

ECBC Newsletter - Winter 2009

First, How can I begin this newsletter without sending our thanks to two very special people; Dean Hale and Chuck Gates. Both have been at the core of ECBC for many years and were the last President and Vice President respectively. They brought so much to the organization, both in leadership and ideas leading to actions that is the ECBC today. Luckily for us, they remain committed to ECBC and still continue to play important roles in the organization. Thank you guys, and we will miss you at future board meetings. The new president and VP are Steve Dougill and Devon Batley. We welcome three new board members who bring a wealth of experience and ideas to the organization; Liz O'Connell, Kim Bodie and Tom Crabtree. This year we will continue with our popular projects and have introduced a few more opportunities for everyone to get involved with bird projects that need little or no bird experience.... Now there is no excuse for not getting out into the outdoors and actively participating in ECBC.

We are grateful to RW Morse publisher who donated four cases (192 books) of "Birds of the Inland NW and NW Rockies" Authors Harry Nehls, Mike Denny and Dave Trochlell. We will use these to start an education program with local schools.

Volunteer in 2009 - We need you:

OK ... so you have heard this before, but we really do need your help. ECBC has a lot of very cool projects and one of our goals as an organization is to encourage as many people as possible to get involved with them. The next few months are a busy time for us as we prepare for the spring / summer field season and we would love to hear from as many of you as possible about getting involved in some of these opportunities.

Although some of our projects involve detailed bird identification skills, many do not and I am highlighting these below.

Kestrel and Bluebird nest box Project :



Kestrels are on the decline. We have a very successful project that maintains over 120 nest boxes in Central Oregon. We need people to adopt a section (a number of boxes), clear them out once a year and check on the nest outcome. We are hoping to ramp up our banding effort at these nests to gather long-term population and demographic data. Contact [[Dean Hale](#)] for more information (so you know its going to be a fun project).

White headed Woodpecker Surveys:

February 1 2009
ECBC
16 Kansas St,
Bend, OR. 97701
<http://ecbcbirds.org>

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The Board ...

[Steve Dougill](#) President
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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
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These spectacular birds are easy to identify! We are partnering with the Sisters Rangers District in assessing their management practices in improving habitat for these woodpeckers. The project involves walking a marked trail through the forest (Metolius Area) and looking for WH Woodpeckers and their nests. This is a great area and a great bird. Not only that, but after signing up as a Forest Service Volunteer they will reimburse you for your vehicle miles. Just several part day commitments are needed. Contact [[Monty Gregg](#)] for more information.



Hart Mountain:



Close to the California border in Southern Oregon is a spectacular refuge that needs our help. They would like some bird surveys done as well as all raptor nests checked for current activity. one trip is set up for early may to monitor and find raptor nests [[more info](#)]. We are planning a second weekend trip in June and we have the use of their very plush "bunk house". There are hot springs, fantastic birds and out-of-this-world scenery. What else could you want Contact [[Devon Bately](#)] for more information.

Conservation work days: We are looking for people to get involved with the conservation committee that helps to shape ECBC's policy and actions for active management of bird habitats in Central Oregon. Contact [[Eva Eagle](#)] for more information. There are also many other projects. Please visit the web site to find out more.

Personality: Interview with Jim Moodie - Volunteer of the Year 2008 - by Judy Merideth Describe your education, the work you do and tell me a little about your family.

I have a BS degree from St. John's University, Collegeville, MN, a MS in Zoology from the University of Idaho, Moscow, and a PhD in Zoology from the University of Oklahoma, Norman. I now teach at Central Oregon Community College. The courses that I currently teach are all designed for non-biology majors. They center around the principle of evolution. My favorite course is the bird ecology class I teach each spring. Part of my job is to interact professionally with the community, so the volunteer award is a major feather in my birding cap! Kimberley Foltz and I have been married for six years and have a three and 1/2 year old daughter, Summitt Rain Foltz-Moodie. Summitt and Kim have helped me out with the last two Bend CBCs. It is a fun family outing. What got you started with birds and birding?

When I was a junior in college, I took a Natural History of Vertebrates course from Dr. Norm Ford. Being an

Where to go birding in Central Oregon [[link](#)]
Recent COBOL archive [[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, 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.

ornithologist, he emphasized birds in the class. I borrowed my Dad's bushnell binocular and bought the Golden Field Guide to Birds for the course and got to see cool birds for the first time. I was hooked. The next year, I did a senior research project on woodpecker foraging, mostly observing the Red-headed Woodpecker. I started a life list during that time and kept it going through graduate school, work, etc. But what really got me deeper into birding was meeting Chuck Trost, who at the time was the ornithologist at Idaho State University. He invited me along on my first Christmas Bird Counts, state listing and birdathons. I'm convinced he could convert anyone into being a birder. Why did you join ECBC and give so much of your time to ECBC?

I joined ECBC when it was in its infancy as a board member, mostly because I liked to hang out with great people like Dean Hale, Judy Meredith, and Chuck Gates. ECBC is brimming with enthusiastic birders who really care about birds and the environment; it is easy to get involved when you are around these folks. To be honest though, COCC has requirements for reaching full professor that include service to the community; so really, by the organization letting me help them, I gain recognition from the college! I do plan on staying engaged with ECBC community after achieving full professor. What is your hope for the future of ECBC and birds?

This organization seems well supported by the community, so I know it will only get better in the future. We have a lot of talented people in the area; they understand and encourage citizen science. What would be really cool is if we become big enough to start hiring people to run the operation, write grants and essentially become the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology of the West! How can we all help to make some good things happen?

I think as long as everyone can contribute what they can, no matter how small, ECBC will succeed in encouraging bird conservation in our neck of the woods. Now let's go birding!

Local Christmas Bird Counts: by Chuck Gates

The 2008 CBC season will be remembered for weather worries and some pretty good birds. The weatherman predicted very poor conditions for the early counts but, luckily, those predictions were often incorrect. While not ideal, most of the counts occurred in acceptable weather and a few enjoyed better than average conditions.

The 2008 season began with the Redmond CBC on December 14th. The state was in the grips of a solid winter storm and flurries pestered volunteers throughout the day. Overall, enough good weather prevailed to make for a successful count. Twenty volunteers counted 84 species. Highlights included 2 Ross's Geese and 2 Dunlin. Both were tallied for the first time ever on this count. Other highlights included Greater White-fronted Goose - 27, Killdeer - 12, Downy Woodpecker - 6, Pinyon Jay - 188 and (Slate-colored) Dark-eyed Junco - 4.

The 41st Bend CBC was held on the 20th. Most participants braced themselves for predicted foul weather but the day turned out better than expected. Over 20 participants fanned out to discover 95 species. Only 2 other years have produced more species. The highlights were exciting and abundant. A Peregrine Falcon made an appearance for only the 3rd time in count history. With few marshy areas in the circle, a Virginia Rail sighting was very unusual. Fourteen Collared Doves were a record as were 15 Great Horned Owls. The rare CBC sapsucker trifecta was achieved with Williamson's, Red-naped, and Red-breasted being located. Two hundred forty-seven Clark's Nutcrackers destroyed the old record of 98. Three American Pipits were joined by 3 Bohemian Waxwings on the "rare bird list." A record 41 Lesser Goldfinches topped off a successful count.

The Antelope CBC was also held on December 20th. This is a much smaller affair than the Bend CBC. Much of the Antelope circle contains open grassland and little water. Private land is everywhere so driving along a few public roads constitutes the entire count effort. Thirty-six species were found with the highlights being 2 Black-capped Chickadees, an unusual Loggerhead Shrike, and an American Crow.

Next on the calendar came the Sisters CBC on December 21st. Again, the weather turned out better than expected, however, high elevation sections ran into deep snow so some areas were inaccessible. Very low temperatures made liquid water hard to find. This was reflected in the final tally as forest species and waterfowl were under-represented. Highlights from this count included 3 Trumpeter Swans, 2 Eurasian Wigeon, 1 Williamson's Sapsucker, 9 Bohemian Waxwings and a Lesser Goldfinch. Other species of note were Black-backed Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker, 5 Northern Shrike, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, and Fox Sparrow.

Continuing on, the Prineville CBC was held on December 31. The weather was mild as temperatures go but it seemed previous cold, stormy weather negatively affected bird numbers. Eighty-two species were tallied which is a little lower than average. Twenty-four volunteers spread out across the CBC circle and some good birds were discovered. Two Harris's Sparrows were the highlight of the count. Seventy-seven Eurasian Collared-Doves shattered the old record of 6. Bluebird numbers were good and Sora, Tricolored Blackbird, and Purple Finches were all tallied. Other good birds included Cackling Geese - 7, Eurasian Wigeon - 1, Ferruginous Hawk - 2 and Barn Owl - 1.

The Santiam CBC is probably the most challenging of all the local counts. Much of the circle consists of snowbound trails and roads around Suttle Lake. Snowshoeing and cross-country skiing are common methods of accessing some of the locations. Some of what was seen included 1 Pygmy Owl, an amazing 96 Chestnut-backed Chickadees and 21 Brown Creepers.

The Utopia CBC was originally planned for the same day as Sisters. However, bad weather forced a move

Guided Trips:

ECBC offers guided trips for individuals and small groups for \$150 in Central Oregon. You drive - we lead. These are led by local experts who will try and find your target birds. All proceeds go to ECBC. Contact [\[Steve Dougill\]](#) for more information.

to January 4th. The Utopia circle is centered where the old Culver Highway branches away from Highway 97 and descends into Culver. This count was originated by a group of young scientists working at the research station at Rimrock Springs Wildlife Management Area in the 70's. Some of the same people, while not so young anymore, still participate in this count. Fourteen participants tallied 53 species. Highlights included 1 Peregrine Falcon, 24 Chukars, 28 Eurasian Collared-Doves, 11 Scrub Jays, 8 Canyon Wrens and 1 Pine Siskin.

Fall Bird Notes: by Chuck Gates

In most circles, the fall is characterized by the turning of the leaves on the trees or by the harvest moon. In birding circles, fall means migration and migration means rarities. Birds are in a hurry as they migrate in the spring. They are eager to get to their breeding grounds. Fall birds, on the other hand, take their time as they move southward. This slower pace increases the chances that one might fall upon the occasional rare bird. It's no wonder that so many unusual birds were seen in Central Oregon this fall.

Waterfowl are not comparatively abundant in Central Oregon during the breeding season and they tend to migrate later than many of the other birds (if they migrate at all). While the warblers, flycatchers, and vireos leave by mid September, many waterfowl have just begun to move. There are exceptions. Cinnamon and Blue-winged Teal migrate out with the songbirds so a BLUE-WINGED TEAL found in late September was somewhat unusual. A REDHEAD in Deschutes is always worth noting and one was seen as late as November 9th at Hatfield. Most of the other rare ducks came in much later. November SURF SCOTERS were found in respectable numbers with nineteen individual birds found at five locations. One of the biggest waterfowl stories of the season had to do with RED-BREASTED MERGANSERS at Wickiup Reservoir in early November. It's unusual to find a single individual of this species in Central Oregon but this year, as many as fifteen were found at Wickiup. That's a notable number.

Other waterfowl sightings of interest were made around the area. A PACIFIC LOON was found at Wickiup on November 14 and HORNED GREBES were pretty easy to find in Deschutes County. If CLARK'S was your grebe of choice, Crook County was the place to be. Both Prineville and Ochoco Reservoirs sported birds throughout the season. BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERONS haunted the backwaters of Prineville Reservoir and GREAT EGRETS were seen at Prineville and Wickiup Reservoirs. WHITE-FACED IBIS showed up at Tumalo and Prineville Reservoirs for their brief but almost annual appearance.

Gulls and terns are sometimes referred to as Larids. This is derived from the Latin *larus*, which means 'seabird'. Fall is the best time to find Larids in Central Oregon and 2008 did not disappoint. The biggest news of the season was the presence of a LAUGHING GULL found at Crane Prairie. FRANKLIN'S GULLS will usually grab the headlines but the few that were reported associating with the "laugher" were virtually lost in the spotlight. A THAYER'S GULL found on the fall NAMC was one of fewer than five historical records for Deschutes County. While a little more common than Thayer's, HERRING GULLS are still a rarity and individual birds were found at Tumalo Reservoir and Lake Billy Chinook. BLACK TERNS made a brief showing at Hatfield in August while COMMON TERNS (which are not common at all here) were found at Wickiup, Crane Prairie, and Tumalo Reservoirs. A single report of an ARCTIC TERN came in from Wickiup on September 1st. A LONG-TAILED JAEGER was seen at Wickiup on the same day as the Arctic Tern. Though not technically a Larid, the Jaeger is often confused with gulls so it's presence in this paragraph is forgivable. Shorebird abundance can be highly variable from year to year. 2008 will not go down as a year of tremendous bird numbers but the variety was actually pretty good. A BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER made an appearance at the Redmond Sewer Ponds, as did a SOLITARY SANDPIPER. SANDERLINGS were located at Wickiup while a SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER made a showing at the Redmond Sewer Ponds. BAIRD'S SANDPIPER numbers were down from previous years but PECTORAL SANDPIPERS made a better than average showing. Even several DUNLIN showed up earlier than normal. SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHERS were seen at Wickiup, Prineville, and Hatfield. The Hatfield birds numbered thirty-four, which is a huge number. RED-NECKED PHALAROPES were found scattered around the water features of Central Oregon. The best shorebird of the season was a RUFF found by Kim Owen at the Redmond Sewer Ponds.

Fall is hunting season for many of the game birds so watching them is often an exercise in patience, as one must dodge shotgun-toting sportsmen who are competing for the same resource. Even so, many good game birds were seen through binoculars instead of gun sights. CHUKARS were seen at scattered locations like Gray Butte and Smith Rock. GRAY PARTRIDGE were found on Grizzly Butte north of Prineville for a third county record. RUFFED GROUSE were found at Crane Prairie and SOOTY GROUSE were seen at Green Ridge. WILD TURKEYS were found scattered in low numbers in all three Central Oregon counties. A BAND-TAILED PIGEON showed up at the Redmond Sewer Ponds briefly and EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVES continue their march on Oregon with a remarkable 90 birds reported from our area.

Our birds of prey consist of the diurnal raptors (daytime hunters) and the nocturnal raptors (nighttime hunters). Many of the rarities below are resident in Central Oregon but are secretive, scant in number, and hard to find. A total of six separate NORTHERN GOSHAWK sightings were reported with most of the birds being seen in timbered areas. Fourteen RED-SHOULDERED HAWKS were found throughout the area making this bird not as much of a rarity as it once was. The same can be said for the PEREGRINE FALCON as 7 different birds were found in Central Oregon. A late SWAINSON'S HAWK was found migrating over Lava Butte in October. FLAMMULATED and WESTERN SCREECH OWLS were located on the Deschutes NAMC and another screech owl was found in Prineville. Scattered PYGMY OWL reports were normal but a BARRED OWL photographed at Tillicum Village was certainly out of the norm. A GREAT GRAY OWL was discovered in the Sisters area but its location was kept secret because this bird is believed to nest in the same area and locals are concerned about disturbance (the ECBC supports this effort). LONG-EARED and SAW-WHET OWLS were

heard calling on Coyle Butte.

Webster's Online Dictionary defines a grab bag as a miscellaneous collection or potpourri. In the middle of most field guides, you can find a group of birds whose idiosyncrasies separate them from the other birds. We'll call them the grab bag birds. Woodpeckers, swifts, shrikes, hummingbirds, and nightjars fit this description in my way of thinking. COMMON POORWILLS were found on the Deschutes County NAMC while WHITE-THROATED SWIFTS were seen coursing vertical canyon walls as late as September 21st. BLACK-CHINNED, CALLIOPE, and ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRDS were found throughout the region. Two of the much more unusual COSTA'S HUMMINGBIRDS were located at Tumalo State Park and Sawyer Park in Bend. LEWIS'S WOODPECKERS were around until late September and WILLIAMSON'S SAPSUCKERS, which normally migrate out, were found throughout the season and into the winter. A total of nine AMERICAN THREE-TOED WOODPECKERS were seen mostly in the Sisters area and BLACK-BACKED WOODPECKERS were found in small numbers in the same locations. Most of the LOGGERHEAD SHRIKES were gone by the end of September and the NORTHERN SHRIKES had moved in by Halloween.

The rest of our birds fall neatly into the generic category of 'songbirds'. Three very unusual BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEES made a showing at a west Bend feeder. If you ever see this species at your feeder, please contact (as this person did) local birders. The status of this species is in question. CHESTNUT-BACKED CHICKADEES are not nearly so mysterious. They are rare but certainly resident as 5 were seen at Whisky Springs and more are seen seasonally. The Lower Bridge BEWICK'S WREN was seen throughout the season while a difficult-to-find SWAINSON'S THRUSH made a showing at a water feature near Sisters. Woodside Ranch reported a GRAY CATBIRD which was well seen and photographed. A CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER was found at Hampton and two BLACK & WHITE WARBLERS were found in Bend. Other good warblers included several HERMIT X TOWNSEND hybrids from the Cascade foothills, a PALM WARBLER found in Brothers, and an AMERICAN REDSTART in Bend. A rare CLAY-COLORED SPARROW came to a water feature briefly in the Sundance sub-division east of Bend. WHITE-THROATED SPARROWS made a good showing with ten birds being tallied from all over the region. A SNOW BUNTING was found on Grizzly Butte for a third county record. Gray-crowned Rosy-finches showed up on Grizzly as well and over twenty PURPLE FINCH reports came in from Deschutes and Crook counties.

A warming Snow Bunting: by Steve Dougill

It's amazing how just one bird can change the day. Picture this: driving rain / hail turning to snow; a wind that makes you walk bent double to stay on your feet; and a cold that rips through both sweaters and a thick coat. Just the kind of weather to avoid the tops of mountains ...However, it was the first of November and the location Grizzly Butte. Normally you get a fantastic view down the O'Neil Valley towards Prineville ... but this day my eyes were just slits to avoid the stinging hail.

I took shelter behind a radio tower and looking around I noticed a small birding creeping around in a weedy patch amongst the snow and gravel. There was no need for binoculars at 10ft; creams and buffs and browns ... a young Snow Bunting. A tundra nester, this species generally spends the winter in weedy fields to the north and east of us and is regularly seen in NE Oregon. This was the third record for



Crook County with only a handful of others having been found in Central Oregon. Its always fun to find something a little unusual, but its even more fun to find something totally out of the blue.... There's nothing like a Snow Bunting to give you a warming feeling on a cold Central Oregon Peak.

The Waxwings: by Chuck Gates

What's the most beautiful bird? Now, there's a loaded question. Certainly there is no definitive answer to such a question but there are many families that might be able to lay claim to such a title. Some could boast they have the most glaring colors and others could claim to have the most elaborate plumage structure. In the background of all such discussions, there are often soft-spoken individuals that speak just one word over and over again....waxwing....waxwing....waxwing.

The waxwing family sports the Latin name Bombycillidae. All three species (yes there are three) were given the genus name Bombycilla meaning 'silky tail'. The gray, silky plumage of this bird is the source of much of its understated beauty. Looking at the feathers of the body, one gets the impression of a one-piece, silk jumpsuit as there is no hint of the presence of individual feathers. To add to its appeal, a waxwing sports a

neat, pointy crest and a mask that extends through the eye. The often-overlooked field mark is a dark, black chin (black in males and more brown in females but this is not entirely reliable) that rounds out the contrasting plumage on the head. The common name, waxwing, comes from the tips of a small group of feathers that resemble a dollop of bright red wax. The color is actually derived from pigments obtained from a diet high in berries (Your new word for the day is frugivorous...fruit eater). These berries can ferment and drunken waxwings have been seen staggering among the fruit trees. Juveniles have streaky plumage and usually lack any waxy wing markings. The sexes are similar and difficult to tell apart even given the difference in chin colors in some individuals.

All three species exhibit similar lifestyles. They are very gregarious. They are fairly nomadic. They tend to follow berry supplies and often leave an area if the food supply is low. This causes frequent eruptions into areas that may not normally have waxwings (this is especially true of the Bohemian Waxwing). Because of this wandering lifestyle, they tend to form no permanent territories and do not sing elaborate songs because there is no need to defend said territories. The songs of all three species are really just calls that tend to be short, high pitched, trills that the birds seem to use to stay in contact with the flock. They are found mostly in the northern hemisphere and tend to hug the northern half of that hemisphere. The Cedar Waxwing will push this envelope being found on occasion as far south as Central America, Bermuda, and northern South America. The Bohemian Waxwing and Cedar Waxwing are found in the western hemisphere while the Japanese Waxwing inhabits the forests of North Eastern Russia. Though the Japanese Waxwing seems to be suffering from habitat destruction, North American waxwing populations seem to be increasing which might reflect the increase in ornamental fruit trees which accompany affluence in the northern western hemisphere. Their social behaviors and tameness around humans add to their appeal for birders.

CEDAR WAXWING

The Cedar Waxwing (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) is the most abundant and widespread of the three species. It gets its name from its fondness for the cones on the Eastern Red Cedar. This tree produces modified cones that look like berries, much like our own Western Juniper. It differs from the Bohemian Waxwing in having a pale yellow belly, white undertail coverts, and a conspicuous lack of yellow or white markings in the wing. The cedar waxwing is browner overall and smaller than its bohemian cousin. Though most birds have a yellow-tipped tail, rarely some show orange in that area and is reflective of its diet during development. Cedar Waxwings can be found throughout Oregon in any season. Large flocks are easiest to locate during winter months when birds tend to invade cities and towns in search of fruit producing trees.

BOHEMIAN WAXWING

The Bohemian Waxwing (*Bombycilla garrulus*) is the largest of all the waxwings and is usually considered to be the more northern of the two North American species. It can be distinguished from the Cedar by its overall larger size, grayer plumage, chestnut undertail coverts, yellow and white markings in the wing, and lower pitched voice. Called Bohemian because of its wandering lifestyle, it either got its species name from its talkative, chattering call or from its superficial resemblance to the European jay whose Latin name is *Garrulus*. These birds hold an air of mystery for most birders as they tend to come and go like nomads and are usually found, not by looking for them, but by being lucky enough to be in the right place at the right time. Small numbers of Bohemian Waxwings will often join flocks of Cedars when they erupt into southern regions. Bohemian Waxwings are hard to find in Oregon. The biggest populations seem to be in Northeastern Oregon, especially in the towns of the Willowa Mountains. LaGrande generally hosts small winter populations but towns like Joseph and Enterprise can often produce flocks of one hundred to over eight hundred birds. You haven't lived until you've seen an evergreen tree with five hundred Bohemian Waxwings adorning its foliage like silky Christmas ornaments. Occasionally, they will make their way to Central Oregon and are easiest to find in the city of Bend.



JAPANESE WAXWING

The Japanese Waxwing (*Bombycilla japonica*) is not very aptly named. It rarely shows up in Japan and is most often found from eastern Siberia to Korea depending on season. The Japanese waxwing differs from the North American Waxwings in that the red in the wing is not usually wax-like at all but exists as a red-brown stripe at about mid-wing. The tails of the Japanese birds are usually not yellow but range from red to

pink reflecting a different diet from their North American counterparts. The undertail coverts resemble the Bohemian Waxwing and the size is similar to the Cedar Waxwing. This bird's small population and decreasing habitat make it a species of concern in its range. This bird is not on the AOU official bird list for North American so finding one locally is unlikely.

So, is the waxwing the most beautiful bird? Only the reader can answer that question. Clearly, they could give just about any species a run for their money. Waxwings...waxwings...waxwings.

Upcoming ECBC Field Trips:

Field trip information can be checked [[here](#)]. They are fun and casual. Come and enjoy the birds with us.

March 21 Saturday---Summer Lake for Snow Geese

April 12 Sunday---Sage Grouse Lek and Sage species east of Bend

April 25 Sat--- Hatfield and Bend

May 3 Sunday--Redmond, Lower Bridge, Smith Rocks etc

May 9 Sat---Possible Owling trip before the NAMC

May 30 Sat---Crook County

Winter / Spring Events:

Recurring Events :

- 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.

Dates: For more events see the ECBC web site

ECBC's Annual Meeting and Fundraiser: Another Fun & Successful Year!

Once again the East Cascades Bird Conservancy held a fun, fruitful and informative Annual Meeting and Silent Auction in November 2008. The meeting brought in over 200 people to share in pizza and appetizers as well as beer provided by Three Creeks Brewery.

James Davis, interpretive naturalist and educator came and charmed us with his interpretation of blackbirds. His skills let us into the amusing world of yellow-headed blackbirds, cowbirds, red-winged blackbirds and grackles!!

The 2008 Silent Auction was a great success, raising about \$4000 for the benefit of birds. Over 50 local business and individuals contributed auction items and in kind donations for this event.

As we strive to do every year we honored Jim Moody with the Volunteer of the Year award, which his daughter Summit accepted on his behalf. Diane Kook was awarded Conservationist of the Year for her part in the nationally recognized and highly valuable Lewis' Woodpecker nest box project. More details about this project can be found at www.ecbcbirds.org.

This year also saw some changes to the ECBC board leadership. After serving the ECBC as president for 2 years and a board member for 6 years, Dean Hale stepped down. Steve Dougill has replaced him as ECBC's new board president.

ECBC's vice-president, Chuck Gates also stepped down after being with the board for 6 years. His replacement will be Devon Batley, who joined the board in 2008.

We also welcomed Kim Boddie, Elizabeth O'Connell and Tom Crabtree to the ECBC board and look forward to their input in 2009 and beyond.

ECBC Project Reports

Kestrel Nestbox study - [[Dean Hale](#)]

We had fantastic news recently. One of the Kestrels Don banded as a nestling in 2006 in NW Bend was recently captured near Sacramento, CA. This is the first time we have managed to track any of our birds!

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](#).



News from ONDA - Devon Batley

It's Looking up for Badlands & Spring Basin Wilderness

On January 7, 2009, the Badlands Wilderness Act and Spring Basin Wilderness act were reintroduced into the Senate as a part of S. 22, the omnibus public lands bill. Since introducing wilderness legislation to protect the Badlands and Spring Basin last June, Senator Wyden has worked tirelessly to ensure that these important bills are passed into law.

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.

Located above the John Day River just south of state highway 218 near Clarno, Oregon, Spring Basin Wilderness Study Area is an 8,400 acre tapestry of rolling hills, providing spectacular vistas of the river and surrounding landscape. This unique wild area offers a profusion of desert wildflowers in the spring, along with recreational opportunities for hikers, horseback riders, hunters, botanists, and other outdoor enthusiasts. For more information on these areas visit www.onda.org

Wind Turbines Proposed for Steens Mountain

In partnership with the Audubon Society of Portland, ONDA has submitted comments in opposition to the wind turbine project, which would generate over 400 megawatts of electricity. Columbia Energy Partners has proposed building an industrial wind power project on North Steens Mountain. The project would place hundreds of 250-foot tall wind turbines within view of the Steens Mountain Loop Road and within the Steens Cooperative Management and Protection Area.

Both ONDA and the Audubon Society support the development of clean, renewable energy, including wind power, through a thoughtful process that ensures a complete review of potential ecological and economical impacts to the area. However the developer of this project has not completed any due diligence in terms of surveying wildlife and sensitive plant species, nor have they obtained permission to build the necessary transmission lines through adjacent public lands.

To help citizens better understand the potential visual impact of the proposed 250 wind turbines ONDA has created a visual analysis of the project using Google Earth.

Upcoming volunteer trips with ONDA

Pine Creek Conservation Area February 27 (Friday) evening to March 1 (Sunday) afternoon:

We are looking for a handful of brave souls to help us gather data on landscape changes in vegetation and stream topography. Volunteers will navigate independently to long-term monitoring points using GPS, and photograph current conditions. For registration, and additional information visit: <http://www.onda.org/get-involved/volunteer/2009-volunteer-calendar/pine-creek-conservation-area-photo-point-vegetation-monitoring-feb-27-march-1-2009>

Robinson Creek Stream Restoration March 13-15 2009:

Help us continue the successful restoration of this important Steelhead stream by planting cottonwood and willow along the banks. A great trip for families. Continued planting helps replace the plantings that didn't make it from last year: soon enough there will be enough browse for beaver to move in and take over the rest of the restoration work! For registration, photos and additional information visit:

<http://www.onda.org/get-involved/volunteer/2009-volunteer-calendar/robinson-creek-stream-restoration-march-13-15-2009>



How Do Birds Keep Warm?- Kevin Lair, Wild Birds Unlimited

Birds have evolved a number of anatomical, physiological, and behavioral characteristics that enable many to survive even the harshest winter conditions. As days grow short and temperatures drop, birds will grow more feathers. The structure of insulating body feathers enables them to trap warm air next to the skin. Some of the warmest jackets and sleeping bags use goose down insulation. Birds also undergo physiological changes that enable them to store more body fat. To establish fat reserves and get the extra calories they need to generate body heat, birds eat more during the fall and winter. Most songbirds will fill a special storage pouch in the esophagus with food before dark and digest the food overnight. Some birds, like hummingbirds and swifts, will enter a mini hibernation called torpor at night. During torpor the metabolism slows and body temperature drops, thereby conserving energy. Birds will also use dense, sheltered areas in trees and shrubs to spend the night and non-feeding times during the day. Some species will roost in groups in tree cavities or roosting boxes, thereby sharing body heat.

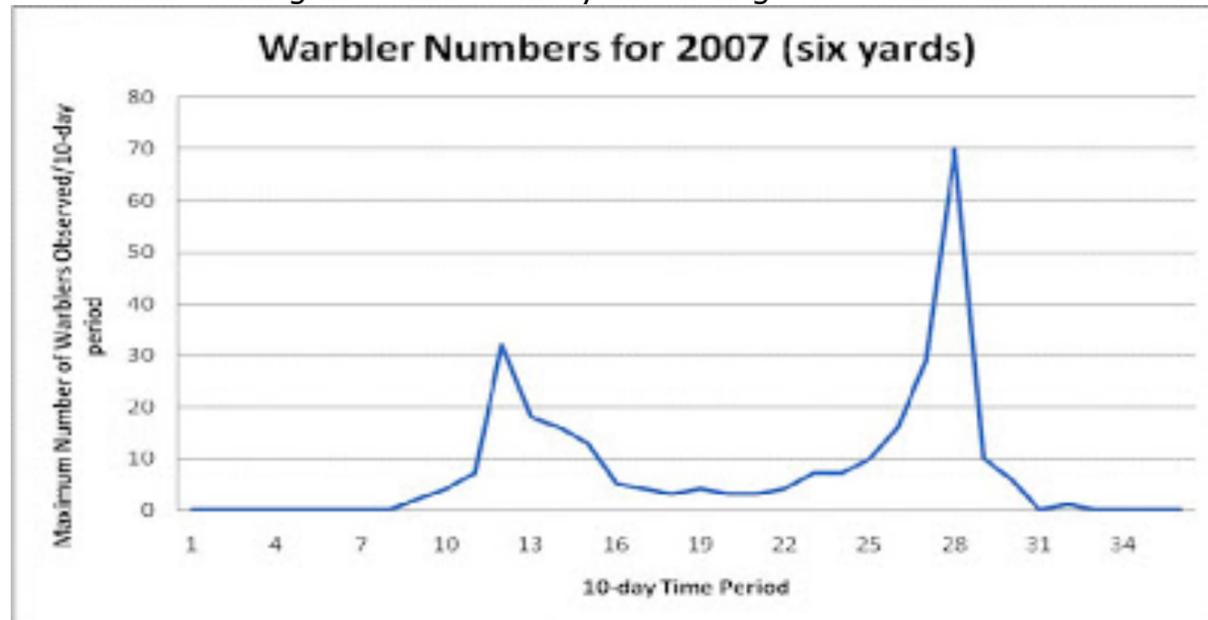
Yard Bird Survey Data:

Yard Bird Surveys for 2007: Warblers - Jim Moodie

Though the West cannot compare with the East for diversity of warbler species, we do have a regular set of species that mostly migrate through our area. The yard bird surveys for 2007 detected many of those species during the spring, summer and fall. For the six yards that kept data throughout the year, the following species were observed by at least one yard: Orange-crowned, Nashville, Yellow, Yellow-rumped, Black-throated Gray, Townsend's, Hermit, MacGillivray's, and Wilson's. For every yard, except one, the warblers migrate through in the spring, and remain absent until late summer post-breeding dispersal or fall migration. A glance at the graph, which includes a sum of all the maximum number of each species seen for all yards/10-day period, tells us that 2007 spring migrants showed up in late March (period 9), but the peak in numbers was in the last 10 days of April, not May. A major reason for this late April peak for all warblers is due to one species: Yellow-rumped Warblers. Butterbutts (my preferred pseudonym for Yellow-rumps)

also dominate the fall migrant numbers. The Millers, several miles East of Bend, had a whopping 58 Butterbutts one day during period 28 (first 10 days of October)! Regardless of the Yellow-rumps, it is obvious that the latter part of April and the entire month of May provide the best chances of seeing warblers in Central Oregon at the lower elevations. Likewise, while some post-breeding warblers show up around our area in August, the fall migration does not really get started until September and falls off quickly after the first 10 days of October. May and September seem to be the best opportunities to see our Western Warblers show up in our yards. I hinted at an exception to the spring/fall migration pattern for our six yard bird surveys. Steve Edwards' location is at a higher elevation and in mixed coniferous forest. His yard survey boasts Pileated Woodpecker and Gray Jay. He can also take pride that he has breeding yard warblers. All the data for June and July is from his yard only.

As 2008 data comes in, it will be interesting to see how numbers shift compared with 2007. I am looking forward to viewing the data. Good yard birding!



USFWS - News from Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge, -by [Marla Bennett](#) Hart Mountain National Wildlife Refuge Christmas Bird Count

On Dec. 29, 2008 in winds of 35-45 mph, 4 intrepid birders conducted the Hart Mountain Christmas Bird Count. They reported 433 birds, 303 of which were horned larks. Six bald eagles and 3 golden eagles were seen, as well as 8 rough-legged hawks, 1 northern harrier, 1 red-tailed hawk, and 1 ferruginous hawk. Thirty-five Canada geese, 2 tundra swans, a lone common goldeneye, 20 chukars, 1 long-eared owl, 2 northern flickers, and 9 common ravens were spotted. Fifteen bushtits, a canyon wren and a marsh wren, 2 robins, 2 Townsends solitaires and 1 northern and 1 loggerhead shrike were seen. Only 7 dark-eyed juncos, 3 song sparrows, and 7 house sparrows represented the sparrow and finch families.

Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge Wildlife Surveys

In July, Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge completed its annual summer aerial survey for pronghorn and bighorn sheep. These surveys are not intended to be a complete census, but to give a general sense of the population trends. This year we observed a total of 2,024 pronghorn with herd ratios of 47 bucks:100 does and 47 fawns:100 does. The 10-year average trend indicates an increasing population (+10.8%) since 1998.

Surveys for California bighorn sheep have been conducted on Hart Mountain since their reintroduction in the mid-1950s. This survey provides a minimum estimate of the bighorn population, sex and age ratios, and general population trend. This year we observed a total of 212 sheep, with herd ratios of 55 rams:100 ewes and 43 lambs:100 ewes; both the highest values observed since 2005.

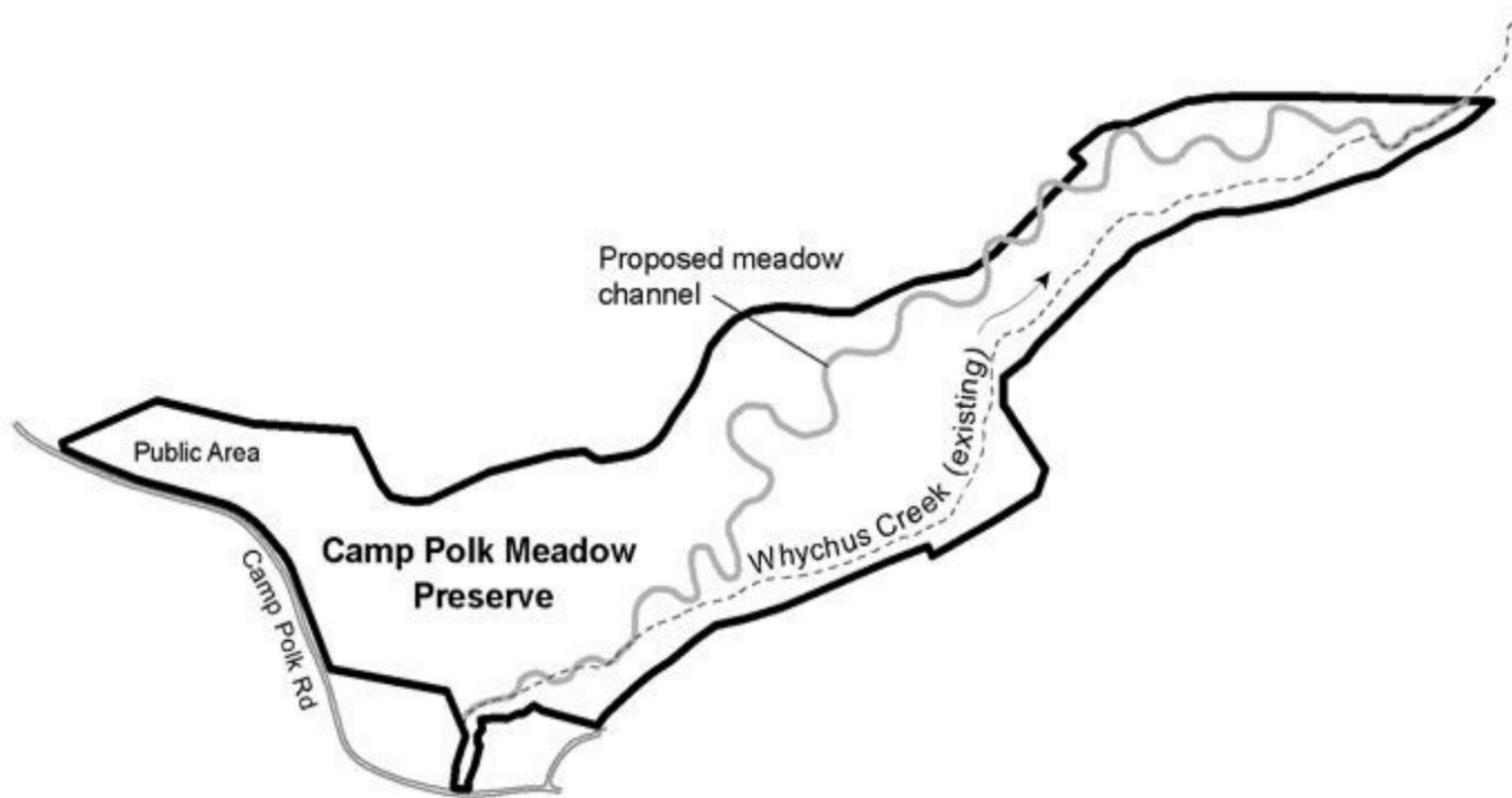
Each year, volunteers and refuge staff conduct greater sage-grouse lek counts on Hart Mountain Refuge and the data is used to monitor population trends. It appears that the ongoing decline in sage-grouse numbers continued in 2008, however production was improved.

[Deschutes Land Trust](#) - Of Bulldozers and birds - by [Sarah Mowry](#)

Want to see the positive impact bulldozers can have on birds? This spring the bulldozers will break ground on a major restoration of Whychus Creek at the Deschutes Land Trust's Camp Polk Meadow Preserve. And it will be the annual bird surveys conducted by East Cascade Bird Conservancy (ECBC) and Land Trust members that will show how the birds react to the restoration.

For eight years, ECBC and the Land Trust have partnered on a bird surveys at Camp Polk Meadow Preserve near Sisters. The Preserve is home more than 150 species and the surveying project is currently providing critical pre-restoration data that will help gauge avian response as the restoration gets underway and then once it is finished.

The Land Trust is restoring Camp Polk Meadow to improve fish and wildlife habitat. Currently, Whychus Creek is restricted to a narrow, straight and fast channel at the south edge of the meadow. The Land Trust is working with our restoration partners to restore the creek to its original channel meandering through the meadow. [See map]. This should re-establish natural meanders, reconnect the creek with its historic floodplain, and create much better fish and wildlife habitat than currently exists. It will also restore more than 70 acres of high quality wetlands and wet meadows, all utilized by many bird species. For more info see ...



Bird surveys at Camp Polk are a great way to watch first-hand the changes the restoration will bring. And this spring will be your last opportunity to record pre-restoration data. Bill Mitchell has been participating in surveys for the past several years. He "looks forward to being able to see the effects the restoration will have on the birds I've come to know so well."

"Bird surveys are also a great way to get outside regularly, have fun and watch the seasons change as different birds come and go" commented Carol Wall another dedicated surveyor.

Now's your chance to be a part of this major restoration project at Camp Polk Meadow. Get involved with bird surveys at Camp Polk Meadow this spring—contact [Eva Eagle](#) for details. Learn more about the bird surveys at:

<http://www.deschuteslandtrust.org/protected-lands/community-preserves/birding>

or

<http://www.ecbcbirds.org/Projects/CampPolkSurvey/tabid/75/Default.aspx>

Summer Lake WMA - Fall/Winter Update by [Marty St. Louis](#)

Fall saw the end of a very productive field season where a wide variety of habitat developments were accomplished, the stage being set for Fall migration and then shift to annual hunting seasons and winter.

Habitat Development/Management

The Summer Lake Wildlife Area (SLWA) Short-Term Habitat Implementation Plan for enhancement of wetlands continued with the completion of summer 2008 field activity. Overly dense tall emergent vegetation (bulrush and cattail) stands in Link Marsh and River Ranch units were mowed and disked to restore open water features and improve habitat diversity. Link Marsh was reflooded in early September and waterfowl response was tremendous.

Major infrastructure (levee and water control structure) improvements were initiated in the River Ranch unit that will allow wetlands to be managed with greater effectiveness and efficiency. This unit will remain dry until early fall 2009 to allow for completion of the enhancement project.

Planning and preliminary work for the next area in the rotation are the large area of Gold Dike and South of Gold Dike units that are now being dewatered and will be held at very low levels throughout the 2009 growing season.. The drawdown began in early December and receding water levels provided tremendous foraging opportunities for waterfowl. When Gold Dike water was released to the head of Summer Lake, shallow flooding of saltgrass and alkaline flats occurred and feeding by dabbling ducks and Canada geese was heavy. Behind Gold Dike rapidly declining water levels exposed the pond bottom that was formerly under 2-3 feet of water and additional foraging opportunities were provided to ducks, geese and swans.

These units will be control burned in March and dense tall emergent stands will be mowed and disked in July, August and completed by mid-September. Infrastructure improvements are also planned during the 2009 field season.

Bullgate Refugeunit (enhanced in 2006-07) showed tremendous returns to migrant

waterbirds in this first year of fully flooded conditions. Vegetation and invertebrate response provide abundant and diverse food sources. Throughout early fall 50-60% of the Wildlife Area's waterbirds were found in this unit.

Early December saw the continuation of additional habitat enhancement on SLWA. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE) contractors initiated the third implementation project of the preferred action as identified in the Final Environmental Impact Statement for Caspian Tern Management to Reduce Predation of Juvenile Salmonids in the Columbia River Estuary. A 0.5 acre nesting island was build in the E. Link unit and will provide a consistent and secure nesting site for Caspian terns and other colonial nesting waterbirds. The island will be visible from the Wildlife Viewing Loop and will provide tremendous opportunities for wildlife viewers to observe those species.

Construction of a floating island in Dutchy Lake is scheduled to occur in February and both sites will be available during the 2009 nesting season. A third island to be situated in south portion of Gold Dike unit is planned during late summer 2009.

Monitoring/Research

July through December saw a wide variety of monitoring efforts being accomplished on SLWA.

Duck brood surveys were conducted in mid-July showed continued good production that was down slightly (-6.8%) from last year but well above (+39.9%) the long-term average.

Waterfowl banding was accomplished by nightlight capture at night (11 sessions) with airboats during the new moon phases in early and late August. SLWA staff and crews from Malheur NWR captured and banded over 2,000 ducks (predominantly gadwall and mallards). Over 500 of these birds were sampled for the presence of avian influenza. To date AI has not been detected in resident and migratory ducks in Oregon.

Tule greater white-fronted geese from the Lower Cook Inlet of Alaska were captured during their brief migration stop at SLWA in early September. Rocket nets were utilized to capture small groups on grit sites and about 50 VHF radio neck collars were placed on adults. This is a continuation of a cooperative research involving the states of Alaska, California and Oregon designed to monitor this unique subspecies of geese in the Pacific Flyway.

Weekly waterbird surveys were initiated in early September and have continued to date documenting over 3.9 million waterfowl use days. Other waterbirds and raptors remained well represented throughout the unusually mild fall, well into early December. Least sandpipers (found on the CBC) were present on Dec. 3 as were greater yellowlegs. One American avocet was present on November 26.

The 22nd Annual Summer Lake Christmas Bird Count was conducted on December 16, 2008. Eight hardy and intrepid counters enumerated about 8,600 birds representing 72 species on a very cold and frozen day. One new species was detected this year, 5 lesser goldfinches were observed. Of interest was the tally of 19 Eurasian collared doves, up considerably from the 6 found in 2007 when they were first detected on the count. At this writing, they remain just as numerous and breeding season calling is being heard. SLWA's roll in the redistribution of wintering Rocky Mountain Population of trumpeter swans continues to show success. Over 50 individuals (as many as 7 family groups) have been observed during weekly counts this past winter including 2 neck banded birds. One bird was captured in 2003 in Island Park, Idaho by Idaho Fish and Game personnel and translocated further south and released at Bear River. The other is a regular winter visitor to SLWA. She was translocated from Island Park as a cygnet in 1994 and when she reached breeding age brought her first brood to SLWA in 1999. Since then she has been detected every winter except one and has shown a total of 33 cygnets this new wintering location.

As the end of January approaches, a return of waterbirds will soon occur. The migratory cycle will once again begin as California wintering birds (especially tundra swans) arrive en route to northerly staging areas and ultimately the Arctic region by late spring.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>DUCKS</u>		<u>GEESE</u>			<u>SWANS</u>	<u>TOTAL*</u>	<u>AM. COOTS</u>
	<u>Snow</u>	<u>Wht.-front</u>	<u>Canada</u>	<u>Total</u>		<u>Waterfowl</u>		

Sept. 10	25,124	0	262	670	932	1	26,057	5,563
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Sept. 17	51,595	0	154	821	975	1	52,571	5,121
Sept. 24	43,522	60	254	495	809	1	44,332	6,214
Oct. 1	42,153	522	249	511	1,482	1	43,636	8,045
Oct. 8	41,696	1,911	1,050	629	3,880	1	45,577	7,496
Oct. 15	33,436	7,956	200	719	9,537	0	42,973	6,474
Oct. 22	31,430	4,191	117	688	5,121	190	36,741	11,394
Oct. 29	32,043	10,421	111	359	10,891	2,940	45,874	9,681
Nov. 5	29,885	9,027	175	284	9,736	3,897	43,518	5,934
Nov. 12	18,138	6,200	244	432	6,876	1,648	26,662	5,206
Nov. 19	24,815	9,218	114	793	10,125	2,495	37,435	5,035
Nov. 26	20,149	15	52	1,016	1,083	2,659	23,891	3,120
Dec. 3	17,619	731	496	791	2,018	2,360	21,997	1,959
Dec. 10	13,380	4	518	1,302	1,824	2,528	17,732	536
Dec. 16	4,456	0	11	1,088	1,099	1,690	7,245	126
Dec. 24	5,809	0	0	780	780	1,933	8,522	156
Dec. 31	5,190	0	1	584	585	1,441	7,216	169
Jan. 9	4,085	0	0	661	661	916	5,662	125
Jan. 14	4,533	0	5	772	777	1,081	6,391	111

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!