

# THE MARITIMES MARSH MONITORING PROGRAM

## 2021 FIELD SEASON

After a slower 2020 season, 2021 was bustling with activity! We had an impressive 29 Marsh Monitors surveying 31 marsh routes in all three Maritime provinces! **THANK YOU** to our dedicated Citizen Scientists for collecting this valuable data! We hope that you enjoyed those serene summer sunrises.

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Cover photo: Rebecca Whiteway





# SUMMARY OF THE 2021 SEASON

**29** Marsh Monitors

**31** marsh routes surveyed

**147** points surveyed

**285** bird surveys

**70** habitat surveys

**106** species recorded



Common Gallinule. Photo: Bill Winsor



Cedar Waxwing. Photo: Rebecca Whiteway

## COVID-19 UPDATE

Citizen Science programming is up and running at Birds Canada, as long as regional guidelines are followed. Remember that the rules can change quickly; it's your responsibility to stay updated on your local regulations regarding travel, masking, and distancing before you head out on survey.

Total number of individual

birds: **1,475**

Coldest survey temperature:

**0°C on June 11th**

Warmest survey temperature:

**24°C on June 29th/30th**



American Coot. Photo: Bill Winsor

# 2021 HIGHLIGHTS

## A new MMMP Video

Staff and volunteers were involved in the filming of a new MMMP video! With funding from TD Friends of the Environment Foundation, we captured what it is like to be a Marsh Monitor. A big thank-you to all those involved!



View video here: [birdscanada.org/mmmp](https://birdscanada.org/mmmp)



Yellow Warbler. Photo: Rebecca Whiteway

## Your MMMP data are being used in a scientific paper!

**Title:** Land cover habitat associations of breeding marsh birds and priority waterfowl differ in eastern Canada.

**By:** K. Studholme, L. Tranquilla, L. Berrigan, L. Achenbach, D. Tozer

*Accepted in the scientific journal Avian Conservation and Ecology.*

**Summary:** Birds Canada scientists used MMMP data to investigate why wetland conservation actions seem to be associated with a recent increase in waterfowl (ducks, geese, swans) in North America, but marsh birds (bitterns, rails, grebes) continue to decline.

### THANK YOU

to all MMP volunteers!  
The data you collect improve our understanding of marsh species and ecosystems, and help inform wetland management decisions.

### A few findings:

- There were more waterfowl and marsh birds in wetlands with a controlled water level.
- Marsh birds and waterfowl have different habitat preferences.
  - There is also variability of habitat preferences within both groups.
- Individual species preferences are important when making decisions.
- Protecting bigger networks of marshes with some urban and agriculture nearby would help waterfowl *and* marsh birds.



# SPECIES SPOTLIGHT: PIED-BILLED GREBE

SOURCE: [ALLABOUTBIRDS.ORG](http://ALLABOUTBIRDS.ORG)

Photo: Houston Sullivan



## Scientific Name:

*Podilymbus podiceps*

Did you know that “podilymbus” means “feet at the buttocks”? Their feet are positioned quite far back, a common characteristic of diving birds. This body structure, as well as their lobed feet, help make this species an excellent swimmer.

These small but loud and chunky birds are one of our most frequently recorded primary species for our Marsh Monitoring Program! They are common throughout most of North America and prefer small and quiet marshes and ponds, often with emergent vegetation (such as cattails). They will feed on various prey including crustaceans, amphibians, fish, and insects. They are excellent swimmers, and often hunt by diving underwater.

### The Pied-billed Grebe's superpower

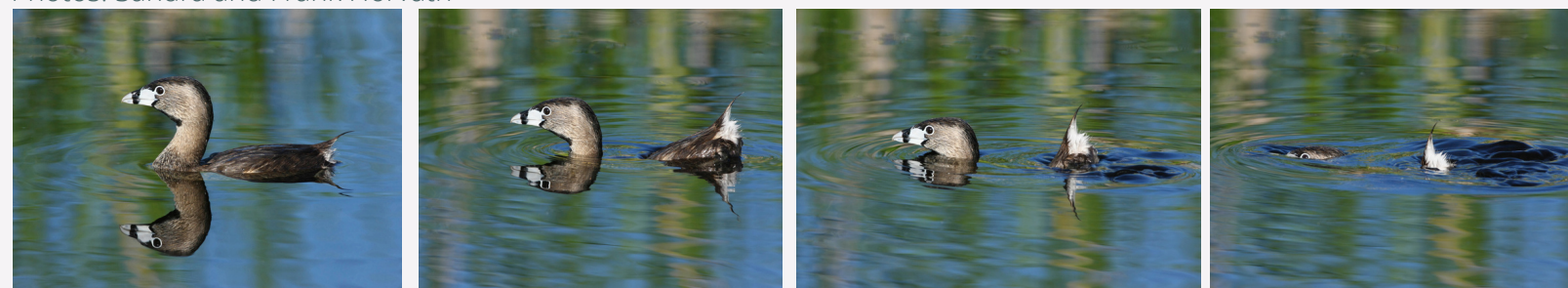
This grebe has excellent control over its **buoyancy**!

Have you ever seen one slowly sink into the water and out of view, or just noticed half of its body out of the water (see photos below)? They can trap and control water under their feathers: they squeeze the water out when they want to become more buoyant.

### Did you know?

Did you know that many species of grebes are known to **eat their feathers**? The feathers seem to act like a sieve that prevents harmful foods from travelling into their intestine. Instead, the trapped food is regurgitated as a pellet, a process that might be aided by those ingested feathers.

Photos: Sandra and Frank Horvath



# BECOME A MARSH MONITOR: YOU CAN HELP SUPPORT THE MARITIMES' RICH WETLAND ECOSYSTEMS!

Do you know your bird ID?  
If not, could you pledge to learn our 12 secretive primary species?

## You could be a Marsh Monitor!

Between late May and mid-July, volunteers take two mornings to survey their marsh routes, record the birds they see and hear, and collect basic information on habitat. See the last page for contact info!

Photo: Allison Manthorne

## ABOUT THE MARITIMES MARSH MONITORING PROGRAM

Many wetland ecosystems are in jeopardy, with increasing pressure from development and resource extraction. Birds Canada leads the Maritimes Marsh Monitoring Program to assess and monitor wetland-associated species and their habitats. Results help to identify conservation and management priorities for wetlands in the Maritimes and beyond. Birds Canada is a partner in the Eastern Habitat Joint Venture ([www.ehjv.ca](http://www.ehjv.ca)), which aims to conserve wetland habitat for the survival of waterfowl and all migratory birds.



# FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO VOLUNTEER, CONTACT:

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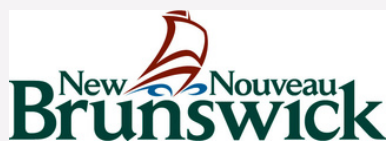
Photo: Kathy Popma

**Birds Canada is the country's only national charitable organization dedicated to bird science and conservation. Birds Canada's mission is to drive action to increase the understanding, appreciation, and conservation of birds in Canada.**

[www.birdscanada.org](http://www.birdscanada.org)



## PARTNERS AND FUNDERS OF 2021



TD Friends of the  
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EHJV  
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Le plan conjoint  
des habitats de l'est