



# Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas 2

## 2017 Season Summary

### Volunteer Survey Hours:

- Season 1 = 10000
- Season 2 = 13000

Cumulative Number of Species Identified = 212

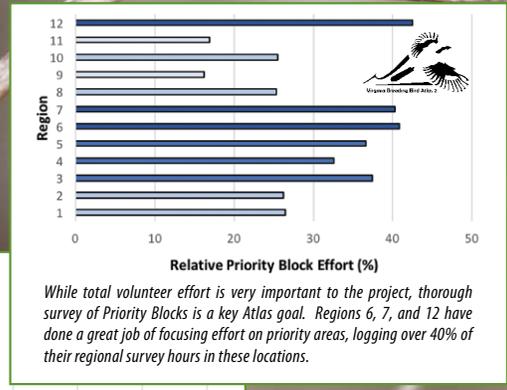
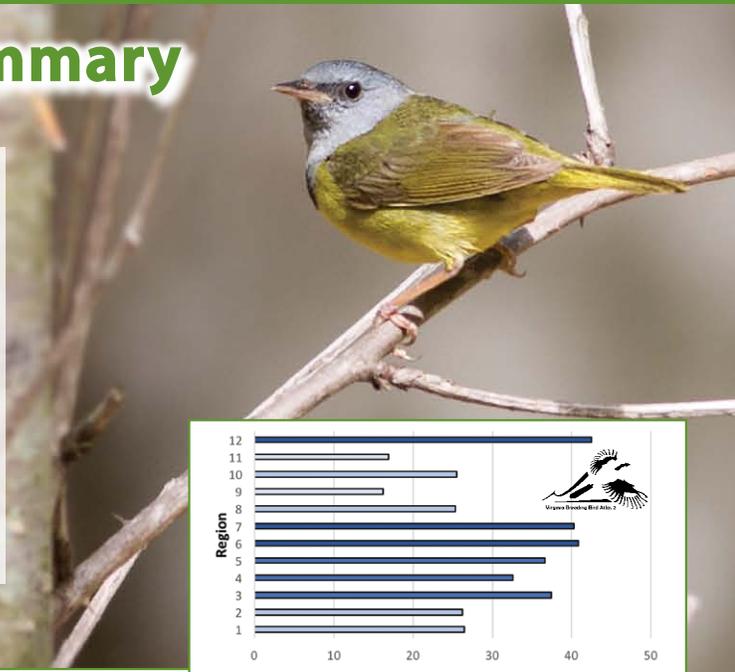
Total Confirmed Breeding Species = 187

### Atlas eBird Contributors:

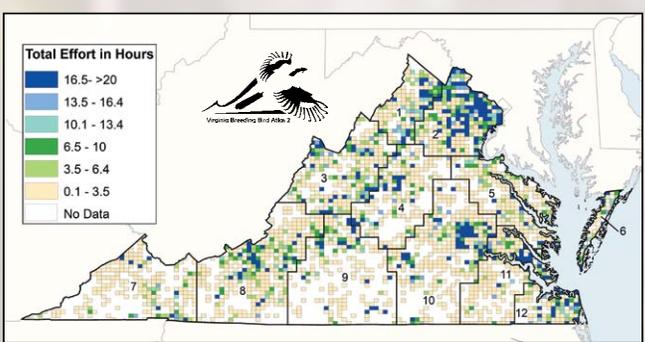
- Season 1 = 430
- Total at end of Season 2 = 750

### Newly Confirmed Breeding Species for 2nd Season:

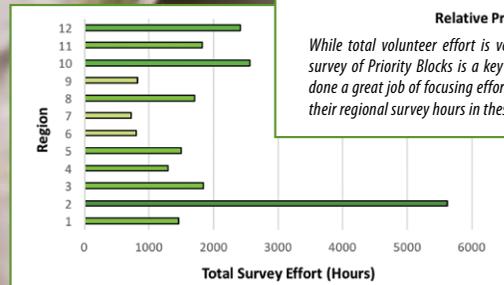
- Anhinga
  - Brown Creeper
  - E. Whip-poor-will
  - Painted Bunting\*
  - Mourning Warbler
  - Swamp Sparrow
  - Wilson's Plover
- \*Evidence strongly indicates breeding



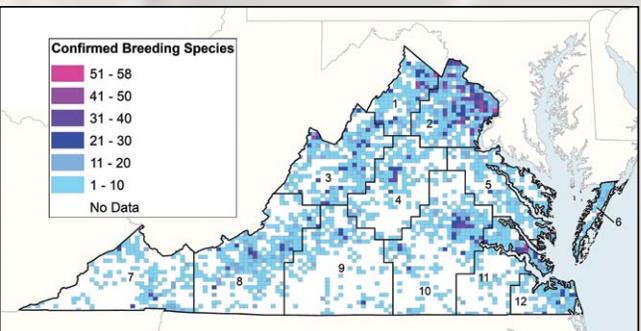
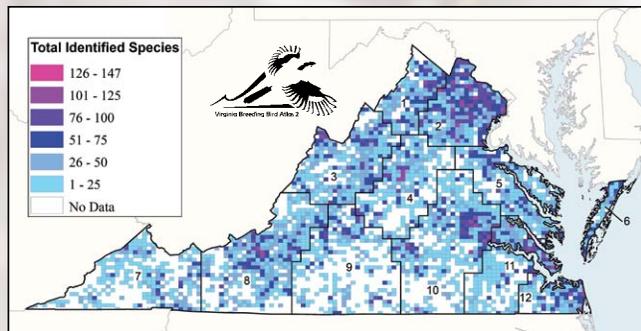
While total volunteer effort is very important to the project, thorough survey of Priority Blocks is a key Atlas goal. Regions 6, 7, and 12 have done a great job of focusing effort on priority areas, logging over 40% of their regional survey hours in these locations.



Volunteer survey effort by Atlas block in first two seasons (2016-2017) of the Atlas project. While Atlas effort is naturally concentrated around populated areas, volunteers made great steps toward increasing survey coverage in more rural areas of VA, including regions 4, 5, 7, 9 and 10. In fact, regions 4 and 7 experienced a more than 100% increase in volunteer effort in 2017!



In the first two Atlas breeding seasons, volunteers have logged a tremendous 23,000 hours of field survey effort. Much of this effort is concentrated in Northern Virginia (Region 2), a hub for state birders. However, most Atlas regions have now logged 1000+ survey hours, a great jump from season one to two.



Numbers of confirmed breeding species are highest where Atlas volunteer effort is greatest, e.g. Northern Virginia and the Richmond area. However, as the Total Identified Species Map shows, Atlas volunteers and birders have documented high numbers of species in all three major eco-regions of Virginia. Within the Coastal Plain, Piedmont, and Mountain-Valley habitats, volunteers identified as many as 147 possible breeding species per block! In the third project season (2018), an important goal will be to increase numbers of possible breeding species in areas with low survey effort to date.



### Species Profile: Anhinga

A uniquely familiar sight in southeastern swamps and wetlands, the Anhinga (or Snake-bird) continues to expand its range northward. While this species did not appear at all in the first VA BBA, an active nest found by an Atlas volunteer confirmed breeding in 2017. Anhingas prefer slow-moving, freshwater habitats for nesting. An active aquatic hunter, this species feeds primarily on fish, crayfish, and amphibians. Once again, Virginia's waterways reveal an exciting new breeder for the Commonwealth and remind us to keep our eyes peeled for breeding evidence on both land and water.

**Bird on Virginia!**  
[www.vabba2.org](http://www.vabba2.org)



### Species Profile: Brown Creeper

On the annual VSO Summer field trip, birders were treated to an uncommon sight. The first Brown Creeper nest for the Atlas project was found at Glen Alton in Montgomery county. While this species is a common winter resident in the southeastern US, few are documented in VA during the breeding season. Unique in their nest placement, creepers prefer to build in the space between a loose piece of bark and the trunk of dead or dying trees. In early spring, volunteers in both high mountain areas of western VA and eastern lowland swamps should listen for the rich tsee notes of the male Brown Creeper's song.

### A note from the Atlas Coordinator Ashley Peele, PhD

The numbers speak for themselves. In season two of VA's second Breeding Bird Atlas, volunteers not only increased statewide survey effort by 30%, but also began filling in many of the blank spots on survey maps. More VA birders began traveling away from home to conduct Atlas surveys or jumped in to collecting data in their own corner of Virginia, helping to fill coverage gaps and ensuring that 2017 was a successful year. Over 150 volunteers helped organize and/or attended major Atlas Training Workshops this Spring, a new program we couldn't have launched without their help. Regional Coordinators and many Atlas ambassadors around the state use their energetic enthusiasm to educate and encourage other birders. And ALL of our Atlas community shows their commitment to bird conservation by taking action. I can't wait to see what we can accomplish in season three of the VABBA2!

