

# Silver State of the Birds

## An Overview of Birds and Conservation in Southern Nevada

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Nevada Birds Record Committee (2019-  
2024)

Education and Outreach  
Red Rock Audubon Society

# Intentions

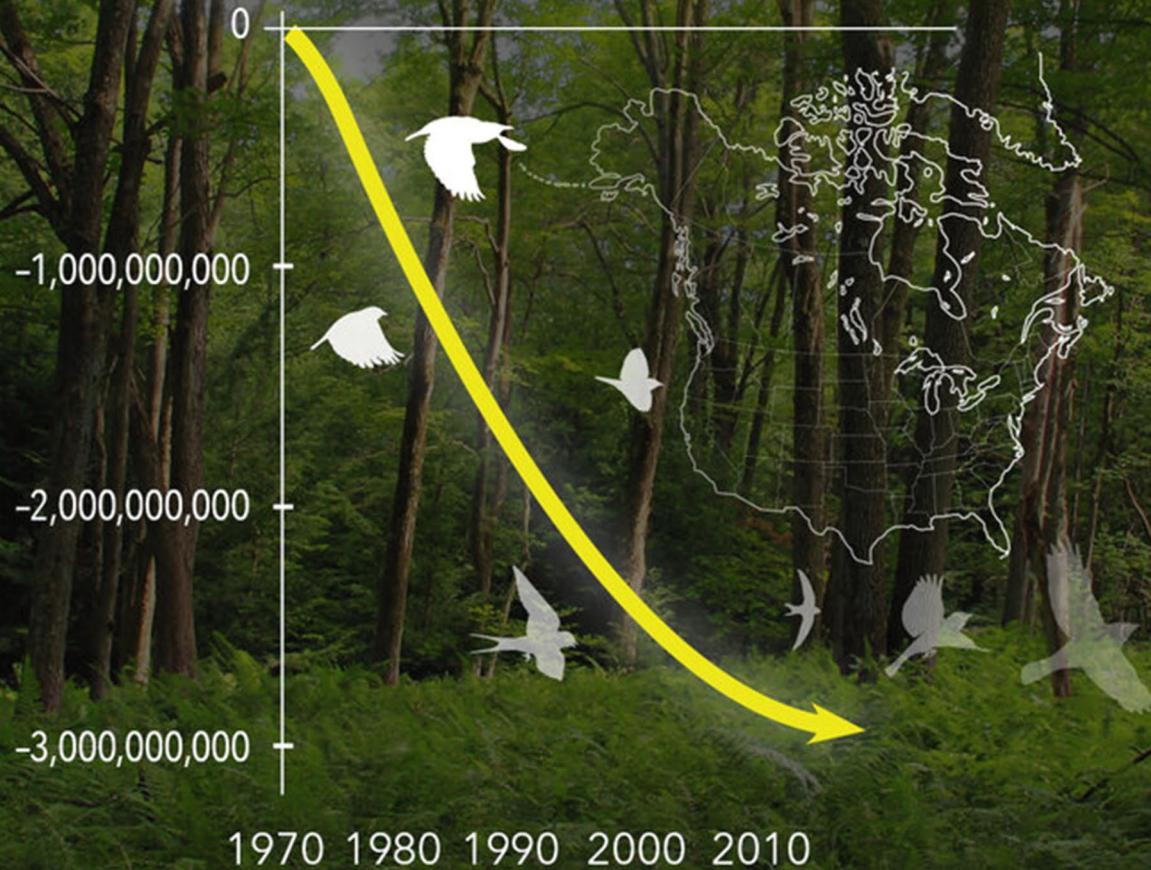
- Provide an overview of birds and their habitats in Southern Nevada.
- Describe the complexities of effective bird conservation.
  - What are the threats?
  - Which ones have the most impact?
- Provide examples of birds in steep decline.
- Highlight what would need to happen to halt and reverse trends.







# 2.9 billion birds gone since 1970



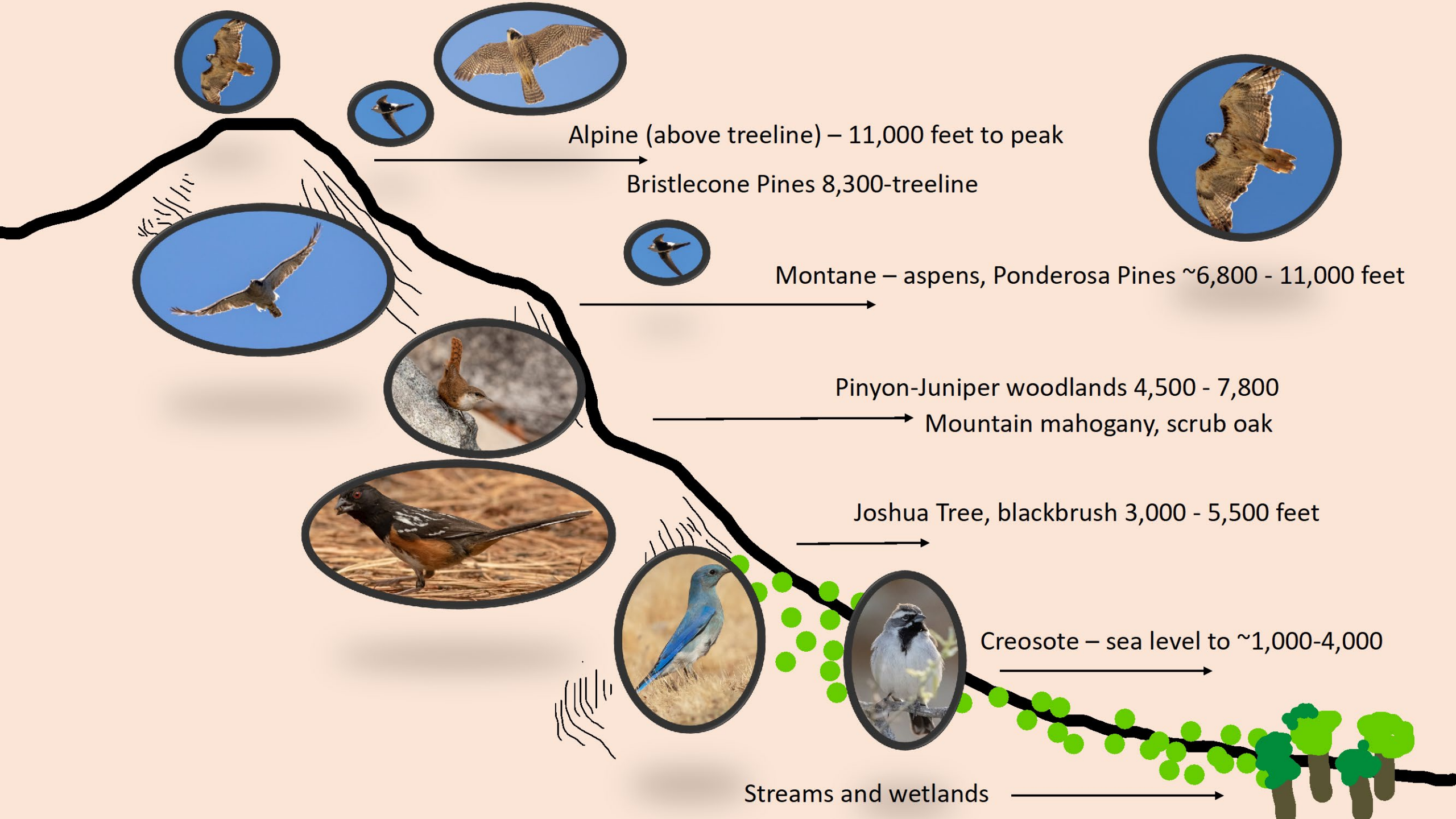
Forest by Nicholas Tonelli/Creative Commons, Map from Birds of North America birdsna.org

Courtesy of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Source: Science, 2019

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- Do Citizen Science
  - Make Windows Safer
  - Keep Cats Indoors
  - Use Less Plastic
  - Use Native Plants
  - Drink Shade-Grown Coffee
  - Avoid Pesticides

## 7 SIMPLE ACTIONS TO HELP BIRDS

Courtesy of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Wood Thrush by John Petrucci/Macaulay Library.



Alpine (above treeline) – 11,000 feet to peak

Bristlecone Pines 8,300-treeline

Montane – aspens, Ponderosa Pines ~6,800 - 11,000 feet

Pinyon-Juniper woodlands 4,500 - 7,800

Mountain mahogany, scrub oak

Joshua Tree, blackbrush 3,000 - 5,500 feet

Creosote – sea level to ~1,000-4,000

Streams and wetlands



- Clark's Nutcrackers are related to crows, ravens, magpies, and jays.
- They rely on available pine crops from Limber and Bristlecone Pines.





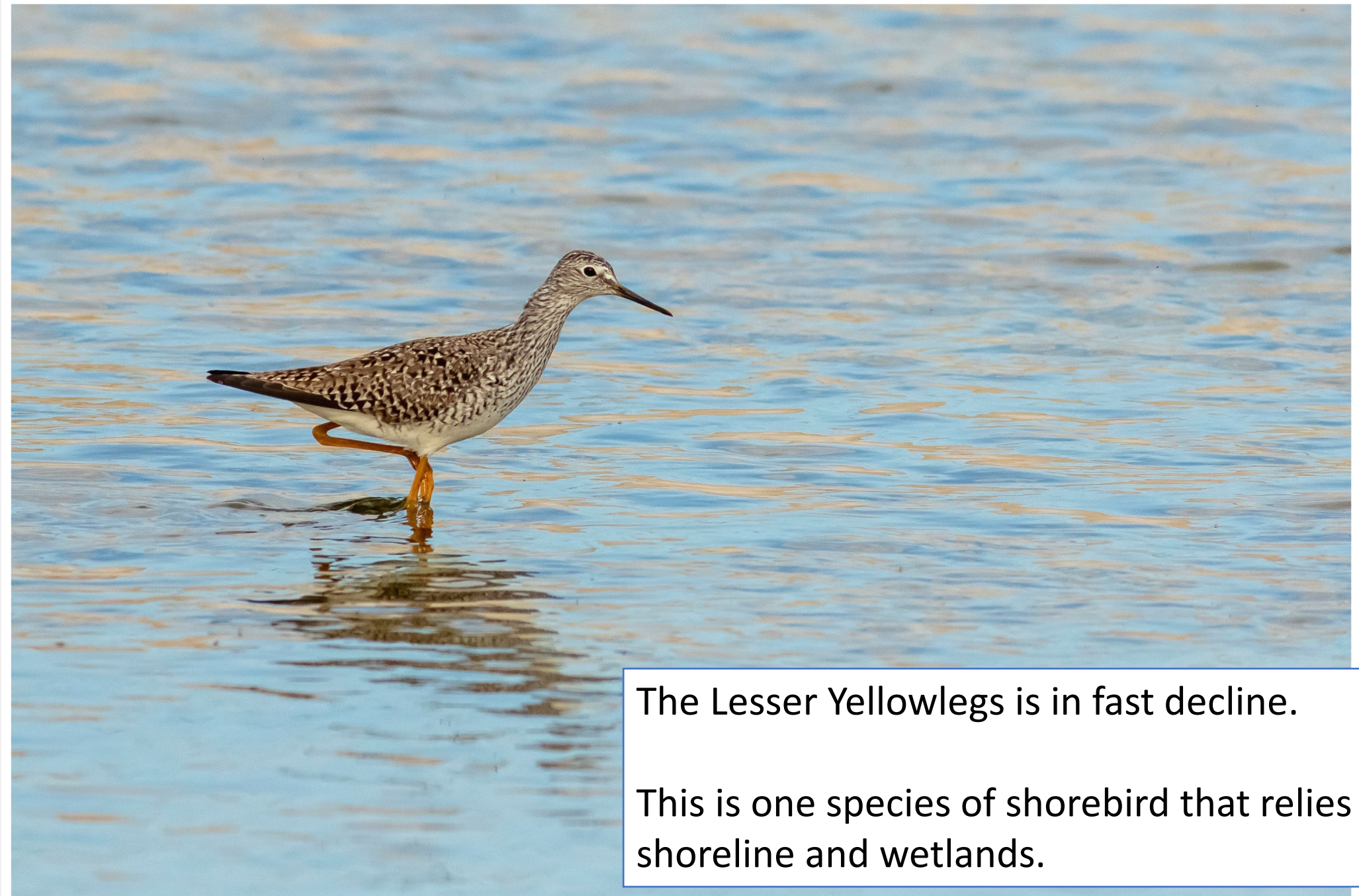
- Pinyon Jays, like nutcrackers, are specialists. They have an important relationship with the Pinyon Pine (*Pinus monophylla*).
- Pinyon Jays “cache” seeds from the pine across the landscape for later consumption.
- Biologists in Arizona observed them cacheing 2,500-3,000 Pinyon Pine nuts/year.



Phainopeplas are experiencing a steep decline due to lack of mistletoe productivity and insect population declines.

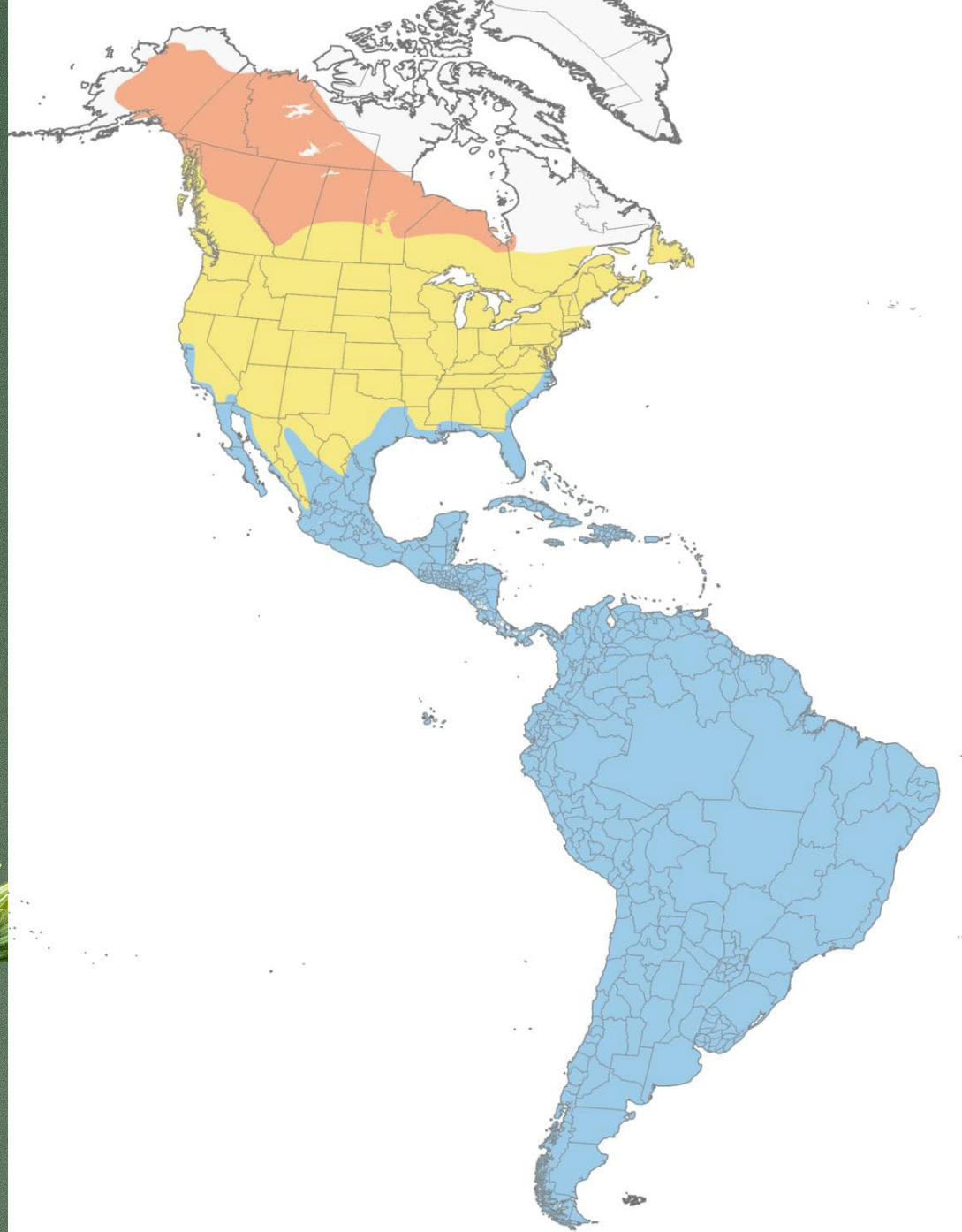
The mistletoe relies on healthy mesquite and catclaw trees as hosts.

Mesquites rely on groundwater sources. Insects are in decline in the west mostly due to increase in temperature AND aridity.



The Lesser Yellowlegs is in fast decline.

This is one species of shorebird that relies on shoreline and wetlands.







# State of the Birds 2022

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## State of the Birds 2022

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## WHAT IS NABCI?

The U.S. Committee of the North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI) is a coalition of 29 federal and state agencies, nonprofit organizations, and bird-focused partnerships that advance biological, social, and scientific priorities for North American bird conservation.



Report Partners

## Report Partners





## On Alert: All of these bird species have lost half of their populations in the past 50 years

Baird's Sparrow  
Black-billed Cuckoo  
Black Skimmer  
Black Swift  
Canada Warbler  
Cerulean Warbler  
Clark's Grebe  
Eastern Whip-poor-will  
Grace's Warbler  
Long-billed Dowitcher  
Mourning Warbler  
Olive-sided Flycatcher  
Red-headed Woodpecker  
Rock Sandpiper  
Snowy Owl  
Surfbird  
Thick-billed Longspur  
Western Grebe  
Wilson's Plover  
Wood Thrush

Allen's Hummingbird  
American Golden-Plover  
Ashy Storm-Petrel\*  
Audubon's Shearwater\*  
Bachman's Sparrow  
Band-rumped Storm-Petrel\*  
Bendire's Thrasher  
Bicknell's Thrush\*  
Black-capped Petrel\*  
Black-chinned Sparrow  
Black-footed Albatross\*  
Black-vented Shearwater\*  
Black Rail\*  
Black Rosy-Finch\*  
Black Scoter  
Bobolink  
Bristle-thighed Curlew\*  
Brown-capped Rosy-Finch\*

Buff-breasted Sandpiper  
Cassia Crossbill\*  
Chestnut-collared Longspur  
Chimney Swift  
Craveri's Murrelet\*  
Elegant Tern\*  
Evening Grosbeak  
Fea's Petrel\*  
Golden-winged Warbler  
Great Black-backed Gull  
Greater Sage-Grouse  
Guadalupe Murrelet\*  
Harris's Sparrow  
Heermann's Gull\*  
Henslow's Sparrow  
Hudsonian Godwit  
Ivory Gull\*  
King Eider

King Rail  
Kittlitz's Murrelet\*  
Laysan Albatross\*  
Least Tern  
LeConte's Sparrow  
LeConte's Thrasher  
Lesser Prairie-Chicken\*  
Lesser Yellowlegs  
Mottled Duck  
Mountain Plover  
Murphy's Petrel\*  
Parkinson's Petrel\*  
Pectoral Sandpiper  
Pinyon Jay  
Prairie Warbler  
Red-faced Cormorant  
Red-legged Kittiwake\*  
Ruddy Turnstone

Rufous Hummingbird  
Saltmarsh Sparrow\*  
Scripps's Murrelet\*  
Seaside Sparrow\*  
Semipalmated Sandpiper  
Short-billed Dowitcher  
Sprague's Pipit  
Stilt Sandpiper  
Townsend's Storm-Petrel\*  
Tricolored Blackbird\*  
Wandering Tattler  
Whimbrel  
Whiskered Auklet\*  
Yellow-billed Loon  
Yellow-billed Magpie  
Yellow Rail\*

**These Tipping Point species are on a trajectory to lose another 50% of their remnant populations in the next 50 years if nothing changes.**

In our region, 15 regularly occurring species have been identified as “at risk” species. Regular occurring species are species that are observed annually in southern Nevada and appear to live out part of life history in the region.

Clark’s Grebe- Lake Mead  
Western Grebe – Lake Mead  
Pectoral Sandpiper – passage migrant  
Stilt Sandpiper – passage migrant in wetlands  
Lesser Yellowlegs – passage migrant in wetlands  
Long-billed Dowitcher – passage migrant/ overwinters in small numbers  
Short-billed Dowitcher – passage migrant in wetlands

Bendire’s Thrasher – Avi Kwa Ame area of Southern Nevada  
LeConte’s Thrasher – Saltbush and Creosote

Pinyon Jay – highly dependent on Pinyon Pines  
Black-chinned Sparrow – mid-elevation of mountains

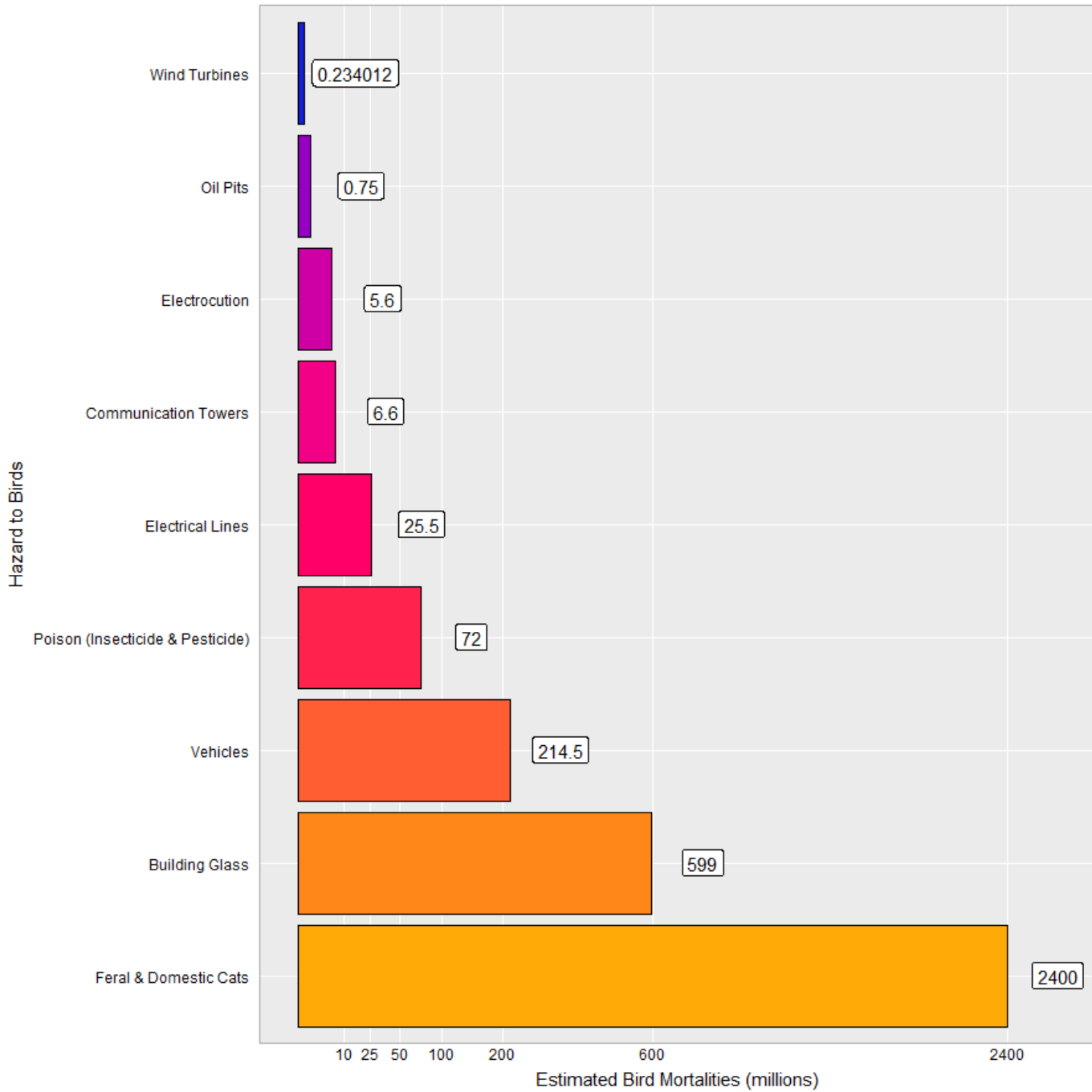
Evening Grosbeak- Ponderosa Forest  
Grace’s Warbler; Ponderosa Forest

Olive-sided Flycatcher – passage migrant  
Rufous Hummingbird – passage migrant

Long-billed Dowitchers at the Las Vegas Wash.



Annual Average Estimated Bird Mortality by Hazard  
(2017 U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Report)



# H.I.P.P.O. and Local Considerations

- Habitat – habitat loss, fragmentation and degradation; changes in fire frequency and scale intensity; loss of wetlands and riparian habitat.
- Invasive species – cats, horses + burros, bullfrogs, dogs, European Starlings, Quagga Mussels; Tamarisk , Cheat Grass, Phragmites, Russian Olive, and Russian Thistle.
- Pollution – Pesticides, atmospheric pollution (CO2 and methane), plastics.
- Population – population growth (2.3 million+ in Clark County and growing).
- Overharvesting – more of an issue in marine ecosystems. Consider the trajectory of the carrying capacity.

## Suggestions to Nevada's Wildlife Commission:

- Work with Great Basin Bird Observatory, National Audubon, and American Bird Conservancy to identify most important areas. Grants exist to enhance habitat!
- Prioritize spring and wetland health!
- Utility-scale solar development and transmission lines will affect breeding and migratory birds! Choose very wisely.
- Make human habitation safer; cats and windows are biggest threats to birds in our neighborhoods.

Red Rock Canyon and Spring Mountain Ranch

Floyd Lamb at  
Tule Springs Park

Aliante Park

Craig Ranch Regional Park

Pueblo Park

Winchester Dondoro Cultural Center

Springs Preserve and  
Lorenzi Park

Clark County  
Wetlands Park

Sunset Park

Lake Mead National  
Recreation Area

UNLV  
Campus

Henderson Bird  
Viewing Preserve

Cornerstone Park

Veterans Memorial Park

