

Clark's Grebe

Aechmophorus clarkii



Photo by Martin Meyers

Habitat Use Profile

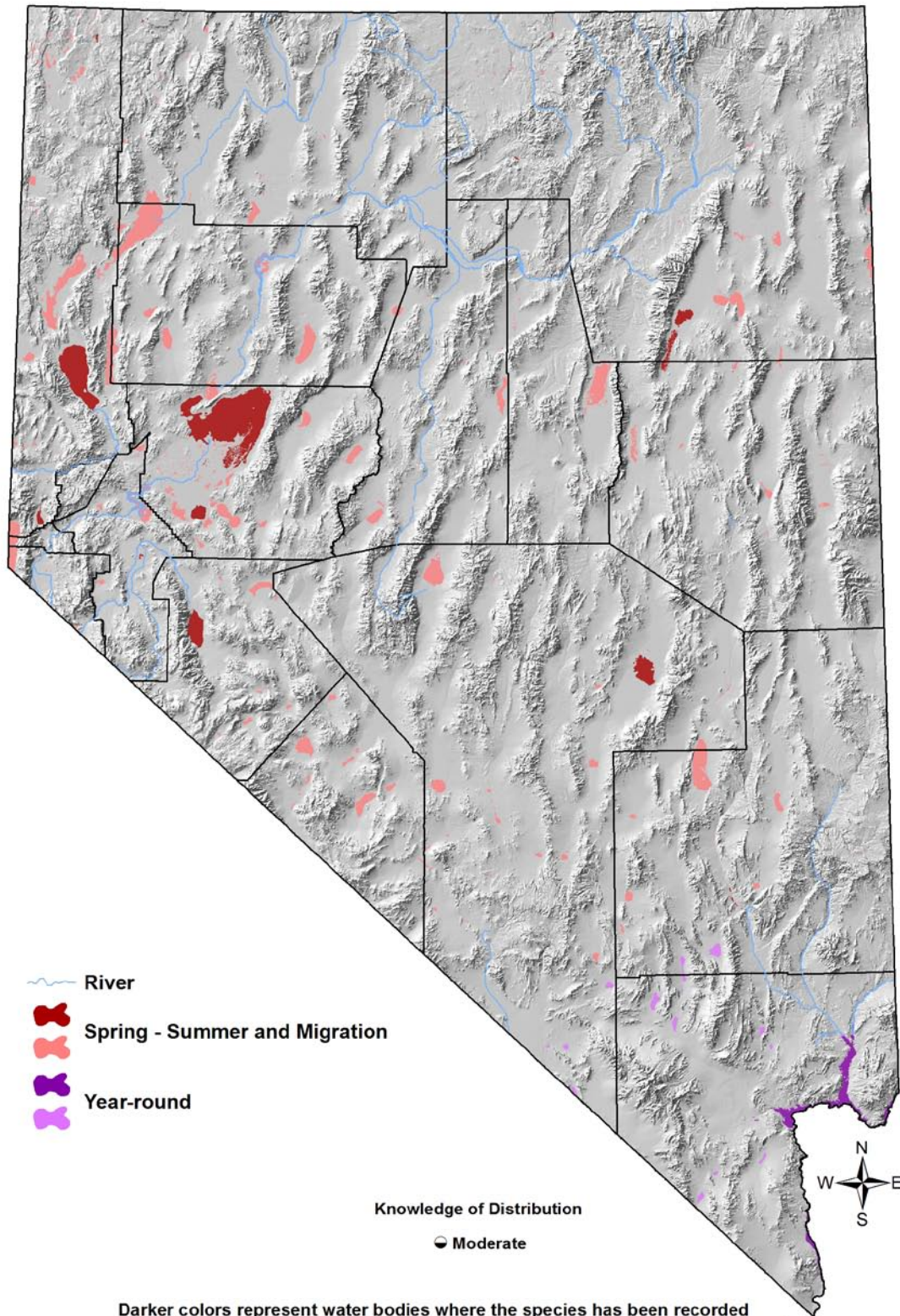
Habitats Used in Nevada	
Open Water (Marsh)	
Key Habitat Parameters ◐	
Plant Composition	Cattail, bulrush, sedges, pondweed and submerged aquatic plants, willow along shoreline
Plant Density	Patches of dense emergent vegetation or pond weed mats for nesting ⁵
Mosaic	Mostly open water, with emergent or floating vegetation along shoreline for nesting (no emergent vegetation needed for migration), variable water depths ⁵
Water Depth	Unknown, but dives deeper than Western Grebe ⁵
Water Quality	Sufficient to support fish ⁵
Response to Vegetation Removal	Negative in breeding sites, otherwise neutral ^{EO}
Area Requirements ◐	
Minimum Patch Size	Unknown
Recommended Patch Size	> 300 ha [740 ac] of open water ⁵
Home Range / Territory Size	Unknown

Conservation Profile

Priority Status	
Conservation Priority Species	
Species Concerns	
High stewardship responsibility (migration) Small population size (breeding) Habitat threats	
Other Rankings	
Continental PIF	None
Audubon Watchlist	None
NV Natural Heritage	S4B
USFWS	Migratory Bird
BLM	None
USFS	None
NDOW	Conservation Priority
IW Waterbird Plan	High Concern
Trends	
Historical ◐	Unknown
Recent ◐	Probably stable ²
Population Size Estimates	
Nevada ◐	~ 300 (breeding) ^{1,2,4}
Global ◐	10,000 - 20,000 ³
Percent of Global	~ 2%
Population Objective	
Maintain / Increase ^{EO}	
Monitoring Coverage	
Source	Nevada Colonial Waterbird Inventory, NWR and WMA counts, Aquatic Bird Count
Coverage in NV	Fair
Key Conservation Areas	
Protection	Lahontan and Ruby Valleys; Pyramid and Walker Lakes (migration); Lake Mead (year-round)
Restoration	Degraded or at-risk marshes
Natural History Profile	
Seasonal Presence in Nevada	
Spring – Summer, Fall (Great Basin) Year-round (Mojave)	
Known Breeding Dates in Nevada	
April – August ^{5, EO}	
Nest and Nesting Habits	
Nest Placement	On mound of matted emergent vegetation or floating vegetation ⁵
Site Fidelity	Moderate for colony sites ⁵
Other	Usually nests in small colonies ⁴⁵
Food Habits	
Basic	Diver
Primary Diet	Small fish ⁵
Secondary Diet	Aquatic invertebrates ⁵

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Darker colors represent water bodies where the species has been recorded within the past 12 years. Lighter colors represent water bodies where the species could potentially occur. Smaller water bodies may be difficult to visualize on the map.

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Overview

Clark's Grebes often co-occur with Western Grebes in Nevada. The two species are very similar in many respects, and little information exists to distinguish between their respective conservation statuses and needs. Therefore, at this time these two species are probably best managed as one taxon until differences in their distributions, abundances, habitat use patterns, and conservation needs are better understood. Although Nevada's population of breeding Clark's Grebes is fairly small and scattered, it appears to be stable. The ongoing Nevada Colonial Waterbird Inventory project being conducted by GBBO and NDOW as part of a regional USFWS colonial waterbird inventory initiative should significantly improve our knowledge of breeding colony locations and lead to a better estimate of the statewide breeding population.

Post-breeding and migratory birds are drawn to Nevada's larger fish-rich water bodies, such as Pyramid and Walker Lakes, from a wider region, and are much more numerous than breeding birds, although data are not sufficient to make precise estimates. Lake Mead is a particularly important resource for Western Grebes and large numbers of Clark's Grebes year-round.

Abundance and Occupancy by Habitat

- Data from the Nevada Aquatic Bird Count show that during September, Pyramid Lake typically hosts at least several thousand staging and migrating Clark's and Western Grebes
- Data from the Nevada Aquatic Bird Count show that Lake Mead hosts at least 200 Clark's and Western Grebes during every month of the year. This number increases several-fold in spring and fall, and shows a pronounced peak (> 1,000 birds) in April

Nevada-Specific Studies and Analyses

No information

Main Threats and Challenges

Habitat and Other Threats

- Loss or degradation of marshes or open waterbodies due to water diversions, declines in water quality, or development
- Increasing salinity in Walker Lake, and associated decline of fishery⁴
- Disturbance from close approach of motorized watercraft⁴

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Research, Planning, and Monitoring Challenges

- Lack of sufficient information about the distribution, abundance, habitat use, and conservation issues for staging, migrating, and wintering populations

Conservation Strategies

Habitat Strategies

- The Open Water (p. Hab-15-1) habitat conservation strategy benefits this species
- Lakes and reservoirs with healthy fisheries are particularly important to this species

Research, Planning, and Monitoring Strategies

- Increase inventory and monitoring coverage through the Nevada Colonial Waterbird Inventory or other avenues to collect additional information on the distribution, abundance, habitat use, and conservation status of breeding, post-breeding, staging, migrating, and wintering populations
- Conduct studies to identify any conservation-relevant differences between Clark's and Western Grebes
- Monitor water quality in occupied sites

Public Outreach Strategies

- Educate recreationalists using motorized watercraft to minimize disturbance of nesting areas and staging hotspots
- Support efforts to protect and restore water inflows into Walker Lake

References: ¹Floyd et al. (2007); ²Ivey and Herziger (2006); ³Kushlan et al. (2002); ⁴Nevada Wildlife Action Plan Team (2006); ⁵Storer and Nuechterlein (1992); ^{EO} Expert opinion