



Newsletter of The Pendleton Bird Club

Kákyá Táymut

KUK-yuh TIE-moot, Umatilla Indian Translation: Bird News

Volume 9, No. 7 Pendleton, Oregon July 2011



Annual Summer Picnic & Bird Club Field Trip 2011

7:00 AM, SATURDAY, JULY 23 found Connie Betts, Aaron Skirvin, Diana LaSarge, Neal Hinds, Virginia Storey, Margie Gaboury, Jack Simons, Lyle and Nancy Brown, Dan Baum, Larry and Carolyn Hodgens, and Barbara and Andrew



Clark all gathered at the Safeway parking lot ready for the Tollgate-Woodward Campground-Summit Road birding field trip. The day turned out to be one of those gloriously perfect Eastern Oregon summer days with full sun and just enough heat to be comfortable.

Some 61 bird species turned out along the safari route to be either heard or seen and in some cases both heard and seen. The reclusive thrushes, Hermit, Varied, and Swainson's, tenors of the North American bird world, gave concerts from behind the forest

greenery at many of the field trip stops. Townsend's Warbler, Black-headed Grosbeak, Western Tanager, Red Crossbills, and Mountain Bluebirds displayed their colors to the delight of all and especially those with cameras. A Hairy Woodpecker could be heard drumming while the Red-naped Sapsucker, Williamson's Sapsucker, and Northern Flicker all made themselves visible. A Mallard and American Robins, two totally common, often ignored but none-the-less beautiful everyday species, shared the spotlight for the day's sightings. For a complete list of the day's birds see Dave Herr's record of the month's sightings at the end of this newsletter.

As scheduled, field trip leader Aaron Skirvin brought the caravan of five field trip vehicles into Emigrant Springs State Park at 1 pm for the picnic lunch. The field trip crew was joined by Gene and Marilyn Cripe, Dave Herr, George Ruby, Jeannie Jenson, Ann Wyatt, and Betty Klepper. The communal picnic table was covered with a variety of salads, cherries,



raspberries, chips and dips, cookies, pie, and other desserts. Conversation was lively as the picnickers sampled the goodies that everyone shared. If you didn't make it to this year's event, hopefully you'll be able to get it into your schedule for next year.

By Barbara Clark with Connie Betts



Bird Club Meeting

**7:00 p.m., Thursday,
October 13, 2011**

TRAVELS OF THE BURROWING OWLS AT THE UMATILLA CHEMICAL DEPOT

by Mike Gregg

**Pendleton First Christian Church
North Main St., Pendleton**

Bird Club Meeting

**7:00 p.m., Thursday,
November 10, 2011**

BIRDING UP THE TEXAS GULF – DURING SPRING MIGRATION

by Terry Steele

Location To Be Determined

OREGON FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS HOLD CONFERENCE IN PENDLETON

By June Whitten and Aaron Skirvin

THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE Oregon Field Ornithologists (OFO) was held for the first time in Pendleton over the weekend of June 17 – 19. The conference was headquartered at the Pendleton Center for the Arts, the perfect facility for the evening events. The conference included two dinners with speakers and field trips on both Saturday, June 18 and Sunday, June 19. About 45 people attended the Friday evening dinner and an enlightening presentation by Mike Denny on the ecology of lithosols in the Blue Mountains. Saturday evening, 63 attendees enjoyed dinner and David Johnson speaking on his specialty, owls, including much information about the Burrowing Owls on the Umatilla Chemical Depot. The excellent meals were catered by the Kinship Café.



Field trips were offered both days with some assistance on leading trips by Pendleton Bird Club members. Aaron Skirvin led trips to Tower Burn both days; June and Duane Whitten led a trip on Saturday which included Coombs Canyon, East Birch Creek, Pearson Creek and Yellow Jacket Roads. Rich Hoyer, a professional bird guide with Wings, assisted the Whittens with this tour on Saturday and led the tour on Sunday. Mike and MerryLynn Denny led trips both days up the Umatilla River and going on to the Tollgate area on Sunday. Barbara Clark took a group to see the hummingbirds at Malissa Minthorn's place on Sunday; and trips went both days to the Umatilla Chemical Depot. The Pendleton Bird Club provided snacks and beverages, which were much appreciated by the participants, for all of the field trips.

We were very fortunate to have been able to receive advance permission to enter the Chemical Depot and take the bus tour. There are numerous Long-billed Curlews and Burrowing Owls on the Depot and the tours were a highlight of the conference. During the tours, which were guided by Don Gillis, Mike Gregg, and David Johnson, the participants watched student



interns install an artificial Burrowing Owl burrow; saw the inside of a burrow from a small video camera; held baby Burrowing Owls; and watched as David Johnson banded them.

OFO considered the conference very successful, and there were many comments about the excellent birding offered by Umatilla County. It did rain on Saturday and kept many of the birds out of view, but the Sunday birding in good weather brought out lots of birds. The consolation to all of the rain this spring and on Saturday's field trip was the beautiful green landscapes across Umatilla County.

Bluebird Trail Update – July, 2011

By Jack Simons

GIVEN THE STRANGE WEATHER we've experienced this past winter/spring, it looks like the 2011 bluebird nesting season has had some "challenging" moments. The persistent cold, wet spring of 2010 was followed by the same conditions in the spring of 2011, which produced a mixed bag of results for this year's first hatch. **Note that we have one more observation date to complete this year's first hatch summary, so some totals in the table will change by the time you read this summary.** You may recall that last year we noticed what appeared to be a significant drop in insect activity along the trail and speculated that this was the result of cool weather conditions. Unfortunately, this same scenario seems to have played out again this year (see table below).

However, adding to this year's problems for nesting bluebirds were 1) squirrels gnawing their way into some boxes, 2) a few boxes falling off tree trunks and 3) what appears to be vandalism/human interference. I think we can all understand the occasional squirrel trying to find a safe spot to nest or a box that comes

loose from its mooring, but human interference has been remarkably absent (fortunately) in previous years.

One instance of poor judgment by someone was a box that was stolen off a tree which had 6 bluebird eggs in it. I'm not sure what sort of satisfaction or motivation drives this type of behavior, but it is unsettling. I will say that the locals who live along the route have been very supportive of our efforts to promote bluebird nesting so I suspect this was an isolated incident involving someone who lives "elsewhere".



The other surprising discovery was finding a deceased male Western Bluebird at the base of a box with three large (almost fledged) dead chicks inside the box. Exactly how does a male bluebird suddenly die outside of his box? Perhaps a bird of prey...that leaves its prey intact? I doubt it. Or perhaps someone driving by with a BB gun who sees an easy target? I suspect this may be the cause but we'll never know. Scratch four birds off the tally sheet, I guess.

I will say that despite the "tough run of luck" for this year's first hatch, the number of eggs laid was slightly higher thus far in 2011 than in either 2010 or 2009. However, more chicks died and fewer fledged thus far than in either 2010 or 2009.

To date, 14 of our boxes (50%) had been cleaned out after the first hatch and only 3 birds (21%) had returned to re-nest in a box that had been cleaned out. (We typically clean out a box after the first hatch to remove the dead chicks/debris/insect parasites that might pose a threat to second hatch chicks.) Six birds had started a second-hatch nest before we could clean out the box. A total of 9 boxes had second hatch nest-

First Hatch	Eggs Laid	Eggs Died	Chicks Hatched	Chicks Died	Chicks Presumed Fledged	Species Per Nestbox (out of 32 nestboxes)			Occupancy Rate
						Western BB	Mt. BB		
2011	162	17	133	30	115	28	0		88%
2010	154	10	139	25	111	32	0		100
2009	159	19	129	18	116	31	0		97



ing activity. This compares to last year's second hatch boxes where, on July 18th, 2010, 7 boxes had second hatch nests. I am hopeful this year's second hatch will be a good one, but these things can go either way sometimes.

Always there are "meaningful moments" while travelling from box to box and this year was no different. Just when you think you've seen it all, a new experience comes along. We've had baby chipmunks jump out from a box onto my wife (she stood her ground!) but this year we saw something I would have bet good money would never happen. (By the way, we've installed heavy gauge metal plates around the holes on "squirrel boxes" to prevent them from gnawing their way into the box; I want to see the squirrel that eats through that metal!).

The first day that we monitored the trail we drove up to a tree that was supposed to have a box attached to it, but no box was in sight. We knew this was the right tree (even the GPS said it was), so I looked around and eventually found it on the ground about 5 feet away in the tall weeds. I picked up the box, looked inside and saw that it was empty so tried to put it back on the long screw that had anchored it to the tree. Failing that I just leaned the box up against the trunk of the tree and made a note to bring back some "heavy duty hardware" to remount the box in two weeks.

When we returned two weeks later, there was the box right where I had laid it against the tree. I picked it up, and out of habit more than anything, I looked inside and, lo-and-behold, there was a nest with two blue-green bluebird eggs! Now, that is truly an example of perseverance and dedication by a little bird that only weighs a few ounces.

PS: Over the next 6 weeks that box produced 5 chicks and 1 (deceased) egg...and that's why I don't make bets.

Visit the Bird Club's website
at www.pendletonbirders.org



Bluebirds Love a Truck

By Joy Jaeger

THIS SPRING A PAIR OF Western Bluebirds must have fallen in love with our truck. Whenever my husband, Steve, and I went up to the cabin located near Poverty Flat the bluebirds would hang around it looking in the windows and mirrors. They would also hang around the cabin deck and try to chase the Violet-green Swallows away from the nest boxes under the upper deck. They spent so much time pecking at the side view mirrors and created such a mess hanging onto the sides of the truck that we ended up putting grocery bags over the side view mirrors.



I mentioned this to our neighbor down the road and she said she had an old medicine cabinet out back of her place and had seen a male Western bluebird spend up to 45 minutes fighting with the "other" male Western Bluebird he saw in the mirror. As time went by it seemed the bluebirds didn't bother our pickup as much and I figured they were busy raising a family in the nest box about 100 yards away.

A couple of weeks ago we started noticing more bluebirds around the cabin. The baby birds had grown up and were learning to be out on their own. We went back up to the cabin recently and when I went out the truck a few hours after we arrived, a female Western Bluebird was hovering about 10 feet off the ground a few feet from the pickup. I wondered what was going on and found out



Steve had left the windows down a couple of inches and a male Western Bluebird had gotten into the pickup and was peering out the window at me and his mate hovering nearby. I ended up opening the doors

on both sides to let him out. He left a little present on the dashboard for us, and I rolled up the windows so he couldn't get back in. The next week when we

went to the cabin they were around but didn't bother the pickup. Maybe the traumatic experience taught them something?

Part 2 – “New Publication: Birder’s Guide to Umatilla County, Oregon”

By Barbara Clark

DID YOU KNOW THAT THE HISTORICAL COMMUNITY WE KNOW today as Albee...like in our Albee Blue Bird Trail...was originally named “Snipe” in 1881, and then changed to “Alba”, and finally to “Albee”, that name coming from the Albee brothers who were stockmen in the area in the late 1800s? Historical tidbits like this can be found throughout the “Birder’s Guide to Umatilla County, Oregon” that was published last month and introduced in the June newsletter. (See the Pendleton Bird Club website and click on ‘Newsletter Archive Library’, June 2011 for that article.)

The Birder’s Guide features 33 birding routes and sites in Umatilla County. The authors divided the county into three regions. Region 1 covers the northwestern part of Umatilla County, extending west and north from Pendleton to the Columbia River and the Umatilla/Morrow county line. It contains all of the “big water” in the county including the Columbia River, Cold springs Reservoir, McKay Reservoir, and the lower 50 miles of the Umatilla River. Region 2 is the northeastern part of Umatilla County and includes most of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. Region 3 is the southern sector of the county extending southward from Pilot Rock including portions of the Umatilla River, Grand Ronde River and North Fork John Day River watersheds.

Following the introductory explanations of the book’s design and organization comes the heart of the book that subdivides the 3 regions into the 33 birding locations. Each of these locations begins with a map of the area followed by a written description of the location, ownership, habitat, birding, directions, accessibility, history, and miscellaneous.

The birding section for each location lists the representative birds for that area with the times of year when they are likely to be seen. The routes themselves are explicit odometer readings to the tenth of a mile. They are accurate!! During the recent Oregon Field Ornithologists Meeting in Pendleton I was asked to take several ornithologists on a fieldtrip to see whatever they especially wanted to see. They particularly wanted to see the Gray Catbird, Red-eyed Vireo, and Veery as described on page 113 under the location ‘Upper Umatilla River’. At exactly mile 7.8 along Cayuse Road as noted in the Birder’s Guide, my guests saw all three species as if the birds had been paid to perform and pose for photographs. I became an immediate advocate for this birding guide to the birds of Umatilla County!

The concluding Appendixes of the guide provides information about facilities and services that can be found in each of the regions including lodging, RV parks/campgrounds, gasoline, cafes, restrooms and other services. Appendix 2 is a checklist of the birds of Umatilla County as of May 2011. The book closes with a Species Index listing each of the Umatilla County birds together with the sites of where it is most likely to be seen. If you desire to know and see the birds in their habitats here in Umatilla County, “The Birder’s Guide to Umatilla County, Oregon” by Aaron Skirvin, June Whitten and Jack Simons is the perfect book for you!



BIRD OF THE MONTH — WILD TURKEY

(Meleagris gallopavo)

By June Whitten

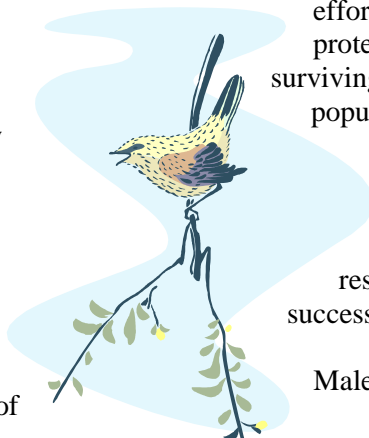
HOW WILD IS A WILD TURKEY? They appear in large flocks in Eastern Oregon apparently unconcerned about human observers. However, talk to a hunter who goes in quest of a nice tom during the hunting season and the story changes to wary, elusive, or non-existent Wild Turkeys. This is just another example that “bird brain” may be a more complimentary moniker than was previously thought to be true.

While Wild Turkeys may appear docile at times, they are wary and cautious, flying or running at the first indication of danger. In spite of their size, they are surprisingly agile fliers for up to a quarter of a mile, often not too far off the ground.

Wild Turkeys are native only to North and Central America. There are several subspecies of Wild Turkey, including the Rio Grande (*M. g. intermedia*) that occurs in Umatilla County. The South Mexican Wild Turkey is considered the nominate subspecies, and the only one not occurring in the United States or Canada. The Aztecs domesticated this subspecies and the Spaniards brought it to Europe in the mid-16th Century. From Spain it spread to France and later Britain as a farmyard animal. By 1620 it was common enough that the Pilgrim settlers of Massachusetts brought turkeys with them from England, unaware that it had a larger, very close relative already occupying the forests of Massachusetts. The Aztec domesticated turkey is one of the smallest subspecies and is best known in Spanish from its Aztec name *guajolote*. This subspecies is thought to be critically endangered as of 2010. It is important to note the Thanksgiving dinner turkey is the same species as the Wild Turkey, just grown much larger and plumper due to

breeding and advanced feeding procedures.

Wild Turkey populations were greatly diminished by the beginning of the 20th century due to overhunting and loss of habitat. The entire population of Wild Turkeys in the United States was estimated to be around 10,000. By the 1940's, Wild Turkeys were almost totally extirpated from Canada and barely hanging on in the United States. Game officials made efforts, which proved quite successful, to protect and encourage the breeding of the surviving wild population. By 1973 the total population in the United States was about 1.3 million. As the turkey population increased, hunting was legalized in 49 states. The estimated population is now around 7 million. Perhaps the restoration program was almost too successful!



Bird of the Month

Male Wild Turkeys display for females by puffing out their feathers, spreading their tails, and dragging their wings in a strutting fashion. Their object is to mate with as many females as possible. They also use gobbling, drumming, and spitting to attract the fair ladies. Courtship begins in March and April when the turkeys are still flocked together in wintering areas. Males may be seen courting in groups, with the dominant male doing most of the strutting and drumming. In one study, the average dominant male that courted as part of a pair of males fathered six more eggs than males that courted alone. Genetic analysis of pairs of courting males also

showed half of their genetic material was identical. The theory behind the team-courtship is that the less dominant male has a greater chance of passing along shared genetic material.

The hens then find a secluded nest site, just a shallow dirt depression lined with woody vegetation. Here the clutch of 10 to 14 eggs is laid, one egg per day. The

eggs are incubated, by the hen only, for at least 28 days. The chicks are ready to leave the nest in less than a day, and begin foraging for small seeds and insects, still under the care of the hen. Wild Turkeys



Wild Turkey with young. Photo by Aaron Skirvin,



are known to eat a wide variety of grasses, roots, insects, berries, nuts, and small reptiles if available.

Wild Turkeys have 5,000 to 6,000 feathers so it is little wonder Native Americans made good use of the feathers both as decorative feather headdresses and feather cloaks. The tom turkeys have many colorful feathers with areas of red, purple, green, copper, and gold. The females are smaller and duller overall mostly in shades of brown and gray. The average male Wild Turkey weighs 11 to 24 pounds and the female only 6 to 12 pounds. They have 3 toes on each foot and the males have a spur behind each of their lower legs, which can inflict some damage in a fight.

Benjamin Franklin wrote a letter to his daughter, Sarah Bache, in 1784, giving his opinion that the Wild Turkey should have been selected as the national bird of the United States, instead of the Bald Eagle. This letter was written after Congress had spent 6 years choosing the eagle as the emblem of the newly formed country. Franklin's disapproval of the Bald Eagle appears evident, but may have been made with mock indignation as there is no evidence he ever officially advocated the Wild Turkey as a national emblem.

Part of the letter reads: *"I am on this account not displeased that the Figure is not known as a Bald Eagle, but looks more like a Turkey. For in Truth the Turkey is in Comparison a much more respectable Bird, and withal a true original Native of America. He is besides, though a little vain and silly, a Bird of Courage, and would not hesitate to attack a Grenadier of the British Guards who should presume to invade his Farm Yard with a red Coat on."*

Wild Turkey is an introduced species in Umatilla County, as well as other areas in Oregon. While not too many years ago Wild Turkeys were rare in Umatilla County, which is no longer the case as they have thrived in the Eastern Oregon climate and habitat. They are often seen in wintering flocks around Ukiah, East Birch Creek Road, Poverty Flats, Dry Creek Road, and the South Fork Walla Walla River Road to name a few areas known for Wild Turkey populations.

Some of the information for this article was taken from: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/WildTurkey>

June – July Bird Sightings

Compiled by Dave Herr

TANYA HARRISON HAS BEEN conducting bird surveys again this breeding season. June 16 she checked the Kanine Ridge/Emigrant Road area on the Umatilla Indian Reservation and found, along with the more common birds, lots of **Grasshopper and Lark Sparrows**. Surveying from Wildhorse Creek to Iskuulpa Creek on June 21, she found **Red-eyed Vireos** and **Lesser Goldfinches**, two species she normally does not encounter in her surveys. Her surveys of the Wanaket Wildlife Area, located along the Columbia River just upstream from McNary Dam, on June 22, included 6 **Grasshopper Sparrows**, 2 **Lark Sparrows** and 6 **Long-billed Curlews**. These were the first **Lark Sparrows** she has found in this area. Surveying again at Wanaket



Bird Sightings



*Grasshopper Sparrow (juv and adult).
Photo by Aaron Skirvin.*

on June 28, Tanya encountered an unexpected **Orange-crowned Warbler** as well as **Grasshopper Sparrows**, **Lark Sparrows** and **Eurasian Collard-Doves**. First noting EC-Doves at Wanaket 3 years ago, Tanya reports they are now pretty common. Tanya surveyed the lower part of Bachelor Canyon at Iskuulpa Creek July 11 and found the usual assortment of birds including **Yellow**, **McGillivray's**, **Wilson's** and **Yellow-rumped Warblers**, **Western Tanagers**, **Cassin's Vireo**, **Black-capped** and **Mountain Chickadees**. She also heard a singing



Grasshopper Sparrow, this is the lowest elevation she has ever found this species in this area.

June 24, Aaron Skirvin (Aaron) did some owling/late night birding along Highway 395 south of Pilot Rock and along Alkali Canyon, Mud Springs Canyon and Coombs Canyon roads.

During the evening he reported seeing lots of owls along every segment of road he drove. Along with approximately **30 Short-eared Owls**, he also found a couple of **Great-horned** and **Barn Owls** and one **Burrowing Owl**.

Joy Jaeger has reported a number of bird sightings this period. Along with the more common birds, she noted an **Eastern Kingbird** on East Poverty Flats Road. This is the first time she has seen this species in that area. Checking the nest boxes around her Poverty Flats cabin, she found one box with baby **Western Bluebirds**, one **House Wren** nest and nesting **Violet-green Swallows**. On June 25, Joy checked the 30 nest boxes she and Steve have placed around their mountain cabin above Albee. She found 4 boxes with baby birds, 9 boxes with eggs (she thinks one was **Mountain Bluebird** and the remainder **Western Bluebirds**), and one **House Wren** nest. Joy was pleased with the results since she was concerned the late spring might adversely affect nesting.

June 25, Jack Simons spotted a pair of **American Wigeon** lounging (his word) in the shallow end of the north shore of Mission Ponds. Jack notes he had never seen **American Wigeon** this late in the season at the ponds. He looked for babies but could not find any.

Although her observation was in Wallowa County, Dolly Robison had a great sighting when she found 2 **Great Gray Owls** SW of Troy,



Western Scrub-Jay. Photo by Karen Baxter.



Eastern Kingbird. Photo by Bob Tapley.

Oregon while doing survey work July 1. Dolly watched the birds flying over an open meadow and since they appeared agitated, thought they might have a nest nearby.

I (Dave Herr) did some birding in the Tollgate area on July 3. I was able to find 2 **American Three-toed Woodpeckers** at Woodward Campground adjacent to Landon Lake and another **American Three-toed Woodpecker** near Coyote Ridge. Birding in the same area the following day, Aaron found several **Olive-sided Flycatchers**, and both **Hairy Woodpecker** and **Northern Flickers**. One female **Common Goldeneye**, without ducklings, was feeding near the shore of Langdon Lake near the

campground. Checking the Athena sewer ponds on his way up to Tollgate, Aaron found a territorial **Black-necked Stilt**, 2 **Wilson's Phalaropes**, several **Killdeer** and a flock of 53 **Western Sandpipers**.

Jack Simons reports from his home between Pendleton and Mission, it appears to be a good year for **House Wrens**. He has enjoyed watching young wrens look for bugs in his flower garden and Sharon Simons has been seeing lots of young **House Wrens** on her walks along the Umatilla River behind their home. Katrina Dielman has been seeing a pair of **Lesser Goldfinches** in her North Hill (Pendleton) yard and thinks they may be nesting in the area.

Dr. Mark Rhodes reported seeing two **Western Scrub-Jays** in a pine tree near Townsend and Diagonal Road. Aaron notes that **Western Scrub-Jays** appear to have a good hold in NW Umatilla County: McNary,

McNary Dam, central Hermiston and now the Diagonal/Townsend road area. However, it remains to be seen if they expand their range further east and south in the county or perhaps leave the area entirely sometime in the future. July 20, Dr. Rhodes reported

an adult and an immature **Western Scrub-Jay** near the intersection of Columbia Blvd. and Chinook Ave. in the McNary part of the town of Umatilla. Aaron notes that, although **Western Scrub-Jays** almost certainly have been breeding in Hermiston since at least 2009, as far as he knows, this is the first reported sighting of a juvenile/immature **Western Scrub-Jay** in Umatilla County. In addition, this must be the eastern most breeding record of the “coastal” variety of Scrub-Jay for Oregon.

July 9, Neal Hinds photographed **Greater Yellowlegs, Western, Least and Spotted Sandpipers** and a **Tree Swallow** at Cold Springs National Wildlife Refuge’s Memorial Marsh. July 9, Jack Simons reported there was a good mix of birds in his front yard during the afternoon. His sightings included **Western Wood-Pewee, European Starlings**, adult and baby **American Robins**, 2 **Black-chinned Hummingbirds** and a singing/nest building **House Wren**. Jack wonders if all this activity might have been spawned by the morning low temperature at his house, **35 degrees F**.

Connie Betts found a **Western Kingbird** in the Pendleton Community Park July 11, and noted there was a **Say’s Phoebe** in the park during the past week and recently she identified a **Dusky Flycatcher** in the park. Checking for owls July 12, Aaron drove south along Highway 395 and then traveled along several of the back roads west of Pilot Rock. He found **10-15 Short-eared Owls** scattered along the route. His most exciting sighting was at least 3 **Burrowing Owls** along Stockdrive Road. He assumes it was a family group, but it was too dark to tell for sure.

On July June Whitten and Aaron did some scouting in the Blue Mountains in preparation for the bird club’s annual picnic. They found good birding at Woodward Campground. Some of their better finds included: 2 hen **Common Goldeneyes** with 6 babies each, **Olive-sided Flycatcher, Fox and Lincoln Sparrows, Varied and Swainson’s Thrushes and Wilson’s, Townsend’s and Yellow-**

rumped Warblers. Soon after turning onto the Summit Road between Highway 204 and I-84, a **Bobcat** crossed the road in front of them. Birding along Summit Road, they heard an **American Three-toed Woodpecker** drumming and saw **Mountain Bluebirds, Hermit Thrush, Dusky Flycatcher, Green-tailed Towhee, Black-headed Grosbeak, Lazuli Bunting and Cassin’s Finch.**



Short-eared Owl. Photo by Duane Whitten.

July 12, Gerry Rowan had a **Barn Owl** perching in an apple tree in his yard near McKay Creek Elementary School in SW Pendleton. The next day, Jack Simons found two juvenile **Eastern Kingbirds** along the Umatilla River behind his home. He notes usually there are 4 or 5 in a brood so maybe the others have not fledged yet or were hiding.

Checking Memorial Marsh at Cold Springs NWR July 16, Neal Hinds was able to

get photographs of a **Northern Flicker, Brown-headed Cowbird, Great Egret, American Coot, Greater Yellowlegs, Wilson’s Snipe, Least, Spotted and Western Sandpipers, Long-billed Dowitchers and Wilson’s Phalaropes.** The following day I (Dave Herr) checked the area and was able to add **Virginia Rail, Black-necked Stilt and Lesser Yellowlegs** to the list.



Connie Betts listed the 61 species seen during the Bird Club Field Trip and Picnic on July 23: **Ring-billed Gull, American Kestrel, Rock Pigeon, American Crow, House Sparrow, European Starling, Brewer's Blackbird, Barn Swallow, Black-billed Magpie, Mourning Dove, Eastern Kingbird, Western Kingbird, Red-tailed Hawk, Northern Harrier, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Brown-headed Cowbird, Pine Siskin, Steller's Jay, Chipping Sparrow, Violet-green Swallow, Osprey, Red Crossbill,**



Common Goldeneye, Varied Thrush (h), Spotted Sandpiper, Mountain Chickadee, Mallard, Fox Sparrow (h), Vaux's Swift, Hermit Thrush (h), Western Tanager, Western Wood-Pewee, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Golden-crowned Kinglet (h), Red-breasted Nuthatch (h), Red-naped Sapsucker, Cooper's Hawk, Dark-eyed Junco, MacGillivray's Warbler, Dusky Flycatcher (h), Williamson's Sapsucker, Northern Flicker, American Robin, Warbling Vireo (h), Swainson's Thrush (h), Hairy Woodpecker (h), Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Hammond's Flycatcher (h), Black-headed Grosbeak, Townsend's Warbler, Lazuli Bunting, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Green-tailed Towhee (h), Mountain Bluebird, Calliope Hummingbird, Common Raven, Turkey Vulture, Cliff Swallow, Western Bluebird, Pileated Woodpecker, and Chestnut-backed Chickadee (h). Note: The (h) stands for "heard only."

Now is the time to start getting serious about looking for shorebirds. Adult birds are already returning from their breeding grounds in the far

north and soon juvenile birds will be migrating through our area. Unfortunately, due to the large amount of participation we had this winter and spring, the water level at two of our better shorebirding areas (Cold Springs and McKay Reservoirs) is still too high for any mud to be showing. Shorebirds have been using Memorial Marsh and the newly constructed Athena sewage ponds, so these are two areas to check until water levels drop at the other reservoirs.

I will be gone during August, so for next month please send your bird sightings to Aaron Skirvin at umatbirder@yahoo.com or call Aaron at 541-215-0761.

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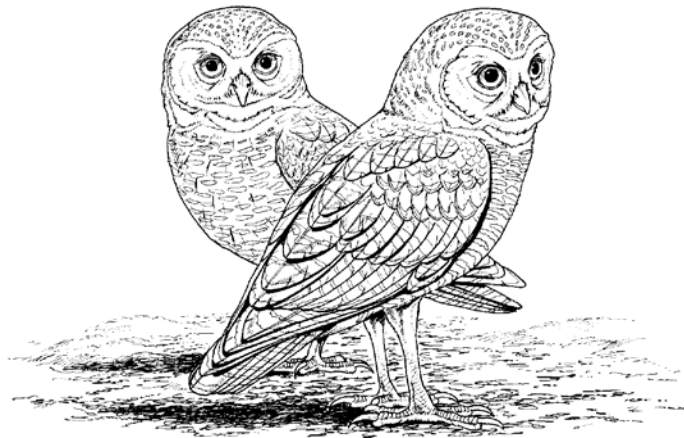
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