

YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT
BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR HABITAT IN BIRD CONSERVATION
REGION 14

Introduction

The Yellow-breasted chat (*Icteria virens*) is a rare, local and erratic breeder in the southern part only of BCR 14. It prefers dense shrubs and vines with no overtopping trees, often near water. Chat populations are declining as more open land reverts to forest in BCR 14. It is listed in one or more state Wildlife Action Plans as a “Species of Greatest Conservation Need” in BCR 14.

Habitat Needs

This bird requires extensive open areas of dense shrubby habitat preferably along streams for breeding habitat. It will also use forest edges, hedgerows and extensive areas of regenerating hardwood forest.

Its territory size ranges from one to three acres.

Habitat Management Practices

The management objective for this species would be to maintain reverting agricultural land in a shrubby condition in large blocks of twenty-five acres or more. Larger clearcuts in the northern hardwood type will provide temporary habitat until the stand reaches the sapling/pole stage. Either of these situations should be located near a stream or water body.

When assessing properties for habitat potential, look for soils that will produce hardwood such as Marlow, Paxton, Becket, Bernardston, Canterbury, Henniker, Montauk, or Plaisted. Recently abandoned agricultural areas may provide other opportunities.

Recommended Silvicultural Treatments include:

Large clearcuts in northern hardwood stands near streams.

Prescribed fire or brush hogging on a maintenance schedule in existing brushy openings.