



The Golden Eagle

Newsletter of the Golden Eagle Audubon Society

Summer 2019

Summer is here, and birds are everywhere and getting in trouble

By Crista Videriksen Worthy

Summer is here! Bountiful May rains brought a bumper crop of yellow arrowleaf balsamroot flowers in the Boise Foothills, along with long, waving, green grasses. The air is fresh and every time I top another hill, I hear the call of the meadowlark. I have never seen lazuli buntings in our yard except during the month of May. This year, we had dozens of these gorgeous creatures on and beneath our feeders for several weeks. Come the first of June, they inexplicably vanished again. A male black-headed grosbeak that had been a regular visitor also departed by late May.

I am always amazed at how birds can be found just about everywhere. We recently visited Walla Walla, and on the way home, pulled off Interstate 84 to switch drivers somewhere in the canyon between Weatherby and Lime, Oregon. I glanced up a dirt road and saw two tom wild turkeys strolling up the road, less than 100 yards from the highway. Toms frequently pair up like this to parade in front of a hen, but if a hen was present, she was out of sight.

If you get out onto the sagebrush plains or sandy culverts this year before it gets too hot, see if you can spot any burrowing owls. These diminutive raptors breed in southern Idaho, but they're hard to spot. When I was a student at UC San Diego in the late 1970s, I saw them regularly in the wide expanse between the campus and the Miramar Naval Air Station. Then a large shopping mall and thousands of condominiums were put up and the owls, along with the gray foxes, vanished. This story is being replayed across burrowing owl habitat nationwide.

Fortunately, these adorable little owls are finding new places to eke out a living. One of them is just off the west end of the runways at Los Angeles International Airport. "No Trespassing" signs and hurricane fences surround the LAX Dunes Preserve, which has become a haven for some of the rarest creatures in California. Scientists recently counted 10 burrowing owls in the

302-acre preserve, the most seen here in four decades. Biologist Pete Bloom commented that for wintering owls, this tiny chunk of land has become priceless coastal real estate.

The preserve is just one small fragment of a dune system that once stretched along the Pacific Coast from Point Conception, west of Santa Barbara, to Mexico. It's also home to federally endangered El Segundo blue butterflies, whose numbers were in steep decline due to habitat loss. Today, thousands of blues flutter over robust stands of buckwheat during certain times of the year.

Other species on the rebound in the isolated dunes include native evening primroses and California gnatcatchers. A recent survey of the federally protected bird found three pairs and six juveniles. Invasive weeds have been removed, along with voracious feral cats that can decimate burrowing owl populations.

Another owl that will soon benefit from human intervention is the barn owl. United Airlines, a company that got its start in Boise, Idaho, launched its "Raptor Relocation" program in Newark, New Jersey, in partnership with Audubon International. Beginning in 2017, it successfully relocated 80 birds, mostly American kestrels, away from Newark International Airport. Now

United will work to save barn owls that live near San Francisco International Airport and account for 13% of bird strikes there. The owls will be trapped and relocated to safer places, such as golf courses. Audubon International says that golf courses provide high vantage points with open views across the fairways and plenty of nesting space for the birds, which also help rid the golf course of rodents and insects.

Meanwhile, on June 5 of this year, a team of The Peregrine Fund's biologists marked a great conservation success when they banded their 500th young Aplomado falcon nestling in southern Texas since 1995. Quite an achieve-

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Burrowing owl on the beach near L.A. International

President's Message

By Liz Urban

Summer is officially here and although it may seem like a lull in bird diversity here at the lower elevations, our breeding birds and Golden Eagle Audubon Society continue to be busy even during these hotter months. It's hard to believe that birds like the long-billed curlew have already concluded trying to raise their young and have left for their non-breeding areas. It won't be long until many of our other long-distance migrants will be on their way.

Please join us in welcoming Jim Lyons as the new GEAS secretary. Jim brings years of history and passion to our chapter. He served as president and vice-president of GEAS in the 1980s and says that now that he is mostly retired he is looking forward to giving back to the community. We want to thank Libby Burtner for her service as the past secretary as she transitions to an at-large board position while she chairs both our small grants and awards committee and the newly formed advocacy committee. We also want to send a heartfelt thank you to outgoing board member Sue Norton. Sue has been an integral part of the board for many years and we will miss her insights and perspectives at future board meetings, and sincerely hope we will have the pleasure of her company at field trips and events for many years to come.

This newsletter is our chapter's first in the transition to a quarterly periodical. It is our goal to make this quarterly publication rich in content, curating meaningful articles that reflect many of the important efforts and issues that affect birds, wildlife, and our community. You can continue to find current and upcoming event and field trip information in our bi-weekly eNews and on our online calendar, found on the website. We have received some feedback that some folks enjoyed the calendar of events that was historically printed in the newsletter, and so we are happy to continue to provide that resource by attaching it to the eNews and making it available on our website to print at home.

Current members are also welcome to send us an email or letter if requesting to have the upcoming events printed and mailed to you. It is our hope that we can reduce the resources committed to printing and mailing, but we also want to ensure that all our members are able to receive information in the format that works best for them.

We are pleased to also make this Summer edition our first formal attempt at an annual report of the chapter's happenings, as our fiscal year concludes on May 31 each year. The goal in presenting this information to our members in this way is that it will provide a better understanding of what we are accomplishing as a volunteer organization. We have now had the contracted outreach and development associate position for a little over a year, and we hope that it has improved our communications, membership services, and impact in the community. We are proud of all the new approaches and efforts our chapter has undertaken during this time.

Thank you for your support as we transition into this new newsletter format. We hope you find this edition informative and to see you at a field trip, event, or meeting soon!



Aplomado falcon

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Chapter News:

By Terra Falconer

We are only half the way through 2019, but what a wonderful year Golden Eagle Audubon Society has had so far. As the Treasure Valley has continued to expand, so have the opportunities that GEAS has to offer. Check out some of the highlights!

Education and Outreach: It has been a busy spring for the education committee this year. From World Migratory Bird Day to World Refugee Day, GEAS volunteers have been working hard to engage our community to help build an appreciation and understanding of birds and the places they live. In 2019, Golden Eagle Audubon Society has attended more than 20 outreach events, educated more than 100 community members through our Intro to Birding courses, mentored an intern, and worked with a great number of partnering organizations. This spring we were thrilled to create an educational How Many Birds Do You Know? banner that has been a hit at many of our events. We are working on creating more events throughout the year to bring our members together such as our

Wings and Wine event this past spring.

Conservation: Our Conservation Committee has sprung into action with our new conservation chair, Matt McCoy. The committee will be working on important issues, such as bird friendly communities, the Native Plant Network, Bluebird Trail monitoring, Christmas Bird Counts, Climate Watch surveys, and nest box monitoring. Anyone interested in becoming involved with the conservation team, may email us at info@goldeneagleaudubon.org.

Advocacy: With the help of the Audubon in Action Grant from National Audubon Society, we have been building an effective conservation advocacy committee led by Libby Burtner. We are focused on planning for an Advocacy Training workshop later this year and becoming involved with important conservation issues in the community. Anyone who would like to become involved with our advocacy team, may email Libby Burtner at lburtner@goldeneagleaudubon.org.

Field Trips: From the Wednesday Morning Club to our monthly Bethine Church Nature Trail Bird Walks, GEAS has been able to offer just over 50 field trips this year so far. We have had field trips almost every week of the year, run by our amazing volunteers and field trip lead, Dondi Black. Anyone who has a favorite place to bird or would like to lead a field trip may contact Dondi Black at dondi@goldeneagleaudubon.org.

Honoring Al Larson: Our May monthly meeting was a special evening during which we were able to highlight the tremendous dedication that Al Larson has contributed to bluebirds and conservation over the years. A representative of the Supreme Master Ching Hai, who is a spiritual leader based in Asia, presented Al with the World Shining Leadership Award. Our members told stories of Al over the years and finished off the evening by watching the Bluebird Man Film by Wild Lens. Thank you to everyone who attended. Al is truly an inspiration to us all.

Volunteer News

A huge thank you to Al Larson for leading the well-attended bluebird field trips this spring. His gentle nature, kindness and generosity are appreciated by all.

Thank you to RL Rowland, Kathy Barker McCoy, Jim James, Kristin Gnojewski and Dondi Black for their dedication in leading field trips and sharing their love of birding with all of us.

A tremendous thank you to Debbie Erwin, April Dawson, Marie Whitworth, Libby Burner, Kathy Barker McCoy, Matt McCoy, Kimberle English, Kristin Gnojewski and our wonderful partners for helping to inspire our community through outreach events this year.

Thanks to the many partners as well as Liz Urban, Megan Jones, Jillian Hanson, Godefroid Ntawuyamara, Gretel Care, Troy Kemp, and Cathalee La for making this year's New Roots Program a success.

Our monthly programs have continued to be engaging and informative. Thank you to Alexander Sapiens for coordinating the speakers and Marian Herz for presenting in July.

Thanks also to Libby Burtner, Louise Maley, Dondi Black, Susan Hazelton,

and Sue Norton for their work on the newsletter. Last, but certainly not least, a huge thank you to Niels Nokkentved for his patience and persistence in creating the new quarterly newsletter

Thanks to the following for their contributions to the Native Plant Network and for promoting bird habitat restoration: Libby Adams, Jared Arp, Kim Bahruth, Dondi Black, Ben Brock, Heidi Ware Carlisle, Nadine Chaffee, Aaron Connolly, Alan Crockett, Amy Dodson, Sara Focht, Kristin Gnojewski, Colleen Greenwalt,

Lou Anne Gwartney, Annette Hanson, Erika Harmon, Arlene Hayward, Diane Jones & Draggin' Wing High Desert Nursery, Greg Kaltenecker, Kevin Laughlin, Helen Manny, Tricia Matthews, Vicki McGrane, Pat McGrane, Colleen Moulton, Karing Nial, Sue Norton, Carolyn O'Connell, John and Anne Olden, Molly O'Leary, Liz Paul, Dusty Perkins, Sandy Provant, Benita Putzier, Chris Roe, Jon Roundy, Klaudia Schaller, Lorna Snowden, Sandra Sweet, Terry Thompson, Suzanne Troje, and Bonnie Urresti.



A pileated woodpecker picks a carpenter ant out of a down log.

Photo by N.S. Nokkentved

GEAS picks banquet speaker for 2020

Golden Eagle Audubon Society is pleased to announce that the speaker for the March 21, 2020 annual banquet will be Lauren McGough. The title of her program is: "Life as a Mongolian Eagle Hunter and the Role of Falconry in Eagle Conservation."

McGough has been a licensed and practicing falconer since age 14. She has been particularly enamored with golden eagles as hunting partners, a unique branch of falconry that has only a handful of practitioners in the United States. After spending nearly two years as an exchange student in the United Kingdom and learning the strong European tradition of eagle falconry, she graduated from the University of Oklahoma with dual degrees in zoology and international studies.

In 2009, she was a Fulbright Scholar to Mongolia, where she apprenticed herself to local eagle masters and trained eagles for hunting foxes on horseback. She loved Kazakh eagle culture so much that she earned a doctorate in social anthropology from the University of St Andrews in Scotland.

Most of all, McGough has enjoyed bringing the eagle training techniques she's learned abroad back to her home country, where she teaches golden eagles in need of rehabilitation how to hunt on the great plains. The past two years she has also been using this technique to rehabilitate eagles in South Africa. Loving flight in all its forms, Lauren is an avid skydiver and is currently pursuing her private pilot's certificate.



Lauren McGough

McGough was profiled on CBS "Sixty Minutes" on October 21, 2018: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/lauren-mcgough-how-an-oklahoma-woman-learned-to-fly-like-an-eagle-in-mongolia-60-minutes/>.



Great horned owl

Continued from Page 1

ment when you consider that, prior to 1995, not a single wild Aplomado falcon had hatched in the United States since at least the 1950s. In the 1980s, Peregrine Fund biologists began reintroducing juvenile falcons bred in Boise at the World Center for Birds of Prey. By providing safe artificial nesting platforms and working with state agencies and landowners to manage habitat for better natural nesting sites, biologists have helped these beautiful raptors regain a claw-hold in the Southwest.

Enjoy your summer and bring your binoculars when you travel, because birds are indeed everywhere!

At Gowen Field in Boise during 2018, 32 wildlife strikes were reported at or below 1,500 feet over the course of 124,344 air carrier and general aviation aircraft movements. Five of these had adverse effects on the aircraft; we can assume all had adverse effects on the birds. The adverse effect strike total at the Boise airport during 2018 was 97 percent above the 5-year average, 256 percent above average for the region, and 205 percent above the average for the U.S. While this sounds pretty bad, I will note that the "adverse effects" strikes from 2014–2018 totaled just 12 birds: 3 gulls, 3 unknown birds, followed by one each of Canada goose, fox sparrow, unknown hawk, mallard, red-tailed hawk, and Townsend's solitaire.

GEAS announces Small Grants awards

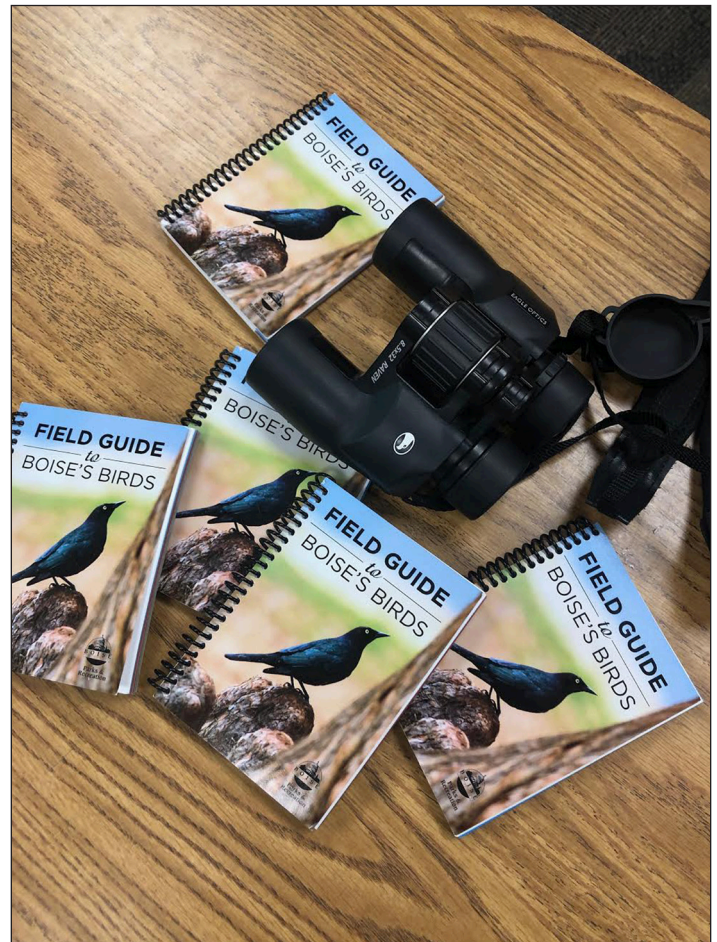
Twice a year, the Small Grants Committee of GEAS sifts through applications for projects that directly benefit wildlife or their habitats in Idaho or consist of bird related educational goals. The grants, up to \$500, are evaluated by the committee, and a recommendation is made to the board, which then makes a decision.

So far, in 2019, we have granted three small grants to:

- Adams Elementary fourth-grade class, using the Bird by Bird Curriculum. Maggie Wilson, teacher and Bird-by-Bird leader, requested the grant to buy her students the Field Guide to Boise's Birds.
- Boise River Enhancement Network (BREN) and the City of Middleton were granted money to help restore 5.9 acres of riparian forest along a 10,250-foot reach of the Boise River where the invasive shrub false indigo (*Amorpha fruticosa*) prevents the germination of seed and growth of black cottonwood.
- Bryce Robinson was awarded a grant to develop educational materials on raptors.

The next round of grant applications will be due by November 8.

The Small Grants Committee and the board take the responsibility to allocate hard-earned funds very seriously, and we thank the membership for their generosity so that GEAS can promote these educational and conservation programs.



Adams Elementary fourth-grade class



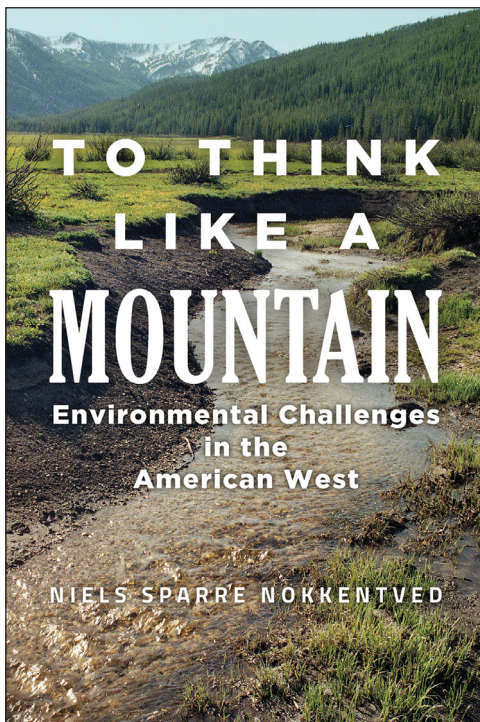
SAVE THE DATE
SEPTEMBER 10TH, 2019

Volunteer Appreciation Celebration!

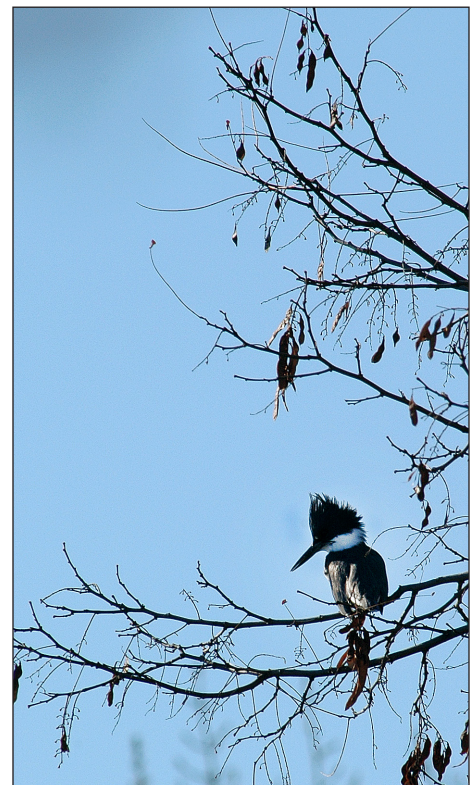
6PM AT THE
STONEHOUSE

Save the Date for our Second Annual Volunteer Appreciation event! Let us celebrate the successes of the year by honoring all the hard work that volunteers have put in to making Golden Eagle Audubon Society great. Mark your calendars for September 10th from 6pm-9pm at the Stonehouse. More details to follow.

WSU Press to publish editor's book on natural resources



Author and GEAS newsletter editor Niels S. Nokkentved takes a fresh look at environmental challenges affecting the Northwest. His essays examine cultural conflicts over resource extraction, threats to watersheds, wolf recovery in the northern Rocky Mountains, lingering effects of livestock grazing, and the vanishing sage grouse. They discuss the importance of forest fires, value of beavers, failed promises of salmon hatcheries, reasons behind the Pacific Northwest timber industry decline, and how unlikely allies learned to set aside differences and resolve long-standing disputes. Nokkentved shares his connection to each concern as well as his own evidence-based perspective. His ultimate goal is to encourage people to think like a mountain, to consider long-term consequences.



Belted kingfisher

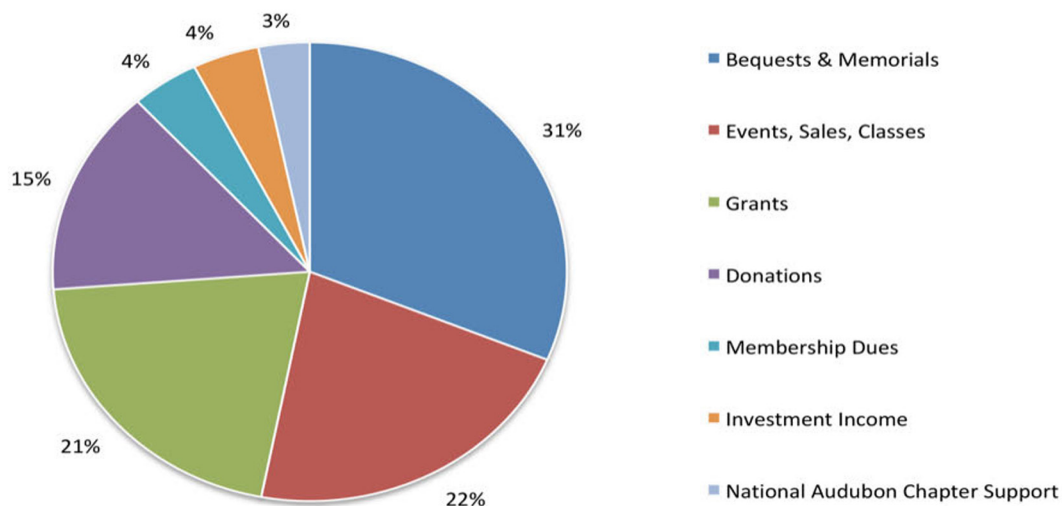
GEAS Financial Overview of the 2018-2019 Fiscal Year

Statement of Activities FY18-19

We hope our members find the following table and figures informative about our chapter operations during the past fiscal year, which concluded May 31.

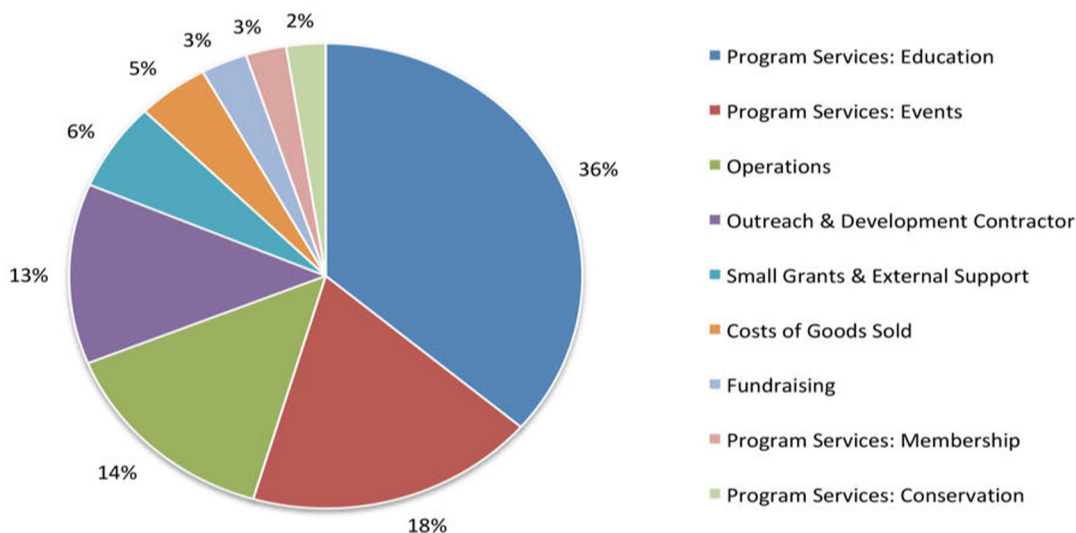
INCOME		EXPENSES	
Bequests & Memorials	\$29,965	Program Services: Education	\$21,106
Events, Sales, Classes	\$20,861	Program Services: Events	\$10,659
Grants	\$19,882	Operations	\$8,331
Donations	\$13,926	Outreach & Development Contractor	\$7,298
Membership Dues	\$4,100	Small Grants & External Support	\$3,616
Investment Income	\$4,028	Costs of Goods Sold	\$2,660
National Audubon Chapter Support	\$3,088	Fundraising	\$1,726
Total Income	\$95,850	Program Services: Membership	\$1,489
		Program Services: Conservation	\$1,442
		Total Expenses	\$58,327

GEAS FY18-19: Income Summary



We were honored to be remembered by Colleen Harden in her estate. Our annual banquet, partnered educational workshops, and the sale of bird-friendly coffee and conservation stamps brought in another large category of income. The banquet raises funds for the chapter, but the workshops and sales are greatly offset by the payment of instructors and the costs-of-goods. Those services are made available for the benefit of the membership and not meant to produce meaningful income.

GEAS FY18-19: Expenses Summary



Another significant portion of the Education expense category comes for our annual New Roots Program, which is paid for primarily with secured grant funding. 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.

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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. GEAS does not share your e-mail address.
- 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 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.

Name: _____
E-Mail: _____ (allows for website login)
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City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Phone: _____

- ☐ Student membership \$15
- ☐ Individual membership \$20
- ☐ Family membership \$35
- ☐ Golden Eagle Lifetime membership \$500

☐ I would like to donate an additional \$ _____

Make check payable to Golden Eagle Audubon Society. Mail to: Golden Eagle Audubon Society, PO Box 8261, Boise, ID 83707,
or pay by credit card on our website www.goldeneagleaudubon.org (click support GEAS).

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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