

# Nighthawks: Dawn and Dusk

Catherine J. Flick

Northwest Ecological Research Institute

White Salmon, WA

[stewart@gorge.net](mailto:stewart@gorge.net)

## Introduction

Common nighthawks (*Chordeiles minor*) are inadequately surveyed by Breeding Bird Surveys (BBS) according to Partners in Flight. Accurate census techniques must be suited for the periods of the day when nighthawk activity is at its peak.

## Objective

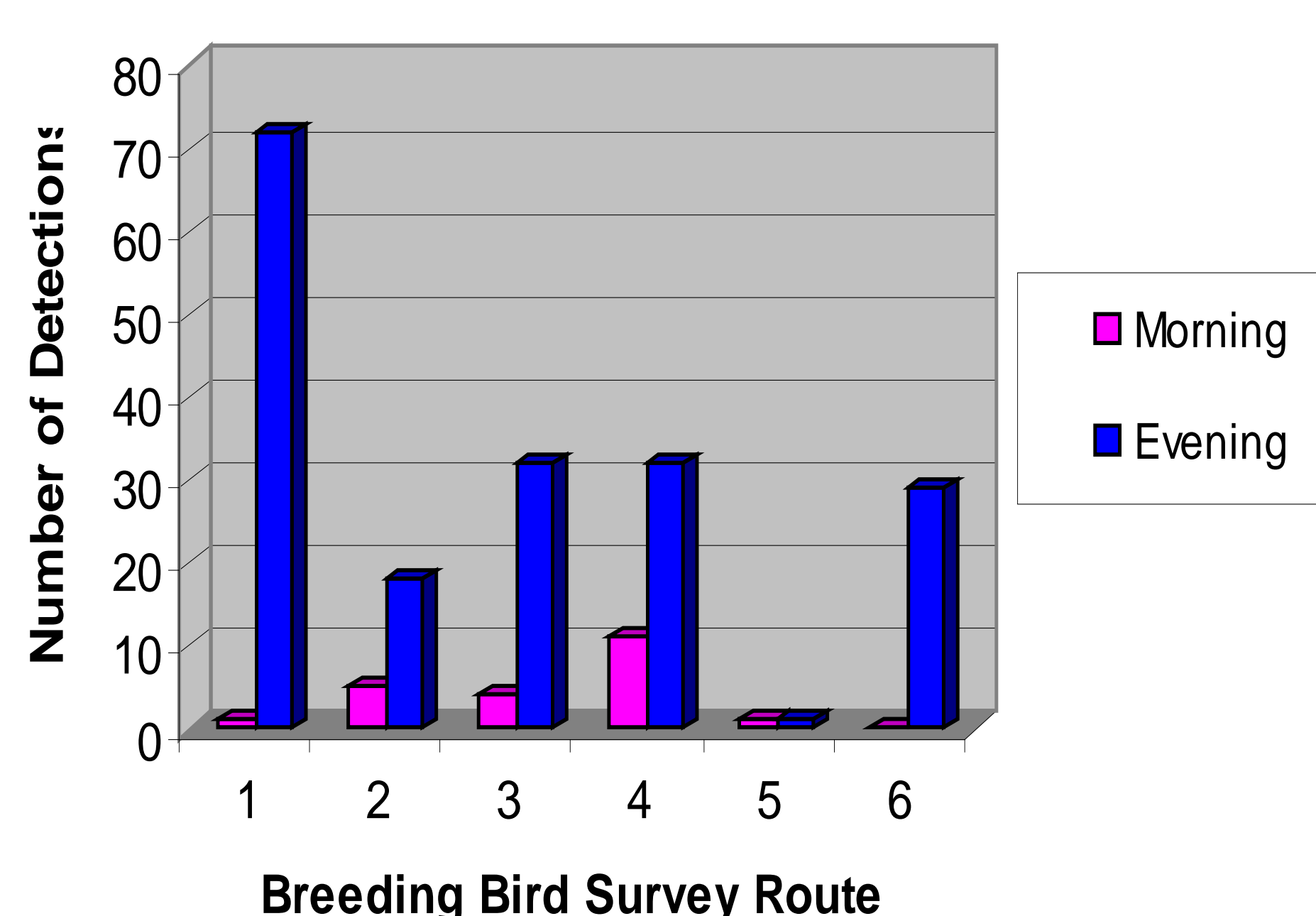
Validate Bender and Brigham's 1998 "Inventory Methods for Nighthawks..." \*\* by comparing morning and evening nighthawk detections on six established BBS routes in south-central WA and north-central OR.

\*\* Darren J. Bender and R. Mark Brigham. 1998. Inventory methods for nighthawks and poorwills (version 2.0). Standards for components of British Columbia's Biodiversity No. 9. 26 pgs

## Methods

- Compare morning and evening nighthawk detections on six BBS routes.
- Morning:** Implement BBS during June using customary protocol and observers. Weather conditions meet protocol.
- Evening:** Adjust BBS protocol for "time of day" using "Inventory Methods for Nighthawks..." guidelines. Conduct surveys during the evenings immediately before or after each morning BBS regardless of weather conditions.
- Survey between 2001-2004**

## Results



- Evening nighthawk detections were higher than morning when weather conditions met Bender and Brigham's protocol guidelines.
- BBS route 5 had consistently similar nighthawk detections during the morning and evening, likely related to limited habitat and timing of survey stop one.
- Evening BBS routes had few or no nighthawk detections when air temperature was near or below Bender and Brigham's protocol specifications.

## Conclusions

- Evening BBS is more productive in detecting nighthawks than morning BBS provided weather guidelines are followed in "Inventory Methods for Nighthawks..."
- Evening detection rates appear most influenced by air temperature.

## Recommendations

- Assure that the highest elevation along a survey route meets the air temperature guideline described in the nighthawk protocol.
- Develop a method to minimize double counting individuals.

Nighthawks are easy to detect by sight or sound.



Photograph by Beck Fenton

## Acknowledgements

**Funding:** Foundation for Northwestern Natural History and Northwest Ecological Research Institute.  
**Technical Support:** Mark Brigham, Charlotte C. Corkran, and Sarah Prince.  
**Breeding Bird Survey Cooperators:** Janet Brown, John Davis, Donna Lusthoff, and Tara Zimmerman.  
**2001-2004 Evening Surveyors and Recorders:** Charlotte C. Corkran, Stewart Fletcher, Diane and Roger Gadway, Michelle Guay, Stuart Johnston, Kathy and Andy Kerr, Beverly A. LaBelle, Donna Lusthoff, Paul Moyer, Shelly Perry, Bets Stover, Bonnie and Dennis White, and Dan Wise.

