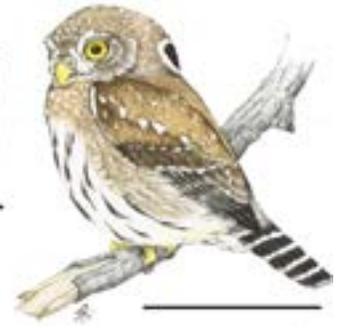


# The Pygmy Owl

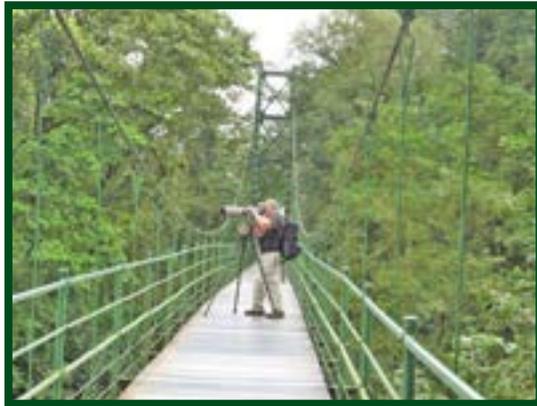
Volume 26  
Issue 51  
Sept. 2017

The Newsletter of the  
Spokane Audubon Society



## Birding Costa Rica

by Buck Domitrovich



### Buck's Bio

I didn't start birding seriously until I retired from the Plumbing Shop at Eastern Washington University in 2006. I got interested in wildlife photography when an old friend loaned me a camera and a 250 mm lens when I went to Alaska for the first time over 30 years ago. I've always enjoyed the outdoors as a youth, hunting and fishing, backpacking with my family mostly in the Pintler Wilderness of Montana.

Now when not travelling, I enjoy going out to Turnbull Wildlife Refuge at least three times a week, and birding the northwest on a regular basis. I've birded and photographed in Washington, Idaho, Alaska, Arizona, Oregon, California, and Costa Rica.

I do not consider myself an expert birder, but consider myself as an advanced intermediate with a life list of about 650 birds.

The Costa Rica adventure was a gift to us for our 50th wedding anniversary to enjoy the wonders of nature in a completely new environment and added over 300 new birds to our life list. We also enjoyed the flora and fauna in a very diverse environment in such a small country.



All photos by  
Buck  
Domitrovich



## The Pygmy Owl

Volume 26 Issue 51 ~ September 2017

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# Visit with Raptors: September 16, 2017 Eighth Annual Chelan Ridge Hawk Migration Festival

Join the Chelan/Entiat Ranger District, North Central Washington Audubon Society and HawkWatch International this fall for the eighth annual Chelan Ridge Hawk Migration Festival! This free family event combines educational activities in Pateros with a field trips to the Wells Wildlife Area and Chelan Ridge HawkWatch site. On Friday the 15th, there is a raptor ID and migration workshop at the local Fire Hall with Dr. Dave Oleyar from HawkWatch International. This all happens in Pateros, Washington on the weekend of September 16th. Register in advance for the field trips and workshop at [ncwaudubon.org](http://ncwaudubon.org), or visit the exhibits at Pateros any time during that Saturday.

This festival is scheduled to coincide with the peak of southbound migration of raptors at Chelan Ridge - the best place in Washington to view fall migrating raptors. Past festivals have brought several hundred people to see hawks up close, enjoy Memorial Park, and spend the day learning all about raptors. So please join us for the 2017 festival!

To sign up for any of the activities or to learn more about the festival please visit our website:

<http://ncwaudubon.org>.



The most commonly seen species are the Sharp-shinned Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Northern Harrier, Golden Eagle, and American Kestrel.

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

The Pygmy Owl deadline will be  
September 18, 2017

# Field Notes

Bird Sightings for the Inland Northwest, compiled by Jon Isacoff

Here is the big breeding season/early fall migration report. Overall 2017 has been a slow year but as always, each month brings some goodies to us. Try to get out and look for migrant shorebirds and passerines during the next few weeks. Soon, most will be gone! Especially rare sightings are in bold/caps:

Bufflehead Chick (rare breeder in WA): Sheep Lake (7/29-TL)

Spruce Grouse: Northwest Peak (8/14-JI)

Great Egret: Colville Flats (8/24-TL)

Black-bellied Plover: Swanson Lakes (8/4-JI and 8/18-GS and KT)

Semipalmated Plover: Haag Cover (8/18-RK); Slavin Ranch (8/26-JI)

Long-billed Curlew (rare in August): Swanson Lakes (8/4-JI)

**BROAD-TAILED HUMMINGBIRD**: Moscow Mountain (8/22-KD)

Williamson's Sapsucker: Baldy St. Joe Mountain (6/5- JI)

American Three-toed Woodpecker: Laird Park (6/17-RB)

Black-backed Woodpecker: Little Pend Oreille NWR (6/17-MM);

Woodpecker: Laird Park (6/17-RB)

Prairie Falcon (rare in Pend Oreille County): Usk (7/7-TL)

**GRAY FLYCATCHER** -- 1st Pend Oreille County Record): Cusick (8/14-MaM)

Red-eyed Vireo (rare in Palouse region): Wawawai County Park (8/7-RB)

Boreal Chickadee: Northwest Peak (8/14-JI)

**CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER**: Ephrata (6/9-MY)

Clay-colored Sparrow: Antoine Peak (6/12-JI); Spokane West Plains (6/15-TL); Flying Goose Ranch (8/14-MM)

Tricolored Blackbird: Sprague (TL-8/25)

Pine Grosbeak: Mt. Spokane (TL-8/17)



**Broad-tailed Hummingbird**  
Photo T. Grey



**Chestnut-sided Warbler**  
Photo Audubon Society

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; MaM-Matthew Moskwik; MM-Mike Muntz; TO-Tim O'Brien; JP-Jonathan Pafford; ER-Eric Rasmussen; JR-Jan Reynolds; JR-Jethro Runco; ShS-Shane Sater; SS-Sandy Schreven; GS-Gina Sheridan; CS-Charles Swift; KT-Kim Thorburn; NT-Norma Trefry; DW-Doug Ward; RW-Roger Wing; TW-Tina Wynnecoop; MY-Matt Yawney; WY-Will Young

# Liberty Lake Field Trip

by Joyce Alonso

In the past few years the SAS Liberty Lake field trip has been a sometime thing, occasionally due to bad weather, sometimes to other factors. Happily, this year the stars ...or whatever...aligned to produce about a dozen participants, including three leaders, and very nice weather!

In past years, we have begun by car, following Brian Miller around winding rural roads to find bluebirds, bank swallows, etc. Alas, this year, the bluebirds did not return to their accustomed boxes and the quarry walls that housed the swallows have been excavated so we reluctantly skipped that part of the trip.

Instead, we began at the Liberty Lake County Park, walking in and wandering from the swimming area near the entrance up to campground and beyond. Given so many pairs of eyes, we identified a respectable number of birds, about 45. No rarities-just the birds we usually see...and take for granted. Among the notables were the hummingbirds-both black-chinned and Calliope-that obligingly perched so we could enjoy them. The flycatchers-Pacific slope, willow, and Western Wood Peewee seen and heard. We were pleased to find all three vireos-Cassin's, warbling and red-eye. We also had the 3 nuthatch species and lots of chickadees, mostly black-capped. In addition to the robins and Swainson's thrushes, always plentiful there we heard and saw the beautiful Veery. We had 5 warblers, including the Common Yellowthroat, difficult to spot because the marsh vegetation was so tall, given the wet spring. Though we heard them very well, most of us failed to spot the reclusive Soras. We also were unable to wander out into the big meadow, which was knee-deep in mud and water.

Other mentionable birds were the hide-and-seek catbirds, the beautiful Western tanagers, a Black-headed Grosbeak on her nest and the red crossbills, which have been scarce lately.

While some folks had to rush off to other appointments, a few of us were able to enjoy a lunch-time visit with Beth and Brian Miller at their home, watching the hummingbirds, Cassin's finches and other species at their well-placed feeders. A good time was had by all.



**Cassin's Vireo**  
Photo Audubon Society



**Warbling Vireo**  
Photo Audubon Society



**Red-eyed Vireo**  
Photo Bill Hubick

# ***Celebrate National Wildlife Refuge Week***



*with a Community Work Day  
at Turnbull National  
Wildlife Refuge!*



Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge, Spokane Audubon Society and Friends of Turnbull will host a community work party on Saturday, October 14, 2017. This is part of an ongoing community effort to restore native riparian habitat to benefit birds and other wildlife species. We have hundreds of native saplings to plant and fencing to erect to protect the trees from deer, elk and moose browsing.

**Attention Groups:** Please **call in advance to register**. It helps us in our planning if we know how many are coming. The Refuge will also host a “potluck” lunch. Please feel free to bring your favorite dish. Ask for Sandy (6509) 235-423 ext. 228.

**Planting Time:** 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

**When:** Saturday, October 14, 2017

**Lunch:** Potluck, 12 p.m. (Friends of Turnbull will supply the hamburgers).

**Where:** Turnbull NWR Headquarters, 5 miles south of Cheney on Cheney-Plaza Road. Turn left on Smith Road drive 2 miles on gravel road to Headquarters.

**Clothing:** Long-sleeved shirt, work pants, gloves, sturdy boots or shoes.

**Equipment:** (If you can) shovels and pliers.

Rain or Shine 

***Everyone is Welcome***



# Vaux's Swifts

by Lindell Haggin

Vaux's Swifts are frequently described as cigars with wings. They are the smallest swift in North America, slightly smaller than a Violet Green Swallow. Their coloration is grayish brown with the throat and rump being slightly lighter in coloration. Their flight pattern shows rapid, stiff wing beats. They do not have a rear talon so they cannot perch on a branch, but cling to rough bark or the inside of chimneys that don't have ceramic liners. If there are large hollow trees they will roost in them as well. Just like Woodpeckers who spend a lot of time perching on the sides of trees, the Swift has a very stiff tail with the center shaft of the feather extending beyond the vanes. Below is a photo of a Vaux's Swift that was found dead showing its features.

Swifts frequently are found capturing insects over rivers. Our home is along the Little Spokane River, so I have seen a few Swifts on a fairly regular basis especially in spring migration and late summer. Our home has expanded over the decades, with varying degrees of sophistication. The original chimney which is no longer used, does not have a liner. A few times over the past ten years, I've seen a several swifts diving into the unlined chimney.

This spring I was disappointed when I only saw one Swift in May. Finally, on July 6 I saw another one. I saw them periodically throughout the month and by the end of July I was seeing up to 5 Swifts. During the hot days at the beginning of August, we were spending more time in the early evening down by the river. Over four evenings the number of Swifts increased from 10 to 40. I was thrilled. Then on August 10, I was out doing my usual morning bird survey, when I saw about 40 Vaux's Swifts flying out of our chimney. What a treat! That evening around 7:15, I sat outside with a clear view of the chimney. In thirty minutes their numbers gradually increased from several until I saw about 30 all swoop down into the chimney. There were a few that were not moving quite as swiftly as others and you could almost see them slow down and drop in feet first.

For the next week, I checked the chimney every evening. They entered the chimney between 7:45 and 8:15. By August 18, however, their numbers were down to 12. A week later, I saw 3 Swifts in the morning of August 26. Right on cue they have started on their migration south to warmer climates. I can only hope they will be back next summer so I can learn more about this fascinating creature.

While I was thrilled with 40 or more Swifts, there are sites on the west side of Washington and Oregon that have upwards of 2000 birds at one site! There is a concerted effort to try to preserve these roosting locations for the Vaux's Swift. If you Google Vaux's Swifts, Monroe, WA you can see a video of them entering a large chimney.



**Vaux's Swift**  
Photo Lindell Haggin

# Upcoming Field Trips

## September 9, 2017 Saturday Sprague Lake Migrant Trip. Leader: Fran Haywood

This is a half-day trip to the Sprague Lake area to look for migrating birds, and birds which often stray here in September. Meet at Coeur d' Alene Park at 6:15am. We will leave the park at 6:30am. There will be a \$5.00 charge per person if we bird at either of the private resorts on the lake. Please call Fran Haywood (509 290-1814; birders13@gmail.com) by Sept 6 if you plan to attend.

Target birds: Loons, Grebes, White Pelicans, Great Egrets, Peregrine Falcon, Red-neck Phalaropes, Terns, American Pipit, Migrant warblers and sparrows.

## October 21, 2017, Saturday Grant County Late Fall Migrant Trip Leader: Gary Blevins

This is a beginning, intermediate and advanced birder-oriented trip to look for specialty birds, such as Arctic Gulls, Lapland Longspurs, and other hard to find and see northern visitors. There may be some down time with little action in between bird sightings but potential for rarities is high. It is a full-day trip from sunrise to sunset. Contact Gary Blevins (863-2659 or [blevins@spocom.com](mailto:blevins@spocom.com)) by October 16 if you plan to attend.

Target Birds: Loons and grebes; scoters and rare wintering waterfowl; wintering raptors; Glaucous, Thayers, and Glaucous-winged Gulls; Snowy Owl; Northern Shrike; Snow Bunting; Lapland Longspur; Gray-crowned Rosy Finch

## 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](mailto:ahm2352@gmail.com)) for information about the Spokane CBC.

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### 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: \_\_\_\_\_

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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

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](mailto:davep_nublado@me.com), or 413-1524.



The Pygmy Owl  
**Spokane Audubon Society**  
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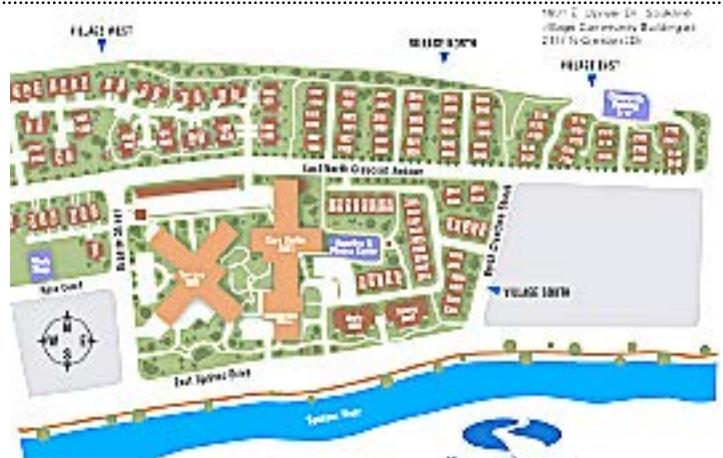
To:

**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



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