

51-28. MUD LAKE WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA (WMA/IBA)

Boundaries and ownership:

Boundaries: Boundaries are marked, but some are not very obvious

Ownership: Idaho Department of Fish and Game; one portion leased from Idaho Department of Lands

Focal species using the site and timing of use:

Mud Lake produces 1000's of waterfowl (Canada Goose, Mallard, Northern Pintail, Gadwall, Northern Shoveler, American Wigeon, Cinnamon Teal, Ruddy Duck), waterbirds (Pied-billed Grebe, American Coot, American Bittern, Sandhill Crane, Black Tern, Forster's Tern, plus colonial nesters listed below), shorebirds (Killdeer, Wilson's Snipe, Long-billed Curlew, Willet, American Avocet, Black-necked Stilt, Wilson's Phalarope) and gulls (California, Ring-billed) every year and provides habitat for up to 160,000 migrating waterfowl (list of breeding waterfowl plus Snow Goose, Tundra and Trumpeter Swans) and waterbirds (Common Loon). Nesting pair of Peregrine Falcons are on site, and American White Pelicans can be observed spring through fall. Also considered a migratory shorebird site by the Intermountain West Regional Shorebird Plan.

Colonies: Eared Grebe, Western Grebe, Clark's Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant (70+ nests), Great Blue Heron, Black-crowned Night Heron, Snowy Egret, Great Egret, Cattle Egret, White-faced Ibis (400+ pairs), Franklin's Gull (600 birds)

Location of type 1 and 2 habitat within the site:

Functional Group	Type 1 Habitat	Type 2 Habitat
waterbirds	breeding colonies, open water & emergent vegetation	none
large waders	breeding colonies, emergent vegetation	rest of shoreline
secretive marshbirds	water's edge	none
waterfowl	open water, edges during breeding season	none
shorebirds	exposed mudflats during spring/fall migration	rest of shoreline
gulls and terns	breeding colonies, all areas	none

Access to the type 1 and 2 habitat and visibility of the birds:

Multiple roads around impoundments, which provide good viewing access on the east side of the lake. Spotting scope will be necessary for much of the area. Will need to use a boat (canoe, small boat, airboat) to survey some areas, particularly for the west side of the lake, but there are boat ramps available. Cormorant colony and Franklin's Gull colony are very visibly from shoreline roads.

Conservation issues:

- Serious infestation of Russian knapweed on the WMA
- Increasing public use of the WMA and demands for additional/different recreational activities could increase disturbance to the birds.
- Minor overgrazing/over-browsing were issues
- Predation is a potential problem

Conservation measures taken, in progress, or proposed:

- Grazing is no longer allowed on the WMA, although a small amount of trespass grazing occurs each year

- IDFG has been trying to control the knapweed problem. Some areas have been burned, mowed, and treated with herbicides. Some areas have been reseeded in an attempt to reclaim treated areas.
- Mud Lake WMA Management Plan
- Predator control measures have been taken in the past.

Past and current surveys:

- Nest searches and brood counts for waterfowl have been conducted the last 2 out of 3 years
- Ibis and gull colonies have been surveyed in the past

Potential survey methods

Description:

- Nest searches for grebes and other waterbirds nesting in the emergent vegetation in small colonies, using a canoe for access.
- Colony counts for nesting herons, egrets, Franklin's Gulls, and Double Crested Cormorants. Some survey work can be done from shoreline, others may require a canoe.
- Census for waterfowl on the open water using a boat. Some observation can be done from the shoreline as well. Late summer or winter counts may be better than breeding season counts, as waterfowl are more easily detected during this period.
- Area searches for migrating shorebirds from observation points near Type 1 habitat.
- Systematic sampling, probably including the use of playback calls, for secretive marshbirds. A canoe or small boat is necessary for access.
- Census for gulls and terns during waterfowl counts

Selection bias: N/A

Measurement error and bias: No issues known at this time.

Needed pilot studies: None may be needed.

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