

Painted Redstart (*Myioborus pictus*)

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): Montane Riparian

Other habitats used: Madrean Pine-Oak Woodland, Mixed Conifer Forest, Southwest Riparian

Summary of Concern

Painted Redstart is a primarily Mexican species that breeds in upland riparian areas of southern Arizona and New Mexico. Information is needed to determine population trends and identify potential threats to this species.

Associated Species

Magnificent Hummingbird (BC2), Acorn Woodpecker, Western Wood-Pewee, Cordilleran Flycatcher (SC2), Black-throated Gray Warbler (SC2), Virginia's Warbler (SC1), Hepatic Tanager, Black-headed Grosbeak

Distribution

In the United States, Painted Redstart breeds patchily across the southern parts of Arizona and New Mexico, occasionally farther north and east. The species occurs as a summer migrant in the northern portions of the Sierra Madre Occidental and Sierra Madre Oriental in Mexico, and as a year-round resident in the central Mexican highlands south to Nicaragua (Barber et al. 2000).

In New Mexico, Painted Redstart breeds primarily in the southwest corner (BCR 34) of the state. It breeds locally in Mogollon highlands north to the San Francisco River and Magdalena Mountains, east to the Black Range, and south to Peloncillo and Animas Mountains (Parmeter et al. 2002, Hubbard 1978).

Ecology and Habitat Requirements

Painted Redstarts may be rare to fairly common in middle- and upper-elevation riparian woodlands, and adjacent pine-oak woodlands. In the United States portion of its range the species generally prefers areas with rugged slopes and deeply-shaded canyon bottoms. In northern Arizona, habitat was described as riparian woodlands with dense overstories, thick undergrowth, and permanent or semipermanent water ([Marshall and Balda 1974](#)). Painted Redstarts also use oak-juniper woodland habitat, and mixed oak and conifer forest (Balda 1967, Barber et al. 2000).

The redstart arrives in New Mexico in late March, begins breeding activities in mid-April, and remains through early September. Nests are placed on the ground, under rocks, tree roots, or overhanging grass clumps. Nest areas are usually sloping banks or rocky canyon walls near running water (DeGraaf et al. 1991, Barber et al. 2000). Painted Redstart nests are occasionally parasitized by Brown-headed Cowbirds, but this is thought to be infrequent.

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

Painted Redstart 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 limited non-breeding distribution.

Population Size

Total population for the state is unknown. PIF estimates a species population of 2 million, and that New Mexico holds less than 1%, or about 6,000 birds. Recorded density estimates vary with conditions and habitat, and include:

- 1.71 birds/ha along a creek bottom in the Chiricahua Mountains (Hutto 1985);

- 0.54 bird/ha in riparian habitat in the Chiricahua Mountains (Balda 1967);
- 2.8-3.8 territories per kilometer of canyon bottom in Cave Creek, Chiricahua Mountains (Marshall and Balda 1974);
- 0.35 birds/ha in pine-oak woodlands in the Chiricahua Mountains;
- 0.25 birds/ha in riparian habitat in northern Arizona (Marshall and Balda 1974).
- 0.15 birds/ha in oak-juniper woodland (Balda 1967).

Population Trend

BBS data are insufficient to estimate a population trend for this species. Barber et al. (2000) report no data on trends. NMPIF assigns the species a score of 3 for local population trend, indicating uncertainty.

Threats

Significant threats to the species are not known. Populations in New Mexico may be threatened by any loss (e.g., catastrophic fire) or alteration of quality breeding habitat in upland riparian areas. Habitat loss in wintering areas may also be a concern. Painted Redstarts have shown sensitivity to human disturbance around the nest, including research activities and recreational land use (Barber et al. 2000).

Management Issues and Recommendations

Management for this and other species associated with riparian habitat in southern New Mexico should focus on keeping montane stream systems intact and forest vegetation in a healthy state.

NMPIF Recommendations

- Maintain upland and mid-elevation riparian woodlands of mixed composition, including dense shrubby understory.

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 population in the BCR 34 portion of the state.

Sources of Information

Balda, R. P. 1967. Ecological relationships of the breeding-birds of the Chiricahua Mountains, Arizona. Ph.D. Thesis, Univ. of Illinois, Urbana, IL.

Barber, D. R., P. M. Barber, and P. G. Jablonski. 2000. Painted Redstart (*Myioborus pictus*). In *The Birds of North America*, No. 528 (A. Poole and F. Gill, eds.). The Birds of North America, Inc., Philadelphia, PA.

DeGraaf, R.M., V.E. Scott, R.H. Hamre, L. Ernst, and S.H. Anderson. 1991. Forest and rangeland birds of the United States, natural history and habitat use. USDA Forest Service, Agriculture Handbook 688.

Hubbard, J. P. 1978. Revised check-list of the birds of New Mexico. N.M. Ornithol. Soc. Publ. No. 6

Hutto, R. L. 1985. Seasonal changes in the habitat distribution of transient insectivorous birds in southeastern Arizona: competition mediated? *Auk* 102:120-132.

Marshall, J., and R. P. Balda. 1974. The breeding ecology of the Painted Redstart. *Condor* 76:89-101.

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