Lewis's Woodpecker - Melanerpes lewis

Abundance: Uncommon

Status: NSSU NatureServe: G4 S2

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: limiting factor is severe

Comment: change is attributed to unknown population status and trends; moved from NSS3 to NSSU

Introduction

The Lewis's Woodpecker breeds locally from southern British Columbia and Alberta south to south-central California and New Mexico. It winters from central Colorado south to northern and western Mexico. It is scattered throughout Wyoming, although it is very localized in suitable habitat. The Lewis's Woodpecker is considered an uncommon summer resident in Wyoming.

Habitat

The Lewis's Woodpecker inhabits open country with scattered trees, usually below 2700 m (9000 ft). Open or park-like ponderosa pine forests are probably its major breeding habitat. It is attracted to burned-out stands of Douglas-fir, mixed conifer, juniper, and riparian and oak woodlands, but is also found in deciduous forests, especially riparian cottonwoods. It excavates a cavity nest in a live or dead tree or tall stump with an average diameter at breast height of 38 cm (15 in).

Problems

- Population status and trends are largely unknown in Wyoming.
- Concentrations of this species occur in only a few areas in Wyoming.
- Populations using riparian woodlands in arid and semiarid areas may be impacted by the loss and degradation of these habitats.
- Populations decline with fire suppression in ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir stands.
- European Starlings may overtake nesting cavities.

Conservation Actions

- Work cooperatively with other agencies to conduct surveys and manage habitat for this species.
- Maintain open, park-like stands of cottonwood riparian and low elevation forests with large snags (at least 38 cm [15 in] diameter at breast height at a density of at least 1 snag per 4 ha [10 ac]), mature trees, shrubby understory, and a productive insect fauna.
- Implement monitoring in suitable habitat where it is presently not being conducted, and continue monitoring in areas where it is currently in place.

Monitoring/Research

A funding proposal had been developed to implement population status and distribution surveys in Wyoming.

Recent Developments

Habitat alterations due to climate change and drought-related beetle infestations are occurring in portions of this species' preferred habitat.

References

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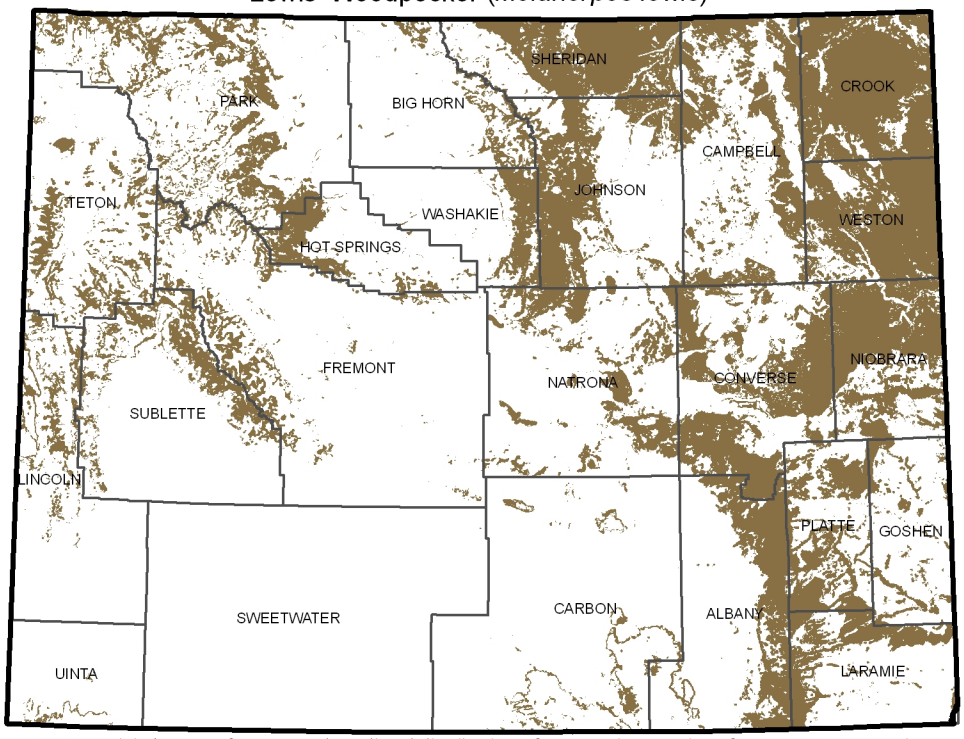
Lewis' Woodpecker (*Melanerpes lewis*)



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.