



The Prairie Owl

VOLUME 44 ISSUE 4

April-July 2016

EVENT CALENDAR

April 1: PAS Photo Contest: submissions begin.

April 9: Field Trip to Kamiak Butte and Rose Creek

April 20 Program: Birds in Managed Forests of the Pacific Northwest.

May 3, 5, 10, and 12: Beginning Birding Class

May 8: Field Trip to Kamiak Butte and Rose Creek

May 17, 19, 24, and 26: Birding by Ear class

May 18: Program: Birds, Beasts, and People: Three Weeks in Kenya and Tanzania

June 4: Bovill Run field trip

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Program Meeting April 20

Palouse Audubon Society invites you to our next program on Wednesday, April 20. Dr. Mark E. Swanson, Associate Professor of Silviculture and Landscape Ecology, School of the Environment at Washington State University, will present a program on Birds in Managed Forests of the Pacific Northwest. The birds of the Pacific Northwest are a very diverse "respondent group" that offer forest managers and scientists a sensitive index of the diversity and functionality of forest ecosystems, including those managed for the continual production of forest products. In this talk, Dr. Swanson discusses a number of bird species in the forests of the Pacific Northwest (both inland and coastal), addressing their habitat needs in relation to forest management practices. The program will be held in the Fiske Room of the 1912 Center, in Moscow, and will begin at 7:30pm. This program is free and open to the public.



Program Meeting May 18

Palouse Audubon Society invites you to our program on Wednesday, May 18. Lauren Fins, recently retired from the University of Idaho Forest, Rangeland, and Fire Sciences Department, will present a program on "Birds, Beasts, and People - Three Weeks in Kenya and Tanzania." In January-February 2015 she spent three magical weeks in East Africa. Both Kenya and Tanzania have set aside vast national parks and conservation areas that are home to and protect native species. She saw "the big five" (lions, elephants, cape buffalo, leopards and rhinos) and will show photos and tell stories about these. But there were also myriads of colorful, graceful, and sometimes bizarre-looking birds, some strangely funny creatures, like warthogs; solitary ones, like serval cats; and stinky ones like the great pods of hippos jammed together in shallow river pools. But some of most interesting and memorable experiences were exchanges with local peoples, including visits with four tribal groups - Maasai, Hadzabe, Dato-ga, and Iraqw. Lastly, she'll touch on her visit to Oldupai Gorge, where Mary and Louis Leakey found fossils that changed our understanding of human evolution. The program will be held in the Fiske Room of the 1912 Center, in Moscow, and will begin at 7:30pm. This program is free and open to the public.



BIRD OF THE MONTH: The Yellow-rumped Warbler



Many of you are familiar with this familiar bird, fondly nick-named the “butter-butt”. It is the most frequently seen Wood Warbler in the Northwest, including our eastern corner, and the only one

we might expect to see during the winter.

This is perhaps the only warbler that may show up at a feeder, and it is not really a neo-tropical migrant, although some do show up in Central America in the winter. But many are to be found within the borders of the U.S. in the winter. The western form, called the Audubon’s warbler, was included in a recent blog post on the website of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology reviewing the increasing number of reports of several species which are staying longer than they used to before moving south, or even electing to stay through the winter in northerly climes. Data from Project Feederwatch indicate that many more yellow-rumps are staying through the winter in the southeastern states (these would be the eastern Myrtle warbler), and that the numbers of winter reports for the Audubon’s form in the northwest are also increasing. This is especially true along the coast, but includes our area as well. Since the numbers reported reflect both the number of participants in the Feederwatch program and the relative infrequency of the warblers at feeders, finding more records on the westside is not unexpected. In 1989 the number of northwest reports was negligible, while in 2013 over 12% of the feeders in the northwest (encompassing OR, ID, MT, WA, and BC) reported having seen at least one during the winter months. Similar conclusions were reached for the Carolina Wren (back east), the Bushtit, and the Northern Rough-winged Swallow.

The original adaptation which allowed both types of Yellow-rumped warblers to stay longer in the north is their ability to digest the wax on the fruits of bayberry (or wax myrtle) plants. The waxes are energy rich although evidently not readily digestible by other birds. I didn’t find any information on whether these plants have started to show up in more northerly locations than they used to, but it would be interesting to know if any

We Need You

The Palouse Audubon Society is in need of interested folks to get involved with the local organization. Currently, there are open board of director and committee member positions available. The board of directors meet monthly from September through May. Meetings usually last an hour to an hour and a half. Committees meet only when necessary and most committees would benefit with some new energy and ideas from members of PAS. Help fulfil the mission of the Palouse Audubon Society: 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. For more information, contact Marie Dymkoski, Vice President at marie-dymkoski@msn.com

2016 Great Backyard Bird Count

2016 Great Backyard Bird Count Breaks All Records! More than 160,000 birders from around the world logged their bird sightings during the 2016 Great Backyard Bird Count, February 12-15, tallying a record 5,689 species—beating last year’s count by 599 species. Thanks to sponsor Wild Birds Unlimited, and to all of you who took part in this epic endeavor to create a remarkable snapshot of the world’s bird-life. View a sampling of some of the great images submitted during the count in our online gallery. <https://www.audubon.org/content/2014-great-backyard-bird-count-summary>

Yellow-rumped Warbler continued

information is available on this question.

There has also been recent work on the hybrid zone between the two forms in British Columbia and Alberta. Based on data from DNA sequences and stable isotopes of hydrogen, it has been possible to narrow the hybridization zone between the Audubon’s and Myrtle forms to a more limited area and to track different gene fragments to see if they differ in hybrids which migrate with the Myrtles (most of the hybrids) or with the Audubon’s. Looking at gene fragments wound up broadening the study to include a Mexican subspecies, the non-migratory Black-fronted Warbler, which also seems to be involved in this hybridization group (because some gene fragments within the migratory yellow-rumps matched those in the Mexican form). Interestingly, the authors of this study (published in 2014) have gone

“SHOW US YOUR WILD SIDE”

We're having another photo contest this year! Palouse Audubon Society is calling for entries for its third annual photo contest. Photo entries for the 2016 PAS Photo contest can be submitted beginning on May 1, 2016 until midnight Pacific Daylight Time on July 31, 2016.

Once again, the contest will be open to anyone who is an amateur photographer, member or non-member. Contest entry rules and prizes will be posted on the PAS website. There will be some changes to the contest rules this year. The contest will consist of the three main categories that we had previously, including birds, other wildlife, and other nature (the nature category includes environment and conservation).



Photo by Neil Adhikari: "Rufous Hummingbird Enjoying Firecracker-bush Flowers"

There will be no age group divisions and there will be no requirement for the photos to be regional. Awards will be given for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place in each of these categories. A total of five photo entries will be allowed per person. Consider submitting any interesting photos that you may have captured during the Christmas Bird Count or the Great Backyard Bird Count, as well as any photos taken during hikes and birding field trips. We hope that everyone will once again “**Show Us Your Wild Side**” this year and send us a snapshot of your encounters with nature. We encourage you to participate in this fun event sponsored by your Society. Take advantage of this great opportunity to display your photographic talent for turning nature into art that can be appreciated by all!

Please submit your photos as attachments to palouseaudubon@gmail.com or mail them on a cd to PO Box 3606, Moscow, ID 83843-1914. For more information about the photo contest, check the PAS website for announcements at www.palouseaudubon.org. For questions concerning the photo contest, or if you have any comments or suggestions, please contact Mike Costa, PAS Conservation Chair, at majcosta@live.com or leave Mike a message at 509-332-1793.



Graduate Research Grants Available

Each year, the Palouse Audubon Society awards two grants in support of research toward fulfilling the chapter's mission of promoting education, conservation, and restoration of natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats. One grant is available for a graduate student at Washington State University and the other for a graduate student at the University of Idaho. The grants are \$500 each with no restrictions on how the grant monies may be used.

In order for us to share in activities supported by the grant and for the student to share some of his/her findings, we strongly encourage the recipients to present their research results at a future program meeting, and our programs have been enriched by their presentations.

This year's grant applications are due by midnight, April 30, 2016 and should be mailed to the society's PO box. The application forms can be downloaded at:

<http://www.palouseaudubon.org/uploads/misc/grantapplication.pdf>

These Jokes are for the Birds

How do you identify a bald eagle? All his feathers are combed over to one side

What do you get if you cross a nun and a chicken? A pecking order.

What is a polygon? A dead parrot!

What birds spend all their time on their knees?
Birds of prey!

When is the best time to buy budgies? When they're going cheap!

Olympic Birdfest April 15-17, 2016

Enjoy guided birding trips, boat tours, live auction and raffle, gala banquet, and more. Our featured speaker, noted artist Tony Angell, "Revealing the Secret Lives of Owls". Extend your festival with our Neah Bay post-trip on April 17-19—two days exploring northwest coastal Washington. Birdfest registration at www.olympicbirdfest.org.

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.

Field Trips

April 9: Mike Clarke will lead a field trip to Rose Creek and Kamiak Butte on April 9th. Meet in the northwest corner of the Pullman Walmart parking lot at 7:30 AM with departure at 7:45 AM. The object is to look for early migrants. We will return to Walmart around noon.

May 8: RJ Balterra will lead a field trip to Rose Creek preserve and Kamiak Butte to look for migrants. Meet in the Roseauer's parking lot at 8 am. This is a morning field trip.

June 4 Bovil Run Field Trip: Ron Force will lead a field trip to Bovill and the East Fort of the Potlatch River in search of warblers. Meet in the Moscow Safeway parking lot at 8 AM. Length indeterminate as long as birding is good.

Wilson's phalaropes take sex role reversal to the extreme. Females are bigger and more colorful than males, and they spar for prospective mates. They seem to have only one job in reproduction: laying eggs. Then, they're out of there, off to find a new partner. Photo by D. Sherony / Wikimedia.



Wing Tip

The largest of all birds is the ostrich. [Ostriches](#) are flightless birds that have a large body, small head, long legs, and a long neck. Although they cannot fly, they are remarkable runners, able to run at speeds of up to 45 mph for half an hour. Adult ostriches weigh between 220 and 350 pounds and measure between 7 and 9 1/4 feet in height.

Wing Tip

The longest feathers ever seen were on a chicken in Japan. Its tail feathers measured 34.7 feet (10.59 m) long.^j

PALOUSE AUDUBON SOCIETY

Palouse Audubon Society
PO Box 3606
Moscow ID 83843-1914



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**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](#)

Palouse Prairie Field Guide: An Introductory Guide to Native Plants, Agricultural Crops and Invasive Weeds for the Curious

Available at Bookpeople

After April 1



By Dave M. Skinner, Jacie W. Jensen and Gerry Gueener.
Dedicated to Dave M Skinner, January 28, 2016

The Palouse Prairie Field Guide was conceived to help people identify many of the plants found in the prairie regions of Idaho, Washington, Oregon and Montana. This includes the Palouse Prairie, Rathdrum Prairie, Zumwalt Prairie, and Camas Prairie. Included in the Field Guide are the most common native plants of the Palouse Prairie, as well as the working agricultural fields. Near the end of the book are some “invasive non-native” plants that inhabit the Palouse. In addition to knowing the “good guys,” the authors felt the curious should be aware of the “bad guys” too.

Representative photographs and descriptions are provided of each plant. Information on the plant’s habitat, native range, bloom period and similar species are also included. Notes (notes of interest) are used to share interesting facts on a plant such as its interaction with birds, pollinators and people. Since a flower’s color is often the first attribute noticed, the Field Guide is arranged by flower color, then alphabetically by family name and then with the most-used common name listed. Other common names are also listed. Scientific names are important but challenging so included is the pronunciation of each plant scientific name. The authors chose to follow the regional Consortium of the Pacific Northwest Herbariums for the scientific plant names of family, genus and species. To assist with the introduction of botanical terms given in the plant descriptions, botanical illustrations are provided in the beginning of the Field Guide and a glossary is located in the back.

It was the authors’ hope, through this introductory Palouse Field Guide, that the lines between all types of lands will blur. Each of us, whether native, agricultural, or urban landowners, or public-lands visitors, determine the future of all our lands. The Field Guide was made as a “carry along with you” book. The spiral binding and pocketable size (4” wide X 8.5” tall) should encourage the curious to include it on even the briefest of walks.