

THE PRAIRIE OWL

PALOUSE AUDUBON SOCIETY

Volume 29, Issue 3, January 2001

PROGRAMS

MOSCOW COMMUNITY CENTER

JANUARY 17, 2001 - 7:30 P.M.

Ponderosa Pine Ecosystems

Rita Dixon, Non-game Wildlife Biologist, Idaho Department of Fish and Game and **Ed Guzman**, Assistant Fire Management Officer, Umatilla National Forest - Ponderosa pine ecosystems provide important habitat for a variety of bird and mammal species. The presenters will discuss Umatilla National Forest planners proposal to use a variety of treatments to restore and maintain Ponderosa pine stands on the Forest.

FEBRUARY 21, 2001 - 7:30 P.M.

History of Wildlife in the Palouse

George B. Hatley, Latah Wildlife Association and PAS member - George has assembled a program and slide show on the history of birds and animals on the Palouse. George relates of his grandfather coming to the Palouse by wagon train in 1877 and finding the area alive with Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse. Along with other abundant wildlife, they were an important food source for the pioneers.

MARCH 21, 2001 - 7:30 P.M.

Bighorn Sheep in Hell's Canyon

Frances Cassirer, Wildlife Biologist, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Clearwater Region Through a cooperative project between the states of Idaho, Oregon, and Washington, the BLM, Forest Service, and the Foundation for North American Wild Sheep, researchers are working to restore bighorn sheep to Hells Canyon. Frances' slide presentation will provide information about bighorn sheep and what is being done to restore their populations in this area.

CALENDAR

JANUARY

- 8 PAS Board Meeting - 7:30pm
2152 Arbor Crest Rd, Moscow
- 17 PAS Membership Meeting - 7:30pm *Ponderosa Pine Ecosystems*
- 20 Snowy Owl/Snow Bunting Field Trip

FEBRUARY

- 5 PAS Board Meeting - 7:30pm
- 10 Snake River Parks - Birding Field Trip
- 16-19 Great Backyard Bird Count
- 17 Owl Nest Box Building Program - Moscow
- 21 PAS Membership Meeting - 7:30pm
History of Wildlife in the Palouse

MARCH

- 5 PAS Board Meeting - 7:30pm
- 21 PAS Membership Meeting - 7:30pm
Bighorn Sheep in Hell's Canyon
- 24-25 Othello Sandhill Crane Festival



**SEE INSIDE FOR FURTHER DETAILS
AND VISIT US ON THE WEB AT:**

<http://www.palouseaudubon.org/>

The mission of the National Audubon Society is to conserve and restore natural ecosystems
- focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats -
for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity.

From the Prez:

The new year arrived without the hysteria of its predecessor. As it turns out, 2000 was in most respects just like any other year. It was a good year, although as I write this article on its final days, I wish there were a few more weeks of time available.

As many of you know, Diane and I have devoted this past year to birding Whitman County. The decision to do this didn't actually take place until February 7 - the day that we saw the Great Gray Owl near the Pullman-Moscow Airport. It was then that Diane announced that she would like to do a *Big Year* in Whitman County. She had to explain to me that a *Big Year* involves trying to see as many species of birds as possible during a given year. Taking part in this endeavor also classifies a person as a *Lister* - a classification not always viewed in the best light by some birders.

In all honesty, it has really been an enjoyable experience. Sometimes it became a quest, almost an obsession to find a specific species. But we learned an awful lot, not only about the birds, but about the area as well. It is fun to take off on a road one has never traveled before; to see terrain and landscapes that you didn't know existed; and in our case, to witness the awesome results of the glacial floods that transformed the northwestern corner of the county.

At the time of this writing, our year-end tally is at 178 species. Number 177 was an American Dipper seen on December 23 near the Pullman Sewage Treatment Facility - a great bird for the county. But all of the birds seen were wonderful and some of them were surprises, like a Lewis Woodpecker in one of the only trees on Rock Creek; or 100+ Ross's Geese and a lone American Golden Plover at Rock Lake; a pair of mating Ferruginous Hawks at Winona; a Black-throated Sparrow at the top of Steptoe Butte; and a Broad-tailed Hummingbird in our own backyard. It has been an enjoyable experience and I would strongly recommend such an activity to anyone. It certainly gives you another reason to get out and enjoy our environment.

Go birding and good birding to all during 2001,

Tom Weber

BITS AND PIECES

WEBSITE ADDITIONS - The Rare Bird Alert Hotline report (208)882-6195 is updated each Friday by Kas Dumroese and later transcribed for *inland-nw-birders* by Charles Swift. The report is now available on our website.

Also for your information, to sign onto *inland-nw-birders* (an email listserv) send an email message to: **Majordomo@uidaho.edu** with the following command in the body of your message:

subscribe inland-nw-birders "your email address"

Please leave the Subject: line blank and do not include a signature file. The service is also available in digest form by substituting **inland-nw-birders-digest** in the message.

THE GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT - The Great Backyard Bird Count is a great personal activity and a great way for scouts, schools, and folks at the office to become excited about birds. For additional information, visit the Great Backyard Bird Count web site at:

<http://birdsource.cornell.edu/gbbc/>

CHAPTER NEWS

RAPTOR REWARD FUND - Eric Barker (from the Lewiston Morning Tribune, 12/21/00)

Dr. Erik Stauber has seen more patients this fall than he cares to. "It's terrible," he said. "We've gotten more birds than usual that have been shot." Since September, Stauber, a Washington State University professor of veterinary science who specializes in raptors, said the teaching hospital has treated three rough-legged hawks, three red-tailed hawks, one bald eagle, one barred owl, and an American kestrel that have been illegally shot. Stauber and officials at the Idaho Department of Fish and Game speculate far more raptors are shot each year than ever get reported. Unless a bird is wounded near a road or home, they are rarely found.

Idaho Fish and Game non-game biologist Rita Dixon fears some hunters may be shooting the birds thinking they are helping control predators, but many are likely shot by people simply seeking a thrill. "I'm sure they know these birds are protected and if the general public knew this was an issue they would be pretty upset about it. Part of it is just the sheer, weird joy of doing it, but there are a number of people who think these hawks are getting all of their game birds. What they don't realize is that most of these birds feed exclusively on rodents. More than anything, it's just sheer ignorance and disrespect of wildlife."

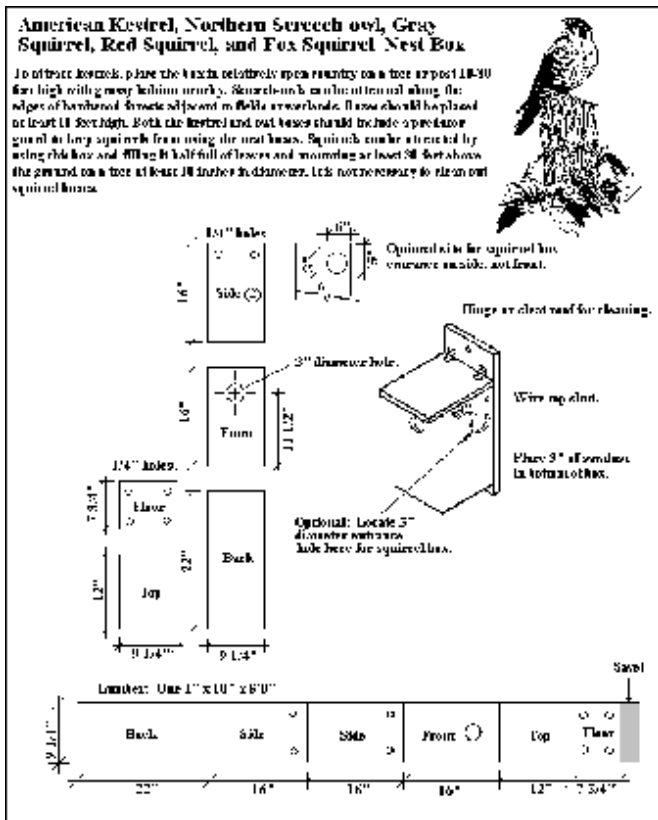
Rita is working to put a reward fund together in hopes it will convince people who see or know of raptor shootings to report the crimes. She hopes to raise \$500 to \$1,000 and is seeking contributions from wildlife and bird-watching groups.

Rita will be present for our January program, *Ponderosa Pine Ecosystems*. Following the presentation we will ask Rita to provide additional information about the Reward Fund. The Palouse Audubon Society endorses the establishment of the fund and will make a donation on the chapter's behalf. In addition, members are encouraged to provide support through a personal contribution. Send your check designated for the Fund to: PO Box 3606, Moscow. Help stop this offensive practice.

OWL BOX BUILDING PROJECT - Palouse Audubon Society will again join Moscow Parks and Recreation in conducting a workshop to learn more about local owl species; to meet some owls and other raptors "up-close and personal"; and to build nest boxes. The workshop will be at the Eggan Youth Center on Saturday, February 17, 2001 at 9:00 a.m. The introduction will feature live raptors and owls handled by the WSU Raptor Club. Construction will follow the program.

This year, we will feature building homes for smaller owls (saw-whet, boreal, or screech owls) and/or kestrels and woodpeckers. Our procedures for installing the boxes will also differ. If attendees believe they have suitable owl habitat, they can install the boxes that they have built themselves. Otherwise, we will be soliciting potential locations for boxes that need a happy home. Potential habitats for owls include forested locations for the saw-whet and boreal owl or riparian habitat for the screech owl. In open prairie habitats, the same box design provides an excellent home for kestrels.

There will be no fee to attend the workshop, but please register by calling the Eggan Youth Center at (208)883-7085. Young children must be accompanied by an adult. Potlatch Forests Inc, Tri-State Distributors, and members of the Palouse Audubon Society are contributing the materials - you supply the enthusiasm and a screwdriver (battery operated are nice).



EDUCATION - Cathy Willmes, reports that she has received requests from the Moscow and Pullman Public Libraries for select books and videos. The Board will discuss the requests at our next Board meeting. The meeting is set for January 8 at 7:30 p.m. at Cathy's home, 2152 Arbor Crest Rd, Moscow. All are welcome.

CONSERVATION - Bill Warren, Chairman, is looking for information on Whitman County raptor habitat that may be useful in finding an area that would qualify as an Important Bird Area (IBA). In particular, Prairie Falcon and Ferruginous Hawk nesting areas may be of importance. Give Bill a call if you have information.

MEMBERSHIP - The chapter continues to welcome and recruit new members to the Audubon family. If you know of a person who may be interested in joining, please pass on the application found on the cover of this newsletter or contact Diane Weber our Membership Chairman. New members receive a subscription to the award winning *Audubon Magazine* and the *Prairie Owl Newsletter*. Our success as an organization depends on our membership growth and their involvement in our mission and grass-root conservation activities. Your participation in membership recruitment and retention is of vital importance to that success.

BOOKS AVAILABLE - Great prices on birding resource guides are available at our meetings or by calling Diane Weber or Charles Swift.

FIELD TRIPS

SNOWY OWL / SNOW BUNTING TRIP - January 20
A joint field trip with Canyon Birders to the Reardan - Davenport area west of Spokane to search for Snowy Owls and Snow Buntings is scheduled for Saturday, January 20. Participants are to meet at Dissmore's IGA, N. 1205 Grand Ave, in Pullman at 8:00 a.m. Weather permitting, this is an all day trip - so bring a lunch.

SNAKE RIVER PARKS - February 10
A birding trip to the dams and parks along the Snake River will be in search of winter waterfowl, landbirds, owls, and a Gray-crowned Rosy Finch roost. Areas to be visited may include: Lower Monumental Dam, Lyon's Ferry, Central Ferry, and Almota. Participants are to meet at 8:00 a.m. at Dissmore's IGA, N. 1205 Grand Ave, in Pullman. Again, weather permitting, this is an all day trip - so bring a lunch.

SANDHILL CRANES - March
A trip to visit the Pot Holes Area near Othello in search of Sandhill Cranes and early migrants is set for March. A date and additional information will be announced next month.

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

PULLMAN/MOSCOW CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

December 16, 2000, Dave Holick

The **61 species** ties three earlier counts for the third highest species total in the history of this count. The 9,270 individual birds tallied is the second highest total. This is quite amazing in light of the severe weather with 60 mph winds and snow the day prior to the count, followed by winds most of the day and blowing and drifting snow during the morning of count day. Although there were no new species, the 588 Gray Partridge, 249 Red-tail Hawks and 58 Wild Turkeys are significant record high counts for these species.

Great Blue Heron 4	Black-billed Magpie 505
Snow Goose 1	American Crow 16
Canada Goose 247	Common Raven 51
Green-winged Teal 12	Black-capped Chickadee 116
Mallard 417	Mountain Chickadee 27
Duck, species? 1	Chestnut-backed Chickadee 5
Bald Eagle 1	Red-breasted Nuthatch 41
Northern Harrier 21	White-breasted Nuthatch 6
Sharp-shinned Hawk 6	Pygmy Nuthatch 36
Cooper's Hawk 3	Brown Creeper 6
Accipiter, species? 4	Bewick's Wren 4
Red-tailed Hawk 249	Winter Wren 6
Harlan's Hawk 1	Marsh Wren 1
Rough-legged Hawk 95	Golden-crowned Kinglet 28
Buteo, species? 10	Townsend's Solitaire 1
American Kestrel 43	American Robin 439
Falcon, species? 1	Varied Thrush 8
Gray Partridge 588	Bohemian Waxwing 43
Ring-necked Pheasant 327	Cedar Waxwing 29
Ruffed Grouse 1	Northern Shrike 3
Wild Turkey 58	Eurasian Starling 2667
California Quail 394	Spotted Towhee 1
Common Snipe 3	Song Sparrow 126
Rock Dove 315	White-crowned Sparrow 1
Mourning Dove 28	Dark-eyed (Slate) Junco 17
Barn Owl 7	Dark-eyed (Ore) Junco 441
Great-horned Owl 15	Dark-eyed Junco, form? 160
Long-eared Owl 7	Snow Bunting 2
Owl, species? 1	Brewer's Blackbird 3
Belted Kingfisher 1	House Finch 306
Downy Woodpecker 9	Red Crossbill 28
Hairy Woodpecker 4	Pine Siskin 77
Northern Flicker 90	American Goldfinch 269
Horned Lark 199	Evening Grosbeak CW
Steller's Jay 4	House Sparrow 735

LEWISTON-CLARKSTON CHRISTMAS BIRD

COUNT December 30, 2000, Charles Swift

The third Lewiston-Clarkston Christmas Bird Count was a great success thanks to the efforts of 27 birders from Canyon Birders and the Palouse Audubon Society. The **86 species** and 15,278 birds surpasses last years totals. For more information on the Christmas Bird Count (including on-line data from all counts) see the birdsources web site at: <http://birdsource.cornell.edu/cbc/index.html>

Participants: Keith Carlson, Francis Cassirer, Jerry Cebula, Cam Collins, Rita Dixon, Kas Dumroese, Doris Ferguson, Dwight Fergusson, Winnie Hepburn, Collin Hughes, Dave Holick, Julie Holick, Bryan Jamison, Jim Jamison, Merlene Koliner, Joe Lipar, Barbara Morgan, Regine Snitzer, Deb Stenkamp, Charles Swift, Carole Vande Voorde, Diane Weber, Tom Weber, Jane Westervelt, Paul Wik, Al Winter.

Pied-billed Grebe 5	Herring Gull 34
Horned Grebe 1	Rock Dove 1305
Red-necked Grebe 2	Mourning Dove 711
Western Grebe 10	Barn Owl 2
Double-crested Cormorant 1	Western Screech-Owl 1
Great Blue Heron 23	Great Horned Owl 8
Blk-crowned Night-Heron 3	Belted Kingfisher 10
Canada Goose 1388	Downy Woodpecker 4
Wood Duck 291	Hairy Woodpecker 1
Green-winged Teal 15	Northern Flicker 84
Mallard 3130	Say's Phoebe 1
Northern Pintail 16	Horned Lark 179
Northern Shoveler 3	Blue Jay 1
Gadwall 6	Black-billed Magpie 163
American Wigeon 395	American Crow 61
Ring-necked Duck 37	Common Raven 39
Lesser Scaup 15	Black-capped Chickadee 47
Common Goldeneye 1000	Mountain Chickadee 1
Barrow's Goldeneye 800	Red-breasted Nuthatch 1
Bufflehead 350	Brown Creeper 3
Hooded Merganser 19	Rock Wren 4
Common Merganser 12	Canyon Wren 2
Bald Eagle (adult) 3	Bewick's Wren 49
Northern Harrier 14	Marsh Wren 4
Sharp-shinned Hawk 6	Golden-crowned Kinglet 22
Cooper's Hawk 6	Ruby-crowned Kinglet 8
accipiter sp. 1	Townsend's Solitaire 3
Red-tailed Hawk 57	American Robin 389
Rough-legged Hawk 10	Cedar Waxwing 12
Golden Eagle 2	Northern Shrike 6
American Kestrel 66	European Starling 1085
Merlin 2	Yellow-rumped Warbler 37
Prairie Falcon 1	Song Sparrow 430
Gray Partridge 68	White-crowned Sparrow 234
Chukar 2	Harris's Sparrow 1
Ring-necked Pheasant 102	Dark-eyed Junco 426
Wild Turkey 2	Red-winged Blackbird 100
California Quail 507	Western Meadowlark 92
Virginia Rail 3	House Finch 292
American Coot 66	Cassin's Finch 6
Killdeer 78	Pine Siskin 18
Common Snipe 5	American Goldfinch 339
Ring-billed Gull 37	House Sparrow 490
California Gull 6	

PROGRAMS

JANUARY 17, 2001 - Moscow Community Center, *Ponderosa Pine Ecosystems: Vanishing Wildlife Habitat*
Rita Dixon - Non-game Wildlife Biologist, Idaho Department of Fish and Game and **Ed Guzman**, Asst Fire Management Officer, Umatilla National Forest.

Biologists agree that the Ponderosa pine ecosystems provide important habitat for a variety of bird and mammal species and are concerned over the loss of this valuable wildlife habitat. Because of the importance of this ecosystem, Umatilla National Forest planners propose to use a variety of treatments to restore and maintain Ponderosa pine stands on the Forest. Ed Guzman, Assistant Fire Management Officer for the Fire and Fuels Management Program at the Pomeroy Ranger District manages this project and will summarize the fire history of the Ponderosa pine ecosystem areas of the Inland Northwest, explaining the loss of this ecosystem over time, and the current condition of remaining sites. He'll follow this with a discussion of methods the Forest Service is using in their Ponderosa pine ecosystem restoration program. Guzman will explain how sites are targeted for treatment and how the Forest Service staff make decisions on the size and the timing of the treatments. He will also provide detailed descriptions of the various treatments, including thinning and prescribed burning.

Rita Dixon, Non-game Wildlife Biologist for the Clearwater Region of the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, has spent several years conducting research in Ponderosa pine ecosystems, including a major study on White-headed Woodpeckers. Dixon will discuss the importance of this ecosystem to a variety of wildlife species, particularly birds.

FEBRUARY 21, 2001 - Moscow Community Center, *History of Wildlife in the Palouse*, **George B. Hatley**, Latah Wildlife Association and PAS member.

Two years ago, at the request of members from the Latah Wildlife Association, George assembled a program and slide show on the history of birds and animals in the Palouse. George relates of his grandfather coming to the Palouse by wagon train in 1877 and finding the area alive with Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse. They and other abundant wildlife became an important food source for the pioneers. Presentations of the program before the Latah Wildlife Association and the Region II Office of Idaho Fish and Game have been well received.

MARCH 21, 2001 - Moscow Community Center, *Bighorn Sheep in Hell's Canyon*, **Frances Cassirer**, Wildlife Biologist, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Clearwater Region.

Frances, through a cooperative project between the states of Idaho, Oregon, and Washington, the BLM, Forest Service, and the Foundation for North American Wild Sheep, has been working on the restoration of bighorn sheep to Hells Canyon for 5 years.

Historically, bighorns were one of the most common large animals in Hells Canyon, but were extirpated by 1945 due to a combination of competition with domestic livestock, overharvest, and probably most significantly, diseases transmitted by domestic sheep. A slide presentation will provide information about bighorn sheep and what is being done to restore their populations in the area.

APRIL 18, 2001 - Moscow Community Center, *Restoration of the Palouse Prairie*, **Scott Lambert**, USDA-NRCS

This program will discuss the rapidly vanishing Palouse Prairie, and the efforts of conservation scientists at Washington State University to help preserve the remnants.

MAY 16, 2001 - Moscow Community Center, *The Warblers: Ecology and Identification*, **Kevin Pullen**, Washington State University.

A veteran speaker for Palouse Audubon returns to share his expertise on these wonderful "little yellow jobs." Learn about many of the trials and tribulations these Neotropical migrants face every season. Identification by sound is featured.



Palouse Audubon Society
PO Box 3606
University Station
Moscow ID 83843

PALOUSE AUDUBON SOCIETY - NEW MEMBERSHIP ONLY

Includes *National Audubon Society* membership, subscriptions to *AUDUBON MAGAZINE* and *THE PRAIRIE OWL* Newsletter.
Send check payable to National Audubon Society and send to: Palouse Audubon Society, PO Box 3606, University Station,
Moscow ID 83843. Please include this coupon. For more information call: (509)334-3817

Y05-7XBP

NAME _____ ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____ PHONE _____

Membership Category (mark ONE):

- | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|---------|--------------------------|---------------------|------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Introductory Membership (1 yr) | \$20.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Life Membership | \$1,000.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Introductory Membership (2 yr) | \$30.00 | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Student & Senior Citizen (62+) | \$15.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> | PAS Newsletter Only | \$10.00 |

PALOUSE AUDUBON SOCIETY ***2000-2001***

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Phyllis Wicks, Treasurer
(208)882-8746

MEETINGS

BOARD - 1st Monday (normally)
11/6, 12/4, 1/8, 2/5, 3/5, 4/2, 5/7, 6/4
MEMBERSHIP - 3rd Wednesday
11/15, 12/20, 1/17, 2/21, 3/21, 4/18

CHAIRMEN

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WEBSITE

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BIRDING HOTLINE

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