

The Quail

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News from Lane County Audubon Society



From Our Treasurer

Ron Renchler, 541.345.0834, christyandron2@gmail.com

Birding in a Trying Time



photo: Karen Irmischer

Willamette River

First, I think I can speak for the entire LCAS membership in expressing our condolences to everyone impacted by the recent wildfires. Our condolences also go out to all those affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Needless to say, 2020 has been a tough year for everyone.

LCAS wants to make things a little easier during these trying times by continuing to offer events that we hope redirect your mind and soul to the comforts of nature. We began offering live, virtual program meetings in September and will continue to do so throughout the fall and winter until conditions around the pandemic improve. (See page 5 for information on November’s virtual meeting.)

If you missed our live virtual programs in previous months, they were recorded and are now available on our website laneaudubon.org. It’s been hard to give up the pleasure of seeing our members at the Garden Club each month, socializing with them, and enjoying the in-person presentations, but we want to protect our members’ health above all else.

Our monthly bird walks have followed a similar path. We encourage everyone to bird outdoors as much as possible and to follow safety guidelines when doing so. In early September, several of our members socially distanced themselves outdoors at Agate Hall to watch the Vaux’s Swifts migrating through, and we still can schedule small, socially distanced bird walks, if our members express an interest. You can keep abreast of these types of events by looking at this month’s *Quail* as well.

Details about our two school programs—Audubon Adventures and Audubon in the Schools—are still being worked out for current school year and will depend heavily on what our local educators want and need in terms of bird-related materials for online teaching and—eventually—face-to-face classes. (See page 7.)

We’re grateful for technologies that allow us to interact with our members in new ways, and we can use our newfound knowledge to record our

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Lane County Audubon Society

541.485.BIRD

laneaudubon.org

P.O. Box 5086, Eugene, OR 97405

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Conservation

Debbie Schlenoff, 541.685.0610, dschlenoff@msn.com

Logging Is Not the Solution to Wildfires

The wildfires that tore through our communities and devastated natural areas were terrifying. We are so sorry for those who had to flee, for those who lost their homes, for those impacted by the fire and smoke. We are sad, too, for the individual animals that might have been harmed due to the wildfires, but it is comforting to note that nature is resilient and populations are generally not wiped out by fire.

Most of the species found in the western states have evolved with wildfire, and although there may be some exceptions, their populations will recover. Fire allows many seeds to germinate and the growing vegetation will provide a source of habitat and food to numerous animals. The Black-backed Woodpecker, which has been a candidate for the endangered species list, actually thrives in burnt conifer forests, where it gobbles the plentiful wood-boring beetles. Other insects come in and, along with the new growth, provide good sources of food for wildlife. The snags, large dead trees, provide shelter to birds, especially cavity nesters. The snags also help to anchor the soil, shade young conifers from intense sunlight, and provide habitat for many insect-eating bats, birds, and small mammals.

It is essential now to move forward in a way that avoids misconceptions about fire and creates the best possibility for recovery. Several misguided proposals to increase logging are already being discussed.

What does the science say?

Basically, logging the forest does not help. In fact, it may make things worse. It reduces the numbers of thick-barked, fire-resilient trees that help to slow the spread of wildfire. When the stumps and debris resulting from a logging operation dry out, they act as kindling when a fire roars through. The small, uniform trees planted after logging also burn readily. The lack of shade after timber extraction creates hotter, drier, and windier conditions. Timber operations additionally help to spread highly combustible invasive grasses. Past data indicates that previously logged forests burn hotter and faster. Post-fire logging continues the destruction of habitat while introducing invasive species, compacting soils, and slowing

recovery of populations in the burnt habitat.

According to the Department of Forestry, 977,830 acres in Oregon burned this last year, but only 16,868 acres burned in 2019, despite the fact that there was not a gigantic increase in fuel over the interval. Scientists agree that intact trees are not fueling wildfires. So what is? The answer is: drought, low humidity, high temperatures, and high winds. All are climate events and all are becoming more acute due to climate change. When politicians try to divert the public's attention by proposing more logging rather than addressing climate change, our antennae should go up (or maybe our head crests). We should be concentrating on developing Community Wildfire Defense Plans and creating fire-wise buffers around communities and homes. We should retain diverse, complex, fire-resistant forests. We should utilize controlled, managed burning to reduce fuels. We should improve detection, warning, and evacuation assistance for folks who live in fire zones. We should address climate change. Let your representatives know.



Wildfires in the Pacific Northwest

Photo: wikicommons

Field Notes: September 2020

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

Black-headed Gull, Yellow-throated Warbler, Bobolink, Elegant Tern

This month was anything but normal, given the fires and smoke, the hot weather at the end of the month, and the rain that helped put the fires out! And, bird-wise it was also anything but normal, with two first records for the county and many other unusual sightings.

Abbreviations: Fern Ridge Reservoir (FRR), Lane Community College (LCC), South Jetty of the Siuslaw River (SJSR)



Photo: Sturtje1979, wikicommons

Black-headed Gull



Photo: Mike Beard, wikicommons

Elegant Tern

GEESE TO SHEARWATERS

Greater White-fronted Goose	Sept 21	River Road area	RH	Normal time for southward migration
Red-breasted Merganser	Sept 20	NJSR	RR	First report for the winter season
Common Nighthawk	Sept 4	River Road area	BC	Last report for the breeding season
Vaux's Swift (6000)	Sept 19	Agate Hall, UO	BC	Normal number for this time of year
Rufous Hummingbird	Sept 20	River Road area	RH	Last report for the breeding season
Rufous Hummingbird	Sept 20	FRR - Perkins	VB	Last report for the breeding season
Black-necked Stilt	Sept 29	FRR - Royal Ave.	JWe	Late report for this species
Black-necked Stilt	Sept 30	Bob Creek	DN	Rarely found on the coast
Pomarine Jaeger	Sept 19	Heceta Beach	AC, et al	Always a good find from shore
Parasitic Jaeger	Sept 19	Bob Creek	AC, et al	More normal from shore
Sabine's Gull	Sept 18	FRR	JS	Very small numbers found most years
Black-headed Gull	Sept 6	FRR - Royal Ave.	Ma	A first for Lane County
Elegant Tern	Sept 21	SJSR	VB	Can be found some years, not others
Sooty Shearwater (1000's)	Sept 15	Florence area	SH, DP	These numbers are rarely seen

WOODPECKERS TO THRUSHES

Lewis's Woodpecker (4)	Sept 27	Mt Pisgah	JF	Large number for any one location
Merlin	Sept 16	Florence	A&DH	First report for the winter season
Olive-sided Flycatcher	Sept 18	Wild Iris Ridge	DA	Last report for the breeding season
Willow Flycatcher	Sept 22	Alton Baker Park	JS	Last report for the breeding season
Dusky Flycatcher	Sept 22	Skinner Butte	MP	Last report for the breeding season
Pacific-slope Flycatcher	Sept 24	Skinner Butte	TMi	Last report for the breeding season
Black Phoebe	Sept 24	Oakridge	MLS	A first for her yard
Cassin's Vireo	Sept 22	Walterville Res.	VB	Last report for the breeding season
Warbling Vireo	Sept 28	Skinner Butte	TMi	Last report for the breeding season
California Scrub-Jay (44)	Sept 28	River Road area	MRu	Very large number for any one location
House Wren	Sept 24	LCC	RS	Last report for the breeding season
American Dipper	Sept 28	Alton Baker Park	JS	Rarely found in the valley
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Sept 12	Island Park	JK	First report for the winter season
Varied Thrush	Sept 9	SE Eugene	TMi	First report for winter season in valley

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SPARROWS TO BUNTINGS

Clay-colored Sparrow	Sept 30.....	Old Town Florence	DF.....	Normal time for very small numbers
Grasshopper Sparrow	Sept 9.....	Alton Baker Park.....	JS.....	Last report for the breeding season
Fox Sparrow	Sept 18.....	Eugene.....	DA.....	First report for the winter season
White-throated Sparrow	Sept 20.....	Mt Pisgah.....	JH.....	First report for the winter season
Golden-crowned Sparrow	Sept 2.....	Old McKenzie Pass.....	AC,et al.....	First report for the winter season
Yellow-breasted Chat	Sept 20.....	Bond Lane.....	SH.....	Last report for the breeding season
Bobolink	Sept 27.....	Waite Ranch.....	JS,GM.....	About the third record for Lane County
Nashville Warbler	Sept 13.....	Island Park.....	TMa.....	Last report for the breeding season
MacGillivray's Warbler	Sept 26.....	SE Eugene.....	TMi.....	Last report for the breeding season
Yellow Warbler	Sept 27.....	Eugene.....	DA.....	Last report for the breeding season
Yellow-throated Warbler	Sept 10.....	Springfield.....	SMc.....	A first for Lane County
Townsend's Warbler	Sept 10.....	SE Eugene area.....	JG.....	First report for the winter season
Hermit Warbler	Sept 28.....	Skinner Butte.....	TMi.....	Last report for the breeding season
Wilson's Warbler	Sept 23.....	Sutton Lake.....	JWi.....	Last report for the breeding season
Western Tanager	Sept 28.....	Skinner Butte.....	TMi.....	Last report for the breeding season
Black-headed Grosbeak	Sept 20.....	FRR.....	NC.....	Last report for the breeding season
Lazuli Bunting	Sept 4.....	Spring Blvd.....	JG.....	Last report for the breeding season

AC Alan Contreras, **A&DH** Anne & Dan Heyerly, **BC** Barbara Combs, **DA** Dennis Arendt, **DF** Daniel Farrar, **DN** Daniel Newberry, **DP** Diane Pettey, **GM** Gerry Meenaghan, **JF** Judy Franzen, **JG** Joshua Galpern, **JH** Jennifer Haynes, **JK** Janet Kelly, **JS** John Sullivan, **JWe** Johnny Westland, **JWi** Jay Withgott, **Ma** Maitreya, **MLS** Mary Lee Sayre, **MP** Magnus Persmark, **MRu** Mark Rudolph, **NC** Nancy Clogston, **RH** Rich Hoyer, **RR** Roger Robb, **RS** Randy Sinnott, **SH** Sally Hill, **SMc** Scott McNeeley, **TMa** Tanner Martin, **TMi** Tom Mickel, **VB** Vickie Buck

Eugene Christmas Bird Count 2020

by Dick Lamster



Unlike many traditional activities this year, the 2020 Eugene Christmas Bird Count (ECBC) will happen! It is set for Sunday, January 3, 2021, our normal date during the three-week Count Period. National Audubon Society (NAS) issued guidelines during the last week of September for conducting this year's unusual Christmas Bird Count, and we will abide by them. Our Coordinator, Dick Lamster, is working with the 27 Team Leaders

and other Count volunteers to work out details, but the following will probably be the plan for this year.

1. Each Team Leader will determine how they want to organize and move their team around. If a Team Leader prefers not to go on the Count this year, a one-year replacement will be chosen.
2. We expect more Home Counters this year and will be prepared to handle that. To be a Home Counter you must live in the Count Circle.
3. Sadly, there will be no Chili Feed Countdown this year. This is unfortunate, because the Chili Feed is always fun for everyone. Instead, we may have a Zoom Countdown.
4. Teams that walk for most of the

day will probably have fewer changes to consider than those that drive a lot.

5. We encourage all previous participants in the ECBC to do so this year. It will be our 79th! New people are always welcomed and we will find a team for anyone who wants to go look for birds on January 3rd.

Please contact Dick Lamster at maeveanddick@q.com, or call him at 541.343.8664 if you are interested or have suggestions. The December-January *Quail* will include more details.

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Zoom Program Meeting Tuesday, November 24, 7:00 pm

Dennis Arendt, 541.221.3691, dennisarendt@gmail.com



For access details, check laneaudubon.org

Ultimate Africa



Ram Papish

Ram Papish will guide us on a tour of what he terms “the greatest wildlife spectacle in the world.” He will show us herds of wildebeest, zebra, and antelope stretching endlessly in every direction, and give us an opportunity to witness the eternal struggle between predator and prey on the expansive plains of Tanzania

Looking beyond the megafauna, he’ll share photos of the wonderful and abundant birdlife of the African savannahs, wetlands and rainforests. And, as a bonus, his presentation will offer a window into the mysteries of Mountain Gorillas in Uganda.

Wearing his science hat, Ram worked as a wildlife biologist studying birds and other wildlife, primarily in Alaska for more than 20 field seasons. Pivoting to his writing and artistic endeavors, he has also authored and illustrated two children’s books: *The Little Fox* and *The Little Seal*, published by University of Alaska Press. His illustrations appear in many books and publications, including the *Handbook of Oregon Birds*, *Northwest Birds in Winter*, *Oregon Birds*, *Afield*, and *Seabirds of Alaska*. Ram regularly presents on science and nature topics at bird festivals, local bird clubs, and in public schools. He combines his background in art, science, and public speaking to engage and educate the public on environmental topics.

Ram grew up in Eugene and now lives in Toledo, Oregon, on six wooded acres with his fabulous wife (his words) Dawn Harris, eight bird feeders, eight nest boxes, 18 chickens, four rescued parrots, and one Chia pet. Since 2009 he has concentrated on pursuing a career as a wildlife scientist, writer, and illustrator.



Photo: Ram Papish

Cheetah



Photo: Ram Papish

Lion



Photo: Ram Papish

Mountain Gorilla



Photo: Ram Papish

Pied Kingfisher



Photo: Ram Papish

Shoebill Family



Photo: Ram Papish

Red-billed Hornbill

Lane County Audubon Society



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

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Submit material to Karen Irmischer at quailkaren1@gmail.com

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Lane County Audubon Society Officers & Board Members

President	Maeve Sowles.....541.343.8664..... maeveanddick@q.com
Treasurer	Ron Renchler.....541.345.0834..... christyandron2@gmail.com
Members	Debbie Schlenoff.....541.685.0610..... dschlenoff@msn.com
	Ramiro Aragon..... aragon.nw@gmail.com
	Rachael Friese..... audadventures@gmail.com
	Jim Maloney.....541.968.9249..... jimgmal@comcast.net
	Rebecca Waterman.....541.653.3354..... fieldtrips@laneaudubon.org
	Herb Wisner (Emeritus) ... 541.344.3634..... hrwisner@comcast.net

Lane County Audubon Society Committee Chairs

Audubon Phone.....	Dick Lamster.....	541.485.BIRD
Audubon Adventures.....	Rachael Friese.....	audadventures@gmail.com
Audubon in the Schools.....	Volunteer Opportunity	
Booth.....	Ron Renchler.....	541.345.0834..... christyandron2@gmail.com
Conservation.....	Debbie Schlenoff.....	541.685.0610..... dschlenoff@msn.com
Education.....	Volunteer Opportunity	
Field Notes.....	Allison & Tom Mickel.....	541.485.7112..... tamickel@riouisa.com
Field Trips.....	Rebecca Waterman.....	541.653.3354..... fieldtrips@laneaudubon.org
FRESH.....	Art Farley.....	541.683.1186..... art@cs.uoregon.edu
Membership Data.....	Tim Godsil.....	541.915.8852..... tgodsil@gmail.com
Program Coordinator.....	Dennis Arendt.....	541.221.3691..... dennisarendt@gmail.com
Quail Editor.....	Karen Irmischer.....	quailkaren1@gmail.com
Recording Secretary.....	Kathy Wilson.....	kfred1953@yahoo.com
Webmaster.....	Hilary Dearborn.....	hcdearborn@gmail.com

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.....\$ _____
- Family \$25.....\$ _____
- 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

Remembering Janet Jernberg, Lane Audubon Volunteer

Janet Jernberg passed away at home September 29th. She was number 97 in our membership database, meaning she joined Lane Audubon when it was first formed, in the mid-1970s.

Janet hosted *The Quail* mailing crew nine times a year in her home, where the group would gather to put mailing labels on the newsletters.

Since the mid-1980s, the mailing group has worked diligently, dependably, and without fanfare. That's more than 35 years! They have truly enjoyed gathering together for this job. Over the years, different people participated, and each one was a valued member. While applying labels, they also celebrated birthdays, holidays, and bird sightings, and shared cakes, cookies, and snacks!

Janet included her great-niece, Star, and great-nephew, Dominik, in these gatherings, since she did after-school



Janet Jernberg with great-nephew Dominik at Wild Iris Ridge, 2018

care for him. More recently they have lived with her to help out as her health declined, and they help with *The Quail* mailings each month.

Janet was a kind, caring, generous, reliable, humble person, and always greeted me with a smile.

Janet's family said she taught them to love nature and birds and took them to the coast and mountains to enjoy the outdoors. She was a sweet lady and I'll miss her.

— Maeve Sowles

From Our Treasurer *continued from page 1*

events and make them available on demand.

While the pandemic has affected many of the ways we operate, we still incur most of our annual operating expenses and depend greatly on your financial support. We value your membership in LCAS, and many of you have chosen to renew annually in November. You can check your *Quail* mailing label (or the email message with your *Quail* link if you receive it electronically) for your membership expiration date. You can renew online at laneaudubon.org/support/join.

We also keep our requests for gifts to a minimum, limiting our annual fundraising appeal to the month of November. Whether you can give a little or a lot, it will help us continue to produce *The Quail* and maintain a robust schedule of (now virtual) events, so thank you in advance for your help.

There are two ways to contribute: (1) mail your gift using the envelope inside this issue of *The Quail*, or (2) visit laneaudubon.org/support/donate to give online. Again, many thanks for supporting LCAS.

Audubon Adventures Makes Nature Fun for Kids!



The National Audubon Society's colorful and engaging educational program for elementary-age youngsters offers both printed and online materials. They are available in a variety of formats

and subjects suitable for classroom groups, libraries, afterschool clubs, science and nature camps, and homeschoolers, as well as families with students in grades 3-5. If you are interested in having the printed materials for your home-schooling or classroom children, Lane Audubon can purchase the kits for school classrooms and homeschool groups.

FMI: contact Rachael Friese via email: audadventures@gmail.com, and/or check out audubonadventures.org.

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Check your mailing label. Has
your *Quail* subscription expired?
See page 6 to renew!



LCAS Bird Walks & Events

Rebecca Waterman, 541.653.3354, fieldtrips@laneaudubon.org

Third Saturday Bird Walk

Although the regular walks are on a COVID hiatus, we continue to lead small walks with some restrictions in place in order to adhere to local safety guidelines. Attendance is capped at 10 birders,

But I enjoy doing it for as few as one. Beginners welcome! Folks wishing to join a walk can email Bex at rebecca.waterman@gmail.com. All participants must wear a mask for the entirety of the walk and maintain the recommended 6-foot distance from each other.

Bird Walk Coordinator Needed!

Rebecca Waterman, our current walk coordinator, is leaving the area soon. Lane Audubon is looking for a volunteer to take her place in planning our monthly Third Saturday Bird Walks. This is a fun opportunity to meet and learn from birding experts; best of all, you get to be out birding! Lane Audubon has the traditional dates set, a network of willing field trip leaders, and a list of past birding locations to choose from. Your responsibility would include deciding on a location, contacting field trip leaders, emailing the field trip publicity, and meeting the birding group on the day of the walk to get things started. Contact Maeve Sowles at 541.343.8664 or president@laneaudubon.org.

Note: since we are currently not having organized bird walks, this is a role we will need help with once the pandemic guidelines allow us to gather in small groups again.

Save the Date: December 11

John Marzluff will present a Zoom meeting entitled “Of Ravens, Wolves and People.” LCAS and the Eugene Natural History Society are cosponsoring this program.

Attached are links to items published recently in *Science* about intelligence in crows and other birds. The more we get to know about the intelligence of crows and ravens, in particular, the more fascinating these dark birds become. The research might interest you. The research reported on in the items isn't by Marzluff.

- eugenenaturalhistorysociety.org/speaker-list/
- statnews.com/2020/09/24/crows-possess-higher-intelligence-long-thought-primarily-human/
- science.sciencemag.org/content/369/6511/1626
- science.sciencemag.org/content/369/6511/eabc5534
- science.sciencemag.org/content/369/6511/1567