



Newsletter of the Pendleton Bird Club

# Kákya Táymut

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

Volume 4, No. 9 Pendleton, Oregon September 2006

## *Fortuitous Birding: The One That Didn't Get Away*

**YOU CAN CALL IT JUST DUMB LUCK** or bullheaded persistence, but I guess if you look at enough birds over enough years, you might see an unusual or rare bird. And, finding one in your own backyard is REALLY lucky.

For the past 15 years, I've lived about 5 miles south of Pendleton between Hwy 395 and McKay Reservoir. Each year I put up one or two hummingbird feeders in early April just as the first Rufous and Calliope Hummingbirds pass through the area. I hang the feeders from the eave of the house over the back patio where I can see them easily from the kitchen and the backyard. Starting in mid- to late April, the first Black-chinned Hummingbirds begin arriving at Pendleton from their wintering areas. Black-chinneds are the only hummingbirds that breed in the immediate vicinity of Pendleton, and I have a few males and females at my feeders all summer. By mid-August, hummingbird numbers drop off, but I often see a few birds at my feeders until mid- to late September (latest date was a juvenile Rufous on September 25, 2002).

Although I have male hummingbirds (Black-chinneds only) at my feeders during the summer, they leave for parts south by the middle of August. After that, I see only females or juveniles (Black-chinned, Rufous, and Calliope) until they all leave in September. About 4 p.m. on Thursday, September 14, 2006, I looked out the kitchen window and did a double-take when I saw what appeared to be a male hummingbird, with a reddish throat, fly away from the feeder.

If it were indeed a male with a red throat, that would eliminate Black-chinned – intriguing! It landed at eye level in the lilac bush across the yard (50 feet away) and sat there for several minutes, partly in the sun and partly in the shade. Occasionally, it would turn its head and I could see a flash of iridescent red on its throat. Having confirmed that it was a male

hummingbird with a red throat and apparently greenish back, I began to try to turn it into an Anna's Hummingbird. Although an extremely rare species in Umatilla County, Anna's would be the most likely red-throated, green-backed male hummingbird here in the fall.

The male Anna's also sports a red forehead and crown. At first I thought this bird might have a red forehead and crown, but the lighting was such that I wasn't completely sure. I called June Whitten and asked her to come over to look at the bird. June

arrived in a few minutes. We watched the bird through the kitchen window as it flew directly at us toward the feeder (and us) several times, revealing an iridescent red throat each time it flew across the yard. After a few more minutes of watching the hummingbird perch in the lilac and periodically fly to the feeder, we determined that it definitely had a red throat, greenish top of head, green back, bright green side of the head above the eye, greenish tinge on the dark sides, whitish band on the upper breast, and a small white spot behind the eye.



Ruby-throated Hummingbird.  
Original pen and ink drawing by  
Roger Hall. Copyright 2006.



The feeder was in the shadows under the eave of the house, but we had good views of the hummer's silhouette as it drank from the feeder about 8 feet away. This bird's profile strongly resembled the Black-chinned Hummingbird's profile that we are so familiar with here. After feeding, the hummingbird consistently flew back to the same perch in the lilac bush. One time, it perched for a few minutes with its back to us and slightly turned to the right, and we could see a deeply notched, solid dark gray or blackish tail.

Hmmm, - more intriguing - based on all of the field marks taken in total, this bird was not a Black-chinned, Rufous, Allen's, Calliope, Anna's, or Broad-tailed hummingbird, the species that are regularly seen in Oregon each year. Thumbing through the bird field guides and discussing the field marks, June and I were starting to think the bird was probably a Ruby-throated Hummingbird.

At about 5 p.m., the bird came to the feeder a final time, and as June and I were looking through a bird field guide, the hummingbird disappeared from the yard. June left to attend a function (prior commitment) at the Pendleton Round-Up, and I set up a lawn chair where I could see the feeder and the hummingbird's favorite perch in the lilac bush and waited for the bird to return. Unfortunately, I didn't see it again that evening.

Later Thursday evening, I sent an email to several local birders, letting them know about the probable Ruby-throated Hummingbird that June and I had seen in my yard. I knew that Ruby-throated Hummingbird is extremely rare in Oregon and had remembered a report of a female (or juvenile) Ruby-throated two falls ago near Fields, Oregon. The observer had seen that bird well and taken some good photos, but non-male Ruby-throated and Black-chinned, two very closely related species, are difficult to tell apart in the field. Bird banders, who handle these birds, know how to distinguish the females/juveniles of these two species, but the rest of us, who see them through binoculars, probably won't be able to identify them in the field.

On Friday morning, the male Ruby-throated showed up at my feeder a little after 7 a.m., as I finished packing for the weekend trip to Malheur NWR with 9 other Pendleton Bird Club members. As the hummingbird ate at the feeder, I watched it through the kitchen window and looked for the black chin, a field mark for male Ruby-throated

Hummingbird. The lighting was so poor (overcast skies and back lighting) that I couldn't discern the color of the chin. But, I saw the flash of red on the throat and got close-up looks at the all dark, deeply notched tail and was convinced that it was a male Ruby-throated Hummingbird. I called Dave Herr at his office in Pendleton and invited him to come out to my house as soon as he could to photograph the hummingbird. The bird continued to feed periodically for about 15 – 20 minutes, then it left, and I didn't see it again.

Meanwhile, I printed off several copies of the Oregon Bird Records Committee's May 2006 official checklist of Oregon birds. Normally we take a few copies with us every time the bird club travels to Malheur NWR — they make a handy tally sheet for the species we see on the trip. Looking at the hummingbird section of the checklist, I noticed that Ruby-throated Hummingbird was not on the list!

Pendleton Bird Club members who were traveling to Malheur began arriving at my house a little before 8 a.m. Fortunately, Club member Bob Tapley brought his new video camera along with him. I told Bob and the others about the Ruby-throated Hummingbird and asked Bob to check out the feeder at the back of the house and photograph the hummingbird if it came to the feeder. Since I hadn't seen the bird for the last 45 minutes, I thought it had left the yard, and we probably wouldn't see it before we departed for Malheur. As the rest of us packed our gear in the vehicles, Bob returned in about 5 minutes and said, "Well, I got it!" With that announcement, we all rushed to the back yard, but the bird was gone. We stood there watching the feeder for a couple of minutes when finally someone spotted the hummer perched in the elderberry bush about 25 feet away at the edge of the yard. It perched there for a few minutes in full view, but backlit. We saw the all dark, deeply notched tail, and as it turned its head once, everyone "oohed and aahed" when the male hummer showed the flash of bright, iridescent red on the throat. This was a life bird for many of us, including me. Bob got additional video footage of the bird, then we departed for Malheur NWR.

At Malheur Friday afternoon, we saw Alan Contreras and Daniel Farrar, expert birders from Eugene, and told them about the Ruby-throated Hummingbird. Later that evening, all of us looked at the video (on Alan's computer) that Bob Tapley had taken of the hummingbird. When Bob took the video, lighting conditions were a little difficult, but there appeared to



be enough photographic evidence to verify the record of a Ruby-throated Hummingbird.

Word about the Ruby-throated Hummingbird slowly went out to the Oregon birding community over the next day or so. On Saturday, Trent Bray, from La Grande, photographed the hummingbird; Dave Herr and Mike and MerryLynn Denny from Walla Walla saw and photographed it. Portland birders Tim Janzen, Owen Schmidt, and Jeff Gilligan saw and photographed the Ruby-throated Hummingbird on Sunday. According to most people who saw the bird (not everyone who came by saw it) reported that it very infrequently visited the feeder. Everyone who saw the bird concurred that it was a male Ruby-throated Hummingbird. I don't have photos of my own, but there are several diagnostic photos and/or video clips of the bird. I have submitted a written report of the sighting to the Oregon Bird Records Committee, and the birders who photographed the hummingbird have submitted their video and photos to the committee. So, this sighting will be the first verified record of Ruby-throated Hummingbird in Oregon!

The hummingbird was last seen on Sunday, September 17<sup>th</sup>. Some birders looked for it on Monday but didn't see it. I returned home from Malheur about 6:15 p.m. on Monday evening, but did not see the bird. Several people watched my feeder for a few hours on Tuesday morning, but no one saw the hummingbird. I kept watch before and after work for the next few days, but the Ruby-throated Hummingbird (and other hummingbirds for that matter) did not make an appearance.

I think I have to call this sighting of a rare bird what it really is: stupendous luck. The probability of this bird being in Oregon in the first place, of it visiting my feeder, then anyone actually seeing the bird, being a male instead of an unidentifiable female or juvenile, and it staying long enough to be identified and photographed is miniscule to the 6<sup>th</sup> power!

I could have easily missed the bird on Thursday afternoon. Instead of puttering around the house, I could have participated in some Round-Up activities and not seen the bird at all. It could have been a female or juvenile. It showed up the day before I left on a long weekend trip to Malheur NWR. It could have just as easily arrived at my feeder, stayed for a couple of days, left the area, then gone undetected while I was at Malheur. Or, I could have had one fleeting look at the bird,

recognized it was an unusual species, but never got a good enough view to conclusively ID the bird. Fortunately, none of those things happened. And, the hummingbird was very cooperative, determined to show all of its field marks.

Lucky or not, it was a great bird to have in the yard, and I would be glad to do it all over again, if given the opportunity.

*Contributed by Aaron Skirvin*

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### **The Big Sit! Bird Count**

**Sunday, October 8, 2006**

Enjoy a few hours or more of relaxed bird counting near McNary Dam at Umatilla or Cold Springs NWR, east of Hermiston. The Pendleton Bird Club will participate again this year in the Big Sit! Bird Count, so put October 8 on your calendar! Want to participate? We hope so! See the article in this newsletter on how you can get involved in this fun event.

**For further information, contact June Whitten: 276-9019**

### Bird Club Meeting

**7:00 p.m., October 12, 2006**

### **“Grouse of the Lewis and Clark Expedition”**

**Presented by**

**Mike Schroeder, Biologist with the Washington Dept. of Wildlife**

**7:00 p.m. at Pendleton First Presbyterian Church,  
201 SW Dorion Ave., Pendleton**



### Bird Club Meeting

**7:00 p.m., November 9, 2006**

**Pendleton First Christian Church on S. Main in  
Pendleton**

**Program to be announced**

### Bird Club Meeting

**7:00 p.m., December 14, 2006**

**Pendleton First Christian Church on S. Main in  
Pendleton**

**Program to be announced**

### Umatilla County

### CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

**Saturday, December 30, 2006**

All are welcome and encouraged to join the count!

Mark your calendar and reserve December 30 for  
counting birds.

Compiler: Aaron Skirvin 276-1948

[askirvin@wtechlink.net](mailto:askirvin@wtechlink.net)

### **MALHEUR / STEENS MOUNTAIN FIELD TRIP — SEPTEMBER 15<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup>, 2006**

**TEN PENDLETON BIRD CLUB BIRDERS** met at Aaron Skirvin's home at 8 a.m. Friday, September 15<sup>th</sup> to start the birding trip to Malheur National Wildlife Refuge and Steens Mountain. We were immediately treated to our best bird of the trip: a male Ruby-throated Hummingbird coming to Aaron's feeder. The hummingbird even cooperated enough for Bob Tapley to get photos with his new video camera! What a way to start a birding adventure with a **FIRST VERIFIED OREGON STATE RECORD** of **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** on our list! This was surely a good omen for the trip.



However, the weather on the way to Malheur was a typical "early spring day" but in September. There was rain, snow, sunshine, hail, and also wind. Since we were mostly traveling, it was a good day for precipitation. The sun came out briefly while we had lunch at the Joaquin Miller Forest Camp, located about 25 miles north of Burns. Here we had the second treat of the day when a pair of **White-headed Woodpeckers** came to a tree near our picnic. Who could ask for anything more?

We met fellow club member, Jill Wyatt, at the Malheur Field Station, but our arrival turned into a bit of confusion. We had reserved Owl East and Owl West dormitories, but Owl West was occupied! Duncan Evered, Director of the Field Station, graciously apologized, but a water main had broken and he had to juggle people around. We ended up in Owl East and the Pelican, which worked out just fine for us. Besides, our neighbors in the Owl West dorm were Alan Contreras and Daniel Farrar, both expert birders from Eugene.

Alan reported that Coos Bay birder Tim Rodenkirk had seen a **Magnolia Warbler** near Benson Pond a few hours previously. We made a quick drive to Benson Pond, where we found quite a few birds, but not the Magnolia Warbler. Friday evening was our pizza get together and planning time for the weekend.

Saturday morning we went to Refuge Headquarters to find we had just missed a male **Baltimore Oriole**. The oriole eluded us all weekend, although he was reported by other birders. We went to headquarters every morning and saw a nice range of warblers: **Townsend's, MacGillivray's, Yellow, Wilson's, Orange-crowns, and plenty of Yellow-rumps**. Of course, the resident Great-horned Owls were present. A **Northern Waterthrush** was reported, but we never found it, nor did anyone else see it again. Several nice sparrows were observed at headquarters: **White-crowned, Golden-crowned, and Lincoln's**.

We returned to Benson Pond where the Magnolia Warbler was reported and now also a **Tennessee Warbler**, which had been found by Alan Contreras. We searched the area each day but never found those two target birds. Maybe the Ruby-throated Hummingbird wasn't such a good omen after all, or, perhaps the bird gods determined we had seen our share of rare birds! The Benson area did produce a great array of warblers, **Western and Gray Flycatchers, Great Horned Owls, Fox Sparrow**, and finally a **Long-eared Owl** on Monday morning.

We found the ponds near Buena Vista Station good for **White-faced Ibis**, both **Greater** and **Lesser Yellowlegs**, **Snowy** and **Great Egrets**, **American Avocets**, **Black-necked Stilts**, and a **Virginia Rail**. We also searched that area for a reported **Red-shouldered Hawk**, but to no avail. We then visited Diamond, including our favorite hawk hangout: "Hawk Alley", which is located near the eastern end of the road connecting Refuge Headquarters with the community of Princeton. We weren't disappointed as we could see ten hawks in one view. There were several **Ferruginous**, **Red-tailed**, and **Prairie Falcons**.

On Saturday, our binocular-view of Steens Mountain showed quite a lot of snow, which gradually melted throughout the day. The weather forecast indicated Sunday would be the best day for the Steens, and it was: a beautiful sunny day for the spectacular scenes on the mountain. The aspens were just showing some color, which added to the views. The recent wildfires had burned for miles in the low- to mid-elevation juniper woodlands along the North Loop Road. Fortunately, the fires stopped just before reaching Fish Lake, but this habitat change will affect the birds of this area.

Water levels in many areas were much different from previous years. A few areas, such as Harney, Malheur, and Alvord Lakes had more water than in several recent years. However, many ponds, especially along the Center Patrol Road on the refuge, were dry. Some of this is controlled by refuge managers, and some of it may be due to the good winter snow pack, or the second hottest summer on record. It did seem to affect the number of birds, which were down from previous years.

On Sunday morning, we saw a **Merlin** standing on a driveway (very unusual behavior for a Merlin) at the headquarters. It was upright, but obviously injured. The volunteer on duty at the headquarters tried to get assistance for the Merlin, but we never found out the end of the story. After a jaunt to Krumbo Reservoir for **Eared Grebe** and **Common Tern**, we stopped at Frenchglen, since we had learned that a fall **Chestnut-sided Warbler** had been seen behind the school. Our luck took a turn for the better, and because of the able assistance of Tim Rodenkirk, some of us got good to fleeting looks at this lovely warbler.

This was the fourth annual fall trip for the Pendleton Bird Club to Malheur NWR and



*kyia Tzymut, Pendleton Bird Club Newsletter*

Steens Mountain. We have seen **Black Rosy-Finches** each year at the summit of Steens Mountain, and in great numbers. The Black Rosy-Finches are usually in medium to large flocks. And, just to PROVE birds don't always do what they are SUPPOSED to do, Duane Whitten called us on his two-way radio to request we return immediately to the parking lot at East Rim Overlook. We did as requested and found that Duane had located ONE Black Rosy-Finch, just over the edge of the rim. Fortunately, it was a cooperative bird that stayed within 25 feet of us for more than a half hour. We watched it, photographed it, put up scopes, showed it to two ladies from Bend (who had no idea such a bird existed) and finally left it alone in its contentment to eat seeds and drink from the small patches of snow. We visited Kiger Gorge viewpoint to look for more Rosy-Finches. As always, we enjoyed the fantastic scenery, but we were not able to find any other Black Rosy-Finches.

#### VISIT THE BIRD CLUB'S WEBSITE

**Bird checklists, ID Challenge, Club Member's Photo Gallery, Newsletter Archive and more.**

[www.pendletonbirders.org](http://www.pendletonbirders.org)

On Monday, after visiting Refuge Headquarters and Benson Pond one last time, we were homeward bound by noon. A stop at The Narrows produced several **Clark's Grebes** and **Western Grebes**. After a stop at the Dairy Queen in John Day, we were on our way back to Pendleton.

We recorded **118 species**, including a **Burrowing Owl**, **Williamson's** and **Red-naped Sapsuckers**, **Loggerhead Shrikes**, many **Sage Thrashers**, **Townsend's Solitaires**, **Black Terns**, **Trumpeter Swans**, and **Lesser Goldfinches**. Betty Klepper had a **Wilson's Snipe** land almost in her car, but it decided to go the other way. Two **Sandhill Cranes** were seen near the Ukiah turn-off and, of course, we saw several small flocks of cranes at Malheur. A short Sunday-night car drive from the Field Station to the headquarters did not produce any **Common Poorwills** this trip, but the drive was not uneventful. There were kangaroo rats and numerous cottontails and jackrabbits hopping in the road, a striped skunk with his tail in the air convinced us to drive on by, and a beautiful **Barn Owl** was hunting from a fencepost.

Participants for this year's Malheur / Steens

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Mountain fall birding trip were: **Russ and Connie Betts, Betty Klepper, Fern Oliver, Kathy Ramsey, Aaron Skirvin, Bob and Dannel Tapley, Jill Wyatt, and Duane and June Whitten.**

*Contributed by June Whitten and Kathy Ramsey*

## “BIG SIT!” COMING ON OCTOBER 8<sup>th</sup>

**ARE YOU READY FOR THE BIG SIT?** In case you don't know, The Big Sit is a stationary bird-watching adventure, which is lots of fun — and sedentary! There are Big Sit circles all over the United States and the whole world, including England, Vietnam, India, The Netherlands, Guatemala, and New Zealand. So, join in the fun on Sunday, October 8<sup>th</sup>, anytime from 12 a.m. to 12 p.m. There may not be many takers during the long dark hours, unless someone is into owling. People will come and go during the day, and you may spend time at both circles. If our communication system works (cell phones) we may be able to see a rarity before it leaves one area or the other.

Bring your lawn chair, binoculars, and snacks or hot beverages and enjoy nature for as long or as short a time as you wish. The circles are 17 feet in diameter. Birds seen or heard outside the circle may be counted. Also, one person may leave the circle to investigate sights or sounds, but the bird may be counted only from within the circle.

We will have two count circles this year — one near the McNary Nature Ponds, about 1/4 mile downstream from McNary Dam; the other will be at Cold Springs NWR. The Cold Springs circle is a new location. Enter the gravel road into the reservoir, and turn right at the first crossroads. Proceed to the first left turn and park in the lot at the end of this road. The trail goes down to the reservoir and a boat launching area. Since the water is now receding, the gate is closed to vehicular traffic. Walk through the opening on the left side of the gate to access the count circle.

The Big Sit is sponsored by Swarovski Optics and Eagle Optics and hosted by Bird Watcher's Digest and the founding bird club, The New Haven (Conn.) Bird Club. One bird from the total species tallied will be put in a drawing. Every circle reporting that bird will have a chance to win the



*kyra Teymut, Pendleton Bird Club Newsletter*

Golden Bird Award which is \$500 and has to be used on improving birding or bird habitat in that area.

See you October 8<sup>th</sup> at the Big Sit!! This is a great event for guests and beginners since we are watching a lot of larger birds which are easier to spot.

**Questions?** Contact June Whitten at 276-9019 or by email at [jwhitten@oregontrail.net](mailto:jwhitten@oregontrail.net)

## BIRDS OF THE MONTH – LOGGERHEAD (*Lanius exubiter*) AND NORTHERN SHRIKES (*Lanius ludovicianus*)

**WE ARE FORTUNATE IN UMATILLA COUNTY** to have two species of shrikes, which gives us the opportunity to see shrikes year-round. Since they are fairly similar in appearance, it is good to know that the Northern Shrike is here for the winter and the Loggerhead Shrike is here for the summer. There is, of course, some overlap during the fall and spring. Occasionally, a Loggerhead or two may over winter here, but no Northern Shrikes have been seen here between mid-April and late September.



Loggerhead Shrike

While the two species are similar in appearance, they can be separated in the field with a good view. The Northern Shrike is larger at 10 inches in length and a 14.5 inch wing-span. The Loggerhead Shrike is a little smaller at 9 inches, with a 12-inch wing-span. This difference in size is difficult to see in the field, but the Northern does appear longer tailed, even at a distance. On the Northern

Shrike, the identification marks to look for are a longer bill, a narrow, black mask with white above and below the mask, and a pale gray throat. On the other hand, the smaller Loggerhead has a wider black mask that extends over the bill. It has a whiter throat which contrasts with a grayer breast and belly.

The Northern Shrike nests in the farthest northern parts of Alaska and Canada. The bulky nest is often built in a spruce tree and is composed of twigs, grasses, and bark and lined with mosses and feathers. Four to six eggs are the usual clutch and are incubated by the female. The eggs are just over 1 inch in length and are greenish-white or grayish blotched with olive, brown, and lavender. The Northern Shrike winters all across the northern United States and southern parts of Canada.

The Loggerhead nests across the southern half of Canada to Mexico. They come north into the mid-west and west into Oregon and parts of Canada in the summer. Some of them remain year-round in the southern and southwestern states. Although scarce in Umatilla County after September, a few Loggerheads are probably present here every winter.

The Loggerhead Shrike nests in open fields with scattered trees and shrubs. It often nests in larger shrubs with a similar nest to the Northern Shrike. Their eggs are about 1 inch in length and are grayish-buff marbled with gray, browns, and black.

Both species eat a diet of large insects and small rodents, lizards, and small birds. Shrikes lack the talons of hawks, but they can stun or kill a small bird in flight with their powerful bill. Shrikes are known for storing their food by impaling the insect, rodent, lizard, or bird on a plant spine or barbed wire. They appear to have excellent recall as to where they stashed their prey.

The juvenile Northern Shrikes are quite buffy-beige and fairly easy to tell from the juvenile Loggerhead Shrikes, which are grayer with subtle, fine barring.

These gray shrikes with black wings, tail and mask are handsome birds. They are most often seen as solitary birds on electric wires and fences. Several Loggerheads were observed on the recent Bird Club trip to Malheur. They are often found in Umatilla County along such areas as the Gurdane-Vinson Road, Coombs Canyon area, and around Ukiah-Albee.

Loggerhead Shrikes will remain this far north for awhile longer this year. But, as the calendar and the weather turn to fall, Northern Shrikes will migrate south to replace the Loggerheads.

*Submitted By June Whitten*

## August –September Bird Sightings

**THERE IS NO PROBLEM DECIDING ON** the best bird sighted this report period — or the year for that matter! On August 14, Aaron Skirvin discovered a **RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD** using the feeder at this home. This is a major discovery which will be described in a separate *Newsletter* article. I'm sure if I had found this bird I would have just passed

it off as another male Black-chinned Hummer. Hats off to Aaron for recognizing this bird was different and for taking the time to study and properly identify it. Most of us will bird our whole life without finding a **FIRST STATE RECORD!**

Joy Jaeger reports the **Dusky Grouse** are still being seen at her summer home in the Blues near Albee. As well as the grouse, many other species are coming to the seed and water she provides. Joy reports **Steller's Jays, Morning Doves, Northern Flickers, White-breasted Nuthatches, Williamson's Sapsuckers** and juvenile **Bluebirds** visiting her feeders.

In late August Connie Betts reported a **Sharp-shinned Hawk** and several **Black-capped Chickadees** in her yard. On September 21, she found the first fall **White-crowned Sparrow**.

Jack Simons reports the **Turkey Vultures** are again being seen behind his home near Mission. Jack believes deer are dying again this fall from blue-tongue, and this is attracting the vultures. Jack found **5 Turkey Vultures** on September 3, and reports there are now **6** roosting in the trees along the Umatilla River.

Water is still high at McKay Reservoir and few folks have been birding the area. On September 3, Aaron (birding with June and Duane Whitten and Jenny Barnett) found a juvenile **STILT SANDPIPER**, **30 Western Sandpipers**, **6 Least Sandpipers**, **6 Baird's Sandpipers**, **1 Semipalmated Plover** and **1 Greater Yellowlegs**.

Shorebirding conditions at Cold Springs Reservoir have been better with several reports from that area. On August 30, Neal Hinds found a **Great Egret** and **2 Killdeer** at Cold Springs. On September 2, Neal reported finding **9 GREAT EGRETS**, **6 Greater Yellowlegs**, **1 Solitary Sandpiper** and **40 Dunlin**. Neal said this is the greatest number of **GREAT EGRETS** he ever found in one group in Umatilla County.

Birding Cold Springs on September 9, Jay Withgott, a visiting birder from Portland found **3 Semipalmated Plovers**, **2 SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPERS**, **6 Baird's Sandpipers**, **4 Pectoral Sandpipers**, as well as **Western and Least Sandpipers**. Jay also reported finding **19 Common Terns**, **1 Forster's Tern** and a **Bonaparte's Gull** below McNary Dam.



On September 16, Craig Bennett, a birder from La Grande reported finding **2 SANDERLINGS**, **7 Baird's Sandpipers**, **1 Pectoral Sandpiper**, **4 Least Sandpipers** and **4 Semipalmated Plovers** at Cold Springs. Birding the same area September 22, Aaron and June Whitten found **4 SANDERLINGS**, and **4 Black-bellied Plovers**. They also reported a flock of **100 Sandhill Cranes** passed over flying south.

On August 27, June and Duane Whitten added **MOUNTAIN QUAIL** to their County-year list. Driving up the Pearson Creek road, they found two males and two females 0.3 miles from the Bird Creek road. A difficult species to find in the County, Duane was ready to take a picture of the birds, when another vehicle drove past them and scarred the birds. Too bad, as this would have been a great picture for the website!

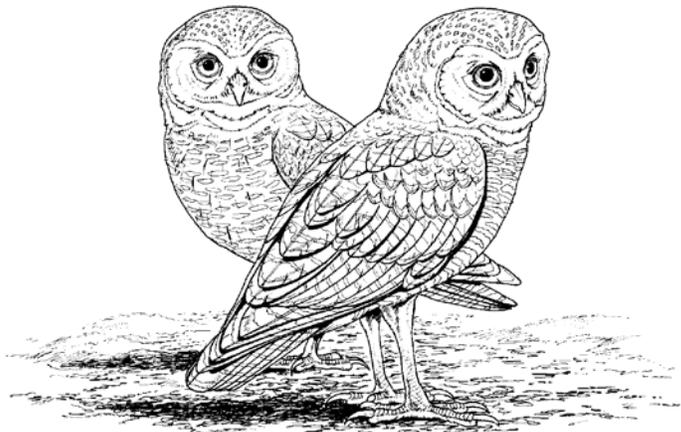
Lots of sparrows have been reported from the Umatilla County grasslands. Both Bob and Dannell Tapley and Aaron report finding large numbers of sparrows along the Vinson to Gurdane road. Aaron estimated he saw **330 Vesper Sparrows** along the

route, as well as **Chipping, Brewer's** and 2 juvenile **Grasshopper Sparrows**. **Chukar** and **Gray Partridge** are also being found along the road.

Winter birds are starting to move into the area. Aaron found the first fall **Dark-eyed Junco** in his yard September 10, and he found a **Golden-crowned Sparrow** with a group of **White-crowned Sparrows** September 12. On September 9, Kate Ely reported hearing a **Western Screech-Owl** calling near her Pendleton home. Although Screech-Owls do not migrate, they tend to sing more in the fall.

Thanks to all who have sent reports this period and please continue to send your bird reports to me, Dave Herr at [dsherr@oregontrail.net](mailto:dsherr@oregontrail.net) or 276-6413.

*Newsletter Editor: Position Vacant*  
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