

# Birds in Winter National Atlas

## Atlas national des oiseaux de France en hiver

- This survey is about "birds in winter" and not wintering birds... This means that you don't have to bother with telling if a bird is wintering or not. The period for collecting data and going in the field is from December 1st until January 31st. All the species seen over this period of time should be noted down, even the rarest and even late migrating birds.
- The survey is running over 3 winters : 2010-2011 ; 2011-2012 and 2012-2013.
- The survey is organized through a national grid of 10x10 km squares.
- The methodology includes a qualitative and a quantitative part. Each volunteer involved in the survey can choose to take part to one of them or both.
- The first goal is to list as many species as possible on each square : this is the **qualitative part** of the survey. There is no methodology to achieve this. Every opportunity to go in the field is good to look for new bird species and add them to the list (no particular times in the day or suitable meteorological conditions). This list can be completed over the three winters, i.e. until January 2013.
- The second goal is to count birds following a specific methodology : this is the **quantitative part** of the survey.

This part needs good ornithology skills. Each 10x10 km square is divided following a grid of 2x2 km squares (see the French written methodology in attached file). This means that you have a central 2x2 km square. If this central square is representative of the landscape and habitats of the 10x10 km square, you can choose it. If not, then select one of the 8 peripheral 2x2 km squares which is the best to you. The central square can also be abandoned if the following methodology cannot be carried out.

When you have chosen the 2x2 km square on which you are going to count birds, then you have to determine a 2 - 4 km long walk inside this square. This method is called "transect" and let's call this walk a transect. Your transect should be prepared in advance on the map to take advantage of existing footpaths. Then the method consists in walking on this transect just twice during the winter months, i.e. once in December and once in the following January month (you cannot undertake a transect in December 2010 and finish it in January 2012 for example). Just stop to write down your sightings, not to look for birds (the walking speed should be ideally 2 km/hour). When you go walking on this transect, note down every bird seen on the specific field form. Don't use your bins to look for birds but simply to help with identification if necessary. Every bird seen should be classified in one of the 4 categories corresponding to the 4 columns of the field form (< 50 m ; 50 - 100 m ; > 100 m ; in flight). You can of course estimate the big groups (accurate counting is not essential) and you should also note down the unidentified birds. The transect is done in one direction (do not count birds on return walk) and can be either a loop or a single linear tract. A transect is not done every winter, i.e. if you achieve one transect in December 2010 and January 2011, you will not have to do it again in the next winters. You can then choose another 10x10 km square and undertake the transect inside it.

When back home, you finally have to describe the habitats on your transect. This is the first part of the field form. There are 8 habitat categories for which a translation is given here :

- A. Forest (trees height > 5 m)
- B. Bush (shrubby, moorlands, scrubland or young forest)
- C. Natural grassland, short grassland on calcareous land, sometimes grazed by sheep
- D1. Intensive agricultural lands : cereal crops with no or very few hedges locales)
- D2. Extensive agricultural lands : hedged farmlands with cattle locales)
- E. Urban lands (village, town, farm)
- F. Aquatic areas (ponds, rivers)
- G. Rocky areas (continental or seaside)

This description is made by dividing your transect into parts with different habitats. For example: the first 200 m are in the middle of cereal crops, then write down 200 m of habitat D1. If you have 100 m of forest on one side of the transect and cereal crops on the other side, then you should write down : 50 m of habitat A and 50 m of habitat D1. This is the way to achieve this description. Don't hesitate to ask any question if necessary.

### **About the online database :**

If you are a user of LPO Vienne online database (<http://vienne.lpo.fr>), you can then enter your sightings concerning the qualitative part of the survey (i.e. any bird sighting over the December - January period). The results analysis will take into account these data. If you take part to the quantitative part of the survey, then you will have to send us back the completed paper form. In December 2011, a specific tool will be available on the website, specifically for the 'Birds in Winter' national survey. A real-time update map of Vienne will allow you to follow the way data are collected on this survey.

### **If you want to take part :**

Just ask for a free square in the part of Vienne you are interested in. We will send you the map and the necessary forms. The survey coordinator for Vienne is François LECOMTE ([fran.lecomte@free.fr](mailto:fran.lecomte@free.fr)) so it's better to write to him directly. For English written questions, write to Thomas WILLIAMSON ([thomas.williamson@lpo.fr](mailto:thomas.williamson@lpo.fr)).

Please, do not hesitate to come and ask us if you need help.

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**Saisissez vos obs' en ligne !**



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