

Western Grebe *Aechmophorus occidentalis*

Conservation Profile



Photo by Fred Peterson

Priority Status	Conservation Target
Reasons for Priority Status	Target Small population size
Other Rankings	Continental PIF: None Audubon Watchlist: None Natural Heritage: S4B USFWS: Migratory Bird BLM: None NDOW: Conservation Priority IM West Waterbird: High Concern
Trends	Historical: Unknown Recent: Unknown [IWWCP]
Population Size Estimates	Nevada: 50 [IWWCP] Global: 110,000 [NAWCP] Percent of Global: < 1 %
Population Objective	Maintain breeding population of 50 birds
Monitoring Coverage	Source: Refuge and WMA counts, Aquatic Bird Count Coverage and Adequacy: Fair
Key Conservation Areas	Lahontan Valley Ruby Lake NWR Walker Lake Pyramid Lake (migration)

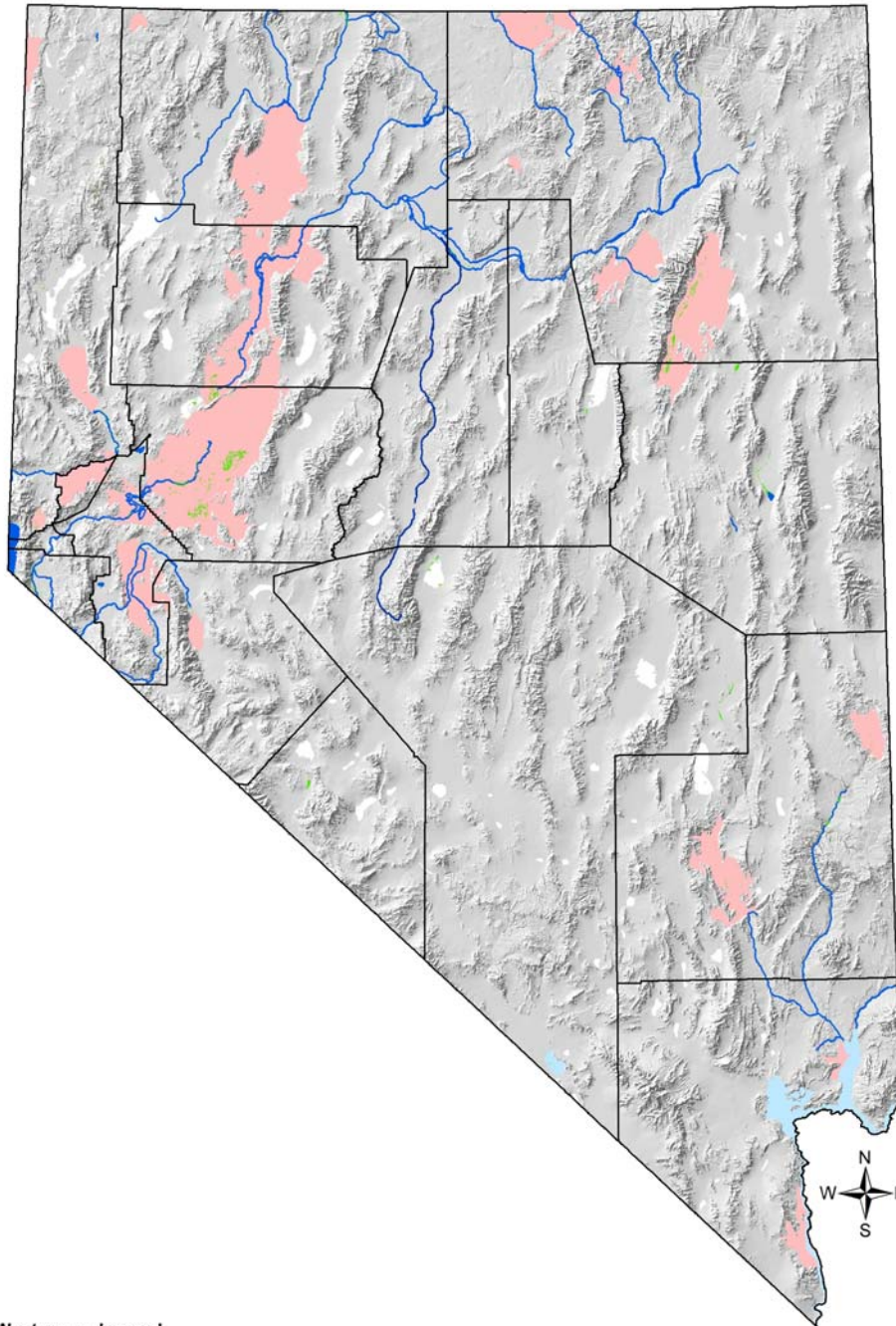
Habitat Use Profile

Main Habitats Used in Nevada	Open Water Marsh
Key Habitat Use Parameters	Usually in large lakes or marshes (with at least several km ² of open water), bordered by emergent vegetation [p1] Emergent vegetation at nesting sites usually comprised of tule, cattail, pondweed [p10, EO] Water quality must be sufficient to support fish populations No emergent vegetation necessary on lakes used during migration
Minimum Patch Size	No information

Natural History Profile

Seasonal Presence in Nevada	Spring – summer (breeding and staging)
Known Breeding Dates in Nevada	May – August [s4, p1] [or April – December [EO], resolve]
Nesting Habits	Builds nest mound of plant material in flooded emergent or submerged vegetation [p1] Usually breeds in colonies, though not always [p1] Nevada colonies tend to be relatively small (10 or fewer breeding pairs) [p4] Moderate to low fidelity to colony locations [p1]
Food Requirements	Small fish; hunts at a wide variety of water depths [p1]

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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 Western Grebe often co-occurs with Clark's Grebe in Nevada. The two species are very similar in many respects, and little information exists that on their respective conservation issues and differences in conservation strategies. Therefore, they are probably best managed as if they were members of a single species until differences in their ecology and conservation needs are elucidated. In addition to their breeding presence across much of the state, Western Grebes are also known to stage prior to migration in our larger, fish-rich water bodies such as Walker and Pyramid Lakes. It is also possible that Lake Mead regularly supports wintering birds, though this requires additional clarification. Although Nevada's population of breeding Western Grebes is fairly small, it appears to be stable. Most of the possible species-specific threats that were identified in preparation of this plan were characterized as having a low impact, with the possible exception of the projected loss or degradation of the Walker Lake fishery.

ABUNDANCE AND OCCUPANCY BY HABITAT

- TBD through literature review

NEVADA-SPECIFIC STUDIES AND ANALYSES

- TBD

MAIN THREATS AND CHALLENGES

- Generalized loss of appropriate Marsh or Open Water habitat with sufficient fish populations
- Increasing salinity in Walker Lake, and associated projected decline of fishery [p4]
- Disturbance from close approach of motorized watercraft [p3]

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CONSERVATION STRATEGIES

Habitat Strategies

- General Open Water and Marsh conservation strategies

Public Outreach

- Educate recreationalists to minimize disturbance of nesting areas and migration stopover hotspots with watercraft
- Continue to support efforts to halt or reverse the dewatering of Walker Lake

Research, Planning, and Monitoring

- Add survey coverage to better assess trends and resource use in Walker Lake and other terminal lakes

OTHER SPECIES WITH SIMILAR STRATEGIES

- Clark's Grebe
- Common Loon

FURTHER READING

- TBD

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

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

[USSCP] U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan

[WHSRN] Western Hemispheric Shorebird Regional Network