

Spotlight on Lewis' Woodpecker

Flies like a crow, hunts like a flycatcher, doesn't peck wood.

The not so aptly named Lewis's Woodpecker forages like a flycatcher and flies like a crow. It is unique with its pink belly, gray collar and dark green back, and can be seen perched on bare branches and fence posts throughout the Okanagan and Similkameen valleys.

Lewis's Woodpeckers recycle holes and cavities created by other woodpeckers or created naturally in dead and decaying trees (snags). They rely on open ponderosa pine forests and old cottonwood riparian forests.

The Lewis' Woodpecker finds itself on the provincial blue list and federally listed as "threatened". This means that they are likely to become endangered unless we address the threats to their populations.

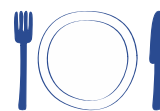


Estimated

decline of Lewis'
Woodpecker
populations
between 1970
and 2014*

72
percent

What's on the menu?



Spring & Summer:
mainly flying insects caught during long, circling flights.

Fall & Winter:
Fruits, berries and nuts are important foods in colder seasons

Overwintering birds (fairly uncommon in the Okanagan and Similkameen) typically eat nuts they've hidden in dead snags.

Why are Lewis' Woodpeckers at risk?

- Felling of large, standing decaying trees (snags); these are potential nesting and perching sites.
- Loss of habitat, especially open ponderosa pine woodlands and riparian forests.
- Netting around vineyards could be a serious source of mortality in late summer.
- Use of insecticides in orchards and gardens may reduce insect population.
- Competition with European Starlings for nest sites
- Fire suppression and in-growth, resulting in dense Douglas Fir-dominated forests.

You can help!

- Avoid frequent or prolonged human disturbance at nest sites during the breeding season (May-August)
- Retain open ponderosa pine forests and black cottonwood stands.
- Protect known nest sites.
- Maintain dead or dying standing trees especially soft, large diameter snags.
- Eliminate pesticide use where possible in order to maintain insect populations
- Ensure agricultural netting is kept tight and monitored regularly.