



# Kákya Táymut

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

Volume 7, No. 7 Pendleton, Oregon July 2009

## OWL AND POORWILL "HUNT"

**Ten birders met at 7:00 p.m., at Pendleton Safeway on Saturday, June 20, to embark on the hunt for the Flammulated Owl and Common Poorwill. On the drive through Pilot Rock, Eurasian Collared-Doves and Rock Pigeons were spotted overhead. The next stop was Battle Mountain State Park where a Western Wood-Pewee, Williamson's Sapsucker, American Robin and Western Tanager were heard. On the way to Ukiah along Hwy 395, Cliff Swallow, American Kestrel, Red-tailed Hawk, Swainson's Hawk, Western Meadowlark, Red-winged Blackbird, European Starling, Violet-green Swallow, Tree Swallow, Barn Swallow, Killdeer, Northern Harrier, Eastern and Western Kingbirds, Savannah Sparrow, Horned Lark, Northern Flicker, Canada Goose, and Western Bluebird were sighted.**

A right turn at the Ukiah junction onto USFS Road #53, a left on Forest Service Road 5312, another right toward Divide Well Campground took us to the Flammulated Owl site. We didn't have to wait long for one to answer the playback at about 9:00 p.m. We waited several minutes before the owl flew over our heads to the other side of the road. A couple of moments later, it flew to a tree next to the road and perched in the open about 60 feet away. With a spotlight on it, the owl posed several minutes so all were able to get very good looks.

On the drive back to Hwy 395, we swerved to avoid a Common Nighthawk resting on the warm road. A debate among cars ensued about whether it was a Common Nighthawk or a Common Poorwill.

A couple of miles SW of Hwy 395 on Gurdane Road, a Common Poorwill put on a flight display never seen by anyone in the group. Out of the corner of his eye, Aaron Skirvin caught movement in the starlit sky and shown his flashlight on the bird. It hovered above us while we got good looks of the underside of the Poorwill's wings and body. A quarter mile further along the Gurdane Road, we encountered another Poorwill which flew across the gully and landed on the hillside. The red shine of its eyes was very clear as it perched on the ground. Suddenly, it flew toward us and landed on the side of the road at our feet where we could see its white throat feathers billow as it called.

Both the Flammulated Owl and Common Poorwill were protecting their territories. Using playback and shining lights can stress the birds, so observation time must be kept to a minimum. What a great night-birding trip that offered spectacular views of two nocturnal species that aren't often seen. The weather cooperated, too; it was dry with little wind, but cool enough for everyone to don jackets.

*Contributed by Connie Betts*

### VISIT THE BIRD CLUB'S WEBSITE

Bird checklists, ID Challenge, Club Member's Photo Gallery, Newsletter Archive and more.

[www.pendletonbirders.org](http://www.pendletonbirders.org)



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### Bird Club Field Trip

Saturday, August 15, 2009

## SHOREBIRDING AT COLD SPRINGS NWR

Meet at Pendleton Safeway (NE parking lot) at 7 a.m. or entrance to Cold Springs NWR at 7:45 a.m.

### Bird Club Field Trip

Friday – Monday, September 4 - 7,  
2009

## MALHEUR NWR & STEENS MOUNTAIN

For details and registration check the announcement in this newsletter or contact June Whitten at 541-276-9019

### Bird Club Meeting

7:00 p.m., October 8, 2009

## RETURN OF CALIFORNIA CONDORS TO OREGON

Presented by David Moen  
Condor Research Associate at the Oregon Zoo

Pendleton First Christian Church  
North Main St., Pendleton

### BIG SIT! Bird Count

October 11, 2009

Contact June Whitten at  
276-9019 for details

### ALBEE BLUEBIRD TRAIL UPDATE

by Jack Simons

The last date that the Albee Bluebird Trail was monitored was Wednesday, July 1<sup>st</sup>. On that date we observed 31 nest boxes with bluebird nesting activity. Of the 31 nests, 20 were determined to be “first hatch” nests with 14 eggs, 15 chicks and a whopping 92 chicks presumed fledged since Mar 21 when our monitoring began. There were 11 nest boxes which



*Western Bluebird eggs (deceased while in the box).*

represented “second hatch” nests. Of the second hatch nests, we counted 38 eggs, 0 chicks and 0 chicks presumed fledged. The second nesting is progressing very well and should produce dozens more Western Bluebirds (and, because a pair of Mountain Bluebirds were seen at one of the boxes, perhaps our first Mountain Bluebird chicks of the year!).

A final tally of the season totals will be tallied for the August or September issue of the Newsletter. Stay tuned...



## PENDLETON BIRD CLUB'S ANNUAL BAR-B-QUE ADVENTURE

by Diana LaSarge and Aaron Skirvin

With promises of seeing Common Goldeneyes, 12 birders met at 9 a.m. at Woodward Campground on Langdon Lake near Tollgate on Saturday, July 11. Unfortunately, the breeze made waves on the lake and pushed clouds overhead, but most of the birders caught a glimpse of three female Common Goldeneyes circling the lake. And, as we watched, two female Mallards presented to us their six ducklings in a little flotilla as they swam to a dock. A Spotted Sandpiper rested on one leg, as usual, on the same dock, and two others foraged for insects on a

lawn across the lake. Pine Siskins were heard in the trees, and a pair of Red Crossbills, two Violet-Green Swallows and a Vaux's Swift flew overhead. A male Lincoln's Sparrow gave the group a good show

and allowed the birders a great view as he flitted in a tree at the edge of the lake. Other birds heard but not seen were Swainson's Thrush, Western Tanager, and Yellow-rumped Warbler.

The group left the lake and drove down the mountain to the Lick Creek Trail at the end of McDougall Road. We hiked a short distance along the crest of a ridge through white yarrow, lomatium, and other wildflowers covered with dark, nearly black and light blue butterflies. With the help of a recorded call on a Palm Pilot, the birders were able to call in an Orange-crowned Warbler and hear a Green-tailed Towhee respond from deep in the brushy draw below. A family of Rock Wrens posed and bobbed on a rocky outcropping next to the trail and gave the birders a detailed view of their intricate feathering. A male Northern Harrier flew above the group and over the hill, and a female Lazuli Bunting made a stealthy retreat into a brush patch, while the male sang nearby. A singing Dusky Flycatcher was heard but not seen in the bushes below the trail.

Traveling back up the mountain and past Tollgate, the birders stopped at the Bald Mountain overlook. A male Green-tailed Towhee was easily seen as he perched in dead branches on the slope below the overlook. While looking at the towhee, Diana LaSarge spotted a Calliope Hummingbird perched on a branch just above the towhee. It is possible the hummer was being territorial about the field of wildflowers that covered the hillside. A female Black-chinned Hummingbird was also seen flitting around the penstemons, paintbrush, larkspur, scarlet gilia, and other flowers. There was no lack of food for the hummers at this location! A Turkey Vulture and a Red-tailed Hawk soared in the canyon below



*Green-tailed Towhee. Photo by Aaron Skirvin.*

the birders, and then the vulture, followed by a Common Raven, rode an updraft up the slope to take a closer look at the birders. Also heard were a Chipping Sparrow and a Rock Wren, both singing below the overlook.

When four of the early birders left the group for their campsites at Jubilee Lake, hunger led the other eight birders past a field of false hellebore and through the mixed conifer forests to Target

Meadows Campground, the site of the club's annual bar-b-que/picnic. There the eight birders were joined by eight additional club members for another delicious picnic. Everyone enjoyed a splendid spread of hamburgers, hot dogs, shish kebabs, salads, baked beans, fresh fruit, desserts and iced tea. As we always find out at the picnic and potlucks, and it was proven again this time, birders are great cooks, too!

Before calling it a day and heading back to town, some of the die-hards drove to the end of the road for some final birding at the Burnt Cabin Trailhead. It wasn't too birdy, mainly because it was mid-day, but nonetheless, we spotted a male Western Tanager, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Warbling Vireo, Hairy Woodpecker, a dark-phase Red-tailed Hawk, and a silent Olive-sided Flycatcher.

Participants in the day's activities were Marilyn and Gene Cripe, George and Leanne Ruby, Russ and Connie Betts, June and Duane Whitten, Dave Herr, Jeanne Jensen, Jack and Sharon Simons, Diana



LaSarge, John Harrison, Hero, John, and Haval Norman, Gary and Virginia Betts, and Aaron Skirvin.

## HERONRY UPDATE

*by June Whitten*

Since the first two nests were built in the heronry on Pendleton's River Parkway in 2003, it has been referred to as the Little League Heronry, being just across the river from the Little League Baseball Park. This heronry has grown every year, doubling in size to 4 successful nests in 2004; and by 2005 there were 10 successful nests.



*Great Blue Heron. Photo by Tim Knight.*

Great Blue Herons typically are colonial nesters, possibly for protection. The young are fed mostly fish, which keeps a heronry near water. The adults also eat various invertebrates as well as mice and voles. When watching the young herons after they are "nest hopping," it is hard to tell which babies belong to which parent. It appears the adults feed whoever is in its nest, but it is hard to tell. As the babies grow, they clamber along the limbs, flap their wings, jump into any nest, and beg for food whenever an adult comes to the nests.

The Little League Heronry continues to grow. In 2007, there were 15 successful nests, and a couple of partial nests that were not completed that year. Now, in 2009, there are over 20 nests, some of these may be partial nests. As the colony spreads, it becomes

more difficult to see all of the nests and young. Observers counted 38 herons at one time in late May.

Great Blue Herons have been known to abandon a heronry after a few years. Hopefully, the Little League Heronry will continue to thrive for at least a few more years. Each May, Betty Klepper, Lorna Waltz, Bruce Barnes, Duane and June Whitten and sometimes other helpers take the Washington School fifth graders on plant and bird walks. The students are thrilled to watch the herons, and even though many of them play ball at the park, they always say in awe, "I didn't know these birds were here!"

## NATIONAL PARKS OF THE WEST — A NEW LIBRARY PROGRAM

*by Betty Klepper*

The Pendleton Library is collecting books, DVD's, maps and other materials on the National Parks of the West for a new project planned for a 10-year period. There will be information in various formats on the plants, animals, geology, and other features of those parks west of the Mississippi River. Many of the materials will be especially for youngsters. Quarterly programs over the next ten years for both adults and children will feature topics relevant to the parks with guest speakers, authors, park supervisors, art opportunities, and other activities that relate to the parks. The project has already funded a special "living room" area in the center of the library that is furnished in a style consistent with park lodges. There the bookshelves show off recent acquisitions for the project and a new computer has been installed to allow people to look up any of the official web sites for the parks and learn about them and what they have to offer. The project is funded through the Oregon Community Foundation.

## BIRDS WITH WHITE SPOTS

*by Jack Simons*

One of the virtues of being a "feeder watcher" is that you get to watch whatever comes into your feeders from within the cozy confines of your home — even while a blizzard howls outside. From a bird's perspective though, it's probably just another day.

As many of you know, part of the joy in feeding birds is the anticipation of what I call "the rare find." It might be snatching a glimpse of a full plumage Lazuli Bunting or a brightly colored Evening



Grosbeak or a rarity like the Great-tailed Grackle. Look out your window long enough and you might even be treated to a *very* rare sight — a common bird that has a distinctive color pattern.

Such was the case last spring when my wife and I spied a Mourning Dove on the ground amongst the sparrows, buntings and finches at our feeders. It was obvious that this particular bird was indeed a Mourning Dove but the white blotchy coloration on its back would make even a seasoned birder pause to re-consider its identity.

There was nothing unusual about the behavior of this dove (it was courting females); however, its unique coloration suggested it might be a weird hybrid or perhaps had flown through a bucket of white paint. I grabbed my camera and snapped a few pictures (see photo). The dove remained in the neighborhood for 2 to 3 weeks then disappeared. We



*Leucistic Mourning Dove. Photo by Jack Simons*

haven't seen it for a couple of months now. Maybe it moved on. Or, perhaps those pretty white feathers were actually a "bull's eye" target for hawks and falcons!

Curious about the dove, I shared the photo with Aaron Skirvin and asked if this could be a "leucistic" dove. Aaron said "yes it could be" and provided me with a website at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology<sup>1</sup>. It was at this site that I read an excellent article entitled, "*Plumage variations: Albinism or Leucism?*" which explained what causes leucism in birds and described the different types of leucism that can occur in birds.

The article went on to say that, "There has been some disagreement in the scientific community about what exactly to call birds with white spots. Solid white birds with pink eyes everyone agrees are albinistic, and pale birds with normally colored but pale plumage everyone agrees are leucistic. But birds with white patches intermingled with normal plumage have been described with a variety of terms."<sup>2</sup>

Albinism is a genetic mutation that prevents the production of melanin in the body while leucism is a genetic mutation that prevents melanin from being *deposited* normally on feathers. Birds with white patches have been said to have partial or imperfect albinism. However, scientists are now clarifying these definitions and point out that

"since birds with white patches do have melanin in the body, they cannot be albinistic."

### **Pale or Pied?**

Thus, the white patches "are caused by a defect preventing normal deposition of the melanin. And since leucism is a deposition problem, it makes sense that birds with white patches would be leucistic. Consequently, leucism comes in two main varieties - **paleness**, an equal reduction of melanin in all feathers; and **pied**, an absence of melanin in some feathers creating white patches."<sup>3</sup>

After I read the above statement I realized our Mourning Dove was a "pied leucistic" which explained the white blotches (and here I thought this bird might be the new Sherwin-Williams "Cover The World" logo...GEEZ!). It was at this point that my feeble mind recalled a photo of a pale-colored Mallard hen

in flight submitted earlier in the year by none other than our own Field Sightings Editor, Dave Herr. I kept the photo on my computer and can now share it with Club members on the Newsletter link at [www.pendletonbirders.org](http://www.pendletonbirders.org). This bird has characteristics of a classic "pale leucistic" bird.

"Leucism is relatively unusual in birds, and albinism is rare. From 2000-2006, Project FeederWatch participants reported fewer than 1000 leucistic birds. Given that participants report about 5.5 million birds each season, the percentage of leucistic birds being reported is very small.

"Typically birds with abnormally white feathers do not survive long because they are so much more visible to predators. Those that do survive may have trouble attracting a mate. Consequently, the mutated genes that cause albinism and leucism are less likely to be passed on to a new generation. If you are ever fortunate enough to see one of these oddly plumaged birds, consider yourself lucky! And if your sighting occurs during the FeederWatch season, report the bird using an Unusual Bird Form online, or send us a note with your paper data forms at the end of the season."<sup>4</sup>



I will post additional photos of pied and pale leucistic birds on the Club's website in this month's issue of the Newsletter. Good luck on your feeder watching — you never know what might drop in...

<sup>1</sup>[http://www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw/AboutBirdsandFeeding/Albinism\\_Leucism.htm](http://www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw/AboutBirdsandFeeding/Albinism_Leucism.htm)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

## **BIRD OF THE MONTH — BARN OWL (*Tyto alba*)**

by June Whitten

True to their name, Barn Owls like to live in barns and other buildings with access, such as sheds, attics, and church steeples. Rock crevices are also to their liking. Due to this owl's voracious appetite for mice, an enlightened farmer will provide nest boxes if no building is available. A nesting pair and their young may eat more than 1,000 rodents per year.<sup>1</sup>

Barn Owls are the most widely distributed species of owl and one of the most widespread of all birds. There are many subspecies around the world and further testing may prove some to be a different species. Since owls have

always been closely associated with mythology, the Barn Owl is often called various names in other parts of the world: White Owl, Silver Owl, Demon Owl, Ghost Owl, Death Owl, Night Owl, Rat Owl, Monkey-faced Owl, Church Owl, and Cave Owl.<sup>2</sup>

To add to their mystic reputation, Barn Owls do not hoot, but give a *shree* scream, ear-shattering at close range. They also have a distinct hissing call. When captured or cornered, a Barn Owl throws itself on its back and flails with sharp-taloned feet.<sup>3</sup>

Barn Owls build a nest of sorts, but it is usually just a scrape in unsorted debris. Clutch size is usually 5-7, and depends on the availability of food. The male feeds the female throughout the incubation period, and both parents brood the babies.

Barn Owls are birds of open country, farmland or grassland, usually at fairly low elevations. They hunt by flying low and slowly over an area of open ground, hovering over spots that conceal potential prey. With extremely acute hearing and ears placed asymmetrically, they do not require sight to hunt. Hunting nocturnally or crepuscularly, it can target, dive, and penetrate its talons through snow, grass, or brush to seize rodents with deadly accuracy. Compared to other owls of similar size, the Barn Owl has a much higher metabolic rate, requiring relatively more food. Pound for pound, Barn Owls consume more rodents than possibly any other creature. Farmers find these owls more effective than poison in keeping down rodent pests. Barn Owls, however, were persecuted, as were many raptors, due to a lack of knowledge of their behavior and diet. Rodent poisoning and diminishing habitat are further threats to the Barn Owl.<sup>4</sup>



Barn Owl. Photo by Mike Danzenbaker.

The Barn Owl is unique with its usually whitish, heart-shaped face. The females may be browner than the males. Barn Owls have a short, squarish tail, which helps distinguish them in flight, as well as the wavering motions and open dangling feathered legs. In true owl fashion, the flight feathers are silent due to tiny serrations on the leading edges.<sup>5</sup>

Although not frequently seen due to their nocturnal habits, Barn Owls are fairly common in Umatilla County. The best place to observe them is in a barn or other out building. They are not particularly upset with humans in their territory. Check vertical cracks in rocky outcroppings as Barn Owls are found in this habitat as well.

1. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barn\\_Owl](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barn_Owl)

2. Ibid

3. Ibid

4. ibid

5. ibid



## BOOK REVIEW

by June Whitten

### Wesley the Owl—The Remarkable Love Story of an Owl and His Girl, Stacey O'Brien, Free Press, 2008

This is a new book in the Pendleton City Library, which recently opened a section on the National Parks. There was funding for some books, which include both birds and wildlife. "Wesley the Owl" is one of the new books from that selection.

Stacey O'Brien, biologist, readily adopts Wesley, a Barn Owl, when he is only 3 or 4 days old. Stacey worked at Caltech in the owl lab so she was available and eager to care for Wesley when he was found with nerve damage in one wing. He did learn to fly, but never to the extent to survive in the wild.

This is an amazing story of dedication, Stacey nurturing and learning to understand Wesley, and Wesley's total dedication to Stacey, the only parent he ever knew. His intelligence is way beyond what people would normally think of in any owl, and he learns to communicate his likes and dislikes very well. With no owl parent to teach him, he learns by trial and error and Stacey's patient tutoring.

Stacey and a friend laughed at Wesley when he tried flying and scooted across the dining room table a couple of times when landing. Wesley pouted with his back to them and wouldn't try again. Stacey decided then no one would be allowed to laugh at Wesley. He did try again and again and learned the skill very well.

Supplying Wesley with fresh or frozen mice proved to be a problem at times. Barn Owls must have mice, not only their favorite food, but a necessity including the bones to supply calcium. He usually ate the dead mouse whole, head first. The Barn Owl has a large gape behind the bill which allows it to swallow the mouse whole. If their prey is larger than a mouse,

they usually tear off pieces at a time. Stacey had to kill the mice and store them in the freezer. Of course, occasionally a mouse or two (or several) were loose in her car and her house. Wesley ate 3 or 4 mice daily, and up to 7 when going into a molt. Even in a city, it isn't always easy to purchase that many mice, dead or alive!

Stacey likened her communication with Wesley as two people who understand each other's language, although neither can speak the other language. Stacey learned more than Wesley in this remarkable story—The Way of the Owl.

### GET READY FOR A TRIP TO MALHEUR/STEENS MOUNTAIN

by June Whitten

The Malheur area is a wonderful place to visit any time, but September is very special. Birding is wonderful; we usually see 130 to 140 species on a long weekend. A highlight is going up on the



*Looking at Steens Mountain from the Alvord Desert floor.*

beautiful Steens Mountain, where the scenery alone is worth the trip. However, this is the home of the Black Rosy-Finch, and we have been very successful in finding them in the past. One year Sage Grouse were seen in the same

vicinity, a special treat. And, the area

around the Refuge Headquarters can house anything from woodpeckers to warblers, and rarities are not unusual there!

Pendleton Bird Club will once again sponsor a trip to Malheur National Wildlife Refuge and Steens Mountain on September 4-7, 2009. We plan to leave Pendleton Friday a.m. (Sept. 4) and return Monday afternoon (Sept. 7), which is Labor Day. We will carpool from Pendleton to Malheur and back, taking no more than 4 or 5 vehicles. If you ride with someone, assistance with gas purchases will be appreciated.

Those who are interested in reserving a space, please send a \$50 deposit, per person, to June Whitten, 1837



SW Athens Ave., Pendleton, OR 97801. We cannot reserve the facilities without a deposit. Checks may be made payable to Malheur Field Station or to June Whitten. June will send the deposits on to Duncan Evered (Malheur Field Station Director) to reserve our rooms. If we cancel our reservation for one or more rooms, part of the deposit may be refunded. No refunds are allowed for cancellations within one week of September 4.

We will rent Owl East and The Pelican, which will house up to 16 people, for three nights. Thus, the attendance on this trip will be limited to 16 participants on a first come, first served basis. Reserve your space by sending \$50 to June Whitten no later than Monday, July 27. The first 16 people who send in their deposits will have reservations. Without knowing the total number of attendees at this time, it is difficult to give the total cost for lodging. Depending on the number of attendees, the cleaning deposit, etc., the expected maximum for lodging will run between \$28 and \$35 per night per person. The Field Station requires the total lodging payment prior to or on arrival. Therefore, around September 1, the total fee will be known and collected.

Owl East and The Pelican have been remodeled recently, and they sound definitely up-graded since our last visit. At this time, the cafeteria at the Field Station is scheduled to be closed (but that could change) over the Labor Day weekend, so we are planning to have our dinners at the Narrows Café on Saturday and Sunday evenings. On Friday night, we will probably take-in pizza or something simple and all of us will get together over dinner in Owl East for a get-acquainted and weekend itinerary meeting. As we have done in the past, we will take our own breakfasts and lunches. Each rental unit has a full kitchen, including a refrigerator to store your perishable items. Bring your own food for breakfasts and lunches, and food costs will be the responsibility of each person. If you have any questions, call or e-mail June Whitten at 541-276-9019 or [jwhitten@oregontrail.net](mailto:jwhitten@oregontrail.net)

## June - July Bird Sightings

*Compiled by David Herr*

Summer is here (finally) and for the last few days, temperatures have been near 100 degrees. Here in the valley, many birds have finished nesting and

immature birds are quite evident. However, as we move into summer, both the birds and bird watchers are slowing down, as evidenced by the reduced length of this report.

**American White Pelicans** continue to be seen in the area. On June 22, Lorna Waltz reported 25 **American White Pelicans** flew down the Umatilla River and landed in the river at the foot of NW 8<sup>th</sup> Street in Pendleton. Lorna noted the birds rested in the area for over two hours before taking off, gaining elevation and flying east.



*American White Pelicans. Photo by Robert Shantz.*

Andy Stepniewski and his wife Ellen, birders from Yakima, WA, visited our area again on June 20. Their first stop was Wenix Springs near Thorn Hollow where they found **57 species** including **Black-chinned Hummingbird, Red-naped Sapsucker, Willow Flycatcher, Western Tanager, Black-headed Grosbeak** and a **Ruffed Grouse** with young. Traveling next to Iskuulpa Creek, they found **Orange-crowned** and **MacGillivray's Warblers, Dusky Flycatchers** and **Cassin's Vireos**. Driving up the Cabbage Hill highway (old Highway 30) they found numerous species including **Western Wood-Pewee, Willow Flycatcher, Warbling Vireo, Yellow-breasted Chat, Black-headed Grosbeak, Lazuli Bunting,** and **Chipping** and **Fox Sparrows**.

June 23, Connie Betts and a neighbor watched an **American Crow** chasing a **Great Horned Owl** at her home near the Pendleton Community Park. Connie reported there are a number of immature **American Crows** at the park learning to fly.

On June 24, Tanya Harrison reported she has been hearing a **Eurasian Collared-Dove** calling near her office at Mission. A pair of **Eurasian Collared-Doves** has been hanging around my (Dave Herr) Mount Hebron neighborhood in NE Pendleton for a couple of months, but I have yet to find any evidence of nesting.

Craig Kvern and Ron Lee saw an adult and an immature **Bald Eagle** at Indian Lake on June 24.



Early (2:00 am) June 25, I drove along Gurdane Road looking for **Common Poorwills**, since participants on a Pendleton Bird Club field trip had good luck finding Poorwills along this road earlier in the month. My objective was to photograph this species, and I was able to find one bird willing to sit long enough for a photo.

Rose Scott reported an amazing sighting on June 26. Rose works at the Echo Windfarm located west of Echo. While checking the area in the evening, she counted **57**



*Long-billed Curlew, Rose Scott.*

**Long-billed Curlews.** Rose noted there were both young and adult birds feeding, and Aaron Skirvin (Aaron) speculated the birds were gathering before heading west to the coast.

June 28 and 30, June and Duane Whitten had two **Rufous Hummingbirds** visit their feeder at their Grecian Heights home in SW Pendleton.

Birding at Cold Springs National Wildlife Refuge on July 4, Neal Hinds found several species of shorebirds at Memorial Marsh (southeast of the reservoir). They included one **American Avocet**, 7 **Greater Yellowlegs**, 6 **Wilson's Phalaropes** and 2 **Spotted Sandpipers**.

Camping at Target Meadows Campground over the 4<sup>th</sup> of July holiday, Aaron reported finding only expected species including several species of woodpecker, **Pine Siskins**, **Hermit** and **Swainson's Thrush**, **Red Crossbills**, **Lincoln's Sparrow**, and **Mountain Chickadee**. On July 7, Aaron found 15 adult **Western Sandpipers** at McKay Reservoir and the following morning saw a pair of courting **Eurasian Collared-Doves** on a power pole near his

yard in SE Pendleton. July 17, Aaron reported 2 **Semipalmated Plovers** at McKay Reservoir.

July 14, Joe and Jan Lysek found several **Bullock's Orioles** at their home along McKay Creek near McKay Creek Elementary School in SW Pendleton.

While conducting a bird survey at the Umatilla Chemical Depot on July 18, Aaron found two singing **BLACK-THROATED SPARROWS**. One was in Umatilla County and thus, another difficult to find species has been added to the County-year list.

Jack Simons reported the **Western Kingbirds** nesting in his front yard are doing well. Jack thinks the three baby kingbirds will soon be able to fly.

Aaron's sightings of **Western Sandpipers** and **Semipalmated Plovers** at McKay Reservoir remind us that adult shorebirds are already heading south after nesting in the far north. Although the water is still high at both McKay and Cold Springs reservoirs, it will be dropping rapidly at both locations and shorebirding will really start to get exciting in August. Check out these areas and please send all your bird sightings to me, Dave Herr, at [dsherr1@mac.com](mailto:dsherr1@mac.com) or 541-276-6413.

**Newsletter Editor: Barbara Clark, 541 278-1252**

**Email Address: [bainbrid@gmail.com](mailto:bainbrid@gmail.com)**

**Technical Editor: Aaron Skirvin, 541 276-1948**

**Email Address: [umatbirder@yahoo.com](mailto:umatbirder@yahoo.com)**

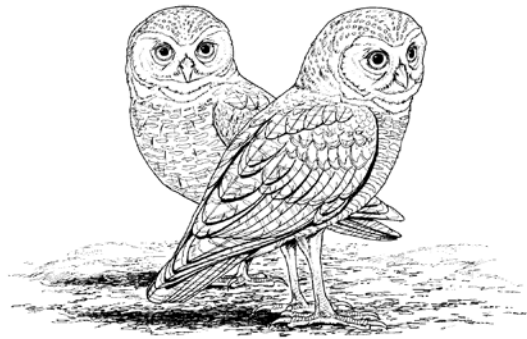
**Field Sightings Editor: Dave Herr, 541 276-6413**

**Email Address: [dsherr1@mac.com](mailto:dsherr1@mac.com)**

**Photo Editor: Jack Simons, 541 276-8566**

**Email Address: [styletoil@eoni.com](mailto:styletoil@eoni.com)**





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