

## Barrow's Goldeneye - *Bucephala islandica*

Abundance: Common

Status: NSS3 (Bb)

NatureServe: G5 S4

Population Status: distribution is restricted but extirpation is not imminent

Limiting Factor: Habitat: limiting factor is severe and not increasing significantly; limited ability to increase species distribution; breeding is limited to northwestern Wyoming on small, clear wetlands not crowded with submergent and emergent vegetation and that do not support fish that compete for invertebrates; increasing human activity reduces habitat suitability

Comment:

### Introduction

The largest population of Barrow's goldeneye is found west of the Continental Divide. However, a small population inhabits eastern portions of Canada and the United States. There is no evidence of exchange between these two subpopulations. The western population breeds from southern Alaska and Mackenzie District through the western states and provinces to California and Colorado. This population winters primarily along the Pacific coast from Alaska to central California. In Wyoming, breeding sites are located in the northwest part of the state, including Yellowstone National Park, and these ducks are common in the Snake, Salt, Green and Bear River drainages. The species occurs across the state during fall and winter wherever there is open water. The western population has been estimated at about 200,000 to 250,000 birds. In Wyoming, Barrow's goldeneyes are less common during the breeding season than during migration. Breeding occurs in the higher elevations of northwestern Wyoming. The Barrow's goldeneye has moderate abundance in Wyoming and is considered a common resident. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD) classifies the Barrow's goldeneye as a Species Special Concern with a Native Species Status of 3 (NSS3) because its breeding population in Wyoming is restricted in numbers and habitat is restricted and vulnerable. However, there is no recent or on-going significant loss.

### Habitat

The Barrow's goldeneyes utilize a variety of habitats during the year. In western mountain and intermountain areas it breeds on montane and subalpine lakes and rivers, beaver ponds, and small sloughs. Prime breeding habitat consists of tall forest growth with hollow trees, generally close to biologically productive cold-water lakes, pools, or rivers. They also tend to select breeding sites near water bodies that harbor no fish. Barrow's goldeneyes are almost exclusively cavity nesters, usually in dead trees, and females with breeding experience show high fidelity to previous nest sites. They are partial to abandoned woodpecker holes. As their diet is primarily aquatic invertebrates, for feeding, they prefer open water without emergent or dense submerged vegetation. Finally, Barrow's goldeneyes may be found in aspen or cottonwood-riparian communities, or marshes, lakes and rivers associated with lodgepole pine, Douglas fir and other coniferous forests, and, during migration and winter, these ducks occupy habitats at lower elevations.

### Problems

- h Human encroachment of wetlands is impacting this species.
- h Population status and trends are not well-known in Wyoming.
- h Species is impacted by fish stocking in ponds and wetlands -- fish compete for invertebrate food resources.
- h Species is susceptible to impacts from energy development and other large-scale projects that destroy or impair suitable habitats.
- h There are no ongoing efforts to delineate important habitats in Wyoming.

## Conservation Actions

- h Identify and delineate important habitats.
- h Work cooperatively with land management agencies and others to protect and manage key habitats.
- h Integrate habitat management for this species and other wetland obligates to the extent possible.
- h Monitor population status and trends.

## Monitoring/Research

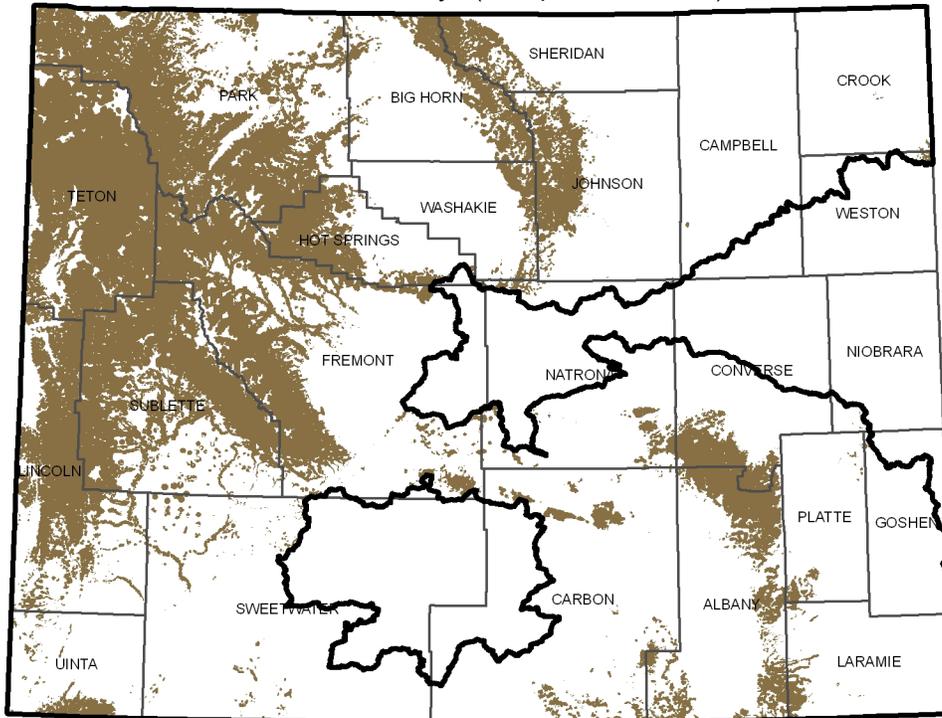
There is no ongoing monitoring or research in Wyoming.

## Recent Developments

None.

## References

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SOURCE: Digital maps of ranges and predicted distributions for Wyoming Species of Greatest Conservation Need: April 2010. Wyoming Natural Diversity Database. University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyoming. Note that brown indicates the predicted distribution of the species; heavy black lines indicate outermost boundaries of possible occurrence.