

The Quail

News from Lane County Audubon Society

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From Our President

Maeve Sowles, 541.343.8664, maeveanddick@q.com

Nature's Wonders Delight Me This Time of Year



Photo: Maeve Sowles

Dogwood blossoms

Celebrate Nature is on my calendar as we enjoy late spring and the arrival of summer. This time of year, I want to hang out in my garden where I keep ears and eyes open for birds, butterflies, and any other life forms that present themselves. I hit "pause" whenever I observe something new, so I'm taking breaks from the gardening at regular intervals. Obviously, the bird

life is one of my great joys, but other animals are also unique and amazing in their own ways.

Our garden block wall and compost pile is home to Western Fence Lizards. They sun themselves and eat insects with vigor. They don't seem bothered by my activities and we watch each other. We also see Western Skinks with the blue tails, but they are less tolerant if I approach them. One of our raised garden boxes has a Northern Alligator Lizard that lingers in a morning sunny spot nearby. We have seen them at other parts of the property, and they are avid bug eaters as well. We actually keep small rock piles near fence posts to provide habitat for these reptiles. They feed on many insects and invertebrates, and we

are happy to have them in our small ecosystem.

One May day a few years ago, we came across a Western Pond Turtle traversing our hillside on a mowed path. We watched her make her way down the hill toward a small pool along Fox Hollow Creek. She had come from an adjoining property with a small watercourse and seemed to know exactly where she wanted to end up. It was an annual trek to her summer pool.

Once, we found a Pacific Giant Salamander near this same creek. It was an impressive 9 inches long, out in the open, which we thought unusual. We soon realized it was dying, we don't know why, but were hoping it had been able to reproduce abundantly during its life. We have seen several of the smaller Rough-skinned Newts in the early spring.

We also have three snake species at our property: Rubber Boa (who feeds on lizards), Garter (eats slugs), and Gopher Snakes are around. Any summer day we walk the property we

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Lane County Audubon Society

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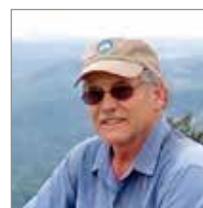
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Conservation

Debbie Schlenoff, 541.685.0610, dschlenoff@msn.com

California Condors Soon to Soar Over Oregon

What's the largest native bird in North America? That's easy. With a wingspan of nearly 10 feet, California Condors (CACO) win the prize. Soaring above the landscape, they use their keen eyesight to search for carrion and provide important "clean-up" services to the environment. It's been about 100 years since these magnificent birds flew in Oregon skies, but I'm happy to report that this is about to change. The Yurok Tribe has worked for decades to bring back this sacred bird, called "pregoneesh" in the Yurok language. A partnership between the Yurok tribe, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Park Service is establishing a population of CACOs in Redwood National Park in Northern California. With a flight range of up to 150 miles per day, these birds will soon be flying in Oregon again.

Once seen over much of North America, the population of these birds plummeted to only 22 individuals by 1987, due to hazards such as

hunting, habitat destruction, and lead poisoning. These were rounded up and placed into a captive breeding program. Thanks to a comprehensive recovery program with a focus on careful breeding, mentorship by older birds, and training programs to prepare the birds for release, more than 300 California Condors now live in the wild, ranging over California, Arizona, Utah, and the Baja Peninsula. Nearly 200 more are living in captivity.

Condors can live for 60 years but do not start to reproduce until they are 6-7 years old. They lay only one egg at a time and do not breed every year. The chick learns to fly when it is about 6 months old but will stay with its devoted parents for many more months. Condors are clever, social birds who engage in games like tug of war and fetch the feather. Their preferred habitat is large swaths of relatively remote land containing rocky cliffs, tall trees, and snags for foraging, roosting, and nesting.

As exciting as it is to be able to see the California Condor in Oregon, threats remain for these endangered birds. The population being released in Northern California has been designated a "nonessential experimental population." This designation exempts most incidental take (or harm) of condors, provided the take is unintentional and not due to negligent conduct. However, some activities are prohibited close to the nest, including habitat alteration, and significant



Photo: Kerry Leek

Condor, Northern Calif, March 2015

visual or noise disturbance. Activities that reduce wildfire risk are allowed.

How can we help? A good strategy is to identify the threats so we can help raise awareness.

- **Lead poisoning.** These scavengers suffer lead poisoning when they eat gut piles and carcasses that have been shot with lead ammunition. Raptor rehabilitation centers throughout Oregon document lead poisoning in Bald and Golden Eagles, hawks, and other raptors. Recapture of condors for de-chelation therapy is stressful for the birds, expensive, and often cannot clear enough lead to prevent an agonizing death. California has banned the use of lead-based ammunition. We can too. But until that time, please help spread the word to hunters you may know. Non-lead ammunition has been shown to be as effective as lead ammunition and the cost is now comparable.

- **Rodenticides.** Rodenticides are slow-acting decoagulants that cause dying animals to wander around in the open in search of water. When hunting raptors or scavengers eat the poisoned rodents (and other non-target animals), they also get

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Photo: Kerry Leek

Condors, Northern Calif, March 2015

Field Notes: March 2021

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



Photo: Becky Matsubara, wiki commons

Green-winged Teal (Eurasian)



Photo: paggyadigan, wiki commons

Harlequin Ducks

Green-winged Teal (Eurasian), Harlequin Duck, Swainson's Hawk, Golden Eagle

A few of the early neotropical migrants have begun arriving and some wintering species have started to head north to their breeding areas, as is normal for this time of year. A lot more of that will be happening over the next month or two.

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

WATERFOWL TO WARBLERS

Green-winged Teal (Eurasian)	March 9	Coburg	NSz	Rare subspecies
Harlequin Duck	March 6	Leaburg area	SA	Rare inland, but breed in the Cascades
Long-tailed Duck	March	Siuslaw River mouth	M.ob.	At least one in the area all winter
Sandhill Crane (37)	March 2	Creswell area	TMo	Only sighting of migrants this spring
Sandhill Crane	March 2	Mt Pisgah	LG	Heard calling overhead - same flock?
Sandhill Crane	March 2	Springfield	SM	Heard calling overhead - same flock?
Pacific Golden-Plover	March	FRR - Fisher Butte	M.ob.	Wintering at this location
Semipalmated Plover	March 27	FRR - Fisher Butte	JS,VT	The first report for spring migration
Pigeon Guillemot (103)	March 16	Sea Lion Caves	RR	Very large numbers - they breed on the cliffs
Pigeon Guillemot (250)	March 22	Sea Lion Caves	JK	Very large numbers - they breed on the cliffs
Black-legged Kittiwake (600)	March 16	Tokattee Klootchman	RR	Very large numbers reported for a few days
Caspian Tern	March 27	Heceta Beach	TMy	First report for the year
American Bittern	March 20	FRR - Royal Ave	JW	First report for the spring
Osprey	March 9	Dexter	MLS	First report away from wintering areas
Swainson's Hawk	March 17	Springfield	MG	Rare for Lane Co
Rough-legged Hawk	March 7	FRR - Royal Ave	VT	Last report for the winter season
Golden Eagle	March 27	Cantrell Rd	AC	Rare in the valley
Short-eared Owl (4)	March 17	Meadowlark Prairie	JR	A large number
Cliff Swallow	March 14	Delta Ponds	SH	About a week earlier than normal
Pygmy Nuthatch	March 6	Eugene	TC	Last report
Northern Mockingbird	March	SJSR	M.ob.	Reported throughout the month
Northern Mockingbird	March 2	West Lake	SH	Becoming more common
Chipping Sparrow (2)	March 28	Springfield	SM	A couple days earlier than normal
Orange-crowned Warbler	March 13	FRR - Royal Ave	A&EB	A few days earlier than normal
Common Yellowthroat	March 26	Mill Race, Springfield	BVW	A day earlier than normal

AC Alan Contreras, A&EB April & Erik Brown, BVW Bethany Van Wheeler, JK John Kingeter, JR Jeff Rosier, JS John Sullivan, JW Jeff Ward, LG Linda Gilbert, MG Marissa Gibson, MLS Mary Lee Sayre, NSz Nancy Stotz, RR Roger Robb, SA Steve Alter, SH Sally Hill, SM Sylvia Maulding, TC Tom Cable, TMo Tori Morgan, TMy Tom Myers, VT Vjera Thompson. M.ob signifies many observers.



Volunteers Needed – Lend a Helping Hand!

“Office” Assistant:

Lane Audubon needs assistance with acknowledging members’ renewals and donations. This person would send out responses each month providing a prompt response to our

generous members!! Excel and Word skills required while working from your computer.

Audubon Adventures Coordinator:

Help us deliver this important educational resource to our local teachers who want to provide environmental education to their students. Skills needed are organization, basic computer and email skills to manage the order and delivery of teaching kits to the classrooms. Follow up with the sponsors and teachers to complete the circle of providing this important teaching tool for our schools.

If you have a computer and a little time, this might be the volunteer opportunity you’ve been looking for!

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



Photo: Dennis Arendt

Chipping sparrow

Conservation *continued from page 2*

poisoned. There are better ways to control rodents. Please let others know. Marijuana production has grown in Northern California and Oregon which, unfortunately, has increased the use of rodenticides. If you are a consumer or know one, please ask dispensaries to urge growers to use other methods.

• **Other contaminants.** One coastal population in Central California is dealing with thin eggshells and inviable offspring due to poisons accumulating from scavenging on sea mammals. The sea mammals contain contaminants including mercury PCBs



Photo: Kerry Leek

Condors, Northern Calif, March 2015

and DDT metabolites. Yes, DDT has been banned in this country for many years, but it is still used in other countries plus it persists for a very long time after use, especially in marine environments. The EPA and other agencies must do better at analyzing and regulating the chemicals that we are all exposed to.

• **Habitat degradation.**

Construction and urban development of rangeland are major offenders. Steps are being taken in the recovery program to train the birds to avoid power lines, which have been a significant source of mortality for released birds. For wild hatchlings, encasing lines in insulated tree wire improves visibility. Similar consideration must be given to wind energy facilities in the condors’ range.

• **Microtrash** (bottle caps, can tabs, bits of plastic, etc.) is often ingested by birds and fed to nestlings, which can lead to poisoning or blockage causing starvation. Let’s work toward eliminating plastic packaging and improving design and recycling of containers.



Aggressive “Hazard Tree” Removal: The Latest Scheme to Clearcut Oregon Forests

In the aftermath of the 2020 Labor Day Fires, Oregon’s forests are ringing with the sounds of chainsaws. These days, visitors to fire-impacted federal lands will see miles of clearcut corridors along roadsides where trees have been removed by forest management agencies in the name of public safety. You can read Sam Krop’s complete blog/article on the Oregon Wild website: oregonwild.org.

Zoom Program Meeting

Tuesday, May 25, 7:00 pm

Dennis Arendt, 541.221.3691, dennisarendt@gmail.com



For access details, check laneaudubon.org

Hawaiian Birds with Rick Ahrens



Rick Ahrens

It's been a long time since we have been able to travel to exotic places. Now is your chance to vicariously see and appreciate some of the birds of Hawai'i. Rick Ahrens will be presenting his unique view of these birds. Join us for a bird's-eye perspective of this legendary paradise.

Most people have heard of Darwin's finches, but many are not aware of Hawai'i's honeycreepers. Both families of birds benefitted from being on isolated islands, evolving into many separate species. The honeycreepers of Hawai'i include some of the most unique and endangered birds in the world. This isolated archipelago is also home to numerous nesting seabirds: albatrosses, tropicbirds, shearwaters, petrels, and others. Many familiar and wide-ranging shorebirds and waterfowl visit during the winter months. Isolated islands provide unique laboratories for evolutionary experimentation and the development of endemic species.

Rick Ahrens grew up in a birding family in Ohio and moved to Oregon in 1981, where he has been a local naturalist for several decades. Over the years, Rick has presented several programs for the Lane County Audubon Society. He has been a leader of bird groups as well as a general naturalist interested in bugs, birds, and ecology.



Photo: Rick Ahrens

Kioea (Bristle-thighed Curlew)



Photo: Rick Ahrens

Moli (Laysan Albatross)



Photo: Rick Ahrens

I'iwi (Scarlet Honeycreeper)



Photo: Katy Vizdal

Bikepath cleanup

Impressive Numbers Joined in LCAS Bike Path Cleanup

We want to thank the organizers: Phil Johnson, Maeve Sowles, and Katy Vizdal for making the event a success. These four arrived early for the Sunday, April 11th, cleanup, and nineteen others joined them on the cool sunny morning to complete the task at hand! Thanks also to Bryan Ribelin, who created our posters to advertise the event!

Folks split up and dispersed in two directions, finishing the job in about 3 hours. We are most grateful for the wonderful showing of volunteers who shared in the work!

Good job and thanks to each of you!

Angela Soto
Sarah Shmigelsky
Emily Kostuch
Sue Thompson
Emily Heilbrun
Caleb Hund
Cathy Ellis
Nancy Clogston
Jennifer Archer
Clara Emlen
Mary Leoni
Ruth Schmidt
Lynn Corbett
Virginia Donohue
Alanna Sowles
Brandon Starks
Connie Berglund
Timothy Fiedler
Karen Fiedler

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 tgodsfil@gmail.com

The Quail Upcoming Content Deadlines
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September issue: August 1

Submit material to Karen Irmscher at quailkaren1@gmail.com

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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

Nearby Nature

May 1, 1 pm-4 pm
BioBlitz 2021

Join us as we use iNaturalist to collect observations of the web of life in the Whilamut Natural Area and at our Learnscope as part of the City Nature Challenge 2021! Participants of all ages will take photos of plants, animals, insects, and fungi and upload them to iNaturalist. You don't need to be a skilled naturalist to join in the fun and learning. Visit our Natural Neighbors Project page to learn how to set up your iNaturalist account. Registration required.

FMI or to preregister:
541.687.9699, or nearbynature.org

May 11, 10 am-12:30 pm
Green Start Play Day: Spring Sprouts

Kids 5 and under only, with an adult, are invited to enjoy this self-led outdoor nature exploration in our Learnscope. This month focuses on our green, growing garden! Each family will be assigned a 45-minute reserved time slot to receive instructions. Then set off in our safe and exciting outdoor classroom to discover toddler and pre-school activities, stories, and games. Rain or shine! Please be sure to pre-register. Social distancing guidelines in place. Members free, non-members \$7/family.

FMI or to preregister:
541.687.9699, or nearbynature.org

June 8, 10 am-12:30 pm
Green Start Play Day: A Bug's Life

Kids 5 and under only, with an adult, can enjoy another self-led outdoor nature exploration in our Learnscope. This month investigate the wonderful world of insects and other bug friends! Rain or shine! Pre-register to reserve your time slot; only three families max can be in the Learnscope at once, with social distancing guidelines in place. Members free, non-members \$7/family.

FMI or to preregister:
541.687.9699, or nearbynature.org



Photo: Jim Austin

Owl and owlets

LCAS Board Elections Notice

Lane County Audubon Society Board elections will be held at the May 25th program meeting.

The slate of candidates are all incumbents: Ramiro Aragon, Rachael Friese, Jim Maloney, Ron Renschler, Debra Schlenoff, Maeve Sowles, and Rebecca Waterman.

From Our President *continued from page 1*

find Garter Snakes, and my husband is careful to avoid them when he mows. Good thing we are retired now, as our work efficiency drops with so many animals to watch! To close with bird sightings, it is amazing how many times I see a Red-tailed Hawk carrying a dangling snake up to feed the nestlings on a summer afternoon. These are all part of the natural balance of things. We are happy to be able to enjoy them all and celebrate nature at this beautiful time of year!

If you want to learn more about some of the non-bird species you see, try using the iNaturalist app: iNaturalist.org/.

With this app you can enter a sighting of any species and it will help identify the species of plant or animal! iNaturalist is a joint initiative of the California Academy of Sciences and the National Geographic Society. Every observation can contribute to biodiversity science, as they

share your findings with scientific data repositories like the **Global Biodiversity Information Facility** to help scientists find and use your data.

Similar to eBird, you can record your encounters with other organisms and maintain life lists, all in The Cloud. It utilizes crowdsource identifications that connect you with experts who can identify the organisms you observe. Your observations create useful data that helps scientists and resource managers understand when and where organisms occur. It is a great learning tool and a research resource that gives nature observers a chance to participate in science and discovery of the natural world around them!



Photo: Maeve Sowles

Pacific Giant Salamander



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



LCAS Bird Walks & Events

Rebecca Waterman, 541.653.3354, fieldtrips@laneaudubon.org

First Saturday Bird Walks, May 1 & June 5

Our new First Saturday bird walks are a celebration of the recently adopted Lane Audubon Inclusivity and Diversity Statement. We are encouraging women, BIPOC, queer birders, and their allies to join these, particularly anyone who has felt intimidated at the thought of joining previously existing walks. New birders are always welcome.

Third Saturday Bird Walk, May 15

This walk will be led by Joshua Little, who is currently doing an Oregon Big Year! Participation has been increased to about 15 folks. Masks and distancing are still required throughout. Folks still need to email Bex to get onto the list, and spots fill up fast. If Bex is free, she enjoys leading walks at other times. New birders always welcome.

Third Saturday Bird Walk, June 19

Details to be determined. Check the LCAS website and/or Facebook page closer to the date.

FMI or to sign up for a walk, please email Bex at rebecca.waterman@gmail.com.



Photo: Rebecca Waterman

Spotted Towhee



Photo: Rebecca Waterman

Violet-green Swallow