

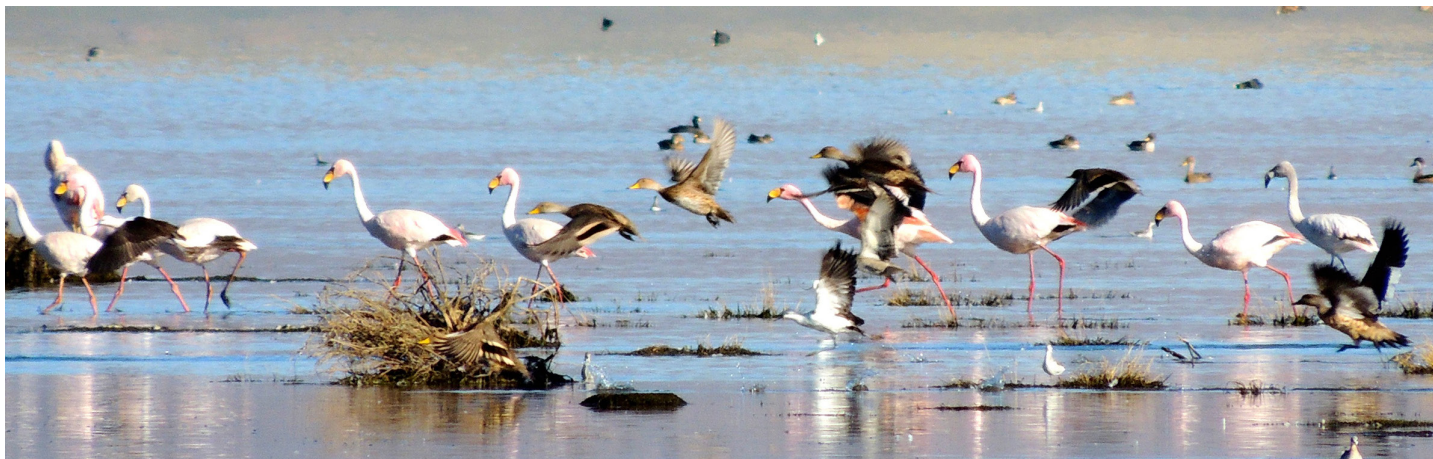
Volume 22
Issue 3
November
2014

The Pygmy Owl

The Newsletter of the
Spokane Audubon Society



November 12th Program: Exploring South America, “the Bird Continent,” with Pacific Biodiversity Institute’s Lucila Castro and Peter Morrison



Join us on November 12th, when we welcome Lucila Castro and Peter Morrison, both of the Pacific Biodiversity Institute. South America, known to many as “the bird continent,” is where nature finds its greatest expression. Lucila and Peter will take us on a virtual expedition through some of the most amazing biodiversity hotspots and wildlands on earth. Many of the best birding hotspots are not known to North Americans and are far from the “tourist trail.” Short videos, photos, maps and discussion will provide a glimpse of the incredible bird life and the tremendous biodiversity of some of the best parts of South America. We will meet scientists and conservationists working to protect what we call “biota maxima” and learn about opportunities to help them study and protect the places where nature flourishes like nowhere else on earth. Lucila and Peter will share some of the latest research on the flamingos of the high Andes and efforts to protect them and their habitat. They will also discuss opportunities for partnerships between birding groups and conservationists in the USA and birding groups and conservationists in South America. Many of our bird species visit South America (for a good reason) and you can too!

Lucila Castro is an Argentine conservation biologist working with Pacific Biodiversity Institute (PBI) and a member

of Grupo de Conservación Flamencos Altoandinos (GCFA). She is an avid bird specialist and superb wildlife photographer with intimate knowledge of some of the best birding hotspots in Argentina. She is in the USA briefly for a scientific symposium and to share her passion for the abundant and diverse birds of South America with audiences here in the Pacific Northwest.

Peter Morrison is a conservation biologist and the executive director of PBI. An avid explorer of wildlands and biodiversity hotspots in both North and South America, he leads a project to explore, document and eventually protect some of these crucial places. Peter also is an award winning photographer and an aspiring wildlife videographer.

*Spokane Audubon’s November program will be held at the
Riverview Retirement Community,
Village Community Building
(Directions on page 8.)*

*Please join us at 7 p.m. for refreshments
and friendly conversation.*

*The program will begin at about 7:30 p.m.,
after announcements.*

The Pygmy Owl

Volume 22, Issue 3 ~ November 2014

The Pygmy Owl, the newsletter of the Spokane Audubon Society, is published monthly, September through June.

Spokane Audubon Society
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Notes from the President

by Fran Haywood

Happy Thanksgiving!

Wow! It's November, already. It hasn't seemed like it since the weather is so balmy. Maybe by the time you read this we will have had our first frost. I remember that very often the first snow arrives around Halloween. Not sure if this has anything to do with climate change, but I am really enjoying my garden.

Most of the local birds have migrated on schedule, and northern visitors are arriving, but July, August, and September all had above normal temperatures. National Audubon is following up their report on the future of birds by trying to figure out what to do. They are starting by protecting IBAs (Important Bird Areas), and other places necessary to the survival of the most endangered species.

What can we do? Create a bird-friendly yard (see page 4 for examples from Alan McCoy). Get involved with your local IBA; talk to people, especially decision makers; support lower emission policies. Volunteer for studies (call Turbull NWR (235-4723) or Washington Fish & Wildlife (892-1001) and ask how you can help). Try to consume less.

In the meantime, get out and go birding. Be thankful that we live in such a beautiful area with four seasons.

Don't forget your calendars! Send them as gifts to your family and friends. They are beautiful, useful works of art, and the sight of those bright, perky birds can't help but lift your mood during the dark, gloomy days of winter.

Our speakers this month are active conservationists in South America. For more information about Pacific Biodiversity Institute's South American Wildlands and Wildlife Project, visit:

http://www.pacificbio.org/initiatives/wildlands_south_america.html

To learn more about opportunities to join a wildlife expeditions in South America, visit:

http://www.pacificbio.org/expeditions/expeditions_south_america.html

December Newsletter Deadline:
Thursday, November 13th

(It's early because of Thanksgiving!)

Please e-mail material to Carmen Yount at
carmen@floreo.com

Sights & Sounds

Bird Sightings for the Inland Northwest, compiled by Jon Isacoff

The latter part of migration is just about over. The arrival of Rough-legged Hawks and Northern Shrikes is the harbinger of winter just around the corner. All in all, it has been a fairly lackluster fall migration, but there have been some really neat finds in the region.

Specific species, such as Surf Scoter, Sabine's Gull, Blue Jay, and White-throated Sparrow made a very nice showing throughout the region, in particular. Several County records were set including Sabine's Gull (Pend Oreille), Palm Warbler (Stevens), Swamp Sparrow (Lincoln), and Harris's Sparrow (Pend Oreille) (see details below). Especially rare species are indicated in bold italics:

SURF SCOTER: Sprague Lake (10/7-JI, 10/9-GF, 10/10-TL, and 10/19-JI and AL); Eloika Lake (10/7-TL); Mill Canyon (10/10-TL and 10/21-JI); Diamond Lake (10/11-TL); Kettle Falls (10/12-WC)

PACIFIC LOON: Sandpoint (10/12-CL)

NORTHERN GOSHAWK: Steptoe Butte (10/19-KC)

FERRUGINOUS HAWK: Sprague Lake (9/22-RK)

BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER: Cow Lake (9/22-RK, 9/23-GF, and 9/25-JI)

LESSER YELLOWLEGS: Rare in October. Slavin Ranch (10/17-JI)

STILT SANDPIPER: Cow Lake (9/22-RK); Sprague Lake (9/26-TL)

PARASTIC JAEGER: Sprague Lake (10/7-JI)

SABINE'S GULL: Genesee (9/19-CL); Cusick (9/19-TL)

FRANKLIN'S GULL: Sandpoint (10/12-RDC)

MEW GULL: Spokane (10/13-JI); Coeur D'Alene (10/13-DW)

BLACK-CHINNED HUMMINGBIRD: Rare in October. Spokane (10/1-KT)

WILLIAMSON'S SAPSUCKER: Moscow (10/1-CS)

RED-NAPED X RED-BREASTED SAPSUCKER HYBRID: Viola (10/20-NM)

AMERICAN THREE-TOED WOODPECKER: Mount Spokane State Park (10/2-TL)

YELLOW-SHAFTED NORTHERN FLICKER: Washtucna (9/16-JI); Moscow (10/4-CL)

BLUE JAY: Viola (9/27-NM); Northport (9/29-ND); Moscow (10/3-LB); Sandpoint (10/3); Spokane (10/6-MF); Spokane South Hill (10/9-10/19-SaS); Sandpoint (9/15-9/21-DB and MB); Davenport (10/18-MR)

LAPLAND LONGSPUR: Cusick (9/19-TL); Cow Lake (9/25-JI); Peone Wetland (9/29-TL); Slavin Ranch-(10/9-JI); Sprague Lake (10/7-JI, 10/10-TL, 10/19-JI and AL); West Plains Spokane (10/10-TL and 10/15-FH)

PALM WARBLER: Colville (9/30-WC)

AMERICAN TREE SPARROW: Palouse Falls State Park (10/18-MD, MLD)

SWAMP SPARROW: Mill Canyon (10/21-JI)

FOX SPARROW: Washtucna (9/24-RB); Hayden (9/26-DW); Moscow (10/8-BB and JH); Colville (10/10-WC); Rose Creek Preserve (10/12-StS)

WHITE-THROATED SPARROW: Hayden (9/18 and 9/26-DW); LeClerc Creek (9/19-TL); Moscow (9/21-10/3-BH); Washtucna (9/23-CL); Pullman (10/1-JW); Mount Spokane Foothills (10/7-TL); Sandpoint (10/12-CL)

HARRIS'S SPARROW: Cusick (10/13-MM)

GOLDEN-CROWNED SPARROW: LeClerc Creek (9/19-TL); Rose Creek Preserve (10/12-StS)

PINE GROSBEAK: Mount Spokane State Park (10/10-Fran Haywood); Salmo Pass (9/26-MC and 10/3-TL)

GRAY-CROWNED ROSY FINCH: Ritzville (10/4-BL); Mount Spokane State Park (10/9-TL and 10/10-TO); Mondovi (10/21-JI)

Observers: DB-Don Baker; MB-Missi Baker; RB-R.J. Baltierra; LB-Leigh Bernacchi; BB-Ben Bright; KC-Keith Carlson; MC-Mike Clarke; WC-Warren Current; RDC-Rich Del Carlo; MD-Mike Denny; MLD-MerryLynn Denny; ND-Nancy Dunnewin; GF-Greg Falco; MF-Marian Frobe; RF-Russell Frobe; JH-John Hanna; FH-Fran Haywood; BH-Bettie Hoff; JI-Jon Isacoff; RS-Russ Koppendrayner; CL-Christopher Lindsey; TL-Terry Little; AL-Angela Lotrario; CL-Carl Lundblad; BL-Becky Lyle; NM-Nancy Miller; MM-Matthew Moskwik; TO-Tim O'Brien; MR-Marcus Roening; StS- Stefan Schlick; SS-Sandy Schreven; SaS-Sandy Sollie; CS-Charles Swift; KT-Kim Thorburn; NT-Norma Trefry; DW-Doug Ward; JW-John Wolff

Fall Birding from My Porch

by Alan McCoy

I got home from our Bike and Bird trip (August 24, 2014) to Heyburn State Park along the Trail of the Coeur d'Alenes in time for a late afternoon cup of coffee. There's always a spare pair of binoculars on the table next to my perch on the porch. I'm sipping away when I spot something in the underbrush out near the currants. I put down the coffee and grabbed those binocs. (This, putting down the beverage and grabbing binocs, will turn out to be a persistent theme of the next couple weeks.) It's a Hermit Thrush. I don't get them often at my place, but in spring or fall they do come through and sometimes I'm lucky enough, or watchful enough, to actually see them do their dance through the ground debris.



Plenty of bugs here for a Hermit Thrush!

I watched for a while from the comfort of my sling chair. Down go the binoculars, and up comes the Kindle and coffee cup. Oops! Down go the Kindle and coffee and up come the binocs to see what that is flitting around in the Forsythia forest. A Wilson's warbler! Like the Hermit, this beautiful creature (yes, even a fall warbler is beautiful to my eye) enjoys the plentiful bugs around our place as they fuel up for their semi-annual journey. One week later on Labor Day, again while enjoying a morning beverage, a

Wilson's warbler was joined by an Orange-crowned for a bug brunch in their dining room—the Forsythia, pussy willow and viburnum. This was the first time I had seen an Orange-crowned warbler on my property.

Skip ahead another week and Audrey and I are outside after breakfast, enjoying the unusually warm fall on the back deck. I have not started up the sunflower seeds, suet or thistle but I notice the usual American Goldfinches, chickadees and Pygmy Nuthatches busily finding insects in the Ponderosa pine and mountain ash. Our Western Bluebirds raised three broods successfully and the families are crowding the birdbaths. Butter butts, otherwise known as Yellow-rumped warblers, have arrived and seem to be everywhere. And again we have Wilson's and Orange-crowned joining the activity. By this time I am getting excited at the variety of not-so-common visitors to my home.

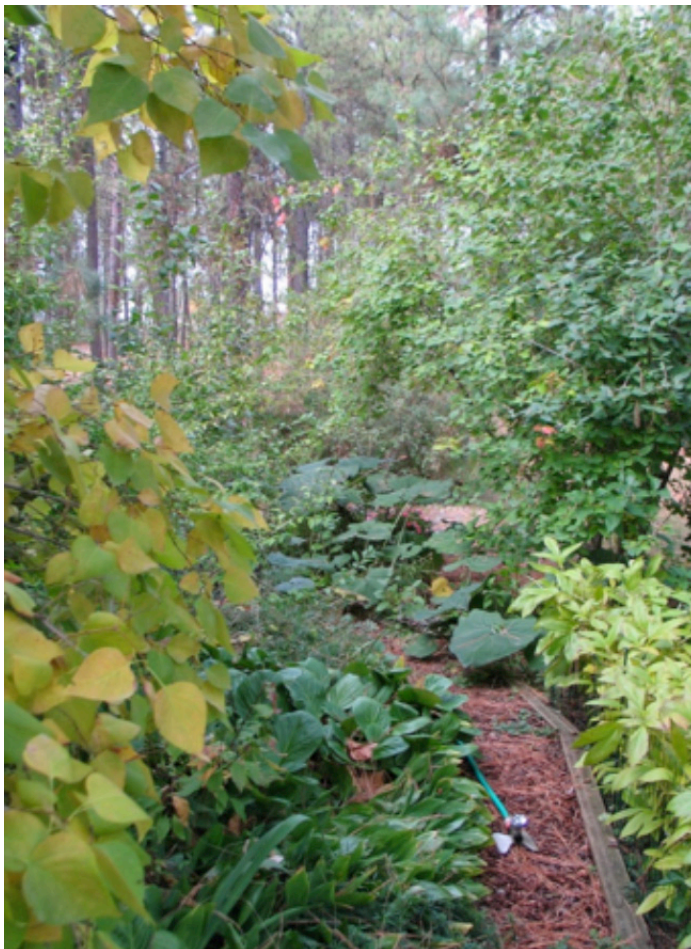
But the next day it got just ridiculous. It was another glorious day to be alive and enjoy the sunshine. I'm excited to see what might show up today. On any given day I might see 10 or 15 species with ease. On this day new species just kept showing up, to my delight and astonishment. The Downy, Hairy and Northern Flickers are common as are House Finches, Mourning Dove and California Quail. This time of year I always see White-breasted Nuthatches, both chickadees, my Western Bluebirds and a few straggling House Wrens and a couple hummingbirds whizzing by. But on this day these were joined by a Nashville Warbler, more Orange-crowned, Yellow-rumped and Wilson's and a pair of Townsend Warblers. I'm almost hyperventilating now. You couldn't pry my binoculars away from me. The Townsend



Forsythia Forest and pond under the watchful eyes of a stone raccoon. The day lilies and other plants around the pond have been trimmed in preparation for winter.

was another property lifer. Five warbler species in one day?! At my house? I'm still buzzing about the warblers when I notice a pair of Red-naped sapsuckers quietly probing for food in some of our pines.

The rest of the day as we tend the garden I am distracted by the constant aerial activity and by the possibility of yet another unusual bird. But it wasn't until the day's work was done and we were relaxing on the front porch that the possibility become a reality. The Western Peewees had already gone south a week or so ago and the flycatcher I



Looking north from the kitchen deck toward the pond (not visible). Birds love the viburnum.

was observing in the Forsythia above the pond was a bit larger, and with a slightly different profile. Another property lifer—Olive-sided Flycatcher. The Cedar Waxwing and Spotted Towhee that later made a cameo visit were just icing on the suet.

On my morning walks the next week I notice that bird activity is slowing. Yellow-rumped warblers are still flit-

ting about, but I find only one Wilson's. By the weekend of September 14th we are down to our regulars. Hold on now! There's a solitary Say's Phoebe bobbing its tail out by the pond and waiting patiently for a meal to fly by. This isn't a first for the property, but not common either.

The next day is a work day but as I walk out the door for my morning walk, I'm immediately saluted by three Great Horned Owls (mom, dad and youngster) hooting their greetings to the day. Walking down the driveway I hear a Golden-crowned Kinglet. I hear these guys each spring and fall, but rarely do they allow me to actually see them. Mondays are often a short day at work so I came home in mid-afternoon ready to pick beans and tomatoes and rake some pine needles. I've got my rake in hand when I see a flash of yellow. Down goes the rake and I run for my binocs. I never find the yellow flash, but I do see something else. It's looking like a song sparrow, and this would be a good find for my dry pine property. In fact it was a Fox Sparrow (slate-colored). This is yet another first for the homestead. I watched this little guy for a half-hour as he hunted for bugs under leaves. What a fantastic bookend to my autumn birding—Hermit Thrush to Fox Sparrow—both doing their dance for bugs in the leaf litter around our home.

Who says spring is the best time for birding!



Looking south from our kitchen deck. Water is more important in the fall than bird seed.

Book Review: *Secrets of Backyard Bird Photography*, by J. Chris Hansen

Reviewed by Marlene Cashen

Once we entered the age of digital photography, with access to superb, affordable cameras and image-stabilized lenses, unfettered by the expense of film and film processing, the world of bird photography exploded.

Anyone involved in this exhilarating and sometimes frustrating pastime knows that not every image taken meets his/her high expectations. And for those interested in capturing images above and beyond “home photo album” quality, tips and techniques from more skilled photographers are desired and needed.

This guide will appeal to and benefit serious hobbyist photographers perhaps more than the casual sharpshooter. Incorporating Hansen’s techniques may result in many more images being “keepers.”

The author very basically discusses camera equipment requirements; food and feeder types and locations; the

placement of photogenic perches in proximity to feeders, with careful attention to lighting direction; preparing and arranging set-ups to provide pleasing backgrounds and bokeh (the quality of blur for out-of-focus parts of the image) for images; and the use of blinds. He then discusses photographic principles to capture sharp, well-composed, dynamic shots. The remainder of the book contains a litany of do-it-yourself feeder, water feature, and blind construction – some easy, but some seemingly requiring more skills to accomplish.

All in all, *Secrets of Backyard Bird Photography* is a good, concise bird photography guide for the serious hobbyist. *Secrets of Backyard Bird Photography* is published by Rocky Nook, and is available through the publisher, online (through Amazon or Barnes & Noble), or through local booksellers..

Calendars make great gifts... 2015 Spokane Audubon Calendar available now!



Above:
Wilson's Snipe,
by Bob Cashen

Right:
Redhead,
by Harry Thomas



\$10 each

Calendars are available at meetings,
by mail or through spokaneaudubon.org (using PayPal).

Shipping charges apply for all mail/online orders.

1 calendar: \$10 + \$3 s&H = \$13

2 calendars: \$20 + \$4 s&H = \$24

3 - 6 calendars: \$30 + \$7 s&H = \$37

Contact Spokane Audubon for
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To order by mail, send check to:

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Spokane, WA 99208

Make checks payable to
Spokane Audubon.

**SAS Field Trips:
November & December**

**November 22, 2014, Saturday
Douglas Plateau
Northern Visitors Trip
Leader: Kim Thorburn**

The Waterville Plateau is a challenging, but high-quality, destination for rarities during the late fall and winter months. We will work the rolling steppe of the Plateau in search of unusual raptors, owls, and passerines. We'll also bird along the Columbia River in hopes of finding rare Arctic Gulls and saltwater waterfowl, such as scoters, Long-tailed Duck, and Pacific Loon. We will spend the night of November 21 in Brewster for an earlier start with the birds dur-

ing this short daylight season. Contact Kim Thorburn (465-3025 or *kthorburn@msn.com*) by November 15 if you plan to attend.

Note: This trip will be dependent on weather and road conditions.

**December 13, 2014, Saturday
Winter Lake and Wetbelt Trip
Leader: Joyce Alonso**

This trip takes us around Beauty Bay on Lake Coeur d'Alene where the Bald Eagles feeding on spawned-out salmon are always a sight to behold. Weather permitting, those interested may drive down to Thompson Lake/Harrison region where a variety of birds winter in a slightly warmer zone. Probable particulars: 8:00 am start at Liberty

Lake Albertson's parking lot. Contact Joyce Alonso (448-2447) by December 6 if you plan to attend.

Note: This trip will be dependent on weather and road conditions.

**December 28, 2014, Sunday
Spokane Audubon
Christmas Bird Count**

All SAS members as well as new birders are always welcome to join the Christmas count, which encompasses the Spokane Count Circle Center: 47° 43' N by 117° 25' W (approximately Division St. and Francis Avenue). Please contact Alan McCoy (509-448-3123 or *ahm2352@gmail.com*) for information about the Spokane CBC.

**Spokane Audubon Society
Membership Form**

Local Membership Dues:

Individual: \$20/year _____

Couple & Family: \$25/year _____

Student: \$10/year _____

Lifetime: \$300 _____

National Membership Dues: \$35/year _____

Individual + National Dues: \$55/year _____

Couple + National Dues: \$60/year _____

Your local membership provides you with *The Pygmy Owl* and supports your local chapter's many conservation and education activities. You will also be eligible for website privileges.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Zip Code: _____ Phone: _____

E-mail: _____



Please make check payable to:
Spokane Audubon Society
Send this form and your check to:

Audubon Membership
Attn: Dave Plemons
1224 W. Riverside #1101
Spokane, WA 99201

Current members may renew memberships from our web site::

<http://spokaneaudubon.org>

Receiving duplicate newsletters? Errors or other changes needed on your mailing label? Contact Dave Plemons at *davep_nublado@me.com*, or 413-1524.



The Pygmy Owl
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November 12th:
 South American Flamingos,
 with Lucila Castro and Peter Morrison
 7:30 p.m.

To:

The Spokane Audubon Society provides resources and services to educate people about birds, wildlife, and the importance of habitats, and to advocate and support public policies and actions that conserve and restore wildlife habitats.

Visit our website: <http://spokaneaudubon.org>

Directions to the General Meeting:

*Riverview Retirement Community, Village Community Building
 2117 E. North Crescent Avenue*

To get to Riverview Retirement Community:

From West Spokane & South Hill

- I-90 East to Exit 281 toward US-2 E/US-395 N/ Newport/Colville
- Follow US-2 E/US-395 N to E. Mission Ave.
- Turn Right at E. Mission Ave.
- Turn Left at E. Upriver Drive

From Spokane Valley

- I-90 West to Exit 282A
- Follow N. Hamilton St. to E. Mission Ave.
- Turn Right at E. Mission Ave.
- Turn Left at E. Upriver Drive

From North Spokane

- Take US-395 S to E. Mission Ave.
- Turn Left at E. Mission Ave.
- Turn Left at E. Upriver Drive

Once you're on E. Upriver Drive (see map below):

- Follow E. Upriver Drive to N. Crestline Street
- Turn Left at N. Crestline Street
- Turn Right on E. North Crescent Drive
- Proceed to entry on left showing numbers 2105-2145

Limited parking is available by the Village Community Building. Overflow parking is along E. North Crescent Ave.

