

Other Ranks:

- New York 2025 SGCN status: Species of Greatest Conservation Need
- COSEWIC: Threatened
- IUCN Red List: Least Concern
- Northeast Regional SGCN: Watchlist [Assessment Priority]

Status Discussion:

This species is listed as threatened in Canada and has shown a severe decline of about 98% of its Canadian population over the last 40 years (NatureServe 2025).

II. Abundance and Distribution Trends

Region	Present ?	Abundance	Distribution	Time Frame	Listing status or S-Rank	SGCN?
North America	Yes	Declining	Unknown	BBS 1966-2022 trend for US		
Northeastern US	Yes	Declining	Unknown	BBS 1966-2022 trend		
New York	Yes	Declining	Unknown	BBS 1966-2022 trend	S5B	Yes
Connecticut	Yes	Declining	Unknown	BBS 1966-2022 trend	S5B	No
Massachusetts	Yes	Declining	Unknown	BBS 1966-2022 trend	S5	Yes
New Jersey	Yes	Declining	Unknown	BBS 1966-2022 trend	Special Concern; S3B,S3N	Yes
Pennsylvania	Yes	Declining	Unknown	BBS 1966-	S3B,S5M	Yes

Region	Present ?	Abundance	Distribution	Time Frame	Listing status or S-Rank	SGCN?
				2022 trend		
Vermont	Yes	Declining	Unknown	BBS 1966-2022 trend	S4B	No
Ontario	Yes	Declining	Unknown	BBS 1966-2022 trend	Threatened ; S4B	
Quebec	Yes	Declining	Unknown	BBS 1966-2022 trend	S2B	

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

The bank swallow is the targeted species for the Swallow Bluffs wildlife management area in St. Lawrence County, NY. Nesting and population surveys are included in the 2020-2029 habitat management plan (NYSDEC 2020).

Trends Discussion

Bank swallow populations appear to be declining in North America, with a 98% decline in population according to the Breeding Bird Survey since the 1970s (Burke et al. 2019, Falconer et al. 2016).

Breeding range map for Bank Swallow

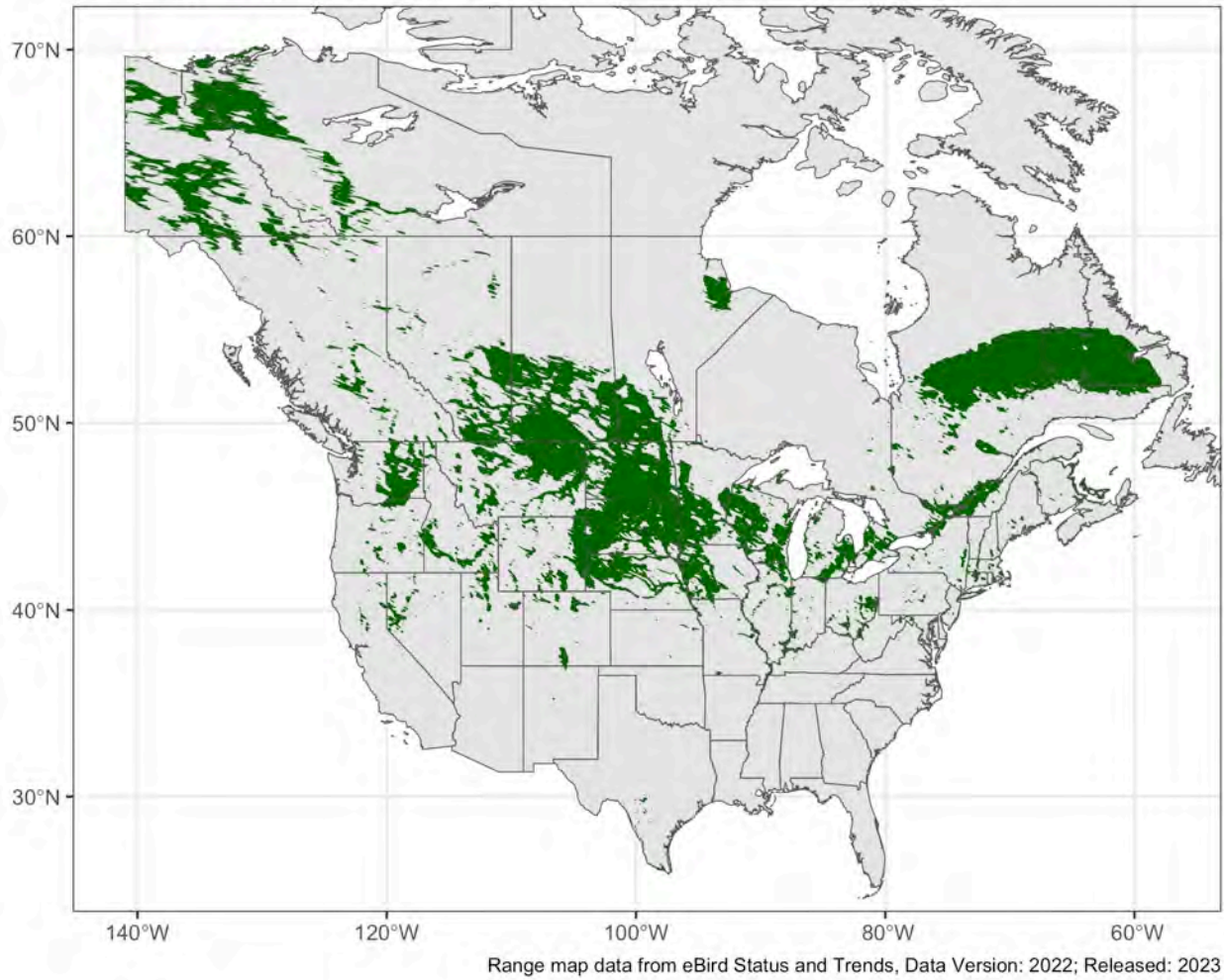
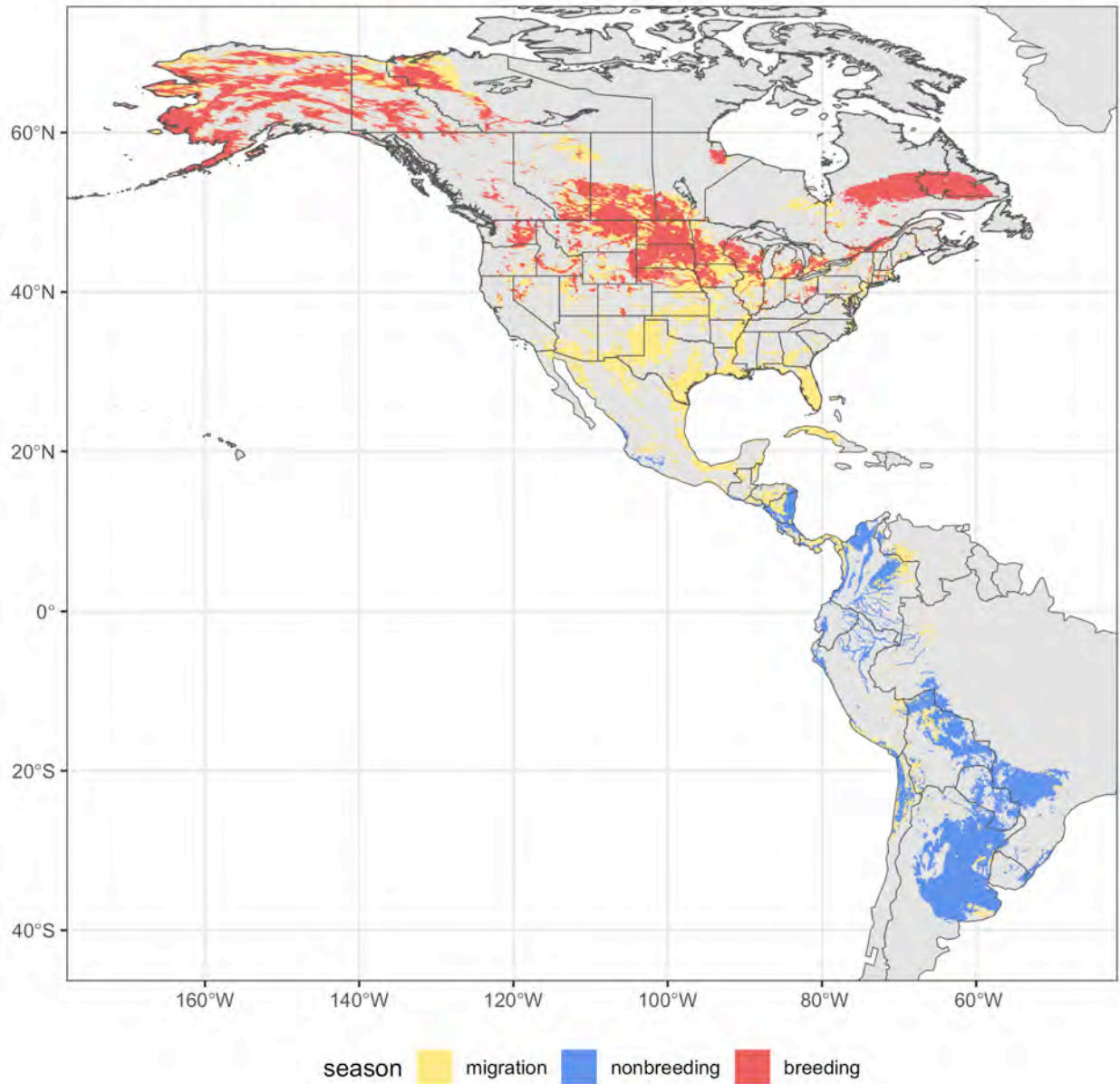


Figure 1. Breeding range of bank swallow (eBird).

Year-round range map for Bank Swallow



Range map data from eBird Status and Trends, Data Version: 2022; Released: 2023

Figure 2. Full (year-round) range of bank swallow (eBird).

Bank Swallow state-level breeding trends 2012-2022

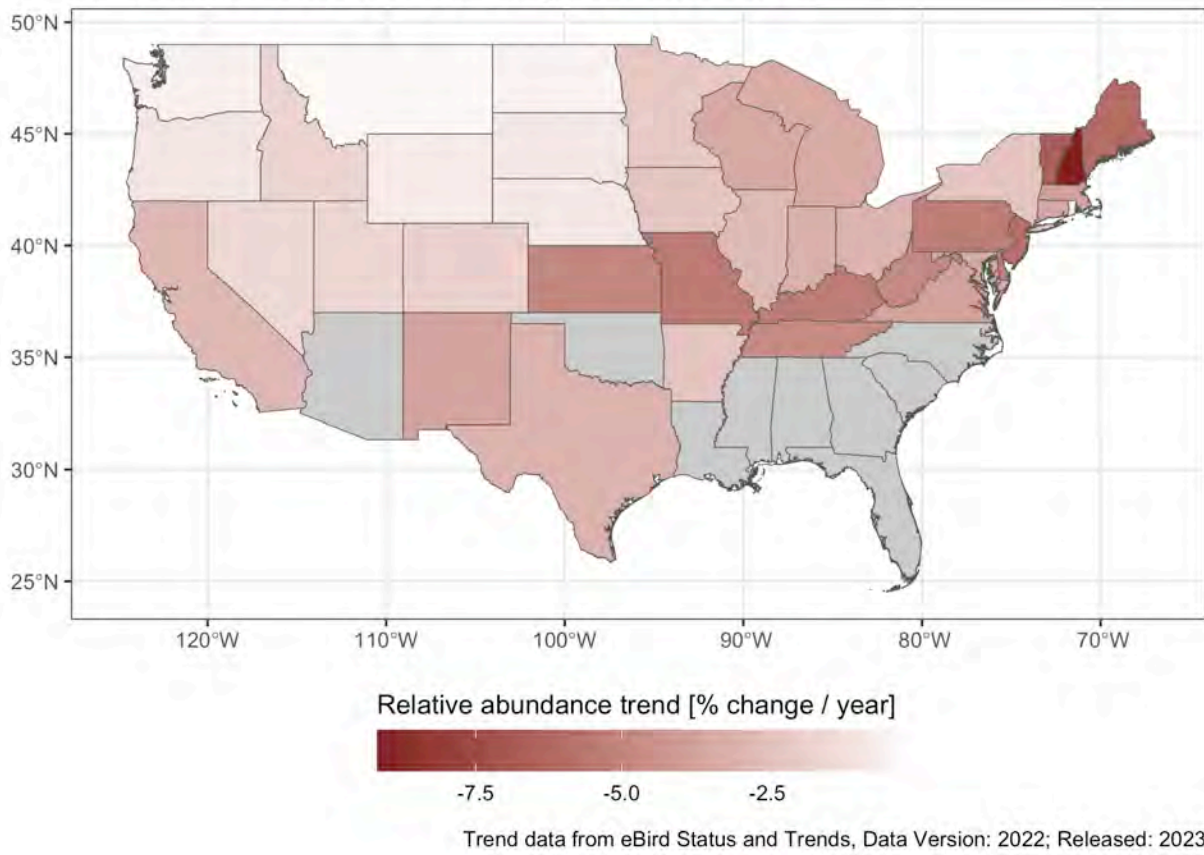


Figure 3. Breeding trends, by state, of bank swallow (eBird).

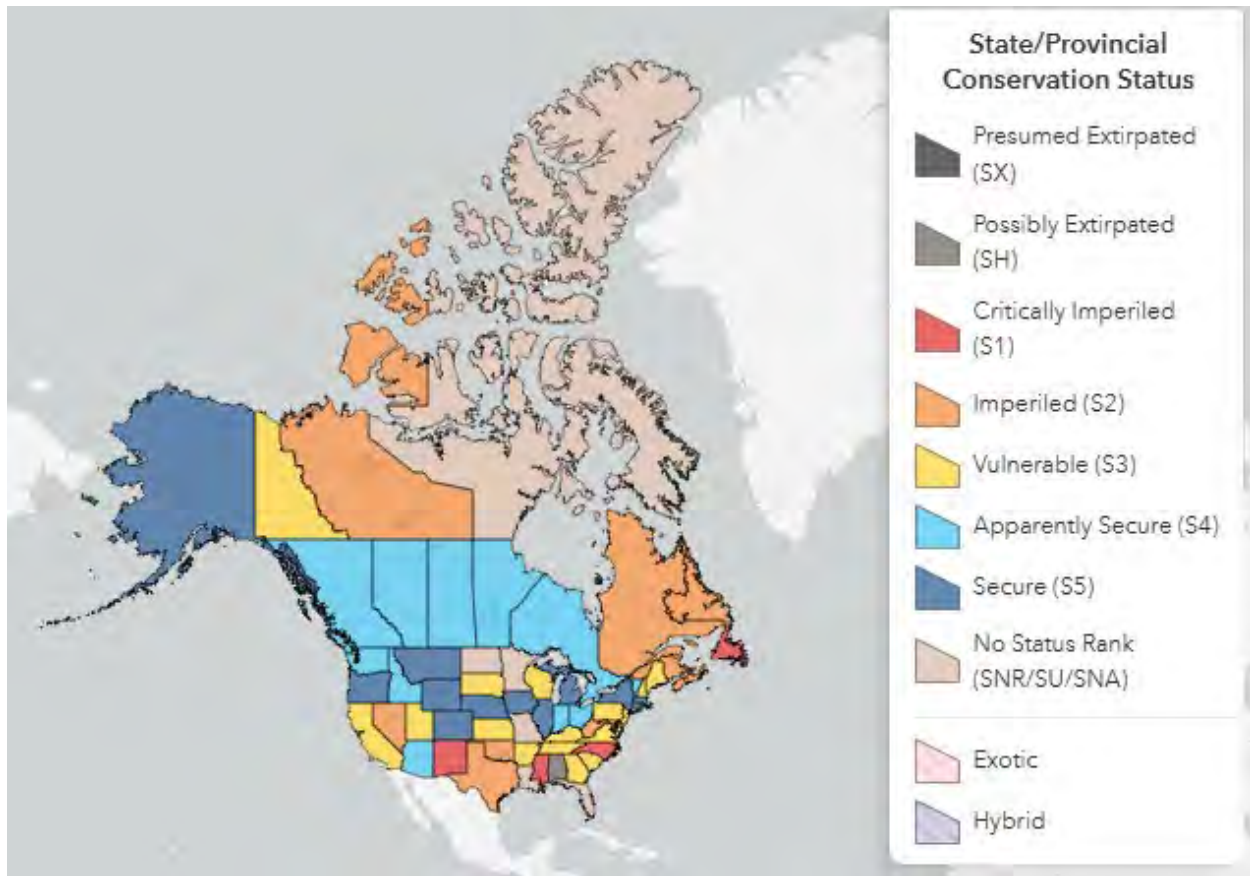


Figure 4. Conservation status of bank swallow (NatureServe 2025).

III. New York Rarity

(provide map, numbers, and percent of state occupied)

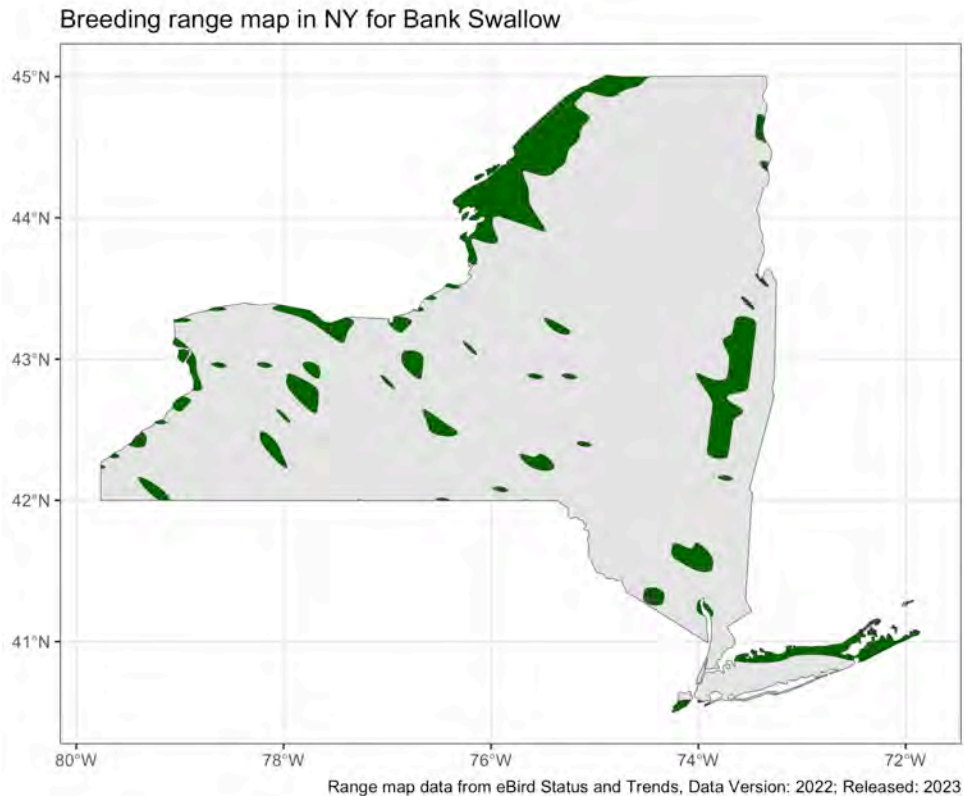


Figure 5. NYS breeding range for bank swallow (eBird).

Details of historic and current occurrence:

Historically, nesting colonies of bank swallows were found in natural sites; now, many nesting colonies can be found in human-made sites (Garrison and Turner 2020).

The first Breeding Bird Atlas (BBA) (1980-85) documented occupancy in 1966 blocks, 36.9% of the survey blocks statewide (Andrle and Carroll 1988). The second BBA (2000-05) documented occupancy in 1421 blocks, 26.6% of the survey blocks statewide (McGowan and Corwin 2008).

The third BBA (2020-25) is currently underway and utilizes a different number and layout of survey blocks across New York, making direct comparison with the first two Atlases difficult. There were 5,333 blocks in the first and second BBAs, and there are 5,710 blocks in the current BBA, of which 1,815 are considered priority blocks. To date, bank swallow has been documented in 509 priority blocks, 13.7% of all priority blocks statewide during the third BBA (NY BBA III Overview, 2024).

New York’s Contribution to Species North American Range:

Based on eBird data, 0.06 percent of the population breeds in New York, while 0 percent of the non-breeding population occurs in New York. Among all states with breeding populations, New York ranks 12 of 28.

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

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:

Estuarine: Aerial

Lacustrine: Aerial

Palustrine: Aerial, Riparian

Riverine: Aerial

Terrestrial: Aerial

Habitat or Community Type Trend in New York

Habitat Specialist?	Indicator Species?	Habitat/ Community Trend	Time frame of Decline/ Increase
Yes	Yes	Decreasing	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:

Nests in sand or gravel banks or road cuts, usually near water. Colonies have recently been reported to use dredged spoil banks in the Hudson Valley.

Habitat includes open and partly open situations, frequently near flowing water (AOU 1983). Nests are in steep sand, dirt, or gravel banks, in burrows dug near the top of the bank, along the edge of inland water, or along the coast, or in gravel pits, road embankments, etc. Both sexes construct the nest burrow. Pairs usually dig a new burrow each year, but sometimes they use old bank swallow burrows or abandoned cavities of the belted kingfisher. Individuals tends to return to same nesting area in successive years, though they may move several kilometers away, especially if nesting was unsuccessful the previous year; yearlings often return to the natal area or nearby (Turner and Rose 1989).

IUCN habitat description: The species nests colonially in newly eroded banks of rivers, streams, lakes, reservoirs, and coastal cliffs (Tucker and Heath 1994, Turner 2004). Quarries are important nesting sites (Tucker and Heath 1994), and birds may use other man-made habitats including road and railway cuttings and building work excavations. Suitability of breeding sites depends on erosion which both creates new sites and destroys old ones (Turner 2004).

Breeding occurs between late April and August usually with two clutches of between three and six eggs. Erosion at breeding sites is vital for creating new nest sites which birds prefer. Bank

swallows may roost in reedbeds. They forage approximately 15 m above ground (Turner 2004) feeding mainly on insects but also taking spiders (Tucker and Heath 1994, Turner 2004). Important foraging habitats include water-bodies, grassland and farmland (Turner 2004). Urban and forested areas are less important. This species is migratory with Eurasian birds typically wintering in the Sahel zone and East Africa south to Mozambique (Tucker and Heath 1994). Breeding birds in North America migrate to South America (Turner 2004). Adult birds migrate soon after breeding. Juveniles roam over a wide area. Most adult birds return to the same breeding colony in subsequent years (Turner 2004).

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):

The clutch size of bank swallows is 2-8 eggs. Incubation lasts 12-16 days (Terres 1980). The young are tended by both sexes and leave the nest at around 18-22 days old (NatureServe 2025). Most individuals live for only one or a few years (NatureServe 2025).

Bank swallows may form flocks of 100s or 1000s prior to fall migration. Inclement weather and resulting scarcity of food may be important factors in nestling mortality in some years; erosion of nest sites and predators also sometimes destroy nests (Turner and Rose 1989).

VI. Threats

Threat Level 1	Threat Level 2	Threat Level 3	Spatial Extent	Severity	Immediacy	Trend	Certainty
1. Residential and Commercial	-	(habitat loss/degradation)	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.
2. Agriculture & Aquaculture	-	(habitat loss/degradation)	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.
7. Natural System Modifications	7.2 Dams & Water Management/Use	-	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.
9. Pollution	9.2 Industrial & Military Effluents	9.2.5 Mercury	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.
9. Pollution	9.3 Agricultural & Forestry Effluents	9.3.3 Herbicides & pesticides	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.
11. Climate Change	11.1 Habitat Shifting & Alteration	(sea level rise)	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.
11. Climate Change	11.3 Changes in Temperature Regimes	11.3.4 Increase in temperature fluctuations	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.

Table 1. Threats to bank swallow.

Streamflow regulation and erosion control pose a threat to bank swallows by reducing available nesting habitats. Agricultural and urban development can result in loss or degradation of foraging and nesting habitats (Falconer et al. 2016). Loss or degradation of wetland habitats diminishes available food, emergent insects, for this species (Falconer et al. 2016). Swallows breeding in active quarries are threatened by continued quarrying activities. Ramirez-Garofalo et al. 2021 suggests that ocean facing nesting areas are susceptible to sea level rise from climate change.

Mercury exposure may be a potential threat to bank swallows (Falconer et al. 2016). Insectivorous birds have higher mercury concentrations compared to birds feeding at lower trophic levels (Keller et al. 2014, Falconer et al. 2016). For tree swallows, mercury has shown a range of negative effects on immune and endocrine systems (Hawley et al. 2009, Wada et al. 2009, from Falconer et al. 2016).

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:

This species is included in the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 (16 U.S.C. 703-712) and is protected as a native species under the NYS Environmental Conservation Law.

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

Action Category	Action	Description
C.7 Legislative and Regulatory Framework or Tools	C.7.2 Create or amend policies, guidelines or best practices	Need reduction in use of pesticides
C.8 Research and Monitoring	C.8.1.1.1 Characterization, demographic study, population or inventory	Monitor population trends and aerial insect food source availability and quality

Table 2. Recommended conservation actions for *bank swallow*.

VII. References

This SSA drew heavily from these resources:

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