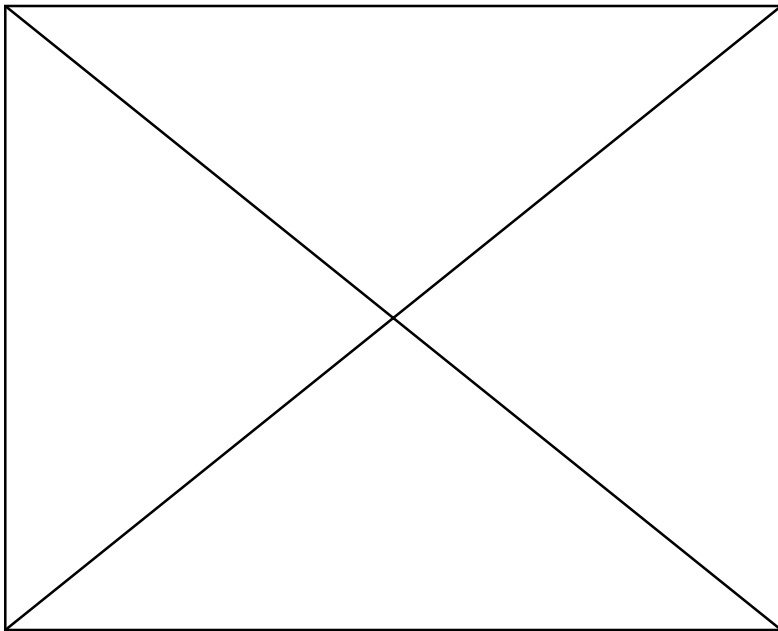


Purple Finch

Carpodacus purpureus

Within Ohio, breeding Purple Finches have been largely restricted to the northeastern counties. A small population may have always resided in these counties as claimed by Kirtland (Williams 1950), but there were few records to substantiate these claims. The first nest was discovered near Cleveland during 1911, but this species was not annually reported from this area until 1925 (Williams 1950). By the mid-1930s, Hicks (1935) cited summer records from Cuyahoga, Lake, Geauga, Trumbull, and Ashtabula counties. Small numbers were regularly found near Cleveland, but few summering finches were reported elsewhere.

During the 1950s, Purple Finches expanded their breeding range within northeastern Ohio. They spread south to Youngstown in 1954 and East Liverpool (Columbiana County) by 1960 (Brooks 1954, Hall 1960). There was also an isolated breeding record from Toledo during 1955 (Mayfield and McCormick 1956). Their summer range continued to slowly expand during the 1960s. By 1970, breeding pairs were appearing west to Lorain County and the Mansfield area, and there was an isolated nesting attempt at Columbus (Peterjohn 1989a). This trend continued during the 1970s and 1980s and was most apparent in the northern counties.



Picture to be added

The Atlas Project produced records from 81 priority blocks, 18 special areas and one other location within 24 counties. These records remain centered within the northeastern counties where the reports from 45.7% of the Glaciated Plateau priority blocks were widely distributed west to Cleveland and south through Medina, Summit, Portage, and northern Columbiana counties. Fewer finches were found in Wayne and Stark counties, and along the northern margin of

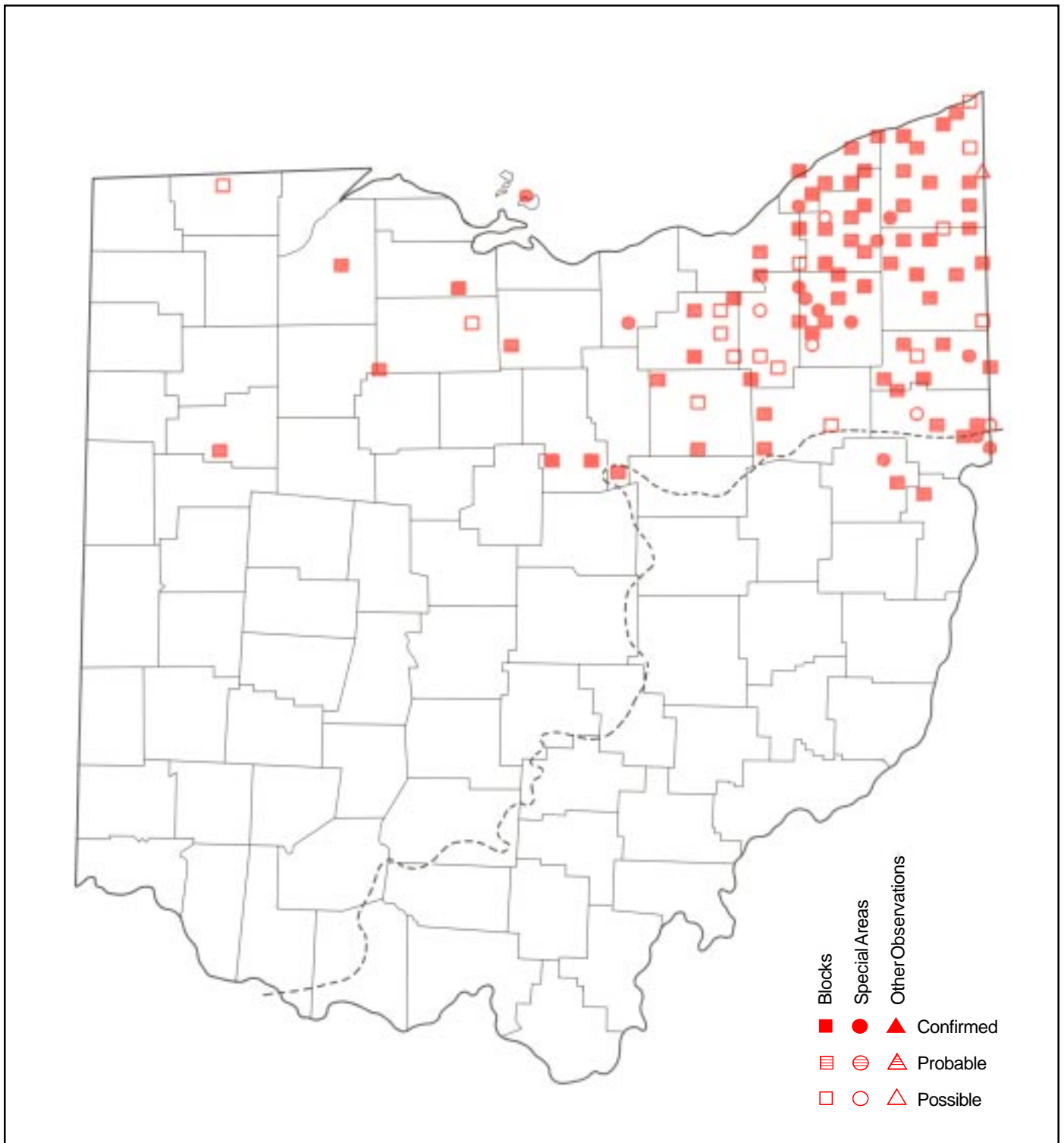
the unglaciated Allegheny Plateau in Columbiana, Carroll, and northern Jefferson counties. These finches were absent from the remainder of the plateau. Elsewhere in northern Ohio, they were widely scattered south through Allen, northern Wyandot, Richland, and Ashland counties; but most of these records consisted of widely scattered territorial males and pairs.

This distribution pattern has not noticeably changed since the completion of the Atlas Project. The only new locality to host a breeding pair was in Hocking County during 1990, presently the southernmost nesting record for Ohio. Purple Finches continued to increase within northern Ohio during these years despite the presence of rapidly increasing numbers of the introduced House Finch. Whether or not breeding populations of these two species can coexist indefinitely within Ohio is uncertain. The numbers of summering Purple Finches should be carefully monitored to determine how they are faring in their competition with the more aggressive House Finch.

Probable breeders provided the majority of Atlas Project records, primarily territorial males. Singing males observed briefly during the summer months were assigned possible status; most of these records pertained to immature males, many of which were probably wandering nonbreeders. Only sightings after June 1 were accepted in order to preclude late spring migrants. Breeding was confirmed in 21 priority blocks. The "30" code provided confirmation in 5 blocks in the Glaciated Plateau region, while other confirmed records included sightings of recently fledged young in 8 blocks, 5 reports of adults carrying food for young, and 2 active nests.

In northeastern Ohio, Purple Finches frequently establish their territories around tall ornamental conifers in residential yards and within Christmas tree plantations. Breeding pairs have also been found in hemlock forests and bogs (Hicks 1935, Williams 1950), but few pairs have occupied natural habitats in recent years. These habitats come close to resembling the open damp coniferous woods in Canada where most Purple Finches nest (Peck and James 1987).

The breeding biology and chronology of Purple Finches in Ohio is poorly understood. Of the few nests which have been discovered in conifers, some were only 3–6 feet off the ground in small Christmas trees while others have been 30–40 feet high in mature trees. Nest construction normally begins during May. The earliest published egg date is May 18 (Williams 1950), and most clutches are probably produced during the second half of May. Recently fledged young have been noted during mid-June, and most young fledge between June 25 and July 5. Double broods have never been reported from Ohio, but some late nesting attempts could have been second broods. Nest construction has been observed into the second half of June and nests with hatching eggs on July 7 (Mayfield and McCormick 1956). If successful, these nests would produce fledglings during late July.



- Blocks**
 ■ Special Areas
 □ Other Observations
- ● ▲ Confirmed
 ▨ ⊖ ⊕ Probable
 □ ○ △ Possible

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	7	7.4	8.6	0.2
Till Plain	271	6	2.2	7.4	–
Ill. Till Plain	46	–	–	–	–
Glaciated Plateau	140	64	45.7	79.0	2.0
Unglaciated Plateau	212	4	1.9	4.9	–

Summary of Breeding Status

No. of Blocks in Which Species Recorded		
Total	81	10.6%
Confirmed	21	25.9%
Probable	45	55.6%
Possible	15	18.5%