



The Magpiper

Field Trips

SUMMER MIGRANTS

Saturday, June 5—8:00 a.m.

Meet at Harper Joy Theatre Parking Lot

Rodger and Ginger Shoemake will lead a morning trip to look for western wood-peewees, Bullock's orioles, yellow-breasted chats, gray catbirds, willow flycatchers, black-headed grosbeaks and other summer nesting birds. This will be a leisurely walk along Foster Road and South Fork Russell Creek Road. Wear your walking shoes, bring your binoculars and join the fun. Call the Shoemakes if you plan to attend. [525-2963](tel:525-2963)

BLUE MOUNTAIN WILDFLOWERS

Saturday, June 19—8:00 a.m.

Meet at Harper Joy Parking Lot

It's time again to join Priscilla Dauble for a trip to the Tollgate area of the Blue Mountains to look at wildflowers. Last year we found approximately 80 different species of wildflowers, as well as many birds and butterflies. This will be an all-day trip and we will be doing quite a bit of walking so bring plenty of food and water and dress accordingly. Call Priscilla if you plan to attend. [529-7939](tel:529-7939)

THANK YOU TOM

Blue Mountain Audubon Board and Membership want to take this opportunity to thank Tom Scribner for his leadership as our President the past two years. His willingness to take on the responsibilities involved in this role are greatly appreciated.

Thanks Tom, for a job well done!

New Officers for the coming term are:

President: position open
Vice President: Mike Denny
Secretary: Paul and Judy Treman
Treasurer: MerryLynn Denny

Evening Walks

Once again this summer, Board members will lead evening walks on the third Thursday of the month. The walks listed below will begin at 6:00 p.m. We will meet at the location where the walk will take place. We hope you will be able to come out and enjoy the birds and the evening.

SOUTH FORK COPPEI CREEK

Thursday, June 17—6:00 p.m.

In the evenings many of the birds come down to the side of the road to look for insects so we will slowly walk along the road from the junction of Walker Road and South Fork Coppei Creek Road north to the intersection with North Fork Coppei Creek Road and see what we can find.

Directions: East of Dixie on Highway 12, turn right onto Lewis Peak Road at elevator. Turn left .1 mile onto Walker Road. Drive 1.4 miles to junction of Walker Road and South Fork Coppei Creek Road. Turn left and park. Walk will begin from this location.

BENNINGTON LAKE

Thursday, July 15—6:00 p.m.

Most of the summer birds will be done nesting, so there should be many young birds to see—western wood peewees, yellow warblers, Bullock's orioles, house wrens, swallows and more.

Walk will begin at the boat launch parking lot.

MILL CREEK TRAIL

Thursday, August 19—6:00 p.m.

Shorebirds start showing up along the creek in August so we'll be on the lookout for such species as yellowlegs, solitary sandpipers and spotted sandpipers. We will also be looking for passerines in the shrubs along the trail.

Meet at the Walla Walla Community College parking lot along the creek.



In the Field

This past month was the time for the return of summer nesting birds and also the time when migrants pass through on their way to their nesting grounds. Read below what people saw in late April and May.

By the end of April, the great horned owl chicks at Bennington Lake had become active, and were beginning to peer out their nesting hole in the parking lot. By the end of May they had fledged. Look (and listen) for them along the canal.

However, the most exciting discovery in April was six long-eared owl chicks at Bennington Lake. This is the first documented evidence of long-eared owls nesting at the lake although we were pretty sure they have done so in previous years.



Long-eared owl chick—Photo by Jim Parrish

On April 26, Jim and Sue Parrish saw a new yard bird - a yellow-headed blackbird.

Our yard birds on April 26 included an Eurasian collared dove, a warbling vireo, tons of evening grosbeaks and white-crowned sparrows, a pair of Brewer's blackbirds and a yellow-rumped warbler.

Shirley Messinger watched a lazuli bunting at her feeder on April 27—the first sighting this spring.

Mike and MerryLynn had a tri-colored blackbird in their yard the last week of April.

On a cold and windy the morning of April 29, eight of us walked Bennington Lake and weren't disappointed with the birds we saw. There were swallows everywhere—all five species, but mostly tree, bank and cliff. Yellow-rumped warblers dazzled us with their breeding plumage and western kingbirds adorned the tops of the trees and shrubs. The long-eared owls have all fledged, but the two great horned owl chicks were

still in their hole in the parking lot cliff. We saw a Hammond's flycatcher, heard several orange-crowned warblers, and a yellow-warbler

Dave Base reported seeing turkey vultures twice the last week of April near Prescott.

On May 1, a female lesser goldfinch came to our feeder. It fed continuously for about 10 minutes and left, not to be seen again. We have had similar visits about this time of year in the past. Later in the week a golden-crowned sparrow came into the yard and stayed several days. Lazuli buntings have been coming to the seed we have scattered on the ground too. Here is a photo I took .



Mike and MerryLynn found some interesting birds at the Delta on May 2. The most exciting was a common teal. This is the Eurasian version of the green-winged teal and hadn't been reported in Walla Walla County for over 15 years. They also saw a Clark's grebe, another hard bird to find in the county. There were over 130 Caspian terns actively catching fish, many with leg bands. At the Millet Pond on Northshore Road they saw over 200 dunlin, a spotted sandpiper, American avocets and black-necked stilts.

Another cold/windy day at Bennington Lake on May 4. The birds were concentrated along the canal where they were protected from the weather. Yellow-rumped warblers were everywhere—I lost count at 27! White-crowned sparrows were even more abundant. Other warblers seen were orange crowned, Nashville and yellow. We saw a warbling vireo, both Hammond's and dusky flycatchers, and western kingbirds. We saw a total of 50 species.

Mike and MerryLynn were back out at the Walla Walla River Delta and Northshore Road Millet Ponds on May 8 where they saw a good number of year birds: whimbrel, blue-winged teal, long-billed dowitcher, short-billed dowitcher, solitary sandpiper, great egret, semi-palmated plover, red-necked grebe and Bullock's oriole.

I joined MerryLynn and her mom on May 13 for a trip to the west side of the county. We found many of the same birds the Denny saw on May 8, but were excited to see a marbled godwit on the Delta.

Kevin Black found a **ruddy turnstone** and a **black-bellied plover** on the blood ponds along Dodd Road on May 15. Later in the day Mike and MerryLynn were able to relocate the two birds, and also saw a **red-knot** at the same location.

Two hundreded forty one hummingbirds were banded at Tom Lamb's place in Dixie the weekend of May 15-16 (189 **calliope**, 32 **rufous** and 20 **black-chinned**). Of those captured, 9 were banded in previous years.

Jonathan Comeau found 20 **American white pelicans** at Whitman Mission on May 15. They have been seen flying along the Walla Walla River the past few years.

There were lots of birds at Bennington Lake on May 19. New arrivals included **western wood peewee**, **Bullock's oriole**, **black-headed grosbeak**, **Wilson's warbler**, **eastern kingbird**, **spotted sandpiper**, **cinnamon teal** and **yellow-breasted chat**.



Yellow-breasted chat
Photo by MerryLynn Denny

Brooke Davey returned from a trip to Utah and Arizona on May 20. She was very excited about seeing two **California condors** in Zion National Park.

On May 21, Lorelei Saxby saw 3 **spotted sandpipers** on the pond at Lyons Park in College Place.

May 22 was the Jasper Mountain Field Trip. It was cold and it was windy, but 12 of us ventured out with Mike and MerryLynn Denny for a great day of birding. Our first stop was South Fork Coppei Creek where a **warbling vireo**, **yellow warblers**, **black-headed grosbeaks** and a **western tanager** gave us the best views. Several **western bluebirds**, a **Hammond's flycatcher**, a **Cooper's hawk** and a **northern harrier** were very cooperative on the road up to the "T". Once at the junction we found a very nice **MacGillivray's warbler** and a noisy **house wren**. We ate lunch overlooking a spectacular view of the South Fork of the Touchet River. Further up the road we ran into a feeding flock of birds that included **mountain and black-capped chickadees**, **ruby-crowned kinglets**, **orange-crowned warblers**, **yellow-rumped warblers**, **red-breasted nuthatches** and a crippling view of a **Townsend's warbler** near the base of a tree that was surrounded by beautiful blue camus. A **hermit thrush** hopped around on the side of the road at another stop

and a **red-naped sapsucker** worked a tree in front of us. We saw or heard a total of 63 species. We could see the snow from the top, but we had no rain or snow all day. Some of the early wildflowers were blooming, but many are waiting for us to see on Priscilla's Wildflower Field Trip June 19.



A group of cold by happy birders

David Forsyth saw a **red-breasted sapsucker** at Bennington Lake on May 22. This species is rarely found in southeastern Washington, and is the first spring record for Walla Walla County. MerryLynn and I went up to the lake on May 24, but could not relocate the bird. However, we did see a male **lesser goldfinch**. Both of these birds are new species for Bennington Lake. On the way home, MerryLynn stopped by Rooks Park and had four **gray catbirds** in the parking lot area.

On May 24, Shirley Muse watched a male **western tanager** bathing in her stream. She also has a pair of **black-capped chickadees** nesting right outside her window.

We had sixteen people on our walking tour around Bennington Lake on May 25, including a group of birders from the Seattle area. It was fun to show them our little birding treasure right here in Walla Walla..

Most of the summer birds are here now. We're still waiting to see a few species - **veery**, **willow flycatcher**, **common nighthawk**, **Swainson's thrush** and **olive-sided flycatcher**.

Summer is a great time to be outdoors and enjoy the birds. Let me know what you find. You can contact me at house_wren@charter.net or 525-2963. To find out what is being seen over the summer, check the website www.blumtn.org and go to the Birding Blog link on the left side of the home page. Happy birding!

Ginger

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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

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____