

made into early May. Unlike the crossbills, which often do not appear in years of low conifer seed crops, Pine Grosbeaks occur in greater or lesser numbers every winter, probably because they seem to prefer such a variety of wild foods, including the fleshy fruits of the crabapple, mountain ash, sumac, and holly; the buds of maple, birch, and aspen; and the seeds of yellow and white birches.

CHRISTOPHER FICHEL

**No. of priority blocks in which recorded**

TOTAL 1 (0.6%)

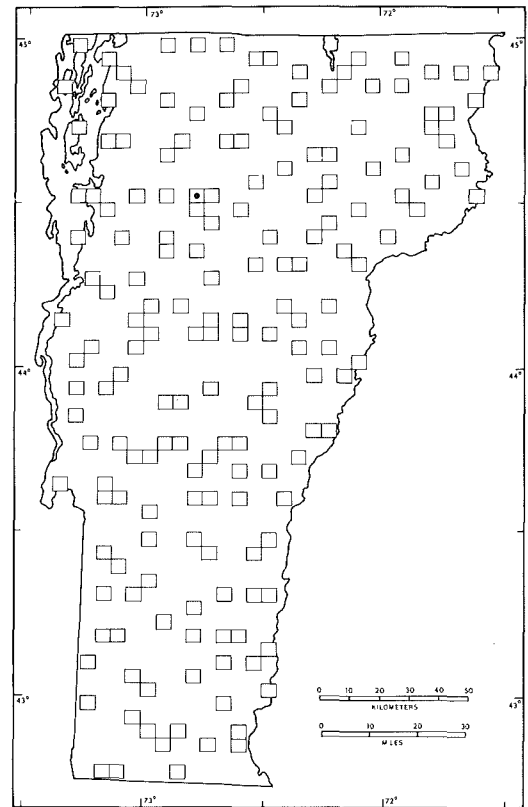
Possible breeding: 1 (100% of total)

Probable breeding: 0 (0% of total)

Confirmed breeding: 0 (0% of total)

**Physiographic regions in which recorded**

	no. of priority blocks	% of region's priority blocks	% of species' total priority blocks
Champlain Lowlands	0	0	0
Green Mountains	1	2	100
North Central	0	0	0
Northeast Highlands	0	0	0
East Central	0	0	0
Taconic Mountains	0	0	0
Eastern Foothills	0	0	0



## Red Crossbill

*Loxia curvirostra*

The Red Crossbill is considered one of Vermont's most erratic nesting species. Neither dates nor locations of nesting are predictable for this bird. Food supply probably influences when and where Red Crossbills will nest (DeGraaf et al. 1980); breeding often occurs where conifer seed crops are plentiful, and does not occur when such crops fail. Nesting generally takes place in late winter and early spring but can occur during the summer and fall as well (Bent 1968). Following nesting, family groups often join together and invade new areas, usually conifer stands, in search of food (Bent 1968).

Early references to Red Crossbills in Vermont mention nesting. Eggs were collected

at Orleans (Thompson 1853), and nests were found at Middlebury and Craftsbury (Howe 1902). Davenport (1907) noted that Red Crossbills nested in towns at 366 m (1,200 ft) elevation in Bennington and Windham counties. A pair was observed collecting nesting material in late May 1948 at Wells River (Smith 1948). A male and female were seen daily throughout September 1953 in South Londonderry, where in late October 1953 an adult male, adult female, and eight immatures were also observed (Downs 1953).

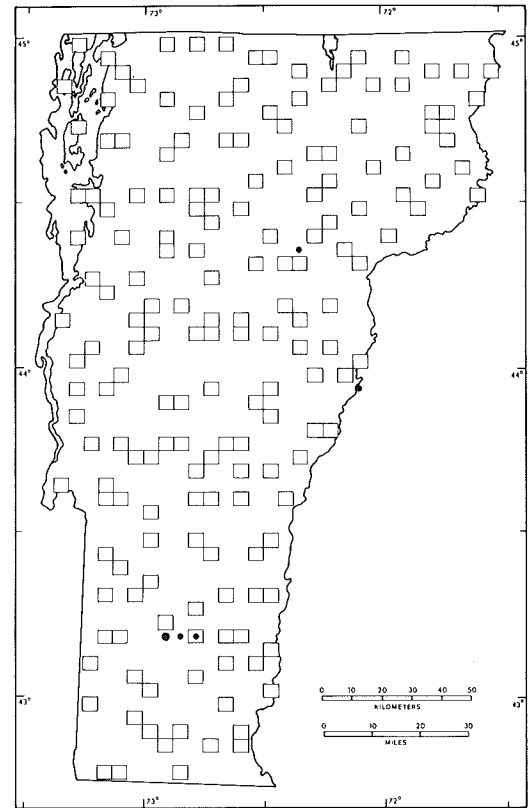
Summer records abound. Perkins and Howe (1901) mentioned Red Crossbills summering in Burlington and other parts of the

state. Davenport (1908) found them in flocks and pairs all summer on Mt. Mansfield in the summers between 1902 and 1906; Ross (1914) had a June record for Bennington; Eaton and Curry (1926) recorded sightings of Red Crossbills along portions of the Long Trail in the Green Mountains in June, July, and August; and Potter (1944) reported immatures on Pico Peak in June. Ten additional summer records exist between 1945 and 1968 from Burlington south to Marlboro (RNEB 1945-68).

During the five years of the Atlas Project there were no nesting confirmations and only five records for this species, three of which were clumped around Winhall and Londonderry in the southern Green Mountains. On June 26, 1979, 5 Red Crossbills—possibly a family group, as some appeared to have streaked juvenile plumage—were seen moving through a mixed conifer (spruce-fir-hemlock) stand at Gale Meadows Pond in Winhall (ASR, W. J. Norse). From November 1979 through April 1980, 10 to 12 Red Crossbills were seen in the vicinity of a pine stand in Winhall; singing males were heard there in February. On June 30, 1981 a Red Crossbill was observed flying from one pine stand to another in Londonderry (ASR, W. J. Norse). The only other occurrences during the Atlas Project were of 4 crossbills in suitable habitat in Marshfield on June 30, 1979 (ASR, M. F. Metcalf), and a pair in red pines at Eel Pot Ledges in Fairlee on May 12, 1980 (ASR, N. L. Martin).

According to sightings reported to *Records of Vermont Birds* (1973-83), Red Crossbills are most commonly seen from October through January and in March, although they have been reported in all months of the year. A spring invasion occurred in 1973; flocks of 10 to 30 birds were observed daily in Londonderry, Grafton, and Hartford, with a maximum of 150 in Londonderry on March 16. During irruptive periods both Red Crossbills and White-winged Crossbills are common; but in general the latter are seen more frequently and in higher numbers than the former.

CHRISTOPHER FICHTEL



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