

Sisters Country birds

By Douglas Beall
Correspondent

The red-winged blackbird, *Agelaius phoeniceus*, is now arriving around Sisters and feeding until they head to mostly wetland areas to begin building nests.

After two to six pale blue-green eggs are laid, the young hatch in only 10-12 days. The young, being fed on insects and seeds, leave the nest in 11-14 days.

The red-wing can be very protective of their nesting areas and will attack hawks and crows from above, diving with their red and yellow epaulets spread out and visible.

The red-winged black-

bird will use its brilliant epaulets by spreading its wings for a full show of color when in breeding territory or hiding the colors when feeding in a flock during the non-breeding seasons. This dulling of the red and yellow patches allow the birds to feed in flocks peacefully.

From 1966-2014, their population has fallen from 190 million to 130 million, mostly due to habitat destruction.

A group of red-wings are known as a "merl," "cluster" or a cloud. For more red-winged blackbird images visit <http://abirdsings.com/> becauseithasasong.com/recent-journeys.



PHOTO BY DOUGLAS BEALL

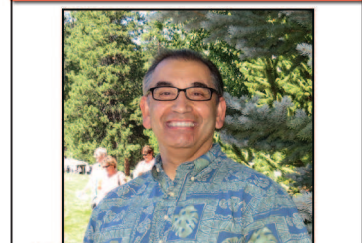
Red-winged blackbird.

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LETTERS

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The track is unusable to the point that our high school and middle school track teams are not allowed to host track meets there. Not only does that take away from our famous "Outlaw Spirit," it also prevents the community at large from benefitting financially from events there. Weekend tournaments held there involving track and field meets, soccer matches, lacrosse games, football camps and other events bring welcome dollars to our community in the form of lodging, dining and shopping in our local merchants' stores. Families and teams love coming to Sisters for these types of events. But we are unable to offer these events due to the state of the stadium.

Let's invest in the children of Sisters and our school facilities. And in our community. Let's continue to show the rest of our state that Sisters' "Outlaw Spirit" is alive and well.

Lee and Eric Huffman

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To the Editor:

With the 47th annual observance of Earth Day just around the corner, this is a great time to explore more effective ways of slowing climate change and conserving Earth's natural resources for future generations.

A 2010 UN report charged animal agriculture with 19 percent of man-made greenhouse gases — more than all transport — and recommended a global shift to a vegan diet. A subsequent World Watch study placed that contribution closer to 50 percent. Meat and dairy production also dumps more water pollutants than all other human activities combined. It is the driving force in global deforestation and wildlife habitat destruction.

Last fall, England's prestigious Chatham House declared that reducing meat consumption is critical to achieving global climate goals. A report from Oxford University found that global adoption of a vegan diet would reduce greenhouse emissions by two thirds. The 2015 U.S. Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee has recommended reduced meat consumption and an environmentally sustainable diet.

Just as we replace fossil fuels by wind, solar, and other sustainable-energy sources, we must replace animal-based foods with the more sustainable vegetables, fruits, and grains. Being mindful of this can help us make better choices at the supermarket.

Skyler Nash

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