

# THE CALLIOPE

EAST CASCADES BIRD ALLIANCE  
QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2024



## President's Message

*By Duke Tufty*

Change is in the air. While the fire and smoke still linger, the days are getting shorter and the temps are getting cooler. And birds are migrating again. What a treat it is to see the birds moving back south and stopping in Central Oregon along their journey. I hope that you can get out to see some of them because they'll soon be home, far far away from here.

We're also experiencing a lot of change here at the **East Cascades Bird Alliance**, with the new name, new website address, new Facebook page, etc. We continue to be excited about the change and hope to have all of the details with the name change finalized by the end of the year.

While COBOL and OBOL remain the primary email based ways for sharing information about birds and birding, the Oregon Birding **Discord server has now supplanted WhatsApp** as the must-have messaging app for birding in Oregon. At first glance, it can seem a bit complicated and even daunting. However, once you get through the initial learning curve, Discord is pretty easy to use and mostly covers the entire state in one place. There are moderators on Discord who are more than happy to help answer your questions and troubleshoot your settings to help you learn the app. If you haven't tried it and want to stay on top of birding in Oregon, I recommend giving it a try. Please see the "Mobile Groups" section of the Oregon Birding Association for more information.

As you may have heard, the **Green Ridge Raptor Survey** will not be held this year. I want to thank David Vick for leading this project and the many others who have contributed over the years. I also wanted to call out Peter Low's integral and spectacular contributions to this project. Just another reason that we all miss Peter and are jealous that England now gets to enjoy his amazing prowess at finding amazing birds. We would love to continue this project. If this is something that you might be interested in taking on, let us know. We would like to talk about ways to help make that happen.

Another change is the completion of the **Whiskey Springs Restoration project**. A big thank you to Judy Meredith, Laurel Collins, Diane Kook, Mike Golden and the other volunteers who helped with this special site along Green Ridge in Jefferson County that was devastated by wildfire in 2020. A friendly reminder that this project is on private property and viewing is only allowed from the public road FS 1140.

And, it's with a heavy heart that we will not be having the **Dean Hale Woodpecker Festival** in 2025. As some of you know, we did our best this year to work around certain regulatory requirements (i.e. in-person CPR/first aid training and background checks for trip leaders) by not charging for the field trips. Our hope was that donations might make up for this and continue to make the festival a viable fund raiser for ECBA. However, that turned out to be a bit optimistic. Unfortunately, given the amount of time and effort required to put on the festival and the prospect of the festival being a net financial loss each year for ECBA, we have decided to focus our efforts on other projects.

One of those projects is well underway. We're thrilled to announce that ECBA has now placed **birding backpacks** in all six Deschutes county library branches, the libraries in both Crook and Jefferson Counties, and the Warm Springs Family Resource Center and Library. We're now working on a way to **make optics available to interested teachers** for use in the classroom and outings.

We are also excited to announce the first annual **East Cascades Bird Alliance Youth Scholarship**. The scholarship will be for a spot at the American Birding Association's Camp Colorado in the summer of 2025 and will include a travel stipend. We hope to have the details, application materials, etc. on our website sometime in October. We'll let everyone know when it's ready to go live.

Finally, we are working hard at **rebuilding our volunteer program** in 2025. Volunteering has been shown to have many benefits. It connects you to others and builds social relationships. It creates community and a sense of place. It can provide both mental and physical health benefits. You can find purpose and meaning. And it can be fun and make you happy!

#### **Volunteer opportunities will include the following.**

- **Co-leading bird walks.** ECBA will be offering birding walks at local hotspots on the weekends to help people develop their birding skills and welcome them into the ECBA family. These walks will typically be short with a definite start and end time, and will focus on nearby locations with nearby resources. We would love your help with this and it will make you a better birder by sharing your knowledge and experience with others.
- **Assist with Citizen Science Projects.** ECBA often knows about great opportunities to get involved with citizen science projects. Does this sound interesting to you?
- **Community events.** ECBA is getting ready to debut its new table setup for community events (shortly before the publication of this newsletter). We would love to attend as many community events in Central Oregon as possible to engage with the community about birding. Would you like to meet some new people and help with this?
- **Habitat restoration and maintenance.** ECBA is partnering with Pollinator Pathways in 2025 to help develop and maintain hummingbird pollinator gardens in the Bend area. ECBA is hoping to be a good partner with Pollinator Pathways. Would you like to help?

If any of these sound interesting to you, please email us at [ecaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:ecaudubon@gmail.com). Thank you!

## Upcoming ECBA Events - Please join us!

### ECBA Annual Event

**Annual Business Meeting & Ice Cream Social & Silent Auction**

**Sunday, November 3, 2024 at 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM (PST)**

**Aspen Hall at Shevlin Park, 18920 NW Shevlin Park, Bend, OR 97701**

This year's Annual Event will be an ice cream social featuring dairy and non-dairy gelatos from Bend's own Bonta Gelato. The event will include news updates about ECBA in 2024 and a vote for the board of directors. It will also feature a talk by Josh Collins about the Greater Sage-grouse conservation project. On top of that we will have a silent auction of wild art. We have a nice selection of framed prints by Louis Agassiz Fuertes and John James Audubon, plus some adorable carved birds and other donated items. You are invited to contribute to the auction as well. Do you have art that you just don't have room for anymore that others will find attractive? You can donate it to ECBA and we will offer it at the auction. Just email [ecaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:ecaudubon@gmail.com) to tell us what you have and arrange a delivery. Proceeds from the art auction will be used to help fund our scholarship for a teen to American Birders Association summer camp. All members should have received an invitation and can RSVP by responding to that invitation or via Member Planet. RSVP's are requested and can be made through Member Planet. **There will be another event notice sent out in mid October via MemberPlanet. It will have an RSVP button like the one that went out earlier.**

### ECBA Birders' Nights

**Third Thursdays, 7-830pm**

**Environmental Center 16 NW Kansas Ave., Bend**

#### **October 17, 2024 Bats of the Pacific Northwest and How They Inspired Radical Conservation Collaborations**

Birds are not the only creatures flying in Central Oregon. Do you ever wonder what you are seeing as the bird world transitions to the bat world at dusk? We are excited to welcome Beth Ward, the coordinator of the Northwest Bat Hub at OSU--Cascades, to share stories and information about bats in the Pacific Northwest.

#### **November 21, 2024 Planning International Birding Trips**

Thinking about going on a birding trip to see some amazing new birds? Overwhelmed by the number of tour operators, destinations, itineraries, and travel options? If so, please join us for an informative Birders' Night featuring Steve Kornfeld who will be sharing his perspective on these things based on his many travel experiences. He will be covering the big picture stuff, such as choosing a tour operator, a travel style, etc., as well as the practical aspects, including packing, field guides, visas, electrical cords, currency, internet and cell coverage, health considerations, and more.

## **Winter Residency: The Science Behind Wintering Anna's Hummingbirds** **by Elise Wolf, Native Bird Care, Central Oregon**

A recent Nextdoor (Sisters, OR region) post suggested removing hummingbird feeders in the autumn to force hummingbirds to fly south. Well, I'm here to say that's not going to happen. These hardy birds have chosen to take on the weather and even go north to Alaska.

They are surviving the chilly climates, and their populations are increasing. At the same time, fledglings and young adults show declines. In this article, I'll explore what the science says about hummingbirds that choose to stay in Central Oregon and other cold, challenging northern regions.

Some of you may have read my blog post on [Caring for Winter Hummingbirds](#). Here, I'll delve deeper into the science behind hummingbird migration and torpor, why winter hummingbirds are at high risk of death, and how we can support their survival.

### **Migration Choices**

Like many birds, Anna's hummingbirds migrate in response to dwindling food availability due to seasonal changes. The shorter daylight hours trigger hormones that prompt them to head north or south. However, migration isn't purely instinctual - there's an element of choice in their decision to migrate.

Hummingbirds show a range of migration patterns, from minimal movement to long-distance travel. Annas are "facultative" migrants, meaning they make choices about migration based on environmental conditions (irruptive species, like the Evening Grosbeak, also display this pattern.) In contrast, species like the Black-chinned or Rufous are "obligate" (hard-wired) migrants, driven by instinct with few exceptions. Anna's may stay year-round or move shorter distances, sometimes (lower latitudes) based on altitude rather than the traditional north-south route, making them less predictable but still migratory. Many still choose to make the long-distance trek.

Scientists believe that Anna's flexible migration patterns enable them to experiment with survival in colder climates. Today, we are seeing Anna's wintering through the British Columbia coast into southern parts of Alaska. Their increasing populations in new regions appear to be more about population movements (emigration) than breeding success, though the jury is still out.

Removing feeders won't push the birds south but will instead cause them to search for another feeder. Hummingbirds remember food locations, and if one arrives after flying hundreds of miles to find no food, it may frantically search for a new feeder. It's essential not to remove feeders while birds are actively feeding, as waking up after a freezing night with no food can be fatal.

### **Feeder Dependence**

It is well documented that human feeding has influenced Anna's hummingbirds' choice to stay in northern areas. Humans have changed the Anna's environmental conditions and food availability. In the milder Pacific Northwest, the decision by Anna's to stay is also supported by the extended blooming seasons of non-native flowering plants—often plants from tropical regions that hummingbirds may have historically fed on during winter months.

In Central Oregon, where winter nectar-producing plants are scarce, Anna's depend on our feeders. Even in warmer summer temps, Central Oregon lacks the abundant nectar of a lush landscape. While hummingbirds do feed on sap (some Ruby-throated hummingbirds are known to follow sapsucker migrations) and fruits, studies indicate that they prefer sucrose. Our feeders function like gas stations, where the birds stop to refuel before hunting for their primary food source—insects. Sugar water, however, offers no nutrients except carbohydrates (no protein, vitamins, or fats). It is similar to our morning coffee.

Hummingbirds are insectivores; they physically need insects to survive. Sugar water gives them the boost to find them. Healthy, warm hummingbirds can find insect foods in winter. Like the Golden-crowned Kinglet making its way through an Arctic winter, Anna's gleans insects off trees and shrubs.

Studies show hummingbirds drink more water when fed a 3:1 sugar solution. In winter, water sources freeze or dry up, and snow is not a water source (it is dehydrating). *A tepid solution is best*, as cold drinks can lower internal body temperature, and their tongues can stick to ice in feeder solutions.

So, do hummingbirds need our feeders in the winter (or smoke-filled, extreme heat) weather? Yes. An easily accessible, clean feeder can improve their overall survival in frigid/hot temps.

### How Can Anna's Survive?

Social media commentary often underestimates the fragility of hummingbirds. Some might believe these tiny birds can handle anything, brushing off concerns as overly worrisome. However, these birds are not as robust as many assume.

For instance, this bird pictured with the bottom-heater feeder was considered to be doing well yet was found dead a day later. Last winter, I received countless emails and calls from people all over the PNW about hummingbirds struggling in the cold. Many didn't make it, even in warmer areas of Oregon and Washington.



Anna's hummingbirds weigh only 4-4.5 grams. Hummingbirds generally have the highest metabolism of any animal on earth due to their small size, high heart rate, and flight style (hovering). Their heart rates run from a resting 420-460 bpm to 1220 bpm hovering. They eat three times their body weight in a day to simply survive the night. In cold weather, they increase their feeding by up to 20%.

To conserve energy, they enter a state called *torpor*, which slows their metabolic and breathing rates and lowers their body temperature. Shallow torpor lowers the body temperature down to 20 degrees below the average 104<sup>0</sup>-107<sup>0</sup> F and minimally slows metabolism. Anna's use shallow torpor overnight, during short cool snaps in a day, or when they are in poor health or unable to find food. They can come out of shallow torpor within a few minutes.

Deep torpor is more severe, shutting metabolism down to 95% of normal and reducing body temperature down to 50% of normal (lowest documented is 48° F/ 54° F average). Breathing is also substantially slowed, with one case documented at 6 bpm. Anna's are noted as being able to handle temperatures down to -8° F. Anna's use deep torpor when temperatures drop to 50° F or below, they are in poor body condition, daylight is shortened, and due to their circadian rhythm. It can take them up to half an hour to wake from deep torpor.

Notably, with all of this adaptation, they are still burning up energy. Once the ambient temperature drops below 50° F, the birds' energy use (fat stores, then muscle mass) increases. The birds must shiver and fluff their feathers to prevent hypothermia.

*Birds found hanging from feeders or fallen into the snow are often in deep torpor or dying.*

Hummingbirds must enter torpor to survive the night. On a single night, an Anna's might fluctuate between shallow and deep torpor. Since they are not eating in a torpid state, they enter temporary starvation. A hummingbird's crop (the small pouch under the chin) can only hold enough nectar to get them through the night, wake them up, and help them find their first insect meal.

Birds also go into torpor from lack of food, intense weather, or poor body condition. Winter, of course, starts to challenge the hummingbird on all those fronts. Birds who must use torpor during the day, perhaps because they began the winter with low body fat, are physiologically starving. Those sitting at the feeder in stasis most of the day are in peril.

The survival of wintering Annas is still being researched. We know that in frigid temperatures, a bird can stay in torpor for a couple of days if it is in superior body condition and wakes occasionally to feed. However, cold weather is costly. It drains the fat reserves needed for warmth and energy. Hummingbirds can survive on feeder solution alone for up to 10 days in warm weather but lose muscle mass. Intense cold significantly increases their energy needs.

Additionally, hummingbirds cannot survive without the nutrients they need. Having the stamina and strength to hunt insects is imperative to their survival. Aiming for our feeder birds to *thrive vs survive* is the best goal.

Finally, hummingbirds are also seriously challenged in cold temps by not having the amount of down that other birds have for insulation. Less down means they need to use more energy to stay warm thus using more energy compared to fluffier birds. Add to this, bird fat is unlike mammals, which provides a uniform insulating layer. Instead, bird fat forms in pockets with only a thin amount as a subcutaneous layer.

Hummingbirds' feathers must remain pristine to provide insulation and weather-proofing. In torpor, the birds do not preen, so their feathers suffer from poor quality and loss of waterproofing. Thus, some hummingbirds look sad and bedraggled. Poor feather condition leads to hypothermia.

The more an Anna's has to fight for feeder access, the poorer the bird's body condition, the colder the weather, and the worse its feather condition, the lower its chances of survival. The Anna's biggest challenge is maintaining their body condition during months of extreme weather or other environmental challenges (drought, smoke). Every hour spent in torpor uses up energy



stores. Once the fat reserves are gone, the body uses muscle mass. Every hummingbird that came into care last winter ranged from skinny to emaciated. Emaciation is impossible for a wild bird to overcome; they must get care beyond a feeder solution and a warm room.

*Hummingbirds are tough. However, there is a physical limit to how much intense weather one can tolerate before succumbing to hypothermia and starvation.*

#### Quick Tips:

- Keep feeders up through November or longer.
- Clean feeders and bird baths regularly.
- Provide a 4:1 water-to-sugar solution
- Keep solution tepid: tongues can freeze to ice.
- Use a feeder heater (15W bulb fall; 25W winter).
- Place feeders under eaves to protect from weather.
- Consider using a safe heat lamp ([click here](#)).
- Use a bird bath heater for winter baths/water.
- Prevent window collisions ([click here](#)).
- Provide fruit flies (see blog [Caring for Winter Hummingbirds.](#) )

In conclusion, love and care for your hummingbirds this winter. Many Facebook pages have posts on ideas for helping hummers in winter. Be selective and wise in your choices. Go to [www.nativebirdcare.org](http://www.nativebirdcare.org) for more information. Email for questions or citations.

Elise Wolf directs the avian rescue and sanctuary, Native Bird Care. She is in her 15th year as a licensed avian rehabilitator in Central Oregon, specializing in songbirds, and her 37th year as a wildlife conservation advocate.



If you are interested in learning more about birds and wildfire smoke and even perhaps want to participate in a related community science project the links below have information about Project Phoenix. These sites were suggested by Gail Snyder as possibly of interest to ECBA members.

[https://www.hcn.org/articles/what-happens-to-birds-when-its-smoky-outside/?utm\\_source=wc1&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=2024-07-05-Newsletter](https://www.hcn.org/articles/what-happens-to-birds-when-its-smoky-outside/?utm_source=wc1&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=2024-07-05-Newsletter)

<https://www.project-phoenix-investigating-bird-responses-to-smoke.org/>

## **VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: SEVILLA RHOADS AND ANDER**



**Where have you lived and worked? Was your occupation/career bird-related?**

We moved to Central Oregon in 2020. We lived in New Hope, PA for several years where we enjoyed volunteering with the Bucks County Audubon. Prior to New Hope, we lived on Vashon



Island. My former career had nothing to do with birds, but being a homeschool parent has allowed me to include birds and birding into our daily lives.

**Where, when and how did you start birding?** When I was a young child in the UK, my aging grandfather asked me to use my young eyes and ears to help him hear and see birds on his birding outings. That special time with my grandfather ignited my love of the natural world. Hoping to pass my grandfather's gift on to our kids, I have taken them birding all their lives. Even before they could talk, I was pointing to birds while saying their species names!

My son's wonderful mentor and namesake, Alec M, supported and deepened Ander's interest in nature. Ander has widened his interests to also study wolves and insects. Incredible mentors, like Dr. Jerry Freilich, our local "bug guy," fueled his excitement and helped him build his observation skills.

**Why do you like birding?** What's not to like? Being in nature with my family and friends indulging our curiosity and awe, and belonging to a community who share this joy. Learning, appreciating and connecting to the natural world.

**What volunteer jobs have you had with ECBA and what did you do for those?**

I have helped with the FaceBook page and my son and I have led programs. I organize the Sunriver 'Christmas' bird count for the Sunriver Nature Center. I also try to be available to help people who need support birding in this area. For example, if an out of town family is looking for kid-friendly birding options, I will take time to give them ideas and often will take them out on a field trip. I love meeting new people and sharing the bounty of our local birding with them!

**What is rewarding for you as an ECBA volunteer?** We have met so many interesting, kind and engaged people. We enjoy the programs and have been able to give back and offer ways for others to enjoy birding, particularly through family and accessible programs.

**What do you see as ECBA's important purposes?** In this challenging era of divides and differences, it is so important to have organizations which provide a community space focused on something positive like a shared love of birds.

**What do you feel are the important issues in birding today?** The rapid loss of healthy wild ecosystems is a critical issue facing us all. We think it is important to stay hopeful and always believe that everyone can make a difference because everything we do to help our natural world, no matter how small the act or contribution, adds up to the way we will together preserve birds for future generations.

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### **Volunteer Opportunity: Do you have 3 - 4 hours a month to spare?**

The Membership Committee needs a volunteer to oversee its workings but not necessarily be involved in the day-to-day data input keeping the ECBA member lists up to date. There are three volunteers already in place that very ably carry out those functions. The committee needs someone who can be the face of Membership with the Board and public, maybe bringing new ideas and perspective to this very necessary part of any non-profit, its members. Are you that

person? If so or if you have questions, contact us at [ecaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:ecaudubon@gmail.com) (a new email address is coming soon as well.)

## WELCOME NEW ECBA MEMBERS!



Christine	Brophy	Sisters, OR
Damian	Dlugolecki	Troutdale, OR
Kevin	Ennis	Sisters, OR
Michael	Fiske	Tigard, OR
Leo	Fremonti	Terrebonne, OR
Julie	Hanson	Bend, OR
Susan	Hooper	Redmond, OR
Tasha	Leonard	LaPine, OR
Kathleen	Martin	Bend, OR
Katherine	O'Meara	Bend, OR
Elana Lee	Reinholtz	Bend, OR
Susan	Stone	Aptos, CA
Jodi	Watson	Seattle, WA

## FREE HELPFUL LOCAL BIRDING RESOURCES

Have you checked out lately the many birding resources available to you at our website, [ecbirds.org](http://ecbirds.org) ? Click the Resources tab and you'll find Birders Connect, Birding Blogs, Media Resources, Oregon Birding Organizations, and Code of Birding Ethics.

Some awesome resources on the ECBA website which have been developed by Chuck Gates include:

**Oregon County Bird Checklists** - These checklists come in two flavors. Let's say you want to have a list of all the common birds in the county so you can check them off as you bird. We have that for every county in Oregon. It's called the Field Checklist. Now, let's say you want to find all the birds that have ever been seen in a county. Maybe you found a bird that is rare or maybe you want to start your own county list and need to know what's been seen in the past. We have that too. It's called the Complete Checklist. Go and play with these. They are regularly updated so you can trust their accuracy (to the degree that they can be).

<https://ecbirds.org/county-checklists/>

**Central Oregon Bird Nests, Eggs, and Young** - This is a photograph resource that shows the nests, eggs, and babies through teens of almost all of our local birds. You find a nest on the

ground and want to ID it, search this site. You want to know what a baby Common Poorwill looks like (and trust me, you do) Check out this site. Ken Hashagen (former ECAS (ECBA) President) is the co-author of this site so high five him the next time you see him.

<https://ecbirds.org/standyoungphotos/>

**Birding Oregon Site Guide** - Visit here for information on over 1200 birding locations in Oregon. GPS coordinates, eBird Hotspot links, written directions (for us Old-Timers) and inside information on how to bird the sites are all found here. Organized by county, finding a spot you are looking for is easy.

<https://ecbirds.org/birding-locations/>



Another great resource is the ECBA Facebook group page which has lots of local tips and photos.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ecasfacebookpage>

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## Late Summer, Early Autumn Central Oregon Birds by local birders/photographers



Prairie Falcon, David Sowers-Emmerd



Sharp-shinned Hawk by Jim St. John



Mountain Bluebird by Erin Keillor



Western Sandpiper by Mike Ogle

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher  
by Chuck Gates







# EAST CASCADES BIRD ALLIANCE

P.O. Box 565, Bend, Oregon 97701  
Website <https://ecbirds.org/>  
Email [ecaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:ecaudubon@gmail.com)  
(will be updated soon)

Sherrie Pierce, *Chatter* (monthly) Editor  
Claire Weiser, *Calliope* (quarterly) Editor

## ECBA Board

Wendy Andrick  
Laurel Collins  
Margi Finch  
Aaron Jenkins  
Miriam Lipsitz  
Brian MacDonald  
Duke Tufty  
Gordon Wetzel

## Autumn 2024 Board Meetings

October 1  
November 12  
December 3

## Board Officers

Duke Tufty	President
Brian MacDonald	Vice President
Gordon Wetzel	Treasurer
Wendy Andrick	Secretary

East Cascades Bird Alliance Board of Directors meets monthly, on the first Tuesday, from 6pm to 8pm. Board meetings are held virtually, via Zoom. If you are interested in attending, please contact [ecaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:ecaudubon@gmail.com) at least two days in advance for a Zoom invitation.

## Committee Chairs

Executive	Duke Tufty
Finance	Gordon Wetzel
Grants	Brian MacDonald
Membership	Vacant
Education	Sherrie Pierce
Conservation Science	Laurel Collins

Minutes and meeting dates are posted at [www.ecaudubon.org/board-meeting-minutes](http://www.ecaudubon.org/board-meeting-minutes)

The East Cascades Bird Alliance (ECBA) is a 501(c)(3) organization which furthers knowledge and appreciation of birds and their habitats through field trips, education, and field studies.

## Program Leaders

Birders' Night	Aaron, Wendy
Field Trips	vacant
Volunteers	Mary Shivell

Join ECBA and help preserve the birds of central Oregon at <https://www.ecaudubon.org/become-a-member/>

## Newsletters

