

# Mojave Warm Desert Scrub



Mojave Warm Desert Scrub near Scotty's Canyon, Esmeralda County. Photo by Elisabeth Ammon.

## Conservation Profile

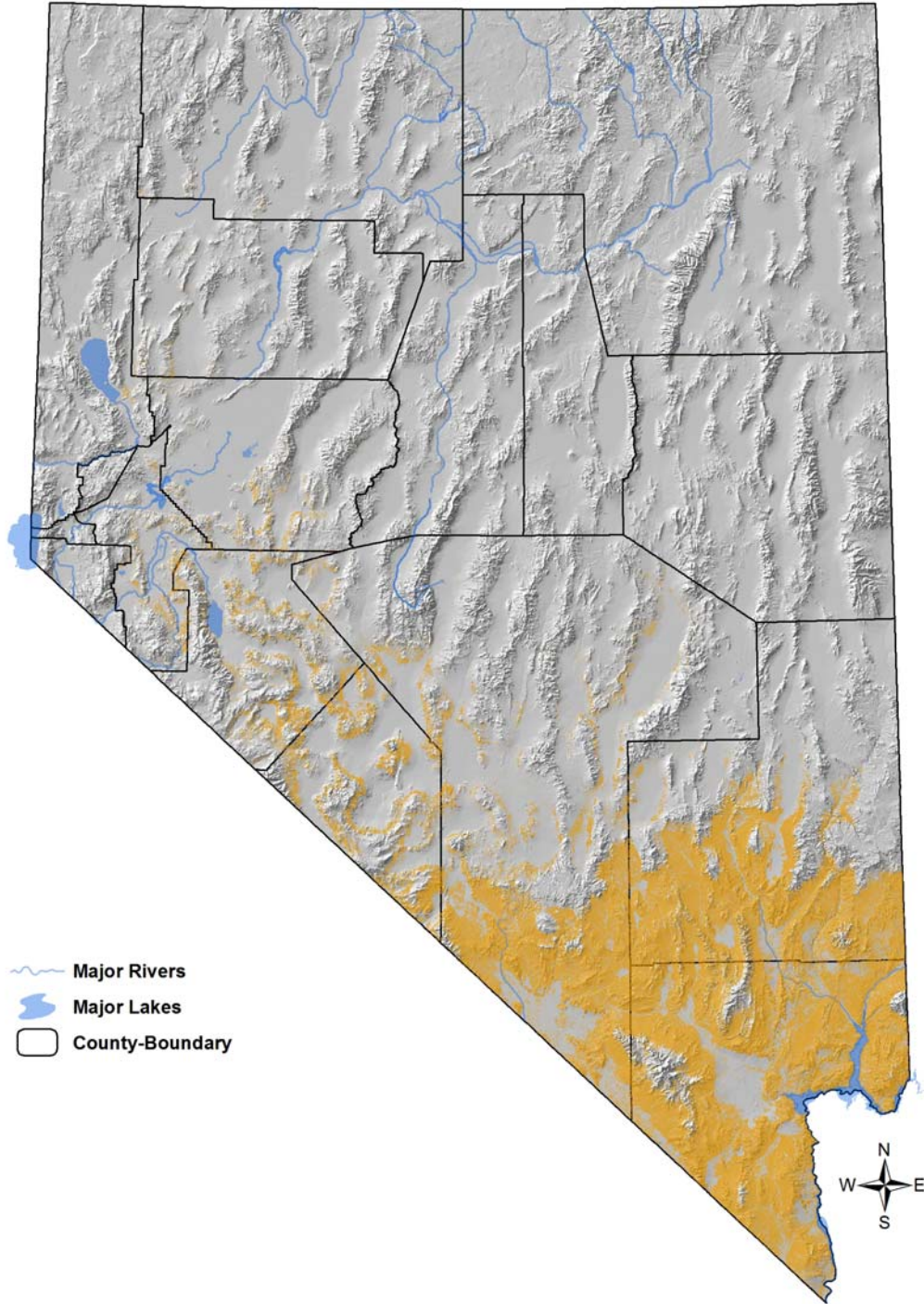
Estimated Cover in Nevada	3,553,600 ha (8,781,000 acres) 12% of state
Landownership Breakdown	BLM = 60% DOD = 15% DOE = 6% FWS = 6% NPS = 5% Other = 8%
Priority Bird Species	Burrowing Owl Gambel's Quail Costa's Hummingbird Le Conte's Thrasher (Golden Eagle) (Prairie Falcon)
Indicator Species	Black-throated Sparrow
Past Impacts	Habitat Conversion Livestock
Most Important Current Threats	Habitat Conversion Invasive Plants Climate Change
Habitat Recovery Time	25-50 years
Regions of Greatest Conservation Interest	Clark and Nye counties
Important Bird Areas	Lake Mead, Wee Thump Joshua Tree Forest, Catclaw Washes

## Key Bird-Habitat Attributes

Stand Structure	Mixed creosote-bursage stands at natural densities including other xeric shrub species; plant litter, cryptobiotic soils, and forb understory important
Ideal Scale for Conservation Action	1,000 ha (2,200 acres) or larger
Distance to Riparian/Spring Habitats and Ephemeral Washes	Proximity of water-dependent habitat or presence of ephemeral washes increases value to birds
Presence of Cliffs > 30 m (100 ft) Tall	Presence of tall cliffs increases value to birds

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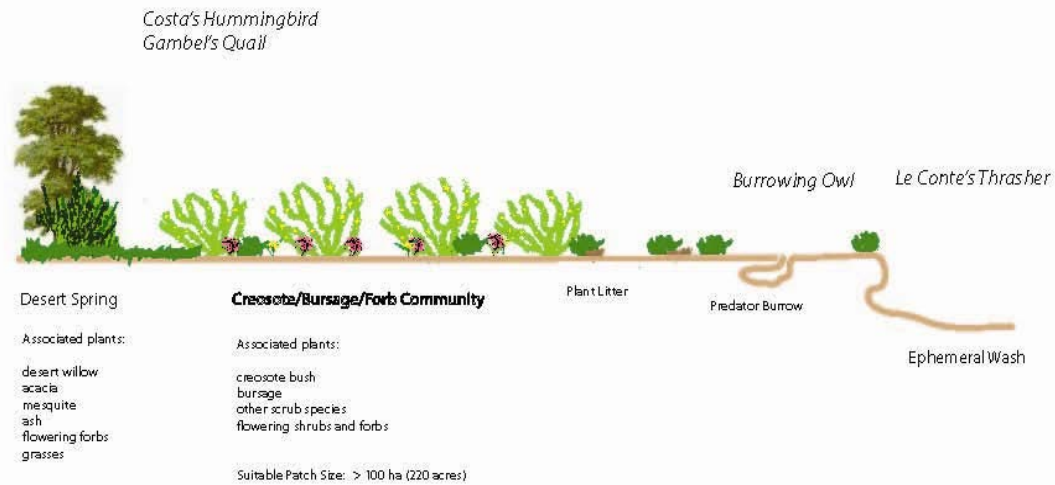
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Mojave scrublands cover the majority of the Mojave portion of Nevada. Yet, the priority species that specialize on these habitats are generally rare on the landscape, and their local presence may be unpredictable from year to year (e.g., Le Conte's Thrasher, Burrowing Owl, and Golden Eagle). For this reason, we recommend large patch sizes for conservation and management so as to accommodate the landscape use of priority species among years. Especially useful are areas that feature larger shrubs of semi-mesic nature, such those found along ephemeral washes. Similarly, areas that have springs, wetlands, or riparian areas in the vicinity (within 1,000-2,000 m) are a priority. A native suite of understory species, including cryptobiotic soils, are important for several priority species, including litter probers such as Le Conte's Thrasher, and the Costa's Hummingbird that seeks flowering plants and insects supported by these.

Traditionally, land uses of Mojave scrub habitats included livestock, mining, and urban development. Livestock use has been reduced significantly since Clark County removed domestic livestock from most lands in the county. However, feral livestock continues to use this habitat and probably poses a threat in high use areas. Urban development is still ongoing in many Mojave scrub areas, and our recommendation is to contain this development to clustered area to the extent possible, avoiding areas with mesic habitats nearby and ephemeral washes. OHV use occurs to a large degree in Mojave scrub habitats, and established trails and avoidance of sensitive areas are recommended for OHV management.

## Mojave Warm Desert Scrub (Creosote-Bursage)

Not To Scale



Possible Indicator Species: Black-throated Sparrow

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## Conservation Strategies

### Habitat Strategies

1. Manage at a large landscape scale (> 1,000 ha or 2,200 acres) with the goal of maintaining natural shrub densities, cryptobiotic soils, understory and litter. Areas with ephemeral washes and nearby wetland, spring, or riparian habitats are of particular priority.
2. Invasive plants should be managed to avoid impacts on fire frequency and integrity of native understory.
3. Recreational uses should be managed to avoid sensitive areas, which include all known occurrences of priority species, ephemeral washes, and areas adjacent to mesic habitats and tall cliffs (> 30 m or 100 ft).

### Public Outreach

1. Promote public appreciation of the fragility of the Mojave desert, and ways to avoid unintentional impacts through motorized recreation.

### Research, Planning, and Monitoring

1. Mapping of ephemeral washes and suitable habitat for Mojave scrub priority species are a high priority for conservation planning and impact avoidance.