



# The Golden Eagle

Newsletter of the Golden Eagle Audubon Society

May/June, 2015

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## Wood Duck Nest Boxes Maintained on Bethine Church River Trail

By Alan Crockett

One of the reasons my wife and I choose a home in southeast Boise was to be near the Boise Greenbelt and the natural areas, such as the Bethine Church River Trail.

When walking and running the Bethine Church Trail and continuing into Ada County's Barber Park, I noticed that many of the wood duck nest boxes along the Bethine Church section were falling apart and obviously not being maintained.

Wood ducks are cavity nesters, and though they usually use a hole in a tree, they willingly accept nest boxes as alternatives. The females do add some down to the cavity, but they don't really build nests. Nest boxes should be cleaned annually and new wood shavings added to them. The deteriorated state of the nest boxes was noticed again on one of the monthly cleanup walks by the Golden Eagle Audubon Society. GEAS has adopted a portion of the Bethine Church Trail. Besides picking up trash, adopting organizations are also responsible for checking on the status of structures.

True to the "Mapman" nickname, I got out my GPS and mapped the location of all the bat and nest boxes along the trail and in Barber Park. I checked whether nest boxes were regularly maintained and if so, by whom. Jerry Pugh, community programs coordinator for the Boise Parks and Recreation Department and Scott Koberg, director of Ada County Parks and Waterways, didn't know who had put up the nest boxes or whether they were being maintained. Upon further investigation, I found that Idaho Fish and Game maintains the boxes in Barber Park but not along the Bethine Church Trail.

I was invited to join Michael Young of Fish and Game and other volunteers on their annual maintenance of the Barber Park boxes. These boxes are mounted on trees. None seemed to have been used by nesting birds recently. Many had been occupied by

squirrels, two by western screech owls but no wood ducks.

I sought the advice of Fish and Game about replacement and maintenance options for boxes on the Bethine Church Trail. Several Fish and Game employees walked the trail and saw the old and unusable boxes. They suggested locations for new boxes.



Alan Crockett (left) and John Buzzell Photo by Bill Seigart alongside pole mount nest box.

I approached Pugh about installing and adopting new nesting boxes on the Bethine Church Trail. Given the OK, my friends John Buzzell, Bill Seigart and I, removed all of the dilapidated duck boxes. We put up 13 relocated or new boxes, some of which were built by Boy Scouts and provided through Fish and Game. We decided to mount boxes on 10-foot poles, instead of trees, fitted with a two-foot wide wrap of roofing steel as a predator barrier.

The new boxes are being monitored. So far, none have been occupied by starlings or squirrels. If these post-mounted boxes are used for duck or owl nests, maybe some of the tree-mounted boxes will be relocated to posts. While wood ducks have not laid any eggs in the boxes as of the end of March, there is some evidence the boxes have been visited by wood ducks and screech owls. In the latest check, a screech owl was present in one of the new boxes and remained in the box when it was opened. My wife, Alice, my friends and I are willing to maintain these boxes for an indefinite period, but GEAS will adopt the boxes for the long term.

Pugh, a 2014 master naturalist graduate, was interested in whether other nest boxes exist along the Boise Greenbelt that might be adopted and maintained by volunteers. I took my trusty GPS to Kathryn Albertson Park, mapped the location of all the boxes I could find and sent the map to Pugh, who is now working to get those boxes adopted and maintained annually.

*Alan Crockett and his wife, Alice, recently moved to Boise from Idaho Falls. They are members of Master Naturalists, the Native Plant Society and the Audubon Society.*

**President’s Message**

By Michele Crist

Greetings Birders!

I hope everyone is out and about or in the backyard watching the spring migration.

So, this is my last president’s column and my last month of being president of GEAS – and I may have fallen into the “lame duck” syndrome over these past couple of months. The past three years have flown by – literally and figuratively! Over this time, I have learned so much about Audubon chapters and even more about the birding world and birders in general.

This morning, while drinking many cups of coffee and thinking about what to write for this column, I did a little research into the demographics of us birders. I searched the website and found an interesting publication from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on the demographics and economics of birding based on the most comprehensive survey of wildlife recreation in the United States: <http://www.fws.gov/southeast/economicImpact/pdf/2011-BirdingReport--FINAL.pdf>. The report identifies who birders are, where they live, how avid they are and what kinds of birds they watch. Basically they researched everything about us. In addition, the report provides estimates on how much birders spend on their hobby and the economic impact of those expenditures.

In the article, I learned that Idaho actually comes in seventh of all the states in percentage of a state’s population considered birders. Twenty percent of Idaho birders traveled from out of state in comparison to Alaska and Wyoming where that statistic is 60 percent. Across the United States, 88 percent tend to be local or “backyard birders,” that is not traveling far to bird watch. These statistics tell a story about how important birds are to our local communities here in Idaho. The report also summarized our demographics – the majority of birders tend to be older in age and Caucasian.

Over the past three years, I have seen GEAS really help address these statistics. We are attracting younger members through Family Bird Walks and Bird by Bird programs and through our birding network in general. We are attracting diversity through programs like New Roots. Our conservation and advocacy work also have attracted new members of all ages who feel bird conservation is very important in Idaho’s management of wildlife. These members like to see GEAS speak up for birds. **(Continued on Page5)**

**GEAS CALENDAR**

**May-June 2015**

Field Trip: Sage Hen and Montour	May 2
Family Birding Walk: Hulls Gulch	May 3
International Migratory Bird Day	May 9
GEAS Monthly meeting	May 26
Field Trip: Avimor Bird Walk	May 30, June 20
Greenbelt Litter Patrol & Birding	May 31
Field Trip: Prairie Blue Bird Trail	June 6
Deer Flat BioBlitz	June 13
Family Birding Walk: Hyatt	June 14
Field Trip: Daggett Creek Picnic	June 20
GEAS Annual Picnic	June 23
Field Trip: Owyhee Bluebird Trail	June 27
Greenbelt Litter Patrol & Birding	June 28

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## 'Chickadee see; chickadee do'

By Crista Worthy

Spring is in full swing. The great flocks of robins broke up in March, signaling the advent of all-out war in every southern Idaho neighborhood. Even at night now, if you step outside you can hear robins calling from widely scattered perches, stridently claiming their territories.



Chestnut-backed chickadee

After a few weeks of jostling, successful pairs claim territories of about two or three yards. Should any interloper dare to trespass, it is immediately attacked by either bird, though I have noticed the male generally goes after intruding males, and the female goes after other females. Battles can be vicious, and it's understandable: if you had to live strictly out of what was in your refrigerator, and others tried to move in and claim it, you'd have to fend them off or risk future starvation. It takes a couple of yards to supply enough worms and other invertebrates to feed a robin family. As I don't use any pesticides and have perhaps more dandelions and thistles than grass, plus tons of bugs and earthworms, my backyard is very popular and hotly contested each spring—even if it looks like a weed patch to human eyes.

We moved to Idaho from southern California in the fall of 2011. I have the good

fortune to work as a writer and editor in an upstairs home office with a commanding view of the back yard and sage hills beyond.

One spring day in 2012 I was immersed in work and slowly became aware of a sound downstairs that kept repeating itself. It sounded like something hitting a window. Distracted, I got up and crept down the stairs. A female robin was perched in the decorative pear tree in the front yard. Then she flew into the window, flopped to the ground, and flew back to her perch. About 20 seconds later, she flew into the window again. I went outside and chased her off. A few minutes later, she was back at it. I went upstairs and looked online: apparently this is not an uncommon phenomenon.

A male or female robin, during early spring as the pair is establishing a territory, will see its Continued on Page 9

### Volunteer News

Thank you to Heidi Ware for her presentation at our March monthly meeting about her trip to Gorongosa National Park in Mozambique. The country is slowly recovering its wildlife after many years of civil war. Zoo Boise has a unique partnership with the national park to help in its recovery, and Heidi was a great Boise bird ambassador.

Many thanks to Sheri Robison for presenting her trip to Madagascar at our April monthly meeting. What a country with so many endemic animals.

We'd like to thank all our field trip leaders: RL Rowland for leading a trip to the Fort Boise Wildlife Management Area in March to see all the snow geese and other birds; Kathy Barker-McCoy and Company for the ever popular Wednesday Morning Club trips; Dave Hazelton for the Sage grouse trip to Washington County; and Danette Henderson, Sue Norton, Liz Urban, Heidi Ware, Terry Rich, Alan Crockett, Tricia Howerton, and Pam Conley for leading the Family Bird Walks.

Thank you to Scott Tuthill, Jim Lyons, Heidi Ware, Lew Ulrey, Gary Worthington, Liz Urban, Sue Norton, Steve Bouffard and Jane Rohling for helping out with events sponsored by the Boise City Parks Boise Watershed.

Thank you to the Nomination Committee, Sean Finn, Liz Urban and Leah Dunn, for getting our slate of six candidates to run for the board. The election will be at our May monthly meeting or you can mail in your ballot.

Thanks to the following volunteers for preparing the last newsletter for mailing: Jessica Pazdan-Fusek, Niels Nokkentved, Lew Ulrey, Teresa Sabala, Jerry & Hope Denney, Bessie Skinner, Louise Maley, Susan Hazelton, Sue Norton and Harold Ward.

Thank you to the Banquet Committee for another fine evening of fun, friends, and food. We especially thank our retiring banquet co-chairs, Sue Norton and Susan Hazelton, for 10 years of fantastic banquets. We also thank the new co-chairs, Danette Henderson and Liz Urban, for stepping up to fill those big shoes for next year.

**Volunteer Needs:** We have some upcoming events for which we need your help.

International Migratory Bird Day will be from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday, May 9, at the World Center for Birds of Prey, 5668 West Flying Hawk Lane, Boise. We need folks to help lead short bird walks and to help kids make bird feeders. Work

the whole day or let us know what hours you can work. Contact Pam Conley, pam\_conley@q.com, 869-0337.

The annual Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge's BioBlitz will be from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, June 13, at the refuge. We need folks to work at our table and talk to the public about GEAS, birds, or whatever. This event is really fun with lots of families and kids of all ages. We will have our scope so you can check out the Osprey nest down by the lake. We need at least two people in the booth at a time. Work the whole day or let us know what hours you can work.

Contact Gerrie Satz, gerries@iranger.com or Pam Conley, pam\_conley@q.com, 869-0337.

**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 e-mail the week prior to line up drivers for the following week.

## GEAS EVENTS for May and June

**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](mailto: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.

### WMC (Wednesday Morning Club) – May & June

Time: 8 a.m.

Location: Janjou Patisserie 1754 W. State St., Boise

Contact: Kathy Barker-McCoy, c- 921-1340

Thanks to my intrepid club members for helping out this winter when I was out of town. They kept things running like clockwork. If you have any suggestions for places that I haven't thought of, please call me, and we'll try to put them on the list. May 6, Hulls Gulch, a little birding then Terry Rich's talk; May 13, the heron/cormorant rookery between Eagle and Glenwood; May 20, hike from Bonneville Point to Lydell Gulch, bring water and wear boots; May 27, looking for the Lewis' woodpecker, location TBA; June 3, Hulls Gulch, a little birding then Terry Rich's talk; June 10, Bogus Basin; June 17, Moore's Creekside; June 24, Ann Morrison park or Montour WMA.

### IBO Hummingbird Banding Project

Dates: June 4, June 20, July 2, July 18, August 1, August 15, August 27

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

Location: Idaho City area

Contact: Jessica Pollock [jessicapollock@boisestate.edu](mailto:jessicapollock@boisestate.edu) 208-426-2225 (office)

To make a reservation, visit <http://ibo.boisestate.edu/blog/24282/> for more information, or call Jessica Pollock at 426-2225.

Reservations must be made in advance. Space is limited.

### Saturday, May 2

Field Trip: Sage Hen Reservoir and Montour Wildlife Management Area

Time: 7:45 a.m. at Park & Ride on State & Riverside Dr. in Eagle or at 9 a.m. at Sweet/Montour junction on Hwy 52 between Emmett and Horseshoe Bend, about 45 minutes from Boise.

Trip Leader: Al Larson

Contact: Pam Conley 869-0337 [pam\\_conley@Q.com](mailto:pam_conley@Q.com)

We will make a brief trip to the Montour wildlife management area and then head for Sage Hen reservoir. We hope our lunch stop will be in the forest at nest box #1. We will continue on to the reservoir and hope it is not snowed in. This is a great opportunity to observe wild flowers as well as birds. Dress for the weather and bring water, lunch and snacks. This is an all day trip.

### Sunday, May 3

Family Birding Walk: Hulls Gulch - especially for children or the child in you

Time: 9 a.m.

Location: Meet at the Jim Hall Foothills Learning Center, 3188 Sunset Peak Rd. Boise

Contact: Pam Conley 869-0337 [pam\\_conley@Q.com](mailto:pam_conley@Q.com)

Theme: Migration. A highlight of this walk will be seeing the nesting great-horned owls that live in Hulls Gulch. We hope to be there in time to see their fuzzy fledgling babies. We will also look

for the beautiful warblers and lazuli buntings that are returning to Boise for the spring and learn about migration. Where do birds go in the winter? What birds are here one time of the year and gone another? Why do birds migrate? What would it be like if you had to migrate like a bird? Bring the whole family, especially the young ones. 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 will finish at 11 a.m.

### Saturday, May 9

International Migratory Bird Day

Time: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Location: World Center for Birds of Prey, 5668 West Flying Hawk Lane, Boise

Cost: \$3 children, \$5 adults

Free to members of The Peregrine Fund, GEAS, MK Nature Center and IBO.

Contact: Tate Mason, Education Coordinator at the Peregrine Fund, [tmason@peregrinefund.org](mailto:tmason@peregrinefund.org) or 208-362-8259.

The Peregrine Fund's World Center for Birds of Prey will be hosting a special event to highlight the importance of migratory birds. International Migratory Bird Day will be a celebration for bird lovers and a call to action for everyone to help conserve migratory birds. Join the Intermountain Bird Observatory, MK Nature Center, Golden Eagle Audubon Society and the Peregrine Fund for a gaggle of bird-related activities perfect for families. See live raptors, build binoculars, and see if you can make it through the migration game. Food trucks will be open from 11-3.

### Tuesday, May 26

GEAS Monthly meeting: Lee Moll, "Birds, Whales & Wildness in the Sea of Cortez, Mexico" and board election

Time: 7 p.m.

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

Join naturalist Lee Moll for a presentation and discussion of the remote islands in the Sea of Cortez. Lee has been migrating around the globe to amazing places for almost thirty years with Lindblad Expeditions-National Geographic. She is passionate about everywhere she's traveled and enjoys taking people with her, both virtually and physically. So either way, get ready for an adventure of a lifetime! We will also be voting for new GEAS board members and officers.

### Saturday, May 30

Field Trip: Avimor Bird Walk

Time: 8 a.m. - noon

Location: Meet at Avimor Community Center on Avimor Dr. off Hwy 55, 2.5 miles past Shadow Valley Golf Course

Contact: Robert Mortensen [birdingisfun@gmail.com](mailto:birdingisfun@gmail.com)

Future Avimor Bird Walk dates: June 20, July 18 and August 22.

### Sunday, May 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](mailto:pam_conley@Q.com)

We will walk down river 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

## May and June events continued

restrooms available.

### Saturday, June 6

Field Trip: Prairie Bluebird Trail

Time: 7:45 a.m.

Location: BLM Office, 3948 Development Ave., Boise ID

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 his expertise and love for the bluebirds with us as we travel 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.

### Saturday, June 13

Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge's BioBlitz

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

Location: Deer Flat NWR 13751 Upper Embankment Rd., Nampa

Contact: Pam Conley 869-0337 pam\_conley@Q.com

A BioBlitz is a 24-hour rapid survey of biological diversity, and to celebrate this biodiversity we host a public festival. On June 12 and 13, local scientists, naturalists, and volunteers will comb Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge to find and identify as many different species of plants and animals as possible. Everyone is welcome to attend and lend a helping hand as we all celebrate the biodiversity at Deer Flat. The festival on Saturday is free and includes all kinds of fun activities for the family. GEAS will have our booth.

### Sunday, June 14

Family Birding Walk: Hyatt - especially for children or the child in you.

Time: 9 a.m.

Location: Hyatt Hidden Lakes Reserve, 5301 N. Maple Grove Rd., Boise, lower parking lot.

Contact: Pam Conley 869-0337 pam\_conley@Q.com

This Boise City Park is managed especially for wildlife. The area has a number of ponds and upland habitat which support a diverse number of birds and other wildlife. Bring the whole family, especially the young ones. 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, June 20

Field Trip: Daggett Creek Bird Walk & Picnic with Al Larson

Time: 7 a.m.

Location: Meet at M.K. Nature Center, 600 S Walnut., Boise, to set up car pools or meet at mile marker 24 on Highway 21 east of Boise (bridge at the mouth of Daggett Creek) at 8 a.m.

Trip Leader: Al Larson

Contact: Pam Conley 869-0337 pam\_conley@Q.com

We will bird on foot along Mores Creek and a short way up Dunnigan Creek. Bring your lunch for a picnic in Larson's yard and enjoy close encounters with humming birds. After lunch there may be a 2 mile hike along a logging road in search of whatever may be out and about.

### Saturday, June 20

Field Trip: Avimor Bird Walk

Time: 8 a.m. - noon

Location: Meet at Avimor Community Center on Avimor Dr. off Hwy 55, 2.5 miles past Shadow Valley Golf Course.

Contact: Robert Mortensen birdingisfun@gmail.com

Future Avimor Bird Walk Dates: July 18, August 22

### Tuesday, June 23

Monthly meeting is GEAS Annual Picnic & New Board Member Induction

Time: 6 p.m.

Location: Municipal Park, north of Fish and Game office in Boise, 500 S Walnut. If it rains, MK Nature Center.

GEAS will provide chicken, soft drinks, and plates and silverware. You bring a side dish or dessert to share. We will be inducting the new board members and officers.

### Saturday, June 27

Field Trip: Owyhee Bluebird Trail

Time: 7 a.m.

Location: Meet at Eagle/Overland Park & Ride at 7 a.m. or Walters Ferry Bridge, south of Nampa on Hwy 45 (12 Ave S.) on west side of the Snake River at 8 a.m.

Trip Leader: Al Larson

Contact: Pam Conley 869-0337 pam\_conley@Q.com

We will set up car pools. We will make brief stops at Murphy, Oreana and other points of interest. There should still be a few active bluebird nests to visit. After lunch we will continue to Spencer reservoir. Bring lunch, snacks, water and dress for the weather.

### Sunday, June 28

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 down river 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.

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## President's message continued from Page 2

The economic story of birding was also very interesting. In 2011, birders generated about \$107 billion in total industry output based on birding trip and equipment expenditures. About 666,000 jobs make up the birding industry, and this employment generated well over \$31 billion. In addition, birding contributed a total of \$6 billion in state tax and \$7 billion in federal tax revenues. I was fascinated by how much we, as birders, contribute to the U.S. economy. No joke; we are an important constituency and economic powerhouse.

These statistics help me see how important GEAS's contributions are to the birding world. As I move into the wonderful position of "past president" on the board, I remain confident that GEAS will continue to grow and expand. I look forward to continue helping GEAS in this manner while also having more time for birding.

Thank you for all your support!  
Michele, president

# GEAS board member election candidates

## Board member candidates:

### Alexander Sapiens

Backyard bird watching has been an interest for me for approximately 20 years. Upon my retirement from San Jose State University in 2009, I began to watch and study birds more actively. My membership in the Southwest Idaho Birdwatchers Association in Nampa and the Golden Eagle Audubon Society in Boise began in 2010. I have attended birding festivals in Kuna, Klamath Falls, Ore., San Diego, Calif., Tucson, Ariz., Harlingen, Texas, Bosque del Apache, N.M. and Salt Lake City. My second hobby, photography, developed to identify and study wild birds better. I have photographed birds in Canada, USA, Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Panama, and many Caribbean islands, including Cuba, Peru, Brazil, Spain, France, Switzerland, Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, Greece, Turkey and China. In the United States, my avian photographic adventures have taken me to California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, Wyoming, South Dakota, Nebraska, Texas, Hawaii and Puerto Rico. For the past four years, RL Rowland and I have conducted monthly bird surveys at Hammer Flat (April – October) as well as different sections of the Boise River Aquatic Bird Survey (November – March) for Idaho Fish and Game.

### Matthew Podolsky

Growing up in the Northeast, I developed a love for thick deciduous forests and the weathered, ancient peaks of the Northern Appalachians. I attended college in upstate New York and spent a summer hiking 600 miles of the Appalachian Trail. It was in the West where I discovered my love for birds while participating in an SCA internship at Lassen Volcanic National Park in Northern California. Several years later I would return to the western states to work as a field biologist with the California condor in the remote desert of Northern Arizona and Southern Utah. I moved to Boise several years later to become a part of the Peregrine Fund's captive breeding program for California condors. I immediately fell in love with Boise, and decided to incorporate the nonprofit, for which I serve as president here in Idaho's capital. Since founding the nonprofit Wild Lens in 2011, I produced and directed the feature-length film, "Scavenger Hunt," about the California condor and the issue of lead poisoning in wildlife, along with the half-hour documentary, "Bluebird Man," about honorary GEAS board member Al Larson. In this time, I have also produced numerous short videos, working closely with almost every conservation-oriented organization in the Treasure Valley. My wife and I look forward to raising our son (now 18 months old) in Boise's wonderful community.

### Liz Urban

Liz Urban has served on the GEAS board for the past three years and currently chairs the education committee and co-chairs the banquet and grants committees. She created and coordinates GEAS's first educational children's camp, the New Roots Program, and is a Bird by Bird Program facilitator. Liz received her master's degree in natural resources in 2011 from the University of Arizona. She has worked on a number of avian research projects at Boise State University since arriving in Boise. She is a committed GEAS volunteer and hopes to continue her efforts by serving on the board of directors for another term.

### Kristin Gnojewski

As a science teacher, I have the unique and awesome privilege of introducing middle school age students to the fascinating world of birds. Some of the most moving moments I have experienced as an educator have involved hearing stories from parents about how their children have developed a love of birds and the natural world as a result of something they experienced at school. As for myself, my fascination with birds began at a young age on outdoor trips with my family. As a teenager I would spend time next to a window at the back of my parents' home watching and recording birds, such as black-capped chickadees and spotted towhees. I will never forget when a pileated woodpecker visited the power pole at the end of our driveway. Over time, I have been able to further my knowledge through volunteering and participating in citizen-science programs. I am so thankful to live in a community with such an active, dedicated and knowledgeable group of individuals working toward enhancing public awareness and habitat for birds. I would love to be able to further my contribution to the community and environment by becoming a member of the GEAS board.

### Chris McClure

My fascination with birds began in high school when I took my first ornithology course. Since then, I have earned a bachelor's degree in environmental economics from the University of Georgia and a doctorate in biology from Auburn University. In graduate school, I studied methods to improve studies of bird habitat use. My family and I moved to Boise three years ago when I was hired by Boise State University where, in collaboration with the Intermountain Bird Observatory, I helped to study the effects of road noise on birds. I am currently the director of the Peregrine Fund's American Kestrel Partnership which is a hemisphere-wide effort between citizen and professional scientists to identify the causes of declines in populations of the American kestrel. I look forward to working with the GEAS to promote the local conservation of birds and their habitat.

### Linda Schuek

Linda Schuek is a graduate of the Pennsylvania State University with a degree in wildlife sciences. She started her professional career as a raptor biologist, working for a variety of private, state and federal agencies. She moved to Idaho in 1990 to work as a consultant on a study in the Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area and then worked for the Boise State University Raptor Research Center until 2001. She has since been employed by the USGS Snake River Field Station, assisting with the management, presentation and public dissemination of data for studies involving a variety of Great Basin species. Linda served on the board of the GEAS for four years, acting as secretary from 1998 through 2001. She looks forward to returning and re-engaging with this community.

### Amy Silver

In 2011, I arrived in Boise from northwest Washington, eager to begin my new job with the Boise School District and to get out and explore the mountains and deserts of Idaho. I love working with kids and spending time outdoors, camping, hiking, biking, backpacking – and always, no matter where I am or what I'm doing – watching and listening for birds. My favorite days are

# Election candidates continued

those when I get to take my students for walks on our little Greenbelt “patch,” looking for bugs, plants, birds and whatever else crosses our path. I am happy to have the opportunity to work with the GEAS board towards wildlife conservation and education here in southwest Idaho.

**Executive position candidates:**

**Leah Dunn**

Leah Dunn is an ecologist with more than 15 years of avian ecology experience working with various nonprofits, state and federal agencies. She works with Boise State University and the USGS for the National Gap Program. Leah’s work on bird conservation strategies with the Canadian Wildlife Service, the Arizona Bird Conservation Initiative, the Department of Defense and several others has provided her with birding opportunities ranging from the Arctic Circle to the Sonoran Desert. Her work has encompassed several species. She believes that the opportunity to continue to serve as a board member of the Golden Eagle Audubon Society would be a great experience, and she hopes to contribute to GEAS’s conservation goals and local efforts. Leah has served on the GEAS Audubon board for the past three years and hopes to bring her experience to continue to serve the Golden Eagle Audubon over the coming year.

**Sue Norton**

Sue Norton has been active on the Golden Eagle Audubon Society board for several years. She has served as secretary, volunteer coordinator and banquet committee co-chair. Sue is a retired English teacher and an active bird enthusiast. Working with GEAS and the board has been a rewarding experience and a chance to meet and work with many wonderful people who care about birds and the world we all live in.

**Sean Finn**

Sean Finn has been working on aspects of avian conservation professionally for more than 25 years, at times working for state and federal agencies, nongovernmental organizations, research firms, and independently. Employed as a science coordinator by

the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Sean has gained a thorough understanding of the interrelationships of people, science and policy to further conservation of wildlife populations and their habitat. Sean has volunteered on the GEAS Board since 2006, at times serving as vice president, treasurer, and conservation committee chairperson. He is running for the office of president in 2015. Sean hopes to bring his lengthy experience studying, enjoying and conserving birds to the position and to lead Golden Eagle Audubon Society to even more effective wildlife-related education and conservation over the coming year.

**Lew Ulrey**

I have been a birder since I was a child. The natural world is very important to me, and I very much support the work that Golden Eagle Audubon Society does on behalf of nature and birds. I earned a master’s degree in business administration at Idaho State University, and I spent the vast majority of my working years as assistant controller at First Security Bank of Idaho. I feel that bringing my business and accounting experience to the job of treasurer would be the best way for me to make a contribution to the work that Golden Eagle Audubon Society does.

**Current board members** who are not up for election are Michele Crist, past president; Maria Minicucci; Lindsay Alsup, conservation committee chair; Gerrie Satz, volunteer coordinator.



Pine grosbeak

Photo by Rober W. Ellis

## Golden Eagle Audubon Society 2015 Board of Directors Election Ballot

**Executive Positions (vote for one for each position):**

President	Vice President	Secretary	Treasurer
<input type="checkbox"/> Sean Finn	<input type="checkbox"/> Leah Dunn	<input type="checkbox"/> Sue Norton	<input type="checkbox"/> Lew Ulrey

**General Board (vote for any 7):**

<input type="checkbox"/> Kristen Gnojewski	<input type="checkbox"/> Matt Podolsky	<input type="checkbox"/> Alexander Sapiens
<input type="checkbox"/> Chris McClure	<input type="checkbox"/> Linda Schueck	<input type="checkbox"/> Amy Silver
<input type="checkbox"/> Liz Urban		

To submit your vote, cut out the above ballot and mail to: Golden Eagle Audubon Society, PO Box 8261, Boise, ID 83707, or bring it to the monthly GEAS meeting on Tuesday, May 26 at the MK Nature Center on South Walnut St. in Boise.

## GEAS Banquet and Auction a Big Success

By Susan Hazelton

More than 185 banquet attendees learned that California condors probably bred in Oregon, honored an outstanding volunteer, and helped raise more than \$8,000 at the 2015 GEAS banquet and auction.

The keynote speaker for the banquet was Susan Haig, supervisory wildlife ecologist at the USGS Forest and Rangeland Ecosystem Science Center in Corvallis, Ore. Her work with Jesse D'Elia, a supervisory fish and wildlife biologist from Portland, has provided the most complete assessment to date of the condor's occurrence in the Pacific Northwest. Haig also spent time with graduate students at BSU, which helped fund part of her stay in Boise.

Liz Urban was honored as volunteer of the year for her many contributions to GEAS. With financial support from National Audubon's Toyota TogetherGreen Program, Liz developed the New Roots program. The goal was to connect children of the refugee community to the environment and to the larger community. The program was launched in June 2014, with 11 children from Iraq, Iran, Russia, Thailand, Burma, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi and Somalia.

The program, structured like a day camp, was free, with all food and door-to-door transportation provided. Children visited places around Boise, learned about local animals and ecosystems, and participated in conservation action. By fostering connections with the land and community, refugee children became stakeholders in their new Boise home. A special thanks goes to Matt Podolsky for his role in making and showing the New Roots film, a video reviewing the program which was a highlight of the evening.

Hope Denney and Leslie Harrison managed another successful dessert sale, along with 17 bakers, who provided an assortment of decadent desserts. Heidi Ware, Jay Carlisle and RL Rowland were equally successful selling raffle tickets. Together these volunteers raised close to \$2,000 at the event.

Be sure to check out the list of donors printed elsewhere in the newsletter and think of them when you make your purchases.

Just as it takes a village to raise a child it takes an army to produce a successful banquet and auction. An army of volunteers, that is. Many people work behind the scenes to organize the banquet, design decorations, solicit auction donations, provide TLC for our speaker, set up and clean up the silent auction, manage registration, help with checkout, and more. A unique component of this auction has been the donations of arts and crafts items from Audubon members and members of the community, from spectacular photographs to exquisite pottery, to specially selected wine baskets and Sean Finn's basket of homemade pasta and sauce.

The auction committee has been in place for 10 years, ever since Sue Norton and Susan Hazelton promised Mike Morrison that if he would serve as GEAS president, we would serve as banquet chairs. Over those years, the committee membership has remained pretty steady; some years losing one or two members, other years gaining members. But always it has remained a group of hard working, steadfast, creative volunteers with a strong commitment to GEAS and, most important, a good sense of humor.

## Thank You to the Banquet Volunteers

Behind our successful banquet and silent auction is a wonderful group of volunteers. The following people baked cakes and pies and torts and more for the dessert sales:

Lindsay Alsup, Ann DeBolt, Ingrid Brudenell, Carol Cassler, Michele Crist, Alice Crockett, Leah Dunn, Liz Finn, Paul Grabe, Julie Heath, Susan Lowman-Thomas, Sue Norton, Jennifer Robbins-Smith, Susan Stacy, Lew Ulrey, and Velma Vance. Hope Denney and Leslie Harrison ran the dessert table with assistance from Eli Cinta Mejia, Caitlin Davis, Ben Dudek, and Bryce Robinson. Ben and Diana Dicus and Teresa Sabala greeted people at the registration table. Louise Maley, Beth Jones, and Bessie Skinner supplied bouquets of spring flowers for the tables. Heidi Ware, Jay Carlisle, and RL Rowland sold raffle tickets. Pam Conley was our gracious Master of Ceremonies for the evening. Sean Finn and Mathew Podolsky set up the AV equipment. Heidi Ware, Harold Ward, and Mitch Levanhagen helped with check out for the silent auction. The following people helped with set up, clean up, and many jobs in between: Bruce Ackerman, Michele Crist, Jerry Denney, Sean Finn, Dave Hazelton, Julie Heath, Iris Henderson, Matthew Henderson, Maril McCord, Gerrie Satz, Lew Ulrey and Liz Urban.

We also want to thank Mathew Podolsky for showing his film on the New Roots program.

The banquet committee met throughout the year to plan the event. Susan Hazelton and Sue Norton were co-chairs, ably supported by Hope Denney, Stephany Erwin, Leslie Harrison, Danette Henderson, Louise Maley, Nancy McCullough, Teresa Sabala, Ann Swanson, Liz Urban and Suzanne Woodcock. The committee had a lot of fun and pleasure in producing the event and working with such a remarkable and enthusiastic group of volunteers.

## GEAS and 'Idaho Gives'

GEAS and our New Roots Program are participating in this year's "Idaho Gives."

We're counting down to Idaho Gives! Idaho Gives is powerful way for Idahoans to come together to support nonprofit causes across the state. Join your fellow Idahoans and be a part of something big, as we come together to celebrate the nonprofits that change lives and make Idaho a great place.

On May 7, log on to [IdahoGives.org](http://IdahoGives.org) and donate to one or more of 500 participating nonprofit causes, including GEAS and our New Roots Program. Your donation could help us win extra award money! To make the event even more powerful, a generous donor will match all donations to New Roots up to \$500, so every dollar given will go twice as far.

On Idaho Gives day, give to the causes you know and love, or find a new cause that shares your passion. On May 7, Idaho Gives-will you?

# Idaho Families for Clean Water and CuMo Project Update

By Pam Conley

On April 9, 2015, the U.S. Forest Service released the Draft Supplemental Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact and updated Supplemental Environmental Assessment, which includes the new baseline groundwater information as well as other updated information.

The Forest Service stands by its decision that there will be No Significant Impact and that an Environmental Impact Statement is not needed. Idaho Families for Clean Water will be meeting to discuss our next steps and will have 45 days to respond to the new information. We will keep you posted on what happens next.

Golden Eagle Audubon Society has been working on the CuMo mining exploration

project since 2005 as part of the Idaho Families for Clean Water coalition. This coalition is composed of GEAS, the Idaho Conservation League, the Sierra Club, Idaho Rivers United, Trout Unlimited, Great Old Broads for Wilderness, and Advocates for the West. We got together in 2005 over concerns about the proposed cyanide heap leach gold mine in Atlanta. We were successful in getting that project stopped. We work on issues that affect the Boise River watershed, which, as you know, is fabulous for wildlife and recreating, as well as being an important water supply.

We have been working diligently to make sure these projects abide by the various environmental laws that were put into place to protect the public health

and environment. Trout Unlimited and Idaho Fish and Game have also worked on rehabilitation projects on lower Grimes Creek to heal past mining scars.

Check out the Google Earth tour of the CuMo mine exploration project. It is a real eye opener. Pause the player to play the videos that are inserted into the Google flyover. After the video has played (via YouTube) press play to continue the tour. The tour is also available through links on the Idaho Rivers United and Golden Eagle Audubon websites. [http://www.mountainvisions.com/getours/CuMoMine\\_5\\_12.html](http://www.mountainvisions.com/getours/CuMoMine_5_12.html).

For more details on the project, see the GEAS website at [goldeneagleaudubon.org](http://goldeneagleaudubon.org), or contact Pam Conley, [Pam\\_conley@q.com](mailto:Pam_conley@q.com) if you have any questions.

## (Chickadee see, chickadee do, continued from Page 3)

reflection, believe it is a rival of the same sex and attack it.

I hung a photo of a great horned owl face in the window. That worked for a few hours. Then I hung a cat photo; the bird simply flew to the back yard and started hitting a window there. Soon the patio chairs were decorated by large, gooey robin droppings, as was the porch under the front window. I could not stop this female from banging into the windows. I'd run out back and she would fly over the house and start on the front window.

Finally I gave up. After several weeks, she and her mate got busy with nesting duties and the attacks stopped. We cleaned up the house and moved on. I dreaded a

repeat the next spring, but so far the robins that have claimed our yard in subsequent years have left the windows alone.

In similar fashion, the great winter covey of about 65 quail has broken into three groups of roughly 20 birds, arriving for seed mostly morning and evening but also now scattered throughout the day. If you watch, you can tell all the birds have paired up.

There may be 20 of them, but each male stays close to his female. Squabbles between males are frequent, though usually short-lived. You can hear the males emit their special sharp aggressive call just before they attack. Soon these smaller groups will break up and pairs will wander

in and out of the yard all day.

Why do so many birds flock together in winter, and then break up in spring and summer? The answer is that a nest anchors you temporarily to one spot, so you must protect the territory around that spot so you can have enough food to feed your family.

In winter, the quail gather partly to stay warm: when not active, they huddle together to conserve body heat. But food tends to be scarce in winter and birds must search constantly. This exposes them to predators like accipiters, and many birds together are more likely to spot a predator. Plus, if you are one in a flock and a predator attacks, you are less likely to be the one to die. Winter birds that don't migrate look everywhere for food, trying new things, and when one finds a food source, others in the flock watch and learn.

The March 2015 issue of *Natural History* magazine has a fascinating article written by Bernd Heinrich, professor emeritus in the biology department at the University of Vermont, who spends his winters in Maine observing chickadee flocks. Through various simple experiments, by observation, and by viewing under a microscope the gizzard contents of one bird that flew into his window, he was able to document several ways that the birds learn from each other where to find new food sources.

He concluded his article with, "Chickadee see, chickadee do."



California quail gather in winter.

Photo by Crista Worthy

**GEAS is grateful to the following businesses and individuals who have donated items and services to our auction**

Ann Debolt	Gerrie Satz	Liz Urban	Rob Miller
Ann Swanson	Graeber and Company	Louise Maley	Ron Laird
Barbara Forderhase	Grey Fox Studio	Maria Minicucci	Sandy Beebe
Basque Market	Habiscapes	Marv's Framing and Galley	Sean & Liz Finn
Bessie Skinner	Harold Ward	Matthew Podolsky	Serenity Spa and Salon
Bob Ellis	Heidi Ware	Matt McCoy &	Shelley & Tick Axtell
Boise Baroque Orchestra	Henderson Corporation	Kathy Barker-McCoy	Southwest Airlines
Boise Contemporary Theater	Hope Denney	Matt Slater	Spike Baker
Boise COOP	Idaho City Hot Springs	Melanie Nelson	Steve Hanser
Breesha Rath	Intermountain Bird Observatory	Michael Weigand	Sue Norton
Bryce Robinson	Jessica McCabe	Michelle Heckman	Sunny Healey
Bruce Ackerman	Jill Cooper	Mike & Brenda Puchalski	Susan Caldwell
Caitlin Davis	Jill Sevy	Mike Lynott	Susan Chaloupka
Chocolat Bar	Jim Holcomb	Nancy McCullough	Susan Hazelton
Dan Kolsky	Jim Lawrence	Netwings	Susan Lowman-Thomas
Danette Henderson	Jon Bart	North End Studio	Suzanne Woodcock
Danielle Torres	Judy Farr	Old Valley Farms	Taylor Lee
Deniz Aygen & Greg	Julie Heath	Pam Conley	The Edge
Kaltenecker	Julie Steele	Payette Brewing Company	The Flicks
Donald Clark	Katherine Grey	Peregrine Fund	The Nature Conservancy of Idaho
Draggin Wings Farm	Kent Collins	Pete Peterson	Tom McCabe
Edson Fichter	Klamath Bird Observatory	Poo Wright-Pulliam	Velma Vance
Erica Craig	Leah Dunn	REI	Wild Birds Unlimited
Faye Gibbs	Lew Ulrey	Richard Lamm	Wild Lens
Flying M Coffeehouse	Lindsay Reynolds	RL Roland	

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

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- For newsletter submissions, send an e-mail to Niels S. Nokkentved at [sparre47@gmail.com](mailto: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)  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 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](http://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.

Post Office Box 8261, Boise, Idaho 83707  
[www.goldeneagleaudubon.org](http://www.goldeneagleaudubon.org)

Chapter Code: C5ZG000Z