



Newsletter of The Pendleton Bird Club

Kákya Táymut

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



Volume 9, No. 1 Pendleton, Oregon January 2011

In the Winter, the Web is Where It's At!

Have You Visited Your Pendleton Bird Club Website Lately?

By Jack Simons

When was the last time you visited the club's website? What! We have a website?? Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus...oops, that was a different story.

But the club does have a website and if you have not taken the time to visit it lately you may have missed some cool stuff. How do you get there? Load this address for a quick tour: <http://pendletonbirders.org/index.html>.

The club's photo galleries are a popular spot. Did you know that club members have submitted more than 1,000 photographs over the past five years and that 865 photos now exist in more than 15 photo galleries? Some of these galleries are "personal" galleries set up for individual club members, but we also have two really outstanding "club" galleries which list bird species with last names from A to L and M to Z.

There is no way to calculate the thousands of man hours invested to take all of the photos in the A to L and M to Z galleries, but these two galleries contain photos with a

combined total of 175 different species. Not all of the species are found in Umatilla County but the vast majority of the photos represent birds here in the county.

The software program used to make and display the galleries is called **Jalbum**, a freeware program available off the Internet. Recently I downloaded their latest upgrade and was pleasantly surprised to see a new filter that sharpens photos much better than previous versions. I would encourage each of you to open the Photo Galleries link on the home page, select either the A to L or M to Z galleries, then click on the Slideshow button (top of page, right button) to see the difference in clarity! **WOW!!!** What a difference and testament to the quality of images club members have been submitting. *Way to go!!*

To see more of what's available on our website, from the Home Page click on any of the available links including:



- Ever have an inkling to see a Newsletter from the past? Open the **Newsletter Archive Library** and you can access any Newsletter published in PDF format within the past year (we're still working on volumes from previous years).
- Curious about the current listing of birds sighted in Umatilla County in 2011? Click on the **2011 Umatilla County Bird Checklist** link for an up-to-date record. This list is updated weekly on Monday throughout the year for your convenience. Need to see checklists from 2003 to 2010? There are links to each of these pages at the top of the 2011 Checklist page.
- What about other checklists...perhaps popular birding locations in the County? Click on the **Umatilla County Bird Checklists** link where you can access checklists for six different popular birding locations.
- **Club Projects?** We've got 'em! From bluebird trails to a hummingbird garden to building artificial Burrowing Owl nest burrows. See what club members have been up to and feel free to join in other projects – just contact us for updates.
- Is bird art one of your passions? If so, click on the **Birds in Art** link to see samples as well as visit websites from four artists including John James Audubon, Louis Agassiz Fuertes, Charley Harper and Lisa Hill. This last artist is a watercolorist who resides in Richland, Washington.
- And, to challenge your identification skills, we always have two pages that are updated with challenging photos of birds found here in the County. Each week we post on the Home Page a "Featured Photo" taken by a Club member that should challenge your ID skills. Just click on the thumbnail of the bird or **Pic of the Week** link to see the bird. And, if you really want to challenge yourself, click on the **Take the ID Challenge** link to see six photos of birds that are found here in the County.

The Club's website has a wealth of information and I encourage each of you to visit now and again to see what's going on (the Club's *Calendar* is posted conspicuously at the bottom of the Home Page). There's a little bit for everybody – so help yourself!



Calendar of Events

Bird Club Meeting

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

LONG-BILLED CURLEWS

Presented by Sidra Blake

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

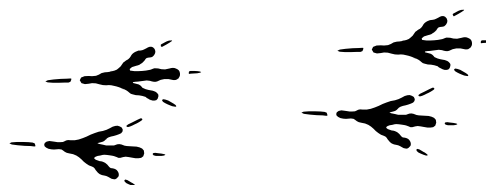
Bird Club Meeting

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

3rd ANNUAL HUMONGOUS ID CHALLENGE

Presented by Jack Simons

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



Bird Club Field Trip

SANDHILL CRANES AT ECHO MEADOWS

Saturday, March 26, 2011

**Meet at 8 a.m. at
Pendleton Safeway Parking Lot
(NE Corner)**

Bird Club Meeting & Potluck Dinner

**6:30 p.m., Thursday,
April 14, 2011**

**Potluck starts at 6:30 followed by
Presentation by Mike Denny**

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

Bird Club Field Trip

GREAT GRAY OWLS AT SPRING CREEK

Saturday, May 7, 2011

**Meet at 7 a.m. at
Pendleton Safeway Parking Lot
(NE Corner)**

Potluck, Blues Birds, Bottom Birds, Canoe Birds.....

By Marilyn Cripe

THE 2011 PENDLETON BIRD CLUB meetings got off to a great start on Thursday, January 13. Approximately 30 enthusiastic birders began the evening with a wonderful potluck that featured exotics such as Thai seafood curry, venison burger, delicious salads, casseroles and desserts.

Even with full tummies, Aaron Skirvin kept us awake with a recap of recent birding adventures and a schedule of exciting field trips. June Whitten reported on the successful fund raiser in December and



explained the good causes the money is used for, including: donations to the First Christian Church for our monthly use of the meeting room and kitchen; to Blue Mountain Wildlife in support of their work in bird rehabilitation and education; and to the Malheur Field Station (see "Malheur Field Station Clawing Back" in this issue). The funds also cover meeting refreshment expenses, web site fees, and other costs of the bird club as they arise.

Following the business meeting, Bruce Mayfield introduced three diverse programs:

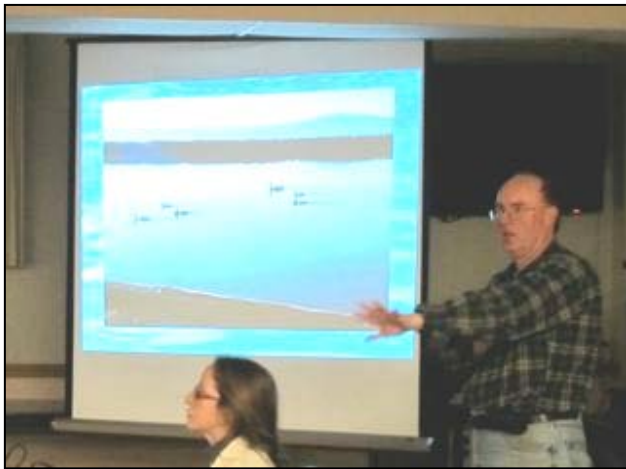
Joy Jaeger began "The Birds of the Blues" with narration and slides she had taken at their mountain cabins: one NE of Ukiah at 4,700' and the other near Poverty Flat at 3,400' elevation. Joy said she is a "beginner" birder and photographer. In 2003, her interest was fortunately captured by the "amazing" and colorful Western Tanager. Her ability to show



distinguishing features on approximately 30 species, plus the differences on some males and females of the same species, prove she is a quick learner!

Jack Simons began by briefly describing his 2-year old Canon camera that enabled him to present the enchanting "Secrets of the Umatilla River Bottom". Jack's artistic, self-advancing show accompanied by classical music kept us in rapt attention. The beautiful photos of birds, mammals, insects, flowers, sunsets and sunrises revealed the delightful treasures of the natural wonders near his home during spring and summer.

Bruce Mayfield and Katrina Dielman narrated slides of their family reunion trip to the Upper Klamath National Wildlife Refuge last June. Their slides showed views of Mt. McLoughlin, a snowy peak in



the nearby Cascades, thousands of acres of marshland and many species of birds, especially waterfowl. As they paddled and drifted in the "Canoe Trail", they also saw an eagle's nest and beaver lodges. Although their campsite at Rocky Point was not secluded, the bird habitat was very close and Katrina really enjoyed awakening to the crescendo of bird songs!

A big **THANK YOU** to all the chefs, participants, presenters, and tidy-uppers. 2011 is off to a fabulous start at the Pendleton Bird Club!

"The rare moment is not the moment when there is something worth looking at, but the moment we are capable of seeing."

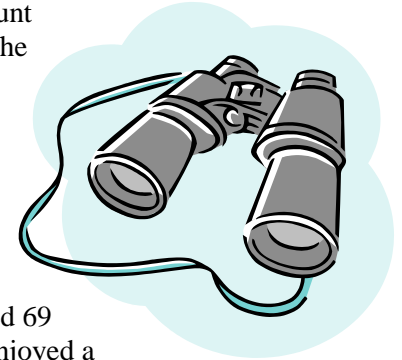
Joseph Wood Krutch



2010 Umatilla County Christmas Bird Count

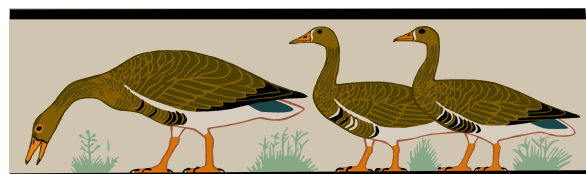
by Aaron Skirvin

WE HELD OUR 2010 ANNUAL Christmas bird count on Sunday, January 2, 2011. Umatilla County's count was part of the nationwide 111th annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC) sponsored by the National Audubon Society. The goal of our count was to find, identify, and count as many birds as possible in a 24-hour period within a count circle 15 miles in diameter. The center of Umatilla County's count circle is located near the base of Cabbage Hill about six miles southeast of Pendleton.



Twenty bird counters, including 4 feeder watchers, tallied 69 species of birds and enjoyed a day of fair weather and good birding on January 2. A typical Umatilla County CBC will tally 70 to 72 bird species. The highest species total for the Umatilla County CBC was 81 species on January 3, 1992. Last year, we found 78 species and counted 8,041 individual birds in the count circle. This year, we tallied 8,580 individual birds. Rules for the Christmas Bird Count allow the addition of species found during "count week" — three days immediately prior to and three days after count day. Although our species count on count day was slightly below average this year, we made up a little ground by adding four count week species: Ruffed Grouse, Pied-billed Grebe, Short-eared Owl, and Pine Siskin.

One to three inches of snow covered most of the count circle on January 2, but the higher elevations around Poverty Flat had 14 inches of snow. The snow depth in the mountains prevented the bird counters there from walking through the forests and several forest species, such as White-breasted Nuthatch, Pygmy Nuthatch, Ruffed Grouse, and Hairy Woodpecker, were missed. On the bright side, game bird and raptor (hawks, owls, and eagles) numbers



were up substantially over last year. For example, this year we found 707 Ring-necked Pheasants (163 last year), 500 California Quail (65 last year), 25 Gray Partridges (none last year), 252 Red-tailed Hawks (158 last year), 4 Cooper's Hawk (none last year), and 19 Bald Eagles (13 last year). Game bird numbers were much higher this year because of their good breeding success this past spring/summer and their higher visibility on count day due to the snow cover. Even with few participants this year, we counted 516 total raptors as compared to 397 last year – a 30 percent increase. Raptor numbers have been high all fall/winter due to the high density of voles in the area.

Participants on this year's count were: Connie Betts, Marilyn Cripe, Katrina Dielman, Debra Doyle, Becky Hiers, Tanya Harrison, Betty Klepper, Craig Kvern, Diana LaSarge, Bruce Mayfield, Dolly Robison, George Ruby, Jack Simons, Sharon Simons, Aaron Skirvin, Virginia Storey, Lorna Waltz, Ruth Whittaker, Duane Whitten, and June Whitten. **A sincere thank you to all for making the time to help count birds for the CBC.**

Results of the 2010 Umatilla County Christmas Bird Count are as follows: Canada Goose 1722, Wood Duck 8, Gadwall 4, American Wigeon 52, Mallard 199, Green-winged Teal 62, Ring-necked Duck 9, Common Merganser 11, Wild Turkey 39, Ring-necked Pheasant 707, California Quail 500, Gray Partridge 25, Ruffed Grouse (count week), Pied-billed Grebe (count week), Great Blue Heron 24, Bald Eagle 19 (17 adults and 2 immatures), Northern Harrier 77, Sharp-shinned Hawk 4, Cooper's Hawk 4, Red-tailed Hawk 252, Rough-legged Hawk 46, Buteo sp. 8, Golden Eagle 6 (3 adults and 3 immatures), American Kestrel 87, Merlin 1, Prairie Falcon 5, American Coot 49, Killdeer 1, Wilson's Snipe 4, Ring-billed Gull 5, Rock Pigeon 186, Mourning Dove 249, Eurasian Collared-Dove 42, Barn Owl 1, Great Horned Owl 6, Short-eared Owl (count week), Belted Kingfisher 5, Downy Woodpecker 5, Northern Flicker 49, Pileated Woodpecker 2, Northern Shrike 4, Steller's Jay 3, Black-billed Magpie 331, American Crow 20, Common Raven 74, Horned Lark 166, Black-capped Chickadee 38, Red-breasted Nuthatch 1, Brown Creeper 2, Bewick's Wren 5, Pacific (Winter) Wren 5, Golden-crowned Kinglet 3, Ruby-crowned Kinglet 3, Hermit Thrush 7, Townsend's Solitaire 4, American Robin 3, Varied Thrush 4, European Starling 913, Yellow-rumped

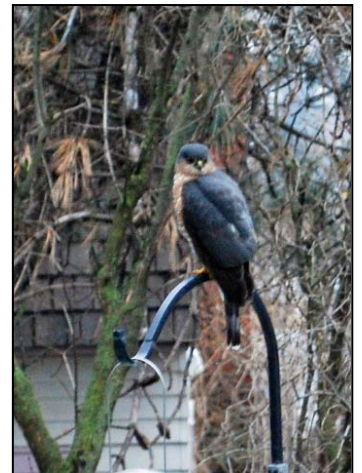
Warbler 2, Spotted Towhee 4, American Tree Sparrow 1, Song Sparrow 142, Golden-crowned Sparrow 1, White-crowned Sparrow 409, Dark-eyed Junco 1056, Red-winged Blackbird 32, Western Meadowlark 100, Brewer's Blackbird 93, House Finch 108, Cassin's Finch 3, Pine Siskin (count week), American Goldfinch 84, Lesser Goldfinch 1, House Sparrow 485.

PBC Feeder Count

Collated by June Whitten & Jack Simons

When it was decided to have a feeder count, the winter weather was in full force. The day the count began on January 12, the temperature warmed considerably, the snow melted, and the birds dispersed. Does the Pendleton Bird Club have some unknown power to control the weather? Perhaps it should have been tested earlier as some people were tired of the white landscape and icy roads!

California Quail came in first place with 248 reported by the ten feeder-count members. The Dark-eyed Juncos were expected to take first place, but they flitted into the fields, and the House Finches beat them by a beak—173 House Finches to 165 Dark-eyed Juncos. The lovely American Goldfinches made a great showing with 158. Mourning Doves, to prove they are not yet replaced by the Eurasian Collared-Doves, showed up with 121 to only 16 Collared-Doves. However, keep in mind, four years ago or maybe even less, there would have been zero Eurasian Collared-Doves.



A sharp-eyed Sharp-shinned Hawk at the feeder of Don & Carol Guenther.

Six of the ten reports included a Sharp-shinned Hawk, which along with other raptors in Umatilla County seem to be present in larger numbers than usual this winter. While most people who feed birds do not care for Sharpies taking "their" birds, one has



to agree they are agile fliers and not to be daunted by hand-slapping humans! The resident Sharpie at the Whitten's feeder spent a lot of time perched on top of the high feeder and one day a sparrow stayed motionless for over ten minutes underneath the bottom feeder to avoid certain death.

Ring-necked Pheasant	4
California Quail	248
Sharp-shinned Hawk	6
Red-tailed Hawk	1
Eurasian Collared Dove	16
Mourning Dove	121
Downy Woodpecker	3
Northern Flicker	13
Black-billed Magpie	21
Black-capped Chickadee	12
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1
American Robin	8
Varied Thrush	2
European Starling	42
Yellow-rumped Warbler	2
Spotted Towhee	3
Song Sparrow	4
White-crowned Sparrow	23
Dark-eyed Junco	165
Red-winged Blackbird	2
House Finch	173
Pine Siskin	1
Lesser Goldfinch	2
American Goldfinch	158
House Sparrow	98

Very good news to see Varied Thrush on the list. They have been a little scarce the past few years. Lorna Waltz reported a third one, but it was visiting her neighbor and wasn't at her feeder.

Thanks to all of the participants in the feeder count. It seemed to be a fun activity from the comments sent with the bird lists. Participants: Connie Betts, Nancy Brown, Barbara Clark, Chris Burford, Marilyn Cripe, Janet Groat, Don and Carole Guenther, Jack Simons, Katherine Skirvin, Lorna Waltz, Tanya Harrison, June and Duane Whitten .

Festivus Miracle

By Ann Wyatt

ON DECEMBER 23RD A BIT AFTER 2 PM I drove up my steep driveway into the carport and saw a big, rather light colored bird fly across the yard to my willow tree. For certain, it wasn't the southwest hill resident Sharpie! It was a female Barn Owl!!! A short while later she was back on her carport rafter perch looking in my den window.



For you non-Seinfeld fans: "Festivus for the Rest of Us" was dreamed up by George's father. It's celebrated on December 23rd to avoid the commercialization of Christmas and any ordinary (or out of the ordinary) happening on that day is a "Festivus Miracle". Jill's and my "Festivus Miracle" was Ms. Barn Owl. She roosted in the rafters during the day, flew out in the evening to hunt and was back Christmas Eve morning. She stayed there on her perch whitewashing the carport, eared up a pellet, snoozed and preened but kept a close watch on us inside. She bumped when we went out but always circled back to same carport perch.

Christmas morning she was gone and we haven't seen her since. Definitely a "Festivus Miracle!"

What a Christmas treat!

Malheur Field Station Clawing Back

By Jack Simons

AS YOU PROBABLY KNOW, each year Pendleton Bird Club reserves the December meeting for its annual auction. Money from the auction is used for donations to worthy causes as well as to pay the club's bills. This year the club made a number of donations including \$100 to the Malheur Field Station in memory of Russell Betts, longtime bird club member, who passed away in



December 2009. I had the honor of attended two PBC field trips to the Station with Russell and his wife Connie and he was always a source of knowledge and inspiration about the outdoors.

Have you ever visited the Malheur Field Station (MFS) in Harney County? It is located on the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in southeastern Oregon. MFS is a nonprofit educational and research center surrounded by wetlands, desert and mountains. Pendleton Bird Club has organized a number of field trips to this popular spot in the past 7 years. With over 35 years of experience, the Station has an excellent track record of providing a unique experience for birders and photographers alike.

Unfortunately, like so many organizations hit hard by these difficult times, the Station found itself struggling financially to stay afloat the last few years. We thought it would be timely to update club members on the financial condition of the Station, where they were and where they are headed. How is the Station doing in these tough times? In the proverbial “nutshell,” things are looking up! It was only a year ago when the Station was faced with a debt load in excess of \$100,000. In response, the Board of The Great Basin Society laid out an aggressive plan to not only upgrade the aging facility but to put into motion a plan for sustainability for the future.

Much of the restructuring has been not only based on private donations from members of Friends of Malheur (FOM) but also a concerted effort has been made to request funds through grant applications. For instance, in November 2009 MFS was awarded \$18,000 from Oregon Community Foundation Advised Funds and most recently, a \$56,500 grant from the Collins Foundation permitted the purchase of a 2009 twelve-passenger van for use in their educational programs plus metal roofing for large buildings on the facility.

More recently, the Board reported a combined \$80,000 grant from the M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust with \$75,000 from dedicated supporters that was used for much needed building renovations. This year, the Station was awarded \$116,500 from the Murdock Trust “to appoint a Development Coordinator, to promote Station business and thus to help achieve self-sufficiency.” Although

the new hire is funded for three years, Murdock expects the Station to partially fund the position they are supporting. Thus, Murdock will support the first year (\$56,000) but only partially support the second (\$38,500) and the third year (\$21,500). To qualify for full payment, the Station must provide matching funds in the amount of \$18,500 in year two and \$43,000 in year three.



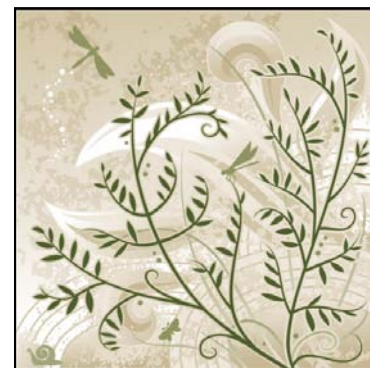
A new funding campaign was launched in late 2010 to further reduce their debt load. Supporters have been asked to support either (or both) the \$18,500 “Murdock Trust Match” or to contribute to the goal of raising \$25,000 for a “fiscally healthier MFS.”

Thanks to generous contributions from dedicated supporters and an aggressive grant program, the future of Malheur Field Station is much brighter. This is welcome news given the Station’s grim predicament only 18 months ago. If you would like to contribute to the Malheur Field Station or become a Friend of Malheur please visit their website at <http://www.malheurfieldstation.org/index.html> for an application form. I think this is indeed “money well spent.”

By the way, the 2011 MFS Program Listings will be published shortly. Last year’s programs included an eclectic selection, including Birding Malheur; Flora of Malheur; Butterflies of Malheur; Malheur Under The Stars; Field Sketching; The Geology of Malheur; and even Music and Painting.

Perhaps the aphorism on their website says it best:

“The pace here is not set so much by timetables and deadlines, but by the weather and the visitor's desire to learn and explore.”



Dolly Robison Discovers Bird Friendly Restaurant in The Dalles

From an email sent to Jack Simons on January 14, 2011:

Jack.....I went to Portland for work this past week. I did find a bird friendly restaurant in The Dalles that I wanted to tell Birders about. I'm always on the lookout for different places to eat & at The Dalles I usually stop & get a bite. I took Exit 84 (3rd exit) & just happened to see a Restaurant sign that made me think that it may be by the river. I wound my way toward the river & found the Windseeker overlooking the Columbia. The surrounding landscaping includes old pothole riparian areas. In the summer, one can eat outside on their deck/patio I would think & with the feeders & little birdhouses they have in the surrounding trees--see some birds. Well, I had a table at a window overlooking the river & while eating, saw Common Goldeneye, Mallards, gulls flying by, Song Sparrow on the post outside the window & Canada Geese! Right outside the restaurant is a 'River walk' that stretches from the 2nd Exit (City Center) to the Discovery Center--maybe 5-6 miles??? But it's paved & goes past pothole riparian areas, old docks & basalt islands. I can't wait to check this out in the spring!!! As it was, I was 1/2 hour ahead of a major sleet/snowstorm that closed I-84 behind me & with the falling snow starting, didn't get to see much more. Later, Dolly

Jack asked Dolly for permission to use her email in this newsletter; and this was her reply:

Please do! It is the Windseeker Restaurant & Portside Pub, 1535 Bargeway Rd., The Dalles. Oh my gosh--they have a website & it's really worth looking at. They also have a U tube advertisement/ look-at-what-they-offer video. Seems like it's a destination as they have gardens, do weddings, have outdoor dining, feature wildlife & birds, have great food & wine--prices are moderate to higher end. Check it out at www.windseekerrestaurant.com! Dolly

December – January Sightings

by Dave Herr

THERE HAS BEEN A VARIETY OF weather this report period. Snow and low temperatures characterized the first part and warmer weather and rain the last couple of weeks. When I got home from a Christmas vacation January 1, I (Dave Herr) immediately filled my bird feeders. As expected, with the cold temperatures and snow on the ground, my yard was soon filled with birds, mostly **House Sparrows, Dark-eyed Juncos, House Finches** and **American Goldfinches**. However, now that the snow has melted, only a few **Dark-eyed Juncos** are visiting. December 24,



Bird Sightings



Dolly Robison noticed a very cold **Killdeer** as she was driving along I-84 near Pendleton.

Aaron Skirvin (Aaron) and June Whitten (June) decided to end 2010 with a birding trip to the north-west section of the county. While looking for **Western Scrub-Jays** in Hermiston (they found one), they were surprised to find a way out of place **Clark's Nutcracker** near the intersection of W. Third Street and W. Hartley Ave. What this high elevation bird was doing in Hermiston is anyone's guess. At the Columbia River below McNary Dam they found the first-winter **BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE** reported last month was still around. There were 3 **Tundra Swans** at the McNary Wildlife Nature Area (MWNA) and at least 4 **Western Scrub-Jays** were near the Oregon Fish View Room.

On January 1, 2011 a number of Pendleton Bird Club members went out to see how many birds they could find to start the New Year. Aaron tallied the results

and reported a total of 76 species counted. Some of the more interesting sightings included **Western Scrub-Jays** in the Hermiston area, **American White Pelican**, **Barrow's Goldeneye**, and a **Eurasian Wigeon** at MWNA, **Prairie Falcon** east of Hermiston, and a **Varied Thrush** in Pendleton. However, the best find of the day was a **NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD** in an alley across Hwy 395 from the Shell gas station in downtown Pilot Rock. It has been several years since this species was last seen in Umatilla County.

The Umatilla Christmas Bird Count was held January 2. A summary of this event is listed in a separate newsletter article.

January 3, I found a **Pine Siskin** at my feeders in NE Pendleton and was able to add this species to Christmas Count "count week" total. Dolly Robinson always checks for birds along Stage Gulch Creek in Stanfield, when she drives to work. In early January she noted a **Black-crowned Night-Heron** along the creek and, on January 6, found a **Great Egret**, another addition to the county year list. Barbara Clark had a **Yellow-rumped Warbler** visit her bird feeders January 6. Barbara noted she had never had this species at her feeder this time of year.

Tanya Harrison ran the Pendleton-Echo-Hermiston Winter Raptor Survey on January 6. During the survey she found 21 **Red-tailed Hawks**, 31 **American Kestrels**, 4 **Northern Harriers**, 5 **Bald** and one **Golden Eagle**, six **Rough-legged Hawks**, a **Merlin** and 2 **Cooper's Hawks**.

Conducting the mid-winter waterfowl count at McKay Reservoir on January 7, along with the expected waterfowl, Aaron, June and Duane Whitten found an unexpected **Lincoln's Sparrow** and amongst the **Red-tailed Hawks**, one **Harlan's Red-tail**.



Northern Mockingbird. Photo by Aaron Skirvin.

Aaron was surprised to see a **Northern Goshawk** near his home on Pendleton's SE Hill January 8. A forest bird, this is a strange accipiter to find within the Pendleton city limits. Tanya Harrison found a **Northern Goshawk** along the Rieth Road in mid-December, another seemingly out of place bird.

Birding in the northwest section of the county on

January 8, Aaron, June and Connie Betts added a number of county year birds to the 2011 list including a **Peregrine Falcon** along the Stanfield Meadows Road, a **Mew Gull** at Umatilla Marina, a **California Gull** just below McNary Dam and a **Glaucous-winged Gull** about ½ mile downriver from the dam. They found there is still at least one male **Eurasian Wigeon** at the MWNA.



Pine Siskin. Photo by Joy Jaeger.

January 9, Aaron and Jack Simons birded from Weston to Wallula and then down the Columbia River to McNary Wildlife Nature Area. Some of their more interesting sightings included: **35 Snow Geese**, 2 male **Eurasian Wigeons** at MWNA, a male **Northern**

Shoveler, pair of **Canvasback**, **Eared Grebes** and a **Brown-headed Cowbird**.

January 14, Katrina Dielman found 2 **Varied Thrushes** in her yard on Pendleton's North Hill. She noted they made quite a show as they tossed leaves while hunting for food. These are the first **Varied Thrushes** Katrina has seen in her yard this winter.



Birding in the Hermiston area January 15, Neal Hinds was able to photograph an immature **Bald Eagle** feeding on a gopher near Wanaket Wildlife Area, and at MWNA he photographed **Tundra Swans**, a **Barrow's Goldeneye** and a **Common Goldeneye**.

January 15, June and Duane Whitten birded in the McNary Dam area. They found a **Great Egret** in Stanfield, a **Mew Gull** and **Ring-billed Gulls** near the Umatilla Marina as well as 2 **Horned Grebes** in the marina and 2 in the Columbia River. Other sightings included a female **Barrow's Goldeneye** and **Eurasian Wigeon** in Fountain Pond at MWNA and 2 **Western Scrub Jays** near the fish ladder. There were at least 6 **Tundra Swans** in the McNary Pond.



Mew Gull (left) and Ring-billed Gull. Photo by Aaron Skirvin.

3 more around the McNary Golf Course. Other sightings included 4 species of **Grebe: Eared, Horned, Pied-billed** and **Western**, many **buteos**, 2 **Golden Eagles** and a **Prairie Falcon**.

Well, there are still at least 8 weeks of winter left, but even in the winter weather, there are still a lot of interesting birds to find. At the January 13, Pendleton Bird Club meeting, members reported a number of **Varied Thrush** sightings, a **Pileated Woodpecker** west of Mission, and **Common Mergansers** and other ducks using the Umatilla River along the

Pendleton Parkway. Please continue to send your winter bird sightings to me, Dave Herr at dsherr1@mac.com or call 541-276-6413.

June, Aaron and Jack Simons birded in the northwest corner of the county January 16. They had a great day, totaling 64 species including 4 new county-year birds (**Northern Pintail** at Stanfield Meadows, **Common Loon** and **Western Grebe** along the Columbia River and a **Marsh Wren** at MWNA). June reported the usual "mob" of **Wood Ducks** as well as lots of other waterfowl species at the Wildlife Nature Area. There are still a couple of **Western Scrub-Jays** hanging out near the fish ladder and 2 or

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