

Southern Oregon-Northeastern California (SONEC): Oregon Factsheet



What is SONEC?

SONEC is a priority landscape that is continentally significant for migratory birds and is an important agricultural region for livestock production on working lands.



Socioeconomic Values

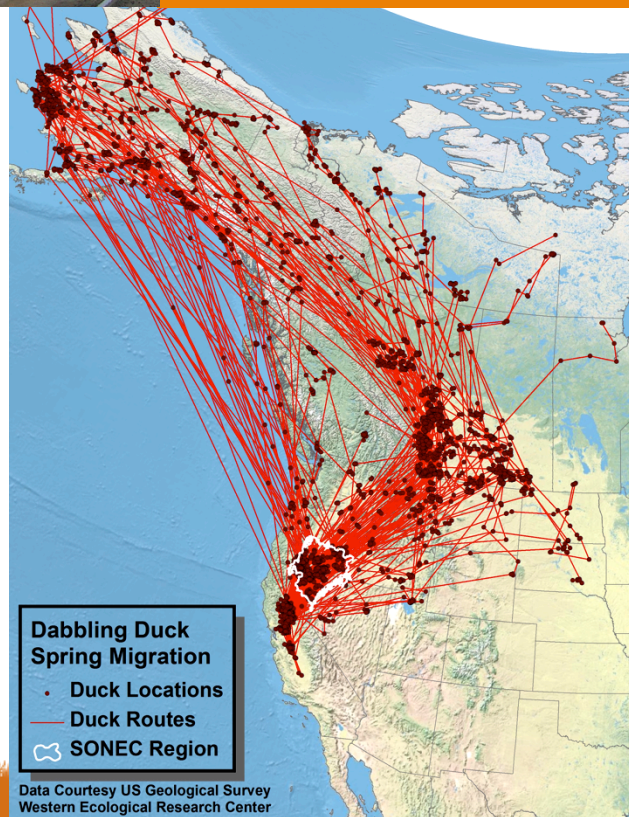
- SONEC is ranching country and livestock production has sustained rural communities here since the late 1800s.
- Flood-irrigated pastures and wet meadows provide valuable livestock forage through haying and grazing management practices.
- The abundance of wildlife makes the region a preferred destination for outdoor enthusiasts and this supports rural economies.



The Southern Oregon portion of SONEC consists of closed basins extending from Klamath and Lake counties east to Harney County.

Ecological Values

- SONEC is one of the most important areas for migratory birds in North America. This region supports up to 70% of the Pacific Flyway's bird populations that pass through during migration.
- Private and public wetlands here serve as a crucial migration hub between wintering and breeding areas across the hemisphere and regionally important breeding habitat for many priority bird species.
- Flood irrigation on hay pastures and wet meadows mimic historic hydrologic patterns and functions, providing valuable ecological services, such as groundwater recharge and habitat diversity.
- The region has also received national attention due to its value for greater sage-grouse. Wet meadows on public lands provide critical late-summer habitat for these sage-grouse and their broods.



Data Courtesy US Geological Survey
Western Ecological Research Center

Oregon Partners

PRIVATE and NGO

- Ducks Unlimited
- Eastern Oregon Agricultural Research Center
- Harney Basin Wetland Initiative
- High Desert Partnership
- Klamath Bird Observatory
- Klamath Lake Land Trust
- National Audubon Society
- Northwest Rangeland Trust
- Oregon Duck Hunters Association
- Oregon Habitat Joint Venture
- Oregon Wildlife
- Point Blue Conservation Science
- Private Landowners
- The Nature Conservancy
- The Wetlands Conservancy

STATE AGENCIES

- Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife
- Oregon Department of State Lands
- Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board
- Oregon State University Extension

EDUCATION & RESEARCH

- Oregon State University
- Portland State University
- University of Montana, Avian Science Center

FEDERAL AGENCIES

- Bureau of Land Management
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
- U.S. Geological Survey

LOCAL AGENCIES

- Local Governments
- Soil and Water Conservation Districts
- Watershed Councils

TRIBES

- Burns Paiute Tribe

Conservation Challenges

- Balancing the migratory bird habitat needs with other resource issues, such as water availability and quality, riparian health, fish passage, non-native carp management, etc.
- Communicating the values of flood-irrigated wet meadows
- Updating aging and inefficient irrigation infrastructure
- Conversion of flood irrigation to other forms of land management
- Establishing conservation funding and capacity



Conservation Solutions

Robust partnerships exist in the Oregon portion of SONEC and stakeholders are working to overcome conservation bottlenecks by:

- Providing science tools and field capacity
- Supporting OWEB and other local watershed initiatives
- Developing innovative funding mechanisms
- Assistance and incentives for private landowners
- Promoting sustainable land-use practices compatible with wildlife & Ag
- Addressing regulatory issues
- Implementing communication strategies

