

Introduction to Habitat Accounts

Overview

In the habitat accounts, we summarize the basic conservation and management information that addresses the habitat needs of the Priority bird species that are associated with each habitat type. As in the species accounts, the first page represents a concise summary of pertinent information, drawn primarily from bird conservation data, in a tabular format. We encourage the user to make use of that page to gain a basic understanding of:

- 1) Habitat and landscape features that are important to birds
- 2) Priority species potentially found within the habitat type
- 3) The conservation concerns relevant to the habitat type
- 4) Regions of greatest conservation interest
- 5) Important Bird Areas that contain significant amounts of the habitat type

Below we describe the information that can be found in each habitat account.

Conservation Profile

Estimated Cover in Nevada: Estimate of total area covered by the habitat type, based on our GIS habitat map (described in *Appendix 1: Methods*).

Landownership Breakdown: Breakdown of the habitat type by owner / managing agency.

Priority Bird Species: Priority species that use the habitat type to a significant degree. Species at the bottom on the list may be listed in parentheses, which indicate that the bird uses the habit occasionally, seasonally, or opportunistically, but is not primarily dependent upon it. This list allows the reader to easily consult those species accounts that may be relevant to a given habitat type.

Indicator Species: Species that are not Priority species in this plan, but can provide an index of habitat integrity based on their presence or abundance. Indicator species are listed here if: 1) Priority species are rare or infrequent enough that they cannot be relied upon as a gauge of habitat integrity, or 2) Priority species only encompass certain aspects of habitat integrity. **Indicator species should primarily be used for monitoring the effectiveness of conservation implementation.** We selected species that we expect to respond positively and relatively quickly to substantive habitat improvements.

Most Important Conservation Concerns: List of concerns and challenges that were identified by the threat committee as being relevant to the habitat type within the next 10 years.

Habitat Recovery Time: Estimated time needed to restore this habitat type from complete destruction to the seral stages that are suitable for its Priority species. This information was often not formally available to us. Therefore, we did our best to estimate recovery times based on recent restoration projects, historic information, and the life history of the oldest plant forms in the seral stages needed by priority species.

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Regions of Greatest Conservation Interest: List of regions in Nevada where conservation action for this habitat type would be most beneficial.

Important Bird Areas: List of Important Bird Areas as identified by the Nevada IBA program that support significant amounts of this habitat type and its associated priority species.

Key Bird-Habitat Attributes

This table includes habitat parameters that were identified as important to the conservation of Priority species in that habitat type, and to the integrity of the habitat type itself. In general, we looked for commonalities among the habitat needs of the Priority birds associated with each habitat type. The table is customized for each habitat type to best reflect those habitat and landscape parameters that are deemed most important for bird conservation. We emphasize the entry for “**Ideal Scale for Conservation Action**”, which reflects our best estimate of how much land would be ideally used for management implementation to accommodate the full suite of priority species.

Habitat Map

We display a map that shows approximately how each habitat type is distributed in Nevada (see *Appendix 1:Methods* for details). We encourage readers to use this map as an indication of **how prevalent a habitat type is within a particular region**, but caution that the map should not be assumed to be precise at increasingly finer resolutions. Many important bird habitat types occur in patches that are too small to visualize in the maps, or that simply are not mapped accurately.

Overview Section

In the overview section, we summarize relevant information about the **history, natural history, and conservation issues** of each habitat type as it relates to bird conservation. Because our expertise encompasses primarily birds, we tend to focus on the habitat factors that are relevant to birds, rather than attempting to present an in-depth review of all habitat conservation issues.

Main Concerns and Challenges

In this section, we provide a summary of **main concerns and challenges** for the habitat type, as were determined by a committee comprised of members from the plan revision working group. We only list those concerns ranked relatively high for each habitat type

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Habitat Diagram

To aid in communicating our vision for habitat conservation, we include a diagram **of an idealized landscape** that summarizes the features important for bird conservation within each habitat. This diagram compresses various habitat features into a single view, but in reality the habitat elements displayed in the diagrams may co-occur only within relatively large areas.



The pinyon-juniper / sagebrush interface near McGill, White Pine County. Photo by John Boone.

Conservation Strategies

Finally, we present the **conservation strategies** that we believe are most effective for bird conservation in each habitat type, subdivided into strategies that focus on: 1) habitat, 2), research, planning, and monitoring, and 3) public outreach. Conservation strategies were developed to accommodate the shared needs of Priority species within each habitat type. For complete conservation planning, **we encourage plan users to consult the species accounts and conservation strategies for each of the species that occur in their planning area.** For this, we recommend first reviewing the range maps of each of the species listed in the Conservation Profile table on the first page, and then reviewing the full accounts of the species that are likely to occur in a planning area. The species accounts will provide greater detail on the conservation needs of each species than can be summarized in the habitat accounts.

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Cottonwood gallery forest on the Lower Truckee River
near Wadsworth. Photo by John Boone.