

Black-backed Woodpecker

Picoides arcticus

Class: Aves

Order: Piciformes

Review Status: Peer-reviewed

Version Date: 31 August 2020

Conservation Status

Table 1 Conservation status according to state, national, and international organizations and agencies.

Organization	Rank
NatureServe	G5/S3
ADF&G	Species of Greatest Conservation Need
IUCN	Least Concern

Final Rank

Conservation Category: **V. Orange**

Unknown status and either high biological vulnerability or high action need

Table 2 ASRS categorical scores. Higher numerical scores denote greater concern.

Category	Range	Score
Status	-20 to 20	0
Biological	-50 to 50	-18
Action	-40 to 40	16

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).

Population Trend in Alaska (-10 to 10)

Data from the Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) suggest an increasing trend of 3.7% per year, with high uncertainty (95% CI: -6.3, 13.7), however, this species is poorly monitored across its range, including in Alaska (Sauer et al. 2017). We therefore rank this question as 0- Unknown.

Score: 0

Distribution Trend in Alaska (-10 to 10)

Unknown.

Score: 0

Status Total: 0

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)

PIF (2019) estimates for Alaska are highly uncertain, with confidence intervals spanning more than 3 ranking categories. To our knowledge, more precise estimates are not available. We therefore rank this question as 0- Unknown.

Score: 0

Range Size in Alaska (-10 to 10)

Year-round resident in parts of Southeast Alaska, southcentral, and central Alaska, north to the southern foothills of the Brooks Range (Tremblay et al. 2016; see observations at ebird.org). Considered "casual" or "accidental" in many parts of its range (Isleib and Kessel 1973; Heint and Piston 2009; Guers 2013). Estimated range is >400,000 sq. km based on range map from ACCS (2017a).

Score: -10

Population Concentration in Alaska (-10 to 10)

Does not concentrate.

Score: -10

Reproductive Potential in Alaska

Age of First Reproduction (-5 to 5)

Unknown, but likely <2 years, similar to the American Three-toed Woodpecker (*Picoides dorsalis*; Tremblay et al. 2018).

Score: -5

Number of Young (-5 to 5)

Unknown in Alaska. Elsewhere in North America, ranges from 2-6 eggs, with 3-4 eggs being the most common (Tremblay et al. 2016).

Score: 1

Ecological Specialization in Alaska

Dietary (-5 to 5)

Specializes in consuming the larvae of wood-boring beetles (Murphy and Lehnhausen 1998; Tremblay et al. 2016). Diet analyses suggest that anywhere from 75% to 95% of its diet is comprised of wood-boring beetles. Occasionally consumes other types of beetles and insects, though to a far lesser extent than other woodpeckers such as the Three-toed Woodpecker (*Picoides dorsalis*; Murphy and Lehnhausen 1998; Tremblay et al. 2016).

Score: 5

Habitat (-5 to 5)

Found in coniferous and mixedwood forests, and most common in forests with a recent fire history (Murphy and Lehnhausen 1998; Hoyt and Hannon 2002; Tremblay et al. 2016). Nest cavities are typically in areas with a high density of snags and are excavated in live or dead trees that are low to moderately decayed (Goggans et al. 1989; Tremblay et al. 2016).

Score: 1

Biological Total: -18

Action

Variables measure current state of knowledge or extent of conservation efforts directed toward a given taxon. Higher action scores denote greater information needs due to lack of knowledge or conservation action. Action scores range from -40 (lower needs) to 40 (greater needs).

Management Plans and Regulations in Alaska (-10 to 10)

Protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA 1918).

Score: 2

Knowledge of Distribution and Habitat in Alaska (-10 to 10)

Habitat associations and range limits are somewhat known, based on multi-species surveys and observations (e.g., Isleib and Kessel 1973; Murphy and Lehnhausen 1998; Heintz and Piston 2009; Guers 2013).

Score: 2

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

Detected on BBS routes, however, these data have several limitations. Notably, BBS routes do not cover the entirety of this species' range in Alaska and survey methods are not adequate for this species' ecology (Tremblay et al. 2016). Sauer et al. (2017) consider this species "poorly monitored" in Alaska.

Score: 2

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

Little is known about the factors that limit this species' population and distribution in Alaska. As with other cavity nesters, the availability of nest sites may be limiting (Hutto and Gallo 2006). Several authors have suggested that this species' persistence and distribution depend on the frequency of wildfires and subsequent wood-boring beetle outbreaks (Murphy and Lehnhausen 1998; Hoyt and Hannon 2002; Nappi et al. 2010). In contrast, other authors have suggested that unburned forest stands may provide more stable habitats and may be more beneficial to the long-term persistence of this species (Tremblay et al. 2015). Additional research is needed to determine the relative importance of different forest stands on long-term reproductive success.

Score: 10

Action Total: 16

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

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