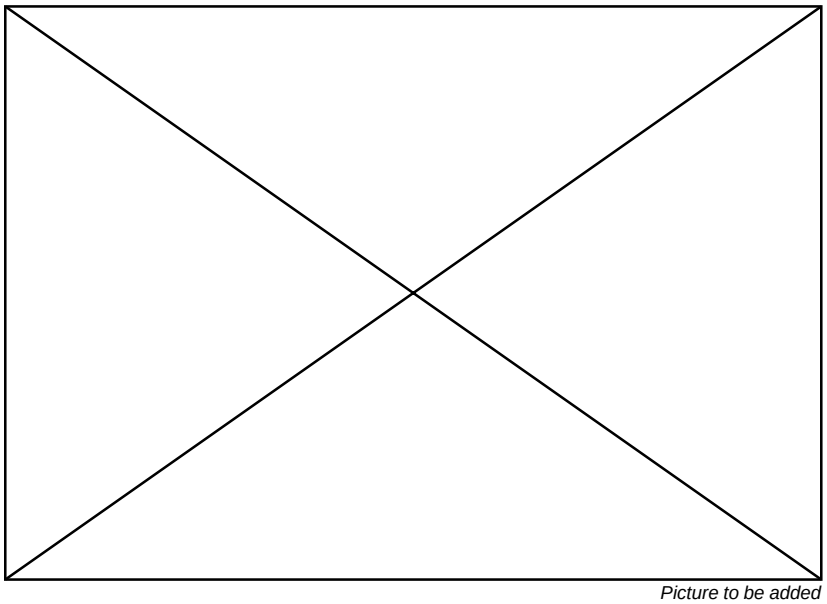
Pine Warbler

Dendroica pinus

As their name implies, Pine Warblers are restricted to woodlands dominated by pines. Within Ohio, they prefer mixed woods where pines predominate in the canopy while the understory is composed of various deciduous species. However, males will also establish territories in pure pine plantations. They occupy mature forests and second growth woods with scattered large pines, and are equally likely to be found within the interiors and along the edges of these habitats. Most pairs are found in sizable wooded tracts exceeding 100 acres in extent, but may also inhabit isolated woodlots of only 10–30 acres.

Ohio's native pine woodlands are primarily restricted to the Allegheny Plateau (Braun 1961). These habitats were limited to dry ridges and slopes within the unglaciated counties while white pines were found within the deciduous woodlands of northeastern Ohio. Extensive reforestation with pines has also been prevalent along this plateau, but has occurred at only a few localities elsewhere in the state.



Picture to be added

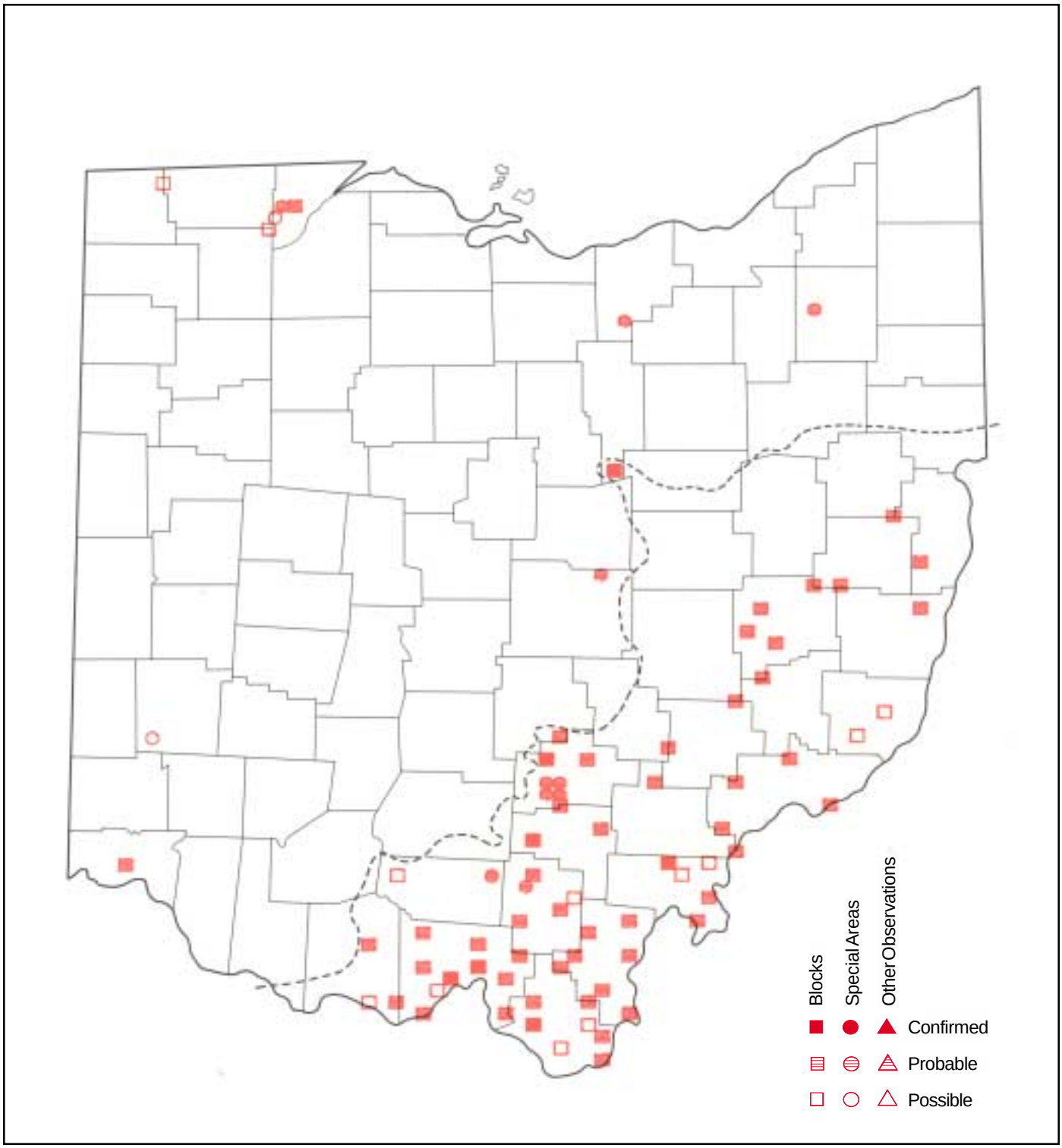
The current distribution of breeding Pine Warblers reflects the availability of these suitable habitats. While the Atlas Project produced records from 67 priority blocks and 12 special areas within 29 counties, only 9 of these records came from glaciated Ohio. These few reports included a small breeding population in the Oak Openings–Maumee State Forest area of Lucas, Fulton, and Henry counties as well as isolated pairs at Findley State Park (Lorain County), at Lake Rockwell (Portage County), and in Hamilton County. The other records from glaciated Ohio pertained to probable nonbreeders occupying marginal habitats. Along the unglaciated Allegheny Plateau, the records from 63 priority blocks and 7 special areas were centered in Scioto, Lawrence, Gallia, Jackson, Meigs, and Hocking counties, particularly in Shawnee, Tar Hollow, and Hocking state forests and portions of Wayne National Forest. Pine Warblers became locally distributed elsewhere in unglaciated Ohio, and are absent from most counties along the northern margin of this plateau.

Breeding Pine Warblers have been expanding within Ohio during the 20th century. The first nesting attempt was reported in 1898 (Henninger 1903), and Hicks (1935) provided the first description of their statewide distribution. He cited summer records from only seven counties. Along the unglaciated Allegheny Plateau, as many as 40–50 pairs were estimated to reside in Scioto County but these warblers were decidedly rare residents in Jackson, Hocking, Fairfield, and Knox counties. There were also summer records from Lake and Ashtabula counties where nesting was not confirmed.

Their subsequent range expansion was poorly documented, especially within unglaciated Ohio where Trautman and Trautman (1968) considered them to be very rare residents during the mid–1960s. Pine Warblers apparently increased within these counties during the late 1960s and early 1970s, while their appearance in glaciated Ohio occurred after 1980 (Peterjohn 1989a). Similar increases have been evident elsewhere in eastern North America between 1965 and 1979, despite sharp declines following the severe winters of the late 1970s (Robbins, C. S., et al. 1986).

Pine Warblers normally place their nests at heights of 20–50 feet among the outer branches of tall pines (Peck and James 1987). These nests are difficult to locate and their breeding chronology in Ohio is poorly understood. Nesting begins relatively early in southeastern Ohio. Nest construction has been observed by April 16–18 and nests with eggs have been reported by the last week of April. Some young warblers fledge during the second half of May, but most fledglings are noted between June 1 and June 15 (Peterjohn 1989a). Second broods may be regularly produced in these counties but have not been documented in the literature. Their nesting activities are delayed by at least 2–3 weeks in northern Ohio where most clutches are completed during mid–May and the young warblers do not fledge until June 25–July 10.

Nesting Pine Warblers also proved to be difficult to confirm during the Atlas Project. Breeding was established in only 7 priority blocks; the "30" code was used in 4 blocks and there were single reports of adults carrying food for young, the distraction displays of adults, and recently fledged young. Most other reports pertained to territorial males and other indicators of probable breeding status.



Analysis of Block Data by Physiographic Region

Physiographic Region	Total Blocks Surveyed	Blocks with Data	% with Data	Regional % for Ohio	Ave. # Individ per BBS Route (1982–1987)
Lake Plain	95	2	2.1	3.0	–
Till Plain	271	1	0.4	1.5	–
Ill. Till Plain	46	1	2.2	1.5	–
Glaciated Plateau	140	–	–	–	–
Unglaciated Plateau	212	63	29.7	94.0	<0.1

Summary of Breeding Status

No. of Blocks in Which Species Recorded		
Total	**67**	**8.8%**
Confirmed	7	10.5%
Probable	48	71.6%
Possible	12	17.9%