

RUSTY BLACKBIRD
BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR HABITAT IN BIRD CONSERVATION
UNIT 14

Introduction

The Rusty blackbird (*euphagus carolinus*) is a rare and local breeder in BCR 14. It prefers boreal wooded wetlands and beaver flowages. Rusty blackbirds are relatively recent arrivals in most of BCR 14, the first nesting records in the 1950's. It is listed as a "Species of Greatest Conservation Need" in at least one of the Wildlife Action Plans in BCR 14 states.

Habitat Needs

This bird is primarily associated with wetlands, wooded swamps, boreal bogs and stream borders.

When assessing properties for the habitat potential for this bird, look for very poorly drained soils or saturated soils. Also look for the shrub/scrub category in the National Wetlands inventory system.

Habitat Management Practices

Since wetlands and riparian areas are the primary habitat location for this species, there will be little direct management that should take place.

Management for early successional species adjacent to known habitat sites might encourage beaver activity, which, in turn, could benefit or maintain some of these wetlands.

When assessing properties for habitat potential, check the latest U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service wetlands inventory and look for shrub/scrub category as well as the WAP. Soil series typically associated with wetland habitats are in Important Forest Soil Groups IIB and include Borochemists, Bucksport, Chocorua, Greenwood, Medomak, Ossipee, Peacham, Pondicherry, Saco, Scarboro, Scarboro very stony, Searsport, Whitman, and Wonsqueak. Soil series typically associated with riparian habitats are also in Important Forest Soil Groups IIB and include Charles, Cohas, Lim, Limerick, Limerick cool, Rippowam, Rumney. There are others in these categories depending on where you are in BCR 14.

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:

Clearcuts or group selection cuts in aspen or spruce/fir adjacent to wetlands might encourage beaver activity.