

The Blue-headed Vireo is an increasingly common breeder in higher elevation forests in the Hudson River Valley.

Conservation Status

Partners in Flight regard the Blue-headed Vireo as a Species of Continental Stewardship in Bird Conservation Region 14. Breeding Bird Survey data show a significant increase in populations statewide since 1966. NYS Breeding Bird Atlas data indicate that it has increased in distribution in the Hudson River Valley in the past twenty years.

**Identification**

This chickadee-sized vireo has a blue-gray head with a white chin, throat, and “spectacles.” The back is bright olive, with black wings highlighted with yellow and whitish wing-bars. The tail is black with yellowish-green edges. The underparts are white with bright yellow sides and flanks. It has a short bill with a slightly-hooked upper mandible and dark legs. The sexes look alike. The immature resembles the adult, but is browner. Its song is a series of clear, loud, somewhat robin-like phrases with pauses between each syllable. The phrases are successively rising and falling, as if the bird were asking and answering a question.

Habitat

This species breeds in extensive middle-aged to mature coniferous or mixed closed-canopy forests with understories of saplings and shrubs, as well as in tamarack or spruce swamps. It is found most often in forests above 900 feet, but can occur at lower elevations, particularly at the edges of wetlands and lakes.

Nesting

The nest is a hanging cup built by both adults in a forked twig in a tree or shrub about 6 to 15 feet above the ground. It is made with twigs, grass, small bits of bark, stems, and spider silk. The interior is lined with grass, rootlets, hair, and conifer needles.

Food

The Blue-headed Vireo forages mainly in the lower and middle canopy, gleaning insects from foliage and twigs by moving from perch to perch or flying out and hovering while taking prey from vegetation. It eats a variety of medium to large insects and some spiders.

Threats

- Fragmentation of forests by suburban development.
- Parasitism by Brown-headed Cowbird.
- Damage to coniferous forests by acid rain.

Management Recommendations

- Maintaining core forests with adequate canopy cover.

This species summary is adapted from James 1998.

For more information, see the following references:

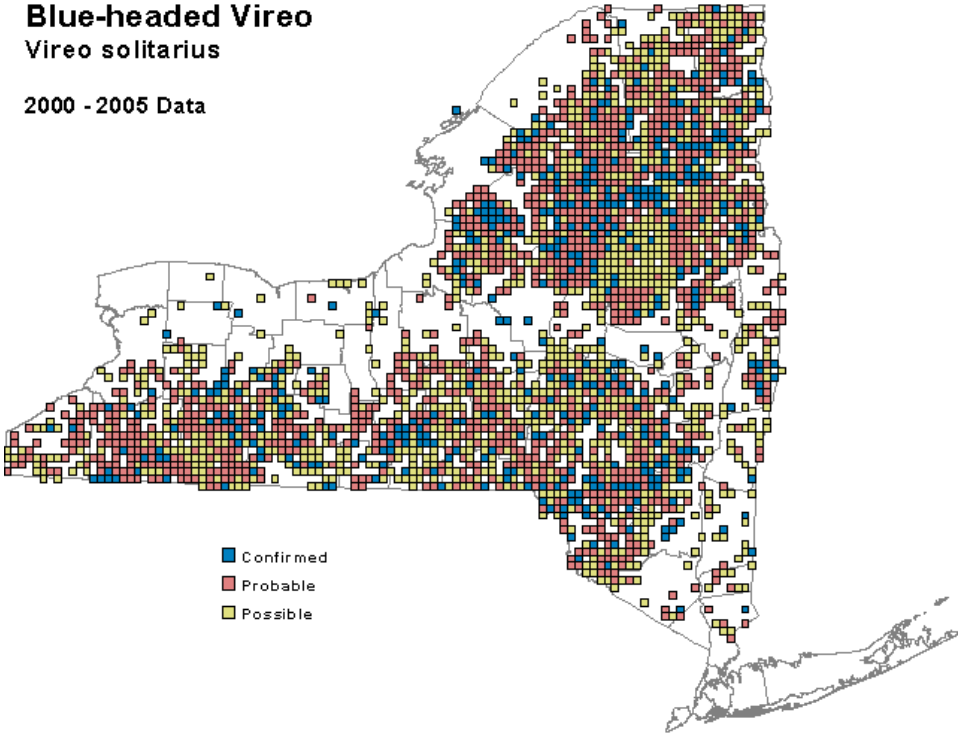
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NYS BREEDING BIRD ATLAS COMPARATIVE DATA

Blue-headed Vireo *Vireo solitarius*

2000 - 2005 Data



Blue-headed Vireo *Vireo solitarius*

1980 - 1985 Data

