

Hooded Oriole (*Icterus cucullatus*)

NMPIF level: Biodiversity Conservation Concern, Level 2 (BC2)

NMPIF assessment score: 14

NM stewardship responsibility: Low

National PIF status: No special status

New Mexico BCRs: 34, 35

Primary breeding habitat(s): Southwest Riparian

Other habitats used: Middle-elevation Riparian

Summary of Concern

Hooded Orioles are relatively uncommon in riparian habitats in southern New Mexico. They may be vulnerable to nest parasitism by Brown-headed Cowbirds, loss or alteration of breeding habitat, and land use changes on wintering grounds in Mexico.

Associated Species

Yellow-billed Cuckoo (BC1), Black-chinned Hummingbird (SC2), Gila Woodpecker (BC2), Southwestern Willow Flycatcher (SC1), Brown-crested Flycatcher, Bell's Vireo (SC1), Yellow Warbler, Summer Tanager (SC2), Black-headed Grosbeak, Blue Grosbeak, Varied Bunting (BC2), Bullock's Oriole (SC2)

Distribution

Hooded Orioles breed across southern portions of California, Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas. The Pacific coast population extends further north, recently expanding through Oregon. The breeding range extends south into Mexico including most of Baja California and Sonora. Migrants to the southwestern United States winter along the Pacific slope of Mexico, mostly from Sonora south. A separate south Texas population winters along the Gulf Coast and the Yucatan Peninsula (Pleasants and Albano 2001).

In New Mexico, Hooded Orioles occur mostly in the southwest quadrant, north to Glenwood and south Sierra county; also more locally in the southeast north to Rattlesnake Springs (Parmeter et al. 2002).

Ecology and Habitat Requirements

Hooded Orioles in New Mexico prefer open riparian woodland areas, and adjacent desert shrub. Typical breeding habitat for this species includes any areas with scattered trees, including desert oases, especially those with palms, and riparian areas with cottonwoods, willows or sycamores. The same habitats are often occupied by Bullock's Orioles. In southern Arizona, Hooded Orioles preferred riparian areas with high vegetation density and the presence of Arizona sycamore (Powell and Steidl 2002). The United States breeding range has expanded with the creation of new nesting habitats in suburban gardens and city parks with ornamental palms (Pleasants and Albano 2001). This does not seem to be the case yet in New Mexico.

Hooded Orioles arrive in southern New Mexico in late April, and generally leave by late August (Parmeter et al. 2002). Nests are woven structures of grass or yucca fibers, suspended from large leaves high in trees. Typical clutch size is 3-4, and two broods per season are often raised. Nests are frequently parasitized by Brown-headed Cowbirds. Hooded Orioles feed on insects, nectar and fruit (Pleasants and Albano 2001).

Conservation Status

Species Assessment

DISTRIBUTION	4
THREATS	3
GLOBAL POPULATION SIZE	3
LOCAL POPULATION TREND	3
IMPORTANCE OF NEW MEXICO TO BREEDING	1
COMBINED SCORE	14

Hooded Oriole is a Biodiversity Conservation Concern, Level 2 species for New Mexico, with a total assessment score of 14. Its highest vulnerability score is a 4, assigned by PIF for its relatively small winter range.

Population Size

Total population for the state is unknown. PIF estimates a species population of 610,000, and that Mexico holds less than 1% of this estimate, or about 4,500 birds.

Population Trend

Hooded Orioles have declined from historically reported high abundances in a number of areas. In recent decades, the species has declined in some regions, such as south Texas, while at the same time expanding its range and increasing elsewhere, such as along the Pacific coast. In New Mexico, this species is not sampled well by BBS; data showing high increases are based on only 4 routes. NMPIF assigns this species a 3 for local population trend, indicating uncertainty. BBS data for 1966-2004 are:

	Annual Trend (%)	P-value	Number of Routes
New Mexico	27.5	0.25	4
FWS Region 2	-0.2	0.90	48
Western BBS	3.7	0.11	59

Threats

Cowbirds are a probable cause of decline in south Texas and parts of Mexico. The threat from cowbirds is associated with changing land use and vegetative cover (Rappole and Klicka 1991). The degree of cowbird parasitism in New Mexico is unknown. Hooded Orioles may use suburban habitats in New Mexico less than in other states where populations are increasing, and may be somewhat vulnerable here due to their dependence on riparian areas.

Management Issues and Recommendations

No special management efforts are needed for Hooded Oriole at this time, apart from overall efforts to maintain the health and integrity of riparian areas in the southern part of the state. Riparian areas should be managed to maintain high vegetation density and key structural components such as sycamores and cottonwoods. Studies to assess the impacts of Brown-headed Cowbirds are needed.

Species Conservation Objectives

NMPIF Objectives

- Design and carry out surveys to better understand species abundance and population trends in the region.
- Maintain or increase the present breeding populations.

Sources of Information

Parmeter, J., B. Neville, and D. Emkalns. 2002. New Mexico Bird Finding Guide. New Mexico Ornithological Society, Albuquerque, NM.

Pleasants, B. Y., and D. J. Albano. 2001. Hooded Oriole (*Icterus cucullatus*). In *The Birds of North America*, No. 568 (A. Poole and F. Gill, eds.). The Birds of North America, Inc., Philadelphia, PA.

Powell, B. F., and R. J. Steidl. 2002. Habitat selection by riparian songbirds breeding in southern Arizona. *Journal of Wildlife Management* 66:1096-1103.

Rappole, J. H., and J. Klicka. 1991. Status of six populations of Rio Grande birds. U.S. Fish Wildl. Ser. Rep.