

Newsletter of The Pendleton Bird Club

Kákya Táymut

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

Volume 8, No. 9 Pendleton, Oregon September 2010

Fledged Bluebird Chicks Break the "300 Barrier"

By Jack Simons

The 2010 bluebird nesting season has concluded here in the Pacific Northwest and we're pleased to report that the results were not nearly as dire as we had predicted. We definitely saw a drop-off in nesting as well as fledged chicks the second half of the season but the over-all year was in the plus column and that is always a good sign. While the vast majority of birds have migrated south, a few may remain in the area to tough-out the winter and to get an early start on nesting next year.

History

As club members know, the Pendleton Bird Club has built and maintained bluebird nesting boxes south of Pendleton in the Blue Mountains near the small town of Ukiah. The club started this project in 2003 and now monitors 32 nest boxes on the trail. This project has been on-going since 2003. The purpose of creating a bluebird nesting box trail was 1) to increase secondary nesting sites for the local bluebird population, 2) to stabilize or increase declining bluebird populations in selected areas and 3) increase public awareness of the importance of maintaining natural habitat for healthy bird populations. Unlike woodpeckers, bluebirds cannot excavate a nesting hole; however, they will readily nest in a woodpecker hole or nesting box. Until recently, these secondary nesting sites were most often found

in dead or decaying trees. However, the cutting of dead trees by the public for firewood has significantly reduced nesting tree sites thus making it difficult for bluebirds to successfully reproduce.

Club members have generously donated their time to make the trail a success. In addition, Kelly Lumber Supply here in Pendleton has regularly supplied price-discounted Tight Knot Grade Red Cedar needed for box construction. Boxes are maintained annually as needed with weather and critters taking their toll. Sometimes a new roof needs replacing or, more often, a woodpecker has enlarged the original hole requiring a front panel be installed with the original 1 9/16 inch diameter hole necessary for bluebird nesting success. Additional information



with photographs is available on the club's website at <http://pendletonbirders.org/> on the "Club Projects" link.

Albee-Ukiah Bluebird Trail Monitoring

My wife Sharon and I monitored the trail in 2010 with additional help from Bruce Mayfield who shared his counts when we could not make it up to the site. The first eggs were laid approximately May 20th this year, which coincides with the first eggs that were laid in 2009.



It should be noted that 2009 was a “La Nina” year which is generally characterized by high moisture levels in winter and spring. In contrast, 2010 was forecast to be an “El Nino” year which in the PNW is generally drier with a reduced snow pack and spring rain. A lack of rain or snow pack can affect the quality of vegetation which in turn can affect the insect population needed to feed young bluebird chicks. It appeared that the weather did have a

significant effect on this year’s chicks. In general, the number of first hatch chicks this year was roughly the same as last year but the second hatch chick population crashed significantly in 2010 compared to 2009. It appeared to us that the number of insects along the trail was noticeably fewer by the time the second hatch was under way. Cool weather at the time and fewer flowering plants to attract insects may have played a role in the decline we observed.

Comparing the 2010 First Hatch to Second Hatch Totals

Comparing the first hatch to second hatch totals in 2010 clearly showed a difference in nesting conditions:

	Eggs Laid	Eggs Died	Chicks Hatched	Chicks Died	Chicks Presumed Fledged	Nest Box Occupancy Rate
First Hatch	154	10	139	25	111	100%
Second Hatch	30	4	26	9	17	22%
Totals	184	15	165	34	128	61%

Only 30 eggs were laid in the second hatch compared to 154 in the first hatch (a reduction of more than 80%). Only 17 chicks were presumed fledged in the second hatch (compared to 111 in the first hatch). Perhaps the most significant number in the above table is the extremely low second hatch nest box occupancy rate of only 22% (compared to 100% for the first hatch).

Comparing the 2009 to 2010 Second Hatch Totals

However, when we compare the second hatch totals from 2009 to 2010 it is obvious the nesting conditions to successfully raise a brood were very different. Last year, forty more chicks fledged in the second hatch than this year:

Second Hatch By Year	Eggs Laid	Eggs Died	Chicks Hatched	Chicks Died	Chicks Presumed Fledged	Nest Box Occupancy Rate
2009	99	25	58	17	57	71%
2010	30	4	26	9	17	22%
Totals	129	30	84	26	74	46%

Comparing Over-all Totals for 2009 and 2010

Though the number of chicks fledged during the second hatch in 2010 was low compared to 2009, the over-all totals for the past two nesting seasons were really quite good. When totals for both seasons are combined some very promising numbers appear. For instance, in the past two seasons, 442 eggs have been laid (13% of which died); 352 chicks hatched (20% of which died); and 301 chicks were presumed to have fledged. Not bad, not bad at all.

Eggs Laid	Eggs Died	% Egg Mortality	Chicks Hatched	Chicks Died	% Chick Mortality	Chicks Presumed Fledged	Nest Box Occupancy Rate
442	59	13%	352	69	20%	301	73%



While breaking the “300 barrier” for chicks fledged the past two years is a milestone the club can be proud of, we still aren’t sure if the egg/chick mortality figures are high, low or normal. Fully 33% of the eggs/chicks counted in our survey died for one reason or another the past two seasons. The causes could be disease, stress, malnutrition or even rodent predation. We seemed to see more boxes with rodent nests this year than last year. In one box during the second hatch, Box 11, we observed 4 eggs on August 1st, 4 young chicks on August 15th and a rodent nest on August 29th. There was no sign the chicks fledged because there were no bird droppings or signs of nesting activity. Could a snake or a chipmunk have eaten these chicks? We just don’t know. Perhaps one of these years we’ll catch the thief in the act.

If you haven’t visited the club’s bluebird trail yet, it is a fun excursion and only an hour’s drive from Pendleton. Let us know if you would like to make the trek up to the trail sometime next year or, if you would rather go alone, we can share GPS coordinates with you so you can locate the boxes along the roadway. Either way, just getting out into the mountains and seeing all of the wildlife is a relaxing, rewarding experience for families. Until next year, take care and *GO BIRDING!!!*



October 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**

November Bird Club Meeting

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

A BIRDING ADVENTURE – SOUTHERN AFRICA

Presented by Terry Steele

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

December 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**

Christmas Bird Count

Sunday, January 2, 2011

**We need your help to count birds on
the 111th Christmas Bird Count.**

For more information, contact

Aaron Skirvin umatbirder@yahoo.com

or 541-215-0761



The Big Sit — October 10, 2010

The Pendleton Bird Club will participate once again in the “Big Sit,” which is an annual event where birdwatchers all over the U.S. and other countries as well participate. This is a fun day where participants may sit inside a circle 17 feet in diameter and record all bird species seen or heard from the circle.

Bird Watcher’s Digest sponsors the “Big Sit,” and Swarovski Optiks offer a \$500 prize to a circle which draws the Golden Bird. After the “Big Sit,” all circles report the species seen. From these, one bird is drawn to be the Golden Bird. Again, a drawing is held to determine which circle will receive \$500 to spend on habitat improvement.



The Pendleton Bird Club has registered three circles: one is below McNary Dam near the McNary Wildlife ponds; another is at Cold Springs NWR; and the third is Mission Ponds. The McNary Wildlife circle has a view of a large pond and the Columbia River, including a popular gull roosting island or two. The



Cold Springs NWR circle allows a good view of the reservoir for shorebirds and waterfowl plus some view of

the brushy habitat surrounding the reservoir. Mission Ponds will have good views of the ponds and surrounding habitat and is located a short distance from Pendleton on the Mission Road.

Bring your binoculars, a scope if desired, a comfortable lawn chair, snacks or a thermos of coffee or hot chocolate, and join a circle, or visit all of the circles. Participants may stay as long a time or as short a time as desired. The main idea here is to show up and have fun!

For further information please call or e-mail:

June Whitten: jwhitten@oregontrail.net
541-276-9019

Aaron Skirvin: umatbirder@yahoo.com
541-215-0761 (Cold Springs NWR)

Jack Simons: styletoil@eoni.com
541-276-8566 (Mission Ponds Circle located on the dike road on the far north end of Mission Ponds)

Nighthawk Memories

Submitted by Dan Baum

Last June during lunch at the Pendleton Bird Club picnic I shared a story with Aaron Skirvin about my memories of Common Nighthawks. Earlier this month, Aaron phoned and asked if I could write a short story for the newsletter and share those memories with all of you.

Probably the first birds I ever really noticed other than American Robins and House Sparrows were Common Nighthawks. At the time (1957-1958), I was 10 or 11

years old, and we lived up on Pendleton's North Hill near the top of NW 7th. I was pretty fascinated by the way the Nighthawks flew, very maneuverable, and I liked the sound they made when they dived.



Common Nighthawk. Photo by Mike Danzenbaker.

I thought they were diving on insects but later learned it was their courtship display. But, I think the thing that intrigued me most was that they flew quite low, sometimes swooping down to within a couple of feet of the ground. This tempted me to attempt to capture one for a close-up examination. I tied an old fishing net on a broom stick and attempted to net myself a Nighthawk. Despite my best efforts, I came up empty-handed; fortunately, the Nighthawks were smarter than I and easily avoided my net.

In those days the Nighthawks were pretty common in the Pendleton area. I didn't realize that fifty some years later I would be interested in knowing approximately how many there were, so I didn't make an attempt to count them. There were quite a lot of



them in the mid-1950s, with a dozen or two in sight at any given time. I don't remember that they were an unusual sight, so I'm assuming that they were here throughout their breeding season, especially since I remember hearing the booming sound they make while diving in their courtship display.

Unfortunately, their numbers, at least in Pendleton, are much lower now.

Nest Box Competition: Gruesome Results

*From the Birding Notes of Joy Jaeger
Photos by Joy Jaeger*

Spring 2007

Violet-green Swallows swooped around our newly purchased cabin on Poverty Flat. A couple of weeks later we placed a bluebird nestbox on the outside railing of the deck and after about fifteen minutes three excited swallows discovered it. They called to each other as they flew around it pausing now and again to peek in, and finally, one went in to check it out.



Meanwhile, in a Pendleton Bird Club birdhouse on a nearby tree a pair of Western Bluebirds were in residence. They also came to the deck to inspect the new bluebird box and after the male had given the box a good looking over, he took up a guard position nearby on the railing. The bluebirds kept to their stake-out whenever a swallow came near, and we noted that the

swallows were no longer trying to build a nest so we moved the box to a place under the upstairs balcony out of sight of the Western Bluebirds. The swallows quickly found the new location and explored the box as excited as before but alas, the bluebirds appeared and took up sentinel once again.

As days went by, the swallows and bluebirds appeared to have made peace! Grass sticking out of the next box crevices indicated that the Violet-greens had been successful in building a nest. The female would go into the box and peek out while the male sat on the rail chattering to her. Or was it to the bluebirds?



On a later visit to the cabin, we noticed the bluebirds had finished raising a brood in their box on the tree and now seemed determined to take over the Violet-green nest box. The female swallow spent all her time defending her nest while the male swallow flew around chirping to her and the bluebirds. By this time the female bluebird joined her partner in harassing the swallows. They continually flew to the swallow house where one sat on the top while the other peered in.

By June 30th the bluebirds took possession of the swallows nest box and the swallows were gone. My husband, Steve looked into the box and saw baby birds that had to be baby swallows as the bluebirds hadn't time to have taken over, laid eggs, and have them hatch.

A week later the bluebirds had 5 eggs in the nest and the baby birds from the previous week were not in evidence. By mid July the bluebirds were feeding baby birds and by the first week of August these young had grown and left the nest.

In the fall when I cleaned out the nest box I discovered that the Western Bluebirds had built their nest right over the poor Violet-green babies whose skeletons were all intact beneath the bluebird nest!



Clark's Nutcracker

(*Nucifraga columbiana*)

Contributed by June Whitten

Clark's Nutcracker is an uncommon bird in Umatilla County, although it is an irruptive species and may occasionally occur in large numbers. It is more apt to be seen in spring and summer but is probably present year round. The Nutcracker is a bird of the western mountains, appearing in most states west of the Mississippi River as well as Alberta and British Columbia, Canada.

Clark's Nutcracker is a robust bird in all respects. It has a strong flight usually flying high overhead and often landing in a treetop. It has a

strong, 1½ inch long bill, which is perfect for obtaining its favorite food, pine seeds. While it is ashy-gray overall, the black wings and partly black tail give it a vibrant appearance. Its size, about 12 inches long, and the call, often described as a harsh, rising rattle or growl, add to the overall effect of a very strong bird.

Being in the Corvid family, along with such cousins as jays, crows, and ravens, Clark's Nutcracker is known for its intelligence. Nutcrackers have a sublingual (underneath the tongue) pouch capable of holding about 90 pine seeds. This pouch greatly enhances the bird's ability to transport and store seeds. The surplus pine seeds are stored, usually in the ground, for later consumption when food is scarce. They regularly store more seeds than they consume and are keepers of the forest in the sense that they reseed their own pine trees. Of course, some other



Bird of the Month



Clark's Nutcracker. Photo by Dave Herr.

birds and small mammals get into the seed caches, but the Nutcrackers are known to store up to 33,000 seeds per bird in as many as 2,500 caches of 5-10 seeds each. This may take in an area of over 12 miles.

The real intelligence shows up in finding their cached seeds. Their long-term spatial memory has been tested with results showing fine memory retention for several months. Even after 6 months and when the seeds are buried under a foot of snow, they are able to relocate their caches with remarkable accuracy. Their ability to find the cached seeds does diminish between 7 and 9 months, although they still manage to relocate the seeds with some trial and error method.

The diet also includes a wide range of insect prey, berries, and other fruits, even small mammals and sometimes eggs and nestlings from other birds. Food may be taken from the ground or from trees, while peanuts and suet are favorites from feeders. The Nutcrackers are able to extract food by clasp ing pine cones in such a way that the cones are held by one or both feet. Rotten logs are hacked into in order to locate large beetle grubs and other pieces of bark and leaves may be turned over in search of insects.

Clark's Nutcracker was named for William Clark of the famed Lewis and Clark Expedition – The Corps of Discovery. After about 3,096 tedious miles (according to Clark's reckoning, which seems a bit long even for the circuitous route the expedition had taken), they crossed present day Montana into Idaho in August, 1805, some 15 months after leaving Missouri. Clark wrote in his diary: *"I saw to day (a) Bird of the woodpecker kind which fed on Pine burs. Its Bill and tale white the wings black every other part of a light brown, and about the Size of a robin."*

Later in his journal entry for May 28, 1806, Lewis gave a detailed description of the bird previously observed by Clark, and he correctly classified it as a corvid rather than a woodpecker. *"Since my arrival here I have killed several birds of the corvus genus of*



a kind found only in the rocky mountains and their neighbourhood. I first met with this bird above the three forks of the Missouri and saw them on the heights of the rocky Mountains but never before had an opportunity of examining them closely. The small corvus described at Fort Clatsop is a different species, tho' until now I had taken it to be the same, this is much larger and has a loud squawling note something like the mewing of a cat. The beak of this bird is 1½ inches long, is proportionably large, black and of the form which characterizes this genus. This bird feeds on the seed of the pine and also on insects. It resides in the rocky mountains at all seasons of the year and in many parts is the only bird to be found.”

Two likely places to find Clark’s Nutcrackers in Umatilla County are the Battle Mountain Scenic Corridor and the Albee Road going into Ukiah. They do prefer the mountains and especially those with plenty of pine trees bearing cones.

Some of the information from this article was obtained from:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clark's_Nutcracker
http://www.sciencedirect.com/science?_ob=ArticleURL&_udi=B6W0W-4JS7Y6B-G&u..

Bird Watcher’s Digest, “Clark’s Crow—Lewis’s Woodpecker, Bird Discoveries on the Famed Westward Expedition” by William B. Hughes

Pine White Butterflies Make Their Appearance in 2010

Submitted by Jack Simons

Do you have a flower garden or were you able to make it up into the Blue Mountains this year? Perhaps you saw a white butterfly with black markings fluttering by in the breeze or flitting from flower to flower. Although this delicate white butterfly looked like a common Cabbage White (aka Cabbage Butterfly) it was actually a Pine White, a primitive species and one of only three species here in the Pacific Northwest whose larvae feed on conifers.

When I saw my first white butterfly in the garden this year my first reaction was “must be a Cabbage” but on closer examination I saw how the black markings and the flight pattern were different from the more common Cabbage. Then there was a second that appeared, then a third and even a fourth visitor to my

Butterfly Bush – a whole flock of white butterflies! Certain it was not a Cabbage, I checked out my “butterfly bible” (*The Butterflies of Cascadia* by Robert Pyle), and located what was a new species for me.

Habitat for the Pine White includes coniferous forests from sea level to mid-montane and in urban neighborhoods with ornamental pines. Host plants include Ponderosa Pine (the favored food), white and lodgepole pines and Douglas fir.

For unknown reasons, the population erupts in certain years resulting in millions on the wing to flicker



Pine White butterfly. Photo by Joy Jaeger.

amongst conifer tree tops. Sometimes considered a timber pest, there is no evidence during mass outbreaks that defoliation of trees occurs. Thus...enjoy them while you can! While monitoring the Bluebird Trail this year my wife and I made our last observation on August 29th and counted exactly 150 Pine Whites that intersected our path from beginning to end of the trail this year. No telling how many were traversing the forest canopy beyond the roadway.

Robert Pyle describes the Pine White’s habitat and range in *Cascadia* then muses, “Common in the San Juan Islands, where I observed one flying onto a ferry at Shaw Island, only to disembark on Orcas Island.” Bug lover or not, you gotta love it!

Thank you Joy Jaeger for your inquiring email and sharing your photo with us!



August/September Bird Sightings

Contributed by Dave Herr

You can tell that fall is just around the corner. As Aaron Skirvin (Aaron) predicted in the last newsletter, **White-crowned Sparrows** arrived in Pendleton on their annual southern migration the first half of September. Connie Betts and others are reporting large numbers of **Common Nighthawks** and Jack Simons has been seeing large groups of **Turkey Vultures** along the Umatilla River behind his home near Mission.

Neal Hinds has been checking the Cold Springs Reservoir area periodically. On August 21, he was able to photograph **California Quail**, **Long-billed Dowitcher**, **Downy Woodpecker** and a **Solitary Sandpiper**. Also on the 21st, June Whitten (June) and Aaron birded along the North Fork John Day River in an unsuccessful attempt to add Mountain Quail to our county-year list. However, during their travels they found an adult **Dusky Grouse** with 2 nearly grown chicks, as well as numerous other species in the south county. They noted several **Turkey Vultures** and 2 **Sandhill Cranes** near Ukiah and found a nice **Cooper's Hawk** as they drove home down Battle Mountain.

Checking McKay Reservoir the following day, June and Aaron found at least 80 shorebirds including 30 **Least** and 45 **Western Sandpipers**, 2 **Semipalmated Sandpipers**, **Killdeer**, 2 **Wilson's Snipe** and one **Red-necked Phalarope**. Driving the roads west of Pilot Rock, they found 4 adult and 10 young **Gray Partridge** as well as quite a few young **Ring-necked Pheasants**. During their drive they noted sparrows were plentiful, finding **Vesper**, **Savannah**, **Brewer's**, and **Grasshopper Sparrows**. One **Loggerhead Shrike** was found along Coombs Canyon Road.



Grasshopper Sparrow (juvenile left; adult right). Photo by Aaron Skirvin.

On August 24, Jack Simons found at least 24 **Common Nighthawks** near his home. The same day Connie Betts counted over 20 **Common Nighthawks** around the Pendleton Community Park, and the next evening Connie found 12 nighthawks.

The white **Common Loon** first spotted by Kris Andrews in April is still in McNary Pool. On August 27, Mike Gessel was able to photograph the loon near the mouth of Juniper Canyon Creek.

Traveling to Wanaket Wildlife Habitat Area August 27 to help with Burrowing Owl burrow installation, Aaron, June and Connie Betts found a **Loggerhead Shrike**, one **Prairie Falcon** and a **Herring Gull**. Returning home they checked Cold Springs and found 2 **Clark's Grebes** and 40+ **Western Grebes** on the Reservoir. They also found 4 **Lark Sparrows** and several **Savannah Sparrows** along the road to the Reservoir. August 28, Neal Hinds found a **Barn Owl** and a loose-knit flock of wandering **Lark Sparrows** at Cold Springs. The same day Jack Simons had 15 **Turkey Vultures** sitting in the snags behind his home and counted another 7 birds spread out in other locations in the Umatilla River bottom for a total of 22 **Turkey Vultures**.

August 28, Aaron drove the Coombs Canyon Road, Spear Canyon Road, Alkali Canyon Road and Gurdane Road looking for **Sage Sparrows**. He had no luck find a Sage Sparrow but found many other interesting birds that included **Lark Sparrows**, **Chipping Sparrows**, a **Loggerhead Shrike**, one **Sage Thrasher** and many **Vesper** and a few **Savannah Sparrows**. There were also a couple of dozen **Say's Phoebes** scattered along his route.

On August 29, June and Aaron looked for, but were unable to find the white **Common Loon** above McNary Dam. They noted there was lots of water being spilled over the dam, and there were 200 **Ring-billed** and some **California Gulls** gulping smolts below the dam. At the McNary Wildlife Nature Area they spotted one adult **Pied-billed Grebe** and 7 young. One **Caspian Tern** flew



up the river, and there were a few **Yellow Warblers**, 2 **Yellow-rumped Warblers** and one **Warbling Vireo** near the ponds.

On August 29, Jack and Sharon Simons made a last check of the Albee Bluebird Trail. Although they found no bluebirds, they spotted a beautiful **Ferruginous Hawk** along Hwy 395 about 2 miles south of the rock quarry (a couple miles north of the Ukiah junction).

Leaving Indian Lake about 12:30 on August 30, Aaron and Craig Kvern saw an adult (blue-gray back) **Northern Goshawk** flying across the road and through the forest just above eye-level.



Sandhill Cranes. Photo by Don Bacus.

September 2, Aaron again checked for **Sage Sparrow** along the roads west of Pilot Rock. He did not find a Sage Sparrow but did find 2 **Loggerhead Shrikes**, 2 **Sage Thrashers**, 3 **Lark Sparrows**, 30-40 **Vesper Sparrows** and a few **Savannah Sparrows**. The grove of white poplar trees along the Gurdane Road yielded **American Robins**, a couple **Western Tanagers**, an **Orange-crowned Warbler**, a **Hammond's** and a **Western Flycatcher**. He also noted there were still quite a few migrating **Say's Phoebes** scattered along the route.



Western Tanager. Photo by Rose Scott.

Dan Baum spotted a white (albino?) **sparrow** near the intersection of Best and Goad Roads (a few miles SE of Pendleton) on September 2 and 3. He wasn't able to see it long enough to make an identification but was sure it wasn't a House Sparrow.

September 4, Aaron noted there was a little mud showing at Cold Springs, but just a strip along the edge. During his visit he found about 20 **Western Sandpipers** along with 2 **Baird's**

Sandpipers. Also present were one **Semipalmated Plover**, one **Black-necked Stilt** and several **Killdeer**. There were several **Greater White-fronted Geese** with some **Canada Geese** along the east shore. The next day, McKay Reservoir yielded some **Western** and **Least Sandpipers**, one **Greater Yellowlegs** and 3 **Long-billed Dowitchers**.

There have been two reports of **Great Gray Owls** this month. Brian Whitten saw a **Great Gray Owl** while grouse hunting on Bridge Creek Flats above Camas Creek on September 6. Joy and Steve Jaeger found a **Great Gray Owl** the following day while driving along Yellow Jacket Road about 15 miles south of Pilot Rock.

September 7, Jack Simons reported finding many birds on the move. In the morning he saw about a dozen **American Robins**, **Cedar Waxwings** and at least 15 **Vaux's Swifts** working an insect hatch over the Umatilla River behind his home. Later, walking to Mission Ponds, Jack had the surprise of his day when a **Peregrine Falcon** flew by only 10 feet off the ground. In the evening he counted at least 29 **Turkey Vultures** flying over on the dike road as they went to roost. This is the most **Turkey Vultures** Jack has seen at one time along the river.

Connie Betts reported on September 8, she still has some **Eurasian Collared-Doves**, a **Black-billed Magpie**, "zillions" of **House Sparrows**, a couple **Black-chinned Hummingbirds**,

House Finches, **American Goldfinches**, and **Mourning Doves** in her yard near the Pendleton Community Park. The following day Connie saw about 50 **Sandhill Cranes** flying over Pendleton Community Park, and the same day, Nancy Brown reported seeing more than 200 **Sandhill Cranes** flying over her Hermiston home.



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

Visiting Cold Springs Reservoir on September 9, Aaron and June found mostly **Western** and **Least Sandpipers**, 5 **Killdeer**, 2 **Baird's** and one **Spotted Sandpiper** and one **SANDERLING**. Neal Hinds had a great day at Cold Springs Reservoir September 11, when he found several **Pectoral Sandpipers** and an adult **SABINE'S GULL**. **SABINE'S GULL** is a rare visitor to our county, and this is only the eighth record for the county. The last sighting was one adult at Cold Springs NWR from September 21 to 27, 2008. September 11, Jack Simons reported 3 juvenile **Lewis's Woodpeckers** in the trees in his pasture along the Umatilla River near Mission.

September 12, Aaron and June drove to Cold Springs to see if they could relocate the **SABINE'S GULL** found there the day before. They were able to find the gull as well as **Pectoral**, **Baird's**, **Least**, **Western** and **Spotted Sandpipers**, **Long-billed Dowitchers**, **Wilson's Snipe**, 2 **Black-necked Stilts**, **Greater Yellowlegs** and a 30 or more **Killdeer**. Driving home via Alkali Canyon Road they found many **Savannah Sparrows**, one group of **Chipping Sparrows**, and a few **White-crowned** and **Vesper Sparrows**. Other finds included a **Loggerhead Shrike**, one **Sage Thrasher** and a **Short-eared Owl**.

Checking McKay Reservoir the same day, Connie Betts noted lots of **Ring-billed Gulls**, 3 **California Gulls**, 7 **Double-crested Cormorants**, **Canada Geese**, 8 **Western Grebes**, 2 **Osprey**, 4 **American White Pelicans**, 6 **Great Blue Herons** and at least 12 shorebirds too far away to identify.

September 13, Jack Simons reported he still had a lone **Lewis's Woodpecker** using the snags in this pasture. The 2 **Great Egrets** that Jack first found the previous week near Mission Ponds were still in the area. The following day Jack noted a bird of interest flying toward him from Mission Ponds. A **Steller's Jay** flew by Jack and kept flying west. Jack notes he has only seen this species once before on his

property, and this was a first reported sighting for Mission Ponds. Jack also enjoyed watching one of his resident **Red-tailed Hawks** make a strafing run at a flock of **Turkey Vultures** roosting in a snag in his back pasture. Jack said the vultures scattered in every conceivable direction!

On September 14, Chris Marks and Aaron birded their way to Cold Springs NWR via Coombs Canyon Road, Nolin, and Echo. They reported finding several of the usual sparrows along the route. At Cold Springs, they spotted a foraging flock of mixed migrant and resident birds including **Western Tanager**, **Warbling Vireo**, **Orange-crowned Warbler**, **Nashville Warbler**, **Townsend's Warbler**, **Yellow-rumped Warbler**, **Black-capped Chickadee**, **Bewick's Wren**, and a **Downy Woodpecker**.

September 15, Craig Kvern was able to get a nice photograph of a **Western Screech-Owl** roosting in a tree in his Adams yard. Barbara and Andrew Clark checked McKay Reservoir September 18. They found several **Ospreys**, one flying with a fish in its talons. They also found 7 **American White Pelicans**, 4 **Great Egrets**, one **Great Blue Heron** and 4 **Western Grebes**. Barbara noted the **Rufous** and **Black-chinned Hummingbirds** that have been visiting their feeders all summer appear to have left, but the first **White-crowned Sparrows** of the fall have shown up at her feeders.

There is still lots of good birding this fall, so please send your bird sightings to me, Dave Herr at dsherr1@mac.com or call 541-276-6413.

Newsletter Editor: Barbara Clark, 541 278-1252

Email Address: bainbrid@gmail.com

Technical Editor: Aaron Skirvin, 541 215-0761

Email Address: umabirder@yahoo.com

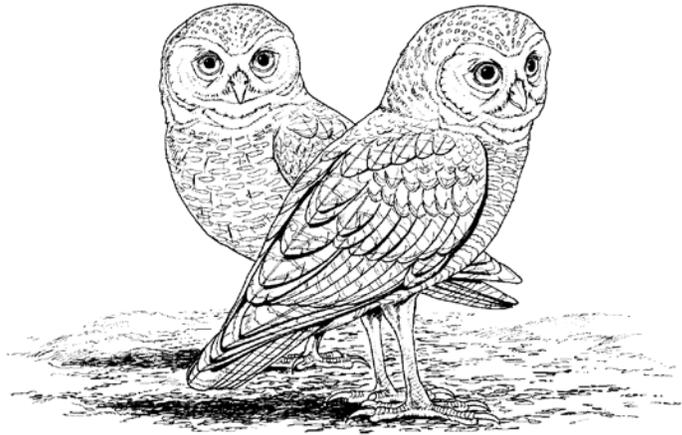
Field Sightings Editor: Dave Herr, 541 276-6413

Email Address: dsherr1@mac.com

Photo Editor: Jack Simons, 541 276-8566

Email Address: styletoil@eoni.com





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Pendleton Bird Club
Pendleton, OR 97801

