



United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE Mountain-Prairie Region

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Dear Southwestern Willow Flycatcher Permitted Surveyors:

The U.S. Geological Survey has updated its survey protocol for the southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*) throughout its range (Arizona, New Mexico, and southern California, Colorado, Nevada, and Utah). The updated protocol and survey forms can be retrieved at the following web address:

<<http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/endspp/protocols/protocols.html>>

The fundamental principles of the methodology described in this updated protocol remain the same as the original protocols: the use of vocalization play-back, repeated site visits, and confirmation of flycatcher identity via the subspecies-characteristic song. It also incorporates the basic premise of our 2000 addendum, that a minimum of five visits is recommended for all "project-related" sites to determine absence. However, it does include a small change in the timing of visits to increase the probability of detecting flycatchers and to help determine if they are breeders or migrants. This latest version also includes improved survey forms and the latest understanding of southwestern willow flycatcher natural history, threats, and habitat.

As before, this protocol is intended to determine if a habitat patch contains territorial southwestern willow flycatchers, and is not designed to establish the exact distribution and abundance of flycatchers at a site. Determining precise flycatcher numbers and locations requires more expertise, visits, and time observing individual bird behavior.

We recognize that this update has been published right before the beginning of the 2010 flycatcher breeding/survey season. However, the overall strategy, methodology, and number of visits are not different from the previous version. As a result, during this transition year, we do not anticipate conflicts with contracts that may have already been established. We request that surveyors begin using it this year.

If there are any questions about this update, please contact Kris Olsen, Permit Coordinator, at 303-236-4256 or Terry Ireland, Recovery Coordinator, at 970-243-2778.

Sincerely,

Assistant Regional Director
Ecological Services