

# Rusty Blackbird

*Euphagus carolinus nigrans*

<b>STATUS</b>	Special Concern 	Vulnerable 
Special Concern 	Endangered 	Not Listed 



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## Species Description

The Rusty Blackbird is medium-sized (21-25 cm), with yellow eyes and a narrow pointed bill. Males are glossy black with a greenish tinge and females are dark grey-brown. They have black legs and feet and a rounded tail. Its song is a high pitched “kerglees” and sounds like a creaky hinged door.



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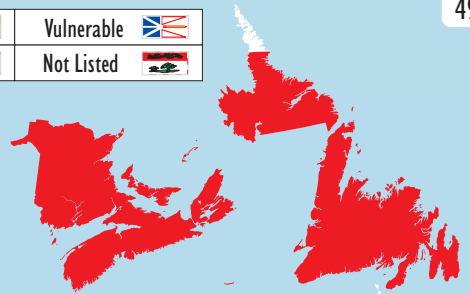


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Beaver pond

Infrequently sighted throughout much of Atlantic Canada with an unknown population size. Winters in the east-central United States.



## Habitat

The Rusty Blackbird breeds from April to August in coniferous-dominated wooded streams, swamps, and bogs. It is also found in wet forested areas near beaver ponds.

Rusty Blackbirds are typically observed near wet areas in coniferous-dominated forests. They tend to be solitary, unlike other gregarious blackbird species.

## Interesting Points

- Approximately 70% of the world's Rusty Blackbirds are thought to breed in Canada!
- This species may have declined by 85% over the last 40 years.
- In Canada, the *nigrans* subspecies occurs only in Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and in the Magdalen Islands of Quebec.

## Similar Species

### Common Grackle:

Larger (28-34 cm); longer bill and tail; black plumage with greenish-purple iridescence to the head, neck and breast; tail is keeled (v-shaped).



### Brown-headed Cowbird:

Smaller (17-22 cm); shorter bill and tail; dark eyes. Males: brown head; shiny black body with green-blue iridescence. Females: solid brown-gray.



Male



Female

## Threats to Survival

- The conversion of wetland breeding habitat to agricultural or urban land.
- Loss of wintering habitat in the Mississippi Valley flood plain forests (reduced by 80% over the last 150 years).
- Blackbird control programs in the United States.

## How You Can Help

Any information on distribution and habitat will help in our understanding of this species. Report sightings to eBird and nest observations to Project Nestwatch:  
[www.birdscanada.org/volunteer/pnw](http://www.birdscanada.org/volunteer/pnw).

## Contacts, Information & Sighting Reports

**Contact:** Environment Canada (506) 364-5044 ext. 5060 or [www.ec.gc.ca](http://www.ec.gc.ca)

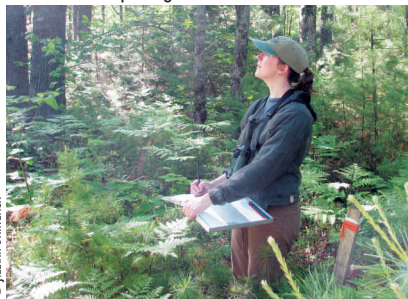
**Info:** Rusty Blackbird Working Group <http://rustyblackbird.org/working-group>

**Sighting Reports:** eBird.org



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Female with fall plumage



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Birding near wooded swamps