

# Pendleton Bird Club

NEWSLETTER Volume 1, No.1 Pendleton, Oregon March 2003

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## **March Organizational Meeting**

On Saturday, March 8<sup>th</sup>, members of the newly formed Pendleton Bird Club gathered together for the first time. Seventeen birders met at Roy Raley Park and walked along the Umatilla River parkway. The birders' enthusiasm seemed undampened by a cold and persistent rain. Only about ten species of birds were observed, possibly because the birders were busy socializing or likely because the birds had the greater common sense and stayed under cover and out of the rain. Ring-billed Gulls and Belted Kingfishers were active over the river, a sign that salmon smolt are probably present. Participants then went to the Little League ballfield where across the river, we observed the beginnings of a Great Blue Heron rookery. One tree held two nests with an adult heron standing in each. A third heron was present in a neighboring tree where two peacocks perched (a bonus).

Participants then gathered at Shari's Restaurant for an organizational meeting led by Aaron Skirvin. Aaron had prepared an excellent handout to guide us through many topics about the concept of what a bird club in Pendleton (Umatilla County) could be. We discussed what the purposes of the club should be, types of activities to fulfill the purpose(s), meeting times and places, field trips, communications to members, etc. During introductions it became evident that people with all levels of birding expertise were present. Aaron introduced Dave Herr as someone who specializes in bird song recordings. We learned that Dannell Tapley's love of flowers has recently blossomed into an enjoyment of birds, inspired by her acquaintance with June Whitten (an avid birder who wasn't at the meeting because she and her husband are birding in Mexico). We met John Norman and his family. John said he was working *up to* the level of amateur birder. But, the Normans admitted to being familiar with birds of Minnesota; John's wife, Hero, has birded in

Iraq, and we learned that their young son, Haval, has a conflicting love of cats! We all agreed that we enjoy the company of others who enjoy observing wild birds. Aaron is maintaining a list of potential club members, so please contact him with the names of anyone who may wish to be notified of future club events.

All present agreed that we would like the club to be active in the enjoyment of observing wild birds, and to contribute to the conservation of birds and their habitats in Umatilla County and adjacent areas. We would like to assist in the education of the public on the appreciation and conservation of birds. It was agreed that it would be the individual's right to pursue political agendas but not a goal of the club as a group.

Participants agreed to the following: hold evening meetings on the second Thursday of every other month, beginning in April; on alternate months, have a field trip; publish a monthly newsletter (Jane Holmes, editor); collect no dues, at least initially; no charter or formal leadership structure, at least initially.

## **Calendar of Events**

**Pendleton Bird Club Meeting**  
**Thursday, April 10, 2003, 7:30 p.m.**

First Christian Church  
Pendleton, Oregon  
(Across from the Pendleton Arts Center)

**Dave Herr** will share his slide and audio presentation of

**"Songbirds of Umatilla County"**

**April 4-6, John Scharff Migratory Bird Festival & Art Show, Burns, OR. See below**

(page 3) or contact Jane Holmes (276-3469) for more information. Pre-registration required.

**April 10, Pendleton Bird Club meeting.** Dave Herr's presentation of "Songbirds of Umatilla County" will help us become aware of the birds we should be seeing locally, this spring. 7:30 p.m. downstairs in the Fellowship Hall of the First Christian Church, Pendleton, Oregon.

**May 3, Pendleton Bird Club's field trip to McNary Wildlife Area.** Meet at the northeastern corner of Pendleton's Safeway parking lot at 7:30 a.m.

**May 10, North American Migration Count.** For more information, contact Kevin Blakely (276-2344), Aaron Skirvin (276-1948), or Dave Herr (276-6413).

**May 17, S.U.R.E. River Clean up.** Stewards of the Umatilla River Environment (S.U.R.E.) is hosting a river clean up in Pendleton, a bird walk along the River Parkway (starting at 7:00 a.m.), and a lunch for the volunteers. For more information, contact Betty Klepper, 276-8416.

**June 12, Pendleton Bird Club meeting.** 7:30 p.m., location and program to be announced later.

International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council  
**BASIC WILDLIFE REHABILITATION  
SKILLS SEMINAR**

Hosted by Blue Mountain Wildlife  
**April 12-13, 2003**  
Pendleton High School

Seminar topics include: basic anatomy, avian neonatal care, handling & physical restraint, nutrition, zoonoses, criteria for release and euthanasia, etc. Hands-on lab using chickens and rabbits.

\$125 registration fee, includes text book

For more information contact: Lynn  
Tompkins, 541-278-0215 ([raptor@ucinet.com](mailto:raptor@ucinet.com))  
or  
Visit [www.iwrc-online.org](http://www.iwrc-online.org)

## **Bird Sightings**

Since October, Jean Wood has been seeing up to 6 **Greater Yellowlegs** in lower McKay Creek at the Pendleton Community Park. Jean also found 2 **Scrub Jays** ("coastal" form) in Ukiah. The jays have stayed in Ukiah all winter, with as many as 3 seen (Mike Denny). Apparently, this is only the second time Scrub Jays have been reported for Umatilla County. Dave Herr reports numerous calling **Virginia Rails** at McNary Wildlife Area. Dave has also lured in (chummed with birdseed) **White-throated** and **Fox Sparrows** at the Wildlife Area. Craig Corder spotted **Dunlin** a few times in the past 2 weeks in the Stanfield and Cold Springs areas. Craig also reported a **Greater White-fronted Goose** at Cold Springs Reservoir.

Paul Daniello and Aaron Skirvin found a **Northern Pygmy-Owl** at Battle Mountain State Park. Last week, **Northern Shrikes** were apparently migrating through the area, as 3 were reported. Aaron Skirvin reported 15 **Violet-green Swallows** at Mission on March 7, 4 or 5 **Tree Swallows** at Mission on March 15, and 37 **Tundra Swans** at McKay Reservoir on March 16. Dannel Tapley has seen a **Sharp-shinned Hawk** (or possibly a **Merlin**) "birding" at the bird feeders located at Clough's on Main St. in Pendleton.

Please report your bird sightings to Dave Herr at 276-6413 or by email, [ds Herr@oregontrail.net](mailto:ds Herr@oregontrail.net).

## **Changing Seasons: Bird Arrivals & Departures**

March through May is an exciting time for birding, because spring bird migration is in full swing. In the vicinity of Pendleton, observers have recorded the following arrival/departure times for migrant species.

Sharp-shinned Hawk – A winter visitor; most depart for their nesting areas by early April.

Osprey – Watch for our locally nesting Ospreys to arrive at the end of March or early April.

Spotted Sandpiper – A careful search along the Umatilla River will reveal a few by late April or early May.

Hummingbirds – Put up your feeders by April 10 to help the earliest migrating Calliope and Rufous Hummingbirds. Our locally breeding Black-chins arrive about a month later.

Vaux's Swift – Watch for the first northbound swifts as they pass through in mid April.

Violet-green Swallow – The earliest hardy birds migrate through at the very end of February or first week of March. The locally breeding birds arrive about March 20.

Rough-winged Swallow – The first ones are seen at the end of March, about one month later than the first Violet-greens.

House Wren – Males arrive (usually in full song) in late April.

Townsend's Solitaire – A few spend the winter here, and most leave for higher elevations by early April.

Yellow Warbler – A common breeding species along Pendleton's River Parkway, this species arrives during the last week of April.

Dark-eyed Junco – This common winter visitor leaves for its mountain breeding areas in mid-April, though a few may linger around Pendleton for another week or two.

White-crowned Sparrow – A common winter visitor, but watch for the strong surge of northward migrants passing through during the third week of April.

Lazuli Bunting – First migrants arrive in late April, with the peak passing through in mid May.

Brown-headed Cowbird – Locally breeding birds arrive in late April.

Bullock's Oriole – These orange beauties arrive during the first week of May.

Aaron Skirvin contribute this month's "Changing Seasons".

## **Miscellaneous**

Betty Klepper is working with teacher Jerri Flynn at Pendleton's Washington Elementary School on a pilot program where students will use the Umatilla River as an outdoor laboratory. June Whitten and Betty are compiling a study book for Washington School's 5<sup>th</sup> grade students that features 24 bird species that are found along Pendleton's River Parkway.

From the website of the Indian River Audubon Society: "A bad day of birding is always better than a good day at the office. And there are no bad days of birding." *Christopher N. Hull*

### **John Scharff Migratory Bird Festival & Art Show**

April 4-6, 2003  
Burns, Oregon

Tours: birds, biology, history, archeology, etc

Workshops: photography, birdwatching basics, bird feeding, bird house building, etc.

**PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED**

For more information contact:  
Harney County Chamber of Commerce  
76 East Washington, Burns, OR 97720  
Phone 541-573-2636

Website: [www.harneycounty.com](http://www.harneycounty.com)

## **Club Organizers**

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*If you have comments about, suggestions for changes, or articles for the newsletter, please contact Jane Holmes.*