

*The Downy Woodpecker is an abundant year-round resident in the Hudson River Valley.*

## Conservation Status

Partners in Flight considers the Downy Woodpecker a species of Regional Stewardship in Bird Conservation Region 28. Breeding Bird Survey data show a stable population statewide since 1966. NYS Breeding Bird Atlas data indicate that it remains abundant in the Hudson River Valley, where it was found in almost every block.

## Identification

This small woodpecker has a white back and undersides, black wings with white spots that form bars, a black crown and eye line, and a black tail with white spots on the white outer tail feathers. The male has a red patch on the back of the head; the female has no red patch; the immature has a red patch on the forehead. Its voice is a descending whinnying trill. Call is a short, "pik."



## Habitat

This species lives in open deciduous and mixed forest, urban woodlots, orchards, forest edges, farmyards, urban and suburban parks, and residential areas. It is less common in coniferous forests.

## Food

This species is primarily insectivorous, foraging by moving actively over tree limbs and trunks, shrubs, and large weeds to probe into crevices and glean from surfaces. Males tend to forage more on smaller branches, females more on larger branches and trunks of trees. It is readily attracted to backyard bird feeders.

## Nesting

This cavity-nesting bird excavates holes in snags, dead trees, or dead portions of live trees. The nest-hole is excavated by both members of the pair and is lined with wood chips.

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**Threats**

- There are few threats to this ubiquitous woodpecker.

**Management Recommendations**

- Leave dead and dying trees standing. One source suggests 5 snags per acre.
- Information on territory size varies, but a minimum habitat area used in one model was 10 acres.

**This species summary is adapted from Jackson and Ouellet 2002.**

**For additional information, see the following references:**

Jackson, Jerome A. and Henri R. Ouellet. 2002. Downy Woodpecker (*Picoides pubescens*), The Birds of North America Online (A. Poole, Ed.). Ithaca: Cornell Lab of Ornithology; Retrieved from the Birds of North America Online:

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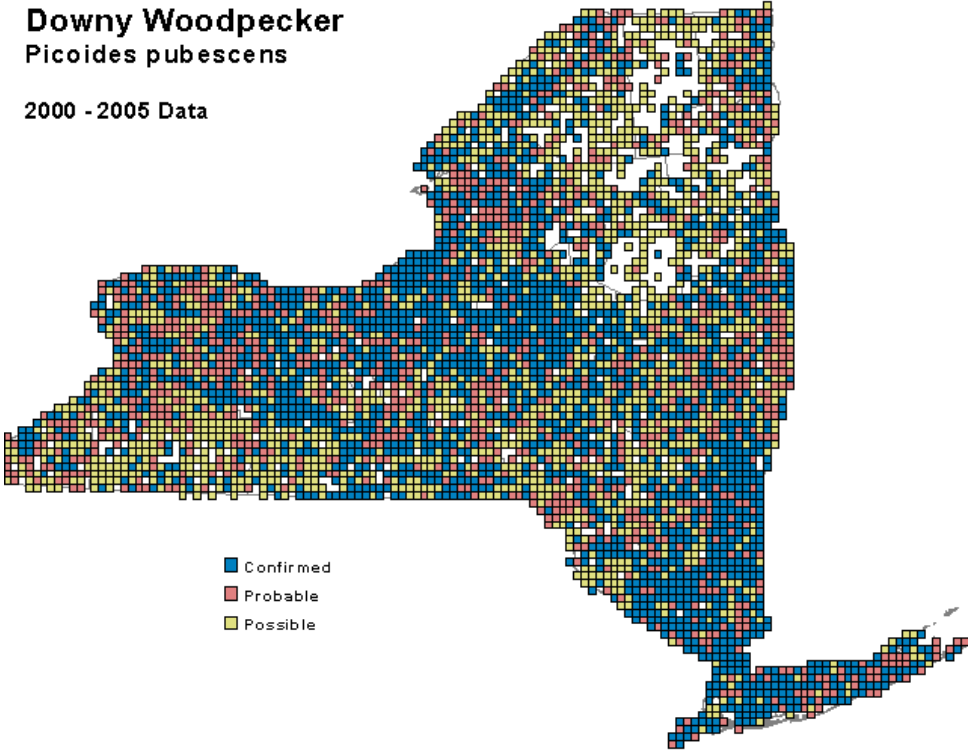
Schroeder, R. L. 1982. Habitat Suitability Index Model: Downy Woodpecker.

U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, DC. <http://www.nwrc.usgs.gov/wdb/pub/hsi/hsi-038.pdf>

## NYS BREEDING BIRD ATLAS COMPARATIVE DATA

### Downy Woodpecker *Picoides pubescens*

2000 - 2005 Data



### Downy Woodpecker *Picoides pubescens*

1980 - 1985 Data

