

OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER
BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR HABITAT IN BIRD CONSERVATION
REGION 14

Introduction

The Olive-sided flycatcher (*Contopus cooperi*) is a locally to fairly common breeder in northern New England, rarer in the southern part of BCR 14. It prefers high elevation spruce/fir forests or the borders of northern bogs and muskegs. It needs tall exposed perches near openings of various sorts. It is listed as a “Species of Greatest Conservation Need” in one or more Wildlife Action Plans in the States of BCR 14.

Habitat Needs

This bird is an insect hawk so high exposed perches from which to hunt bugs are an important element of its habitat. These perches can be dead or alive and need to be located in and around in coniferous forests, usually at higher elevations, or adjacent to bogs, muskeg areas, stream borders, or clearcuts.

Its territory size ranges from four to eight acres.

Habitat Management Practices

The key to managing for this species lies in the retention of dead or alive perch trees in softwood clear cuts and around bogs and other riparian situations.

When assessing a property for habitat potential, look for poorly drained high elevation soils in Important Forest Soil Groups IIB such as Bemis, Cabot, Monarda. Soils at lower elevations also in Important Forest Soil Groups IIB include Lyme, Moosilauke, Pillsbury, Ridgebury or Stissing. There are other applicable soil series depending on where in BCR 14 you are working.

Recommended Silvicultural Treatments include:

Manage lower elevation spruce/fir using the even-age system and creating patches of over five acres in size. Leave around five standing living or dead trees per acre in the patches. An uneven-age system by definition creates cut groups that are usually less than three acres in size. This use of this system is less likely to provide areas in suitable home range sizes unless the cut units are adjacent to bogs, muskeg areas or other similar types of openings. Leave the same five perch trees per acre.

In general, cutting operations above 3000 feet should be discouraged. If cutting is deemed necessary then the following guidelines should be followed. (see “Good Forestry in the Granite State” pages 167 to 169 for details):

Direct management so that it maintains or increases the softwood component
Maintain a structure that contains at least 60 percent of the harvest area in trees with diameters of four inches or more.

Leave ten percent of the area uncut.

Allow no more than 30 percent of the cut area to be in a size class of less than four inches.

Plan to extend rotation ages by thirty percent or more with corresponding extended entry times

Operate only when erosion control can be maximized. This may result in operations that only take place on frozen ground and use current methods to minimize soils compaction as well as erosion.

Leave at least five dead or living perch trees per acre of cut.