How to Report Negative Data through the Vernal Pool & Rare Species (VPRS) Reporting System
To begin, navigate to the Survey Home Page by clicking the “survey” button on the top of your VPRS home page screen.
Survey Home Page

STEP 1: To Start, click here to create a Survey.

To open an existing survey, you may enter an Survey Number and click here to open that report. Alternately, you can highlight a survey and click the Open Report button at the bottom of the page.

For additional information use the Help link located on each page.

A Survey is a structured search for particular species in a specific place using a pre-defined methodology. Some examples of surveys include: research driven surveys, surveys required as part of a MESA Project Review, and survey efforts organized by the NHESP.

Only 100 reports can be displayed in your Survey grid at one time. If you have more than 100 reports, use these buttons to toggle thru them.
Starting your Survey

Option 1: A pre-defined template

STEP 2: This is used when the NHESP has organized a survey effort and has created a template for the surveyors to use when reporting their search effort and findings. You would be informed by a NHESP staff member if you are to use a pre-defined template for your survey.

Option 2: User generated survey

STEP 2: This is used for any other survey conducted including regulatory and research purposes. You can choose which species you are searching for and enter the dates you visited a particular area. You will likely be selecting this option for most Survey efforts.
Templates & Target Groups

Option 1:
The pre-defined template is pre-populated with the Target Groups.

Option 2:
The User generated survey allows users to choose one or more Target Groups. Later you will be able to choose specific species from each group.

Note: The Target Group(s) selected cannot be edited after this step.

Will this survey be using a pre-defined template?
Yes  No

Select the template assigned by the Survey Organizer:

Target Groups

Create New Survey

Target Groups

Animals

Vertebrates

- Birds
- Mammals
- Reptiles
- Amphibians
- Fish

Insects

- Beetles
- Dragonflies/Damselflies
- Flies/Other Insects

Non-Insects

- Snails
- Mussels
- Crustaceans
- Other Invertebrates

Plants

- Vernal Pools

Vernal Pools

- Vernal Pools
**STEP 2 (continued):** The Target Group(s) list is generated from the Groups picked in the previous step. This will be filled in if you choose a pre-defined template.

**Note:** Target Group(s) are not editable once you reach this step, whether using a pre-defined template or not.

**STEP 3:** Survey Name and Survey Description can be entered to give the NHESP some basic information about your survey. This will be filled in and not editable if you choose a pre-defined template.
The idea behind the Survey form is to collect negative as well as positive data. A Search Area defines where the search effort was focused. Later (under the Visit Methodologies Tab), you will be asked for information about the amount of time spent searching an area and whether anything was observed.

STEP 4: Click “New Area” to define areas searched by mapping a polygon.
Mapping Tools and Features:
Base Map Options

There are 3 base map options and one data layer available on the top right of your map. These can be turned on and off to help you most accurately navigate to and map your Search Area. Only one base map can be displayed at a time. The Potential Vernal Pool layer can be used with any map layer and turned on once zoomed in to a scale of 1:36,112.

Note: Not all map layers are available at all scales. If a map doesn’t load, try another layer or zoom to a different scale.
Mapping Tools and Features: Panning and Zooming

Mouse over the map to display the pan tool seen here which you can use to navigate around the map.

You can click the circle on the scale bar on the left side of the map and it will tell you what scale level you are at. On the scale bar you can click and drag the circle up and down or click the plus (+)/minus (-) buttons to zoom in and out.

In addition to using the scale bar to zoom, you can hold the Shift key on your keyboard then click and drag your mouse over an area of the map to zoom in as demonstrated here.
Search Areas can be mapped as Polygons only. In order to zoom in to the appropriate town select a town name from the drop down.
**STEP 4a:** A survey can have multiple Search Areas and each one can have a list of Property Owners, Directions and a habitat description.

**STEP 4b:** You may also digitize your path to site, as a line only, using the mapping tools provided. Once your path to site has been digitized, it may be zoomed to or edited at any point. After your initial mapping of the path, the Draw Site Path button will display as Edit Site Path and a Path Zoom button will also appear.
Visit Dates

STEP 5: To Add Visit Dates, click the “New Visit” button below the Search Area box.

Multiple visit dates can be added per Search Area.

STEP 6: Once a date of visit has been selected the system prompts you to select the species you were searching for at that area on that day. This can be done by highlighting the appropriate Target Group and clicking the “New Target” button.
STEP 6 continued: For each Target Group and Visit a list of questions will be presented for you to answer. These questions are specific to the group of species and although the questions may be the same or similar across groups they should be answered with the specific Target Group in mind.
STEP 7: To specify your target species, type any portion of the scientific, common or family name and click “Find”. When you have found your target species, highlight it in the grid and click “Select”.

Notice the filter is pre-filtered to “Birds” because that was the Target Group selected on the previous page.

STEP 7a: If the species you wish to report is not contained in the list, use the “Not Found” button on the left panel. The group will be pre-populated with the group you’ve already selected, simply enter the species name in the box provided.

If you are surveying for a suite of species, such as “Marsh Birds”, feel free to type that in to the “Not Found” text box.
STEP 8: Multiple species can be added per group per visit. A Methodology form will be created for each species in order to obtain specific information about the search effort for each species on each day.

Note: The +/- button at the top of the form allows you to expand/collapse the form.
The Methodology form will appear for each species entered on each visit date. The questions are the same across all species, however, the search methods vary depending on the group. If more than one search method was used for a species on the same date we ask that you enter the species twice in the left panel and fill in a form for each methodology used, specifying the amount of time spent using that search method.

Another purpose of the methodology form is to receive information about whether the target species was observed.

**STEP 8:** For negative search efforts, select No.
The Paste function will paste most of the information from the form copied. Once the information is pasted it can be modified as needed. “Search Method” may not copy if you are pasting information into a different target group. Also, the information about whether the species was observed is not copied and should be answered for each species.

If you were searching for several species at the same time you can use the copy/paste feature.

First, fill in a methodology form. Next, click the “Copy” Button on that form. Then select the species you wish to paste the information to (can be from any Group, Search Area, or Visit date). Click Paste Visit in the form you wish the information to paste into.
**Photos/Documents**

**STEP 9:** You may add, edit, or remove photos, audio, and/or documents, with comments, to include in your report. All uploaded files are displayed here.

**STEP 9a:** To attach files to your Survey, click the Add button in the lower right corner. From the pop-up window that appears, click **Select File** and navigate to the file you wish to upload.

**Note:** Maximum file size is 20MB. Acceptable file types include: .jpg, .png, .gif, .doc, .docx, .xls, .xlsx, .pdf, .wav, .mp3. This is applicable for any part of the system where you can upload a file to your report.

**STEP 9b:** Select the file you want to attach, and, when it has finished loading, click **OK**.

**STEP 9c:** The photo will now appear on the Photos/Documents window. You can repeat these steps as necessary to include all files you wish to attach.

**Want to upload a shapefile?** While the VPRS system doesn’t directly support shapefile upload, you can export the attributes of a point shapefile into a .xls or .xlsx format and upload that to your report. The attribute table of your shapefile must contain the Latitude and Longitude coordinates in Decimal Degrees for each shape within your table. If your shapefile does not already contain the Lat/Long information, you can use out-of-the-box ArcMap tools to add and calculate these fields.

If you require assistance with this process please contact us at: ContactVPRSAdmin@state.ma.us.
Closing Your Survey

STEP 10: Once you have finished entering your survey data you can “Close” the survey by clicking the “Close” button at the bottom left of the screen.

By closing your survey you are indicating that you have finished entering data and the NHESP can review the information. The survey, however, is never locked down like the observation forms and, therefore, if you continue this survey in the next season, feel free to Open the survey (the Close button will display as “Open” once clicked) and continue data entry.
Questions or Feedback?

Contact us at:
ContactVPRSAAdmin@state.ma.us