Volume 22 Issue 9 May 2015

Pygmy Owl The Newsletter of the



May 13th Program:

Washington Loons, with Daniel & Ginger Poleschook



Daniel and Ginger (Gumm) Poleschook have been photographing nature and wildlife since 1971. Their efforts have included acquiring data for wildlife officials, assisting with color-marking, banding, and lab sampling of nesting loons and chicks for the United States Forest Service, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and BioDiversity Research Institute, since 1996. They compiled "Washington Common Loon Reference Records." Their conservation efforts for the Common Loon have helped maintain a stable and slowly growing population in Washington.

For example, they developed the "Keep the Gift Alive Fund" in 2002, for supplying small fry to Common Loon nesting lakes that had none, in order to help loon chicks survive. Daniel and Ginger were instrumental in developing the "Natural Avian Guard" which surrounds nest sites to prevent avian predation of eggs and chicks. And they derived the "Common Loon Chick Survival Curve" from an empirical relationship of common loon chick weight versus age.

Ginger and Daniel are the photographers of two loon books: *Call of the Loon* and *Journey with the Loon*. They also have supplied images for several calendars, and for many conservation magazines, including *Journal of Wildlife Management* and *National Geographic*. They have photographed more than 300 species of North American and African birds.

Announcements

Learn to Bird Workshop

May 4, 6, 8, will be held at Spokane Falls Community College Building 28, Room 144. See page 6 for more details.

Spokane Audubon Elections

will be held at the May 13th meeting. Members are encouraged to volunteer in whatever capacity suits them.

2015 Turnbull NWR Spring Festival, Floods, Flowers & Feathers

Saturday, May 30th 8 am to 3 pm Cost: Free See page 4 for more details.

2016 Spokane Audubon Calendar Photo Contest Deadline: Sunday, May 31

No late entries accepted. See page 4 for details.

Spokane Audubon's May 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 9 ~ May 2015

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

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Notes from the President

by Fran Haywood

As the days get longer and my term as your president is coming to an end, I am reminded of the many dedicated members who have given time and effort to support Spokane Audubon. "It takes a village," as the saying goes, to keep the wheels turning.

While we are far from the seat of state government, many of our members have written letters to congressmen and senators and to the editors of publications on environmental issues, gone to meetings and spoken passionately. You have made a difference!

Recently, due to in large part to Audubon's efforts, smelt fishing was closed in Washington before this species completely disappeared from our waters. (Smelt, a necessary food for seabirds and other species, have been declining rapidly.) This was a big win for Audubon. Now studies are ongoing to determine what is a healthy population before fishing can be resumed with sustainable limits.

Partly because of Audubon's concern, oil and coal trains are under scrutiny and legislation is in the works to protect our cities, waters, and aquifers from spills and fires.

Closer to home we are still trying to protect the old growth forest on Mt. Spokane. There are so many other issues, and space prevents me from mentioning everything. I hope you all will pay attention during the summer break from Audubon meetings and newsletters.

Our members have served on boards to make our city and state a better place in which to live. They have given time to many educational endeavors, including partnering with Turnbull Wildlife Refuge, working with scouts, garden clubs, school science fairs, and teaching beginning birding classes. Many are now counting sagebrush birds to determine their status in Eastern Washington; and several members have been counting and banding birds at Turnbull, and in past years, on the Little Spokane River. Many also worked on a 5-year study of Bobolinks near Cusick. Kim Thorburn spends more hours than anyone can count working to protect sage habitat. Look to the sidebar at the left to see how others are involved on a regular basis to keep Spokane Audubon running smoothly.

We need more of our members to step up and help. The community, in general, and we members all benefit from the environmental efforts and enjoy the activities provided by our organization, so the work load must be shared. We welcome new faces and ideas and are flexible regarding commitments. It is your Audubon. If not you (as a board member or ______), then who? Come join us! We will be electing officers at the May meeting.

Sights & Sounds

Bird Sightings for the Inland Northwest, compiled by Jon Isacoff

The warmest, driest spring in memory and possibly record is bringing migrants in early. Swifts, swallows, hummingbirds, kingbirds, and many others are days and in some cases, weeks ahead of schedule. In addition, all five goose species in our region made very nice showings through the last month. Don't blink or migration might be over before it normally might even have started!

Snow Goose: Sprague (3/27-NT); Moscow (3/29-CL); Spangle (3/29-WY); Spokane (4/7-JI); Genesee (4/10-JH); Sandpoint (4/15-RDC)

Ross's Goose: Sprague (4/7-JI)

Greater White-Fronted Goose: Rock Lake (3/21-RB); Slavin Ranch (3/21-JI); Sprague (4/7-JI)

EURASIAN WIGEON: Heyburn State Park (3/22-JI): Genesee (3/27-CL); Valley (3/27-TL); Peone (3/30-4/1-TL); Reardan (4/2-JI); Rock Lake (4/4-DJ); Coeur D'Alene (4/5-SJ); Moscow (4/9-CS); Calispell Lake (4/11-TL);

HARLEQUIN DUCK: Marble Creek (4/10-MS)

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER: Sprague (4/17-TL)

GOLDEN EAGLE: Lake Spokane (3/27-TL); Chewelah (3/30-MI); Rock Lake (4/4-AR); Spokane (4/8-JG); Spirit Lake (4/9-BS); Davenport (4/10-WY)

DUNLIN: Davenport (4/2 and 4/14-JI); Ewan (4/3-RB)

SANDHILL CRANE: Spokane (3/29-DH); Sprague (4/3-JI); Turnbull NWR (4/13-PD)

Long-Eared Owl: St. John (3/19-RB); Newport (4/7-TL)

CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD: Rare in first half of April: Colbert (4/2-TW); Moscow (4/9-SC); Spokane (4/12-DH); Paradise Ridge (4/12-KD) Hayden (4/12-DW)

RUFOUS HUMMINGBIRD: Rare in first half of April: Spokane (4/12-DH)

WILLIAMSON'S SAPSUCKER: Paradise Ridge (3/30-CL)

BLUE JAY: Conkling (3/24-BK)

WHITE-THROATED SPARROW: Heyburn State Park (3/24-BK)

HARRIS'S SPARROW: Washtucna (3/28-RK)

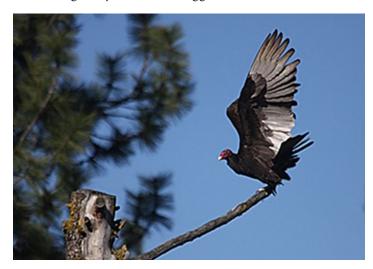
PINE GROSBEAK: Pullman (3/11-RB); Sandpoint (3/19-MN); Moscow (3/20-IB); Spokane (3/23-3/25-TL); Lane Marsh (4/10-MH)

Observers: 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; Stacy Crist (SC); RDC-Rich Del Carlo; KD-Kas Dumroese; PD-Peter Dunwiddie; GF-Greg Falco; MF-Marian Frobe; RF-Russell Frobe; MF-Mike Fulton; JG-Joshua Glant; JH-John Hanna; LH-Lisa Hardy; FH-Fran Haywood; MH-Morai Helfen; DH-Dave Holick; MI-Michael Irving; JI-Jon Isacoff; DJ-Dick Johnson; SJ-Steve Joyce; BK-Bob Kemp; RK-Russ Koppendrayer; TL-Terry Little; AL-Angela Lotrario; TL-Thomas Light; CL-Carl Lundblad; AM-Alan McCoy; MN-Marjolein Nibbelink; TO-Tim O'Brien; JR-Jethro Runco; AR-Adrian Rus; MS-Mike Scott; BS-Brad Sondahl; CS-Charles Swift; RT-Rick Taylor; NT-Norma Trefry; KT-Kim Thorburn; DW-Doug Ward; TW-Tinay Wynnecoop; WY-Will Young

First Visit of the Spring

Ron & Pat Dexter

On Saturday April 18th, Pat and I were sitting on our front deck when I noticed a large turkey-sized bird down by our lower pond. I looked throut my binos and saw our first Turkey Vulture of the year. Late April is usually when they show up in our neighborhood, so it was really no surprise. From 300 feet, the photos weren't too good, so I jumped into the UTV and slowly drove down the driveway. Most birds will let you get closer when you are in a vehicle because they don't recognize you as a two-legged, mean old human.



I did manage to get close enough for a couple of cropped photos. The snag is one of two that I had a tree climber top a few years ago. It has really paid off, because I have had many nice birds perch on or nest in them, including Bald Eagles, Pileated Woodpeckers, nuthatches, Great Blue Herons and Northern Goshawks.

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 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.



Turnbull will be hosting its Fourth Annual Floods, Flowers and Feathers Festival on Saturday, May 30, 2015. For the past three years, this event has been very successful with the assistance and expertise of our partners.

When: Saturday, May 30, 2015
Time: 8 am - 3 pm
Where: Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge
Cost: Free

Enjoy spring by experiencing and learning about the exceptional wildlife, habitats, and geology of the unique Channeled Scablands landscape. Come join the fun on May 30 at Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge. In partnership with numerous organizations/agencies we are offering the Fourth Annual Spring Nature Festival, with activities for families and individuals of all ages.

Take a walk on the wild side and discover birds, wildflowers, insects, other wildlife, and catch a glimpse of remnants of the ice age floods that created the diverse habitats of the Scablands. Nature hikes, tours, kids' activities, and informational booths provided by a number of organizations will make for a wonderful spring day outdoors in this remarkable environment. (For more fun, bring a child!)

This event is free; however, some activities require reservations. For those activities that do require reservations, contact us to reserve your spot.

For event schedules, activity descriptions and maps of the event, visit Turnbull's web site at http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Turnbull/.

Deep Creek Preserve public tour Saturday, May 30, 2015 9:00-11:00 AM

We will meet at 9:00 AM at the WDFW Audubon Lake Preserve south parking 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.

Come and explore this never before publicly open space; there should be plenty of waterfowl to observe—maybe even a swan!

No RSVP is required, but it is helpful. For more information or to get directions, call the office at 509-328-2939 or email Chris DeForest at *cdeforest@inlandnwlandtrust.org*.

Field Trip Report: Bluebird Trip

by Marian Frobe

Despite the horrendous forecast for March 21st, seven of us in three cars decided to brave the weather to go look for bluebirds. Although it was raining when we parked in Coeur d'Alene Park, it stopped before we headed out, so we had periods of cloud and of sun and was much better than we had anticipated.

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. When we walked over to the creek, we also found a lone Common Merganser drake and on the ponds we flushed a Great Blue Heron and a Belted Kingfisher, as well as several duck species.

Paradise Prairie yielded numerous Western Bluebirds, several Savannah Sparrows at the Slavin Ranch trailhead, and an elusive Northern Shrike. We had NO swallows and no Tundra Swans, but we did find a Trumpeter Swan pair on Depot Springs Road. Late in the morning the wind became a factor, so we missed most small birds, though the ducks on some of the ponds gave us good looks. At one spot there was a feeder with a mixed flock of brilliant Red-winged Blackbirds and Yellow-headed Blackbirds that were almost glowing in the sun.

Because of the wind, we didn't do much more than stop briefly at Philleo Lake, though Joyce radioed that she had found Double-crested Cormorants out in the lake, and we saw an immature Bald Eagle spooking the ducks across the lake at one point. Most of us had eaten our lunch already by the time we made it to Turnbull NWR, but we used the bathroom there and then two of our cars decided to do the Auto Tour Route which yielded nothing new for us.

I counted 38 species, down from most years, but we'll blame it on the wind. Despite the forecast, it never rained on us after we left Spokane.

Field Trip Report: Sprague Lake Trip

by Fran Haywood

Saturday morning, April 18th, started windy and cool, but by the time we arrived in Sprague, it was sunny. Northern Flickers called and Violet Green Swallows greeted us at our meeting spot and it only got better from there. Due to drying ponds, I took a roundabout way to Sprague, which took longer, but I think it was worth it.

Highlights of the day included: Two Great Horned Owls were on nests on the old sunset highway just east of Reardan, and a Red Tailed Hawk took up the nest on Sprinkle Rd. Davenport Cemetery was full of Yellow-rumped Warblers feeding in the grass with a Dark-eyed Junco and American Robins. Red Crossbills were calling and one flew over us. We heard Red Breasted Nuthatch and chickadees.

Ruby Crowned Kinglets bounced around. There were probably more species, but it was chilly. Old Kuck Rd had Dunlin, Golden Yellowlegs, Green-winged Teal, Tree Swallows, Killdeer, Wilson's Snipe and two Longbilled Curlew.

Driving south on Rocklyn we spotted the pair of Swainson's Hawks that Marlene had photographed earlier, and saw several more Swainson's and Red-tailed Hawks, one lone Rough Legged Hawk, several Northern Harrier and American Kestrel.

Next stop, Sprague Cemetery, where we added Nashville Warbler and Townsend's Solitaire. It was getting late, so we didn't linger, but this migrant trap can be amazing.

As we headed into Sprague, a Say's Phoebe flew up and displayed for us. At our first stop at the first boat launch we spied two Common Loon, a Horned Grebe and many species of duck, including a pair of Harlequins spotted by Jim, while Marsh Wrens scolded from everywhere.

Driving along the lake we spotted a Snow (or maybe a Ross's) Goose, feeding with the Canadas, while a Sandhill Crane fed along the fenceline. Great catch, Bea! Bald Eagle and Osprey were here, as were many Horned Lark and Savannah Sparrows.

Cow Lake had White Pelicans and Hallin gave us Yellowheaded Blackbirds to add to the Red-winged and Brewer's we had already observed, along with White-crowned Sparrow, another Snipe, and a Pheasant, Ruddy, Gadwall, Wigeon, Scaup, Cinnamon Teal, and Mallard were a few of our duck species. We had five Avocet feeding in a flooded field on the Cow Lake Road, a Turkey Vulture soaring and a flock of turkey on the drive home.

All in all an amazing day with 13 Auduboners willing to stay until 3 pm on a "half day" trip. Many of our 72 species were spotted by their sharp eyes and ears. Thank you everyone for a wonderful day! For a complete list, check Bea Harrison's post on inlandnwbirders or eBird.

SAS Field Trips for May & June

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. The workshop will be held at Spokane Falls Community College, Building 28 (the new Science Building), room 144, 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.

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.

Full summaries for the following trips can be found in the January edition of *The Pygmy Owl*, or at spokaneaudubon.org:

June 6, 2015, Saturday Liberty Lake Trip Leader: Joyce Alonso and Brian Miller

Contact Joyce Alonso (448-2447) by May 31 if you plan to attend.

June 7, 2015, Sunday Douglas Creek/Waterville Plateau Trip Leader: Kim Thorburn

Contact Kim Thorburn at 465-3025 or *kthorburn@msn.com* by June 1.

June 13, 2015, Saturday Iller Creek Trip Leader: Gary Lee

Contact Gary Lee at *bird_fan@aol.com* or 389-5474 to sign up and for meeting time.

June 14, 2015, Sunday Palisades/Indian Canyon Trip Leader: Lindell Haggin

Contact Lindell Haggin (446-4118 or *lindell4118@comcast. net*) by June 7 if you plan to attend.

Local Membership Dues:

June 19-June 21, 2015 Friday-Sunday Little Pend Oreille National Wildlife Refuge Camping Trip Leaders: Fran and Brad Haywood

Contact Fran Haywood (290-1814 or *birders13@gmail.com*) or Joyce Alonso (448-2447) by June 13. Camping fees may apply.

June 27, 2015, Saturday Mount Spokane Subalpine Birds Trip Leader: Jim Hudlow

Contact Jim Hudlow (*flyz4free@yahoo.com* or 509-926-2186) by June 21 if you plan to attend.

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 <i>The Pygmy Owl</i> 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:



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.

