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Memos to BBS Observer

Sam Droege

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United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

OFFICE OF MIGRATORY BIRD MANAGEMENT
LAUREL, MARYLAND 20708

Dear BBS Observer:

Many thanks! The BBS route(s) that you ran in 1988 have been entered into our database. Every route is important and used in analyses of population change and relative abundance.

But your efforts are not quite over yet! We need you to check how well we have entered your data into the computer. Looking at your enclosed printouts, please check the following items:

1. Are the page totals and number of stops correct?
2. Are there any missing or incorrect species?
3. Is all the heading information correct?
4. Are there any starred species (see explanations below)?

Please use the enclosed return envelope for replies.

Let me take a moment to explain about any starred species you might find on your printout. First, if in past years you have sent us information about these species, you need not send it again. A starred species indicates that the marked species has rarely occurred on BBS routes in your area in the past. It does not necessarily mean that it doesn't breed or summer in your area or that it could never occur on your BBS route. What it does mean is that, when we look at summaries of our data, the species in question occurs so infrequently that we want to double check the record. These starrings are automatic, they do not represent personal challenges by someone in the BBS office to the veracity of your sightings.

If you have found 2 stars next to a species, you just need to double check for a bird placed in the wrong row or consider that it might be a migrant. If you do find a discrepancy please drop us a line, otherwise you need not contact us. If there are 3 stars next to a species please send us a brief confirmation of the sighting. We do not want the usual detailed descriptions, just a note about the circumstances and breeding status.

As a final note, we assume that if you ran a BBS route(s) this year, that you will run those same route(s) next year. If this is not the case, please let us know. We can therefore begin looking for new observers as soon as possible.

September 1988

BBS ROUTE ASSIGNMENTS DURING 1988

We have listed below a breakdown by state and province of the number of routes available and the number of routes assigned to observers in 1988. In next year's issue of the **BBS MONITOR** we will list how many of those assigned routes were actually run.

We have also included a map showing the locations of uncovered BBS routes (fig. 1). If you are interested in running an additional route please contact your state or provincial coordinator or this office. Even better, if you know of someone with good hearing, who knows all the songs and calls of the local birds, give us his name and we will assign them a nearby BBS route.

State Province	% Assigned	# Rtes Available
AL	98	53
AK	41	71
AR	100	29
AZ	44	34
CA	74	186
CO	88	56
CT	100	16
DE	80	10
FL	100	84
GA	100	58
ID	98	56
IL	100	64
IN	90	42
IA	100	33
KS	97	38
KY	70	46
LA	100	42
ME	74	55
MD	100	51
MA	95	22
MI	100	73
MN	83	52
MS	87	31



MO	97	37
MT	96	48
NE	70	44
NV	51	33
NH	100	23
NJ	84	31
NM	100	31
NY	78	112
NC	68	31
ND	95	44
OH	100	44
OK	100	34
OR	90	62
PA	91	102
RI	100	5
SC	77	22
SD	65	43
TN	100	42
TX	86	111
UT	74	47
VT	91	23
VA	100	44
WA	100	46
WV	63	52
WI	97	70
WY	68	105

USA	84	2478
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ALT	60	60
BC	51	83
NWT	57	7
MAN	74	23
NB	71	28
NF	15	27
NS	54	24
ONT	75	75
PEI	50	4
QUE	36	73
SAS	36	81
YUK	48	27
CAN	51	512

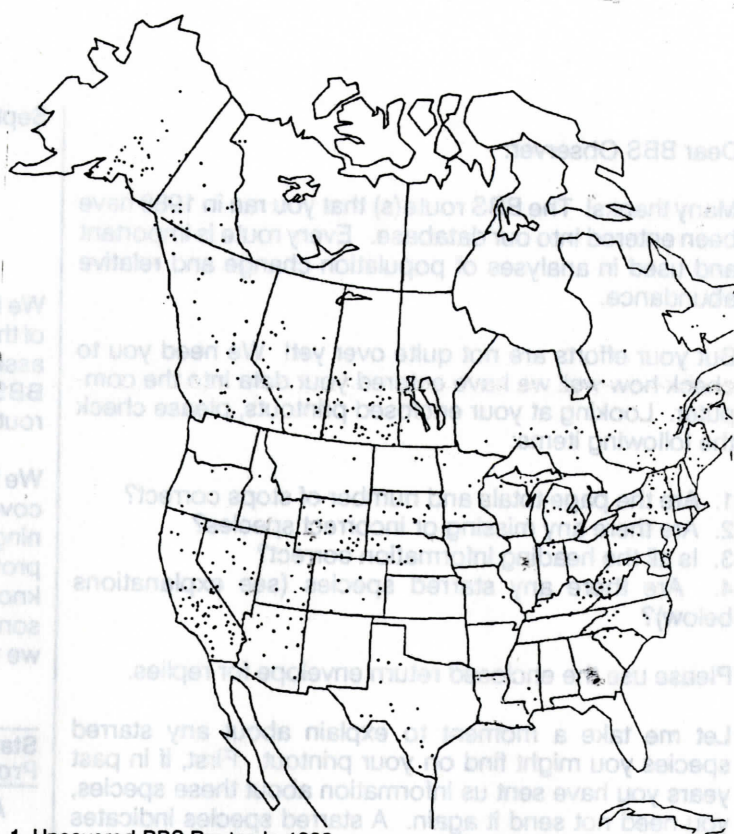


Fig. 1. Uncovered BBS Routes in 1988.

CHANGING BIRD POPULATIONS 1966-1987

We have just analyzed BBS data from 1966 - 1987. We have statistically meaningful trends for over 400 species. If you are interested in obtaining information on population trends for a species or region please drop us a line.

Thanks again for all your efforts and we hope to see your surveys again next year.

Cordially,


Sam Droege
301 498 0330



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

OFFICE OF MIGRATORY BIRD MANAGEMENT
LAUREL, MARYLAND 20708

September 1987

Dear BBS'er:

Thanks again for running your BBS route(s). All indications are that we have surpassed the all time record for number of routes run in one year. Each advance in coverage means better monitoring of regional and continental bird populations. Especially encouraging were increases in coverage in the sparsely populated regions of Canada, the Southwest, and Florida. I would like to thank all our state and provincial coordinators for a well done job.

1987 PRINTOUTS

Enclosed are printout(s) of the results of BBS route(s) that you ran in 1987. Please check these numbers for transcription and keypunching errors. Closely check those species that have 2 or 3 stars next to them on your printout. They could indicate rare species, misidentification, or data entered on the wrong row on the summary sheet.

For species with 2 stars, we will assume that these records are correct unless we hear otherwise. However, for 3 stars we feel that these species are rare enough in your state that some very brief details are warranted. If you have verified these species on your route in the past you need not go through the efforts again. You can use the enclosed envelope for any replies.

FOR FUTURE REFERENCE

Editing BBS routes is an often tedious and always time consuming process. Believe it or not we actually do check everyone's data by hand as well as by computer. We average only about 20 routes per day. Most BBS'ers do an excellent job of filling out their forms. However, the exceptions require significant amounts of office time. This means we have less time to analyze data, fill data requests, and expand coverage. What some people perhaps don't realize is that all the columns on the field and summary sheets must be completed in order for us to even start editing your routes. If the "stops per species" column on the summary sheet or page totals column on the field sheets are left blank we must complete them here at the office. We don't want to discourage anyone from running BBS routes and definitely don't want to appear ungracious for all your help so if you lack the time to fill out the forms we will gladly continue to do so.

COMING EVENTS

This fall and winter I hope to incorporate the majority of your suggestions into a new set of forms. We plan to rerun the trend analysis program again for all 22-years worth of data. These new trends can be requested at that time. I also hope to work on a wide variety of route problems and expand route coverage in the Northwest Territories and the West.

WANT TO RUN ANOTHER BBS ROUTE?

For those of you who would like to run another BBS route take a look at the figure below. It presents a rough idea of which routes went unassigned last year. This figure does not include those routes that have never been run. If you spot a route that you would like to do or know of some local and competent observer please drop us a line. We depend on the contacts made by our coordinators and observers to staff the routes. Many thanks.

VOLUNTEER AND PAID WORK AT BBS HEADQUARTERS

From time to time we get the money to hire people to work on the BBS. We usually hire locally but we would like to expand our selection to people who have had experience doing bird censuses and are directly interested in the BBS. If you have any interest or know of someone else who might like to experience working at with us here at Patuxent Wildlife Research Center please give me a call or drop me a letter. A wide variety of housing can be arranged.

Keep 'em Flyin'

Sam

Sam Droege
301 498 0330

