Black Swift (*Cypseloides niger*)
Conservation Status Rank Summary

October 30, 2025

For details on assessment and ranking methodology, see: *Conservation Status Assessment Definitions, Process, Rank Factors, and Calculation of State Ranks for Montana Species*

Rarity and Trends

Rank Factor	Date Assessed	Value	Score	Data Source	Comments
Rarity					
Range Extent	2024-05-13	S: 71766.5 km²	3.930	MTNHP Range Maps	None
Area of Occupancy	2024-05-13	527 | 4km² cells	4.130	MTNHP Modeling	None
Number of Occurrences	2024-05-13	*	2.750	MTNHP Databases	around 50 waterfalls with birds
Population Size	2025-10-30	[263, 743]	1.570	MT Audubon report	Based on analysis of Audubon Survey data
# of Occurrences in Good Condition	2024-05-13	*	0.000		None
% of Area Occupied in Good Condition			-		**Factor not used in ranking.**
Environmental Specificity	2009-01-27	Very narrow	-	MTNHP Species Rank Data Table	**Factor not used in ranking.** Require areas behind waterfalls for nesting. | Methodology: NS (2003) | Original Score: A
Rarity is calculated by averaging weighted factor scores: **((3.93 × 1) + (4.13 × 2) + (2.75 × 1) + (1.57 × 2) + (0.00 × 2)) / 8 = 2.26**					
Trends					
Short-term Trend	2024-10-21	*	-	Montana Audubon survey data	**Factor not used in ranking.** Species appears to have continued to occupy historic nesting sites over the last decade. However, formal analyses of occupancy and count data have not been attempted.
Long-term Trend	2009-01-27	*	[-0.070, 0.070]	MTNHP Species Rank Data Table	Waterfall habitats have probably been relatively stable since European arrival to within +/- 25%. | Methodology: NS (2003) | Original Score: E
Trends score is calculated by summing weighted short and long-term trend scores: **(([-0.07, 0.07] × 1)) = [-0.07, 0.07]**					

Threats

Rank Factor	Date Assessed	Value	Score	Data Source	Comments
Threats					
Overall Threat Impact		Very High - High	[0.000, 1.830]		None
Intrinsic Vulnerability	2009-01-27	Moderately vulnerable	-	MTNHP Species Rank Data Table	**Factor not used in ranking.** Methodology: NS (2003) | Original Score: B
Threat score is calculated from Overall Threat Impact when available or Intrinsic Vulnerability if not: **([0.00, 1.83]) = [0.00, 1.83]**					

Individual Threats Data

Threat Category	Date Assessed	Impact Score	Scope	Severity	Immediacy	Comments
Climate Change & Severe Weather	2024-05-13	Very high - High	Pervasive	Extreme-Serious	High	Loss of waterfall habitat would have severe consequences for this species
Threat Tally: [0,1] - Very High, [0,1] - High, 0 - Medium, 0 - Low Overall Threat Impact* = Very High - High						

*See Conservation Status Assessment Definitions, Process, Rank Factors, and Calculation of State Ranks for Montana Species for calculation of Overall Threat Impact based on the number and impact of individual threats.

Conservation Status Rank Calculation

Raw score

Rarity: (2.26 × 70%) + Threats: ([0.00, 1.83] × 30%) + Trends: ([-0.07, 0.07]) = [1.51, 2.20]

Calculated Rank: S2

Accepted Rank	S2B
Date Approved	2024-09-30
Approval Authority	Montana Species of Concern Committee
Rank Justification	Species is limited in distribution and requires very specific waterfalls for nesting which are rare on the landscape. Species appears to be somewhat stable in occupancy and faces significant threats from drought and changing hydrology, which may cause loss of waterfall nesting sites.

Supplementary Information

Montana Natural Heritage Program. 2021. Conservation Status Assessment Definitions, Process, Rank Factors, and Calculation of State Ranks for Montana Species. 18 p.
https://mtnhp.mt.gov/docs/Montana_State_Rank_Criteria_20211201.pdf

Montana Field Guide Species Account:
https://fieldguide.mt.gov/speciesDetail.aspx?elcode=ABNUA01010

Predicted Suitable Habitat Model:
https://mtnhp.mt.gov/resources/models/?elcode=ABNUA01010

Information Needs

Information needs are assessed by considering the availability of factors used to assess species status as well as the quality of these assessments. Current information availability and quality to inform Conservation Status Rank for this species are highlighted.

Rank Factor	Assessment Category	Value	Criteria
General Status	Status Quality	Adequate	Calculated rank has low uncertainty and is represented by a single rank (e.g. S3); accepted rank may be adjusted to a range rank (e.g. S2S3)
		Poor	Rank assessed as SU or calculated rank has notable uncertainty and corresponds to a range rank with 2 or more values (e.g. S2?, S1S3, or S4S5)
Rarity	Range Quality	Adequate	Range polygon adequately represents area of probable occupancy and does not include substantial unoccupied areas; range may be adequately defined and still include areas of unsuitable habitat (e.g. mountain ranges for plains species)
		Marginal	Range polygon defined, but may include or exclude notable areas where the species may or may not occur on the landscape
		Poor	Range polygon not defined
	Habitat Quality	Adequate	Species-habitat relationship is well-defined (e.g. relevant literature or robust habitat model available)
		Marginal	Understanding of species-habitat relationship is adequate among some but not all habitats (e.g. literature covers similar habitats outside of Montana or habitat model performance is only somewhat adequate)
		Poor	Species-habitat relationship is not well understood
Threats	Threat Quality	Adequate	Threat Impact is a single value (including "Unthreatened")
		Marginal	Threat Impact assessed at more than one value (e.g. "High - Medium")
		Poor	Threat Impact is Unknown but Intrinsic Vulnerability is assessed
		Unknown	Threat Impact is Unknown and Intrinsic Vulnerability is not assessed
Trends	Recency	Current	Short-term Trend assessment date less than 10 years old
		Out of Date but Adequate	Short-term Trend assessment date is more than 10 years old or Unknown, but species is Unthreatened
		Out of Date	Short-term Trend assessment date more than 10 years old
		Not Available	Short-term Trend data are not available
	Trend Quality	Sufficient	Short-term Trend assessed at a single value or multiple values with a minimum trend greater than -10% (stable or increasing)
		Unknown but Sufficient	Short-term Trend is Unknown, but species is Unthreatened
		Poor	Short-term Trend is less than -10% (in decline) with two or more values selected
		Unknown	Short-term Trend is Unknown

Summary of Information Availability

Data on current occupany are sufficient. Threats are uncertain. Montana Audubon has monitoring data for nesting sites, but these data have not been analized to determine trend.

Summary of Information Needs

Better assessment of impacts of drought and other climate related factors will provide more certainty in rank score. Monitoring should continue to help understand trend given the species high threats. Analysis of trend data from past surveys would provide a more defensible short-term trend.

Additional Threat Details

The table below contains the complete threats assessment for this species. While the Conservation Status Rank Calculation is based on cumulative, broadly categorized (Level 1) threats data, threats are assessed and tracked for more specifically categorized (Level 2) threats when available.

Threat Category	Date Assessed	Assessed By	Data Source	Scope	Severity	Imme-diacy	Comments
Natural System Modifications - 7.1 - Fire & Fire Suppression	2026-03-26	Dan Bachen	SWAP Assessment	Large-Restricted	Unknown	High	Wildfire impacts to nest sites, air quality, hydroperiod, and prey abundance
Climate Change & Severe Weather - 11.2 - Droughts	2024-05-13	Dan Bachen	NHP Data And CCVI/AC analysis	Pervasive	Extreme-Serious	High	Loss of waterfall habitat would have severe consequences for this species