

The Prairie Owl



Volume 38 Issue I

August-September-October 2009

EVENT CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER

5—Mann Lake Field Trips, every Saturday morning during the month

16—Program: *Status of North American White Sturgeon*

OCTOBER

3—Mann Lake Field Trips, every Saturday morning during the month

21—Program: *Digital Photography for Birders*

PALOUSE AUDUBON

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VAUX'S SWIFT

Vaux's Swift, a slightly smaller counterpart of the eastern North American Chimney Swift (*Chaetura pelagica*), breeds from southwestern Canada through the western United States to Mexico, Central America, and northern Venezuela. In winter, northern migrant populations of this species overlap southern residents. Best known for its quick flight and dazzling aerial agility, this bird seldom perches except when nesting or roosting, and it probably mates on the wing. Hollow trees are its favored nesting and roosting sites (chimneys are used on occasion), making this swift vulnerable to loss of old-growth forest. Indeed, recent declines in Vaux's Swift populations have been documented in the Pacific Northwest where mature forest is dwindling. Its nest, an open half-circle of loosely woven twigs, is glued together and to the inside of a hollow tree or chimney with the bird's sticky saliva. In migration, large flocks of this species circle roosts at dusk, feigning entry until the first few birds take the plunge—then the whole flock follows abruptly, literally pouring



out of the sky and disappearing into the roost tree.

Like other swifts, the Vaux's is almost entirely insectivorous—a strainer of aerial plankton—hawking a variety of ants, bugs, flies, moths, spiders, and aphids from the air. An adult feeding young collects boluses of food in its mouth and carries these back to its nestlings. Each parent makes up to 50 trips per day, delivering more than 5,000 small insects from dawn to dusk.

This swift is named for William S. Vaux (1811–1882), a member of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia and a friend of John K. Townsend, who described this species in 1839 from specimens collected on the Columbia River.

Many of the life history traits of this species are still unknown, although extensive studies in forests of NE Oregon have provided information on nest and roost site characteristics (Bull and Cooper 1991; Bull and Blumton 1997; Bull 2003a). (see page 3)

FROM THE PREZ

Summer has gone by way too fast this year. I hope everyone has had a wonderful summer.

I have been a member of Palouse Audubon Society (PAS) since the spring of 2001 and a member of the board since August 2002. I was elected as co-president of PAS along with Charles Swift in May 2004. Charles resigned in the fall of 2006. Since I have been the PAS president since 2004, I feel that it is time to resign as president of PAS at the end of this term, next spring. I

would love to stay on as Field Trip Coordinator and also help out in any way I can with PAS projects. I will be asking the PAS board to set up a search committee in accordance with the PAS bylaws.

It is time for new leadership in our group and I know that other chapters have presidents that are not avid birders as their president so anyone can take on this responsibility. If anyone is interested in stepping up to the plate with new ideas to help this group continue to provide a service to this area, please let us know.

Terry Gray

PROGRAMS

September 18—*Status of North American White Sturgeon*—Paul Anders, Fishery Scientist with Cramer Fish Sciences in Moscow, and Affiliate Faculty in the Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources at the University of Idaho.

Paul has been involved in the fisheries profession for about 25 years, with 20 years in the Columbia River Basin, US and Canada, working on a wide range of fisheries and aquatic ecology projects. Paul will provide an informal biological overview and will discuss the current status of a long-lived native species, the White Sturgeon across much of its range, including how this ancient fish is imperiled by modern challenges.



October 21—*Digital Photography for Birders*—Daniel Poleschook, Jr., Adjunct Field Scientist, BioDiversity Research Institute

Dan has been active in nature photography since 1971, when he began entering his images of nature in competitions at prestigious camera clubs in Denver, Colorado. He has won awards from and has judged for many exhibitions of the Photographic Society of North America. With the advanced improvement of digital cameras, Dan has converted his camera bodies from film to file. Dan's experience with the newer media has made him an expert in the digital photography field. Come observe and learn from Dan how to improve your photography.

TOGETHER GREEN AWARD

Congratulations to member Chris Dixon for being awarded a \$15,000 grant by the National Audubon Society in support of her *TogetherGreen Innovation Grant* application. The review committee was very impressed with her application and strong proposal titled:

Idaho-Washington Stateline Wetlands Community Wildlife Park

The grant ends on August 16, 2010 and will be used to further improve and develop the state line wetlands as a community wildlife park. The chapter also wishes to acknowledge the work of our president, Terry Gray for broadcasting the availability of various grants to the community.

MEMBERSHIP

Palouse Audubon Society, PO Box 3606, Moscow ID 83843-1914, is a chapter of the National Audubon Society. Our mission 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.

General membership meetings are held at the 1912 Building, 3rd and Adams St, Moscow ID, at 7:30 p.m. on the third Wednesday of each month, September through May. The board of directors meet at the 1912 Center at 7:30 p.m. on the first Tuesday of each month.

The Prairie Owl is published every other month, August through April. Material for the Owl should be sent to the editor, Tom Weber, 230 SE South St, Pullman WA 99163, or email tweber@wsu.edu by the 20th of the month. Subscription problems should be addressed to the membership chair, James Storms, PO Box 235, Garfield WA 99130, (509) 635-1272 or email nbutte@pullman.com. Visit the Palouse Audubon Society website at <http://www.palouseaudubon.org/>

FIELD TRIPS

September 5—*Mann Lake Field Trips* (every Saturday during the month) with Terry Gray. The trips are sponsored by Palouse Audubon and Canyon Birders, and will focus on the fall migration of waterfowl and shorebirds through our region. Field trip leaders and participants are to meet at the Mann Lake boat ramp at 8:30 am. This is a great time of year to observe migrants at the lake.

October 3—*Mann Lake Field Trips* (every Saturday during the month) with Terry Gray. The trips are sponsored by Palouse Audubon and Canyon Birders, and will focus on the fall migration of waterfowl and shorebirds through our region. Field trip leaders and participants are to meet at the Mann Lake boat ramp at 8:30 am.

Treasurer's Report— 7/31/09

Checking Balance 3/3/09	\$5,730.68
Dues and Donations	\$250.00
U/I Environmental Club	\$330.00
Idaho Fish and Game	(\$50.00)
Keep the Gift Alive	(\$150.00)
Chris Dixon	(\$391.75)
U/I Publishing	(\$261.67)
Mailing and Post Office	(\$196.00)
PAS Student Grants	(\$1,000.00)
Walmart	(\$10.51)
Checking Balance 7/31/09	\$4,250.75

Certificate of Deposit	\$5,173.41
Liabilities (Norcross Grant)	(\$1,471.74)
(Wetlands Grant)	(\$192.88)
Total Assets:	\$7,759.54

Membership Report—8/24/09

National & Palouse Audubon	242
Palouse Audubon (paid & pending)	67
National Audubon (only)	100
Total Membership	409

PAS Membership Year—Sep 1 to Aug 31
2009-2010 DUES ARE DUE!

If you are interested in observing hundreds of swifts diving into a chimney to roost—they still may be found entering the chimney at the Old Martin Tire Store in downtown Moscow. This spectacular display may last for a few weeks yet.

If you wish to see them, arrive at the parking lot across the street around 7:15 p.m.

On August 25, Terry reported 215 swifts seen between 7:15 pm and 8:10 pm. On Saturday, August 29 at 7:50 pm, Terry counted 268 swifts dropping into the chimney in less than 5 minutes.

VAUX'S SWIFT *(continued from page 1)*

diet and foraging activity (Bull and Beckwith 1993), and nesting chronology (Bull and Collins 1993). Comparative studies in other parts of its range are desirable.



**SATURDAY MORNINGS
AT MANN LAKE—**

**Baird's Sandpiper
(juvenile)**

photo by *Terry Gray*



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

C9ZY050Z

NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY (New only)

Includes *National Audubon Society* and *Palouse Audubon Society* membership and subscriptions to *AUDUBON MAGAZINE* and *THE PRAIRIE OWL* newsletter. Send check payable to **National Audubon Society**

- Introductory Membership** \$20.00
- Student & Senior Citizen (62+)** \$15.00

Palouse Audubon Society

Financially supports the programs and activities of the Palouse Audubon Society and includes an annual subscription to *THE PRAIRIE OWL* newsletter. Send your check payable to **Palouse Audubon Society**

- Annual Membership** \$15.00
- For additional information call: (509) 635-1272

NAME _____ ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ State _____ Zip _____

PHONE _____ EMAIL _____

Return this form with your check to: Palouse Audubon Society, PO Box 3606, Moscow, ID 83843-1914

PALOUSE AUDUBON SOCIETY

Palouse Audubon Society
PO Box 3606
Moscow ID 83843-1914



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

**We're on the Web (and
in COLOR) at:
palouseaudubon.org**

RESEARCH GRANTS AWARDED

Last spring, Palouse Audubon established two grants in the amount of \$500 each in support of research fulfilling the chapter's mission statement. One grant is available for a graduate student at Washington State University; the other for a graduate student at the University of Idaho. Marisa and Jody were our first recipients and received their awards at our May Program meeting. Congratulations!

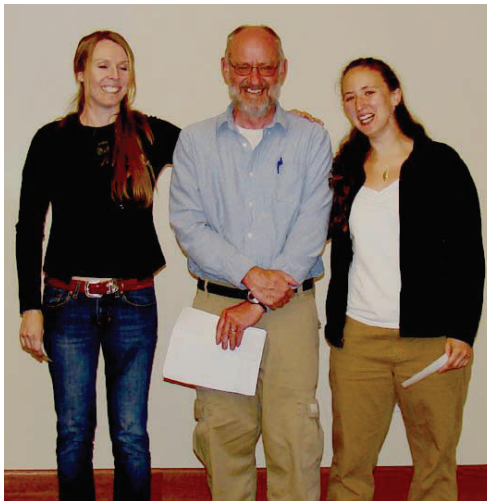
MARISA LAUREEN OLSON, Washington State University, School of Biological Sciences. Research Advisor: Hubertus Schwabl PhD.

Avian Immunology

The emergence and management of zoonotic disease is an issue of great public concern (Avian Flu Virus), not only because of the potential threat that these pathogens may impose on human health, but also because of the threat to domesticated animals.

The objectives of the study are two-fold. First, to determine the time of

the year and stage of development at which individuals within a population of wild and laboratory House Sparrows are at greatest risk of contracting and thus spreading pathogenic disease both within and between species. Secondly, to examine immunologic defenses of House Sparrow hosts against ectoparasites.



JODY VOGELER, University of Idaho, Wildlife Resources. Research Advisor: Kerri Vierling PhD.

The use of LiDAR to evaluate the relationship between forest structure and bird species richness on Moscow Mountain

As human influences on the environment continue to grow, understanding factors driving biodiversity has become a focus in research management and conservation efforts. In order to maintain biodiversity, it is critical to understand the driving forces behind species distribution and their responses to changes in the landscape.

The main objective is to evaluate the relationship between forest bird species richness and LiDAR derived vertical structure variables.

The grant is being used to assist in vehicle and fuel costs for the 2009 summer field work on Moscow Mountain.