



The CHATTER August 2025

August 14 Birders' Night: Malheur, A High Desert Oasis in Need of Friends

Malheur National Wildlife Refuge is 187,000 acres of wet meadows, alkaline playas, rocky ridges, and more – all situated in the northern reach of the Great Basin. From bobolink to badgers, the wildlife that depends on the protection of this wild landscape is as diverse as the habitat. Friends of Malheur NWR Director, Janelle Wicks, will share more than the importance of this space but what their organization is doing to support it through advocacy and stewardship. The program will start at 7pm.

Feel free to come early for dinner and a beverage. There is typically a nice group there by 6:00pm or so.

More from Janelle:

The Friends of Malheur NWR is an independent non-profit organization. We are empowered to do the work we do because of the community of support from our Members and Donors. We do not depend on Federal funding or grants. Whether you are a \$20 annual member or a \$1,000 Sandhill Crane Society Member – you are funding the work we do. So, what are we doing?

Current conservation and stewardship initiatives include, but are in no way limited to:

- Staffing the Malheur NWR Visitor Center and Crane's Nest Nature Center & Store from March 1 – October 31st
- Fully funding a seasonal Biological Technician to support the Refuge's Biology Department
- In partnership with Oregon Cultural Heritage Commission, we sponsor of the Oregon Natural Desert Association and Lomakatsi Restoration Project Tribal Stewards Program spending 1 week at Malheur NWR every summer.
- Support Burns Paiute Tribe's Youth Opportunity Program spending time on biological and maintenance projects at Malheur NWR – FIRST YEAR!
- Coordinate Bat Conservation effort at Malheur NWR Headquarters including fly out census and habitat mitigation.
- Sponsor conservation pruning efforts to conserve aging tree stands across the Refuge to maintain habitat for wildlife and protect cultural heritage.
- Co-coordinate and host the annual Harney County Migratory Bird Festival
- Manage the annual Artist in Residence Program and Youth Wildlife Art Contest
- Dark Sky compliance inventory and retrofitting across the Refuge.
- Stewardship of various Refuge sites including hiking trails and Sod House Ranch
- And the list goes on and on...

The Friends of Malheur NWR have two full-time, year-round staff and they could not do all of the above on their own – it takes a fairly robust brigade of volunteers.

Opportunities to become a FOMR volunteer are plentiful and diverse. We genuinely believe there is something for everyone. Here is a brief list of upcoming opportunities:

August 8-10: Sod House Ranch pre-season spruce-up AND evening bat surveys.

September 19-21: Fall tasks, TBD but likely to include trail stewardship and weeding of invasives.

October 17-19: Fall tasks, TBD but likely to include wire and debris removal. To volunteer or for more information contact director@malheurfriends.org

Save the Date

The ECBA Annual Event will be held November 9, 2025, from 4-6 pm at Aspen Hall in Shevlin Park. Plan on joining us for a fun gathering with refreshments and updates on our projects plus elections for the Board of Directors.

Cabin Lake

The Cabin Lake Bird Blinds and watering holes are operational again, thanks to Mel Crabb who has taken over maintenance of the system. For the last 2 years Clay Crofton volunteered his time to maintain this wonderful birding asset. Before Clay, Tom Lawler did the job for 8 years and before that, Don Franks maintained Cabin Lake and numerous other wildlife guzzlers in the area. By the way, Mel is married to Kathleen Franks, daughter of Don Franks and they live in Fort Rock. If you haven't been to Cabin Lake, it's an area on the edge of the Deschutes National Forest and the sage-steppe desert. It is located on Cabin Lake Road, 10 miles north of Fort Rock, by an out-of-commission Forest Service ranger station. The bird blinds and water basins (called guzzlers) that provide water for the birds and wildlife are maintained by East Cascades Bird Alliance. On the interface of the forest and the desert, bird species are abundant and diverse. These blinds attract birders and photographers from all over. National Audubon Society magazine had an article in 2016, featuring Don Franks and the Cabin Lake bird blinds. You can find it here -

<https://www.audubon.org/news/secret-pools-oregon-desert-are-magnets-all-kinds-thirsty-animals>

“Cabin Lake's system is vastly different from the typical guzzler,” according to Nancy Bruenner, who heads up one of many “Adopt A Guzzler” programs for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW). (Currently, about 30 volunteers are involved around the state.) Most guzzlers are much bigger—up to 10 or 30 feet across—and are often supported by hunting chapters, with the purpose of providing water for migrating mule deer, upland game birds, and antelope, Bruenner says.”



To visit the Cabin Lake bird blinds, park on the road to the old ranger station shown in the photo and walk past the station buildings. (search for Cabin Lake Bird Blind in Google maps). Remember to bring some suet cakes – the birds will appreciate it.

ECBA Merchandise is Now Available

Because of many requests, ECBA is again offering custom t-shirts for sale. Designed by our long-time friend and most talented artist, Don Sutherland, we are pleased to make them available online. Displaying Don's talent at capturing nine of the locally nesting woodpeckers, these shirts are one of a kind commemorating the Dean Hale Woodpecker Weekend. Utilizing a local small business, Our Personal Touch, the shirts can be ordered online and have an option of being picked up in the store or sent to your home. Ordering information is at the top of [the ECBA home web page](#). And rumor has it that hats are soon to come!

Orchard Park Hummingbird Garden

We would welcome more volunteers once a month for routine maintenance of the Hummingbird Garden at Orchard Park on the third Friday of August, September, and October. The next date is Friday August 15 at 8am at Orchard Park. If you are interested, send an email to ecba@ecbirds.org with your contact info and put Hummingbird Garden on the subject line.



Pollinator Pathways Volunteers Gwen Bartonek, Mary Shivell, and Miriam Lipsitz

City of Redmond Wetlands Complex Project Update

From Jeremy Stachowski, Wastewater Division Manager, City of Redmond:

The City greatly values its relationship with the East Cascades Bird Alliance (ECBA) and sincerely appreciates your continued advocacy and support for the upcoming Redmond Wetlands Complex project. Your understanding of the long-term benefits this project will bring to local wildlife is truly appreciated.

As we move forward with construction, we want to ensure clear communication regarding safety and site access. The scale of work required—including blasting, excavation, and significant earth-moving—will span the entire property. Due to the intensity and scope of these activities, maintaining a safe environment is our top priority. For the safety of all, **access to the project area will be limited strictly to City staff and authorized construction personnel throughout the construction period.** This restriction applies to all City property within the site, including the infiltration gallery.

The construction and associated habitat development are expected to take approximately **two years to complete.** We understand and respect the importance of this area to ECBA members, and we are committed to restoring access as soon as it is safe and feasible to do so. Should timelines change and earlier access becomes possible, we will promptly update you.

Thank you again for your support and understanding as we work to bring this important project to life. Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions or concerns to either myself or Ryan Kirchner.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

- We are looking for someone with some treasury skills and an interest in joining the Board. Please let us know if you or someone you know has the interest and skills we need to fill this spot this year.
- We are fortunate to have local legend, David Vick, back to host two days of Hawk Watch in early October. More details to come, keep an eye on the calendar and newsletters.

Waivers - Need To Sign Once Per Year.

If you are taking part in any ECBA activity, you need to have a waiver on file. You can [fill out the waiver online.](#)

Wingspan Silhouettes at the Crooked River Wetlands

This project was successfully completed with support from the East Cascades Bird Alliance, CRWC staff, Arc Asylum of Powell Butte, and the Crooked River Wetlands Volunteers, the Wetlands. It was first proposed by Mary Luckey, one of the Wetlanders. She proposed making life-sized cutouts of birds that could be displayed so that visitors could get an actual visualization of the sizes of some of the birds that visit the complex. Tragically, Mary passed away before the project got past the planning stages but the rest of the Wetlanders saw it to fruition and dedicated the silhouettes to her. Check out the finished project, plaques and thank-yous to all involved on your next visit to the Wetlands.

Crooked River Wetlands Walks

In 2025, Wetlands Walks will be held on the first and third Saturdays of the month starting in April and running through September. The first walk will be April 5, 2025 and the last walk of the year will be September 20, 2025. We gather in the CRWC Parking lot at 7:45AM. Walks will begin at 8:00AM and conclude at 10:00AM. The walks are approximately 2 miles long and last about 2 hours. There is no drinkable water at this facility so bring water and dress for Central Oregon weather. A 4-person golf cart is available to carry those who can't walk the distance. Email Chuck Gates (cgates326@gmail.com) if you would like a seat(s) on the cart.

Details:

- First and third Saturday of every month
- April thru September 7:45 am-10:00 am
 - August 2 and August 16
 - Sept 6 and Sept 20
- Meet at the Wetlands pavilion - 4035 NW Rimrock Acres Loop
- For more information, [email Chuck Gates](#) or [visit the Crooked River Wetlands website](#).
- Sponsored by Prineville Bird Club and Crooked River Volunteers

Sunriver Bird Walks

Please join us for the Sunriver Bird Walk on Saturday, August 2. Meet at the Nature Center at 7:30 am. Walk lasts 3 - 4 hours. Distance 3 - 4 miles. Some walking on uneven terrain. Restrooms available midway and at the end. Bring binoculars. Dress for the weather. Bug spray is advised for a portion of the walk. Leaders are Tom Lawler and Diane Burgess. The next Sunriver Bird Walk will be on Saturday, August 30.

Are you a Birder? These might be of interest

The best resource for all things birdy is the [East Cascades Bird Alliance website](#). If you are interested in knowing what is going on locally and as well as the state, sign up for one of these. Here are links to signing up for the list serves Central Oregon Birders Online, COBOL and Oregon Birders Online, OBOL. Go to this page <https://ecbirds.org/birder-resources-2/birders-connect/>

Want to know where to go to bird in Oregon? Check out this amazing collection of information, <https://ecbirds.org/birding-locations/>

Are you a social media user? The ECBA Facebook page is administered by Chuck Gates and Don Sutherland. Chuck recently posted that ECBA had 608 members and he hopes we can get to 1000. Even if you are not a FB fan this site provides many great bird photos and links to interesting information.

Also, in the realm of media, the Wednesday Birders communicate on a What's App site. If you would like to get their messages about upcoming locations and real time meet-ups, go to the WhatsApp Wednesday Birders Carpool Chat and ask to be

admitted. If you don't have the app, it is easily installed from wherever you get your apps.

If you are a Fred Meyer Rewards participant you might consider [linking your account](#) to their Community Rewards program, specifically the East Cascades account and search for East Cascades Audubon Society, (Sorry, it is still listed under the old name) The organization number is RY026. That will allow a contribution from Fred Meyer be made to ECBA on a quarterly basis based on what you have spent, nothing more than that. There are several non-profits that are linked to this so you may find more than one that you would like to help out.



Golden Eagle by Amanda

GOOD BIRDING!