Sisters Country birds

By Douglas Beall Correspondent

A familiar resident of our ponderosa pine forests is the white-headed woodpecker (Picoides albolarvatus). Feeding on insects, cone seeds, and larva from the thick bark of ponderosa pines, they also nest in older snags of pines.

After excavating the nest cavity, two to nine white eggs are laid and the parents share brooding duties for approximately 14 days, and then the chicks are fed by both parents for another 26 days in the nest. At least some of the pairs remain together for the

winter. White-headed woodpeckers are one of the most poorly studied birds of the woodpecker family.

American ornithologist John Cassin first described the white-headed woodpecker in 1850. Cassin collected some 43,000 various bird skins which were cured in arsenic, and he died from arsenic poisoning.

A group of woodpeckers are referred to as a "drumming," "gatling," or "decent."

To view more images of the white-headed woodpecker, visit http://abird singsbecauseithasasong. com/recent-journeys.



Santa visits **Black Butte** Ranch

By Jim Cornelius Editor in Chief

Santa Claus is extremely busy in this season, but each year he makes time to spend the weekend before Christmas at Black Butte Ranch. He visits with dozens and dozens of children, hearing about their year and their holiday wish list, then shares story and song with the 400 or so people who turn out for the Ranch's Breakfast with

Julia Kelleher of Bend has been bringing an extended family of 20 out to Black Butte Ranch each year for the past seven years. The reason is simple:

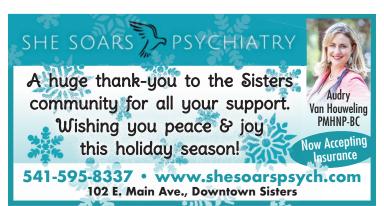
"He's the best Santa," she told The Nugget. "Real Santa."

Over Saturday and Sunday morning, Santa spent hours with the children as thousands of pictures were snapped. Then, presumably, he headed back to the North Pole with a long list of Christmas wishes in his pocket to prepare for one extraordinarily busy night of delivery.

Breakfast with Santa is part of Black Butte Ranch's set of traditional holiday activities, which also includes tours of the Ranch in a wreath-decked carriage.



Families crowded The Lodge at Black Butte Ranch so that children could have some time with Santa Claus.





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