



Newsletter of The Pendleton Bird Club

Kákya Táymut

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

Volume 8, No. 7 Pendleton, Oregon July 2010

Birding on the Border

It was reunion time when June and Duane Whitten, Aaron Skirvin, Connie Betts, Ann Wyatt and Betty Klepper joined Bob and Dannell Tapley in Southern Arizona for some first class birding. The Tapleys, who moved to Arizona from Pendleton nearly two years ago, greeted the Pendleton crowd with a delicious welcome dinner on Saturday evening, May 29th.

The next day we visited Sweetwater Wetlands (Tucson's wastewater treatment facility) and then birded our way to Willcox, a town on the northern border of the Chiricahua Mountains. On the way, we visited Ann's son (Mark) and his girl friend at St. David, where we got close-up looks at a Greater Roadrunner carrying a lizard in its beak. At the Holy Trinity Monastery in St.

David, we saw a pair of N. Beardless-Tyrannulets at close range, a Vermilion Flycatcher pair, Tropical and Cassin's Kingbirds, and Gila Woodpeckers. Along the way, birds of note included Purple Martin and Gray Hawk. There were many

Chihuahuan Ravens in desert areas and some Common Ravens in the mountains. That evening, we drove into the western Chiricahua Mountains and readily found several singing Whip-poor-wills, two calling Whiskered Screech-Owls, and a calling Flammulated Owl at the end of West Turkey Creek Road.



June Whitten looks through the spotting scope for the Botteri's Sparrow as her husband Duane, Ann Wyatt and Aaron Skirvin try to spot it.

On Monday, we birded in the Chiricahua Mts. west of Portal. From the summit at Onion Saddle, we could easily see smoke from the Horseshoe Fire, which had kept us out of Cave Creek Canyon. Birds high in the Chiricahuas included Mexican Chickadee, Plumbeous Vireo, Hermit Thrush, Painted Redstart, Grace's Warbler, Brown Creeper, and Western Bluebird. On the way up to the summit, we spotted a female Scott's Oriole

building a nest in a roadside yucca. While we lunched in Pine Canyon, a pair of Hepatic Tanagers and a Dusky-capped Flycatcher visited our picnic site. That evening we stopped by Ash Canyon B&B near Sierra Vista, where the owner (Mary Jo Ballator)



maintains a bird feeding area. Our quarry was the rare Lucifer Hummingbird, but instead we found Broad-billed, Anna's, and Black-chinned Hummingbirds.

We returned to Ash Canyon B&B early Tuesday morning and hit the jackpot: Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher, Blue Grosbeak, Spotted Towhees, several hummingbirds (but still no Lucifer), Arizona Woodpecker, Ladder-backed Woodpecker, Acorn Woodpecker, Black-headed Grosbeak, Arizona Gray Squirrel, Rock Squirrel, and other wildlife. It was a hummingbird haven at Beatty's Guest Ranch in Miller Canyon (renowned for close-up hummingbird viewing), just a few miles south of Sierra Vista. Here we saw 7 species of hummers, including White-eared and Berylline, which were life birds for several of us. That evening we returned to Ash Canyon B&B and finally had excellent views of a male Lucifer Hummingbird.

On Wednesday, we left Sierra Vista, driving west-erly through US Army Fort Huachuca and birded on the Fort in Garden Canyon and Huachuca Canyon, both wonderful birding spots with small streams and relatively untouched vegetation. We found a pair of nesting Buff-breasted Flycatchers, several Summer Tanagers, Western Wood-Pewees building a nest, and a number of Cassin's Kingbirds.

At Patagonia, we stopped at the old Paton residence, where hummingbird and other feeders are maintained for public viewing. Violet-crowned Hummingbirds, which are notable here and a few other places in the US, gave us good views at the feeders along with other hummingbirds, including Anna's and the ever-present Broad-billed. Patagonia



Pendleton birders pose for group photo at Pena Blanca Lake, Arizona.

wayside yielded Thick-billed Kingbird and Bell's Vireo. Birding in the evening near Nogales, we found a flock of Black-bellied Whistling Ducks and a Brown-crested Flycatcher at Kino Springs golf resort.

Thursday, we drove the beautiful back road north-westerly from Nogales to the small town of Arivaca, with a birding stop at Pena Blanca Lake. Flycatchers abounded at Pena Blanca, including Vermilion Flycatcher, Cassin's Kingbird, Brown-crested Flycatcher, Western Wood-Pewee, and Dusky-capped Flycatcher. We also saw Black Vulture, Summer Tanager, and Rufous-crowned Sparrow at the lake.

On Friday morning's birding trip to the Santa Catalina Mountains (Mt. Lemmon) NE of Tucson, our guide, Melody Kehl, helped us find Gray Vireo, Red-faced Warbler (20 feet away at eye-level!!),



Curve-billed Thrasher.

numerous Cordilleran Flycatchers, Greater Pewee, Virginia's Warbler, Zone-tailed Hawk, Grace's Warbler, Band-tailed Pigeons, and Brown Creeper. Friday evening Bob, June, and Aaron did a short birding run to Florida Wash about 10 miles SE of Green Valley. They readily called in Rufous-winged Sparrow and a male Varied Bunting. On the way to Florida Wash, they had a serendipitous moment when a Common Black-Hawk

soared over the road near the car. We really hadn't expected to see the Black Hawk since they are usually found in only a few scattered locations in SE Arizona.

On Saturday morning we birded Madera Canyon, a popular birding area in the Santa Rita Mountains 30 miles south of Tucson. Bob, Connie and Aaron got

excellent views of the Elegant Trogon, their reward for a rather arduous walk that the rest of the group elected to omit. On the drive back to Green Valley, a



Blue Grosbeak and White-winged Doves.

Zone-tailed Hawk with two Red-tails soared near the car. That afternoon Melody Kehl guided us to California Gulch. Along the way, we spotted a couple of Gray Hawks, a Varied Bunting and two Botteri's Sparrows (life bird for most). At dusk, in the depths of California Gulch, only a mile north of the Mexican border, Melody led us on a short walk up the gulch and readily produced two Five-striped Sparrows in



Greater Roadrunner with lunch (a succulent lizard).

the bushes within 60 feet. Everyone got good views and a new life bird - the second life bird for the Whittens in one day!! After a glorious dinner provided by our guide, Melody called up two Elf Owls, our first of the trip, and life-bird for several of us.



On Sunday we returned to Madera Canyon to look for Black-capped Gnatcatcher and Flame-colored Tanager. But, on the way, we stopped on the outskirts of Green Valley, where Melody advised us we could readily find the Rufous-winged Sparrow that only Bob, June, and Aaron had seen so far. Sure enough, after watching a male Northern Cardinal serenade us with his song for a few minutes, June played the taped song of the Rufous-winged Sparrow. Within 3 or 4 seconds the Rufous-winged arrived on cue, in the open within 50 feet and sat in the bush for all to admire!!

On our final day, we went back to the Santa Catalina Mountains to try for better looks at Greater Pewee and Virginia's Warblers, but they remained uncooperative. We did see our first-of-the-trip Black-tailed and Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, however. Those brought our total for the trip to 161 species!

We had a great trip thanks to the thorough planning by Aaron, Duane and June and the warm hospitality of the Tapleys. We were also pleased with our decision to hire a professional guide; Melody enriched our experience and saved a lot of searching time. We've mentioned our routes and sites in this article so that if you ever want to bird in Southeastern Arizona, you will know some special places to go. Southeastern Arizona is truly a birding paradise!

Submitted by the "Birding on the Border" participants.

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

Calendar of Events

Bird Club Meeting

7:00 p.m., Thursday, October 14, 2010

GROUSE OF THE WORLD

Presented by Mike Gregg & Jenny Barnett

Pendleton First Christian Church
North Main St., Pendleton

Bird Club Meeting

7:00 p.m., Thursday,
November 11, 2010

A BIRDING ADVENTURE – SOUTHERN AFRICA

Presented by Terry Steele

Location to be determined

Bird Club Meeting

7:00 p.m., Thursday, December 9, 2010

AMAZING HUMMINGBIRDS OF THE UNITED STATES

A Video Presentation Produced by

Charles W. Melton

Followed by

THE ANNUAL FUND RAISER

Pendleton First Christian Church
North Main St., Pendleton

What a Difference a Year Makes

Submitted by Jack Simons

On Sunday, July 4th Sharon and I travelled to the Albee-Ukiah Bluebird Trail to check on nesting bluebirds. What a beautiful day it was! Temperature was perfect with a light breeze, sunny and wildflowers everywhere. A perfect day in bluebird country or at least that was our first impression. Unfortunately, our little buddies in their boxes were not doing so well. It appeared that the weather had impacted bluebird production this year. I think we all had some doubts about how well nesting



Five Western Bluebird chicks ready to fledge from their nestbox...

would go this year given the cold, wet conditions this spring. Here were the numbers as of July 4:

- Boxes that had nests this year: 31 out of 31 (all Western Bluebirds)
- Eggs counted in nestboxes: 13
- Chicks counted in nestboxes: 36
- Chicks presumed fledged: 92 (last year's first hatch total was 110 for comparison)
- Dead chicks counted in nestboxes: 11
- Nestboxes with new nesting material for a second hatch: 2 out of 31
- Nestboxes that appeared to be abandoned: 9 out of 31

The biggest surprise was the number of dead chicks in nestboxes (11). I can only speculate as to the cause



for such high mortality but my best guess was that the insect hatch this year was way down. Despite an abundance of wildflowers on every hillside, ravine or gully, we only saw 4 butterflies and no honeybees. Normally you can drive down the road and intersect insects flying across the roadway but on the fourth of July the air was practically empty. I think the cold weather this spring affected the insect hatch and this in turn affected the bluebird hatch. My best guess is that the cold conditions stressed the chicks and with a low food supply, many simply starved to death. Saddest sighting was opening a box and seeing a large chick huddled against the nestbox doorway and its sibling lying dead against the opposite wall.

We saw no raptors (normally a common sight on the trail) and only 1 flycatcher – an Eastern Kingbird (an insect eater). **Now fast forward two weeks to Sunday, July 18...**

It was another gorgeous day in the Blue Mountains along the Trail. Given the high mortality rate we had encountered two weeks before, we were curious if this year's insect hatch had finally begun and if a second hatch of bluebird chicks was underway. Unfortunately, the first 11 boxes on the trail pretty much summed up this year's second hatch: we found abandoned boxes, dead chicks in boxes, and many boxes empty of eggs and chicks. It was for this reason that we cleaned and emptied 10 of the first 11 boxes we opened. In fact, by the time we had finished checking all 31 boxes, we had cleaned out 23 of the 31 boxes leaving only 8 boxes with eggs/broods. Here are the numbers for July 18:

- Boxes that had first hatch nests: 2; boxes that had second hatch nests: 5
- Eggs counted in first hatch nests: 1; eggs counted in second hatch nests: 15
- Chicks counted in first hatch nests: 5; chicks counted in second hatch nests: 6
- Chicks presumed fledged in first hatch: 92; chicks presumed fledged in second hatch: 0
- Dead chicks counted in first hatch nests: 11; dead chicks counted in second hatch nests: 12
- Nestboxes with new nesting material for a second hatch: 5 out of 31
- Nestboxes that appeared to be abandoned: 23 out of 31

As a basis for comparison, last year on July 19 there were 20 second hatch nests; 59 eggs, 23 chicks; and, 0 fledged birds. What happened?

Good question. While this is only speculation, I think the answer lies in the lack of food for this year's crop of young bluebirds. We continue to see very little insect activity along the Trail. Insects are an excellent source of protein and a staple in the diet of bluebirds thus when that part of the food chain crashes it has an



...and, unfortunately, five that did not make it.

effect up the food chain which in this case means fewer eggs, chicks and fledglings. There is nothing more discouraging than opening a nestbox with dead chicks.

We will continue to monitor the remaining nestboxes and update conditions in next month's Newsletter. But at this point it doesn't look too hopeful for a successful second hatch crop. In the end though, this is the way of Nature and it has worked successfully for eons. And with 92 presumed chicks fledged this year from the first hatch, the general bluebird population should continue to grow and expand its range.

As disheartening as it may seem, the decline in this year's hatch is insignificant compared to the cumulative effect of the removal of dead snags containing woodpecker holes that traditionally have been used by bluebirds for nesting. This is why the bird club's effort to provide nesting sites to bluebirds displaced by manmade changes and nest-site competitors like Starlings is so important.



SHORT-EARED OWL (*Asio flammeus*)

Submitted by June Whitten

The Short-eared Owl has such short ear tufts that they are seldom visible. When the owl is in a defensive pose, the ear tufts are raised and can be visible. All owls in the genus *Asio* have ear tufts of varying lengths. *Flammeus* is Latin for flaming or the color of fire. While the Short-eared Owl is far from a flaming color, it does have a rusty belly and brown and mottled tawny plumage with a barred tail and wings. The upper breast is streaked. The yellow eyes look extra large due to the black rings encircling them with disks of whitish feathers around the black rings. The Short-eared Owl is a medium-sized owl, about 15 inches long, with the females being slightly larger than the males.



Bird of the Month

The Short-eared Owl is crepuscular (hunts at twilight and just before daylight), as well as nocturnal when it hunts at night. It is, however, one of the most diurnal owls and is quite often seen in daylight. The daylight hunting probably occurs when voles, its preferred prey, are most active. The Short-eared Owl lives in or near open grasslands and fields where it can swoop down, feet first, to capture voles, other rodents, small mammals, and some insects. The black, hooked bill is rather short, and well constructed to tear the flesh from small rodents.

The flight of the Short-eared Owl may be described as moth-like or slightly floppy with irregular wing beats. During the breeding season, March to June, the male attracts the female by swooping down over the nest area, flapping his wings. The nest is on the ground, concealed by low vegetation and lightly lined with weeds, grass, or feathers. A typical clutch consists of 4 to 7 white eggs, but as many as 12 eggs may occur in years with high vole population. Normally, they have a single clutch per year, and the eggs hatch after 24 – 28 days of incubation, which is mostly by the female. Total incubation time for the clutch varies and may go as long as 37 days since incubation begins with the first-laid egg, and the eggs are laid at two-day intervals. The offspring fledge at a little over 4 weeks. This owl is known to lure predators away from the nest with the “broken wing” act.



The Short-eared Owl is a wide-spread species, occurring on all continents except Antarctica and Australia. Besides North America, it breeds in Europe, Asia, South America, the Caribbean, Hawaii, and the Galapagos Islands. It is somewhat migratory, leaving the colder areas for warmer areas during the winter. It will also wander nomadically in search of food supplies during years when vole populations are low. This is very true in Umatilla County where some years the Short-eared Owls are plentiful and other years, they are extremely scarce.

The population of Short-eared Owls appears to be remaining fairly steady in most of its breeding range. However, it is listed as endangered in New York state and is declining in the southern portion of its range where it is listed as ‘of special concern, threatened, or endangered’ in several states.

2010 is a good year for Short-eared Owls in Umatilla County. A drive around dusk up Highway 395 a few miles past Nye Junction has been consistent with one or more Short-eared Owls. Coombs Canyon and Mud



Short-eared Owl. Photo by Mike Danzenbaker.

Springs Canyon roads are usually productive and several have been seen around the grasslands when starting up the Cayuse Road.

Some of the information for this article was taken from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Short-eared_Owl

Birding the Pacific Northwest: Yakima Greenway-Poppoff Trail

Submitted by Barbara Clark

While reading my 50-year high school class reunion booklet last Spring, I discovered one classmate that noted herself as an avid birder. It turned out to be my friend, Ruth, with whom I walked to school every day a long time ago. I called her home in Michigan, our first contact in 50 years. She and her husband were coming to Washington in June to see the Spotted Owl. We made arrangements to meet in Yakima near the end of June.

I got out my Sun and Sage Loop Great Washington Birding Trail Map and we decided to spend our morning together birding along the 1.5-mile Poppoff

Birding Washington



Trail, which is at the southern end of Yakima's 10-mile Greenway. We discovered a fabulous walking/biking path along

several ponds with overhanging shrubs, willows and cottonwoods and birds galore! On the map it is noted as "Premier Yakima bird walk"! They boast woodland residents such as Bewick's Wrens and Song Sparrows; migrant species including White- and Golden-crowned Sparrows, Spotted Towhees, and Dark-eyed Juncos; pond dabbler and diving ducks, and other avian fish-eaters like Osprey, Belted Kingfisher, Bald Eagle, and Great Blue Heron. We saw all of the fish eaters just mentioned and many other species not mentioned in the map commentary!

In the future, whenever I have need of a driving break between Pendleton and Seattle, I plan to visit this Poppoff Trail as it is only a minute or two from the first exit heading north (from I-82, exit 36). Turn east immediately onto E Valley Mall Blvd. Drive 0.2-mile to Jewett Pathway at Spring Creek Parking Lot. Great place to stretch, see some birds and hop right back onto the freeway. With a bike one could ride the whole 10 miles along the Naches and Yakima Rivers through the non-profit owned 3,600 acres of super birding habitat.



A postscript to the Spotted Owl quest, by the time my friends reached Yakima, they had traveled down to Corvallis, OR and joined a group guided by a Fish and Wildlife forester to see a Spotted Owl with chicks down a steep trail back in the woods. Their life list of 726 North American bird species was increased several times on this journey to the Pacific Northwest.

June-July Bird Sightings

Compiled by Dave Herr and Aaron Skirvin

Well, it looks like we have finally moved into our normal summer weather pattern after a very wet and cool spring. Because of all the rain, the herbaceous vegetation is prolific and staying greener much later than normal. I (Dave Herr) wonder if this will make any difference in the nesting success this year. The latest survey Jack and Sharon Simons completed of the Albee Bluebird trail (check the article elsewhere in the newsletter), indicates it may not be a good breeding year for some species.



Bird Sightings

Jenny Barnett saw a **Burrowing Owl** at Wanaket Wildlife Area when she was conducting a bird survey on June 21. This is the first time in seven or eight years that a Burrowing Owl has been reported from



Burrowing Owl. Photo by Mike Gregg.

Wanaket (where they used to breed annually). Jenny organized a search for a nesting burrow, and on June 28, Jenny, June Whitten, Jack Simons, and Aaron

Skirvin were successful in finding one **Burrowing Owl** and a nesting site in a badger burrow. Returning to the site a couple of days later, Jenny found two **Burrowing Owls** near the burrow.

June 23, Tanya Harrison reported there were **Dusky Flycatchers** singing at her home on the North Hill in Pendleton. This is strange, since they should have been on their mountain habitat by then. Tanya also reported that on a Reservation breeding survey run June 24, they found **Dusky Flycatchers** in the Blues as well as several **Lark Sparrows** and a **Common Nighthawk** on Kanine Ridge.

On June 25, I found a drumming male **American Three-toed Woodpecker** near campsite #1 in Woodward Campground at Langdon Lake. Checking Mission Ponds on June 25, Aaron Skirvin (Aaron) found an adult **Pied-billed Grebe** with 3 youngsters paddling after it. Aaron notes Pied-billed Grebes are difficult to find during breeding season in Umatilla County and this is only the second record of this species successfully breeding at Mission Ponds.

June 28, Rose Scott sent around a number of pictures of baby **Black-necked Stilts** she found at a small pond on 3 Mile Canyon Farm in Morrow County. Joy Jaeger has been checking the birds at their mountain cabin above Albee. Joy reported finding **Wild Turkey**, **Dusky Grouse** and a **Pileated Woodpecker** recently at their Albee place.

On the evening of June 28, Aaron decided to do some "twilight birding" and checked the area along Hwy 395 to Gurdane Road and Hwy 74 from Nye Junction to Vinson. He found a pair of **Ferruginous Hawks** still hanging around at their nest site in Jack Canyon near Nye Junction. On his travels he found at least **8 Short-eared Owls**, with one family group of 4. As well as birds, Aaron reported seeing a number of snakes soaking up the warmth of the pavement. Unfortunately, several snakes had been hit by cars.

June 30, June Whitten (June) looked for the Hwy 37 **Burrowing Owls**, but was unable to find any. The following day she did find one owl, which she believes, was a juvenile bird. June wonders if some of the 7 young and 2 adults owls seen there earlier in June have dispersed to another area.

Connie Betts had a **Rufous Hummingbird** in her yard July 2. She also reported finding a **Killdeer** and **Western Kingbird** at the Pendleton Community Park. Connie notes that in past years there used to be several Killdeer in the park area, but this was her first sighting for this year.



Black-necked Stilt chick. Photo by Rose Scott.

June 30, Aaron and June did another night drive to look for birds and snakes. Because of the cool weather they found no snakes. However, as Aaron noted, some birds do like the night.

Going up Hwy 395 past Nye Junction, there were 3 **Short-eared Owls** perching on fence posts. Driving between Gurdane and Vinson, they saw several **Common Nighthawks** were on the road and in the air. They also saw or heard at least 8 **Common Poorwills**.

Duane and June Whitten had a male **Rufous Hummingbird** visit the hummingbird feeders at their home in SW Pendleton on July 1 and 3. On July 3, Aaron and June checked Memorial Marsh to see if they could find any early migrating shorebirds. They were able to find 3 **Greater Yellowlegs**, 3 **Lesser Yellowlegs**, 5 **Western Sandpipers**, 4 **Least Sandpipers** and one **Semipalmated Sandpiper** at the marsh. At Warehouse Beach Recreation Area there were numerous **Forster's Terns** and **Caspian Terns** as well as the first-of-the-year juvenile **Ring-billed Gulls** perching on the rocks with the terns and adult gulls. Joy Jaeger reported that a pair of **Tree Swallows** was nesting in one of her bird houses at their cabin on Cabbage Hill. She took photos of the **Tree Swallows**, and noted this is the first year she has seen these swallows at their cabin.

On the 4th of July, June and Aaron checked out the Pearson Creek area. Although the temperatures were quite cool for this time of the year, birding was good.



Some of the highlights included **Mountain Bluebird**, **Cassin's Finch**, **Red Crossbills** and **Lincoln's Sparrows**. Starting down Yellowjacket Road, there was a pair of **Pygmy Nuthatches** going into a nest hole in a snag and **Western Bluebirds** using another cavity in the same snag. Perhaps the most unusual sighting of the day was a xanthochroistic **Bullock's Oriole** they found at McKay Reservoir. It was a male, probably first-year, and it was brilliant yellow on all the under parts, olive-yellow on the back, but its wings were pure white. It had a black eyeline but no other black that they could see and no orange.

Sharon Simons reported 2 baby **Ospreys** in the nest on Hwy 30 on the east side of town. It looks like the nest rebuilding efforts earlier in the season were successful. Over the July 4th weekend, Lynn Tompkins received a report, with photos, of a **Red-tailed Hawk** at the Kinzua mill in Pilot Rock that was banded and marked with patagial tags. Lynn and Karen Kronner tracked down the details about the banded hawk. It is three years old and was captured at the Portland International Airport in April 2010 and transported for release at Clatskanie, OR. The airport has a program of trapping and translocating Red-tailed Hawks and other birds to reduce the chance of airplane-bird strikes. Reportedly, the program traps and translocates between **35 and 150 birds** each year.

July 5, Aaron and June birded at Emigrant Springs State Park, along the Summit Road, Tollgate and Mission. Highlights included 3 **Chestnut-backed Chickadees** at Emigrant Springs; **Pileated Woodpecker**, **Hairy Woodpecker**, and **Williamson's Sapsucker** along Summit Road in Umatilla County. At Langdon Lake there were 3 hen **Common Goldeneyes**. There was one **Short-eared Owl** and one adult **Burrowing Owl** along Homly Road and a flock of **American White Pelicans** resting at Mission Ponds.

Craig Kvern reported finding a group of 4 **Burrowing Owls** on the evening of July 7 along North Cayuse Road near Rothrock Road. There has been an upturn in Burrowing Owl sightings this year; Craig's report is the 4th location of



Lark Sparrow. Photo by Joy Jaeger.

actual or probable breeding Burrowing Owls in Umatilla County outside the Chemical Depot. The other three locations are one each at Wanaket Wildlife Area; along Hwy 37 just north of Pendleton; and along Homly Road near Tubbs Ranch Road.

Just before dark the same day, Barbara Clark and her brother and sister-in-law, Clint and Jan Bainbridge, spotted a **Short-eared Owl** perching on a fencepost along Hwy 395 near Whitaker Flat. The next day, Barbara Clark and her brother drove up Yellowjacket Road, where they found a variety of grassland and forest birds. Birds of note included a **Lark Sparrow**, **Mountain Bluebirds**, and a **Spotted Sandpiper**.

Neal Hinds and Aaron had a great birding trip from Mission to Tollgate on July 10. They reported finding many **Gray Catbirds** and **Black-headed Grosbeaks** along Cayuse Road between Cayuse and Thorn-hollow. They were surprised to find an out-of-season, out-of-habitat **Peregrine Falcon** along North Cayuse Road near Mann Road. Other noteworthy birds included two drumming (one seen) male **American Three-toed Woodpeckers** and a singing **Olive-sided Flycatcher** near the south end of Woodward Campground and one female and five duckling **Common Goldeneyes** on Langdon Lake.

Fledgling birds started showing up in good numbers during the first half of July. Checking Pendleton Community Park, Connie Betts found young **American Robins**, **House Sparrows**, **House Finches**, **American Goldfinches**, **Brewer's Blackbirds**, **American Crows**, **Canada Geese**, **California Quail**, **Black-headed Grosbeaks**, and **Black-chinned Hummingbirds**. Barbara Clark also reported young birds around her yard near McKay Dam in mid-July. She noted **Black-headed Grosbeaks** with their immature offspring and **House Sparrows** and **House Finches** with "masses of children."

This spring, Jack Simons has noticed a general lack of songbirds, especially flycatchers such as Western Wood-Pewee and Eastern and Western Kingbirds, that he usually sees each spring and summer in his

neighborhood along Umatilla River between Pendleton and Mission. On July 13, he reported seeing two male **Black-headed Grosbeaks** in his yard, the first ones he had seen for several weeks.

July 14, June and Duane Whitten made the trip to Tollgate to look for the **American Three-toed Woodpecker**, which had been reported at Woodward Campground. They were successful in their quest, finding a pair of the woodpeckers near the south end of the campground. Another bird they found while they were looking for the woodpecker was a loud and noisy male **Olive-sided Flycatcher** persistently singing his request for “quick-three-beers!”

While conducting surveys at Wanaket Wildlife Area, which is located along the Columbia River a few miles east of McNary Dam, on July 16, Jenny Barnett discovered a singing **COMMON YELLOWTHROAT** in the bulrush patch at the edge of a pond. Common Yellowthroat is rarely found in Umatilla County, and our records show only 10 reports of this species since 1982.

The next day, Aaron and June reported finding juvenile **Grasshopper, Vesper, and Savannah Sparrows** in a small flock along Highway 395 near Whitaker Flat. On July 18, Craig Kvern saw a group of 3 adult **Gray Partridges** with about 18 young chicks along Adams Road.

The breeding season is winding down at the lower elevations of the county, where we’ve received numerous reports of young birds the past few weeks. However, breeding is in full progress in the Blue Mountains, and a trip to the mountains to seek relief from the hot temperatures should produce plenty of songbirds. The annual fall shorebird migration has started and will only get better over the next couple of months. If you make a birding trip in the next month, please report your bird sightings to **both** Dave Herr at dsherr1@mac.com or call 541 276-6413 and to Aaron Skirvin at umatbirder@yahoo.com or call 541 215-0761.

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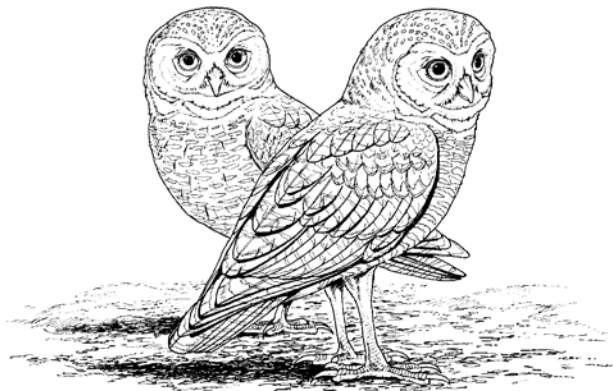
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