

THE CALLIOPE

EAST CASCADES AUDUBON SOCIETY
QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2020



President's Report

By Tom Lawler

A situation has come upon all of us which we have no control over. I don't have much to say that has not been said by others. We have lost the ability to do something that many humans enjoy and that is socializing. But as birders we also have the ability to do our hobby in a solitary fashion or with a small group. I encourage everyone to still get out and enjoy life to the extent that social distancing allows. The birds are out there for us to enjoy and they are returning!

There are ways to stay informed without direct physical contact with individuals. If you do not belong to COBOL (Central Oregon Birders Online), a groups.io group, then maybe you should join to keep up on local sightings. Information on how to sign up is on our website. You might also want to join the ECAS Facebook group. I know many are Facebook adverse. I don't participate much as an individual but I do enjoy the groups I belong to.

Let's all hope this passes and we remain healthy.

All ECAS events are canceled until further notice. Any updates can be found at <https://www.ecaudubon.org/>

Get to Know Your ECAS 2020 Board

Tom Lawler, President tom.lawler.or@gmail.com

Tom was elected to the Board in 2015 and is serving his 3rd year as President. He has lived in Central Oregon for over 11 years. In that time he has slowly become involved in birding activities in the area. Not only has his love for birds grown in these years but also his desire to get bird activities going in southern Deschutes county. In the last few years he started leading Saturday bird walks at the Sunriver Nature Center most weeks March thru October. These bird walks are a popular activity in this resort area. He has taught bird watching classes at La Pine Parks and Rec and has been requested to work with homeschooled children teaching them the skills of bird watching. He has led ECAS field trips and at the Dean Hale Woodpecker Festival and participated in Christmas Bird Counts, Spring and Fall Migration Counts and Winter raptor surveys in Lake County. He regularly visits Cabin Lake to clean the water bowls and pick up trash, and has become project leader for that site and its improvements. In addition he handles birds at Sunriver Nature Center and gives bird talks about birds of prey. Tom is the liaison to the ECAS Conservation Committee.

Gordon Wetzel Vice-President gordonwetzel@gmail.com

Gordon recently moved to Bend from Anchorage, Alaska, his home for the past 40 years. Seasonal migrations were getting too long so he and his wife Linda got up and moved. Gordon worked as an engineer in the oil industry for BP until 2000 when he retired. He then pursued other interests including endurance sports and coaching cross country skiing. He served on the Board of the Nordic Skiing Association of Anchorage (NSAA) for 6 years, 4 years as president. NSAA is a non-profit that maintains trails and manages programs to promote Nordic skiing. Birding has been an evolving interest. He was always interested in the natural world and outdoor activities. After attending the Kachemak Bay Shorebird Festival in Homer, Alaska he started developing a birding itch. Birding gets one in touch with the environment and helps to develop an understanding of ecology and the need for conservation. Also, as his running game turned to walking, it made sense to carry binoculars and a camera and take time to smell the roses. As a Board member of ECAS, Gordon will be involved in conservation efforts in Central Oregon and will share his love of the outdoors.

Diane Burgess, Secretary dgburgess54@gmail.com

My interest in birding began in 2007 while visiting a friend in Jekyll Island, Georgia. She suggested we take a guided birding tour. I saw so many beautiful birds in the woods, wetlands, and on the beach. My favorites were the Roseate Spoonbill, Black Skimmer, Wood Stork, and Anhinga. I joined ECAS after moving to Bend in 2012. I took outdoor recreation COCC classes led by Damian Fagan. During the snowshoeing outings, he always pointed out the birds. In February, I joined his birding trip to Klamath Falls. We saw so many waterfowl and raptors. I knew then that I wanted to go birding on a regular basis. Through regular outings with Wednesday Birders, I have learned a lot about birds and enjoyed the camaraderie of birders.

Terri Hyde, Treasurer terri.hyde@yahoo.com

Terri was elected to the Board in 2014 and is serving her 3rd year as Treasurer after volunteering on the Finance Committee for several years. She became interested in nature and

conservation as a child growing up on a South Dakota ranch located in the Missouri flyway. In Terri's words: "I would go with my father in the early-summer dawn to watch the prairie chickens dance, and with my mother to meetings to oppose (unsuccessfully) the Big Bend Dam on the Missouri River." Terri was a tax lawyer with a Washington DC law firm (now WilmerHale) for more than 30 years where her practice included representation of tax-exempt organizations and numerous pro bono projects for conservation organizations. She received an introductory course in bird watching on a World Wildlife Fund trip to Belize and Costa Rica in 1987, and bird watching has been a source of enjoyment since that time. Terri moved to Bend in 2010 and is now retired from her law firm.

Carolyn Rochelle csrochelle62@gmail.com

For many years I have enjoyed observing and caring for the native birds that call Oregon and Washington home. Since childhood, birds have been a part of my life. I enjoyed many outings with the Tahoma Audubon Society in Tacoma, Washington. Five years ago I was introduced to ECAS as a result of monitoring a local Bluebird trail. I am looking forward to my membership on the board and the opportunity to contribute to ECAS. An added plus is that "birders" are some of the nicest people I know.

Bob Sizoo thebobsizoo@gmail.com

Prior to moving to Central Oregon in 2013, I lived for 45 years in Humboldt County, 60 miles south of the Oregon border in the evil state. Following 15-years doing jobs that required lots of manual effort but left plenty of time for birding, I spent 26 of years in education: 10 years teaching sixth grade in Eureka, and the rest working on the Humboldt State University campus, at various times as a program coordinator, co-director of the Redwood Writing Project, lecturer, and student-teacher supervisor. I was a member of the Redwood Region Audubon Society since the early 70's, and volunteered in the 1980's as a docent at the Arcata Marsh Project, one of the earliest wetlands in the country constructed to provide tertiary sewage treatment. It's the grandpa to the Crooked River Wetlands. I live in Tumalo with my wife, three horses, two (indoor) cats, and wide open skies that took some getting used to after being hemmed-in by redwoods for four decades.

Garrett Durheim gdurheim@gmail.com

I was born and raised here in central Oregon and love everything about our little piece of paradise. I started birdwatching in high school and was immediately hooked. Now I never leave the house without binoculars! The wonderful folks in our birdwatching community have taught me so much about the beauty in our backyard, and I am excited to help spread that knowledge and give back to nature. My favorite bird in central Oregon is the Belted Kingfisher, but I do have a special place in my heart for woodpeckers as well.

Jan Rising janrising58@gmail.com

I served as a Board member for 2 consecutive 3 year terms from 2011 through 2016. Much of that previous Board time was spent as Treasurer. After retiring from a 23 year Chiropractic career near Boston, MA, I moved to Bend in 2006. The weekend after moving to Bend, I attended my first birding field trip with East Cascades Bird Conservancy (ECBC) at Calliope Crossing and immediately discovered the rich resource of excellent birders and birding habitat

in central Oregon. Growing up in Tucson AZ, I enjoyed the common yard birds such as Gila Woodpecker, Mourning Dove, Northern Cardinal, Pyrrhuloxia, Verdin and hummingbirds. But my birding interest really solidified while living in New England when I discovered warblers at Mt Auburn Cemetery. Once introduced to warblers, I was never able to sleep past 5am during the Spring. Introducing new birders to the avian life around them is very rewarding and I have volunteered with Deschutes Land Trust as a bird tour leader at some of their properties for the past 6 years, as well as leading a few birding tours for ECAS. I am a member of the ECAS Membership Committee and have been the Chair of that committee since 2009. It is an honor for me to be associated with ECAS and to actively participate in helping ECAS continue to provide educational and fun activities which help support the birds that live in or pass through our region every year.

Amanda Accamando amanda@sunrivernaturecenter.org

Recently appointed to the ECAS Board, Amanda joined Sunriver Nature Center as its manager in August, 2017. She previously lived in Littleton, Colorado, where she worked as the education and volunteer manager for the Hudson Gardens & Event Center. The 30-acre facility in the Denver suburb is known for its gardens, picnic areas, walking trails and wildlife. For more than 15 years, Amanda developed and managed science education and outreach programs for a variety of cultural institutions. She has a bachelor of science degree from State University of New York, and a masters degree in biology from Louisiana State University.

2020 Golden Eagle Cam <http://www.goldeneaglecam.org/>

History : <https://www.ecaudubon.org/golden-eagle-cam>



ESSAY CONTEST FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS



Western Field Ornithologists is holding an essay contest in 2020 for students in grades 9 - 12. The theme of the essay contest is the impact of climate change on bird populations.

The student who submits the winning essay will win a pair of either Zeiss 8X42 "Terra ED" binoculars or Nikon 8X42 "Monarch 7" binoculars. Deadline is May 24, 2020.

For details and guidelines, go to

https://www.westernfieldornithologists.org/docs/2020/WFO_2020_HS_Student_Essay_Contest.pdf



Artwork by Summitt Rain Moodie

Think Wild



THINK WILD is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization located in Bend, Oregon. Our mission is to inspire the High Desert community to care for and protect native wildlife through outreach/education, conservation, and rescue and rehabilitation

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH to teach and inspire the public to live respectfully with urban wildlife - offering Think Wild Education, awareness events, and online resources.

HABITAT CONSERVATION by providing a voice for native wildlife by

- advising on limiting the man-made hazards in our growing, urban landscapes
- providing guidance on enhancements to habitat
- reducing wildlife threats around the home

RESCUE AND REHABILITATION

A Wildlife Hospital to treat and rehabilitate native wildlife by providing care for patients who have been injured or orphaned so they can be released back into the wild. Construction and provisioning of the Wildlife Hospital was completed in Fall of 2019. It focuses on a community need for care of mammals and raptors and also coordinates with the local wildlife rehabilitation community. Opening this summer, the Hospital expects to reach a full capacity of 1,000 patients annually, serving Central and Eastern Oregon.



Contact Information: Sally Compton, Executive Director Sally@thinkwildco.org
You can also reach us by phone at 541-933-5437 or email us at info@thinkwildco.org .
Wildlife hotline: 541-241-8680
Learn more, book a tour, and donate at <https://www.thinkwildco.org/>

CENTRAL OREGON FIELD NOTES – WINTER 2019-2020

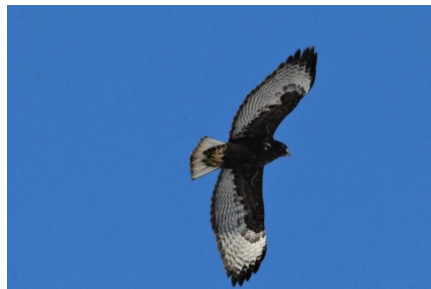
By Chuck Gates, aka the “Bard Owl”

Somewhere around 1593, Shakespeare coined the famous line, “Now is the winter of our discontent.” Fast-forward 400+ years and there is little discontent when reviewing the birding of winter 19-20. Plenty of unusual and rare sightings brightened dull days and, overall, discontent was at a minimum. Below is a summary of the birding highlights for the 2019-20 winter birding season.

When temperatures allowed it, many water birds turned up on our lakes and ponds this winter. SNOW GEESE were spotted at Barnes Butte Res. (Gonzalez), Alfalfa (Low) and north of Prineville (Crabtree). CACKLING GEESE turned up at 6 different locations throughout the region (Mult. Obs.). An early CINNAMON TEAL was noted at the Crooked R. Wetlands on 24 Feb (Gates) and the only EURASIAN WIGEON to make this report came in from Steelhead Falls (of all places) on 14 Dec (Cahill). Haystack Reservoir produced the only PACIFIC LOON this winter. Shorebirds rarely show up in mid-winter here so separate reports of LEAST SANDPIPER from Camp Polk (Kristovich) and Powell Butte (Zalunardo) were of interest.

Game birds are not uncommon in Central Oregon but, like some of their human counterparts, they often go unseen because they are hunkered down to beat the cold. Twice during the season, CHUKAR reports came in from Lake Billy Chinook west of Culver (K. Smith, Meredith). Wild Turkeys are common enough to remain off this list but a small flock at the Prineville Sewer Ponds marked the first time they had been seen at that location (Gates).

Raptors are annual winter regulars here and vultures often begin their annual northward migration in late winter. The first TURKEY VULTURES appeared on 31 Jan over Pilot Butte (Meyer) and were next noted on 22 Feb in Prineville (Jacobson). NORTHERN GOSHAWKS were recorded at two locations in Bend (Threlkeld, Fagan) and once at Camp Sherman (Cahill). RED-SHOULDERED HAWKS proved hard to find with the only two reports coming from different parts of Bend (M. Miller, Arneson). A Dark-phased HARLAN’S RED-TAILED HAWK was photographed in Powell Butte on 12/2/19 (Gates). [above]



PEREGRINE FALCONS were tallied at the Prineville Sewer Ponds (Gates), along the Crooked River in Prineville (Gonzalez), at Lake Billy Chinook (Burgess) and on the Redmond CBC (Pierce fide). SHORT-EARED OWLS made a welcomed return to the Powell Butte area (Mult. Obs.) and other “shorties” were located in the Alfalfa area for a rare Deschutes County record (Low). WESTERN SCREECH-OWLS were spotted at Lake Billy Chinook (K. Smith) and along Wilt Road north of Sisters (Tank). A NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL was heard in the same area on Wilt Road and 3 BARRED OWL reports came in: Tumalo (Meenaghams), Big River Boat Launch (Ketchum) and Knott Road (Clark).

Western Screech-owl, Lake Billy Chinook, 12/31/19, Kevin Smith

The only unusual woodpecker report this winter came from the Dry Canyon area in Redmond where a RED-NAPED SAPSUCKER was located (Kuhlman).

Most of the interesting reports this season came in on the Passerine front. A BLACK PHOEBE turned up at the Crooked River Wetlands for a second winter in a row (Gates) and a BLUE JAY spent most of the winter coming to a feeder in Tumalo (Mult. Obs.). TREE SWALLOWS began arriving on 22 Feb (Low) at Hatfield Lake which is about average for that species. BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEES were found in the Warm Springs area (Sizoo, Crabtree) and CHESTNUT-CAPPED CHICKADEES were discovered on Skyliners Road (Meredith fide), Deschutes R. Woods (Moodie), Circle Lake (Yalcin) and Black Butte Ranch (Low). High numbers of CANYON WRENS were reported by multiple observers from places like Lake Billy Chinook, Peter Skein Ogden Wayside, Smith Rock and the Steelhead Falls area (Mult. Obs.). Interestingly, early SAGE THRASHERS were found on China Hat Road (Meredith fide), Fort Rock Road (Meredith fide) and Reynold's Pond in Alfalfa (McAtee). AMERICAN PIPITS showed up at the Crooked River Wetlands (C. Miller) and the Trout Creek area (Cahill). A Wintering(?) ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER was seen on two occasions, 9 days apart, on Pilot Butte (Jett, Centanni). A YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER was found in Trout Creek on 18 Dec (Meredith, Sizoo, Burgess) and the first SAGEBRUSH SPARROWS began arriving east of Bend on 26 Feb (Meredith fide). For the very first time in Jefferson County, an AMERICAN TREE SPARROW was located north of Gateway (Meredith, Sizoo, Burgess). FOX SPARROW reports came in from multiple observers in Deschutes and Crook counties. A single LINCOLN'S SPARROW report from Madras (C. Miller) helped highlight how under-reported this species is in winter. The only SWAMP SPARROW found this winter was in north Prineville (Horvath). SAVANNAH SPARROWS failed to make it onto the Prineville CBC but were seen a couple of weeks later north of Prineville (Gates). WHITE-THROATED SPARROWS showed up in Redmond (Wing), Tumalo S.P. (Low), Sisters (Schas, Meredith) and Bend (Reeder). Nearly a dozen HARRIS'S SPARROW reports were received from the Old Mill District in Bend, but it was unclear whether this represented one or multiple birds (Mult. Obs.). A LAPLAND LONGSPUR was isolated from a Horned Lark flock north of Brothers (Kornfeld) and 11 CASSIN'S FINCHES were seen at the Warm Springs Museum for an unusual winter record (Sutherland). PURPLE FINCHES were found in multiple areas with the bulk of the sightings coming from the Prineville Cemetery (Meredith, Thomas, Sizoo, Burgess, Cahill). BROWN-HEADED COWBIRDS are



Gray-crowned Rosy-finch, Lava Butte,
2/8/20, Jim Moodie



Tricolored Blackbird, Prineville, 1/9/20, June McAtee

uncommon here in winter so a total of 54 in a blackbird flock on Couch Market Road was shocking (Low). In the same area as the Lapland Longspur, a single SNOW BUNTING showed up (Low D. Smith) and 8 PINE GROSBEAKS were located off of Skyliners Road on Christmas Day (Low). Lava Butte produced a couple of GRAY-CROWNED ROSY-FINCHES (Moodie) and a smattering of BROWN-HEADED COWBIRDS were found in multiple locations. Unusual for winter, YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRDS were seen north of Prineville (Gates) and north of Madras (Sizoo). Scattered TRICOLORED BLACKBIRDS were found on Agency Plains (Meredith, Sizoo, Burgess), Old Mill in Bend (Horvath), Prineville (McAtee) and Terrebonne (Cahill).

Hutton's Vireo, Sawyer Park, 12/7/19, Jim Moodie

Topping the list as the best sighting of the season was the location of Central Oregon's first HUTTON'S VIREO on 7 Dec at Sawyer Park. Like many rare birds in our area, this one was discovered by Peter Low. The bird hung around for about a month. To the surprise of almost everyone, a second discovery of Hutton's Vireo was made near Three Creeks Lake south of Sisters. This time two birds were found by Josh Little and soon, for the second time ever, people were scrambling to find a Deschutes County Hutton's Vireo. It remains to be seen if the two Sisters birds will stay and nest. It might be that these two sightings are simple anomalies, or these may be the vanguards of a future range expansion. Only time will tell.



If after reading this review, you are still suffering from a winter of discontent, I suggest you are making MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING and that you would be better off just taking it AS YOU LIKE IT and accept the fact that ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.

OBSERVERS IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

(MG) Mark Gonzalez, (PL) Peter Low, (TC) Tom Crabtree, Chuck Gates, Matt Cahill, Kris Kristovich, Cindy Zalunardo, Kevin Smith, Judy Meredith, Barbara Meyer, Larry Jacobson, Vernon Threlkeld, Damian Fagan, Marilyn Miller, James Arneson, Diane Burgess, Sherrie Pierce, Peter Low, Sue Tank, Gerry Heenagham, Kathleen Ketchum, Gary Clark, Dan Kuhlman, Bob Sizoo, Jim Moodie, Kaplan Yalcin, Craig Miller, Courtney Jett, Caleb Centanni, Howard Horvath, Gary Wing, Jake Schas, Nancy Reeder, Steve Kornfeld, Don Sutherland, Evan Thomas, David Smith, June McAtee, Josh Little.

Saga of the Sage-Grouse, Part 2 - Forbs are the Answer

by Gordon Wetzel

Who's eating my lunch?



In the January issue of *The Calliope*, I started telling about my discovery of the Greater Sage-Grouse situation under the mentorship of Stu Garrett, MD. A quick recap – ODFW conducts an annual population survey. The results for 2019 showed another bad year (25% decline). The overall decline in Oregon since 1980 is approximately 50%. To help us understand what's behind these numbers, Lee Foster, the author of the report was scheduled to talk to us at the May 21st Birders' Night, but that meeting has been canceled until further notice.

To put this trend in perspective let's compare what's happening to birds as a whole. The September issue of *Science* had an article "Decline of the North American Avifauna" (<https://www.birds.cornell.edu/home/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/DECLINE-OF-NORTH-AMERICAN-AVIFAUNA-SCIENCE-2019.pdf>). It states that since 1970 bird abundance has declined by 29%. To make this comparable to Oregon sage-grouse study time frame (1980 – 2019) results in 20% decline. The anthropocene has been tough on birds and especially on the sage-grouse. (The Anthropocene Epoch is the period during which human activity has been the dominant influence on climate and the environment.)

Let's get back to the fundamental biology of the bird – what do sage-grouse eat? Dr. Rosentreter, retired State Botanist for BLM in Idaho, has studied bird diets, and he has a very interesting 45-minute video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ynAopZ26XAA>). Since you missed Birders' Night in February take a look at this. An excerpt from his talk shows a comparison of diets of our Galliformes.

A Comparison Table for Some Beaked Animals in North America, and their General Food Habits, Brood-rearing and Lifestyle (compiled by Roger Rosentreter, 2015).

Animal	Food- winter	Food- summer	Brood-rearing Insect type	Scratch the soil for food	Avg. life span (yrs)	Migration pattern up to X miles
Sage-grouse	Sagebrush	Insects Forbs Sagebrush	Grasshoppers Ants	No	4	Relatively long distances <60
Sharp-tailed grouse	Buds Berries Catkins	Insects Forbs	Grasshoppers Large insects	No	1	Short elevational distances <20
Chukar	Seeds, Early forbs & Grasses, Poa root bases	Forbs, Young grass; Seeds; Insects; Roots of forbs	Grasshoppers All types	Yes	1	Short elevational distances <2
Quail	Seed	Forbs, Seeds, Insects	All types	Yes	1	None, except Mountain quail
Pheasants	Seed	Forbs, Seeds, Insects	All types	Yes	1	None
Ptarmigan	Buds	Forbs Insects	All types	Yes	1	Short elevational distances <4
Desert Tortoise	None- they hibernate	Forbs	None	No, but they do dig	75	None

Forbs are herbaceous flowering plants other than a grass. The main message Dr Rosentreter tries to convey is that forbs are the key food for sage-grouse. Sage provides the structure of the habitat and some of the diet but forbs are essential for thriving. Another take-away is that a healthy insect population is also necessary. A mix of native plants is needed for a healthy population of insects.

That brings us to competition for food. As you can see from the table, all these birds need forbs, even the tortoise. The sage-grouse has an advantage in that it also eats sage, but it cannot survive on sage alone. What else is eating the forbs out on the sagebrush steppe? Since this is the anthropocene, it must be humans - we raise livestock. Cows eat grass and forbs. Sheep eat grass and forbs and prefer forbs. Stu compiled this table to give some perspective:

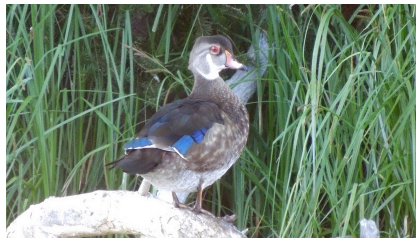
Grazing Preferences of Sage-steppe Animal Species in Spring and Summer Brood-rearing Habitat for Sage-grouse

Animal	Animal Wt., lbs	Preference
Sage-grouse	5	Forbs
Rabbit	5	Forbs
Pronghorn	130	Forbs
Deer	180	Forbs
Sheep	250	Forbs
Cattle	1400	Forbs
Insects	Aggregate wt.- a lot	Forbs

The vast majority of the remaining sage-grouse habitat is BLM land. The following is an excerpt from an article in E&E News, 1-20-2020. BLM administers 18,000 permits and leases for livestock grazing on 155 million acres of public lands in the western United States, more than 60% of the 245 million acres it manages across the nation. The BLM is preparing to overhaul grazing regulations, including how it addresses scofflaw ranchers on public lands. According to BLM, the newest updates will address grazing permit procedures and land use planning, as well as how best to use grazing to address and reduce wildlife risks. The proposed changes also focus on "strengthening controls to prevent unauthorized grazing." This sounds great but not everyone sees it as positive. The Western Watersheds Project sees it as a way of appeasing grazing permittees that break the rules. The Public Lands Council and the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, however, praised the proposed revisions, which it described as a long-overdue correction to regulations enacted under Clinton administration Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt.

It will be interesting to see how this all shakes out. Should we be worried for the sage-grouse? You betcha! By the way, The Western Watersheds Project has a nice synopsis of the sage-grouse issue and a great video of males displaying which can be seen at: <https://www.westernwatersheds.org/issues/species/sage-grouse/>.

LOOK WHO RECENTLY JOINED THE ECAS FLOCK !



Amanda	Accamando	Bend, OR
Carolyn	Anderson	Bend, OR
Alisa	Anguiano	Bend, OR
Michel	Bee	Bend, OR
Marinell	Blankfort	Bend, OR
Scott	Bowler	Sisters, OR
Jared	Bruns	Redmond, OR
Christopher	Bushnell	Bend, OR
Glenn	Cantor	Bend, OR
Brenda	Chilcott	Redmond, OR
Matt & Kelly	Cleman	Bend, OR
Allison	Cowie	Bend, OR
Nancy	Dasen	Bend, OR
Maria	Donnelly	Bend, OR
Deb	Dory	Bend, OR
Garrett	Durheim	Bend, OR
Carole	Hallett	Portland, OR
Maribeth	Harris	Bend, OR
Vanessa	Ivey	Bend, OR
Mary Ann	Jestel	Bend, OR
Clarissa	Jurgensen	Bend, OR
Cathy	Kozmary	Las Vegas, NV
Terri	Libert	Sunriver, OR
John	McFarland	Bend, OR
Denise	Moore	Bend, OR
Gerry	Mueller	Bend, OR
Bridget & Steve	Murphy	LaPine, OR
Carolyn	Myhre	Bend, OR
Jacqueline	Newbold	Bend, OR
Tierney	O'Dea	Bend, OR
Dianne	Page	Bend, OR
Lori	Prime	Redmond, OR
Jill	Punches	Portland, OR
Susan	Selbach	Bend, OR
Diana	Shoemaker	Bend, OR
Virginia	Stern	Portland, OR
Russ	Taylor	Bend, OR
Andy & Cheryl	Tillman	Terrebonne, OR
JVO & Sharon	Weaver	Bend, OR
Stephen	Wilkins	Bend, OR
Cherry	Williams	Bend, OR
Andrea	Wirth	Henderson, NV
Samantha	Wolfe	Hines, OR

Members Questionnaire

By Jan Rising, Membership Committee

A big thank you to all of our members and program/project leaders who replied to our recently emailed questionnaires. We received excellent feedback that will help ECAS plan according to our members interests. In a nutshell here's some info about some questions we asked:

(78 responses from 388 emailed surveys)

How long have you been a member?

One year or less- 10

1-3 years- 26

3 or more years- 42

Why did you join?

To learn about birds- 52

To meet other birders- 44

To learn about places to bird- 38

To support bird conservation- 52

To be involved with a birding group- 23

What activities have you participated in?

Birders Night- 44

Annual Event- 35

Field trips- 46

Wednesday Birders- 35

Dean Hale Woodpecker Festival- 40

Christmas Bird Counts- 29

Bird surveys- 19

Potluck picnic- 16

Winter raptor route surveys- 20

How is Member Planet working for you?

Good- 44

OK- 7

Not so good- 2

And a special thanks to Liz Thill who created the questionnaire forms on Member Planet and emailed them to our membership.

Bangers, Boxes, & Babies: Spring Tips for Woodpeckers

By Elise Wolf, Native Bird Care, avian rescue

I always get asked what to do about Northern Flickers, or other head-bangers that visit our homes each spring announcing their presence with a tap tap tap or a loud machine gun dddddd. My answer is always to joke and say – get up at 5 am. It brings a laugh, and some groans. But, in all seriousness, adaptation is one of the best solutions to this issue. When viewed as a puzzle and not a problem, the relationships of birds with us, our homes, and the altered environment we have created for them can be seen with a more congenial attitude.



Flickers nest in dead or dying trees, providing homes for other cavity-nesting species – small owls, kestrels, ducks, small mammals, and other songbirds. They are considered a ‘keystone’ species, meaning that their presence is key to the success of other species. According to Cornell Lab of Ornithology, “The loss or diminution of the Northern Flicker would likely have a large impact on most woodland ecosystems in North America.”

For decades there was a bounty on snags in our surrounding forests (and porcupines as well, which help by making dead trees). Logging protocols have historically allowed or even required removal of dead or dying trees. We continue to see these antiquated and tragic policies played out today in forest plans and decisions. In addition to habitat loss and lack of snags, starling cavity theft, pesticides, and window strikes. Only 40% of Flickers survive the winter according to researchers.

As predominantly ant-eaters, these birds have to work quite hard to find their foods. Last summer was noticeably short of insects, and that reality showed in our rescue as babies and adults came in low in weight and even emaciated. So, be thrilled that you have someone able and willing to take out carpenter ants on your property. We can buy new trim; we can’t buy Flickers.

Have I pulled at your heart-strings enough now? So what can you do regarding not just flickers, but all our little bangers?

Tip #1: Let them bang & get up early!

Hear me out – this is actually very effective. If they start on the gutters, that’s perfect. They are not going to hurt the gutter, but they get a loud, reverberating – and for them, satisfying – sound. If you relinquish the gutter, then they may leave the roof alone. This is exactly what ours have done. Once they have successfully established that your home and yard are ‘theirs’ – since this time of year their banging is territorial – they may stop sooner. By the way, Flickers are only territorial regarding their nests sites, not their food resources. That sharp ach, ach, ach, ach, ach, ach that you hear all day is also them declaring that their found nesting site in your yard is theirs. Sweet, huh?!

Our flickers take about 2 weeks of gutter-banging to convince the others that our house is their house. What does not work, and can make them more persistent, is running outside and yelling at them. My husband has proven this repeatedly, he is now forbidden from this activity as I insist that I prefer the banging to his yelling and clapping. Our Pa Flicker is already done with this activity this year, and politely conducted all of it on the gutters.

Get up early. I can hear the groans. If you find their incessant pounding at first light irritating or waking you up, adapt by adjusting your schedule. Get a start on the day. It will only last a short time. Your reward will be adorable baby ones in another couple of months.

Tip #2: Give them a house!

Ok, not yours perhaps (hehe), but one of their own. If Pa Flicker has decided to make a cavity in the wall of your garage or home, then give them an alternate. **Flickers will use a bird box...if they want to. They physiologically and mentally need to excavate the cavity.** So, pack the nest full of wood chips. Use aspen wood chips from a pet store (not mulch due to splinters; not cedar because it's toxic; not pine, it's sappy).

Absolutely and always put grooves up all four sides of the inside of the box. Choose a box that opens (which you should do anyway). Remove the side opposite the opening. Use a tool of choice to make 1/8th inch grooves. For Flickers, these grooves should be 1/2 inch apart, bottom to top of box. Flickers begin to perch on the sides of their cavities at about 17 days. Being gregarious, flicker babies need space, so make sure they have use of the entire inside of the box.

Place the box on a metal post, like you would a swallow or bluebird box, at 8'-12' high. This prevents predators from being able to climb up and get into the box. Place 10' from the nearest tree, in the shade, facing South or Southeast. Proper siting and location is paramount. Choose the most private, least stressful place to site your planet-mate's new house. Base decisions on June activity levels and locations, not April's. Ideally, it should *not* be above a door or social gathering areas. Younger birds may not have the experience to know they are making a housing faux pas until it's too late (one way I get baby birds). Placing the box on the house might work best if you have a small yard and this is the safest, private place for your bird family. Or, if you want to exclude a current Flicker's hole-building project on your own house, try putting up a box over that hole.

Flickers will tolerate activity and humans until fledgling stage (this is true of all birds). However, all birds get stressed and once the fledglings are able to flap even a bit, they can get spooked from their nests/cavities before they are ready. Also, birds are territorial, not just among their own species, but sometimes with other species as well (like bluebirds attacking swallows; easily solved by doing back to back boxes). So, if this bird made an awful real estate decision, relocate by exclusion (see www.nativebirdcare.org for a long list of options) and put up the pole box if you want the birds.



Placement of their house on your house, by the way, is excellent for your littler tap-tappers: nuthatches and chickadees. These birds will readily take over a box, and you can often simply place a box right over the hole they have embarked on creating. Simply fill the hole with a sealant, and place the box over it. Put an inch of the aspen bark in the box. Placement and location

are the same as for Flickers. Make many more grooves, spaced closer together, like 1/8th to 1/4th inch apart, just on the front of the box, below the hole. But, put them all the way across so babies can get alongside and push dominant and bigger babies away from the hole. Too few places to hang can lead to the largest baby dominating the hole and the others starving. (Never put perches on bird boxes, unless you want to feed our corvids).

Tip #3: Attracting Breeding Birds (or not)

If you are putting up boxes to attract breeding birds, the choice of a box should be **based on bird spacing and territories, food abundance (natural insects, not your feeders) and safety for the birds**. Putting up multiple boxes without thought to these critical components can result in birds abandoning their eggs or worse, the babies dying from starvation or predation. Evaluate for your local birds too – who is already there breeding? How many birds do you have? What species? Look up the species you think you want and look at spacing and territory and habitat requirements (see link below). Make your box choices based on the quality of your habitat, species appropriateness, insect availability, locals, site activity, predators (cats/raccoons? = NO BOXES.)

What's your habitat? Do you have birds already in your habitat? Can you improve that? Do you have old junipers? Tall pines? Deciduous or riparian? Open or closed canopy? Meadows or thick forest? What plants? Native insect producers (like our wild shrubs)? Lots of lovely but non-insect productive landscaping plants? Tiny yard in downtown or large acreage backed to wild spaces? Birds feed babies insects – wild, natural insects that must come from their habitats. And those insects are declining. Putting up multiple boxes is putting those new parents and your local birds into competition for those insects.

Am I making this more work than you thought? Good, because putting up bird boxes and attracting them is not a benign activity. Last year I had someone ask me why a bluebird laid eggs in four different bluebird boxes, all spaced about 10 feet apart. The bird abandoned all of them. First-time breeders make bad choices. Box placers can make bad choices too. Sometimes birds will not simply avoid a bad box. They will waste their time and lose physical condition.

Producing and raising babies is hard on both parents. It takes an extraordinary amount of physiological effort for a female to pump out eggs. All calcium going into those shells is coming straight out of the bones of that bird. Yes, birds eat calcium in the wild, but what is eaten during egg production comes mainly from the body, not foods. Birds that fully produce and care for three nests in a summer, will not only look tragic, but will likely not make it over

the winter, much less to their wintering site. (This is the main reason not to feed mealworms abundantly but just as a treat. Never try to replace wild foods. Plus, mealworms are nutritionally incomplete, they require supplementation to avoid nutritional deficiencies when fed in abundance, as we do in care).

One other caution regarding boxes: predation. I used to put up boxes to renest some cavity nesters who made poor real estate choices. No longer. Last box I provided was for a Pygmy Nuthatch family. The move went smoothly, the parents started their family and returned immediately to their jobs of feeding. A raccoon ate them all. He had likely seen us put up that handy breakfast buffet of a box, climbed up, reached in, and ate them all. Thanks guys! Renesting is only done with certain species, under very specific conditions, and only if birds are robust and healthy. I am happy to advise on this.

I am not saying do not put up boxes. I am advising that you consider the where, when, who, why, and what in box choices. Just be thoughtful. *Never simply launch into putting up numerous bird boxes. And do not privilege some species over others. Choose based on the above principles.*

Cornell Lab's Nestwatch site has full pages of how, where, when, territory, and other facts regarding bird boxes. For every bird you want to attract, go to this site and look at all of the information. ***Here's a link to chickadees.***

<https://nestwatch.org/learn/all-about-birdhouses/birds/mountain-chickadee/>

Tip #4: Exclusion (*finally!*)

Okay, if I have not convinced you yet of how much you should love your head bangers, there are ways to exclude them. No, fake owls don't work. (These and hawk silhouettes don't work for preventing window strikes either). Exclusion is the only way to keep birds off your home, not chasing or throwing beer cans. LOL.

If a bird has found a smaller, but tantalizing metal roofing item (like my entire roof), and you want to get up at 7 am not 5 am, then you might paint that item with rubberized paint. Ask your paint store for advice. If your Flicker dude has chosen wood to bang into, use hardware cloth, sheet metal, or cement siding to cover it. Hardware cloth is not obvious and can be painted. If it's a chimney, and you love your Flicker dude, put up sheet metal so that he chooses that location to bang, not others. Distraction and redirection is always more successful in training any animal. Gutters, as mentioned, are really ideal, they are not over our heads generally and easier to ignore.

For lots of solutions and ideas, go to www.nativebirdcare.org. I have scoured the internet for ideas, and have listed them. There are also links to other sites.

Tip #5: Can I move a nest or cavity?

Short answer is still no, not active nests. If *early enough* in the breeding process, we might be able to relocate to very close by. You are implored to consult with a wildlife rehabilitator (me) before you do anything however, just to ensure success and no loss of babies. Tree removal and limbing anytime from May to August is dangerous for birds. However, if done early enough in the season, it is possible to move the nest. With woodpeckers, cutting out the cavity

in the tree, and attaching it to an adjacent tree actually can work. I am happy to consult on that. If it's truly a 'danger' tree, then topping it now and taking it fully down in the fall and allowing the woodpeckers to finish their baby-making jobs is best. Or remove danger limbs, and leave those with nests.

With Flickers and other woodpeckers, if the nest is destroyed earlier in the season, the parents will try again. The whole process takes these larger birds time. Having babies mid-summer season is not going to be that successful. If the fledglings are born in July, then that means fledgling time is August, nearing the end of the main bug season.

Tip #6: When to intervene with adults or babies?

I often get asked when or if one should intervene with birds they believe are injured, or with babies seemingly in distress. I have to say that in my entire 10 years of rehabbing, I have only had 3 kidnapped, healthy birds. These were killdeer, and the kids took an hour chasing them down along the river in La Pine. What I am saying is that it is my experience – at least in Central Oregon – successful kidnapping is not that common.

Woodpeckers come into care primarily due to the bird hitting a window, getting mauled by a dog or cat, or as babies when someone has destroyed their nest (tree removal or exclusion). Millie – the famous girl from last year – came in when the person chose to paint the house even though there were 2 adult birds going into a hole in their garage door. The parents tried to keep feeding; all but one starved. Flickers are ground feeders, so they - like juncos, towhees, robins, corvids, and doves - are vulnerable to predation, harassment, and lack of food. A flicker that sits on the ground or in a tree unmoving for long periods is likely not ok. A fledgling unable to fly is not ok. A bird that hits a window won't be ok, without treatment. Concussion, neurological, and even spinal injuries are common in these birds. Bring 'em in.

From observation and rehab experience, I have found that woodpeckers stay with parents for a lot longer than is estimated. They also stick around for more of the fall and winter than is estimated. This is why I chose to do soft-release at the release site of a Black Headed Woodpecker last year. And it was good I did; she would have starved. A local bird family adopted her after two and a half weeks. They all flew off together – two parents, the two young (one mine). So all young woodies must be returned to parents. Rehab and return is swift if we still have a family to return the birds to. Like corvids, woodpeckers clearly learn a lot from their parents. Singletons, like Millie, stay on at the center here and are cared for and fed for two months or longer.

In sum: I hope that I have given you food for thought about our bangers, boxes, and baby birds. Stay well.

Fun Links:

Exclusion: <http://www.nativebirdcare.org/living-with.html>

Millie the Flicker & her Famous Tongue: <https://www.facebook.com/native.bird.care/>

Search "Flicker" in the search bar on the left after clicking on "posts."

Cornell Labs Nestwatch:

<https://nestwatch.org/learn/all-about-birdhouses/birds/mountain-chickadee/>

Oregon Breeding Bird Atlas is Now Online

*By Paul Adamus (principal coordinator of the 1995-1999 Oregon BBA) and
Kit Larsen*

The first and largest comprehensive baseline survey of Oregon's birds -- the Oregon Breeding Bird Atlas (BBA) -- can now be viewed for FREE on the Oregon Birding Association's website. The web version is just as interactive as the CD in which it was originally published, and contains a map for every breeding species, information on habitat use, the complete database, statistical analysis, and much more. The BBA consisted of field surveys by over 800 volunteers



during the period from 1995 through 1999. If you were birding in Oregon then and were a volunteer, your name is in it. Kit Larsen volunteered hundreds of hours to create the original CD, but now that few new computers have CD drives, we recently decided the BBA should be moved online where it is more discoverable and accessible to a wider audience. Michael Medina graciously volunteered his programming expertise to move the entire contents of the CD onto the OBA website, with support from Diana Byrne. Species names have been updated. We would appreciate this post being mentioned in local Audubon group newsletters and on birding listservs. Here is the link: <https://oregonbirding.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/bbs/>

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