

Volume 22
Issue 4
December
2014

The Pygmy Owl

The Newsletter of the
Spokane Audubon Society



December 10th Program:
Celebrating the 115th Christmas Bird Count:
What do future CBC's hold for us?
presented by Gary Blevins



*American Robin in Winter, by Jonathan Oleyar.
Photo courtesy National Audubon Society.*

National Audubon scientists recently released *Audubon's Birds and Climate Change Report*, a massive undertaking that is the broadest and most detailed study of bird population and climate change. Audubon scientists used hundreds of thousands of citizen-science observations and sophisticated climate models to predict how birds in the U.S. and Canada will react to climate change.

The December program will use data from this recently released report to project changes in certain bird species that occur on the Spokane CBC. Historical Spokane CBC data will also be used to look for past trends in the same birds' populations.

While looking at this data we will also review how to distinguish between species that look similar. Please plan to join us for a fun evening of great bird pictures and a look into future Christmas Bird Counts.

*Spokane Audubon's December program will be held at the Riverview Retirement Community, Village Community Building
The program will begin at about 7:30 p.m., after announcements.*

**Spokane Audubon's
Christmas Gift/Swap Shop**

Do you have quality bird or nature-related items that you don't need but someone else might appreciate or use as a gift?

Bring them, along with a little cash so you can participate, to the December meeting and place on our \$1, \$3, or \$5 dollar tables.

We'll have fun, perhaps solve a shopping dilemma, and raise a little cash for our organization.

You might also bring a holiday treat to share, and...



Christmas Bird Count!

December 28, 2014, Sunday
Spokane Audubon
Christmas Bird Count

All SAS members as well as new birders are welcome to join the 115th Annual Christmas Bird Count! Please contact Alan McCoy (509-448-3123 or ahm2352@gmail.com) for information about the Spokane CBC.

Spokane Audubon Society December Field Trip

December 13, 2014, Saturday
Winter Lake and Wetbelt Trip
Leader: Joyce Alonso

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 Thompson Lake/Harrison region where a variety of birds winter in a slightly warmer zone. Probable particulars: 8:00 am start at Liberty Lake Albertson's parking lot. Contact Joyce Alonso (448-2447) by December 6 if you plan to attend.

Note: This trip will be dependent on weather and road conditions. The trip this year may include Boy Scouts working on a merit badge.

The Pygmy Owl

Volume 22, Issue 4 ~ December 2014

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

Spokane Audubon Society
P.O. Box 9820
Spokane, WA 99209-9820

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



Officers

President

Fran Haywood birders13@gmail.com

Vice President

OPEN

Treasurer

Lindell Haggin lindell4118@comcast.net

Secretary

Ed Reynolds edndaisy@aol.com

Elected Board of Directors

Joyce Alonso	jbalonso3@msn.com
Bob Cashen	mjaycashen@aol.com
Marlene Cashen	mjaycashen@aol.com
Brad Haywood	birders13@gmail.com
Gary Lee	bird_fan@aol.com
Jan Reynolds	edndaisy@aol.com

Committee Chairs

Field Trips

Jon Isacoff isacoff@gonzaga.edu

Programs

Gary Lee bird_fan@aol.com

Education

Joyce Alonso jbalonso3@msn.com
Lindell Haggin lindell4118@comcast.net

Conservation

Greg Gordon fightingbull63@gmail.com

Hospitality

Jan Strobeck jandeerpark@aol.com

Membership

Dave Plemons davep_nublado@me.com

Publication

John English jhe230@yahoo.com

Publicity

Kim Thorburn kthorburn@msn.com

Pygmy Owl

Carmen Yount carmen@floreo.com

Volunteer Coordinator

Joyce Alonso jbalonso3@msn.com

Website

Alan McCoy spokaneaudubon.org

Notes from the President

by Fran Haywood

Merry Christmas, everyone! I hope you all are planning on signing up for the Christmas Bird Count. You can join a group for any length of time, in an area close to your home, a new area you wish to explore, or just count the birds at your feeders and report to someone in your section. Check with Alan McCoy for guidance.

Audubon Washington is working on a sagebrush songbird survey. The project began last year in the Tri-Cities and will be expanding to our area in 2015. This is a program to include chapters that are not on the migration flyway routes. Lindell has agreed to chair the spring/summer sagebrush bird survey, and Gary Blevins has offered to teach identification skills. Very little is known about these birds. Volunteers will use GPS to navigate to specified points for the count and record their sightings using eBird. (eBird is a terrific tool for keeping your own lists, by the way.) More information about training and counting dates will be printed in *The Pygmy Owl* in the coming months.

In these days of limited government funding, citizen science is increasingly important, especially in light of Audubon's recent report on the potential impact of climate change on many of our native birds. Anything we can do to help will contribute toward saving birds for future generations.

Henry Van Dyke said *"Use what talents you possess; the woods would be very silent if no birds sang there except those that sang best."* There are many opportunities to get involved. Pick what works for you, what you enjoy.

Don't forget to pay attention to coal and oil trains rumbling through our area, over the sole source of our drinking water, alongside food crops, and fish streams.

Looking for a gift idea? Support Spokane Audubon and show off the work of some of our amazing photographers by purchasing 2015 SAS calendars!

January Newsletter Deadline:
Thursday, December 11th

(It's early because of Christmas!)

Please e-mail material to Carmen Yount at
carmen@floreo.com

**Field Trip Report:
Sprague Lake Birding Trip
(September 6, 2014)**

by Norma Trefry

On Sept. 6, eight people met to bird around the Sprague Lake area. We started at the Sprague Lake Cemetery. There we saw Great Horned Owl, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Red Tail Hawk, Western Meadowlarks, American Goldfinches, House Wren, Pacific Slope and Hammond's Flycatchers, and Golden-crowned Kinglet.

Our next stop was the Sprague Lake Resort. We checked the mud for shorebirds and found Killdeer, Spotted Sandpipers, Greater Yellowlegs, Great Blue Heron, and Pheasants! On the lake were White Pelicans in feeding formation, Mallards, Pied Bill Grebe, Double-crested Cormorants, and on the far shore, Forster's Terns. Overhead were Swainson's and Red Tail Hawks, and Turkey Vultures. Along the shore and in the large trees were Red-wing and Yellow-headed Blackbirds, a Belted Kingfisher, Wilson's and Yellow Warblers, Dark-eyed Juncos, and Pacific Slope Flycatchers. Along the road out were Mourning and Eurasian Collared Doves, Says Phoebe, and White-crowned Sparrows.

At the Harder boat launch a Yellow Warbler and a Bewick's Wren which sat out in the open and sang for us. As we drove along the lake, we stopped to observe many Western Grebes, Coots, Canada Geese and a Common Tern floating on the water not far from shore. Along the road we saw Savannah Sparrows, Brown-headed Cowbirds, and Brewer's Blackbirds.

We ended our trip at the Sprague Lake Sewage Treatment Ponds which had many Northern Shovelers, and a small flock of Red-necked Phalaropes.

By 2 o'clock we were on our way home after a good day of birding.

.....
Looking for a good read this winter?

***Welcome to Subirdia: Sharing our
Neighborhoods with Wrens, Robins,
Woodpeckers and Other Wildlife,***

by John M. Marzluff, with illustrations by Jack DeLap
University of Washington Wildlife Biologist John Marzluff and his teams of graduate students discovered that our backyards, as "edge" habitats, have the potential to host a wide diversity of bird life. Read about Marzluff's discoveries, and get recommendations for turning your yard into important habitat!

**Calendars make great gifts!
2015 Spokane Audubon Calendar**



Trumpeter Swan, by Harry Borland

\$10 each

Calendars are available at meetings,
by mail or through spokaneaudubon.org (using PayPal).

Shipping charges apply for all mail/online orders.

1 calendar: \$10 + \$3 s&H = \$13

2 calendars: \$20 + \$4 s&H = \$24

3 - 6 calendars: \$30 + \$7 s&H = \$37

Contact Spokane Audubon for shipping costs for 7+ calendars.

To order by mail, send check to:

Spokane Audubon Society
15418 Little Spokane Drive
Spokane, WA 99208

Make checks payable to *Spokane Audubon*.



Blue Grouse, by Tom Munson

The Joys of Bird Banding At Turnbull NWR

Text and photos by Joyce Alonso

In addition to being a wildlife sanctuary, Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge is a prime site for scientific research. Although the place is managed for wildlife of all kinds, there has been, since its designation in 1937, an emphasis on its avian population. Bluebird nest box trails are monitored weekly; Breeding Bird Surveys (point counts) are done at dawn; and waterfowl nesting efforts logged by wading observers. However, to my mind, one of the most fascinating bird-study endeavors is bird banding.



Mike Rule with a Wilson's Warbler.

On the Turnbull Refuge every summer since 1994, biologists Mike Rule and Sandy Rancourt, partnered by Audubon member/refuge volunteers Russell and Marian Frobe, and assisted at times by Mike and Sandy's daughter Rachel or other refuge staff and volunteers, have conducted a MAPS (Monitoring Avian Production & Survivorship) bird-banding program. It involves eight sessions, beginning in May, spaced about 10 days apart, through July, with more (optional) efforts in August in order to include some migrants. (There were dozens of Wilson's Warblers in the last session I attended!)

A series of nine nets is set up before dawn in thickets attractive to birds. The nets, spaced at least 50 meters apart, are placed around a large meadow. They are checked every 45 minutes for captured birds, which are untangled, placed in individual cloth bags, and brought to "the station."

There they are precisely checked to determine their age and gender, breeding status, amounts of fat and feather molt (all of which statistics are meticulously recorded.) A tiny,



Marian supervising my weighing efforts.

numbered band is fastened around a leg. Finally, they are weighed and released.

The information thus obtained is sent to the Institute for Bird Populations, a part of the Point Reyes Bird Observatory in California. The Institute came into being about 25 years ago, at first, funded by a grant, later supported by Fish and Wildlife and others. Collection of the data allows scientists to monitor for changes in annual productivity (the ratio of young to adult birds), overwinter survival by recaptures, population variations of individual species, distribution of different bird species and the avian population in general.



Russell recording all that data.

This challenging project is not for the faint of heart. First, it involves rising from a comfortable bed at "0-dark-30," setting the nets before daylight in order not to reveal their presence, slogging along a sometimes ankle-deep mud trail eight times



Mike examining a chickadee.

in a morning, and untangling captured birds without harming them. Then the above-mentioned scientific checking and measuring must be done, sometimes with magnifying head glasses, by consultation with thick books detailing every variation of size and plumage, and close attention to correct entry of every piece of information. And all of this speedily before it's time to go collect the next round!



Rachel banding a reluctant flicker.

and a Blackpoll Warbler, two years ago. Unusual catches have included a Ruffed Grouse, California Quail, and Wilson's Snipe...oh, and a moose! Being a recent, uneducated newcomer to the project, I missed those events. My two thrills were being assigned to revive an accidentally captured hummingbird (by warming him on the windshield vents in the car...he did survive!) and weighing, then releasing a Pygmy Owl, the only owl ever caught in their 20 years of banding. I was lucky enough to be there...don't know of anything much more fun!



Sandy, getting info from a bird's head.

The participants seem to enjoy the job because they keep doing it year after year. I asked Mike what the most interesting "catches" have been. For exotics, he mentioned the Golden-winged Warbler, a WA State record, banded in 2000,



Here's our mascot!

The Audubon Report: Birds & Climate Change

Half of the bird species in the continental United States and Canada are threatened by climate change. Many of these species could go extinct without decisive action to protect their habitats and reduce the severity of global warming. That's the startling conclusion reached by Audubon scientists in a new study.



The Audubon Climate Report projects a 58% loss of summer range, and a 74% loss of winter range, for the Bald Eagle. Washington state could be one of the few remaining suitable breeding areas south of Canada. Photo (from the 2014 SAS calendar) by Bob Cashen.

Of 588 bird species examined in the study, 314 are at risk. Of those, 126 species are at risk of severe declines by 2050, and an additional 188 species face the same fate by 2080, with numerous extinctions possible if climate change is allowed to erase the havens birds occupy today.

“The greatest threat our birds face today is global warming,” said Audubon Chief Scientist Gary Langham, who led the investigation. “That’s our unequivocal conclusion after seven years of painstakingly careful and thorough research. Global warming threatens the basic fabric of life on which birds—and the rest of us—depend, and we have to act quickly and decisively to avoid catastrophe for them and us.”

To understand the links between where birds live and the climatic conditions that support them, Langham and other Audubon ornithologists analyzed more than 40 years of historical North American climate data and millions of historical bird records from the U.S. Geological Survey’s North American Breeding Bird Survey and the Audubon Christmas Bird Count. Understanding those links then al-

lows scientists to project where birds are likely to be able to survive—and not survive—in the future.

The study offers an invaluable new way for Audubon to discuss and address climate change by bringing the issue into backyards and neighborhoods across America. It also reveals areas likely to remain stable for birds, even as climate changes, enabling us to identify “stronghold” areas that birds will need to survive in the future.

We need a roadmap for bird conservation in coming decades in a warming climate. The study provides a key entry point for Audubon’s greater engagement on the urgent issue of global warming. Responding to the magnitude of the threat to our birds, Audubon is greatly expanding its climate initiative, aiming to engage a larger and more diverse set of voices in support of protecting birds.

Solutions will include *personal* choices to conserve energy and create backyard bird habitat, local action to create community climate action plans, state-based work to increase rooftop solar and energy efficiency, and our work in Important Bird Areas and other efforts to protect and expand bird habitats.

Here’s what you can do to help protect our birds:

Create a bird-friendly yard: Healthy birds will be better equipped to face the challenges of climate change. Commit to creating safe spaces for birds around your home and your community by using fewer pesticides, letting dead trees stand, installing birdbaths, using native plants in existing beds and replacing some of your lawn with native plantings. Remember that public areas are also candidates for “bird-scaping.” (athome.audubon.org)

Get involved with your local Important Bird Areas: Pitch in with Audubon’s IBA program, which identifies and conserves areas vital to birds and biodiversity. Help with IBA restoration, cleanup, citizen science and field trips.

Put birds on your community’s agenda: Begin a conversation with your neighbors, colleagues and local leaders about why it’s important to protect your community’s birds. Write a letter to your local newspaper, speak at a community event, or visit a local school.

Meet with local decision makers: Share this science with state wildlife agencies, city parks departments, extension services and other groups that manage our national resources. Ask decision makers how they are planning to address it. For more information on how to help officials use and

integrate Audubon's science, e-mail
climatescience@audubon.org.

Support policies that lower emissions: Urge all leaders to enact policies to lower greenhouse gas emissions and support clean energy. Put these policies on your leaders' agendas, and publicly support efforts to make them stick.

Get involved with Spokane Audubon! Come to meetings and volunteer with us on local projects.

There is much to see, and learn from, The Audubon Report, and little of it will fit in *The Pygmy Owl*. Explore Audubon's web site for more information: climate.audubon.org.

"Bye Bye Birdie"

by Jan Strobeck

If the recent Audubon report,
Birds and Climate Change,
proves to be accurate,
these, too, may fade away . . .

"As the crow flies"

"The early bird gets the worm"

"The catbird's seat"

"Bird's eye view"

"Eats like a bird"

"Robin redbreast"

"Birds of a feather"

"Hawks and Doves"

"The bluebird of happiness"

"The birds and the bees"

(Oh, Oh, double trouble)

"Mad as a wet hen"

"A little bird told me"

"If it looks like a duck..."

"A bird in the hand..."

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
Spokane Audubon Society
 P.O. Box 9820
 Spokane, WA 99209-9820
 (509) 838-5828

Non-Profit
 Organization
 Spokane, WA
 US Postage
 PAID
 Permit No. 34

December 10th:
 Preparing for the Christmas Bird Count,
 with Gary Blevins
 7:30 p.m.

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>

Directions to the General Meeting:

*Riverview Retirement Community, Village Community Building
 2117 E. North Crescent Avenue*

To get to Riverview Retirement Community:

From West Spokane & South Hill

- I-90 East to Exit 281 toward US-2 E/US-395 N/ Newport/Colville
- Follow US-2 E/US-395 N to E. Mission Ave.
- Turn Right at E. Mission Ave.
- Turn Left at E. Upriver Drive

From Spokane Valley

- I-90 West to Exit 282A
- Follow N. Hamilton St. to E. Mission Ave.
- Turn Right at E. Mission Ave.
- Turn Left at E. Upriver Drive

From North Spokane

- Take US-395 S to E. Mission Ave.
- Turn Left at E. Mission Ave.
- Turn Left at E. Upriver Drive

Once you're on E. Upriver Drive (see map below):

- Follow E. Upriver Drive to N. Crestline Street
- Turn Left at N. Crestline Street
- Turn Right on E. North Crescent Drive
- Proceed to entry on left showing numbers 2105-2145

Limited parking is available by the Village Community Building. Overflow parking is along E. North Crescent Ave.

