

Migratory birds flocking to Tahoe basin



A female downy woodpecker does not need a wide branch to hang on to. Photo/Dale Roberts

By Dale Roberts

STATELINE – For those who love Tahoe for its wildlife and natural grandeur, the Tahoe Institute for Natural Sciences has something for everyone whether they are just learning about the wildflowers surrounding their campsite to the serious student of ornithology.



Charles Hopkins from Maryland confirming a bird identification. Photo/Dale Roberts

The Tahoe Institute For Natural Sciences (TINS) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to bringing world-class interpretive studies and education to the Tahoe area. Its staff is comprised of individuals who are widely recognized as experts in their fields, and has a volunteer staff that draws from various naturalists and environmental scientists that live in the Tahoe area.

Last weekend TINS offered two bird watching walks focusing on the migratory birds of the Tahoe basin. There was also a focus on the various bird songs to help people locate and identify the various birds in their habitats.



Western gulls are a common migratory bird in the Tahoe basin. Photo/Dale Roberts

Saturday's walk at Spooner Summit was led by founding member Kirk Hardie and assisted by Rich Chambers. Sunday's walk was at Rabe Meadows off of Kahle Drive in Stateline, and was led by Chambers and assisted by staff member Michelle Witte.



Birds were not the only animals out – a praying mantis tries to blend in.
Photo/Dale Roberts

In all, approximately 40 species of birds were identified in several habitats in both locations. Between sightings the leaders pointed out various flowers, trees and animals seen along the way. With their depth of knowledge of the area's ecosystems, they were able to answer practically any question a participant may have had relating to the natural sciences.

Most events TINS sponsors are free and are ideal for families. Group sizes are kept small to maximize the learning experience.