

Spokane Audubon's next meeting will be:
Wednesday, September 14th at 7:30 p.m. Social get-together at 7:00

Volume 27
Issue 10
June 2019

The Pygmy Owl

The Newsletter of the
Spokane Audubon Society



Spring on the LPO

by Lisa Langelier

From 1994 until 2008, I managed Little Pend Oreille National Wildlife Refuge (LPO). The place sank deep roots into my heart. Still owns a part of me. Some of you may be thinking about visiting the refuge during a June Spokane Audubon field trip. June is prime time for birds on LPO. If you cannot make the June trip, try to go at another time.

LPO lies east of Colville in the Selkirk Mountains, with elevations ranging from 1,800 ft. on the western border to 5,600 ft. at Olson Peak, the highest point on the eastern border. Along this elevational gradient, you will find open Ponderosa pine and Douglas fir in the lowlands, western larch, grand fir, western red cedar, and hemlock in the mid-elevations on up to the high elevation subalpine fir and spruce forests. Diverse forest types, coupled with riparian and wetland habitats, old orchards, and farm fields attract more than 205 bird, 58 mammal, 8 reptile, and 6 amphibian species to this 41,878-acre refuge. Some suggestions on where to go, sprinkled with reminiscences, follow.

Hike the 4.5-mile Mill Butte Trail across from Headquarters. I traipsed those pine-clad hills many times during my lunchtime walks. If you are lucky, you may see or hear a Townsend's solitaire. One day I found a solitaire nest on the ground in a fire scar at the base of a tree – solitaires often build their nests in sheltered places. It was a cup of woven pine needles lined by grass and bits of bark. Another species to watch for along the trail is the white-headed woodpecker – one of nine woodpecker species to call LPO home.

Explore Cottonwood Camp on the Little Pend Oreille River, one-half mile from Headquarters. This riparian area harbors many riparian-dependent species including red-eyed vireos, American redstarts, MacGillivray's, yellow, and Nashville warblers. Nearby you may see or hear a least flycatcher, lazuli bunting, ruffed grouse, or American dipper.

Continue on the 10-mile auto tour along Bear Creek Road with its 12 interpretive panels that describe refuge history, habitats, wild inhabitants, and management practices. Check out the massive Ponderosas near Bear Creek Camp in an area dubbed "The Pines." You can detour off the auto tour toward Potter's Pond and Bayley Lake where moose and many other species may show themselves.

Head back to the tour route, going north along Rookery Road, and hike to the beaver pond overlook. One of my favorite LPO places is McDowell Lake. If you walk down to the lake, you may notice painted turtles suspended in water or lining logs on shore.



McDowell Lake © Lisa Langelier

(cont on page 2)

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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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Lazuli Bunting ©Jesse Amesbury

Walk along the ADA-accessible nature trail, lovingly built by the Friends of LPO, that starts at River Camp and leads to McDowell Marsh and Lake. Search for yellowthroats, ruby-crowned kinglets, barn swallows, mergansers, buffleheads, osprey, and bald eagles. Red-necked grebes once nested along the lakeshore but I think the river otters made their lives difficult.

Years ago, our fire crew was piling branches from a thinning project on the west side of the refuge when they spotted a flammulated owl chick. Although it had left the nest cavity, the chick was too young to survive on its own. Not commonly seen, this small nocturnal owl (about five inches tall), with small ear tufts and dark eyes, resides in mature open pine and Douglas fir forests in the West. Since it eats mostly insects, it winters in Mexico and Central America. We left the owl for the parents who likely were nearby keeping vigil.

If you still have time and want to explore higher elevation habitats, visit Blacktail Mountain, or head east on State Highway 20 to Tacoma Creek Road (also called Olson Creek Road). Cross the Little Pend Oreille River and look for belted kingfishers, chestnut-backed chickadees, or spruce grouse.

Let the LPO test all your senses. Smell the fresh scent of cottonwood resin, watch the shimmering green aspen, and hear the ethereal trill of Swainson's thrush. Enjoy LPO--your National Wildlife Refuge. It may claim a spot in your heart too.

September Pygmy Owl
Deadline August 20th

*Please note there is no Pygmy Owl
for July and August*

Field Notes

Bird Sightings for the Inland Northwest, compiled by Jon Isacoff

Migration has just passed its peak and birds are singing everywhere. As is always the case, some really interesting birds showed up in unexpected places. May has been a banner month thus far for uncommon/rare shorebirds, as listed below. As shorebird migration winds down, be on the lookout for birds singing unusual songs – it might be a vagrant that has come to set up shop here in our backyard!

Ross's Goose: Potlach (4/21-JE and NP)

Snow Goose: Kootenai NWR (4/24-CE); Sprague (5/8-NT); Potholes Reservoir (5/16-RoB and MY)

Sandhill Crane: Blue Lagoons (5/12-NP)

Semipalmated Plover: Swanson Lakes (5/16-JI)

Marbled Godwit: Sprague (4/26-RoB)

Long-billed Curlew: Airway Heights (4/25-MW)

RUDDY TURNSTONE: Potholes Reservoir (5/15-RoB)

RED KNOT: Potholes Reservoir (5/16-RoB)

Semipalmated Sandpiper: Swanson Lakes (5/16-JI)

Franklin's Gull: Reardan (5/17-TL); Ewan (5/19-JI and CL); Saltese Wetlands (5/20-JI)

Forster's Tern: Sprague (5/18-TL); Ewan (5/19-JI and CL)

WHITE-FACED IBIS: Sprague (5/6-JE)

BROAD-WINGED HAWK: Spokane (4/28-MW)

Ferruginous Hawk: Sprague (5/6-JE)

Black-backed Woodpecker: Aladdin (5/6-JC); Jungle Hill (5/16-RaB)

Peregrine Falcon: Ewan (4/28-JE and NP); Swanson Lakes (5/16-MC and JI)

Purple Finch: North Potholes Reserve (5/18-MY)

Lesser Goldfinch: Seven Bays (4/26-JV); Spokane (5/4-MW); Lincoln (5/16-JI); Spokane Valley (5/9-MC)

Lapland Longspur Airway Heights (4/25-MW)

Clay-colored Sparrow: Swanson Lakes (5/16-JI); Reardan (5/16-JE)

Sagebrush Sparrow: Odessa (5/11-ST)

Golden-crowned Sparrow: Hawk Creek (4/27-JV); Sprague (5/3-JI); Viola (5/3-NW); Davenport (5/3-MC); Spokane (5/4-MW)

Tricolored Blackbird: Sprague (5/8-JI)

Observers: DB-Don Baker; MB-Missy Baker; RB-R.J. Baltierra; RaB-Rachel Barton; RoB-Roopak Bhatt; DB-Donna Bragg; BB-Ben Bright; JC-Janice Ceridwen; MaC-Marlene Cashen; WC-Warren Current; RDC-Rich Del Carlo; JC-Janice Ceridwen; KD-Kas Dumroese; JoE-Johnna Eilers; JE-Jacob Elonen; CE-Carol Ellis; FF-Fred Forssell; MF-Marian Frobe; LH-Lindell Haggin; BH-Bea Harrison; JI-Jon Isacoff; SJ-Steve Joyce; BK-Bob Kemp; TL-Terry Little; CoL-Courtney Litwin; CL-Carl Lundblad; CM-Curtis Mahon; TM-Theresa Mathis; DM-David McNeely; NM-Nancy Miller; TO-Tim O'Brien; PO-Peter Olsoy; NP-Neil Paprocki; ER-Eric Rassmussen; NR-Nick Risch; ShS-Shane Sater; SS-Sandy Schreven; KS-Katie Sorenson; CS-Charles Swift; MS-Mark Stromberg; SP-Shep Thorp; JV-Joe Veverka DW-Doug Ward; NW-Nancy Williams; MW-Michael Woodruff; DY-David Yake; MY-Matt Yawney



Ruddy Turnstone ©Arthur Morris

Audubon Council of Washington (ACOW)

SAVE THE DATE!

Audubon Council of Washington

HOST REGION: Southwest Chapters (Vancouver, Willapa Bay, Grays Harbor, Tahoma, Black Hills)

WHEN: September 27-29, 2019

WHERE: Vancouver Water Resources Education Center, 4600 SE Columbia Way, Vancouver, WA 98661

REGISTRATION: \$40/person

THEME: 100% Audubon

Inspired by our recent victory in passing the 100% Clean Energy legislation, we have been reflecting on all we can accomplish when we – as an Audubon community – are 100% committed. By combining forces, all our initiatives are stronger, and with a mentality of 100% we remove the barriers that keep us from thinking big in what we can accomplish together.

In this year's ACOW, we will focus on big initiatives that could impact 100% of Audubon chapters. Key speakers include the director of Audubon's new Migratory Birds Initiative and the leader of the Campus Chapter Program. We will take time to celebrate recent achievements, in the legislature (e.g., 100% Clean Energy) and across the landscape (e.g., completion of the Sagebrush Songbird Survey in Eastern Washington.) And we will honor longtime Audubon leader Helen Engle, who exemplified what it means to be 100% in for the birds.

During this weekend, we'll reserve time to share our work, learn from each other, identify opportunities to collaborate, and network with Auduboners from across the state.

ACOW will start on Friday afternoon with education and conservation committee meetings, followed by pizza and an evening speaker. We will meet all day Saturday and conclude with field trips on Sunday to see cranes and other special birds in the region.

Please save the weekend on your calendars now, and watch the website for more information as it becomes available. See you in Vancouver!

-Teri Anderson

Membership in the Spokane Audubon Society Has its Perks.

Contributed by Alan McCoy

"Pet Vittles and Wild Bird West is offering current members of the Spokane Audubon Society a 10% discount on wild bird seed, most bird feeders and bird houses! This discount will not be applied to items that are already discounted at the time of purchase."

Pet Vittles and Wild Bird West
919 N Argonne Rd
Spokane Valley WA 99212

(509) 927-0675

Membership Report

by Dave Plemons

Update of Members' Nesting through May 22, 2019:

Welcome to our new nesters: Anne Jessica Hoss & Family and Lori Pegg. We especially appreciate the lifetime membership of Nancy McCambridge.

Many thanks to our returning nesters: Lisa Langelier, Sherry & Craig Lee, Kenneth Penner & Family and Delores Schwindt.

Many nesters chose to not receive a hard copy of the Pygmy Owl. If you could help us to reduce costs and save paper and energy by switching to our electronic full-color publication, please contact me. You already have access to the newsletter on the Spokane Audubon WebSite on the Pygmy Owl page. To receive a personal PDF copy for your own file, we will need your Email address. Mine is davep_acer@msn.com. Legibility is critical. Occasionally I cannot clearly make out some Email addresses.

Disease Prevention at Your Feeders

from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology

If you notice sick birds around your feeders, make sure you clean your bird feeding area. In fact, it's a good idea to regularly clean your feeders even when there are no signs of sick birds: prevention is the key to avoiding the spread of disease.

To clean your feeder, take it apart and use a dishwasher on a hot setting or hand wash either with soap and boiling water or with a dilute bleach solution (no more than 1 part bleach to 9 parts water). For a less toxic solution replace the bleach with vinegar. Rinse thoroughly and allow to dry before refilling. If a sick bird does come to your feeder, minimize the risk of infecting other birds by cleaning your feeder area thoroughly. If you see several diseased birds, take down all your feeders for at least a week to give the birds a chance to disperse.



Easy Tricks for Cleaning Under Bird Feeders

Here are several ways to clean under feeders. While each method will not necessarily be effective in every yard, the best way to keep the ground clean is to use as many techniques as possible.

Rake the ground to loosen hulls and debris, then use an outdoor shop vacuum or leaf vacuum to collect the material and dispose of it properly.

Move feeders to a new position in the yard each month, rotating positions so each prior location can naturally decompose before it is used again.

Add a 3-4-inch layer of mulch below the feeders, then turn the mulch to bury debris where it can decompose out of sight. Replace the mulch seasonally to dispose of remaining debris.

Allow feeders to remain empty for a day or two to encourage birds to pick up spilled seed and be their own cleanup crew.

Trim grass around the feeder shorter than the rest of the lawn so the debris can be cleaned up more easily, and mow around the feeding area with a collector bag for easy disposal.

I Found A Baby Bird. What Do I Do?



Nestlings (left) are mostly featherless and helpless birds that should be returned to their nests, if possible. Fledglings (right) are mobile and well-feathered. Their parents are likely nearby and they rarely need help.

Images via Birdshare: Anne Elliot (left); Central Jersey Wildlife (right).

At some point, nearly everyone who spends time outdoors finds a baby bird—one that is unable to fly well and seems lost or abandoned. Your first impulse may be to help the young bird, but in the great majority of cases the young bird doesn't need help. In fact, intervening often makes the situation worse. Here's how to determine whether to take action:

The first thing to do is to figure out if the baby bird is a nestling or a fledgling. Most of the baby birds people find are fledglings. These are young birds that have just left the nest, are still under the care of their parents, and do not need our help. Fledglings are feathered and capable of hopping or flitting, with toes that can tightly grip your finger or a twig. These youngsters are generally adorable and fluffy, with a tiny stub of a tail.

When fledglings leave their nest, they rarely return; so even if you see the nest it's not a good idea to put the bird back in—it will hop right back out. Usually there is no reason to intervene at all beyond putting the bird on a nearby perch out of harm's way and keeping pets indoors. The parents may be attending to four or five young scattered in different directions, but they will return to care for the one you have found. You can watch from a distance to make sure the parents are returning to care for the fledgling.

If the baby bird is sparsely feathered and not capable of hopping, walking, flitting, or gripping tightly to your finger, it's a nestling. If so, the nest is almost certainly nearby. If you can find the nest (it may be well hidden), put the bird back as quickly as possible. Don't worry—parent birds do not recognize their young by smell. They will not abandon a baby if it has been touched by humans. If the nest has been destroyed you can make a new one, place the chick back inside and watch to see if the parents come back.

If you have found both parents dead, the young bird is injured, you can't find the nest, or are absolutely certain that the bird was orphaned, then your best course of action is to bring it to a wildlife rehabilitator. You can find one in the wildlife rehabilitator directory, or Google your state and "wildlife rehabilitation." A sick, injured or orphaned baby bird may need emergency care until you can get it to a wildlife rehabilitator.

Bottom line: remember that the vast majority of "abandoned" baby birds are perfectly healthy fledglings whose parents are nearby and watching out for them.

from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology submitted by Alan McCoy

2019 Field Trips at a Glance

June 7-8, 2019 Friday-Saturday
Little Pend Oreille National Wildlife Refuge
Leader: Mike Munts/Alan McCoy

June 8, 2019 Saturday
Liberty Lake
Leader: Sandy Sollie

December 15, 2019, Sunday
Cheney Christmas Bird Count
Leader: Sandy Schreven

December 29, 2019, Sunday
Spokane Christmas Bird Count
Leader: Alan McCoy



Details of the field trips will be found on our website
<https://www.audubonspokane.org/upcoming-events>.

Spokane Audubon Society Membership Form

Local Membership Dues:

Individual: \$20/year _____

Couple & Family: \$25/year _____

Student: \$10/year _____

Lifetime: \$300 _____

Donation _____

Your local membership provides you with *The Pygmy Owl* and supports your local chapter's many conservation and education activities.

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_acer@msn.com, or 413-1524.



The Pygmy Owl
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June 2019

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 Bldg
 2117 E. North Crescent Avenue

From West Spokane & South Hill

- 1-90 East to Exit 281 toward US-1 E/US-395 N (Newport/Colville)
- Follow US-2 E/US-395 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 Dr.

From North Spokane

- Take US-395 S to E. Mission Ave.
- Turn Left at E. Mission Ave.
- Turn Left at E. Upriver Dr.

Once you're on E. Upriver Drive (see map below)

- Follow E. Upriver Drive to N. Crestline Street
- Turn Left on N. Crestline Street
- Turn Right on E. North Crescent Drive
- Proceed to entry on left showing numbers 2015-2145



Limited parking is available by the Village Community Building. Overflow parking is along E. North Crescent Ave.



BirdNote can also be heard on KEWU 89.5 FM 8 a.m. daily

