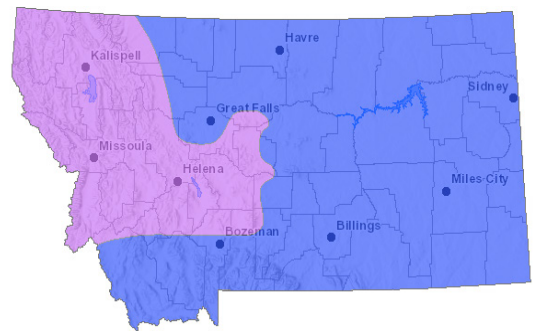


Citizen science guide to the GRAY-CROWNED ROSY-FINCH

Both Gray-crowned and Black Rosy-finches (right) are Montana Species of Concern and Species of Greatest Inventory Need. They breed in high elevation, alpine habitats, in western and southwestern parts of the state (see photo left). Efforts to monitor these species in their breeding habitat takes surveyors to remote and extraordinary mountain peaks where sunrise walking transects are used to locate foraging and nesting birds. Rosy-Finches are most often seen foraging alone or in family groups on the ground, in rocky, barren, or grassy areas along the edge of the snow pack, however they nest up high, above timberline, among glaciers in cliff crevices and talus. They are frequently found nesting on north facing slopes. Because Rosy-Finches are spread out during the breeding season, they require a focused survey effort we believe can be accomplished through citizen science.



Gray-crowned Rosy- Finch
Leucosticte tephrocotis

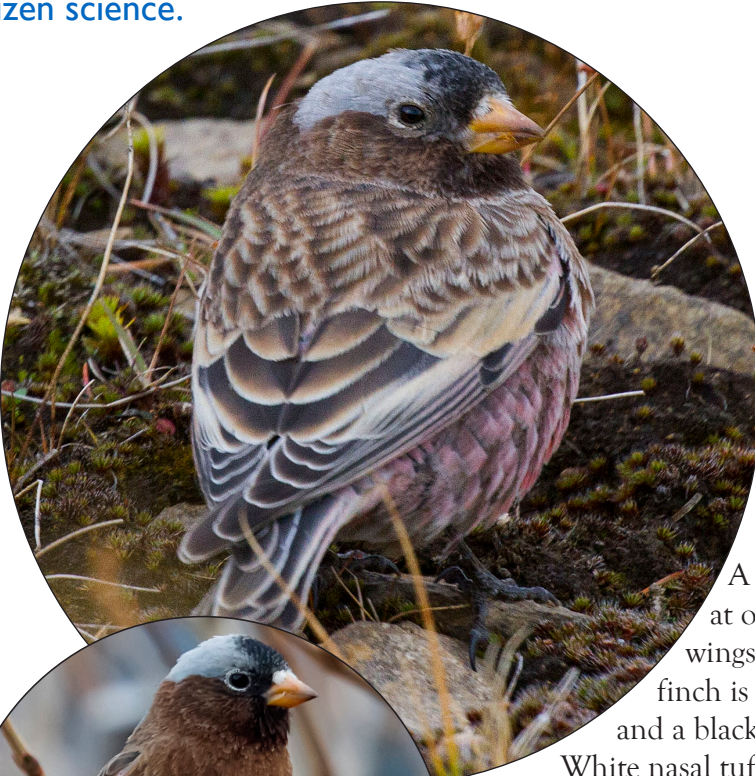
A medium-sized, brown finch with a breeding range at or above tree line in western Montana. With long wings and a notched tail, the male of this brown-bodied finch is accented with pink on the wings, belly, and rump, and a black forehead and bill with contrasting gray nape.

White nasal tufts are visible above the bill. Females are similar but have less distinct black and pink coloration and are similar in plumage to juvenile birds, though juveniles lack the distinct gray crown altogether. Flocks of these alpine birds occupy low-elevation meadows and prairies during the winter, when the occasionally visit backyard feeders.

For more information on Montana's rosy-finch identification visit:
fieldguide.mt.gov

For more information on species protocol and
citizen science opportunities visit: www.mtaudubon.org

photos by Bob Martinka





First Winter & Female
(August - March)



Adult Male breeding
(March - August)



Juvenile
(June - August)



Contribute your Rosy-Finch sightings to science: Montana Audubon is working with partners in southwestern Montana to discover just where our Black Rosy-Finches are active and breeding. Searching for these alpine residents requires sunrise hikes at high elevation (see habitat above) during summer months, and can start as soon as their habitat is accessible. Surveys are walking transects during which all Rosy-Finch observations are recorded. If you'd like to participate, please think about what mountain range you'd like to visit. You can share your incidental sightings too. Please record any observations of Black Rosy-Finches and include date, time, location of observation, GPS location if available, weather information, and who made the observation. Please include detailed information as you could help discover a new nesting location in the state. To submit your observations, please send us a quick email.

If you'd like to participate in this project, please contact Amy Seaman, Montana Audubon Conservation Program Manager
aseaman@mtaudubon.org or 406-210-9449

