

Canvasback

Aythya valisineria



Photo by Chris Nicolai

Habitat Use Profile

Habitats Used in Nevada	
Open Water (non-breeding) Marsh (breeding)	
Key Habitat Parameters ●	
Plant Composition	Cattail, bulrush, sedges ²
Plant Density	Moderate density (100 – 400 stems/m ²) of emergent plants for breeding ³
Mosaic	Shallow marsh with variable stem densities, interspersed with open water ²
Water Depth	40 – 80 cm (17 – 35") for nest ³ ; up to 5 m (16 ft) for foraging ²
Hydrology	Minimal daily fluctuation in stage during breeding ³
Response to Vegetation Removal	Probably negative for breeding; otherwise: requires aquatic plants ^{EO}
Area Requirements ●	
Minimum Patch Size	Unknown; probably large marsh complex for breeding ³ ; 100-200 ha (220 – 440 ac) for migration ⁴
Recommended Patch Size	Large open waters in winter ^{EO}
Home Range	Unknown

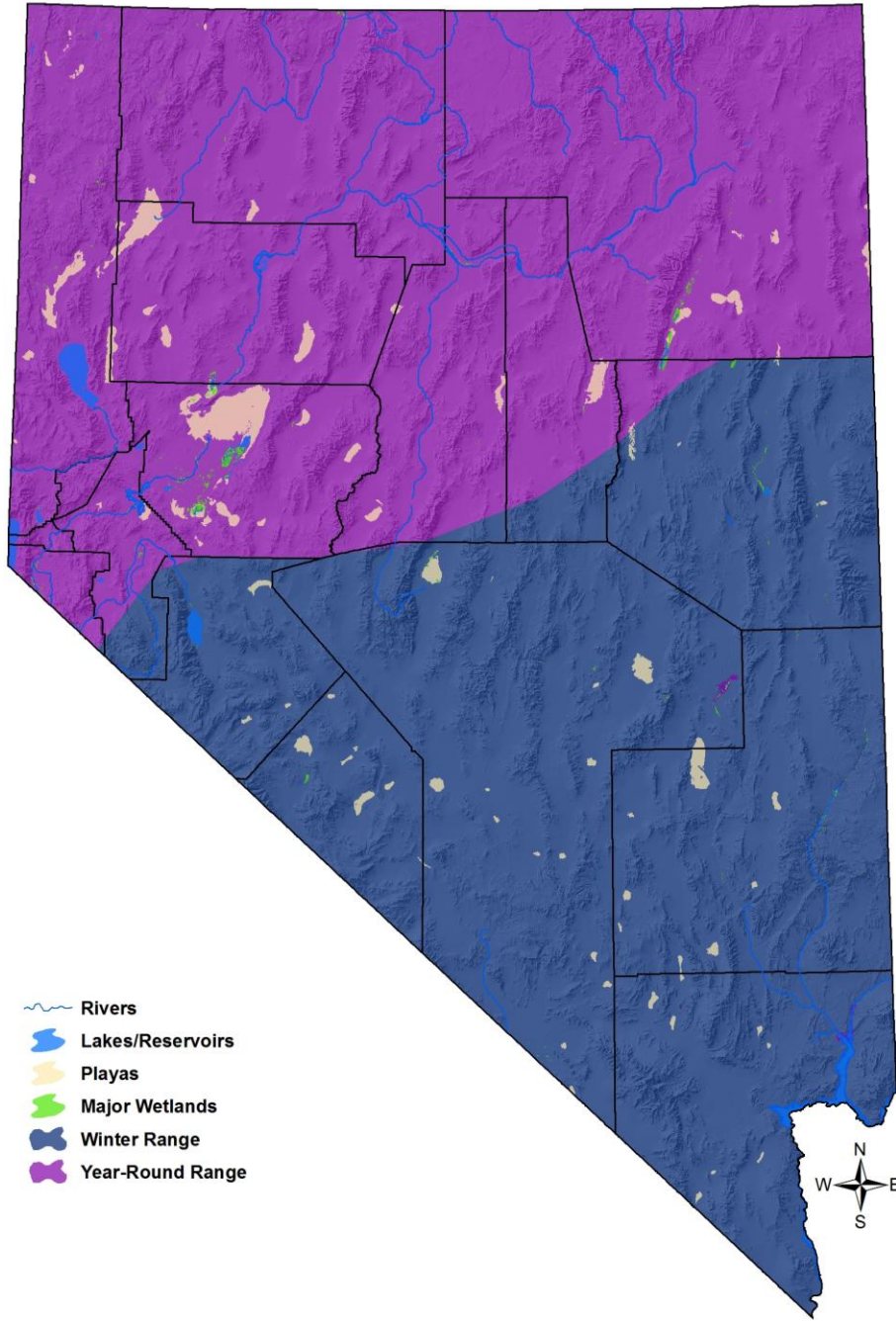
Conservation Profile

Priority Status	
Conservation Species	
Species Concerns	
Population declines Small population size Habitat threats	
Other Rankings	
Continental PIF	None
Audubon Watchlist	None
NV Natural Heritage	S3, S4
USFWS	Migratory Bird
BLM	None
USFS	None
NDOW	Conservation Priority, Gamebird
Pacific Flyway Council	High
Trends	
Historical ●	Rangewide declines ¹
Recent ●	In Nevada, stable ¹
Population Size Estimates	
Nevada ●	4,600 ¹
Global ●	580,000 ²
Percent of Global ●	< 1%
Population Objective	
Maintain/Increase ^{EO}	
Monitoring Coverage	
Source	NWR and WMA counts, NDOW aerial surveys, Aquatic Bird Count
Coverage in NV ●	Very good
Key Conservation Areas	
Protection	Ruby Valley and Lahontan Valley
Restoration	All Great Basin open water habitat

Natural History Profile

Seasonal Presence in Nevada	
Spring – summer (breeding in N-central) Year-round, with larger migration/winter populations	
Known Breeding Dates in Nevada	
May – July ⁵	
Nest and Nesting Habits	
Nest Placement	Over water, platform in emergent vegetation ²
Site Fidelity	Probably high for breeding territory ² ; moderate for wintering ⁶
Food Habits	
Basic	Omnivorous; diver
Primary Prey	Aquatic plants and aquatic invertebrates ²
Secondary Prey	n/a

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Note to Reviewers: Map to be revised to be more spatially explicit

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References: ¹ WAP Team (2006), ² Mowbray (2002), ³ Kruse et al. (2003a), ⁴ Kruse et al. (2003b), ⁵ GBBO unpubl. atlas data, ⁶ Robertson and Cooke (1999), ^{EO} expert opinion

Overview

Despite being one of North America's least numerous ducks, the Canvasback has been well-studied and monitored. Though the population size in Nevada is small, it appears to be fairly stable. The bulk of the Canvasback's breeding range is to the north of Nevada, and Ruby Lake supports the species' southernmost significant breeding population (Kruse et al. 2003a). Canvasbacks nest on matted down emergent vegetation, and nest success is highest when the nest can be placed far (4 – 25 m, 12 – 80 ft) from the shoreline, in a large patch of moderately dense vegetation, and over shallow, rather than deep, water (Kruse et al. 2003a). The species migrates throughout Nevada's open water and marsh habitats, and most of the Ruby Valley population winters in central and southern California (Kruse et al. 2003b). Despite the relatively low estimated number of breeding birds, a total of 50,000 birds are estimated to migrate through the Great Basin region (Kadlec and Smith 1989). As with other waterfowl, population trends are closely monitored and harvest limits determined by the Pacific Flyway Council.

Abundance and Occupancy by Habitat

No estimates available

Nevada-Specific Studies and Analyses

Habitat Requirements

Findings from Ruby Lake breeding population (Kruse et al. 2003)

- Average nest success 50%
- In comparison to failed nests, successful nests were located :
 - Over shallower water
 - Further from shore
 - In wider bands of emergent vegetation with lower stem densities
- Unusually high water that floods interior emergent vegetation reduces nest success

Main Threats and Challenges

Habitat Threats

- Loss and degradation of suitable wetland habitat (Mowbray 2002)
- May abandon breeding efforts during years of drought (Mowbray 2002), or suffer nest failure in high water years (Kruse et al. 2003a)

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Other Threats

- Overall low population size; one of the least abundant ducks in N. America (Mowbray 2002)
- Inter- and intra-specific brood parasitism common, but probably does not greatly impact reproductive capacity (Mowbray 2002)

Species with Similar Conservation Strategies

- Redhead
- Lesser Scaup

Conservation Strategies

Habitat Strategies

1. Key breeding sites in Nevada are already managed for duck productivity
2. In breeding wetlands, minimize departures from average water levels, especially during nesting period; preserve wide bands of emergent vegetation
3. Maintain productive open water habitat throughout Great Basin for non-breeding season, with aquatic plants and invertebrates at up to 20 ft water depth