

MONTANA OWL WORKSHOP

APRIL 23–28, 2015

LEADERS: DENVER HOLT, MATT LARSON & MATT YOUNG

COMPILED BY: DENVER HOLT

**VICTOR EMANUEL NATURE TOURS, INC.
2525 WALLINGWOOD DRIVE, SUITE 1003
AUSTIN, TX 78746
WWW.VENTBIRD.COM**

MONTANA OWL WORKSHOP
APRIL 23–28, 2015

By Denver Holt

VENT's 2015 Montana Owls Workshop was another fun trip. We saw 6 species of owls, including Great Horned, Northern Pygmy, Boreal, Northern Saw-whet, Long-eared, and Short-eared. We had terrific looks at all species.

On our first morning out, ORI (Owl Research Institute) researchers guided us to a female Northern Pygmy Owl peering from her tiny two-inch circular nest cavity entrance. She was very obliging for about 5 minutes and then retired back into the cavity, presumably to incubate eggs.

After searching for and inspecting about 100 woodpecker holes, we were awed to see a female Northern Saw-whet Owl peer from her nest cavity. This was very timely, as the group had almost given up hope after an entire day of searching without success. How quickly everyone forgot about their exhaustion and previous disappointment when the female peered from her cavity. At our high elevation nest box study we found 3 Boreal Owl females, each peering from their nest box holes. In fact, we had five Boreal Owl nests at this study site in 2015. This was a lifer for several participants.

Great Horned Owls were relatively abundant. We observed them along roadsides and farm yards, and located a few nests. In fact, we visited one nest where the ORI has a live camera (24/7) and had outstanding looks at adults and 3 large chicks.

Short-eared Owls were observed conducting a variety of behaviors, ranging from hunting low over grasslands, or engaged in territorial skirmishes with neighboring Short-eared Owls. We also had some great looks at aerial courtship displays, also known as ski-dancing.

Our group was able to observe ORI researchers as they captured and banded Long-eared Owls. We also had fine looks at a Long-eared Owl female on a nest and were able to observe researchers band and take measurement data on the male.

Unfortunately, we missed Great Gray Owl. We found the nest; however, no owls were around, and egg shell fragments were lying on the ground below. We suspected a predation event. Our Barn Owls also disappeared, and we are unsure of their fate.

It's always difficult finding owls; however, our group was resilient and worked hard. It paid off, as we eventually had very satisfying looks at several species of this elusive group of birds.

VENT: Montana Owl Workshop Field Checklist

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
1	COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME												
2	Waterfowl	Anatidae												
3	Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>	X											
4	Gadwall	<i>Anas strepera</i>	X											
5	American Wigeon	<i>Anas americana</i>	X											
6	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	X											
7	Northern Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>	X											
8	Green-winged Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	X											
9	Canvasback	<i>Aythya valisineria</i>	X											
10	Redhead	<i>Aythya americana</i>	X											
11	Ring-necked Duck	<i>Aythya collaris</i>	X											
12	Lesser Scaup	<i>Aythya affinis</i>	X											
13	Bufflehead	<i>Bucephala albeola</i>	X											
14	Common Goldeneye	<i>Bucephala clangula</i>	X											
15	Barrow's Goldeneye	<i>Bucephala islandica</i>	X											
16	Hooded Merganser	<i>Lophodytes cucullatus</i>												
17	Common Merganser	<i>Mergus merganser</i>	X											
18	Ruddy Duck	<i>Oxyura jamaicensis</i>	X											
19	Greater Scaup	<i>Aythya marila</i>	X											
20	Blue-winged Teal	<i>Anas discors</i>	X											
21	Cinnamon Teal	<i>Anas cyanoptera</i>	X											
22	Trumpeter Swam	<i>Cygnus buccinator</i>	X											
23														
24	Pheasants, Grouse and Allies	Phasianidae												
25	Gray Partridge (I)	<i>Perdix perdix</i>	X											
26	Ring-necked Pheasant (I)	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>	X											
27	Ruffed Grouse	<i>Bonasa umbellus</i>	X											
28	Loons	Gaviidae												
29	Common Loon	<i>Gavia immer</i>	X											
30	Grebes	Podicipedidae												
31	Pied-billed Grebe	<i>Podilymbus podiceps</i>	X											
32	Horned Grebe	<i>Podiceps auritus</i>	X											
33	Red-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps grisegena</i>	X											
34	Eared Grebe	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>												
35	Western Grebe	<i>Aechmophorus occidentalis</i>	X											
36	Cormorants	Phalacrocoracidae												
37	Double-crested Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax auritus</i>	X											
38	Pelicans	Pelecanidae												
39	American White Pelican	<i>Pelecanus erythrorhynchos</i>												
40	Hérons, Egrets and Bitterns	Ardeidae												
41	Great Blue Heron	<i>Ardea herodias</i>	X											
42	New World Vultures	Cathartidae												
43	Turkey Vulture	<i>Cathartes aura</i>	X											
44	Osprey	Pandionidae												
45	Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	X											
46	Hawks, Eagles and Kites	Accipitridae												
47	Bald Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	X											
48	Northern Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>	X											
49	Sharp-shinned Hawk	<i>Accipiter striatus</i>	X											
50	Cooper's Hawk	<i>Accipiter cooperii</i>												
51	Northern Goshawk	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>												

VENT: Montana Owl Workshop Field Checklist

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
1	COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME												
52	Swainson's Hawk	<i>Buteo swainsoni</i>												
53	Red-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>	X											
54	Golden Eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>												
55														
56														
57	Rails, Gallinules and Coots	Rallidae												
58	Virginia Rail	<i>Rallus limicola</i>												
59	Sora	<i>Porzana carolina</i>												
60	American Coot	<i>Fulica americana</i>	X											
61	Cranes	Gruidae												
62	Sandhill Crane	<i>Grus canadensis</i>												
63	Stilts and Avocets	Recurvirostridae												
64	Black-necked Stilt	<i>Himantopus mexicanus</i>	X											
65	American Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra americana</i>	X											
66	Plovers and Lapwings	Charadriidae												
67	Killdeer	<i>Charadrius vociferus</i>	X											
68	Sandpipers and Allies	Scolopacidae												
69	Spotted Sandpiper	<i>Actitis macularius</i>	X											
70	Long-billed Curlew	<i>Numenius americanus</i>												
71	Long-billed Dowitcher	<i>Limnodromus scolopaceus</i>												
72	Wilson's Snipe	<i>Gallinago delicata</i>	X											
73	Lesser Yellowlegs	<i>Tringa flavipes</i>	X											
74	Gulls, Terns and Skimmers	Laridae												
75	Ring-billed Gull	<i>Larus delawarensis</i>	X											
76	California Gull	<i>Larus californicus</i>	X											
77	Pigeons and Doves	Columbidae												
78	Rock Pigeon (I)	<i>Columba livia</i>	X											
79	Eurasian Collared-Dove (I)	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	X											
80	Mourning Dove	<i>Zenaida macroura</i>	X											
81	Owls	Strigidae												
82	Western Screech-Owl	<i>Megascops kennicottii</i>												
83	Great Horned Owl	<i>Bubo virginianus</i>	X											
84	Northern Pygmy-Owl	<i>Glaucidium gnoma</i>	X											
85	Burrowing Owl	<i>Athene cunicularia</i>												
86	Great Gray Owl	<i>Strix nebulosa</i>												
87	Long-eared Owl	<i>Asio otus</i>	X											
88	Short-eared Owl	<i>Asio flammeus</i>	X											
89	Boreal Owl	<i>Aegolius funereus</i>	X											
90	Northern Saw-whet Owl	<i>Aegolius acadicus</i>	X											
91	Woodpeckers	Picidae												
92	Lewis's Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes lewis</i>												
93	Red-naped Sapsucker	<i>Sphyrapicus nuchalis</i>	X											
94	Williamson's Sapsucker	<i>Sphyrapicus thyroideus</i>	X											
95	Downy Woodpecker	<i>Picoides pubescens</i>	X											
96	Hairy Woodpecker	<i>Picoides villosus</i>	X											
97	Northern Flicker	<i>Colaptes auratus</i>	X											
98	Pileated Woodpecker	<i>Dryocopus pileatus</i>	X											
99	Falcons and Caracaras	Falconidae												
100	American Kestrel	<i>Falco sparverius</i>	X											
101	Merlin	<i>Falco columbarius</i>												

VENT: Montana Owl Workshop Field Checklist

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
1	COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME												
102	Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>												
103	Prairie Falcon	<i>Falco mexicanus</i>												
104	Tyrant Flycatchers	Tyrannidae												
105	Say's Phoebe	<i>Sayornis saya</i>												
106	Western Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus verticalis</i>												
107	Eastern Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus tyrannus</i>												
108														
109	Crows, Jays and Magpies	Corvidae												
110	Gray Jay	<i>Perisoreus canadensis</i>	X											
111	Steller's Jay	<i>Cyanocitta stelleri</i>	X											
112	Blue Jay	<i>Cyanocitta cristata</i>												
113	Clark's Nutcracker	<i>Nucifraga columbiana</i>	X											
114	Black-billed Magpie	<i>Pica hudsonia</i>	X											
115	American Crow	<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>	X											
116	Common Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	X											
117	Larks	Alaudidae												
118	Horned Lark	<i>Eremophila alpestris</i>												
119	Swallows	Hirundinidae												
120	Tree Swallow	<i>Tachycineta bicolor</i>	X											
121	Violet-green Swallow	<i>Tachycineta thalassina</i>	X											
122	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	<i>Stelgidopteryx serripennis</i>	X											
123	Bank Swallow	<i>Riparia riparia</i>												
124	Cliff Swallow	<i>Petrochelidon pyrrhonota</i>												
125	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	X											
126	Chickadees and Tits	Paridae												
127	Black-capped Chickadee	<i>Poecile atricapillus</i>	X											
128	Mountain Chickadee	<i>Poecile gambeli</i>	X											
129	Nuthatches	Sittidae												
130	Red-breasted Nuthatch	<i>Sitta canadensis</i>	X											
131	White-breasted Nuthatch	<i>Sitta carolinensis</i>	X											
132	Pygmy Nuthatch	<i>Sitta pygmaea</i>												
133	Creepers	Certhiidae												
134	Brown Creeper	<i>Certhia americana</i>												
135	Wrens	Troglodytidae												
136	House Wren	<i>Troglodytes aedon</i>	X											
137	Pacific Wren	<i>Troglodytes pacificus</i>												
138	Marsh Wren	<i>Cistothorus palustris</i>	X											
139	Dippers	Cinclidae												
140	American Dipper	<i>Cinclus mexicanus</i>	X											
141	Kinglets	Regulidae												
142	Golden-crowned Kinglet	<i>Regulus satrapa</i>	X											
143	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	<i>Regulus calendula</i>	X											
144	Thrushes and Allies	Turdidae												
145	Mountain Bluebird	<i>Sialia currucoides</i>	X											
146	Townsend's Solitaire	<i>Myadestes townsendi</i>	X											
147	Swainson's Thrush	<i>Catharus ustulatus</i>												
148	American Robin	<i>Turdus migratorius</i>	X											
149	Varied Thrush	<i>Ixoreus naevius</i>												
150	Mockingbirds and Thrashers	Mimidae												
151	Gray Catbird	<i>Dumetella carolinensis</i>												

VENT: Montana Owl Workshop Field Checklist

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
1	COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME												
152	Starlings	Sturnidae												
153	European Starling (I)	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	X											
154	Wagtails and Pipits	Motacillidae												
155	American Pipit	<i>Anthus rubescens</i>	X											
156														
157														
158														
159	Waxwings	Bombycillidae												
160	Cedar Waxwing	<i>Bombycilla cedrorum</i>	X											
161	Bohemian Waxwing	<i>Bombycilla garrulus</i>												
162	New World Warblers	Parulidae												
163	Northern Waterthrush	<i>Parkesia noveboracensis</i>												
164	Orange-crowned Warbler	<i>Oreothlypis celata</i>												
165	MacGillivray's Warbler	<i>Geothlypis tolmiei</i>												
166	Common Yellowthroat	<i>Geothlypis trichas</i>												
167	Yellow Warbler	<i>Setophaga petechia</i>												
168	Yellow-rumped Warbler	<i>Setophaga coronata</i>	X											
169	Townsend's Warbler	<i>Setophaga townsendi</i>	X											
170	Wilson's Warbler	<i>Cardellina pusilla</i>												
171	Buntings, Sparrows and Allies	Emberizidae												
172	Spotted Towhee	<i>Pipilo maculatus</i>												
173	Chipping Sparrow	<i>Spizella passerina</i>	X											
174	Clay-colored Sparrow	<i>Spizella pallida</i>												
175	Vesper Sparrow	<i>Poocetes gramineus</i>	X											
176	Savannah Sparrow	<i>Passerculus sandwichensis</i>	X											
177	Song Sparrow	<i>Melospiza melodia</i>	X											
178	White-crowned Sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia leucophrys</i>												
179	Dark-eyed Junco	<i>Junco hyemalis</i>	X											
180	Cardinals and Allies	Cardinalidae												
181	Western Tanager	<i>Piranga ludoviciana</i>												
182	Black-headed Grosbeak	<i>Pheucticus melanocephalus</i>												
183	Lazuli Bunting	<i>Passerina amoena</i>												
184	Troupials and Allies	Icteridae												
185	Red-winged Blackbird	<i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>	X											
186	Western Meadowlark	<i>Sturnella neglecta</i>	X											
187	Yellow-headed Blackbird	<i>Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus</i>	X											
188	Brewer's Blackbird	<i>Euphagus cyanocephalus</i>	X											
189	Brown-headed Cowbird	<i>Molothrus ater</i>	X											
190	Bullock's Oriole	<i>Icterus bullockii</i>												
191	Siskins, Crossbills and Allies	Fringillidae												
192	House Finch	<i>Haemorhous mexicanus</i>	X											
193	Cassin's Finch	<i>Haemorhous cassinii</i>	X											
194	Red Crossbill	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>	X											
195	Pine Siskin	<i>Spinus pinus</i>	X											
196	American Goldfinch	<i>Spinus tristis</i>	X											
197	Old World Sparrows	Passeridae												
198	House Sparrow (I)	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	X											
199														
200														
201														

VENT: Montana Owl Workshop Field Checklist

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
1	COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME												
202														
203														
204														
205														
206														
207														
208														
209														
210	MAMMALS													
211	Squirrels, Prairie Dogs & Marmot	Sciuridae												
212	Eastern Fox Squirrel	<i>Sciurus niger</i>	X											
213	Red Squirrel	<i>Tamiasciurus hudsonicus</i>	X											
214	Yellow-pine Chipmunk	<i>Tamias amoenus</i>	X											
215	Least Chipmunk	<i>Tamias minimus</i>												
216	Red-tailed Chipmunk	<i>Tamias ruficaudus</i>												
217	Columbian Ground-Squirrel	<i>Spermophilus columbianus</i>	X											
218	Golden-mantled Ground-Squirrel	<i>Spermophilus lateralis</i>												
219	Richardson's Ground-Squirrel	<i>Spermophilus richardsonii</i>												
220	Hoary Marmot	<i>Marmota caligata</i>												
221	Yellow-bellied Marmot	<i>Marmota flaviventris</i>	X											
222	Beavers	Castoridae												
223	American Beaver	<i>Castor canadensis</i>												
224	Rats & Mice	Muridae												
225	Common Muskrat	<i>Ondatra zibethicus</i>	X											
226	Porcupines	Erethizonitidae												
227	North American Porcupine	<i>Erethizon dorsatum</i>												
228	Rabbits & Hares	Leporidae												
229	Mountain Cottontail	<i>Sylvilagus nuttallii</i>												
230	Snowshoe Hare	<i>Lepus americanus</i>												
231	White-tailed Jackrabbit	<i>Lepus townsendii</i>												
232	Cats	Felidae												
233	Mountain Lion (Puma)	<i>Puma concolor</i>												
234	Bobcat	<i>Lynx rufus</i>												
235	Dogs	Canidae												
236	Coyote	<i>Canis latrans</i>	X											
237	Red Fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>												
238	Bears	Ursidae												
239	American Black Bear	<i>Ursus americanus</i>												
240	Brown Bear	<i>Ursus arctos</i>												
241	Weasels	Mustelidae												
242	Northern River Otter	<i>Lontra canadensis</i>												
243	American Marten	<i>Martes americana</i>												
244	Short-tailed Weasel	<i>Mustela erminea</i>												
245	Long-tailed Weasel	<i>Mustela frenata</i>												
246	Skunks	Mephitidae												
247	Striped Skunk	<i>Mephitis mephitis</i>												
248	Raccoons	Procyonidae												
249	Northern Raccoon	<i>Procyon lotor</i>												
250	Deer	Cervidae												
251	White-tailed Deer	<i>Odocoileus virginianus</i>	X											

VENT: Montana Owl Workshop Field Checklist

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
1	COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME												
252	Mule Deer	<i>Odocoileus hemionus</i>	X											
253	Elk	<i>Cervus canadensis</i>	X											
254	Pronghorn	Antilocapridae												
255	Pronghorn	<i>Antilocapra americana</i>	X											
256	Bison, Sheep & Goats	Bovidae												
257	American Bison	<i>Bison bison</i>	X											
258	Mountain Goat	<i>Oreamnus americanus</i>												
259	Bighorn Sheep	<i>Ovis canadensis</i>	X											
260														