

# The East Cascades Audubon Society

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Thursday, February 25, 2016

The Spring and Summer are the busiest seasons for the ECBC: Many of the field projects are in full swing and this year is proving to be record breaking for the Kestrel Nest Box and Lewis's Woodpecker Projects. Field trips have started in earnest and we have led two conservation workdays to improve bird habitat near Sisters and Big Summit Prairie. As a fundraiser, we have also led ten fee-based trips that have been very popular and very well received.

June saw the first annual Woodpecker Wonderland Festival based at Camp Sherman. ECBC was heavily involved with coordinating the finances and leading the popular field trips.

This season has also been a time for introspection and planning. Sharon Leighty, a professional non-profit developer, donated an evening of her time to help the Board craft a plan to move ECBC on to the next stage. With an outsiders perspective it was clear that we were spread a little thin so we decided to put two projects on hold: the Gray Flycatcher and Shorebird Surveys. We would still very much like to monitor the extremely important shorebird areas of Central / Southern Oregon at Summer Lake and Lake Abert as tens of thousands of birds migrate through in the fall. However, this needs additional resources and planning and we will work with our partners to make this happen.

We would also like to express our sincere thanks to Mrs. Harriet Dennison who donated \$1,000 to ECBC through the Oregon Community Foundation. In addition, Wild Food Markets of Bend will donate 10 cents per bag of groceries you buy to the ECBC if you mention us and you use a recycled bag. Thank you everyone for making the ECBC grow and prosper.



ECBC volunteers at Big Summit Prairie caging aspens and improving the habitat for birds

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### **Spring Birding Highlights**, by Chuck Gates

Spring is always special. It seems like our souls thaw with the ice of winter and everything, including ourselves, exudes renewal. The best part of spring is the arrival of bird migrants. Birds pour back into Central Oregon to take advantage of the portly bounty of food and breeding habitats. You've just gotta love it.

Water birds ebb and flow in the spring. Some birds leave (like waterfowl) and some birds arrive (like Spotted Sandpipers and Wilson's Phalaropes). Many just stop temporarily on their way to parts farther north. All of this involves birds being on the move and that means rarities can be found.

WHITE-FRONTED GEESE stopped by with a high count of 250 at Houston Lake in Crook County. No Snow Geese or Ross's Geese were reported but there were probably a few around. The Paulina TRUMPETER SWAN was spotted again this year (Still no mate for that one but, maybe someday). EURASIAN WIGEONS showed up at Redmond Sewer Ponds, Paulina Valley, and Hatfield Lake. BLUE-WINGED TEAL were seen at Houston Lake in late May. WHITE PELICANS returned to Crook County after spurning the county last year.

Several birds were seen at Houston and Ochoco Lakes. A single SANDHILL CRANE was heard passing overhead near the town of Redmond. An unusual BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER spent a day at Houston Lake and while LESSER YELLOWLEGS and SOLITARY SANDPIPERS were found scattered around the local water features. One of the best birds of the spring was a well-marked and well-seen SEMI-PALMATED SANDPIPER that was found near Houston Lake. FRANKLIN'S GULLS caused a buzz in the local birding



community as birds were seen in Deschutes and Crook Counties. These are hard to find in both counties. FORSTER'S, BLACK, and CASPIAN TERNS showed up in small numbers, mostly in Crook County.

Game birds and raptors get pretty active in the spring as they vie for mates and territories. SOOTY GROUSE were located fairly regularly in the Sisters area. WILD TURKEYS were common at Camp Polk and Rager Ranger Station. MOUNTAIN QUAIL were seen or heard at Prairie South, Ochoco Reservoir, and Prineville Reservoir. The EURASIAN COLLARED DOVE continues its invasion of Eastern Oregon with about 25 birds being reported locally. BAND-TAILED

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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 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 August [[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

PIGEONS are quite rare locally but one showed up in Prineville and another west of Bend. GOSHAWKS were found at Calliope Crossing and East of Bend. FERRUGINOUS HAWKS were found in huge numbers with 30 and 32 seen on two separate locations along Hwy 20 east of Bend in March. MERLIN was reported from many locations (usually urban) and an incredible GYRFALCON was seen flying over Bend for one of only a handful of Deschutes County records. PEREGRINE FALCONS were seen at 4 different locations and PRAIRIE FALCONS were relatively easy to find in the open areas. A BARN OWL was seen in Redmond for an unusual Deschutes County record and PYGMY OWLS were found "tooting" at Sawyer Park, Shevlin Park, and Cold Springs Campground. A BARRED OWL was photographed in Prineville and a SAW-WHET OWL was heard calling in a Redmond yard.

Woodpeckers and nightjars provide us with an annual treat that is both welcome and stimulating. The first POORWILLS were heard around the end of April and NIGHTHAWKS came in at the end of May. LEWIS'S WOODPECKERS returned to the ECBC Nest Box Study Area with a vengeance and as many as 49 were counted as they prepared to begin nesting. WHITE-HEADED WOODPECKERS were reported from throughout the region in appropriate habitat and all three sapsucker species were found as well. BLACK-BACKED (but no 3-toed Woodpeckers) were found in the Sisters area during the spring season.

Most of the spring bird buzz usually centers around the migrating passerines (perching birds). This diverse group of birds offers the most opportunities for rarities and unusual sightings. WHITE-THROATED SWIFTS and ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRDS were pretty common if you knew where to look and a BLACK-CHINNED HUMMINGBIRD made a showing at a Deschutes River Woods feeder. A possible SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER was spotted near Terrebonne for an area first and a RED-EYED VIREO was a "maybe" at Calliope Crossing (two people thought they might have heard one from the same location on two different occasions).



A rare (for Deschutes) BEWICK'S WREN was seen by several people at Lower Bridge and John and Anne Gerke found a BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER at Smith Rock. A singing VEERY was heard at Slough Camp near Benham Falls and a NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD was located at Tumalo State Park. AMERICAN PIPITS were seen at scattered watering holes and YELLOW-BREASTED CHATS were seen near Redmond and Ashwood. The biggest story of the

spring was a wayward SUMMER TANAGER that apparently showed up at Camp Sherman around Memorial Day. WHITE-THROATED SPARROWS were still being seen in Bend in early May and TRICOLORED BLACKBIRDS returned to traditional breeding spots in Crook County. Finally, PURPLE FINCHES continue an apparent range expansion eastward as several were reported around Bend and Prineville. There was even a sight record of birds copulating for a first county record in Crook County.

**Local Personality**, by Judy Meredith

**Janice Rising** has been helping the ECBC in so many ways...mostly keeping us updated on

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.

## **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.

all the volunteers and members we have. Thanks Jan.

This birding thing started about 35 years ago. A co-worker had given me a pair of binocs and after a few years of looking at mountains, I realized birds were way more interesting with magnification than were mountains. I requested a lighter, more modern pair of binocs as a graduation present 15 years later and I was off and running. I grew up in Tucson, AZ but really didn't connect with birds there until many years after leaving the region. Mostly, I was a hiker and backpacker in Arizona and then California and I couldn't seem to merge hiking and birding.



Prior to moving to Bend, I lived in New England, just outside of Boston. This is where I really started birding. But it wasn't until about 10 years ago that I discovered warblers by birding with the Brookline Bird Club at Mt. Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, MA. After discovering warblers, I was never able to sleep later than 4:30am during April or May.

Most of my birding experiences have been near where I've lived - New England, or southeast Arizona when I returned for visits with family or friends. But I've also birded in Trinidad and Tobago as well as the Galapagos.... and stateside at Cape May, Hawk Mtn., Chincoteague/Assateague, Florida, New Mexico, Alaska, and most recently, Utah and Colorado.

I am currently on my 3rd career working part time at Wild Birds Unlimited in Bend. My first career as a microbiologist research tech took me to USC Med School in Los Angeles. Ten years later I moved to Portland, OR where I continued this work at Reed College and the Veterans Admin Hospital. After graduating from Western States Chiropractic College outside of Portland in '82 I moved to New England where I had a private practice for 27 years.

I think I always knew I would return to Oregon one day and before 9/11 in 2001 I explored many towns in Oregon as potential retirement locations. Bend was the top of the list and finally in May 2006 I returned to Oregon. My first ECBC bird walk was 4 days after arriving. I had spent 7 months in Tucson just before moving to Bend and marveled at the clean, fresh, cool, moist air at Calliope Crossing. I knew I was finally home.

September 2007 I started helping ECBC with membership duties and in March 2008 I started monitoring Lewis's Woodpecker boxes at Entrada burn. In the past I had volunteered with The Nature Conservancy in Boston and Tucson Audubon Society in Tucson. I also have volunteered with Miller Wildlife Rehab in Tucson. I have found volunteering to be an enriching experience and since I had the time and energy, wanted to offer some of my skills to ECBC.

I live in northeast Bend with my partner of 28 years, Wendy Caro, and a wonderful cat named Catalina.

## **Summer Tanager Steals the Show in Camp Sherman ....** by Chuck Gates



On June 6th of this year, birders from everywhere descended on the tiny community of Camp Sherman to attend the first annual Woodpecker Wonderland Festival. Who knew that the avian star of this woodpecker show would turn out to be a non-woodpecker passerine far from its normal range. This bird, of course, was a bright red, male Summer Tanager. In the local birding community, Peter Low has a reputation for

being able to find birds. Sometimes it seems like his perceptive skills are supernatural but Pete chalks it up to starting early and doing it often. Those skills came into play along the Metolius River very near Camp Sherman. While scouting in preparation for the festival, Peter discovered the Summer Tanager. Mixed in with many Western Tanagers, that crimson eye catcher stood out well amidst the pines and alders as it actively fed.

Soon the buzz was out and people at the festival flocked to the location to see the bird. Since it

was pretty active, it would often fly to locations unknown so not everyone was lucky enough to locate it right away. However, over the course of the three-day weekend, most birders got to see it. All the sightings occurred within a ¼ mile downstream of the bridge at Camp Sherman. The Summer Tanager is a common resident of lowland and open woodlands. It is not often found in coniferous forests even within its normal range. This fact makes the patently coniferous Camp Sherman area even more of an unusual spot for this species. The only all red bird in North America, this tanager breeds in the southern United States and northern Mexico, northward and east to southern Iowa and New Jersey. In the west, it rarely breeds north of southern Nevada.

A bee-eating specialist, the Summer Tanager will often eat adult bees and wasps, beating them against branches to dislodge their stingers before swallowing them. They often will hang out next to hive and eat the adults until they are all gone and then gorge on the fat grubs within the hive. Once the crowds from the festival dispersed, the question arose, "How long would the Summer Tanager stay?" Not very long was the answer to that question. Several birders looked the following week but could not locate the bird. Through a little sleuthing and discussions with locals, it was determined that the bird showed up somewhere around Memorial Day weekend and was gone sometime after the woodpecker festival. That put it in Camp Sherman for about two weeks. Not long enough for those birders who couldn't get enough of this amazing red wonderer.

### **Of Ovenbirds and Martinis ...** By Charmane Powers

On June 2 and 3 an Ovenbird graced my yard. Early the morning of June 2, still in bed and with my window open, I heard a bird song nearby with which I wasn't familiar. Propping myself up on one elbow, I scanned the honeysuckle outside our window—nothing there. Back to sleep I went. I heard it again, but still saw nothing in the honeysuckle. I got up. Looking down this time, I saw a bird walking on the dirt below the honeysuckle. Then it flew off toward the back yard. I hadn't thought to look somewhere besides the foliage.

Watching it in our back yard, it was quickly clear that I had not seen this species before. Consulting the National Geographic Guide and with many exclamations to my husband and son, I figured out pretty quickly what it was. It had all the proper field marks—orange-red stripe down the top of the head with a dark stripe on either side of that, eye ring, bold spots on the breast, and most interestingly to me, the habit—walking around like a biped, tail cocked.

Our back yard is relatively small,(;) about 50' x 40'. It consists of a small patch of lawn surrounded by a swath of 6' of native Mazama Ash, grasses, and forbs on two sides, and ~12' of the same at the very back, behind some aspens. This edge habitat was where our visitor gave this astonished human almost an hour of viewing that morning before I left for work.

The next day, newly educated on the bird's 2-syllable warbler song, I heard it again while laying in bed at 5:10 a.m. but it was too dim yet to see it. It woke me again about an hour later. That morning, it was less interested in staying in our yard; popping over the fence into the neighbor's and back again. The previous day we had the luxury of setting up a scope and trying (unsuccessfully) to photograph through it. Perhaps on that first day it had just arrived after a long flight and was tired, and after a day of recovery, was more active as it prepared for another flight.



On the second morning our 10-year-old son was able to film a few seconds of it out of our bedroom window with his video camera. The video has a bit of a "Sasquatch" feel to it, but it was much better than the photographs we took, which had a blurry fishbowl quality to them.

That day after work, I looked around for it and saw it once again doing its "here-I-am-now-I'm-gone" routine. I poured a pomegranate martini and sat on the back deck. He came back in. I watched him come and go for almost an hour.

I did not hear or see it the following morning. We were out of town that day and the next, and I have not seen or heard it since.

I like the thought of sitting on the deck observing him go about his work of getting a living in this strange habitat, far from its normal range, while I sipped the red martini and pondered. How many rare birds visit us but land in places where they go unrecognized? What happened to shift him so far off course, and where was he going next? It didn't really matter— I was grateful for the sweet short delight.

## **Breeding Bobolinks Discovered in Eastern Crook County ...** by Chuck Gates

For several years now, I have been recording bird reports from Central Oregon and posting them on the ECBC website. This activity gives me access to most of the rare bird activity observed in Central Oregon. Starting a couple of years ago, I began to receive anecdotal accounts of Bobolinks breeding in eastern Crook County. At first, I was pretty skeptical because I visit that part of the county frequently and I'd not discovered any Bobolinks. Then one day,



Denise Reinhart and I were driving along the Crooked River near Paulina and we discovered over 100 Bobolinks. These birds were in basic (non-breeding) plumage and the date was late August so I knew these were not breeding birds. However, it did raise the question of the location of the breeding colony. That mystery was solved this year with the discovery of a breeding colony of Bobolinks in the Paulina region of eastern Crook County.

Renee Roufs lives and works at Rager Ranger Station. Rager is one of Crook County's hidden jewels. The ranger station is nestled in pines at the transition zone between forest and sagebrush scrub very near the eastern border of Crook County. Renee has been at Rager for some time and has developed many relationships with local landowners. One such landowner happened to mention to Renee that they had Bobolinks nesting on their property. Renee relayed this information to me and the two of us confirmed the colony by direct observation. The birds are on private land and the landowners are not interested in hosting birders who want to see these birds so the exact location of the colony will not be revealed here. Birders are reminded to respect the property and privacy rights of these folks and it is requested that no one contact the landowners about visiting this colony.

After some discussion with the landowner, it was determined that this colony was present when they gained possession of the property in the 1970's. Once the news of this discovery reached the birding community, I began to receive more information. Nancy MacDonald of Prineville mentioned the birds to a 92-year-old neighbor who was raised in the Rager area and she claimed to be familiar with this species. So... it seems that Bobolinks may have been regular nesters in the area for some time. This is important since general wisdom has placed the nearest Bobolinks in Eastern Oregon with the closest breeding colonies near Prairie City and Mount Vernon in Grant County.

Over the course of 20 years of birding in Crook County I have documented over 175 species that breed within the county boundaries. The discovery of Bobolinks in the Paulina area adds another species to this list and another chapter in the Crook County avian book of knowledge.

## **Fires are vital to the health of our forests:** by Steve Shunk; recent letter published in the Grass Valley Union, CA

I appreciate your recent publication of Dr. Chad Hanson's "Other Voices" on fire ecology, and I would like to amplify a couple points.

First and foremost, fire is a critical component of most healthy forests, but not just in the West. Southeastern forests too evolved with a regular fire regime, and the clearing and subsequent development (for agriculture and otherwise) of these lands has contributed to population declines in many species, not the least important of which are the woodpeckers (especially the Red-cockaded Woodpecker). In fact, woodpeckers are also critical components of healthy forest ecosystems. We may even be able to monitor woodpecker populations as one gauge of forest health.

It is also important to note that forest managers recognize this importance, and wherever possible, they are managing many of these forests now with the return of fire into the ecosystem.

But we have two problems. (1) We now live in the "woods," making it impossible to allow fire to run its natural course without jeopardizing human lives and livelihoods; and (2) Timber now has a high value to our society, and letting it burn is perceived as detrimental to local economies (as is the opposition to forest salvage projects that seek to capture some of this value before burned timber degrades to the point where it is no longer marketable).

I am a staunch conservationist, which is not to say that I oppose logging or fire suppression. These two human activities are facts of life; as long as we live in the woods and as long as we use wood products, we will need to engage in these two practices. I am simply in favor of conserving our forests so that they retain their value as healthy ecosystems, for the ecosystems themselves and for all of their components, of which humans are one. I also recognize that forestry practices of prior centuries occurred without having the knowledge of forest ecology. It's not that we cut all our forests because we didn't care about maintaining healthy ecosystems, but rather that we did not even understand the mechanisms of a healthy ecosystem.

Those of us who live in the woods need to realize that we are essentially placing ourselves in the path of fire, and we need to manage our own properties to protect their value. Clearing brush, as Dr. Hanson suggests, is just one way to do this. Furthermore, those of us who use wood products need to realize that as long as we do so, trees will need to be cut down somewhere, and the only way to conserve these trees and the ecosystems they support is to limit our use of wood products.

We must recognize fire as well as our own dynamic role as two critical components in healthy forest ecosystems, and we must learn how the two can work together to see the forest for the trees, as well as the woodpeckers and the bark-beetles and the fungi, and so on.

Today, we can make no more excuses. Because of the work conducted by Dr. Hanson and others to teach us about forest ecology, we now have a responsibility to apply what we know so that human activities and healthy forest ecosystems can and may coexist.

Stephen A. Shunk is a professional naturalist, author and field ornithologist based in the ponderosa pine forests of central Oregon's east Cascade Mountains. He conducts regular surveys on the interactions between forest fire and avian populations. He can be reached at [steve@paradisebirding.com](mailto:steve@paradisebirding.com).

### **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 ....

This spring was cold and wet with snow into June. Still, we had great turnouts at all of our field trips averaging 15 – 20 people. Joined by groups from Portland and Washington State, regulars and new members enjoyed the bird banquet that Central Oregon offers up.

May 4 - A local trip to Bend. The riparian habitat along the Deschutes River attracts a host of migrants and we saw a variety of flycatchers and warblers, and a Calliope Hummingbird along the First Street Rapids Trail. We stopped at Robert Sawyer Park before heading over to the Entrada Burn, on the western edge of Bend. This is the site of the successful ECBC Lewis's Woodpecker Project and we saw many birds noisily calling and claiming their nest boxes.

May 16 – We led a combined trip with the Deschutes Land Trust at Camp Polk Meadow, just outside Sisters. I was glad we started early as temperatures soon climbed into the 90's. On a four mile round trip, we passed through a variety of habitats and had fantastic views of Western Tanagers, Black-headed Grosbeaks, and Northern Orioles. We didn't get to see any rails despite the fact we heard both Sora and Virginia Rails calling from the marsh. We will continue to build the relationship with The Land Trust and offer these combined trips as its fun to mingle the two groups and meet new people.

May 19 – This was the annual fast past tour of Crook County, led by Chuck Gates. Species numbers quickly rose as we moved from one great birding spot

to another. Not only did we get a chance to see some great birds but also were shown some fantastic birding areas to return back to with more time to spare. First stop was Houston Lake in Powell Butte where we saw a number of terns and gulls and great views of a Bittern. The star, however, was a small sandpiper that was well out of its normal range: A Semi-palmated Sandpiper. After stopping for Juniper species and seeing Lark, Brewers and Vesper Sparrows and Gray Flycatchers we headed into the Ochocos and through Big Summit Prairie where the wild flowers were just beginning to carpet the meadows and forest clearings. We looped around to the Paulina Valley where Willets were displaying, Stilts and Avocets were setting up territories, and Curlews were singing their bubbling trills. We enjoyed a pair of Wilson's Phalaropes just 10ft away next to the road in a small pool.

June 14 – Howard Horvath led a smaller trip to some more local birding areas close to Sisters. The highlight for everyone was a great view of a Pileated Woodpecker at Trout Creek Swamp; a bird that is more often heard than seen. Other birds at the swamp included Lincoln Sparrow and Dusky Grouse and great views of Fox Sparrows and Green-tailed Towhees.

### **Fundraiser field trips:**

The ECBC is privileged to have some excellent and fun birders who are willing to take people out on custom guided field trips at very competitive rates to local areas. What is more, the money goes directly to the organization and used for local bird conservation projects! This year we treated 10 groups to unique birding adventures throughout Central Oregon. With a group from Seattle, we found all 11 species of local nesting woodpeckers. With another group, we were treated to Pygmy, Barn, Burrowing, and Great Horned Owls at nests. A separate group, in the early spring, watched leking Sage Grouse and thousands of geese. There are lots of fantastic areas to visit and great birds to find.

A few ideas: early spring trip to see Sage Grouse or thousands of geese; Forest birds in the Cascades; marsh birds at Summer Lake or Malheur, the north Klamath area for Yellow Rail, Black Swift and marsh birds, Crook County for a whole variety of birds, Lake Abert for more than a hundred thousand shorebirds .....

This is how it works: We provide a guide (generally two if you prefer). You provide the transportation and can bring as many people along as you want. If need be we will provide a second rig to transport the guides. You donate \$150 to ECBC for the day and cover the cost of gas for the vehicles. What a great way to support ECBC and have a fantastic day birding with friends and family.

### **Summer / Fall 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

- 8/16 ECBC Conservation Work day at Glaze Meadow – Help us remove old fencing and improve the habitat for the wildlife.... [[More info](#)]
- 8/17 ECBC Field trip to Summer Lake. This is a fantastic wetland in Lake County for Egrets, Bitterns and a whole host of shorebirds.... [[More info](#)]
- 8/28 ECBC Raptor ID class in preparation for the Green ridge Raptor Migration Counts. Meet in the Environmental Center, Bend from 6:30 –

8:30pm.

- 9/13 ECBC Field trip to Hatfield Lake and the Bend area. Stay local and bird the local hot spots for either half or a full day.... [[More info](#)]
- 9/20 & 21 North American Migration Counts throughout the State of Oregon.
- 9/27 ECBC Field trip to Lower Bridge and Redmond Sewage Lagoons. Another local trip to see migrants and shorebirds.... [[More info](#)]
- 10/04 ECBC Field trip to Wickiup Reservoir. This is one of the local hot spots and good for a variety of waterfowl and forest birds.... [[More info](#)]
- 11/08 ECBC Annual Meeting. Come join the social event of the year with free food, entertainment and guest speaker. Help ECBC raise money the easy way.
- 11/09 ECBC Field trip to The High lakes of the Cascades. Another chance to see migrating waterfowl and upland forest birds.... [[More info](#)]

### **ECBC Project Reports:**

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

For the past two years at the Entrada site of our LEWO (LEWIS'S WOODPECKER) nest box project, we have seen great success. And this year, I am happy to report our success has continued! 18 out of our 26 nest boxes we have in place at this site have been occupied by LEWO's this breeding season! What fun it has been watching these woodpeckers perform their mating rituals, and their aerial acrobatics as they hunt the sky for food for their increasingly very vocal youngsters! By very early July, the young will begin to fledge and follow their parents around learning the 'art of fly-catching' from them. So much fun to watch this all take place, and to be a part of it all!

Many thanks to everyone who volunteered their time this year, with this nest box project, helping to cleanout the nest boxes, monitoring them weekly, and reporting data. Could not have done this without all of your help!

Miriam Lipsitz

Dean Hale

Wendy Caro

Jan Rising

Curt Ringstad

Paul and Linda Whitsell

Chris and Lynn Iversen

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

### **Report of Spring North American Migration Count**

Every spring and fall, the ECBC administers a statewide migration count. Though no longer a continent wide count, it's still referred to as the North American Migration Count (NAMC). This spring, the count produced some very big numbers and a small glimpse at what spring bird migration looks like in Oregon.

The count consists of volunteers choosing a county to participate in and following an established route. All birds seen are counted and totaled. Dates for each county are established ahead of time and the count period is 24 hours. The county totals are sent to the state coordinator who compiles and totals all data. In addition to bird numbers, weather and participant data are also collected.

Just about 300 people participated in this year's count. Of Oregon's 36 counties, 26 were surveyed while 10 were left un-sampled as a result of a lack of volunteers. In those 26 counties, the following data were collected:

- Close to 750 hours of data collecting in the field
- Nearly 6500 miles logged walking, driving, and boating
- 291 Species of birds were documented in the state
- 158,347 Individual birds counted
- The most common species seen were Common Murre (45,041), White-faced Ibis (6973), American Coot (6308), Canada Goose (6242), Cliff Swallow (5515), European Starling (4661), Western Sandpiper (4262), Brewer's Blackbird (4189), Mallard (3608), Violet-green Swallow (3306), Tree Swallow (3168)
- Counties reporting the most species were Deschutes (175), Coos (171), Klamath (168), Douglas (159), Curry (158), Harney (151), Baker (149), Lake (146), Linn (145), Lane (143), Crook (143)

As might be expected, some unusual birds were located on this count. A few late SNOW GEESE were found in Harney County. TRUMPETER SWANS were seen in Harney and Deschutes Counties. Four HARLEQUIN DUCKS showed up on the Linn County count and Deschutes County produced the only SAGE GROUSE report. DUSKY GROUSE turned up in Crook County while Douglas County produced the only RED-NECKED GREBE reports. A single LAYSAN ALBATROSS was tallied in Curry County waters, as was a PINK-FOOTED SHEARWATER. Five counties reported offshore LEACH'S STORM-PETRELS. Perhaps the best sightings of the count were a total 6 MURPHY'S PETRELS seen offshore of 3 different Oregon counties. A single CATTLE EGRET made a very rare showing in Klamath County. WHITE-TAILED KITES were seen in 3 counties and RED-SHOULDERED HAWKS were found in 5 different counties. A single MERLIN in Jefferson County was the only one recorded during the count. SNOWY PLOVERS were found in Lane and Coos Counties while Grant County produced the only UPLAND SANDPIPER records for the count period. A rare inland spring BAIRD'S SANDPIPER showed up in Deschutes County and all 3 JAEGERs were found off the coastal counties. SABINE'S GULLS were tallied in several coastal counties, as were ARCTIC TERNS. A single GLAUCUS GULL was located in Coos County. MARBLED MURRELETS were seen in Tillamook and Coos Counties and TUFTED PUFFINS were reported from 3 coastal counties. The lone BURROWING OWL on the count came from Harney County and BLACK SWIFTS were only found in Curry County. A single COSTA'S HUMMINGBIRD was in Deschutes County and the only ALLEN'S HUMMERS were seen in Curry County. At least one BROAD-TAILED HUMMINGBIRD was found in

Harney County. Early EASTERN KINGBIRDS were tallied in Baker County and BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHERS were only seen in Josephine County. Josephine also produced the only CALIFORNIA TOWHEES found in the state. Benton County produced the only GRASSHOPPER SPARROWS and WHITE-THROATED SPARROW reports came in from Tillamook and Harney Counties. TRICOLORED BLACKBIRDS were found in Crook and Douglas counties.

All in all, the 2008 Oregon NAMC was a qualified success. It is the goal of the ECBC to get every county in the state covered during these counts. That goal was not achieved but efforts will continue to be made to fulfill this goal in future counts.

The ECBC would like to thank all volunteers who contributed time, money, and sweat in order to gather migration data for this project. A special thank you goes to the county coordinators who weathered varying data formats, tardy reporters, and a pushy state coordinator. The ECBC salutes you.

If you would like to get involved with this count in the future, please go to the ECBC website and contact the state NAMC coordinator. You won't regret this amazing birding experience..

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

There was no field work throughout the summer. The project kicks into high gear in November when field surveys start again throughout The State. We have been mapping the Raptor routes using "google maps" so soon there will soon be a cool way to see the routes and contact the volunteers.

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

Fall migration is just a few months away, and volunteers will be needed at Green Ridge for ECBC's 4th raptor migration count.

This year we will be counting from 10AM to 5PM on September 20, 21 and 27, 28, October 4, 5 and then the 11, 12th.

All are welcome to sign up. You definitely do not need to be an expert. If you can stay the day, great, but even if you only have a few hours, that is fine too.

This year there will a sign on the road next to the path we walk to the ridge, making the site even easier to find.

You may also plan to carpool from Indian Ford Campground and we will leave from there at 9:15.

Where to signup: email [Ksharples@comcast.net](mailto:Ksharples@comcast.net) , call: Karen Sharples 503-709-3885

Attend a raptor ID Class on August 28 6:30 PM at Bend Environmental Learning Center, 16 NW Kansas St

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

Once again, ECBC volunteers conducted bird surveys at Glaze Meadow, a diverse area surrounding Black Butte Ranch. The highlight was confirming Veery nesting in the area, a first for Deschutes County and a rarity in Central Oregon. Although this species is known to summer in a couple of locations, it is extremely secretive and actual breeding behavior is very difficult to record in the field.

Oregon Wild has been working on plans to thin the forest surrounding the Meadow to help mitigate the threat of fires to Black Butte Ranch properties. The project has a signed decision notice and there were no appeals during the review period. Several modifications were made in

the final decision in response to public comment; more trees were left around the meadows; some trees will be felled and left on the edges of meadows to provide for small critter habitat. Also many old growth stands will be left intact and more wildlife cover patches will be left.

Forest thinning will start this winter and the prescribed burning will begin in the next 2-4 years. It will be very interesting in the following years as we continue to monitor the area and continue to provide input into helping to manage this unique area. For directions to this great birding area [\[see\]](#).

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

### **ECBC members are making a positive difference for bird habitat.**

On May 31 a group of us gathered at Camp Polk Meadow for our second annual "Bird and Weed" day there. With the help of some energetic J Bar J girls, we pulled out a huge number of mullein from the middle meadow, traditionally the floodplain for Whychus Creek. Amanda Egertson, land steward for the Deschutes Land Trust, explained the importance of removing these invasive weeds ahead of their effort to "re-meander" the creek back into this floodplain. "When we plant riparian vegetation here we don't want these invasive weeds competing with them," she said. Before the weeding, ECBC members conducted a quick survey of the Preserve as part of our ongoing survey project for the Land Trust. Our survey tracked the number and location of 48 species around the preserve that morning, contributing to a long-term database that will help the Land Trust understand the impact of the creek relocation project.

### **Ochoco Work Day Summary – Big Summit Prairie June 21st**

The East Cascades Bird Conservancy would like to thank all the volunteers who showed up for the June 21st workday at Big Summit Prairie.

The objective for the day was to cage as many aspen sprouts as we could in mature aspens stands that are losing their overstory. Due to a combination of factors, such as grazing pressure from cattle, deer and elk as well as a diminishing water table and encroachment by conifers, aspen stands in the Ochocos are losing their strongholds. The Forest Service has worked with volunteers, ranchers and wildlife biologists to regenerate these stands by creating aspen exclosures and caging individual sprouts in areas where stands are degrading. The group of ECBC volunteers that came out was able to cage over 30 aspens in two different stands.

Notable bird appearances included nesting Williamson's Sapsuckers, Red-naped Sapsuckers, Pygmy Nuthatches, Western Bluebirds, and White-headed Woodpeckers.

The Big Summit Prairie and surrounding meadows were abundant with wildflowers; Arrow-leaf Balsamroot, Mule's Ear, Mountain Iris, Lupine, Indian Paintbrush, Shooting Stars, and Pussy-toes were all out in force.

Thanks to Forest Service Wildlife Biologist, Dede Steele, for helping direct the volunteer efforts and providing some natural and cultural history interpretation.

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

The early spring was spent cleaning and repairing all 120-nest boxes ready for the nesting season, with over 500 miles of driving this was a huge task but it has paid off with about 55 boxes being used by Kestrels.

## 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](#).



## Senator Wyden Introduces Badlands and Spring Basin Wilderness Bills

by Devon Bately

Continuing his efforts to preserve the natural beauty of Oregon, U.S. Senator Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) introduced separate pieces of legislation 6/25/2008 to extend permanent federal wilderness protection to the Badlands and Spring Basin. The bills would designate as Wilderness almost 30,000 acres just east of Bend, Oregon, through the Oregon Badlands Wilderness Act of 2008 and over 8,600 acres overlooking the John Day Wild and Scenic River through the Spring Basin Wilderness Act of 2008.

"Everyone from businesses to neighboring landowners supports preserving these scenic gems for future generations to use and enjoy. My legislation is a reflection of what I've been hearing from Oregonians for years," said Wyden.

Be sure to drop Senator Wyden a note thanking him for his leadership

<http://wyden.senate.gov/contact>

For more information on these proposed Wilderness areas and to send a comment to your Representatives visit [www.onda.org](http://www.onda.org)

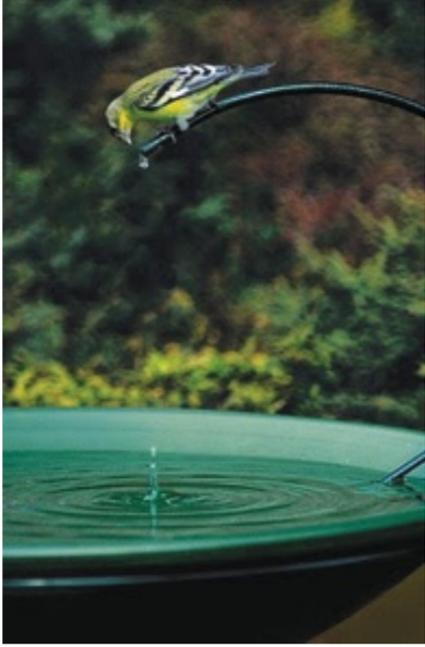


## Want More Birds? Just Add Water! - Kevin Lair, Wild Birds Unlimited

Summer has arrived in Central Oregon at last. With the heat and dryness of summer in the high desert, one of the best ways to provide for birds is to offer water. Not all birds will visit seed, suet, or nectar feeders, but all species need access to water. Birds' high metabolic rate and rapid respiration drains moisture from their bodies quickly. Not only do birds need water from drinking, but also for bathing. Clean feathers are important for overall health and provide optimum insulating and flying abilities. Providing water is a great way to encourage otherwise hard to attract species such as warblers, thrushes, and flycatchers to visit your backyard habitat.

Provide a shallow water source to accommodate most songbird species. One to two inches deep is ideal. If you have a pond or water feature, use rocks and branches to make shallow areas for the birds. Birdbaths also work well and can be placed near windows or feeders where the birds will be the most visible. Consider using a hanging birdbath placed high off the ground if cats are in the area.

Birds find the sight and sound of moving water particularly attractive. Adding a dripper to a birdbath or water feature



will be enjoyed by the birds, and also help replace water lost due to evaporation. If standing water providing breeding locations for mosquitoes is a concern, just be sure to change the water in the birdbath at least once per week. Replacing the water that often will not provide enough time for any eggs deposited to develop into adult mosquitoes. Fish can be added to ponds or water features to consume the mosquito larvae and pupae before they metamorphose into adults. Adding water to your backyard habitat this summer will make a big splash with the birds!

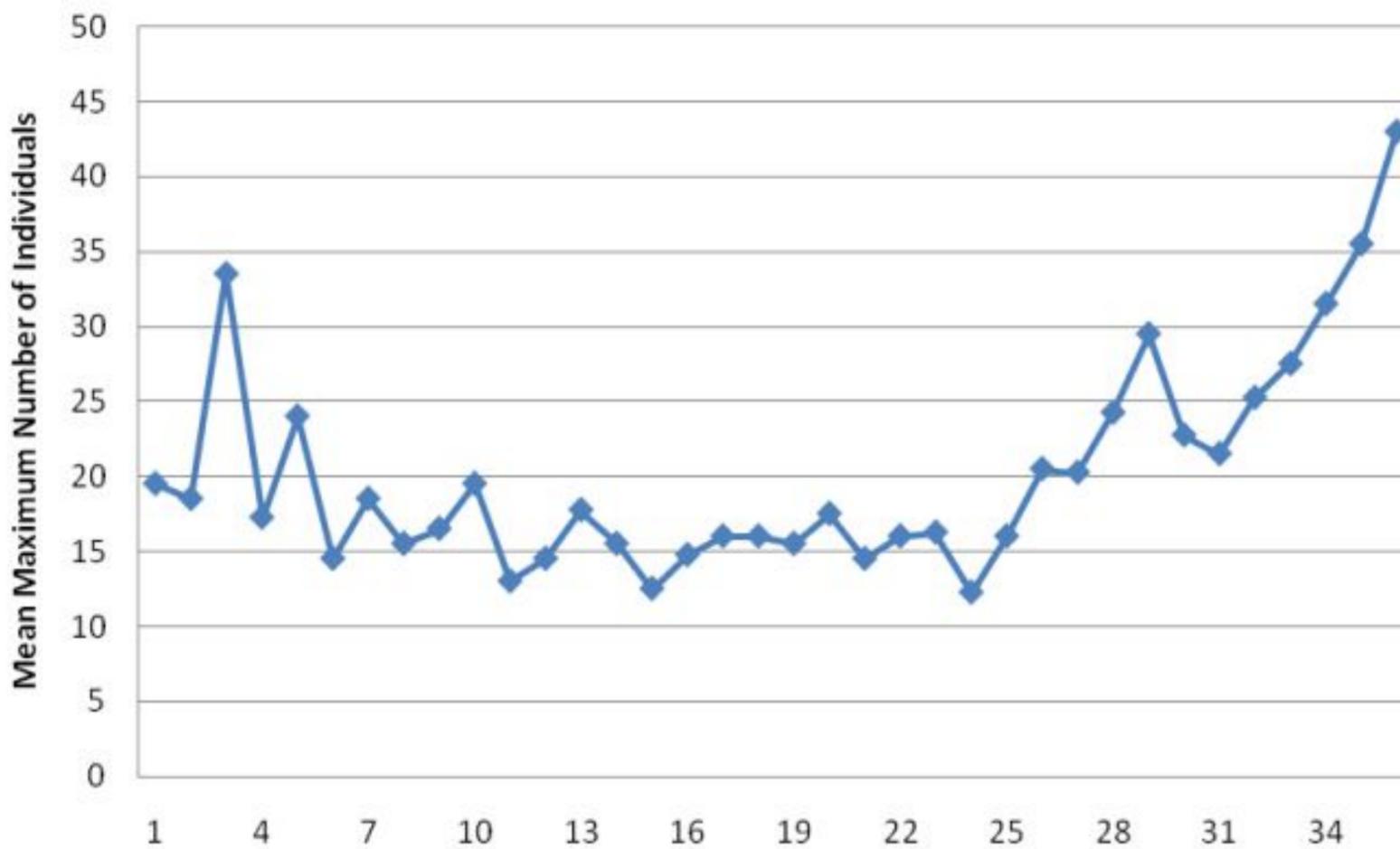
## Yard Bird Survey Data:

### Yard Bird Survey Data 2007: those unpredictable finches- Jim Moodie

For this newsletter, I looked at the finch data for the five yards that kept records for the entire year in 2007. Each yard reported the maximum number of individuals for each species of finch seen on one day during 10-day periods.

If we start with the most common finch, the House Finch, not surprisingly, we find House Finches recorded for each of the 10-day periods by every yard except one: a yard west of Bend in mixed coniferous habitat that had no House Finches at all. For the other yards, are House Finch numbers consistent over the year? Based on our data, the answer is no.

### House Finch mean-maximum/10-day period

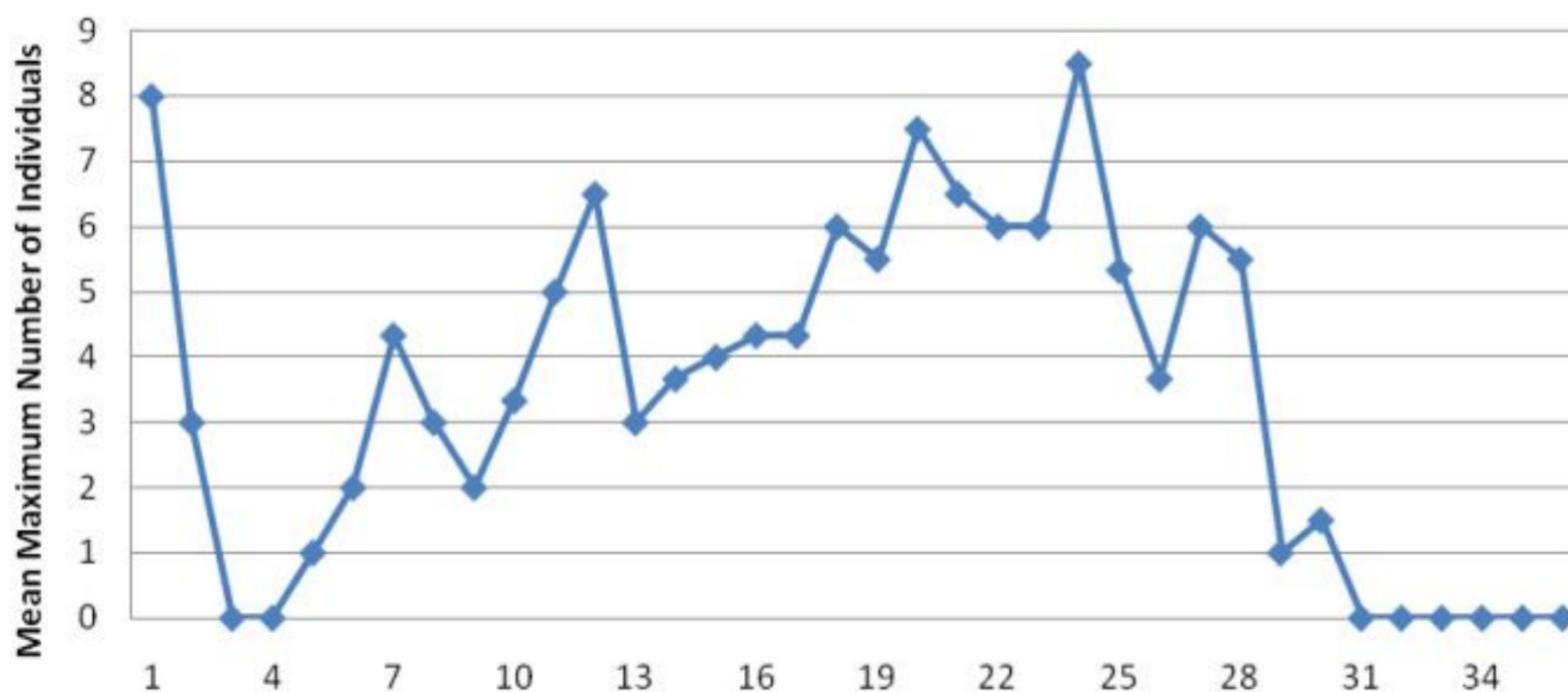


Apparently, House Finches begin dispersing in late February (period 6) and the mean number of finches seen remains below 20 until mid September (period 26). Then the number of birds shows a steady increase through December. This indicates that Central Oregon, while maintaining a breeding population of House Finches, certainly is attractive to this species as a wintering location. Maybe it's the skiing?

What about the other two *Carpodacus* finches (Cassin's and Purple)? Cassin's Finch shows a more seasonal pattern. For 2007, Cassin's Finches were reported by four of the five yards at least for one time period. For those yards where Cassin's Finches were regular, however, we see that the number of this species increases beginning in March and continues to climb until May. Presumably, the dip in numbers during the summer months represents a subset of birds

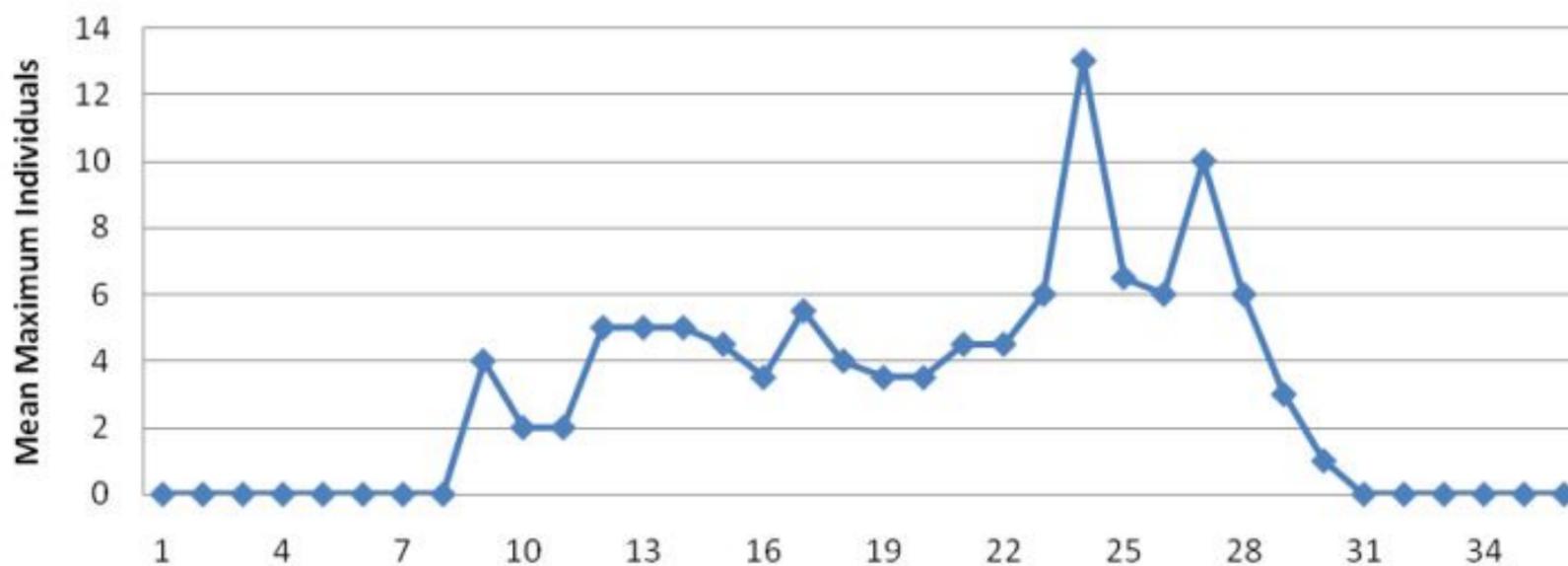
remaining to breed, with the increase afterwards denoting successful breeding. Numbers for this species peak during the end of August; the population then declines over the next two months. Late year Cassin's finches (Cassin's Finches) are a rare site in Central Oregon

### Cassin's Finch Mean-Maximum Number of Individuals



Finally, we are beginning to see an increase in Purple Finches in Central Oregon. I have been fortunate enough to observe this species establish a small breeding colony in my neighborhood over the past five years. Apparently, Steve Edwards, living West of Bend, is also seeing Purple Finches in his yard during the summer months. If we look at the data for these two properties, it appears that the purple finches are successfully breeding in Central Oregon, and should be considered a species that is expanding its range into the area. I'll consider the 2007 yard data for the other finch species in the next newsletter.

### Purple Finch Mean Maximum Individuals/Period



#### U.S. Forest Service: Lauri Turner

Not much has changed as far as projects go for the wildlife group on the Deschutes National Forest. We are busy trying to accomplish many different projects. However, the Deschutes NF could use your help in gathering information regarding our new sensitive species, the Northern Waterthrush. Not much is known about its habitat or habits. We do know it is found on the Crescent Ranger District along Crescent Creek in willow habitat. We would like to increase our knowledge as it relates to this species. That's where ECBC can help. We are looking for known sightings or any other information particularly related to their habitat needs. If you have any information, please contact Joan Kittrell, Crescent RD Wildlife Biologist at 541-433-3237 or Lauri Turner, Forest Wildlife Biologist at 541-383-5640. Any information would be greatly appreciated.

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

The summer field season is in full swing with a wide variety of habitat development and monitoring activities being undertaken by Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife staff (ODFW), other agency personnel, and volunteers.

## **Habitat Development and Management**

Over 600 acres were disked in Bullgate Refuge unit in 2007 and along with major dike and levee maintenance, has resulted in tremendous water bird use in this first year of fully flooded conditions.

Spring shorebird use was very heavy as was breeding activity by all 9 of the Wildlife Area's breeding species. Black-necked stilts were especially numerous with nearly 200 pairs nesting.

Waders and other water birds have made extensive use of this early succession stage unit. Foraging White-faced Ibis Great Egrets were very common throughout the late spring and early summer. Eared Grebes have been fairly numerous and may be breeding in the greatly enhanced open water conditions.

The Summer Lake Wildlife Area (SLWA) Short-Term Habitat Implementation Plan for enhancement of wetlands continued with planning for late summer 2008 field activity.

Link Marsh and River Ranch units have been dewatered and held dry since January. They were control burned in March and dense tall emergent stands will be mowed and disked in July-August and completed by mid-September.

Duck Unlimited, Inc. will fund and deliver major infrastructure improvements to improve water management capabilities in the River Ranch unit and result in greatly enhanced wetland function and habitat diversity. Construction will start early in August and should be completed by mid-September.

Planning was accomplished for the construction of a 0.5 acre nesting island in E. Link unit. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have taken the lead for the third implementation action for 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. Construction is scheduled to start in early August and completed by mid-September. The nesting island will be visible from the Wildlife Viewing Loop and afford tremendous opportunities for wildlife viewers to observe colonial nesting water birds.

## **Monitoring**

April through June saw a wide variety of monitoring efforts being accomplished on SLWA.

Secretive marsh bird surveys were established and conducted beginning in late May. Data entry and analysis has yet to be completed, but large numbers of American bitterns (Bitterns) were present on nearly every sample station (33) and good numbers of Virginia Rail, Sora, and Pied-billed Grebes were detected. One repeat survey was completed by mid June. Data collected will be submitted as part of a North American Data base to monitor population trends on an annual basis.

Of interest was SLWA's first detection of Yellow Rail. While not recorded during the survey, the calling rail was heard during duck pair surveys in early June.

Duck breeding pair surveys were initiated mid-May (mid May) and completed in early June. Results showed a slight increase in overall pair numbers (12 species represented) from last year (1.6%) and the long-term (17 year) average (3.2%).

Snowy Plover surveys were conducted in the Summer Lake Basin during late June. Over 330 birds were counted along the shoreline and in SLWA units.

Two Breeding Bird Surveys were conducted on SLWA in June to document presence and abundance of primarily non-waterfowl species on the Area. This was the 10th year of the surveys.

## **USFWS - News from Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge, July 2008 By Marla Bennett**

Each year staff and volunteers at Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge (HMNAR) count sage grouse on their mating leks to determine the population trend. Between 1991 and 2000, the number of birds on trend leks was fairly stable, ranging between 100 and 200 males. Beginning in 2001, the numbers climbed each year to a peak of 859 in 2005. Numbers dropped each year since 2005 to 198 birds in 2008. The recent downward trend is typical of most populations across

the birds' range.

The annual bighorn sheep and pronghorn helicopter counts will have occurred by July 14 and 15. Last year's counts revealed approximately 250 bighorn and 2,050 pronghorn.

HMNAR is resurfacing the road across the refuge. Throughout construction, one lane will generally be kept open for traffic, and wait times will not exceed ½ hour. Construction will stop during holidays and most weekends.

### **Oregon Field Ornithologists - by Dave Tracey**

OFO's 29th Annual Meeting will be held at Malheur Field Station  
September 12th through 14th, 2008.

Fall is a great time to be at Malheur with few mosquitoes and good chances of finding rare birds. The meeting will include field trips, programs and the annual business meeting. We will have more information in the near future explaining meal options and lodging in Burns. Those interested in staying at Malheur Field Station will need to make arrangements individually and are encouraged to reserve their space well in advance. Information and reservations are at: <http://www.malheurfieldstation.org> or (541) 493-2629. OFO is only reserving a limited amount of space for speakers, guides, etc. Mark your calendars and stay tuned for more information coming soon.

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!