

Black-backed Woodpecker - *Picoides arcticus*

Abundance: Rare

Status: NSSU

NatureServe: G5 S1

Population Status: population status and trends are unknown; species-specific surveys are needed due to current monitoring techniques that are not adequate to determine population status and trends

Limiting Factor: Habitat (and Climate Change): limiting factors are severe and continue to increase in severity; an increase in available habitat is anticipated due to beetle-killed trees and forest fires, but this species' response to habitat alterations resulting from climate change is unknown for the long-term, although benefits are suspected for the short-term

Comment: NSS4 to NSSU due to unknown population status and trends

Introduction

The Black-backed Woodpecker occurs locally from northern Alaska, east to Newfoundland and northern New England, and south to central California and northern Minnesota. It wanders irregularly south in winter. It occurs year-round in Wyoming and currently nests only in the northwest and northeast corners of the state. The Black-backed Woodpecker is considered a rare resident in Wyoming.

Habitat

The Black-backed Woodpecker inhabits mature and old-growth montane coniferous forests with decadent trees, snags, and fallen logs. It is closely associated with recently-burned forest habitats and depends heavily on the larvae of wood-boring beetles. It may require a dynamic mosaic of recent burns across a landscape to sustain populations.

Problems

- h Population status and trends are largely unknown in Wyoming.
- h Impacted by logging of old-growth and mature forests, fire suppression, salvage and suppression logging of burned and beetle-infested trees, and short logging rotations.

Conservation Actions

- h Continue inventory and monitoring efforts and implement the Monitoring Wyoming's Birds grid-based monitoring program to determine density and population trends.
- h Maintain dense forests of mature and old-growth conifers with an element of disturbance, and retain large-diameter trees and snags (at least 20 to 30 cm [8 to 12 in] in diameter at breast height) to supply suitable nest sites and foraging substrates.
- h Prevent habitat loss due to fire suppression, loss of mature and old-growth forests, and removal of snags and insect-infested trees.
- h Refrain from salvage logging recently burned coniferous forests for up to six years post-burn or until wood-boring insects decline. If salvage logging is inevitable, remove trees from one area of the burn only, leaving intact other areas that retain proper snag dimensions for this and other post-fire dependent species.
- h Work cooperatively with other agencies to conduct surveys and manage habitat for this species.
- h On a landscape scale, provide a continual supply (1 to 2% of the landscape) of recent stand replacement fires greater than 40 ha (100 ac) in size, with at least 50% of that total unsalvaged after burning.

Monitoring/Research

Additional information is needed on habitat use, diet, snag density requirements, and response to land management activities, especially forest harvest patterns and changes in fire regimes.

Recent Developments

The availability of habitat for this species has increased over the past several years as climate change and drought-related beetle infestations have increased.

References

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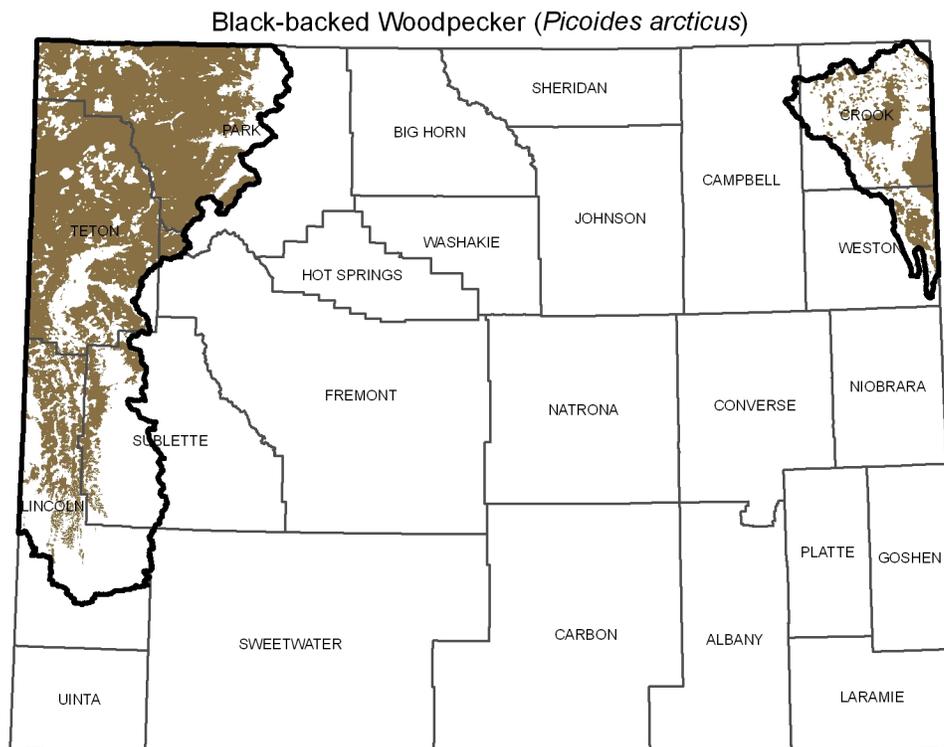
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SOURCE: Digital maps of ranges and predicted distributions for Wyoming Species of Greatest Conservation Need: April 2010. Wyoming Natural Diversity Database. University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyoming. Note that brown indicates the predicted distribution of the species; heavy black lines indicate outermost boundaries of possible occurrence.