

Long-billed Curlew

Numenius americanus



Photo by Martin Meyers

Habitat Use Profile

Main Habitats Used in Nevada	Wet Meadows Agricultural Lowland Riparian, primarily Great Basin [s, p1, p4, p9]
Key Habitat Use Parameters	Preferred nesting sites in Nevada are wet meadows / agricultural fields (Hartman and Oring 2008) Will also nest in more sparsely vegetated areas, including agricultural fields with short stubble [p1] More densely vegetated areas with greater cover used for brood-rearing [p1] Forages in a variety of uplands, wet soils, mudflats, shorelines [p1] Will sometimes forage in shallowly flooded fields or shallow water, but avoids > 16 cm water depth [p1]
Minimum Patch Size	Territory size: 6-14 ha; needs 300-500 m buffer around territory; therefore, patch size ~50-100 ha [p1]

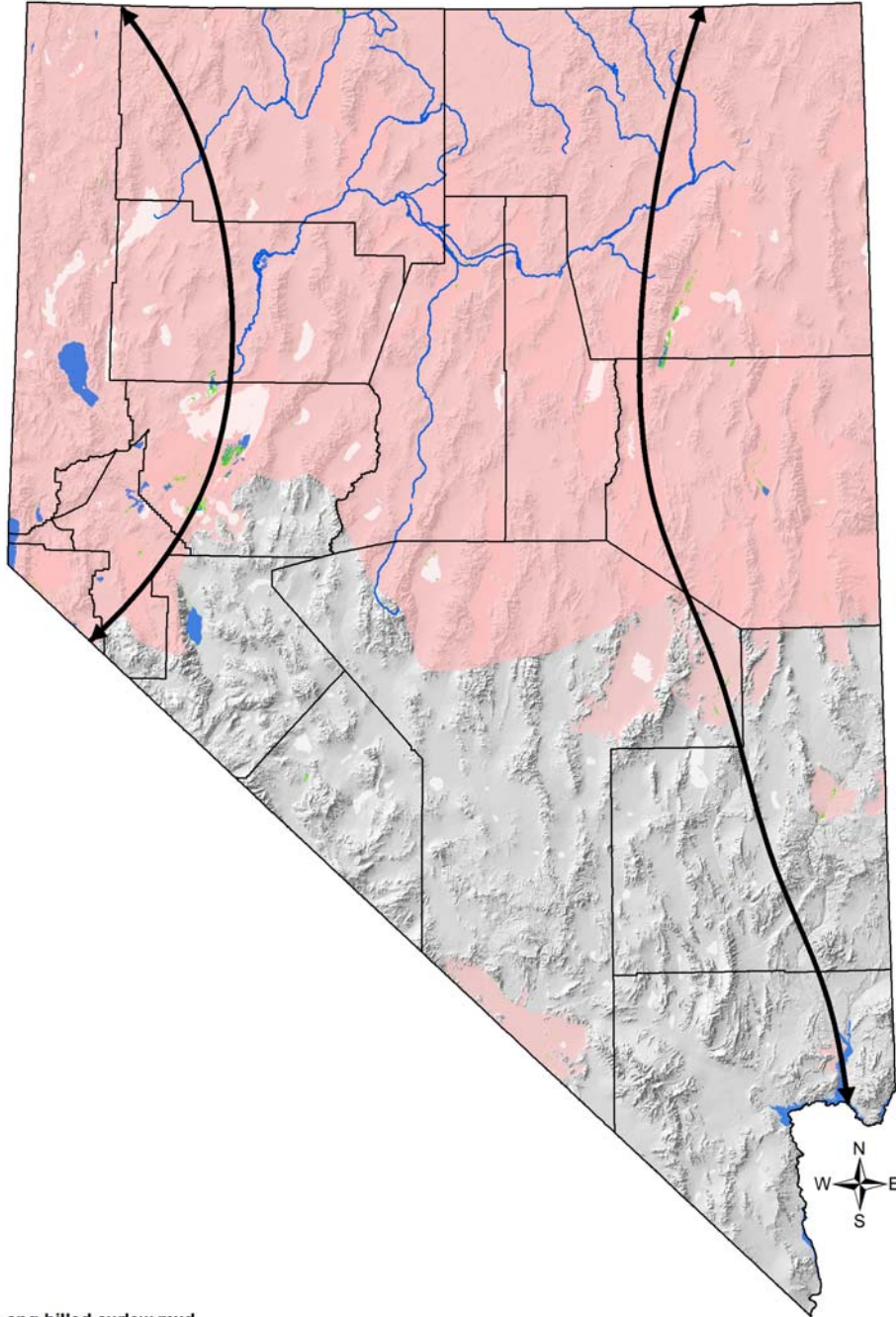
Conservation Profile

Priority Status	Conservation Target
Reasons for Priority Status	Small population size Possible threats
Other Rankings	Continental PIF: None Audubon Watchlist: None Natural Heritage: S2S3B USFWS: Bird of Conservation Concern (Great Basin and Mojave Desert); Migratory Bird BLM: Sensitive Species NDOW: Conservation Priority IM West Shorebird: Critically Important
Trends	Historical: Significant declines [p1] Recent: Stable or increasing [LBCUSACP]
Population Size Estimates	Nevada: 1,150 [LBCUSACP] Global: 65,500 [LBCUSACP] Percent of Global: 2%
Population Objective	Maintain population of 1,150 breeding birds
Monitoring Coverage	Source: Nevada Bird Count, refuge counts Coverage and Adequacy: Good
Key Conservation Areas	Ruby Valley, Humboldt River system

Natural History Profile

Seasonal Presence in Nevada	Spring – summer (breeding)
Known Breeding Dates in Nevada	April – July [s4]
Nesting Habits	Nest is a scrape on ground, located where vegetation height generally < 10 cm [p1]
Food Requirements	Pecks and probes for a variety of medium – large invertebrates and small vertebrates

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File: Long-billed curlew.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

Although the Great Basin contains only a modest proportion of the global population of breeding Long-billed Curlews, research conducted here has made a disproportionately large contribution to our knowledge of the species [p1]. For a shorebird, this species uses surprisingly dry areas and can be found in a wide variety of habitats that could be characterized as “open but with groundcover”. Traditionally a wet meadow and grassland bird, Long-billed Curlews have adapted to the desert, and now make frequent use of Nevada’s agricultural areas for both foraging and nesting. The species breeds across northern Nevada, but there is a pronounced concentration in the northeastern quadrant of the state, which is regarded as a breeding stronghold [p9]. In this area, a significant amount of nesting occurs on private land, leaving much of the species management in the hands of private landowners.

ABUNDANCE AND OCCUPANCY BY HABITAT TYPE

Habitat-specific density based on Nevada Bird Count data

Long-billed Curlew						
	Primary Habitat Type Present at Transect	No. Transects with Sightings	Nevada Bird Count Sightings per 40 ha			
			average	95% confidence interval**	% transects occupied	
Great Basin	Lowland Riparian	5	7.4	-2.2 - 17.0	0.08 (5/66)	
	Montane Riparian	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.01 (1/88)	
	Salt Desert	1	6.4	n/a	0.09 (2/23)	
	Wetland	9	3.3	1.4 - 5.3	0.37 (11/30)	

- As many as 450 in North Ruby Valley, with densities of ~ 7 males / 100 ha (Hartman and Oring 2008)

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NEVADA-SPECIFIC STUDIES AND ANALYSES

- TBD (Hartman and Oring refs)

MAIN THREATS AND CHALLENGES

- Loss of Wet Meadow habitat
- Heavy livestock grazing, particularly during nesting period [p1, p3, EO]
- Agricultural activities during nesting period
- Drying of wet meadows due to groundwater pumping or surface water diversions

CONSERVATION STRATEGIES

Habitat Strategies

- General Wet Meadow and Agricultural conservation strategies
- Manage livestock grazing in breeding areas in wet meadows during the Long-billed Curlew breeding season; rotational grazing strategies may be effective to produce a mosaic of different vegetation covers to accommodate habitat preferences for nesting and brood rearing

Public Outreach

- Encourage deferment of haying or other mechanized agricultural activity until after the nesting season
- Discourage loss of water in wet meadows to groundwater pumping or surface water diversion
- Engage in cooperative conservation efforts with private landowners

Research, Planning, and Monitoring

- Where water diversions may impact curlew breeding habitat, monitor these impacts

PRIORITY SPECIES WITH SIMILAR CONSERVATION STRATEGIES

- TBD

FURTHER READING

- Fellow and Jones 2009
- Hartman and Oring 2009

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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