

The Pygmy Owl

Volume 26
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January 2017

The Newsletter of the
Spokane Audubon Society



Spokane Pollinators: Their Habitat, Food, and Behavior

Our January 11th program will be presented by Jeanne Dammarell, a multi-faceted nature enthusiast and Life Spokane Audubon member. Jean has lived in our area for many years. While she modestly disclaims any designation as an “expert”, those who know her can testify to her knowledge of birds, plants and insects, as well as her talent with a camera. Her photographs are highly regarded by everyone who has seen them.

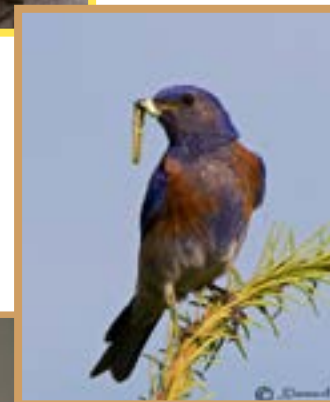
Although Jeanne’s initial field of study was history, in which she received her B.A., she later obtained a degree in horticulture, which led to her interest in habitat and, then, birds. As she observed them, she became curious about their behavior, their habitat and their food. As time went on, the study and photography of insects became her central focus (oops, a pun!). The content of Jeanne’s program, I think, is best described in her own words.

“What I’m hoping to bring to the meeting is an appreciation of the diverse intricacies of the places we visit regularly. I’ll focus on the landscapes that surround Spokane...most heavily on the sagebrush habitats of Lincoln County. When you say, ‘pollinators’, most people assume...honeybees...,possibly butterflies. The reality is much deeper...the many native bees, flies, moths, butterflies and other insects in our area are absolutely necessary to the continued migration of birds in Spring. I also hope to inspire birders to think about their role as caretakers in an urban landscape. I’ll address things we can do in our yards to improve on the food and nesting capacity of the city and suburbs. It’s surprisingly easy...and fun... and you reap the benefits for years.”

This is sure to be a great program, one that nobody will want to miss. Y’all come...at 7:00 pm to socialize (meeting starts shortly after 7:30), on Wednesday, January 11th.



Two-tailed Swallowtail



Western Bluebird holding a moth caterpillar.



Male Monarch butterfly perched on milkweed.

Photos by Jeanne Dammarell

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Owl illustrations on pg. 1 and pg. 8 © Jan Reynolds.



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Spokane Audubon Field Trips for 2017

As you glance over this January issue of the Pygmy Owl, you might notice that something is missing. For the last several years this issue has been devoted largely to a list of our field trip offerings for the upcoming year. I am writing this article to explain why you are not now perusing and anticipating field trips. The position of Field Trip coordinator (along with some other leadership positions in Spokane Audubon) has been vacant for a year. At our last board meeting I volunteered to add that job to my Audubon commitment. Thus I am writing these words. For the last couple of years we have noticed a significant drop-off in the number folks participating in our field trips. As a result some of our leaders have told us that they are no longer willing to lead trips. Furthermore, attendance at our monthly meetings has been lagging of late.

It seems that we have come to a moment begging for reflection and re-evaluation. This reflection involves our field trips certainly, but also our mission and community service. Are we providing services that meet needs in the community? I think so. Do you? How can we do a better job of meeting your needs? We need to cultivate new leaders for Spokane Audubon and new members as well. Can you help with that? I hope so.

In early January I want to have a planning meeting to look at our field trips for 2017 with the idea of re-designing the trips we offer. We will probably offer fewer trips this year. Maybe we will offer new trips and perhaps we will offer some trips every other year. We might offer more advanced trips more often. Another idea is to use a service like MeetUp or email to offer more spontaneous trips. Your field trip ideas are welcome!

Please contact me by phone or email to talk about field trips or anything else having to do with Spokane Audubon.

Alan McCoy
509-448-3123
ahm2352@gmail.com

Spokane Audubon's next meeting will be:

Wednesday, January 11th at 7:30 p.m.

Deadline for February P.O. submissions
is January 20th.

Field Notes

Bird Sightings for the Inland Northwest, compiled by Jon Isacoff

The deep freeze is on. As a result, birds have fled the region in droves! Sadly, almost no winter finches have arrived in the region, although to make up for it, there have been frequent Bohemian Waxwings sightings with several flocks in the 100-200 range. Overall, however, this is a slow time for birding in the region, especially with most if not all non-moving water frozen over. Look to Christmas Bird Counts to turn up so exciting and unexpected finds!

Snow Goose: Moscow (11/26-CS); Medical Lake (11/26-SS); Slavin Ranch (11/25-SS); Liberty Lake (11/26-MC); Spokane Valley (12/2-DC)

Surf Scoter: Spring Canyon Campground (11/26-JI); Sandpoint (11/27-ER)

White-winged Scoter: Evans Campground (12/4-DB)

Long-tailed Duck: Electric City (12/17-RM)

Mew Gull: Colville (11/27-WC); Coeur D'Alene (12/16-TL)

Glaucous Gull: Coeur D'Alene (12/16-TL)

Anna's Hummingbird: Spokane (11/20-12/10-CoL); Hayden (12/12-16-DW)

Say's Phoebe: Rare in November (11/27-ND)

Snow Bunting: Steptoe Butte (11/22-RB); Almira (12/9-TL)

White-throated Sparrow: Hayden (12/14-DW)

White-throated Sparrow: Davenport Cemetery (11/18-JR, JA)

White-winged Crossbill: Pullman (12/12-RB)

Gray-crowned Rosy Finch: Steptoe Butte (11/29-SO)

Common Redpoll: Sandpoint (11/25-RDC)



Snow Buntings
© Anjoudiscus, Mirabel

Observers: JA-Joyce Alonzo; DB-Don Baker; MB-Missy Baker; RB-R.J. Baltierra; MaB-Matt Bartels; TB-DB-Donna Bragg; BB-Ben Bright; Janet Callen (JC); MaC-Marlene Cashen; MC-Mike Clarke; DC-David Crafton; WC-Warren Current; KD-Kirsten Dahl; RDC-Rich Del Carlo; MD-Mike Denny; MLD-Merry-Lynn Denny; ND-Nancy Draznin, KD-Kas Dumroese; PE-Patrick Ellsworth; GF-Greg Falco; BF-Bob Flores; MF-Marian Frobe; RF-Russell Frobe; EG-Emma Gregory; JG-Jim Greaves; LH-Lindell Haggin; JH-John Hanna; LH-Lisa Hardy; FH-Fran Haywood; BH-Bettie Hoff; RH-Ray Hoff; DH-Dave Holick; JI-Jon Isacoff; CJ-Craig Johnson; SJ-Steve Joyce; RK-Russ Koppen-drayer; DK-David Kreft; CL-Christopher Lindsey; JL-Joshua Little; TL-Terry Little; CoL-Courtney Litwin; CL-Carl Lundblad; CM-Cindy McCormack; AM-Alan McCoy; EM-Eliot Miller; NM-Nancy Miller; RM-Roy Myers; SO-Scott O'Donnell; PO-Peter Olsoy; JP-Jonathan Pafford; ER-Eric Rassmussen; JR-Jan Reynolds; JR-Jethro Runco; SS-Sandy Schreven; HS-Herman Schreven; MS-Mark Stromberg; SS-Shirley Sturts; CS-Charles Swift; JT-Jason Talbot; NT-Norma Trefry; TW-TC Walker; DW-Doug Ward; PW-Paul Warnick; JW-John Wolff; TW-Tina Wynnecoop; MY-Matt Yawney; WY-Will Young

Merlin Bird Photo ID Mobile App Launches

Computer vision app can identify North American bird species from photographs

For release: December 14, 2016

Ithaca, NY, New York, NY, & Pasadena, CA--The Merlin Bird Photo ID mobile app has been launched and, thanks to machine-learning technology, can identify hundreds of North American species it "sees" in photos. The app was developed by [Caltech](#) and [Cornell Tech](#) computer vision researchers in partnership with the [Cornell Lab of Ornithology](#) and bird enthusiasts. Because Merlin Bird Photo ID can be used on mobile devices, it can go anywhere bird watchers go.

"When you open the Merlin Bird Photo ID app, you're asked if you want to take a picture with your smartphone or pull in an image from your digital camera," explains Merlin project leader Jessie Barry at the Cornell Lab. "You zoom in on the bird, confirm the date and location, and Merlin will show you the top choices for a match from among the 650 North American species it knows."



Photo ID may be downloaded free for iOS or Android systems from the [Apple](#) and [Google Play](#) app stores. It is included in the Merlin Bird ID app, which was originally released in 2014 and ask users five questions to help them identify a bird they saw.

Sagebrush Songbird Survey

The planning and scoping of sites for this year's Sagebrush Songbird Survey has been going apace. We will be doing most of the work in Lincoln County. It is a wonderful opportunity to get out in the wonderful shrub-steppe habitat each spring, see and hear good birds, and gather important data for Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. There will be a training session April 1 and 2 in Moses Coulee. People will stay in the Nature Conservancy's lodge. Experts will be there to help you learn the habits and songs of the target species. There will also be training on GPS units needed to locate the observation sites. The ability to hear bird songs is vital, as well as the ability to walk up to two miles. If you are interested in participating, please contact Lindell Haggin (lindell4118@comcast.net or call 466-4118). It is a great opportunity to get out and enjoy some wonderful birds in a marvelous setting.

Lindell Haggin
509-466-4118

GROW YOUR AUDUBON

Tom Light, Pres.

Spokane Audubon Society is evolving and needs your help!

Events, Meetings, and Field Trips don't fall out of the sky. They take volunteers and planning. In order for our organization to thrive into this 21st century we need some new volunteers and new ideas. If not you, then who?

We currently have several opportunities for you to shine your light on the evolution of Spokane Audubon programs and activities. This is an opportunity for you to define the future direction of SAS.

- Join the Board of Directors - several slots are available
- Field Trips - new places, new leaders, new formats
- Nominating Committee
- Big Sit/ Big Day organizing committee
- Advertising
- Calendar Committee
- Membership and Communications
- Annual Meeting planning

There are lots of additional opportunities and exciting ideas that need help. Contact any Board member, and Challenge us to find an opportunity for your unique skills



The Wild Eye: Field Notes from a Wildlife Refuge

By Lisa Langelier
Reviewed by Kim Thorburn

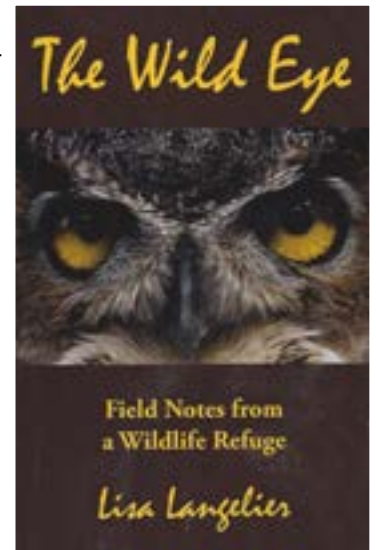
Spokane Audubon member Lisa Langelier's recently published book, *The Wild Eye: Field Notes from a Wildlife Refuge*, is a charming collection of essays about her years with wildlife as manager of the Little Pend Oreille National Wildlife Refuge and later as manager of the Inland Northwest National Wildlife Refuge Complex when her office moved to Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge. Her stories resonate with all of us who appreciate wildlife, from the casual enjoyer who delights in seeing a moose during an occasional outing to the avid birdwatcher competing for the highest county count.

The essays contain personal reflections intermingled with biologic and cultural notes of the story's species or families. The prose flows as the reader is taken in by Lisa's warm remembrances, sure to bring to mind experiences of one's own. The notes about owls begin with the pleasure Lisa feels when the great horned owls are hooting their courtship outside her home. You understand her reverie as she watches the drama in a beautiful old cottonwood outside of her LPO office window.

There are important lessons about living with wildlife. There is an essay about feeding birds that ensure it is done safely. I picked up some great tips on successful wildlife viewing. Many chapters provide counsel about safety around wildlife, such cautions that a cow moose does not behave like the Bullwinkle of our childhood.

Lisa's passion for environmental protection and the importance of our public lands threads throughout the volume. Her stories and emotions are convincing. She shares a story about rescuing a fledgling osprey tangled in fishing line used to construct the nest and another about a bald eagle succumbed to lead poisoning.

The Wild Eye contains beautiful photographic illustrations, most taken by another Spokane Audubon member Tom Munson. I commend the book to all of my fellow Spokane Auduboners. It is sure to rekindle your love of wildlife.



Spokane Audubon's Collection of Mounted Birds

Joyce Alonso

Anyone attending our local meetings in the past few years has admired some of our most beautiful and valuable educational tools. About five years ago our education volunteers agreed that the collection of mounted birds we were using in our programs really needed updating. Some specimens dated from the 1940s and needed to be retired! Feathers were missing; heads were wobbling!

Because our organization does both environmental and educational work, we are able to obtain a government permit allowing us to possess and display taxidermied bird mounts. These permits are required by law to protect against the 19th century practices of killing birds to use their feathers as decorations on women's fashions and shooting them for sport to become part of private collections.

Through our connections with wildlife offices and other local sources, we have acquired some excellent birds for mounting. They range in size and species from a Calliope Hummingbird to a Snowy Owl.

We have three special individuals to thank for this special collection. The first is a talented young woman, Lanica Hodges, of Hodges Taxidermy in Hawk Creek Canyon, northwest of Davenport. While she is compensated for her work, we have benefited both from her creative artistry, her amazing patience in working on such small subjects, and her generosity in discounting her services and doing some of the work without charge.

Secondly, because the mounted birds are used to educate the public at meetings, school classes, and educational fairs, they need to be protected, both from possible transport and weather mishaps and from unintentional damage by the exploring hands of school children. Long-time Audubon member Ed Reynolds has volunteered his carpentry skills to fashion plexiglas boxes to house each bird or group.

Finally, thanks go to Kim Thorburn, who graciously has taken on the task of doing the paperwork (nobody's favorite pastime) required to maintain our

permit. Her environmental field work also has given her the connections that brought in some of our specimens.

Those of us on the education team can testify to the effectiveness of these mounted birds in engaging the public. Recently, Lindell Haggin used several of them, including the Snowy Owl, at a Spokane Symphony concert, where they were a star attraction. I've lost count of the times the Great-horned Owl I was carrying to a classroom has excited the attention of every child (and adult) I passed in the hall. In our 21st century society, the majority of our citizens have never been so close to a real bird. Although their lives were forfeited to an encounter with a window or a truck, they continue to be a valuable resource to attract and engage both children and adults in the wonders of our natural world.



Calliope Hummingbird

© Mike Wisnicki



Snowy Owl

Kim Thorburn

**Field Trips,
January**

**January 21, 2017 Saturday
LC Valley Banana Belt Trip
Leader: Keith Carlson**

For somewhere between the past 5 and 10 years some hardy (demented?) members of SAS have been adventuring down to the Lewiston-Clarkston area to see what birds we can find for our year lists. The trip has been known as the "LC Valley Banana Belt Trip". Leaders have been varied, probably beginning with Cindy McCormack, who told us what interesting birds spend the winter there. Over the years we have seen Western Screech Long-eared and Saw-whet Owls, Long-tailed Ducks, Rosy Finches being harassed by a Peregrine Falcon, Lesser Goldfinches, etc.

It's a lot of fun, but the trip is not for the faint of heart. It involves several hours of travel, plus lots of time spent outdoors in less than balmy conditions.

Therefore, the trip is weather-dependent and could be called off by the leader if there are too few participants or he considers conditions unsafe. Participants are organized into carpools in order to make the experience more productive for everyone.

This year the date is Saturday, January 21st. Keith Carlson, an expert in the area, will be the leader. For information and/or to resister for the trip (as close to a week in advance as possible, please) call President Tom Light at (509) 638 2274

**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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<http://spokaneaudubon.org>

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Errors or other changes needed on your mailing label? Contact Dave Plemons at davep_nublado@me.com, or 413-1524.



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