

Tundra Swan

Cygnus columbianus



Photo by Fred Petersen

Habitat Use Profile

Habitats Used in Nevada	
Marsh Open Water	
Key Habitat Parameters ●	
Plant Composition	Cattail, bulrush, sedges, sago pondweed and other aquatic vegetation, agricultural crops
Plant Density	Mostly open water; scattered emergent vegetation; dense aquatic (submerged) vegetation preferred ^{1,2}
Mosaic	Mostly open, but relatively shallow water, fringed by emergent vegetation ¹
Water Depth	≤ 100 cm (42") for foraging ¹
Water Quality	Tolerates variety of salinities ^{EO}
Response to Vegetation Removal	Probably neutral, but negative for submerged vegetation ^{EO}
Area Requirements ●	
Minimum Patch Size	130 ha (290 ac) for migration ¹
Recommended Patch Size	≥ 150 ha (370 ac) ^{EO}
Home Range	Unknown

Conservation Profile

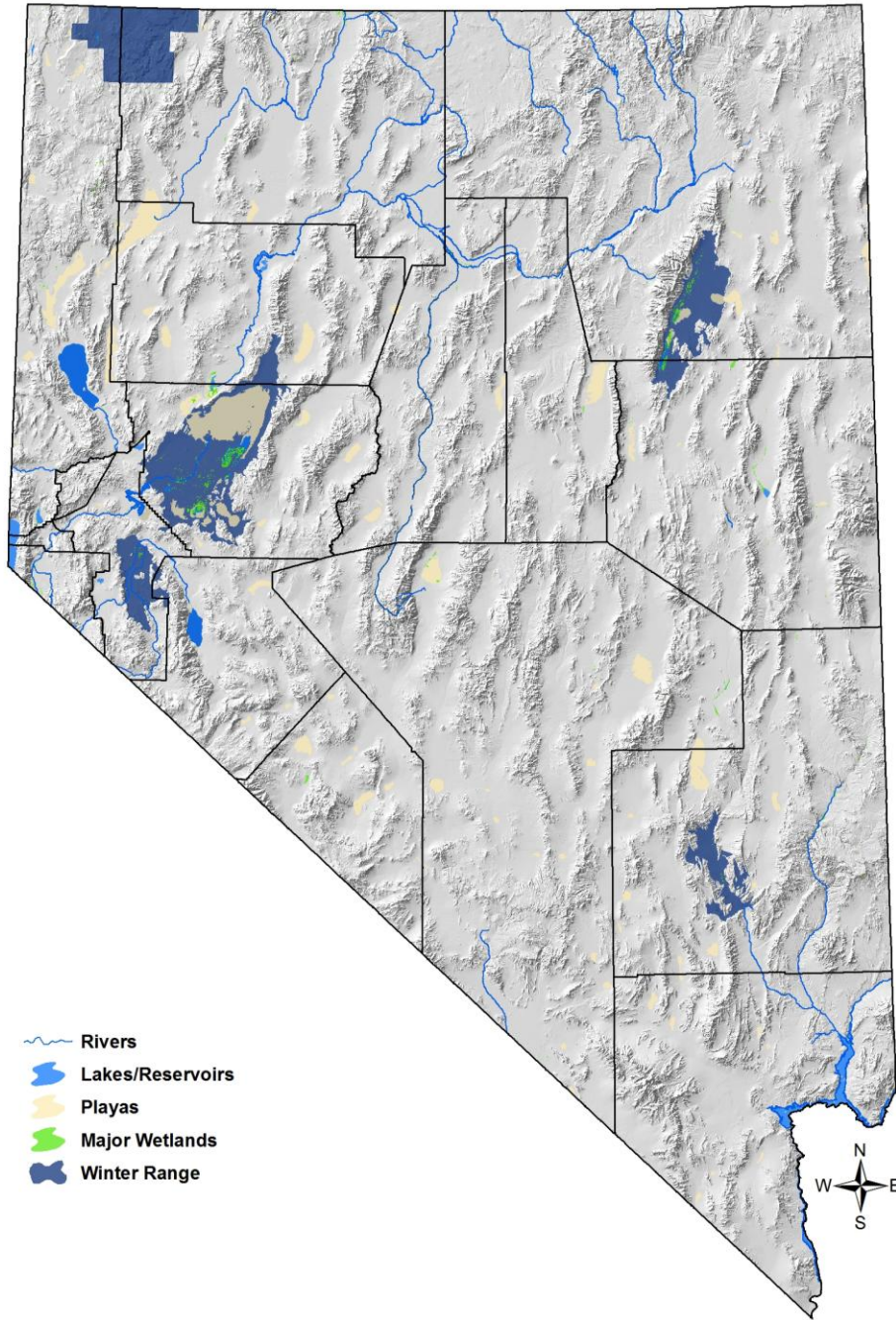
Priority Status	
Conservation Species	
Species Concerns	
Historic population declines High Nevada stewardship for wintering Habitat threats	
Other Rankings	
Continental PIF	None
Audubon Watchlist	None
NV Natural Heritage	None
USFWS	Migratory Bird
BLM	None
USFS	None
NDOW	None; Gamebird
Pacific Flyway Council	High/Medium
Trends	
Historical ●	Rangewide declines ¹
Recent ●	Stable ¹
Population Size Estimates	
Nevada ●	1,000 – 10,000; highly variable ²
Global ●	150,000 ¹
Percent of Global ●	< 1 - 7%; western population: ≤ 20% ¹
Population Objective	
Maintain ^{EO}	
Monitoring Coverage	
Source	USWFS mid-winter surveys, NDOW aerial surveys, NWR and WMA counts
Coverage in NV ●	Very good
Key Conservation Areas	
Protection	Lahontan Valley, Ruby Valley
Restoration	All open water and marsh complexes

Natural History Profile

Seasonal Presence in Nevada	
Fall – winter	
Known Breeding Dates in Nevada	
Not a breeder	
Nest and Nesting Habits	
Nest Placement	n/a
Site Fidelity	High for wintering sites ¹
Food Habits	
Basic	Herbivorous; dabbler
Primary Prey	Aquatic and emergent vegetation ¹
Secondary Prey	Agricultural crop, aquatic invertebrates ¹

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References: ¹ Limpert and Earnst (1994), ² C. Mortimore (pers. comm.), ^{EO} expert opinion

Overview

The Tundra Swan breeds in the Arctic, and occurs in Nevada only through the winter and during migration. The species is divided into a “Western population” and “Eastern population” based on the location of wintering grounds, and Nevada hosts up to 20% of the Western population’s wintering birds. About 35 – 40,000 birds migrate through the entire Great Basin, which is about half of the population size estimate for the Pacific Flyway (Kadlec and Smith 1989). Current management appears sufficient to maintain these populations, but they depend on water-dependent habitats that are under threat from a variety of sources.

Abundance and Occupancy by Habitat

- Unknown

Nevada-Specific Studies and Analyses

- NDOW swan monitoring program

Main Threats and Challenges

- Few present threats exist, and Nevada wintering populations appear to be relatively stable under current management guidelines
- Climate change and future demands on water likely to be threats
- Nevada’s smaller wintering sites may not be sufficiently protected

Species with Similar Conservation Strategies

- Northern Pintail
- Lesser Scaup

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Conservation Strategies

Established Strategies

1. Pacific Flyway Council and NDOW monitor populations

Habitat Strategies

1. Marshes and Open Water conservation strategies benefit this species (see habitat accounts)
2. Manage wintering and migration stopover sites to encourage healthy growth of sago pond-weed

Research, Planning, and Monitoring

1. Continue to monitor wintering populations, determine thresholds for conservation action, if habitat resources decline