

<b>SPECIES: Scientific [common]</b>	<i>Picoides arcticus</i> [Black-backed Woodpecker]
<b>Forest:</b>	Bridger-Teton National Forest
<b>Forest Reviewer:</b>	Randall Griebel, James Wilder
<b>Date of Review:</b>	07/17/2018; reviewed 5/20/2025
<b>Forest concurrence (or recommendation if new) for inclusion of species on list of potential SCC: (Enter Yes or No)</b>	NO

**FOREST REVIEW RESULTS:**

1. The Forest concurs or recommends the species for inclusion on the list of potential SCC:  
Yes \_\_\_ No X \_\_\_
2. Rationale for not concurring is based on (check all that apply):  
Species is not native to the plan area \_\_\_\_\_  
Species is not known to occur in the plan area \_\_\_\_\_  
Species persistence in the plan area is not of substantial concern X \_\_\_

**FOREST REVIEW INFORMATION:**

1. Is the Species Native to the Plan Area? Yes X \_\_\_ No \_\_\_  
  
If no, provide explanation and stop assessment.
2. Is the Species Known to Occur within the Planning Area? Yes X \_\_\_ No \_\_\_  
  
If no, stop assessment.

**Table 1.** All Known Occurrences, Years, and Frequency within the Planning Area

<b>Year Observed</b>	<b>Number of Individuals</b>	<b>Location of Observations</b>	<b>Source of Information</b>
1989	1	Blackrock Ranger District; Arizona Creek	Wyoming Natural Diversity Database (July 2018)
2001-2002	2	Kemmerer Ranger District; Little Bear Creek	Wyoming Natural Diversity Database (July 2018)
2008	1	Jackson Ranger District; North Lower Slide Lake	Wyoming Natural Diversity Database (July 2018)
2012	3	Kemmerer Ranger District; Smiths Fork	Wyoming Natural Diversity Database (July 2018)

- a. Are all Species Occurrences Only Accidental or Transient?  
  
Yes \_\_\_ No X \_\_\_

If yes, document source for determination and stop assessment.

- b. For species with known occurrences on the Forest since 1990, based on the number of observations and/or year of last observation, can the species be presumed to be established or becoming established in the plan area?

Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_ Unk \_X\_\_

If no, provide explanation and stop assessment.

- c. For species with known occurrences on the Forest predating 1990, does the weight of evidence suggest the species still occurs in the plan area?

Yes\_X\_\_ No\_\_\_

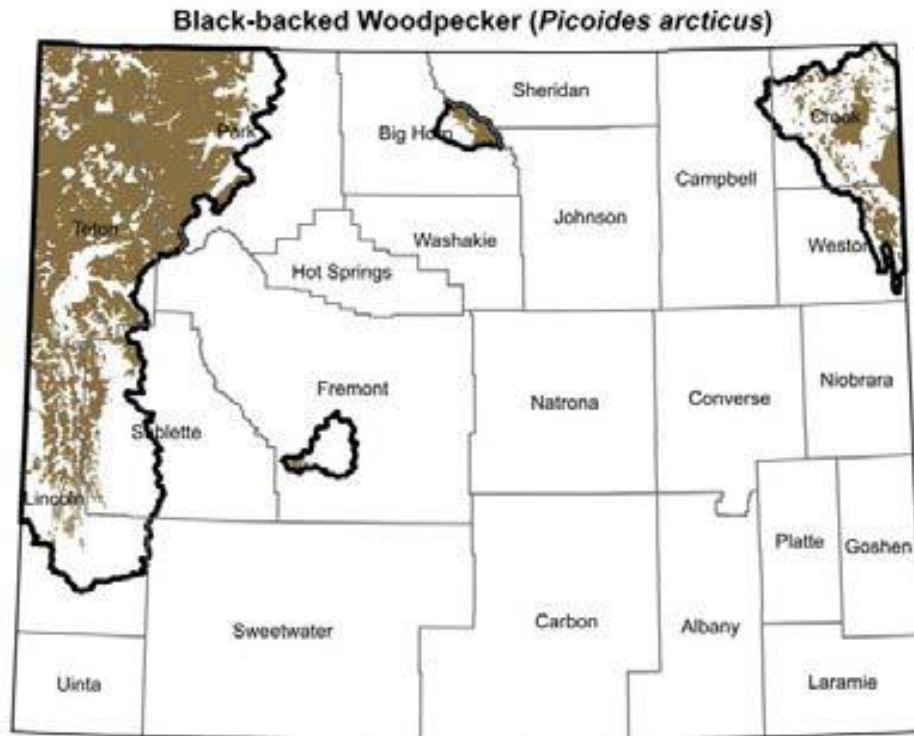
If no, provide explanation and stop assessment.

d. **Map 1**, Black-back woodpecker range map of North America



Wyoming Game and Fish Department. 2017. State Wildlife Action Plan. Black-back woodpecker (*Picoides arcticus*).

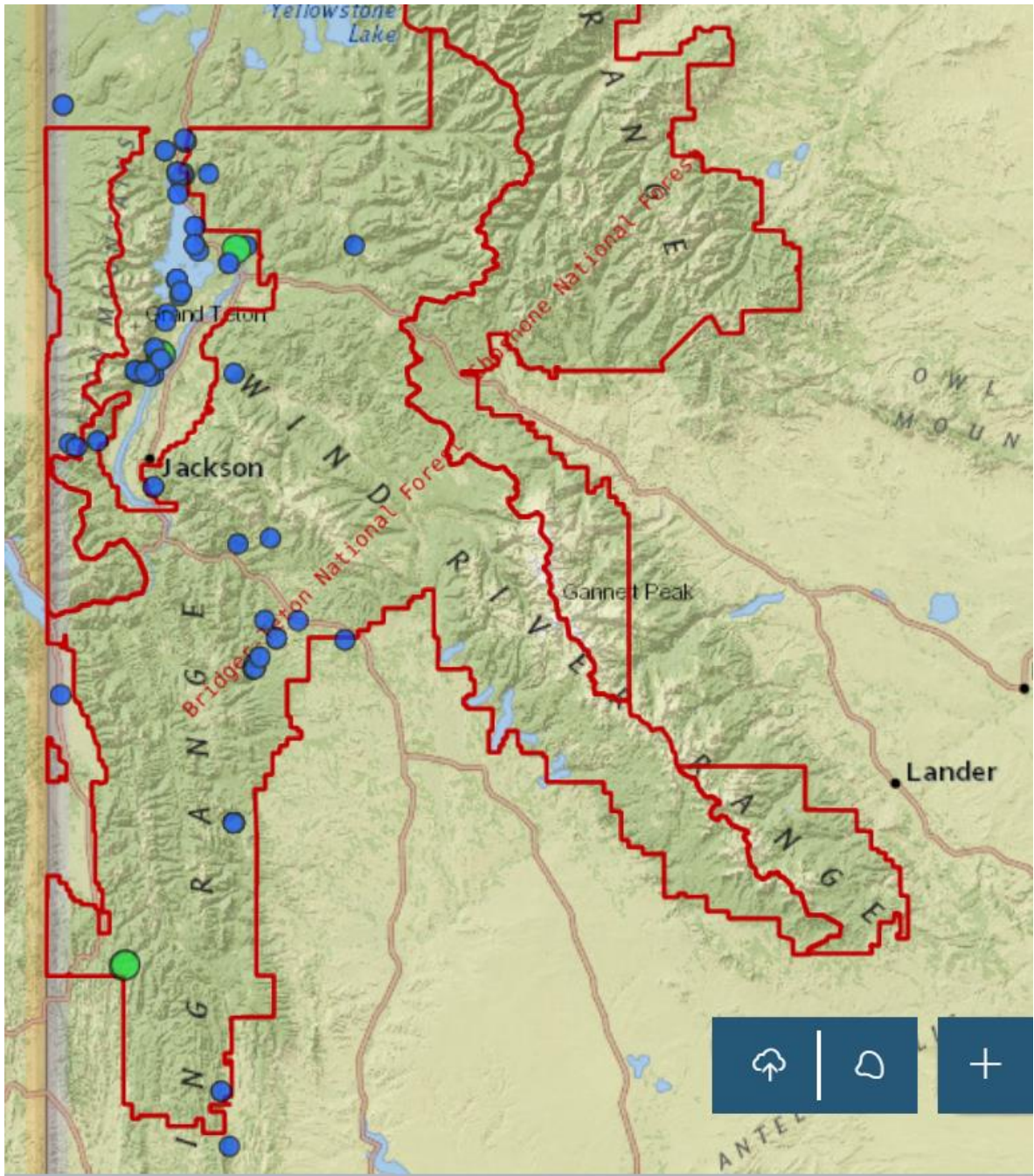
- e. **Map 2**, Range and predicted distribution of *Picoides arcticus* in Wyoming.



SOURCE: Digital maps of ranges for Wyoming Species of Greatest Conservation Need: Sept. 2016.  
Wyoming Game and Fish Department and 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.

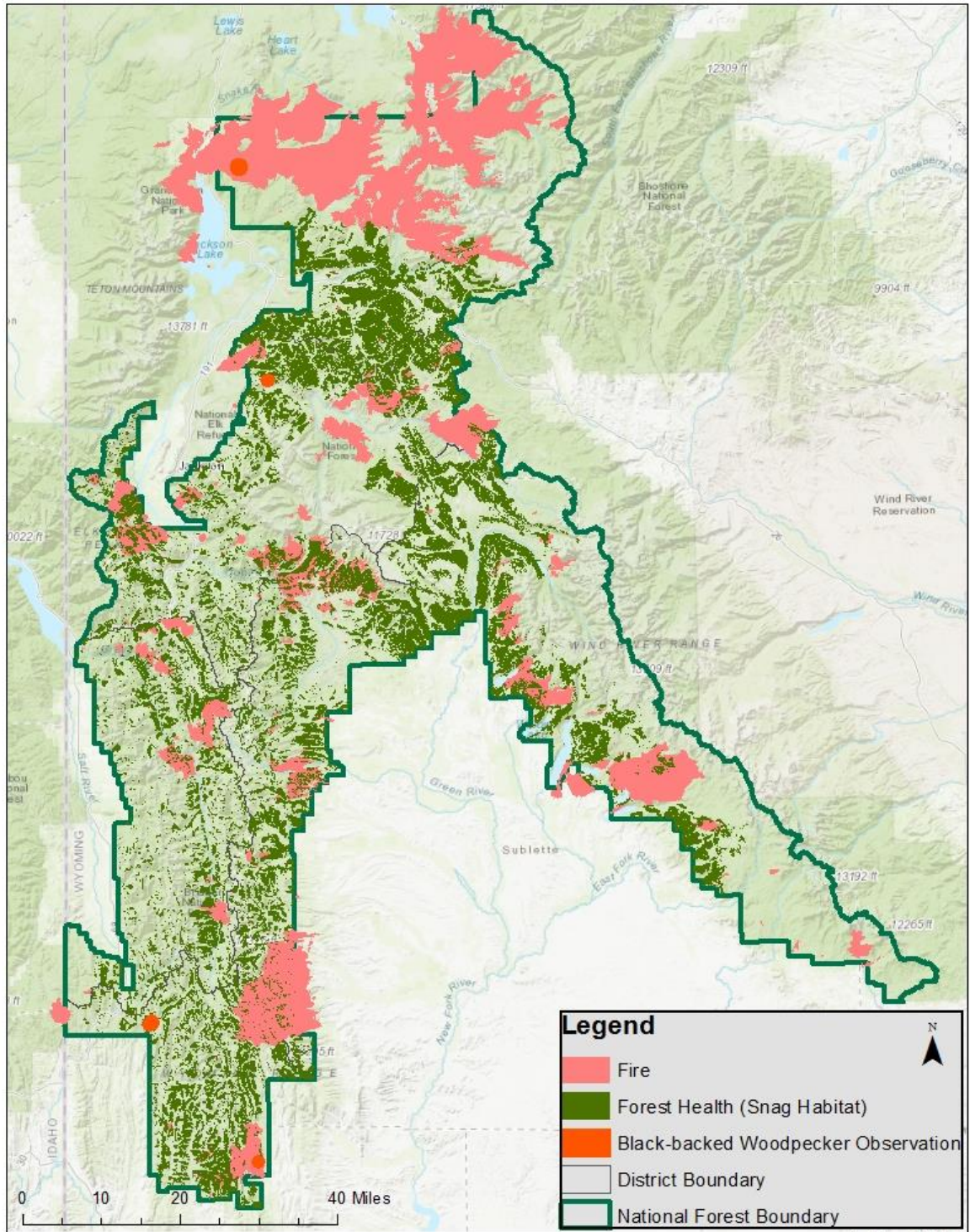
Wyoming Game and Fish Department. 2017. State Wildlife Action Plan. Black-back woodpecker (*Picoides arcticus*).

- f. **Map 3**, Map of Black-backed woodpecker occurrences on the Bridger-Teton National Forest (Wyoming Natural Diversity Database, [May 2025]).



- g. **Map 4**, Snag habitat on the Bridger Teton National Forest. Includes all historical to present fire polygons and forested areas damaged by insects, disease, abiotic factors, multiple factors and unknown reasons.

# Snag Habitat



A. Egan 2018

\*Note that in most cases of forest damage and fire there are also live, green trees intermixed within the polygons.

3. Is There Substantial Concern for the Species' Capability to persist Over the Long-term in the Plan Area Based on Best Available Scientific Information?

**Table 2.** Status summary based on existing conservation assessments

Entity	Status/Rank (include definition if Other)
<b>NatureServe Global Status</b>	<p><b>G5— Secure</b></p> <p><i>Common; widespread and abundant.</i></p>
<b>NatureServe State Status</b>	<p><b>S2— Imperiled</b></p> <p><i>At high risk of extinction due to very restricted range, very few populations (often 20 or fewer), steep declines, or other factors.</i></p>
<b>WGFD</b>	<p><b>NSSU (U), Tier II</b></p> <p><i><u>Population Status:</u> Unknown; Necessary information is lacking, Unknown status until information is obtained.</i></p> <p><i><u>Limiting Factors:</u> Necessary information is lacking, Unknown status until information is obtained.</i></p> <p><i><u>Tier II:</u> Moderate priority</i></p> <p><i>[The WGFD's Species of Greater Conservation Need (SGCN) designation process is based upon its <b>Native Species Status (NSS)</b> classification system that compares population and limiting factor variables using a 16 cell matrix. As a species moves from a placement closest to the upper left corner of the matrix (Aa/NSS1) toward the lower right corner (Dd/NSS7) the species' population status in Wyoming is considered more secure. Numerical scores were assigned to each of these variables and summed to provide a total score (i.e. NSS3). SGCN were placed into one of three tiers based on their total score: Tier I – highest priority, Tier II – moderate priority, and Tier III – lowest priority.]</i></p> <p><i>(WGFD - Wyoming Species of Greatest Conservation Need)</i></p>
<b>WYNDD</b>	<p><b>Species of Concern</b></p> <p><i>Species vulnerable to extirpation at the global or state level due to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>a. their rarity (e.g., restricted distribution, small population size, low population density)</i></li> <li><i>b. inherent vulnerability (e.g., specialized habitat requirements, restrictive life history)</i></li> <li><i>c. threats (e.g., significant loss of habitat, sensitivity to disturbances)</i></li> </ul> <p><i>(Wyoming Natural Diversity Database - Species of Concern)</i></p>
<b>USDA Forest Service</b>	<b>Region 4: No Special Status</b>

<b>UDI FWS</b>	<b>No Special Status; Migratory Bird</b>
<b>WY BLM</b>	<b>No Special Status</b>
<b>IUCN</b>	<p><b>LC – Least Concern</b></p> <p><i>A taxon is Least Concern when it has been evaluated against the criteria and does not qualify for Critically Endangered, Endangered, Vulnerable or Near Threatened. Widespread and abundant taxa are included in this category.</i></p> <p>(IUCN – Red List Categories and Criteria)</p>
<b>Partners in Flight (PIF) Continental Concern Score</b>	<b>10</b>

**Table 3.** Status summary based on best available scientific information.

Species (Scientific and Common Name): <i>Picoides arcticus</i> [Black-backed woodpecker]		
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Rationale</b>	<b>Literature Citations</b>
Distribution on Bridger-Teton National Forest	Black-backed woodpecker year-round range overlaps with the very northwest corner of Wyoming (Map 1). Habitat for the species is generally located throughout the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, including part of the Bridger – Teton National Forest (Map 2). Occupancy records indicate that the species is not well distributed, and is considered rare or uncommon on the BTNF (Map 3). The few Black-backed woodpecker observations documented on the BTNF are scattered across the forest. No occurrence records have been located on the Pinedale Ranger Districts However, the occupancy records correlate with the species suitable habitat identified on the Forest.	Wyoming Game and Fish Department. 2017. State Wildlife Action Plan. Black-backed woodpecker ( <i>Picoides arcticus</i> ).
Abundance on the Bridger-Teton National Forest	In Wyoming, the Black-backed woodpecker has an abundance rank of <i>rare</i> and appears to be uncommon throughout its suitable habitat (WGFD 2017). According to the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, from 1968–2015, annual Wyoming BBS detections of Black-backed woodpecker ranged from 0 to 3, with none recorded in most years. Only 4 Black-backed woodpeckers were detected statewide during surveys for the Integrated Monitoring in Bird Conservation Regions (IMBCR) program between 2009 to 2015 (WGFD 2017). IMBCR data for the BTNF indicates that Black-backed woodpeckers have a slight increasing trend since 2010 on the BTNF (Shivik 2025). Black-backed	<p>Bird Conservancy of the Rockies. (2017) The Rocky Mountain Avian Data Center [web application], Brighton, CO. <a href="http://www.rmbo.org">http://www.rmbo.org</a>.</p> <p>Wyoming Game and Fish Department. 2017. State Wildlife Action Plan. Black-backed woodpecker (<i>Picoides arcticus</i>).</p> <p>Shivik, J. A. 2025. 2025 Intermountain</p>

Species (Scientific and Common Name): <i>Picoides arcticus</i> [Black-backed woodpecker]		
Criteria	Rationale	Literature Citations
	woodpecker abundance on the BTNF is unknown. However, the low number of occurrence records suggests the species is uncommon on the BTNF.	Region Broad-Scale Bird Monitoring Report, draft. 76 pp.
Population Trend on the Bridger-Teton National Forest	There are no Black-backed woodpecker population trend estimates for the Bridger-Teton National Forest or the state of Wyoming. Population trend data from the North American BBS for the Northern Rockies region suggest that Black-backed woodpeckers experienced a long-term (1966–2015) increase of 2.12% and short-term (2005–2015) increase of 8.05% annually (Sauer et al 2017). However, both of these estimates are statistically insignificant. IMBCR data for the BTNF indicates that Black-backed woodpeckers have a slight increasing trend since 2010 on the BTNF (Shivik 2025).	Sauer, J. R., D. K. Niven, J. E. Hines, D. J. Ziolkowski, Jr, K. L. Pardieck, J. E. Fallon, and W. A. Link. 2017. The North American Breeding Bird Survey, Results and Analysis 1966 - 2015. Version 2.07.2017 USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, Laurel, MD.  Shivik, J. A. 2025. 2025 Intermountain Region Broad-Scale Bird Monitoring Report, draft. 76 pp.
Habitat Trend on the Bridger-Teton National Forest	The Black-backed woodpecker is associated with mature, fire regulated, boreal and coniferous forests, which include the combination of decadent trees, snags, and fallen logs (WGFD 2017). The species is greatly dependent on some type of disturbance such as fire or beetle infestation (Orabona 2017). In Wyoming, habitat includes mature forests dominated by spruce, Douglas fir, Ponderosa pine, and Lodgepole pine. While there is little Ponderosa pine on the BTNF, 33% (1,136,184 acres) of the Forest provides suitable habitat for the Black-backed woodpecker. This vegetation class is defined by late seral Spruce-Fir and Douglas fir, where mature, large diameter trees dominate or co-dominate (Helmbrecht 2012). However, the Black-backed woodpecker is considered uncommon to rare in these habitats. Although, local increases in Black-backed woodpeckers may occur in response to beetle outbreaks and fires (WGFD 2017).  Snag habitat from beetle outbreaks and other factors is well distributed throughout the forest (Map 4). However, recent large fires have not resulted in an influx of Black-backed woodpecker sightings. It appears that even with the abundance of mature snag habitat, the species remains uncommon on the BTNF. This is likely because the Forest is on the very southern edge of the	Helmbrecht, D., M. Williamson, and D. Abendroth. 2012. Bridger-Teton National Forest Vegetation Condition Assessment.  Orabona, A. C. 2017. Threatened, Endangered, And Nongame Bird And Mammal Investigations. Wyoming Game and Fish Department Nongame Program Statewide Wildlife and Habitat Management Section Wildlife Division. Annual Completion Report.  Wyoming Game and Fish Department. 2017. State Wildlife Action Plan. Black-backed woodpecker ( <i>Picoides arcticus</i> ).

Species (Scientific and Common Name): <i>Picoides arcticus</i> [Black-backed woodpecker]		
Criteria	Rationale	Literature Citations
	Black-backed woodpecker range, and optimal habitat for the species is located to the north, including Canada, Alaska, and parts of Idaho and Montana.	
Threats to the Species and its Habitat on the Bridger-Teton National Forest	<p><u>Natural Threats</u></p> <p>The Black-backed woodpecker is a fire-dependent species that utilizes the abundance of wood-boring beetles on fire-killed or fire-damaged trees for foraging (WGFD 2017). The species depends on dead and decaying trees for cavity excavation for nesting, and creates new cavities each breeding season. Nesting and foraging habitat appears to be well distributed across the forest (Map 4), whether that is the result of wildfire or forest health issues related to insects and disease. However, wildfire suppression efforts could result in less available habitat in the future.</p> <p><u>Habitat Loss</u></p> <p>Habitat loss is one of the most significant threats to the species. In Wyoming and across its range, fire suppression threatens the long term persistence of the Black-backed woodpecker by reducing available snag habitat (WGFD 2017). Additionally, salvage logging and fuels reduction activities in burned and beetle-killed areas threaten this species by removing dead trees that could be used for nesting and foraging.</p> <p><u>Climate Change</u></p> <p>Changes in climate including warming temperatures and broad-scale changes in precipitation patterns will likely increase the extent and severity of stand-replacing wildfires, disease outbreaks, and insect infestations on the BTNF. Larger, more frequent and intense fires will result in the predominance of younger forests. Increases in burn frequency, size, and severity is projected to decrease late seral forests on the landscape, which could decrease the availability of large trees and snags available for nesting and foraging.</p>	Wyoming Game and Fish Department. 2017. State Wildlife Action Plan. Black-backed woodpecker ( <i>Picoides arcticus</i> ).

Species (Scientific and Common Name): <i>Picoides arcticus</i> [Black-backed woodpecker]		
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Rationale</b>	<b>Literature Citations</b>
<p><b>Summary and recommendations:</b></p> <p>Although nesting and foraging habitat is well distributed across the forest, the species distribution and abundance is almost non-existent. While the species appears to be rare and uncommon across its range, including on the BTNF, the species is likely less abundant on the Forest due to large fire return intervals and increased fire suppression. The Bridger-Teton National Forest is nearly outside the range of the Black-backed woodpecker and the Forest likely does not provide optimal habitat for the species. As occupancy records suggest, populations of Black-backed woodpeckers do not appear to be prevalent on the Forest and the few documented observations suggest those of transient or incidental individuals, rather than established populations. Additionally, the species increasing population status for the Rocky Mountain region suggests that where optimal habitat is present for this species, populations are evident and their distribution and abundance are sizable, compared to that of the BTNF.</p> <p>Considering the lack of established Black-backed woodpecker populations, and the Forest's location within the specie's North American range, there is not a substantial concern for the specie's capability to persist over the long-term within the planning unit at this time. Therefore, it is recommended that the Black-backed woodpecker is not a Species of Conservation Concern for the Bridger-Teton National Forest.</p> <p>Evaluator(s): Ashley Egan, Randall Griebel</p>		<p>Date: July 16, 2018</p>