Black-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus erythropthalmus*)
Conservation Status Rank Summary

December 9, 2024

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	2024-12-06	S: 294335.3 km²	4.710	MTNHP Range Maps	None
Area of Occupancy	2024-12-06	3231 | 4km² cells	4.810	MTNHP Modeling	None
Number of Occurrences	2024-12-06	96	4.130	MTNHP Databases	None
Population Size			-		**Factor not used in ranking.**
# of Occurrences in Good Condition			-		**Factor not used in ranking.**
% of Area Occupied in Good Condition			-		**Factor not used in ranking.**
Environmental Specificity	2009-01-20	Moderate	-	MTNHP Species Rank Data Table	**Factor not used in ranking.** Uses a broad variety of deciduous forest. | Methodology: NS (2003) | Original Score: C
Rarity is calculated by averaging weighted factor scores: **((4.71 × 1) + (4.81 × 2) + (4.13 × 1)) / 4 = 4.62**					
Trends					
Short-term Trend	2024-12-06		-		**Factor not used in ranking.**
Long-term Trend	2024-12-06		-0.070		None
Trends score is calculated by summing weighted short and long-term trend scores: **((-0.07 × 1)) = -0.07**					

Threats

Rank Factor	Date Assessed	Value	Score	Data Source	Comments
Threats					
Overall Threat Impact		Very high	0.000		Loss of mature canopy on deciduous forests from altered hydrology and grazing. Pesticide use (dependent on tent caterpillar nests for food). Nocturnal towers represent a significant collision risk. Tropical deforestation during winter may be an important
Intrinsic Vulnerability	2009-01-20	Not intrinsically vulnerable	-	MTNHP Species Rank Data Table	**Factor not used in ranking.** Methodology: NS (2003) | Original Score: C
Threat score is calculated from Overall Threat Impact when available or Intrinsic Vulnerability if not: **(0.00) = 0.00**					

Individual Threats Data

Threat Category	Date Assessed	Impact Score	Scope	Severity	Immediacy	Comments
Agriculture & Aquaculture	None	High	Pervasive	Serious	High	Multiple Level 2 threats - see Additional Threat Details below.
Natural System Modifications	None	Medium	Large	Moderate	High	Multiple Level 2 threats - see Additional Threat Details below.
Invasive & Other Problematic Species, Genes & Diseases	2026-03-23	Medium - Low	Pervasive	Moderate-Slight	High	Loss of riparian habitat from encroachment of non-natives
Climate Change & Severe Weather	2024-12-09	High	Pervasive	Serious	Moderate	Audubon's Survival by Degrees project predicts a severe decline in breeding habitat for this species across the northern US
Threat Tally: 0 - Very High, 2 - High, [1,2] - Medium, [0,1] - Low Overall Threat Impact* = Very 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: (4.62 × 70%) + Threats: (0.00 × 30%) + Trends: (-0.07) = 3.16

Calculated Rank: S3

Accepted Rank	S3B
Date Approved	2009-05-01
Approval Authority	Montana Species of Concern Committee
Rank Justification	Species is a rare breeding migrant found within deciduous riparian forest across central and eastern Montana. Its current population trend is unknown, and it faces high threats from habitat loss due to conversion of forest to agriculture and climate change.

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=ABNRB02010

Predicted Suitable Habitat Model:
https://mtnhp.mt.gov/resources/models/?elcode=ABNRB02010

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

Species information is based on infrequent observations, and while data are present the overall quality is marginal. Trend is currently unknown.

Summary of Information Needs

Recent surveys with Automated Recording Units have proven effective for detecting the species. These surveys should be repeated across the species range to provide data to inform 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
Agriculture & Aquaculture - 2.1 - Annual & Perennial Non-Timber Crops	2024-12-09	Dan Bachen	MTNHP data	Large	Serious	Moderate	Conversion of decideous forest to row crops. 84% of the species predicted habitat occurs on private lands without protection
Agriculture & Aquaculture - 2.3 - Livestock Farming & Ranching	2026-03-20	Dan Bachen	SWAP Assessment	Pervasive	Moderate	High	Grazing that results in habitat loss and degradation
Natural System Modifications - 7.2 - Dams & Water Management/Use	2026-03-20	Dan Bachen	SWAP Assessment	Large	Moderate	High	Loss of riparian forest due to channelization, dewatering for irrigation, and hydrological changes on dammed rivers
Natural System Modifications - 7.3 - Other Ecosystem Modifications	2026-03-20	Dan Bachen	SWAP Assessment	Restricted	Moderate	High	Loss of riparian habitat due to channel simplification (e.g. bank stabilization using riprap and side-channel isolation)
Invasive & Other Problematic Species, Genes & Diseases - 8.1 - Invasive Non-Native/Alien Species/Diseases	2026-03-23	Dan Bachen	SWAP Assessment	Pervasive	Moderate-Slight	High	Loss of riparian habitat from encroachment of non-natives
Pollution - 9.2 - Industrial & Military Effluents	2026-03-23	Dan Bachen	SWAP Assessment	Restricted	Unknown	High	Pollution/run-off (e.g. PFAS) from mines.
Pollution - 9.3 - Agricultural & Forestry Effluents	2026-03-23	Dan Bachen	SWAP Assessment	Large	Unknown	High	Direct and indirect mortality due to insecticides.
Climate Change & Severe Weather - 11.1 - Habitat Shifting & Alteration	2024-12-09	Dan Bachen	Audubon Survival by Degrees project	Pervasive	Serious	Moderate	Audubon's Survival by Degrees project predicts a severe decline in breeding habitat for this species across the northern US