

ECBC Newsletter - Spring 2008

May 5, 2008

This is our first electronic newsletter and we hope that you will provide your comments to us. This format allows us to provide more information with less impact on the environment. It also allows us to reach a wider audience. In each issue we will provide information on the ECBC projects, news from other conservation / wildlife groups in the area, and a listing of any birding events coming up in Central Oregon. We will continue to highlight a local personality, local birding news, and good birding resources.

The early part of the year is a time for the ECBC to prepare the ground work for the coming season of field projects. It is also a time to build on the solid backbone that is ECBC. We have added several features to our web site including online payments / donations and an archive of photos of unusual birds of Central Oregon. We continue to build relationships with other conservation organizations and have had productive meetings with the Deschutes Basin Land Trust and The U.S. Forest Service. ECBC was represented at two community events this winter / spring; the eagle Festival at Lake Billy Chinook near Madras and the Earth Day festivities in Bend. At both events we focused on kid activities while gently spreading the bird conservation message. A big thank you to Marilyn Miller and Devon Bately for helping to organize these.

And now Spring is here; The Winter Raptor Survey has drawn to a close for another year while Lewis's Woodpeckers are returning to the burns around Bend and investigating our nest boxes. Shorebirds are migrating through Central Oregon, unaware that they are being counted and adding to valuable long-term datasets. Field trips have also started and are a great chance for members to meet each other and see some great places and birds. Birding-by-ear walks are going strong (led by Dave Tracy) and a new weekly event, the Wednesday Morning Birders, offers more chances to meet birders in the local area. Next week The North American Migration Counts occur ... There is a lot happening. There are so many chances for you to get involved and most of all ... enjoy the birds!

Problems viewing the Newsletter ?..... Every email provider and computer setting is different. Although we have made every effort to direct this newsletter to your inbox, it is possible that it could be treated as spam. To avoid this in the future please forward it to your inbox. It is also probable that your personal security settings will block attachments (i.e. the images on this page). None of the attachments contain harmful information and you should allow them from this sender. It is also possible that your e-mail program only accepts plain text. This is the case with antiquated systems and they will not see any of the formatting or images. Instead they will see a text form of the newsletter that we have created for them.

Winter Birding Highlights, by Chuck Gates

It's sometimes easy to think of the winter birding season in terms like "cold" or "dreary" or "not worth the frostbite". However, it's prudent to remember that winter birding has it's own set of charms and attractions. This sentiment was well displayed in the 2007-08 season. Though the thermometer might have sent a contrary message, this winter was "hot" Winter is about water birds.

SNOW GEESE were reported from 14 different locations with a total of 23 birds being seen in Central Oregon. WHITE-FRONTED GEESE were also reported from Crook and Deschutes Counties. As many as 19 CACKLING GEESE were seen around the area. Perhaps the most interesting waterfowl find was Steve Dougill's discovery of a BLACK BRANT in the farm fields north of Prineville (Look for a separate article about this bird in this newsletter).

Four TRUMPETER SWANS were seen on the Sisters CBC while a single EURASIAN WIGEON showed up for the Prineville CBC. An unusual BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON was discovered along the river in Bend but, sadly, this bird died soon after it was discovered. A SORA was located in Prineville and a smattering of RING-BILLED GULLS were reported from various water features. The Haystack PACIFIC LOON stayed around until December 8 and COMMON LOONS were seen throughout the region.



Rare winter Game Birds are....well...rare. This winter past did nothing to dispel that fact. CHUKARS were seen just once in the Smith Rock area and WILD TURKEYS came down from deep winter snows and were seen near Sisters. RING-NECKED PHEASANTS were located in Crook, Deschutes, Wasco, and Jefferson Counties. A total of 33 EURASIAN-COLLARED DOVES were discovered throughout the region.

There were a lot of raptors reported from our region this winter. This is certainly due, in no small part, to the tremendous efforts of over 150 ECBC volunteers who participated in the annual Winter Raptor Surveys. This state-wide project continues to add bushels of data about wintering raptors and raptor distribution in Oregon. Late (or maybe early) reports of OSPREY around the new year came in from Sunriver, Gateway, and Prineville. Four different NORTHERN GOSHAWKS were found at different times in Bend and Sisters. Large numbers of Deschutes

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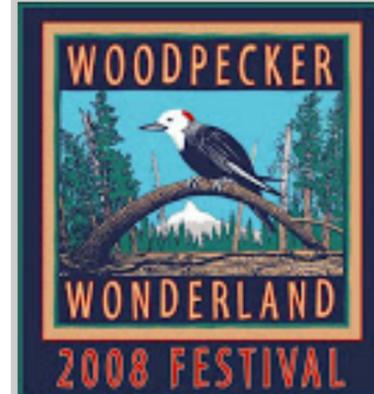
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Click on the image to
find out more about the
Woodpecker Festival
occurring this year near
Sisters.



and Crook County FERRUGINOUS HAWKS were found and they were joined by a more unusual Jefferson County "Ferrugy". One hundred and sixteen ROUGH-LEGGED HAWKS were tallied along with 139 BALD EAGLES and 74 GOLDEN EAGLES. If that weren't enough, 26 MERLIN, 60 PRAIRIE, and a single PEREGRINE FALCON were also documented in the area. Owls included WESTERN SCREECH OWLS from Prineville, Powell Butte, and Camp Sherman; PYGMY OWLS from Millican, Prineville, Sisters, and Tumalo Reservoir; and SHORT-EARED OWLS from Prineville and Powell Butte. A single SAW-WHET OWL was heard calling from an area south of Prineville.

We love our woodpeckers in Central Oregon so a good reconning of their winter numbers is always informative. A WILLIAMSON'S SAPSUCKER was seen on the Prineville CBC for only the second time. RED-BREASTED SAPSUCKER sightings came in from three different areas near Prineville. WHITE-HEADED WOODPECKERS were found in the Sisters area and 10 BLACK-BACKED WOODPECKERS on the Sisters CBC made a big splash. A rare winter NORTHERN 3-TOED WOODPECKER is always interesting but 4 of them on the Sisters count was very special.

A single BLUE JAY was found by Susan Doran in Bend. This bird hung around for a while and was last seen on or around January 15th. Many passerines (perching birds) leave for the winter and don't return until spring. A few come back early to take advantage of the emerging insects at the end of winter. SAY'S PHOEBES began showing up around February 12th. TREE SWALLOWS and VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOWS were right behind them with the first birds arriving on February 22nd.

There are those passerines that seem to find Central Oregon winters to their liking and choose to stick it out instead of migrating. BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEES were found in the Gateway area north of Madras. Most ROCK and CANYON WRENS go south but a few were reported wintering in the canyons of Central Oregon. BOHEMIAN WAXWINGS were spotted from two



different locations in Bend and YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLERS, though scarce, were found a few times. FOX SPARROWS were tallied in Sisters and Prineville and several LINCOLN SPARROWS were discovered skulking around. WHITE-THROATED SPARROWS were seen in Bend and Prineville and HARRIS'S SPARROWS were located in Prineville and Paulina.

The annual TRICOLORED BLACKBIRDS of Crook County were joined by other birds found in Wasco County and near Madras. BROWN-HEADED COWBIRDS showed up in large numbers with 93 on the Utopia CBC. Rosy-finches, Pine Grosbeaks, and Purple Finches failed to make a showing this winter.

Local Personality, by Judy Meredith

Nicole Nielsin-Pincus was selected to the board at the annual meeting and is already active on three committees. She works as a wildlife technician for the USFS Ochoco NF in Prineville. Nicole and her husband Max moved to Prineville in Nov 2006 for his job with the Crooked River Watershed Council. Nicole did her undergraduate work at U of New Hampshire in Environmental Science and Wildlife Biology and obtained a Masters degree at U of Idaho in Wildlife Biology. She found herself interested in birds in 1997 when she went abroad to study wildlife in Tanzania, East Africa.



She says "I thought I was going to get to know charismatic species such as lions and elephants, but fell in love with birds. It was exciting to come home and feel like I was on safari again everyday. I couldn't believe what I had been missing". She believes that birds are such a great, tangible way to fall in love with ecology. As a scientist, she thinks they are also a great subject for study and an indicator of biodiversity and environmental change. She enjoys time with her daughter, Sylvia, husband, Max, and energetic Border Collie, Badger, in a variety of outdoor activities such as hiking, skiing, canoeing, camping, fishing, and gardening. A hearty welcome to Nicole.



Devon Batley, was also just elected to the board. She works as the membership coordinator for the Oregon Natural Desert Association. Her affair with Central Oregon began in the early 90's when she located here as a pre-teen with her dad and sister. After a period in the UK she returned here over a year ago to be near her fiancé and to finally live somewhere for more than three months. Her interest in birds started in 2004 when she took a job with the Roseburg BLM surveying for Marbled Murrelets. This exposed her to all types of birdy things and she "actually learned to identify birds by song, a once daunting task became fun and intriguing".

From there she worked for HawkWatch International, "which was probably my most fun job and lowest paid. However I learned hawk id skills and trapping and banding; it was exciting, challenging and rewarding." There's not much Devon does that doesn't involve a little birding. She loves camping, hiking, boating, fishing, skiing, playing with her kitties, and her pre-husband Sean. A big welcome to Devon.

The Board ...

[Dean Hale](#)
President

[Chuck Gates](#)
Vice President

[JoAnne Bernt](#) Secretary

[Steve Dougill](#)

[Marilyn Miller](#)

[Nicole Nielsin-Pincus](#)

[Devon Batley](#)

Local Info:

Information on ECBC projects and volunteer opportunities, [\[see\]](#)

Sign up for COBOL, the local listserver for staying connected with Central Oregon's birds [\[link\]](#)

Local yard bird project [\[link\]](#)

Local rare and unusual bird photos [\[link\]](#)

Where to go birding in Central Oregon [\[link\]](#)

The 2007 Field Notes for Central Oregon at [\[here\]](#)

COBOL archive for May [\[link\]](#)

Fundraising:

As a non-profit we rely on you to help keep the organization alive. Currently we are seeking funds to hire an Executive Director which would solidify the organizations base and allow it to grow. Please help us reach this important goal.

Volunteering:

We have many volunteer opportunities ranging from bird surveys, conservation work days, and helping on booths at county fairs. Other needs include working with bird data, contacting members,



On January 11, 2008 Steve Dougill and Damian Fagan were running the north Prineville Winter Raptor Survey for the ECBC. As it turns out, raptors would not be the big story that day. Instead, they happened upon one of Central Oregon's most unusual geese... the Brant.

Brant are most commonly found on the Oregon Coast in winter. Flocks of over a hundred can be seen in places like Netarts, Yaquina, and Tillamook Bays.

Inland sightings are much more rare. This is only the 3rd verified report of this species in Central Oregon and a first for Crook County.

While it was present, the Brant tended to congregate with a mixed flock. With the Brant were Canada Geese, Snow Geese, and Cackling Geese.

Over the course of about a month, several people traveled to witness this rarity. Even Central Oregon's own goose enthusiast, Marilyn Miller, got a chance to view the Brant.

All good things must come to an end and the Brant was not seen after February 10.

Rare birds always bring an air of excitement to the local birding community. Nothing gets the birding juices flowing like a good "rare bird alert." Just such an event occurred on March 10, 2008. The rare bird that was reported was a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher.

At about 9:30 on May 10, Sonja de Boer was driving north on Hwy 97 north of Terrebonne when a bird caught her attention. The bird had crossed the road in front of her and she noted the small body size compared to a very long tail and a light body color. She also noted that the bird flew with a bouncy flight pattern. Sonja promptly turned around and relocated the bird while it hovered and hunted in an open field east of the highway. At one point it landed on a



fence post to give her a chance to study it while perched. She even took a couple of photos. For several minutes, she watched the bird to be sure of her initial identification. After she saw the bird bank into the sun and display pink sides and under wings, she knew she was looking at a scissor-tailed Flycatcher.

What happened next is an indication of how the avid birders in Central Oregon are so intricately connected. No fewer than 10 people were on the scene within a couple of hours. Sue and Mel Holt were lucky enough to see the bird but unfortunately even all that birding might was not enough to produce another sighting. No one else saw the bird that day.

Others trickled back to the location in the following days but no one saw the bird again. This is often the way of the rare bird. It comes...it shines...and it leaves us wanting.

One definition of a rare bird is one that has been seen fewer than five times in an area. Using this definition, the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher found in Terrebonne is certainly rare. This is only the second time this species has ever been recorded in Central Oregon. The first sighting occurred in 1978 at Davis Lake. This bird is also unusual because it was found so early. All other spring records of this species in Oregon are from early May to early July.

It's always important to maintain a certain level of skepticism when dealing with rare bird reports. Although this bird was seen by more than one observer and was well described, it's still possible there was no Scissor-tailed Flycatcher at this location. The early date would certainly support this idea. Even if this bird were within its normal range (Texas to Nebraska), this would be a pretty early date of arrival for this species (late March to early May is more normal). This skepticism provides us with a sense of mystery that often accompanies rare bird sightings. After all, without the mystery, they wouldn't be considered rare.

Recent Field Trips, by Steve Dougill

A key part of what ECBC is about, is to introduce people to the birds and the great birding areas in Central Oregon. Car pooling is encouraged and it's casual and fun



Our first trip of the season was on a chilly Easter Day (3/23) and eight of us headed east from Bend to look for geese. On the way to Burns we stopped in the sagebrush habitat and hay fields to look at raptors and desert sparrows. There were large numbers of both FERRUGINOUS HAWKS and BALD EAGLES, probably due to the abundant ground squirrels. In the flooded valley close to Burns, we saw our geese; thousands of them!

writing grants, and sharing ideas. [Contact] Diane Kook, our volunteer coordinator.

Suggestions & Comments:

Please send any comments about this newsletter and how we might be able to improve it to the [ECBC]

Checklists:

Checklist for Central Oregon birds [get it]

Checklist for Deschutes birds [get it]

Businesses:

Does your business want to support ECBC and bird conservation in the local area? Please contact us for the benefits we can provide your company by becoming a supporting member.

Guided Trips:

ECBC offers guided trips for individuals and small groups for \$150 in Central Oregon. These are led by local experts who will try and find your target birds. This year we are leading trips to Eastern Crook County, Summer Lake, Fort Rock and the High Cascades. Reserve a place and customize your trip. All proceeds go to ECBC



In Late August we will be leading a weekend trip to the Malheur Wildlife Preserve and the Steens Mountains of south-eastern Oregon. This is a chance to see Black Rosy-Finches and Broad-tailed Hummingbirds. Also, there will still be many breeding birds present on the Malheur wetlands. We encourage car-pooling, and camping at Page Springs

All in all we saw almost 20,000 SNOW and ROSS'S GEESE . It was fantastic! Also, we found large numbers of SANDHILL CRANES (more than 150) gracefully flapping over the area and standing around in the fields. With them were several groups of LONG BILLED CURLEWS. There were lots more BALD EAGLES everywhere and ducks and geese and more geese. Further south, we stopped at The Narrows and were treated to newly arrived BLACK NECKED STILTS gracefully strutting about in the shallow water and, rather unusually, 4 HERRING GULLS mixed in with other gulls. Apart from the birds, we saw several herds of Pronghorn grazing in the hay fields and running through the desert.

Spring should have been here for our second field trip when nine intrepid birders gathered for a trip to visit Smith Rock State Park and Lower Bridge on April 20. It was 24 degrees when the birding started and it didn't warm up much. Still, the main snowstorm arrived later when people were back in their vehicles. Despite the weather migrants were searching for food along the Deschutes River and the BEWICK'S WREN put on a show. This is a rare bird in Central Oregon that might be starting to extend it's range down the Deschutes River from the Columbia Gorge.

Later in the day the group hiked down into the canyon at Smith Rock and were treated to a spectacular display by the resident Golden Eagle at its nest. Both Canyon and Rock Wrens were seen and first of the year MacGillivray's and Nashville Warblers were found.

On the 4th May spring had finally arrived. Migrants were everywhere for the nineteen of us on the Bend field trip. We kept to the regular haunts: the First Street River Trail, Sawyer Park, Entrada Burn and Hatfield "Lake". Lots of challenging flycatchers, colorful warblers, secretive Hermit Thrushes and a beautiful male Calliope Hummingbird sitting right out in the open for all to see. We were treated to newly arrived Tanagers and Black-headed Grosbeaks and swarms of swallows and swifts.

At the Entrada burn we saw lots of Lewis's Woodpeckers hanging out at the ECBC nest boxes. If you have never been out here, it's a site you will not want to miss ... the birds are spectacular!

Finally a quick look in at Hatfield Lake where we were treated to a variety of shorebirds at close quarters; two Solitary Sandpipers were particularly nice, as was a couple of close Lesser Yellowlegs and a flock of Wilson's Phalaropes spinning about on the water. All in all we had a total of 92 species.

Ross's Geese Color bands:

On the field trip to Burns at the end of March, our group was lucky enough to see four banded Ross's Geese (with coded neck collars) in a mixed flock of about 2000 "white geese". It turns out that these geese were collared by the Canadian Wildlife Service. The geese are captured during their flightless period in late July and early August using "helicopter drive" techniques at their breeding grounds in the Arctic. Information on their age and sex is recorded. Adult and juvenile geese are leg banded and adult geese are collared. Each neck collar contains a unique, easily readable, three-digit, alpha-numeric code. Collars may be yellow, blue, red, black or green, depending upon the species of goose and the location of the nesting colony. Two of our birds were collared as adults in 2003 on the west coast of Hudson Bay. The other two birds came from even further north; The Queen Maud Gulf Bird Migration Sanctuary on the north coast of Nanavut in 2002 and 1991. This makes the oldest one more than 17 years old! More information on the project and the reasons for the surveys can be seen by following this [\[link\]](#).

Spring Events:

Recurring Events:

- Every Tuesday through the Spring - Birding by Ear with Dave Tracy. Join us as we find birds along the Deschutes River. This is a great chance to become familiar with the local birds and meet some other birders. Free, and open to all ages. Meet Sawyer Park at 8:00am ... [\[contact\]](#) Dave for more info.
- Every Wednesday, local birders meet at Nancy P's Bakery at 7.30am to decide where they want to bird that morning. The bakery is located between Milwaukee and Newport on 11th on the west side of Bend. [\[Contact\]](#) Judy Meredith for more info.

At the beginning of 2008, newly retired Judy Meredith, decided that it might be nice to have an informal bird event on Wednesday mornings. Since this was her brainchild, we have looked to her as the "leader" a title she prefers not to have. So to convince us she is not the leader, she proceeded to spend most of March and April out of the state. Well it is still a good idea so Wednesday morning birding has not stopped. Any interested Birder is welcome to join the group and we welcome new birders.

We usually have no plan until we meet and assess the weather as well as recent bird sightings. For the most part, we spend about three hours locally in pursuit of birds. However, on one occasion, we did make it an all day event traveling all the way to Gateway spending time in Adams, Madras, and the Trout Creek Campground.

There were some great looks at a good variety Central Oregon birds but nothing I would call rare. It is my opinion that the best bird observed was the White Throated Sparrow on the First Street River Trail. Of course I do not attend every Wednesday and due to a cross-country trip with ten days birding in Florida, I too was gone for most of March. By Don Sutherland.

- The third Thursday of selected months is Birder's Night at the Environmental Center in Bend. For a schedule of talks and slide shows [\[see\]](#) for more info.

Campground. Neither of these costs are covered by the registration fee of \$100 per individual. For more information contact [\[Steve Dougill\]](#)

A fun project to get involved with:

United States Nightjar Survey Network - A region-wide network of conservation minded citizens working together to improve our understanding of the population distribution and trends of Nightjars.

Nightjars, or goatsuckers, are the most enigmatic group of birds in North America. Very little is known about the basic aspects of their biology, habitat use, and population status due to their cryptically nocturnal lifestyle.

In recent years, conservationists and the general public have come to share a general sense that populations of Nightjars are dramatically declining. However, prior to this program, there was no widespread, long term monitoring strategy to gather vital population information. Gaining an understanding on the precise magnitude and scale of population changes are critical if we are to plot a course for conservation.

The Nightjar Survey Network is a new and powerful annual monitoring strategy, coordinated by The Center for Conservation Biology, to collect information on population distribution and trends of Nightjars over large regions. Nightjar survey routes are distributed throughout 37 U.S. states. The success of this program relies entirely on volunteer participation.

Nocturnal behaviors of Nightjars are influenced strongly by moonlight. Activities such as calling and foraging increase

Dates: For more events see the ECBC web site

- 10 & 11 May - Spring NAMC. For list of compilers and more info [[click](#)]
- 15 May - Birders Night - Talk by Kevin Lair of Wild Birds Unlimited on back yard birds. [[info](#)]
- 17 May - International Bird Migration Day, Prineville ... [[info](#)]
- 18 May - ECBC Field Trip to Crook County ... [[info](#)]
- 31 May - ECBC Conservation Work day at the Metolius Preserve where we declare a war on the invasive weed Mullien ... [[info](#)]
- 7 & 8 June - Woodpecker Festival, Camp Sherman ... [[info](#)]
- 14 June - ECBC Field Trip to Metolius Preserve and Trout Creek (DLT preserves) ... [[info](#)]
- 21 June - ECBC Conservation Work day at Big Summit Prairie where we will help regenerate Aspens. We encourage people to camp the night before ... [[info](#)]
- 10 July - ECBC Board Meeting, 5.30pm at Environmental Center. All welcome ... [[info](#)]

ECBC Project Reports:

Lewis's Woodpecker Study - Contact [[Diane Kook](#)]

The Lewis's Woodpeckers are back in Central Oregon! These birds typically show up in our region around the last week in April- the 1st week in May and then migrate south again around the end of September. Currently volunteers have readied the nest boxes we have in place for them at our project sites for the up and coming breeding season. This consisted of cleaning out the nest boxes and replacing a 4-6 inch layer of shavings, and replacing some bark on a few fronts of the nest boxes. We also cleared out a few squirrel nests and will be keeping a close eye to see if these mammals return and take up residence once again in the nest boxes.

Currently there are 11 volunteers who will be donating their time, from the beginning of May through the early part of July, monitoring and collecting data about the use of our nest boxes by this beautiful species of woodpecker.

North American Migration Count - Contact [[Chuck Gates](#)]

Next week NAMC is happening! It occurs on Saturday 10 and Sunday 11 May throughout Oregon. Apart from coordinating the project we are attempting to collate all the count data from the previous 14 or so years into a database for analysis. This will offer an unprecedented view of long-term population trends in the State.

The Fall 2007 North American Migration Count marked a pivotal moment in the history of this count. Since its meager beginnings in 1994, the count has gone through many ups and downs. In its hay day, the NAMC in Oregon involved nearly every county in the state. Recently, participation has been dwindling as volunteers began to question the validity of a continent-wide count that no longer involves most of the continent. The fall of 2007 marked a turning point in data collection and processing that will hopefully encourage more volunteers to join in and make this a meaningful migration count for Oregon.

In 2006, the East Cascades Bird Conservancy decided to take over the administration of this count and attempt to reinvigorate it. Efforts are being made to find volunteers for each county. Progress is being made but the going is slow and difficult. It is the hope of the count coordinators that people will begin to see the benefits of these counts and participate more fully.

Of the counties that did participate, enthusiasm was generally good. One hundred and forty five participants fanned out in their prospective counties and mustered over 500 hours of volunteer time. The total car mileage for the count was 3626 with another 390 miles tallied by means other than automobile. Twenty-two individuals participated in feeder watches and twelve stationary observers logged 33 hours. Nineteen intrepid volunteers spent 25 hours owling while covering about 160 miles.

A total of 285 species were counted during the time period. The individual total was 713,834. This number is quite high compared to past years. This was due mostly to one sighting of over 550,000 Barn Swallows in Yamhill County.

under bright moonlight conditions and it is thought that breeding may actually be timed with the lunar schedule. We have designed protocols for this survey to take advantage of these behaviors by conducting surveys only during bright moonlit nights so detection rates will be higher and more consistent.

Nightjar Surveys are easy to perform and will not take more than two hours to complete. It is conducted like the USGS Breeding Bird Survey except for special modifications to accommodate Nightjars. Volunteers conduct roadside counts at night, when the moon is equal or greater than 50 % illuminated and above the horizon, by driving and stopping at 10 points along a predetermined 9-mile route. At each point, the observer counts all Nightjars seen or heard during a 6-minute period. No artificial broadcast of the species call is used.

Please consider adopting a Nightjar Survey Route, your participation is key to the success of the program. To get involved click [[here](#)]. To see survey areas in Central Oregon, click [[here](#)] and look at Basin 2.

One of the more interesting and entertaining parts of NAMC is to view the rare birds that people scare up as they romp around the state. This time of year, many are rushing to Malheur to see the smorgasbord of rarities that show up there every fall. However, due to this count, other birds were discovered that merit mentioning. A possible Blue-headed Vireo was reported from Baker County. This bird was observed by JoAnne Britton and the description seemed to fit Blue-headed quite well. JoAnne was not completely certain so the sighting remains in the "possible" category. A single Black-and-white Warbler was reported from Deschutes County. The bird was seen well. Trumpeter Swans were reported from Crook and Deschutes while a single Eurasian Wigeon was found in Coos County. Twenty-four Red-shouldered Hawks were located in ten different counties. Two of those sightings came from Deschutes and five from Klamath. Five counties produced a total of eight White-tailed Kites. Dusky Grouse were found in Crook and Baker Counties. Flesh-footed Shearwaters were seen off the coasts of Lincoln and Tillamook Counties as were Leach's Storm-Petrels. Single American and Pacific Golden-Plovers were located in Lane and Coos Counties respectively. Four Common Terns were found in three interior counties while a total of 46 Arctic Terns were tallied at sea. Five Xantus's Murrelets were located at sea with the majority coming from Curry County and a single Cassin's Auklet was recorded off the coast of Douglas County. The ocean crew turned up good numbers of all three jaeger species and 9 South Polar Skua. Forty-four Eurasian Collared-Doves were seen in ten counties with the high number of thirteen coming from Jefferson County. A single Spotted Owl from Douglas County was joined by a lone Long-eared Owl from Jefferson. Barred Owls were found in Curry and Douglas Counties. A solitary Three-toed Woodpecker report came from the forests of Linn County. Klamath produced a single Black Phoebe for the only eastern record (13 more were seen in the west). Eastern Kingbirds turned up in Klamath and Baker Counties. Blue-gray Gnatcatchers were seen in Klamath and Crook Counties. Seven California Towhees were located from Josephine County while a single Tri-colored Blackbird was seen in Deschutes.

Winter Raptor Surveys - Contact [[Jeff Fleischer](#)]

The East Cascades Bird Conservancy's Winter Raptor Survey Project concluded its fourth survey season at the end of March. This winter, a total of 122 survey routes were in the project throughout the state of Oregon. More than 8,000 miles of transects were surveyed by more than 90 project volunteers from November through March. The primary months of survey work are December through February, with November and March considered transition months as birds move north and south during migration.

This winter, during December through February, a total of 303 surveys were completed out of a possible 365. The volunteers logged 1,296.5 hours while surveying a total of 23,465 route miles. The maximum monthly coverage was 8,065 miles in January followed by 8,013 miles in February and 7,387 miles in December. The monthly total number of raptors counted was 5,896 (Dec), 5,941 (Jan), and 5,406 (Feb). As in the previous 3 winters, the Red-tailed Hawk was the most prevalent species counted, making up 43% (Dec), 42% (Jan), and 47% (Feb) of total birds found. The American Kestrel ranked second at 25%, 24%, and 21% for the respective months followed by Bald Eagles at 5%, 11% and 10%. Rough-legged Hawks accounted for 8%, 8% and 6% while Northern Harriers rounded out the top 5 with 8%, 7% and 7% for the three months. These 5 species have consistently accounted for a little more than 90% of the monthly total of birds counted each month since the start of this project.

A complete final report of this past winter's project activities will be available later this summer. It will contain a variety of charts that will depict all the data collected since the start of this project. The success of this project lies squarely with all of the great people who have volunteered their time these past 4 winters to get out and do the monthly surveys. Their efforts are sincerely appreciated. Without this supreme effort, there would be no Oregon Winter Raptor Project. This project is scheduled to continue into the future as long as there will be folks dedicated to doing these surveys. We are always looking for more individuals to join in on the fun and provide even more new areas of the state to survey. If this project sounds like something that you would like to participate in, please contact Jeff Fleischer, project coordinator.

Green Ridge Raptor Surveys - Contact [[Karen Sharples](#)]

Last season was yet again a bumper year for raptor counts. Green Ridge proves to be an excellent place to record raptors migrating south, especially when winds turn towards the west. This seems to create just the right conditions to draw in the raptors that use the up drafts created by the topography of the ridge line. In early October, we had a fantastic day where we recorded over 300 individual raptors including a Goshawk, 4 Peregrines, eagles, Merlins, and lots and lots of Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks. Each year since the counts started, we have recorded more birds than the more famous Bonney Butte Hawk Watch site to the north. This is probably due to the lower elevation of Green Ridge and the fact we are able to count in weather conditions that close Bonney Butte down.

Look for a summary of the results in the next newsletter. We are also asking for anyone in the Sisters area to house volunteers from The Valley for a night during the survey season to help encourage more people to participate in this great project.

Inland Shorebird Surveys - Contact [[Steve Dougill](#)]

During the spring, water levels are generally too high in many locations in Central Oregon to attract many shorebirds. This makes wetlands that are artificially managed especially important during this season. This spring we have been focusing our efforts on several key spots: Hatfield Lake and Redmond Sewage Lagoons (Deschutes); Prineville Sewage Lagoons and Guterrez Ranch (Crook); Pelton Dam (Jefferson); and Summer Lake (Lake).

Killdeer started arriving in force by mid March and are normally the first shorebirds to be recorded when the surveys start (although

some birds were braving the area in February). Late march saw the first of the Dunlin with their beautiful black bellies and reddish backs. Also present were Greater Yellow Legs at Redmond Sewage lagoons and Stilts and Curlews in the Harney Basin.



By the second week of April peeps were starting to pass through with least and western sanpipers in a few sites. Summer Lake is always a hotspot and the wet conditions and current management regime have yielded high numbers of shorebirds. During a count in the 3rd week of April there were over 450 Avocets, 131 Black-necked Stilts, 200 Long-billed Dowitchers, 19 Willets and 2 Snowy Plovers. By the last week of April the first Wilson's Phalaropes were beginning to show up and 2 Solitary Sandpipers made an appearance at Hatfield Lake.

Glaze Meadow Surveys - Contact [[Steve Dougill](#)]

In a couple of weeks, we will start the third consecutive year of bird surveys in the woodlands surrounding Glaze Meadow. The Forest Service, in partnership with Oregon Wild, will be thinning areas of the forest to reduce the threat from high intensity fire to the neighboring Black Butte Ranch. ECBC is providing information on the effects of the management so that it can be accomplished with as little impact to the birds / wildlife as possible. This is supported by a recent grant from Oregon Wild of \$500 for which we are extremely grateful. This will be used to reimburse volunteers for their vehicle expenses incurred during the surveys.

Last year we found good numbers of woodpeckers, including nesting White-headed and Pileated. Close to the swamp, we came across a family group of Ruffed Grouse, several Pygmy Owls, breeding Purple Finches, and territorial Swainson's Thrushes. Veery were found for the second year in a tangled area of aspen swamp. Central Oregon's first Northern Parula was found at this location along with a rare Red-eyed Vireo. For directions to this great birding area [[see](#)].

Camp Polk Meadow Surveys - Contact [[Contact Eva Eagle](#)]

The Deschutes Basin Land Trust and East Cascades Bird Conservancy have been collaborating for several years to conduct informal area surveys at Camp Polk Meadow Preserve. This 145 acre Preserve, owned and managed by the Land Trust, is a hot spot of bird activity - so far we have documented 135 bird species at Camp Polk Meadow.

Over the next several years the Land Trust will be engaged in a major stream restoration in "The Meadow". The Land Trust and ECBC are interested in tracking the effects of this project on bird populations. In order to do so, we need volunteers to help conduct bird surveys year round - with a special emphasis on early May to late September. So we are still looking for volunteer birders to continue these surveys.

Any interested birder can help in this survey. All you need to do is to participate in a guided survey orientation to the Preserves and learn the survey protocol. Then you can conduct a survey at your own convenience. You can record your results in a variety of ways, thus adding to our store of knowledge about the birds of Camp Polk Meadow Preserve.

Gray Flycatcher Surveys - Contact [[Chuck Gates](#)]

In the summer of 2003, the Crooked River National Grasslands contacted the ECBC for assistance in monitoring Gray Flycatchers in the grasslands area near Madras. The CRNG was (and still is) doing a widespread fire treatment on public land in selected areas surrounding Madras. The area ranges from Smith Rocks in the south to near Willowdale in the north and from near Crooked River Ranch to Round Butte. Pre-burn and post-burn avian data collection was needed to monitor the impact of burning on the Gray Flycatcher. An emphasis is being placed on monitoring Gray Flycatchers because of their status as a species of concern.

To count the birds, a standard point count method is used. Surveyors are provided maps with random points. Surveyors drive to those points and listen for 10 minutes, recording every species heard. When Gray Flycatchers are heard, compass readings distance estimates are recorded. There are 10 such points in each route. Surveys begin at sunrise and usually take 3-4 hours. Follow-up surveys are then done to locate Gray Flycatcher nests. The project is usually accomplished between May 20 and July 10.

Since 2003, the ECBC has done this survey annually (we missed 2005 due to funding problems). 2007 was a year with mixed results. In the course of surveying 48 point-count stations, volunteers tallied a total of 1200 individuals of 52 different species (one station was inaccessible due to road barrier). The top three most abundant species, with frequencies calculated as birds per 48 stations, were Western Meadowlark (186 individuals, 3.87/station), Common Raven (81 ind., 1.69/sta.) and Mourning Dove (74 ind., 1.54/sta.). (See Table 2a) Western Meadowlark also occurred at the most stations (35, 60%), followed by Mourning Dove (28, 48%) and Northern Flicker (24, 41%).

The focal species for the project, Gray Flycatcher, ranked twenty-first in abundance and frequency, with 21 individuals detected at 15 stations (1.4/station, 31%). Of these 15 stations where Gray Flycatchers were detected, ten hosted birds within 50 meters. These results were promising but follow-up surveys were unable to locate any active nests in areas where breeding behavior had been noted.

In 2008, the ECBC will again monitor these bird populations in the CRNG. If you are interested in getting involved with the Gray Flycatcher Survey as a Project leader, the following requirements must be met: Project Leaders must have transportation (4-wheel drive is required for some routes). Project Leaders must be healthy enough to be able to get in and out of a car and should be able to identify birds by sound. Project Leaders are expected to collate the data on provided forms and report that data to the Project Coordinator. Basic MS Word and Excel skills are helpful but not necessary for this task. In addition to Project Leaders, ride-a-long volunteers are encouraged to participate. This is a great opportunity to learn how to do point counts and identify birds by ear.

Another way to get involved with this project would be to help us do nest searches. This activity requires no experience and can be a lot of fun. Volunteers arrive early in the morning at locations already identified as probable nesting sites. They locate birds by sight or sound (very easy for Gray FC because of their distinctive and simple song). They then patiently follow the birds (from a safe distance) back to their nests and record the location of the nest.

If you don't feel like fieldwork is for you, you can offer to help with data processing. This would involve collecting data forms from field workers and transferring it into electronic form. Mostly, it involves entering numbers into a spreadsheet. Help writing a final annual report is also needed.

The Gray Flycatcher Survey is just the kind of project the ECBC was created to handle. It can't be successful without volunteer help. Please consider getting involved with this wonderful project by contacting the Project Coordinator.

Conservation work days and projects - [[Contact Eva Eagle](#)]

The ECBC Conservation Committee (Eva Eagle, Anne Gerke, Peter Low, Marilyn Miller, and Nicole Nielson-Pincus) has been busy planning ways for ECBC members to improve bird habitat. So far we have two workdays scheduled: Camp Polk Meadow 'Bird and Weed' on May 31 and Glaze Meadow 'Bird and Fence Pull' August 16. Note the 'Bird and...' part—these are great birding locales and we want to enjoy them as well as help them out.

Other projects are in the works. Last year, an ECBC work party camped in the Ochocos and built an aspen enclosure. This year, we hope to do more of this and are working to find the right date and time for that. We would also love to organize a workday or two closer to Bend and welcome ideas from the membership about possible projects. Let us know about places that need our help!

One focus for the Conservation Committee in 2008 is to strengthen the partnership between ECBC and the Deschutes Basin Land Trust. This year for the first time, ECBC board members will be leading two special birding expeditions on Land Trust properties: on April 26 Nicole Nielson-Pincus led a woodpecker tour at the Metolius Preserve and on May 16 Steve Dougill will help find and identify the springtime birds of Camp Polk Meadow. These efforts build on a longstanding partnership between the two organizations. For seven years, ECBC has sponsored an intensive bird survey project at Camp Polk Meadow that produced a season-by-season bird list for the area. These results will, in time, help the Land Trust understand the impact of habitat changes over the next several years. Every spring, ECBC leads a field trip to these preserves to observe migrating and nesting species; starting last year, we have committed to improve Camp Polk Meadow habitat through a conservation workday.

Kestrel Nestbox Study - [[Contact Don McCartney](#)]

During the period 1998 through 2007, the Kestrel project has grown from one box to 120, and the cumulative number of young falcons fledged is slightly in excess of one thousand. However, American Kestrel numbers are declining in North America according to a Fall 2007 Kestrel Symposium of the Raptor Research Foundation. Nesting data is provided to the Cornell Lab for Ornithology from boxes monitored by ECBC volunteers.

Jim Anderson bands as many of the young nestlings as possible for migration studies. These banding sessions also serve a great educational experience for youth groups, land owners, and other people invited to attend.

News from other Local groups:

No group works alone and we would like to introduce you to a range of other conservation / wildlife groups in Central Oregon that are active and support our mission. If you are active in a group not represented here and would like to contribute a regular piece, please contact [The Nuthatch](#).



By Sarah Mowry

The Deschutes Land Trust works cooperatively with landowners to conserve land for wildlife, scenic views, and local communities. We care for more than 7,200 acres in our region for today and for generations to come.

The Land Trust owns and cares for four Community Preserves—places protected for native plants and wildlife but also for you to enjoy and explore. We offer walks and hikes at our protected properties as well as opportunities to help with restoration and stewardship.

Camp Polk Meadow Preserve is a 145 acre meadow near Sisters that is one of Central Oregon's birding hot spots. The Land Trust and ECBC have collaborated on many projects at Camp Polk including bird surveys and conservation work days. Bird surveys conducted for the past 7 years by ECBC and Land Trust members have helped tremendously to monitor the conditions of the meadow and the 150 species that call it home.

This year, ECBC and the Land Trust will partner on a conservation work day on May 31st from 8am-12pm to help with the major restoration of Whychus Creek through Camp Polk Meadow. We hope you'll join us for morning birding and then invasive species removal in preparation for creating a new stream channel for Whychus Creek. This restoration will dramatically improve habitat, including wetlands and wet meadows, all utilized by many bird species



by Devon Bately

Opposition to Proposed Hydroelectric Projects on Summer Lake and Abert Rim Grows

NT Hydro, an Idaho based development firm, has applied to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) for a preliminary permit that could lead to construction of two pumped storage hydroelectric projects on Summer Lake (docket P-13050) and on Abert Rim (docket P-13054). In the last two weeks the Oregon Natural Desert Association (ONDA), joined by Oregon Wild and WaterWatch of Oregon have submitted comments in opposition to both projects. Numerous individuals and agencies have submitted their Motions to Intervene including local Summer Lake landholders, the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife, Oregon Water Resource Department and the US Forest Service.

The reasons for opposition to these projects range from devastating ecological impacts to diminishment of aesthetic values along the Oregon Outback National Scenic Byway.

The proposed hydroelectric projects would require the construction of large pumps and turbines, and associated pipes, tunnels, substations and transmission lines that would intrude directly on two designated Wilderness Study Areas. The Diablo Mountain WSA reaches about halfway into Summer Lake and the necessary substation and transmission lines would be visible from the WSA, diminishing the wilderness properties of the area. The Abert Rim project is perhaps even more egregious as it will potentially dredge a natural perennial freshwater lake in the Abert Rim Wilderness Study Area, as well as constructing a tunnel directly under the WSA.<>

Pumped storage systems are designed for energy storage, not net energy production. To generate energy the alkali waters would be pumped uphill during the night when electric rates are low, stored in a reservoir, then released during the daytime to generate electricity when rates are high, resulting in a net loss of energy to the electric grid, but a profit to the operating company from the difference between the two rates. NT Hydro states that they intend to use wind power to power the pumps at night. The glitch? There are currently no wind farms in the Summer Lake/Abert Rim area so NT Hydro would just be drawing off the same power grid everyone else uses.

Summer Lake and Lake Abert are closed basin alkali lakes that receive runoff from perennial streams. Both these lakes provide vital habitat for migrating and nesting birds, including the Western Snowy Plover, listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. The Lake Abert Area of Critical Environmental Concern, covering more than 49,000 acres of the lake, associated wetlands, and surrounding habitat, was established primarily for protection of the Western Snowy Plover. Lake Abert and Summer Lake provide about 90% of all nesting Snowy Plover habitat in Oregon. In fact the 19,000-acre Summer Lake Wildlife Area was also created to protect Western Snowy Plover. The two proposed hydropower projects would likely cause significant harm to the species and its habitat.

Both Summer Lake and Lake Abert serve as important stops for migrating birds along the Pacific Flyway. Despite the limited amount of water it contains, Lake Abert is an oasis for migratory shorebirds who depend on the brine shrimp and brine flies in the lake for food during their migrations. Peak shorebird counts on Summer Lake have ranged from 30,000 to 50,000 birds per year. This draws tourist dollars to the valley and the loss of bird populations and blowing dust will interfere directly with the region's economy.

To feed the pumped storage system NT Hydro proposes withdrawing 2,000 acre feet of water from Summer Lake, a deficit that wildlife can't afford. Closed-basin lakes are known to have large fluctuations in volume throughout the year. At its best Summer Lake is three feet deep and spans a length of 20 miles, meaning that reduction of the water table will lead to decreased surface water for migrating waterfowl and shorebirds, drastic changes in exposed shoreline which will devastate nesting and feeding habitat as well as leading to more toxic alkali dust being released.

Similar effects will be felt by bird populations at Lake Abert. The lake is so extensive (about 60 square miles) but shallow (approximately 6 feet on the average), withdrawals of even small amounts of water will cause magnified effects to the lake's shoreline, and the proposed withdrawal of water for this project will have significant, harmful effects on the lake's diverse aquatic ecosystem. Read more about these projects [[here](#)].

ONDA Pushes for Badlands Wilderness

The Badlands Wilderness Study Area encompasses over 30,000 acres of juniper-sagebrush habitat. This area is accessible by a number of hiking trails and is a great place to visit year-round. Just 15 miles from Bend, the WSA offers unique lava formations, ancient junipers, plentiful bird watching and wildflowers in the spring and summer.

The Badlands' current status is a Wilderness Study Area (WSA), a designation that imposes fewer restrictions than wilderness designation, and does not offer the permanency that wilderness does. Recognizing the need to provide recreation opportunities for non-motorized users, protect natural resources, and minimize conflicts among visitors, the BLM closed the Badlands to motorized use in their 2005 Resource Management Plan.

For over ten years ONDA has been working to get Wilderness designation for the Badlands. This year we have ramped up our efforts and employed two Greencorps interns to get the word out and generate comments to Senator Wyden in support of Badlands Wilderness. This drive included a well-attended Badlands pub-crawl at which 80 comments were generated to Sen. Wyden in favor of Badlands Wilderness. In total we have collect 850 comments this year, we also have support of over 200 local businesses and Deschutes County Commissioner Tammy Melton (nee Baney).

It's not too late to make your voice heard; if you haven't submitted your comments to the Senator you can do so [[here](#)].



Create a Complete Backyard Bird Habitat - Kevin Lair, Wild Birds Unlimited

After a long winter, spring has finally arrived in Central Oregon. Springtime is a great time to evaluate your backyard bird habitat and consider making improvements. A complete habitat consists of four key elements: food, water, nesting habitat, and shelter.

Spring is an important time to keep the birdfeeders full. While it is warmer and plants are beginning to grow, most plants do not set seed until later in the summer or fall. Therefore there is not more food available yet for seed eating birds. In addition, birds are now faced with all their nesting related chores. They must find and defend a territory, attract a mate, produce eggs, incubate the eggs, and feed the nestlings and fledglings. All these chores certainly take a toll on nesting birds, and healthy, well fed adults have the best chances of producing many healthy offspring.

For most seed eating songbirds the preferred seed is black oil sunflower. This can be offered in the shell or out if shell mess and germination are concerns. Provide white millet if Dove and Quail are present. Offer nyjer seed in a finch feeder for Goldfinches and Pine Siskins.



Keep the suet feeders filled. Energy-packed suet is great for nesting birds. Parents will even carry beakfulls of suet to their nest to feed their nestlings. As temperatures rise, switch to heat tolerant suet doughs. They will withstand even direct summer sun without melting.

Rufous Hummingbirds are moving back into Central Oregon, so now is the time to put out your hummingbird feeders. The best nectar is simply one part white table sugar to four parts water. Be sure to change the nectar and clean the feeders every 4 to 5 days.

A water source is a great attractant for all bird species, including those such as warblers that do not eat seed or suet and may not otherwise visit backyard habitats. Birdbaths can be on pedestals, on the ground, or even hung in trees or from poles. Ponds and water features are great, as long as they have a shallow section. The ideal water depth for most songbirds is 1-2 inches.

Spring is also a great time to evaluate the nesting habitat available in your yard. Having nesting boxes is a great way to help cavity nesting birds successfully raise their young. Mountain Chickadees, Pygmy Nuthatches, Tree and Violet-green Swallows, and Mountain and Western Bluebirds all take readily to boxes. Appropriate dimensions and

entrance hole sizes can help encourage the species you want, and discourage non-native species like House Sparrows and European Starlings.

Take a look at the trees and shrubs you have in your yard. If possible, try to create a "wild area" densely planted with native vegetation. These areas provide shelter and may be used by non-cavity nesting species as nesting sites. Plant berry producing trees and shrubs to provide food for fruit eating birds.

Improve your bird habitat now and you will be rewarded with great bird activity for years to come. It's great for you, and great for the birds.

Crooked River Watershed Council:by [Max Nielsen-Pincus](#)

The Crooked River Watershed Council has recently completed an assessment of the anadromous fish reintroduction area of the Lower Crooked River Watershed. The assessment lays the groundwork for the development of several major watershed and habitat enhancement projects, including two major fish passage and screening projects at private diversion dams on the Crooked River and two habitat enhancement projects on the Crooked River and Ochoco Creek near Prineville. In addition, the Watershed Council is a partner in several other projects focused on improving stream and riparian habitat, managing juniper at the small watershed scale, and monitoring water quality and watershed trends. Our projects in the Crooked River Watershed will improve and restore riparian and wetland habitat for neo-tropical migrants, and reclaim sage grouse habitat from the expansion of western juniper. Our projects are voluntary restoration and monitoring efforts that rely on partnerships with landowners, agencies, municipal governments, and irrigation districts.

Yard Bird Survey Data: Getting to know the locals better - Jim Moodie

Last year, ECBC supported the beginning of a new kind of survey: birds seen in people's yards. The goal is to use yards as a means of detecting trends in migratory species or patterns in the movements of residents or wintering species. Thirteen yards began the year by reporting the maximum number of individuals seen on one day during 10-day periods. By year's end, six yards had complete data sets for the entire year.

For all yards reporting at least part of the year, we identified 137 species. The data suggest more interesting trends than just number of species. For example, let's look only at the Rufous Hummingbird data for those yards completing the entire year:

April	May			June			July			Aug			Sept	
0	2	2	1	0	2	5	6	7	6	5	2	2	1	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	4	3	3	4	4	3	2	2	1
1	1	1	1	0	2	2	2	5	3	4	4	3	3	2
2	2	1	1	0	2	12	9	10	8	7	6	4	3	1
0	2	0	0	0	1	2	2	3	3	3	2	1	1	0
0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	3	5	5	5	3	2	0

Rufous Hummingbird numbers are low in spring and this species disappears during the first ten days of June! The numbers appear to peak during the 2nd ten-day period of July and then slowly dwindle until all the birds are gone by the 20th of September. Of course, this is only for one year, but hopefully, with continued efforts by people willing to report their yard birds in a systematic way, we can uncover some real trends with our local bird populations.

U.S. Forest Service: Lauri Turner

The Deschutes National Forest manages public lands for multiple resource benefits. It is one of 17 forests in the Pacific Northwest Region of the Forest Service. The Wildlife Biologists on the Deschutes NF are working on many projects across three districts, many of which aid in bird conservation.

The Sisters Ranger District is working on two stewardship projects, Glaze Forest Restoration and Flymon, where thinning, aspen enhancement, noxious weed treatments, and road closures will occur. The bird information collected by ECBC for the Glaze project helped the wildlife biologist a great deal in his analysis. THANK YOU!! In addition, two hardwood planting projects will occur this spring in association with Oregon Hunters Association and National Wild Turkey Federation. May 17th cottonwood and dogwood will be planted around two small ponds in the First Creek drainage within the B&B fire to help promote the re-establishment of these hardwoods. Hardwoods will also be planted around impoundments recently enhanced to retain water for a longer period during the summer months.

The Bend-Ft. Rock Ranger District is currently working on a 7000 acre project designed to enhance habitat for sage grouse in the Pine Mountain area by proposing to lop and scatter trees in historic habitat. In addition, 3 water developments specifically designed for sage grouse will be installed. The Crescent Ranger District is working on several aspen enhancement projects employing local high school kids to assist in the planting. In addition, they are continuing to work on Big Marsh balancing the needs of the Oregon spotted frog and yellow rail. It's also good Sandhill Crane habitat.

The Forest is a partner in the early stages of development of a Conservation Assessment for the Lewis' and White-headed Woodpeckers. Soon we will be sending out a request for information on these two species. We are continuing our bald eagle monitoring if anyone is interested in assisting. A new bird species was added to our Sensitive Species list – the Northern Waterthrush. Not much is known about this species so if anyone has any information, please contact Lauri Turner, Forest Wildlife Biologist, at 541-383-5640 or [[e-mail](#)] Check out the [[Eagle Cam](#)]. They're nesting! And also check out our Wildlife Viewing [[website](#)].

Summer Lake Wildlife Management Area: [Martin St. Louis](#)

Summer Lake Wildlife Area (SLWA) was established in 1945 by the Oregon State Game Commission (now Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife or ODFW) when land acquisition at the north end of Summer Lake Valley was initiated. SLWA became Oregon's first of several wetland-focused wildlife areas. The Federal Aid to Wildlife Restoration Act of 1937 (Pittman-Robertson Act or PR) was the major funding source used for acquisition and the

sole source of operations and maintenance today. PR funds are generated by an excise tax on firearms and ammunition and are distributed to States by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service based on size (square miles) and Hunting License holders.

SLWA recently (October 2007) completed a revision of its long-range management plan that will guide management for the next 10 years. The revision is a habitat based approach with a focus on ecosystem management and is strongly tied to the Oregon Conservation Strategy. Goals for Summer Lake Wildlife Area are:

Goal 1: To protect, enhance and manage wetland habitats to benefit fish and wildlife species.

Goal 2: To protect, enhance and manage upland habitats to benefit a wide variety of wildlife species.

Goal 3: To provide a variety of wildlife oriented recreational and educational opportunities to the public that are compatible with Goals 1 and 2.

Major habitat enhancement actions are underway at this time. Infrastructure vital for wetland management is being enhanced and upgraded and vegetation manipulations are being undertaken to restore diversity and productivity. On a rotational basis (once every 6-8 years), units are being drawn-down (and held dry), burned and disked to influence plant density and diversity. Infrastructure improvements will enable water levels and vegetation responses to be managed more efficiently. This will provide a much wider array of habitat features to meet life cycle needs for a wide variety of wildlife species.

Work in Bullgate Refuge unit was completed last fall and has resulted in tremendous waterbird use. Overly dense and impenetrable stands of tall emergent vegetation were disked and reflooded. This action made plant seeds and vegetation more available to foraging birds and the incorporation of organic matter into the soil stimulated invertebrate production.

During spring migration, waterfowl use approached nearly 1.0 million use-days by 16 species of ducks, 4 species of geese and both trumpeter and tundra swans. Shorebirds have responded well to these management actions their use is increasing as migration progresses.

In 2008, ODFW will undertake similar actions in the adjacent Link Marsh and River Ranch units and wildlife response is expected to be comparable to results observed in Bullgate Refuge.

The ECBC is a 501c3 non-profit organization dedicated to helping birds and their habitats. Although we are based in Central Oregon, we organize several State-wide projects and are strong advocates for conservation. We encourage you to visit us at <http://ecbcbirds.org> and become a member of this growing and energetic organization. As always, enjoy the birds!