

Willet

Tringa semipalmata



Photo by Larry Neel

Conservation Profile

Priority Status	Conservation Target
Reasons for Priority Status	Threats Small population size
Other Rankings	Continental PIF: None Audubon Watchlist: None Natural Heritage: S3B USFWS: Migratory Bird BLM: None NDOW: Conservation Priority IM West Shorebird: Very Important
Trends	Historical: Declines [p1] Recent: Stable [USSCP]
Population Size Estimates	Nevada: $\geq 2,100$ [NDOW] Global: 250,000 [WHSRN] Percent of Global: $\geq 8\%$
Population Objective	Maintain breeding population of at least 2,100
Monitoring Coverage	Source: Nevada Bird Count, refuge and WMA counts, Aquatic Bird Count Coverage and Adequacy: Poor
Key Conservation Areas	Humboldt River system Ruby Valley [p4] Carson Valley Mason Valley Scripps WMA / Washoe Lake

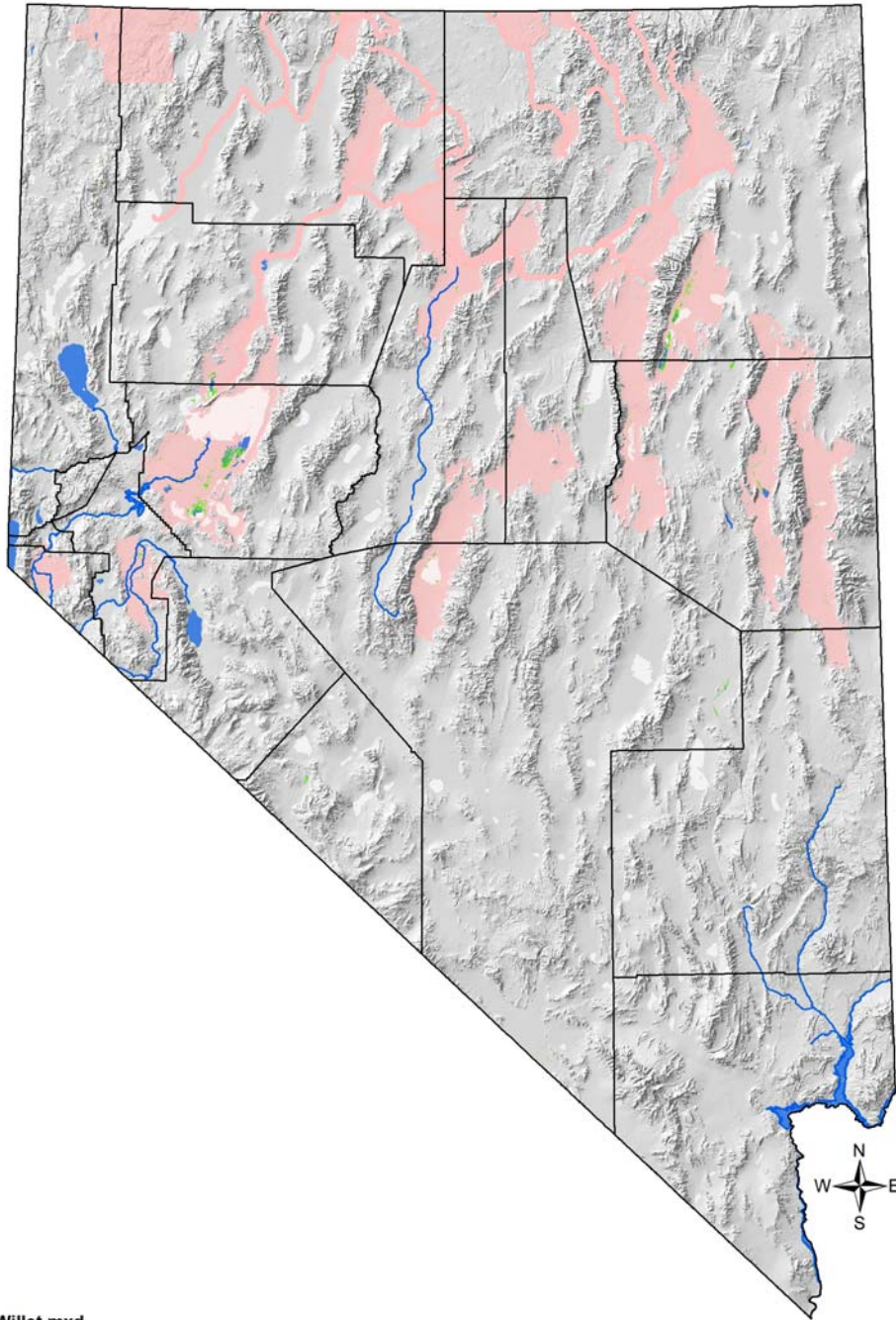
Habitat Use Profile

Main Habitats Used in Nevada	Marsh Wet Meadow Great Basin Lowland Riparian Open Water (shorelines)
Key Habitat Use Parameters	Prefers short vegetation (< 15 cm) on wet soils, or dry uplands in close proximity to water [p1] Often associated with smaller, ephemeral water bodies [p1, Ryan and Renken 1987] Associated in some areas with spikerush marshes [p1] May use agricultural habitat or other adjacent uplands for foraging
Minimum Patch Size	Territory size averages ~ 45 ha [p1] Tend not to occur in patches of suitable habitat smaller than 100 ha [p1]

Natural History Profile

Seasonal Presence in Nevada	Spring – summer (breeding)
Known Breeding Dates in Nevada	Early April – July [s4]
Nesting Habits	Nests placed on open ground at margins of ponds, lakes, wet meadow, marshes, sagebrush adjacent to meadows or marshes [p1]
Food Requirements	Terrestrial and aquatic macroinvertebrates, especially beetles; also small fishes [p1] Forage in shallow water (typically < 8 cm), shorelines, or adjacent areas with wetter soils [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

Nevada’s Willets belong to the *inornatus* subspecies, known as the “Western” Willet, separated from the “Eastern” Willet. Like the Long-billed Curlew, its habitat is not limited to shoreline areas, but it does not typically stray as far from wetlands as the Long-billed Curlew. Within these limitations, however, Willets use a fairly broad array of wet habitat types. This includes agricultural land, although not to the extent exhibited by the Long-billed Curlew. Willet territories tend to be large, and they may therefore be more sensitive to fragmentation than some other shorebirds. Given that Nevada hosts nearly 10% of the global breeding population, this species is probably significantly under-monitored in our state.

ABUNDANCE AND OCCUPANCY BY HABITAT

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

		% Transects Occupied (Great Basin)
Lowland Riparian		0.14 (9/66)
Sagebrush		0.03 (1/33)
Wetland		0.1 (3/30)

- Nevada population estimate is conjectural, based on the availability of suitable habitat in Humboldt River system, along with a mean density of 2 birds / 100 acres (NaturServe)
- The population estimate may be conservative in that it does include likely high population numbers from the Lahontan Valley, Ruby Valley, or Truckee, Carson, or Walker Rivers

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NEVADA-SPECIFIC STUDIES AND ANALYSES

- TBD

MAIN THREATS AND CHALLENGES

- Conversion of Wet Meadow and Marsh habitats
- Heavy livestock grazing or haying during breeding season
- Fragmentation of suitable habitat

CONSERVATION STRATEGIES

Habitat Strategies

- General Wet Meadow and Marsh conservation strategies
- Conserve and protect intact native grasslands in Willet breeding areas

Public Outreach

- Where present in agricultural areas, avoid heavy grazing and haying during breeding season

Research, Planning, and Monitoring

- Additional study of trends, habitat use, and threats needed for this species

OTHER PRIORITY SPECIES WITH SIMILAR CONSERVATION STRATEGIES

- White-faced Ibis
- Wilson's Phalarope

FURTHER READING

- Shuford et al 2002
- Haig et al 2002

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

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[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