



Newsletter of the Pendleton Bird Club

Kákya Táymut

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

Volume 7, No. 1 Pendleton, Oregon January 2009

North to Alaska — Gambell and Nome

Part II

YOU MIGHT THINK THAT WATCHING a presentation on Alaskan birding on a cold winter's night in January would chill you to the bone, but when you are among friends and family at a potluck dinner, the setting couldn't be better. Thirty birders gathered to share favorite recipes (spaghetti, chicken, rice, salads, and fabulous deserts) at the January 8th Bird Club meeting at the Pendleton First Christian Church. If the food was excellent, then the Whitten's presentation on their Alaskan adventure last summer was superb!

This was the second part of a two part series. Part I of the series was presented by Aaron Skirvin and Betty Klepper at the December Bird Club meeting. Part II of the series was given by June and Duane Whitten which was entitled, *North to Alaska — Gambell and Nome*.

Duane "set the scene" for us using detailed maps that showed where the town of Gambell was located, which was, well, out in the middle of nowhere. Gambell sits on the northwestern edge of St. Lawrence Island in the Bering Sea. I could pinpoint the location of this tiny native Alaskan community but let's just say this is the land of Polar bears, whales, seals and ice — lots of ice! Ice bergs, ice flows, icicles — you get the picture.

Pendleton Bird Club members were there as part of a guided birding trip with other birders from across the country. Two outstanding guides, Jon Dunn and Paul Lehman, led the entourage of 20 birders across tundra and gravel beaches to see an amazing collection of both migrant and resident birds. Four wheeled ATVs were used for transportation to and from birding areas at Gambell. There was only one airplane landing strip on the island

and everything had to be airlifted in. A strict 50-pound baggage weight limit was imposed on each of the birders. However, food was not an obstacle because meals were prepared on-site (three meals per day!) and were "excellent" according to Duane.

In addition to the first-rate birding, local wildlife included three types of seals — spotted seal, bearded seal and ringed seal. Native Americans at Gambell still hunt whale, walrus and seal for their meat, which was evident from the meat-filled drying racks in town. Hand carved ivory (and bone) made from walrus and whale were available for visitors to purchase. Betty and June displayed samples of hand carved ivory they had purchased from local artists. It was both creative and high quality.

Native artists extract ivory from three "boneyards" on the island: the Near Boneyard, Far Boneyard and Circular Boneyard. Skeletal remains from whales, walrus and seals are buried at these locations with strict rules prohibiting outsiders from scavenging. However, birding was permitted at these sites and sightings of rare North American birds are fairly common and may include the elusive Jack Snipe, Little Bunting, and Red-throated Pipit. Many of the bird species at Gambell are summer visitors from Asia or resident in Arctic regions and thus we would not expect to see them here in Umatilla County. However, some species such as Dunlin, Short-eared Owl, and Sandhill Crane frequently make an appearance here in the County. Lapland Longspurs and Snow Buntings, rarely seen species in our area, were common and almost underfoot during the birding ventures around Gambell.



Waterfowl seen at this latitude included three members of the eider family — Common, Steller's and King. In addition, Arctic Loon and Red-throated Loon are commonly seen at this latitude. (On a local note, a Red-throated Loon was reported upstream from McNary Dam for only the second time in Umatilla County on January 1st— a rare visitor indeed! What a way to start the new year and to reconnect with the location of last summer's birding adventure. Be sure to read June's "Bird of The Month" article in this issue.)

Nome, which is located on the NW coast of Alaska, was the headquarters for the birders on the second stage of the trip. Grizzly bear, a wayward moose running down a dirt road for half a mile before "exiting stage left" and a herd of musk oxen were also seen by our travelers on their trip. Their hike through the hummocked tundra, which tripped up Duane, proved fruitful as the group located the uncommon Bristle-thighed Curlew, a local breeding species. Bar-tailed Godwit, Bluethroat, Willow Ptarmigan and Arctic Warbler were a few other Arctic specialties seen by the group in the environs around Nome.

Human follies included the infamous "train to nowhere" whose rusted hulk stands alone on the tundra, a victim of ill-sighted fortune seekers from another era. What a treat to have visited this unique faraway land with so many magnificent bird species among beautiful vistas. Kudos to June, Duane, Betty and Aaron for sharing their adventures with us. We have a new perspective of this place formerly described as "out in the middle of nowhere." Now it's on the map...

Contributed by Jack Simons

VISIT THE BIRD CLUB'S WEBSITE

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

www.pendletonbirders.org

Photos of the Alaska birding tour are on the website as well as new photos in the updated and ever-challenging "ID Challenge" section.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Bird Club Meeting

7:00 p.m., February 12, 2009

BIRD TREKKING THROUGH PANAMA

**By June and Duane Whitten and Betty
Klepper**

Pendleton First

Christian Church

North Main St., Pendleton

Bird Club Meeting

7:00 p.m., March 12, 2009

QUEST FOR THE ROSEATE SPOONBILL

By Bruce Mayfield

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

Bird Club Meeting & Potluck

6:30 p.m., April 9, 2009

FIRST ANNUAL HUMONGOUS BIRD ID CHALLENGE

By Jack Simons

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



Bird Club Meeting

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

BURROWS FOR BURROWING OWLS

**By Mike Gregg, James Redhold
and Don Gillis**

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

BIRD OF THE MONTH – RED-THROATED LOON (*Gavia stellata*)

RED-THROATED LOON IS VERY RARE in Umatilla County, there being only two verified sightings: the first on November 19, 2000, and the other on January 1, 2009. It is, however, quite likely that a very few Red-throated Loons pass through Umatilla County annually and go undetected. The location of each sighting is the Columbia River: the 2000 sighting at McNary Dam and the 2009 sighting near Sand Station Recreation Area, located about 7 miles upstream from McNary Dam. The Columbia is often full of white-caps and large waves, making the sighting of a loon more difficult. There are several pullouts along the river from Sand Station to the Washington border, but it is still very easy to miss these loons.

The Red-throated Loon is the smallest loon of the five North American loons and is unique in several ways. Most loons are extremely awkward on land, but Red-throated Loons have been known to travel long distances on land. When seriously disturbed, they may move their chicks to a new pond. They can take off from land, while other loons need water for take offs and landings. The three front toes are webbed and they have short, well-defined tails. They can vary their buoyancy in order to remain underwater, with the whole body submerged and only the eyes and bill visible. Adult loons shed their flight feathers simultaneously at the end of the breeding season and are unable to fly for several weeks.

Red-throated Loons breed on freshwater lakes of the subarctic and boreal zones, with



a strong preference for undisturbed sites. They settle on stretches of still water ranging in size from small ponds to large, deep lakes, and at times, even nest on sheltered coastal inlets. Loons are monogamous, forming long-term pair bonds. Pairs established from the previous season probably remain together throughout the winter, and start nesting early. The male selects the nest site, a simple heap of plant matter. They are tolerant of other pairs close by. Breeding starts in May in the southern part of the range, and in the northern part, timing depends on the spring thaw. One to three eggs may be laid, but two is the usual clutch size. Incubation lasts 27 days, and both parents participate in incubating the eggs, beginning when the first egg is laid. This results in one chick being older and stronger, and it will be the sole survivor if food is scarce for the chicks.

The chicks have dark brown down, and are paler below. By 2–3 weeks of age, they spend most of the time swimming, though they still rely on their parents for food until they are fully grown. They do not ride on the backs of their parents as other loon babies often do. Fledging takes place at about 7 weeks. They are sexually mature at 2 – 3 years, and are known to have lived 23 years in the wild.

The Red-throated Loon obtains most of its food underwater, in dives from a few feet to more than 27 feet that last an average of one minute. They prefer to forage in marine waters and never forage in their nesting pond, unlike other loons. Prey is located visually, so these loons favor clear water for foraging, and they do not fish at night. Their prey consists of small or medium sized fish and occasionally crustaceans, mollusks, frogs, fish spawn, and insects. Food is usually swallowed before the loon surfaces.¹

Red-throated Loons are about 25 inches long, and during the breeding season have a solid dark brown upper body, the head and upper neck is grayish, with a large, glossy-red patch on the foreneck. In winter, the face and foreneck are white, and the upper part is dark brownish and finely spotted with white. This loon holds its head in a position that gives the bill a slightly upward-pointing position, which makes a good identification clue. The Red-throated Loon has a distinctive, loud call, and often both mates give the call simultaneously. It sounds like a long, low-pitched whistle with some clear notes interspersed.

¹http://animaldiversity.ummz.umich.edu/site/accounts/information/Gavia_stellata.html

Contributed by June Whitten

WHERE IN THE WORLD ARE THE BIRDS?

MANY BIRD CLUB MEMBERS, as well as non-members in our community, feed birds, especially in winter. There are often remarks about “having quite a few birds”, however, except for the occasional rarity, they are often the same species. This situation results in people questioning what birds are being recorded in other parts of the United States and Canada. With this in mind, requests were sent to a few people with known e-mail addresses requesting feeder counts during the first 10 days in January which resulted in the following lists being compiled. The Pendleton Bird Club cordially thanks the following people who forwarded their feeder counts to us. Lists have been sorted according to region.

SOUTHWEST REGION

Ron Holland; Ranch Cucamonga, California

American Kestrel (1)
Mourning Dove (7)
Anna’s Hummingbird (2)
Black Phoebe (1)
Bushtit (15)
Northern Mockingbird (3)
European Starling (15)
Orange-crowned Warbler (2)
Yellow-rumped Warbler (4)
Townsend’s Warbler (1)
Wilson’s Warbler (1)
White-crowned Sparrow (4)
American Goldfinch (20)
House Finch (12)
House Sparrow (50)

Jim Nerison and Bob Buttery, Green Valley, Arizona. No numbers were included. The list includes the feeders at Madera Canyon.

White-faced Ibis
Mallard
Northern Pintail
American Wigeon
Northern Shoveler
Green-winged Teal
Redhead
Ring-necked Duck
Bufflehead
Ruddy Duck
Short-tailed Hawk

Red-tailed Hawk
American Kestrel
Peregrine Falcon
Gambel’s Quail
Killdeer
Mourning Dove
Rock Pigeon
Great Horned Owl
Anna’s Hummingbird
Acorn Woodpecker
Gila Woodpecker
Northern Flicker
Say’s Phoebe
Mexican Jay
Bridled Titmouse
White-breasted Nuthatch
Cactus Wren
Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Curve-billed Thrasher
Chihuahuan Raven
European Starling
Phainopepla
Spotted Towhee
Green-tailed Towhee
Abert’s Towhee
Chipping Sparrow
Rufous-crowned Sparrow
White-crowned Sparrow
Yellow-eyed Junco
Brewer’s Blackbird
Brown-headed Cowbird
Pine Siskin
Lesser Goldfinch
House Finch

Ginny and Bob Rada, Bouse, Arizona

Great-tailed Grackle (12)
Mourning Dove (8)
Inca Dove (6)
Costa’s Hummingbird (4)

Fox Sparrow (4)

Joy Pesonen, near Santa Fe, New Mexico (Joy is Aaron Skirvin’s sister). Joy says she often has Scaled Quail, Juniper Titmouse, Sharp-shinned and Red-tailed Hawks, but they were not present on count day.

Scrub Jay (1)
Common Raven (3)
American Crow (1)
Mountain Bluebird (7)
American Robin (1)
Canyon Towhee
Dark-eyed Junco
Pine Siskin (5)
House Finch (2)

Marion and Victor Czaja, Huston, Texas

Sharp-shinned Hawk (1)
Red-shouldered Hawk (2)
Eurasian Collared-Dove (2)
White-winged Dove (6)
Red-bellied Woodpecker (2)
Eastern Phoebe (1)
Blue Jay (2)
American Crow (2)
Carolina Chickadee (2)
Tufted Titmouse (1)
Carolina Wren (1)
Northern Mockingbird (1)
Brown Thrasher (1)
Cedar Waxwing (8)
Pine Warbler (2)
Chipping Sparrow (22)
Lincoln’s Sparrow (2)
White-throated Sparrow (5)

White-crowned Sparrow (9)
Dark-eyed Junco (2)
Northern Cardinal (6)
Red-winged Blackbird (2)
Common Grackle (2)
Pine Siskin (38)
American Goldfinch (20)
House Sparrow (8)

EASTERN REGION

Paul Daniello, New Hampshire. (Many of you may remember Paul, as he lived in Pendleton for several years.)

Red-bellied Woodpecker (1)
Downy Woodpecker (1)
Tufted Titmouse (1)
Black-capped Chickadee (4)
Dark-eyed Junco (slate-colored, 4)
Northern Cardinal (a pair of year-round residents)
Pine Siskin (5)
American Goldfinch (8)

Bill and Sally Fintel, Lewes, Delaware

Snow Geese (21)
Turkey Vulture (2)
Ring-billed Gull (15)
Herring Gull (3)
Mourning Dove (2)
Eastern Screech Owl (1 in nestbox in backyard)
Red-bellied Woodpecker (2)
Downy Woodpecker (2)
Blue Jay (2)
Tufted Titmouse (5)
Carolina Chickadee (4)
Carolina Wren (2)
Golden-crowned Kinglet (1)



Hermit Thrush (1)
 Cedar Waxwing (5)
 Pine Warbler (2)
 White-throated Sparrow
 (15)
 Song Sparrow (1)
 Dark-eyed Junco (9)
 Northern Cardinal (2)
 Pine Siskin (3)
 American Goldfinch (7)
 House Finch (8)

MID-WEST REGION

Brenda and Coen Dexter,
 Nucla, Colorado. (The
 numbered birds are feeder
 birds, the others are yard
 birds. A Band-tailed
 Pigeon was present before
 count day.)

Eurasian Collared-Dove
 (12)
 Downy Woodpecker ((2)
 Hairy Woodpecker (1)
 Northern Flicker
 American Crow
 Common Raven
 American Robin
 Mountain Bluebird
 Townsend's Solitaire
 European Starling
 Spotted Towhee (1)
 White-crowned Sparrow
 Song Sparrow (1)
 Dark-eyed Junco (36,
 mostly Oregon Juncos)
 Red-winged Blackbird
 (41)
 House Finch (20)
 Pine Siskin (2)
 American Goldfinch (25)
 House Sparrow (15)

NORTHWEST REGION

Pat and Doug Levitt,
 Royston near Courtenay,
 British Columbia.

Downy Woodpecker (1)
 Red-breasted Sapsucker
 (1)

Northern Flicker (1 pair)
 Chestnut-backed
 Chickadee (3)
 Winter Wren (1)
 Red-breasted Nuthatch (1)
 Varied Thrush (1)
 Spotted Towhee (6)
 Fox Sparrow (1)
 Song Sparrow (3)
 Dark-eyed Junco
 And one Merlin seen
 perusing the area.

Jane Burton, Fanny Bay,
 Vancouver Island, British
 Columbia

Northern Flicker (2)
 Black-capped Chickadee
 (4)
 Red Breasted Nuthatch (2)
 Varied Thrush (2)
 Northern Crow (7)
 European Starlings (5)
 Spotted Towhee (4)
 Fox Sparrow (1)
 Golden-crowned Sparrow
 (3)
 Pine Siskin (5)

Vicki Hansen, Campbell
 River, British Columbia

Northern Flicker (1)
 Chestnut-backed
 Chickadee (2)
 Steller's Jay (3)
 Varied Thrush (1)
 Spotted Towhee (4)
 European Starling (1)
 Fox Sparrow (2)
 Song Sparrow (1)
 Dark-eyed Junco (13)
 Purple Finch (1)

Laurie Ulm, Melville
 between Campbell River
 and Courtenay, Vancouver
 Island, British Columbia
 Northern Flicker (2)
 Chestnut-backed Chickadee
 (4)
 Steller's Jay (2)
 Varied Thrush (5)
 Spotted Towhee (3)
 Fox Sparrow (2)
 Song Sparrow (1)
 Dark-eyed Junco (6—
 Oregon)

Maj, Courtenay, British
 Columbia

Bald Eagle (2)
 Pileated Woodpecker (1)
 Northern Flicker (2)
 Chestnut-backed
 Chickadee (6)
 Common Raven (2)
 Varied Thrush (2)
 Spotted Towhee (4)
 Song Sparrow (2)
 Dark-eyed Junco (16)

Pat and Bob Brandt,
 Auburn, Washington, where
 they counted all species on
 their acreage.

Canada Goose (80)
 Mallard (10)
 American Wigeon (1)
 Eurasian Wigeon (1— new
 yard bird!)
 Ring-necked Duck (4)
 Hooded Merganser (4)
 Bald Eagle (2)
 Wilson's Snipe (1)
 Red-breasted Sapsucker (1)
 Pileated Woodpecker (1)
 Northern Flicker (2)
 Steller's Jay (2)
 Common Raven (2)
 American Crow (5)
 Black-capped Chickadee
 (3)

Chestnut-backed Chickadee
 (3)
 Red-breasted Nuthatch (1)
 Brown Creeper (1)
 Bewick's Wren (1)
 Ruby-crowned Kinglet (3)
 Varied Thrush (1)
 American Robin (7)
 European Starling (40)
 Spotted Towhee (1)
 Golden-crowned Sparrow (2)
 Song Sparrow (2)
 Dark-eyed Junco (10)
 Pine Siskin (50)
 Purple Finch (2)
 House Finch (12)

Russ and Connie Betts,
 Pendleton, Oregon. (Just to
 add one local feeder on an
 average day.)

Sharp-shinned Hawk (1)
 Mourning Dove (1)
 Northern Flicker (4)
 American Robin (8)
 Varied Thrush (1)
 Cedar Waxwing (3)
 Dark-eyed Junco (1)
 House Finch (24)
 American Goldfinch (3)

John Baker, Saint Charles,
 Illinois. John reports having
 House, Purple and
 Goldfinches, Red-breasted
 Nuthatch, Red and White-
 winged Crossbills coming
 through earlier. And, a lot of
 Snowy Owls in fields not far
 from his home.

Downy Woodpecker (2)
 Black-capped Chickadee (4)
 White-breasted Nuthatch (2)
 Dark-eyed Junco (8)
 Northern Cardinal (2)
 Pine Siskin (12)
 Squirrels... (too many)



Are there birds on these lists that would make good additions to someone's life list? Thanks to our contributors, we know the states and vicinities where you can find them. *Happy Birding!*

Contributed by June Whitten

FISH EATING EAGLES

ON NEW YEAR'S WEEKEND, I headed to my friend Rebecca's place outside of Bruneau, Idaho. They live on a dairy farm just above the Snake River. That Saturday morning the local birders out of Boise were engaged in their Christmas Bird Count and came up to the house to ask permission to look into the barns for owls. That got me in the mood for some birding and when Rebecca mentioned that she had never seen an eagle in the 13 years she had lived there, I decided I needed to take her down to the river and find some.

After checking on the Great Horned Owl in the barn, we headed down to the river. We drove under cliffs still covered in patches of snow and saw a flock of about 50 Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches. They were flitting from snow patch to snow patch and flew right by the rig. The lighting was perfect, so we sat there to enjoy the show until the other birders pulled up behind us.

We then continued down to the river, and as soon as we turned the bend, we saw 5 eagles soaring above the water! I identified 1 juvenile and 2 adult Bald Eagles, and 1 juvenile Golden Eagle. We also saw a lot of Mallards, Lesser Scaup, and gulls on the river, plus the occasional cormorant and Ring-necked Duck.

After the eagles had flown off, we decided to walk under a nearby stand of trees to see if we could figure out what they were eating. I was hoping to find duck feet or wing tips to show Rebecca, but we found nothing. As we were turning to leave, I saw a dead foot-long fish by the water. I had assumed that the folks who had left the area as we arrived had been fishing and discarded some fish they had caught. Then I found another fish, this one had a hole in its side and was still bleeding, so I assumed it had just died. Then it gulped for air. I found another fish nearby — still flopping — with more holes in its side. I called Rebecca over — the eagles had been catching fish! As we looked for more fish, I finally noticed the eagles. All five of them were sitting high atop the cliffs across the river, looking at us. At that point we decided to leave and let the eagles finish their meal.

Contributed by Tanya Harrison

2008 UMATILLA COUNTY CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

TWENTY-ONE BIRDERS, including four feeder counters, participated in the annual Umatilla County Christmas Bird Count on January 3, 2009. Umatilla County's count was part of the nationwide 109th annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC) sponsored by the National Audubon Society. The goal of our count was to find, identify, and count as many birds as possible in a 24-hour period within a count circle 15 miles in diameter. The center of Umatilla County's count circle is located near the base of Cabbage Hill about six miles southeast of Pendleton.

A typical Umatilla County CBC will tally 70 to 72 bird species. The highest species total for the Umatilla County CBC was 81 species on January 3, 1992. Last year, we found 69 species and counted 8,226 individual birds in the count circle. This year, we found 67 species but increased the total number of individual birds to 9,383. The bird counters experienced fairly good weather, with little wind and a few snow flurries in the morning but warming temperatures in the afternoon. Rules for the Christmas Bird Count allow the addition of species found during "count week" — three days immediately prior to and three days after count day. This year, one additional species, Western Screech-Owl, was seen within the count circle during count week but not on count day.

Some highlights from this year's count included a very high number (394) of raptors (hawks, owls, and eagles) and a super high number (1092) of Horned Larks. The previous high count on Horned Larks was 546 on January 5, 2002. We had the highest count ever on Bald Eagles with 36; the previous high was 24 on December 30, 2006. The male Mountain Bluebird that was observed at Wildhorse Golf Course was a new species for the Umatilla County Christmas Bird Count. Our total of 337 American Robins was second only to our first count, January 2, 1988, when 536 were reported. Most years, we find less than 40 robins; some years no robins are reported.



Participants in this year's count were: Jerry Baker, Jenny Barnett, Connie Betts, Russ Betts, Barbara Clark, Gene Cripe, Marilyn Cripe, Tamara Enz, Becky Hiers, Jane Holmes, Craig Kvern, Diana LaSarge, Bruce Mayfield, Dolly Robison, Jack Simons, Sharon Simons, Aaron Skirvin, Lorna Waltz, Duane Whitten, June Whitten, and Dale Wilkins.

Results of the count are as follows: Canada Goose 811, Wood Duck 4, Gadwall 5, American Wigeon 75, Mallard 434, Northern Pintail 6, Ring-necked Duck 5, Lesser Scaup 2, Common Goldeneye 153, Bufflehead 6, Hooded Merganser 2, Common Merganser 53, Ring-necked Pheasant 250, Wild Turkey 46, California Quail 38, Double-crested Cormorant 7, Great Blue Heron 20, Black-crowned Night-Heron 5, Bald Eagle 36 (19 adults and 17 immatures), Northern Harrier 37, Sharp-shinned Hawk 7, Cooper's Hawk 7, Red-tailed Hawk 142, Rough-legged Hawk 85, *Buteo* sp. 3, Golden Eagle 8 (5 adults and 3 immatures), American Kestrel 56, Merlin 3, Prairie Falcon 4, American Coot 6, Ring-billed Gull 14, Rock Pigeon 164, Mourning Dove 233, Great Horned Owl 2, Short-eared Owl 4, Belted Kingfisher 8, Downy Woodpecker 7, Hairy Woodpecker 1, Northern Flicker 68, Pileated Woodpecker 4, Northern Shrike 5, Steller's Jay 2, Black-billed Magpie 416, American Crow 15, Common Raven 156, Horned Lark 1092, Black-capped Chickadee 58, Red-breasted Nuthatch 4, Bewick's Wren 4, Golden-crowned Kinglet 1, Mountain Bluebird 1, Townsend's Solitaire 1, American Robin 337, European Starling 2420, Spotted Towhee 1, American Tree Sparrow 3, Song Sparrow 49, White-crowned Sparrow 205, Dark-eyed Junco 807, Red-winged Blackbird 43, Western Meadowlark 31, Brewer's Blackbird 180, House Finch 111, Red Crossbill 6, Pine Siskin 34, American Goldfinch 235, House Sparrow 345.

Contributed by Aaron Skirvin

December – January Bird Sightings

The snow and cold of late December gave way to the fog and cold of mid-January, with a few nice, spring-like days in between. The cold weather forced many birds to seek out bird feeders, and several club members found their feeders full of birds during the cold spell. Those who have spent some time birding in the northwestern part of the county this winter are still reporting high numbers of hawks and eagles.

This is a superb winter to do some



hawk watching and gain experience identifying hawks. If you haven't had a chance to get out and look for raptors, I recommend planning a trip to look for them in the rural areas around Pendleton. There are many *buteos* scattered throughout the agricultural areas and grasslands. The old highway up Cabbage Hill is one of the better places to look for these birds. In addition to the pleasure of seeing the hawks, your spirits will be lifted when you break out of the fog and into the sunshine at the summit near Poverty Flats.

On December 22, Jack Simons spotted a flock of 25 Bohemian Waxwings in his neighbor's yard, which is located between Pendleton and Mission. Jack also mentioned a lack of waterfowl in the neighborhood, including Mission Ponds, which were covered in ice. Jack also reported seeing some Bald Eagles along the Umatilla River.

On December 23, Connie Betts found 3 Black-crowned Night-Herons, 20 Mallards, and a Great Blue Heron along McKay Creek in SW Pendleton. Barbara Clark's bird feeding station (near McKay Dam) was active during the snowy weather. Barbara's observations included 20+ Dark-eyed Juncos, a pair of Song Sparrows, a few House Sparrows, one White-crowned Sparrow, a pair of Spotted Towhees, a couple of cold Northern Flickers who couldn't get any of the suet because it was frozen solid, a flock of at least 64 House Finches, two pairs of American Goldfinches that frequent the nyger seed feeder, a flock of 20+ California Quail, and a Sharp-shinned Hawk that made hunting sorties through the neighborhood.

Rose Scott, who feeds birds at her home at Mission, reported two Northern Flickers (eating suet), Dark-eyed Juncos, White-crowned Sparrows, Song Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbirds, Mourning Doves, and a few American Goldfinches coming to her feeders.

On December 24, Connie and Russ Betts could find only 13 Mallards in McKay Creek and no Black-crowned Night-Herons or Great Blue Herons. They also found a Ruby-crowned Kinglet in their yard, as well as a Sharp-shinned Hawk feasting on a songbird, probably a Dark-eyed Junco. On Christmas Day, Connie and Russ were surprised to find an Arctic Horned Lark in a neighbor's yard in their residential neighborhood in SW Pendleton. This Horned Lark was obviously lost because the species is a grassland

bird, always found in rural areas. The Arctic subspecies of Horned Lark is a winter visitor, locally, but probably does not occur here every winter. They are distinguished from our resident Horned Larks by their white (rather than yellowish) throats and supercilia.

Pilot Rock resident, Mayanna Kopp, has active feeders as well. Around Christmas time, Mayanna reported many birds using her feeders due to the cold, snowy weather: 4-6 Eurasian-collared Doves, Mourning Doves, many California Quail, Ring-necked Pheasants (3 males daily and an occasional female), and Red-winged Blackbirds. On Christmas Day she observed, 6 Canada Geese flying over her house in SE Pilot Rock.

The bird list for Mission Ponds grew by one species (to a total of 124) on December 27, when Jack Simons spotted a Short-eared Owl flying near the ponds. Jack further reported that his sighting was the "first time I've seen a Short-eared in this neck of the woods."

By December 28, most of the snow had melted from the lower elevations of Umatilla County, making it possible to do some relatively safe travelling (and birding) along the rural roads. On the 28th, I (Aaron Skirvin) ventured out to look for birds at Ukiah, then to the Columbia River. Highlights of my trip included 1 probable (seen briefly as it flew over the car) Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch at Whittaker Flats; 1 Prairie Falcon along US Hwy 395 just north of the Ukiah jct.; a flock of 250+ probable Bohemian Waxwings (I couldn't get close enough to the swirling flock to ID by sight or call, but later confirmed as Bohemians by Lee Farren) in Ukiah; 2 American White Pelicans in Columbia River opposite McNary Wildlife Nature Area; and 2 Harris's Sparrows (1 adult & 1 immature), 3+ Golden-crowned Sparrows, and 5 Bald Eagles (2 adults and 3 immatures) at McNary Wildlife Nature Area.

On December 30, Jack Simons reported seeing a Pileated Woodpecker near his home between Pendleton and Mission. Bette Husted has been seeing a few Eurasian Collared-Doves in the Sherwood neighborhood in SW Pendleton since November, but on December 31, she found nine of the doves in a tree in her yard.

The best bird of the reporting period (and possibly the whole year to come) was a RED-THROATED LOON seen and photographed on January 1 by Andy and Ellen Stepniewski (birders from Yakima) near Sand Station Recreation Area along the Columbia River. This is only the second record of Red-throated Loon for Umatilla County; the first was reported by Mike and MerryLynn Denny in November 2000. Also on January 1, Barbara Clark reported finding a Spotted Towhee in her yard.

The Umatilla County Christmas Bird Count was held on January 3. To read about the results of the count, check out the article in this newsletter. On January 3, Neal Hinds, birding at Cold Springs NWR, found 22 species including a Downy Woodpecker, a Varied Thrush, and 9 immature Bald Eagles. On the same day, Mayanna Kopp reported 10 Eurasian Collared-Doves (which she sees nearly every day), several Mourning Doves, California Quail, House Finches, American Goldfinches, Dark-eyed Juncos, and 1 Sharp-shinned Hawk at her Pilot Rock feeders.

A male Varied Thrush showed up in Connie and Russ Betts' backyard in SW Pendleton on January 4 and was seen daily for several days (eating juniper berries and cracked corn from the feeders) until it finally disappeared by January 14. In addition to all the other birds visiting her feeders on a regular basis, Mayanna Kopp reported a few Pine Siskins at her Pilot Rock home on January 4.

Barbara Clark reported finding 5 Bohemian Waxwings perching in the trees in her yard near McKay Dam on January 9. Dolly Robison saw the Great Egret at Stanfield on January 8, 9, and 12. She also reported regularly seeing 2 Eurasian Collared-Doves in her yard and another Collared-Dove in a friend's yard in NE Hermiston in mid January.

On January 10, Neal Hinds birded for a couple of hours at Cold Springs NWR and reported finding a small flock of Golden-crowned Kinglets there. This is the first report we have of Golden-crowned Kinglets at the refuge. Also on January 10, Barbara Clark and I birded in the Ukiah area. Highlights of our trip were a few Eurasian Collared-Doves at Pilot Rock; 2 (possibly 3) Golden Eagles along US Hwy 395 in Jack Canyon and Whittaker Flat; 1 Bald Eagle near Whittaker Flat; a flock of Red Crossbills, 4 Bohemian Waxwings, 3 Pine Siskins, and 1 American Tree Sparrow in Ukiah; and 2 flocks of



Wild Turkeys, a Townsend's Solitaire, and a Clark's Nutcracker just east of Ukiah.

While travelling to Ukiah on January 10, Rose Scott took a photo of an adult Bald Eagle perched on a power pole along US Hwy 395 between Pilot Rock and Pendleton. Birding in and around Ukiah on the 10th, Rose reported finding a Rough-legged Hawk, a Red-tailed Hawk, a Northern Shrike, Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, Prairie Falcon, 60+ Wild Turkeys, American Goldfinches, Oregon Juncos, CHESTNUT-BACKED CHICKADEES, an American Kestrel, and some California Quail.

June Whitten and I looked for birds at Cold Springs NWR and the Columbia River on January 11. At Cold Springs, we found 11 Bald Eagles and a white headed and white necked Canada Goose among hundreds of ducks and geese. Along the Columbia River were 2 Common Loons upstream of Warehouse Beach Recreation Area, a male Barrow's Goldeneye among several hundred Common Goldeneyes at the Port of Umatilla, an adult Herring Gull near Juniper Canyon, and an adult Glaucous-winged Gull at McNary Dam. Just below McNary Dam, we spotted 6 Bohemian Waxwings among 40 or so Cedar Waxwings.

On the evening of January 12, Dolly Robison heard two hooting Great Horned Owls in her neighborhood in NE Hermiston. Rose Scott photographed a cooperative Ruffed Grouse from her car along Iskuulpa Creek Road on January 13. On the same day, Connie Betts found a pair of Gadwalls, 18 Mallards, and a Great Blue Heron in McKay Creek and about 100 American Robins in SW Pendleton.

Jerry Baker reported the first (to my knowledge) Eurasian Collared-Doves in Athena, when on January 16th, he saw 5 of the doves in town. On January 17, Dave Herr, still trying to reacclimate to Pendleton's climate after spending a few weeks in hot and humid Ecuador, did some birding along the Columbia River and reported finding 3 Harris's Sparrows and a Fox

Sparrow at the main parking lot at McNary Wildlife Nature Area. Also on January 17, Jack Simons reported seeing his "first of the year" Wood Ducks (a pair) flying over the Umatilla River and an adult Bald Eagle perched in a tree in his pasture between Pendleton and Mission.

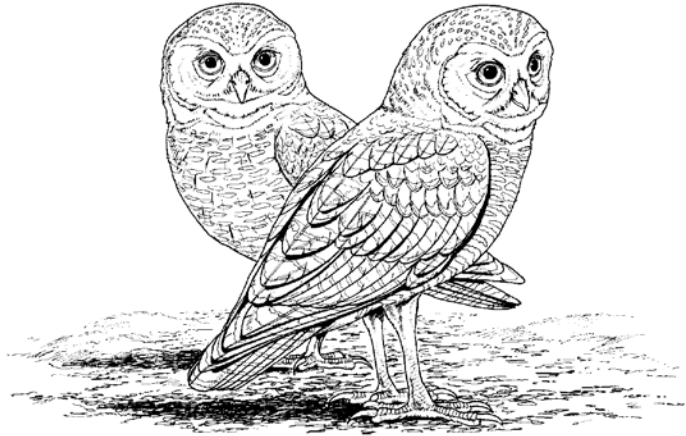
On January 18, Neal Hinds reported finding a Hermit Thrush at Cold Springs NWR. Birding in the vicinity of Pendleton Community Park in SW Pendleton on January 19, Russ and Connie Betts tallied over 300 American Robins, 37 Mallards, and several Northern Flickers.

We have a few club members who reside outside the local area. The Tapleys recently moved from Pendleton to Tucson, AZ, and Andrew Clark is on temporary work assignment with the US AID in Nairobi, Kenya. I thought you would be interested in reading brief reports on some of the birds they are seeing in their areas. Bob and Dannel Tapley reported some common birds they saw on January 8 at Sabino Canyon, a federal park located about 10 miles NE of Tuscon, AZ. The highlights of their excursion included Cactus Wren, Phainopepla, Curved-billed Thrasher, Northern Mockingbird, Pyrrhuloxia, and Gambel's Quail. Andrew Clark sent a report of a few birds he has seen on his morning walk to work in Nairobi, Kenya. Some of the noteworthy birds Andrew reported were Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird, Grey-backed Cameroptera, and Silvery-cheeked Hornbills.

Dave Herr has returned from his trip to Ecuador and is resuming his duties as Bird Sightings editor for the newsletter. Please report your bird sightings to Dave Herr at ds Herr1@mac.com or 276-6413.

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