



THE PRAIRIE OWL

PALOUSE AUDUBON SOCIETY

Volume 46, Issue 4, Feb-March 2018

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

PROGRAMS

Wednesday, Feb 21 - Join **HawkWatch International** Senior Scientist Dave Oleyar as he talks about the history of the organization, ongoing research efforts (including citizen science opportunities), and current topics of conservation concern for birds of prey. The program will be held at 7:00pm on Wednesday, February 21, in the Great Room of the 1912 Center, Moscow.

HawkWatch International started over thirty years ago as an organization focused on monitoring the status of raptor populations in the west by counting and banding migrants each year. These efforts continue today and these valuable long-term data have highlighted at-risk species that merit further study, but also conservation success stories. In addition to migration monitoring HWI biologists (and in many cases armies of citizen scientists) currently study the ecology of American Kestrels in different landscapes; Short-eared Owl population status and distribution across the west; Golden Eagle nesting and movement ecology; and the ecology of cavity-nesting small forest owls in southeast Arizona and northern Utah. Come learn about what we do and how you can help! This program is sponsored by Palouse Audubon Society and is free and open to the public.

Wednesday, March 21 - Fred Rabe, professor emeritus of biological sciences, UI, will present a program on **Ecology of North Idaho Streams in Research Natural Areas** at 7:00pm in the Great Room of the 1912 Center, Moscow. Sampling, photographing, and writing about small streams and rivers in northern Idaho has been a favorite past time of his for many years. Some 40 to 50 of these aquatic sites have been set aside and protected as Research Natural Areas (RNA). A knowledge of each stream's habitat and biotic conditions enables investigators to determine whether the site meets the necessary high standards of becoming an RNA. These areas serve as nature preserves for ordinary as well as rare and endangered plants and animals. RNA also provide baseline areas against which the effects of human activities in similar environments can be measured, for example, a graduate student using this idea sampled the impact of rock landslides on organisms in the Lochsa River. RNAs provide educational experiences for small groups to study outdoor labs. Friends of the Clearwater, a local advocacy group, is active in these activities. This program is sponsored by Palouse Audubon Society and is free and open to the public.



Ron Force

FROM THE PREZ

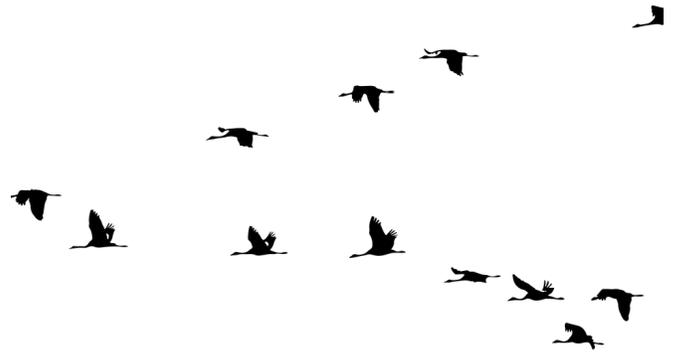
The past several nights I was awakened by the local pair of Great Horned Owls calling outside the window, a sure sign we've reached the depths of winter.

Then, as the sun began to rise I heard the call of geese headed north, a harbinger of Spring.

Another sign of spring is the lineup of field trips we're featuring led by board member R.J. Baltierra. We want to thank RJ for reviving our field trip program. Here's hoping more of you can participate.

If you can't get out on a field trip, join the Great Backyard Bird Count, featured elsewhere in this issue.

SAVE THE DATE
Great Backyard Bird
Count February 16-19,
2018



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FIELD TRIPS

February 10, Saturday: Lewiston/Clarkston valley, looking for waterfowl, owls, and other winter residents. Meet at 8am. Full day, with half day optional. Meet at Umpqua Bank parking lot 225 N. Grand, Pullman.

February 24, Saturday: Rock Lake area, maybe Steptoe Butte. Migrant waterfowl, and raptors. Full day. Meet at Umpqua Bank parking lot 225 N. Grand, Pullman, 8am.

March 10, Saturday: Spring Valley Reservoir. Waterfowl and forest birds. Half day. Meet at 8am at Safeway parking lot, 1320 S. Blaine, Moscow.

March 24, Saturday: Wawawai Canyon to Steptoe Canyon. Full day. Meet at 8am at Umpqua Bank parking lot 225 N. Grand, Pullman.

Contact RJ at 509-332-9043.

Always dress for the weather, bring water and any other food and drink needs. Wear comfortable shoes!

April 28-29, Saturday-Sunday All day field trips organized with the Coeur d'Alene, Idaho Audubon Society. More TBA

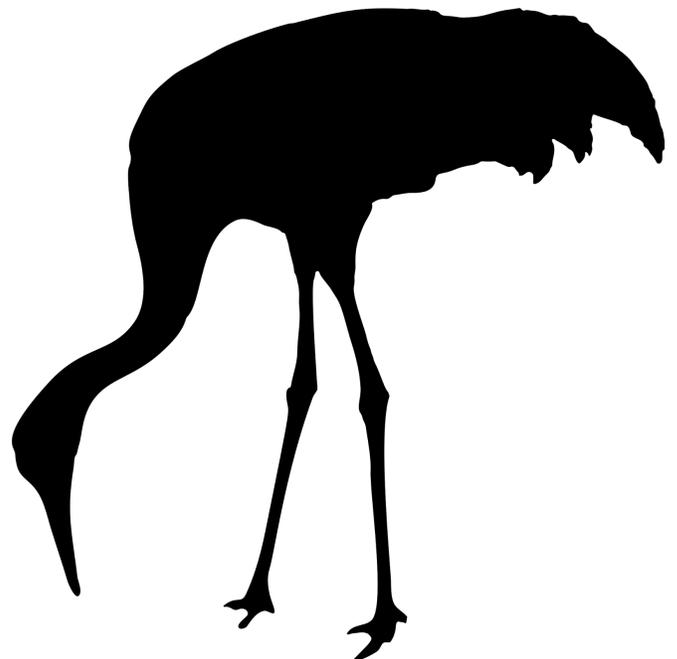
Look for Monday or Wednesday afternoon bird walks through March. More information will be found on our website and Facebook page: Palouse Audubon Society.

OTHELLO SANDHILL CRANE FESTIVAL

The 21st annual Sandhill Crane Festival will be held in Othello, Washington, March 23-25.

The theme for this year's festival is "H2O Birds on the Go." With the celebration of the spring migration of the Sandhill Cranes, the festival offers a variety of events for the whole family to enjoy and learn, from birding tours to lectures to children's activities on Saturday at the Othello High School. The Saturday night banquet speaker will be Stefan Schlick, from Portland Audubon Society. Stefan was born and raised in Germany, but relocated to the US in 1992. For the last 25 years, he has been birding Europe and North America extensively, and he is a member of the Oregon Bird Records Committee. His Saturday evening lecture will explain why cranes have been fascinating people all over the world for centuries. Visit the Othello Sandhill Crane Festival website for more information on all events:

othellosandhillcranefestival.org



GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT, FEBRUARY 16-19, 2018

The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) is a free, fun, and easy event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of the distribution and abundance of birds.

Participants are asked to count birds for as little as 15 minutes (or as long as they wish) on one or more days of the four-day event and report their sightings online. Anyone can take part in the GBBC, from beginning bird watchers to experts, and you can participate from your backyard, or anywhere in the world.

Last year over 200,000 bird-watchers participated the GBBC. This year, you are invited to join them in this unique citizen science project sponsored by the National Audubon Society and the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. Are you concerned about your ability to identify all the birds you may see at your location? There are tools on the GBBC website (<http://gbbc.birdcount.org/>) to help you! At the Get Started section you can access a bird list by zip code. On the list itself, an underlined species is a hyperlink, and clicking on it will take you to the Cornell Lab. identification guide, with photos, descriptions, behavior, habitat, range maps, and similar and related species lists. You can compare Downy with Hairy Woodpeckers; Cedar with Bohemian Waxwings; American with Lesser Goldfinches; House, Cassin's, and Purple Finches. During the count itself, you can compare your results with those of other GBBC counters at

<http://ebird.org/ebird/gbbc/places>. Just 15 minutes of your time will help scientists to better understand the big picture about what is happening to bird populations. Let's make an effort to put the Palouse region on the map this year and share our sightings on the

Palouse Audubon Facebook page. If you have any questions about the GBBC, don't hesitate to post them on the Facebook page, too.

Launched in 1998 by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, the Great Backyard Bird Count was the first online citizen-science project to collect data on wild birds and to display results in near real-time. Now, each year, new records are set as more bird watchers participate and more species seen and checklists submitted. New features of the GBBC website allow you to print a bird list by your zip code, access free birding apps, and use online bird identification guides and "tricky" bird ID challenges. To join this four-day count to create an annual snapshot of the distribution and abundance of birds throughout the world, begin by visiting the website at <http://gbbc.birdcount.org/>.

Nominations for Palouse Audubon Chapter Officers

Nominations are being accepted for chapter President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Election of officers will take place at the program meeting in February, where nominations will also be accepted from the floor. If you are interested in serving in one of these positions, please contact Marie Dymkoski (marie-dymkoski@msn.com, or 509-595-1650). More information can be found in the chapter Bylaws posted on the Palouse Audubon Society website, www.palouseaudubon.org, at the link "About Us, Mission".

The annual meeting of Palouse Audubon Society will be held at the March program meeting, where installation of officers and other chapter business will be conducted.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT 2017

The 47th consecutive (and 64th overall) Moscow-Pullman Christmas Bird Count was 16 December 2017. We traded in last year's frigid temperatures for fog and 6 inches of fresh snow that fell the night before the count. All still water was mostly frozen and only minimal amounts of moving water were open. We had 47 participants (4 shy of our all-time high; 35 as part of 17 field teams and 12 watching feeders) who spent almost 54 hours driving 412 miles, 47 hours walking 41.5 miles, and almost 20 hours watching feeders. We tallied 65 species, a bit off our 10-year average of 68.

New high-count records include 17 COOPER'S HAWKS (14; 2015), 576 EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVES (452; 2015), 2 AMERICAN COOTS (1; 2003 & 2008), 15 TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRES (11; 2004), 38 AMERICAN TREE SPARROWS (17; 2012), and 145 LESSER GOLDFINCHES (137; 2014).

We tied our CACKLING GOOSE (1; 2010-2014) and DOWNY WOODPECKER (16; 2013) high-count records and tallied 8 Count Week species: SNOW GOOSE, NORTHERN PINTAIL, BARROW'S GOLDENEYE, BALD EAGLE, STELLER'S JAY, PACIFIC WREN, WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL, and HOARY REDPOLL. Many field teams reported reduced numbers of birds and it being a "slow" day and our numbers supported that conclusion. We counted 9673 birds, well-below last year's all-time record of 15816 and well-below our 10-year average of 12250.

Some other tidbits: (1) We have now tallied EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVES for 11 years (they were first reported 2007). After dropping precipitously last year, the number of EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVES jumped upward this year, due in part to the 162 birds counted at the UI Dairy Barns, nearly

30% of all reported. Even so, our MOURNING DOVE numbers were slightly above the 15-year average of 221. (2) We tallied a combined total of 24 SHARP-SHINNED and COOPER'S HAWKS this year; more than usual. In the 11 years prior to Eurasian Collared-Doves, our overall average for these two species was 4. For the 11 years that we have had this introduced species, the overall average has climbed to 8. Could it be these accipiters like Eurasian Collared-Doves? (3) Our good numbers of COMMON REDPOLLS were the best in almost two decades.

Thanks to everyone who participated! See you on December 15th, 2018.

2017 Moscow-Pullman CBC Final Tally	
Snow Goose	CW
Cackling Goose	1
Canada Goose	140
American Wigeon	1
Mallard	411
Northern Pintail	CW
Green-winged Teal	2
Barrow's Goldeneye	CW
California Quail	611
Ring-necked Pheasant	61
Gray Partridge	25
Wild Turkey	50
Great Blue Heron	4
Northern Harrier	4
Sharp-shinned Hawk	8
Cooper's Hawk	17
Bald Eagle	CW
Red-tailed Hawk	78
Red-tailed (Harlan's) Hawk	4
Rough-legged Hawk	12
Buteo, species?	6
American Coot	2
Killdeer	2
Rock Pigeon	126

Eurasian Collared-Dove	576
Mourning Dove	235
Great-horned Owl	5
Northern Pygmy Owl	1
Long-eared Owl	1
Belted Kingfisher	1
Downy Woodpecker	16
Hairy Woodpecker	9
Northern (Red-shafted) Flicker	152
Pileated Woodpecker	1
American Kestrel	30
Merlin	4
Northern Shrike	3
Steller's Jay	CW
Blue Jay	6
Black-billed Magpie	506
American Crow	50
Common Raven	80
Horned Lark	725
Black-capped Chickadee	154
Mountain Chickadee	14
Red-breasted Nuthatch	56
White-breasted Nuthatch	6
Pygmy Nuthatch	5
Brown Creeper	1
Pacific Wren	CW
Bewick's Wren	9
Golden-crowned Kinglet	44
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1
Townsend's Solitaire	15
American Robin	100
Varied Thrush	7
European Starling	2176
Bohemian Waxwing	4
Cedar Waxwing	213
Yellow-rumped (Audubon's) Warbler	1
American Tree Sparrow	38
Dark-eyed Junco, form?	333
Dark-eyed (Slate) Junco	16
Dark-eyed (Cassiar) Junco	3
Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco	778
White-crowned Sparrow	64
Song Sparrow	107
Red-winged Blackbird	2
Brewer's Blackbird	2

Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch	6
House Finch	505
White-winged Crossbill	CW
Common Redpoll	132
Hoary Redpoll	CW
Pine Siskin	158
Lesser Goldfinch	145
American Goldfinch	211
House Sparrow	444

Creative expression, whether that means writing, dancing, bird-watching, or cooking, can give a person almost everything that he or she has been searching for: enlivenment, peace, meaning, and the incalculable wealth of time spent quietly in beauty.

Anne Lamott

MEMBERSHIP

Palouse Audubon Society (PAS) 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 7:00 p.m. on the third Wednesday of each month, September through May. The board of directors meets at the 1912 Center at 7:00 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, Marie Dymkoski marie-dymkoski@msn.com by the 20th of the month. Subscription problems should be addressed to the membership chair, Diane Weber 509-334-3817 or catbirdz@roadrunner.com.

Visit the Palouse Audubon Society website at <http://www.palouseaudubon.org/> or find us on Facebook.



THE PRAIRIE OWL

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 the Palouse Audubon Society.

Annual Membership **\$15.00**

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