



1100 W. Moana Lane, Reno, NV 775-825-0602  
11301 S. Virginia Street, Reno, NV 775-853-1319  
7655 Pyramid Hwy., Sparks, NV 775-425-4300

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## "Nature News" from Wild Birds Unlimited at Moana Nursery



Rufous Hummingbird

### Nectar - Remember it's Pure and Simple!

Here's a random hummingbird fact - the average hummingbird found in North America tips the scales at around three grams and its brain only makes up about 4% of its body weight. That means that their BB sized brain weighs in at a very minuscule 0.12 grams!

So, with such a tiny amount of brain power, just how do they remember a thousand mile migration route that ends up at the same exact nectar feeder they used last year? It's a truly amazing feat! Especially when you consider that the human brain weighs in at a whopping 1350 grams and some of us (who will remain nameless) always seem to have trouble remembering even the simplest things...like the recipe for hummingbird nectar! Is it a 6:1 ratio or 4:1? Is the 4 the sugar part or is it the water portion?

Well, it's important to remember that the simple recipe for hummingbird nectar is the 4:1 ratio - 4 parts water to 1 part white table sugar. This concentration has proven safe and attractive to hummingbirds for decades and closely mimics the average concentration (20%) of the natural flower nectar on which hummingbirds feed.

Hummingbird nectar should always be made from simple table sugar (sucrose) as it is the closest possible duplicate of natural flower nectar. Sugar alternatives such as honey, artificial sweeteners, raw sugar, organic sugar, brown sugar or additives such as preservatives and red dyes should not be used as they can potentially be harmful to

hummingbirds.

Be sure to visit us soon and we can help you with the simplest way to make pure nectar for your hummingbirds by using our WBU Nectar. You will never have to worry about remembering the recipe again!

Jacque Lowery, Manager  
Wild Birds Unlimited Nature Shops at Moana



May Specials - Just in time for Mother's Day!

- Save \$5.00 to \$10.00 on EcoClean Feeders (no bleach needed)
- Save \$10 on APS Basic Set-up (superior feeder support system)

Offers end May 15, 2012. Cannot be combined with other offers.

- Bungalow Seed Cake and Feeder \$7.99 (Reg.\$11.98 - - while supplies last)
- [45th Anniversary Sale continues at Moana Nursery ... see it here.](#)

## May Bird of the Month - Rufous Hummingbird

The Rufous is the feistiest hummingbird in North America. The brilliant orange male and the green-and-orange female Rufous Hummingbird are relentless attackers at flowers and feeders. Rufous Hummingbirds are wide-ranging, and breed farther north than any other hummingbird.

### Fun Facts:

- Rufous is a fairly small hummingbird with a slender, nearly straight bill, a tail that tapers to a point when folded, and fairly short wings that don't reach the end of the tail when the bird is perched.
- They have the hummingbird gift for fast, darting flight and pinpoint maneuverability. Like other hummers, they eat insects as well as nectar, taking them from spider webs or catching them in midair.
- Rufous Hummingbirds breed in open areas, yards, parks, and forests up to treeline. On migration they pass through mountain meadows as high as 12,600 feet where nectar-rich, tubular flowers are blooming.



For more bird of the month information, visit our local WBU website by clicking [here](#).

## Hummingbirds, Orioles, Tanagers Oh My!

Cool Bird Alert! Entice hummingbirds, orioles and tanagers with the right foods. The secret to success is having the foods they want available and ready before they arrive.

### Hummingbirds

Hummingbirds are most easily attracted to nectar feeders. Be sure to have nectar feeders out and ready as they are migrating through to their summer breeding grounds.

Hummingbirds remember feeders from last year and will visit those same spots to see if the nectar is available. They will also check out new locations; especially, if the feeders have some red coloration on them. Hummingbirds learn that many red flowers provide quality nectar sources and then show a tendency to check out red colors while foraging.

Residential hummingbirds, the ones that stay in our area to raise families, are more likely to visit feeders



on a regular basis if the feeders are available when they move in. Also, place multiple feeders



around your yard to make it more difficult for one hummingbird to claim and protect your feeders.

## Orioles

Orioles are nectar, fruit and insect eaters. While in their tropical winter habitats, Baltimore and Bullock's Orioles feed on nectar from numerous flowering trees, which explains their attraction to nectar feeders upon their spring-time return to North America.

They usually stay hidden in the trees eating and singing their beautiful whistling notes. They can be drawn down from their perches with foods like nectar, grape jelly, orange slices, mealworms and Jim's Birdacious® Bark Butter®.



## Tanagers

Sightings of tanagers are on the rise, including Summer, Scarlet and Western Tanagers. Like orioles, tanagers tend to hide in the trees and are partial to foods like suet, Bark Butter, fruit and jelly.

## Local Bird Sightings by Jacque Lowery

Spring bird migration is in full swing! People are reporting migrating warblers and tanagers. And many of our summer residents are arriving in areas from Fallon to Carson to the Truckee Meadows. Western Kingbirds have been seen in the north valleys; Bullock's Orioles (males at this time) have been heard singing in several places including my back yard; Black-chinned Hummingbirds are starting to drift in, also. It is definitely time to put



out hummingbird feeders. If you live in a mature neighborhood with cottonwood trees, an oriole feeder might be successful, as orioles will drink nectar and like grape jelly. Also, they seem to prefer cottonwood trees for nesting sites.



We can't ignore our resident birds during this exciting time of year. How many of you are being awakened I-o-ong before daylight by an American Robin's insistent "cheer-up cheerily, cheer-up, cheerily". It just wouldn't be Spring without our elegant Robins. Mourning Doves can be seen chasing around almost every yard, and some are already sitting on their messy little nests. Male House Finch and Lesser Goldfinch seem to sing non-stop all day long, starting very early in the morning, also. I know of at least one House Finch nest with babies already this spring.

Perhaps the most frequent bird-noise complaint right now is woodpecker "drumming". Woodpeckers like to announce their territory and availability to the lady woodpeckers by drumming on anything that will make a lot of noise. For some of you that is the side of your house, your metal furnace flue, a fence post or power pole. In some cases they may peck at the wood on your house thinking insects are present, or because it looks like a good place to excavate a nesting cavity. To deter these behaviors you can try spraying him with water from a garden hose, hanging aluminum foil strips from the area, or covering the area with screen material.

This is a great time of year to see amazing, colorful birds; observe nest building activity; observe courtship behavior; and so much more. Remember a reliable source of water for your yard and consider food that contains more calcium for stronger eggs. And, as always, keep your eyes and ears open for the unexpected in your backyard.

## Upcoming Nature Events

- \* May 5: Full Moon, May 20: New Moon
- \* May 5 - 6: Eta Aquarids meteor shower
- \* May 12: International Migratory Bird Day
- \* Big Brown Bats might be seen swooping at dusk to eat flying insects.
- \* Fishing season begins in earnest with Rainbow and Green-Backed Cutthroat Trout filling lakes and rivers.
- \* Dawn Chorus: It's a most delightful avian chorus as males sing their finest to start the nesting cycle.
- \* Male Western Tanagers arrive and are often seen traveling in pairs.
- \* Warblers, kingbirds, mockingbirds, swifts delay their arrival until abundant flying insects are available.
- \* Spotted Towhees will sing from dawn to dusk in search of a mate.
- \* Hummingbirds arrive. Be sure to have their feeders up early in the month.
- \* Peak of warbler migration happens early in month.
- \* Hermit Thrush, and Black-headed Grosbeaks return.
- \* Grackles return north.
- \* Peak of bird courtship. Listen for the morning chorus.
- \* Nesting materials are being collected.
- \* Orioles return and begin nesting. Be sure to have their feeders, nectar, fruit and jelly out early.
- \* Beaver kits and skunk litters are born.
- \* Woodhouse's, Western and Great Plains Toads start singing.
- \* Be on the lookout for tadpoles in ponds.

## Lahontan Audubon Society Upcoming Field Trips and Meetings Events

Monthly Meetings are held every fourth Tuesday, August through May, 6:30 p.m. (social) 7:00 p.m. - meeting begins. Monthly meetings are held at the Moana Nursery Landscape and Design Center, 1100 West Moana Lane, in Reno. Moana Nursery is on the southwest corner of Lakeside Drive and West Moana Lane; the Landscape and Design Center is a separate building, located on the west side of the parking lot (not in the nursery shop itself). We look forward to seeing you there!

- [May 22, 2012 - Sharon Schafer - The Art of Nature: Images from the Wildlands of Southern Nevada](#)

## Field Trips

- [Sunday, May 6, 2012 - McCarran Ranch, Truckee River](#)
- [Friday-Sunday, May 18-20, 2012 - Spring Wings Bird Festival, Fallon](#)

For more information on the Lahontan Audubon Society, [click here.](#)

## Birds of the Truckee Meadows 2012

LAS will present the popular bird identification classes, Birds of the Truckee Meadows, again this year, starting May 2. This is an excellent opportunity for new birders to learn from some of the area's experts and a great refresher for seasoned birders.

The classes will be held at the Girl Scout Building, 605 Washington Street, in Reno, on Wednesday evenings from 7:00-9:00 p.m. The cost is \$40 for all five classes or \$10 per single class (payable at the door, please arrive early to pay).

- May 2, 2012 - Introduction to Birding, Dave Jickling
- No class on May 9
- May 16, 2012 - Birds of Prey, Bob Goodman
- May 23, 2012 - Birds of Lakes and Marshes, Larry Neel
- May 30, 2012 - Neighborhood Birds, Alan Gubanich
- June 6, 2012 - Mountain Birds, Jim Eidel

For more information or to register in advance, please contact Jane Burnham, telephone 775-677-4178, email: [jane.burnham@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jane.burnham@sbcglobal.net).

For more information on the Lahontan Audubon Society, [click here](#).

## Animal Ark Upcoming Events

### Piñatas & Predators

Saturday, May 5

10:30 am - 3:00 pm

Come watch the fun as our predators break open their treat-filled piñatas! Great photo opportunities! We invite you to come Saturday, April 28th, and help make the piñatas.

### Cheetah "500"

Sunday, May 27

5:30 pm

Reservations required due to limited seating. RSVP: 1-775- 970-3431

Prices for this special evening event: Adults \$40; Seniors \$35; Children (10-16 years old) \$30.

May 27th is the day for the Indianapolis 500 and the Cheetah 500! Come see the world's fastest land mammal in action as our cheetahs run at top speeds - completely off-leash - around the Animal Ark cheetah field! Children must be at least 10 years old.

[For more information about Animal Ark click here.](#)



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Moana Nursery | 1100 W. Moana Lane | 11301 S. Virginia St. | Reno | NV | 89509