Volume 20 Issue 7 March 2013







Join us on March 13th for a presentation about Great Gray Owls in Idaho, featuring Mike Munts from Little Pend Oreille National Wildlife Refuge. Mike studied biology at Northwest Nazarene University in Southern Idaho where he had the opportunity to study Great Gray Owls in central Idaho for two and a half years. His presentation will explain their basic natural history in the Inland Northwest, what habitats they use, and where to look for them.

A highlight of Mike's research is that he has identified potential reproductive habitat in Little Pend Oreille NWR and has worked with Spokane Audubon to develop these sites. This past summer, Ed Reynolds and Gary Lee took on the project of building and installing half a dozen nest platforms on the Refuge. Now we're waiting to see whether they pass the Great Grays' inspection.

Mike is the wildlife biologist at Little Pend Oreille National Wildlife Refuge. He grew up in the Idaho Panhandle and has been birding and studying birds in various parts of the Inland Northwest for more than 25 years.

photo by Kameron Perensovich, via Wikimedia Commons



photo by Arne List, via Wikimedia Commons

Spokane Audubon's March program will be held at the *Riverview Retirement Community, Village Community Building,* 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 20, Issue 7 ~ March 2013

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

Spokane Audubon Society P.O. Box 9820 Spokane, WA 99209-9820

Owl illustrations on pg. 1 and pg. 8 © Jan Reynolds.

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President's Message

by Kim Thorburn

Did you participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count? Wonderful! You contributed important information about winter birds. So far, more than 125,000 check lists have been submitted in 2013.

Audubon Society and Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology have used the power of citizen science to learn about the status of bird species, where birds are, to where they might be moving, and much more for over a century. For example, we recently completed the 113th Christmas Bird Count (CBC). Each December, former Spokane Audubon President Gary Blevins provides historical information about Spokane birds based on years of CBC data. It was bird lovers like you and me who collected the information.

The feeder count sponsored by Cornell Lab each year from November to April is another opportunity to contribute valuable information about the status of birds. More recently, Cornell Lab has developed eBird, electronic lists that anyone can maintain. This growing compendium is tapped by scientists and agencies to learn about everything from migration to climate change. It is birders like you and me who are providing the data.

Agencies like the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the US Fish and Wildlife Service use citizen science to monitor their lands and the status of birds. For several years, Spokane Audubon has partnered with the Spokane Office of BLM to count birds on one of their parcels for International Migratory Bird Day. We have partnered with Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge for many years and contributed to spring bird point counts.

The US Geological Survey Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) is another citizen science activity that monitors the status of neotropical reproducing birds. There are several Washington State BBS routes that have not been counted for many years.

I think it's really cool. We're the boots on the ground, doing what we love to do: watching birds and at the same time, contributing valuable data. That's what the GBBC and citizen science is all about.

> April Newsletter Deadline: Friday, March 22 Send material to carmen@floreo.com

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Alan McCoy

Sights & Sounds

Bird Sightings for the Inland Northwest by Cindy McCormack

Winter is finally winding down (thank goodness!), and some of our earliest migrants have already arrived: the Redwinged Blackbirds are re-establishing their territories on the cattails, the spring ducks are finding the ice-free areas, and the Say's Phoebes have started to trickle in. Watch the goose flocks for the occasional Greater White-fronted, Snow, and Ross' Geese, for we often find these with the Canada and Cackling Geese during migration.

There still are plenty of winter birds—Common Redpoll sightings are still fairly common (ha-ha!), as are reports of Bohemian Waxwings and Pine Grosbeaks.

Some of our resident birds have been singing in the mornings (or during any sunny break), especially Song Sparrows and Bewick's Wrens, making being up at the break of dawn a pleasure again!

PACIFIC LOON

• Snake River (Lewiston/Asotin) (KC), on the Columbia River between Brewster & Bridgeport (SD/JI), and on Lake Pend Oreille (JI)

Red-Breasted Merganser

• Clearwater River (Lewiston, ID) (JH); Lake Pend Oreille (TG); Cougar Bay (JI), Wolf Lodge Bay (TL)

EURASIAN WIGEON

• Rock Lake Road (MC), Kiwanis Park in Lewiston; Swallows Park in Clarkston (including a hybrid)

LONG-TAILED DUCK

• One bird located at Hayden Lake at the end of January (DW/JI)—always a pleasure to see one of these lovely ducks!

Gyrfalcon

• Spokane County—Euclid/Coulee Hite area (KT—Great find, Kim!), Bridgeport (SD/JI)

SNOWY OWL

• The Snowy Owls between Reardan and Davenport have been fairly cooperative in February. Several birders have reported the owls south of the highway—one of them is almost completely white. (RD reported 7 birds, do we have the beginnings of a Parliament?) The February field trip was able to get great views of some of these owls after the fog finally lifted! Birds have also been seen near Bridgeport/Waterville Plateau and Anatone flats.

Gulls

- A pale gull at Swallows Park was identified as an Iceland Gull. There was also a possible second, younger bird seen later at the same location.
- Lesser Black-backed Gull at Heyburn State Park (JI), Cougar Bay (TL).
- Mew Gulls at Lake Coeur d'Alene (TL)

Three-Toed Woodpecker

• A great find on Mt. Spokane—another reason to snowshoe! (WW)

BLUE JAY

• Moscow (CS)

HARRIS' SPARROW

• Continued to be found at St. John (RB) and Lewiston in Hells Gate State Park.

RUSTY BLACKBIRD

• What a treat! This Icterid is unusual for our area— it was located at Wolf Lodge Bay (DW/JI).

SNOW BUNTING

Two birds on Sprague, near Coulee Hite (GF), a flock near Harrington (JS), Davenport, and Central Ferry (SD/JI).

PINE GROSBEAK

 These winter birds are still being frequently heard and seen. Spokane South Hill (HF), Veradale (BC/MC), Moscow (CL), Sandpoint (ML), Hayden (DW), Electric City (MMD)

Thanks to everyone for your reports! Joyce Alonso, Richard Baltierra, Libby Beck, Tom Besser, Kevin Black, Mike Britton, Jay Carlisle, Keith Carlson, Bob Cashen, Marlene Cashen, Mike Clarke, Jim Christiansen, Tom Crabtree, Melissa Cummins, Warren Current, Mike & MerryLynn Denny, Bob Derting, Ron Dexter, Tim Durnell, Greg Falco, Howard Ferguson, Marian Frobe, Becky Goldner, Terry Gray, Mike Haldeman, John Hanna, Lisa Hardy, Brad & Fran Haywood, Mark Houston, Carrie Hugo, Jon Isacoff, Chris Janett, Dick Johnson, Lee Johnson, Marv Lambrecht, Carl Lundblad, Russ Koppendrayer, Gary Lee, Terry Little, Kevin Lucas, Garrett MacDonald, Bud & Roxanne McCormack, Cindy Mc-Cormack, Brian Miller, Roy Myers, Tim O'Brien, Grace & Ollie Oliver, Sue Orlowski, Terri Pieper, Ed & Jan Reynolds, Tim Smith, Sandy Sollie, Erik Stauber, John Stuart, Charles Swift, Rick Taylor, Catherine Temple, Kim Thorburn, Norma Trefry, Warren Walker, Andre Wamsley, Doug Ward, Diane Weber, Rick Welle, Michael Woodruff, Roger Woodruff, Matt Yawney.

Species	Number	Max	Year
Greater White-fronted Goose	3	3	2012
Canada Goose	5236	6020	2006
Wood Duck	16	58	2004
Gadwall	45	122	1996
American Wigeon	71	250	1958
Mallard	2932	4351	1995
Northern Pintail	12	82	1995
Green-winged Teal	19	134	1958
Redhead	2	276	1953
Ring-necked Duck	103	390	1958
Lesser Scaup	6	2037	1961
Surf Scoter	1	1	2012
Bufflehead	68	105	2009
Common Goldeneye	60	910	1963
Barrow's Goldeneye	18	140	1969
Hooded Merganser	49	82	1996
Common Merganser	59	417	2000
duck sp.	32	1080	2007
Gray Partridge	23	253	1981
Ring-necked Pheasant	105	400	1964
Wild Turkey	266	501	2006
California Quail	914	4401	2003
Pied-billed Grebe	5	23	2011
Double-crested Cormorant	52	52	2012
Great Blue Heron (Blue form)	26	50	1995
Bald Eagle	33	71	2010
Northern Harrier	10	24	1999
Sharp-shinned Hawk	18	28	2005
Cooper's Hawk	6	19	2008
Accipiter sp.	2	7	2003
Red-tailed Hawk	105	105	2012
Rough-legged Hawk	19	19	2012
Buteo sp.	1	5	2003
American Kestrel	7	13	2004
Merlin	9	12	2000
Virginia Rail	3	3	2012
American Coot	30	800	1960
Ring-billed Gull	106	509	1999
Rock Pigeon	1247	3403	2006
Eurasian Collared Dove	109	109	2012
Mourning Dove	105	407	2005
Barn Owl	5	5	2012
Great Horned Owl	2	15	2007
Northern Pygmy Owl	1	6	2003
	1 5	6 19	2003 1970

Species	Number	Max	Year
Downy Woodpecker	25	46	2003
Hairy Woodpecker	12	23	2009
Northern (red-shafted) Flicker	222	222	2012
Pileated Woodpecker	4	7	2011
Northern Shrike	7	37	1988
Black-billed Magpie	304	535	2005
American Crow	162	1152	1974
Common Raven	169	187	2011
Black-capped Chickadee	578	578	2012
Mountain Chickadee	215	328	2003
Red-breasted Nuthatch	285	805	1981
White-breasted Nuthatch	25	129	1989
Pygmy Nuthatch	487	777	2003
Brown Creeper	2	21	1953
Canyon Wren	4	11	1960
Bewick's Wren	49	61	2004
Pacific Wren	6	6	2012
Marsh Wren	1	12	1990
American Dipper	3	20	2000
Golden-crowned Kinglet	115	380	1980
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	2	15	2010
Townsend's Solitaire	13	13	2012
American Robin	1671	4278	1975
Varied Thrush	36	152	1974
European Starling	1904	6559	2006
Bohemian Waxwing	239	15000	1966
Cedar Waxwing	215	267	2000
waxwing sp.	25	40	2009
Spotted Towhee	2	10	2002
American Tree Sparrow	2	6	1997
Song Sparrow	242	302	2006
White-crowned Sparrow	3	180	1963
*	1035	3603	1974
Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco Dark-eyed (Slate-colored)	1033	31	1974
Junco	14	51	1975
Red-winged Blackbird	57	1433	2004
Pine Grosbeak	41	270	1963
Cassin's Finch	9	1451	1988
House Finch	1344	2295	2002
Red Crossbill	455	901	1981
Common Redpoll	55	870	1965
Pine Siskin	147	682	1980
American Goldfinch	477	477	2012
Evening Grosbeak	27	973	1988
finch sp.	72	72	2012
House Sparrow	1526	2597	1960

Christmas Birds, **Counted**! The 2012 Christmas Bird Count At a Glance

Data provided by Spokane CBC Compiler, Alan McCoy, with additional information from National Audubon's CBC web site (http://birds.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count). Selective compilation of trivia by Carmen Yount.

National CBC Statistics:

CBC Dates: Dec. 14, 2012 - Jan. 5, 2013 Counts completed in the 113th CBC: 1669 Birds counted in the current year: 45,894,744

Spokane Christmas Bird Count:

Date: Sunday, Dec. 30, 2012 Sunrise: 7:38 a.m. Sunset: 4:07 p.m. Temperatures: 27.5° (high), 23° (low) (*Number of layers I wore under my winter coat: four. ~ ed.*) Conditions: Overcast

Number of species sighted in the Spokane count: 86 Number of Northern Pygmy Owl sightings: 1 Total number of birds: 24,247

Total participants: 64 Total miles covered (foot + car): 628.3 Total miles covered (snowmobile): 0 Total hours at feeders: 33.5

Top 10 Species, 2012:

Canada Goose - 5236 Mallard - 2932 European Starling - 1904 American Robin - 1671 House Sparrow - 1526 House Finch - 1344 Rock Pigeon - 1247 Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco - 1035 California Quail - 914 Black-capped Chickadee - 578

Top 10 species as a percentage of all sightings: 75.83%

Rarest species in 2012, with 1 sighting each:

Surf Scoter Northern Pygmy Owl Marsh Wren

Note: The following statistics track some year-to-year changes. While we all recognize that these kinds of statistics are considered trivial, and that change over time is of more interest to scientists, these tidbits are still a lot of fun.

Greatest *increases* in sightings between 2011 and 2012 (for non-zero entries in both years):

Species	% Increase	2011	2012
Eurasian Collared Dove	5,350%	2	109
Cedar Waxwing	1,554%	13	215
Rough-legged Hawk	850%	2	19
American Robin	813%	183	1671
Wood Duck	700%	2	16

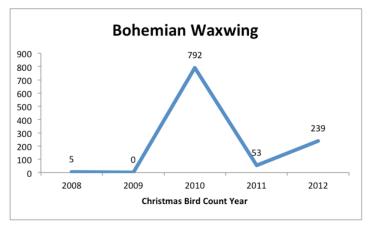
Greatest *decreases* between 2011 and 2012 (for non-zero entries in both years):

Species	% Decrease	2011	2012
Redhead	-80%	10	2
American Dipper	-79%	14	3
Pied-billed Grebe	-78%	23	5
European Starling	-69%	6081	1904
Great Horned Owl	-67%	6	2

Greatest increase from zero between 2011 and 2012: Common Redpoll, 0 in 2011 to 55 in 2012

Species with no change between 2011 and 2012: Belted Kingfisher (13/13) Ruby-crowned Kinglet (2/2) Spotted Towhee (2/2) American Tree Sparrow (2/2) Northern Pygmy Owl (1/1)

One species with dramatic variation over 5 years:



Thank you to all of the circle leaders, and to Alan for compiling the mountains of data! The next Spokane Christmas Bird Count will be Sunday, December 29, 2013.

SAS Field Trips, March & April

March 16, 2013, Saturday Bluebird Trip Leader: Marian Frobe

This is a family-friendly, half-day trip and a great way to greet spring. We will drive a route on Paradise Prairie to see returning favorite birds. We'll probably end up at Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge. The trip usually ends around 2 pm. Meet at Spokane's Coeur d'Alene Park at 7:00 am. Call leader Marian Frobe at 328-0621 by March 12th if you plan to attend.

<u>Target Species</u>: Migrant ducks and geese, raptors, woodpeckers, Say's Phoebe, Western Bluebird

March 23, 2013, Saturday Turnbull NWR Beginning Birder Basics Trip Leader: Fran Haywood

This is a half-day driving and walking trip for all levels of birders. Meet at the refuge headquarters near Cheney at 7 am. Contact leader Fran Haywood, 484-8666, birders13@aol.com by March 16th if you plan to attend.

Note: A \$3 entrance fee is required.

<u>Target Species</u>: Breeding waterfowl; Tundra and Trumpeter Swans; Great Blue Heron; Red-tailed Hawk; woodpeckers; Pygmy, Red-breasted, and White-breasted Nuthatch; Western Bluebird; Song Sparrow; Red-winged and Yellow-headed Blackbird; Red Crossbill

April 6, 2013, Saturday Sagebrush Specialty Trip Leader: Cindy McCormack

This is a full-day trip to western Grant County open to all birders. The birds of the sage habitat are splendid and not to be missed. Because the best observation time is near sunrise, we will have a very early departure at 5:30 am from Coulee City. We will probably start by birding Moses Coulee and its environs. Then the itinerary likely will include St Andrews, Banks Lake, Sun Lakes, etc. It is **COLD** at early morning in the sagebrush, so bring warm clothes. Bring food because there aren't many restaurants in the Moses Coulee. Also be advised that the trip will take full advantage of all rest stops, but there may be long intervals without any formal bathroom facilities. Contact Cindy McCormack at nwbirder@gmail.com or 939-4448 by April 1st to sign up or for more information.

<u>Target Species</u>: Loggerhead Shrike, Sage Thrasher, Savannah Sparrow, Sage Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Brewer's Sparrow

April 18-23, 2013, Thursday-Tuesday Point Reyes, California Field Trip Leader: Kim Thorburn Limit: 6 Birders

This six-day trip is for intermediate and advanced birders. Kim Thorburn will provide lodging for up to six participants and lead field trips on Bolinas Lagoon and beach, Point Reyes Bird Observatory, Point Reyes National Seashore, and Bodega Bay. This region is a year-round birding hot spot, site of the filming of Alfred Hitchcock's "The Birds," and home of elite birder and artist Keith Hansen. There is a variety of pelagic and other waterfowl, migrating shorebirds and warblers, and lots of land natives that we don't often see here. Participants will be responsible for their own air travel to Oakland and we'll split the cost of land transportation and food. We'll need to coordinate arrival and departure in Oakland. Contact Kim Thorburn by April 1st if you're interested in learning more. 465-3025, kthorburn@msn.com.

<u>Target Species (examples)</u>: Acorn Woodpecker, Nuttall's Woodpecker, Blackthroated Gray Warbler, Wrentit, Allen's Hummingbird, Whimbrel, Snowy Plover, Western Gull, Common Murre, Red-shouldered Hawk, White-tailed Kite, Rufouscrowned Sparrow

April 20, 2013, Saturday Sprague Lake Field Trip Leader: Fran Haywood

This is an all-day trip to the Sprague Lake area, open to all birders. We will look for migrating and early resident species, especially ducks. We hope to find Swainson's Hawks, American White Pelicans and, if we get lucky, Long-billed Curlew. We will meet at Spokane's Coeur d'Alene Park at 6:30 am. Contact Fran Haywood (484-8666, birders13@aol.com)

<u>Target Species</u>: Migrant ducks and geese, American White Pelican, Swainson's Hawk, American Avocet, Black-necked Stilt, Caspian Tern, Say's Phoebe, Yellow-rumped Warbler, White-crowned and Savannah Sparrows

April 27, 2013, Saturday West Plains Early Migrant Trip Leader: Alan McCoy Limit: 15 Birders

This all-day trip is for all levels of birders. We will stop at Reardan's Audubon Lake where we will look for waterfowl and shorebirds. We will check out the Davenport Cemetery, which can be great for migrants. Then we will go north to the Little Falls Dam, follow the Spokane River upstream and finish up at the Indian Canyon Springs area. We will meet at 6:00 am at the Rosauer's parking lot in Browne's Addition (near 2nd Avenue and Sunset Highway) and plan to return about 6:00 pm. Contact leader Alan McCoy at 448-3123, 448-8861 or ahm2352@gmail.com by April 20th to reserve your place.

<u>Target Species:</u> Migrant ducks, raptors, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Bewick's Wren, Black-necked Stilt, American Avocet, Red-necked Grebe, Calliope Hummingbird, Orange-crowned, Nashville and Yellow warblers, Say's Phoebe, Western and Mountain Bluebirds.

Note: Field Trip Schedule Change

The following field trip, originally scheduled for Saturday, May 12, *HAS BEEN CHANGED* to:

May 5, 2013, Sunday Slavin Ranch Wetland Trip Leader: Alan McCoy

This is an annual trip to Slavin Ranch for Spokane Audubon. It is a half-day walking trip along a primitive trail through open Ponderosa pine scab rock country with many views of seasonal wetlands. All levels of birders are welcome. The Slavin Ranch is a Conservation Futures acquisition located about 10 miles south of downtown Spokane and a mile west of Hwy 195. We will start at the Slavin Ranch parking lot at 7:00 am and end about 1:00 pm. Please call leader Alan McCoy at 448-3123 or 448-8861, ahm2352@gmail.com by April 28th if you plan to attend.

Friends of Turnbull Benefit Auction

Dilemma: How to raise funds to benefit the very successful education program at Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge (that is NOT federally funded!)

Pass the hat??? NO

Send a solicitation letter??? NO

Organize a special evening...with spirits, great (catered by Klink's) food, and entertainment (music, live & silent auctions) ??? **YES**

When: April 13th, 5 to 8:30pm

Where: In Cheney, at the Wren Pierson Community Center

Cost: \$35 per person (No more than the price of a complete meal + wine in many good local restaurants)

Please do join us for this special event. Tickets may be purchased online (\$5 discount) at *http://friendsofturnbull. brownpapertickets.com.*

P.S. If you are already triple-booked for that night, donations are greatly appreciated!

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: Phon	ie:
E-mail:	

The April 10th general meeting will feature the program

"For the Love of Ants: A Superorganism"

by Laurel D. Hansen, Spokane Falls Community College Professor of Biology, Zoology, Insects and People.

We hope to see you there!



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

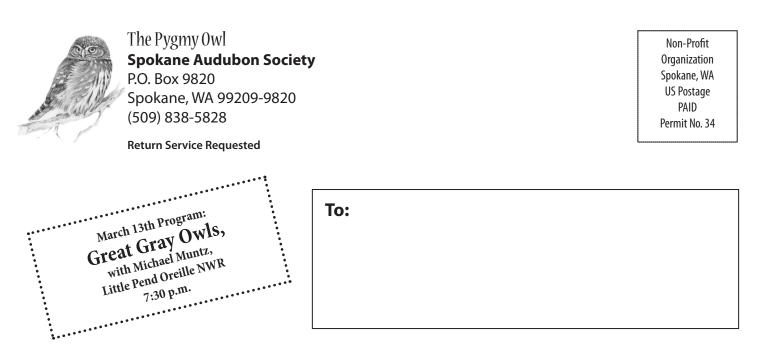
> Audubon Membership Attn: Dave Plemons 1224 W. Riverside #1101 Spokane, WA 99201

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.

Spokane Audubon Society Membership Form



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 to 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.