



The CHATTER April 2026

April Birders' Night

The Bird-Caterpillar Connection with LeeAnn Kriegh

Caterpillars are the single most important insect in the diet of most terrestrial birds, yet our knowledge of these larval marvels often begins and ends with *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. So, let's get caught up on the latest research. We'll explore the life cycles of each of the 160,000 species of caterpillars (or at least a few of the best-known), discuss why these bristly sausages are so vital to nestling diets, and learn a few simple ways we can boost caterpillar populations in our own backyards. LeeAnn Kriegh is a woolly bear enthusiast and author of *The Nature of Bend* and *The Nature of Portland*. She'll have the 2025 editions of both books available for sale at the talk.

Located at [Worthy Brewing](#), the program will start at 6pm on April 9, 2026.

Feel free to come early for dinner and a beverage. Worthy Brewing offers a happy hour from 3-6pm.

Welcome to the Board



Lexie Houchins-Park, recently joined the ECBA Board as Vice President. A resident of Bend, Lexie is a lover of Oregon's high desert plants, wildlife, natural history, and people. She brings broad intersectional experience working with nonprofits and government agencies in local agriculture and environmental sectors.

With a B.A. in Environmental Anthropology and extensive professional work in communications and outreach, her expertise lies in bringing people together to bolster thriving ecosystems. As an active community volunteer, she lends her skills in communications, graphic design and systems optimization to support citizen science initiatives for optimal impact.

With a particular passion for native birds, she currently volunteers as a Bird Surveyor with Deschutes Land Trust and an Adopt-a-Lek Greater sage-grouse surveyor with ODFW, and coordinates the Sunriver Nature Center & Observatory Christmas Bird Count on behalf of the Audubon Society. Being out in the field listening for and observing birds is her happy place

Go Birding!!

Spring has sprung and with it has brought several opportunities to get out and go birding.

- **Birding By Ear**

It's that time of year again. Birding By Ear walks at Sawyer Park started on Tuesday March 11th and will continue on Tuesdays through early June. Join Dave Tracy, no registration fee and all ages and birding abilities are welcome. ECBA would like all BBE participants to sign their activity waiver, available here at [fill out the waiver online](#). It only takes a minute and can be filled out on your phone when you arrive or you can fill out in advance. The waiver only has to be filled out once a year.

Location: Sawyer Park parking lot

Time: 8:00 am on Tuesdays running from March through early June

Duration: 1-1.5 hours depending on bird activity

We usually cover about 1-1.5 miles over mostly flat trails. Depending on the weather, be prepared to dress for cool, breezy conditions. Wear suitable clothing & footwear in case of snow, rain & muddy trails. Contact Dave if you have any questions.

Dave Tracy 541 390-9941 dctracy03@gmail.com

- **Crooked River Wetland Walks**

The 2026 Wetlands Walks schedule is now complete. The first walk is April 4th. Come join us as we walk the paved paths of the Crooked River Wetlands. These walks are essentially bird tours, so we go slowly and talk about the birds we see. Wear appropriate clothes for the current weather and remember, "Bring Your Own Water!!" If you are not walking too well these days, we have 3 seats available on a golf cart so everyone can enjoy the walk. If you want to join us, the address is 4035 NW Rimrock Acres Loop Prineville, OR. We meet at 7:45AM and start the walk at 8:00AM. We are usually done by 10:00AM. The walk covers about 2 miles. Walks occur on the 1st and 3rd Saturdays of the warm months (Apr. through Sept.). For more information (including reserving space on the golf cart), contact Chuck Gates at 541-280-4957 or cgates326@gmail.com.

- **Wednesday Birders**

[Wednesday Birders](#) is a group of birders, birding, but not a traditional field trip with a named leader who always provides a guided field experience. Everyone helps everyone else, shares, learns and enjoys birding together. Usually, some advanced birders are there and are so helpful. All are welcomed. We carpool when possible.

Please remember to read [COBOL](#) by Tuesday mornings for last minute details and changes to plans in case of adverse weather, road conditions or detours, bird news or better birding opportunities. Watch COBOL (COBOL is Central Oregon Birders Online and free to join.) for meeting and carpooling times and places or for changes in the plan. Remember to dress for the weather. Be prepared with food, sunscreen, etc. and bring a pair of binoculars. Spotting scopes are helpful on many trips.

- **Summer Lake Shorebird Survey**

Where: Summer Lake Wildlife Area

What: Volunteers conduct counts of all shorebirds and other waterbirds (excluding waterfowl and American coots) across the entire Summer Lake Wildlife Area.

When: Saturday & Sunday, May 30 and 31, 2026

Why: The survey was established in 2009 to monitor breeding shorebird and other waterbird populations and to document bird responses to habitat enhancement and management actions in each of Summer Lake Wildlife Area's habitat management units. The Summer Lake Shorebird Survey has been conducted annually (except in 2020) since 2009.

How: Volunteers count from vehicles along roads, and/or by foot hiking along dikes and levees, cross country and/or wading through marsh and shallow ponds to survey all types of wetland habitat. Volunteers willing to survey by wading/hiking (for 3 or 4 hours) into distant (1 to 2 miles from dikes/roads) are especially needed.

In the past, bicycles, canoes and kayaks have been used in some areas. Binoculars are essential and the use of spotting scopes in many areas is encouraged. Volunteers meet at River Campground on Summer Lake Wildlife Area at 7:30 am and are assigned specific areas to survey. Historically, some volunteers have camped one of the Wildlife Area's four primitive sites. Others have chosen commercial lodging at the Lodge at Summer Lake. In the past, the group found about 120 species of birds throughout the weekend of counting and birding.

Please contact Marty St. Louis for additional details and information.

PO Box 68, Summer Lake, OR 97640

Cell phone: (541)-219-0879 or email: stlouismartin541@gmail.com

- **Don & Lowell Franks Nest Box Project**

Project Leader, Dan Ankrom, describes it as a seasonal opportunity to help check more than 200 nest boxes in the outer reaches of Eastern Central Oregon that need maintenance in the fall and in early spring. A good description of this unusual project, located in gorgeous Oregon scenery, can be found on our website [here](#). For more details, contact Dan at daankr498@gmail.com

- **Survey Birds with Deschutes Land Trust!**

Love to bird? Excited about birds, but don't know where to start? Looking to connect with the land in a new way? Become a Land Trust bird surveyor! Volunteer with Deschutes Land Trust to conduct bird surveys year-round at Land Trust protected lands. Surveyors help monitor local bird populations and participate in global efforts to track birds. Complete the [initial bird surveyor orientation steps online](#), then join the Land Trust for a site orientations this spring. [Learn more!](#)

Two Nest Platforms to Watch

- The ECBA supported [Golden Eagle Camera](#), streaming live footage of the nest at Wychus Creek Canyon, is focused on Petra and Rocky who have returned for their twelfth year to, hopefully, raise some young. This year there are two eggs. This is the only Golden Eagle cam in North America. One other is in Latvia! There is background information and a chance to donate to this project on the ECBA [website](#).
- A new site to watch is the [Elshoff Osprey Nest Camera](#) at Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. It is named in honor of long-time Central Oregon Birders and naturalists Cal and Alice Elshoff, According to the Friends of [MNWR recent newsletter](#), "this camera allows us a privileged view of wild birds and other wildlife going about their daily lives without disturbance." It also provides background of the project.

Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities

For any of the following volunteer opportunities email: ecba@ecbirds.org and put the project in the subject line

- Earth Day Saturday, April 25th. Two more people are needed for the 1:30-3:30 shift at Alpenglow Park
- Saturday, April 25th at Smith Rock State Park. Guided hike (shorter, upper rimrock loop) and table time in the afternoon.
- World Migratory Bird Day, May 9th at the High Desert Museum. Provide information from 9 am to 2:30 pm.
- Seasonal maintenance at **The Hummingbird Garden at Bend's Orchard Park**. The first date is April 17 and will continue on the third Friday once a month from 9-10am (except when it gets really hot in the summer, then it will be 8-9am). The next two dates will be May 15 and June 19, This is an ongoing project supported by both Pollinator Pathway Bend and ECBA. For a description of the project <https://ecbirds.org/projects/hummingbird-garden-at-bends-orchard-park/>

Osprey Watch Recap

We wanted to thank everyone who came to last month's Birders' Night Osprey Presentation by Think Wild and Pacific Power. At this time several pairs of Osprey have been sighted returning to the area.

“Osprey are amazing sentinel species that can tell about ecosystem health, including fisheries, climate change, and pollution, while also helping us understand local threats they face. Think Wild is leading local efforts of Osprey Watch, which is part of a global community science program. Community science is becoming increasingly important for gathering data across large spatial scales that wouldn’t otherwise be possible, and these efforts can help inform real management and conservation decisions.”

~Kylie Lanuza, Think Wild

If you would like to join this international research effort, go to the [Think Wild sign-up page](#).

New to birding? An offer from Gail...

Would you like to spend an hour or so with a seasoned (old) birder?

I have a biology/ecology background and although I am not an “expert” birder by any means, I enjoy sharing my enthusiasm for birding and experiencing the excitement of a beginning birder’s new insights and discoveries.

Email me if you would like to set up a meeting time and Bend location that works for both our schedules. And yes, you can bring a friend or family member.

Gail Sabbadini

ggsabba@gmail.com

Save the Date

Dean Hale Woodpecker Festival will be June 5, 6, and 7. Paul Bannick will be speaking and sharing his new book, “Woodpecker: A Year in the Life of North American Woodpeckers”. Here is an [article about his book from the New York Times](#).

ECBA Merchandise is Now Available

ECBA is again offering custom t-shirts and hats for sale. These would make great gifts for any time of the year! Designed by our long-time friend and talented artist, Don Sutherland, we are pleased to make them available online. You can order merchandise from a local small business, Our Personal Touch, and you can either pick up your order in the store or have it sent to your home. Ordering information is at the top of [the ECBA home web page](#)



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 the list servs: 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. This page has many great bird photos and links to interesting information.

Oregon Birding Discord is a great place to stay connected with birders statewide. You'll find channels for each region of the state for rare bird alerts, general chat, and more. Download Discord from your app store and join the Oregon Birding discord: <https://discord.gg/gdwFZeby>

If you are a Fred Meyer Rewards participant, consider [linking your account](#) to their Community Rewards program, specifically the East Cascades account and search for East Cascades Audubon Society. (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.



Golden Eagle by Amanda.

Good Birding