

WALKER LAKE IMPORTANT BIRD AREA *Fact Sheet*

Protecting and conserving bird habitats in Nevada one area at a time.



GENERAL INFORMATION

Walker Lake is a “desert terminal lake” at the terminus of the Walker River located in west-central Nevada. The lake’s shoreline has minimal vegetation with some scattered low desert scrub. However, in the northern portion of Walker Lake at the river delta, there are some wetland plants, including tamarisk (a.k.a salt cedar).

The predominant habitat type found at Walker Lake that is important to birds is the **open water** of the lake. Nesting habitat is available in the southern portion of the lake as evident by the nest site records of the Western Snowy Plover.

Through radio telemetry studies, it was discovered that the Walker Lake Loons breed in Saskatchewan, Canada. Most loons utilize Walker Lake as a feeding and resting site during their migration.

REASONS FOR IBA RECOGNITION

1. The Walker Lake IBA supports these species identified as high conservation priorities and tied to the lake habitat type: Clark’s, Western, and Eared Grebes, White-faced Ibis, American White Pelican, and Snowy Plover.
2. The Walker Lake IBA supports a significant congregation of water birds. Walker Lake supports more than 10,000 water birds which includes Western Snowy Plover and Common Loon.

What is an IBA?

IBAs are areas that are important places for bird populations and where conservation efforts are focused. Within NV, there are 39 recognized IBAs which are sites that provide essential breeding, migration, or wintering habitat for one or more species of birds.

What is a “desert terminal lake”?

There are only 3 lakes in Nevada that are at the end of a river system with no outflow: Pyramid Lake, Summit Lake, and Walker Lake.

They are all remnants of ancient Lake Lahontan.

For more information, contact

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BIRD SPECIES OF FOCUS FOR THE WALKER LAKE IBA

- Common Loon
- American White Pelican
- Clark's Grebe
- Western Grebe
- Eared Grebe
- Western Snowy Plover
- White-faced Ibis
- Northern Shoveler
- Ruddy Duck
- Gadwall

Photo Courtesy of D. Barrett



American White Pelican

Common Loon



Photo Courtesy of R. Pow-

Did You Know??

Common Loons are "piscivorous"? That means that they eat fish!

IMPACTS TO THE IBA

- Water Quantity: The over-appropriated Walker River is the primary conduit for water to reach the lake. Due to the low in-stream flows, lake levels have dropped 136 feet since the 1800s. Due to the loss of sustainable fisheries in the lake, Common Loons and other fish-eating birds are negatively impacted.
- Water Quality: Without the proper inflow of water into the lake, water quality has been impacted with the increased concentration of total dissolved solids (salts) above the normal saline conditions. In addition, mercury contamination has occurred due to the historical upstream mining activities within the Walker River watershed.

The NV IBA Program is supported through the cooperative efforts of:

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

1. Seek opportunities to assist in the study of the Common Loon migration patterns and/or the mercury contamination impacts.
2. Support conservation activities such as habitat restoration efforts.
3. Raise public awareness of the high wildlife and habitat values of Walker Lake.
4. Support the improvement of water delivery system throughout the entire watershed.



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