

Oregon

Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program

Closed Basin Habitat Priorities

Biological Description

This focus area encompasses the closed stream systems of Summer Lake, Chewaucan River to its terminus in Lake Abert, Honey, Twentymile, and Deep Creeks, and the Warner Lakes. The topography is (rocky, rugged with steep canyon headwaters), streams flow from dry forest headwaters to flat high desert terminal lakes. Irrigation is prevalent with complex ditch systems. Wetland habitats and seasonal meadows persist in the lowlands and along the margins of the lakes. Seasonally available water results in spring migrant bird habitat in playas, meadows, marshes, and alkali flats. Uplands are characterized by expansive sage brush communities, including a portion of the sage grouse range in Oregon. Private lands are located in key areas for partnerships such as along major waterways, floodplains, and wetlands. Threats to habitat come from recreation, loss of ranching operations, invasive species, inappropriate livestock management, and development.

Priority Habitats/Key Resources

Passage & In-Stream Habitat	Shrub-Steppe
Riparian & Floodplain Habitat	Migratory birds (upland & wetland dependent)
Permanent and seasonal wetland basins	Hart Mountain NWR, Summer Lake Wildlife Area

Focus species: Warner sucker, interior redband trout, greater sage grouse, pygmy rabbit, migratory wetland and riparian birds, nearly 60 species of shrub steppe and grassland birds.

Important Factors

The Closed Basin region offers the Service unique opportunities to work within the ranching and agricultural communities to provide technical assistance and funding to proactively restore stream, wetland and sagebrush steppe habitats *while* sustaining healthy rangeland to benefit grazing.

Our focus in the Warner basin is recovery of Warner sucker (and benefits to redband trout) on Honey, Twentymile, and Deep Creeks to restore connectivity between fluvial and adfluvial habitats. Priority projects focus on: 1) passage & screening, 2) instream habitat, and 3) riparian restoration. Redband trout habitat and passage on the Chewaucan River continues to be a priority. The basin contains lakeshore, freshwater marsh, and alkali playas that provide habitat to hundreds of thousands of shorebirds & waterfowl. Compatible private lands restoration projects to enhance habitat features is a priority. Strategic shrub-steppe restoration will focus on intact habitats by targeting encroaching juniper and other exotic species to benefit 56 native birds, including shrub-steppe obligates such as species of concern, greater sage grouse & pygmy rabbit.

Current Partners program activity in the Closed Basin has been focused primarily on fish passage and screening as well as stream restoration in the Chewaucan River, as part of a large and successful partnership to restore interior redband trout populations. Strong partnership and participation with local SWCD and watershed council staff are resulting in increased landowner participation in screening diversions on Honey and Deep Creeks as well as some of our first shrub steppe restoration in the Warner basin. While this focus area is still in the partnership development phase, substantial gains have been made in the communities and with local watershed councils, SWCDs, state and federal partnerships, and landowner interest. Numbers of fundable projects meeting PFW criteria are expected to increase each year.