

Red Crossbill

(*Loxia curvirostra percna*)

- Red Crossbill are a medium-sized finch, which uses its crossed beak to pry open conifer cones.
- Males are a dull red colour with brown shading and females are grayish olive with yellow rumps.
- They are distinguishable from White-winged Crossbills by their lack of white wing bars and other Red Crossbill subspecies by their thicker bills.
- They have a distinct song.



Provincial Distribution



Habitat/ Range

This subspecies of Red Crossbill is endemic to eastern Canada. There have been sporadic reports of this subspecies in other Atlantic provinces but it is likely that they are restricted to the island of Newfoundland. Red Crossbill are associated with conifer forests, with the highest numbers of observations occurring in the older, mature forests of western Newfoundland.

Population Trends

There are an estimated 500-1500 individuals on the island. Christmas Bird Counts and Breeding Bird Surveys have shown a decline in the number of Red Crossbill observations over the last 35 years. The last recorded nest sighting occurred in 1977; however, juvenile birds were seen in 2005.

Limiting Factors and Threats

Habitat loss due to deforestation and natural forest loss as a result of insect infestation and changes in forest fire regimes maybe limiting this population.

Special Significance

The island of Newfoundland may be the only location where this rare subspecies breeds.

You can help protect the Red Crossbill:

- Report any sightings to the Wildlife Division.
- Participate in bird surveys and counts.
- If you own forested land, consider how you might manage it to conserve rare species.

Department of Environment & Conservation

Wildlife Division

Endangered Species & Biodiversity

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