

Picoides tridactylus -- (Linnaeus, 1758)

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

Common names: Three-toed Woodpecker;

European Red List Assessment

European Red List Status

LC -- Least Concern, (IUCN version 3.1)

Assessment Information

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Reviewer(s):	Symes, A.
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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 is not known, but the population is not believed to be decreasing sufficiently rapidly to approach the thresholds 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 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 is not known, but the population is not believed to be decreasing sufficiently rapidly to approach the thresholds 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; Austria; Belarus; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Bulgaria; Croatia; Czech Republic; Estonia; Finland; France; Germany; Greece; Italy; Latvia; Liechtenstein; Lithuania; Macedonia, the former Yugoslav Republic of; Montenegro; Norway; Poland; Romania; Russian Federation; Serbia; Slovakia; Slovenia; Sweden; Switzerland; Ukraine

Vagrant:

Denmark; Hungary

Population

The European population is estimated at 598,000-1,450,000 pairs, which equates to 1,200,000-2,900,000 mature individuals. The population in the EU27 is estimated at 41,200-235,000 pairs, which equates to 82,300-470,000 mature individuals. For details of national estimates, see [Supplementary PDF](#).

Trend

In Europe and the EU27 the population size trend is unknown. For details of national estimates, see [Supplementary PDF](#).

Habitats and Ecology

The species inhabits mature conifer forests, particularly spruce *Picea* spp., and is somewhat irruptive, being found commonly where disturbance such as fire has caused local outbreaks of insects (Winkler et al. 1995). Courtship begins from the second half of March and laying from mid-May, although it can be up to two weeks earlier in southern Europe, to June, occasionally July. The nest-hole is excavated two to ten metres up in a dead tree, or in a dead section of live tree with heart-rot. Spruce and other conifers are preferred but some non-coniferous species (*Populus*, *Betula*, *Alnus*) are also used (Winkler and Christie 2002). Clutch size is

generally three or four eggs in the Alps. It feeds primarily on engraver and spruce bark-beetles (*Ips* and *Polygraphus* spp.) as well as wood-boring beetles and other invertebrates (Gorman 2014). In the mountains populations are largely resident, but often shift to lower altitudes or move short distances after breeding. Northern Eurasian populations perform eruptive migrations at long intervals (Winkler and Christie 2002).

Habitats & Altitude			
Habitat (level 1 - level 2)		Importance	Occurrence
Forest - Boreal		major	breeding
Forest - Boreal		major	non-breeding
Forest - Temperate		suitable	breeding
Forest - Temperate		suitable	non-breeding
Altitude	360-1900 m	Occasional altitudinal limits	

Threats

Large-scale commercial logging and modern forestry management practices, including fire suppression, removal of dead or insect-infested trees (Tucker and Heath 1994) and pesticide use (Winkler and Christie 2002) have led to declines. Wide spread death of spruce and fir, stands caused by acid rain in central Europe, may temporarily benefit the species, but may pose a serious threat in the long term (Tucker and Heath 1994).

Threats & Impacts					
Threat (level 1)	Threat (level 2)	Impact and Stresses			
		Timing	Scope	Severity	Impact
Agriculture & aquaculture	Agro-industry plantations	Ongoing	Majority (50-90%)	Slow, Significant Declines	Medium Impact
		Stresses			
		Ecosystem conversion; Ecosystem degradation			
Biological resource use	Logging & wood harvesting (unintentional effects: (subsistence/small scale) [harvest])	Ongoing	Majority (50-90%)	Slow, Significant Declines	Medium Impact
		Stresses			
		Ecosystem conversion			
Natural system modifications	Suppression in fire frequency/intensity	Ongoing	Minority (<50%)	Slow, Significant Declines	Low Impact
		Stresses			
		Ecosystem degradation			
Pollution	Acid rain	Ongoing	Minority (<50%)	Unknown	Unknown
		Stresses			
		Ecosystem conversion; Ecosystem degradation			
Pollution	Herbicides and pesticides	Ongoing	Majority (50-90%)	Slow, Significant Declines	Medium Impact
		Stresses			
		Indirect ecosystem effects			

Conservation

Conservation Actions Underway

Bern Convention Appendix II. EU Birds Directive Annex I. There are no known current conservation measures for this species.

Conservation Actions Proposed

Intensive management of favoured habitats, such as old spruce- or fir-dominated forest with abundant dead wood in mountains or damp lowlands of this species should be avoided. Protected areas should cover at least 50 ha, in order to sustain a single pair. Within intensively managed mature forests, dying or dead trees should be left. If there is insufficient dead wood then cutting single mature trees to around 10 m and leaving to decay, may provide suitable nest sites (Tucker and Heath 1994).

Bibliography

Gorman, G. 2014. *Woodpeckers of the World: the Complete Guide*. Christopher Helm, London.

Tucker, G.M. and Heath, M.F. 1994. *Birds in Europe: their conservation status*. BirdLife Conservation Series no. 3, BirdLife International, Cambridge.

Winkler, H. and Christie, D.A. 2002. Three-toed Woodpecker (*Picoides tridactylus*). In: del Hoyo, J., Elliott, A., Sargatal, J., Christie, D.A. and de Juana, E. (eds.) 2014. *Handbook of the Birds of the World Alive*. Lynx Edicions, Barcelona. (retrieved from <http://www.hbw.com/node/56239> on 2 March 2015).

European Regional Assessment



Picoides tridactylus

Range

■ Extant (resident)

Citation:
BirdLife International (2015)
European Red List of Birds



Map created 05/12/2015



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