

## Appendix A: Birds

### Olive-sided Flycatcher

*Contopus cooperi*

Federal Listing	N/A
State Listing	SC
Global Rank	G5
State Rank	S3
Regional Status	Very High



Photo by Len Medlock

#### Justification (Reason for Concern in NH)

Aerial insectivores (here including nightjars, swifts, flycatchers, and swallows) have recently received increased conservation attention due to significant declines in several species (Hunt 2009, Nebel et al. 2010). Because all species share a common prey base of flying insects, there has been much speculation on a potential common cause for many of the declines. Threats identified for the group as a whole include changes in food supply, effects of insecticides on adults or young, loss of nesting locations, climate change. It should be noted that any of these factors could be affecting birds at any point in their annual cycle, and knowledge of their winter ecology is currently largely unknown. Populations of olive-sided Flycatchers have been declining on a continental scale for over 40 years (Sauer et al. 2014). Annual rates of decline for the entire population and in the northeastern United States (USFWS Region 5) are between -3.5 and -3.9% per year, while in NH the rate is -6.8%/year. The latter estimate has only moderate credibility because of small sample size and relatively low abundance. Targeted surveys for this species in NH during 2014 failed to detect it in >90% of 7.5" topographic quads in southwestern NH where it had been present during the Breeding Bird Atlas in the early 1980s. Surveys in the central portion of the state (Lakes Region, southern White Mountains), found it in roughly 50% of previously-occupied quads (PDH, unpubl. data). These distributional data from NH are consistent with range losses seen in other northeastern states and Ontario (Cadman et al. 2007, McGowan and Corwin 2008, Renfrew 2013, MassAudubon 2014).

#### Distribution

The Olive-sided Flycatcher breeds across most of northern and western North America. In the west, it occupies primarily mountainous areas in the Rockies and coastal ranges south to Arizona and Baja California. Across most of Alaska and Canada it occurs in lowland boreal forest, extending south into the northern Great Lakes and Northeast (NY, VT, NH, ME). It formerly occurred farther south in New England and through the Appalachians to NC, but populations south of northern New England and New York are now highly fragmented and apparently declining. The species spends the winter (Oct-Apr) primarily in the mountains of northwestern South America (Venezuela to Bolivia), generally between 1000 and 2000 meters. It is uncommon in winter in the highlands from southern Mexico to Panama (Altman and Sallabanks 2012). During the late 20th century, Olive-sided Flycatchers were found across much of western, central, and northern NH, and were mostly absent from the Merrimack/Contoocook River valley and east to the coast (Foss 1994). They were most common in the north and least common in the southwest, and have largely disappeared from the latter region (see Justification).

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### Habitat

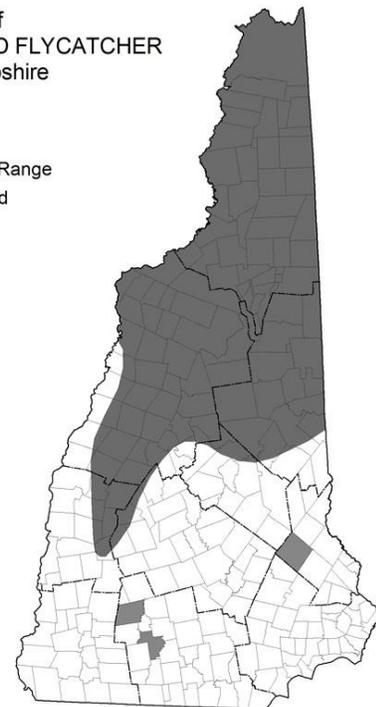
Across their broad range, Olive-sided flycatchers are generally associated with opening or edges in coniferous forest (COSEWIC 2007, Altman and Sallabanks 2012). Such openings include harvested areas (often with residual trees), burns, bogs, and other wetlands, as well as naturally open forest types. Key habitat features include scattered dead and/or emergent trees that are used as foraging or singing perches, and most sites have a significant coniferous element. Examples of habitats used in NH include partially-harvested lowland spruce/fir, spruce/tamarack bogs, beaver ponds, and edges of marshes, shrub wetlands, and northern swamps. In the mountains of western North America, it is found most frequently in burned or otherwise disturbed forest, and lack of recent fire history in the Northeast may be one reason for its restriction to wetlands and harvests in this part of the country. During the winter, Olive-sided Flycatchers use forest edges and openings in evergreen montane forest.

### NH Wildlife Action Plan Habitats

- Peatlands
- Lowland Spruce-Fir Forest
- Marsh and Shrub Wetlands
- Northern Hardwood-Conifer Forest
- Northern Swamps
- Temperate Swamps

Distribution of OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER in New Hampshire

■ Current Range  
▨ Localized



Distribution Map

### Current Species and Habitat Condition in New Hampshire

Significant rangewide population declines and some range retraction (see Justification).

### Population Management Status

Management is not currently in place for this species.

### Regulatory Protection (for explanations, see Appendix I)

- Fill and Dredge in Wetlands - NHDES
- Migratory Bird Treaty Act (1918)

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### Quality of Habitat

Unknown

### Habitat Protection Status

Highly variable

### Habitat Management Status

Habitat management has not been implemented for this species

### Threats to this Species or Habitat in NH

*Threat rankings were calculated by groups of taxonomic or habitat experts using a multistep process (details in Chapter 4). Each threat was ranked for these factors: Spatial Extent, Severity, Immediacy, Certainty, and Reversibility (ability to address the threat). These combined scores produced one overall threat score. Only threats that received a “medium” or “high” score have accompanying text in this profile. Threats that have a low spatial extent, are unlikely to occur in the next ten years, or there is uncertainty in the data will be ranked lower due to these factors.*

### Habitat conversion due to development (Threat Rank: Medium)

Ongoing residential and commercial development results in permanent loss of habitats for wildlife. This threat is ranked as “moderate” largely because it was ranked this way for one or more of the habitats used by Olive-sided Flycatchers. In reality the sites usually occupied by this species are probably at relatively low risk due to protected status, remoteness, or wetland character.

### List of Lower Ranking Threats:

Species impacts from pesticide use causing prey declines

Habitat degradation in harvested areas that become ecological traps due to increased predation

Habitat impacts from road fragmentation

Habitat conversion from deforestation in Latin America

Habitat degradation from habitat shifting and changes in species composition

### Actions to benefit this Species or Habitat in NH

#### Habitat selection research

##### Objective:

Determine characteristics of habitats used by Olive-sided Flycatchers in the Northeast, including response to forest management.

##### General Strategy:

Use available data on locations for this species to select focal areas for more in depth surveys, which could involve individually-marked birds, radio telemetry, and/or territory mapping. Collect habitat data from used and unused areas to identify important features or habitats selected by this species. Such data are currently lacking for Olive-sided Flycatchers in the northeastern United States.

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### Political Location:

Carroll County, Coos County, Grafton County

### Watershed Location:

Androscoggin-Saco Watershed, Upper CT Watershed, Pemi-Winni Watershed

## Migratory connectivity research

### Objective:

Determine migratory routes and winter range for Olive-sided Flycatchers in the Northeast

### General Strategy:

Use geolocators to collect data on Olive-sided Flycatcher locations and movement during the non-breeding season. Such data can identify critical non-breeding sites and timing of migration stopover, which may be important for future conservation.

### Political Location:

Carroll County, Coos County, Grafton County

### Watershed Location:

Androscoggin-Saco Watershed, Upper CT Watershed, Pemi-Winni Watershed

## References, Data Sources and Authors

### Data Sources

Trend data from BBS and Breeding Bird Atlases (citations above)  
NH distributional data from NHBR/NH eBird and P. Hunt.

### Data Quality

Because of low densities, BBS data for Olive-sided Flycatcher at the southern edge of its range are of only moderate credibility, although trends for these regions are comparable to those elsewhere in the species' range and are corroborated by Atlas data.

### 2015 Authors:

Pamela Hunt, NHA

### 2005 Authors:

## Literature

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