

The Pygmy Owl

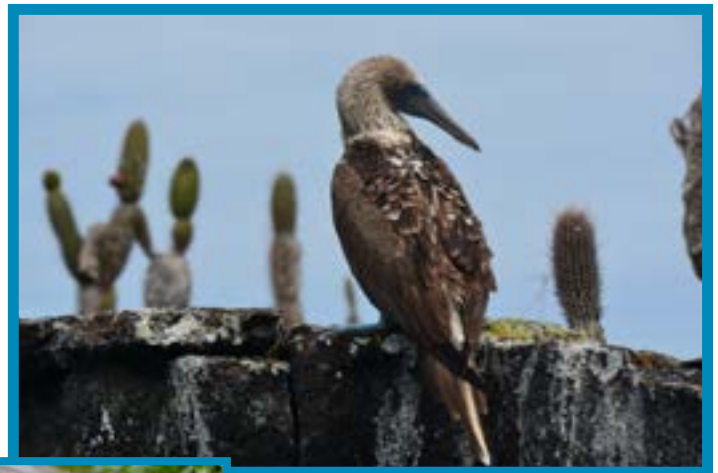
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The Newsletter of the
Spokane Audubon Society

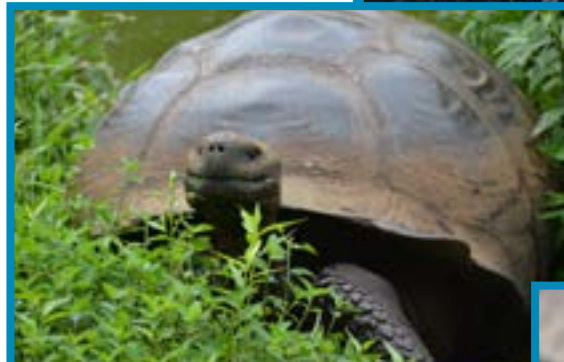


Visiting the Galapagos with Nathan Paul

My presentation on the Galapagos will be a photo journey to the different islands, highlighting social, economic, and environmental conditions, and the biology of the Galapagos. I will show pictures on the different types of birds that inhabit the islands, especially the famous finches. From marine iguanas to different species of birds, plants and the harsh landscape, come see the unique beauty of the islands and witness the human impact. I will also share some photos from a friend, a photographer for National Geographic, who lives in the Galapagos.



Blue-footed Booby



Galapagos Tortoise



Marine Iguana



Nathan Paul teaches Biology, Medical Interventions, and American Sign Language at Ferris High School. He is an avid traveler who likes to experience the world.

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Blue-footed Boobies National Geographic

Blue-footed boobies are aptly named, and males take great pride in their fabulous feet. During mating rituals, male birds show off their feet to prospective mates with a high-stepping strut. The bluer the feet, the more attractive the mate.

These boobies live off the western coasts of Central and South America. The Galápagos Islands population includes about half of all breeding pairs of blue-footed boobies.

Like other boobies, blue-foots nest on land at night. When day breaks, they take to the air in search of seafood, sometimes fishing in cooperative groups. They may fly far out to sea while keeping a keen eye out for schools of small fish, such as anchovies. When their prey is in sight, these seabirds utilize the physical adaptations that make them exceptional divers. They fold their long wings back around their streamlined bodies and plunge into the water from as high as 80 feet. Blue-footed boobies can also dive from a sitting position on the water's surface.

Blue-footed boobies also use their webbed feet to cover their young and keep them warm. When a typical brood of one to three chicks hatches, both parents feed and care for them.



Spokane Audubon's next meeting will be:

Wednesday, November 9th at 7:30 p.m.

Deadline for December P.O. submissions
is November 21st.

Field Notes

Bird Sightings for the Inland Northwest, compiled by Jon Isacoff

Wet weather is here! It's been cold, damp, and dark. Good for pushing birds South and inland; bad for birders who want to actually see the birds. The past month has seen an exceptional push of Surf Scoters into the region, as well as a few White-winged Scoters. A Sabine's Gull and Swamp Sparrow at Heyburn State Park have been enjoyed by many observers. The best rarities for the period were Chestnut-sided Warbler and Palm Warbler, both observed in Moscow. Especially rare species are in caps.

Greater White-fronted Goose: Slavin Ranch (10/9-JI)

Surf Scoter: Heyburn State Park (10/11-JI); Potlatch (10/13-CL); Diamond Lake (10/14-TL); Thompson Falls (10/14-TG); Spokane (10/18-JI); Kettle Falls (10/18-WC)

White-winged Scoter: Diamond Lake (10/14-TL); Kettle Falls (10/18-WC)

Great Egret: Nine Mile Falls (10/18-TW)

Northern Goshawk: Inchelium (10/14-DR)

Sanderling: Sheep Lake (9/18-JI); Sandpoint (9/20-DP)

Franklin's Gull: Coeur D'Alene (9/24-CL)

Sabine's Gull: Heyburn SP (10/8-CL)

Common Tern: Cusick (9/22-TL)

Anna's Hummingbird: Viola (9/20-NM); Spokane (9/23-CoL); Hayden (10/17-DW)

American Three-toed Woodpecker: Salmo Mountain (9/22-TL)

Lapland Longspur: Reardan (10/7-TL); Sheep Lake (10/15-RB)

CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER: Moscow (9/17-BB)

PALM WARBLER: Moscow (10/6-CL)

Swamp Sparrow: Heyburn SP (10/11-CS); Liberty Lake County Park (10/18-JI)

White-throated Sparrow: Medical Lake (9/21-DP); Moscow Mountain (9/23-CS); Moscow (9/17-BB and 10/4-JH); Little Spokane River (10/6-LH); Thompson Falls (10/17-JG)

Gray-crowned Rosy Finch: Salmo Mountain (9/22-TL); Steptoe Butte (10/15-RB)

White-winged Crossbill: Pass Creek Pass (9/20-AS)



Chestnut-sided Warbler
© Gerrit Vyn

Observers: AS-Andy Stepniewski; DB-Don Baker; MB-Missy Baker; RB-R.J. Baltierra; MaB-Matt Bartels; TB- KB-Kyle Bren; BB-Ben Bright; Janet Callen (JC); MaC-Marlene Cashen; MC-Mike Clarke; WC-Warren Current; KD-Kirsten Dahl; RDC-Rich Del Carlo; MD-Mike Denny; MLD-MerryLynn Denny; KD-Kas Dumroese; PE-Patrick Ellsworth; GF-Greg Falco; BF-Bob Flores; MF-Marian Frobe; RF-Russell Frobe; JG-Jim Greaves; LH-Lindell Haggin; JH-John Hanna; LH-Lisa Hardy; FH-Fran Haywood; CH-Chazz Hesselein; BH-Bettie Hoff; RH-Ray Hoff; DH-Dave Holick; JI-Jon Isacoff; SJ-Steve Joyce; RK-Russ Koppendrayner; DK-David Kreft; CL-Christopher Lindsey; JL-Joshua Little; TL-Terry Little; CoL-Courtney Litwin; CL-Carl Lundblad; CM-Cindy McCormack; AM-Alan McCoy; EM-Eliot Miller; NM-Nancy Miller; WN-Walker Noe; PO-Peter Olsoy; TO-Tim O'Brien; JP-Jonathan Pafford; DP-Donald Pendleton; DR-Denise Ray; JR-Jethro Runco; SS-Sandy Schreven; HS-Herman Schreven; RS-Ryan Shaw; MS-Mark Stromberg; SS-Shirley Sturts; CS-Charles Swift; RT-Rick Taylor; JT-Jan Thom; NT-Norma Trefry; TW-TC Walker; DW-Doug Ward; TW-Tina Wynnecoop; MY-Matt Yawney; WY-Will Young

Late August Birding: South Skookum Lake

By Alan McCoy

For the past couple years we, Sandy Sollie and I, have led a fall birding/biking trip along the Trail of the Coeur d'Alenes between Chatcolet Campground in Heyburn State Park and Harrison, Idaho. This year we decided to shake things up a bit and explore north in Pend Oreille County. Initially we thought we would try the Little Pend Oreille NWR. But then at Fran Haywood's suggestion we looked into the Skookum Creek and South Skookum Lake campgrounds and eventually chose South Skookum Lake campground. This small campground has good campsites especially for tenters, but RV's work well too as Fran and Brad Haywood discovered.

It turns out that we were a couple weeks too late for the breeding birds as well as many migrants but overall the birding was not bad at all for this time of year. There are several good birding spots within a short drive of the campground. North Skookum Lake, Skookum Creek campground, the Usk Bridge and other areas along the Pend Oreille River, Calispell Lake, Dike Rd and Flying Goose Ranch are all within easy striking distance of South Skookum Lake.

At 8 am on Friday morning August 26th we were joined by Norma Trefry. Actually that's not quite true. Norma got to the campground at 7 am but we weren't expecting her until 8 am so she had to pace around awhile as we ate and otherwise prepared for the day. Norma has a cabin not too far away and she knows this area very well and had spent some time recently birding the area so it was great to have her with us. Eventually we got ready and Audrey Burr, my wife, Sandy and I piled into Richard Sollie's truck while Fran and Brad road in Norma's car. First stop was Skookum Creek campground.

As we drove down the mountain toward our first stop we stopped abruptly (as birders often do on such trips) to observe a small flock of Red Crossbills and Pine Siskins as they were picking at the grit in the dirt road we were travelling. At this stop we also heard a Cassin's Vireo and saw a flock of Violet-green Swallows way up high.

A few weeks earlier Fran and Brad camped at the Skookum Creek campground for the first time and found it to be very productive. In birding though, timing is everything, and a couple weeks later we found

great potential but few birds. Downy and Pileated Woodpeckers, a couple of Lincoln Sparrows along with Gray Catbird and Spotted Towhee were pretty much it. There is a marsh as well as riparian area adjacent the campground for warblers, flycatchers, vireos and such so put it on your map for next year. Speaking of maps, the Palouse to Pines portion of the Great Washington Birding Trail is a great resource for birding this area of Pend Oreille County.

Next stop was Dike Road, which parallels and is on the east side of the Pend Oreille River. At the intersection of Le Clerc Rd and Dike Road is a beautiful new facility of the Kalispel Indian Tribe that has bathrooms, coffee and food (more on this later). The target bird for this portion was Lewis's Woodpecker but we were also on the lookout for shorebirds. The river did not have an abundance of birdlife but there were decent numbers of White Pelicans, Pied-billed Grebes, Double-crested Cormorants as well as a few Mallards and Gadwall. Soaring were Turkey Vulture, a few Osprey and Bald Eagles, and not as many Red-tailed Hawks as I would expect. We were glad to see more than a few American Kestrels. Passerines were scarce but we did see a few Savannah and Vesper Sparrows as well as some Bobolinks. Finally toward the north end of Dike Road we finally found some Lewis's Woodpeckers. These were undoubtedly the same ones that Norma had seen just a few days before in the same general vicinity. But we didn't see any shorebirds.

By the time we finished at Dike Road it was time for lunch. In our haste to get ready to leave the campground we didn't pack a lunch. Or at least the 4 of us in the Sollie truck hadn't packed a lunch. Norma and the Haywoods had brought along lunch... of course! When Norma heard that we hadn't brought along a lunch she admonished us with, "You didn't bring a lunch? What kind of birders are you anyway?!" I had to admit, it didn't look good. Starting at 8 am instead of the prime birding time of 6 am and not bringing a lunch. Yep, this was not good, especially for the "leaders." Somewhat chastened but undeterred, and more importantly still hungry, we leaders decided that the new Kalispel Indian place looked like a good place to have some lunch and a bathroom break.

After a short break for lunch Norma, Fran and Brad decided to go back to Skookum Lake as Norma had some canning to do at home. Audrey, Sandy, Richard and I drove north a few miles to explore the Flying Goose Ranch in search of the elusive shorebirds and any other unsuspecting birds in the area. We were

in luck at the very first stop at the river. A small flock of Wild Turkeys skittered away quickly as we sighted our first shorebirds of the trip, Killdeer of course! As we kept looking we discovered a half-dozen Baird's Sandpipers foraging on the nearby shoreline, but that was it for shorebirds. On the water with the exception of a lone Wood Duck were more pelicans, cormorants and grebes. In the air however, we had a nice show. In one spot we watched as an Osprey was chased by a Peregrine Falcon. Meanwhile we had our scopes focused on a far-away bird perched on a pole. We knew by its profile that it had to be a raptor of some sort. We walked a few hundred yards for a better view and finally identified the Merlin as it flew, probably perturbed by our approach, even though we were still a good distance away.

By mid-afternoon we returned to camp to share our sightings with Fran and Brad and find out what they had been doing. Brad had done some serious napping and reading while Fran hiked the short loop around South Skookum Lake. This small lake has great potential for birdlife even though we were a bit late in the year to enjoy all it has to offer. We arrived on Thursday afternoon and left Sunday morning. During this time we hiked around the lake several times and explored the area, following what bird calls we heard. In no particular order we observed and/or heard Gray and Steller's Jays, Varied and Swainson's Thrushes, Pacific Wren, Ruffed Grouse, Brown Creeper, Red-naped Sapsucker, Northern Pygmy Owl and Barred Owl.

Sandy and I, along with our spouses, will definitely be camping and birding this area again as we had a fabulous time. Next time though, we will likely schedule it for a few weeks earlier; and of course we'll be packing our lunches, as a birder should!



Varied Thrush ©Eric Preston



Pileated Woodpecker
©Eric Preston



Holiday Gift Giving

Holiday gift-giving is a long-standing tradition for many of us. The Spokane Audubon shopping opportunity is of recent origin, but fun and rewarding. At the up-coming NOVEMBER meeting we'll gather a bit early to participate in an activity that has had many satisfied customers and benefited our group's bottom line the past three years. Here's how you can be part of the process:

- 1) Bring and donate something bird or nature-related to be sold, thus making more space in your closets: Examples: T-shirts, hats, books, prints, puzzles, vases, etc. (It needs to be in new or near-new condition for this event)
 - 2) Make a mental list of people you need to shop for, bring some cash or your checkbook, and get some shopping done without braving the Mall!
 - 3) Watch the process while munching cookies and encourage others to buy out the place.
- Questions: Call Joyce Alonso at 939 0120.
Pick-up of items might be arranged if you can't attend the meeting or drive a small sports car

2017 Spokane Audubon Society Calendar at Auntie's

Photographers of the 2017 calendar will be at Auntie's Bookstore on Saturday, November 26 from 2:00 to 4:00 pm to sell and sign the calendars. This is Small Business Saturday, so by coming you can support not only Spokane Audubon Society, but Auntie's Bookstore.

The calendars are just as spectacular as usual with photos featuring birds of eastern Washington, taken by Spokane Audubon Society members. This will be your chance to meet some of the photographers, see the equipment they use and support a good cause. If November 26 doesn't work out for you, calendars are available now at Auntie's and at our regular monthly meetings.

We Are Looking For a Good Man!

One of our male participants for the upcoming trip to the Rio Grande Valley has had to cancel and so we have a opening for a roommate for Gary Lee.

The trip leaves Spokane on Saturday, Jan 28, 2017, and will return on Feb 6th. We will be headed first to Houston where we shall search for Monk Parakeets, Brown-headed Nuthatch and Red-cockaded Woodpecker. On our way down to the Valley we will be taking a boat trip, hoping for a close look at Whooping Cranes (we will very likely see them, just no guarantee how close without the boat). We will then head down to Brownsville to start our Valley birding. Green Jays, Kiskadee, Common Chachalaca and Green Parakeet should be abundant as well as many of other resident Valley birds. Often during trips vagrants stop in for a visit - a Variegated Flycatcher was there earlier this fall, a Hook-billed Kite was seen this week as was a Northern Jacana. Projected cost for the trip is just slightly over \$1000.

Please contact Ann Brinly agbmaelstrom@gmail.com or 509 443 5661 if you would like to join us for a fantastic birding (and usually photographic) opportunity.



Monk Parakeets



Chachalaca

The Roots of Music: Exploring Earth's Soundscapes

Northwest Museum of Arts & Culture's Auditorium
2316 W. First Avenue
Spokane, WA 99201
November 16, 2016 6:30 pm, Wednesday

In a compelling presentation that weaves together music and ecology, biologist George Halekas surveys the unique beauty of nature's soundscape, and explores why Earth is considered a 'sonic jewel' and 'singing planet.' The vibrant musical heritage of humanity is a wonderful component of this rich soundscape diversity, and the conversation will begin by looking at the emergence of music in ancient hunter gatherer societies from an ecological perspective. The focus will then shift to exploring Earth's soundscapes from the large planetary scale, to investigating representative habitats like the rainforest and ocean, as well as listening to the fascinating details of individual bird and whale song. Time permitting, we'll come full circle and listen to contemporary music composers who take a more inclusive or interactive approach to making music with nature's orchestra.



George Halekas, a former Wildlife Biologist with the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, is captivated by the power and expressiveness of music and its ability to capture human emotions. A lifelong conservationist, he is drawn to understanding the relationship between living organisms and their surrounding environment, especially through sound.

**Field Trips,
November – December**

**November 19, 2016, 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 18 in Brewster for an earlier start with the birds during this short daylight season. Contact Kim Thorburn (465-3025 or *kthorburn@msn.com*) by November 14 if you plan to attend.

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

**December 10, 2016, Saturday
Coeur d' Alene area Eagles
Leader: TBD**

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 the Thompson Lake/Harrison region where a variety of birds winter in a slightly warmer zone. Probable particulars: 8:00 a.m. start at Liberty Lake Albertson's parking lot.

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

**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:
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Send this form and your check to:

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

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or 413-1524.



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