

Appendix A: Birds

Sedge Wren

Cistothorus platensis

Federal Listing	N/A
State Listing	E G
Global Rank	G5
State Rank	S1
Regional Status	Very High



Photo by Pamela Hunt

Justification (Reason for Concern in NH)

Sedge Wren was originally listed as Endangered in NH on the basis of rarity, long-term historic declines, and habitat specificity. It has never been common in New England, which is generally considered the extreme eastern edge of its range in North America. There is some evidence for locally high populations in the early 20th century, but it has not been confirmed breeding for over 30 years and probably should no longer be considered a regular member of the state's avifauna. Sedge Wren was considered Very High Concern but Low Responsibility in the RSGCN list for the Northeast (USFWS Region 5).

Distribution

Sedge Wrens have a wide but disjunct distribution across the Western Hemisphere from southern Canada to Tierra del Fuego. In North America the bulk of the population breeds in the northern Great Plains and Great Lakes regions, with irregular nesting east to the Northeast (Maryland to New Brunswick) (Heckert et al. 2001). It winters in the southeastern United States. Breeding occurs earlier in the northwest than in the south and east of this range (Herkert et al. 2001). Most documented breeding in New York and New England happens between July and September, and probably represents second attempts by individuals from the Midwest.

There have been only seven "breeding season" records of Sedge Wren in New Hampshire since 1980, as follows:

- Alton – 8/15/1980
- Newmarket – 6/22-7/1/1985 (single unmated male nest-building)
- Sutton – 5/21/1989
- Kensington – 5/19-6/18/1994 (persistent singing male, 2 birds at one point)
- Derry – 5/19-6/4/1998
- Durham – 7/25-8/12/2001 (2 birds on 7/29)
- Sandwich – 7/16-18/2012

Of these, four are of birds that persisted for more than two weeks or which built a nest. These can be considered "probable" breeding records under Breeding Bird Atlas criteria, but "confirmed" breeding has not been documented in New Hampshire for a considerable time. Given the distribution of these records, any future breeding is most likely in wetlands in the southeastern portion of the state, but is considered highly unlikely given the irregular history of the species here.

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Habitat

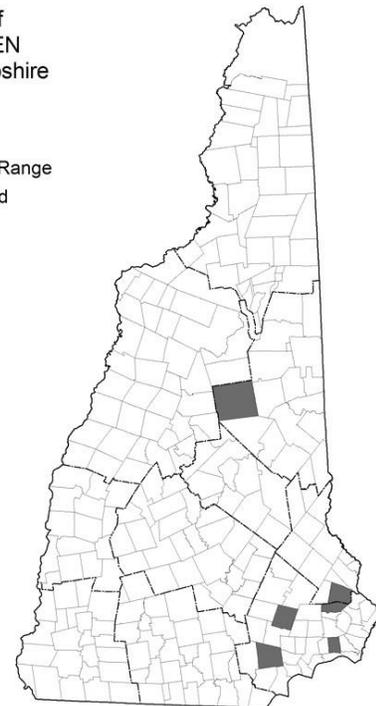
Such areas include wet hayfields, sphagnum moss bogs, and the margins of ponds (Herkert et al. 2001), and in these habitats, they prefer shrub cover. The species does not use wetlands with sparse vegetative cover or those dominated by cattails (*Typha* sp.). Historically, coastal populations in the Northeast also occurred in salt marshes. Recent verified reports from New Hampshire come from weedy grass fields, tussock marshes, and wet shrubby areas at the margins of marshes or wet meadows.

NH Wildlife Action Plan Habitats

- Marsh and Shrub Wetlands

Distribution of
SEDGE WREN
in New Hampshire

■ Current Range
▨ Localized



Distribution Map

Current Species and Habitat Condition in New Hampshire

Although historic declines have been noted in the Northeast, recent Atlas data suggest increases in New York (McGowan and Corwin 2008) and small but stable distributions in Vermont and Massachusetts (Renfrew 2013, MassAudubon 2014). BBS data also indicate stable or increasing populations over most of its core range in the Midwest (Sauer et al. 2014).

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)
- Fill and Dredge in Wetlands - NHDES

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- 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

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)

Given the types of wetlands this species uses and its extreme irregularity in the state, this threat is likely actually “Low”

List of Lower Ranking Threats:

Habitat degradation from mercury deposition

Habitat conversion from the direct filling of wetlands for development

Actions to benefit this Species or Habitat in NH

Sedge Wren monitoring

Objective:

Assess current status of Sedge Wren in NH

General Strategy:

Although Sedge Wrens are too scarce in New Hampshire to warrant any species-specific inventory or monitoring projects, birders frequenting appropriate habitat should be familiar with its song 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.

Political Location:

Statewide

Watershed Location:

Statewide

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References, Data Sources and Authors

Data Sources

NH distribution data from NHBR/NH eBird

Data Quality

Given the species' recent scarcity in the state, the available data are probably insufficient to fully warrant conservation should action be desired. In addition, the potential for confusion with the similar Marsh Wren (*Cistothorus palustris*) makes even evaluation of historic records problematic.

2015 Authors:

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2005 Authors:

Literature

Herkert, J.R., D.E. Kroodsmas, and J.P. Gibbs. 2001. Sedge Wren (*Cistothorus platensis*), 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/582doi:10.2173/bna.582>

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