



The

March 2017

Quail

News from Lane County Audubon Society



From Our President

Helping Anna's Thrive Through Winter

Maeve Sowles

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tgodsil@gmail.com



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Over the past few winter months, my husband and I have hosted two males and one female Anna's Hummingbirds at our property. This is the fifth year we have had them consistently all winter. We live at a 1,000-foot elevation, so tend to have cooler temperatures than the valley floor. Many Willamette Valley folks have been hosting over-wintering Anna's here for more than a decade. It has become normal to see these birds during the winter months. Through the cold, harsh ice storm (we were without power for 5 days) with its snow and sub-freezing nights, we tried to keep the sugar water feeders thawed for them. My husband would get out early to change out the warm feeders for the birds, having brought them in for the night. We even rigged up heat lamps and extension cords to keep them thawed during the day. Feeding wild birds is a big commitment!



A woman from the Coos Bay area called the Lane Audubon phone to report she has been hosting about 40 Anna's Hummingbirds since the fall. They stay until early spring and then move on, probably heading north and east into the interior of the state. She said it was more typical for her to have seven or eight birds, so 40 was a new record for her!

These birds not only eat sugar water, but also hawk tiny insects from the air and glean spiders and spider eggs from trees and plants. They seem to be thriving here during the winter, in a surprising feat of adaptation. Is it because of loss of habitat farther south and/or the warmer winters in the north with more desirable habitat

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California Condor Recovery Update

Debbie Schlenoff

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Rowdy teenagers were getting into some trouble and people were concerned about their ability to comfortably fit into a complex society. The solution: a mentorship program where an experienced adult was able to keep the rambunctious youngsters in line and engage their interest. This mentor program has been working successfully for years as part of the California Condor recovery effort, where conservationists and scientists work hard to save the condor from extinction and reintroduce the birds into the wild. In 1987, only 22 individuals were found in the wild and shortly thereafter were taken into captivity. Thanks to a comprehensive recovery program with its focus on careful breeding, mentorship and training programs, there are now over 400 condors with just over half of them living in the wild.

It is amazing to see these birds soaring in their natural habitat. California Condors have a 9-10 foot wingspan and may soar up to 150 miles per day. These scavengers use their keen eyesight to search for carrion and play an important “clean-up” role in the environment. They are clever birds that live and eat in social groups, are strongly bonded, and often mate for life. Their slow reproductive output is one of the challenges to recovering these birds. While they may live for 50-60 years, they don’t begin reproducing until they are 6-7 years old. They lay only one egg at a time and do not breed every year. Chicks learn to fly when they are about 6 months old, but will stay with their devoted parents for many more months.

The biggest threat to California Condors in the wild is ingesting lead shot or bullet fragments in the animal carcasses or hunter-discarded gut piles on which they feed. Bald and Golden Eagles and other raptors poisoned by lead are brought into care centers throughout the area and often die an agonizing death. In addition to the threat to scavengers, studies have shown that even meat cleaned by hunters before cooking still contains lead. We have banned lead in paint and gasoline to protect our families, and it is now time to ban its use in ammunition. California has instituted a step-wise phasing out of lead ammunition, which goes fully into effect in 2019. One drawback for hunters is that non-



Photo by Brandt/USFWS

lead ammunition is more expensive. Given the market for ammunition in California, the price will come down. The stabilization of price, the demonstrated accuracy of non-lead shot, the health benefits to people, and the very lives of magnificent animals like California Condors and Bald Eagles are well worth the regulation. Note that hunting privileges will not be restricted in any way; there would simply be a requirement to use non-toxic shot. In good news, the outgoing director of the US Fish and Wildlife Service issued a directive in January that non-toxic ammunition and tackle be used on Service lands. Whether this directive will hold under the new administration is uncertain.

Many hunters who use lead shot are not aware of the threats to people and wildlife. Education will help, and this in turn could help the effort to expand the range of the California Condor, which historically flew throughout the West. It is exciting to know that they may be back in Oregon within the next two years. Several groups, including the National Park Service, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Yurok tribe are proposing to expand the project by releasing birds into Redwood National Park in Northern California, where they have not been seen in 100 years. California Condors are considered sacred by Yurok people. There is also a plan by the Nez Perce to investigate potential release around Hell’s Canyon in northeast Oregon.

A public scoping period about the project is in progress. Right now public agencies seem to be leaning toward

(continued on page 4)

Field Notes: January 2017



• Golden Eagle
• Virginia Rail

• Townsend's Solitaire
• Palm Warbler

Tom and Allison Mickel

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It was cooler than normal with even a little snow at the first of the month. A few of the hardy early migrants started to arrive for the summer much earlier than normal. It was surprising to see that a few of the semi-hardy wintering species survived the cold snowy weather in December and early January.

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

WATERBIRDS

Canvasback	Jan 30	Oakridge	MLS	Rare at this location
Long-tailed Duck	Jan 6	Ocean Haven	PO	Normally one along coast in winter
Ruddy Duck (1500)	Jan 19	Siltcoos Lake	AC	They winter in large numbers here
American White Pelican	Jan	FRR	m.ob.	Larger numbers than normal
American Bittern	Jan 15	FRR - Royal Ave	MP	Rare in the winter
Black-crowned Night-Heron (3)	Jan 29	Kirk Park	BA	Rare in the winter

HAWKS to GULLS

Osprey	Jan 31	SJSR	fide AC	Wintering the last couple of years
Golden Eagle	Jan 31	Junction City area	BC	Rare in the valley
Virginia Rail	Jan 29	Mercer Lake area	SB	Not uncommon along coast in winter
Virginia Rail (2)	Jan 22	FRR - Fisher Butte	KW	Rare in the valley in winter
Sandhill Crane	Jan 20	SE Eugene	TM	Rare in the winter
Semipalmated Plover	Jan 3	FRR - Orchard Point	SH	Rare in the winter
Lesser Yellowlegs	Jan 14	FRR - Royal Ave	ID	Rare in the winter
Glaucous Gull	Jan 26	Bob Creek mouth	NN	Small numbers in the winter

PIGEONS to FINCHES

Band-tailed Pigeon (2)	Jan 16	Sutton Lake	TB	Occasionally winter on coast
Band-tailed Pigeon	Jan 23	Delta Ponds	SH	About a month & a half earlier than normal
Short-eared Owl (2)	Jan 6	Franklin Rd	JS,JL	Only report this winter!
Say's Phoebe	Jan 3	Alvadore Rd	RR	Another wintering bird
Say's Phoebe	Jan 21	Airport area	PS	Another wintering bird
Northern Shrike	Jan 13	Bond Rd	JS	Very few reports this winter
Horned Lark (7)	Jan 27	Delta Ponds area	CS	Normally found in grass fields
Tree Swallow (15)	Jan 3	FRR - Royal Ave	TMe,TM	About a month earlier than normal
Tree Swallow (2)	Jan 3	Siltcoos River	GR	About a month earlier than normal
Townsend's Solitaire	Jan 14	E Alton Baker	RR	Rare in the valley in winter
American Robin	mid-Jan	throughout valley	m.ob.	Large flocks everywhere
Northern Mockingbird	Jan 14	Florence	SH,DP	They winter in very small numbers
Orange-crowned Warbler (2)	Jan 2	EWEB - Roosevelt	VT	Winter in small numbers most years
Orange-crowned Warbler	Jan 16	Sutton Lake	TB	Winter in small numbers most years
Orange-crowned Warbler (2)	Jan 16	Siltcoos River	GR	Winter in small numbers most years
Palm Warbler	Jan 5	SW Eugene	SG	Rare in the valley
Chipping Sparrow	Jan 29	River Rd area	LMa	Rare in the winter
Swamp Sparrow	Jan 14	FRR - Royal Ave	ID	A normal wintering location
Swamp Sparrow	Jan 29	EWEB - Roosevelt	BC	Unusual wintering location
Harris's Sparrow	Jan	Bond Rd	m.ob.	Seen throughout the month
Harris's Sparrow	Jan 4	W Eugene	fide AP	Another wintering bird

(continued on page 4)

Field Notes (continued from page 3)

Brown-headed Cowbird	Jan 3	FRR - Coyote Ck	JM	Occasionally winter in small numbers
Brambling	Jan	Sutton Lake	m.ob.	Seen throughout the month
Cassin's Finch	Jan 3	Alton Baker Park	SH	Rare in the valley
Pine Siskin (6)	Jan 22	Camas Ridge School	JGa	Rare this winter
Late Reports				
Golden Eagle	Dec 23	Walterville area	SD	Rarely in the valley
Bullock's Oriole	Nov-Feb	Florence	MH	Rare in the winter

AC Alan Contreras, AP Al Prigge, BA Bob Archer, BC Barbara Combs, CS Caryn Stoess, DP Diane Pettey, GR Glenn Reubon, ID Isaac Demzer, JGa Joshua Galpern, JL Joshua Little, JM Joyce McCahill, JS John Sullivan, KW Kirsten Wert, LMa Libbie Marshall, MH Mary Holm, MP Margie Paris, MLS Mary Lee Sayre, m.ob. many observers, NN Nels Nelson, PO Pam Otley, PS Priscilla Sokolowski, RR Roger Robb, SB Sean Burns, SD Sue Dickson, SG Steve Gordon, SH Sally Hill, TB Trent Bray, TMe Thomas Meinzen, TM Tom Mickel, VT Vjera Thompson. **Fide** indicates a sighting reported by the listed observer.

From the President (continued from page 1)

for them? Our cold events are fairly short-lived, so they get a reprieve when the “normal temperatures” return. Being able to find food and shelter here gives them an early edge on the nesting season. They have their territory set up and are ready for action when the sun breaks through.

By mid-February the males were displaying, and the female was collecting nesting material. She would fly into the window boxes and skylights to collect spider webs. I have not located her nest, since we have many big trees nearby. I will be watching for her offspring to appear at the feeders, and wondering just how early they will be out of the nest this year!

As the days get longer, it makes me happy to know they have had a safe place to shelter and eat throughout the winter. Spring will arrive at the equinox, March 20th, when the lengths of day and night are equal. It is always energizing to have more hours of daylight, and to know that spring has officially arrived!

Conservation Column (continued from page 2)

Alternative 1, which would classify the birds released in Redwood National Park as an “experimental population” removing several protections that would be afforded to them under the Endangered Species Act. We endorse Alternative 2, which gives them full protection under the ESA. The proposals will be refined and a draft released for public comment this summer. Although the first public comment period closed at the end of January, you can still contact officials to voice your support for the reintroduction of condors and request appropriate steps to protect them from lead poisoning. You can also help by spreading the word and educating hunters and others about the problems with lead ammunition. It may take a while for official progress but, in the meantime, voluntary cooperation from an informed public will go a long way toward protecting the condors and other marvelous birds of prey.

An on-line letter in support of the project can be found here: action.biologicaldiversity.org/p/dia/action3/common/public/?action_KEY=17557

Or contact David M. Roemer, Deputy Superintendent, Redwood National Park, 707.465.7700

OPB coverage of the issue: opb.org/news/article/condor-reintroduction-in-the-northwest-will-put-the-scavengers-in-leads-way/

Official info on the proposal: parkplanning.nps.gov/documentsList.cfm?projectID=66364

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Birds and Bugs, with Rick Ahrens

Judy Brown

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Much of migration is driven by the seasonal availability of bugs in the northern latitudes. In this lively and informative slide show, we'll look at numerous examples and discover how important birds are to the overall health of various ecosystems.

A naturalist for over 30 years in the Eugene area, Rick is associated with Nearby Nature, West Eugene Wetlands, Mt. Pisgah Arboretum, and others. His grandmother sparked a lifelong interest in birds, and in the last 20 years he has become interested in "bugs" of various sorts, especially butterflies and spiders.



March Program Meeting

Birds and Bugs, with Rick Ahrens



Photo by Jim Maloney

Tuesday, March 28, 7:30 p.m.

**Eugene Garden Club
1645 High St., Eugene**

Good Earth Show Keeps LCAS Booth Volunteers Busy

Lane County Audubon Society was in the midst of the action again this year at the Good Earth Home, Garden & Living Show, which ran from Friday, January 20, to Sunday, January 22, at the Lane County Fairgrounds. A steady stream of people from all over Lane County visited the LCAS booth to share their birding experiences and ask questions about avian life in our area.

LCAS is fortunate to have a dedicated crew of booth volunteers who enjoy sharing their enthusiasm for birds and their habitats. Because the Good Earth Show draws a crowd with similar enthusiasms, this has become our premiere booth event each year.

Thanks to everyone at the booth: Flo Alvergue, Connie Berglund, Judy Brown, Theresa Burnett, Hilary Dearborn,

Margot Fetz, Barb Foreman, Dolly Marshall, Dianne McInnes, Sally O'Donnell, Nancy Radius, Bruce Stermer, Caryn Stoess, Dave Stone, Janie Thomas, Vjera Thompson, Joyce Trawle, and Susanne Twight-Alexander.

LCAS was also represented at the show by Dick Lamster, who gave a presentation about making backyard habitat safer for birds, and by Kris Kirkeby, who led a session on bird identification. Thanks to both of them as well.

If you're interested in helping LCAS spread the word about birds and our educational and conservation programs, contact Ron Renschler at 541.345.0834 or e-mail christyandron@qwest.net.

Lane Audubon 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 support 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 County Audubon Society 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

Visit laneaudubon.org



Deadlines:

April issue: March 4
May-June issue: April 1

Submit material to
Karen Irscher
quailkaren@earthlink.net

The Quail is the newsletter of Lane County Audubon Society, which is a chartered chapter of National Audubon Society. Nine issues are published per year (*May-June, July-Aug. and Dec.-Jan. are double issues*).

Local members of National Audubon Society receive a free subscription to *The Quail* but are encouraged to voluntarily join Lane County Audubon Society.

Subscriptions: Contact Tim Godsil at 541.915.8852 or tgodsil@gmail.com.

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Lane Audubon Membership Dues

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

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Mail this form and your payment to:

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Community Calendar, Events, and Opportunities

A service to Lane Audubon members

Friends of Buford Park

Saturday, March 11, 8 a.m.-11 a.m.

Turtle Flats Bird Count

Bring your own binoculars, snacks, and water. Dress for the weather. Turtle Flats is located at 86641 Franklin Boulevard East, Eugene. Park at the gate.

FMI or to register: 541.344.8350 or email Michelle Emmons at volunteer@bufordpark.org with Coast Fork Bird Count in the subject header. Include your name and phone number.

Mt. Pisgah Arboretum

Sunday, March 19, 8 a.m.-11 a.m.

Early Spring Bird Walk

Join Julia Siporin and Joni Dawning for a monthly bird walk intended for people with all levels of birding experience. Vocalizations, habitat, and behavior clues will be used to identify winter and year-round residents. Come discover the Arboretum's avian diversity. Please bring binoculars. Option to continue until noon for those who are interested. Rain or shine. Meet at the Arboretum Visitor Center. \$5, members free.

FMI: 541.741.4110 or mountpisgaharboretum.org

Southern Willamette Ornithological Club (SWOC)

Monday, March 20, 7 p.m.

Birds of Southern India and Sri Lanka, with Sarah Smith de Vasconcellos

After attendees share recent bird sightings, the speaker will show slides on her experiences with the above-mentioned areas, including the remote Andaman Islands. All three areas have numerous endemics, especially owls, including the mythical Serendip Scops Owl of Sri Lanka. Photos of India's charismatic megafauna, such as elephants and gaur (Indian Bison) will also be shown. Location: McNail-Riley house, 601 W 13th Ave., Eugene, at the NW corner of W. 13th Ave. and Jefferson St., by the old Lincoln School. All are welcome to this free monthly gathering.

FMI: ellencantor@gmail.com

Mt. Pisgah Arboretum

Saturday, March 25, 1 p.m.-3 p.m.

Aquatic Amphibians Walk

Mount Pisgah has great habitats for breeding Willamette Valley amphibians. Join Tom Titus, biologist and author, for a talk and walk through our riparian areas and learn about the unique assemblage of amphibians that rely on healthy aquatic habitats for reproduction. We'll listen for Pacific chorus frogs, watch for roughskin newts in amplexus (mating), and search for egg masses of the Northwestern salamander. Bring rubber boots. Rain or Shine. Meet at the Arboretum Visitor Center. \$5, members free.

Sunday, March 26, 10 a.m.-noon

Wildflower Walk

Join Arboretum site assistant and botanist Matt Groberg for an exploration of our early spring wildflowers. Learn the identification of up to 20 native wildflowers. Perfect for beginning and intermediate plant enthusiasts. Leave with a greater understanding and appreciation of the Willamette Valley's native flora. Rain or shine. Meet at the Arboretum Visitor Center. Don't forget your parking pass. \$5, members free.

FMI: 541.741.4110 or mountpisgaharboretum.org



13th Annual Pacific City Birding and Blues Festival

April 21-23

Enjoy a children's art activity, multiple guided field trips, paddle trips and a live bird-of-prey presentation. Presentations also include noted bird photographer Paul Bannick speaking on owls, Robert Fields on the albatross colony of Midway Atoll, and Peter Pearsall on North American deserts.

FMI or to register: 541.867.4550 or birdingandblues.org/scheduleofevents

Bird-related Volunteer Opportunity

Consider assisting the Northwest Oregon District of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) at its bird-banding station in the West Eugene Wetlands. At the BLM's Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS) station, participants will help provide kids with real-world, interactive lessons about research and conservation efforts for resident and migratory bird populations.

Volunteer positions include: Net openers/extractors, data recorders, and conservation education leaders. Education leaders should be at least amateur birders and be excited to connect kids in grades 6-12 with nature through the joy of birds. Activities will take place near Fern Ridge Reservoir on selected Thursday and Friday mornings between the end of May and the end of October.

FMI or to sign up, contact Wildlife Biologist John Deluca: jdeluca@blm.gov or 541.683.6229

March Program Meeting

Birds and Bugs, with Rick Ahrens



Tuesday, Mar. 28, 7:30 p.m.


Eugene Garden Club
1645 High St., Eugene



NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY
LANE COUNTY CHAPTER

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Bird Walks and Events

Jim Maloney

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Third Saturday Bird Walk

Saturday, March 18, 8 a.m.

Vjera Thompson will lead this walk along the new Millrace Bike and Walking Trail in Springfield. She has been an avid birder in the Eugene/Springfield area for many years.

We will meet to carpool at the usual location, in the east parking lot at South Eugene High School, then leaving at 8 a.m.

If you would prefer to meet at the walk location, meet at the trailhead behind Booth Kelly, 307 South 5th Street in Springfield.

To reach this location, head south on Springfield's 5th St. After Dutch Bros., cross the railroad tracks and turn left. Expect us there 8:30-ish.

Birders of all levels are welcome. We are friendly to folks looking to explore the fun of appreciating birds. Our intention is to return by noon.

A \$3 donation is requested to help support Lane County Audubon's education and outreach programs.

If you need binoculars let us know ahead of time, as we have a few to lend. For questions or more information, contact Jim Maloney at jimgmal@comcast.net or 541.968.9249.

Together for Birds

In light of recent moves to roll back environmental protections, the American Bird Conservancy is circulating a petition entitled Together for the Birds. The group encourages everyone who cares about birds to sign this petition. It asks the new Administration and Congress to protect conservation priorities that protect wildlife and the environment we share with them.

FMI: tinyurl.com/zaswrnd