

Volume 23
Issue 1
September 2015

The Pygmy Owl

The Newsletter of the
Spokane Audubon Society



September 9th Program: Birds (and Beasts) of the Kalahari, with Ron Force

The Kalahari Basin and desert is a large semi-arid area in Namibia, Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe which supports a wide variety of wildlife and birds. It features the Okavango Delta, an inland river delta that serves as an oasis in an otherwise dry area. Ron Force traveled on safari there in August 2013, and will present a travelogue on the birds, animals, environment, and conservation issues of the countries he visited.



Ron is the Dean of Library Services, Emeritus, at the University of Idaho. He is the current president of the Palouse Audubon Society. Photos (Red-billed Hornbill, above, and Greater Kudu, below) courtesy of Ron Force.



Spokane Audubon's September 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.

Spokane Audubon Field Trips September & October

**September 12, 2015 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 a.m. Please call Norma Trefry by Sept 9th if you plan to attend. Phone: 926-2533. Email: firsttrefry@gmail.com.

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

**October 24, 2015, Saturday
Grant County Late Fall Migrant Trip
Leader: Gary Blevins**

This is a beginning, intermediate and advanced birder-oriented trip to look for specialty birds, such as Arctic Gulls, Lapland Longspurs, and other hard to find and see northern visitors. There may be some down time with little action in between bird sightings but potential for rarities is high. It is a full-day trip from sunrise to sunset. Contact Gary Blevins (533-3661 or GaryB@spokanefalls.edu) by October 18th if you plan to attend.

Target Birds: Loons and grebes; scoters and rare wintering waterfowl; wintering raptors; Glaucous, Thayers, and Glaucous-winged Gulls; Snowy Owl; Northern Shrike; Snow Bunting; Lapland Longspur; Gray-crowned Rosy Finch

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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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Board Report

by Ed Reynolds

For some time we have been working on an opportunity to purchase 150 acres adjoining Reardan Audubon Lake. The original property, purchased through the efforts of Spokane Audubon, the Reardan Community and WDFW, had long been a favored birding spot noted for migrants and had been platted for a housing development. When we learned that additional property might be on the market, Lindell Haggin led Board efforts to explore possible expansion of the existing wildlife area, and after many months those efforts culminated in the new property being purchased by the Inland Northwest Land Trust. *The Spokesman-Review* for January 22nd features an article by Rich Landers discussing the purchase and the importance of the area.

Birders like the late Warren Hall and his sidekick Jim Acton were responsible for bringing this important birding area to our attention, and it is unlikely that this new purchase would have occurred without Lindell's unstinting efforts. Members of the Spokane Audubon Society can be proud to have had a hand in the effort.

Some years back a doctor in Montana willed about a third of an acre of mineral rights to Spokane Audubon. The property lies on the western edge of the Bakken oil fields. We have sold a lease on the rights to a Texas company for about \$250 and will, if the company drills and extracts oil, be paid royalties. Your board has been hesitant about being involved with oil extraction, but we concluded that selling the lease was the best option. We could have sold the rights for a little more than the lease fee, but that would only mean that someone else would have collected royalties. Had we refused to sell or lease, the courts could have allowed the drilling to proceed. (One suspects that the oil industry had a hand in writing Montana law.) Given the recent drop in oil prices it may be that no drilling will occur, but one never knows. Meanwhile, we have a little bit more money to aid in our conservation and education efforts.

The deadline for the October issue is

Thursday, September 24th

Please send any materials for the newsletter to

carmen@floreo.com

Sights & Sounds

Bird Sightings for the Inland Northwest, compiled by Jon Isacoff

As fires burn and the sun scorches, bird activity is in a summer lull. But worry not, migration is about to come! And the season has not been without some interesting sightings including a few pretty rare birds and at least one county record.

Especially rare sightings are in bold/italics.

SNOW GOOSE: Spring Valley Reservoir (5/28-MS)

TRUMPETER SWAN: Calispell Lake (8/7-JI and TL)

SPRUCE GROUSE: Salmo Pass (8/7-JI and TL)

GREAT EGRET: Rock Lake (7/19-RJB and 7/22-FH)

WHITE-FACED IBIS: Cow Lake (7/5-JI)

SANDHILL CRANE: Peone Wetland (6/13-TL); Cow Lake (7/22-FH and 8/11-JI)

WILLET: Reardan (7/11-TL)

SANDERLING: Rock Lake (8/6-RJB)

SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER: Eloika Lake (7/26-TL); Medical Lake (8/1-8/4-HS and SS); Crooked Knee Lake (8/10-RJB and 8/13-TL); Sprague (8/11-JI); Reardan (8/12-JI); De Smet (8/13-CL)

PECTORAL SANDPIPER: Rare in July: Slavin Ranch (7/10-JI)

FRANKLIN'S GULL: Sprague (5/30-JI; 6/14, 6/26, and 8/8-TL)

COMMON TERN: Eloika Lake (6/2-TL)

LONG-TAILED JAEGER: Deyo Reservoir (8/12-CL)

BAND-TAILED PIGEON: Moscow (6/8 to 6/15-KiD)

LEAST FLYCATCHER: Waitt's Lake (6/5-TL); Slavin Ranch (7/27-SS and 8/14-JI)

ROCK WREN: Rare in Pend Oreille County: Sullivan Lake Road (7/31-TL)

BEWICK'S WREN: Uncommon in Pend Oreille County: Horseshoe Lake (6/25-TL); LeClerc Creek (7/9-TL)

CHESTNUT-COLLARED LONGSPUR: Coolin (5/20-BoB and GB)

NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH: Eloika Lake (5/26-TL); Mt. Spokane (5/28-TL and 5/31-TO); Amazon Creek Marsh (6/5-TL); Flodelle Creek (6/13-TL); Little Pend Oreille NRW (6/26); Upper Priest River (7/25-CL)

GRASSHOPPER SPARROW: 1ST Pend Oreille County record: Cusick Meadows (7/4-TS and 7/9-TL); Linden Road (7/18-CL)

ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK: Liberty Lake (7/17-BM)

BOBOLINK: Newman Lake (5/28-TL and 5/31 TO); Newton Road (6/5-TL); Waitt's Lake (6/5-TL)

Observers: DB-Don Baker; MB-Missy Baker; RB-R.J. Baltierra; MBa-Maria Barone; MaB-Matt Bartels; DBd-Donna Bradford; TB-Tom Bragg; DB-Donna Bragg; BoB-Bob Bond; GB-Georgina Bond; BB-Ben Bright; CC-Corinne Cameron; DC-Del Cameron; MaC-Marlene Cashen; MC-Mike Clarke; Stacy Crist (SC); RDC-Rich Del Carlo; WC-Warren Current; KiD-Kirsten Dahl; 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; TM-Tom Mansfield; MFM-Mary Frances Mathis; AM-Alan McCoy; BM-Brian Miller; EM-Eliot Miller; MN-Marjolein Nibbelink; TO-Tim O'Brien; JP-Jonathan Pafford; JR-Jethro Runco; AR-Adrian Rus; TS-Todd Sahl; HS-Herman Schreven; SS-Sandy Schreven; MS-Mike Scott; BS-Brad Sondahl; CS-Charles Swift; RT-Rick Taylor; NT-Norma Trefry; KT-Kim Thorburn; DW-Doug Ward; TW-Tina Wynnecoop; WY-Will Young

2015 Sagebrush Songbird Survey At a Glance

Survey completed in April, May and June of 2015

Number of volunteers: 114, from seven Eastern Washington chapters, two Western Washington Chapters and the Yakima Training Center

Number of surveys: 186

Number of sites: 66

Number of volunteer hours: 2000+

Loss of Forest Snags in the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest

Did you know that trees can be more important for wildlife dead than alive? When trees die, their wood softens and rots providing places for animals to create cavities that are used as nest and shelter sites. In the northwest, nearly 100 species of wildlife use snags including some of our favorite birds such as woodpeckers, bluebirds, owls, nuthatches, chickadees, wrens, ducks, swifts, swallows, and kestrels.



photo by Paul Bannick,
used with permission

But did you also know that due to outdated policies, the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest allows the public to cut down snags?

The Okanogan-Wenatchee manages nearly 1.5 million acres and some of the most beautiful pine forests of the eastern Cascade Range. This forest is home to five at-risk woodpecker species in Washington State, including the Black-backed Woodpecker, White-headed Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker, Lewis' Woodpecker, and American Three-toed Woodpecker. Other cavity-nesting birds threatened by snag-habitat loss include the Flammulated Owl, Mountain Bluebird, and Pygmy Nuthatch. Yet every year, hundreds to thousands of snags in these birds' home territories are cut down by woodcutters, hunters, and campers.

Join us in a campaign to educate land managers with the Okanogan-Wenatchee to let them know the value of snags in our forests. Let them know that snags are vital components of our forests and snag felling should not be permitted for healthy forest management.

- Nearly every other land management agency in Washington prohibits snag felling because of the value of snags for wildlife. Agencies that prohibit snag felling include Washington Department of Natural Resources, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Olympic National Forest, Gifford Pinchot National Forest, Mount Baker Snoqualmie National Forest, Mount Saint Helens National Volcanic Monument, North Cascades National Park, Mount Rainier National Park, and Olympic National Park.
- The Okanogan-Wenatchee allows snag-felling under conditions of a woodcutting permit. However, snag-felling is not regulated leading to overharvest of snags each year.
- Illegal woodcutting is common, includes other illegal activities such as off-road driving, cutting within streams and water, cutting in areas marked

'closed to woodcutting', and cutting of snags with white-headed and black-backed woodpecker nests.

- Woodcutting is allowed during the sensitive nesting season for birds and woodcutters are allowed to cut snags immediately adjacent to active nest trees. The noise and disturbance caused to nesting birds can be extreme and has led to nest abandonment in black-backed woodpecker, three-toed woodpecker, and bluebirds.

The collective power of the Audubon network in Washington can make a difference. Please consider contacting the local forest staff and let them know that the loss of snags means the loss of forest birds and the loss of overall forest biodiversity and resilience.

Mike Williams
Forest Supervisor
Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest
215 Melody Lane
Wenatchee, WA 98801
Mrwilliams01@fs.fed.us
509-664-9323

Kelly Lawrence
District Ranger
Naches Ranger District
10237 US Highway 12
Naches, WA 98937
kellylawrence@fs.fed.us
509-653-1415

You may sign an online petition at this address:

<https://works.audubon.org/petition/snagged-end-snag-cutting-federal-lands>

For more information please contact Woodpecker Biologist Philip Fischer, at pcfischer@gmail.com.

2016 Spokane Audubon Society Calendar: Birds of Eastern Washington

\$10



Belted Kingfisher, by Bob Cashen

Birds of Eastern Washington features photographs by Spokane Audubon members. Proceeds from the sale of calendars help fund Spokane Audubon's conservation and education initiatives.

Calendars cost \$10 each, and are available for purchase at general meetings, through mail order or through the website, spokaneaudubon.org (using PayPal).

Note: Shipping charges apply for all mail/online orders:

- 1 calendar: \$10 + \$3 s&H = \$13
- 2 calendars: \$20 + \$4 s&H = \$24
- 3 - 6 calendars: \$30 + \$7 s&H = \$37

Contact Spokane Audubon for shipping costs for 7+ calendars.

To order by mail, send check to:

Spokane Audubon Society
15418 Little Spokane Drive
Spokane, WA 99208

Make checks payable to *Spokane Audubon*.



Sharp-tailed Grouse, by Tom Munson

Citizen Science:

Use Your Smartphone to Report Moose Observations

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) wants to hear about your moose observations when you're afield this fall and winter, especially in north-east Washington. And now they've got a smartphone application to make moose reporting even easier.

WDFW wildlife biologist Jared Oyster, who coordinates moose survey work in Eastern Washington, says this citizen science survey is designed to collect long-term data on the population status and trends of moose in Washington. WDFW has been monitoring moose annually using helicopter surveys, and is developing a population estimate for the northeastern part of the state. But monitoring is expensive and limited by weather conditions and other logistical challenges. A broad geographic coverage of moose observations, collected in a standardized and repeated way by the public, can be very helpful tracking long-term changes.



WDFW adapted the smartphone app system begun in Alberta, Canada, (originally initiated in 2012 by Dr. Mark Boyce, and coordinated at the Department of Biological Sciences University of Alberta).

The detailed directions for downloading and using the free smartphone application are at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/viewing/moose/>. Hunters are being asked to use the moose reporting application so Wild ID numbers (hunting license database) are used for identification; non-hunters simply need to enter any 11-digit number to identify themselves. The system also asks for observations to be reported within Game Management Units (GMU), a map of which can be found at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/gmu/>.

Butterfly Enthusiasts!

Lovers of nature, wildlife and photography are invited to an all ages "show and tell" butterfly program featuring photos from the 2015 season.



Spokane Public Library, Downtown Branch
906 W. Main, Meeting Room 1A, First Floor
September 29th, 2015
6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

If you would like share your own photos, send by e-mail, no later than September 13th to baumann.jp56@gmail.com. (Maximum of 7 photos per person, please, with your name and contact info.)

There will be one hour for photo sharing, followed by 30 minutes for planning future Washington Butterfly Association programs in our area. Bring yourself, your ideas and your kids ages 8 and up!

Celebrate National Wildlife Refuge Week with a Community Work Day at Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge!

Saturday, October 3, 2015
9 a.m. to Noon

Everyone is welcome to join us for this ongoing community effort to restore native riparian habitat to benefit birds and other wildlife species. We have hundreds of native saplings to plant and fencing to erect to protect the trees from deer, elk and moose browsing.

Attention Groups: Please call in advance to register. It helps us in our planning if we know how many are coming. To register, call (509) 235-4723 ext. 228. Ask for Sandy.

Lunch: At noon the Refuge will host a potluck lunch. Please feel free to bring your favorite dish. (Friends of Turnbull will supply the hamburgers)

Where: Turnbull NWR Headquarters, 5 miles south of Cheney on Cheney-Plaza Road.

Wear a long-sleeved shirt, work pants, gloves, sturdy boots or shoes. If you can, please bring a shovel or some pliers.

Audubon Council of Washington (ACOW) Annual Meeting

Date: Saturday, October 24, 2015

Location: Best Western Plus, Skagit Valley Inn, 2300 Market Street, Mount Vernon, WA

Agenda and Information: <http://wa.audubon.org/chapter-meetings>

Registration: \$40 at <http://ow.ly/QSS6w>

Register now for the 2015 annual meeting of the Audubon Council of Washington (ACOW), hosted by Skagit Audubon Society and the NW I Chapters!

ACOW is our annual state-wide meeting where members from all Audubon Chapters in Washington gather together for a weekend of information sharing, knowledge gathering, and fellowship. This year's meeting will focus on state and federal level policy actions around Audubon's climate initia-

tive, as well as showcase chapter work being done to educate communities about the impact of climate change on birds.

Presentations from Kittitas Audubon Society and Black Hills Audubon Society will highlight just some of the exciting work being done by chapters on behalf of birds in Washington State. Take home tips and tricks on how to engage reluctant audiences in climate action, and how to transform your neighborhoods into a true bird-friendly community, one backyard at a time.

Expect a dynamic day of discussion and collaboration around meaningful actions we can take together to augment our conservation impact, creating places where birds and people prosper.

All meeting information, including the agenda, accommodations, and weekend logistics may be found on the Audubon Washington website at <http://wa.audubon.org/chapter-meetings>. See you there!

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:
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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September 9th Program:
Birds (and Beasts) of the Kalahari,
 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.

