

Volume 23
Issue 8
April 2016

The Pygmy Owl

The Newsletter of the
Spokane Audubon Society



April 13th Program:

The Once and Future River: An Ecological Vision for the Spokane River, featuring Gonzaga University Environmental Studies Senior Class



Join us on April 13th for a special program, as Gonzaga Environmental Studies students offer the first public presentation of a revitalization plan for the Spokane River. In cooperation with residents and non-profit groups, Gonzaga students are developing an ecological and social vision for the Spokane River between the Spokane Community College and the University District through the newly formed University District Ecological Alliance (UDEA).

In the 112 miles from Lake Coeur d'Alene to the Columbia, the Spokane River is constrained by 7 dams, none of which allow for fish passage. Fifteen of the river's 35 fish species are introduced. In addition to the dams and bridge crossings, the river channel has been modified, channeled, and fortified with rip-rap. Although cleanup began in the 1970s, the Spokane River still ranks among the top ten most polluted in the United States. While the downtown section of the river has seen significant improvement, the reach above Hamilton Avenue suffers from litter, homeless camps, erosion, industrial run-off, and general neglect.

Does it have to be this way? What might a "revitalized" Spokane River look like? How might we improve the riparian habitat and ecological function of the river while providing ecosystem services and recreational opportunities, especially for low income residents?

To explore these questions further, students will present their research in the following areas:

- *Ecological Services of the Spokane River:* What are the current and potential ecological services provided by the river to

citizens of Spokane? How might we expand and improve the riparian zone?

- *Toxic Waste Management:* An overview and assessment of the current clean-up efforts.
- *Biological Inventory and Assessment:* What are the common, native, and threatened aquatic and riparian species? How are they interacting with exotic species? How should we manage introduced species in an urban environment?
- *Community Values and Perceptions:* How do residents of Logan and Chief Garry view the river? Is it an asset or liability? How can we improve recreational access and environmental educational opportunities?
- *GIS Analysis:* Using Geographical Information System software, students will present land use maps, ownerships status, ecological values and potential recreational access points.
- *Ecological Enhancement of Lake Arthur:* This project envisions transitioning Gonzaga's Lake Arthur into a functioning wetland and increased breeding and nesting habitat for waterfowl and other wetland species.

The April program will be held at the Riverview Retirement Community, Village Community Building (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

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Spokane Audubon Society
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Scholarship Opportunity

Washington Ornithological Society Patrick Sullivan Young Birders Fund

The Young Birders Fund was first conceived by Andy and Ellen Stepniewski and was established by the Washington Ornithological Society in 2005 to encourage and support young people interested in birding.

After Patrick Sullivan's death in September 2007, the name of the fund was changed to the Patrick Sullivan Young Birders Fund (PSYBF) to honor his contributions to birding in Washington. Many WOS members have fond memories of birding with Patrick when he was quite young and watching him mature into one of Washington's premiere birders.

Funds are generated through Andy and Ellen Stepniewski's donation of Andy's portion of the profits from sales of *A Birder's Guide to Washington*, which Andy co-authored, and donations from WOS, WOS members, and the general public. Grants are available to individual young people or adults to help fund group birding activities or education for young people.

WOS defines "young birders" as anyone in the age group from pre-teens through early 20s, showing a serious interest in birds and birding. Both students and non-students are eligible and are encouraged to apply.

This grant program is not intended to support graduate school activities. PSYBF grants are intended to support activities directly related to birding, such as, but not limited to:

- Registration fees and expenses for birding conferences and related events;
- Fees and expenses for youth birding camps such as those offered by the National Audubon Society or the American Birding Association and Victor Emmanuel Nature Tours, and related activities;
- Research on specific species or species groups that spend a significant portion of their life cycle in Washington; and census work at a park or natural area;
- Bird banding, when supervised by a qualified adult;
- Supplies and related expenses for adult-taught youth group activities centered on birding and bird study.

To apply, visit <http://wos.org/psybf/apply/>

The deadline for May's *Pygmy Owl* is

Thursday, April 21st

Please send any content to

carmen@floreo.com

Sights & Sounds

Bird Sightings for the Inland Northwest, compiled by Jon Isacoff

This is another of those “in between” times where many, if not most, winter birds have left but we’re awaiting the big push of migration in a month or so. Some of our lovely Pine Grosbeaks and Redpolls are still being seen. It’s a good time to look for raptors, ducks and geese. Though as always, you never know what will show up or where!

SNOW X CANADA GOOSE HYBRID: Sprague (3/19-JI and TL)

SNOW GOOSE: Valley (3/10-TL); Kellogg (3/12-BK); Newman Lake (3/18-JP)

GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE: Cave Lake (2/21-DW); Tolo Lake (2/27-CJ; 3/7-TLa); Sheep Lake (3/11-TL)

TRUMPETER SWAN: Chain Lakes (2/27-LH); Alkali Lake (3/1-RB); Mondovi (3/11-JI)

EURASIAN WIGEON: Philleo Lake (2/27-RT); Calispell Lake (3/3-TL); Newman Lake (3/17-TL); Deyo Reservoir (CJ-3/18); Crooked Knee Lake (3/19-JI and TL); Sprague (3/19-JI and TL)

THAYER’S GULL: Coeur D’Alene (2/23-RM)

DUNLIN: Sheep Lake (3/11-TL); Mill Canyon (3/11-JI)

RED-NAPED SAPSUCKER: Rare before late March; (2/25-RDC)

HARRIS’S SPARROW: Continuing at Philleo Lake (2/19-TL and 3/16-JI)

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD: Uncommon before April; Paradise Prairie (3/16-JI)

PINE GROSBEAK: Mead (2/20-JG); Slavin Ranch (2/24-JI); Kelly Hill (2/26-WC); Moscow (2/26-CS; 3/5-BB; and 3/8-JS); West Medical Lake (2/26-RT); Philleo Lake (2/27-RT)

COMMON REDPOLL: Davenport (2/28-RT); Colbert (2/28-RT); Pullman (3/2-RB); Cusick (3/3-TL); Steptoe Butte (3/7-MD and MLD)

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); WC-Warren Current; RDC-Rich Del Carlo; MD-Mike Denny; MLD-MerryLynn Denny; 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; CJ-Craig Johnson; SJ-Steve Joyce; BK-Bob Kemp; RK-Russ Koppendrayner; TLa-Terry Lane; JL-Joshua Little; TL-Terry Little; TL-Thomas Light; CL-Carl

Lundblad; TM-Tom Mansfield; CM-Cindy McCormack; AM-Alan McCoy; EM-Eliot Miller; NM-Nancy Miller; RM-Robert 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; RT-Rick 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

Say’s Phoebe Shenanigans

story and photo by Ron Dexter

February 28, 2016

Today the female Say’s Phoebe arrived. I was reading the paper and Pat told me to look out the window. There, on a Serviceberry bush just a few feet from me was the female.

Later, I went outside to confirm that the two were here together. They were both on top of the antenna and wind vane on the shop. Just then, a third bird flew past the shed and these two went after it. Soon they came back on top of the shed. The third one was another male. They began chasing one another through the trees and back on top of the shed. They finally grabbed hold of each other at the same time and fell down on top of the shed where they wrestled for at least one minute.



Then the female dove at them and broke them up. They scattered, but returned to chasing for the next 5 minutes when I came back in the house. Of course, I hope that the old timer wins, but I’ll never know since they don’t wear name tags.

2017 Spokane Audubon Calendar Photograph Contest Guidelines

Submission Period: May 1 - May 31, 2016

**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 photograph(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 Sunday, May 1. The deadline is Tuesday, 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 the 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.



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Pileated Woodpecker © Gregg Thompson

Field Trip Report: Bluebird Trip, March 19, 2016

by Marian Frobe

For a change we had wonderful weather for the Bluebird Trip, but there were only three of us on the trip to enjoy it!

We started, as usual, at the pond east of the Pullman Highway, and almost our first bird of the trip was the Bald Eagle at the nest in the tree across Latah Creek. There weren't many ducks on the pond, though.

Paradise Prairie yielded numerous Western Bluebirds and several Red-winged Blackbirds. We had one Savannah Sparrow. There was more water in some of the ponds and we amused ourselves scoping the many ducks and geese on the wetlands, eventually ending up with most species.

As the sun was so bright, we had a hard time trying to figure out a Northern Harrier that was perched facing us on a fence post. Eventually it flew and we saw the telltale white rump. We even had a few swallows, but they were either so far away or passing by so rapidly we never got a chance to identify them.

Lewis's Woodpecker Boxes

by Kim Thorburn

The Lewis's woodpecker population is declining throughout its range. It is candidate for listing in Washington. The threats include habitat degradation and loss. Its breeding is closely associated with ponderosa pine forests and fire. Development and logging encroach on these forests throughout the West, affecting many cavity-nesting species. Nest boxes have provided effective conservation in some instances, but their use by Lewis's woodpeckers has not been well documented.

On a recent blustery late winter day, a small group from the Davenport Cub Scout troop, the Davenport Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office, the Spokane District Bureau of Land Management (BLM) office, and Spokane Audubon Society set out to place nest boxes in some ponderosa pine and burn habitat in an effort to enhance the Lewis's woodpecker population. Jeff Jones, formerly of the Davenport NRCS office, learned of a similar successful project in Bend, Oregon. With a small amount of support from NRCS, Jeff coordinated the local project.

The Bend folks sent the nest box specifications and encouragement. They counseled patience; it was four years before their boxes were occupied. The Cub Scouts built 10 boxes. Our little group walked around recently burned and unburned pine forests of the BLM Telford unit and picked out suitable trees to place the boxes. We stuffed wood shavings

Philleo Lake yielded Tundra Swans, quite a few of them in a spot we couldn't stop to scope but we could hear them well from our usual stop at the end of the lake. Rymii and Rachel were very patient with me as we searched through all the Dark-eyed Juncos looking for the Harris' Sparrow that's been reported hanging out with them; unsuccessfully, I might add.

Just past that spot we had another Bald Eagle being harassed by a Red-tailed Hawk. Funny how small the hawk looks when you see it next to an eagle. That was actually our third Bald Eagle.

We worked our way to Turnbull NWR, where we used the welcome bathroom there but also saw the Trumpeter Swans on Middle Pine Lake as we were going in to the headquarters.

All in all, I counted 40 species—not bad considering we had some missed birds we usually see. Thanks for coming with me, Rymii and Rachel!

through the nest box holes and Jeff pounded them onto our selected trees.



Lewis's Woodpecker by Jason Lowe

It seemed that the windstorms of the past couple of seasons dramatically affected the landscape of the nearly decade-old burn. Almost every snag had fallen in this area of known Lewis's woodpecker nesting. We wondered if we would wait four years or if we might be replacing nearly totally demolished habitat.

If you bird North Telford or Mosquito Springs this summer, watch for the boxes. Please let us know if you see any evidence of use, especially by Lewis's woodpeckers.

SAS Field Trips, April & May

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.

*** NOTE DATE CHANGE***
May 7, 2016, Saturday
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'll check out the Davenport Cemetery, which can be great for migrants. Then we will go north to the Little Falls Dam and follow the Spokane River upstream and finish up at the Indian Canyon Springs area. We'll 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 25 to reserve your place.

** This field trip was originally scheduled for April 30th.*

May 9, 11, 13
Monday, Wednesday, Friday evenings
Bird Identification Workshop
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 from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m. at a site to be determined. 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 14. For more information or to reserve your place for the workshop, contact Gary Blevins at (533-3661 or GaryB@spokanefalls.edu) by April 25.

May 14, 2016, 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 1 to register for the trip.

May 14, 2016, Saturday
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 10 if you plan to attend.

May 21, 2016, Saturday
Peone Prairie Wetlands Trip
Leaders: Ann Brinly, Jim and Bea Harrison

This half-day trip will focus on visiting several hot spots in the Peone Prairie wetlands area. Meet at 7:00 a.m. SHARP

at Feryn Conservation parking area. Contact Ann Brinly, agbmaelstrom@gmail.com by May 14 to sign up.

**May 22, 2016, 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 28, 2016, Saturday
Douglas Creek/Waterville Plateau Trip
Leader: Kim Thorburn**

All levels of birders are welcome to join this all-day trip to Waterville Plateau birding hotspots. We will bird Douglas Creek (rough road access), the Waterville STP, and Badger Mtn. Contact Kim Thorburn at 465-3025 or kthorburn@msn.com by May 22.

**May 29, 2016, 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.

Want to be the newsletter editor?

Position starts September 2016. Contact Carmen Yount (carmen@floreo.com) if you're interested!

**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:
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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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*April 13th Program:
 The Once and Future River: An Ecological
 Vision for the Spokane River,
 with Gonzaga University's
 Environmental Studies Senior Class
 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.

