

Dr. Ryan Burnett Presentation Summary

California Gulls are found only in western North America. They winter along the Pacific coast and breed at inland lakes, especially saline lakes. Historically, Mono Lake supported one of the largest breeding populations of the species in the world.

In response to growing concern about the health of the Mono Lake ecosystem and its effects on the gull population, Point Blue began studying breeding California Gulls there in 1983. Since then, we have conducted annual counts of nesting gulls and the number of chicks produced. This presentation will cover California Gull life history and details about the Mono Lake population, including trends in nesting numbers, reproductive success, and lake-wide chick production.

We will also summarize two studies on the factors affecting nesting population size and chick production conducted at the Lake and discuss how lake levels have shaped—and may continue to shape—the gull population, and provide important context to understand why Mono Lake is important to California Gulls in California and beyond.