

the Pelican

the official bi-monthly newsletter of the Lahontan Audubon Society

**September / October
2015**

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Mission:

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.

Submissions for the November / December 2015 issue are due September 28, 2015.

The Pelican may be viewed on the LAS website at www.nevadaaudubon.org, click on the Newsletter box on the left side of the Home Page.

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Date: Fourth Tuesday of the month
Time: Social at 6:30 p.m. Program starts at 7:00 p.m.
Location: Moana Nursery Landscape and Design Center
1100 West Moana Lane, Reno

Directions: Moana Nursery is on the southwest corner of Lakeside Drive and West Moana Lane. The Landscape and Design Center is a separate building located on the west side of the parking lot.

September 22, 2015 – Dancing Grebes and Ventriloquist Owls by David Arsenault, Plumas Audubon

The Plumas Audubon Society, in partnership with Audubon California and other Audubon chapters in northern California, have been working to conserve Clark's Grebe, Western Grebe, and Flammulated Owl populations in northern California. Clark's and Western Grebes are colonial water birds that nest on floating mounds of vegetation and have elaborate courtship rituals including a "rushing" display where pairs dance across the water together. Plumas Audubon has been monitoring grebes breeding at four lakes in northeastern California for the last five years. The grebe populations comprise a significant proportion of all of the grebes that breed in California and the western U.S. and are thus of high conservation value. A focus of our grebe study is to determine how water level management at three reservoirs (Lake Almanor, Lake Davis, and Antelope Lake) affects breeding grebes and to find ways to improve their reproduction. The ventriloquist Flammulated Owl is a secretive, Neotropical migrant that eats only insects and nests in tree cavities. For the last four years, Plumas Audubon has been monitoring this owl around Lake Davis, the largest known population in the Sierra Nevada. A focus of our owl study is to determine how forest thinning projects and snag availability affects owls. David will discuss each study's results to date and Audubon's efforts to help these unique owls and water birds.

October 27, 2015 – Preserving Beauty by Jerry Fenwick

Jerry Fenwick is a historian and well-known photographer who has lived in the Reno-Sparks area for over 68 years. Together with Neal Cobb, Jerry has authored two books: *Reno Now and Then* and *Reno Now and Then II*. As a member of the Reno Historic Preservation Society, he has brought the area's history to life for students – from first graders to classes at the University of Nevada, Reno. As a member of the Reno Photo Club since 1960, he has served as an officer, presented programs, and served as a judge for competitions. This program will showcase the photographic equipment that Jerry uses, the set-up he has designed in his home to take photographs of birds and flowers, and the landscaping he has put in place to provide a safe and friendly place for the various birds that he photographs in his yard. Jerry will also show how he processes the final images either for printing or just viewing. All of the pictures that will be shown were taken in his yard, mostly backyard, over a period of years up to the present. And the photos are stunning – come see for yourself.

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LAS NEEDS A VICE PRESIDENT

Probably most of you know that Nancy Peppin, who has been our Vice President since July 2014, passed away in late June. She is sorely missed. We need someone to step up to fill the VP slot until the end of June, 2016. The main job of the VP is to arrange program speakers for our eight monthly meetings and preside over the meetings. The VP also would step in for the President if necessary (but Jacque Lowery, our new President, has no plans to retire this year). Nancy had already arranged speakers for the three remaining program meetings this year. The new

VP will need to arrange for speakers for the first five meetings of 2016 (January through May). Alan Gubanich, who served many years as LAS's VP, will help out in the interim, and Alan and the Board have ideas and contacts for possible speakers in 2016, so taking over as LAS VP should not be a daunting task. If you would like to serve as VP, please contact Jacque Lowery at nevadabird@charter.net or 771-7390, or Alan at renopopop@pyramid.net or 857-0191 or for more information about duties of the LAS VP.

CENTRAL VALLEY BIRD SYMPOSIUM

The Central Valley Bird Club will be hosting the 19th Annual Central Valley Birding Symposium November 19-22, 2015 at the Stockton Hilton Hotel in Stockton, CA. Thursday night's Keynote speakers are Ed Harper and Ed Pandolfino presenting a program on "A Central Valley Year of Sights and Sounds." Friday night's keynote program will be presented by

Steve N.G. Howell on "Shift Happens: Rare {Vagrant} Birds in North America." And, Saturday night's keynote program, "Our Magnificent Valley Oaks; Hubs of their Habitats" will be presented by Kate Marianchild. There will be many other fine talks, workshops, and field trips. Check out their website at: <http://www.cvbsreg.org>.

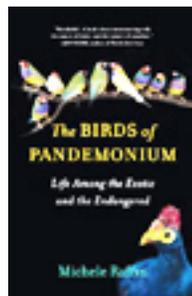
BIRDS & BOOKS

Zena Lamp, 775-762-3068 zenanlamp@gmail.com

Everyone is welcome to our fun flock of readers interested in nature, especially birds and birding. We meet on the fourth Wednesday of the month at Sundance Bookstore, 121 California Avenue, Reno at 4:00 p.m. Books are selected in advance, but you can join us even without having read them. Sundance Bookstore has a coffee bar and an outdoor patio, and parking is available. For a brief description of the selected books,

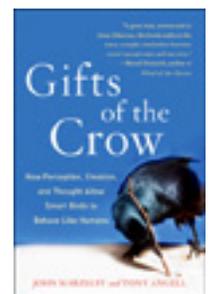
September 23, 2015

The Birds of Pandemonium by Michele Raffin



October 28, 2015

Gifts of the Crow: How Perception, Emotion, and Thought Allow Smart Birds to Behave Like Humans by John M. Marzluff, Ph.D and Tony Angell



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<http://www.facebook.com/lahontanaudubon>

LAS COMMUNICATIONS CHAIR & OTHER COMMUNICATIONS VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The LAS Communications Chair oversees *The Pelican* newsletter, the LAS email notification list, the LAS website and Facebook page, and publicity for LAS and for LAS special events.

Our current Communications Chair has served for over seven years and is looking to step down. We would like to get a new Communications Chairperson in place by the end of October.

As LAS has grown, the responsibilities for communications have expanded. We expect to divide the Communications Committee into three or four sub-committees. We need volunteers to head up each sub-committee and also help out with communications duties described below.

LAS's newsletter, *The Pelican*, currently consists of six issues each year, but LAS is considering doing the newsletter less frequently. We are looking for a sub-committee chair to oversee the newsletter content and serve as the final set of eyes for proofing prior to publishing. We currently have a proofing editor and a layout editor, but we could also use volunteers for backup on these tasks. Most of all, we are sorely in need of volunteers to write articles (usually around 500 words) about birds, places to go birding, book reviews, or anything of interest about the world of birds and birding. If

you are a creative person and enjoy writing, please volunteer -- we really need fresh voices.

The LAS email notification list is used to remind members about field trips, meetings, events, and other activities. It contains about 350 plus contacts. We need a volunteer or two to maintain the contact list, compose and schedule the email reminders, and send about five or six emails per month.

We also need one or more volunteers to help post events and news on the LAS website and Facebook page and create content for each.

LAS also needs volunteers to assist with publicity for LAS events and functions and to coordinate spokespeople for LAS when the media requests comment. Duties would include coordinating with newspaper columnists for the local newspapers and with local television and radio reporters to publicize our Bird Identification Classes, LAS educational events, and other LAS activities and special events.

Please, if you are interested in chairing the Communications Committee, heading up a sub-committee, or volunteering for specific jobs on a subcommittee, contact Kathy Oakes, our Communication Chair, by email at oakesy@sbcglobal.net or call at 747-5446.

DONORS



American White Pelican \$100 - \$499

Dave and Patty Sawyer
Mike Strem

American Avocet \$50 - \$99

Penny and Jerry Kelley
Brian Trusler
Jeanne Harrah-Johnson and Jerry Johnson
Kate King
Penny McClary and Don Carlon

Mountain Bluebird \$20 - \$49

William and Karen Fletcher
Sue Jacox
Sandra Mason
Jane Schwenk
Laura Gibson and Michael Rosen
Christopher Horton
Nancy Santos
Dan Westermeyer
Tina Nappe

Ruby Crowned Kinglet \$10 - \$19

Judith and Paul Krefting
Patti Sakelaris
Barbara Shirahama

Other:

Grassroots Books: \$175 from their continuing program of accepting books for resale on behalf of LAS

THE FUTURE OF THE GREATER SAGE-GROUSE AND ITS HABITAT, TMCC DISTINGUISHED SPEAKER SERIES

A select panel from the Sagebrush Ecosystem Council will discuss the pros and cons of adding the Greater Sage-Grouse to the Endangered Species List. Panel members will discuss the consequences of listing (or not) the Sage-Grouse and other sage habitat species, factors affecting the decline of the Sage-Grouse, stakeholders, and related land use issues. Segments of the PBS *Nature* documentary, *The Sagebrush Sea*, will be shown. This film, produced by Cornell University's

Department of Ornithology, tracks the Greater Sage-Grouse and other wildlife through the season. Marc Dantzker of Cornell will introduce the film and the evening's program.

Where: Truckee Meadows Community College, Dandini Campus, Sierra Building, Room 108.

When: Thursday, September 10, 2015, 7:00 pm
More information at: <http://www.tmcc.edu/dss/>.

FIELD TRIPS

Jasmine Kleiber

nevadabirder@gmail.com

Field trips are free to Audubon members and non-members unless otherwise noted, and we encourage birders of all skill levels to participate. Trips are subject to change or cancellation so please pre-register with field trip leaders to make sure that they have contact information so they can reach you in the event the trip changes or is cancelled. Remember to dress accordingly as the weather can be very unpredictable in Nevada, and please bring lots of water!

Please also remember to check the calendar on LAS website (www.nevadaaudubon.org) and the LAS Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/lahontanaudubon>) for any additional field trips that may have been scheduled after posting of this newsletter issue.

Saturday, September 12, 2015 Fall Migration at Spooner Lake

Time: 8:30-11:30 a.m.

**Leader: Kirk Hardie, 775-298-0065,
kirk@tinsweb.org**

The Tahoe Institute for Natural Science (TINS), Lahontan Audubon Society (LAS) and Tahoe Rim Trail Association (TRTA) are co-sponsoring this easy stroll to search for migrant birds heading south for the winter. We will search the aspen stand, willows, and the lake for any migrants and local birds, such as Orange-crowned and Wilson's Warblers, White-crowned Sparrows, Green-tailed Towhees, Ring-necked Ducks, and Red-breasted Sapsuckers. Free, but reservations are required. Reservations are being handled by the TRTA and will open one month in advance. Please visit Spooner Lake Migration Registration on the TRTA website to register (<https://www.tahoerimtrail.org/index.php/events-and-programs/calendar-of-events/trail-use/1345-september-13-fall-migration-at-spooner-lake>). Meeting location and other details will be emailed to registered participants the week of the walk.

Saturday, September 19, 2015 Swan Lake/Lemmon Valley Marsh, North Reno

Time: 8:00 a.m.

**Leader: Bob Goodman, 775-972-7848,
pandion36@aol.com**

Meet at the McDonald's parking lot off the Lemmon Valley Exit (#74) off of Hwy 395, north of Reno. We will carpool the short distance to Lemmon Valley Marsh. Bring a spotting scope if you can, and prepare to be out until mid-day. It is a good time to see fall migrants and winter resident birds on the marsh and wetlands. This is an easy bird walk, and birders of all experience are welcome. Please check the LAS website for updates because this trip is subject to change depending on conditions at Swan Lake.

Saturday, September 26, 2015 Oxbow Park, Reno

Time: 9:00 a.m.

**Leader: David Jickling, 775-848-0069,
david.jickling@gmail.com**

Meet at the Oxbow Park parking lot for this easy nature trail walk. To get there, take I-80 to the Keystone Exit and head south. Turn right on Second Street, which turns into Dickerson Road, then follow it until it ends at the park. This park is a great local hotspot to find fall migrants and to learn about Reno's backyard birds. Plan to spend a few hours, so bring your binoculars, a scope if you have one, and water. A great walk for beginner and experienced birders alike. Please contact Dave to reserve your spot.

Saturday, October 3, 2015 Silver Saddle Ranch, Carson City

Time: 8:00 am-12:00 pm

**Leader: Nancy Santos, 775-884-1570,
nancylas@att.net**

The Silver Saddle Ranch Annual Bird Walk is scheduled for Saturday, October 3, 2014. We will meet at the Red House Complex parking lot, at the end of Carson River Road in Carson City, NV. Please contact Nancy Santos for more information and to register for the bird walk.

Sunday, October 4, 2015 Taylor Creek, South Lake Tahoe

Time: 8:30 a.m.

**Leader: Sheryl Ferguson,
s-sferguson@sbcglobal.net**

Please join us on this wonderful trip sponsored by LAS and the Tahoe Institute for Natural Sciences (TINS). We will meet at the Taylor Creek Visitor Center kiosk. From Reno or Carson City, take Hwy 50 to South Lake Tahoe. Follow Hwy 50 south and turn right onto 89 (Emerald Bay Rd.) at the "Y" intersection in South Lake Tahoe, shortly after Staples. Drive 2.9 miles from the "Y." After Richardson's Resort, look for the U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Visitor Center sign on the right side of the road. Turn in at the sign and park in the parking lot. This easy, half-day bird walk will follow a nature trail (with disabled access). We will enjoy lunch at a local burger stand, but you may bring your own lunch if you prefer. Since this is a fall trip, added bonuses include looks at the Kokanee Salmon spawning run and gorgeous fall colors. After lunch, we will make suggestions about additional places of interest nearby for participants who wish to continue afternoon birding on their own.

BIRDS AND MORE - SCRUFFY JAYS

Kathy Oakes

oaksey@sbcglobal.net

Summer mornings, I breakfast outside with “my” Western Scrub-Jays—toast for me, peanuts for the jays. Recently, I’ve noticed that my breakfast companions are looking scruffy and drabber than usual. Many are missing the pretty white line over their eye and have more grey feathers than blue on top of their heads. Are they sick? No, my jays are molting.

Molting is the periodic shedding and replacement of all or a portion of a bird’s feathers. Once formed, a feather doesn’t continue to grow and cannot be repaired. The ends of a bird’s feathers wear away and break from contact with vegetation or the ground as a bird goes about its life. As damage accumulates, the aerodynamic and insulating properties of the feathers are compromised, and they must be shed so that new ones can grow in.

All birds molt at least once a year, many do so twice. Most of our familiar northern temperate songbirds go through a complete molt to replace all of their feathers in late summer. This is the time when food is still plentiful, the burdens of raising young are over, and the energy demands of migration are yet to come. During this molt, which may last 5 to 12 weeks, body feathers are replaced progressively in waves, beginning on the head, face, and throat and extending backward toward the tail. The wing and tail feathers are replaced symmetrically one or two pair at a time so that the bird is able to fly at all times. The late summer complete molt is called the pre-basic molt, because after it is finished, the bird is in basic plumage.

Basic plumage? What does that mean? We North American bird watchers are used to thinking of the bright summer plumage as a bird’s main look. But birds that have a breeding and nonbreeding plumage actually spend more time in their nonbreeding plumage, which is therefore termed the *basic* plumage. Species that look the same year-round (like my jays) are always in basic plumage. The more colorful spring breeding plumage seen in many species (such as warblers) is referred to as the *alternate* plumage.

Birds that are always in basic plumage molt only once a year, getting all

colorful breeding plumage (warblers, tanagers, buntings, goldfinches) molt twice a year. These birds go through the complete pre-basic molt in late summer into their drab basic plumage (which makes those fall warblers so darn hard to identify). Then, in late winter, the birds go through a second partial molt, replacing body feathers, wing coverts, and tail feathers to achieve their colorful alternate plumage.

There are many variations in molting schemes. Ducks, swans, grebes, and pelicans molt all of their flight feathers all at once and replace them in a short time, some in as little as two weeks. During this time, they cannot fly and many retire to large isolated lakes to avoid predators. This molting strategy likely evolved because waterfowl are heavy bodied relative to their wing surface. The loss of only a few flight feathers would seriously compromise their ability to take off from the water and fly strongly. A short period of being grounded is apparently less dangerous than a longer period of compromised flying.

Over the next couple of weeks, take the opportunity to check out our local birds to see if you can spot molting in action. Molting birds tend to be disheveled overall. Look for contrast between bright new feathers and old worn ones, and for gaps in wings and tails where old feathers have been dropped and new ones have just started growing. I know that in a few more weeks, my scruffy scrub jays are going to look pretty sharp in their new feathers when they come to demand their morning peanuts.



Western Scrub-Jays molting. West Reno. September 5, 2009.

Photographer Ed Oakes.

their feather replacement chores over with in late summer. These include jays, chickadees, owls, woodpeckers, vireos, thrushes, flycatchers, and hawks. Interestingly, the American Robin, a thrush, has a bright breeding plumage, which it achieves in only one molt using a neat trick. Robins grow brightly colored feathers with dull tips in their late summer pre-basic molt. Throughout the winter, the dull tips slowly wear off until the bright feathers are revealed in spring when needed for breeding display.

But most birds that have a very

LAS MEMBERSHIP / DONATION FORM

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

1. LAS Renewal New Membership Send me a National Audubon application
 2. 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

Volunteering: I am interested in receiving information about volunteering for LAS:

NAME (please print) _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____

PHONE _____

EMAIL _____ Include on LAS-only email list

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$ _____ September / October 2015 issue

Make check payable to Lahontan Audubon Society and mail this form to:
 LAS Membership, P.O. Box 2304, Reno, NV 89505

LAS SALES FORM

	Price	Postage	TOTAL
<i>Important Bird Areas of Nevada</i> Published by Lahontan Audubon Society, 2005	\$10	\$4.60	_____
<i>A Birding Guide to Reno and Beyond - Second Edition</i> Published by Lahontan Audubon Society, 2007	\$10	\$2	_____
<i>Nevada Birding Map - Second Edition</i> Published by Lahontan Audubon Society, 2007	\$4	\$1	_____
<i>Tahoe Area Plants & Animals Pocket Guide</i>	\$7	\$1	_____
<i>Wildflowers of the Northern Nevada Cold Desert</i> Published by the Nevada Native Plant Society	\$8	\$2	_____
<i>Hummingbirds of Nevada</i> Published by Lahontan Audubon Society, 2014	\$5	\$1	_____

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ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____

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EMAIL _____ (in case of a question regarding your order)

Make checks payable to Lahontan Audubon Society and mail with this form to:
 Jane Burnham, LAS Sales, 8071 Big River Drive, Reno, NV 89506

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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 Dean Heller 400 S. Virginia St. #738 Reno, NV 89501 Reno phone: 775-686-5770
Representative Mark Amodei 400 S. Virginia St. #502 Reno, NV 89501 Reno phone: 775-686-5760	Governor Brian Sandoval 101 N. Carson St. Carson City, NV 89710 775-684-5670