

## **SBSC Weekly Highlights, June 6, 2007**

**USGS Uncovers Female Aggressiveness in Wintering Migratory Bird:** In many species of migratory birds that winter in Central and South America, wintering males are dominant over females. This allows males to obtain the highest quality habitats and resources, and can force females into suboptimal habitats. One possible outcome of this is reduced survivorship of females. Recent research by ecologists with the Southwest Biological Science Center has found that willow flycatchers (*Empidonax traillii*) wintering at study sites in Costa Rica behave differently. During an experiment to measure aggressiveness of flycatchers on their winter territories, female and male flycatchers did not differ in aggressiveness. Furthermore, females used the same aggressive vocalizations (e.g., songs and calls) and other behaviors as males. As a result, females maintained separate territories within the same habitats as the males, and sometimes displaced males during territorial encounters. This territorial aggressiveness and site tenacity has conservation implications for the flycatcher on the wintering grounds. The details of this research were just published in the article "*Willow Flycatcher Nonbreeding Territory Behavior in Costa Rica*," by Sogge, Koronkiewicz, van Riper and Durst (*The Condor* volume 109:475-480). Contact: Mark Sogge; [mark\\_sogge@usgs.gov](mailto:mark_sogge@usgs.gov).

**USGS to Brief Kane County Resource Committee on Soil Research:** On June 12th, USGS scientist Mark Miller will brief members of the Kane County (Utah) Resource Committee on his on-going research investigating effects of mechanical vegetation treatments on rates of wind- and water-driven soil movement in rangeland ecosystems managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in southern Utah. The Resource Committee is composed of local community members who work with BLM and other stakeholder groups to address resource-management issues on public lands. Contact: Mark Miller, Southwest Biological Science Center, Kanab, Utah, 435-644-4325, [mark\\_miller@usgs.gov](mailto:mark_miller@usgs.gov).