

THE PRAIRIE OWL



PALOUSE AUDUBON SOCIETY

Volume 30, Issue 2, November 2001

PROGRAMS

November 14, 1912 Building, 3rd and Adams, Moscow, 7:30 p.m. - *Sage Hens and Prairie Grouse: Natural history and conservation of Sharp-tailed and Sage Grouse in Colorado and Idaho*. Once common in many parts of the west, Sage Grouse and the newly designated Gunnison Sage Grouse of Colorado have suffered declines across much of their range. Sharp-tailed Grouse have not suffered as much and have benefited from reclaimed mines in Colorado. University of Idaho graduate students Cam Collins, Doris Hausleitner, and Paul Wik will discuss topics of their field research on these 2 grassland grouse species.

December 12, 1912 Building, Moscow, 7:30 p.m. - *Christmas Dessert Social and Auction*. Join us for an evening of Holiday fun. Included in the evening is a program on birds by a special guest speaker, desserts with ice cream, coffee, and punch, and a silent auction for a wonderful variety of birding trips, books, art work and Christmas gifts.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

December 15, Dave Holick, coordinator - Come join local birders as they participate in the 102nd annual Christmas Bird Count. Count day for the *Pullman-Moscow Circle* is being coordinated by Dave Holick and Tom Weber. Please call (208)882-5556 or (509)334-3817 for additional information. Everyone is welcome.

January 5, Charles Swift, Coordinator - Join us in the banana belt for a great day of birding. The *Lewiston/Clarkston Count* always yields large numbers of waterfowl, raptors, and wintering land birds. Novice birders are welcome and will be teamed with experienced counters. Meet at 7:00am at the Lewiston Jack in the Box, 19th St, Lewiston. A chili-feed and count tally is planned for the evening. Contact Charles Swift at (208)883-0553.

CALENDAR

NOVEMBER

- 5 PAS Board Meeting – 7:30pm, Cathy Willmes, 2152 Arbor Crest Rd., Moscow
- 10 Lewiston Field Trip
- 14 PAS Membership Meeting – 7:30pm
Sharp-tailed and Gunnison Sage Grouse
- 22 Thanksgiving Bird Count

DECEMBER

- 3 PAS Board Meeting – 7:30pm, Tom Weber, 230 SE South St., Pullman
- 12 PAS Membership Meeting – 7:30pm
Christmas Dessert and Silent Auction
- 15 Pullman-Moscow Christmas Bird Count

JANUARY

- 5 Lewiston/Clarkston Christmas Bird Count
- 7 PAS Board Meeting – 7:30pm, TBA
- 16 Membership Meeting, program TBA

VISIT US ON THE WEB AT

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

Our website contains the Rare Bird Alert Hotline, updated each Friday by Kas Dumroese, field trip reports, event schedules, Christmas Bird Count results, Birding Checklist, and various other materials.

The *Prairie Owl* also is available on the website in PDF format. **If you would prefer receiving an electronic copy of the *Prairie Owl* - rather than the mailed version - drop Tom Weber a line at (509)334-3817 or email tweber@wsu.edu to arrange the change.**

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

CHAPTER NEWS

From the Prez:

Winter must be fast approaching. The arrival of some of our winter birds tells me so. It is always good to see them again - White-crowned Sparrows, Oregon Juncos, Townsend Solitaires, Cedar Waxwings, and Northern Shrikes. Although I dread the cold and dreariness of the winter, the birds always lift my spirits.

I would like to thank trip leaders Charles Swift, Jane Westervelt, and Joe Lipar for the excellent field trips this fall. The weekly count at Mann Lake has witnessed a wide variety of species and continues to draw in some spectacular birds. The trips to Coeur d'Alene Lake and Kamiak Butte were well attended, and the upcoming Lewiston field trip promises to again be a great outing. In addition, the Thanksgiving and Christmas Bird Counts will again be sponsored. Information about the former is found elsewhere in the newsletter. With regard to the Christmas Count, there is always room for more participants. Although usually not held during the best of weather, the count always brings great satisfaction to the participants. Please contact Charles Swift, Dave Holick, or myself about joining in. The dates are Saturday, December 15 and January 5 – both great days to be out birding.

This past year, National Audubon changed their method of providing support to the local chapters. The end result was a severe cut in the amount of your membership dues being returned to the Chapter. We find ourselves extremely taxed for funds to provide the programs and services we have been accustomed to. To address our financial shortfall, the Board of Directors has recommended the institution of a Christmas Social and Auction. At our December meeting, at the newly completed 1912 Building in Moscow, a special guest speaker will provide an exception program on birds; dessert, ice cream and beverages will be served; and a silent auction held for some wonderful birding trips, books, artwork, and other merchandise. This will be a great time to do some last minute Christmas shopping and the tax-deductible benefits will greatly assist our Chapter. If you have something you would care to donate for the auction, please give me a call. Check our website for additional information on the evening and please, make plans to join us for a fun filled evening.

Best wishes for a wonderful Holiday Season and a Happy New Year,
Tom Weber

EDUCATION – Cathy Willmes

Thanks to the generosity of members of the Palouse Audubon Society, a number of elementary school classrooms in our region enjoyed a subscription to Audubon Adventures. This is the award-winning environmental education program of the National Audubon Society, aimed at students in grades 4-6. This fall, each participating classroom received individual student copies of four issues of the Audubon Adventures newsletter. The topics in this year's newsletters are

- “So Different, so Alike: The Diverse World of Mammals”
- “They Call Us Cold-Blooded” ...about cold-blooded animals
- “Who Needs a Backbone?” ... about invertebrates
- “The Feather Factor” ... about birds and all their variations

We are currently sponsoring 14 classrooms around the Palouse. Special thanks are due to Ruth Ownbey and Barbara Nakata for each sponsoring a Pullman classroom this year.

MEMBERSHIP – Diane Weber

National Audubon Society has announced a fall membership incentive campaign. From now until

December, any Audubon member can give a gift of a year's membership in Audubon for only \$15! And here is how your gift helps Palouse Audubon, too: regardless of where the recipient lives, our chapter will receive credit for the membership, along with the entire \$15 membership payment!

What's the catch? Only that you must use the gift membership form enclosed with this newsletter and send payment to National Audubon Society, in New York. The recipient of your gift will receive all the benefits of membership, including the award-winning Audubon magazine and membership in the local Audubon chapter where they live.

What is the deadline? Gift memberships must be received in New York by December 15. Call Diane Weber, Membership Chairman, at (509)334-3817, if you have any questions about this program.

FIELD TRIPS – Charles Swift

November 10 - Lewiston Area. Our fall trip to Lewiston is almost an annual event and can be quite good despite the usual fall rains! We should see the first arriving goldeneyes and other diving ducks as well as lots of puddle ducks and other water birds. Last year we also found some interesting gulls, and we expect to see a variety of land birds as well. The trip will continue into the afternoon depending on interest and energy. Bring a lunch if you plan to stay for the afternoon. Participants should meet at 8:00 a.m. at the Rosauer's Parking Lot, 411 N. Main St., Moscow. For more information contact Charles Swift at (208)883-0553.

THANKSGIVING BIRD COUNT

The Thanksgiving Bird Count takes place for one hour on Thanksgiving Day. The counter chooses the time that best fits his or her holiday

schedule – and the location. The count includes birds that pass through a 15-foot diameter circle or cylinder, since birds passing through or over the area are counted. The count circles usually are located around whatever attracts birds – feeders, baths, cover, etc. Most participants select a count area visible from a comfortable spot near a window. Others select water areas or a favorite birding area and make an outdoor count. Whichever is the case, the same count circles should be used each year.

Individual birds are to be counted only once during the hour, even if they pay repeated visits to the count area. Flocks should be counted only once, when the largest number are inside the area. Last year, 449 people made 462 counts in the Western states, Alaska and Hawaii. One hundred forty-nine species were tallied.

If you wish to participate, forms are available on the website homepage or by request to Tom Weber, 334-3817.

CONSERVATION NEWS - Bill Warren

Charles Swift and I were invited to attend the Region 2 Idaho Department of Fish and Game non-game focus group. These events are being held around the state on various wildlife topics as part of the current strategic planning process within the agency.

The meeting was held on October 4 at the IFG regional office in Lewiston. The meeting had a large attendance with individuals representing resource management agencies, non governmental organizations, businesses, land owners, and Idaho congressional delegation staffers.

Although the participants displayed a lot of support for making non-game management a higher priority with IFG, I felt that the meeting lacked focus, in that the specific needs for non-game management, and what specific on-the-ground actions that IFG could take to foster non-game conservation were never made clear.

There was also a lack of recognition that the primary threat to non-game conservation exists on private lands, not on public. Most of the discussion seemed to be based on the assumption that public lands were the primary area for IFG non-game emphasis. Such an approach is contrary to the latest research on threats to biodiversity.

I felt that the issues discussed did not address the institutional change required in agency thinking and fish and wildlife management in general. The scientific knowledge and public values that support conservation efforts are far ahead of the species by species approaches that are still current within IFG and other resource management entities. Simply adding a species by species approach for non-game will not be any more satisfactory than it has been for game management.

Fish and wildlife conservation today should be biodiversity conservation in its broadest sense:

biodiversity at the landscape, community, population and genetic level. Biodiversity conservation requires a change to landscape and ecosystem level thinking that recognizes what Leopold recognized more than 50 years ago, that our system of public refuges, forests, and other public lands will not be enough to conserve wildlife and the habitats on which they depend. What is required instead will be a way of living on the land – including private land – that meets fish and wildlife conservation needs while also meeting human economic and social needs.

If one accepts my premise that the priority for non-game conservation exists on private lands and in rethinking the entire paradigm of traditional fish and wildlife management, then the following are examples of specific things that the IFG could do or support for non-game conservation:

- conduct inventories of private and public lands for the occurrence of imperiled non-game species and habitats
- create partnerships with land owners to encourage non-game conservation on private lands with appropriate awards and incentives
- become more involved with local communities and local nonprofits to foster an ethic of community responsibility for protecting and enhancing non-game habitats and populations, and provide the requisite biological knowledge to assist them
- become involved on the local level with county and city zoning and land development planning to provide input that will promote the consideration of non-game conservation, including principles of landscape ecology.
- consult and work with real estate developers to influence the design of new housing and commercial developments to take account of non-game conservation needs.

To accomplish the above tasks IFG will need to redirect the staff time of its biologists and hire specialists in biodiversity conservation, landscape ecology, and GIS, as well as individuals proficient at public outreach that can act as liaisons between IFG and local communities. IFG will need to form partnerships with the public and communities to achieve a sense of ownership and empowerment to participate in wildlife conservation. Ultimately, the IFG's mission should be to facilitate the development of an ethic of stewardship for all wildlife species.

The greatest current threat to biodiversity (which should really be the focus and concept that is used rather than “nongame” which keeps us thinking in the old paradigms of resource management) in the western United States, and perhaps in the rest of the country, is habitat destruction on private lands resulting from rapidly increasing urban and suburban sprawl. In the west we also have the phenomena of housing and ranchette development in what were once very rural areas. Private timber companies, including Plum Creek and Weyerhaeuser, are turning to real estate development on their forest lands, which in many cases lie

within or adjacent to public lands. Plum Creek for example is looking at real estate development on about 400,000 acres of its land holdings (The Daily Inter Lake, Kalispell, 10/25/01).

Real estate developments result in road building on steep slopes, the closing off of migratory corridors between core habitat areas (a major issue now with grizzly bear recovery in the Northern Rockies as stated by the USFWS head grizzly recovery biologist), fragmenting or destroying habitat, and increasing predation and harassment of wildlife from domesticated animals and humans.

Wildlife management agencies need to move from the antiquated approaches of single species management and apply contemporary conservation science while incorporating new public values to become biodiversity and landscape management entities.

I would encourage all Audubon members to express their views to IFG regarding nongame management as the agency undertakes its current planning process.

Conservation Projects and Volunteers

The Palouse Chapter has a great need for local members of Audubon to get involved with conservation projects and participate in our chapter's conservation planning.

One possible initiative is the development of a monitoring system for important habitat areas in the Palouse-Clearwater region that could provide long term trend data for particular habitats. Such data could also be used to meet the criteria for inclusion as part of the Audubon Society's state and national network of Important Bird Areas.

Chapter members could adopt a site close to where they live for monitoring. Please contact me if you are interested.

You are invited to attend an evening of fun and merriment.

CHRISTMAS DESSERT SOCIAL AND AUCTION

December 12, 2001
7:30 p.m.

1912 Building, 3rd and Adams, Moscow

An evening including a special guest; an enjoyable program on birds; a variety of delicious desserts and beverages; and a silent auction for an assortment of quality gifts, merchandise and birding trips.

SEE YOU THERE!

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 _____

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

2001-2002

OFFICERS

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

MEETINGS

BOARD - 1st Monday (normally)
11/5, 12/3, 1/7, 2/4, 3/4, 4/1, 5/6
MEMBERSHIP - 3rd Wednesday
11/14, 12/12, 1/16, 2/20, 3/20

CHAIRMEN

Diane Weber, Membership
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Bill Warren, Conservation
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Cathy Willmes, Education
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WEBSITE

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BIRDING HOTLINE

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