



Kákya Táymut

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

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ENCOUNTER WITH A BANDED HAWK

It's not very often we have the opportunity to see a banded bird, and it's probably even rarer to see a banded hawk. Based on the records from the U. S. Bird Banding Laboratory, only about 5 percent of the banded Red-tailed Hawks are ever encountered by someone after they are banded.¹ I'm actually amazed the encounter rate with banded Red-tails is that high!!

The banded hawk observed on March 18, 2009, by employees at the Calpine power-generating plant, which is located near Hermiston at the intersection of OR Hwy 207 and I-84, was even more memorable because it crashed into a window at the plant. The hawk, although dazed and suffering a "headache," soon recovered and flew away. But, before the hawk left, quick-thinking workers at the plant noticed the band on the hawk's right tarsus and took photos. The colored band, stenciled with the number "43," was not the typical aluminum band issued to bird banders by the U. S. Bird Banding Laboratory in Maryland.

Naturally, the Calpine workers were interested in the history of the hawk: where, when, and why it was banded. Rick Colgan, Calpine's manager, contacted JR Cook who in turn contacted me to find out what kind of hawk collided with the window and how they might find out the circumstances of the hawk receiving a band. The easiest part was identifying the hawk; the excellent photos of the bird disclosed its identity as an immature Red-tailed Hawk.

Between Rick and me making email and phone contacts in San Diego, Walla Walla, Olympia, TriCities, and Portland over the next few days, we eventually discovered the answer to the history of the

hawk. On April 8, I received a forwarded email message from Laurence M. Schafer, the biologist who banded the hawk. Laurence's email, which originated in South Dakota, made its way to me via the U. S. Bird Banding Laboratory in Laurel, MD and the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Portland, OR. Here are excerpts from Laurence's email, which describes the hawk-banding project; Laurence also provided a photo of hawk number "43" as a nestling:



Although I'm in South Dakota right now and my banding database is in my Olympia, WA office, I actually remember banding that bird. It was one of 3 nestlings I banded at Fairchild Air Force Base in Spokane, WA, on or about 28 April 2008. Hermiston is roughly 150 miles southwest of Fairchild.

You have the "after" pics, how about a "before" pic with it and its two siblings? You can see WA44 clearly and then the 3 of WA43 in the middle.

You can tell Aaron that we are studying raptor movements (this is a national effort) and the efficacy of translocation from airports as a tool to reduce raptor strikes at airports. Red-tailed hawks are actually the 4th to 5th most commonly struck bird species across the United States. As you may suspect, bird strikes are almost always fatal to the birds involved (in addition to the safety hazard to the aircraft, pilot, and passengers), so we work pretty hard to keep them from colliding with aircraft.

Very cool to get a report and pic so early. Glad to hear it flew away.

Best Wishes,



Laurence M. Schafer,
Staff Biologist, USDA-Wildlife Services

Olympia, WA

Many thanks to Tami Tate-Hall (US Fish and Wildlife Service in Portland, OR) and Rose DeComo (Bird Banding Laboratory in Laurel, MD), without their efforts to track down the hawk bander, we wouldn't have found out the history of the hawk. And, thanks to Laurence Schafer for his prompt and informative response about the hawk and the hawk-banding study.



We hope the hawk fully recovered from its accident at Calpine and has no further collisions with windows, airplanes, or anything else so others have the opportunity to see Red-tailed Hawk #WA43.

¹ <http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/BBI/homepage/spec.htm#3370>

Contributed by Aaron Skirvin

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Bird Club Meeting

7:00 p.m., May 14, 2009

BURROWS FOR BURROWING OWLS

By Mike Gregg, James Rebholz, and
Don Gillis

Pendleton First Christian Church
North Main St., Pendleton

River Parkway Clean-up

Saturday, May 16, 2009

The Bird Club will help with the annual
Spring clean-up of the
River Parkway in Pendleton
Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the Stillman Park, SE 4th
and Byers Streets in Pendleton
See the announcement in this newsletter

Bird Club Field Trip

Sunday, May 31, 2009

Birding at Tower Burn, Ukiah, Battle Mountain, and Albee Bluebird Trail

Meet at 6:00 a.m. at the NE corner
of Pendleton Safeway parking lot

Bird Club Picnic

Saturday, July 11, 2009

Tollgate Area
Meet at Woodward Campground
(Langdon Lake) at 9 a.m. for some
birding prior to the picnic or at Target
Meadows Campground at noon when
we will start the picnic.



April 18 Field Trip Report

At 0800 hrs on Saturday, April 18, ten enthusiastic, beady-eyed birders (Aaron Skirvin, Jack Simons, Russ and Connie Betts, Tanya Harrison, Nancy Brown, Steve McMillan, Jeanne Jenson, and Jill and Ann Wyatt) met at the Pendleton Safeway parking lot for the first 2009 Bird Club field trip.

Our first stop was Wildhorse Golf Course ponds where it's obvious spring has come to Umatilla County. Ruddy Ducks were showing off and everything else was also twitterpated: American Coots; Killdeer; Yellow-headed, Red-winged and Brewer's Blackbirds; and Cinnamon Teal.

The American Kestrels hunted from the power lines on the way to stop two – Mission Wetland Community Park – in dire need of a community clean up, but the birds didn't mind. Two Downy Woodpeckers, a Pileated Woodpecker that disappeared into the back woods after calling a few times, Northern Flicker, Mourning Dove, Red-winged Blackbirds, Ring-necked Pheasant, and White-crowned Sparrows were seen at the park.

On a couple stops along Old Cabbage Hill Road, we heard Fox and Song Sparrows that shyly stayed in the brush. A Savannah Sparrow sat high on a shrub sunning itself. A White-crowned Sparrow, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Black-capped Chickadee, and Spotted Towhee came out for a peek as Aaron coaxed them in pished. A pair of Northern Harriers soared in their territory and chased an accipiter away. Checking out the Bluebird nestboxes – unoccupied – we saw a stunning male Mountain Bluebird and his mate on a fence nearby. Topping out on Poverty Flat Road, we spied a Western Meadowlark and a Red-tailed Hawk.

Continuing on to Joy and Steve Jaeger's cozy cabin, three beautiful white tailed deer ran across the access road with "flags up." The grass widows were blooming in lovely drifts, as well as yellow fritillaries (yellow bells) and star flowers. We saw Western Bluebirds, Chipping Sparrow, Violet-green Swallows, and a Yellow-rumped Warbler in the Jaeger's yard. They had their hummingbird feeder up waiting for a hummer to drop by for a sip. Their pond had a healthy swarm of goldfish trolling its waters and a Song Sparrow overseeing the entire group from his perch atop a small tree.

We continued down I-84 to Emigrant Springs State Park and, other than a ton of snow and a lot of Freeway noise, we found only Golden-crowned Kinglet, Northern Flicker, and a Turkey Vulture. Traveling back to Pendleton we saw more Red-tailed Hawks (including one on a nest) and American Kestrels, and checked out the Osprey nesting platform on the east side of Pendleton. One Osprey sat on the platform piled high with sticks, garbage bags, and orange baling twine. Just as we drove off the other Osprey plopped onto the nest.

After dropping off those people at the Safeway parking lot who had "to do lists," the remaining group went on to McKay Reservoir, and there we saw the "coup de grace" – three Common Loons and a new Great Blue Heron rookery!! Northern Shoveler, American Wigeon, Common Merganser, Northern Pintail, Lesser Scaup, Black-billed Magpie, California Quail, American White Pelican, Double-crested Cormorant, Tree Swallows, Killdeer, and Brewer's Blackbirds were also seen. Now aren't the rest of you sorry you couldn't get out of bed to do this trip??

Contributed by Ann and Jill Wyatt

May 16 Clean-Up – Pendleton's River Parkway

The annual spring clean-up of the Parkway is scheduled for May 16. The Pendleton Bird Club will again volunteer to clean the area between the Main Street and SE 8th Street Bridges. All volunteers are requested to meet at **Stillman Park at 9 a.m. on Saturday, May 16**. If we have a good turnout of club members, we can be done by 11:30 or 12:00 — in plenty of time to partake of the barbecue provided by U.S. Bank. We need your help; please plan on participating. Contact June Whitten at jwhitten@oregontrail.net or 276-9019 if you can help or need additional information.

Contributed by June Whitten

VISIT THE BIRD CLUB'S WEBSITE

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

www.pendletonbirders.org



April 9 Bird Club Meeting

The Humongous Bird ID Challenge and the potluck were both humongous successes at the April Bird Club meeting. We are always reminded, and just have to accept, that birders are good cooks, too. As always, the food was delicious and there was plenty for everyone. Because the potlucks are so much fun, the same question came up again: Should we schedule more than two potlucks per year? The camp that “doesn’t want to wear out a good thing” barely edged out the “Yes, let’s have 3 potlucks each year” camp.

Jack Simons ensured the fun continued after the potluck, when he presented the First Annual Humongous Bird ID Challenge. But, at first we weren’t too sure Jack had retained his sanity after spending so much time putting together his PowerPoint presentation. Some members were ready to “pack it in” and leave right away when Jack first explained the rules of the Challenge and showed a “practice” photo of a, a...well, a possible bird – but, then it could have been a very close close-up of the side of a barn! Then Jack assured us that the slide was just a joke, which elicited nervous laughter from the remaining audience.

Just as everyone was calming down a bit from trying to identify the bird/barn photo, Jack did it again. Up went another warm-up slide, which Jack claimed was a “Sandhill Goose.” Now, I know it couldn’t be a Sandhill Goose, because after the meeting I checked on the internet, and the American Ornithologists Union does NOT list “Sandhill Goose” as a North American bird. Therefore, it can’t be a Umatilla County bird either, and Jack was supposed to limit his slides to birds found in Umatilla County. Through the laughter when Jack projected the slide, you could hear murmurs of something about “photoshopping” the photo of the alleged Sandhill Goose.

Next, Jack teed up the slides of 50 birds, which constituted the real Challenge. Oops, make that 51 slides; somewhere in creating the program, Jack slipped in an extra bird photo. Jack noted that most of the photos, which were good to excellent photos, were taken by club members, a tribute to the quality of photographers in the club. Come to think of it, Jack neglected to say who took the photo of the Sandhill Goose.

Everyone concurred that the ID Challenge was a lot of fun and that we should try it again next year. I tend to agree, with one condition. If Jack’s allowed to do this again next year, he’ll need adult supervision when putting the program together.

Contributed by Aaron Skirvin

Bird of the Month – Black-crowned Night-Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*)

Black-crowned Night-Herons are fairly common in Umatilla County, but are not seen too often due to their nocturnal habits. They feed at dusk and at night by standing or wading quietly near the edge of a stream or often a marsh. Fish is their favorite food, but they may take aquatic invertebrates, lizards, snakes, rodents, and eggs as well. Night-Herons grab their food with their bills, unlike some herons that stab their prey.

With a range that spans five continents, including much of North America, the Black-crowned Night-Heron is the most widespread heron in the world.¹ It feeds at night in the same areas that other heron species frequent during the day. It is often near fresh water, but also inhabits brackish marshes and lagoons.

Nycticorax means “night raven,” so named due to the Night-Heron’s nocturnal habits and its crow-like call. The Night-Herons that live in North and South America belong to the subspecies *N. n. hoactli*, while the nominate subspecies *N. n. nycticorax* is located in Europe, Asia, and Africa.²

In some locations, Night-Herons remain year-round if the food supply stays constant. They do migrate from the colder locations in the United States to the southern states and Mexico. One of the best locations to see Night-Herons in Umatilla County is the ponds at McNary Wildlife Nature Area below McNary Dam. These Night-Herons remain in this area year-round. Night-Herons are sometimes seen on the Pendleton River Parkway, more often in spring and summer.

Since Night-Herons are large, about 25” in length, and stocky with large heads and short necks, they should be easy to view. However, during the day-light hours, they spend their time roosting quietly in brushy areas, cattails, or trees. After the trees leaf out in the spring, they can be especially difficult to find.



The adults are light gray with black wings and crown. The breast is grayish-white; the bill is long and sturdy; the legs are yellow; and the eye is red with a dark stripe running to the dark bill. The juveniles are quite different with a brown, slightly streaked back; a strongly streaked breast with broad brownish streaks; and large, white spots on the wings. The eye is red, but the crown is brown and the pointed bill is mostly yellowish.

A platform of sticks placed in a tree, cattails, or brushy areas make up the nest. Night-Herons are colonial nesters and there may be up to a dozen nests in one area. They usually lay 1-7 eggs, which are greenish in color and about 2 inches long. The babies hatch after about 25 days of incubation. They are fed regurgitated fish and later mostly fish for about 6 or 7 weeks when they can forage on their own.

Young Night-Herons often disgorge their stomach contents when disturbed. This habit makes it easy to study its diet. The parents do not seem to recognize their own young at the nests, and will brood and feed chicks not their own.³

¹ http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Black_crowned-Night-Heron/lifehistory (Cornell Lab of Ornithology)

² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black-crowned_night_heron

³ Ibid

Contributed by June Whitten

March – April Bird Sightings

Since the March newsletter was published, we've been transitioning from winter to spring, and not a moment too soon for most of us. Along with the change in seasons, the numbers of birds have increased in our area and so have the numbers of bird sightings reported for the newsletter. Keep your reports coming in; many of our members enjoy reading about the birds their fellow birders are seeing locally. Spring bird migration is well underway, but many of the neotropical migrant birds still have not returned to Umatilla County from their southern wintering areas. Spring migration will peak in mid-May, with all of the regular breeding species returning by the first week of June. There are many more species yet to arrive in Umatilla County, so I hope you find time to get out to do some birding, and be the first to report a Western

Kingbird, Wilson's Warbler, Townsend's Warbler, Black-chinned Hummingbird, Vaux's Swift, or any of the other several dozen species that breed in the diverse habitats of Umatilla County. Please report your sightings to Dave Herr at dsherr1@mac.com or 276-6413.

Long-billed Curlews normally arrive in Umatilla County between March 12 and 15, but this year, Bill Quaempts reported seeing one flying over Hwy 395 between Stanfield and Hermiston on March 5, which is the earliest spring record we are aware of for Umatilla County. JR Cook reported the first sighting of **Chukars** in Umatilla County this year, when he saw 4 on March 12 at Juniper Canyon.

Mission Ponds is a good place to look for the some of the earliest swallows that return to Umatilla County each spring, as the ponds attract many swallows. On March 17, and again on March 22, Jack Simons reported seeing about **400 Violet-green Swallows** swarming over Mission Ponds.

Connie and Russ Betts reported finding 2 **Downy Woodpeckers** in Pendleton Community Park, which is located along McKay Creek in SW Pendleton, on March 19. The same day, Jack Simons saw 20 **American Wigeons** feeding on the newly sprouted grass in his pasture between Pendleton and Mission. Barbara Clark spotted a single **Short-eared Owl** near the upper end of the west-side road at McKay Reservoir on March 20. Short-eared Owl is very uncommon at McKay.

Joy and Steve Jaeger spent March 20 - 24 at their cabin on Cabbage Hill and noted a **Violet-green Swallow** checking out their nesting boxes. On the trip up to their cabin, the Jaegers saw a **Pileated Woodpecker** at Mission and a **Red-tailed Hawk** on a nest near Exit 216 off I-84. Joy also reported seeing a **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** and 2 **Spotted Towhees** near their cabin. On March 21, Craig Kvern reported seeing 5 **Gray Partridges** at the head of Saddle Hollow Canyon, which is located in the northeastern region of the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

Birding in the west county on March 21, Neal Hinds found a **Long-billed Curlew**, the first of the year **Cinnamon Teal** along Stanfield Meadows Road and a **Violet-green Swallow** at Cold Springs NWR. On March 21, Jack and Sharon Simons and I (Aaron Skirvin) drove to Battle Mountain and Ukiah, mainly to check on the Bluebird Trail. Birding highlights included: 1 **Eurasian Collared-Dove** in Pilot Rock;



5 **Long-billed Curlews** along Hwy 395 at the West Birch Creek bridge; 1 **Barn Owl** perched in a crevice in a basalt cliff 2 miles west of Pilot Rock; 1 **Golden Eagle** about 5 miles west of Pilot Rock; **Williamson's Sapsuckers**, **Clark's Nutcrackers**, **Red Crossbills**, **Cassin's Finches**, and **Pygmy Nuthatches** at Battle Mountain State Park; 3 **Savannah Sparrows** and 1 **Vesper Sparrow** near Ukiah sewer ponds; and 1 **Mountain Bluebird**, several **Western Bluebirds**, and 2 **Northern Shrikes** in the Ukiah and Albee area.

Barbara Clark and I spent a good part of March 22 birding from Coombs Canyon to Nolin, Echo/Stanfield Meadows, and the Columbia River from Umatilla to Hat Rock. Highlights of the trip were: 1 **Ferruginous Hawk** near a nest along Coombs Canyon Road; 1 first winter **Mew Gull** with a flock of 100+ **Ring-billed Gulls** at Nolin; 6 **Eurasian Collared-Doves** in Echo; 200 **Sandhill Cranes** in Echo Meadows; several **Tricolored Blackbirds** near the intersection of Emert and Rosenberg Roads in Echo Meadows; 1 **American Avocet**, 2 **Black-necked Stilts**, and several **Wilson's Snipes** in the wetlands along Emert Road; 13 **Dunlins** at "Horseshoe Pond" along Stanfield Meadows Road; 3 **Horned Grebes** at Umatilla Marina and adjacent Columbia River (2 had partly molted into breeding plumage, the other was still in winter plumage); and 1 immature **Mew Gull** at Hat Rock State Park.

Connie Betts reported watching a **California Quail** at her feeder in SW Pendleton on March 23. Although California Quail are fairly common, locally, Connie noted that this is the first one in her yard in 20 years. The quail was eating suet that **Northern Flickers** had spilled on the ground. Also, on March 23, Tanya Harrison reported 2 **Western Screech-Owls** in the trees in her yard on the North Hill in Pendleton. Tanya further reported that this is the fourth year in a row she has seen them in the neighborhood. The next day, Dolly Robison and Deb Doyle found a male **Common Goldeneye** swimming in the Umatilla River at Yoakum.

Ron and Carole Louderback, birders from Kennewick, photographed a **Peregrine Falcon** along Stanfield Meadows Road on March 24. They reported the falcon was "harassing geese and Pintail flocks in spite of sporting a full crop."

On March 25, Connie Betts filed the following report about bird activity at her feeders in SW Pendleton,

"I've been watching about **100 Am. Goldfinches** feed every day for about 3 weeks and am filling the feeders daily. Today, I looked out and saw something different with the Goldfinches - about a dozen **Pine Siskins**, first time for the yard." The same day, I saw ~250 swallows flying over Mission Ponds, about 90% were **Tree Swallows** and the rest were **Violet-greens**. Connie Betts' **Pine Siskins** continued at her feeders for a few days, but numbers dwindled to just 1 or 2 birds before they all left by April 1.

For the first time in years, a **Western Screech-Owl** took up temporary residence in one of Jane Holmes' Wood Duck nest boxes. Jane saw the owl on March 27 and is considering installing new nest boxes for Wood Ducks, owls and wrens on her property along the Umatilla River in Pendleton. Before work on March 27, I drove to the "Cabbage Hill brush patch" to check out the bird activity. There wasn't much going on except a couple of singing **Fox Sparrows** and **Song Sparrows**. Then I found a singing **Varied Thrush** and 2 **Wood Ducks** perched in the trees at Wetlands Community Park at Mission. On March 28, Jack Simons reported seeing 4 **American White Pelicans** "cruise" into Mission Ponds. These are the first pelicans Jack has seen this year, but if this year is like the last few years, pelicans will be regular visitors to Mission Ponds and the Umatilla River in the Pendleton-Mission area well into the summer.

Every year, there is a friendly competition among local birders to see and report the first Osprey of the year. Give or take a few days, the Ospreys arrive in Umatilla County about April 1 each spring. This year, Don Gillis captured the honors of spotting the first **Osprey** in Umatilla County. Don saw one collecting sticks for a nest near Hat Rock State Park on March 28. Hermiston birders, Lyle and Nancy Brown, reportedly took a break from tax preparation on March 30 to do some birding in the Pendleton area. Even though Jack Simons had been keeping a close eye out so he could report the first Osprey of the year at Mission Ponds (and the Browns knew this fact), the Browns managed to "poach" the first Mission Ponds **Osprey** right out from under Jack's nose. Then, they had the *gall* to report their Osprey sighting to Jack in a very humbling email. Of all the nerve!! Oh well, Jack will just have to wait till next year. Clearly though, the Brown's story about taking a break from tax preparation was just a guise for their real purpose: "poaching" Ospreys in the Pendleton area.



On their way back to Hermiston, the Brown's took a circuitous route via Coombs Canyon and Mud Springs Canyon Roads. Their purpose in taking the long route home was to bolster their county year bird lists. And, they did enlarge their lists, adding **Long-billed Curlew, Horned Lark, Violet-green Swallow, and Mountain Bluebird.**

Apparently, March 30 (or late on March 29) was the day when **Ospreys** made their big push into Umatilla County. In addition to the Browns' sighting at Mission Ponds on March 30, I saw one Osprey near the nest at Pendleton's Eastgate and another one at McKay Reservoir.

Neal Hinds reported the year's first **Greater Yellowlegs** on April 4, when he saw two along Stanfield Meadows Road. Neal also saw two **Ospreys** in Stanfield. While driving I-84 between Pendleton and Hermiston, Neal twice saw a *hawk with a white head* near Exit 199 during the first week of April. Both times, the hawk was perched on a fence post, but Neal wasn't able to get close enough to ID the hawk. Neal said the hawk reminded him of a Kite. If you happen to see this hawk, which is quite distinctive, please contact Dave Herr.

During the first week of April, I received two reports of calling **Western Screech-Owls** in the neighborhood near Pendleton Community Park. We're not sure whether there are two pairs of owls or just one pair with a good-sized territory.

Fishing and birding at McNary Wildlife Nature Area on April 4, Russ and Connie Betts reported the following birds: 3 **Caspian Terns; Double-crested Cormorant; 2 pairs of Ring-necked Ducks; American Coots; 1 Pied-billed Grebe** (in the Columbia River); 1 pair of **Common Mergansers** on the Washington side of the Columbia; **Mallards; Buffleheads; a pair of Common Goldeneyes; 1 Osprey; Violet-green Swallows; and a male Downy Woodpecker.** Connie also reported that a tame Chukar followed her around while she was birding. Perhaps, this was a case of the bird watching the birder! On the drive back to Pendleton via Hwy 37, the Betts saw **Mourning Dove; Red-tailed Hawk; Black-billed Magpie; Western Meadowlark; a Killdeer** (sitting on a wire!!); **American Kestrel; Say's Phoebe; American Crow; and Northern Harrier.** As they passed Wanaket Wildlife Mitigation Area, they saw an estimated **1000** ducks and geese fly up from the ponds and fields.

JR Cook found two **Turkey Vultures** on April 4 feeding on a carcass along Gerking Flat Road, which is north of Adams. The same day, I saw several **Cliff Swallows** at their nesting cliffs along Hwy 395, a couple of miles west of Pilot Rock. And, the **Barn Owl** was back in the crevice in the cliff along Hwy 395 west of Pilot Rock. Jenny Barnett and Tanya Harrison reported finding 1 **Snow Goose** "mixed in with a pile of **Canada Geese**" and 1 **Golden-crowned Kinglet** at Wanaket Wildlife Mitigation Area on April 6.

Two **Gray Flycatchers** were sighted in the Pendleton area during the week of April 5. Barbara Clark saw one along the River Parkway in Pendleton on April 7, and Jack Simons saw one on April 9 near his home between Pendleton and Mission. I spotted a single **Black-necked Stilt** at Wildhorse Golf Course ponds on April 9 and 10.

Early April is the time to begin looking for the first hummingbirds that pass through Umatilla County on their northward migration. At least one Calliope Hummingbird bypassed Umatilla County, when it was discovered at a feeder in Spokane on April 9. Among a group of swallows, mainly **Tree and Violet-green**, that I saw at Mission Ponds on April 10 were 2 **Northern Rough-winged** and 1 **Barn Swallow.**

On April 12, Barbara Clark put up hummingbird feeders at her home near McKay Dam. Within a couple of hours "a gorgeous, adult male **Rufous Hummingbird**" arrived and fed from the feeders. Barbara's sighting is the first hummingbird report for Umatilla County this year. Tanya Harrison saw several flocks of **White-fronted Geese**, totaling **380** birds, fly over the Umatilla Wilderness Area on April 12. The same day, Joy Jaeger reported finding **Townsend's Solitaire, Red Crossbill, Song Sparrow, and Violet-green Swallow** on their property on Cabbage Hill.

Portland birders, Paul Sullivan and Carol Karlen, stopped by Mann's Pond on April 12 on their trip back to Portland from Clarkston, WA. They reported seeing many **Yellow-headed and Red-winged Blackbirds**, 8 or so **Black-necked Stilts**, and 1 **Tundra Swan** at the pond.

The same day, Jack Simons, June Whitten, and I birded from Pendleton to the North Fork John Day River. Our birding highlights included: a flock of **16 Black-necked Stilts**, 1 **Common Loon**, and 3



American White Pelicans at McKay Reservoir; 2 **Swainson's Hawks**, one along McKay Drive and the other at Pilot Rock; **5 - 8 Ferruginous Hawks**, 1 **Prairie Falcon**, and 1 **Rough-legged Hawk** in Jack Canyon; **50+ Clark's Nutcrackers** at Battle Mountain and along Albee Road; **25 Western and Mountain Bluebirds** along Albee and Albee-Ukiah Roads; and 1 singing **Canyon Wren** along Texas Bar Road (North Fork John Day River area).

Birding during windy conditions at Stanfield Meadows and Echo Meadows on April 13, Nancy Brown tallied 39 species in about 3 hours. Her highlights were **500+ Sandhill Cranes** in the cornfields along Emert and Andrews Roads; **Cinnamon Teal**; **Northern Shoveler**; **Northern Pintail**; **Greater Scaup**; **Swainson's Hawks** (one seen from Nancy's living room window in Hermiston and the other at Echo Meadows); **Black-necked Stilt**; **American Avocet**; **Greater Yellowlegs**; **Wilson's Snipe**; and **Tricolored, Brewer's and Yellow-headed Blackbirds**.

Lorna Waltz had a persistent **Sharp-shinned Hawk** regularly "birding" at her feeders in NW Pendleton. On April 14, Lorna had a great view of the little hawk when it sat on the deck railing about 6 feet away, as Lorna enjoyed both the hawk and her morning cup of coffee. Driving to Indian Lake on April 15, Craig Kvern and I saw about 15 **Western Bluebirds** and **20 Townsend's Solitaires** along East Birch Creek Road and one **Osprey** at Indian Lake. The Osprey was "pushing its luck" as less than 2 acres of Indian Lake was ice-free, which must make fishing very challenging.

About a half-hour before dark on April 16, I birded along Stanfield Meadows Road. Fifty or more **Black-necked Stilts** and about a dozen **American Avocets** were feeding in the flooded fields along the road. A flock of 15 **Dunlins** were hurriedly feeding in Mann's Pond, and a male **Cinnamon Teal** was at "Horseshoe" Pond.

Last week, Dave Herr returned from his trip to Egypt, and he will be back in the saddle to write up the April-May field notes for the May newsletter. On April 18, Dave filled his feeders with the last of his winter supply of niger seed and within a couple of hours, **3 Lesser Goldfinches** showed up to dine on the seed. Lesser Goldfinches, though becoming more regular in the county in the past 3 or 4 years, are still very uncommon here. Also, on April 18, Craig Kvern saw an estimated 200 **Sandhill Cranes** flying

northward at high altitude over Adams.

The Bird Club held its field trip to Cabbage Hill and Emigrant Springs State Park on April 18. To find out what was seen on the field trip, check out the article about the trip in this newsletter.

Jack Simons reported that on April 19 he saw the pair of **Red-tailed Hawks**, which nested across the Umatilla River from his property, feeding brand new nestlings. In addition, Jack reported that another pair of **Red-tailed Hawks** just finished building a new nest in the cottonwoods near Mission Ponds.

On April 19, June Whitten, Steve McMillan, and I birded from Pendleton to Ukiah. Birding was very productive. We saw 83 species for the day and highlights included: 1 **Common Loon** and 1 **Bonaparte's Gull** at McKay Reservoir; 2 **American Avocets** and 1 or 2 **Black-necked Stilts** at the ponds along Birch Creek a mile north of Pilot Rock; 1 juvenile **Golden Eagle** flying over Wegner Gulch Road; 1 **Brewer's Sparrow** along Wegner Gulch Road; 1 **Eurasian Collared-Dove** carrying a twig into a nest in a spruce tree in a yard in Pilot Rock; 1 **Long-billed Curlew** along Yellowjacket Road and a pair of curlews near Ukiah sewer ponds; 1 **Barn Owl** in crevice in basalt cliff a couple miles west of Pilot Rock; a pair of **Chukars** near the Barn Owl; at least 3 nesting pairs of **Ferruginous Hawks** in Jack Canyon; a female **WHITE-HEADED WOODPECKER** at Battle Mountain State Park; a **Red-naped Sapsucker** at Battle Mountain summit; several **Evening Grosbeaks** at a feeder in Ukiah; and 1 **Shrike** (probable Northern near Ukiah sewer ponds, but the bird was so wary it would not stay in one place long enough or close enough for an ID). If it was a Northern Shrike, it would be the latest spring record for Umatilla County. The current latest date for this species is April 7.

Joy and Steve Jaeger reported that a couple hours after the Bird Club's field trip on April 18, a male **Calliope Hummingbird** visited the feeder at their cabin on Cabbage Hill. The next day a male **Rufous Hummingbird** visited the feeder. The following day (April 20), both **Calliope** and **Rufous** Hummingbirds fed at their feeders. If you haven't put up your hummingbird feeders, it's time to put them up, since the hummingbirds have returned to Umatilla County for the spring and summer!

Now that Dave Herr has returned from his world travels (temporarily, at least), he will resume his



duties as the field notes editor. With the peak of the migration season coming up in the next few weeks, a large number of species and individual birds will be returning to Umatilla County. Let's all go birding, early and often, so Dave has lots of bird sightings for the May issue of the newsletter. Please send your

sightings to Dave at dsherr1@mac.com or call 276-6413.

Newsletter Editor: Position Vacant

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