

Bristlecone Audubon



Newsletter 010 9 March 2011

Spring in the Air

While the official first day of Spring is still eleven days off, the wild things know better. Millions of birds are already on the move. The greater sandhill cranes are returning from their winter range on the Lower Colorado River. Mountain bluebirds are moving in great foraging flocks through low valley sagebrush and greasewood habitats on their way north. Turkey vultures are gliding in and setting up communal night roosts in large cottonwood trees.....probably wondering why they ever left Argentina. Vultures, not unlike our native reptiles, are rather 'poikilothermic' or 'cold-blooded'. As such, they require a warm morning sun to fire up their metabolic engines. Often, this time of year, one can see vultures, while perched, using their 69-inch wing spans as photon collectors, turning like great daffodils in morning sunlight.

Already, golden eagles and great horned owls are feeding hatched young and many of our smaller birds of prey are busy initiating nesting territories and incubating clutches. As if on cue, Great Basin ground squirrels were seen yesterday making their first tentative forays from their earthen hibernation dens, looking up, always up for that winged menace of their nightmares. Perhaps it's a good thing our own primate lineage did not share the earth with Pterosauria. Some larger pterodactyl wings spanned 480 inches.



Six sub-adult bald eagles perch in single cottonwood snag along the South Fork Humboldt River, Elko County, Nevada, March 2011 (Photo File, Bristlecone Audubon).

Even though spring is well on its way, many of our wintering birds are still hanging on for one or two last meals in Nevada's lowlands prior to heading north and uphill to their respective breeding grounds. This makes the winter/spring transition an exceptional time for birding northern Nevada.



Part of communal foraging flock of 165 wintering rosy finches, Elko County, Nevada, March 2011. Photo includes mixed flock of black rosy finches and two subspecies of gray-crowned rosy finches; the Hepburn's Rosy Finch (*L.t.littoralis*) from the northern Rocky and Cascade Mountains as well as the Interior Rosy Finch (*L.t.dawsoni*) from the Sierra and White Mountains. (Photo File, Bristlecone Audubon).

And speaking of wintering birds, Lois Ports has been tabulating Elko Christmas Bird Count numbers since 1990. Table 1 is her summary going back to 2005. The full table can be viewed at our Website.

Tentative Calendar for early 2011

March 16	Commensal Symbiosis: Red-naped Sapsuckers and Silver-haired Bats NDOW 6:30pm		
April 16	Buzzard Saturday Road Kill BBQ	Lamoille Grove	4:00pm
May 28-30	Birds Gone Wild	Ruby Lake	

Please send submissions to: pbradley@ndow.org. P.V. Bradley, Newsletter Editor, Bristlecone Audubon

Natural History: Turkey Vultures spotted: 6 March 2011- Battle Mountain (Larry Teske), 8 March 2011- Elko (Ann Haglund), 9 March 2011-Newark Valley (Bristlecone Staff).

Table 1. Elko Christmas Bird Count Summary, 2005 to 2010. (Table Courtesy of Lois Ports).

SPECIES	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005
COMMON LOON	0	0	0	0	0	1
W. GREBE	0	0	0	0	0	0
PIED-BILLED GREBE	0	0	0	6	0	0
EARED GREBE	1	0	0	0	0	0
GRT. BL. HERON	1	0	0	5	2	0
BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERON	0	0	0	0	0	0
TRUMPETER SWAN	0	0	0	0	0	0
TUNDRA SWAN	0	0	6	1	0	0
SNOW GOOSE	0	0	0	cw	0	0
CANADA GOOSE	275	557	303	479	316	488
GREATER WHITE FRONTED GOOSE	0	0	3	CW	0	0
WOOD DUCK	0	0	1	0	0	5
GREENWING TEAL	0	18	0	40	3	26
MALLARD	67	186	60	83	110	88
PINTAILS	0	0	0	30	5	36
BLUE WING TEAL	0	0	0	0	6	8
CINNAMON TEAL	0	0	0	0	0	0
N. SHOVELER	0	0	0	20	30	7
GADWALL	4	0	6	77	23	3
WIGEON	0	0	0	6	0	43
CANVASBACK	0	0	0	0	0	0
REDHEAD	0	0	4	43	0	4
RING-NECKED DUCK	1	2	4	73	45	4

LESSER SCAUP	0	22	0	22	25	35
COM. GOLDENEYE	0	2	1	100	23	25
BARROWS GOLDENEYE	0	0	0	0	0	0
BUFFLEHEAD	0	0	0	100	35	4
COM. MERGANSER	0	1	0	2	0	3
HOODED MERGANSER	5	0	18	6	6	0
RUDDY DUCK	0	0	1	40	5	120
UNIDENT. DUCK	100	97	1	0	35	30
BALD EAGLE	6	4	5	5	3	3
N.HARRIER	2	16	7	6	7	20
N. GOSHAWK	0	1	0	1	0	0
SHARPSHINNED HAWK	8	2	7	2	3	3
COOPER'S HAWK	4	2	CW	0	4	2
RED-TAIL HAWK	20	18	4	9	12	14
ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK	3	7	4	5	7	7
OSPREY	0	0	0	0	0	0
GOLDEN EAGLE	6	3	2	14	4	6
UNIDENT. EAGLE	0	0	0	0	0	0
UNIDENT. HAWK	4	1	1	1	1	1
KESTREL	5	5	CW	0	1	13
MERLIN	0	0	0	0	0	0
PRAIRIE FALCON	1	0	0	5	1	1
GRAY PARTRIDGE	5	35	0	CW	4	CW
CHUCKAR	0	0	0	0	0	0
SAGE GROUSE	0	0	0	0	0	0

CALIF. QUAIL	77	52	0	7	14	0
WILD TURKEY	0	7	0	18	25	0
VIRGINIA RAIL	0	0	0	0	0	0
COOT	203	29	230	570	40	848
KILLDEER	0	0	0	0	0	0
COMMON SNIBE	0	1	0	0	2	2
RINGBILLED GULL	0	0	0	0	0	2
CALIFORNIA GULL	0	0	0	4	0	0
HERRING GULL	0	0	0	0	0	0
GULL SPECIES	0	0	8	0	0	0
ROCK DOVE	592	177	250	431	176	354
MOURNING DOVE	0	CW	0	10	0	4
EURASIAN COLLARED DOVE	335	338	151	111	19	4
GREAT HORN OWL	3	1	0	2	0	3
SHORT-EARED OWL	0	0	0	0	1	0
WESTERN SCREECH OWL	0	0	0	0	0	CW
BELTED KINGFISHER	0	0	0	0	5	0
REDNAPED SAPSUCKER	0	0	0	0	0	0
MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD	0	0	0	2	0	0
GAMBEL'S QUAIL	0	0	50	0	0	0
RED BREAST. SAPSUCKER	0	0	0	0	0	0
DOWNY WOODPECKER	3	1	0	1	0	3
HAIRY WOODPECKER	1	1	0	0	0	2
N.FLICKER	50	40	29	29	28	54
EMPIDONAX SP.	0	0	0	0	0	0

SAY'S PHOEBE	0	0	0	0	0	0
HORNED LARK	0	12	173	3	0	0
BLUE JAY	0	0	0	0	0	0
SCRUB JAY	20	2	8	5	11	5
PINYON JAY	2	1	11	2	25	90
CLARK'S NUTCRACKER	0	0	0	0	0	0
AMERICAN CROW	15	12	16	23	0	0
MAGPIE	120	84	65	163	115	117
COMMON RAVEN	161	97	45	121	80	105
MTN. CHICKADEE	17	1	8	10	3	3
JUNIPER TITMOUSE	8	1	0	4	0	13
BUSHTIT	32	50	0	0	16	20
RED-BR. NUTHATCH	1	0	0	0	0	0
WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH	0	3	0	CW	0	0
BROWN CREEPER	0	0	0	0	0	0
HOUSE WREN	0	0	0	0	1	0
MARSH WREN	3	0	0	0	0	0
WREN SP.	1	0	0	0	0	0
AMERICAN DIPPER	0	1	0	0	0	0
RUBY CROWN KINGLET	0	0	0	0	3	0
GOLDEN CROWN. KINGLET	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOWNSENDS SOLITAIRE	9	3	1	5	3	17
HERMIT THRUSH	25	0	0	0	0	0
ROBIN	184	44	54	36	61	276
VARIED THRUSH	0	0	1	0	0	0

NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD	1	0	0	0	0	0
AM. PIPIT	0	0	0	0	0	0
CEDAR WAXWING	238	199	15	33	8	20
BOHEMIAN WAXWING	7	0	0	0	0	21
UNIDENT. WAXWING	0	0	0	0	0	0
NORTHERN SHRIKE	0	0	0	2	0	0
LOGGERHEAD	1	0	1	1	0	0
STARLINGS	1544	1289	1551	648	505	660
YELLOWRUMP WARBLER	0	0	1	0	1	5
ORANGE CR. WARBLER	0	0	0	0	0	1
SPOTTED TOWHEE	1	0	0	1	0	0
CHIPPING SPARROW	0	0	0	0	0	0
TREE SPARROW	15	54	10	0	0	0
SONG SPARROW	7	9	3	0	6	8
FOX SPARROW	0	0	5	3	cw	4
WH-THROATEDSPARROW	0	0	0	0	0	0
HARRIS SPARROW	0	0	0	0	0	0
WH-CROWNED SPARROW	65	25	84	49	8	33
MISC. SPARROW	2	258	10	4	0	46
DARK-EYED JUNCO	149	459	88	172	57	64
(SLATE) DARK-EYED JUNCO	5	5	0	0	0	0
RED-WING BLACKBIRD	0	8	1	0	0	1
MEADOWLARK	0	0	0	2	0	0
BREWERS BLACKBIRD	145	40	29	1	40	59
BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD	0	0	0	46	0	0

GREAT-TAIL GRACKLE	30	65	44	22	10	8
GRAY-CROWN ROSY FINCH	144	59	105	1	145	35
BLACK ROSY FINCH	21	11	22	0	25	0
CASSIN'S FINCH	10	30	CW	21	cw	13
HOUSE FINCH	259	487	320	216	113	97
UNIDENTIFIED FINCH	0	18	0	0	0	0
PINE SISKIN	26	23	102	28	0	23
COMMON REDPOLL	0	0	0	0	0	0
AMERICAN GOLDFINCH	74	21	76	51	3	40
LESSER GOLDFINCH	64	12	7	20	48	41
RED CROSSBILLS	0	0	0	26	0	0
EVENING GROSBEAK	15	0	0	0	0	0
HOUSE SPARROW	3304	1608	1646	468	608	1029
TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	8507	6617	5658	4553	2921	5120
TOTAL SPECIES	61	59	51	70	54	65

