

The Pygmy Owl

Volume 24
Issue 2
October 2016

The Newsletter of the
Spokane Audubon Society



Birding Mt. Spokane

Ron Dexter and Cris Currie will both address the members for our November program. Ron Dexter is a long-time SAS member and served on the Board of Directors for 4 years. He will talk briefly about years of birding on Mt. Spokane. He walked all of the trails in the summertime and snowshoed them in the winter. Ron kept records of birds on all of his hikes. He has published that birdlist specifying which birds breed in the Park.

Ron will then introduce Cris Currie who asked Ron to include his birdlist and some bird photographs in his new guide book for the mountain.

Cris M. Currie will present his user's guide to Mt. Spokane State Park. The 150 page book, published in 2015

by Gray Dog Press, covers the natural and cultural history of the park along with detailed maps and trail descriptions. Cris was the founding and only chair of the Mt. Spokane State Park Advisory Committee and has been the president of the Friends of Mt. Spokane State Park since 1998. He has volunteered thousands of hours on behalf of Mt. Spokane, and whatever questions you might have about the park, he can probably answer. He has a B.A. in biology, a B.S. in nursing, and an M.A. in conflict resolution and has worked as both a nurse and a mediator.

Cris will bring copies of his non-profit pocket book to sell (\$15.00) and autograph, if requested.



Ron Dexter



Cris M. Currie

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Volume 23, Issue 12 ~ October 2016

The Pygmy Owl, the newsletter of the Spokane Audubon Society, is published monthly, September through June.

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Owl illustrations on pg. 1 and pg. 8 © Jan Reynolds.



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Scissor-tailed Flycatcher

Cornell Lab of Ornithology

This rare bird was sighted in Othello on August 10th of this year. Scissor-tailed Flycatchers breed in open habitats in the southern Great Plains and south Texas, especially around scattered trees or utility lines. They tolerate human presence well and frequently breed in towns.

An elegant gray and salmon-pink flycatcher festooned with an absurdly long tail, the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher is the bird to look for on fence wires in the south-central United States. They typically perch in the open, where their long, forked tails make an unmistakable silhouette. The tail proves useful as they expertly catch insects on the wing with sharp midair twists and turns. In late summer and early fall, scissor-tails gather in large, bickering flocks to migrate to Mexico and Central America.



© Christopher L. Wood

Spokane Audubon's next meeting will be:

Wednesday, October 12th at 7:30 p.m.

Deadline for November submissions
is October 21st.

Field Notes

Bird Sightings for the Inland Northwest, compiled by Jon Isacoff

Songbird and shorebird migration is winding down and (at least for me) it was lackluster! However, people as always found some good stuff. The definite high-light was rare Eastern WA SCISSOR-TAILED FLY-CATCHER. Soon hundreds of thousands of waterfowl will descend upon us. Look for saltwater ducks and rare loons among them. And may fall be sunny and mild! Especially rare species are in caps.

Greater White-fronted Goose: Cow Lake (9/2-TL); Boundary Creek (9/3-CL); Sprague (9/10-NT)

Great Egret (locally rare): Colville (8/20-MaB); Paradise Creek (8/26-TG); Moscow (9/1-TG)

Northern Goshawk: Wallace (8/24-JT)

Black-bellied Plover: Othello (8/18-BT); County Line (8/31-KB); Cow Lake (9/2-TL); Clark Fork (9/4-RDC); Sheep Lake (9/13-JI)

PACIFIC GOLDEN PLOVER: Potholes Reservoir (8/18-BL and BT)

American Golden Plover:

Sanderling: Sheep Lake (8/27-CS and 9/10-RJB) Dworshak Reservoir (9/2-CS)

Mew Gull: Sandpoint (9/3-CL)

Sabine's Gull: Soap Lake (9/2-MY)

Common Tern: Potholes Reservoir (8/17-BL and BT); Soap Lake (9/7-MY); Eloika Lake (9/7-TL); Sandpoint (9/8-TL and JP); Sprague (9/15-TL)

Lewis's Woodpecker: Gold Creek (9/1-CS); Rose lake (9/1-SS); Post Falls (9/3-SJ)

Hairy Woodpecker (locally rare): Washtucna (9/2-TL)

American Three-toed Woodpecker: Salmo Pass (8/17-CH)

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER: Othello (8/10-JoP)

Blue Jay: Coeur D'Alene (9/1-MS); Morton Slough (9/3-CL); Colburn (9/3-RDC); Harrison (9/4-KD)

Lapland Longspur: Sheep Lake (9/13-JI)

Black-throated Gray Warbler: Sentinel Bluffs (8/28-BW)

Fox Sparrow: Banks Lake (8/27-MY); Kamiak Butte (8/30-MC)

Golden-crowned Sparrow: Cusick (9/3-TL); Soap Lake (9/13-MY)

White-winged Crossbill: Salmo Mountain (8/21-MaB); Upper Priest Lake (9/5-CL)

Lesser Goldfinch: Washtucna (8/20-RS); De Smet (8/28-CL)

Observers: DB-Don Baker; MB-Missy Baker; RB-R.J. Baltierra; MaB-Matt Bartels; TB- KB-Kyle Bren; BB-Ben Bright; Janet Callen (JC); MaC-Marlene Cashen; MC-Mike Clarke; WC-Warren Current; KD-Kirsten Dahl; RDC-Rich Del Carlo; MD-Mike Denny; MLD-MerryLynn Denny; KD-Kas Dumroese; PE-Patrick Ellsworth; GF-Greg Falco; BF-Bob Flores; MF-Marian Frobe; RF-Russell Frobe; TG-Terry Gray; JH-John Hanna; LH-Lisa Hardy; FH-Fran Haywood; CH-Chazz Hesselein; BH-Bettie Hoff; RH-Ray Hoff; DH-Dave Holick; JI-Jon Isacoff; SJ-Steve Joyce; BK-Bob Kemp; RK-Russ Koppendrayner; DK-David Kreft; BL-Bruce Labar; CL-Christopher Lindsey; JL-Joshua Little; TL-Terry Little; TL-Thomas Light; CL-Carl Lundblad; CM-Cindy McCormack; AM-Alan McCoy; EM-Eliot Miller; WN-Walker Noe; PO-Peter Olsoy; TO-Tim O'Brien; JP-Jonathan Pafford; JoP-John Poshook JR-Jethro Runco; SS-Sandy Schreven; HS-Herman Schreven; RS-Ryan Shaw; MS-Mark Stromberg; SS-Shirley Sturts; CS-Charles Swift; RT-Rick Taylor; JT-Jan Thom; NT-Norma Trefry; BT-Bill Tweit; BW-Brad Waggoner; TW-TC Walker; DW-Doug Ward; MY-Matt Yawney; WY-Will Young

Wildlife Areas

Kim Thorne

In late May, I had the good fortune of representing the Fish and Wildlife Commission at the dedication celebration of the 4-O Ranch Wildlife Area in Asotin County.

The Washington Fish and Wildlife Department's (WDFW) newest wildlife area, the breathtakingly beautiful 10,500-acre 4-O Ranch was purchased from Milton Odom II in five phases with grants from the state's Recreation and Conservation Office and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Its slopes and ridges overlook the Grand Ronde River and harbor game species, such as mule deer, elk and bighorn sheep; important fish species including redband trout, steelhead and salmon in the drainages; and many state wildlife species of concern.

The dedication brought in neighbors, legislators, county commissioners, Nez Perce tribal representatives, federal and state agencies staff members, wildlife and fishing organizations members, and birders. None beamed more than Mr. Odom who learned a lot about state bureaucracy as he transferred his family's more than 60-year legacy of stewardship into the enduring hands of state conservation.

The 4-O Ranch will remain a working ranch but will continue in the gentle tradition of the Odom family who always shared the land with fish and wildlife. As part of the state's inventory of public lands, the 4-O Ranch is now available to all of us who enjoy fish, wildlife and scenic beauty. Before the official event, I birded along Grand Ronde River WDFW access sites



Yellow Breasted Chat

up the Cougar Creek drainage and racked up nearly 40 species of mostly breeding song birds. Yellow-breasted chats were abundantly chattering in the riparian areas and halfway up, I met WDFW District Biologist Paul Wick counting chicks in a golden eagle nest.

WDFW wildlife areas receive less fanfare than federal public lands managed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the National Forest Service, and the National Parks Service. The Department owns more than 30 wildlife areas, including the oldest purchased in 1939, Sinlahekin Wildlife Area in the Okanogan. Closer to home,

the Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area in Lincoln County protects nearly 21,000 acres of almost virgin sage-steppe for many of the state's priority wildlife species, including Columbian sharp-tailed grouse and greater sage-grouse. The Reardan Audubon Lake Wildlife Area provides important breeding and stop-over habitat for resident and migratory waterfowl and shorebirds.

As our state's population grows, WDFW wildlife areas become increasingly important for the protection of vulnerable habitats for fish and wildlife and for providing public access for the enjoyment of our valuable natural resources. Each wildlife area is managed differently in terms of allowable activities. There is a public process for the development of management plans that allows stakeholder input on how to best meet conservation goals while maximizing access. Discovery Passes are required for wildlife areas entry.

While not as visible as federal public lands, our WDFW wildlife areas face the same kind of opposition that was represented by the occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge earlier this year. The Department has a process for identifying potential lands for purchase for fish and wildlife conservation. It begins with a willing seller. However, the sale is often opposed by local politicians and neighbors who feel threatened by the loss of property tax payments and a traditional way of life. The Department provides some counties with state lands payment-in-lieu-of-taxes (PILT) but the rate was frozen by the legislature in 2008 during the Great Recession so counties are losing money. The WDFW is seeking legislation to increase the PILT rate.

We birders and wildlife conservationists need to be knowledgeable about the WDFW wildlife areas. Be involved stakeholders in management planning. Use them. Advocate for them. It is our public lands that will ensure our natural resources remain healthy into the future.



F-O Ranch

photo by Bob Dice, Manager Asotin NWR

State Fears Extinction of Marbled Murrelets

by Maria M. Ruth

The past decades have not been kind to the Marbled Murrelet. Across its range, from Alaska south to central California, this imperiled seabird has suffered severe population declines—primarily from the loss and fragmentation of the forests where it nests, but also from predation, oil spills at sea, net fishing, and depletion of the small fish it feeds on.

The situation is so dire in Washington, that the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW) has recommended elevating the protective status of marbled murrelets from threatened to endangered. Between 2001 and 2015, Washington's murrelet population numbers dropped 44 percent. Wildlife biologists believe the marbled murrelet could become extirpated in the state within the next several decades if solutions aren't found to address threats to this species.

The WDFW is seeking public comment on their uplisting recommendation. Deadline for comment is October 10. Please see information below on how to submit your comments and participate in this critical conservation action.

The WDFW uplisting recommendations and draft status review are available online at http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/endangered/status_review/. Comments on the reviews and recommendations can be submitted by October 10, via email to TandEpubliccom@dfw.wa.gov or by mail to Hannah Anderson, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, 600 Capitol Way N., Olympia, WA 98501-1091.

WDFW staff members are tentatively scheduled to discuss the reviews and recommendations with the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission at its November 2016 meeting in Olympia. (Meeting dates and times were not confirmed at The Echo press time; please go to <http://wdfw.wa.gov/commission/> for this information.



Inland Northwest Land Conservancy Event

by Kim Reasoner

HOST..... Inland Northwest Land Conservancy

GUIDES..... Bea and Jim Harrison

DATES..... October 29, 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. Fall Migration-Light walk

PLACE..... 52975 Bisson Road Reardan, WA

SUITABILITY..... Children are welcome. No pets please. The terrain is unstable with no established paths, so proper shoe attire is required. Please dress for weather conditions.

BRING..... Insect repellent

FEE..... Open to the public

Deep Creek Preserve is Inland Northwest Land Conservancy's prime bird migration land, located near Reardan, Washington. Covering a total of 150 acres of land, Deep Creek Preserve is adjacent to the 277 acres of Audubon Lake Wildlife Area. The Deep Creek Preserve is the perfect location to view over 200 kinds of birds and other wetland associated species. Starting at Bisson Road, we will be joined by Bea and Jim Harrison for a guided walking tour to view the migratory birds and waterfowl, as well as to admire the surrounding landscape. The terrain on this two hour walking tour is uneven, so please wear appropriate walking boots or shoes, and dress appropriately for the weather. If you have an extra spotting scope or binoculars, please bring them along. This walk is ideal for those who want to learn more about the Deep Creek Preserve, those who want to gain insight into migratory birds, and for those who would enjoy sharing their knowledge of waterfowl and what they bring to our region.

Kim Reasoner

Inland Northwest Land Conservancy

Director of Strategic Community Outreach

509-868-6972 (c)

509-328-2939 (o)



Project FeederWatch is a winter-long survey of birds that visit feeders at backyards, nature centers, community areas, and other locales in North America. FeederWatchers periodically count the birds they see at their feeders from November through early April and send their counts to Project FeederWatch. Feeder-Watch data help scientists track broadscale movements of winter bird populations and long-term trends in bird distribution and abundance.

Anyone interested in birds can participate. FeederWatch is conducted by people of all skill levels and backgrounds, including children, families, individuals, classrooms, retired persons, youth groups, nature centers, and bird clubs. You can count birds as often as every week, or as infrequently as you like: the schedule is completely flexible. All you need is a bird feeder, bird bath, or plantings that attract birds.

New participants are sent a Research Kit with complete instructions for participating, as well as a bird identification poster and more. You provide the feeder(s) and seed. Then each fall participants receive our 16-page, year-end report, Winter Bird Highlights. Participants also receive access to the digital version of Living Bird, the Cornell Lab's award-winning, quarterly magazine.

There is a \$18 annual participation fee for U.S. residents (\$15 for Cornell Lab members). Canadians can participate by joining Bird Studies Canada for CAN\$35. The participation fee covers materials, staff support, web design, data analysis, and the year-end report (Winter Bird Highlights). Project FeederWatch is supported almost entirely by participation fees. Without the support of our participants, this project wouldn't be possible.



SEED: THE UNTOLD STORY

Fri Oct 7, 7:00 Pm
Bing Crosby Theater, 901 W. Sprague Ave.
Spokane

In the last century, 94% of our seed varieties have disappeared. As biotech chemical companies control the majority of seeds, farmers, scientists, lawyers and indigenous seed keepers fight a David and Goliath battle to defend the future of our food. This fascinating feature-length documentary follows passionate seed keepers protecting our 12,000-year old food legacy, while also examining issues surrounding the loss of seed diversity, climate change, pesticides, GMO labeling and the patenting and corporate takeover of seeds and food.

Produced by Marisa Tomei's Seneca Falls Picture House, Marc Turtletaub (Little Miss Sunshine) and Phil Fairclough (Grizzly Man, Cave of Forgotten Dreams), SEED is a Collective Eye Films production. A non-profit media organization based in Portland and San Francisco, Collective Eye Films is an educational film distribution and production company that presents compelling documentaries exploring the untold stories of our time.

Inland Northwest Land Conservancy is delighted to bring this unique showing to the historical Bing Crosby Theater in downtown Spokane. It is a natural extension of our work to inspire our community members to be informed about their environment and how it affects their overall health.

All ages welcome for this fun family event.
Doors open at 6:00 PM for 7:00 PM showing.
Fee: \$10 per person

Spokane Audubon at Spokane Symphony

Respighi's Pines of Rome was on the program of the Spokane Symphony for the opening concert of the season September 17 and 18. Two whistlers were invited to provide songs of local birds and the Spokane Audubon Society was invited to display some of our mounted specimens in the lobby. Tina Wynecoop, Ann Brinly and Lindell Haggin provided information about the birds and our chapter's activities. Concert-goers were impressed with the variety and beauty of the birds at both the Saturday evening and Sunday afternoon performances. A great collaboration between two organizations making Spokane a better place to live.

SAS Field Trips, October – December

October 22, 2016, Saturday
Grant County Late Fall Migrant Trip
Leader: Gary Blevins

This is a beginning, intermediate and advanced birder-oriented trip to look for specialty birds, such as Arctic Gulls, Lapland Longspurs, and other hard-to-find-and-see northern visitors. There may be some down time with little action in between bird sightings but potential for rarities is high. It is a full-day trip from sunrise to sunset. Contact Gary Blevins (533-3661 or garyb@spokanefalls.edu) by October 16 if you plan to attend.

November 19, 2016, Saturday
Douglas Plateau Northern Visitors Trip
Leader: Kim Thorburn

The Waterville Plateau is a challenging but high-quality destination for rarities during the late fall and winter months. We will work the rolling steppe of the Plateau in search of unusual raptors, owls, and passerines; we'll also bird along the Columbia River in hopes of finding rare Arctic Gulls and saltwater waterfowl, such as scoters, Long-tailed Duck, and Pacific Loon. We will spend the night of November 18 in Brewster for an earlier start with the birds during this short daylight season. Contact Kim Thorburn (465-3025 or kthorburn@msn.com) by November 14 if you plan to attend.

Note: This trip will be dependent on weather and road conditions.

Spokane Audubon Society Membership Form

Local Membership Dues:
Individual: \$20/year _____
Couple & Family: \$25/year _____
Student: \$10/year _____
Lifetime: \$300 _____
National Membership Dues: \$35/year _____
Individual + National Dues: \$55/year _____
Couple + National Dues: \$60/year _____

Your local membership provides you with *The Pygmy Owl* and supports your local chapter's many conservation and education activities. You will also be eligible for website privileges.

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____
Zip Code: _____ Phone: _____
E-mail: _____



Please make check payable to:
Spokane Audubon Society
Send this form and your check to:

Audubon Membership
Attn: Dave Plemons
1224 W. Riverside #1101
Spokane, WA 99201

Current members may renew memberships from our web site::

<http://spokaneaudubon.org>

Receiving duplicate newsletters? Errors or other changes needed on your mailing label? Contact Dave Plemons at davep_nublado@me.com, or 413-1524.



The Pygmy Owl
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To:

The Spokane Audubon Society provides resources and services to educate people about birds, wildlife, and the importance of habitats, and to advocate and support public policies and actions that conserve and restore wildlife habitats.

Visit our website: <http://spokaneaudubon.org>

December 10, 2016, Saturday
Coeur d' Alene area Eagles
Leader: TBD

This trip takes us around Beauty Bay on Lake Coeur d'Alene where the Bald Eagles feeding on spawned out salmon are always a sight to behold. Weather permitting, those interested may drive down to the Thompson Lake/ Harrison region where a variety of birds winter in a slightly warmer zone. Probable particulars: 8:00 a.m. start at Liberty Lake Albertson's parking lot.

Note: This trip will be dependent on weather and road conditions.

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