



Spencer J. Cox

Governor
Declaration

Whereas, 2021 marks the 30th anniversary of Great Salt Lake's Western Hemispheric Shorebird Reserve Network designation;

Whereas, preserving Great Salt Lake and its wetlands is essential to protect hemispheric and global populations of millions of migratory birds;

Whereas, Great Salt Lake is the namesake of our state's capital city, an integral part of our cultural heritage, and an iconic part of the state of Utah's wild and natural landscape;

Whereas, Great Salt Lake and its resources provide significant contributions to Utah's economy, including the brine shrimp, mineral extraction, recreational opportunities, and is internationally and hemispherically renowned habitat for birds;

Whereas, in 2014, the Utah Legislature recognized these attributes pursuant to enrolled H.J.R.20, Joint Resolution Recognizing the Significance of the Great Salt Lake;

Whereas, in 2019, the Utah Legislature unanimously passed, and the Governor signed, H.C.R.10 - Concurrent Resolution to "Address Declining Water Levels of the Great Salt Lake" to protect the Lake and its resources for Utah's future generations;

Whereas, Great Salt Lake is home to five Important Bird Areas (IBAs) of Global Significance for biodiversity and birds;

Whereas, Great Salt Lake and its wetlands provide breeding, staging and stopover habitat for over 10 million waterfowl, shorebirds and other waterbirds;

Whereas, Great Salt Lake, its wetlands and uplands provide habitat for 338 species of birds;

Whereas, Great Salt Lake and the surrounding wetlands create vital habitat in the Western Hemisphere, supporting more than 1.4 million breeding and migrating shorebirds annually, including nearly one-third of the global population of Wilson's Phalaropes, more than 56% of the global population of American Avocets; 37% of the North American population of Black-necked Stilts, and 21% of the North American breeding population of Snowy Plovers;

Whereas, Shorebirds rely on specialized habitats and food sources to survive, but these resources are increasingly under threat from human disturbance, habitat loss and degradation, increasing predation, and climate change;

Whereas, Great Salt Lake is part of a network of wetland ecosystems throughout the Western Hemisphere critical to migratory birds that rely on its unique features, including shorebird species travelling from breeding grounds in the Arctic tundra to non-breeding grounds in southernmost South America (and back) each year;

Whereas, the Western Hemispheric Shorebird Reserve Network is a science-based, partnership-driven, conservation initiative for protecting the ecological integrity of critical habitats for shorebirds throughout the Americas;

Whereas, Great Salt Lake's designation as Western Hemispheric Shorebird Reserve Network site makes it part of a voluntary local, regional and international network of sites used by shorebirds, that develops public awareness, scientific inquiry, management, and generates conservation funding opportunities for shorebirds; and,

Whereas, in March 1991, Great Salt Lake was designated a Site of Hemispheric Importance to shorebirds by the Western Hemispheric Shorebird Reserve Network;

Now, Therefore, I, Spencer J. Cox, Governor of the great State of Utah, do hereby declare 2021 as

The Year of the Shorebird in Utah

and

The Year of the Western Hemispheric Shorebird Reserve Network Site at the Great Salt Lake



Spencer J. Cox
Governor