

Franklin's Gull

Leucophaeus pipixcan



Photo by Fred Peterson

Conservation Profile

Priority Status	Conservation Target
Reasons for Priority Status	Small population size Possible threats
Other Rankings	Continental PIF: None Audubon Watchlist: None Natural Heritage: S3B USFWS: Migratory Bird BLM: None NDOW: Conservation Priority IM West Waterbird: High Concern
Trends	Historical: Increased in Great Basin over last 75 years [p1] Recent: Increasing [IWWCP]
Population Size Estimates	Nevada: 350 [LN] Global: ~ 600,000 [NAWCP, p10], but possibly > 1 million [p1] Percent of Global: < 1 %
Population Objective	Maintain breeding population of 350
Monitoring Coverage	Source: Refuge surveys, Aquatic Bird Count Coverage and Adequacy: Very Good at NWRs, Fair – Poor elsewhere
Key Conservation Areas	Ruby Lake NWR Lahontan Valley

Habitat Use Profile

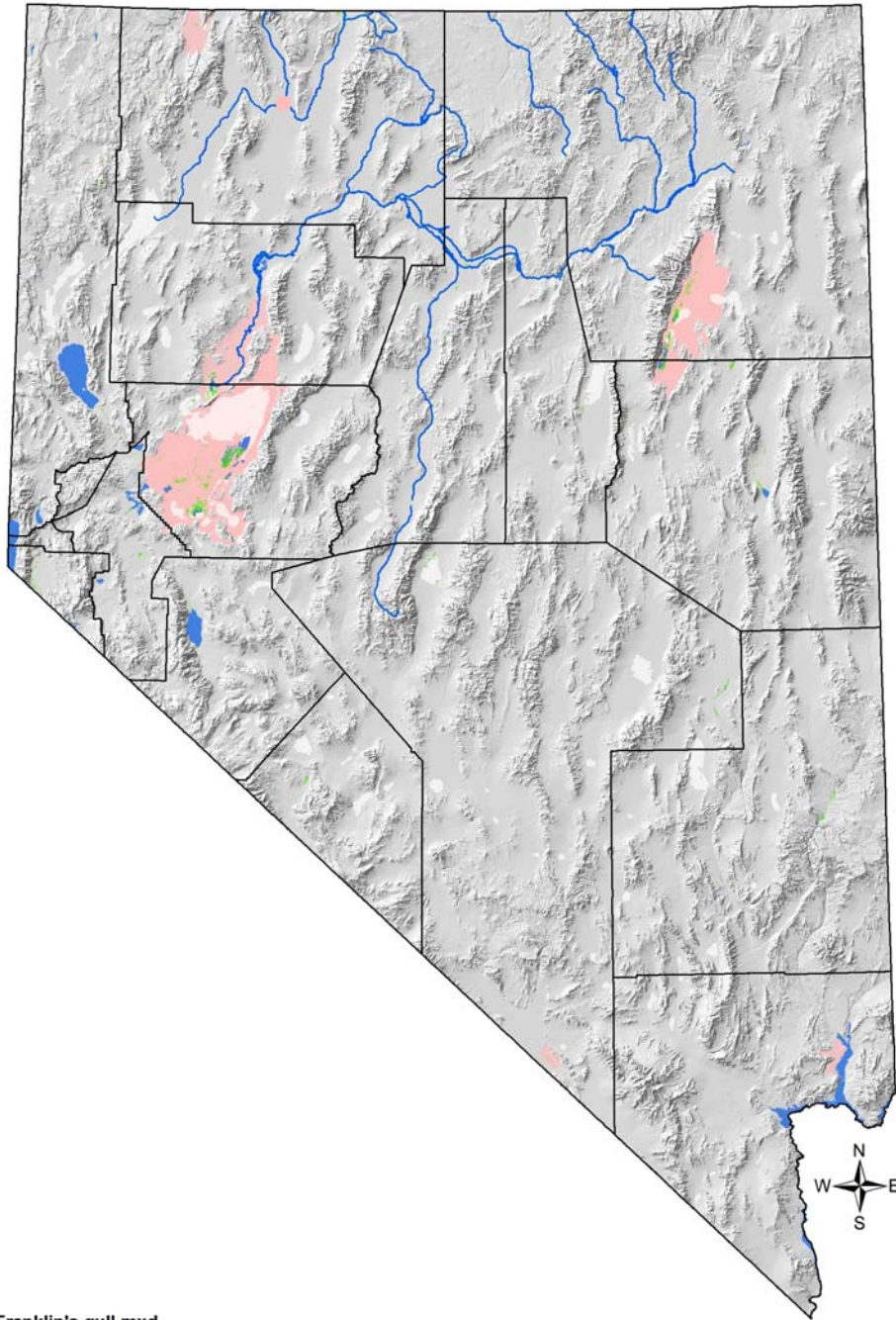
Main Habitats Used in Nevada	Marsh Open Water Variety of terrestrial habitats for foraging, especially Agricultural [p1]
Key Habitat Use Parameters	Nests in areas where density of emergent vegetation is relatively low, or at the edge of higher density emergent vegetation [p1] Nest sites often associated with bulrush [p1] Foraging extends into surrounding terrestrial habitats, including agricultural [p1]
Minimum Patch Size	Generally prefers larger marshes or lakes for breeding [p10]

Natural History Profile

Seasonal Presence in Nevada	Spring – summer (breeding) Late summer (post-breeding vagrancy) Fall (migration stopover)
Known Breeding Dates in Nevada	May – July [p3, p1]
Nesting Habits	Colonial breeder Nests on mats of floating vegetation [p1] Most nest are located over water of 30 – 60 cm depth, surrounded by deeper water [p1, p10]
Food Requirements	Omnivorous, wide variety of insects, other invertebrates, seeds, and plant matter [p1] Forages terrestrially, aerially, and on or just below water surface [p1]

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File: Franklin's gull.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

Historical and recent population trends of the Franklin's Gull in the west are complex and regionally varied across the species' breeding range. In Nevada, however, at the southern margins of their breeding range, Franklin's Gulls have slowly increased. Franklin's Gulls were apparently unknown in the Great Basin until approximately 75 years ago, and the first Nevada record did not occur until 1972 [p1]. Until recently, our breeding population was very small (about 20 birds, occasionally peaking at about 50), but beginning in 2006 or 2007, number of breeders began to increase, especially in Ruby Lake NWR, which now hosts most of the state's known breeding pairs. Despite increases, the Franklin's Gull is still a conservation target species because of its small population size and its sensitivity to human disturbance and changing water levels in the breeding sites. Franklin's Gulls engage in significant post-breeding vagrancy prior to southward migration [p1], and birds migrating from farther north use a number of stopover sites in Nevada. Additional work is needed to determine whether conservation issues exist for post-breeding or migratory Franklin's Gulls in Nevada.

ABUNDANCE AND OCCUPANCY BY HABITAT

- Nest spacing in colonies may be as close as 1 m, more typically ~ 3 m [p1]
- Colonies can become very large; Nevada's have historically been small (< 50 pairs / site) but are recently increasing in size at Ruby Lake NWR [p1, EO]

NEVADA-SPECIFIC STUDIES AND ANALYSES

- None

MAIN THREATS AND CHALLENGES

- Vulnerable to human disturbance during nesting [p1]
- Sensitive to changes in water level during nesting [p1]

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CONSERVATION STRATEGIES

Habitat Strategies

- General Marsh and Open Water conservation strategies
- Manage breeding sites to maintain consistent water level during breeding season [p10]
- Limit human disturbance of colony sites [p10]

Research, Planning, and Monitoring

- Conduct additional research / monitoring to determine role played by Nevada in providing stopover habitat for migrants

PRIORITY SPECIES WITH SIMILAR CONSERVATION STRATEGIES

- TBD

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