



The Prairie Owl

VOLUME 43 ISSUE 3

December 2014-January 2015

EVENT CALENDAR

December 2-Board Meeting
December 14-Lewiston-Clarkston Christmas Bird Count
December 20-Pullman-Moscow Christmas Bird Count
December 18-Juliaetta-Lower Potlatch Christmas Bird Count
December-No Program Meeting this month
February 13-16-Great Backyard Bird Count

Happy Holidays!

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Ron Force
208-874-3207
ronforce@gmail.com,
Vice President:
Marie Dymkoski,
509-595-1650
Marie-dymkoski@msn.com
Secretary; Program Chair:
Diane Weber
509-334-3817
catbirdz@roadrunner.com
Treasurer: Lavon Frazier
509-595-1913
lavon_frazier@outlook.com
Membership: Ron Force
Newsletter Editor:
Tim Hillebrand
208-310-1341
tshphd@gmail.com
Outreach: Diane Weber
Conservation Committee:
Mike Costa
509-332-1793
majcosta@live.com
Field Trips: Paul Schroeder
509-334-2470
schroede2003@yahoo.com
Members at Large
James Storms
509-635-1272
nbutte@pullman.com

Annual Christmas Bird Count

The annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count will take place from December 14 2014 to January 5, 2015. Here are some interesting videos about CBC:
<http://bit.ly/1F55Vp4>

The dates for our local area CBCs are as follows:

Moscow-December 20: Meet at Starbucks in the Palouse Empire Mall parking lot at 6:30 AM. Contact Kas Dumroese (kas.birder@gmail.com)

Pullman-December 20: Meet at Daily Grind Coffeehouse on Main St. in Pullman at 6:30 AM. Contact Marie Dymkoski (marie-dymkoski@msn.com)

Lewiston-Clarkston-December 14: Meet at Rosauers at 6:30 AM. Contact Bryan Jamison (jami9197@aol.com)

Juliaetta-Lower Potlatch River: December 18: Contact Charles Swift for meeting information (chaetura@gmail.com)



Mark Your Calendar for GBBC too

The Great Back Yard Bird Count is just around the corner too. So mark your calendar for February 13-16, 2015. This will be the 18th year. For more information go to <http://bit.ly/1xH8q25>.

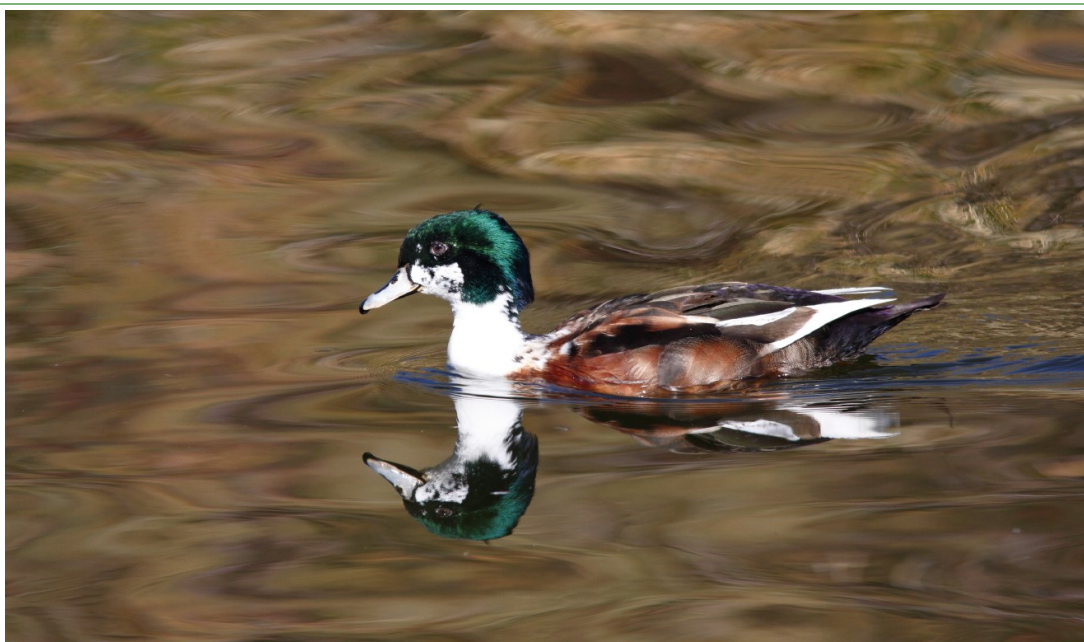
January 21 Program: Trumpeter Swans in Yellowstone

Join us on January 21, 2015, for a program on Trumpeter Swans in Yellowstone National Park by Edward (Oz) Garton, Professor Emeritus of Fish and Wildlife Ecology, University of Idaho. Dr. Garton has studied Greater Yellowstone Trumpeter Swans for 30 years and has documented a variety of causes for their declining populations, including changing water allocations, disturbance of nesting habitat, and possibly even climate change. We may be in danger of losing this iconic Yellowstone species! The program will be held at 7:30 p.m. in the Fiske Room of the 1912 Center, Moscow.



Check out the size of these magnificent creatures!

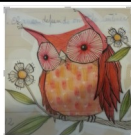
Crows and Ravens have the largest cerebral hemispheres (brains), relative to body size, of any avian family.



Can you identify this bird?

My old birding friend Denny Green from Santa Barbara took this photograph. His guess is that it's a cross between a Wood Duck and an American Widgeon. What do you think?

- The American turkey vulture helps human engineers detect cracked or broken underground fuel pipes. The leaking fuel smells like vulture food (they eat *carrion*), and the clustered birds show repair people where the lines need fixing.



**Donna Hanson of Pullman
won the owl print.**

If your mailing label says "EXP 9/14", this will be your last issue of the Prairie Owl. Use the renewal form below to continue your membership.

PALOUSE AUDUBON SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM

Membership includes an annual subscription to **The Prairie Owl** newsletter. Please consider an additional donation in support of the programs and activities of Palouse Audubon Society.

Annual Membership	\$15.00	Donation
-------------------	---------	----------

NAME	ADDRESS
------	---------

CITY STATE ZIP

PHONE _____ EMAIL _____

Return this form along with your check to Palouse Audubon Society, PO Box 3606, Moscow, ID 83843-1914.

- Check one: ☐ I PREFER TO READ THE PRAIRIE OWL ON THE WEBSITE
(notice will be sent by email when a new issue has been posted on the website)
- ☐ PLEASE SEND A PRINTED COPY OF THE PRAIRIE OWL

Mountain Bluebird



The state bird of Idaho is the Mountain Blue Bird (*Sialia currucoides*). It's also the state bird of Nevada. They return to snowy Idaho as early as February looking

for mates and nesting sites. They prefer to build their nests in cavities in wide open spaces at the edge of a forest in relatively high altitudes from 5000-10000 feet. Once paired, they are monogamous.

Sometimes nesting sites can be limited, which in turn limits the population. That's why it's a good idea to build and install nesting boxes for them. The ideal box is four inches square by eight inches high with a 1 ½ inch entry hole about six inches up from the bottom.

The male Mountain Bluebird is unmistakable because of its brilliant cerulean blue coloration. The female is more gray with hints of blue. They are a medium sized bird weighing just over an ounce and measure a little over six inches in length.

They feed mostly on insects and can hover like Kestrels when hunting for food. They will come to a platform feeder with live meal worms, berries, or peanuts.

Females are usually the nest builders. Eggs are pale blue in a clutch of four or five eggs mostly attended by the female while the male supplies food. Incubation time is 14 days and 21 days before the young leave the nest.



From the Prez



Ron Force

One of the benefits of belonging to the National Audubon Society is the ability to participate in scientific projects without an academic degree. The November-December issue of Audubon magazine highlights three innovative thinkers who lead two projects which depend on volunteers: The Breeding Bird Survey, and the North American Bird Phenology Program (phenology is the study of periodic biological phenomena). Volunteers on the Breeding Bird Survey monitor bird population trends, which started in 1966. An even older study, the North American Bird Phenology Program began in 1880 and ended in 1970, and amassed over six million observations of what birds were seen where, and at what time, all recorded on index cards. Over 2,500 volunteers all over the world are now transcribing the cards into a computer database, working from online photo images.

The National Audubon Society has three ongoing Citizen Science projects, Hummingbirds at Home, the Christmas Bird Count, now in its 114th year, and the Great Backyard Bird Count, coming up in February. The details on the local Christmas Bird Counts are in this issue. You don't need to be an expert birder to participate. This is a team exercise, just bring a pair of eyes and some binoculars.

In April, we'll also be recruiting observers for Washington Audubon's Sagebrush Bird Survey.

All of these volunteer projects are a vital means to keep track of what's happening to bird species and their populations across the country. Get out and join us!

20 Fun Facts about Wild Turkeys

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

1. Due to overhunting and deforestation that eliminated wild turkeys' habitat, these birds were nearly extinct in the 1930s. Today, there are more than 7 million wild turkeys and their range is spread throughout North America. (See the [wild turkey range map](#).)
2. There are approximately 5,500 feathers on an adult wild turkey, including 18 tail feathers that make up the male's distinct fan.
3. There are five distinct subspecies of wild turkeys: Eastern, Osceola, Rio Grande, Merriam's and Gould's. Subtle plumage differences and different ranges distinguish the birds. In some classifications, a sixth subspecies - the south Mexican wild turkey - is also recognized.
4. Wild turkeys have very powerful legs and can run at speeds up to 25 miles per hour. Their top speed in flight is 55 miles per hour. Domestic birds, on the other hand, are bred to be heavier so they provide more meat and therefore cannot fly.
5. These birds are omnivorous and will try many different foods. Most of their diet is grass and grain, but wild turkeys have a varied diet and will also eat insects, berries and small reptiles.
6. The average lifespan of a wild turkey is 3-5 years, and the oldest known wild turkey lived to be at least 13 years old. Domestic birds bred for food only live a few months.
7. In the wild, turkeys range from 5-20 pounds. Domestic turkeys are specially bred to be heavier and could weigh twice as much as their wild cousins.
8. Because it is a native bird with a proud demeanor and protective instincts, the wild turkey was Benjamin Franklin's preference for the national bird, not the bald eagle that is more of a scavenger and will rob other birds and animals for prey.
9. A wild turkey's gobble can be heard up to one mile away and is a primary means for a tom to communicate with his harem.
10. Adult male turkeys are called toms and females are called hens. Very young birds are poults, while juvenile males are jakes and juvenile females are jennies. A group of turkeys is called a rafter or a flock.
11. The wild turkey is one of only two birds native to North America that has been regularly domesticated, and domestic wild turkeys are raised all over the world. The other North American bird often bred for food is the Muscovy duck.
12. Alaska and Hawaii are the only two states without extensive wild turkey populations.

13. The wild turkey's bald head and fleshy facial wattles can change color in seconds with excitement or emotion. The birds' heads can be red, pink, white or blue.
14. Wild turkeys see in color and have excellent daytime vision that is three times better than a human's eyesight and covers 270 degrees, but they have poor vision at night.
15. Just hatched wild turkeys are precocial, which means they are born with feathers and can fend for themselves quickly, and they leave the nest within 24 hours to forage for food with their mothers. The male turkeys have very little to do with raising chicks.
16. Wild turkeys were first domesticated in Mexico and then exported to Europe. European settlers brought domesticated turkeys back to the New World with them as colonists, but would also hunt the wild birds they found.
17. The first unofficial presidential pardons were granted to domestic turkeys in 1947, and since then every president has "pardoned" two birds (a presidential turkey and a vice presidential turkey) before Thanksgiving.
18. June is National Turkey Lovers' Month and promotes eating turkey at times other than major holidays, since turkey meat is low in fat and high in protein, making it healthier than many other meats. Because turkeys can be so large, they are also more affordable than many other available meats.
19. The average American eats 18 pounds of turkey every year, and more turkeys are consumed on Thanksgiving than on Christmas and Easter combined.
20. The wild turkey is the official game bird of Alabama, Massachusetts and South Carolina. Though they may not be designated as official game birds in other states, wild turkeys are widely hunted - in fact, are the most hunted of all birds.





Palouse Audubon's NEW Website

If you haven't visited our new website lately, you are in for a pleasant surprise. It has been completely redesigned and is fraught with useful information that is easily accessible.

The credit for the new design goes to Bo Ossinger of netpalouse.com. Of course the board members made some suggestions and recommendations as well. But Bo put it all together for us. The site is now maintained by board member Marie Dymkoski who would appreciate some help if anyone is interested.

To give you an idea of the content, the tabs across the ribbon at the top of the site include: Home, About Us, Activities and Events, Birding, Conservation, Newsletters, Photos, and Resources. Here you can find out just about anything you want to know about birding on the Palouse.

The photos from our photo contest are there along with many illustrative photos by Terry Gray, Catherine Temple, and Nancy Miller.

Back issues of our newsletter are archived since 2000. That's quite a few newsletters, but it is interesting to check them out. I wish everyone would just go to the website to view or download the newsletter. It would save a lot of printing and mailing money that could be put to other purposes.

So, if you want to check out local hotspots, upcoming field trips or the next program presentation, this is the place to visit to keep current.

Under the resources tab there is a wealth of information with hotlinks. There are links for both Idaho and Washington along with a whole host of other tools including advice and plans on building bird houses.

Under the Birding tab there is information about exotic arrivals, hotspots, check lists, bird identification help, and field trip reports.

The Activities and Events section has our chapter calendar, chapter meetings, field trips, bird counts, birding festivals, chapter projects and student grants.

The Conservation tab contains conservation news, conservation plan, citizen science, backyard habitats, Mann Lake Surveys, and What to do if...

About Us is where you get our contact information, our mission statement, membership, and board of directors contacts.

There is also a handy search box so that you can quickly find what you are looking for on the site.

Check it out at <http://www.palouseaudubon.org>.



Mountain Quail

The hummingbird, the loon, the swift, the kingfisher, and the grebe are all birds that cannot walk

MEMBERSHIP

Palouse Audubon Society (PAS), PO Box 3606, Moscow ID 83843-1914, is a chapter of the National Audubon Society (NAS) with its own dues. New NAS members in our chapter area receive one year's free membership in PAS, along with the chapter newsletter and other benefits of membership.

PAS dues of \$15 are payable in September. Members may receive the chapter newsletter, The Prairie Owl, either by mail or by email notification of its posting on the chapter's website. Members are encouraged to read the newsletter online to save printing and postage expenses. PAS members who have not renewed and NAS members who have not paid dues after one year of membership are removed from the newsletter distribution list on December 31st.

General membership meetings are held at the 1912 Building, FISKE ROOM, 3rd and Adams St, Moscow ID, at 7:30 p.m. on the third Wednesday of each month, September through May. The board of directors meets at the 1912 Center at 7:30 p.m. on the first Tuesday of each month.

The Prairie Owl is published every other month, August through April. Material for the Owl should be sent to the editor, Tim Hillebrand, 857 Orchard Ave., Moscow ID 83843, 805-518-9612, tshphd@gmail.com by the 20th of the month. Subscription problems should be addressed to the membership chair, Ron Force, PO Box 3606, Moscow ID 83843-1914, 208-874-3207, ronforce@gmail.com. Visit the Palouse Audubon Society website at <http://www.palouseaudubon.org/> or find us on Facebook.

PALOUSE AUDUBON SOCIETY

Palouse Audubon Society
PO Box 3606
Moscow ID 83843-1914



**Get to know our local Owls
Give a Hoot. Go Owling.**

The mission of the Palouse Audubon Society is to promote education, conservation, and the restoration of natural ecosystems--focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats--for the benefit of humanity and the Earth's biological diversity

We're on the Web:
www.palouseaudubon.org
and on Facebook

PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
COLTON, WA
PERMIT NO. 4

Winter is a WONDERFUL time to bird in the Klamath Basin **WINTER WINGS FESTIVAL**

February 12-15, 2015

Featuring: **RICHARD CROSSLEY
and JENNIFER WU**

**NEW BIRDING AND PHOTOGRAPHY
FIELD TRIPS, WORKS SHOPS,
AND MINI SESSIONS**
Many old favorites, too

Registration begins in early December
at WinterWingsFest.org



Wing Tip

The chicken is the closest living relative to the Tyrannosaurus rex.

Mocking Birds

Mockingbirds can imitate many sounds, from a squeaking door to a cat meowing. They have been reported in Southern Idaho, so they are moving this way.

Olympic Peninsula 2015 **BirdFest** *Come bird with us!*



- ♦ San Juan Island Cruise
- ♦ Neah Bay Birding Excursion
- ♦ Guided Birding Trips
- ♦ Bird Drawing Class
- ♦ Auction & Raffle
- ♦ Photography Workshop
- ♦ Gala Banquet with speaker
Lynsy Smithson-Stanley

April 10 - 12, 2015

For more information:
www.olympicbirdfest.org
info@olympicbirdfest.org
or 360-681-4076



For lodging and visitor information,
call 800-942-4042 or click
www.olympicpeninsula.org

www.visitsunnysequim.com
800-737-8462



Which Came First?

According to National Geographic, scientists have an answer for the age old dispute over which came first, the chicken or the egg. Reptiles were laying eggs thousands of years before chickens appeared. The first chicken came from an egg laid by a bird that was not quite a chicken. Therefore, the egg came first.

