

Least Sandpiper

Calidris minutilla



Photo by Larry Neel

Conservation Profile

Priority Status	Conservation Target
Reasons for Priority Status	Threats High migration stopover stewardship
Other Rankings	Continental PIF: None Audubon Watchlist: None Natural Heritage: S4N USFWS: Migratory Bird BLM: None NDOW: Conservation Priority IM West Shorebird: Very Important
Trends	Historical: Unknown Recent: Decreasing [USSCP]
Population Size Estimates	Nevada: 2,200 [NDOW, Andres], with substantial annual variation Global: 700,000 [WHSRN] Percent of Global: < 1 %
Population Objective	Maintain 2,200 rolling ten-year average
Monitoring Coverage	Source: NDOW Migratory Shorebird Counts, refuge counts Coverage and Adequacy: Very Good in Lahontan Valley and refuges, Fair elsewhere
Key Conservation Areas	Lahontan Valley, Pyramid Lake, Humboldt River system, Ruby Valley, Las Vegas Wash system

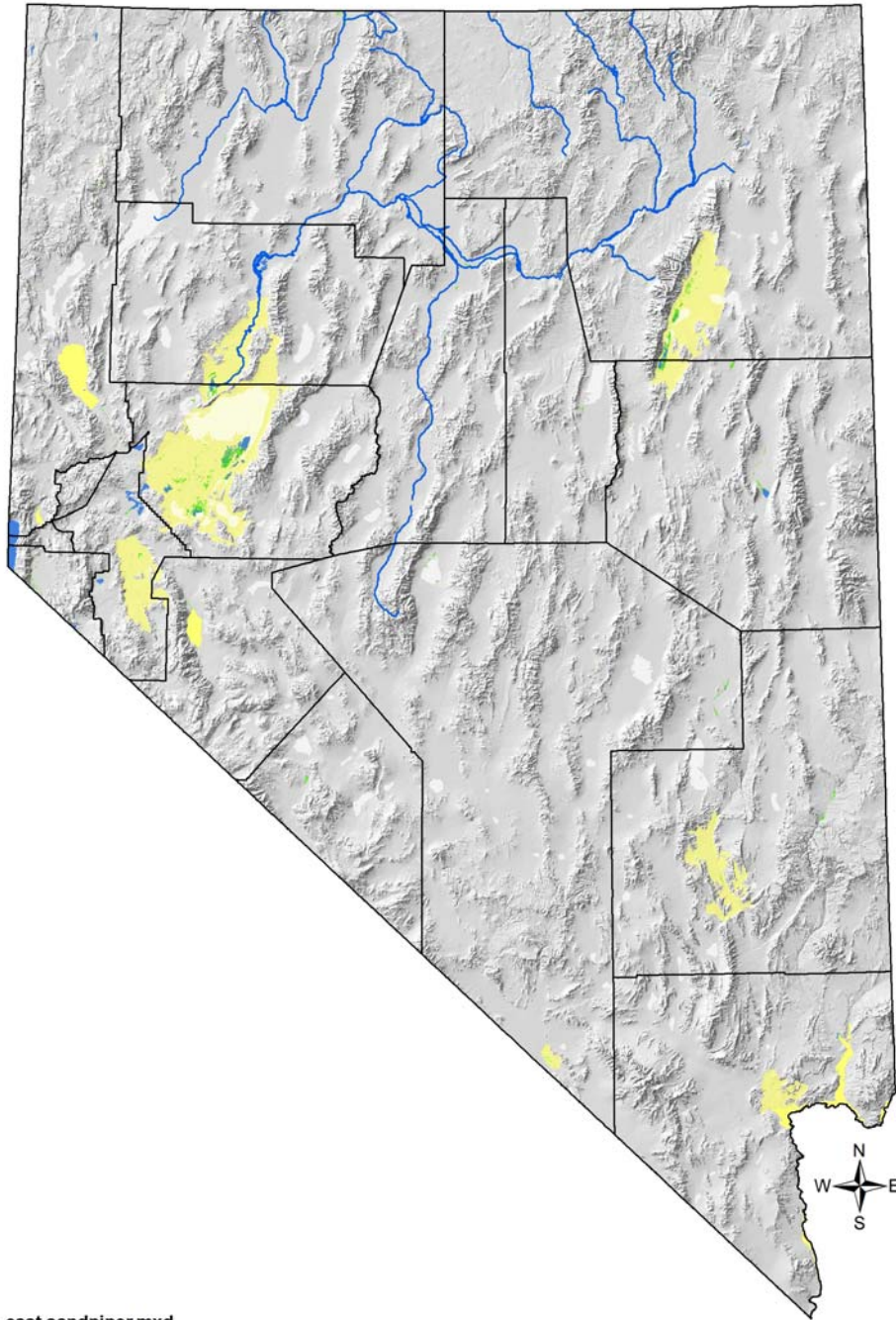
Habitat Use Profile

Main Habitats Used in Nevada	Marsh Open Water margins Wet Meadows Agricultural [p1]
Key Habitat Use Parameters	Open margins of lakes, ponds, rivers, marshes, ditches Forages in open areas, but may enter adjoining terrestrial vegetation cover for roosting [p1] Remains relatively near water's edge during foraging [p1]
Minimum Patch Size	Often seen on smaller water bodies [p1]

Natural History Profile

Seasonal Presence in Nevada	Fall (migration, late-July - August peak) Spring (migration, April - May peak)
Known Breeding Dates in Nevada	N/A
Nesting Habits	N/A
Food Requirements	Benthic and terrestrial invertebrates that are less than 6 mm in length [p1] Feeds on mudflats or open shallow water with depth < 4 cm [p1]

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File: Least sandpiper.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

Because it tends to be most common during spring rather than fall migration, the Least Sandpiper stands out among the other Conservation Target species that are present in Nevada only as migrants. This bird often occurs in mixed flocks during migration stopovers, although it tends to be somewhat more likely to venture away from the water's edge than other sandpipers. Because of its affinity for mixed flocks, it is difficult to obtain accurate counts of Least Sandpipers, and population estimates could therefore err in some systematic (but unquantified) manner. Least Sandpipers appear to be declining overall, though these declines appear to be stronger in the eastern part of North America than in the west. It has been suggested that ongoing declines are related to threats associated with migration or wintering grounds, but specific mechanisms of the decline, or possible management responses, have not yet been adequately addressed.

ABUNDANCE AND OCCUPANCY BY HABITAT

- Gregarious during migration, with density proportional to prey availability [p1]
- Ten-year average population average of 2,200, ~ 90% in Lahontan Valley, ~ 10% elsewhere in state
- High count 8,300 in Lahontan Valley in 2001 [NDOW]

NEVADA-SPECIFIC STUDIES AND ANALYSES

- TBD

MAIN THREATS AND CHALLENGES

- Reported to be more vulnerable to threats during migration and in wintering habitat than is the case on the breeding grounds [p1]; however, nature of these threats not specified

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CONSERVATION STRATEGIES

Habitat Strategies

- General Marsh and Open Water conservation strategies
- Maintain water levels in important migration stopover sites through migration peaks

Research, Planning, and Monitoring

- Additional monitoring outside of Lahontan Valley to better determine importance of Nevada for migration stopover

PRIORITY SPECIES WITH SIMILAR CONSERVATION STRATEGIES

- Western Sandpiper

FURTHER READING

- Shuford et al 2002
- 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