

THE PRAIRIE OWL

PALOUSE AUDUBON SOCIETY

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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, 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, 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.

On Wednesday, November 20, join us at the Arts Workshop Room for a presentation from Eric Anderson and Joan Folwell about Palouse Prairie on Steptoe Butte. Program will be held at the 1912 Building, Moscow, Idaho, beginning at 7:00pm. This workshop will give a background and overview to the multi-year process of placing a private land parcel on Steptoe Butte into the public domain

in an effort to preserve Palouse Prairie habitat.

Included in the presentation will be a talk about the various stakeholders, partners, and perspectives that were included as part of the process, including bird conservation and recreation values. The workshop will be facilitated by two members of the Palouse Prairie Foundation, including one of the landowners that was integral in seeing this land converted into the public.

Eric Anderson grew up fascinated by the tallgrass prairie of Iowa and this fascination extended to Palouse Prairie habitat when he moved to Moscow in 2012 to work at the University of Idaho. Eric has a background in conservation and environmental service-learning through his time with AmeriCorps and Earth Force. Eric also received a graduate certificate in Restoration Ecology and a Master of Natural Resources degree at the University of Idaho.

Joan Folwell has been a member of the Palouse Prairie Foundation since 2005. She has helped to protect Palouse Prairie by obtaining recognition for it in the Critical Area Ordinances for Whitman County and the city of Pullman. She and her husband Ray engage in a 20-acre restoration effort north of Pullman and are part owners of the Steptoe parcel.



Marie Dymkoski

FROM THE PREZ

The weather has changed, the tomatoes are ripening on the vine and the birds are on the move. The American Goldfinches have just about eaten all of the seeds from my sunflowers, and what they missed, my chickens will get. Of course, the chickens take the red cherry tomatoes right off the vine as well!



I love this time of year when everyone is in such a hurry to enjoy the last days of summer and get the yard, garden, and summer chores done in the last few weekends of good weather. The days are shorter, but we manage to get plenty done when the door is closing on dry weather. I'm already planning my spring seed starting and hoping to increase my perennial plantings for hummingbirds. I enjoyed the many local hummers in my yard this year.

I hope you've had a chance to get out and enjoy the beautiful fall weather too.

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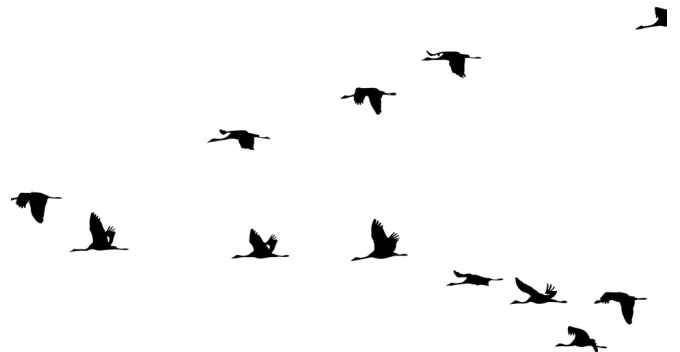
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Programs: board will jointly work on programs



FIELD TRIPS

Tom Fischer of the Palouse Audubon Society will be leading a few trips during the winter months. More information will be found on our Facebook page as well as updates on our website.

We currently have several members who are volunteering to facilitate "raptor runs" throughout the Palouse. The Winter Raptor Survey Project has been extended throughout our region and trips generally cover an area of 50-60 miles per route. More than 90% of all birds counted on these surveys consist of the following species: Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Northern Harrier, Bald Eagle, and Rough-legged Hawk. If you are comfortable with identifying these 5 species and would like to participate in a raptor run, contact us at palouseaudubon@gmail.com.



BOOK REVIEW

Never to Be Heard

Evolution is slow, but recent extinctions are comparably fast. I was surprised to learn after birding for several years that I was unaware that upwards of 10 species of birds that made North America part of their range at some part of the year are now vanished, extinct from the planet. Of course I knew of the grave history of the end of the Passenger Pigeons and the Carolina Parakeets, but worldwide 40 species, and just as many subspecies have suffered the same fate. Altogether about 80

tragic histories of bird extinctions I did not know, and unaware that there are now about 40 diverse species never to be heard calling from the trees, seen on the high seas, or ticked off any young birder's life-list.

The stories and history of how these birds came to an end are mostly deplorable. Much extinction directly and indirectly was caused by human exploration, settlement, and greed. Invasive rats and cats, meals for sailors, obsessive collecting and other worse human activities are among the reasons for their extinction. I urge you to read the fascinating tales of each and every one. They tell the fates of birds as magnificent as the Great Auk, a duck with a pink head, and the boldly colored Bachman's Warbler. Whom some still holdout that a few birds might have survived somewhere.

Certain species of course were more likely than others to become extinct; birds with small populations and more so those residing on islands were much less likely to outlast their human, feline, canine, or other invasive assailants. Colorful birds killed and collected for fashion or display were more desirable than drably colored bird species, and species who had evolved to be docile perhaps as a result of no natural common predators were surely doomed. The Palouse has no recent know avian extinction, but we surely altered its avian distribution and perhaps species richness by our settlement and large scale agricultural transformation of the land.

Human's fascination of birds, butterflies, plants and everything observable, recordable, photographable, or collectible seems to be closely tied to a species population. Birds seem less special when they are more common to us. Think Robins and House Sparrows, seen one we've seen them all you might think, but a Helmeted Hornbill might peak people's interests. It sounds exotic, and it's important because while we may not be killing off tens of thousands of birds for their fashionable feathers as once took place, we have new ways of hindering a flourishing biodiversity. This includes habitat destruction and fragmentation and of course multiple others. This is happening all around us to

birds common and exotic; it is simply just new avenues to additional extinctions. Some species will still be more vulnerable than others.

After you have learned about the destruction of various entire species, take a look at <www.edgeofexistence.org> . Their bird list shows 100 “EDGE” birds, birds which they consider “Evolutionarily Distinct and Globally Endangered”. These are 100 Birds which are possibly already extinct, on the brink of extinction, or in the process of becoming conservation effort successes. These are birds such as the Kakapo, a large flightless parrot with a total population of 126 individuals, or the Madagascar Serpent Eagle, which could lose up to 94% of the species’ habitat depending on the severity of climate change.

Wouldn’t it be great if we could keep all those species alive? I recommend the book *A Gap in Nature: Discovering the World’s Extinct Animals* available at Neill Public Library, and the TV series *Lost Animals of the 20th Century*, 16 documentary episodes available on youtube.com and some streaming platforms.

Current life list 2019: about 10,358 more species to go out of 10,758.

Life list when I die: hopefully a few more out of 10,758. Not one less (lumping and splitting aside).

Sources:

www.edgeofexistence.org

<https://www.worldbirdnames.org/>

Submitted by Laura Bloomfield

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 extended to Oct 7**

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/XMWH66M>



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.

- <https://ebird.org/octoberbigday>

BIRDS AND WINDOWS - a bad combination!

Most of us are aware of the plight of birds flying into windows. Recent articles in the Daily Evergreen and the American Bird Conservancy have brought to attention the large numbers of birds injured or killed by collisions with glass windows. Smithsonian researchers report a conservative estimate of up to a billion bird deaths annually caused by collisions with windows in all types of buildings including single story homes to high

rise structures. A recent article in the WSU **Daily Evergreen** (May 16, 2019) by researcher **Jessica Tir** relates the extent of the problem to the local community. She mentions options such as bird-safe glass (Glas-Pro) that can deter birds from flying into windows, and other types of window treatments, including patterned adhesives, that can also reduce the incidence of bird collisions.

There are numerous additional alternative suggestions as to how to avoid these unfortunate instances. Some resources are presented here with the hope that it will gain your attention to take steps to deal with this problem. Solutions suggested to prevent bird collisions with windows include window decals, partially closed window blinds, frosted or etched windows, and minimization of night illumination with shades or other window coverings. The most effective tactic seems to be to prevent reflections in windows that attract or mislead the birds. The American Bird Conservancy recommends exterior window screens as one of the best solutions. Mesh insect screens are effective in that they eliminate reflections in the windows that attract the birds, and they also provide a “cushioning” effect if birds do fly into the screens. I even have screens covering windows that do not open, including my large living room picture windows! The sheets of screen are separated from the window by wooden spacers around the perimeter of the window. I have also resorted to hanging strips of marker ribbon that flutter in front of my windows and patio sliding door and it seems to have alleviated the problem to a great extent.

Let’s all give a second thought to the effects our windows impose on wildlife. A good project for school children might be to have them make some colored cut-outs to apply to their windows at home and at school. This might serve to foster an awareness and appreciation for wildlife. Future structures are placing a greater emphasis on bird-friendly building designs, including fewer windows and non-reflective glass, as one way to counteract this problem in newer developments. A

Bird-Safe Buildings Act bill has been designed to have federal buildings incorporate bird-safe building materials, design features, and lighting aimed at reducing bird collisions. Awareness and support for these measures should be encouraged and promoted.



Submitted by Mike Costa

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT 2019

Join the Palouse Audubon Society for the 2019-20 Christmas Bird Count on Saturday, December 14th. More information will be available in our next issue of **The Prairie Owl** or contact us at palouseaudubon@gmail.com.

How the count started, and how the data is used today.

Prior to the turn of the 20th century, hunters engaged in a holiday tradition known as the Christmas "Side Hunt." They would choose sides and go afield with their guns—whoever brought in the biggest pile of feathered quarry won.

Conservation was in its beginning stages in that era, and many observers and scientists were becoming concerned about declining bird populations. Beginning on Christmas Day 1900, ornithologist Frank M. Chapman, an early officer in the then-nascent Audubon Society, proposed a new holiday tradition—a "Christmas Bird Census" that would count birds during the holidays rather than hunt them.

So began the Christmas Bird Count. Thanks to the inspiration of Chapman and the enthusiasm of 27 dedicated birders, 25 Christmas Bird Counts were held that day. The locations ranged from Toronto, Ontario to

Pacific Grove, California with most counts in or near the population centers of northeastern North America. Those original 27 Christmas Bird Counters tallied around 90 species on all the counts combined.

CBC in the Modern Era

From December 14 through January 5 each year tens of thousands of volunteers throughout the Americas brave snow, wind, or rain, and take part in the effort. Audubon and other organizations use data collected in this long-running wildlife census to assess the health of bird populations, and to help guide conservation action.

How the Christmas Bird Count Helps Protect Species and Their Habitat

The data collected by observers over the past century allow Audubon researchers, conservation biologists, wildlife agencies and other interested individuals to study the long-term health and status of bird populations across North America. When combined with other surveys such as the Breeding Bird Survey, it provides a picture of how the continent's bird populations have changed in time and space over the past hundred years.

The long term perspective is vital for conservationists. It informs strategies to protect birds and their habitat, and helps identify environmental issues with implications for people as well.

What conservationists have learned through Christmas Bird Count data

- Audubon's 2014 Climate Change Report is a comprehensive, first-of-its kind study that predicts how climate change could affect the ranges of 588 North American birds. Of the 588 North American bird species Audubon studied, more than half are likely to be in trouble. Our models indicate that 314

species will lose more than 50 percent of their current climatic range by 2080.

- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has included Audubon's climate change work from CBC data as one of 26 indicators of climate change in their 2012 report.
- In 2009 CBC data were instrumental in the collaborative report by the North American Bird Conservation Initiative, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service - State of the Birds 2009.
- In 2007, CBC data were instrumental in the development of Audubon's Common Birds in Decline Report, which revealed that some of America's most beloved and familiar birds have taken a nosedive over the past forty years.

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 for more information! Just click on the "Join Us" button.

New Feature: Use Merlin Bird ID on AllAboutBirds.org

We've brought our popular Merlin Bird ID tool to the Web! Now you don't have to download the Merlin app to identify 650+ North American bird species.

Just visit [All About Birds](http://AllAboutBirds.org) and look for the "ID" button in the upper right corner of any page. It works just like our popular app, asking you five simple questions and then giving you a short, smart list of suggestions about what bird you might have seen. It's great if your smartphone is short on memory, and it works from any browser on any device. [Try out Merlin now!](#)

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 by the 20th of the month. Any questions about membership should be directed to Ron Force 208-874-3207 or email 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 _____

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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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NEWS

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