

The East Cascades Audubon Society

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Thursday, February 25, 2016

ECBC Newsletter - **Fall 2008**

November 1, 2008

Another Fall Season is passing as we head towards winter. Our surveys on Green Ridge for migrating raptors has just wrapped up while the winter raptor surveys are just beginning. This is a great time to get involved, have fun and add to this growing 5-year, State-wide dataset.

The third weekend in September saw another successful Fall Migration count, coordinated by ECBC. Equally as important as the fieldwork, we are pleased to announce that we have entered all the historic fall count data for this State-wide survey for the last 15 years and will be making it available to the public and researchers to analyze and look for long-term bird population trends.

Despite moving to Eugene in early September, Nicole Nielsen-Pincus is still firmly on the Board of ECBC and helped to coordinate a local fall Vaux's Swift survey. While we don't have quite the numbers that Eugene and Portland do, it is still a spectacular site seeing a frenzied mass of swifts gathering in the evening before they dive down a chimney to roost. You have to be quick to count them.

Our biggest news though is our upcoming Annual Meeting, being held in Bend on 8th November. This is a great time to catch up on old friends, people you met on field trips or projects ... and to meet others with similar interests. It's also a chance to see what we have been doing over the year, talk to the Board members, and give suggestions. We have a fantastic guest speaker, wonderful live music, free food; Of course, we hope you take this opportunity to bid on silent raffle items, renew memberships and general support ECBC in whatever way you can.

ECBC

16 Kansas St,
Bend, OR. 97701
<http://ecbcbirds.org>

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The Board ...

[Dean Hale](#)
President

[Chuck Gates](#)
Vice President

You're Invited to the
EAST CASCADES BIRD CONSERVANCY

**6th Anniversary Annual Meeting
and Fundraiser**

The East Cascades Bird Conservancy is a non-profit organization working for Oregon's birds. ECBC is dedicated to supporting bird conservation by engaging the public in volunteer field studies and by supporting projects that further the knowledge and appreciation of birds and their habitats.

Come find out more about ECBC at our 6th Annual Meeting and Fundraiser. Enjoy free food and beverages and listen to live music by NTT. We will be raffling off an IPOD. There will be a silent auction as well. James Davis, the guest speaker, will give an entertaining presentation in costume and active style to teach us about blackbirds and conservation.



WHERE

Bend Senior Center
1600 S.E. Reed Market Road
Bend, Oregon

WHEN

Saturday, November 8th
5:30 to 8:30 p.m.

CONTACTS

Dean Hale 388-1770
Joanne Bernt 548-7541

For more information please visit the ECBC website at <http://www.ecbcbirds.org>

Music by (click image for more information)

JoAnne Bernt
Secretary

Steve Dougill

Marilyn Miller

Nicole Nielsen-Pincus

Devon Batley

Local Info:

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

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

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

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

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

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

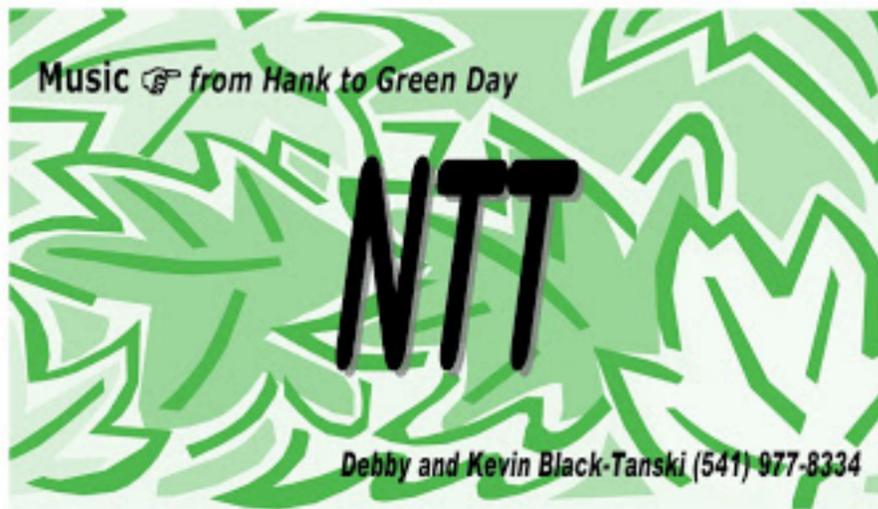
COBOL archive for October [[link](#)]

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



ECBC in the News:

Several ECBC board members promoted ECBC and local conservation issues in the media:

Steve Dougill was interviewed by Ethan Lidsey of Oregon Public Radio about the bird spectacle at Abert lake... [details](#)

Chuck Gates was interviewed the local radio station KPOV in Bend. He talked about ECBC and local bird conservation issues

Chuck Gates gave a talk to the Salem Audubon Society in August to encourage more people on the "west-side" to participate in ECBC projects

Devon Batley had an article in the Bend Bulletin in the summer about ECBC.

Don McCartney's Kestrel project was featured in Birds and Bloom Magazine.

Personality: James Davis - guest speaker at the annual event

James grew up in Tucson, Arizona, and as a young lad enjoyed taking flowers apart, chasing lizards and catching (and sometimes eating) large bugs. Obviously destined for a career as a naturalist, James has continued to be fascinated with living things and science. After an exciting and colorful time as an undergraduate during the heydays of the '60's in California, he eventually headed to Fort Collins, earning a masters degree in Zoology from Colorado State University in 1975.

James lived in California for several years teaching junior and senior high school science classes and working in two zoos as "the Zoo Mobile Guy." He moved to Portland, his mother's hometown, in 1981 and began working for the Audubon Society, soon thereafter creating an education program and a job for himself as Education Director. In 1990 he quit as full-time Education Director but kept doing educational programs and birding tours for Audubon while teaching science classes at Marylhurst University.

James was instrumental in starting Marylhurst University's "Head Start Summer Science Institute," the only training program in science for Head Start teachers in the nation, and taught in the program for its 10-year lifespan.

His book, Seasonal Guide to the Natural Year: Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia was published in 1996. He is currently rewriting the book for publication by Timber Press. He is a contributing author of Wild in the City: A guide to Portland's Natural Areas published in 2000.

James has been a naturalist for Metro Regional Parks and Greenspaces, the Portland area's region park system, since 1998. He is the naturalist for Smith and Bybee Wetlands Natural Area and does a variety of other educational programs in Metro's new Greenspaces.

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.

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.

James lives in Portland with his wife Sally and has a grown daughter living nearby. When not pursuing his natural history interests, James plays guitar in rock and roll bands, although not nearly enough these days.

Summer Bird Notes: by Chuck Gates

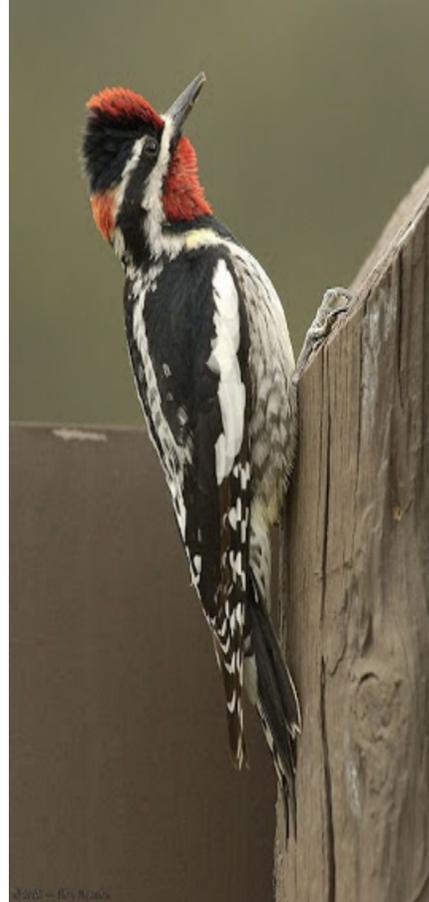
The official summer season consists only of the months of June and July. Most of the other birding seasons are 3 or 4 months long. Even though summer is shorter, some really good birds made themselves known in Central Oregon this year.

Water birding in the summer consists mostly of checking out local nesters and looking for some early or late migrants at the beginning and the end of the season. A late SNOW GOOSE was found in early June at Houston Lake and the resident Trumpeter Swan at Gutierrez Ranch near Paulina persists without a mate for another year. BLUE-WINGED TEAL made a good showing in the area with sightings at Bend and Redmond Sewer Ponds. GREATER SCAUP made an unusual appearance in mid-summer at Hatfield while CLARK'S GREBES were spotted from five different locations around the area. Houston Lake continues to be a reliable place to observe breeding AMERICAN BITTERNs. Crook County produced sightings of BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON from three different locations. BLACK-NECKED STILTS were discovered at Hatfield and Houston Lakes and SOLITARY SANDPIPERS were located at Hatfield and Redmond Sewer Ponds. The difficult to identify SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER was identified from 3 locations while the equally difficult SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER was seen at Hatfield, Tumalo Res., and Redmond Sewer Ponds. The first RED-NECKED PHALAROPES began their annual late summer visitation on July 22 while BONAPARTE'S GULLS began arriving around the 12th of July. BLACK TERNS and a single FORSTER'S TERN were the only terns reported this summer.

Many raptors choose to summer in Central Oregon to take advantage of an abundance of prey items, which they use to feed hungry young. Nesting OSPREY were abundant throughout the region. One NORTHERN GOSHAWK was found in the Ochocos and a juvenile RED-SHOULDERED HAWK hung out just east of Prineville for about a week. Nesting FERRUGINOUS HAWKS were found east of Bend and near Paulina and a single adult PEREGRINE FALCON was seen soaring over Crook County High School in Prineville. The only owls reported for the season were PYGMY OWLS from many forested regions and a single BARRED OWL found in the Ochoco Mnts.

Gallinaceous (the chicken-like birds) and other game birds are often best seen in summer because they will frequently have a brood of precocial chicks in tow and these tend to slow the adults down and make them more visible. CHUKARS were reported from the Crooked River and Deschutes River Woods. DUSKY GROUSE were located in the Ochocos and their Cascades counterpart, the SOOTY GROUSE, were seen near Sisters and at Trout Creek. MOUNTAIN QUAIL made a showing south of Sisters in July with a pair of adults and 17 little ones. EURASIAN COLLARED DOVES continue to invade our area in larger and larger numbers.

Woodpeckers are common nesters in Central Oregon. With the inaugural Woodpecker Wonderland Festival, many eyes were out and about searching for nesting woodpeckers. Although cooler temperatures seemed to delay the nesting season, most of the choice woodpecker species were located for the festival and throughout the summer. LEWIS'S WOODPECKERS continued to use the ECBC nest boxes in the Entrada Burn SW of Bend. Several hybrid sapsuckers were located and served to highlight our area as a major overlap region for the RED-NAPED and RED-BREASTED SAPSUCKER. WHITE-HEADED WOODPECKERS showed their normal abundance and the harder to find BLACK-BACKED WOODPECKERS were seen in pretty good numbers due to the large number of burned trees in the Cascades. It's always hard to find the THREE-TOED WOODPECKER but birders like Shunk, Dougill, Low, and Horvath were able to locate several. PILEATED WOODPECKERS were located in places like the Ochocos, Trout Creek, Grizzly Mnt, and Black Butte Ranch.



Some very interesting passerines graced us with their presence this summer. The folks at the woodpecker festival found an ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD and a COSTA'S HUMMER stayed a while in Deschutes River Woods. PACIFIC SLOPE seems to be the flavor of Western Flycatcher most often seen and heard in the Cascades near Sisters. LOGGERHEAD SHRIKES were found scattered around the region in dryer habitats. A CHESTNUT-BACKED CHICKADEE showed up at the Metolius Preserve and a BEWICK'S WREN summered at Lower Bridge. A singing VEERY spent the whole summer behind Gobbler's Knob just south of Black Butte. HERMIT WARBLERS were reported from several locations above Sisters and many HERMIT x TOWNSEND'S WARBLERS illustrated the fragility of the term 'species' as these two close relatives often hybridize. An OVENBIRD was around in Bend for a few days in June and YELLOW-BREASTED CHATS were discovered in Deschutes and Crook Counties. Probably the best bird of the summer was the aptly named SUMMER TANAGER that gave a wonderful show to the woodpecker festival participants in Camp Sherman. It's hard to find WHITE-CROWNED SPARROWS in Central Oregon in the summer but several were located nesting at high elevations in the Cascades. A ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK found its way to the willows on the Crooked River east of the Prineville Reservoir and a colony of nesting BOBOLINKS was seen east of Paulina. PURPLE FINCHES rounded out the passerine report for Central Oregon.

Some unusual birds:

Central Oregon's First Laughing Gull - By Chuck Gates

Every Wednesday, a group of Central Oregon Birders meet and go birding somewhere in the area. One such outing resulted in a first for Central Oregon birding. A juvenile Laughing Gull was discovered at Wickiup Reservoir on September 24th. This is the first record for this species in the area and only the third record ever for the state of Oregon. The group gathered to set the agenda for their day. Judy Meredith (who leads this group), Peter Low, and Howard Horvath decided they would go out to Wickiup Reservoir. Wickiup is about 10 miles west of LaPine and is pretty famous for producing fall rarities (Hudsonian Godwit, Palm Warbler, Red-throated Pipit...). On the way to Wickiup, there are many good birding stops and one of them is Cow Meadow on Crane Prairie Reservoir. This is where the crew found the Laughing Gull.

Laughing Gulls normally are found along the east coast from Texas to Maine. This gull is superficially similar to the Franklin's Gull that frequents the eastern half of our state. In their juvenile plumages, both birds appear "dirty white" on the head and dusky brown on the back. The Laughing Gull usually has less dark plumage on the head, more black in the wingtips, and a broader black band on the tip of the tail. It takes a good eye to tell these two apart and it's hard to find 6 better eyes than those that first observed this bird.

As the word got out, several local birders arrived and were able to view the Laughing Gull. Viewing was sometimes difficult as there were about 1000 gulls in the area and they would often swarm and move throughout the day. To make matters even more difficult, there were several Franklin's Gulls (a rarity in their own rite) mixed in with the group for the sake of confusion. The bird stayed for several days and then was not seen again.

There is an old rule in birding. Get boots on the ground at the right places, during the right seasons, and you will find rare birds. This certainly held true in this instance. If you would like to join the Wednesday birding crew, everyone is welcome. All you have to do is go to the ECBC website (ecbcbirds.org) and contact Judy Meredith. If you join them, you too could become part of Central Oregon birding history.

Three phone calls on the way to Abert, by Steve Dougill

Who would stop at a closed, run down café that is next to a busy highway, surrounded by trash and derelict sheds on a cold and blustery day? Silly question when we are talking birders here.

On the 19th September, Peter Lowe and myself were heading out early to Lake Abert for a NAMC count the next day. The location described above is Hampton, east of Bend on Hwy 20 in the middle of the sagebrush. But that's the point: it has the only trees for miles around and a Chestnut-sided Warbler found them. There are three trees and in them were 6 other warblers and this eastern vagrant.



That was the first of three phone calls to Bend birders in the next few hours.



Our next stop was Chickahominy Reservoir, an isolated body of water just west of Riley. Peter picked up on a mid-sized shorebird that was a tiny dot in the scope. You could make absolutely no field marks out at all, except that it was tipping forward to feed. Still, Peter called out Stilt Sandpiper immediately, highlighting his quiet confidence and fantastic birding skills. We crept closer, and sure enough we were rewarded with all the diagnostic plumage and structural characteristics. The result was the second of three phone calls.

Two stops; two very rare birds. What do you expect when you stop a few miles down the road at a small pond surrounded by willows?

A sharp "tick-tick-tick" and a Northern Waterthrush flashes by right next to a Hoary Bat we had been

watching roosting in the willows. Over the next hour we got glimpses totaling less than a couple of seconds between the two of us. At one point I was sitting quietly in the middle of a thicket and saw its reflection in the water, but because the vegetation was so thick I couldn't see the actual bird!



Moments later the Waterthrush landed within a yard, bobbed and flew into the next bush. Of course this resulted in the third phone call – Peter used his phone to report a lot of rare birds this year and we are all extremely grateful.

Two Rarities Evade Most Local Birders - By Chuck Gates

Once you've been around the Central Oregon birding scene for a while, you know we have a system. The plan is to get bird information out as quickly as possible so that those that want to see them can see rare birds. We have a birding hotline. If you see a rare bird, you can call Dean Hale (388-1770) and he will spread the word to most of the birding community. We have COBOL (see ecbcbirds.org for info on how to subscribe to COBOL). Just post a message online and birders all over the area will get messages in their email boxes immediately. With all this communication wizardry at our disposal, you would think birds with brains the size of an M&M would be outsmarted by us. You would be wrong.

Twice this fall, very rare birds have shown up at a location and were only seen by a very few observers. Black Phoebe and Clay-colored Sparrows are about as uncommon a set of species as we have around here. Birds that are as rare as these will often cause an activity buzz in our local birders. And this did happen this year. The only problem was... the birds didn't cooperate. Both left the area before most locals could get a look at them.

The Black Phoebe appeared out of nowhere as JoAnne Bernt was relaxing in her yard. Relaxing and JoAnne don't really go together so the sight of her taking a break in the yard was just as unusual as the Phoebe. JoAnne called me but I wasn't home. Not realizing how unusual it was, she figured I would call back if it was important so the word didn't make it out until I got home just before dark. Luckily for me, the bird showed up again just at dusk and I got to see it. It did not appear again the next day so the rest of the birders around missed out.

Out in Sundance, east of Bend, you will find two important birding areas. One is the almost hollowed ground that produced a Northern Hawk Owl a couple of years back and the other is the home of Diane Kook and Peter Low. If you don't know these two, they're sort of the Bat Man – Cat Woman of Bend birding. Diane is a local expert and Peter is "out of this world good." This fall, a Clay-colored Sparrow visited them. They got the word out immediately but apparently the bird didn't get the message because it quickly moved off and was not seen again.

Clearly, we have a system in place to inform birders when the really good birds come our way. The only thing we have to do now is figure out a way to communicate to the birds the importance of staying in one place long enough to satiate our thirst for rarities.

Three Warbler Surprise - By Chuck Gates

Fall warbler migration is a highlight of the year. Annually, swarms of migrant warblers pour out of the boreal forests of Canada and head for a winter vacation in the tropics. Many of these warblers take a migration route that bypasses Central Oregon so we miss them on their journey south. However, sometimes they grace us with their presence and we get a couple of good warbler sightings every fall. This year was no exception. On September 18th, Kevin Smith decided to check out Birder's Night at the

Environmental Center in Bend. Getting there a little early, he some time on his hands.

Now, if you know Kevin, you know that time on his hands equals photography. He headed down to the Deschutes and began photographing migrants in the area. His best find was an American Redstart. This bird normally nests in most of the country except much of the far west. Central Oregon nesting records do exist but it is far from common. Good find Kevin.



On September 20th, Deschutes County held its fall migration count. People scattered to the far corners of the county tallying birds both common and rare. Black and White Warbler is another boreal nester but it usually migrates east of the Rocky Mountains when it heads south. In Central Oregon, we usually get one or two per migration season that seem to lose their way and pass through here. Two in a season is good but two in one day is even better. That's what happened this year. Tom Crabtree found one along the Deschutes River and Bob Cooper found one at his residence in western Bend.

What do you do if you spent a whole Saturday searching for migrants in Deschutes County? Well, if you're Tom Crabtree, you go out on Sunday and look for some more. His efforts paid off on September 21st when he found a Palm Warbler near the little berg of Brothers on Hwy 20. This bird, like the others, likes to migrate on the east side of the Rockies. This one got lost. This is only the second record for Deschutes County and Crabtree deserves kudos for such a good find.

ECBC Field Trips:by Steve Dougill

Aug 17 – Summer Lake. This is the second year we have made a trip to Summer Lake in the fall and it won't be the last. What a fantastic place to go birding and it is only a couple of hours away from Bend. About 20 people joined up for the spectacle of the marsh birds, waterfowl and shorebirds. We found over 2000 Dowitchers, lots of Phalaropes and good numbers of Snowy Plovers. Several Franklin's Gulls graced us and we were treated to hundreds of Avocets and Stilts. Add to that White Pelicans, Bitterns, Night Herons and Great White Egrets with 1 Snowy Egret. Perhaps the most memorable site for me was over 40 Egrets, all in different poses hunting in the marsh.

Sep 13 – Local spots. Howard Horvath and Steve Kornfeld led a small group around some of the migrant spots along the Deschutes River in Bend before heading up to Redmond. Lots of migrant warblers and flycatchers with the first sightings of White-crowned and Golden-crowned Sparrows of the fall. At the Redmond Sewage Lagoons they re-found the Ruff and were treated to a variety of shorebirds including Pectoral, Semi-palmated and Baird's Sandpipers.

Oct 4 – High lakes. Unfortunately you can't pick the weather, and it was cold and rainy all day. Still Dean Hale and Howard Horvath took a few folks around Wickiup Reservoir who managed to find some Common Loons (eerily calling through the mist), plenty of White fronted Geese and two dozen Bald Eagles.

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

- 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](#)]

During this past spring and summer the LEWO nest box project has seen great success! Out of our 26 boxes in our project area, 18 of those were used by LEWO's for nesting/breeding purposes. Out of those 18, 17 boxes were used for raising at least 3-4 young per box. We only observe the nest boxes from a distance and do not look inside so we can only estimate the number of young birds raised by each pair of adults. Why do we only observe the nest boxes from a distance? We are uncertain what harm looking into the nest box may cause, such as abandonment of the nest and young, or? So, we chose to only watch from a distance and record our data.

This past spring, 3 nest boxes were also placed outside of the project area, but within close proximity, in subdivisions. All three were used by LEWO's with 2 of these raising young. This provides good data that these birds are in need of nesting cavities as they have chosen to nest right near homes!

I just received a report of a LEWO still coming to one of the homes for a visit to their suet feeder. (Oct. 6th) Amazing!

In the project area which is just off of Century Drive, just west of the Entrada Lodge, an estimated 48 adult Lewis's were present this breeding season. This area which measures approximately ½ x 1 mile is perfect habitat for the Lewis's Woodpecker. These birds prefer open canopy forests, (preferably that have been burned) and low understory brush. An added feature is the Deschutes River which runs along the southern border of the project area, and all the bugs that hatch and live along its shores. With homes nearby and feeders present, these birds are certainly set up for success! Lots of food for all!

The Lewis Woodpecker mainly forages for food by fly-catching from the tops of live trees and snags. Watching this woodpecker performing its aerial acrobats while fly-catching for food is quite spectacular! They are amazing fly-catchers! I have often seen an adult bring back at least 12 bugs in its bill for feeding the young in the nest box. Again, the project area is perfect for catching bugs, as both the river and understory brush serve as bug breeding homes!

Over the years we have added bark to the front of our nest boxes, and we have found

this addition to be a great asset for the LEWO's. The adults have been observed flying directly to the nest box and landing vertically on the front of the nest box by gripping onto the bark. This has aided the woodpecker in feeding the young, and enticing the young to fledge out of the nest box, as the adult sits very close to the entrance hole.

News of our success has been spreading! The American Bird Conservancy is currently working on putting together a similar project in Montana. Partner's In Flight invited me to speak at their international conference, this past Feb., in which I presented ECBC's LEWO NEST BOX PROJECT. It was a great success, and well received by all present. Currently, an article about the PIF conference proceedings is awaiting acceptance into The Condor magazine. This article was written mainly by Jim Moodie with my input on the project, and we'll be sure to keep everyone posted about this outcome.

This year 16 volunteers gave their time and talents in helping to monitor the success at the "Entrada" Project site. 251:40 hours of time were given, as well as 1227 miles donated to help record nesting success data. Could not have done this without their help, many of which have already signed up for helping again next year!!

In the coming year, there are plans to add two more project sites. It will be another exciting spring, as we await the arrival of these wonderful woodpeckers once again!! Start looking for these beauties in early April!!

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

Twice per year (spring and fall), Oregon does a migration count to get a snapshot of what bird migration looks like in the state. It's called the North American Migration Count because there was, at one time, a movement to include all the 50 states and all the provinces of Canada in this count. It no longer is a continent-wide effort but the moniker remains. The 2008 Fall NAMC went off without a hitch and some very interesting data was collected.

One of the problems that are associated with a statewide project is the problem of collecting data from many people. Out of the 36 Oregon Counties, the project collected data from 27. That means 27 different people have to find time in their busy schedules to collect the data, process it, and send it in to the state coordinator (me). Inevitably, there are conflicts and people are unable to send in their data. This makes a comprehensive review of that data impossible until the data comes in. Consequently, this will not be a comprehensive review of that data. Instead, I intend to cover the highlights of the data that has been collected so far. For a complete summary of the 2008 NAMC, look for an article in a future edition of Oregon Birds Magazine. Said article will be submitted when all the counties have reported their data.

With just under half the counties submitting data by the deadline for this article, it's surprising that we had as many good reports as we did. Trumpeter Swans were found in Harney County as expected (it's one of the few places in Oregon that they nest). A single Harlequin Duck was found in Curry County, as were Surf and White-winged Scoters. The only Barrow's Goldeneyes were found in Linn County. Sage Grouse was located in Crook County and Sooty Grouse were tallied in Jefferson. Mountain Quail were discovered in Linn and Curry Counties. Pacific Loons were present in the coastal counties and a single Snowy Egret report came in from Malheur County. Two White-tailed Kites were seen in Benton County and Northern Goshawk was found in Baker and Deschutes Counties. Red-shouldered Hawks were found in four counties and Swainson's Hawks were reported from some eastern counties. A very early Rough-legged Hawk report came in from Harney County. Peregrine Falcons were seen in six counties. A single Snowy Plover report came from Harney County and three Marbled Godwits were seen in Curry County. Sabine's Gull was located in Harney County while Common Tern reports came in from Baker. A Flammulated Owl was located in Deschutes and two Barred Owls were heard in Curry County. Long-eared and Saw-whet Owls were also reported. The only Western Kingbird came from Curry County and a single Northern Shrike was seen in Deschutes County. Columbia produced the only report of Purple Martin. Two Gray Catbirds were seen in Yamhill County and two Black and White Warblers were found in Deschutes. Deschutes also produced a Chestnut-sided Warbler and an American Redstart. A Blackpoll Warbler and a Northern Waterthrush were seen in Harney County. The only Chat was seen in Benton County. An early White-throated

Sparrow was seen in Benton and Lapland Longspurs were found in Curry County. A Black-headed Grosbeak was in Curry as well.

Undoubtedly, these results will change as more county reports are submitted and more feathered gems are discovered. Again, a full accounting will appear in Oregon Birds Magazine. Hopefully, you will be able to join us for the Spring NAMC, which occurs on the second weekend in May.

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

The fifth winter of survey work for the East Cascade Bird Conservancy Winter Raptor Survey Project will soon be underway. This project is a statewide effort during the months of November through March to conduct surveys on established driving routes around Oregon. Last winter saw the largest effort to date for the project, with a total of 122 survey routes covering more than 8,000 miles and involving the efforts of more than 80 primary volunteers that conducted the surveys.

During the first four winters, a total of 29 different species of raptors have been identified. The five most prominent species have been the Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Northern Harrier, Bald Eagle, and Rough-legged Hawk. Together, they have comprised around 90% of all birds counted each winter, with the Red-tailed Hawk and American Kestrel accounting for between 70 and 75%. Interesting species documented the first four winters have been Snowy Owl, Northern Hawk Owl, Great Gray Owl, Gyrfalcon, Swainson's Hawk, and Long-eared Owl. Crested Caracara has been observed but unfortunately not during formal surveys.

New participants are always welcome to join in on the surveying activities. There are still areas around the state that are not being surveyed for lack of participants. There are also established routes that go uncovered from time to time when primary volunteers are unable to do survey work for any given month. If you are interested in participating, please contact project coordinator Jeff Fleischer at raptorrunner97321@yahoo.com and all effort will be made to include you in the project survey effort!

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

2008 Summary by Kim Bodie

The ECBC Green Ridge Raptor Migration Count was scheduled for the last two weekends of September and the first two weekends of October. The first weekend, Sept. 9/20 & 21 we had pretty mild weather with slow raptor movement. On Saturday we had 5 observers and counted 29 birds from 7 species. On Sunday, we had 8 observers for a count of 39 birds from 8 species.

The Thursday before the second count weekend the Wizard Fire started in the Metolius Basin and burned up and over the top of the ridge just south of our Hawkwatch site. They used the 600 Road that we use for access as a fire line. The Forest Service closed access to the area for two weeks, two of our count weekends.

The area opened up in time for our last weekend. Saturday, 10/11, wasn't the nicest day in the world. The temperatures stayed in the 30s and the winds were strong and cold out of the north. We had 7 cold observers counting 54 raptors from 6 species. Sunday proved to be a much better weather day and we had 5 observers and a count of 65 birds from 8 species.

The one casualty of the project was Karen Sharple's beautiful sign showing the start of the trail to the sight. At the end of the first weekend it was stashed in a black plastic bag behind a log on the south side of the road. When we went back the last weekend we did find the wire frame and legs of the sign behind a burned out log.

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

For two years, ECBC has organized 'conservation workdays' that give us an opportunity to improve birding habitat. These workdays have ranged from half day projects to all

day projects and have focused on a few high quality areas: Camp Polk Meadow, Hatfield Lake, Glaze Meadow, and two locations in the Ochocos. We have pulled weeds, removed barbed wire, built fences to protect aspens, and posted 'No Hunting' signs.

You might wonder what happens at an ECBC conservation workday. Rest assured we don't make it all work and no play! We begin, of course, by birding. Taking advantage of those morning hours to enjoy the area, we spread out and look for birds, sometimes with the objective of doing a survey and sometimes just to enjoy the birds. After an hour or two of birding, we take a break and organize for the task at hand. ECBC provides snacks and juice, which seems welcome at this point. Often, we will work till lunchtime and then eat lunch at the site before heading off. If the task requires or the distance to the site is great, we are likely to work for a bit in the afternoon as well. In no case, however, do we turn the day into an ordeal nor does the work last all day.

One nice thing about these workdays is the chance to partner with other organizations. The work is generally directed by a partner organization, such as the Deschutes Land Trust or the Forest Service. In addition, we often work alongside another group, whether the Boy Scouts, the J Bar J girls, or the Ochoco fire crew. This adds a lot of fun to the occasion and has the advantage of adding energetic young help to our efforts. Next year we will take on some more conservation workdays, the number and location depending on member interest. The Conservation Committee organizes these workdays, but we need your ideas and suggestions. In fact, we are in need of new members for 2009. If you have ideas about workday locations or you want to participate in the committee please contact me.

Oregon Swift Project - [[Contact Nicole Nieves-Pincus](#)]

ECBC Volunteers Assist in National Swift Survey

Birders across the state and the country came out to watch migrating swifts put on their end of summer show this September. During migration, both Vauxs' and chimney swifts (eastern species) congregate into impressive flocks that dive into chimneys for their nightly roost. This entertaining phenomenon is also a great way to gather population data. Volunteers in Texas have created a program to link data across the country called National Swift Night Out (<http://www.concentric.net/~dwa/page56.html>). Volunteers in Washington have organized a state wide count and have asked Oregon and California birders to help link the data along the West coast (<http://vauxhappening.org>). ECBC volunteers assisted in the count in Bend and found a new roost location at 644 NW Harrington St. at a business called, Christmas Presence. The homeowner reported that swifts have used the chimney both spring and fall in the past and that she enjoys their presence.



After several nights of scouting known locations used by the swifts in the past, Judy Meredith, Tom Crabtree, Kim Boddie, and Dean Hale to name a few, found the swifts using the NW Harrington St. location. Nightly counts reached over 250 birds and there was suspicion that another roost location is also being used as some birds broke off the flock and did not enter the chimney each night.

Although the site in Bend may not have numbers as impressive as those documented at the well-known sites in the Willamette Valley, no other site east of the Cascades reported more swifts. In fact, volunteers in the La Grande area observed no birds at sites used in the past. Other historic sites in Central Oregon, such as the hospital in Prineville, have since been capped and are unavailable to swifts. The count for Oregon totaled over 17,000 birds.

Volunteers in Washington's swift count are also interested in spring time data. The fall migration has always gathered the most attention as numbers at these communal roosts are highest and most impressive, but little is known about the northward migration and the opportunity exists to gather population information in the spring as well. We hope to gather more data in Oregon in the spring as well.

The Vaux's swifts need large, hollow snags for roosting and nesting and depend on mature and old growth forests in western North America. Population information is not well documented and scientists suspect that the species may be in decline. Although the swifts are likely limited by suitable forest habitat, the chimneys used in migration play an important part for the species as well. Chimneys built before World War II that are made with just bricks (as opposed to cement lined, more modern chimneys) are best for the swifts to cling to. The Swift Night Out project is a great opportunity to involve volunteers and interested citizens in gathering useful, scientific data and stir up awareness to keep them standing and open for the swifts to use.

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

Don started the Kestrel Nestbox survey in 1998 was because American Kestrel numbers were, and still are, declining in North America. Don was concerned about this decline in population and decided to put up Kestrel boxes. Kestrels have used Don's nestboxes every year since he began in 1998.

Why is it special?

The program is an aggregation of boxes that is one of the largest (120 boxes today) and most successful on the North American continent. Don has the only Kestrel Nestbox program in Oregon as far as he knows. In 2005 a total of 196 falcons were fledged from 62 active boxes. Since 2005, there have been 50 to 60 active boxes each year including over 50 in 2008. To date over 1,000 American Kestrels have been produced on this "trail".

How is it presently operated?

In addition to the basic function of providing suitable nest cavities for American Kestrels, the boxes are monitored to generate nesting data for The Cornell Lab of Ornithology and to gauge the progress of the nestlings for their eventual banding.

Kestrel nestbox volunteers first check the boxes around May 10th and recheck them 3 to 4 weeks later to verify that eggs are present in the boxes. The presence and number of eggs is used to determine when to re-check for nestlings and to determine banding dates. Banding takes place from June 20 through about July 10th. Jim Anderson and Don are in charge of the banding with Jim as the Master Bander. Don and Jim have records of all the Kestrels banded. Also, summary results are sent annually to Dr. David M. Bird of the Avian Science and Research Center at McGill University in Montreal, as he is studying Kestrel population declines on parts of the continent, notably the northeastern US.

Where are the boxes?

With the exception of the Skeleton Burn and Millican areas, the boxes are basically located west of the Highway 97 with the Crooked River Ranch on the North, the Delicious Burn to the west and Tumalo Reservoir to the south. In addition to these burns, concentrations of boxes are located on Wilt Road, Innes Market Road, Couch Market Road, Plainview Road and Sisemore Road areas.

How is it successful?

The Kestrel program seems to be successful because Central Oregon has the right habitat for the birds to successfully breed. The future direction of the project is to maintain the current 120 boxes with no plans for expansion for now.

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](#).



Proposed Wind Turbines on Steens Mountain - [Devon Batley](#)

On August 18th ONDA submitted comments and written testimony to the Harney County Planning Commission objecting to applications for the construction of a 400 megawatt industrial wind power project on North Steens Mountain. ONDA supports 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.

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. The developer, Columbia Energy Partners, has asked for land use permit approval without conducting any studies on the potential effects of the development on birds, including sage grouse, which depend on this area. The developer also has not obtained necessary rights-of-way from the Bureau of Land Management and the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge to connect the proposed project to the regional energy grid and has not fully disclosed the project's effects on the unspoiled qualities of Steens Mountain. By breaking its project into four applications, Columbia Energy Partners has attempted unlawfully to avoid the Oregon state Energy Facility Siting Council environmental review process.

ONDA Raises Awareness at First Wild Badlands Day

On September 20th ONDA hosted the first ever Wild Badlands Day. Despite the cloudy skies and threat of rain approximately 60 people turned out to enjoy the Badlands and relax with a beer at Pine Mountain Sports. ONDA organized a number of groups for morning outings into the Badlands WSA, including a birding walk, hosted by ECBC, around Reynolds's Pond. This pond provides a great place for bird watching, especially during migration. A number of warbler species were seen flitting among the willows as well as belted kingfisher, Great-blue heron, white-crowned sparrows and Townsend's solitaires.

The after-party held at Pine Mountain Sports was well attended and visitors enjoyed music by Bare Roots, beer from Silver Moon Brewery and burritos from the Taco Stand. The Badlands WSA is currently awaiting action in Senate and hopefully will be designated wilderness in 2008. See www.onda.org for more information.



Winterize your yard for the birds! - [Kevin Lair](#), Wild Birds Unlimited

As fall arrives in Central Oregon, now is the time to assess your backyard bird habitat and make sure it's ready for winter. Here are some things to consider:

Clean your feeders. Soak them in a dilute bleach solution, then scrub with a brush. Rinse very well and let them dry thoroughly before refilling.

Review the feeders you have and make sure you have the variety you want. Consider feeders that give you the flexibility to feed peanuts, fruit, suet, and seed.

Provide liquid water in the winter. In addition to drinking, birds need to bathe to keep their feathers clean and maximize their insulating ability.

Create brush piles from tree and shrub trimmings. Birds will seek shelter from inclement weather and predators in brush piles.

Clean out nesting boxes and leave them up for birds to roost in during cold winter days and nights.

Provide a diverse backyard habitat to encourage a great variety of birds to visit your yard this winter.

Yard Bird Survey Data:

Yard Bird Survey Data 2007: The other finches- [Jim Moodie](#)

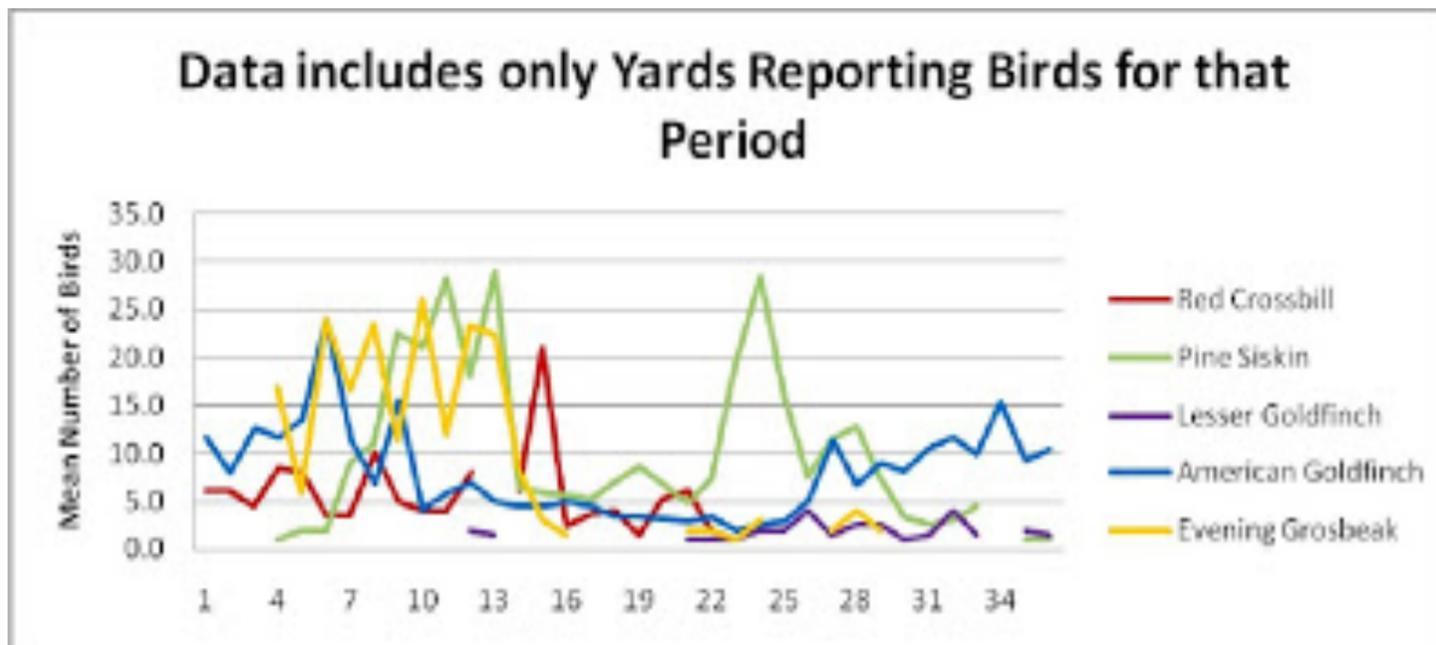
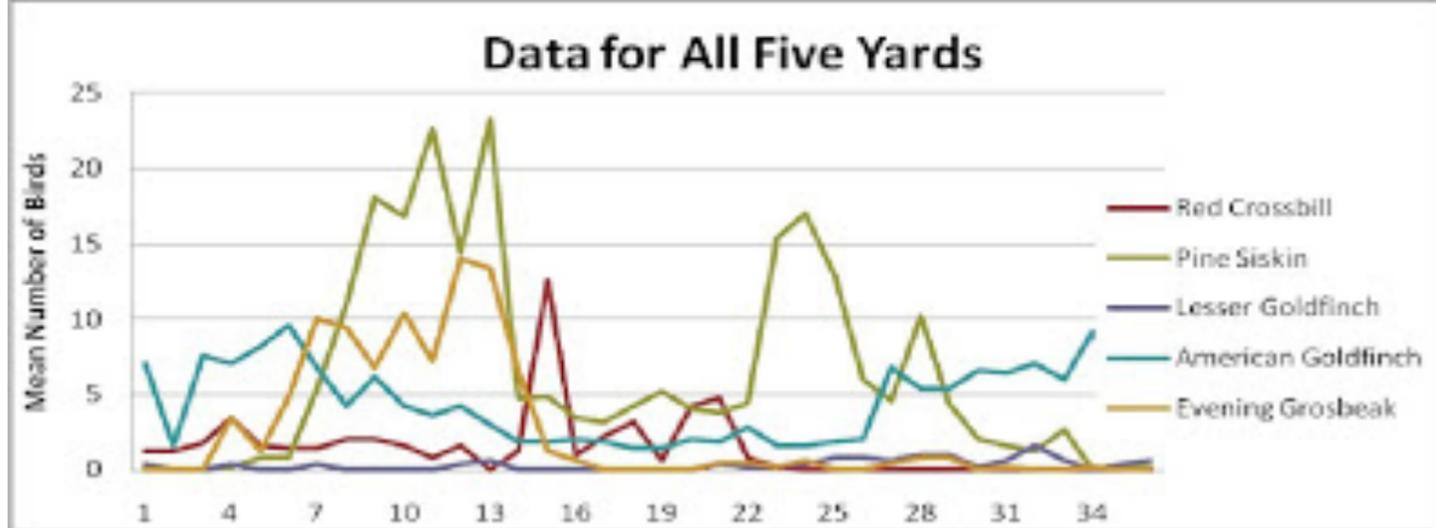
In the last newsletter (Summer 2008), I reported on the annual abundance of the *Carpodacus* finches, Purple, Cassin's and House, based on yard bird survey data. For this newsletter, I have prepared two graphs to explore what the yard bird surveys can tell us about the abundance patterns of the other true finches: Red Crossbill, Pine Siskin, Lesser Goldfinch, American Goldfinch and Evening Grosbeak. For this analysis, I used the data collected by five yards that reported their birds throughout the year. Keep in mind that each time period is approximately 10 days long, and there are three time periods per month.

To save space and to make comparisons across species more straightforward, I have plotted abundances for the five species on one graph. First, I plotted the average number of birds seen for the five yards, even if the yard had no birds for a time period (this would dampen the average number of birds seen for that time period). I then reanalyzed the data using only time periods where birds were reported during each time period. The second graph is useful in determining average flock size, for instance. What patterns can be detected?

American Goldfinches seem to visit yards throughout the year, but are certainly in larger flocks during the winter months. Looking at the second graph, American Goldfinch flock size dropped from around 10-20 birds down to five or less when April rolled around. This pattern suggests birds are 'spreading out' to breed. Larger flocks then formed in mid-September and remained at those levels through the rest of the year. Comparing the first and second plots, it is apparent that not everyone reports American Goldfinches each time period, although all five yards did so at some point during the year.

While American Goldfinches are more widespread, Lesser Goldfinches seem to be restricted to the yards located primarily in the Eastern parts of Central Oregon. And even for those yards (all of which are rural), records for Lesser Goldfinches are spotty and uneven. This species seems to be moving into the area and it will be interesting to track Lesser Goldfinch population trends over time.

Red Crossbills, Pine Siskins and Evening Grosbeaks, on the other hand, were reported more often by yards located in the more Western, forested areas. All three species showed a similar pattern, being more abundant during the spring months and dropping out or at least dropping off during the summer. Pine Siskins, unlike the crossbills and grosbeaks, then increased in numbers during the month of August, but those numbers then drop until the birds are not to be found by the end of December. For these three species, which seem to vary tremendously in their abundance due to the timing and quantity of cone crops, it will be interesting to track their yard numbers and timing of appearance for 2008 and beyond. Enjoy your backyard birds everyone!



USFWS - News from Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge, October 2008 -by [Marla Bennett](#)

Hart Mountain had another good year for antelope. Forage and water were in good supply. The annual July aerial pronghorn count indicated a minimum number of 2,021-- just 30 less than in 2007. The ratio of pronghorn fawns to does was the highest ever, at 48 fawns:100 does. The 30-year pronghorn population trend shows an increase of over 74%. The bighorn sheep population is estimated to be 240.

Pronghorn bow and rifle hunting seasons have passed, resulting in 49 killed bucks, a 100% success for hunters. Two deer bow seasons resulted in 8 dead deer, a harvest rate of 23%, reflecting the decline in the deer population that has been observed over the last 10 years. Five bighorn sheep tags were awarded; 3 sheep were killed. Two hunting seasons are yet to occur: deer muzzleloader and the 3rd late season deer bow hunt.

In October, staff from Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) will visit Hart Mountain to capture sage grouse for a joint effort to relocate sage grouse from Hart to Washington State. This relocation is part of WDFW's effort to restore a population of sage grouse in Lincoln County, Washington in the Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area. This will be the 2nd relocation of grouse from Hart Mountain to Swanson Lakes. The grouse are fitted with radio collars so that their survival can be monitored.

Deschutes National Forest (USFS) - by [Lori Turner](#)

In 2003, the Sisters Ranger District developed a monitoring strategy under the Metolius Vegetation project to test the

effectiveness of forest thinning treatments in ponderosa pine stands for improving white-headed woodpecker habitat. The Metolius project area has been a stronghold for the white-headed woodpecker and has been the site of previous studies by Frenzel and Dixon. The strategy was designed to answer two questions:

1. Are we enhancing white-headed woodpecker habitat by manipulating habitat?
2. Which are the most beneficial treatments for achieving desired habitat conditions?

Six areas were selected, three treatment areas and three controls. Pre and post-treatment monitoring was conducted. Protocols were established for nest searches, snag surveys, and nest monitoring. In addition, snag data collection and vegetation analyses around nest sites were completed. Although we are still analyzing the data, initial findings show that nests found, both pre and post-treatment, were associated with forested openings ranging in size from 1/4 to 1 acre. Some treatments are just being completed so its too early to tell how effective they are. It is our hope to continue this monitoring in the future in order to answer these important questions.

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 Sate-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!