

SOUTHWESTERN WILLOW FLYCATCHER
(Empidonax traillii extimus)

STATUS: Endangered (60 FR 10694, February 27, 1995) with critical habitat (50 CFR 60886, October 19, 2005).

SPECIES DESCRIPTION: Small, migratory bird about 15 cm (6 in) long, with grayish-green back and wings, a white throat, a light gray-olive breast, and a pale yellowish belly. Two wingbars are visible and the eye ring is faint or absent.

HABITAT: Nests and forages in dense riparian habitats along streams, rivers, lakesides, and other wetlands. Some of the more common plant species used for nesting are: willow, boxelder, tamarisk, Russian olive, buttonbush, cottonwood, and mesquite. Nests are found in dense thickets of these and other plants species that about 4-7 m (13-23 ft) in height. Migration habitat is believed to primarily occur along riparian corridors. Habitat occurs at elevations below 8,500 ft (2,590 m).

RANGE: Historical: Includes southern California, southern Nevada, southern Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, western Texas, southwestern Colorado, and extreme northwestern Mexico.

Current: As of the end of the 2005 breeding season, just over 1200 territories were estimated to occur across its range. Since listing, breeding territories have been detected in all states of its historical range, with the exception of west Texas. In Arizona, since listing, territories have been detected on the Agua Fria, Gila, Little Colorado, Salt, San Pedro, Colorado, San Francisco, Hassayampa, Verde, Big Sandy, Santa Maria, Virgin, and Bill Williams rivers, and Pinal, Tonto and Cienaga creeks. Most birds likely winter in Mexico, Central America, and possibly northern South America.

REASONS FOR DECLINE/VULNERABILITY: Endangered primarily due to riparian habitat reduction, degradation, and elimination as a result of agricultural and urban development. Other reasons for the decline/vulnerability of the flycatcher include: the fragmented distribution and low numbers of the current population; predation; brood parasitism by cowbirds; and other events such as fires and floods that are naturally occurring, but have become more frequent and intense as a result of the proliferation of exotic vegetation and degraded watersheds, respectively.

NOTES: A final recovery plan is available online at:
http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/arizona/SWWF_RP.htm

Listed as a Species of Special Concern by the State of Arizona.

Critical habitat was finalized and designated in southern California, southwestern Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico on October 19, 2005.