

Franklin's Gull - *Larus pipixcan*

Abundance: Common

Status: NSS3 (Bb)

NatureServe: G4G5 SHB

Population Status: population size and distribution are restricted but extirpation is not imminent; only 3 nesting locations are known statewide

Limiting Factor: Habitat (and Human Activity): limiting factors are severe; as with all colonial nesting waterbirds, there is limited available habitat, which is not likely to increase without intensive management and cooperation with private landowners and other land management agencies; sensitive to human disturbance during nesting

Comment:

Introduction

The Franklin's Gull breeds from the Canadian Prairie Provinces, south to Utah, and east to Iowa. It winters primarily along the Pacific coast of South America, casually along the Gulf coast of Texas and Louisiana, and in Hawaii. It is found across most of Wyoming during migration, but breeding has only been confirmed in northwestern Wyoming. The Franklin's Gull is considered a common summer resident in Wyoming.

Habitat

The Franklin's Gull inhabits marshes and sloughs with sparse emergent vegetation, such as cattails, bulrushes, or reeds, but scavenges in most open habitats below 2500 m (8000 ft). It nests in colonies in marshes no denser than 10 plants less than 1 m tall per square meter (=1 plant <3 ft tall per square foot), and usually near patches of open water.

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.
- h This species is sensitive to human disturbance during nesting.
- h Breeding habitat in Wyoming is disjunct and secure breeding sites are limited in distribution.

Conservation Actions

- h Continue inventory and monitoring efforts and implement the Monitoring Wyoming's Birds grid-based monitoring program to determine density and population trends.
- h In areas where Franklin's Gulls are nesting, maintain complexes of marshes with sparse emergent vegetation interspersed with patches of open water.
- h Maintain stable water levels throughout the nesting season in areas where this species breeds.

Monitoring/Research

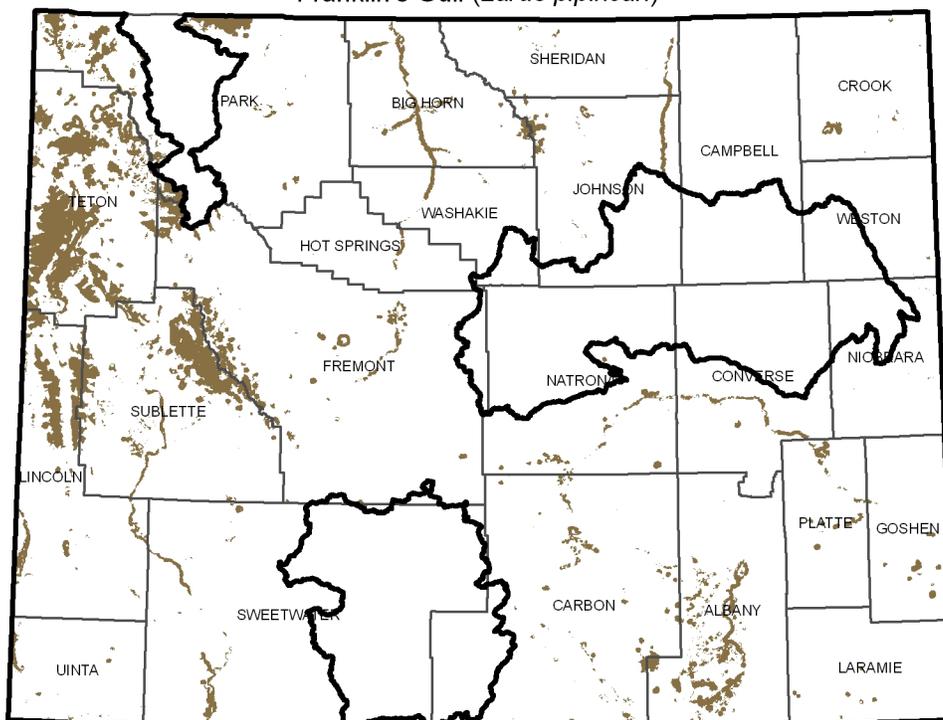
Monitor known nesting colonies a minimum of every three years to determine occupancy and estimate the number of nesting pairs.

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.

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.