

Northern Hawk Owl (*Surnia ulula*) Conservation Status Rank Summary

October 22, 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	2024-10-22	Y: 9813.5 km ²	3.140	MTNHP Range Maps	None
Area of Occupancy			-		Factor not used in ranking.
Number of Occurrences	2024-10-22	36	2.750	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	2011-12-21	Moderate	-	MTNHP Species Rank Data Table	Factor not used in ranking. Moderate Generalist. Broadly uses boreal conifer forests, usually dominated by spruce and fir, with the key limitation being nest sites and microtine rodent populations which are broadly distributed. The species is also believed to preferentially associate with post-burn forests for nest sites and foraging areas. Methodology: NS (2003) Original Score: C
Rarity is calculated by averaging weighted factor scores: $((3.14 \times 1) + (2.75 \times 1)) / 2 = 2.95$					
Trends					
Short-term Trend	2024-10-22		-	NHP Data	Factor not used in ranking. No data to assess trend are available
Long-term Trend	2024-10-22		0.000	MTNHP data	Species is found across federally managed areas that have not changed significantly since European arrival
Trends score is calculated by summing weighted short and long-term trend scores: $((0.00 \times 1)) = 0.00$					

Threats

Rank Factor	Date Assessed	Value	Score	Data Source	Comments
Threats					
Overall Threat Impact		Medium	3.670		Fire suppression has likely reduced hunting and prey habitat. Salvage timber harvest that removes potential nest snags represents a threat to the species. Timber harvest practices that provide more edge and more nest and perch trees would benefit the species. Shooting, trapping, vehicle collisions, pesticides, and transmission line electrocutions are probably more minor threats to the species.
Intrinsic Vulnerability	2011-12-21	Not intrinsically vulnerable	-	MTNHP Species Rank Data Table	Factor not used in ranking. Not Intrinsicly Vulnerable. Species matures quickly, reproduces frequently, and/or has a high fecundity such that populations recover quickly (5 years or 2 generations) from decreases in abundance. Species has good dispersal capabilities such that extirpated populations generally become reestablished through natural recolonization. Methodology: NS (2003) Original Score: C
Threat score is calculated from Overall Threat Impact when available or Intrinsic Vulnerability if not: (3.67) = 3.67					

Individual Threats Data

Threat Category	Date Assessed	Impact Score	Scope	Severity	Immediacy	Comments
Transportation & Service Corridors	2024-10-22	Low	Restricted	Moderate	High	Vehicle collisions are reported within and outside of the species range in Montana.
Climate Change & Severe Weather	2024-10-22	Medium	Pervasive	Moderate	High	As Montana represents the southern extent of the species distribution, warming temperatures likely represent a threat to persistence
Threat Tally: 0 - Very High, 0 - High, 1 - Medium, 1 - Low Overall Threat Impact* = Medium						

*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: $(2.95 \times 70\%)$ + Threats: $(3.67 \times 30\%)$ + Trends: $(0.00) = 3.16$

Calculated Rank: S3

Accepted Rank	S3
Date Approved	2012-04-17
Approval Authority	Montana Species of Concern Committee
Rank Justification	Species has a restricted distribution within Montana and is found within the vicinity of Glacier National Park and portions of the Bob Marshall Wilderness. Trends are unknown and it faces moderate threats from vehicle collisions and warming temperatures.

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=ABNSB07010>

Predicted Suitable Habitat Model:

<https://mtnhp.mt.gov/resources/models/?elcode=ABNSB07010>

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 is not well studied, but rarity factors are generally of good quality but areas used by the species may exist outside of the species current range. Threats are poorly understood. No short-term trend data are available.

Summary of Information Needs

Baseline monitoring to determine trend and surveys within suitable habitat across other portions of the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex are necessary to refine range and establish trend monitoring.

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	Immediacy	Comments
Transportation & Service Corridors - 4.1 - Roads & Railroads	2024-10-22	Dan Bachen	MTNHP Data	Restricted	Moderate	High	Vehicle collisions are reported within and outside of the species range in Montana.
Climate Change & Severe Weather - 11.3 - Temperature Extremes	2024-10-22	Dan Bachen	Expert Opinion	Pervasive	Moderate	High	As Montana represents the southern extent of the species distribution, warming temperatures likely represent a threat to persistence