



# The Quail

February 2009

NEWS FROM LANE COUNTY AUDUBON SOCIETY

## FROM OUR PRESIDENT



### Appreciating nests in winter

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After the first winter storms have stripped the trees bare the scenery changes dramatically. As I drive familiar routes to work or errands, I see a skyline that reveals nests previously concealed by leaves on the deciduous trees. High up in the trees crow and squirrel nests remain intact, even after heavy winds. The nests, now in full view, were built well enough to withstand wind and rain and raise a family. What more can be asked of a home?



Each bird species builds a unique nest structure using materials found nearby. Birds are quite resourceful and will include human materials if preferred natural materials are not available. Seeing a nest in winter is instructive as to the needs of the breeding birds in our area. The location, materials and ability to hide from predators gives them a chance for breeding success. The nest site needs to remain undisturbed at the critical breeding season. Look closely at the nests now, rather than when the birds are using them.

Birds are very secretive about their nests. I have watched two Bushtits at the UO campus displaying nesting behavior, but did not know where they were building their nest. After the leaves had dropped off a small deciduous tree, the pendulous nest became visible. This finely woven pocket nest constructed of mosses, grass, lichens and spider webs was made to look like part of the tree, and, although it had been blocked from view by the leaves, was masterfully disguised.

Robins build a bowl-like nest with grasses, twigs, mosses and mud. They choose a sturdy shrub or tree with a fork in a branch as a platform. The female carries materials, including mud, in her beak to cement everything together. I have watched a robin build in an oak near our house, making trip after trip with grasses and mud in her beak. Her nest spot was barely visible during the summer, but once the leaves dropped, I could see the product of her hard work. She lined the inner cup with fine grasses that act as

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## The Northern Spotted Owl and natural selection

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*"...from so simple a beginning, endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been, and are being, evolved."*

—Charles Darwin

Charles Darwin published *On the Origin of Species* 150 years ago in 1859. On February 12, we celebrate his 200th birthday. Darwin's ideas provided a framework for biology that explains how populations of living things came to have the traits that they have, and how they can be extraordinary in their diversity and yet share connections based on common ancestry. Darwin was slow and deliberate about developing his ideas and much of his work was formulated after returning home from his famous voyage aboard the HMS *Beagle*. It was back in England that he consulted ornithologist John Gould who identified his specimens from the Galapagos Islands as different species of finches. Darwin came to understand that the bill size of the different species had changed over succeeding generations to accommodate the different sizes of seed and insects that they consumed. Today, changes in the average beak and body size of Galapagos finches associated with changes in climate and food availability continue to be documented. Darwin's theory of natural selection includes the idea that living things show variation in many of the traits they possess and often these traits are heritable. If a variant of a trait allows an organism to have a better chance of surviving and reproducing in a given environment, then individuals with this trait will produce relatively more offspring and pass the trait on. Over time, the trait will become more common in the population. More favorable traits are *selected* and persist through the generations. Therefore, we see that organisms in a given habitat have traits that are adaptations for that particular environment. Darwin's

ideas about natural selection should, and often do, determine how public policy is enacted. Destruction and degradation of habitat are among the biggest threats that wildlife faces.

### The plight of the Northern Spotted Owl

The Northern Spotted Owl is a symbol for the dependence of a species on a particular habitat. The owls rely on old growth habitat for nesting (cavities in large old trees), hunting (mostly of rodents and other prey that live in the complex understory of old growth forests), and microclimate. They are adapted to this habitat of which less than 20% remains. In 1990 the Northern Spotted Owl was listed as *threatened* under the Endangered Species Act. The Northwest Forest Plan released in 1994 protected the owl and another 600 or so species that depend on old growth forests. These decisions were contentious and the battle continues to rage. Those involved in the plan understood that owl populations would continue to decline for a while and that even a concerted recovery effort would not produce stabilization for many decades. Yet the continued decline of spotted owl populations was used as an excuse to create a new forest plan which severely amplifies logging, including old growth. Lawsuits and settlements under the Bush administration reduced the amount of designated Critical Habitat for the Northern Spotted Owl (and by default, other old-growth dependent species) by over one and a half million acres. The Final Recovery Plan and Revised Designation of Critical Habitat for the Northern Spotted Owl were condemned by scientists and are

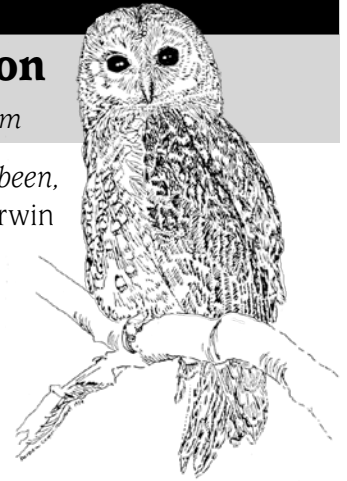
currently being challenged in court by Earthjustice on behalf of a number of organizations including the National Audubon Society.

### Recent legislation imperils species

The BLM has similarly rejected protests against the Western Oregon Plan Revision (WOPR), which would likewise eliminate forest habitat. The plan is being steamrolled through despite a letter of opposition from Oregon Governor Kulongoski who received thousands of messages from citizens concerned about a vast increase in logging and a reduction of water and habitat protections. The fate of the plan will be determined in the courts or decided by the next administration. Many groups are urging the public to voice their concern to the new administration at [www.change.gov](http://www.change.gov).

There's yet another change that will hinder our ability to protect species from degradation of the habitats to which they are adapted. Despite roughly 200,000 comments in opposition, a new regulatory change in the Endangered Species Act eliminates effective oversight by government scientists when a government project such as logging, mining, or building roads and dams, is proposed. The regulation also prevents action on behalf of species at risk from the effects of global warming. Congress

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## FIELD NOTES: NOVEMBER–DECEMBER 2008

### • Brown Pelicans late traveling south • Rare Clay-colored Sparrow • Merlins in Alton Baker • Heerman's Gull on Dexter Lake

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The weather was a real mixed bag in November and December. We started with warm, sunny, unusually dry weather before our typical winter rains set in, but then the rains gave way to a very cold snowy spell. The biggest news of the period was the late lingering Brown Pelicans along the coast. Pelicans typically head south before November, but good numbers were observed migrating into December this year.

#### WATERBIRDS

Ross's Goose	Dec. 19	Canary Rd. area	VD	A rare sighting near the coast
Tundra Swan (32)	Dec. 15	Deflation Plain	JS	A normal wintering location, but numbers have been quite low the last few years.
Mandarin Duck (male)	Dec. 7	Delta Ponds area	JH	Most likely a bird escaped from captivity.
Eurasian Wigeon	Dec. 2	Alton Baker Park	RR	There have been very few reports this winter.
Long-tailed Duck	Dec. 15	South Jetty, Siuslaw R.	JS	A normal winter location
Common Goldeneye	Dec. 28	Delta Ponds	DD	Rarely found at this location
Barrow's Goldeneye (3)	Dec. 29	Lane Memorial pond	PP	Not a normal location for this species
Eared Grebe	Nov. 10	Siuslaw River mouth	AC	They normally winter in small numbers here.
Brown Pelican (220)	Nov. 15	Heceta Head	AC	Large number for this late in the year
Brown Pelican (100)	Nov. 30	Heceta Head	AC, RH	Late in the year to sight this bird at all
Brown Pelican (90)	Dec. 15	South Jetty, Siuslaw R.	JS	An even later date to find any, much less 90!
Green Heron	Dec. 2	Alton Baker Park	RR	They winter in small numbers most years.

#### VULTURES & RAPTORS

Turkey Vulture	Nov. 7	Highway 126 & "Q" St.	TE	Late in the year for sightings except in the W. Eugene area
Turkey Vulture	Dec. 17	north Santa Clara	MRu	Either wintering numbers are increasing or they're foraging over a larger area than in past years.
Osprey	Nov. 22	Junction City pond	DF	Not normally found away from a major river this time of year
Osprey	Dec.	Willamette River	m. ob.	Numerous reports of a single bird around Delta Ponds and I-5 along the river
Bald Eagle (pair)	Nov. 24	Alton Baker Park	AM	The "Skinner Butte Pair" getting ready for another breeding season?
Rough-legged Hawk	Nov. 3	Eugene airport area	DF	First report for the winter season
Merlin (3)	Dec. 10	Alton Baker Park	LM et al.	High number for a small area
Prairie Falcon	Nov. 3	Eugene Airport area	DI	A species that winters in small numbers
Prairie Falcon	Dec. 30	Cantrell Rd.	HR	A normal location for this species

## FIELD NOTES: NOVEMBER–DECEMBER 2008, *continued*

### SHOREBIRDS & GULLS

Wilson's Snipe	Dec. 16	Skinner Butte	EC	Not a normal location for this species, especially in the snow
Red Phalarope (6)	Nov. 10	Klootchman	AC	Normal time for their southward migration
Heermann's Gull	Nov. 4	Dexter Reservoir	RS	Quite unusual inland
California Gull (5000 adults)	Nov. 15	Siuslaw Estuary	AC	An unusually high number
Herring Gull (100)	Dec. 15	South Jetty, Siuslaw R.	JS	A large number
Thayer's Gull (50)	Dec. 15	South Jetty, Siuslaw R.	JS	A large number
Glaucous Gull	Dec. 28	Florence CBC	fide RR	One bird normally found in the area
Glaucous Gull	Dec. 29	Alton Baker Park	DD	One bird occasionally winters in the area
Pigeon Guillemot	Nov. 10	Siuslaw River mouth	AC	A late date for sightings close to shore
Barn Owl	Nov. 8	E. Eugene	LM	Heard at night—the first in many years

### PASSERINES

Say's Phoebe	Nov. 4	Crow Rd.	DI	A late report for this late fall migrant
Northern Shrike	Nov. 5	Eugene Airport area	LM et al.	The first winter report from the valley
Black-throated Gray Warbler	Dec. 28	Florence CBC	fide RR	Very rarely found in winter
Summer Tanager	Nov. 12	Heceta Beach	DP	A possible female was briefly seen, but not found on subsequent attempt.
American Tree Sparrow	Dec. 15	South Jetty, Siuslaw R.	JS	A rare winter visitor from the north
Chipping Sparrow	Nov. 1	SW Eugene	DI	Late for this breeding species
Chipping Sparrow	Dec. 2	SW Eugene	SG	The same bird?
Clay-colored Sparrow	Dec. 28	Florence CBC	fide RR	Only about ten previous sightings in Lane Co.
Fox Sparrow (Red subspecies)	Nov. 9	SE Eugene	A&TM	The subspecies from eastern N. America not commonly found in Oregon
Swamp Sparrow (2)	Dec. 8	FRR—Perkins Peninsula	A&DH	A normal location for this wintering species

### Abbreviations:

**Deflation Plain** South Jetty of the Siuslaw River deflation plain; **FRR** Fern Ridge Reservoir; **Klootchman** Klootchman State Wayside

### Thank you, contributors!

EC Ellen Cantor, AC Alan Contreras, TE Tom Escue, DD Don DeWitt, VD Vern DiPietro, DF Daniel Farrar, SG Steve Gordon, A&DH Anne & Dan Heyerly, RH Rich Hoyer, JH Judy Hubbard, DI Dave Irons, LM Larry McQueen, A&TM Allison & Tom Mickel, PP Peter Patricelli, DP Diane Pettey, HR Holly Reinhard, RR Roger Robb, MRu Mark Rudolph, RS Randy Sinnott, JS John Sullivan



# 2008 Eugene Christmas Bird Count Report

## Notable trends and unusual sightings

by Dan Gleason

January 4, 2009 was the date of the 2008 Eugene Christmas Bird Count. After a week of wet weather, counters were pleased to have a dry and pleasant day in the field. The count area was divided into 25 teams and a record number of home counters also participated this year. As I write this, results from home counters have not been completely tallied, so the number of individual birds seen will be higher for some species, especially Anna's Hummingbirds and other species that regularly visit feeders.

This year, 128 species were seen in the field, a total that is a bit lower than in previous years. But there were some remarkable finds. An unexpected surprise for the season was a Black-headed Grosbeak that has been visiting a feeder in east Eugene. These birds should all be in Mexico at this time of year, and I don't recall any previous records in the winter here. An exciting find to be sure!

Even more unusual was Larry McQueen's sighting of a Jack Snipe. This is a Eurasian species with only a few records for North America. However, it may be more common than we once suspected and could easily be overlooked, even by experienced birders. The wet fields where it is found are infrequently visited by birders; it is difficult to see unless flushed; and it is often confused with other snipe or even rails. It is known to wander and may be wandering more in search of appropriate habitat, which is quickly disappearing in its native range.

Another find that caused excitement among birders was a Gyrfalcon patrolling the fields in the area of Prairie Road and West Beacon Drive. This is

the largest falcon and is a species that breeds in the Arctic and wanders south in winter. One to a few individuals may be found as far south as Oregon each year, but they seldom wander as far south as Lane County. The only other time one was present during a Eugene Christmas Count was in 1973. This is a powerful and impressive falcon and worth looking for if you have the opportunity.



Spotted Towhee, by Cary Kerst

There were other good sightings as well on this year's count. Steve Gordon reported seeing a Say's Phoebe. This is one of Oregon's earliest migrants, but they are seldom seen in winter. (Two were reported on last year's count.) Three Osprey were seen, which ties

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## Massive effort by birders generates 2008 Eugene Christmas Bird Count

Dick Lamster, Eugene Christmas Bird Count Coordinator

Birders woke up Sunday morning January 4 to 28 degrees and a heavy overcast! But 155 of them put on all the warm clothes they owned and went out to see as many birds as they could find. These hardy souls, divided into 25 teams, braved the cold to take part in the 67th Eugene Christmas Bird Count (ECBC), part of the 109th National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count. There were 48 Christmas Bird Counts scheduled to be held in Oregon this year, but a few were postponed or cancelled because of the severe weather conditions. We had the cold, but no snow and no ice!

Our 25 teams of birders spent a total of 13 ½ hours and drove 94 miles "owling" in the pre-dawn hours. Then

they walked a total of 113 miles over 171 hours and drove 635 miles over 70 hours looking for birds. In addition, over 70 Feeder Counters reported the birds they saw at their feeders during the day. Although the cold seemed to keep the birds from moving around much, making them harder to spot, it turned out to be an above average count with 128 species reported.

Around 5:00 p.m. the teams gathered at the Eugene Garden Club for the traditional Chili Feed and Count Down sponsored by Lane Audubon. Allison Mickel's popular homemade chili drew 82 to the Feed, with a number of others dropping by briefly to report their findings. Many thanks go to Allison and Sandy Poinsett for their work in the kitchen!

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# 2008 Eugene Christmas Bird Count Totals

L = Low H = High R = Record T = Ties Record (low or high)

January 4, 2009

Species	Total (All teams)	Grand Total	Low # in years >0 (year or # of years)	High # (years)	Average #	# of yrs seen
Snow Goose	4	4	1 (5 yrs)	9 (85)	3	14
Cackling Goose	20,572	20,572		33,934 (07)	3884	4
Canada Goose	6,304	6,409 L	3 (64)	70,139 (00)	6738	62
Tundra Swan	227	227 L	2 (63, 59)	3,000 (99)	654	45
Wood Duck	151	151	1 (47)	201 (49)	24	51
Gadwall	152	152	2 (46, 72)	429 (05)	85	45
Eurasian Wigeon	4	4	1 (6 yrs)	6 (99)	3	16
American Wigeon	788	798	2 (63)	5,603 (03)	575	50
Mallard	1,670	1,860	10 (45)	6,754 (95)	1194	59
Northern Shoveler	357	357	1 (48)	471 (92)	134	54
Northern Pintail	378	378 L	2 (76)	9,023 (84)	1427	58
Green-winged Teal	411	411	1 (62)	8,994 (05)	750	55
Ring-necked Duck	118	118	1 (47)	351 (87)	68	53
Lesser Scaup	105	105	2 (55)	7,000 (64)	253	57
Bufflehead	108	110 H	2 (64)	142 (03)	31	38
Common Goldeneye	1	1	1 (7 yrs)	16 (91)	4	16
Hooded Merganser	29	31	1 (70, 78)	54 (01)	13	38
Common Merganser	170	170	2 (49, 56)	1,075 (04)	162	52
Ruddy Duck	107	107 H	1 (44)	308 (07)	36	53
Ring-necked Pheasant	8	10 L	1 (1912)	161 (47)	50	63
Wild Turkey	99	183	25 (00, 03)	200 (08)	72	11
California Quail	163	215	1 (5 yrs)	662 (75)	76	50
Pied-billed Grebe	119	122 H	1 (5 yrs)	160 (01)	31	61
Horned Grebe	10	10 RH	1 (4 yrs)	9 (07)	3	10
Western Grebe	2	2 TRL	2 (4 yrs)	245 (83)	35	35
Double-crested Cormorant	555	765 H	1 (6 yrs)	1,665 (07)	174	27
American Bittern	2	2	1 (7 yrs)	3 (69, 07)	2	13
Great Blue Heron	111	113	1 (55, 64)	215 (93)	77	59
Great Egret	78	80	1 (4 yrs)	180 (02)	28	33
Turkey Vulture	17	22 H	1 (52, 79, 96)	32 (08)	5	11
Osprey	3	3 TRH	1 (5 yrs)	3 (91, 98)	2	15
White-tailed Kite	25	25 H	1 (68, 94, 95)	30 (04)	11	28
Bald Eagle	46	47 RH	1 (74, 75, 82)	36 (08)	5	30
Northern Harrier	65	65 H	1 (42)	102 (03)	35	60
Sharp-shinned Hawk	13	18	1 (7 yrs)	21 (02)	8	54
Cooper's Hawk	21	23 H	1 (10 yrs)	22 (08)	5	58
Red-shouldered Hawk	17	18 H	1 (11 yrs)	20 (07)	3	22
Red-tailed Hawk	113	118	2 (45)	164 (05)	66	61
Rough-legged Hawk	2	2 L	1 (5 yrs)	44 (73)	7	36
American Kestrel	80	80	6 (45)	1000 (69)	75	62
Merlin	8	8	1 (10 yrs)	16 (01)	4	39
Gyr Falcon	1	1 TRH	1 (73)	1 (73)		1
Peregrine Falcon	3	3 H	1 (12 yrs)	5 (05)	1	18
Virginia Rail	2	2	1 (14 yrs)	11 (84)	3	25
American Coot	448	448	2 (44, 47)	1,733 (07)	159	62
Killdeer	586	586 L	4 (12)	6400 (69)	1309	63
Greater Yellowlegs	46	46	1 (7 yrs)	126 (02)	23	38
Spotted Sandpiper	8	8	1 (4 yrs)	14 (67)	5	42
Least Sandpiper	51	51	1 (71, 87)	800 (47)	110	33
Dunlin	1,193	1,193	3 (50)	14,578 (99)	1960	51
Long-billed Dowitcher	88	88	1 (78, 82, 83)	300 (68)	73	32
Jack Snipe	1	1 R		New to ECBC		
Wilson's Snipe	94	94	3 (42)	410 (69)	78	59
Mew Gull	7	7 L	1 (7 yrs)	1,605 (84)	103	30
Ring-billed Gull	161	191 L	1 (51)	4,600 (68)	1142	57
California Gull	9	9 L	1 (69)	1,000 (65)	170	52
Herring Gull	19	19	1 (58)	175 (79)	27	41
Thayer's Gull	20	20	1 (96, 04)	117 (73)	16	25
Western Gull	13	13	1 (4 yrs)	42 (04)	8	26
Glaucous-winged Gull	176	177	1 (49)	1403 (85)	144	45
Rock Pigeon	1,175	1,177 H	29 (45)	1252 (99)	531	34
Band-tailed Pigeon	1	1	1 (86)	22 (83)	8	11
Eurasian Collared-Dove	20	20	0	20 (08)	0	0
Mourning Dove	119	195	1 (44, 46, 53)	660 (67)	134	60
Barn Owl	2	2	1 (58, 61, 80)	10 (72)	4	42

# 2008 Eugene Christmas Bird Count Totals

Species	Total (All teams)	Grand Total	Low # in years >0 (year or # of years)	High # (years)	Average #	# of yrs seen
Western Screech-Owl	10	10	1 (6 yrs)	22 (07)	8	43
Great Horned Owl	7	7	1 (5 yrs)	29 (69)	7	45
Northern Pygmy-Owl	2	2	1 (9 yrs)	3 (79)	2	16
Barred Owl	1	1		1 (04, 07)		1
Short-eared Owl	4	4	1 (11 yrs)	35 (72)	6	49
Northern Saw-whet Owl	9	9 RH	1 (10 yrs)	8 (05)	2	33
Anna's Hummingbird	40	105 RH	1 (73, 88)	87 (08)	15	36
Belted Kingfisher	20	20	1 (5 yrs)	49 (95)	15	62
Acorn Woodpecker	22	24	1 (46)	146 (77)	40	60
Red-breasted Sapsucker	8	10	1 (5 yrs)	59 (90)	9	57
Downy Woodpecker	56	91 H	1 (42, 48)	75 (07)	29	62
Hairy Woodpecker	15	18 H	1 (4 yrs)	16 (48)	5	60
Northern Flicker	394	429 H	2 (12)	558 (73)	180	63
Pileated Woodpecker	5	5	1 (9 yrs)	12 (07)	4	41
Black Phoebe	6	6	1 (84, 86, 00)	8 (08)		5
Say's Phoebe	1	1	2 (08)		2	
Northern Shrike	3	3	1 (7 yrs)	16 (73)	4	42
Hutton's Vireo	6	6	1 (4 yrs)	15 (72)	4	43
Steller's Jay	308	328 H	4 (45)	854 (02)	126	61
Western Scrub-Jay	775	866 H	11 (51)	999 (02)	367	56
American Crow	2,942	3,050	2 (12)	5600 (68)	1129	63
Common Raven	66	67	1 (59, 67, 69)	501 (99)	41	54
Black-capped Chickadee	794	1,053	46 (44, 48)	1,057 (00)	455	61
Chestnut-backed Chickadee	109	181	2 (46, 52)	187 (02)	59	60
Bushtit	412	838	2 (47, 50)	975 (08)	225	60
Red-breasted Nuthatch	75	145	1 (56)	166 (04)	39	58
White-breasted Nuthatch	8	15	2 (47)	88 (67)	21	61
Brown Creeper	52	63	1 (65)	80 (07)	22	56
Bewick's Wren	69	76	1 (45)	141 (75)	52	61
Winter Wren	42	47	3 (57)	118 (75)	42	63
Marsh Wren	24	24	2 (89)	69 (08)	16	49
Golden-crowned Kinglet	272	302	26 (45)	1,111 (01)	386	63
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	246	281	1 (49)	1,751 (01)	243	62
Western Bluebird	140	145 H	8 (81)	194 (05)	45	57
Hermit Thrush	6	7	1 (6 yrs)	37 (03)	7	55
American Robin	3,591	3,785	130 (44)	7228 (77)	1900	61
Varied Thrush	130	190	1 (56, 59)	1010 (54)	140	62
Wrentit	20	20 H	1 (4 yrs)	19 (04)	6	36
European Starling	9,105	9,534	6 (52)	50,184 (95)	9941	56
American Pipit	151	151	1 (87)	610 (57)	130	60
Cedar Waxwing	136	202	1 (44)	1117 (82)	135	58
Orange-crowned Warbler	1	2	1 (13 yrs)	8 (95)	3	31
Yellow-rumped Warbler	130	201	35 (90)	259 (84)	48	60
Townsend's Warbler	32	66	1 (7 yrs)	103 (05)	27	49
Spotted Towhee	381	475	30 (42)	487 (04)	220	63
Savannah Sparrow	39	39	1 (52, 57)	344 (92)	49	56
Fox Sparrow	237	266	5 (45, 57)	448 (84)	138	62
Song Sparrow	717	774 H	10 (12)	1,111 (84)	450	63
Lincoln's Sparrow	53	55	1 (5 yrs)	119 (90)	21	51
White-throated Sparrow	24	29 H	1 (6 yrs)	40 (08)	6	40
White-crowned Sparrow	370	401 H	6 (51)	453 (03)	128	61
Golden-crowned Sparrow	954	1,069	34 (45)	3,374 (00)	535	62
Dark-eyed Junco	3,635	4,335 H	100 (12)	4,468 (74)	1291	63
Black-headed Grosbeak	1	1 RH	1 (08)	New to ECBC		
Red-winged Blackbird	4,603	4,622	1 (44)	40,263 (93)	3371	61
Western Meadowlark	183	183	8 (52)	380 (68)	137	63
Brewer's Blackbird	3,903	4,046	113 (44)	9792 (72)	2268	62
Brown-headed Cowbird	12	12 L	1 (5 yrs)	240 (68)	48	40
Purple Finch	66	70	2 (64)	246 (53)	57	62
House Finch	562	706	3 (45)	1,675 (75)	416	60
Red Crossbill	22	22	1 (81, 87, 95)	56 (04)	14	23
Pine Siskin	125	205	1 (76)	1,809 (92)	209	52
Lesser Goldfinch	73	112	1 (54, 92)	150 (68)	28	51
American Goldfinch	96	157	2 (71)	243 (87)	89	54
House Sparrow	447	543	2 (43)	900 (67)	389	62

Number of species seen: 130 Number of individuals: 74,624

# 2008 Eugene Christmas Bird Count Report

**Massive effort by Eugene birders generates 2008 Christmas Bird Count,**  
*continued from page 5*

Last year there were 2,113 Christmas Bird Counts in North America, Latin America, the Caribbean and several Pacific Islands, of which the Eugene Christmas Bird Count was the eighth largest in number of participants! We are fortunate to have so many bird lovers here and so many excellent birders willing to be Team Leaders. I especially want to thank the 25 Team Leaders for doing such a superb job of organizing and working with their teams. Many of you have served for over 20 years and some for over 30 years!

Thanks also go to the Organizing Committee for their hard work:

Barbara Gleason provided the maps and assigned volunteer bird watchers to teams; Dan Gleason provided the bird checklists, compiled results and verified unusual and rare sightings; and Herb Wisner coordinated the Feeder Counters and submitted their sightings to Dan.

Be sure to put January 3, 2010 on your calendar for the 2009 Eugene Christmas Bird Count and plan to join us as a team member or feeder counter. Thanks again to all those who participated and helped to make the Eugene Christmas Bird Count one of the best in the world! ①



American and Eurasian Widgeon (in front), by Cary Kerst

**Notable trends and unusual sightings,**  
*continued from page 5*

the previous record high, and 17 Turkey Vultures were seen. Thirty-two vultures were seen last year so this is not a record high, but is certainly more than would be expected for this time of year. Record highs were also reported for Bald Eagle (46), Northern Saw-whet Owl (9) and Eurasian Collared-Dove (20). Eurasian Collared-Dove is a species that we are not excited to see here. This bird has spread very rapidly across North America since its introduction into Florida in the 1970s. It began to move westward in the 1990s, reaching Oregon just a

couple of years ago, and is now seen in all parts of the state. There are fears about the impacts of this non-native intruder. White-throated Sparrows were also seen in high numbers this year: 24 were counted. Our average is six individuals of this species but our record high was last year at 40.

Overall, this was a good Count. A large number of participants came to enjoy the chili feed in the evening (many thanks to Allison Mickel and her crew for providing the delicious chili) and to do a quick review of the day's findings. We look forward to seeing everyone again for the 2009 Count which will be held on January 3, 2010. ①

## Hearty thanks from the Lane Audubon Board!

The Lane Audubon Board thanks everyone who contributed to the 2008 Eugene CBC

### Organizing Committee

Dick Lamster  
Herb Wisner  
Dan Gleason  
Barbara Gleason

### Team Leaders

Ron Renschler  
Jim Carlson  
Herb Wisner  
Rick Ahrens  
Dan Gleason  
Don Schrouder  
Kit Larson  
Roger Robb  
Davey Wendt  
Tom Mickel  
Vjera Thompson  
David Novak  
Arch McCallum  
Steve Gordon  
Charlie Thomas  
Holly Hartmann  
Dave Bontrager  
Jim Maloney  
Fred Chancey  
John Sullivan  
Dave Irons  
Barbara Combs  
Bruce Newhouse  
Dennis Arendt

### Chili Feed Chef & Crew

Allison Mickel  
Sandy Poinsett

### And the many Counters— both at home and in the field

Thanks to all who made the 2008 Eugene CBC a huge success!

## A MESSAGE FROM LANE AUDUBON BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Maeve Sowles, President

343-8664

president@laneaudubon.org



We ask you to become a local member of **Lane County Audubon Society** and support our grassroots efforts in the local community. All of 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!

### LANE AUDUBON MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS



*The Quail* • **The Quail**  
9 issues/yr.



• **Field Trips &  
Bird Walks**



• **Program Meetings**

**NEW**



• **Educational  
Publications**



• **Conservation  
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Representation**



• **Answers to  
Questions:  
485-BIRD**

Visit our web site:  
[www.laneaudubon.org](http://www.laneaudubon.org)

### JOIN OR RENEW TODAY:

### Lane Audubon Society welcomes you!

Lane County Audubon Society needs your local membership dues to keep our various programs alive! This means that your membership dues for National Audubon Society no longer support a membership in your local chapter. Become a member of Lane Audubon today to help us continue our educational programs and our work in protecting birds, other wildlife, and their habitats in Lane County. We appreciate your support.

### LANE AUDUBON MEMBERSHIP DUES

- ☐ Individual \$20.....\$ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Student and Seniors (65 and over) \$15 .....\$ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Family \$25 .....\$ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Lifetime Membership \$400.....\$ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ I want to do more. Here's my tax deductible contribution for .....\$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Total Enclosed (check payable to Lane County Audubon Society) .....\$ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Check here if you are a current national Audubon member    ☐ Don't know

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

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

### PLEASE CONTACT ME REGARDING:

- ☐ Gift memberships
- ☐ Volunteering for Lane Audubon activities
- ☐ Lane Audubon's Living Legacy program
- ☐ I'd like to receive e-mail alerts about conservation issues.

### Mail this form and your payment to:

Lane Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 5086  
Eugene, OR 97405

## THE BOARD THANKS YOU

### Thank you to members!

Over \$4000 in donations since our November request shows wonderful support for our programs. In tight economic times we THANK YOU for your commitment to Lane Audubon!

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY



### Quail Layout

**Description:** We are looking for a volunteer to do layout & graphics for *The Quail*. We provide the template (formatted with InDesign) and the text. Then, you add the graphics and do the layout.

**Qualifications:** Ability to manipulate graphics files; experience using InDesign

**Time commitment:** 5-8 hours per issue; 9 issues per year

**Contact:** Cynthia Stockwell, 345-9358 or [quail@clearwire.net](mailto:quail@clearwire.net)



*The Quail*

Deadlines:  
**March issue: February 8**

Submit material to:  
Cynthia Stockwell, editor,  
<[quail@clearwire.net](mailto:quail@clearwire.net)>

### THE QUAIL

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

Local members of national Audubon receive a free subscription to *The Quail*, but are encouraged to voluntarily join Lane Audubon (see pg. 9).

**Subscriptions:** Contact Jim Blick at 683-4635 or [blick@toast.net](mailto:blick@toast.net).

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## LANE COUNTY AUDUBON OFFICERS & BOARD MEMBERS

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	Debra Eichner	607-6123	<a href="mailto:aceichner@msn.com">aceichner@msn.com</a>

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Field Trips	Dael Parsons	729-0048	<a href="mailto:daelparsons@comcast.net">daelparsons@comcast.net</a>
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Membership Data	Jim Blick	683-4635	<a href="mailto:blick@toast.net">blick@toast.net</a>
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## PROGRAM MEETING: FEBRUARY 24

### UGANDA: from Murchison Falls to the Impenetrable Forest by Bob Fleming

Herb Wisner

344-3634

hrwisner@comcast.net



Uganda, located astride the equator in Africa, lies at the biodiversity heart of the continent. Colors in Uganda, a country almost exactly the size of Oregon, range from the dense greens of the Congo Basin forest ecosystem in the southwest to near-desert khakis in the northeast. Some

1,008 bird species live within this amazing mélange, including the Abyssinian Ground Hornbill, Great Blue Turaco, Piapiac and Rock Pratincole.

While Uganda's political instability has been infamous for decades, the country turned a corner some fifteen years ago, and this has greatly benefited both the people and the wildlife (problems, alas, still linger in the far north). Today, national parks and reserves are thriving, and the large mammals populations that were mostly destroyed for bush meat during the period of instability are resurging. Hippos, for example, seem to be everywhere along the Victoria Nile and the Kazinga Channel, and elephant populations have doubled. In addition, populations of gorillas and chimpanzees appear to be near carrying capacity in places such as the Impenetrable and Kibale forests.

Please join us at 7:30 on Tuesday, February 24, for a journey to this amazing part of Africa. Naturalist Bob Fleming, who has been traveling to some of the wilder corners of the continent since 1973, will present the program. ①

## PROGRAM MEETING

### UGANDA: from Murchison Falls to the Impenetrable Forest by Bob Fleming



**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24  
7:30 P.M.**

**Eugene Garden Club  
1645 High Street, Eugene**

#### **Appreciating nests in winter, continued from page 1**

a soft cushion for the eggs and chicks. Even though built from coarse materials, the nest is beautiful and functional.

Bird behaviors dictated by instincts and necessity still require aid from those of us who feel a kinship to other species. Human impacts on the natural world may be either positive or profoundly negative. Through learning and understanding we may be able to swing that effect in a positive direction. Connections with nature and with other people who value a connection to nature are the hope of the future for our bird friends. As I look at the trees with nests buffeted by the winds, yet hanging on into the spring, waiting to receive another generation of nesting birds, I still have hope. ①

#### **The Northern Spotted Owl and natural selection, continued from page 2**

can prevent these new regulations from being enacted. Please contact your legislators directly or sign the petition at [http://www.change.org/actions/view/reject\\_bush\\_administrations\\_attack\\_on\\_endangered\\_species](http://www.change.org/actions/view/reject_bush_administrations_attack_on_endangered_species)

#### **Proposed wilderness bills to expand protected habitat**

On the positive side, Congress has made an early move to support Wilderness Bills through the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act of 2009, S. 22, which would include areas of Mount Hood and the Columbia River Gorge and critical wildlife habitat in the Soda Mountain Wilderness, Copper Salmon Wilderness, Spring Basin Wilderness and Badlands Wilderness. The Bill has received strong support from Oregon lawmakers. The protection of habitat that would result from passage of this bill would provide much cause for celebration on Darwin's bicentennial birthday. ①



## BIRD WALKS AND EVENTS

**Monthly Bird Walk:** Our monthly bird walks are usually held on the third Saturday of the month, but we often have additional walks or special trips. With knowledgeable leaders and many pairs of eyes to help spot birds, our trips are a great way to increase your birding skills while learning about Lane County birds and their habitats. All birders are welcome, from novice to expert. A \$3 donation is suggested.

Dael Parsons

729-0048

daelparsons@comcast.net

**SATURDAY  
FEBRUARY 21**

### THIRD SATURDAY BIRD WALK

#### WALK AROUND DELTA PONDS

Please join us on February 21 for a walk around Delta Ponds to view wintering waterfowl, raptors and songbirds.

*Be sure to dress for the weather. All things are possible here in February. We will meet at South Eugene High at 19th and Patterson at 8:00 a.m. and return before noon. Questions? Contact Dael at daelparsons@comcast.net or 729-0048.*

**SATURDAY  
FEBRUARY 28**

### CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

#### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR FINLEY NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE PLANTING

The Audubon Society of Corvallis seeks 150 volunteers for the annual Finley National Wildlife planting. Last year over 200 volunteers planted 1000 trees in less than an hour! This year we will plant Spurred Lupine or Nelson's Checkermallow on a gentle hillside near woodpecker Loop Trail.


*10:00 a.m. to 12 noon; rain or shine; Go six miles south of Corvallis on 99W to Finley Road and follow planting signs. Refreshments and hot drinks will be served. FMI: John Gaylord at 541-745-5088 or cell 541-908-2898*

**SATURDAY  
MAY 9**



### FERN RIDGE WINGS AND WINE BIRDING FESTIVAL

The Fern Ridge Wings and Wine Festival is our big event of the year. The Festival combines great birding opportunities with talks, exhibits, wine tasting, and fun activities for the whole family.

Spring is a fun and exciting time at Fern Ridge, when you may see a wonderful mixture of north-bound Neotropical migrants and breeders including geese, stilts, phalaropes, Yellow-headed Blackbird, American Bittern and Redhead. 

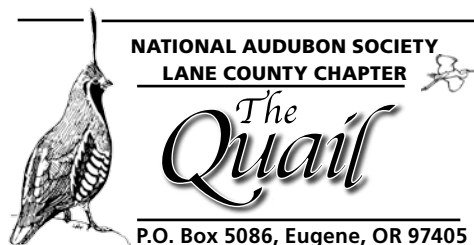
### PROGRAM MEETING

**UGANDA: from  
Murchison Falls to  
the Impenetrable  
Forest**


*by Bob Fleming*



**Tuesday, February 24  
7:30 P.M.  
Eugene Garden Club  
1645 High Street, Eugene**



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