

*This small, recognizable wood-warbler is a common breeder in the Hudson River Valley in mixed and deciduous forests and is one of the first warblers to arrive in the spring.*

## **Conservation Status**

Breeding Bird Survey data indicate a steady decline in Black-and-White Warbler populations in New York since 1966. NYS Breeding Bird Atlas data reflect a decline in distribution, particularly in the southern part of the Hudson River Valley. Partners in Flight lists it as a Species of Regional Concern in Bird Conservation Regions 13 and 30, and as a Species of Regional Stewardship for BCR 14.



## **Identification**

This species is well-named with a black back streaked with white, a black-and-white-striped head, black wings with white wing bars, a white eyebrow, and black legs. The female is slightly different from the male, with buffy flanks and face. It feeds by creeping along branches like a nuthatch and probing bark crevices with its long thin bill. Its song is a series of thin, high-pitched notes similar sounding to a squeaky wheel.

## **Habitat**

This warbler breeds in mature and second-growth deciduous or mixed deciduous-coniferous forests, especially those containing saplings or scrubby trees. It also occupies forested wetlands, regenerating clear-cuts, wooded city parks, cemeteries, and wooded roadsides.

## **Food**

It forages most often by creeping along tree trunks and branches, but also by gleaning insects from foliage. It eats beetles, moths, ants, flies, bugs, spiders, as well as caterpillars and other larvae.

## **Nesting**

The nest is built by the female and is a well-hidden cup made of grasses, dead leaves, bark strips, rootlets, and pine needles lined with fine grasses, rootlets, and hair. It is usually on the ground, often among a pile of dead leaves, against the foot of a tree or shrub, or in cavities in and around stumps, rocks, and logs.

### Threats

- Intense pressure from suburban development that results in forest destruction and fragmentation.
- Degradation of habitat due to overgrazing by white-tailed deer.
- Increase of nest parasitism by Brown-headed Cowbirds due to forest fragmentation.
- Nest predation by Blue Jays, deer mice, Eastern chipmunks, Northern flying squirrels, red squirrels, and raccoons.

### Management Recommendations

- Maintain a minimum size of continuous forest of 750 acres
- Confine forest management practices to the non-breeding season because human activity or disturbance of the understory is not tolerated.
- Maintain a mosaic of even-aged patches through group selection cutting.

**This species summary is adapted from Kricher 1995 and Palis and Cannings 2000.**

### For additional information, use the following references:

Dunn, J. L., and K. L. Garrett. 1997. A Field Guide to Warblers of North America (Peterson Field Guide Series). Houghton Mifflin, Boston, MA.

Kricher, John C. 1995. Black-and-white Warbler (*Mniotilta varia*). In The Birds of North America Online (A. Poole, ed.). Ithaca: Cornell Lab of Ornithology; Retrieved from the Birds of North America Online: <http://bna.birds.cornell.edu/bna/species/158>

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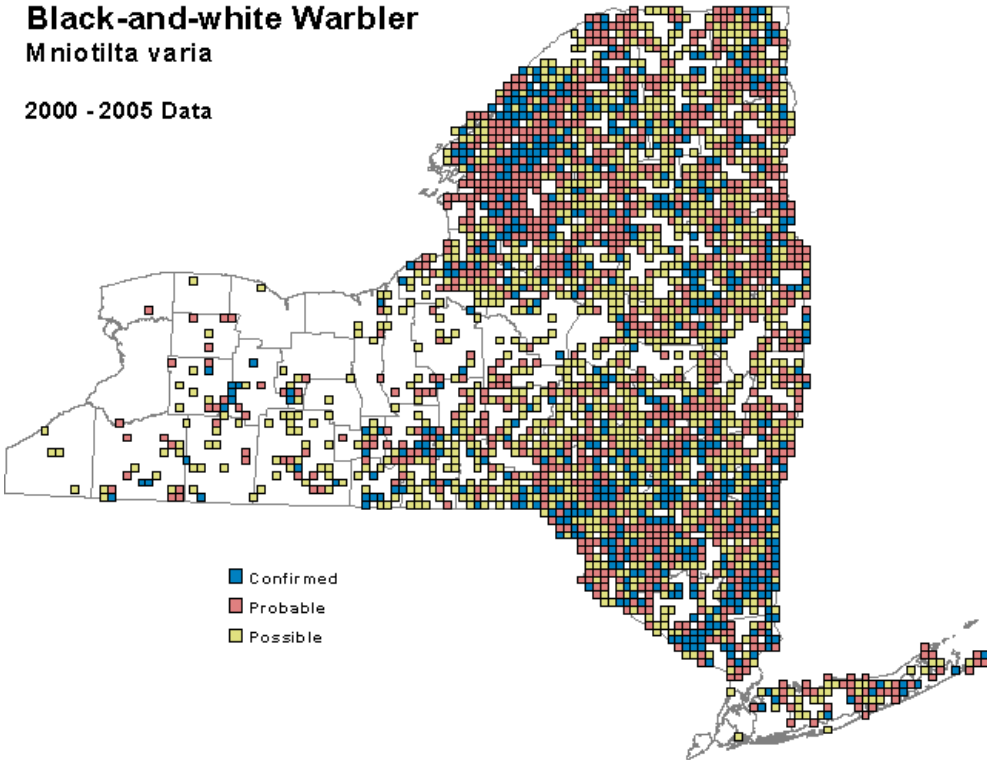
Palis, J. and S. Cannings. 2001. Species Management Abstract for Black-and-White Warbler. Nature Conservancy, Arlington, VA. <http://conserveonline.org/docs/2001/03.baww.doc>.

Swift, B. L., J. S. Larson and R. M. DeGraaf. 1984. Relationship of breeding bird density and diversity to habitat variables in forested wetlands. *Wilson Bulletin* 96:48–59. <http://elibrary.unm.edu/sora/Wilson/v096n01/p0048-p0059.pdf>.

NYS BREEDING BIRD ATLAS COMPARATIVE DATA

**Black-and-white Warbler**  
*Mniotilta varia*

2000 - 2005 Data



**Black-and-white Warbler**  
*Mniotilta varia*

1980 - 1985 Data

