

Turkey vultures play a key role



BIRD-WATCHING
EH Van Blaricom

As a connoisseur of song birds, why am I sending in such an ugly picture of a turkey vulture? I’ve had this photo in my collection for a long time without using it, but since these repulsive looking scavengers have a role to play in the complexities of nature, I decided to write about them as they will be coming north over our skies in a few more weeks.

They are most noticeable when you see them circling up high without flapping their wings, and right away you start wondering, what’s dead around here? When you ever get a chance to see them up close, you will know why they are named “turkey vultures” as they resemble a turkey with their red head and no feathers. But their beaks are curved down like hawks so they can rip apart their food which consists of road-kills since the invention of the automobile. Following nighttime when headlights blind so many animals, in the mornings there are quite a lot of dead and mangled animals such as rabbits, opossums, skunks and sometimes deer to be found along the highways. That’s when these vultures go out to find their breakfast. Nor do these scavengers just eat fresh road-kills; no dead, maggot-infested creature is too repulsive to a vulture.

Sometimes one can see several



Courtesy photo/EH Van Blaricom

Increasing numbers of turkey vultures are likely to be seen in Wallowa County in the coming weeks.

of them crowding out the ravens and magpies to feed on a dead deer along the roadside. Speaking of crowding, vultures roost in huge flocks mostly in dead trees. But there is a steel tower with numerous braces down at French Glen, Ore., where I have seen as many as 40 or 50 vultures roost at

night on this tower. One other oddity of these huge birds is they are like pigeons and doves in that they only lay two eggs which take more than a month to hatch. It also takes more than a month and a half before the nestlings can fly. In spite of their repulsive diet, these vultures are the

janitors that provide a valuable service by cleaning up the dead and rotting animals that would otherwise take a month or more for the maggots to consume.

Next month I will get back to telling about the beauty and habits of songbirds.

Wallowa golfers struggle at Wildhorse

The Wallowa golf team traveled to the Wildhorse golf course last Friday and slipped a little on its scores from the previous week.

Wallowa coach Marvin Gibbs said, “The kids have their favorite courses and Wildhorse isn’t one of them. The sand and the water got ’em.”

Claire Wellens kept her card the same as last week carding a 103.

Karl Wellens shot a 91, up two strokes from the previous week with Alex Coutant shooting a 101 after he tied with Karl last week. Kai Oliver shot a 101 with Caevan Murray posting the next best card at 116. Thomas Jamerson shot a round of 127.

The Wallowa boys team finished fifth out of six teams.

Coach Gibbs added, “Overall we’re looking pretty good. If we could get a little bit better weather we could get more practice. We’re focusing on getting to district and state.”

On Friday the team will be in John Day.

SHOOTER: Egg shoot coming up

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This Saturday the association will hold its annual Egg Shoot. The event will feature three classes of shooters: pro, amateur, and novice, with different entry fees for the three categories.

The Egg Shoot is aptly named after the trophy design, which features an ostrich egg with a shooter on top. The trophy roams and different sponsors in the county display it for a year with the title holder’s name and picture on it. Eggs are also used as targets in the shoot.

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Enterprise boys golfers lower their team score

By Rich Rautenstrauch
Wallowa County Chieftain

Over the last two weeks the Enterprise boys golf team lowered their team score by 45 strokes. The boys placed third out of six teams at the Wildhorse Golf Course last Friday. Coach Mike Crawford said he didn’t have enough girls to field a team but two

individuals did play.

For the boys, Cody Irish led the way with a tally of 95. Brycen Locke was next, carding a 99. Gotro Thanadkit completed the course in 101 strokes, and Christian Ruckdashel shot a 104. Isaac Rowley, alternate for the team, slipped a little from week ago with a total of 112.

Coach Crawford, who has

taken his team to district for the last 16 years straight, felt a little better about this squad with the third-place finish on the weekend.

Among the girls, Carsen Sajonia shot a 98, slipping three shots from last week. Emma Hall improved her score measurably shooting a 137.

Next up for the team is a trip to John Day.

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