Tricolored Blackbird

Agelaius tricolor

Photo by Martin Meyers

Habitat Use Profile

Main Habitats Used in Nevada	Marsh Agricultural (for foraging)
Key Habitat Use Parameters	Dense emergent vegetation (bulrush, cattail) preferred [p1] May be sensitive to degradation of water quality [EO] Proximity of good foraging areas (such as agricultural operations) may be advantageous [EO]
Minimum Patch Size	Nevada's single reliable breeding wetland is ~ 0.8 ha

Conservation Profile

Priority Status	Conservation Target
Reasons for Priority Status	Single isolated Nevada breeding population Single unprotected Nevada breeding site Range-wide declines
Other Rankings	Continental PIF: Watch List Audubon Watchlist: Red Natural Heritage: S1B USFWS: Bird of Conservation Concern (Great Basin), Migratory Bird BLM: Sensitive Species NDOW: Conservation Priority
Trends	Historical: Substantial range-wide declines [p1] Recent: Stable to decreasing range-wide, Nevada population stable [i1, p4]
Population Size Estimates	Nevada: ≤ 50 pairs [p3, p4] Global: 250,000 [p1, p5] Percent of Global: < 1%
Population Objective	TBD
Monitoring Coverage	Source: Nevada breeding population counted annually by [TBD] since 2005 Coverage and Adequacy: Excellent, but uncertain in future
Key Conservation Areas	Carson Valley

Natural History Profile

Seasonal Presence in Nevada	Spring - summer
Known Breeding Dates in Nevada	March – July [EO]
Nesting Habits	Colonial nester [p1] Nests attached to emergent marsh vegetation, 0.1 – 1.5 m above water or ground level {p1]
Food Requirements	Opportunistically forage for insects, mollusks, grains, in wetlands, grasslands, and agricultural areas [p1] May forage up to 15 km from breeding wetland [p3]

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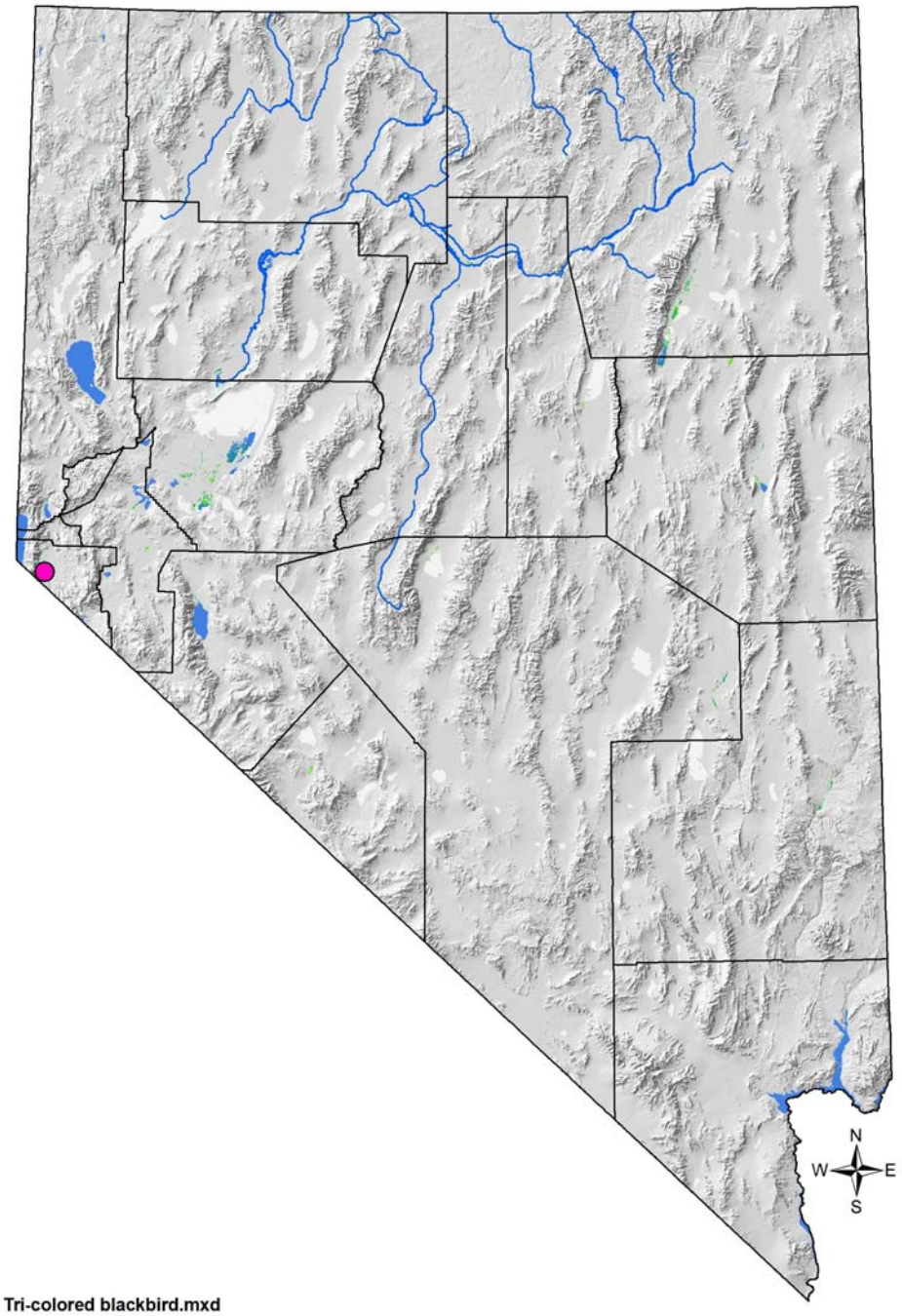

File: Tri-colored blackbird.mxd

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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 overwhelming majority of Tricolored Blackbirds reside year-round in central California, where they have suffered historically from significant loss of wetland habitat. Nevada's single breeding colony is disjunct from the main population of Tricolored Blackbirds, which it rejoins in the winter months. This colony usually breeds in a small marsh on private land in Douglas County, though there have been occasional reports of breeding in other nearby wetlands as well. The main conservation need for this species in Nevada is to secure the single reliable breeding pond and nearby wetlands. Additional needs are to continue monitoring the population, and to devote additional effort to locating any other breeding wetlands that may exist.

ABUNDANCE AND OCCUPANCY BY HABITAT

- Colonial breeder, ~ 20 pairs annually on average in Nevada [p4]

NEVADA-SPECIFIC STUDIES AND ANALYSES

- TBD [Great Basin Birds]

MAIN THREATS AND CHALLENGES

- Nevada's single persistent breeding colony inhabits a small (0.8 ha) marsh located on private land. The future of this property and, thus, the colony is uncertain.

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CONSERVATION STRATEGIES

Public Outreach

- Engage landowner to encourage continuing stewardship of the colony

Research, Planning, and Monitoring

- Seek additional protection for main breeding wetland in Douglas County
- Support continued survey effort
- Expand survey to locate additional nearby breeding wetlands
- Further study habitat use and basic biology of Nevada population, compare to main breeding population in California

OTHER PRIORITY SPECIES WITH SIMILAR CONSERVATION STRATEGIES

- None

FURTHER READING

- TBD [Great Basin Birds]

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