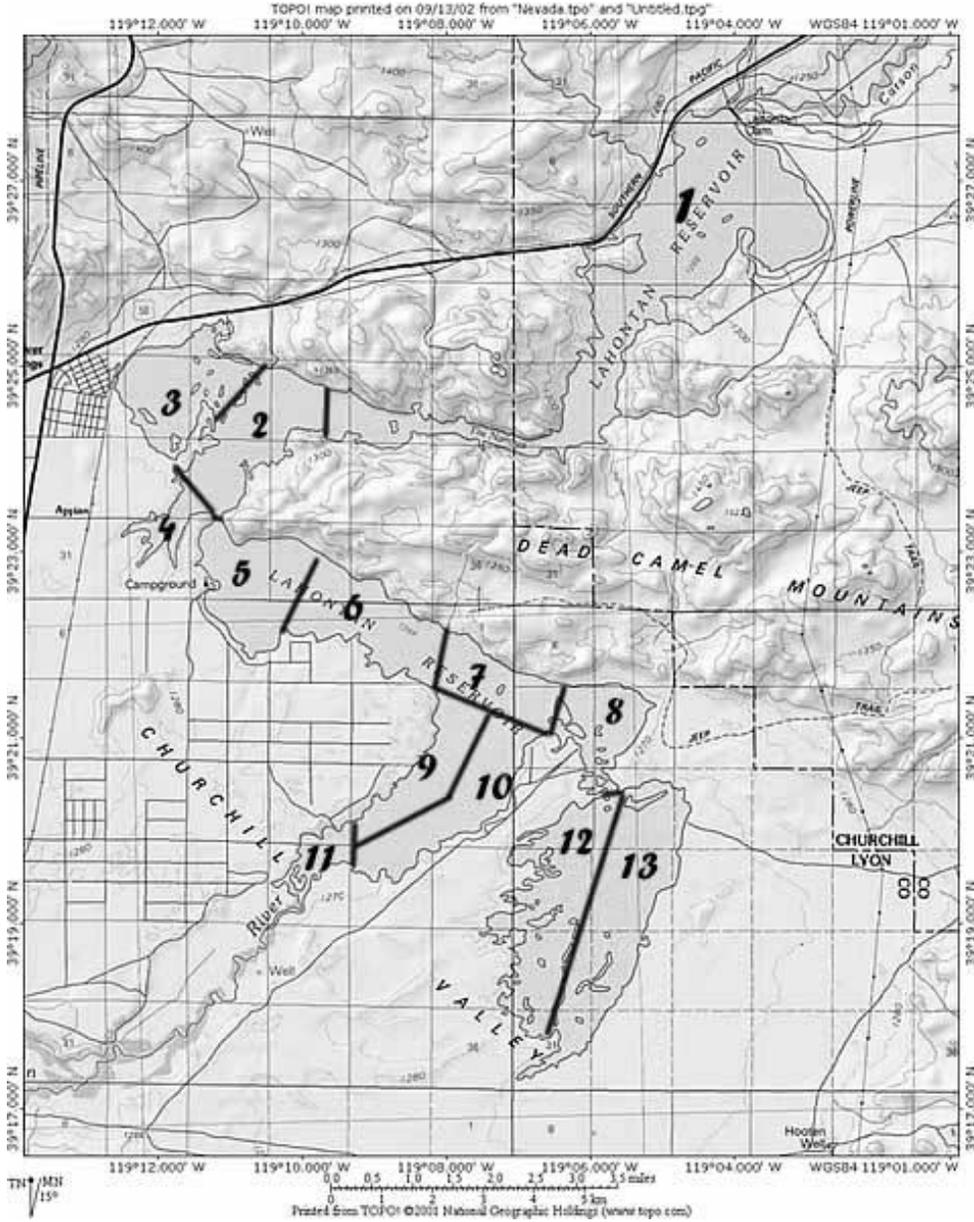


## 6. Lahontan Reservoir



### Boundaries and Ownership

Lahontan Reservoir covers approximately 26 square miles in northern Lyon and southwestern Churchill Counties. A 162 foot high dam on the Carson River created the reservoir as part of the Newlands Project in 1915. The reservoir is fed by the Carson River and a 32.5 mile diversion canal from the Truckee River. An island in the reservoir is the only Ring-billed Gull rookery in the state along with California Gull, Double-crested Cormorant, egrets and herons. Limited marshes surround the reservoir with the exception of the Carson River delta where there are extensive marshes. Capacity is 317,500 acre-feet; however this is drawn down to almost nothing for agricultural

purposes in dry years. Lahontan Reservoir is BOR and Water District property surrounded by BLM and, on the southwest shore, by private lands of Silver Springs. An agreement between BOR and the NV Division of Parks has created the Lahontan Reservoir Recreation Area on the east shore.

### **Focal Species**

Ring-billed Gull, California Gull, Black-crowned Night-heron, Snowy Egret, and Double-crested Cormorant nest at rookery  
Black Tern?  
Common Merganser, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Wood Duck, Canada Goose, and other waterfowl  
Shorebirds?  
Common Moorhen  
Bank Swallow colonies  
Bald Eagle nesting (only successful, known, active nest site in NV)

### **Location of Type I Habitat**

All open water and some of the marshes at the delta are Type I habitat. Nesting colonies are also Type I habitat (**where are they?**).

### **Location of Type II Habitat**

Little or no Type II habitat probably exists, unless some portions of the reservoir are identified as such in preliminary surveys.

### **Access and Visibility of Birds**

Lahontan Reservoir is about a 1 hour drive from Reno, and about a ½ hour drive from Carson City. Access is excellent via State Park, BOR and BLM lands and the streets/roads on Silver Springs. Eastern shore is quite remote. Visibility is good due to relative lack of vegetation. The delta area may need to be assessed in terms of accessibility and visual obstructions. The reservoir's shape allows for fairly comprehensive surveys from the shore line.

### **Past and Current Surveys**

NDOW - N. Saake winter waterfowl surveys 1967-2001  
Judd and Gubanich: Gull banding (late1980's, early 90's)  
Current:  
Bald Eagle Survey: NDOW and NDOP  
Hg Study/Blood Chemistry studies on-going - Henry and Hill

### **Potential Survey Methods:**

#### ***Description***

Fixed wing aircraft, boat and ground surveys all very feasible. Colonial nesters need special attention in survey design.

#### ***Selection Bias***

None likely due to public ownership.

#### ***Measurement Error and Bias***

No unusual sources of error and bias expected, but effects of reservoir stage on bird abundance may be extreme and should be addressed in monitoring plan.

**Needed Pilot Studies**

None needed, except perhaps general assessment of bird use throughout year (particularly role of shorebirds).

**Contact with Local Knowledge:** Jim Lytle, Lahontan Audubon Society.