

Connecticut Bird Species Prioritization

The following tables combine bird species listed by the Connecticut State Endangered and Threatened Species List for 1998, the species of conservation priority provided by the Partners in Flight ranking criteria at a National (Global) and Regional level, and the National Audubon Watch List for 1997. Table 1 provides the table of all species considered. Tables 2-5 sort those species into categories useful for conservation planning.

In these tables the following designations were used:

State Rank is based on the 1998 Connecticut Endangered and Threatened Species List: SC = Special Concern, T - Threatened, E = Endangered, ↑ = status increased in rarity on the 1997 list, ↓ = decreased in rarity in 1997, NEW = added to the list in 1998.

PIF Global Score - Partners in Flight Global Score which incorporates information about each species across its geographic range to give wider perspective;

PIF Area 9 Score = Partners in Flight score for Physiographic Area 9, southern New England. Species of conservation priority for global or regional scores were identified using the cutoff of 19 or higher to conform with conventions used elsewhere by Partners in Flight.

Population Trend and **Area Importance** (discussed below) are two criteria used to develop the Partners in Flight regional scores. I have provided these data as supporting evidence for the regional scores provided.

Population Trend - generally assigned on the basis of Breeding Bird Survey data. Population Trend rates the magnitude and direction of Breeding Bird Survey population trend. PT of 1 or 2: increasing abundance, PT of 4 to 5: decreasing abundance; PT of 3 usually means there is uncertainty associated with the population trend either because the species is not adequately detected using Breeding Bird Survey techniques or the sample size of the survey routes is too small. For these tables, essentially all the species listed have population trends of 3 or higher.

Area Importance Score - evaluates the abundance of a species within a physiographic region relative to its abundance throughout its range. The intent of AI scores is to direct conservation efforts toward areas that are most important to a species' survival and to highlight the responsibility of those areas for a species' conservation. AI=1: species is accidental and does not occur annually in the area, to 5: species is present in highest relative abundance. A score of 3 or higher indicates species which use Connecticut for a significant portion of their range and therefore Connecticut has a higher responsibility for their conservation.

Habitat1 and Habitat2 - given in Tables 2-4, are categories based on USFWS habitat descriptions; two habitats are provided where relevant.

Table 1. List of bird species of Conservation Concern in Connecticut. This list is presented in taxonomic order providing State Rank from the Connecticut State Endangered and Threatened Species List (1998) followed by the Partners in Flight score for Region 9, the southern New England physiographic region. The population trend scores range from 1-5, based on Breeding Bird Survey results for physiographic area 9 (southern New England); Area Importance scores range from 1 (species is accidental and does not occur annually in the area) to 5 (species is present in highest relative abundance). Species that occur on National Audubon's 1997 Watch List have an asterisk beside the PIF Area 9 score.

Species	State Rank	PIF Area 9 Score	Area Importance	Population Trend
Common Loon	SC	15	1	3
Pied-billed Grebe	E	13	2	3
American Bittern	E	18	2	4
Least Bittern	T	17	2	3
Great Egret	T	13	2	3
Snowy Egret	T	13	2	3
Little Blue Heron	SC	14	2	3
Cattle Egret	SC	11	2	3
Yellow-crowned Night Heron	SC	16	2	3
Glossy Ibis	SC	15	2	3
American Black Duck		21*	5	3
Blue-winged Teal	T NEW	14	2	3
Bald Eagle	E			
Northern Harrier	E	17	2	3
Sharp-shinned Hawk	E	15	2	3
Cooper's Hawk	T	15	2	3
Red-shouldered Hawk	SC	16	2	3
Broad-winged Hawk		19	4	5
American Kestrel	SC NEW	15	3	5
Peregrine Falcon	E	18	2	3
Northern Bobwhite		20	3	5
Black Rail	E↑	24*	2	3
Clapper Rail		21	5	3
King Rail	E↑	17	2	3
Common Moorhen	E↑	14	2	3
Piping Plover	T	27	2	3
American Oystercatcher	SC	19	2	3
Willet	SC↓	21*	5	3
Upland Sandpiper	E	22	2	5
Eskimo Curlew	SC			
American Woodcock		21	4	3
Roseate Tern	E	18	2	3
Common Tern	SC	16	5	3
Least Tern	T	18	4	3
Black-billed Cuckoo		22	4	5
Common Barn Owl	E↑	16	2	3
Long-eared Owl	E	15	2	3
Short-eared Owl	T	19*	2	3
Northern Saw-whet Owl	SC	14	2	3
Common Nighthawk	T↑	14	2	3
Whip-poor-will	SC	20	3	3
Chimney Swift		21	4	5

Species	State Rank	PIF Area 9 Score	Area Importance	Population Trend
Red-headed Woodpecker	E	22 *	2	5
Olive-sided Flycatcher	SC	17	2	3
Eastern Wood-Pewee		20	4	4
Alder Flycatcher	SC NEW	13	2	1
Least Flycatcher		19	3	5
Great Crested Flycatcher		20	3	5
Eastern Kingbird		19	4	5
Horned Lark	T	11	2	3
Purple Martin	SC	15	2	3
Common Raven	SC	11	2	3
Sedge Wren	E	21	2	3
Wood Thrush		24*	4	5
Brown Thrasher	SC NEW	20	3	5
Blue-winged Warbler		26	5	5
Golden-winged Warbler	T ↑	27 *	2	5
Northern Parula	SC	17	2	3
Black-throated Blue Warbler		22*	2	3
Prairie Warbler		23*	3	5
Cerulean Warbler		24 *	2	3
Black-and-white Warbler		20	4	4
Worm-eating Warbler		24*	3	3
Louisiana Waterthrush		23	4	3
Canada Warbler		22	3	4
Yellow-breasted Chat	E	16	2	3
Scarlet Tanager		21	4	4
Rose-breasted Grosbeak		21	4	5
Eastern Towhee		19	4	5
Field Sparrow		20	3	5
Vesper Sparrow	E	15	2	4
Savannah Sparrow (Ipswich)	SC	13	2	4
Grasshopper Sparrow	E	16	2	3
Henslow's Sparrow	SC	27 *	2	5
Salt Marsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow	SC	28 *	5	3
Seaside Sparrow	SC	26 *	5	3
Bobolink		19 *	2	3
Eastern Meadowlark	SC NEW	16	2	5
Baltimore Oriole		22	5	5
Purple Finch		19	3	5

Table 2. Species that have been identified as national conservation priorities (PIF global scores 19 or higher) and regional priorities within southern New England physiographic area 9. * = species on National Audubon (1997) Watchlist.

Section 1. Species that depend on the southern New England Physiographic Area 9 and Connecticut has an important responsibility for the conservation of their populations, Area Importance = 3-5. Population Trends range from 3-5. Piping Plover and Roseate Tern are added to this list because of Federal listing.

Species	State Rank	PIF Phys. Area 9 Score	PIF global score	Area Importance Area 9	Pop Trend Area 9	Habitat1	Habitat2
Salt Marsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow*	SC	28	25	5	3	maritime	
Piping Plover	T	27	24	2	3	maritime	
Seaside Sparrow ^{1*}	SC	26	21	5	3	maritime	
Blue-winged Warbler		26	19	5	5	successional forest	Shrub
Wood Thrush*		24	20	4	5	hardwood	
Worm-eating Warbler*		24	21	3	3	hardwood	
Prairie Warbler*		23	20	3	5	shrub	Successional forest
Louisiana Waterthrush		23	19	4	3	hardwood	Swamp
American Black Duck*		21	19	5	3	marsh	Maritime
Roseate Tern	E	18	16	2	3	maritime	

¹Very small nesting populations in Connecticut.

Section 2. Species with small populations in Physiographic Area 9, Area Importance = 2; Connecticut is unlikely to influence rangewide conservation efforts.

Species	State Rank	PIF Area 9 Score	PIF global score	Area Importance Area 9	Pop Trend Area 9	Habitat1	Habitat2
Henslow's Sparrow ^{1*}	SC	27	24	2	5	grassland	
Golden-winged Warbler*	T ↑	27	25	2	5	successional forest	Shrub
Cerulean Warbler*		24	25	2	3	swamp	Hardwood
Black Rail ^{1*}	E ↑	24	24	2	3	marsh	
Black-throated Blue Warbler*		22	20	2	3	northern hardwood	
Bobolink*		19	19	2	3	grassland	Agricultural
Eskimo Curlew ²	SC		29			maritime	

¹ Very small nesting populations in Connecticut.

² Extirpated.

Table 3. Regional conservation priorities identified by Partners in Flight for southern New England physiographic area (9), with global scores <19. * = species on National Audubon (1997) Watchlist.

Section 1. Species that depend on the southern New England Physiographic area (9), Area Importance scores = 3-5.

Species	State Rank	PIF Area 9 Score	PIF global score	Area Importance Area 9	Pop Trend Area 9	Habitat1	Habitat2
Canada Warbler		22	18	3	4	hardwood	Shrub
Black-billed Cuckoo		22	16	4	5	hardwood	
Baltimore Oriole		22	15	5	5	hardwood	
Willet*	SC↓	21	18	5 ¹	3	maritime	
American Woodcock		21	18	4	3	successional forest	
Clapper Rail ¹		21	17	5	3	maritime	
Chimney Swift		21	17	4	5	hardwood	Urban
Scarlet Tanager		21	15	4	4	hardwood	
Rose-breasted Grosbeak		21	15	4	5	hardwood	
Northern Bobwhite		20	17	3	5	shrub	Successional forest
Whip-poor-will	SC	20	17	3	3	shrub	
Eastern Wood-Pewee		20	17	4	4	hardwood	
Brown Thrasher	SC NEW	20	17	3	5	shrub	successional forest
Field Sparrow		20	17	3	5	shrub	agricultural
Great Crested Flycatcher		20	14	3	5	hardwood	
Black-and-white Warbler		20	14	4	4	hardwood	swamp
Broad-winged Hawk		19	12	4	5	hardwood	
Least Flycatcher		19	16	3	5	hardwood	
Eastern Kingbird		19	12	4	5	shrub	agricultural
Eastern Towhee		19	15	4	5	shrub	successional forest
Purple Finch		19	14	3	5	pine forest	hardwood
Least Tern	T	18	15	4	3	maritime	

¹ The area importance score may be too high for Connecticut.

Section 2. Species with very small, peripheral, or extirpated populations in physiographic area 9, Area Importance = 2; Connecticut is unlikely to influence range wide conservation efforts.

Species	State Rank	PIF Area 9 Score	PIF global score	Area Importance Area 9	Pop Trend Area 9	Habitat1	Habitat2
Red-headed Woodpecker*	E	22	18	2	5	hardwood	Agricultural
Upland Sandpiper	E	22	15	2	5	grassland	Agricultural
Sedge Wren	E	21	18	2	3	marsh	
American Oystercatcher	SC	19	17	2	3	maritime	

Table 4. Species that have been identified as conservation priorities in Connecticut by the State Endangered and Threatened Species List (1998) but are not considered national or regional priorities by Partners in Flight. Note that many of these species have population trend = 3, which means either the population trend is unknown or there are insufficient data to form a conclusion. For additional information Breeding Bird Survey data were examined from broader geographic areas. * = species on National Audubon (1997) Watchlist.

Section 1. Species that show declining population trends in physiographic area 9¹, or USFWS Region 5², or within the entire Breeding Bird Survey area³. Also listed are species that do not occur on a sufficient number of BBS routes to determine trends for physiographic area 9⁴ or USFWS Region 5⁵. Sharp-shinned Hawk has been moved to this section because the species is known locally to be decreasing in the region although BBS trends show an increase.

Species	State Rank	PIF Area 9 Score	PIF global score	Area Importance Area 9	Pop Trend Area 9	Habitat 1	Habitat 2
American Bittern ^{1,3}	E	18	17	2	4	Marsh	
Olive-sided Flycatcher ^{2,3,4}	SC	17	17	2	3	northern hardwood	
King Rail ^{3,4,5}	E ↑	17	15	2	3	Marsh	
Yellow-breasted Chat ^{2,4}	E	16	14	2	3	Shrub	successional forest
Grasshopper Sparrow ^{2,3,4}	E	16	16	2	3	Grassland	agricultural
Eastern Meadowlark ^{1,2,3}	SC NEW	16	14	2	5	Grassland	agricultural
Sharp-shinned Hawk	E	15	11	2	3	Hardwood	
American Kestrel ^{1,2}	SC NEW	15	10	3	5	Successional forest	agricultural
Vesper Sparrow ^{1,2,3}	E	15	14	2	4	Shrub	
Common Nighthawk ^{2,3}	T ↑	14	12	2	3*	Shrub	urban
Savannah Sparrow ^{1,2,3}	SC	13	12	2	4	Grassland	agricultural
Horned Lark ^{2,3,4}	T	11	11	2	3	Grassland	

* Population trend for Common Nighthawk in Connecticut may be too low – 5 may be more appropriate.

Section 2. Species maintaining very localized breeding populations in Connecticut. Great Egrets and Snowy Egrets were more numerous in the state before the plume trade in the early 1900's and have never recovered to historical levels. Glossy Ibis, Little Blue Herons, and Cattle Egrets have recently expanded into the area.

Species	State Rank	PIF Area 9 Score	PIF global score	Area Importance Area 9	Pop Trend Area 9	Habitat 1	Habitat 2
Yellow-crowned Night Heron	SC	16	14	2	3	marsh	
Glossy Ibis	SC	15	11	2	3	maritime	
Little Blue Heron	SC	14	12	2	3	maritime	
Great Egret	T	13	9	2	3	maritime	
Snowy Egret	T	13	9	2	3	maritime	
Cattle Egret	SC	11	7	2	3	maritime	

Section 3. Species maintaining very localized but important wintering populations in Connecticut.

Species	State Rank	PIF Area 9 Score	PIF global score	Area Importance Area 9	Pop Trend Area 9	Habitat 1	Habitat 2
Short-eared Owl*	T	19	19	2	3	grassland	
Peregrine Falcon	E	18	14	2	3	northern hardwood	
Northern Harrier	E	17	16	2	3	shrub	maritime
Common Loon	SC	15	14	1	3	marsh	
Bald Eagle	E		15			swamp	hardwood

Section 4. Species with low populations in Connecticut that show increasing population trends in physiographic area 9¹, USFWS Region 5², or survey-wide³.

Species	State Rank	PIF Area 9 Score	PIF global score	Area Importance Area 9	Pop Trend Area 9	Habitat 1	Habitat 2
Northern Parula ²	SC	17	15	2	3	northern hardwood	
Red-shouldered Hawk ³	SC	16	12	2	3	swamp	hardwood
Cooper's Hawk ³	T	15	11	2	3	hardwood	
Purple Martin ²	SC	15	13	2	3	shrub	agricultural
Alder Flycatcher ¹	SC NEW	13	13	2	1	shrub	
Common Raven ³	SC	11	7	2	3	northern hardwood	

Section 5. Species that are not detected well by Breeding Bird Survey techniques and therefore their population trends are not well known. Species on this list should be monitored using other techniques to determine population trends.

Species	State Rank	PIF Area 9 Score	PIF global score	Area Importance Area 9	Pop Trend Area 9	Habitat 1	Habitat 2
Least Bittern	T	17	15	2	3	marsh	
Common Tern	SC	16	11	5	3	maritime	
Common Barn Owl	E ↑	16	14	2	3	grasslands	agricultural
Long-eared Owl	E	15	15	2	3	pine forest	
Blue-winged Teal	T NEW	14	12	2	3	marsh	
Common Moorhen	E ↑	14	9	2	3	marsh	
Northern Saw-whet Owl	SC	14	12	2	3	pine forest	
Pied-billed Grebe	E	13	9	2	3	marsh	

Table 5. Species of highest conservation concern sorted by habitat. At minimum, conservation plans in Connecticut should consider the needs of these species. * = species on National Audubon (1997) Watchlist.

Section 1. Species identified as national conservation priorities by Partners in Flight; Area Importance scores = 3-5.

Species	State Rank	PIF Phys. Area 9 Score	PIF global score	Area Importance Area 9	Pop Trend Area 9	Habitat1	Habitat2
Wood Thrush*		24	20	4	5	hardwood	
Worm-eating Warbler*		24	21	3	3	hardwood	
Louisiana Waterthrush		23	19	4	3	hardwood	Swamp
Salt Marsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow*	SC	28	25	5	3	maritime	
Piping Plover	T	27	24	2	3	maritime	
Seaside Sparrow*	SC	26	21	5	3	maritime	
Roseate Tern	E	18	16	2	3	maritime	
American Black Duck*		21	19	5	3	marsh	Maritime
Prairie Warbler*		23	20	3	5	shrub	Successional forest
Blue-winged Warbler		26	19	5	5	successional forest	Shrub

Section 2. Species identified by Partners in Flight as regional priorities; Area Importance scores =3-5.
 * = species on National Audubon (1997) Watchlist.

Species	State Rank	PIF Area 9 Score	PIF global score	Area Importance Area 9	Pop Trend Area 9	Habitat1	Habitat2
Canada Warbler		22	18	3	4	hardwood	Shrub
Black-billed Cuckoo		22	16	4	5	hardwood	
Baltimore Oriole		22	15	5	5	hardwood	
Chimney Swift		21	17	4	5	hardwood	urban
Scarlet Tanager		21	15	4	4	hardwood	
Rose-breasted Grosbeak		21	15	4	5	hardwood	
Eastern Wood-Pewee		20	17	4	4	hardwood	
Great Crested Flycatcher		20	14	3	5	hardwood	
Black-and-white Warbler		20	14	4	4	hardwood	swamp
Broad-winged Hawk		19	12	4	5	hardwood	
Least Flycatcher		19	16	3	5	hardwood	
Willet*	SC↓	21	18	5	3	maritime	
Clapper Rail		21	17	5	3	maritime	
Least Tern	T	18	15	4	3	maritime	
Purple Finch		19	14	3	5	pine forest	hardwood
Northern Bobwhite		20	17	3	5	shrub	Successional forest
Whip-poor-will	SC	20	17	3	3	shrub	
Brown Thrasher	SC NEW	20	17	3	5	shrub	successional forest
Field Sparrow		20	17	3	5	shrub	agricultural
Eastern Kingbird		19	12	4	5	shrub	agricultural
Eastern Towhee		19	15	4	5	shrub	successional forest
American Woodcock		21	18	4	3	successional forest	

Section 3. Species identified as conservation priorities by the State Endangered and Threatened Species List (1998) with declining population trends. These species are not considered national or regional priorities by Partners in Flight for the southern New England physiographic region (9).

Species	State Rank	PIF Area 9 Score	PIF global score	Area Importance Area 9	Pop Trend Area 9	Habitat 1	Habitat 2
Grasshopper Sparrow ^{2,3,4}	E	16	16	2	3	Grassland	agricultural
Eastern Meadowlark ^{1,2,3}	SC NEW	16	14	2	5	Grassland	agricultural
Savannah Sparrow ^{1,2,3}	SC	13	12	2	4	Grassland	agricultural
Horned Lark ^{2,3,4}	T	11	11	2	3	Grassland	
Sharp-shinned Hawk	E	15	11	2	3	Hardwood	
American Bittern ^{1,3}	E	18	17	2	4	Marsh	
King Rail ^{3,4,5}	E ↑	17	15	2	3	Marsh	
Olive-sided Flycatcher ^{2,3,4}	SC	17	17	2	3	northern hardwood	
Yellow-breasted Chat ^{2,4}	E	16	14	2	3	Shrub	successional forest
Vesper Sparrow ^{1,2,3}	E	15	14	2	4	Shrub	
Common Nighthawk ^{2,3}	T ↑	14	12	2	3*	Shrub	urban
American Kestrel ^{1,2}	SC NEW	15	10	3	5	Successional forest	agricultural