

# THE PRAIRIE OWL

PALOUSE AUDUBON SOCIETY

Volume 48, Issue 1, September 2019

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*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

**On Wednesday, September 18**, at 7:00pm in the Arts Workshop Room of the 1912 Building, Moscow, Idaho. The **Ordinary Extraordinary Junco** is a documentary film project designed to engage, entertain, and inspire student and adult audiences of all backgrounds. The feature-length film (88 min.) is comprised of eight shorter video modules (3 to 20 min.), or "chapters," that highlight past and present biological research on one of the most common and abundant—yet amazing and diverse—groups of songbirds in North America, the Juncos.

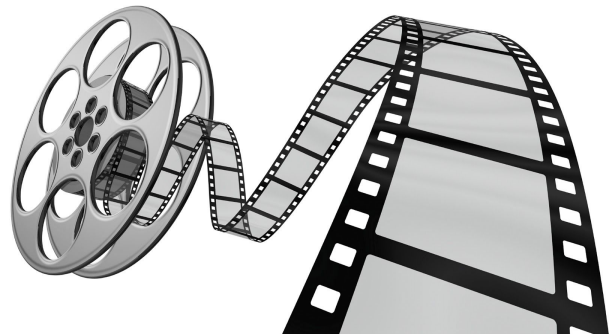
Please join us as we begin our program year for 2019-2020.

**On Wednesday, October 16**, join past president, Ron Force for his presentation on birding in Alaska. We'll be meeting in the Arts Workshop Room at the 1912 Building, Moscow, Idaho. Meeting will begin at 7:00pm.

### **The Pribilof Islands: Big Years, Big Listers, and Fowl Obsessions**

The Pribilof Islands, a volcanic group in the Bering Sea off Alaska have become famous

among birders after being featured in the book *The Big Year*. Besides having a variety of Arctic and sub-arctic nesting species, the islands collect stray migrants from Asia making a visit a must for birders trying to build a large ABA bird list. In May of 2019, Ron Force and Mike Scott joined a tour to St. Paul Island. They found fellow birders and their culture almost as fascinating as the unique landscape and rare birds. The visit also made stark the challenges facing the Arctic, its wildlife, and inhabitants at a time of climate change.



### **SAVE THE DATES!**

#### **Upcoming Program Dates~**

November 20, 2019

NO MEETING IN DECEMBER

January 15, 2020

February 19, 2020

March 18, 2020

April 15, 2020

May 20, 2020



**Marie Dymkoski**

## FROM THE PREZ

What a summer! It's hard to believe it is coming to a close, with students coming back to our universities, and our K-12 schools also returning to the classrooms. Labor Day weekend is always a sign of summer's end, and I for one love to get out and see all the birds finding their way home, either north or south.

There are reports of Mann Lake (Lewiston, Idaho) very active with terns, pectorals and other shorebirds. Other areas of interest are Rock Lake and Sprague Lake, Washington. Be sure to check your parks; Steptoe Butte and Kamiak Butte for migratory activity. I live close enough to make day trips to Heyburn State Park, Idaho, and have seen much bird activity as well as many boaters, campers and others enjoying family fun before the end of summer.

September is a busy month with fall sports and specifically university college games that bring so many visitors to the beautiful Palouse. There are so many activities during the month and I hope you're able to get out and enjoy the beauty we call home. I'd love for you to join me in two of my favorite activities: birding and biking! Check out this newsletter for more information on the Paradise Creek Bike and Bird event on Saturday, September 21. I hope to see you there.

This month we also send out our membership renewals and ask that you continue to support the work that we do. Thank you in advance!

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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**Committee:** Mike Costa, 509-332-1793

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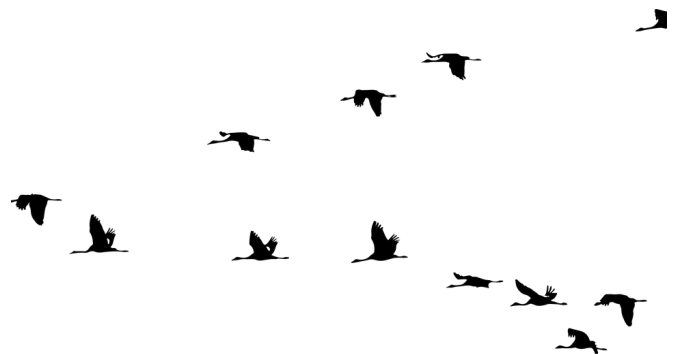
**Field Trips:** Tom Fischer

### **Members at Large:**

David Pierce-Garnett, 208-310-2766

[davidpiercegarnett@gmail.com](mailto:davidpiercegarnett@gmail.com)

Programs: board will jointly work on programs



## FIELD TRIPS

**Tom Fischer** of the Palouse Audubon Society will be leading a Rock Lake area field trip on **Saturday, September 7**.

Plan on meeting at Umpqua Bank-Pullman Branch parking lot for an 8:00am leave time.

The trip (subject to modification) includes Texas Lake, Rock Lake and nearby areas, and if sufficient time, Steptoe Butte on the return to Pullman.

This will be a full day trip and you should bring a lunch as well as plenty of water. Binoculars are helpful although not required. Dress for the weather and always wear comfortable shoes. There will be some walking on this trip. Could also be some elevation change.

Contact Tom at 509-334-1181 for any further information.



**Saturday, September 7** Join the Canyon Birders at Mann Lake. Meet at 8:00am at the Boat Launch Parking area for a walk around the lake's exposed mud areas.

**Saturday, September 14** Canyon Birders continue their Mann Lake trips throughout the month to take advantage of the changing mud conditions and arriving migrants. 8:00am at the Boat Launch Parking area. Expect plovers and waterfowl to arrive in their non-brown duck plumages to provide some new excitement.

**Saturday, September 21** Join Canyon Birders at Steptoe Butte State Park. This all day trip is always a treat during migration. We will meet at the west end of Walla Walla Community College at 7:30am to car pool and stop by *Dissmore's IGA in Pullman* at 8:30am to pick up Moscow/Pullman birders. Remember lunch, snacks and drinks and your Discover Pass if you expect to drive.

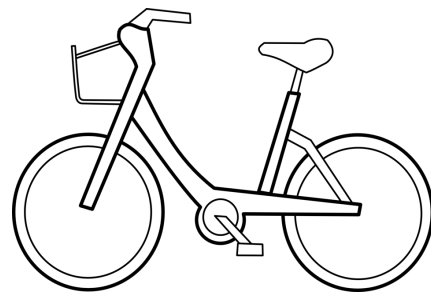
## BIKE AND BIRD

As part of #PalouseBikeWeek, the *Palouse Audubon Society* in partnership with the *Palouse Conservation District* will be hosting the second ever **Paradise Creek Bike and Bird** event on **Saturday, September 21**, from 7:00-9:00am.

Anyone interested in a fun morning of cycling and birding along the Bill Chipman Trail with an enthusiastic group of birders of all skill levels should meet at the Bill Chipman Trailhead (across from the Sunset Mart on Bishop Blvd) at 7:00am.

During the ride, cyclists will stop periodically to identify birds of interest along the trail as well as help document avian use of habitat improvement projects along Paradise Creek between Pullman and Moscow.

Don't ride but still want to join in on the birding fun? People walking are also welcome to join. For more information and to register for the event, visit [www.palousecd.eventbrite.com](http://www.palousecd.eventbrite.com)



## BOOK REVIEW

**THE LIFE AND DEATH OF ST. KILDA**  
by Tom Steel.

An old English friend sent me this book for Christmas 2017. A dedicated trekker, he had finally visited this remote island, which is part of a small archipelago located at the westernmost point of the United Kingdom in the Outer Hebrides. I was intrigued by the title, but didn't get around to reading the book until last year. Although the small community on the inhabited island (Hirta) never numbered more than 200 people, their

livelihood was highly dependent on birds as well as fish. During the 2-week harvest period in the nesting season (summer), men and boys would scale the near-sheer cliffs of nearby islands, and slaughter thousands of gannets, fulmars, and puffins as well as collect their eggs. Birds were not only eaten and dried, but their feathers were collected, and the oil of fulmars extracted to be sold on the mainland for use as decorations (feathers), and fuel for lamps as well as medicinal purposes. This was an important source of income for the St. Kildans; however in the 1920's the demand for feathers and oil declined, and the population became increasingly dependent on mainland relief. Finally, in 1930, the decision was made to evacuate the community, now down to only 36 people; not only were there few young people (an astounding 60% of children died of juvenile tetanus before adulthood), but the community had become too small to sustain itself. The birds have rebounded on the adjacent islands such that they now contain the world's largest seabird colony with 18 species of nesting birds; there were an estimated 59,000 pairs of gannets and 40,000 pairs of fulmars in 1973. The islands are part of the Scottish National Trust as well as a UNESCO Dual World Heritage site, and are visited by hundreds of visitor groups each year. Soay sheep which were abandoned on a nearby island of Soay have become the focus of demographers studying the dynamics of these now-wild mammals. This is a fascinating book which tells the story of how the human population of St. Kilda survived in such a severe and isolated environment for hundreds of years. Although the descriptions of the St. Kildans harvesting of birds and their eggs does not make for pleasant reading, it may be of some comfort to know that birds are now thriving in a completely protected setting. Certainly, I'd love to go there some day to see the seabird populations and how the St. Kildans lived in faithfully restored residences and other buildings. Another one for the bucket list!

***Submitted by Peter Meserve***

### **Member Survey!**

The Board of Palouse Audubon Society would like to hear from you! We've put together a short survey and ask that you take a few minutes to visit the link to help us learn more about you and your membership with PAS. Survey will close September 30.  
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/XMWH66M>

## **PALOUSE AUDUBON GRANT AWARDS**

During our April meeting, Ron Force awarded two \$500 grants to graduate students Jessica Tir of Washington State University and Guedry Faust of University of Idaho.

Ms. Tir predicts that birds alter their vocalizations in response to changing food availability and she will test this by evaluating the vocal response to reduced food availability using captive wild-caught pine siskins.

Mr. Faust is studying the vascular flora of the Selkirk Mountains of Idaho with a focus on the contemporary use of floras.

Congratulations to both students and we wish you well on your continued research.

### **Nez Perce**

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
Nez Perce National Historical Park



### **Celebrate National Public Lands Day**



Help park rangers plant native plants and restore natural habitat at the Spalding Visitor Center. Bring your family, friends, or coworkers to spend the day outdoors!

Join us for this *free* event  
**Saturday, September 28, 2019**  
**9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.**

Please bring sun protection, water, food, and proper clothing for working outside.

Anyone under the age of 18 requires a parent or guardian.

For more information:  
Nez Perce National Historical Park  
39063 US Highway 95  
Lapwai, ID 83540  
208-843-7009

Follow us!  







Global Big Day has become a May tradition for tens of thousands of eBirders: 24 hours to put your favorite park/county/state/province country/continent on the global birding stage. Last year we couldn't wait a full year between Global Big Days, and October Big Day was born. **On 19 October, October Big Day is back!**

Can we beat last year's total of 6,331 species on a single October day?

## How to participate

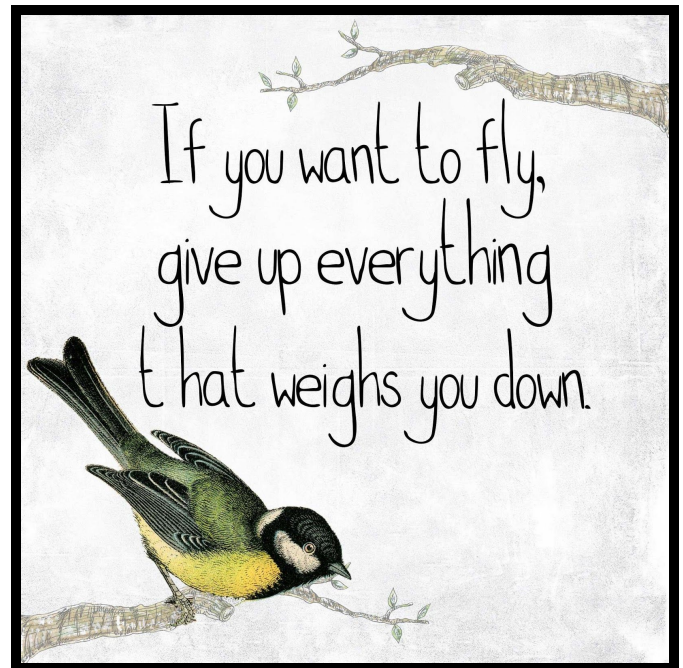
- **Get an eBird account:** eBird is a worldwide bird checklist program used by millions of birders. It's what allows us to compile everyone's sightings into a single massive October Big Day list—while at the same time collecting the data for scientists to use to better understand birds. **Sign up here.** <https://bit.ly/2kuEcRq>

**Watch birds on 19 October:** It's that simple. You don't need to be a bird expert, or go out all day long. Even 10 minutes in your backyard will help. October Big Day runs from midnight to midnight in your local time zone. You can report birds from anywhere in the world.

- **Enter what you see and hear on eBird:** You can enter your sightings **via our website** or—even easier—download the **free eBird Mobile app.** <http://help.ebird.org/customer/portal/articles/2411868>

You can enter and submit lists while you're still out birding, and the app will even keep track of how far you've walked, so you can focus on watching birds. While you're downloading free apps, try out the Cornell Lab's **Merlin Bird ID** app <https://bit.ly/2kke63H> for help with identification. Please enter sightings before 23 October to be included in our initial results announcement.

- **Watch the sightings roll in:** During the day, keep an eye on how the lists are growing in different parts of the world. Follow along with sightings from more than 150 countries. Stats will be updated in real-time on our **October Big Day page.** <https://ebird.org/octoberbigday>



Yearly membership to the Palouse Audubon Society starts September 1. Please consider renewing today, or if you're not yet a member, we'd love to have your support. We have STRIPE payment on our website now for ease in paying online. Stop by our website at [www.palouseaudubon.org](http://www.palouseaudubon.org) for more information! Just click on the "Join Us" button.



**Tom Fischer** and **Laura Bloomfield** enjoyed leading two field trips this summer. The photos show the group of birders at the Colfax Trail field trip enjoying the Bald Eagle nest and hiking on the beautiful trail along the river.

As our new field trip coordinator, Tom looks forward to putting together more opportunities for us to get together and learn more about the birds around the area. Remember that when attending any of the field trips, you should be aware that there will be some walking and to wear appropriate shoes as well as clothing for the weather. All day trips should also include plenty of food and water.

Field trip information can be found in our newsletter as well as our website. For last minute coordination of trips you can also find posts on our Facebook page.



**SAVE THE DATE**  
 Christmas Bird Count  
 Saturday December 14, 2019  
 Contact us at [palouseaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:palouseaudubon@gmail.com)  
 for more information!

## KOPPEL FARM SPRING FAIR



**Mike Costa** and **Charlotte Omoto** attended the Koppel Farm Spring in May and enjoyed telling others about the Palouse Audubon Society and interacting with young and old that stopped by the display table.



During the fair there was a raffle for a beautiful gift basket put together by the board of the Audubon Society and the lucky winner was **Laurence Davin**. Congratulations and enjoy all the great birding supplies



## MEMBERSHIP

Palouse Audubon Society (PAS) is a nonprofit 501(c)3 and 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 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, 3rd and Adams St, Moscow ID, at 7:00 p.m. on the third Wednesday of each month, September through May, except in December. The board of directors meets at the 1912 Center at 7:00 p.m. on the first Tuesday of each month, September through May.

***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](mailto:marie-dymkoski@msn.com) by the 20th of the month. Any questions about membership should be directed to Ron Force 208-874-3207 or email [ronforce@gmail.com](mailto:ronforce@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 a donation in support of the programs and activities of the Palouse Audubon Society. Membership renewals are due in September and current members will receive renewal notices at that time. PAS is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization.

Annual Membership **\$15.00**                      Donation \_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

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Mail this form along with payment to: Palouse Audubon Society, PO Box 3606, Moscow ID 83843-1914

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Any questions, please email [palouseaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:palouseaudubon@gmail.com)

NEWS

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