

THE PRAIRIE OWL



PALOUSE AUDUBON SOCIETY

---- www.palouseudubon.org -----

Volume 34, Issue 1, September 2005

SINGAPORE SLING

I hope that everyone had a good summer and managed to get out into the field. My summer was filled with lots of work commitments and working with many undergraduates who came from all parts of the country to work on research projects at WSU. But I did get an opportunity to do some birding on a trip to Singapore in July. During the Southwest Monsoon, July is the month with the lowest rainfall. The humidity combined with high daytime temperatures mean that long birding trips can be quite demanding and tiring. The summer is not the best season to visit Singapore if you want to see large numbers of birds. The island's resident bird species are disappearing at the rate of nearly one per year. This decline is due to rapid urban development, which has seen the loss of species such as hornbills and trogons. However, Singapore is a very birding-friendly country with many fine reserves and parks that provide a relief from the stresses of living in a modern fast-paced city. The size of the island and the outstanding public transportation system make it very easy (and cheap) to get to the different birding locations. As this was my first birding trip to Asia it meant that almost every species I saw was a life bird!

There are many public parks and gardens that allow easy observation of some common bird species. Both the Common and Javan Mynas are very numerous as are the House Crow, Spotted Dove, Black-naped Oriole and Olive-backed Sunbird. Urban areas also allow some of the smaller unobtrusive birds such as Sunda Woodpecker, Common Iora and Golden-bellied Gerygone to be seen. The bright and colorful kingfishers are also easy to spot in areas close to water. Although you have to be careful when you look up as there are some potential birding hazards not usually encountered in the US!



The bird reserves in Singapore have facilities that rival any that I have visited in the US and Europe. The Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve, which opened in 1993, is the last stopover in the migration path southwards from the Malay Peninsula. Migratory birds include sandpipers and plovers and more than 130 bird species have been recorded here. During the summer Sungei Buloh is still a good place to visit to see Herons and various species of Egret and the impressive White-Bellied Fish-Eagle.

Grant Norton, Editor

If you would like to write an article for inclusion in the *Prairie Owl*, or if you have an interesting bird story, or a field trip report please send it to me at norton@mme.wsu.edu.

Thanks!

Palouse Audubon Society Calendar

September-October, 2005

(go to www.palouseaudubon.org for calendar updates and additional information)

September 3,10,17,24 – 8:30 AM Saturday mornings at Mann Lake. 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 from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. This is a great time of year to catch migrants at the lake.

September 21 - PROGRAM: A Summer on St George Island, Alaska by Will Boyd - 7:30 PM 1912 Center, Moscow.

October - 1,8,15,22,29 - 8:30 AM Saturday mornings at Mann Lake

October 14 - PROGRAM: Butterflies of the Palouse by Amy Pocewicz - 7:30 PM 1912 Center, Moscow.

(** note: program is a week earlier than our usual 3rd Wed. programs)

Mann Lake Directions: 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, continue straight past the grain towers to the main parking lot.

Contact Information: Charles Swift, (208) 883-0553, charless@uidaho.edu; Terry Gray, (208) 285-1639, clgtlg@genesee-id.com; Tom Weber, (509) 334-3817, tweber@wsu.edu

PROGRAMS

September 21 – A Summer at the Alaska Maritime NWR on St. George Island by Will Boyd
1912 Building, 3rd and Adams, Moscow, 7:30PM

Will Boyd will share his experiences from a summer working at the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge on St. George Island in the Pribiloffs. St George Island is in the Bering Sea, 800 miles west of west of Anchorage, and is home to millions of nesting seabirds including the world's largest population of Thick-billed Murres and Red-legged Kittiwakes. It is also home to native Aleuts and the descendants of 18th century Russian trappers. Will's talk will cover seabird ecology, history, and culture of St George and include plenty of captivating photos.

October 12 – Butterflies of the Palouse by Amy Pocewicz
1912 Building, 3rd and Adams, Moscow, 7:30PM
(** note: program is a week earlier than our usual)

Amy Pocewicz will present a program on her research of butterfly ecology in the Palouse region. Her talk will include information on butterfly families, their host plants, and required resources as well as some preliminary data from her research. Amy is a PhD. student in the College of Natural Resources at the University of Idaho.

FROM THE PRESIDENTS

Greetings! The shortening days and cool nights tell us fall is approaching. Even more evident to birders are the chips of migrating warblers, assemblages of shorebirds at Mann Lake, and continued departure of our summer residents. In actuality our "fall" migration began in early July with the arrival of adult shorebirds from their northern tundra breeding grounds. Southbound migration is greatly protracted compared to the spring rush to breeding grounds and continues well into November with the arrival of local wintering species from northern locales. This time of year can be quite exciting with surges of migrants following cold fronts. As we have done the past few years, we will continue to sample and survey fall migration at Mann Lake near Lewiston every Saturday through October. We hope to see you at one of our Saturday morning gatherings.

The Palouse Audubon board met in August to plan the upcoming year. We are looking forward to another series of excellent guest speakers and field trips such as our September and October programs described here. We are also planning to offer a birding class in the spring and rejuvenate some of our conservation projects. Please take note of the volunteer opportunities listed below and contact one of the co-presidents if you are interested. Thanks and Good birding!!

Charles Swift and Terry Gray

HELP RAPTOR REHABILITATION AT WSU

The Raptor Rehabilitation Program at WSU's College of Veterinary Medicine is often the last hope and the best chance for critically ill or injured birds of prey. Every year, the patient numbers continue to grow. Last year the unit treated more than 200 animals. The demand for this humane service has now led to the need for an expanded facility.

"There is nothing worse than having to turn away an injured patient," says Dr. Nickol Finch, the veterinarian who manages the program. "We have a plan developed to build a new facility that would allow a greater area for all birds that would benefit from controlled flight training during their rehabilitation. This is coupled with a viewing area people can sit and watch their progress."

The Raptor Rehabilitation Program receives no state funding for its services, and instead relies entirely on private support, and volunteer help. If you'd like to join our efforts, please contact:

Andrea Farmer
WSU College of Veterinary Medicine
PO Box 647010
Pullman, WA 99164-7010
afarmer@vetmed.wsu.edu
(509) 335-5389

MISSION OF THE WSU RAPTOR REHABILITATION PROGRAM

- Provide humane medical care to injured wild birds with the primary goal of release back into the wild.
- Further conservation efforts through raising public awareness about wild animals and the environment via presentations using live raptors and visual aids.
- Encourage student participation in the avian medical field (veterinary and non-veterinary students)
- Support the avian medical profession by fostering competent veterinary techniques and supporting avian medical research
- Teach veterinary students medical and surgical treatments and management and care of sick, injured and rehabilitating raptors.

Do you eBird??

Many birders use the internet regularly to communicate with other birders, post photos, plan trips, etc. Now there is way for birders to contribute to valuable bird sighting data to the birding and scientific community using an internet tool called eBird (www.eBird.com). eBird is a joint project of National Audubon, Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology and a number of other organizations. Birders can contribute casual sightings, timed surveys, and intensive surveys of specific locations. Locations are identified by latitude and longitude and can be created by birders and shared with other birders. Already in our area there are shared eBird locations for Mann Lake, University of Idaho, and Phillip's Farm among others. You can identify your yard as a location and enter sighting data as often as you like.

The main shortcoming to eBird right now is the ease of reporting and summarizing the captured data. The eBird coalition is currently working on version 2.0 and this is likely to greatly increase the utility of eBird to birders. For example many birders want to know their county, state, and region lists and the new version will accommodate this. This will encourage more birders to use eBird for birding purposes while at the same time proving important data for scientific purposes. In addition, it is hoped in the near future that there will be a bulk data load utility for all of us who have private bird sighting databases on our home PCs.

Area birders may also want to check out birdnotes.net, a bird sighting database created here in the northwest which covers primarily Idaho, Washington, and Oregon. There are thousands of sight records currently available in birdnotes.net. Hopefully in the future there will be a way to consolidate these data into a single database. Birders can contribute by entering their sightings online at eBird. This is especially useful in areas like the inland northwest where there are still large gaps in our understanding of bird distribution and occurrence.

BIRD OF THE MONTH

Swainson's Hawk

Very soon the Swainson's hawk, which has been a summer-long visitor in the Palouse will head to its wintering grounds on the plains of Argentina. The Swainson's hawk is a slender buteo with a relatively long tail and long pointed wings. The adult is dark brown above with a brown breast and a pale belly. The immature is heavily streaked with brown. All-dark birds (as shown in Terry Grey's photo) are common. Light adult Swainson's can be distinguished in flight from our other common similar sized buteo, the red-tailed hawk, by the white leading edge on the underside of the wing (red-tailed hawks always show a dark mark on the leading edge).

Swainson's hawks eat mainly grasshoppers and crickets but will also consume small mammals and birds. They are much appreciated by farmers and they have been described as "the most useful and beneficial of all our hawks".

The Swainson's hawk is named after William Swainson, a friend of John Audubon. Swainson had an opportunity to collaborate with Audubon on the *Birds of America*. He refused because he said that Audubon intended to "conceal my name—and transfer my fame to your papers and reputation". Swainson's fame as an ornithologist was short lived and the biological classification scheme that he proposed was never adopted.

By the time you read this newsletter there will only be a few weeks in which to see this very special hawk. So get out into the field and enjoy this summer visitor.



Dark Adult Swainson's Hawk (Photo credit Terry Grey)
Grant Norton, Editor

PAS CLUB NOTES

Local Membership dues are due this month

Last year, PAS implemented a local membership of \$15 to deal with changes in National Audubon revenue sharing and to provide an option for local only memberships. Local members receive the Prairie Owl newsletter and directly support PAS activities. Dues may be submitted with the coupon below or with the dues notice you will be receiving shortly. We appreciate your support!

Volunteer Opportunities

Field Trip leaders – we are always looking for more field trip leaders, a good knowledge of the area is all that is required, you do not need to be an expert!

Audubon Adventures coordinator – administer the Audubon Adventures program in our region by recruiting area classrooms, interfacing with National Audubon, communicating with participating teachers etc.

Nestbox program coordinator – communicate and coordinate with those who maintain bird next boxes (primarily bluebird next boxes), encourage participants to submit data to Cornell's Nextbox program through Palouse Audubon, organize volunteers to help survey and maintain area next box trails.

Attend PAS Board meetings – board meetings are open to all members. Come and share your ideas - we are always looking for input from members. Contact a board member for up to date meeting information.

Help by volunteering at the WSU vet school raptor rehab facility - contact Angela Teal – ateal@cvm.vetmed.wsu.edu or 509-335-0711.

PAS Annual Report Available on PAS Web Site

National Audubon requires all chapters to prepare and submit annual reports and plans by August-September. Palouse Audubon's annual report covering the 2004-2005 year is now available online at www.palouseaudbon.org. The annual plan for the upcoming year is being prepared and will be posted when ready. Please contact a board member if you have suggestions or comments.

IDAHO COMPREHENSIVE WILDLIFE CONSERVATION STRATEGY – DRAFT AVAILABLE

For the past two years, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, in conjunction with many diverse partners, has been developing a Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy for Idaho. The goal is to prevent wildlife from becoming endangered by conserving them before they decline to the point that they are listed under the U.S. Endangered Species Act.

The Conservation Strategy addresses the following questions: What are the species and habitats in trouble? What are the issues they face? Most importantly, what can be done to conserve them? This is the first time we have attempted to gather all of this information together in one place and in a format that will be a useful tool for conservation efforts. This has been a large undertaking completed under a tight deadline and we are sure that the document could be improved. Please help us by having a look at Idaho's first Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy.

Thus, we invite you to review and, if you wish, comment on draft materials of the Idaho Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy at <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/tech/CDC/cwcs.cfm>.

If you would like to provide comments on any of the materials, just click on the "submit comments" button. All comments received through Thursday, September 15, 2005 will be considered in the final draft.

If you would like to receive an email when the Strategy webpage is updated, you may sign up for Fish & Game E-mail Updates on the Strategy webpage.

The final version of the Idaho Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy will be submitted to the U.S. Department of Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service by October 1, 2005.

Thank you for your interest in and support of fish and wildlife conservation in Idaho!

Rita Dixon

Zoology Program Leader and Idaho CWCS Coordinator
Idaho Department of Fish and Game
600 S. Walnut Ave.
P.O. Box 25
Boise, ID 83707

Telephone: 208-287-2735

Email: rdixon@idfg.idaho.gov

<http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cdc>

PALOUSE AUDUBON Board of Directors

Officers

Co-President: Charles Swift, (208) 883-0553, charless@moscow.com

Co-President: Terry Gray, (208) 285-1639

clgtlg@genesee-id.com

Conservation: Position Open

Education: Position Open

Field Trips: Charles Swift, (208) 883-0553, charless@moscow.com

Membership: James G. Storms, (509) 635-1272, nbutte@pullman.com

Newsletter Editor: Grant Norton, (509) 334-1219, norton@mme.wsu.edu

Program: Thomas L. Weber, (509) 334-3817, tweber@wsu.edu

Publicity: Diane Weber, (509) 334-3817, catbirdz@adelphia.net

Treasurer: Henry Willmes (208) 882-2649, willmes@adelphia.net

Webmaster: Thomas L. Weber, (509) 334-3817, tweber@wsu.edu

Secretary: Deborah Stenkamp

MEMBERSHIP

Palouse Audubon Society, PO Box 3606 University Station, Moscow ID 83843, 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, 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 meets at member homes at 7:30 p.m. in the first week 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 by the 20th 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.

Visit the Palouse Audubon website at www.palouseaudubon.org

Palouse Audubon Society

PO Box 3606

University Station

Moscow, ID 83844

PALOUSE AUDUBON SOCIETY – ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP

Financially supports the programs and activities of the Palouse Audubon Society and includes an annual subscription to *THE PRAIRIE OWL* newsletter. Send your **\$15.00** check payable to **Palouse Audubon Society** to: Palouse Audubon Society, PO Box 3606, University Station, Moscow, ID 83844. Please include this coupon. For more information call: (509) 635-1272

NAME _____ ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ State ____ Zip _____

PHONE _____ EMAIL _____

NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY – NEW MEMBERSHIP ONLY

Includes *National Audubon Society* and *Palouse Audubon Society* membership and 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 83844.

Please include this coupon. For more information call: (509) 635-1272

NAME _____ ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ State ____ Zip _____

PHONE _____ EMAIL _____

Membership Category (Mark ONE):

Introductory Membership (1 yr) \$20.00

Student & senior Citizen (62+) \$15.00

Y057XCH