Beneficial Management Practices for Landbirds at Risk in Forestry

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In Nova Scotia, recovery of five at-risk forest birds (Canada Warbler *Cardellina canadensis*, Common Nighthawk *Chordeiles minor*, Eastern Wood-Pewee *Contopus virens*, Olive-sided Flycatcher *Contopus cooperi*, and Rusty Blackbird *Euphagus carolinus*) will depend on stewardship of their breeding habitat within working forests. Beneficial Management Practices (BMPs) applied during forestry operations can maintain habitat elements required by a Species At Risk (SAR). This project aims to develop, test, and assess BMPs for SAR birds in collaboration with the forest industry. The goal is to find solutions that will benefit both the birds and forestry. Results of the collaboration with the Medway Community Forest Co-op (MCFC), a Crown land licensee operating on 15,000 hectares in Annapolis Co. will be presented. In 2021-2022, field surveys were conducted on 16 sets of MCFC harvest blocks to determine SAR presence and specific areas used. Autonomous Recording Units were deployed in suitable habitat to increase detections. After finding SAR, partners used the *Nova Scotia SAR BMP Series for Forestry* to help inform MCFC harvest operations by extending the closed season for harvesting, identifying the location of key habitat features, applying appropriate buffer zones around habitat features, and specifying the type and spatial arrangement of retention trees. BMP effectiveness will be determined by drone mapping before and after harvest, as well as field verification of stands post-harvest, and follow-up SAR surveys the next breeding season. Project partners are operationalizing the BMPs with an aim of having more widespread implementation through crown pre-treatment assessment protocols and private land stewardship.

Keywords: BMP, SAR, Birds, Forestry, Stewardship, Habitat Conservation

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