

Eared Grebe

Podiceps nigricollis

Conservation Profile

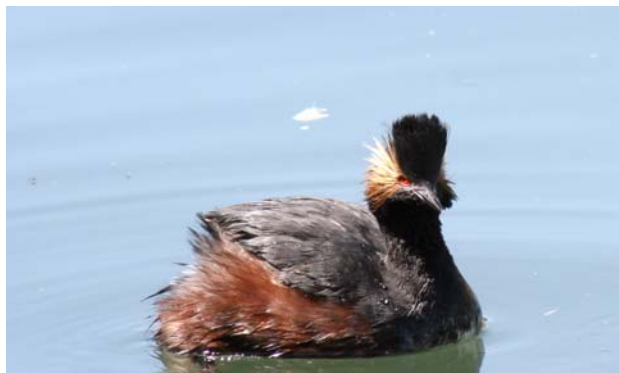


Photo by Jacque Lowery

Priority Status	Conservation Target
Reasons for Priority Status	Threats Small population size
Other Rankings	Continental PIF: None Audubon Watchlist: None Natural Heritage: S4B USFWS: Bird of Conservation Concern (Great Basin); Migratory Bird BLM: None NDOW: Conservation Priority IM West Waterbird: High Concern
Trends	Historical: Unknown Recent: Stable or increasing [IWWCP]
Population Size Estimates	Nevada: 400 [IWWCP] Global: 4,100,000 [NAWCP] Percent of Global: < 1 %
Population Objective	Maintain breeding population of 400 birds
Monitoring Coverage	Source: Refuge and WMA counts; Aquatic Bird Count Coverage and Adequacy: Good
Key Conservation Areas	Ruby Lakes NWR, Lahontan Valley, Walker Lake, Pyramid Lake

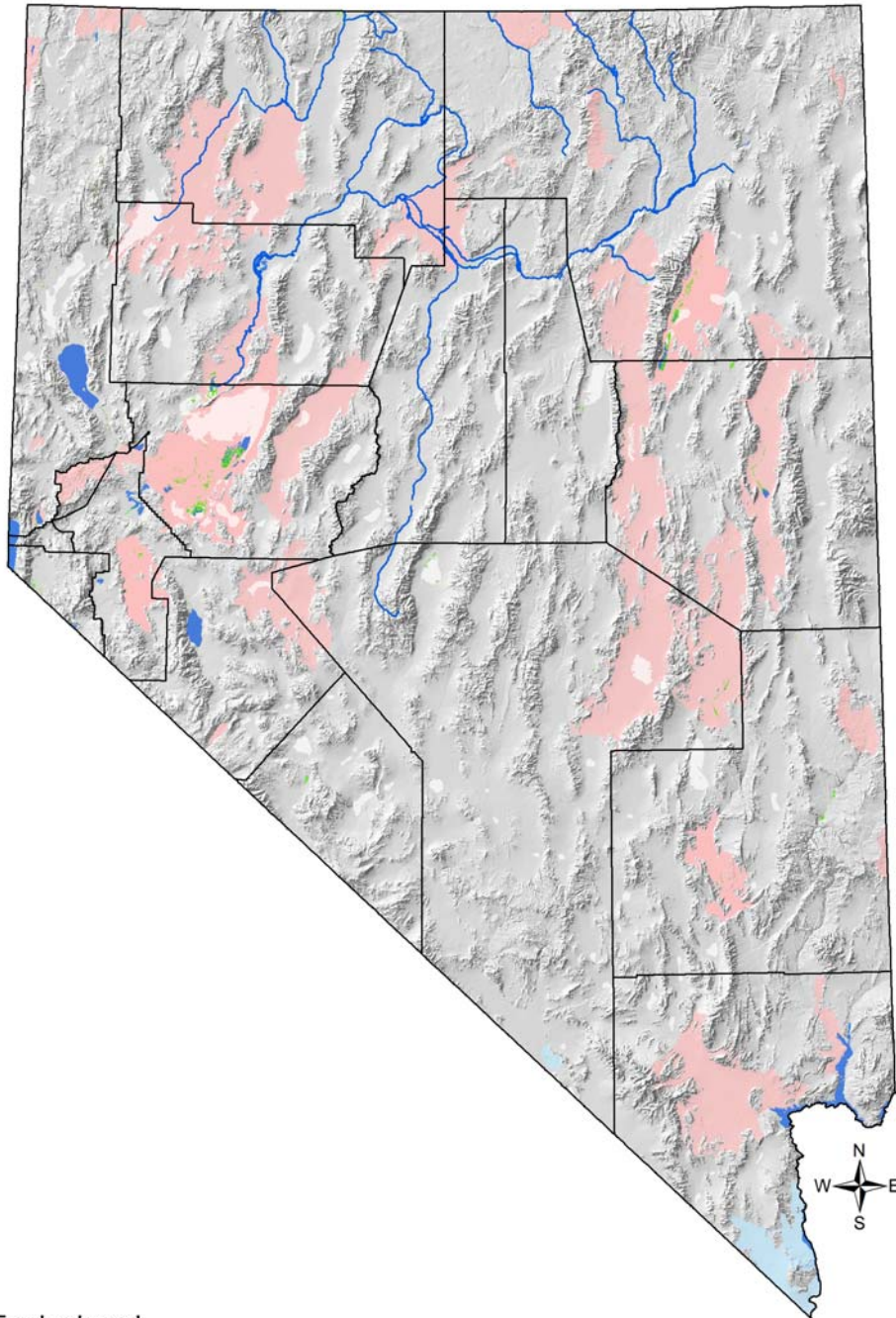
Habitat Use Profile

Main Habitats Used in Nevada	Open Water Marsh
Key Habitat Use Parameters	Prefers shallow, alkaline lakes, ponds, and marshes with emergent vegetation and very productive macroinvertebrate communities [p1]
Minimum Patch Size	Uses water bodies of a variety of sizes [p4]

Natural History Profile

Seasonal Presence in Nevada	Spring – summer (breeding) Winter (far southern Nevada)
Known Breeding Dates in Nevada	May – August [p1]
Nesting Habits	Floating nests attached to emergent vegetation Nests may be placed either beneath overhead cover, or in a relatively open situation [p1, p4] Usually breeds colonially, but in Nevada colonies are typically small [p1, p4] Moderate fidelity to breeding locations, if consistently available [p1]
Food Requirements	Variety of aquatic invertebrates, less commonly small aquatic vertebrates [p1] Forages in water column (up to 4 m depth) or on shallow bottoms [p1]

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File: Eared grebe.mxd

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Temporary Map Key

Pink: Breeding range

Hot pink / magenta: For some birds, breeding data was limited, and was supplemented by extrapolation to include likely breeding range. In these cases, hot pink represents known breeding range, and lighter pink the extrapolated breeding range.

Blue: Winter range

Yellow: Important migration stopover areas

Purple: Year-round range

Green: In some maps, wetlands mapped by SWReGAP are shown in green for interpretational purposes

Dot symbols: In cases where breeding records were isolated or very restricted in extent, they are represented by a pink dot symbol rather than a shaded area.

Arrows: Major migration routes. These are shown only for birds for which there are migration-associated conservation issues.

OVERVIEW

The Eared Grebe is distinct in several respects from Nevada's two other conservation priority grebe species. Most notably, it is strongly associated with saline wetlands, though less so during breeding season [p1]. Immediately after breeding, most birds from Nevada and surrounding areas appear to wander into either Mono Lake or Great Salt Lake, where they congregate in very large numbers to feed on brine shrimp prior to fall migration [p1]. Compared to the Western and Clark's grebes, the Eared Grebe appears to engage in little, if any, significant staging activity within Nevada itself, but is abundant throughout the migration season. Additionally, this grebe feeds primarily on invertebrates, while the other grebes are primarily fish-eaters. All three grebes share in common a fairly widespread breeding presence in the state, but overall a relatively small breeding population, and seemingly stable population trends. Relatively few clear-cut species-specific conservation threats have been identified for any of the grebe species, apart from general concerns about conserving and protecting open water and marsh habitats.

ABUNDANCE AND OCCUPANCY BY HABITAT

- High counts as follows:
 - 600 breeders recorded at Ruby Lake in 1983 (Alcorn 1988)
 - Several hundred nests recorded at both Carson Lake and Stillwater NWR in mid-1990's (Chisholm and Neel 2002)

NEVADA-SPECIFIC STUDIES AND ANALYSES

- None

MAIN THREATS AND CHALLENGES

- Conversion or dewatering of alkaline marshes and lakes
- No significant species-specific threats identified

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CONSERVATION STRATEGIES

Habitat Strategies

- General marsh and open water conservation strategies

Research, Planning, and Monitoring

- Conduct additional research to better determine specific habitat needs and threats in Nevada, and whether Nevada provides any important pre-migration staging habitat

PRIORITY SPECIES WITH SIMILAR CONSERVATION STRATEGIES

- Cinnamon Teal
- American Avocet
- Black-necked Stilt

FURTHER READING

- [TBD pending literature review]

Temporary codes for standard references

[p1] Birds of N. America account for this species

[p2] NV Bird Conservation Plan ver. 1 (Neel 1999)

[p3] NV Wildlife Action Plan

[p4] Nevada Breeding Bird Atlas

[p5] PIF N. American Landbird Conservation Plan (Rich et al 2004) (NOTE:

[p6] Intermountain West Regional Shorebird Plan (Oring et al 2003)

[p7] Pacific Flyway reports

[p8] Shrubsteppe Landscapes in Jeopardy (Dobkin and Sauder 2004)

[p9] Birds in a Sagebrush Sea (Paige and Ritter 1999)

[s1] NBC-based population size estimates

[s2, s3] NBC-based habitat relationship analysis

[s4] Breeding Bird Atlas breeding phenology data

[i1] BBS trends analysis (Sauer et al 2005)

[i2] NV Upland Game Management Plan (Espinosa et al in prep.)

[i3] Western Quail Management Plan (Zornes et al 2008)

[i4] NDOW Shorebird and Waterbird monitoring data (Neel)

[i5] Brad Andres IMJV Shorebird / Waterbird data set

[i6] GBBO Technical Report 08-01 (2008)

[EO] Expert opinion from NVPIF group members

[IWWCP] Intermountain West Waterbird Conservation Plan

[NAWCP] North American Waterbird Conservation Plan

[LBCUSACP] Long-billed Curlew Status Assessment and Conservation Plan

[USSCP] U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan

[WHSRN] Western Hemispheric Shorebird Regional Network