



Kákya Táymut

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

Volume 7, No. 6 Pendleton, Oregon June 2009

ALBEE BLUEBIRD TRAIL: OFF TO A GREAT START

If you had the good fortune to attend the club's May 31st field trip, then you probably caught the last leg of the journey, the Albee Road – Ukiah Bluebird Trail. The club has maintained this trail since 2003 and now has 27 bluebird nest boxes mounted on fence posts, trees and the occasional power pole. We have an additional 5 nest boxes at Battle Mountain State Park and in the Battle Mountain Scenic Corridor along Highway 395, which brings the total number of nest boxes to 32.

We're pleased to report that nesting conditions this spring have been very good and that nesting success appears to be excellent. On Sunday, June 14, we (Sharon and Jack Simons) counted 31 out of 32 nest boxes (97%) with Bluebird nesting activity. This includes the nest box that reared three baby chipmunks, which now has a brand new bluebird nest but no eggs yet, as well as the nest box that had five eggs removed (by a snake?) before our arrival on May 31 but now has a full house of six tiny, blue Western Bluebird eggs. Obviously, there is some good biology taking place on our trail. (Note: Given the massive effort underway by the Columbia Power Cooperative Association installing new power poles and a new power transmission line along Albee Road, it is amazing our bluebirds have tolerated and indeed thrived under these conditions!)

While overall nesting success is excellent there may be a caveat in the numbers. In a recent correspondence with Aaron Skirvin, he pointed out a few possible reasons why our nest box occupancy rate may be so high. Although excellent nesting conditions this spring are an obvious factor there could be additional factors at play. As Aaron pointed out, "*Because all of our boxes (at least along Albee Road) are being used by BBs, there is either a shortage of suitable nesting sites in the area, or our*

boxes are preferred (over natural nesting sites) by the BBs, or some of both. Assuming that some of the birds raised in the boxes over the past few years are probably returning to breed near the site where they were born, we may have more birds than boxes for them." If indeed there is a shortage of natural nesting sites available, then our nest boxes are a critical link to future bluebird nesting success in the Battle Mountain region of the Blue Mountains.

By The Numbers...

Observation Date: June 14, 2009
Nest Box Occupancy: 31 out of 32 boxes (97%)
Eggs Counted: 31
Chicks Counted: 88
Chicks Presumed Fledged: 8
Total Eggs, Chicks, & Chicks Presumed Fledged: 127

Observation Date: May 25, 2009
Nest Box Occupancy: 30 out of 32 boxes (94%)
Eggs Counted: 124
Chicks Counted: 14
Chicks Presumed Fledged: 0
Total Eggs, Chicks, & Chicks Presumed Fledged: 138

Barring a local weather disaster in the Battle Mountain region, the Western Bluebirds should be on their way to a great year of nesting. If the latest counts hold, the first hatch may exceed the approximately 125 chicks reported from last year's entire hatch. Recall that a few industrious bluebirds will attempt a second nesting, which could push nesting totals even higher than last year. Stay tuned for additional reports over the next few months as the nesting season continues to unfold.

Contributed by Jack Simons



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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.**

Bird Club Meeting

7:00 p.m., October 8, 2009

PROGRAM TBD

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

Illegal Shooting of Birds

The Ferruginous Hawk lies dead on the nest. As with many dead birds, there is no proof the bird died from a gunshot wound. However, there is hardly any other possible explanation except the hawk was killed by a bullet. Although many Ferruginous Hawks nest on rocky outcroppings, this nest along Coombs Canyon Road is in a tree and very near the road.

According to Lynn Tompkins, Executive Director of Blue Mountain Wildlife at Pendleton, OR, where injured birds are treated and released when possible, there are 15 to 20 birds brought to this facility annually that have gunshot wounds. Of these birds only a very small number, 1 or 2, survive and are releasable. There are also birds brought in that are dead or dying that are probably gunshot victims; however, as is the case with the Ferruginous Hawk at Coombs Canyon, there is no definite proof. The

persons responsible for the shootings are almost never apprehended.

When asked about the gun of choice to illegally kill birds, Lynn Tompkins responded that apparently any gun will do the job. The two Golden Eagles found shot last fall were victims of high-powered rifles. However, air guns, .22 caliber rifles, and various gauges of shotguns are just as effective and perhaps more often used. While hawks and eagles are often the target, many smaller birds are shot as well and left to die wherever they fall.

It is illegal to shoot or kill most birds by any method. The Migratory Bird Treaty Act protects over 900 species of birds in Canada, United States, and Mexico. Why, then, does illegal shooting of birds occur so often? While there is no easy answer to such a question, two things are rather obvious. Some people are not mature enough to own a gun and cannot resist target practice on a defenseless bird. And, many of the killings are in remote areas where the birds are not discovered immediately, if ever, so there are no witnesses, no prosecution, and no penalty. In the case of hawks, it is also possible some people fail (or refuse) to understand and appreciate the importance of predators in the ecosystem or the good hawks do in catching and eating rodents such as squirrels, mice, and voles.

If the shooter is caught, which rarely happens, the violator is subject to \$500 fine, and/or a 6 month jail sentence. Current law classifies illegal shooting of birds as a misdemeanor. There is legislation currently being considered in the US Congress (H.R. 2062) that would make it a felony to intentionally and maliciously take a protected bird species. H.R. 2062 is the Migratory Bird Treaty Act Penalty and Enforcement Act of 2009. If passed in its current form, the new law would classify illegal shooting of birds as a felony, and a person convicted under the law would be subject to a \$50,000 fine and/or up to two years in jail. Representative Peter DeFazio from Eugene introduced the bill. You can read the text of the bill at <http://www.opencongress.org/bill/111-h2062/text> .

There is an additional part of this bill which would allow the Secretary of the Interior or the Secretary of the Treasury to offer rewards from money received through fines to citizens who furnish "information that leads to an arrest or a criminal conviction for any violation of this Act." This seems to be a most



important addition to the law since most perpetrators currently are never caught.

Portland Audubon Conservation Director Bob Sallinger had the following to say when testifying on the bill before congress in Washington, D.C.: “The intentional and malicious taking of protected bird species is a crime that should be a felony. Today, nearly one out of every four bird species in the United States is experiencing significant long-term population declines. At the same time, one out of every four adult Americans is a birder, and birding contributes \$122 billion into our economy annually. The malicious intentional killing of protected birds strikes at the heart of public trust. Citizens need to know that their investment in bird conservation will be protected.”

All 50 states have a mandatory requirement for a Hunter’s Safety Certificate in order to purchase any hunting license. Several states, including Oregon, have this program available on-line. It is often available in a classroom setting as well. Oregon’s program does include a field day in addition to completing the course. While the program is mostly aimed at safe and responsible hunting procedures, it does have a section on identifying birds of prey and gives their protected status. This part of the program could be strengthened as education is no doubt the surest method in preventing shooting of protected birds.

As citizens and birders, all of us need to take responsibility to educate our fellow citizens whenever possible and to report any wanton killing of the protected birds.

Contributed by June Whitten

Bird Club Picnic at Tollgate – Saturday, July 11, 2009

This year’s annual picnic will be held at the Tollgate area in NE Umatilla County. For those who want to do some birding prior to the picnic, we will meet at 9:00 a.m. at Woodward Campground (west side of Langdon Lake). Woodward Campground, a US Forest Service facility, is located on the south side of Highway 204, about 20 miles east of Highway 11 (or about 1 mile east of Tollgate Store). For those who can come later, we will start the picnic at noon at Target Meadows Campground. Target Meadows Campground, another US Forest Service facility, is

located a few miles north of Tollgate. To reach Target Meadows Campground, travel east on Hwy 204 about ¼ mile past the entrance to Woodward Campground and turn left (northeast) onto Skyline (Kendall/Skyline) Road (USFS Road #64). Travel 0.3 mile on Skyline Road and turn left (north) on USFS Road #6401 toward Target Meadows and zero your odometer at this point. At mile 1.5 on USFS Road #6401, turn right (northeast) on USFS Road #050 (signed) toward Target Meadows Campground. The road enters the campground at about mile 2.0. The right fork at mile 2.2 accesses camping sites on the eastern arm of the campground. We will set up for the picnic on the eastern arm of the campground, if a site is available there.

Please bring your choice of meat to barbecue, buns if required, beverage of your choice, and all table service. Also bring a salad, dessert, or item of choice to share. Condiments and iced tea will be furnished.

Our summer picnic provides an opportunity to get acquainted with new friends or new birders, so please invite guests. Birding in the Tollgate area should be very good (weather permitting) at this time. We likely will see one or two female Common Goldeneyes with ducklings on Langdon Lake. This is the only known site in Oregon where Common Goldeneyes breed. We should see many of the Blue Mountain birds from Vaux’s Swifts to Lincoln’s Sparrows. Mosquitoes can sometimes be a problem at Target Meadows, so come prepared for them. Arrange your own transportation or car pool. If anyone needs a ride, call Lorna Waltz, 276-6353.

New Heron and Cormorant Nesting Colony at McKay Creek NWR

If you’ve visited McKay Creek NWR this spring you might have noticed more Double-crested Cormorants than usual fishing in the reservoir. Great Blue Herons are more visible as well, and the reason is the establishment of a new nesting colony of both species along the eastern shore of the reservoir.

On April 18, 2009, participants on the Pendleton Bird Club’s field trip first noticed the new colony. At that time, there were four to six heron nests and several cormorants perching in a snag that is in a grove of deciduous trees about a mile south of McKay Dam. Our viewing distance from the upper boat launch to the colony was a little more than one mile, which



made it difficult to get an accurate nest count even with a scope.

Over the next few weeks and before the new foliage of the surrounding trees obscured most of the nesting snag, Double-crested Cormorants were observed building nests in the same snag that held the heron nests. We still haven't obtained an accurate nest count due to the long viewing distance from the west shore road and trees obscuring some of the nests. With the aid of a spotting scope, you can usually see a couple of nests and a few cormorants in the trees from the west shore road; however, foliage from adjacent trees blocks the view of most of the nesting colony. This past Wednesday (June 17), I counted nine Double-crested Cormorants perching in the nesting snag and two occupied cormorant nests.

I was not aware of either herons or cormorants breeding on the refuge prior to 2009. There are several Great Blue Heron rookeries in Umatilla County, including one at Pendleton, which continues to increase its number of nesting birds every year since its inception in 2003. I was not aware, however, of Double-crested Cormorants breeding anywhere in Umatilla County even though cormorants, like Great Blue Herons, are year-round residents here.

I sent an email to local birders and biologists requesting information on locally nesting cormorants. The consensus of opinion among those I contacted is that neither Great Blue Herons nor Double-crested Cormorants had nested at McKay Creek NWR prior to this year. In addition, no one was aware of any cormorant nesting colonies in Umatilla County prior to this year. Craig Corder, long-time Hermiston birder who now lives near Cheney, WA, informed me that years ago Double-crested Cormorants nested in dead trees along the Columbia River on the Umatilla NWR in Morrow County. Once the nesting snags toppled, the cormorants abandoned the site. Craig was not aware of any nesting cormorants in Umatilla County during his 30+-year tenure as a birder in Umatilla County.

Of course, no one knows how many years the new colony will remain active at McKay Creek NWR. Usually, heron rookeries and cormorant nesting colonies are active for several consecutive years. We also don't know what "motivated" the birds to start a nesting colony at McKay Creek NWR this year. Has the abundance of their food source (mainly fish) increased in the past few years? Perhaps the fact that some trees recently died in a relatively undisturbed

part of the refuge created a suitable nesting site? Maybe there is an excess number of herons for the available rookeries in the area, and some adventurous birds established a new rookery, with cormorants soon joining the herons.

In the next few weeks, we may see even more cormorants at the refuge when the juveniles leave their nests and begin fishing in the reservoir. If you go out to the refuge to view wildlife, in addition to the herons and cormorants, look for flotillas of American White Pelicans and closely check out the grebes. During the past several weeks, two Clark's Grebes have mingled with the 15 – 20, non-breeding, summer-resident Western Grebes. With the pelicans, herons, cormorants, grebes, Osprey, and fisherman working the waters of McKay Reservoir, the next generation of herons and cormorants will have plenty of competition as they try to "make a living" off the fish in the reservoir.

Contributed by Aaron Skirvin

VISIT THE BIRD CLUB'S WEBSITE

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

Bird of the Month – Ferruginous Hawk *(Buteo regalis)*

The largest buteo, averaging 23 inches long with a 56-inch wingspan, in Umatilla County is indeed a regal bird. This hawk often perches on poles or the ground, then flies on its long, broad wings over the open, arid grasslands to hunt small mammals. Hovering and cruising low over the ground are used as hunting techniques. The Ferruginous Hawk's favored habitat includes grasslands, open prairie, and shrub-steppe at low to mid-elevations, with rock outcroppings and shallow canyons. As in most buteos, the female is larger than the male.

Ferruginous is from Latin meaning "iron and iron-rust color," and Ferruginous Hawks have extensive rust-colored feathers on the upperparts, lower belly and legs in a light morph. The tail is white underneath but usually shows some pale rust with white on the top in flight. The head and underparts are pale. Since the legs are feathered, it once had the



colloquial name of Ferruginous Rough-leg, since Rough-legged Hawks also have feathered legs and are a close relative. The dark morph Ferruginous has a darker rust-brown color on the entire body and wings. Dark-morph Ferruginous Hawks are somewhat rare and there is no in-between (intermediate) morph.¹

Ferruginous Hawks nest in a variety of locations, often on rocky outcroppings, cliffs, or in isolated trees or small clumps of trees. Authors differ as to whether ground nests are more successful than tree nests, but they are more susceptible to predation by mammals. The nests are usually made of sticks and often more sticks are added each year to old nests. Bark or pieces of grass and weeds are used for the lining. Clutch size varies from 1 to 8 and is probably linked to the food supply. The average clutch is 3 to 4 eggs, 2 ½ inches long, non-glossy white, speckled with reddish-brown markings. The Ferruginous Hawk is usually single-brooded and does not renest if there is a clutch failure.²

Incubation begins with the first egg laid and is shared evenly by the parents. Since the eggs are laid in two-day intervals, the incubation time varies. Nestlings also vary as males fledge at 38 to 40 days and females as late as 50 days. This variation is due to females needing about 10 days longer to develop. Post-fledglings depend on the parents for food for about four weeks. The young continually fly farther from the nest increasing their hunting area and ability during this month.³

Breeding territories are often greater than four square miles. Nesting sites, however, can be very close together, just a few hundred yards apart. Where the sites are very close together, it is thought they were built as “cover” nests and not intended for use. Ferruginous Hawks favor jackrabbits or other rabbits, squirrels, mice, voles, and occasionally snakes, birds, and insects for their diet. The young are fed torn bits of meat from any of the small mammals that are successfully caught by the parents.⁴

Ferruginous Hawks have been known to live as long as 20 years in the wild, but most birds probably live about 5 years. First-year mortality rate is estimated at about 66 percent and adult mortality at 25 percent. The reasons for mortality include illegal shooting, loss of food supply, harassment, predation, and loss of nestlings due to lack of food supply.⁵

Ferruginous Hawks have at times been considered threatened, endangered or of special concern on various threatened species lists. There are, however, recent population increases in some areas and the concern status has been reduced. In Umatilla County, while there is no actual study of Ferruginous Hawks, the population may be diminishing.

There is a Tri-National Migration Study (U.S. Canada, and Mexico), started in 2007 and continuing into 2009. The researchers captured and telemetered 56 adult Ferruginous Hawks and 10 juveniles. Telemetering birds is the latest in technology to learn more about a species and its migration and to assess survival and mortality factors throughout the year.

The largest nesting populations are in Alberta, Canada and Wyoming. As much as 20 percent of the northern birds winter in Mexico. Some Ferruginous Hawks of the more southern populations appear to migrate only short distances, if at all.⁶

The best areas to see Ferruginous Hawks in Umatilla County are the grasslands southwest of Pendleton. The birds arrive in March, become difficult to find after June, and are usually gone by October. A few hawks over-winter locally, but usually only a bird or two are reported during winter, often in the Milton-Freewater area.

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ferruginous_Hawk

² Ibid

³ Ibid

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Ibid

⁶ <http://www.ferruginoushawk.org/project.html>

Contributed by June Whitten

Winter Grips 90 Per Cent of North, Migratory Birds Can't Breed

By: Robert Alison

It is the winter that refuses to go away in northern Manitoba and most of the eastern Arctic. Prolonged cold snowy conditions in the Hudson Bay area are expected to obliterate the breeding season for migratory birds and most other species of wildlife this year.

According to Environment Canada, the spring of 2009 is record-late in the eastern Arctic with virtually 100 per cent snow cover from James Bay north as of June 11.



May temperatures in northern Manitoba were almost four degrees C below the long-term average of -0.7, and in early June, temperatures averaged three degrees below normal.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration images confirm snow and ice blanket all of northern Manitoba, part of northern Ontario and almost all of the eastern Arctic as of June 12. U.S. aerial flight surveys confirm the eastern Arctic has no sign of spring so far.

"I have lived in Churchill since the 1950s, and this the latest spring I have ever seen here," said local resident Pat Penwarden. "The spring of 1962 was almost this bad."

Six-foot snowdrifts blocked Churchill-area roads. A thick blanket of snow, in places three- and four-feet deep, coated 90 per cent of the local taiga in northern Manitoba. Ecotourists, who normally flock to northern Manitoba every June to see birds and other wildlife, cancelled their plans this June "in droves," according to local ecotourist specialists. Snowy conditions are largely to blame.

"It is like a winter landscape," said Ruth Baker, a Michigan tourist who spent June 9 to 12 at Churchill. "I couldn't believe the snowdrifts, like mountains of snow".

Researchers confirm that the lateness of the spring of 2009 dooms local birds to a virtually complete reproductive failure.

According to Robert Jefferies, professor emeritus of botany at the University of Toronto, the last time there was a late spring in northern Manitoba, in 1983, there was a total reproductive "bust" in lesser snow geese. Most species of birds did not nest at all.

Aerial inventories of fall migrant geese from the eastern Arctic that year confirmed 0.005 per cent of the fall population comprised juvenile birds, compared to the normal figure of over 50 per cent.

According to Cornell University researchers, currently at Churchill, shorebird nesting is already three-weeks late, and has yet to start.

The first Canada goose nests were initiated on June 7, more than one month later than normal, and probably not early enough to allow goslings to mature before the fall migration flight. Canada geese are the first birds to nest in northern Manitoba. Many northern

birds require more than 100 days to nest, incubate young and rear offspring to a condition suitable for fall migration.

According to Robert Rockwell of The City University of New York, who studies geese in northern Manitoba, if the geese have not begun incubating clutches of eggs before June 11, there is almost no chance that their offspring will be strong enough to endure the long southbound fall flight.

In 1983, that was the case, and 1983 was not nearly as late as 2009.

Research by Hugh Boyd, scientist emeritus at the Canadian Wildlife Service, states late Arctic springs reduce northern waterfowl production by up to 90 per cent, with very late springs having a devastating impact.

According to Vern Thomas, a University of Guelph researcher, record-late springs produce "reproductive failures" in northern geese.

"These late springs generate reproductive busts," confirmed Joe Jehl, who has studied birds in northern Manitoba since the late 1960s and recently retired from the Smithsonian Institution.

Studies at Churchill show that in late springs, female birds delay nesting, and rather than starve for lack of food, they re-absorb already-formed eggs to benefit from their nutritional content.

Nesting often does not occur under those conditions. In 2004, a late spring caused many northern Manitoba migratory birds to abandon nesting efforts and head back south in late June, more than two months early.

Recent late springs in the Hudson Bay area have been more frequent than normal: 2004, 2002, 2000 and 1997.

According to NOAA scientists, although the Arctic is warming, more frequent annual oscillations in temperature are likely to occur, often resulting in late springs.

"Such major oscillations are part of a bumpy ride toward global warming," said Thomas Karl of the National Climate Center. "For awhile at least this will be the shape of things to come."

Vegetation is also impacted upon by late Arctic springs, with green-up about three weeks late this



year. Consequently, herbivorous animals have delayed breeding

"People often confuse climate with weather, and this spring is a weather phenomenon," said an Environment Canada spokesperson.

Robert Alison is a Victoria-based wildlife biologist and writer with a PhD in zoology.

Republished from the Winnipeg Free Press print edition June 12, 2009 A18

May – June Bird Sightings

It's hard to believe that spring is over and summer is already here. All the spring migratory species expected to arrive in Umatilla County have been reported, and nesting is well underway for many. Several species difficult to find in the county have been reported this period, and as I write this a total of 228 species have already been seen in Umatilla County so far this year. Maybe we will top the 2008 total of 254 species in 2009.

George Bonbright reported a pair of **Bullock's Orioles** in his Pendleton yard on May 20. As George watched these colorful birds, he noted they appeared to be gleaning aphids from the underside of leaves on several large cottonwoods. Don and Norma Staebler have several Screech Owl nest boxes in their SW Pendleton yard, and owls use the boxes almost every year. On May 21, they reported two young owls were out of one box and two more were still in the box: a total of 4 baby **Western Screech-Owls** in all!

May 21, Tanya Harrison heard her first **Eurasian Collared-Doves** calling near her home on Pendleton's North Hill. Jenny Barnett reported that she now hears **Eurasian Collared-Doves** calling almost every evening from her back yard in SW Pendleton and is sure they are going to nest in the area.

The afternoon of May 22, Kate Ely reported 20 **American White Pelicans** rising in a thermal near the Umatilla Tribal offices. Aaron Skirvin (Aaron) check out McKay Reservoir the evening of May 22. Among the many species he found were 2 **Clark's** and 20 **Western Grebes**, 2 breeding plumaged **Eared Grebes**, a pair of **Canvasbacks** and 2 **Black Terns**.

May 23, Neal Hinds spent the day birding at Cold Springs National Wildlife Refuge. He found over 40 species including **Virginia Rail**, **Lazuli Bunting** and **Blue-winged Teal**. During the third week in May, Don Gillis turned in the first 2009 county report of **Common Nighthawk** at the Umatilla Chemical Depot.

May 25, June and Duane Whitten, Dale and Barbara Brandt, Bette Husted and Aaron birded throughout the Ukiah area. On this trip the group added **Bobolink** to the county year list. On the same day, Jack and Sharon Simons checked the nest boxes along the Pendleton Bird Club (PBC) Albee Bluebird Trail north of Ukiah. In an article found elsewhere in the newsletter, Jack describes the exciting sighting on this trip.

May 25, Wayne Hoffman reported finding a **WESTERN SCRUB-JAY** in the Wildlife Nature Area below McNary Dam. Aaron notes that this is only the 6th report of this species in the county and the first spring sighting he is aware of.

Andy and Ellen Stepniewski, active birders from the Yakima area, spent May 30 and 31 birding around Pendleton. At the marshes along I-84 near the Highway 207 exit, they tallied 35 species in 30 minutes including **Great Egret**, **American White Pelicans**, **Black-crowned Night-Herons**, and **Tricolored Blackbirds**. On May 31, along the Umatilla River east of Cayuse they found **Black-chinned Hummingbirds**, **Gray Catbird**, **Veery**, and **Red-eyed Vireos**. Birding along Ninemile Ridge near the junction of the North and South Forks of the Umatilla River they added two new birds to the county year list: **Swainson's Thrush** and **Black-backed Woodpecker**.

May 31, Aaron Skirvin lead a group of 14 enthusiastic birders on an all day PBC field trip that included Tower Burn, Ukiah, Battle Mountain and the Albee Bluebird Trail. The group saw a total of **92 species**, a great count for only birding in the southern portion of the county. Some of the highlights of the day were an adult antelope and 2 fawns, **Sandhill Cranes**, **Bobolinks**, **Virginia Rail**, **Golden Eagle**, **Prairie Falcon**, **Dusky Grouse**, **Green-tailed Towhees**, **Lazuli Buntings**, **Nashville Warbler**, **Townsend's Warbler**, **Willow Flycatcher** and **Yellow Warbler**. Stopping at Battle Mountain on the return trip, Aaron reported the group had great views of a **Pileated Woodpecker** hammering on a



stump and a male **Cassin's Vireo** in fresh alternate (breeding) plumage.

June 1, Mayanna Kopp reported a hen **Wild Turkey** had visited her Pilot Rock feeder for the previous 4 days. At her feeders, she has also seen **Ring-necked Pheasants**, a pair of **Eurasian Collared-Doves** and a **Black-chinned Hummingbird**.

Walking his dogs at Mission Ponds on June 2, Jack Simons found 3 sets of **Canada Goose** goslings (15 total) and 7 baby **Mallards**. Because of the high water level in the ponds, Jack reported it has been a tough year for nesting waterfowl at the ponds.

Birding in the Emigrant Springs area the morning of June 6, Aaron reported finding numerous species including **Swainson's Thrush**, **Chestnut-backed Chickadees**, **Hammond's Flycatchers**, **Townsend's Warblers**, **Mountain Bluebirds**, and a **Lark Sparrow**. In the evening of the same day Aaron drove to the Gurdane area to look for **Common Poorwills**. He was quite successful, finding 7 of these interesting birds and even managed to get a couple of photos.

Connie and Russ Betts had a **Black-capped Chickadee** at their SW Pendleton feeder on June 6. Although common in the winter, **Black-capped Chickadees** are less common around Pendleton in the spring and summer.

Jack Simons reported he again has **American Kestrels** nesting on his property near Mission.

Although he has placed several large nest boxes in the trees behind his home, this year Jack reports the Kestrels used an old woodpecker hole in a dead cottonwood to raise their brood of 4 baby birds. A **Western Kingbird** pair is nesting in an ash tree in front of his home.

I (Dave Herr) had quite a surprise when I looked out the window at my feeders on June 15. Along with the **House Sparrows**, **Brown-headed Cowbirds** and **Brewers Blackbirds**, a yellow and green **Parakeet** was eating seed with the other birds. Although it surely escaped from someone's cage, the **Parakeet** seems to be doing well on its own.

June 16, Dolly Robison counted 30-35 **American White Pelicans** soaring above the U.S. Forest Service compound next to the Umatilla River in Pendleton. Aaron speculates that the birds were feeding on young salmon released earlier from an upriver hatchery.

Nesting is well underway in the valley and many young birds are already being reported. However roads in the Blue Mountain have just opened and species that normally nest there are just starting their breeding season. Regardless of where you choose to bird during the next month, please send all your bird sighting to me, Dave Herr at dsherr1@mac.com or call 276-6413.

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