

*The Louisiana Waterthrush is an uncommon and declining breeder along forested fast-flowing streams in the Hudson River Valley.*

**Conservation Status**

The Louisiana Waterthrush is considered a Species of Greatest Conservation Need in New York. Partners in Flight regard it as a Species of Regional Concern, Continental Stewardship, and Regional Stewardship in Bird Conservation Region 28. Breeding Bird Survey data reflect a significant decline in state populations in the past four decades. NYS Breeding Bird Atlas data show a reduced distribution in the Hudson River Valley over the past twenty years.

**Identification**

This large warbler is about the size of a Tufted Titmouse with brownish upperparts, a white eyebrow, dark eyeline, white underparts with dark streaks on the breast and sides, a white throat and pink legs. It can be easily identified by its habit of moving its tail up and down while walking. It has a loud, penetrating, musical song begins with three or four distinctive shrill, slurred notes followed by a descending warbling twitter.

**Habitat**

This species is found in deciduous and mixed bottomland forests with a thick understory along clear, fast-flowing, gravelly streams. Robbins (1979) considered it to be area-sensitive species, requiring a minimum of 250 acres to sustain a viable breeding population in Maryland. Its territory is linear, running along streams, and was found by Eaton (1958) to be 1,312 feet in length.

**Nesting**

The nest is built by both adults and is a cup made of leaves, bark strips, twigs and moss placed on the ground in a cavity under a steep bank along streams or in upturned roots of a fallen tree over or near water.

**Food**

This bird feeds on terrestrial and aquatic insects and invertebrates such as caterpillars, spiders and mollusks, by gleaning on the ground, on rocks, or in dead leaves in or near shallow water.

**Threats**

- Forest destruction and fragmentation due to suburban and commercial development.
- Actions that result in muddying of water, including use of ATVs.
- Destruction of understory from overbrowsing by white-tailed deer.
- Nest predation by snakes, shrews, red squirrels, Blue Jays, raccoons, and opossums.

**Management Recommendations**

- Preserve forest tracts over 250 acres in size and minimize edges.

- Manage forests to create or maintain a dense understory of shrubs and saplings.
- Maintain understory by limiting overbrowsing by white-tailed deer through herd culling or other methods.

**This species summary is adapted from Eaton 1958, Robbins 1979, and Robinson 1995.**

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

Eaton, S. W. 1958. A life history of the Louisiana Waterthrush. *Wilson Bulletin* 70:211-236.  
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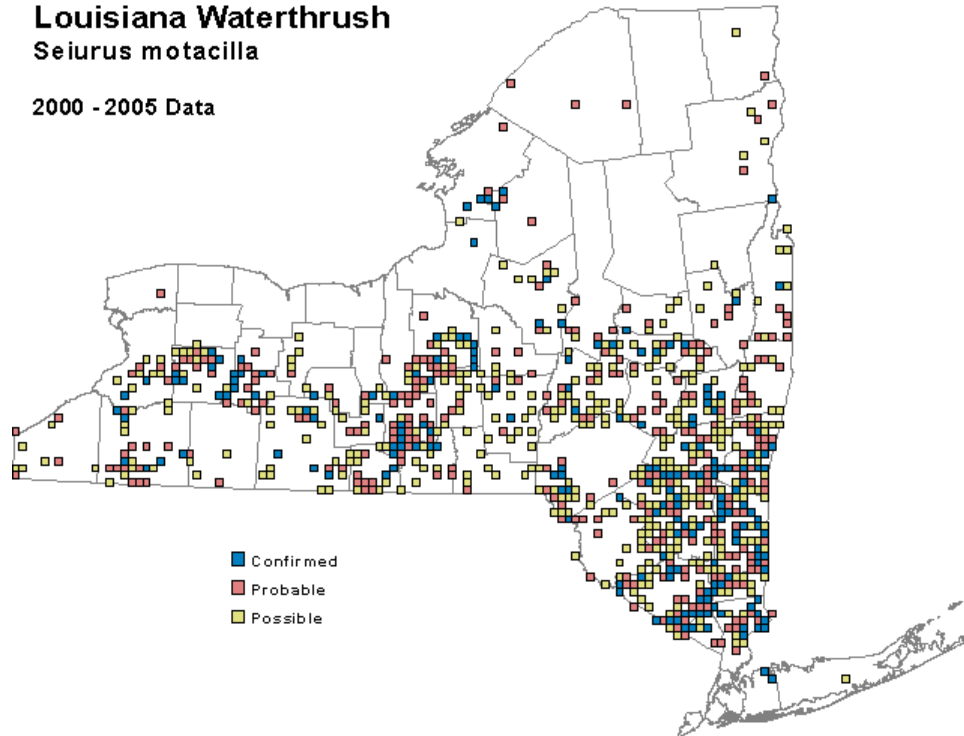
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Robinson, W. Douglas. 1995. Louisiana Waterthrush (*Seiurus motacilla*), *The Birds of North America Online* (A. Poole, ed.). Ithaca: Cornell Lab of Ornithology; Retrieved from the Birds of North America Online: <http://bna.birds.cornell.edu/bnaproxy.birds.cornell.edu/bna/species/151>

## NYS BREEDING BIRD ATLAS COMPARATIVE DATA

### Louisiana Waterthrush *Seiurus motacilla*

2000 - 2005 Data



### Louisiana Waterthrush *Seiurus motacilla*

1980 - 1985 Data

