

Kákya Táymut

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

Volume 2, No. 12 Pendleton, Oregon December 2004

DECEMBER BIRD CLUB MEETING

Noted local bird expert, Craig Corder, treated the Bird Club to an in-depth discussion about the birds which can be seen at McNary Wildlife Park. Based on three decades of birding in the area, Craig was able to share with us some of the fruits of his experience.

To help us learn how to distinguish many species which are quite similar to each other, he showed us colorful close-up slides of several of these more challenging birds. His slides showed similar birds, side-by-side, so that we were able to see some of the key identifying features which can help tell them apart.

An interesting point which came up several times was how our area has seen some new bird species make this their home over the years. For example, Craig told us that the first Bewick's Wrens were not sighted in Umatilla County until around 1980, and those were found in the McNary Park area. Now, of course, we can find them here in Pendleton along the Umatilla River parkway. He also talked about how Ospreys have made a significant come-back in the last decade or so, throughout the county. While Western Kingbirds are common to our area, recently Eastern Kingbirds have begun nesting in McNary Wildlife Park as well. Unfortunately, he also has noted a significant decline in Common Yellowthroats, those pretty little warblers with the striking black masks.

I think we all were surprised when Craig told us that the number of species which have been observed at McNary totals 224. On the other hand, this area is a "migrant trap" – an area which attracts migrating song birds (many of which migrate at night) because of the feeding, sheltering, and resting habitat it provides. Like the Headquarters at the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, the McNary Wildlife Park is fairly isolated, contains stands of trees, and is

located in the midst of a much more open landscape. So it makes sense that the park would attract bird species that we wouldn't expect to see elsewhere in Umatilla County.

Spending so much time birding in this little bird paradise at McNary Park, Craig has had many great discoveries and experiences. One event that sounded quite dramatic was when he and his wife, Judy, happened upon a whole tree full of chattering Orange-crowned Warblers that apparently were resting in this area along the banks of the Columbia River for a few hours before continuing their northward migration.

This fall, Craig and other members of the Bird Club sighted at McNary only the second recorded visitation of a Sabine's Gull. Other rare sightings at McNary have included a Red-Eyed Vireo, Purple Finches, and Northern Water-thrush.

In all of their birding adventures, it sounded like their most exciting discovery was when Craig and Judy spotted a Yellow-throated Vireo down at the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. Their identification became the first confirmed sighting in Oregon of this species!

Craig's excellent presentation generated a good turnout, with 36 people attending our meeting. In addition to this presentation, John Norman auctioned off the book, *Birds in Nest Boxes*, which was written by Charlotte Corkran, who is a friend of Marilyn and Gene Cripe. Charlotte Corkran very kindly donated two copies of her interesting book to our Bird Club, and the other copy will be auctioned off at the next meeting to help raise funds for the club. Bidding was active, so this next copy may be in high demand! Also to raise funds, we had a raffle for a new bird-feeder and bird seed, which was won by Jean Wood. For the Christmas for the Birds, several

club members generously brought donations for Blue Mountain Wildlife, which they placed under the Christmas Tree.

We capped off a very pleasant evening with refreshments and time for visiting with one another. June Whitten's homemade Pumpkin Bread was a delicious finale to another great meeting!

Contributed by Becky Hiers

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Umatilla County
Christmas Bird Count
Saturday, January 1, 2005

**See Article in this newsletter
for instructions on how to Participate
Compiler: Kevin Blakely 276-5249**

**WATCHING WARBLERS
BIRDERS' SOCIAL**
February 5, 2005
Richland, Washington

**See article in this newsletter on how you can
join other club members on
this fun outing.
Trip Leader: June Whitten at 276-9019.**

February 2005 Bird Club Meeting
Thursday, February 10, 2005

**Potluck starts at 6:30 p.m., followed by
"Birds of Mission Ponds"**
Presented by
Jack Simons

Pendleton First Christian Church
on Main St. across from the Arts Center

Injured Barn Owl Finds New Home for Christmas

The September 2004 issue of the *Kakya Taymut* has an article about an injured Barn Owl that Dolly Robison rescued while looking for owls and Common Poorwills during our local Fall Bird Migration count. You will find a copy of the article in the newsletter archive link at the Bird Club's web site: www.pendletonbirders.org.

Lynn Tompkins, Director of the local Blue Mountain Wildlife Rehabilitation and Education Center, received the owl from Dolly on September 19 and started its treatment and rehabilitation program. It turned out that the owl had a compound fracture of the right humerus (upper bone in the wing), which a local veterinarian surgically repaired with three wires implanted at the fracture site. This treatment technique gave the wing both rotational and longitudinal stability, and a full recovery looked promising. The wing was then bandaged to the body for one week to give it additional support.

While the fracture healed nicely, unfortunately adhesions between the skin and muscle from the shoulder to the fracture site had begun to form before the bird was admitted. The adhesions, which were probably the result of the trauma that occurred when the bird was initially injured, prevented the owl from completely extending its right wing. Although its wing extension increased over time as the owl exercised in a flight pen, it was not able to fly normally. Blue Mountain Wildlife's rehabilitation permits require that nonreleasable birds, such as this Barn Owl, be either euthanized or placed in an educational facility. In this case, Blue Mountain Wildlife was fortunate enough to locate a facility willing to accept the owl. So on November 28, the Barn Owl was transferred to the Sunriver Nature Center near Bend, Oregon where it will become part of their education program.

Contributed by Lynn Thompkins and Aaron Skirvin

Join us on the Umatilla County Christmas Bird Count

Here are the details for the 18th official Umatilla County Christmas Bird Count scheduled for **SATURDAY, JANUARY 1, 2005**. This local count is part of the national 104th annual Audubon Christmas Count. Christmas Bird Count history and

lots of information can be viewed at the Audubon website (www.audubon.org) and click on link to Christmas Bird Count).

At this time, no major changes have been made in where or how we conduct our count (the participant fee remains at \$5 per birder if they are older than 17 years of age and each participant will receive a CBC issue of American Birds). The Area Coordinators have already volunteered (or been volunteered) and other interested participants should contact them directly for count day coordination.

- ◆ **Area 1** (Pendleton, Wildhorse Creek and Riverside)
– *Jack Simons* – (276-8566 hm)
- ◆ **Area 2** (Umatilla River, Mission -Cayuse)
– *Kevin Blakely* - (276-2344, wk;
276-5249, hm)
- ◆ **Area 3** (McKay Reservoir and Birch Creek)
– *June and Duane Whitten* -(276-9019 hm)
- ◆ **Area 4** (Patawa Creek, Coyote Creek and upper Tutuilla Creek)
Dolly Robison (567-3642, hm; 278-6471, wk)
- ◆ **Area 5** (St. Andrews, Emigrant Hill and Poverty Flats)
Aaron Skirvin (276-1948, hm)
- ◆ **Area 6** (Spring Hollow Creek and upper McKay Creek)
Dave Herr (276-6413, hm; 278-3869, wk)

Bird enthusiasts can also choose to do stationary feeder counts if you have an active location. All Christmas Bird Count participants will get together for a count-down at the end of the day and compile the bird count data. Last year we had 28 participants (six kids) that saw a total of 7,940 birds (66 species). Abby's Pizza on Southgate in Pendleton has reserved the back room for us at 4:30 pm that evening. Please feel free to contact Kevin Blakely (276-2344, wk; 276-5249, hm) if you have any general count day questions or specific questions about the areas or feeder counts.

GO BIRDING SATURDAY, January 1, 2005
Contributed by Kevin Blakely

Thank You Pendleton Birders!

A note of thanks to the Pendleton Bird Club for your support, both individually and as a club, of Blue

MountainWildlife with donations of your time, talents, and finances. A special thank you for sharing your Christmas with the birds. We wish you a blessed holiday season.

Sincerely, Bob and Lynn Tompkins (and the flock!)

Lynn Tompkins
Blue Mountain Wildlife
71046 Appaloosa Lane
Pendleton, OR 97801
541-278-0215
www.bluemountainwildlife.org

The First Annual Pendleton Bird Club **“Turkey Hunt”**

Six Pendleton Bird Club (PBC) members met Saturday morning November 20, in a quest to find as many Wild Turkeys as possible. The Wild Turkey population has been increasing in Umatilla County, and this trip was an opportunity to count birds and get into the Thanksgiving spirit. The idea for a pre-Thanksgiving turkey count is not new. The Blue Mountain Audubon Society in Walla Walla, WA, has held a count for a number of years. In fact, Blue Mountain Audubon challenged PBC to see who could get the highest count for the day.

Unfortunately PBC got “slammed” in this competition. After a half day of searching we found 45 turkeys, all in one flock located east of Cayuse. In contrast, the Blue Mountain Audubon group found a total of 243 birds on their trip. However, in our defense, the Blue Mountain count was an all day trip and they searched in two counties.

During our trip, a stop at Mission Ponds yielded the expected waterfowl, but not the Great Egret that Jack Simons has been seeing there. We also drove to the end of the Iskuulpa Creek road and played a taped Northern Pygmy-Owl call. One very upset Red-breasted Nuthatch responded and later a Northern Pygmy-Owl tooted back to us, but would not approach.

If we hold this field trip next fall, we are clearly going to have to expand our route. On November 19, Joy Jaeger reporting seeing 46 Wild Turkeys near Albee and on November 22 Ginger Shoemaker reported seeing over 200 Wild Turkeys near the last farm on the Upper Dry Creek Road (south of Milton-Freewater). Had we found all these birds on November 20, we would have given Blue Mountain

Audubon a run for their money. Wait until next year!

Contributed by Dave Herr

Watching Warblers Birders' Social

Editor's Note: The Pendleton Bird Club received the following announcement of a Birders' Social to be held at Richland, Washington on February 5, 2005. June and Duane Whitten have volunteered to lead Pendleton Bird Club members who wish to attend this event. If you would like to participate with other members of the bird club, please contact June Whitten at 276-9019.

Can you imagine watching all of North America's eastern warblers on **February 5th**? You can do just that.

Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society (LCBAS) will be holding a birders' social which includes a bird walk in the morning, a break for lunch, the DVD version of WATCHING WARBLERS at the Battelle Auditorium, followed by refreshments and visiting time.

The birdwalk will be on Bateman Island starting at 8 am. If the group is huge we may venture into the Yakima Delta or other surrounding areas. Bateman Island is known for having just about anything show up. Come see what you can find. Directions are in the WA Bird Finding Guide or request them by return email.

The feature, WATCHING WARBLERS, is an hour of up-close looks at singing male eastern warblers and more. You may have seen the video, but the DVD version has better sound and picture quality. Battelle Auditorium is located at 903 Battelle Blvd off George Washington Way in the northern part of Richland. A \$5.00 donation will be requested at the door. There is seating for 300 which will be available on a first come, first served basis. The showing will start at 1 pm.

LCBAS is working with the award winning filmmakers Judy Fieth and Michael Male to make this event possible. There will be DVD's available for purchase for \$39.95. Proceeds from the sale of the DVDs will be returned to Judy & Michael to support the making of Watching WESTERN Warblers.

If you are interested in attending or need more information, please reply to wlafra@owt.com or cmreep@charter.net and include your phone number. Let us know if you or your group may attend and if you would like a DVD reserved. Please gather your birding friends and come meet other birders. Spread the word.

Keene, New Hampshire CBC

Editor's Note: Club member, Paul Daniello sent this report of his Christmas Bird Count experience at Keene, New Hampshire on December 18. Last summer Paul moved from Pendleton to Keene to attend Antioch New England Graduate School, where he is enrolled in a Master's program.

Saturday (December 18) Tyler, Jessica, Julie, and I (Paul Daniello) undertook the Christmas Bird Count for section 1 (downtown Keene) of Cheshire County, New Hampshire. I met the three of them at 0500 hr. We then drove a couple of minutes to Robin Hood park where we hiked, slid, crunched, and shivered the next couple of hours listening for owls. We heard none. The temperature was -7°. It was a beautiful starlit morning. Nice to be alive with new friends.

We went to Tyler's apartment to warm up with a "spot o' tea" and English muffins. We then continued the bird count walking the bike path, hiking Beech Hill Conservation Area, Ashuelot River Park, and the wetlands near Antioch New England Grad School. After the count, all section counters met for a pot luck count down in Gilsum, north of Keene.

Here's what we found: American crow-29; House sparrow-15; European starling-154; Rock dove-89; Black-capped chickadee-32; Mourning dove-15; Hairy woodpecker-4; Downy woodpecker-9; White-breasted nuthatch-7; Blue Jay-12; Wild Turkey-12; Golden-crowned kinglet-2; Tufted titmouse-6; American goldfinch-1; Mallard-22; House finch-2; Canada goose-4; Northern cardinal-1; Dark-eyed junco (slate-colored) -7; American tree sparrow-5; Red-tailed hawk-1 (being mobbed by a murder of crows).

It was a great day! Nice to be out and about with new friends. Thank you friends!

Merry Christmas.

Contributed by Paul Daniello

2005 Wall Calendar Now Available

The Majestic Pacific NW 2005 wall calendar is now available. Featuring award-winning landscape and wildlife images, Oregon photographer, Nancy J. Smith, would like to donate a portion of the proceeds of the calendar sales to Blue Mountain Wildlife to help in rehabilitation efforts and maintenance of the organization. To preview photos from the calendar, click on the following link: (http://www.pendletonbirders.org/2005_wall_calendar.htm)

Only \$13.95 each. To order, call or email:

Nancy J. Smith PH: 503 658-4408
Focus On Photography FX: 503 658-4410
PO Box 2486
Gresham OR 97030
Email: njs@focusonpd.com
<http://www.focusonpd.com>

November-December Bird Sightings

Well, most of the **Pacific Loons** found below the McNary Dam during the last report period have moved on, but **Blue Jays** continue to be found in Umatilla County. The only recent Pendleton reports have come from the McKay subdivision and adjacent area. On November 14 and 21, Brian and Wyatt Whitten reported 4 **Blue Jays** at their home adjacent to the McKay Community Park. Connie Zahl reported several **Blue Jays** in her yard at SW Hailey Place in Pendleton on November 22 and again on November 27. Russ and Connie Betts have been seeing **Blue Jays** in this area throughout the report period. Their high count was 6 birds on December 3. The same day, Jean Wood reported seeing 5 **Blue Jays** at the Community Park. During December, I have also seen **Blue Jays** several times in the same area. Jerry Baker reported that a **Blue Jay** spent last winter in Athena and he has been seeing one again this fall. And finally, Claudia Flaiz reports she has been seeing a **Blue Jay** periodically in her Hermiston yard. I appreciate the **Blue Jay** reports observers have been sending and ask folks to continue, so we can track the birds through out the winter months.

On November 26, Connie Betts reported finding one **Greater Yellowlegs** below the footbridge at the McKay Community Park. This is the same area where 6 **Greater Yellowlegs** wintered last year. On the same day, Craig and Judy Corder birded at Cold Springs Reservoir. Their best find was an adult **Mew**

Gull. This is the first time Craig has found this species at the refuge. Along with the other expected waterfowl, they noted **5000 Canada Geese**. Birding at McNary Wildlife Park on November 28, Craig and Judy found an adult **COMMON YELLOWTHROAT**. This warbler species is very difficult to find in the county. They also found 3 **Pacific Loons**, a **Mew Gull** and 1 **Barrow's Goldeneye** below McNary Dam. At Hat Rock State Park they found a **EURASIAN WIGEON**. On December 1, Neal Hinds located a **HARRIS' SPARROW** at McNary Park. On December 2, Craig Kvern reported seeing 6 **Bald Eagles** just upstream from Cayuse. On December 2, Jack Simons was surprised to find a **Great Egret** still at Mission Ponds. That day he also had 14 **Evening Grosbeaks** at his feeder located between Pendleton and Mission. Craig Corder reported the Great Egret was still at Mission Ponds on December 9. Is this bird going to stay around for our Christmas Count? Birding at McNary Wildlife Park on December 2, Craig reported **120 Wood Ducks**, over **100** roosting **Black-billed Magpies** in one flock, and a **Fox** and a **HARRIS'S SPARROW**. On December 3, a farmer near Stanfield reported 3 **CATTLE EGRETS** roosting on the roof of an outbuilding. One bird was relocated December 4, Craig found it December 7, Aaron located it December 10, and the Whittens and Betts saw it on December 11. Driving the Holdman Highway on December 4, Craig Corder had an interesting sighting. He saw a **Northern Goshawk** flying through the sagebrush. Not typical habitat for goshawks and Craig thought it might be hunting quail. On the same day after returning home, Craig found 15 **Bohemian Waxwings** in his Hermiston yard. Birding at the McNary Wildlife Park on December 7, Neal Hinds relocated the **HARRIS'S SPARROW** reported previously, as well as a **Bald Eagle**. December 10, Aaron found 3 **Bohemian Waxwings** in Pilot Rock. Lorna Waltz reports that a **Bald Eagle** has been perching on a snag along the Umatilla River between the Main Street and 10th Street Bridges. What a great bird to see in downtown Pendleton.

Larry and Lisa Hill, while birding along the Columbia River on December 11, reported the male **EURASIAN WIGEON** was still at Hat Rock State Park. On December 12, Sandy Frost spotted an **albino European Starling** in a flock of about 50 starlings near Adams. Also, on December 12, June and Duane Whitten and Aaron saw a Tiaga form of **Merlin** at Grecian Heights in Pendleton. Aaron Skirvin

reported 2 Great Egrets at Mission Ponds on December 13.

Russ and Connie Betts had a **Northern Goshawk** “birding” around their yard in SW Pendleton on December 16. Only a few goshawks are seen in the county each year, and to see one in your yard is a really remarkable. Jack Simons found the **Great Egret** at Mission Ponds on December 17, and it was still there on the 19th when June, Duane, and Aaron saw it foraging in the cattails at the edge of the east pond. Also on December 19th, June, Duane and Aaron reported a “black” **Merlin** at Wildhorse Golf Course Ponds.

Craig Corder reported he thinks this will be special winter for northern birds. It will be interesting to see if we can find any new county-year birds before

December 31 (maybe a **SNOWY OWL!**). And who know what we may find to start our New Years list on the Umatilla County 2005 Christmas Bird Count, January 1?

Submitted by Dave Herr

Newsletter Editor: Position Vacant
Editor for December: Jack Simons 276-8566
Email: styletoil@eoni.com



Pendleton Bird Club
70371 Prairie Road
Pendleton, OR 97801