

Wallowa Valley — Leader: Ken Chamberlain January 9-10, 2016

The Oregon Birding Association Wallowa Valley field trip was last Saturday and Sunday, January 9 and 10. We were lead by Kyle Bratcher of the local ODFW office on Saturday, he was able to put us on some good birds. Thank you Kyle. A great group of participants enjoyed some fun winter birding and snowy mountain landscapes. 53 species were recorded.

We visited many areas and a wide range of habitats. These included; Jim Town Rd., Leap, School Flat, and Golf Course Rd areas, Wallowa Lake, Zumwalt Rd, Ferguson Ski Area/McCully Creek, Prairie Creek area East of Joseph, etc. At the time, state highways were dry and in good condition, most of the valley county roads were passable in 2wd vehicles. Some of the higher areas Leap Rd, Golf course Rd, School Flat Rd., Zumwalt rd, etc. while passable, felt better with 4wd.

Wallowa Valley winter specialties and notable birds:

As reported many GRAY PARTRIDGES in the Leap/Golf Course/School Flat Rds area, we counted at least 66 on Saturday pm. GRAY-CROWNED ROSY-FINCHES small groups were seen at feeders on Elk Mtn Rd. and Liberty Rd. also on the little open ground on Golf Course Rd., AMERICAN TREE-SPARROWS in road side open areas along Elk Mtn Rd also feeders on Getting and Elk Mtn Rds., BOHEMIAN WAXWINGS were on Jim Town Rd. just North of Parsnip Crk. Rd. these were found thanks to a tip by to Paul Sullivan. Raptors were well represented with every morph and age of ROUGH-LEGGED and RED-TAILED HAWKS, both EAGLE species, also PRAIRIE FALCONS, KESTRELS and MERLIN (what a great potential area for a Raptor Route).

We searched for Gyrfalcon, Snow Bunting, Pine Grosbeaks, WW Crossbills and Common Redpolls at known locations with no success. Seemingly, these are either not there or in low numbers and were missed. County listing note, HOODED MERGANSERS, a relatively “good” bird in the county, were at two sites, Pete’s Pond and in Rock Creek at HWY 82, and a WESTERN GREBE was on Wallowa Lake. All checklists were posted to eBird.

This was the first Oregon Birding Association field trip 2016. The next trip will be to Brownsmead Area in Clatsop County on Saturday March 12, we will be lead by local birder Mike Patterson, no introduction required. Keep the date open, details and registration information to be posted very soon. More trips around the state are planed and will be announced as details firm up, I’m hoping about 3 months in advance.

All the best birding
Ken Chamberlain
OBA Field Trips Coordinator

Brownsmead (Clatsop County) — Leader: Mike Patterson March 12, 2016

This field trip was lead by Mike Patterson. He shared his local knowledge of birds, ecology, and history of the Brownsmead area with 9 participants. We enjoyed good conditions considering the forecast; tolerable wind, and rain, getting a bit wetter and colder as the day progressed. A total of 67 species were recorded during our morning. As previously posted, Nagi Aboulenein has trip photos posted at: <https://goo.gl/photos/XSY3uNb5GqXjcNpaA>

We visited a variety of sites in the Brownsmead general area, these included: Big Creek Fish Hatchery; Bughole Unit, Brownsmead; Jackson/Pentilla Unit; Rudat Unit; Svenson Island Rd.; and Twilight Eagle Sanctuary—Overlook.

Highlights were:

Colombia Maritime Museum: MERLIN (flyby)

Big Creek Hatchery: AMERICAN DIPPER and HOODED MERGANSERS (eBird <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S28133545>)

Bughole Unit: 36 GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GEESE (eBird <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S28133558>)

Rudat Unit: 1 RUFOUS HUMMINGBIRD female (eBird <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S28133552>)

Jackson/Pentilla Unit: 2 EURASIAN WIDGEON, 2 CINNAMON TEAL, 3 WOOD DUCKS, 45 GREATER YELLOWLEGS, 220 MEW GULLS (eBird <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S28133555>)

Svenson Island Rd: 550 SNOW GEESE, 26 TUNDRA SWANS, 37 CANVASBACKS, 1 WESTERN SCRUB-JAY (eBird <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S28133537>)

Twilight Eagle Sanctuary—Overlook: 3 TUNDRA SWANS, 4 BALD EAGLES (appropriately), VIOLET GREEN and TREE SWALLOWS (eBird <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S28133535>)

Complete checklist and google map location in eBird checklists

Many thanks to Mike for leading a great trip!

All the best birding
Ken Chamberlain
OBA Field Trip Chair

Spotted Owl Field Trip — Leader: Janice Reid May 15, 2016

This trip was lead by Janice Reid a wildlife Biologist for the US Forest Service Pacific Northwest Research Station. Janice has studied Spotted Owls for many years in the area west of Roseburg in Douglas County. She generously shared her knowledge with 12 field trip participants. It was great opportunity to see an experienced and knowledgeable wildlife biologist interacting with a sensitive bird in a difficult landscape. We all left with a new appreciation of this owl and its status.

Janice took us to an area west of Roseburg, we will call it a "secure undisclosed location", miles past a locked gate. After a short "tail gate" discussion of Spotted Owl biology, study, status and appreciation we took a walk down an unmarked abandoned logging road. We walked to a site that was known to be occupied by single male Spotted Owl, not currently part of a nesting pair. After a bit of time, and for some, an additional steep, straight downhill, cross-county walk, the owl was observed. A bit later the owl moved to an area where the entire group was able to experience and enjoy extended close views. Many photos were taken.

A recent Cornell Lab of Ornithology - Living Bird magazine article included a detailed profile of Janice and the current status of the Northern Spotted Owl: <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/evidence-of-absence-northern-spotted-owls-are-still-vanishing-from-the-northwest/>

Ken Chamberlain
OBA Field Trip Chair



Spotted Owl photo above by Ken Chamberlain.



Photo of Spotted Owl above by Nagi Aboulenein.

Great Gray Owl Trip — Leader: Laura Navarrete June 4, 2016

This field trip was led by Laura Navarrete, wildlife Biologist for the La Grande District of the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest. Laura was joined by very active and knowledgeable local birders Michael and Susan Daugherty of La Grande. Laura manages and monitors the owls in this area; She pretty much knows every individual. We were in good hands.

Our group of 12 persons visited the Spring Creek area west of La Grande. Laura gave us a short orientation to the area and background on the Great Gray Owls that breed there. She also noted some of the wildlife and people management issues in the area. We visited a nesting site where three juveniles had fledged in recent weeks. The juveniles were getting fairly mobile and had been moving away from the nest. There was some concern that they might not be relocated.

After a short search we found a juvenile GREAT GRAY OWL, after a bit of time another juvenile, then an adult female, followed by yet another Juvenile; One adult and 3 juveniles total. They were preening and roosting in a 200 or 300 foot diameter area with the juveniles giving occasional begging calls. (A recording of similar calls from Cornell <http://macaulaylibrary.org/audio/62947/play> , a good sound to know when looking for fledglings.)

We spent a good amount of time enjoying the birds on a beautiful spring morning. Many photos and videos were taken. Nagi Aboulenein has posted some photos to flickr <https://flic.kr/s/aHskB8HD2M> and David Carmack made a beautiful video <https://youtu.be/U7XkINn6gdc> (David has previously posted this to OBOL, but it's worth reposting).

Later in the morning we walked and birded the general area around the nest. Birds of note LEWIS'S WOODPECKER & PYGMY NUTHATCH; a WILLIAMSON'S SAPSUCKER & CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD was seen by some. eBird checklist:
<http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S30076772>

Later in the morning we visited Red Bridge State Park on the Grande Ronde River. The highlight there was at least four GRAY CATBIRDS. Even in the heat of the day they were very active in song and movement. There easily could have been a few more in addition. ebird checklist:
<http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S30077120>

Thanks to Laura, Michael and Susan for making this a great trip.

More trips to come!

Ken Chamberlain
OBA Field Trips Coordinator

Photo below by Ken Chamberlain:



Bonney Butte — Leader: Ken Chamberlain October 8, 2016

Our OBA Bonney Butte field trip was Saturday October 8. Many thanks to [Hawkwatch International](#) and their field observers for hosting our group.

We were lucky to slip in between storms with fair weather and a very good sized movement of birds. There was a moderately strong west wind that seemed to keep to birds a bit distant but the quantities were outstanding. There were a lot of amazing distant spotting and identifications by the Hawkwatch crew and other observers. The banding crew brought several Merlins, a Cooper's Hawk, and a male Northern Harrier, and several Sharp-shinned Hawks to the observation area while we were there. We arrived about 10am and stayed for five hours. During that time passage was about:

1 Turkey Vulture
8 Golden Eagles
142 Sharp-shinned Hawks, they just kept coming!
1 Northern Harrier (uncommon in Hood River Co.)
31 Cooper's Hawks
11 Bald Eagles
21 Red-tailed Hawks
12 Merlins
3 Peregrine Falcons

Quantities are from the Hawkwatch International log sheets. The day totals are posted at: http://www.hawkcount.org/day_summary.php?rsite=601&rmonth=10&rday=8&ryear=2016.

The site remains open until Oct. 31 and is well worth a visit. The last 4 miles of access road was in OK condition for slow passage in vehicles with Subaru Forester or better clearance.

My photos are at <https://flic.kr/s/aHskJnLufn>. Nagi Aboulenein also took photos and may post soon.

Good Birding
Ken Chamberlain
OBA Field Trip Chair

Here's a short video of the OBA field trip to Bonney Butte that took place last Saturday. Ken has already posted statistics on the bird counts.

https://youtu.be/gsn_cyY2TTg