Volume 22 Issue 8 April 2015

# Pygmy Owl The Newsletter of the Spokane Audubon Society



# April 8th Program: Kate Davis from Raptors of the Rockies



ate Davis of Raptors of the Rockies has been providing Leducational programs to schools and the public with live birds of prey for 27 years. She keeps 18 non-releasable and falconry birds at the facility at her house on the banks of the Bitterroot River in Western Montana. Formal programs number nearly 1,550 for audiences young and old alike. These birds are the subjects and source of inspiration for her photography, drawings, paintings, etchings, welded steel sculptures, and writing, with five books published to date. Raptors of the West Captured in Photographs won the National Outdoor Book Award in 2011. Bald Eagle Nest—A Story of Survival in Photographs is about a nest that fledged four young, a rare feat. Her latest book, American Kestrel: Pint-Sized Predator, just hit the stands with 100 photographs, six chapters and plans for building kestrel nest boxes. "Gotta love a kestrel," goes the saying.

Kate will give a PowerPoint presentation and discuss her educational program and books, with plenty of new bird photographs on the big screen. She'll also introduce four Teaching Team raptors: a falcon, hawk and two owls, all seasoned professionals. We'll finish with a shortened version



of her recent TEDx Talk "Communication In the Dark" and practice "hooting up an owl." Kate will have a stash of books for the signing – and bookmarks for all our friends!

Spokane Audubon's April program will be held at the

Riverview Retirement Community, Village Community Building

(see page 8 for directions)

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 22, Issue 8 ~ April 2015

*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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# Notes from the President

by Fran Haywood

It seems we have gone from budburst to full blown spring. Not only are flowers blooming all over, returning birds are singing their spring songs, and spring activities are also on fast forward.

I was on a conference call with the state office and several other Audubon Chapter presidents and conservation chairs on Tuesday. I led a group of seniors on an Inland-NW-Tours trip to Calispell Lake to see swans on Wednesday, attended a meeting on permitting cell towers in a South Hill neighborhood on Thursday, and I'm off to help with a classroom presentation with Turnbull outreach Friday.

Mary Jokela drove all the way from Deer Park to the women's club on the South Hill for the meeting on the cell towers (please see her report on page 4).

Springfest meetings are heating up with the festival fast approaching on May 30th. I will be taking refresher training classes at Turnbull in April to gear up for lots of school groups at the refuge this spring. This is a small example of my schedule and it is pretty tame, compared to others in our club, especially Joyce and Lindell. We all love it and I think it is keeping us young. As long as we can catch our breath.

Speaking of Swan festivals, our visit included a tour of the beautiful Kalispell Wellness Center, where we stopped for lunch. It is amazing what wonderful use the tribes are making of gambling profits from their casino. The center has a medical and dental clinic, teen center, day care, head start, gym, pool, climbing wall, meeting rooms, deli, and so much more. The tribe has even opened it for use by the non-indian community. Their new rest stop/deli/museum, just north of Cusick on Hwy #20 is a much appreciated amenity.

We are continuing to monitor the coal and oil train issue. The latest derailments which resulted in oil cars catching fire and burning involved the new, improved, safer, cars that were supposed to prevent such calamaties. With so many trains running right through Spokane, there is a frightening probability that it will happen here; and, of course, there is always the fear of an oil spill into the rivers or into our aquifer.

One other thing I need to mention is that we will be having an election of officers at our May meeting. The position of president and vice-president are open and there is room on the board for new members. If you are interested, or know anyone who would be willing to lead, please speak up. I have very much enjoyed my term and it has been a pleasure to serve with this amazing board, but it is time for me to move on. I have learned so much the last two years and look forward to supporting whomever takes the lead.

# Sights & Sounds

Bird Sightings for the Inland Northwest, compiled by Jon Isacoff

Phoebes, Bluebirds, and Swallows are back! In the midst of the warmest, driest spring on record, we are already gearing up for summer. While great for two-footed animals, the lack of water may spell trouble for migrating and breeding waterfowl. The Pine Grosbeak irruption that started with a flourish ended with a bang with many sightings throughout the region. Happy spring migration! Especially rare sightings bold and italics.

**Snow Goose**: Heyburn SP (2/10-BK); Chewelah (2/16-DK); Rose Lake (3/4-BK); Coeur D'Alene (3/15-WY)

**Greater White-Fronted Goose**: Spokane (3/8-JI)

**TRUMPETER SWAN**: Mondavi (2/19-JI)

**EURASIAN WIGEON**: Harrison (2/1-CL); Rose Lake (3/3 to 3/7-BK); Reardan (3/7-JI); St. Maries (3/13-BK)

Common (Eurasian) Teal: Philleo Lake (3/1-JI)

**LONG-TAILED DUCK:** Coeur D'Alene (2/15-CDAA)

HARLEQUIN DUCK: Coeur D'Alene (2/19-BK to 2/27-DW)

**RED-BREASTED MERGANSER:** Coeur D'Alene (2/1-CL); Coeur D'Alene (2/14-LH); Heyburn SP (3/3 to 3/13-BK); Sandpoint (3/5-JR); Hope (3/6 and 3/16-JR)

**PACIFIC LOON**: Hope (3/6-JR)

**GOLDEN EAGLE**: Martin Road (2/19-GF); Philleo Lake(3/1-JI); Calispell Lake (3/5-TL)

**DUNLIN:** Swanson Lakes (3/3-KT); Davenport (3/9-JI)

MEW GULL: Coeur D'Alene (2/1-CL)

**ICELAND GULL:** Bayview (2/7-DW)

**Anna's HummingBird:** Hayden (12/14 to 2/xx-DW)

**BLUE JAY**: St. Maries (2/12-BK); Moscow (2/15-MC to 3/3-CS); Coeur D'Alene (3/12-AW)

**House Wren**: Rare in March - Cheney (3/7-TO)

**Snow Bunting:** Gem Road (2/21-BK)

**BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER:** Spokane (12/31-PM and

3/2-JI)

WHITE-THROATED SPARROW: Moscow (2/14-IB)

**GRAY-Crowned Rosy Finch**: Rochat Road (2/13-BK)

PINE GROSBEAK: Moscow (2/8-CL and 2/28-CS); Spokane Valley (2/12-MC); Spokane (2/28-FH); (Slavin Ranch (3/3-JI); (Pullman-3/8-RB)

COMMON REDPOLL: Chewelah (2/16-MBa)

Observers: RA-Ryan Anderson; DB-Don Baker; MB-Missy Baker; RB-R.J. Baltierra; MBa-Maria Barone; MaB-Matt Bartels; IB-Isabel Brofsky; BB-Ben Bright; MaC-Marlene Cashen; MC-Mike Clarke; CDAA-Couer D'Alene Audubon; RDC-Rich Del Carlo; TD-Tim Durnell; GF-Greg Falco; MF-Marian Frobe; RF-Russell Frobe; MF-Mike Fulton; MH-Mike Haldeman; JH-John Hanna; LH-Lisa Hardy; FH-Fran Haywood; BH-Bettie Hoff; IM; JI-Jon Isacoff; BK-Bob Kemp; DK-David Kreft; JL-Joshua Little; TL-Terry Little; AL-Angela Lotrario; CL-Carl Lundblad; AM-Alan McCoy; PM-Patrick McKann; TO-Tim O'Brien; JR-Jethro Runco; CS-Charles Swift; RT-Rick Taylor; NT-Norma Trefry; KT-Kim Thorburn; DW-Doug Ward; AW-Andree Wilkey; WY-Will Young



Congratulations to Spokane Audubon member Kim Thorburn on her recent appointment to the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission.

The Fish and Wildlife Commission is a nine-member panel that directs policy for the Fish and Wildlife Department.

Kim was named to the commission by Gov. Jay Inslee

Reardan Audubon Lake Deep Creek Preserve Tour Saturday, April 25<sup>th</sup> 9 a.m. - 11 a.m.

Join Inland Northwest Land Trust's Conservation Director Chris DeForest on the last Saturday of April at the newly purchased Deep Creek Preserve. This 151acre parcel is adjacent to the WDFW Reardan Audubon Lake Preserve just north of Reardan, WA, 22 miles to the west of Spokane.

We will meet at 9:00 a.m. at the WDFW Audubon Lake Preserve south parking lot (Discover pass required to park in the lot) and caravan to the adjacent Deep Creek Preserve for a one-hour walking tour. This is undeveloped land; be prepared for rough terrain and dress for the weather.

RSVP not required, but helpful: 509-328-2939 or cdeforest@inlandnorthwestlandtrust.org

# 2016 Spokane Audubon Calendar Photograph Contest Guidelines

Submission Period: May 1 - May 31 Beginning May 1, submit photos to: spokaneauduboncalendar@yahoo.com

# **Eligibility Requirements**

- Spokane Audubon Society member in good standing
- Electronically submits up to three 9.25"-wide and 6.75"-height digital photographs. The photographs shall not have the © symbol with the photographer's name or other inserted script.
- If photographer has photographs(s) selected, he/she maintains copyright and agrees to provide perpetual use of the photograph(s) to Spokane Audubon Society for the calendar and other promotional and educational purposes.

# **Call for Entries**

- Photographers may submit entries starting Friday, May 1. The deadline is Sunday, May 31.
- No entries will be accepted after the deadline.
- Unselected photographs from previous years will not be automatically submitted. The photographer may resubmit photos not previously selected for use.

# **Judging and Selection**

- Selection will be made by a panel of three to five impartial judges, at least one of whom is a Spokane Audubon Society board member or committee chair. It is preferred that some panel members have moderately advanced bird identification skills and experience with bird photography.
- Photographers who submit entries cannot be judges.
- The bird must be focus of the photograph. Preference is given to unusual species and hard-to-see species or behaviors.
- Judging criteria are photo composition and quality. Submissions must comply with the size requirement.
- The panel will select 14 photographs for each calendar month and additional photographs that might be used in smaller form on the date pages.
- Following selection, entrants will be notified of the decisions.

## **Publication**

• Each photograph will be published with the common name of the bird species and © with the name of the photographer.

# Lincoln Cell Tower

by Mary Jokela

Cell service became a part of our lives relatively recently. However, the mysterious appearance of a behemoth broadband cell tower in one's neighborhood would probably be an unwelcome surprise. News of the proposal/permit application for such a structure generates noisy NIMBY reponse. Clamor is effective. Seattle attorney David Bricklin (attorney for The Lands Council, Spokane Audubon, Roskelley and Krause in a Thurston County suit seeking review of State Parks and Rec's decision allowing the Mt. Spokane proposed ski area expansion) spoke briefly at the Women's Club on March 19, 2015. He said that clamor often prods cell tower developers to abandon a planned tower and move to another site; and that municipalities, counties and states can enact regs for cell tower height, camouflage, location, setback requirements, etc.

Citizen attention and participation are crucial. And bird carnage, collisions with towers, guy wires, and mass migratory night-time confusion caused by lighted towers are documented evidence of cell tower perils.

Bricklin says that Spokane's cell tower guidelines are weak. Spokane's Municipal Code directs the permitting process. Developer applies, City ostensibly gives notice for comments, City considers, City eventually authorizes permit. Or not. In what Bricklin says is a very unusual procedural decision, in mid-March Spokane's City Council boldly directed a moratium on development applications. In any event comment and other deadlines are critical.

Meanwhile please consider studying this file at City Hall, 808 W. Spokane Falls, also online with Patricia Hansen's assistance: reference file is Z1400013CEL2, via Dave Compton, Assistant City Planner, Planning Department. If you file documents, take another person with you to confirm filing so papers don't disappear into government black holes.

Also, Patricia Hansen (*patricia@phansen.com*) shepherds an effective South Hill neighborhood communication group. She is pleased to share information.

Most important for all property owners and residents: if you receive a notice for proposed development of any description, **Do Not Ignore** its provisions for response/comment. Study the application and learn your individual citizen rights!

# **Bee Aware**



by Mary Jokela

Spring: flowers and foods that delight our senses and beautify home and garden. An essential connection to these green wonders, native pollinators and commercial bees are a vital link to our food supply. But things are going badly for bees for many reasons.

Bee disappearance worldwide spawned earlier suspicions of possibilities like diseases, habitat loss, nutritional deficiencies and poor beekeeping practices allowing mite infestations. Turns out different culprits lurk:

- 1. Bee food shortage: a critical lack of flowering plants that provide robust forage for bee nutrition (nectar for carbohydrates, pollen for protein). Healthy bees effectively combat many diseases. But countless dead zones of lawn, cropland, "beautified" public spaces rarely provide flowers on which to forage. Native flowering perennial plants do.
- 2. A class of water-soluble neurotoxic pesticides called neonicotinoids (neonics): a synthetic form of nicotine, the neonic pesticide applied to seed spreads through plants as they grow, attacking the nervous system receptors of a wide range of pests. Navigation and immune system failure results and, when combined with another insecticide used to kill mites, neonics wreak havoc with bees' neural circuitry, causing them to forget associations between flower scents and food rewards.

Even at exposure levels too low to kill bees outright, neonics damage their nervous systems in ways that make survival difficult, researchers have found. One of the most provocative studies was published in 2012 by French researchers, who attached radio transmitters to the insects and observed them as they flew out of the hives to forage for food. After the bees were exposed to the neonicotinoid thiamethoxam, their navigation systems seemed to malfunction, and they were several times more likely to die before they could return to the hive.

A different 2014 South African research study concluded that neonics prevented bees from retrieving information they'd stored in their memories during exploratory flights. And a 2014 Brazilian research study found that neonics were damaging bees at the cellular level, hindering them

from generating energy needed to contract their muscles and move their wings.

Further, managed honeybees pollinate billions of dollars' worth of US crops, including such mainstays as onions, almonds, oranges, avocados. Sierra Club reports that neonics are applied to 90% of the corn and 30% of the soybeans grown in the US. And that they're used on apples, rice, potatoes, sugar beets and citrus fruits—and on about half of the plants sold in major garden stores.

Additional studies now suggest that neonics may pose risk to other animals as well—most notably birds, which can receive lethal doses if they eat seeds coated with the pesticide. But ascertaining seed source and agricultural process is challenging. Chensheng Lu, an associate professor of environmental exposure biology at Harvard University's School

of Public Health, said the threat is even deeper: "The detrimental effects of neonics are at the ecological scale."

So what can we do? Plant native flowering perennials. Visit local nurseries, learn their ecological values and postures, patronize them. Consider the

potential risks of pesticide use and purchasing big box store annual plants.

Use insecticides very conservatively, always exactly as directed. To find out whether an insecticide we see on the shelf of our hardware, pest control supply or garden center is a neonicotinoid, look on the list of active ingredients. If we see one of the following names listed, the insecticide includes a neonicotinoid: Acetamiprid, Clothianidin, Dinotefuran, Imidacloprid, Nitenpyram, Thiocloprid, Thiamethoxam. Also note that while active pesticide ingredients are listed on containers, inert ingredients not listed are proprietary and some may be more toxic than active ingredients. If we see no names or "proprietary" only, there's a research project at our doorsteps.

Lastly, cheer the City of Spokane; in July 2014 Spokane banned neonicotinoid use on public property.

#### Mark your calendars!

Turnbull NWR's Community Spring Planting Event Saturday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>

9 a.m. - noon

Plant native saplings and erect protective fencing. Stay after for the potluck lunch!

# SAS Field Trips for April & May

April 18, 2015, 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)

April 23-28, 2015, Thurs. - Tues.

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. There is a variety of pelagic and other waterfowl, migrating shorebirds and warblers, and lots of land natives that we don't often see here. Participants will be responsible for their own air travel to Oakland and we'll split the cost of land transportation and food. We'll need to coordinate arrival and departure in Oakland. Contact Kim Thorburn by April 1 if you're interested in learning more. 465-3025, kthorburn@msn.com.

April 26, 2015, Sunday West Plains Early Migrant Trip Leader: Alan McCoy Limit: 15 Birders

This all-day trip is for all levels of birders. We will stop at Reardan's Audubon Lake where we will look for waterfowl and shorebirds. We will check out the Davenport Cemetery, which can be great for migrants. Then we will go north to the Little Falls Dam, follow the Spokane River upstream and finish up at the Indian Canyon Springs area. We will meet at 6:00 a.m. at the Rosauer's parking lot in Browne's Addition (near 2nd Avenue and Sunset Highway) and plan to return about 6:00 p.m. Contact leader Alan McCoy at 448-3123,

448-8861 or *ahm2352@gmail.com* by April 20 to reserve your place.

May 4, 6, 8;
Monday, Wednesday, Friday evenings
Bird Identification Workshops
Leaders: Gary Blevins and
Kim Thorburn

OK. Novices and beginners, this is your chance. Two instructors will teach a series of three classes on beginning birding and bird identification by sight and sound. Workshops will be held at a site to be determined, from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m. Slides and computer programs will be used to introduce you to many of the bird species commonly observed in the Spokane area. A \$20 donation to Spokane Audubon is requested. A field trip for workshop participants to Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge will be held on International Migratory Bird Day, May 10. For more information or to reserve your place for the workshop, contact Gary Blevins at (533-3661 or *GaryB@spokanefalls.edu*) by May 1.

May 9, 2015, Saturday
Bird Identification Workshop Field Trip
to Turnbull NWR
Leaders: Gary Blevins and
Kim Thorburn

Come celebrate International Migratory Bird Day by birding. Although the trip is specifically designed for the Bird Identification Workshop participants, other birders are welcome. We will meet at Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge, near Cheney, in the parking lot across from Pine Lake at 7:00 a.m. and bird the refuge until 2:00 p.m. Contact leader Gary Blevins at (533-3661 or *GaryB@spokanefalls.edu*) by May 3 to register for the trip.

May 16, 2015, Sunday Slavin Ranch Wetland Trip Leader: Alan McCoy

This is an annual trip to Slavin Ranch for Spokane Audubon. It is a half-day walking trip along a primitive trail through open Ponderosa Pine scab rock country with many views of seasonal wetlands. All levels of birders are welcome. The Slavin Ranch is a Conservation Futures acquisition located about 10 miles south of downtown Spokane and a mile west of Hwy 195. We will start at the Slavin Ranch parking lot at 7:00 a.m. and end about 1:00 p.m. Please call leader Alan McCoy at 448-3123 or 448-8861, *ahm2352@gmail.com* by May 4 if you plan to attend.

May 24, 2015, Sunday Mosquito Springs Trip Leader: Kim Thorburn

This trip is for birders of all levels. It is a half-day walking trip over rough terrain. Experience this little-known BLM shrub-steppe riparian area brimming with arriving breeding birds. We will also check for sagebrush and grassland species. Contact Kim Thorburn, 465-3025 or *kthorburn@msn. com* by May 18 if you're interested.

# May 30, 2015, Saturday Peone Praries Wetlands Trip Leader: Jim Hudlow

This half-day trip will focus on visiting several hot spots in the Peone Praries wetlands area. Meet 7:00 a.m. **SHARP** at Foothills Community Church, 11100 N. Peck Road. Contact Jim Hudlow (*flyz4free@yahoo.com* or 509-926-2186) by May 27th, if you plan to attend.

Local Membership Dues:

# May 31, 2015, Sunday Little Spokane Natural Area Trip Leader: Lindell Haggin

All levels of birders are welcome to join us for a half-day walking trip along the Little Spokane River Natural Area. This is the peak of breeding season. Over 80 species have been recorded in this rich riparian, forest, and rock habitat. Meet at the Spokane River Boat Launch parking lot less than one mile north of Nine-Mile Dam on Rt. 291 at 6:30 a.m. Contact Lindell Haggin, 466-4118 or *lindell4118@comcast.net* by May 25 if you plan to attend.

Note: A WA Discover Pass is required for parking on this trip. Purchase online or at REI.

May Newsletter Deadline:

Thursday, April 23rd

Please e-mail material to *carmen@floreo.com* 

# Spokane Audubon Society Membership Form

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 your local chapter's many conservation ar 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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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 to 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.

