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The Quail

News from Lane County Audubon Society



From Our President

Maeve Sowles, 541.343.8664, maeveanddick@q.com

Sitting Still in the Right Place Can Offer Bird-Rich Rewards



Some birding groups have held “Big Sit” events where participants gather in a birdy area and watch for any birds that fly, swim, or hop by in order to count them. A contest or a bird count tally might be included. Of course eBird users can also log in the tally for the specific location.

For less experienced birders, it’s a great way to join with more

experienced birders to learn from them and see how the birds are identified and counted.

While it has similarities to the Christmas Bird Count, in this case the counters are stationary, so they can focus on watching the birds that move through an area. Many “Big Sit” counts are done during either spring or fall migrations. During COVID times, it is an appealing way for a very small group or family to enjoy the outdoors while watching and counting birds in a favorite birding area. That may even be in your own front or back yard!

This comes to mind after we had a similar experience while “working” in our orchard on a sunny day in early March. The woodpeckers were

putting on a show for us. We had males drumming all over the property. Northern Flickers were calling and drumming in three different directions from us. Three Red-breasted Sapsuckers were actively flying from garden fence posts to trees and back right in front of us. One flew from a tree over my husband’s head, and I thought it might land on him.

All were in their spring fever display prime and their colors were striking. A male Downy Woodpecker was displaying his red crest on an old snag nearby. A Hairy Woodpecker male was drumming at the top of another snag. Earlier in the day the Pileated Woodpeckers had been vocalizing. It turned into a woodpecker springtime extravaganza for us, and we sat on tree stumps to watch all this instead of “working.”

Taking the time to enjoy what nature offers is both a pleasure and a gift. I hope you can find a bird-filled place to watch as the spring birds arrive and put on their courtship displays!

Lane County Audubon Society

541.485.BIRD

laneaudubon.org

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Swift Watch 8

Conservation

Debbie Schlenoff, 541.685.0610, dschlenoff@msn.com

The River Democracy Act of 2021 Would Protect More Oregon Waterways

Riddle: You're out hiking one day, and you catch glimpses of osprey, kingfishers, American Dippers, herons, perhaps a flycatcher, a woodpecker, a warbling vireo. Where are you?

As you listen to the bird calls, the sun glints off the water but the edges of the stream are cooled by the shade of riparian vegetation. You see flashes of fish, and darting damselflies, hopping frogs, and puddling butterflies. Dare you dream that this river oasis will still be providing habitat in a few years? Dare away. On February 3rd, Senators Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley introduced the River Democracy Act of 2021 in Congress. The legislation would add nearly 4,700 miles of rivers and streams in Oregon to the national Wild and Scenic Rivers system, established in 1968. Oregon now has 2,173 miles designated in the Wild and Scenic Rivers system, but that total is only about 2% of Oregon's 110,994 miles of waterways. The River Democracy Act of 2021 would triple that to about 6% of Oregon's rivers and streams. It would also double protected land from a quarter-mile corridor on both sides of the river to a half-mile.

The public has been deeply involved in this process. Just over a year ago, recommendations were solicited. Since then, nearly 2,500 Oregonians offered more than 15,000 nominations including submissions from a middle school science

class (Tumalo Creek), river guides (Rough and Ready Creek), and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (Umatilla River and Middle Fork John Day). The Act applies to only federal lands, while protecting private property rights and water rights. It prohibits dams, clear-cut logging, and other harmful activities in protected areas. As part of the plan, Native American tribes will work with federal land managers to develop river management plans. Wild and Scenic River corridors will be assessed for wildfire risks, with managers required to implement a plan that reduces wildfire threats to nearby homes and businesses, and they will work with local agencies in the event of a wildfire. River management

plans to be developed will include stream and forest restoration work, and species restoration for culturally significant native species, such as huckleberry and salmon.

This legislation will help:

- Protect habitat for riparian vegetation, fish, birds, and wildlife.
- Protect species of concern, such as endangered salmon that need cool waters and are highly sensitive to turbidity and loss of streamside habitat.
- Protect watersheds and ensure access to high-quality drinking water.
- Preserve cultural resources and foods, particularly providing benefits to families with traditions of fishing for salmon and steelhead.
- Benefit Oregon ranchers and farmers who need clean water to irrigate their crops and sustain their livestock.
- Decrease wildfire risk and develop fire management plans that increase resiliency of the river and adjacent communities.
- Mitigate climate change through

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Willamette River at Buford Park

photo: Karen Irmischer

Field Notes: February 2021

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



Photo: DickDaniels, wiki commons

Rhinoceros Auklet



Photo: Ron Knight, wiki commons

Black-legged Kittiwake

Rhinoceros Auklet, Black-legged Kittiwake, Lapland Longspur, Western Bluebird

The month seemed pretty normal for those of us in Lane County, as compared to the northern valley. The early “spring” arriving birds have started to show up, and more will be arriving through March. Some of the resident species have started to sing/display: woodpeckers, Hutton’s Vireo, chickadees, wrens, thrushes, and sparrows.

Abbreviations: North Jetty of the Siuslaw River (NJSR)

WATERFOWL

Brant	Feb 14	Siltcoos River mouth	MS	Normally only migrants
Ruddy Duck (300)	Feb 10	Siltcoos Lake	AC	Large numbers
Clark’s Grebe	Feb 3	Heceta Head	AC,RH	Unusual on the ocean
Clark’s Grebe	Feb 10	Siltcoos Lake	AC	Rarely found on the lake
Band-tailed Pigeon	Feb 14	Creswell area	TMo	A normal arrival date
Rufous Hummingbird	Feb 19	Florence area	DP	A normal arrival date
Rufous Hummingbird	Feb 26	River Road area	KU	A few days later than normal
Sandhill Crane (2)	Feb 4	Cantrell Rd	NC	Rarely found during winter
Sandhill Crane (4)	Feb 17	FRR - Royal Ave	RS	Rarely found during winter
Mountain Plover	Feb 9	Siltcoos River mouth	A&TM	Last reported sighting
Marbled Murrelet	Feb	N of Florence	M.ob	Unusually common this month
Ancient Murrelet (2)	Feb 11	NJSR	DP	Found in small numbers
Rhinoceros Auklet (many)	Feb 11	NJSR	DP	Starting to return for the breeding season
Black-legged Kittiwake	Feb 10	Florence area	AC	Very large numbers being seen
Black-legged Kittiwake (150)	Feb 11	NJSR	DP	Very large numbers
Western Gull	Feb 22	W Eugene area	AC	Never common inland
Brown Pelican	Feb 3	Heceta Head	AC,RH	An uncommon winter report

FLYCATCHERS TO WARBLERS

Horned Lark (75)	Feb 1	Eug Airport area	AC	Large numbers
Western Bluebird (7)	Feb 18	N River Road area	MM	Not seen in the area before
American Pipit (400)	Feb 1	Eug Airport area	AC	A very large flock
Lapland Longspur	Feb 1	Eug Airport area	AC	Rarely found inland
Hermit Warbler (photos)	Feb 21	Springfield	SM	Rare winter sighting

AC Alan Contreras, A&TM Allison & Tom Mickel, DP Diane Pettey, KU Kate User, MM Marcia Maffei, MS Martin Sheehan, NC Nancy Clogston, RH Rich Hoyer, RS Robert Snowden, SM Sylvia Maulding, TMo Tori Morgan. M.ob signifies many observers.



Volunteers Needed

Administrative Assistant

Lane Audubon would like a volunteer who could serve as an Administrative Assistant for Board and Chapter functions. Position requires word processing, Excel spreadsheets, and PowerPoint skills. Working from home is required.

Audubon Adventures Coordinator

LCAS is looking for a volunteer who can link teachers in grades 3–5

with the *Audubon Adventures* kits created by National Audubon Society. Through our Adopt-a- Classroom Program we ask members to sponsor this program with a donation, so there is no cost to the schools. This volunteer reaches out to teachers and potential sponsors, then compiles the orders for National Audubon who sends the kits to the schools. The coordinator follows up by making sure teachers have received their kits and sends acknowledgements out to the classroom sponsors. Please help us keep this important program going!

FMI: please contact Maeve Sowles at audubon@laneaudubon.org or 541.343.8664.

Lane County
Audubon
Society



Mission Statement

Lane County Audubon Society is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the conservation of and education about our natural environment, with a primary focus on birds and other wildlife and their habitats.

Equity and Diversity Statement

The birds that Lane County Audubon Society pledges to protect differ in color, size, behavior, geographical preference, and countless other ways. We acknowledge the differences among people and also respect the individuality of each member of our community. We are committed to a community free of any kind of discrimination based on race, color, sex, age, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, disability, and national or ethnic origin.

Just as biodiversity strengthens natural systems, the diversity of human experience strengthens our conservation efforts for the benefit of nature and all human beings.

We encourage positive change in the community and environment.

Conservation *continued from page 2*

protecting vegetation that sequesters large amounts of carbon and helps keep waterways cooler.

- Support and bolster the outdoor recreation economy. Outdoor Recreation Industry data indicates that outdoor recreation supports 224,000 jobs and generates \$15.6 billion in consumer spending.
- Provide opportunities for recreation and connection with nature (a host of activities are supported such as camping, rafting, kayaking, birding, hiking, photography, fishing, etc.)
- Ensure these opportunities exist for future generations.

More information and a link to thank the senators can be found here: ouregonrivers.org/



Photo: Cary Kerst

Great Blue Heron

Bike Path Clean-up

Our spring Bike Path Clean-up has been scheduled for Sunday, April 11th, from 9 am to noon.

We will meet near the Euphoria Chocolate Company at Stewart Road and Bertelsen, just north of West 11th. Social distancing with masking as needed isn't difficult to do during this activity. Please Volunteer to help!

To join the volunteer effort, email Katy Vizdal at katyvizdal@gmail.com if you are interested.

Zoom Program Meeting Tuesday, April 27, 7:00 pm

Dennis Arendt, 541.221.3691, dennisarendt@gmail.com



For access details, check laneaudubon.org

Saline Lakes, Flamingos, and Life in Extreme Environments



Photo: Dennis Arendt

Nate Senner

Saline lakes occur in some of the world's driest regions yet are home to globally important assemblages of an array of endemic taxa, ranging from microbes to wading birds. Saline lakes may also be especially vulnerable because the species occupying them are dependent upon lake salinity remaining within a narrow window. Lake salinity, in turn, is largely determined by variation in water availability, meaning that environmental irregularities that influence water levels can lead to rapid changes in the local biotic community. In this context, the increasing demand for lithium batteries poses a potential risk to the biota of saline lakes: most lithium is mined in and around saline lakes and, especially, from saline lakes in the "Lithium Triangle" of

the Andes of Chile, Bolivia, and Argentina. This presentation will explore how water availability and lithium mining influence the three species of flamingos that breed in the Lithium Triangle — the Andean (*Phoenicoparrus andinus*), James' (*P. jamesi*), and Chilean Flamingos (*Phoenicopterus chilensis*). Given the essential function of flamingos as top-consumers and their critical role in the local eco-tourism industry, the projected future increases in the demand for lithium batteries pose grave threats to regional biodiversity and human economic well-being. Our results thus provide a much-needed assessment of the effects of lithium mining on saline lake ecosystems and hint at the impacts of even the most 'sustainable' technologies when they must meet global demands.

Biography: While growing up in Alaska, Nathan started studying birds at the age of 14. After earning a B.A. from Carleton College, he was awarded a Thomas J. Watson Fellowship to follow Hudsonian Godwits on their annual migration from the Arctic to the southern tip of South America and back. Following his Watson Fellowship, Nathan spent a two-year stint in Eugene trying to become a professional marathon

runner. When that didn't work out, he resumed his godwit research while pursuing his Ph.D. at Cornell University with Dr. John Fitzpatrick. From there, he traveled to the Netherlands for a postdoc with Dr. Theunis Piersma at the University of Groningen, studying the flexibility of Black-tailed Godwit annual cycles, and then on to the University of Montana, where he investigated the population dynamics of high-elevation deer mice with Dr. Zachary Cheviron. Since 2019, Nathan has been an assistant professor in the Department of Biological Sciences at the University of South Carolina. In his free time, Nathan still trains with his running partner, Oliver, three-time canine champion of the Snow Joke Half Marathon and inarguably Montana's fastest dog.



Photo: Jay McGowan

Nate with Hudsonian Godwit



Photo: Maria Steger

Flamingos

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 Godsfil at 541.915.8852 or tgodsil@gmail.com

The Quail Upcoming Content Deadlines

May-June issue: April 1

July-August issue: June 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.)

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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

Lane County Audubon Society Yearly Membership

- Individual \$20.....\$ _____
- Students 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).....\$ _____

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

I am a Current National Audubon member Don't know

Please contact me regarding

Gift memberships Lane Audubon's Living Legacy program

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

I would prefer to receive the e-Quail newsletter by e-mail.

I would like to receive e-mail alerts about conservation issues.

I would like to volunteer for Lane County Audubon activities.

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

Mail this form and your payment to: Lane County Audubon Society, P.O. Box 5086, Eugene, OR 97405

What's Happening in the Oregon Legislature?

Consider writing your state representatives in support of the following proposed legislation.

Protect Oregon's forests. HB 2357. Eliminates the problematic Oregon Forest Resources Institute while allowing for more monitoring staff at ODF to ensure compliance with forestry laws. Increases science staff at the Department of Forestry to protect rivers and streams. Increases monitoring of dangerous landslide areas on forest land.

Protect beavers. OR (HB) 2843. Would protect beavers from being trapped and hunted on federal public lands. Beavers provide important habitat restoration functions.

Ban Coyote Derbies. HB 4075. Coyote killing contests undermine modern, science-based wildlife management principles and are not an effective wildlife management tool. The best available science shows that many wildlife populations depleted by unnatural means simply reproduce more quickly due to the sudden drop in competition for resources and changes to social structure from the loss of individuals. End cruel, wasteful, and unsporting coyote killing contests in Oregon.

Equity and Climate in Land Use. HB 2448. Requires Land Conservation and Development Commission to make changes to statewide land use that focus on

climate justice by addressing climate change adaptation and mitigation and environmental justice for disadvantaged communities.

Help reduce pesticide use: HB 2406. Expands list of pesticides that may not be included in school lists of low-impact pesticides for use in integrated pest management plan.

HB 2409. Prohibits homeowners' associations from requiring application of pesticide on owners' properties.

100% Clean Energy for All. HB 2995. Transitions Oregon to 100% clean energy within the next few decades, helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and create new jobs in clean energy.

Legislator lookup options:

- gov.oregonlive.com/legislators/
- oregonlegislature.gov/FindYourLegislator/leg-districts-mobile_new.htm

Bike-Path Clean Up

Sunday April 11th, 2021 | 9AM - 12PM

Where: We will meet near the Euphoria Chocolate Company at Stewart Road and Bertelsen, just north of West 11th.

Provided: Bags and tools.

Bring: Masks, gloves, sanitizer, water, and snacks.

Sign up: Please sign up by emailing: audubon@laneaudubon.org

We will maintain social distancing along the route!

We look forward to seeing you there!



Join the volunteer effort, watch birds along the route and clean the bike path!



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LCAS Bird Walks & Events

Rebecca Waterman, 541.653.3354, fieldtrips@laneaudubon.org



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Lane County Audubon Society

Third Saturday Bird Walk, April 17

This month's bird walk is a celebration of the recently adopted Lane Audubon Inclusivity and Diversity Statement. We are reaching out to women, BIPOC, queer birders, and their allies. In May, we will have our traditional Third Saturday Bird Walk. With both walks, participants will need to stay masked and distanced, and the walks will be limited in size. If Bex is free, she enjoys leading walks at other times. New birders always welcome. FMI or to sign up for a walk, please email Bex at fieldtrips@laneaudubon.org

Vaux's Swift Watch – Sunset, April 9 and 16, 2021

The Vaux's Swifts use the chimney at Agate Hall to roost for the night as they gather to feed and recover after migration from the south.

Please join us before sunset on Friday April 9th and April 16th at Agate Hall on the UO campus. We will be at the parking area at 17th and Agate—look for the Audubon banner!

FMI: Lane Audubon Facebook page or web site, or call the Lane Audubon phone at 541.485.2473. You can also check out the Vaux's Happening website for more information about Vaux's Swifts: vauxhappening.org

