

SUDOKU

The challenge is to fill every row across, every column down, and every 3x3 box with the digits 1 through 9. Each 1 through 9 digit must appear only once in each row across, each column down and each 3x3 box.

		9	5					
					2			
2			1		8	9	3	
	7	9		2				
2			5					
1	4				3			
			7			6	1	
		5						
3				8				4

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Answers to last week's puzzles

7	8	4	6	9	1	2	3	5
3	9	1	4	5	2	6	7	8
2	6	5	8	7	3	9	1	4
4	2	8	1	6	9	7	5	3
5	7	9	2	3	8	1	4	6
1	3	6	5	4	7	8	9	2
6	1	7	3	8	5	4	2	9
8	5	2	9	1	4	3	6	7
9	4	3	7	2	6	5	8	1

Crossword

Across: 1. Daniel, Am. frontiersman; 6. Chronic nag; 11. Underlying theme; 13. Exclamation of excitement; 15. Place in office; 16. Rose plant fruit; 17. Abbr. after a comma; 18. Nutty confection; 20. "To ___ is human ..."; 21. Orders to plow horses; 23. Come to mind; 24. Taro plant's edible root; 25. Cab driver in "It's a Wonderful Life"; 27. ___ grass; 28. Sheik's bevy; 29. Daniel Webster, e.g.; 31. Golden Horde member; 32. Fat unit; 33. ___ Scotia; 34. Artificial leg?; 36. Extension of library book due date; 39. Mawkishly sentimental; 40. Haul; 41. Bigwig; 43. Downer; 44. Stands for; 46. It has its ups and downs; 47. CD follower; 48. Tony ___, Am. singer; 50. Boy; 51. "Father Murphy" extras; 53. Unit of distance used in navigation (2 wds); 55. Listlessness; 56. Men with chauvinistic beliefs; 57. Small coins of ancient Greece; 58. Concise

Down: 1. Baseball batters who lightly tap the ball; 2. Bawdy; 3. His "4" was retired; 4. ___ tide; 5. Accessory; 6. Excelled; 7. Cheat, slangily; 8. ___ v. Wade; 9. Desert shrub with scalelike leaves; 10. Stranger; 11. Surrounding and blockading a fortress; 12. Restaurant serving light meals; 13. Slap target, sometimes

How Much ?



How much money has the Shrine Steer generated at the annual East West Game through 2014 to help kids at Shriners Hospital for Children? \$302,000 according to Guyer & Associates. Diana Downing and Susan Bunch (pictured above) of the Baker County Cattlewomen have played key roles in organizing fundraisers to help acquire and promote the Shrine Steer for several years.

Current Reservoir and Snow Depths

January 2015 Water Volumes: Recorded on the last day of previous month and subject to revision.

Thief Valley Reservoir Water Storage Volume: 13,882 acre-feet (98 percent of 30-year average)
Phillips Reservoir Water Storage Volume: 16,544 acre-feet (52 percent of 30-year average)
Brownlee Reservoir Water Storage Volume: 1,634,420 acre-feet (137 percent of 30-year average)
Wolf Creek Reservoir Water Storage Volume: 2,804 acre-feet (100 percent of 30-year average)
Pilcher Creek Reservoir Water Storage Volume: 2,395 acre-feet
(An acre-foot is defined as the volume of one acre of surface area to a depth of one foot.)
Water Levels
Brownlee Reservoir Water Level: 2,059 feet (18 feet below Full Pool)
Wolf Creek Reservoir Water Level: 3,645 feet (25 percent of full pool)
Pilcher Creek Reservoir Water Level: 3,952 feet (42 percent of full pool)
Snow Depths
Anthony Lakes SNOLITE Site at 7,160 feet: Snow Depth - 45 inches
Bourne SNOTEL Site at 5,850 feet: Snow Depth - 19 inches
Taylor Green SNOTEL Site at 5,740 feet: Snow Depth - 27 inches
Wolf Creek SNOTEL Site at 5,630 feet: Snow Depth - 23 inches
Moss Springs SNOTEL Site at 5,760 feet: Snow Depth - 36 inches
All measurements are current as of Feb. 10 at 10 a.m.

The Western Meadowlark: The bird we call our own

By Sheryl Blossom



The time is again upon us. Oregon's state bird, the Western Meadowlark, is about to make its 2015 singing debut in the Baker Valley. The timing of our fine-feather friend's arrival could not be more appropriate as we prepare to celebrate our State's 156th birthday. For those of you who don't know (pretty unlikely) but Oregon became the 33rd member to join as a state with the United States on the Feb. 14, 1859.

Oregonians did not declare the Western Meadowlark as their own until 1927 - more than 68 years later. The Oregon Audubon Society conducted a poll of school children across the state. With more than 80,000 votes being cast, the Meadowlark won by a wide majority, defeating candidates like the Oregon Junco, the Varied Thrush, the White-crowned Sparrow and the Oregon Bluebird.

On July 27 of that year, Governor Patterson issued a proclamation declaring the Western Meadowlark (*Sturnella neglecta*) as our own. How could that Governor go wrong? More than 80,000 kids participating in democracy to name a state bird. No-brainer! I am guessing our current Governor would love to have something that easy on his desk right now.

Four other states followed Oregon's lead in recognizing this lovely songbird as their own: Nebraska (1929), Montana (1930), Kansas (1937), and North Dakota (1947). It was only the state of Wyoming who beat Oregon to the punch in naming the Western Meadowlark. They did so in Feb. of 1927, edging us out as number one by a mere five months. (Damn! Once again Oregonians are denied a #1 title.)

Baker County, dominated by open grasslands and agriculture area, provides the Western Meadowlark with the type of habitat it likes to call home. They forage on grain and weed seeds, beetles, caterpillars, sowbugs, spiders and other insects found aplenty here. Every spring, many of us hear their familiar, flute-like melody and say "hey, I know that sound...what bird is that, anyway?"

More often than not, it is the male we see perched on a fence post or atop a power line. This colorful bird (a member of the blackbird family) proudly shows off his bright yellow chest and distinct back v-shaped band splashed across. Throughout spring and summer, his voice is confident, distinct and captivating. That alluring call comes in handy. After all, he does not mate with one but two females during the breeding season. Sorry to you romantics. I know it is Valentine's week, but this is not a one-bird man.

The female, on the other hand, has little time to show off. Go figure! Alone, the female Western Meadowlark seeks a nest spot on the ground, preferably covered by dense vegetation. Native grasses, rabbit brush and greasewood work well. She uses her bill to cut a depression in the soil, and then line it with soft grasses and pliable shrubs. Often she uses the surrounding vegetation to anchor a waterproof dome by weaving grass and shrub stems. Her commitment to covering her young from weather and predators is not only admirable, but rather ingenious. She works solo for six to eight days to complete a nest that can reach eight inches across with a cover of up to five inches.

As we approach spring, males will establish an average territory of seven acres. He will fearlessly defend the area for up to a month with "pursuit flights" that can last up to three minutes. He will continue this aggressive display until the females arrive in the neighborhood. His focus then turns to the ladies.

The female Western Meadowlark will lay one to two broods each spring and summer. They usually contain five or six eggs and require approximately two weeks before hatching. Full disclosure requires me to inform you that the male does sometimes assist the female with feeding his offspring once hatched, and does play a role in actively defending the nest. You gotta give credit where credit is due. The young leave the nest in about 10-12 days.

It is during the incubation time we humans pose a great threat to the success of their breeding. The usual suspects like hawks, skunks, coyotes, raccoon and weasels play their predictable havoc with a Western Meadowlark's nesting grounds. But they are extremely sensitive to humans when nesting and will abandon a nest if they are disturbed while incubating their eggs.

Western Meadowlarks are numerous, but recent counts indicate their breeding populations have been declining. While we here in Baker County are fortunate to have them in solid numbers, it is not unusual to hear someone from the other side of the state remark how much they miss hearing the once familiar call of the Western Meadowlark. In fact, many use the word scarce. Hard to imagine, but true.

As with other species, habitat destruction, climate change, invasive plants, fire suppression, and pesticide use, are often reasons contemplated for the decline in numbers. I am not the correct person to offer a scientific reason to explain such a decline. I do know that the Western Meadowlark has been part of our landscape for centuries.

Merrriweather Lewis noted the Western Meadowlark in his journal on

See MEADOWLARK on page 13

Treasure Valley Livestock Market Report

February 6, 2015

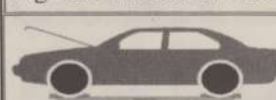
Class	Weight	Average Price	Top Price
Steers	200-300	187.50	187.50
	300-400	197.00	262.50
	400-500	184.50	274.00
	500-600	219.50	220.00
	600-700	155.50	218.00
	700-800	179.75	206.00
	800-900	162.25	191.00
	900-1000	150.00	150.00
	1000 and Up	117.25	138.00
	Heifers	200-300	237.50
300-400		222.50	257.50
400-500		159.50	210.00
500-600		199.50	214.75
600-700		174.25	212.00
700-800		147.75	192.50
800-900		128.50	164.00
900-1000		131.00	157.00
1000 and Up		117.25	138.00
Cows		800-900	87.00
	900-1000	64.00	64.00
	1000-1100	63.00	86.50
	1100-1200	83.00	111.00
	1200-1300	92.25	126.00
	1300-1400	92.75	117.00
	1400-1500	70.25	99.00
	1500-1600	93.25	130.00
	1600-1700	102.00	122.00
	1700-1800	98.25	99.00
Bull Cf.	1800-1900	94.50	95.50
	300-400	170.00	170.00
	400-500	155.50	156.00
	500-600	207.25	215.00
	600-700	176.25	200.00
	700-800	91.00	91.00
	900-1000	79.00	117.00

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