
The Bicknell's Thrush breeds in the Catskills High Peaks at elevations above 3,500 ft.

Conservation Status

The Bicknell's Thrush is considered a Species of Greatest Conservation Need and listed as Special Concern in New York. It is listed as a "Red" WatchList species by the National Audubon Society because it has a small population, limited distribution, and faces major threats. Partners in Flight list it as a Species of Continental Concern, Continental Stewardship, and Regional Stewardship in Bird Conservation Region 14. The NY Breeding Bird Atlas data indicate a consistent or slightly growing distribution in the Hudson River Valley during the past two decades.



Identification

This medium-sized thrush (smaller than a robin) has an olive-brown or brown back with a contrasting reddish tint on the wings and tail and a buffy breast with darker brown spots. The face has a brown patch with a whitish eye ring. The part of the lower mandible of the bill nearest the throat is yellow-orange, which helps distinguish it from other thrushes. The song is a series of distinctive, nasal, spiralling phrases that rises at the end and is heard most often at dawn and dusk.

Habitat

This thrush is found at high elevations in dense stands of young to mid-successional balsam fir re-growing from damage by wind, ice, and snow and occasionally in spruce, white birch, mountain ash, and other hardwoods. It can also be found in disturbed areas near ski trails.

Nesting

The nest is built by the female and is a bulky cup constructed mainly of twigs and moss, built on a horizontal branch against the trunk of a small conifer 3-12 feet above the ground.

Food

This bird most often forages on or close to the ground, but may glean foliage or branches of trees. During the breeding season, it eats mainly insects and larvae, as well as beetles, various species of flies, spiders, and earthworms. During migration it consumes fruit.

Threats

- Decline of high-elevation forests, especially red spruce and balsam fir, due to acid rain.
- Decline of balsam-fir forests due to climate change.
- Forest fragmentation from recreational and commercial development, such as construction and activities from ski areas, telecommunications towers, and development of wind-power generation facilities.

Management Recommendations

- Close trails to public uses during the breeding season: May through July.
- Maintain low fir-spruce thickets in 10-25 foot wide bands of gradually increasing height along ski-trail edges to provide nesting and foraging sites.
- Maintain forested “islands” as large as possible between ski trails, minimize width of trails, and maximize habitat connectivity in developed areas to increase suitability for nesting and foraging.

This species summary is adapted from NYSDEC 2000, Rimmer et al. 2001 and Rimmer et al. 2005.

For more information, see the following references:

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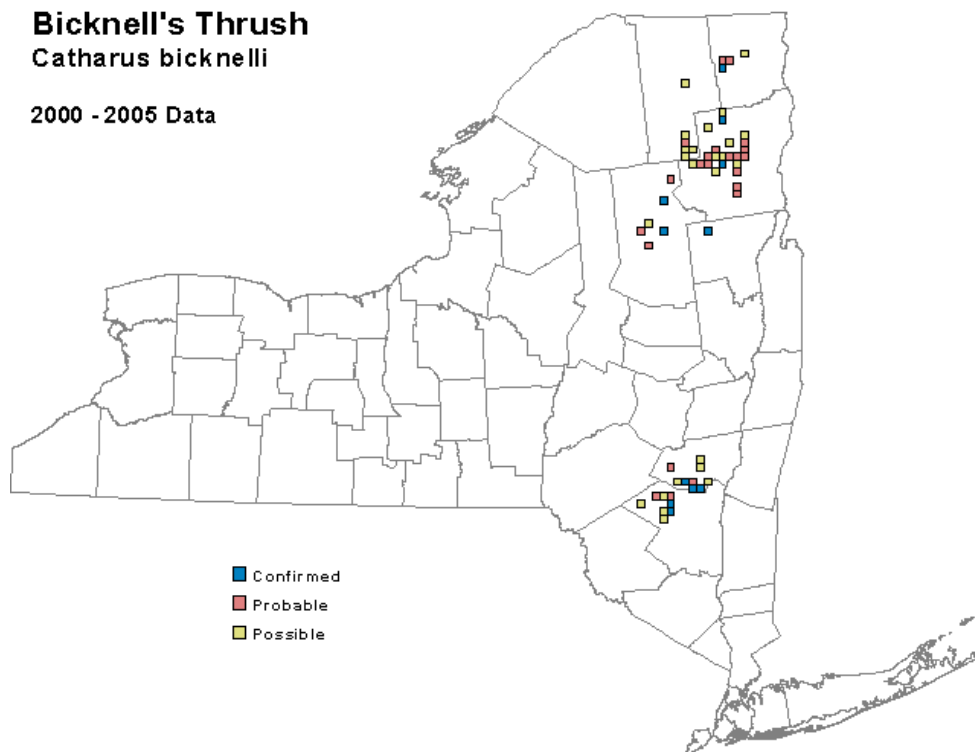
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NYS BREEDING BIRD ATLAS COMPARATIVE DATA

Bicknell's Thrush

Catharus bicknelli

2000 - 2005 Data



Bicknell's Thrush

Catharus minimus

1980 - 1985 Data

