

Birds of Nevada



Waterbirds on Pyramid Lake, with Anaho Island in the background. Photo by Bob Goodman.

1. Overview

A total of 482 species of birds have been recorded in Nevada (Nevada Bird Records Committee, pers. comm.), and of these, 300 species have either nested or are estimated to occur with some regularity in the state (Appendix 1). Of the 300 species, 252 are



Bald Eagle. Photo by Wendy Francis

currently known to nest (see also

Floyd et al. 2007), and 46 occur as non-breeders in the state. One species, the Elf Owl, is extirpated but was a historic breeder, and another, the Sharp-tailed Grouse, has been reintroduced in recent times. The majority of the breeding birds of Nevada are landbirds, but a sizeable portion of the species of conservation interest consists of shorebirds and waterbirds, reflecting the importance of waterbodies in a desert state. Mesic habitats, such as riparian, wetland, and agricultural areas, together support the largest portion of bird species in Nevada, but some of the species of greatest conservation concern specialize on upland habitats, for example Greater Sage-Grouse, Bendire's Thrasher, and Pinyon Jay. A complete list of habitat use by the 300 primary bird species of Nevada is provided in Appendix 2.

Conservation Profile

Total Number of Regularly Occurring Bird Species	300
Total Number of Birds Recorded To Date	482
Total Number of Priority Species	78
Habitat Types Most Commonly Used (estimated percent of all Nevada species)	Great Basin Lowland Riparian (38%) Mojave Lowland Riparian (33%) Marshes (27%) Open Water (24%) Agricultural (24%) Montane Riparian (22%) Aspen (20%)
Indicator Species	Yellow Warbler (breeding) Wilson's Warbler (migration) Bobolink (north and northeast) Phainopepla Juniper Titmouse
Number of Important Bird Areas (IBAs)	39

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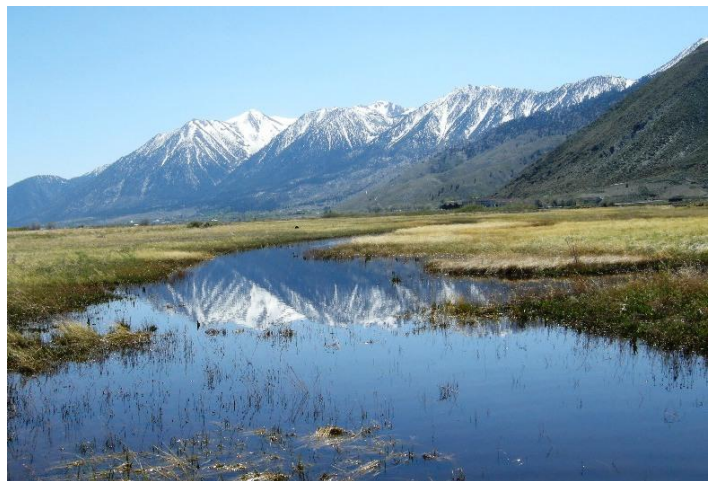
2. Priority Species

Through our ranking process (see Methods), we identified 73 Conservation Priority and 4 Special Status species. Conservation priority species were identified primarily by the fact that they were ranked as high priorities in one or more of multi-organizational bird conservation initiatives (for details, see Methods). Interestingly, priority species were divided fairly equally between those that tend to occur as clusters in restricted habitat types (such as Marsh or Aspen) and those that spread out over large landscapes in widespread habitat types (such as Sagebrush or Pinyon-Juniper). Most conservation priority species were designated as such because of population declines, significant threats, dependence on restricted or threatened habitat, or small population size. Two species that were not ranked highly by other initiatives (Northern Goshawk and Ferruginous Hawk) were included as conservation priorities because they are already high conservation priorities for local and regional resource management agencies, and because they are widely suspected of having “fallen through the cracks” in earlier planning efforts. Four priority species (Prairie Falcon, Common Poorwill, Gray Flycatcher, and Green-tailed Towhee) had no conservation priority in other initiatives, but were included as Stewardship Species because their estimated population in Nevada exceeds 20% of the estimated global population. Several other conservation species also occur in abundances of > 20% of global population in Nevada, but other conservation species are quite rare in the state. Both conservation and stewardship species are considered conservation priorities in this plan, because Nevada resource management can have significant effects on maintenance of their populations.

Four species were included as Special Status species, including Bald and Golden eagles, Peregrine Falcon, and Burrowing Owl. This designation was applied either because these birds, though no longer suspected of experiencing declines or significant threats, are still subject to management and monitoring programs as a result of federal legislation (the three raptors), or because additional research is required to determine if there is cause for conservation concern in Nevada (Burrowing Owl). All of the Special Status species are management priorities for several land management agencies as management indicators or special-policy species. The list of conservation priority and special status species in Nevada and reasons for their inclusion in the plan are provided in Table 1.

3. Important Bird Areas of Nevada

Important Bird Areas (IBAs) have been designated by the Audubon Society to highlight the most important conservation landscapes for bird diversity in the state, with emphasis on species of conservation priority. IBA-specific conservation plans, active partnerships, volunteer activities, monitoring and outreach are being implemented by Audubon to improve



Carson Valley IBA. Photo by Anne Thomas

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public appreciation and participation, and to aid in conservation implementation for these hotspots. Therefore, the IBA program is a key partner in focusing Nevada bird conservation efforts on those landscapes that contain the greatest local densities and diversity of priority species. Appendix 3 lists the occurrence of priority species in designated IBAs of Nevada.

In this plan, we encourage our partners to take advantage of both IBA program services, as well as site-specific conservation planning undertaken by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (for Nevada's National Wildlife Refuges), Nevada Department of Wildlife (for Nevada Wildlife Management Areas and gamebird management), the National Park Service (National Parks and Recreation Areas), and by other agencies and organizations. These site-specific conservation efforts are extraordinarily useful for birds that cluster into particular sites or habitats, such as most waterbirds, shorebirds, and waterfowl; riparian species, and mesquite-acacia associated birds.



Tundra Swans. Photo by Bob Goodman

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Table 1. List of Conservation Priority and Special Status species for the Nevada Comprehensive Bird Conservation Plan, in taxonomic order.

Species	Audubon Watchlist 2007	Continental Partners in Flight	Intermountain West Regional Shorebird Plan	Intermountain West Waterbird Conservation Plan	Pacific Flyway Council Rankings	Nevada Upland Gamebird Plan	Estimated % of Global Population in Nevada	Nevada Bird Conservation Plan Status	Specifics
Trumpeter Swan	Yellow				High			Priority	Conservation Species
Tundra Swan					High/Medium			Priority	Conservation Species
Cinnamon Teal					Medium			Priority	Conservation Species
Northern Pintail					High			Priority	Conservation Species
Canvasback					High			Priority	Conservation Species
Redhead					High			Priority	Conservation Species
Lesser Scaup					High			Priority	Conservation Species
Greater Sage-Grouse	Yellow	Watch List				Very High		Priority	Conservation Species
Dusky Grouse						High		Priority	Conservation Species
Sooty Grouse	Red	Watch List				High		Priority	Conservation Species
Sharp-tailed Grouse		Stewardship				High		Priority	Conservation Species
Mountain Quail	Yellow	Watch List				High		Priority	Conservation Species
Gambel's Quail		Stewardship				High		Priority	Conservation Species
Common Loon				Moderate/High Concern				Priority	Conservation Species
Eared Grebe				High Concern				Priority	Conservation Species
Western Grebe				High Concern				Priority	Conservation Species
Clark's Grebe	Yellow			High Concern				Priority	Conservation Species
American White Pelican				High Concern				Priority	Conservation Species
Least Bittern				Moderate Concern				Priority	Conservation Species
Snowy Egret				High Concern				Priority	Conservation Species
White-faced Ibis				Moderate Concern				Priority	Conservation Species
Bald Eagle		Stewardship						Special Status	Policy
Northern Goshawk								Priority	Conservation Species
Swainson's Hawk	Yellow	Watch List						Priority	Conservation Species
Ferruginous Hawk								Priority	Conservation Species
Golden Eagle								Special Status	Policy
Peregrine Falcon		Stewardship						Special Status	Policy
Prairie Falcon							24-32% or greater?	Priority	Stewardship Species

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Clapper Rail	Yellow							Priority	Conservation Species
Sandhill Crane				High Concern	TBD			Priority	Conservation Species
Snowy Plover	Yellow		Critically Important					Priority	Conservation Species
Black-necked Stilt			Critically Important					Priority	Conservation Species
American Avocet			Critically Important					Priority	Conservation Species
Willet			Very Important					Priority	Conservation Species
Long-billed Curlew	Yellow		Critically Important					Priority	Conservation Species
Marbled Godwit	Yellow		Very Important					Priority	Conservation Species
Western Sandpiper	Yellow		Very Important					Priority	Conservation Species
Least Sandpiper			Very Important					Priority	Conservation Species
Long-billed Dowitcher			Critically Important					Priority	Conservation Species
Wilson's Phalarope			Critically Important					Priority	Conservation Species
Red-necked Phalarope			Very Important					Priority	Conservation Species
Franklin's Gull				High Concern				Priority	Conservation Species
Black Tern				High Concern				Priority	Conservation Species
Band-tailed Pigeon		Watch List						Priority	Conservation Species
Yellow-billed Cuckoo								Priority	Conservation, ESA
Flammulated Owl	Yellow	Watch List						Priority	Conservation Species
Burrowing Owl								Special Status	Research
Spotted Owl	Yellow	Watch List						Priority	Conservation Species
Short-eared Owl	Yellow	Watch List						Priority	Conservation Species
Common Poorwill								Priority	Conservation Species
White-throated Swift		Watch List						Priority	Conservation Species
Costa's Hummingbird	Yellow	Watch List						Priority	Conservation Species
Calliope Hummingbird	Yellow	Watch List						Priority	Conservation Species
Rufous Hummingbird		Watch List						Priority	Conservation Species
Lewis's Woodpecker	Red	Watch List						Priority	Conservation Species
Williamson's Sapsucker	Yellow	Stewardship						Priority	Conservation Species

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White-headed Woodpecker	Yellow	Watch List						Priority	Conservation Species
Gilded Flicker	Red							Priority	Conservation Species
Olive-sided Flycatcher	Yellow	Watch List						Priority	Conservation Species
Willow Flycatcher	Yellow	Watch List						Priority	Conservation Species
Gray Flycatcher		Stewardship					50% or greater	Priority	Stewardship Species
Bell's Vireo	Red	Watch List						Priority	Conservation Species
Gray Vireo	Yellow	Watch List						Priority	Conservation Species
Pinyon Jay	Yellow	Watch List						Priority	Conservation Species
Sage Thrasher		Stewardship					20-48%	Priority	Stewardship Species
Bendire's Thrasher	Red	Watch List						Priority	Conservation Species
Le Conte's Thrasher	Yellow	Watch List						Priority	Conservation Species
Virginia's Warbler	Yellow	Watch List						Priority	Conservation Species
Lucy's Warbler	Yellow	Watch List						Priority	Conservation Species
Hermit Warbler	Yellow	Watch List						Priority	Conservation Species
Grace's Warbler	Yellow	Watch List						Priority	Conservation Species
Green-tailed Towhee		Stewardship					17-22% or greater	Priority	Stewardship Species
Abert's Towhee	Yellow	Watch List						Priority	Conservation Species
Brewer's Sparrow	Yellow	Watch List						Priority	Conservation Species
Black-chinned Sparrow	Red	Watch List						Priority	Conservation Species
Sage Sparrow	Yellow	Stewardship						Priority	Conservation Species
Tricolored Blackbird	Red	Watch List						Priority	Conservation Species
Black Rosy-Finch	Red	Watch List						Priority	Conservation Species