

Species at Risk

Lewis's Woodpecker

Melanerpes lewis



STATUS

The Lewis's Woodpecker is protected under the federal *Species at Risk Act* as a Threatened species.

HABITAT DESCRIPTION

The Lewis's Woodpecker is a migratory species that breeds in British Columbia. Its breeding habitats include dry, open Ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*) forests and grasslands; mature riparian cottonwood (*Populus* spp.) stands adjacent to open areas; and recently burned Ponderosa pine or Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) dominated forests. Large open areas are necessary for foraging, with trees used as hawking perches and for nesting. Its breeding range is roughly equivalent to that of the Ponderosa Pine Biogeoclimatic Zone.

HABITAT FEATURES (BIOPHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES)

Lewis's Woodpeckers require habitat with the following biophysical attributes:

- Open habitat with scattered or edge trees, particularly Ponderosa pine;
- Riparian forests adjacent to open areas, particularly those dominated by cottonwood;
- Large diameter trees for nest sites; ideally either living trees with partial decay, or dead trees with advanced decay. Preferred species include black cottonwood, Ponderosa pine, and other conifers; and
- Diverse ground cover of low shrubs, grasses and herbaceous plants that produce berries or provide habitat for insects

CRITICAL HABITAT RANGE

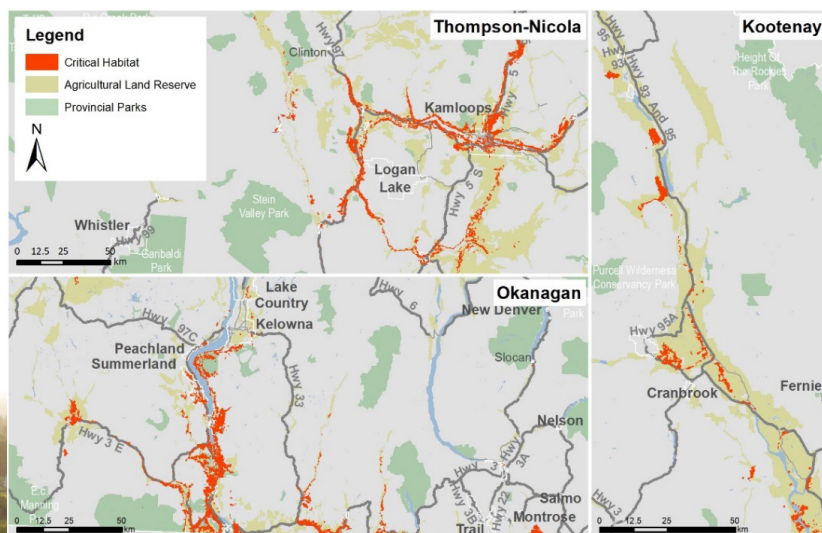


Figure 1: In Canada, Lewis's Woodpecker only occurs in the valleys of the southern interior of B.C. It breeds as far north as the Fraser Basin, near the confluence of the Fraser and Chilcotin rivers. Within this range, birds are concentrated in areas with suitable habitat.

CRITICAL HABITAT FEATURE LINK TO BC AGRICULTURAL BMPs

This table identifies which Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) Beneficial Management Practices (BMPs) may be applicable; other stewardship actions may also be possible.

Habitat biophysical attributes	Activity that would destroy critical habitat	Agricultural BMP for protection or enhancement of habitat
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trees scattered throughout and around the edges of open areas, with some large diameter dead or dying trees (including black cottonwood, Ponderosa pine, and other coniferous trees) Riparian forest adjacent open areas; dominated by cottonwood trees 	<p>Clearing of forested land for other uses and/or cutting down dead or dying standing trees.</p> <p><i>How activity would destroy critical habitat:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removal or modification of known or potential nest trees leads to a loss of nesting habitat Removal of standing mature trees within 400 m of a known or potential nest tree results in loss of perching, foraging and food cache substrate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect existing large diameter Ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir and cottonwood trees (avoid cutting, topping or limbing) Leave non-hazardous dead trees in place Plant Ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir and cottonwood trees scattered throughout or along edges of fields (this strategy should not be used in existing open stands, unless natural forest succession is inhibited) <p>BMPs 2006-1002 2006-1004 2006-2101 2006-2104 2006-2203 2006-2204 2018/2019-3001 2018/2019-1002 2018/2019-1004 2018/2019-1005 2018/2019-3401 2018/2019-1901 2018/2019-1902 2018/2019-2205 2018/2019-3501</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low density stands: open forests and grasslands Recently burned Ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir forest 	<p>Reforestation after wood harvesting; fire suppression.</p> <p><i>How activity would destroy critical habitat:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliberate alteration of natural disturbance regimes can result in dense forest habitats not suitable for aerial foraging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain low density forest stands and open grassland: do not in-fill plant <p>BMPs 2018/2019-3501</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diverse ground cover of low shrubs, grasses and herbaceous plants that produce berries or provide habitat for insects 	<p>Vegetation removal (e.g. urban or agricultural conversion, livestock grazing/trampling).</p> <p><i>How activity would destroy critical habitat:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant clearing or destruction of understory vegetation (i.e. grass and shrub layers) and of fruit-bearing trees/shrubs within 400 m of a known or potential nest tree results in loss of food resources and foraging potential 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect and enhance diverse ground cover of low shrubs, grasses and herbaceous plants <p>BMPs 2006-0601 2006-0602 2006-1002 2006-1003 2006-2001 2006-2101 2006-2104 2006-2203 2006-2204 2018/2019-0601 2018/2019-3001 2018/2019-1002 2018/2019-1003 2018/2019-1004 2018/2019-3401 2018/2019-1901 2018/2019-1902 2018/2019-2205 2018/2019-3501</p>



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OR EMAIL: sarpal@ardcorp.ca

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