



# Southwestern Willow Flycatcher

## FY2021 Progress Report



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.

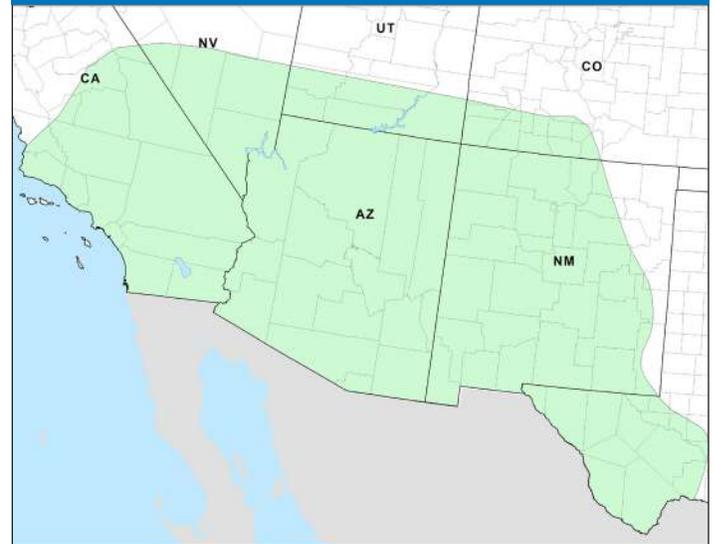
Restoring habitat for the southwestern willow flycatcher not only benefits the flycatcher but many other species. Eighty-four species, including the flycatcher, benefit from conservation work in riparian ecosystems.

## NRCS and the Southwestern Willow 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 ranchers with regulatory predictability under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), which ensures regulatory compliance for ranchers who continue to manage their ranches using NRCS-prescribed conservation practices for up to 30 years.

## PROJECT BOUNDARIES



## Actions

- ◆ Protect, maintain and restore riparian habitat.
- ◆ Increase and improve occupied, suitable and potential breeding habitat.
- ◆ Manage livestock grazing to increase quality and abundance of habitat.
- ◆ 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.

Through conservation, landowners are helping the southwestern willow flycatcher and other wildlife while improving their land. (Photo by Jeremy Roberts)



Fiscal Year 2021 Southwestern Willow Flycatcher  
NRCS Financial Assistance Contract Summary  
Environmental Quality Incentives Program

State	Acres	NRCS Investment	Contracts
Arizona	1,875	\$247,546	5
California	10,288	\$556,691	3
Colorado	0	\$0	0
Nevada	0	\$0	0
New Mexico	0	\$0	0
Utah	526	\$139,383	3
Totals	12,689	\$943,620	11

Data source: NRCS Economic and Policy Assessment Division, October 2021.

**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. NRCS works with landowners to restore nesting habitat in six recovery units. The acreage accomplishments help meet the 10-year goals of the flycatcher recovery plan.



Photo courtesy of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

**Overall Summary FY 2012–21**

**Total NRCS Investment.....\$8,251,823**

**Number of Contracts.....110**

**Total Acres Contracted ..... 28,746**

**Nesting Habitat in Population Recovery Units:**

	<span style="color: #0070C0;">■</span> FY 2012–21 Acres Completed	<span style="color: #7099C0;">■</span> FY 2012–21 Acres In Progress
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Basin and Mojave 1,108 total acres  
■ 68 ■ 1,040

Coastal California 2,768 total acres  
■ 2,348 ■ 420

Gila 1,309 total acres  
■ 681 ■ 628

Lower Colorado 825 total acres  
■ 544 ■ 281

Rio Grande 584 total acres  
■ 437 ■ 147

Upper Colorado 1,088 total acres  
■ 573 ■ 515