

The Pygmy Owl

Volume 26
Issue 50
June 2017

The Newsletter of the
Spokane Audubon Society



MUSING ABOUT LITTLE OWLS

by Kim Thorburn

It entered my consciousness slowly as I plodded along the forest trail. A songbird frenzy: dark-eyed juncos alarm clicking frantically, persistent tin bugling of red-breasted nuthatches, and continuous high-pitched squeal from golden-crowned kinglets. I stopped short. A dozen or so tiny songbirds were winging in and out of a gnarled, stunted Ponderosa pine just off the trail. I approached and looked into the yellow eyes of the minuscule Saw-Whet owl, seeming to implore my assistance with relief from its tormentors.



Saw-whet Owl

My barn seemed like a carnival for field mice. They would nearly run over my feet with their antics, abundant farm forage ensuring a healthy population. "If I can't have an owl, I sure need a bull snake," I would think every time I opened the barn door. It didn't take long. Three-feet long and lean, the snake hissed and slithered through the hay. The mouse carnival moved on.



Bull Snake

It was Indian summer in the chaparral of the Coast Range, great for hiking but there was no rest for little songbirds anticipating the lean months to come. A busy great flock, maybe a hundred Chestnut-backed Chickadees, Dark-eyed Juncos, Red-breasted Nuthatches, and Hutton's Vireos, is distracted by the intruder. Attracted by the nasal "dee,dee,dee," mechanical trills, toy tin bugling, and "vrees," I stopped and peered. Each took a turn, fluttering in very close. Settling on a branch, it would cock its head and quickly swerve even closer before making way for the next gutsy mobber.



Chestnut-backed Chickadee

All photos by Kim Thorburn

The Pygmy Owl

Volume 26 Issue 50 ~ June 2017

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.



Officers

President

Tom Light tlight3@gmail.com

Vice President

OPEN

Treasurer

Lindell Haggin lindell4118@comcast.net

Secretary

Ed Reynolds edndaisy@aol.com

Elected Board of Directors

Joyce Alonso	jbalonso3@msn.com
Ann Brinly	agbmaelstrom@gmail.com
Bob Cashen	mjaycashen@aol.com
Marlene Cashen	mjaycashen@aol.com
Gary Lee	bird_fan@aol.com
Jan Reynolds	edndaisy@aol.com
Lisa Langelier	langelier.lisa@gmail.com

Committee Chairs

Field Trips

Alan McCoy spokaneaudubon.org

Programs

Gary Lee bird_fan@aol.com

Education

Joyce Alonso jbalonso3@msn.com
Lindell Haggin lindell4118@comcast.net

Conservation

Greg Gordon fightingbull63@gmail.com

Hospitality

Jan Strobeck jandeerpark@aol.com

Membership

Dave Plemons davep_nublado@me.com

Publication

Sally English jhe230@yahoo.com

Publicity

Kim Thorburn kthorburn@msn.com

Pygmy Owl

Joanne Powell jopowell39@aol.com

Volunteer Coordinator

Joyce Alonso jbalonso3@msn.com

Website

Alan McCoy spokaneaudubon.org

Earth Week Competition Results

by Joyce Alonso

This spring we tried something new for Earth Day. Our board planned and ran Spokane Audubon's first ever (that I know of anyway) Big Day/Big Sit competition. Although we were not overwhelmed with entries, we had participants and winners in three of five categories, as follows:

Teen Big Day: The winner, with 81 species, was Curtis Mahon, who accepted as a prize a book with a set of the Audubon Society Master Guide to Birding.

Adult Big Sit: The winner, with 24 species, was Mary Porter, who edged out Tom Light, the activity's originator! She received a bird feeder and a bag of sunflower seeds.

Adult Big Day Group: The winner was Alan McCoy's field trip crew of 12, who beat out an entry by the F.S.J group of 3 participants...by 9 birds. Alan had 77 species...and good ones they were, too. Their reward was an "emergency" pack of trip necessities... from snack bars to a roll of Charmin.

Our participants enjoyed this event so much we hope to have more of you taking part next year. I have a great kids' prize that went unclaimed! Surely, some grandparent or parent in this organization takes their offspring birding! The children could manage the computer reporting of the list if the parent just drives...and spells hard bird names. Thanks to Tom Light for producing classy-looking certificates for all and to Jenny Michaels for receiving and checking the entries.

Spokane Audubon's next meeting will be:
Wednesday, September 13th at 7:30 p.m.

The Pygmy Owl will return in September.
The deadline will be August 21, 2017

Field Notes

Bird Sightings for the Inland Northwest, compiled by Jon Isacoff

Spring migration has brought its usual group of surprises, rarities, fun birds, and well, LOTS of birds! Though cool and wet, our breeding birds have returned and the forests, fields, and sage are full of sound again. Rare shorebirds in particular have made a fine showing this spring with all of the flooded fields and exposed mud. Notable recent sightings:

Greater White-fronted Goose: Willow Lake (4/30-SJ)

Harlequin Duck: Hauser Lake (5/6-SJ)

Red-breasted Merganser: Sprague (5/?-JI)

WHITE-FACED IBIS: Sprague (5/xx-JI)

AMERICAN GOLDEN-PLOVER: Sprague (5/2-JI)

Long-billed Curlew: Peone (5/2-TL); Colville (5/14-WC)

MARBLED GODWIT: Sprague (5/12-TL)

Sanderling: Sprague (5/8-TL)

Burrowing Owl: Sprague (5/22-MC)

Lewis's Woodpecker: Rock Lake (4/29-RB); Rose Creek (5/7-RB)

NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD: Bonner's Ferry (5/21-RD and SS)

American Redstart: Sprague (5/12-TL)

Golden-crowned Sparrow: Viola (5/3-NM); Davenport (5/5-JA)

White-throated Sparrow: Almira (5/8-RM)

GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE: Pullman (5/12-MH)

Observers: JA-Jim Acton; DB-Don Baker; MB-Missy Baker; RB-R.J. Baltierra; MaB-Matt Bartels; TB-Tom Besser; DB-Donna Bragg; BB-Ben Bright; MaC-Marlene Cashen; MC-Mike Clarke; LC-Lee Crawford; WC-Warren Current; RDC-Rich Del Carlo; KD-Kas Dumroese; RD-Roger Doucet; MF-Marian Frobe; SG-Stan Gough; LH-Lindell Haggin; JH-John Hanna; LH-Lisa Hardy; 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 Koppendrayer; JL-Joshua Little; TL-Terry Little; CoL-Courtney Litwin; CL-Carl Lundblad; CM-Curtis Mahon; AM-Alan McCoy; EM-Eliot Miller; NM-Nancy Miller; RM-Roy Myers; TO-Tim O'Brien; JP-Jonathan Pafford; ER-Eric Rasmussen; JR-Jan Reynolds; JR-Jethro Runco; ShS-Shane Sater; SS-Sandy Schreven; SS-Shirley Sturts; CS-Charles Swift; KT-Kim Thorburn; NT-Norma Trefry; DW-Doug Ward; RW-Roger Wing; TW-Tina Wynnecoop; MY-Matt Yawney; WY-Will Young



Golden Plover
by Glenn Bartlet



American Redstart
by Gerrit Vyn

West Plains Spring Migrants Field Trip 2017

By Alan McCoy

Eyes. Twelve pairs to be exact. By 6 am on Saturday, April 29th, these eyes and corresponding humans were out and about to see what was happening in the avian world just west of downtown Spokane in what I call the greater Palisades Park area. This is the starting point for a full day trip that meanders downriver to Tum Tum and then out to Reardan (and sometimes Davenport) before heading back. All bundled up in layers on this chilly spring morning, our caravan made its way along Grove and Basalt roads ticking off species in a hurry. This is always a rich area with Bewick's, House and Pacific Wrens, 3-4 swallow species, warblers, sparrows, Rufous and Calliope Hummingbirds. But sometimes eyes can be deceived. Such was the case when Fearless Leader mistook a Say's Phoebe for a Western Kingbird. Not to worry though because Fran Haywood's eyes were not so deceived and Fearless Leader did spot a Western Kingbird 15 minutes later along Inland Road, perched on a fence wire. An hour later the alert eyes of Patti Brewton called attention to a black-headed gull flying butterfly-like across Long Lake while we were at the Noel's house scanning for water birds. We quickly identified the Bonaparte's Gull before it was gone with the now considerable wind. Along with the gull we spotted Red-necked and Horned Grebes and a couple Common Loons bouncing around in the chop. A little later in the park at the base of Long Lake Dam the persistent eyes of Kris Singletary found a male Red-naped Sapsucker, quietly but steadily tapping away high in a Ponderosa pine.

Of course, our twelve pairs of ears were active too and a couple of Sora and a Pacific Wren were too shy to be seen, but not so shy that they could resist taunting us. I find that every spring I need to get my birding ears back and there's no better way than to have a Bewick's Wren, or in our case several of the little orators, filling our ears with their constant and variable chatter. After one long session listening and finally observing one at the confluence of the Little Spokane and Spokane Rivers, Fran said to me that someone once told her, when encountering a songster such as this "When in doubt, it's likely a Bewick's Wren."

Here's a link to a Google map of our adventure.

https://drive.google.com/open?id=1ld_2-YkHGRX-LPZHivZVOITGgcol&usp=sharing

Zoom in to see the sighting locations in detail. On the left side of the screen in the navigation bar click on the down arrow to see the list of all 77 of the birds seen and heard.



Common Loon
by Bea Harrison



Red-necked Grebe
by Kim Thorburn

This Is a Test!

If you've been reading the Pygmy Owl carefully, you already know that Spokane Audubon is switching our publication to a digital format as of September, 2017. **This is our last print issue.** This decision will result in the saving of trees used to produce paper plus the energy used for production, etc., etc. and help us keep our bank account greener. However, we do not want to lose contact with our members so...

1) we ask you to make sure that we have your correct, updated e-mail address. If in doubt, check with Dave Plemons at davep_nublado@me.com, or 413-1524.

OR

2) let us know by e-mail to Dave or by phone to Joyce Alonso (939-0120) that you wish to continue receiving a paper copy. We ask for your patience as we transition to this new system. So far, only a few people have requested continued paper copies.

Spokane Audubon's Summer Retreat

Remember that Spokane Audubon will be on summer break until September (no meetings); however, we'll have a summer retreat on Sunday, July 9th, from approximately 9:30 am-1:30 pm. It includes a potluck and some birding at the home of one of the board members.

While this event is planned and run by the SAS Board, all interested members are encouraged to attend. (Attendance does NOT include coercion to become a Board member!) Contact one of the current board members (see list on p. 2) for more information.

FLOODS, FLOWERS, AND FEATHERS FESTIVAL

by Joyce Alonso

Every spring for the past six years the staff at Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge has put on a free nature festival ("floods, flowers, and feathers") for the public. This year, as well as last, the event was run in partnership with the city of Cheney on the day of their May Fest. The specifically nature-related activities were set up at the Refuge.

These activities included various nature walks... focusing on birds, flowers, a bluebird talk/box check, an Ice Age Floods geology tour by bus and a bike ride for the energetic. Some participants took part in bird banding (a Northern Flicker, House Wren, Song Sparrow and Red-breasted Nuthatch). Others collected ants and ticks for the entomology booth. Still others learned about water quality by catching and studying pond invertebrates under a microscope. Kids of all ages admired the live raptors (Orville, the Barred Owl and Sadie, the American Kestrel) brought out by a handler from West Valley Learning Center and participated in the "Can You Find that Bird?" activity. Some, especially boys, tried out the hoses of the Turnbull fire crew, with great success at knocking down the target cones. Everyone sampled the cookies made by Friends of Turnbull and Spokane Audubon members.

We were fortunate to have good weather! One dark cloud after another wandered overhead, but not a drop of rain fell...even when we were taking down the tents and gear. A big thanks to the SAS volunteers who help make this event possible...Jan and Ed Reynolds, Sandy Sollie and family, Carmen Yount, Fran Haywood and Marian Frobe...and many others who helped anonymously.

Liberty Lake Field Trip

Joyce Alonso will be leading a half-day field trip on June 10th to Liberty Lake. Call for details at 509-939-0120.



NORTHWEST ROOM

presents

John James Audubon 'The Birds of America'

Tuesday, June 27

6-7 pm

Spokane Public Library - Downtown



Join us for a special viewing of John James Audubon's *The Birds of America* (1856 edition) and *The Viviparous Quadrupeds of North America* (1854). The Northwest Room at Spokane Public Library is proud to own an octavo edition of *The Birds of America* and a folio edition of the lesser known Quadrupeds.

On The Web (www.spokaneaudubon.org)

On the Web will return in the September issue.

ACOW 2017



Please mark your calendars for the 2017 Audubon Council of Washington meeting!

What: ACOW 2017
(there will be Education and WSACC meetings on Friday)

Date: Saturday, October 14, 2017

Location: Sequim, WA

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
Spokane Audubon Society
 P.O. Box 9820
 Spokane, WA 99209-9820
 (509) 838-5828

Non-Profit
 Organization
 Spokane, WA
 US Postage
 PAID
 Permit No. 34

To:

June 2017

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>

From Division Street go about 12 blocks East on Mission Ave. Just before the bridge over the Spokane River (by Avista), turn left (East) on Upriver Drive. Go 3 long blocks and turn left (North) on Crestline Street. Go one block. Turn right onto E. North Crescent Ave. Proceed a short way and take a left into the second of the driveways to the Community Building. The Community Building is straight ahead at the end. There are about 15 spaces to the left of the building and about 8 to the right. If these are full, you may have to park on E. North Crescent Ave



Listen to
BirdNote[®]
 on KYRS
 The Air Community Radio
 88.1 & 92.3 FM
Saturdays at 8:30 AM

*20 years of stories about birds,
 the environment, and more*

Other ways to hear BirdNote

