

# Wildlife Species Profiles



## ASSESSING HABITAT QUALITY FOR PRIORITY WILDLIFE SPECIES IN COLORADO WETLANDS

TERN © USFWS / MOUSE © CNHP / DACE © MPCA PHOTOS / FROG © KEITH PENNER



Wildlife species profiles have been created for priority wetland-dependent birds, mammals, fish, amphibians, and reptiles. Example species covered include (clockwise from top left): least tern, Preble's meadow jumping mouse, redbelly dace, and northern leopard frog.

***The purpose of these profiles is to provide landowners and land managers with easy-to-use guidelines for understanding habitat needs of priority wetland-dependent wildlife.***

## Introduction

This series of species profiles consists of 18 profiles for 26 wetland-dependent wildlife species; three profiles cover guilds with multiple related species: the dabbling duck profile includes seven species; the frog profile and the redbelly dace profile each include two species. These 26 species were selected because they were included in research on habitat preferences completed as part of projects in the Lower South Platte River Basin (Ortega 2013) and the Lower Arkansas River Basin (Ortega

2014). Additional wetland-dependent priority species more specific to the mountains or western Colorado are not included in this series, but may be developed in the future.

### Colorado Distribution

County occurrence for species in the series is provided on the following page. A checkmark does not suggest regular occurrence in a county; rather, it may indicate that the species has been observed at least once or may hypothetically occur. If a species is checked, please refer to the profile for more detailed information.

### Maps

Colorado distribution maps were created using multiple credible sources. Maps were created for fish using Hydrologic Unit Codes, according to

Woodling (1985), NDIS (2014), and Paul Foutz (pers. comm., CPW). The remaining maps were created using county occurrence. For birds, the following resources were used: Andrews and Righter (1992), First Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas (Kingery 1998), Second Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas (COBBAIL 2015), and CFO (2015). Reptile and amphibian maps were created using Hammerson (1999) and NDIS (2014). Mammal maps were created using NDIS (2014), Boyle (2006), Grunau et al. (1999), and Schorr (2001).

### Habitat Condition Scorecards

Habitat Scorecards are included with each species profile for the purpose of assessing habitat conditions before and after implementation of wetland habitat improvement projects. Please check the instructions for each species. In most cases, habitat variables should be assessed during late spring or early summer. Each habitat variable has assigned values for ranges of conditions; the variables and their assigned values are weighted according to importance of each variable as perceived by experts in the field.

### Getting Help

Most variables can easily be measured or determined by anyone. In some cases, users may wish to solicit assistance from CPW staff, such as District Wildlife Managers, Wetland Focus Area Committees, or Private Land Biologists at Natural Resources Conservation Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Questions can also be addressed to the CPW Wetlands Program Coordinator, Brian Sullivan at (970) 472-4306 or [brian.sullivan@state.co.us](mailto:brian.sullivan@state.co.us).

# Colorado Distribution by County

Colorado County	BIRDS	American bittern	Bald eagle	Black rail*	Dabbling ducks	Least tern	Lewis's woodpecker	Long-billed curlew	Piping plover	Sandhill crane	Short-eared owl	MAMMALS	Preble's m. j. mouse	River otter	FISH	Arkansas darter	Brassy minnow	N. redbelly dace	S. redbelly dace	HERPS	N. leopard frog	Plains leopard frog	Red-sided garter snake	Yellow mud turtle
Adams		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓								✓		✓	
Alamosa		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓										✓			
Arapahoe		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓								✓		✓	
Archuleta			✓		✓		✓	✓		✓				✓							✓			
Baca			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓											✓		✓
Bent		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓							✓	✓		✓
Boulder		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓							✓		✓	
Broomfield		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓							✓		✓	
Chaffee		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓	✓										✓			
Cheyenne		✓	✓		✓			✓		✓	✓										✓	✓		✓
Clear Creek			✓		✓		✓			✓											✓			
Conejos		✓	✓		✓		✓			✓	✓										✓			
Costilla		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓	✓										✓			
Crowley		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓										✓	✓		
Custer		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓				✓							✓	✓		
Delta		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓							✓			
Denver			✓		✓		✓	✓		✓			✓								✓		✓	
Dolores		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓				✓							✓			
Douglas		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓					✓			✓		✓	
Eagle			✓		✓		✓			✓	✓			✓							✓			
Elbert			✓		✓		✓	✓		✓	✓		✓			✓					✓	✓		
El Paso		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓			✓					✓	✓		
Fremont		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓					✓		✓	✓		
Garfield			✓		✓		✓	✓		✓				✓							✓			
Gilpin			✓		✓																✓			
Grand		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓	✓			✓							✓			
Gunnison		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓	✓			✓							✓			
Hinsdale		✓	✓		✓		✓			✓				✓							✓			
Huerfano		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓							✓	✓		
Jackson		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓							✓			
Jefferson		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓							✓		✓	
Kiowa		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓										✓	✓		✓
Kit Carson		✓	✓		✓			✓		✓	✓										✓	✓		✓
Lake		✓	✓		✓		✓			✓											✓			
La Plata		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓							✓			
Larimer		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓							✓		✓	
Las Animas			✓		✓		✓	✓		✓	✓			✓							✓	✓		✓
Lincoln			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓					✓					✓	✓		
Logan		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓			✓				✓	✓	✓	✓

# Colorado Distribution by County

Colorado County	BIRDS	American bittern	Bald eagle	Black rail*	Dabbling ducks	Least tern	Lewis's woodpecker	Long-billed curlew	Piping plover	Sandhill crane	Short-eared owl	MAMMALS	Preble's m. j. mouse	River otter	FISH	Arkansas darter	Brassy minnow	N. redbelly dace	S. redbelly dace	HERPS	N. leopard frog	Plains leopard frog	Red-sided garter snake	Yellow mud turtle
Mesa		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓			✓				✓			
Mineral			✓		✓		✓			✓				✓							✓			
Moffat		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓	✓			✓							✓			
Montezuma		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓	✓			✓							✓			
Montrose			✓		✓		✓	✓		✓	✓			✓							✓			
Morgan		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓			✓				✓		✓	
Otero		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓										✓	✓		✓
Ouray		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓				✓							✓			
Park		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓	✓			✓							✓			
Phillips			✓		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓										✓	✓	✓	✓
Pitkin		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓				✓							✓			
Prowers		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓					✓					✓	✓		✓
Pueblo		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓		✓			✓		✓	✓		
Rio Blanco		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓							✓			
Rio Grande		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓	✓										✓			
Routt		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓				✓							✓			
Saguache		✓	✓		✓		✓			✓	✓			✓							✓			
San Juan		✓	✓		✓		✓			✓											✓			
San Miguel			✓		✓		✓	✓						✓							✓			
Sedgwick		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓			✓				✓	✓	✓	✓
Summit		✓	✓		✓		✓			✓				✓							✓			
Teller		✓	✓		✓		✓			✓											✓			
Washington		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓			✓				✓	✓	✓	✓
Weld		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓			✓				✓		✓	
Yuma		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓						✓				✓	✓	✓	✓

\*The black rail is not on the official list of priority species, but is a species of interest in the Lower Arkansas River Basin.

## Citations

- Andrews, R., and R. Righter. 1992. *Colorado Birds*. Denver Museum of Natural History, Denver, Colorado.
- Boyle, S. 2006. North American river otter (*Lontra canadensis*): a technical conservation assessment. USDA Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Region.
- COBBAII (Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas II). 2015. Maps available online at <http://bird.atlasing.org/Atlas/CO/>.
- CFO (Colorado Field Ornithologists). 2015. Colorado county birding. <http://coloradocountybirding.org/CountySelector.aspx>.
- Grunau, L., R. Schorr, D. Green, B. Rosenlund, C. Pague, and J. Armstrong. 1999. Conservation and management plan for the Preble's meadow jumping mouse on the U. S. Air Force Academy. Colorado Natural Heritage Program unpublished report to the Natural Resources Branch, U.S. Air Force Academy.
- Hammerson, G. A. 1999. *Amphibians and Reptiles in Colorado: A Colorado Field Guide*. University Press of Colorado and Colorado Division of Wildlife.
- Kingery, H. E., Editor. 1998. Colorado breeding bird atlas. Colorado Bird Atlas Partnership and Colorado Division of Wildlife, Denver, Colorado.
- NDIS (Natural Diversity Information Source). 2014. On-line mapping tool formerly available through Natural Resource Ecology Laboratory, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado.
- Ortega, C. P. 2013. Habitat quality for wetland-dependent priority wildlife species in the Lower South Platte River Basin, Colorado: species assessments and monitoring protocol. Report prepared for Colorado Natural Program, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 8.
- Ortega, C. P. 2014. Habitat quality for wetland-dependent priority wildlife species in the Lower Arkansas River Basin, Colorado: species assessments and monitoring protocol. Report prepared for Colorado Natural Program, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 8.
- Schorr, R. A. 2001. Meadow jumping mice (*Zapus hudsonius preblei*) on the U.S. Air Force Academy, El Paso County, Colorado. Colorado Natural Heritage Program unpublished report to the Natural Resources Branch, U.S. Air Force Academy.
- Woodling, J. 1985. Colorado's little fish: a guide to the minnows and other lesser known fishes in the state of Colorado. Colorado Division of Wildlife, Denver, Colorado.