



# THE PRAIRIE OWL

PALOUSE AUDUBON SOCIETY

Volume 29, Issue 4, March 2001

## PROGRAMS

MOSCOW COMMUNITY CENTER

### **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.

### **APRIL 18, 2001 - 7:30 P.M.**

*Chasing Pronghorn in Yellowstone: an Effort in Futility?* - **Kevin Pullen**, Science Instructor and Asst. Curator of the Conner Museum at WSU. Kevin will talk about the research being done on pronghorn antelope in Yellowstone National Park. He will discuss some of the concerns for the population as well as his experience capturing fawns for tagging and monitoring.

### **MAY 16, 2001 - 7:30 P.M.**

*Palouse Prairie Restoration: Reintroducing native plants into former croplands* - **Dave Skinner**, USDA-NRCS Plant Materials Center at WSU. This program will discuss the rapidly vanishing Palouse Prairie, and the efforts of conservation scientists to re-introduce native plants into former croplands. A field trip to possibly the Kramer Plot (Colton), research farms (WSU and U/I), and a restoration example (Kas Dumroese) is being arranged for the following Saturday.

## CALENDAR

### **MARCH**

- 5 PAS Board Meeting - 7:30pm
- 6 Army Corps of Engineers Open House – 2:00 – 8:00pm, Dworshak
- also Yukon to Yellowstone Initiative – 7:30pm, University of Idaho Law School Court Rm
- 13 National ORV Coalition – 7:00pm
- 21 PAS Membership Meeting - 7:30pm  
*Bighorn Sheep in Hell's Canyon*
- 23-25 Othello Sandhill Crane Festival
- 29 Palouse Science Center Meeting – 7:00pm
- 31 Lewiston-Clarkston Field Trip

### **APRIL**

- 2 PAS Board Meeting - 7:30pm
- 18 PAS Membership Meeting - 7:30pm  
*Chasing Pronghorn in Yellowstone: an Effort in Futility?*
- 21 Turnbull National Refuge Field Trip
- 28 Potlatch River Hike – Bill Warren

### **MAY**

- 7 PAS Board Meeting - 7:30pm
- 12 International Migratory Bird Day
- also National Keep Your Cat Indoors Day
- 16 PAS Membership Meeting - 7:30pm  
*Palouse Prairie Restoration: Reintroducing native plants into former croplands.*
- 19 Steptoe Butte/McCroskey Park Field Trip

**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:

Spring is in the air. After over 3.5 months of snow, ice, cold, and gray weather we're all anxious for the return of life to the Palouse. Our feathered friends should be right behind the *snowbirds* as they make their return to the north country. For those of you who did not make our February program, John and Amy Roberson have returned to Pullman following three months in the south. The birds can't be far behind. John was happy to report that they had added three birds to their life-list during the winter.

February was a busy and successful month for the chapter and there are many members to thank for making it so. Diane Weber, Harold Ward, Mary Bostick, and I spent a weekend in the Palouse Mall passing out literature about Palouse Audubon and recruiting new members; Al Stage, Tom Partington, and Trish Heekin cut out material for 25 nest boxes for the Nest Box Project; Charles Swift led a very successful field trip to the Snake River parks; and George Hatley filled the house for his presentation on the *History of Wildlife in the Palouse*. My thanks to everyone who made our many programs and projects a success.

Within the next few days, I will be presenting a program on bluebirds and swallows for the Genesee *After School Program*. Program coordinator, Tina Wytcherley, has also come up with enough material for the students to build a dozen nest boxes. The very thought of bluebirds and nest boxes has Diane and I thinking about this year's nesting season. Some of the birds could be arriving soon. This weekend we will be re-visiting our bluebird trail near Rose Creek to make some additions, repairs, and spring cleaning of the 40 plus boxes. We had a very successful first nesting last year and are hoping for the same again this year. We can hardly wait to see 'our' birds again.

There are a lot of activities scheduled for the coming months and I hope you will have an opportunity to attend some or all of them. In any case, I hope you take advantage of the coming warm and sunny days. Don't let them pass by. Get out and enjoy the return of life to the Palouse Country. You owe it to yourself. Go birding and good birding to all of you,

*Tom Weber*

## BITS AND PIECES

**WEBSITE ADDITIONS** - The Rare Bird Alert Hotline report **(208)882-6195** is transcribed and updated each Friday evening by Kas Dumroese. The report is available on the website along with

field trip reports, CBC results, editions of the *Prairie Owl*, and on-line membership application.

**ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS OPEN HOUSE** - All interested persons are invited to attend an open house at the Dworshak Visitor Center at the top of the dam between 2:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 6. The purpose of the event is to provide an update on the inventory and analysis progress of the Dworshak Master Plan and Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (MP/SEIS); solicit participation in groups working to help shape plan recommendations; inform individuals of volunteer opportunities; and listen to concerns. The event is informal and open to all.

**Y2Y CONSERVATION INITIATIVE** - The Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative (Y2Y) represents a bi-national network of over 275 conservation groups, wildlife biologists, economists and others. It was founded in 1993 to conserve the beauty, health, and natural diversity of the Rocky and Columbia Mountains from the Sawtooth and Wind River Mountains in the south to the Yukon's Mackenzie Mountains in the north. Harvey Locke, one of Canada Times Magazines' leader's for the 21st century, will share his hope and vision for the Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative. As founder of the initiative, Locke will offer a unique perspective on environmental tactics needed to protect the Rocky Mountains' important species such as grizzly bear and wolf. The presentation is scheduled for March 6 at 7:30 p.m. at the University of Idaho Law School Court Room. Everyone is invited.

**ORV PROGRAM** - The National ORV Coalition works to protect and restore all public lands and waters from the severe damage caused by personal watercraft, dirt bikes, and off-road vehicles. On Tuesday, March 13, at 7:00 p.m. in the Moscow Community Center, guest speaker Ronni Flannery will provide an update on what other parts of the country are doing with regard to ORV use as well as share ideas for monitoring and challenging inappropriate ORV projects. Discussion of situations occurring in north Idaho as well as potential responses will be of primary focus during the meeting. The meeting is free and open to the public.

**OTHELLO SANDHILL CRANE FESTIVAL** - The Crane Festival in Othello returns for a fourth year with lots of activities and field trips. The main Festival events will be held at Othello High School on Saturday, March 24. Additional field trips are

scheduled for Friday afternoon and Sunday morning.

Friday's field trip check-in and departure is from the Columbia NWR office, 735 E. Main St. Mike Denny and several FWS biologists will lead a tour of Columbia NWR at 4:00 p.m. The tour does not seek out cranes but may venture into crane country. One crane viewing bus will depart at 4:30 p.m. and stay until sunset, catching the cranes at their noisiest as they return to roost for the evening.

Saturday's schedule includes 12 presentations during the 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. lecture period. Programs include: Falconry (Steve Herman); Fire effects on birds at the ALE Reserve (Bill LaFramboise); The Missoula Floods (Brent Cunderla); Woodland Park Zoo-Wild Wise (Frank Hein); Grouse of Washington (Mike Schroeder); Othello History within the Drumheller Channeled Scablands (Gladys Para); Shrub Steppe Flora and Fauna (Andy Stepniewski); Owls of Eastern Washington (Mike Denny); Wildlife Habitat Design for your Home (Cary Munce); Spring Migration in the Columbia Basin (Bill LaFramboise); and Human and Natural History of the Columbia Basin (Jack Nisbet). The Keynote Speaker at 2:00 p.m. will be Joe Engler of the Ridgefield NWR Complex. His talk is titled "The Status of Breeding Greater Sandhill Cranes in Washington." Jack Nisbet, author of *Singing Grass Burning Sage*, will be the banquet speaker at 7:00 p.m. His talk is titled "Condors, Cranes, and Curlews: Columbia Basin Birds at the time of European Contact."

Saturday field trips include eight crane viewing bus tours lasting two hours each. Busses will leave on the half-hour beginning at 7:30 a.m. (five busses) and at 4:00 p.m. (three busses). A 2-hour geology field trip leaves at 11:00 a.m. immediately following the geology lecture. All Saturday field trips board at the high school.

Sunday's field trips offer visitors a chance to explore the Columbia Basin with experienced leaders. For the early risers, a sage-grouse lek tour to Douglas County will begin at 4:00 a.m. led by Mike Schroeder or

another WDFW biologist. This trip will seek out all of the shrub steppe obligates of the area. An extended tour of the Columbia NWR and Potholes area will depart at 7:00 a.m. led by Mike Denny and refuge biologists. This tour will cover the variety of wet and dry habitats of the



area keying on cliff and canyon habitats and local nesting species including owls. If Burrowing Owls are not seen on this tour they will be searched for after returning to Othello. At 7:30 a.m. Bill and Nancy LaFramboise will lead a tour up north to the Lower Grand Coulee. This trip is guaranteed to produce something special as it covers waterbirds, canyon and cliff areas, and early migrants through the Columbia Basin. At 8:00 a.m. Andy Stepniewski leads his annual pilgrimage to the Wahluke Slope where Sage Sparrow is abundant. Expect shrub steppe species and a great view of the White Bluffs along the Hanford Reach of the Columbia River. Local historian Gladys Para will lead the 9:00 a.m. history tour of the Drumheller Channeled Scablands. The last crane viewing bus will depart at 10:00 a.m.

Saturday and Sunday tours leave from the high school parking lot. Details and registration information are available from the Chamber of Commerce at (800)684-2556, by email at [othello@othello-wa.com](mailto:othello@othello-wa.com) or by visiting their web site at: <http://www.othello-wa.com/>

### **PALOUSE DISCOVERY SCIENCE CENTER –**

The Palouse Discovery Science Center is a non-profit organization whose purpose is to further the public's understanding of science and technology through the use of educational programs, exhibits, teaching collections, and activities which emphasize the physical participation of individuals. The Palouse Discovery Science Center will be located in Moscow on the top floor of the Historic 1912 building. The Center's design will emphasize hands-on fun and learning.

On Thursday, March 29 at 7:00 p.m., the first annual membership meeting of the Palouse Discovery Science Center will be held at the Moscow Junior High School (1410 East D St.) Multipurpose Room. At the meeting, the history and past activities of the organization will be described, plans for the coming year's activities will be announced, and an invitation will be extended to become founding members of the newly formed Palouse Discovery Center Guild. There will also be a chance to do some "hands-on" science activities. The meeting is free and open to the public.

### **CHAPTER NEWS**

**RAPTOR REWARD FUND** - Rita Dixon, IDFG, has been working to put together a reward fund in hopes it will convince people who see or know of raptor shootings to report the crime. She hopes to

raise \$1,000 or more and has sought contributions from wildlife and bird-watching groups.

The Palouse Audubon Society strongly deplors these random acts of violence to the raptor population and endorses the establishment of the fund. To date, over \$300 has been contributed and forwarded to Rita by our chapter. We wish to thank the membership for providing support through personal contributions. If you wish to participate, send your check to: PO Box 3606, Moscow. Help stop this offensive practice.

**OWL BOX BUILDING PROJECT** – A very successful owl nest box program, spear-headed by Chairman Al Stage, was conducted at the Eggan Youth Center on Saturday, February 17, 2001. Over 100 people attended and heard a fine presentation on local owls by Kevin Pullen, Assistant Curator of the WSU Conner Museum of Zoology. Stephanie Harding (below), and her friends Bethany Brown and Nick Lee from the WSU Raptor Rehab Club brought Taro (American Kestrel), Sarah (Northern Saw-whet Owl, below),



Stevie (Barn Owl), and Frederick (Flammulated Owl) for our enjoyment. Construction of 25 small owl/kestrel nest boxes followed the program. The chapter wishes to thank our sponsors:

Moscow Parks and Recreation, Potlatch Corporation, Tri-State Distributors, Trish Heekin, Phil Tanimoto, and Palouse Cabinet & Millworks.

**EDUCATION** - Cathy Willmes will include a flyer about Audubon Adventure Classrooms in our next newsletter. The flyer will include information about last year's classrooms (17) and a request for sponsorship by members. Two copies of *Birding in Idaho*, a copy of National Geographic's, *Birds of North America*, and a subscription to *Bird Watchers Digest* were given to the Moscow Public Library during the month. The chapter plans to donate a copy of *John James Audubon in the West* by Sarah Boehme and *The Life of Birds* video series to the Pullman Public Library during the coming month.

**CONSERVATION** - Bill Warren is asking for input on areas that would be important habitats for local bird conservation (Idaho and WA). The intent is to develop our own inventory of local bird habitats that are particularly important for

conservation. Give Bill a call if you have any suggestions or information.

**MEMBERSHIP** - The chapter continues to welcome and recruit new members to the Audubon family. Since our last newsletter we are happy to welcome nearly a dozen new members to the Audubon organization. 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, 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.

## FIELD TRIPS

**LEWISTON/CLARKSTON VALLEY**, March 31 - A half day to all day trip for water birds and early spring migrants. Expect a variety of species, many of them feeling the urges of the breeding season by this time in the valley. Early nesters such as Rock Wren and Say's Phoebe are likely - Bald Eagle and Osprey are possible. Courtship and song should be in evidence. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at Rosauer's, 411 N Main St., in Moscow.

**TURNBULL WILDLIFE REFUGE**, April 21 - All day trip for waterfowl, marsh birds, swallows, bluebirds, and many others. We'll explore the cattail marshes and Ponderosa Pine stands at Turnbull with stops in route for nesting raptors and open country species of Whitman County. Meet at Dissmore's IGA, 1205 N Grand Ave in Pullman at 8:00 a.m.

**POTLATCH RIVER HIKE**, April 28 - Bill Warren will lead a hike on the new Potlatch River Forest Service trail at Little Boulder Creek Campground on Saturday, April 28. This is an easy 3 or 4 mile loop. Information will be provided on the ecological and land use history of the area. It should be a great time for viewing wildlife, wildflowers, and some very impressive stands of larch. Meet at the north end of Tidyman's parking lot in Moscow at 8:30 a.m. to carpool - or meet at the trail head (at the north side of the bridge crossing the Potlatch River just before Boulder Creek Campground) at 9:30 a.m. To get to the trail head, go east on the Troy Highway (Hwy 8) from Moscow to Helmer. Turn right at the sign marked

“Little Boulder Creek Campground.” Meet at the bridge crossing the Potlatch River.

**STEPTOE BUTTE and MARY MINERVA McCROSKEY STATE PARK**, May 19 - A half day to all day trip for neotropical migrants including flycatchers, vireos, warblers, Lazuli Bunting, Black-headed Grosbeak, bluebirds, and others. We'll visit a variety of habitats from shrub steppe to mixed conifer. Many species will be singing and we'll have a chance to work on bird identification by ear. Meet at Dissmore's IGA, 1205 N Grand Ave in Pullman at 8:00 a.m..

## ANNOUNCEMENTS, ETC.

**PULLMAN/MOSCOW CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT OMISSION** – Omitted in last month's CBC report were a list of participants in the December 16, 2000, count. **Count Participants:** Mary Aegerter, Mary Bostick, Justin Brown, Nathan Burkepile, Peggy Chevalier, Cam Collins, Kas Dumroese, Doug Flansburg, Alex Hammond, Doris Hausleitner, David Holick, Paul Holick, John Kramer, Collin Leach, Joe Lipar, Barbara Morgan, Grant Norton, Gary Qualmann, Suzanne Qualmann, Shawn Schmidt, Deborah Stenkamp, Charles Swift, Kelly VanNess, Harold Ward, Bill Warren, Diane Weber, Tom Weber, Clare Wisser, Sharon Wisser, Dan Worsham. **Feeder watch participants:** Tom Besser, Laila Carson, Ray Hoff, Edith Hostetler, Kathleen Koger, Doug Rudolph. Thanks to all for making the count a success.

**BLUEBIRD NEST BOXES AVAILABLE FROM IDFG**, Lewiston Morning Tribune – To greet the early spring arrival of Idaho's state bird, the Mountain Bluebird, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Clearwater Region, is offering bluebird nest boxes to the public for a small fee. All funds received are used to purchase additional project material and enhance the Lewiston Wildlife Habitat Area located near the IDFG office.

Materials for the cedar nest boxes were donated by local lumber mills and constructed by IDFG volunteer, Don Kunze of Lewiston. Kunze has built several hundred nest boxes for IDFG.

Mountain Bluebirds nest throughout Idaho in



higher elevation meadows, forested areas and on open ridges. In addition, the Western Bluebird inhabits the open prairies of Washington and Idaho. Nest boxes should be placed in rural areas, far from buildings or communities where European Starlings and House Sparrows congregate. Bluebirds are very territorial, so boxes should be placed at least 100 yards apart. For more information of Idaho's bluebirds or volunteering for IDFG, please contact the Clearwater Region Office, 1540 Warner Ave., Lewiston, 83501, (208)799-5010.

**IDAHO NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY, WHITE PINE CHAPTER PROGRAMS**, Room 213, College of Natural Resources Building, University of Idaho.

**March 15**, Thursday, 7:30 p.m, Dr. Mal Furniss, *Insects of Wildland Shrubs*. Contact Sonja Lewis, (208)882-3544

**April 16**, Monday, 7:30 p.m, Dr. Dan Barney, Horticulturist, University of Idaho Research and Extension Center, *Developing a Domestic Huckleberry*. Contact Jonalea Tonn, (208)882-5900

**INTERNATIONAL MIGRATORY BIRD DAY** is an annual event created by Partners in Flight; a coalition of federal and state agencies; bird clubs; corporations; non-governmental organizations; and individuals; whose mission is to conserve migratory birds. One way to achieve this mission is by increasing public awareness of the factors that may contribute to declines in bird populations.

Plans are in the works for an event on May 12 at the Moscow Community Center to celebrate International Migratory Bird Day. Rita Dixon, IDFG, has all kinds of cool things planned and has asked for involvement by Palouse Audubon Society. The Board will discuss her proposal at our March 5 meeting. The meeting begins at 7:30 p.m. at the home of Tom and Diane Weber, 230 SE South St, Pullman. All are welcome.

**NATIONAL KEEP YOUR CAT INDOORS POSTER CONTEST** - American Bird Conservancy and Wild Bird Centers of America announce a nationwide contest to determine the official poster of *National Keep Your Cat Indoors Day 2001*. *National Keep Your Cat Indoors Day*, May 12, aims to educate cat owners that both cats and wildlife benefit when cats are kept indoors.

Contest information is available at <http://www.abcbirds.org> or by contacting Linda Winter, American Bird Conservancy, (202)452-1535 or Kari Hurlbut, Wild Bird Centers of America, (301) 229-9585.

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**

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"/> Student & Senior Citizen (62+) \$15.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> PAS Newsletter Only \$10.00 |

## PALOUSE AUDUBON SOCIETY

2000-2001

### OFFICERS

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**Phyllis Wicks**, Treasurer  
(208)882-8746

### MEETINGS

**BOARD** - 1st Monday (normally)  
12/4, 1/8, 2/5, 3/5, 4/2, 5/7, 6/4  
**MEMBERSHIP** - 3rd Wednesday  
1/17, 2/21, 3/21, 4/18, 5/16

### CHAIRMEN

**Diane Weber**, Membership  
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### WEBSITE

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

### BIRDING HOTLINE

(208)882-6195