

Blue Mountain Audubon Society

The Magpiper

November, 2014

Monthly Calendar

Thursday, November 13

Board Meeting

7:00 p.m.

Thursday, November 20

Membership Meeting

7:00 p.m.

Whitman College

Saturday, November 22

Field Trip

Harper Joy Theatre Parking lot

President: Mike Denny

Vice President:

Secretary: Paul and Judy Treman

Treasurer: Jonathan Webster

Conservation: Chris Howard

Education: Kathy McConnell and
Emily Dietzman Asmus

Membership: Melissa Webster and
Holly Howard

Programs: Nancy Mitchell

Publicity: Jonathan Webster

Natural Area: Jan and Jack Gisler

Bluebird Trails: Tom Scribner

Adopt a Highway: Jill Gardiner,

Joanne-Hesser James, Mike James

Webmaster: George Jameson

Facebook Admin: Judy Treman

Field Trips: Paul Treman

Magpiper Editor: Ginger Shoemake

Member at Large: Shirley Muse

Priscilla Dauble

Bird Sightings: Ginger Shoemake

Website:

<http://www.blumtn.org>

Bird sightings:

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Contact BMAS:

housewren084@gmail.com

PO Box 1106

Walla Walla, WA 99362

Meeting

Membership Meeting: November 20—7:00 p.m.

Room 151 Hall of Science, Whitman College

**PROGRAM: THE WALLA WALLA WATERSHED
can it become salmon safe?**

Salmon-Safe's mission is to transform land management practices so Pacific salmon can thrive in West Coast watersheds. **Kevin Scribner**, a partner within the Salmon-Safe Partnership Network (www.salmonsafe.org), will portray how Salmon-Safe Certification works to achieve and sustain ecological function in working landscapes using voluntary, market-incentivized methods. Currently, over 70% of the Walla Walla Valley vineyards are certified Salmon-Safe, as well as over 2,000 orchard acres.

Kevin leads Salmon-Safe agricultural outreach in the mid Columbia Basin and advises Salmon-Safe on special projects. Co-located in Walla Walla and Portland, Kevin has helped inform and shape Salmon-Safe almost since our founding at Pacific Rivers Council. Kevin has extensive experience in natural resource planning and management, community cultural development, alternative food systems, ecological restoration and commercial fishing. Kevin served on the Board of Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council and served as the Basin Advocate for the bi-state Walla Walla Watershed Alliance. Kevin also consults with Vinea Sustainable Trust, a vineyard and winery organization in the Walla Walla Appellation, and a key Salmon-Safe implementation partner in the interior Columbia Basin. Kevin grew up in Walla Walla graduating from Whitman College in 1975 with a B.A. in English.

Field Trip

TOM'S TURKEY TROT

Saturday, November 22—9:00 a.m.



It's time for the annual November Turkey Trot led by Tom Scribner. We will scour the Blue Mountain foothills in Columbia and Walla Walla Counties in search of wild turkeys. Along the way we will look for other birds, such as northern shrike, Townsend's solitaires, pileated woodpeckers, pygmy owls, and the unexpected birds that are waiting to be discovered. It will be an all-day trip so bring a lunch, something warm to drink, and a friend or two;

and don't forget your binoculars and field guide. This trip is always a lot of fun and the scenery alone makes it a trip you won't want to miss.

Meet at the Harper Joy Theater parking lot and we will car pool. Please call or e-mail Tom if you plan to attend. **529-8628 or tom@minnickhayner.com**



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On the Road by George Jameson

RED ROCKS LAKE GARDENING

For several years my wife, Deanna, and I traveled around the country full time in an RV. We volunteered at different National Wildlife Refuges staying south in the cold winter months and heading north in the warm summer sun.

Once we volunteered at Red Rock Lakes NWR. It is on the Continental Divide right along the Montana/Idaho border about 50 miles west of West Yellowstone and is one of the most geographically beautiful national wildlife refuges in the lower 48 states.



Photo from yellowstonetourism.org

One thing I missed during our travels was a garden and the fresh vegetables that growing the edible plants provides. When we got to Red Rocks I decided to get a small garden started. I scrounged up some extra unused 2 by 8 planks, nailed them together to form a rectangle box and filled them with some top soil and planting mix. In one I planted lettuce, a mixed variety.

The lettuce did very well and provided fresh greens not only for us but for several other people at the refuge that wanted a salad. The lettuce lasted unflinching until we left in September.

In the other raised bed I started some summer squash specifically zucchini, Burpee's Black Beauty. I planted them about the middle of May and they grew wonderfully well until June 9th when it was 24 degrees just before sunrise. Zukes do not like the cold, at least not that much cold. The plants were gone.

Realizing I had until September to harvest nature's bounty and I had plenty of seeds, I started the plants

again. This second set of plants did equally as well as the first and popped up out of the ground. I thought, "Here we go zukes!" only to be stopped by 25 degrees on the morning of July 7th.



Photo by George

Not being one to give up easily, and knowing we had some time with the longer sunny days of July and August, I started the last of my seeds which then did really well until August 4th when the temperature was 23 degrees when I got up at 5:30 AM.

My zucchini growing days at Red Rock Lakes were over, and Mother Nature or at least the frost monster had won. I learned one lesson quite clearly that there are certain crops that just are not hardy enough to grow at 7,800 foot elevation. The lettuce was impervious to the cold, and the zukes were not. I am fairly certain that tomatoes and the cantaloupe that I can grow in Walla Walla would not have survived either.

It is a lot of fun traveling around at the different wildlife refuges and growing a garden.

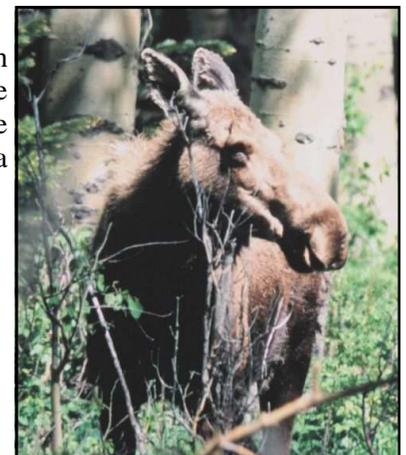


Photo by George

Tidbits

ALL ABOUT BIRDS

Want to see what is coming to feeders this winter at Cornell's Sapsucker Woods and at a feeder in Ontario? Then you should check out webcams on the *All About Birds* website from Cornell. Later in the season you can watch cams showing nesting red-tailed hawks, great blue heron and barn owls. Besides the cams, *All About Birds* has extensive information on birds and birding basics. This is a site you will want to bookmark and visit often. www.allaboutbirds.org

PRAYING MANTIS MYTHS and LEGENDS



A praying mantis is a large predatory insect with large eyes, a turnable head and powerful legs with which to hold its prey. When resting, its front legs are held in a way that makes them seem folded in prayer.

Photo by Rodger Shoemake

Many myths and legends surround the preying mantis. Here are a few:

According to Kung Fu legend, in 1368 AD a Buddhist Wang Lang observed a praying mantis hunting a cicada. When Lang attempted to brush away the giant insect with a reed of stalk, the brave mantis attempted to defend himself by gripping the stalk. It is said that this interaction in a Monastery garden inspired principles within the Chinese Martial Arts practice.

An old Arabic folktale tells of the mantis pointing towards Mecca

Early French stories indicate that a lost child could find its way home by following the directions of a praying mantis. Much like a compass, the mantis can be associated with the four cardinal points of a compass. Use the mantis in activities that involve finding new directions, re-orienting yourself, and gaining your bearings when you're lost, either physically or emotionally.

Bird of the Month

BROWN CREEPER *Certhia Americana*



Size: 5.25 inches

Description: Streaked brown and buff above with white underparts, a long slightly curved bill, a buffy stripe over eye, and a long stiff tail that helps it spiral up tree trunks.

Photo by Jim Parrish

Brown creepers search for small insects and spiders by hitching upward in a spiral around tree trunks and limbs. They move with short, jerky motions using their stiff tails for support. To move to a new tree, they fly to it's base and resume climbing up. They are fairly common in mature forests, but because of their tiny size and color, they blend in to their environment and are hard to see. Their calls are very high pitched and often hard to hear. For these reasons, they can be difficult to find. However, they are often mixed in with flocks of nuthatches and chickadees so by watching these flocks you may find them. Watching for a tiny bird working its way up a tree is probably the easiest way to locate them.

They are found throughout North America, especially during the winter. They breed mostly in mature forests at high elevations in the West. In the winter, they move into a broader variety of forests and become easier to find in deciduous woodlands. They prefer forests with many large live trees for foraging and large loose-barked trees for nesting.

Brown creepers feed primarily on small insects and spiders. However during the winter they may also eat small amounts of seeds and other plant materials and may visit seed and suet feeders.

A brown creeper's nest is a hammock-like nest behind a loosened flap of bark on a dead or dying tree and is built by the female, although the male helps by bringing nesting material. She builds a frame of twigs and strips of bark and uses cocoons and spider egg cased to stick the nest together and secure it to the inner surface of the tree bark.

Look for these tiny birds at Rooks Park, Pioneer Park, Fort Walla Walla and other places around Walla Walla where there are large trees.

The World Around Us

RESOLUTION OPPOSING INCREASING OIL TRANSPORTATION THROUGH AND EXPORTS FROM THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST
State environmental organizations have been working hard to bring their voices together against increased oil transport and export in our state. Washington Audubon has written the following Resolution to add their support to this effort.

WHEREAS,

There is industry movement in proposing, permitting, and building oil receiving and export terminal/facilities at several Pacific Northwest ports, including Vancouver, Cherry Point, Longview, Grays Harbor, and Anacortes in Washington state, and

WHEREAS,

burning oil is a major cause of greenhouse gas emissions worldwide that contribute to global climate change, when green alternatives are increasingly available, and

WHEREAS

National Audubon Society's Birds and Climate Change Report demonstrates that global warming is the number one threat to birds in North America, and

WHEREAS,

increased transportation and exporting oil, by any means, in the Pacific Northwest will harm our environment and the public health in a manner that cannot be sufficiently mitigated at this time, and

WHEREAS,

increased export of oil contradicts our own state's efforts, as articulated by the Governor's Executive Orders to curb greenhouse emissions, and

WHEREAS,

the Magnuson amendment to the Marine Mammal Protection Act prohibits federal permitting of projects which would enable the handling of additional crude oil in Puget Sound and the Straits other than for use in Washington State, and

WHEREAS,

WSACC supports well-designed, appropriately sited, renewable energy projects; therefore,

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED,

that the Washington State Audubon Conservation Committee (WSACC) opposes any and all proposals for increased transport of oil through or export from the Pacific Northwest.

Furthermore, WSACC urges upholding the Magnuson Amendment, declaring a moratorium on any new fossil fuel-related industrial facilities pending a comprehensive Environmental Impact Statement; a halt to oil transport by DOT-111 tanker cars and other unsafe rail cars; and immediate improvements to safety measures for all existing oil transportation, both by land and water.

Closer to Home.....

REMPEL NATURAL AREA CLEAN-UP



On October 19, a group of Blue Mountain Audubon members, armed with clippers, loppers, saws, shovels and rakes, tackled the overgrown trails at the Natural Area.

The steps going down to the main trail were completely overgrown and practically impossible to see. Here is a photo of the steps after hard work by much of the group.



This is a photo of some of the group after some down and dirty work at the site.

ADOPT A HIGHWAY TRASH PICK-UP

On October 26, another work party took place—this time at Blue Mountain Audubon's one mile stretch of road along Highway 12 west of town. This is a bi-annual activity to pick up the garbage that too many people throw out along our highways.



What's Happening

**WALLA WALLA
CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14**

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR NOW AND
DON'T MISS THIS EVENT!**

NOTES FROM THE BOARD

At the October Board meeting the group voted to give Blue Mountain Wildlife a \$250 donation to help with the tremendous work they do at the facility. The photo below shows Paul and Judy Treman presenting Executive Director, Lynn Tompkins with the check at the recent Field Trip to the Center's Open House.



At the meeting, Mike introduced new Board members and thanked them for their willingness to volunteer. Those introduced were Kathy McConnell, Education Chair, and Highway Pick-up Coordinators Jill Gardiner, Joanne-Hesser James and Mike James. Mike indicated that Emily Dietzman Asmus will be helping with Education. Jan and Jack Gisler will coordinate efforts at the Rempel Natural Area.

Members are always welcome to attend Board meetings. They are held at 7:00 p.m. the second Thursday of the month. Please let Mike know if you would like to attend m.denny@charter.net

Musings by Chris Howard

Musings from Ecuador

Right now, I am sitting in a small open sided tin roofed shelter up on the side of hill where the signal is strongest. It is surrounded on 3 sides by dense green cloud forest. In front is a long green valley. The ever present clouds are sitting on the top on the steep ridges. The clouds are always lifting up then settling down...occasionally there are breaks of sun, especially around mid-day. A beautiful green, yellow and black tanager just briefly landed in a tree in front of me....fortunately I have my binoculars handy beside the computer.

The day before yesterday was an exciting day...I went for a hike with a guide and a Dutch couple who were visiting. We hiked up and down very steep jungle covered mountainsides, often crossing creeks with slippery rocks...the Dutch woman fell in once. As we were descending a steep ridge we heard and saw large movements in the tree tops overhead so big that it could only be one thing...monkeys. Directly over my head I saw a large all black spider monkey swing through the branches. For a brief moment, as his limbs and tail were stretched out like a spider between branches, he looked down at me while I was looking up at him and I felt a moment of eye contact...one species to another, a long lost cousin. I was filled with awe, I had wanted to see monkeys that I knew were here. Later in the day, in a far off valley, we heard the roaring of the loudest animal on earth, it really sounded like a jet plane engine...the howler monkey. As we continued on the trail, the roaring became louder. We cut off the trail and bushwhacked uphill until we were just under the tree from where the roaring was coming. This large black howler monkey had opened his mouth into big circle, puffing out his throat and roaring like nothing I had ever heard before. It was amazing! On a limb next to him was a mother with a small child monkey clutching her. The monkey seemed agitated that we were there but he never left and at times seemed somewhat curious of these two leggeds peering up at them. The roaring continued as we disappeared down the mountainside.

Yesterday on another hike to check camera traps high up on a ridge top, we spotted a Golden Headed Quetzal, which is one of my favorite birds. As I write this, a large Chestnut Mandibled Toucan just landed in the tree top behind me waving its huge bill up and down squawking loudly to another Toucan I can hear answering across the valley. There is the constant drone of various cicada-like insects that remind me on the layer upon layer of life that surrounds us.

The clouds have just lifted and now there is a bit of blue sky. Everything is always changing.

In the Field...by Ginger Shoemake

Summer is over and it's time to get ready for winter birding. One nice thing about looking for birds in the winter is that the leaves are gone from the trees so they are easier to find.

Priscilla Dauble found a **great blue heron** munching down on the goldfish in her backyard pond on September 27. She checked later in the day and there were just a few fish left, but I'll bet there was one satisfied heron!

Don Grosse watched a **sharp-shinned hawk** chasing a **red-naped sapsucker** in his yard on September 29. They both slammed into a screen covered window. The sapsucker was dead but the hawk was dazed and flew away after a few minutes.

On September 29, Rodger and I found this **barn owl** sitting in a tree where we usually see **great horned owls** on Byrnes Road. There were no great horned owls on Byrnes Road, but we did find the one we usually see on Short Road.



Photo by Rodger Shoemake

Melissa Cummins saw **Bonaparte's gulls** and **Franklin's gulls** at McNary NWR Headquarters on October 1. Also, there was a large flock of **white-fronted geese** on Hanson Loop Road and 4 **snow geese** were in with the flock.

MerryLynn and I went over to the west side on October 2 to look for gulls and more. We saw some great birds! The most exciting for me was seeing four or five waves of **sandhill cranes** flying over McNary Headquarters. We heard them calling first and then saw them. We estimated over 500. We saw the **white-fronted geese** and **snow geese** on Hanson Loop Road. Along Humorist Road where the refuge has burned the field there were many **American pipits** and **Savannah sparrows**. At Headquarters were many of the gulls Melissa saw plus a **Sabine's gull**. We also saw two **Sabine's gulls** at Peninsula HMU. When I got home there was an email from Steve Hampton, a birder from California who was at Bennington Lake. He was looking at a **red phalarope**. MerryLynn and I went right out there and found it. Paul and Judy came soon and all three of them took many photos.

Here is a photo MerryLynn took of the **red phalarope**.



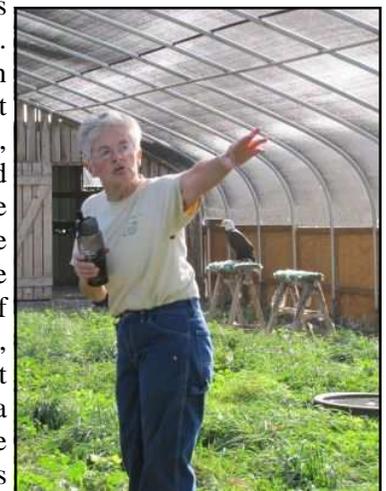
Also on the lake were 22 **white-fronted geese**. The next morning the phalarope was still present—out in the middle of the lake with a **western grebe**.

The Tuesday Walkers were treated to a **pileated woodpecker** on their walk around Bennington Lake on October 8. Although they nested at Rooks Park this summer, they are rarely seen at the lake.

Nat Drumheller is visiting from Alaska and making the most of his time to see our birds. He found a juvenile **northern shrike** at Bennington Lake on October 8. I'm sure he'll find more good birds during his stay.

MerryLynn once again birded the Columbia River on October 9. She watched over 150 **snow geese** fly over and several flocks of **sandhill cranes**. The next day she saw a **pine grosbeak** at the Fort Walla Walla Natural Area.

October 11 was the Field Trip to Blue Mountain Wildlife in Pendleton. Eighteen people joined Paul and Judy Treman to see the birds at the Center and learn about the wonderful work Lynn and Bob Tompkins do there. Lynn led tours through the facility. This photo was taken in one of the flight pens where hawks, eagles and owls could be seen flying. While the main focus of the facility is the rehabilitation of injured wildlife, sometimes this is not possible so it is also a rare opportunity to see some of the raptors that are not easy to find in the wild.



Here are photos taken by Judy Treman of two of the many beautiful raptors we saw.

Golden eagle and **northern goshawk**



On the morning of October 11, MerryLynn walked Stone Creek. She found a **common yellowthroat**, a **MacGillivray's warbler** and two **orange-crowned warblers**.



Dick Unrue had a visit at his feeder from this **eastern bluejay** on October 13. Although Dick didn't see the jay again, keep your eyes out for them. They occasionally are seen in town

during the winter months.

It was pretty quiet at Bennington Lake on October 14. There were two **long-billed dowitchers**, a few **killdeer** and a **great blue heron** on the mud. There had been a large flock of **canada geese** on the lake earlier. Two **great horned owls** were snoozing in the trees along the canal. Several **black-capped chickadees**, **juncos** and **white-crowned sparrows** were also seen.

There has been a **great egret** hanging around Mill Creek this month.

Earl Blackaby got this great shot of it on October 17. The photo was posted on the Blue Mountain Audubon Facebook page.



To see more beautiful photos of birds seen around Walla Walla, check out our [Facebook Page!](#)

Through the fog on October 19, we watched several hundred **canada geese** and a few **cackling geese** fly over our yard. **Cedar waxwings** and **yellow-rumped warblers** took turns bathing in the bird bath and **dark-eyed juncos** dotted the grass and flower beds. The waxwings have discovered our juniper and have been devouring the berries. I have a few feeders out and started ground feeding for the sparrows and finches. I'll put out more feeders as the weather gets colder.

There were many **canada geese** enjoying the remains of a corn field along Depping Road for a few days in late October. On October 21 Sue Parrish saw two **snow geese** in with the flock. Later that day they had vanished. The snow geese were back with the other geese in the field on October 25.

Nat Drumheller saw a **eastern bluejay** on Biscuit Ridge Road in with a mixed flock of **robins**, **cedar waxwings** and **Steller's jays** on October 23. Later in the day he saw an **American tree sparrow** at Bennington Lake.

On October 25 Nat went back up Biscuit Ridge and found a wide variety of mountain species—**ruffed grouse**, **black-capped**, **mountain** and **chestnut-backed chickadees**, **red-breasted nuthatches**, **brown creepers**, **pacific wrens**, **golden crowned** and **ruby-crowned kinglets**, **spotted towhee** and **pine siskins**.

Fall is definitely here. The leaves are turning brilliant colors, we've had our first foggy day and rain has finally come to the valley. Now it's time to think about putting out feeders and water for the birds as they adjust to the coming winter. They will thank you and you will be rewarded with the hours of enjoyment watching the birds in your yard.

Let me know what you are seeing by emailing housewren084@gmail.com

**WALLA WALLA
CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14**

BLUE MOUNTAIN AUDUBON
Ginger Shoemake, Editor, **The Magpiper**
PO BOX 1106-0022
Walla Walla, WA 99362

Non-Profit Organization
US Postage Paid
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Mission Statement:

Blue Mountain Audubon Society (BMAS) was organized in 1971 and chartered by National Audubon Society in 1972. The Chapter's objectives are to serve its membership and the larger communities of Southeastern Washington and Northeastern Oregon with the goals to appreciate, preserve and enjoy birds, wildlife, and the natural environment of the area. Education is a primary objective of Chapter activities. Through volunteer efforts BMAS provides educational opportunities, conservation activities and enjoyment of wildlife and wildlife habitat opportunities to members and to the public. The Chapter meets the third Thursday, (September through May) at 7:00 p.m. in the Whitman College Science Building. A newsletter, **The Magpiper** is published September through May and is free to members. Non-member subscription fees are \$25 annually. BMAS is a non-profit 501c(3) organization. Find us on the internet at www.blumtn.org

Join Blue Mountain Audubon Society – Complete the following information and mail along with a check in the amount of \$25 for your first year's membership to: Blue Mountain Audubon PO Box 1106, Walla Walla, WA 99362

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____