

# The Cual News from Lane County

**News from Lane County Audubon Society** 

## **From Our Treasurer**

Ron Renchler, 541-345-0834, christyandron2@gmail.com

# **Simple Pleasures**



Agate Hall chimney and swifts

Talking with a longtime friend on a warm evening in early September, I discovered he had never seen the Vaux's Swifts entering the chimney at the Old Condon School near Hayward Field on the University of Oregon campus. (The building with the chimney is now called Agate Hall. If you haven't yet seen the swifts descending into the chimney to roost each evening for a couple of weeks in September and again in April as they migrate through,

be sure to put it on your bucket list of birding events. See next April's *Quail* for details on Lane County Audubon's "gatherings" celebrating their spring migration.)

The next day, my friend, his wife, and I headed to the chimney, and happened upon a couple of other Audubon folks there doing "citizen science," counting the number of swifts entering their temporary roost as they migrated south in the fall. There were also a few neighborhood residents who had dropped by to witness the spectacle. It was near sunset, and our small group of observers enjoyed an easy conviviality, sharing our enthusiasm and wonder.

The swifts didn't disappoint. They began circling right before sunset and gradually increased in numbers until they filled the sky, circling the chimney

like a tornado, getting ready to retire for the night. The counters estimated about 4,500 birds! After several false starts, the swifts began descending into the chimney. The "resident" Cooper's Hawk showed up for dinner. Although we rooted against him, the hawk nabbed a swift and flew off to eat its evening meal. But the rest of the swifts safely made it into the chimney to rest for the night before emerging the next morning in search of insects. Such is a day in the life of migrating Vaux's Swifts, and in the lives of a small group of people fascinated with these birds' habits and behaviors.

This is what Lane County Audubon Society (LCAS) is about at its core—a group of local people who like to share their love and enthusiasm for birds. LCAS has many ways of doing so: through our birding events and bird walks, our monthly educational talks on birds and their habitats, and our school programs that help youngsters to learn about birds and bird biology (see page 4 for information on Audubon

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Lane County Audubon Society
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## **Conservation**

Debbie Schlenoff, 541.685.0610, dschlenoff@msn.com

# **Roadside Spray**



Roadside herbiciue spiny.... oadside herbicide spraying has Lane County, and that hasn't changed.

Lane County served as a model for environmental stewardship when it banned roadside herbicide spraying in 2008 in response to community concerns. Mowing and other mechanical/manual techniques have proven largely effective at managing our county roadsides since then. Unfortunately, inadequate funding has negatively impacted that effectiveness, so a task force was convened in 2015 to deal with the problem. While some members of the task force were reportedly skeptical about lifting the moratorium on herbicides, they understood the need for addressing problem areas. As a result, ordinance 16-07 was passed in July 2016. The task force recommended several wellconsidered measures to protect and inform the public while allowing for limited use of herbicide spray.

Most of the problem areas relate to guardrails that are not easily reached by mowers. This month, the county announced that roadside spraying would be reinstituted along 400 miles of guardrails. (I suppose the idea of "limited" means different things to different people.) Excess vegetation can be dangerous as it grows toward the roadside and should be managed. Yet, it is evident from a quick ride around the area that not all guardrails

present this problem. Guardrails are almost all over embankments, ditches, and waterways. County documents clearly state: "Studies documenting the presence of herbicides in area streams and effects of herbicides on salmon point to the need for public agencies to serve as models of environmental stewardship in landscape management." The county does require a buffer zone around documented waterways, but a confounding problem is that many temporary seasonal streams are not documented and, therefore, not protected. Run-off after the use of herbicides will carry the chemicals from treated areas into these temporary waterways. These will then drain into larger waterways, thus defeating the effort to protect waterways directly.

While the Board of Health reached out to partners to identify less harmful herbicides, concerns remained about those that are allowed. For example, exposure to triclopyr has been associated with breast cancer and genetic mutations in people, (See pesticide .org/pesticide\_factsheets), and has been shown to decrease survival in nestling birds and to alter frog behavior. Roads often serve as pollinator corridors, so herbicides can cause health problems for bees and birds, fish and other wildlife. The task force advised that "impacts to other species, including pollinators and amphibians should be considered."

We commend the task force for sound recommendations including: "All decision making and process development will be transparent to the public and guided by human and environmental health considerations." It's up to us to be sure the county adheres to this, but there is much we do not know. We know that the county

roads were inventoried, but we don't know what was learned. Which areas are being prioritized? What are the criteria? Do we know if any seasonal streams are below the guard rails at targeted sites? To protect the public, the task force advised that signs be posted at sites a week before spraying, and then site information be made available online. We would also appreciate a list of proposed targets before spraying. The citizens of Lane County are savvy and could share valuable information about whether specific areas are actually in need of treatment, as well as the location of problem sites, temporary streams, etc. Some confusion exists about the spray process as well. Typically an area would be moved first before spray application. If not, untrimmed but dying vegetation may create fire hazards and visual obstructions. But if, as stated, there are not enough mowers or the mowers cannot reach the vegetation, will the protocol be different?

The county ordinance states that "mechanical and manual methods will continue to be the primary tools within our program." According to a county spokesperson, they have only five mowing vehicles and are understaffed, so do not have enough people to work manually at the problem sites. Worker safety, which may be compromised around guardrails on curvy roads, is of paramount importance. More workers, protective clothing, and temporarily closing lanes for worker safety would help a lot.

It would seem that much of the problem does not come down to the effectiveness of manual vs. herbicide control, but that the overriding problem is inadequate funding to carry out the program as originally requested by the people of Lane County. We hope that budget changes in the near future allow more money for effective mower and manual control.

Continued on page 5

## **Field Notes: September 2017**

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

# **Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Rose-throated** Pipit, Pigeon Guillemot, Parasitic Jaeger

V/e finally got some significant rain during the month; otherwise it was warm and sunny. Migration was in full swing, as is normal, with some birds arriving from the north for the winter and others heading south for warmer climes.

Abbreviations: Fern Ridge Reservoir (FRR), North Fork of the Siuslaw River (NFSR), North Jetty of the Siuslaw River (NJSR), South Jetty of the Siuslaw River (SJSR)



Rose-breasted Grosbeak

Cackling Goose	Sept 13	Eugene	SMc	First report for the winter season - early
Common Goldeneye	Sept 23	Eugene	JM	First report for the winter season - early

#### **VULTURES TO GULLS**

Turkey Vulture (117)	Sept 22	Creswell area	NS	Moving south - a 10 min count!
American Golden-Plover	Sept 22	FRR - HQ pond	JS	Found most years in small numbers
American Avocet	Sept 3	NFSR mouth	JS	Rare away from FRR
American Avocet (3)	Sept 10	NFSR mouth	AC,et.al	Rare away from FRR
American Avocet	Sept 30	FRR	JS	A late sighting
Long-billed Curlew	Sept 22	FRR	SH	Annual in small numbers during migration
Marbled Godwit (9)	Sept 4	FRR - HQ pond	JS	A very large number for inland Lane Co.
Red Knot (2)	Sept 3	NFSR mouth	JS	Seen in small numbers during migration
Dunlin	Sept 22	FRR	JS	First report for the winter season
Ruff	Sept 1	SJSR deflation plain	JS	Rare, but regular migrant in the county
Wilson's Phalarope	Sept 21	FRR	KP	One of only a handful of reports from Sept
Sabine's Gull	Sept 9	FRR	SH	Rare, but regular migrant in the county at FRR
Franklin's Gull	Aug 30	Siltcoos Beach	DF	Rare, but regular migrant in the county
Common Tern (16)	Sept 14	FRR	RR,JS	Rare, but regular migrant in the county at FRR
Common Tern	Sept 16	NJSR	AC,et.al	Rare, but regular migrant in the county at FRR
Common Tern	Sept 24	McKenzie River area	JK	Rare, but regular migrant in the county at FRR
Forster's Tern	Sept 10	SJSR - crab dock/pier	AC,DF	Rare in migration
Parasitic Jaeger	Sept 22	FRR	JS	Rare away from the coast
Pigeon Guillemot (3)	Sept 16	NJSR	AC,et.al	Not usually reported this time of year

### **WOODPECKERS TO BLACKBIRDS**

Lewis's Woodpecker (3)	Sept 17	Mt Pisgah	JSi	Rare, but regular during the fall migration
Western Wood-Pewee	Sept 20	Skinner Butte	LM,et.al	Last report for the breeding season
Willow Flycatcher	Sept 7	Eugene	EC	Last report for the breeding season
Hammond's Flycatcher	Sept 6	FRR - Jeans Rd	LM,et.al	Last report for the breeding season
Gray Jay (3)	Sept 18	south hills of Eugene	RF	Sporadic reports from the area
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Aug 30	Alton Baker Park	LM,et.al	First report for the winter season
Varied Thrush	Sept 18	Creswell	NS	First report for the valley for the winter season
Red-throated Pipit (probable)	Sept 26	Siltcoos River mouth	AC	Only one record for Lane Co.
Lapland Longspur	Sept 19	Baker Beach	LG	Annual along the coast in the fall
Lapland Longspur	Sept 24	Siltcoos River mouth	WW,CH	Annual along the coast in the fall

MacGillivray's Warbler	Sept 8	Creswell area	TMo	Last report for the breeding season
Townsend's Warbler	Sept 15	South Eugene	BG	First report for the valley for the season
Yellow-breasted Chat	Sept 6	FRR - Jeans Rd	LM,et.al	Last report for the breeding season
Clay-colored Sparrow	Sept 8	FRR - Royal Ave	JS, SH	Rare, but regular migrant in the county
Clay-colored Sparrow	Sept 12	Bob Creek	M&SS	Rare, but regular migrant in the county
Fox Sparrow	Sept 14	Creswell area	NS	First report for the winter season
White-throated Sparrow	Sept 26	Siltcoos River mouth	AC	First report for the winter season
White-throated Sparrow	Sept 27	Oakridge	MLS	First report for the winter season
Golden-crowned Sparrow	Sept 15	Lorane Highway	BCo	First report for the winter season
Western Tanager	Sept 20	Skinner Butte	LM,et.al	Last report for the breeding season
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	Sept 16	Eugene	LM	Rare in county, especially in fall
Black-headed Grosbeak	Sept 13	Kirk Park	CS	Last report for the breeding season
Lazuli Bunting	Sept 10	SJSR - crab dock/pier	AC,et.al	Last report for the breeding season
Yellow-headed Blackbird	Sept 6	FRR - Royal Ave	SD	Last report for the breeding season

AC Alan Contreras, BG Barbara Gleason, BCo Beth Cookson, CH Chris Hinkle, CS Cody Smith, DF Daniel Farrar, EC Ellen Cantor, JK Jim Kopitzke, JM Jacob Mathison, JS John Sullivan, JSi Julia Siporin, KP Ken Phifer, LG Levi Grudzinski, LM Larry McQueen, MLS Mary Lee Sayre, M&SS Max & Sarah Smith, NS Noah Strycker, RF Rachael Friese, RR Roger Robb, SD Steve Dignam, SH Sally Hill, SMc Steve McDonald, TMo Tori Morgan, WW Will Wright.



# **Seeking Sponsors** for Audubon **Adventures**

udubon Adventures is back Awith a brand new learning kit for the 2017-18 school year, entitled "Birds, Bees, Flowers and Trees." Some teachers have started placing their orders and are eager to share the new material with students!

This year's kit includes the following three topics:

• Birds on the Move: Every year, twice a year, millions of birds take to the skies on epic migratory journeys.

- Plants Are for the Birds: For birds, native plants are an essential food source, offer protection from predators, and provide them with a home.
- The Buzz About Native Bees: North America's 4,000-plus species of native bees are busy performing a vital role in healthy ecosystems.

Audubon Adventures is developed by professional educators and designed for grades 3-5. Each kit contains 32 printed magazines on each topic as well as access to online features and activities.

Thanks to generous sponsors, we offer these kits at no cost to teachers in Lane County.

If you would like to sponsor a classroom, please mail a taxdeductible donation of \$45 (payable to LCAS) to Audubon Adventures, PO Box 5086, Eugene, OR 97405 or donate online via the provided link: laneaudubon.org/education /audubon-adventures/sponsor/form

Please contact Rachael Friese at audadventures@gmail.com if you have any questions. Thank you for your support!

# **Audubon** in the **Schools Program Coordinator Needed**

The Audubon in the Schools (AITS) curriculum comprises five fun-filled lessons that combine bird biology and basic art techniques. Originally developed by artist Kris Kirkeby, our former Education Chair, the lessons are excellent examples of participatory education. The program is designed to provide elementary students with a solid introduction to core aspects of bird biology, including feather anatomy and function, bird identification techniques, bird field marks, and habitat. The coordinator oversees all facets of the program. This includes classroom scheduling and volunteer training, plus teaching lessons to students along with the other volunteers. Help us take this wonderful education program to new heights!

For more information, visit our Volunteer page online at laneaudubon .org/support/volunteer, or contact Maeve Sowles at 541.343.8664, or president@laneaudubon.org.

## **Program Meeting: Tuesday, November 28, 7:30 pm**

Program Coordinator: Judy Brown, 541.344.4023, towhee@centurylink.net

# **Birding the Border Country: Lake, Harney, Washoe & Humboldt Counties**



John Shewey and friend

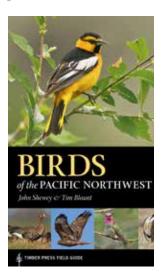
mong the most remote regions in the western United States, northwestern Nevada and adjacent southeastern Oregon (the border country) offer outstanding and largely unheralded birding opportunities. Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge is a familiar hotspot to many Oregon birders, but nearby Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge in Nevada is nearly twice as large and offers outstanding birding prospects as well. And the lands along the edges of Sheldon—on and near the Oregon/Nevada border expand the opportunities even further for people who love wild lands and wildlife.

Within this vast desert landscape, little-known gorges echo with the call of Canyon Wrens, Greater Sage-Grouse swarm to hidden water holes, lacustrine marshes erupt with a cacophony of myriad water birds, Sage Thrashers sing ebulliently throughout broad scrubland basins, and Common Poorwills roost unobtrusively amid jumbled boulders and the rugged rimrock-topped slopes guarding vast high-elevation plateaus.

John Shewey is a longtime freelance writer and photographer who has spent decades exploring the border country. He's left boot prints in places few people tread, changed flat tires on roads better walked than driven, and rejoiced in finding remote locations teeming with birds. Run the very real risk of catching John's infectious enthusiasm by joining him for this presentation celebrating the diversity of the Northern Great Basin. He'll

offer tips on where, when, and how to explore this remarkable region.

John teamed up with Tim Blount to coauthor Birds of the Pacific Northwest. Tim has been an institution in Oregon birding for many years, serving on the Oregon Birds Records Committee and working as the director of Friends of Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. A few years ago, Tim set a Harney County big year record with 253 species. He has birded every corner of the state. The photographic field guide John and Tim produced—Birds of the Pacific Northwest-was released in spring 2017 by Portland's Timber Press. The book has been widely lauded for its vast store of approachable information, outstanding photography, and superb production values.



#### From Our Treasurer continued from page 1

Adventures, one such program supported solely by LCAS members).

Since we are a volunteer organization with no paid staff, we depend on outside funding to cover the material costs of offering these opportunities. Each November we ask our members to support our efforts with a tax-deductible gift. It's easy to contribute; just mail your donation in the envelope inserted in this month's Quail, or give online at laneaudubon.org/support/donate. (You can renew your annual local membership on our website as well.) The birds and LCAS will love you for it!

#### Conservation continued from page 2

If you live along county roads, one of the most important things you can do right now is to register your property as a no-spray area: lanecounty.wufoo.com/forms/no-spray-areaapplication/

Wherever you live, remind county officials that we are concerned about the use of chemicals in public places. Insist on transparency and limited use of herbicides.

The contact person for the Vegetation Management Program is Pamela Reber, Natural Resource Specialist 541.682.8521, pamela.reber@co.lane.or.us. Or contact the Lane County Board of Commissioners: lcbcccom@co.lane .or.us



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

Dec.-Jan. issue: November 4 February issue: January 5

Submit material to Karen Irmscher at quailkaren1@gmail.com

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

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#### **Lane County Audubon Society Officers & Board Members**

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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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☐ Lifetime Membership \$400	\$			·
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## **Community Calendar and Events**

A service to Lane County Audubon Society members



#### Mt Pisgah Arboretum Saturday, November 4,

10 a.m.-noon

#### Forest Ecology Walk

Explore the plants and animals of the Arboretum and their place in our native ecosystems with ecologist and LCC instructor Pat Boleyn. From our oak savanna to our conifer and incense-cedar forests, the interrelationships are fascinating and complex. Come away with a clearer understanding of the importance of these forests to us and the organisms that make them their home. Rain or Shine. Meet at the Arboretum Visitor Center. \$5, members free.

FMI for all Mt Pisgah events: mountpisgaharboretum.org or 541.741.4110



Saturday, November 11, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

Play in the Rain Day

Looking for something fun to do with your family on a rainy Saturday in November? Visit Mount Pisgah Arboretum for our community's 6th annual Play in the Rain Day. This fun, allages family event happens in November each year. Discover how fun, easy, and rewarding it is to spend time outdoors in nature—in

ALL kinds of weather. Rain or shine, so dress for the weather.

Meet at the Arboretum Visitor Center. \$5, members free.



Sunday, November 19, 8 a.m.-11 a.m. Bird Walk

Join Julia Siporin and Joni Dawning for another monthly bird walk intended for people with all levels of birding experience. They'll use vocalizations, habitat, and behavior clues for identification of fall migrants and year-round residents. Come discover the Arboretum's avian diversity. Please bring binoculars. Option to continue the walk until noon if interested. Rain or shine.

Meet at the Arboretum Visitor Center. \$5, members free.



## Southern Willamette Ornithological Club (SWOC)

Monday, November 20, 7 p.m.

Eugene Birders Night

Attendees share recent sightings and discuss birding-connected topics. The program that follows is TBA. Check out the Oregon Birders

Online (OBOL) website the week before the meeting date for specifics. Location: The historic McNail-Riley house, 601 W 13th Ave, Eugene, is at the NW corner of W. 13th Ave. and Jefferson by the former Lincoln School. Park in the five spaces closest to the M-R house, or across 13th Ave. in the Fairgrounds parking lot. All are welcome to attend this free monthly event.

FMI ellencantor@gmail.com



# Olympic Birdfest—Save the date

April 13-15, 2018

Enjoy guided birding trips, boat tours, live auction, raffle, gala banquet, and more. Featured speaker Claudio Vidal will give a presentation entitled "Patagonia & Chile: Birds & Mammals at the End of the Americas." You are invited to join the festival pre-trip, a three-day, two-night birding/sightseeing cruise of the San Juan Islands, April 10-12, or extend your festival with a Neah Bay post-trip on April 16-17, 2018: two days exploring northwest coastal Washington.

FMI and to register olympicbirdfest.org.

## Give to LCAS When You Shop Online

Go to smile.amazon.com and select Lane County Audubon Society



Rachael and daughter Lucy

## Welcome New LCAS Board Member, Rachael Friese

We want to welcome Rachael Friese to the Lane Audubon Board! Rachael has been involved with our organization as the Audubon Adventures coordinator since spring of 2016. She is excited about birding and cares deeply about the value of environmental education for her children and all children.

#### Rachael's Self-introduction

Hello! I'm Rachael Friese and when I'm not too busy being a wife and mom, I'm also the Audubon Adventures coordinator for LCAS. I'm happy to join the board and continue my efforts to protect birds through education and conservation. My interest in birds was sparked by a pair of Western Screech Owls only four years ago and I haven't put my binoculars down since!

# Thanks and Farewell to Caryn Stoess

We want to thank Caryn Stoess for her service on the Lane Audubon Board since January of 2015. She took on the Audubon in the Schools program, one of our important educational activities. Caryn has been a great asset as well as a fun companion on our bird walks and other events. Her enthusiasm for birding and learning will be missed. Caryn has moved to Corvallis for a new job and will continue her birding adventures up the valley. Best of luck and thank you Caryn—we will miss you!



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**OR CURRENT** RESIDENT

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## **Lane County Audubon Society Bird Walks & Events**

Rebecca Waterman, 541.653.3354, rebecca.waterman@gmail.com

## **Third Saturday Bird Walk**

Saturday, November 18, 8 a.m.

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

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

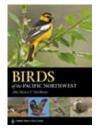
FMI: Rebecca Waterman at 541.653.3354 or rebecca.waterman @gmail.com.

## **Eugene Christmas Bird Count (ECBC)**

Sunday, December 31, 2017

This will be the 76th ECBC and the 118th National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count. Dick Lamster is the Coordinator again this year, supported by the Steering Committee of Allison Mickel, Herb Wisner, Dan Gleason, Vjera Thompson, and Barbara

Gleason. We will divide our 15-mile diameter Count Circle into 27 Areas, and each Area will have an expert birder serving as the Team Leader. Watch for more information in the December-January issue of The Quail or contact Dick Lamster at 541.343.8664 or at maeveanddick@q.com. This fun and exciting event is open to anyone interested in birds. If you are a beginning birder and want to learn more, this is a good opportunity to learn while bird watching with experienced birders. If you are a skilled birdwatcher, we could use your assistance and expertise. If you have participated in the past, we hope you will join us again this year. We have space for everyone, and the more eyes the better!



#### **November Program Meeting**

Birding the Border Country: Lake, Harney, Washoe & Humboldt Counties, with John Shewey Tuesday, November 28, 7:30 p.m.

Eugene Garden Club 1645 High St., Eugene



Join your fellow 20% of Lane County Audubon Society members who help save paper and postage by receiving The Quail electronically.

Contact Tim Godsil at tgodsil@gmail.com