Redhead

Aythya americana

Photo by Larry Neel

Habitat Use Profile

Habitats Used in Nevada
Open Water Marsh

Key Habitat Parameters ●	
Plant Composition	Cattail, bulrush, sedges, rushes, aquatic (submerged) vegetation
Plant Density	Patches of high-density emergent vegetation [1]
Mosaic	Hemi-marsh (patches of emergent vegetation and open water); nesting wetlands often near open deep water [1]
Water Depth	20 – 150 cm (8 – 63") through wetland; < 1.2 m (4 ft) for foraging [1]
Hydrology	Little fluctuation in stage where nesting [1]
Response to Vegetation Removal	Unknown

Area Requirements ●	
Minimum Patch Size	> 4 ha for breeding [1]
Recommended Patch Size	≥ 100 ha (220 ac) [EO]
Home Range	Unknown

Conservation Profile

Priority Status
Conservation Species

Species Concerns
High Nevada stewardship for migration Habitat threats

Other Rankings	
Continental PIF	None
Audubon Watchlist	None
NV Natural Heritage	S4b
USFWS	Migratory Bird
BLM	None
USFS	None
NDOW	Conservation Priority; Gamebird
Pacific Flyway Council	High

Trends	
Historical ●	Rangewide declines prior to 1960s [1]
Recent ●	Probably stable in the west [2]

Population Size Estimates	
Nevada ●	4,500 [3]
Global ●	600,000; highly variable [1]
Percent of Global ●	1%

Population Objective
Maintain/Increase [EO]

Monitoring Coverage	
Source	NDOW aerial surveys, NWR and WMA counts, NDOW hunting surveys, Aquatic Bird Count
Coverage in NV ●	Very good

Key Conservation Areas	
Protection	Lahontan Valley, Ruby Valley
Restoration	All Great Basin open water, marsh

Natural History Profile

Seasonal Presence in Nevada
Year-round; highest during migration

Known Breeding Dates in Nevada
Late April – July [1,4]

Nest and Nesting Habits	
Nest Placement	Over water (20 -50 cm, 8 – 21", deep) in dense emergent vegetation; or on ground in uplands or islands within 3 m (10 ft) of water edge [1]
Site Fidelity	Unknown

Food Habits	
Basic	Omnivorous; shallow diver
Primary Prey	Aquatic invertebrates and submerged plants [1]
Secondary Prey	Fish eggs [5]

Confidence in Available Data: ● High ● Moderate ● Low

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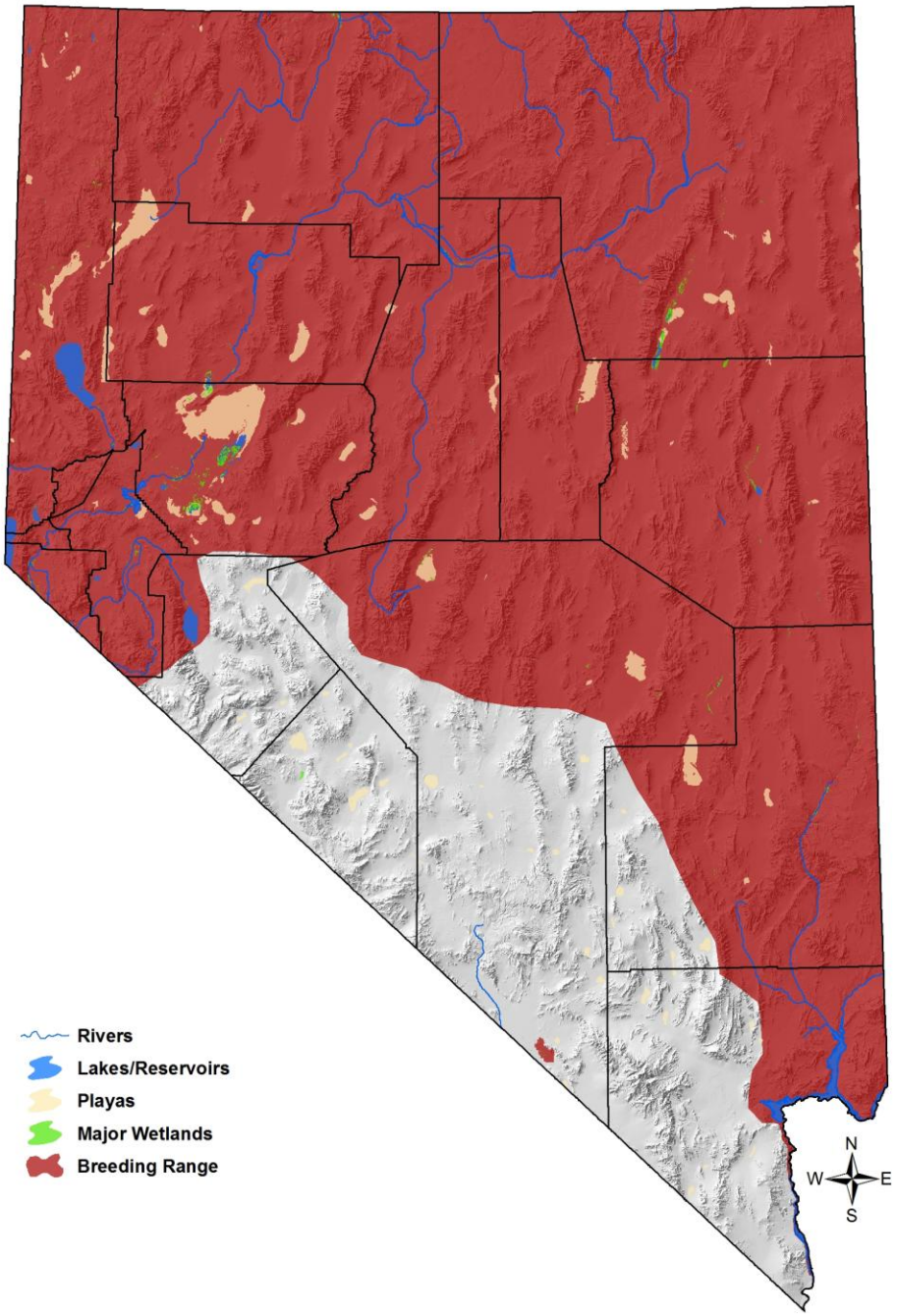

Note to Reviewers: Map will be made more spatially explicit

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References: [1] Woodin and Michot (2002), [2] Sauer et al. (2008), [3] WAP Team (2006), [4] GBBO unpubl. atlas data, [5] Noyes (1985), [EO] expert opinion

Overview

The Redhead has its breeding stronghold in the Prairie Pothole region of central North America, but nevertheless it is also reported to be the second most common nesting duck in Nevada (C. Mortimore, pers. comm.). Nevada has a small but important stewardship responsibility for the species, particularly during migration. Breeding populations here appear fairly stable and close to population targets, as is the case for this bird across most of its range. In arid West, the main need is to secure and maintain sufficient water supplies for wetlands (Woodin and Michot 2002). Despite the relatively low estimated number of breeding birds in Nevada, 200,000 Redheads are estimated to migrate through the Great Basin region (Kadlec and Smith 1989), of which Nevada is a significant part. Because Redheads are relatively flexible in their habitat use, general habitat management strategies that benefit other ducks are likely to benefit Redheads as well.

Abundance and Occupancy by Habitat

- 6 – 12 pairs / km^2 (Woodin and Michot 2002)

Nevada-Specific Studies and Analyses

- None

Main Threats and Challenges

- Wetland loss and degradation
- Drought and low water conditions adversely affect breeding success and increase predation pressure (Woodin and Michot 2002)

Species with Similar Conservation Strategies

- Lesser Scaup

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Conservation Strategies

Established Strategies

1. Pacific Flyway Council and NDOW monitor populations

Habitat Strategies

1. Open Water and Marsh conservation strategies (see habitat accounts)
2. Secure and maintain sufficient water supply for wetlands (Woodin and Michot 2002)

Research, Planning, and Monitoring

1. Identify key stopover sites