

Black-backed Woodpecker *Picoides arcticus*



A male Black-backed Woodpecker perched at a nest cavity in the Lakeview-Arrow Creek region is the only breeding record for the valley. *Photo by Ed McMackin.*

Ornithological History: Mailliard (1932) collected three specimens of Arctic three-toed [Black-backed] Woodpecker, two at Kitchener and one at Creston.

Munro (1950) observed one pair of Arctic three-toed [Black-backed] Woodpecker with three full-grown young on Drywash Mountain among dead larch trees. Specimens were collected on 5 August 1948.

Butler et al. (1986) considered Black-backed Woodpecker to be *rare* with most sightings in Lakeview and at the Salmo-Creston Summit where it nested in early June.

Creston Valley Status: Likely resident but *very rare* in spring and summer and *casual* in autumn and winter; breeds.

Occurrence: Black-backed Woodpecker is sparsely distributed and, although it may be present throughout the year, is rarely encountered. One or two birds have been noted each year from 1976 through

1981 and in 1983, 1993, 1998, 2009, 2014, 2015, and 2018. The species has been recorded from 600 m (1,968 ft) to 1,825 m (5,987 ft) elevation in mixed coniferous forests.

Recent sightings include a male Black-backed Woodpecker on 7 October 2014 feeding in a dead tree along Big Bear Creek Forest Service Road (Holly McMackin), a female on 5 December 2015 scaling bark from the trunk of a larch tree in a mixed coniferous forest on Dodge Creek Forest Service Road (pers. obs.), and a female or juvenile foraging in larch and spruce trees on Upper Bayonne Forest Service Road on 25 August 2018 (Hardy Delafield).

Breeding: In 1977, Ed McMackin found an active nest in early June and was able to monitor the site until large nestlings were visible in July. The excavated cavity was situated in a spruce snag beside Lakeview-Arrow Creek Road at 801 m (2,627 ft) elevation.

In British Columbia, cavities are excavated in living or dead coniferous trees where clutch size is 3 or 4 eggs and brood size from 1 to 3 young.



Breeding was confirmed for Black-backed Woodpecker when a large nestling demanded to be fed. *Photo by Ed McMackin.*

Databases: Occurrence records (72) and breeding record (1)

Habitat: Black-backed Woodpecker frequents mid-to-upper elevation coniferous forests. Natural or prescribed forest burns are favoured.

Seasonal Occurrence Records

Spring – 26 records from 8 April to 31 May (1 to 2 birds)

Summer – 41 records from 1 June to 25 August (1 to 2 birds)

Autumn – 2 records on 11 September and 7 October (1 bird)

Winter – 3 records on 5 December and 3 and 28 February (1 bird)