**Dendrocopos leucotos -- (Bechstein, 1803)**

ANIMALIA -- CHORDATA -- AVES -- PICIFORMES -- PICIDAE

**Common names:** White-backed Woodpecker;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>European Red List Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LC -- Least Concern, (IUCN version 3.1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Assessment Information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year published:</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date assessed:</td>
<td>2015-03-31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessor(s):</td>
<td>BirdLife International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviewer(s):</td>
<td>Symes, A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compiler(s):</td>
<td>Ashpole, J., Burfield, I., Ieronymidou, C., Pople, R., Wheatley, H. &amp; Wright, L.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Assessment Rationale**

**European regional assessment: Least Concern (LC)**

**EU27 regional assessment: Least Concern (LC)**

In Europe this species has an extremely large range, and hence does not approach the thresholds for **Vulnerable** under the range size criterion (Extent of Occurrence 10% in ten years or three generations, or with a specified population structure). The population trend appears to be stable, and hence the species does not approach the thresholds for **Vulnerable** under the population trend criterion (30% decline over ten years or three generations). For these reasons the species is evaluated as Least Concern in Europe.

Within the EU27 this species has a very large range, and hence does not approach the thresholds for **Vulnerable** under the range size criterion (Extent of Occurrence 10% in ten years or three generations, or with a specified population structure). Despite the fact that the population trend appears to be decreasing, the decline is not believed to be sufficiently rapid to approach the thresholds for **Vulnerable** under the population trend criterion (30% decline over ten years or three generations). For these reasons the species is evaluated as Least Concern in the EU27.

**Occurrence**

**Countries/Territories of Occurrence**

**Native:**
Albania; Armenia; Austria; Azerbaijan; Belarus; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Bulgaria; Croatia; Czech Republic; Estonia; Finland; France; Georgia; Germany; Greece; Hungary; Italy; Latvia; Liechtenstein; Lithuania; Macedonia, the former Yugoslav Republic of; Moldova; Montenegro; Norway; Poland; Romania; Russian Federation; Serbia; Slovakia; Slovenia; Spain; Sweden; Switzerland; Turkey; Ukraine

**Vagrant:**
Belgium; Netherlands

**Population**
The European population is estimated at 232,000-586,000 pairs, which equates to 464,000-1,170,000 mature individuals. The population in the EU27 is estimated at 22,000-71,000 pairs, which equates to 44,000-142,000 mature individuals. For details of national estimates, see **Supplementary PDF**.

**Trend**
In Europe the population size is estimated to be stable. In the EU27 the population size is estimated to be decreasing by less than 25% in 15.6 years (three generations). For details of national estimates, see **Supplementary PDF**.

**Habitats and Ecology**
The species occurs in broad-leaved forest. In central and southern Europe it is found in forests dominated by beech (Fagus spp.), hornbeam (Carpinus betulus) and oak (Quercus spp.) and in northern and eastern Europe forests dominated by birch (Betula spp.) and aspen (Populus tremula) (Hagemeijer and Blair 1997). Courtship begins in February and egg-laying from late April to May or June. Both sexes excavate the nest in the soft
wood of a dead or decaying tree, stump or branch, or in a utility pole. Clutch size generally three to five eggs (Winkler and Christie 2002). It is highly insectivorous and only occasionally takes plant matter. It specialises on wood-boring beetle larvae, particularly longhorn species (Coleoptera) but also feeds on flies, carpenter moths and carpenter ants (Gorman 2014). The species is generally resident with some local movements (Winkler and Christie 2002).

### Habitats & Altitude

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Habitat (level 1 - level 2)</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Occurrence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forest - Boreal</td>
<td>suitable</td>
<td>resident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest - Temperate</td>
<td>major</td>
<td>resident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wetlands (inland) - Permanent Freshwater Marshes/ Pools (under ha)</td>
<td>suitable</td>
<td>resident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wetlands (inland) - Permanent Rivers/ Streams/ Creeks (includes waterfalls)</td>
<td>suitable</td>
<td>resident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altitude</td>
<td>max. 1850 m</td>
<td>Occasional altitudinal limits</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Threats

Intense forest management, leading to a reduction of dead wood or the introduction of conifers results in a reduction in population size (Winkler and Christie 2002, Håpnes 2003), accompanied by loss of genetic diversity (Winkler and Christie 2002).

### Threats & Impacts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Threat (level 1)</th>
<th>Threat (level 2)</th>
<th>Impact and Stresses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture &amp; aquaculture</td>
<td>Agro-industry plantations</td>
<td>Timing: Ongoing, Scope: Majority (50-90%), Severity: Slow, Significant Declines, Impact: Medium Impact</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Stresses**

- Ecosystem conversion; Ecosystem degradation; Inbreeding

### Conservation

**Conservation Actions Underway**

Bern Convention Appendix II. EÚ Birds Directive Annex I. The species is listed as Critically Endangered on the Swedish Red List (Gärdenfors 2010) and a national Species Action Plan was published in 2005 (Mild and Stighäll 2005). Norwegian birds were translocated to Sweden (Håpnes 2003) and a captive breeding programmes set up in order to supplement the dwindling population there. Some reserves were established as was successful management to create dead wood, however the achievement of the targets planned in 2005–2008 was on average much lower than planned (Blicharska et al. 2014).

**Conservation Actions Proposed**

Everywhere, this species's survival is dependent on preservation of reasonably large areas of unmanaged deciduous forest (Winkler and Christie 2002, Håpnes 2003), including dead wood. Restoration of natural habitats is also important (Håpnes 2003).

### Bibliography


**Dendrocoptes leucotos**

**Range**

- Extant (non breeding)
- Extant (resident)

**Citation:**

---

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply any official endorsement or position by IUCN.