

The Black-throated Blue Warbler is found in forests above 1,000 ft. in the Hudson River Valley, where it is a common, but declining breeder. It can be readily seen in spring and fall migration.

Conservation Status

The Black-throated Blue Warbler is considered a Species of Greatest Conservation Need in New York. Breeding Bird Survey data indicate decreasing populations statewide in the past four decades. NY Breeding Bird Atlas data show a decline in distribution in the Hudson River Valley during the past two decades.



Identification

This wood-warbler is about the size of a Black-capped Chickadee. The adult male has dark blue upperparts with a white wing patch, a black face, throat and sides, and white underparts. The female has greenish-gray upperparts, a small white wing patch, a whitish eyebrow stripe, and buffy underparts. The song is buzzy, with 4-7 syllables, “zur-zur-zur-zur zee,” the last syllable being higher than the others.

Habitat

This species is found in large, relatively continuous tracts of deciduous or mixed deciduous-coniferous forests with a thick understory of shrubs or saplings and a largely closed canopy. Tree species preferred include maples, birches, beech, and other northern hardwoods, as well as eastern hemlock, spruce, and fir. Robbins et al. (1989) lists this species as area-sensitive, occurring mainly in forest tracts greater than 250 acres.

Food

This bird feeds mainly in the understory finding prey on the undersides of leaves. It is insectivorous, feeding on adults and larvae of butterflies and moths, crane flies, spiders, and other arthropods.

Nesting

The nest is usually located in a dense layer of either deciduous or mixed coniferous-deciduous shrubs such as viburnums, laurel, rhododendron, or saplings such as spruce, beech, or maple. It is typically placed in a fork 3-6 feet above the ground and is an open cup made of thin bark strips, weeds, and spider webs.

Threats

- Forest destruction or fragmentation due to suburban and industrial development.
- Loss of understory by maturation of forests, forest-management practices, and over-browsing by white-tailed deer.
- Elimination of prey base from use of insecticides.

Management Recommendations

- Preserve forest tracts over 250 acres in size and minimize edges.
- Actively manage forests to create or maintain a dense understory of shrubs and saplings by selectively thinning to partially open the canopy, or by implementing a logging rotation schedule that creates young second-growth forests.
- Maintain understory by limiting overbrowsing by white-tailed deer through herd culling or other methods.
- Eliminate invasive exotic shrub species to maintain native shrubs for nesting.
- Do not suppress outbreaks of caterpillars that eat leaves.

This species summary is adapted from Holmes et al. 2005.

For more information, see the following references:

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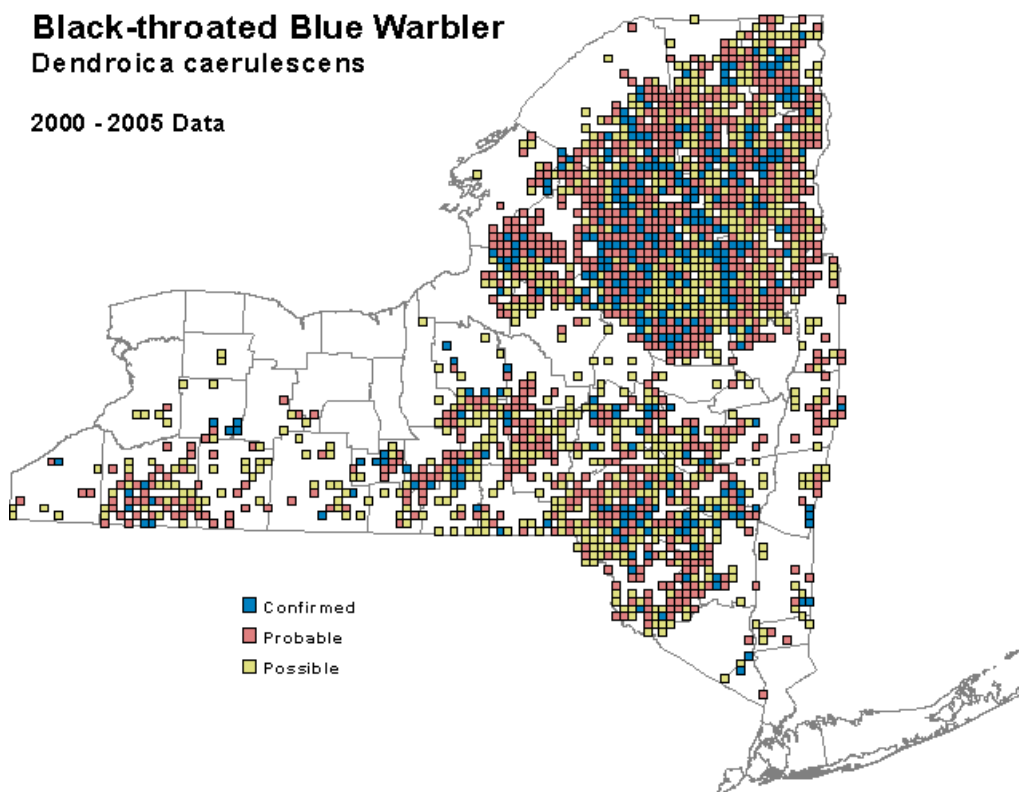
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NYS BREEDING BIRD ATLAS COMPARATIVE DATA

Black-throated Blue Warbler
Dendroica caerulescens

2000 - 2005 Data



Black-throated Blue Warbler
Dendroica caerulescens

1980 - 1985 Data

