

Two new species spotted during Christmas Bird Count

Swans, bluebird make the list for the 35th John Day event

By Tom Winters
For the Blue Mountain Eagle

On Saturday, Dec. 19, members of the Grant County Bird Club performed their 35th John Day Christmas Bird Count.

Although the weather looked bad in the morning, and probably was why so many birders did not show up, the day turned out not too bad. The count numbers were down, mostly due to lack of participants, but also because the weather forced the birds and the birders to seek cover now and then.

Two new species were recorded for the count: trumpeter swan and western bluebird. All told, 58 species were found and 3,489 individual birds counted. Participants were Mike Bohannon, Susan Church, Hugo Cobos, Randy Hennen, Clarence and Marilyn O'Leary and Tom Winters, with Dennis Flippence, Anne Frost, Cecil Gagnon, Eva Harris and Nita Van Voorhis keeping track of their yard birds.

Birds seen: Canada goose (347), trumpeter swan (2), tundra swan (11), wood duck (20), mallard (86), hooded merganser (21), common merganser (34), wild turkey (65), California quail (617), great blue heron (10), bald



This varied thrush was photographed last week at Holliday State Park in Mt. Vernon by avid birdwatcher Tom Winters of Bear Valley.

eagle (7), northern harrier (6), sharp-shinned hawk (2), Cooper's hawk (10), northern goshawk (1), red-tailed hawk (43), rough-legged hawk (1), golden eagle (1), American kestrel (12), American coot (3), rock pigeon (24), Eurasian collared-dove (339), mourning dove (24), barn owl (1), great horned owl (4), belted kingfisher (3), downy woodpecker (3), hairy woodpecker (1), northern flicker (18), Steller's jay (14), west-

ern scrub jay (12), Clark's nutcracker (1), black-billed magpie (90), American crow (1), common raven (104), black-capped chickadee (35), mountain chickadee (11), brown creeper (1), American dipper (2), ruby-crowned kinglet (2), western bluebird (1), mountain bluebird (1), Townsend's solitaire (55), American robin (136), varied thrush (2), European starling (627), cedar waxwing (1), spotted towhee (2), song

sparrow (19), white-crowned sparrow (37), golden-crowned sparrow (3), dark-eyed junco — Oregon (382), slate-colored junco (3), house finch (38), pine siskin (38), lesser goldfinch (15), American goldfinch (4), evening grosbeak (5), and house sparrow (131). Species not seen on the count day but during the count week



A black-capped chickadee was spotted at Holliday State Park in Mt. Vernon.



A white-crowned sparrow at Holliday State Park, photographed last week by Tom Winters of Bear Valley.

(the three days preceding and following the count) include red-breasted, white-breasted and pygmy nuthatches and fox sparrow.



This year's John Day Christmas Bird Count marks the first time trumpeter swans were located on the count day. Two trumpeter swans, in the photo, were spotted by Bear Valley resident Tom Winters last week near Happy Valley Road in Mt. Vernon.

The John Day count was one of almost 2,500 Christmas Bird Counts throughout Canada, the United States, Latin America, Bermuda and Pacific Islands. Last year, there were well over 72,000 participants, most of them out in the field, but many counting birds at home. Almost 25 percent of Canadian counters were feeder-watchers, while only 10 percent were in the United States and 5 percent in Latin America. Might have something to do with the latitude?

The Portland Christmas Bird Count had 375 participants, the highest number of

birders after Edmonton, Alberta. Last year, 655 species were found in the United States. One of the coastal Texas counts recorded 234 species, and the highest count in Oregon was Yaquina Bay with 151 species. A count in Ecuador had the highest count of all with 529 species. This year marks the 116th Christmas Bird Count. The first counts, held in 1900 from Toronto, Ontario, to Pacific Grove, California, found only 90 species. There were only 25 counts and a total of 27 participants.

Tom Winters is the stand-in president of the Grant County Bird Club. The club meets at 6:30 p.m. on the third Tuesday of each month, with a potluck. Meeting place varies. For more information, call Winters at 541-542-2006.

TOWN

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Day River provides for an area rich in agricultural land.

Meals are served weekly at the Monument Senior Center, which is also the location for many community events, family gatherings, meetings and other functions. The Monument Food Bank provides monthly food donations — a valuable resource that assists people in the Monument and Long Creek area.

Columbia Power Co-op is also headquartered in Monument.

Monument School, with an enrollment of 62 students in grades K-12, boasts state-of-the-art science and computer labs and an ag building with a strong and active FFA. Other educational programs include Ethos, a nonprofit that offers music lessons, and a grant from the Gorge Community Foundation, which provides art classes. The Monument Flying Tigers is a travel club that has been to China and Thailand in past years.

Despite the distance from larger towns — or maybe because of it — many people in Monument are longtime residents who enjoy living there.

"Let me tell you, this is an exceptional community," said Monument School secretary Jennie Mund. "If there is a need, you would be surprised at the people who rally to help. ... It's small, and it's home."

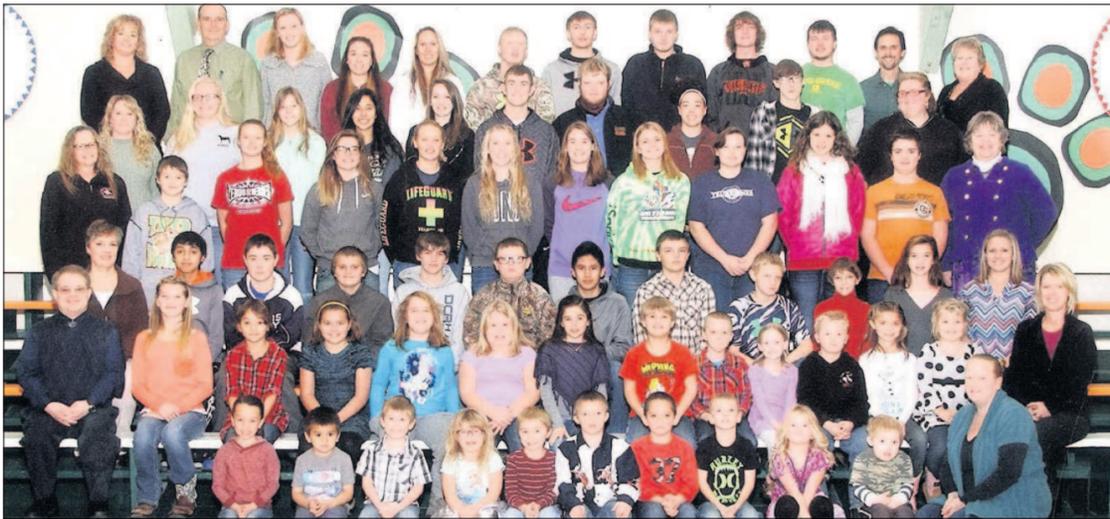
City recorder Dorothy Jordan said one longtime resident recently told her the best thing about living in Monument is "it's not on the way to anywhere."

Jordan, who has lived in Monument for five years and has been the city recorder for two-and-a-half, said she personally likes the slower pace and being closer to nature.

"The people who come here want to come here," she said.

Monument, with a population of about 125, is governed by a City Council of five: President Carrie Ussery, and Councilors Pat McCary, Steve Ussery, Bill Turner and Phil Merricks. City staff include Public Works Director Mike Schaffer, City Recorder Jordan, Finance Manager Robert Yukawa and Maintenance Assistant Cinimon Derowitsch.

The community is currently without a mayor.



Contributed photos

The 2015-16 Monument School student body and staff gathered for a group photo.



The park in the heart of Monument is the scene for family gatherings and community events, such as the annual Monument Jubilee on the Fourth of July.

Jordan said they have a new sewer project underway, funded by U.S. Department of Agriculture grant money. Crews are also putting in a chlorination building for the irrigation system.

Monument is noteworthy for being incorporated

twice — once in 1905 and, for unknown reasons, again in 1947.

City council meetings are at 7 p.m. the second Wednesday of the month at City Hall.

For more information, call Monument City Hall at 541-934-2025.



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The Monument Senior Center is the site of the town's Tuesday senior meals, as well as the gathering spot for meetings, family gatherings and other functions.

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BARGAIN MATINEE IN (1) Adults \$7 ALL FILMS \$6 ON TIGHTWAD TUESDAY
MOVIE SCHEDULE JAN. 6 - 14

THE REVENANT R
Leonardo DiCaprio, Hugh Glass, a frontiersman on a fur trading expedition in the 1820s, is on a quest for survival after being brutally mauled by a bear.
FRI-SUN (3:45) 7:20
MON-THURS 7:20

THE HATEFUL EIGHT R
Quentin Tarantino. In the dead of a Wyoming winter, a bounty hunter and his prisoner find shelter in a cabin currently inhabited by a collection of nefarious characters.
FRI-SUN (4:00) 7:30
MON-THURS 7:00

STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS PG-13
A continuation of the saga set thirty years after Star Wars: Episode VI - Return of the Jedi (1983).
FRI-SUN (4:10) 7:10
MON-THURS 7:10
\$9 Adult, \$7 Senior (60+), Youth

ATTENTION GRANT COUNTY VETERANS:
Did you know a service-connected disabled veteran is entitled to FREE use of Oregon State Parks?
See your Grant County Veteran Services Officer today for more information, located at Grant County Courthouse.
Open Mon, Wed, & Fri, 10 am - 4 pm, by appointment. Call 541-575-1631

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