



The Golden Eagle

Newsletter of the Golden Eagle Audubon Society

July/August, 2014

'Bird By Bird' Helps Start Citizen Science Project At Borah High

By Liz Urban

"Bird by Bird" is an Idaho program that teaches youths from preschool through high school about birds and their habitats.

This program provides an opportunity for students to learn in outdoor environments about biology, ecology, and the complex interrelationships between wildlife, habitats and humans. It has operated in Boise Valley schools for six years. Program partners include Idaho Department of Fish and Game's Watchable

Wildlife Program; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Bureau of Land Management; Wild Birds Unlimited; Land Trust of the Treasure Valley; and your very own Golden Eagle Audubon Society.

The program connects interested teachers with "bird pro" facilitators to make monthly classroom visits, lead field trips, bring live birds into

the classroom and more. Another integral piece of the program provides participating classrooms with bird feeders, seed, binoculars, field guides and other educational resources. Students are the primary caretakers of the birds and contribute to citizen science throughout the year by observing birds and collecting data. After six years, the Bird By Bird program has reached more than 3,200 children in and around the Treasure Valley.

Largely because of the commitment of dedicated teachers, yearly participation is ensured. Teachers recognize the positive benefits to our youth, who will grow into the next generation of conservation leaders, wildlife stewards and outdoor enthusiasts, and they are the backbone of the program.

Kris Stone has been an enthusiastic Bird by Bird teacher since the program began. She teaches biology at Borah High School in Boise to hundreds of students a year.

This past year, Stone wanted to create a unique citizen science project for her classes. Four Bird by Bird facilitators offered to help: Jill Baum, Terry Rich, Matt Stuber and the writer. Stone's students already had become "species experts" on birds they were

likely to see coming to the class'd birdfeeders, but Stone really wanted them to be able to participate in an expanded scientific process that included collecting scientific information, analyzing that data, and drawing conclusions from their own results. With the help of the facilitators, we designed a bird point count and protocol for the kids to use along the canal near school grounds.

The facilitators presented the methods and the importance of research design to the students, and then helped them try it. The

facilitators would come out once a week and help the students with bird identification and answer questions about the project.

The students performed counts over an eight-week period, and they collectively counted more than 1,300 birds of 35 species. They entered the data and picked a question to answer with it.

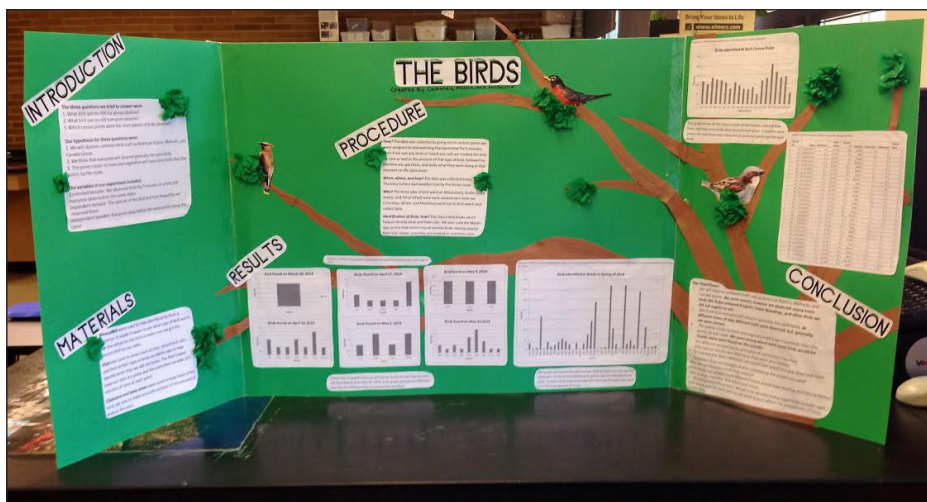
Instead of a traditional final

exam, these students were tasked with analyzing data, and then were required to present their findings in a scientific poster, just like real-life scientific finding presentations. Two Boise State University graduate students, Allie Anderson and Shawn Smith, presented their research posters to the students to show what kind of research is happening in the area and to illustrate some possible poster approaches.

The facilitators evaluated the student posters to see what the students had learned. It was great to see these students work through the scientific process, recognize patterns, and feel ownership and pride in their own knowledge of birds. We hope that Borah High will continue this project next year, as this new unique data set will only be more powerful with time.

To learn more please visit <http://birdbybirdidaho.com>. For more information on how to get involved please contact Meggan Laxalt Mackey (margaret_laxalt_mackey@fws.gov) or Deniz Aygen (deniz.aygen@idfg.idaho.gov.)

Liz Urban is a GEAS board member and Bird by Bird facilitator.



Students' Bird by Bird research presentation poster.

Photo by Liz Urban

President's Message

By Michele Crist

Greetings GEAS!

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge three directors who are leaving the Board: Pam Conley, Barb Forderhase and Heidi Ware.

Pam Conley has been instrumental to the board for many years. She served on the board for nine years and as president for three of those years: May 2009 – May 2012. She also works hard organizing our volunteers, leading bird watching trips, representing GEAS at different events, leading the charge in bird conservation issues and managing our newsletter. She has done much for GEAS and we thank her for all of her contributions. In addition, Pam will continue volunteering for GEAS in all of these capacities – lucky for us!

Barb Forderhase served on the board for these past three years. Barb provided much support for GEAS by representing GEAS at different events, bringing raptors and owls into the classrooms to educate children and young adults and offering good suggestions in our long GEAS strategy sessions

Heidi Ware also served on the board for these past three years and played valuable roles as secretary and also chair of the Education Committee this past year. Heidi also created our GEAS Facebook page, which has been a big success, and we are thankful that she will continue to update our Facebook page for us. She also spent many hours volunteering at events and our annual banquet. She has led many family bird walks and birding trips up to Lucky Peak. She also provided valuable input in all of our strategic plan sessions and in all of our board discussions. Heidi plans to volunteer on the Banquet Committee and to continue volunteering leading family bird walks and other birding trips up to Lucky Peak. Please give a big thank you to Pam, Barb and Heidi for all of their contributions! We will miss their presence on the board!

I would also like to give much gratitude to all of our members who participated in this past election. Four new directors will be serving on the board: Maria Minicucci, Lindsay Reynolds, Gerrie Satz and Lew Ulrey. I know that they will have much to contribute to GEAS, and I am looking forward to working with them. Please give them a big welcome the next time you see them.

Michele Crist
President

GEAS CALENDAR

July-August 2014

Field Trip: Prairie Blue Bird Trail	July 12
Family Birding Walk	July 13
Field Trip: Avimor Bird Walk	July 19
GEAS Monthly meeting	July 22
Greenbelt Litter Patrol & Birding	July 27
Event: Kokanee Outdoor Day	August 9
Field Trip: Idaho Bird Observatory	August 16
Field Trip: Avimor Bird Walk	August 23
GEAS Monthly Meeting	August 26
Field Trip: Idaho Bird Observatory	August 30
Greenbelt Litter Patrol & Birding	August 31

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Michele Crist, President mrcgoldeneagle@gmail.com	863-1918
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Leah Dunn ldboise@gmail.com	
Liz Urban urbanhawk137@gmail.com	629-2146
Terry Rich amphispiza@gmail.com	
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Levi Mohler (Honorary, Deceased)	

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Website: Rod Smith	859-3298
Historian: Jennifer Robbins-Smith	threehappycampers@hotmail.com 859-3298
Webmaster Harold Ward	geas@seeboise.com 338-7015

OUT THE KITCHEN WINDOW

By Hilda Larson

We are running some of Hilda Larson's past columns and selections from her columns in appreciation of the observations she wrote about over the years. We are going to begin running columns by some of our members also. If you would like to submit a column about birds or issues related to birding, please submit it to Niels Nokkentved, editor of the The Golden Eagle at sparre47@gmail.com.

June 1996

On a cold, wet day in May, Al and I were monitoring the bluebird nest boxes at Prairie. Near the end of the trail and the day, Al found a nest covered with material that appeared to be what a rodent would use. According to Al's records there should have been one- to two-day-old bluebird nestlings in the box. He removed the nest and upon examining it discovered three tiny, cold bluebird babies under the new material.

At first they appeared dead, but he noticed a slight movement, so we turned the heater on in the truck and cuddled the naked little things in our hands. After a while they began to move a little and make feeble attempts at raising their heads a little for something to eat.

Since the parents had evidently abandoned them we sought out other solutions. Having no way of feeding them, Al looked through his records to find a box with babies approximately the same age. Then we drove back several miles and put them in a nest already well filled with baby mountain bluebirds and two eggs still to hatch. A pair of industrious parents waited nearby.

On the 29th of May, Al returned to find a nest of bustling birds too young to band, so he did not disturb them to get a count of the beaks. On the 4th of June we found eight healthy babies who now have identification bands on their legs. One egg did not hatch, or there would have been

nine in a 4-inch by 5-inch space. Momma and Poppa bluebird are to be commended.

June 2000

The bluebirds are doing well, with not as many casualties as last year. Al has been kept busy traveling from one end of the area to the other.

Several parties have gone out with him for the day and enjoyed themselves and learned about the birds. The children, especially, seem to learn about nature in a new way. Perhaps we have some future ornithologists in the making.

As Al approached one box, a weasel poked its head out instead of a bird. It was reluctant to leave, so Al took some photographs. The nest was not disturbed, and there was no sign of any remains of birds. We don't know whether the weasel made meals of the birds or was just investigating.



Volunteer News

There are quite a few people to thank for their volunteer efforts.

Thank you to Terry Rich for his presentation on his trip to Namibia last year.

Thank you to the Bird by Bird Team that made a presentation at our May board meeting.

We thank the following folks for leading field trips. Al Larsen led a trip to

Montour WMA and Sagehen Reservoir, John Shortis and Gary Worthington led trips at the Boise Watershed for Earthday, Kathy Barker-McCoy for her Wednesday Morning Club, and Scott Tuthill for trips at the Crane Creek Golf Course on Monday mornings. If you'd like to lead a trip or have an idea for a trip, contact Pam Conley at 208-869-0337 or pam_conley@q.com.

Thank you to the following bluebird lovers for driving Al around on the bluebird trails and helping him out: Jimmy Yorgensen, Cathy Eells, Cheryl Huizinga, Matt Podolsky, Neil Paprocki, Letty Percifield, Jim Holcomb, Dave Hazelton, Nancy McCullough, Peggy Williams, Liz Urban, Boyd Steele, Kristin Gnojewski and Pam Conley. As you can see it takes a lot of folks to keep up with the Bluebird Man.

Volunteers are needed for the following events:

Kokanee Days, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Saturday, August 9.

Bluebird Trail Drivers-helpers Needed. Pam Conley, the Bluebird Dispatcher, is looking for volunteers to drive Al Larson around on his bluebird trails this season. A

vehicle with good clearance is preferable. GEAS will reimburse you for your fuel costs or you can donate it to the cause. Drivers are needed one or two days a week, especially when the little bluebirds are close to fledging. Contact Pam at 208-869-0337 or pam_conley@q.com and she will add you to her contact list. She will send out an email the week prior to line up drivers for the following week.

Thanks go to the following people for their work on the newsletter: Niels Nokkentved, Jessica Pasden, Ann Swanson, Susan Hazelton, Suzanne Woodcock and Sue Norton.

On May 10, we had a group of folks who helped out at the International Migratory Bird Day at the M.K. Nature Center. Bruce Ackerman, new member Renee Mahler, Sue Norton, Liz Urban, Dianne Miller, RL Rowland, Jennifer Robins-Smith and Gerrie Satz.

GEAS depends on all of its volunteers to accomplish its mission. Step up to the task of offering just a little time and effort to help us grow and meet our goals.

Gerrie Satz
Volunteer Coordinator
208-473-2650



Egret

Photo by Bob Ellis

GEAS EVENTS for July and August

Field trip information is subject to change. Please check the website <http://www.goldeneagleaudubon.org> and go to the Calendar and Field Trips section for the latest information or contact Pam Conley at 869-0337 or pam_conley@q.com

Field Trip Etiquette: We set up car pools to take as few cars as possible, while making sure everyone has a window. Please give the driver of your ride gas money and arrive 10 minutes early.

IBO Hummingbird Banding Project

Dates: July 12, July 26, August 9, August 23

Time: About 7:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Location: Idaho City area

Contact: Jessica Pollock jessicapollock@boisestate.edu 208-426-2225. To attend one of these hummingbird banding sessions please contact Jessica. Space is limited.

Wednesday Morning Club – July & August 2014

Time: 8 a.m.

Location: Janjou Patisserie (best croissants in Boise, the old Moxie Java in the strip mall northwest of State and 17th).

Contact: Kathy Barker McCoy, h- 384-1205 c- 921-1340

Wednesday Morning Club continues into the summer. Come join us for some great nature adventures. Check our online calendar for dates and potential destinations.

Saturday, July 12

Field Trip: Prairie Bluebird Trail

Time: 7:45 a.m.

Location: BLM Office, 3948 Development Ave., Boise

Trip Leader: Al Larson

Contact: Pam Conley 869-0337 pam_conley@Q.com

Meet at the BLM parking lot at 7:45 a.m. to set up carpools. Al will share with us his expertise and love for the Bluebirds along his trail. This should also be a good time for finding the bobolinks near Prairie. Varied habitats, beautiful scenery, and many of Idaho's breeding birds – all in one trip. Bring lunch, water, a lawn chair (for lunch), and sun protection for an all day trip. Restrooms are available at Willow Creek and Prairie.

Sunday, July 13

Family Birding Walk - Especially for children or the child in you.

Time: 9 a.m.

Location: Kathryn Albertson Park parking lot, 1001 N.

Americana Blvd., Boise

Contact: Pam Conley 869-0337 pam_conley@q.com

We will walk the paved loop around the park looking for geese, ducks, and herons on the water, as well as songbirds in the brush. Bring the whole family, especially the young ones. We go over the basics of using binoculars. We have binoculars and field guides you can borrow. Sign up the kids in our Frequent Flyer Club where they earn rewards for birding. We finish at 11 a.m.

Saturday, July 19

Avimor Bird Walk

Time: 8 a.m. - noon

Location: Meet on Avimor Dr off Hwy 55.

Contact: Robert Mortensen birdingisfun@gmail.com

Walk through the hillsides surrounding the Avimor neighborhood.

Tuesday, July 22

GEAS Monthly meeting- Fred Bassett, Hummingbird banding

Time: 7 p.m.

Location: M.K. Nature Center, 600 S Walnut., Boise.

Fred Bassett is a certified master bird bander who has been researching hummingbirds for twenty years. He lives in Montgomery, Alabama, in the winter, and visits Boise in the summer. During the winter, he studies hummingbirds in the Southeast states, and each summer he bands for three months in the Northwest, banding all along the way at numerous sites from Florida to Idaho. Bassett is the president of the non-profit organization Hummingbird Research Inc. He has banded more than 20,000 hummingbirds, and findings from his research have been published in the Journal of Field Ornithology and other national publications. He will present his research about the four species of hummingbirds that breed in Idaho and introduce other species of hummingbirds that may be seen in the state. He will also discuss his continuing research in other areas of the United States. Come learn more about these tiny, long distance migrants.

Sunday, July 27

Boise River Greenbelt Bird Watching & Litter Patrol

Time: 9 a.m.

Location: Meet in the Greenbelt parking lot behind the Tavern at Bown Crossing (near east end of Park Center Blvd.)

Contact: Pam Conley 869-0337 pam_conley@q.com

We will walk downriver from the bridge at Bown Crossing, birding as we go, and pick up litter on our way back. We usually finish around noon. Bring gloves, water, & binocs. No public restrooms available.

Saturday, August 9

Kokanee Outdoor Day

Time: 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Idaho City Road Trip. GEAS will host the first stop on the road trip on Hwy. 21 at milepost 20. Then work your way toward Idaho City with fun and interesting stops along the way. Check our on-line calendar at www.goldeneagleaudubon.org for info.

Saturday, August 16

Idaho Bird Observatory

Time: 7:30 a.m.

Location: Meet at Hilltop Cafe on Hwy 21

Trip Leader: TBD

Contact: Pam Conley 869-0337 pam_conley@q.com

Half-day trip to observe migrating passerines and watch the observatory staff mist netting and banding these small migrants. A four-wheel drive, high clearance vehicle is recommended to navigate the road to the banding station at Lucky Peak. We meet at the old Kodiak Grill (Hilltop Café) and carpool to the top. Be sure to bring snacks and water. Dress for wind, sun, and capricious weather. Be sure to bring a little extra cash to buy an IBO tee-shirt or hat and support this great project.

Saturday, August 23

Avimor Bird Walk

Time: 9 a.m. - noon

Location: Meet on Avimor Dr off State Highway 55.

Contact: Robert Mortensen birdingisfun@gmail.com

Walk through the hillsides surrounding the Avimor neighborhood.

Tuesday, August 26

GEAS Monthly meeting-Slide Show on Birding in Cuba,

e-Birding Can Help Provide Data on Rare and Uncommon Birds

By Jay Carlisle

The Idaho Bird Conservation Partnership is hoping that many birders can help by eBirding their sightings of some selected species for which partner organizations need additional distributional information.

We've drawn up a list of species that we could especially use continuing and additional data – some are quite rare or limited in distribution, such that we don't expect many new registries. Others are more widespread but more complete information is desired. Please see the list below and, anyone so inclined, report sightings on eBird. (I know many are already doing this so kudos and thanks!)

For anyone not already an eBird user, I highly recommend it (there are many tutorials can be found on Google, but the [eBird](#) link is a good start). One additional benefit of eBird is that it allows data sharing with agencies such as Idaho Fish and Game, so once checklists have been submitted, they are accessible by Fish and Game and other partners. Still not convinced? The next best bet will be to report observations to Fish and Game by using the IFWIS online observation form to submit one-time sightings (<https://fishandgame.idaho.gov/species/node/add/observation>).

For researchers who instead have entire data sets to submit,

start with this summary page: <https://fishandgame.idaho.gov/ifwis/portal/blog/new-observations-and-survey-upload-form> or try contacting the IFWIS folks (“contact us” link at bottom of page) with any questions.

Here's the species list:

- Harlequin Duck
- Black Swift
- Bobolink - especially in suspected breeding areas (likely late May to early July)
- Black Rosy-finch
- Upland Sandpiper (might be a slim chance given how rare this species has become but worth a real effort in historical “strongholds”)
 - Especially Valley County in Round Valley, High Valley and the Donnelly/Roseberry area.
 - If anyone is going to search for this species, please let me know so I can coordinate/keep track of efforts; “negative data” (unsuccessful searches) are just as important to know about. I can provide additional details about likely areas to search, and I suggest combining a search with some playback – likely best shot between late May and early July.
- Spruce Grouse
- Nightjars (Common Nighthawk and Common Poorwill)
- A few grassland species:
 - Long-billed Curlew
 - Short-eared Owl
 - Burrowing Owl
- A few pinyon/juniper/mountain mahogany species:
 - Gray Flycatcher
 - Pinyon Jay
 - Juniper Titmouse
 - Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
 - Virginia's Warbler

For some of the species lower down on the list (more widespread and/or frequently observed), I want to emphasize that we really are interested in any and all observations. I know some birders are most excited about, for example, the first curlew of the year but maybe less likely to record or report to eBird all subsequent sightings (I admit that I sometimes fall into this category), but any observations of these species in Idaho will be useful to us.

Lastly, if this list looks daunting to anyone who is thinking: “I can't help with all of those!” Worry not! We understand that the combined range of these species spans the full extent of Idaho but that only a subset occurs in most regions. Thus, we're not asking anyone to take special trips on our account – just anyone seeing these species while they are out and about, we'd love it if they share. And anyone interested in taking additional outings in search of these species – go for it! Thanks for your interest and happy birding.

Jay Carlisle, Research Director, Intermountain Bird Observatory Research Assistant Faculty, Department of Biological Sciences, Boise State University; Coordinator, Idaho Bird Conservation Partnership, IBCP on Facebook http://works.bepress.com/jay_carlisle/

Field Trips, Continued

Time: 7 p.m.

Location: M.K. Nature Center, 600 S Walnut., Boise

Pat Weber and Cheryl Huizinga will give a presentation on their recent adventure to Cuba in March 2014 with 14 other Idaho birders sponsored by Intermountain Bird Observatory. Through photos and stories, they will tell about the endemic bird species found in Cuba and about Cuban people, their history and culture

Saturday, August 30

Idaho Bird Observatory

Time: 7:30 a.m.

Location: Meet at Hilltop Cafe on Hwy 21

Trip Leader: TBD

Contact: Pam Conley 869-0337 pam_conley@q.com

Half-day trip to observe migrating passerines and watch the observatory staff mist netting and banding these small migrants. A four-wheel-drive, high-clearance vehicle is recommended to navigate the road to the banding station at Lucky Peak. We meet at the old Kodiak Grill (Hilltop Café) and carpool to the top. Be sure to bring snacks and water. Dress for wind, sun, and capricious weather. Be sure to bring a little extra cash to buy an IBO tee-shirt or hat and support this great project.

Sunday, August 31

Boise River Greenbelt Bird Watching & Litter Patrol

Time: 9 a.m.

Location: Meet in the Greenbelt parking lot behind the Tavern at Bown Crossing (near east end of Park Center Blvd.)

Contact: Pam Conley 869-0337 pam_conley@q.com

We will walk downriver from the bridge at Bown Crossing, birding as we go, and pick up litter on our way back. We usually finish around noon. Bring gloves, water & binocs. No public restrooms available.

Donors of Goods and Services to the 2014 Banquet and Auction

GEAS is grateful to the following businesses and individuals who donated goods and services to the 2014 banquet and auction.

Deb Abbott
Bruce Ackerman
Alavita Italian Restaurant
Shelley & Tick Axtell
Spike Baker
Betsy Balch
Basque Market
Sandy Beebe
Bird House & Habitat
Bleubird Café
Boise Coop Wine Shop
Brandtastic Soil
Bronze Antler
Bobbie Buchanan
Susan Caldwell
Carol Casler
Central Valley Joint Venture
Susan Chaloupka
Chocolat Bar
Don Clark
Pam Conley
Jill Cooper
Erica Craig
Michele Crist
Ann DeBolt
Downtown Hound
Deb Eisinger

Sean Finn
Barbara Forderhase
Fred Meyer
Great Basin Bird Observatory
Grey Fox Studio
Charlotte Gunn
Steve Hanser
Vanessa Hanser
Leslie Harrison
Dave & Susan Hazelton
Julie Heath
Michelle Heckman
Danette Henderson
Idaho Bird Observatory
Idaho Public TV
Idaho Shakespeare Festival
Intermountain Gas
Susan Lowman Thomas
Kay Magee
Terry & Louise Maley
Jessica McCabe
Tom McCabe
Nancy McCullough
Matt & Kathy McCoy
Robin Miller
Maria Minicucci
Clyde Morgan
Mike Morrison
Nails by PJ
Corliss Neuber
Sue Norton

Deb Parliman
Patagonia Casitas
Payette Brewing Company
Estelle & Frank Peak
Mike & Brenda Puchalski
Red Lion Downtowner
REI
Terry Rich
Larry Ridenhour
Bryce Robinson
Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory
Doug Rose
Jan Rush
Alexander Sapiens
Gerrie Satz
Mary Schofield
David Scott
Bessie Skinner
Solutions for Bird Conservation
Southwest Airlines
Sun Valley Resorts
Ann Swanson
The Flicks
The Peregrine Fund
Lew Ulrey
Liz Urban
Heidi Ware
Wild Birds Unlimited
Suzanne Woodcock
Poo Wright Pulliam
Andrea Zollweg

Good news for birders

As of 1 May 2014 the Ada Co. Landfill now has a “Birdwatcher” ticket that allows free entry into the landfill for the purpose of “birding only.”

Just tell the friendly folks at the entry/ weigh-in kiosk that you are there for birdwatching and are bringing no trash. They may or may not ask, anyway, if you are bringing anything in, but they will check you; it is their job. You will then be issued a ticket with “Birdwatcher” printed on it. Don’t lose it, you’ll need it to leave.

There is a barcode on the ticket and a reader on the the exit scale that will allow the ticket holder through. Upon driving off the scale, turn the ticket in at the kiosk, the last gate will be raised and you’re off.

The folks that manage the landfill are birder friendly and this free “Birdwatcher” entry ticket is a privilege that can be taken away if abused. Please play nicely. Thank You and Good Birding. RL Rowland



Eared grebes

Photo by Bob Ellis

Catowners Can Make a Difference: Keep Those Felines Indoors

By Crista Videriksen

In early 2013, a study concluded that cats kill an estimated 1.4 to 3.7 billion birds, and 6.9 to 20.7 billion mammals each year within the continental U.S.

Published in *Nature*, the findings are part of a three-year effort to estimate the number of birds killed by predators, chemicals and in collisions with wind generators and windows, conducted by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the Smithsonian's Conservation Biology Institute. While it's true that feral or "unowned" cats kill the most, pet cats are responsible for a sizable percentage of the toll. Cats will hunt even when not hungry; it's simply what they do. Cats have become, in ecological terms, an invasive species, and pet cats are subsidized hunters. These statistics should concern any bird lover.

But the concern goes further: like many bird enthusiasts, I also happen to love cats. And letting a cat roam outdoors is generally bad for the cat.

Outdoor cats are subjected to death and disease. They can be hit by vehicles, killed by coyotes or dogs, attacked by other cats – which often results in an abscess – harassed by people or get lost. That is why the Humane Society says the average outdoor cat lives three to four years. Sure, there are exceptions. But the statistics overwhelmingly show that letting a cat out is likely to drastically shorten its life. Statistics are available from the Idaho Human Society.

In 1981, I worked as a veterinary assistant and was given a kitten by a client. Having seen a parade of cats with injuries from cars and other cats, I was not about to let my sweet kitten out. "Buns" stayed inside, got more love and attention than you can imagine and lived to be almost 19 years old.

Letting a cat out is also not very neighborly. Dogs are easily contained within fenced yards, but not cats. They simply hop fences and proceed into neighbor's yards, where they often dig up gardens and leave dead animals. Most people would never allow their dog to roam in their neighbor's yard, but they don't think that way about a cat. Some cat owners don't want to maintain a litter

box in their house, so they let their cat out to do its business, never considering that "business" is being foisted upon their neighbors. While it's true we don't have a leash law for cats, in Ada County and most others, any domestic animal that enters another person's property is legally trespassing and can legally be brought to an animal shelter.

Where I live in Hidden Springs, our town manager sent a letter to all residents every year, asking them to keep pet cats inside for the health of the cats and to protect the abundant wildlife around the neighborhood. Still, I noticed collared pet cats wandering daily.

Last year one of them began hunting in my yard and was soon killing a bird almost every day and leaving it for me to clean up. I tried chasing him off. I bought cat repellent for the yard. Next, I picked him up, called the phone number on his collar and left polite and complete messages for his owners with my name and contact info. I left notes on their door. Still, every day the cat returned, and I got no response from the owners.

The town manager issued a violation. Still no response. I'd find a dead quail on the lawn covered in hornets and have to wait until after dark to clean it up. Finally I contacted the Humane Society to see if they had

any suggestions. They urged me to bring the cat in. I left another note for the owners. Still no response.

Finally, after months of no responses, I picked up the friendly cat, and we made the drive with him purring in the car the whole way. I handed him over, along with complete contact info for his owners and myself. Before I left I checked on him as he lay peacefully in a cage. I made sure that if the owners didn't come and pick him up, that I would be contacted. I didn't want him harmed. The owners did pick him up but not before having to pay a fine, have him vaccinated, and finally hear from the Humane Society, why it is important for all cat owners to take responsibility for their pets. Since it is almost impossible to contain a cat within a yard, it's best to keep it inside.

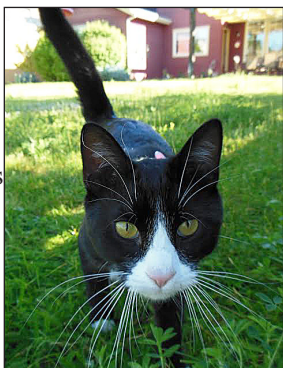
I felt bad, but I had tried for months to get the owners to act on their own.

The town manager was supportive, and we sent out more letters to residents, explaining the wildlife-killing issues, the cat-health issues, the legal issues, and the neighborliness issues. And you know what? It worked. Since last summer, I have seen exactly one wandering cat. This neighborhood has always been very conscientious about dogs. I believe most of our cat owners simply hadn't really thought about these issues with regard to their cats. Once it was pointed out to them, that's what they did – think. The people here care about wildlife. They value open space. Many of them have National Wildlife Federation "Certified Backyard Habitat" signs on their front lawns.

Encouraged by this success, I wrote an op-ed on the subject of outdoor cats for a small national conservation magazine. Many of the initial comments from cat lovers chastised me, but in the months that followed I received many more comments from people who agreed that cats belong indoors. A few months later I saw another op-ed on the subject in the *New York Times Sunday Magazine*. Even more encouragingly, almost all the comments on that op-ed were positive. As the *Times* writer said, I believe we are on the verge of bringing a new awareness of this subject. Someday soon, maybe letting your cat out will be looked upon the way we now look at letting your dog poop on someone's lawn without cleaning it up, or smoking in someone's office without asking.

The National Wildlife Federation, Audubon Society and other conservation organizations encourage all Americans to provide food, water and shelter to birds and other wildlife. Even people with small yards or just a window box can make a difference. Climate change, habitat destruction, toxic chemicals, high-rise buildings, and many other human-caused events have made survival difficult for many species. They need all the help they can get.

Most people don't allow their dogs loose to poop or cause trouble in their neighbor's yard, or get lost, injured, or killed by a car. What's the difference with a cat? It's time to start taking responsibility for all our pets. One person alone can't solve the problem of feral cats, but they alone can solve the problem of their cat.



A Letter to the Ada County Planning & Zoning Commission

Dear Commissioners:

We write this letter in strong opposition to the rezoning of this parcel from residential to commercial and the Conditional Use Permit for a Sporting Clay Shooting Range at 2730 East Kuna-Mora Road (Parcel #: S1631325400; File Number: 201400682-CU-MSP). The location of the proposed range is completely inappropriate as it sits in between two residences and abuts a nationally recognized bird conservation area that Ada County has recommended as a regional park/preserve. Moreover, the Master Site Plan Application submitted by Briggs Engineering, Inc. neglects to even mention the most serious impact the proposed Shooting Range could have to the area – the addition of unlimited and unaccountable amounts of lead into public waters.

The first and foremost concern about the location applied for is safety. The neighbors on both sides of the proposed range are highly concerned about their safety and well-being. I recognize that Briggs Engineering, Inc. and their client, PRGW and Associates LLC, have expressed in addendums to the Master Site Plan a safety process intended to minimize the risk of a mishap. Yet we also know that firearm accidents happen all too often, and that often, those accidents and mistakes cannot be taken back. Permitting this range between two long-standing, full time residences will egregiously impact the lives of those families. They won't be able to leave their own house during daylight hours except under the fear and angst generated by Range staff and patrons. Just imagine such a facility going in next door to your house. The constant noise of gunfire would be your least concern – you'd be worried that you, your family, pets, or livestock could be struck by stray lead at any moment.

The permit attempts to justify this location by citing the two shooting ranges on Kuna-Mora Road (inaccurately referenced as "several"). Yet those ranges are positioned and situated to control the downrange risk. The Blacks Creek Public Shooting Range is no closer than 295 yards from the nearest property boundary. All shooting is highly controlled and occurs in the opposite direction from any residences. The Boise Gun Club's nearest residential neighbor is about 550

yards away from the range where, again, shooting is highly managed and directed away from housing. At the proposed Sporting Clay Range, 75% of the Phase 1 development is closer than 250 yards to a neighboring house and, according to the Plan addendum, "the course designer is not limited by ... angle or distance," and the "targets ... introduce illusion of speed and distance." All this suggests a tight shooting space with less control of the targets. It's inappropriate for the close proximity of houses.

The proposed sporting range abuts Blacks Creek Bird Reserve, a nationally recognized Important Bird Area as identified by Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) and National Audubon Society (<http://web4.audubon.org/bird/iba/>). The Reserve is home to over 150 bird species year-around; 13 species (Clark's grebe, greater scaup, northern pintail, snowy plover, American golden-plover, long-billed curlew, Swainson's hawk, short-eared owl, loggerhead shrike, lark sparrow, horned lark, Brewer's sparrow, and sage sparrow) are Species of Greatest Conservation Need according to IDFG. Regular discharge of shotguns – especially during the bird hunting "off-season", when the proposal indicates use will be highest – will disturb these birds, potentially even discouraging them from breeding. This is unacceptable and might be construed as in violation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act as it serves as a form of harassment. Furthermore, the Ada County Open Space Task Force (http://www.idahosmartgrowth.org/images/uploads/files/ostf_report_v7_04-19-08_final.pdf) identified Blacks Creek Reservoir as a "Jewel in the Desert" that, "could provide public recreation" (page 30) and should be designated a, "regional open space park/preserve" (page 31). Considering that county, state, and national entities designate Blacks Creek Reservoir as something special, surely there are much better locations for a Sporting Clay Range in the Treasure Valley and along Kuna-Mora Road.

Finally, the proposal makes no consideration of the fate of discharged lead shot resulting from target shooting. Problems with lead toxicity are well-documented in terms of human health and the potential to impact water quality (<http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/>

[massdep/toxics/sources/lead-shot-harmful-effects.html](#)). Presumably a portion of the shot will take place over Blacks Creek canyon which, at the discretion of the Pleasant Valley Irrigation District, delivers water to downstream users. Lead reacts more readily and becomes more mobile under alkaline conditions like the soils in that area. So PRGW and Associates LLC and Briggs Engineering, Inc. are proposing to concentrate a toxic substance onto volatile soils and adjacent to surface water being delivered to downstream users. The whole concept is a non-starter and should not be approved by the Ada County Planning & Zoning Commission.

We oppose granting this change in zoning and the permit based on concerns about human safety, protecting open space, wildlife protection, human health, and plain old logic. Parcel #: S1631325400 is not the right place for a shotgun range. Please do the right thing and deny Conditional Use Permit 201400682-CU.

Thank you, Golden Eagle Audubon Society

(Ada County Planning and Zoning is considering a proposed clay shooting range near Blacks Creek. GEAS members are urged to send a letter to the Commission or attend the Planning and Zoning hearing at 6 p.m. July 10, at 200 W. Front St, Boise in room 1235. For questions contact Sean Finn at a.gentilis@gmail.com.)

Board, Officer Election Results

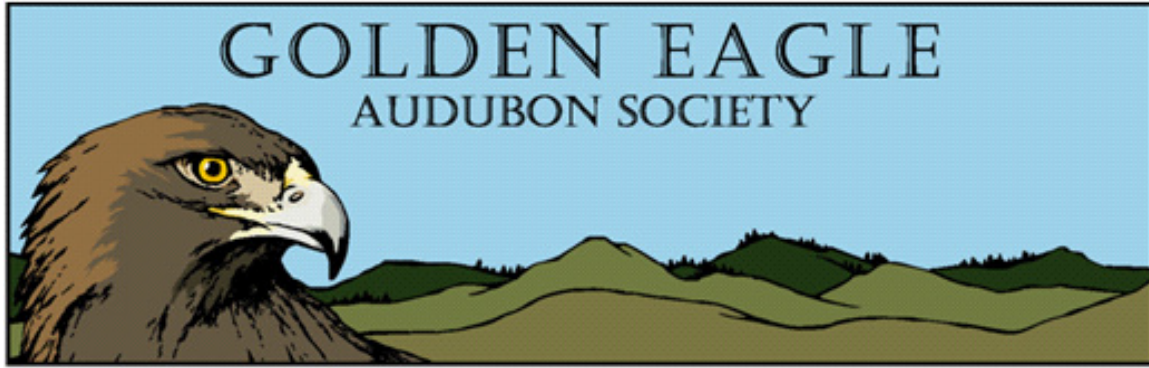
GEAS welcomes the newly elected members to the Board of Directors:

- Maria Minicucci
- Lindsay Reynolds
- Gerrie Satz
- Lew Ulrey

We look forward to working together to continue moving GEAS forward, as it wouldn't be possible without the commitment of our volunteer officers, board members and committee members.

Officers are:

- Michele Crist, president.
- Bruce Ackerman, vice president.
- Suzanne Woodcock, treasurer.
- Sue Norton, secretary.



P.O. Box 8261 Boise, ID 83707 www.goldeneagleaudubon.org

Small Grants Available from Golden Eagle Audubon Society

Starting in 2014, Golden Eagle Audubon Society (GEAS) will begin accepting applications for small grants. Grants to individuals or nonprofit organizations will be awarded for projects that directly benefit wildlife or their habitats in Idaho, or consist of bird-related educational goals. We highly encourage projects that focus on non-game species, but will consider game species applications.

This document serves as notice of availability of funds for the 2014-2015 fiscal year. In following years, the announcement of funds will be available on the GEAS website in early July, and in our July/August and January/February newsletters.

Grant applications may be submitted at any time, but proposals will generally be reviewed TWICE a year. The GEAS Grants and Awards Committee will review all applications, and final decisions will be voted on by the Board at either the January or July board meetings. For proposals to be considered for the next review period, applications must be received at least 30 days prior to the next Board meeting at which voting on grants is scheduled (December and June). Candidates may be contacted by the committee in the interim for more information. Proposals will be scored based on a rubric (which will be available on the website shortly).

Proposals should follow these guidelines:

- Because of limited resources, the Board anticipates awarding multiple grants generally less than \$500.
- Applications should follow the form provided by GEAS (found at www.goldeneagleaudubon.org), with the entire proposal being a maximum of two pages.
- In addition to the grant proposal, candidates should submit a letter of reference regarding your ability to complete the stated project.
- Successful applicants must agree to submit a report on the status of the project and how the funds were used within 1 year of receiving funds.

Proposals must be submitted by email to the Grant and Awards Committee Chair (Liz Urban, urbanhawk137@gmail.com).

Please share this notice with others who might be interested. Thanks!

On the Bluebird Trails

By Al Larson

All of the fire damaged nest boxes have been replaced on the Prairie Bluebird Trail.

Of those 39 boxes, 27 have already been used by bluebirds, one by a house wren, and 11 were still vacant May 31. With warm weather in the forecast, most of the remaining boxes should show some activity soon.

Nesting activity at Prairie started off fairly early, and then came a series of storms and cold weather. Production stopped. Eggs were lost. A few mountain bluebirds managed to save their early start. Recently things seem to be getting back on track. Birds are busy again.

The Owyhee trail has been more successful. One nest of birds was old enough to band April 25. We've been busy banding nestlings every trip since. On one very busy day, we banded 118 individuals, nestlings and adult females.

Normally peak banding occurs in the second week of June. This Spring we have already banded 430 mountain bluebirds and seven western bluebirds mostly before the end of May. With this early success there should be a greater number of second broods than normal. We shall see.

A special thanks goes out to all of you who gave your time and shared your vehicles to take me out to monitor these nest boxes. We all make a great team.



Al Larson on the Blue Bird Trail. Photo by Neil Paprocki-Wildlens Inc.

The Golden Eagle Audubon Society publishes *The Golden Eagle* six times a year.

- Please help us save paper and mailing costs; if you would like to receive your newsletter online, send your name and zip code in an e-mail to membership@goldeneagleaudubon.org.
- For membership/subscription information, renewals, or change of address, e-mail membership@goldeneagleaudubon.org.
- For newsletter submissions, send an e-mail to Niels S. Nokkentved at sparre47@gmail.com. The deadline for newsletter submissions is the second Sunday of the month.

We invite you to join our organization. Please choose **one** of the options below:

Join the National Audubon Society

Please enroll me as a member of the National Audubon Society and my local chapter. I will receive the Audubon Magazine and The Golden Eagle. (National membership includes local membership.)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

E-Mail: _____ Phone: _____

Introductory offer for the first year: \$20

Senior or student offer for first year: \$15

Make check payable to National Audubon Society and mail to: National Audubon Society, PO Box 422250, Palm Coast, FL 32142-2250.

Chapter Code: C2ZG000Z

Join the Golden Eagle Audubon Chapter

My membership in the local chapter includes a one-year subscription to The Golden Eagle. I understand that my dues remain with the local chapter and support its activities. (Local membership only.)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

E-Mail: _____ Phone: _____

Please enroll me in the local chapter only for a cost of \$15.

Please send my newsletter via e-mail.

Please mail my newsletter to me.

I would like to donate an additional \$ _____

Make check payable to Golden Eagle Audubon Society and mail to: Golden Eagle Audubon Society, PO Box 8261, Boise, ID 83707.

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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www.goldeneagleaudubon.org