



## *PARTNERS IN FLIGHT*

### OREGON-WASHINGTON CHAPTER

<http://www.orwapif.org> Fall 2005

Prepared by Cathy Flick. Submissions welcome at: [cflick@fs.fed.us](mailto:cflick@fs.fed.us)

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- ***Feature Article: Shrubsteppe Bird Research Continues at the Hanford Reach National Monument***

Heidi Newsome, US Fish & Wildlife Service, [heidi\\_newsome@fws.gov](mailto:heidi_newsome@fws.gov) and  
Aaron Holmes, PRBO Conservation Science

The 2005 field season marks the second season of work on a three-year study to assess shrub-steppe bird communities and habitat associations on the Hanford Reach National Monument (HRNM). The study began in 2004 and was developed in partnership with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Migratory Birds Office, U.S.G.S. Biological Resources Division and the Point Reyes Bird Observatory (PRBO) in order to better characterize avian use of shrub-steppe habitat types, and potential response of avian communities to management activities. The Science Support program of the U.S. Geological Survey funds this study. The study focuses on upland breeding migratory song birds of the shrub-steppe ecosystem. Specific objectives of the study are to 1) map relative abundances of shrub-steppe birds across the Saddle Mountain and Wahluke Units of the HRNM; 2) compare mean abundance of each species across the five major vegetation cover types; 3) create a model of habitat affiliations using detailed vegetation measurements and 4) establish baseline data for a long-term monitoring program.

The methods of this study were designed specifically to address the objectives using a point-count methodology, and vegetation measurements that will allow predictions of avian species abundance based on understory and overstory plant composition. This information will aid in understanding how bird communities differ among cover types and will allow predictions for how they might change with management actions. Developing this baseline data is critical to planning land use activities while conserving populations of breeding shrub-steppe bird species. The data from this study should allow HRNM to detect trends (whether the populations are increasing, decreasing, or remaining stable) in abundance of shrub-steppe birds. Additionally, the information will allow managers to track responses to management actions, for example, how bird communities would respond to a prescribed fire, or to habitat changes due to wild fire. Finally, the data allow for an adaptive management approach to shrub-steppe restoration. This adaptive approach will allow projects to be modified or improved to further conservation of birds on the Monument if the response of bird species is

different than expected.

The study is part of the larger Sagebrush Bird Conservation Network (SBCN) <http://www.sagebrushbird.org/> an effort to coordinate and disseminate information related to shrub-steppe bird research in the Intermountain West. The SBCN is committed to the preservation and enhancement of shrub-steppe bird populations and the sagebrush ecosystems they depend on. The goal of the network is to improve coordination among individuals and institutions that conduct research on sagebrush associated birds and provide science based recommendations and decision support tools for land managers.

The data collection methods allow for this study to be used in comparison to other study areas, potentially allowing for conclusions to be applied at a broader scale in the arid west.

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## • **Feature Article: Leavenworth Spring Bird Fest**

Karen Haire, Coordinator [karenhaire@earthlink.net](mailto:karenhaire@earthlink.net), (509) 548-4566



The third annual Leavenworth Spring Bird Fest was May 6 - 8, 2005. Throughout the weekend, event and trip leaders used every opportunity to raise awareness that neotropical migratory songbirds come to Central Washington for a very important, and brief, part of their year – to breed and fledge. They make the trek from Mexico and Latin America specifically for the fine habitat and choice cuisine the Wenatchee River Valley offers. By showcasing our mountains, rivers, and forests -- from Fish Lake to Blackbird Island to Confluence Park -- Bird Fest 2005 encouraged citizens to value natural resources and to protect the region's habitat.

The Leavenworth area, on the east slope of the Cascades, is an ideal location for a birding festival. The diversity of habitats allows for a variety of species – ponderosa pines are homes for white-headed woodpecker and calliope hummingbird, sub-alpine firs host blue grouse and the shrub-steppe to the east has sage sparrow, Swainson's hawk and sage thrasher. More than 150 species were observed during the 44 field trips at the 2005 Bird Fest.

An important part of Bird Fest is the education program. All third-graders in the Cascade School District learned from a fascinating curriculum specially designed for Bird Fest and enjoyed a visit from a naturalist in their classroom. The program culminated in a field day in

Leavenworth's Waterfront Park, observing birds and playing educational games. Bud Anderson of the Falcon Research Group brought a live red-tailed hawk and American kestrel to the event, which was a highlight for many of the children.

The Leavenworth Spring Bird Fest is a cooperative event, with talents from government agencies, non-profit conservation and arts organizations, and the local businesses. Join us next year for the Leavenworth Spring Bird Fest on May 18 - 21, 2006. For more information, fly to [www.leavenworthspringbirdfest.com](http://www.leavenworthspringbirdfest.com)

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- ***Upcoming Meetings and Workshops...***

**October 4 - 6, 2005: Pacific Coast Joint Venture (PCJV) & Northern Pacific Shorebird Working Group - Joint Meeting at La Conner Country Inn, La Conner, WA.** This meeting will include an annual meeting of the Northern Pacific Coast Shorebird Working Group and a focus meeting on upland habitats and the landbird component of the North Puget Sound PCJV Plan. Meeting objectives include 1) learning more about PCJV Implementation Plan updates and how the shorebird and landbird groups can assist and integrate with that effort, and 2) focusing discussions on regional shorebird and landbird conservation and management activities. Contact: Sue Thomas, 503-231-6164, [IMBD@fws.gov](mailto:IMBD@fws.gov)

**October 26, 2005: Purple Martin Western Working Group Meeting at the Gifford Pinchot National Forest Headquarters in Vancouver, WA.** This meeting shall review the breeding season's successes for martins across the Pacific Northwest (British Columbia, WA, OR, and CA). Coordination for color banding martins during 2006 at specific colonies will be finalized in order to observe potential movements across geographic population centers. **Contact:** Stan Kostka, <mailto:lynnandstan@earthlink.net>

**November 2-4, 2005: Partners-In-Flight Western Working Group Meeting in Lockeford, CA.** This will be a monitoring coordination meeting. The agenda is forthcoming. **Contact:** Kim Kreitinger, 415-868-0655 extension 320

**November 10, 2005: OR/WA Partners-in-Flight Meeting in Sandy, OR.** The time and location are yet to be determined and will be distributed on the OR/WA PIF email list and posted on the OR/WA PIF website in September. **Contact:** Jaime Stephens, 541-201-0866, <mailto:jlh@klamathbird.org>

**February 27 – March 2, 2006: Long-billed Curlew Working Group Meeting in Boulder, CO.** The Long-billed Curlew working group is being formed to advance research on this highly imperiled species. This working group will have a priority-setting meeting during the "Shorebird Science in Western Hemisphere" meeting in Boulder, Colorado, USA 27 February - 2 March. Please let us know if (a) you would like to be part of this group, including participation in decision making and being informed of activities, and (b) intend to attend the Boulder meeting and would like to present a paper on Long-billed Curlew research as part of a symposium we are organizing. **Contact:** Lew Oring, <mailto:oring@cabnr.unr.edu>

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• *Synopsis of Some Recently Held Meetings and Workshops...*

**Oregon/Washington and California PIF Working Together – The ORWACA Meeting by John D. Alexander and Jaime L. Stephens**

In April 2005 the Oregon/Washington and California Partners In Flight chapters held a workshop to establish a strategy for implementing regional conservation plans within current land management policies. More than 100 forest administrators, biologists, managers, and researchers took part in this workshop focusing on how Partners In Flight (PIF) products (e.g. broad-based conservation plans, issue-specific decision support tools, and monitoring and research techniques) can be integrated with agency policies and land management plans. The workshop consisted of a series of presentations and discussions regarding:

- Application of monitoring and research to forest bird conservation;
- Federal management regulations and policies;
- Use of national and regional PIF bird conservation plans;
- Integration of bird monitoring within the adaptive management framework;
- Quantitative habitat and population objectives; and
- Useful products for forest bird conservation.

The workshop resulted in a conservation planning strategy that includes the following three areas where efforts will be focused to advance the integration of bird conservation objectives and land management planning:

- 1) Products that present the link between specific management issues, science-based results, and bird conservation objectives. Such products will provide decision support tools and best management practices documents designed to help land managers make informed decisions regarding land management planning and bird conservation objectives.
- 2) A white paper including examples of 'success stories' outlining how science-based Partners In Flight products were used to make land management decisions that benefited focal species, as measured by bird monitoring techniques.
- 3) Opportunities for linking PIF objectives with priority land management issues and projects within revisions of Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service management plans and integration of Partner In Flight monitoring techniques within agency effectiveness monitoring programs.

Affiliates of the two Partners In Flight chapters are actively implementing this strategy by continuing to work with land managers, researchers and outreach professionals. As we continue to foster strong partnership, the best available science is being linked with priority land management issues to enable the implementation of national and regional bird conservation objectives in Oregon, Washington, and California.

### **Bird Monitoring Techniques & Vocalization Training Summary by CJ Flick**

The *Bureau of Land Management* and the *Forest Service* have hosted this workshop annually since 1994. It rotates to different geographic areas each year. This year it was held in the Columbia River Gorge between May 9-13th. The 2006 workshop will likely take place in eastern Washington or western Idaho.

The highly trained instructors provide current information and demonstrations on bird survey techniques (area-search, constant-effort mist net, point-count, line transect, nest search), review bird vocalizations used to conduct various surveys, and provide feedback to participants who bring along their bird survey projects. Barb Bresson always includes guest speakers that showcase some of the local area's bird research. Contact Barb Bresson 541-503-668-1414, <mailto:bkottbresson@fs.fed.us> for information on the 2006 training.

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## • ***Contributions to the Newsletter and Website***

### **Newsletter**

Submissions for to the Oregon/Washington Partners in Flight newsletter are welcome throughout the year. If you are interested in preparing an article or would like to submit an announcement please contact Cathy Flick ([cflick@fs.fed.us](mailto:cflick@fs.fed.us)).

### **Website**

Likewise, contributions to the Oregon/Washington Partners in Flight website are welcome throughout the year. To submit materials, please contact Dan Barton (<mailto:daniel.barton@umontana.edu>).

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## • ***New Internet Resources***

**Raptor Information System (RIS)** <http://ris.wr.usgs.gov/> is a keyword catalog of over 33,000 references about the biology and management of birds of prey. It includes books, articles, theses, government reports, and other gray literature regarding raptors worldwide. You can search by author, title, keyword, year of publication... or any combination of these fields. You can also search for articles on a particular raptor species by typing in the genus and the species

or by referring to an extensive 4,000 keyword list.

USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center made available online the **North American Breeding Bird Atlas (BBA) Viewer** [http://mbirdims.fws.gov/nbii\\_bba](http://mbirdims.fws.gov/nbii_bba) and **BBA Explorer** <http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bba/> providing access to results from multiple state and provincial Breeding Bird Atlas projects. These atlases are population surveys that assess the distribution of breeding birds based on a “block” system, with blocks about 2-3 miles on a side. The **BBA Viewer** is a mapping application that allows users to map species results from multiple Breeding Bird Atlases in North America for the first time. The **BBA Explorer** Web site allows users to learn about methods used in each Breeding Bird Atlas project, and to retrieve Atlas project results in a tabular form by species, block, or region (e.g., by county).

The online tools are intended to complement the final publications themselves (which provide informative analyses and discussion). As of May 2005, the BBA tools contained data for 16 states and one Canadian province. Additional states have expressed interest in participating in this effort to develop a continental repository for Breeding Bird Atlases in North America that increasingly could serve as a resource for regional and national bird conservation planning and evaluation.

The *Institute for Bird Populations* is an update to the Avian Demographics Query Interface, <http://www.birdpop.org/nbii/NBIIHome.asp>, a data retrieval Web site providing bird population demographic results from the **Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship Program (MAPS)**. Updated survival rate estimates and productivity indices based on ten years (1992-2001) of bird banding data are now available online for more than 150 species of North American landbirds. These landbird demographic results can be retrieved via the Avian Demographics Query Interface by species and region -- and are a useful information resource that is not available elsewhere.

The North American **Breeding Bird Survey (BBS)** <http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bbs/results/> is a long-term, large-scale, international avian monitoring program initiated in 1966 to track the status and trends of North American bird populations. BBS data were critical in the development of the recent State of the Birds report <http://www.audubon.org/bird/stateofthebirds/index.html> and they also provide the foundation for many of the Partners-In-Flight bird population estimates.

Each year during the height of the avian breeding season, typically in June, participants skilled in avian identification collect bird population data along roadside survey routes. Each survey route is 24.5 miles long with stops at 0.5-mile intervals. At each stop, a 3-minute point count is conducted. During the count, every bird seen within a 0.25-mile radius or heard is recorded. Surveys start one-half hour before local sunrise and take about 5 hours to complete.

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- **Recent Notices**

**Proceedings of the Third International Partners in Flight Conference held at Asilomar, CA in 2002.** We now expect the publication to be out by the end of August.

C. John Ralph and Terrell D. Rich, editors. 2005. Bird Conservation Implementation and Integration in the Americas: Proceedings of the Third International Partners in Flight Conference 2002. Gen. Tech Rep. PSW-GTR-191. Albany, CA: Pacific Southwest Research Station, Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture. Two volumes.

**International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD) Themes for 2006 and 2007** The date of IMBD 2006 is May 13 (as always, the second Saturday in May). As you know, IMBD coordinators work together each year to select a theme that will reach the many different audiences that celebrate IMBD. Based on feedback from the organizations that sponsor IMBD, we have chosen the **Boreal Forest to be the theme for 2006**. The importance of this region to migratory birds will be celebrated in the educational materials and art of the upcoming IMBD season. If you'd like to learn more about the boreal (get a headstart for next year!) check out <http://www.borealbirds.org/>; there is a lot of great information to be found there, and a cool interactive map that you might be seeing in some of IMBD's own materials next spring.

Our program has begun to think even farther ahead: we are also excited to announce that we have selected **Climate Change as the theme for IMBD 2007**. Knowing the theme a year and a half in advance will allow extra time to explore and develop this complex theme and the many issues involved.

As always, we look forward to your comments and input. **Contact:** Joy Korones, 703-358-2318, <mailto:IMBD@fws.gov>

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