

# The Pygmy Owl

The Newsletter of the  
Spokane Audubon Society



## Eastern Washington Regional Meeting Report

Members from many of the Eastern Washington Chapters were present at the regional meeting on May 3, 2014 in Moses Lake. Fran and Brad Haywood represented Spokane Audubon. Fran reported the proceedings to the board at the May meeting. Because so much of the information is relevant to Spokane Audubon, passages from the summary (provided by Eastern Washington Program Director Christi Norman) are included here.

### *State Conservation Priorities Overview*

Christi Norman reported success on many fronts of the Audubon Washington Sagebrush Shrub-steppe Campaign. The collective comments submitted by Audubon Washington and Eastern Washington Audubon chapters to the BLM scoping process last fall were accepted and are likely to positively impact the decision making process, as we helped to identify some information gaps. Spokane Audubon was key to the creation of the Lake Creek IBA, encompassing 300,000 acres of potential grouse habitat and the third local population of Greater Sage-grouse in Washington State. This has helped BLM and WDFW efforts to accommodate grouse in their management, and provide some necessary habitat connectivity. The Bobolink project is in its 5th year. The data has helped to incorporate wildlife values into Tribal rangeland management practices, including cross-fencing. The new Sagebrush Songbird Survey project is underway, being piloted by Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society. We would like to establish this as the number one community science program to partner with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife in the state. If successful, the ultimate goal will be to effect change at the policy level.

### *Chapter Conservation Priorities*

Gail opened the discussion by noting how Whidbey Audubon has been able to successfully focus their chapter's priority issues by composing Position Papers. As with most chapters, their chosen priorities are influenced by local issues that are brought repeatedly to the chapter's attention either by members or the general public. These Position Papers

generally address long-term investment projects. National Conservation priorities (e.g. Seas & Shores, Working Lands, Bird Friendly Communities) could also be used as criteria to proactively help establish general priority guidelines and filter issue involvement.

Chapters are working on conservation issues and projects that most concern their local communities. Lower Columbia Basin focused on land securement and road opposition, Hanford land transfers from the Department of Energy to the USFWS1, coal and oil transport. Kittitas has worked on a Vaux's Swift chimney project, Teanaway public land regulations, Naneum Ridge off-road vehicle opposition, Yakima Basin project (Bumping Lake) opposition, perch pole program with landowners, bluebird boxes. Spokane is involved in Audubon Reardon Lake land acquisition, Mount Spokane ski run opposition, and community outreach/education on songbird protection; North Central emphasized Greater Sage-grouse lek monitoring, sagebrush songbird survey, Horan Natural Area wildlife pond preservation, Chelan County water and habitat issues. Lower Columbia Basin reported active partnerships with other local, like-minded organizations, especially Friends of Badger Mountain and the Trust for Public Lands. The Alliance for a Livable and Sustainable Community is an umbrella for groups interested in collaborating on local issues of concern. There is substantial cross-pollination of membership between groups. These partnerships help provide additional issue expertise, personnel capacity, and further important community outreach efforts.

Lower Columbia Basin identifies and chooses conservation priority issues at board meetings based on interest, and the capacity of chapter personnel to become involved. Many issues are brought to their attention by partnering organizations. The chapter has an activist base of 20-30 members that is augmented to about 100 people through activist partnerships. Information about chapter conservation projects is shared with chapter membership and interested citizens via the LCBAS website and newsletters; members write letters to the editors of local newspapers; these newspapers

*continued on page 5*

## The Pygmy Owl

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## Announcements!

***There will be no general meeting in June.***

Have a great summer and  
we'll see you in September!

### Board Planning Meeting

If you'd like to give input on the operation of Spokane Audubon in the next year, you're invited to come to the annual board planning meeting.

When: Sunday, July 6  
9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

(Bring something to share for a potluck lunch!)

Where: Lindell Haggin's House

If you would like to attend,  
contact Lindell at [lindell4118@comcast.net](mailto:lindell4118@comcast.net)  
for her address.

This is an informal meeting where we discuss what Spokane Audubon has accomplished over the last year and what we hope to accomplish in the coming year. It's a productive meeting, and a good time. (*Note: You do not have to be a member of the board to attend.*)

Consider joining us!

### Field Trip Date Changes

The June 7 Liberty Lake Trip has been re-scheduled for June 14.

The June 15 Palisades/Indian Canyon Trip has been re-scheduled for June 22.

See page 6 for details!

*The Pygmy Owl* is taking a break for the summer.

We'll return in September.

September Newsletter Deadline:

**Friday, August 22**

Please send material to:  
[carmen@floreo.com](mailto:carmen@floreo.com)

# Sights & Sounds

## Bird Sightings for the Inland Northwest

by Tim O'Brien

Hello birders! As of May 24, reported species in Spokane county now total 187 for the year. Late spring migrants are still filtering into the county, with some common birds for this time of year not being reported yet.

Some of the more notable sightings since the last column include the following records: on May 11, two **AMERICAN AVOCETS** were spotted along Old Highway 195 south of Spangle; on May 12, the first **AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN** was spotted swimming on Meadow Lake.

Five **CASPIAN TERNS** were sighted at Williams Lake on May 10.

**BLACK TERNS** returned to the area with a report from the Fish Lake trail near Cheney on May 17.

A single **LEWIS'S WOODPECKER** was found out on the West Plains on South Stroup Road on May 2.

Nesting **LONG-EARED OWLS** have been relocated in a private site in the county for the second year in a row. Please do not inquire for details as this species is highly sensitive.

A recurring theme for birders this year is that *we're not seeing many birds*. Late spring seems to be following the pattern of the year. As we head into summer, we are missing several commonly found birds, so please email me or report them in eBird. Here is a list of some of them: **AMERICAN BITTERN, RED-NECKED PHALAROPE, BARRED OWL, SHORT-EARED OWL, COMMON POORWILL, OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER, PACIFIC-SLOPE FLYCATCHER, RED-EYED VIREO, ROCK WREN, VEERY, SWAINSON'S THRUSH, HERMIT THRUSH, GRAY CATBIRD, MACGILLIVRAY'S WARBLER, AMERICAN REDSTART, and FOX SPARROW.**

Our bird of the month is the **HOODED WARBLER** (see right) that was found by Mike Clarke at Kamiak Butte County Park in Whitman County. Kamiak Butte seems to be a preferred stop-over for this Eastern species throughout the years.

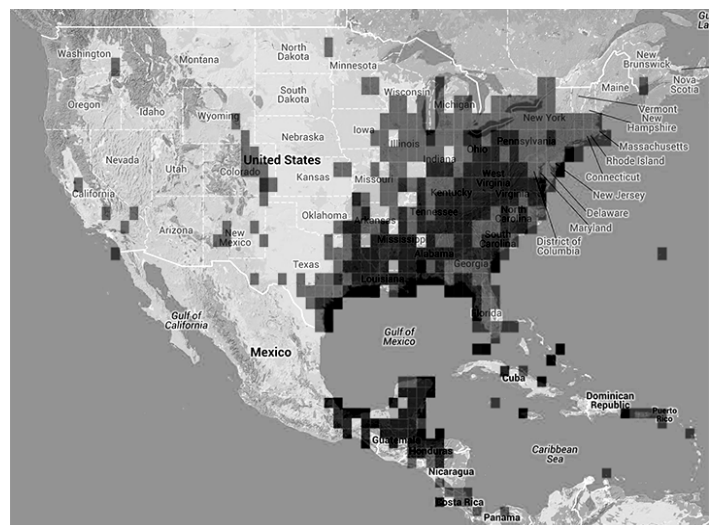
Have a great summer, and be sure to report those birds!

## Meet the Hooded Warbler (*Setophaga citrina*)



Photo: "Hooded Warbler - Montrose Point Bird Sanctuary - Lincoln Park, Chicago Park District, Chicago, IL - 6 May 2012," by *JanetandPhil* is licensed by CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

## Hooded Warbler Sightings, 2014 *retrieved from eBird May 25, 2014*



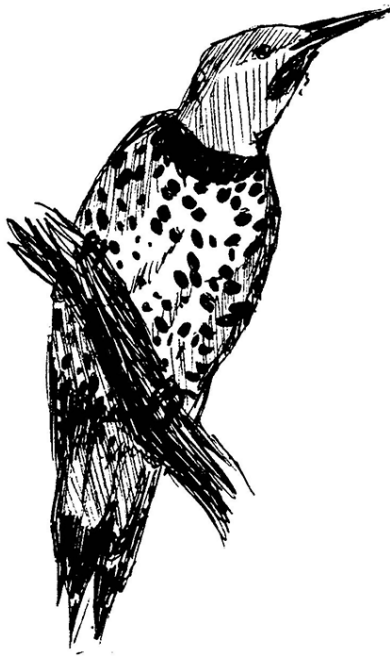
Our Eastern friend has made a few appearances outside of its range this year!



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## Field Trip Report: Beginning Bird Walk At Turnbull

By Fran Haywood



*Northern Flicker*  
by Kirsten Munson

Five friendly birders joined me on March 29, despite promised rain threatening. It was cold and breezy to start, but the sun came out and the rain held off. What more can you ask on a March birding walk?

Tree Swallows were soaring everywhere. A few days before, most of the swallows were Violet-green, but today they were really outnumbered by the Tree.

A family of Trumpeter Swans, (2 adults and 3 almost adult young), were in the main pool, along with another pair. They displayed nicely for us, even giving us an amazing fly-by.

A Killdeer appears to be setting up territory near the viewing telescopes, and told us to stay away.

We saw lots of Western Bluebirds, on and near the nest boxes at the riparian area and along the driving route.

Ducks included Ring-necked, along with Mallard, American Wigeon, Green-winged Teal, Lesser Scaup, and Hooded Merganser. American Coot, and a Pied-billed Grebe pair completed the waterfowl.

A pair of Black-capped Chickadee called and showed off for us and one White-breasted Nuthatch gave a lesson on his feeding behavior.

Noisy Flickers were everywhere, and a Red-tailed Hawk soared over.

Marsh Wrens scolded us from every cattail marsh, but refused to show themselves.

The Say's Phoebe I found on my scouting trip refused to show, but Robins and but-tercups were nice, as was a distant singing Western Meadowlark.

## Field Trip Report: Sprague Lake Field Trip

by Fran Haywood

Saturday April 19, eight of us in two cars headed first to Reardan and then south & west. Reardan highlights included most duck species, Pied Billed and Eared Grebe, and 4 Black-necked Stilt and a couple of Killdeer. We were treated to all three blackbird species, White-crowned and Song Sparrows, and scolding Marsh Wrens. Northern Harrier cruised over.

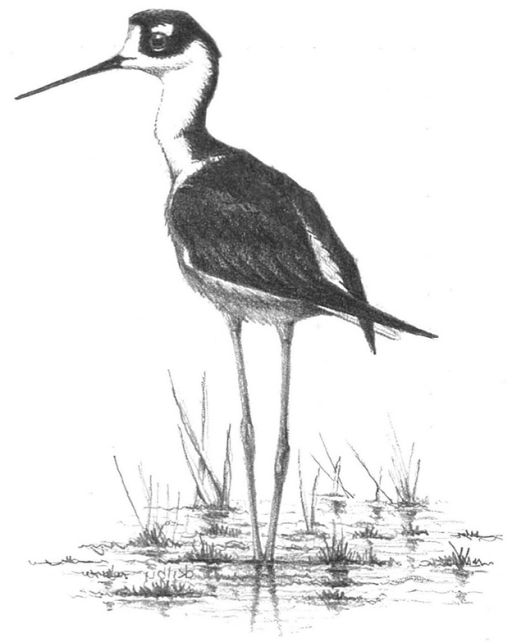
On Wollwebber Rd we spotted Swainson's hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Kestrel and Raven, though we missed Sandhill Crane. Schirr Rd yielded Turkey Vulture. Western Meadowlarks sang everywhere.

At Sprague Cemetery we added House Finch, Northern Flicker, Say's Phoebe and Ruby Crowned Kinglet.

Sprague water treatment ponds had 14 Dunlin, all lined up on a pipe, while Avocets and Stilts fed in the mud flats. Many ducks fed in the ponds.

Sprague Lake added Western Grebe pairs dancing and Double-crested Cormorant, and at the Cow Creek Bridge we added a flock of Cliff Swallows to the Tree and Violet-Green already seen. Horned Larks, and Meadowlarks sang and posed for us. We glimpsed Vesper and Savannah Sparrow. Cow Lake added a Common Loon to our tally, and Marsh Wrens scolded from the reeds at Hallin Lake.

Pleasant weather, great company with 43 species tallied. We managed to sandwich our trip between rain and roaring wind. It was truly a raptor day, as we saw many hawk species enjoying the weather.



*Black-necked Stilt*  
by Daniel S. Kilby

are very responsive to environmental news, including an article on the first bald eagles to nest within city limits. North Central Washington recently held a strategic planning meeting where they determined which two priority conservation goals they wanted to work on.

### ***Education And Outreach Priorities***

All chapters are involved in formal and/or informal education and outreach activities; for some chapters, education is their most significant community contribution.

Central Basin has long been involved with the Audubon Refuge Keepers (ARK) program, teaching children about the importance of the federal refuge system to bird and wildlife conservation. The program has become a principal component in the environmental curricula of 11 schools in the region. The chapter awards three \$750 scholarships each year. The chapter also does outreach regarding backyard birds with a project using a tuna fish can to make a feeder.

Lower Columbia Basin has an active education committee. They are currently looking for ways to add to their bird-banding project an educational component that will include protocol, identification, and eBird technology. Ed Rykiel suggested that there are education gaps at the high school and adult levels, perhaps because elementary schools are logistically the easiest to engage.

Kittitas is involved with the Kittitas Environmental Education Network (KEEN), which recently secured a one million dollar grant for the construction of an interpretive center.

Spokane often partners with the Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge where 8,000 students (mostly of elementary age) partake in field and classroom sessions on water quality, habitat and animal adaptation to environment. These programs are presented by an Americorps leader, often assisted by SAS members. SAS and Friends of Turnbull have begun monthly beginning birding classes at the Refuge. Spokane also partners with local Master Hunters to create bird models used for a scavenger hunt at the annual spring Festival.

North Central Washington focuses mostly on education. The chapter is involved with numerous festivals throughout the year, and may be adding another festival in Ferry County! They have an education partnership with the Wenatchee River Institute, and are now partnering with Wenatchee College on an Intro to Birding class (a mini version of larger Master Birder courses). One popular and successful education tool is their "What's that Bird?" program whereby they pose analog birds in natural habitat and help children identify the still figures. This could be an excellent tool for the sagebrush songbird survey project with a set of sagebrush

birds. The chapter is also looking to create an online birding guide. Barb Masberg suggested an app version to encourage young people to utilize the tool. It was thought this may be out of budget, but could possibly be developed with a license from the NAS ESRI program.

LCBAS considered the need to better align their education and outreach goals with their conservation priorities. Opportunities to use conservation priority language (e.g. "sagebrush shrub-steppe habitat", "bird friendly community/playground") in current programs could be a way to easily incorporate larger-scale "One Audubon" conservation topics/strategies, and promote consistent, big picture messaging/thinking.

### ***Pilot Project In Practice***

The Sagebrush Songbird Survey is off to a roaring start! Robin Priddy reported that, when LCBAS was approached about being the first chapter to engage in this pilot project, she simply said "Yes!" From there, the project sprang to life somewhat organically through member collaboration and interest, and leadership from Audubon Washington. This is a model validation presence/absence survey involving enthusiastic community scientists, a professionally developed scientific protocol, and crowd-sourced data management through eBird. LCBAS has found that meaningful work is what has drawn together a talented team of birders to participate in this innovative agency-partner project.

Chapter capacity has expanded. This project has given access to established birders and young energy that is attracted to birding activities. The project has become a road by which to pull people into chapter work and build chapter membership. Outreach flows naturally through meaningful work. The LCBAS chapter has an informal steering committee of people interested in the project to help coordinate and lead related activities and tasks. Member capacity has grown in the way of knowledge transmission, GIS capabilities, field and audio avian species identification, birding to a scientific protocol, and eBird data input.

Project communications are delivered through once/month in-person committee meetings, a page via the Audubon Washington website (and links to this page on chapter websites) with survey/protocol information and training resources, and a Google Docs folder with volunteer and scheduling information that can be edited by participants.

There is potential for all Eastern Washington chapters to be involved in this project. Once the challenges of the pilot year are solved, this project will be scaled up to include birds in the range of the Columbia Plateau.

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## SAS Field Trips June - September

**June 1, 2014, 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 am. Contact Lindell Haggin, 466-4118 or [lindell4118@comcast.net](mailto: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.

Target Species: Common and Hooded Merganser; Osprey; woodpeckers; Pacific-slope and Willow Flycatchers; Warbling, Cassin's and Red-eyed Vireos; White-breasted Nuthatch; Bewick's and House Wrens; Gray Catbird; Black-headed Grosbeak; Bullock's Oriole

### **June 8, 2014, Sunday 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](mailto:kthorburn@msn.com) by June 1.

Target species: Variety of migrating warblers, Lazuli Buntings, Rock and Canyon Wrens, and much more (Douglas Creek); all varieties of swallows, some shorebirds and waterfowl (Waterville STP); Warbling Vireos, several warbler species and more (Badger Mtn.)

### **June 14, 2014, Saturday Liberty Lake Trip Leaders: Joyce Alonso and Brian Miller**

**Note: This field trip was originally scheduled for June 7.** This is a mostly easy, walking half-day trip. Liberty Lake hosts some of the best habitat diversity in Spokane County, with extensive wetlands and prairie, old second-growth Ponderosa Pine, and some of the best wetbelt mixed conifer forest in the area. We'll meet at the Liberty Lake Albertson's parking lot, time to be determined. Guided by Brian, we'll drive nearby roads to seek some target birds. We'll then go walk through the park and end up at Brian's home, with its great feeders, to eat our brown bag lunches. Contact Joyce Alonso (448-2447) by June 10 if you plan to attend.

Target Species: Red-necked Grebe; Wilson's Snipe; Virginia Rails; Sora; woodpeckers; Hammond's, Dusky, and Willow Flycatchers; Cassin's, Warbling, and Red-eyed Vireos; Marsh Wren; Yellow, MacGillivray's, Orange-crowned, Townsend's, and Nashville Warblers; American Redstart; Common Yellowthroat

### **June 20-June 22, 2014, Friday-Sunday Little Pend Oreille National Wildlife Refuge Camping Trip Leaders: Joyce Alonso and Fran Haywood**

Enjoy a great time camping and birding at Little Pend Oreille NWR in Stevens County, WA. Participants are encouraged to attend for whatever part of this trip suits personal schedules. We'll do everything from look for Black-backed Woodpeckers to admire butterflies, and try to ID the wildflowers. There will be potluck main meals (maybe even a marshmallow roast) and campfire songs! To reserve a place or for more information, contact Fran Haywood (290-1814 or [birders13@gmail.com](mailto:birders13@gmail.com))

[gmail.com](mailto:birders13@gmail.com)) or Joyce Alonso (448-2447) by June 13. Camping fees may apply.

Target Species: Woodpeckers, Black-backed, White-headed and common species; warblers, vireos, flycatchers, jays, thrushes, finches, chickadees, nuthatches and ducks and grebes

### **June 22, 2014, Sunday Palisades/Indian Canyon Trip Leader: Lindell Haggin**

**Note: This field trip was originally scheduled for June 15.** All levels of birders are invited to explore the Indian Canyon area immediately west of town. Come outfitted with binoculars and field guides, water, and shoes or boots for walking one or two miles. We will meet at 6:30 am at the Rosauer's at 1808 W. 3rd Ave. The field trip will end at approximately 11:00 am. Contact Lindell Haggin (446-4118 or [lindell4118@comcast.net](mailto:lindell4118@comcast.net)) by June 14 if you plan to attend.

Target Species: Raptors, woodpeckers, White-throated Swifts, Western Wood-pewee, Dusky and Hammond's Flycatchers, Cassin's and Warbling Vireos, breeding sparrows and finches, Black-headed Grosbeak

### **June 28, 2014, Saturday Mount Spokane Subalpine Birds Trip Leader: Jim Hudlow**

This is a half-day hiking trip for all levels of birders. The grade is very gentle, but we will walk four to six miles. Be prepared with plenty of snacks and water. You may retreat at any point. Mt. Spokane is the primary (and only publicly accessible) site for subalpine breeding birds in Spokane County, making this a popular and exciting annual event. Meet 7:00 am **SHARP** at Foothills Community Church, 11100 N. Peck Road. Contact Jim Hudlow ([flyz4free@yahoo.com](mailto:flyz4free@yahoo.com) or 509-926-2186) by June 21 if you plan to attend.



Note: Discover Passes required for all vehicles in Mt. Spokane State Park. Purchase online or at REI.

Target Species: Dusky and Ruffed Grouse; accipiters; Northern Pygmy Owl; woodpeckers; Hammond's Flycatcher; Warbling and Cassin's Vireos; Gray and Stellar's Jays; Chestnut-backed Chickadee; Swainson's, Hermit, and Varied Thrushes; Yellow-rumped and Townsend's Warblers; Fox Sparrow; Cassin's Finch; Red Crossbill

**August 23th, Saturday  
Trail of Coeur D'Alene's  
Bike Birding**

**Leader: Alan McCoy and Sandy Sollie**

Interested in covering lots of ground without a car? Or just combining birding and a little exercise? The wetlands along this section of the trail can be great for migrating shorebirds, cranes, pelicans, and waterfowl. Expect a fun, easy 10-20 mile ride on a paved flat trail for all level of birders. Bring your bicycle/helmet, lunch, water, snacks, and optics and meet at the Harrison Marina trailhead at 7:30 am. After the

ride, we can sit at the marina and have an ice cream cone as a reward! Contact Alan at (509-448-3123 or or [ahm2352@gmail.com](mailto:ahm2352@gmail.com)) by August 16 to reserve and get information or for carpooling.

(Note: Adverse weather may force cancellation or rescheduling).

**September 6, 2014 Saturday  
Sprague Lake Migrant Trip  
Leader: Norma Trefry**

This is a half-day trip to the Sprague Lake area to look for migrating birds, and birds that often stray here in September. Meet at Coeur d'Alene Park at 7 am.

Please contact Norma ([firsttrefry@gmail.com](mailto:firsttrefry@gmail.com), 926-2533) by August 30 to confirm participation.

Target Birds: Waterfowl, loons and grebes, White Pelican, Peregrine Falcon, Red-necked Phalarope, Sabine's Gull (rare), terns, American Pipit, migrant sparrows and warblers.

**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: \_\_\_\_\_



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**Spokane Audubon Society**  
Send this form and your check to:

Audubon Membership  
Attn: Dave Plemons  
1224 W. Riverside #1101  
Spokane, WA 99201

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<http://spokaneaudubon.org>

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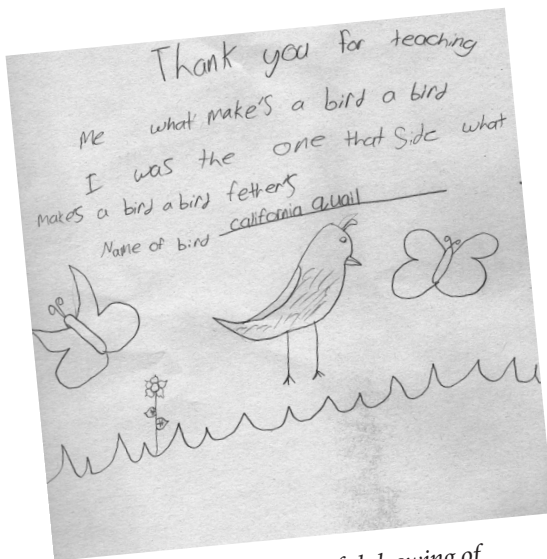
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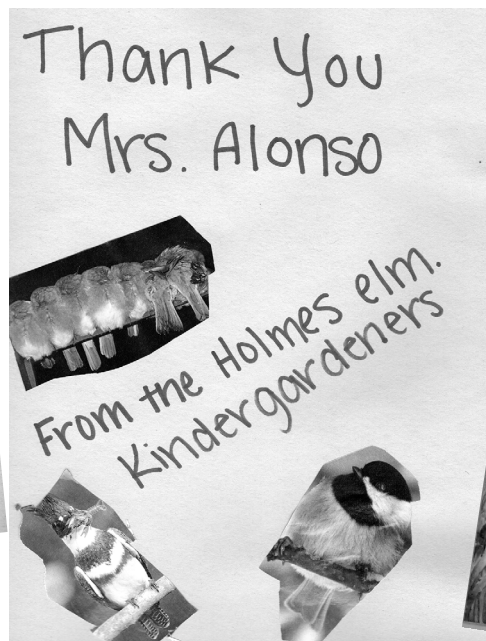
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**Visit our website: <http://spokaneaudubon.org>**

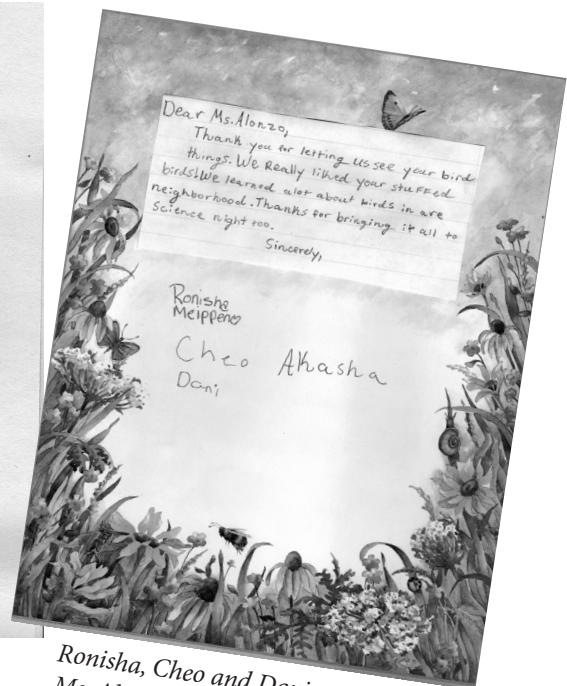
Earlier this year, Joyce Alonso taught a bird class for students at Holmes Elementary. Thanks in large part to one teacher's interest, Holmes is one of our newest education program participants. The students sent some wonderful thank you notes!



Mallory Rice sent a beautiful drawing of a California Quail along with a thank you note to Joyce: "Thank you for teaching me what makes a bird a bird. I was the one that said what makes a bird (is) feathers."



Miss Kaelyn's kindergarden class made a collage featuring all kinds of birds. They said, "Thank you for coming and showing us all those cool birds!"



Ronisha, Cheo and Dani wrote, "Dear Ms. Alonso, Thank you for letting us see your bird things. We really liked your stuffed birds! We learned about birds in our neighborhood. Thanks for bringing it all to science night, too."