



# News Release

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## **RECOVERY STEPS IDENTIFIED FOR ENDANGERED SOUTHWESTERN BIRD**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has finalized a recovery plan for the southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*), an endangered bird that migrates from Latin America. The plan was developed by 14 scientists from various disciplines with input from more than 200 team members including ranchers, farmers, water, power and environmental interests, tribes, federal and state land managers, and local governments.

The flycatcher can be found in Arizona, New Mexico, western Texas, southwestern Colorado and the southern portions of California, Nevada and Utah. "The input from local people was critical to preparing a workable plan that lays out realistic recovery goals for the southwestern willow flycatcher throughout its seven-state range," said Dale Hall, Director of the Service's Southwest Region.

Recovery plans serve as a blueprint for conserving threatened or endangered species. The Southwestern Willow Flycatcher Recovery Plan describes the status, current management, recovery objectives and criteria, and recommends specific actions to shift the southwestern willow flycatcher from endangered to threatened, and to ultimately remove it from the list of threatened and endangered species.

The southwestern willow flycatcher builds its nest and raises its young in the southwestern states then migrates to Mexico, Central America, and possibly northern South America during our winter months. The primary reason for the bird's decline is loss of riparian habitat throughout the southwest.

"Because the southwestern willow flycatcher lays its eggs and raises its young here in the United States, good habitat is essential if the bird is to successfully reproduce and increase its numbers," said Hall. "There are other vulnerable southwestern species who, in their struggle to survive, would also benefit if we restored riparian areas."

The Recovery Plan places emphasis on actions that restore and enhance riparian ecosystems by maintaining and restoring flowing streams, cause flood cycles in some years, lessen impacts from domestic livestock,

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wild burros, and native grazers, secure long-term protection of breeding habitat, control exotic plant species and reduce nest parasitism by brown-headed cowbirds.

Recovery plans identify when an endangered species is recovered to the point where it no longer needs Endangered Species Act protection. Currently there are 986 known territories (the size of an area used by a breeding pair) in southwestern willow flycatcher range. Before the bird can be taken off the threatened and endangered species list, there should be 1,950 geographically distributed territories throughout the bird's range with assurance the habitat will be maintained over time.

To obtain a copy of the Recovery Plan, contact Greg Beatty at Arizona Ecological Services Field Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2321 West Royal Palm Road, Suite 103, Phoenix, Arizona 85021-4951, or call (602) 242-0210 or download the plan from the Internet at <http://arizonaes.fws.gov>.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System which encompasses nearly 540 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resource offices and 78 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces Federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Aid program that distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

><http://Southwest.fws.gov><