

## Loess Bluffs National Wildlife Refuge Monthly Habitat, Waterfowl and Eagle Survey Report

Date: 2026-01-06

### Document Purpose:

This document provides a summary of waterfowl and bald eagle use on Loess Bluffs NWR, updated weekly. Bird estimates are derived using Integrated Waterbird Management and Monitoring (IWMM) protocol using an area count (bird per acre), block or modified block count methods, for more information click on the following links for [IWMM Protocol](#) pages 18 – 21 and [U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service's estimating flock size](#) website.

### Habitat Conditions Summary:

Habitat conditions are rated based on ocular estimates of overall habitat condition, area (acres) of wetlands flooded and percentage of wetland frozen using [IWMM Protocol](#) pages 11 – 17.

| Habitat Condition             | 12/09/2025 data | 12/16/2025 data | 12/30/2025 data | 01/06/2026 data |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Habitat Conditions Rating     | Fair            | Fair            | Fair            | Fair            |
| Acres of wetlands flooded     | 3,330           | 3,330           | 3,330           | 3,400           |
| Percentage of Wetlands Frozen | 99%             | 99%             | 99%             | 80%             |

### Waterfowl Species Summary:

| Species                     | Number of Birds observed week of 12/09/2025 | Number of Birds observed week of 12/16/2025 | Number of Birds observed week of 12/30/2025 | Number of Birds observed week of 01/06/2026 |
|-----------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| Greater White-fronted Goose | 17,545                                      | 5,580                                       | 3,761                                       | 4,665                                       |
| Snow Goose                  | 544   | 16,000                                      | 435   | 20,105                                      |
| Ross's Goose                | 2   | Present                                     | Present                                     | Present                                     |
| Canada Goose                | 374   | 51  | 475   | 912   |
| Trumpeter Swan              | 1,977                                       | 1,994                                       | 3,158                                       | 3,422                                       |
| Tundra Swan                 | 13  | 2   | 4   | 0   |
| Wood Duck                   | 3   | 0   | 0   | 0   |
| Gadwall                     | 0   | 0   | 36  | 5   |
| American Wigeon             | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   |
| American Black Duck         | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   |
| Mallard                     | 4,883                                       | 8,425                                       | 11,991                                      | 7,030                                       |
| Blue-winged Teal            | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   |
| Cinnamon Teal               | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   |
| Northern Shoveler           | 0   | 15  | 35  | 1   |

| Species                | Number of Birds observed week of 12/09/2025 | Number of Birds observed week of 12/16/2025 | Number of Birds observed week of 12/30/2025 | Number of Birds observed week of 01/06/2026 |
|------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| Northern Pintail       | 25  | 5   | 3   | 6   |
| Green-winged Teal      | 190   | 0   | 1,220                                       | 105   |
| Canvasback             | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   |
| Redhead                | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   |
| Ring-necked Duck       | 40  | 0   | 0   | 30  |
| Scaup                  | 0   | 0   | 0   | 4   |
| Bufflehead             | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   |
| Common Goldeneye       | 0   | 0   | 0   | 151   |
| Hooded Merganser       | 0   | 0   | 0   | 5   |
| Common Merganser       | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   |
| Red-breasted Merganser | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   |
| Ruddy Duck             | 0   | 2   | 0   | 0   |
| Pied-billed Grebe      | 0   | 1   | 0   | 0   |
| Horned Grebe           | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   |
| Eared Grebe            | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   |
| American Coot          | 9   | 0   | 0   | 5   |

Species Group Summary:

| Species Group | Total number of birds observed week of 12/09/2025 | Total number of birds observed week of 12/16/2025 | Total number of birds observed week of 12/30/2025 | Total number of birds observed week of 01/06/2026 |
|---------------|---|---|---|---|
| Geese         | 18,465  | 21,631  | 4,671   | 25,682  |
| Dabblers      | 5,101   | 8,445   | 13,285  | 7,147   |
| Divers        | 40  | 2   | 0   | 190   |
| All Ducks     | 5,141   | 8,447   | 13,285  | 7,337   |
| Shorebirds    | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   |

Eagles Summary:

| Bald Eagles | Total number of birds observed 12/09/2025 | Total number of birds observed 12/16/2025 | Total number of birds observed 12/30/2025 | Total number of birds observed 01/06/2026 |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|
| Adult       | 202                                       | 214                                       | 359                                       | 173                                       |
| Immature    | 314                                       | 345                                       | 653                                       | 311                                       |
| All Eagles  | 516                                       | 559                                       | 1,012                                     | 484                                       |