



# The Golden Eagle

Newsletter of the Golden Eagle Audubon Society

July/August, 2015

---

## Red-Tailed Hawk Encounter Inspires Memories of New York's Pale Male

By *Crista Videriksen Worthy*

On June 2, I was driving slowly out of the Target parking lot toward the Stinker gas station at the corner of Eagle and Chinden, when I heard sounds that made me stop the car.

My sunroof was open, and as I looked up and out of it, a very large hawk swooped over the car toward the sounds I had been hearing. Based on the hawk's trajectory, I swept my gaze up to the top of a cell-phone tower just 25 feet away from where I sat in my car. Immediately, everything came together as I saw the hawk land on its large, scraggly nest of sticks. The eyasses' cries rose to a fever pitch as the hawk held what appeared to be a dead rodent above them. I strained to see more but of course could not look down into the nest from my position on the ground.

After about ten seconds the adult bird was off again, and I drove slowly forward, looking up at the nest. A number of large sticks had fallen to lower tiers on the tower. I continued out onto Eagle and turned east on Chinden. As I looked to the left I saw a tractor plowing up a piece of still-open land, and there was the adult hawk, following the tractor, probably looking for more rodents stirred up by its passage. I smiled and wondered whether the man on the machine even noticed the hawk, or if any of the thousands of people who drive by that corner daily ever notice the nest. The hawk was so large it was surely the female, and so light in color that I wonder if it is a ferruginous hawk, rather than the ubiquitous red-tail. I should go back with binoculars to find out.

This reminds me of a trip I made to New York with my husband in 2005. He flew there for a business meeting. I flew there to spot a celebrity; one who happens to be a bird. Pale Male, so named for his light coloration, hatched in 1990. Many red-tailed hawks and other birds stop in Central Park during their yearly migrations, but in 1991 Pale Male stayed. Soon he attracted the attention of birdwatchers, who in subsequent years set up telescopes to see him take a succession of mates and nest on nearby buildings. Central Park provided an unending supply of food in

the form of pigeons. His mates succumbed to the hazards of life in a world of humans—by eating poisoned rats or pigeons, or colliding with vehicles. But each time Pale Male lost a mate, he found another, building a nest each year, and raising more than 20 eyasses.



Red-tailed hawk

In 2004, the PBS Nature documentary "Pale Male" made millions of TV viewers aware of this unique hawk and the spectacle of raw nature amidst the big city that his life provided. Pale Male became national news after he and Lola built their nest, anchored by anti-pigeon spikes, above the balcony of CNN anchorwoman Paula Zahn's apartment on Fifth Avenue. Their mess annoyed her, and in December the nest and spikes were removed. Huge protests ensued. Fellow resident Mary Tyler Moore joined them. The Audubon Society helped craft an agreement to replace the spikes and install a new cradle for the nest. The following spring, Pale Male and Lola were observed constructing a new nest on the cradle.

I walked out of the Plaza Hotel at the southeast corner of Central Park and continued up Fifth Avenue, looking for the nest. I must have looked odd, constantly craning my neck to stare at each balcony as I walked—I didn't know the exact address. But by the time I reached Harlem and the northeastern corner of Central Park, I had not found the nest. Dejected, I rode the bus back down, until at one stop, a group of eighth-graders got on and one girl sat next to me. In her hand she held a postcard of Pale Male.

"Where did you get that?" I asked her.

"Back there where Pale Male is," she replied.

Needless to say, at the next stop I hopped off, backtracked, and followed her instructions to where the observers stood, near the Children's Pool, with their telescopes. And there he was, soaring above, around, and back to the nest. I was thrilled. I looked through the telescope, and Lola appeared to be incubating eggs. My trip to New York was a success!

Sadly, those eggs did not hatch, nor did subsequent eggs over the next couple of years. In 2008, **(Continued on Page 5)**

**President’s Message**

By Sean Finn

Dear Members of Golden Eagle Audubon Society,  
 First, let me say I am honored to take on the role and serve as president of GEAS. I take this role seriously and promise to faithfully strive to achieve the goals set forth in our strategic plan and to be available to all members to hear your thoughts, concerns or simply your good birding stories.

Second, please join me in expressing deep gratitude to our outgoing board members and officers. Bruce Ackerman, Suzanne Woodcock, Julie Heath, Steve Hanser and Jason Sutter provided countless contributions to GEAS and conservation and education in southwest Idaho. Their enthusiasm and competence will be sorely missed. Bruce: I don’t know how we will survive without you. “Happy Trails” to you, my friend. Also, a special THANK YOU to Michele Crist for her outstanding leadership as president over the past three years. Michele will serve as past president, and continue to impart her wisdom and leadership to GEAS.

Thank you all!

Third, join me in welcoming our new slate of officers: Vice President Leah Dunn, Treasurer Lew Ulrey and returning Secretary Sue Norton; and board members: Kristin Gnojewski, Matt Podolsky, Linda Schueck, Chris McClure, Amy Silver and Alexander Sapiens. We all have big shoes to fill, so let’s start trying some on! Please note our contact information to the right and don’t hesitate to contact us with any question, concerns or great ideas.

Though I know many of you, there are many, many members I have not yet met. I hope that changes in the coming year. I was born a misplaced westerner on the east coast. Growing up in the suburbs of New York, watching robins and starlings compete for dominance of our back lawn, I was secretly plotting my escape to the West. That happened in 1984 as I relocated to Montana, then Wyoming, then Colorado as I began my new life. Along the way, I’ve lived and bird-watched in most western states, earned two degrees in wildlife management, and eventually settled down in Boise where we—my wife Liz and 9-year-old daughter, Gigi—have been for 18 years. We maintain a wildlife-friendly yard, which is a constant source of inspiration for me.

This year we have a pair of California quail raising a brood in our yard. The tiny, fuzzy, intricately marked broodlings are a sheer delight to watch as they struggle to explore the world but get back to cover at the slightest perceived threat. But the rock star of this family is not the young—eight babies hanging in there!—but the Dad, who we call Skippy. Skippy has only one leg—the left one—and an extremely beat up right wing that he uses as to balance and stabilize as he hustles around the yard. Despite his tongue-in-cheek nickname, Skippy is as tough as nails; the kind of leader that doesn’t lament his shortcomings or give up because

**(continued on Page 5)**

**GEAS CALENDAR**

**July-August 2015**

Family Birding Walk	July 12
Field Trip: Avimor Birdwalk	July 18
Greenbelt Litter Patrol & Birding	July 26
GEAS Monthly meeting	July 28
Field Trip: Avimor Birdwalk	August 22
GEAS Monthly meeting	August 25
Field Trip: Idaho Bird Observatory	August 29
Greenbelt Litter Patrol & Birding	August 30

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Sean Finn, President a.gentilis@gmail.com	371-2740
Leah Dunn, Vice President ldboise@gmail.com	
Sue Norton, Secretary nortonsu@msn.com	378-4248
Lew Ulrey, Treasurer lulrey@cableone.net	322-8246
Lindsay Alsup linzybird@gmail.com,	
Maria Minicucci idmini@cableone.net,	
Gerrie Satz gerries@iranger.com.	
Liz Urban urbanhawk137@gmail.com	629-2146
Kristin Gnojewski kgnojewski@cableone.net	
Chris McClure chrimcc@gmail.com	
Matt Podolsky matthew@wildlensinc.org	
Alexander Sapiens dr.sapiens@gmail.com	
Linda Schueck lschueck@msn.com	
Amy Silver amysilver819@gmail.com	
Al Larson (Honorary) larson83703@msn.com	343-0959
Levi Mohler (Honorary, Deceased)	

**COMMITTEES**

Banquet: Liz Urban, Danette Henderson	629-2146
Conservation: Lindsay Alsup	linzybird@gmail.com
Education: Liz Urban	urbanhawk137@gmail.com 629-2146
Field Trips: Pam Conley	869-0337
Membership: Bruce Ackerman Susan Werner	342-0896 342-0896
Program: Bruce Ackerman	342-0896
Publicity: Leah Dunn	ldboise@gmail.com
Newsletter: Niels S. Nokkentved	sparre47@gmail.com 377-3360
Volunteer Coordinator Gerrie Satz.	gerries@iranger.com
Website: Rod Smith	rods325@gmail.com 859-3298
Historian: Jennifer Robbins-Smith	threehappycampers@hotmail.com 859-3298
Webmaster Harold Ward	geas@seeboise.com 338-7015

# In Memory of Spike Baker

By Susan Hazelton

Anyone who has attended the GEAS banquet in previous years may be lucky enough to have won a stunning framed photograph by Spike Baker. Spike was a long time GEAS member, a skilled photographer, raconteur and nature lover.

Robert A. “Spike” Baker died May 12, 2015, in the timber-frame home he built on the Payette River. He was an Idaho native, born in Boise July 25, 1932. He grew up in south Boise where he was raised by his grandparents and three uncles. They gave him his first camera and taught him to hunt, fish, trap and use woodworking tools.

He graduated from Boise High School and shortly thereafter began his career with the U.S. Forest Service. That’s where he met Judy Adair. They were married in 1958 and spent 56 years together enjoying travel and the out of doors.

Spike was known for his generosity and his pride in his photographs. Several of us can remember Spike at the annual picnic, where he would bring his latest photographs and spread them out on the picnic tables. For many years he donated framed photographs to the GEAS annual banquet and auction. And when he attended the auction, you didn’t want to bid against him

if he was bidding on one of Sue Norton’s jam baskets!

He designed and distributed annual calendars featuring his photos to those lucky enough to be on his mailing list. And he was generous with his time, as well. At the conclusion of nearly every remarkable and exotic trip he and Judy took during his retirement, Spike would present a program to GEAS and SIBA members. They were thoughtful, interesting and well organized. Not only would his presentations include beautiful photos of the birds he and Judy had seen—occasionally Judy would help with the identifications—but also included pictures of the locations and the people they had encountered.

During the last month of his life, Spike was able to watch sandhill cranes from his Gem County home. Judy has said it was a good year for cranes.

And you know, if Spike had been able to photograph the cranes, the pictures would have been spectacular.



## Volunteer News

We have lots of folks to thank—here goes.

Sue Norton wants to thank her helpers who folded and prepared the newsletter to go out to members: Susan Hazelton, Suzanne Woodcock, Louise Maley, Andrea Sawyer, Lew Ulrey and Nancy McCollough. Let us thank Sue Norton who picks up from the printer, supervises and takes completed newsletters to the post office.

A note of appreciation to Steve Bouffard who has been teaching classes and leading field trips for the National Federation for the Blind on birding by ear.

Thanks to Alan and Alice Crockett and RL Rowland for leading the Boise River Bird Walk and Litter Patrol. Thanks to Al Larson for leading the Sagehen Bluebird Trail and Prairie Bluebird Trail field trips. Thanks to Liz and Mark Urban, Danette and Iris Henderson, Sue Norton, Steve Bouffard and Pam Conley for running the GEAS booth at the International Migratory Bird Day event hosted at the World Center for Birds of Prey.

Thanks to Megan Jones, Genny Gerke and Sean Finn for helping Liz Urban with the planning of this year’s New Roots Program.

Bruce Ackerman would like to thank Lee Moll who presented our monthly program May 26, about the amazing trips she leads to see birds, whales and wild areas in the Sea of Cortez, Mexico,

with the Lindblad Expeditions-National Geographic tours. She is interested in signing up people to go on future tours there or to many other destinations.

Susan Werner has been working hard behind the scenes to keep the membership database current, making sure addresses are kept up-to-date so the newsletter goes out promptly. She also keeps track of membership payments and donations to the chapter.

Thanks go to the following board members who have finished up their terms in office: Bruce Ackerman, Suzanne Woodcock, Julie Heath, Steve Hanser and Jason Sutter. Terry Rich was unable to complete the year because of other obligations.

Thank you to Michele Crist, Bruce Ackerman and Suzanne Woodcock, who have retired from officer positions.

Thanks to Niels Nokkentved, Harold Ward, Pam Conley, Rod Smith and Jennifer Robbins-Smith for behind the scenes work on various committees.

Sean Finn would like to thank Jared Fluckiger, Larry Ridenhour and Bruce Ackerman for installing the new sign bases at Blacks Creek Bird Reserve (see article in this newsletter). We thank Larry for seeing the project through – acquiring the steel, delivering it to Centennial Job Corps, picking the new sign bases up and storing them and arranging access

to the vehicles and materials needed to install them. Thank you to the Job Corp for welding and painting the sign bases. Thanks to Jane Rohling for designing the new interpretive signs and to the 2015 New Roots kids for placing the signs on the bases.

Also a big thank you to Tate Fisher, Matt McCoy, Larry Ridenhour, and all those at the BLM Four Rivers Field Office for design and installation of the new handicap-accessible restroom facility at Blacks Creek Bird Reserve – also for strategically arranging the boulders to look nice and manage access to the Reserve. If you have not been lately, you need to go out to the Reserve and marvel at all the improvements.

Thanks to Terry Rich and Liz Urban for instructing a course called “Basic Birding and Beyond” for the Osher Institute on behalf of GEAS, donating their honorariums for teaching to Audubon. Gerrie Satz thanks all the members who brought refreshments to the meetings. Everyone enjoyed snacking before and after the meetings.

Gerrie Satz, Volunteer Coordinator

### Volunteers Wanted

Mitch Levenhagen, an incoming master’s of biology student at BSU under Jesse Barber, will be conducting research this summer with another student, Eli Cinto Mejia, in the **(continued Page 7)**

## 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](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.

### Intermountain Bird Observatory Field Trips

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 Hilltop Café on Highway 21 and carpool to the top. Bring snacks and water. Dress for wind, sun, and capricious weather. Be sure to bring a little extra cash to purchase an IBO T-shirt or hat and support this great project. The staff appreciates healthy snacks also.

### IBO Hummingbird Banding Project

Dates: July 2, July 18, August 1, August 15, August 27

Time: approximately 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.

### WMC (Wednesday Morning Club) – July & August 2015

Time: 8 a.m.

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

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. July 1, Hulls Gulch with Terry Rich; July 8, Ann Morrison Park; July 15, Lydle Gulch; July 22, Boise Greenbelt; July 29, Bogus Basin; Aug. 5, Hulls Gulch; Aug. 12, Barber Park; Aug. 19, Hyatt; Aug. 26, Bogus Basin. If the weather is too hot we may cancel. Bogus/Mores Mtn. is our go-to spot to escape the heat so we've scheduled a number of visits there.

### Sunday, July 12

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](mailto: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 18

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) for more information. Future Avimor Bird Walk Dates: July 18, August 22.

### Sunday, July 26

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 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 and binocs. No public restrooms available.

### Tuesday, July 28

GEAS Monthly meeting- TBA

Time: 7 p.m.

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

Fred Bassett will talk about hummingbird banding.

### Saturday, August 22

Field Trip: Avimor Bird Walk

Time: 9 a.m. - noon

Location: Meet on Avimor Dr off Hwy 55.

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

Walk through the hillsides surrounding the Avimor neighborhood.

### Tuesday, August 25

GEAS Monthly meeting: TBA

Time: 7 p.m.

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

TBA

### Saturday, August 29

Field Trip: Intermountain 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](mailto: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 purchase an IBO T-shirt or hat and support this great project. The staff appreciates healthy snacks also.

### Sunday, August 30

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 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 and binocs. No public restrooms available.

## Field Trip Report: Two Auction Field Trips

By Susan Hazelton

Ever wonder about those field trips offered as a donation to the GEAS annual banquet? Do they live up to their promises? Are they as wonderful as they sound? Well, I can tell you that they are pretty fabulous.

At the 2015 banquet, Sue Norton was the successful bidder on two trips: one with Barbara Forderhase and another with Matt McCoy and Kathy Barker-McCoy. I was fortunate to be invited to accompany her on both trips.

The first trip took place in April, when Sue, Ann Swanson and I joined Barbara Forderhase for a field trip to the Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area. Barbara is the environmental education specialist for the BLM and experienced in raptor identification.



Kathy Barker-McCoy and Sue Norton at the Oolite Interpretive Site.

We started at the BLM office on Development Avenue, east of the airport. Barbara showed us the education birds she uses in her presentations to schools. These birds were injured in the wild and taken to a rehabilitation center for care: a great-horned owl, Swainson's hawk, and red-tailed hawk.

From there we traveled to the Wild Horse Corrals on Pleasant Valley Road. We didn't see the barn owl we were looking for, but we did get to view the magnificent collection of wild horses under the care of the BLM. On South Cole road, we spotted a great-horned owl and searched in vain for burrowing owls. From there we traveled to Dedication Point to view the prairie falcons, stopping to observe the nest of a ferruginous hawk, complete with fuzzy white chicks peeping over the top. Northern harriers swooped over the fields and Barbara taught us how to identify Swainson's hawks as they circled overhead. At Celebration Park we watched golden eagles at a huge nest, perched within a rock. Barbara is an excellent teacher who knows where the birds are. Not only was it an enjoyable day, but an educational one as well.

On the last day of May, Sue and I traveled with Matt McCoy and Kathy Barker-McCoy along the length of the Owyhee Uplands Back Country Byway. Known locally as the Mud Flat Road, the byway is primarily a gravel road—92 miles within

Idaho and 12 miles within Oregon. The byway can be reached through Jordan Valley or from Highway 78 near Grand View. We started at Grand View.

Our first stop was south of Grand View at the Oolite Interpretive site, where we saw black-throated sparrows and sage sparrows, both exciting finds. At the Poison Creek Picnic Area, we watched a short-eared owl and northern harrier dueling overhead. A long-eared owl huddled next to the trunk of a cottonwood tree.

We continued along the byway, watching bluebirds and tree swallows hovering next to the bluebird boxes installed by Al Parry. We found green-tailed towhees, Bullock's orioles, lazuli buntings, several kinds of warblers at various stops. We listened to Matt's explanation of the BLM's efforts to control the expansion of junipers. Juniper woodlands have been increasing in the sagebrush steppe, choking out shrubs and grasses. This has reduced the habitat for sage grouse.

We stopped at the Mud Flat Administrative Site, originally established as Camp Mud Flat, a Civilian Conservation Corps camp. Then on to the North Fork Recreation Site, where an outhouse designed to withstand bullets and other man and nature caused acts of vandalism cost \$27,000. We observed a variety of waterfowl at Dougal Reservoir. Along Jordan Creek we saw sandhill cranes, ibis and egrets.

And you can't drive through Jordan Valley without stopping at the Rock House for milkshakes and ice cream cones. Seventy species and a scoop of espresso explosion. It doesn't get much better.

---

### President's Message, continued from Page 2

"life is too hard." Rather, he is hyper-diligent and on constant lookout for threats and opportunities. I may not be as successful as Skippy when serving as GEAS President. But I will use him as a spirit guide and try to lead GEAS with the same chin-up attitude. I hope you'll join me in being inspired by Skippy and participate in taking care of the birds this year.

Contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Gerrie Satz, and we will let you know how you can contribute to GEAS too.

Sean Finn, president

---

### Pale Male, continued from Page 1

experts recommended removing the spikes that were preventing proper incubation. Since 1991, Pale Male has outlived seven mates. He and his eighth mate, Octavia, are now raising several eyasses that are stretching and flapping their wings daily. Pale Male is 25 years old and has fathered many dozens of baby hawks.

Indeed, a 2007 Audubon Society study found 32 locations throughout the city where pairs of red-tails were spotted breeding in nests, and residents have spotted dozens of unattached red-tails throughout the five boroughs. Pale Male has been immortalized on television, in several books, and in the minds of millions—quite a legacy. But today, you can bet he's just focused on finding another pigeon for his offspring.

# 'The Sagebrush Sea' is coming to the Egyptian in Boise



AN OCEAN OF BIODIVERSITY, LIVING IN A COLD DESERT

## THE SAGEBRUSH SEA

A film by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology

Film screening & panel discussion, moderated by **Marcia Franklin** from Idaho Public Television. Panelists to include film's producer, **Marc Dantzker**, and Idaho sage-grouse science experts.

*sponsored by the Hardy Foundation*

**Tuesday, June 30 | Historic Egyptian Theatre**  
**Doors open 5:00 p.m., film starts 6:00 p.m.**  
 Free admission, families welcome!

A public screening of the "The Sagebrush Sea" is coming June 30 to the historic Egyptian Theater in downtown Boise, sponsored by The Hardy Foundation.

This documentary recently premiered on the award-winning PBS series "Nature."

The public is invited to watch this stunning documentary, filmed partly in Idaho, on the large screen.

"The Sagebrush Sea" follows the greater sage-grouse – an increasingly rare bird with a unique display– through a year on the steppe. See stunning film of variety of Wyoming's wildlife including golden eagles, mule

deer, pronghorn, badgers, and hawks. This one-hour documentary was aired nationally May 20, on the award-winning PBS series "Nature." The film has been viewed by more than 1.2 million households to date.

Following the screening, a panel discussion will focus on the film, the science around this iconic bird, and the issue that has brought so many parties into the discussion about this species' future. Marcia Franklin, Idaho Public Television's producer and host for "Dialogue" will bring together a group of panelists, including The Nature Conservancy's Will Whelan;

Marc Dantzker, of Cornell Lab of Ornithology and producer of the film; Brian Rutledge, National Audubon Society's policy advisory; Steve Knick, supervisory research ecologist with the U.S. Geological Survey; and Jack Connelly, a retired Idaho Fish and Game grouse biologist.

Sponsors include GEAS, The Nature Conservancy, National Audubon Society, Rockies Office, Idaho Botanical Garden, Morrison Knudsen Nature Center, Bureau of Land Management and Conservation Geography.

Details are on the GEAS website: [www.goldeneagleaudubon.org](http://www.goldeneagleaudubon.org).

# Blacks Creek Bird Reserve Just Keeps Getting Better

By Sean Finn

This spring brings more improvements to Blacks Creek Bird Reserve that especially enhance the visitor experience.

Blacks Creek Reserve is an Audubon Important Bird Area located a few miles south of Boise—take the Blacks Creek exit on I-84 make a right and drive a few miles to the Reserve. New members may not be aware that Golden Eagle Audubon led a partnership that completely reversed the condition of the Reserve—from an anything-goes trashed and degraded “no man’s land” to protected and recovering wildlife habitat – over the past seven years.

The Bureau of Land Management has been an integral



Bruce Ackerman, Larry Ridenhour and Jared Fluckiger install an interpretive sign base.



Participants in the New Roots Program help with the installation of interpretive signs.



Interpretive sign explain what visitors see at the Blacks Creek Reserve.

partner from the beginning. The agency manages about half of the Reserve area and has really stepped up in 2015. The Blacks Creek Reserve now has a deluxe, handicap-accessible pit toilet, improved landscaping that is both visually appealing and more protective, and new interpretive signs with details on the habitats and species and seasonal bird checklists.

In sum, the improvements are part of the longer range management plan for the Reserve that make it more of a destination birding attraction in southwest Idaho. We can't thank BLM staff members enough for the depth of planning and improvements they've made at the Reserve.

Beyond those man-made improvements, Mother Nature has been busy too. The moist spring has contributed to higher water levels in the reservoir, which increases and diversifies the habitat quality at Blacks Creek. So plan a day to visit the Reserve during this birding season. See if you can find the six new interpretive signs—they're all within a few hundred yards of the west parking area. And enjoy the birds, the water and the vistas that Blacks Creek Bird Reserve offers.

## Volunteers, continued from Page 3

Orchard Combat Training Center, about 25 miles south of Boise.

And they are looking for some volunteers to help. The projects generally deal with the impacts of artificial gas compressor station noise on birds and other organisms in the sagebrush-steppe ecosystem.

They are hoping to get GEAS and other bird organization members to come out to the Training Center for one of a few mornings sometime between July 6 and 24, dates will be narrowed down in the coming weeks. Volunteers would be asked simply to listen for bird songs under different background noise levels ranging from the control areas of natural, ambient sounds to areas near the artificial gas compressor stations.

Anyone interested may contact Levenhagen at 414-828-0590 or via e-mail at mitchelllevenhagen@boisestate.edu. Or contact Jesse R. Barber at jessebarber@boisestate.edu.

# Film Project to Document the Plight of the Vaquita

By Matt Podolsky

The latest Wild Lens film project, "Souls of the Vermilion Sea," will be a feature length project documenting the struggle to save the vaquita from extinction.

The vaquita, also known as Gulf of California harbor porpoise, is the world's most endangered marine mammal, and with fewer than 100 individuals remaining, experts have predicted that it will be extinct by 2018 if no substantial action is taken to protect it.

Wild Lens decided to start production for this film with a kick-starter campaign, in part because of the success the group had with their "crowd-source" funding campaign for "Bluebird Man." The campaign began just a few weeks after the start of production and ran through the entire month of June. The

funding goal of \$15,000 was reached in the final week.

This film will be shot over the next three years, with the goal of documenting this crisis stage of the recovery effort as it plays

geared towards aiding in the recovery effort.

Though our initial fund-raising campaign is now complete and our funding goal of \$15,000 has been reached, there are still

lots of ways to get involved in this project and in vaquita conservation. Visit our website at [VaquitaFilm.com](http://VaquitaFilm.com) where you'll find a short video and several podcast episodes about this species. Tell your friends and family about the vaquita and share this information with them. Reach out to "Souls of the Vermilion Sea" producer – and recently elected GEAS board member – Matthew Podolsky to learn more about the film and how you can get more directly



Vaquita

Photo by Paula Olson, NOAA contractor.

out. In addition to the final feature length documentary, short videos will be release every six months throughout the course of production. These short videos will serve as tools for outreach and education efforts

involved in the recovery effort.

Contact Podolsky at: [matthew@wildlensinc.org](mailto:matthew@wildlensinc.org); the kickstarter at <https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/157422504/souls-of-the-vermilion-sea>.

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](mailto:membership@goldeneagleaudubon.org). GEAS does not share your email address.
- For membership/subscription information, renewals, or change of address, e-mail [membership@goldeneagleaudubon.org](mailto:membership@goldeneagleaudubon.org).
- 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