

Portneuf Valley Audubon Society News

November 2018, Vol. 45, #12

PVAS website: <http://pvaudubon.org>

Facebook: Portneuf Valley Audubon Society

PO Box 32, Pocatello, ID 83204-0032



Flammulated Owl photo by Leon Powers.

November 15, Thursday, Monthly Meeting
"Adventures Studying Flammulated Owls in Idaho's Sublett Mountains" by Leon Powers
Time: 7:00 p.m.
Where: Marshall Public Library Community Room.

Dr. Leon Powers will talk about his past studies of the Flammulated Owl in Idaho's Sublett Mountains. His book, "SEVEN SUMMERS: Adventures Studying Flammulated Owls in Idaho's Sublett Mountains" will be available for purchase for \$19 and for signing by Dr. Powers.

Powers, Ph.D., is Professor Emeritus at Northwest Nazarene University in Nampa, Idaho. In addition to various biology courses he taught Birds of Prey classes for 30 years.

Currently, he is "Doc Hawk," nature writer for Boy Scouts' Boys' Life Magazine, and is the author of the nonfiction books, "A Hawk in the Sun," "Dead Owls Flying," "The Forgotten Expedition," and "Doc Hawk Stories for Everyone."

According to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Flammulated Owls are a small owl of mountain pine forests and is common in scattered localities through the west. It has short, feathered ear tufts, dark eyes and is gray or brownish gray.

This owl eats very few vertebrates at all, and subsists nearly entirely on insects.

November 17, Field Trip
American Falls Trout Farm
Time: 8 a.m. to noon

Fearless leader Chuck Trost will lead a group to the trout farm to look at our feeders, and to the Snake River to look for Loons and Scoters and whatever other birds cross our paths.

Plan to meet by the IMNH at 8:00 a.m. to carpool for the trip. Please dress for the weather and bring a friend and some snacks. We'll be home by noon.

To Carpool: Meet at 8 a.m. in the lower ISU Campus parking lot by the Bison Sculpture behind the Idaho Museum of Natural History Building (5th and Dillon).

October 20, Field Trip Report

Seven of us cleared the paths and filled the feeders at American Falls trout farm in record time. Thanks everyone! After working we went down Pipeline Road to the Snake River and we saw about 20 species of birds, including a Surf Scoter and two Great Egrets. On the way home a female Great-tailed Grackle lit on the hood of Frank and Nancy Renn's car while they were buying some sweets in American Falls.

Other Upcoming Events this fall/winter

• **December 13, Audubon/Watershed Guardians Holiday Party Potluck at the Elks Lodge**
Details to follow in next newsletter but mark your calendar.

• **December 15, Pocatello Christmas Bird Count**

• **December 22, American Falls Reservoir Christmas Bird Count**

Please contact Chuck Trost (208-233-4538) for group and route assignments. We will meet at Chuck's home (225 N. Lincoln) at 6:30 after each count for a chili feed and a count tally. Thanks in advance to everyone for your help!

• **January 12, 2019, Annual Bald Eagle Count from American Falls Dam to Raft River.**

Stay tuned for details.

President's Letter from the Portneuf Valley Audubon Society President Barb North

Congratulations to David Bush for a very nice Thesis Defense: Incubation Behavior and Genetic Attributes of Trumpeter Swans Restored to Grays Lake National Wildlife Refuge! He was thorough and prepared. It was a joy to hear about the results and conclusions of his research.

PVAS helped support this research; we are very happy to have played a part in your project. Thanks, David. We wish you the best in your future.

On other notes, we are coming up to the holiday season. There is the Thanksgiving Day Bird Count, Christmas Bird Counts, and our Holiday Party on Dec 13.

Thanksgiving Bird Counts are to take place on Thanksgiving Day. That's on November 22 this year. Counts are to last only one hour and are to include birds within a 15-foot diameter circle.

For the Thanksgiving Bird Count, the time of day and location of the count are chosen by the counter, but the same count area should be used each year. If you have not done this count before, you may want to make a trial count beforehand, which will help make changes for the real one on Thanksgiving.

Most folks pick a spot that is easily seen from some comfortable place by a window, which make this count one that can be made in comfort regardless of the weather outside.

Count circles frequently include something which attracts birds — feeders, bird bath, vegetation, etc. The Count Circle can be considered a cylinder, since birds passing through the circle/cylinder can be counted. Do not count those flocks of geese or the soaring hawks or vultures seen way up there. Limit the height of your cylinder to where you can be sure the birds went through it.

Count individual birds only once! Ten visits by one chickadee is still just one chickadee. To count species which appear in flocks, make a count each time they appear (or every so often if they hang around) but use only the highest number made for one of those counts as your tally of that species for the hour. I will have some data sheets available at the meeting, or you can google Thanksgiving Bird Count and pick up one yourself.

Our Christmas Bird Counts are organized by Dr. Chuck Trost. You can contact him to get more

information about time, date, and available routes. His number is 208-233-4538.

Our Holiday Party will be at the Elk's Lodge, downstairs, on Thursday, December 13. This will be a potluck. More information will be coming at the meeting and in the next newsletter. We will have our White Albatross Gift Exchange and we are talking about a book exchange. Stay tuned for more info.

Please come out to hear Leon Powers present his newest book on Flammulated Owls! He is an entertaining speaker with many stories to tell and many experiences to share.

See you at the meeting!

Barb North

**From National Audubon Society's Website:
Make Your Own Suet (Visit <https://idahostateu.com/AudubonSuet> for more info and to see a video on making the suet)**

With this vegetarian version of suet (traditionally it's made from rendered animal fat) you can provide the perfect winter substitute for birds that normally feast on insects.

This lipid-rich treat can help prepare year-round residents for the long winter and is quite the draw for birds such as woodpeckers, wrens, chickadees, nuthatches, and titmice. Check out this recipe, inspired by "The Misfit Baker" blog.

Materials:

- 1 1/2 cups shortening (look for palm oil free options)
- 3/4 cups nut butter (any kind)
- 3 1/2 cups wild bird seed
- 1 cup quick oats
- 1/2 cup corn meal
- Ice cube tray

Steps:

1. Mix the dry ingredients of bird seed, oats, and corn meal together and set aside.
2. Combine the shortening and nut butter in a separate bowl and melt. Stir until completely combined.
3. Pour the melted mixture into the dry ingredients and stir until combined.
4. Spoon mixture into the ice cube tray.
5. Freeze for one to two hours and place in your suet feeder!

Note: Not recommended for outdoor temperatures above 50 degrees.

From the National Audubon Society's Newsroom,
(www.audubon.org/news/audubon-invites-you-join-119th-annual-christmas-bird-count)

Audubon Invites You to Join the 119th Annual Christmas Bird Count
Between December 14 and January 5,
participants will be part of the world's longest-running wildlife census, which contributes invaluable data to bird population research.

NEW YORK — For the 119th year, the National Audubon Society is organizing its annual [Christmas Bird Count](#). Between December 14 and January 5, tens of thousands of bird-loving volunteers will participate in counts across the Western Hemisphere. The data collected by participants continues to contribute to one of only two large existing pools of information notifying ornithologists and conservation biologists about what conservation action is required to protect birds and the places they need.

The Christmas Bird Count is one of the [longest-running wildlife censuses](#) in the world. Each individual count takes place in a 15-mile-wide circle and is led by a compiler responsible for organizing volunteers and submitting observations to Audubon. Within each circle, participants tally all birds seen or heard that day—not just the species but total numbers to provide a clear idea of the health of that particular population.

“The Christmas Bird Count is a tradition that everyone can participate in,” said Geoff LeBaron, Audubon’s Christmas Bird Count Director. “Adding observations to more than a century of data helps scientists and conservationists discover trends that make our work more impactful. Participating in the Christmas Bird Count is a fun tradition for anyone and everyone.”

Christmas Bird Count data have been used in more than 300 peer-reviewed articles, including 2014’s Audubon [Birds and Climate Change Report](#), which found that more than half of the bird species in North America are threatened by a changing climate. When combined with other surveys such as the [Breeding Bird Survey](#), it provides a picture of how the continent’s bird populations have changed in time and space over the past hundred years. The long-term perspective is vital for conservationists. It informs strategies to protect birds and their habitat, and helps identify environmental issues with implications for people as well.

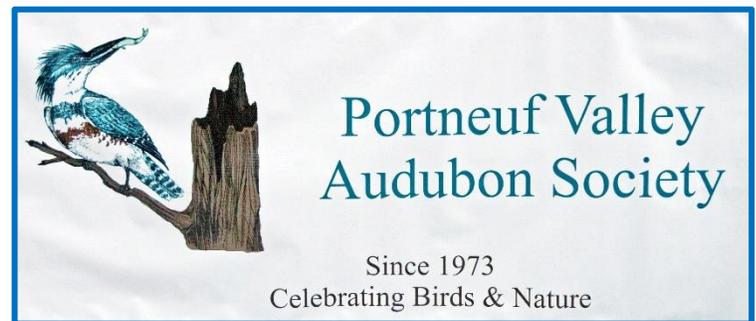
Last year, the 118th Christmas Bird Count included a record-setting 2585 count circles, with 1957 counts in the United States, 463 in Canada and 165 in Latin America, the Caribbean, Bermuda and the Pacific Islands. This was the eighth-straight year of record-breaking counts.

In total, 76,987 observers out in the field and watching feeders tallied up 59,242,067 birds representing 2673 different species and 426 identifiable forms—about one-quarter of the world’s known avifauna. Approximately 5 percent of the North American landmass was surveyed by the Christmas Bird

Count. Last year included a new species for the entire Christmas Bird Count database: a [Mistle Thrush](#) representing the first ever appearance of that species in North America.

Continuing the disturbing finding from last year was the continued decline of the [Northern Bobwhite](#), the only native quail in the eastern United States. This species has essentially disappeared from the Northeast and faces massive declines due to loss of shrubland habitat exacerbated by increased droughts. Other species in decline include [American Kestrels](#), our smallest falcon, and the [Loggerhead Shrike](#), a predatory songbird that impales its prey on thorns. While the reasons for these declines is poorly understood, scientists suspect loss of habitat as well as susceptibility to pesticide use.

Beginning on Christmas Day in 1900, Dr. Frank M. Chapman, founder of Bird-Lore – which evolved into [Audubon magazine](#) -- proposed a new holiday tradition that would count birds during the holidays rather than hunt them. Conservation was in its beginning stages in that era, and many observers and scientists were becoming concerned about declining bird populations. So began the Christmas Bird Count. 119 years later, the tradition continues and still manages to bring out the best in people.



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New or Renewing National Audubon Member: mail form and your \$20.00 check directly to the New York address. This includes membership in PVAS.

MAKE YOUR CHECK PAYABLE TO THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY.

**Attn: Chance Mueleck
NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY
225 Varick Street, 7th Floor
New York, NY 10014**

PVAS CHAPTER LOCAL MEMBERSHIP ONLY, \$15.00 for one year. Make your check payable to the Portneuf Valley Audubon Society.

Mail form and your check to Frank Renn, Membership Chair, PO Box 32, Pocatello, ID 83204-0032

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