CAPE BRETON PRIVATELAND PARTNERSHIP

Nova Scotia At-Risk Birds

Bicknell's Thrush (*Catharus Bicknelli)*

Status

- Endangered (NS)

Species Description

- Smallest of the northern *Catharus* thrushes with a length of 16-18cm and a mass of 25-30g
- Upper parts of body are olive brown
- Under parts of body are grey with dark spots on throat and breast
- Chestnut brown upper tail
- Lower half of their bill is pale yellow during breeding season

Threats

- Habitat disturbance from agriculture and forestry practices in wintering areas
- Forestry practices within breeding range
- Construction of wind farms in breeding range
- Climate change

Habitat Characteristics

- Dense conifer-dominated forest stands or dense conifer-dominated mixedwood stands at elevations ≥ 340m
- Dense coastal lowland forest

Resources

- General Info: Species at risk - Government of Nova Scotia, Canada
- Recovery Plan: RECOVERY_PLAN-Adopted_Bicknells_Thrush.pdf (novascotia.ca)

Canada Warbler (*Cardellina Canadensis*)

Status

- Endangered (NS)

Species Description

- Small songbird at 12-15cm long
- Both males and females have bluish-grey upper parts with black markings on their heads and black streaks across their yellow underbelly
- These markings are less distinct on females and juveniles
- Breeding season in Nova Scotia is from late May to mid-August

Threats

- Breeding and overwintering habitat loss and degradation due to urban development, forestry and agricultural practices and wetland drainage
- Habitat fragmentation resulting from forestry and road building
- Over-browsing on forest understory which reduces nesting sites and necessary cover
- Reduced insect prey
- Window and vehicle collision

Habitat Characteristics

- In Nova Scotia they are often found in swamps with red maple, spruce, cinnamon fern, and sphagnum moss
- Prefer moist/wet forests with a well-developed deciduous shrub layer and a broken canopy
- Nesting sites often located on uneven forest floors within downed woody material in order to well conceal the nests

Best Management Practices

- Learn to identify Canada Warblers and report sightings
- Avoid harvesting and silvicultural activities during nesting season (June 1-August 15)
- Learn to recognize their preferred habitat on your property in order to mark them and to plan activities around them
- Avoid altering preferred habitat by minimizing soil compaction and avoiding the removal of ground vegetation and downed woody material
- Leave 50m buffers around wetland edges
- Harvest on frozen ground to avoid altering wetland hydrology, minimize rutting and soil compaction
- Use uneven aged management systems, when possible, in forestry management

Resources

- General Info: Species at risk - Government of Nova Scotia, Canada
- Recovery Plan: RECOVERY_PLAN_Adopted_Canada_warbler_10Feb21.pdf (novascotia.ca)

Common Nighthawk (*Chordeiles Minor)*

Status

- Threatened (NS)

Species Description

- Medium sized bird at 24cm in length
- Large flattened head, large dark eyes, small bill and large mouth
- Long, slender wings with white bar on the underside that can be seen when the bird is in flight
- Dark brown, mottled with black, white and buff plumage
- Make a loud "peent" call when in flight
- Males are known to make loud booming noises with their wings as both a territorial display and as a means of attracting females
- Aerial insectivores that feed at dawn and dusk at heights from 1-80m

Threats

- Reduced availability of insect prey as a result of loss of insect-producing habitats (wetlands), climate change, pesticide use and light pollution
- Loss of breeding habitat due to urban development, agricultural and forestry practices
- Collisions with vehicles, planes and human structures

Habitat Description

- Breed in open areas with little ground vegetation, either natural or man made/maintained (i.e.: dunes, beaches, logged or burned-over areas, forest clearings, barrens, peat bogs, blueberry fields, quarries, and pastures).
    - Nesting season extends from May to mid-August with successful attempts taking at least 7 weeks
    - Nests are typically 2 eggs laid directly on bare soil, sand or gravel with a roughly 20-day incubation period
    - Nestlings remain in the nesting area with their parents for up to 30 days after hatching
- Prefer areas with water such as wetlands, lakes and rivers which provide an abundance of flying insects to be foraged
- Artificial lights can attract flying insects, thus attracting the common nighthawk
- Have been known to roost in shaded, camouflaged areas with an unobstructed flight path such as on logs, tree limbs, the ground, fences, or rooftops
- Migrate south in groups to overwintering grounds in South America in the fall and migrate north individually in the spring

Best Management Practices

- Learn to identify the Common Nighthawk and report sightings
- Avoid harvesting and silvicultural activities during breeding season (May 15-August 15)
- Cease activity if an adult is flushed from the ground, mark off and avoid suspected or known nest area.
    - Place marker in a location not directly next to the nesting site as it could attract predators.
    - If the bird is acting defensively increase the buffer distance until the defensive behaviour stops
- Leave 25m buffers around breeding habitat during low-impact activity (i.e.: planting, weeding) and 100m buffers during high-impact activity (i.e.: harvesting, road building)
- Leave at least 25% of areas that have experienced natural disturbance areas

Resources

- General Info: Species at risk - Government of Nova Scotia, Canada
- Recovery Plan: RECOVERY_PLAN_Adopted_Common_nighthawk_10Feb21.pdf (novascotia.ca)

Eastern Wood-Pewee (*Contopus Virens)*

Status

- Vulnerable (NS)

Species Description

- Small forest bird at 15cm in length
- Long wings and tail with a straight, thin bill
- Greyish-olive plumage on upper body and pale on the under body with a greenish colour on breast and sides and two white bars on their wings
- Peaked crown giving their head a triangular shape
- Males and females have a similar appearance
- Identification can be challenging due to similar appearance of flycatcher species. The Eastern Wood-Pewee is larger in size, has a darker face, weaker eye ring, and longer, pointier wings
- Males sing a distinct, slurred "pee-a-wee", "wee-ur", or "wee-oo" song from exposed perches to attract females. These calls last about 1 second and trail off on the last note
- They are aerial insectivores and mostly prey on wasps, bees, flies and moths

Threats

- Loss and/or degradation of habitat
- Reduced availability of insect prey as a result of loss of insect-producing habitats (wetlands), climate change, pesticide use
- Severe storms during migration and in wintering grounds resulting in mortality of Eastern Wood-Pewees
- Nest predation by Blue Jays, Crows, Ravens, Red Squirrels and more
- Over browsing by white-tailed deer altering habitat

Habitat Description

- In Nova Scotia they are often found in Maple, Birch, Oak, Pine or Hemlock dominated stands
- Breed in mature and intermediate-aged deciduous or mixed forest, and occasionally in coniferous forests
    - Breeding zones have open understories, complex vertical structures with snags and dead limbs useful for foraging perches and open flight paths
- Usually nest near forest edges, clearings, or canopy gaps near lakes, rivers or wetlands as they provide flying insects for prey
    - Nests are typically built on the limbs of tall mature trees far from the trunk

- Openings in or below the canopy are where they hunt for prey, perching on dead branches 10-12m high while they hunt

Best Management Practices

- Learn to identify Eastern Wood-Pewee and report sightings
- Learn to identify their preferred habitat on your property
- Avoid harvesting and silviculture activity during nesting season (May 15-August 15)
- Schedule harvests during winter when ground is frozen to minimize damage to soil (i.e.: compaction, rutting)
- Mark trees surrounding any found nests, so as not to draw attention to the tree the nest is in
    - Avoid any activity within 20m of the nest until the end of nesting season
- Use selection harvest techniques to create large tracts of old or mid-aged forest with higher basal areas and small canopy gaps
- Maintain large, mature trees
    - >30cm diameter at breast height (DBH) in deciduous forests
    - >35cm DBH in coniferous/mixed-wood forests
- Maintain a basal area of 22 m^2/ha
- Maintain small scale, continuous, incremental gap dynamics to support growth of uneven-aged stand structure
- Create more variability in canopy gap size including group openings from 0.02 to 0.21 ha in size in areas of abundant regeneration

Resources

- General Info: Species at risk - Government of Nova Scotia, Canada
- Management Plan: EAPW_Management_Plan_Final_7March2022.pdf (novascotia.ca)

Olive-sided Flycatcher (*Contopus Cooperi)*

Status

- Threatened (NS)

Species Description

- Medium-sized songbird at 18-20cm in length
- Large head, large dark bill and short legs and tail
- Brownish olive-grey face and back
- Whitish throat, center of breast and belly
- Dark wings
- Males, female and juveniles all similar in appearance
- Males make a loud, three-note whistle which sounds like "quick, three bears"
- Aerial insectivores that forage from high perches

Threats

- Habitat loss and degradation in both breeding and wintering areas
- Forestry practices
- Reduced availability of insect prey as a result of loss of insect-producing habitats (wetlands), climate change, pesticide use and light pollution

Habitat Description

- In Nova Scotia they are typically found in forests with a relatively open canopy dominated by Black Spruce and sometimes Red Spruce, Balsam Fir, White Pine, Hemlock and Larch
- Prefer Spruce swamps and coniferous forest edges along wet openings like meadows, rivers, bogs and ponds
- Sometimes found in disturbed areas such as early post-fire landscapes
- Nests often built on the edge of forests near wetlands
- Nests often built in mature conifers, typically Spruce, high off the ground and near the end of tree limb

Best Management Practices

- Learn to identify Olive-sided Flycatcher and report sightings
- Learn to identify their preferred habitat on your property
- Avoid harvesting or silviculture during nesting season (May 15-August 15)
- Schedule harvests during winter when ground is frozen to minimize damage to soil (i.e.: compaction, rutting)
- Leave a 50m buffer around wetlands
- Avoid activities which may alter wetland hydrology
- Use uneven aged forest management techniques
- Leave clumps of tall trees standing in cutover areas to create perches

- Maintain or increase downed woody material in stands
    - Leave snags when possible
    - Leave coarse and fine woody debris on the ground
- Maintain open meadow habitat next to coniferous forests for feeding sites
- Avoid the use of pesticides and herbicides
- Limit beaver trapping when possible as they create irregular wet habitats used by the Olive-sided Flycatcher

Resources

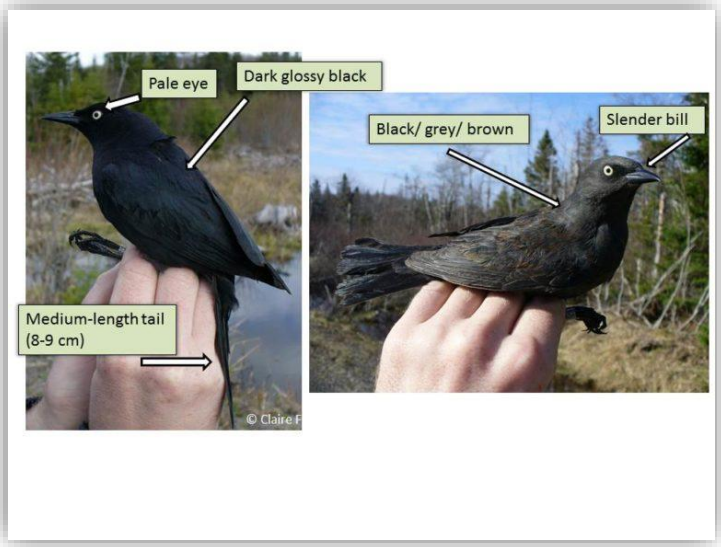
- General Info: Species at risk - Government of Nova Scotia, Canada
- Recovery Plan: RECOVERY_PLAN_Adopted_Olive_sided_flycatcher_10Feb21.pdf (novascotia.ca)

Rusty Blackbird (*Euphagus Carolinus*)

Status

- Endangered (NS)

Species Description



- Medium-sized songbird at 21-25cm in length
- Yellow eyes
- Narrow, pointed bill
- During breeding season males are glossy black and females are charcoal grey
    - During non-breeding season they are tan or rust coloured
- Black legs and feet
- Rounded tail
- Often form flocks with Red-winged Blackbirds and Common Grackles during migration
- Earliest migratory species to arrive in Nova Scotia, arriving in April

Threats

- Loss and/or degradation of breeding habitat in wetlands due to urban development, agricultural and forestry practices and mining
- Trapping beavers which create suitable breeding habitat for Rusty Blackbirds
- Mercury contamination resulting from human activity (i.e.: cars, industrial activity)
- Acid rain causing acidification of wetlands
- Climate change
- Blackbird control programs in the United States
- Loss/degradation of wintering habitat in the southern United States

Habitat Description

- Forested wetlands and coniferous-dominated wooded streams, swamps, bogs and beaver ponds are preferred breeding habitats from April to July
- Nests are built within 3 meters from the ground in dense clumps of short coniferous trees near water
    - Nests are well hidden and cup-shaped
- Have high site fidelity (return to the same nesting site each year)
- Occasionally overwinter in Nova Scotia when they don't migrate to the southern United States for the winter

Best Management Practices

- Learn to identify Rusty Blackbird and report sightings
- Avoid harvesting or silviculture during nesting season (April 15-August 15)
- Schedule harvests during winter when ground is frozen to minimize damage to soil (i.e.: compaction, rutting)
- Leave a 50m buffer around wetlands
- Avoid activities which may alter wetland hydrology
- Encourage open canopy conditions with some diversity in vertical structure in mature, shade-intolerant coniferous stands (White Spruce, Black Spruce, or Balsam Fir) with >60% advanced natural regeneration by removing 50% of the overstory
    - Throughout harvest blocks prioritize the retention of potential perch trees
    - Plant native softwood species at a density of 1800-2500 stems/ha in stands with <60% advanced natural regeneration
- Reduce the creation of linear edges when planning your harvest
- If nesting is observed or suspected avoid harvesting in the area in order to maintain the breeding site as they will return each year

Resources

- General Info: Species at risk - Government of Nova Scotia, Canada