

*The Indigo Bunting is a common breeding bird in woodland edges and shrubby fields in the Hudson River Valley.*

## Conservation Status

Partners in Flight regard this species as a Species of Continental and Regional Stewardship in Bird Conservation Region 28. Breeding Bird Survey show a relatively stable population statewide since 1966. NYS Breeding Bird Atlas data indicate that its distribution continues to be widespread in the Hudson River Valley.



## Identification

This small bunting, a little larger than a goldfinch, is sexually dimorphic, that is, the male and female look totally different. The male is overall blue with black wings, black legs, and a gray beak. The female is overall pale brown, with brown streaks on the breast, black legs, and a gray beak. The male sings from a high perch a song consisting of a series of paired, whistling, buzzy syllables.

## Habitat

This species is found in a wide variety of early and mid-successional shrubby and weedy habitats, such as old fields, forest edges, open deciduous woodlands, hedgerows, and utility rights-of-way. It needs low vegetation for nesting and higher upright vegetation for song perches. They are also found in brushy woodland edges and clear cuts with partial canopies. They equally prefer damp and dry habitats.

## Nesting

The nest is built by the female in dense cover in the fork of a shrub or sapling, or in brambles or weeds, 5-15 feet above the ground. It is a cup made of dry grass, weed stems, and other plant material.

## Food

This species feeds by gleaning on the ground and in low shrubs and trees for spiders and insects such as caterpillars, bugs, beetles, and grasshoppers. It also eats the seeds of grasses, herbs and berries.

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**Threats**

- Loss of habitat due to succession of old fields to forest.
- Loss of habitat due to suburban development.
- Conversion of old fields into pastures or row crops.
- Parasitism by Brown-headed Cowbird.

**Management Recommendations**

- Maintain shrub habitat near forest that has a woody component with shrubs or young trees less than ten feet tall with scattered open patches of grasses and forbs. Patches of shrub habitat do not have to be large, but between 2-5 acres.

**This management summary is adapted from Payne 2006.**

**For more information, see the following references:**

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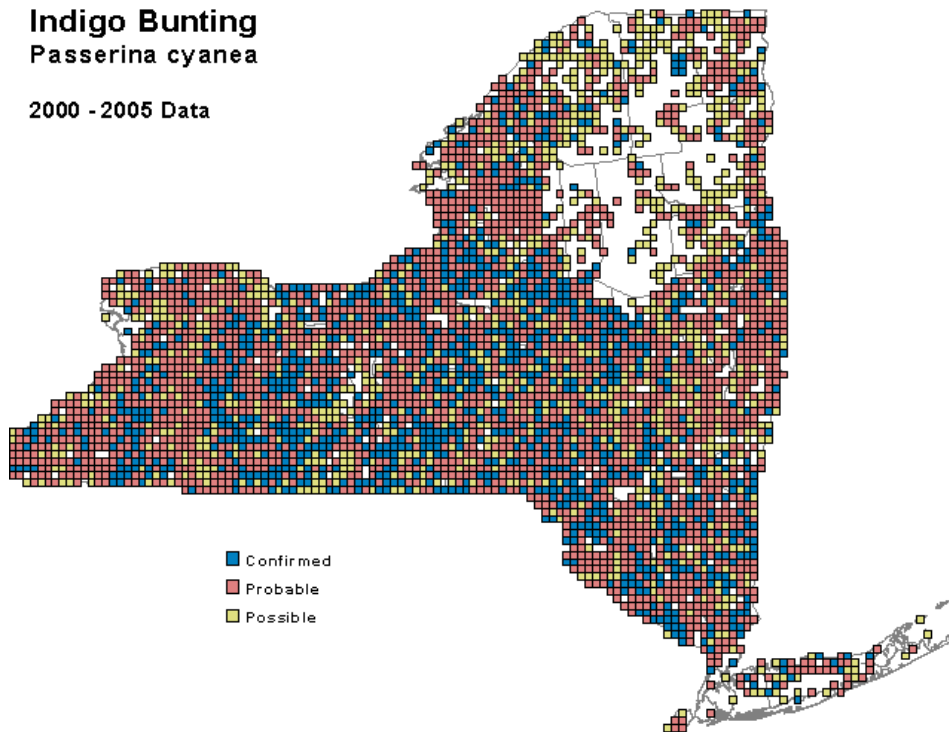
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## NYS BREEDING BIRD ATLAS COMPARATIVE DATA

### Indigo Bunting *Passerina cyanea*

2000 - 2005 Data



### Indigo Bunting *Passerina cyanea*

1980 - 1985 Data

