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The Quail

News from Lane County Audubon Society



From Our President

Maeve Sowles, 541.343.8664, maeveanddick@q.com

I Miss My Audubon Friends! But Nature Offers Solace



Photo: Karen Imscher

Birding at Kirk Pond

Our last Program Meeting was in late February and our last face-to-face Board Meeting was in early March. Since then, we have suspended our normal scheduled activities. I often think about our many volunteers and members who attend these Lane Audubon functions, people I only see at that

time. Now months have passed and I feel the loss of normal contacts, hugs, smiles, and bird sightings that we would normally share when we see each other. I hope each of you is doing what you can to stay safe and healthy!

We have all been forced to find new ways to live our lives. For Lane Audubon we are using new technologies like Zoom for our Board meeting, and this month we will have our first Zoom Program meeting presentation. Nothing can replace the enjoyment of our in-person gatherings, so we do hope we can return to the traditional format in the future. For now, we hope you will stay connected to us via the electronic

world. We are also open to new ideas and suggestions for keeping in touch, so please reach out if you want to share those with us! Our organization continues to adjust to the pandemic world, and we plan to stay involved with environmental outreach and education as the situation allows.

This is a year of many changes. Spending time in nature is one of my survival strategies. I find it comforting and healthy to be outdoors, both doing physical activity and observing and taking in nature's beauty. The 2020 pandemic stay-at-home lifestyle gives us a chance to hone our yard bird lists. Birding at home, we can have a Yard List for birds, other animals, wildflowers, and mushrooms. Tracking the date of first arrival of a bird species in the spring and the last sighting before birds leave for fall migration is easier when we are home all the time!

Have you become a user of eBird or iNaturalist this year to help track your observations? Have you learned

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Lane County Audubon Society

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Conservation

Debbie Schlenoff, 541.685.0610, dschlenoff@msn.com

The Expanding Perils of Plastic Pollution

I have always been charmed by watching videos of bowerbirds decorating their bowers to attract females. Historically, they have decorated with colorful flowers, leaves, feathers, shells, and berries. But now the display sites contain a preponderance of plastic waste, including bottle caps and straws.

During these difficult times, it is easy to get distracted from threats to bird populations. As a result, environmental protections are being rolled back at breakneck speed and habitat continues to be lost. Issues that were on our radar tend to fall aside as other concerns become paramount. One such issue is rampant plastic pollution, but recent reports remind us that the problem will not just fade away without a change in the way we do business. More than 80 percent of seabirds (some sources say 90 percent) were found to have plastic in their bellies. To get a feel for how fast the problem has grown, compare that to 1960 when that number was a mere 5 percent. When dead Laysan Albatross chicks were examined, plastic was found in more than 97 percent of them. The number of seabirds that die due to plastic is estimated to be one million per year. And that figure does not include other types of birds, nor both terrestrial and marine wildlife.

The UN estimates that 79 percent of the plastic ever produced has ended up in the environment. Only 9 percent has been recycled. And wherever the plastic ends up, it has a good chance of finding its way into

waterways. These eventually dump it into the oceans, where it can persist for centuries.

Some reasons why plastic is such a problem for birds:

- Plastic debris may look like food, smell like food, and float like food.
- The animals fill up with plastic (no nutritional value) and basically starve to death.
- Parents unwittingly collect plastic debris or prey containing microplastics to feed to their chicks.
- Sharp edges may puncture the digestive tract and other internal organs.
- Birds are at risk from the toxic effects of the chemical coating on plastics.
- Birds (and other animals) become entangled in plastic debris.
- For diving birds, the entanglement often results in drowning.
- Tightly wrapped plastic leads to infection of the constricted area.
- Restricted movement leads to greater risk from predators and less ability to forage.

Where Do We Go From Here?

A recent article in the journal *Science* (June 2020) used models to determine the efficacy of various interventions to reduce plastics. A major point was that mismanagement of plastic waste needs to be addressed globally. In many places, plastic is burned as a way to get rid of it. This is a major health hazard and does nothing to keep plastic particles out of the environment. In addition to environmental degradation, it is a



photo: Joseph C Boone, wikicommons

Satin Bowerbird at his bower filled with plastic

social justice issue with severe health consequences that disproportionately affect communities with emerging economies.

The authors note opportunities for improvement. They suggest that further investment in resource-efficient business models, reuse and refill systems, incentivizing collection for recycling, substitution of sustainable materials for plastics, better waste management technology, and focused government policies are necessary to reduce the problem of plastics.

During this pandemic, we might need to alter our habits in ways that are less than ideal. Out of cautious necessity, the ban on plastic bags imposed by many states has been lifted. Stores may disallow reusable bags. Take-out service is on the rise meaning increased prevalence of single-use dishware and utensils. It's ever more important to be aware of options and consequences.

What We Can Do About It

- Help raise awareness. This spring, the theme of World Migratory Bird Day was "Protect Birds: Be the Solution to Plastic Pollution!"
- Reduce your use of plastics, especially single-use, disposable plastic products. Cut out plastic cutlery, straws, single-use water bottles and cups. Drink tap water and utilize reusable water bottles.
- Try sealing food with wax-coated cloth instead of plastic wrap.

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Field Notes: Summer 2020

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

Calliope Hummingbird, Common Grackle, Red-eyed Vireo, Northern Waterthrush

The weather for the period was more or less normal, with a hot spell at the end. As is typical, some of the far northern breeders were already headed south after failed attempts at breeding during the latter portion of the period. Much larger numbers will head south in the next two-to-four months.

Abbreviations: Fern Ridge Reservoir (FRR), Oregon Bird Records Committee (ORBC), South Jetty of the Siuslaw River (SJSR)



Photo: Dan Pancamo, wikicommons

Calliope Hummingbird



Photo: dfaulder, wikicommons

Common Grackle

WATERFOWL TO SHOREBIRDS

Canvasback ♂	July 3	FRR - Royal	MS	Rare during the breeding season
Canvasback ♀	July 14	FRR - Royal	SH	A breeding pair?
Common Nighthawk	June/July	Eugene/Springfield	M.ob.	More reports than the last few years
Black-chinned Hummingbird	June 13	Leaburg area	M&SA	About twenty records for Lane Co.
Calliope Hummingbird	July 12	Warner Mtn area	SH,VB	Rare breeder in the high Cascades
Calliope Hummingbird	July 17	Cottage Grove area	SS	Quite rare in the valley this time of year
Black-necked Stilt (ad & 2 juv)	July 1	FRR - Royal	AC,TJ	Nesting again this year
American Avocet	July 29	FRR - Royal	GM	Rare during fall migration
Marbled Godwit	July 3	SJSR - crab dock	AC,VT	A little earlier than normal
Semipalmated Sandpiper	June 29	FRR - Royal	GM	A little earlier than normal
Wilson's Snipe	June 17	S Coyote Unit - FRR	JGe	Uncommon breeder in the valley
Solitary Sandpiper	July 17	FRR - Royal	MS	Rare during fall migration
Wandering Tattler	July 22	Strawberry Hill	JW	First report for fall migration
Lesser Yellowlegs	July 1	FRR - Royal	AC,TJ	A little earlier than normal

GULLS TO VIREOS

Sabine's Gull	July 14	Siltcoos River mouth	RR	Rare for the breeding season
Heerman's Gull	July 17	Siuslaw River mouth	AC,JGa	Normal time for northward movement
Marbled Murrelet (100+)	July 3	Bray Point area	AC,VT	Very high numbers for recent years
Cassin's Auklet	July 17	Siuslaw River mouth	AC,JGa	Uncommon during the breeding season
Storm-Petrel sp. (dark-rumped)	July 10	Siltcoos River area	TG-T	If accepted by the OBRC - Lane Co. first
Black-crowned Night-Heron	June 4	Danebo Pond	VT	Rarely seen during breeding season
White-faced Ibis	July 2	FRR -Royal	RA	Rare during breeding season
Long-eared Owl	July 30	Lorane area	DK	Rarely found during breeding season
Am. Three-toed Woodpecker	June 20	Scott Lake area	AC,et al	They breed in the high Cascades
Am. Three-toed Woodpecker	July 4	Gold Lake road	JL	Adults feeding young in nest
Black-backed Woodpecker	June 20	Scott Lake area	AC,et al	They breed in the high Cascades
Black-backed Woodpecker	July 17	Ollalie Mtn	LG	In recent burn - farther west than normal
Ash-throated Flycatcher	June 2	Steward Pond	EB	Continuation of the large spring numbers
Ash-throated Flycatcher	June 9	Delta Ponds	JL	Continuation of the large spring numbers
Red-eyed Vireo	July 1	Finn Rock Reach	RR	The only sighting for this year!

SWALLOWS TO WARBLERS

Bank Swallow	July 14	FRR - Royal	JS	A little earlier than normal
Horned Lark	July 2	FRR - Royal	JL	Uncommon in this area during breeding
Mountain Bluebird	June 4	Wild Iris Ridge	VB	Rare in the valley during breeding season

SWALLOWS TO WARBLERS CONTINUED

Mountain Bluebird.....	July 2.....	Taylor Burn Rd.....	A&TM	They breed in the high Cascades
Northern Mockingbird	June 2.....	Mt Pisgah	JH.....	Rare in the valley in breeding season
Northern Mockingbird	June 22.....	Siltcoos River mouth.....	DF.....	2nd year of sighting in breeding season
Cassin's Finch.....	July 6.....	Taylor Burn Rd.....	RR.....	They breed in the high Cascades
Brewer's Sparrow	July 10.....	FRR - Royal	JGa	A little earlier than normal
Vesper Sparrow	July 26.....	High Prairie- Oakridge.....	JL.....	Are they breeding in the area?
Grasshopper Sparrow	July 4.....	Alton Baker Park.....	JS,LJ	Singing in old landfill
Grasshopper Sparrow	July 22.....	S Coyote Unit - FRR.....	JGe	Possible breeding
Lincoln's Sparrow	July 17.....	FRR - Royal	MS	Rare away from the high Cascades
Common Grackle	July 9.....	FRR - Orchard Pt	BC.....	About the fifth record for Lane Co
Great-tailed Grackle	July 4.....	FRR - Royal	VT,NC.....	The first report since 2017
Northern Waterthrush.....	July 2.....	Mule Prairie.....	A&TM	First report from this area since 2002
Black-and-white Warbler.....	June 4.....	Owasso Bridge area.....	RH.....	Second breeding season report for Lane

AC Alan Contreras, A&TM Allison & Tom Mickel, BC Barbara Combs, DF Daniel Farrar, DK David Kennedy, EB Evan Burgess, GM Gerry Meenaghan, JGa Joshua Galpern, JGe Joel Geier, JH Jennifer Haynes, JL Joshua Little, JS John Sullivan, JW Jay Withgott, LG Linda Gilbert, LJ Laura Johnson, M&SA Marian & Steve Alter, MS Martin Stervander, NC Nancy Clogston, RA Ramiro Aragon, RH Rich Hoyer, RR Roger Robb, SH Sally Hill, SS Steve Stump, TG-T Torry Gage-Tomlinson, TJ Tye Jeske, VB Vickie Buck, VT Vjera Thompson. **M.ob.** signifies many observers.

Bird Walk Coordinator Needed!

Lane Audubon is looking for a volunteer to plan the 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 rules allow us to gather in small groups again.

Online Resources for Lane County Birders

We've posted these before, but they are so useful that they bear repeating.

- Birding News on the American Birding Association's Oregon Birding Online (OBOL) website offers the primary bird-sighting listserv for Oregon: birding.aba.org/maillist/OR0. First click on Home, then scroll down to the OBOL link. It can be sorted to include postings from Lane County, other counties and regions in Oregon, and even for other states and countries. To set your list for local sightings, go to Birding News. Scroll down in the search field at the top, and choose OR-Lane County or, for a more limited list, OR-Willamette Valley. Sightings by local birders, along with occasional bird-related comments, will show up in your email, and it's all free.
- Birding Eugene is another useful online site for local birders: thefarleys.us/BirdingEugene/Welcome.html.

This is a website that details birding spots close to Eugene. To visit a site, just click on the name

in the list at the top. Each page introduces birding sites of interest, describing key features of the area, indicates the birds likely to be seen there, and includes several pictures of birds common to the site. By clicking on the name of a bird, one is taken to the page for that species maintained by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. That page provides background information about the bird, including a recording of its song.

- Willamette Valley Birding Trail is a website for those who want to travel a little farther afield: oregonbirdingtrails.org/willamettevalley.htm. This website provides resources for planning your visit to this trail and has links to eight other Oregon birding trails. Each includes a trail guide with maps and information about the birds that you can look for along the trail.

Links for these and other resources are listed in the Web Links section of the Resources listing on LCAS's website: laneaudubon.org/resources/links.

Zoom Program Meeting Tuesday, September 15, 7:00 pm

Dennis Arendt, 541.221.3691, dennisarendt@gmail.com



From Our President *continued from page 1*

more than you thought possible by observing the birds and animals that are in your yard? Being forced to stay home and watch the world in your backyard can be a revelation of the wonderment and solace nature provides.

Keep looking and keep learning about these animals who are our neighbors. It may open your mind and heart to them and help to make your world seem more interesting. Time in nature gives us a chance to reevaluate our priorities and values. I know that has been my experience and has helped me calm my mind through this time!

The coronavirus has required many changes in our lives, including to our upcoming Program Meetings. **Fall's Audubon meetings will be online only.** The meetings will be "live" on Zoom, but also recorded so that you can access them from the website afterwards. Our first Zoom program meeting will be on Tuesday, September 15, at 7. Check the LCAS webpage (lanecountyaudubon.org) for instructions on how to access the meeting. Presenters for the fall meetings have been revised as well. Doctoral thesis changes and a job in Switzerland have forced two of the scheduled speakers to cancel their programs. Doing Zoom meetings will be new for us. We hope you like them. Because the programs will be available online for a long time, perhaps even more people will be able to enjoy them.

Dead Trees: Why We Need Them



Ken Bevis is now our first speaker. Ken is an accomplished natural history educator and wildlife biologist whose entertaining environmental conservation lectures focus primarily on the birds and forests of the Pacific Northwest. His

presentation will be about dead trees. Fortunately, he is very humorous and has the ability to make something as seemingly dull as dead trees exciting. He will elaborate on the many creatures that find food and housing there: slugs, bugs, and salamanders for starters. If you have ever wondered how many ways dead trees can be valuable, tune into this program.

Ken Bevis is currently the Stewardship Biologist for the Washington Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) Small Forest Landowner office. He helps landowners learn how to manage small private forest lands for the benefits to wildlife. For 15 previous years, he worked for the U. S. Forest Service, Yakama Indian Nation, and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. He was one of first biologists to look at the Spotted Owl situation in Washington.

Originally from Virginia, he has made Washington his home since 1986. He holds a BS in Forestry and Wildlife from Virginia Tech (1979) and a MS in Biology from

Central Washington University (1994), where he studied woodpeckers and owls, and deepened his knowledge and appreciation of dead trees.

He frequently teaches workshops and classes for Washington State University Extension programs. An accomplished singer-songwriter, he has also acquired some local renown as a nature troubadour. Living surrounded by nature in the beautiful Methow Valley of far North-Central Washington, he creates songs inspired by a deep sense of wonder, passion, and insights on the natural world. Ken says that his songs emerge and music flows as he watches, remembers things felt, smelled, and lived. FMI: To hear or order his songs and albums: kenbevis.com/music.



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

October issue: September 1
November issue: October 1

Submit material to Karen Irmischer at quailkaren1@gmail.com

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

Printed on postconsumer waste paper.
Layout by Kerry Lutz.

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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

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To pay by PayPal, go to laneaudubon.org/support/join

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Gift memberships Lane Audubon's Living Legacy program

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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

Herb Wisner's Bird-rich Memoir Now Available on Amazon

Long-time LCAS board member Herb Wisner, now 98, has completed his memoir, *My Life... and Then Some: A Memoir?* Herb's bird-filled autobiography is available on Amazon! The following teaser is shortened slightly from what appears on the Amazon website:

For 98 years, Herb Wisner has lived a remarkable life. Raised in an extraordinary childhood home near the New Jersey shore, his journeys took him to colleges in Alabama and New York, to overseas exploits while in the Army Airforce during WWII, and to a teaching career that stretched from rural Unadilla, New York, to Eugene, Oregon.

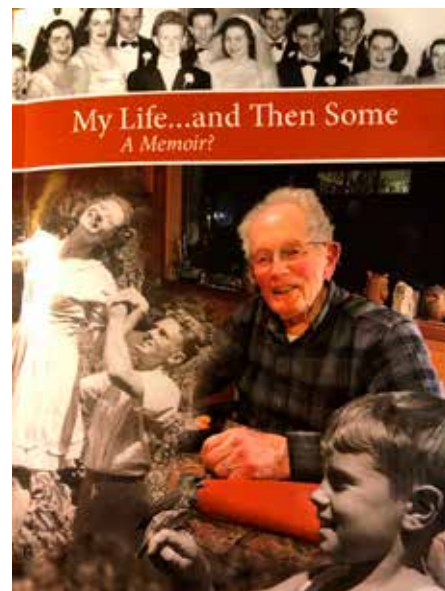
Accompanied by hundreds of photos, Herb's stories span nearly a century. They include vivid portraits of family and friends whose paths have crossed his. He remembers them all in his unique voice infused with gentle humor.

Born in 1922, he describes his rich childhood growing up on an old 5-acre estate near Asbury Park, New Jersey, where his parents, aunts, uncles, and cousins all lived together,

running the place as a summer hotel for guests who returned year after year to spend the entire summer. He paints vivid pictures of little-known, behind-the-scenes situations when stationed in Italy, Libya, and Egypt during WWII, where he and fellow meteorologists were the ones to decide when the weather was safe for pilots to fly. Returning home from the war, he details meeting Ruth Usher, the love of his life, and changing career directions to become a teacher and the lifelong naturalist he still is.

Teaching is in Herb's blood. His father, aunts, and uncles were teachers. From them, he also inherited a love of birds and the natural world. You will share Herb's deep appreciation of birds and the natural world, and his life-long love of teaching—from instructing not-always-attentive junior high and high school students in Unadilla, New York, to inspiring hundreds of students in the biology department at the University of Oregon.

After retirement, he continued to teach through the numerous slide lectures he gave for many



organizations in the Eugene area. He also served as a guide for natural history tours in Oregon offered by Elderhostel (now Road Scholar). Many he taught still come up to Herb to exclaim “you were the best teacher I ever had!” Herb Wisner is a man who loves his family and friends, and his family and friends love him back. That love shines throughout this book, as his daughter and two sons grow up, yet return again and again to be with him and their mom, Ruth. And still Herb has stories to tell.

FMI or to purchase: [amazon.com/My-Life-Then-Some-Memoir/dp/1734388838](https://www.amazon.com/My-Life-Then-Some-Memoir/dp/1734388838)

Conservation *continued from page 2*

- Buy metal razors and wood-handled toothbrushes.
- Don't use balloons; find earth-friendlier ways to be festive.
- Use matches instead of plastic lighters (one of the most common items found in albatross bellies).
- Avoid buying items packaged with excessive amounts of plastic. Buy items that come in paper and glass bottles. Buy bulk.
- Recycle whatever plastic you do use.
- Support businesses that use sustainable packaging or offer plastic alternatives.
- Participate in beach and community cleanups.
- Let elected officials know that you support policies to reduce plastic, create and improve all facets of the recycling chain, and better manage plastic waste.

Thanks for a Job Well Done

Thank You to Ramiro Aragon for completing a bird survey and list for a property near Cheshire, Oregon. He was helped by John Sullivan on one of the visits. The 219-acre property was designated a perpetual wetland by the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the owner requested our help in supplying a bird list. Ramiro did a great job!



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your *Quail* subscription expired?
See page 6 to renew!



LCAS Bird Walks & Events

Rebecca Waterman, 541.653.3354, fieldtrips@laneaudubon.org

Bon Voyage to Vaux's Swifts at Agate Hall

Lane County Audubon Society will host two of its annual fall swift events outside Agate Hall at sunset on consecutive Fridays, September 4th and 11th.

We will spread out to maintain social-distancing, so please be careful of your and other's safety! Vaux's Swifts use the chimney to roost for the night as they gather prior to migration. We may see thousands of birds entering the chimney, but there is no guarantee!

It is fun to observe the swifts before they fly off to Central and South America for the winter. Look for the LCAS banner at the south parking lot of Agate Hall. Stop by and enjoy this annual natural phenomenon. It is free! And conveniently close to Prince Puckler's Ice Cream, which is not free but can be a low-cost addition to your evening's fun.

FMI see the Vaux's Swift page on the LCAS website: laneaudubon.org/docs/vauxs-swift, or call 541.343.8664.

The Mysterious Lives of Birds Who Never Come Down Except to Nest

Swifts spend all their time in the sky. Common Swifts are the big cousins of our Vaux's Swifts and are found throughout Europe during breeding season. They fly south to Africa, to equatorial and sub-equatorial regions for the winter. What can their journeys tell us about the future?

If you'd like to know more about these mysterious birds, check out this link: nytimes.com/2020/07/29/magazine/vesper-flights.html



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Photo: Bettina Arrigoni, Wiki common

Vaux's Swift



Photo: Maron Bernisen, Wiki common

Common Swift