



Southwestern Willow Flycatcher

Status: Endangered

The Southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*) is a small Neotropical migratory bird that lives in riparian areas and wetlands in the arid Southwest. It is listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The flycatcher's current range is similar to its historic range, but its population has declined because of a decrease in habitat caused by surface water diversion, groundwater pumping, changes in flood and fire regimens, and spread of non-native and invasive plants.

The flycatcher nests in native trees and shrubs where available but also nests in thickets dominated by the non-native invasive species like tamarisk and Russian olive. Efforts to control non-native species can be detrimental to flycatchers, especially if those plants are removed in places lacking in suitable native riparian habitat.

Restoring habitat for the Southwestern willow flycatcher not only benefits the flycatcher but many other species. Eighty-four species, including the flycatcher, benefit from conservation work in riparian ecosystems.

NRCS and the Flycatcher

NRCS provides technical and financial assistance through the Working Lands for Wildlife (WLFW) partnership to assist agricultural producers implement a variety of conservation practices. Practices aim to protect and restore breeding habitat, combat habitat losses because of surface water diversion and groundwater pumping, address changes in flooding and fire regimens and manage non-native and invasive plants. WLFW also provides landowners with predictability under the ESA, providing incidental take coverage for 84 wildlife species that occupy the riparian systems of the Southwest. Predictability enables landowners to operate their farms and ranches as long as NRCS-prescribed conservation practices are maintained.



Actions

- Protect, maintain, and restore riparian habitat.
- Increase and improve occupied, suitable, and potential breeding habitat.
- Manage livestock grazing to increase habitat quality and quantity.
- Improve weed and invasive species management.
- Increase connectivity of existing habitat.

Outcomes and Impacts

Landowners are restoring habitat for southwestern willow flycatcher and other riparian habitat species, aiding in the implementation of its recovery plan and increase landowner confidence that the conservation practices they implement will not harm the species or its habitat.



Landowner Jim Hook (left) surveys beetle-killed tamarisk with NRCS Soil Conservationist Amber Johnson along the San Juan River near Bluff.

Fiscal Year 2015 Southwestern Willow Flycatcher
NRCS Financial Assistance (FA) and Active and Completed Contracts through WLFW

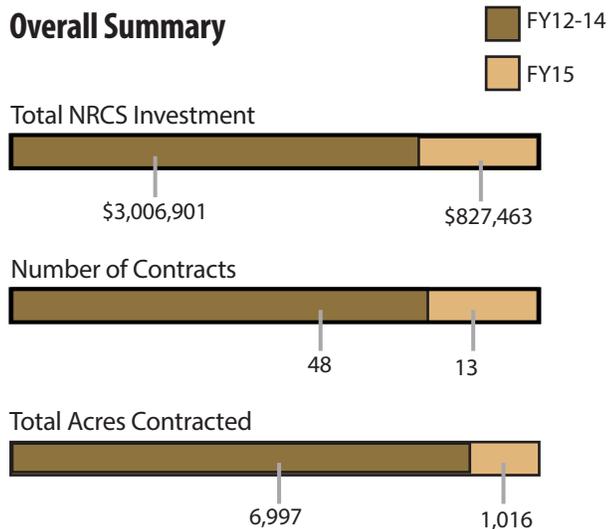
State	Acres	NRCS Investment	Contracts
California	705	\$613,283	5
Nevada	0	\$0	0
Utah	26	\$11,616	2
Arizona	214	\$103,894	3
Colorado	71	\$98,670	3
New Mexico	0	\$0	0
Total	1,016	\$827,463	13

Data source: NRCS Resource Economics, Analysis and Policy Division, October 2015.

NRCS GOALS

Through WLFW, NRCS works with producers to restore habitat in riparian areas in the Southwest in an effort to increase populations of the southwestern willow flycatcher, provide habitat for other species and provide predictability to producers, ensuring they can continue managing their working lands. To meet these three goals, NRCS aims to restore 2,755 acres of nesting habitat by 2018 with acreage milestones in six recovery units. NRCS is using their milestones as an interim target to help meet the 10-year goals of the flycatcher recovery plan.

Overall Summary



**2018 Milestones:
Nesting Habitat in Population
Recovery Units**

