



THE PRAIRIE OWL

PALOUSE AUDUBON SOCIETY
Volume 45, Issue 4, April-May 2017

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

April 19 – 1912 Building, 3rd and Adams, Moscow, 7:00 p.m. More and more Americans are accepting the science verifying climate change, yet opinions on the consequences of climate warming and on policies to address it are very diverse. Judy Meuth, a member of the Palouse Citizens' Climate Lobby, will present information on Americans' views of climate change and addressing it; Congressional activity on climate change; and policy options to curb change including regulations, cap and trade, taxes, and revenue-neutral fee and dividend. One solution, placing a revenue-neutral fee on carbon that would be returned to Americans via a monthly dividend, is a proposal that has garnered support across the political spectrum. This program will be presented on April 19, 2017 in the Great Room of the 1912 Center, Moscow at 7:00pm: please note the earlier start time! The program is co-sponsored by Palouse Audubon Society and the Palouse Citizens' Climate Lobby and is free and open to the public.

May 17 – 1912 Building, 3rd and Adams, Moscow, 7:00 p.m. The Nature Conservancy owns over 30,000 acres of the Zumwalt Prairie, a high-elevation grassland in northeastern Oregon. The preserve is managed to support conservation throughout the prairie, to maintain its incredible wildlife diversity, and to improve its largely intact habitat. Jeff Fields, project manager of the Zumwalt Prairie Preserve, will give an overview of the prairie and the preserve, discuss the role of the

preserve and how it is managed, and describe how the Conservancy works with other landowners to maintain the ecological health of the prairie and the economic viability of working ranches. This program will be presented on May 17, 2017 in the Great Room of the 1912 Center, Moscow at 7:00pm: please note the earlier start time! The program is sponsored by Palouse Audubon Society and is free and open to the public.

Birding Classes held in May

Palouse Audubon Society will offer a beginning birding class again this spring. Class sessions will be held in the 1912 Center, Moscow, from 7:30 to 9:00 pm, on **May 2, 4, 9, 11**, with morning field trips on **May 6 and 14**. The class will be taught by local birding expert Kevin Pullen and is designed for adults of all ages who want to learn how to identify birds or how to be a better birder. The class is an introduction to birds and bird identification, with an emphasis on common, local birds and birds migrating through our area in early May: warblers, sparrows, thrushes, and hawks. Registration fee is \$50 (\$40 for Palouse Audubon members). For more information, or to register for the class, contact Diane Weber at catbirdz@roadrunner.com or 509-334-3817. Class size is limited and advanced registration is required.

Palouse Audubon Society will also offer a birding-by-ear class this spring, taught again by Kevin Pullen, "Identifying Common Local

Songbirds by Sight and Sound, with an emphasis on song.” Class sessions will be held in the 1912 Center, Moscow, from 7:30 to 9:00 pm, on **May 16, 18, 23, and 25**, with field trips **May 20 and 28**. One make-up field trip will be scheduled later. The class sessions will explore representatives of common breeding birds--wrens, chickadees, nuthatches, thrushes, warblers, and sparrows—and “sound-alike” birds will be compared. Registration fee is \$60. For more information, or to register for the class, contact Diane Weber at catbirdz@roadrunner.com or 509-334-3817. Class size is limited and advance registration is required.



Ron Force

From the Prez:

When you wake up in the morning, you can hear the geese passing over. Spring migration is underway and there are reports of new migrants arriving daily. Which leads you to ask, “When will Palouse Audubon field trips start?” The answer is **“When some member steps forward to lead them.”** We lost our field trip chair, and a new one has not been found.

We’ve been running the plea **WE NEED YOU** in this year’s issues of *The Prairie Owl* in hopes some members would come forth and volunteer to become involved in the life of the chapter. While we were able to recruit a new secretary (Thanks Charlotte!) we still have vacancies on the Board. Almost weekly we have to turn down requests for educational presentations to public interest groups or to represent Palouse Audubon at fairs and public events.

We’ve been lucky to have dedicated, long-term volunteers, but those days are coming to an end. Without additional active membership, the future of the chapter is in doubt. Contact Marie Dymkoski, Vice President marie-dymkoski@msn.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Ron Force, 208-874-3207, ronforce@gmail.com

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Conservation Committee: Mike Costa, 509-332-1793, majcosta@live.com

Field Trips: *Vacant*

Members at Large: Paul Schroeder, 509-334-2470, schroede2003@yahoo.com

Cornell Lab of Ornithology Webcams

As the breeding season nears, additional webcams on the Cornell Lab of Ornithology website have been activated. Two cams online all year long are the Pond cam and the Cornell Feeders. The Ontario Feeders cam is still active and provides glimpses of eastern bird species like Blue Jay and Northern Cardinal. On the Red-tailed Hawks cam Ezra and Big Red are refurbishing their nest. The Savannah, Georgia, Great Horned Owl nest has been taken over by a pair of Osprey. A short-term cam currently active is Lance-tailed Manakins in Panama! If the birds are not active on the live feed, check out video clips posted below. The Albatross cam shows Laysan Albatross chick Kalama on Kauai, and the Cahow cam is located in the burrow of an endangered Bermuda Cahow (petrel) chick. Both chicks are fat and fluffy and growing fast! You can find all these webcams at <http://cams.allaboutbirds.org/> and watch as they are joined soon by the California Condor webcam from California. As this newsletter goes to press, another webcam has come online: a Barred Owl nest box in Indiana with 3 eggs.

Documentary Film Showings

In April, Palouse Audubon will show two recent documentary films. The films will be presented at 7:00pm on **April 10 and April 27** in the Fiske Room at the 1912 Center. On **April 10** we are considering the film “Chasing Ice” (75 minutes long) which received the 2014 News and Documentary Emmy for Outstanding Nature Programming. The documentary includes the largest glacier calving event ever captured on film. For this and other highlights, visit the film’s website <https://chasingice.com>. On **April 27** we will view “The Messenger,” “a visually thrilling ode to the beauty and importance of the imperiled songbird and what it will mean to all of us on both a global and human level if we lose them.” Many Audubon chapters have shown this film at their regular program meetings. This film is 90 minutes long. Watch the trailer and find more information at <http://songbirdsos.com/>.



PAS Graduate Student Grants

Each year, the Palouse Audubon Society awards two grants of \$500 each in support of research supporting 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 (WSU) and the other for a graduate student at the University of Idaho (UI). The winners are usually invited back to present a program on the outcome of their research. There are no restrictions on how the money is used.

The deadline for applications is **April 28** with the awards to be presented at the May program meeting. For information and entry forms, go to our Website:

<http://www.palouseaudubon.org/activities-events/student-grants/>

2017 Great Backyard Bird Count

New records were set in 2017 during the Great Backyard Bird Count: number of checklists submitted and number of estimated participants. New York led in the United States with the most checklists submitted (7191), and California reported the most species (370), closely followed by Texas with 360. The undisputed winner for number of species reported was Colombia with a whopping 955, followed by India with 801, and Mexico with 774 species. Visit the GBBC website, BirdCount.org, to read the summary of the 2017 GBBC, including the 10 most-reported species and the 10 most numerous species. Affecting bird counts this year was the incredibly warm weather during the GBBC (in almost every part of the U.S, except—of course—the Pacific Northwest), and migration was well underway in mid-February! Mark your calendars for next year: the **2018 GBBC is February 16-19**.

Volunteer Opportunity: Bird Monitoring on Thorn Creek and Cow Creek, Idaho

Volunteer birders are needed to assist the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) and Palouse Conservation District in roadside bird point counts along Thorn Creek and Cow Creek near Genesee, Idaho. The counts will begin Saturday, **April 22** (depending on weather) and extend at roughly one week intervals through mid-May. Bird point counts will consist of volunteers driving to marked locations about one mile apart throughout the Thorn Creek and Cow Creek watersheds, recording all birds seen or heard for a five minute period, and then continuing to the next location. If necessary, a training day will be provided by the IDFG prior to April 22 to familiarize interested volunteers with the bird point count protocol. The data collected by volunteers will be used to monitor changes in avian populations due to a large riparian restoration project beginning this spring. Interested volunteers should contact IDFG Habitat Technician, Anthony Hatcher by phone (208) 799-5010 (ask for Anthony), cell (980) 622-1987, or email at anthony.hatcher@idfg.idaho.gov for more information.

Steptoe Butte State Park News

Washington State Parks has initiated a new round of management and land use planning called CAMP (Classification and Management Planning) to look for ways to improve the state parks and evaluate current programs and facilities. (It has nothing to do with camping!) The process includes opportunities for public participation and is intended to identify areas within the parks corresponding to established park land classifications, which include Recreation Areas, Natural Areas, Heritage Areas, Natural Forest Areas and Natural Area Preserves. The first park on the list is to be Steptoe Butte State Park, an important area for many Palouse Audubon members. I attended a public meeting in Colfax on March 7 to represent Palouse Audubon, and spoke up for the value of the existing park for bird conservation and recreation. Many other

constituents also spoke up, including parasailers, mountain bikers, snowmobile users, amateur astronomers, and ordinary hikers.

This meeting was one of two, this one “to identify issues and concerns”. A second public meeting will be held sometime in May, called “Exploring alternative approaches”. The objective is to prepare a list of possibilities and discuss their merits. Ultimately an updated park management plan will result from two more meetings and several subsequent steps prepared by the CAMP team taking into account the wishes of the users of the park. This will be submitted to the State Parks Commission.

An additional objective is to adopt a long-term park boundary. This is of particular interest since two of our members, Ray and Joan Folwell, joined the Bassetts, a couple from the west side, to purchase over 430 acres of land adjacent to the park. I was surprised to learn that the park includes only about 150 acres, and that much of the land adjacent to the road which ascends to the top is private property. The land for the current park was donated by Virgil McCroskey many years ago. The newly purchased property includes much of the land adjacent to the road and reaches down to cultivated areas on several sides of the butte. The new owners hope that the State Parks will be able to purchase this land from them to be added to the State Park, and much support for this idea was expressed by all constituents. From our conservation-minded point-of-view the new land includes one of the largest tracts of relatively undisturbed Palouse Prairie habitat remaining, upon which several rare plants have already been found (Spalding’s Catchfly and Palouse Goldenrod). It also includes habitat for Rock Wrens, Rosy Finches, and Townsend’s Solitaire, among other species otherwise hard to find in Whitman County. The addition of this property will probably be included in this section of the review of the park. However, the state parks have few funds for land acquisition; each request must be submitted to the legislature for individual consideration, which means that this acquisition will probably take two to three years under the most favorable circumstances.

Paul Schroeder
Palouse Audubon Board Member

“SHOW US YOUR WILD SIDE” in the Palouse Audubon Society
2017 Photo Contest

This is a reminder to all photography enthusiasts that entries for the 2017 photo contest can be submitted beginning on **April 1** until midnight Pacific Daylight Time on **July 31, 2017**. Although there are numerous photo contests sponsored by various organizations, none compares to the uniqueness of our Palouse Audubon Society contest, focused on the birds and other wildlife and natural surroundings of the greater Palouse region. This is your opportunity to share those captivating photos that you took during the Christmas Bird Count or the Great Backyard Bird Count, as well as any photos taken during hikes and birding field trips or just from stepping out into your backyard. Your photos could end up being winners! So get ready to be involved and once again “Show Us Your Wild Side”!

In addition to last year’s photo contest winners that are presented under the “photos” tab of the PAS website, the judges bestowed the distinction of “honorable mention” to some additional spectacular photo entries.

For more information about the photo contest, check the PAS website at www.palouseaudubon.org for detailed rules regarding photo entries and instructions concerning how to submit your entries. For questions concerning the photo contest, or if you have any difficulties with the photo submission procedure, please contact Mike Costa, PAS Conservation Chair, at majcosta@live.com or leave a message at 509-332-1793.



Palouse Audubon Society
PO Box 3606
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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, Ron Force, PO Box 3606, Moscow ID 83843-1914 or ron-force@gmail.com. Visit the Palouse Audubon Society website at <http://www.palouseaudubon.org/> or find us on Facebook.

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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Palouse Audubon Society, PO Box 3606, Moscow ID 83843.

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