



# The Magpiper

June, 2009

Page 1

**The *Magpiper* this month is special issue about summer field trips and birding information. In addition, I have included a survey about the publication.**

## Summer Field Trips

### SUMMER BIRDS

Saturday, May 30, 7:00 a.m. Morning trip.  
Leader: Ginger Shoemake 525-2963

### WESTERN WALLA WALLA COUNTY

Saturday, June 13, 7:00 a.m. ALL DAY Bring lunch  
Leaders: Mike and MerryLynn Denny 529-0080

### WILDFLOWERS IN THE BLUES

Saturday, June 20, 8:00 a.m. ALL DAY Bring lunch  
Leader: Priscilla Dauble 529-7939

### WALLA WALLA RIVER DELTA

Saturday, July 25, 6:00 a.m. ALL DAY Bring lunch  
Leaders: Mike and MerryLynn Denny 529-0080

### MOUNTAIN BIRDING

Saturday, August 8, 7:00 a.m. ALL DAY Bring lunch  
Leaders: Mike and MerryLynn Denny 529-0080

**Details will be posted on website for each trip.**

**All trips leave from Harper Joy Theatre Parking lot. Call if you plan to attend. Plan to carpool.**

## Summer Evening Walks

Because some of you are not able to spend an entire day on field trips, the Board is offering three evening walks this summer. They will be held the third Thursday of each month. Board members will be leading these evening walks. We hope you will be able to come out and enjoy the birds.

### BENNINGTON LAKE

Thursday, June 18, 6:00 p.m.  
Meet at the parking lot at Bennington Lake.

### SOUTH FORK COPPEI CREEK

Thursday, July 16, 6:00 p.m.  
Directions: East of Dixie on Highway 12, turn right onto Lewis Peak Road before elevator at top of hill. Turn left .1 mile onto Walker Road. Drive 1.4 miles to junction of Walker Road and S. Fork Coppei Creek Road. Turn left and park. Meet here.

### FORT WALLA WALLA NATURAL AREA

Thursday, August 20, 6:00 p.m.  
Meet at Natural Area parking area off Myra Road.

**Details will be posted on website for each walk.**

## Blue Mountain Audubon Website <http://www.blumtn.org>

The Blue Mountain Audubon website is a great resource for local birding information. I urge you to check it on a regular basis for the latest information on what is happening in our area. Some of the links you will want to peruse regularly are:

**Field Trip Details:** Look here for descriptions of upcoming field trips.

**Bird Sightings 2009.** Check the list of birds seen for the year 2009.

**Birding Blog.** This link will have current sightings throughout the summer so you will know where the birds are being seen.

**Local Birding Info.** This link has many interesting topics including check lists, arrival dates, and birding locations.

**Sign up for Bird Alerts!** If you want to know unusual birds that are being seen, you can be added to special email service. Click on the link to be added to the list.

George Jameson is our webmaster and he is always looking for ways to make the site more useful to all of you. If you have questions or suggestions email them to George at [nuthatch@blumtn.org](mailto:nuthatch@blumtn.org).



## *In the Field*

On April 28 evening grosbeaks and Cassin's finches were seen in both College Place and Walla Walla. They continued to be reported throughout the month of May in many locations.

Lazuli buntings returned the last week of April. I had reports from several people saying they had them in their yards. By the second week of May they were being seen in large numbers—waiting for the weather to improve higher up where they nest.

MerryLynn had a warbling vireo on April 29 in her yard, and she and I found a Cassin's vireo on Seaman Road on April 27.

Alice Chaney saw a young great blue heron at a nest at Blalock Pond on May 1.

May 2 was Tom Scribner's Bluebird Field Trip to check on the boxes south of Pomeroy. Unfortunately it rained much of the day, but Tom still checked about 40 boxes (while the rest of us watched from inside our vehicles). We saw 50 mountain bluebirds and 4 western bluebirds. Earlier in the trip near Waitsburg we saw great horned owl chicks and two heron rookeries. Other notable sightings were a hairy woodpecker, a western kingbird and several vesper sparrows.

Mike and MerryLynn birded the west side of the county on May 2 and added western sandpiper, least sandpiper and lesser yellowlegs to the 2009 county list. The next day they found grasshopper sparrows and a gray flycatcher on Hatch Grade. At the Northshore Road millet ponds they found Wilson's phalaropes and a Baird's sandpiper.

Sheila and Denis found a black-backed woodpecker in the burned area near their place on Wolf Fork. If you are in the mountains this summer, don't overlook the recently burned forest because black-backed woodpeckers and others love this habitat.

We walked Bennington Lake in the rain on May 5. We saw a spotted sandpiper—the first to return to the lake. Later in the month there were a pair.

Jon Lundak found a young northern saw-whet owl at Bennington Lake on May 9. Another northern saw-whet owl nest hole was found—this time on S. Fork Coppei Creek in a snag about a mile south of the junction with Walker Road. There were three young owls peering out of the hole. Nancy Alden from Seattle found the nest hole on May 11.

Mike and MerryLynn birded west and north of Walla Walla on May 9. They were able to add short-eared owl, semi-palmated plover, Forster's tern and long-billed dowitcher to the 2009 county list.

Peter and Barbara Castle live along the Walla Walla River in Milton Freewater. On May 10 they reported numerous hummingbirds, California quail, wood ducks and an eastern blue jay on their property. They also said their resident barn owl has returned.

Mike Denny led a very informative tour of the Fort Walla Walla Natural Area on May 10. There was a big group and everyone enjoyed hearing about the flora, fauna and history of this unique spot.

Jim Davis called on May 12 to let me know he had a Lewis' woodpecker in his yard. Wow, what a yard bird! There were also many lazuli buntings, evening grosbeaks and hummingbirds at his feeders. An all white dove was hanging around and he wasn't sure if it was an albino or an escapee of some sort.

Flycatchers and warblers were in abundance at Bennington Lake on May 13. We saw Hammond's, least, and dusky flycatchers, yellow, yellow-rumped, MacGillivray's and Nashville warblers. We also saw several warbling vireos, Bullock's orioles, western wood peewees and more. Ticks were out in abundance in the tall grass.

MerryLynn, her mom and I went out to the Delta on May 14. There were two black-bellied plovers, a few dunlin, several western sandpipers, lots of American avocets and 20 or so long-billed dowitchers in the mud. Three black-crowned night herons flew over and pelicans, Caspian terns and gulls were there in large numbers. At Tyson Ponds we found a red-necked phalarope and three Wilson's phalaropes, several black-necked stilts and a lesser yellowlegs.

On May 15 George Jameson watched a mama wood duck and 8 tiny ducklings between ponds on South Wilbur.

Shirley Muse called to report a warbling vireo in her yard on May 16.

We had a Townsend's warbler and a Wilson's warbler in our yard on May 17.

On May 18, MerryLynn and I walked up N. Fork Copper Creek Road. Birds were singing everywhere and we had great looks at western tanagers, MacGillivray's warblers, a Nashville warbler, an olive sided flycatcher

and two beautiful **golden eagles** (being harassed by two **ravens**.) Wildflowers were starting to bloom and there were many beautiful butterflies.

Mike and MerryLynn had an **Eurasian collared dove** in their yard on May 19 . On May 21 they had a dozen **red crossbills**, a **yellow headed blackbird**, **lazuli buntings** and **evening grosbeaks**.

Bennington Lake was birdy again on May 20. **Western tanagers** were moving through and we saw several. We also saw the first **eastern kingbird** of the summer. There are a pair of **spotted sandpipers** on the south end. **Western wood peewees** and **Bullock's orioles** have moved into the cottonwoods and we saw a **Wilson's warbler** and two **MacGillivray's warblers**.

Joe and Carolyn Corvino birded South Fork Coppei Creek on May 22. They found lots of birds including two more returning summer nesters - **willow flycatcher** and **gray catbird**.

On May 24 the Corvinos joined Rodger and I for a trip up Jasper Mountain. Some of the species we saw were **western bluebird**, **western tanager**, **black-headed grosbeak**, **western wood peewee**, **willow flycatcher**, **Hammond's flycatcher**, **Say's phoebe**, **hairy woodpecker**, and **MacGillivray's warbler**.

### **Summer Birding Sites**

Listed below are some good places to look for summer birds. When the weather is hot, it is best to bird early morning when the birds are active. Evenings can also be productive. **When walking roads remember to watch for traffic and respect private property.**

#### **Bennington Lake**

Walk the two mile lower trail. South end of lake and west side of trail along canal are the best birding areas.

#### **Natural Area**

Take steps down to the blackberry patches. Turn right and walk to barn area. Good birding all along this trail.

#### **South Fork Coppei Creek Road**

See directions under *Evening Walks*. Park and walk north and south along the road. More birds further south on S. Fork Coppei Creek for about 6 miles into forest. Stop and walk riparian areas.

#### **North Fork Coppei Creek Road**

From Walker Road corner go left .8 miles. Turn right onto gravel road. Drive 3.2 miles to base of hill. Park and walk up the road looking for forest birds.

#### **Foster Road**

Turn right off Cottonwood Road onto Foster Road. (road turns to gravel at state line) Drive 1.2 miles. Park and walk along road to right turn sign. Then drive 1.2 miles further south past Lynch Ranch. Park and walk along road

#### **South Fork Russell Creek Road**

From School Avenue turn left onto Russell Creek Road. Drive 4 miles east to Foster Road. Turn right and go .1 mile. Turn left onto S. Fork Russell Creek Road. Drive 2.1 miles. Park and walk. (McKay Road at 1.9 miles also good birding)

#### **Jasper Mountain Road**

Turn right off Highway 12 at McCowan Road shortly before Waitsburg. Drive 1.0 miles to end of pavement. Veer right onto Jasper Mountain Road. Drive 5.7 miles to beginning of conifers. Walk riparian areas. (Check bluebird boxes going up.) Stop and walk several times along wooded areas. From conifers, continue 3.1 miles to "T". Stop and walk both directions. (burned areas are good for woodpeckers).

### **Magpiper Survey**

In an effort to make the Magpiper a better publication, I am asking you to complete this survey. I would like to know what you like about the publication, what you don't think is useful, and general comments on how to improve it in the future. Please send the survey to:

Ginger Shoemake  
Blue Mountain Audubon  
PO Box 1106  
Walla Walla, WA 99362

Please rate the following items 1 through 5 with 1 being the least favorable and 5 being the most favorable.

President's column	1	2	3	4	5
Bird of the month	1	2	3	4	5
Spotlight on nature	1	2	3	4	5
Conservation page	1	2	3	4	5
The Environment	1	2	3	4	5
Books	1	2	3	4	5
In the Field	1	2	3	4	5
Birding Sites	1	2	3	4	5

Additional features you would like to see:

Comments:

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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 7:30 in Gaiser Auditorium, Whitman College Science Building. A newsletter, **The Magpiper** is published September through May and is free to members. Non-member subscription fees are \$20 annually. BMAS is a non-profit 501c(3) organization. Find us on the internet at <http://www.blumtn.org>

Join Blue Mountain Audubon Society – Complete the following information and mail along with a check in the amount of \$20 for your first year's membership to: Blue Mountain Audubon Society, PO Box 1106, Walla Walla, WA 99362

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