

Appendix A: Birds

Common Gallinule

Gallinula galeata

Federal Listing	N/A
State Listing	SC
Global Rank	G5
State Rank	S2
Regional Status	High



Photo by Pamela Hunt

Justification (Reason for Concern in NH)

Secretive marsh birds like the Common Gallinule 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 Common Gallinule, repeated Breeding Bird Atlases in the Northeast have consistently documented a 30-40% loss of occupied range (Cadman et al. 2007, McGowan and Corwin 2008, Renfrew 2013, MassAudubon 2014). The Breeding Bird Survey shows a significant decline of over 2% per year in the eastern United States (Sauer et al. 2014), but data are generally poor for this species.

Distribution

Breeds locally across the eastern United States, primarily around the Great Lakes and along the Atlantic and Gulf coastal plains. The species is highly dispersed and local in the West, and widely distributed from Mexico to South America, and also throughout the Caribbean (Bannor and Kiviat 2002). Northern populations withdraw to the southern U.S., Caribbean, and Central America in winter.

Common Gallinules have been recorded during the breeding season (conservatively June-July) at only three New Hampshire locations since 1990, as follows:

- Cherry Pond, Jefferson (1996-97)
- Stubb's Pond, Newington (1999, 2002)
- Surrey Lane marsh, Durham (2005-06)

Based on the lack of recent summer records, it is not clear that the Common Gallinule is still a regularly-occurring breeding species in New Hampshire, and records of migrants in spring have also declined since the late 1990s.

Habitat

Common Gallinules breed in a variety of freshwater wetlands, usually containing a dense mix of emergent (e.g., *Typha*, *Sagittaria*) and floating (e.g., *Nymphaea*) plants (Bannor and Kiviat 2002). They may also use altered or artificial wetlands such as sewage lagoons and farm ponds.

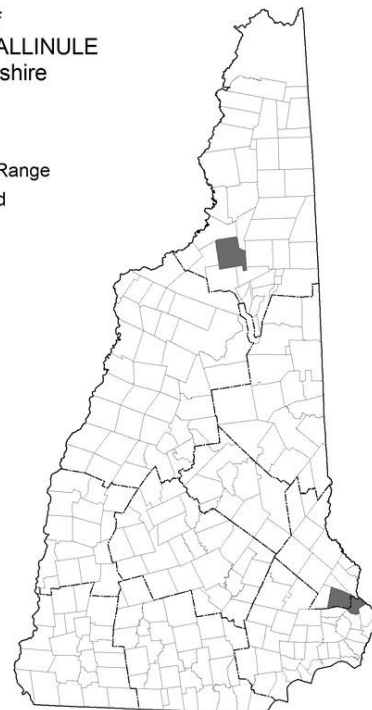
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NH Wildlife Action Plan Habitats

- Marsh and Shrub Wetlands

Distribution of
COMMON GALLINULE
in New Hampshire

■ Current Range
▨ Localized



Distribution Map

Current Species and Habitat Condition in New Hampshire

Declining across most of its range in the U.S., and probably extirpated 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

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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 degradation from the succession of artificial wetlands (Threat Rank: Medium)

Some of the more recent sites for gallinules in southern NH have been in artificial wetlands such as unused ponds at wastewater treatment plants or reclaimed borrow pits. While such sites can provide suitable habitat for a number of years, unless vegetation is actively managed they eventually become overgrown to the point that they are no longer quality habitat. Because such sites lack dams or hydrological connections to other wetlands, controlling increased vegetation by regulating water levels is not possible, and the only other alternative – mechanical disturbance – is but expensive and potentially damaging.

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

There are limited data on specific responses by gallinules to invasive plants (see Whitt et al. 1999).

List of Lower Ranking Threats:

Habitat conversion and mortality from drawdowns or removal of dams
Habitat degradation from removal or management of vegetation
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 marshbirds

General Strategy:

Although Common Gallinules are too scarce in New Hampshire to warrant any species-specific inventory or monitoring projects, birders frequenting appropriate habitat should be familiar with its calls and report it if found. In addition, any broad wetland bird monitoring project should include this species, and should ensure that observers can identify it.

Appendix A: Birds

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 Common Gallinules have been recorded in recent decades are not regularly surveyed, and the species may persist undetected.

2015 Authors:

Pamela Hunt, NHA

2005 Authors:

Kim Tuttle, NHFG

Literature

Bannor, B.K. and E. Kiviat. 2002. Common Gallinule (*Gallinula galeata*), 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/685doi:10.2173/bna.685>

Cadman et al. 2007. Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Ontario, 2001-2005. Bird Studies Canada, Environment Canada, Ontario Field Naturalists, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, and Ontario Nature, Toronto, xxii + 706 pp.

Massachusetts Audubon Society. 2014. Massachusetts Breeding Bird Atlas. Online results at: <http://www.massaudubon.org/our-conservation-work/wildlife-research-conservation/statewide-bird-monitoring/breeding-bird-atlases/bba2/>

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

Renfrew, R.B. 2013 (ed.). The Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in Vermont. University Press of New England, Hanover, NH.

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 01.30.2015 USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, Laurel, MD

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.