

Clark's Grebe

Aechmophorus clarkii



Photo by Martin Meyers

Habitat Use Profile

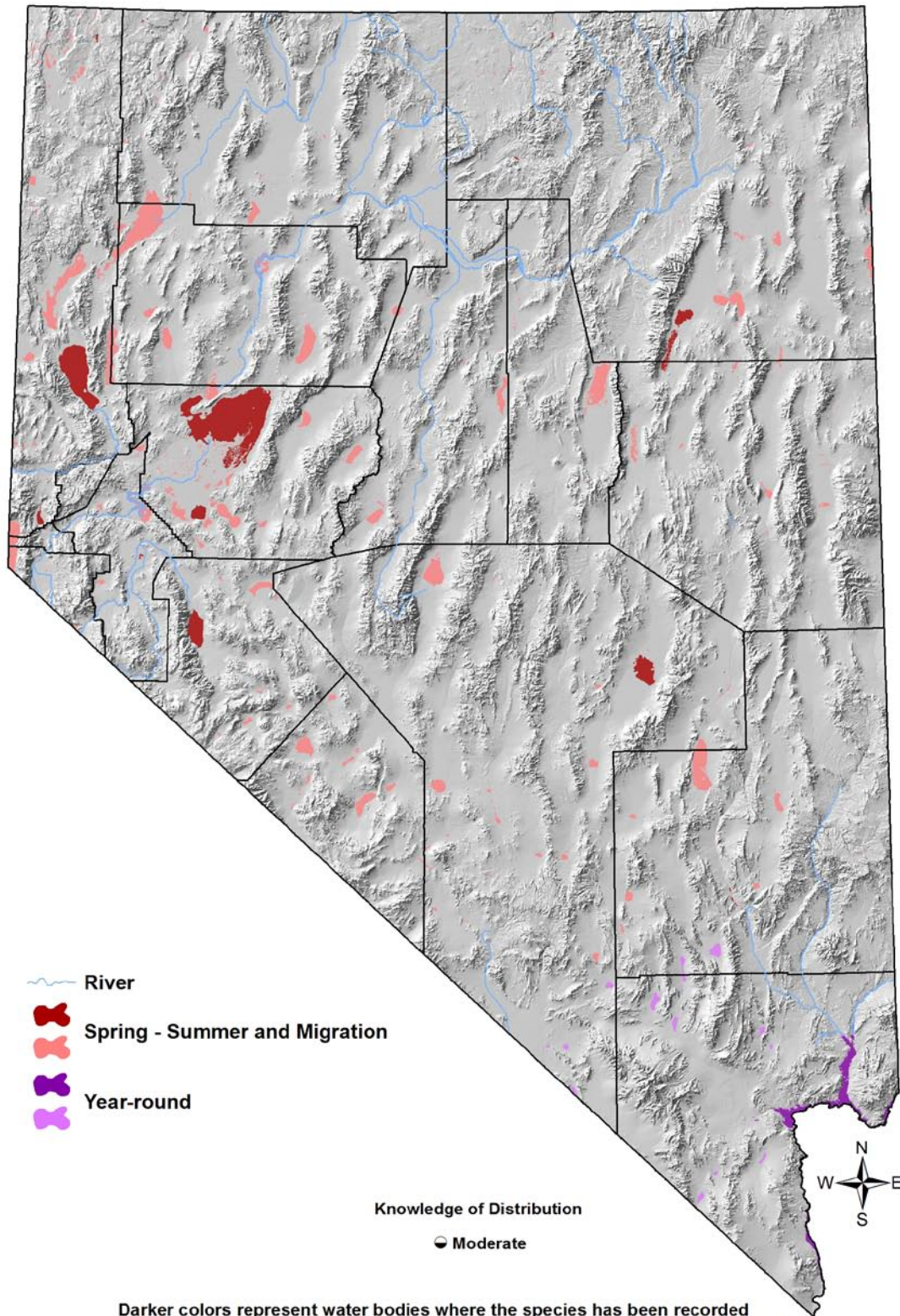
| Habitats Used in Nevada | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Open Water (Marsh) | |
| Key Habitat Parameters ◐ | |
| Plant Composition | Cattail, bulrush, sedges, pondweed and submerged aquatic plants, willow along shoreline |
| Plant Density | Patches of dense emergent vegetation or pond weed mats for nesting ⁵ |
| Mosaic | Mostly open water, with emergent or floating vegetation along shoreline for nesting (no emergent vegetation needed for migration), variable water depths ⁵ |
| Water Depth | Unknown, but dives deeper than Western Grebe ⁵ |
| Water Quality | Sufficient to support fish ⁵ |
| Response to Vegetation Removal | Negative in breeding sites, otherwise neutral ^{EO} |
| Area Requirements ◐ | |
| Minimum Patch Size | Unknown |
| Recommended Patch Size | > 300 ha [740 ac] of open water ⁵ |
| Home Range / Territory Size | Unknown |

Conservation Profile

| Priority Status | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Conservation Priority Species | |
| Species Concerns | |
| High stewardship responsibility (migration) Small population size (breeding) Habitat threats | |
| Other Rankings | |
| Continental PIF | None |
| Audubon Watchlist | None |
| NV Natural Heritage | S4B |
| USFWS | Migratory Bird |
| BLM | None |
| USFS | None |
| NDOW | Conservation Priority |
| IW Waterbird Plan | High Concern |
| Trends | |
| Historical ◐ | Unknown |
| Recent ◐ | Probably stable ² |
| Population Size Estimates | |
| Nevada ◐ | ~ 300 (breeding) ^{1,2,4} |
| Global ◐ | 10,000 - 20,000 ³ |
| Percent of Global | ~ 2% |
| Population Objective | |
| Maintain / Increase ^{EO} | |
| Monitoring Coverage | |
| Source | Nevada Colonial Waterbird Inventory, NWR and WMA counts, Aquatic Bird Count |
| Coverage in NV | Fair |
| Key Conservation Areas | |
| Protection | Lahontan and Ruby Valleys; Pyramid and Walker Lakes (migration); Lake Mead (year-round) |
| Restoration | Degraded or at-risk marshes |
| Natural History Profile | |
| Seasonal Presence in Nevada | |
| Spring – Summer, Fall (Great Basin) Year-round (Mojave) | |
| Known Breeding Dates in Nevada | |
| April – August ^{5, EO} | |
| Nest and Nesting Habits | |
| Nest Placement | On mound of matted emergent vegetation or floating vegetation ⁵ |
| Site Fidelity | Moderate for colony sites ⁵ |
| Other | Usually nests in small colonies ⁴⁵ |
| Food Habits | |
| Basic | Diver |
| Primary Diet | Small fish ⁵ |
| Secondary Diet | Aquatic invertebrates ⁵ |

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Darker colors represent water bodies where the species has been recorded within the past 12 years. Lighter colors represent water bodies where the species could potentially occur. Smaller water bodies may be difficult to visualize on the map.

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Overview

Clark's Grebes often co-occur with Western Grebes in Nevada. The two species are very similar in many respects, and little information exists to distinguish between their respective conservation statuses and needs. Therefore, at this time these two species are probably best managed as one taxon until differences in their distributions, abundances, habitat use patterns, and conservation needs are better understood. Although Nevada's population of breeding Clark's Grebes is fairly small and scattered, it appears to be stable. The ongoing Nevada Colonial Waterbird Inventory project being conducted by GBBO and NDOW as part of a regional USFWS colonial waterbird inventory initiative should significantly improve our knowledge of breeding colony locations and lead to a better estimate of the statewide breeding population.

Post-breeding and migratory birds are drawn to Nevada's larger fish-rich water bodies, such as Pyramid and Walker Lakes, from a wider region, and are much more numerous than breeding birds, although data are not sufficient to make precise estimates. Lake Mead is a particularly important resource for Western Grebes and large numbers of Clark's Grebes year-round.

Abundance and Occupancy by Habitat

- Data from the Nevada Aquatic Bird Count show that during September, Pyramid Lake typically hosts at least several thousand staging and migrating Clark's and Western Grebes
- Data from the Nevada Aquatic Bird Count show that Lake Mead hosts at least 200 Clark's and Western Grebes during every month of the year. This number increases several-fold in spring and fall, and shows a pronounced peak (> 1,000 birds) in April

Nevada-Specific Studies and Analyses

No information

Main Threats and Challenges

Habitat and Other Threats

- Loss or degradation of marshes or open waterbodies due to water diversions, declines in water quality, or development
- Increasing salinity in Walker Lake, and associated decline of fishery⁴
- Disturbance from close approach of motorized watercraft⁴

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Research, Planning, and Monitoring Challenges

- Lack of sufficient information about the distribution, abundance, habitat use, and conservation issues for staging, migrating, and wintering populations

Conservation Strategies

Habitat Strategies

- The Open Water (p. Hab-15-1) habitat conservation strategy benefits this species
- Lakes and reservoirs with healthy fisheries are particularly important to this species

Research, Planning, and Monitoring Strategies

- Increase inventory and monitoring coverage through the Nevada Colonial Waterbird Inventory or other avenues to collect additional information on the distribution, abundance, habitat use, and conservation status of breeding, post-breeding, staging, migrating, and wintering populations
- Conduct studies to identify any conservation-relevant differences between Clark's and Western Grebes
- Monitor water quality in occupied sites

Public Outreach Strategies

- Educate recreationalists using motorized watercraft to minimize disturbance of nesting areas and staging hotspots
- Support efforts to protect and restore water inflows into Walker Lake

References: ¹Floyd et al. (2007); ²Ivey and Herziger (2006); ³Kushlan et al. (2002); ⁴Nevada Wildlife Action Plan Team (2006); ⁵Storer and Nuechterlein (1992); ^{EO} Expert opinion