

Bristlecone Audubon



Newsletter 012 14 July 2011

Conservation Easement Protects Boyd Humboldt Valley Wetlands in Perpetuity

Word came from Jim Elias, Chief Operating Officer with American Lands Conservancy (ALC) that as of 10:46 a.m., 28 June 2011, the Boyd Humboldt Valley Wetland National Important Bird Area and surrounding uplands of the Boyd Family Ranch is now protected in perpetuity by a Conservation Easement, the first of its kind for ranches along the main stem of the Humboldt River in northern Nevada. In short, the ecosystem within the boundaries of the Boyd Ranch, including flooded wetlands, native hay meadows, river riparian and sagebrush steppe uplands are protected for all time from wildlife habitat destruction and landscape subdivision (Figures 1-5).



Figure 1. Boyd Humboldt Valley Wetlands National Important Bird Area (IBA) from 3,000 feet on 28 July 1983 (Aerial Photo File, Bristlecone Audubon).

When it became apparent that the Humboldt River System provided habitat for approximately 300 bird, mammal, reptile, amphibian and fish species, the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) initiated its first comprehensive study of the System in 1983. Since then, NDOW, Audubon, The Nature Conservancy, American Lands Conservancy, Landowner Incentive Program, Ranch Open Space, Nevada State Lands and the Natural Resource Conservation Service have all come to the conclusion that preserving the Humboldt River ecosystem may turn out to be one of the most important natural heritage legacies of our time.

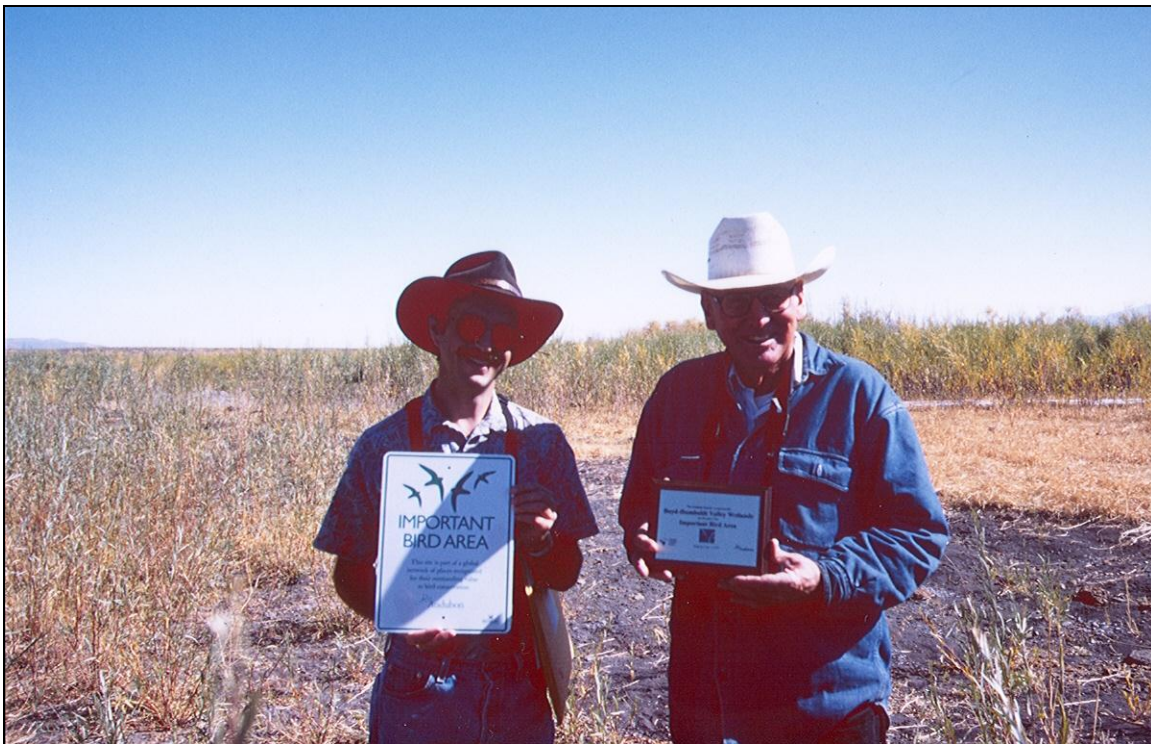


Figure 2. The late Jack Boyd (on right) and Don McIvor (Audubon) at National Important Bird Area (IBA) Ceremony on Boyd Family wetlands in 2004 (Photo File, Bristlecone Audubon).

When it comes down to it though, the true heroes of this tale are the members of Family Boyd. Andrew Boyd Jr., son Russell and family have protected the integrity of the Boyd Ranch environment since the land was homesteaded in 1869. Their stewardship of the land has resulted in this confluence zone of the Humboldt River, Lamoille Creek and Rabbit Creek providing some of the richest wildlife habitat on the upper Humboldt System. Nesting greater sandhill crane, black tern, white-faced ibis, bobolink, greater sage-grouse and Wilson's phalarope along with year round resident northern river otter, American beaver and northern leopard frog attest to the modern day productivity of this area.

Because of over 140 years of perseverance, Boyd Ranch properties provide a window into potential wildlife productivity of much of the upper Humboldt River System, in particular those properties heretofore not so well tended. And, because of their vision for the future, the Boyds provide us hope for the long term preservation, restoration and conservation of the entire system as a ribbon of wildlife habitat through one of the driest cold deserts in North America. If all goes well, the Boyd Humboldt Valley Wetland will be only the first in a long string of Conservation Easements that will protect the Humboldt River System for all time.



Figure 3. Female Wilson's phalarope (*Phalaropus tricolor*) swimming in pond of silver and gold, 9 May 2011. Nesting species in Boyd Humboldt Valley Wetland (Photo Courtesy of Ms. Anne Norby).



Figure 4. White-faced ibis (*Plegadis chihi*) foraging near nesting colony on Boyd Humboldt Valley Wetland (Photo Courtesy of the Boyd Family).

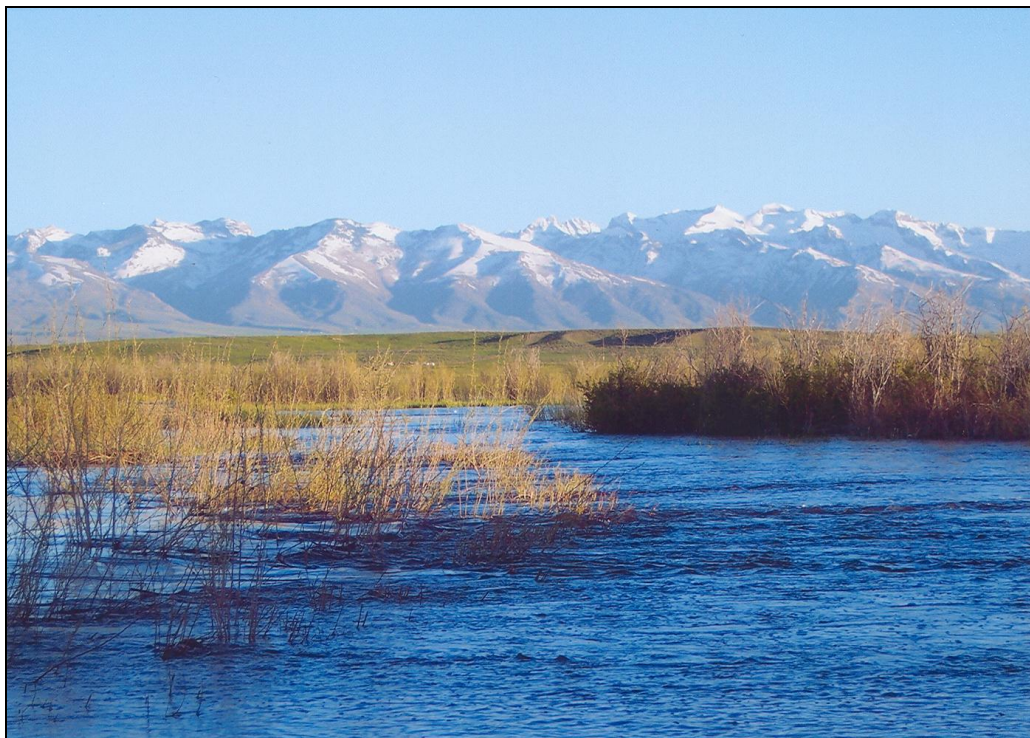


Figure 5. Humboldt River in evening (Photo Courtesy of Boyd Family).

Table 1. List of wildlife seen during the Basin and Range Seminar in Ruby Valley on Memorial Day Weekend, May 2011, Elko and White Pine Counties, Nevada. (List Courtesy of Melody Asher).

Birds

		Family: <i>Cathartidae</i> (New World Vultures)
		Turkey Vulture <i>Cathartes aura</i>
Order: <i>Gaviiformes</i> (Diver/Swimmers)		
Family: <i>Gaviidae</i> (Loons)		
Common Loon <i>Gavia immer</i>		
		Order: <i>Anseriformes</i> (Waterfowl)
		Family: <i>Anatidae</i> (Ducks, Geese, Swans)
Order: <i>Podicipediformes</i> (Flat-toed Divers)		Canada Goose <i>Branta canadensis</i>
Family: <i>Podicipedidae</i> (Grebes)		Trumpeter Swan <i>Cygnus buccinator</i>
Pied-billed Grebe <i>Podilymbus podiceps</i>		Gadwall <i>Anas strepera</i>
Eared Grebe <i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>		American Wigeon <i>Anas americana</i>
Western Grebe <i>Aechmophorus occidentalis</i>		Mallard <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>
Clark's Grebe <i>Aechmophorus clarkii</i>		Cinnamon Teal <i>Anas cyanoptera</i>
		Northern Shoveler <i>Anas clypeata</i>
		Northern Pintail <i>Anas acuta</i>
Order: <i>Pelecaniformes</i> (Four-toed Fisheaters)		Green-winged Teal <i>Anas crecca</i>
Family: <i>Pelecanidae</i> (Pelicans)		Canvasback <i>Aythya valisineria</i>
American White Pelican <i>Pelecanus erythrorhynchos</i>		Redhead <i>Aythya americana</i>
Family: <i>Phalacrocoracidae</i> (Cormorants)		Ring-necked Duck <i>Aythya collaris</i>
Double-crested Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax auritus</i>		Lesser Scaup <i>Aythya affinis</i>
		Bufflehead <i>Bucephala albeola</i>
Order: <i>Ciconiiformes</i> (Waders and Vultures)		Common Goldeneye <i>Bucephala clangula</i>
Family: <i>Ardeidae</i> (Bitterns, Herons, Egrets)		Common Merganser <i>Mergus merganser</i>
American Bittern <i>Botaurus lentiginosus</i>		Ruddy Duck <i>Oxyura jamaicensis</i>
Great Blue Heron <i>Ardea herodias</i>		
Great Egret <i>Ardea alba</i>		Order: <i>Falconiformes</i> (Diurnal Flesh Eaters)
Snowy Egret <i>Egretta thula</i>		Family: <i>Accipitridae</i> (Hawks, Eagles, Osprey)
Cattle Egret <i>Bubulcus ibis</i>		Osprey <i>Pandion haliaetus</i>
Black-crowned Night Heron <i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>		Bald Eagle <i>Haliaetus leucocephalus</i>
Family: <i>Threskiornithidae</i> (Ibises)		Northern Harrier <i>Circus cyaneus</i>
White-faced Ibis <i>Plegadis chihi</i>		Sharp-shinned Hawk <i>Accipiter striatus</i>

Cooper's Hawk *Accipiter cooperii*

Red-tailed Hawk *Buteo jamaicensis*

Ferruginous Hawk *Buteo regalis*

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*

Family: Falconidae (Falcons)

American Kestrel *Falco sparverius*

Prairie Falcon *Falco mexicanus*

Order: Gruiformes (Cranes and Allies)

Family: Rallidae (Rails, Coots)

Sora *Porzana carolina*

American Coot *Fulica americana*

Family: Gruidae (Cranes)

Greater Sandhill Crane *Grus canadensis tabida*

Order: Charadriiformes (Wading Birds)

Family: Charadriidae (Plovers)

Killdeer *Charadrius vociferus*

Family: Recurvirostridae (Avocets)

Black-necked Stilt *Himantopus mexicanus*

American Avocet *Recurvirostra americana*

Family: Scolopacidae (Sandpipers, Phalaropes)

Greater Yellowlegs *Tringa melanoleuca*

Willet *Catoptrophorus semipalmatus*

Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularia*

Long-billed Curlew *Numenius americanus*

Least Sandpiper *Calidris minutilla*

Long-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus scolopaceus*

Wilson's Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Wilson's Phalarope *Phalaropus tricolor*

Family: Laridae (Gulls, Terns)

Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis*

California Gull *Larus californicus*

Caspian Tern *Sterna caspia*

Forster's Tern *Sterna forsteri*

Order: Columbiformes (Pigeons and Allies)

Family: Columbidae (Doves)

Rock Dove *Columba livia*

Mourning Dove *Zenaida macroura*

Eurasian Collared-Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Order: Strigiformes (Nocturnal Flesh Eaters)

Family: Strigidae (Owls)

Western Screech-Owl *Otus kennicottii*

Great Horned Owl *Bubo virginianus*

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

Order: Apodiformes (Small Fast Fliers)

Family: Apodidae (Swifts)

White-throated Swift *Aeronautes saxatalis*

Family: Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)

Black-chinned Hummingbird *Archilochus alexandri*

Broad-tailed Hummingbird *Selasphorus platycercus*

Order: Coraciiformes (Cavity Nesters)

Family: Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

Belted Kingfisher *Ceryle alcyon*

Order: Piciformes (Cavity Builders)

Family: Picidae (Woodpeckers)

Lewis' Woodpecker *Melanerpes lewis*

Red-naped Sapsucker *Sphyrapicus nuchalis*

Downy Woodpecker *Picoides pubescens*

Hairy Woodpecker *Picoides villosus*

Northern Flicker *Colaptes auratus*

Order: Passeriformes (Perching Birds)**Family: Tyrannidae (Flycatchers)**

Western Wood-Pewee	<i>Contopus sordidulus</i>
Willow Flycatcher	<i>Epidonax traillii</i>
Gray Flycatcher	<i>Epidonax wrightii</i>
Cordilleran Flycatcher	<i>Epidonax occidentalis</i>
Say's Phoebe	<i>Sayornis saya</i>
Ash-throated Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus cinerascens</i>
Western Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus verticalis</i>
Eastern Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus tyrannus</i>

Family: Laniidae (Shrikes)

Loggerhead Shrike	<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>
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Family: Vireonidae (Vireos)

Plumbeous Vireo	<i>Vireo plumbeus</i>
Warbling Vireo	<i>Vireo gilvus</i>

Family: Corvidae (Jays)

Western Scrub-Jay	<i>Aphelocoma californica</i>
Pinyon Jay	<i>Gymnorhinus cyanocephalus</i>
Clark's Nutcracker	<i>Nucifraga columbiana</i>
Black-billed Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>
American Crow	<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>
Common Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>

Family: Alaudidae (Larks)

Horned Lark	<i>Eremophila alpestris</i>
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Family: Hirundinidae (Swallows)

Tree Swallow	<i>Tachycineta bicolor</i>
Violet-green Swallow	<i>Tachycineta thalassina</i>
N. Rough-winged Swallow	<i>Stelgidopteryx serripennis</i>
Cliff Swallow	<i>Petrochelidon pyrrhonota</i>
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>

Family: Paridae (Chickadees, Titmice)

Mountain Chickadee	<i>Poecile gambeli</i>
Juniper Titmouse	<i>Baeolophus griseus</i>

Family: Aegithalidae (Bushtits)

Bushtit	<i>Psaltriparus minimus</i>
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Family: Sittidae (Nuthatches)

Red-breasted Nuthatch	<i>Sitta canadensis</i>
White-breasted Nuthatch	<i>Sitta carolinensis</i>

Family: Troglodytidae (Wrens)

Rock Wren	<i>Salpinctes obsoletus</i>
Canyon Wren	<i>Catherpes mexicanus</i>
House Wren	<i>Troglodytes aedon</i>
Marsh Wren	<i>Cistothorus palustris</i>

Family: Cinclidae (Dippers)

American Dipper	<i>Cinclus mexicanus</i>
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Family: Regulidae (Kinglets)

Ruby-crowned Kinglet	<i>Regulus calendula</i>
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Family: Turdidae (Thrushes)

Mountain Bluebird	<i>Sialia currucoides</i>
Townsend's Solitaire	<i>Myadestes townsendi</i>
Hermit Thrush	<i>Catharus guttatus</i>
American Robin	<i>Turdus migratorius</i>

Family: Mimidae (Thrashers, Mockingbirds)

Sage Thrasher	<i>Oreoscoptes montanus</i>
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Family: Sturnidae (Starlings)

European Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>
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Family: Bombycillidae (Waxwings)

Cedar Waxwing	<i>Bombycilla cedrorum</i>
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Family: Parulidae (Wood Warblers)

Virginia's Warbler	<i>Vermivora virginiae</i>
Yellow Warbler	<i>Dendroica petechia</i>
Yellow-rumped Warbler	<i>Dendroica coronata</i>
Black-throated Gray Warbler	<i>Dendroica nigrescens</i>
MacGillivray's Warbler	<i>Oporornis tolmiei</i>
Common Yellowthroat	<i>Geothlypis trichas</i>
Wilson's Warbler	<i>Wilsonia pusilla</i>
Yellow-breasted Chat	<i>Icteria virens</i>

Family: *Thraupidae* (Tanagers)Western Tanager *Piranga ludoviciana***Family: *Emberizidae* (Sparrows, Towhees, Juncos)**Green-tailed Towhee *Pipilo chlorurus*Spotted Towhee *Pipilo maculatus*Chipping Sparrow *Spizella passerina*Brewer's Sparrow *Spizella breweri*Vesper Sparrow *Poocetes gramineus*Lark Sparrow *Chondestes grammacus*Sage Sparrow *Amphispiza belli*Savannah Sparrow *Passerculus sandwichensis*Song Sparrow *Melospiza melodia*Mountain W-crowned Sparrow *Zonotrichia leucophrys oriantha*Dark-eyed Junco(Oregon) *Junco hyemalis therburi*Dark-eyed Junco(Gray-headed) *Junco hyemalis caniceps***Family: *Cardinalidae* (Grosbeaks, Buntings)**Black-headed Grosbeak *Pheucticus melanocephalus*Lazuli Bunting *Passerina amoena***Family: *Icteridae* (Blackbirds, Orioles)**Bobolink *Dolichonyx oryzivorus*Red-winged Blackbird *Agelaius phoeniceus*Western Meadowlark *Sturnella neglecta*Yellow-headed Blackbird *Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*Brewer's Blackbird *Euphagus cyanocephalus*Great-tailed Grackle *Quiscalus mexicanus*Brown-headed Cowbird *Molothrus ater*Bullock's Oriole *Icterus bullockii***Family: *Fringillidae* (Finches, Grosbeaks)**Cassin's Finch *Carpodacus cassinii*House Finch *Carpodacus mexicanus*Pine Siskin *Carduelis pinus*Lesser Goldfinch *Carduelis psaltria*American Goldfinch *Carduelis tristis*Evening Grosbeak *Coccothraustes vespertinus***Family: *Passeridae* (Old World Sparrows)**House Sparrow *Passer domesticus***Mammals****Order: *Chiroptera* (Bats)****Family: *Vespertilionidae* (Plainnose Bats)**Townsend's Big-eared Bat *Corynorhinus townsendii***Order: *Lagomorpha* (Pikas, Hares, Rabbits)****Family: *Leporidae* (Hares, Rabbits)**Black-tailed Jackrabbit *Lepus californicus*Mountain Cottontail *Sylvilagus nuttalli*Pygmy Rabbit *Brachylagus idahoensis***Order: *Rodentia* (Rodents)****Family: *Sciuridae* (Squirrels)**Least Chipmunk *Tamias minimus*Cliff Chipmunk *Tamias dorsalis*Uinta Chipmunk *Tamias umbrinus*Yellow-bellied Marmot *Marmota flaviventris*White-tailed Antelope Squirrel *Ammospermophilus leucurus*Great Basin Ground Squirrel *Spermophilus mollis*Belding's Ground Squirrel *Spermophilus beldingi*Golden-mantled Ground Squirrel *Spermophilus lateralis***Family: *Cricetidae* (Mice, Rats, Voles)**Deer Mouse *Peromyscus maniculatus*Piñon Mouse *Peromyscus truei*Desert Woodrat *Neotoma lepida*Bushy-tailed Woodrat *Neotoma cinerea*Montane Vole *Microtus montanus*Muskrat *Ondatra zibethica***Family: *Erethizontidae* (New World Porcupines)**North American Porcupine *Erethizon dorsatum*

Order: Carnivora (Flesh-Eaters)

Family: Canidae (Dogs)

Coyote *Canis latrans*

Family: Mustelidae (Weasels and Allies)

Long-tailed Weasel *Mustela frenata*

American Badger *Taxidea taxus*

Order: Artiodactyla (Hoofed Mammals)

Family: Cervidae (Deer)

Mule Deer *Odocoileus hemionus*

Family: Antilocapridae (Pronghorn)

Pronghorn *Antilocapra americana*

Reptiles

Order: Squamata (Lizards, Snakes)

Family: Iguanidae (Iguanas and Allies)

Sagebrush Lizard *Sceloporus graciosus*

Common Side-blotched Lizard *Uta stansburiana*

Greater Short-horned Lizard *Phrynosoma hernandesi*

Family: Scincidae (Skinks)

Great Basin Skink *Eumeces skiltonianus utahensis*

Family: Colubridae (Solid-toothed Snakes)

Great Basin Gopher Snake *Pituophis cantenifer deserticola*

Note: This list is a combination of wildlife sight record data from Memorial Day Weekend, May 2011, Ruby Valley.



Quail in Camouflage (*Callipepla californica*) (Photo Courtesy of Mr. John Norby).

Tentative Bristlecone Audubon Calendar for remainder of 2011 and early 2012

August 13 American Pika, Flower & Bird Hike Road's End, Lamoille Canyon 7:30am
Sturdy boots, sack lunch, water and appropriate clothing are essential. Approximately four miles of hiking in high elevation tundra and subalpine forest. Good trail. Back to vehicles around 1:00 pm.

September 28 Morocco: Wild Birds of the Sahara and Mediterranean Team Clark
Presentation immediately follows business meeting, 6:30 pm, NDOW, 60 Youth Center Rd

October Black-Rosy Finch Ecology in the Great Basin NDOW Staff

November Break

December Elko, Ruby Valley, Snake Valley, Battle Mountain and Jarbidge CBC Bird Counts

January 2012 Winter Raptor Survey

February Break

March Southern Desert Mine Claim Marker Post Pull

Natural History: At their home on the western flank of the Ruby Mountains, Bristlecone Audubon members Don and Virginia King have noticed an astonishing reduction in spring and summer 2011 hummingbird activity as compared to years previous. One hypothesis suggests that migrating populations of our four hummingbird species were impacted negatively by an unusually cool, wet spring. An alternative hypothesis suggests hummingbirds may be drawn toward this year's unusually resplendent gilia, penstemon and paintbrush desert bloom and thus away from backyards and feeders.... a sort of fructose over sucrose display of preference on the part of wild birds. Tell us what you think and we'll print it in the next offering.



Bristlecone Audubon Officer Roster

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Deadline for submissions for the next Newsletter is 5 August 2011. Please send submissions to:
pbradley@ndow.org, P.V. Bradley, Newsletter Editor, Bristlecone Audubon