

BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO  
BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR HABITAT IN BIRD CONSERVATION  
REGION 14

### Introduction

The black-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus erythrophthalmus*) is an uncommon but widespread species in BCR 14. It prefers low dense shrubby vegetation as an understory within larger areas of upland hardwoods. It also used brushy pastures, hedgerows, open woodlands, orchards and brushy roadsides. The key component is low dense, shrubby, vegetation in relatively extensive woodlands. These birds are declining throughout its range.

Its territory size is between 11 to 50 acres. Densities may increase when there are high tent caterpillar or gypsy moth populations.

### Habitat Management Practices

The habitat management objective for this species would be to maintain a dense shrubby condition within and across 50-acre units of woodland or old field/pasture land.

Soil series include Berkshire, Bice, Charlton, Sutton in Important Forest Soils Group IA and Acton, Canton, Chichester, Monadnock, Newfields, Sunapee, Waumbek in Important Forest Soils Group IB.

Recommended Silvicultural Treatments include:

In woodlands, either the hardwood or the oak-pine complex:

Consider patch cuts ranging from three to five acres in size if managing via the even-age system. A two cut shelterwood system would also work to establish the desired shrub layer.

In all-aged stands, consider using group selection cuts. The size of the groups should be maximized.

When treating old fields or pastures, set the areas up for mowing or brush hogging schedules so that about thirty percent of any given fifty-acre unit remains in a dense thicket situation at all times.

Maintain a dense shrubby condition along back roads and field borders.