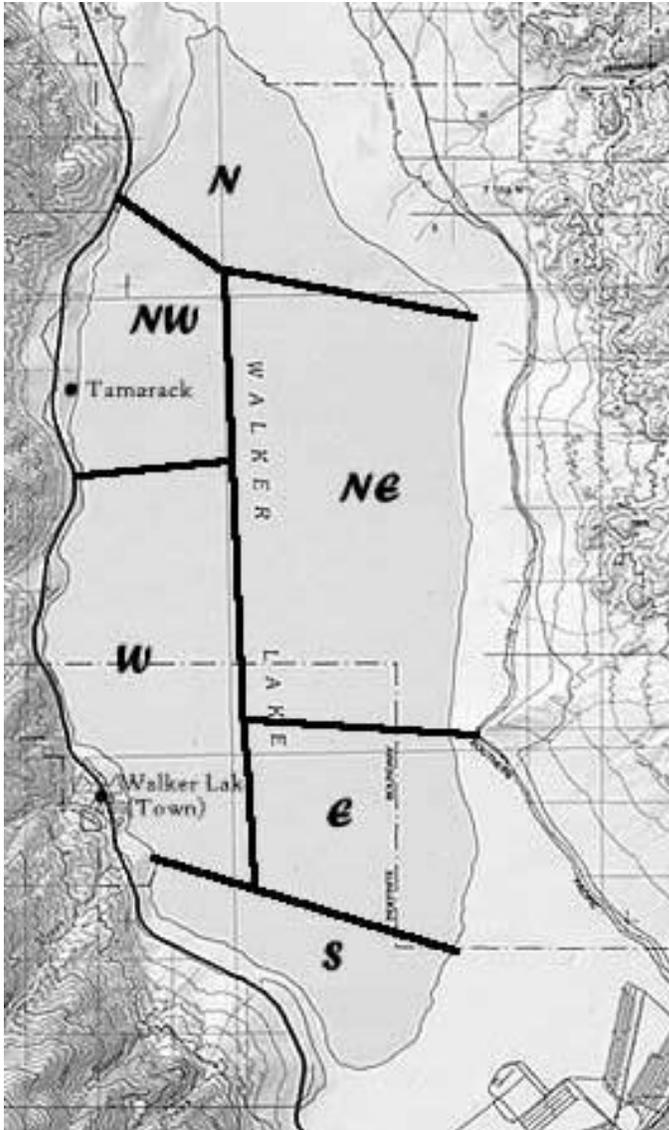


2. Walker Lake



Boundaries and Ownership

Boundaries well-defined by lake shores. The lake and immediately adjacent areas are primarily owned by BLM, the south shore is regulated by the Hawthorne Army Depot. In close proximity to the shoreline are a small amount of private lands, DoD lands associated with the Army Depot, and Walker River Paiute Tribal lands.

Focal Species

Focal species at this site include open-water piscivorous birds, Common Loon, Western and Clark's Grebe, Pied-billed Grebe, American Coot, Snowy Plover, White-faced Ibis, and American White Pelican.

Location of Type I and II Habitat

All open water in the site is Type I habitat for focal species.

Access and Visibility

Walker Lake is 2 ½ to 3 hours from Reno and Carson City, with smaller towns in between. The site itself is not particularly remote, with camping and other accommodations available nearby in Hawthorne. A highway with pull-outs bounds the west side of the lake. South and east side can be accessed via dirt roads (4x4 needed). Waterbirds can be counted by spotting scope, but the lake is too large for complete counts from the shore. Boat ramps along the western shore provide public access. Mud flats and Snowy Plover nesting sites are primarily on DoD lands on the southeastern shore. No public access to DoD lands without permission and pre-arranged escorts by Army Depot personnel. Army Depot personnel may be open to helping with surveys.

Past and Current Surveys

NDOW has conducted surveys for waterbirds and ibis in spring and fall since 1989 by boat. Waterfowl has been surveyed by NDOW for about three decades during winter flights (fixed wing aircraft). Audubon Christmas Bird Counts have been conducted in roughly the southern half of the lake since 1997, mostly from shoreline. Ad hoc surveys by amateur birders have been going on for ca. 20 years, many of these sightings are archived at <http://list.audubon.org/wa.exe?S1=nvbirds>.

Potential Survey Methods

description- surveys from shore, boat, and aerial surveys (though air space restrictions may apply over Hawthorne Army Depot).

selection bias—no public access to limited shorebird habitat, but permission can be obtained from various land managers, given sufficient lead time.

measurement error & bias— Large, open waterbody with very limited emergent vegetation and good overall visibility of birds; some species (e.g., Common Loons) may be difficult to accurately count in aerial surveys due to diving; wind can significantly affect detectability due to wave action; detectability falls off with distance from the west shore (assuming shore-based survey); large lake that birds may also move during a count .

Needed Pilot Studies

Probably none as survey efforts have been ongoing at varying intensities for more than a decade.

Contact with Local Knowledge: Don McIvor, Lahontan Audubon Society.