

# Development and Marketing Strategies for Birding and Wildlife Tourism In the Greater Reno Nevada Region

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Submitted to:

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## I.0 Project Summary

On July 1, 2004, the Fallon Convention and Tourism Authority was awarded a regional planning grant from the Nevada Commission on Tourism to hire a consulting firm to assess the birding resources in Nevada and to create an action plan to increase birding tourism in the state. A steering committee was formed to oversee the contract and project. The committee members include Mr. Rick Gray representing the Fallon Convention and Tourism Authority, Ms. Janet Schmidt representing Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge, and Ms. Ali Chaney and Mr. Jim Lytle representing Lahontan Audubon Society and Spring Wings. On September 1, 2004, Nature Tourism Planning was hired to conduct this assessment.

Nevada contains many unique and marketable birding and wildlife tourism destinations. All of these sites merit inclusion in a statewide marketing program targeting nature tourists. However, after comparing the initial scope of the grant to the size of the budget, the planning team, consultant and granting agency agreed that narrowing the initial work to a focused region would allow the consultants, community businesses and project steering committee to develop marketing strategies that address local resources and needs while producing short-term, measurable results. Ultimately, a similar assessment process should be completed for all regions of the state so a comprehensive statewide birding and wildlife tourism program can be integrated into Nevada's other successful tourism campaigns.

### I.1 Project Area

The project area selected for this initial phase of work includes the tourism corridors bounded by Reno on the north, Fallon on the east, the Carson Valley on the south and the California/Nevada border on the west, as well as outstanding adjacent sites such as Pyramid Lake, which are logically associated with the described project area. This area was selected because it represents a number of state tourism regions, offers a diverse selection of birding sites and has the tourism infrastructure required to implement a marketing campaign. Finally the compact size of the project area and its proximity to the steering committee and consultants made the project manageable within the budget constraints.

*"To me, there is nothing more exciting than hiking out to the edge of a Great Basin playa in late April to scan thousands of shorebirds, including American avocets and black-necked stilts, and searching out the occasional rare shorebird that just might be there."*

David Lukas

*Watchable Birds of the Great Basin*

## 2.0 Visitor Analysis

Wildlife watching by people at home and as they travel, has been growing in popularity across the country in recent years. One of the country's best known studies on recreation activities, the National Survey on Recreation and the Environment shows that viewing wildlife is one of the fastest growing activities as measured both by percent change and by number of participants. This increase resulted in wildlife watching being ranked the 9<sup>th</sup> most popular activity in 2000-01 with 44.7% of the U.S. population participating.<sup>1</sup> The popularity of this activity represents tremendous opportunities for tourism organizations in Nevada.

The state has many excellent wildlife watching sites, and while Nevada is not well-known as a bird or wildlife watching destination, 23% of Nevada residents already participate in wildlife watching.<sup>2</sup> As well, the information available on tourists visiting Nevada would indicate their socio-economic characteristics and travel activities are similar as those of wildlife watchers. It is quite likely the Greater Reno Nevada region will be able to attract greater numbers of tourists to watch wildlife if people are made aware of the state's nature tourism resources. In the following sections, the characteristics of those market segments with the greatest potential are discussed along with those products that can be easily developed and marketed to meet visitor needs.

### 2.1 Existing Market Segments

Many people visiting the project area have come for, or participated in gaming activities, but there are also travelers interested in wildlife watching and other outdoor recreational activities. The 2001 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation shows that 543,000 people engaged in wildlife watching in Nevada during that year. Of the 308,000 people who traveled away from home to view wildlife in Nevada, 86,000 were residents traveling within the state, while 222,000 people came from out of the state to watch wildlife. These wildlife watchers are already having a significant impact on the state's economy. Nevada wildlife watchers spent over \$70 million on trip-related expenditures and \$180 million on equipment and other purchases. Non residents accounted for a significant proportion of the trip-related expenditures, spending \$61 million in Nevada.<sup>3</sup>

This survey can be helpful in providing a better understanding of wildlife watchers and their needs when they travel. A large percent of Nevada residents (23%) participate in wildlife watching and are primarily urban dwellers. They are evenly spread between the two genders, cross a variety of age groups, and are likely to be non-Hispanic. They are also better-educated and enjoy a higher income than the average Nevada resident (see Table 2-1).

**Table 2-1  
Characteristics of Nevada and National Wildlife Watchers<sup>4</sup>**

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Nevada Wildlife Watchers (Percent)</b>	<b>National Wildlife Watchers (Percent)</b>
Population Density		
Urban	91	82
Rural	9	18
Sex		
Male	50	45
Female	50	55
Age		
16-17	3	..
18-24	10	..
25-34	17	12
35-44	23	26
45-54	18	24
55-64	13	21
65+	16	12
Ethnicity		
Hispanic	19	9
Non-Hispanic	81	91
Annual Household Income		
Under \$10K	3	..
\$10,000 – 19,999	6	..
20,000 – 29,999	12	10
30,000 – 39,999	13	11
40,000 – 49,999	12	11
50,000 – 74,999	18	24
75,000 – 99,999	10	14
\$100,000 +	11	17
Education		
11 yrs or less	16	7
12 years	39	36
1 to 3 years college	25	21
4 years college or more	19	36

These findings are not inconsistent with statistics gathered from The Nevada Commission on Tourism (NCOT). While there have not been any specific studies done by NCOT on nature-based tourism, some inferences can be made by looking at information gathered on people who visited Nevada in 2003 and participated in activities often enjoyed by wildlife watchers or natural history enthusiasts. These people stayed for more than one day and undertook outdoor activities such as hiking, camping or canoeing/kayaking/rafting or attended cultural events or festivals. The sample size for this extract was relatively small and several more periods of data collection would be required before the results could be extrapolated across all Nevada tourists, but some interesting observations can be made. Several of the most popular activities were directly or indirectly related to wildlife/bird watching. Wildlife watching was ranked number 20 in terms of popularity, while bird watching came in 41. While these rankings are relatively modest, it must be remembered that little marketing has been done to date to make people aware of the wildlife watching opportunities in the state. Other activities like scenic drives or hiking, or attractions such as mountains or parks, are already popular with Nevada tourists and can be further enhanced by providing additional opportunities for bird or wildlife watching.

**Table 2-2  
Popular Activities for Nevada Outdoor and Festival Seeking Tourists<sup>5</sup>**

Ranking	Activity	% of Respondents
6	Scenic Drive	41.20
8	Hiking	35.62
12	Mountains	32.19
15	Parks: National or State	28.76
20	Wildlife Watching	24.46
41	Bird Watching	7.73

Other information from this selected sample of Nevada tourists shows that the mean age of these tourists was 51 years, the average number of people in the travel party was 3.73 and the average time in the state was almost 6 days. The most common motivating factor was visiting friends or relatives (12%) as was a desire to visit the Las Vegas Strip (9%) or undertake general gaming (9%).<sup>6</sup> Primary markets come from those regions relatively close to the western state border.(see Table 2-3).

**Table 2-3  
Demographic Origin of Nevada Outdoor and Festival Seeking Tourists<sup>7</sup>**

Demographic Market Area	%
Los Angeles (includes Palm Springs)	13.73
San Francisco – Oakland – San Jose	9.44
Reno	5.58
San Diego	4.72
New York	4.29
Sacramento-Stockton-Modesto	4.29
Chicago	3.86
Las Vegas	3.86

This information would suggest that these visitors are not dissimilar to those people who have a general interest in wildlife watching. There is not sufficient information to comment statistically on the presence of serious bird watchers but it would appear there is potential to expand nature-based tourism.

Reno-Sparks Convention & Visitors Authority (RSCVA) is the largest destination marketing organization in the study region and has undertaken several visitor profile studies. With their recent efforts to target the adventure traveler, this research can also be helpful in assessing the potential to expand wildlife watching recreation.

The 1999 RSCVA visitor profile study shows that visitation to the Reno-Sparks region is characterized by an “older, more affluent, strong “empty nester” profile”.<sup>8</sup> In 1999 the median age was 54, by 2003 it had increased to 56.<sup>9</sup> The 1999 visitor study also noted that there appears to be a trend away from younger, lower income singles and family groups. This has been of concern to the organization and they are expanding their marketing activities targeted at younger travelers.

Geographically, near states make up the largest share of visitation with California, Washington and Oregon being the three largest markets. In recent years, RSCVA has focused on target markets in the San Francisco Bay Area of California with an effort being made to attract men and women 25-54 years old who have an active lifestyle and are young at heart.<sup>10</sup> The number of California visitors has decreased in recent years, however the number of first time visitors increased 22% in 2003.<sup>11</sup> This increase seems to have been caused by successful marketing to more diverse audiences from distant states and an increase in convention business and bowlers.

The primary reason given for visiting the region by tourists is to get away or to vacation. The RSCVA has identified outdoor adventure activities as an important part of their marketing strategy and the slogan “Reno-Tahoe, America’s Adventure Place” figures prominently in their marketing materials. The Reno-Sparks location, activities and value are cornerstones of its competitive advantage for adventure travel. The unique selling proposition for the current marketing campaign is “Reno-Tahoe is a destination offering Gaming Plus.”<sup>12</sup>

## **2.2 Potential Market Segments**

The wildlife watching tourists that Nevada seeks are spread across several market segments. The most specialized group and perhaps the one that comes first to mind would be the serious bird watchers. This group has some very distinct features as described in the following sections. Targeting this group will be very important in developing the region’s nature tourism potential, both for the visitor nights it can provide but also for the increased destination awareness that can accompany bird watching activities. Costa Rica is now a popular destination for many North Americans, but initially the country was ‘discovered’ by scientists and birdwatchers. Their repeated trips to the country generated more and more tourism as their accounts of the wonderful natural features they discovered were circulated. It may be possible for Nevada destination marketing organizations (DMOs) to use the same strategy in building their visitation by nature tourists.

Equally important to the region’s development and marketing strategies will be the other, larger market segment that participate in bird and wildlife watching, the casual wildlife watcher. These people are often very interested in wildlife phenomena (defined as significant wildlife events that are visible to and easily appreciated by the public), but may lack the experience, skills and equipment of the more serious bird watchers. These casual observers are as interested in viewing wildflowers, deer or spawning trout as they are in viewing birds. Often these people will engage in outdoor activities such as hiking, paddling or camping that lends itself to wildlife watching. Wildlife watching may not be the primary motivation for their activity, but it is generally considered a positive added value to their outdoor activity. These casual wildlife watchers tend to need more support so maps and other publications, as well as facilities such as wayside exhibits or visitor centers, interpretive programming, and directional signage, greatly increase their trip enjoyment.

The characteristics of these various market segments are described in more detail below.

### **2.2.1 Serious Birdwatchers (or ‘Birders’)**

These people tend to be older, and generally more males participate than females. It is a well educated group with above average income.<sup>13</sup> Many serious birders are members of at least one birding

organization. These people have an extensive knowledge of birds and natural habitats. Correct identification of species and the observation of new species are extremely important to this group. They maintain a number of bird lists (a tally of species seen) which may include a life list (all species seen), a country list, a state list and even a yard list. They travel with a selection of regional field guides and reference books and always have high quality binoculars and often a spotting scope. In addition to birding in their local community, they will take one or more trips a year for the primary purpose of watching birds. For the more social types, travel with their local birding group is a popular activity. Seeing new species or species that are endemic to an area will be the main attraction for this market. Nevada's best known species for this group would likely be the Himalayan Snowcock found in the Ruby Mountain area. The Greater Reno region does not have any endemic species in the area; however the distinct variety of habitats in close proximity to each other would be a selling feature to this group.

For those people who identify themselves as serious bird watchers or expert bird watchers, they will have some additional requirements for a good travel experience. They want specific information in the form of regional or local birding guidebooks, access to regional rare bird alert websites, and local bird checklists (with seasonal and habitat abundance information). They generally do not hire guides, but if they do book a local guide, they demand a local expert that knows the local specialty birds and where to find them. A daily birding log of species observed is important at prime viewing sites so birders can see what has been seen and add their sightings to the record. They will need access to birding sites in terms of boardwalks, viewing blinds and possibly boats, where roads or trails do not get sufficiently close to the birds. Few serious bird watchers will complain about the lodging, being fairly tolerant of the number of stars a property has received, but they will be looking for good value. Nevada is able to meet this last need with the wide range of accommodation providers and the competitive pricing already in place. However, be forewarned that serious birders are not tolerant of inadequate or incorrect information about current birding or habitat conditions.

## 2.2.2 Casual Wildlife Watchers

In general this group does not identify themselves as birdwatchers or wildlife watchers, although they are highly predisposed to watch wildlife if the opportunity is presented to them. As mentioned earlier, their primary motivation is likely to be related to outdoor adventure, social interaction or learning. Most age groups and household compositions (i.e. families, singles, couples) are represented although most ethnic groups are under represented.

Several subgroups or markets exist within the larger group of casual wildlife watchers. They are described below:

*"I am going on a several day road trip to Nevada this coming July. I'm a generalist. I want to explore the natural and cultural side of Nevada. I will not go to Nevada for gambling. I'm looking for tips and a map."*

Female  
California Wildlife Festival Participant

## Outdoor Recreationists

Soft adventure pursuits such as hiking, biking or paddling are popular activities for these outdoor recreationists. Wildlife watching would be an activity they could undertake in addition to their primary activity or they may be influenced in their route choice by the added value of seeing wildlife. Outdoor adventurers tend to be younger than serious birders, but are still well educated and have disposable income for travel. More characteristics of these travelers are shown in Table 2-4.

<b>Demographic Measure</b>	<b>Kayakers tend to be...</b>	<b>Canoe Participants tend to be...</b>	<b>Hiking Participants tend to be...</b>	<b>Paved Road Biking Participants tend to be...</b>	<b>Single Track &amp; Dirt Road Bicycling Participants tend to be...</b>
Gender	Slightly more male	Slightly more male	Slightly more male	Slightly more male	Male
Age	Young (29.5 yrs median)	Young (29.5 yrs median)	Middle age (39.5 yrs median)	Young (29.5 yrs median)	Young (29.5 yrs median)
Marital Status	Unmarried	Slightly more unmarried	Equally married & unmarried	Slightly more unmarried	Unmarried
Educational Background <sup>15</sup>	Well educated	Well educated	Well educated	Moderately educated	Limited education
Household Income	\$62-70K mean annual income	\$57K mean annual income	\$55K mean annual income	\$56K mean annual income	\$54-55K mean annual income
Residence Region in U.S.	From the West & South (North Central 16%)	North Central 28%	Primarily from West (North Central 24%)	North Central 25%	North Central 22%

## Sightseers

These individuals are difficult to categorize, but they tend to prefer road trips which take them off the interstates and they are looking for authentic experiences. They range from empty nesters that travel in the shoulder seasons to families that travel on weekends or school vacations. Many of these people come from neighboring states such as California, but some will be in transit such as the 'snowbirds' wintering in Texas or Arizona. These travelers often undertake a variety of activities in the area so their time available for wildlife watching may be limited. Attracting these people to wildlife watching activities is possible if their busy schedules are kept in mind. Ease of access will be important so good signage and maps, and visitor center staff able to offer wildlife watching tips must be in place. Special events such as nature festivals or behind the scenes tours may also be popular as unique or memorable experiences can provide these visitors with greater trip satisfaction or encourage them to extend their stay in the area.

## Educational Travelers

As the name suggests, these are people who like to learn while on holidays and may enjoy travel with a sense of purpose such as that created by an opportunity to financially support conservation activities or to participate in bird counts or bird banding. Traditionally, educational travelers have

tended to be slightly older and may enjoy group travel (e.g. Elderhostel) or may simply be looking for opportunities to participate in interpretive talks.

There is increasing research to suggest that most travelers find educational experiences enhance a travel experience. National Geographer Traveler undertook a Geotourism (a new name for the concepts of sustainable tourism) survey in 2002 to understand better the motivations of people interested in preserving a destination's geographic character. Results from this study as shown in Table 2-5 show that education experiences are important for many of these travelers.

	<b>Geo-Savvys</b>	<b>Urban Sophisticates</b>	<b>Good Citizens</b>	<b>Wishful Thinkers</b>
<b>Market Size (no. of est. travelers)</b>	16.3 million	21.2 million	17.6 million	22.3 million
<b>Distinguishing travel preferences</b>	Seek culturally/socially orientated travel	Similar to Geo-Savvys; most concerned with living in harmony with nature	Strong involvement in community activities; heightened level of cultural and env awareness	Low level of travel due to time or money but say travel is the natural right of all
<b>Travel frequency (avg. no of annual trips)</b>	7.6	6.4	5.8	3.9
<b>Activities</b>	83% visit destinations with authentic historic or archaeological sites 81% prefer small, locally run accommodation 81% travel to see lifestyles diff from their own	86% explore historic and charming towns/locations 76% visit dest. with authentic historic or archaeological sites 81% say chance to try local foods very important when traveling	88% want high levels of cleanliness 79% want high levels of safety & security 60% want high quality visitor services	48% like outdoor adventure travel with risk, challenge, excitement 46% like travel to remote locales 42% like trips to go hunting or fishing
<b>Outdoor Recreation</b>	Twice as likely as average to enjoy outdoor adventure travel	74% want to exp outdoors but with comfortable accommodation	Large number volunteer or donate to historic, cultural or educational institutes	Are most interested in outdoor related travel Want to be very active and busy when they travel
<b>% indicating education experience important on trip</b>	73%	61%	66%	46%
<b>Average age</b>	43	45	55	22.3
<b>Average Household Income</b>	\$68,220	\$76,630	\$70,650	\$53,380
<b>% with children in household</b>	41%	30%	28%	50%
<b>Occupation</b>	32% professional/specialty professions	32% professional/specialty positions 23% executive/managerial positions	33% professional/specialty positions	22% technical, sales or admin position

The age, income level and occupation of these Geotravelers would also suggest that they are similar in characteristics to those people who enjoy wildlife watching as described in the National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation. It is likely these people already participate in wildlife watching activities or would have an interest in them if the opportunity was properly presented.

Nevada may be able to appeal to these markets by using the inherent learning opportunities often found with wildlife watching. For example, learning more about bird identification or wildlife habitats could be provided through interpretive signs, guidebooks, guest speakers or interactive kiosks.

### **Festival Goers**

These wildlife watchers tend to be social and enjoy the festive atmosphere that accompanies special events and nature festivals. For many of these people, the opportunity to eat, be entertained or shop is as important as the wildlife phenomena in creating a memorable experience. Local handicrafts, food and musicians are appreciated as are any traditions or themes that help to create a feeling of authenticity or connectedness to the local community.

Many communities have used wildlife festivals to generate significant economic impacts. In Rockport, Texas, they have built the Hummingbird festival over 10 years into an event that attracts 5,000 visitors annually. The Rockport-Fulton Chamber of Commerce estimates the economic impact of this festival as \$1.4 million over the 4 day event.<sup>16</sup> The Greater Reno area has a number of small nature festivals such as the Spring Wings that could be expanded to capture more of this market.

### **Local Residents**

These people are likely to have bird feeders in their backyard, but may be unaware of the bird watching opportunities to be found in northwest Nevada. The chance to view wildlife in the Greater Reno area may provide recreational opportunities that will increase their commitment to conservation or possibly create a desire to travel in the local area for short getaways instead of traveling out of state. Targeting this group of wildlife watchers represents an opportunity to keep Nevada travel dollars at home. Included within this category are the seasonal and year-round residents of Lake Tahoe. The residents of Lake Tahoe are predisposed to outdoor recreational activities and many are looking for unique day trips away from home.

*"I work at a campground on Lake Tahoe's south shore. Campers, and I, are looking for day trip opportunities. Trips to different habitats and areas in Nevada are closer than trips to the Central Valley. I want information on where to go and send people on day trips in Nevada."*

Female from Fremont, CA  
California Wildlife Festival Participant

## **2.3 Geographic Origin of Market Segments**

Many of the tourists attracted to wildlife watching opportunities will be those people living in neighboring states such as California, although opportunities also exist to target those people traveling through Nevada en route to other destinations.

**Regional markets** – Northwestern Nevada is within a three- to five-hour drive from metropolitan areas of central California. Residents of Sacramento and the San Francisco Bay Area are the best markets for wildlife watchers geographically as they are close to the study region. The Greater Reno area offers this market the chance to view certain bird species not available in central California. The wide range of accommodation and good value for the tourist dollar are also competitive strengths of the region. To achieve marketing success with wildlife watchers, the Greater Reno area will need to overcome people's perception that it is primarily a gambling destination or that it has little to offer nature lovers.

**Intercept tourists** - Those tourists who visit Nevada en route to other destinations or who are in the state to visit family or friends, shop, or attend special events may be interested in wildlife watching if the opportunity is marketed to them. People touring by RVs would be a good example of a market segment that could be encouraged to visit a wildlife watching site, possibly extending their stay in the state as a result. Intercept tourists will be primarily from the western U.S. and Canada although all states will be represented due to Nevada's position as an international travel destination. Travelers in the region for gambling or conventions may also represent potential marketing opportunities where they share characteristics with casual wildlife watchers. Providing these people with suggested 2 hour or ½ day itineraries would be helpful in capturing their travel dollars.

### **New versus Existing Markets**

The market segments described under the broad category of casual wildlife watchers are in many cases, already visiting Nevada. They are coming to the state to participate in an outdoor sport, visiting friends, or touring by RV. There are opportunities to extend their stay with the addition of another activity i.e. wildlife watching, or to increase their numbers by making them more aware of the natural diversity found in Nevada.

Informal discussions held by members of the project team with representatives from bird watching groups and attendees at California nature festivals would indicate that serious birders are not visiting Nevada from out of state in significant numbers at this time. It would appear the absence of this market segment is due to a lack of awareness, not a negative perception of the Nevada bird watching experience.

## **2.4 What Do Wildlife Watchers Want in a Travel Experience?**

Targeting wildlife watchers will require Nevada tourism businesses and marketing organizations to ensure they are providing products and facilities that meet the needs of wildlife watchers. These may be new products, e.g. suggested touring itineraries, or they may be existing products delivered in new ways e.g. breakfast or snacks available at 4:30 a.m. before bird watchers leave for a morning in the field.

Research into the California market, a good regional market for the Greater Reno area, shows that California residents are active outdoor recreationists, with 69.1% saying they spend more time on outdoor recreation activities than five years ago.<sup>17</sup> For these people, the most important factors affecting their enjoyment of a natural area are being able to relax, feeling safe and secure, being in the outdoors and the beauty of the area. A needs analysis done for the California State Parks also showed that wildlife viewing was one of the top four activities that would have been done more often if

facilities were available; as it stands wildlife viewing was named as the 8<sup>th</sup> most popular outdoor recreation activity.<sup>18</sup> If the Greater Reno area can make California residents aware of the additional wildlife watching sites within close proximity, they may be able to tap this unmet demand.

Californians also stressed the need to get away from crowded situations. As a factor influencing their enjoyment of their favourite recreation activity, it was rated as important or very important by 84.2%.<sup>19</sup> This has important implications for the Greater Reno Nevada region as they may be able to develop a competitive position for their area around the fact that they can offer an wildlife watching experience that is less crowded, undiscovered or in a ‘new’ destination (for wildlife watching).

The outdoor recreation activities that Californians find popular are shown in Table 2-6. The popularity of these particular activities would support the concept of developing Nevada driving or tour itineraries that could combine wildlife watching sites with historical or cultural themes set against stunning natural vistas.

<b>Recreation Activity</b>	<b>Percent Who Participated</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Walking for fitness and fun	91.1	1
Driving for pleasure, sightseeing, driving through natural scenery	90.2	2
Visiting historic or cultural sites, museums	85.5	3
Attending outdoor cultural events (festivals, fairs, concerts, historical re-enactments, outdoor theatre)	82.6	4
Beach activities, surf play	82.2	5
Visit outdoor nature museums, zoos or arboretums	80.1	6
Picnicking in developed sites	76.7	7
Wildlife viewing, bird watching, viewing natural scenery	75.1	8
Trail hiking	68.7	9

To reach California residents with marketing messages, most say they prefer to receive their information on public recreation areas and facilities by friends and family, the Internet and brochures, with a very high percent of households (83.9%) saying they have Internet access.<sup>21</sup> This may suggest that the Greater Reno area would benefit from a central website with information on wildlife viewing sites, current conditions and species being seen.

## **2.5 Qualitative Research on Birder Expectations, Perceptions and Preferred Destinations**

Interviews with past, current and potential nature viewers yield perspectives that may be used to shape marketing efforts. Over one hundred interviews and conversations were conducted for this report. Those interviewed included beginning to expert birders, disabled birders and attendees at four California birding/wildlife festivals. Some had extensive background and experience with wildlife viewing in Nevada while others had never traveled to the state to watch wildlife. However, every person interviewed was selected because of their overall interest in wildlife viewing – the key target audiences for this marketing effort.

Specific questions were asked to determine their past travel and birding experiences in Nevada (destinations, routes taken, quality of experience) as well as their future plans to return to Nevada to watch wildlife. Overall, those interviewed had very positive things to say about visiting Nevada in general. People who had birded the area, also had favorable viewing experiences. However, most people don't immediately think of Nevada as a birding destination. This suggests that quality natural attractions and tourism support services are not a limiting factor. Rather, nature-based attractions and experiences are just not on people's radar screens. The missing ingredient is an expansion of marketing to let potential visitors know about Nevada and its attractive and plentiful nature-based tourism locations and experiences.

A side benefit of these interviews and conversations was that they put Nevada back on the radar screen for past and potential birders. Many people indicated an interest in returning to the Reno/Carson City/Fallon areas in the near future.

### Summary of Interviews

Responses are grouped into three categories, serious birders, disabled birders and wildlife festival participants who represent casual birders.

### Universal Comments

Those people who had been to Nevada for birding or other outdoor recreation in the past, stated, almost universally, that they had very positive experiences. Areas mentioned most often as areas visited were Great Basin National Park, Lahontan Valley (Fallon/Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge), Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation, Red Rock Canyon State Park, and Ruby Lakes National Wildlife Refuge/Ruby Mountains. Great Basin National Park, although our newest national park, has likely benefited from the attraction national parks hold for national and international travelers. Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation, Red Rock Canyon State Park, Ruby Lakes, and Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge have been written about for years and have been actively marketed as travel destinations for decades. This may explain why these areas were mentioned most often not only by those who have stopped in Nevada for nature-based tourism, but for those who plan or hope to visit in the future.

Driving and experiencing the U.S. Highway 50 corridor was mentioned by numerous interviewees as being wonderful. The wide-open spaces, abundance of historical and natural amenities to be found, and the opportunity to take "a road less traveled" were attractive features drawing people to experience Hwy. 50. In stark contrast to the positive comments about Hwy. 50, there was a strong distaste for Interstate 80 stated by several interviewees. Similar to the specific destinations mentioned above, the popularity of the U.S. Highway 50 corridor among interviewees may have been a result of the conscious marketing campaign for that roadway.

For those planning a trip to Nevada, a common comment was, "Once I get there, where do I go? I want birding itineraries to sites within an hour of where I am staying. A widely available brochure with some itineraries placed at visitor centers and public accommodations is needed."

The reasons why people had not been to Nevada for nature-based tourism were relatively few and centered on the following:

- I/we just don't think about visiting Nevada.
- I/we go through Nevada on the Interstates to get to another destination.
- I/we think of Nevada as just being one big desert.
- I/we didn't know there were wetlands or so much diversity in Nevada.

## **Serious Birders**

As the profile on serious birders points out, these individuals are focused on finding and viewing key bird species and their comments below reflect their knowledge of and interest in birds in the region.

Serious birders generally are looking for locations that attract a diversity of birds. In the high desert habitats of Nevada, water and lush riparian (riverside) habitats are magnets for spring and fall migrants and vagrant (out of range) species. Specific local areas include the riparian habitat around the Carson Diversion Dam and isolated oases alongside Pyramid Lake.

Serious birders also mentioned that Nevada has several distinct assemblages of birds that might be promoted as being seen in Nevada first. Examples include, southern desert species reaching the northern limits of their ranges, Sierra Nevada species reaching their eastern limits, northern species reaching their southern limits, and eastern species reaching their western limits along with the presence of both the heart and western limits of the suite of Great Basin species. For example, in the areas bordering the relatively narrow Carson Valley, two distinct woodpecker species can be found. On the Sierran slopes above the west side of the valley is the eastern limit of nesting for the red-breasted sapsucker. On the slopes on the east side of the valley is the western limit of nesting for the red-naped sapsucker. From a marketing perspective, this means a birder visiting the Carson Valley may see both of these nesting species during their trip – in essence, “one-stop shopping.” Most birders will be looking for a number of new or unusual sightings and experiences to justify making the trip so providing a list of these species assemblages will be important. Detailed lists of these species can be found in Appendix C.

Extreme range limits and species mixes in close proximity are quite prevalent in Nevada. Despite the lack of any species endemic to Nevada, the wide diversity of major habitat regions in such close proximity suggests a “Bird Nevada First” marketing strategy. By radiating out throughout Nevada from the Carson City/Fallon/Reno area, one can find birds typical of the Great Basin, California's Sierra Nevada, Arizona's deserts, and some species from the east, as well as those found in extensive wetland and open water habitats. In addition to seeking birds and other nature experiences in the known areas mentioned, several serious birders were aware of, or had pursued, the Himalayan Snowcock in northeastern Nevada, the only location where this species is found in the United States.

Interviews with the leadership of Audubon Chapters in California concluded that developing 2-4 day field trips to northwest Nevada would be popular with their membership. The Field Trips Chair for Ohlone Audubon Society (Fremont/Hayward, CA) believes northwest Nevada birding trips would be attractive to Audubon Chapters in the Sacramento Valley/San Francisco Bay Area as an alternative and new birding destination within 3-5 hours of home. Other California Audubon chapters regularly schedule multiple-day field trips that are up to seven hours one-way from home.

## Disabled Birders

An unplanned interview, but welcomed, was conducted with the President of the Disabled Birders Association of America, Cheri Pillsbury. She stated that efforts to provide Universal Access often caters solely to wheelchair access and not those not wheelchair bound. Cheri said placement of benches at viewing sites and at frequent intervals along trails would be the single, biggest improvement for those with non-wheelchair bound disabilities. An added benefit is that conscious placement of benches would likely be appreciated by all visitors, disabled or not. Cheri also stated that, by definition, if wildlife at a site can be viewed easily from vehicles, the site could be mentioned as universally accessible (e.g.: The easy viewing from the roadside at S-Line Reservoir or the roads through Carson Lake Wetlands).

Two of the best examples of Universal Access birding and wildlife viewing sites in northwestern Nevada is Reno's Oxbow Nature Study Area and Rancho San Rafael. They have paved handicapped parking, Universal Access to picnic tables, wheelchair accessible ramps to restrooms, a trail system that is almost 100% wheelchair accessible, wheelchair pull-outs along the trails, benches at frequent intervals (100 yards or less), wheelchair ramps to observation decks and towers, and signs placed low enough to read from a wheelchair.

## Festival Participants

A booth promoting northwestern Nevada birding and the May, 2005 Spring Wings Festival in Fallon was in place at four California birding/nature festivals: Stockton (November, 2004), Morro Bay (January, 2005), Vallejo/San Francisco Bay (January, 2005) and San Diego (February, 2005). About 3,300 people attended these events and many stopped by the booth to pick up materials about the region. Informal interviews were conducted with one hundred twenty-nine individuals that stopped by seeking information about northwest Nevada birding. They were questioned about their knowledge of and past travel experiences in the area, and of their interest in birding in the area in the future. Twenty-four of the one hundred twenty-nine people interviewed had already planned to go to or through Nevada in 2005. The availability of the Nevada Birding Map, Fallon birding brochure, and Fallon Visitor's Guide was highly appreciated by attendees. As a result of the available information and conversations, several attendees stated the intention of visiting Nevada within the next three years now that they knew something about its attractions.

The most mentioned northwestern Nevada attractions were Fallon/Lahontan Valley/Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge for wetlands, shorebirds, waterfowl, and white-faced Ibis; Lake Tahoe/Mount Rose for montane (mountain) species; Pyramid Lake for the American White Pelican colony; and the Spring Wings Festival in Fallon. From a marketing perspective, these locations are the visible "grabbers" to introduce the rest of northwest Nevada to potential customers.

A number of people indicated that they often included other activities besides birding into their visits. Among those mentioned were hot springs, ghost towns, cowboy poetry, and local museums. Quotations from those interviewed are scattered throughout the report.

*"I saw my first and only White-faced Ibis in the Lahontan Valley wetlands."*

Female from Pleasant Hill, CA  
California Wildlife Festival Participant

## 3.0 Wildlife and Wildlife Viewing Sites Assessment

### 3.1 Nevada Bird Occurrence Profile

In order to maximize the marketing potential of northwest Nevada's birding resources, one must first understand which birds are attractive to which market. A bird occurrence profile (see Appendix C for details) identifies the huge population densities (birding phenomena) as well as the rare or unique species found in the state.

The primary birding phenomena listed are those that are most likely to appeal to the broadest possible wildlife viewing audience, including general travelers to and through northwest Nevada. The secondary birding phenomena listed are those attractive to a more birder-specific audience or are available, even surpassed, outside of Nevada. Examples of grouping of species unique to a major habitat type are given (e.g.: Sierra Nevada) to use in attracting targeted audiences.

*"We haven't birded much in Nevada before. But, we did go see the American white pelican colony at Pyramid Lake."*

Couple from Davis, CA  
California Wildlife Festival Participants

Serious birders often travel to an area in search of a specific species or group of species. The individual bird species profile shows the number of states where a specific species present in Nevada may also be found. The profile also identifies those species unique to the northwest part of the state. This profile should be used to help determine which species to market to which audiences based on the geographic origin of the birder or birding constituency.

Two examples are...

*Bird Species of Interest to Northern California Birders* (Himalayan Snowcock, Sage Grouse, Red-naped Sapsucker, Black-backed Woodpecker, Cordilleran Flycatcher, Black-billed Magpie, Juniper Titmouse, Virginia's Warbler, Gray-crowned Rosy Finch)

*Bird Species of Interest to Southern California Birders* (Himalayan Snowcock, Sage Grouse, Blue Grouse, Broad-tailed Hummingbird, Red-naped Sapsucker, Black-backed Woodpecker, Cordilleran Flycatcher, Black-billed Magpie, Juniper Titmouse)

All species and phenomena on the list would be of interest to birders from outside of the United States as well as birders from the east coast ... a huge marketing area. Similarly, there are opportunities to market regional bird specialties within the state as well. Nevada definitely has the birds and birding opportunities to market. But, it will take more than "one size fits all" marketing to capture these birders.

## 3.2 Assessment of Regional Birding and Wildlife Tourism Destinations

The project area has literally hundreds of natural areas which were identified as good birding sites during our initial research. Based on an extensive literature review, web site review, and 100+ interviews, we narrowed the list to 43 and made site visits to these locations in October and December of 2004. Many of these sites were explored with local guides Jim Lytle and Jack Walters (See Appendix D).

The following attributes were assessed during our site visits:

- Proximity to gateway/hub destinations of Carson City, Reno and Fallon
- Location along travel corridors
- Proximity to guest services
- Marketable wildlife species or large concentrations of wildlife
- Seasonality of wildlife viewing experience
- Diversity of habitats and landscape features
- Scenic, historic and other site amenities

At the conclusion of these site assessments, the top 12 destinations were selected for their marketability and a detailed outline was prepared for each of the 12 (see Appendix E). These outlines provide enough detailed information to develop targeted marketing messages and travel itineraries for each of the three hub cities. Additional site assessments should be conducted to increase the “inventory” of birding and wildlife viewing sites for each of the hub locations as time and budgets allow.

### ***Top Twelve Sites by Hub***

#### **Carson City-Carson Valley-Genoa Hub**

Davis Creek County Park  
Jack's Valley Road  
Silver Saddle Ranch  
Spooner Lake State Park

#### **Fallon Hub**

Carson Lake  
Fort Churchill State Park  
Lahontan State Recreation Area  
Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge  
Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation\*

#### **Reno-Sparks Hub**

Galena Creek County Park  
Oxbow Nature Study Area  
Swan Lake -AKA Lemmon Valley Marsh  
Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation\*

\* Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation should be marketed as a destination from Fallon and Reno/Sparks

## 4.0 Analysis of Existing Nature Tourism Marketing and Support Materials

Birding and other wildlife watching is greatly enhanced by the availability of clear and accurate information on locations to be visited. Increasingly, this information is being sought out via the Internet, often with follow-up by equally convenient e-mail communication. Those who plan trips to a specific destination, particularly ardent pursuers of a specific interest, such as birders or wildflower enthusiasts, have the options of printing out Internet information and purchase maps, guides, and/or other materials before leaving home, at entry points leading to their destinations, and/or at the destinations themselves. This information may be relied upon heavily to reach the best destinations at the optimum times for the desired birding and other wildlife experiences.

Once on site, directional and informational signage, interpretive displays, kiosks, detailed site maps, birders' boards (up-to-date sightings information for birders), visitor centers, and road conditions advisories are desired and sought. Northwest Nevada has a variety of birding and other wildlife watching materials. There are books, brochures, checklists, maps, pamphlets, and web pages or sites devoted to attracting wildlife watchers to Nevada, especially birders. The materials are intended to give those watchers accurate information on the best destinations to match the desired experience. However, no one website or publication currently paints a complete picture of the birding/wildlife viewing opportunities in northwest Nevada. Used in concert, these materials do provide a good overview of the region's viewing opportunities, but they are not available at one location, nor were they designed with any continuity or intended use with other sites or publications, except for the Nevada Birding Map which is keyed to three regional wildlife viewing publications.

To field test the usefulness of the existing regional websites and publications, the consultant staff used these materials to plan and conduct their field work. Taken as a whole, the materials were more than adequate for finding the best viewing sites in the region. However, no one website or publication provided the necessary materials to stand alone, and it did take a lot of work to cross reference all of the materials prior to and during the field testing. The results of this analysis and field testing are found in the following sections.

### 4.1 Web Sites Analysis

An analysis of Nevada birding web sites was made during the course of this project. Sites were checked for clarity, helpful links, and ease (number of clicks) needed to reach locator maps, directions, specific site descriptions, wildlife viewing attributes, and species lists. Also checked was the timeliness of the web sites.

A February 3, 2005 Internet search using the key words "Nevada birding" yielded a result of 44,000 listings. Of the top ten search results, the Lahontan Audubon Society birding pages site was listed 4th, the Great Basin Bird Observatory home page 5<sup>th</sup>, and Lahontan Audubon Society home page 10<sup>th</sup>. In addition, the first site had a clear link to the excellent Lahontan Audubon Society birding pages. The first page ranking is very important as Internet browsers can reach the best NW Nevada birding information with a minimum of effort.

An analysis of the top ten "Nevada birding" websites was conducted to find out which ones give the best information and link to the site(s) with the best information, in this case the Lahontan Audubon

Society birding pages. It is also important to know which sites provide poor information or links as the opportunity exists to contact the webmasters for those sites to develop clear links to the best site resulting in coverage in all of the top ten listed sites (see detailed analysis in Appendix F).

In addition, the websites for the Nevada Division of Wildlife and the three tourism bureaus within the hub cities, Fallon, Reno/Sparks and Carson City were reviewed for their current listings of birding and wildlife viewing locations. The Carson City site ([www.visitcarsoncity.com](http://www.visitcarsoncity.com)) had no mention of bird watching and the Reno/Sparks site ([www.renolaketahoe.com](http://www.renolaketahoe.com)) provided both itineraries (2-hour, half day and full day) and a link to the Great Basin Bird Observatory site within their outdoor activities section. The Reno/Sparks staff should be congratulated for their initial efforts. Now the listed itineraries need to be fleshed out to provide directions and additional materials to make the information usable to potential visitors. The Fallon Convention and Tourism Authority's web site ([www.fallontourism.com](http://www.fallontourism.com)) and the Nevada Division of Wildlife's web site ([www.ndow.org/wild/bird/](http://www.ndow.org/wild/bird/)) were the best developed for birdwatchers and a detailed analysis is found in Appendix G.

## 4.2 Birding and Wildlife Viewing Publications Analysis

A number of guide books, maps and flyers were reviewed for use in trip planning and while visiting the sites. Those materials included the *Nevada Birding Map, Nevada – FREE 2004-2005 Official State Map, A Birding Guide to Reno and Beyond*, and the *Nevada Wildlife Viewing Guide*. In urban/developed areas, more detailed street maps supplemented these materials. In the Fallon/Lahontan Valley area, the *Birding in the Lahontan Valley, Fallon, Nevada* rack-sized brochure and *Birds of the Lahontan Valley: A Guide to Nevada's Wetland Oasis* supplemented these references. The *2004 Fallon Visitor's Guide* was used to find supplementary information about other attractions and services in that area.

No single publication reviewed is thought to stand alone in terms of being the only one needed for a NW Nevada birding trip. Nor is that to be expected. Emphasis, space, and format all play a part in the end product developed. However, several publications used together work well. All of the publications have their merits and some are best suited for casual birders and others for serious birders. All of them will benefit from additional marketing and updating when reprints are being done. If possible, visitor center staff should receive orientation on the available publications and which level of birder they will best serve. A complete analysis of their strengths, weaknesses, intended audience and marketing recommendations can be found in Appendix H.

## 5.0 SWOT Analysis - Bird and Wildlife Watching Tourism in the Greater Reno Nevada Region

To determine where the best opportunities exist for expanding Nevada's nature tourism industry through bird and wildlife watching, a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis was prepared. A SWOT analysis is helpful in the planning phase as it can focus activities to where an organization or community is strongest and where the opportunities for growth are greatest.

To complete the SWOT analysis, people from tourism organizations in the study area were contacted in late 2004 and early 2005 (see Appendix A for interview list). They were asked about the efforts

already underway to attract wildlife watchers and any problems they had experienced or envisioned in further developing this market. Feedback obtained during these informational interviews was supplemented by observations of the project team during their December site visit.

The analysis revealed a region rich in wildlife watching resources and with a broad, established tourism infrastructure that could be used to attract new markets or by existing markets in new ways. An overall lack of awareness of Nevada as a nature lover's destination was repeatedly mentioned as one of the problems the region must overcome. Inconsistency in water levels at some of the regions' flagship attractions such as Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge and rapid development and suburban growth throughout the region are other examples of weaknesses and threats that must be considered in the development of nature-based tourism in the area.

The items identified as strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are listed in the following section.

### **Strengths**

- ✓ Dramatic landscapes
- ✓ Variety of landscapes/habitat located in close proximity to each other, for example, Pyramid Lake, Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge lakes and sloughs, and Sierra Nevada mountains within a small geographic area
- ✓ Large number of protected wildlife watching sites e.g. Stillwater, Fallon and Anaho Island National Wildlife Refuges, state parks, Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation.
- ✓ Wide variety of bird species including migratory and resident Bald Eagles. A Colorado study found that Golden and Bald eagles were the most popular bird species among wildlife watchers.<sup>24</sup> The most popular species overall for wildlife watching was deer, which are also found in the Great Reno Nevada Area.
- ✓ Interesting and highly visible wildlife phenomena accessible for public viewing (nesting pelicans at Pyramid Lake, Bald Eagle feeding behavior on ranch lands in the Carson Valley during calving season, nesting White-Faced Ibis in the Lahontan Valley)
- ✓ Wide range of accommodation to suit all tastes and budgets
- ✓ Nature festivals already being offered (e.g. Springs Wings, Eagles and Ag)
- ✓ NCOT is one of the country's strongest tourism marketing organizations
- ✓ Nevada's state marketing objectives include growth strategies for outdoor adventure travelers
- ✓ A birding map for the state
- ✓ The Greater Reno area has large regional markets to draw tourists from
- ✓ This study is supported by a collaborative effort across several CVBs, Audubon and government agencies
- ✓ Multitude of viewing sites with good infrastructure (platforms, walkways, interpretive signage) and a variety of viewing experiences (urban versus rural, Great Basin versus pinyon forest, lakes versus desert)
- ✓ Soft adventure ground tour operators are active in the area (e.g. Tahoe Trips and Trails, Wild Sierra Adventures among others)
- ✓ Receptive tour operator (Western Discovery Tours) working in region; partnerships being created with accommodation providers (Reno Hilton)
- ✓ Reno-Sparks is a gateway community with many flights and competitive fares available
- ✓ Rich cultural history (Native American, wild west, pioneers)

- ✓ Historic sites, some of which are also good wildlife watching sites (e.g. Fort Churchill, Silver Saddle Ranch)
- ✓ Hiking and biking trails with plans to expand the system (e.g. Truckee River corridor planned between Pyramid Lake, Truckee, CA and Lake Tahoe)
- ✓ Truckee River Whitewater Park, the only facility of its kind in a downtown resort area
- ✓ Interagency visitor center in California willing to distribute Nevada wildlife watching tourism materials
- ✓ Has more Basque restaurants than other areas, a possible cultural attraction
- ✓ Fishing opportunities at sites such as Pyramid Lake may be used to attract wildlife watchers who fish as well as bird watch
- ✓ Paiute Nation at Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation are interested in developing nature-based tourism that is low impact
- ✓ Staff at the Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation Visitor Center are willing to provide interpretive programs on their nation's culture and history to wildlife watchers on a donation basis

## **Weaknesses**

- ✗ Perception that Reno/Sparks offers only gambling activities
- ✗ Lack of destination awareness among bird watchers and natural history enthusiasts. Even established bird watching organizations have had difficulty in selling Nevada birding (ABA conference in 2004 had approximately 1/2 of expected attendees).
- ✗ No one 'distinct' bird species in the study area having appeal to the serious birder
- ✗ Older condition of some hotel properties
- ✗ Casinos unattractive to some nature tourists
- ✗ Lack of awareness and knowledge among front line service staff about wildlife watching locations and species
- ✗ Water levels at viewing sites vary widely from year to year
- ✗ Lack of pull off areas along Jack's Valley Road
- ✗ Most nature festival attendees in past years were local residents, few tourists
- ✗ No single Internet presence easily available to tourists with Nevada wildlife watching (sites, maps, bird lists, current conditions, recent sightings) and tourism information (transportation routes, accommodation, attractions, etc)
- ✗ Tourism-related organizations in the study region do not have the same level of awareness of nature-based tourism activities underway in Nevada. For example, the staff at the Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation Visitor Center was unaware of the Nevada Birding Map, but would like to receive a copy. Some of the tour operators and hotels contacted during the SWOT analysis were also unaware of the study and the attempt to increase nature-based tourism in the area.
- ✗ Some birdwatchers to Nevada were put off by the difficulty in obtaining permits (buildings closed, lack of signage, aggressive dogs) to watch wildlife on Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation.
- ✗ Need for additional coordination between resource agencies, environmental organizations and tourism industry.

*"My impression of NV is a place for off-roaders, not birders."*

Male  
California Wildlife Festival Participant

## Opportunities

- ✓ Excess accommodation capacity during shoulder seasons (which coincides with prime migration seasons for wildlife)
- ✓ For serious birders in north or east of Nevada, they can observe some bird species in the Greater Reno area rather than travel on to California or Arizona
- ✓ Pelicans (an easily visible, easily identifiable bird) nest in large numbers at Pyramid Lake, representing an opportunity for many people to become engaged in wildlife watching with minimal negative impacts on the habitat or the birds
- ✓ Several birding species found in the study area are closer to Central California residents than are other sites where these species are found
- ✓ Ability to package cultural sites with wildlife watching opportunities to create themed trails or tours e.g. Frontier/Wild West experiences, Paiute culture and Pelican life cycles, Fallon Flights (birds and aircraft on Naval Air Base)
- ✓ California's Nature Festival committee open to Nevada participation to develop cross marketing opportunities
- ✓ Large number of potential nature tourists located nearby; by increasing destination awareness, potential exists for substantial increases in visitation.
- ✓ Tourism organizations in the area are interested in working together to market nature tourism; creates possibility for new packaged tours and cooperative marketing initiatives.

## Threats

- ✗ Rapid pace of suburban development in the entire region, but especially in the Carson Valley, threatens wildlife habitat and animal populations, as well as the feeling of open space and solitude desired by nature tourists.
- ✗ Immigrants and minorities are not significant participants in wildlife watching activities; marketing efforts may not appeal to these groups.
- ✗ Many rural communities and states are actively marketing their nature tourism amenities, increasing competition for the fairly limited number of serious birders

## 6.0 Wildlife Watching Tourism Products

The Greater Reno Nevada Region has natural resources on public lands and the existing tourism infrastructure to provide several nature based tourism products, such as:

- **Self-guided wildlife viewing sites** (both urban and rural). These sites, combined with many others in the Nevada Birding Map form the cornerstone of the nature-based tourism products (the most marketable viewing sites are described in more detail in Appendix E.
- **Wildlife phenomena** (defined as significant wildlife events that are visible to and easily appreciated by the public) such as the nesting white pelicans at Pyramid Lake.
- **Nature-themed festivals** such as Spring Wings (Fallon area) and Eagles & Agriculture (Carson Valley area) incorporate natural, historic and cultural elements in multi-day special events.
- **Guided wildlife watching tours.** These are limited at present but the potential exists to expand them. Currently, most tourists interested in guided tours would avail themselves of the short tours

offered during the Spring Wings festival or as part of the interpretive programs at the state parks or national refuges in the area. A small number of tour operators in the region offer hiking trips or photography tours with a natural history emphasis which could be of interest to casual bird watchers. In The Field (run by Jim Lytle and Alan Gubanich) offers tours targeted specifically at birdwatchers. Tour operators in the region are also able to develop custom trips for specialized interests. Western Discovery Tours has also indicated an interest in developing tour packages aimed at bird watchers and has been discussed these possibilities with staff from the Reno Hilton.

➤ **Suggested touring itineraries for 2 hours, ½ day and 1 day.** While these itineraries do not exist in detail at present, relatively little development time would be needed to prepare these for inclusion in marketing materials and wildlife viewing and tourism websites. It is suggested that a 2-hour, ½-day and full-day itinerary be developed for these hub areas:

- Fallon
- Reno-Sparks
- Carson City

➤ **Web sites and various publications.** A number of existing web sites and publications on regional birding are available through various sources in the area. These products could be better packaged and offered to individuals planning a trip to the area.

## 6.1 Product/Market Match

By examining both the products the Greater Reno Nevada area can offer to nature tourists, and what is known about the preferences of wildlife watchers, a product market match has been prepared (see Table 3-1). This table identifies which tourism products are likely to hold the greatest appeal to different markets. It is probably true that all of the products will hold some appeal to people within all market segments, but it is necessary to identify where the best product market matches exist. This will allow scarce marketing resources to be allocated to developing and promoting those opportunities with the greatest chance of success.

Products	Serious Bird Watchers	Outdoor Recreationists	Sightseers	Educational Travelers	Festival Goers	Local Residents
Viewing sites	X	X	X			X
Wildlife phenomena	X		X	X	X	X
Nature-themed festivals	X (if tours led by expert birders)	X (if outdoor recreation venues included)	X	X	X	X
Guided tours	X (specialized)	X	X	X		
Suggested itineraries	X	X	X	X		X
Species check lists	X			X		
Informational websites	X	X	X	X	X	X
Travel directories	X	X	X	X	X	

*X = represents best product/market matches*

The product/market match would suggest that serious bird watchers, as might be expected, will enjoy all products associated with wildlife watching. Other groups undertake wildlife watching on a more casual basis and will be attracted to those products that meld with their other recreational objectives. For outdoor recreationists, the ability to identify and visit sites with wildlife viewing opportunities

either during their chosen sport, or before and after, will be important. For them, maps, guide books, websites, and knowledgeable visitor center staff with suggestions on where to go and what to see will be very important. Suggested itineraries can be critical in reducing the visitors risk of a bad experience i.e. time wasted looking for a site that doesn't exist or is closed or is too far away, and increase the likelihood they will spend more time in the area.

Sightseers are by nature interested in seeing what an area has to offer. Like the outdoor recreationists, they will want to be directed to the best sites and are open to suggestions on how to spend their time. They may be more open to the special events such as wildlife migration or festivals as these can form the primary reason for the trip or create a truly special experience or memory that they will share with family and friends for some time to come.

Educational travelers tend to be a discerning group of visitors and will have their needs met by those products that provide them with formal or informal learning experiences. While viewing sites with interpretive signage will be of interest to this group, Nevada can increase their chance of attracting these tourists by offering more intensive learning experiences. Tours or talks by natural history experts at festivals, or the opportunity to take guided trips will appeal to these life-long learners. Behind-the-scenes tours or the chance to meet local experts may be something that can be offered by state agencies or conservation groups for special interest groups within this segment. Wildlife phenomena when supported by interpretive programs will hold great appeal to education travelers by providing access to a 'living theater' where learning can occur in a visually dramatic fashion. Suggested itineraries and species check lists will be good products for this group if the recommended stops can be linked to local guide books or interpretive programs and signage to increase their knowledge of the natural, cultural and historic resources.

People attending nature-themed festivals are likely to be serious bird watchers or simply people who enjoy attending special events depending on how the events are structured. Serious bird watchers attend to participate in tours led by local experts and to observe the species or migration events. However most other festival goers will be attending for the overall festive atmosphere of these events and are as likely to attend county fairs, art shows, and other festivals as a desirable way to pass their leisure time. Tours, especially behind-the-scenes or with access to restricted lands, are popular but, equally important is the opportunity to shop for crafts, sample local cuisine, listen to entertainers or meet new people. The festivals in the study area have the potential to appeal to a greater market with additional marketing and product development. The Eagles and Agriculture festival is currently held on one weekend with limited space available for tours on private ranch lands, but the demand for this type of event could justify its expansion into a multi-weekend event with additional tours and events. Similarly, the Spring Wings festival has world-class speakers, but perhaps could include more shopping (nature art and books, or local crafts) or additional activities such as the photographic display being contemplated. The American Birding Association website [www.americanbirding.org](http://www.americanbirding.org) offers a free booklet on developing and marketing nature festivals that may be helpful in developing the Greater Reno Nevada festivals.

While local residents are not a primary tourism market segment, developing and promoting wildlife viewing sites, festivals and viewing activities for regional wildlife phenomena will increase local recreational opportunities. Over the long term this will increase the constituent base for conservation activities and for support of nature tourism activities. Providing world-class wildlife watching opportunities close to home may reduce the amount of money spent by Nevada residents outside of the state, a more immediate benefit.

## 6.2 Competitive Position

The following concepts could be used to describe Northwest Nevada's competitive strength i.e. the advantages that could be highlighted to compete with California or Arizona destinations.

- ✿ Northwest Nevada is closer to several species or phenomena (nesting pelicans) for Central California residents. The "Bird Nevada First" slogan is well suited for this target audience.
- ✿ Visitors can watch wildlife in comfort in Northwest Nevada. There are frequent and affordable flights, lots of hotels and something in every price range, and lots of attractions to fill in any spare time.
- ✿ You can have a pioneering experience in Nevada. Some areas of the state have not been explored by birders before. Unlike popular birding destinations such as southeast Arizona that have been studied for decades, Nevada offers serious birders the chance to find new populations of birds not previously known.
- ✿ Nevada is not as crowded as California. Many places in California are getting too crowded (especially for some nature viewing experiences). You can come to Nevada and spread out without worrying as much about sharing the outdoors with large numbers of nature lovers. Eighty-seven percent of Nevada is public land.

## 6.3 Potential Brand/Positioning Statements

### "Bird Nevada First" Campaign

"Bird Nevada First" is suggested as the tag line (slogan) for a statewide marketing campaign promoting bird watching in Nevada. The concept for the campaign is to position Nevada as the first place that serious and casual birders consider when they are planning their next outing. Nevada is also the first place that birders from the west can see certain eastern birds, and likewise, eastern birders can see western specialties. The tag line is clear, simple and creates a call to action. As the sample design reflects, the tag line will be presented in a standardized color bar on the bottom of the advertisement with an inset photo of a bird species. This format will not change throughout the campaign to develop brand recognition. However, specific advertisements can be created for individual events, locations or targeted audiences, providing the flexibility that individual visitor's bureaus need to promote their destination. While the bird photo will remain constant, the images can be switched out based on the area's specialty, seasonal variability, or target audience.

"Bird Nevada First" does have some potential negative components that need to be field tested before the campaign is launched. First the term "Bird" which is short for "bird watching" may not be a term understood by the non-birder or beginning birder. The tag line will work great for serious birders and those folks that read one of the many bird watching magazines. We are not too concerned about the initial confusion over the term "Bird" because it will force the reader to pause and think about the phrase and thus read further. With the correct images and secondary banners, we believe the tag line will do its job of raising the visibility of birding in Nevada. The other potential down side is that it focuses exclusively on bird watching. Other types of wildlife viewing would be excluded from this campaign.

February 25–27, 2005  
Call 800-727-7677 to register

## Carson Valley Eagles and Agriculture Tour



The sample ad for the Eagles and Agriculture Tour shows how an ad can be designed for a specific event. Beyond publication advertisements for example, we can envision a billboard advertisement on westbound Interstate 80 in downtown Reno using this format with the Banner heading: “California Quail Next Exit -- Why Go Any Further?” The billboard will advertise Oxbow Nature Study Area with a photo of the nature trail with viewers and the inset bird photo would be a head shot of the California Quail.

Advertisements for local destinations could use existing slogans such as “A Little Less Stress, A Lot More Fun” for the Carson Valley, or “Your Adventure Begins Here” for Ely. Unique slogans can also be designed to fit the need. The following list offers a few additional slogans developed as we reviewed photographs taken on our field assessments.

Wide Open Birding (photo of expansive vistas or open canopy of a streamside cottonwood grove)  
Think you’ve seen Nevada? Think Again. (photo of rich riparian forest or high Sierra summit)  
Catch the Pioneering Spirit (photo of isolated historic buildings or ruins)  
Birding with a View (photo of Pyramid Lake with pelicans in foreground)  
Mother Nature’s Floor Show (photo of unique natural phenomenon)  
Follow the Wildlife. Make tracks to Nevada. (photo of jackrabbit tracks through snowy sagebrush)  
Wildlife Watching in Nevada is a Safe Bet. (photo of wildlife viewers)  
Guaranteed Jackpots! Wildlife Watching in Nevada. (photo of eagles for “ooo ahhh” value)  
Close in Distance. Miles Apart in Experience (Photo of open space; applicable to California markets)

## 7.0 Recommendations

The following list of recommendations is organized into two categories; Short-term and Long-term. Short-term recommendations are intended to jump-start a birding and wildlife viewing marketing effort which will show results within a 24-month period. Long-term recommendations address primarily infrastructure improvements or value-added materials and experiences beyond those necessary to begin building a nature tourism program.

While this report focuses on the regional project area bounded by Fallon, Reno and Carson City, it is intended to be used as a template that can be modeled in other parts of the state. To that end, we have identified additional statewide tasks that should be considered as appropriate within the recommendation.

Finally, we have added a number of examples of where these types of recommendations are being implemented by other NTP clients or colleagues throughout the country in the event that you wish to do additional research on these subjects.

### **Short-Term (From high priority to medium priority)**

#### **Coordination and Organizational Needs**

**Create a regional birding and nature tourism working group to bring together the tourism industry (DMOs, accommodations, tour operators, etc.) and the resource organizations (federal, state and local resource agencies, and conservation organizations) to foster the development and marketing of wildlife watching activities.** The existing Project Steering Committee can serve as the initial organization, but it needs to be broadened out to involve other stakeholders. There is a great deal of interest in promoting nature tourism within the region, but currently no coordinated effort to do so. Ideally, all of the tasks in this section would be organized and filtered through this umbrella organization. As interest in a statewide program evolves, a similar statewide working group should be formed to address the interests and needs of all of the regions throughout the state. *(Examples: Estes Park, Colorado made a concerted effort to market their community as a wildlife watching destination and it has been very successful. Their formerly slow fall season is now at capacity as people come to watch the elk bugle. They also get travelers from further afield (less regional markets, more long haul) in the fall than previously. At one point they instigated a voluntary bed tax for wildlife watching activities that was quite successful i.e. most tourists were willing to put money in when the purpose was explained. On a statewide level, the California Watchable Wildlife Steering Committee has been working on the promotion and marketing of wildlife viewing in California for over a decade. More information at [www.cawatchablewildlife.org](http://www.cawatchablewildlife.org)).*

**Conduct a regional/state workshop or roundtable on Birding and Nature-based Tourism in Nevada to present the findings of this report.** While the report should be distributed to all interested parties in the region and state, we recommend that the materials be presented in a workshop or roundtable forum to generate additional interest in the subject, to jumpstart the regional

working group, and to create subcommittees to begin implementing these and other group recommendations. The Spring Wings Festival has recently requested that the CA Watchable Wildlife Committee present one of their successful Wildlife Festivals Workshops in Nevada. This workshop could easily be included into the overall program as an added value for participants. A similar workshop could be conducted in other parts of the state to encourage the formation of similar working groups.

## **Itineraries**

**Develop detailed 2-hr, ½-day and full-day driving itineraries from the hub cities of Carson City, Reno/Sparks and Fallon.** The current publications available in print and on the web that promote regional bird and wildlife watching do not provide adequate information to help visitors plan an excursion in the area. These itineraries should be available in PDF format on a centralized website as well as be printed for distribution at local visitor information centers and at travel shows.

This report provides most of the background information needed to create travel itineraries to the top 12 viewing sites in the region. By combining the recommended list of 2-hour, ½-day and full-day itineraries (see Appendix F) with the detailed site descriptions of the top 12 viewing sites (see Appendix E), you can develop a very useable product. You may want to consider adding additional sites to the itineraries since there are many more to choose from. Additional work will be necessary to develop a format that fits the information and budget. *(Example: A number of states have created “birding trails” which for the most part are regional driving loops. Most do not offer specific 2-hour to full day itineraries but the state of Virginia has the most comprehensive trail network of any state in the nation ([www.dgif.state.va.us](http://www.dgif.state.va.us)).*

## **Website Development**

**Determine which agency/organization is best able to host and maintain a portal website for wildlife watching information for the region.** The Lahontan Audubon Society’s birding web pages are outstanding as are those of the Nevada Division of Wildlife. Either one would be a natural choice for hosting the itineraries.

**Initiate and Improve Links.** The hosting agency selected above should serve as the anchor for initiating and improving links to and from other web sites. Communicate with the webmasters of other sites to initiate or improve links to all of the birding and tourism sites in the region. Finally provide a link from the host site to a printable PDF version of the *Birding in the Lahontan Valley, Fallon, Nevada* brochure as well as provide ordering information for other regional birding and wildlife viewing publications. The Nevada Commission on Tourism’s website, [www.travelnevada.com](http://www.travelnevada.com), should offer links to birding sites.

**Provide Specific Wildlife Phenomena Web Pages.** Wildlife phenomena attract not only birders, but the much broader general public as well (see appendix C for detailed list of regional phenomena). Information provided should include maps to sites, directions to sites, seasonal occurrence of each phenomenon, best time of day for viewing, and one or more high quality photos illustrating each phenomenon. . (examples: hummingbirds in Rockport, Texas and the Kern River Valley of California, and turkey vultures in the Kern River Valley. Wildlife festivals have grown around each of these wildlife phenomena, which is a natural outgrowth of these occurrences.)

**Provide Water & Road Conditions Information.** Perhaps the greatest allure of Northwestern Nevada is the large bodies of water and wetlands that provide outstanding birding when water is present. When water is not present, expectations of visitors will not be met. Provide specific, up-to-date information on water availability at the wetland sites in the region along with current bird populations, and offer alternative viewing sites when water is low or absent. Conversely, when water has soaked roads and made them impassable, or nearly so, expectations will not be met either. Provide accurate and timely information on road conditions with low clearance, two-wheel drive vehicles in mind.

## **Marketing**

**Create a “Bird Nevada First” campaign to be launched and tested in the project area before initiating at a statewide level.** The project area, as well as the entire state, is not recognized as a birding destination by serious or casual birders. A coordinated marketing campaign is needed to raise the awareness of birders in targeted regions of the country.

**Intercept travelers driving north along Highway 395 by submitting birding and other outdoor recreation materials to the Interagency Visitor Center in Lone Pine.** The visitor center manager, KC Wylie, has offered to display your materials for free. A new center is being built so getting space to display your materials now will pay off when the new building is opened. This would also be a good way to test the campaign and other birding materials for their effectiveness by tracking the quantity of materials being distributed.

**Offer familiarization tours for established international bird touring companies such as Wings or Field Guides, regional travel and outdoor writers, and volunteer birding trip leaders.** These would be best conducted prior to the two regional wildlife festivals to increase attendance at these events or during the region’s key wildlife phenomena. Invite individuals such as K.C. Wylie to attend as well as the field trip leaders for large Audubon chapters in California. Pam packets should include copies of the best regional birding publications and contact information for local birding experts.

**Participate in California wildlife festival trade shows.** Over 40 wildlife festivals occur in California each year. Some attract over 25,000 participants, others a few hundred. There are no other events in California that attract bird and wildlife watchers in large numbers. Our test distribution of materials at a few festivals this year reflected an interest in Nevada as a birding destination. In future years after your program materials are developed, consider attending a few of the nation’s largest wildlife festivals such as the Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival in Harlingen, Texas or The Bird Show in Cape May, New Jersey.

**Add parking pull-outs along Jack’s Valley Road to allow visitors to stop and view safely.** While capital improvements are generally a long-term issue, the safety concerns of birding along Jack’s Valley Road merit mentioning now. The road is quite busy and there are currently no shoulders along the road to allow wildlife viewers to stop and enjoy the deer and hawks that are common in the area without risking a collision.

## **Long-Term (no priority order)**

**Conduct front line training on serving bird and wildlife watchers (VIC staff, concierges, front desk staff).** This would best be done after the itineraries and other marketing materials are developed and available for distribution. (*Example: Ducks Unlimited in Canada teamed up with Tourism Saskatchewan to provide training to visitor center staff on wildlife watching. The program was successful in increasing staff awareness of the region's wildlife watching opportunities and allowing them to better serve visitors' needs.*)

**Increase year round advertising of Spring Wings Festival** (e.g. advertise at local museums and visitor centers, add sticker to brochures, use banner advertising on websites). This will help to increase participation beyond local residents and will increase visibility for wildlife viewing in general.

**Work with regional ranchers and farmers to develop agricultural and nature tourism components of their businesses to encourage the long-term sustainability and viability of family farms and rural landscapes.** NTP works with the Small Farm Center at UC Davis to conduct ag and nature tourism workshops throughout California. They might be willing to conduct a workshop in Nevada if requested. (see [www.sfc.ucdavis.edu](http://www.sfc.ucdavis.edu))

**Add a voluntary stewardship fund to room rates to create an opportunity for the public to donate funds for conservation, training, marketing initiatives related to wildlife watching tourism** (*see Estes Park Example above*)

**Identify capital improvement needs on existing and potential viewing locations and encourage land owners to make improvements.** Site interpretation, directional road signs, basic visitor amenities, safety concerns, disabled access points, etc. would benefit all users.

## **Appendix A**

### **SWOT Interviews Information**

#### **People Contacted**

Ben Aleck, Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation Visitor Center Tel. 775-574-1088  
Jim Bell, Wild Sierra Adventures Tel. 775-323-8928 info@wildsierra.com  
Candy Duncan, Carson City Convention and Visitors Bureau Tel. 775-687-7410  
candace@vistcarsoncity.org  
Lynne Foster, Nevada Department of Wildlife Tel. 775-688-1997 lfoster@ndow.org  
Rick Gray, Fallon Convention and Visitors Bureau Tel. 775-423-4556 falntour@phonewave.net  
Debra Lang, Carson Valley Inn & Casino Tel. 775-782-9711 debral@cvinn.com  
Bill Maynard, American Birding Association Tel. 719-578-9703 X239  
Carol Pearson, Reno Hilton Tel. 800-321-6014  
Dave Petersen, Nevada Commission on Tourism Tel. 775-687-0640  
Skip Sayre, Carson Valley Chamber of Commerce Tel. 775-782-8144 X 101 skip@carsonvalleynv.org  
Ann Thomas, Western Discovery Tours Tel. 775-329-9933  
Cherie Turner, Tahoe Trips & Trails Tel. 530-583-4506 info@tahoetrips.com  
Erin Wallace, Reno Sparks Convention Visitors Authority Tel. 775-827-7600  
KC Wylie, Lone Pine Interagency Visitor Centre Tel. 760-876-6215

## **Appendix B**

### **Serious Birders Interview Information**

#### **Individual Interviewees**

Ron Conkey, Editor-*Nevada Birding Map*, Lahontan Audubon Society

Jim Eidel, Founding Member-Great Basin Bird Observatory, Lahontan Audubon Society

Phil Gordon, Field Trip Organizer-Ohlone Audubon Society, Hayward, CA

Jim Lytle, Co-Founder-In the Field Tours, Lahontan Audubon Society

David Lukas, Author, *Watchable Birds of the Great Basin*

Martin Meyers, Nevada Bird Records Committee

Cheri Pillsbury, President, Disabled Birders Association of America ([www.dba-usa.org](http://www.dba-usa.org))

Mike San Miguel, Past-President-Western Field Ornithologists, Past Member-California Bird Records Committee, Current Member-Nevada Bird Records Committee

Jack Walters, Author, *Bird Stories and Sightings in Nevada, Vol. I*

#### **Interview Summaries**

Suggested slogans for promoting birding tourism in Nevada. “Discover Nevada Birding” and “Be a Birding Pioneer – Bird Nevada!” were offered to entice birders with the opportunity to contribute new bird status and distribution information to a state that still has vast, unexplored mountain areas. They mentioned participatory programs in place, such as the Nevada Bird Count (NBC) – All Bird Monitoring Program and a January raptor (hawk) survey, where contributions of data could be made. “Be a birding pioneer like those in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. That opportunity still exists in Nevada of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.”

Suggested promoting suites of related bird species as quests for diverse numbers of grouse and quail, hawks, woodpeckers, and sparrows. Birders could be enticed to Nevada to pursue these suites of species just as they now go to Colorado in pursuit of grouse and quail, and Crane Creek, Ohio in pursuit of warblers. They suggested promoting the Himalayan Snowcock, “The only thing we have no one else has.” They also discussed the attraction of 125 wintering Bald Eagles in NORTHWEST Nevada, and the diversity and migration of raptors (hawks and other birds of prey).

Mentioned that birders would be interested in the results of the Nevada Breeding Bird Atlas (BBA) and Nevada Important Bird Areas (IBA) program for use in planning trips. The BBA project shows the nesting season ranges of species within Nevada. The BBA has shown range extension by several species, bringing several closer to NORTHWEST Nevada. The IBA program is identifying those areas in Nevada most critical to birds. IBA programs in other states have turned up areas not necessarily well known in the birding community.

## Appendix C Nevada Bird Occurrence Profile

### PRIMARY BIRD/BIRDING PHENOMENA EXPERIENCE OPPORTUNITIES IN NORTHWESTERN NEVADA:

*American White Pelican* nesting colony at Anaho Island National Wildlife Refuge, Pyramid Lake (4500 pairs)  
*White-faced Ibis* nesting colonies in Lahontan Valley (4,000 pairs)  
*Fall Waterfowl* viewing in northwest Nevada/Lahontan Valley (200,000 to 1,000,000 individuals)  
*Spring Waterfowl* viewing in northwest Nevada/Lahontan Valley (200,000 to 1,000,000 individuals)  
*Fall & Spring Canvasback* numbers in Lahontan Valley (24,000-28,000 individuals)  
*Sage Grouse* controlled viewing at leks (February-April)  
*Black-necked Stilt* nesting in Lahontan Valley (High of 6000 pairs)  
*American Avocet* nesting in the Lahontan Valley (3,000-5000 pairs, high count of 24,451 Aug 1998)  
*Long-billed Dowitcher* (counts to 100,000 individuals)  
*Fall Shorebird Migration* in Lahontan Valley (50,000-250,000 individuals)  
*Spring Shorebird Migration* in Lahontan Valley (50,000-250,000 individuals)  
*Bald Eagle* viewing in Carson Valley from alongside Hwy. 395

### SECONDARY BIRD/BIRDING PHENOMENA EXPERIENCE OPPORTUNITIES IN NORTHWESTERN NEVADA:

*Common Loons* at Walker Lake (up to 100 individuals)  
*Eared Grebe* spring numbers in Lahontan Valley (Up to 10,000)  
*Western Grebe* and *Clark's Grebe* nesting  
*Tundra Swan* (1200-2000 wintering individuals)  
*Redhead* (and other duck species) nesting concentration in Lahontan Valley (1300 nests)  
*Winter Raptor* viewing in northwest Nevada/Lovelock  
*Nevada's only Bald Eagle nesting site at Lahontan Reservoir* (Market particularly to Nevadans – birders or not)  
*Owl nesting diversity* of ten species  
*Woodpecker nesting diversity* of ten species  
*Bank Swallow* nesting colonies

#### Unique Species Assemblages

*Great Basin species assemblage* Sage Grouse, Chukar, Broad-tailed Hummingbird, Red-naped Sapsucker, Gray Flycatcher, Cordilleran Flycatcher, Plumbeous Vireo, Pinyon Jay, Black-billed Magpie, Juniper Titmouse, Sage Thrasher, Virginia's Warbler, Brewer's Sparrow, Sage Sparrow

*Sierra Nevada species assemblage* Mountain Quail, Red-breasted Sapsucker, White-headed Woodpecker, Cassin's Vireo, Hermit Warbler

*Birds of Interest to Northern California Birders* Sage Grouse, Red-naped Sapsucker, Black-backed Woodpecker, Cordilleran Flycatcher, Black-billed Magpie, Juniper Titmouse, Virginia's Warbler, Gray-crowned Rosy Finch

## Individual Species Occurrence

The profile shows the number of states where a specific species may be found as well as whether it is only found in NW Nevada. This profile may be used to help determine which species to market to which audiences based on the geographic origin of the birder or birding constituency. All of the species listed are found in NW Nevada.

### KEY:

**01-17** – Number of states the species occurs regularly even if only in a small portion of state.

**NWNV** – Species confined in Nevada to the northwest sector

Seasonality in NWNV - Sp = Spring, Su = Summer, F = Fall, W = Winter

Abundance in NWNV - A = Abundant, C = Common, U = Uncommon, R = Rare

**4** – *Red-breasted Sapsucker* (**NWNV**) Sp-U, Su-U, F-U, W-U, *Tricolored Blackbird* (**NWNV**) Sp-R, Su-R, F-R

**5** – *Mountain Quail* (**NWNV**) Sp-R, Su-R, F-R, W-R, *White-headed Woodpecker* (**NWNV**) Sp-U, Su-U, F-U, W-U, *Golden-crowned Sparrow* (**NWNV**) W-U

**6** – *Costa's Hummingbird* Sp-R, Su-R, *Varied Thrush* (**NWNV**) Sp-R, F-R, W-R, *Hermit Warbler* (**NWNV**) Sp-U, Su-U, F-U, W-U

**7** – *California Quail* Sp-C, Su-C, F-C, W-C

**8** – *Band-tailed Pigeon* Sp-U, Su-U, F-U, W-U, *Vaux's Swift* Sp-R, F-R, *Anna's Hummingbird* Sp-R, Su-R, *Calliope Hummingbird* Sp-C, Su-C, F-C, *Broad-tailed Hummingbird* Sp-C, Su-C, F-C, *Black-backed Woodpecker* (**NWNV**) Sp-R, Su-R, F-R, W-R

**9** – *Spotted Owl* (**NWNV**) Su-R, *Black Phoebe* Sp-R, Su-U, F-U, *Virginia's Warbler* Sp-U, Su-U, F-U, *Black-throated Sparrow* Sp-C, Su-C, F-U

**10** – *Chukar* Sp-C, Su-C, F-C, W-C, *Hammond's Flycatcher* Sp-C, Su-C, F-C, *Cordilleran Flycatcher* Sp-C, Su-U, F-C, *Pinyon Jay* Sp-C, Su-C, F-C, W-C, *Bushtit* Sp-C, Su-C, F-C, W-C, *Sage Sparrow* Sp-C, Su-C, F-C, W-U

**11** – *Sage Grouse* Sp-U, Su-U, F-U, W-U, *Blue Grouse* Sp-U, Su-U, F-U, W-U, *Flammulated Owl* Sp-R, Su-U, F-R, *Northern Pygmy-Owl* Sp-U, Su-U, F-U, W-U, *White-throated Swift* Sp-U, Su-U, F-U, *Williamson's Sapsucker* Sp-U, Su-U, F-U, W-U, *Dusky Flycatcher* Sp-C, Su-C, F-C, *Gray Flycatcher* Sp-C, Su-C, F-C, *Clark's Nutcracker* Sp-C, Su-C, F-C, W-C, *Juniper Titmouse* Sp-U, Su-U, F-U, W-U, *Western Bluebird* Sp-U, Su-U, F-U, W-R, *Black-throated Gray Warbler* Sp-C, Su-C, F-C, *MacGillivray's Warbler* Sp-C, Su-C, F-C, *Green-tailed Towhee* Sp-C, Su-C, F-C, *Cassin's Finch* Sp-C, Su-C, F-C, W-C

**12** – *Western Screech Owl* Sp-U, Su-U, F-U, W-U, *Ash-throated Flycatcher* Sp-C, Su-C, F-C, *Plumbeous Vireo* Sp-C, Su-C, F-C, *Cassin's Vireo* Sp-C, Su-C, F-C, *Steller's Jay* Sp-C, Su-C, F-C, W-C, *Western Scrub Jay* Sp-C, Su-C, F-C, W-C, *Violet-green Swallow* Sp-C, Su-C, F-C, *Mountain Chickadee* Sp-C, Su-C, F-C, W-C, *Sage Thrasher* Sp-C, Su-C, F-C, W-R, *Townsend's Warbler* Sp-U, F-U, *Western Tanager* Sp-C, Su-C, F-C, *Brewer's Sparrow* Sp-C, Su-C, F-C, *Gray-crowned Rosy Finch* Sp-U, F-U, W-U

**13** – *Lewis' Woodpecker* Sp-U, Su-U, F-U, *American Dipper* Sp-U, Su-U, F-U, W-U

**14** – *Common Poorwill* Sp-U, Su-C, F-U, *Red-naped Sapsucker* Sp-C, Su-C, F-C, W-C, *Pygmy Nuthatch* Sp-U, Su-U, F-U, W-U, *Canyon Wren* Sp-C, Su-C, F-C, W-R, *Lazuli Bunting* Sp-C, Su-C, F-C

**15** – *Western Wood-Pewee* Sp-C, Su-C, F-C, *Black-billed Magpie* Sp-C, Su-C, F-C, W-C

**16** – *Black-headed Grosbeak* Sp-C, Su-C, F-C

**17** – *Clark's Grebe* Sp-C, Su-C, F-C, W-U, *Ferruginous Hawk* Sp-U, Su-U, F-U, W-U, *Say's Phoebe* Sp-C, Su-C, F-C, W-R, *Rock Wren* Sp-U, Su-U, F-U, W-R, *Mountain Bluebird* Sp-C, Su-C, F-C, W-U, *Townsend's Solitaire* Sp-U, Su-U, F-U, W-R, *Spotted Towhee* Sp-C, Su-C, F-C, W-U, *Bullock's Oriole* Sp-C, Su-C, F-C

## **Appendix D**

### **All Assessed NW Nevada Sites & Sub-Sites with Cross-References & Logical Hubs**

The following sites were assessed during this project. They are cross referenced to three of the birding publications used during the assessment process and each site is linked to the logical hub communities.

**KEY:**

N-# = *Nevada Wildlife Viewing Guide* listing

R-# = *A Guide to Birding Reno and Beyond* listing

W-# = *Nevada Birding Map* locator

# = reflects the assigned site number in that publication

Anaho Island National Wildlife Refuge/Pyramid Lake east shore (N-3, R-12), Fallon/Reno-Sparks

Big Canyon Park-AKA "The Willows" at Pyramid Lake (R-12), Fallon/Reno-Sparks

Big Den Creek-Desatoya Mountains (N-31, W-24), Fallon

Carson Diversion Dam (R-16), Fallon

Carson Lake & Wetlands (N-29, R-1, W-23), Fallon

Carson River Ranches (R-2), Fallon

Centerville, Mottsville, Muller, and Waterloo Lanes, (R-3) Carson City-Carson Valley-Genoa

Clear Creek Road, Carson City-Carson Valley-Genoa

Crystal Peak Park-Verdi (R-18, W-11), Reno-Sparks

Davis Creek County Park (R-20), Carson City-Carson Valley-Genoa/Reno-Sparks

Deadman's Creek Trail (R-20), Carson City-Carson Valley-Genoa/Reno-Sparks

Dunn Hatchery Ponds at Pyramid Lake (R-12), Fallon/Reno-Sparks

East Fork Carson River (N-9), Carson City-Carson Valley-Genoa

Fallon Naval Air Station Nature Trail (R-1), Fallon

Fort Churchill Road (R-5), Carson City-Carson Valley-Genoa/Fallon

Fort Churchill State Park (R-5, W-19), Fallon

Galena Creek County Park (N-6, R-9, W-10), Reno-Sparks

Geiger Grade (R-6), Carson City-Carson Valley-Genoa

Genoa Cemetery (R-3), Carson City-Carson Valley-Genoa

Harmon Reservoir (R-16), Fallon

Honey Lake (R-7), Reno-Sparks

Incline Village Treatment Ponds-East Valley (R-3), Carson City-Carson Valley-Genoa

Indian Lakes Road at Rio Vista Drive-cemetery (R-16), Fallon

Jack's Valley Road/SR206 (N-8, R-3, W-4), Carson City-Carson Valley-Genoa

Lahontan State Recreation Area (N, W-20), Fallon

Lake Tahoe State Park-Sand Harbor (N-7, W-6), Carson City-Carson Valley-Genoa

Lovelock area (W-26, W-27, W-28)

Lovelock Valley (N-10, W-25), Fallon/Lovelock

Mason Valley Wildlife Management Area (N, R-8, W-3), Fallon

Mount Rose/Ophir Creek & Trail (R-9), Carson City-Carson Valley-Genoa/Reno-Sparks

Numana Wetlands Trail-Paiute Indian Reservation (R-12), Fallon/Reno-Sparks

Old Geiger Grade Road (R-6), Carson City-Carson Valley-Genoa

Oxbow Nature Study Area (N-5, R-10, W-12), Reno-Sparks

Peavine Peak (R-11), Reno-Sparks

Pyramid Lake (N, R-12, W-18), Fallon/Reno-Sparks  
 Pyramid Lake Fisheries Hatchery (R-12), Fallon/Reno-Sparks  
 Rancho San Rafael Regional Park (R-13, W-13), Reno-Sparks  
 Rock Park Trail (N-4, W-14), Reno-Sparks  
 Rosewood Lakes Golf Course (R-4), Reno-Sparks  
 S Line Reservoir (R-16), Fallon  
 Scripps Wildlife Management Area (R-20), Carson City-Carson Valley-Genoa/Reno-Sparks  
 Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge area (N-1, W-29, W-30, W-31, W-32)  
 Sierra Valley/Yuba Pass (R-14), Reno-Sparks  
 Silver Saddle Ranch (R-7, W-8), Carson City-Carson Valley-Genoa  
 Six Mile Canyon Road (R-6), Carson City-Carson Valley-Genoa  
 Soda Lake (R-16, W-21), Fallon  
 Soda Springs (W-1), Hawthorne  
 Spooner Lake State Park (N-7, R-16, W-5), Carson City-Carson Valley-Genoa  
 Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge (N-30, R-16, W-22), Fallon  
 Sutcliffe Marina at Pyramid Lake (R-12), Fallon/Reno-Sparks  
 Swan Lake Nature Study Area-formerly Lemmon Valley Marsh (R-17, W-16), Reno-Sparks  
 Swan Lake settling ponds (R-17, W-17), Reno-Sparks  
 Tahoe Meadows (R-9, W-7), Carson City-Carson Valley-Genoa/Reno-Sparks  
 Thomas Creek Road & Trail (R-9), Carson City-Carson Valley-Genoa/Reno-Sparks  
 Truckee River delta at Pyramid Lake (R-12), Fallon/Reno-Sparks  
 Truckee River Walk, Reno-Sparks  
 University Farms (R-4, W-15), Reno-Sparks  
 US Highway 395 Bald Eagle winter viewing area, Carson City-Carson Valley-Genoa  
 Verdi-Bridge Street, Dog Valley Road, Hill Lane, Trelease Road (R-18), Reno-Sparks  
 Verdi Nature Trail (R-18), Reno-Sparks  
 Virginia City (R-6), Carson City-Carson Valley-Genoa  
 Virginia Lake (R-19), Reno-Sparks  
 Walker Lake (N-41, R-8, W-2), Hawthorne  
 Walley's Hot Springs Resort (R-3), Carson City-Carson Valley-Genoa  
 Washoe Lake Mitigation Area (R-20, W-9), Carson City-Carson Valley-Genoa  
 Washoe Lake State Park (R-20), Carson City-Carson Valley-Genoa  
 Washoe Valley-Bellevue Road, Big Canyon Creek delta & marsh, Franktown Road SR877,  
 Highway 395, Old Highway 395, Whitman Street (R-20), Carson City-Carson Valley-  
 Genoa/Reno-Sparks  
 Wilson Canyon (N-40), Carson City-Carson Valley-Genoa  
 Winnemucca area (N-14, N-15, N-16, W-33)

## Appendix E Analysis of Top 12 Birding Sites and Regional Hubs

### CARSON CITY/CARSON VALLEY REGIONAL HUB (including Genoa & Virginia City)

#### **Overview of the Carson City/Carson Valley Regional Hub**

The Carson City/Carson Valley Regional Hub serves the following Top Dozen most marketable NW Nevada wildlife viewing sites: Silver Saddle Ranch, Jack's Ranch Road, Lake Tahoe-Nevada State Park (at Spooner Lake), and Davis Creek Park/Washoe Valley.

The wildlife viewing sites best served by the Carson City/Carson Valley regional hub may be marketed in packages of one to two hour, full morning, full afternoon, and full day itineraries including one or more itineraries to several sites.

**Marketing Recommendations - Market** Carson City/Carson Valley as the hub for radiating out to birding sites not only in the urban area but also the Washoe Valley and Lake Tahoe. Use these outlying areas to further package Carson City/Carson Valley as the hub for a multi-day stay. **Market** the fact that Carson City and the Carson Valley essentially separate the Sierra Nevada from the westernmost mountains in the Great Basin. This is an area where Red-breasted Sapsuckers nest on the Sierra Nevada side of the valley, while a few miles to the east Red-naped Sapsuckers nest. **Market** other contrasts to market ... including among other bird species, other animals, and plants. **Market** the designated Jack's Valley and Lake Tahoe State Park Important Bird Areas and the single most important reason why each was designated. Doing so builds credibility. **Market** the Carson City/Carson Valley Hub at Fallon's Spring Wings festival and at birding festivals in California and other bordering states. **Market** fully the deer, Bald Eagle, and hawk concentrations natural history phenomenon that exists in the Carson Valley and along Jack's Valley Road. **Market** the Carson City/Carson Valley as the hub for experiencing those phenomena. Successful models of marketing phenomena of nature include those centered on Bald Eagles (Carson Valley, NV and Klamath Basin, OR), Canada Geese (Maryland), elephant seals (San Simeon, CA), hummingbirds (Kern River Valley, CA, Rockport, TX, and SE Arizona), Monarch Butterflies (Pacific Grove, CA and Santa Cruz, CA), Sandhill Cranes (Bosque del Apache, NM and Platte River, NE), Snow Geese (Sacramento Valley, CA), and Turkey Vultures (Kern River Valley, CA). **Market** birding by horseback and other wildlife viewing modes of transportation. **Market** all sites where birding/wildlife viewing by canoe or kayak is permitted. Determine use or use restrictions of motorized and non-motorized watercraft at Lake Tahoe, Washoe Lake, and other bodies of water in the area and come up with a marketing plan, printed materials, and web site pages for such uses. **Develop and market** detailed birding itineraries for web sites using the skeleton itineraries provided.

**Also, Market** Carson City/Carson Valley's location at the intersection of east-west US Hwy. 50 (The Loneliest Road in America, the Gateway to Lake Tahoe and the Sierra Nevada, and the hub for experiencing historic Virginia City) and north-south Hwy. 395. **Market** fully the fact that Carson City is the Nevada's State Capital with numerous state museums and historic sites.

## Overview of Specific Sites

### **Davis Creek Park**

**Target Audience** – Birders, General Public.

**Proximity** – Twenty minutes from Carson City.

**Accessibility** – At edge of Washoe Valley, paved roads to site.

**Birding Qualities** – Calliope Hummingbird, woodpeckers, nuthatches, swallows, warblers.

**Other Site Amenities** – Jeffrey pines, willows, bitterbrush, intermittent creek, pond, equestrian trailhead accessing Toiyabe National Forest, Ophir Creek Trailhead accesses Tahoe Meadows, restrooms, campground with 62 campsites, hot showers year round.

**Viewing Season** – Year round.

**Time to Spend** – One to two hours early to mid-morning.

**Uniqueness** – Only transition zone site between lower hub sites and Lake Tahoe Top 20 area sites in “Carson” hub. Access to mountain birds in winter.

**Experience** – Experience mountain birds year round in a Jeffrey pine forest.

**Marketing Recommendations** – **Market** as part of coverage of several Washoe Lake site and habitat area itineraries, a distinct subset of the “Carson” hub service area. **Market** access to mountain birds in winter. **Market** presence of Calliope Hummingbird, a species in high demand by birders and, marketable to a wider audience as the smallest bird in the United States and Canada.

### **Jack’s Valley Road/SR 206 (IBA-Important Bird Area)**

**Size** – Twenty-two+ mile long driving tour.

**Target Audience** – Birders, General Public.

**Proximity** – The driving tour starts three miles from Carson City.

**Accessibility** – Paved roads, twenty-two+ mile long driving tour with few pull-outs.

**Birding Qualities** – Hawk watching, Nevada’s only Tricolored Blackbirds (important to Nevada and out-of-state birders listers, and as a life bird for birders), birding on foot at Genoa Cemetery, Genoa Park, and Wally’s Hot Springs Resort.

**Other Site Amenities**– Prime winter range for hundreds of two recognizable subspecies of mule deer winter range, bitterbrush, sagebrush, agricultural fields, picturesque valley, Genoa (oldest town in Nevada), Mormon Station Historic Monument (restrooms), many historical markers, B&B in Genoa.

**Viewing Season** – All year for birding, hawk watching peaks in winter, deer present mid-October through April.

**Time to Spend** – One to four hours any time of day for birding, early morning and after 4pm for deer.

**Uniqueness** – Hawk watching hot spot, hundreds of mule deer of two identifiable subspecies

**Experience** – Experience two wildlife viewing phenomena (hawks and deer) in one location.

**Cautions** – Few pull-outs along two land road, area being rapidly developed.

**Marketing Recommendations** – **Market** this to a wide audience as the hawk and deer phenomena are very attractive – two premier wildlife viewing species in high numbers in a scenic and historic setting. **Market** Nevada’s only known population of Tricolored Blackbirds to Nevada and out of state listers. **Market** the Jack’s Valley Road driving tour as one to be taken any part of the day. **Market** walking sites along Jack’s Valley Road as sites to be best visited in the morning at the start of the birding day, especially in hot weather. **Market** as part of “Carson” hub service area itineraries.

## **Lake Tahoe-Nevada State Park (at Spooner Lake) (IBA-Important Bird Area)**

**Size** – 13,500 acres (Spooner Lake is part of 13,500 acre Lake Tahoe-Nevada State Park).

**Target Audience** – Birders, General Public.

**Proximity** – This subset of 13,500 acre Lake Tahoe-Nevada State Park is twenty minutes (14 miles) from Carson City.

**Accessibility** – Picnic area and trail system at 7100' easily accessed from paved road. May be closed due to deep snow anytime from late fall to late spring.

**Birding Qualities** – Mountain birds found in forests, meadows, and lakes. Species of very high interest to all birders including Blue Grouse, Northern Pygmy Owl, Red-breasted Sapsucker, Williamson's Sapsucker, White-headed Woodpecker, and Black-backed Woodpecker may be found here. Adjacent Lake Tahoe has Osprey and Bald Eagle.

**Other Site Amenities** – Lake Tahoe across the road, excellent wildflowers and butterflies in spring and summer, mule deer, chipmunks, coyotes, rare and elusive Sierra Nevada red fox, spawning of Lahontan cutthroat trout in summer at Marlette Reservoir, extensive foot and horse trail system, two wilderness rental cabins, group use area, picnic area, restrooms, open to cross-country ski birding access in winter with day lodge.

**Viewing Season** – Spring through fall, best May through July.

**Time to Spend** – one hour to all day.

**Uniqueness** – Only higher mountain birding site among the Top 12 Sites recommended (Mount Rose, in the Reno-Sparks hub service area, is in the Top 20). Offers higher mountain birding and other wildlife watching close at hand and adjacent to world-famous Lake Tahoe. Species of very high interest to birders. Offers cool retreat from the heat of summer.

**Experience** – Experience birding and other wildlife viewing in mountain forest, meadow, and lake habitats in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

**Cautions** – Avoid during snowfall and heavy snow presence. Be aware of 7100' elevation.

**Marketing Recommendations** – **Market** as area to visit to round out NW Nevada birding experience with a higher elevation Sierra Nevada experience. **Market** world famous Lake Tahoe connection. **Market** the fact that this area is a subset of the 13,500 acre Lake Tahoe-Nevada State Park. **Market** highly sought bird species. **Market** wildflower, butterfly, and spawning Lahontan cutthroat trout occurrence. **Market** as a site to visit to escape the heat of hot afternoons in summer. **Market** as part of "Carson" hub service area itineraries. **Market** as a full morning, full afternoon, or all day destination to see montane bird species. Montane areas are often active longer into the day. They are usually more active in the afternoon due to the higher elevation. Suggest that birders go up in elevation to the Spooner Lake State Park area late morning or in the afternoon, on spring through fall days deemed to be too hot in Reno proper. Summer may be marketed as being a great time to visit due to the availability of cooler afternoon temperatures in the mountains. Mornings down low, afternoons up high.

## **Silver Saddle Ranch**

**Size** - 702 acres.

**Target Audience** – Birders, General Public.

**Proximity** – Ten minutes from downtown Carson City.

**Accessibility** – This site is a 4.5 mile drive on paved roads from Hwy. 395 in downtown Carson City to a paved parking lot. From there, a short trail leads to a viewing platform alongside the Carson River. The main portion of this public park is accessed on the opposite side of the river. The site has an excellent, flat, trail system.

**Birding Qualities** – Birding associated with riparian habitat, grassland, pastures, and Great Basin shrublands. Migrating songbirds, riparian bird species.

**Other Site Amenities** – Attractive farm setting with numerous horses, formal education program, scenic river setting, restrooms on site.

**Viewing Season** – All year.

**Time to Spend** – One to four hours, mornings best

**Uniqueness** – The only top twenty site in the “Carson” hub along a major river. The only top twenty site in the “Carson” hub with extensive and mature riparian habitat.

**Experience** – On an easy trail system, experience birds and other wildlife in an extensive, mature riparian forest alongside one of Nevada’s major rivers.

**Marketing Recommendations** – **Market** experiencing an easy, highly scenic walk through the extensive, mature riparian forest bordering the Carson River, one of Nevada’s major rivers. **Market** this as the only easily accessible site in the “Carson” hub service area where the preceding may be done. **Market** the ranching and pastoral nature of the area, including the presence of numerous grazing horses. **Market** the interface with the native Great Basin habitats on the flanking hillsides. **Market** its very close proximity to a major urban area, a place to very quickly get away from the urban lifestyle. **Market** as part of “Carson” hub service area itineraries.

## **FALLON REGIONAL HUB**

**(including Lovelock, Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation, and Walker Lake)**

### **Overview of the Fallon Regional Hub**

The Fallon Regional Hub serves the following Top Twelve most marketable NW Nevada wildlife viewing sites listed in alphabetical order: Carson Lake, Fort Churchill State Park/Lahontan State Recreation Area, Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation (see separate listing following), and Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge.

Water availability at Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge impacts the consistency of the wildlife viewing experience at what would otherwise be considered one of the Fallon area’s two Flagship Sites; the other being Carson Lake Wetlands. With the exception of the NAS Fallon Nature Trail, parts of Lahontan State Recreation Area, and the satellite Lovelock Valley and Walker Lake sites, access to all sites and on site involves use of dirt roads. These dirt roads may vary in condition depending upon precipitation. Therefore, it is critical to provide clear and current information on access to all sites at all times of the year, probably most appropriately on dynamic web site pages and at visitor contact points. The good news is there so many excellent bird sites in the Fallon area that birds and birding experiences missed at one area due to adverse conditions may be often enjoyed at one or more other sites.

The Lahontan Valley also hosts bird occurrence phenomena that could be marketed to an audience beyond the birding community: shorebird concentrations spring through fall, waterfowl concentrations spring and fall, and White-faced Ibis concentrations spring and summer are so great they each fit the natural history phenomenon description.

A feature of the Fallon Hub is that it is in close proximity to alternative wildlife viewing experiences. Fort Churchill State Park has a shared canoe trail down the Carson River. Another canoe trail exists below Carson Diversion Dam. Helpful in terms of extended seasonal use is that each has a different optimum time for use.

**Marketing Recommendations - Market** Fallon as the hub for radiating out to birding sites not only in the Lahontan Valley, but also Carson River Ranches, Fort Churchill Road, Fort Churchill State Park, Lahontan State Recreation Area, Lovelock Valley, Mason Valley, Pyramid Lake, and Walker Lake. **Market** the Lovelock Valley as a great winter raptor viewing area that is most easily accessed from Fallon from among the three major hubs, Carson City/Carson Valley, Fallon, Reno/Sparks. Use this fact to further package Fallon as the hub for a multi-day stay. **Market** Mason Valley and Walker Lake as sites to visit all morning, or as a single day outing starting at Mason Valley, then proceeding to Walker Lake late morning to early afternoon. **Market** the Lahontan Valley and Spring Wings festival at birding festivals in California and other bordering states. **Market** fully the natural history phenomena that exist in the Lahontan Valley. **Successful models** of marketing phenomena of nature include those centered on Bald Eagles (Carson Valley, NV and Klamath Basin, OR), Canada Geese (Maryland), elephant seals (San Simeon, CA), hummingbirds (Kern River Valley, CA, Rockport, TX, and SE Arizona), Monarch Butterflies (Pacific Grove, CA and Santa Cruz, CA) Sandhill Cranes (Bosque del Apache, NM and Platte River, NE), Snow Geese (Sacramento Valley, CA), and Turkey Vultures (Kern River Valley, CA). **Market** birding by horseback and other wildlife viewing modes of transportation. **Market** all sites where birding/wildlife viewing by canoe or kayak is permitted, such as seasonal use along the Carson River. Determine use or use restrictions of motorized and non-motorized watercraft at Carson Lake Wetlands, Harmon Reservoir, Lahontan Reservoir State Park, Mason Valley WMA, Pyramid Lake, S-Line Reservoir, Soda Lake, Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge, and Walker Lake and come up with a marketing plan, printed materials, and web site pages for such uses. **Develop and market** detailed birding itineraries for web sites using the skeleton itineraries provided.

### **Overview of Specific Sites**

#### ***Carson Lake (IBA-Globally Important Bird Area)***

**Size** – 22,000 acres.

**Target Audience** – Birders, General Public.

**Proximity** – Ten miles from Fallon.

**Accessibility** – Paved roads to site, dirt roads on site.

**Birding Qualities** – Up to 4000 pair White-faced Ibis nesting colony is one of North America's largest, concentrations of 15,000 migrating Snow Geese mid-January to mid-march and October to early December, tens of thousands of migrating and nesting shorebirds spring through fall, thousands of migrating and nesting ducks spring through fall. Prairie Falcon year round, Peregrine Falcon in winter and spring, Bald Eagle in winter, Short-eared Owl seasonally.

**Other Site Amenities** – Three observation towers, canoe access, muskrats, coyotes, 22,000 acres of wetlands, mountain background, restrooms at entrance.

**Viewing Season** – All year.

**Time to Spend** – One hour to 3/4 day.

**Uniqueness** – Wildlife phenomena involving huge numbers of several bird species, a Globally Important Bird Area, Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN) site.

**Experience** – Find yourself wonderfully overwhelmed by tens of thousands of birds at a 22,000 acre, Globally Important, Great Basin wetland with a stunning in mountain backdrop.

**Caution** – Roads and dikes are muddy and slippery when wet. No driving, hiking or wading off roads and dikes. Make sure visitors know they must check in and check out at the entrance.

**Marketing Recommendations** – **Market** the fact that this is one of the Pacific Flyways best birding areas, a Globally Important Bird Area of 22,000 wetland acres where tens of thousands, even hundreds of thousands, of birds may be present. **Market**, specifically, the White-faced Ibis, Snow Goose, other waterfowl, and Bald Eagle wildlife phenomena occurrences to best attract the General Public. **Market** the shorebird concentrations phenomenon and WHSRN designation to birders. **Market** the IBA, WHSRN, and Pacific Flyway notoriety. **Market** as part of Fallon hub service area itineraries to encourage all day and multi-day visits.

**Fort Churchill State Park (Important Bird Area) & Lahontan State Recreation Area (IBA) including Fort Churchill Road**

**Size** – 33,762 acres.

**Target Audience** – Birders, General Public.

**Proximity** – From Fallon it is 18 miles to north shore of Lahontan Reservoir, 35 miles to Fort Churchill State Historic Park

**Accessibility** – Paved roads to sites, paved roads, dirt roads, hiking & horse trails, and canoe trail on site.

**Birding Qualities** – Nevada's only Bald Eagle nesting pair, one of Nevada's largest concentrations of Bald Eagles, separate nesting islands for California Gull and Ring-billed Gull, NW Nevada's only site for recent sightings of Yellow-billed Cuckoo, songbird migration, Golden Eagle, Prairie Falcon, Peregrine Falcon, Black-throated Sparrow, Great Basin desert species, late March through early July birding by canoe on Carson River, birding by boat on Lahontan Reservoir, *Checklist of Birds – Fort Churchill S.H.P., Carson /River, Lahontan Reservoir* revision just completed,

**Other Site Amenities-** Monarch and swallowtail butterflies, lizards, snakes, black-tailed jackrabbits, deer, Fort Churchill, Buckland Station (a Pony Express stop), one Nevada's lushest gallery cottonwood forests (along the Carson River), interface of Great Basin lake, grassland, riparian, and shrub habitats, canoe trail, horseback riding, scenic, campground with 20 campsites, picnic areas, restrooms.

**Viewing Season** – All year for birding from land and on Lahontan Reservoir, late March through early July for canoe access.

**Time to Spend** – Half day to full day, at least one hour per sub-site.

**Uniqueness** – See Bald Eagle, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, and birding by canoe qualities above. Great Basin lake, grassland, riparian, and shrub habitats, extensive, gallery cottonwood forest, historic amenities context.

**Experience** – Experience the wildlife in one of Nevada's lushest gallery cottonwood forests by canoe on the Carson River, see one of Nevada's largest concentrations of wintering Bald Eagles, search for grassland birds among the reserved ruins of a historic fort.

**Cautions** – Drive only on designated roads, canoe access depends on water levels, most of canoe trip is flat – watch for sudden afternoon winds.

**Marketing Recommendations** – **Market** Nevada's only nesting Bald Eagle pair, one of Nevada's largest concentrations of wintering Bald Eagles, and wildlife viewing along the Carson River by canoe and on Lahontan Reservoir by boat not only to birders, but to the General Public as well. **Market** the fact that both Fort Churchill State Park and Lahontan State Recreation Area are designated Important Bird Areas. **Market** the Yellow-billed Cuckoo occurrence, songbird migration, and Great Basin birding qualities to birders. **Market** the historic amenities. **Market** as part of Fallon hub service area itineraries to encourage all day and multi-day visits.

**Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation (see separate listing following)**

**Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge (IBA-Globally Important Bird Area)**

**Size** – 77,500 acres (This refuge is part of the larger 200,000 acre Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge)

**Target Audience** – Birders, General Public.

**Accessibility** – Paved road to site, dirt roads on site.

**Proximity** – 16 miles from Fallon to this 77,500 acre refuge.

**Birding Qualities** – Globally Important Bird Area, concentrations of up to 250,000 waterfowl, Nevada's largest concentrations of Bald Eagles, half of the Pacific Flyways Canvasback population in migration, concentrations of shorebird, Tundra Swan, hawks and eagles, stronghold for Loggerhead Shrike – high nesting density, Snowy Plovers nest here, area has produced a number of rarities.

**Other Site Amenities**- mule deer, badger, kit fox, coyote, kangaroo rats, collared lizards, good viewing from vehicles, canoe access, huge size of 77,500 acre refuge and overall 200,000 acre Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge, restrooms at field office nearby, but off main tour route site.

**Viewing Season** – All year. Exceptional viewing of waterfowl and wading birds spring through fall, Waterfowl best in fall, Tundra Swans best in early winter, American White Pelicans March to November. Shorebirds excellent late-April to mid-May and mid-July to late-August. Birds of prey and deer in fall and winter.

**Time to Spend** – 2 hours to full day, even more.

**Uniqueness** – Globally Important bird Area, Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN) site, Nevada's largest concentrations of Bald Eagles, huge size, waterfowl concentrations.

**Experience** – Experience a quarter million waterfowl, thousands of shorebirds, and one of Nevada's largest concentrations of wintering Bald Eagles at this 77,500 acre Globally Important, Great Basin wetland.

**Cautions** – Roads muddy when wet, wildlife viewing quality dependent upon presence of water. Large, open area requires carrying of drinking water and protection from the elements, especially in summer..

**Marketing Recommendations** – **Market** the huge size of 77,500 acre refuge and overall 200,000 acre Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge to the General Public. **Market** the fact that this is a Globally Important Bird Area where hundreds of thousands of birds may be present. **Market**, specifically, the wildlife phenomena of concentration of a quarter million waterfowl and Nevada's largest concentration of Bald Eagles to best attract the General Public. **Market** the Canvasback and shorebird concentrations phenomena to birders. **Market** the IBA, WHSRN, and Pacific Flyway notoriety.

**Market** variable presence of water and where to turn to for water presence information. **Market** as part of Fallon hub service area itineraries to encourage all day and multi-day visits.

**RENO/SPARKS REGIONAL HUB  
(including Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation)**

**Overview of the Reno/Sparks Regional Hub**

The Reno/Sparks Regional Hub serves the following Top Twelve most marketable NW Nevada wildlife viewing sites: Galena Creek County Park, Oxbow Nature Study Area, Pyramid Lake (see also separate listing following), Swan Lake -AKA Lemmon Valley Marsh

**Marketing Recommendations** – **Market** Reno-Sparks as the “Gateway to Experiencing NW Nevada Birding and Wildlife Watching.” Reno-Sparks lends itself to this marketing because it is the home

to Reno-Tahoe International Airport and it is at the intersection of east-west I-80 and north-south US Hwy 395. **Market** Reno-Sparks as the hub for radiating out to birding sites not only in the urban area but also Verdi, the Mount Rose region, the Lake Tahoe region, and Pyramid Lake. Use these outlying areas to further package Reno-Sparks as the hub for a multi-day stay. **Market** in all printed materials and on web sites, at least in passing reference, the fact that Reno has hosted the biennial conference of Western Field Ornithologists, a Regional Conference of the American Birding Association, and other important bird/birding meetings. Doing so builds credibility. **Market** designated Important Bird Areas and the single most important reason why each was designated. **Market** the Reno-Sparks Hub at Fallon's Spring Wings festival and at birding festivals in California and other bordering states. **Market** fully the American White Pelican natural history phenomenon that exists at Pyramid Lake and the Reno-Sparks as the hub for experiencing that phenomenon. Successful models of marketing phenomena of nature include those centered on Bald Eagles (Carson Valley, NV and Klamath Basin, OR), Canada Geese (Maryland), elephant seals (San Simeon, CA), hummingbirds (Kern River Valley, CA, Rockport, TX, and SE Arizona), Monarch Butterflies (Pacific Grove, CA and Santa Cruz, CA) Sandhill Cranes (Bosque del Apache, NM and Platte River, NE), Snow Geese (Sacramento Valley, CA), and Turkey Vultures (Kern River Valley, CA). **Market** birding by horseback and other wildlife viewing modes of transportation. **Market** all sites where birding/wildlife viewing by canoe or kayak is permitted. Determine use or use restrictions of motorized and non-motorized watercraft at Pyramid Lake and other bodies of water in the area and prepare printed materials and web site pages to highlight the restrictions and how they benefit the wildlife. **Develop and market** detailed birding itineraries for web sites using the skeleton itineraries provided.

### **Overview of Specific Sites**

#### ***Galena Creek County Park***

**Size** – 420 acres.

**Target Audience** – Birders, General Public.

**Proximity** – 13 miles from Reno.

**Accessibility** – This 420 acre site is accessed by paved road. Fair Universal (barrier free) access

**Birding Qualities** – Woodpeckers including Red-breasted Sapsucker and White-headed Woodpecker, warblers, spring and fall songbird migration.

**Other Site Amenities** – Golden-mantled ground squirrels, mule deer, coyotes, bears, bobcats, bats, raccoons, Leopard frogs, tree frogs, water snakes, and lizards along creek. Aspens, alders, dogwoods, Jeffrey pine, Ponderosa pine, and abundant bittercherry. Many trails including one mile long nature trail. Horseback riding, campfire programs, ranger-led hikes, tours by appointment, restrooms, and picnic tables.

**Viewing Season** – Year round.

**Time to Spend** – One hour to half day.

**Uniqueness** – Only Sierra Nevada site in Reno-Sparks hub service area. Helps round out Reno-Sparks hub service area birding and other wildlife viewing by providing montane habitat-associated experiences. One mile long nature tour. Guided tours by appointment for groups of ten or more.

**Experience** – Experience mountain birding and wildlife viewing only thirteen miles from downtown Reno.

**Cautions** – Watch out for snakes and other natural hazards.

**Marketing Recommendations** – **Market** as a destination that helps round out Reno-Sparks hub service area birding and other wildlife viewing by providing montane habitat-associated experiences.

**Market** the impressive diversity of tree and animal species that may be seen. **Market** availability of guided tours for ten or more people to area tourism support services such as hotels and tour

companies. These tours are likely to be attractive to the General Public, not birders. **Market** as part of Reno-Sparks hub service area itineraries to encourage all day and multi-day visits.

### **Oxbow Nature Study Area**

**Size** – 8 acres.

**Target Audience** – Birders, General Public.

**Proximity** – Located in the heart of Reno.

**Accessibility** – This 8 acre site is easily accessible by Reno surface streets. The site itself is fully-accessible.

**Birding Qualities** – Riparian, pond, marsh, and river birding. Excellent migrant trap in fall and early winter. Good for migrants and vagrants in spring. Large resident population of California Quail. Wood Duck, Common Merganser, Northern Orioles, Evening Grosbeaks. Osprey appear spring and fall. Bald Eagle, Merlin, and American Dipper were all seen here during a single 45 minute, early December 2004 visit. White-throated Sparrow, Winter Wren, and Varied Thrush have been found here as well as Bohemian Waxwings among the Cedar Waxwings.

**Other Site Amenities** – Mink, muskrats, beavers, Monarch butterflies, tiger swallowtail butterflies, spring and summer wildflowers, tall cottonwoods, brush piles, willows, turtles. Excellent interpretation, several observation decks, riparian, pond, and marsh area alongside the Truckee River, Parking, restrooms, picnic tables, trails, observation decks are fully accessible. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recognizes Oxbow Nature Study Area as a national model for a successful urban nature center. 1/3 mile long wheelchair accessible trail.

**Viewing Season** – All year.

**Time to Spend** – One to four hours.

**Uniqueness** – Urban site...excellent wildlife viewing, interpretation, and access in the heart of Reno. Five observation decks (three riverside, one pond, and one tree-top).

**Experience** – Experience songbirds at treetop level on an early mid-May morning. Watch an American Dipper play and dive in a riffle while a magnificent Bald Eagle flies downriver overhead in winter. Sit quietly and watch for timid wildlife from a secluded bench.

**Caution** – Visitor center only open by appointment. Oxbow NSA is at the end of a road that is lined by several light industries. Be sure **marketing** mentions this. Take advantage of this potential negative by playing up the idea of the light (Oxbow NSA) at the end of the tunnel (light industry corridor).

**Marketing Recommendations** – **Market** this urban site's remarkable diversity of wildlife and wildlife viewing opportunities. **Market** its location in a major urban area, a place to very quickly get away from the urban lifestyle. **Market** to active birders as and excellent migrant trap during fall and late winter and as a good site for migrants and vagrants in spring. **Market** as the centerpiece for Reno-Sparks hub service area itineraries to encourage all day and multi-day visits. **Market** Oxbow NSA as the anchor for marketing full morning, all day, or several mornings itineraries for visits to a suite of sites located on the west side of Reno off Interstate 80.

### **Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation (see separate listing following)**

### **Swan Lake Nature Study Area -AKA Lemmon Valley Marsh (IBA-Important Bird Area)**

**Size** – 1800 acres.

**Target Audience** – Birders, General Public.

**Proximity** – Ten miles from I-80/US 395 interchange, in Reno city limits.

**Accessibility** – Paved roads to site, dirt roads on site.

**Birding Qualities** – Lake, marsh, sagebrush, and greasewood habitats, plus bordering sewage treatment ponds offer excellent birding. Burrowing owls nearly year round with pairs nesting in nestboxes located at west edge of marsh. Tundra Swan, Greater White-fronted Goose, and ducks common in winter, American Avocets, Black-necked Stilts, and other shorebirds in spring. Virginia Rail and Sora. Sagebrush-associated species.

**Other Site Amenities** – Lake and marsh wetlands varies in size from 250 acres to 1500 acres, guaranteed water rights, \$250,000 worth of interpretive signs, \$480,000 spent for interpretive center, a network of trails, boardwalk with interpretive signs, and observation platforms, has formal education program.

**Viewing Season** – All year. Best time is November through May.

**Time to Spend** – One to four hours any time of day. Best time is early to mid-morning, then late afternoon and evening.

**Uniqueness** – Swan Lake is a nearly unspoiled wetland in the midst of suburban housing and warehouses. Only major traditional wetland in Reno-Sparks urban area. Nesting Burrowing Owls.

**Caution** – Stay off muddy roads and alkali mudflats.

**Marketing Recommendations - Market** to birders as part of birding itineraries covering several habitats. **Market** this area as a traditional wetlands birding experience to round out “Reno-Sparks” hub birding opportunities. **Market**, as appropriate, the presence of **Burrowing Owls**.

## **PYRAMID LAKE PAIUTE RESERVATION**

### **Fallon & Reno-Sparks Hubs**

#### ***Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation (Globally IBA-Important Bird Area)***

**Size** – 475,000 acres (including 112,000 acre Pyramid lake)

**Target Audience** – Birders, General Public.

**Proximity** – One hour from Fallon or Reno to first recommend birding stop at Numana Wetlands Trail.

**Accessibility** – Paved roads from Fallon and Reno to site. Paved roads, dirt roads, and 4WD only roads on site. Note: boaters and hikers must remain at least 500 feet from Anaho Island.

**Birding Qualities** – 700 acre Anaho Island National Wildlife Refuge in Pyramid Lake supports up to 6500 pairs of nesting American White Pelicans. Pelicans visible March to October. Nesting Double-crested Cormorants, Great Blue herons, California Gulls, and Caspian Terns. Common Loons, Western Grebes, Clark’s Grebes, and Osprey. Tundra Swans and waterfowl common in fall and winter. Six species of grebe possible. Wading birds and shorebirds present spring through fall. Golden Eagles and waterfowl present year round. Burrowing Owl, Sage Trasher, and Black-throated Sparrow in sagebrush habitat. Isolated oases productive during spring and fall songbird migration. Lake and oases are magnets for migrants, rarities, and strays. Pacific Loon, Red-necked Grebe, Parasitic Jaeger, Sabine’s Gull, and Blackpoll Warbler have been recorded.

**Other Site Amenities-** Paiute Indian Reservation, Native American museum in Nixon, wide-open scenic views of 112,000 acre lake surrounded by mountains, camping, boating, spring and summer lizards and wildflowers, black-tailed jackrabbits, Great Basin kangaroo rats.

**Viewing Season** – All year. Best March through November.

**Time to Spend** – Half day to full day starting early in the morning at Numana Wetlands Trail.

**Uniqueness** – One of the largest American White Pelicans in North America in a stunning Great Basin

setting. Bill Maynard, American Birding Association Field Programs Manager, describes Pyramid Lake as “the region’s crown jewel.”

**Experience** – Experience one of the largest American White Pelicans in North America in a stunning Great Basin setting. As a birder, savor the complete birding experience offered by the Numana Wetlands Trail, lower Truckee River, isolated oases along the west shore of Pyramid lake, Pyramid Lake proper, Anaho Island National Wildlife Refuge, and the Truckee River Delta at Pyramid Lake.

**Caution** – Permit required to visit the reservation which encompasses all of the birding stops centered on Pyramid Lake. Binoculars or spotting scope required to see pelican colony well from shore. Avoid soft sand adjacent to roads. Boating is dangerous in high winds.

**Special Note on Pyramid Lake**

Both Fallon and Reno-Sparks are logical hubs for experiencing Pyramid Lake. Both should market this destination as part of their hub strategies.

**From Fallon Hub** - Accessing Pyramid Lake using the Fallon Hub makes sense because the entrance to the region through Wadsworth is more rural and reaches a prime early morning birding site first. An all day itinerary would start with early morning birding along the Numana Wetlands Trail and Truckee River, followed by birding the Big Canyon Park- AKA “The Willows” at Pyramid Lake, Sutcliffe Marina, Truckee River Delta, and Anaho Island National Wildlife Refuge . This itinerary is most logically followed using the Fallon Hub.

**From Reno-Sparks Hub** - Since the Reno area does not appear to have any bird phenomena in the immediate area like the public wintering Bald Eagle viewing area in the Carson Valley or the thousands of spring and fall shorebird assemblages and several thousand+ pairs of nesting White-face present from May through August in the Lahontan Valley, it is recommended that Reno incorporate heavily into its marketing of wildlife viewing opportunities the presence of up to 6500 pairs of nesting American White Pelicans at Anaho National Wildlife Refuge in Pyramid Lake. Since the road to the pelican colony viewing area is rough dirt, the opportunity exists to package guided tours from Fallon and Reno/Sparks to Pyramid Lake.

**Marketing Recommendations** –**Market** the American White Pelican colony at Pyramid Lake and other Pyramid Lake area wildlife viewing opportunities by working closely with Anaho NWR staff and the Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation tribal council.

## **Appendix F**

### **Suggested Birding Itineraries by Hub**

#### **Carson City-Carson Valley-Genoa Hub**

##### One to Two Hour Itineraries

Clear Creek Road  
Incline Village Treatment Ponds  
Jack's Valley Road  
Silver Saddle Ranch  
Spooner Lake Park  
Washoe Lake

##### All Morning Itineraries:

Silver Saddle Ranch, Clear Creek Road, Jack's Valley Road, and Spooner Lake Park can be productively visited for less than an hour to all morning.  
Washoe Lake

##### All Afternoon Itineraries:

Spooner Lake State Park  
Spooner Lake State Park, Incline Village Treatment Ponds  
Spooner Lake State Park, Washoe Lake

##### All Day Itineraries (To be followed in the order presented):

Silver Saddle Ranch, Spooner Lake State Park, Incline Village Treatment Ponds  
Clear Creek Road, Spooner Lake State Park, Incline Village Treatment Ponds  
Jack's Valley Road, Spooner Lake State Park, Incline Village Treatment Ponds  
Silver Saddle Ranch, Jack's Valley, Road, Spooner Lake State Park, Incline Village Treatment Ponds  
Clear Creek Road, Jack's Valley Road, Spooner Lake State Park, Incline Village Treatment Ponds  
BIG DAY – Silver Saddle Ranch, Clear Creek Road, Jack's Valley Road, Spooner Lake State Park, Incline Village Treatment Ponds

#### **Fallon Hub**

##### One to Two Hour Itineraries

Fallon NAS Nature Trail  
Harmon Reservoir  
Soda Lake  
S-Line Reservoir, Indian Lakes Road cemetery

##### All Morning Itineraries:

Carson Diversion Dam  
Carson Lake Wetlands  
Carson River Ranches

Fallon NAS Nature Trail, Carson Lake Wetlands  
Fallon NAS Nature Trail, Harmon Reservoir, S-Line Reservoir, Indian Lakes Road cemetery,  
Soda Lake (To be followed in the order presented)  
Fallon NAS Nature Trail, Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge  
Fort Churchill State Park, Fort Churchill Road (To be followed in the order presented)  
Lahontan State Recreation Area  
Mason Valley WMA  
Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge  
Walker Lake

All Afternoon Itineraries:

Carson Lake Wetlands  
Fort Churchill Road (For raptors and other bird species active in the afternoon)  
Lahontan SRA  
Lovelock Valley (in winter)  
Mason Valley WMA  
Soda Lake, Indian Lakes Road cemetery, S-Line Reservoir, Harmon Reservoir (To be followed in the order presented)  
Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge  
Walker Lake

Note: The afternoon itineraries listed for areas not in the mountains assume birding from or next to the vehicle to avoid the heat of the spring into fall, and the cold late fall into spring.

All Day Itineraries (To be followed in the order presented):

Carson Diversion Dam, Lahontan Valley Wetlands sites  
Carson River Ranches, Fort Churchill State Park, Fort Churchill Road, Lahontan SRA  
Fallon NAS Nature Trail, Lahontan Valley Wetlands sites  
Lahontan Valley, Lovelock Valley  
Lahontan Valley Wetlands sites (various combinations)  
Mason Valley WMA, Walker Lake  
Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation (Numana Wetlands Trail/Truckee River, Big Canyon Park-AKA "The Willows" at Pyramid Lake, Sutcliffe Marina, Truckee River Delta, Anaho Island National Wildlife Refuge)

**Reno-Sparks Hub**

One to Two Hour Itineraries

Galena Creek County Park  
Mount Rose  
Oxbow Nature Study Area  
Rancho San Rafael Regional Park  
Rock Park Trail  
Swan Lake  
Verdi-Bridge Street, Dog Valley Road, Hill Lane, Trelease Road  
Verdi – Crystal Peak Park  
Verdi Nature Trail  
Virginia Lake

All Morning Itineraries:

Galena Creek County Park  
Oxbow Nature Study Area  
Mount Rose  
Rancho San Rafael Regional Park  
Rock Park Trail, Rosewood Lakes Golf Course, University Farms  
Galena Creek County Park, Mount Rose  
Oxbow Nature Study Area, Rancho San Rafael Regional Park  
Oxbow Nature Study Area, Mount Rose  
Swan Lake, Mount Rose

All Afternoon Itineraries:

Mount Rose  
Mount Rose, Virginia Lake  
Mount Rose, Swan Lake

All Day Itineraries (To be followed in the order presented):

Galena Creek County Park, Mount Rose, Swan Lake  
Oxbow Nature Study Area, Mount Rose, Swan Lake  
Oxbow Nature Study Area, Rancho San Rafael Regional Park, Mount Rose, Swan Lake  
Mount Rose  
Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation (Numana Wetlands Trail/Truckee River, Big  
Canyon Park-AKA "The Willows" at Pyramid Lake, Sutcliffe Marina, Truckee River Delta, Anaho Island  
National Wildlife Refuge )  
BIG DAY - Oxbow Nature Study Area, Galena Creek County Park, Mount Rose, Swan  
Lake

**Disabled Birder Itinerary (to be followed in the order presented)**

Oxbow NSA, Rancho San Rafael Regional Park, Crystal Peak Park, Virginia Lake

## Appendix G

### Specific Web Site Analysis

As listed in response to “Nevada birding” keywords search on February 3, 2005:

1. [www.birding.comm/wheretobird/Nevada.asp](http://www.birding.comm/wheretobird/Nevada.asp)
2. [www.camacdonald.com/birding/usnevada.htm](http://www.camacdonald.com/birding/usnevada.htm)
3. [www.birdingpal.org/nv.htm](http://www.birdingpal.org/nv.htm)
4. [www.nevadaaudubon.org/BirdSites/las-map.htm](http://www.nevadaaudubon.org/BirdSites/las-map.htm)
5. [www.gbbo.org/nevada.htm](http://www.gbbo.org/nevada.htm)
6. [www.nevadabirding.com](http://www.nevadabirding.com)
7. [www.nevadalinks.net/Nevada\\_Birding.htm](http://www.nevadalinks.net/Nevada_Birding.htm)
8. [www.virtualbirder.com/vbirder/realbirds/rbas/NV.html](http://www.virtualbirder.com/vbirder/realbirds/rbas/NV.html)
9. [www.birdperch.com/placest.asp?state\\_id=33](http://www.birdperch.com/placest.asp?state_id=33)
10. [www.nevadaaudubon.org](http://www.nevadaaudubon.org)

The following five out of the top ten sites listed required one to two clicks to reach the desired Lahontan Audubon Society bird pages...

#### [www.nevadaaudubon.org/BirdSites/las-map.htm](http://www.nevadaaudubon.org/BirdSites/las-map.htm)

The Lahontan Audubon Society birding pages, [www.nevadaaudubon.org/BirdSites/las-map.htm](http://www.nevadaaudubon.org/BirdSites/las-map.htm), web link was outstanding. It is the one to try and link with all other top ten listed sites. This site was very attractive and friendly. It had a map with NW Nevada birding sites clearly shown and one click links to each of those specific sites. In the narrative for each site, there was information on what to expect, best time of year to visit, notable bird species, precautions, how to get there, and popular birding route including those by vehicle, hiking, and canoe. Optional side trips were listed. This site also had links to specific bird species accounts with accompanying full-color photos. Although each photo took a long time to download, the printed information for each species was available to read while waiting.

This site was very complete except for links to tourism support services and detailed birding strategies for each site such as would be laid out for a “Big Day” in pursuit of the most species.

#### [www.gbbo.org/nevada.htm](http://www.gbbo.org/nevada.htm)

The Great Basin Bird Observatory web site, [www.gbbo.org/nevada.htm](http://www.gbbo.org/nevada.htm), consisted of a single page that presented solely two links accompanied by one to two sentence descriptors. The first of the two went directly to the Lahontan Audubon Society birding web pages. As this web site is further constructed, the task will be to keep these links prominent.

#### [www.nevadaaudubon.org](http://www.nevadaaudubon.org)

The Lahontan Audubon Society home page, [www.nevadaaudubon.org](http://www.nevadaaudubon.org), had direct, one click links each to its excellent birding pages, the *Nevada Birding Map*, and *A Birding Guide to Reno and Beyond* order form. This is the web site address listed most frequently in printed materials. Going to this web site address will get the interested birder to desired information with a minimum of effort.

#### [www.nevadalinks.net/Nevada\\_Birding.htm](http://www.nevadalinks.net/Nevada_Birding.htm)

This was a one page site with a very clear link directly to Lahontan Audubon Society NW Nevada birding web pages.

[www.birding.comm/wheretobird/Nevada.asp](http://www.birding.comm/wheretobird/Nevada.asp)

This site had an obvious link to the Lahontan Audubon Society birding web pages, although there is a Las Vegas bias on birding hotspots listings.

The following two out of the top ten sites listed required three or more clicks to reach the desired Lahontan Audubon Society bird pages...

[www.camacdonald.com/birding/usnevada.htm](http://www.camacdonald.com/birding/usnevada.htm)

This site did have a link to the Great Basin Bird Observatory (GBBO) at the top of the first page. In turn, the GBBO single page site led directly to the Lahontan Audubon Society birding pages.

This site had an overall Las Vegas bias. The links to NV web sites were not strong and the map lacked details and clarity.

[www.virtualbirder.com/vbirder/realbirds/rbas/NV.html](http://www.virtualbirder.com/vbirder/realbirds/rbas/NV.html)

This site had out-of-date information. It took two clicks from the site to reach the link to the Lahontan Audubon Society site.

The following are the three other top ten listed sites analyzed...

[www.nevadabirding.com](http://www.nevadabirding.com)

This site did have a clear link to Fallon's Spring Wings festival. However, there were lots of poorly designed links. Several clicks had to be made to get to desired information. This was a very frustrating site.

[www.birdingpal.org/nv.htm](http://www.birdingpal.org/nv.htm)

This site was designed to get people directly in touch with local birders via e-mail. It assumes knowledge of Nevada bird status and distribution. Direct links to the Lahontan Audubon Society birding web pages would have been useful.

[www.birdperch.com/placest.asp?state\\_id=33](http://www.birdperch.com/placest.asp?state_id=33)

This site took multiple clicks to reach dead-ends. This was a very frustrating site.

## **Two Other Web Sites**

<http://www.ndow.org/wild/bird/>

The Nevada Division of Wildlife <http://www.ndow.org/wild/bird/> Bird Watching web page was visited on February 6, 2005. It is clear, well organized, practical, and brief. There were links to printable PDF files for NDOW's three regional bird checklists, winter bird feeding, and the Nevada Partners In Flight Bird Conservation Plan. There was a link to Lahontan Audubon Society. The links sidebar to other NDOW web pages led to helpful information including "Wildlife Education Area."

[www.fallontourism.com](http://www.fallontourism.com)

The Fallon Convention and Tourism Authority [www.fallontourism.com](http://www.fallontourism.com) web site was reviewed in depth on February 3, 2005. It featured birding prominently at the top of its home page in the form of an attractive pictorial link entitled "For the Birders CLICK HERE." This link led to a web page with a few,

well-chosen words including “Bird-Neva Triangle” that highlighted and cross-promoted the triangle formed by Carson Valley, Fallon, and Pyramid Lake. These short, market-oriented words ended with a direct link to the outstanding Lahontan Audubon Society Northwest Nevada birding web site at [www.nevadaaudubon.org/BirdSites/las-map.htm](http://www.nevadaaudubon.org/BirdSites/las-map.htm). The home page had a sidebar with clear links listed to Recreation & Attractions, Events, Lodging, and Dining. It also had a link to a Links page.

## **Appendix H**

### **Birding and Wildlife Viewing Publications Analysis**

#### **2004 Fallon Visitor's Guide - Lahontan Valley News/Fallon Eagle Standard and Fallon Convention and Tourism Authority. 2004.**

**Description** – This is a 60 page visitor's guide to Fallon and vicinity.

**Strengths** – This publication has a comprehensive index with forty headings leading to equally comprehensive information on visiting and experiencing Fallon and vicinity. The Spring Wings Bird Festival and Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge each have a listing in the index leading to articles on each. There is a section entitled "Surround yourself in Birds" (following the "Surround yourself in Fallon" theme) that provides a Day one, Day two, Day three birding itinerary. There is also a section Hwy. 50 entitled "Loneliest Road in America." The guide has the expected, but useful, sections including those on accommodations, events, fishing, golfing, history, hunting, museums, parks, restaurants, and web sites. In addition, it has sections evocative of the West or Nevada in general and Fallon in particular such as the Cantaloupe Festival, casinos, cave tours, Corn Maze, Fallon Air Show, Fallon Farmers Market, ghost towns and old mining towns, horseback riding, Maine Street Walking Tour, Pony Express Stations, and rodeo. People interviewed at four California birding and nature festivals mentioned that they integrated many, alternative activities into their birding or nature-themed trips

**Weaknesses** – The word "Fallon" is placed vertically on the side of the front page and the words "Visitor's Guide" are at the bottom of the front page. The year "2004" is the only text at the top of the page. When this brochure is displayed in a rack, the key information, Fallon and Visitor's Guide, are blocked from view.

**Intended Audience** – Visitors to Fallon.

**Where Found** – Fallon Chamber of Commerce, Fallon Convention and Visitor Authority

**Marketing Recommendations** – 1. Distribute at festivals throughout Nevada, California, and other bordering states. 2. Distribute at visitor centers in Nevada and along the Hwy. 395 corridor. 3. Be sure this and other area visitor guides are mentioned and recommended in nature-based tourism printed promotional materials and on web sites. Add a "Lahontan Audubon Society (birding information): [www.nevadaaudubon.org](http://www.nevadaaudubon.org)" listing to the "Handy Website Address" section.

#### **A Birding Guide to Reno and Beyond - Blow, Karen L., Clark, Lucie W., Gubanich, Alan, McNinch, David, editors for Lahontan Audubon Society. 2000.**

**Description** – This publication is a 56 page guide to twenty major birding areas and several optional side trips in the Carson City, Fallon, and Reno region.

**Strengths** – Overall this publication is an excellent, comprehensive, light, and user-friendly guide to finding birds at twenty NW Nevada birding sites. There are "WHAT TO EXPECT," "HOW TO GET THERE," "POPULAR BIRDING ROUTE," "OPTIONAL SIDE TRIPS" and "Notable Species" sections for each of the twenty birding areas. There is a "Finding Selected Species" section listing sixteen bird species that are among those most frequently sought by visiting birders. Accompanying each of the sixteen species are one or more suggested areas where they may be found. There are Carson City, Fallon, and Reno area maps with areas numbered, and specific maps for ten areas. All of the preceding area-specific features of this book were consistently and clearly laid out. This was the most consistently used reference during the October and December 2004 field visits to NW Nevada.

**Weaknesses** – It is difficult to relocate “Optional Side Trips” as they are not listed in the table of contents. There is no index. Since only twenty areas are covered, several excellent birding sites in NW Nevada are not included.

**Intended Audience** – Novice to expert birders.

**Where Found** – Lahontan Audubon Society web site (PDF form and hard copy order form), American Birding Association on-line bookstore, Los Angeles Audubon Bookstore (catalog, phone, store, web site).

**Marketing Recommendations** – Make this publication readily available in local bookstores, at NW Nevada wildlife viewing sites, at visitor centers along the Hwy. 395 corridor, and at festivals throughout Nevada, California, and other bordering states.

**Additional Recommendation** – 1. Add “Optional Side Trips” listings under the appropriate area heading in the table of contents. 2. Add a one page section listing a table with primary and secondary bird phenomena in NW Nevada. Include the locations and times of occurrence. 3. Add a one page section on additional NW Nevada birding materials and where and how to secure them. 4. Add a comprehensive index.

***Birding in the Lahontan Valley, Fallon, Nevada*** - Fallon Convention and Tourism Authority (Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge, Nevada Division of Wildlife, Great Basin Bird Observatory, Nevada Wide Open, [travelnevada.com](http://travelnevada.com)). No date given.

**Description** – This is a two-sided, 11” x 17” publication folded into a rack-sized brochure.

**Strengths** – This publication has an excellent one page map color-keyed to surrounding descriptions of seven birding areas found within a few miles of Fallon. Both the map and area descriptions areas are on a single, one-sided page making it very convenient and car friendly. This brochure is wonderfully comprehensive. Half of the other side of the brochure is devoted to four brief, informative sections, each highlighting one of the four seasons. In turn, each section contains monthly highlights. The last half of one side of the brochure has the cover and back panels along with a panel introducing the Lahontan Valley wetlands. The back panel has contact information on Fallon’s Spring Wings Bird Festival, the Fallon Convention and Visitor Authority, Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge, and Nevada Division of Wildlife. This brochure was used extensively during the October and December 2004 field visits made by members of the project team.

**Weaknesses** – None considering the size of this publication.

**Intended Audience** – Novice to expert birders.

**Where Found** – Fallon Visitor and Convention Authority.

**Marketing Recommendations** – 1. Distribute at festivals throughout Nevada, California, and other bordering states. 2. Distribute at visitor centers in Nevada and along the Hwy. 395 corridor. 3. Provide at NW Nevada birding sites. 4. Be sure this brochure is mentioned and recommended on the Internet and in other printed materials. 5. If not done so already, provide links to printable PDF version of this brochure on web sites

**Additional Recommendation** – Use this brochure as a model for providing clear, comprehensive, friendly, helpful, highly informative, and well laid out information.

***Birds of the Lahontan Valley: A Guide to Nevada’s Wetland Oasis*** - Chisholm, Graham and Neel, Larry A. 2002.

**Description** – This is a 240 page reference book.

**Strengths** – The detailed information on status, arrival and departure dates, peak counts, colonial nesting waterbirds, shorebird counts, and Christmas Bird Counts for the Lahontan Valley is very helpful in trip planning. Also helpful is the chapter on eleven birding areas in the Lahontan Valley,

including two not covered in other reviewed publications. It is important to have this book along on trips to the Lahontan Valley to check and see if a bird sighting is expected in the area and habitat the time of the visit. The peak count information helps determine if the number of individuals present has precedent. The detailed table of contents and index are also very helpful. This book was used extensively during trip preparation and trip visits in October and December 2004.

**Weaknesses** – None.

**Intended Audience** – Novice to expert birders

**Where Found** – Amazon.Com, American Birding Association on-line bookstore, Los Angeles Audubon Bookstore (catalog, phone, store, web site)

**Marketing Recommendations** – This book should be recommended in other publications and on web sites as part of the package of publications to have on hand during visits to the Lahontan Valley.

**Additional Recommendation** – None.

**Nevada Birding Map** - Conkey, Ronald L., researcher, compiler, and editor for Lahontan Audubon Society. 2004.

**Description** – This full-color map of Nevada features thirty-three birding sites in “Western Nevada.”

**Strengths** – This comprehensive birding map has thumbnail listings for thirty-three “Western Nevada” birding sites numbered on the map. This is the only publication that cross-references to several other publications. It cross-references to *A Birding Guide to Reno and Beyond*, *Birds of the Lahontan Valley*, and the *Nevada Wildlife Viewing Guide*. This was very helpful on site visits. The accompanying information lists the priority to visit (1-low to 5-high), difficulty to reach (1-easy to 5-difficult), administrating agency, amenities such as picnic tables, toilets, and wheelchair accessibility, checklist availability, habitat nomenclature abbreviations (explained in Habitat Type Descriptions elsewhere on map), time period to visit, UTM location, and directions. The “How To Use this Map” section has general background on Nevada birding, birding, Nevada, water, hazards, available supplemental maps, and further references. There is an extensive sub-section on “Habitat Type Descriptions and Probable Bird Inhabitants.” There are administration addresses with the suggestion to send postcard of support, birding festivals contact information, and contact information for organizations with information on birding Nevada. This publication was extremely popular at three California birding festivals attended in January and February 2005. However, due to its comprehensiveness, those who were given the map were told to think of it as a reference book requiring an hour or more of study at home before use in the field. This map was used extensively during trip preparation and trip visits in October and December 2004.

**Weaknesses** – This is not a pick-up and use map. It is awkward to use in the car. Due to its comprehensiveness, it is more like a reference book that requires an hour or more of study at home before use in the field. There is so much information in this publication that it is often hard to find the keys to the symbols provided in the thumbnail descriptions. The 1 to 5 number system for priority of visit and difficulty to reach is confusing as in the first, the number one has the least desirable ranking while in the second, the number one has the highest desirable ranking.

**Intended Audience** – Novice to expert birders

**Where Found** – Los Angeles Audubon Bookstore (catalog, phone, store, web site)

**Marketing Recommendations** – This was the most popular Nevada birding publication distributed at three California Wildlife festivals in January and February 2005. The caveat to the following recommendations is that those who acquire the Nevada Birding Map should be told that it requires extensive pre-trip study to discover all of its features and to absorb the meaning of the

symbols in the thumbnail descriptions of each area that are keyed out on other parts of the map including the reverse side. With this in mind...

1. Distribute at festivals throughout Nevada, California, and other bordering states.
2. Distribute at visitor centers in Nevada and along the Hwy. 395 corridor.
3. Provide at NW Nevada birding sites.
4. Describe and make availability known on web sites.

**Additional Recommendations** – 1. Encourage and promote ongoing field checks of all *Nevada Birding Map* locations and solicit from map users clarification of directions and information where necessary (e.g.: Lovelock winter raptor area). 2. Due to its comprehensiveness, those who were given the map were told to think of it as a reference book requiring an hour or more of study at home before use in the field. 3. The number signifies the highest in rank. Change the priority to bird ranking from 1- low, 5-high to 1-high, 5-low. Then, high priority and easy will go together as 1s while low priority and difficult will go together as 5s. 4. Be sure distributors are made aware that the *Nevada Birding Map* is not best as a “stand alone” piece. It is an important tool, packed with helpful information, that is best used with one or more other maps, local or regional birding guides, web site information, and other birding and tourism support materials.

### ***Nevada – FREE 2004-2005 Official State Map*** - Nevada Commission on Tourism. 2004.

**Description** – This is the official state map of Nevada.

**Strengths** – The comprehensiveness of this map is impressive without seeming overwhelming. Sections include an index, road conditions phone numbers, distance chart, rest areas, recreation facilities, wilderness areas, major city region maps, mileage between I-80 interchanges, scenic byways, historic mining towns, summer recreation, winter recreation, Nevada’s wildlife, RV NV, Nevada adventure, and Nevada almanac. There is also a section with name, mailing address, phone number, and web site address for one hundred nine visitor information contacts. A particular strength from a birding promotion standard is the presence of is a full panel on Nevada’s Wildlife including the highlighting of the presence of one of the nation’s three largest nesting colonies of White-faced Ibis and the nation’s largest nesting colony of American White Pelicans at Pyramid Lake’s Anaho Island National Wildlife Refuge.

**Weaknesses** – none noted

**Intended Audience** – Visitors to Nevada

**Where Found** – Visitor contact points throughout Nevada.

**Marketing Recommendations** – 1. Fulfill the current request from the Lone Pine Interagency Visitor Center for NW Nevada materials BEFORE their new visitor center opens in Lone Pine, California later in 2005 by providing the *Nevada 2004-2005 Official State Map*. 2. Distribute at festivals throughout Nevada, California, and other bordering states. 3. Thank the Nevada Commission on Tourism for including a full panel on Nevada’s Wildlife and for highlighting the White-faced Ibis and American White Pelican colonies. 4. Encourage the Commission on Tourism to continue the Nevada’s Wildlife panel and references to bird phenomena in future editions of the Nevada official state map.

**Additional Recommendation** – None.

### ***Nevada Partners In Flight – Bird Conservation Plan*** - Neel, Larry A., Editor. 1999.

**Description** – This 355 page reference book is the Partners In Flight plan to conserve habitats and birds in Nevada. Nevada PIF is made up of representatives of agencies and organizations including the Department of Defense, Great Basin Bird Observatory, Lahontan Audubon Society, Nevada Division of Forestry, Nevada Division of Wildlife, The Nature Conservancy, USDA Forest Service,

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDI Bureau of Land Management, USDI Bureau of Reclamation, USDI Fish and Wildlife Service, and the University of Nevada-Reno.

**Strengths** – This publication includes a brief overview of Nevada Bird conservation, descriptions of fifteen major habitat types with suites of indicator species to be protected in each habitat, and a listing of all Nevada bird species and their habitats. The level description of habitat and species associations is not found in any other of the reviewed materials. A review of the in depth habitat and species accounts was very helpful prior in preparation for field visits in October and December 2004. This is an important reference toll for active birders. Although the plan is not widely available in print, a PDF file is available on the Internet at: [www.blm.gov/wildlife/plan/pl-nv-10.pdf](http://www.blm.gov/wildlife/plan/pl-nv-10.pdf).

**Weaknesses** – This is a large, bulky publication that is not widely available in print.

**Intended Audience** – Wildlife managers, novice to expert birders.

**Where Found** – PDF file is available on the Internet at: [www.blm.gov/wildlife/plan/pl-nv-10.pdf](http://www.blm.gov/wildlife/plan/pl-nv-10.pdf).

**Marketing Recommendation** – Make sure active birders are aware of this publication and its availability via the Internet.

**Additional Recommendation** – None.

### ***Nevada Wildlife Viewing Guide* - Clark, Jeanne L. 1993.**

**Description** – This 84 page book is part of the series of state-themed Watchable Wildlife viewing guides. Watchable Wildlife sites are found around the United States and are identified by the familiar signs with white binoculars on a brown background. Fifty-five sites throughout Nevada and thirteen in NW Nevada project area.

**Strengths** – This book is compact, succinct, well presented, and useful. Each site is listed and covered on a single page with a description, viewing information, directions, site manager, phone number, size, closest town, and map given for each site. A feature of this guide, not found in the other reviewed publications, is viewing information for amphibians, fishes, insects, mammals, reptiles, and wildflowers as well as birds. Clear symbols give a quick picture of what is present at each site. Another strength of this guide is the fact that people are familiar with the Watchable Wildlife logo on signs at sites around the United States. This guide is directly keyed to those signs and those sites. Having information clearly presented on a single page makes this guide easy to use. This book can be viewed as a stand alone book for the general Public in pursuit of wildlife viewing experiences.

**Weaknesses** – Some of the strengths of this guide are also its some of its weaknesses. Due to its compactness, this guide covers only thirteen sites in the NW Nevada project area. Detailed, even sample, itineraries are not available for most sites. This is not a stand alone book for active birders.

**Intended Audience** – Any member of the Public interested in viewing wildlife in Nevada.

**Where Found** – Amazon.Com, Los Angeles Audubon Bookstore (catalog, phone, store, web site)

**Marketing Recommendations** – 1. Market this book to the broader wildlife viewing audience beyond birders. The *Nevada Wildlife Viewing Guide* is necessary for those who want a publication that is not focuses not only on birds, but on amphibians, fishes, insects, mammals, reptiles, and wildflowers as well. 2. Distribute at festivals throughout Nevada, California, and other bordering states. 3. Distribute at visitor centers in Nevada and along the Hwy. 395 corridor. 4. Provide at NW Nevada birding sites. 5. Make availability known on web sites. 6. Include this book in lists of suggested references to bring so non-bird wildlife viewing opportunities are covered.

**Additional Recommendation** – Keep this book's format as it is. Corrections of its weaknesses will just lead to weakening of its strengths. Encourage user feedback to see what edits may be made while keeping to the same format.

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