

# AT A GLANCE

## SIHD board vacancy

**LONE PINE** – This notice is to announce a vacancy on the Southern Inyo Healthcare District Board of Directors. The District is accepting letters of interest (include qualifications) to fill the seat of Richard Fedchenko, which became vacant on Aug. 1. The successful person will serve in this position until the next general district election.

The deadline to submit the letter of interest is Aug. 15. Letters of interest may be delivered to Maritza Perkins, in person at 501 E. Locust Ave. Lone Pine, CA 93545, or by email at mperkins@sihd.org.

For further information on this position, please contact Maritza Perkins at (760) 876-5501 ext. 2210.

## Road closures

**BISHOP** – The Inyo County Road Department will be replacing a culvert on Poleta Road (also known as East Line Street) at the Rawson Canal. There will be a road closure in place from Sept. 3 through Oct. 31, starting just east of the cemetery and continuing east for approximately 1,500 feet. Detours are available via Warm Springs Road or Laws-Poleta Road.

## Train rides at Laws

**BISHOP** – The Death Valley Rail Road No. 5 Brill Car will be operating between 10:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. for rides through the museum grounds Saturday, Aug. 17. Families are invited to come ride the train before school starts for the fall. Tickets are \$5 per person, children younger than 13 ride free when accompanied by an adult.

Labor Day weekend, Aug. 31 through Sept. 1, will be the final weekend for train rides until Thanksgiving and the Railroad Express with Santa on Dec. 14.

For more information, contact the museum at (760) 873-5950.

## Buffet Tribute Band

**BISHOP** – Adventures in Parrottise, a Jimmy Buffet tribute band will be performing a free concert from 6 - 8:30 p.m. today on the Berger Solor Electric Stage at the Tri-County Fairgrounds and Event Center in Bishop. Bring a lawn chair. Beer and margaritas will be available for purchase.

## VFW breakfast

**BISHOP** – The VFW Auxiliary Post 8988 will be serving breakfast from 9 - 11 a.m. Sunday, Aug. 11, at 484 Short St.

The menu includes french toast, eggs to order, big link sausage, fruit, juice, tea, coffee and hot chocolate for a \$9 donation. Children 12 and younger eat for half price. Open to the public. Call (760) 920-0106 or (760) 873-5770 for more information. Free delivery is available.

## City council

**BISHOP** – The Bishop City Council will meet at 6 p.m. Monday in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 301 W. Line St. The meeting will be streamed live on Channel 12 or online at cityofbishop.com.

## Co-ed soccer

**BISHOP** – The city of Bishop will be hosting the 2019 fall adult co-ed soccer league, games will be on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday nights starting Sept. 6.

The league will be accepting the first 11 teams to register. The league is coed 11 on 11 with a minimum of 5 women on the playing field at all times. Registration is online at cityofbishop.com, registration and team fees are due Aug. 23.

For more information, call (760) 873-5863.

## LIVING WITH WILDLIFE

# What makes a bird a bird

By Cindy Kamler



CINDY KAMLER  
GUEST COLUMNIST

Yes, all birds lay eggs as do many other creatures as a means of reproduction. We want to take a close look at bird egg-laying. There are 10,000 unique bird species. In addition to laying eggs, they share many other features: a backbone, part of a skeletal structure filled with hollows, gaps, and air sacs so they can fly more efficiently; feathers (including down), that serve as body insulation; and wings (whether they can fly or not). Even flightless birds have vestigial or adapted wings or flippers they may use for swimming, threat displays, or courtship dances. All birds have bills: a bony, keratin-covered projection forming their mouth; are warm-blooded and have a high, efficient metabolism that quickly turns food into usable energy. All birds have two legs (bi-pedal) for perching, walking, hopping, or running and a furcula (wishbone) that protects the chest cavity during wing beats. Birds have highly developed communication skills. They communicate vocally through elaborate songs and calls and may use non-verbal sounds (and gestures) for courtship, territorial defense, parent-chick recognition, and community cooperation. All birds have keen navigation. For migrating species, their skills allow them to make journeys of hundreds or thousands of miles through highly variable climate and geographical conditions, yet arrive at the same places year after year. Non-migratory birds also use their navigation skills to visit the same food sources or nesting sites without difficulty.

Egg-laying (reproductive cycle): All birds reproduce by laying eggs. Eggs have a hard shell and require incubation to continue development until hatching. Nature has created variations on this reproductive activity, which means that offspring develop in different ways (precocial or altricial). As wildlife rehabilitators, it is critical to know and understand these differences.

Altricial bird species are most common. The newly-hatched young are relatively immobile, have

little or no down, are not able to obtain food on their own, and must be cared for by adults; closed eyes are common, though not ubiquitous. Altricial young are born helpless and require care for a length of time. Among birds, these include herons, hawks, woodpeckers, owls, cuckoos and most passerines (song-birds). Passerines are the largest group of birds.

Precocial babies are less common. Young are hatched with eyes open, covered with down, and leave the nest within two days or less. In North American birds the following levels of precociality are found. (One form is found only in Australia.) Precocial two is found in ducklings (our local Mallards are a good example) and the chicks of shorebirds; they follow their parents but find their own food. Precocial three: The young of game birds (like our local California Quail) trail after their parents and are shown food. Precocial four is represented by the young of most rails and grebes; they follow their parents and are not just shown food but are actually fed by them. Semi-precocial: They are hatched with eyes open, covered with down, capable of leaving the nest soon after hatching (they can walk and often swim), but stay at the nest and are fed by parents. This pattern includes the young of gulls and terns and the Sora hatchling we successfully raised a few years ago.

Two relatively common precocial babies we see are Mallards and Quail (California). The female Mallard lays about a dozen eggs and incubates them on the ground. The ducklings all hatch within a short peri-



A baby bird begins learning how to feed itself while at the Eastern Sierra Wildcare rehabilitation facility.

Photo courtesy Eastern Sierra Wildcare

od of time and are up and ready to go. Mom's goal is to lead her babies to water as soon as possible. She does not feed them; they must obtain nutrition from the water by sifting it through their tiny beaks.

This season, many mothers sited their nests an unusually long way from water. This hazardous challenge too often called for traveling across roads and through fences. Babies became separated, mothers were hit by cars, the water source had dried up. Single ducklings or larger groups were rescued and admitted to Wildcare.

We know that the little ones must learn to feed themselves immediately (remember, the mothers do not feed them). We place them in a small container of water in which to trigger their instinct to sift; chick starter is sprinkled lightly to provide the nutrients. A mother ducklings job consists mostly of keeping the babies together, helping them to find food/water, and keeping them warm by letting them snuggle into her feathered body. We provide a heating pad and a feather duster.

Food is presented to resemble the natural feeding method.

Female Quail lay eggs in a ground nest, too, about a dozen. Two females sometimes lay eggs in one nest. Incubation is by female only for 21-24 days. Downy young leave their nest soon after hatching and follow their parents. Both parents tend young and lead them to food sources, but young feed them-

selves. While not having such a critical goal as the mallard, quail parents do move with the babies to avoid predators and teach the chicks what to eat and where to find it. Even with two guardians, the group can be disturbed by predators, dogs and cats, roads, etc. Sometimes, one or more of the young fall into holes or crevices and are left behind. Upon arrival at the Center after rescue, a feather duster and heating pad help keep the babies feeling warm and secure. Appropriate foods (chick starter, fish pellets, small mealworms) are spread on the "ground" and a human finger tap taps to indicate the presence of food. The instinct to peck is very strong.

Altricial babies come in smaller groups (2-6) than the precocial. Nests are built by the parents; there is a wide variety of nest designs and locations. Orioles weave a pendulous nest of grasses; most woodpeckers nest in hollows in trees, snags or buildings. Often, but not always, both parents will help incubate the eggs and later, keep the young warm. Hatchlings may be without any down or feathers; others can have fairly thick down. Babies beg for food by lifting their heads on spindly necks and opening their beaks wide. Parents place food into the opening. The variety of foods reflects the variety of bird species, but in most cases, the food is insect matter (protein) of some kind. Unable to gather a variety of insects, Wildcare caregivers, place a specially-made formula in that

open mouth, alternating with mealworms and waxworms. Nests are chosen to simulate natural nests for the particular species; mirrors are provided for single babies so their reflection can keep them company.

Mother Nature has created a fabulous array of creatures called Birds to play a part in the health and development of her environment while giving us humans the gift of feathered and aerial beauty to embellish our skies, waters and landscapes. While their complexity makes caring for the orphaned and injured Aves (birds) a challenge, it also teaches us much about the miracle of creation.

*(Living with Wildlife is a program of Wildcare Eastern Sierra (formerly Eastern Sierra Wildlife Care) dedicated to helping the people of the Eastern Sierra live in harmony with our wild neighbors. For further information, contact Executive Director Cindy Kamler at (760) 872-1487.)*



In the wild, parent birds teach their babies how to find food, or they bring food to their nest.

Photo courtesy Eastern Sierra Wildcare

# BREASTMILK!

## Nature's 1st Immunizations

### August Breastfeeding Awareness Month 2019



Irene J. Mason, MS, RD, IBCLC  
&  
Kendra Turner, WNA, CLC



760-872-3707  
WIC is an Equal Opportunity Institution



- Back, Neck & Joint Pain Relief
- Headache Relief
- Allergy Relief
- Affordable X-Rays

MWF 7:45-5:15  
CALL  
DR. SCHMIDT, D.C.  
760-873-7178

389 N. Main St. Stc. C  
Bishop, CA 93514  
www.bishopchiropractic.com



"Your word of mouth is our answer to serving the HEARING IMPAIRED in the OWENS VALLEY FOR OVER 30 YEARS!"

**WE SAY THANK YOU!**  
Better Hearing Through Professional Care

308 West Line St., Suite 10,  
Bishop CA 93514,  
Across Street from City Hall  
760-873-4658