



## STUDY GUIDE: ENHANCE BIRDING BY EAR SKILLS TO IDENTIFY THE WOODLAND NESTING BIRDS IN THE BCN DATABASE

### THE STATISTICS UNDERLYING THE BCN POPULATION TRENDS DATA FROM 1999-2020

**Trend** : Average annual population change (up or down) over the 22 year study period

**% Error** : When this # is larger than the Trend average #, the latter is uncertain

**Points** : # of individual points where the species was recorded at least once

**Records** : Total # of birds of a specific species, seen across all survey points

**Frequency** : % of survey points where a species was seen at least once; assesses overall abundance - more common species show approx 30-50% frequency

**Credibility** : Informed method of assessing the accuracy of the population Trend #; Higher % error reduces Credibility of the Trend value

The links to species songs and calls are from [xeno-canto.org](http://xeno-canto.org)

In most cases, the recordings are from Illinois or nearby states, to avoid 'dialects' (many species songs vary with geography). Be sure to read the [terms of use](#) and the [FAQs](#). Click on [advanced search](#) and type in a species name should you want to explore the available recordings for a particular species

**Cautionary Note:** The 50+ species contained in this study guide breed primarily in woodlands, yet likely will be observed in other habitats while monitoring. This will be also true for species that primarily nest in other habitat types. Why? Many species have adapted, breeding in different habitats, Red-winged Blackbirds and Common Yellowthroats, for example. Woodland species also will widely forage for food for their nestlings during the breeding season. Non-native plants in woodland habitat tend to be 'insect poor', so woodland nesters must extend their search. Various studies have shown that 'insect poor' habitats reduce nesting success.

The other factor influencing occupancy overlap: Fragmentation of habitat types – aka edge effects. BCN monitoring counts birds at points within 'natural areas' (approx 10% of the land area across the CW region) there is a significant edge effect – shrubland birds heard/seen from a woodland point, for example.

Regular (and rare) BCN woodland breeding birds - in alphabetical order



Species	Trend	% Error	Credibility	Points	Records	Frequency	Trend Status
<a href="#">Acadian Flycatcher</a>	16.9%	8.2%	Mod	34	65	1%	Strong Increase
<a href="#">American Crow</a>	-7.6%	1.2%	Good	585	1752	24%	<b>Steep Decline</b>
<a href="#">American Robin</a>	1.4%	0.4%	Good	1970	19799	80%	Moderate Increase
<a href="#">Baltimore Oriole</a>	2.8%	0.9%	Good	873	2984	35%	Moderate Increase
<a href="#">Barred Owl</a>			Poor	10	11	0%	Poorly Known
<a href="#">Black-and-white Warbler</a>			Poor	3	3	0%	Poorly Known
<a href="#">Black-capped Chickadee</a>	-1.4%	0.8%	Good	1004	5320	41%	<b>Moderate Decline</b>
<a href="#">Broad-winged Hawk</a>	-1.9%	6.4%	Mod	25	32	1%	Uncertain
<a href="#">Brown Creeper</a>			Poor	2	2	0%	Poorly Known
<a href="#">Carolina Wren</a>	2.1%	6.1%	Mod	36	47	1%	Uncertain
<a href="#">Cerulean Warbler</a>			Poor	7	7	0%	Poorly Known
<a href="#">Chimney Swift</a>	6.8%	2.2%	Good	313	874	13%	Moderate Increase
<a href="#">Cooper's Hawk</a>	1.4%	2.8%	Good	165	233	7%	Stable
<a href="#">Downy Woodpecker</a>	1.2%	0.8%	Good	866	2977	35%	Moderate Increase
<a href="#">Eastern Phoebe</a>	4.3%	2.5%	Good	199	351	8%	Moderate Increase
<a href="#">Eastern Whip-poor-will</a>	<b>very rare possible breeder</b>						
<a href="#">Eastern Wood-Pewee</a>	4.1%	0.7%	Good	806	4743	33%	Moderate Increase
<a href="#">Great Crested Flycatcher</a>	5.1%	0.9%	Good	749	2498	30%	Moderate Increase
<a href="#">Great Horned Owl</a>	-6.1%	3.8%	Good	63	97	3%	<b>Moderate Decline</b>
<a href="#">Hairy Woodpecker</a>	2.6%	1.8%	Good	330	606	13%	Moderate Increase
<a href="#">Hooded Warbler</a>	1.2%	3.2%	Good	82	192	3%	Stable
<a href="#">House Wren</a>	0.9%	0.7%	Good	1033	5037	42%	Moderate Increase
<a href="#">Indigo Bunting</a>	2.8%	0.6%	Good	1295	8135	53%	Moderate Increase
<a href="#">Kentucky Warbler</a>			Poor	5	7	0%	Poorly Known
<a href="#">Least Flycatcher</a>	-10.8%	6.3%	Mod	29	39	1%	<b>Moderate Decline</b>
<a href="#">Louisiana Waterthrush</a>			Poor	7	9	0%	Poorly Known
<a href="#">Northern Flicker</a>	1.5%	0.8%	Good	974	2780	40%	Moderate Increase
<a href="#">Northern Parula</a>			Poor	7	13	0%	Poorly Known
<a href="#">Ovenbird</a>	-4.6%	2.7%	Good	113	222	5%	<b>Moderate Decline</b>
<a href="#">Pileated Woodpecker</a>	29.5%	9.8%	Mod	54	83	2%	Strong Increase
<a href="#">Pine Warbler</a>	<b>rare; only recent records</b>						
<a href="#">Prothonotary Warbler</a>			Poor	10	22	0%	Poorly Known
<a href="#">Red-bellied Woodpecker</a>	6.3%	0.8%	Good	904	4091	37%	Strong Increase
<a href="#">Red-breasted Nuthatch</a>			Poor	2	2	0%	Poorly Known
<a href="#">Red-eyed Vireo</a>	-0.5%	0.7%	Good	762	3779	31%	Stable
<a href="#">Red-headed Woodpecker</a>	3.3%	2.9%	Good	153	330	6%	Moderate Increase
<a href="#">Red-shouldered Hawk</a>			Poor	11	16	0%	Poorly Known
<a href="#">Red-tailed Hawk</a>	0.1%	1.6%	Good	456	902	19%	Stable
<a href="#">Rose-breasted Grosbeak</a>	5.6%	1.4%	Good	514	1282	21%	Moderate Increase
<a href="#">Scarlet Tanager</a>	2.9%	1.3%	Good	420	1065	17%	Moderate Increase
<a href="#">Summer Tanager</a>	8.6%	8.0%	Mod	31	49	1%	Moderate Increase
<a href="#">Tufted Titmouse</a>	-0.3%	3.4%	Good	80	127	3%	Stable
<a href="#">Turkey Vulture</a>	4.2%	3.3%	Good	209	442	8%	Moderate Increase
<a href="#">Veery</a>	-2.7%	3.3%	Good	71	252	3%	Uncertain
<a href="#">White-breasted Nuthatch</a>	6.1%	0.9%	Good	676	3159	27%	Strong Increase
<a href="#">Wild Turkey</a>			Poor	18	23	1%	Poorly Known
<a href="#">Wood Thrush</a>	2.1%	1.5%	Good	361	1029	15%	Moderate Increase
<a href="#">Yellow-billed Cuckoo</a>	0.8%	2.6%	Good	194	241	8%	Stable
<a href="#">Yellow-throated Vireo</a>	5.3%	2.7%	Good	166	293	7%	Moderate Increase
<a href="#">Yellow-throated Warbler</a>			Poor	7	8	0%	Poorly Known

urban

generally silent

## Regular (and rare) BCN woodland birds - ranked by abundance



Species	Trend	Error	Credibility	Points	Records	Frequency	Trend Status	
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<a href="#">Red-bellied Woodpecker</a>	6.3%	0.8%	Good	904	4091	37%	Strong Increase	compare Red-headed Woodpecker
<a href="#">Red-eyed Vireo</a>	-0.5%	0.7%	Good	762	3779	31%	Stable	compare Yellow-throated Vireo
<a href="#">White-breasted Nuthatch</a>	6.1%	0.9%	Good	676	3159	27%	Strong Increase	
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Turkey Vulture	4.2%	3.3%	Good	209	442	8%	Moderate Increase	generally silent
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<a href="#">Northern Parula</a>				7	13	0%	Poorly Known	
<a href="#">Barred Owl</a>				10	11	0%	Poorly Known	
<a href="#">Louisiana Waterthrush</a>				7	9	0%	Poorly Known	
<a href="#">Yellow-throated Warbler</a>				7	8	0%	Poorly Known	
<a href="#">Cerulean Warbler</a>				7	7	0%	Poorly Known	
<a href="#">Kentucky Warbler</a>				5	7	0%	Poorly Known	
<a href="#">Black-and-white Warbler</a>				3	3	0%	Poorly Known	
<a href="#">Brown Creeper</a>				2	2	0%	Poorly Known	
<a href="#">Red-breasted Nuthatch</a>				2	2	0%	Poorly Known	
<a href="#">Eastern Whip-poor-will</a>								very rare possible breeder
<a href="#">Pine Warbler</a>								rare; only recent records



## Woodland Birds - the 'Regulars' - sounds and mnemonics *notes, pitfalls, other species to consider or rule out*

**Yellow-billed Cuckoo** song, a single repeated “ooop” long call starts with “kowlp”(compare with **Black-billed Cuckoo** song, but be aware BBCU is a shrubland species and is more rare in our area)

**Red-tailed Hawk** learn fledgling begging call; Blue Jays mimic the adults and juveniles well

**Red-bellied Woodpecker** weak but loud “churr” - “chig-chig-chig” call; compare **Red-headed Woodpecker**

**Hairy Woodpecker** high-pitched “TWEEK” (compare with **Downy Woodpecker**, learn “kingfisher” rattle to help separate) and wicka-wicka call similar to **Northern Flicker**

**Downy Woodpecker** PIK call and very high-pitched rattle call/whinny(compare with **Hairy Woodpecker**)

**Northern Flicker** primary song is a repeated note similar to **Cooper’s Hawk**; note TEW call; compare “wicka wicka” call to **N Cardinal** and **Hairy Woodpecker**)

**E Wood-Pewee** often three syllables: ascending “Pee-uh-wee repeated 2-3 times, and an answered, descending Pee-wee (compare with **E Phoebe**)

**Great Crested Flycatcher** “fweep” or “wheep”

**Red-eyed Vireo**: Mnemonic: Here I am, at the top, of the tree, see me-fairly quick, learn the Shweee raspy call also. (compare with **Yellow-throated Vireo**)

**Blue Jay**: Primary “Jay Jay” call, Bell or Car-alarm call (also mimics hawks and several other species)

**American Crow** (also learn fledgling coos and calls, and soft family 'conversation' sounds)

**Black-capped Chickadee** (both song and call useful)

**White-breasted Nuthatch** 'hank hank' (compare with Red-breasted Nuthatch)

**House Wren** warbly long song

**European Starling** (mimics many species, so watch it singing if you can)

**American Robin** repeated 'cheerily cheerup' compare with **Rose-breasted Grosbeak**

**Wood Thrush** 'eeolay' (also learn pit volley agitation sound)

**Rose-breasted Grosbeak** more melodic/complex; compare with **American Robin**

**Baltimore Oriole**: rich tones and loud whistles (compare with **Orchard Oriole**)

**Scarlet Tanager** Larry, burry, worry, hurry (2 note phrasing, repeated 4-5 times; 'chip-burr' call) compare with **Summer Tanager**

**Indigo Bunting** paired phrases: Fire fire where where here here there there – learn chip notes also

## Priority woodland species of conservation concern

### LEVEL 1 - HIGHEST CONCERN

**LEVEL 1:** Red-headed Woodpecker,  
Cerulean Warbler, E. Whip-poor-will

**LEVEL 2:** Yellow-billed Cuckoo,  
Chimney Swift, Am. Woodcock,  
Wood Thrush

**LEVEL 3:** N. Flicker, Broad-winged  
Hawk, Kentucky Warbler,  
Prothonotary Warbler, Hooded  
Warbler, Acadian Flycatcher,  
Ovenbird, Red-shouldered Hawk,  
Yellow-throated Warbler

For certain species on this list, BCN's monitoring area represents a core/important breeding area, significant for sustaining the individual species' population; other BOC species listed here are currently rare or casual breeders only

