

# The Quail

News from Lane County Audubon Society

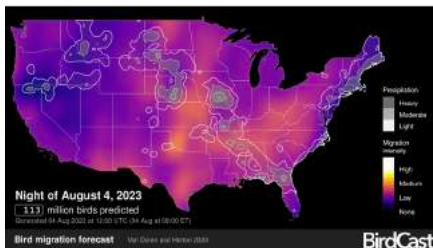
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## From Our President

Maeve Sowles, 541.343.8664, audubon@laneaudubon.org

## New Resources for Tracking Bird Migration, Locally and Beyond



By September, fall's bird migration is in full swing. We can find shorebirds and ducks arriving at Fern Ridge and other waterways. We can see the Vaux's Swifts at Agate Hall, as well as other chimneys around the area. The raptor migration can be observed by watching the skies as several species soar south, moving on southerly air currents.

For autumn birding locally, we have the return of mountain birds

to the lower elevations. Some birds migrate through, heading south; others simply move into lower altitudes like the Willamette Valley for the winter. This is true of the Belted Kingfisher, Varied Thrush, Northern Flicker, Pacific Wren, the two kinglets, and Harlequin Ducks (who return to coastal waters). We also see the return of some of the northern-breeding birds, such as Golden-crowned Sparrow and Fox Sparrow, plus many ducks and shorebirds that will remain in the Willamette Valley until next spring.

Many smaller Neotropical bird species (70% to 80%) migrate at night, affording them some protection from predators. The stars and the moon aid night-flying birds'

navigation. Free of daytime thermals, the atmosphere is more stable, making it easier to maintain a steady course, especially for smaller birds such as warblers that might fly as slowly as 15 miles per hour. We often are unaware of the huge number of birds passing overhead at night, unless we are outside and hear their contact calls as they fly overhead in loose groups.

A relatively new and fascinating resource for learning about these night migrations is a website called **BirdCast**: [birdcast.info/migration-tools/live-migration-maps/](http://birdcast.info/migration-tools/live-migration-maps/)

About BirdCast: "Beginning in 2018, after many years of research and developments in machine learning, cloud-based computing, and big data analytics, the BirdCast site began to feature migration forecasts that predicted how many birds would be aloft over the continental US, plus live migration maps that reported how many birds actually took flight. These bird migration maps represented the culmination of a 20-year-long vision," [as well as] "the beginnings of new

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Lane County Audubon Society

541.485.BIRD

laneaudubon.org

P.O. Box 5086, Eugene, OR 97405

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## Conservation

Debbie Schlenoff, 541.685.0610, debschlenoff@gmail.com

# Bird Migration Questions and Some Answers



### Who? Why? When? Where? How?

So many questions are asked about bird migration and so many scientific studies are done to supply a rich font of answers.

**Why and when?** Birds in the Northern Hemisphere migrate in the spring to chase resources— food and nesting sites. They return south in the fall to find readily available food and avoid harsh weather.

**Who travels the furthest?** Arctic Terns fly the longest distance, migrating 90,000 km (55,923 mi) from pole to pole each year.

**What triggers migration?** Genetics play a role as do environmental cues, such as changes in food availability, the angle of the sun, and the length of the day.

**How do they get ready for the journey?** Changes in hormones promote readiness to migrate. The birds experience restlessness and hyperactivity (known as *Zugunruhe*). Heavy eating helps birds store fat and make muscle. Heart and flight muscles increase in size, but other organs including the stomach, liver, intestines, and reproductive organs often get

smaller (presumably so the birds have less unnecessary weight to carry).

**How do they know where to go?** That depends on the species. Many birds learn the route from experienced individuals during their first migration. Others seem to know innately what direction to head in without having been shown the way.

**How do they navigate to find their way?** Some birds learn landmarks to help guide them along their migration route, but most employ various senses to determine their direction. Evidence suggests that birds use their internal biological clock, along with environmental cues, as a kind of compass. For example, if you want to go west, fly away from the sun in the morning and toward the sun in the evening. Overcast day? No problem. Birds can see polarized light to know the position of the sun, even when it is obscured by clouds. The majority of birds, even songbirds who are normally active during the day, will migrate at night, using the stars in the night sky to guide them. Birds can also sense the Earth's magnetic field to help them migrate in the right direction.

It's exciting to learn about a sense that we humans cannot use. A new study identified the region of the brain that migratory birds use to perceive the magnetic field, and observed that it turns on and off: active when flying, dormant when resting. The authors liken it to being able to attentively listen to music, but also to tune it out when it is playing in the background. Homing pigeons add another sense, that of smell.

**How do you keep birds from “cheating” to find their way back home?** In one older but memorable experiment, they transported homing pigeons to a distant location. To prevent the birds from getting clues about which way they had been moved, they placed them inside a cylinder filled with bottled air and surrounded by magnetic coils, flashed lights on and off randomly, and played white noise in the background. And just to be sure they weren't tracking turns from the vehicle, they had them riding on a tilting turntable. While occasionally making them nauseous, it did not interfere with their ability to navigate home.

**With fall migration starting in September, let's consider what we can do to help.** We can reduce hazards to the birds along their route. Fall migration is generally larger because both adults and juveniles are in the skies. That means an increased rate of collisions with man-made structures, especially since juveniles are less experienced. As mentioned above, many birds fly at night and may suffer from light pollution, which interferes with their ability to navigate using the stars. Disorientation caused by artificial lighting often draws the birds down into urban landscapes where they are vulnerable to many hazards. Please remember to check the lights at your home, business, and neighborhood, to be sure they are pointed down, shielded above, and only lit when necessary for security. Consider motion sensor detectors which turn lights on only when needed. Birds don't recognize glass as a solid object, and far too often fly into it, resulting in fatalities. Cover your windows and glass doors. Close the curtains, shades, or blinds. Attach screens or strings, or apply window

*continued on page 4*

## Field Notes: June/July 2023

Tom and Allison Mickel, atmickel@gmail.com

# Tufted Puffin, Marbled Godwit, Willet, Ovenbird

The season seemed fairly normal, with a couple of very warm days. The breeding season, however, seemed condensed this year. It could have been caused by the cool wet spring turning to hot summer so quickly. A few unusual birds showed up, which isn't out of the norm. See the sightings below for details.

### Abbreviations:

Fern Ridge Reservoir (FRR), North Jetty Siuslaw River (NJSR), South Jetty Siuslaw River (SJSR)



Photo: Faucon, Wikimedia Commons

*Marbled Godwit*



Photo: Alan D. Wilson, Wikimedia Commons

*Tufted Puffin*

Blue-winged Teal	June 12	Meadowlark Prairie	VT	Female w/downy young
Northern Shoveler	June 12	Danebo Pond	VT	Female w/downy young
Sandhill Crane	July 18	McKenzie Bridge area	VH,et al	Rare summer sighting in low Cascades
Marbled Godwit	July 4	FRR	RR	Never common in the valley
Semipalmated Sandpiper	July 9	FRR	KY	First report for the fall migration
Wandering Tattler	July 11	NJSR	LH	First report for the fall migration
Willet	July 8	NJSR	LP,SM	Rare in Lane Co
Tufted Puffin	June 26	Devils Elbow SP	DM	Former breeding location
Tufted Puffin	June 28	Strawberry Hill	NS	Rarely seen in Lane Co any longer
Tufted Puffin	July 20	NJSR	RR	Rarely seen in Lane Co any longer
Bonaparte's Gull	June 29	FRR	LP,BR	Uncommon inland in Lane Co
Heermann's Gull	June 29	SJSR	NS	First sighting for the fall
Common Tern	July 21	Siltcoos River mouth	DD	Small numbers are seen from shore
American White Pelican	June 20	June Mountain	NS	Very unusual location – flying overhead
Least Flycatcher	May 29	Mt Pisgah	NS	Fifth record for Lane Co
Say's Phoebe	June 30	FRR	RR	Rare summer sighting
Ash-throated Flycatcher	May 19	Creswell area	JGr	Breeding habitat – did it breed?
Purple Martin	June 11	N Eugene	RH	Second report of nesting in a cell tower
Bank Swallow	July 2	Walterville Reservoir	VB	Very unusual location
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	June 8	Mt Pisgah	AH	Very late sighting from the valley
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	June 28	Hills Creek Reservoir	A&TM	Rare this low in Cascades in summer
Rock Wren	June 17	Cougar Dam	JS,LJ	Breed in small numbers in the Cascades
Western Bluebird – 6 young	May 25	Westmoreland area	SG	Fledged from nest box in backyard
Brewer's Sparrow	July 15	FRR	JGn,TJ	Occasionally found in the fall in the valley
Vesper Sparrow	June 30	FRR	RR	Only possible nesting in Lane this year
Lark Sparrow	June 8	Siltcoos River mouth	LH	A late spring "overshoot"?
Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch	May 29	South Sister	JM	Only reliable location in Lane Co
Grasshopper Sparrow	June 21	FRR	DA,et al	The normal breeding location
Ovenbird (photos)	June 15	Salt Creek Falls area	JN	Fourth record for Lane Co
Summer Tanager	June 27	Bohemia Mtn area	SH,VB	Fourth record for Lane Co
Summer Tanager (photos)	July 9	W Eugene	HK,NC	Fifth record for Lane Co – same bird?
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	May 21	Cottage Grove area	Fide MS	Normal time of year for this rare migrant
Indigo Bunting	June 1	Skinner Butte	RF	Rare but almost annual in Lane Co

AH Anne Heyerly, A&TM Allison & Tom Mickel, BR Bonnie Roemer, DA Dennis Arendt, DD Dominic DeLaca, DM Diane Morton, EC Elle Canalez, HK Holly Knight, JGn Joshua Galpern, JGr Joel Geier, JM Joshua Mooney, JN Jeff Nordstrom, JS John Sullivan, KY Kaplan Yalcin, LH Lars Hovde, LJ Laura Johnson, LP Lalla Pudewell, MS Maeve Sowles, NC Nancy Clogston, NS Noah Strycker, RF Rachael Friese, RH Rich Hoyer, RR Roger Robb, SG Steve Gordon, SH Sally Hill, SM Sylvia Maulding, TJ Tye Jeske, VB Vickie Buck, VH Vaughn Holland, VT Vjera Thompson. Fide references a sighting reported by the listed observer.



# Seeking Audubon Adventures Sponsors and Educators!

Schools are back in session, and it's time to invite teachers to sign up for *Audubon Adventures*. The *Audubon Adventures* curriculum kits are designed by the National Audubon Society to help students learn about the natural world and increase their environmental awareness. Students receive three issues of a full-color magazine, and teachers have access to a variety of online materials and lesson plans that meet language arts and science standards.

Every Audubon Adventures classroom also receives a year's membership to the National Audubon Society and Lane County Audubon Society. What's not to love?

Each year, LCAS members have generously sponsored kits for local classrooms. Use the donation information below if you are interested in helping to continue this tradition. If you'd like to sponsor a specific school or classroom, please include that information. We will do our best to accommodate your request.

Educators interested in receiving an Audubon Adventures kit for their classrooms can email [audadv@laneaudubon.org](mailto:audadv@laneaudubon.org). The earlier sponsorships are received, the earlier materials can be delivered to our local schools.



*Snowy Owl, by Eliza Wharram, age 8*

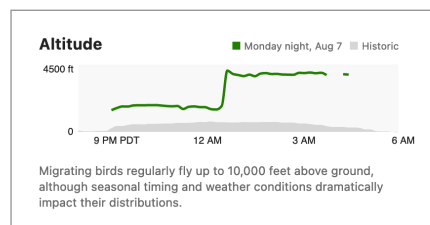
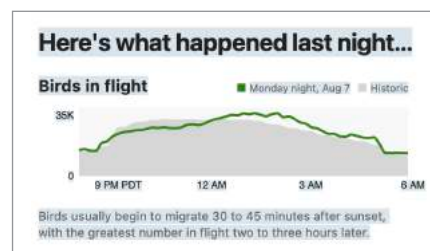
Mail your donation of \$45 per classroom (payable to LCAS) to: Audubon Adventures, PO Box 5086, Eugene, OR 97405 or go online: [laneaudubon.org/education/audubon-adventures](https://laneaudubon.org/education/audubon-adventures) to make your donation via our secure PayPal server.

## From Our President *continued from page 1*

inspiration for the next generation of bird migration research, outreach, education, and application. BirdCast applies weather surveillance radar to gather information on the numbers, flight directions, speeds, and altitudes of birds aloft in order to expand the understanding of migratory bird movement.”

For a review of these tools and the 2023 season see this article: [birdcast.info/news/the-return-of-migration-tools-fall-2023/](https://birdcast.info/news/the-return-of-migration-tools-fall-2023/) On the BirdCast website, one link option allows you to select your local area (Lane County) and view a dashboard which keeps an updated tally of numbers and species that are migrating through after dark. See link at: [dashboard.birdcast.info/region/US-OR-039](https://dashboard.birdcast.info/region/US-OR-039) You can look at historical and forecast data as well as Real Time data on a particular day! This opens a new world of bird life data to help us learn about these wonderful animals and their nighttime migrations.

The transitions to fall and winter help us to track the pulse of the natural world. We need to remember the rhythms of the earth moving around the sun, and how we depend on this wonderful planet, our blue-green Earth. It is home to birds, to humans, and every living creature that depends upon the integrity of the Earth's systems to survive.



## Conservation *continued from page 2*

films with a dot pattern to the outside of your windows. For more info: [abcbirds.org/glass-collisions/](https://abcbirds.org/glass-collisions/)

**Most birds need safe, resource-filled stopover sites along their migratory route.** We can help by supporting initiatives that provide this habitat; for instance, protecting forests, wilderness areas, and parks. At home, keep your gardens messy. Birds use leaf litter, dead snags, and branches. They eat seeds from old flower stalks and seek cover in old plants. Take advantage of the season to plant native flowers and shrubs. Nature will keep them watered throughout our rainy season. Then the flowers, seeds, and fruits will be available to birds next spring and summer. Avoid the use of pesticides including herbicides, rodenticides, or insecticides, all of which directly or indirectly impact birds.

**Migration is an amazing spectacle; let's do our part to help birds on their way.** And enjoy the coming change of season!

## LCAS Program Meeting—In Person and Zoom Tuesday, September 26, 7:00 pm

Dennis Arendt, 541.221.3691, dennisarendt@gmail.com



Please plan to join us at the Campbell Center at 7:00 PM on Tuesday, September 26. This program meeting will also be available over a Zoom connection for those who prefer to participate from home. A link to the Zoom meeting will be available on our website about one week before the meeting.

### Upcoming 2023-24 Program Meetings

October 24: **Steve Shunk**—Woodpeckers

November 28: **Tim Griffith**—The Yellowstone Ecosystem

January 23: **Magnus Persmark**—Birding in Borneo

February 27: **Daniel Farrar**—Snowy Plovers

March 26: TBD

April 23: TBD

May 28: **Sue Anderson**—Butterflies

## Birdability = Birding and Accessibility



Photo: Elizabeth Goward

Sarah Merkle

**B**irding is for everybody and every body, regardless of disability or health concern. As we all get older, we lose some of our hearing, mobility, and vision. One in four Americans have a significant disability, and an estimated 5% of Americans experience short-term disabilities each year.

On Tuesday, September 26, the Lane County Audubon Society will start its new season of program meetings with a presentation about how we can make birding more accessible to a wider segment of our population. Sarah Merkle (they/them), the Director of Development at the McKenzie River Trust, will be our speaker. They will explain how we all benefit from inclusivity by adopting a broader definition of “birding.” Participants will also hear about ways to improve our communication and

pay more attention to the accessibility needs of other birders.

Sarah Merkle joined McKenzie River Trust in 2023. Originally from the California coast, they received their undergraduate degree from UC Santa Cruz, where they developed a passion for old growth redwood forests and rivers. After completing a graduate degree at Mills College, they moved to Oregon in 2016. They now have more than 10 years of experience working in nonprofits, both as an administrator and as a direct service provider focusing on mental health, social justice, community advocacy, and peer support. They spend their free time exploring, birding, camping, writing, and working at learning how to talk to plants.



Photo: Holly McBae

*A birdability outing*

## Mount Pisgah Arboretum Looking For Volunteer Educators This Fall!

**V**olunteer Nature Guides are trained in local ecology, teaching techniques, and nature topics before leading groups of elementary-aged children on weekday field trips at the Arboretum.

Volunteers are asked to commit to joining each of the four training topics before guiding small school groups along the trails this September through early November.

Interested? FMI or to sign up: contact Education Manager Sara Spoden, [education@mountpisgaharboretum.org](mailto:education@mountpisgaharboretum.org)

# 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](mailto:tgodsil@gmail.com)

### The Quail Upcoming Content Deadlines

October: September 1  
November: October 1

Submit material to Karen Irmscher at [quailkaren1@gmail.com](mailto: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

President	Maeve Sowles.....541.343.8664..... <a href="mailto:audubon@laneaudubon.org">audubon@laneaudubon.org</a>
Treasurer	Ron Renchler.....541.345.0834..... <a href="mailto:christyandron2@gmail.com">christyandron2@gmail.com</a>
Members	Ramiro Aragon ..... <a href="mailto:aragon.nw@gmail.com">aragon.nw@gmail.com</a>
	Barbara Bryson ..... <a href="mailto:bbryson150@gmail.com">bbryson150@gmail.com</a>
	Debbie Schlenoff.....541.685.0610..... <a href="mailto:debschlenoff@gmail.com">debschlenoff@gmail.com</a>
	Isaac Scott ..... <a href="mailto:isaacscott3764@gmail.com">isaacscott3764@gmail.com</a>
	Kirstin Waldkoenig ..... <a href="mailto:kirsinw@uoregon.edu">kirsinw@uoregon.edu</a>

## Lane County Audubon Society Committee Chairs

Audubon Phone.....	Dick Lamster.....	541.485.BIRD
Audubon Adventures.....	Cecelia Hagen.....	<a href="mailto:audadv@laneaudubon.org">audadv@laneaudubon.org</a>
Audubon in the Schools.....	Barb Pope.....	<a href="mailto:aitsbirds@gmail.com">aitsbirds@gmail.com</a>
Booth.....	Ron Renchler.....	541.345.0834 ..... <a href="mailto:christyandron2@gmail.com">christyandron2@gmail.com</a>
Conservation.....	Debbie Schlenoff.....	541.685.0610..... <a href="mailto:debschlenoff@gmail.com">debschlenoff@gmail.com</a>
Education.....	<b>Volunteer Opportunity</b>	
Field Notes.....	Allison & Tom Mickel.....	541.485.7112 ..... <a href="mailto:atmickel@gmail.com">atmickel@gmail.com</a>
Field Trips.....	Lalla Pudewell.....	<a href="mailto:tolalla@gmail.com">tolalla@gmail.com</a>
Membership Data.....	Tim Godsil.....	541.915.8852..... <a href="mailto:tgodsil@gmail.com">tgodsil@gmail.com</a>
Program Coordinator.....	Dennis Arendt.....	541.221.3691..... <a href="mailto:dennisarendt@gmail.com">dennisarendt@gmail.com</a>
Quail Editor.....	Karen Irmscher.....	<a href="mailto:quailkaren1@gmail.com">quailkaren1@gmail.com</a>
Recording Secretary.....	Kirstin Waldkoenig.....	<a href="mailto:kirsinw@uoregon.edu">kirsinw@uoregon.edu</a>
Webmaster.....	Hilary Dearborn.....	<a href="mailto:hcdearborn@gmail.com">hcdearborn@gmail.com</a>

## 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](http://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](http://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



# Thank You

## UO Museum of Natural and Cultural History

Lane Audubon was one of the featured community organizations attending when UO Museum of Natural and Cultural History held a Family Nature Night, “Wetlands and Watersheds,” on June 22. Thank you to **Rose and Joe Brittain** for preparing kids’ activities and staffing the kids’ table for this event and for providing fun educational items for the children attending. Maeve Sowles staffed the display and handout booth. Dick Lamster and Ron Renchler gave organizational support.

## Buffalo Exchange

Thank you to Buffalo Exchange for choosing Lane County Audubon Society as a 6-month recipient of their Tokens for Bags Donation plan. Here’s how it works: Through the Tokens for Bags® program, shoppers are offered a token in place of a bag, which they can donate to one of three local charities. For each token, Buffalo Exchange donates five cents to that charity. Since its creation in 1994, BE has raised more than \$926,025 for thousands of

local nonprofit organizations. Every token a customer donates represents a plastic bag that is not added into circulation. Thanks to their customers, they are proud to have kept over 18.5 million plastic bags from polluting the environment.

A pioneer in resale fashion, Buffalo Exchange is a sustainable business that works to protect the environment by reusing and recycling clothing. Since opening in 1974, this family-operated company has grown to 41 stores in 15 states. For six months, starting in July, LCAS, along with the Buffalo Exchange in Eugene, will be listed on this website: [buffaloexchange.com/tokens-for-bags-charities](http://buffaloexchange.com/tokens-for-bags-charities). Buffalo Exchange, 1275 Willamette St, Eugene, 541.687.2805

## LCAS Receives \$500 Grant

The Towhee Fund of Oregon Community Foundation approved an Advised Fund grant in the amount of \$500 for Lane County Audubon Society. The grant’s purpose is to provide 11 Audubon Adventure curriculum kits to elementary school classrooms. We are thankful and excited to receive these funds, which will help with our education outreach program, Audubon Adventures.



Photo: Ron Renchler

*Taxidermied Wood Duck pair, available for display.*

## Bird Display Volunteer Needed

Lane County Audubon Society (LCAS) would like to have a volunteer to organize, schedule, and set up its taxidermied bird displays. In the past, LCAS’s bird specimens have been displayed at local schools, public libraries, and other sites.

LCAS has a variety of taxidermied birds housed in plastic display units, along with several egg and nest displays. All specimens are covered by LCAS’s educational permit issued by the U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife and are listed in a spreadsheet we have developed.

Contacts at various libraries and schools are already established, so reaching out to persons at potential sites for the displays is easy. This volunteer position requires only a couple of hours of time each month. A basic knowledge of spreadsheets is useful.

If you’re interested in spreading the word about LCAS in the community, this is an ideal way to get started. Contact Ron Renchler at [christyandron2@gmail.com](mailto:christyandron2@gmail.com) or 541.345.0834 for more information.



Photo: Bob Brammell

*Osprey—Siltcoos River*



Photo: Bob Brammell

*Osprey—Siltcoos River*



Check your mailing label. Has  
your *Quail* subscription expired?  
See page 6 to renew!



## LCAS Bird Walks & Events

Lalla Pudewell, [tolalla@gmail.com](mailto:tolalla@gmail.com)

### First Saturday Bird Walk, September 2

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. Location and leader TBA.

FMI or to sign up, contact Sarah: [1stsatbirdwalks@laneaudubon.org](mailto:1stsatbirdwalks@laneaudubon.org)

### Third Saturday Bird Walk, September 16

Our Third Saturday Bird Walk continues to be open to all participants. The leader, destination, and time are TBD.

FMI: [audubon@laneaudubon.org](mailto:audubon@laneaudubon.org) or check the Lane Audubon website and/or the Lane Audubon Facebook page close to the walk date.



## Bon Voyage to Vaux's Swifts at Agate Hall

Lane County Audubon Society will host two fall swift events outside Agate Hall at sunset on Friday, September 8, and Friday, September 22. It's fun to observe the swifts as they gather, inside the Agate Hall chimney to roost before they fly off to Central and South America for the winter. We may see thousands of birds circling, then funneling into the chimney, but there is no guarantee!

Look for the LCAS banner at the 17<sup>th</sup> and Agate parking lot North of Agate Hall. Stop by and enjoy this annual natural phenomenon. It's free! And conveniently close to Prince Puckler's Ice Cream, which is not free, but can be a low-cost addition to your evening's fun and may entice reluctant family members and/or friends to come along and share the amazement!

FMI : 541.343.8664, or check out the Vaux's Swift page on our website: [laneaudubon.org/vauxs-swift-information](http://laneaudubon.org/vauxs-swift-information)