

*The Prairie Warbler is a declining breeder in the Hudson River Valley in brushy old fields and other early successional habitats as well as in the Albany pine barrens.*

### Conservation Status

Throughout its range, Prairie Warbler populations have declined significantly in the past four decades, which has led to its "Yellow" designation on the Audubon WatchList. Additionally, it is listed as a species of Continental Concern by Partners in Flight in Bird Conservation Regions (BCR) 13, 28, and 30, and as a species of Regional Concern in BCRs 28 and 30. However, Breeding Bird Survey data indicate that its population has increased in New York during the same period, although Breeding Bird Atlas data indicate a reduced distribution in the Hudson River Estuary.



### Identification

This is a small wood warbler of early successional habitats and pitch-pine/oak forests. The adult male has olive-green upperparts with chestnut streaks on the back, a bright yellow throat and underparts with black streaking on the flanks, a yellow face with a black eye line and black malar stripe that separates the yellow below the eye from the yellow on the throat. Females and immatures have the same appearance, but are drabber and lack the chestnut streaks. It often bobs its tail. The song is a distinctive series of 10 or more short, equally spaced, buzzy notes that rise in pitch.

### Habitat

This species is found in abandoned pastures or fields with shrubby growth, pine barrens, burned-over areas, and powerline corridors. Most of these habitats are early successional and are suitable for breeding beginning about 5 years after burning or clearing and continuing for about 10-20 years.

### Nesting

This species nests in low shrubs, saplings, thickets, or fern clumps. The female selects the nest site and builds the nest, which is 1-10 feet above the ground. It is a shaggy cup constructed of plant fibers, leaves, insect or spider egg cases, and other similar materials and is lined with plant down.

### Food

This bird feeds on small, soft-bodied arthropods, mainly insects and spiders, and occasionally fruit and other plants. Arthropods are gleaned from plants, seized on wing, or picked from the ground.

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**Threats**

- Loss of early successional habitat from suburban development.
- Reforestation of old fields and shrublands.
- Destruction of regenerating habitat due to more frequent mowing.
- Predation and parasitism by Brown-headed Cowbirds.
- Predation of eggs and nestlings by snakes, chipmunks, and red squirrels.

**Management Recommendations**

- Actively maintain early successional shrubby vegetation by prescribed burning, mowing or clearcutting.
- Treat portions of large areas on a rotational schedule to provide a mosaic of successional stages.
- Manage landscapes to provide a mosaic of sites.

**This management summary is adapted from NatureServe 2008 and Noland et al. 1999.**

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

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Nolan Jr., V., E. D. Ketterson and C. A. Buerkle. 1999. Prairie Warbler (*Dendroica discolor*), 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/bna/species/455>

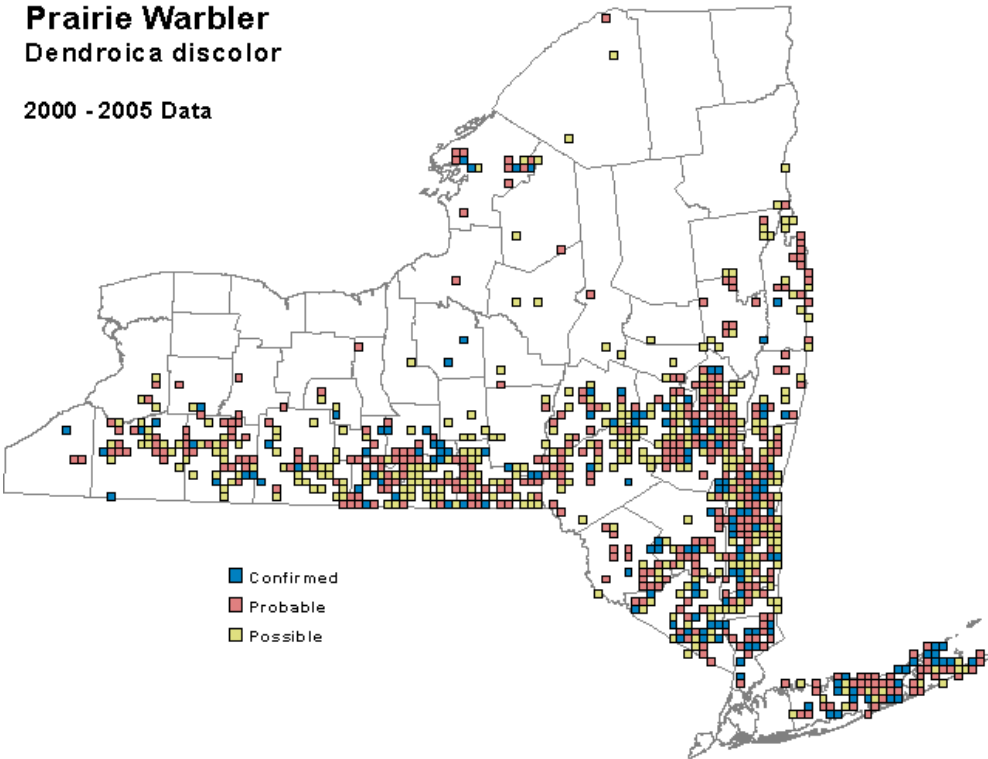
Nolan, V., Jr. 1978. The ecology and behavior of the Prairie Warbler *Dendroica discolor*. *Ornithological Monographs* 26: 1–595.

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**NYS BREEDING BIRD ATLAS COMPARATIVE DATA**

**Prairie Warbler**  
*Dendroica discolor*

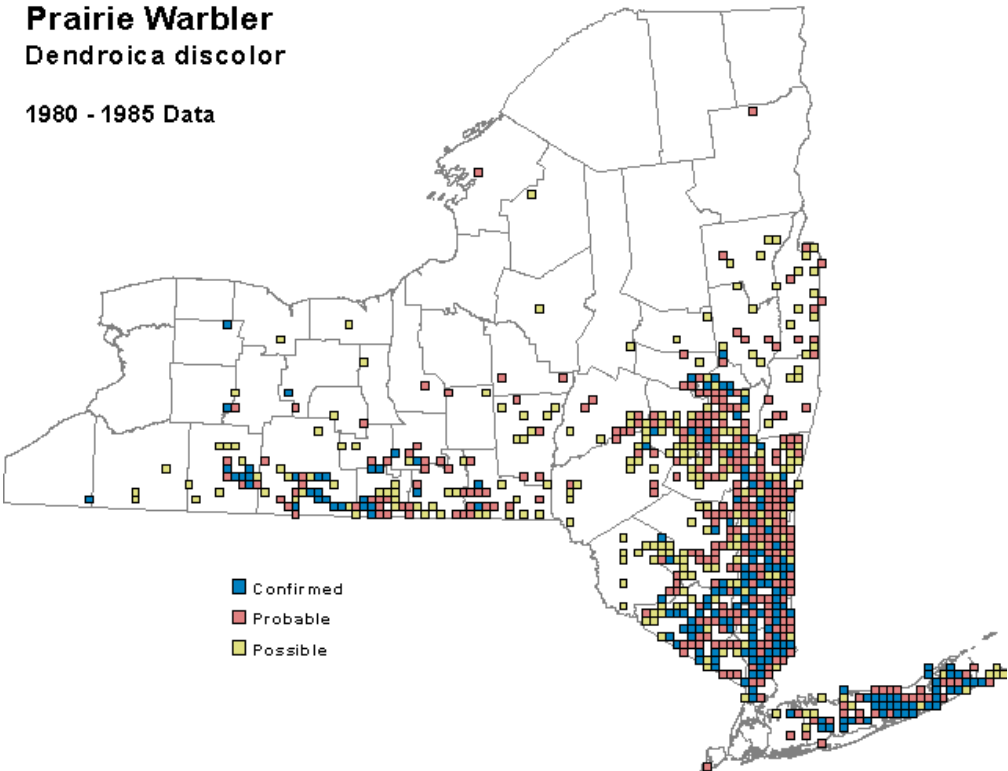
2000 - 2005 Data



- Confirmed
- Probable
- Possible

**Prairie Warbler**  
*Dendroica discolor*

1980 - 1985 Data



- Confirmed
- Probable
- Possible