Northern Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*)

Species Status Statement.

Distribution

Northern goshawk occurs in forested habitats across the mid and high latitudes of North America, Europe, and Asia. In North America, this species is widely distributed year-round across Canada, Alaska, the Rocky Mountains, and New England. Scattered populations also occur as far south as the mountains in central Mexico (Squires and Reynolds 1997). Some goshawks are partial migrants, and may winter across the Great Plains. In Utah, this species is a year-round forest resident, with records from nearly every county in the state.

Table 1. Counties of known occurrence of Northern Goshawk

Northern Goshawk	
BEAVER	RICH
BOX ELDER	SALT LAKE
CACHE	SAN JUAN
CARBON	SANPETE
DAGGETT	SEVIER
DUCHESNE	SUMMIT
EMERY	TOOELE
GARFIELD	UINTAH
GRAND	UTAH
IRON	WASATCH
JUAB	WASHINGTON
KANE	WAYNE
MILLARD	WEBER
PIUTE	

Abundance and Trends

The estimated goshawk population of North American is approximately 210,000 individuals (Partners in Flight 2019). In the lower 48 states, western density estimates are about 8 pairs per 100 km^2, whereas eastern density estimates are much lower, at about 1 pair per 100 km^2 (Squires and Reynolds 1997). Partners in Flight Assessment reports an estimated 2% population increase in the last 4 decades (Rosenburg et al 2016), although within Utah, goshawk populations appear to have declined slightly by -1.74% per year (95% CI: -5.67 to 3.61; Sauer et al. 2017) between 1968 and 2015. Nesting territories within Utah appear to be relatively stable, however a recent study of productivity indicates northern goshawk is susceptible to climatic effects, with near-complete nest failure in 2019 resulting from the

combined effects of severe drought followed immediately by a severe winter (R. Miller, Pers. Comm.)

Statement of Habitat Needs and Threats.

Habitat Needs

Rangewide, northern goshawk is a forest generalist, and may be found hunting and nesting in semi-open forested habitats across a wide range of elevations (Squires and Reynolds 1997). Goshawk nests are often situated near open water, but the necessity of this feature is unknown. Nests are bulky and are typically built in a large tree, often the largest or one of the largest trees in the territory. In Utah, surveyors have found nests in a variety of tree species, including lodgepole pine, aspen, pinyon pine, ponderosa pine, and Douglas fir. Northern goshawks are large, opportunistic predators, and will hunt any number of small to medium prey species including large songbirds, rodents, rabbits, and occasionally small raptors. Goshawks require habitats with a substantial prey base (Squires and Reynolds 1997).

Threats to the Species

Current primary threats to this species include habitat degradation and human disturbance. Habitat degradation and fragmentation pose a threat to northern goshawk by impacting prey species richness and abundance, as well as altering preferred habitat characteristics for hunting and nesting.

Extensive human disturbance of nest sites, including active logging operations and construction, can cause nest abandonment, even in nests with older chicks that the parents have invested considerable time in raising (Squires and Reynolds 1997). Forest management may increase or decrease forest characteristics beyond compatible levels, or fragment contiguous forest into smaller, less desirable patches (Beier and Drennan 1997). Fortunately, with monitoring and careful silvicultural and harvest practices that avoid nest disturbance or destruction, many goshawk populations are recovering.

Climate change poses a largely unresolved threat to northern goshawk populations, with intersecting themes of expanding insect ranges (e.g., bark beetles and bud-worms), high tree mortalities, wildfire, and increased climactic variability combining to an undescribed degree.

Table 2. Summary of a Utah threat assessment and prioritization completed in 2014. This assessment applies to the species' entire distribution within Utah. For species that also occur elsewhere, this assessment applies only to the portion of their distribution within Utah. The full threat assessment provides more information including lower-ranked threats, crucial data gaps, methods, and definitions (UDWR 2015; Salafsky et al. 2008).

Northern Goshawk
No Identified Threats - Data Gaps Only

Rationale for Designation.

The recovery of northern goshawk is due, in large part, to ongoing management afforded by several states and provinces. In Utah, continued designations as a Conservation Agreement species with the US Forest Service Region 4, a state Sensitive Species, and a Species of Greatest Conservation Need have facilitated appropriate and successful habitat management (UDWR 2015).

Economic Impacts of Sensitive Species Designation.

Sensitive species designation of northern goshawk is intended to facilitate coordinated management of the species and to minimize economic impacts associated with an increase in conservation status. Current status incurs environmental analysis for forestry and other management actions that may impact occupied forest habitats.

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