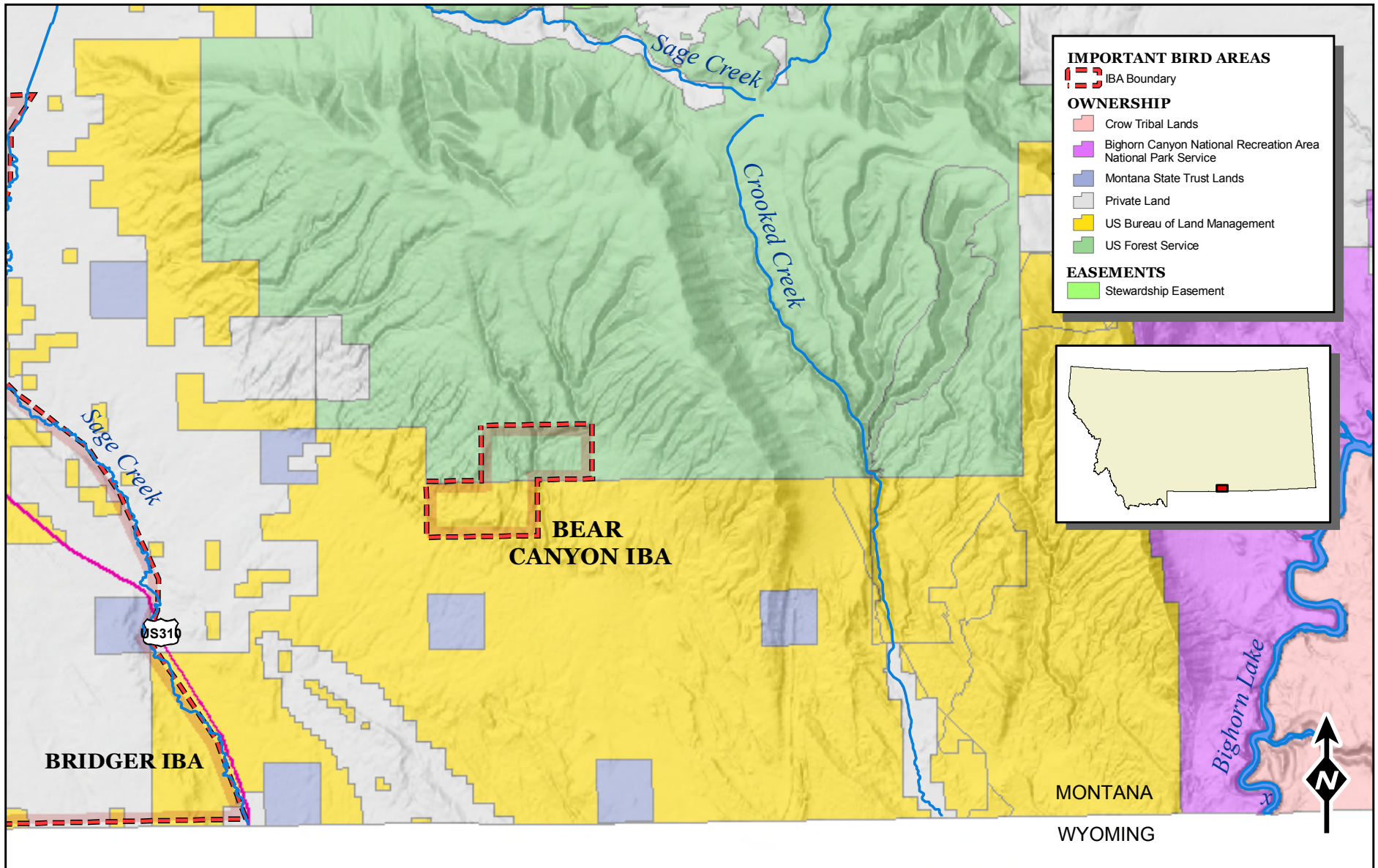
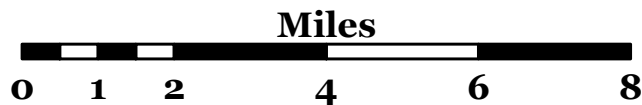


Bear Canyon IBA

Montana IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS (IBA) PROGRAM



North American Datum 1983
State Plane Coordinate System
Scale 1:160,000



Montana Audubon
Ann M. Piersall 2008



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SITE PROFILE

Name: Bear Canyon

State: US-MT

Counties: Carbon

Site Status: Recognized

Site Description:

The IBA is centered around the lower and middle reaches of Bear Canyon (T8S, R26E, sects. 34 & 35; T9S, R26E, sects. 3 & 4), which sits less than 10 km from the Wyoming border in the foothills of the Pryor Mountains. This area is driest in Montana and supports the state's only stands of Utah juniper. The scenery and habitats are spectacular and make for a unique Montana setting reminiscent of the Desert Southwest.

Ornithological Summary:

Bear Canyon supports breeding populations of more than a dozen species on the Montana Priority Bird Species List. It also has the highest known number of nesting Blue-gray Gnatcatchers among the handful of foothill canyons in the area that constitute the entire range of the species in Montana. The riparian corridor is home to a rich diversity of Neotropical migrants, and the adjacent uplands are inhabited by Common Poorwills, Loggerhead Shrikes, Sage Thrashers, Green-tailed Towhees, Pinyon Jays, and the occasional broods of Greater Sage-Grouse.

Conservation Issues:

Cattle grazing has affected the understory of the cottonwood gallery forest in some places, and offroad vehicles have resulted in increased erosion of the slopes adjacent to the canyon bottom. Owners of a limestone quarry on private land 6 km from the IBA would like to expand their operation onto federal lands, posing a potential threat to the site.



Catche-Lower Will
AR. Photo by D.

National Audubon Society 2004. The Important Bird Areas Historical Results.
Available at <http://www.audubon.org/bird/iba> 12.2004

*"IBAs have the unique
power to unite people,
communities, and
organizations in proactive
bird conservation, one
place at a time"*

- Frank Gill, Senior
Ornithologist, National
Audubon Society



Washington-Pike Grove Hill IBA
NV. Photo by Sam McEwan

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Site Name: Bear Canyon

IBA Code: USMT02

Status: Recognized

State: Montana

Species Criteria: D1, D3, D4i

Country: US

Site Criteria:

County: Carbon

Latitude: 45.0833

Area (ha): 1036.0

Elevation (m): Min 1555.0 Max 2012.0

Longitude: -108.5333

Bird Conservation Region: Northern Rockies

Endemic Bird Area:

Site Description: The IBA is centered around the lower and middle reaches of Bear Canyon (T8S, R26E, sects. 34 & 35; T9S, R26E, sects. 3 & 4), which sits less than 10 km from the Wyoming border in the foothills of the Pryor Mountains. This area is driest in Montana and supports the state's only stands of Utah juniper. The scenery and habitats are spectacular and make for a unique Montana setting reminiscent of the Desert Southwest.

Ornithological Significance: Bear Canyon supports breeding populations of more than a dozen species on the Montana Priority Bird Species List. It also has the highest known number of nesting Blue-gray Gnatcatchers among the handful of foothill canyons in the area that constitute the entire range of the species in Montana. The riparian corridor is home to a rich diversity of Neotropical migrants, and the adjacent uplands are inhabited by Common Poorwills, Loggerhead Shrikes, Sage Thrashers, Green-tailed Towhees, Pinyon Jays, and the occasional broods of Greater Sage-Grouse.

Species Data and Criteria (abbreviated):

(for the full table, [click here...](#))

Common Name	Date	Seasonal/Daily	Season	# Observed	Density (#/km2)	Units	Proposed Criteria	Confirmed Criteria
Greater Sage-Grouse	2001	S	breeding	1		Females only	D1 - State Species of Conservation Concern D3 - Species in rare/unique habitat	D1 - State Species of Conservation Concern D3 - Species in rare/unique habitat
	Source Text:	Field notes of Jeff Marks (Montana Audubon) and Paul Hendricks (Montana Natural Heritage Program) based on site visits from 1996-2001. During several of these years, single female with brood observed near mouth of canyon.						
Downy Woodpecker	2001	S	breeding	2		Breeding pairs	D1 - State Species of Conservation Concern D3 - Species in rare/unique habitat	D1 - State Species of Conservation Concern D3 - Species in rare/unique habitat
	Source Text:	Field notes of Jeff Marks (Montana Audubon) and Paul Hendricks (Montana Natural Heritage Program) based on site visits from 1996-2001.						
Common Poorwill	2001	S	breeding	6		Males only	D1 - State Species of	D1 - State Species of

							Conservation Concern D3 - Species in rare/unique habitat	Conservation Concern D3 - Species in rare/unique habitat
	Source Text:	Field notes of Jeff Marks (Montana Audubon) and Paul Hendricks (Montana Natural Heritage Program) based on site visits from 1996-2001.						
Cooper's Hawk	2001	S	breeding	1		Breeding pairs	D3 - Species in rare/unique habitat	D3 - Species in rare/unique habitat
	Source Text:	Field notes of Jeff Marks (Montana Audubon) and Paul Hendricks (Montana Natural Heritage Program) based on site visits from 1996-2001.						
Loggerhead Shrike	2001	S	breeding	1		Breeding pairs	D1 - State Species of Conservation Concern D3 - Species in rare/unique habitat	D1 - State Species of Conservation Concern D3 - Species in rare/unique habitat
	Source Text:	Field notes of Jeff Marks (Montana Audubon) and Paul Hendricks (Montana Natural Heritage Program) based on site visits from 1996-2001.						
Warbling Vireo	2001	S	breeding	6		Breeding pairs	D1 - State Species of Conservation Concern D3 - Species in rare/unique habitat	D1 - State Species of Conservation Concern D3 - Species in rare/unique habitat
	Source Text:	Field notes of Jeff Marks (Montana Audubon) and Paul Hendricks (Montana Natural Heritage Program) based on site visits from 1996-2001.						
Pinyon Jay	2001	S	resident	30		Adults only	D1 - State Species of Conservation Concern D3 - Species in rare/unique habitat	D1 - State Species of Conservation Concern D3 - Species in rare/unique habitat
	Source Text:	Field notes of Jeff Marks (Montana Audubon) and Paul Hendricks (Montana Natural Heritage Program) based on site visits from 1996-2001. At least one flock occurs in the IBA but breeding status unknown.						
Clark's Nutcracker	2001	S	resident	10		Adults only	D1 - State Species of Conservation	D1 - State Species of Conservation

							Concern D3 - Species in rare/unique habitat	Concern D3 - Species in rare/unique habitat
	Source Text:	Field notes of Jeff Marks (Montana Audubon) and Paul Hendricks (Montana Natural Heritage Program) based on site visits from 1996-2001.						
Sage Thrasher	2001	S	breeding	3		Breeding pairs	D1 - State Species of Conservation Concern D3 - Species in rare/unique habitat	D1 - State Species of Conservation Concern D3 - Species in rare/unique habitat
	Source Text:	Field notes of Jeff Marks (Montana Audubon) and Paul Hendricks (Montana Natural Heritage Program) based on site visits from 1996-2001.						
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	2002	S	breeding	6		Breeding pairs	D3 - Species in rare/unique habitat D4i - >1% State population	D3 - Species in rare/unique habitat D4i - >1% State population
	Source Text:	Field notes of Jeff Marks (Montana Audubon) and Paul Hendricks (Montana Natural Heritage Program) based on site visits from 1996-2001.						
	2001	S	breeding	6		Breeding pairs	D3 - Species in rare/unique habitat D4i - >1% State population	D3 - Species in rare/unique habitat D4i - >1% State population
	Source Text:	Field notes of Jeff Marks (Montana Audubon) and Paul Hendricks (Montana Natural History Program) based on site visits from 1996-2001.						
Cassin's Finch	2001	S	breeding	3		Breeding pairs	D1 - State Species of Conservation Concern D3 - Species in rare/unique habitat	D1 - State Species of Conservation Concern D3 - Species in rare/unique habitat
	Source Text:	Field notes of Jeff Marks (Montana Audubon) and Paul Hendricks (Montana Natural Heritage Program) based on site visits from 1996-2001.						
Chipping Sparrow	2001	S	breeding	10		Breeding pairs	D1 - State Species of Conservation Concern D3 - Species in	D1 - State Species of Conservation Concern D3 - Species in

							rare/unique habitat	rare/unique habitat
	Source Text:	Field notes of Jeff Marks (Montana Audubon) and Paul Hendricks (Montana Natural Heritage Program) based on site visits from 1996-2001.						
Brewer's Sparrow	2001	S	breeding	10		Breeding pairs	D1 - State Species of Conservation Concern D3 - Species in rare/unique habitat	D1 - State Species of Conservation Concern D3 - Species in rare/unique habitat
	Source Text:	Field notes of Jeff Marks (Montana Audubon) and Paul Hendricks (Montana Natural Heritage Program) based on site visits from 1996-2001.						
Lark Sparrow	2001	S	breeding	3		Breeding pairs	D1 - State Species of Conservation Concern D3 - Species in rare/unique habitat	D1 - State Species of Conservation Concern D3 - Species in rare/unique habitat
	Source Text:	Field notes of Jeff Marks (Montana Audubon) and Paul Hendricks (Montana Natural Heritage Program) based on site visits from 1996-2001.						
Green-tailed Towhee	2001	S	breeding	10		Breeding pairs	D1 - State Species of Conservation Concern D3 - Species in rare/unique habitat	D1 - State Species of Conservation Concern D3 - Species in rare/unique habitat
	Source Text:	Field notes of Jeff Marks (Montana Audubon) and Paul Hendricks (Montana Natural Heritage Program) based on site visits from 1996-2001.						
MacGillivray's Warbler	2001	S	breeding	10		Breeding pairs	D1 - State Species of Conservation Concern D3 - Species in rare/unique habitat	D1 - State Species of Conservation Concern D3 - Species in rare/unique habitat
	Source Text:	Field notes of Jeff Marks (Montana Audubon) and Paul Hendricks (Montana Natural Heritage Program) based on site visits from 1996-2001.						
Lazuli Bunting	2001	S	breeding	5		Breeding pairs	D1 - State Species of Conservation	D1 - State Species of Conservation

							Concern D3 - Species in rare/unique habitat	Concern D3 - Species in rare/unique habitat
	Source Text:	Field notes of Jeff Marks (Montana Audubon) and Paul Hendricks (Montana Natural Heritage Program) based on site visits from 1996-2001.						

Ownership

The IBA consists of two sections owned by Bureau of Land Management and two owned by the U.S. Forest Service.

% of IBA	Ownership
50.0	Federal / Bureau of Land Management BLM
50.0	Federal / USDA Forest Service - National Forest

Habitat

Most of the canyon bottom is a mix of sagebrush/juniper and low desert shrubs. The upper reaches of the canyon contains a beautiful stand of narrow-leaved cottonwoods with a rich understory of shrubs. The surrounding slopes are a mix of Utah juniper, limber pine, and sagebrush. This area is the only place in the state with Utah juniper, and is the driest part of the state.

% of IBA	Habitat
	Barren / Bare Rock/Sand/Clay / Cliff
	Forested Upland / Evergreen Forest / Juniper
	Shrubland / Shrubland / Low Desert Scrub
	Wetlands / Woody Wetlands / Riparian Corridor

Land Use

% of Total Use of IBA	Land Use
	agriculture / Grazing/ Pastureland
	hunting / Small Game Hunting
	tourism/recreation / ATV Use
	tourism/recreation / Birdwatching
	tourism/recreation / Hiking

Threats

Cattle grazing has affected the understory of the cottonwood gallery forest in some places, and offroad vehicles have resulted in increased erosion of the slopes adjacent to the canyon bottom. Owners of a limestone quarry on private land 6 km from the IBA would like to expand their operation onto federal lands, posing a potential threat to the site.

Level	Threat
5	Agricultural intensification/expansion / Grazing
5	Extraction Industry / Soft-rock mining
5	Recreation/tourism / Off-road vehicles

Nominator(s):

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University of Montana
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Missoula, MT 59812
United States
Email:
Phone: (H) 406-543-0995
(W) 406-243-6005

Steward(s):

Monitoring Location Affiliated with this Site:

Location	Lat/Long	County	Zip	Habitats
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Citation: National Audubon Society 2005. The Important Bird Areas Historical Results.
Available at <http://www.audubon.org/bird/iba> 12.2004