

Montana Bird Distribution

Adopt a Quarter-quarter Latilong Instructions

Thank you for agreeing to adopt a quarter-quarter latilong (QQLL). This instruction sheet explains:

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How to Submit Records:

If you want to contribute bird observation records to the 7th edition of *Montana Bird Distribution*, you can:

- If you are willing to adopt a quarter-quarter latilong (QQLL), you can use the simpler Bird Observation Record Sheet (Excel spreadsheet) from MT Audubon website (file name: MT_Bird_Dist_Record_Sheet_Simple_2009.xls). Use this spreadsheet to enter your bird sightings by QQLL. This simpler spreadsheet should be submitted by email to Janet Ellis at jellis@mtaudubon.org.
- One simple way to record your handwritten records is to print a copy of the simple QQLL spreadsheet (file name: MT_Bird_Dist_Record_Sheet_Simple_2009.xls), and use that spreadsheet to write in your records. All written bird sighting records should be sent to: Montana Audubon PO Box 595 Helena, MT 59624 (if you can enter the information on-line that would be best – email to jellis@mtaudubon.org).
- Instead of using this spreadsheet system, records may be submitted online: <http://mtnhp.org/observationform/> (simple version) or <http://mtnhp.org/Tracker/> (more detailed version).
- A more detailed Excel spreadsheet can be downloaded from Tracker: <http://mtnhp.org/Tracker/>. Use this spreadsheet to enter your bird sightings.

What Records Should be Submitted:

We are interested in bird observations recorded since the last edition of *Montana Bird Distribution* was published in 2003.

The Deadline for Submitting Records:

All record must be submitted by December 31, 2010 for inclusion in 7th edition of *Montana Bird Distribution*.

What is a Quarter-quarter Latilong?

The Montana Bird Distribution project is currently recording birds on a quarter-quarter latilong (QQLL) basis. To accomplish this, the state of Montana is divided into a grid-like pattern of units called latilongs, quarter-latilongs, and, smaller yet, quarter-quarter latilongs. The word “latilong” is a combination of the words “latitude” and “longitude” and represents the area of land formed by the

intersection of these imaginary mapping lines. Montana is divided into 49 latilongs, 185 quarter-latilongs, and over 700 quarter-quarter latilongs. Each QQL covers an area roughly 11 miles by 17 miles.

Where to Find QQL Maps:

If you want an 8-1/2" X 11" map of a specific QQL, (1) we can send you the map, or (2) you can download maps from the following location: <http://mtnhp.org/MTBIRD/> (the link to this site is also available from the Montana Audubon website).

In addition to creating maps of specific QQLs, we have created special maps for "popular birding" areas such as Freezout Lake, wildlife refuges, and cities occupying several QQLs (e.g. Billings, Great Falls, Helena, Missoula, etc.). If you don't see the map you need, contact us and we'll get it for you!

Specific Instructions for QQL Spreadsheet:

The QQL MT Bird Distribution spreadsheet is in Microsoft Excel (file name: MT_Bird_Dist_Record_Sheet_Simple_2009.xls). You need to have the Excel program to use the spreadsheet. We can also send you a spreadsheet in Microsoft Works.

Data Field	Instructions
Observer	First and Last name of person who observed the animal (e.g., Joe Smith)
Contact Information	Please give us phone, email, and/or address so that someone can contact you with any questions about observations.
Common Name	See "MT Bird List" worksheet for current common name. You may choose to copy and paste from this list to avoid spelling errors.
Status (choose one): B b t W w	This field must contain one of the following letters: B = direct evidence of breeding, b = Indirect or circumstantial evidence of breeding, or t = No evidence of breeding (during breeding season February 16 to December 14); W = overwintering or w = observed during winter season (during wintering season December 15 to February 15). The definitions for these terms can be found in the QQL Instruction Sheet on the Montana Audubon website or in the 6th edition of <i>Montana Bird Distribution</i> .
Date	Month/Day/Year (e.g., 12/19/2005). Please enter a date or provide comments if observations were not made on a single date.
QQL	Quarter-Quarter Latilong in which the observation was made. See image of QQL boundaries online at http://mtnhp.org/MTBIRD/ (map in upper right corner).
Location	Note: In general the more precise the location information you provide, the more valuable your record will be for conservation efforts. General description of location, ideally with reference to a prominent landmark (e.g. western slope of Sphinx Mountain, 22 miles SE of Ennis; or Missouri River at Fort Benton). You can also include gps points; Township, Range & Section coordinates; etc. When reporting GPS point locations: when the datum is not WGS 84, please indicate.

Comments

Comments **must** be included in this field to justify "B - direct evidence of breeding" or "W - overwintering." We ask that you also include information on submissions for "b - indirect evidence of breeding." Comments may be requested for "t" or "w" where appropriate. Additional location information may also be included in this field, including latitudes and longitudes, UTM's, or TRS coordinates. The additional location information is highly valuable for all Species of Concern or Potential Species of Concern.

See QQLL Instruction Sheet or the 6th edition of *Montana Bird Distribution* for details on the B, b, t, W, and w status rankings.

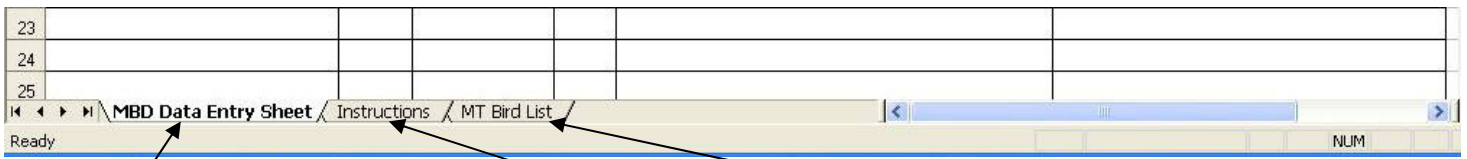
Comments may also be entered on habitat information (descriptions) associated with the observation (e.g., "Cave," "wetland is approximately 100 feet long by 20 feet wide," "old growth forest with closed canopy and many cavities for nesting," or "road adjacent to wetland disrupts flow of water into wetland.")

Notes

1. Please submit rare bird records (see list at http://mtaudubon.org/html/science_MBRC6.htm) to the Montana Bird Record Committee (jeff17_marks@msn.com) on a standard rare bird reporting form (<http://mtaudubon.org/birds/distributionQQLL.html>)
2. If you have questions regarding this spreadsheet please contact Janet Ellis at jellis@mtaudubon.org or 406-443-3949.
3. **To be included in the 7th edition of *Montana Bird Distribution*, records must be submitted by December 31, 2010** by email (preferred!!!!!!!!!!!!!!) to: Janet Ellis at [<jellis@mtaudubon.org>](mailto:jellis@mtaudubon.org) or mail: Montana Audubon, P.O. Box 595, Helena, MT 59624.

Example of QQLL Spreadsheet filled out:

A	B	C	D	E	F
Bird Observation Record Sheet*					
* Observations can be entered online via the Tracker website at http://mtnhp.org/Tracker/NHTMap.aspx .					
3 Observer _____		3 Contact Information: _____			
4					
5 Common Name	Status*	Date	QQLL	Location (more specific info - including written description; gps location; Township, Range & Section; etc.)	Comments (*Explain Status: B, b, t, W, or w). Comments required for "B - direct evidence of breeding" and "W - overwintering" and encouraged for "b - indirect evidence of breeding."
6 American Robin	B	6/15/2009	27B4	Helena - 703 Breckenridge, Latitude =46.58491 Longitude= -112.02931	flushed female off nest with eggs
7 Gray Catbird	b	5/23/2008	28A3	Bend in Missouri River 1/2 mile below Holter Dam	heard single individual singing in shrubs near river's edge
8 Black-capped Chickadee	W	12/1/2008	27B4	Helena - in town; TRS = 10N, 03W, Sec 30, SW of SW corner	5 individuals seen between 12/1/08 to 1/15/09
9					
10					



MBD Data Entry Sheet

Instructions

MT Bird List

The QQLL Spreadsheet is actually 3 spreadsheets (see illustration above): the first spreadsheet is titled “MBD Data Entry Sheet”; this sheet is where you enter your records. The 2nd spreadsheet is titled “Instructions”; it has the *Specific Instructions for QQLL Spreadsheet* (above). And the 3rd spreadsheet is titled “MT Bird List”; it is a bird list that can be sorted alphabetically or taxonomically.

Bird Status Codes and Criteria

Each bird record needs to indicate the "status" of the bird, which requires the observer to record the appropriate symbol for Bird Status (B, b, t, W, or w). This section of the Instruction Sheet explains each of these terms.

The maps in *Montana Bird Distribution* are based upon observations made during two distinct seasons, the:

- **Breeding season** (February 16 to December 14, which includes spring and fall migrations for many species); and the
- **Wintering season** (December 15 to February 15).

Letters are used to describe the status of the bird species observed. The status tells us whether the species recorded exhibited behavior indicating:

- B** = direct evidence of breeding
- b** = indirect evidence of breeding
- t** = no evidence of breeding
- W** = overwintering
- w** = seen during winter, but not confirmed as overwintering

The lettered symbols are defined as follows:

BREEDING SEASON (February 16 – December 14)

For observations of birds during the breeding season, the letters “B,” “b,” or “t” are used to indicate the birds’ breeding status.

“B” Direct evidence of breeding or “evidence of young.”

Use of the “B” to designate breeding requires evidence that young (or eggs) have been produced.

Breeding is not assumed simply by the presence of adults or behavior. “B” is used only if one of the following criteria are met:

1. Occupied nest - adults entering or leaving nest site in circumstances indicating an occupied nest (includes high nests or nest-holes, the contents of which cannot be seen) or adult incubating or brooding.
2. Recently fledged young (of altricial species) incapable of sustained flight, or downy young (of precocial species) restricted to the area by dependence on adults or limited mobility.
3. Adults attending young - adult carrying food or fecal sac for young, or feeding recently fledged young.
4. Used nest or eggshell found (Identification must be convincing for such records to be accepted).
5. Nest with egg(s) which can be clearly identified. *The presence of cowbird eggs or young is confirmation of breeding for both cowbird and host species.*

NOTE: Records of direct evidence (“B”) of breeding are *only* accepted when the criteria used to determine matches at least one of the five items (criteria) listed above.

The historic quarter-latilong information (records for sightings prior to 1996) are represented by the darker green background for “B” in each QLL block. This represents the highest status of the records for this species in this particular QLL.

“b” Indirect, or circumstantial, evidence of breeding

“b” is used if one of the following criteria are met:

1. Singing males or territorial birds observed in suitable nesting habitat during the breeding season.
2. Courtship behavior or copulation.
3. Adults visiting a probable nest site.
4. Agitation behavior, distraction display, feigning injury, or anxiety call from an adult.
5. Nest building.
6. Physiological evidence of breeding (brood patch or eggs in oviduct) based on bird in hand.

The historic quarter-latilong information (records for sightings prior to 1996) are represented by the lighter green background for “b” in each QLL block. This represents the highest status of the records for this species in this particular QLL.

“t” No evidence of breeding

Transients, migrants, or wide ranging species that exhibit no behavior at the time observed.

The historic quarter-latilong information (records for sightings prior to 1996) are represented by the lighter green background for “t” in each QLL block. This represents the highest status of the records for this species in this particular QLL.

WINTERING SEASON (December 15 - February 15)

For observations of birds during the wintering season, “W” or “w” are used to indicate that species’ winter status.

“W” Overwintering

Regular sightings during the winter period. (When submitting data, you must include, in the Observation Notes section, the dates for which the bird was seen throughout the winter months December 15 – February 15).

The historic quarter-latilong information (records for sightings prior to 1996) are represented by the darker blue background for “W” in each latilong (LL) block. This represents the highest status of the records for this species in this particular LL.

“w” observed during the wintering season, but not confirmed as overwintering

Species observed at least once between December 15 and February 15, but not regularly during the wintering season.

The historic quarter-latilong information (records for sightings prior to 1996) are represented by the lighter blue background for “w” in each LL block. This represents the highest status of the records for this species in this particular LL.

This information is taken from the following publication: Lenard, S., J. Carlson, J. Ellis, C. Jones, and C. Tilly. 2003. P.D. Skaar's Montana Bird Distribution, Sixth Edition. Montana Audubon, Helena, Montana, 144 pp.

For More Information on the Montana Bird Distribution Project:

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