



Newsletter of The Pendleton Bird Club

# Kákya Táymut

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

Volume 9, No. 10 Pendleton, Oregon October 2011

## ***“Burrowing Owls Abound at the Chemical Depot”***

**T**HE PROGRAM FOR THE October Pendleton Bird Club meeting was an update on the Burrowing Owl Artificial Nesting Project at the Umatilla Chemical Depot. Dr. Mike Gregg, US Fish and Wildlife Service biologist, explained that 20 geolocators were attached to Burrowing Owls at the Chemical Depot in 2010. Using data from these geolocators allowed researchers to determine wintering locations for four of the Burrowing Owls.

Some of the more surprising results were from the male owls, who apparently do not want to stray far from their established breeding territories. At least one male spent the winter near Yakima, Washington, presumably to be in a great position to quickly return to its breeding location at the Depot. The research so far shows the males do not make long journeys away from their breeding grounds.

Females with geolocators tended to winter farther south; one female from the Depot wintered in Las Vegas. In another study, a female banded in Alberta, Canada enjoyed the winter in Baja California then returned only as far north as Colorado to nest the following spring. To further our understanding of the movement of the Depot owls,

Mike told the group that there is an extensive plan to place more sophisticated (and expensive) satellite transmitters on a larger number of owls next year at the Depot.

The population of Burrowing Owls on the Chemical Depot has greatly increased from probably only 4 nesting pairs in 2008 to 61 in 2011. Over 200 chicks were banded at the Chemical Depot this year; researchers will continue to capture the owls next year to see how many return. The chicks are caught by trapping them in the burrow then bringing them out by hand.

Mike stressed the need for more burrows for the owls in other areas, such as Wanaket Wildlife Area, since the Chemical Depot may soon be overrun with owls that cannot locate a suitable nest sites. Due to a lack of badgers in the region (which make burrows the owls like to use) the installation of more artificial burrows is probably the only way the Burrowing Owl population can be brought back to a sustainable

population in Umatilla County. In the long-term the best solution might be to increase the badger population, which would allow the owls to find natural burrows for nesting.



*Adult Burrowing Owl with leg band. Over 200 chicks were banded at the Chemical Depot in 2011.*

*By June Whitten*

## *Calendar of Events*

### **Bird Club Meeting**

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

### **BIRDING UP THE TEXAS GULF DURING SPRING MIGRATION**

by Terry Steele

Pendleton First Presbyterian Church  
201 SW Dorion Ave., Pendleton

### **Bird Club Meeting**

7:00 p.m., Thursday, December 8, 2011

### **PENDLETON BIRD CLUB ANNUAL RAFFLE AND AUCTION**

Pendleton First Christian Church  
215 North Main St., Pendleton

### **Christmas Bird Count**

Friday, December 30, 2011

See article in this newsletter for details  
or contact Aaron Skirvin 541-215-0761,  
[umatbirder@yahoo.com](mailto:umatbirder@yahoo.com)

### **Umatilla County Winter Birding Big Day**

Midnight to midnight, Sunday, January 1, 2012

Count as many bird species as you can in one day  
in Umatilla County, then report your species list  
to Aaron Skirvin at [umatbirder@yahoo.com](mailto:umatbirder@yahoo.com)

### **Bird Club Meeting and Potluck Dinner**

6:30 p.m., Thursday, January 12, 2012

### **FOURTH ANNUAL HUMOUNGOUS ID CHALLENGE**

(All new, more challenging, exciting format!)

By Jack Simons

Pendleton First Christian Church  
215 North Main St., Pendleton

### **Bird Club Meeting**

7:00 p.m., Thursday, February 9, 2012

### **ON SAFARI IN KENYA & TANZANIA**

By Dave Herr

Pendleton First Christian Church  
215 North Main St., Pendleton



## Results of the Umatilla County Big Sit! Bird Counts

**T**HE BIG SIT! BIRD COUNT is an annual affair held the second Sunday of October. It is organized by the folks at Bird Watchers Digest. The intent is to have a fun, relaxing day (or part of a day) birding in a social setting. For background information on the Big Sit! count, check the September newsletter or go online and visit Bird Watchers Digest's website at: (<http://www.birdwatchersdigest.com/bwdsite/connect/bigsit/index.php?sc=migration>).

This year, three counts were conducted on October 9 in Umatilla County: Columbia River below McNary Dam, Cold Springs NWR, and Mission Ponds. The captains of each count provided the following short write-ups of the results of their counts.

### Columbia River

The "Big Sit!" site on the Columbia River near the nature ponds below McNary Dam was manned by Connie Betts and Duane and June Whitten. There was an unusually high amount of water being released from the dam for this time of year. Consequently, the islands that would usually house many gulls, possibly terns, and other water birds were inundated by the overflow of water.

It was a rather slow morning for birding, but we were still able to record 19 species from the circle, including Marsh Wren, Yellow-rumped Warbler, and Song Sparrow. There were various ducks in Frog Pond, also in view from this circle. Ducks included Wood Ducks, Gadwall, American Wigeon, and Mallard. A Pied-billed Grebe was observed in the pond and several Western Grebes were fishing out in the Columbia. The bird species observed here were typically the more common species, such as Northern Flicker, Belted Kingfisher, and American Kestrel.

*By June Whitten*



### Cold Springs NWR

Seven birders and 47 bird species showed up for the Cold Springs NWR Big Sit! on October 9. At about 7:20 a.m., I set up the count circle on the mudflats on the east shore of the reservoir. Neal Hinds arrived about 7:40 and stayed an hour and half. Angela Baylink, Bruce Mayfield, and Katrina Dielman arrived about 8:15 and stayed an hour and half. June Whitten and Connie Betts arrived about 10:45 and stayed for about 1/2 hour. In addition to the birds observed during the count, we saw/heard Rocky Mountain Elk, a Coyote, and several Mule Deer.

Wind was calm and temperature was pleasant to begin with, but the temps dropped over the first 2+ hours, causing everyone to put on more layers. It sprinkled lightly beginning about 9:30, then the sun came out and it warmed a little. All in all, a very pleasant morning at Cold Springs with 6 great birder friends.

New species kept showing up throughout the morning to keep things interesting - the last two species (about 11:30) were Greater White-fronted Goose and Red-necked Phalarope. Here is the official list for the day: Greater White-fronted Goose, Snow Goose, Cackling Goose,

Canada Goose, American Wigeon, Mallard, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck, Surf Scoter, Common Merganser, Ruddy Duck, California Quail, Horned Grebe, Western Grebe, American White Pelican, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Osprey, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Peregrine Falcon, Prairie Falcon, American Coot, Black-bellied Plover, American Golden-Plover (4), Killdeer, Greater Yellowlegs, Lesser Yellowlegs, Western Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Dunlin, Long-billed Dowitcher, Red-necked Phalarope, Bonaparte's Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Black-billed Magpie, Common Raven, Barn



*PBC members at Cold Springs NWR enjoying the BIG SIT!  
From left, Neal Hinds, Bruce Mayfield, Katrina Dielman,  
Angela Baylink*



Swallow, American Pipit (lots and they were close), Western Meadowlark, and House Finch.

Surf Scoter is a rare, annual fall visitor in Umatilla County and not reported every year. And, this sighting is the first record of this species for Cold Springs NWR!! The flock of 4 American Golden-Plovers is a record high number of that species at one time in Umatilla County; 3 have been reported twice before at Cold Springs NWR.

By Aaron Skirvin

### Mission Ponds

Sunday, October 9<sup>th</sup> dawned bright and early at Mission Ponds. With my two dogs Yonia and Brownie safely at home (I've taken them on the Big Sit! in years past and all they do is whine and whimper about "just sitting here when there are surely things to harass"), I headed out to my usual circle location on the dike road north of Mission Ponds. The best spot for viewing seems to be the one and only spot that allows a view of the river bottom AND the west pond. This usually gives me access to shorebirds foraging in the river bottom as well as waterfowl at the pond.

This year I spotted 23 species, which is within my range of normal years (I seem to average between 23 and 25 species each year). Unfortunately, there were no "surprise birds" this year. I was disappointed the Pileated Woodpeckers did not make an appearance but they come and go on their own schedule. Case in point: Yesterday (October 22), I walked out the front door and there were 2 Pileated Woodpeckers 20 feet away just 3 feet off the ground picking off aphids swarming on the trunk of our big elm tree; at the exact same time, a Downy Woodpecker happened to come around another trunk also feeding on aphids and in the upper branches were 3 or 4 flickers feasting – a smorgasbord of woodpeckers! Now that I think of it, North America's smallest and largest woodpecker species were only a few feet apart. Timing is everything, I guess.

Here are the birds that came my way during my 1-1/2 hours of relaxation: Mourning Dove, Rock Pigeon, Black-billed Magpie, Northern Flicker, European Starling, Belted Kingfisher, Red-winged Blackbird, Song Sparrow, Common Raven, Red-tailed Hawk, Great Blue Heron, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Lesser Yellowlegs, Killdeer, Mallard, American Wigeon, Pied-billed Grebe, Ring-necked Duck,

Green-winged Teal, Canada Goose, American Coot, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Hairy Woodpecker,

The sighting of the juvenile Black-crowned Night-Heron confirms that this species is still breeding at Mission Ponds – a good sign!

By Jack Simons

## Umatilla County Christmas Bird Count, Friday, December 30, 2011

**H**ERE ARE THE DETAILS FOR the 25<sup>th</sup> official Umatilla County Christmas Bird Count, which is scheduled for **FRIDAY, DECEMBER 30, 2011**. This local count is part of the national 112<sup>th</sup> annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count. If you are interested in the history of the Christmas Bird Count and count data accumulated for the hundreds of counts across the country, please visit Audubon's website (<http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/>).

During our count last year on January 2, 2011, 20 bird counters, including 4 feeder watchers, saw 69 species of birds, and tallied a total of 8,580 individual birds in our circle. The Umatilla County count circle is 15 miles in diameter, with the center located about 7 miles southeast of Pendleton.

We welcome **everyone** (from beginning birder to expert) to help count birds on December 30, 2011. There are no major changes in Audubon's rules from last year as to how we conduct our count. The participant fee remains at \$5 per birder for those participants **older than 18 years of age**, and each participant can receive a CBC issue of *American Birds*.

Our count circle is divided into four areas, and each area has a Coordinator (see below). Each Coordinator is responsible for organizing and managing the bird counters in his/her area. To get involved and help count birds, each interested participant must contact one of the Area Coordinators to join that group for count day. The Coordinator will set a place and time for his/her team members to meet on count morning. If you want to help count birds on December 30, please contact one of the Coordinators listed below.



- ◆ **Area 1** (Pendleton, Wildhorse Creek, Patawa Creek and Riverside)  
*Jack Simons* — home: 541-276-8566
- ◆ **Area 2** (Umatilla River and Cayuse)  
*Bruce Mayfield* — cell: 541-969-8444
- ◆ **Area 3** (McKay Reservoir, Upper McKay Creek, and Birch Creek)  
*June and Duane Whitten* — home: 541-276-9019
- ◆ **Area 4** (Mission, Emigrant Hill and Poverty Flats)  
*Aaron Skirvin* — cell: 541-215-0761

Birders can also choose to do feeder counts if you have an active feeder within the count circle. If you want to do a feeder count, contact Aaron Skirvin (see contact information below). All Christmas Bird Count participants will get together for a count-down at the end of the day and compile the count results. Abby's Pizza on Southgate in Pendleton has reserved the banquet room for us from 4:30 – 7:30 pm that evening. Please contact Aaron Skirvin (541-215-0761 or [umatbirder@yahoo.com](mailto:umatbirder@yahoo.com)) if you have any questions about the areas or feeder counts or how to participate.

**LET'S GO CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTING  
ON FRIDAY, DECEMBER 30, 2011!!!**

*By Aaron Skirvin*

**The "Killdeer" of Honolulu**

*Editor's Note: Tanya Harrison is a Bird Club member and a wildlife biologist for the Umatilla Confederated Tribes. Tanya spent most of her childhood in Hawai'i (the island of Kaua'i) and travels there annually to visit family and friends. On her visits during winter she has observed the local plover, a species that, on its wintering grounds, behaves very similarly to our "Killdeer." Although Killdeer are very common breeders throughout Umatilla County, they are actually extremely rare in Hawai'i. This is Tanya's story of the Hawaiian "Killdeer," a species that has been recorded only 3 or 4 times in Umatilla County.*

**M**OST OF THE URBAN BIRDS of Honolulu are introduced, but the Pacific Golden-Plover, or Kolea in Hawaiian, is a native winter visitor. I've visited Honolulu frequently since my childhood, but have only recently started paying

attention to the birds, and I have been surprised at how common and fearless the plovers are. I've found them standing on lawns in city parks, as well as on the University of Hawai'i campus. They appear almost oblivious to people, I've managed to sneak up within 20 feet or so of these birds before they slowly



walk off, only to return to the same spot after I back away. My friends who reside in the city will see plovers at the same spot on a lawn all winter, but don't know if the birds return to the same location annually.

Three years ago, when I first started paying attention to the plovers, my friends and I attended an antique show at the Blaisdell Center, a small convention center well within the urban jungle, and I noticed a plover on a rock in a small patch of lawn next to an even smaller fish pond. This particular area is well hemmed in by buildings and a parking structure, so that seemed a rather odd place for the bird to be,



especially since thousands of people frequent events at the adjacent exhibition hall and nearby arena. Exactly one year later, we attended the same show, and found another plover on the same rock. *The same bird?*





I returned to Honolulu recently, and of course, had to check out that rock. There was construction going on at one edge of the pond, so I didn't expect to see any birds. Yet to my surprise, there stood a plover atop that same, whitewashed rock. I have no idea if this is the same bird, or why it chose to hang out at such a noisy, high traffic area. Perhaps it enjoys antique shows and rock concerts? I'll have to look for the little guy again when I return next year.

By Tanya Harrison

## Bird of the Month – Sabine's Gull (*Xema sabini*)

**S**ABINE'S GULL (pronounced saw-bins) is an elegant, small (13.5 inches in length) gull somewhat tern-like in its graceful flight. It is not a diver, but often feeds by picking food from water in flight. Sabine's gulls eat a variety of food, including many insects, small fish, crustaceans, mollusks, aquatic worms, and occasionally eggs and young birds often of Arctic Terns.

Sabine's Gull is named after brothers, Joseph and Edward Sabine. There are conflicting reports on which brother found the first recorded Sabine's Gull: Sir Edward, a well-known English scientist and astronomer, sent a specimen to his brother, Joseph; or, Joseph Sabine, also an English scientist, shot the first recorded Sabine's Gull, found as a vagrant in England, and named it for his brother, Sir Edward. Either way, the gull retained the Sabine name and the first description from 1819.

Sabine's Gulls breed in the Arctic tundra where they nest on wet coastal meadows and salt-grass flats,

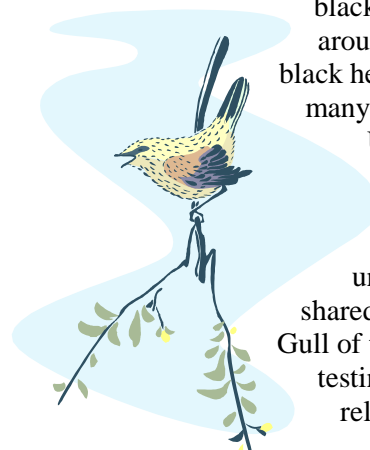
often near a tidal beach. They often nest in small colonies of 6 to 15 pairs, usually near Arctic Terns. The nest is merely a depression in the grass, lined with bits of vegetation. Two or three spotted, brownish-buff eggs are incubated for about 25 days.

Sabine's Gulls are migratory and, outside of the breeding season, quite pelagic. Migrating south in the autumn, most of the population winters at sea in the Pacific Ocean off western South America. Greenland and eastern Canadian birds cross the Atlantic by way of the westernmost fringes of Europe to winter off southwest Africa.

An adult Sabine's Gull is readily identifiable with a black head, black bill with a yellow tip, a pale gray back and wing coverts. On closer inspection, though, the head is dark gray with a black thin black edge. The white tail is forked and the black primary flight feathers and white secondaries show up well in flight. The black head and striking wing pattern are good identification marks.

It takes two years for the birds to attain full adult plumage, so it is good to be prepared to identify juveniles as well. They have similar tricolored wing patterns, but the grey is replaced by brown, and the tail has a black terminal band. The head will not be

black but may have some gray around the cap. Adults lose the black head in winter as well, but many of the Sabine's Gulls seen in Umatilla County in September and October still have black heads. The black bill and notched tail are almost unique for gulls, a characteristic shared only by the Swallow-tailed Gull of the Galapagos Islands. DNA testing has ruled out a close relationship between these two gulls and apparently, the closest relative of the Sabine's Gull is the Ivory



### *Bird of the Month*

Gull, another Arctic species.

It is during the fall migration that, with a little luck, a Sabine's Gull may be found in Umatilla County. Although they are not reported every year, the most regular places to find a Sabine's Gull include Cold Springs NWR and the Columbia River, anywhere from McNary Dam to upstream locations still in Umatilla County. A very unusual sighting, however,





was reported on September 15, 2011, by Aaron Skirvin and Diana LaSarge, when a juvenile Sabine's Gull was observed foraging along the edge of Hwy



*Sabine's Gull. Photo by Mike Danzenbaker.*

395 about 2 miles north of Battle Mountain Forest Scenic Corridor. This bird was a long ways away from any lake or reservoir (their usual habitat) and may have gotten slightly off course as the more typical route would come down around the Columbia River.

*By June Whitten*

Some of the information for this article was obtained from: *A Dictionary of Scientific Bird Names*, Jobling, James A.

*The Birder's Handbook, A Field Guide to the Natural History of North American Birds*, Ehrich, Paul R., Dobkin, David S., and Wheye, Darryl

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sabine%27s\\_Gull](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sabine%27s_Gull)

## September – October Bird Sightings

**F**ALL IS DEFINITELY **H**ERE. The leaves are starting to change color and the fall migration is coming to an end. A number of people have reported **Sandhill Cranes** flying south over the county and on October 13, Connie Betts reported seeing the first **Rough-legged Hawk** of the season over Reith Ridge, just west of Pendleton. **Dark-eyed**



**Juncos** have returned, as have **White-crowned Sparrows**. Another sign late fall migration is underway occurred when Jack Simons counted an unprecedented **32 Turkey Vultures** roosting and sunning themselves in the trees behind his home between Pendleton and Mission on September 20. Jack notes this is a definite record number of vultures for his property. Connie Betts spotted a **Turkey Vulture** circling over Sherwood/McKay area of Pendleton on September 28.

Birding McKay Reservoir September 21, June Whitten (June) and Aaron Skirvin (Aaron) found



*Rough-legged Hawk. Photo by Aaron Skirvin.*

only a few shorebirds, but the variety was excellent. Out of the 11 total shorebirds seen they noted 6 different species including: **Pectoral Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Sanderling, Baird's Sandpiper, Killdeer** and **Western Sandpiper**. June relates that September 21 was the last day she had any humming-birds (a **Rufous**) visit her feeder. Birding around Cold Springs Reservoir September 24, Neal Hinds found a small flock of **American Pipits** and at McNary Wildlife Natural Area he found a single **Great Egret**.

September 24, traveling in the Coombs Canyon and Mud Springs area, June noted lots of juvenile hawks (**Red-tailed, Swainson's** and **Northern Harriers**) and surmise they had a good nesting year. During her travels she also found **Savannah** and **White-crowned Sparrows, Horned Larks, Western Meadowlarks** and a few **Dark-eyed Juncos**. There was also one **Short-eared Owl** and several groups of young **Ring-necked Pheasants**.



Connie Betts birded at McKay Reservoir on September 25 and reported finding many species including **Great Blue Heron, American White Pelican, Western Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, Ring-billed Gull, and Long-billed Dowitcher.**

September 25, Joy Jaeger noted lots of birds around her mountain cabin above Albee. The birds were drinking from the water pans she had set out and included 9 **Red Crossbills**, 10 **Pine Siskins**, 3 **Pygmy Nuthatches**, a **White-breasted Nuthatch**, **Yellow-rumped Warblers**, **White-crowned Sparrows**, **Dark-eyed Juncos**, **Western Bluebirds**, **Cassin's Finches**, 5 **Dusky Grouse**, **Steller's Jays** and a **Hairy Woodpecker**. September 27, Joy's sightings included **Western Bluebirds**, **Song Sparrows**, **American Robins**, **Yellow-rumped Warblers** and **Chipping Sparrows**.

September 26, Dr. Mark Rhodes was able to photograph a fledgling **Eurasian Collared-Dove** near the McNary Golf Course. According to Aaron, sightings and photographs of juvenile **Eurasian Collared-Doves** are very difficult to come by in Umatilla County. However, he notes these doves are quite prolific and must be breeding by the thousands in Umatilla County. Connie Betts seemed to substantiate this observation when she reported counting **43 Eurasian Collared-Doves** at McKay Reservoir on September 25.

A few **Ospreys** are still around, Connie saw one at McKay on the 25, Jack Simons saw one behind his home October 21, and Dolly Robison reported seeing one recently along Little Lookingglass Creek several miles east of Tollgate.

Katrina Dielman continues to have a birdy yard at her Pendleton North Hill home. On September 28, she watched a pair of sparring **Northern Flickers** and 15 or so **Pine Siskins**. And, on October 2, she spotted a late **Western Flycatcher**. Katrina also reports seeing

**Mourning Doves, House Finches, American Goldfinches, and White-crowned Sparrows** on a daily basis.

Also on September 28, Lorna Waltz watched a female **American Goldfinch** feeding sunflower seeds to a fluttering baby bird. Lorna noted she normally sees this kind of activity in early August and this is just another indicator of how late the breeding season extended into late summer/fall this year. The same day, Connie

Betts saw a single **Turkey Vulture** soaring over her SW Pendleton home.

Neal Hinds began the month of October with a great find on October 1. He was able to photograph a **SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER** at Cold Springs Reservoir. Aaron notes this is only the second record of **SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER** in Umatilla County and the first photograph. Neal was also able to photograph **Pectoral Sandpipers, Black-bellied Plovers** and **American Pipits** the same day.

Logan Whitten found two coveys of **Mountain Quail** (about 15 birds in each covey) on October 1. Logan saw them while walking up Stover Canyon in the Bridge Creek

Wildlife Management Area (south of Ukiah). Although a permanent resident and breeding species in the county, **Mountain Quail** are difficult to find and are not reported every year. On October 3, Joy Jaeger reported seeing a flock of **Gray Partridge** along Yellow Jacket Road about 4 to 5 miles south of Hwy 395.



*Eurasian Collared-Dove fledgling. Photo by Dr. Mark Rhodes.*



*Sharp-tailed Sandpiper. Photo by Neal Hinds.*





October 4, June reported, “**American Crows** have come to town”. June and Duane counted over **50 American Crows** visiting the parking lot of McKay Elementary School and another **50** or more at the Pendleton County Club. June wonders if the rain a day or two before brought the crows into the area and wonders if they are going to move to warmer areas for the winter or if they are going to stay for the winter. On October 5, Aaron reported seeing about **100 crows** foraging in a hay field along East Birch Creek Road a few miles SE of Pilot Rock.

An apparent migrant, a **Varied Thrush** visited Connie Bett’s SW Pendleton backyard on October 4. Jack Simons saw his first fall **Dark-eyed Junco** the same day and reported lots of **Yellow-rumped Warblers** eating aphids in his front yard elm tree. October 7, Jack reported the recent storm seemed to motivate a few birds to move through our area. In the morning he saw **Peregrine Falcon** opposite Missions Ponds, and walking along the Umatilla River he spotted an **Osprey** and later in the day heard a flock of **Sandhill Cranes** flying over Mission Store. Earlier he had seen a distant flock heading south over the Wildhorse Casino.

Early the morning of October 8, birding at Cold Springs Reservoir, Neal Hinds found a flock of 12 **Greater White-fronted Geese**, a large flock of **Sandhill Cranes**, over 200 **American White Pelicans**, several dozen **Pectoral Sandpipers** and several **Black-bellied Plovers**. Joined later by Aaron, they counted **24 Black-bellied Plovers** and 1 **American Golden Plover**. **24 Black-bellied Plovers** may be a record number for Cold Springs.

As part of her job, Dolly Robison travels throughout the area. She reports seeing several **Mountain Bluebirds** in the Ukiah area and a **Short-eared Owl** near Albee. She had a couple of **Western Scrub-Jays** at her east Hermiston home earlier in the fall, but has not seen them lately.

A number of folks have been seeing **Red-tailed Hawks** with wing tags south of Pendleton. Dan Baum saw one near Birch Creek and Kimdel Owen, a birder from Redmond, reported seeing one near

McKay Reservoir. These hawks were captured at the Portland Airport and to prevent possible collisions with aircraft, moved to our area.

Neal Hinds has been busy with his camera. October 15 he photographed an **American Golden-Plover** and a **blue phase Snow Goose** at Cold Springs Reservoir. Although more common in the Midwest, the blue phase of the **Snow Goose** is quite rare in NE Oregon. The same day at the McNary Wildlife

Nature Area, Neal was able to photograph both a mature and immature **Eurasian Wigeon**.

Checking Mission Ponds October 16, Jack Simons found the first **Tundra Swan** he had seen in 4 or 5 years there. The swan was alone except for 4 **Canada Geese** and when they took off, Jack was amazed at how much larger the swan was compared to the geese. October 21, Jack found 2 **Lesser Yellowlegs** in the river bottom opposite the ponds and reported

that the resident **Red-tailed Hawks** are “setting up camp” for the winter.

With November approaching, lots more birds will start visiting bird feeders. I stopped feeding at my NE Pendleton home in May, but a couple of weeks ago filled my feeders. I have several hanging feeders with black oilseed and normally this time of year have lots of **House Finches**, both adult and young birds visiting. However this year I have yet to see a House Finch at my feeders. I am curious if other have noted a smaller number of House Finches than normal this fall? Please continue to send all your bird sighting (including House Finch sightings if you have any) to me, Dave Herr at [dsherr1@mac.com](mailto:dsherr1@mac.com) or call 541-276-6413.



*Mountain Bluebird in flight. Photo by Eric Quaempts.*

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

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

**Technical Editor: Aaron Skirvin, 541 215-0761**

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

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

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

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

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





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Pendleton Bird Club  
Pendleton, OR 97801

