

Threats to Birds That the Utah Inland Port Presents

7.5 to 10 Million birds use Great Salt Lake annually, many of whom migrate thousands of miles. (As a result of these very significant numbers, Great Salt Lake has been designated a Globally Important Bird Area and is included in the Western Shorebird Reserve Network). The Great Salt Lake Ecosystem is a global treasure.

The Utah Inland Port being planned along the south shore of Great Salt Lake will be a massive project that will introduce a tremendous amount of pollution. Unless very careful study is conducted and smart design is implemented, the health of the birds of Great Salt Lake and the people of the Salt Lake valley will be seriously endangered due to environmental degradation. Here are the environmental threats this port poses to the birds:

Air Pollution -- Birds suffer greatly from air pollution, just as we humans do. They suffer the same respiratory and cardiovascular consequences. Unless extraordinary planning and use of green technology is implemented, air pollution will escalate from the diesel engines of trains and commercial trucks, and the car emissions from increased traffic in the area.

Noise Pollution – Noise is a great disturbance to resting, nesting, foraging and staging birds. The port will likely create noise 24/7.

Light Pollution – Light at night is very damaging to migrating birds who use the stars and the night sky to navigate. Bright lights at night create confusion and disorientation, and can result in throwing off the birds' timing of their migration. This can cause birds to arrive too early or too late to take advantage of available food sources.

Water Pollution - Toxic run-off will likely increase in the area and will enter the ground water system as a result of the area being paved over.

Collision Hazards – The port will bring many tall structures to the port area. These will likely include stacks of shipping containers, cranes, communications towers, oil tanks, silos, etc. As the port is in the direct flight path of migrating birds, these tall structures will present extreme collision hazards.

Invasive Weeds – With the constant movement through the Port of trains and trucks from other parts of the country, it is expected that noxious weeds will inadvertently be brought into the area. Noxious weeds aggressively invade and outcompete native vegetation. Birds depend on native vegetation for food and shelter and the variety of insects that rely on native host plants. When habitat composed of preferred native

vegetation is replaced by plant species that birds or their food sources cannot utilize, their habitat is degraded or lost.

Increased Chemical Load From Mosquito Abatement -- Increased human activity in this fragile area will result in increased application of chemicals to control for mosquitos and other noxious biting insects. This will result in a reduction of the mosquito population which birds rely on as an important food source for the other insects that birds eat. The chemicals used also kill off non-target species, especially other invertebrates, that are also important food sources for foraging birds. These insects and invertebrates are elemental in maintaining a healthy wetland food web.

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