

October 2013

Birding Observer

Five Valleys Audubon Society, a Chapter of the National Audubon Society



Calendar

- **Saturday, October 5th:** Join us for an all-day field trip to Rob Domenech's Golden Eagle banding site near Lincoln. This field trip starts at the W. Broadway Park-n-Ride lot at 6:00 am. It will entail a steep 2-mile hike up to the banding station. **Reservations are required.** To reserve a spot, ask questions, or if you need a ride - contact Cynthia Hudson at 830-5424 or bobcyn@live.com. The trip will be limited to 6 participants, but if there is enough interest an additional trip may be added on Sunday, October 6th.
- **Monday, October 7th, 7pm:** Betsy Griffing will host the October board meeting at her office. The address is Axilon Law Group, 257 W Front St, Suite B in downtown Missoula.
- **Monday, October 14th, 7:30pm:** Aaron D. Flesch, a doctoral student in the Division of Biological Sciences at UM, will present on Ferruginous Pygmy Owls of the Sonoran Desert at our October program meeting.
- **Tuesday, October 15th:** Submission deadline for the November edition of the *Birding Observer*.
- **Saturday, October 19th:** Beginning bird walk at Lee Metcalf NWR from 10am-Noon. Meet the field trip leader at the Refuge Visitor's Center.

Ecology and Conservation of Ferruginous Pygmy-Owls in the Sonoran Desert

Conservation and recovery of rare and declining species requires broad understandings of factors that affect distribution, abundance, and vital rates. Ferruginous Pygmy-Owls are residents across much of the lowland Neotropics north to southern Arizona and Texas. Although once common locally in southern Arizona, pygmy-owls have been extirpated from much of their historic range in Arizona due to habitat loss, were listed as endangered in 1997, then delisted for reasons unrelated to recovery in 2006. Aaron Flesch has studied pygmy-owls immediately adjacent to Arizona in northwest Mexico since 2000. On October 14th, Aaron will discuss the natural history and ecology of pygmy-owls and summarize aspects of this research. He will address how habitat and weather affect reproduction, how climate change is driving declines in abundance, and more generally how information on distribution and vital rates can be applied to conservation and recovery of this and other species.

Aaron D. Flesch is a doctoral student in the Division of Biological Sciences at University of Montana and a Senior Research Specialist in the School of Natural Resources and the Environment at University of Arizona. He earned his M.S. in Wildlife Ecology at the University of Arizona and B.A. in Environmental Studies at Prescott College and is in his last semester at UMT. Aaron is an applied population biologist and works on a broad range of questions. His dissertation research is focused on how processes such as dispersal and habitat selection drive patterns of animal distribution in fragmented landscapes. Aaron is passionate about field work and natural history, and he is committed to producing science that has both theoretical and applied value for conservation and management of natural systems.

Ferruginous
Pygmy-Owl



Help Save Paton's Birder Haven

By Pat Little, President



Cinnamon
Hummingbird

You may be familiar with Paton's Birder Haven in Patagonia, AZ. You may have been there or know birders who have been there. One of our board members got started in birding there. Its future is uncertain but funds are being raised to help preserve it.

The Paton's Birder Haven Story: Paton's Birder Haven had its start in 1974, when Wally and Marion—life-long bird-lovers—began to plant flowers and install water features on their property. They put up hummingbird feeders and had great success, attracting Violet-crowned Hummingbirds along with even rarer species like the Cinnamon Hummingbird and Plain-Capped Starthroat.

When the couple realized birders were crowding outside their fence to get a better view, the Patons opened the gate and welcomed them inside.

Over time, the Patons provided a tent for visiting birders, installed benches, and provided bird guides. They placed a chalkboard in the yard so daily sightings could be noted. On the gate, they installed a tin can called the “sugar fund” for donations to defray the cost of bird feedings.

The Patons have now passed on, creating an uncertain future for this birding landmark. The American Bird Conservancy is raising money to purchase the property and will then donate it to Tucson Audubon. Our Five Valleys Audubon board has decided to contribute \$100 from chapter funds towards the goal. If you would like to donate, visit <http://www.abcbirds.org/paton/> or mail a check to:

Paton's Birder Haven
c/o American Bird Conservancy
P.O. Box 249
The Plains, VA 20198

Field Trip

By Larry Weeks

Saturday, August 24, 2013: Migrating shorebirds were the primary focus of the August field trip to the old Smurfit-Stone mill site. On the second stop, we had excellent views of a western sandpiper, a Baird's sandpiper and 2 lesser yellowlegs. As we drove along a flooded sludge pond, we encountered 3 red-necked phalaropes in winter plumage, a red-necked grebe and several species of ducks.

At a second flooded sludge pond, there were several shorebirds but they were back-lit. So we relocated and walked along the east dike so we could get better light. We flushed 2 sandhill cranes and about 200 Canada geese on the walk in but the shorebirds stayed put. There were about a dozen western sandpipers, at least one semipalmated sandpiper, several Baird's sandpipers, 2 long-billed dowitchers, killdeer, and spotted sandpipers.

We then drove to the south end of the property. There must have been 15 Lewis's woodpeckers along the Clark Fork River. A peregrine falcon was roosting near the rock cliffs across the river. However, the lack of their presence during the breeding season indicated that they did not nest there this year.

A walk around the south habitat produced yellow and yellow-rumped warblers, Cassin's vireo, gray catbirds, cedar waxwings, wood ducks, and a sharp-shinned hawk. We then searched the north end of the property for a couple of solitary sandpipers that were seen the day before, but we were unsuccessful. There were 9 participants on the tour and we identified 59 species.

Writers Wanted

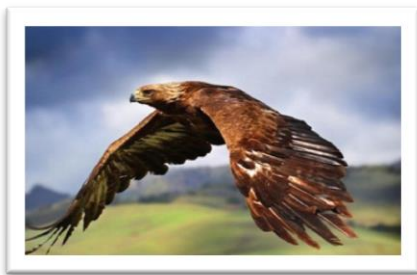
The Five Valleys Audubon Society encourages everyone to submit articles to our newsletter.

We welcome articles about birds and other wildlife, environmental conservation, birding hotspots/travel and anything else of interest to your Audubon friends.

Monthly deadlines are the 15th of each month. Please submit articles via email to our editor, Beverly Orth Geoghegan at orthbev@hotmail.com. And of course, please let the editor know if you any questions. We look forward to hearing from you.

Eagle Observers Wanted

Raptor View Research Institute is looking for volunteers to help with eagle counting this fall. No experience necessary, you will learn from the experts! For many years RVRI has conducted a count of migrating Golden Eagles at Nora Ridge, near Lincoln. This year they are expanding to also count at Rogers Pass, a few miles to the East, and thus to get a better idea of the total number of eagles migrating south along the Rocky Mountains. This is an opportunity to get some great close-up looks at eagles in flight, and to learn how to identify them from a distance. If you're interested, contact Fred Tilly at fredtil@yahoo.com to find out more and get on the schedule. This is in addition to our chapter field trip to RVRI's eagle banding operation.



Golden Eagle

Go Green and Save !

Do you want to help Five Valleys Audubon Society save money, paper and volunteers' time?

Please consider viewing your **Birding Observer** online. In addition your online copy will have 'color' content and you will receive your newsletter much earlier than the mailed hard copy!

If you can **Go Green** and wish to receive your **Birding Observer** only via email, just send us a request with your name to Vick Applegate at k7vk@arri.net.

You can also always find your current newsletter on our website at: www.fvaudubon.org. Thanks!



Join Five Valleys Audubon Society

Please enroll me as a Chapter member of the Five Valleys Audubon Society. I will receive the *Birding Observer* and may participate in all local Chapter activities. I understand that my dues remain entirely with the Chapter.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Please note: The newsletter will be delivered electronically unless requested otherwise.

\$15 is enclosed for Chapter-only membership

An additional sum of \$_____ is also included to support Chapter activities.

Please make check payable to the Five Valleys Audubon Society and mail to:

Five Valleys Audubon Society
PO Box 8425
Missoula, MT 59807

Join National Audubon Society & Five Valleys Audubon Society

Please enroll me as a member of the National Audubon Society and my local Chapter. I will receive the *Audubon* magazine and the *Birding Observer*, and I may participate in all local Chapter activities. I understand that my dues are shared between NAS and my local Chapter.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Please note: The newsletter will be delivered electronically unless requested otherwise.

\$20 for a 1-year individual or family membership

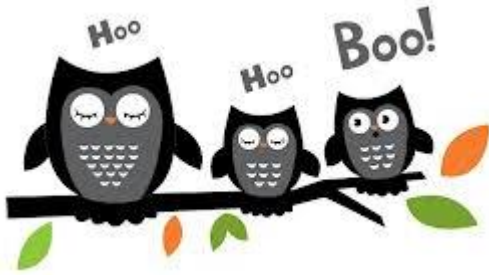
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Please make the check payable to National Audubon Society and mail to:

National Audubon Society
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Palm Coast, FL 32142-2250

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 PO Box 8425, Missoula, MT 59807
www.fvaudubon.org

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