

Appendix A: Birds

American Three-toed Woodpecker

Picoides dorsalis

Federal Listing	N/A
State Listing	T
Global Rank	G5
State Rank	S1
Regional Status	



Photo by Nathan4300, Dreamstime.com

Justification (Reason for Concern in NH)

Although locally common in western North America, the American Three-toed Woodpecker is local in its limited range in the northeastern United States. Despite relatively low abundance and lack of data, several observers have noted declines in this species over the past century, largely attributed to timber harvesting (Forbush 1927 in Oatman 1985, Hagan et al. 1997). More recently, declines were not noted during the second Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas (Cadman et al. 2007), but the species occupied 32% fewer blocks in New York's second Atlas (McGowan and Corwin 2008) and remains extremely rare in Vermont (Renfrew 2013). Over the last 150 years in New Hampshire, extensive logging of coniferous forests has reduced the amount of standing dead and dying timber that the species prefers, and beaver activity, insect outbreaks, salvage logging of affected stands, and suppression of forest fires, have further reduced and degraded potential three-toed woodpecker habitat. The species' close relative in Europe (*P. tridactylus*) appears to be declining in several areas (Leonard 2001), again believed a result of logging and fragmentation of forest.

Distribution

Population and habitat distribution: The American Three-toed woodpecker inhabits boreal and montane coniferous forests of Canada and the northern United States, from Alaska to California in the west, and northern Wisconsin east to northern New York and northern New England. In New Hampshire, the species has been documented in the North Country and in the White Mountains, with Mt. Passaconaway (Waterville Valley) being the southern-most location documented in the state (Foss 1994). There have been only 11 confirmed sightings since 1980, and none since 2000, as listed below.

Livermore 1980 (Greeley Ponds)
Livermore 1981 (Nancy Pond)
Bethlehem 1981 (Mt. Tom)
Success 1986
Pittsburg 1995 (East Inlet)
Pittsburg 1996 (East Inlet)
Low and Burbanks Grant 1996 (Mt. Adams)
Bethlehem 1997 (Mt. Tom)
Pittsburg 1998 (East Inlet)
Thompson and Meserves Purchase 2000 (Caps Ridge Trail)
Pittsburg 2000 (East Inlet)

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There were also unconfirmed records from Lake Umbagog area in 2004 and 2011

Habitat

Habitat Description: Coniferous forests with abundant dead and dying trees caused by disease, fire, flooding, insects, wind, and pollution. In the Northeast, occupied sites are most often associated with wetlands such as bogs or swamps, or logged areas with standing dead conifers (Foss 1994). A habitat suitability index developed for the species in Alberta suggests that the following habitat features are associated with American Three-toed Woodpecker occupancy (Zapisssocki et al. 2000):

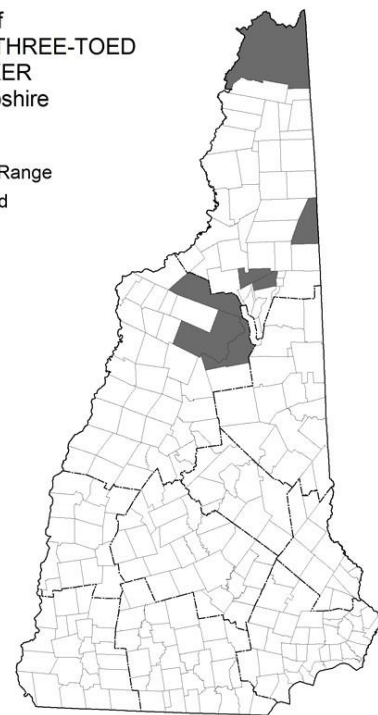
- Trees greater than 8 cm (3.15 in) dbh, with trees greater than or equal to 20 cm (7.9 in) optimal.
- Tree heights greater than 4 m (13 \bar{O}) are suitable, with trees greater than or equal to 8 m (26 \bar{O}) Optimal.
- Stands with numerous snags have more food and potential nests, and stands with greater than or equal to 1.2 snags/ha are optimal.
- Conifer-dominated stands (more than 50% conifer) are preferred, and stands with more than 20% conifers are unsuitable.
- Tree canopy closure must be more than 6% for a stand to be suitable for three-toed woodpeckers, and stands with closure greater than 50% are optimal.

NH Wildlife Action Plan Habitats

- Lowland Spruce-Fir Forest
- High Elevation Spruce-Fir Forest

Distribution of
AMERICAN THREE-TOED
WOODPECKER
in New Hampshire

■ Current Range
▨ Localized



Distribution Map

Current Species and Habitat Condition in New Hampshire

No information. Species is exceedingly rare in the state and has not been conclusively reported since 2000.

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Population Management Status

Management is not currently in place for this species.

Regulatory Protection (for explanations, see Appendix I)

- Endangered Species Conservation Act (RSA 212-A)
- Migratory Bird Treaty Act (1918)

Quality of Habitat

No information

Habitat Protection Status

All of the known recent sites are protected on either state or federal lands (White Mountain National Forest, Connecticut Lakes Headwaters).

Habitat Management Status

Habitat management has not been implemented for this species.

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 conversion due to development (Threat Rank: Medium)

See lowland spruce-fir forest profile.

Habitat conversion and fragmentation from energy and communication infrastructure (Threat Rank: Medium)

See high-elevation spruce-fir forest profile.

Habitat conversion and degradation from ski area expansion (Threat Rank: Medium)

See high-elevation spruce-fir forest profile.

List of Lower Ranking Threats:

- Disturbance from persistent organic compounds
- Habitat degradation from acid deposition
- Disturbance from mercury toxicity
- Disturbance from hiking activity
- Disturbance during research activities

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Habitat degradation from harvest practices that prevent much of the forest from reaching later successional stages

Habitat impacts from road fragmentation

Habitat conversion and degradation from warming temperatures and associated increase of hardwood species

Actions to benefit this Species or Habitat in NH

American Three-toed Woodpecker surveys

Objective:

Collect data on current distribution

General Strategy:

Observers in appropriate habitat should be aware of the possibility of this species and report it if detected. See spruce-fir forest habitat profiles for actions related to habitat management.

Political Location:

Coos County, Grafton County

Watershed Location:

References, Data Sources and Authors

Data Sources

Distribution data from Breeding Bird Atlases (citations above), and NHBR/NH eBird
Known sites were derived from NHBR, and conservation and management status was obtained from NHFG, the Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge, and the WMNF.

Data Quality

Data are very limited due to this species' low densities and often inaccessible habitats, and are confounded by its similarity to the much more common Black-backed Woodpecker.
There are few data on distribution and abundance of three-toed woodpeckers and no information on the availability and condition of suitable habitat for them.

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Literature

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