

Eastern Wood-pewee

Contopus virens

STATUS

Special Concern 

Vulnerable 

45



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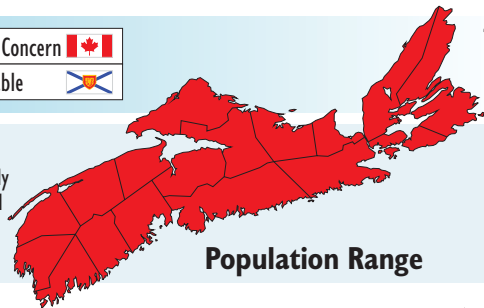
Species Description

The Eastern Wood-pewee is a flycatcher (15 cm long) with a very weak eye ring, long, pointed wings, and a straight, thin bill. Its upperparts are greyish-olive with two white wing bars. Its underparts are off-white with dusky sides. Males and females are similar in appearance. Its song is a pleasing, name-saying, whistled “pee-ah-wee”.



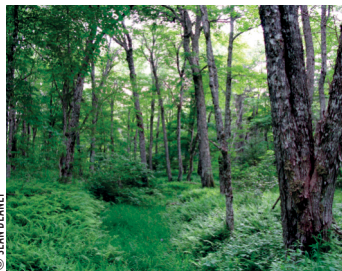
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Found throughout Nova Scotia. Winters in primarily in South America. Declined by 70% over the last 40 years in Canada.



Habitat

Found along mature deciduous and mixedwood forest edges (with tree species such as Sugar Maple, Oak and Poplar) and natural forest clearings; often near lakes, rivers or wetlands. It eats flying insects and requires open areas to feed, and big trees with branches to perch on. It generally avoids habitats near roads, development, and areas cleared by forestry activities. Nests are built on the limbs of tall, mature trees.



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The Eastern Wood-pewee is often observed perched on branches, with its body in an upright position, searching for aerial insects to forage on. It breeds from May to September.

Interesting Points

- Its highly disguised nests can be located up to 21 m off the ground.
- Uneven-aged forestry management techniques such as selection harvesting can create small, open feeding areas for this species.
- Like some other songbirds, this species largely migrates during the night.



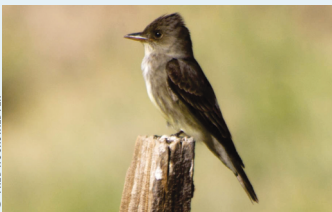
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Similar Species

Flycatchers can be very tricky to distinguish. One of the best ways to differentiate them is through their vocalizations and habitat-use. The Eastern Wood-pewee can be distinguished from other flycatchers (Least, Alder, Yellow-bellied) by its faint eye ring and long, pointed wings.

Olive-sided Flycatcher (page 43):

Dark “vest” and white belly; larger size; preference for coniferous forest edges. Song is a loud “Quick, free beer!”



© FRED HOCHSTADTER

Eastern Phoebe:

Weak wing bars; commonly observed wagging its tail. Often nests on artificial structures. Song a short, raspy “fee-be”



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Threats to Survival

- Habitat loss and degradation (breeding and wintering grounds).
- Large-scale changes in flying insect prey (acid rain, climate change, pesticides).
- Mortality at the wintering grounds and during migration (severe storms).
- Nest predation (Blue Jays, Red Squirrels)
- White-tailed Deer overbrowsing (habitat alteration).



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How You Can Help

Learn to recognize this species and report sightings to eBird. Maintain large, mature trees on your properties and woodlots. Choose pesticide-free foods and keep your land chemical-free.



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Contacts, Information, Sighting Reports & Stewardship Opportunities

Contact: Environment Canada (506) 364-5044 or www.ec.gc.ca

Info: www.speciesatrisk.gc.ca, www.gov.ns.ca/natr/wildlife, www.mba-aom.ca

Sighting Reports: eBird.org, 1-866-727-3447, www.speciesatrisk.ca/sightings

Stewardship: Bird Studies Canada 1-888-448-2473, www.bsc-eoc.org