

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Harts Basin

Site Code S.USCOHP*10490

IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 1163 Site Class PCA
Site Alias None

Network of Conservation Areas (NCA)

<u>NCA Site ID</u>	<u>NCA Site Code</u>	<u>NCA Site Name</u>
-		No Data

LOCATORS

Nation United States Latitude 385009N
State Colorado Longitude 1075631W

Quad Code Quad Name
38107-G8 Orchard City

County
Delta (CO)

Watershed Code Watershed Name
14020005 Lower Gunnison

SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation	5,500.00 Feet	1,676.00 Meters
Maximum Elevation	5,500.00 Feet	1,676.00 Meters

Site Description

Hart's Basin is the area surrounding Fruitgrowers Reservoir, which provides irrigation water to about 2700 acres of orchards and croplands in Delta County. Its shallow open water, mudflats and marshlands attract an enormous number of migratory waterfowl and shorebirds as well as a large variety of nesting birds. The most dramatic event annually is the arrival of the sandhill cranes on their migration between central New Mexico and their breeding grounds in the greater Yellowstone area. This is the most important resting spot for this population between the San Luis Valley and their breeding ground. The whooping cranes that were raised by sandhills were part of the flock that stopped here in 1996. At the end of March in 1997, over 10,000 sandhills used the reservoir as their overnight stop, fascinating local bird enthusiasts with their courtship and dominance displays (horn, personal communication). Local birders Steve McCall of the Bureau of Reclamation and Ron Lambeth of the Bureau of Land Management have proposed the site to the American Bird Conservancy as a "United States Important Bird Area". In their nomination criteria they cite: seven endangered, threatened, or vulnerable species which use the area (although CNHP does not track them unless they are known to be nesting); representative communities of waterbirds, shorebirds and wading birds; use by 1% or more of a species population (sandhill cranes, with 20,000 birds stopping during the spring migration); and use by over 2,500 wading birds, including sandhills, white-faced ibis, great blue herons, black-crowned night herons, snowy, cattle, and great egrets, and rails. The southwest willow fly-catcher has been observed at the reservoir, with its presence during June and July strongly suggesting that it is nesting there, although no nests have been confirmed. The only record of the interior least tern dates from 1980 (Chase 1980), and the species probably is no longer present. We show it as an historic record to document the fact that it was seen, and should be watched for in the future. It further emphasizes the singularity of Hart's Basin as an important bird site. Most of the land in the site is privately owned. The reservoir and a very small amount of surrounding land are owned by the Bureau of Reclamation. The dam is operated by the Orchard City Irrigation District, and the Black Canyon Audubon Society cooperates in management of the reservoir area. Water in the reservoir has been contaminated, testing high in fecal matter, from upstream sources. The lake may be in the process of eutrophication (overloading of organic materials, which depletes oxygen when they decompose) (Schroeder, personal communication).

Key Environmental Factors

No Data

Climate Description

Arid semi-desert.

Land Use History

No Data

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Cultural Features

No Data

SITE DESIGN

Site Map Y - Yes

Mapped Date 12/01/1997

Designer Lyon, M.J.

Boundary Justification

The site includes the reservoir to the high water mark, including the cottonwood stands and wetland vegetation, as well as adjacent arid land which is important as a buffer to reduce human disturbance to the birds.

Primary Area 643.36 Acres

260.36 Hectares

SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B3: High Biodiversity Significance

Biodiversity Significance Comments

This site is of major importance as a migratory stopover for waterfowl and shorebirds. The whooping crane occurrence is not considered viable, and does not influence the site's rank.

Other Values Rank No Data

Other Values Comments

No Data

LAND MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Land Use Comments

No Data

Natural Hazard Comments

No Data

Exotics Comments

No Data

Offsite

No Data

Information Needs

No Data

ASSOCIATED ELEMENTS OF BIODIVERSITY

<u>Element</u>			<u>Global</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Driving</u>
<u>State ID</u>	<u>State Scientific Name</u>	<u>State Common Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Site Rank</u>
17271	<i>Egretta thula</i>	Snowy Egret	G5	S2B	No
24693	<i>Sarcobatus vermiculatus / Distichlis spicata</i> Shrubland	Saline Bottomland Shrublands	G4	S2	No
19495	<i>Pelecanus erythrorhynchos</i>	American White Pelican	G3	S1B	No
22447	<i>Coluber constrictor mormon</i>	Western Yellowbelly Racer	G5T5	S3	No
19695	<i>Grus americana</i>	Whooping Crane	G1	SNA	Yes
17407	<i>Catoptrophorus semipalmatus</i>	Willet	G5	S1B	No
22447	<i>Coluber constrictor mormon</i>	Western Yellowbelly Racer	G5T5	S3	No

REFERENCES

<u>Reference ID</u>	<u>Full Citation</u>
-	No Data

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Additional Topics

No Data

VERSION

Version Date 12/01/1997

Version Author Lyon, M.J.

Disclaimer

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