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The Quail

News from Lane County Audubon Society



From Our President

Maeve Sowles, 541.343.8664, maeveanddick@q.com



Western Bluebird

Allen Prigge Remembered



Al Prigge

around Eugene. Many local Western Bluebirds are descendants of birds that nested successfully in Al's boxes.

Originally from Minnesota, Al Prigge graduated with a degree in Forestry from the University of Minnesota in 1952. He served on the board of the North American Bluebird Society and contributed articles to its publication. For decades he worked locally for the US Forest Service. Throughout his life, Allen used his knowledge and skills to help the cavity-nesting birds that he loved. Even more significant is the inspiration he provided to other people in caring for and sharing the love of birds.

Several local birders have commented since we learned of Al's passing:

Dick Lamster – I learned about bluebirds from Al by monitoring a portion of his houses for several years. For 25 years now, I have maintained more than 40 bluebird houses on our 10 acres south of Eugene. I always credit Al for getting me started and Tony Koch (Bird Haven) for advancing my knowledge. Al was posting to OBOL as recently as a year ago and also attending Lane County Audubon Society monthly programs until a year ago or so. He was not only a great birder, but he was also a wonderful person. The birding community lost a great member this week.

continued on page 6

We just learned of the passing of Allen Prigge on December 30th. He was 97 years old. A longtime Eugene-area birder, he had been a member and supporter of Lane County Audubon since the beginning. Starting in 1973, Al managed and maintained more than 300 bluebird boxes in and

Lane County Audubon Society

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Lane Co. CBC..... 2-5



Field Notes 7



GBH nesting time..... 8



Program Meeting..... 9

2019 Eugene Christmas Bird Count

by Dick Lamster, Count Coordinator



Chili Feed from the rear



Kathy Wilson, Sandy Poinsett, and Allison Mickel

For the second time in a row, the Eugene Christmas Bird Count (ECBC) had good weather! The 27 teams of observers looked for birds for the 78th ECBC on Sunday, December 29, 2019, with no ice, no snow, and no wind. The sun even came out for a short time, and just to remind us it was December in Oregon, it did rain for a little while in the mid-afternoon.

The 162 Field Observers along with the 81 Home Counters identified 123 species of birds (plus 8 more during Count Week) and 357,948 individual birds. The number of species is a little below average for the past few years, but the huge number of individual birds is extremely high. Species Compiler Vjera Thompson's explanation for this unusually high number can be found in her report following this article. Our record for species is 140 (plus 2 during Count Week) in 2005, and our previous record of 129,874 individual birds was set in 2000.

Having 162 Field Observers also set a new record, erasing our old record of 157 set in 2012. The number of Home Counters was about average for the past few years. Herb Wisner continues to manage the Home Counters at age 97 ½! His son and daughter, Darryl and Linda, along with Maeve Sowles, assisted Herb this year. Last year we had the 12th largest Christmas Bird Count (CBC) in number of participants out of the 2,615 Christmas Bird Counts in the U.S., Canada, and Latin America. This year there were 40 CBCs in Oregon. A complete listing of all the CBCs and previous year's results can be found on the National Audubon Society's website at christmasbirdcount.org. The code for the ECBC is OREU.

The Field Observers walked 154 miles in 191 hours and drove 590 miles in 75 hours. We also had two observers who looked for birds from their bicycles for 5 hours and rode for 7 miles. Seven teams went owling in the dark for 13 hours and covered 35 miles. The 81 Home Counters watched birds for approximately 234 hours.

At the end of the day, 130 tired, cold, muddy but happy birders gathered for the LCAS-sponsored Chili Feed to share stories and participate in the traditional

Countdown. Allison Mickel prepared more than 12 gallons of homemade vegetarian chili for the group, which was served along with dinner rolls, chips, and salad. Everyone attending brought a dessert to share. This year, Rebecca Waterman and the Cornbread Café provided fresh cornbread for everyone. A special thank you goes to them. Sandy Poinsett and Kathy Wilson set up the tables and chairs, arranged the serving tables, organized the rooms, and served chili to everyone. Bruce Wilson and his Clean-up Crew of Charlie Thomas, Kyle Wilson, Nancy Radius, and Rob Mertz had the room looking spotless in record time. The Chili Feed is always a wonderful and fun ending to a great day of birding.

A big thank you goes to Herb Wisner for organizing the Home Counters, Vjera Thompson for compiling the results, and the 27 Team Leaders whose names appear below. Without the Team Leaders' hard work of assembling their teams, guiding them all day, and then reporting the results, the ECBC would not be the great event it continues to be. And thanks again to all of you who participated and helped to make the 2019 ECBC one of the biggest and best in the country!

Be sure to mark January 3, 2021, on your calendar for the 2020 ECBC.

Team Leaders by Area

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 1: Ron Renchler | 12A: Steve Gordon |
| 2: Jim Carlson | 12B: Thomas Meinzen |
| 3A: Dan Heyerly | 13A: Rebecca Waterman |
| 3B: Darryl Wisner | 13B: Holly Hartmann |
| 4: Rick Ahrens | 14: Dave Bontrager |
| 5A: Donna Albino | 15: Jim Maloney |
| 5B: Marcia Maffei | 16: Linda Gilbert |
| 6: Kit Larsen | 17: John Sullivan |
| 7: Roger Robb | 18: Caryn Stoess |
| 8: Dave Kofranek | 19: Barbara Combs |
| 9: Tom Mickel | 20A: Brandon Green |
| 10: Vjera Thompson | 20B: Bruce Newhouse |
| 11A: David Novak | 21: Ellen Cantor |
| 11B: Dick Lamster | |

2019 Eugene Christmas Bird Count Tally

by Vjera Thompson, December 29, 2019

123 Species + 8 Count Week, 357,948 individuals

H = High, RH = Record High, L = Low, RL = Record Low,
TRH = Ties Record High, CW = Count Week



Photo: Cary Kerst

Red-breasted Sapsucker

Species	Grand Total	Relative Status	Species	Grand Total	Relative Status	Species	Grand Total	Relative Status
Snow Goose.....	2		Herring Gull.....	7	L	Chestnut-backed Chickadee	266	RH
Greater White-fronted Goose	42		Iceland (Thayer's) Gull.....	1	L	Barn Swallow.....	1	RH
Cackling Goose.....	36,882		Glaucous-winged Gull.....	231		Bushtit.....	1,209	H
Canada Goose.....	4,384		Double-crested Cormorant.....	89	L	Wrentit.....	10	
Wood Duck.....	114	H	American White Pelican.....	105	RH	Golden-crowned Kinglet.....	463	
Northern Shoveler.....	162		Great Blue Heron.....	118		Ruby-crowned Kinglet.....	447	
Gadwall.....	1,397	RH	Great Egret.....	110	H	Red-breasted Nuthatch.....	105	H
Eurasian Wigeon.....	2		Green Heron.....	2		White-breasted Nuthatch.....	45	H
American Wigeon.....	481		Turkey Vulture.....	10		Brown Creeper.....	105	RH
Mallard.....	1,164		Northern Harrier.....	36		Pacific Wren.....	68	
Northern Pintail.....	3,165	H	Sharp-shinned Hawk.....	14		Marsh Wren.....	33	
Green-winged Teal.....	3,739	H	Cooper's Hawk.....	23	H	Bewick's Wren.....	136	H
Ring-necked Duck.....	163	H	Bald Eagle.....	88	H	European Starling.....	270,000	RH
Lesser Scaup.....	34	L	Red-shouldered Hawk.....	35	H	Western Bluebird.....	87	
Bufflehead.....	137	H	Red-tailed Hawk.....	143	H	Varied Thrush.....	252	
Common Goldeneye.....	13	H	Golden Eagle.....	0	CW	Hermit Thrush.....	5	
Hooded Merganser.....	79	H	Barn Owl.....	2		American Robin.....	2,721	
Common Merganser.....	2,765	RH	Western Screech-Owl.....	2	L	Cedar Waxwing.....	185	
Ruddy Duck.....	40		Great Horned Owl.....	14		House Sparrow.....	473	
California Quail.....	150	H	Northern Pygmy-Owl.....	4	RH	American Pipit.....	278	H
Ring-necked Pheasant.....	3	L	Barred Owl.....	2	H	House Finch.....	492	
Wild Turkey.....	472	H	Northern Saw-whet Owl.....	1		Purple Finch.....	22	
Pied-billed Grebe.....	83	H	Belted Kingfisher.....	53	RH	Pine Siskin.....	29	L
Western Grebe.....	0	CW	Williamson's Sapsucker.....	1		Lesser Goldfinch.....	251	RH
Clark's Grebe.....	0	CW	Red-breasted Sapsucker.....	37	H	American Goldfinch.....	159	
Rock Pigeon.....	620		Acorn Woodpecker.....	83	H	Fox Sparrow.....	217	
Eurasian Collared-Dove.....	325	RH	Downy Woodpecker.....	117	H	Dark-eyed Junco.....	3,297	
Mourning Dove.....	499	H	Hairy Woodpecker.....	15	H	White-crowned Sparrow.....	517	H
Anna's Hummingbird.....	299	RH	Pileated Woodpecker.....	9	H	Golden-crowned Sparrow.....	1,145	H
Virginia Rail.....	0	CW	Northern Flicker.....	429		White-throated Sparrow.....	26	H
American Coot.....	98		American Kestrel.....	102		Savannah Sparrow.....	9	L
Black-bellied Plover.....	10		Merlin.....	17	RH	Song Sparrow.....	765	
Semipalmated Plover.....	4	H	Peregrine Falcon.....	6	H	Lincoln's Sparrow.....	33	
Killdeer.....	727		Prairie Falcon.....	1		Swamp Sparrow.....	1	
Dunlin.....	3,060		Black Phoebe.....	27	RH	Spotted Towhee.....	581	H
Least Sandpiper.....	86		Say's Phoebe.....	1		Western Meadowlark.....	190	
Long-billed Dowitcher.....	10	L	Hutton's Vireo.....	7		Red-winged Blackbird.....	2,814	
Wilson's Snipe.....	60		Northern Shrike.....	1	L	Brown-headed Cowbird.....	0	CW
Spotted Sandpiper.....	2		Steller's Jay.....	553	H	Tricolored Blackbird.....	0	CW
Greater Yellowlegs.....	37		California Scrub-Jay.....	747		Brewer's Blackbird.....	1,075	
Mew Gull.....	5	L	American Crow.....	1,820		Orange-crowned Warbler.....	0	CW
Ring-billed Gull.....	50		Common Raven.....	100	H	Yellow-rumped Warbler.....	223	H
Western Gull.....	2	L	Black-capped Chickadee.....	1,132	H	Townsend's Warbler.....	231	H
California Gull.....	12	L	Mountain Chickadee.....	0	CW			

2019 Eugene Christmas Bird Count Species Compiler Notes

by Vjera Thompson, Species Compiler

Rain was forecast for Count Day, December 29, 2019, but only a few sprinkles were felt. A record number of field counters were happy to spend a mostly dry day outside.

Field Observers and Home Counters reported a total of 123 species and 357,948 individual birds on Count Day, and an additional 8 species during Count Week. One unusual count record was a Williamson's Sapsucker. It was last reported in our count in 1965. Another unusual find was 4 Semipalmated Plovers at Fern Ridge. They are typically present during migration, but not in the winter.

Other unusual Count Week additions were: a Golden Eagle, seen while people were chasing the Williamson's Sapsucker a couple days later, a Mountain Chickadee at a feeder, and Tricolored Blackbirds near a dairy. A few expected birds were missed on the count but found during Count Week. See the summary of count results for the full list of Count Week finds. Other misses were Greater Scaup, Rough-legged Hawk, and White-tailed Kite.

Three species seen in large flocks at Fern Ridge led to record highs: Gadwall, Common Merganser, and American White Pelican. The old record for the pelicans was 65, but the wintering flock has grown this year and 105 were found. As they did last year, Eurasian Collared-Doves reached another record high, with 325 counted in 22 different areas. Another record high was set by Anna's Hummingbirds, which were found in almost every area.

Twenty-seven Black Phoebes documented the continued growth of phoebes in the circle.

The big surprise of the day was a very large flock of European Starlings that two teams saw streaming across the morning sky. Both teams were flabbergasted by the numbers in this flock and initially had no idea how to estimate the potential number of birds. After studying photos and starling habits, an estimate was generated: 3,000 starlings per second for at least two minutes. That calculated out to 360,000 birds, but due to possible fluctuations and wanting to be conservative, we settled on 270,000 birds. I assumed that all other starlings seen later in the day might have dispersed from the morning flock, so kept the reported total at 270,000 despite other teams reporting a total of 12,869. The team that reported the starlings also had a surprising 5 Merlins in their area, presumably attracted to the starling smorgasbord.

Our Home Counters contributed to high counts of Eurasian Collared-Doves, Chestnut-backed Chickadees, Brown Creepers, and Lesser Goldfinches.

We had calm pre-dawn hours for owling, and we were able to find all the expected species of owls except for Short-eared Owl, which has gotten harder to find in the circle in recent years. Northern Pigmy-Owls set a new record, with four reported by three different teams.

Thanks to all the birders who participated on field teams and from homes, who helped make this a successful count.

2019 Cottage Grove Christmas Bird Count

by Grace Fowler-Gore, Count Coordinator and Compiler

The 17th Cottage Grove CBC (the first occurred in 1971) took place on December 28, 2019. Twenty-five participants identified 84 species and counted 4,011 individual birds. This is a decrease of 2,570 from last year. The day started out cold and foggy. Around noon it switched to cold and partly cloudy/clear, but we were lucky and didn't get any precipitation during our count.

Again this year, it appears the feeder birds knew when they are going to be counted, so they hid. Fortunately many returned to the feeders the next day. In 2018 the

Green Heron eluded us for the entire count week, but this year we spotted it at the Row River Nature Park. I'm hoping the decreased numbers are a result of visibility during half of the day and not a drop in bird populations. A notable increase in numbers occurred for Eurasian Collared-Doves: 17 in 2017, 68 in 2018, and 100 in 2019. The largest numbers occurred on the north part of our circle. An American White Pelican made its first appearance on our count list.

Six more birds were added during Count Week: Dunlin, Cooper's Hawk, White-breasted Nuthatch, Barred Owl, Great Horned Owl, and Western Screech Owl.

Thanks to fellow zone volunteer leaders: Hydie Lown, Alison Center, Bonnie Samuels, Julie Parker, Barbara Butzer, Tori Morgan, and Tony Willey. A big thank you to all participants. This couldn't happen without your efforts.

2019 Florence Christmas Bird Count

by Vjera Thompson, Count Coordinator and Compiler

The Florence Christmas Bird Count was held on Saturday, December 14, 2019. The weather was mellow, with no rain until later afternoon and fairly calm winds, although the ocean was turbulent. We had 40 participants in the field and three Home Counter reports. For the second year, counters enjoyed the hospitality and delicious food of Best Thai Cuisine at our countdown dinner gathering.

We recorded 132 species, plus 2 for count week, which is higher than our average of 126. Count Week birds were Snowy Plover and Brewer's Blackbird, which were both found during follow-up visits to enjoy one of our best findings: a flock of 20+ Snow Buntings, a new high record for the count.

During the count, we also found two first-time species. One, a Golden Eagle, was observed harassing some ducks in a pond along the North Fork Road. Another new

sighting was two Lapland Longspurs seen at the South Jetty. Other unusual sightings include a Bullock's Oriole at a feeder, a Barn Swallow, and two Ospreys.

We got more owls than usual thanks to Tim Rodenkirk, who went owling for four hours, plus a couple of daylight sightings of owls.

Record high counts included Mallard (802), Red-winged Blackbird for the second year (408), Red-necked Grebe (23), Sharp-shinned Hawk (8), Merlin (7), Rhinoceros Auklet (6), Eurasian Collared-Dove (121), and Brown Creeper (21). Marsh Wren (109) beat last year's record with another thorough survey of Waite Ranch, and 22 were added from the South Jetty area. Most surprising was the new record for Anna's Hummingbird. The old record was 66 and the new record is 143, with 51 observed in just one area! Species not found included Black Oystercatcher, Common Goldeneye, Ruddy Duck, White-tailed Kite, and Great Horned Owl.

Thanks to my fellow team leaders: Alan Contreras, Peter Ralph, Kit Larsen, Tom Mickel, Linda Gilbert, Vjera Thompson, Tom Cable, John Sullivan, Pat Blue Heron, Adele Dawson, Magnus Persmark, and Daniel Farrar. Thanks also go to Ellen Cantor for doing the upfront coordination.

2019 Oakridge Christmas Bird Count

by Joel Geier, Count Coordinator and Compiler

A nine-hour break in early January rains was timed perfectly for the daylight portion of the Oakridge CBC on January 4, 2020. Thanks to that, plus the efforts of 13 energetic volunteers, we found 73 species (plus a Mute Swan of suspect origin) on Count Day. That's the highest number of species found on this count since its restart in 2009, after 25 years of dormancy. Three more species – Hooded Merganser, Killdeer, and White-crowned Sparrow – were found during Count Week.

Two new species that have been expanding their presence in western Oregon made it onto the all-time list: a Barred Owl responded to small-owl imitations in Greenwaters Park just before dawn, and a Black Phoebe turned up at the wetland below Hills Creek Dam. Virginia Rail, previously found only as a Count Week bird, finally made it onto the Count Day list when one called from a remedial wetland on the old mill site, reacting to a Bald Eagle that flew over.

Red-shouldered Hawk and Lesser Goldfinch – first recorded in 2012 and 2017, respectively – were found again this year. New high counts were recorded for Ruddy Duck (7 on Hills Creek Reservoir), Great Gray Owl (2 hunting separately on private land around High Prairie), and White-throated Sparrow (2 visiting separate feeders). The tally of 9 Anna's Hummingbirds was the second-highest on record. The presence of 2 Great Gray Owls raises hopes that they might still be nesting in the same area documented by USFS biologists about a decade ago.

A lone American Pipit on the west side of Hills Creek Reservoir was the first record since the count was restarted in 2009. High marks were also set for Steller's Jay (88), California Scrub-Jay (45), Black-capped Chickadee (77), Spotted Towhee (41), Song Sparrow (55), and Golden-crowned Sparrow (46).

Oddly enough, the nice weather might have depressed counts of species associated with conifer-forest habitat in the higher elevations of the circle. As the day warmed up, trees laden with snow from the previous night began to shed their loads, producing a nearly continuous cascade of wet snow. Forest birds seemed to respond by staying under cover.

continued on page 6

2019 Oakridge CBC

continued from page 5

No grouse were found, Canada Jays (6) were wary, and notably low tallies were recorded for Brown Creeper (2) and Golden-crowned Kinglet (75). Only 2 American Dippers were found, perhaps because streams were flowing at all elevations, so there was no need for them to concentrate in more visible locations lower down.

Thanks to our volunteers including Oakridge-Westfir locals Alicia Nichols, Scott Nelson, Mary Lee Sayre, and Amy Weih, plus Alison Center, Grace Fowler-Gore, Lindsey Wickre, and Aaron Eastman, who drove up from Cottage Grove, Sue Nay from Pleasant Hill, and Eugene-Springfield birders David Braunschweiger, Diane Horgan, and Don Laufer.

From Our President

continued from page 1

Sally Hill – This news makes me sad. Al was like the energizer bunny walking up and down the summit to Skinner Butte in Eugene, even after his heart surgery. He was always the charming gentleman full of knowledge and humility. I will raise a glass to you Al!

Deanna Eisinger – I am sorry to hear this. He was a great friend of birds, especially the bluebirds.

Jim Hardman – I am saddened to hear of Al's passing, as he was a very kind and knowledgeable person. I birded with Al a number of times and always came away learning something new. I, for one, will miss running into him in the field as he always made the day a little brighter. – R.I.P. Al and know you are missed.

Jeff Gilligan – I am sorry to read it. I didn't realize Al was that old. He participated in several out-of-state field trips that I lead for Portland Audubon way back when I was almost a kid. Al was a very nice fellow.

Dan Gleason – I always enjoyed my interactions with him and will miss visiting with him again.

Larry McQueen – We have missed Al's presence on the birding trails.

Lynda Colburn – Sad to hear this. I had lots of enjoyment working on bluebird nest box trails in the late 1970s with him. The birding community will miss him.

Alan Contreras – A great friend from my youth, Al took me birding many times. His work with bluebirds is a legacy we can all enjoy. I saw him carrying a scope around the dikes at Fern Ridge at age 91. We should all be so lucky!

Volunteers Needed

Audubon in the Schools

The Audubon in the Schools team has been doing a wonderful job bringing this educational program into our schools. Volunteer instructors have also presented some beginning birding classes for the Outdoor Schools Program. In 2019 the overall number of students who enjoyed these sessions was 1,286! We gave 48 presentations in 23 schools.

Schools are requesting more AITS classroom visits than ever, so we need more volunteers to help out!

If you are interested in helping and being a part of this talented group, please contact Maeve Sowles at audubon@laneaudubon.org.

Administrative Assistant

Lane Audubon would also like a volunteer who could serve as an Administrative Assistant for Board responsibilities. Requisite skills include the ability to use typical word processing, Excel spreadsheets, and PowerPoint. Since we do not have a physical office, working from home would be required.

For more information, contact Maeve Sowles at audubon@laneaudubon.org.

Booth Staffing Scheduler

Lane County Audubon Society relies on the volunteer efforts of many people. Wren Fulner is one such person. Until recently she was LCAS' very helpful booth staffing scheduler. LCAS is happy to say "Thank You" to Wren for all her help. With her departure, we are now in need of a new scheduler.

This position requires only a few hours of time two or three times each year, when booth events are scheduled. Some basic computer and organizational skills, such as sending group e-mail messages and putting together staffing schedules, are needed. The process begins by sending out announcements to an email list of potential volunteers, alerting them to a booth staffing opportunity. After volunteers respond, the scheduler puts together staffing schedules and distributes them to booth staffers.

Orientation and training will be provided, and the work can be done from your home. It can be rewarding to work behind the scenes to help Lane Audubon spread the word about the importance of birds and their habitats. To learn more about this position, please call contact Ron Renschler at christyandron2@gmail.com, or 541.345.0834.

Field Notes: November/December 2019

Tom and Allison Mickel, 541.485.7112, tamickel@riouisa.com



Photo: Adamantios, wiki commons

Burrowing Owl



Photo: Tom Talbott, wiki commons

American Bittern

Burrowing Owl, Lapland Longspur, Snow Bunting, American Bittern

An unusually dry couple months—November was the fifth driest on record for Eugene. A number of species were found later than normal this season, as you can see below. It will be interesting to see if any of them overwinter.

Abbreviations: Fern Ridge Reservoir (FRR), South Jetty of the Siuslaw River (SJSR), Valley River Center (VRC)

WATERFOWL TO HAWKS

Snow Goose (2)	Nov 5	SJSR	RA	Unusual for the coast
Snow Goose (12)	Dec 8	Eugene airport area	JS,TJ	Larger flock than usual
Black Scoter	Nov 17	Siuslaw River mouth	AC,et al.	Unusual location for this species
Common Goldeneye	Nov 28	Willamette @ VRC	TMe	Becoming common at this site
Eared Grebe	Dec 5	SJSR	AC,et al.	Unusual in winter at the coast
Clark's Grebe	Dec 5	Siuslaw River mouth	AC,et al.	Rare along the coast
Band-tailed Pigeon (4)	Nov 1	Stonefield Beach	TJ,et al.	Very late for anywhere in the county
Rufous/Allen's Hummingbird	Nov 17	Westlake	AC,et al.	Rarely this late in the year
Sandhill Crane (27)	Nov 20	Dorena Reservoir	SS	Later than normal
American White Pelican (2)	Nov 1	SJSR	TJ,et al.	Very rare along the coast
American Bittern	Dec 2	Springfield mill race	RA	Rare in the winter months
Osprey	Nov 17	Siuslaw River mouth	AC,et al.	Have wintered the last few years
Osprey	Dec 22	Alton Baker Park	RR, JS	Have wintered in small numbers for yrs
Burrowing Owl	Nov 1	Eugene area	DJ	Rarely found in the valley any more
Barred Owl	Nov-Dec	Eugene area	M. ob.	About a dozen reports from around town
Short-eared Owl	Nov 1	FRR - Royal Ave	Fide RF	Early for this wintering species
Prairie Falcon	Dec 8	Greenhill Rd	JS,TJ	First report for winter

FLYCATCHERS TO WARBLERS

Say's Phoebe	Nov 19	99N/Enid Rd area	JS	Likely wintering – often seen thru Dec
Tropical Kingbird	Nov 7	Florence	AD	Found almost annually along the coast
Blue Jay (photo)	Nov 18	River Rd	Fide PC	Rare record for the county
California Scrub-Jay	Dec 4	C&M Stables	AC,et al.	Rarely found along the coast
Swainson's Thrush (photo)	Nov 13	River Rd	LMa	Very late record – last photo Dec 11
Tree Swallow (1)	Dec 12	99N/Enid Rd area	JS	Rare outside the breeding season
Tree Swallow (2)	Nov 18	FRR - Royal	TR	Rare outside the breeding season
Barn Swallow (4)	Dec 1	E Alton Baker Park	RR	Rare outside the breeding season
Barn Swallow	Dec 14	SJSR deflation plain	JS,et al.	Rare outside the breeding season
Barn Swallow (2)	Dec 26	Baker Beach	MP	Rare outside the breeding season
Swallow sp. (4)	Dec 7	Alvadore	JS	Rare outside the breeding season
Mountain Chickadee	Dec 9	Veneta	Fide RF	Rare away from the high Cascades
House Wren	Nov 5	FRR - Royal	TC	Rare outside the breeding season
House Wren	Nov 28	W D St greenway	JS	Rare outside the breeding season
Evening Grosbeak	Nov 27	Oakridge area	MLS	Not common in winter
Lesser Goldfinch	Nov 12	Sutton Lake	AC,et al.	Rarely found along the coast
Lapland Longspur (2)	Dec 14	SJSR deflation plain	JS,et al.	Rarely found on Lane coast in winter
Snow Bunting	Nov 5	Mt Pisgah	Fide VT	Rarely found in the valley

Snow Bunting (21)	Dec 14	Baker Beach	MS	Rarely found on Lane coast in winter
Chipping Sparrow	Nov 5	99N/Enid Rd area	JS	Very late report
American Tree Sparrow	Nov 8	FRR - Royal	PS	Small numbers in winter most yrs
Swamp Sparrow	Nov 9	FRR - Royal	RJ	They winter, but aren't easy to observe
Swamp Sparrow (3)	Dec 14	Waite Ranch	DF,et al.	They winter, but aren't easy to observe
Bullock's Oriole	Nov-Dec	Florence	Fide NT	One has wintered at same house 2-3 yrs
Tricolored Blackbird	Nov 24	FRR - Royal	JSp	About ten records for the county
Brown-headed Cowbird	Dec 22	Meadowlark Prairie	BN,NB	Rarely overwinter
Orange-crowned Warbler (6)	Nov-Dec	Eugene & FRR	M. ob.	Winter in small numbers most years
Common Yellowthroat	Nov 3	Delta Ponds	RF,TJo	Late report for this species
Wilson's Warbler	Nov 30	Jasper Park	FT,TGT	Very late report for this species

AC Alan Contreras, AD Adele Dawson, BN Bruce Newhouse, DF Daniel Farrar, DJ Dave Jones, FT Forest Tomlinson, JS John Sullivan, JSp Josh Spice, LMa Libbie Marshall, MLS Mary Lee Sayre, MP Magnus Persmark, MS Martin Stervander, NB Neil Bjorkland, NT Nikki Thomas, PC Pam Comeleo, PS Pat Snyder, RA Ramiro Aragon, RF Rachael Friese, RJ Robert Jilek, RR Roger Robb, SS Sue Sheppard, TC Thomas Czubek, TGT Torrey Gage-Tomlinson, TJ Tye Jeske, TJo Tim Johnson, TMe Thomas Meinzen, TR Tim Ream, VT Vjera Thompson. Fide references a sighting reported to the listed observer. M.ob.signifies many observers.

February Is GBH Nesting Time

by Dennis Arendt

A tall wading bird is often seen standing alone in fields and wetlands searching for snakes, frogs, and fish. It stands quietly, still, and poised to strike. This is how we see the Great Blue Heron most of the year. But that all changes in mid-February.

From 1993 to 2000, I observed a Great Blue Heron colony of more than 60 nests, located on an island at the confluence of the Willamette and McKenzie rivers. Although controlled by a sand and gravel company, I was originally given permission to go on the island for the annual Christmas Bird Count. After several years I was granted permission, and a key, to enter the property on weekends.

Each year the activity level in the giant cottonwood trees jumped from zero to bustling in one in mid-February week. The nests, clustered in the crowns of giant cottonwoods at the northern end of the island, would be empty one Saturday, then occupied the next Saturday by a hundred birds. The change was startling, and I was excited each February to see it happen. The

number of nests ranged from a low of 48 to a high of 63, with an average of 58. Most of the nests clustered within the crowns of seven trees near a slough that cut through the island.

The herons spent many days repairing nests damaged by winter storms or building new ones. One winter I discovered that one of the cottonwoods had fallen. I don't know if the herons tried to keep the same nests from year to year, but I observed no fighting over nest sites.

The herons greeted their mates with grunts and growls and a gift of a branch to be embedded into the nest. By March, I could see adult herons sitting low in their nests incubating eggs. My ability to see the nests diminished as the foliage thickened. However, in April I could hear the "che che che che" sounds of more than a hundred young birds. The calls of the young birds were background noise throughout the forest. By May, the sounds emanating from the young birds changed to a lower pitched "grr grr grr" sound. In June, the nests were mostly hidden above the dense foliage, but I could



GBH nests in a cluster of trees

tell by the diminished noises from the nest sites that the young had fledged. They had left the colony and dispersed throughout our area.

The colony that I watched has disappeared. In 1999 a pair of Bald Eagles set up a nearby nest, and within one year the colony was abandoned and re-established in several locations throughout our area.

Now it is time to look for the gathering of these great birds into their nesting colonies. You'll likely find them near Delta Ponds, a few nests in Alton Baker Park, and a large colony in the Nature Conservancy's Willamette Confluence property. Most are much smaller than the one I observed. Enjoy the return of these solitary hunters and communal nesters.

Program Meeting, Tuesday, February 25, 7:00 pm

Dennis Arendt, 541.221.3691, dennisarendt@gmail.com



7 pm start time!

By popular request, our program meeting time has permanently changed from 7:30 pm to 7 pm, starting with this meeting.

The History of Birding in Oregon with Alan Contreras



Photo: Thomas Meinzen

Alan Contreras

Alan Contreras is currently writing *A History of Oregon Ornithology* for OSU Press, with help from Vjera Thompson, Nolan Clements, Chip Jobanek, Herb Wisner, Larry McQueen, and others. This program will feature more people than birds, while illustrating how bird study has changed in Oregon from the early 1800s through the Internet age. You'll hear about John Kirk Townsend (as in Warbler and Solitaire), whose bird specimens were eaten by hungry members of his team, and Henry Henshaw, who

mistakenly let off his shotgun in front of the constable's home. Another historical character was Olaus Murie, who banded the first Oregon bird and then nearly completed his life list at Three Arch Rocks. More fascinating characters will surely make their appearances as his remarks and anecdotes range over a hundred years of Lane County birding.



Landing bird photography equipment on Three Arch Rocks, 1912.

Born in Tillamook County, Alan Contreras is a fourth-generation Oregonian. He grew up mostly in Lane County, where his passionate interest in birds led him to start the Cottage Grove Christmas Bird Count when he was 15, and serve as president of the Eugene Natural History Society when he was 18. A graduate of the University of Oregon and its law school, he is now retired from work in higher education. Although he always wanted to be a famous science-fiction writer, that hasn't happened yet. Instead, he co-edited *Birds of Oregon*, edited *Birds of Lane County*, wrote *Afield: Forty Years of Birding in the American West*, and co-authored *Handbook of Oregon Birds* and *Northwest Birds in Winter*.



Irene Finley climbing with box of glass photo plates, about 1908.

Plus he has written three books of poetry and, most recently, edited *Edge of Awe: Experiences of the Malheur-Steens Country*. And that's not all. For a more complete listing, check out his website: alanlcontreras.com/books.



Sketch by Meriwether Lewis of "The Beautiful Buzzard of the Columbia."

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The Quail is the newsletter of Lane County Audubon Society, a chartered chapter of National Audubon Society. Local members of National Audubon Society receive a free subscription to *The Quail* but are encouraged to voluntarily join Lane County Audubon Society.

The Quail Subscriptions

Contact Tim Godsil at 541.915.8852 or tgodsil@gmail.com

The Quail Upcoming Content Deadlines

March issue: February 1
April issue: March 1

Submit material to Karen Irmscher at quailkaren1@gmail.com

Nine issues published per year (Feb., Mar., Apr., May-June, July-Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., and Dec.-Jan.)

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Lane County Audubon Society Welcomes You—Join or Renew Today!

We ask you to become a local member of Lane County Audubon Society and support our grassroots efforts in the local community. Your membership dues for National Audubon Society no longer fully cover the costs of a membership in your local chapter. Your local dues stay here to help us work on local education projects and conservation issues related to birds and their habitats. With your support, we will continue to do the things you expect from us. We welcome your suggestions—this is your Audubon! We appreciate your support. — *Maeve Sowles, President*

Lane Audubon Membership Benefits

- *The Quail*—9 issues/yr.
- Field trips and bird walks
- Program meetings
- Educational publications
- Conservation issue representation
- Answers to questions: 541.485.BIRD
- Website: laneaudubon.org

Lane County Audubon Society Yearly Membership

- Individual \$20.....\$ _____
- Students and Seniors (65 and over) \$15.....\$ _____
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- Lifetime Membership \$400.....\$ _____
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To pay by PayPal, go to laneaudubon.org/support/join

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I would prefer to receive the e-Quail newsletter by e-mail.

I would like to receive e-mail alerts about conservation issues.

I would like to volunteer for Lane County Audubon activities.

Lane Audubon will not release your personal information to other organizations. We will use it only for Lane County Audubon Society communications.

Mail this form and your payment to: Lane County Audubon Society, P.O. Box 5086, Eugene, OR 97405

Community Calendar and Events

A service to Lane County Audubon Society members

2/8-9 Mt Pisgah Arboretum
Saturday and Sunday, February 8 and 9, 9 am-3 pm

Bee Identification Workshop

Join August Jackson, Interpretation Coordinator at Mount Pisgah Arboretum and author of *The Bees of the Willamette Valley*, for a two-day crash course on bee identification, held in partnership with Lane Community College. Participants will leave with the knowledge to identify most of the Willamette Valley's 30 bee genera. Most of the class will be spent viewing specimens through microscopes and utilizing an illustrated key. No prior experience with bees, microscopes, or keys necessary. Arboretum members \$70, non-members \$80. Pre-registration required.

FMI or to register: mountpisgaharboretum.com/workshop-registration, or 541.747.3817

2/8 Nearby Nature
Saturday, February 8, 1 pm-3 pm
Nature Quest: Bee Mine?

Learn all about the bees that help bring the plants in our Learnscape Garden to life. Enjoy a special presentation, make a simple mason bee home from natural materials, and play fun bee-themed nature games.

Nearby Nature members free, non-members \$7/family

Nearby Nature Learnscape, 622 Day Island Rd., Eugene 97401

2/9 Mt Pisgah Arboretum
Sunday, February 9, 8:30 am-11 am
Bird Walk

Join Julia Siporin and Joni Dawning for their monthly bird walk. Intended for people with all levels of birding experience, they will use vocalizations, habitat, and behavior clues for identification of winter and year-round residents. Please bring binoculars. Option to continue the walk until noon if interested. Rain or shine. Meet at the Arboretum Visitor Center. Don't forget your parking pass. \$5, members free.

FMI for all walks: mountpisgaharboretum.org, or 541.741.4110

12/13 Nearby Nature
Wednesday, February 11, 10 am-11:30 am

Green Start Play Day: Get Egg-cited!

Enjoy outdoor nature play in our Learnscape plus toddler and pre-school activities and stories—this month all about eggs! Kids 5 and under only, with an adult. Rain or shine! Members free, non-members \$7/family. Nearby Nature Learnscape, 622 Day Island Rd., Eugene 97401

FMI & pre-register: nearbynature.org, or 541.687.9699



2/13-16 Winter Wings Festival
Feb 13-16, in Klamath Falls
The Winter Wings Festival is produced by Klamath Basin Audubon Society volunteers.

FMI: info@winterwingsfest.org or 877.541.BIRD (2473)

2/17 Nearby Nature
Monday, February 17, 8:30 am-3 pm
No School Day Adventure: Nature Gamers

Play Giant Jenga, create a salmon obstacle course, build a tree, melt a mountain, and more. Create a game from natural and recyclable materials to take home! \$50 members/\$60 non-members. Scholarships available. Ages 6-9, max 12 kids. After-care 3-4 pm! Outdoors in Alton Baker Park. FMI and pre-register: nearbynature.org, or call 541.687.9699

2/17 Southern Willamette Ornithological Club (SWOC)
Monday, February 17, 7 pm
Eugene Birders' Night

"Left Side of the Road: Birding Australia by Camper Van." Forest Tomlinson will share photos and stories of his six-week birding trip in Australia during which he covered more than 3,000 miles by van and well over two



Short-eared Owl Surveyors Needed

Volunteers are invited to help gather data for the largest Short-eared Owl study in the world! This community science project covers eight states. To participate, potential surveyors sign up for a survey grid and complete two 90-minute road-based surveys from March through May. All of the specifics can be found on the project website: WAFLS project website. Sign up asap for the most location options!

FMI: eBird Northwest Article & WAFLS Facebook page

thousand by air. All are welcome to attend this free monthly event. Location: Historic McNail-Riley house, 601 W 13th Ave, Eugene, at the NW corner of W. 13th and Jefferson St., by the former Lincoln School. Park in the five spaces closest to the M-R house, or across 13th in the fairgrounds parking lot.

FMI: ellencantor@gmail.com

2/22 Mt Pisgah Arboretum
Saturday, February 22, 10 am-12 pm

Life Among the Mosses Walk

Botanist David Wagner will tell moss stories and weave lichen yarns to help us understand the elfin world of mosses, liverworts, and lichens. Rain or shine. Meet at the Arboretum's Visitor Center. Don't forget your parking pass: \$5, members free.

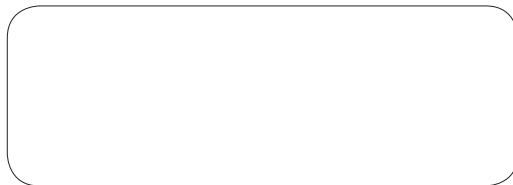
2/22 Nearby Nature
Saturday, February 22, 1 pm-3 pm
Citizen Science Saturday: Oh My, Look Up High!

Join us for data collection, observations, photography, and more. Learn about ospreys and herons in Alton Baker Park as we document water bird activity in and near the canoe canal. Designed especially for adult participants. Members free, non-members \$7. Meet at Water Wise Garden Patio outside the Alton Baker Park Host Residence, 622 Day Island Rd.

FMI and to register: nearbynature.org, or 541.687.9699



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LCAS Bird Walks & Events

Rebecca Waterman, 541.653.3354, fieldtrips@laneaudubon.org

Third Saturday Bird Walks

Saturday, February 15, 8 am

Site and leader will be determined by interesting bird sightings posted to OBOL and other pertinent information available before the day of the walk. Details will be posted on the LCAS Facebook page: facebook.com/pages/Lane-County-Audubon-Society/330177413824, and on the website: laneaudubon.org.

All ages and skill levels are welcome. Bring binoculars, if you have them. To carpool, meet at 8 a.m. at the South Eugene High School parking lot, corner of 19th and Patterson. We plan to return by noon. Remember that it's not a good idea to leave valuables or your vehicle registration in your car if you leave it at the lot. A \$3 donation is appreciated to help support Lane County Audubon's activities.

FMI: Rebecca Waterman at fieldtrips@laneaudubon.org.com, or 541.653.3354

It's Not Too Late!

If you got busy over the holidays and forgot to give an annual donation to Lane County Audubon Society, it's not too late to give to a great cause.

All of your tax-deductible donation stays local, funding LCAS education, conservation, and outreach initiatives.

You can mail your donation, large or small, to LCAS, PO Box 5086, Eugene, OR 97405. If you prefer to give online with a credit card, use the link on LCAS's website: laneaudubon.org/support/donate.

Thanks in advance for your support.

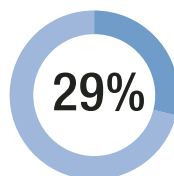


February Program Meeting
The History of Birding in Oregon
with Alan Contreras

Tuesday, February 25, 7:00 pm

Eugene Garden Club
1645 High St., Eugene

**New
7pm Start
Time!**



Join your fellow 29% of Lane County Audubon Society members who help save paper and postage by receiving *The Quail* electronically.

Contact Tim Godsil at tgodsil@gmail.com