

HELP STUDY HABITAT NEEDS OF HIGH-PRIORITY FOREST BIRDS



Canada Warbler
by Bill Dilger

BFL targets the highest-priority species in each region:

- Please survey for **HIGHEST-PRIORITY SPECIES** at your existing BFL study sites. If you determine that these sites are NOT suitable (no potential for newly selected species to breed at your old sites) then consider adding new study sites in appropriate habitat for these species, **but please do not select study sites based on prior knowledge that the species is present.**
- You may survey for **OTHER PRIORITY SPECIES** at the same study sites, and you are welcome to select additional species from the BFL CD.

Your data will help us develop management guidelines and conservation strategies for forest birds throughout North America.

FOREST TYPE/REGION	HIGHEST-PRIORITY SPECIES	OTHER PRIORITY SPECIES
Eastern Deciduous Forest (southern New England, Appalachian, southern Great Lakes, upper Midwest)	Cerulean Warbler	Worm-eating Warbler Eastern Wood-Pewee Red-headed Woodpecker
Southeastern Bottomland-hardwood Forest (southeastern and Gulf coastal plains, Piedmont, lower Mississippi Valley)	Swainson's Warbler	Prothonotary Warbler Eastern Wood-Pewee
Southeastern Pine Forest (southeastern and Gulf coastal plains, Piedmont)	Brown-headed Nuthatch	Red-headed Woodpecker Eastern Wood-Pewee
Northern Hardwood/Mixed Forests (northern New England, northern Great Lakes, southeastern Canada)	Canada Warbler	Black-throated Blue Warbler Eastern Wood-Pewee
Northern Coniferous/Boreal Forests (eastern Canada and high elevations of north-eastern U.S.)	Canada Warbler	Bay-breasted Warbler Olive-sided Flycatcher
Pacific Northwest Conifer Forests (Cascade and Sierra Nevada mountains, Pacific Northwest coastal plain)	Olive-sided Flycatcher	White-headed Woodpecker Hermit/Townsend's Warbler
Rocky Mountain Conifer Forests (Rocky Mountains, Great Basin)	Olive-sided Flycatcher	Lewis's Woodpecker Williamson's Sapsucker
Western Riparian Forest (all western regions)	Willow Flycatcher	Lewis's Woodpecker Veery Yellow-billed Cuckoo
Pacific Oak Woodland (California)	Oak Titmouse	Nuttall's Woodpecker
Mexican Montane Forests (Arizona, New Mexico, western Texas mountains)	Red-faced Warbler	Arizona Woodpecker Greater Pewee

Willow Flycatcher by Ken Rosenberg

STEPS FOR SELECTING HIGHEST-PRIORITY SPECIES

1. Select the **forest type/region** that best describes the area where you will conduct your surveys (see chart on front side of sheet).
2. Look at the **range maps** of the *highest-priority species* and *other priority species* in your selected region to see if the breeding ranges of these species overlap with your study area. To find the range maps, go to the *References:Species Accounts* section in the manual (index-page 5.1.1) or visit <http://birds.cornell.edu/bfl/speciesaccts/species_list.html> on the BFL web site.
3. Next check the **breeding habitat** descriptions for each selected species by checking their individual species account to make sure that the habitat is appropriate at each of your study sites for the priority species in your region. To find this information, go to the same section as listed in number 2.

TIPS FOR STUDYING HIGHEST-PRIORITY SPECIES

Cerulean Warbler—*patchily distributed throughout their range, favoring mature deciduous forests in both upland and bot-tomland hardwood tracts. Males often found in the upper canopy singing from the tallest trees. Song is similar to the Black-throated Blue Warbler and the Northern Parula. Spring arrival dates vary with latitude, surveying should begin in mid-May. Understanding the habi-tat and area requirements of this declining species is critical.*

Brown-headed Nuthatch—*breeds almost exclusively in mature southeastern pine forests foraging mainly in the upper third of pines, moving up and down the trunks and also along limbs. Sometimes found in association with endangered Red-cockaded Woodpecker. Mainly nonmigratory; surveys should begin in mid-April. Due to the disappearance of mature pine forests, its restricted range, and declining population numbers, understanding the ef-fects of forest fragmentation is very important to its long term con-servation.*

Olive-sided Flycatcher—*primarily breeds in montane and northern coniferous forests, favoring forest edges and open-ings. Forages from the top of snags or uppermost branches of live trees. Distinguished from Greater Pewee by song and range, and Eastern and Western Wood-Pewees by song and size. Due to their late arrival, surveys should begin in early June. This species is de-clining in all regions, thus we need to know how specific factors such as sensitivity to land-use practices affect their population vi-ability.*

Oak Titmouse—*Found in low to mid elevation woodlands of warm, dry oak or oak-pine. Forages in trees at varying heights, occasionally on open ground. Similar in appearance and song to the Juniper Titmouse, but their ranges only overlap in extreme northern California. Nonmigratory, surveying should begin in early to mid-April. Understanding precise habitat requirements and sen-sitivity to land-use practices is important, as oak woodlands con-tinue to disappear within their range.*

Swainson's Warbler—*found in wet, deciduous lowland forest with dense underbrush and uplands where rhododendron is plentiful to about 3,000 ft.; forages on the ground. Hard to observe; distinctive, loud song begins like the Louisiana Water-thrush, but descends with several notes at the end. Understand-ing their habitat requirements, area sensitivity, and response to fragmentation is of utmost importance for their conservation.*

Canada Warbler—*breeds in moist coniferous and mixed hardwood forests of the northern and Appalachian regions. Prefers a dense understory; most activity is within 15 ft. of the ground. Song is similar to the Magnolia Warbler and Common Yellowthroat, but longer and more variable with many different song types. They are late spring arrivals, so surveying should begin in late May to early June. Due to this species' low overall density, rapid population de-clines, and massive deforestation of its wintering ground, it is im-portant to understand the species' sensitivity to forest fragmentation and habitat alteration such as silviculture.*

Willow Flycatcher—*Prefers moist, shrubby areas with dense vegetation, typically in a riparian area. Closely resembles other Empidonax flycatchers by sight so must be distinguished by song. "Fitz-Bew" can sound similar to Alder's song, but Alder's emphasis is on the second syllable. They are late migrants, so surveying should begin at the end of May or early June. The south-western subspecies is listed as endangered, and is greatly reduced from its historical distribution. In western regions, we must deter-mine its precise habitat needs and area requirements.*

Red-faced Warbler—*typically breeds above 6,000 ft. on heavily wooded montane slopes and steep canyons where there is a mixture of oaks and conifers. Foraging occurs low in shrubs to upper canopy. Song is similar to the Yellow Warbler, but their habitats rarely overlap. Surveying should begin in early to mid-May. Due to its patchy breeding distribution and dependence on montane coniferous forests, it is important to learn the extent of the population as well as area requirements.*