

BROAD-WINGED HAWK

(*Buteo platypterus*)

Guidance for Conservation

The Broad-winged Hawk is a common, but declining breeder and common migrant in forests in the Hudson River Valley.

Conservation Status

Breeding Bird Survey data indicate an increasing population of Broad-winged Hawks state-wide, likely due to forest recovery and an increase in stands of older growth in the past four decades. However, NYS Breeding Bird Atlas data show a decline in distribution in the past twenty years in the Hudson River Valley. Partners in Flight lists this species as one of Regional Concern in Bird Conservation Region (BCR) 30 and as of Regional Stewardship in BCR 28.

Identification

This raptor is crow-sized, with short wings and conspicuous broad white-and-black tail bands. In adults, the back and wings are dark brown and the breast has narrow reddish barring. In immature birds, the breast is buffy with varying amounts of dark spotting. Its call is a two-syllable whistle "pee-wee," first note slightly higher in pitch.



Habitat

This species is found in dense mixed forests near water, less frequently in open woodlands. It generally perches under or in the tree canopy and forages at openings, edges, and wet areas. It migrates in flocks, often numbering in the hundreds, along ridges, river valleys, and shorelines.

Food

This bird is primarily a predator of small mammals and amphibians, especially frogs, but will eat reptiles, birds, and various invertebrates. Prey consumption tends to reflect availability. It typically hunts from a perch on a snag or dead limb of a tree, typically at a clearing, along woodland roads, forest edges, or at the margin of seasonal and permanent waters. It is a sit-and-wait predator, spending much time scanning quietly for prey from perches and then swooping on it in a manner described as "catlike." Prey is sometimes taken on the wing; dragonflies and butterflies captured in this manner likely represent a significant portion of the diet during migration.

Nesting

This species nests in continuous deciduous or mixed-deciduous forests near wet areas and forest openings, edges, and woodland roads. The nest is typically placed in the lower third of a moderate- to large-sized tree, in a crotch or on a branch next to the trunk, about 25-40 feet above the ground. It may modify an old crow or squirrel nest, and places fresh greenery in the completed nest.

Threats

- Forest fragmentation due to suburbanization and other human development near lakefront areas.
- Declines in amphibian populations.

Management Recommendations

- Maintain large, continuous forest areas.
- Maintain small clearings and wetlands in the vicinity of nesting areas.

This management summary is adapted from Goodrich et al. 1996 and NatureServe 2008.

For additional information, see the following references:

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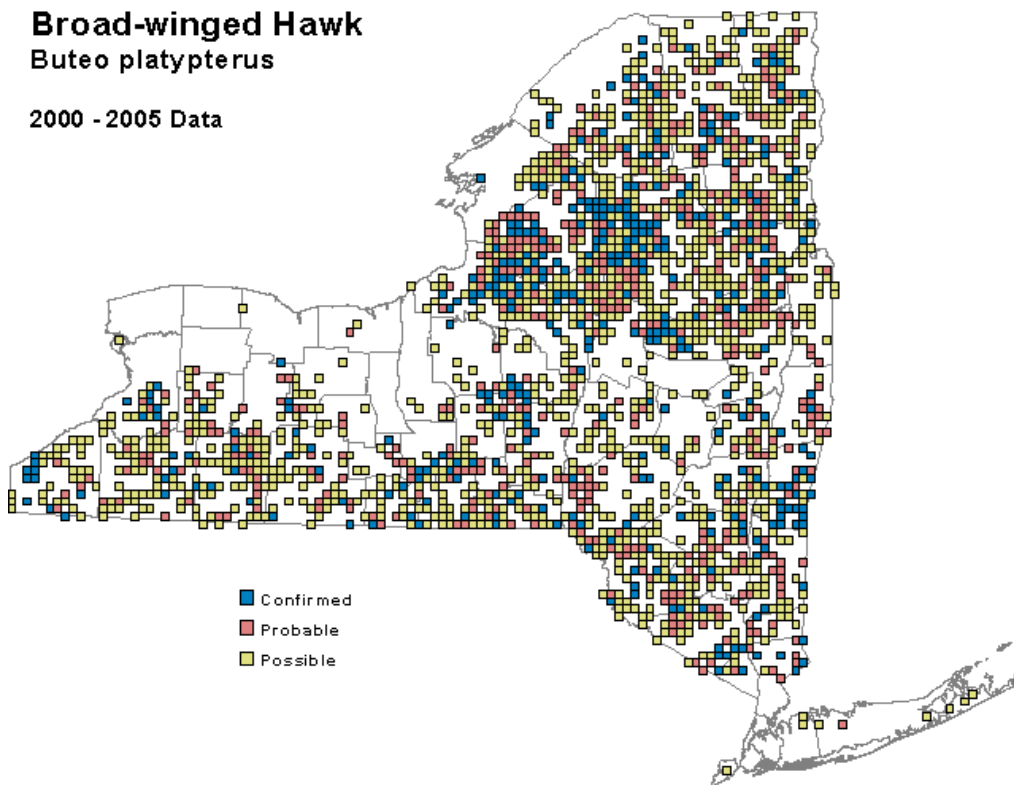
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NYS BREEDING BIRD ATLAS COMPARATIVE DATA

Broad-winged Hawk
Buteo platypterus

2000 - 2005 Data



Broad-winged Hawk
Buteo platypterus

1980 - 1985 Data

