

Olive-sided Flycatcher

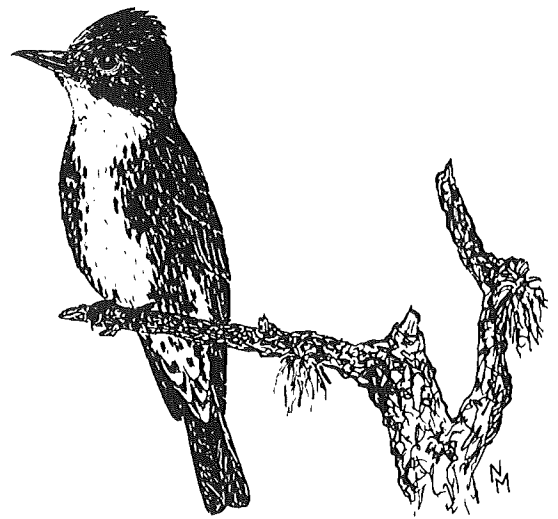
Contopus borealis

Olive-sided Flycatchers nest in open boreal forests in Alaska, Canada, the mountain ranges of the western U.S., the northern portions of the Great Lake states, and northern New England, and in the Appalachians southward into Tennessee and North Carolina. In winter they migrate south into Central America and the mountains of western South America (AOU 1983). Olive-sided Flycatchers are early fall migrants, gone from Vermont before the end of September. Spring arrivals appear during the second and third weeks of May.

In the late 1800s, the Olive-sided Flycatcher was considered common in Vermont in the Londonderry area in June and July (Allen 1909). Perkins and Howe (1901) considered the species common during the summer months. G. H. Ross (1906a), writing of birds in Rutland County between 1888 and 1906, mentioned that Olive-sided Flycatchers were found in summer "chiefly around mountain ponds." L. H. Ross (1914) noted Olive-sideds were rare in the vicinity of Bennington, in the Valley of Vermont. Writing of birds that occurred during the summer in the Green Mountains, Davenport (1908) found Olive-sided Flycatchers "common about all swampy areas to the base of [Mt. Mansfield]." Spear (1976) alluded to the species being infrequently encountered.

Summer habitats of Olive-sided Flycatchers in Vermont include high-elevation wetlands (Davenport 1907), slashed and burned forests in the mountains (Eaton and Curry 1926), coniferous forests and bogs at elevations between 457 and 762 m (1,500–2,500 ft) (Spear 1976), and boreal forest in the Northeast Highlands (RVB, Summer 1975). Bull (1974) mentioned that they breed in the higher mountains of New York State. Olive-sided Flycatchers are often seen perching on conspicuous treetops, on snags, or live trees with dead crowns, uttering their loud, three-note call *quick-three-beers*.

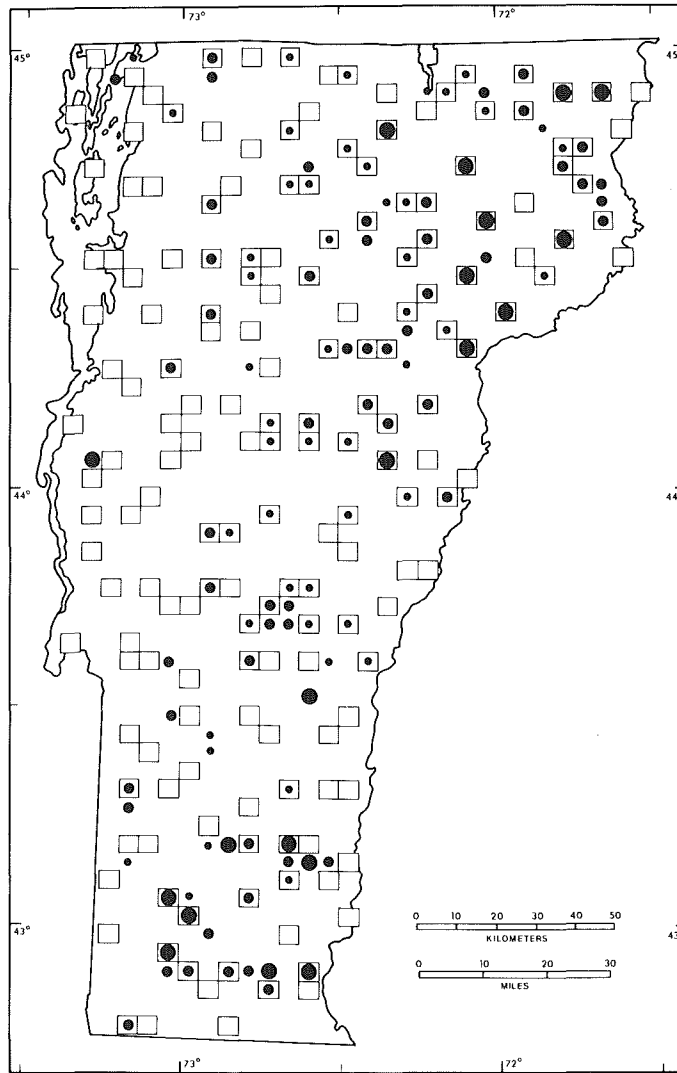
The Olive-sided Flycatcher nest is placed



most often in a conifer at 1.5–21 m (5–70 ft) above the ground, usually near the end of a horizontal limb in clusters of upright twigs. It is a cup with a loose foundation of dead twigs, and is made of grasses, mosses, lichens (often *Usnea*), straw, rootlets, and pine needles (Harrison 1978; Terres 1980). Clutches consist of 3 or 4 eggs, although usually 3 are laid. The eggs are cream-white, buff, or pink, lightly wreathed at the broad end with brown or gray blotches (Harrison 1978). Vermont nesting information for Olive-sided Flycatchers is scanty: there is one egg date for a 3-egg clutch on June 14; a nestling date on July 9 (the nest at 10.7 m [35 ft] on an outer branch of a large fir); and fledgling dates of July 22 and 26 and August 2. New York egg dates range from June 9 to July 27; there is one nestling date for June 22; and fledgling dates range from July 10 to July 24 (Bull 1974). Incubation lasts from 16 to 17 days (Walkinshaw and Henry 1957a).

Olive-sideds usually hunt from a high exposed perch, and dash out to capture the flying insects which make up their diet: honeybees, winged ants, and parasitic wasps (Beal 1942), as well as carpenter ants, click beetles, wood borers, leaf chafers, bark beetles, and cicadas (McAtee 1926).

Though apparently not abundant in Vermont, Olive-sided Flycatchers do occur



No. of priority blocks in which recorded

TOTAL 86 (48%)

Possible breeding: 37 (43% of total)
 Probable breeding: 34 (40% of total)
 Confirmed breeding: 15 (17% of total)

Physiographic regions in which recorded

	no. of priority blocks	% of region's priority blocks	% of species' total priority blocks
Champlain Lowlands	5	16	6
Green Mountains	29	54	34
North Central	17	89	20
Northeast Highlands	11	69	13
East Central	16	84	18
Taconic Mountains	1	6	1
Eastern Foothills	7	29	8

regularly during the breeding season in suitable habitats. Their statewide distribution closely parallels the distribution of coniferous wetlands and intermediate- to high-elevation forests such as those found in Northeastern Vermont and the Green Mountains. Logging activity in some areas has probably increased the amount of habitat for Olive-sided Flycatchers by creating openings in these forests.

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