



The Prairie Owl

VOLUME 43 ISSUE 2

October-November 2014

EVENT CALENDAR

October 7-Board Meeting
October 15-Program Meeting
Endangered Birds of Hawaii
October 18-Field Trip
November 5-Board Meeting
November 8-Field Trip
November 19-Program Meeting
Raptors of Winter
December 2 Board Meeting
December-TBS-Pullman-Moscow
Christmas Bird Count
December-TBA-Lewiston-Clarkston
Christmas Bird Count
December-TBA-Kendrick-Julietta
Christmas Bird Count
December: No Program Meeting
this month
Happy Holidays!

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Chasing the Akialoa, Mamo and other endangered birds of Hawaii—Dr. Mike Scott

Program: October 15, 2014, 7:30 pm,
Fiske Room, Moscow 1912 Center.

Dr. Scott was the leader on the first Forest Bird Survey of the Hawaiian islands, 1977-81. The survey included all native forests above 1000 meter elevation on the islands of Hawaii, Maui, Moloka'i, and Lana'i.

The principal objectives were to determine for each bird species studied 1) distribution; 2) population size; 3) density (birds/km²) by vegetation type and elevation; 4) habitat response; and 5) geographical areas where more detailed studies were needed.

Where were the birds found? Were they protected by reserves and parks? What feats were necessary to survey them? Come and find out!

Michael Scott, University of Idaho Distinguished Professor Emeritus recently retired after 37 years as a research biologist with the US Department of Interior. He worked ten years in Hawaii, served two years as head of California Condor research in California. The last 25 years of his career were as Professor of Wildlife Biology and Leader of the Idaho Cooperative Research Unit at the University of Idaho.



Mamo

Program Meeting November 19: Raptors of Winter

The WSU Raptor Club will present this program highlighting Raptors of Winter with non-releasable raptors currently residing at the WSU Veterinary Teaching Hospital. Join us in the Great Room at the 1912 Center, Moscow, for this special holiday event featuring live birds, opportunities for close-up photographs, door prizes, and holiday treats. The meeting will begin at 7:30pm on Wednesday, November 19, and is open to the public.



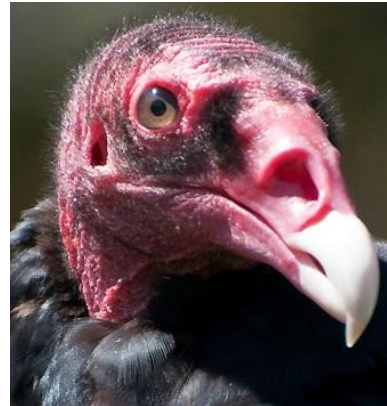
Reminder

It's time to pay your dues.



A House Wren can feed 500 spiders and caterpillars to its nestlings during a single summer afternoon.

When danger threatens, a Turkey Vulture defends itself by puking up its last meal. This is a very gross and very effective defense strategy.



Hérons and egrets were once shot by the thousands so that their ornate feathers could be used to decorate women's hats. The shooting of most migratory birds is now illegal.



DUES ARE DUE NOW. PLEASE USE THE FORM BELOW AND SUBMIT YOUR DUES AT YOUR EARLIEST CONVENIENCE. THANK YOU.

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

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Half of North America's Birds at Risk from Climate Change

Half of the bird species in the continental United States and Canada are threatened by global warming. Many of these species could go extinct without decisive action to protect their habitats and reduce the severity of global warming. That's the startling conclusion reached by Audubon scientists in a new study.

Here in Idaho, birds threatened by global warming include the Trumpeter Swan, Bohemian Waxwing, Merlin, and Evening Grosbeak.

Of 588 bird species examined in the study, 314 are at risk. Of those, 126 species are at risk of severe declines by 2050, and a further 188 species face the same fate by 2080, with numerous extinctions possible if global warming is allowed to erase the havens birds occupy today.

"The greatest threat our birds face today is global warming," said Audubon Chief Scientist Gary Langham, who led the investigation. "That's our unequivocal conclusion after seven years of painstakingly careful and through research. Global warming threatens the basic fabric of life on which birds--and the rest of us--depend, and we have to act quickly and decisively to avoid catastrophe for them and us."

To understand the links between where birds live and the climatic conditions that support them, Langham and other Audubon ornithologists analyzed more than 40 years of historical North American climate data and millions of historical bird records from the U.S. Geological Survey's North American Breeding Bird Survey and Audubon Christmas Bird Count. Understanding those links then allows scientists to project where birds are likely to be able to survive--and not survive--in the future.

The study offers an invaluable new way for Audubon to discuss and address global warming by bringing the issue into backyards and neighborhoods across America. It also reveals areas that are likely to remain stable for birds even as climate changes, enabling Audubon to identify "stronghold" areas that birds will need to survive in the future.

The result is a roadmap for bird conservation in coming decades in a warming climate. The study provides a key entry point for Audubon's greater engagement on the urgent issue of global warming. Responding to the magnitude of the threat to our birds, Audubon is greatly expanding its climate initiative, aiming to engage a larger and more diverse set of voices in support of protecting birds.

Solutions will include personal choices to conserve energy and create backyard bird habitat, local action to create community climate action plans, state-based work to increase rooftop solar and energy efficiency, and our work in Important Bird Areas, and other efforts to protect and expand bird habitats.

For more information, visit Audubon.org/Climate.

From the Prez



Ron Force

Although most of you are familiar with our programs and field trips, the Palouse Audubon Society contributes to local conservation projects, often with other organizations.

For example, we have a grant from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife to construct a second Ferruginous Hawk nesting platform in Whitman County, joining one we constructed two years ago.

Last year we provided an information kiosk and bird lists to Wawawai County Park.

We've received a grant from the Idaho Community Foundation in conjunction with Women in Science at the University of Idaho to construct a boardwalk at the Stateline Wetlands. This adds to the project we started in 2009 with a Toyota Together Green grant.

This year we submitted another Together Green grant jointly with the Palouse-Clearwater Environmental Institute (PCEI) to restore a wetland on PCEI land.

Starting next spring, we've joined with Washington Audubon's Sagebrush-Steppe initiative to monitor bird populations on two Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Areas in Asotin County.

Some are funded by external grants, but we also use funds from local dues and contributions, and volunteers from the chapter. Join your fellow members in contributing money and time to these worthy projects. Contact me or any board member for further information.

We still need volunteers for treasurer and webmaster.

WSU Raptor Club

by Kerry Ann Littlefield

Owl bet you would love to hear about the WSU Raptor Club; it's a hoot! The WSU Raptor Club began in 1981 and is facilitated through the Exotics ward in the Veterinary Teaching Hospital on the WSU campus. The club currently has 13 raptors ranging from American Kestrel, Northern Saw-whet and Western Screech Owls, Red-tailed Hawk, Snowy and Great Horned Owls, and a Golden Eagle. All of the birds are non-releasable. As ambassadors for their kind in the wild, the Raptor Club educates the public, promoting wildlife conservation, raptor species awareness, as well as providing people with a chance to see raptors up close. Great Grey Owl below is named Gus and is a current resident. He came to the hospital in 2009 with a fractured right wing, which resulted in major amputation just below his elbow. Because of his injury, he is unable to fly or fend for himself in the wild. The Great Gray Owl is more commonly found up North in Canada and Alaska where they are well adapted. Each bird varies in personality, health needs, and biology, which presents dues-paying volunteers with a unique opportunity when working with these birds. The club currently has seven officers, most of whom are students at WSU, and several hundred members. Want to join or learn more about the WSU Raptor Club? For more information contact at wsuraptorclub@gmail.com. If you are interested in having the Raptor Club visit your school, public event, or give you a private tour of the mews, email the officers at wsuraptorprogram@gmail.com.



Gus, the Great Gray Owl,
photo taken by Kerry Ann
Littlefield

Bird of the Month: Cedar Waxwing (*Bombycilla cedrorum*)



If you have a mountain ash tree near where you live, this is the time of year you might find it full of delightful, dapper Cedar Waxwings, feeding in flocks in the ripe fruit. This species may be found on the Palouse at any time of year, and

can be easily located by their high thin whistles, but are noticeable in the early fall, when fruiting trees are plentiful. These birds feed on fruit throughout the year, but supplement their diets with insects gleaned from trees from which they are also removing fruit, or by catching flying insects in mid-air like flycatchers (mainly in spring and summer). Waxwings are specialized for feeding on fruit and can survive on fruit alone for several months at a stretch, which other birds can't do. Brown-headed Cowbird chicks hatched in waxwing nests rarely survive, partly because they do not thrive on a mostly fruit diet.

Cedar Waxwings share the abundant mountain ash (and other) berries with robins, and I have seen both species reeling on their legs and unable to fly because they had consumed old berries that were fermenting on the bush. They were tipsy! This is not good for the birds, and may even have fatal results.

These birds are doing well and slowly increasing their populations, at least partly because fruiting trees are often planted as newly developed properties are landscaped, increasing the resources available to them.

Juvenile waxwings are distinctive and they are present at this time of year. They lack the rich brown and yellow plumage of the adult, opting instead for a more or less uniform light gray back, and a whitish belly with streaks of the same gray along the sides.

The black mask is present, but smaller and surrounded by white, which is connected to a vertical oval of white feathers in a narrow line. I found a stunned juvenile beneath one of my windows last week, which eventually recovered enough to leave the scene.

These beautiful birds deserve your attention even if only for the pleasure of getting a good look at them. Hope you have some in your neighborhood!

- Paul Schroeder

MEET THE BOARD

Paul Schroeder



As a child, Paul Schroeder was interested in birds, and almost anything else alive. Growing up in downtown Brooklyn, N.Y. he had a limited palate of animals to enjoy near his family's apartment. The arrival of a blue jay one afternoon provided a dramatic improvement, the memory of which remains to this day. He is a born biologist, majored in biology in college, then attended graduate school and got a doctorate in biological sciences (with an emphasis in marine biology!) which involved a move to California and a much greater exposure to birds. He maintained an informal bird list back then, but it was lost in one or another of his moves. He joined the faculty at Washington State University in 1968, where he taught a variety of courses and did research (not on birds!) until 2001. Throughout his time at WSU he had opportunities to visit and live in other parts of the world, where the birds were particularly interesting (e.g. Germany and Australia). In about 1992 he was made director of the Charles R. Conner Museum, succeeding Richard Johnson, a true ornithologist. The museum maintains an expanding research collection and both traditional exhibits and newer ones developed by talented undergraduates interested in both animals and exhibit design. About this time his birding started to become a little more formal, and upon retirement in 2001 he joined Palouse Audubon and began birding more systematically. He has learned a lot from people who have been serious birders for many more years than he and enjoys being made aware of the presence of interesting species (like last winter's Northern Hawk Owl) when they appear in the area.

Paul's favorite bird:

Cedar Waxwing



Beep Beep

Roadrunners eat almost anything they can catch: lizards and snakes, small rodents, scorpions and tarantulas, and large insects. They'll even leap up to catch hummingbirds at nectar feeders.



Grackles are skilled at imitating sounds such as car horns.

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

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You could win this print by Cori Dantini if you pay your dues by October 10. There will be a drawing and the winner will be announced at the October meeting.

Field Trips

October 18: This all-day trip to Steptoe Butte will leave at 8am from the Dissmores parking lot in Pullman. Bring lunch, beverages, and snacks as desired. We will look for Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches and other migrants in the park and may make other stops as time and weather permits.

November 8: This all-day trip will leave at 8am from the Dissmores parking lot in Pullman. We will probably travel to lower elevations, depending on weather and recent bird reports. Bring lunch, beverages, and snacks as desired. Check the PAS website for further details in late October-early November.

Wing Tip

Collective nouns for a group of Bitterns includes a dash, a freeze, a print, a pretense, and a siege of Bitterns.