

The Rose-breasted Grosbeak is a common but slightly declining breeder in the Hudson River Valley.

Conservation Status

Breeding Bird Survey data show a moderate decline in populations statewide since 1966. NYS Breeding Bird Atlas data indicate that its range has declined some in the Hudson River Valley, but overall is very common. Partners in Flight lists it as a Species of Regional Concern in Bird Conservation Region (BCR) 30 and Regional Stewardship in BCR13.

Identification

This species is medium-sized, somewhat smaller than a robin. Males and females look completely different except for a large pale conical bill. The male has a black back and hood, black wings with small white patches, and a bright red triangle on its breast. The female is mostly brown on the back, has a buffy belly with brown streaking, and a pale broad eyebrow. The song, given by both sexes, is robin-like, but sweeter and more varied and often interspersed with the grosbeak’s distinctive “chink” call note. This is one of few species reported to sing while sitting on the nest.



Habitat

This bird is considered a generalist and found in a wide variety of habitats, including edges of mature moist deciduous and mixed forests, swamp, marsh and stream borders, wooded swamps, and shrubby borders of ponds or pastures. It also commonly uses well-vegetated suburban areas, including parks, gardens, and orchards. It avoids dry oak woodlands. Most nests are reported from deciduous or mixed woodlands, rarely from coniferous woodlands, with moderate numbers in scrubby areas and other disturbed areas, including gardens. It does not appear to be adversely affected by forest fragmentation.

Food

This species forages mostly in the forest canopy, but also in shrubs and occasionally on the ground. Insects are gleaned from the foliage or, less commonly, caught in the air. It also eats seeds, buds, fleshy fruits, and young leaves. It occasionally forages from the ground, but usually in the canopy at the periphery of foliage and branches where leaf cover is densest, taking invertebrates and/or fruit from the vegetation. It uses bird feeders where available.

Nesting

The nest can be located in a wide variety of habitats, including deciduous, mixed, and coniferous woodlands, overgrown fields and pastures, shrubby roads and rail rights-of-ways, in gardens, parks, and residential areas. Nests are located in both wet areas, such as swamps, bogs, swales and moist woods, and dry upland areas. Nests often are placed in vertical forks of saplings, shrubs, or vines. The

ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEEK

(*Pheucticus ludovicianus*)

Guidance for Conservation

nest is a loose, open cup constructed of coarse sticks, twigs, grasses, weed stems, decayed leaves or straw, and lined with fine twigs, rootlets, or hair.

Threats

- Fragmentation of forest habitat.
- Loss of habitat from development.
- Maturation of forest, which may reduce nesting opportunities.
- Parasitism by Brown-headed Cowbird.

Management Recommendations

- Although thought to be tolerant of fragmented landscapes, this bird would benefit from the protection and restoration of large, unfragmented blocks of structurally complex upland and lowland hardwood forests.
- Promote natural disturbances, such as beaver activities, and forest management practices that promote a variety of cover types and successional stages.
- Wetland shrub communities are important to this species and should be integrated into land management planning.

This management summary is adapted from Wyatt and Francis 2002.

For additional information, see the following references:

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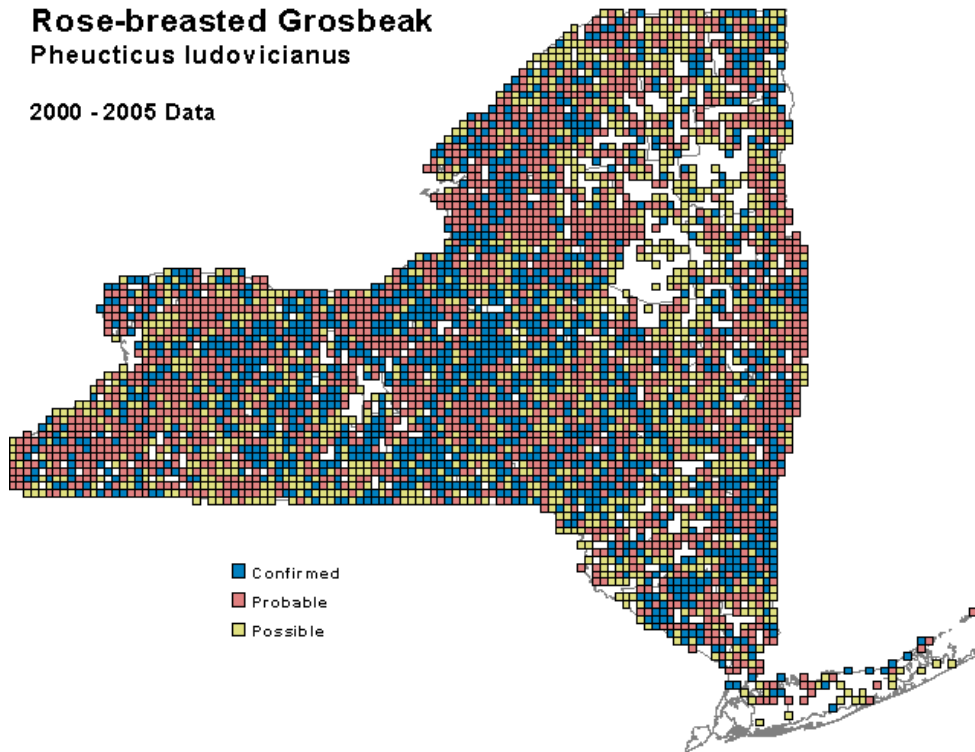
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NYS BREEDING BIRD ATLAS COMPARATIVE DATA

Rose-breasted Grosbeak *Pheucticus ludovicianus*

2000 - 2005 Data



Rose-breasted Grosbeak *Pheucticus ludovicianus*

1980 - 1985 Data

