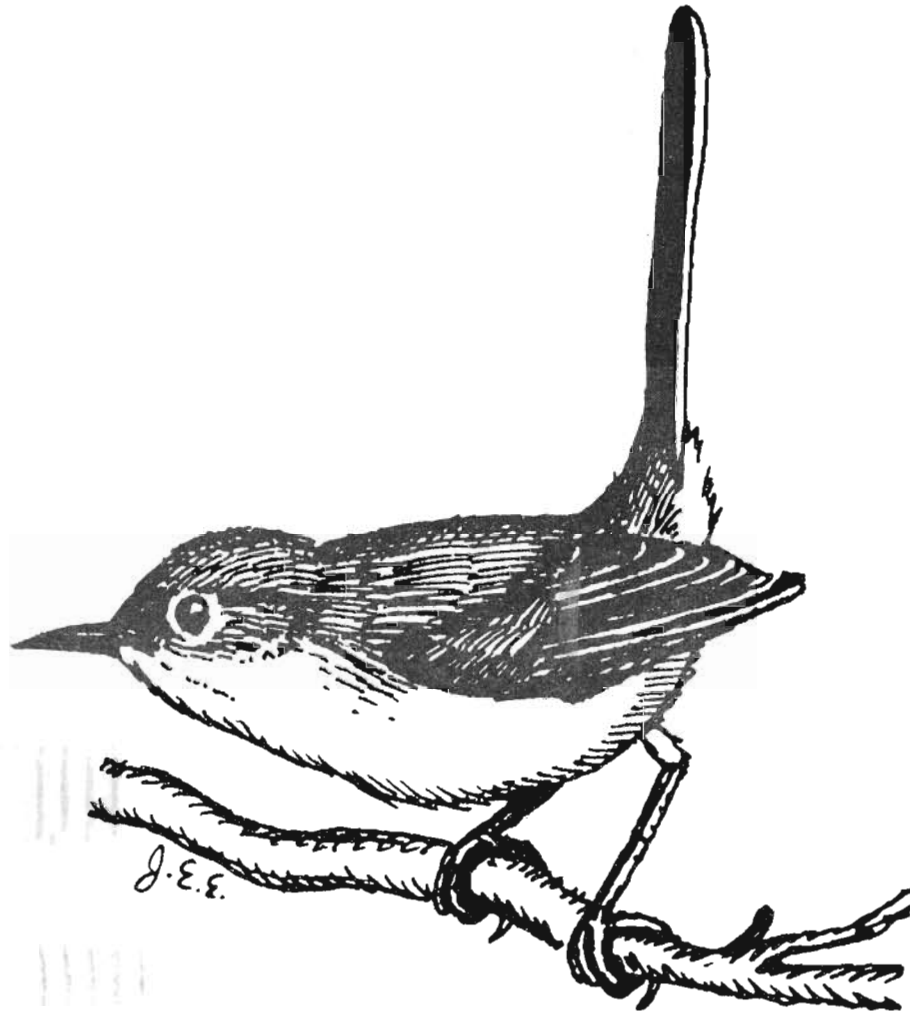


Oregon Birds

Vol. 5 No. 2 - 1979



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Published for and distributed to the members of
the Southern Willamette Ornithological Club (SWOC),
P. O. Box 3082, Eugene, Oregon 97403.

Annual Membership Fees: Regular - \$6.00/
Sustaining - \$10.00.

Oregon Birds is printed six times annually at
the University of Oregon Press. Articles appearing
in Oregon Birds may be reprinted with permission of
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Cover illustration, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher,
and other illustrations by Joe Evanich.

Preliminary Oregon Blue List - 1979

Tom Lund

The purpose of this list is to draw attention to species and subspecies of breeding birds in the state whose future could be in jeopardy. Birds which are considered eligible are those falling within these four categories: * (1) species that may or may not be declining now but may be in trouble in the foreseeable future; (2) those forms that occur in such small numbers that their status should be monitored; (3) those forms for which there is no scientific data to determine whether or not they are declining, but there is definite concern for the species; and (4) those species which give definite evidence of noncyclical declines in the majority of their ranges.

Many changes have taken place in the avifauna of Oregon since the coming of European civilization, and species which were once abundant in some areas are now rare or entirely lacking in those regions. However, while some species of birds are absent or declining in certain areas of the state, in most other regions of Oregon where they occur such species are still thriving. If all species which have declined in regional areas but are still in good numbers in the majority of their range in the state were included, the list would have perhaps three-quarters of the birds known to breed in Oregon. In order to make a "Blue List" workable on the state level, it seems necessary to draw the line between such species which have suffered only locally and those which are declining throughout the majority of their range. To be "Blue Listed" a species must receive a majority opinion from observers throughout its range. If all species were listed for which there was concern from any one sector of the state, it would make an absurdity of the project.

A list of rare and endangered species in Oregon has been published (David Marshall, Endangered Plants and Animals of Oregon, Part III: Birds. Agricultural Experimental Station, Oregon State University, 1969; available free upon request from the Fisheries and Wildlife Dept., School of Agriculture, OSU, Corvallis); but this publication is now ten years old and significant amounts of data have accumulated since this list came out. However, most of the obvious candidates for an Oregon Blue List are cited by Marshall and the following list reproduces Marshall's entirely with a few additions.

A number of species and subspecies are recommended for deletion: (1) forms which have proved to be more abundant and widespread than formerly believed; (2) forms for which no evidence is available indicating there was ever a naturally occurring breeding population; (3) forms which do not appear to have ever been permanently established in the state; (4) subspecies whose populations merge within the state into more widespread and abundant subspecies; and (5) species or subspecies which are unquestionably not breeding species in Oregon.

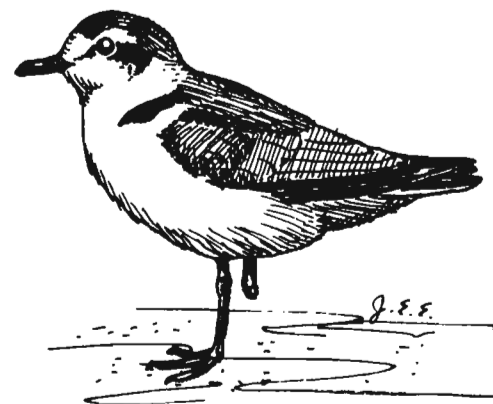
The validity of this list and the recommended changes is entirely dependent upon the views and experience of the participants. Without input from the state's observers, such a list will be sorely deficient in accurate information. All persons interested in birds and experienced with the birdlife of Oregon are asked to participate to make this list as comprehensive as possible.

INSTRUCTIONS: A copy of this form is provided to be returned to the Editor of OREGON BIRDS; an additional copy is provided for you to keep. If you agree with the species being listed, leave the name untouched. If you wish

to see the species (or subspecies) deleted, circle the species name. Written comments are especially desired, particularly on dissenting opinions. ADDITIONS: If there are species you believe should be added to the list, indicate these; please provide a written explanation. NO OPINION: If you have no opinion as to the status of a species, draw a line through the name.

- Tom Lund
Blue List Compiler
Oregon Birds
P. O. Box 3082
Eugene, OR 97403

*These definitions taken almost verbatim from American Birds, May 1978: 406.



--Snowy Plover--

Species recommended for Blue Listing:

1. Listed by Marshall

Red-necked Grebe	Upland Sandpiper
Horned Grebe	Black-necked Stilt
Fork-tailed Petrel	Franklin's Gull
White Pelican	Caspian Tern
Great Egret	Rhinoceros Auklet
Snowy Egret	Yellow-billed Cuckoo
Least Bittern	Flammulated Owl
White-faced Ibis	Spotted Owl
Ring-necked Duck	Great Gray Owl
Lesser Scaup	Dusky Poor-will (subspecies)
Bufflehead	Northern Three-toed Woodpecker
Harlequin Duck	Black Phoebe
Swainson's Hawk	Purple Martin
Ferruginous Hawk	Nicasio Scrub Jay (subspecies)
Bald Eagle	Warner Valley Titmouse (subspecies)
Prairie Falcon	Mockingbird
American Peregrine Falcon	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
Western Pigeon Hawk	Water Pipit
Spruce Grouse	American Redstart
Sharp-tailed Grouse	Bobolink
Greater Sandhill Crane	Tricolored Blackbird
Yellow Rail	Black Rosy Finch
Snowy Plover	Grasshopper Sparrow

2. Not listed by Marshall

Lewis' Woodpecker	Peale's Peregrine Falcon
Burrowing Owl	Northern Waterthrush

Species listed by Marshall in 1969 but now recommended for deletion:

Brown Pelican (not breeding)	Allen's Hummingbird
Trumpeter Swan (introduced)	Eastern Phoebe
Aleutian Canada Goose (subspecies)	Nevada Scrub Jay (subspecies)
Tule White-fronted Goose (subspecies)	Warner Valley Bewick's Wren (subspecies)
Barrow's Goldeneye	Catbird
Osprey	Veery
Sierra Blue Grouse (subspecies)	Bohemian Waxwing
Alaskan Short-billed Dowitcher (subsp.)	Hutton's Vireo
Marbled Murrelet	Pine Grosbeak
California Screech Owl (subspecies)	Wallowa Gray-crowned Rosy Finch (subsp.)
California Pygmy Owl (subspecies)	Black-throated Sparrow

Species recommended by participant for inclusion in the Oregon Blue List:

Occurrence and Identification of The Stilt Sandpiper in Oregon

David M. Fix

One of the most poorly known shorebirds in Oregon is the Stilt Sandpiper, Micropalama himantopus. Its rather inconspicuous habits and ambiguous appearance in fall, combined with unfamiliarity with the species on the part of Oregon observers, make this a difficult bird to know.

The history of this sandpiper as an Oregon species is obscure. Published accounts indicate that it has always been a fairly rare bird everywhere in the Pacific Northwest. The earliest report for Oregon that I have been able to find was of an unstated number of birds seen in early May 1962 at Klamath Marsh by Dick Evans (AFN 16:437). For about the next eight years, only one or two Stilt Sandpipers were seen, but since 1970 increased coverage has resulted in the discovery of at least thirteen individuals at six different localities. With the exception of the Klamath Marsh record, all reliable reports of Stilt Sandpipers have been fall migrants. Extreme dates of occurrence are 18 July to 9 October inclusive; a preponderance of records falling in the period mid-August to early September is noteworthy and reflects to some degree a high level of observer coverage of good shorebird concentration spots during this time. Many Stilt Sandpipers have been encountered with other migrant shorebirds on coastal tideflats, while others have appeared in the interior Western Oregon valleys and at Baker. Considering that Stilt Sandpipers regularly congregate in significant numbers in the Salton Sink of southeast California, and probably pass through the Great Basin en route, it is a bit surprising that there are apparently no records of this species anywhere in heavily-birded southeastern Oregon. It is interesting to note that 1977 brought a rash of reports from several widely scattered

locations in western Oregon. This impressive showing was but a small representation of what was one of the most outstanding seasons in recent years for Stilt Sandpipers on the Pacific Slope. That fall was characterized by weather systems conducive to southwesterly drift of central-Nearctic-breeding shorebirds, of which this is a typical species. The listing which follows should not necessarily be construed as an absolutely complete record of this species' occurrence in Oregon, as extraneous circumstances have limited my access to the more obscure and older publications. It is, however, essentially quite complete.

The identification of Stilt Sandpipers in Oregon appears to pose special problems, as judged by the disturbing number of incorrectly-identified or confused occurrences of this species in the state. This bird is readily identifiable by an observer who has had a reasonable amount of experience with it. Unfortunately, most Oregon birders enjoy but a relatively short period each year in which to gain some measure of familiarity with many species of shorebirds. Thus the detection and subsequent identification of an unusual bird in a flock is commonly met with false confidence, or none at all.

Adult Stilt Sandpipers in alternate plumage are stunning birds, and are virtually impossible to mistake for anything else. Regrettably, Stilt Sandpipers in this dress are seldom encountered in Oregon. Almost all Stilts occurring in the state are in some form of the very nondescript basic plumage. Fall adults and birds-of-the-year are, for practical purposes, much alike. They may easily be unwittingly overlooked among the other medium-sized, gray-and-whitish fall sandpipers with which they are wont to mingle. This is where the possibility of error is greatest. Stilt Sandpipers in Oregon have been variously misidentified as dowitchers, yellowlegs, even such basically dissimilar birds as Sharp-tailed

<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>NO.</u>	<u>OBSERVERS</u>	<u>REFERENCE</u>
Klamath Marsh, Klamath Co.	May 1962	?	D. Evans	<u>AFN 16:437</u>
Tillamook Bay, Tillamook Co.	30 Aug 68	1	J. Crowell et al.	<u>AFN 23:97</u>
Sauvie Island, Multnomah Co.	18 Jul 70	1	J. Gilligan et al.	<u>AFN 24:709</u>
Baker, Baker Co.	24 Aug 74	1	A. Ward	<u>AB 29:91</u>
Yaquina Bay, Lincoln Co.	23 Aug-2 Sep 74	1	G. Burreson et al.	<u>AB 29:108</u>
■ S.J.C.R., Clatsop Co.	30 Aug-1 Sep 74	1	H. Nehls, T. Lund	<u>AB 29:108</u>
Yaquina Bay, Lincoln Co.	7 Sep 76	1	D. Faxon	<u>AB 31:214</u>
Yaquina Bay, Lincoln Co.	9 Oct 76	2	J. Armstrong	<u>AB 31:214</u>
Yaquina Bay, Lincoln Co.	28 Jul 77	1	D. Fix et al.	<u>AB 31:1180</u>
Agate Reservoir, Jackson Co.	19 Aug 77	2	S. Summers et al.	<u>OB 1(2):41</u>
Fern Ridge Reservoir, Lane Co.	1 Sep 77	2	A. Contreras et al.	<u>OB 1(2):41</u>
Sauvie Island, Multnomah Co.	2 Sep-3 Sep 77	2	J. Gilligan et al	<u>OB 1(2):41</u>

and Curlew Sandpipers! The popular field guides fail to illustrate this species accurately enough to preclude regular confusion. This is, as has been noted by a variety of birders, largely due to a failure to depict hatch-year plumages, which seem to crop up more frequently on the Pacific Coast than adults. Incidentally, this holds true for other species of uncommon shorebirds, and should be realized by birders on the watch for unusual waders.

Fall Stilt Sandpipers are often discovered feeding with loose concentrations of other shorebirds, especially dowitchers. Due perhaps to their inherent drabness, they seem to have an annoying trick of remaining undetected until a thorough scrutiny of each group of sandpipers is made. Even then, they may cause a delayed double-take on the part of the observer. Stilts may even adapt their versatile foraging strategy to "complement" that of the species they are associating with (Tom Lund, Alan Contreras, pers. comm.; pers. obs.), adding to the likelihood of their being missed. When a suspicious individual is spotted, close observation will reveal a number of distinctive characteristics that set the Stilt apart from all other shorebirds. The basic-plumage Stilt Sandpiper is superficially rather close in general appearance to a slight-bodied, slim-billed dowitcher. It differs from both species of dowitchers, and other sandpipers, in possessing the following marks. It is a remarkably long-legged sandpiper in relation to its body size. This point alone should serve to distinguish a Stilt from any dowitcher and all of the smaller sandpipers. The thin, long legs, which impart to the bird a peculiarly delicate look, may or may not be greenish. Apparently the leg color may be variable. The color of the legs is not the most crucial mark in identifying a Stilt Sandpiper, but should in any case be noted as something other than reddish or bright yellow. The bill of a suspect Stilt is a key feature,

and must be carefully studied. It is always very slightly drooped along the distal one-third, or so, of its extent. Though sometimes deceptively subtle, this is one of the most important and unique field points of the species.

The flight pattern should also be seen to lend support to a positive identification. This is similar to the flight pattern of Wilson's Phalarope, being unrelievedly dark-winged and dark-backed (note dark lower back), with whitish rump and squarish white tail. The head pattern of fall birds is not terribly distinctive, although a dull orange-ish loreal spot may be present. Resemblance to fall dowitchers is again suggested by the fairly prominent whitish supercilliary and contrasting darkish eyeline. Any observation of a Stilt Sandpiper in Oregon should be well-documented, with the important field marks fully described. It is hoped that this review of the occurrence and identification of Stilt Sandpiper in Oregon may assist birders in locating and correctly identifying this interesting and attractive sandpiper when it makes an appearance in the state.

- David M. Fix

REFERENCES:

Jewett, Stanley G., et al., Birds of Washington State. University of Washington Press, Seattle, 1953.

Larrison, Earl J. and Sonnenberg, Klaus G., Washington Birds, Their Location and Identification. Seattle Audubon Society, Seattle, 1968.

Peterson, Roger T., A Field Guide to Western Birds. Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1961.

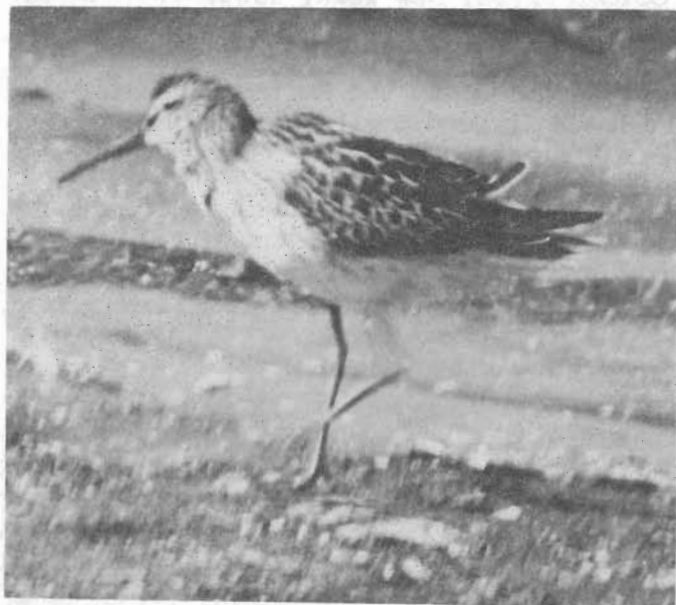
Robbins, Chandler S., et al., Birds of North America. Golden Press, New York, 1966.

Reference was also made to the Northern Pacific Coast, Mountain West, and Northern Rocky Mountain-Intermountain Regional Reports of Audubon Field Notes/American Birds.

Captions to Stilt Sandpiper photographs on pages 12 and 13.

- ① Stilt Sandpiper, Yaquina Bay, Oregon, 1 Sep 1974. Notice this bird's slender, very slightly drooped bill and generally attenuated proportions. Note also darkish spot before eye and contrasting pale supercilliary. Photo - Gene Burreson.
- ② Stilt Sandpiper, Yaquina Bay. In this view of the same individual, note the shorter bill and less massive body of the Stilt in comparison to the dowitcher, sp. on right. Calidris sp. at far left. Photo - Gene Burreson.
- ③ Stilt Sandpipers, Sauvie Island, Oregon, 2 Sep 1977. Can you correctly identify these birds? They gave Portland-area birdwatchers headaches. Photograph shows the decurvature of the bills of both birds to be just barely perceptible. Immatures of this species will show a suffusion of darker color on the upper breast. The Stilt Sandpiper in the background shows what are obviously long legs; leg joint is at water surface level. Photo - Jeff Gilligan.

STILT SANDPIPERS



①



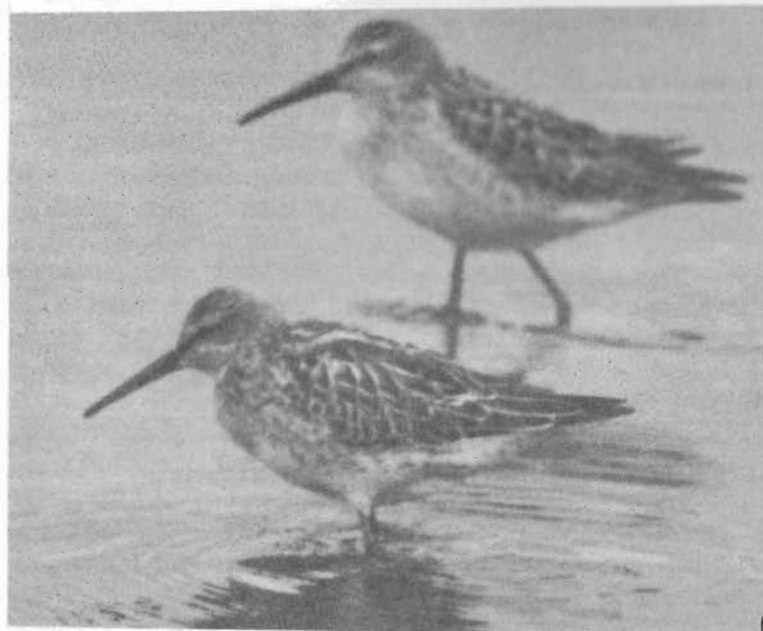
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Captions and photograph credits on page 11.

STILT SANDPIPERS



②



③

Captions and photograph credits on page 11.

Oregon Field Notes Summary: January 1 - March 31, 1979

Clarice Watson

This first attempt to summarize field notes from around the state is based on Audubon Societies' publications, the Grande Ronde Bird Club Newsletter, and a copy of a report sent to the compilers of the AMERICAN BIRDS regional report* covering the period from January to April 1979. It is our hope that in the near future we can receive and include information from other areas of the state too. The state has been divided into convenient regions for this summary. The results of the Christmas counts have appeared in another issue of OREGON BIRDS and they will not be included except to report on unusual or rare species which remained into 1979. Neither will the raptor survey report from the Grande Ronde Bird Club be covered again.

January was an unusually bitter month for Oregonians and the birds with snow and icy conditions over much of the state. Finding food and shelter became a life and death matter for the birds and they moved, if possible, into areas which provided these. February brought welcome rains but not very exciting birding. However, warm days in March saw the start of spring migration and hazardous weather conditions were over.

NORTHEASTERN OREGON

In the northeast section of Oregon, birds of prey were quite noticeable in Jan. and Feb. Observations included two Goshawks at High Valley, ten Barn Owls in one olive tree (!) on the Irrigon Wildlife Area, Umatilla Co., six unfortunate Barn Owls killed along I-80 on Jan. 25, and Prairie Falcons and Rough-legged Hawks in good numbers. Reports of nesting raptors include a Great Horned Owl incubating one egg on Jan. 31, a Red-tailed Hawk building a nest on Mar. 11 at

La Grande, Golden Eagle eggs ready to hatch late in Apr. in Union Co., and Burrowing Owls back on nesting sites in the Grande Ronde Valley by Mar. 18.

Bohemian Waxwings began increasing in numbers in La Grande in Feb. and during the cold weather large flocks of Horned Larks were in Morrow and Gilliam counties. Snow Buntings and Gray-crowned Rosy Finches could also be found in this part of the state. On Feb. 26 Tad and Kathy Finnell were treated to Pine Grosbeaks singing at the summit of Blue Mountain Pass.

Spring migration got underway as Sandhill Cranes at Ladd Marsh Mar. 9, Great Blue Herons returned to a rookery on Catherine Creek Mar. 11, Long-billed Curlews were observed Mar. 15 at Umatilla Meadows, and Osprey appeared during the week of Apr. 15. Sage Thrashers were found Mar. 14, Tree Swallows on Mar. 11, Violet-green Swallows on Apr. 7, Cliff Swallows on Apr. 17, and Yellow-headed Blackbirds on Apr. 6.

SOUTHEASTERN OREGON

At Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, few birds remained during the winter, but a report of 41 Trumpeter Swans (including 10 immatures) at the headquarters display pond on Jan. 4 was encouraging. By mid-Jan. Golden Eagles were on territory and Great Horned Owls were incubating after mid-Feb. American Robins wintered in good numbers in the nearby mountains and Western and Mountain Bluebirds began appearing in late Jan. Twenty-five Cedar Waxwings, considered occasional here in the winter, were seen Feb. 1.

Pintails and Green-winged Teal were the first waterfowl spring migrants on Feb. 6 and by the end of Feb. Whistling Swans, White-fronted Geese, Snow Geese, Common Merganser, Redheads and Canvasbacks had arrived. Other migrants and

their arrival dates are the Greater Sandhill Cranes Feb. 22, Lesser Sandhill Cranes Mar. 1, American Coot Feb. 15, Killdeer Feb. 1, Mourning Dove Feb. 2 (earliest arrival date for the refuge), Say's Phoebe Mar. 4, and Western Meadowlarks Feb. 22.

SOUTHERN CENTRAL OREGON

From the Klamath Falls area, the Bewick's Swan seen by Steve Summers with some 25,000 Whistling Swans on Feb. 25 was the second sighting of this Eurasian swan in this basin in the last few years. Unfortunately other Oregon birders were unable to locate it after Steve's sighting. By Mar. 19 American Avocets, Black-necked Stilts and White Pelicans were found on the Klamath NWR, indicating that spring migration of these birds was starting. Tri-colored Blackbirds were observed at several locations just north of the California and Oregon border in the Klamath area in early Mar. (Tad Finnell, et al.) and the location of an Eastern Fox Sparrow at Fort Rock and Sage Sparrows at Cabin Lake April 8 (Tad Finnell, et al.) are noteworthy.

NORTHERN CENTRAL OREGON

Two very unusual reports from the Bend area--a Red-bellied Woodpecker (an Eastern bird) was watched by Shirly Geller on her patio "getting water from the melting ice during our very cold mid-Jan.", and Kay Kirby reportedly saw two Mexican Jays (birds of the SE Ariz., N.M. and Tex. southern mountains) Mar. 3 in the Tumalo State Park area. We hope the Oregon Records Committee will receive full detailed reports on these.

In Jan. Horned Larks and Mountain Bluebirds were abundant in the Madras area, a European Wigeon was at Pioneer Park in Bend, a "white-headed" American Robin was found among large flocks of "normal" robins, and a flock of

Red Crossbills and another of Pine Grosbeaks were seen in the Bend area. In Feb. two White-fronted Geese appeared in Drake Park in Bend, two large flocks of Western Meadowlarks were found, and a Peregrine Falcon was seen on Mill Creek.

Spring migration was noted as birders saw White Pelicans overhead Mar. 14, Turkey Vultures Mar. 24, Osprey at Ochoco Lake Apr. 2, eight Whimbrel at the Sun River airstrip Mar. 20 (a first according to naturalist Jay Bowerman), an early Common Nighthawk during the month, a Rufous Hummingbird in Bend Apr. 3, a Western Tanager at Sisters Mar. 23 (Dan Gleason) and a Say's Phoebe back at a nesting site Mar. 6. Also of interest are a White-headed Woodpecker found at Thorn Springs Mar. 24 and a Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker at Cold Springs Campground Apr. 8, Deschutes Co., (Mark Egger).

WESTERN OREGON

During the winter months it is not unusual for birds uncommon or rare to Oregon to settle in an area and stay for weeks or even longer. Some are located in late fall or early winter and our Christmas Bird Counts often turn up others--all providing "winter sport" for birders trying to relocate them. This year was no exception. Birds which fall into this category and were still around in 1979 were the Emperor Goose at the Nehalem sewage ponds and nearby meadows, the semi-wild Tufted Duck at the Pittock Sanctuary in Portland, a Red-shouldered Hawk near the Eugene airport, a "Harlan's" Red-tailed Hawk on Sauvie's Island, a Hooded Oriole at a Eugene feeder, and White-throated and Harris' Sparrows at feeders in Roseburg and Forest Grove.

Some uncommon birds appear for shorter times and may be seen by only one or a few lucky birders. The following were such sight records: an Emperor Goose on Mar. 5 at Baskett Slough NWR (John

Crowell), an American Avocet at Seaside Feb. 25 (Ed Seelye), an extremely misplaced Rivoli's Hummingbird (normally found only in the mountains of SE Ariz., N.M. and Tex.) reported at a Coos Bay feeder Jan. 9 (fide E. G. White-Swift), a Sage Thrasher at Bayocean parking lot on Tillamook Bay in Mar. (Phil Mattocks), Cassin's Finches at feeders in Corvallis (Fred Ramsey) and Eugene (Martha Schmitt) in Apr., and a Snow Bunting and Lapland Longspur with Horned Larks near the Eugene airport Feb. 4 (David Fix and Tom Lund). The Records Committee has not seen details of the Rivoli's Hummingbird record.

Other sightings of interest along the coast are a Cattle Egret at Coos Bay Apr. 5 (E. G. White-Swift), European Wigeon at Florence (Tad Finnell), Nehalem and Tillamook (Steve Gordon) in Feb., three Oldsquaw in Yaquina Bay during Feb., unusually large number of Black Scoters, two White-tailed Kites east of Alsea Feb. 25-27 (Norm Barrett), a Peregrine Falcon at Seal Rock in mid-Mar. (Bob Lawrence, fide Robert Olson), a small flock of Snowy Plover frequenting the beaches near Charleston (E. G. White-Swift), a Long-billed Curlew at Yaquina Bay Apr. 21 (Fred Ramsey, et al.), twelve Marbled Godwit at Newport Feb. 26, a late Rock Sandpiper near Depoe Bay Apr. 24 (Greg Gillson), Glaucous Gulls at Seal Rock (Chris Marsh) and Newport (Robert Olson) in Feb., a Black-legged Kittiwake on South Beach at Newport Mar. 4 (Tad and Kathy Finnell), a Snowy Owl at Clatsop Spit Feb. 10 (Jim Carlson), and a Black and White Warbler at the Sunset Bay Camp-ground south of Charleston Apr. 7 (E. G. White-Swift), Tad Finnell and Dan Heyerly).

In the Willamette Valley these observations are worth noting: European Wigeon at Eugene (Jim Carlson) and Halsey (Barbara Combs) in Feb., a White-tailed Kite near Sunset High School west of Portland Feb. 19 and another near Brownsville Mar. 5 (the Fern Ridge area near Eugene had a

concentration of about 20 early in the year), a Peregrine Falcon in downtown Eugene from Jan. to Apr. (S. Gordon, J. Carlson, A. Contreras, and D. Fix), a Long-billed Dowitcher with Common Snipe at Forest Grove on Jan. 28, a Glaucous Gull at Eugene in Feb. (S. Gordon, et al.), an early Common Nighthawk in Eugene Apr. 16 (Don Watson), a Black-billed Magpie and a Western Kingbird at High Prairie in Oakridge Mar. 18 (June McAtee and Elizabeth Sanders), a Palm Warbler in Corvallis Apr. 12-15 (Margaret Rostker, et al.), three Lawrence's Goldfinches at a Portland feeder in Apr., three Bobolinks with blackbirds along I-5 between Harrisburg and Coburg (Howard Taylor), and a Vesper Sparrow at a feeder in Portland during Feb. and Mar. (Jim Lyons).

Casualties of the winter included scores of waterfowl on Sauvie's Island that did not survive the Jan. storms but provided food for wintering Bald Eagles, an immature Turkey Vulture which failed to winter-over successfully in the Roseburg area despite efforts to provide it with carrion, and about 300 birds, mostly Common Murres and Cormorants, contaminated in varying degrees from an oil slick Feb. 20 off the Lincoln County coast.

This summary is by no means exhaustive, but hopefully the most interesting sightings have been gleaned from the many field notes. Some of these sightings may be part of spring migration when birds sometimes stray from the normal migration routes and we expect many more interesting reports from the field notes for April and May.

- Clarice Watson
1285 East 20th Ave.
Eugene, OR 97403

* The Audubon Warbler (Portland Audubon Society), The Chat (Corvallis Audubon Society), The Eagle Eye (Central Oregon Audubon Society), Oregon

Grape Leaf (Salem Audubon Society), The Quail (Lane County Audubon Society), The Rav-on (Grande Ronde Bird Club), and the Field Report from Southeast Oregon for Winter 1977-78 by Steve Thompson of Malheur National Wildlife Refuge.

Brief Notes

Douglas Lorain

While on a family trip to eastern Oregon, I had the opportunity to do a good deal of birding and made at least one interesting observation. We were in a colorful area known as Leslie Gulch, about 30 miles north of Jordon Valley, in Malheur County. Large red and yellowish rock outcroppings predominate the landscape of the region. There were a small colony of approximately 20 White-throated Swifts flying about a large, rugged pillar. I had many good looks at these sleek birds for almost 20 minutes and watched as they continued to fly in and out of small niches in the rocks, about 50 feet above the ground, seemingly tending to their nests. I have no knowledge of this species breeding in the Owyhee country before and am relaying this observation to you. All observations were made on May 28, 1978, on a warm, sunny day, and regrettably, no telephoto camera was available.

- Douglas Lorain
6586 Waconda Rd. N.E.
Salem, OR 97305

Birding "Par"

Steve Gordon

Have you ever tallied up the number of species you have observed in a day and been amazed that the total was 75 or 95 . . . or at least more than you imagined? Have you ever wondered just how many species were possible within a certain geographic area such as a refuge or county? Have you ever wondered if you could find 100 species in one day or where to go to realize such a goal? This article will show you a method for answering some of those questions.

James A. Tucker in The Texas Birding Marathon presented a method for birders to use when attempting to calculate the number of expected species for a "Big Day" within a given birding area. The method is based upon probabilities and the term used by Mr. Tucker to describe the concept is "par".

In order to illustrate this concept, par has been calculated for the Finley, Klamath Basin and Malheur National Wildlife Refuges for each of the four seasons. The relative abundance (abundant, common, uncommon, etc.) used on the checklists determines the information given in the "number possible" column. For example, in the spring at the Finley Refuge, a total of 186 species are listed with 13 abundant, 48 common, 62 uncommon, 21 occasional, 37 rare and 5 accidental.

Since it is not likely that every species will be found on any given day, assumptions based on probabilities are made for each of the relative abundance categories. It is assumed that species listed as abundant (a) have a 100% chance of being seen; common (c) have a 90% chance; uncommon (u) have a 60% chance; occasional (o) have a 20% chance; rare (r) have a 5% chance; and accidental (A) have a 0% chance of being seen. These probability figures are somewhat

Relative Abundance	SPRING		SUMMER		FALL		WINTER	
	Number Possible	"Par" Number Expected	Number Possible	"Par" Number Expected	Number Possible	"Par" Number Expected	Number Possible	"Par" Number Expected
<u>FINLEY N.W.R.</u>								
a	13	13	6	6	9	9	10	10
c	48	43	43	39	39	35	36	32
u	62	37	47	30	53	32	36	22
n	21	4	26	5	35	7	22	4
o	37	2	33	2	26	1	30	2
r	5	0	1	0	6	0	5	0
A	186	99	156	82	168	84	139	68
Total								
<u>MALHEUR N.W.R.</u>								
a	35	35	37	37	43	43	5	5
c	52	47	37	33	47	42	14	13
u	48	29	46	28	50	30	24	14
n	34	7	35	7	34	7	40	8
o	40	2	25	1	41	2	42	2
r	209	120	180	106	215	124	125	42
Total								
<u>KLAMATH BASIN N.W.R.</u>								
a	14	14	16	16	21	21	2	2
c	61	55	58	52	52	47	34	31
u	67	40	63	38	65	39	33	20
n	62	12	58	12	62	12	46	9
o	21	1	17	1	24	1	28	1
r	225	122	212	119	224	120	143	63
Total								

flexible and will certainly vary depending upon the experience and talents of the individual birder. You can alter the probabilities to suit your own situation.

This system can be used with any checklist which provides relative abundance information. I have used it when planning trips to exotic birding spots to provide estimates of how many new life list birds might be expected. The system can also be used when planning a "Big Day". No matter how the system is used, it can be educational and fun.



OREGON BIRDS

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A Publication on Oregon Birds By the
Southern Willamette Ornithological Club

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