



The Quail

News from Lane County Audubon Society

Please consider receiving The Quail electronically

From Our President

Maeve Sowles, 541.343.8664, maeveanddick@q.com

These Books Challenge Us to Be Good Neighbors to Our Earth Home



I recently revisited my John Marzluff book, *Welcome to Subirdia*, published in 2014. Lane Audubon has enjoyed Marzluff's program presentations in person and via Zoom. Marzluff is a Professor of Wildlife Science at the University

of Washington, plus author of *In the Company of Crows and Ravens*, and several other books. *Subirdia* is an informative read, as it provides a summary of his multi-year research projects along with research results from other scientists studying birds that live at the interface of human and non-human population areas. He also presents examples of evolutionary changes in some birds, as a result of their close association with human impacts, such as noise, light, harassment, and chemical pollution within and near urban areas. Through his studies, he documents many negative impacts that human lifestyles inflict on bird populations.

In the next to last chapter, "Good Neighbors," Marzluff asks his readers

to consider practicing the following principles:

1. Do not covet your neighbor's lawn. Lawns are really ecological disasters of the highest magnitude.
2. Keep your cat indoors!
3. Make your windows visible to birds.
4. Do not light up the night sky.
5. Provide food, water, nest boxes, and other provisions that birds need.
6. Do not kill native predators.
7. Foster a diversity of habitats within the cities where we live.
8. Create safe passages across roads and highways.
9. Work with planning authorities to ensure the existence of functional connections which allow animals to move safely and easily between aquatic and terrestrial habitats in our urban and rural areas.
10. Enjoy and bond with nature where you live, work, and play.

Engaging with nature allows people to appreciate nature, build respect for

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Lane County Audubon Society

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Florence CBC 9

Conservation

Debbie Schlenoff, 541.685.0610, dschlenoff@msn.com

Adequate Water in Lake Abert Is Essential for More Than 80,000 Migratory Birds

Lake Abert, a remote saltwater lake in Oregon's high desert, is shrinking. In the last decade, its water volume has dropped more than 90 percent. Oregon's only saline lake, it has gone dry twice in the last eight years: in 2014 and again in 2021. Located about 25 miles north of Lakeview in south central Oregon, this lake is a critical stopover for migratory birds traveling along the Pacific Flyway. It provides essential habitat for breeding and migration for over 80,000 migratory birds each year—shorebirds, waterfowl, and other water birds, representing about 80 species. Among the supported species are a significant percentage of the populations of American Avocets, Wilson's Phalaropes, Northern Shovelers, Eared Grebes, Western Sandpipers, and "threatened" Snowy Plovers. According to one report, there has been a decline of nearly 82% in bird sightings at Lake Abert when water levels are low.

When water gets too scarce, the lake becomes too salty even for the critters that are adapted to live in saline lakes. When the brine shrimp and brine flies cannot survive, the birds are left without their major food source. This spells disaster for energy-depleted migrating birds and for breeding birds needing resources to support their young. In addition, the birds themselves are physiologically stressed by the increased salt load.

There are several proposed explanations as to why the lake

is drying up. Climate change is exacerbating the problem with higher temperatures and longer droughts. And some of the loss is due to irrigation by nearby ranchers and farmers. However, in some other years that were not as dry as 2014 and 2021, although the lake shrank, it did not dry up. Some have proposed that the straw that broke the camel's back was the diversion of water due to the River's End Reservoir and dam. A recent report revealed that in 2015, a DEQ employee proposed that this state-subsidized reservoir project had worsened the lake's decline. She was directed to stop the investigation on this.

Today, interest in focusing on the problem has been rekindled, with a push to investigate the causes and support the protection of Lake Abert. The National Audubon Society and partners have asked that water



Photo: BLM, wiki commons

Lake Abert

levels and flows be monitored, water availability and water budgets be analyzed, and instream water rights be established in a way that supports healthy aquatic ecosystems and engages with the appropriate tribes. They also seek passage of federal legislation, the Saline Lake Ecosystems in the Great Basin States Program Act, which would appropriate funds to study, monitor, and support the lake.

It is essential that wide swaths of habitat be protected to support an array of birds and other wildlife, but it is often quite a battle to make that happen on the large scale that is needed. Here is an opportunity to conserve a relatively small area that we know has an outsized impact on the security of bird populations. Urge your legislators to make it happen.

Nice video of the birds at lake Abert: vimeo.com/245439764



Photo: Shadowmeld Photography, wiki commons

Lake Abert with low water levels

Field Notes: January 2022

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

Brown Booby, Snowy Owl, Western Tanager, Wilson's Warbler

The weather for the month seemed a little cooler, sunnier, and foggier than normal. In other words, not as cloudy and wet as normal. And, for some reason, I forgot to include the Snowy Owl in last month's fieldnotes!

Abbreviations:

Fern Ridge Reservoir (FRR), North Jetty of the Siuslaw River (NJSR)



Photo: Benjamin44, wiki commons

Brown Booby



Photo: Peter K Burian, wiki commons

Snowy Owl

GEESE TO RAPTORS

Ross's Goose	Jan 16	Franklin Rd	SH	Unusual in the valley
Tundra Swan (800)	Jan 26	Meadowview Road	AC	A large flock
Long-tailed Duck	Jan 9	Mill Race - UO	JL	Rarely inland
Common Goldeneye	Jan 1	Franklin Rd	RR	Rare away from large lakes or rivers
Band-tailed Pigeon	Jan 22	Creswell area	TMo	Rarely found in the winter
Common Loon	Jan 9	Mt Pisgah area	Ma	Uncommon away from large lakes
Brown Booby	Jan 2	NJSR	DP	Rare; third Lane Co sighting
Snowy Egret	Jan 2	FRR area	AK,PR	Last report for the area
Green Heron	Jan 1	Alton Baker Park	JM	Winter in small numbers most years
Osprey	Jan	Florence area	M.ob.	Have wintered in the area for a few years
Red-shouldered Hawk (15)	Jan 30	Lorane valley	LG,CS	A good area for this species

WOODPECKERS TO TANAGERS

Lewis's Woodpecker	Jan	Sher Khan Rd	M.ob.	Wintering in the area
Lewis's Woodpecker	Jan 22	Seavey Loop Rd	SR	Only reported that day
Horned Lark	Jan 28	Oakridge	MLS	Found last year about the same time
Tree Swallow	Mid-Jan	FRR/Siuslaw mouth	M.ob.	A little earlier than normal
Violet-green Swallow	Jan 28	30th Ave area	JG	A little over a month early
Barn Swallow	Mid-Jan	FRR/Siuslaw mouth	M.ob.	They normally don't stay for long
Northern Mockingbird	Jan 24	Alton Baker Park	JJ	A few winter here some years
Harris's Sparrow	Jan 14	Oakridge	MLS	Rare winter visitor
Swamp Sparrow	Jan 6	FRR area	SH	Fewer than normal reports this winter
White-throated Sparrow (9)	Jan 12	River Road area	RH	How many are in Eugene during winter?
Wilson's Warbler	Jan 2	Stewart Pond	JL	Rare wintering species
Orange-crowned Warbler	Jan	Eugene area	M.ob.	Much larger numbers than normal
Western Tanager	Jan 8	River Road area	RH	Rare wintering species

Late Report

Snowy Owl (photo).....Dec 7.....Elmira.....PM.....Rare winter visitor

AC Alan Contreras, AK Andrew Kern, CS Cynthia Stockwell, DP Diane Pettey, JG Joshua Galpern, JJ Jessica Jones, JL Joshua Little, JM Jim Mitchell, LG Linda Gilbert, Ma Maitreya, MLS Mary Lee Sayre, PM Pam McBride, PR Peter Ralph, RH Rich Hoyer, RR Roger Robb, SH Sally Hill, SR Samuel Rodgers, TMo Tori Morgan. M.ob signifies many observers.



Photo: Dave Peeling, WSU Extension Snohomish County

Mindful Spring Gardening

By Debbie Schlenoff

With the coming of spring this month, we are tempted to get back in the garden. Perhaps it's never too early for weeding to make room for native plants and for putting native plants in the ground. But do try to resist the urge to clean up your garden too much. Solitary native bees may be overwintering in your yard and leaving things somewhat messy will help them be safe until they emerge later in the spring. These helpful pollinators use bare patches of soil, twigs, stems (especially pithy stems), leaf litter, snags, and stumps. To support the pollinators and birds, it's best to hold off on a major clean-up until temperatures are consistently over 50 degrees.

Thank You for the Spotting Scope

Thank you to Evelyn Scherr for the generous donation of a spotting scope and tripod to be used in our Educational Programs!



Photo: Magnus Persmark

Cinnamon Flycatcher



Photo: Bob Fleming

Himalayas

The End of "Zoom Only" Program Meetings?

By Dennis Arendt

In April and May, Lane County Audubon Society Program Meetings will be held at the University of Oregon in a large auditorium. This will allow for some in-person gathering, (following all of the COVID restrictions) and for Zooming out to those who prefer to participate from their home computers. This type of hybrid meeting was initially used in September for Noah Strycker's presentation about the Chinstrap Penguins. It worked well.

The Audubon Society meeting will be on April 26, at 7 pm in a UO auditorium. Program presenter Bruce Newhouse is an expert on all sorts of birds, plants and bugs. His presentation will focus on pollinators. Bees, of course, but other pollinators, too. This program will be just in time for spring blossoms, and you'll have a choice between attending the meeting in person or online.

The May 24th meeting, also held at the UO, will feature the greatest mountain range in the world. Bob Fleming, a regular speaker at the LCAS meetings, will tell us about the

Himalayas. Bob grew up in India and has trekked through these impressive mountains. Apropos the enormity of the topic, his photographs and stories will be presented on the big auditorium screen for those who want to attend in person. Concurrently, the presentation will be available to those at home via the Zoom link.

Our plan is to continue this hybrid meeting system in the fall, when LCAS will relocate our regular meetings to the Campbell Center near Skinner Butte Park. Meetings will be in the Great Hall, where there is plenty of room for well-spaced seating. The presentations will also continue being available via Zoom for those who wish to participate online.

COVID regulations will be followed, whatever they are at the time. Perhaps, there will be fewer of them by the time our fall meetings start. The Zoom meeting format has allowed many more Audubon members to participate in the program meetings. Keeping the Zoom format going, in conjunction with in-person meetings, will allow many more people to benefit from our programs.

LCAS Program Meeting Tuesday, March 22, 7:00 pm, Zoom only

Dennis Arendt, 541.221.3691, dennisarendt@gmail.com



LCAS Program will be available on Zoom. The link to this program will be available on the LCAS website. The program will also be recorded and made available to you afterwards.



Photo: Randy Sinnott

Magnus and Rosie

Three Weeks in Southern Ecuador



Photo: Randy Sinnott

Magnus Persmark

For our March Program Meeting, LCAS member Magnus Persmark will lead us on an adventure through the spectacularly bird-rich wild lands of Southern Ecuador. He traveled there in January of 2022, along with his wife, Rosie Hammond, and fellow LCAS members Dave Westerfield and Randy Sinnott. With the help of Jose Illanes, a knowledgeable Ecuadorean bird guide, our intrepid adventurers were able to find and identify more than 600 species.

After flying into Ecuador's largest city, Guayaquil, they traveled east over the mountains to the ill-defined border with Peru, then on to the mountain highlands, and lastly to the coast. Despite being nearly the same size as Oregon, Ecuador's location near the equator, plus its varied geography, makes it an inviting home to more than 1,600 bird species. That's well over three times the number of species ever found in Lane County.

The southern part of Ecuador encompasses many special ecoregions, such as the Tumbes dry forests, with short wet seasons and long dry ones. In the Andes, they found two recently catalogued bird species, the Jocotoco Antpitta and the Blue-throated Hillstar. The highlands have many birds specifically adapted for these high elevations, like the crazy Giant Conebill. This tour covered not only the Tumbes and Andean foothills, but also the coastal mangroves, rain forests, montane cloud forests, high altitude elfin forests, and the Andean tundra, called the paramo.



Photo: Magnus Persmark

Jocotoco Antpitta



Photo: Magnus Persmark

Spangled Coquette

About Magnus Persmark

Born in Gothenburg, Sweden, Magnus grew up in a small town on the country's southern coast. Much time was spent with family outside: rambling through forests, looking for wildflowers in springtime, picking mushrooms or berries in the fall, as well as skiing on trails and ice skating on frozen lakes in winter. The ancient Swedish law of common access to private lands made it easy and safe for kids to roam. It was inevitable, perhaps, that birds would pose a particular fascination, and Magnus got his first binoculars from his grandparents at age 10. With the exception of a brief teenage hiatus, he has been birding ever since. As part of biochemistry graduate school he moved to California for a year in the late 80s, and 30-plus years later he still calls the USA home. He and his wife have enjoyed living in Eugene since 2005.



Photo: Magnus Persmark

Gray-headed Gull

it, care, wonder, and even love nature.

Simply put...Love thy wild neighbor!

Marzluff's words ring true, now that the timber companies have successfully used fear of fire to gain unlimited logging rights throughout our western states. These decisions were made with no mention of habitat, wildlife, or carbon sequestration. There is no mention of how big stands of trees cool the earth with shade, store water in their shade, and absorb carbon dioxide as they "breathe." Allowing the timber companies to profit from these fear tactics and ignore the basic biology of our interconnectedness with the environment is a huge and destructive oversight. Every living being on the planet requires a healthy environment to survive. By removing all forest trees and understory plants, we undermine our very existence and push ourselves, and every other living thing on the earth, closer to a withered and hopeless future. We can do better than this!

Read on...

Below are a few more books at the top of my reading list—books that can help increase our understanding of the dynamics of our shared environment.

Finding the Mother Tree: Discovering the Wisdom of the Forest Book, by Suzanne Simard, suzannesimard.com/ (May 4, 2021)

Suzanne Simard is a Professor of Forest Ecology at the University of British Columbia. She is a pioneer on

the frontier of plant communication and intelligence, and has been hailed as a scientist who conveys complex, technical ideas in a way that is dazzling and profound. Her work has influenced filmmakers (*The Tree of Souls* in James Cameron's *Avatar*), and her TED talks have been viewed by more than 10 million people worldwide. In her first book, Simard brings us into her world, the intimate world of the trees, in which she brilliantly illuminates the fascinating and vital truths – that trees are not simply the source of timber or pulp, but are a complex, interdependent circle of life; that forests are social, cooperative creatures connected through underground networks by which trees communicate their vitality and vulnerabilities with communal lives not that different from our own.

Simard writes how trees, living side by side for hundreds of years, have evolved; how they perceive one another, learn and adapt their behaviors, recognize neighbors, and remember the past; how they have agency about the future; elicit warnings and mount defenses; compete and cooperate with one another with sophistication, exhibiting characteristics ascribed to human intelligence, traits that are the essence of civil societies. And at the center of it all, the Mother Trees: the mysterious, powerful forces that connect and sustain the others that surround them.

Author Douglas W. Tallamy has several books that educate and engage

readers to do their part in helping our planet earth. Doug Tallamy is a professor in the Department of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology at the University of Delaware, where he has taught insect-related courses for 40 years. His book with Timber Press, *Nature's Best Hope: A New Approach to Conservation That Starts in Your Yard* (February 04, 2020), is a *New York Times* Best Seller.

The Nature of Oaks: The Rich Ecology of Our Most Essential Native Trees (March 30, 2021)

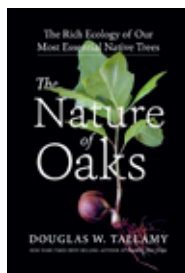
The Living Landscape: Designing for Beauty and Biodiversity in the Home Garden (July 01, 2014)

Bringing Nature Home: How You Can Sustain Wildlife with Native Plants, Updated and Expanded (April 01, 2009)

A World on the Wing—The Global Odyssey of Migratory Birds

Release date March 2022 by Scott Weidensaul, scottweidensaul.com/

"Scott Weidensaul's gripping journey alongside the world's feathered wanderers and the people who study them. ...Littered with such wonders... [it] rivals the astonishing feats of the birds he chronicles. ... As the birds flit through these pages, but with ever less frequency through our lives, we can only hope that birders and non-birders alike take inspiration and a call to action from *A World on the Wing*. This is the kind of book we've been waiting for." — Christian Cooper, *The New York Times*



Why We Honor Herb



You can join Herb's 100th birthday celebration, by mailing cards/letters to this address:

Herb Wisner, 2965 Olive Street Eugene, Oregon 97405, or email his daughter Linda at lindawisner182@gmail.com by March 20th. Linda will share the greetings with him at their family gathering.

In his current home at Fox Hollow Residential Care Community, he still enjoys watching birds through a window. If you want to know more about his bird- and nature-rich life, his autobiography, *My Life and Then Some*, is available on Amazon: [amazon.com/My-Life-Then-Some-Memoir-dp/1734388838](https://www.amazon.com/My-Life-Then-Some-Memoir-dp/1734388838).

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If you're new to our organization, and wondering why Herb is so significant to Lane County Audubon Society, read on. The following information is excerpted, paraphrased, and updated from Maeve Sowle's President's Page in *The Quail*, March of 2016 edition, which can be read in its entirety on the LCAS website.

Herb Wisner has volunteered and been on the Board of Lane County Audubon for decades. He still maintains his Board position (emeritus). In 2014 he asked to give up the Program Chair, but continued to help find speakers for years.

His untiring efforts on behalf of Audubon span his lifetime. Herb's father and uncle were naturalists and fostered his interest in the study of nature while he was growing up in New York State. Birds were a big passion. As a young man he worked at the National Audubon Hog Island Nature Camp in Maine. Herb and his

wife, Ruth, came to Eugene in 1966, where he was a UO biology lecturer for much of his career. I have been told his fun and exciting classes and field trips inspired many students to pursue more biology courses. When he took students on camping trips in the mountains so they could awaken to the dawn chorus of forest birds, his enthusiasm and interest in birds sparked their desire to know much more.

Dan Gleason said, "After just a few trips with him, I was hooked." His energy level is understandably lower at 99, but throughout most of his life, Herb's interest in the natural world and appetite for learning were difficult to keep up with. He was continuously learning. He exercised regularly and enjoyed working in his garden. For many years, he organized the LCAS Home Counters for the Eugene Christmas Bird Count each winter. Concurrently, he was active with the Eugene Natural History Society, for which he was treasurer.

Herb has created a legacy of work inspiring others to learn about and respect the wonders of the natural world. "He possesses a lifelong deep curiosity of the natural world," said Herb's son, Darryl. "He instilled that trait in his family, his students, and most likely anyone who has ever known him." His children are another legacy, as they continue to dedicate



Photo: Darryl Wisner

Dave and Robin Wisner



Photo: Darryl Wisner

left to right: Allen Work, Bob Fleming, Darryl and Dave Wisner

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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 Godsil at 541.915.8852 or tgodsil@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

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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

Florence Christmas Bird Count Summary

By Count Compiler, Vjera Thompson



Photo: wiki commons

Snowy Plover



Photo: Cary Kerst

Black Phoebe

The 37th Florence Christmas Bird Count was held on Saturday, December 18, 2021. After a one-year hiatus due to COVID precautions, 40 birders were eager Field Counters, and another seven Home Counters reported on their feeder birds. The weather was varied, with gusty 20 mph wind and no rain on the outer coast, and calm wind with drizzle inland. With the current COVID precautions, we were not able to meet for a dinner afterwards, but instead met virtually via video.

We recorded 121 species, plus 4 for Count Week, which is a little below our average of 126. Twenty-nine of the species were found by one team only. Count Week birds were Osprey, Red-shouldered Hawk, Common Goldeneye, and Killdeer. Our four sea watching teams, complained of wobbly optics and noticed very little

bird movement on the ocean. We did have sightings of Ancient Murrelet, Marbled Murrelet, Black-legged Kittiwake, Long-tailed Duck, Red Phalarope, Bonaparte's Gull, and several dark shearwaters.

We found two first-time species for the Count. One, a Common Yellowthroat, was found at the Waite Pasture restoration property, along with a record 27 Lincoln Sparrows and three Orange-crowned Warblers. The other new sighting was two groups of Wild Turkeys in the Glenada area. The one bittern was also unusual.

Very little owling was done, and the number of owls seen was low, with only one Barred Owl and one Northern Pygmy Owl.

Record high counts included Mallard (854), Snowy Plover (31), Black Phoebe (22), and the previously mentioned Lincoln's and Orange-crowned Warblers. We had high numbers of Pine Siskins, with nine areas reporting a total of 351, very close to our record of 359. Eurasian Collared Doves numbers shrank dramatically—we only got 38 compared to our last count of 121. Species not found included Killdeer (only our second time missed), Ruddy Duck, Purple Finch, and American Goldfinch.

Thanks to team leaders Hendrik Herlyn, Peter Ralph, Dennis Arendt, Alan Contreras, Marcia Maffei, Ellen Cantor, Linda Gilbert, John Sullivan, Pat Blue Heron, Adele Dawson, Rich Hoyer, and Tye Jeske. Thanks also to Ellen Cantor for doing the upfront coordination.

Why We Honor Herb

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time and energy to LCAS.

“I’ve worked with Herb for decades now, and the one thing that always strikes me is his unending good humor and wit. He invariably makes us laugh and guides us to strive to learn more. Herb’s fascination by all aspects of nature is an inspiration. Thank you, Herb, for your long-term and continuing work on behalf of Lane County Audubon!” wrote Maeve Sowles.

Still Winning Accolades

In early February, Herb Wisner was awarded the Oregon Blackberry Award, presented by Peter Eberhardt. (Peter’s partner, Marcia Maffei, now manages the LCAS Christmas Bird Count Home Counters that Herb managed for so many years.) Peter presents these awards to people who have made significant contributions to the welfare of the community. Herb was the 30th recipient.



photo: Cary Kerst

Northern Shovelers



photo: Cary Kerst

Western Sandpipers



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your *Quail* subscription expired?
See page 8 to renew!



LCAS Bird Walks & Events

Rebecca Waterman, 541.653.3354, fieldtrips@laneaudubon.org

Masks and distancing may still be required throughout walks, depending on evolving COVID-safety guidelines. Participation continues to be limited due to the ongoing pandemic, so please email Bex at fieldtrips@laneaudubon.org to sign up for any of these walks.

First Saturday Bird Walk, March 5

Our First Saturday Bird Walks, created in celebration of the Lane Audubon Inclusivity and Diversity Statement, are reserved for women, BIPOC, and members of the LGBTQIA+ community. Birders of all levels and backgrounds are welcome to join, particularly those who may have felt intimidated at the thought of birding alone or on other guided walks. The time, place, and leader of this walk is to be arranged.

Third Saturday Bird Walk, March 19

Our Third Saturday Bird Walk continues to be open to all participants. Gerry Meenaghan will lead this walk in and around Lane Community College.

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Other Ways to Keep Tabs on Local Birds

By Rebecca Waterman

There are many different ways to communicate about birds. Social media, word of mouth, listservs, and messaging apps. Whatsapp is a messaging app that is connected to your cell phone number. It can be accessed on a smartphone and also by web, but you need to first connect through your phone. If you enjoy ongoing birdy chat, you may consider joining one or more Whatsapp groups. A Whatsapp group is similar to a group text in that many folks can join. Benefits include: growing community, up-to-the-minute news on interesting sightings, and sharing lots of other bird-related information.

Particularly relevant to our readers may be the Lane County Open Birdchat and the Open Oregon Birders Whatsapp groups. Links to these, and more, groups may be found on the Oregon Birding Association website oregonbirding.org, or folks can email Rebecca fieldtrips@laneaudubon.org for more information. These groups are open to any bird-related conversation, including first of year/season sightings, questions about road conditions, identification help, interesting sightings not limited to Rare Bird Alerts, and more!