

Appendix A: Birds

Marsh Wren

Cistothorus palustris

Federal Listing	N/A
State Listing	N/A
Global Rank	G5
State Rank	S3
Regional Status	High



Photo by Pamela Hunt

Justification (Reason for Concern in NH)

Secretive marsh birds like the Marsh Wren have generally been considered conservation priorities because of known losses of wetland habitats, combined with often poor data on species' distribution, abundance, and trend. In the case of the Marsh Wren, repeated Breeding Bird Atlases in the Northeast have consistently documented stable or increasing range occupancy (Cadman et al. 2007, McGowan and Corwin 2008, Renfrew 2013, MassAudubon 2014). The Breeding Bird Survey does a better job of estimating trends for Marsh Wren than other wetland birds, and based on BBS data populations are generally increasing or stable, although most data are from the West and Midwest (Sauer et al. 2014). Data for the Northeast are more equivocal, with declines in some areas, increases in others, and few significant trends. There are no data on trends in New Hampshire, although there is some evidence for local extirpations related to changes in habitat.

Distribution

Breeds across southern Canada and the northern and western United States, and along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts. There is also an isolated population in central Mexico (Kroodsma and Verner 2014). Winters in the western and coastal portions of the breeding range, and also in much of Mexico and the southwestern U.S. In New Hampshire, most breeding season records are from two general areas: the Connecticut River valley and Great Bay/Seacoast, with scattered records elsewhere inland where suitable habitat is present.

Habitat

Breeds in a variety of freshwater wetlands, as well as brackish and salt marshes (Kroodsma and Verner 2014). Important habitat features in all cases are some form of tall emergent graminoid plants (e.g., *Typha*, *Scirpus*, *Phragmites*, *Spartina*).

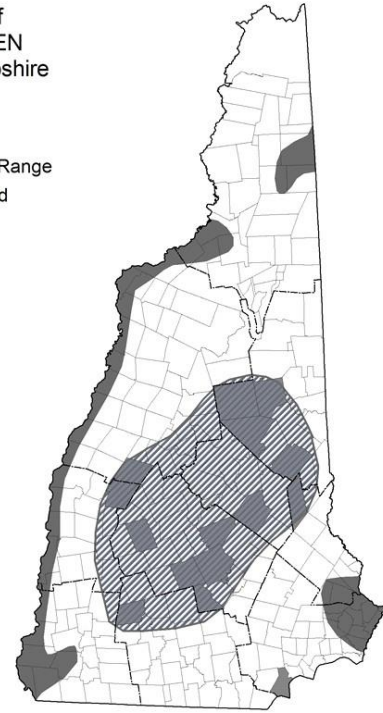
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NH Wildlife Action Plan Habitats

- Marsh and Shrub Wetlands
- Salt Marshes

Distribution of
MARSH WREN
in New Hampshire

■ Current Range
▨ Localized



Distribution Map

Current Species and Habitat Condition in New Hampshire

Stable or increasing across most of the Northeast. Probably stable in New Hampshire.

Population Management Status

Management is not currently in place for this species.

Regulatory Protection (for explanations, see Appendix I)

- Fill and Dredge in Wetlands - NHDES
- Marsh and shrub wetlands
- Migratory Bird Treaty Act (1918)

Quality of Habitat

No information

Habitat Protection Status

No information

Habitat Management Status

Habitat management has not been implemented for this species

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Threats to this Species or Habitat in NH

Threat rankings were calculated by groups of taxonomic or habitat experts using a multistep process (details in Chapter 4). Each threat was ranked for these factors: Spatial Extent, Severity, Immediacy, Certainty, and Reversibility (ability to address the threat). These combined scores produced one overall threat score. Only threats that received a “medium” or “high” score have accompanying text in this profile. Threats that have a low spatial extent, are unlikely to occur in the next ten years, or there is uncertainty in the data will be ranked lower due to these factors.

Habitat degradation and species impacts from introduced or invasive plants (Threat Rank: Medium)

There are limited data on specific responses by wrens to invasive plants, but this species appears to occur in lower densities at sites dominated by purple loosestrife (Whitt et al. 1999).

List of Lower Ranking Threats:

Habitat degradation from mercury deposition

Habitat degradation from removal or management of vegetation

Disturbance to nests by watercraft

Habitat conversion from the direct filling of wetlands for development

Actions to benefit this Species or Habitat in NH

Marshbird Monitoring

Objective:

Assess population status of secretive marsh birds

General Strategy:

Any broad wetland bird monitoring project should include this species, and should ensure that observers can identify it.

Political Location:

Statewide

Watershed Location:

Statewide

References, Data Sources and Authors

Data Sources

NH distribution data from NHBR/NH eBird

Data Quality

Many of the wetlands where Marsh Wren have been recorded in recent decades are not regularly surveyed, and the species may persist undetected

2015 Authors:

Pamela Hunt, NHA

2005 Authors:

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Literature

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McGowan, K.J., and K. Corwin (eds.). 2008. The Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in New York State. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY.

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Sauer, J.R., J.E. Hines, J.E. Fallon, K.L. Pardieck, D.J. Ziolkowski, Jr., and W.A. Link. 2014. The North American Breeding Bird Survey, Results and Analysis 1966 - 2013. Version

Whitt, M.B., H.H. Prince, and R.R. Cox, Jr. 1999. Avian use of purple loosestrife dominated habitat relative to other vegetation types in a Lake Huron wetland complex. *Wilson Bulletin* 111: 105-114.