



The Golden Eagle

Newsletter of the Golden Eagle Audubon Society

Fall 2020

Making room for birds and their habitat is its own reward

By Crista Videriksen Worthy

After a relatively dry winter and early spring, we've been gifted with numerous days of rain, interspersed with plenty of sunshine and mild temperatures. I'm not sure I've ever seen the foothills so green! For the past few years, I've been diligently cutting back invasive weeds in the hill behind our house, and now in spring we enjoy a backdrop of sage interspersed with pretty blue flax. Behind our lawn, a row of cottonwoods has grown to more than 40 feet tall, and numerous small saplings have come up in the lawn itself. Along with 20 aspen saplings we planted in the grass, this mini-forest is attracting lots of wildlife, including deer, foxes, and badgers. And tons of quail!

A couple of months ago I noticed a large nest near the top of a black locust tree along Dry Creek Road, between Highway 55 and Hidden Springs. Soon a great horned owl could be seen sitting there all day, and, eventually, three owlets. Then one day they were gone. It turned out they had simply fledged and moved about half a mile east, to my neighbor's yard, where I photographed two of the owlets with one of their parents on May 21.

My neighbor, who couldn't be happier about her new "tenants," mentioned how she'd watched a dozen western tanagers in her yard that morning. I told her I'd never seen a single one here. But the very next day I saw a small flock of them, all males, feeding beneath a tree at the street corner. Unfortunately, they were all in the middle of the street, and when I walked by later, I saw a dead one lying in the gutter—probably hit by a car. Worse, I learned that a flock of western tanagers had flown into the Joe R. Williams building, which is all glass, in downtown Boise the day before. The tanagers must have been migrating through the area.

On a happier note, I will remind you that it's amazing what one person can do for birds, just by providing habitat. Here in southwest Idaho we have "The Bluebird Man," Al Larson, who built more than 300 bluebird nest boxes, setting them up along five different "bluebird trails." Over the nearly 40 years he's donated to this endeavor, Larson has banded well over 30,000 western and mountain bluebirds. Every time I see a bluebird, I say, "Thank you!" out loud, to Al Larson.

I recently read about Avery Island, a small "salt dome" island off Louisiana's Gulf Coast. Shortly before the Civil War, Edmund McIlhenny (1815–1890) married into the Avery family, who already lived on the island. In 1868, McIlhenny developed and patented Tabasco—that unique pepper sauce you may have a bottle of in your cupboard.



Great horned owl family

Photo by Crista Worthy

One of his sons, Edward Avery "Ned" McIlhenny (1872–1949) was born on Avery Island. He developed a keen interest in birds and later dropped out of university to join an 1894 Arctic expedition as an ornithologist. After returning from the Arctic, Ned noticed a drastic decline in the numbers of egrets and herons on Avery Island and surrounding areas. The birds were being slaughtered for their gorgeous nuptial plumage, to adorn women's hats—ounce for ounce, the feathers exceeded the price of gold at the time. Ned estimated that fewer than 1,400 great egrets and 250 snowy egrets were left. He took action by creating a

newsreel targeted at moviegoers and politicians, publicizing the birds' plight. Next, he enlarged a lake on the island, constructed a large, netted, flying cage, and hand-raised eight snowy egrets there. He released them in autumn, hoping they would return the following spring, which they did. He then constructed elevated racks of bamboo strips to entice great egrets. The installation, which he called Bird City, is credited with reviving Louisiana's severely diminished egret populations.

Ned also took over the family Tabasco business, which grew by leaps and bounds after he modernized production and promotion of the spicy sauce. In 1910, Ned and others (including the Rockefeller Foundation) purchased more marshland and donated it all to Louisiana as a wildlife refuge of nearly 175,000 acres. By 1911, Ned estimated his sanctuary was protecting 100,000 birds. President Theodore Roosevelt praised Bird City as "the most noteworthy reserve in the country." And in 1918, President Woodrow Wilson and the Audubon Society persuaded Congress to pass the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. In the century since its enactment, the act has saved millions, if not billions, of birds. The Trump administration is no longer enforcing portions of this landmark law. I hope you keep this in mind when you vote in November!

For events see: <https://www.goldeneagleaudubon.org/Events>

President's Message

By Liz Urban

I hope this newsletter finds you and your loved ones well. This year is sure to be remembered by each of us for years to come. There have been many unknowns, bizarre twists and turns, and hopefully a few bright rays of hope and happiness. Here at GEAS I feel great pride in our community and how we have been able to continue to thrive in this new, ongoing pandemic existence.

We were greatly saddened, and frankly worried, about having to cancel our annual banquet and auction this past March. This event has traditionally been one of our largest fundraisers of the year. There is no question that cancelling the event was the only responsible choice, but having to do so the week of the event, and before the official lock-down, meant that we still had to pay the venue for an event that couldn't occur. We thank each and every person who was so generous in letting us convert your tickets into donations to help us cover this cost. The good news is that someday, hopefully next summer, we'll be able to gather again at a venue that will allow us to roll over the investment into the future.

The community's generosity continued into the Idaho Gives online fundraising event in May, during the time when we were still trying to figure out how to safely continue offering programming. The support of more than 50 individuals provided more than \$4,700 to help GEAS continue during these strange times.

Through the dedication of our volunteers and contractors, we were able to pivot many of our offerings and take things virtual. I hope you have enjoyed some of the numerous engagement opportunities that can be found online. There have been dozens of presentations, contests, a trivia night, a "catio" tour and keep-cats-safe-inside awareness week, art tutorials, virtual public lands day programming, and more. The amount of creativity and dedication of everyone to make all of this possible is truly inspiring.

There was a good deal of discussion about how and when to begin offering in-person field trips and volunteer events again. Safety is paramount, but we also know how important it is to be able to continue these fundamental pieces of our mission. Especially in a time when bird-watching is attracting new birders in droves, and the number of people moving to our area continues to skyrocket. Please allow me to extend my thanks to all our field trip leaders, volunteers, and to our contractor Adra Lobdell for creating safe opportunities for our community to engage with nature through birding and restoration work. We anticipate continuing to offer numerous opportunities each month, but for a limited number of participants per event and with precautions in place. Please check out our online calendar or FaceBook for upcoming opportunities and information on how to sign-up.

As an organization, we are also going through changes and growth. We have a new development committee, a couple of new programs in the works, and a strategic plan that is almost finished; one planning meeting was rudely interrupted by that earthquake this spring. Not only that, but the GEAS board of directors unanimously decided to invest in the future of the organization by hiring our first executive director. This decision has been years in the making, and I want to ensure our membership that we waited until we were certain that this level of commitment to bringing on staff was one that would be sustainable. The executive director will begin as a part-time position, with guaranteed funding in place for the position for the first three years. We are very excited to see where a dedicated and visionary leader can take GEAS. We have grown to the point that this is an immediate need to keep our momentum and programming going, even with our fabulous volunteer corps. The board has appointed a hiring committee to find the right person for this job as well as do all the necessary logistical pieces to bring on our new staff as employees. It is a lot of work, and I sincerely thank Lisa Reed for chairing the committee as well as Dondi Black, Sierra Laverty, and Matt Podolsky for their service. This dedicated team, of which I am also a part, is currently searching and interviewing candidates. We will continue until we

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Volunteer News

Volunteer Acknowledgements

What a year we have had! With all of the changes that occurred over the past few months, we want to acknowledge those that have contributed in an amazing way to keep our members and community engaged with the outdoors during this time of uncertainty.

First off, we would like to give a huge shout out to the tremendous efforts that the banquet committee put into facilitating, and postponing, the annual banquet this year and to those that donated to the silent auction. We appreciate all of the time and effort that went into making the difficult decisions on how to move forward with the event in light of the pandemic. Particularly thank you to Matt McCoy, Teresa Sabala, Alex Takasugi, and Sue Norton for facilitating the postponement.

Thank you to Kathy Barker McCoy and David Potter for the bird class and field trips. Our members can learn a great deal from you two. Thank you to Alexander Sapiens for making sure no one showed up for the canceled field trip to Fort Boise as well as Adra Lobdell for leading the bird walk in March and virtual bird walks in June.

Thank you to everyone who helped create programming online to help inspire connection to nature when we could not physically be together. A huge thank you to the artists in our artist tutorial series, Tempe Regan and Poo Wright Pulliam. We appreciate our Birdy Storytime partners including Heidi Ware Carlisle, Traci Swift, Corrine Roberts, and Bryce Mercer. We also appreciate those of you who contributed to our blog including Adra Lobdell, Leanne Lloyd-Fairey, Bob Fairey, Alexander Sapiens, and Vicky Runnoe. We are also tremendously grateful for Libby Burtner and Jim Lyons for sharing your photos with us during your Instagram Takeovers.

Thank you to our wonderful presenters over the past few months including Caitlin Davis, Neil Paprocki, Corrine Roberts, Lucian Davis, Adra Lobdell, Louisa Evers, Sierra Laverty, Ceredig Roberts, and Pangea Finn. We appreciate your fascinating presentations.

For their dedication and dirty hands, the Native Plant Network sincerely

thanks: Madison Skinner, Chris Roe, Adra Lobdell, Libby Adams, Liz Paul, Rob Tiedemann, Lorna Snowden, Debbie Wiggins, Jon Roundy, Helen Fisher, Kelly Selvege, Estelle Peak, Maison O'Niell, Colleen Moulton, Terra Falconer, Gretel Care, Benita Putzier, Terri Edwards, Kristin Haustveit, Berit Kuykendall, Annette Hanson, Lisa Reed, Tricia Matthews, Jon Mathews, Kelley Green-Davis, Kathleen Tiffany, Mary Jane Marlow, Carolyn King, Sue Norton, Linda Kirkpatrick, Randy Langseth, Nadine York, Lorraine and Dave Poor, Elizabeth Grosse, Debbie Erwin and Chris Dresden, Caitlin Keady, Dusty Perkins, Susan Ziebarth, Leslie Blackburn and everyone else in the Network. Special thanks to Diane Jones at Draggin Wing Farms for her incredible generosity and to Martha Brabec for her dedication to restoring habitat in and around Boise.

We also thank the many people who signed up to Adopt a Plot at the IBO river restoration site. Plots still available.

Thank you to our restoration volunteers Alice & Alan Crockett, Ann Debolt, Kristin Gnojewski, and Roger Rosentreter for your work and dedication along the Greenbelt and at Warm Springs Park.

Our advocacy committee has remained diligent in speaking up for birds and the environment, and we would like to thank them for their efforts.

A huge shout out to Megan Jones, Cathalee La, and Liz Urban for your efforts to deliver hands-on environmental experiences to New Roots Participants' homes.

We want to thank the Master Naturalist class this year as well as Sara Focht and Elizabeth Dickey for facilitating the transition to digital volunteering.

Thank you to Bryce Robinson and Ally Turner for collaboration on the Junior Duck Stamp workshop.

Last, but not least, thank you to Niels Nokkentved for his dedication to the newsletter.

Thank you also to our past and present board of directors

With all that has been going on this year, we haven't had the opportunity to thank our board members who rotated off the GEAS Board of Directors this past June. Libby Burtner, Alan Crockett, Leah Dunn, Matt Podolsky, Chris McClure, Alex Takasugi have dedicated years to helping lead GEAS and will be greatly missed. We are fortunate to have many of these volunteers continue on in different capacities, so it is a pleasure to be able to continue to work together.

This election cycle we welcomed Lucian Davis, Patti Guicheteau, Sierra Laverty, and Lisa Reed to the Board as well as Ceredig Roberts who is serving as Treasurer. Dondi Black moved into the Vice President position and Jim Lyons remains our Secretary along with the at-large directors Michele Crisst and Alexander Sapiens. Liz Urban is serving her final year as president this year as well. Thank you all for all the incredible work you have already taken on and a very belated official welcome!

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find a match for GEAS, and the entire board will be tasked with final approval. With some luck we will be able to introduce you to our new director in the next newsletter.

During these turbulent times, I hope that birds and nature have brought comfort and joy to each and everyone of us. It is my hope that even more people will now appreciate the vital connection we have to nature and that we collectively acknowledge that we have a responsibility to protect birds and their habitats. That is the mission of GEAS, and I am thankful that we are all working together to do just that here in southwest Idaho.

Take Care,
Liz Urban, GEAS President

The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors. They do not necessarily reflect the opinions or views of GEAS or its members.

Volunteer Spotlight: Al Larson receives Great Egret Award

On October 6, 2020, GEAS was thrilled to recognize and celebrate Al Larson, Bluebird Man, with National Audubon Society's Great Egret Award. The Great Egret award recognizes dedicated individuals who have made significant long-term contributions to Audubon and conservation in pursuit of the Audubon mission. To be eligible for this award, volunteers must have committed 20 years or more to the Audubon mission. Not only has Al nearly doubled the 20 year mark, he has banded more than 30,000 bluebirds in southwestern Idaho, educated thousands of people on the importance of conservation, and has touched so many of our lives.

Thank you, Al, for being an inspiration to us all.

GEAS was also pleased to announce the creation of the Larson Legacy Fund at this covid-concise celebration. This



internally administered fund will be dedicated to continuing Larson's amazing environmental legacy through dedicated and ongoing support of community science efforts in southwestern Idaho, now and into the future. Examples of what the fund will support include the continued monitoring and maintenance of the Larson's 300 bluebird nest boxes on six trails in southwestern Idaho. Other community science initiatives at Audubon such as the Christmas Bird Counts, Climate Watch, and other similar activities that support the conservation of birds and their habitats will be considered as beneficiaries of these dedicated funds.

The GEAS board of directors has seeded the Fund with more than \$5,000 to express our thanks and desire to ensure the Larsons' legacy continues to impact generations to come.

Bethine Church River Trail Update

By Alan Crockett

Golden Eagle Audubon has picked up trash monthly along the downstream half-mile section of the Bethine Church Trail for many years. However, since birding is better farther upstream, when it came time to readopt sections of the trail, the 0.6 mile section immediately downstream of Barber Park was selected. The new adoption program requires more than the original trash pickup. Now we wire trees to protect them from bark-eating beavers, we dig and pull invasive weeds, we plant, water, weed and mulch new native plant seedlings, etc. To this end, before Covid-19 hit, a work party was held to wrap/rewrap trees with chicken wire. Subsequently, a volunteer provided 50 new native plants which were planted just downstream of the East Parkcenter bridge and they have been routinely watered, weeded and mulched over several months. Only one plant has died. An experiment was conducted by planting clusters of cottonwood poles up to 10' long in areas well above the water table. Of the 15 poles planted, 14 have survived and have received regular watering. Hopefully, the new roots are growing to groundwater. It was observed that numerous small saplings were growing in open areas without large trees and the suggestion was made to protect these small trees instead of planting seedlings or poles. Now over 50 of these saplings are protected with welded wire cages. In late September, about 60 plants were provided by the City, planted by volunteers and have been regularly watered since. All these actions were limited to the Audubon adopted section of the Bethine Church Trail. At the ending River Run section of the Trail, the City donated ten 5-foot tall cottonwoods to the River Run home owners association and they, too, were planted and cared for by volunteers. Finally, a

recommendation was made to Boise Parks and Recreation to use new, finer gravel along the Audubon adopted trail section. This gravel (manufactured sand, called 'chat') was spread in June on the Audubon section and was so successful with walkers and runners, that the remaining mile of Bethine Church Trail was graveled with chat in September. This "chat" is finer, 3/8 inch minus particle size vs. 3/4 inch minus roadmix, is much smoother and seems to drain better.

Come and enjoy the easily-walked Bethine Church Nature Trail! The Birding is great and the scenery is lovely. And there will be plenty of work to do come spring!



Pileated woodpecker

Photo by Jackie Robidoux, @j_robidoux

Financial Statement of Activities and Fiscal Year Summary

GEAS’s fiscal year ends May 31, so the first part of the pandemic was felt in the last quarter of FY19-20. We were forced to cancel the banquet the week before it was scheduled to occur in March. Because of the last moment cancelation we were contractually bound to pay the venue. Thankfully our community was very generous in letting us try to reschedule and eventually cancel the 2020 event. Thank you to every supporter who helped us get through that unprecedented situation.

Before the pandemic, GEAS had presented a record number of educational programs and events. We conducted our first ever advocacy training workshop, gave more than a dozen presentations to community groups, hosted a junior duck stamp

art workshop, created the “winter birding challenge” and much more. This was made possible in part to the support of our new education and community engagement specialist contractor. Thank you Adra for your work and to every donor and member who helped us reach thousands in our community through your gifts.

GEAS chose to honor the bequest left to us by Colleen Harden last year with a memorial bench at the City of Boise’s Warm Springs Park. We hope if you visit the pollinator garden we have worked with partners to install, that you will take a moment to remember Colleen as you enjoy the space.

Please send any questions about the chapter’s income or expenses by email to info@goldeneagleaudubon.org. Golden Eagle Audubon Society remains a 501(c)3 non- profit organization.

GEAS’s Anti-racist Statement

Golden Eagle Audubon Society’s Board of Directors believes that silence is not an option, and that we must be vocal on our anti-racist journey. It is clear that the systematic inequalities inherent in our society towards people of color must be at the forefront of our awareness. GEAS is committed to dismantling those inequalities wherever we are able to do so.

Black Birders Week amplified the experience of so many birders of color across our nation. The simple joy of being outdoors and watching birds is an experience that can and has been unsafe for birders of color. We are committed to doing everything our organization can to make birding accessible and safe for all people.

GEAS has sought to keep equity, diversity, and inclusion at the forefront as we deliver community programming. Most of our offerings are available at no cost and open to the public; an intentional choice to make our programming accessible. For seven years, our New Roots Program has engaged under-served youth by connecting them with nature. Even with this flagship program, we know we can do more and do it better.

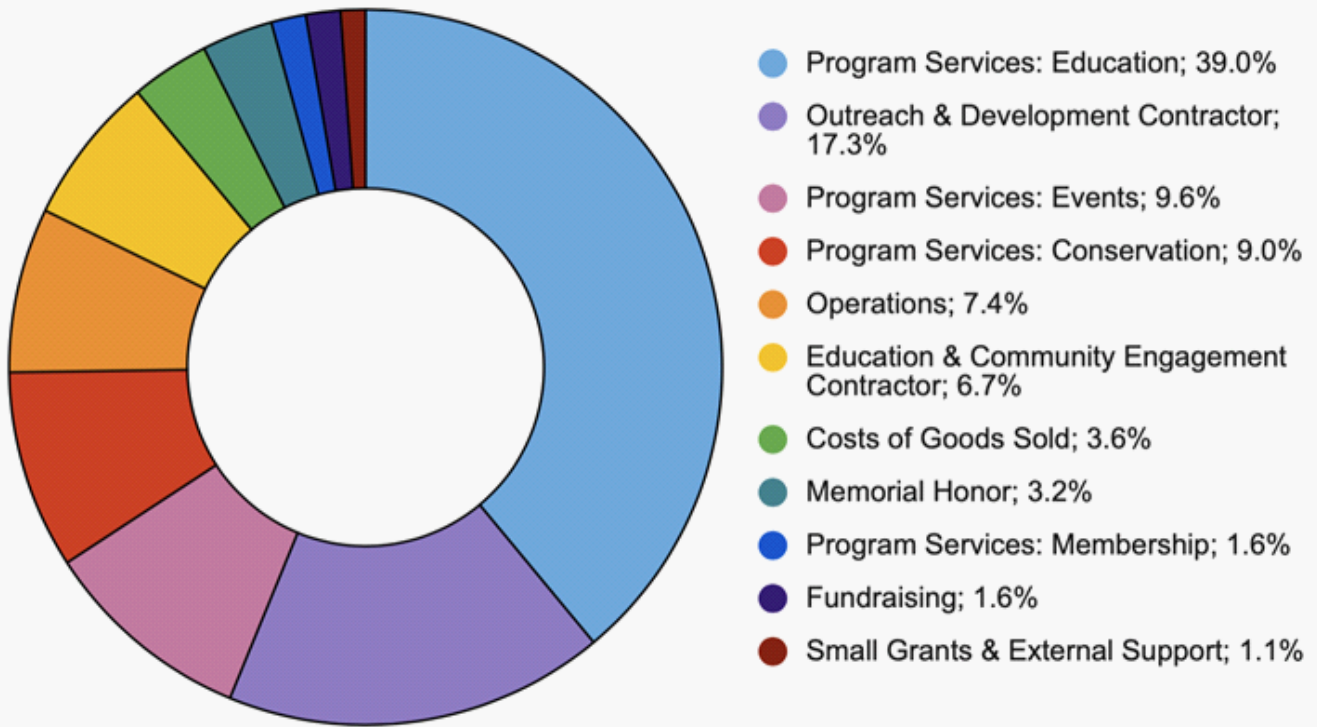
We are working on a detailed plan of action to make our membership, programming, and birding at large in our community open and accessible to all people. When it is complete we will share this plan in its entirety, but some of these actions will include:

- A commitment to expanding services to new areas to reach underprivileged communities, while continuing free and public offerings whenever possible.
- Expanding partnerships to better serve, reach, and engage more diverse communities.
- Providing a sense of security by expanding information about the locations of field trips. ie: how public an area is, cell service access, etc.
- Revising guidelines for field trips leaders and volunteers to include guidance on representatives’ responsibility to create a safe and welcoming environment for birders of color

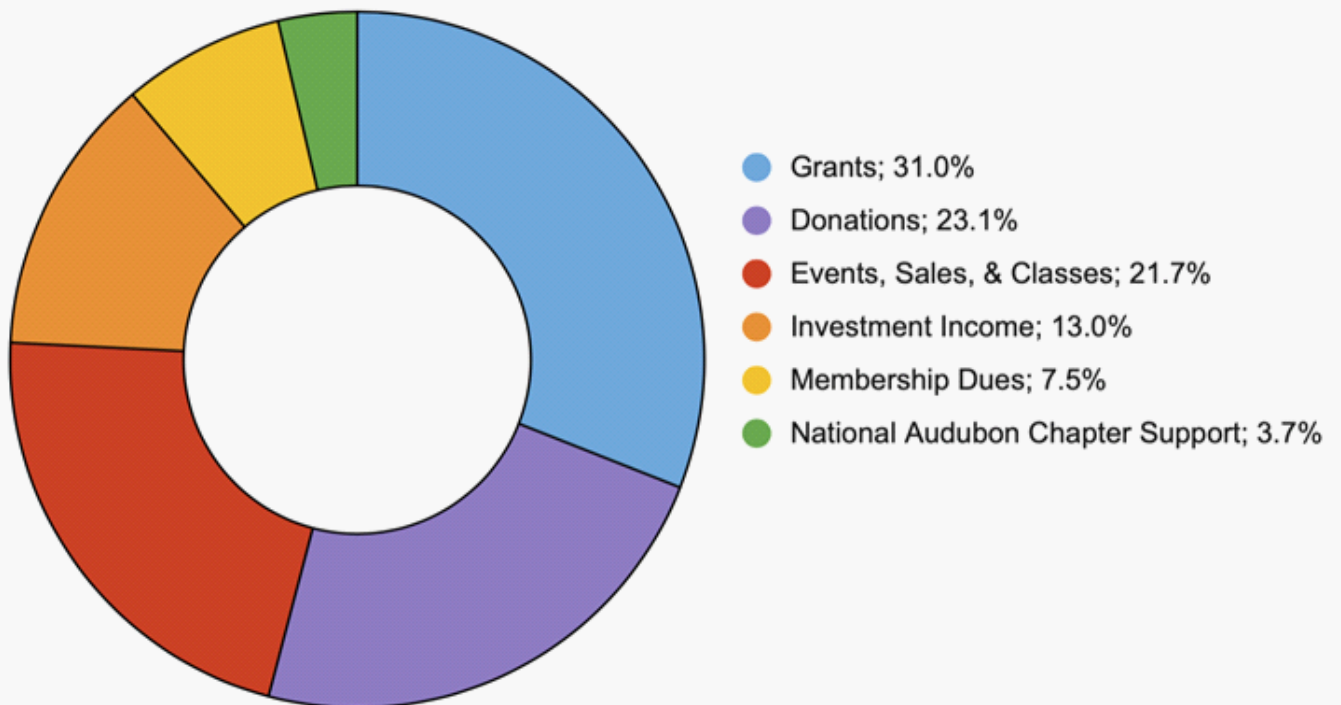
As a board, we commit ourselves to becoming anti-racist within the leadership of our organization. Many directors and officers have completed, or are in the process of completing, the Wassmuth Center’s Human Rights Certification program so we are better equipped and more thoughtful in serving our membership and community.

Income	
Grants	\$19,994.00
Donations	\$14,934.00
Events, Sales, & Classes	\$13,988.00
Investment Income	\$8,391.00
Membership Dues	\$4,870.00
National Audubon Chapter Support	\$2,368.00
TOTAL	\$64,545.00
Expenses	
Program Services: Education	\$24,162.00
Outreach & Development Contractor	\$10,706.00
Program Services: Events	\$5,946.00
Program Services: Conservation Operations	\$5,564.00
Education & Community Engagement Contractor	\$4,617.00
Costs of Goods Sold	\$4,177.00
Memorial Honor	\$2,208.00
Program Services: Membership;	\$2,000.00
Fundraising	\$975.00
Small Grants & External Support	\$972.00
TOTAL	\$62,026.00

GEAS FY 19-20: Expense Summary



GEAS FY 19-20: Income Summary



Owl pellets tell nature's stories

By Alice Crockett

My next-door neighbor Michael often walked the country road between our two houses to visit me. His sister, Katherine age six and two years older than Michael, would wave to me from her front yard when I drove to town, but her interests were at home, not at the neighbors.

On one of Michael's visits when he was seven or eight, I gave a papery, just shed, snakeskin to him. I'd found it while mowing the lawn. Garden snakes were some of my best pest controls. I had to keep a sharp eye out when mowing so that I wouldn't mow the snakes as they slithered from garden to garden. The skin was so lovely, so light, so incredibly intact that I told Michael he must carefully take it home to show his family! He did. Later in the day, I found out from his mother Beth, that snakes give her the willies!

But it was a good learning experience for Michael. She requested that one snakeskin was enough. We laughed.

Well, back to when Michael was four. It was summer and I had heard the nighttime deep hooting of Great

Horned Owls often. They would perch in our Russian Olives, Weeping Willow and Black Cottonwoods during the day and hunt at night. That day, I was engrossed with some kind of digging and planting, when Michael walked down the grassy slope of our front yard to visit. I'd noticed owl pellets beneath the Willow earlier and thought excitedly that Michael might like to see them—even open one up to see what was inside. I asked him if he had heard of owl pellets. He slowly shrugged his shoulders in puzzlement. "Would you like to see an owl pellet?" I asked. He nodded yes, not quite sure what he was in for. We walked to the base of the Willow and knelt. There were five pellets. We carefully dissected a pellet with a small willow branch. A tiny white skull, leg bones and fur clumps emerged. It was grand! We talked about owls and what they eat; how they fly silently to catch voles; how their heads can rotate and how large their eyes are. Michael, I must add, had one of the lowest pitched voices I have ever heard from either a child or teenager. His eyes sparkled. His low-voiced comments were thoughtful. I asked him if he would like to take a pellet home to show his family. He said that he would. We wrapped an owl pellet in a paper towel. I explained that after his family had seen and examined the pellet, they should wash their hands. He nodded. He understood.

Michael left for home, walking slowly, carefully holding the pellet package.

Several days later, as I was digging and planting in the front yard, I looked up and saw Michael walking down the grassy slope toward me. He came smiling and we exchanged pleasantries: "Hello." "How are you?" "It's a nice day!" Then Michael said, in his very low voice, "Mrs. Crockett, did you know there's a difference between dog poop and owl pellets?"



GEAS Banquet rescheduled for August

After postponing our annual banquet from March to October, the Golden Eagle Audubon Society board of directors and banquet committee made the difficult decision to cancel the 2020 banquet.

With the safety of our members in mind and the uncertainty of hosting a large gathering during the coronavirus pandemic, we decided it isn't feasible to hold this annual fundraiser and social event this year.

Our annual banquet has traditionally been a great time to give thanks to our many volunteers and donors, connect with members, and celebrate the birding community in southwestern Idaho. It is also our largest fundraiser each year which helps support our programs and commitment to birds and other wildlife in Idaho.

The next annual banquet and silent auction has been tentatively scheduled for August 2021, public health crisis permitting.

We appreciate your support during these uncertain times and look forward to celebrating with you in the future! In the meantime, we hope you and your family stay safe and take advantage of our social-distance friendly programming throughout the year by visiting www.goldeneagleaudubon.org/ events.

GEAS plans to hire an executive director

GEAS is hiring its first executive director. Our organization was founded in 1972 by passionate birders in our community. Over the decades, our volunteers have made a critical impact on southwest Idaho's wildlife habitat, birding education and citizen science, and so much more. Nearly 50 years later, our reach has grown to more than 1,300 members, partnerships both big and small, and features projects like the New Roots Program and the Native Plant Network. Our fledgling organization has grown tremendously, and every person that reads this update has played a part in that evolution.

As Southwest Idaho also experiences growth, it is more important now than ever for GEAS to be an active advocate for birds in our state. We are searching for someone to be steward for our growing programs, and to support the long term sustainability of the GEAS legacy. Our organization must stand strong for wildlife at this critical juncture in history. Sadly, it is estimated that there are 3 billion fewer birds in the skies of North America today than there were when GEAS was founded. Together, our members, volunteers and now our staff will build a better Idaho for birds, wildlife, and the people who live here.

Help us spread the news! Please share the job opportunity, which is posted on the Idaho Nonprofit Center job board, with anyone in your network who you think would be a good fit for GEAS.

In addition to the Executive Director position we are also seeking a Communication and Development Coordinator as Terra Falconer heads off to her new career as a school psychologist. More info on this position can be found online and will be a 15-20hr/wk, primarily remote job with two-weeks paid-time off included.

Both the executive director and communications and development coordinator positions will be open until filled.

New Roots Program: - COVID-19 Edition

It's probably no surprise that the eighth annual New Roots Program, designed to engage under-served youth from refugee and immigrant communities in nature, looked different this year. Normally we would have planned on taking up to 30 youth on a series of daily field trips for two weeks to experience and engage in science, environmental education, and the community. During lock down this past spring, we realized that format was not going to be possible, so we got to work thinking about what we could do to pivot the program and still best serve our students.

Thanks to the willingness of the Idaho STEM Action Center, which was our principal funder this year, to allow us to change our format we were still able to engage more than 40 people directly in the New Roots Program. Over the course of six months, beginning in April during lock down, we developed, assembled, and delivered themed, monthly STEM at-home kits to eight participating families. Kits included topics and activities on birding, nature journaling, native plants, gardening, insects, pollinators, geology, astronomy, meteorology, outdoor science fun, and outdoor skills like first aid and orienteering. It was intense to create materials and activities that could engage English language learners without the support of teachers and instructors. We were fortunate to have the help of Dr. Megan Jones, co-founder of the New Roots Program and experienced English language learners teacher, and Adra Lobdell, GEAS Education Specialist, assist with creating new content and providing instructions for these at-home kits.

In addition to serving our existing New Roots students, we also sought to expand our reach this year since we had already crafted so much material for the kits. We partnered with Agency for New Americans, for instance, and supplied 10 backpacks full of STEM, outdoor, and school materials for newly relocated refugee families. We also partnered with the Bureau of Land Management to supply 100 birding discovery kits to the Kuna, Caldwell, and Nampa libraries just in time for National Public Lands Day this fall. Lastly, we created five sets of resources in loanable backpacks that anyone in the community can request to borrow to begin exploring birds and nature at home.

It was a very different year, and instructors and students greatly missed being able to explore and learn together in person. We sincerely hope that what we were able to provide created opportunities to enjoy nature during this bizarre and stressful year. We did ask our students to send us some pictures of the projects they worked on, and we were delighted to see multiple generations in each family working together on the provided projects and with the materials. The engagement of families was an unanticipated highlight of the overall New Roots Program this year. We hope we will be able to continue to provide avenues for entire families to engage in science and outdoors into the future. We invite you to check out what New Roots looked like this year on our FaceBook page and are already thinking about how to adapt the program so we can get back out together safely next summer.

GEAS making Boise, Idaho safer for birds

The GEAS advocacy and conservation committees have been working on a number of avenues this year to make our community better for birds.

We contributed to and supported a resolution that passed the Idaho State Senate unanimously this past session, but did not make it through the House, that recognized that birds play an important role in our ecosystems and economy and highlighted the 29 percent decline in North American birds documented in the Rosenberg, et.al., study published last year.

We have supported the City of Boise in adopting either an ordinance or internal policy to make new municipal buildings as bird-safe as possible. We have met with a member of the City Council and city planners about the issue.

With the efforts of dedicated volunteers and concerned citizens, Ingrid and Bill Brudenell, we have also been able to work with a state of Idaho building manager to assess the level of impact a potentially dangerous building is having in downtown Boise. A group of volunteers has been surveying for birds that have collided with the building during the fall migration season and hopes to continue to monitor for collisions. If a particular aspect of the building is responsible for a significant portion of recorded mortalities, we will work on solutions with the building managers.

GEAS launches young birders club

The Idaho Young Birders Club is a newly launched Golden Eagle Audubon Society program, aimed at engaging young people in birds and conservation, and raising awareness about opportunities to participate in and aid conservation.

The club is run by high school and college students who want to give young people the same opportunities they had to get involved in birding and conservation.

Due to COVID-19, they are currently restricted to online programming, where they run social media accounts with bird related games, information about birds and the people who work with them, and opportunities to get involved with birding and conservation. They recently began offering online presentations on a variety of topics, including beginner bird identification and presentations from ornithologists. When they begin in-person events, they will be leading birding field trips, visits to local conservation organizations, and more.

They will be launching a membership program in November, in partnership with GEAS's membership program for students. Learn more about the club on their website.



Golden Eagle Audubon 2020 program updates:

Native Plant Network

The Native Plant Network produced about 3,500 seedlings in the growing season this year. With school closures and social distancing in place, COVID-19 had a big impact on seedling production. That said, this amazing network of volunteers still managed to plant about 2,000 native plants at IBO's Diane Moore Nature Center along the Boise River this fall. The remaining native plants are set to be planted later this fall at Blacks Creek shooting range, Idaho Fish and Game's Nampa office, and LTTV's Hillside to Hollow. Even in this time of uncertainty, the Native Plant Network continues to make a positive impact on

Education Programs

While this spring was certainly not what we had envisioned, we were able to shift gears and offer a wide variety of online programming for the community during the pandemic. We hosted weekly presentations in the month of April ranging from rough-legged hawk and golden eagle research to an introduction to the Idaho Young Birders Club and more! You can see all of these recordings on our website at www.goldeneagleaudubon.org/Presentations. We will continue offering our monthly meetings & presentations on the fourth Tuesday of the month virtually through the end of the year.

We also began a Nature Art Tutorial series that featured three fantastic artists: Tempe Regan, Poo Wright-Pulliam, and Alyson Dana Fine Art. These artists shared with us their beautiful artwork and tips that seek to inspire a connection between nature and art. You can see our tutorials at www.goldeneagleaudubon.org/tutorials.

With schools closing this spring, we collaborated with a variety of partners for a weekly "Birdy Storytime" series on Facebook. We had a great time highlighting bird-friendly books as various bird enthusiasts around the valley read aloud these stories. In addition to Birdy Storytime, we hosted an Art and Mindfulness challenge during which many of you were able to share with us your daily bird observations through art and photography.

This summer, our newest program, the Idaho Young Birders Club, officially launched. Thanks to a group of dedicated high school and college students, Young Birders has created engaging social media content, launched their own website, and offered two presentations that have connected inspiring young birders to the world of birds. We invite you to follow along on their journey by following @IdahoYoungBirdersClub on social media and visiting <https://sites.google.com/view/idaho-young-birders-club/home>.

For National Public Lands Day we teamed up with the Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area to host a Virtual Public Lands Day celebration. Additionally, we provided 100 families in Canyon County free Birding Discovery Kits. These kits were chock-full of awesome bird related activities for the whole family to enjoy. We appreciate the hard work and dedication that Cory Roberts and Liz Urban put into making this event possible.

This fall we hosted our inaugural Keep Cats Indoors Awareness Week and Virtual Catio Tour, during which we advocated on behalf of birds and cats by bringing to attention to various solutions that are good for both birds and cats. A huge

thank you to Adra Lobdell and our many partners for making this week a success.

Idaho Gives

We are proud to say that Idaho Gives was a success this year as we nearly doubled our donations from last year! Our focus was to raise funds to help transform southwest Idaho communities into bird-friendly communities. We highlighted many of our programs, including the New Roots Program and our bird-friendly education and advocacy efforts. We really appreciate everyone that made Idaho Gives a success.

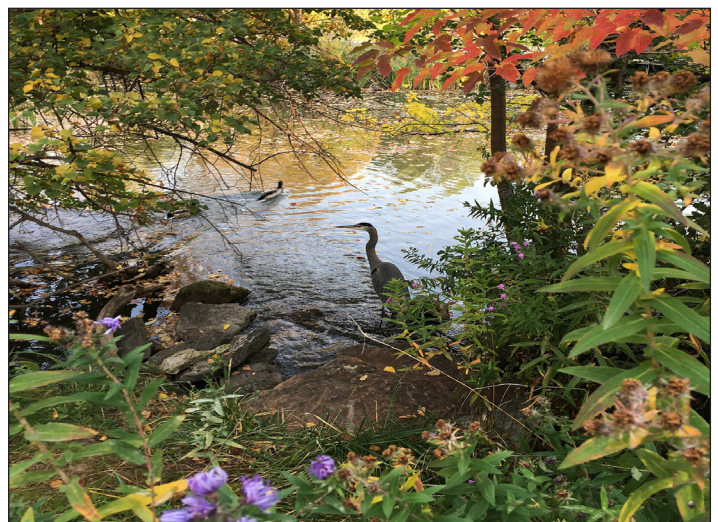
Field Trips

This fall, Golden Eagle Audubon Society began hosting field trips again with coronavirus restrictions in place. With these precautions in place, field trips have been a success so far. We restarted our monthly Bird Walk in the Park and Bethine Church River Trail Bird Walk series as well as our Wednesday Morning Birding Group Club.

To continue to offer safe experiences for all, we will be operating our public bird walks and field trips with the following measures until further notice: Pre-registration will be required for all participants. Please do not show up for an event if you did not pre-register online. Group sizes will be limited to eight participants and two leaders; 10 people total. We ask that participants wear a face covering and observe safe distancing while in attendance. We will only be loaning binoculars to attendees who request them ahead of time. You will be able to request them during pre-registration. Check our online calendar for the current schedule and for the registration link.

Conservation

Throughout September and October, GEAS hosted several planting events at the Bethine Church River Trail, Warm Springs Park, and the Intermountain Bird Observatory's Diane Moore Nature Center. Despite group size restrictions due to COVID-19, dozens of volunteers came out at various times to help plant hundreds of native trees, shrubs, and grasses. This expansion of native habitat will go a long way to increase food and shelter opportunities for our native birds as well as other wildlife. A huge thank you to all the volunteers who came out to do this important work!



A fall day in Kathryn Albertson Park

Photo by N.S. Nokkentved

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We invite you to join the Golden Eagle Audubon Chapter

Membership in the local chapter includes a one-year subscription to *The Golden Eagle*, and all my dues remain with the local chapter and support local activities.

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Please contact us for information on membership scholarships.

To join the National Audubon Society visit <http://www.audubon.org/> and use chapter code G00 for Golden Eagle Audubon Society, or write to: National Audubon Society, PO Box 422250, Palm Coast, FL 32142-2250.

The Golden Eagle Audubon Society is southwest Idaho's chapter of the National Audubon Society.
GEAS promotes environmental awareness through field trips, local programs and volunteer work.

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