Vermont Forest Bird Monitoring Program

Data Entry Instructions

The recommended internet browsers for working with the online database are Chrome, Firefox or Safari. Internet Explorer is not recommended.

Observers who were registered in the “old” USGS database will have an account in the new database, but will likely need to reset their password (see “Lost/Reset Password” below).

Logging in


2. Enter your e-mail address when prompted and click “Enter”.

3. On the next screen, enter your password and click “Login”.

Lost/Reset Password

1. If you don’t know your password or want to change it, click “Forgot your password?”.

2. An e-mail will be sent to you with a link to reset your password. The link will take you to a “New Password” page where you need to enter a new password twice and then click “Save”. Once you save your new password you should follow the steps above for “Logging In”.

New Account


2. Enter your e-mail address when prompted and click “Enter”.
3. If no account was found, click on the link to register for an account.

4. You’ll be taken to a registration form with 7 parts. Steps 1 and 2 should be self-explanatory. For Step 3, you can enter “Vermont Center for Ecostudies” for the Organization, with the following address: PO Box 420, Norwich, VT, 05055. The phone number is 802-649-1431.

5. For Step 4, select “Default” from the options. For Step 5, type “VTFBMP”. For Step 7, type the numbers in the top of the “ReCaptcha” box into the text box. If you cannot read the numbers clearly, click the “Get a new challenge” button, which is the red button with two arrows in a circle. Once the form is completed, click “register”.
6. You will receive an e-mail with a link. Clicking on the link in the e-mail will bring up a registration confirmation screen. The project leader will receive an e-mail asking him or her to approve your request for joining the project.

![Thank you for confirming your registration](image)

7. You will not be able to log in to enter data until the approval process is completed.

**Enter Observation Data**

IMPORTANT: Plan to enter all of your data in one sitting. Data are cached to your internet browser during data entry, and not saved to the database until all data for a survey are entered and pass basic quality control checks. If you do have to take a break, your data will likely be saved on your computer and you should be able to start where you left off, but this is not guaranteed (it will depend on your local computer settings). If you need to resume data entry after an interruption, restart your process at Step 1, using the same internet browser (e.g., Chrome). When you get to Step 4 you should see your previously entered data.

**NOTE:** We can now enter squirrel observations directly into the database along with birds using the following codes: CHIP (chipmunk), EGSQ (eastern grey squirrel), and RESQ (red squirrel).

1. After logging in, you will see a “Welcome” screen with projects you have access to as well as actions you can take. Make sure the project highlighted is (“VTFBMP – Vermont Center for Ecostudies Forest Bird Monitoring Program”) and click on “Point Count Events and Secretive Marshbird Surveys”.
2. Choose your site from the list of routes. The list is alphabetized by site name. Note that the figure below only shows the top of the list of routes.

![Point Count Transects or Routes](image)

3. The next screen allows you to create a new visit (enter data) or review previous visits to the route. To get to the data entry screen, first verify the location at the top of the screen, then click “Start”. The observation protocol (“3_5_10m50M+”) and site condition protocol (“Landbird_Weather”) should be set by default. **Note:** if you got interrupted during data entry and need to resume where you left off, or are interested in reviewing old data for the route (including viewing a list of species detected during a given survey), click on the date of the survey in the “Review/edit an existing visit” section.

![Visits](image)

4. You will be taken to a “New Visit” screen. Fill out the “General” section at the top with the date of the survey and visit number, and verify that the correct observer name is selected (the database will default to the person entering the data). The date can be entered in a variety of formats and will convert to the standardized format used by the database. The visit number should be “1” for the first visit of the year, or “2” for the second.
5. Next, fill out the “Site Conditions” section (temperature, sky code, wind direction, and wind speed). The database cannot handle alphabetical wind direction codes, so convert your codes as follows: 0 = No Wind, 1 = N, 2 = NE, 3 = E, 4 = SE, 5 = S, 6 = SW, 7 = W, 8 = NW, 9 = Not Recorded.

6. The next section is “Points Surveyed”. For each point that was surveyed, place a check in the box to the left of the point name. Then provide the starting time for each count. If any of the point counts had NO birds detected, click in the circle next to “no” in the “Detections?” column. Finally, add any notes about the point count (e.g., comments about noise, or other unusual events). The image below shows the “Points Surveyed” section filled out for a partial survey of the first four points on a route, where the fourth point had no bird detections.

7. Before entering observations, verify any species codes on your coding sheet that you are unsure about. The database will not check your species codes for errors until you complete data entry, and data entry errors that accidentally produce a valid code (for an unintended species) will not be detected. For example, the correct Yellow Warbler code is YEWA, not YWAR, and gray squirrel is EGSQ. To verify species codes, click on “Search the species database” in the “Observations” section.
8. A new tab should open in your browser; begin typing a code, common name, or scientific name in the “Search for:” box to check your codes.

9. Once you are confident that your species codes are correct, enter data in the “Observations” section. The columns on the online form will match your data coding sheet, except that the online form has columns for “Breeding” (not used by this project, but available to document signs of breeding) and “Notes”. Clicking “i” next to a column heading will provide a list of valid codes, and the “Quick Tips” link at the top of the Observations section has useful information about data entry. The data entry form will automatically convert entries to all caps, and you can use “Enter” to go to a new line, the up or down arrows to move vertically, and Tab and Shift-Tab to move right and left. Note: If you did not record the time of detection of a species, select “NR” for the Time Bin.

10. You will need to click on “+20 rows” at the bottom-left of the data entry screen for each additional batch of 20 rows. Once all data rows are entered, review the data for errors and correct any mistakes you see. Pay particular attention to the species codes. The database will allow ANY 4-letter combination during data entry, and it will not catch mistakes that produce a 4-letter code for a different species than the one observed.

11. Once you are comfortable with the data accuracy, click “Save to database”. The database will perform a number of data checks.
12. If an error message appears on the screen, review the data and correct the error. The most common errors are invalid species codes and invalid detection cues. Note that you can sort by species code by clicking the “Species” label, to facilitate locating problem codes. All other fields can also be sorted. Don’t forget to correct your coding sheet as well if you used an incorrect species code.

13. If the data were saved successfully, you will see a message after clicking “Save to database”. You can close the message by clicking the “X” to the far right of the message. You will be taken to the “Review or Edit Visit” screen for proofing your data.

Proof Observation and Site Data

1. The next screen is long and contains the data you entered as well as a list of species detected. Clicking a link in the “Sections” portion will jump to that section of the “Review or Edit Visit” screen (you can also just scroll down). You will see a box that says “Proofing Completed”. **DO NOT** click this box until the data have been reviewed according to the procedures below.

2. Begin by clicking the “Overview” link or scrolling to the Overview section. Verify the site (“Transect” in the database), Date, and Visit. These data cannot be changed; if there is an error contact the Project Manager for assistance.
3. Scroll down to the “Points Surveyed” section. Verify that all your points are listed, and that the Start Time for each point and any notes related to each point count are correct. If you need to edit a Start Time or Note, just double-click in the field and make your change. This section also displays the number of individuals detected at each point (“Total Count at Point”).

4. Scroll down to the “Site Conditions” section and verify that the information is correct.

5. Scroll down to the “Species List” section, just below the “Observations” section. This section allows you to compare the species code used with the common name of the species. Please review the list carefully to ensure that you did not inadvertently use an incorrect species code. The Occurrence field is currently empty, but it will eventually provide information from eBird to indicate if the species is common, uncommon, rare, or never seen near the point count station and at the same time of year.
6. Once you are confident that your species codes are correct, scroll up to the “Observations” section. Review your data line by line, to ensure that the time, distance category, and detection type are correctly entered. Point and Time cannot be changed, and the “Singing?” column should be ignored. All other data can be corrected by double-clicking in the appropriate field.

**NOTE:** If your data coding sheet has multiple individuals of the same species detected during the same time bin, the database will consolidate the data into one row. For example, if two AMCRs were detected in the >50 distance band and both were heard calling during minutes 5-10, “2C” will be entered in the >50 column and “10” in the Time Bin column. But if one crow was seen while the other was heard, then “1C1I” will be in the >50 column.

7. When you have completed reviewing all of your data, return to the top of the “Review or Edit Visit” screen and click on “Proofing completed”.

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**Excel Table:**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Point</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Species</th>
<th>0 - 50</th>
<th>&gt; 50</th>
<th>NR</th>
<th>Time Bin</th>
<th>Singing?</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>05:34</td>
<td>AMCR</td>
<td>2C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>701</td>
<td>05:34</td>
<td>RJIA</td>
<td>1C</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>701</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Review or Edit Visit Screen:**

- Data status is currently RAW. When you have finished proofing and reviewing this visit, click **Proofing completed**.
8. You will be returned to the “Visits” screen, and the Status of your data will now be “CLEAN” instead of “RAW”.

Congratulations! You’ve finished data entry. Please mail your field cards and data coding sheets to VCE.