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Camas National Wildlife Refuge is 36 miles north of Idaho Falls on I-15. Exit at Hamer and follow signs east, north, and west over I-15 to the refuge, about 5 miles. The mailing address is 2150 E. 2350 N. Hamer, Idaho 83425. Refuge Headquarters phone: 208 662-5423. The Refuge Manager is Rob Larrañaga.

The Migratory Landbird Research, conducted for the fourth successful season by Dr. Jay Carlisle and his team from Idaho Bird Observatory, Boise State University, concluded the last mistnetting, banding, and study session on June 15, 2007. Studies were completed in the fall of 2005 during songbird migrations, the spring and fall of 2006, and the spring of 2007. We hope to replicate the study in five years. We now have baseline data and can compare future measurements with changes in native vegetation due to replacement of invasive shrubs and trees with native plants, as well as changes in the data observed at Lucky Peak IBO banding station near Boise. Changes in specie numbers and migration routes in Idaho can be observed, as well as irruptions, and increments or losses in weight gain and condition of migratory birds as, we hope, functions of changes in vegetation on the refuge.

In spring of 2007, they netted 1,889 individuals of 56 species, compared to 2,322 of 71 species in the spring of 2006. The decline in abundance and diversity reflects the two month season, and probably the absence of storm fronts coming through the refuge in 2007 compared to several "fall-out producing storms in the spring 2006 that brought us more birds of more species on those days following storms," according to Dr. Carlisle. "All species that we caught in '06 but missed in '07 were represented by 4 or fewer individuals except for Red-breasted Nuthatch (20 in '06) which is an irruptive specie. We caught all of the usual species and most of them in comparable numbers. An interesting illustration of differences between spring '07 and spring '06 is the number of Western Tanagers (59 in '07 vs. 201 in '06) We caught over 60% of our tanagers in '06 on three post storm days. We noted significant declines in Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Cordilleran Flycatchers, and Swainson's Thrushes as well", not so clearly related to weather conditions. "The top ten species in '07 were Hermit Thrush (376) Wilson's Warbler (257), Swainson's Thrush (191), MacGillivray's Warbler (142), Dusky Flycatcher (73), American Robin (73) and Western Tanager (59)."

Unusual species included Wood Thrush, Magnolia Warbler, Black-and-White Warbler, and Ovenbird in the nets, and observations of Brown Thrashers, Northern Parula, Harris Sparrow, and Golden-Crowned Sparrow.

Interest in Dr. Carlisle's summaries of previous banding efforts has been impressive, resulting in publication and peer reviews. We feel his efforts will have a very significant impact on assessing the value of changes in vegetation and other conditions on CNWR. The research team has been gracious and welcoming to many elementary student, Boy Scout, BYU Idaho, ISU, and Audubon groups during the course of the research. Their educational outreach has reached many groups in eastern Idaho and has heightened awareness of the value of the refuge for migrants and research. If you are interested in a copy of his final summary for 2007 or other data he is processing, or wish to add your thanks for their efforts, you can contact him at JayCarlisle@boisestate.edu



On June 15th Dr. Jay Carlisle, far left, gave a Conservation Biology Class from the University of Montana-Western, in Dillon, Montana a tour of the bird banding research project and the surrounding area with mist nets and new plantings. The group seemed to very much enjoy him and the opportunity to observe the banding.

Carlos Valeris! Dr. Carlisle advertised in Central and South America and adjacent areas for a researcher with the appropriate background who might be interested in joining the Idaho Bird Observatory research team at CNWR. With a view to developing ties to a scientific community studying bird migrations at both ends of the journey, he hoped to cultivate interest and cooperation in the study in Mexico or Central America, where most of our landbirds winter. Our astounding luck: he was contacted by Carlos Valeris, associated with La Universidad del Zulia, in Venezuela, where Carlos lives near the border with Columbia.



L to R, Dr. Jay Carlisle of Idaho Bird Observatory, Carlos Valeris of Venezuela, and Dick Munoz, Project Leader for Southeast Idaho National Wildlife Refuge Complex.

Carlos had the interest, dedication, and expertise to become a huge asset to the research effort, as well as a valued friend to the refuge staff and research team. He is fluent in English and skilled in ornithology as well as soccer, which was a huge attraction to various children (and adults!) who came to treasure him. Thanks most to the efforts of Jay Carlisle, his Visa, transportation, and small compensation for his effort was obtained. The dates of his permitted stay in the US allowed him to participate in the Camas NWR study, spend a few weeks at Hagerman Fossil Beds NM, and assist Dr. Carlisle in the training of the fall research team for Lucky Peak before he must leave. Carlos says his favorite things about the US are our people and our food! We are so grateful for the opportunity to know him and the quality of his work and will miss him enormously.

Native Trees! Camas National Wildlife Refuge is an oasis in the midst of sagebrush and agricultural development and migrants are attracted to the optimal habitats on Camas. Efforts to enhance songbird habitat resulted in over 400 native fruit bearing trees and shrubs, many now over 7 feet tall, planted in 2005 to replace the invasive Russian-olive trees. The majority of the 75 willow and cottonwood trees slated for planting this year are already in the ground, thanks to funding by a USFWS Challenge Cost Share Grant, and the efforts of resident volunteers, and staff. Portneuf Valley Audubon Society



members assisted resident volunteers with the laborious task of installing weed barrier fabric. Menan Boy Scout member Allen Echman and his labor crew contributed their work and over \$350 in materials to construct protective fencing. These trees will help replace the drought stricken native cottonwood and willows. Stopover sites, areas where birds rest and replenish nutrition during migration, are considered one of the most important habitat types in a bird's life cycle.

International Migratory Bird Day at CNWR included several popular and productive events on Saturday May 12. Individuals and groups had an opportunity to experience, appreciate, and learn about the wonders of birds and bird migration while visiting the banding station near headquarters. In addition, twenty-eight volunteers, compiling sixty hours

of service, completed the remaining 500 feet of the ¼+ mile "Scout" birding trail, making it wheelchair accessible. Volunteers also assisted with the installation of weed barrier fabric around the newly planted trees. Contributing organizations included Boy Scouts, New Scouts, and Webelos from Hamer, and the Portneuf Valley Audubon Society from Pocatello, which purchased the fabric as well.

Fire! The first wildfire of the season occurred in late May and consumed about 13 acres. Planned burns prevent some of the spread, but the drought and lack of a resident firefighting team inspires concern for the whole area. Firefighters from the local communities, other refuges, the BLM and neighboring farms have been generous with their time and skills to protect Camas from what seem to be inevitable fires.

Updated Camas NWR bird List! On May 26th a group of seasoned Idaho "birders" familiar with the Camas NWR and it's bird guests, as well as Rob Larrañaga and Dr. Jay Carlisle, met together for the purpose of updating the list of bird species found at Camas NWR, and the designations as to season and rarity. Prior to the meeting all were treated to a pre-Memorial Day cookout. The group included Dr. Chuck Trost from Pocatello PVAS, Darren Clark from Rexburg, Cliff Wiese from Island Park, and KIT Struthers from the Snake River Audubon Society, Idaho Falls. The bird list was expanded by over 90 species, and designations as to rarity and residency were updated as well with the help of a summary of species

noted in the Refuge manager's notes from 1937, when the Refuge was established, to the present prepared by a former volunteer, Elizabeth Smith. This document proved extremely valuable during this exercise. The Bird List is in process of review by the participating team and will form the nucleus of the new refuge wildlife list. A Watchable Wildlife matching grant from the Idaho Department of Fish and Game spurred this long awaited project.



Above, L to R, Kit Struthers, Teresa Mathis, Darren Clark, Cliff Wiess, (Rob Larrenaga behind Chuck) and Chuck Trost discuss the revisions to the Camas NWR bird list with Dr. Jay Carlisle (not seen to left) on May 26, 2007.

Appreciation of our Volunteers! It would seem that **Sharon and John Dollar** have set the standard for what is becoming the legendary excellence of resident volunteers who have helped so much to continue the projects and the maintenance of Camas NWR in a time when funding and staffing have suffered significantly from Federal Budget cuts. Their contributions continue and have been discussed at length in earlier Newsletters. Suffice it to say we continue to value them and their service. They are amazing! A recognition and appreciation picnic was held at Sid Brown's beautiful Medicine Creek property on June 14th to honor Jay Carlisle's Idaho Bird Observatory research team, who concluded their netting efforts of June 15th, the Dollars, some local veteran volunteers, as well as two new couples who are serving as resident volunteers. **Dave Ewaldt and Dianne Parrot** from Arizona were here for the duration of the bird banding. They spend most of the year travelling in their motorhome, spend winters in Mexico, and heard about the Camas Banding research while working at Columbia NWR. They have worked at Yellowstone, Malheur NWR in Oregon where they hosted the Visitor Center, Glacier NP, and next summer plan to volunteer in Maine. After a career as a CPA with General Motors Insurance, Dianne became an avid birder on retirement. Dave, an engineer, laughs and says his retirement is devoted to taking Dianne wherever she wants to bird, but he too has worked on GPS mapping, building repair, weed control around the new trees, and supporting Dianne's banding efforts with the research team. Dave enjoys new fiction, enjoys Camas NWR and all others, and has enjoyed being here long enough to feel he knows people in Hamer, especially the Library staff whom he has met in the process of reading "eight or ten books" since their arrival in Idaho. He commented that they have driven over 10,000 miles in Mexico in four winters, and enjoys that experience very much as well. Dianne added that she has particularly enjoyed Carlos Valeris who has tutored her in the Spanish language during their stay. Dianne also enjoys work on her genealogy and appreciated the proximity to Salt Lake City where she was able to pursue that interest as well as the

birding. They left Camas with the completion of the Bird banding, headed out to Yellowstone. They will be missed **Bob and Pat Brandt** from Auburn, Washington visited Dave and Dianne at Camas NER, love it, donated \$50 to PVAS for the support of Camas, and plan to return as resident volunteers in August. We thank them for their interest and generosity and look forward to their return! **Donn Larson**, of Idaho Falls, has continued to capture the unique beauty of Camas NWR in all it's seasons for the people of eastern Idaho through his spectacular photographs with articles in the *Idaho Falls Post Register*, the *Pocatello Idaho State Journal*, and other area newspapers. He continues to maintain the educational interpretive signs along the wildlife viewing routes on the refuge and has contributed his photo artistry to the Kiosk and has contributed hundreds of hours and considerable expense to bringing the treasures of Camas to the residents and eastern Idaho and visitors alike. We have appreciated his artistry and generosity for years. **Joe and Linda Noll** and their black Labrador Retriever, **Joss**, come to Camas NWR from Albany, Georgia. The Nolls retired three years ago after Joe's career as a mechanical engineer with Proctor and Gamble and Linda's as an independent contractor in technical writing. This couple has enjoyed a lifetime of sailing and scuba diving, and chose to "go RVing" in order to take Joss with them. They discovered volunteer opportunities on the Internet through the National Park Service, BLM, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. We're delighted that they chose Camas NWR for efforts this summer! They have helped with general maintenance such as painting, sanding and staining, weed control fabric around the new trees, noxious weed mapping, and various housekeeping and maintenance activities, weed control fabric around the new trees, and the completion of birding trails. They plan to head for the Oregon Coast toward the end of July, and will be missed. Their efforts are also very much appreciated! **Nancy Maxwell**, who edits the PVAS *Camas Newsletter*, is a transplant (hopefully not noxious or invasive)

from Oklahoma where she retired in 2001 after almost 30 years of work in Oklahoma Child Protective Services. The attractions to Idaho are a daughter and son-in-law in Blackfoot, ISU, and Pocatello's location within day trips of over 10 WMAs and NWRs. She and her German Shepherds treasure all of them!

All of the volunteers were recognized at the June 14th gathering for their excellence in contributions to Camas and are appreciated more than they will ever know both for the value of their labor and the excitement of their character and enthusiasm for the National Refuge System. They contribute far more than the required 24 hours per week, for the trailer pad and electric hookup that the refuge provides. For volunteer opportunities, please contact Rob Larrañaga, Refuge Manager.

Photo to right: front: Joe and Linda Noll; back L to R: Dianne Parrot and Dave Ewaldt, Nancy Maxwell, Sharon and John Dollar. We lost Donn Larson!



Water on the Refuge! In accordance with the water laws of 2003, June 19 marked the last day Camas NWR was permitted to draw water from Camas Creek, compared to early August in most years. The early run off from the mountain watershed and the continuing drought on the Snake River Plain has made the spring of 2007 a difficult season for water level management in nesting areas on the refuge. We are now relying on the pumps, and keeping open water for waterfowl as able. Fire, of course, remains a huge concern as last year's great flows generated extension vegetation growth. Some areas had adequate water for nesting; however, the success of the trumpeter swan nesting has yet to be determined. What appeared to be an above average production year for goslings was observed early in the season at the north end of the tour route on Big Pond.

Fall Migrations for song/land birds will begin in August and continue through October. Normally freezing conditions in the north, i.e. availability of open water and food supplies, prompts the migrations of ducks and geese. Ducks arrive from late August (teal) through November, and since the geese are often the last to leave the frozen North, some arrive when Camas is frozen over and proceed to Mud Lake or American Falls Reservoir and the Snake River where there is usually open water. The largest number and varieties of waterfowl can usually be observed in late October. Approximately 500 Sandhill Cranes will peak at Camas in late September. This is also a prime area to witness the arrival of fall via the bugling of bull elk.

Your comments and questions about the content of the Newsletter are always welcome. Please contact Nancy Maxwell at 208-232-2784 or P. O. Box 4784, Pocatello, Idaho 83205, or e-mail to outlier@peoplepc.com