

ALDER FLYCATCHER
BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR HABITAT IN BIRD CONSERVATION
REGION 14

Introduction

The alder flycatcher (*Empidonax alnorum*) is an uncommon breeder in BCR 14 with the exception of Maine where it is more common (see figure 1).

Habitat Needs

This species is basically a non-forest dweller. Its primary habitat is located in alder swamps, along the edges of bogs, swamps, streams and ponds. Nesting habitat includes low dense shrubby area and the shrub zones on the edges of wetland openings.

Food sources are primarily airborne insects.

Territory size ranges from 3 to 8 acres.

Habitat Management Practices

The objective for the habitat management of this species would be to create or maintain a mix of alder size classes combined with shrubby openings near wetlands. An appropriate ratio would be one opening per eight acres of available habitat. This condition needs to be provided across space and time.

When assessing properties for habitat potential, check the latest U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service wetlands inventory and look for forested wetlands and emergent shrub categories. Soil series include Biddeford, Borochemists, Bucksport, Burnham, Catden, Chocorua, Greenwood, Ipswich, Matunuck, Maybid, Meadowsedge, Medomak, Natchaug, Ossipee, Pawcatuck, Peacham, Pondicherry, Saco, Saco Variant, Scarboro, Scarboro very stony, Searsport, Timakwa, Vassalboro, Waskish, Westbrook, Whitman, Whitman cool, and Wonsqueak. These soils are classified as Important Forest Soils Group IIB.

Management in this habitat type will typically be carried out using non-commercial methods. When working in alder, select areas to treat that have mostly horizontal stems indicating maturity and a decline in structural quality. Openings should be 0.5 to 1.5 acres in size. When treating alders with a machine, such as a brontosaurus or other similar machines, make sure that the ground is frozen solidly and leave six inch stubs behind. Cutting alder flush to the ground seems to disturb the root system reducing sprouting while cutting higher up seems to result in more regeneration. Entry periods should be every 10 years.

Red maple, hardwood or mixed wood stands adjacent to alder swamps or shrubby wetlands can be managed commercially using group selection where the resulting

regeneration can double as shrubby openings. Apply this management according to any existing wetland protection regulations.