

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: <i>Foraging area</i>
Formation Name	Coastal Scrub-Herb
Macrogroup Name	Coastal Grassland & Shrubland
Habitat System Name:	Coastal Grassland & Shrubland Macrogroup - Unknown Habitat System Notes: <i>Shrubby areas on islands for nesting.</i>
Formation Name	Freshwater Marsh
Macrogroup Name	Coastal Plain Pond
Habitat System Name:	Northern Atlantic Coastal Plain Pond Notes: <i>May nest in shrubs on edges; forage in wetland.</i>
Macrogroup Name	Emergent Marsh
Habitat System Name:	Laurentian-Acadian Freshwater Marsh Notes: <i>May nest in shrubs on edges; forage in wetland.</i>
Macrogroup Name	Modified-Managed Marsh
Habitat System Name:	Modified-Managed Marsh Notes: <i>May nest in shrubs on edges; forage in wetland.</i>
Macrogroup Name	Wet Meadow-Shrub Marsh
Habitat System Name:	Introduced Wetland and Riparian Vegetation Notes: <i>May nest in shrubs on edges; forage in wetland.</i>

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Stressor Priority Level based on Severity and Actionability	Moderate Severity		High Severity	
	Highly Actionable		Medium-High	
	Moderately Actionable		Medium	
	Actionable with Difficulty		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: Survey and Monitoring	Biological Priority: high	Type: new
Implement targeted surveys to better understand the distribution and status of this species and to help direct conservation actions to newly documented populations			

Stressor(s) Addressed By This Conservation Action

Lack of knowledge

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

Stressor(s) Addressed By This Conservation Action

Recreational Activities

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

Stressor(s) Addressed By This Conservation Action

Lack of knowledge

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

Stressor(s) Addressed By This Conservation Action

Lack of knowledge

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

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.