

Clark's Grebe - *Aechmophorus clarkii*

Abundance: Uncommon

Status: NSS4

NatureServe: G5 S1B

Population Status:

Limiting Factor:

Comment:

Introduction

The Clark's Grebe breeds from British Columbia, east to Minnesota, and south to central Mexico. It winters from central California south to central Mexico. During summer, it is scattered across most of Wyoming although confirmed or suspected breeding has been recorded primarily in western Wyoming. The Clark's Grebe is considered an uncommon summer resident in Wyoming.

Habitat

The Clark's Grebe inhabits marshes and lakes, usually with extensive areas of open water and bordered by tall emergent vegetation. Ideal nesting areas provide large clumps of emergent vegetation interspersed with open water so that the vegetation blocks wave action. Large bulrush "islands" with inner open water areas and channels are good nesting sites.

Problems

- h The availability and suitability of breeding sites can be unstable between years as a result of fluctuating water levels and changes in land use practices. This species often nests late in the season, and is threatened by low water levels in late summer.
- h Breeding habitat in Wyoming is disjunct and secure breeding sites are limited in distribution.
- h Sensitive to human disturbance during nesting. Entire colonies will leave their nests when approached by humans, leaving them vulnerable to predators; repeated disturbances early in the nesting cycle can cause nest abandonment.

Conservation Actions

- h Continue inventory and monitoring efforts.
- h Develop and maintain a positive relationship with landowners on whose property this species nests. Educate and cultivate a feeling of participation in landowners to promote beneficial land use practices and management for this species on private land.
- h Identify and survey additional potential breeding sites where this species has not been documented before to avoid focusing management on only a portion of the population.
- h Implement monitoring in suitable habitat where it is presently not being conducted, and continue monitoring in areas where it is currently in place.
- h Maintain stable water levels throughout the nesting season in areas where this species breeds.
- h Minimize human disturbance at nesting sites during the breeding season.
- h Work with private landowners to conserve habitat for this species by seeking financial incentives from various sources and providing assistance and expertise with management activities.
- h Manage nesting areas to maintain extensive complexes of marshes with stands of emergent vegetation greater than 6 m (20 ft) wide and interspersed with patches of shallow open water.

Monitoring/Research

Monitor known nesting colonies a minimum of every three years to determine occupancy and estimate the number of nesting pairs.

Recent Developments

Drought-related habitat changes have degraded some of the historic nesting sites and reduced the number of nesting pairs detected during the past several years. A cooperative, 11-state colonial waterbird monitoring program was initiated in 2009 with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This will conclude in 2011, with an Atlas of all known nesting colonies in the 11 western states produced in 2012.

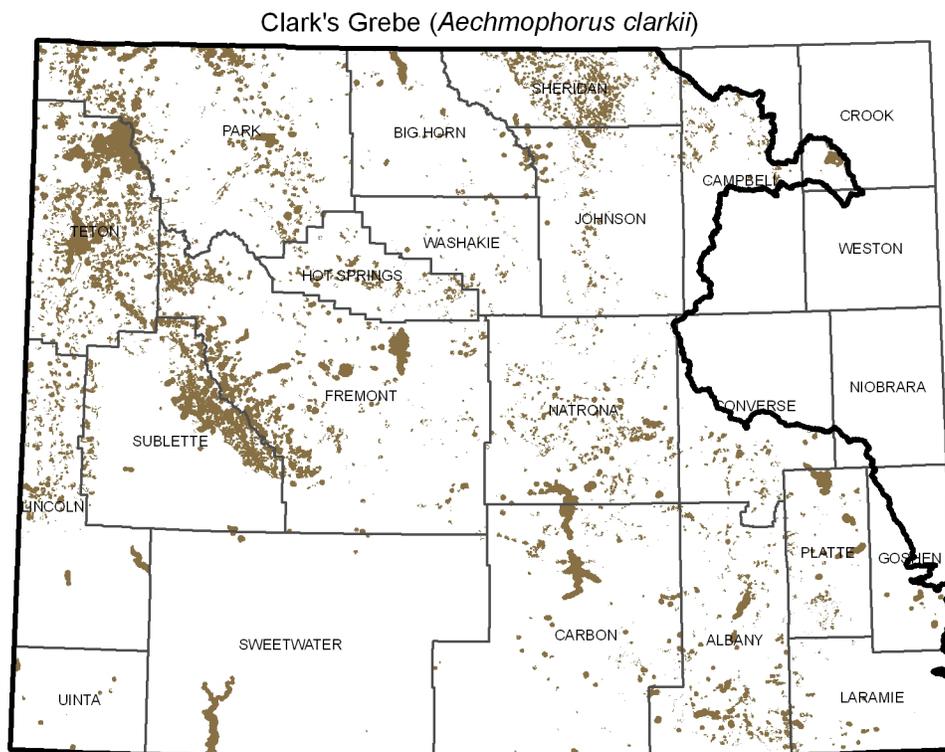
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SOURCE: Digital maps of ranges and predicted distributions for Wyoming Species of Greatest Conservation Need: April 2010. Wyoming Natural Diversity Database. University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyoming. Note that brown indicates the predicted distribution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