

Nycticorax nycticorax (Black-crowned Night-heron)

Priority 2 Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN)

Class: Aves (Birds)

Order: *Pelecaniformes* (Peleicans, Herons, Ibises, And Allies)

Family: *Ardeidae* (Bitterns, Egrets, Herons, And Night-herons)

General comments:

We recommended the Black-crowned Night-heron for State Endangered status in 2014, at which time approximately 102 breeding individuals were nesting on four coastal islands, down 46% from the 2006 estimation of 95 pairs at seven sites. In 2009, several historic and active colonies were surveyed by aerial or ground surveys, revealing 106 breeding pairs at three sites. However, pair counts at these three sites have dropped. As of 2014, we believe the population is as low as 51 pairs on 4 coastal islands.

Species Conservation Range Maps for Black-crowned Night-heron:

Town Map: [Nycticorax nycticorax Towns.pdf](#)

Subwatershed Map: [Nycticorax nycticorax HUC12.pdf](#)

SGCN Priority Ranking - Designation Criteria:

Risk of Extirpation:

Maine Status: Endangered

State Special Concern or NMFS Species of Concern: NA

Recent Significant Declines: NA

Regional Endemic: NA

High Regional Conservation Priority: NA

High Climate Change Vulnerability: NA

Understudied rare taxa: NA

Historical: NA

Culturally Significant: NA

Habitats Assigned to Black-crowned Night-heron:

Formation Name Cliff & Rock

Macrogroup Name Rocky Coast

Habitat System Name: North Atlantic Cobble Shore **Notes:** *Foraging area*

Formation Name Coastal Scrub-Herb

Macrogroup Name Coastal Grassland & Shrubland

Habitat System Name: Coastal Grassland & Shrubland Macrogroup - Unknown Habitat System **Notes:** *Shrubby areas on islands for nesting.*

Formation Name Freshwater Marsh

Macrogroup Name Coastal Plain Pond

Habitat System Name: Northern Atlantic Coastal Plain Pond **Notes:** *May nest in shrubs on edges; forage in wetland.*

Macrogroup Name Emergent Marsh

Habitat System Name: Laurentian-Acadian Freshwater Marsh **Notes:** *May nest in shrubs on edges; forage in wetland.*

Macrogroup Name Modified-Managed Marsh

Habitat System Name: Modified-Managed Marsh **Notes:** *May nest in shrubs on edges; forage in wetland.*

Macrogroup Name Wet Meadow-Shrub Marsh

Habitat System Name: Introduced Wetland and Riparian Vegetation **Notes:** *May nest in shrubs on edges; forage in wetland.*

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Macrogroup Name Ruderal Shrubland & Grassland

Habitat System Name: Ruderal Shrubland & Grassland Macrogroup - Unknown Habitat System **Notes:** *Shrubby areas on islands for nesting.***Formation Name Intertidal**

Macrogroup Name Intertidal Gravel Shore

Habitat System Name: Lower Intertidal **Notes:** *Foraging area*

Macrogroup Name Intertidal Mudflat

Habitat System Name: Freshwater Tidal Marsh **Notes:** *Foraging area*Habitat System Name: Non-Vascular Mudflat **Notes:** *Foraging area*Habitat System Name: Submerged Aquatic Vegetation **Notes:** *Foraging area*

Macrogroup Name Intertidal Sandy Shore

Habitat System Name: Sand Flat **Notes:** *Foraging area*Habitat System Name: Submerged Aquatic Vegetation **Notes:** *Foraging area*

Macrogroup Name Intertidal Tidal Marsh (peat-forming)

Habitat System Name: Acadian Coastal Salt Marsh **Notes:** *Foraging area*Habitat System Name: Coastal Plain Tidal Marsh **Notes:** *Foraging area***Formation Name Northeastern Upland Forest**

Macrogroup Name Central Oak-Pine

Habitat System Name: North Atlantic Coastal Plain Maritime Forest **Notes:** *Nesting colonies.***Formation Name Northeastern Wetland Forest**

Macrogroup Name Northern Swamp

Habitat System Name: Northern Appalachian-Acadian Conifer-Hardwood Acidic Swamp **Notes:** *Nesting colonies.***Stressors Assigned to Black-crowned Night-heron:**

Stressor Priority Level based on Severity and Actionability		Moderate Severity	High Severity
	Highly Actionable	Medium-High	High
	Moderately Actionable	Medium	Medium-High
	Actionable with Difficulty	Low	Low

IUCN Level 1 Threat Human Intrusions and Disturbance**IUCN Level 2 Threat:** Recreational Activities**Severity:** Moderate Severity **Actionability:** Highly actionable**Notes:** Outdoor recreation can cause disturbance to nesting birds; would need to restrict activities within and adjacent to colonies during nesting.**IUCN Level 1 Threat Other Options****IUCN Level 2 Threat:** Lack of knowledge**Severity:** Moderate Severity **Actionability:** Highly actionable**Notes:** Knowledge of current breeding colony locations is very limited; need more survey and monitoring in order to adequately protect active colonies.

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**Only species specific conservation actions that address high (red) or medium-high (orange) priority stressors are summarized here.*

Conservation Action	Category:	Biological Priority:	Type:
Implement targeted surveys to better understand the distribution and status of this species and to help direct conservation actions to newly documented populations	Survey and Monitoring	high	new

Stressor(s) Addressed By This Conservation Action

Lack of knowledge

Conservation Action	Category:	Biological Priority:	Type:
Develop outreach program to educate landowners and recreational users about black-crowned night herons' breeding habitat requirements and sensitivity to disturbance.	Species Management	moderate	new

Stressor(s) Addressed By This Conservation Action

Recreational Activities

Conservation Action	Category:	Biological Priority:	Type:
Determine whether prefledging success and productivity rates are contributing to declining numbers	Research	high	new

Stressor(s) Addressed By This Conservation Action

Lack of knowledge

Conservation Action	Category:	Biological Priority:	Type:
Investigate effect of aerial predators (gulls, crows, eagles) on nesting success.	Research	moderate	new

Stressor(s) Addressed By This Conservation Action

Lack of knowledge

Conservation Action	Category:	Biological Priority:	Type:
In cooperation with landowners and partners, develop and post signs at colonies encouraging users to keep a wide berth during nesting.	Species Management	moderate	new

Stressor(s) Addressed By This Conservation Action

Recreational Activities

Guild Level Conservation Actions:

This Species is currently not attributed to a guild.

Broad Taxonomic Group Conservation Actions:

Additional relevant conservation actions for this species are assigned within broader taxonomic groups in Maine's 2015 Wildlife Action Plan: Element 4, Table 4-1.

Habitat Based Conservation Actions:

Additional conservation actions that may benefit habitat(s) associated with this species can be found in Maine's 2015 Wildlife Action Plan: Element 4, Table 4-15. Click on the Habitat Grouping of interest to launch a habitat based report summarizing relevant conservation actions and associated SGCN.

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The Wildlife Action Plan was developed through a lengthy participatory process with state agencies, targeted conservation partners, and the general public. The Plan is non-regulatory. The species, stressors, and voluntary conservation actions identified in the Plan complement, but do not replace, existing work programs and priorities by state agencies and partners.