

Colonial Nesting Waterbird Survey for Montana, 2014

Prepared by Amy Cilimborg and Fred Tilly, Montana Audubon

Introduction

This report details the 2014 results and six year history of the Western Colonial Waterbird Monitoring and Inventory (WCWS) program in Montana. Participating in the 2014 and past seasons' surveys were Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Montana Audubon, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Surveys of colonial nesting waterbirds were conducted for the sixth consecutive season during May and June of 2014 at sites which have been identified as important in monitoring the species of particular interest (target species). During the 2014 season a total of 14 sites were surveyed and data were collected on all of the 18 waterbird species known to nest in Montana (including one seldom seen species recorded in 2014).

During the first three seasons (2009-2011), many sites were surveyed in order to evaluate the status of colonial nesting waterbirds throughout Montana and to document nesting colonies of Great Blue Herons and Double-crested Cormorants along all of the major river systems of the state. Sites were identified using the Montana Natural Heritage Program's data base as well as the map work and in-season discovery of the observers. All survey data was entered into a spreadsheet as part of the Western Colonial Waterbird Monitoring and Inventory (WCWS) program in Montana, initiated by the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

After the initial three years of surveys, monitoring of a limited number of sites was continued in order to track changes in breeding populations with emphasis on species of particular concern. The information has been added to the WCWS spreadsheet each year. This report details the 2014 survey results and compares them with past seasons. A discussion of each species is presented. A table presents annual breeding pair counts for each species at sites selected for having relatively large numbers of nesting pairs and consistent site coverage (Table 1).

A table is included showing the sites surveyed in 2014 and those that we would like to cover in the future if resources are available (see Table 2).

Species Accounts

Target species:

Clark's Grebe, CLGR

The Clark's Grebe is an uncommon breeding species in Montana. They nest in colonies on large lakes and marshes. Although colonies may contain tens or hundreds of nests, those in Montana are typically small (5 to 10 pairs). The nest is on a floating platform of vegetation in shallow water. Unless the bird is well-seen it can be difficult to distinguish from the much more common Western Grebe. During the six years of this series of surveys the only sites in Montana with the Clark's Grebe confirmed as nesting are Freezout Lake and Ninepipes NWR where 2 or 3 nests per year have been documented. In 2014 no nests were found but one individual was seen at Freezout Lake.

American White Pelican, AWPE

There are four known breeding locations for AWPE in Montana. Three of these are major colonies and one is much smaller. Nesting was documented at all 4 sites for the AWPE in 2014. The three major sites yielded a total count of 6290 nests. This compares with 5843, 4823, 4622, 5865 and 6927 nests,

respectively, in 2009 through 2013 (see Table 1). While there have been large fluctuations in the annual nest numbers at each colony, the overall totals for the three sites have remained relatively stable.

The AWPE typically nests in large colonies on an island or point that is relatively isolated from predators. The nests are shallow depressions scraped in the ground and lined with twigs and other debris. Where available, partial shade afforded by trees is preferred. Colony locations may vary from year to year depending on water levels and other factors. The timing of egg-laying may vary among colonies, even those in close proximity. For example, at Medicine Lake NWR, during the first three seasons of this study, there were two sub-colonies, one on a large island and one on a long point from which predators were excluded with an electric fence. At the time of the surveys island nesting birds had only eggs while on the point the nests had well-developed chicks, one invariably much larger than the other, in nearly every nest. In subsequent years all nesting for the species at Medicine Lake was on the point only.

Productive nesting colony survey dates (meaning active nests were documented) for this species have ranged from 5/22 to 6/16 during the six years of this study.

Double-crested Cormorant, DCCO

The Double-crested Cormorant is a common breeding species throughout Montana. Nests consist of a platform of sticks in a tree or on the ground on an island. The DCCO often nests in tree colonies with herons or on the ground within large gull and pelican colonies. They generally breed at three years of age and nest in large or small colonies.

Nesting was documented at a total of 7 sites for the DCCO in 2014 yielding a total count of 1,109 nests. This was close to the totals of past seasons. The top three nesting sites were Bowdoin NWR with 428 nests, Canyon Ferry WPA with 282 and Medicine Lake with 151. The total for these top three sites in 2014 was 861 (Table 1). These sites, all east of the Continental Divide and ranging from Canyon Ferry WMA in Broadwater Co. to Medicine Lake in Sheridan Co., show a slight increase after the 2009-2011 period with some large annual fluctuations at individual sites. The top three sites are those with large numbers of the species nesting. At these there was a consistent effort to document all of the nests. Productive nesting colony survey dates for this species have ranged from 5/3 to 7/13 during the six years of this study.

Great Blue Heron, GBHE

The Great Blue Heron is a common breeding species on lakes, ponds, marshes and rivers throughout Montana. They breed as early as two years old and nest in large or small colonies. The nest is a platform of sticks, usually in a tree but may be on the ground on an island. The GBHE often nests in colonies with other herons and in Montana with cormorants and occasionally on an island with gulls.

Timing of nesting for this species is usually early and aerial surveys are generally done in April and May before the leaves hide the tree nests. At this time the GBHE are usually occupying the rookeries and have eggs in the nest. Productive nesting colony survey dates for this species have ranged from 4/1 to 7/24.

In the 2012- 2014 period aerial surveys were not done. Nesting in 2014 was documented at three sites for a total of 102 nests. One of these locations was a newly documented island colony of 15 nests on the Missouri River at Fort Peck just below the dam. Two sites were selected from the information in the WCWA spreadsheet where there was fairly consistent annual coverage and relatively large numbers of

the species documented. These are Bowdoin NWR on the east side of the Continental Divide and Ninepipes NWR on the west side. The numbers at the two sites are fairly consistent through the six years of the surveys (see table 1).

Black-crowned Night Heron, BCNH

The Black-crowned Night Heron in Montana nests in colonies of from 5 to 100 breeding pairs in a variety of locations, all on the east side of the Continental Divide. The nest, a platform of sticks or reeds, may be on the ground, in the protection of a reed bed or in a group of trees. A protected location such as an island is preferred. Eggs usually number 3 to 8. The Black-crowned Night Heron is most active at dusk and during the night. They feed on a wide variety of small aquatic life forms.

During the 2014 survey, nesting was documented at three sites for a total of 103 nests. Two sites where this species usually nests that are usually covered were missed this season due to weather and access issues. The totals for the three top sites (taking into consideration low water in one year and no data in another at one of the sites) have been holding steady since 2011 (Table 1). Productive nesting colony survey dates for this species have ranged from 5/29 to 7/27.

White-faced Ibis, WFIB

The White-faced Ibis is an uncommon breeding species in Montana and sites are generally east of the Rocky Mountain Front. The WFIB typically nests in marsh habitat and colony size in Montana has ranged from 5 to 195 breeding pairs. The nests may be in low trees, aquatic vegetation or on the ground. The nest consists of a deeply cupped platform of coarse vegetation and sticks. They have been found nesting within or near large FRGU colonies in rushes at 4 locations during this study.

The most used nesting site in Montana for this species is Red Rock Lakes NWR where as many as 195 nesting pairs have been documented. Unfortunately counts have not been conducted there during most years of this study. See Table 1.

In 2014 nesting was documented at two sites for a total of 82 nests. Two important sites for the species were not covered, one due to access problems and the other due to limited staff time. Numbers of WFIB at Bowdoin NWR this year showed a sharp increase from a 5 year average of 25, with a 2014 total of 75 nests.

Productive nesting colony survey dates for this species have ranged from 6/15 to 7/14.

Franklin's Gull, FRGU

The Franklin's Gull nests in very large colonies in prairie marshes in scattered locations east of the Rocky Mountains in Montana. Colony size is often several thousand breeding pairs. The nest, composed of a floating platform of reeds, is most often in dense reeds or rushes in 2 to 3 feet of water. Nests may be on the ground in some locations or in shallower water. The nest is well-maintained and the coarse vegetation is lined with softer material. Eggs usually number two or three. The Franklin's Gull feeds on insects and other small prey and will scavenge as well.

In 2014 nesting was documented at two of the three normally-covered sites in Montana for a total of just 1940 nests. Two other sites in the state host large numbers of nesting FRGU but are not surveyed in most years. The three-site total was down sharply this season due to no survey at Manning Lake and a very low total at Bowdoin NWR (Table 1). Bowdoin, a major FRGU nesting site has had almost complete abandonment by the species in 2013 and 2014 in spite of normal water levels and no other apparent cause. FRGU do nest in very large numbers just to the north in Canada and surveys there (not currently being

done), combined with our own, would provide a much clearer picture of any major population changes in the species.

Large annual fluctuations at individual sites are not particularly unusual for this species. Looking at Table 1 we see a zero for Homestead Lake in 2012 (drained for the summer) and a corresponding increase at Manning Lake which is located just a few miles to the south. Aside from the nearly complete disappearance at Bowdoin, the species totals seem to be holding steady. Solving the muddy access problem at Manning Lake would improve our monitoring of this species.

Caspian Tern, CATE

The Caspian Tern is an uncommon but widespread nesting species in Montana. They nest on rivers and large lakes in distinct colonies or in mixed colonies with gull and other tern species. In Montana colony size is typically less than 50 breeding pairs. Nests are typically on sand and gravel, or sometimes on vegetation. Eggs number from one to three. The Caspian Tern feeds mainly on fish and is known to fly up to 60 km from the breeding colony to catch fish.

No nesting was found for the CATE in 2014 in surveys at any of the 3 Montana sites where the species has generally nested in the past (Table 1). The colony at Fort Peck Lake on York Island had grown each year from 51 in 2011 to 286 nests in 2013 but suddenly there were no nests in 2014 with no change in water level to explain the disappearance. The Ring-billed and California Gulls were still nesting at the colony in normal numbers, as were the Cormorants. When the lake level drops, the north extension of York Island is connected to the main island where there are some coyotes that can then easily reach the colony so when the water level is down the location is not used by any of the colonial-nesting waterbird species. That was not the case in 2014. In short, everything appeared favorable for CATE nesting at the York Island colony site in 2014 but they had apparently moved elsewhere. It is possible that they found better fishing near another nesting location. Several Caspian Terns were seen along the shores of Fort Peck Lake around the time of the survey but no other nest location was found. The lake is very large and only the northern end has been covered in this series of surveys. Some flying by a CM Russell NWR staff member and boat travel by the staff has not turned up any other nesting colony locations on other parts of the lake. The 2014 survey was done on 6/10 so the CATE could possibly have nested later, but that would be a very unusually late start.

Canyon Ferry WMA also had no CATE nesting this season for the first time in this 6 year series of surveys, their average being 14 nests. The survey has always been done in late May as it was this year. So later nesting may be possible but seems unlikely.

Bowdoin NWR, where a very few of this species have nested during past surveys had none in 2014 but 5 were seen at a mixed colony location and may have nested later as the survey was done on 5/22.

Forster's Tern, FOTE

The Forster's Tern nests in marshes in scattered locations east of the Rocky Mountains in Montana. Colony size is typically less than 50 breeding pairs. The nest site can vary from an unlined scrape in mud or sand to a floating mat of vegetation or the top of a muskrat house. Eggs usually number three or more. The Forster's Tern feeds mainly on fish and insects in the marsh.

Nesting was documented at 4 sites for the FOTE in 2014 for a total of 17 nests. Totals for the 5 top sites for this species were down in 2013 and 2014 but two sites were not covered in 2013 and one in 2014 (Table 1). Thus there is no trend in the FOTE data and considerable variability is to be expected at any

given site given their tendency to nest in scattered small groups or singly. Productive nesting colony survey dates for this species have ranged from 6/4 to 7/22.

Common Tern, COTE

The Common Tern nests on lakes in scattered locations east of the Rocky Mountains in Montana. In Montana colony size is typically less than 50 breeding pairs. Nests are typically on an island in sparse low vegetation or on bare ground. Eggs usually number from two to four. The Common Tern feeds mainly on fish in lakes and large rivers.

Nesting was documented at 6 sites for the COTE in 2014 for a total of 146 nests, the highest total in this 6 year series of surveys. Six sites were selected for inclusion in Table 1 as indicative of population trend for the species. Numbers for the COTE show considerable site variability due to a variety of causes and show no clear trend. Productive nesting colony survey dates for this species have ranged from 5/22 to 6/25.

Black Tern, BLTE

The Black Tern is an uncommon but widespread nesting species in Montana, present on both sides of the Continental Divide. They nest in freshwater marshes, usually in colonies of from 5 to 50 pairs. The nest, typically with 2 to 4 eggs, is either on floating marsh vegetation or on the ground at the water's edge. They feed on fish and insects at or near the surface and catch insects in flight.

Nesting was documented at just one site for the BLTE in 2014 yielding a total count of 20 nests. The number of productive sites for this species in recent years has been much lower than in 2009 when many more sites were surveyed to establish the status of the species around the state and 13 sites were documented with active nesting. The tendency of this species to nest in isolated marshes without other colonial nesting waterbirds present means that most of the major sites that are annually monitored are not sites where the BLTE nests. During these surveys the BLTE was found to move from one nesting location to another more frequently than other species.

This year, in order to better monitor the Black Tern, three sites were added to the limited number of key sites now monitored annually (Table 1). These are clustered in a small area west of the Continental Divide in the west central part of the state. Blackfoot WPA, Brown's Lake and Klienschmidt Lake have a history of BLTE nesting and are easily accessible for the survey staff.

Productive nesting colony survey dates for this species have ranged from 6/5 to 7/18 (WCWS spreadsheet).

Non-target Species:

Snowy Egret (SNEG)

This is a non-target species only because it has only been recorded nesting in Montana on two other occasions (in 1979 at or near Freezout Lake and 1999 at Bowdoin NWR) and was therefore unexpected. A pair was documented at Medicine Lake NWR on June 6 on Bridgerman Point in a very large mixed colony including AWPE, DCCO and BCNH. The nest was in a dense chokecherry thicket with several nests of DCCO and BCNH. The pair was frightened out of the thicket as the observer neared their part of the colony. After about 20 minutes they returned to the thicket, perching on the high branches. The

nest was mostly hidden by dense foliage about 15 feet up in the thicket which reached a height of about 20 feet. Video was recorded of an adult returning to the thicket, descending through the branches and settling on the nest.

Horned Grebe, HOGGR

The Horned Grebe is an uncommon breeding species in the wetlands of Montana. They are usually solitary nesters on ponds and marshes. The nest is on a floating platform of vegetation. HOGGR nests are often found in or near rush beds along the shore of a pond.

The HOGGR has seldom been recorded in these surveys and, as it is not a target species, no special effort has been made to search for this bird. We had one nest observation on a pond with bulrush near shore in Sheridan County during the 2009 exploration phase of these surveys. Five individuals were seen at Freezout Lake in Teton County during the 2010 survey but nesting was not confirmed.

Red-necked Grebe, RNGR

The Red-necked Grebe is an uncommon breeding species on lakes and ponds across northern Montana. They nest in colonies or single pairs on shallow lakes and marshes (rarely less than 10 acres). They are at least two years of age before breeding and groups of non-breeders are found within the species nesting range during the spring and summer. The nest is on a floating platform of vegetation. RNGR colonies are often found in or near dense rush, cattail or sedge beds along the shore of a lake but the locations often change from year to year.

Nesting was documented at 3 sites for the RNGR in 2014 and the total estimate of nests was 11. The monitoring situation for this species is similar to that for the BLTE in that the RNGR is not generally found at the major mixed species waterbird nesting sites, but rather in lakes and ponds that would not otherwise be on our list of key sites for continued monitoring. Fortunately, the RNGR nests at Brown's Lake and Klienschmidt Lake along with the BLTE. That makes these sites a very good addition to the list of sites to be monitored in the future. Red-necked Grebe numbers at Brown's lake and Klienschmidt Lake this year are similar to those obtained in the 2009-2011 period (Table 1).

Post-fledging counts of pairs of adults with young are a good way to estimate nest numbers for this species and Grebes in general. The nests are often spread out in large areas of dense emergent vegetation and it is difficult to locate more than a portion of them. After fledging, the birds tend to be out in open water where they are easy to spot. The family group stays together and at least one adult seems to always be near the young. Productive nesting colony survey dates for this species have ranged from 5/24 to 7/18 (post fledging).

Eared Grebe, EAGR

The Eared Grebe is a very common breeding species on sheltered shallow areas of lakes, ponds and marshes throughout Montana. They breed as early as one year old and nest in large or small colonies. The nest is on a floating platform of vegetation. EAGR colonies are often found in or near dense rush, cattail or sedge beds along the shore but the locations often change from year to year. Nests of this species are difficult to find without undue disturbance if they are in dense cover as they often are.

As this is a very common bird and is present in a huge number of marshes, lakes and small ponds, it was usually ignored during these surveys. Very large colonies were located in the same bulrush beds as the

Franklin's Gull at Homestead Lake and Bowdoin NWR with estimates of 250 to 500 nests not uncommon.

Nesting for this species was documented as early as 6/5 and the latest was the discovery of three active nests with warm eggs on 7/21/2010 at Bowdoin NWR, Phillips County.

Western Grebe, WEGR

The Western Grebe is a common breeding species in the wetlands of Montana. They nest in colonies on large lakes and marshes. The nest is on a floating platform of vegetation in shallow water. WEGR colonies are often found in dense rush beds along the shore of a large lake but the locations often change from year to year making colonies difficult to find.

Unless the bird is well-seen it can be difficult to distinguish from the much less common Clark's Grebe. This posed a problem at one site (Freezout Lake WMA) in the 2009 survey at one colony where both Clark's and Western Grebes appeared to be nesting in close proximity and that site (with 77 nests) is documented under the heading of "CLGR or WEGR". These were most likely nearly all WEGR as the CLGR has only been infrequently documented at that site.

Nesting was documented for the WEGR in 2014 at 3 sites for a total of 99. Two sites were chosen for inclusion in Table 1 for this species as they have been fairly well monitored there while this non-target species has been largely ignored at most sites. The nests are difficult to find and the surveys at the major sites tend to be completed well before a post-fledging count of the WEGR could be done.

Ring-billed Gull, RBGU

The Ring-billed Gull is a common breeding species throughout Montana usually nesting on an island in a large colony and often with the California Gull and sometimes other species. Nests are a shallow cup of vegetation on the ground.

As non-target species the Ring-billed and California Gulls were often lumped together under the heading RB or CAGU. At a great distance the species are difficult to distinguish and we often did not take the time to get closer and do a separate count of each species. In other instances the two species were noted as nesting in large numbers but no estimate was attempted.

Nesting was documented at a total of 5 sites for the RBGU in 2014 for a total of 1718. In addition there were 3 more sites with only RB or CAGU estimates. The total of these was 4545 and most were very likely RBGU.

Two sites were selected for use on this species in Table 1, Bowdoin NWR and Fort Peck Lake (York Island). The two species were almost always counted separately at these two sites and a substantial number gulls are involved. The Fort Peck site is for York Island only and is only of use when the water level in the lake is near full and the colony is occupying that island.

Totals for the two sites used in Table 1 have fluctuated but seem to be holding steady. Productive nesting colony survey dates for this species have ranged from 5/16 to 6/28.

California Gull, CAGU

The California Gull is a common breeding species throughout Montana usually nesting on an island in a large colony and often with the Ring-billed Gull and sometimes other species. Nests are a shallow cup of vegetation on the ground.

Nesting was documented at a total of 7 sites for the CAGU in 2014. One of these (Canyon Ferry) had no estimate of numbers. Another (Bowdoin NWR) had a total of 3675 undifferentiated RB or CAGU. The two species at Bowdoin have averaged 20% CAGU and 80% RBGU so we can estimate that there were 735 CAGU there in 2014.

At Ninepipes NWR 249 CAGU nests were counted, close to numbers there in past years. At Katy Lake (a part of Medicine Lake NWR, Sheridan Co.) 50 were counted nesting around the edges of the large RBGU colony, an increase from just 8 in 2013 and no nesting prior to that. At Fort Peck (York Island), 550 were counted with the larger numbers of RBGU, roughly in line with past counts.

At Medicine Lake, 29 were counted nesting with the DCCO on Gull Island while the larger colony on three islands was estimated at 620 Ring-billed and California Gulls. There was a new site documented this year on the Missouri River at Great Falls on Steamboat Island and it had an estimated 250 RBGU and CAGU nests.

Two sites were selected for use on this species in Table 1, Bowdoin NWR and Fort Peck Lake (York Island). CAGU and RBGU were almost always counted separately at these two sites and a substantial number gulls are involved. The Fort Peck site is for York Island only and is only of use when the water level in the lake is near full and the colony is occupying that island. California Gulls show a slight upward trend in totals at these two sites.

Acknowledgments

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks provided funding for the 2014 surveys. Montana Audubon hired staff and administered contracts. Our appreciation is extended to all those who helped make this three year survey possible:

Principal survey observer was Fred Tilly, Montana Audubon, for the eastern Montana counties and other sites.

At Arod Lakes NWR surveys were completed by Bob Jordan and Steve Dawes, USFWS. At Bowdoin NWR surveys were done by Jessica Larson (Refuge Biologist), Carmen Luna (Refuge Manager), Todd Boonstra, Mike Dailey and Ben Morin. At Canyon Ferry WMA surveys were done by Fred Jakubowski, Adam Grove, Claire Gower, Kristina Smucker, all with MT FWP. At Fort Peck Lake Aaron Johnson provided essential boat transportation. At Freezout Lake WMA surveys were done by Brent Lonner & Catherine Wightman of MT FWP. At Kleinschmidt Lake thanks is extended to landowner Bob Geary. At Medicine Lake Zacherly Poetzsch and Andrew Thatcher assisted with surveys and Mike Borgreen, Refuge Biologist, assisted with essential logistical support. At Ninepipes NWR surveys were conducted by Janene Lichtenberg of the Salish Kootenai Tribe and Amy Cilimburg of MT Audubon. At Wild Horse Marsh and Reservoir appreciation is extended to landowner, Willie Doll and Jim Hansen of MT FWP assisted with survey observations.

Table 1. Number of nests at top annually monitored sites for selected species, 2009-2014

Target Species:

AWPE (American White Pelican)

site	County	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Bowdoin NWR	Phillips	1352	818	785	759	1524	1507
Canyon Ferry WMA	Broadwater	1907	2244	886	2051	2556	1704
Medicine Lake NWR	Sheridan	2584	1761	2951	3055	2847	3073
Total		5843	4823	4622	5865	6927	6284

DCCO (Double-crested Cormorant)

site	County	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Bowdoin NWR	Phillips	133	254	110	551	313	428
Canyon Ferry WMA	Broadwater	340	371	360	346	330	282
Medicine Lake NWR	Sheridan	10 PC	98	231	214	291	151
Total		473	723	701	1111	934	861

GBHE (Great Blue Heron)

site	County	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Bowdoin NWR	Phillips	29	25	12	31	26	34
Ninepipes NWR	Lake	NC	62	45	52	NC	53
Total		29	87	57	83	26	87

BCNH (Black-crowned Night Heron)

site	County	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Medicine Lake	Sheridan	36	36	97	70	84	84
Flat Reservoir	Phillips	1 PC	32	53	4	26	NC
Bowdoin NWR	Phillips	2	10	14	35	26	8
Total		38	78	164	109	136	92

WFIB (White-faced Ibis)

site	County	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Bowdoin NWR	Phillips	11	17	35	36	25	75
Homestead Lake	Sheridan	0	3	0	0	0	7
Manning Lake	Roosevelt	9	NC	10	12	31	NC
Red Rock Lakes NWR	Beaverhead	95	195	NC	NC	NC	NC
Total		115	215	45	48	56	82

FRGU (Franklin's Gull)

site	County	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Homestead Lake	Sheridan	0	2000	1200	0	1920	1920
Manning Lake	Roosevelt	1970	NC	1800	2700	1620	NC

Bowdoin NWR	Phillips	2450	1025	1820	2050	130	20
Sub-Total		4420	3025	4820	4750	3670	1940
Benton Lake NWR	Cascade	3811	4833	3280	NC	NC	NC
Red Rock Lakes NWR	Beaverhead	16 PC	87 PC	NC	NC	NC	NC

CATE (Caspian Tern)

site	County	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Fort Peck Lake	Garfield	0	0	51	220	286	0
Canyon Ferry WMA	Broadwater	12	11	12	17	19	0
Bowdoin NWR	Phillips	0	1	1	8	0	0*
Total		12	12	64	245	305	0

FOTE (Forster's Tern)

site	County	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Bowdoin NWR	Phillips	17	4	10	NC	6	1
Freezout Lake WMA	Teton	13	15	10	40	6	3
Homestead Lake	Sheridan	NC	14	0	0	3	12
Manning Lake	Roosevelt	4	NC	12	12	NC	NC
Ninepipes NWR	Lake	30	22	17	9	NC	1
Total		64	55	49	61	15	17

COTE (Common Tern)

site	County	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Bowdoin NWR	Phillips	NC	13	8	22	0	0
Freezout Lake WMA	Teton	42	10	24	31	36	45
Homestead Lake	Sheridan	NC	0	37	0	15	6
Katy Lake (Med. Lk. NWR)	Sheridan	0	0	59	69	19	14
Medicine Lake	Sheridan	0	8	0	0	25	58
Wild Horse Marsh&Res.	Phillips	0	0	0	15	19	21
Total		42	31	128	137	114	144

BLTE (Black Tern)

site	County	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Blackfoot WPA	Powell	6	19	6	NC	NC	0
Brown's Lake	Powell	6	14	12	NC	NC	20
Klienschmidt Lake	Powell	8	10	NC	NC	NC	0
Wild Horse Marsh&Res.	Phillips	0	4	20	0	0	0
Total		20	47	38	0	0	20

Non-target species:**RNGR (Red-necked Grebe)**

site	County	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Brown's Lake	Powell	5	2	6	NC	NC	3
Klienschmidt Lake	Powell	5	3	NC	NC	NC	7
Ninepipes NWR	Lake	0	1	6	0	NC	1
Total		10	6	12	0	0	11

WEGR (Western Grebe)

site	County	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Freezout Lake WMA	Teton	77**	52	53**	NC	31	8 PC
Ninepipes NWR	Lake	NC	79	43	NC	NC	84
Total		0	131	43	0	31	84

RBGU (Ring-billed Gull)

site	County	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Bowdoin NWR	Phillips	3519	3040	680	950	1519	2940***
Fort Peck Lake	Garfield			1300	1300	1200	750
Total		3519	3040	1980	2250	2719	3690

CAGU (California Gull)

site	County	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Bowdoin NWR	Phillips	913	375	50 PC	458	545	735***
Fort Peck Lake	Garfield			720	350	700	550
Total		913	375	720	808	1245	1285

Table 2. Colonial Nesting Waterbird Sites surveyed in 2014

Covered Sites:		
Site	County	Comments
Arod Lakes WPA	Teton	Would like a "within colony" survey
Blackfoot WPA	Powell	Added to key sites list in 2014
Bowdoin NWR	Phillips	Continue
Browns Lake	Powell	Added to key sites list in 2014
Canyon Ferry WMA	Broadwater	Would like a count of species other than AWPE and DCCO, perhaps a second, later, survey for terns.
Fort Peck Lake	Garfield	Continue and coordinate with COE on surveys
Freezout Lake	Teton	Continue
Great Falls, Steamboat Island	Cascade	First documented in 2014. Seems to be only large gulls, no need to continue annually, but easy to do from road.
Homestead Lake	Sheridan	Continue
Katy Lake/Lake Cr.	Sheridan	Continue
Kleinschmidt Lake WPA	Powell	Added to key sites list in 2014
Medicine lake NWR	Sheridan	Continue
Ninepipes NWR	Lake	Continue
Wild Horse Marsh & Reservoir	Phillips	Continue
Sites normally covered but missed in 2014:		
Flat Reservoir	Phillips	Continue
Manning Lake	Roosevelt	Continue
Sites we would like to add to the list of those annually surveyed:		
Benton Lake NWR	Cascade	
Red Rock Lakes NWR	Beaverhead	