

# This songbird has a broad repertoire



**BIRD-WATCHING**  
EH Van Blaricom

The white-crowned sparrow is a very common song bird that can be found in a variety of habitats from Alaska to Mexico. It is rather confusing to study white-crowned sparrows as there are several different "races" to be observed all along the western states to Mexico. There are differences in the stripes on their heads and even in their songs from one area to another. In other words, a white-crowned sparrow in San Diego can have a different song than one here in Wallowa County. However,

I'm going to leave that to the nit-picking ornithologists as that takes the joy out of bird-watching for the average observer.

I think this photo I took shows the dignity of his posture. As far as its song, it is rather wheezy compared to some of the more melodious songs of the sparrow family.

As near as I can tell, the race we have here in Wallowa County is called the Mountain White Crown and breeds in the high mountains from the Canadian border to the Sierras of California. They winter mostly in the southwestern states. According to my observations, their preferred habitat seems to be the brushy areas where they usually nest on the ground. However, it isn't unusual to see them in backyard gardens in the suburbs of towns.

They eat both seeds and insects and

can be observed scratching in the leaves to find food underneath dense shrubs. For those of you who climb clear up above the timberline in the Wallowa Mountains, you will see these sparrows along with gray-crowned rosy finches and neither species show much fear of humans. I have personally observed most of the white-crowned sparrows while trout-fishing in Joseph Creek where there is dense bushes and plenty of water.

One other peculiarity of these sparrows is they scratch with both feet and jump back to see what they have uncovered. I used to watch them under our juniper trees outside our windows. We always got to see them in the spring and autumn as they made a "pit-stop" at our acreage while migrating.

E.H. Van Blaricom resides in Joseph.



E.H. Van Blaricom

The White-Crowned sparrow.

## REPORT

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More than half of all infections occurred outside of the intensive care unit, in nursing homes, in kidney dialysis treatment centers or in the general ward of the hospital. Some targeted infections can be decreased by more than 70 percent, and that is the immediate goal of the CDC and health service organizations.

The 2015 report does show a general reduction in infec-

tions at hospitals across the state — do show but not by much.

Furthermore, incidences of one of the most virulent hospital-associated infections — C. diff. — increased, resulting in the highest percentage ever reported in the state.

C. diff. is increasingly resistant to antibiotics. According to the CDC it continues to cause hundreds of thousands of infections and tens of thousands of deaths every year.

Wallowa Memorial is required to report only four of the possible bacterial infections since incidence of the others is rare for so small a fa-

cility. Of those four, the hospital reported only a single case of C. diff. in 2015, down from three in 2014.

By comparison, Grande Ronde Hospital in La Grande reported three health care associated infections in 2015, up from one in 2014.

Karvoski attributed Wallowa Memorial's success to "a very good team."

"We are very vigilant about our infections," she said. "We also do a very good job training for standard precautions, we use special cleaners that kill C. diff. and we have a wonderful housecleaning crew. All of that goes into play

to keep infections down. It takes a team to make it happen."

Hospitals are not always responsible for an infection. Patients sometimes arrive for treatment with an existing infection on board. In 2014 the state passed a law requiring health care facilities to notify receiving facilities of a patient's C. diff. status upon transfer. The law makes it possible for hospitals to place such patients immediately into isolation, helping stop the accidental spread of the infection to other patients.

Oregon hospitals as a whole performed better on

hospital-onset MRSA bloodstream infections compared to hospitals nationally. They also did better in preventing surgical site infections following heart, hysterectomy, hip and colon surgeries in 2015; in particular, surgical site infections following coronary artery bypass grafts was statistically better than the national average and lower than the 2014 national average. Oregon dialysis facilities also reported fewer bloodstream infections and fewer access-related bloodstream infections than the national average.

Patients can reduce the risk of infection by taking all the

pre-hospitalization steps such as a pre-surgical antibacterial shower or bath, not shaving before surgery and stopping smoking. They should also take antibiotics and other medications exactly as directed by their doctors, and ask their visitors to clean their hands before visiting and to stay home if they are sick.

Individuals who know they will be scheduling surgery or hospital stays can check an Oregon hospital's record of preventing these dangerous infections by searching the infection by infection breakdown at <http://tinyurl.com/obz537n>.

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## LAWSUIT

Continued from Page A1

- The defendants retaliated against the couple for exercising their right of free speech and their right to de-

velop their private property.

- A "temporary taking" took place when the stop-work order was placed on the property development in April 2014.

- Neil, Young, Wallowa County and Lindstrom and an

unknown number (estimated at 10 total) of John and Jane Does had colluded to deprive the couple of their property rights.

- The defendants engaged in retaliatory practices against the couple for exercising their right of free speech and their right to develop private property.

- An application for quiet title and declaratory relief and injunctive relief was sought (establishing ownership to title of James property and protecting it against any claims by the city or county).

Three of the nine claims in all were dismissed without prejudice, meaning the decision in those cases is open

for appeal. Those claims eligible for appeal were against the city, Neil, Young, Wallowa County and Lindstrom for racketeering; a claim of negligence causing damage against all defendants; and the claim against the city and county to quiet title and for declaratory and injunction relief.

The Jameses were represented by Benjamin Boyd of the Hostetter Law Group, LLP of Enterprise.

Boyd said he has no comment on what his clients will do or on the outcome of the legal action.

The couple asked for a jury trial, economic damages of \$9,470, non-economic

damages of \$125,000, attorney's fees and costs, interest at the highest lawful rates, treble damages, punitive damages, an injunction barring city, county and workers from entering the property for purposes other than described in the city's easement, a declaration concerning the terms of that easement, a declaration concerning Oregon's "essential facilities" statutes and damages for the deprivation of their constitutional rights.

The decision for dismissal was brought down Aug. 10.

City/County Insurance Services provided council for the city, county and individuals working for both entities.

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