



## The CHATTER May 2026

### May 14 Birders' Night

**Birders' Night: Visions of Desert Life with Alan Contreras**

**May 14 @ 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm**

**Visions of Desert Life with Alan Contreras**

Long-time Oregon birder and writer Alan Contreras will present an unusual program of poems, stories and images related to birds, wildlife and the human experience of eastern Oregon. He will read from his own work and the work of other writers including Ursula K. Le Guin, Ada Hastings Hedges, Ellen Waterston, C.E.S. Wood and others. These readings will be accented with images by visual artists and photographers working in eastern Oregon and perhaps excerpts from music inspired by eastern Oregon.

Alan L. Contreras, a fourth-generation Oregonian, has published several books about the natural world as well as professional work in higher education, poetry and essays. His recent work includes *A History of Oregon Ornithology* (senior editor, OSU Press 2022), *Edge of Awe: Experiences of the Malheur-Steens Country* (editor, OSU Press 2019), and *Collected Poems of Ada Hastings Hedges* (ed. with Ulrich Hardt, OSU Press 2020). He is currently working on a book on the Oregon desert as a source of creative inspiration. He will have books for sale at the meeting located at Worthy Brewing. The program will start at 6pm on May 14, 2026.

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

### Earth Day a Great Success

A big thanks to all our Earth Day Volunteers at Alpenglow Park: Ken Meyer, Terri Hyde, Miriam Lipsitz., Jan Clark, Charlotte Mountain and Angela Otto.

Also thanks to Laura McCaskill at "Birds for Good" for donating 10% of her Earth Day Sales to ECBA.

<https://birdsforgood.com/>



Ken Meyer at ECBA Earth Day booth.  
Photo by Terri Hyde

## Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities

We have a couple nice opportunities to get involved with and give back to the local birding community.

### 1. Jewel Elementary School

A field trip will be held Friday on May 15th. This is the probable schedule.

9:15-9:45 Walk from Jewell to Alpenglow park

9:45-11:00 **Field Trip** (hour and 15 minutes)

11:00-11:15 Lunch (at climbing rock wall section of park)

11:15-11:45 Walk to return to Jewell

**2. World Migratory Bird Day Sat. May 9, 2026.** We need one more volunteer for “Birding for Breakfast” at the High Desert museum, 6:45 – 9:00. For more details about the event, see here: <https://highdesertmuseum.org/events/birding2026/?datetime=1516>

Email Wendy Andrick if you are interested in volunteering for either of these at: [ecba@ecbirds.org](mailto:ecba@ecbirds.org)

## More Volunteers

Here is a photo of Chuck Gates and Sierra Schneider volunteering at the recent Smith Rock Spring Thing - an annual volunteer event that takes place at Smith Rock State Park in central Oregon. It is organized by the Smith Rock Group, a non-profit organization that works to preserve and enhance the park's natural, cultural, and recreational resources. They were there as members of the East Cascades Bird Alliance. Photos by Wendy Andrick



## Woodpecker Festival

The Dean Hale Woodpecker Festival will be June 5, 6, and 7. There are still spaces available on some of the trips so check the [ECBA registration page](#) for information. 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](#). A new Woodpecker Festival tee shirt is now available on the merchandise page. [Check it out](#).

## Ethical Birding

"As we head into another exciting season outdoors, we encourage all members to read the referenced Audubon article and recommit to the birding code of ethics. Let's be mindful of where we walk so we're never trespassing, give nesting birds the space and quiet they need, avoid using playback, and always work to minimize our presence in sensitive habitats. Every small act of respect helps ensure that the birds we love can continue to thrive where they live." ~Wendy Andrick

Here is a link to [Audubon's guide](#).

## Registration for the Oregon Birding Association's Annual Meeting and Field Trips now open to OBA members

Just a reminder about this OBA event in Burns from May 22-25. Registration is still open, **but will close on Friday, May 8th.**

There are still great field trips with openings. Sign up soon to reserve your spot. You must be an OBA member, but the membership fees are not high and support a great organization. A full list of field trips is provided on the [OBA website](#). The agenda with locations and times of all social events has also been updated. Register [here](#).

## 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 11<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:dctracy03@gmail.com)

- **Crooked River Wetland Walks**

The 2026 Wetlands Walks schedule is now complete. 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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!](#)

## **Three Nest Cameras to Watch**

- The ECBA supported [Golden Eagle Camera](#), streaming live footage of the nest at Whychus Creek Canyon, is focused on Petra and Rocky who have returned for their twelfth year to, hopefully, raise some young. This year there were two eggs. Both hatched but only one chick survived. 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](#).

- There is an American Kestrel [nest box camera](#) to watch located in a rural area outside of Redmond. The nest box was built by ECBA member Dick Tipton and is maintained by the property owners.
- 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.

## 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