

Trumpeter Swan

Cygnus buccinator



Photo by Larry Neel

Habitat Use Profile

Habitats Used in Nevada	
Marsh Open Water	
Key Habitat Parameters ●	
Plant Composition	Cattail, bulrush, sedges, willow spp., aquatic (submerged) vegetation
Plant Density	Varying densities of emergent vegetation, clumpy distribution ¹
Mosaic	Irregular shorelines with clumpy emergent vegetation (hemi-marsh) and significant aquatic vegetation, surrounded by open water; islands surrounded by deep water especially useful ¹
Water Depth	> 50 cm (21") around nest site; < 130 cm (54") for foraging ¹
Water Quality	Low salinity, little or no pollution ^{EO}
Hydrology	Minimal daily fluctuation in stage during nesting ^{EO}
Response to Vegetation Removal	Probably negative ^{EO}
Area Requirements ●	
Minimum Patch Size	5 ha (11 ac) ^{EO} , including ≥ 2 ha (4.5 ac) of unobstructed open water ¹
Recommended Patch Size	150 ha (370 ac) ^{EO}
Home Range	Unknown

Conservation Profile

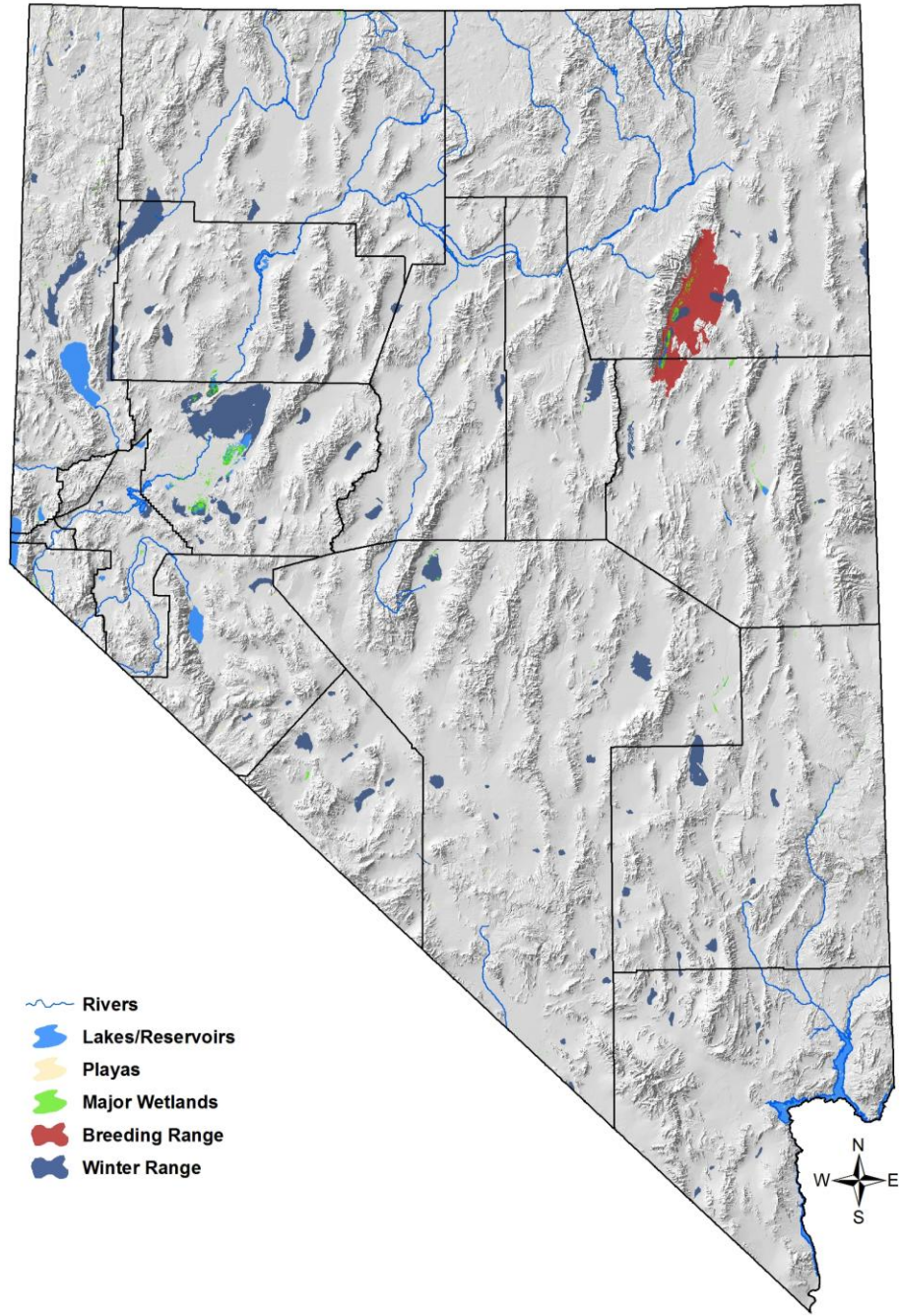
Priority Status	
Conservation Species	
Species Concerns	
Small population size Habitat threats	
Other Rankings	
Continental PIF	None
Audubon Watchlist	None
NV Natural Heritage	S1b
USFWS	Migratory Bird
BLM	None
USFS	None
NDOW	None
Pacific Flyway Council	High
Trends	
Historical ●	Rangewide declines and range contraction in Nevada ¹
Recent ●	Appears stable in Nevada, after reintroduction ^{1,2}
Population Size Estimates	
Nevada ●	≤ 30 (breeding) ²
Global ●	16,000 ¹
Percent of Global ●	< 1%
Population Objective	
Maintain/Increase ^{EO}	
Monitoring Coverage	
Source	NWR surveys, NDOW aerial surveys
Coverage in NV ●	Very good at Ruby Lake
Key Conservation Areas	
Protection	Ruby Valley
Restoration	Ruby Valley

Natural History Profile

Seasonal Presence in Nevada	
Year-round	
Known Breeding Dates in Nevada	
Early May – mid-August ³	
Nest and Nesting Habits	
Nest Placement	On ground on islands, hummocks, or floating vegetation ¹
Site Fidelity	High for breeding sites ¹
Food Habits	
Basic	Omnivorous; dabbler
Primary Prey	Submerged and emergent vegetation ¹
Secondary Prey	Cygnets: Aquatic invertebrates ¹

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References: ¹ Mitchell (1994), ² C. Mortimore (pers. comm.), ³ GBBO unpubl. atlas data, ^{EO} expert opinion

Overview

Nevada's small population of Trumpeter Swans at Ruby Lake is the result of a successful reintroduction of the species in the 1940s-50s following its earlier extirpation from the state. While persistent, this breeding population is very small and highly disjunct from other breeding populations farther to the north and east. Reintroduction of additional breeding populations elsewhere in the state is possible, but it is not a current priority for management agencies (C. Mortimore, pers. comm.). There is limited information on post-breeding occurrence of this species outside of Ruby Valley, and it is speculated that wintering birds are found more widely, albeit rarely, in other parts of Nevada (Ivey 1990).

Abundance and Occupancy by Habitat

- Unknown for Great Basin

Nevada-Specific Studies and Analyses

- Ruby Lake NWR annual monitoring
- NDOW swan counts

Main Threats and Challenges

- Nevada population is small, disjunct, and probably has abandoned migration (Mitchell 1994)
- Cygnets at Ruby Lake suffer high predation rates (C. Mortimore, pers. comm.)
- Trumpeter Swans are sensitive to water pollution, nest-site disturbances (Mitchell 1994)

Species with Similar Conservation Strategies

- Tundra Swan
- Northern Pintail
- Cinnamon Teal

Further Reading

- North American Waterfowl Conservation Plan

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Conservation Strategies

Established Strategies

1. Ruby Lake NWR management plan and monitoring program
2. Pacific Flyway Council monitors populations

Habitat Strategies

1. Most recommended Marsh and Open Water conservation strategies are already in place in Ruby Lake NWR (see also habitat accounts); implement these more widely if additional populations are found
2. Protecting water quality and limiting human disturbance of nest sites appear to be especially important

Research, Planning, and Monitoring

1. Continue monitoring of Ruby Lake population by Ruby Lake NWR
2. Determine more fully whether Ruby Lake breeders are sedentary or migratory
3. Determine whether sites other than Ruby Lake are regularly used by wintering swans