
The Sharp-shinned Hawk is an uncommon breeder and over-wintering species in the Hudson River Valley, but is relatively common in spring and fall migration.

Conservation Status

This hawk is considered a Species of Greatest Conservation Need and listed as a Species of Special Concern in New York. However, NYS Breeding Bird Atlas data indicate an increasing distribution of these birds throughout the state as well as in the Hudson River Valley.

**Identification**

This woodland raptor is robin- to pigeon-sized. Adults have solid blue-gray upperparts and horizontally-barrred, reddish underparts. They have short, rounded wings and long, square tails with gray and black bars and narrow, white tips, and red eyes. Immature birds are brown above with vertical brown streaking below and yellow eyes.

Habitat

This bird can be found in coniferous, mixed, or deciduous forests with openings. It prefers open woodlands, edges of woods, clearings, hedgerows, or bushy pastures where small birds are found.

Food

This species eats mainly small to medium-sized birds, but occasionally will feed on small mammals and insects. It forages regularly in deciduous or mixed as well as coniferous woods, particularly near more open areas typical of edge habitats. It is also often found near bird feeders where small birds are prevalent.

Nesting

It generally prefers dense, even-aged, young stands of coniferous trees for nesting. A new nest is usually built every year, although the same nesting area may be used for several years. The nest is a broad, flattish platform of sticks or twigs, lined with strips of bark, and is typically about 2 feet wide. It is well hidden, usually in a stand of conifers, against a tree trunk in a crotch or on a major branch, generally 30 to 35 feet above the ground.

Threats

- Habitat fragmentation due to deforestation and development.
- Collisions with plate glass doors and picture windows near bird feeders.

Management Recommendations

- Maintain undisturbed/undeveloped areas of young closed canopy forests.
- Develop and maintain forest openings.
- Avoid cutting or thinning trees within 2 acres of known nest sites.
- Restrict human use of nesting habitats during the breeding season from April through July.

This species summary is adapted from Bildstein and Meyer 2000, James 1984 and NatureServe 2008.

For additional information, see the following references:

Bildstein, Keith L. and Ken Meyer. 2000. Sharp-shinned Hawk (*Accipiter striatus*), 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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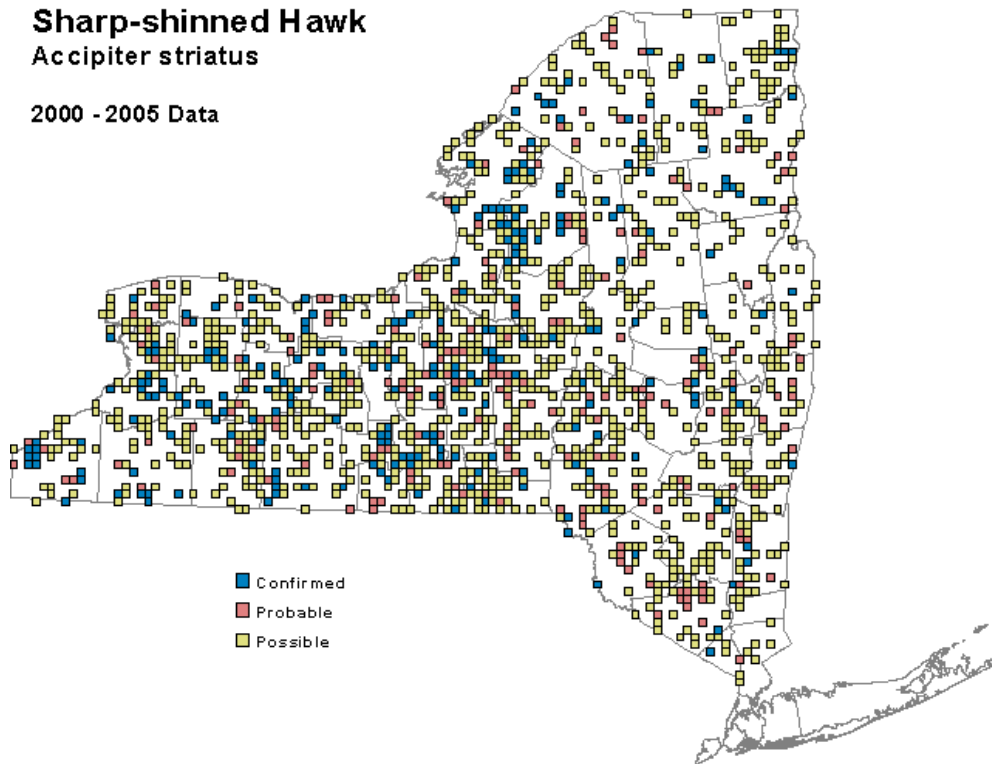
Roth, T.C., S. L. Lima, W. E. Vetter, and T. C. Roth, II. 2005. Survival and causes of mortality in wintering Sharp-shinned Hawks and Cooper's Hawks. *Wilson Bulletin* 117: 237-244.

Smith, D. G., T. Becker, & A. Devine. 2001. The Sharp-shinned Hawk in Connecticut. *Connecticut Warbler* 21: 124-129.

NYS BREEDING BIRD ATLAS COMPARATIVE DATA

Sharp-shinned Hawk *Accipiter striatus*

2000 - 2005 Data



Sharp-shinned Hawk *Accipiter striatus*

1980 - 1985 Data

