

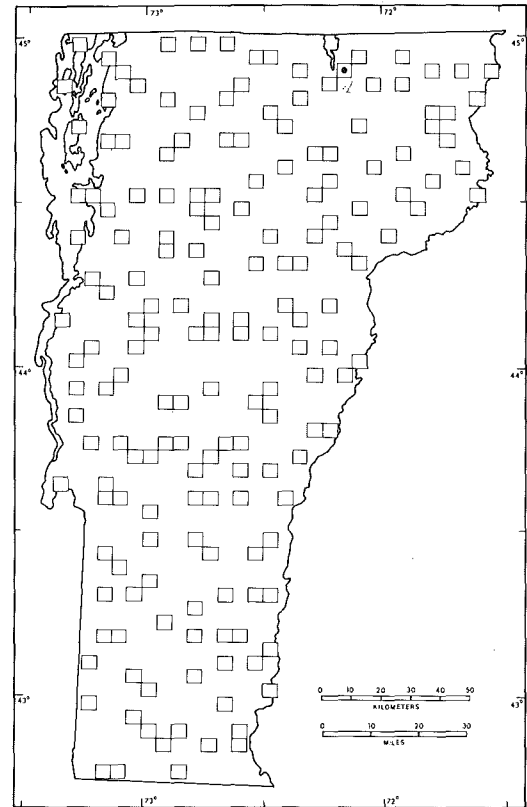
No. of priority blocks in which recorded

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	0	0	0
North Central	1	5	100
Northeast Highlands	0	0	0
East Central	0	0	0
Taconic Mountains	0	0	0
Eastern Foothills	0	0	0



Ring-necked Pheasant

Phasianus colchicus

The date when the Ring-necked Pheasant was first introduced to Vermont is uncertain, but the Vermont legislature gave the species protection in 1892 (Foote 1946). Birds were primarily stocked in the Champlain Lowlands; up to 5,000 were released at a shooting preserve in Shelburne in 1894. Banded birds from this release were later found near Bennington and Barre (Foote 1946). Favorable conditions, including mild winters and fields of grain and corn, helped fuel a population increase. However, a severe winter in 1904–5 decimated the population, and numbers remained low into the 1920s. The first state-run game farm for raising pheasants was opened in 1922 in Milton by the Vermont Fish and Game Service. An average of 1,500 birds were raised

annually until 1937 when, because of economic difficulties, the farm was closed (Foote 1946). The Fish and Game Service continued stocking the Champlain Valley, lower Connecticut River valley, and Bennington County, using pheasants purchased from outside the state (Foote 1946). This system was eventually abandoned. On a trial basis between 1966 and 1971, the Fish and Game Service again stocked pheasants for hunting; since then Ring-necks have not been released by that agency (J. D. Stewart, pers. comm.). Local releases by private individuals have continued.

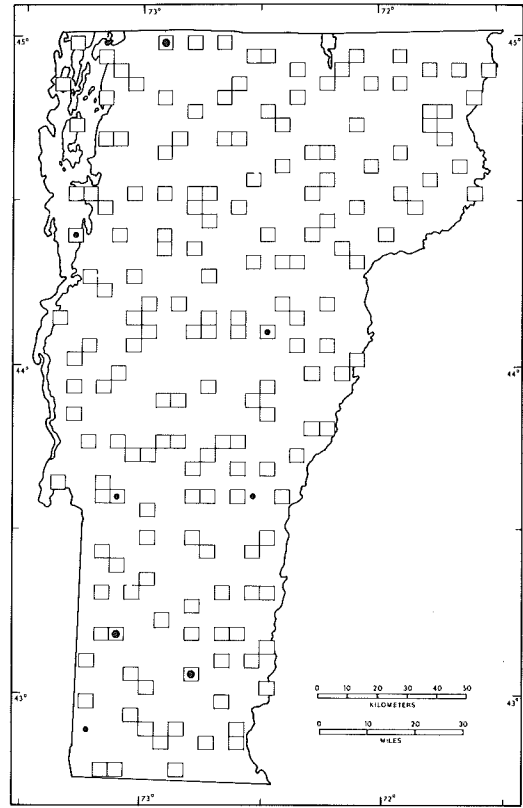
During the 1976–81 Atlas Project survey, nine reports (six possible and three probable nestings), encompassing both priority and non-priority blocks, were recorded.

Two possible nestings and one probable nesting occurred in the Champlain Lowlands; similar numbers were recorded in the Valley of Vermont: two possibles (at West Rutland and Bennington) and one probable (Manchester). Possible nestings—one each at East Barre and Woodstock—occurred in eastern Vermont, and there was one Ring-neck sighted in the Green Mountains (a displaying cock pheasant at Wardsboro). Ring-necks have also been recorded periodically during the past decade in the vicinity of Westminster.

Foote (1946) estimated that during periods of relative pheasant abundance in Vermont areas with substantial cover supported a fall population of 1 Ring-neck per 2.03 ha (5 a), while areas with "average" cover supported 1 bird per 20.3 ha (50 a). However, Allen (1956) doubted that fall populations in Vermont exceeded 1 bird per 40.5 ha (100 a).

Severe winters undoubtedly take their toll on any released pheasant stock, as demonstrated by the species' decline after the 1904–5 winter; in addition, predations affect the population. Hessler et al. (1970) determined that 81% of pen-reared pheasants died within a month of release; 92% of those were killed by predators. These pheasants showed no fear or tendency to seek cover.

CHRISTOPHER FICHEL



No. of priority blocks in which recorded

TOTAL 6 (3%)
 Possible breeding: 3 (50% of total)
 Probable breeding: 3 (50% 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	2	6	33
Green Mountains	1	2	17
North Central	0	0	0
Northeast Highlands	0	0	0
East Central	1	5	17
Taconic Mountains	2	12	33
Eastern Foothills	0	0	0