Marin County Breeding Bird Atlas II

Annual Report: 2021

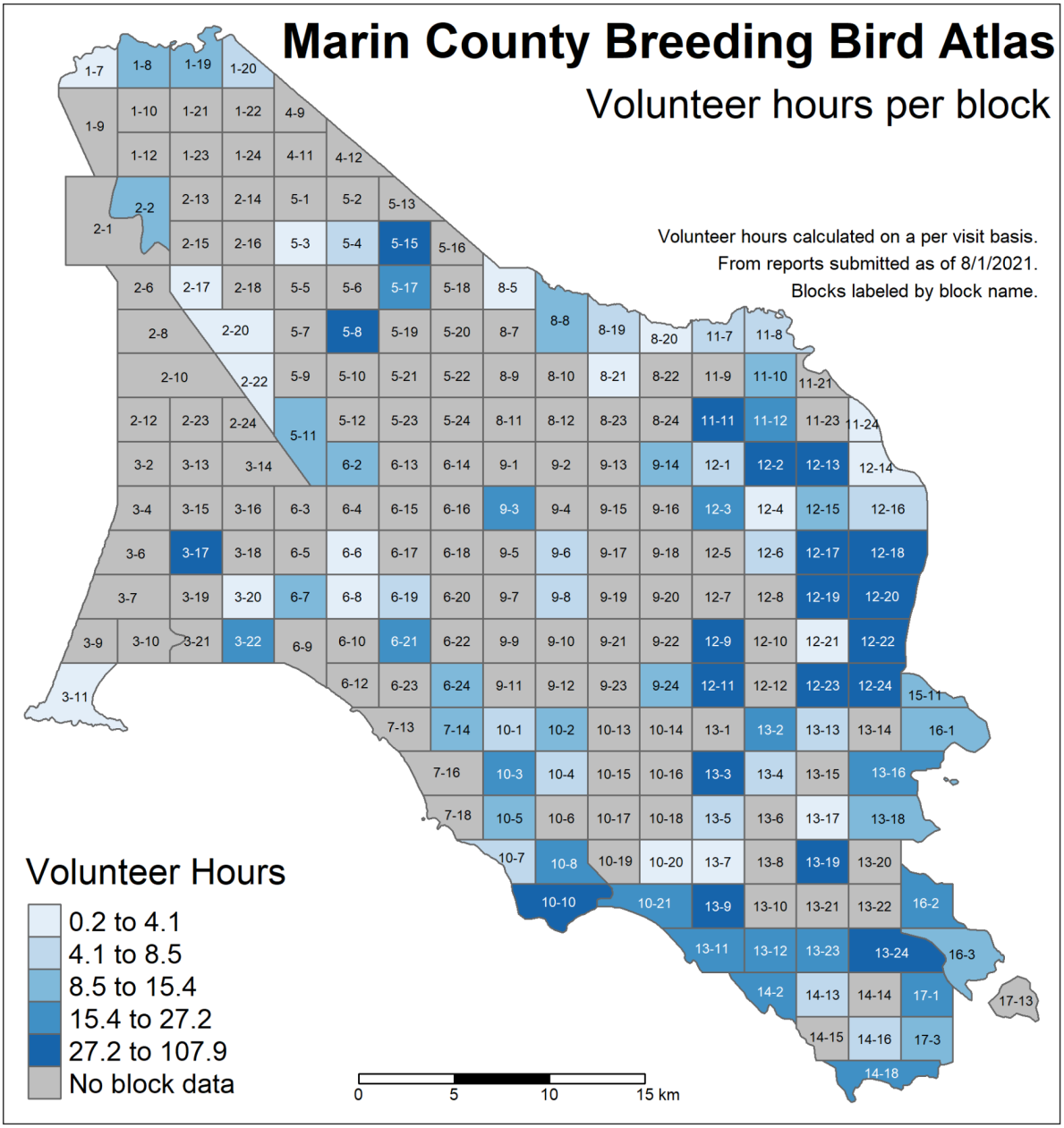
August 1st, 2021

A Western Screech-Owl peeking out of an Oak tree on Mt. Burdell. Photo credit: Becky Matsubara.

Fantastic job everyone!

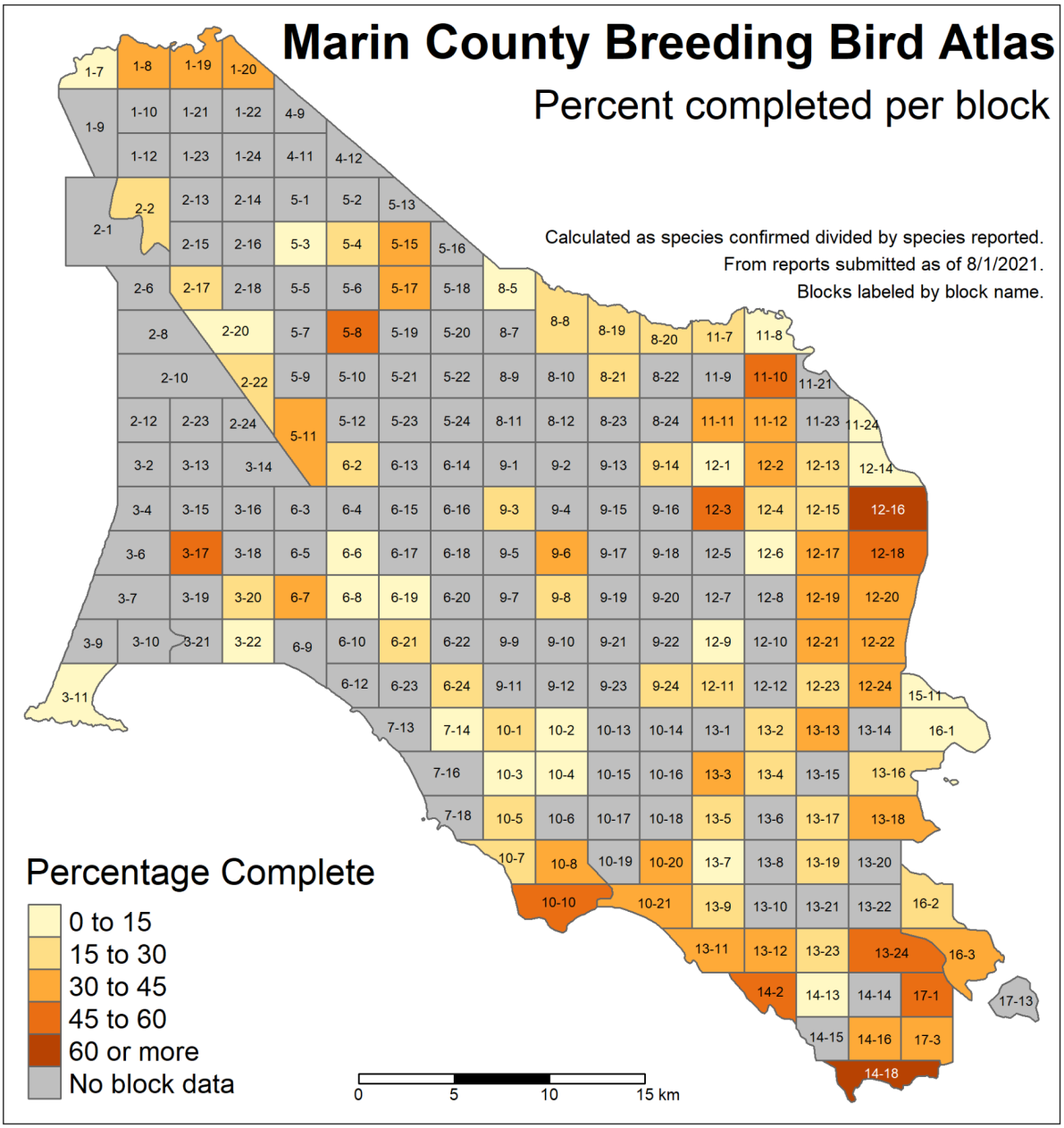
Do you like the photo above? Check out our photo story map of volunteer photos from the 2021 season at the link below.

https://mcbba.github.io/storymap21/



Please find a webmap companion at: https://mcbba.github.io/webmap/volunteer_hours

*This map considers only the hours as counted on a per visit basis, it does not include if multiple volunteers were present on the survey in the effort data.



Please find a webmap companion at: https://mcbba.github.io/webmap/percent_complete

*Please note that blocks with unusually high percentages may have not reported very few species in the possible or probable categories. Those block leaders should make an effort to survey those species again next season. This is as per the methods of Santa Cruz Breeding Bird Atlas, where a block is considered complete when 60% of the species reported in all breeding categories by the current observer have been confirmed.

A Promising Start

MCBBA2 was launched this year -- and what a year it was!!

The first re-study of the Marin County Breeding Bird Atlas got off to a remarkable start in 2021. Over the course of an official field season of 92 days -- 15 April to 15 July -- 52 volunteer block leaders and observers recorded over 21,000 observations, representing the results of almost 1,600 hours in the field.

Every volunteer project of this kind must reckon with the sheer variety of skill levels among observers. However, MCBBA2 was clearly fortunate in the high level of expertise throughout its ranks of volunteers. Regional coordinators, Susan Kelly, Alex Merritt, Juan Garcia, and David Wimpfheimer recruited knowledgeable birders and guided them into blocks that needed comprehensive coverage. The Atlas was also able to benefit from the superb professional advice of many prominent experts, including Dave Shuford, Dave DeSante, Rusty Scalf, Denise Wight, and many others. Offering his cartographic skills and technical know-how was our own in-house GIS analyst William Wiskes.

The results so far (and data are still accumulating as we write) will illustrate the importance of revisiting older findings within the context of a long-term study. One key difference between MCBBA1 and MCBBA2 is our census measure. Since we are counting individual birds of each species observed -- including non-breeding species -- and since MCBBA1 was concerned only with breeding evidence, we have inevitably recorded species that the first study did not. There are about one hundred of these species observed in our new study that were not observed in the original study. When we limit the difference to breeding confirmations, we get a more refined estimate.

The pattern of breeding confirmations gives us a preliminary insight into overall results. After a single season, MCBBA2 has already confirmed 119 species! Many of these are resident birds, such as Spotted Towhee and California Quail, but, importantly, several are neotropical migrants like Olive-sided Flycatcher and Black-headed Grosbeak. The new Atlas has confirmed a few species not confirmed by MCBBA1: Mute Swan, Wild Turkey, Eurasian Collared Dove, American Avocet, Forster's Tern, Bald Eagle, Peregrine Falcon. On the other hand, Shuford's

atlas recorded breeding confirmations that escaped our first-year effort. To be sure, some of these species are absent from our Atlas only because we are yet to gather all data for the year; as-yet unconfirmed species will surely be added: Cinnamon Teal, Snowy Egret, Yellow Warbler, etc. We are confident that data-sharing agreements with other conservation contractors will add records that are lacking as of this writing. Finally, our Incidental Observations are yet to be integrated into our main database. For example, a last-minute confirmation for Cedar Waxwing has come in during the composition of this report.

We'd like to express our heart-felt thanks to all who have counseled us, encouraged us and given their time and observational skills. The Marin County Breeding Bird Atlas is, above all, a community effort. Our efforts were also aided by many organizations, including Marin Audubon Society, Point Blue Conservation Science, the California Avian Data Center, and the Institute for Bird Populations.

Because of all the help you have given us, MCBBA2 has a bright future! Please watch for new announcements from the MCBBA2 Steering Committee and Marin Audubon.

-Juan García

Read more on the Marin Audubon website

Breeding Confirmations - 119 species

The table below lists all species that were confirmed by block leaders on regular site visits (as of submitted by 08/01/2021). Incidental Observations and Nest Reports have not yet been integrated into our main database. For example, a last-minute confirmation for Cedar Waxwing has come in while we were writing this report and hasn't been incorporated yet.

Canada Goose	Barn Owl	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
Mute Swan	Western Screech-Owl	House Wren
Wood Duck	Great Horned Owl	Pacific Wren
Gadwall	Spotted Owl	Marsh Wren
Mallard	Belted Kingfisher	Bewick's Wren
California Quail	Acorn Woodpecker	Northern Mockingbird
Wild Turkey	Downy Woodpecker	European Starling
Pied-billed Grebe	Nuttall's Woodpecker	Western Bluebird
Rock Pigeon	Hairy Woodpecker	Swainson's Thrush
Eurasian Collared-Dove	Northern Flicker	American Robin
Mourning Dove	Pileated Woodpecker	House Sparrow
White-throated Swift	American Kestrel	House Finch
Anna's Hummingbird	Peregrine Falcon	Purple Finch
Allen's Hummingbird	Ash-throated Flycatcher	Pine Siskin
Virginia Rail	Western Kingbird	Lesser Goldfinch
Common Gallinule	Olive-sided Flycatcher	American Goldfinch
Black Rail	Western Wood-Pewee	Lark Sparrow
Black-necked Stilt	Pacific-slope Flycatcher	Chipping Sparrow

American Avocet

Black Oystercatcher

Killdeer

Snowy Plover

Pigeon Guillemot

Western Gull

Forster's Tern

Brandt's Cormorant

Pelagic Cormorant

Double-crested Cormorant

Great Blue Heron

Great Egret

Green Heron

Black-crowned Night-Heron

Turkey Vulture

Osprey

White-tailed Kite

Northern Harrier

Cooper's Hawk

Bald Eagle

Red-shouldered Hawk

Red-tailed Hawk

Black Phoebe

Hutton's Vireo

Warbling Vireo

Loggerhead Shrike

Steller's Jay

California Scrub-Jay

American Crow

Common Raven

Chestnut-backed Chickadee

Oak Titmouse

Horned Lark

Tree Swallow

Violet-green Swallow

Northern Rough-winged Swallow

Purple Martin

Barn Swallow

Cliff Swallow

Bushtit

Wrentit

White-breasted Nuthatch

Pygmy Nuthatch

Brown Creeper

Dark-eyed Junco

White-crowned Sparrow

Savannah Sparrow

Song Sparrow

California Towhee

Rufous-crowned Sparrow

Spotted Towhee

Western Meadowlark

Hooded Oriole

Bullock's Oriole

Red-winged Blackbird

Brown-headed Cowbird

Brewer's Blackbird

Orange-crowned Warbler

Common Yellowthroat

Yellow-rumped Warbler

Black-throated Gray Warbler

Hermit Warbler

Wilson's Warbler

Black-headed Grosbeak

Lazuli Bunting