

THE PRAIRIE OWL



PALOUSE AUDUBON SOCIETY

Volume 30, Issue 5, May 2002

PROGRAMS

May 15 – 1912 Building, 3rd and Adams, Moscow, 7:30 p.m. *A Fragile Frontier: Lessons Learned on Tundra Time*. Spokesman-Review Outdoors Editor Rich Landers will present a slide program about his backcountry travels in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. The program focuses on a sliver of land north of the Brooks Range -- a critical nursery for wildlife as well as the center of the nation's current energy policy debate -- through the wide-open eyes of an adventurer.

VISIT US ON THE WEB AT

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

The website contains up-to-date information about chapter activities, events, field trips, Rare Bird Alert reports, field trip reports, Christmas Bird Count results, birding check lists, *Prairie Owl* issues, conservation news and much more. There is even a page for members bird feeder totals. Information for the website is always appreciated. Contact Tom Weber at (509)334-3817 or email tweber@wsu.edu if you have anything you would like to contribute or suggest for the website or *Prairie Owl*.

The next newsletter will be out September 1.

CALENDAR

MAY

- 6 PAS Board Meeting – 735 E. 7th St., Moscow 7:30pm
- 11 International Migratory Bird Day Celebration – Idaho Fish and Game Headquarters, Lewiston.

WOS Field Trip – 6:00 am

- 12 Coyote Grade Field Trip
- 15 PAS Membership Meeting – 7:30pm, Rich Landers – *A Fragile Frontier: Lessons Learned on Tundra Time*
- 17-18 Fields Spring State Park Field Trip

JUNE

- 2 Chain of Lakes and Cataldo Field Trip
- 3 PAS Board Meeting – 7:30 pm
- 5 Wednesday evening bird walk – 6:30 pm
- 12 Wednesday evening bird walk – 6:30 pm
- 14-16 Boundary County, Idaho, Field Trip
- 19 Wednesday evening bird walk – 6:30 pm
- 26 Wednesday evening bird walk – 6:30 pm

AUGUST

- 26 PAS Board Meeting – 7:30 pm

SEPTEMBER

- 18 PAS Membership Meeting – T.B.A.

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

OFFICERS & CHAIRPERSONS NEEDED –Elections of officers and chairpersons for the 2002-2003 year will be held at our May Membership meeting. Any and all positions are available. We welcome all interested and enthusiastic members. We should well be proud of what the chapter continues to do in our community but just imagine how much more should or could be accomplished if more members were involved. Please – consider leading the chapter during the next year. It is a rewarding experience. For further details, contact Tom Weber or any of the chairpersons listed on the back page. Your service to the Chapter is greatly appreciated.

FIELD TRIPS

Saturday, May 11 - WHITMAN COUNTY

Joe Lipar will be leading a tour of Whitman County on a field trip sponsored by the Washington Ornithological Society. The morning will be spent concentrating on landbirds and migrants at Rose Creek Sanctuary, Kamiak Butte, and Steptoe Butte. The afternoon will focus on the western parts of the county in search of waterfowl, shorebirds, and grassland species. This should be an enjoyable and productive way to celebrate International Migratory Bird Day.

Participants should meet at Dissmore's IGA parking lot at Grand Avenue and Stadium Way, Pullman at 6:00 a.m. Registration must be made via email to: jlipar@wsu.edu

Sunday, May 12 - COYOTE GRADE

Jane Westervelt will lead this field trip down Coyote Canyon, located between Genesee and Spalding. The canyon is a great area for songbirds, raptors and owls. Participants should meet at 8:00 a.m. at Rosauer's on N. Main in Moscow. For additional information contact Jane at (208)882-8597.

Friday, May 17 and Saturday, May 18 - FIELD SPRING STATE PARK. Join trip leader Charles Swift on this search for White-headed Woodpecker, Williamson's Sapsucker, and woodland and shrub nesting birds. During the optional Friday night camp-over participants will listen for Flammulated Owls and Common Poorwills. Check the web site for meeting information or contact Charles at (208)883-0553.

Sunday, June 2- CHAIN OF LAKES & CATALDO

In search of Bobolinks, Jane Westervelt will lead this field trip north through the Chain of Lakes near Harrison and on to Cataldo Mission. Participants should meet at 7:30 a.m. at Rosauer's on N. Main in Moscow. For additional information contact Jane at (208)882-8597.

Wednesdays, June 5, 12, 19, 26 – EVENING BIRD WALKS.

Join trip leader Charles Swift and local birders for evening birding on the Palouse. Destination will be up to the trip leader but expect to visit areas such as Idler's Rest, Coyote Grade, and various local parks. Meet at 6:30 p.m. at the Safeway Parking Lot on Blaine in southeast Moscow. Expect to return to Moscow by 9:30 p.m. For additional information contact Charles via email at charless@moscow.com or (208)883-0553.

Friday, June 14 - Sunday, June 16- BOUNDARY COUNTY, IDAHO. Join Charles Swift for a weekend trip to Boundary County to explore the Kootenai National Wildlife Refuge, Nature Conservancy's Ball Creek Ranch, Boundary Creek Wildlife Management Area, and parts of the Selkirk Mountains. Expect a large variety of nesting land and water birds including American Bittern, Black Swift, Boreal Chickadee, and Least Flycatcher. Moose and a variety of wildlife are also likely. We will be up early to catch the dawn chorus and doing light to moderate walking during the day. Limited lodging is available at the Ball Creek ranch house (contact me if interested) or make your own arrangements to stay nearby in Bonner's Ferry. For additional information and to sign up contact Charles via email at charless@moscow.com or (208)883-0553.

INTERNATIONAL MIGRATORY BIRD DAY

Once again, Rita Dixon has put together exhibits and all kinds of fun stuff to celebrate International Migratory Bird Day. The event is sponsored by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game and will take place at their headquarters located at 1540 Warner Avenue in Lewiston. This year's International Migratory Bird Day will feature a tour of the Lewiston Wildlife Habitat Area; a field trip to Mann Lake (an Idaho Important Bird Area); a mist-netting and banding demonstration and much more. Displays, exhibits and games also will be featured.

The theme for this year's May 11th International Migratory Bird Day is recognition and conservation of the places that migratory birds need - habitats at either end of their seasonal journeys and stopover points along the way. Protecting habitat is one of the most important ways that people can benefit birds.

Some places are especially important to birds. They provide habitat for endangered or threatened species or species of concern; support large numbers of breeding, migrating, or wintering birds; and provide habitat for species with limited ranges. This year, IMBD will examine the range of habitats that migratory birds use, with a close-up look at special sites that have been designated as Important Bird Areas.

IMBD is an annual event created by Partners in Flight (PIF). PIF is a coalition of federal and state agencies, bird clubs, non-governmental organizations, corporations, and individuals, and its 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.

- Teach school kids or scouts about birds with the IMBD educational materials.
- Invite your mayor or congressperson to a local bird walk or festival.
- Hold a day-long or week-long birding festival.
- Raise funds for your migratory birds conservation project.
- Organize merchants at the local mall to set up a display about birds.
- Raise awareness about birds in Latin America by hosting a "conservation coffee day."

Please join in celebrating birds on May 11th! For further information contact: Rita Dixon, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, at (208)799-5010 or via email at rdixon@idfg.state.id.us

CHAPTER NEWS

From the Prez:

Spring must finely be here! Yesterday, White-crowned Sparrows arrived in Pullman. It's nice to hear their sour chorus once again and to experience warmer temperatures. The students on campus are doing their part to hurry along the season. More and more sandals, shorts, and tank tops are showing up daily. As it turned out, March was cold enough to turn back many of the swallows and bluebirds. When Diane and I last checked our bluebird nest boxes, more were being used as roosts than as nest boxes. There were only a few nests under construction and a perished male Western Bluebird was found in one of the boxes. The insect population had to be pretty sparse during those cold days.

Although much of the west is suffering from draught, our trips into the drier northwest corner of Whitman County suggest that the lakes and ponds may have recovered some since last fall. We were especially pleased to see that water had once again returned to the shallow seasonal pond west of Lamont. Two years ago this was the best area in the county for shorebirds and waterfowl. Last year it was totally dry. The pond has recovered half of its earlier size and is teeming with birds. We located several new species for our county totals during recent visits.

Our past two membership meetings featured not only some great programs but also had some great turnouts. I wish to thank Dan Casey, the "Birdman of Kalispell", for the wonderful program on his activities as the Northern Rockies Coordinator for the American Bird Conservancy. Dan traveled many miles to visit with us and we are very grateful for both his presence and program. Also, thank you to

member Mary Aegerter, for a great program on the Lolo Trail and the route of the Corps of Discovery. Mary's book on the various trails through the mountains between the Weippe prairie and Lolo Pass will be released very shortly. We wish her much success on her book and we were pleased that so many members came out for her presentation. The audience was the largest of the year.

Our last program until fall will feature Rich Landers, Spokesman-Review Outdoors Editor, who will present a slide program about his backcountry travels in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. It should be a great program and certainly will provide us with more of an understanding of an area that has been very much in the news.

During the coming weeks and months, I hope that you will be able to participate in some of the excellent field trips put together by our able trip leaders. Charles and Jane have included not only Saturday but also Sunday and evening weekday trips in the birding schedule. With the arrival of nice weather, we don't have much of an excuse not to GO BIRDING.

Tom Weber

Conservation News - William A. Warren, PhD

Biodiversity loss is the most pressing conservation issue today. Biodiversity includes not only the number of different species but also genetic, population, and community diversity. Not that biological diversity hasn't waxed and waned in a given area or within a particular taxon over geologic time, it has. But today's loss of diversity is occurring at a rapid pace (at least since the late Cretaceous), and is largely due to human influence planet wide.

This situation does not mean that the world will come to an end tomorrow, or that human survival or the survival of life in general is threatened. But for those of us who value wildlife and ecological diversity it is a major concern, particularly when one considers that much of this loss is preventable (at least in principle) by changes in human cultural practices that affect biodiversity.

For example, in the United States alone an estimated 539 species of plants and animals are presumed to have become extinct since Euro American settlement of the continent. There are two recorded extinctions for Idaho, and one for Washington. So, we are fortunate to live in an area containing most of its indigenous (from the time of Euro American settlement) species diversity. The US Fish and Wildlife Service currently considers over 1000 species to be at risk of extinction in the United States.

Although few Northwest species have become extinct over the last couple of centuries; in general, northern states, and particularly Alaska, have low diversity for reasons unrelated to human impact. Areas of greatest diversity in the US are the southern tier of states from Florida to California. California and the southern Appalachians are the two most important "hotspots" in the continental United States for both diversity and rarity, and the Southeastern US has the highest freshwater species diversity.

This may come as a surprise to some who associate wilderness or wild-lands, such as we have in the Northwest, as harboring the greatest remaining biodiversity, particularly species that are imperiled or rare; however, this is not the case. In fact, areas that have strict protective status such as wilderness areas and nature preserves harbor only from 4-9% of the nations imperiled and federally listed species. Alternatively, private lands have at least one population of over half of all imperiled species and two-thirds of those species listed under ESA. Three quarters of imperiled and endangered species are found on lands open to intensive human manipulation with little or no legal protection for their habitat. And habitat (the lack of it) is the key to extinction.

Habitat destruction is the number one threat to species diversity in the United States, contributing to an estimated 85% of imperiled or endangered species. The two greatest causes for habitat destruction in the United States are agriculture and commercial development (urban-suburban sprawl). Logging, something we tend to focus on in the Northwest, ranks 9th as a contributor to habitat destruction. Land conversion due to urban/suburban development accounts for three times the impact on habitat that logging has, and unlike logging, grazing and agriculture, once land is paved over, built over, and sown in bluegrass for suburban lawns, it's pretty well unrecoverable as wildlife habitat (on a human time scale).

What these data imply is that conservation of wildlife and plant diversity in the United States is not feasible by relying on public or conservation lands alone, or by changing logging practices where needed for the protection of biodiversity – although these measures are very important. The vast majority of habitat that species and other forms of ecological diversity need for survival are, and will continue to be, located on lands intensively used by humans. Cultural changes in how landscapes are used - our relationship with the lands we live with and on - will have to be the solution to biodiversity conservation. Preservation is in some cases a necessary but not sufficient vehicle for biodiversity conservation. Preservation of public lands and the development of

natural resource management science were probably the main biodiversity conservation advances from the late 19th through most of the 20th century. The leading conservation issue for the current century will be how can we live with other life forms in a sustainable manner on the majority of the lands that will be used and occupied by an ever expanding human population - a population that continually increasing its per capita consumption of resources toward the levels occurring in the United States and whose rate of consumption (already the highest in the world) is increasing much faster than the rate of population growth.

We'll look at how this issue is currently being addressed in the next PAS Newsletter (September).

References:

Noss, Reed F., Edward T. III LaRoe, and J. Michael Scott. 1995. *Endangered Ecosystems of the United States: A Preliminary Assessment of Loss and Degradation*. National Biological Service, US Department of the Interior.

Stein, Bruce A., Lynn S. Kutner, and Jonathan S. Adams, eds. 2000. *Precious Heritage: The Status of Biodiversity in the United States*. Oxford University Press.

Turner, Monica G. and others. 2001. *Land Use*. United States Geological Survey.
<http://biology.usgs.gov/s+t/SNT/noframe/lu106r.htm>

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NORTH AMERICAN BLUEBIRD SOCIETY--
25TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE, June 13-16, 2002 -
Hosted by the Southern Interior Bluebird Trail Society

Join us as **The Blue Turns Silver**. The Southern Interior Bluebird Trail Society are the hosts of the North American Bluebird Society's 25th Conference. It will be held at the Penticton Lakeside Resort June 13th to 16th, 2002. You do not have to be a member of any group or club to attend. Everyone is welcome! Event activities include:

Thursday June 13th

10:00am to 9:00pm-- Registration, exhibits, networking and evening presentations.

Friday June 14th

(\$35.00 per person)

7:30am to 4:00pm-- Choose one of three guided FIELD TRIPS ~ Trip commentaries by naturalists, historians and expert birders. You are guaranteed to spot both Mountain and Western Bluebirds on these

trips. All trips are via air-conditioned buses ~ Lunch and admissions included

a. Summerland ~ A walk on a bluebird trail at the Thomas Ranch, then north to the Agricultural Research Station and Ornamental Gardens in Summerland for lunch. Canyon views, old Kettle Valley Railway trestle, birding and tour through Summerland Sweets; a short stop at the Trout Hatchery and end with a winery tour.

b. Circle Tour ~ White Lake/Grist Mill/Osoyoos Desert Centre - First stop, the Dominion Radio Astrophysical Station at White Lake. Bluebird trails surround the area. Keremeos and the Grist Mill for lunch. An afternoon stroll on the Osoyoos Desert boardwalk can be a heated experience - be sure to bring your hat and sunscreen.

c. Desert and Mountains ~ Vaseux Lake wildlife area has riparian habitat and is complete with a bird blind at the end of a short boardwalk. South to Road #22 which is known for excellent birding along the river channel and oxbow areas. On to Osoyoos Desert Centre to view the restoration project and transcontinental bluebird site. Lunch at Haynes Point where there is a boardwalk through a wetland marsh. Then up the Anarchist Mountain east of Osoyoos.

4:00pm to 9:00pm-- Exhibit area open

6:00pm to 9:00pm-- Barbeque by the lake ~ Penticton Lakeside Resort (\$20.00)

Saturday June 15th

(Includes lunch and nutrition breaks)

8:00am to 5:00pm-- Speakers program, exhibit displays, lunch provided Speakers include: BC Ornithologist ~ Wayne Campbell, biologist ~ Dick Cannings, Owl Rehab expert and educator ~ Sherri Klein, Filmmakers and Wildlife Photographers ~ Jeff and Sue Turner plus noted Historian ~ Doug Cox.

6:00pm to 7:00pm-- No host bar

7:00pm to 9:30pm-- NABS Annual Banquet and Silent Auction Keynote speakers: John and Mary Theberge ~ Wolf Researchers

Sunday June 16th

Take a walk on the wild side with local historian ~ Doug Cox. Enjoy a 2 hour Birding walk with Doug, while he explains local history and shows you views of the valley near Hillside Estate Winery. (The above schedule is subject to minor changes prior to the start of the conference)

The cost for all the events: \$115.00 CDN or \$79.00 US. Cheques on US banks accepted for payment in US funds. Be eligible to win prizes for booking early ~ before April 30th.

Register for the whole conference or pick and choose the events you wish to attend. Additional information locations: Penticton Lakeside Resort (800)663-9400; Terry Tellier (250)493-4634, t.tellier@shaw.ca;

<http://members.shaw.ca/t.tellier/bluebirds/>; Sherry Linn (250)495-7891, goldstrm@vip.net; or <http://www.nabluebirdsociety.org/annual2.htm>

WASHINGTON ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY (WOS) ANNUAL MEETING

The 14th Annual Conference of the Washington Ornithological Society will be held at the Cedars Inn in Okanogan from Friday, June 14, through Sunday, June 16, 2002. Field trips to look for the region's remarkable diversity of breeding bird species will be conducted Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, and led by experienced birders. Owlning trips are planned for both Friday and Saturday nights participants will search for Great Horned, Western Screech, Flammulated, Northern Saw-whet, Long-eared, and Great Gray Owls (maybe more!). We will venture out in daylight and dark to places with exotic names like Sanpoil River, Freezeout Ridge, Chesaw, Nighthawk, and Sinlahekin Valley. The Conference will also feature Friday and Saturday evening programs by speakers addressing topics relevant to the Okanogan.

The Cedars Inn, in the town of Okanogan, is Conference Headquarters. Okanogan is located near the junction of Highways 97 and 20 in north central Washington, and is 150 miles south of the Canadian border, 100 miles north of Wenatchee, 150 miles west of Spokane, and 240 miles east of Seattle. Okanogan is situated on the floor of the Okanogan Valley, a sunny, dry area of sage-covered foothills rimmed by mountainous pine forests.

The Conference Committee hopes you enjoy your visit to the Okanogan. We are offering some excellent field trips - space is limited, so register early! Be sure to indicate alternate choices for field trips and designate the menu items you prefer.

REGISTRATION DEADLINE IS MAY 31, 2002

See <http://www.wos.org/WOSConf.htm> for complete registration information.

GOOD NEWS - AI Stage

Last week, Marjory and I checked 6 of the chapter's barn owl boxes mounted in the Colfax-Palouse-Pullman area. Two of them have barn owl chicks (one of which was a repeat occupancy from last year). One box is occupied by an unknown species and contains a couple of chicks. Of the one small owl box we checked, it contained a shallow nest with 3 blue eggs. They looked robin-ish, but inside a nest box?

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 your check payable to **National Audubon Society** to: Palouse Audubon Society, PO Box 3606, University Station, Moscow
ID 83843. Please include this coupon. For more information call: (509)334-3817

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NAME _____ ADDRESS _____

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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

2001-2002

OFFICERS

Tom Weber, President
(509)334-3817, tweber@wsu.edu
Phyllis Wicks, Treasurer
(208)882-8746

MEETINGS

BOARD - 1st Monday (normally)
5/6, 6/3, 8/26
MEMBERSHIP - 3rd Wednesday
5/15, 9/18

CHAIRMEN

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