

White-headed Woodpecker

Picooides albolarvatus

Conservation Profile



Photo by Larry Neel

Priority Status	Conservation Target
Reasons for Priority Status	Small population size Specialized, restricted habitat
Other Rankings	Continental PIF: Watch List Audubon Watchlist: Yellow Natural Heritage: S2 USFWS: Bird of Conservation Concern (Great Basin), Migratory Bird BLM: None NDOW: Conservation Priority
Trends	Historical: Unknown, but possible significant declines due to historical forestry practices [p1] Recent: Stable or slightly increasing in region [i1]; Nevada trend unknown
Population Size and Stewardship %	Nevada (NBC): 840 Nevada (PIF): 660 Global: 72,000 [p5] Stewardship %: ~ 1 %
Population Objective	TBD
Monitoring Coverage	Source: Nevada Bird Count [TBD if other] Coverage and Adequacy: Very Good
Key Conservation Areas	Carson Range

Habitat Use Profile

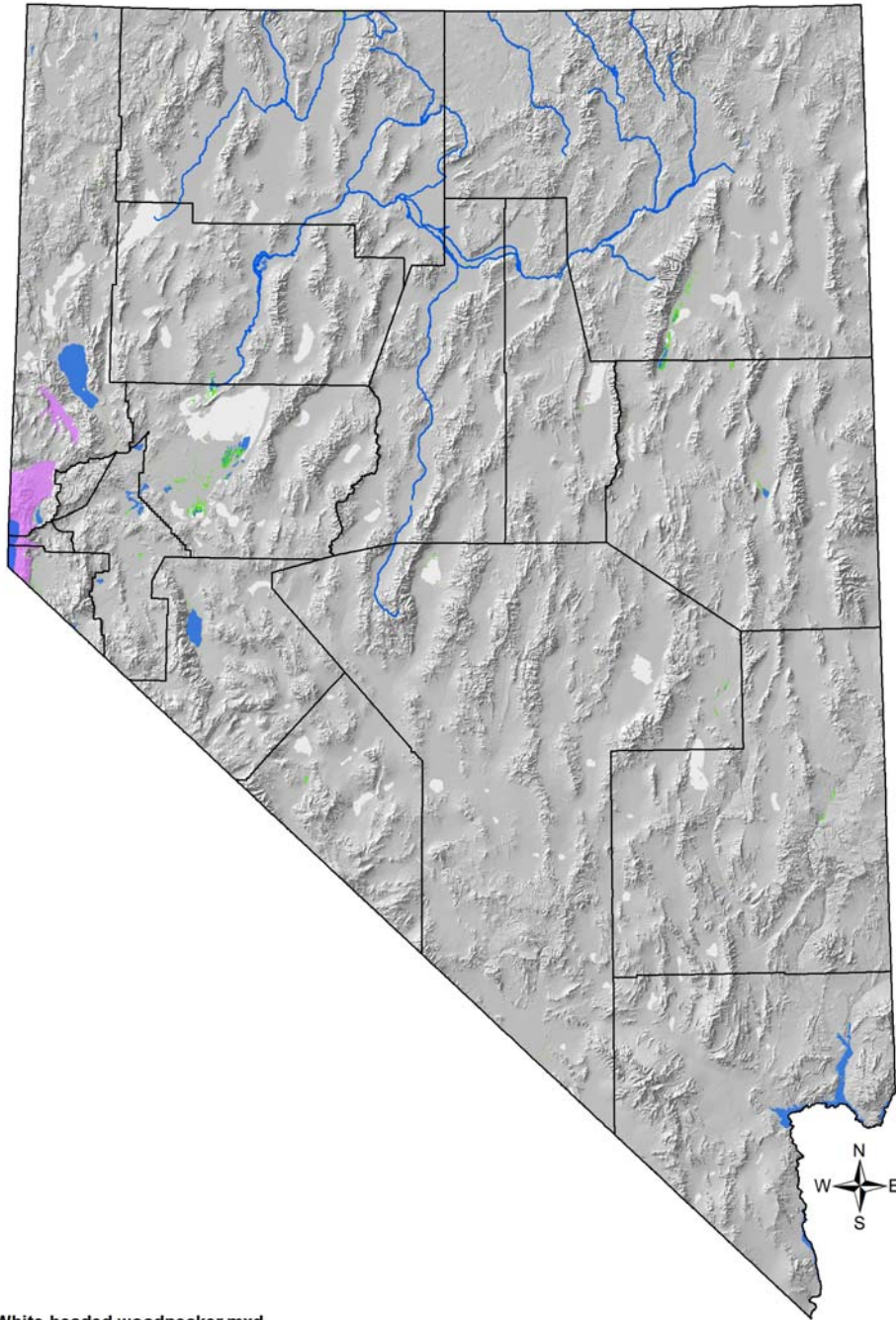
Main Habitats Used in Nevada	Coniferous Forest
Key Habitat Use Parameters	Most often inhabits ponderosa or Jeffrey Pine –dominated forest, but >1 species of large-coned conifers preferred, which may also include; sugar pine, lodgepole pine, white fir, incense cedar, Douglas-fir [p1] Multi-storied canopies preferred, with canopy cover 50%-70% [p1] High density of large (DBH >53cm) trees preferred Recommended snag density (with DBH > 58 cm) 45 snags / 40 ha [p1] Ideal habitat usually has sparse understory [p1]
Minimum Patch Size	Home range 100-200 ha in intact sites, >300 ha in fragmented sites [p1]

Natural History Profile

Seasonal Presence in Nevada	Year-round
Known Breeding Dates in Nevada	May – mid-August [p1]
Nesting Habits	Primary cavity nester in large coniferous snags [p1] Mean DBH of nest snags 80 cm [p1] Fidelity to breeding territory is high, but new cavity is usually excavated each year [p1]
Food Requirements	Conifer seeds, mainly pine, along with invertebrates obtained from tree bark [p1]

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File: White-headed woodpecker.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

White-headed Woodpeckers are restricted to the Carson Range of far western Nevada, which represents the edge of their core geographical range through the Sierra Nevada - Cascade axis. This is strictly a bird of Coniferous Forests, particularly those with large trees, mixed-age forest structure, mixed-species tree composition, and a high density of standing snags. Though this woodpecker is not typically associated with post-burn landscapes, it may respond positively to low-intensity fire if snags are not removed [p1]. Traditional forestry practices may represent a threat to this bird, but these rarely occur in Nevada and thus the primary conservation strategy here is continued monitoring to confirm that numbers remain stable.

ABUNDANCE AND OCCUPANCY BY HABITAT

- NBC data (percent transects column actually refers to **proportion** of transects)

		% Transects Occupied (Great Basin)
Aspen		0.06 (1/18)
Coniferous Forest		0.32 (6/19)
Montane Riparian		0.01 (1/88)

- 5.0 pairs / 40 ha per BBS in 50's – 70's [p3]

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NEVADA-SPECIFIC STUDIES AND ANALYSES

- Landscape Associations (NBC data)
 - White-headed Woodpeckers occurred on seven NBC transects, all of which were clearly dominated by Coniferous Forest

TRANSECTID	HABITAT	REGION	WHWO	Conifer	Pinyon- Juniper	Montane Riparian
CF-2634	Coniferous	West	2.5	94.2	.3	1.3
CF-NORTHCANYON	Coniferous	West	1.7	92.7	.0	3.5
CF-TUNNELCREEK	Coniferous	West	1.3	87.1	.1	7.5
CF-4946	Coniferous	West	1.3	88.2	.0	1.9
MR-27978	Montane Rip	West	.9	60.1	1.5	6.1
CF-2732	Coniferous	West	.5	66.7	.8	7.1
CF-1665	Coniferous	West	.5	63.7	3.3	.0

MAIN THREATS AND CHALLENGES

- Characteristic threats from the White-headed Woodpecker's adjoining breeding range (clear-cutting, even-age stand management, forest fragmentation) are very limited or non-existent in the Carson Range
- Possible threats in Nevada include increased fire frequency and fuels reduction that result in removal of snags or simplification of forest structure and composition

CONSERVATION STRATEGIES

Habitat Strategies

- General Coniferous Forest conservation strategy, with particular emphasis on the following:
 - Fuels reduction should be designed so that the forest architecture preferred by this bird is retained
 - Maintenance of larger snags is a particularly important management objective

OTHER PRIORITY SPECIES WITH SIMILAR CONSERVATION STRATEGIES

- Band-tailed Pigeon
- Spotted Owl

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- Hermit Warbler

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
[LBCUSACP] Long-billed Curlew Status Assessment and Conservation Plan
[USSCP] U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan
[WHSRN] Western Hemispheric Shorebird Regional Network