



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Threatened and Endangered Species

Queen Charlotte Goshawk

(British Columbia Distinct Population Segment)

(*Accipiter gentilis laingi*)

The Queen Charlotte goshawk is a subspecies of forest-dwelling hawk that nests at low densities in the temperate rainforests on the islands and mainland coast of Southeast Alaska and British Columbia. The subspecies is smaller and darker than the more widespread northern goshawk (*A.g. atricapillus*).

Status

The British Columbia Distinct Population Segment (DPS) of the Queen Charlotte goshawk was proposed for listing under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) on November 3, 2009 (Federal Register vol. 74, p. 56757). In Canada, the *laingi* subspecies is federally listed as “Threatened” under the Species at Risk Act. The State of Alaska has designated the bird a “species of concern” due to threats to its nesting and foraging habitat, and the U. S. Forest Service (USFS) has designated it a “sensitive species.”

Range and Population Size

The DPS of this subspecies in British Columbia, Canada, occurs on Vancouver Island and the surrounding smaller islands, the Queen Charlotte Islands, and the coastal mainland and adjacent islands west of the crest of the Coast Mountains. The DPS in Southeast Alaska is not proposed for listing under the ESA.

Goshawk populations are difficult to census, but breeding pair populations have been estimated by adjusting habitat capability (number of potential territories) to reflect observed nest area occupancy rates. Biologists estimate that there are approximately 360 breeding pairs in Canada, 300 breeding pairs in Southeast Alaska, and an unknown number of non-breeding birds.

Rich Lowell / ADFG



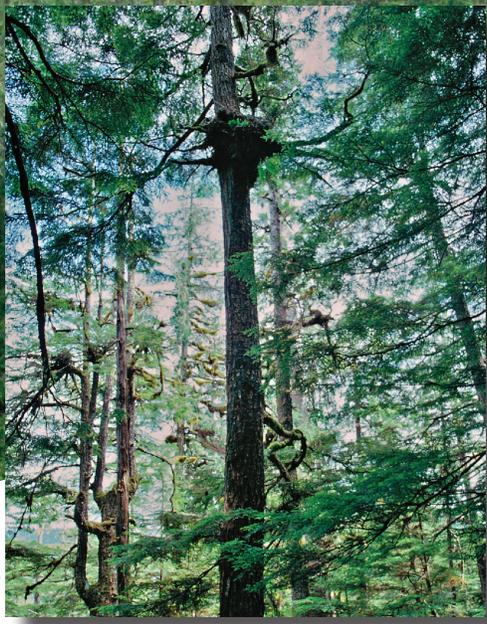
Adult male Queen Charlotte Goshawk.





ShoreZone

Craig Flatten



Queen Charlotte Goshawk nest.



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Queen Charlotte Goshawk nestlings.

Habitat and Habits

Queen Charlotte goshawks nest and forage in dense, wet, coastal rainforests. They primarily use medium and high volume forests for foraging and other daily activities and avoid non-forested and clearcut areas. Goshawks also use mature second-growth stands, and may nest in such stands where old growth is limited.

Queen Charlotte goshawk nests are typically located in high-volume forest stands with relatively dense canopies. Nesting pairs are territorial, and their nests are usually distributed evenly across available habitat. Not all territories support nesting pairs, and the number of active territories (those supporting active nesting) varies annually, depending on prey availability and weather. Individual nests within a territory are frequently not used in subsequent years because pairs often move to alternate nests. Most of these alternate nests are clustered within an area of a few hundred acres.

Breeding-season home ranges average about 11,000 acres (4,500 hectares) for females and 15,000 acres (6,000 hectares) for males. Males have been known to move as far as 2 miles (3.2 kilometers) between subsequent nests, but apparently remain in their established home ranges. Females will sometimes leave a nesting territory altogether and nest with a new mate in a different territory as far as 95 miles (152 kilometers) away. In winter,

Queen Charlotte goshawks typically range beyond the immediate nest area, but stay in the region.

Goshawks typically hunt by flying between perches and launching attacks from those positions. They take a variety of prey, depending largely on local availability, which varies markedly among islands in the Queen Charlotte goshawk's range. Red squirrels and sooty grouse (formerly known as blue grouse) form the bulk of the birds' diet in many locations, although thrushes, jays, crows, ptarmigan, and woodpeckers are frequently taken as well. During winter, many avian prey species migrate from the region, reducing the variety and abundance of food available to the goshawks. There are few Queen Charlotte goshawk prey species that use open and edge habitats, so clearcut timber harvesting typically results in decreased food availability.

Threats

Clearcut logging reduces habitat value for goshawks by decreasing prey availability and eliminating nest sites. Most of the goshawk's forest habitat is managed by the USFS in Southeast Alaska, and by the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations in British Columbia. Logging has converted approximately 13 percent of the productive forest in Southeast Alaska, and 35 percent of the productive forest in British Columbia, to younger second-growth

forest, which does not provide suitable habitat for goshawks until it matures at approximately 50 to 100 years, depending on the site. Management plans continue to evolve in both Alaska and British Columbia, but we expect another 15 percent of the forest to be harvested in Southeast Alaska, and another 24 percent of the forest to be harvested in British Columbia, in the coming decades.

Conservation Measures

In Canada (where the British Columbia DPS is proposed for listing), Wildlife Habitat Areas may be implemented to protect important habitat elements such as goshawk nests. Wildlife Habitat Areas designated for goshawks are designed primarily to protect a core area that supports the active nest, alternate nests, and post-fledging area. Timber harvest is generally prohibited within these core areas. Management plans may be developed to guide timber harvesting and road construction in the surrounding management zone to protect foraging habitat.

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