

Volume 26
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The Pygmy Owl

The Newsletter of the
Spokane Audubon Society



A Comparison of 2 years of CBC Data 50 Years Apart, 1966 and 2016

by Gary Blevins

As I started thinking about preparing this year's December program, I began exploring different ways to look at the historical data for Spokane's CBC. This year's theme came to me while I was leading my Late Fall Migrants trip in October. I have led that trip over a number of years, stopping at most of the same stops at approximately the same time of the year. One could assume that over the years of leading the trip you could reliably learn where certain bird species would be observed. While this is true for some species, it is not true for most species. For example, I sometimes find loons on a couple of lakes along the route but I can reliably find a number of loons on Blue Lake. Another focus species, falcons, are not always observed every year on the trip and the observations that have been made are mostly random as to the locations falcons have been observed.

These thoughts became the theme of this year's December program. A number of factors influence bird observations. How do these factors affect CBC data? I decided to focus on data from two specific years that are fifty years apart, 1966 and 2016. I scrutinized the CBC data from several different viewpoints, species not observed within one of the two years, species with observations that either decreased or increased, and species observations that were similar within the two years.

One factor that certainly influences CBC data is the correct identification of similar species. We will review the identification of some of these important species. I am looking forward to spending another great December evening sharing ideas with my Audubon friends. I hope that I will see you at the December Audubon meeting.

Gary Blevins is a retiring faculty member at Spokane Falls Community College. His educational background includes a B.S. and M.S. in Biological Sciences from Wichita State University, Wichita, Kansas, and additional study at Emporia State University and University of Wyoming.

His teaching experience includes classes in Ecology, General Biology, Organismal Biology, Human Anatomy and Physiology, Vertebrate Anatomy, and Basic Ornithology. In addition to his academic background, Mr. Blevins has work experience as a temporary Wildlife Biologist with the U.S. Forest Service (Shoshone National Forest, Dubois, WY, and Bighorn National Forest, Buffalo, WY), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Endangered Species Division), Kansas Fish and Game Urban Wildlife Program, and Washington Department of Wildlife Urban Wildlife Program.

Past research includes the effects of park management and landscaping on populations of both non-migratory and migratory birds in Wichita Kansas and MAPS (Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship) banding stations for the Bighorn National Forest in Wyoming. Most recently, he has managed three MAPS banding stations, one each for the Colville National Forest, the Little Pend Oreille National Wildlife Refuge, and the Washington Department of Wildlife.

**Spokane Audubon's next meeting will be:
Wednesday, December 13th at 7:30 p.m. Social get-together at 7:00**

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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 DECEMBER 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.

If you want to bring any items for the auction, give them to Joyce Alonso or another board member to place on the appropriate table.

Also, please bring holiday treats to share.

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



19th Annual
SNOW GOOSE FESTIVAL
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January 24-28, 2018

Exciting field trips, birding walks, naturalist hikes, informative workshops and fun, free activities for the entire family

Birds

"Gathering of Winds" Banquet with keynote speaker, Jon L. Dunn, Chief Consultant and Editor of the *National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America*

Register online:
snowgoosefestival.org
530 892-9092

The Pygmy Owl deadline:
December 20, 2017

Field Notes

Bird Sightings for the Inland Northwest, compiled by Jon Isacoff

Winter is just about here and already it is: finch time. In progress is a transcontinental finch irruption. In our region, Common Redpolls have made a very early and abundant arrival as well as a few White-winged Crossbills. In the Midwest and East Red Crossbills are pouring into areas that unlike us, don't often get to see them. Be on the lookout. In addition, we are having irruptions of BLUE JAYS, a colorful species that we don't see too often. Be on the lookout for all of these as well as the usual fun winter visitors. Especially rare sightings are in bold/caps:

Greater White-fronted Goose: Duck Lake (10/4-FH and NT); Albion (10/20-RB); Sandpoint (10/22-RW); Reardan (10/29-JI); Swanson Lakes (11/3-TL); Spokane Valley (11/10-SJ)

Surf Scoter: Dworshak Reservoir (10/15-CL); Kettle Falls (10/22-WC); Spokane (11/9-JI); Priest Lake (11/9-TL)

White-winged Scoter: Diamond Lake (11/1-TL); Newman Lake (11/4-TL); Dworshak Reservoir (10/15-CL); Rosalia (11/8-CS)

Long-tailed Duck: Kettle River (11/6-DB)

Red-breasted Merganser: Philleo Lake (11/5-JI); Sprague (TL); Sandpoint (11/5-ER); Sprague (11/11-TL); Eloika Lake (11/12-TL)

Pacific Loon: Curlew Lake (10/29-DB); Little Goose Dam (10/29-MaB); Hayden (11/11-DW); Sprague (11/11-TL)

Sandhill Crane: Boundary Creek WMA (9/24-JI); Ball Creek (9/30-CL); Boundary Creek WMA (10/1-CL)

Franklin's Gull: Sprague (9/21-TL)

Sabine's Gull: Sprague (9/21-TL)

Long-eared Owl: Steptoe Butte (10/27-RB)

Boreal Owl: Saddle Pass (9/22-TL)

Anna's Hummingbird: Moscow (9/20-SC); Spokane Valley (9/25-MC); Riggins (10/14-CL); Hayden (11/7-DW)

Black-backed Woodpecker: Mill Creek (10/20-TL)

Blue Jay: Trout Creek (10/22-CLa); Hayden (10-23-11/16-DW); Moscow (10/26-CC); Sandpoint (10/27-JM); Moscow (10/28-MS); Airway Heights (10/28-CM); Palouse Falls SP (10/29-MaB); Viola (11/7-NM); Pullman (11/8-RB); Colburn (11/9-MM) Ponderay (11/12-TW); Bonner's Ferry (11/15-TM)

BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER (1ST Whitman Record) – Central Ferry (10/8-RB)

Gray Catbird: Rare in October-Boundary Creek WMA (10/29-CL)

Lapland Longspur: Spar Lake (10/21-PG); Trout Creek (10/22-CLa); Rathdrum (11/5-DW); Pullman (11/14-RB)

Snow Bunting: Steptoe Butte (10/27-RB and 11/12-JI); Sandpoint (10/28-CL); Spokane (10/29-MW); Saltese Wetland (10/31-JI); Rathdrum (11/5-DW); Sheep Lake (11/11-TL)

Swamp Sparrow: Boundary Creek WMA (10/1-CL)

Harris's Sparrow: Kootenai NWR (10/29-CL); Mead (11/1-TL); Colville (11/8-WC); Philleo Lake (11/12-JI)

White-throated Sparrow: Boundary Creek WMA (9/24-JI); North Spokane (9/30-LH); Sandpoint (9/30-CL); Boundary Creek WMA (10/1-CL); North Spokane (10/6-NT); Moscow (10/8-CL)

Golden-crowned Sparrow: Davenport (10/23-MC)

Gray-crowned Rosy Finch: Mill Creek (10/20-TL); Spokane (10/29-MW); Little Goose Dam (10/29-MaB); Hooper (10/31-RB); Bonner's Ferry (11/3-RD); Tensed (11/12-CL)

White-winged Crossbill: Bonner's Ferry (10/30-RD); Pullman (11/8-SM)

Pine Grosbeak: Mt. Spokane (10/24-TL); Spokane (10/29-MW); Pullman (11/5-RB); Lookout Pass (11/10-BK); Big Meadow Lake (11/16-SH)

Common Redpoll: Spokane (10/28-MW); Sandpoint (10/28-CL); Bonner's Ferry (10/29-CL); Reardon (10/29-JI); Heyburn SP (11/7-JI); Mead (11/1-TL); Bayview (11/4-DW); Spokane Valley (11/6-TO); Steptoe Butte (11/7-BS); Newport (11/8-JS); Spokane Valley (11/13-MF); Duck Lake (11/14-NT); Spokane (11/16-JI)

HOARY REDPOLL: Reardon (9/29-JI)

Observers: PA-Palouse Audubon; DB-Don Baker; MB-Missy Baker; RB-R.J. Baltierra; MaB-Matt Bartels; DB-Donna Bragg; BB-Ben Bright; MaC-Marlene Cashen; MC-Mike Clarke; CC-Chris Claudill; SC-Stacy Crist; WC-Warren Current; RDC-Rich Del Carlo; KD-Kas Dumroese; RD-Roger Doucet; MF-Marian Frobe; CG-Cheryl Griffith; PG-Pat Grantham; LH-Lindell Haggin; JH-John Hanna; SH-Stratton Hatfield; FH-Fran Haywood; BH-Bettie Hoff; RH-Ray Hoff; DH-Dave Holick; MH-Marcus Hooker; JI-Jon Isacoff; SJ-Steve Joyce; BK-Bob Kemp; RK-Russ Koppendrayner; CLa-Caleb Lashway; TL-Terry Little; CoL-Courtney Litwin; CL-Carl Lundblad; TM-Travis Mangione; CM-Curtis Mahon; MM-Marcia Marine; NM-Nancy Miller; JM-Julie Monroe; SM-Steve Mulgrew; TO-Tim O'Brien; JP-Jonathan Pafford; ER-Eric Rassmussen; JR-Jan Reynolds; JR-Jethro Runco; ShS-Shane Sater; SS-Sandy Schreven; BS-Bill Siems; JS-John Stuart; CS-Charles Swift; KT-Kim Thorburn; NT-Norma Trefry; DW-Doug Ward; TW-Tom Whalen; MW-Michael Woodruff; RW-Rob Woods; MY-Matt Yawney; WY-Will Young



Blue Jay
© Gary Mueller



Common Redpoll
© Sharon Watson

Hoary Redpoll
© Chris Wood

Single parenting and black-chinned hummingbirds.

Archilochus alexandri.

by Lisa Langelier

A male black-chinned hummingbird is one of the taxidermy specimens that Lanica Hodge prepared for Spokane Audubon Society's education and public display program. Although I do not know the story of this specimen, his essence impresses.

Mesmerized by his moves, she watched from a branch as he ascended 100 feet above her, plunged earthward, and then moved quickly from side-to-side in a U-shaped pattern. The sun caught his shimmering green crown, back, and sides and the iridescent purple strip at the base of his black velvet chin. Like her, he had a white spot behind his eye. He was the one for her. And for several more female black-chinned hummingbirds...

Female hummingbirds parent alone. The male courts the female, invests his seed, and then seeks other available females. This type of breeding strategy evolves in species when there is no advantage in the male remaining to raise the young and she can find enough food without help.

After mating she takes on all the domestic duties: building the tiny nest of plant down and spider silk, incubating two smaller-than-jelly bean eggs for two weeks, then feeding plant nectar and small insects to the growing hatchlings for three more weeks. During cold spells she needs to eat three times her 3.5 gram body weight—less than three paper clips-worth—to stay alive.

Black chinned hummingbirds are one of the three hummingbird species that breed in eastern Washington. Calliope and rufous are the others who spend some time in our area. Black-chinned hummers are one of the most adaptable hummingbirds, able to live in a variety of western US habitats from southern British Columbia to Central Texas. They head south to winter along the coast in Mexico.

My IBirdPro app lists the following names for groups of hummingbirds: bouquet, glittering, hover, shimmer, and tune. I'll be patient to "tune" into these bird "bouquets" next spring and she may be back too looking for the one.



Black-chinned Hummingbird
Photo by Lisa Langelier

SAS Programs 2017-2018

2017	Speaker	Topic
13-Dec	Gary Blevins	Xmas bird count
2018		
10-Jan	Jon Isacoff	Birding Cape May
14-Feb	Kim Thorburn	Self-driven, Self-catered Western Kalahari Birding Tour
14-Mar	Carmen Yount (Jami Ostby Marsh)	Raptor Outreach program ANNUAL MEETING
11-Apr	Catherine Temple	Wildlife Photographer/Artist
9-May	Ron Force	Birding & Travels in Ethiopia
12-Sep	Lisa Langelier	TBA

And It Rained Most of the Day

by Gary Blevins

First just a thought. In 2013, Neil Hayward set the record for the “Big Year” for birds of North America by observing 749 species. Many thought that his record would be hard to break. However, last year, John Weigel broke that record by observing 780 species. His number may increase by 3 birds because he observed “provisional” species, which were not on the ABA’s checklist—yet. Once these species (the Pine Flycatcher, Common Shelduck, and Common Vireo) are reviewed and added to the ABA checklist, John’s final tally will be 783. So based upon this record for birding for a year, here is my question for you: Does observing 60 species while birding on a cold rainy day in eastern Washington for a day on a field trip make for a “big day”? I will leave that for you to ponder.

I have been leading the “late migrant trip” for many years. In all that time, I have never had a day where it rained for most of the day. The good news is that it did not affect the number of bird species observed much. It did, however, result in a group of cold, wet birders.

At Reardan’s Audubon Lake, we observed more Snow Geese than observed on any trip before. Snow Geese observations have been increasing in eastern Washington largely due to warming Arctic weather, which has increased their populations.

Absent from this year’s trip were any observations of large falcons and eagles. The group observed lots of Red-tailed hawks and Rough-legged hawks along with some Northern Harriers and American Kestrels.

The most special observations came from a field in the Wilson Creek area. I had never seen the field flooded by water in the fall. While driving past it I saw several large, white waterfowl-like birds. Quickly finding a place for the group to safely pull off, we jumped out and got a nice surprise. Hidden behind a ridge we found a number of bird species. In addition to the large white, waterfowl-like birds, which turned out to be a couple dozen American White Pelicans, we also found a couple dozen Great Egrets, several dozen Long-billed Dowitchers, a number of Greater Yellowlegs, Killdeer, and several species of waterfowl. Alan had one of the best observations for this stop, an immature Black-crowned Night Heron.

The next stops were on the chain of lakes from Soap Lake to Sun Lake. Observations on these lakes included Western Grebes, Horned Grebes, and Red-necked Grebes. The day ended at Blue Lake, looking closely at Common Loons and hoping to find a Pacific or Arctic loon mixed in with the Common Loons. Ok, just joking about the Arctic Loon, but there is a Grant county record of an Arctic Loon in 2000. That would have made it a “Big Day”.



Juvenile Black-crowned Night Heron
by Georges McNeil



Long-billed Dowitcher
Audubon

American Coot, *Fulica americana*

by Lindell Haggin

The American Coot runs contrary to the statement “If it looks like a duck and acts like a duck, it’s a duck”. The Coot is not a duck. Actually, it is more closely related to the Sandhill Crane and other wading birds like rails.

The American Coot is all gray except for a white bill and forehead. The head is small with red eyes. Its wings are short, making it a weak flier. It likes still water, fresh and occasionally saltwater, where it dabbles for aquatic plants. It will dive underwater. It does not waddle, but walks more like a chicken.

Its feet are quite remarkable to look at. They are not webbed, but the toes have broad lobes on the bottom of each segment. This arrangement allows the toes to bend, making it easier to walk on land, yet the lobes spread out to support its weight in muddy marshes.

While the great majority of their diet is plant material, they will eat insects and crustaceans. Their nest is usually on a floating platform secured to stands of reeds, cattails or other vegetation in the water. The young are covered with down (and very cute) and are ready to leave the nest within 6 hours of hatching. The female will help feed the young rather than making them secure all their food on their own.

Population numbers are stable. Coots are seldom hunted since their flesh is not considered especially palatable. They are susceptible to the pollutants from agriculture, industry and nuclear facilities that can end up in wetlands, so scientists will monitor the coots to assess problems in the environment at large.



American Coot
© Lindell Haggin

Upcoming Field Trips

December 30, 2017, Saturday Christmas Bird Count
Leader: Alan McCoy

All are invited to participate, including new birders and those living inside the circle who can only watch their feeders at home. So join the Spokane Christmas count! The Spokane Count Circle is a 15 mile diameter circle centered at 47° 43' N and 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.

Membership Report

by Dave Plemons

Update of Members' Nesting through Nov. 18th

Welcome to our new nesters: Kris Singletary and Kit Hayworth, and Kelly Jones & family.

Many thanks to our returning nesters: Jane Beaven & Dan Finn, Dan & Donna Burt, Cynthia Cilyo & Brian Aut, Chris Janett, Larry & Patty Marsh, Jenny & Tom Michaels, Mike Rule & Sandra Rancourt, John & Amy Roberson, Steven Siegfried, and Norma Trefry.

Many nesters chose to not receive a hard copy of the Pygmy Owl. If you could help us reduce costs and save paper & energy by switching to our electronic full color publication, please contact me. You already have access on the Spokane Audubon WebSite under the tab: Members Only. To receive a personal PDF copy for your own file we will need your Email address. Mine is davep_acer@msn.com.

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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December 2017

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

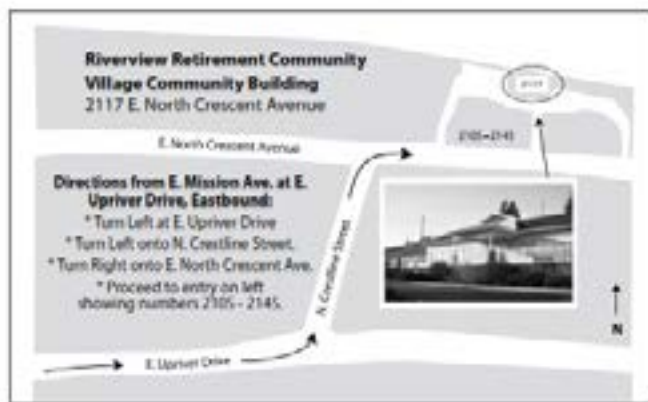
- I-90 West to Exit 282A
- Follow N. Hamilton St. to E. Mission Ave.
- Turn Right at E. Mission Ave.
- Turn Left at E. Upriver Drive

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.

KBirdNote can also be heard on
 EWU 89.5 FM 8 a.m. daily

