

Northern Goshawk

Autour des palombes

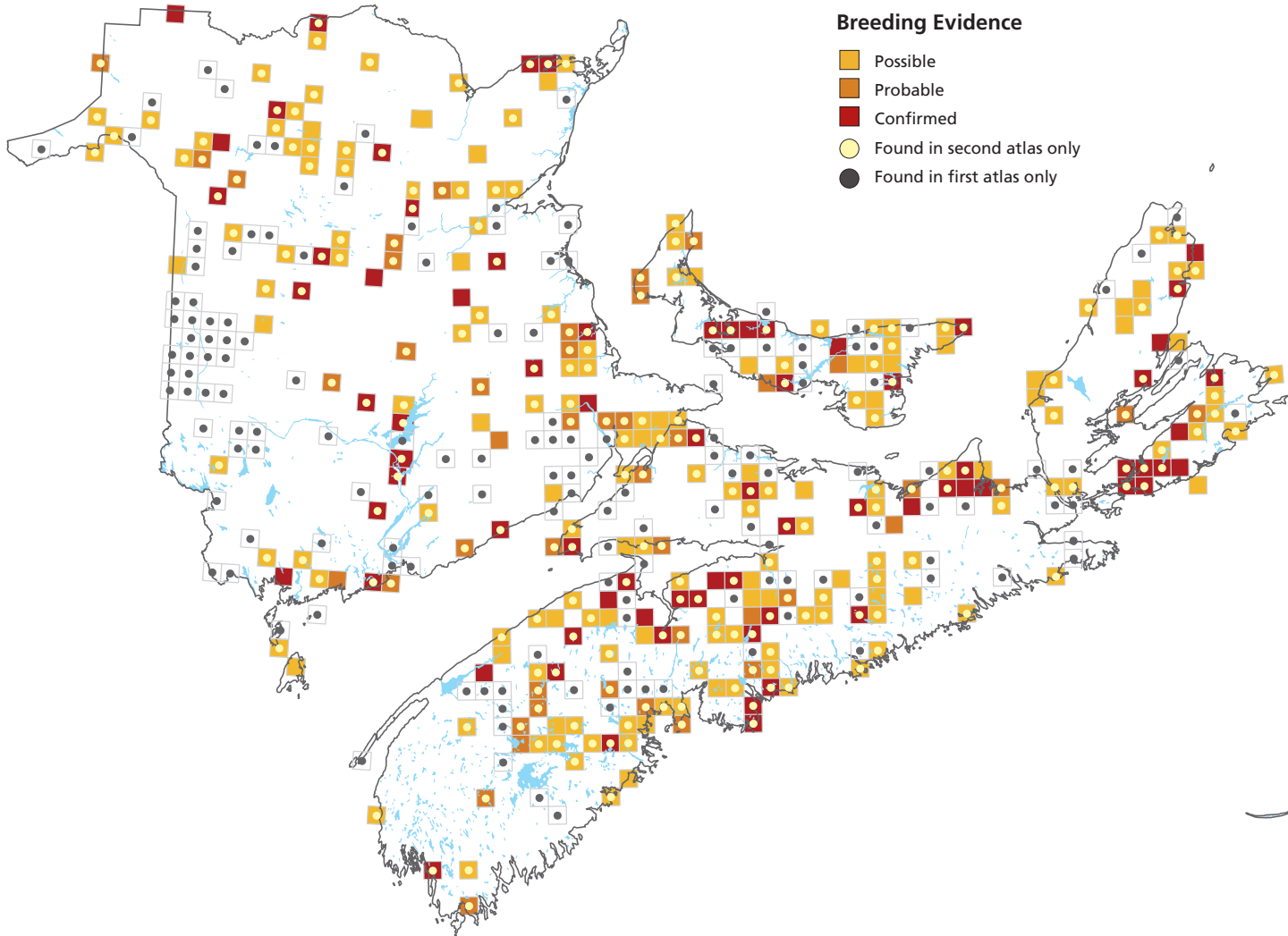
Accipiter gentilis



Jim Goltz

Few experiences are more thrilling (or terrifying) than hearing the alarm call of the Northern Goshawk, a loud, hollow “cuk-cuk-cuk-cuk,” as it fiercely defends its nest from would-be intruders. This species, our largest accipiter, can be found in forested regions throughout the northern hemisphere. Most of its North American range lies to our north and west, from the tree line south through the Northern Forests and western mountains.

In the Maritimes, as elsewhere, the Northern Goshawk is found in various habitats, including sapling, immature, and mature coniferous and deciduous forest. The nest locations, which are often re-used between years, tend to be in mature forests with open understoreys and high canopy closure. Goshawk records came from forested regions throughout the Maritimes, including the very fragmented forests of PEI and the Annapolis Valley, although surprisingly few records came from the Valley Lowlands of NB or from southwestern NS. The probability of observation is relatively low across the whole of the Maritimes.



Probability of Observation



The Northern Goshawk saw only small changes in its overall distribution, including some retraction from NB's western Valley Lowlands, and a corresponding decline in the probability of observation in this same region. The BBS in Canada also suggests no substantial population change. Nonetheless, the species has shown some sensitivity to landscape levels of timber harvesting in other regions and is considered highly sensitive to human disturbance at nest sites. Continued monitoring of populations and of breeding success in the Maritimes could be important for this majestic bird of prey.

—Peter Bush



Sean Basquill