

LAHONTAN AUDUBON SOCIETY
IS NOW
NORTHWEST NEVADA BIRD ALLIANCE



American White Pelican - Marti Phillips/Audubon Photography Awards

Annual Report 2024

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Our mission is to preserve and improve the remaining habitat of birds and other wildlife, restore historical habitat, and educate people, especially children, about birds in our unique Nevada environments.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To Our Incredible Birding Community,

We are thrilled to welcome you to the newly named *Northwest Nevada Bird Alliance*! Formerly known as the Lahontan Audubon Society, we remain deeply committed to the belief that [birding is for everyone](#). Birds don't recognize boundaries—they unite us across continents, flying between us to remind us of how interconnected our world really is. The Black-necked Stilt you spotted at Swan Lake or Stillwater this summer might be soaring over a mudflat in Central or South America by now. As these migratory journeys unfold, they highlight our shared responsibility to protect the environment, from local actions to global efforts.

For over 60 years, our chapter has proudly advocated for birds in our community. We've built a legacy of hands-on youth education that enhances school curricula and fosters a passion for nature. And, most importantly, we have come together to celebrate the beauty of birds and the urgent need to conserve their habitats.

After a slow financial period and a dip in membership, we're excited to announce that our renewal begins with you—our dedicated members, with fresh ideas, and diverse voices. To better reflect our mission and reach the growing community of bird lovers, we've made the bold decision to rename ourselves the *Northwest Nevada Bird Alliance*. While we remain legally registered as Lahontan Audubon Society, this new name signals our commitment to broadening our perspective and embracing the many ways people contribute to bird conservation—from scientific research to grassroots community-building.

John James Audubon's art will always be a vital part of birding history, but we know that today's birding community includes many diverse individuals and groups who are also making profound impacts through science, art, education, and habitat protection. Together, we are all stewards of the world's birds, working to ensure that future generations experience the same wonder we do when we see a rare bird or hear a familiar call.

This report celebrates the incredible work we're doing, thanks to the passionate efforts of our members, volunteers, and supporters. From birding field trips to education programs, community science projects, and conservation initiatives, your contributions make all the difference. We are stronger together, and with your support, we continue to build a thriving community dedicated to protecting Nevada's birds and their habitats.

As we embark on this exciting new chapter, we remain steadfast in our mission: *to make Nevada a better place for birds*. Our name may be new, but our dedication is the same. Together, we can make a positive change for birds.

Thank you for being a part of our journey. Here's to the future of birding, conservation, and community!

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

FY2024-25 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Northwest Nevada Bird Alliance's Board of Trustees works to promote our mission and guides the direction of our organization during our fiscal year, which starts on July 1 and ends on June 30. The FY2024-25 Board consisted of:

Suzie Reynolds – President
Lauren Whitenack – Vice President
Judy Duffy – Treasurer
Linda St-Cyr – Secretary
Phyllis Henderson
Bruce Blackadar
Marisa Ernst
Lorraine Hickey
Tom Stille



NAME CHANGE

The Northwest Nevada Bird Alliance's Board wavered over the decision on our chapter's name for multiple years. This year, they made the decision to change our chapter name from Lahontan Audubon Society to Northwest Nevada Bird Alliance. Lahontan Audubon Society has been struggling for some time to vitalize and grow their organization. Factors considered for the name change included public interactions that revealed that many members of our general community did not know about Lahontan Audubon Society. One barrier to this seemed to be a lack of awareness about Nevada's hydrologic history, particularly the existence of ancient Lake Lahontan, which once covered the region where our chapter operates. More concerning was that many people also did not associate the name Audubon with birds and did not know of the [history about the formation of the National Audubon Society](#). A secondary factor considered in the name change was the rapid growth of Reno and Sparks and the expansion of very diverse communities, which we wanted to welcome into our chapter. To enable our organization to grow, our Board decided to drop the names that were no longer common and to include the word "bird" in our chapter name, to make it easier to discover our organization and mission. They also decided to include the word "alliance" to welcome in people of all backgrounds, and because many other Audubon chapters have been also updating their names from "Audubon Society" to "Bird Alliance." Updating our name to one that is commonly used by other Audubon chapters allows for public recognition that we are still a chapter of the National Audubon Society, which accepts updates to the chapters' names. After the Board's discussion on the new name, and a member vote, the new name for our chapter was chosen to be Northwest Nevada Bird Alliance. Updating our chapter name is in process. Lahontan Audubon Society is now doing business as Northwest Nevada Bird Alliance and this new name will begin to appear on our website and communications.

STAFF

Northwest Nevada Bird Alliance had one full-time staff member and one part-time AmeriCorps State National Member this past year.

Executive Director – Diane Wong-Kone

Diane carries out daily administrative duties and communications with membership, researches grant funding, supports ongoing chapter activities, enables new partnerships, and carries out actions directed by our Board of Trustees to promote our chapter's mission.

AmeriCorps State National Member – Patty Moen

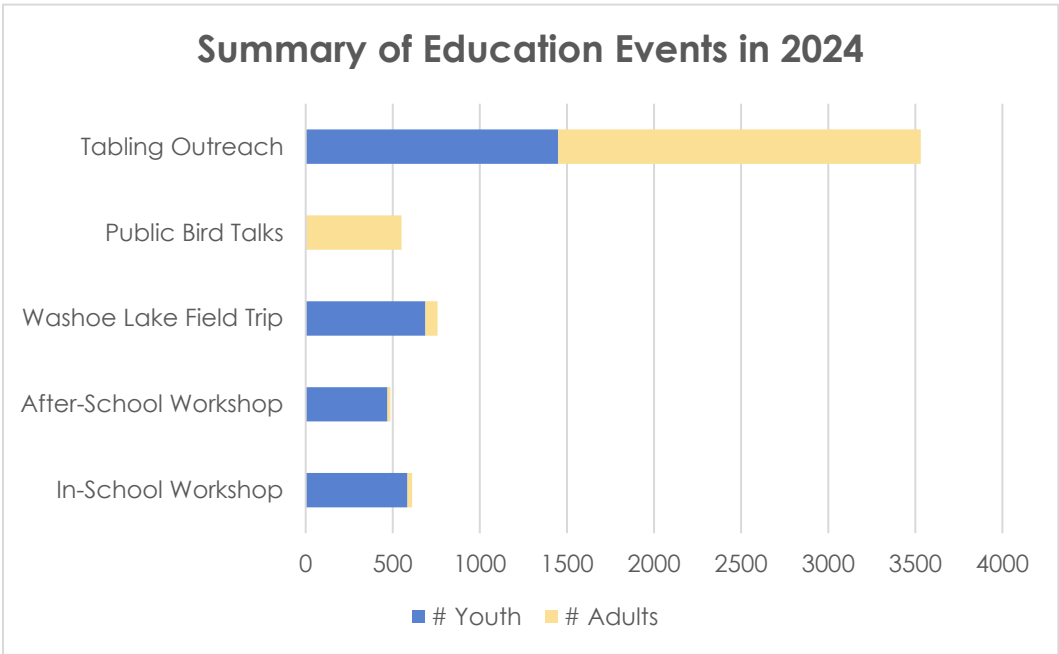
Our chapter hired Patty Moen as our Community Outreach Coordinator through the Truckee Meadows Parks Foundation's AmeriCorps program. Patty's primary duties included supporting our Education Committee's activities, assisting volunteers, and spearheading new outreach events for our chapter, which included tabling at the Riverside Farmer's Market in Idlewild Park.

WHAT WE DO

EDUCATION

Education Committee Chair: Alan Gubanich

Our Education Committee provides education about birds in Nevada and beyond, with a focus on youth education. Education events include in-school programs, after-school programs, spring field trips to Washoe Lake, and table outreach at various festivals and public events throughout Reno, Sparks, Carson City, and Lake Tahoe.



Northwest Nevada Bird Alliance's education programs are provided free to the public and to our local schools. We couldn't provide this service without our many volunteers, whose love of birds and sharing knowledge helps spread appreciation and education of Nevada's birds, to grow our birding community and to promote avian conservation. Our in-school and after-school programs use several developed lesson plans and activities that allow students to learn what makes birds unique, to identify Nevada birds, and to learn about bird adaptations. The Washoe Lake field trip program provides outdoor education to many of our local schools. This year, our chapter received a grant from the Nevada Outdoor Education and Recreation Program to reimburse Title 1 Schools for bus trips. Many of our schools with lower budgets miss out on outdoor recreation opportunities, such as our Washoe Lake program. Thanks to the funding grant, we enabled more schools to participate. Our Washoe Lake field trip program leads students through two main activities, an investigation of aquatic macroinvertebrates and microorganisms using compound microscopes, and an active walk to use binoculars and spotting scopes to identify local birds. These activities teach the students about our desert lake ecosystem and provide a human connection to our local birds and some of their natural habitats. This program is very popular with our local teachers and many return to participate in our Washoe Lake field trips each year.



Our Education Committee is fostering the next generation of birders!

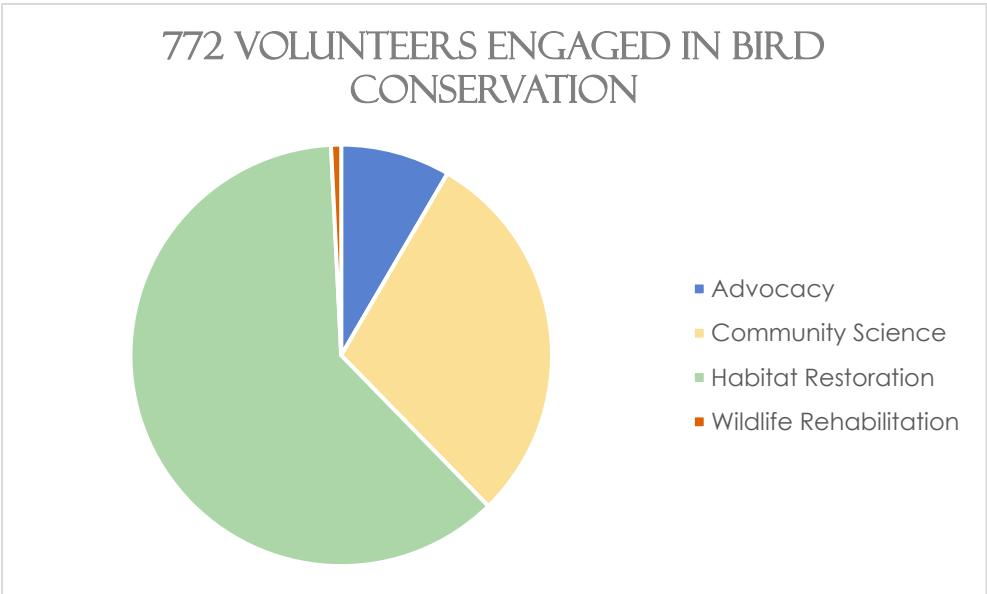
In addition to youth programs, our Education Committee provides free public bird talks at Galena Creek Visitor Center, to multiple senior living communities, libraries and other public spaces. Our Education Chair, Alan Gubanich, educates and entertains the crowds about identification and the ecology of our many Nevada birds, often using our avian taxidermy collection.

Our Education Committee, along with some of our other working committees, provides tabling outreach at many local festivals and public events, to spread the knowledge of our chapter and our birds to our community. These tabling events engage more people by far than all our other educational activities by inviting many members of the community to join in on our bird walks, classes, or conservation activities.

CONSERVATION

Conservation Committee Chair: Marisa Ernst

In 2024, Marisa Ernst became the new Chair of our Conservation Committee. Along with over 500 other Audubon chapters, Northwest Nevada Bird Alliance works with the National Audubon Society to help “bend the curve” to reverse alarming declines in bird populations. Our chapter focuses on the Nevada habitats that are important for birds in our communities and larger landscape-scale habitats that are important for regional bird conservation. Our efforts at grassroots advocacy for avian conservation are strengthened with the voices of our members. Active volunteerism also plays a big role in our effort to monitor local, vulnerable bird populations and in creating beautiful park spaces that can be enjoyed by both birds and us.

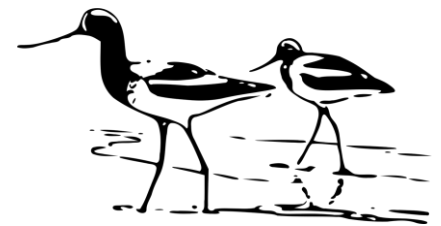


One of our advocacy highlights included the garnering of signatures on postcards on Earth Day in favor of the Migratory Birds of the Americas Conservation Enhancements Act of 2023, which provides financial assistance to promote neotropical bird conservation. These postcards were hand-delivered to key representatives in Washington, D.C. by the National Audubon Society and the act was passed into law in April 2024.

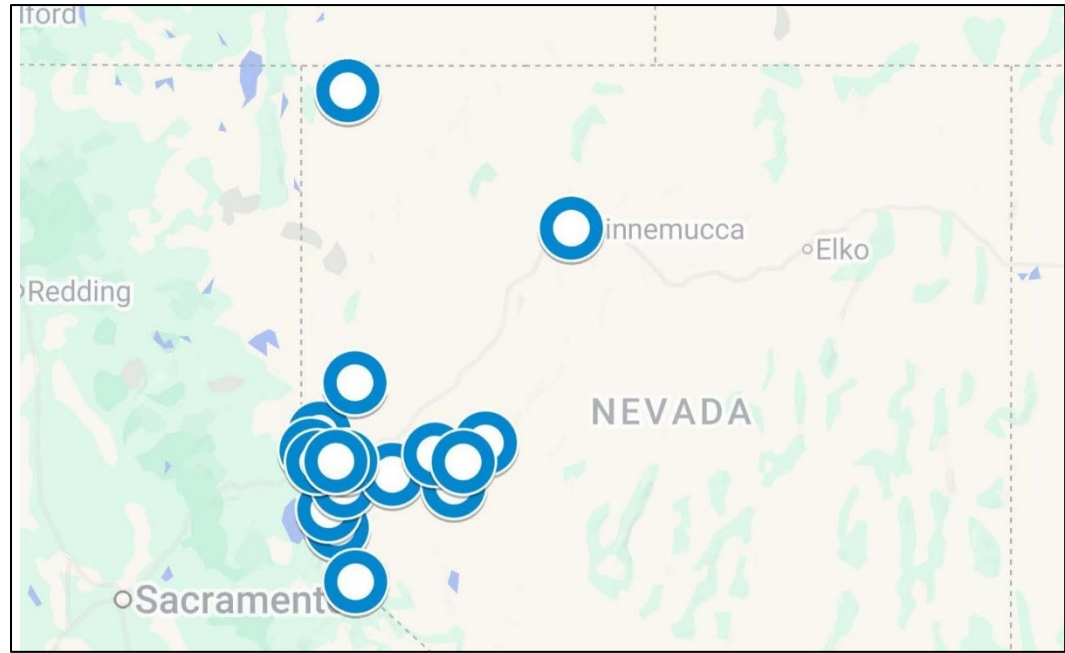
Our 2024 advocacy efforts for birds included:

- Letters supporting native vegetation along the Truckee River corridor – submitted to multiple local authorities
- Meetings and letters expressing concern on road development at Swan Lake – submitted to the Sparks Mayor, Washoe County Commissioners, and RTC
- Sign on to support letter for Conserve Nevada funding – submitted to the Nevada Governor by The Nature Conservancy of Nevada
- Comment on lighting along the Truckee River and concerns for wildlife impacts – submitted to Reno City Council
- Sign on to support language and funding in the Senate Interior Appropriations Bill to support our saline lakes ecosystems – submitted by the National Audubon Society with multiple chapters to the Senate Appropriations Committee, with an additional second letter submitted to the Nevada Congressional Delegation
- Sign on to support the Desert Terminal Lakes Provision in the Senate Farm Bill – submitted by the National Audubon Society with multiple chapters to Nevada Senators
- Signing a petition by the Center for Biological Diversity for rulemaking to allow permits authorizing the foreseeable killing of migratory birds in building collisions, to reduce bird mortality caused by glass collisions in new building construction
- Participating in a Bureau of Land Management (BLM) workshop in Sparks, to give public feedback on current Pinyon-Juniper woodland management for Pinyon Jays
- Submitting a letter of support to the BLM for federal funding for acquisition of a parcel in the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest on Thomas Creek in the Carson Range.
- Observation study of pedal boat impacts on resident water birds at Virginia Lake, with no negative effect observed.

Our ongoing community science projects involve recruiting members from our community to participate in important bird data collection. These bird data help scientists and inform land management practices that can help vulnerable bird populations, such as long-distance migrating shorebirds, and our local Pinyon Jay populations. These groups of birds have shown alarming population declines and our volunteers work alongside federal and state agency biologists to monitor the birds in our area. Our shorebird counts focus on the Lahontan Valley Wetland Complex at Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge and Carson Lake in Fallon, and we work with the Great Basin Bird Observatory to collect Pinyon Jay data throughout northern Nevada. We also promote multiple Christmas Bird Counts throughout northern Nevada and adjacent areas in California and Oregon. The Christmas Bird Count is organized by the National Audubon Society and is the longest running community science bird count program in the U.S. Our local Truckee Meadows Christmas Bird Count has been running since 1961, two years before the Lahontan Audubon Society was formed!



Our volunteers also work on the ground to beautify our community spaces for birds and people. In 2024, our chapter received multiple grants to purchase fruit trees and irrigation equipment to enhance the [Valley Wood Wildlife Gardens](#) for birds. Northwest Nevada Bird Alliance volunteers have worked alongside the City of Reno and multiple other nonprofit organizations, such as Biggest Little Bee City and Keep Truckee Meadows Beautiful, carrying on Tom Stille's vision of maintaining community gardens that can provide food and shelter for birds and our neighbors too.



Map showing the reach of our Conservation Committee's activities in 2024, including Christmas Bird Counts, shorebird surveys, advocacy areas, Pinyon Jay surveys, and community gardens.

Lastly, a few of our volunteers helped at [FlyAway Bird Rescue](#) in Silver Springs. Volunteers helped [release rehabilitated birds](#) to the wild and helped [construct a flight cage](#) large enough to rehabilitate an eagle! Our Education Chair, Alan Gubanich, works closely with FlyAway's rehabilitator, Suzette Feilen, to bring birds that cannot be rehabilitated into our taxidermy collection. We honor the lives of these birds by using them for education, to foster an understanding of our birds in the younger generation.

FIELD TRIPS

Field Trip Committee Chair: Lauren Whitenack

Birding field trips are one of our most popular events. As the seasons progress, the bird communities in our area change, from wintering waterfowl, to local resident birds, to spring songbirds, and nesting neotropical migrants that head south again in the fall. We are lucky to have multiple birding spots with different habitats that feature different bird

communities to see and learn about! Many of our local hotspots are featured in our [Online Area Birding Guide](#) and many of our bird walks visit these areas regularly.

In 2024, Northwest Nevada Bird Alliance hosted over 70 free bird walks, including customized walks for our Blind, Deaf, and LGBTQIA+ communities. We also featured a bat walk with the Nevada Department of Wildlife. Throughout the year, our 23 trip leaders recorded 175 bird species in Nevada on [eBird](#) in the counties of Washoe, Lyon, Churchill, Carson City, Douglas, and Storey Counties. We thank our many field trip leaders for sharing their bird knowledge and for sharing some of their favorite birding spots with us! Thank you Lauren Whitenack, Jeff Bleam, Ben Sonnenberg, Steven Cavros, Linda St-Cyr, Ned Bohman, Tom Stille, Nancy Santos, Julie Duda, Bill Grossi, JoAnn Cobb, Margaret Lord, Elise Lingenfelter, Katie Smith, Lori Bellis, Cathy Schmidt, Brendan Bucy, Sheryl Ferguson, Clayton Peoples, Jaida Marinas, Kaimana Lunaria, and Kath Giel!



A group of happy birders looking for dippers along the Truckee River!

International Bird Tours

In 2024, Northwest Nevada Bird Alliance partnered with Crescentia Expeditions (now [Flyway Birding Tours](#)) on two amazing bird tours to Central America. These tours not only feature amazing avian biodiversity, but our guides, Mario Cordoba and Tony Arce introduced our tour participants to local avian and habitat conservation projects. These ecotours not only provide fantastic birding experiences, but they support the local groups that steward the land for resident tropical birds, and some of our Nevada birds that migrate south too! The two featured tours in 2024 visited [northern Costa Rica](#) and [Panama](#).

Please stay tuned in 2025-2026! Our Field Trip Committee is working on even more bird outings which may include some trips outside the nearby Reno area, but maybe not as far as Central America. We will continue to discover new birds together!

PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

Programs and Activities Committee Chair: Vice President – Lauren Whitenack

Northwest Nevada Bird Alliance meets on most 4th Tuesdays of the month at Moana Landscape Center, located at 1190 Moana Lane in Reno. Our Vice President curates our speaker series. Many of our speaker program recordings are available on [our YouTube channel](#). We thank our 2024 speakers who helped us learn more about birds and the natural world:

Ned Bohman – Birds of the Farallon Islands

Robin Eppard and Western Nevada College Students – Pinyon Jay Monitoring

Robin Holabird – Creating a Home Bird Video

Mario Cordoba – Panama Bird Tour, Harpy Eagle Quest

Matt Jansen – Yellow-billed Cuckoos in Nevada

Justin Small – Greater Sage-Grouse

Jess Brooks – Breeding Bird Survey Program

Steve Gessler – India: The Search for Bengal Tigers

Our Programs and Activities Committee also organizes our spring bird identification class series on The Birds of the Truckee Meadows. In 2024, we held our classes at the Rosewood Nature Center. These classes taught bird identification skills, from learning about field guides, to backyard birds, to those oh so hard to identify Empidonax flycatchers! We are grateful to our birding instructors: Ned Bohman, Lauren Whitenack, Alan Gubanich, Mike Goddard, and Don Molde.

OUTREACH

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging Chairs: Lauren Whitenack and Jaida Marinas

In 2024, Northwest Nevada Bird Alliance formed a new working committee, our Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging (EDIB) Committee. This committee has been working hard to welcome in new communities that were seen to be missing or a minority component of our membership. In the past, Audubon chapters were predominantly made up of people who had leisure time to go birding. With birding becoming more popular, optics becoming more available, and with our urban centers of Reno and Sparks booming, our Board members decided to form the EDIB Committee to find ways to connect with our growing population.



Birding in the snow for the 2024 Truckee Meadows Christmas Bird Count.

In 2024, Lauren Whitenack received grant funds for a project that focused on inclusion of our LGBTQIA+ community. The National Audubon Society supports the Let's Go Birding Together (LGBT) walks that allow a safe space for members to join and learn birds together. Special events that our EDIB Committee hosted for Northwest Nevada Bird Alliance included special LGBT walks, a LGBT trivia night, tabling at Pride Day, a special session on Christmas Bird Count protocol, and an invitation to include LGBTQIA+ members and friends on a special Christmas Bird Count walk! Even though the grant funds have been well spent, our chapter's Let's Go Birding Together walks continue, and they continue to be popular. Our EDIB Committee has also worked with our Deaf and Blind communities, offering special bird walks that cater to their special abilities. Our EDIB Committee will continue to practice and teach inclusivity so that everyone may learn about and enjoy our Nevada birds. Our committee will continue their work to reach out to even more communities in future years. Our goal for our chapter is that we will build an inclusive bird-loving community - just as diverse as the bird communities we adore. We believe that birding is for everyone!

FINANCIALS



Northwest Nevada Bird Alliance's fiscal year runs from July 1 – June 30 each year. Our 990 tax form is available for viewing on Guidestar (www.guidestar.org). The summary chart is provided below through 2024. Our chapter is starting to recover after a slow period from 2014-2021, at which point our organization hired its first Executive Director and AmeriCorps VISTA members to help revitalize the chapter. Increasing revenue has allowed us to provide more services in avian education and conservation in our community in recent years. Click the button to the left to see our [Guidestar profile](#).

Revenue vs. expenses: 2024 breakdown

SOURCE: IRS Form 990

NET GAIN/LOSS: \$2,524 in 2024

Total revenue:	\$87,555	
Contributions:	\$76,686	
Gov't grants:	N/A	
Program services:	\$0	
Investments:	\$10,997	
Special events:	\$0	
Sales:	\$0	
Other:	\$0	
Total expenses:	\$85,031	
Program services:	N/A	
Administration:	N/A	
Fundraising:	N/A	

Note: When component data are not available, the graph displays the total Revenue and/or Expense values.

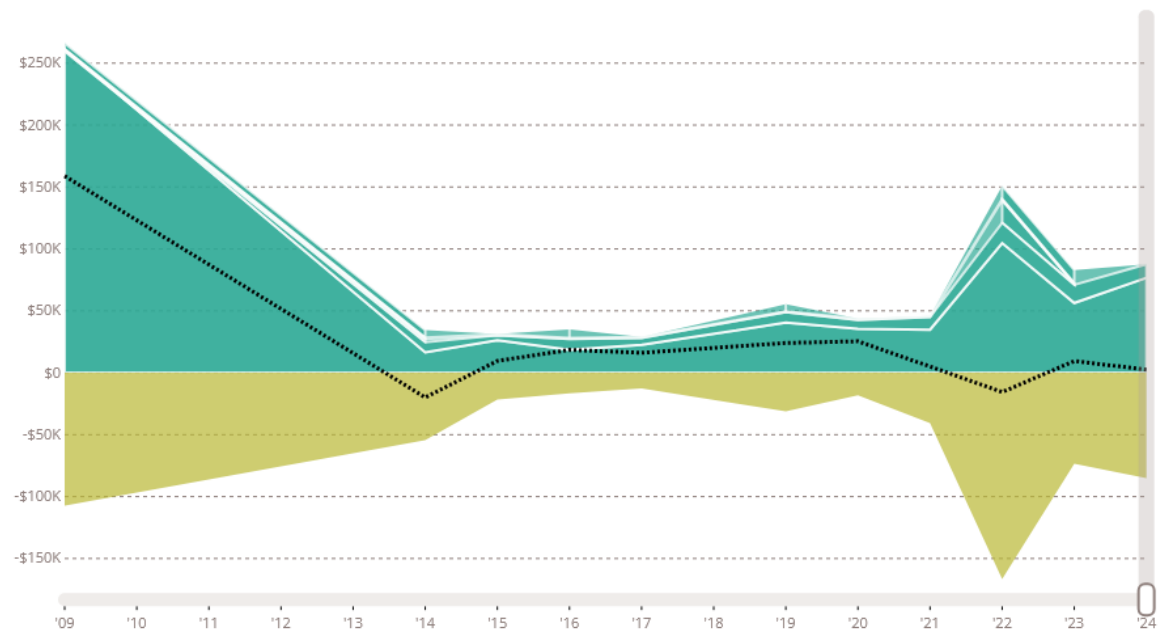


Chart showing revenue and expenditure from 2009 to 2024 for Lahontan Audubon Society from Guidestar (accessed 09/20/25)

VOLUNTEERS

Our chapter thanks the numerous volunteers that make our organization shine! Northwest Nevada Bird Alliance has always been an active volunteer-run organization that strives to protect our Nevada birds. Whether they are teaching youth about birds, leading bird walks, providing adult science talks, participating in community science bird monitoring, advocating for bird habitats, or serving on our Board of Trustees to provide governance and guidance to our chapter, our volunteers are who enable Northwest Nevada Bird Alliance to spread our wings throughout our region! We would like to call out those outstanding individuals that have helped us to further our mission to protect birds! Thank you! We appreciate all you do to make this world a better place for birds and for us!



Jessica Abbot
Valerie Andersen
Julie Ansell
Barbara Arnold
Chad Arnold
Sage Babish
Alex Badgett
Linda Badzoich
Ernie Baragar
Joe Barnes
Daisy Bazemore
Lori Bellis
Hannah Bishop-
Mosar
Bruce Blackadar
Jeff Blean
Kara Blum
Ned Bohman
Mary Ann Bonner
Adam Bradley
Alissa Briggs
Olivia Brister
Carmen Britton

Fritz Eriksen
Marisa Ernst
Lauren Estrada
Jessica Fanaselle
Sheryl Ferguson
Chris Fichtel
Kirby Flanagan
Ginny Flanagan
Sydney Fox
Delaine Fragnoli
Bill Frey
Darla Garey-Sage
Paula Gessler
Steve Gessler
Dennis Ghiglieri
Kath Giel
Mike Goddard
Howard Goldbaum
Bob Goodman
Carol Grenier
Bill Grossi
Alice Grulich-Jones
Alan Gubanich

Brooke Koerner
Mark Kohler
Christine Lamphear
Jody Lawlor
Bradley Leavitt
Nancy Light Elise
Lingenfelter
Judith Lockwood
Margaret Lord
Kaimana Lunaria
Khong Lunaria
Mary Luzier
Mike Margerum
Jaida Marinas
Teresa Mauck
Peggy McCormick
Mary McEneny
Joel McMillon
Sue Mitchel
Patty Moen
Don Molde
Julia Mortenson
Tina Nappe

Manisha Rohatgi
Bryan Rozmarynoski
Jennifer Royale
Katie Rybicki
Nancy Santos
Elliot Schifferdecker
Cathy Schmidt
Chase Schober
Jane Schwenk
Sharla Scott
Becca Serdehely
Amanda Seymour
Benjamin Shafer
Bob Sheridan
Jeri Siegel
Amil Sifers
Melissa Sinka
Justin Small
Katie Smith
Peggie Smith
John Sokol
Ben Sonnenberg

Kristina Brodzinski
Kelle Brogan
Jess Brooks
Brendan Bucy
Jane Burnham
Janet Busi
Lurana Cancilla
Luna Cannon
Pat Cashman
Steven Cavros
Joe Chiaretti
Blake Choley
Ava Ciaccia
Jo Ann Cobb
Kelly Colegrove
Robin Courts
Karen Critor
Claire Davis
Grisell de la Rosa
Alan de Queiroz
Sandi Dillard
Julie Duda
Judy Duffy
Dave Emme
Julana Eppard
Robin Eppard
Brent Erichsen

Teresa Gubanich
Shelly Gulotta
Diane Haynes
Jarlath Hendee
Phyllis Henderson
John Hendrickson
Kayla Henry
Lorraine Hickey
Martha Hildreth
Nancy Hoffman
Cheyenne Holland
Diane Horgan
Julia Hubbard
Jennifer Jay
Carrie Jenkins
Jennie Jones
Scherbinski
Jordan Juzdowski
Jaime Kamman
Kentia Kalanaki
Valerie Keglovits
Paul Kennedy
Diane Kileen
Chloe Kinerson
Pat King
Kai Kjolhaug
Joanne Kleintjes

Karen Chickering
Kathy Oakes
Vivian Olds
Kat Olson
Colin Ono-Moore
Drew Pearson
Patrick Peevey
Clayton Peoples
Alexus Perez
John Pertsch
John Phillips
Gabby Piceno
Maile Pierson
Kennady Pine
Deborah Pontius
Randy Pontius
Gil Potter
Deb Prevost
Tailar Purciel
Bob Puterski
Eileen Puterski
Heidi Radebaugh
Cadwalader Reese III
Dave Reynolds
Jamie Reynolds
Suzie Reynolds
Kimberly Rios

Hannah
Sonnenberg
Elizabeth Spencer
Linda St-Cyr
Sue Stevenson
Iris Stille
Tom Stille
Rose Strickland
Cilia Suhayda
Kristin Szabo
Caron Tayloe
Gail Townshend
Jill Trainer
Tara Tran
John Udall
Linda Valle
Joanne Vinton
Maxine Weiss
Steep Weiss
Dan Westermeyer
Lauren Whitenack
Steve Wiel
Ted Williams
Julie Wing Gapusan
Jim Woods
Desna Young
Debbie Zalmana

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

As we reflect on this year's progress, the Northwest Nevada Bird Alliance is filled with anticipation for the journey ahead. Our commitment to preserving the habitats where birds thrive—and where we can all connect with nature—remains unwavering. We are excited to continue strengthening our birding community, expanding our reach, and ensuring that future generations can experience the joy of watching birds soar in our Nevada landscapes.

This work is only possible because of the incredible support we receive from our members, volunteers, and the community. Your dedication makes our mission a reality, and for that, we are deeply grateful. Together, we are safeguarding the natural spaces we all love, and we look forward to the many opportunities to grow, learn, and soar alongside you in the years to come.

