

# Gilded Flicker

## *Colaptes chrysoides*



Photo by Harold Stiver

### Habitat Use Profile

Habitats Used in Nevada	
Joshua Tree (Mojave Lowland Riparian (conjectural))	
Key Habitat Parameters ◦	
Plant Composition	Joshua tree, other tall <i>Yucca</i> spp., various cactus species
Plant Density & Size	Requires trees with ≤ 30-50 cm [12 – 20 in] dbh <sup>4</sup>
Mosaic	Unknown
Distance to Water	No known relationship
Response to Vegetation Removal	Negative, but exotic weed control encouraged <sup>E0</sup>
Area Requirements ◦	
Minimum Patch Size	~ 100 ha [250 ac] <sup>E0</sup>
Recommended Patch Size	> 1000 ha [2,500 ac] <sup>E0</sup>
Home Range	50 – 100 ha [120 – 240 ac] <sup>4</sup>

### Conservation Profile

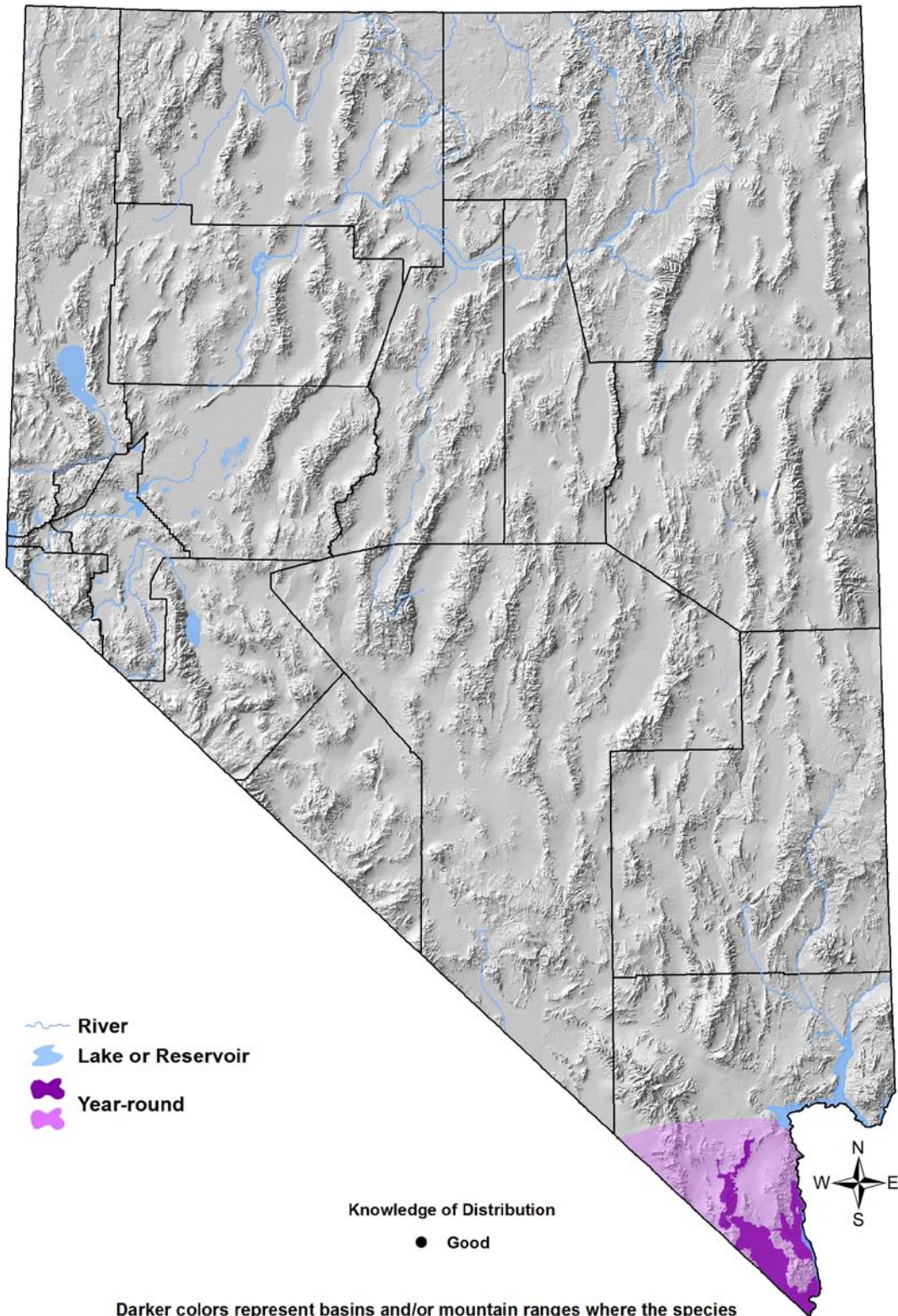
Priority Status	
Conservation Priority Species	
Species Concerns	
Small population size Habitat threats	
Other Rankings	
Continental PIF	None
Audubon Watchlist	Red
NV Natural Heritage	S1
USFWS	Bird of Conservation Concern, Migratory Bird
BLM	None
USFS	None
NDOW	None
Trends	
Historical ◦	Unknown
Recent ◦	Appears stable range-wide, but may be declining in Mojave region <sup>7</sup>
Population Size Estimates	
Nevada •	< 100 <sup>2</sup>
Global •	1,000,000 <sup>5</sup>
Percent of Global	< 1%
Population Objective	
Maintain / Increase <sup>E0</sup>	
Monitoring Coverage	
Source	Nevada Bird Count
Coverage in NV	Fair / Poor
Key Conservation Areas	
Protection	Joshua tree habitat in Eldorado Valley, McCullough and Newberry ranges
Restoration	Joshua tree stands throughout Clark and Nye counties

### Natural History Profile

Seasonal Presence in Nevada	
Probably Year-Round	
Known Breeding Dates in Nevada	
Early April – July <sup>3,4</sup>	
Nest and Nesting Habits	
Nest Placement	Excavates cavity in large tree, primarily <i>Yucca</i> spp. in Nevada <sup>4</sup>
Site Fidelity	Unknown
Food Habits	
Basic	Omnivorous ground forager
Primary Diet	Terrestrial insects <sup>4</sup>
Secondary Diet	Fruits, seeds <sup>4</sup>

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Darker colors represent basins and/or mountain ranges where the species has been recorded within the past 12 years. Lighter colors represent the broader area within which the species is presumed to occur in appropriate habitat types.

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## **Overview**

Prior to the Nevada Breeding Bird Atlas project, Gilded Flickers were not known to breed within the state. During atlas surveys, however, a small but persistent breeding population was discovered in southern Nevada not far from Searchlight. It is unknown whether Gilded Flickers have had a long-term presence here, or whether these birds are the result of a recent colonization event.<sup>EO</sup> Gilded Flickers in Nevada are clearly associated with Joshua Trees and other tall *Yuccas* that provide a substrate for nest cavities. In Tucson (AZ), they were more commonly found at sites with more native desert scrub vegetation in the landscape (within 1.7 km [1 mi]).<sup>8</sup> They have also used Mojave Lowland Riparian habitat along the Lower Colorado River (mostly outside of Nevada), but fewer than 300 remain.<sup>6</sup> Continued monitoring and additional research are needed to better understand the status and needs of this bird, but in the meantime, its limited habitat in Nevada should be protected from development or excessive disturbances.

## **Abundance and Occupancy by Habitat**

- No information for Nevada; 20 birds / 40 ha recorded in Arizona<sup>4</sup>

## **Nevada-Specific Studies and Analyses**

No information

## **Main Threats and Challenges**

### Habitat Threats

- Habitat threats for Gilded Flickers in Nevada are conjectural, but may include loss or degradation of habitat due to:
  - Suburban / urban development
  - Energy development
  - Fire
  - Heavy OHV use
  - Invasive weeds that increase fire frequency
  - Fragmentation of existing habitat through any of the preceding mechanisms

### Research, Planning, and Monitoring Challenges

- Lack of detailed knowledge of distribution, status, and ecological requirements

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**Conservation Strategies**

**Habitat Strategies**

- The Joshua Tree habitat conservation strategy (p. Hab-8-1) benefits this species; the Mojave Lowland Riparian (p. Hab-11-1) may benefit this species
- Protect current known habitat from development and heavy recreational use
- Aggressively fight fire that threatens known habitat

**Research, Planning, and Monitoring Strategies**

- Search for additional breeding locations in areas with suitable habitat, including Wee Thump Joshua Tree Wilderness Area
- Use current monitoring and research programs (NBC, Clark County MSHCP<sup>1</sup>, etc.) to look for occurrences of Gilded Flicker in or near Mojave Lowland Riparian Habitat
- Conduct research to determine habitat needs, patch size, and seasonal movements of Gilded Flickers in Nevada
- Continue and enhance monitoring to better estimate population size and determine trends

**Public Outreach Strategies**

- None identified

References: <sup>1</sup>Clark County (2000); <sup>2</sup>Floyd et al. (2007); <sup>3</sup>GBBO unpublished Atlas data; <sup>4</sup>Moore (1995); <sup>5</sup>Rich et al. (2004); <sup>6</sup>Rosenberg et al. (1991); <sup>7</sup>Sauer et al. (2007); <sup>8</sup>Turner (2006); <sup>EO</sup> Expert opinion