



The Western Tanager is a handsome bird with a song that somewhat resembles a robin with a sore throat. Although it is common in open woodlands, it tends to stay in the shade, making it hard to spot.

# Western Tanager

*(Piranga ludoviciana)*

## STATUS

SARA  
Alberta

NO STATUS  
SENSITIVE

British Columbia  
Saskatchewan

YELLOW  
NO STATUS

## PRIMARY HABITAT

Coniferous/mixedwood

## TERRITORY SIZE

>2.8 ha (core area ~0.8 ha)

## NEST TYPE

Canopy (conifer)

## NEST REUSE

No

## STAND LEVEL

Retention patches containing snags, deciduous trees, and large-diameter conifers.

## LANDSCAPE LEVEL

Heterogeneous landscapes with late-seral upland forests and early-seral openings.

## BREEDING WINDOW



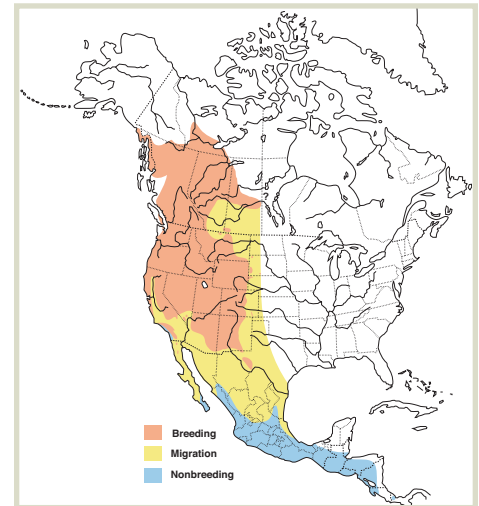
## HABITAT ECOLOGY

- The Western Tanager is found in a wide range of forest habitats west of Manitoba, but is mainly found in open coniferous, mixed coniferous, and mixed coniferous-deciduous woodlands.<sup>1</sup>
  - This species is often found at forest edges of natural openings and transitions to aspen patches and second-growth harvest- and fire-origin stands.<sup>1,2</sup>
  - They are associated with a high overstory canopy, large-diameter trees, and a coniferous component.<sup>1</sup>
- Western Tanager nest trees and habitat associations vary according to forest type:
  - In boreal forests, they are associated with late-seral open coniferous or mixed coniferous-deciduous forest,<sup>1</sup> particularly white spruce.<sup>3,4</sup>
  - In ponderosa pine/Douglas fir/grand fir mixed conifer forests, they are associated with late-seral fire-origin forest and mid-seral forests originating from uneven-aged management and selection harvest.<sup>5</sup>

## RESPONSE TO FOREST MANAGEMENT

- This species responds well to uneven-aged management including partial retention harvesting,<sup>6,7</sup> but is rare or absent from regenerating clearcuts without residual trees (up to 33 years postharvest and possibly longer).<sup>6-8</sup>
- Thinning of Douglas fir stands increased Western Tanager numbers relative to unharvested stands.<sup>9,10</sup>
- Over 10 years, Western Tanagers had higher occupancy of wide (avg. 30 m) riparian buffers compared with narrow (avg. 13 m) buffers in Douglas fir/western hemlock/western red cedar forests.<sup>11</sup>
- Western Tanagers appear to be more sensitive to harvesting in aspen-dominated forests, where they prefer old unharvested forests over clearcuts and harvests with up to 40% retention.<sup>12,13</sup>

## RANGE MAP



## STAND-LEVEL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Within pure and mixed conifer forests, retention harvesting or thinning are recommended in lieu of clearcutting. The following habitat features are recommended for retention to increase within-stand complexity:
  - Snags and large-diameter (e.g., >20 cm diameter) downed woody material<sup>1,5</sup>
  - Deciduous species (e.g., paper birch, trembling aspen, black cottonwood),<sup>14</sup> including large-diameter trees<sup>12</sup>
  - Large-diameter coniferous canopy trees for nesting (e.g., white spruce or Douglas fir)<sup>1</sup>
- It is suggested that Western Tanagers breed in retention patches with preference given to larger patches, however patch size thresholds for successful breeding are not provided.<sup>1</sup>