

Bird Field Note
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03/13/15



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Eagles throughout the Bitterroot Valley began incubating the last two weeks. Eagles occupy both of these nests.



Large groups of Tundra Swans make their way north. Most fly by unnoticed, unless they give a telltale honk.

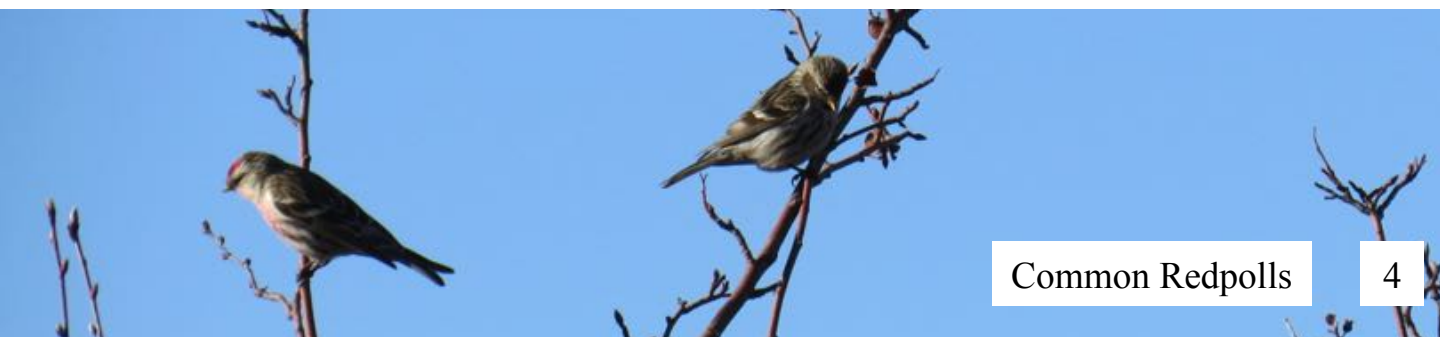


Winter Shrubby Draw Surveys

Our draw surveys revealed a mixture of winter birds and spring arrivals. Compared to past months, bird numbers increased due to the large numbers of Common Redpolls in Sheep Camp. Springtime species included: American Robin, Western Meadowlark, Spotted Towhee, Say's Phoebe, and Dark-eyed Junco.

Table 1. Species using shrubby draws from 3/9-3/11/2015.

	Partridge Alley			Tongue Creek			Sheep Camp			Total
Species	3/9	3/10	3/11	3/9	3/10	3/11	3/9	3/10	3/11	
Common Redpoll							50	157		207
American Tree Sparrow	4	4		2	9	2	7	3	15	46
Black-billed Magpie	3	5	3	6	4	2	3	5	3	34
European Starling	2	1	2	7	1	3		9		25
Black-capped Chickadee							6	13	5	24
Mourning Dove					3	3	5	10	2	23
American Robin	1	2	3	1			1	1	11	20
Western Meadowlark	2	4	1		1	2	1	1		12
House Sparrow	6	1	4							11
Song Sparrow	2	2	3	1	1			1	1	11
Spotted Towhee				1				1	6	8
Say's Phoebe	3	2	1						1	7
Northern Flicker				1		1	2	1	1	6
Red-breasted Nuthatch							1	3	2	6
Clark's Nutcracker							1	2	1	4
Gray Partridge		2				2				4
Dark-eyed Junco						1			2	3
Horned Lark		1	1					1		3
Mountain Chickadee								2		2
Northern Shrike					1		1			2
Red-tailed Hawk							2			2
Common Raven					1					1
Northern Harrier	1									1
Total	24	24	18	19	21	16	80	210	50	462



Common Redpolls

A Clark's Nutcracker took several visits to the Sheep Camp stock tank. A pair nests in the young ponderosa pines on the hills above the spring.



We saw an increase in ungulate numbers at low elevations. Several hundred elk grazed on the hill above Sheep Camp.

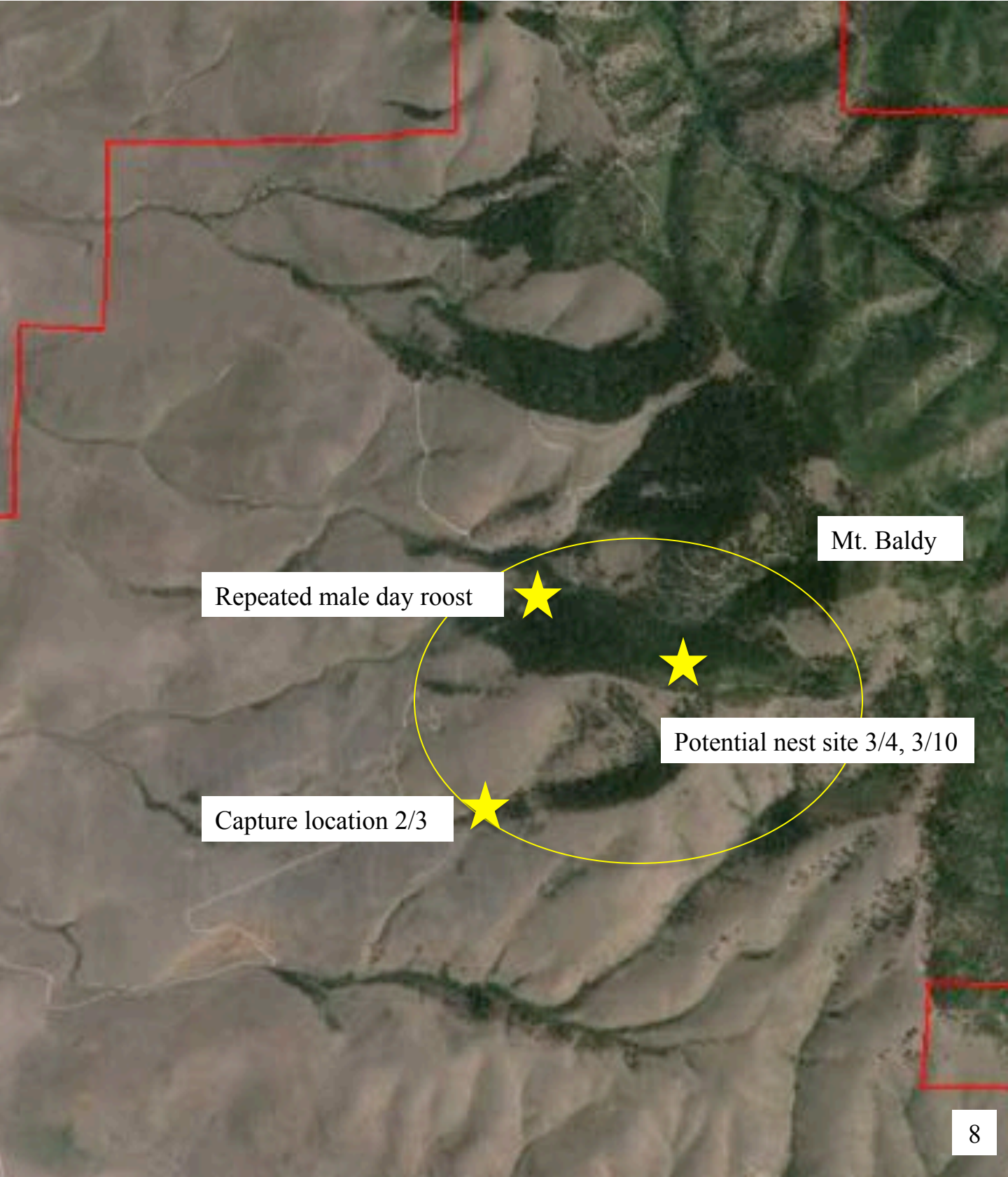


Mule deer browsed as we moved past them during our surveys. Most nibbled on emerging cheatgrass and bitterbrush, but a few occupied the draws, eating other deciduous shrubs.



Northern Pygmy-owl Tracking

A month's worth of tracking revealed the general territory of the West Baldy pygmy-owl. Most daytime observations occurred within a small area, where the owl perched in Douglas-firs to eat voles. William twice saw the owl interacting and vocalizing with a presumed female. He found a promising cavity-filled snag nearby.



Repeated male day roost

Mt. Baldy

Potential nest site 3/4, 3/10

Capture location 2/3

The pygmy-owl pair vocalized on the same tree branch.



The male took a nap while eating a vole.



Even with a telemetry signal, we sometimes had a hard time locating the owl. It used both open and dense vegetation.



In general, we located the pygmy-owl more easily than the Northern Saw-whet Owls.



