Steller's Jay

*Cyanocitta stelleri*

**Class:** Aves  
**Order:** Passeriformes

**Review Status:** Peer-reviewed  
**Version Date:** 06 February 2019

### Conservation Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NatureServe:</th>
<th>Agency:</th>
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<tr>
<td>G Rank: G5</td>
<td>ADF&amp;G: Species of Greatest Conservation Need</td>
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<td>S Rank: S5</td>
<td>USFWS:</td>
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#### Status - variables measure the trend in a taxon’s population status or distribution. Higher status scores denote taxa with known declining trends. Status scores range from -20 (increasing) to 20 (decreasing).

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<tr>
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<th>Range</th>
<th>Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Status</td>
<td>-20 to 20</td>
<td>-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biological</td>
<td>-50 to 50</td>
<td>-41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action</td>
<td>-40 to 40</td>
<td>16</td>
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#### Final Rank

Conservation category: VII. Yellow  
low status and either high biological vulnerability or high action need

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Higher numerical scores denote greater concern

### Biological - variables measure aspects of a taxon’s distribution, abundance and life history. Higher biological scores suggest greater vulnerability to extirpation. Biological scores range from -50 (least vulnerable) to 50 (most vulnerable).

#### Population Size in Alaska (-10 to 10)

Uncertain, but >25,000. Partners in Flight estimates the Alaskan population size at 110,000 individuals (95% CI: 54,000-200,000; PIF 2019).

**Score**

-10

#### Range Size in Alaska (-10 to 10)

Occurs from southcentral Alaska (including the Kenai Peninsula) south to southeast Alaska (ACCS 2017a). Estimated range size is >100,000 sq. km., but <400,000 sq. km.

**Score**

-8
Population Concentration in Alaska (-10 to 10)

Does not concentrate.

Reproductive Potential in Alaska

Age of First Reproduction (-5 to 5)

Probably 2-3 years (Walker et al. 2016). Little is known about the reproductive ecology of Steller's jay. Although juveniles (1 year old) can breed, limited data suggest that is rare (Brown 1964, qtd. in Walker et al. 2016).

Number of Young (-5 to 5)

Little information available. In western U.S. and Canada, mean clutch size was $3.06 \pm 0.82$ SD, with a range between 1 and 4 eggs (Walker et al. 2016). Females likely lay a single clutch per year, though renesting is possible if the first clutch fails (Walker et al. 2016).

Ecological Specialization in Alaska

Dietary (-5 to 5)

Little is known about the diet of Steller's jay in Alaska, though it has been reported predating on bird eggs and frequenting bird feeders (Williamson et al. 1965; Sieving and Willson 1998; De Santo and Willson 2001). Elsewhere in their range, Steller's Jay are opportunistic omnivores, feeding on berries, seeds, and arthropods (Walker et al. 2016).

Habitat (-5 to 5)

Exhibits generalist habitat preferences (Hansen and Urban 1992; De Santo and Willson 2001; Vigallon and Marzluff 2005). In southeast Alaska, found in a variety of forest types including coniferous, deciduous, and mixedwood, as well as in clearcuts, young- and old-growth forests (Williamson et al. 1965; Kessler and Kogut 1985; DellaSala et al. 1996; Sieving and Willson 1998; De Santo and Willson 2001). Frequently observed in edge habitat, such as along wetland-forest and forests near residential areas (Williamson et al. 1965; Sieving and Willson 1998; De Santo and Willson 2001; Marzluff et al. 2004). Nests are constructed on tree branches and sometimes even on human structures (Vigallon and Marzluff 2005; Walker et al. 2016).

Knowledge of Population Trends in Alaska (-10 to 10)

Surveys are largely concentrated in southeast Alaska (including islands), but there are far fewer records in southcoastal and southcentral Alaska (ARCTOS 2016). Habitat associations are described, mostly from southeast Alaska (e.g. Kessler and Kogut 1985; DellaSala et al. 1996; Sieving and Willson 1998; De Santo and Willson 2001). Frequently observed in edge habitat, such as along wetland-forest and forests near residential areas (Williamson et al. 1965; Sieving and Willson 1998; De Santo and Willson 2001; Marzluff et al. 2004). Nests are constructed on tree branches and sometimes even on human structures (Vigallon and Marzluff 2005; Walker et al. 2016).

Knowledge of Factors Limiting Populations in Alaska (-10 to 10)

Very little is known about the factors that regulate Steller's Jay populations in Alaska or elsewhere, and most studies have focused on individual-, rather than population-level assessments of fitness. It
is unclear whether Steller’s Jays that live in close proximity to humans benefit from access to anthropogenic food sources. In central California, individuals near campgrounds were in better body condition and had higher reproductive rates than jays which lived in forests (West and Peery 2017); however, Marzluff and Neatherlin (2006) did not find any difference in home range size or reproduction between Steller’s Jays living near or far from humans. Marzluff et al. (2004) found that individuals that used more complex habitat (patches, edges) had higher breeding success. Complex habitat may increase the amount of insects, berries, and nest sites available (Marzluff and Neatherlin 2006). Logging practices which increase the amount of edge habitat may therefore be beneficial for populations of Steller's Jays: on Prince of Wales Island, for example, abundance was highest in commercially thinned, young-growth forests (Dellasala et al. 1996).

**Supplemental Information** - variables do not receive numerical scores. Instead, they are used to sort taxa to answer specific biological or management questions.

| Harvest: | None or Prohibited |
| Seasonal Occurrence: | Year-round |
| Taxonomic Significance: | Monotypic species |
| % Global Range in Alaska: | <10% |
| % Global Population in Alaska: | <25% |
| Peripheral: | No |

**References**


