

# Connecticut Warbler Conservation Summit

## October 21, 2022 --- SUMMARY

### SPECIES PROFILE:

- Uncommon to rare with at least 97% of breeding population in Canada
- Partners in Flight estimate is 1.8 million but Boreal Avian Modeling project estimates 4.7 million, with core population in Alberta
- U.S. population likely in tens of thousands, most in north-central Minnesota
- Steep declines observed in U.S. and eastern Canada in past three decades
- One of the least studied songbirds in North America

### REGIONAL UPDATES:

- Wisconsin: only 3 breeding pairs left, all in dry, mature jack pine; DNR working to raise awareness and improve habitat
- Minnesota: significant declines and retreating north; fledglings stayed within 200m of nest for 3+ weeks
- Michigan: likely extirpated as breeder; potential for KIWA habitat work to later benefit CONW
- Canada: 2020 status upgraded from Imperiled to Apparently Secure (based on new info); COSEWIC needs better data to assess E/T status; climate change threatened; BBS trends vary by region but generally declining
- Quebec: jack pine habitat with blueberry and moss, much like WI; threatened by blueberry farming
- Ontario: ARU surveys in roadless areas of north showed 44% of 200+ points occupied, mostly in bog/fen habitat with BLPW; increased prob. of obs. in north from Atlas 1 to 2; Atlas 3 ongoing
- Manitoba: highest occupancy bordering MN, highest density east side of Lake Winnipeg; McKinnon geolocator project tracked 4 birds to NE U.S., then over Atlantic to Cuba & So. Amer.
- Saskatchewan: transition zone for CONW from spruce bog in east to hardwoods in west; 500K-1mil birds?
- Alberta: still a lot of CONW; ARUs much better than BBS for surveys; flat terrain with variable cover types, but happiest in ~60yo aspen
- British Columbia: 40-120yo aspen & ground cover key; special concern listing; forestry & grazing are significant threats, yet no long-term habitat plans; outlook pessimistic
- South America: nearly nothing known about CONW in winter; severe deforestation in Gran Chaco, where many thought to overwinter; some partnerships and projects taking shape there now, but time is of the essence (may not have 10 years)

### SURVEYS & MONITORING:

- Current: NA-BBS, Atlases, National Forest monitoring in U.S., BAM, Wildtrax (ARUs), eBird
- Needs: reduce uncertainty to allow for proper species assessment/listing; improve monitoring off roads and north of BBS range; resample known sites; combine with other species?

### RESEARCH:

- Current/recent: MN fledgling movements; Hallworth & McKinnon tracking projects; song studies by Hannah and Bayne
- Needs: fall stopover sites/MOTUS; winter surveys & habitat; demographic parameters; climate change impacts

**SUSPECTED THREATS & LIMITING FACTORS:**

- Deforestation on wintering grounds
- Loss/degradation of breeding habitat due to forestry, fire suppression, agriculture, resource extraction, and other human activity
- Migration stopover habitat and collisions, esp. in northeastern No. Amer. in autumn
- Climate change, esp. on breeding grounds

**PRIORITY ACTIONS:**

- Publish manuscript that summarizes range-wide status/trends and sounds alarm for the species' conservation need
- Add breeding season survey effort that improves status/trend monitoring and allows more certain assessment by COSEWIC & other conservation groups
- Advance partnerships and support initiatives in the Gran Chaco that protect winter habitat
- Conduct surveys for CONW in the Gran Chaco to determine wintering sites & habitat
- Initiate more tracking projects, using MOTUS tags, geolocators, or other devices, to further identify wintering grounds and migration stopover sites
- Investigate demographic parameters throughout the species' life cycle
- Develop Best Management Practices for breeding habitat and communicate to appropriate resource managers

The next working group meeting will be held in December or early January (date TBD) with primary focus on drafting the manuscript. We will also discuss strategies for advancing other priority actions identified above.