

Pygmy Nuthatch - *Sitta pygmaea*

Abundance: Uncommon

Status: NSSU

NatureServe: G5 S2

Population Status: population status and trends are unknown

Limiting Factor: Habitat (incl. climate change): limiting factors are severe; the elimination of coniferous forest habitat due to beetle kill, logging, and climate change is on-going

Comment: change is attributed to unknown population status and trends; moved from NSS4 to NSSU

Introduction

The Pygmy Nuthatch is patchily distributed from south-central British Columbia and the mountains of the western US to central Mexico. It is a year-round resident throughout its range, including Wyoming, although it may move to lower elevations during winter. It is scattered throughout most of Wyoming, although it primarily occurs in the ponderosa pine forests of eastern Wyoming. The Pygmy Nuthatch is considered an uncommon resident in Wyoming.

Habitat

The Pygmy Nuthatch is considered a pine specialist; it is restricted mainly to ponderosa pine forests, although it also occurs in other coniferous habitats. It prefers mature to old-growth stands that are fairly open (less than 70% canopy cover), with a component of vigorous trees of intermediate age. It excavates cavities for nesting and night-roosting and is therefore dependent on high densities of large snags.

Problems

- h Population status and trends are largely unknown in Wyoming.
- h Nesting sites and foraging areas may be impacted by timber harvesting practices that remove older trees and snags.

Conservation Actions

- h Work cooperatively with other agencies to conduct surveys and manage habitat for this species.
- h Maintain open stands of mature to old-growth ponderosa pine containing large trees, large snags, and vigorous trees of intermediate age.
- h Manage Pygmy Nuthatch habitat to avoid conflicts with timber harvesting.
- h Work to better understand the effects of long-term fire suppression on Pygmy Nuthatch habitats.

Monitoring/Research

May need specialized, periodic monitoring to estimate the number of breeding pairs if existing monitoring programs do not detect this species in sufficient numbers to determine population density and trends.

Recent Developments

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

References

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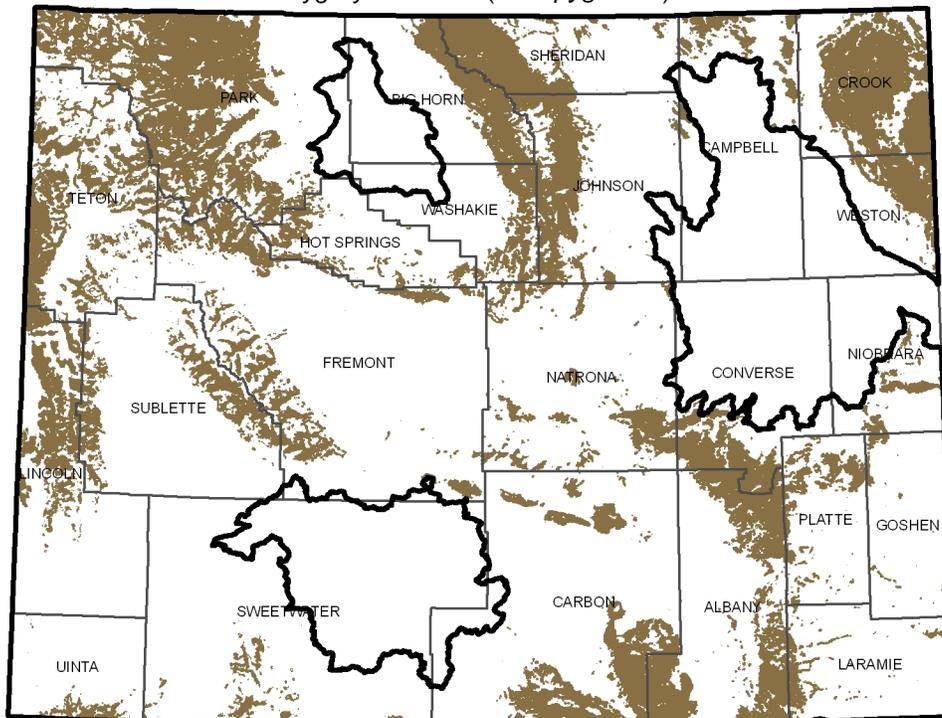
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SOURCE: Digital maps of ranges and predicted distributions for Wyoming Species of Greatest Conservation Need: April 2010. Wyoming Natural Diversity Database. University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyoming. Note that brown indicates the predicted distribution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