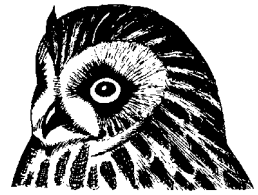


# THE PRAIRIE OWL



PALOUSE AUDUBON SOCIETY

Volume 33, Issue 1, September 2004

## COCKNEY SPARROW IS BROWN BREAD

My thoughts turned recently to the once ubiquitous Cockney Sparrow. I was reading an article about bird song dialects that discussed regional variations in bird songs: a San Franciscan white-crowned sparrow, for example, sounds different from its Washingtonian cousin. A sparrow with a Cockney accent really would be something to hear. Maybe they even developed their own rhyming slang to really confuse other birds and birders.

The BBC recently highlighted the decline of the once common cockney sparrow population by announcing that the London bird is now brown bread! Sparrows were a fixture all over London, in parks, gardens and squares. There was a major decline in the sparrow population between the wars when the automobile replaced the horse drawn carriage. The birds would feed on grain that spilt from nosebags and undigested seeds in dung. During the period 1994 to 2000 the sparrow population of London decreased by 59% then by a further 25% the following year.

There are several theories that have been put forward to account for this dramatic trend—additives in lead-free gasoline, predation by cats, and the loss of nesting places as older London neighborhoods became gentrified.

The demise of the popular and much loved cockney sparrow from many parts of London means that once familiar chirps and twitters are no longer heard by many residents. This is a great loss. Bird song is one thing that can really lift the spirits and create a sense of wellbeing.

The decline in the cockney sparrow population is just one example of a saddening trend. At the BirdLife International conference held in Durban, South Africa back in March it was estimated that 1211 out of around 10,000 known bird species are facing extinction. The main causes are again the usual suspects—loss of habitat, predation, and climate change. The Spix's macaw in Brazil and the Hawaiian crow are two examples of species that have vanished from the wild. The black-breasted puffleg (an Ecuadorian hummingbird) is an example of a species that is in big trouble. Although I may never see a black-breasted puffleg it would be nice to think that one day I might actually be able to. Unfortunately the prognosis for the black-breasted puffleg, like so many other species, is not good.

In the morning I like being woken by the sound of robins, nuthatches, and house finches outside my bedroom

window. The familiar wake up call is a very pleasant way to begin the day. One of the benefits of living in a rural community like Pullman is that we can be close to wildlife. It is with some dismay that I look at many of the new developments that have sprung up all over town in the last decade. Many of these appear to have no interest in blending in with our rural environment. They seem to be trying to recreate the suburbs within the country. There are residential areas where there are no trees and probably the sound of bird song in the morning is as absent as that of the twittering of the cockney sparrow in old London town.

Bird song is adaptable not only in dialect but also in volume. A recent study by Henrik Brumm published in the *Journal of Animal Ecology* (vol 73, p. 434, 2004) found that in noisy urban areas nightingales sing at levels as high as 95 decibels in order to be heard. European law requires ear protection for workers exposed to more than 87 decibels. So maybe the old music hall song "A Nightingale Sang In Berkeley Square" should be re-recorded as "A Nightingale Bellowed in Berkeley Square". Maybe not quite as romantic as the original but I'm sure Tony Bennett could do something with it.

There is a very important change to the Palouse Audubon Society bylaws that will affect all members. The details are given below. I encourage everyone to continue to support our local Audubon chapter. Good birding!

*The Editor*

Please review the Expire Issue date on your *Prairie Owl* newsletter label and on your next issue of *AUDUBON* magazine. If those dates do not agree, please contact me so that I can work with NAS to assure that you receive the maximum length of membership that you are entitled. You can contact me by email or by regular mail. (Contact information below.)

*James G. Storms*  
Membership Chairman, PAS  
Chapter Y-05

# CALENDAR

## SEPTEMBER

- 4 Mann Lake Field Trip
- 8 Board Meeting - 7:30pm, 550 N Fir St, Genesee
- 11 Mann Lake Field Trip
- 15 PAS Program Meeting -- *Instruments of Discovery*, Gary Lentz, Washington State Parks
- 18 Mann Lake Field Trip
- 25 Mann Lake Field Trip
- 26 Tom Beale Roads Field Trip - 8:00am

## OCTOBER

- 2 Mann Lake Field Trip
- 4 Board Meeting - 7:30pm, *T.B.A.*
- 9 Mann Lake Field Trip
- 16 Mann Lake Field Trip
- 20 PAS Program Meeting – *T.B.A.*
- 23 Mann Lake Field Trip
- 30 Mann Lake Field Trip

## MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

At the PAS Program Meeting on May 19, 2004, an amendment to our bylaws was passed instituting chapter dues. This amendment breaks new grounds for the chapter.

Until now, we have relied on the National Audubon Society's dues share program to fund chapter activities. These activities include: Audubon Adventure Classroom sponsorship, the *Prairie Owl* newsletter, the Rare Bird Report Hotline, PAS sponsored field trips, evening bird walks, and all conservation and educational activity sponsorships.

Due to the loss of a share of your National Audubon annual dues, the chapter will need to generate enough money to maintain a basic existence. We hope that you will continue to support the Palouse Audubon Chapter through payment of an annual membership.

The new bylaws read as follows:

### **ARTICLE I MEMBERSHIP**

**Section 1:** *Any person interested in the purpose of the Palouse Audubon Society is eligible for membership.*

**Section 2:** *Annual dues of membership shall be \$15.00 with the exception of new National Audubon Society members who will be assessed dues following their first year of membership.*

**Section 3:** *All members shall enjoy all the rights and privileges pertaining to the members of this society.*

**Section 4:** *Membership dues shall be payable in September.*

**Section 5:** *Should renewal of membership dues not be paid within six months after the time they are payable, a member so in default shall forthwith be dropped from the rolls.*

We have a great chapter. We accomplish much with a corps of active participants. My hope for the future is that you will continue to support the Palouse Audubon Society through your financial and personal commitment.

*Tom Weber, Past President*

## PROGRAMS

**Wednesday, September 15 - INSTRUMENTS OF DISCOVERY** - A program by Gary Lentz, Washington State Parks - 1912 Building, 3<sup>rd</sup> and Adams, Moscow, 7:30 p.m.

Gary Lentz, who portrays Sgt. Patrick Gass has served on the Washington State Governor's Lewis & Clark Trail Committee since 1982. He is currently Vice President of the Washington State Chapter of the Lewis & Clark Trail Heritage Foundation.

With a background in zoology and natural history he has been the manager of Lewis & Clark Trail State Park since 1979. He has presented programs on the weapons, tools, journals, medicine, and other aspects of the Corps of Volunteers for



NW Discovery. He has worked with local historians, artists, and others as a consultant. He writes a column for the Washington State Chapter of the L&C Trail Heritage Foundation's Newsletter answering questions about various aspects of the Expedition called, "Kumtux Wawa". He has written about the medicines of Capt. Lewis, and was awarded the Washington State Historical Society's David Douglas Award.

**INSTRUMENTS OF DISCOVERY** focuses on some of the equipment carried by the expedition for determining distances and latitude, spyglasses, microscope, hydrometer, record keeping, and astronomical items. When possible, this program is presented at night to allow star identification.

**THIS IS A PERFECT PROGRAM FOR THE ENTIRE FAMILY. DON'T MISS IT!**

**Wednesday, October 20 – WHICH AGES FIRST... THE BIRD OR THE EGG?** - Dr. Donna Holmes, Associate Research Professor, University of Idaho - 1912 Building, 3<sup>rd</sup> and Adams, Moscow, 7:30 p.m.



Dr. Holmes' research focuses on the comparative biology of aging and life span in birds and mammals, particularly reproductive aging in females. She is particularly interested in the timing of ovarian aging in female birds and the evolution of menopause. Long life

spans in birds makes them prime candidates for the study of aging. Don't miss this highly educational program by one of the University's leading scientists. Everyone is welcome.

**Wednesday, November 17 - HOLIDAY SOCIAL and AUCTION** - 1912 Building, 3<sup>rd</sup> and Adams, Moscow, 7:30 p.m.

An absolutely beautiful program will be featured at our fourth annual *Holiday Social and Auction*. Daniel Poleschook Jr. and Ginger Gumm of Loon Lake, Washington will present a program on *CHURCHILL POLAR BEARS*. Daniel became a professional nature photographer in 1990, after a career in geology, when he formed a nature photography workshop company conducting about 15 workshops per year in the western United States, Florida, Canada, and Africa.

Dan's program will surely be a great attraction to our auction - the purpose of which is to raise funds in support of the chapter's many Audubon Adventure classrooms. Auction items include a wonderful variety of birding trips, books, artwork and Christmas gifts. Desserts, ice cream, coffee, and punch, will be served. Support of Audubon activities is tax-deductible, so bring your checkbook and help the cause. Everyone is welcome.

## FIELD TRIPS

**Saturday, September 4, 11, 18 and 25 - MANN LAKE FIELD TRIPS** - Sponsored by Palouse Audubon and Canyon Birders, these trips will focus on the fall migration of waterfowl and shorebirds as they pass through our region. Field trip leaders will be there until 11:30 a.m. or later. This is the ideal month to catch migrants at the lake. **Participants are to meet at the Mann Lake boat ramp at 8:30 a.m.**

**Sunday, September 26 - TOM BEALE ROADS** - Sponsored by Canyon Birders, the trip will check out these three roads to look for migrants and habitat changes during the past several years. Meet alongside Gart's Sporting

Goods in Lewiston at 8:00 a.m. to carpool. Carole Vande Voorde, field trip leader.

**Saturday, October 2, 9, 16, 23 and 30 - MANN LAKE FIELD TRIPS** - Sponsored by Palouse Audubon and Canyon Birders, these trips will focus on the fall migration of waterfowl and shorebirds as they pass through our region. Field trip leaders will be there until 11:30 a.m. or later. This is a great month to catch migrants at the lake. **Participants are to meet at the Mann Lake boat ramp at 8:30 a.m.**

### DIRECTIONS TO MANN LAKE

From the north end of Lewiston, follow US 12 south into town, cross the Clearwater River on Memorial Bridge and immediately take the first left (east) toward East Lewiston. Turn left (east) onto East Main Street and go about a half-mile to the flashing yellow lights. Turn right (south) onto Lapwai (a.k.a. Lindsay Creek) Road. When the road forks stay right on Lindsay Creek Road (Nez Perce County Road 460) and follow it about 5 miles to its terminus at Grelle Avenue. Turn left (east) onto Grelle Avenue and just past the sharp right curve; turn left (east) onto East Powers Avenue (a.k.a. Lapwai Road). Continue straight (east) past the grain towers to the main parking lot. ID DeLorme 54, A-1.

## FROM THE PREZES

Welcome back and greetings from the new co-presidents, Terry Gray and Charles Swift. We are looking forward to a great year for Palouse Audubon! We are in great shape thanks to the direction over the past 4 years of outgoing president Tom Weber. We also thank the board (listed below) for all their hard work over the past year.

We are planning a full year of field trips and monthly programs and continue to work on projects such as Audubon Adventures and the Barn Owl nest box project. We are planning some new activities like a basic birding class, an expanded nest box project, a local bird monitoring program and additional van-pool birding trips to popular locations. We are always interested in your input and help in moving these projects forward.

Last spring, the board proposed and the club voted to institute local membership dues for Palouse Audubon. This was the result of declining revenue sharing from National Audubon. The local dues will allow us to maintain basic club services such as the bi-monthly newsletter, our rare bird alert (RBA), and our Audubon Adventures program. In addition, we are looking into ways to maintain or reduce our expenses. As always, Palouse Audubon activities are open to anyone. We do appreciate your support!

There are many ways that you can help Palouse Audubon. Here is our “top ten ways to support Palouse Audubon”:

10. Attend a monthly meeting or field trip
9. Bring a friend to a meeting/field trip
8. Report your bird sightings
7. Suggest a speaker or field trip
6. Attend a monthly board meeting
5. Write an article for the newsletter
4. Lead a field trip or present at a monthly meeting
3. Donate support of Audubon Adventure classrooms
2. Become a volunteer board member (ask us how!)
1. Buy a local membership

*Charles Swift*

## HOW DO YOU WANT YOUR OWL?

Do you have a preference for how you receive your copy of *The PRAIRIE OWL*— the Palouse Audubon Society newsletter? At present the Owl is mailed to all PAS members and has been on our website for several years at [www.palouseaudubon.org](http://www.palouseaudubon.org). Some members like to receive a hard copy; however, hard copy is the most expensive method of corresponding chapter news.

The use of e-mail is becoming a common method of distributing information (for example, rare bird alerts). The downside is that 1) not everyone is “computer savvy” and 2) not everyone is on the net. Personally, I have found that I have trouble copying and printing portions of the newsletter from the website that I wish to use. All choices have advantages and disadvantages for someone. All members will continue to receive a hard copy of the Owl in the mail. If you would like to receive your copy via e-mail or prefer to use the on-line version only then drop me a line.

Regular mail: J.G. Storms, PO BOX 235, GARFIELD WA 99130-0235, e-mail: [jgstorms@pullman.com](mailto:jgstorms@pullman.com). Let me know your preference.

*James G. Storms*

Membership Chairman, PAS, Chapter Y-05

## WINGS OVER ALASKA

Now birders throughout North America will have even more incentive to identify as many birds in Alaska as possible. “Wings Over Alaska” is a new Alaska Department of Fish and Game program that encourages more people to enjoy Alaska’s birds and to take their birding skills to a higher level. Alaska is home to a huge variety of birds, 468 species have been positively identified to date and makes the 49th state a paradise for birders and a destination for many who hope to see rarities like the Bluethroat, Whiskered Auklet, and Bristle-thighed Curlew.

Wings Over Alaska participants are awarded certificates for bird species they have seen in Alaska. There are four levels of certification:

Species	Certificate	Signed by
50	Willow Ptarmigan	ADF&G Staff
125	Gyr Falcon	Wildlife Conservation Director
200	Spectacled Eider	ADF&G Commissioner
275	Bluethroat	Governor

To expand knowledge of bird distribution and abundance, birders are encouraged to enter their birding records into eBird ([www.eBird.org](http://www.eBird.org)), an online citizen science program of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Audubon, and to report rare bird sightings to experienced local birders or birder hot lines or to 907-465-5157 with details to forward to appropriate person or list. The birding program website is <http://www.birding.alaska.gov>. Here one may download the program brochure, checklist and application.

The *Wings Over Alaska* program is sponsored by Alaska Airlines. Participation is free and open to residents and non-residents. If you have questions, suggestions, or your office needs more brochures or stickers, contact Karla Hart, <[karla\\_hart@fishgame.state.ak.us](mailto:karla_hart@fishgame.state.ak.us)>

## IN THE LIBRARY

The following audio CDs are available for loan from the Moscow library (110 S. Jefferson). They will be shelved with the music CDs in the “Miscellaneous” category.

- Voices of the Cloud Forest (Costa Rica)
- Peterson Field Guides: Western Bird Songs
- Bird Songs of the Rocky Mountain States and Provinces
- The Diversity of Animal Sounds (alligator, bats, birds, chimps, elephant, elk, frogs, rattlesnake, etc.)
- Frog and Toad Calls of the Rocky Mountains
- Frog and Toad Calls of the Pacific Coast

## AUDUBON REPORT ON WA BIRDS

Recent good weather has made all of us keenly aware of the bounty that nature brings to us each spring. Against this backdrop the Audubon Society released a report about the state of Washington's birds. The report found that one-third of the state's birds are at risk due to urban sprawl.

## MEMBERSHIP

**Palouse Audubon Society, PO Box 3606 University Station, Moscow ID 83844-0001**, is a chapter of the National Audubon Society. The mission of Audubon 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, 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 member homes at 7:30 p.m. on the first Monday of each month.

*The Prairie Owl* is published every other month, September through May. Material for the *Owl* should be sent to the editor, Grant Norton, 1225 NW Clifford St, Pullman WA 99163, or email [norton@mme.wsu.edu](mailto:norton@mme.wsu.edu) by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month. Subscription problems should be addressed to the membership chair, James Storms, PO Box 235, Garfield WA 99130, or email [nbutte@pullman.com](mailto:nbutte@pullman.com). Visit the Palouse Audubon Society website at <http://www.palouseaudubon.org/>

habitats in Tacoma and Pierce County. Indeed, there are many recent local demonstrations of success:

- ◆ In February, Metro Parks Tacoma and the City of Tacoma partnered to purchase 2.3 acres next to Snake Lake, an urban wetland park and environmental education center.
- ◆ Recently the Pierce County Council passed a \$5-per-parcel conservation fee that will be used to enhance habitats next to rivers and protect farmlands. The county has begun to purchase parks and open space with \$56 million collected from voter-approved tax increases, development impact fees and other sources.
- ◆ In March, the state Legislature approved the use and recognition of areas of essential habitat for birds in Washington. Audubon Washington has produced documentation of 53 critical sites so far by using scientific criteria in the worldwide Important Bird Areas (IBA)

The status of birds is an important early indicator of the health of our environment and our quality of life. Like the canary in the coal mine, they send us a warning to take better heed of our surroundings. Despite the findings, this report was not one of doom and gloom. Since the decline of bird species and their habitat is primarily caused by humans, humans can also meet the challenge and opportunity to create the solutions.

The report points out how protecting birds and their habitat can benefit the economy. Bird-watching is one of the fastest-growing activities in the United States, and the latest report from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife shows that wildlife watching provides more than 22,000 jobs and brings in \$980 million to the state economy each year.

While this report took a statewide perspective, we can tackle many local issues to do our part to protect birds and their

program. Another 50 sites are currently the subject of research. Thanks to this legislation, IBA status will be considered a criterion for the management of public lands and waters that hold critical bird habitat.

◆ More and more individuals are removing non-native grass from their lawns and replacing it with native plants, creating backyard sanctuaries for birds and other wildlife. Nurseries are offering native plants to customers, and nonprofit native plant sales are very popular.

There is more work to be done. Cities and counties are revising rules that govern development related to significant bird habitat such as wetlands, shorelines and forested areas. These "critical areas" are at the heart of the battle to save the hundreds of bird species that call Pierce County home, and it is imperative that the ordinances that protect them be strong. All citizens should contact their local elected representative and ask them to pass strong critical areas ordinances.

Ultimately, each of us can make a difference every day. We can choose native plants for our back yards, buy shade-grown coffee, volunteer to clean a park or call our representatives to let them know how we feel about the issues. If nothing else, we can stop to observe the birds and see how they interact with their environments.

You do not have to be a birder or a member of Audubon to make a difference for the state of Washington's birds. The choices you make regarding what you plant, what you buy and how you spend your free time can make a big difference.

*Natalie and Rob McNair-Huff*

*Co-presidents of the Tahoma Audubon Society.*

## PALOUSE AUDUBON Board of Directors

### Officers

President: Charles Swift, (208) 883-0553, [charless@moscow.com](mailto:charless@moscow.com)  
Co-President: Terry Gray, (208)285-1639, [clgtlg@genesee-id.com](mailto:clgtlg@genesee-id.com)  
Secretary: Deb Stenkamp, (208) 883-0553, [charless@moscow.com](mailto:charless@moscow.com)  
Treasurer: Henry Willmes (208)882-2649, [willmes@adelphia.net](mailto:willmes@adelphia.net)

### Directors

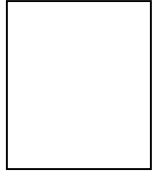
Bill Moore, (208) 882-8869, [bmoore@fsr.com](mailto:bmoore@fsr.com)  
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### Committee Chairs

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Education: Cathy Willmes, (208) 882-2649, [willmes@adelphia.net](mailto:willmes@adelphia.net)  
Field Trips: Charles Swift, (208) 883-0553, [charless@moscow.com](mailto:charless@moscow.com)  
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Program: Tom Weber, (509) 334-3817, [tweber@wsu.edu](mailto:tweber@wsu.edu)  
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Website: Bill Moore, (208) 882-8869, [bmoore@fsr.com](mailto:bmoore@fsr.com)

*Palouse Audubon Society*

PO Box 3606  
University Station  
Moscow ID 83844-0001



**NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY - NEW MEMBERSHIP ONLY**

Includes *National Audubon Society* and *Palouse Audubon Society* membership, and an annual subscription to *AUDUBON MAGAZINE* and *THE PRAIRIE OWL* newsletter. Send your check payable to **National Audubon Society** to: James Storms, PO Box 235, Garfield WA 99130-0235. Please include this coupon. For more information call: (509) 635-1272.

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 | <b>Y05</b>  |
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**PALOUSE AUDUBON SOCIETY - ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP**

Financially supports the programs and activities of the Palouse Audubon chapter and includes an annual subscription to *THE PRAIRIE OWL* newsletter. Send your **\$15.00** check payable to **Palouse Audubon Society** to: James Storms, PO Box 235, Garfield WA 99130-0235. Please include this coupon. For more information call: (509) 635-1272

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

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