



# MARITIMES BREEDING BIRD ATLAS

The following letter went out to all bird atlas participants, but NHS members who are not taking part could lend their voice to

this effort to raise funds to help make sure that this project continues.

"For the last several months, we have been seeking additional funding to sustain the operation of the Maritimes Breeding Bird Atlas. A significant part of our fundraising effort has been placed in an appeal to the 3 provincial ministers responsible for wildlife in the Maritimes. To help ensure our success with this appeal we need your assistance.

Letters from the voting public can greatly influence which projects receive provincial funding. To show your support for the Atlas, please write to the Minister of Community and Cultural Affairs. Some points you might mention in your letter are: the atlas is a cooperative project involving the efforts of more than 500 volunteers who give generously of their time; the initial funding for the project came from the federal government and it is important for the provinces to contribute as well; this is the first thorough survey of all the bird species of the province, and has the potential to be joined to other atlas databases to form a national database; the atlas data will be useful for a variety of conservation and management strategies (name some); the atlas project is important to you.

The Minister's mailing address is: Hon. Gilbert Clements, Minister of Community and Cultural Affairs, Box 2000, Charlottetown, P.E.I. C1A 7N8. Please send your letter before 15 February (or as soon as possible - ed.) to lend it the most impact. Writing to the Minister is the simplest way for you to generate funding for the atlas.

Sincerely,  
Judith Kennedy, Atlas Coordinator

## Footprints in the snow

There are lots of footprints in the snow around here this time of year, but the strange side-by-side tracks and the four-foot long ovals are from my skis and snowshoes. In an effort to learn more about bird nests and to perhaps aid in work on the breeding bird atlas, I spent a beautiful afternoon looking for nests. Although many of the smaller nests don't survive the weight of heavy, wet snow or the 100 km/hr winds, they are surprisingly easy to find. Nests in alders, pin cherry trees and tamaracks stand out when there are no leaves or needles to obstruct the view. It also gives a good opportunity to take a close look at what the nests are made of, how they are put together, and where in the tree or shrub are they positioned.

As I was tromping around in the woods or in overgrown fields, it occurred to me that this would be a great learning experience for children as well as adults. Wouldn't it be fun to find out exactly what type of bird blends yellow birch bark, plant fibers and spider silk into a work of art and hangs it from the fork of an alder? Wouldn't it be nice to go back to that hole in the poplar and see what type of woodpecker will call it home?

If you have any suggestions for activities that involve children in any aspect of natural history, please let me know and we can run some of the ideas in future newsletters.

