



# Common Nighthawk

*(Chordeiles minor)*

**STATUS**

SARA

Alberta

THREATENED

SENSITIVE

British Columbia

Saskatchewan

YELLOW

NO STATUS

**PRIMARY HABITAT**

Open/burned pine

**TERRITORY SIZE**

~28 ha

**NEST TYPE**

Ground

**NEST REUSE**

Some

**STAND LEVEL**

Operator training to avoid disturbing nests during postharvest/postfire activities

**LANDSCAPE LEVEL**

Natural disturbance (wildfire) and early-seral habitats within NRV

The Common Nighthawk swoops over open grass or water to catch insects mid-air, hunting mainly at dusk or dawn. Their tendency to build ground nests in recent openings makes them vulnerable to silviculture and salvage logging.

**BREEDING WINDOW**



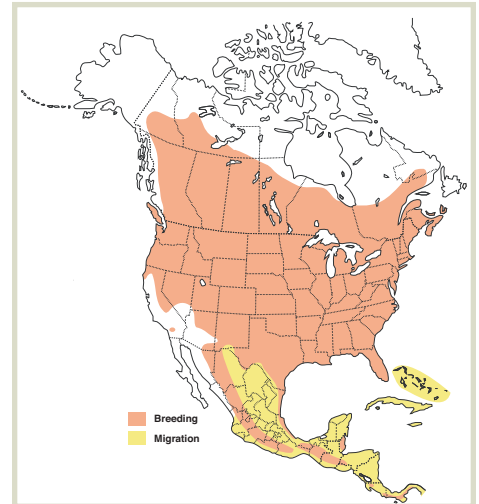
## HABITAT ECOLOGY

- Common Nighthawks are mainly found in grassland habitats, but part of the population breeds in open pine or mixedwood forests including lodgepole pine, ponderosa pine, mixed pine/aspen, and young mixedwoods.<sup>1-5</sup>
- This species prefers open habitats including recently burned or logged stands.<sup>6</sup> They hunt by catching insects mid-air over open ground and/or water.<sup>1</sup>
- Common Nighthawks lay two large, spotted eggs on open ground or near logs, boulders, grass clumps or shrubs.<sup>1</sup>

## RESPONSE TO FOREST MANAGEMENT

- Fire suppression is the main threat to Common Nighthawks as it reduces openings and bare ground within forested habitats needed for foraging and nesting.<sup>6</sup> Afforestation of abandoned agricultural areas and grasslands likewise reduces habitat availability for this species.<sup>7</sup>
- Common Nighthawks have been observed in stands with low (2%) retention, recent clearcuts, and recently thinned Douglas fir stands (30–40% retention), however at numbers too low for statistical analysis.<sup>8-10</sup>

## RANGE MAP



## STAND-LEVEL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recent harvests or burns may attract nesting pairs of Common Nighthawk, and ground nests are highly vulnerable to disruption during silviculture (e.g., site preparation, planting) or salvage logging.<sup>6</sup>
- Operators should be on the lookout for this species from mid-May until the end of August.<sup>1</sup>
- The following recommendations apply to operators working in recently disturbed (mainly pine) stands:
  - Halt operations if a flushing adult is observed and mark off the suspected or known nest area to be avoided.
  - General buffer recommendations for ground-nesting species range from 10–25 m for low-impact activities (e.g., planting) and 50–100 m for high-impact activities (e.g., road-building).<sup>11</sup>
  - If defensive behaviour (e.g., hissing, diving, flushing) is observed, buffer distances should be increased until the behaviour ceases.