



the Pelican

Lahontan Audubon Society • P.O. Box 2304 • Reno, Nevada 89505 • www.nevadaaudubon.org • 775-324-BIRD

Mission statement: To preserve and improve the remaining habitat of birds and other wildlife, restore historical habitat, and educate the public, with emphasis on children, providing vision to all about our unique Nevada environments.

**MAY/JUNE
2007**

vol. 44, no. 5

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Membership

*Submissions for the July/August issue
are due June 1, 2007*

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Date: Fourth Tuesday of the month
Time: Social at 6:30 p.m. Program starts at 7 p.m.
Location: South Valleys Library
15650A Wedge Parkway, Reno
Exterior door, west side of building

Directions to South Valleys Library: Take Hwy 395 to the Mt. Rose Hwy. Head west on the Mt. Rose Hwy and take the first right turn onto Wedge Parkway, just past Raley's shopping center. Go about one mile on Wedge Parkway and look for the boldly designed, mustard yellow library on the right.

May 22 -- Mark Vollmer and Lynda Nelson -- Seasons of the Wilbur D. May Arboretum at Rancho San Rafael Park, Reno

This presentation will have two parts. First, Lynda Nelson, the Washoe County Parks Natural Resource Planner and former horticulturist for the May Arboretum for 15 years, will present plans for the new visitor center to be built at the Wilbur D. May Arboretum. She will also give us a schedule of upcoming gardening workshops plus information on the annual fundraising Wine and Roses event held in June. Then Mark Vollmer, an award-winning photographer, freelance writer and geologist based in Reno, will present a 22-minute slide show, "Seasons of the Wilbur D. May Arboretum," featuring his images of the arboretum throughout the seasons choreographed to recorded music. The multi-media program, two years in the making, features the gardens in their seasonal splendor including native flowering plants, birds, small mammals, and events such as the balloon races and garden tours.

There are no LAS meetings during the summer months. The next meeting will be Tuesday, September 25.

FIELD TRIPS

Christiane Omer
Janet Hudson

775-354-2634
775-303-1541

happycpo@aol.com
cookiejargirl@yahoo.com

Field trips are free to Audubon members and non-members. Birders of all skill levels are encouraged to participate. We strongly encourage all interested participants to pre-register with field trip leaders. Pre-registration provides leaders with an idea of the number of participants to expect and contact information so the leaders can reach you in the event of trip changes or cancellations. Dress for the weather and bring something to eat and drink.

For information on field trips added after this publication, check the Lahontan Audubon Society web site at www.nevadaaudubon.org.

Saturday, May 5

McCarran Ranch, Truckee River The Nature Conservancy

Time: 7:30 a.m.

Trip Leaders: Janet Hudson, 775-303-1541,
cookiejargirl2000@yahoo.com
Christiane Omer, 775-354-2634,
happycpo@aol.com

Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the McDonald's/Chevron Station on Vista and Brierley near I-80, off exit 21. Note that Brierley is called Salomon on the right hand branch of the street. Turn left off the exit onto Vista. McCarran Ranch is about 15 minutes east of Reno. Birding the ranch should provide a good opportunity to see spring riparian migrants. Bring water and snacks and be prepared for a few hours of birding. Reservations required and group size is limited to 12.

Saturday, May 5

Swan lake Nature Study Area

Time: 8:30 a.m.

Clean-up Leader: Bob Goodman, 775-972-7848, Pandion36@aol.com

Here's a chance to contribute to the beauty of Nevada. We'll help our birds and other animals by cleaning up their home at Swan Lake Nature Study Area. Please meet us at the Lemmon Valley McDonald's parking lot off exit 74 of 395, and we'll organize from there. If folks have a pickup we can use for hauling junk to the transfer station, it would be helpful. Rubber boots are advised, for those who have them, for working in the marsh.

Saturday, May 12

Silver Saddle Ranch

Time: 7:30 a.m.

Trip Leader: Nancy Santos,

775-884-1570, las@att.net

Sponsored by LAS and Friends of Silver Saddle Ranch (FOSSR), this spring trip to Silver Saddle Ranch is the annual FOSSR May general meeting. The trip includes a walk along riparian habitat adjacent to the Carson River. Other habitats along the way include agricultural fields, sagebrush and willows. The diversity of habitats provides for a diversity of bird species to be observed. All levels of birders are welcome and beginning birders are encouraged to attend. Please contact Nancy to register for the trip.

Saturday-Sunday, June 23-24

Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge

Work Day and Field Trip

Place: Little Sheldon Headquarters

Project Leader: Michael Goddard,

Stillwater NWR (775) 423-5128

The Sheldon work project is on for June 23 and 24. The purpose of this trip is a Saturday fence removal with potluck, and a Sunday refuge tour. Please RSVP Mike Goddard so we know how many people to expect. The work day will be Saturday, June 23. Sunday will be a tour with Brian Day, Sheldon NWR Manager. We will be removing fence on the west side of the refuge. Bring gloves,

sunscreen, plenty of liquid refreshment, fence tools, wire cutters, buckets (for scrap wire and clips) and long-bladed screwdrivers if you have them. Plan on eating lunch in the field on Saturday. Make sure your spare tire is up to snuff as we have encountered flat tires in the past on our adventures at Sheldon. Fuel up at Cedarville, Alturas, Gerlach or Denio. I heartily recommend caravanning with others and having a Nevada Gazeteer in hand.

Bring your own main course and a side dish to share for the Saturday night pot luck. We will be camping out in the yard at the little Sheldon HQ. Water and a restroom are available. There should be plenty of wildlife to keep us company. Sage Grouse, Pronghorn, Great-horned Owls, and Sandhill Cranes are some we have seen in the past. Be sure to bring a little insect repellent in case the bugs are out. Mike will arrive Friday afternoon to greet early arrivals.

For directions, go to the LAS web site at www.nevadaaudubon.org.

Saturday, June 30

Birding and Wildflower Trip, Tahoe City

Time: 7:30 a.m.

Trip Leader: Richard Carlson, 530-581-0624, rccarl@pacbell.net

LAS is sponsoring a small-group birding trip to the north Lake Tahoe area. Enjoy a profusion of birds and wildflowers as the group searches for such species as Mountain Bluebird, Willow Flycatcher, Red-Breasted Sapsucker, McGillivray's Warbler, Black-backed Woodpecker, and Pine Grosbeak in Tahoe's flower-covered alpine meadows. The area also has tree carvings by Basque shepherds and an old Basque oven. Bring a bag lunch to enjoy Calliope Hummingbirds from a private deck overlooking Lake Tahoe. Free, but reservations are required. Contact leader Richard Carlson for meeting place.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

The Pelican is the official newsletter of the Lahontan Audubon Society and is published six times annually. Subscriptions are paid for as part of the dues of LAS or the National Audubon Society. LAS welcomes gifts, donations, and bequests in general, or gifts in honor or memory of relatives and friends. Such donations will be used as specified or, if unspecified, will be used to support LAS education and conservation projects. All donations are tax deductible.

WHERE TO WRITE:

Keep conservation to the forefront. Write your elected officials and tell them how you feel:

Senator Harry Reid
400 S. Virginia St. #902
Reno, NV 89501
Toll-free: 1-866-736-7343

Senator John Ensign
400 S. Virginia St. #738
Reno, NV 89501
Reno phone: 775-686-5770

Representative Dean Heller
400 S. Virginia St. #502
Reno, NV 89501
Reno phone: 775-686-5760

Governor Jim Gibbons
101 N. Carson St.
Carson City, NV 89710
775-684-5670

IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS PROGRAM

Robin Powell

775-247-2798
rpowell@audubon.org

New Beginnings

Good day! My name is Robin Powell and I am the new Nevada Director of Bird Conservation. I want to briefly tell you about how we are going to build on the success of Don McIvor's efforts and the new direction of the program.

Currently, there are 39 Important Bird Areas (IBA) recognized within Nevada. All of the IBAs are unique and have special challenges to them. The IBA Program will be identifying and addressing any threats or risks to the habitats of those IBAs. As we all know, habitat fragmentation and loss are the primary threats to bird populations. Therefore, our primary goal is to protect, preserve, and enhance the IBAs to ensure habitat sustainability. Most habitat degradation risks to the IBAs include invasive plants (or noxious weeds), altered fire regime, off-road vehicle use, and grazing mismanagement. Other resource concerns are water quality and quantity issues, urban development or other land development projects, and change of land use. All of these factors contribute to the decline of bird populations in Nevada and throughout the world.

On the bright side, there are many Nevada residents that put a high value on wildlife and birds and work diligently to

protect and conserve bird habitat. Therefore, another key goal of the Nevada IBA Program is to facilitate positive and effective partnership development with all stakeholders (i.e., land managers, land owners, grassroots organizations, and interested parties) within or adjacent to an IBA. The coordinated effort yields a higher rate of successes and long-term effectiveness. The IBA site designation and the development of partnerships will be catalysts for many "on-the-ground" conservation efforts. The IBA program will coordinate with private and public entities to coordinate resources, efforts, and site monitoring.

Here is a listing of some of the future activities that the IBA Program will engage in:

- ⦿ Initialize the "Adopt an Important Bird Area" program
- ⦿ Second round of IBA nominations
- ⦿ IBA Program capacity building
- ⦿ Improve coordination with California and Idaho IBA Programs for interstate IBAs
- ⦿ Increase public awareness and outreach for proper land management and best management practices

- ⦿ Develop and institute on-the-ground projects that address the resource concerns at high-risk IBAs based on the conservation planning

I look forward to working with all of you and building relationships that will translate to the field for the protection and long-term success of the Important Bird Areas of Nevada.

— Robin Powell

IBA Looking for a Truck Donation

The Nevada Important Bird Areas are located in some of the most remote spots in Nevada. The NV IBA Program is seeking donations for a reliable, 4-wheel drive vehicle to help the program with the monitoring of the sites. If you have a vehicle or leads, please contact Robin Powell, NV Director of Bird Conservation at 775-247-2798.

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S PERCH

New Birding Guide to Reno and Beyond

The original *A Birding Guide to Reno and Beyond* was published by LAS in late 2000. That effort was inspired by John Biewener's guide from some 30 years earlier. *A Birding Guide to Reno – Second Edition* now makes its debut in 2007!

This fully revised edition began with review and road tests of the 20 areas by LAS volunteers Jane Burnham, Ali Chaney, Ron Conkey, Bob Goodman, Teresa Gubanich, Jacque Lowery, Jim Lytle, Don McIvor, Nancy Santos, Bonnie Wagner and the two editors Alan Gubanich and me. Alan Wallace proposed a new area and prepared a first draft of that section. Detailed editing of the guide began last summer and concluded mid-March, after volunteer proofreading assistance by Bob Goodman, Georgia Rohrs, and Teresa Gubanich.

The guide is again in convenient, plastic spiral binding and archival paper. The covers inside and out are in color with bird and area photography by Bob Goodman, Steve Ting, and Alan Gubanich. The guide has been greatly enhanced by revised and new maps created by Tim Herrick through the cooperation of his employer, Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW).

In addition to the overview map, new planning tools have been added in the form of two mileage tables and a time considerations chart. An expanded section on finding selected species has been brought to the front of the book. Side trips are now listed with their respective areas in the table of contents, so that they will not be overlooked.

Grants for publication from Nevada Commission on Tourism

and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service were secured by Janet Schmidt of the USFWS, who also initiated a collaboration with NDOW. This project involves a tremendous number of LAS volunteer hours. We are excited about the publication, and we hope you enjoy *A Birding Guide to Reno and Beyond – Second Edition*. Order forms are here on page 7 as well as on our web site.

Also, we congratulate and salute our sister organization Great Basin Bird Observatory (GBBO) on the publication of its handsome, monumental work, *Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Nevada*, University of Nevada Press, 2007. See www.gbbo.org.

– Karen L. Kish

LAS Needs Membership Chair

LAS needs a volunteer to fill the Membership Chair. This position involves straightforward tasks, mainly light record keeping and some routine correspondence. At most, it takes an average of about one to two hours per week. Current Membership Chair Judy Kretzer will provide assistance in a smooth transition. If you would like further information or feel that you might be able to help LAS in this activity, please contact Judy Kretzer at judykretzer@yahoo.com / telephone 826-6891 or Karen Kish at klkish@pyramid.net / telephone 841-1180.

LAS Elections in May

Our active Audubon chapter has always been privileged to have talented, motivated, and environmentally-concerned individuals who have given real commitment to keeping our chapter strong in birding, conservation, and education. Our annual chapter elections will be held at the beginning of the General Meeting on May 22.

Officers – President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Recording Secretary – are elected annually. Trustees, who help direct chapter activities as voting board members, serve three-year terms. Seats #6 and #7 are up for election this year.

The Board meets the first Tuesday evening of months September through June from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm, following a dinner-social hour. The Board and various committee chairs also gather for a one-day strategic planning retreat during one of the summer months.

You may nominate yourself or any local or national member in good standing, subject to that person's acceptance of nomination. We encourage you to become involved in the group of officers and trustees who form our Board. Contact Alan Gubanich at 857-0191, e-mail aag@unr.nevada.edu; or Bob Goodman at 972-7848, e-mail pandion36@aol.com, with any questions or nominations.

DONORS

Trousdale Memorial - \$100

Jack W Cochran

American Avocet \$50 - \$99

Willis Allen

John Lane

Mountain Bluebird \$20 - \$49

Odetta Coughlin

Ruby-crowned Kinglet \$10 - \$19

Denise Trease

Stephanie K. Sander

CONSERVATION CORNER

LAS, Partners Meet With Legislators and Congress

On March 27, 2007, our organization continued its efforts to reach out to our legislators and encourage them to support the State Wildlife Grants program by helping host a Legislative Breakfast. Conservation partners, including the Nevada Department of Wildlife, Allison MacKenzie law firm, Lahontan Audubon Society, Nevada Ducks Unlimited, Nevada Wildlife Federation, Nevada Waterfowl Association, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and The Nature Conservancy, gathered together to share with our state lawmakers our commitment to wildlife conservation and encourage them to support this program. It was a great morning spent visiting with legislators and fellow conservation partners. Highlights of the morning were Department of Wildlife staff with their feathered friends; a Barn Owl, Red-tailed Hawk and a Great Horned Owl, as well as, a wonderful video highlighting the need to protect natural resources for future generations. As of this writing, the bill to secure state matching funds for this program is still in draft request format. We hope that by the time you read this, it will have been read on the floor of the Assembly and be making its way through committee! We'll keep you updated on our website. Thanks for your support.

Some exciting things have happened regarding State Wildlife Grants at the federal level. LAS participated in efforts to encourage our Congressional delegates to support SWG funding at the national level by flying back to D.C. February 27-28 to meet with them directly. The large coalition effort, known as Teaming with Wildlife, of which we are a partner, is seeking \$85 million for fiscal year 2008. Robin Powell, our new IBA Director, along with LAS member Dave McNinch (Wildlife Commissioner), Hazel Wong from The Nature Conservancy and Laura Richards of Department of Wildlife attended to discuss this important grant program and the need to fully fund it to help Nevada's wildlife resources. If the program is funded at the level requested, Nevada would get \$1.2 million toward conservation projects (assuming the

state can provide the matching funds). The really exciting news... all three of our House delegates signed a 'dear colleague' letter supporting this effort and encouraging their colleagues to do so as well. To show how far we've come, last year Shelley Berkeley was the only member to sign the letter. We are grateful to our representatives for showing their support of this worthwhile program!
— *Ali Chaney*

2007 Birds of the Truckee Meadows

LAS is once again sponsoring five evening classes on bird identification. The classes will be held at the Nevada Department of Wildlife building, 1100 Valley Road, starting at 7 p.m. All five classes cost \$40, or individual sessions are \$10. Birding books and guides will also be available.

Classes are:

- Tuesday, May 8 - Mountain Birds with Jim Eidel
- Tuesday, May 15 - Backyard Birds with Alan Gubanich
- Tuesday, May 22 - Birds of Lakes and Marshes with Larry Neel
- Wednesday, May 30 - Birds of Prey with Bob Goodman
- Tuesday, June 5 - Birds and Birding with David Jickling /
- June 9 - Field Trip

Those attending are asked to arrive at the classroom off the north parking lot a little before 7 p.m. to expedite sign-ins. For questions and reservations (none really needed): Bob Goodman, 972-7848, or Pandion36@aol.com.

Field Trip Report

Saturday, March 24

Sierra Valley and Yuba Pass, Calif.

Leader: Alan Gubanich

The McDonald's in Lemmon Valley overflowed with 18 eager birders on Saturday morning. Folks downed their Egg McMuffins, and then caravanned to our first stop in Vinton. There we saw two Sandhill Cranes flying overhead, Red-tailed Hawks, and beautiful Western Meadow Larks singing gloriously. We meandered westward across Sierra Valley enjoying the great weather as well as spectacular views of Rough-legged Hawk, Northern Harrier, Sage Thrasher, American Kestrel, Horned Lark, and three species of swallows. We also saw Greater White-fronted Goose, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Cinnamon Teal, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Bufflehead, Pied-billed Grebe, Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Greater Yellow-legs, American Avocet, and more. The group headed over Yuba Pass to Bassett's Station on Highway 49 for some grub and a local American Dipper. Birding Yuba Pass did not produce many birds, but we did get to trudge through the snow for some Dark-eyed Juncos. A brief stop at Vista Point produced cawing Common Ravens, Mountain Chickadees and a gorgeous view of the valley. The highlight of the day was also the last stop of the day at the willows on Hwy 49 (directions in the Reno birding guide). As soon as we stopped, people began exclaiming over the myriad of birds, "Look, there's a Cassin's Finch, and a White-headed Woodpecker," and "There's a Northern Flicker," and "Look there, at the tree (which tree?) there's a Red-breasted Sapsucker, and a Hairy Woodpecker." It was like a nature show gone nuts! We added Brown Creeper, Yellow-rumped Warbler, American Robin, and White breasted Nuthatch then called it a day. In all we saw 52 species of birds and had good company, good laughs, and a great time.

— *Submitted by Christiane Omer*

BIRDS IN TOWN

by Alan Wallace

Ah, a typical February and March in northern Nevada towns. In early February, the waterfowl were searching for traces of open water after a long frigid spell, and hungry, near-torpid birds feasted at our feeders. By late March, **Red-tailed Hawks** were nesting, **Cedar Waxwings** and **American** and **Lesser Goldfinches** were scarfing down the new buds on trees, and **Killdeer** and **American Robins** were yanking grubs and worms from the soft ground. March also brings the first noticeable signs of migration, sometimes with a bang and other years, like this one, much more subtly. In the wetlands, a few **American Avocets**, **Black-necked Stilts**, **Sandhill Cranes**, **Marsh Wrens**, and **Yellow-headed Blackbirds** made their first appearances, just not in the burst of numbers as in some springs, and only one (count it, one) small flock of **Tree Swallows** had found its way north by the end of March. A few **Turkey Vultures** tipsily soared over towns in western Nevada in mid March, yet their early numbers were low as well. As usual, wintering birds like **Tundra Swans** and **Golden-crowned Sparrows** lingered into late March, and others, such as the **Yellow-rumped Warblers**, disappeared suddenly early in the month, to be replaced by spring-resident **Cassin's Finches** in the lowlands. In Austin, Frank Whitman noted the annual March coincidence of the departure of **Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches** and the bloom of the spring crocus. Still, one could tell that spring was here even with one's eyes closed: the breeding calls of **Mourning Doves**, **California Quail**, and **Dark-eyed Juncos** filled the morning air, and robins were vocal from before first light until well after the artificially lengthened end of the day. So, although the shift from winter into spring was less pronounced this year, it did happen, paving the way for the breeding season to come.

The Great Backyard Bird Count was held in the middle of February, and participants in sixteen northern Nevada towns contributed their sightings. As usual, the reports reflected the diverse backyard habitats within the state, and the mention of **White-headed Woodpecker**, **Juniper Titmouse**, and **American Dipper** gave clues to where those yards might be located. **Eurasian Collared-Doves** were seen in Fernley, Spring Creek, Wadsworth, and Baker, widely scattered locations and settings that show the steady range expansion of this species. **Pine Siskins**, which recently have restricted themselves to eastern Nevada, appeared in small numbers in western Nevada as well. Although not exactly an irruption, their presence after the long absence was noted by several birders.

Every two-month period brings a few sightings of unusual birds and behaviors. A couple of **Mew Gulls** and a **Eurasian Wigeon** visited the Swan Lake area in Lemmon Valley, and at least one pink **Ring-billed Gull** joined the regulars at Virginia Lake in Reno. Although the birds were hard to find, birders found diminutive **Northern Pygmy-Owls** and **Northern Saw-whet Owls** lurking in dense trees. At the more obvious end of the spectrum, a couple of **Northern Goshawks** visited in-town yards, and a **Varied Thrush** briefly stopped in Lovelock. Jacque Lowery reported the ongoing defense of the East Plumb Lane McDonald's in Reno by Ring-billed Gulls against Red-tailed Hawks, as well as a **Sharp-shinned Hawk** fishing for who knows what in one pond.

With the end of the heavy winter feeding season, it's time to think about cleaning up and disinfecting your feeders and feeding areas if you don't do so regularly. Wash out the feeders with a weak bleach solution, and clean up the mess of shells and seeds (the area under my niger seed feeder had a two-inch-thick, nearly impermeable yet moldy mat of discarded seeds). We haven't heard of any outbreaks of avian disease this winter, but this falls into the ounce of prevention category.

This February and March, 120 species were reported from northern Nevada towns, including those from the Great Backyard Bird Count. Sources of information for this column included **Brian Adams**, **John Anderson**, **Richard Brune**, **Chris Cheney**, **John Davis**, **Steve Deasy**, **Mary Jo Elpers**, **Linda Hiller**, **Nancy Hoffman**, **Dennis Ghiglieri**, **Bob Goodman**, **Jacque Lowery**, **Sue Anne Marshall**, **Martin Meyers**, **Kathy Oakes**, **Fred Peterson**, **Harold Peterson**, **Debbie & Randy Pontius**, **Melissa Renfro**, **Will Richardson**, **Nancy Santos**, **Heather Sprague**, **Rose Strickland**, **Steve Ting**, **Frank Whitman**, **John Woodyard**, and me. Contributions are welcome, so send a postcard/note to 1050 Sumac St., Reno, NV 89509 or an email to wallacealan@sbcglobal.net, or continue to post items on the Nevada bird list-serve. The deadline for the next column is **May 25**. Good birding!

LAS MEMBERSHIP/DONATION FORM

Lahontan Audubon Society Membership: All funds remain in the community. Members receive *The Pelican* newsletter and may elect to receive e-mail activities notices. Please complete and mail this form with payment.

- LAS Renewal New Membership Send me a National Audubon application
- Individual/Family - \$20/year Full Time Student/Senior (over 62) - \$15/year

LAS Donations: Please select level:

- Ruby-crowned Kinglet - \$10 Mountain Bluebird - \$20 American Avocet - \$50
 American White Pelican - \$100 Golden Eagle - \$500 or more

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May/June 2007 issue

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<i>A Birding Guide to Reno and Beyond--Second Edition</i> Published by Lahontan Audubon Society, 2007	\$10	\$1.50	_____
<i>Nevada Birding Map--Second Edition</i> Published by Lahontan Audubon Society, 2007	\$ 4	\$1	_____

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