



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.

**MARCH/APRIL
2008**

vol. 45, no. 4

Inside This Issue

- 1 Monthly Meetings
- 2 Field Trips
- 3 Important Bird Areas
- 4 From the President's Perch
- 5 Conservation Corner
- 6 Birds In Town
- 7 LAS Sales/
Membership

*Submissions for the May/June
issue are due April 1, 2008
(No foolin')*

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.

March 25—Bird Identification Panel—How Do They Know?

Ever wonder how those "experts" can identify practically every bird they see while you can't even figure out if it's a sparrow or a thrush or a hawk? Now's your chance! Join us for an evening of "how-to" with a group of local birding "experts" who have agreed to show us how they identify those birds that you only scratch your head over. Some of our best birders, such as Martin Myers and Greg Scyphers among others, have agreed to form a panel that will try to identify birds from photos submitted by you -- including photos of birds that almost anyone would have trouble identifying! So search your files for bird photos (digital or 35mm slides) and contact Alan Gubanich well ahead of time (857-0191 or aag@unr.nevada.edu) so he can collect the photos for the meeting. You can e-mail your photos to Alan directly, but contact him first to arrange for any slides. He will show your photos to the panel, one at a time, and then we can all listen as these accomplished birders agree (or disagree) as to what the bird is and why they think so. Perhaps we'll all find out that even "experts" can sometimes be stumped like the rest of us!

April 22—Robin Powell—The Effects of Urban Weeds on Avian Populations

Robin Powell, the director of Bird Conservation for the Important Bird Areas program of Nevada, will present a topic that the general public rarely thinks about: the impacts that weeds in urban or disturbed environments have on many species of birds. Throughout Nevada, weed management has been predominantly a concern for agricultural communities and watershed conservationists. However, weed infestations in urban and suburban areas are quickly growing. Without proper response or action to these weed infestations, there is the potential for enormous impacts on bird populations.

FIELD TRIPS

Christiane Omer

775-354-2634

happycpo@aol.com

LAS field trips are free and open to the public. Birders of all skill levels are encouraged to participate. Please pre-register with trip leaders so they can contact you in the event of trip changes or cancellations. Always dress for changing weather conditions and bring something to eat and drink. For additional information, visit the LAS web site at www.nevadaudubon.org or contact Field Trip Chair Christiane Omer.

Assistant Field Trip Chair Janet Hudson is moving to the Elko area, and we're going to miss her. Good-bye, good luck, and many thanks to Janet for all her help with field trips. We'll hope to catch up with Janet in Lamoille Canyon. — Christiane Omer

Saturday, March 22, 2008

Sierra Valley Expedition

Time: 8 a.m.

Leader: Alan Gubanich 775.857.0191 or aag@unr.nevada.edu

For those who didn't get to the Sierra Valley trip last fall, here's your chance! We'll spend the morning and part of the afternoon looking for any late winter raptors (Red-tailed, Rough-legged and Ferruginous Hawks), and waterfowl (swans, ducks and geese), plus any early migrants—Sandhill Cranes and White-fronted Geese are always possibilities. We can brown-bag our lunch, or enjoy a great little restaurant in Sierraville (let me know your preference when you contact me). If time and weather permits, we may also visit Yuba Pass or Plumas-Eureka State Park. In the eastern Sierra, chickadees, nuthatches, jays, woodpeckers and sapsuckers are always possibilities. Please contact Alan beforehand if you plan to attend. We will meet in the McDonald's parking lot, Lemmon Valley exit (Exit 74), north of Reno, off Hwy 395.

Saturday, March 29

Susanville Sage-Grouse Lek and Honey Lake, CA

Time: 5 a.m.

Leader: Dave Jickling 775.329.8959

This is a great chance to see nature in action! Observe male Greater Sage-Grouse perform to

attract females onto their lekking grounds. This tour also includes a visit to Honey Lake wetlands with good potential for numerous waterfowl and raptor species. Participants should meet at the McDonald's on Oddie Blvd. two blocks east of Highway 395 at 5 a.m. in Sparks. Depending upon road conditions, only four-wheel drive or high clearance vehicles will be able to drive to the lek. Bring food, water and a scope if you have one.

Saturday, April 12

Damonte Ranch Wetlands

Time: 8 a.m.

Leader: Kathy Oakes 775.747.5446 or oakesy@sbcglobal.net

We will meet at the Jack in the Box in the Damonte Ranch Shopping Center. Coming from I-395 south, take the Damonte Ranch Parkway exit (#59), turn right (you will be going west), then turn right into the shopping center. The Jack in the Box will be on your left. We will carpool from there to the wetlands. (If you reach South Virginia Street, you've gone too far.) Bring binoculars and a spotting scope if you have one, and extra clothes for unpredictable weather. Prepare to be out until mid-day. This is an easy walk (wheel chair accessible) on paved trails and birders of all experience are welcome. It will be a good opportunity to see the wetlands created as part of the subdivision development in this area. We hope to see early spring migrants and resident birds of wetlands and open meadows.

Saturday, April 19

Swan Lake

Time: 8:30 a.m.

Leader: Bob Goodman 775.972.7848 or Pandion36@aol.com

Meet Bob at 8:30 a.m. in the McDonald's parking lot, Lemmon Valley Exit (Exit 74), north of Reno, off Hwy 395. 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. This is a good time to see early spring migrants and winter resident birds on the marsh and wetlands. This is an easy bird walk and birders of all

experience are welcome.

Saturday, April 26

Wandering the Carson Valley

Time: 7 a.m.

Leader: Jim Woods 775.265.3914 after 6 p.m. or woobib@charter.net

Here is a great opportunity to see the numerous birds and habitats of the Carson Valley. We'll take a walk at the IVGID wetlands to look for waterfowl, and hopefully be enraptured by Prairie Falcon, American Kestrel, Bald Eagle, Golden Eagle, and Northern Harrier. On the Carson River, we'll look for kingfisher, merganser, Cooper and Sharp-shinned hawks, and those challenging sparrows! Next, it's back to town and a local ranch for more. Meet at the In & Out Burger in Carson at 7 a.m. to carpool. From Reno, take 395 South to Carson City. South of Carson City turn right on Topsy Lane (a mile or so south of Spooner Summit turn-off) then take a left into the shopping center and find In & Out Burger. Look for a red mid-size pick-up with a red camper shell. Bring a bag lunch and plenty of water, a scope if possible, and expect to wrap up around 2:30 p.m.

Saturday and Sunday, May 3-4

Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge Workday/Field Trip

Leader: Mike Goddard 775.423.5128 or Mike_Goddard@fws.gov

Place: Badger Campground

Purpose: Saturday fence-making with potluck and Sunday Refuge tour

For more information on this trip, including detailed directions, go to the LAS web site. The Sheldon Refuge is one-of-a-kind, beautiful northern Nevada country. This is an experience you'll always remember, and you'll be doing something to help the region and the wildlife who inhabit it.

(South Lake Tahoe field trip report on page 4)

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

Global Warming and Climate Change Effects

The buzzword(s) and hot issue in the 1980's was species conservation, 1990's was invasive species, and for the new millennium, it is climate change and global warming. The overall warming of the planet or global warming is one of the greatest threats to birds and other wildlife. Climate change, the changes in the regional climatic characteristics such as temperature, rainfall, humidity, wind, and severe weather events, is typically in response to the warming of the Earth. Empirical scientific data has demonstrated that the natural cooling and heating of the Earth's atmosphere has been accelerated due to the human-generated greenhouse gases, which have boosted the Earth's ability to trap heat.

Global warming could affect the abundance and distribution of birds in Nevada. Changes in climate may change nesting and feeding habitats, migratory stopover areas, and the availability of key food sources. Some impacts may be positive, making conditions more favorable for certain kinds of birds. But climate change also could lead to reduced breeding success in some species and some localities, raising the possibility of regional population declines and extinctions.

Birds require specific environmental conditions to survive and raise their young. Nesting, for example, is timed to coincide with favorable weather and food availability. If a trend toward warmer spring weather leads birds to nest earlier, their breeding success may suffer if primary food sources are not yet available when nestlings hatch. Birds are more mobile than most other animals, and they simply can fly to a new location if a former site is no longer suitable. But global warming may make it difficult for some species to find new habitats. Plant and animal communities that provide optimal habitat today may be fundamentally altered in the future as the climate changes. A recent study suggests that ecological communities may not simply shift their range northward in response to warming but instead may undergo complex changes as interacting species are affected in different ways by the changing climate.

Changes in temperature and precipitation predicted under global warming could affect the nesting habitats of ducks and other waterfowl. According to one study, global warming could cause breeding populations of ducks in the north-central United States to decline by more than half—from 5 million birds

today to between 2.1 and 2.7 million by the year 2060. Why? Warmer temperatures and more frequent droughts could cause hundreds of thousands of ponds in the prairie pothole region of the north-central U.S. to dry up. This scenario could be reality in Nevada.

Within Nevada, the most affected landscapes of climate change will be the high elevation mountain ranges and alpine tundra habitats. For Important Bird Areas, such as Ruby Mountains and Great Basin National Park, climate change is a serious concern for avian species of conservation priority such as the Black Rosey-Finch which are dependent on the talus slopes of the alpine tundra habitats.

Other issues of concern, due to climate change and global warming, will be the shift of vegetation communities that will be non-supportive of avian obligate species. The future will also bring increases in temperature that may allow frost-sensitive species from the Southwest to move hundreds of miles north and further displace the sagebrush (frost-tolerant), which would be devastating to sagebrush obligate species.

—Robin Powell
Nevada Director of
Bird Conservation

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S PERCH

LAS member Meri McEneny works with the topic of defensible space in our area and offers this followup to our October General Meeting.

Thanks to former firefighter turned arborist Kris Coston for his defensible space presentation at the October LAS meeting; and thanks to The Pelican staff for letting me expand upon that presentation to address issues important to LAS.

Nevada and the Sierra range are prone to wildfire. Wildfires now burn hotter and more frequently than indicated by historical data, and more of us live close to wildlands. Recent local fires have brought awareness and action to create defensible space to reduce the threat of wildfire. LAS members can reduce the likelihood of wildfire in our own landscapes and, as partners in community projects, help represent wildlife concerns.

Defensible space is the area around a home or community where plant material has been modified to reduce the threat of wildfire and give firefighters a safer place to work. Plants can either be removed or modified by type or density. The website www.livingwithfire.info contains a wealth of information on fire issues ranging from an evacuation checklist to more desirable plant choices and building materials. Click on "Six Steps to Defensible Space" to determine your specific defensible space needs based on your location and vegetation types. Living With Fire was created by Ed Smith at the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension. Now in its 10th year, over two million copies have been produced with over 40 versions for specific conditions throughout the U.S. and Canada.

Ed is also a board member of the non-profit Nevada Fire Safe Council (www.nvfsc.org). The NVFSC is a private membership corporation supported by grants, donations and dues, whose mission is to assemble diverse interests to offer solutions to reduce fire losses in Nevada. The NVFSC helps establish neighborhood Fire Safe Chapters, which identify local fire concerns. NVFSC provides grants to chapters for identified goals. There are 75 chapters in Nevada, including the Cali-

fornia portion of Lake Tahoe. Chapter projects might involve installing water storage tanks or creating fuel breaks which modify vegetation around community boundaries.

Working with NVFSC chapters, LAS members can create defensible space with diversity of plant species and appropriate levels of reduction to protect homes and wildlife habitat. Clear cutting is not required for fire safety. You can represent LAS' concerns during the planning and construction of fuel breaks or other projects like controlled burns. You might, for example, increase awareness about timing and habitat for avian breeding or nesting. LAS: Get involved in defensible space!

- Meri L. McEneny

Our Newest Board Member

The LAS Board has approved the appointment of Gene Hansel to fill Board Seat #2. A retired engineer, Gene and his wife Sue, a retired registered nurse, are originally from North Carolina. After nine years' work in Asheville, Gene worked as a business manager for a major international oil company, spending about 19 1/2 years in Saudi Arabia, with other stays in London, Houston, and San Francisco. After retirement, Gene and Sue decided to settle in Reno to be near grandchildren. They enjoy the lifestyle here and access to the outdoors, especially the desert. Gene is a Master Gardener. Gene and Sue are active in the Rock Art Foundation. Gene is also Field Trip Coordinator for the Reno Gem and Mineral Society. He is even learning to bird! The Board looks forward to Gene's involvement.

Newsletter Editor Sought

Lahontan Audubon Society is looking for an editor for our newsletter, *The Pelican*. Our very able editor Mike Greenan, who has been serving for four years, must now step down due to work demands and other commitments.

The eight-page publication is published

six times a year (every two months). Content is provided by an experienced group of dedicated volunteers by a deadline one month in advance of the issue date. We have a formal editorial policy in place. The editor's job is primarily layout and proofing. Layout and pagination is done with Adobe InDesign, so experience with that program would help but is not required. The newsletter is e-mailed to the printer in a pdf file.

LAS will provide the editor with a copy of InDesign, if needed, and a style guide and files of past copies. Mike will also be able to provide transition guidance and support. We estimate that the Editor position takes about 7-10 hours per issue, i.e. every two months.

LAS really needs the valuable contribution of a volunteer for this important and integral part of our organization. If you are interested, please contact Karen Kish at 775-841-1180 or klkish@pyramid.net as soon as possible.

Field Trip Report

Taylor Creek /Cove East Snowshoe Trip, South Lake Tahoe

Thirteen hardy birdwatchers hit the hard, crunchy, SNOWY trails at Taylor Creek on snowshoes and X-country skis in search of winter birds. A Belted Kingfisher, Downy Woodpecker, and Townsend's Solitaire all posed as each bird watcher skied or snowshoed up to the scopes. Other winter residents included Pygmy Nuthatch, Clark's Nutcracker, Red-shafted Flicker, Common Raven, and Black-billed Magpie. There was "sign" of American Dipper on the rocks in the creek under the bridge, but no Dipper appeared. A Greater White-fronted Goose was spotted by Lynn Harriman. It was feeding on a patch of grass at the mouth of Taylor Creek. Mallard, Common Merganser, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Gadwall, Hooded Merganser, Canada Goose, American Coot, Pied-billed Grebe, Ruddy Duck, California, Ring-billed, and Herring Gull, and Red-tailed Hawk brought the list total to twenty-four. For those Reno folks who caucused on 1/19/08, we welcome you to call and arrange to winter bird with us at some other more convenient time.

--Sue Stevenson

CONSERVATION CORNER

11th Annual Spring Wings Bird Festival May 9– 11

Spring Wings is a celebration of bird migration through Lahontan Valley. It is a festival for the nature enthusiast and people of all ages where we seek to highlight the wonderful natural resources of the Lahontan Valley.

As we kick off our second decade, this year's event is shaping up to be one of the best yet. Our Friday night keynote speaker will be author and naturalist Scott Weidensaul. Scott appears at Audubon Nature Centers and Festivals all across the country. He is a much sought-after speaker on the festival circuit across the nation. He lectures widely on wildlife and environmental topics and is an active field researcher, specializing in birds of prey and hummingbirds. In addition, we've decided to shake things up a bit and base the festival out of Oats Park and the beautifully restored Barkley Theater. Having it at the park will offer a real festive atmosphere for the whole family complete with vendor booths, exhibitors, and nature-related, hands-on activities.

Spring Wings continues to reach out and explore the many opportunities there might be to bring new faces to the festival and expand our reach into the local community. We are always seeking new ideas for the festival as well as volunteers. If you are interested in helping with the festival or have a great idea, please contact Janet Schmidt, 775-428-6452. And, if you'd like to take part in the festival, you can view additional information and register online at www.springwings.org.

Bird & Books

LAS Birds & Books is a flock of readers interested in nature, especially birds and birding. The group meets in Reno on the third Tuesday of the month, 7-8:30 p.m., at Sundance Bookstore, 1155 W. 4th Street, #106-Keystone Square Shopping Center. You are encouraged to attend a

meeting to see if this group is for you or to contact Kenn Rohrs at 775-849-9530 or karohrs@charter.net for more information. For a complete schedule and brief description of the selected books, go to the LAS web site and check the Birds & Books section of the Meetings page.

March 18--Rare Encounters with Ordinary Birds by Lyanda Lynn Haupt

April 15--The Beak of the Finch by Jonathon Weiner

May 20--The Bird Artist by Howard Norman

Bird I.D. Classes

Spring is nearly here, and it will soon be time for LAS' popular "Birds of the Truckee Meadows" series of five classes in basic bird identification. Each session is presented by a different local expert. This is an excellent resource for new birders, birders new to our area, or birders seeking a review. Classes are at the Nevada Division of Wildlife at 1100 Valley Road (north end of building), Reno, 7-9 p.m. on Tuesday May 6, 13 and 20, and June 3 and 10. The cost is \$40 for 5 classes or \$10 per class (payable at the door - arrive early to pay). To register or for further information, call Bob Goodman at 972-7848.

FUND DRIVE 2007 DONORS

Thank you for your generous donations to support our conservation, education, and birding activities! Thank you, too, for the vote of confidence that your donations represent. — *The LAS Board of Trustees*

Golden Eagle \$500 or More:

Dave & Pam Straley

American White Pelican \$100 - \$499:

Richard, Katherine, & Kristin Blakey in memory of Dorothy J. Blakey, Jane Bowden, Robert & Gigi Chisel, Theodore & Marsha Davey, Karen Kish, Donald & Carol Lauer, Jacque & Dale Lowery, Diane & Mark McAllister, Penny McClary, Emily & Kathryne McPherson, Kathy Oakes, Dr. Frederick Petersen, Jo Anne Sharigian Gould, John & Faith Spencer, Carole Terry, James Thompson & Irene Matthews, Theresa Wachs, Alan Wallace

American Avocet \$50 - \$99:

Ellen & Adib Alawar, Debra Brus, Peter & Trudy Brussard, Allison Chaney, Gini Cooper Watts, Jeanne Harrah Johnson, Elwood & Vicki Hill, Michael Fondi, William Frey, John F. Gardner, Laura Gibson & Michael Rosen, Gene & Sue Hansel, Cynthia Joyce, Mary Ellen & Robert Komac, Juleen Marcuerquiaga, George & Sherry McConnell, Tim & Sandy McFarren, Elza & Marjorie Minton, Don & Jean Molde, Leontine Nappe, Martha & Larry Neel, F. Kirk & Annaliese Odencrantz, Richard Palcanis, Helen Risley, Catherine Robinson, Dale & Linda Sanderson, Bob Shields, Jacque Spacek, Phillip & Susan Stevenson, Julie U'Ren, Bonnie & Rusty Wagner, James & Diane Weishaupt

Mountain Bluebird \$20 - \$49:

John & Gisela Anderson, Bertha Axtell, Elizabeth Baglin, Mary Lou Banta, Steve & Cherry Barney, Stephen Buck, Catherine Carlson, D. Michael Clasen, Carol Coli, Patrick & Laurie Colletti, Carol Cooke, Crystal Family, John Currie, Ron & Judy Daly, Vasil & Anita Eftimoff, Clara Engeseth, Joseph & Sheila Erlach, Deborah Fleischer. Rachel & Raymond Fletcher, Helen Foster, William & Julie Frame, Allen & Judy Frederick, Jim Gallagher, Grant & Joan Gardner, Dennis Ghiglieri & Rose Strickland, Carol Grigus & William Bertram, Kirk Hardie, Sharon Hay, Judith Holt, Natasha Hrenoff, Joe & Sally Kelley, Jeffrey Kirst, Jean Levinson, Margaret McCafferty, Stanley & Olga Miller, Patricia Moen & David Emme, Bonnie & Kiyoshi Nishikawa, Dorothy O'Hearn. Marc & Kathryn Reynolds, Christopher Ross, Stephanie Sander, Schell Creek Ranch, Phyllis Schmidt, Barbara Simons, Deborah & Michael Stoker, Gail Taylor, Carol Tresner, Valerie Truce, Myra Ulvang, Theodore Williams, Robert & Janet Wood

Ruby-crowned Kinglet \$10 - \$19:

David & Connie Biba, Barbara Dimmitt, Judith Eisele, Peter Fairley, Leonard & Nancy Fitzgerald, Helaine Greenberg, C.G. Griffith, Nancy Humphries, Glenda Mahin, Harold & Francine Oleck, John Pierce, Sue & James Roberts, William Rowley, Becky Saltenberger, Wesley Shirts, Jennifer Skelton, Randy & Linda Turia, Tess Whitehouse

BIRDS IN TOWN

by Alan Wallace

Most birders have a love-hate relationship with gulls: they love them because they're, well, birds, but they hate them because the gulls often are difficult to identify, especially with all of the perplexing first-, second-, or even third-year plumages. Most of us do pretty well with the wintering adult **Ring-billed** and **California Gulls** that frequent the in-town ponds. Reno and Sparks lakes, though, have hosted some pretty unusual gulls of late, starting with a Sabine's Gull in the fall, that were spotted by observant birders whose eyes don't glaze over at the sight of a gull. In early December, a couple of juvenile **Thayer's Gulls** joined the other gulls at Virginia Lake and the Sparks marina. In the ensuing two months, as many as 20 **Herring Gulls** were at the marina, as was a **Mew Gull** in early January. But one bird stumped even the experts: a large, dark-backed, long-winged, pink-footed gull joined a few hundred other gulls at Virginia Lake. The bird might have been a subadult **Lesser Black-backed Gull**, but then an adult Lesser Black-backed showed up to show off the true features, which led to some rethinking about the identity of the first bird.

As a small army of birders, with an astounding net worth of optical gear, rimmed the lake, one thing was clear: everyone was focusing on the *features* of the birds, a great example of using those clues for identification. A lot of us see an **American Robin** in the yard and know that it's a robin, but we don't think of *why* it's a robin. What is it about that bird that differs from a **Varied Thrush**, like the one near the Reno Fairgrounds in December? How about all of those accipiters that have been terrorizing the **Mourning Doves** and **California Quail** at our feeders: they look very similar, but what clues say it's one and not the other (such as the "C" in **Cooper's Hawk** and Curved tip of the tail and the "S" in **Sharp-shinned Hawk** and Straight tip)? Or the **Snow** and **Ross's Geese** that joined the **Canada Geese** in towns this winter: both are white, have black on their wings, and pretty much look the same, but a careful look at their bills, size, and even head shape can help to distinguish one from the other. Sometimes it takes going back to the fundamentals and actually looking at the characteristics of a bird to identify it. And sometimes it's just fun to carefully study a common bird to really appreciate something like the bright red bills of the **Common Mergansers** along our rivers (plus, it's good practice for the more difficult birds, such as the migrant fall warblers).

Northern Nevada birders applied their identification skills in December and January and managed to spot 128 species of birds in towns and yards. Imagine the variety of characteristics that differentiate that many species! Take the small reddish birds: streaky breasted **House Finches** everywhere, a brief January incursion of plain-breasted **Cassin's Finches**, the occasional **Red Crossbill** with its (natch) crossed bill, and the large flocks of semi-red **Gray-crowned** and **Black Rosy-Finches** in Elko. Or the small birds that were crawling around on tree trunks: **Pygmy**, **White-breasted**, and **Red-breasted Nuthatches** went up, down, and around, whereas the **Brown Creepers** started at the bottom and only went up (feeding behavior is a characteristic just like the white head on the wintering **Bald Eagles**). A few **Bohemian Waxwings** drifted into towns, joining the more common **Cedar Waxwings**: both are very similar, but one has a rust-colored butt and the other doesn't. **Common Goldeneyes** were extremely common along the rivers, but arcuate white face patches, instead of round ones, indicated the presence of a few **Barrow's** as well. And the seemingly similar birds with different features go on and on.

Of course, there are occasions (more than we likely would care to admit) when a bird just doesn't give us enough clues to make a convincing identification. And that's OK: at least we gave it our best shot given the available evidence. Better luck next time. Or you could follow the dictum of a non-birding friend, who used to say that there were only four types of birds: seagulls, ducks, eagles, and singing birds. If you think about the features of each group, they cover the basic characteristics of most of our northern Nevada birds, including the unusual gull at Virginia Lake (although I'd toss in waders as a fifth category). With guidelines like that, who said that bird identification was difficult?

Sources of information for this column included **Brian Adams, Mary Anderson, Alan de Queiroz, John & Sue Golish, Bob Goodman, Linda Hiller, Dennis Ghiglieri, Nancy Hoffman, Ed Kurtz, Tim Lenz, Sue Anne Marshall, Martin Meyers, Jill Neumann, Christiane Omer, Fred Petersen, Harold Peterson, Lois Ports, Melissa Renfro & John Free, Nancy Santos, Greg Scyphers, Dennis Serdehely, Rose Strickland, Steve Ting, Dave Worley**, 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 listserv. The deadline for the next column is **March 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.

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

NAME (please print) _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____

PHONE _____

E-MAIL _____ Include on LAS-only e-mail list

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$ _____

March/April 2008 issue

Make check payable to Lahontan Audubon Society and mail this form to:
 Kathy Oakes, LAS Membership, 4120 Plateau Road, Reno, NV 89519

LAS SALES FORM

	Price	Postage	TOTAL
<i>Important Bird Areas of Nevada</i> Published by Lahontan Audubon Society, 2005	\$19.95	\$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	_____
TOTAL ORDER			_____

NAME (please print) _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____

PHONE _____

E-MAIL _____ (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

Printed on Recycled Paper

THE PELICAN
Lahontan Audubon Society
P.O. Box 2304
Reno, Nevada 89505

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
RENO, NEVADA
PERMIT NO. 181

Postmaster: Please send change of address to *The Pelican*, P.O. Box 2304, Reno, NV 89505.

If your mailing label is highlighted, please renew your local LAS membership now.

LAHONTAN AUDUBON SOCIETY

OFFICERS

President	Karen Kish	klkish@pyramid.net	841-1180
Vice President	Alan Gubanich	aag@unr.nevada.edu	857-0191
Treasurer	Dave Straley	dstraley@nvcbell.net	832-9222
Recording Secretary	Bonnie Wagner	bwagner@hyattclassic.com	829-6311

TRUSTEES

Seat #1 to 2008	Jane Burnham	jane.burnham@sbcglobal.net	677-4178
Seat #2 to 2008	Gene Hansel	renohansel@yahoo.com	354-2150
Seat #3 to 2009	Ali Chaney	ali_chaney@hotmail.com	813-3494
Seat #4 to 2008	Kathy Oakes	oakesy@sbcglobal.net	747-5446
Seat #5 to 2009	Jacque Lowery	wbureno@sbcglobal.net	853-1302
Seat #6 to 2010	Linda Badzioch	lbadzioch@pyramid.net	851-8353
Seat #7 to 2010	Kenn Rohrs	karohrs@charter.net	849-9530

IBA

Director	Robin Powell	rpowell@audubon.org	247-2798
----------	--------------	---------------------	----------

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Activity/Program	Alan Gubanich	aag@unr.nevada.edu	857-0191
Birding Classes	Bob Goodman	pandion36@aol.com	972-7848
Birds & Books Reading Group	Kenn Rohrs	karhors@charter.net	849-9530
Communications	Karen Kish	klkish@pyramid.net	841-1180
Conservation	Ali Chaney	ali_chaney@hotmail.com	813-3494
Education	Alan Gubanich	aag@unr.nevada.edu	857-0191
Field Trips	Christiane Omer	happycpo@aol.com	354-2634
Hospitality	Linda Badzioch	lbadzioch@pyramid.net	851-8353
LAS Sales	Jane Burnham	jane.burnham@sbcglobal.net	677-4178
Membership	Kathy Oakes	oakesy@sbcglobal.net	747-5446

PUBLICATION AND INFORMATION

<i>The Pelican</i> Editor	Mike Greenan	mike@basicallywild.com	322-0707
<i>The Pelican</i> Distribution	Connie Douglas	nevadaconnie@sbcglobal.net	425-1305
"Birds in Town"	Alan Wallace	wallacealan@sbcglobal.net	786-5755
LAS Info Line	Jacque Lowery		324-BIRD
Web Master	Steve Ting	scting@charter.net	849-3725