

RED-SHOULDERED HAWK (*Buteo lineatus*) GUIDANCE FOR CONSERVATION

The Red-shouldered Hawk is an uncommon but increasing resident in forested areas of the Hudson River Valley.

Conservation Status

This hawk is considered a Species of Greatest Conservation Need and listed as a Species of Special Concern in New York. Partners in Flight regard it as Species of Regional Concern in Bird Conservation Regions 13, 28 and 30. NYS Breeding Bird Atlas data show an increase in Red-shouldered Hawk distribution statewide as well as in the Hudson River Valley.



Identification

This raptor is slim, narrow-winged, and long-tailed. The adult is blackish-brown above with extensive black and white checkering, especially apparent on the wings. It has reddish streaking and edging all over the body, but it is most evident on the shoulders. The tail is blackish with three or four narrow white bands. The breast, belly and wing linings are reddish with black streaks. From courtship to the start of incubation, Red-shouldered Hawks scream a loud "kee-yar." During the remainder of the year they are predominantly silent.

Habitat

It is found in a broad array of forests, but favors extensive, mature, upland mixed deciduous-coniferous forest, bottomland hardwood riparian areas, and flooded deciduous swamps. Preferred forest stands most often consist of mature to old-growth canopy trees with variable amounts of understory, although the subcanopy is generally open, giving a park-like appearance. This is an area sensitive species requiring at least 25 acres of continuous forest to meet territorial requirements.

Food

It obtains prey by hunting from perches and scanning the ground below. It eats amphibians, reptiles, small rodents, and shrews, as well as young birds.

Nesting

Nesting almost always occurs near water, such as a swamp, river or pond. The male and female build the nest together. It is usually placed in the crotch of the main trunk of a tree, 20-60 feet high and is made of sticks and twigs. In western New York, one pair was found per 428 acres.

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Threats

- Loss of habitat due to deforestation.
- Loss of habitat due to suburban development.
- Human disturbance from hikers, off-road vehicles, hunters, and horseback riders.

Management Recommendations

- Preserve large tracts of deciduous forest (over 25 acres) in mid-to late-successional states, particularly low, wet woods, streams, lakes or marshes.
- Avoid cutting riparian forests.
- Avoid constructing roads on riparian corridors.
- Encourage the reforestation of blocks of lowland areas with hardwoods.
- Maintain at least 25 acres of mature forest with minimal understory near nest site.
- Minimize disturbance by hikers, hunters, horseback riders and off-road vehicles during the breeding season from mid-March to the end of June.

This management summary is adapted from Crocoll 1994, James 1984 and NYSDEC 2008.

For additional information, see the following references:

Crocoll, S. T. 1994. Red-shouldered Hawk (*Buteo lineatus*). The Birds of North America Online (A. Poole, ed.). Ithaca: Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology; Retrieved from The Birds of North American Online database: http://bna.birds.cornell.edu/BNA/account/Red-shouldered_Hawk/

Crocoll, S. T., and J. W. Parker. 1989. The breeding biology of Broad-winged and Red-shouldered Hawks in western New York. *Journal of Raptor Research* 23:25–139.

James, R. T. 1984. Habitat Management Guidelines for Ontario's Forests: Nesting Accipiers, Buteos and Eagles. Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. <http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca/mnr/forests/forestdoc/guidelines/pdfs/buteos.pdf>.

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New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC). 2008. Red-shouldered Hawk Fact Sheet. <http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7082.html>.

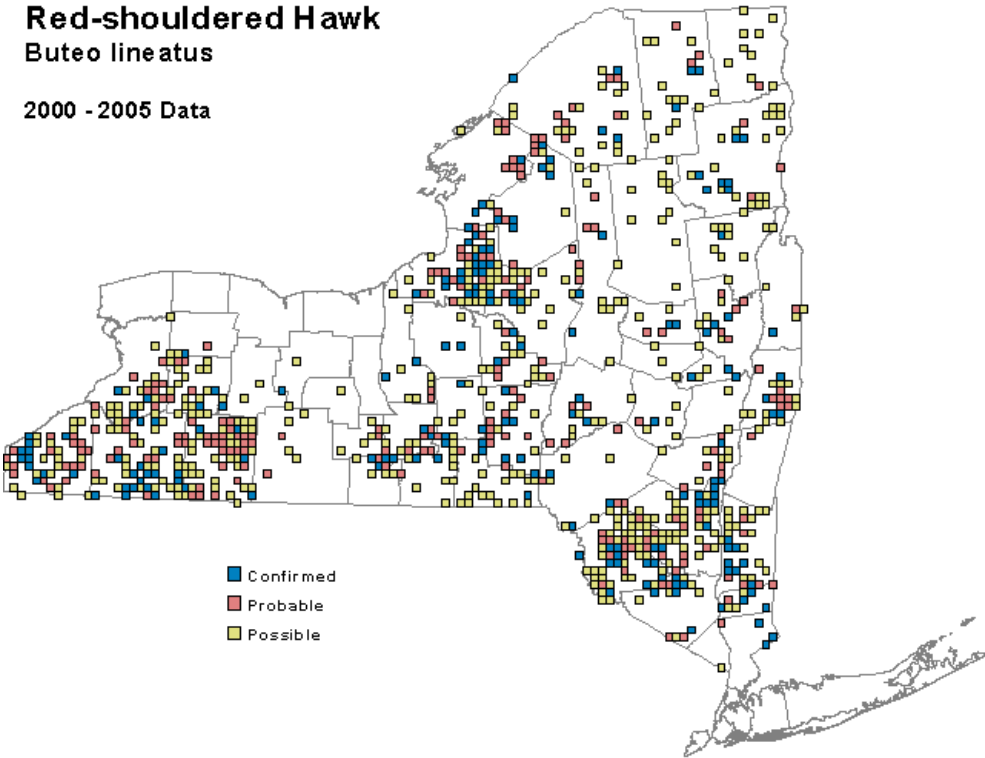
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Speiser, R., Bosakowski, T. 1995. Relationships between habitat selection and productivity of Red-shouldered Hawks in New Jersey and New York. *Journal of Raptor Research* 29:66-67.

NYS BREEDING BIRD ATLAS COMPARATIVE DATA

Red-shouldered Hawk
Buteo lineatus

2000 - 2005 Data



Red-shouldered Hawk
Buteo lineatus

1980 - 1985 Data

