

Volume 23
Issue 7
March 2016

The Pygmy Owl

The Newsletter of the
Spokane Audubon Society



March 9th Program:
Forestry is for the Birds (and other critters too),
featuring Wildlife Biologist Michael Munts



One of the primary management activities of the Little Pend Oreille National Wildlife Refuge is forest restoration. The question is, how do we manage forests for the benefit of wildlife?

Spokane Audubon's March presentation will examine the forest restoration and management practices on the little Pend Oreille National Wildlife Refuge. We will walk through the process of planning and implementing a habitat improvement project in refuge forests.

Mike, the wildlife biologist at Little Pend Oreille National Wildlife Refuge, grew up in the Idaho Panhandle and has been birding and studying birds in various parts of the Inland Northwest for more than 25 years.

Photos courtesy of Mike Munts.

*The March program will be held at the
Riverview Retirement Community, Village Community Buildin (Directions on page 8.)*

Please join us at 7 p.m. for refreshments and friendly conversation.

The program will begin at about 7:30 p.m., after announcements.

The Pygmy Owl

Volume 23, Issue 7 ~ March 2016

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

Spokane Audubon Society
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Owl illustrations on pg. 1 and pg. 8 © Jan Reynolds.



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Help Wanted: Newsletter Editor

Produce ten, 8-page newsletters per year,
September – June.

Note from the editor: I've been doing the newsletter for five years, and while I enjoy working on it, it's time for me to move on and do other things.

What, exactly, does the newsletter editor do?

Here's my checklist, but it should go without saying that every editor has his or her own ways of working, and *many of these tasks could be done differently.*

- Solicit content, a month before in newsletter; send an e-mail reminder to the board one week before the deadline.
- Collect and sort content.
- Send program information to Alan McCoy for *spokaneaudubon.org*
- Lay out content, including photos, illustrations and text. (I use Adobe InDesign CS6; previous editor used Microsoft Publisher.)
- Edit the newsletter. (An SAS proofreader is available.)
- Make edits and corrections, then convert the newsletter to PDF and send it to the printer via e-mail.
- After printing, pick up the newsletter from printer and deliver it to whomever is doing the mailing.
- Adjust photos and images in newsletter from b/w to color. Post current newsletter as a PDF on *spokaneaudubon.org*.
- Send e-mail containing newsletter to PO mailing list.

Time Commitment:

I plan to spend ~ 12 hours/month, even though it often takes me around 8 hours. (More than 12 hours is rare, but so is fewer than 8 hours.)

Constraints:

The printed newsletter must be ready two weeks before the general meeting to allow adequate time for mailing. (It takes a few days to coordinate and prep bulk mail, and 1 - 3 business days for USPS to deliver. We want the newsletter to be in people's hands at least 3 - 5 days before the meeting.)

Contact me at carmen@floreo.com if you have any questions or are interested in working on *The Pygmy Owl*.

The deadline for April's *Pygmy Owl* is

Thursday, March 24th

Please send any content to

carmen@floreo.com

Sights & Sounds

Bird Sightings for the Inland Northwest, compiled by Jon Isacoff

We're entering the late winter doldrums. Some of the exciting winter species are either departing or have already been seen many times over. Though the report is short and sweet, there are a few goodies still being discovered. Soon, spring will be on the way and with it millions of migrants. Get ready!

SNOW GOOSE: Philleo Lake (2/16-TO)

TRUMPETER SWAN: Wolf Lodge Bay (1/21-TL); Evans Campground (2/7-WC); Lake Pend Oreille (2/9-RDC)

NOTHERN GOSHAWK: Moscow (1/26-BH)

MEW GULL: Wolf Lodge Bay (1/21-TL); Farragut SP (2/2-IS)

THAYER'S GULL: Cougar Bay (1/21-TL); Heyburn SP (2/7-JI)

GLAUCOUS GULL: Heyburn SP (1/24-JI)

YELLOW-RUMPED WARLBER: Pullman (2/8-RB); Hayden (2/13-JC)

HARRIS'S SPARROW: Philleo Lake (2/7-TO)

PINE GROSBEAK: Kellogg (1/21-BK); Slavin Ranch (1/22-JI and 1/31-BS); Moscow (1/25-JW and 2/1-CLY); Mt. Spokane Foothills (1/26-TL); Little Spokane River (1/31-TO); Pullman (2/6-RB); Sandpoint (2/14-KeT); Cusick (2/25-JS)

WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL: Spokane Valley (2/2-JaP); Moscow (2/3-CS); Moscow (1/24-CL; 1/26-CLY; 2/3-CS; 2/6-PO; 2/8-JU; 2/10-BB; 2/11-JH); Spokane (2/15-MP)

COMMON REDPOLL: Little Spokane River (1/20-TL); Indian Creek Canyon (1/24-RK); Moscow (1/25-CS); Pullman (1/26-RB and 2/4-PE); Mt. Spokane Foothills (1/26-TL); West Plains (1/27-TO); Eloika Lake (1/28-TL); Pullman (2/1-RB); Rock Lake (2/6-RB); Texas Ridge (2/12-CT); Hayden (2/12-JC); Wilbur (2/15-LT)

Observers: JA-Jim Acton; DA-Dan Audet; DB-Don Baker; MB-Missy Baker; RB-R.J. Baltierra; MBa-Maria Barone; MaB-Matt Bartels; ToB-Tom Besser; TB-Tom Bragg; DB-Donna Bragg; BB-Ben Bright; Janet Callen (JC); MaC-Marlene Cashen; MC-Mike Clarke; Stacy Crist (SC); RDC-Rich Del Carlo; WC-Warren Current; KD-Kas Dumroese; PE-Patrick Ellsworth; GF-Greg Falco; RF-Rex Franklin; MF-Marian Frobe; RF-Russell Frobe; MF-Mike Fulton; JG-Joshua Glant; JH-John Hanna; LH-Lisa Hardy; FH-Fran Haywood; BH-Bettie Hoff; DH-Dave Holick; Idaho Survey (IS); MI-Michael Irving; JI-Jon Isacoff; ; CJ-Chris Jannet;

DJ-Dick Johnson; SJ-Steve Joyce; BK-Bob Kemp; RK-Russ Koppendrayer; JL-Joshua Little; TL-Terry Little; AL-Angela Lotrario; TL-Thomas Light; CL-Carl Lundblad; TM-Tom Mansfield; CM-Cindy McCormack; AM-Alan McCoy; EM-Eliot Miller; NM-Nancy Miller; WN-Walker Noe; PO-Peter Olsoy; TO-Tim O'Brien; JP-Jonathan Pafford; MP-Mary Porter; JaP-James Prudente; JR-Jethro Runco; TS-Todd Sahl; SS-Shane Sater; MS-Mike Scott; BS-Bill Siems; JS-John Stuart; CS-Charles Swift; CaT-Carol Taylor; CT-Catherine Temple; KeT-Ken Thacker; NT-Norma Trefry; KT-Kim Thorburn; LT-Lindsey Tower; JU-Josef Uyeda; DW-Doug Ward; JW-Jane Westervelt; TW-Tina Wynnecoop; MY-Matt Yawney; CLY-Claudia Lyons-Yerion; WY-Will Young

Special Event: "Think & Drink"

Wednesday, March 16th

Lindaman's Bistro

1235 S. Grand Blvd, Spokane

7:30 p.m.

On Wednesday, March 16th, Humanities Washington will sponsor a "Think & Drink" at Lindaman's Bistro. The presentation will feature a discussion about *Sage Spirit: The American West at a Crossroads*, a book by author and photographer Dave Showalter.

Showalter and Paul Lindholdt, a Spokane poet and author, will discuss the following theme:

"Although the spirit of the American West remains an ideal to our national heritage, and many places remain wild and free, for the first time in our country's short history, development has left many lands and waterways fragmented and scarred by roads, mines, diverted water, and urban development; choked by invasive species; or compromised by over-use—with land, water, and air polluted for short-term gains."

They will discuss the importance of preserving the economic livelihood and treasured lifestyles of the American West as well as preserving a priceless ecosystem.

Dave is based in Colorado and has published two books focused on the American West. Paul Lindholdt is based in Spokane. He teaches at EWU and has published a number of books including *In Earshot of Water: Notes from the Columbia Plateau*.

Crossing Paths with Washington's Wildlife: Get Nest Boxes Ready For New Occupants

WDFW Crossing Paths Newsletter, February 2016

Spring may officially be several weeks off, but now is the time to get your bird nest boxes cleaned out and ready for new, incoming occupants.

If you don't already have nest boxes up, this is the time to either build or buy and place them, following our specs at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/projects/nestboxes/index.html>

Many backyard birding enthusiasts who use nest boxes leave them up year-round and leave nesting materials in them through the winter, when some birds will use them as nighttime roost sites. However, migrating birds that use cavities for nesting, like bluebirds, swallows and wrens, will be returning next month and they prefer clean quarters to follow their instincts to build their own nests.

All nest boxes attract insects – mites, lice, fleas, flies, hornets, spiders and more. In small numbers they are relatively harmless to birds, but in larger numbers they can cause injuries and even fatalities to young birds.

Inspect all nest boxes to clean out insects and to remove the old nesting material. Although some diligent industrious birds will remove old nesting material before building their own particular nest, many more will just build on top of an old one. That kind of layering can raise the nest dangerously close to the entrance hole where predators might reach eggs or young.

Your inspection may turn up dead nestlings or infertile eggs, which of course should also be removed. Be sure to use protective gloves, maybe even a dust mask, and dispose of everything you find in nest boxes away from the site to avoid smells that can attract predators.

Nest box maintenance includes tightening screws, loosening lag bolts, unblocking drainage holes, and generally making sure everything is secure and working right.

If you find a nest box in your collection that, year after year, goes unused, consider relocating it. It might not be in the appropriate habitat or suitable height location for the species it's built for, or perhaps it's in the right place but is not built correctly. Check the entrance hole size, overall size dimensions, and other factors that are important to, and different for, various species of nest-box-using birds. Details are available at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/projects/nestboxes/index.html>

If the same nest box turns up dead nestlings or infertile eggs more than once, consider relocation to avoid competitors

or predators, or remodeling to protect the species using the box. A predator block – just a one-inch thick piece of wood drilled with the appropriate size hole – mounted over the entrance hole to create a short tunnel into the nest, can deter starlings, raccoons, or squirrels that have chewed the original hole bigger.



Western Bluebird leaving a nest box fitted with a predator block, by Kevin Cole (CC BY 2.0).

Another improvement is to remove any perch post projecting out from the front of a nest box. Our native cavity-nesting birds don't need these perches but they are used by more aggressive, non-native birds to harass nesting birds.

If you often have earlier-arriving starlings or English house sparrows dominating your nest box site, you may want to plug the entrance hole until later this spring when bluebirds or swallows or other native species arrive. Small paper cups and other such plugs work well. Remember to remove the plug as soon as you see your "target" species return to the area, or when you otherwise learn of its return. (Online birding chat groups can be a good source of news about migratory bird movements.)

If you watch a nest box closely enough this spring to know when birds have finished raising a brood, you can clean out the box again to encourage another pair to use it or the same pair to nest again. Just don't disturb an obviously occupied nest box.

Visit the WDFW Crossing Paths Archive: http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/crossing_paths/

Spokane Audubon Society 2017 Rio Grande Valley Trip

Spokane Audubon's Ann Brinly will be taking a small group to the Rio Grande Valley in Texas sometime in January or February of 2017. Estimated cost will be about \$1000, not including meals, for the week-long trip. (The estimate is based on current gas prices - things may change.)

Several of the nearly guaranteed birds include; Green Jay, Common Parakeet, Altamira Oriole, Crested Caracara, Red-shouldered Parrot, Harris's Hawk, Plain Chachalaca, Pyrrhuloxia, Ladder-backed Woodpecker and Great Kiskadee. We will also look for Whooping Cranes as well as any rarities (such as Great Pewee, Crimson-collared Grosbeak and Tropical Parula), which may show up.

The trip is limited to six birders. Please contact Ann Brinly, agbmaelstrom@gmail.com, if you are interested.



Spring Bird Festivals

If you're looking for opportunities to "get out of Dodge" for some of your birding, check out some local(ish) spring bird festivals!

Wings over Water

Northwest Birding Festival

Blaine, WA

March 11 - 13

wingsoverwaterbirdingfestival.com

Othello Sandhill Crane Festival

Othello, WA

March 18 - 20

othellosandhillcranefestival.org

Olympic Peninsula BirdFest

Sequim, WA

April 15 - 17

olympicbirdfest.org

Field Trip Report: Winter Visitors Trip, February 6, 2016

by Fran Haywood

Winter Visitors?? Where is the snow? Cold? Snowy Owls? Oh well, we made do with a little drizzle, a little overcast, windy (though not as strong as forecast), and some sun, with temperatures feeling much more like late March than early February.

We took a different route from our usual: Davenport, down Cottonwood Creek and Hawk Creek to the campground, back up Miles/Creston Road to Swanson Lakes Wildlife Management Area, Old Kuks Road & home.

It was a slow paced trip, but held a few nice surprises. Taking a route on Euclid Road, we encountered a Northern Shrike, followed by the Great Horned Owl in the city park in Davenport.



American Dipper by Chuck Kerkerling.

As I was telling everyone that I had only seen one dipper in Hawk Creek, a second flew in and both gave us great looks at their feeding behavior. We also had a Bewick's Wren, Townsend's Solitaire, Horned Grebe, Mallard, Canada Geese, and a calling Belted Kingfisher that we couldn't locate, despite hearing it several times.

Off to Swanson Lakes where we were rewarded with an American Kestrel persistently attacking a Prairie Falcon perched on a power pole, until the smaller bird finally drove off the larger one. A second Prairie Falcon was near the same area where we had Snowy Owls last year on Schuster Road. Nice finds... they almost made up for the lack of owls.

Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, many groups of Horned Lark, a flock of Red-winged Blackbirds, Black-billed Magpie, American Robins, quail, and a couple more shrikes were added to our list, along with more hawks.

Chuck took lots of dipper photos and did all the driving for Bill, Gary, Brad and me. Maybe next year we will actually have snowy owls!

Spokane Audubon Citizen Science Opportunities

Reardan Audubon Lake Waterfowl Surveys

Waterfowl Surveys at Reardan Audubon Lake are being held weekly until mid-April. Help count and/or record data for a survey that will provide important information for WDFW and Ducks Unlimited to use in applying for grants. The grant funding will be used to increase acreage or enhance land already owned to protect wildlife.

Sagebrush Songbird Survey Training Saturday, April 2

Training for Sagebrush Songbird survey will be held April 2. Learn to identify by sight and sound songbirds associated with shrub-steppe habitat. Learn how to navigate to sites using GPS. Learn the protocol for conducting our surveys. Spend time in the fascinating shrub-steppe habitat. Surveys will be conducted starting in mid-April, mid-May and the beginning of June. Learn more about this diminishing habitat and the birds that it supports.

For more information or to volunteer for either (or both) opportunities, contact Lindell Haggin at lindell4118@comcast.net or by calling 509-466-4118.



SAS 2017 Calendar Contest

Calling all photographers! It's time to start thinking about the 2017 calendar. Complete rules will be printed in next month's edition of *The Pygmy Owl*.

Turnbull NWR Community Planting Party Saturday, April 30, 2016 9 a.m. - noon

This is part of an ongoing community effort to restore native riparian habitat to benefit birds and other wildlife species. We have hundreds of native saplings to plant, and fencing to build at the project site to protect the trees from deer, elk, and moose browsing. Everyone is welcome!

Attention Groups: Please call in advance to register (509-235-4723), and ask for Sandy. It helps us in our planning if we know how many are coming. The Refuge will also host a potluck lunch. Please feel free to bring your favorite dish.

Turnbull NWR Photo Contest

Turnbull is seeking photos from amateur photographers showcasing the wildlife and habitats found on the refuge.

Contest Dates: 11/1/2015 - 10/31/2016. For complete rules, go to www.fws.gov/refuge/turnbull

The winning photo will be featured on the face of the 2017 annual refuge pass.

SAS Field Trips, March & April

March 19, 2016, Saturday Bluebird Trip Leader: Marian Frobe

This is a family friendly, half-day trip and a great way to greet spring. We'll drive a route on Paradise Prairie to see returning favorite birds. We probably will finish at Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge. The trip usually ends around 2 p.m. We will meet at Spokane's Coeur d'Alene Park at 7:00 a.m. Call leader Marian Frobe at 328-0621 by March 15, if you plan to attend.

March 26, 2016, Saturday Turnbull NWR Beginning Birder Basics Trip Leader: Fran Haywood

This is a half-day driving and walking trip for all levels of birders, and is family oriented. It is early in the season for many species, but always exciting to see what has arrived. Meet at the refuge headquarters near Cheney at 7 a.m. Contact leader Fran Haywood, 484-8666, birders13@gmail.com by March 20 if you plan to attend.

April 16, 2016, Saturday Sprague Lake Field Trip Leader: Fran Haywood

This is a half-day trip to the Sprague Lake area, open to all birders. We will look for migrating and early resident species, especially ducks. We may drive through Miller Ranch, stop at Sprague Cemetery, and Cow Lake. We hope to find Swainson's Hawks, American White Pelicans, and if we get lucky, Long-billed Curlew. We will meet at Spokane's Coeur d'Alene Park at 6:30 a.m. Contact Fran Haywood (484-8666, birders13@gmail.com) by April 10 if you plan to attend.

April 21-26, 2016, Thursday-Tuesday Point Reyes, California Field Trip Leader: Kim Thorburn Limit: 6 Birders

This six-day trip is for intermediate and advanced birders. Kim Thorburn will provide lodging for up to six participants and lead field trips on Bolinas Lagoon and beach, Point Reyes Bird Observatory, Point Reyes National Seashore, Mt. Tamalpais State Park, and the Marin Headlands. This region is a year-round birding hot spot, site of the filming of Alfred Hitchcock's "The Birds," and home of elite birder and artist Keith Hansen. Participants will be responsible for their own air travel to Oakland and we'll split the cost of land transportation and food. Contact Kim Thorburn by April 1 if you're interested in learning more: 465-3025, kthorburn@msn.com.

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Pileated Woodpecker © Gregg Thompson

**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.



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March 9th Program:
Forestry is for the Birds (and other critters),
 with Mike Munts
 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.

