

The Eastern Wood-Pewee is a common breeder in forested areas of the Hudson River Valley.

Conservation Status

Partners in Flight regards this species as a Species of Regional Concern in Bird Conservation Regions 13, 28 and 30. Breeding Bird Survey show a significant decline in populations statewide since 1966. Breeding Bird Atlas data indicate some decline in distribution in the Hudson River Valley, but overall it remains very common.

Identification

This small flycatcher is slightly larger than a chickadee with brownish-olive upperparts, pale underparts with a grayish breast and sides, 2 white wing bars, and a bill that is dark above and orange below. The sexes look alike. This bird gets its name from its song, a high slurred “pee-ah-wee.”



Habitat

This flycatcher is found in a wide variety of wooded habitats including deciduous, coniferous, or mixed forests, riparian bottomlands, orchards, woodlots, and parks. It prefers younger forest edges or clearings with an open understory, relatively dense midstory, and closed canopy, although it will use areas with a dense understory if the canopy is open.

Food

This bird sits in an upright position on a dead branch in the canopy or the subcanopy where it preys mainly on flying insects taken while flying out from its perch. It also gleans insects from foliage or on the ground. It feeds in a variety of habitats such as forest clearings, field edges, and wetlands.

Nesting

The nest is built most often in a deciduous tree or sapling either in the forest edge or interior. It is constructed on a horizontal branch, 8-20 ft. above the ground, and is a shallow cup of grass and other plant material covered with lichens and held together with spider silk.

Threats

- Habitat loss due to development.
- Habitat degradation due to over browsing by high populations of white-tailed deer.
- Maturation of forests that results in closed canopies.
- Nest parasitism by Brown-headed Cowbirds.
- Reduction of prey base due to pesticide use.

Management Recommendations

- Maintain large tracts of mixed-aged forest with a closed canopy and limited clear cuts.
- Control populations of white-tailed deer by hunting or other management activities.

This management summary is adapted from McCarty 1996 and Palis and Cannings 2000.

For more information, see the following references:

Hespenheide, H. A. 1971. Flycatcher habitat selection in the eastern deciduous forest. *Auk* 88:61-74. <http://elibrary.unm.edu/sora/Auk/v088n01/p0061-p0074.pdf>.

McCarty, John P. 1996. Eastern Wood-Pewee (*Contopus virens*), *The Birds of North America Online* (A. Poole, ed.). Ithaca: Cornell Lab of Ornithology; Retrieved from the Birds of North America Online: <http://bna.birds.cornell.edu.bnaproxy.birds.cornell.edu/bna/species/245>

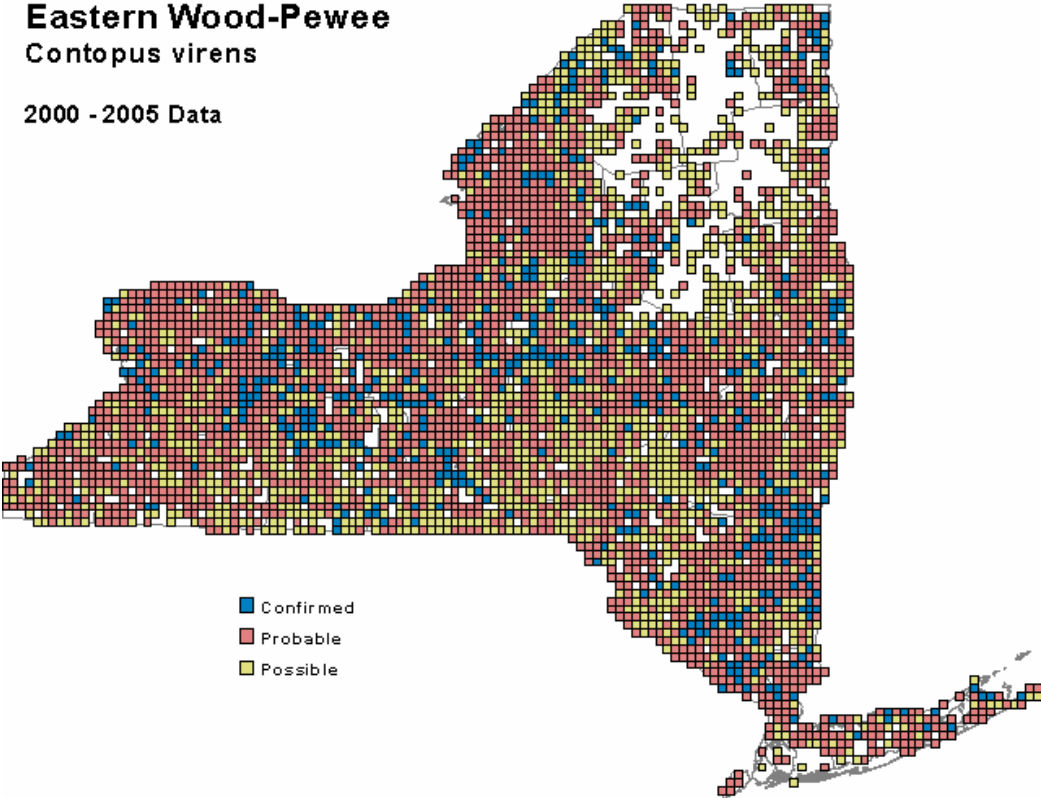
NatureServe. 2008. NatureServe Explorer: an Online Encyclopedia of Life [web application]. Version 7.0. NatureServe, Arlington, VA. <http://www.natureserve.org/explorer>.

Palis, J., and S. Cannings. 2000. Species Management Abstract: Eastern Wood-Pewee. Nature Conservancy, Arlington, VA. <http://conserveonline.org/library/ewpe.doc>

NYS BREEDING BIRD ATLAS COMPARATIVE DATA

Eastern Wood-Pewee
Contopus virens

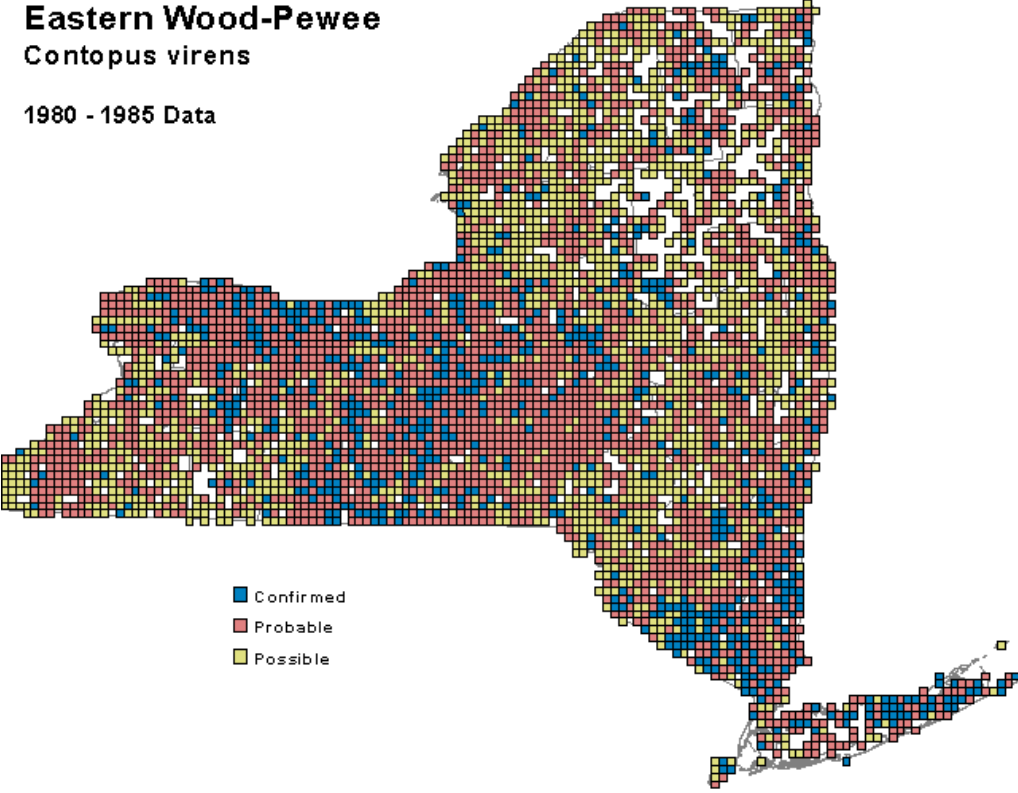
2000 - 2005 Data



- Confirmed
- Probable
- Possible

Eastern Wood-Pewee
Contopus virens

1980 - 1985 Data



- Confirmed
- Probable
- Possible