

**SOUTHWESTERN WILLOW FLYCATCHER**  
*(Empidonax traillii extimus)*

**STATUS:** Endangered (60 FR 10694, February 27, 1995) with a 2013 revision of critical habitat (78 FR 344, January 3, 2013).

**SPECIES DESCRIPTION:** Small, migratory bird about 15 centimeters (6 inches) 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 wetlands. Some of the more common plant species used for nesting are: willow, tamarisk (or salt cedar), boxelder, Russian olive, buttonbush, and mesquite. Nests are found in dense thickets of these and other plants species that are about 4-7 meters (13-23 feet) in height. Migration habitat is along riparian corridors. Nesting habitat is currently known to occur at elevations below 8,500 feet (2,590 meters).

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

**Current:** As of the end of the 2007 breeding season, almost 1,300 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 Texas. In Arizona, since listing, territories were 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, Cherry, and Cienega creeks. Flycatchers winter in Mexico, Central America, and possibly South America.

**REASONS FOR DECLINE/VULNERABILITY:** Endangered primarily due to riparian habitat reduction, degradation, and elimination from land and water management actions associated with agricultural and urban development. Other threats include: the fragmented distribution and low numbers of the current population; predation; cowbird brood parasitism; and 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.

Because over half of all known flycatcher territories contain the exotic plant, tamarisk, the introduced tamarisk-eating leaf beetle is a threat. This beetle is spreading on its own and is also believed to being transported by humans into the flycatcher's range. Tamarisk often flourishes in areas where native trees are unable to grow due to land/water management actions (river damming, flow regulation, diversion, groundwater pumping, etc.). Loss of tamarisk vegetation without replacement by native trees will likely impact the flycatcher and other riparian obligate wildlife in Arizona, New Mexico, southern Nevada, southern Utah, and southern Colorado, and possibly areas in California.

**NOTES:** Revised critical habitat identifies 1,227 stream miles within the 100-year floodplain of waters in Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, Nevada, and Utah encompassing approximately 208,973 acres total. Designated critical habitat in Arizona includes stream segments in: Apache, Cochise, Gila, Graham, Greenlee, La Paz, Maricopa, Mohave, Pima, Pinal, Santa Cruz, and Yavapai counties (78 FR 344). A recovery plan is available online at:

[http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/arizona/SWWF\\_RP.htm](http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/arizona/SWWF_RP.htm) Listed by the State of Arizona as a Species of Greatest Conservation Need.