

# Adirondack Wild Calls For Action On Spruce Grouse

**Editorial Staff,**  
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*Photo of female spruce grouse courtesy Algonquin Provincial Park, Canada.*

On Endangered Species Day, May 17, 2019 Adirondack Wild renewed its call for the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to protect the endangered spruce grouse, which occupies a few select areas in the Adirondack Park. The spruce grouse requires specialized habitat in low-elevation boreal woods and wetlands which in New York State are found only in the Adirondack Park.

According to DEC's 2012 Spruce Grouse Recovery Plan, the species is restricted to just 15 scattered populations in the Adirondack Park, nine of which are concentrated in the Raquette-Boreal area east of the Carry Falls Reservoir.

These isolated areas of spruce grouse habitat are shrinking in size. DEC determined in 2012 that the spruce grouse's range had declined more than 50% in the preceding 20 years. According to the authors of the DEC's Spruce Grouse Recovery Plan, in 2006 there were "probably less than 75-100 adult spruce grouse in the state."

“There are only a few habitats where the spruce grouse hangs on in our state,” Adirondack Wild’s David Gibson said. “New York has a high level of responsibility for ensuring that spruce grouse breeding habitats are restored and not threatened by human development or recreational uses.”

“We are asking the DEC to commit today to taking active measures to not only protect existing occupied habitats but to restore spruce grouse populations to historic locations where the bird once lived, but is no longer found – as called for in the NYS Endangered Species Act and the DEC Spruce Grouse Recovery Plan,” Gibson added.

According to DEC biologists, the Boreal Primitive Area near Carry Falls reservoir includes 30% of the sites which are thought to still support the endangered spruce grouse in New York State. Included among these nine sites are several sites that appear to be among the best remaining sites for the species in the state.

The 2006 Unit Management Plan for the Raquette-Boreal area, written by the DEC and approved by the Adirondack Park Agency, states that “the number of [spruce grouse] sites and their close proximity to one another undoubtedly makes the Raquette Boreal Forest one of the most important areas in the state with regard to the preservation and possible recovery of spruce grouse populations in New York State.”