Upland Sandpiper
Bartramania longicauda

Aves — Charadriiformes — Scolopacidae

CONSERVATION STATUS / CLASSIFICATION

Rangewide:	Secure (G5)
Statewide:	Critically imperiled breeding (S1B)
ESA:	No status
USFS:	Region 1: No status; Region 4: No status
BLM:	Peripheral (Type 4)
IDFG:	Protected nongame

BASIS FOR INCLUSION
Lack of essential information pertaining to status in Idaho.

TAXONOMY
In the same subfamily as curlews and phalaropes (Tringidae), yet in a unique genus, the upland sandpiper is a medium-sized sandpiper with a long, thin neck, small head, large dark eyes, thin wings, and a long tail. It has yellowish legs and feet (Bolster 1980, McAllister and Demers 1993). In flight, a white leading edge to the wing is visible and blackish primary wing feathers contrast markedly with the brown secondaries and upperparts. This species has a distinctive call that includes a whistled kip-ip-ip-ip that is often heard at night and windy, prolonged whistles. There is no subspecies (Houston and Bowen 2001).

DISTRIBUTION AND ABUNDANCE
The upland sandpiper breeds in North America from north-central Alaska southeast to central Maine and southern New Brunswick, south to Virginia, west to central Colorado and patchy locations in eastern Washington, northeastern Oregon, and Idaho. Most of the breeding population is concentrated in the Great Plains. Populations west of the Rockies are rare and patchy (McAllister and Demers 1993). Wintering grounds include South America from Surinam and northern Brazil south to central Argentina and Uruguay. Upland sandpipers were discovered in Kootenai Co., Idaho in 1897 and have been reported to breed in small colonies, precariously, from the 1950s (Thieman 1988, McAllister and Demers 1993, Taylor and Trost 1987). Not seen every year in the state, breeding has been confirmed in the Panhandle (Kootenai Co.), and is suspected in the west-central region (Valley Co.) (Stephens and Sturts 1997). There has been no recent breeding records of the upland sandpiper in Idaho (S. Sturts, pers. comm.).

POPULATION TREND
Upland sandpipers declined dramatically at the turn of the century as a result of intensive market hunting (Bolster 1980). The populations rebounded when hunting was prohibited with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1916 yet has made another decline, mostly in the northeast and northwest, due to modern farming methods, conversion of prairie to croplands, fragmentation, and housing developments. These human activities

are reflected in Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) data which report a significant increase from 1966–1979 (+3.1% per year) in the U.S., and then a significant decline from 1980–2004 (-1.0% per year; Sauer et al. 2005). Populations east of the Rockies are in steep decline or are already extirpated (McAllister and Demers 1993). In Idaho, trend data are not available.

HABITAT AND ECOLOGY

Only the killdeer (*Charadrius vociferus*), mountain plover (*C. montanus*), and long-billed curlew (*Numenius americanus*) show a similar strategy of feeding and nesting in upland prairie habitat. Preferred habitat includes a wide variety of croplands, pastures, wet or high-elevation meadows, and native prairie types over relatively smooth topography (McAllister and Demers 1993). Nesting habitat vegetation is normally not over 10–40 cm (3.9–15.7 in.) tall at the time of nest building and often near forest-grassland edge or forest-sagebrush edge. Wooden fence posts also appear to be associated with sandpiper use. Nests are usually hidden within a clump of vegetation, usually grasses and some forbs. The nest is a grass-lined depression with a normal clutch of 4 eggs. Historical locations surveyed in Idaho and Washington in 1993 turned up no official sighting and no nest, yet some unconfirmed reports were made during the summer (McAllister and Demers 1993). Nesting birds may still occur in less than a dozen sites in Oregon. Whether nesting still occurs in Washington and Idaho is unknown.

ISSUES

Loss of habitat to agriculture and urban development and heavy grazing is thought to be the biggest factor in upland sandpiper decline (Houston and Bowen 2001). In northern Idaho and eastern Washington, grassland habitat in the Rathdrum Prairie and Spokane Valley area has been largely lost to housing and commercial developments (Thieman 1988, McAllister and Demers 1993).

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Additional surveys of historical nesting sites should occur to verify the eradication of the upland sandpiper from the state. Any remaining habitat in Idaho and eastern Washington should be extensively surveyed. If any upland sandpipers are discovered in the area, extreme efforts should be taken to work with landowners to protect remaining habitat.

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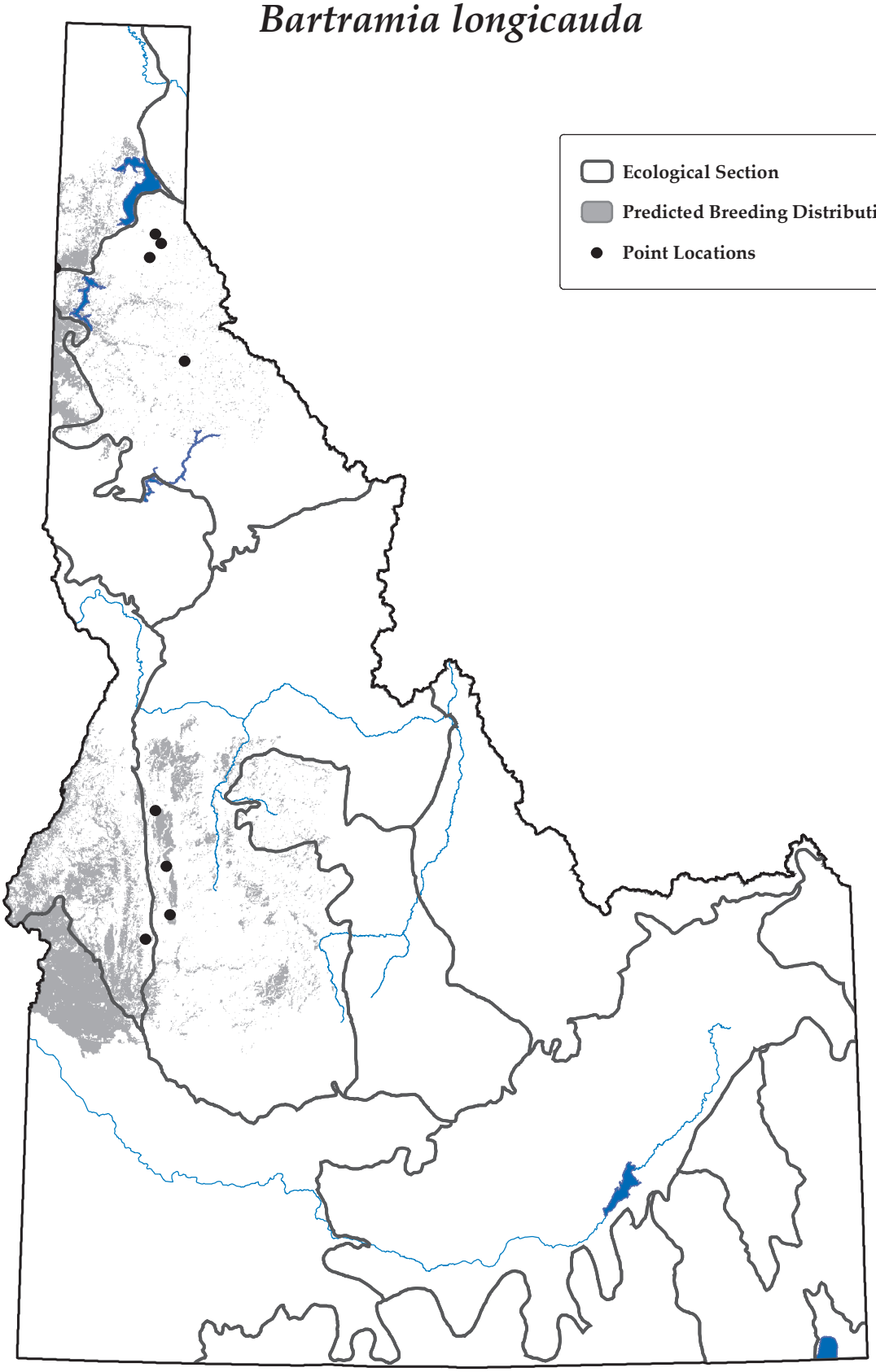

Map created on September 21, 2005
and prepared by Idaho Conservation Data Center.
Sources: Point data are from Idaho Conservation Data Center, Idaho Department of Fish and Game (2005). Predicted distribution is from the Wildlife Habitat Relationships Models (WHR), A Gap Analysis of Idaho: Final Report. Idaho Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, Moscow, ID (Scott et al. 2002). Predicted distribution is approximate (for more information, go to http://www.wildlife.uidaho.edu/idgap/idgap_report.asp).

0 20 40 80 Kilometers

0 20 40 80 Miles