

Species Status Assessment

Common Name: Felt's Mason Bee **Date Updated:** 2025-03-15
Scientific Name: *Osmia felti* **Updated By:** Erin L. White
Class: Insecta
Family: Megachilidae

Species Synopsis

(a short paragraph which describes species taxonomy, distribution, recent trends, and habitat in New York):

Felt's Mason Bees are known from North Dakota eastward in the northern US and also from the east coast from Georgia to New Hampshire. In Canada, they are known from Ontario and Quebec (NatureServe 2025).

The species was ranked an S1 as part of the ESNPS (White et al. 2022) based on rarity, trend, and threat information. *Osmia felti* is known historically (1999 and earlier) from Albany County. Since 2000, it has been observed in Livingston and Suffolk counties (White et al. 2022). It appears to have always been a rare bee in New York.

This species is associated with sandy barrens habitats (Tucker and Rehan 2019; Latham 2020) and has been observed near oak forest/pine barrens, shrublands, coastal hardwoods, and coastal red-maple black gum swamp in NY (White et al. 2022, Gawler 2008). The nesting and floral associations are unknown but *Osmia* are cavity nesters (Wilson and Caril 2016)

I. Status

a. Current legal protected Status

- i. **Federal:** Not Listed **Candidate: No**
ii. **New York:** Not listed

b. Natural Heritage Program

- i. **Global:** G3
ii. **New York:** S1 **Tracked by NYNHP?** On Active Tracking List

Other Ranks:

NYS 2025 SGCN Status: High Priority Species of Greatest Conservation Need

COSEWIC: Not listed in Canada
 IUCN Red List: Not assessed by IUCN Red List
 Northeast Regional SGCN: Proposed Watchlist [Assessment Priority]

Status Discussion:

The species was ranked an S1 as part of the ESNPS (White et al. 2022) based on rarity, trend, and threat information. *Osmia felti* is known historically (1999 and earlier) from Albany County. Since 2000, it has been observed in Livingston and Suffolk counties (White et al. 2022). It appears to have always been a rare bee in New York.

II. Abundance and Distribution Trends

Region	Present?	Abundance	Distribution	Time Frame	Listing status or S-Rank	SGCN?
North America	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown		
Northeastern US	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown		Proposed Watchlist [Assessment Priority]
New York	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	S1	
Connecticut	No	-	-	-		
Massachusetts	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	SNR	
New Jersey	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	SNR	
Pennsylvania	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	SNR	
Vermont	No	-	-	-		
Ontario	No	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	SU	
Quebec	No	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	SNR	

Column options

Present?: Yes; No; Unknown; No data; (blank) or Choose an Item

Abundance and Distribution: Declining; Increasing; Stable; Unknown; Extirpated; N/A; (blank) or Choose an item

SGCN?: Yes; No; Unknown; (blank) or Choose an item

Monitoring in New York

(specify any monitoring activities or regular surveys that are conducted in New York):

The Empire State Native Pollinator Survey (ESNPS) was conducted from 2017-2021, but there are no organized, regular monitoring or survey activities directed toward this species or to sites where they have been documented. Some regular monitoring may occur at protected sites that Heritage staff revisit if they occur on state properties, as part of OPRHP or State Lands inventory work.

Trends Discussion

(insert map of North American/regional distribution and status):

Osmia felti is known historically (1999 and earlier) from Albany County. Since 2000, it has been observed in Livingston and Suffolk counties (White et al. 2022). It appears to have always been a rare bee in New York.

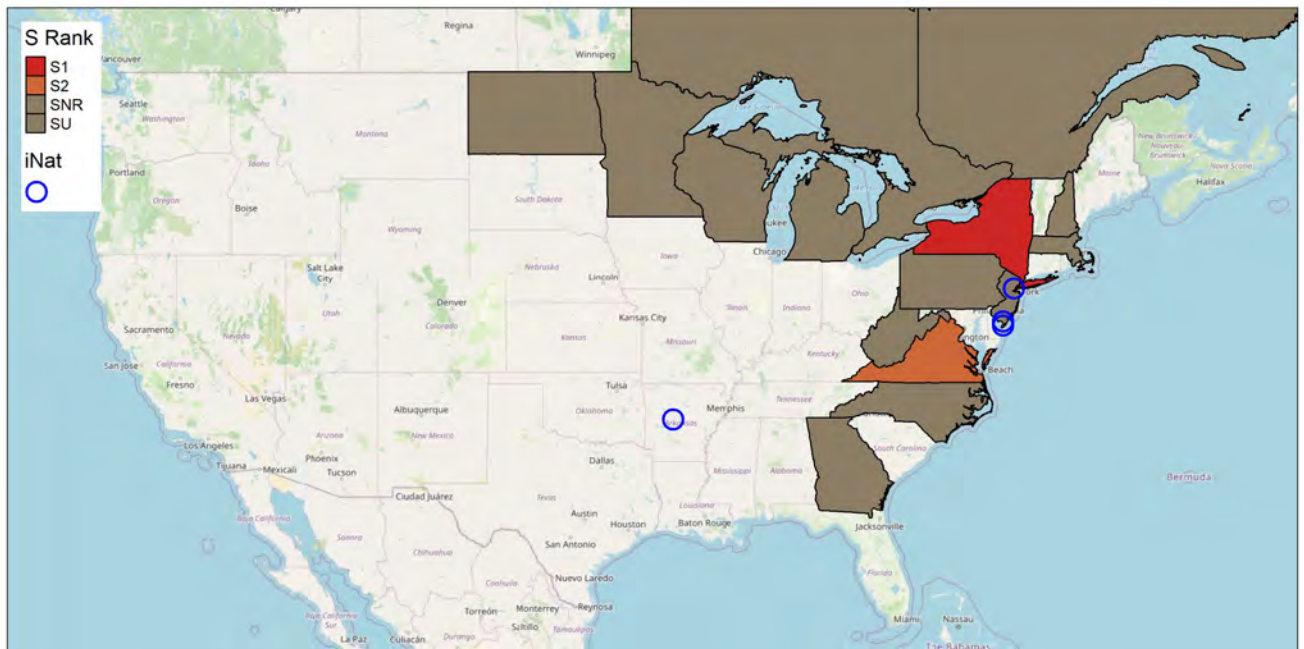


Figure 1: *Osmia felti* North American distribution. Points show research-grade iNaturalist observations.



Figure 2: *Osmia felti* regional distribution as reported at <https://northeastwildlifediversity.org/rsgcn> .

III. New York Rarity

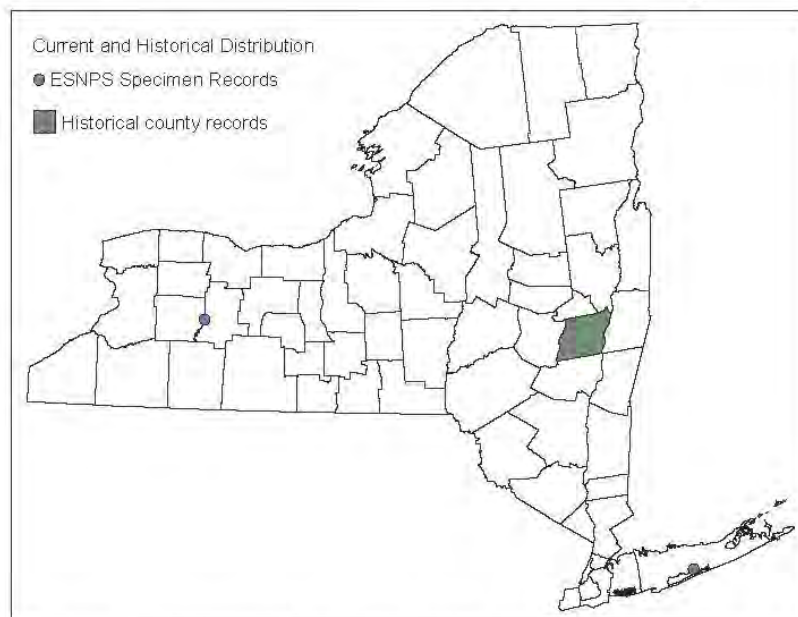


Figure 1: Observations from 2000 to present depicted as dots; those from 1999 and earlier as shaded counties.

Figure 3: NYS distribution for *Osmia felti* based on element occurrence data.

Years	Observations	# of Counties	% of counties in State
Pre-2000	8	1	1.6
2000-2023	2	2	3.2

Table 1. Number of observations of *Osmia felti* grouped by the dates known to be extant (repeat observations (element occurrences) include the years spanning first observation to last observation) and the number and percent of total of counties these observations fall within for New York State.

Details of historic and current occurrence:

Osmia felti is known historically (1999 and earlier) from Albany County. Since 2000, it has been observed in Livingston and Suffolk counties (White et al. 2022).

Percent of North American Range in NY	Classification of NY Range	Distance to core population, if not in NY
1-25%	Peripheral	~500 mi

Column options

Percent of North American Range in NY: 100% (endemic); 76-99%; 51-75%; 26-50% 1-25%; 0%; Choose an item

Classification of NY Range: Core; Peripheral; Disjunct; (blank) or Choose an item

IV. Primary Habitat or Community Type

(from NY crosswalk of NE Aquatic, Marine, or Terrestrial Habitat Classification Systems):

NatureServe broad habitat types: Woodland - Mixed, Sand/dune, Barrens, Woodland - Conifer, Urban/edificarian, Forest - Hardwood, Suburban/orchard

Oak Forest/Pine Barrens

Shrublands

Coastal Hardwoods

Coastal Red-Maple Black Gum Swamp

Habitat or Community Type Trend in New York

Habitat Specialist?	Indicator Species?	Habitat/ Community Trend	Time frame of Decline/ Increase
No	No	Unknown	Unknown

Column options

Habitat Specialist and Indicator Species: Yes; No; Unknown; (blank) or Choose an item.

Habitat/Community Trend: Declining; Stable; Increasing; Unknown; (blank) or Choose an item.

Habitat Discussion:

This species is associated with sandy barrens habitats (Tucker and Rehan 2019; Latham 2020) and has been observed near oak forest/pine barrens, shrublands, coastal hardwoods, and coastal red-maple black gum swamp in NY (White et al. 2022, Gawler 2008). The nesting and floral associations are unknown but *Osmia* are cavity nesters (Wilson and Caril 2016). Many terrestrial habitat-checkoffs are based on an analysis of occurrence data and land-cover data by Chesshire et al. (2023).

V. Species Demographics and Life History

Breeder in NY?	Non-breeder in NY?	Migratory Only?	Summer Resident?	Winter Resident?	Anadromous/Catadromous?
Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No

Column options

First 5 fields: Yes; No; Unknown; (blank) or Choose an item.

Anadromous/Catadromous: Anadromous; Catadromous; (blank) or Choose an item.

Species Demographics and Life History Discussion

(include information about species life span, reproductive longevity, reproductive capacity, age to maturity, and ability to disperse and colonize):

Recent observations in NY have occurred in June and August (White et al. 2022),

VI. Threats

Threats facing stem-nesting or cavity-nesting bees include habitat loss from conversion of shrublands to agriculture, fire, logging and wood harvesting, invasive plants and pathogens, pesticides, and climate change (White et al. 2022). Kammerer et al. (2020) found that warmer winters will result in fewer bees and solitary bees are more sensitive to drought conditions, which are predicted in the Northeast as a result of climate change.

Threat Level 1	Threat Level 2	Threat Level 3	Scope	Severity	Irreversibility	Trend	Certainty
2. Agriculture & Aquaculture	2.1 Annual & Perennial Non-Timber Crops	(agricultural expansion/conversion of shrublands)	R	L	H	Choose an item.	Choose an item.
5. Biological Resource Use	5.3 Logging & Wood Harvesting	-	R	L	H	Choose an item.	Choose an item.
7. Natural System Modifications	7.1 Fire & Fire Suppression	7.1.1 Increase in the fire regime	R	L	H	Choose an item.	Choose an item.
8. Invasive & Other Problematic Species	8.1 Invasive Non-Native Plants & Animals	8.1.2 Terrestrial plants	P	M	H	Choose an item.	Choose an item.
8. Invasive & Other Problematic Species	8.4 Pathogens	-	P	M	H	Choose an item.	Choose an item.
9. Pollution	9.3 Agricultural & Forestry Effluents	9.3.3 Herbicides & pesticides	R	L	H	Choose an item.	Choose an item.
11. Climate Change	11.1 Habitat Shifting & Alteration	(warmer winters result in fewer bees)	W	L	H	Choose an item.	Choose an item.
11. Climate Change	11.4 Changes in Precipitation & Hydrological Regimes	11.4.2 Droughts (solitary bees more sensitive to drought).	R	L	H	Choose an item.	Choose an item.

Table 2. Threats to *Osmia felti*.

SCOPE: Spatial proportion of the distribution that is expected to be affected in the next 10 years (**narrow**= 1-10%; **restricted**=11-30%; **widespread**=31-70%; **pervasive**= 71-100%).

SEVERITY: The degree of population reduction in the next 10 years that can be reasonably expected from the threat given the current circumstances and trends (**low**=degrade/reduce population by 1-10%; **medium**=d/r population by 11-30%; **high**=d/r population by 30-70%; **very high**=d/r population by 71-100%).

IRREVERSIBILITY: The degree to which the effects can be reduced and the species restored (**low**=easily reversed, at a low cost, and/or within 0-5 years; **medium**=can be reversed with a reasonable commitment of resources and/or within 6-20 years; **high**=can technically be reversed, but not practicably affordable and/or it would take 21-100 years; **very high**=cannot be reversed and species not likely to be restore and/or it would take >100 years).

Are there regulatory mechanisms that protect the species or its habitat in New York?

Yes:

No:



Unknown:

If yes, describe mechanism and whether adequate to protect species/habitat:

Describe knowledge of management/conservation actions that are needed for recovery/conservation, or to eliminate, minimize, or compensate for the identified threats:

Any efforts to protect wild bee populations from pathogen exposure would benefit this species. Suggested actions would include using mesh to prevent escape of bees from commercial breeding greenhouses, proper disposal of commercial bees, sanitation in greenhouses, and development of molecular screening. Tight restrictions on importing bees and elimination of parasites from commercial populations has been suggested as ideal (Meeus et al. 2011, Schweitzer et al. 2012). Limiting exposure of *Osmia felti* to insecticides would also benefit them. Suggested actions include avoidance of application to flowers that bees are attracted to and application of solutions or soluble powders (rather than dusts or wettable powders) to the ground in calm wind and warmer temperatures during periods of dewless nights to minimize the impact to resident native bee populations (Schweitzer et al. 2012). Organic farming has also been suggested to benefit native bees. Ensuring habitat resources for foraging, nesting, and overwintering will also benefit *Osmia felti*. These habitats should be within close proximity to each other and without road or railroads between them, which have been suggested as potential barriers to dispersal. Suggested actions for habitat management should include ensuring nectar availability throughout the spring and summer by improving flower abundance and species richness and species with overlapping blooms. If mowing of fields occurs, summer is the best time and mower blades should be raised to avoid ground nests of other pollinators. Staggering cutting times in different field areas will ensure nectaring sources are always available. Increasing available nesting habitat may be accomplished by maintaining standing old trees and coarse woody debris on the ground.

Action Category	Action	Description
A.1 Direct Habitat Management	A.1.0.0.0 Direct habitat management	Site/Area management
A.1 Direct Habitat Management	A.1.1.0.0 Manage plants, animals, fungi, or bacteria	Invasive/Problematic species control
B.3 Outreach	B.3.1.4.0 Public outreach and information	Awareness & Communications
C.6 Design and Plan Conservation	C.6.5.0.0 Conservation planning	Site/Area Protection
C.6 Design and Plan Conservation	C.6.5.0.0 Conservation planning	Resource/Habitat Protection
C.6 Design and Plan Conservation	C.6.5.1.3 Develop a conservation, management, or restoration plan for protected private lands	Habitat/Natural process restoration
C.7 Legislative and Regulatory Framework or Tools	C.7.1.3.0 Create, amend, or influence regulation	
C.7 Legislative and Regulatory Framework or Tools	C.7.2.1.0 Create or amend policies	
C.9 Education and Training	C.9.2.0.0 Training and individual skill development	Training

Table 2. Recommended conservation actions for *Osmia felti*.

VII. References

This SSA drew heavily from these resources:

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NatureServe. 2023. NatureServe Explorer: An online encyclopedia of life [web application]. Version 7.1. NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. <http://www.natureserve.org/explorer>. [Accessed 12/14/2023].

Additional references:

Gawler, S.C. 2008. Northeastern Terrestrial Wildlife Habitat Classification. NatureServe, Boston, MA.

IUCN 2024. IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Version 2023.1. <www.iucnredlist.org>. Accessed 28 August 2024.

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Meeus, I., M. J. F. Brown, D. C. De Graaf, and G. Smagghe. 2011. Effects of invasive parasites on bumble bee declines. *Conservation Biology* 25(4):662–671.

Northeast Fish and Wildlife Diversity. 2024. Regional Species of Greatest Conservation Need (2024). <https://northeastwildlifediversity.org/rsgcn>. Accessed August 28, 2024.

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White, Erin L., Matthew D. Schlesinger, and Timothy G. Howard. 2022. The Empire State Native Pollinator Survey (2017-2021). New York Natural Heritage Program. Albany, NY.

Wilson, J.S. and O.M. Carril. 2016. A guide to North America's Bees: The bees in your backyard. Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey.

Originally prepared by	Erin L. White
Date first prepared	March 15, 2025
First revision	
Last revision	