



Region	Present?	Abundance	Distribution	Time Frame	Listing status	SGCN?
Connecticut	Yes	-	-			No
Massachusetts	Yes	-	-			No
New Jersey	Yes	-	-			No
Pennsylvania	Yes	-	-			No
Vermont	Yes	-	-			No
Ontario	Yes	Stable	Stable			No
Quebec	Yes	Stable	Stable			No

*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*):

None.

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

Bonaparte's gull increased greatly in numbers in New York since the early 1900s when it was a rare migrant in Niagara Frontier; the species now regularly numbers 10,000 in one flock, and up to 100,000 in the region (Beardslee and Mitchell 1965, Burger and Brownstein 1968). Christmas Bird Count for New York data suggest that populations appear to be stable if not increasing, though their numbers fluctuate widely from season to season. The Niagara area population has increased significantly since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and more wintering populations were observed at inland locations between 1965 and 2003.

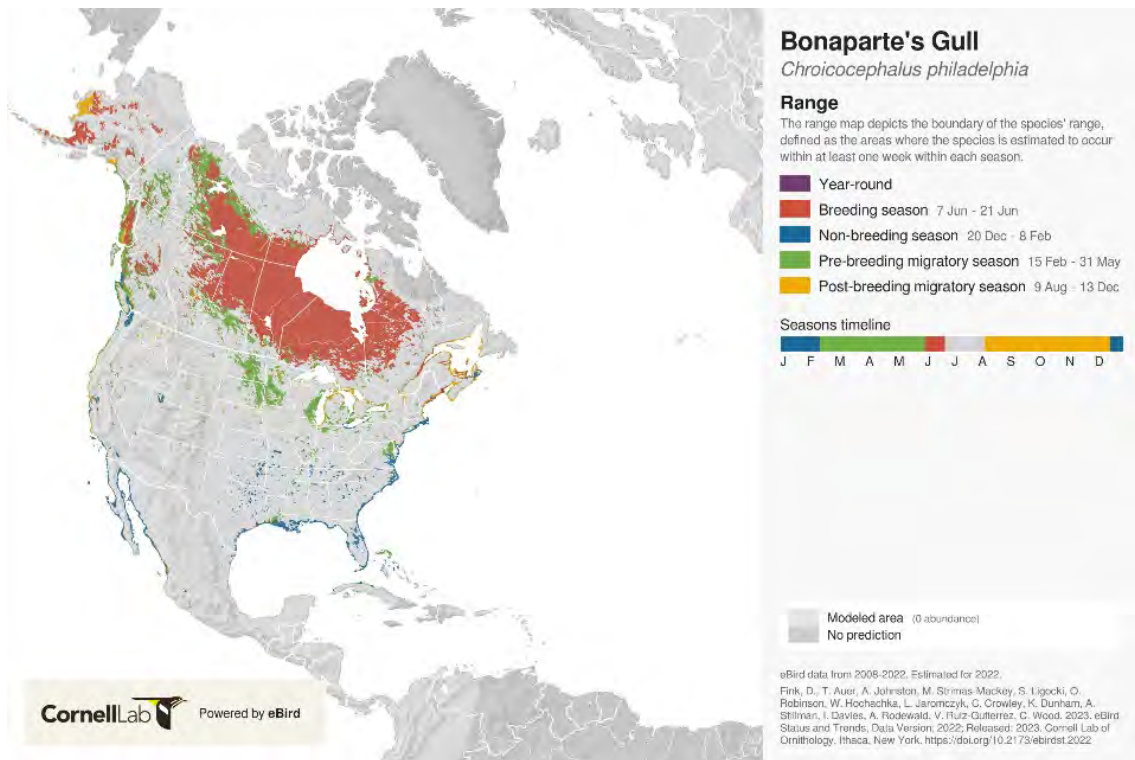


Figure 1. Global distribution of Bonaparte's gull (eBird)

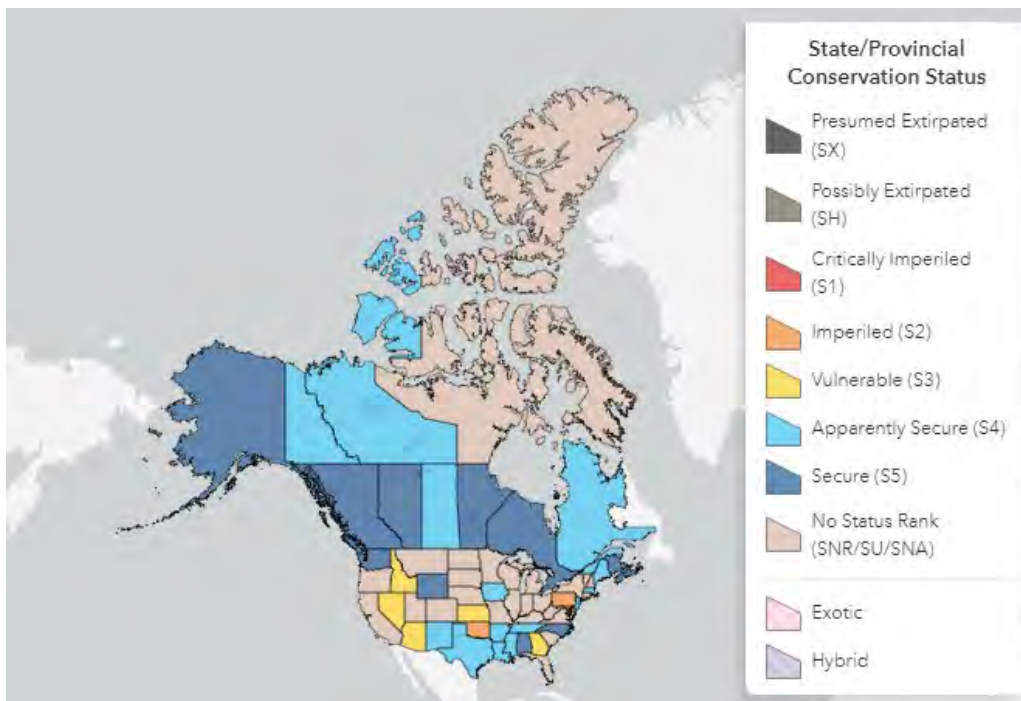
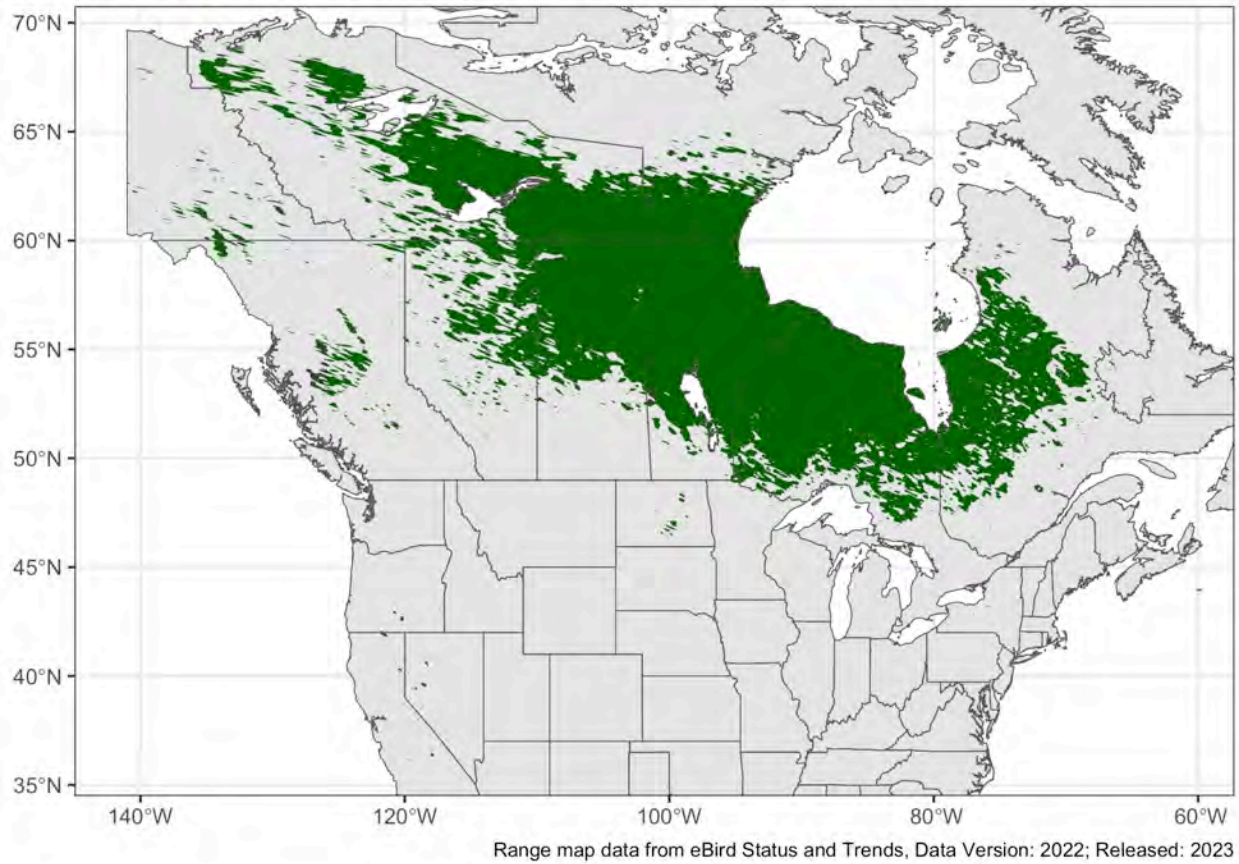


Figure 2. Conservation status of Bonaparte's gull in North America (NatureServe)

Breeding range map for Bonaparte's Gull



**Figure 3.** Breeding range of Bonapate's gull (eBird).

**III. New York Rarity** (provide map, numbers, and percent of state occupied)

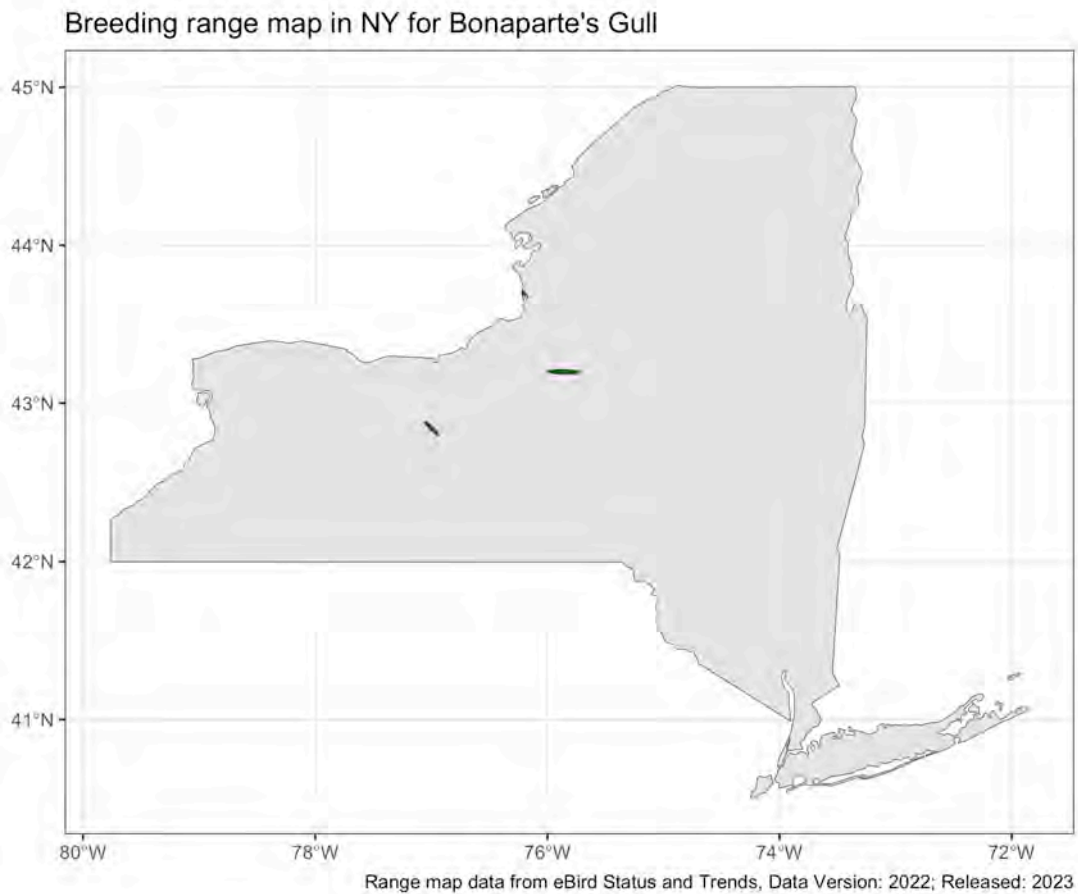


Figure 4. NYS Breeding range of Bonaparte's gull.

**Details of historic and current occurrence:**

Brock (1998) summarized high counts of wintering gulls in New York: 10,000 in Gravesend Bay, Kings County in January 1962; 100,000 in Niagara River and nearby reservoirs in November 1959; 60,000 along Niagara River in 1969. Bull (1974) notes that Bonaparte's gull "frequents Long Island waters, the lower Hudson River, and the Great Lake region, but is especially numerous in the Buffalo-Niagara Falls area, and to a lesser extent, New York harbor.

Numbers fluctuate from year to year due to fish abundance and distribution, weather conditions, water levels, and icing of water bodies. Christmas Bird Count Data for 2010-2022 documented an average of 7,774 individuals with a high count of 16,857 in 2013-14 and a low count of 1164 in 2021-22. Recent high counts are summarized by Brock (1998): 40,000 at the mouth of the Niagara River in December 1990. During the winter of 2012-2013, more than 45,000 Bonaparte's gulls were counted in the Buffalo-Niagara Falls area.

The first Breeding Bird Atlas (BBA) (1980-85) documented occupancy in 0 blocks, 0% of the survey blocks statewide (Andrle and Carroll 1988). The second BBA (2000-05) documented occupancy in 0 blocks, 0% 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, Bonaparte's gull has been documented in 13 priority blocks, 0.2% of all priority blocks statewide during the third BBA (NY BBA III Overview, 2024).

**New York's Contribution to Species North American Range:**

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

*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):

1. Large/Great River, Deep Water, Rocky Bottom
2. Marine, Intertidal, Benthic Geomorphology, Tidal Flats
3. Lake and River Shore/Beach
4. Marine Intertidal Gravel/Sand Beach
5. Marine, Intertidal, Benthic Geomorphology, Bar

**Habitat or Community Type Trend in New York**

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

*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 usually overwinters on lakes, rivers, marshes, coastal bays and harbors, sandbars and mudflats, and beaches along coasts. It often concentrates near convergences, upwellings, sewage outfalls and lagoons and inlets (Lauro 1980, Campbell et al. 1990, Small 1994). Breeding occurs in coniferous woodlands near ponds and lakes.

**V. Species Demographic, and Life History:**

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

*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):*

Bonaparte's gull remains among the least studied of any gulls regularly nesting in North America, partly because it nests high in trees at high latitudes, with nests widely dispersed, and is nowhere abundant. Relatively secretive nesting habits make it difficult to observe the breeding behavior of large numbers of pairs. Bonaparte's gulls nest in treed bogs and fens with open water and in areas of black spruce adjacent to lakes, rivers, and ponds. Nests are generally built 3-6 m high in trees but may also be on the ground in mounds of marsh vegetation or mudflats of dry sloughs. The Bonaparte's gull may nest singly or in colonies of 2-20 pairs. Virtually nothing is known about mate fidelity, age-distribution of breeding adults, measures of reproductive success (and their variations in different regions), recruitment, life span, or survivorship.

No definite information on age at first breeding; some individuals probably breed at 2 years of age. Presumably breeds every year unless tundra lakes are late in thawing. Most clutches contain 2-3 eggs. Few data are available on reproductive success. A British Columbia study reported 6 broods of 1 chick, 49 of 2 chicks, and 4 of 3 chicks (mean 1.86; Campbell et al. 1990), indicating a loss of 0.72 chicks/pair between incubation and fledging. Anecdotal accounts of egg mortality include embryonic death, hatching death, disappearance (possibly predation), and abandonment (Twomey 1934). Mortality of chicks is probably greatest during first week of life, when they leave tree nests and make their way, with parents, to ponds or muskeg pools (Twomey 1934).

**VI. Threats** *(from NY 2015 SWAP or newly described):*

The greatest potential threat is loss of habitat due to coastal and offshore development or activities that may result in large scale alteration of bay or ocean substrates (e.g. dredging, sand mining, development of barrier islands, scouring of littoral areas by commercial shellfish harvesting, etc.). Collision with structures, spills, or intensive human disturbance are a potential concern. Diseases such as Type E botulism (Great Lakes) has killed large numbers of birds annually since 1999. Waterbirds are also subject to entanglement in fishing gear. Sea level rise and frequent storms and flooding events due to climate change threaten habitat and resources.

In general, wintering waterbirds face threats from loss of habitat to coastal wetlands, activities that result in large scale alteration of bay or ocean substrates (dredging, sand mining, development of barrier islands, etc.), direct mortality from collisions with structures, erosion of habitat, various contaminants, or intensive human disturbance.

<b>Threat Level 1</b>	<b>Threat Level 2</b>	<b>Threat Level 3</b>	<b>Spatial Extent</b>	<b>Severity</b>	<b>Immediacy</b>	<b>Trend</b>	<b>Certainty</b>
1. Residential and Commercial	1.1 Housing & Urban Areas	(coastal development)	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.
3. Energy Production & Mining	3.2 Mining & Quarrying	(sand-mining)	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.
5. Biological Resource Use	5.4 Fishing & Harvesting Aquatic Resources	(shellfish harvesting)	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.
6. Human Intrusions & Disturbance	6.3 Work & Other Activities	-	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.
7. Natural System Modifications	7.3 Other Ecosystem Modifications	(dredging, development of barrier islands)	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.
8. Invasive & Other Problematic Species	8.4 Pathogens	8.4.1 Bacterial pathogens (Type E Botulism)	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.
11. Climate Change	11.5 Storms & Severe Weather	-	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.

**Table 1.** Threats to Bonaparte's gull

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

Yes:  X                       No:                             Unknown:       

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

Bonaparte’s gull is protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

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

Protect important foraging areas from development, human disturbance, environmental contaminants, and other potential impacts. Work with regional marine resource managers to identify common interests and potential conflicts (ex- commercial fishing/shell fishing techniques, aquaculture development, entanglement, oil spill response plans) with needs of wintering water birds. More intensive studies are needed of interactions between commercial fisheries and seabirds. Cooperate in development and conduct of baseline surveys or monitoring programs to determine population status of wintering waterfowl/water bird species in New York and/or eastern North America, at 10-year (or more frequent) intervals (NYSDEC 2005).

Action Category	Action	Description
A.1 Direct Habitat Management	A.1.0.0.0 Direct habitat management	Site/Area management
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 (pollution control)
C.7 Legislative and Regulatory Framework or Tools	C.7.1.3.0 Create, amend, or influence regulation	Policy/Regulation Changes (hunting regulations, ocean dumping practices)
C.7 Legislative and Regulatory Framework or Tools	C.7.2.1.0 Create or amend policies	Policy/Regulation Changes (hunting regulations, ocean dumping practices)
C.10 Institutional Development	C.10.2.0.0 External support and organization development.	Alliance & Partnership Development

**Table 2.** Recommended conservation actions for Bonaparte’s gull.

## VII. References

- Beardslee, C. S. and H. D. Mitchell. 1965. Birds of the Niagara Frontier region. Bull. Buffalo Soc. Nat. Sci. 22:252-253.
- BirdLife International 2009. *Larus philadelphia*. In: IUCN 2011. IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Version 2011.2. <[www.iucnredlist.org](http://www.iucnredlist.org)>. Downloaded on 07 December 2011.
- Brock, R.W. 1998. Bonaparte's Gull, *Larus philadelphia*. Pages 279-80 in Bull's Birds of New York State. M. Levine, ed. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY.
- Burger, J. and R. Brownstein. 1968. The status of Bonaparte's Gull in New York State. Kingbird 18:9-20.
- Burger, J. and M. Gochfeld. 2002. Bonaparte's Gull (*Chroicocephalus philadelphia*), The Birds of North America Online (A. Poole, Ed.). Ithaca: Cornell Lab of Ornithology; Retrieved from the Birds of North America Online: <http://bna.birds.cornell.edu/bna/species/634>
- Campbell, R. W., N. K. Dawe, I. McTaggart-Cowan, J. M. Cooper, G. W. Kaiser, and M. C. E. McNall. 1990. The birds of British Columbia, Vol. 2: diurnal birds of prey through woodpeckers. R. Br. Columbia Mus. Victoria.
- Corwin, K. 2011. NYSDEC SWAP 2015 Species Status Assessment for *Agrigomphus cornutus*. Prepared on December 7, 2011. Revised by J. Murtaugh July 2014.
- eBird data from 2008-2022. Estimated for 2022. Fink, D., T. Auer, A. Johnston, M. Strimas-Mackey, S. Ligocki, O. Robinson, W. Hochachka, L. Jaromczyk, C. Crowley, K. Dunham, A. Stillman, I. Davies, A. Rodewald, V. Ruiz-Gutierrez, C. Wood. 2023. eBird Status and Trends, Data Version: 2022; Released: 2023. Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, New York. <https://doi.org/10.2173/ebirdst.2022>
- Lauro, A. J. 1980. The winter ecology of Bonaparte's Gull on the south shore of Long Island. Linn. News Letter 34(Mar):1-3.
- NatureServe. 2023. NatureServe Explorer. Page last published (12/1/2023). [https://explorer.natureserve.org/Taxon/ELEMENT\\_GLOBAL.2.106311/Chroicocephalus\\_philadelphia](https://explorer.natureserve.org/Taxon/ELEMENT_GLOBAL.2.106311/Chroicocephalus_philadelphia). Accessed 1/2/2024.
- NYSDEC. 2005. New York State Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy.
- Pons, J. M., A. Hassanin, and P. A. Crochet. 2005. Phylogenetic relationships within the Laridae (Charadriiformes: Aves) inferred from mitochondrial markers. Molecular Phylogenetics and Evolution 37:686-699.
- Small, A. 1994. California birds: their status and distribution. Ibis Publ. Co. Vista, CA.
- Twomey, A. D. 1934. Breeding habits of Bonaparte's Gull. Auk 51:291-296.