EVENTS

31 Oregon Birding Association Annual Meeting
   by the OBA Board of Directors

FIELD NOTES

1 Oregon Field Notes Overview
   by Diana Byrne

2 North Coast
   by Wink Gross

5 South Coast
   by Tim Rodenkirch, Jesse Burgher, Tom Mickel

12 Portland Area
   by Brodie Cass Talbott

19 Willamette Valley
   by Pamela Johnston, Tom Mickel

24 Rogue-Umpqua
   by Frank Lospalluto, Jesse Burgher

26 Mid-Columbia
   by Nolan Clements

28 Central Oregon
   by Chuck Gates

32 South-Central
   by Kevin Spencer

40 Northeast Oregon
   by Nolan Clements, Tom Winters

Southwest Oregon
   not covered in 2019

BIRDING

56 2019 Oregon Listing Results
   by Paul T. Sullivan

45 A Large Year: Adventures of an Avian Addict
   in 2019
   by Nolan Clements

STATUS AND DISTRIBUTION

16 Three Taxonomic Goose Issues to Gander
   by M. Ralph Browning

50 The Status of the Black Rosy-Finch
   on Steens Mountain, Oregon
   by Elijah Gordon, Steven G. Herman

52 Oregon Bird Records Committee Report
   by Craig Miller and the OBRC

CONSERVATION

15 Citizen Science and Short-eared Owl
   Conservation
   by Jesse Burgher

35 Staying Dry: Umbrella Species Management
   in the Sagebrush Ecosystem
   by Alan Harrington, Vanessa Schroeder,
    Jonathan Dinkins

PHOTOGRAPHY

9 The Stories of Three Photos
   by Nagi Aboulenein

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Field Notes provide summaries and highlights of bird activity for the past year, by region, for all of Oregon. The 10 regions of Oregon used for the Field Notes correspond to ecoregions as much as possible, while still respecting county boundaries (with the exception of Lane and Douglas Counties, that split across regions because they have coastal and inland areas). Ecoregions, defined by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, are areas where ecosystems and environmental resources are generally similar, and they are identified by analyzing the patterns and composition of geology, landforms, soils, vegetation, climate, land use, wildlife, and hydrology. (https://www.epa.gov/eco-research/ecoregions)

Notation used in the Field Notes: birds that are rare, unusual, or out of season in a region are marked in **bold**. Birds that are rare in all of Oregon (review species, as designated in the Official Checklist of Oregon Birds) are marked in **BOLD CAPITAL LETTERS.**

### COUNTIES IN EACH REGION:

1. **North Coast**
   - Clatsop
   - Tillamook
   - Lincoln

2. **South Coast**
   - Coastal Lane
   - Coastal Douglas
   - Coos
   - Curry

3. **Portland Area**
   - Columbia
   - Washington
   - Multnomah
   - Clackamas

4. **Willamette Valley**
   - Yamhill
   - Marion
   - Polk
   - Benton
   - Linn
   - Inland Lane

5. **Rogue-Umpqua**
   - Inland Douglas
   - Josephine
   - Jackson

6. **Mid-Columbia**
   - Hood River
   - Wasco
   - Sherman
   - Gilliam
   - Morrow
   - Umatilla

7. **Central Oregon**
   - Jefferson
   - Wheeler
   - Deschutes
   - Crook

8. **South-Central**
   - Klamath
   - Lake

9. **Northeast Oregon**
   - Grant
   - Union
   - Wallowa
   - Baker

10. **Southeast Oregon**
    - Harney
    - Malheur
A hike out to the tip of Cape Lookout (Tillamook County) on Nov 23 rewarded James Billstine with a flyby adult male **KING EIDER**.

A **Costa’s Hummingbird** showed up at Vicki Miller’s feeder in Manzanita (Tillamook County) on Oct 30 and was photographed on Nov 3. Lars Norgren found another in Newport’s Deco District (Lincoln County) on Nov 12.

Molly Sultany photographed an astonishing eight **Black-necked Stilts** *(photo next page)* at the Warrenton sewage ponds (Clatsop County) on Aug 21. Russ Namitz, Judi Sawyer, and Bill Tice struck gold—Golden-Plovers, that is—at Bayocean (Tillamook County) on Sep 29 with two each side-by-side American and Pacific Golden-Plovers. They were part of a five-plover flock. Snowy Plovers continue to increase in the region. Nesting Snowy Plovers fledged young at Clatsop Spit (Clatsop County), Nehalem Spit and Sitka Sedge State Natural Area (Tillamook County), and South Beach (Lincoln County). It was a good year for Marbled Godwits with 63 on Clatsop Beach on Apr 23 recorded by Mike Patterson, and 14 recorded on the Tillamook Christmas Bird Count on Dec 14 (James Billstine). The high count for Rock Sandpipers was four at Seal Rock (Lincoln County) on Nov 18 (Russ Morgan). They continued through the rest of the year. Bill Tice found a **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** at Driftwood Beach (Lincoln County) on Aug 23. Probably the same bird was re-found at Ona Beach State Park (Lincoln County) on Aug 25 where it remained for three days (multiple observers). Strong north winds at the end of April made for spectacular shorebird movements right along the beaches. Such was Mike Patterson’s observation of 551 **Short-billed Dowitchers**, seen flying north along Clatsop Beach within a 30-minute period on Apr 25.

Mike Patterson found a “suspiciously small snipe,” possibly a **Jack Snipe**, at Wireless Road (Clatsop County) on Nov 11. **Willets** were more common than usual along the coast in August, with two at Fort Stevens State Park (Clatsop County) on Aug 8 (B. Newhouse) and two at Sitka Sedge State Natural Area on Aug 31 (Wink Gross).

**South Polar Skuas** are rarely seen from land, so one pursuing a Common Murre at Yaquina Head on Jul 22 (Hanky Kim) is notable. Phil Pickering saw another South Polar Skua at Boiler Bay on Oct 19, along with a Parakeet Auklet, and a “tiny, distant” possible **Red-legged Kittiwake**.

Beverly Hallberg found a **Franklin’s Gull** at Nehalem sewage ponds (Tillamook County) on Aug 6. It remained until Aug 16. Another was photographed by Molly Sultany at Del Rey Beach (Clatsop County) on Aug 12. Only a few **Elegant Terns** made it to the region this year. The high count was six at Fort Stevens State Park on Sep 11 (Brian Sturges).

Phil Pickering saw three Black-footed Albatrosses off Boiler Bay on Oct 19. On Oct 8, a Northern Fulmar was between the jetties at Yaquina Bay (Steve Holzman). The only Murphy’s Petrel report was a single bird seen 86 miles west of Cape Meares (Tillamook County) during a repositioning cruise on May 2 (multiple observers). Another repositioning cruise found a **Hawaiian Petrel** 60 miles west of Cascade Head (Tillamook County) on May 8, and Oregon Pelagic Tours found one 56 miles west of Yaquina Head on Aug 24 *(photo left)*.
During his remarkable Oct 19 Boiler Bay seawatch, Phil Pickering spotted a **COOK’S PETREL**.

American White Pelicans are common enough in Clatsop County, but much harder to find farther south. This year, singles were at Rockaway (Tillamook County) on Aug 4 (Tate Pyle) and Bayocean on Aug 22 (Annika Andersson), and five birds were over the Oregon Coast Aquarium in Newport on May 31 (Dan Kuhlman). The two Tillamook **Cattle Egrets** found in December 2018 lingered until at least Mar 2, 2019.

Lars Norgren found a Golden Eagle near Salmon Creek Road (Lincoln County), possibly attracted by roadkill, on Oct 25. An adult Northern Goshawk was flushed by Camden Bruner along Upper Cedar Creek in the Siuslaw National Forest (Clatsop County) on Mar 26. An immature **Broad-winged Hawk** was over Drift Creek (Lincoln County) on Oct 8 (Jeff Gilligan).

A remarkable **Black-backed Woodpecker** was at Thornton Creek (Lincoln County) on Dec 2 for the second county record (Darrel Faxon). Chuck Philo spotted a flyover **White-headed Woodpecker** on Oct 6 while looking for the Newport Deco District rarities (see below),

The only Gyr falcon reported was one over Lyngstad Heights along the Lewis and Clark River (Clatsop County) on Apr 9 (Lee Cain).

On May 13, Patty Teague photographed an adult and three fledgling Black Phoebes in Warrenton for Clatsop County’s first confirmed breeding. Phil Pickering photographed an **Ash-throated Flycatcher** along the Salishan Nature Trail (Lincoln County) on Jun 13. Mike Patterson photographed a **Loggerhead Shrike** on Jackson Road in Brownsmead (Clatsop County) on Mar 28. An iNaturalist user took a photo of a **Clark’s Nutcracker** at Nestucca Bay National Wildlife Refuge (Tillamook County) on Sep 29. Kent Coe found another on the summit of Nehkahnie Mountain (Tillamook County) on Oct 9.

The 20 Bank Swallows flying around dredge spoils on Miller Sands Island (Clatsop County) on May 29 suggest breeding (Daniel Horton). A **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** was found by Mike Patterson at Svensen Island (Clatsop County) on Nov 24. It remained at least to Nov 29. The Goodspeed Road (Tillamook County) **Mountain Bluebird** found in December 2018 was still present on Jan 1, 2019 (Bill Tice et al.). Another was photographed on the Fort-to-Sea trail in Warrenton on May 6 (Patricia Teague).

**A Gray Catbird** was at Tierra del Mar (Tillamook County) on Jun 8 (Wink Gross). Stan and Gloria Beerman found a **Brown Thrasher** at Kilchis Point (Tillamook County) on May 18. Northern Mockingbirds (**photo below**) were reported from
Nestucca Bay National Wildlife Refuge on Jan 28 (Jack Hurt), Sitka Sedge State Natural Area on Jul 26 (Ken Chamberlain), Warrenton on Nov 27 (Mike Patterson), and Neskowin on Dec 28 (Ben Davis).

Mike Patterson flushed a “likely” Chestnut-collared Longspur at SJCR on Sep 16.

Clatsop County’s first Grasshopper Sparrow was seen at Warrenton on Dec 8 (Mike Patterson). It remained at least until Dec 22. Colby Neuman found a Clay-colored Sparrow on Tone Road (Tillamook County) on Jan 10. It was last reported on Feb 8. Mike Patterson also found one on Wireless Road (Clatsop County) on Nov 2 that lingered at least to Dec 23 (photo above). Steve Warner (reported to Mike Patterson) found a Black-throated Sparrow at Crown Camp Reservoir above Seaside on Jun 12. In addition to the Clay-colored Sparrow, Colby Neuman found a Lark Sparrow in the same patch on Tone Road on Jan 10. It was still present on Feb 7. The Boquist Road (Tillamook County) Harris’s Sparrow, found on the last day of 2018, lingered to at least Feb 23, 2019. Another(?) returned to the same spot Oct 27 (Stefan Schlick). The Brownsmead (Clatsop County) Harris’s Sparrow, found in December 2018, remained until at least Feb 20, 2019 (Mike Patterson). Mike Patterson found yet another at Wireless Road on Nov 18. It remained at least a month. A Vesper Sparrow was at Wireless Road on Mar 31 (Mike Patterson).

A Yellow-headed Blackbird was found on Wireless Road on Sep 21 by Mike Patterson. Way more Bobolinks than usual (i.e., three) showed up in the region this year. One was photographed at Humbug Refuge (Clatsop County) on Aug 26 (Ben Davis), one was at Wireless Road on Sep 1 (Mike Patterson, Diana Byrne), the third was on Boquist Road on Sep 2 (David Mandell).

Jon Anderson found an ORCHARD ORIOLE (photo below) in Newport’s Deco District on Oct 5. It was intensively pursued by many birders, and was last reported on Oct 7. On Dec 24 David Bailey opened his Seaside back door and was pleasantly surprised to see a Hooded Oriole fly up. It remained in the neighborhood through the end of the year.

Phil Pickering photographed a Black-and-white Warbler on the Salishan Nature Trail on Jun 4. The Ona Beach Black-and-white Warbler, found in 2018, was last reported on Jan 2, 2019. Shawneen Finnegan and Dave Irons found a Tennessee Warbler behind Tillamook Hospital on Sep 28. (It did not stick around even long enough for me to get there from Fred Meyer. Sad.)

Nashville Warblers are not easy to find in the region, so two at Seaside on Oct 7 were notable (David Bailey). Single birds were at Rudat Road (Clatsop County) on Jan 1 (Mike Patterson), Cloverdale (Tillamook County) on Sep 27 (Wink Gross), and Hatfield Marine Science Center on Dec 30 (Aaron Beerman). On Oct 6, while searching for the Newport Orchard Oriole, Jim Danzenbaker et al. found a PRAIRIE WARBLER. It remained until Oct 12. Oldtimers reminisced that history was repeating itself: the same combination, an Orchard Oriole and a Prairie Warbler, was discovered in Newport on Sep 27, 1981! (as reported by Range Bayer)

Timothy Lawes photographed a stunning male SUMMER TANAGER at Kilchis Point on Sep 23. Cliff Cordy found a Dickcissel on Boquist Road on Jan 5. It continued until at least Feb 21.
Twenty-five Snow Geese in Bandon on Oct 13 was a high number for this species (Alan Contreras, Nolan Clements). A Trumpeter Swan found by Terry Wahl (TW) on Dec 10, 2018 at the Wahl ranch near Cape Blanco (Curry County) was present until Jan 2, 2019; two photographed by Robyn Henise (RH) and Don Henise (DH) at Myrtle Point Marsh (Coos County) on Nov 30 were only the seventh Coos County record. Another single Trumpeter Swan was seen on Dec 23 near Norway, perhaps one of the two earlier birds (RH, DH, et al.)?

Breeding ducks at the old Weyerhaeuser settling pond site on the North Spit of Coos Bay included: two to three broods of Cinnamon Teal in late July, two Northern Shovelers with broods around the same time, and multiple (20+) Gadwall broods, as reported by Tim Rodenkirk (TR), RH, and DH. Six to seven American Wigeons at a pond near Coquille from June 22–30 were either late migrants or early arrivals (TR). At the same pond there were one to three Green-winged Teals during the same period that were also either very late or very early. American Wigeon have never been recorded breeding in Coos County and Green-winged Teal have only bred there once. There were 14 Eurasian Wigeons found on the Coquille Valley Christmas Bird Count on Jan 5 (reported to Harv Schubothe). The Mingus Park, Coos Bay, male Eurasian Wigeon arrived on Sep 28 for its fifth winter (Holly Rodenkirk). A female Black Scoter was spotted with a group of Surf Scoters at the Umpqua River South Jetty near Winchester Bay (Douglas County) by Russ Namitz on Aug 18. A male Barrow’s Goldeneye was found off the Empire district of Coos Bay from Nov 16 through the end of the year (TR et al.).

The first male Rufous Hummingbirds were reported on Feb 2 at feeders in Coos Bay (Bob Fields) and North Bend (Karen Saxton).

On Nov 17 a female-type Rufous/Allen’s Hummingbird was observed at Westlake on the Lane County coast (Alan Contreras et al.). Three Calliope Hummingbirds were seen in the Eden Valley area of the Siskiyou National Forest on both Apr 21 and Apr 27 (TR et al.). The Sandhill Crane found on the Port Orford Christmas Bird Count west of Langlois on Dec 22, 2018 was last reported on Jan 27, 2019 (TW et al.). An American Avocet was seen at Sutton Beach on Apr 29 by Daniel Farrar (DF), a rare coastal Lane County sighting. A Marbled Godwit was seen on Sep 3 at Tahkenitch Creek Estuary north of Reedsport (Douglas County) (DF). A Red Knot (photo next page) was seen in Bandon State Park on May 10 (Steve Dimock), and one was present late in spring migration on Jun 2 at the mouth of Tenmile Creek (Coos County) (DF).

A WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER with a large flock of Western Sandpipers on the beach at North Spit Coos Bay on Aug 28 was a nice find (and the fifth Oregon record) by Dave Lauten and Kathy Castelein—they also found the first Oregon record of this species, on Jun 28, 2003. A Wandering Tattler was seen on the north jetty of the Coquille River near Bandon on Jan 5 (Kathy Castelein)—the second winter in a row that one has been observed in that location; likely the same bird was back in the same area for a third winter when it was observed on Dec 27 (Ken Chamberlain). An unusual spring migrant Wandering Tattler was found on May 7 at the south jetty of the Siuslaw River (Lane County) by Roger Robb.

A Parasitic Jaeger was spotted by Russ Namitz off the coast near Sparrow Park Rd. Beach north of Reedsport (Douglas County) on Sep 8.
A Sabine’s Gull was found on Bandon Beach on May 16—an unusual find in the spring (Dave Lauten, Kathy Castelein). An Arctic Tern was seen on Aug 6 along the Oregon Dunes Loop Trail (Douglas County) (DF). There were zero reports of Elegant Terns on the south coast. A Black-footed Albatross was seen from Cape Arago (Coos County) on Jan 13 (Russ Namitz).

The aftermath of a storm on Oct 19 brought many pelagic species near shore—off the Coos Bay north jetty in one hour there were 1800 Northern Fulmar, 1200 Leach’s Storm-Petrels, and 600 Fork-tailed Storm-Petrels (TR)! On the same day, in Bandon, RH and DH counted 200 Leach’s Storm-petrels. And one Leach’s Storm-Petrel, rarely seen from shore in Lane County, was observed by Diane Pettey from Heceta Beach on Oct 19. Leach’s Storm-Petrels were also spotted on May 11 from a cruise ship off Douglas County (multiple observers). A Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel was seen from the south jetty of the Siuslaw River (Lane County) on Aug 12 (Liam Waters et al.). Cruise ship goodies from Coos County included three Murphy’s Petrels on both Apr 29 and May 2 (multiple observers). In Curry County, cruise ship treats included: one Murphy’s Petrel and both COOK’S PETRELS and Hawaiian Petrels on May 8 (Skip Russell et al.) and a Scripps’s Murrelet on Sep 27 (Tim Shelmerdine). The Ancient Murrelet seen from Ocean Beach State Park (Lane County) on Aug 9 (Elizabeth Laver-Holencik) was an unusual breeding-season report. On Sep 3 large numbers of Cassin’s Auklets were found all along the Lane County coast (Alan Contreras et al.).

Tufted Puffins have been quite scarce along the Lane County coast for many years, so one seen on Jul 27 from the Siletcoos River mouth (Diane Pettey, Jim Danzenbaker) and two seen on Sep 23 from Heceta Head, a former breeding location, were welcome news (Steven Waltz).

The first part of September produced a good number of shearwaters along the Lane County coast with three Buller’s Shearwaters on Sept 10 and three Pink-footed Shearwaters on Sep 17 seen from Siletcoos River beach (DF).

An immature BROWN BOOBY was seen from Cape Arago on Oct 26 (Russ Namitz). Oregon’s second RED-FOOTED BOOBY was found sick on the beach at Bandon and photographed on Nov 16 (William Binneweis, Harv Schubothe). Unfortunately, it was found dead nearby on the beach a couple of days later.

The first American White Pelican of the year along the Lane County coast was seen on Aug 7 at Heceta Beach (Diane Pettey). Two American White Pelicans were seen in Brookings on Nov 2 (Howard Sands)—likely the same birds had been seen in Florence (Lane County) a couple of days earlier (Alan Contreras et al.).
A RED-HEADED WOODPECKER (photo previous page) was photographed by multiple observers on Jul 6 around Tahkenitch Lake, north of Reedsport (Douglas County) for a fourth Oregon record. One or two Acorn Woodpeckers were present at Mt. Bolivar (Coos County) on May 4 (TR). An immature Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was seen at Honeyman State Park (Lane County) on Jan 23 (DF), and was in the area at least through Mar 15 (Michael Karpinko).

An adult male Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was present in Bandon from Jan 5 to 10 (Diane Caveness, Harv Schubothe, et al.). A Gyrifalcon was seen on Feb 13 at China Creek in Bandon (Joe Metzler). A gray-phase Gyrifalcon was photographed in Bandon on Sep 29 (Diane Bilderback) and seen again at New River (Curry County) on Oct 31 (TR)—this species has wintered on private ranchland in the New River bottomlands of Coos and Curry Counties where they likely go unnoticed most years by birders. A Prairie Falcon was seen at Johnson Mill pond near Coquille on Oct 31 (RH, DH).

A well-documented Dusky Flycatcher was present on the Wahl ranch from Dec 2, 2018 through Feb 2, 2019 (TW et al.). A late-in-the-year Western-type Flycatcher was at the Wahl ranch from Oct 29 through at least Nov 24 (TW with video). Up to four Say’s Phoebes overwintered at several locations in Brookings in both the winter of 2018/2019 and the winter of 2019/2020, with two wintering at the Wahl ranches near Cape Blanco (Curry County) in 2018/2019 and one in 2019/2020 (multiple observers). Another Curry County Say’s Phoebe was found on the Port Orford Christmas Bird Count on Dec 28 (reported to TR). Say’s Phoebes overwintered at the quarry up on Bethel Mtn. (Coos County) both winters (TR), and apparently they are overwintering in 2019/2020 near Norway (Coos County) (TR, RH, DH) and in Myrtle Point (Coos County) (RH, DH). The first migrant Say’s Phoebes were seen on Feb 16 in Port Orford and Feb 22 near Cape Blanco (Amy Duerfeldt, TW). Ash-throated Flycatchers were found in Brookings on Jun 6 (Mark Stevens) and at Lower Fourmile Creek (Coos County) on Jun 8 (TR).

A Sedge Wren. Photo by Noah Strycker.

Tropical Kingbird. Photo by Don Henise.

The Coquille Valley Christmas Bird Count had its first-ever Tropical Kingbird on Jan 5 (Ron Steffens). Terry Wahl saw four Tropical Kingbirds at the family ranch near Cape Blanco on Nov 18. There have been over 60 records of Tropical Kingbird (photo left) (some of which involve multiple birds) in Coos County alone since its removal from the Oregon Bird Records Committee review list in 2002—there were three reports of four birds total in Coos County this fall and two reports from Curry County of five birds total (multiple observers). One Tropical Kingbird was reported during the fall in coastal Lane County on Nov 7 at Florence (Adele Dawson).

A Blue Jay was at a feeder in Port Orford from Feb 23 to Apr 21 (Alice Pfand). There was a miniature invasion of Clark’s Nutcracker this fall in western Oregon with three south coast observations: one at Cape Blanco State Park on 14 Oct (Dena Turner); one at William Tugman State Park (Coos County) on Nov 2 (reported to Rachel Friese); and another report from the Cape Blanco area on Nov 24 (reported to TW). A Black-billed Magpie was present but elusive in the Langlois (Curry County) area from Oct 21, 2018 through at least Jan 2, 2019 (TW et al.). A magpie was found later in the winter in Del Norte County, California—perhaps the same bird? A single Horned Lark was in Bandon on Nov 1 (RH, DH). There was a single Tree Swallow and a single Barn Swallow on the Coquille Valley Christmas Bird Count at Johnson Mill Pond near Coquille on Jan 5 (TR). On Dec 19, three Tree Swallows and two Barn Swallows were at Myrtle Point Marsh (RH, DH). A White-breasted Nuthatch was reported from Vulcan Lake in the Siskiyou Mountains of Curry County on Aug 20 (Marrion Hadden). The SEDGE WREN (photo below) found at Waite Ranch (Lane County) in December 2018 was last seen/heard on May 5, 2019 (Daniel Farrer). A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was reported from the unlikely location of a clearcut in the Coos County Forest on Apr 22, and was only the fourth Coos County record (David Rankin). Another was found at North Spit Coos Bay on Nov 4–5 (RH, DH, TR). A pair of Western Bluebirds fledged young in Bandon at a house just a few blocks from the beach (Bruce Williams).
Snow Bunting was on the Wahl ranch on Oct 16 (TW). A very early Longspur of the Siuslaw River (Diane Pettey et al.). A Chestnut-collared Sparrow was more common than normal in coastal Lane County, including a flock of 21 seen on Oct 15 at the north jetty near Coquille from at least Jan 3 to Jan 27 (TR). A Wilson’s Warbler in Coquille on Dec 17 was at the Winchuck River mouth on May 1 (Nancy Stotz). A Hooded Oriole was photographed near the Winchuck River mouth in December 2018 and re-found on Mar 31, 2019 in the same area (DF). Overwintering Bullock’s Orioles included a first year male Bullock’s Oriole in Bandon from Jan 5–10 (Diane Cavaness, Harv Schubothe, et al.), and one found on the Port Orford Christmas Bird Count on Dec 28 (Lars Norgren et al.). Bullock’s Orioles have wintered at the same feeders in Florence for at least three winters—on Mar 8 three were found in the yard (DF) and at least one was found there in November and December (reported to Nikki Thomas).

There were Rusty Blackbirds (photo left) in both Coos and Curry Counties, both second county records: one at Cape Arago (Coos County) on Oct 24 (DH, RH, et al.); and one at Pistol River (Curry County) on Nov 10 (Joni Dawning). Male Grasshopper Sparrow was at the Wahl ranch on Sep 24 (TR). A female Lark Bunting was photographed on the Wahl ranch on Sep 24 (TR). Only two Clay-colored Sparrows were found this fall in Curry County, and one in Coos County (multiple observers). A singing Clay-colored Sparrow was found in Florence on Apr 25 (DF), only the second such report for coastal Lane County. Two Harris’s Sparrows overwintered: one at the Wahl ranch from Dec 10, 2018 through Jan 1, 2019; and another at Millicoma Marsh in Coos Bay from Dec 13, 2018 through at least Feb 24, 2019 (TR et al.). A Harris’s Sparrow was photographed in Florence on May 11–12 (Bonnie Olson, Jaklyn Larsen).

A Jun 4 Harris’s Sparrow photographed at Cape Arago may be the latest spring record for the state (MaryAnn Clayton). A Vesper Sparrow was at a hay field south of Powers from Apr 21 to May 19 where it may have attempted to breed—this location has had spring Vesper Sparrows every year back to 2014 (TR et al.). A late Vesper Sparrow was up the Winchuck River (Curry County) on Oct 13 (TR). A Red Fox Sparrow was photographed at a Charleston (Coos County) feeder on Mar 4–5 (Kathleen Kravik). Coos County’s earliest fall Swamp Sparrow was at Bandon Marsh National Wildlife Refuge on Oct 12 (TR). Coos County’s earliest Yellow-breasted Chat was found singing near Remote on Apr 28 (TR).

There were Rusty Blackbirds found on a ranch west of Langlois on Jan 7 (TW). The fall migration had more Lapland Longspur reports than normal in coastal Lane County, including a flock of 21 seen on Oct 15 at the north jetty near Coquille from at least Nov 10 through at least Dec 28 (Rick McKenzie, TW). Snow Buntings were more common than normal in coastal Lane County, including a flock of 21 found during the Florence Christmas Bird Count on Dec 14 at Baker Beach (Martin Stervander).

A flock of 15 overwintering Lapland Longspurs was found on a ranch west of Langlois on Jan 7 (TW). The fall migration had more Lapland Longspur reports than normal in coastal Lane County, including a flock of 21 seen on Oct 15 at the north jetty of the Siuslaw River (Diane Pettey et al.). A Chestnut-collared Longspur was on the Wahl ranch on Oct 16 (TW). A very early Snow Bunting was along the waterfront in Coos Bay on Oct 14 (TR) and another was at a ranch west of Langlois from Nov 10 through at least Dec 28 (Rick McKenzie, TW). Snow Buntings were more common than normal in coastal Lane County, including a flock of 21 found during the Florence Christmas Bird Count on Dec 14 at Baker Beach (Martin Stervander).

Coos County’s third Grasshopper Sparrow was in a hay field north of Powers singing on Jul 19–20, but unfortunately the hay was cut a couple of days later (TR, Russ Namitz). A Lark Sparrow was at the Wahl ranch on Sep 24 (TW). A female Lark Bunting was photographed on the Wahl ranch on Sep 24 (TR). Only two Clay-colored Sparrows were found this fall in Curry County, and one in Coos County (multiple observers). A singing Clay-colored Sparrow was found in Florence on Apr 25 (DF), only the second such report for coastal Lane County. Two Harris’s Sparrows overwintered: one at the Wahl ranch from Dec 10, 2018 through Jan 1, 2019; and another at Millicoma Marsh in Coos Bay from Dec 13, 2018 through at least Feb 24, 2019 (TR et al.). A Harris’s Sparrow was photographed in Florence on May 11–12 (Bonnie Olson, Jaklyn Larsen).

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An ORCHARD ORIOLE was found up the south bank of the Chetco River near Brookings on Sep 7 (Caleb Centanni, Courtney Kelly Jett). A Hooded Oriole was photographed near the Winchuck River mouth on May 1 (Nancy Stotz). A Hooded Oriole was photographed in Florence in December 2018 and re-found on Mar 31, 2019 in the same area (DF). Overwintering Bullock’s Orioles included a first year male Bullock’s Oriole in Bandon from Jan 5–10 (Diane Cavaness, Harv Schubothe, et al.), and one found on the Port Orford Christmas Bird Count on Dec 28 (Lars Norgren et al.). Bullock’s Orioles have wintered at the same feeders in Florence for at least three winters—on Mar 8 three were found in the yard (DF) and at least one was found there in November and December (reported to Nikki Thomas).

There were Rusty Blackbirds in both Coos and Curry Counties, both second county records: one at Cape Arago (Coos County) on Oct 24 (DH, RH, et al.); and one at Pistol River (Curry County) on Nov 30 (Shawnee Finnegan, Dave Irons). A singing male Great-tailed Grackle was at Mingus Park (Coos County) on May 22–23 (TR et al.). A Nashville Warbler (Sean Burns) and a female Black-throated Gray Warbler (Lars Norgren) were found on the Coquille Valley Christmas Bird Count on Jan 5. Common Yellowthroats overwintered in Coos Bay at Millicoma Marsh from Dec 5, 2018 to Feb 24, 2019 and near Coquille from at least Jan 3 to Jan 27 (TR). A HOODED WARBLER was found singing away at Millicoma Marsh on the morning of May 26 but never showed itself (TR, Dave Lauten, Kathy Castelein, Barb Taylor). A singing first-year male American Redstart was at Pistol River on Jun 11 (TR). Up to four Palm Warblers overwintered in North Bend from Dec 26, 2018 through Feb 25, 2019 (Tim Gannon et al.)—this species is much harder to find in Coos County than in Curry County. Two Townsend’s Warblers were found in a mixed flock on the Siskiyou National Forest out of Brookings on Aug 14, a very early date (TR). A Wilson’s Warbler in Coquille on Dec 17 was one of only a handful of December records for Coos County (RH, DH). Male Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were found at Cape Blanco on Jun 2 (Joni Dawning) and in Bandon on Jun 8 (TR).

Rusty Blackbird. Photo by Don Henise.
My interest in wildlife photography came about during our family’s many visits to that greatest of National Parks, Yellowstone, with its abundance of wildlife. While there on one of our visits, I also had a close encounter with an American Kestrel. After taking photos of that kestrel, my interest in bird photography took off, and I learned more and more about how to get good photos, even in adverse conditions. The fine details and colors made visible by good bird photos are one of the major aspects of bird photography that I find fascinating. Looking at a bird for a moment (or a minute) through binoculars fails, at least for me, to satisfy my desire to look at fine feather details and the gradation of colors and hues present in birds.

And that leads to where I would like to place the focus of this article—bird photography in adverse conditions. The tips that I will share are less on the technical side, but in my opinion are no less important in enabling the photographer to take good photos.

STUDY THE BIRD’S BEHAVIOR

A young Ruff made a rare appearance at the mud flats of the Hatfield Marine Sciences Center’s Nature Trail in Newport in late September 2018. Since my wife and I happened to be in nearby Lincoln City for the weekend, we headed down to Newport to see the bird and add it to our Life List. When we arrived, the Ruff was easy to find in the midst of the dozens of California Gulls and Western Gulls present on the mudflats. It was weaving its way between gulls, with frequent stops to snack on worms and other invertebrates and insects. From my vantage point, this is how things looked (photo below):

Careful observation of the bird’s behavior and a good measure of patience are just as critical in capturing good photos, as is having the correct exposure and shutter speed settings. In trying to work your way to a spot from which to take your photos, be aware of some additional factors. For best results, try to position yourself with the sun to your back, and your shadow pointing towards your subject. If you’re trying to take photos of birds taking off or landing, keep in mind that birds prefer to fly into the wind, so try to position yourself such that the wind is blowing from behind you. Last, but definitely not least, do not disturb or stress the wildlife in your quest for that great photo—if the bird is being disturbed by your presence, back off!

TAKE THE PHOTO ANYWAY

My wife and I participated in an OBA winter field trip to the Wallowa Mountains in January 2018. On an evening owling expedition on a quiet National Forest road, we first heard, then saw, a Northern Pygmy-Owl. The owl was on a relatively low branch, maybe 8 or 10 feet high, and quite close—we found ourselves less than 20 feet away from it. From a pure birding perspective, it was an unforgettable encounter, as the tiny owl seemed completely unperturbed by our presence, and was
hooting very enthusiastically. Everyone had as good looks as could be had in the near dark conditions. However, from a photography perspective, conditions were suboptimal—in fact, they couldn’t have been much worse as there was hardly any light left. However, an important rule I follow is that a bad photo is usually better than no photo at all, so I decided to do what I could.

My camera is a full-frame Canon 5D Mark IV with a 500mm F/4.0 lens attached. In order to allow it to gather as much light as possible, I proceeded to take many photos with successively slower shutter speed until I got as low as 1/8 of a second, with the ISO set to 3200 and the aperture as wide open as possible. This provided a good compromise between light sensitivity and acceptable levels of noise for my particular camera model. Since I did not have a tripod with me, I had to take the photo handheld. Thankfully, the little owl was very cooperative, and held still while I was clicking away. Even with all that, the photo was still very underexposed—here is what the photo straight out of the camera looked like (photo above).

The previous photo clearly does not do the magnificent owl justice. However, after some small amount of post-processing (a bit of exposure adjustment, a touch of sharpening and some noise reduction) here is the final result (photo above right). The final photo is much more detailed and vibrant, and enhances the wonderful memory of the owl encounter. Even if the conditions are far from optimal, my choice will always be to take the photo and do my best. It helps to know your equipment well, and to be comfortable with pushing it to the edge. This will help salvage what may initially seem a lost cause. Of course, the best way to acquire such familiarity and comfort with your equipment is simply to take lots of photos.

**POST-PROCESS FOR BEST RESULTS**

Another example of going for the shot even in the worst conditions resulted in one of my all-time favorite photos. We visited New Mexico in December 2015, in order to do some winter birding in Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge and some of the other amazing areas in southern New Mexico. To our great distress, the day after we arrived, southern New Mexico was hit by its worst blizzard in 40 years. After spending a full day cooped up in our hotel due to highway and road closures, we ventured out as soon as roads were opened again the following morning. Snow was still falling but seemed to be tapering off, so we made our way to Bernardo Wildlife Area near our hotel. When we arrived there, we were fortunate enough to see many hundreds of Sandhill Cranes as well as thousands of Snow Geese. However, conditions were starting to worsen again, and incoming fog and fresh snow were not helping. The initial,
straight-out-of-the-camera photo (above) of a large flock of cranes feeding on a corn stubble field looked like nothing could be done with it. However, after experimenting with exposure and white-balance adjustments, as well as some de-hazing, the final version can be seen below. To this day, it remains one of my absolute favorites because of how it captured the amazing sight of hundreds of cranes continuing to feed, unperturbed by being in the middle of a blizzard.

There’s much more to successful wildlife photography than just the technical aspects like exposure, shutter speed and ISO.

First, study the behavior of the bird and position yourself such that the bird will naturally approach you as opposed to you approaching it. That way, the bird will be more comfortable, resulting in better photos and a better experience for the bird.

Second, know your gear well and get comfortable with using it—this will allow you to take photos even in adverse circumstances, with good confidence that you’ll be able to make the photos shine with minor adjustments in post-processing.

Third, learn some basic post-processing skills to get the best out of your camera. Always use RAW format (not JPG) if your camera supports it, since it saves a complete representation of all the data that was captured by the camera’s sensor, and allows for much more powerful post-processing adjustments. A good image processing package is important as well—many powerful image processing packages are now available that are capable of doing what was shown in the above photos.

And a last piece of advice: while photography is a wonderful and rewarding hobby, don’t let it get in the way of enjoying the birds!
2019 saw a boom in rare bird reports across the Portland-area counties, as big-year birders broke records in Multnomah and Columbia Counties.

John Book found an Emperor Goose on Sauvie Island (SI) on Nov 5. The bird remained with large flocks of Cackling Geese, mostly in Columbia County, and on several occasions ventured just over the county line into Multnomah County, until Dec 1. Throughout the month, the island was also home to Ross’s Goose and Brant mixed in with the four more likely goose species.

A Tufted Duck originally found Jan 31 by Jim Danzenbaker on the Washington side of the river opposite Broughton Beach (BB) was seen on the Oregon side until Mar 12. A Harlequin Duck, found by Philip Kline, was seen at Eagle Creek from Jan 15 to 29. John S. Powell viewed one from SI on Aug 17.

A pair of Black Scoters were reported by Ken Vanderkamp at Columbia Point (Multnomah County) on Oct 21, cavorting with Surf Scoters and White-winged Scoters. A pair of Long-tailed Ducks were found at Hagg Lake by Stefan Schlick on Oct 23.

Eared Grebes were reported in all four counties, with the most notable report being Philip Kline’s raft of 13 at Columbia Point on Oct 11. Clark’s Grebes were also reported widely, including at Harbor View Park (Multnomah County), Columbia Point, SI, and Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge.

Common Poorwills also showed a bit of synchronized migration: Hailey Walls and Sarah Swanson were surprised to find one at Oaks Bottom on Apr 30, and Colby Neuman (CN) found one on Larch Mountain the same day. For good measure, John S. Powell reported one on Mt. Tabor on May 2 and on May 10.

Black Swifts were reported twice in three days in Hillsboro, first by Ryan Downey on May 24, and then by Justin Wrinn on May 26. It was a bumper year for Calliope Hummingbirds, with birds being reported in large numbers throughout the valley in spring.

Shorebird season was full of local and state rarities. A Black-necked Stilt was found by Rick Bennett at Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge on May 1, and a bird at SI was found by Tom Myers on Sep 6. An American Avocet found by Audrey Addison was a one-day wonder at BB on Apr 3.

An American Golden-Plover was found at BB by Aaron Beerman on Oct 2. A juvenile Pacific Golden-Plover was found by John Bishop, Greg Baker, and Ken Vanderkamp at Smith and Bybee Lakes on Aug 24. A flyover Upland Sandpiper was seen and recorded at Smith and Bybee Lakes on Aug 26 by CN and Nick Mrvelj (NM).

Jay Withgott found a Whimbrel at BB on Aug 30. Rick Bennett found a Long-billed Curlew at Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge Apr 20. CN found a Marbled Godwit on Aug 18 at Sturgeon Lake, and then found a Hudsonian Godwit at the same location Sep 17. A Ruff was found at Vanport Wetlands Sep 26 by CN. Stilt Sandpipers were found both at SI on Sep 9 (Philip Kline) and at Smith and Bybee Lakes on Sep 18 (CN, Brodie Cass Talbott, Justin Cook). Sanderlings were reported from a number of locations along the Columbia and Willamette rivers in late August through early September.

Kosuke Saita found a Parasitic Jaeger at Smith and Bybee Lakes on Sep 25, and another was found Sep 28 at BB by Audrey Addison. A Black-legged Kittiwake was found by Wink Gross at Columbia Point on Dec 6. Sabine’s Gulls were reported along the Columbia and at SI from Sep 17 to 22. Franklin’s Gulls were reported at three separate locations along the Columbia River in Portland in October, and were widely reported on SI.
A Forster’s Tern was found at SI on Aug 28 (Wink Gross), and another was found on Sep 20 at Fernhill by Steve Nord.

Wink Gross found a Red-throated Loon, viewed from SI, on Feb 21. Another, perhaps the same bird, was found by Andy Frank on Mar 1 at BB where it continued until Apr 8. Pacific Loons were reported at multiple locations along the Columbia River in October, as well as at Hagg Lake.

A Pelagic Cormorant was found by NM and Conor Scotland at BB on Oct 13, and then re-found at Hayden Island three days later.

Snowy Egrets continued their tradition of stopping off at Smith and Bybee Lakes in late summer. Black-crowned Night Herons continue to breed at Koll Center Wetlands and to be very scarce elsewhere. Other reports were by Jeff Dillon along SE McLoughlin Blvd. on May 7, and by Chris Rombough at Jackson Bottom Wetlands on Jun 30.

Steven Rogers found a White-tailed Kite on SI on Nov 21. A few Northern Goshawks were reported across the area, including at Larch Mountain by CN, and at Mount Tabor by Skye Jaas.

Golden Eagles were reported in larger-than-average numbers across the region throughout the year, perhaps because of an increased number of observers. A Broad-winged Hawk was found by Shawneen Finnegan on Bull Mountain on Sep 25. April saw a few Swainson’s Hawks migrate through the area, including reports from: Cedarcrest (Clackamas County) by Mike Bogar on Apr 11; Commonwealth Lake by Peyton Cook on Apr 12; and NE Portland by NM on Apr 21. A Ferruginous Hawk was reported on Mar 20 by Joe Yuhas at BB.

A Burrowing Owl was found walking down the sidewalk and then flying into a window of the Amazon building that faces Swigert Rd. on Mar 24 (Ezra Cohen). Re-found by a few birders later that afternoon, the owl seemed in decent health and was not seen again at that location, but one turned up at nearby Steigerwald four days later.

A Lewis’s Woodpecker was found on SI by Philip Kline and Tom Myers during the Sauvie Island Christmas Bird Count on Dec 15—the same day that Tom Myers reached his record-breaking Columbia County big year total of 215! A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was seen in Washington Park in late December 2019, but not reported until early January 2020. A Red-naped Sapsucker, originally found in October 2018 by Rick Bennett in Sherwood, continued until March 2019, and then returned in October 2019, where it remained through the end of the year. One was also found by Nick Mrvelj on Apr 20 in the Overlook neighborhood of North Portland. A Black-backed Woodpecker was found by CN on Larch Mountain on May 23, and was re-found throughout the summer. Another was found east of Timothy Lake by Chantelle and Brian Simmons on Aug 21.

A Least Flycatcher was recorded “che-becking” by Tyler Hallman east of Sandy on Jun 8. Jay Withgott found a Gray Flycatcher at Cooper Mountain on Apr 28. Then, as if synchronized, three different birds appeared in three different parts of Portland on May 2: one was found at Powell Butte by Ross Barnes-Rickett; one at Swigert was found by Audrey Addison and CN; and another was found in Raleigh Hills by Dwight Porter.

An Eastern Phoebe (photo previous page) found by CN on SI on May 7 was the first record for Multnomah County, and it remained along Oak Island Road for two weeks. It was also a good year for Ash-throated Flycatchers, although Multnomah County hogged all of the reports, with one in Gresham found by Ross Barnes-Rickett on May 2, another found at Oaks Bottom by David Smith on May 21, and a third bird found at Vanport Wetlands by Linnea Basden and Joshua Meyers on Jun 6.

Loggerhead Shrikes were reported across the Sandy River Delta area as well as at Powell Butte in late March. Northern Shrikes seemed ubiquitous in 2019.

A Clark’s Nutcracker found by CN at Larch Mountain on Aug 14 remained until Oct 14. Another was photographed by Greg Schechter at Mt. Tabor on Oct 13.

A single Mountain Chickadee was found by Craig Tumer at Sundial Road in Troutdale on Nov 1, and then another was found by Lincoln Rice at Angel’s Rest on Nov 8. One was also reported coming to a feeder in Warren in November. A Pygmy Nuthatch was found by Joshua and Samuel Holman on Mt. Hood (Clackamas County) on Aug 18.

A Canyon Wren found by John Bishop near Multnomah Falls continued to the end of the year—and was Colby Neuman’s final bird in his record-smashing 247 species count for a Multnomah County big year!

A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher found by Casey Cunningham in December 2018 continued to Jan 18, 2019 along the slough near NE 122nd Ave. in Portland. A bird found by Rick Bennet at his Sherwood home on Mar 16 did not return.

A Wrentit was heard singing at Sandy River Delta by Sarah Swanson and Eric Carlson on May 20.

Sagebrush Sparrow. Photo by Owen Schmidt.
The **Eastern Bluebird** pair first found by Eric Carlson at the Dharma Rain Zen Center in November 2018 continued until March 2019. Andrea Johnson found a possible first-county-record **Mountain Bluebird** at SI in Columbia County on Mar 22. Mountain Bluebirds were also reported at Harbor View, BB, and Powell Butte in Multnomah County, all in March.

A **Dusky Thrush** was reported in Metzger on Feb 26 by Steve deMoulin, for a first Oregon state record.

Drew Moyer found a **Sage Thrasher** at Swigert Road on Mar 19. A Northern Mockingbird found near Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge in the fall of 2018 continued into April 2019, and then returned in November for another winter.

A **Pine Grosbeak** was found on June 4 by Ken Vanderkamp at Larch Mountain, and another was reported by Mary Ellen Collentine on Mt. Hood (Clackamas County) on Nov 14.

At least five Lapland Longspurs were reported, mostly along the Columbia River, all in fall. **Snow Buntings** were seen at BB on Nov 13 by Andy Frank.

A **Grasshopper Sparrow** was found on May 23 at Swigert Rd. (CN). A **Lark Sparrow** was found by Cole Sites on the Eastbank Esplanade on May 16, and then another was found on SI on May 17 (CN), followed by a third bird at the Sandy River Delta on May 20 (NM). A **Clay-colored Sparrow** was found associating with a Chipping Sparrow and others at Oaks Bottom by Sarah Swanson and Eric Carlson on Sep 30. **Harris’s Sparrows**, often scarce across the region, were reported at multiple locations across Washington, Columbia, and Multnomah Counties. A **Sagebrush Sparrow** *(photo previous page)* was found at Swigert Road in Troutdale on Mar 11 by CN. A Multnomah County first, it continued until Mar 20.

A **Brewer’s Sparrow** was also found at Swigert Road by CN on Mar 21, and then again Apr 29, presumed different migrants. A separate bird was found at Vanport Wetlands on Apr 27 by Abby Haight. **Vesper Sparrows** were numerous in 2019 with birds being found at multiple locations along the Sandy River Delta, on SI, and in Clackamas County.

A **Tricolored Blackbird** found by NM on Feb 18 at the Purina factory near Kelly Point Park continued until Mar 17, and there may have been several. The Tricolored Blackbird was found in a large flock of blackbirds, including Yellow-headed Blackbirds, originally reported by Zack Schlanger. Mary French and Doug Niwa found a **Rusty Blackbird** at Hedges Creek Marsh on Nov 18. A **Great-tailed Grackle** was found by Tom Magarian and Dave Irons at Vanport Wetlands on Jun 2, a first Multnomah County record for this range-expanding icterid.

A **Black-and-white Warbler** *(photo left)* was found at Sandy River Delta on May 20 (Sarah Swanson), and another was found on Nov 28 on SI (Columbia County) by Aaron Beerman. A Magnolia Warbler was found by Craig Tumer on May 31 in Cedar Mill.

It was a good year for **Palm Warblers** with a single bird found at Fazio Slough by CN on the Jan 5 Portland Christmas Bird Count, and three separate birds found in Washington County: one at Jackson Bottom Wetlands on Jan 4 (Rick Bennett); one at Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge on Apr 25 (Chris Woods); and one at Fernhill Wetlands on Nov 6 (Steve Nord).

**ABBREVIATIONS:**
(CN) Colby Neuman  
(NM) Nick Mrvelj  
(BB) Broughton Beach  
(SI) Sauvie Island

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**Black-and-white Warbler.** Photo by Nels Nelson.

**Short-eared Owl, Broughton Beach.** Photo by Tom Myers.
CITIZEN SCIENCE AND SHORT-EARED OWL CONSERVATION

by Jesse Burgher

Short-eared Owls (*Asio flammeus*) are found in grasslands, shrub-lands, marshes, and tundra across North America. But knowledge of this species’ population trends and habitat use is lacking, in part due to locally scattered distributions and annual fluctuations in movement. Evidence points towards population declines across North America, but specific numbers are still unknown. Through a multi-year, large-scale citizen science project, some conservation and research groups throughout the western United States hope to get a better picture of the overall conservation concerns and priorities for Short-eared Owls.

The Short-eared Owl is a medium sized bird with a rounded head whose namesake small ear tufts are rarely visible. They stand 13–17 inches tall, weigh between 7–17 ounces, and have a wingspan between 33–41 inches. They are generally light brown, with buff and white spots, and have a pale breast streaked with brown. Their facial disk is pale and well pronounced, with dark rings around bright yellow eyes. Their wings are generally pale underneath with dark “apostrophes” at the wrists. Short-eared Owls inhabit open-country, preferring treeless flat habitat that is very different from the forests most people associate with owls.

Short-eared Owls are quite active during crepuscular periods and can be seen coursing slowly over short grasslands as the light fades, searching for small mammalian prey. Their flight pattern is often described as moth-like. They are ground-nesting owls, often choosing a high point or mound to scratch out a shallow nest. Males will engage in courtship displays of elaborate flight, wing clapping, and exaggerated wing flapping. Mated pairs defend their territory throughout the breeding season with territory sizes that are thought to be dependent on prey availability and abundance. During winter months, these owls move with weather and prey availability and, in contrast to many other owl species, they may also form communal roosts in winter. They have been seen in groups of up to hundreds of individuals. Individual movements across the landscape and choices of breeding habitat appear to be highly variable and fluctuate annually. While some characteristics of their habitat are known, there is a lot left to learn about what this species needs to maintain its populations.

The Short-eared Owl is considered endangered in many states around the Great Lakes and in the northeastern United States. Population trends are not known for much of the western United States. In Oregon, it has been identified as a sensitive species in the Oregon Conservation Strategy. Additionally, the National Audubon Society Climate Initiative has identified the species as climate endangered in its 2014 Climate Report stating, “Audubon’s climate model shows a loss by nearly three-quarters of climatically suitable space in winter.” To get a better assessment of the status of Short-eared Owls across the west, the Intermountain Bird Observatory, along with Hawk Watch International, the Klamath Bird Observatory, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and other state agency partners began a citizen science project in 2016. The Western *Asio flammeus* Landscape Study (Project WAfLS) was started as a way to engage the general public to conduct broad-scale count surveys in an effort to collect population data across Utah and Idaho. It expanded to Nevada and Wyoming in 2017, and a grant in 2018 from the USFWS expanded the project across four more western states, including Washington and Oregon. Volunteers conduct evening point count surveys along predetermined transects in March and April to gather detection information about Short-eared Owls during the height of breeding courtship.

You may sign up for specific transects in Oregon for the 2020 survey season, which can give you opportunities to watch these amazing birds while contributing to the knowledge and conservation of the species across the western United States. To see annual reports and papers discussing the results of this historic project, keep an eye on Avian Knowledge Northwest and Project WAfLS websites, listed below.

**LITERATURE CITED**


THREE TAXONOMIC GOOSE ISSUES TO GANDER

by M. Ralph Browning, Retired, Biological Survey at Division of Birds, Smithsonian

The changing season brings the opportunity to document familiar and unfamiliar taxa of birds, some of which are generally recognized as subspecies, but might actually represent distinct species. Giving less attention to a taxon currently of subspecific rank as compared to a recognized species is ignoring an opportunity to gather more information (Phillips 1975). Some of those alleged subspecies may require a reevaluation of their taxonomic status before being considered species by checklist committees such as the North American Check-list Committee (NACC) of the American Ornithological Society (AOS). Time constraints might prevent considerations of proposals for taxonomic change or proposals on certain taxa that have not been submitted.

Taxonomic status of some taxa decided by the NACC might also differ from other, less conservative lists. Compared to AOS, the Clements list (Clements et al. 2019), the list in use by eBirders, is less conservative by recognizing more species except Clements follows AOS for breeding species in the geographic scope of AOS. Incidentally, the American Birding Association (ABA) follows the AOS checklist for North American species and Clements for the remaining planet. The International Ornithological Committee (IOC) checklist (Rasmussen and Donsker 2020) is still less conservative by recognizing more species than either Clements or, in North America, the AOS checklist. Compared to IOC, the Howard and Moore list (Dickinson and Remsen 2013) is more conservative whereas Clements is intermediate. Birdlife International differs from the other checklists, including that of AOS, in recognizing species following some criteria not used by the other checklists.

Hybridization between species of Anatidae is widely documented (see Gonzalez et al. 2009), is common in geese (Ottenburghs et al. 2016a) and the present concepts of hybridization (AOU 1998:xiv) weakens arguments concerning interbreeding of related taxa. The frequency of sightings of wild hybrid is extremely low (e.g., Branta canadenis X Anser anser hybrids represent <1.0% of the entire British population) (Ottenburghs et al. 2016a).

Some taxa occurring in the Pacific Northwest present taxonomic situations that are at issue with AOS decisions or lack thereof. These should be documented as they migrate or breed in the region. Several of these taxa are or eventually will prove to be recognized by AOS as species, some will remain as subspecies while most will require further study and all deserve our attention because they are, as Phillips notes, populations marked by nature and thus easily studied. The following brief outlines three species of geese regularly occurring in the Pacific Northwest.

Tule Goose (Anser elgasi)

Although currently recognized (AOU 1998, Banks 2011) as a subspecies of A. albifrons (White-fronted Goose), elgasi is readily identified by most game managers in California as the Tule Goose and a separate taxon from other A. albifrons (pers. observ.). The large and dark taxon elgasi breeds in south-central Alaska and winters in the Sacramento Valley, California. Orthmeyer et al. (1995) provided additional analysis demonstrating that only two bill measurements correctly classified 92% of males and 96% as elgasi or albifrons. Also, there are ecological, behavioral and other morphological differences between elgasi and other taxa of A. albifrons (e.g., Takekawa 2005; Dunn 2005; Deuel and Takekawa 2008). For example, nest sites of elgasi do not require permanent water vs. other geese (Densmore et al. 2006). Genetically (mtDNA), Cook Inlet birds (elgasi) differ from other White-fronted Geese in Alaska (Ely et al. 2017).

There is more to learn, but in the meantime, watching for elgasi is worthwhile. Incidentally, elgasi breeds in the taiga, not in the tule region of Alaska. Should these birds be split, the name Taiga Goose might be most suitable.

Bean Goose or which bean goose?

The AOS (2007) recognized two Old World species, Anser serrirostris (Tundra Bean-Goose) (photo page 19) and A. fabalis (Taiga Bean-Goose), within the complex whereas most, but not all (e.g., McInerny et al. 2018) checklists recognize only one species. Carboneras and Kirwan (2020), in the Birds Alive, concluded that because of contradictory findings in the literature and interbreeding of the different taxa, it is “safer” to recognize only one species of bean goose. Morphological differences between populations may or may not be at the species level, but differences in vocalization (Dunn and Alderfer 2017) between serrirostris and fabalis suggest differences at the species level.

The different taxa in this complex are morphologically similar and field identification simply as bean goose for some past and present records is prudent (Howell et al. 2014). Nelson et al. (2013:207) wrote “Few records that the [California Bird Records] committee has accepted have engendered so much controversy with respect to identification, owing to the intricacies and uncertainties of intraspecific variability and taxonomy.” The committee did not identify a photographed individual at the Salton Sea bean goose to species. This same bird is illustrated in Dunn and Alderfer (2017), with a notation that the particular bird appeared intermediate between the Tundra and Taiga taxa. Resolution of the taxonomy and field identification of bean geese will improve.
Brant

Briefly, of the four world-wide subspecies of brant recognized by Lewis et al. (2013) and others including IOC, Clements, etc., only two are recognized as breeding birds in North America (AOU 1998). Illustrations of the two North American taxa (Dunn and Alderfer 2017), including an unnamed population, reveal three morphologically dissimilar brant that breed on the continent. The darkest of the three was recognized as the species Black Brant (*Branta nigricans*) (e.g., AOU 1957), which was later (AOU 1976) relegated to a subspecies of *B. bernicla*. The paler populations consist of two morphological taxa, with the palest population known as *hrota* and a darker population not yet formally named. The unnamed population breeds in the Parry Islands of the northern Canadian Archipelago (Boyd and Maltby 1979) and mostly winters in the northern Puget Sound in Washington (Reed 1989). These birds are often referred to by the English name Gray-bellied Brant and are provisionally recognized by Lewis et al. (2013) under the name *nigricans*.

Unfortunately, the name *nigricans*, based on winter specimens from New Jersey, cannot be used for either the darkest brant as the binomial for Black Brant or a subspecific name for the pale Parry Island birds. Morphologically, the type of *nigricans* cannot be identified with any population with certainty and was considered a *nomen dubium* by Browning (2002). Therefore, the name *nigricans* is not available for any population of brant and the darkest taxon must be known as *orientalis*, the next available name (Delacour and Zimmer 1952, Browning 2002). Regrettably, numerous authors contributing to world checklists (e.g., Dickinson and Remsen 2013, Carboneras et al 2018) continue to use *nigricans* for the black subspecies. However, Lewis et al. (2013) referred to the gray-bellied population that winters in northern Washington and breeds in the Parry Islands (northern islands of Canadian Archipelago) under the name *nigricans*.

Publications, especially concerning wildlife management, use either *nigricans* (e.g., Cedillo et al. 2013) or *orientalis* (e.g., Brand 2009) for the Black Brant. Should DNA material ever be sampled from the type of *nigricans* and compared with breeding birds, it might be possible to sort out the correct use of *nigricans*. Whether the black population is recognized as *nigricans* or *orientalis*, that population and the Parry Island birds are considered specifically distinct from other populations of brant (Millington 1997, Sangster et al. 1999, Browning 2002, Marshall et al. 2003). Genetics might help answer taxonomic questions of brant. Although Mlodinow and Axelson’s (2006) mentioned of an unpublished study of mtDNA and Talbot (pers. comm. 2017) stated published data was forthcoming, that information continues to be unavailable. In the meantime, Ottenburghs et al. (2016b) sequenced the genomes of 17 species of geese, including three taxa (*bernicla, hrota* and *nigricans*) of brant. A maximum likelihood tree revealed differences between the three taxa of brant that are greater or equal to differences between *Branta* species (*canadensis, hutchinisi, and leucopsis*) and *Anser* species (e.g., *albifrons* and *erythropus* and *caerulascens* and *rossi*).

There are several other reasons for considering recognizing at least the darkest taxon and likely the Parry Island taxon as separate species, including, for example, assortative mating on the breeding (Abraham et al. 1983) and wintering (Novak et al. 1989) grounds, different migration routes (Boyd et al. 2013), and a gross exaggeration of alleged interbreeding of different taxa (Buckley et al. 2002, Garner 2008).

Observations of brant that are paler that Black Brant may not be identifiable as the palest taxon, *hrota*, but may represent the gray-bellied Parry Island brant. Rare bird committees should consider amending birds of interest or review species by including the three morphological types of brant, especially since all three are recognized (contra AOU 1998) as separate species.

Acknowledgements

Discussion and examination of specimens of brant with Sean Boyd and Charles Handley while I was at the National Museum of Natural History appreciated. I thank Alan Contreras for his useful comments on an earlier draft.

Literature Cited


Yamhill, Polk, Marion, Benton, Linn, and Inland Lane Counties

Snow Geese are not seen every year in Yamhill and Marion Counties, but Roy Gerig (RG) found one juvenile in a Cackling Goose flock at Ankeny National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) on Oct 16, and Paul Sullivan (PTS) observed one juvenile with some Canada Geese in McMinnville on Nov 17. Oregon’s second TUNDRA BEAN-GOOSE (photo below), originally spotted at Finley National Wildlife Refuge on Oct 27, 2018 by a visiting Finnish birder, then seen regularly until Dec 18, 2018, was re-found on Jan 21, 2019 by Nancy Stotz. It continued to be seen as it moved around the refuge, and was last seen with thousands of Cackling Geese along Bruce Road on Mar 15, 2019 (Sally Hill, Diane Pettet, Nancy and Bill LaFramboise). Trumpeter Swans appeared at ANWR on Nov 4 (RG); two were seen Nov 5 (John Thomas); and they were seen with Tundra Swans on Nov 13 by Mike Unger (MU) and the Salem Audubon Society.

A family of six Blue-winged Teal was found at Eagle Marsh, ANWR by Jack Presley and RG on Aug 5. A Eurasian Green-winged Teal was found at Stewart Pond on Feb 4 (Alan Contreras). A Tufted Duck (photo next page) was reported at the Philomath Sewage Treatment Plant by Duncan Evered on Nov 25 and continued to be seen until Dec 5. A pair of Harlequin Ducks was observed on Salmon Creek near Oakridge on Mar 26 and Apr 10 (Mary Lee Sayre). A female with two young was along Salmon Creek on Jul 10 (Cathy Olson et al.) and five young were on Coal Creek above Hills Creek Reservoir on Jul 13 (Neil Bjorklund). Very few recent records of breeding have been found in the Lane County Cascades recently. Harlequin Duck (not found in Yamhill County since 1984) were seen on the upper reach of the Nestucca River near the Yamhill-Tillamook County line by fishery biologists (reported to PTS). Two Surf Scoters appeared at Sheridan Sewage Treatment Ponds (SSTP) on Oct 20 (David Irons) and were also seen on Oct 21 (PTS) and on Oct 22 (RG). Tom Love found one Common Goldeneye at SSTP on Nov 22. A Red-breasted Merganser was seen at Huddleston Pond, Willamina, on Oct 21 by Jim and Jeannette Scott, for the first Yamhill County record. Don Berg and RG re-found it on Oct 22. Another was reported on the Salem Christmas Bird Count on Dec 14 on a pond at RiverBend Materials gravel works (Marion County), a first for that circle, reported to Harry Fuller (HF). An adult and young Ruddy Duck were found at Gold Lake on Aug 8 (Kit Larsen), for one of a very few breeding records for Lane County.

On Jun 23 a Mountain Quail brought nine tiny chicks to the yard of Steven Burock and Pamela Johnston (PJ), 5 miles northwest of McMinnville. It exhibited protective behavior, covering the chicks with its wings and body. They continued through Oct 20. A Red-necked Grebe, the fourth record in Yamhill County, was at SSTP on Oct 21 (PTS) and on Oct 22 (RG). Eared Grebe were seen there by twos and threes on Sep 13, Sep 23, Oct 21, and Nov 18, all detected by PTS. A Western Grebe was reported from SSTP on Oct 21 by PTS. A Clark’s Grebe was seen at ANWR on May 2 by David Hargreaves. A Clark’s Grebe at a farm pond on Salt Creek Rd. on Jul 29 (PTS, Bill Tice, HF) was a first Yamhill County record. It was also seen on Jul 30 (Bill Tice, Dave Berg) and on Jul 31 (Erik Bergman).
A Black-necked Stilt appeared at ANWR on Apr 21, seen by the Salem Audubon Society field trip led by MU. Another was found on Jul 26 at SSTP by PTS and Tom Love, the first since 2009. At ANWR, David Irons detected a flock of 20 Whimbrel on May 5. A flock of 22 Whimbrel were observed near the Eugene airport on Apr 25 (John Sullivan), one of the larger flocks reported from inland Lane County.

For the second fall in a row, a HUDSONIAN GODWIT was found at Fern Ridge Reservoir (FRR), this time on Sep 17 (Gerry Meenagh). It was Lane County’s third record. The Red Knot found at FRR on Aug 28 by Russ Namitz was one of very few inland records for Lane County. On that same day Russ Namitz also found a Ruff at FRR, which is almost annual in the fall at this location. A Stilt Sandpiper was found by Russ Namitz on Aug 12 at Pintail Marsh of ANWR and sightings continued until Oct 7. The CURLEW SANDPIPER found at FRR on Jul 22 by Anne and Dan Heyerly was one of very few inland reports. The Aug 17 Sanderling at FRR (Joshua Little) was another rare inland report. John Sullivan found a Western Sandpiper at FRR on Feb 22 for a rare winter sighting. A Short-billed Dowitcher was at ANWR on Aug 21 with about 15 Long-billed Dowitchers (RG). Five Lesser Yellowlegs at Meadowlark Prairie on Mar 24 was a large number for such an early date (Alan Contreras et al.).

Willet is a rare bird in Lane County, so one at Danebo Pond on Jul 28 (Barbara Combs) was quite unusual. Four juvenile Wilson’s Phalaropes appeared at ANWR on Jul 24 (RG). On Jul 26 one was at SSTP (PTS, Tom Love). Tom Love coincidentally saw the first Yamhill County record there on Jul 31, 1984.

A Black-legged Kittiwake was photographed in a Eugene parking lot on Feb 15 (Nancy Clogston), for a rare inland sighting. Two Franklin’s Gulls were found by Sally Hill at FRR on Aug 13, where they’re occasionally seen in the late summer. Alton Baker Park in Eugene was an unusual location for two Caspian Terns seen on Sept 22 (Roger Robb). On Jun 9, during a Salem Audubon Society trip to Minto-Brown Island Park (Marion County), MU noted a Caspian Tern flying over the Willamette River.

American White Pelicans were at ANWR in small numbers, with one found on May 15 and on Aug 18 by RG. The Salem Audubon Society field trip led by Paul Davis, Kay Fagan, and Fred Stephens counted 20 on Aug 20. The Cattle Egret at FRR on Apr 23 (Noah Strycker) was only the seventh Lane County record since 2000 and the fourth breeding season bird. The older records for Lane County were almost exclusively in the winter months. A rare spring sighting of a Black-crowned Night-Heron was from Alton Baker park on May 23 (Elias Zuniga). The White-faced Ibis at FRR on Sep 4 was a rare non-spring sighting (Eughan Gormley).

White-tailed Kites were present on John and Linda Fink’s East Cascades Audubon Society Raptor Route on Jan 7, Feb 5, Nov 13, and Dec 3 along two stretches: Fendall and Tindle Roads; and Ft. Hill, Tenbush, and Allen Roads. They found from one to three birds per visit at these sites.

The first two Band-tailed Pigeons of the year came to Steven Burock and PJ’s feeder 5 miles northwest of McMinnville on Mar 5. The last bird there was a lone juvenile on Oct 21. At least seven Band-tailed Pigeons showed up in John Thomas’s backyard near Silverton (Marion County) on Apr 28.

Ed McVicker and Bob Lockett saw a YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO in Willamette Greenway State Park at Grand Island (Yamhill County). It didn’t call despite playback and was not re-found—this elusive species is rare in the public lands along the river.

A Common Nighthawk flew over Roger Freeman’s home outside Silverton (Marion County) on May 27 and on Jun 9. Between those sightings, John Polo heard nighthawk peents near the Detroit U.S. Forest Service ranger station on May 29. On Jun 13 PTS saw one at dusk in south McMinnville (Yamhill County). Evening bird walks by the Salem Audubon Society at Minto-Brown Island Park (Marion County) produced five on Jul 19 (Barbara Dolan), and eight on Aug 15 (MU).

The sky was swarming with hundreds of Vaux’s Swifts over the Center St. Bridge, Salem, on Apr 20 (RG). Vaux’s Swifts descended into the chimney of McMinnville Co-operative Ministries nightly between Aug 26 and Sep 4, with a peak count of at least a thousand on Sep 1 (HF). Vaux’s Swift roosting continued, with a peak count of 3,150 going into the chimney behind Palace Theater on High St., Silverton, on Sep 22, the largest group Grant Canterbury and John Thomas had seen locally. Two male Costa’s Hummingbirds were found on Apr 17, one in the Creswell area (Hydie Lown) and the other in the River Road area of Eugene (Barbara Combs). There are less than 15 records for Lane County.

Tufted Duck. Photo by W. Douglas Robinson.
Mike Patterson was at Mt. Hebo when he saw a Golden Eagle inside the Yamhill County line on Sep 11. On Apr 30, David Mandell observed a Swainson’s Hawk in flight between Salem and Woodburn (Marion County). A Swainson’s Hawk was seen by Mark Nikas in west Eugene on May 2, during the time of year when most of the Lane County records have occurred. One Rough-legged Hawk was along the Ft. Hill, Tenbush, and Allen Rd. segment of John and Linda Fink’s raptor route on Mar 5.

The first Burrowing Owl seen in Lane County for a number of years was seen on Nov 1 in the Eugene airport area (Dave Jones). Great Gray Owls are being detected at more Oregon sites. A Great Gray Owl was seen by Jim Reed on Apr 2 in the Jasper area, an area where they have been seen in the past. HF and a BLM biologist heard a male calling repeatedly in a dense forest of young Douglas fir and maple trees in northeast Marion County on May 13. On Jan 26, Josh Spice heard a calling Long-eared Owl in the FRR area, a rarely found/heard owl in the county. A Long-eared Owl was seen along Coffin Butte Rd. (Benton County) on the afternoon of March 1 by Alex Farrand. A Long-eared Owl was seen in flight, coming from an ash grove near the Rail Trail at ANWR, on Dec 23 (RG). Short-eared Owls were seen near McMinnville Airport (Yamhill County) on Nov 15 (PTS) and on Nov 19 (HF).

A Lewis’s Woodpecker graced the Silverton Christmas Bird Count for the first time in over 20 years on Dec 26 when one was located by Roger Freeman and Joe Blowers in an oak grove near Riches Rd. (Marion County). The Yamhill Valley Christmas Bird Count’s first two Lewis’s Woodpeckers were both seen on Dec 27 south of Amity: one on Old Bethel Rd. (Grant and Karen Hoyt); the other on Perrydale Rd. (PJ). Both were re-found on Dec 28 by PTS. During the Eugene Christmas Bird Count on Dec 29 a male Williamson’s Sapsucker was found south of FRR for a first Lane County valley sighting (Holly Hardman). An adult male Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (photo right) was discovered a little east of FRR on Mar 26 (Noah Strycker). There are about 10 records of this species in Lane County. The Yellow-bellied Sapsucker first seen in 2018 returned to Linda Fink’s Grand Ronde Agency orchard from Nov 7 to Nov 17.

A GyrFalcon was reported from Irish Bend Loop west of Peoria Rd. (Linn County) on March 1 by Jeff Fleischer. It was relocated a few miles southeast of there the next day, and there was speculation that it might be an individual that was seen in the general vicinity in February 2017. A Peregrine Falcon was on Gun Club Rd. (Yamhill County) on Dec 26 (Grant and Karen Hoyt).

Willow Flycatchers usually show up after nesting season at Wennerberg Park, Carlton (Yamhill County), and they were seen again this year on Aug 9 (HF). Hammond’s Flycatchers were detected at Silverton on Apr 2 (Grant Canterbury), and at Joryville County Park (Marion County) on Apr 24 (RG). Access to Detroit Flats at the upper end of Detroit Reservoir was limited this spring, and the only flycatcher report from this oasis was of a Gray Flycatcher reported on May 18 (RG). High numbers of Gray Flycatchers were reported in the Eugene/Springfield area this spring by multiple observers.

Black Phoebes are reliably found in the Willamette Valley, and are being found at new sites, including: SSTP between April and September (PTS); Huddleston Fishing Pond in Willamina on Sep 3 (PTS); the field behind the McMinnville hospital on Nov 3 (PTS); near Dayton on Sep 3, Nov 29, and Dec 5 (PJ); along Agency Creed Rd. on March 31 (Linda Fink); on Rock Creek Rd. on Nov 13 (Linda Fink); and at ANWR between April 21 and Nov 30 (multiple observers). Say’s Phoebes were seen on Yamhill Rd. on Mar 11 and on Nov 11 (PJ); at Ash Swale on Nov 2 (HF); along Buena Vista Rd. (Marion County) on Nov 4 (RG), and at ANWR on Dec 4 (RG). The first breeding-season Say’s Phoebe in Lane County was reported on Jun 16 at Jasper Park (Barbara Combs).

A very early Western Kingbird was seen at FRR on Mar 29 (Dave Jones). Western Kingbirds were reported at Sunnyview Rd. and 117th St., east of Salem, on Apr 25 (RG) and at the usual nesting site on Moores Valley Rd. (Yamhill County) on May 16 (PTS). Grant and Karen Hoyt saw up to four birds at once on Meadowlake Rd. west of Carlton from Jul 12 to Jul 22, the first they have seen in the 11 years they have lived nearby.

A Loggerhead Shrike was seen at FRR on Apr 28 (Sally Hill) for the first report in six years. Northern Shrikes were seen at ANWR on Oct 11 (Susan Kirkbride); along Buena Vista Rd. on Oct 19 (RG); at Pintail Marsh on Nov 30 (RG); and at Fulquartz Landing Rd. and Riverwood Rd. on Dec 26 (Grant and Karen Hoyt).

![Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. Photo by Maitreya.](image)
Red-eyed Vireos are reliable in early June on Grand Island, south of Dayton (Yamhill County), where they were found on June 4 (RG) and on Jun 10 (PTS) along the fisherman’s trail through the woods to the river. Three male and one female Purple Martins passed through the Hunsaker Rd. wetlands (Marion County) on Apr 5 (RG). Red-eyed Vireos breed along the Willamette River just upstream from Eugene, but the Jun 30 sighting at Finn Rock Reach along the upper McKenzie River moves their breeding area quite a ways into the lower Cascades (Roger Robb).

A Blue Jay was photographed in the River Road area of Eugene on Nov 18 (reported to Pam Comeleo)—there are less than 20 records for Lane County. There were two fall reports of Clark’s Nutcrackers in the valley, where they’re rare any time of the year: at Spencer Butte on Oct 4 (reported to Larry McQueen); and in the Creswell area on Oct 11 (Sally Nelson).

A very late report of a Northern Rough-winged Swallow was from FRR on Oct 1 (Jay Withgott). Barn Swallows departed Yamhill County in massive flocks, detected by radar during their morning fly-outs from the cornfields. Aug 22 was the beginning of fall roosting on Dorsey Rd., south of Dayton, where PTS counted 5,000 birds. By Aug 24, 15,000 birds were there, but by Aug 30 they had moved and were next seen on radar on Grand Island and another site south of Newberg. In the midst of migration, MU noted that the Willamette River at Keizer Rapids Park (Marion County) was extremely busy with hundreds of swallows on Sep 9. Thousands were gathering on Grand Island in September, and as late as Oct 11, the fly-out of Barn Swallows before sunrise in the extreme southeast corner of Yamhill County was still visible on radar (PTS).

The only Mountain Chickadee report outside of their high Cascades habitat was from Veneta on Dec 9 (reported to Rachael Friese).

The Pygmy Nuthatch found at the upper end of Hills Creek reservoir on May 25 was a very rare occurrence in Lane County, given that there are less than five records (Doug Robinson). House Wrens were seen much later in the year than normal, at FRR on Nov 5 (Thomas Czubek), and at the West D Street greenway in Springfield on Nov 28 (John Sullivan). Blue-gray Gnatcatchers nested again at Mt. Pisgah (multiple observers). A Mountain Bluebird was found near FRR on Feb 2 (Alan Contreras) and a pair was in the same area on Mar 3 (Kara Greer), and seen through mid month by multiple observers. Wrentits continued their two steps forward, one step back movement eastward. They were seen along Muddy Valley Rd. (Yamhill County) on Apr 25 and on May 17 (PTS, Roshana Shockley); at NW Gerrish Valley Rd. and Mt. Richmond Rd. on May 17 (Ken Chamberlain); at Minto-Brown Island Park on Aug 28 (Paul Evans, Kay Fagan, Fred Stephens); and north of Peavine Rd. and Youngberg Hill Rd. (Yamhill County) on Dec 26 (PTS).

Multiple parties of birders saw Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches near the summit of Mary’s Peak (Benton County) starting with a sighting on Oct 27 by Isaac Denzer—the most birds seen at one time were 13 reported by Pam Otley on Oct 31. Reports continued through Nov 15 (Nolan Clements, Caleb Centanni). The species has been regular there since the early 1970s, according to Lars Norgren. Pine Siskins were reported from Sep 9 through December in the strikingly low numbers of one each at the home feeders of HF, Linda Fink, PJ, and PTS. On Nov 16–17 a flock of Lesser Goldfinches came to Linda Fink’s home at Grande Ronde Agency, very unusual for that location (Yamhill County).

The Oakridge sighting of a Lapland Longspur on Mar 11 was unusual for both its location and time of year (Mary Lee Sayre). RG heard a Lapland Longspur call from a large grain stubble field on Wintel Rd. at ANWR on Apr 2. A Chestnut-collared Longspur (photo left) was discovered on Mar 13 by RG along Blueberry Rd. (Linn County), associating with a Snow Bunting, Lapland Longspur, Horned Larks, and American Pipits.
Multiple observers reported it through Apr 5. A Chestnut-collared Longspur was also reported nearby on Dec 23 (Adrian Hinkle, Hendrik Herlyn, Oscar Harper).

Lark Sparrow is an almost annual spring migrant to Lane County, so the one found in Eugene on May 16 was not too unusual (Nancy Clogston). A rare spring Brewer’s Sparrow was found in the Creswell area on Mar 23 (Noah Strycker). An American Tree Sparrow was reported at Baskett Slough National Wildlife Refuge (Polk County) on Mar 9 (Linnaea Basden). The American Tree Sparrow found at FRR on Nov 8 (Pat Snyder) was at a normal location for this almost annual late-fall migrant. A singing White-throated Sparrow was found at Berggren Watershed preserve on June 27 (Roger Robb)—was it on territory or just a late migrant? A very early Vesper Sparrow was found in Oakridge on Mar 19 (Alan Contreras et al.).

Green-tailed Towhees are normally post-breeding birds in the high Cascades of Lane County, so one in the Blair Lake area on Jun 8 was quite unusual (Forest Tomlinson).

The eighth record of Bobolink for Lane County was found at FRR on Sep 8 (Hendrik Herlyn et al.). A Hooded Oriole was photographed coming to a hummingbird feeder in London Springs, southeast of Cottage Grove, on Apr 20 (Laurie Anderson). There are about 10 records of Tricolored Blackbirds for Lane County, including the three from this year. On Feb 3 at least one was found in the large blackbird flock at a feedlot on Crow Rd. (Sally Hill). On Sep 6 one was found at FRR (Sally Hill), and on Nov 24 another was found there—the same location and time of year as most of the records.

A Black-and-white Warbler was found in west Eugene on Sep 1 (Josh Spice), for about the tenth Lane County record. A late-in-the-year Common Yellowthroat was found at Delta Ponds on Nov 3 (Rachael Friese, Tim Johnson).

Hooded Warbler. Photo by Jamie Simmons.

A HOODED WARBLER (photo above left) was discovered in Willamette Park, Corvallis, by Duncan Evered on May 13 and was only seen until the following day. In the last few years, Black-throated Gray Warblers have been found during the winter, and this year another one was found at West Lawn Cemetery on Jan 13 (Vjera Thompson). A very late-in-the-year Wilson’s Warbler was found at Jasper Park on Nov 30 (Forest Tomlinson, Torrey Gage-Tomlinson). A female Rose-breasted Grosbeak visited a feeder in Bruce Pratt’s Corvallis yard starting on Feb 24, and it was seen for over a month by multiple observers. Rose-breasted Grosbeaks are found in Lane County almost annually, normally in the late spring, so the one seen in Eugene on Mar 4 was earlier than normal (Sreedhar Thakkum). A male Rose-breasted Grosbeak (photo above) was found on Bald Hill (Benton County) on Jun 5 by Bill Proebsting and it remained in the area for at least 10 days. A Black-headed Grosbeak was coming to a Eugene feeder on Jan 2 (reported to Larry McQueen)—they’re found during the winter about every other year in Lane County.

ABBREVIATIONS:
(HF) Harry Fuller
(MU) Mike Unger
(PJ) Pamela Johnston
(RG) Roy Gerig
(PTS) Paul Sullivan
(ANWR) Ankeny National Wildlife Refuge, Marion County
(FRR) Fern Ridge Reservoir, Lane County
(SSTP) Sheridan Sewage Treatment Ponds, Yamhill County

Editor’s note: Most of the field reporting for the 2019 Willamette Valley Field Notes came from Yamhill and Marion Counties (Pamela Johnston) and interior Lane County (Tom Mickel). The Oregon Birds editors are seeking field notes reporters for Benton, Linn, and Polk Counties for 2020.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Photo by Pam Otley.
The Rogue-Umpqua region had a handful of local rarities along with a few state rarities in 2019, prompting more Oregon birders to visit southern Oregon locales than in recent years.

A male Black-chinned Hummingbird was seen in Medford on Sep 6 (Jeff Tufts). Two Costa’s Hummingbirds were noted in the region, one in Eagle Point on Sep 9 (Howard Sands) and one at a residence outside Grants Pass (Josephine County) on Oct 24 (Rob Santry).

A Long-billed Curlew was spotted in the meadows near Howard Prairie (Jackson County) on Apr 14 (Rene Allen, Sammie Peat). A Semipalmated Sandpiper was seen on Aug 27 at Plat I Reservoir near Sutherlin (Douglas County) by Russ Namitz.

A Mew Gull was out at Lost Creek Lake (Jackson County) on Oct 1 (Janet Kelly, Gary Shaffer, Jim Livaudais). A Glaucous-winged Gull was seen near the Cole Fish Hatchery below Lost Creek Dam on Oct 10 (Norm Barrett). Two Common Terns were at Lost Creek Lake on Oct 6 (Courtney Kelly Jett, Janet Kelly).

A Snowy Egret was reported from Tussing Park outside Grants Pass (Josephine County) on Jun 18 (Cliff Peterson) and another was at Fish Lake (Jackson County) on Sep 2 (Brenda Miller). Two White-faced Ibis were at Kirtland Ponds (Jackson County) on Apr 28 (Gary Shaffer) and a single was at Denman Wildlife Area’s Ave. G Ponds on May 1 (Jim Livaudais).

A migrating Swainson’s Hawk was over Agate Desert on Mar 20 (Alex Lamoreaux). A Burrowing Owl was found at Agate Lake (Jackson County) on Feb 9 (Jon Cox) and continued at least until Mar 12 (Violet Lospalluto). Burrowing Owls bred in the Rogue Valley in the first half of the twentieth century and were a common winter visitor just a few decades ago, but they are no longer common here.

A Red-naped Sapsucker was reported from outside Trail on Feb 10 (Christy Pitt). A female American Three-toed Woodpecker was found in the trees near Thousand Springs Sno-Park (Jackson County) on Apr 24 (Howard Sands).

A Prairie Falcon was seen on Dec 26 on Fort McKay Rd., near Oakland (Douglas County) by Russ Namitz.

Two Gray Flycatchers were photographed at Mildred Kanipe Park near Oakland on Apr 28 by Ken Burton. There was a sighting of a Say’s Phoebe on Feb 8 by Keith Phifer at Ford’s Pond outside of Sutherlin (Douglas County).

An Eastern Kingbird was seen at Emigrant Lake Park on Jun 7 (Roxanna Tessman) and again on Jun 8 (Amanda Alford). Another Eastern Kingbird was seen at Ford’s Pond on Sep 7 by Kenneth Phifer.
A **Red-eyed Vireo** was detected during a point-count survey on the Rogue River Preserve on Jun 16 (Frank Lospalluto). This bird was found very near Dodge County Park, where a small breeding population existed in the 1970s. A group of Horned Larks were seen flying near the base of Mt. Thielsen (Douglas County) on Sep 21 by Russ Namitz. Photographs of a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher were taken near Days Creek on May 13 by Russ Namitz.

A **Gray Catbird** was in the willows near the boat ramp at Willow Lake on Sep 18 (Susan Thornburg). A bird seen by dozens of Oregon birders was the cooperative **CALIFORNIA THRASHER** (*photo right*) in Talent, first heard by two Southern Oregon University Environmental Education students, who informed their professor, Stewart Janes. The bird was observed at the beginning of April and last reported near the end of July. This was the sixth state record.

A Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch was seen by Russ Namitz near the base of Mt. Thielsen on Sep 21. Ralph Browning found a **LITTLE BUNTING** on Oct 4 in a willow clump on the Medco A flats near Lost Creek Lake—alas, he was the only observer and no photo was obtained. A **Lark Bunting** spent a few days along the Ashland Bike Path on Jan 23 (Andrew Partin). This was a third record for Jackson County.

A **Clay-colored Sparrow** was spotted by two Portland birders at Lost Creek Lake on Oct 17 (Joshua Meyers, Linnaea Basden). An **American Tree Sparrow** was found at Denman Wildlife Area’s Ave G and H Ponds on Jan 10 and stayed until late March. A Swamp Sparrow, another scarce visitor, was seen on Mar 17 by Matthew Hunter at Ford’s Pond. Matthew Hunter saw a group of at least two males and one female **Tri-colored Blackbirds** on Stearns Lane in Oakland on Jan 13.

An **American Redstart** (*photo below*) spent most of January near Ashland Pond; it was first noted on Jan 1 (Jennifer Butler). An immature **Blackpoll Warbler** in fresh fall plumage was photographed at Plat I Reservoir near Sutherlin on Sep 13 by Russ Namitz. A **Palm Warbler** was found on Dec 29, 2018 during the Ashland Christmas Bird Count near the Imperatrice Property, and it continued into early January 2019. This was only the second record for Palm Warbler in Jackson County. A **Summer Tanager** was seen near Roseburg on Jul 2 by Kenneth Phifer.
very large flock of 30,000 Snow Geese was observed from the Boardman Marina and RV Park (Morrow County) by Adrian Hinkle and Em Scattaregia on Jan 4. In past years up to 120,000 Snow Geese have been observed along the Morrow County section of the Columbia River. On Nov 4, Aaron Beerman found a single Ross’s Goose with roughly 8,000 Snow Geese at Cold Springs National Wildlife Refuge (Umatilla County). Two Trumpeter Swans were observed at McKay Creek National Wildlife Refuge (Umatilla County) on Mar 22 (Diana LaSarge, Aaron Skirvin). Eurasian Wigeons were present in Umatilla County during the winter months and spring migration. A pair of Harlequin Ducks was in Jennings Creek near Indian Lake on May 8 (Craig Kvern), for only the sixth report of this species in Umatilla County. Mark Ludwick found the only reported Surf Scoter in Umatilla County at Hat Rock State Park on Oct 22. Most years several are seen during fall migration on or near the Columbia River in Umatilla County. Umatilla County’s fourth record of Black Scoter was found at Warehouse Beach Recreation Area on Jan 4 (Mark Ludwick). Common Goldeneyes nested at Langdon Lake near Tollgate in Umatilla County. These ducks have nested annually on this lake since at least 2004. A female Red-breasted Merganser at McKay Creek National Wildlife Refuge on May 10 (Aaron Skirvin) was an unusual spring record for the region.

Morrow County’s first record of YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO was found by Neal Hinds at the Boardman Marina and RV Park on Sep 17. Several White-throated Swifts returned to their nesting cliffs at three locations west of Rieth. Anna’s Hummingbirds were present in Umatilla County from January through February and from September to early December. On Oct 12, three were reported by Robert Sallee just south of Milton Freewater. Morrow County saw only one report of Anna’s Hummingbird, which came from the Boardman Marina and RV Park on Sep 18 (Aaron Beerman). A raft of roughly 30,000 American Coots were found by Adrian Hinkle and Em Scattaregia at the Boardman Marina and RV Park on Jan 4.

After only three reports of Black-bellied Plovers in Umatilla County in fall 2018, this plover returned in larger numbers in fall 2019. On Oct 9, Aaron Skirvin reported 17 at Cold Springs, and 18 were seen at this location on Oct 13 by Carolyn Featherston. Morrow County generally has few shorebird reports during fall migration, and in 2019 had only three reports, each of one bird. On Oct 7, Trent Bray saw an American Golden-Plover at Cold Springs National Wildlife Refuge. Neal Hinds found a single Marbled Godwit on Jul 6 and another on Aug 13, both at McKay Creek National Wildlife Refuge. Most years, a few Sanderlings are reported from Cold Springs National Wildlife Refuge and McKay Creek National Wildlife Refuge during fall migration, but no Sanderlings were reported in 2019. A Short-billed Dowitcher was found on Emert Rd. (Umatilla County) on Apr 28 (Mark Ludwick). A Willet was found on agricultural land several miles north of Carty Reservoir (Morrow County) on May 23 (Pete Szasz). Rick Bennett found a Sabine’s Gull at the McNary Dam on Oct 3, and this bird was last reported on Oct 6. One Franklin’s Gull was reported at the McNary Dam on Aug 6 (Mark Ludwick); one was at the Ukiah sewage treatment ponds (Umatilla County) on May 24 (Terry Little); four adults were at McKay Creek National Wildlife Refuge on May 28 (Aaron Skirvin); and one was on agricultural land several miles north of Carty Reservoir in Morrow County on Sep 23 (Pete Szasz). A “Thayer’s” Iceland Gull was seen at the McNary Dam on Nov 17 (Nick Mrvelj) and another was observed at the Boardman Marina and RV Park on Dec 31 (Nolan Clements, Steve Clements, Arlene Blumton). Mark Ludwick saw a Common Tern at Warehouse Beach Recreation Area on Aug 26, and at least nine were at McKay Creek National Wildlife Refuge on Sep 3 (Aaron Skirvin).

Two Pacific Loons were present below the McNary Dam on Nov 4 (Russ Morgan, Dave Trochlell). Several observers reported the loons through Nov 24, with the highest count (six) recorded by Trent Bray on Nov 8. A Black-crowned Night-Heron was present on Dec 28 in Pendleton within the Umatilla County Christmas Bird Count circle, which does not include McNary Wildlife Nature Area where they winter in numbers, making this a notable sighting. A White-faced Ibis was seen on Jun 6 at Cold Springs National Wildlife Refuge (Neal Hinds).

A very early Turkey Vulture was seen by Dolly Robison northwest of Hermiston on Jan 18. The vulture was photographed the next day, and this is the only January record for the region. A Red-shouldered Hawk, Umatilla County’s seventh record, was found by Carolyn Featherston northeast of Charlestown on Jan 28. Another was reported from the McNary Wildlife Nature Area by Paul Sullivan on Mar 1. It is unclear if these were two separate individuals. Terry Little reported hearing a remarkable seven Flammulated Owls on May 17 along a 3-mile stretch of road west of Ukiah.
These birds hung around for several other birders to enjoy. One of Umatilla County’s only records of Snow Bunting was found amongst Horned Larks by Mark Ludwick, Jack Simons, and Aaron Skirvin northwest of Nye on Feb 16.

A Clay-colored Sparrow with a brood patch was along Gurdane Rd. on Jun 24 and marked the first record for the Umatilla County (Diana LaSarge, Aaron Skirvin). Five Harris’s Sparrows were found throughout the winter and fall months. McNary Wildlife Nature Area was home to a White-throated Sparrow in the late winter and another in the fall. Diana LaSarge and Aaron Skirvin found a Sagebrush Sparrow on the western portion of Coombs Canyon Rd. on Mar 11. Sagebrush Sparrows are not known to breed in Umatilla County, and this is the first report of this species in Umatilla County since 2015. A Swamp Sparrow was found by Laurie Ness and Patrick Paulson at McNary Wildlife Nature Area on Nov 16. Summer reports of Green-tailed Towhees from the Umatilla County portion of the Blue Mountains indicate that they are probably breeding on brushy south-facing slopes. Morrow County had a single report of Green-tailed Towhee from Anson Wright Park on May 18 (Craig Miller).

Tricolored Blackbirds (photo below) were present, but in small numbers, at the Tower Rd. Ponds colony in Morrow County. One was observed with a flock of 3,000 blackbirds in agricultural fields east of Boardman on Dec 31 (Nolan Clements, Steve Clements, Arlene Blumton).

These birds hung around for several other birders to enjoy. One of Umatilla County’s only records of Snow Bunting was found amongst Horned Larks by Mark Ludwick, Jack Simons, and Aaron Skirvin northwest of Nye on Feb 16.
Central Oregon is high desert country, but we often have sightings of rare water birds. The biggest waterfowl story of 2019 was the discovery of a TUNDRA BEAN-GOOSE at the Crooked River Wetlands in Prineville on Apr 19 by Aaron Beerman. It stayed until May 3, and was only the third record for this species in Oregon. On the more mundane waterfowl front, Cackling Geese were reported on just over 10 occasions with a high count of 37 reported at Tumalo Reservoir on Sep 26 by Courtney Kelly Jett (CKJ) and Matt Cahill. Wild Trumpeter Swans were spotted mostly in Crook County, but a lone bird was seen at Haystack Reservoir in Jefferson County on May 12 by Chuck Gates (CG), and another was on the Redmond Sewage Ponds on Halloween (David Vick).

Over a dozen Eurasian Wigeons were found during the year and at least two American Wigeon X Eurasian Wigeon hybrids were also noted at the Crooked River Wetlands (CG). Nine Greater Scaup were seen at Wickiup Reservoir on Oct 20 by Peter Low (PL) and smaller numbers were noted on several water features throughout the cold months. 2018 saw record numbers of Surf Scoters but 2019 was a more normal year with 25 reports and a high count of 31 at Wickiup Reservoir on Oct 20 (PL). White-winged Scoters were spotted six times and four different birds were recorded at Crane Prairie Reservoir on Oct 26 (PL). Two Long-tailed Ducks were seen at Wickiup Reservoir on Nov 16 (PL) and another turned up at the Prineville Sewage Ponds on Nov 28 (Russ Namitz). At least seven different Red-breasted Merganser reports came from Wickiup Reservoir (PL), Hatfield Lake (PL), Suttle Lake (Aaron Beerman, Gloria Beerman), Haystack Reservoir (JJ), and Prineville Reservoir (Russ Namitz).

Central Oregon has been a mecca for upland game bird hunting since many of these birds were introduced early in the last century, but that is changing. Despite steady drops in the numbers of hunters, habitat loss continues to cause decreases in overall populations with several species nearing extirpation. Two Mountain Quail were reported at Lake Billy Chinook on Jan 1 (Kevin Smith) and 11 miles north of Sisters on May 28 (Sue Tank). Chukars were found by six birders in five locations but Gray Partridge was only seen once, near Lone Rock Ranch in Wheeler County on June 15 (Paul Adamus). Dusky Grouse continue to be scarce with single bird reports coming in from Lookout Mountain on Jul 19 (Pam Scranton, Chris Scranton) and the Mill Creek Wilderness on Sep 19 (Nancy Stotz). Greater Sage-Grouse were at the Millican Lek on Apr 9 (Will Wright), on Beaver Creek Rd. in Crook County on Sep 14 (Tyler Groo), and on Pine Mountain Rd. (probably the same birds as the Millican Lek) on Sep 4 (Bill Tice), but numbers have dwindled to nearly zero. Band-tailed Pigeons, on the other hand, are on the rise with six reports coming in from six locations.

Both Red-necked and Horned Grebes were reported over a dozen times from multiple locations. The less-common Clark’s Grebes were seen at Houston Lake on May 7 by Mark Gonzales; at Wickiup on Oct 1 and Nov 2 by CKJ, Matt Cahill, Evan Thomas (ET), and PL; at Prineville Reservoir on Oct 2 and Oct 16 by Neil O’Hara and Wayne Bowers; and at Hatfield Lake on Nov 29 by PL.

It’s always worth noting when an unusual swift or hummingbird shows up. Black Swifts were sighted at the Bend Riverhouse on Aug 15 (Dawn Villaescusa), the Bend Boys and Girls Club on Sep 5 (Judy Meredith), and in Warm Springs on Oct 26 (Damon Pritchett). Black-chinned Hummingbirds are expected in Crook and Jefferson Counties, but Deschutes County is different. Single birds were seen at feeders in Sisters on May 14 (Kristen Tackmier), Cody Rd. in Bend on May 23 (Jack Souhrada), Deschutes River Woods on Jun 15 (Jim Moodie), and River Bluff Trail on Aug 2 (CKJ).

Stilt Sandpiper. Photo by Chuck Gates.
Shorebirds and rails use local water features to nest and fuel up while on their migratory routes. Surprisingly, **Yellow Rail** was in nesting habitat near Sunriver on May 13 (Matt Cahill). Single Black-bellied Plovers were noted at the Crooked River Wetlands on Apr 20 (PL), Wickiup Reservoir on Aug 8 (CKJ), and again at Wickiup on Aug 20 (PL). One **Pacific Golden-plover** was spotted at Wickiup on Jul 6 (PL). A **Whimbrel** was located at Tumalo Reservoir on Aug 28 (PL) for only the eighth Deschutes County record. Marbled Godwits were found at Wickiup on Jul 8 (Chris Scranton, CKJ) and in Powell Butte on Sep 20 (Cindy Zalunardo).

A rare (fourth Crook County record) **Stilt Sandpiper** (*photo previous page*) was recorded at the Crooked River Wetlands on Aug 19 (Craig Bennett, Alec McDonnell). Sanderlings were reported twice this fall: at the Crooked River Wetlands on Aug 12 (David Vick); and at Wickiup Reservoir on Sep 3 (CKJ). Semipalmated Sandpipers were noted over 30 times at four locations (Crooked River Wetlands, Wickiup Reservoir, Hatfield Lake, and a single record from Lake Billy Chinook) and by almost 30 observers. Short-billed Dowitchers were discovered at Hatfield Lake on May 9 (Mathew Bowman), Jul 21 (Tom Crabtree), Oct 5 (PL), and at Wickiup Reservoir on Aug 10 (PL). Bill Tice saw a Solitary Sandpiper on Sep 2, and at least 12 different Solitary Sandpipers visited during the fall.

The only local jaeger record of the year was a **Parasitic Jaeger** seen at Davis Lake on Sep 21 (CKJ, Caleb Centanni). A very rare spring **Sabine’s Gull** was seen at Hatfield Lake on Apr 7 (CM) and a more-expected fall bird was at Crane Prairie on Sep 15 (PL). There were eight reports of Franklin’s Gulls with a high count of six birds at Hatfield Lake on Jun 2 (Bryan Lanning). October brought reports of seven Herring gulls, and one **Glaucous-winged Gull** was found at Wickiup Reservoir on Oct 28 (Tom Crabtree). Nesting Black Terns returned to Paulina Valley after being absent for two drought years (Char Corkran, CG, Diane Burgess, Jan Howard) and other Black Terns visited Hatfield Lake on Jun 4 (CKJ) and Jul 2 (Jim Moodie). The only **Common Tern** report for the year came from Wickiup Reservoir on Sep 5 (W. Douglas Robinson).

Pacific Loons were spotted about a dozen times in 2019 but only one **Red-throated Loon** was seen, at Wickiup Reservoir on Sep 29 (PL). American Bitterns are annual at Houston Lake in Crook County but it was notable that there were single birds at Crooked River Wetlands on May 3 (Scott Ramos), Calliope Crossing near Sisters on May 12 (Erik Kershner, Michael Green), Rimrock Springs east of Culver on Jun 16 (W. Douglas Robinson), and Crane Prairie Reservoir on Aug 1 (Bill Tice).

Green Herons turned up on the Crooked River in Prineville on May 2 (Cindy Zalunardo), Suttle Lake on May 6 (Diane Burgess, Milton Vine, ET, Kara Jakse), on the Deschutes River near Dillon Falls on May 13 (David Reim), and at Crane Prairie on Aug 18 (Claire Weiser). One of the hardest herons to find in our region is the Black-crowned Night-heron and only two were found for all of 2019: at Crooked River Wetlands on Jun 30 by Craig Miller (CM); and at Haystack Reservoir on Sep 2 by Bill Tice.

Many interesting raptors were reported this year. Just under 50 Red-shouldered Hawks were tallied during 2019 with the bulk of the sightings occurring in August and September. At least two **Broad-winged Hawks** were noted on the East Cascades Audubon Green Ridge Hawkwatch on Sep 21 (PL). **Harlan’s Hawks** were discovered at Terrebonne on Nov 2 (CG), Pilot Butte in Bend on Nov 29 (PL), and Powell Butte on Dec 2 (CG).

A Barn Owl was heard in Bend on Oct 16 for a rare Deschutes County record (Matt Cahill) and a Burrowing Owl was seen east of Paulina on May 26 where they are not so unusual (Iain Tomlinson). Around 15 Barred Owls were reported from Deschutes County but only one pair was found in Crook County on Nov 12 (Jan Howard). A **Great Gray Owl** was seen at Camp Sherman on May 31 (Simon Kiacz) and another was seen in the Ochocos near Bandit Springs Rest Area on May 5 (reported to CG). A Long-eared Owl was heard calling west of Redmond on Jun 12 (Martin Stervander) while Short-eared Owl sightings occurred at Sunriver on Jun 18 (Diane Burgess), Powell Butte on Nov 8 (Dorothy Gates), Houston Lake on Nov 20, and near Alfalfa on Dec 27 (PL). Finally, a very rare **Boreal Owl** was heard calling near Charlton Lake on Aug 3 (CKJ, Caleb Centanni).

On the woodpecker front, some interesting sightings were made. An **Acorn Woodpecker** made an appearance in Sisters just in time for the Dean Hale Woodpecker Festival on May 30 (Allen Freudenthal). Around the same time, a leucistic *Sphyrapicus* sapsucker was being seen by dozens of birders at Calliope Crossing. American Three-toed Woodpeckers were tallied at Trout Creek Swamp on May 27 (Bob Sizoo, ET, Kara Jakse), at Soda Creek Campground on May 27 (Steve Shunk), at Sparks Lake on Jul 22 (Alec McDonnell), near Camp Sherman on Aug 2 (Curtis Bosket), at Three Creeks Lake on Nov 7 (CG, Don Sutherland), and along the Tumalo Falls Trail on Nov 17 (PL).

*Eastern Kingbird. Photo by Bob Sizoo.*
Though the species might be a little mundane, the location of a Pileated Woodpecker at the Prineville Cemetery on Nov 13 (Don Sutherland, Mark Gonzales) was without precedence.

**Least Flycatchers** were found along Winlock Rd. in Wheeler County on May 22 (Noah Strycker) and at Calliope Crossing on Jun 6 (Alan Mauer). An over-wintering **Black Phoebe** was at the Crooked River Wetlands on Jan 1 (Tom Crabtree) and this species was again at this location on Mar 22 (Don Sutherland), on Sep 25 (Cindy Zalunardo, Diane Burgess, Judy Meredith, Milton Vine), on Dec 6 (CG) and on Dec 31 (CM). Other Black Phoebes were found at Pelton Overlook in Warm Springs on Jan 16 (CG), Sunriver on Jul 27 (Diane Burgess, Tom Lawler), Tumalo Reservoir on Aug 28 (Tom Crabtree), Sawyer Park in Bend on Sep 23 (Brett Bohnert), and Tumalo Reservoir again on Sep 25 (ET). A Say’s Phoebe was photographed in Powell Butte late in the year, on Nov 28 (CG).

While annual in the other three counties of Central Oregon, **Eastern Kingbird** (photo previous page) is rare in Deschutes County, so single birds at Hatfield Lake on May 18 (Dick Williams), Hatfield on Jun 2 (Bryan Lanning), and Tumalo Reservoir on Jun 16 (Bob Sizoo, ET) were important to note. Central Oregon’s very first **Hutton’s Vireo** (photo below) was discovered at Bend’s Sawyer Park on Dec 7 (PL).

**Blue Jays** (photo next page) were in Bend on Nov 6 (Janice Farney), in a different part of Bend on Nov 8 (Damian Fagan), south of Prineville on Nov 9 (Scott Lewis), and west of Tumalo on Nov 21 (PL). Common Ravens rarely make the highlight reel but a kettle of over 250 was verified by a photograph north of Grizzly Butte on Jul 2 (Adrienne Smith). Black-capped Chickadees (near Warm Springs) and Chestnut-backed Chickadees (near the Cascade crest) were found in all of their historic locations by multiple observers. A **House Wren** was reported from Eagle Crest very late in the year, on Oct 10 (Michael Allendar) and a Bewick’s Wren turned up in Sisters on Dec 6 (Clay Crofton). Blue-gray Gnatcatchers were tallied at least 15 times at 10 locations and by multiple observers. Only Indian Ford Campground produced **Gray Catbirds**, on Jul 11 (Margaret Alcorn, Peter Zika) and Sep 11 (PL).

Three **Pine Grosbeaks** (photo next page) were photographed at Three Creeks Lake on Nov 13 (Mark Armstrong, Cindy Armstrong) and eight more were seen on Christmas Day off Skyliners Rd. west of Bend (PL). Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches were detected at nine locations with a high count of 40 on Summit Rd. in Crook County (CG). Purple Finches continue to be sporadically reported throughout the region and Lapland Longspurs were found eight times with a high count of 14 north of the Brothers Rest Area on Feb 22 (CKJ, Joel Tinsley). Two **Snow Buntings** turned up at Wickiup earlier than usual, on Oct 26 (PL).

A **Red Fox Sparrow** was documented in Powell Butte on Oct 12 (CG) and Jefferson County’s first **American Tree Sparrow** was seen north of Gateway on Dec 19 (Judy Meredith). Harris’s Sparrows were seen at Elliott Ln. near Prineville on Jan 9 (Howard Horvath), at the Old Mill in Bend on Jan 14 (Jim Moodie), on Karch Dr. in Bend on Feb 25 (Charlene Virts), in Gateway on March 23 (PL), and again at the Old Mill on Mar 31 (Alan Mauer). White-throated Sparrows were found at 10 different locations, but Swamp Sparrows turned up only at the Crooked River Wetlands on Jan 4 (CM, Marilyn Miller).

A Yellow-headed Blackbird was seen at Lower Bridge late in the year on Nov 30 (PL) and another was seen north of Prineville on Dec 3 (CG). Bobolinks continue to breed along Puett Rd. in eastern Crook County with a conservative high number of 20 recorded on Jul 14 (Mark Gonzales). Tricolored Blackbirds also were noted as breeding in the Prineville area with an unprecedented second clutch documented at the Crooked River Wetlands on Jul 31 (CG, CM, PL). A **COMMON GRACKLE** turned up in Redmond on May 16 (CM) while **Great-tailed Grackles** were noted at Alfalfa on May 7 (Vickie Buck) and Powell Butte on Jun 22 (Cindy Zalunardo).

On Aug 28, both **Northern Waterthrush** (Simon Kiacz) and **American Redstart** (PL) were discovered at Tumalo Reservoir. A **Palm Warbler** was found by visiting Florida birders on Nov 1 for a Jefferson County first record (David Goodwin, Erik Haney, Jim Eager) and a **Chestnut-sided Warbler** added to the rare bird frenzy at Tumalo Reservoir on Aug 30 (ET, Tom Lawler). A **Hermit Warbler** was recorded by Joe Geier at Barnhouse Campground on Jun 29 for an unusual Ochoco breeding record. It’s not unusual to find **Lazuli Bunting** in our area from May through August but a bird seen and heard north of Sisters by Sue Tank on March 15 was certainly bizarre.

**ABBREVIATIONS:**
(CG) Chuck Gates
(CKJ) Courtney Kelly Jett
(CM) Craig Miller
(ET) Evan Thomas

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**Oregon Birds Volume 46 (1) - 2020**
The annual meeting of the Oregon Birding Association (OBA) will take place September 11-13, 2020 in Astoria, Oregon. This will be our first joint meeting with our birding neighbors to the north, the Washington Ornithological Society (WOS).

A variety of field trips will take place in both Oregon and Washington, including pelagic trips out of Ilwaco, Washington.

Saturday night’s keynote speaker will be John Fitzpatrick, Ph.D., ornithologist and executive director of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. The Lab is a global pioneer in citizen science projects that now engage hundreds of thousands of public citizens in research on bird distribution, movements, and population trends.

Friday night we will join in a fun WOS tradition! Dennis Paulson and Shep Thorp will host “Stump the Experts,” a series of photographs featuring challenging instances of bird identification that one may encounter in the field, such as unusual lighting, movement, and peculiar plumages.

The conference will be held at the Clatsop County Fairgrounds in Astoria, with dinners catered by Fulio’s Pasteria. You may register for the meeting and field trips at the OBA website starting at the end of June. Check the OBA website https://oregonbirding.org for more information as it becomes available.

We look forward to seeing you in Astoria!

The OBA Board of Directors
The precipitation and snowpack were about normal or slightly above for the area in 2019. Summer temperatures were not extreme, and the air was smoke free during late summer and fall. Lake County seemed to have many more interesting bird observations in 2019, probably due to an increase in visitors.

Cackling Geese moved through Klamath County in early October, as evidenced by the 50 that were seen at Davis Lake on Oct 8 by Courtney Kelly Jett. Tom Lawler saw two Cackling Geese at Summer Lake Wildlife Management Area (SLWMA) (Lake County) on Dec 18. Three Trumpeter Swans were reported by Marshal Moser, Kevin Spencer (KTS), and Dave Haupt (DH) at Williamson River from Mar 1–16. Tom Mickel saw 18 Trumpeter Swans, possibly including some hatch-year birds, at SLWMA on Aug 21. On Apr 15, Wink Gross spotted an Eurasian Wigeon at SLWMA and Roger Robb saw a Red-breasted Merganser there. A Surf Scoter was seen at the Lake of the Woods on Nov 9 (Julie Van Moorhem, DH, KTS).

A Mountain Quail seen on Aug 7 by Liam Murphy and Keith Lee on Cabin Lake Road was in an area of Lake County where they have not been reported previously. But two Mountain Quail (photo below left) found at Frain Ranch, Klamath River Canyon, by Alex Lamoreaux on Oct 8 were in an area of Klamath County where they are expected. It was interesting to note that both Ruffed Grouse (photo next page) and Sooty Grouse were present at Elder Creek (Lake County) on Nov 13 (Drew Meyer). Alex Lamoreaux saw 14 Wild Turkeys at Frain Ranch on Oct 8.

Two migrant Red-necked Grebes were seen at Fourmile Lake (Klamath County) on Oct 9. There were 12 Clark’s Grebes at SLWMA on Aug 3, including some recently fledged grebes, indicating late breeding (Ryan Bushong).

At the Modoc Point Hawk Watch on Sep 21, Frank Lospalluto reported an unusually high number of 18 Band-tailed Pigeons, and he also observed a Black Swift. A swarm of 88 Vaux’s Swifts was seen at Goose Lake State Park (Lake County) on Sep 8 (Rachel Bonafilia). Toby Bradshaw found one Black-chinned Hummingbird in the town of Christmas Valley (Lake County) on Sep 1. A male Costa’s Hummingbird visited a feeder in Klamath Falls on Apr 16 (Dave Hewitt, DH, KTS).

Rita Carratello heard a Yellow Rail at Goose Lake State Park on Aug 3, a late date for detecting Yellow Rail by call. Over 4,000 American Coots were at the north end of Agency Lake on Sep 24 (DH); 3,000 were on Davis Lake on Oct 8 (Courtney Kelly Jett); and an estimated 3,500 were on Thompson Reservoir on Oct 24 (Lindsay Watts)—showing the population spike during the fall.

Matt Cahill saw 50 American Avocets at Lake Abert on Nov 10, a late date to see them in this area. A Whimbrel was at Township Rd. (Klamath County) in the permanent pastures on Apr 16 (Bob Hunter). Ryan Bushong saw three Sanderlings at SLWMA on Aug 3. A Stilt Sandpiper at SLWMA on Jul 26 was an unusual find (Andy Stepniewski). Two Pectoral Sandpipers were seen at SLWMA on Sep 6 by Craig Miller (CM). A Semipalmated Sandpiper was reported at Lake Abert on Aug 4 by CM. A Solitary Sandpiper was reported at SLWMA by John Sullivan on Aug 18 and by Tom Mickel on Aug 21, and another was seen at Davis Lake on Aug 27 by Craig Bennett.

CM spotted a Parasitic Jaeger at SLWMA on Sep 7, and Caleb Centanni saw one at Davis Lake on Sep 20. A Sabine’s Gull was at SLWMA on Sep 7 (CM). KTS and DH counted 1,392 Bonaparte’s Gulls at Putnam’s Point on Nov 5, headed for
their night roost at the lake after returning from foraging at the emptying canals. Rachel Bonaflia saw 120 Franklin’s Gulls at Lake Abert on Sep 14. An adult Mew Gull was observed at the Seven-mile Canal confluence with Agency Lake by KTS on Sep 17; one adult Mew Gull was at Lake Ewauna on Nov 1–11 (DH, KTS). A Glaucous-winged Gull was seen at Lake Ewauna on Feb 16 (KTS). A Common Tern was observed at Davis Lake on Sep 21 (Caleb Centanni, Courtney Kelly Jett).

Loons have not been seen in the lower elevation lakes during migration in recent years, but they are still seen at higher elevation lakes. A Pacific Loon was at Lake of the Woods on Nov 9 (KTS, DH). Four Common Loons were on Thompson Reservoir on Oct 24 (Lindsay Watts); one was at Lake of the Woods on Nov 9 (DH, KTS). A congregation of 253 American White Pelicans was observed at SLWMA on Sep 7 (CM). Six juvenile Green Herons were seen by Willie Hall on Aug 13 at Rocky Point/Harriman Springs, where breeding was first reported in the Klamath Basin in the 1990s.

A White-tailed Kite was at Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge on Dec 15 (Molly Russell). An immature Red-shouldered Hawk was seen by Tom Mickel at Long Creek, USFS Rd. 27—a possible breeding location? Six Red-shouldered Hawks were observed during the Modoc Point Hawk Watch on Sep 24 (Stewart Janes, Frank Lospalluto, KTS, DH)—possibly indicating that their populations are moving further north?

A Flammulated Owl was found at Cabin Lake on Jul 10 by Laurie Ireland. A Western Screech Owl was heard at Hagelstein Park on Oct 8 by Nick Rosen, which may indicate movement along the juniper/pine corridor. A Barred Owl was observed at the end of Nicholson Rd. at Fort Klamath on Mar 8 (KTS, DH); one was road-killed near Henley High School in an open agricultural area on Nov 2 (DH, KTS); and one was near Cashow Springs on Nov 26 (Drew Meyer). A Short-eared Owl was reported at SLWMA on Dec 17 by Judy Meredith.

Two immature Red-naped Sapsuckers were seen at Long Creek USFS Rd. 27 on Aug 20 (Tom Mickel). An Acorn Woodpecker was seen on Sep 21 during the Modoc Point Hawk Watch, an unusual location to see them, away from oaks (Frank Lospalluto). An American Three-toed Woodpecker was found by Courtney Kelly Jett on June 9 at Campbell Lake in Lake County, where there are few records. Five Pileated Woodpeckers, including a pair, were seen by KTS at several North Warner locations during the Lakeview Breeding Bird Survey route on Jun 18.

KTS observed two Hammond’s Flycatchers singing on May 9 at the Klamath Outdoor Science School Camp near Jackson Kimball State Park—the same location where they have been found for the previous nine years. A Black Phoebe was reported on Jan 12 on Dixon Rd./Wood River bridge, possibly the most northern Klamath County record (KTS, DH). An Eastern Kingbird was at Klamath Marsh on May 23 (Ken Phifer), and one was at SLWMA on Jul 22 (Kent and Helen Ostermiller).
Feb 16 (KTS) and at Summer Lake Rest Area on May 10 (Steve Clements). Two White-throated Sparrows were reported in Klamath Falls on Dec 14 (KTS, Stacy Taeuber). A Swamp Sparrow was found at Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge, Straits Drain Units, on Mar 2 by DH and KTS.

A Yellow-breasted Chat was singing on May 15–21 along the Link River, the second year it has been heard at this location (Dave Hewitt). Another Yellow-breasted Chat was reported at Summer Lake on Jun 20 by Bill Bradford; and one was at Frain Ranch on Sep 3 (Lauren di Biccari). A Bobolink was seen at Adel on Jun 10 by Ellen Cantor.

Single Great-tailed Grackles were seen at Wingwatcher Trail and Straits Drain pump at Hwy 97, and both remained all summer and fall, and into winter (multiple observers). A Northern Waterthrush was observed at Summer Lake Lodge on May 23–24 by Rick Vetter and Team Ona. A Northern Watherthrush (photo above) was seen at Gilchrist Crossing (a continuing probable nesting site) on Aug 11 by Nolan Clements. Steve Clark found a Chestnut-sided Warbler near the Hwy 140 Plush cutoff on Aug 21. A Rose-breasted Grosbeak was seen at Fort Rock State Park on May 31 by Sandy Mico and Dan van den Broek.

ABBREVIATIONS:
(CM) Craig Miller
(DH) Dave Haupt
(KTS) Kevin Spencer
(SLWMA) Summer Lake Wildlife Management Area
The sagebrush ecosystem faces threats which result in millions of acres lost annually and this has made it one of the most imperiled ecosystems in North America. Over 350 sagebrush-associated animal and plant species rely on the sagebrush ecosystem, and some of these species have been identified as species of conservation concern. Unless effective conservation actions are implemented to reduce the tide of habitat loss in the sagebrush ecosystem, many of these species will continue to experience population declines. In fact, arid lands birds (inclusive of sagebrush-obligate birds) and grassland birds are among the most rapidly declining groups of birds in North America (Sauer et al. 2017). Notably, sagebrush-obligate, rather than sagebrush-associated, birds are of particular research and management interest given their reliance on the sagebrush ecosystem for their existence. Furthermore, birds have rapid responses in abundance and productivity to environmental change, which makes them great indicators of environmental health; thus, the proverbial ‘canary in the coal mine’. All sagebrush-obligate birds depend on the sagebrush ecosystem to meet their breeding season biological needs, which requires adequate levels of sagebrush (*Artemisia* spp.) and herbaceous cover for nesting and insect and forb resources for foraging.

In the drier portions of the sagebrush ecosystem, fire from altered fire regimes is driven by invasive annual grasses, such as cheatgrass. Drier areas that historically burned every 50 to 100 years have recently been burning every few years, and these fires have the ability to spread to thousands or hundreds of thousands of acres. These grasses quickly colonize disturbed areas, grow faster and sooner than natives, and create a continuous mat of fuel that facilitates the spread of fire across larger areas. These clever invaders actually change the environment to better suit their needs (i.e., repeated fires free up nutrients and resources that allow them to continue to outcompete native plant species). A bit ironically, the sagebrush ecosystem is also shrinking in sites which contain more moisture, typically at higher elevations. A lack of fire on the landscape from human fire suppression during post-European settlement of the western U.S. and overgrazing of domestic livestock in the 1920s and 1930s has assisted in the encroachment of conifers. Conifers, such as junipers, are native to the western U.S. but do not tolerate fire, and historically grew in areas safe from fire or in wetter sites without sagebrush. The lack of fire in these sites has allowed junipers to outcompete native shrubs like sagebrush. Juniper not only outcompetes other native plants in the sagebrush ecosystem,
but wildlife species adapted to live in sagebrush begin to abandon areas with even low levels of juniper cover. Sagebrush wildlife species commonly have low survival and breeding success where conifers have encroached. The combined effect of increased fire at low elevations and conifer encroachment at higher elevations has squeezed the functional habitat to a narrower area for sagebrush-associated wildlife (Figure 1). Conversion to cropland, energy development, and urban expansion into the sagebrush ecosystem are also negatively associated with sagebrush-obligate birds, who can serve as indicators of the rapid decline of the sagebrush ecosystem. Due to these extensive threats, the sagebrush ecosystem occupies about half of its historic extent and continued loss of this ecosystem could spell disaster for the species that call it home. In addition to the primary landscape-scale threats of fire, conifer encroachment and invasive grasses, the sagebrush ecosystem is susceptible to climate change. These threats not only the sagebrush wildlife, but they also threaten rural economies and users of public lands, from hunters, to birders, backpackers and ranchers.

Greater Sage-Grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*) and Gunnison Sage-Grouse (*Centrocercus minimus*) are sagebrush-obligate birds that require the sagebrush ecosystem year-round and currently occupy approximately 56% and 10%, respectively, of their pre-European settlement (pre-1800) distribution (Schroeder et al. 2004; Figure 2). Greater and Gunnison Sage-Grouse have also experienced significant population declines of 66% and 66-90%, respectively, during the past half century (Gunnison Sage-Grouse Rangewide Steering Committee 2005, Garton et al. 2015, Nielson et al. 2015; Figure 3). In 2010, Greater Sage-Grouse were designated “warranted but precluded” by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) under the Endangered Species Act (ESA); however, Greater Sage-Grouse were removed from the ESA list in 2015 in response to the massive conservation efforts throughout the Greater Sage-Grouse distribution. In comparison, Gunnison Sage-Grouse were listed as “warranted but precluded” in 2000 and were officially listed as a threatened species under ESA in 2014. The designations of “warranted but precluded” indicated that USFWS believed these birds met the criteria to be listed, but other species were in more urgent need of ESA protections. USFWS precluded them so that they could be reassessed at a later time, which resulted in different protection outcomes between species. Throughout the rest of this article, we refer to both species as ‘sage-grouse’, because much of what we discuss applies to both species and the habitat they occupy, although only Greater Sage-Grouse reside in eastern Oregon (Figure 2).

Sagebrush-obligate songbirds, including Brewer’s Sparrow (*Spizella breweri*), Sage Thrasher (*Oreoscoptes montanus*), and Sagebrush Sparrow (*Artemisiospiza nevadensis*), are declining range-wide and concurrently with sage-grouse since the 1960’s (Sauer et al. 2017; Figure 4). This has led multiple western states, including Oregon, to provide conservation status to songbird species (Knick et al. 2003). Sagebrush-obligate songbirds and sage-grouse have similar habitat requirements and face many of the same landscape-scale habitat threats. This has led managers to consider sage-grouse an “umbrella species.” The umbrella species concept is simply the idea that if you create conservation measures for a single species that is highly associated with an ecosystem, then not only will that single species benefit, but other species associated with the same ecosystem will also benefit. The application of the concept is thought of as a conservation advantage, in which a single species is used to represent other native co-occurring species or environmental characteristics to achieve conservation goals (Figure 5). In the case of the sagebrush ecosystem, sage-grouse act as an umbrella by guiding many conservation activities within the sagebrush ecosystem, thereby, potentially benefiting many other sagebrush dependent wildlife under the umbrella’s canopy. Importantly, umbrella species conservation provides the potential to conserve many species under the umbrella without the complexities of managing for the individual requirements of dozens or hundreds of species. However, the success of the umbrella species concept is reliant upon similar abundance, distribution, habitat requirements, and environmental threats for the umbrella species and those species under its canopy (Carlisle et al. 2018a, Dinkins and Beck 2019). As a ‘conservation short-cut’, the umbrella species concept is attractive to managers for its simplification of community ecology. However, despite its wide application across ecological systems and taxa, studies that directly test the efficacy of umbrella species conservation are rare. Currently, it is unclear how efforts

Figure 2. Current and historic ranges of the Greater and Gunnison Sage Grouse. Map by Alan Harrington.
to promote sage-grouse habitat will affect sagebrush-obligate songbirds (passerine species that are also completely or partially dependent on sagebrush).

Ongoing efforts to conserve sage-grouse provide great opportunities for researchers to evaluate the benefits of conservation efforts targeted towards sage-grouse for sagebrush-associated species. Sagebrush-associated species have assumed conservation benefits under the sage-grouse conservation umbrella with co-occurring sagebrush-obligate songbirds thought to get the most benefit. These songbirds and sage-grouse have similar habitat requirements for breeding and respond similarly to habitat threats (Knick et al. 2005). While sagebrush-obligate songbirds and sage-grouse all require sagebrush to survive, their specific habitat requirements in the sagebrush and spatial scale of threats vary. For example, sage-grouse remain in the sagebrush ecosystem year-round, while sagebrush-obligate songbirds migrate. These songbirds and sage-grouse are excellent groups of species to evaluate under what circumstances the sage-grouse conservation umbrella might work.

Sage-grouse have clearly defined habitat requirements and a well-known biology, allowing managers to more easily apply conservation measures for this species. Previous efforts to evaluate benefits to sagebrush-associated species from sage-grouse conservation investments have primarily considered commonalities in land-cover associations, spatial habitat overlaps, and indices of co-occurrence. It is of particular interest to better understand how sage-grouse and sagebrush-obligate songbirds concurrently respond to disturbance and environmental changes. This will assist in understanding the extension of sage-grouse conservation to other sagebrush-obligate birds. The primary threats to both sage-grouse and sagebrush-obligate songbirds include habitat loss and fragmentation (breaking up of large contiguous habitat into smaller chunks; Knick et al. 2005, Garton et al. 2015, Nielson et al. 2015).

So, what do we know thus far regarding how sagebrush-obligate songbirds respond to current habitat issues and in relation to sage-grouse? A common management practice targeted at sage-grouse conservation is the removal of juniper trees. Sage-grouse stop using areas of sagebrush with as little as 1-4% juniper cover, which is only a few trees across a large area (e.g., imagine only a few trees in numerous city blocks). Sage-grouse and sagebrush-obligate songbirds evolved in wide open spaces without tall trees or structures that provide excellent perches for raptors. Managers have not yet solved the issues of eradicating mega-wildfires or restoring areas that have converted to vast expanses of invasive annual grasses, but tools to remove junipers and increase sage-grouse habitat are available. In Oregon, studies that have looked at the response of sagebrush-obligate songbird abundance to western juniper (Juniperus occidentalis) removal have shown that juniper removal benefits multiple sagebrush-obligate species, supporting the idea of the umbrella species concept (Holmes et al. 2017). Sagebrush-obligate songbird abundance can nearly double when the majority of sagebrush landscapes are free of trees (Donnelly et al. 2016). Cutting junipers buys instant habitat, and while expensive, it allows managers to increase sage-grouse and sagebrush-obligate songbird abundance and breeding success. This type of conservation action restores large tracts of land, benefitting sagebrush-obligate birds and the sagebrush ecosystem. Similarly, natural gas infrastructure significantly threatens sagebrush-obligate songbirds and sage-grouse in Wyoming. Increasing oil and gas well density has been documented with reduced densities of sagebrush-obligate songbirds (Gilbert and Chalfoun 2011), decreases in songbird nest survival with habitat loss (Heathcoat and Chalfoun 2015), and lower sage-grouse habitat use, and nest and brood survival with increased disturbance from energy development (Kirol et al. 2020). These similarities among sage-grouse and sagebrush-obligate songbirds support the utility of the umbrella species concept at large spatial scales. Conservation efforts for sage-grouse involving the reduction of threats, such as juniper encroachment and oil and gas development, extend benefits to sagebrush-obligate songbirds.

However, not all management practices targeted towards sage-grouse conservation benefit sagebrush-obligate songbirds, calling the umbrella species concept into question. Sage-grouse use a mosaic of sagebrush throughout the year with varying densities, heights, and sagebrush species across the landscape. In some cases, managers have employed management actions to reduce sagebrush cover with the goal of stimulating the growth of protein rich plants (e.g. wildflowers). However, researchers in
Wyoming have recently concluded that practice has little benefit for sage-grouse (Smith and Beck 2018, Smith et al. 2018, Smith et al. 2019). In a parallel songbird study from the same Wyoming area with sagebrush treatments, Carlisle et al. (2018b) found that mowing big sagebrush (Artemisia tridentata) for the intended purpose of increasing brood-rearing habitat for sage-grouse had negative effects on Brewer’s Sparrow and Sage Thrasher. For this particular management action, sagebrush-obligate songbirds did not receive protection under the umbrella, and it also did not improve habitat quality for sage-grouse.

Evaluating the sage-grouse conservation umbrella by targeting management actions is beneficial, yet researchers and managers are increasingly interested in how multiple populations of the different species respond. In 2006, scientists from the Forest Service’s Pacific Northwest Research Station (Rowland et al. 2006) assessed land-cover associations and spatial overlap of habitats among sagebrush species and found that Brewer’s Sparrow may benefit from sage-grouse conservation investments, but other sagebrush-obligate species did not have adequate protection under the umbrella. Dinkins and Beck (2019) found conservation areas for sage-grouse in Wyoming were connected to higher sage-grouse population trends, but sagebrush-obligate songbird Breeding Bird Survey trends were no different in or out of sage-grouse conservation areas.

When considering sage-grouse as an umbrella species, research overall has indicated that conservation actions for sage-grouse at large spatial scales can provide benefits to sagebrush-obligate species. However, it is not a perfect strategy, as songbirds do not always do better in areas set aside for sage-grouse. Thus, conservation success depends on multiple factors at different spatial scales and upon the species of interest. At smaller scales there appear to be more holes in the sage-grouse conservation umbrella with conservation benefits not always extending to other sagebrush-obligate species. Sustaining existing habitat through effective management is of great importance (Carlisle et al. 2018a). This is particularly true in Oregon, where the landscape scale threats of fire and invasive annual grass are currently difficult to manage.

Very few studies have investigated whether demographic rates of sagebrush-obligate songbirds are positively connected with sage-grouse habitat use and demographic rates. At present there is scientific need for direct comparisons of these metrics (e.g., habitat use, abundance, nest success, and nest density) among sage-grouse and sagebrush-obligate songbirds, which is the focus of current research in eastern Oregon by @SageHabitatTeam with Alan Harrington. He is tackling different aspects of how or under what circumstances sage-grouse are a good umbrella for sagebrush-obligate songbirds. Alan is investigating how sage-grouse conservation investments have the potential to benefit sagebrush-obligate songbirds by comparing concomitant sage-grouse and sagebrush-obligate songbird habitat use and productivity at the same locations and across the landscape. Alan’s aim is to identify whether and when sage-grouse can function as a reliable umbrella for the abundance, nest density, and nest success of the three sagebrush-obligate songbirds.

**Literature Cited**


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**Figure 4. Population trajectories of Brewer’s Sparrow, Sagebrush Sparrow, and Sage Thrasher from range-wide Breeding Bird Survey data 1966–2017.** [Link](https://www.mbr-pwrc.usgs.gov/)
Figure 5. Current Brewer’s Sparrow, Sagebrush Sparrow, and Sage Thrasher annual ranges compared to the sage-grouse ranges. Maps by Alan Harrington.


The mountains of northeast Oregon received an unusually large quantity of snow late in the winter, leading to significant amounts of water in the valleys in the spring and early summer, that persisted into mid and late summer. Summer temperatures remained mild with only one or two days reaching triple digits. In combination, this created abundant shorebird habitat for fall migrants. November through December saw very little true winter weather in Grant County, with most snow and cold weather occurring around Thanksgiving. Thanks to members of the Grant County Bird Club, other local birders, and visiting birders reporting on eBird, coverage of the region has improved over the years. Between Christmas Bird Counts, Breeding Bird Surveys, Raptor Counts, and the participation of seasonal workers for the US Forest and Fish and Wildlife Services, there have been more observers in the field.

Snow Geese were found near Prairie City on Jan 25 by Karen Jacobs and Jim Soupir (KJ, JS) and then sporadically in the spring and fall. Although they are an expected migrant, Ross’s Geese are not observed annually, but Union County saw four reports in late March and early April, totaling five individuals. There were also two reports in late fall of three individual Ross’s Geese. There were a few sightings of Greater White-fronted Geese in Grant County in the spring. Cackling Geese were identified west of Mount Vernon from a couple of locations on Mar 11 (KJ, JS). The Wallowa Christmas Bird Count on Dec 22 had its first record of Cackling Goose at the Wallowa Lake Boat Ramp (Nolan Clements (NC) et al.). There were three reports of single Trumpeter Swans: one at the Barreto Pond (Union County) seen by Trent Bray (TB) on Mar 3; one heard near the White Barn Ponds (Union County) on Nov 11 (Cathy Nowak); and a very out-of-place-and-time individual found at Minam State Park (Wallowa County) on Jun 28 (Kent Coe). Trumpeter Swans were also found west of Mount Vernon on Feb 12 by Mike Bohannon (MB) and Anne Frost (AF); they were seen in John Day on Dec 6 by Tom Winters (TW); and also seen in the John Day Valley on Dec 10 (MB, AF); and on the John Day Christmas Bird Count on Dec 14.

Blue-winged Teal are not often seen in Grant County but were found in Seneca on Jun 17 (KJ, JS), near Picture Gorge on Aug 31 (TW), and at Holliday State Park in November (AF). Three reports of individual Eurasian Wigeon drakes came from Wilkinson Lane in Union County on Mar 13 (TB), on Apr 3 (Marie Gaylord), and on Apr 14 (Dave Trochlell). A Eurasian Wigeon was seen near Prairie City (Grant County) on Mar 25 by several observers. A Northern Pintail was found west of Mount Vernon on Jan 11 (KJ, JS). Greater Scaup were observed in Union, Wallowa, and Baker Counties, with five reports of 12 total birds. TB found 19 Surf Scoters on Wallowa Lake on Oct 20. A White-winged Scoter continued on New Year’s Day for TB at the La Grande Sewage Treatment Plant (Union County). This represents possibly the fourth county record. There was only one sighting of Barrow’s Goldeneye in Grant County, in Monument on Jan 26 (KJ, JS), but there were several sightings in Union, Wallowa, and Baker Counties. Two Red-breasted Mergansers were seen at Morgan Lake (Union County) on Nov 17 by Dave Trochlell (DT).

Mountain Quail are one of the most elusive breeding birds in northeast Oregon, with reports coming primarily from the eastern portion of the Wallowa Mountains and Hells Canyon. In 2019, Wallowa County had three reports: one south of Lostine in the foothills of the Wallowas on Apr 12 (Paul Adams, Thomas Gilg); three south of Imnaha along the Snake River on Dec 12 (Mike Hansen); and three north of Imnaha on May 21 (Diane Trainer). The most common location for Mountain Quail in Grant County is along the South Fork John Day River and associated drainages, but they were found in Canyon City on Jan 1 (MB,TW) and seen in the area into March.

Gray Partridge may be occasionally found in the upper John Day Valley, Fox Valley, and Long Creek (Grant County). Ring-necked Pheasants may often be found near Monument, but one was observed near Prairie City on Aug 12 (KJ, JS). Greater Sage-Grouse were observed near Keating in Baker County in spring and summer.
Spruce Grouse (*photo right*) were present on the eastern slope of the Wallowa Mountains at locations like McCully Creek. Spruce Grouse are also present on the west side of the Wallowas but are more difficult to find there. Union County had two reports in the Dobbin Creek drainage below Moss Springs in late August and early September.

A Horned Grebe was found near Mount Vernon on Mar 11 and on Sep 30 (KJ, JS). It was an incredibly good year for Red-necked Grebes with six reports from Union County totaling 13 individuals, and a single report from Wallowa County. An Eared Grebe was seen east of John Day (Grant County) on Nov 20 (TW). Another was found in early December at the Wallowa Lake Dam by DT, and it was re-found for the Wallowa Christmas Bird Count. A Western Grebe was seen at Poison Creek Reservoir in Silvies Valley (Grant County) on Oct 6 (KJ, JS).

A Common Poorwill was heard prior to the start of a Breeding Bird Survey in Logan Valley (Grant County) on Jun 10 by Chris Bare and Tom Winters. Vaux’s Swifts roost and nest in the John Day Elks Lodge chimney and on Sep 23 Karen Jacobs counted 2,751 birds. The last sighting was on Oct 2. White-throated Swifts were present during the nesting season in the Burnt River Canyon in Baker County. One was reported near Troy (Wallowa County) on Apr 26 (Scott O’Donnell), and another was reported at Red Bridge State Park (Union County) on May 19 (Laura Mahrt). White-throated Swifts nest on Goose Rock at the John Day Fossil Beds and were observed on Jun 3 (TW).

Anna’s Hummingbirds continue to advance into northeast Oregon: Union County had nine total birds, one of which was an individual attempting to overwinter from 2018 and another continued at a feeder into 2020, both in La Grande. Wallowa County had two reports, both birds trying to overwinter. One of these was the Wallowa Christmas Bird Count’s first record. A possible juvenile female Costas Hummingbird visited Clarence and Marilyn O’Leary’s (O’L) feeder in John Day in early September. Another visitor was a Broad-tailed Hummingbird on May 2 (O’L). A BROAD-BILLED HUMMINGBIRD was seen east of John Day on Sep 22–23 by Cecil Gagnon, Tom Winters, and the O’Learys.

Soras are uncommon, and rare in December, but one was found on the John Day Christmas Bird Count on Dec 14 (KJ, JS). A Black-necked Stilt was seen near Dayville (Union County) on Apr 21 (TW). A Whimbrel on Pierce Rd. found by TB on May 15 marked the third record for Union County. Marbled Godwits were seen in Union County throughout the spring and fall migrations. On Apr 29 Russ Morgan saw one at Alicel Scrape; on May 4 Steve Clements and Arlene Blumton saw one on Wilkinson Lane; and on Jul 22 Roger Robb saw 21 on the south end of Peach Rd., which were seen by TB later that day at the La Grande Sewage Treatment Plant. DT saw a single Stilt Sandpiper on Aug 15 at the south end of Peach Rd. Between Aug 15 and Aug 25, as many as four Stilt Sandpipers were seen at this location.

A Sanderling was found at the La Grande Sewage Treatment Plant by DT on Aug 30, and on Aug 31 an additional bird was found with the first. Union County had Dunlin twice in the spring and once in the fall. A Least Sandpiper was found at the John Day Fossil Beds on Sep 8 (KJ, JS). A single Short-billed Dowitcher was seen at Wilkinson Ln. on May 6 by TB, and on May 10 by Mark Ludwick. One was also reported on Pierce Rd. in La Grande on May 18 (Marie Gaylord). Up to nine Solitary Sandpipers were seen during fall migration at the south end of Peach Rd. A Solitary Sandpiper was found along Murderers Creek on Jun 27 (MB) and another seen at Monument on Aug 8 by Arlene Blumton, NC, and Steve Clements.

A series of Willet reports came from the Grande Ronde Valley (Union County) in early May. One was found by TB on Ruckman Rd. on May 2, and another was reported at Wilkinson Lane on May 8 (Russ Morgan). It is unknown if this was the same bird or two separate individuals. NC and Russ Morgan reported two more Willets at the south end of Peach Rd. on Jul 22 which were only present for 30 minutes. Wallowa County’s first and second records of Red Phalarope came on Aug 21 at the Joseph Sewage Ponds (Mike Hansen) and on Sep 2 at the Wallowa Sewage Ponds (TB). Plumage characteristics showed these were two different individuals.

An adult and a juvenile Sabine’s Gull visited the La Grande Sewage Treatment Plant from Sep 17 to Sep 20 (DT), and another juvenile was seen at Thief Valley Reservoir (Union County) on Sep 18 (DT). Three Herring Gulls were found by TB at Alicel Scrape on Apr 8, another individual was found at the La Grande Sewage Treatment Plant on Oct 16 (DT), and one was found on Wallowa Lake on Oct 20 (TB).
Black Terns, which are not normally present in northeast Oregon, were found three times during migration in Union County. One bird was reported at Wilkinson Lane on May 27 (TB), five birds were observed on the eastern portion of Alicel Lane on May 29 (TB), and a single fall migrant was recorded at the La Grande Sewage Treatment Plant on Sep 11 (DT). Common Terns, another uncommon to rare migrant in northeast Oregon, were recorded twice in Union County. NC found one at Thief Valley Reservoir on Aug 30, and after dipping on the Thief Valley bird, TB found his Common Tern for the year at the La Grande Sewage Treatment Plant on the same day.

The fourth Wallowa County record of Pacific Loon was recorded on Wallowa Lake on Oct 27 (Mike Hansen). Twenty-two American White Pelicans dropped in to Silvies Valley on Apr 14 (KJ, JS,TW). Some were also found near Mount Vernon on Jul 10 (MB). A Great Egret was seen in John Day on May 6 (O’L) and on May 21 (KJ, JS). Other sightings were on Oct 9 east of John Day, and several near Prairie City on Oct 27 (KJ, JS). Baker County’s second Snowy Egret was found by NC and DT at Farewell Bend State Park on Jul 20. Snowy Egrets are probably annual at this location, since they are reported from the Idaho side nearly annually along this stretch of the Snake River.

Wallowa County’s first record of Red-shouldered Hawk was found by Sean Cozart along Lower Diamond Ln. on Dec 7. A possible Red-shouldered Hawk was seen in John Day in early March by Susan Church. Swainson’s Hawks have been appearing in the winter at times and one was near Long Creek on Jan 9 (MB,AF).

Northeast Oregon had a very good year for owls, with reports of 11 species including a Barred Owl at Moss Springs Campground (Union County) on Oct 19 (TB).

On Jul 22, Mark Baldwin found an adult and a juvenile Red-breasted Sapsucker at Hilgard State Park (Union County). This is the first report of this species breeding in northeast Oregon, although it was never confirmed if the second parent bird was Red-naped or Red-breasted. A Red-breasted Sapsucker was at John Day on Jan 4 (O’L). TB counted five American Three-toed Woodpeckers on Mt. Fanny (Union County) on Aug 17. American Three-toed Woodpeckers are rarely seen in Grant County but several were reported this year: at Murderers Creek on Jul 10 (MB); four at Olive Lake in early August (Dan Kimball); at North Fork John Day River on Aug 25 (KJ, JS); and along Pine Creek on Nov 13 (MB).

A Gyrfalcon was found on Elk Mountain Rd. (Wallowa County) by NC, Steve Clements, and Arlene Blumton on Dec 21, and it continued for the Wallowa Christmas Bird Count on Dec 22 (TB). A Peregrine Falcon was seen in the John Day Valley on Oct 11 (MB). Another was seen on Dec 10 near Mount Vernon (MB,AF).

Wallowa County’s first Least Flycatcher was found by Shawneen Finnegan at Minam State Park on Jun 23. Union County had its third and fourth records of Gray Flycatcher on Jun 16 at Ramo Flats (NC et al.) and on Sep 12 at Thief Valley Reservoir (Russ Morgan). Further south in Baker County, where arid juniper habitat is more extensive, Gray Flycatcher is reported nearly annually. In 2019 there were two reports of three total birds south and east of Medical Springs.

There were no reports of Cordilleran Flycatchers this year but there were several reports of Pacific-slope Flycatchers: at Holiday State Park on Apr 28 (Bill Moloney); and at Murderers Creek on Jul 10 (MB) and on Aug 16 (KJ, JS). There was a report of an Ash-throated Flycatcher along Philberg Rd. (Union County) on Jul 22 (Roger Robb).

A Cassin’s Vireo was seen extremely late in the year, during a period of warmer weather on Dec 18, foraging for insects in Susan and Michael Daugherty’s yard in La Grande.

A migrant Red-eyed Vireo was seen by TB in La Grande on Jun 6. Red Bridge State Park (Union County), a historical nesting location for Red-eyed Vireos, had several reports throughout the summer. Additional Red-eyed Vireos reports were of one bird northeast of Copperfield (Baker County) along the Snake River on Jun 7 (Dan van den Broek), and of several birds breeding near Imnaha (Wallowa County) along the Snake River.

Northeast Oregon had a multitude of Blue Jays in the fall and winter of 2019. Union County, which usually has the fewest reports of this species in the region, had two reports: one from south La Grande and the other from Union. As many as seven birds were present in the Baker Valley from mid-October through the end of the year. A troop of three hung around Joseph from late fall into 2020. A Blue Jay briefly visited John Day on Jan 11 (Bob Stewart). A Blue Jay was reported in Prairie City on Nov 3 (Erika Porter) and on Dec 22 (KJ, JS).
A California Scrub-Jay was seen by Dawn Bishop in Baker City on Oct 27. An astounding 673 Black-billed Magpies were observed leaving a roost site on the southern portions of Ladd Marsh Wildlife Management Area on Jul 31 by NC and other bird-banders.

Five Bushtits were seen in the Burnt River Canyon on Mar 22 (Dawn Bishop). Habitats and microclimates in Union and Wallowa Counties are not as favorable for Bushtits as southern Baker County, but in 2019, Union County had two reports from Ramo Flats of two birds on Jun 16 (TB) and 20 birds on Nov 23 (Mike Daugherty). Bushtits (photo previous page) were reported at John Day Fossil Beds (Grant County) on May 23 (Dorothy McHaney, Rich Hoyer), and on June 7 (Ken Chamberlain).

A total of 42 Bewick’s Wrens were found on the Union Christmas Bird Count, doubling the previous high count of 21. A Veery was found at Coyote Bluffs along the Middle Fork John Day River on Jul 7 (KJ, JS). Gray Catbirds (photo above) are often found along that river fork but this year were seen at Holliday State Park on Jul 27, Sep 9, and Nov 7 (AF) and on Sep 10 (KJ, JS). A Sage Thrasher was at Poison Creek Reservoir on Apr 4 (KJ, JS), Apr 21 (O’L), and Apr 23 (TW).

Union County’s third record of Northern Mockingbird was found by DT at Ramo Flats on Jun 18. Bohemian Waxwings were seen in small numbers in all Union, Wallowa, and Baker Counties in the beginning and end of the year. American Pipits were found along Dixie Creek on Feb 5 and Feb 27 and near Kimberly on May 4 (KJ, JS). Another one was seen in Logan Valley on Apr 26 (MB).

A male Purple Finch visited Susan and Michael Daugherty’s feeder in La Grande (Union County) on Oct 17, and returned on Dec 12 with a female. There were only two Purple Finch reports in Grant County, one from Canyon City on Jul 11 (TW) and the other from John Day on Oct 16 (O’L). It was a poor year overall for Common Redpolls in northeast Oregon, with three reports of singles in the southern portion of the Grande Ronde Valley in January and one report north of Joseph in December. The largest congregation of these winter finches was a report of 40 found by Sean Cozart west of Union on Jan 1. One of Baker County’s few records of White-winged Crossbill was of two birds at Anthony Lakes Ski Area on Jan 18 (DT). These birds were reported again on Mar 22 (Kent Coe). Lesser Goldfinches continue to increase in density in northeast Oregon with flocks of 40 or more being reported on a regular basis.

Lapland Longspurs were present in Wallowa and Union Counties in the beginning and end of the year and also in fall migration. It was an exceptionally good year for Snow Buntings (photo below) in northeast Oregon. They were present in Union, Wallowa, and Baker Counties, with high counts of 1000 or more on the Zumwalt Prairie (Wallowa County) and 40 on Ramo Flat (Sean Cozart).

Pine Grosbeaks were reported multiple times in Union, Wallowa, and Baker Counties. Notable reports came from Anthony Lakes in Baker County where adult birds were observed feeding fledglings (NC, Steve Clements, Arlene Blumton); from McCully Creek where a nest with downy chicks was found and documented (NC, DT); and from Mount Emily Recreation Area (Union) where up to 15 individuals were reported from mid-December through the end of the year (Arlene Blumton et al.).
The second Union County record of “Sooty” Fox Sparrow was recorded in the southern portion of La Grande on Dec 18 (DT). While “Slate-colored” Fox Sparrows are present in all three counties as breeders and as migrants—other Fox Sparrow subspecies are very rare any time of the year. Northeast Oregon experienced its best year for Golden-crowned Sparrows ever with a whopping 20 reports of 29 total individuals throughout northeast Oregon. The majority of these observations were in the fall but several of them were from the spring. Harris’s Sparrows were present in Union and Wallowa Counties in 2019. Union County had seven reports of nine total birds, while Wallowa County had one report of two birds.

Single White-throated Sparrows were found in Joseph on Jan 6 by Adrian Hinkle and Em Scattaregia; in Bear Valley on Oct 19 by Matt Cahill; and in southern La Grande on Nov 28 by DT. Sagebrush Sparrows were seen in Prairie City on Feb 25 (KJ, JS); in John Day on Mar 4 (MB); and in John Day on Mar 15 (O’L). Two Sagebrush Sparrows were found in La Grande by DT on Mar 6. Two more were found by Steve Clements and Arlene Blumton on Peach Rd. on Mar 9, and Kent Coe found another bird on Wilkinson Ln. on Mar 13.

Lincoln’s Sparrow is a common breeder and migrant in northeast Oregon, but is very rare in the winter. DT found a Lincoln’s Sparrow in mid-December at Ladd Marsh in Union County. Russ Morgan found a Swamp Sparrow at the Distribution Pond in Union County on Nov 13, and Ken Chamberlain et al. found another at the Enterprise Wildlife Manage Area (Wallowa County) on Jan 21. There are only a handful of reports of Green-tailed Towhees in Baker and Union Counties most years, and they don’t normally breed there, but in 2019 there were several reports of breeding birds.

The only Green-tailed Towhee reports in Grant County were from Flagtail Lookout on Aug 16 (KJ, JS) and from the Canyon Fire Complex, also in August (David DuBois). A possible Orchard Oriole was seen at John Day on Jun 29 (O’L). A possible female Baltimore Oriole was seen in Canyon City by Eva Harris. A Common Grackle (photo below) was found by Caleb Centanni et al. near Hot Lake (Union County) during the Ladd Marsh Bird Festival on May 18.

The second Union County record of Northern Waterthrush was found by NC along Meadow Creek in Starkey Experimental Forest on Sep 4. A Black-and-white Warbler was reported from Hollliday State Park on Apr 28 by Bill Moloney. A possible Blackpoll Warbler was also reported from there on Apr 28 (MB). The first Union County record of Blackpoll Warbler was found by NC at Chief Valley Reservoir on Sep 6, and it stuck around until the next day for several other birders to enjoy. Black-throated Gray Warblers were reported twice during spring in Wallowa County.

ABBREVIATIONS:
(AF) Anne Frost
(DT) Dave Trochlell
(KJ, JS) Karen Jacobs and Jim Soupir
(MB) Mike Bohannon
(NC) Nolan Clements
(O’L) Clarence and Marilyn O’Leary
(TB) Trent Bray
(TW) Tom Winters
I thought a lot about how to write this article. I even spent two hours in a coffee shop writing a first draft which was detailed, dry, and read sluggishly. While writing that first draft, I scrolled through my 2019 eBird checklists monotonously. I got to May and had written 2,500 words. I did not want to finish writing about my year in this way. However, as a result of this eBird sleuthing I was inundated with the memories of the adventures that were had during the year. This made me realize that while my large 2019 list was a product of chasing, listing, and twitching, it was also a result of exploring, learning, and collaborating. It was about getting out to find birds. If I were to recount every weekend trip, every new rarity, and all the bits in between, the result, in my opinion, would come off, not as a story, but as a report. Instead of reporting each species, I’ll share some of my favorite stories from 2019—the longest chase, the most extreme day, the most smile-inducing adventure, and the lessons learned.

The experiences that I had in 2019 would not have occurred if it hadn’t been for the experiences I had had in the previous year. In the spring of 2018, I was still attending La Grande High School. At the time I considered myself a total bird nut. I had run out of classes to take at my high school and as a result I had no classes first and second periods. During the cold months, I was studious, using the time to do homework. When spring hit, my overly academic nature was numbed.

Graduation came and went and on September 15, 2018 I left La Grande for Corvallis to start my first term at Oregon State University (OSU). At this time, I had seen 273 species in 2018 in Oregon, and only 292 species in the state in my life. I was missing birds like Brown Pelican, Black Oystercatcher, Wrentit, and Black Phoebe. I was an Eastern Oregon native. Western Oregon was a foreign land. It was also a bigger ball field, and as a result, allowed for longer throws. After a last-minute chase trip during winter break from La Grande to the coast for a wintering Ruddy Turnstone, a pair of Cattle Egrets near Tillamook, and the Lane County Sedge Wrens, I finished 2018 with an Oregon year list of 339 species. I had added 66 species to my Oregon year list in under three and a half months, 47 of those were state birds, and 37 were life birds. I was “listed” out. January 1 was not the start of a Big Year for me, it was simply the day that I needed to put up a new calendar. I wanted to start 2019 by just enjoying the birds coming to the seed in my La Grande yard. 2019 was the year of the Dark-eyed Junco.
The first tale comes from Tillamook County in January. After returning to Corvallis from wintery La Grande, my roommate and birding companion, Caleb Centanni, and I decided to stick our toes in the Tillamook County action for a Sunday. In the past week Glaucous Gull, Clay-colored Sparrow, Dickcissel, a wintering Ruddy Turnstone, a pair of Cattle Egrets, and multiple Palm Warblers had been reported in the span of a few days. Instead of dangling our toes in, we ended up waist deep in the Tillamook birds. On a chase trip to see multiple birds of interest, Caleb and I expected to see maybe three-fourths of them, if we got lucky.

Alarms rang in our third-floor dorm room while it was still dark outside. Most of our peers were still sleeping off Saturday night’s liquor, but we were up early, headed to the dairy fields of Tillamook. A little over two hours and a travel mug of Starbucks’ instant coffee later, we found ourselves eyeing the Glaucous Gull at the FedEx parking lot. Some searching under rare blue skies yielded the Clay-colored Sparrow and the also-present Lark Sparrow among White-crowned Sparrows. Birders at the staked-out Dickcissel helped us get on the bird within 20 minutes of pulling up. On the way north through Tillamook, we dined luxuriously at a Subway to celebrate the morning’s goodies. After lunch, the Ruddy Turnstone was with its normal flock of Black Turnstones at Bay Ocean Oyster Company, along with a Eurasian Wigeon in the bay. All that was left were the Cattle Egrets. We had already had a legendary day, and we knew the Cattle Egrets would be the hardest of our targets. An hour of driving through their normal haunts didn’t yield anything. Several more roads left us egretless.

Your desire for the chocolate intensifies in an extreme way. At that moment, our desire to see these small, white egrets was frustrated and invigorated by the fact that we were not seeing them. A wrong turn brought us overlooking a pasture with lots of Great Egrets. We were excited. We scanned. We saw nothing. Despair hung on our shoulders like fog in February in the Willamette Valley. One of us got back in the car in a declaration of defeat, the other made one last sweep with binocs. Would we remain egretless? Success! The two small, white egrets sat close to us, away from the greats. We hooted. Caleb turned and told me to listen to a call note. A Palm Warbler chipped as it flew past us. Deciding to not press our luck, we declared victory and drove back to Corvallis with a few new birds under our belts.

The remainder of the winter was mundane. I had checked off the Portland Eastern Bluebirds on my return trip to Corvallis from La Grande at the beginning of the term, and Caleb and I eventually got good looks at the Tundra Bean-Goose at Finley National Wildlife Refuge. Among other species, I enjoyed a Long-tailed Duck and a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker in Lane County, a Rose-breasted Grosbeak in Corvallis, a Tufted Duck and a Northern Mockingbird in the Portland area, and a Chestnut-collared Longspur in Linn County. Swallows had arrived by the time spring break rolled around and I was anxious for true spring and neotropical migrants.

Some of the cultivation of my avian mania came from spring break trips. Since middle school, my parents made a point to go on a road trip for my spring break at the end of March. Trips to Cape Disappointment State Park in Washington got me my first Red-throated Loons and Common Murres. Trips to Klamath County and northern California produced Ross’s Geese and Snow Geese, in addition to many species of migrating waterfowl.
The intensity of these trips increased as I got older and became more bird hungry. A trip to Redding, California, gave us looks at Yellow-billed Magpies, Nuttall’s Woodpeckers, and Red-shouldered Hawks. In 2017 we went to Arizona for a week; I saw 42 life birds on that trip, including Black-capped Gnatcatcher and Elegant Trogon. The next year, a trip to Costa Rica produced 200 or more life birds in seven days. In 2019 however, my parents and I stayed in Oregon. Over the course of the last week in March we saw roughly 190 species in Oregon. We experienced 60 degrees, sun, and my state California Towhee at Upper Table Rock in Jackson County. We also woke up to three inches of snow on the tent at Lava Beds National Monument in northern California several days later. I saw my state Allen’s Hummingbird at Arizona Beach State Recreation Site in Curry County, as well as my state Juniper Titmouse along Willow Valley Road in Klamath County. A Townsend’s Solitaire on March 26 at Moore Park in Klamath County was my 200th bird of the year. At this point in the year I was still not truly year listing. If I had been, this trip would’ve been more momentous, yet, it was particularly impressive looking back on it. When my parents picked me up from Corvallis on March 21, I had seen 176 species. By the time I was back in my dorm room on March 31, the year list was at 212. Again, I wasn’t playing the numbers game when I returned and started spring term at OSU, nor was I playing the numbers game when Caleb and I went on bird-related trips eight out of the ten weekends of the term.

I could write a thousand words on each weekend of spring term. In addition to my downright thirst for migrants and adventure, I was a full-time student taking 17 credits. General chemistry made my serotonin levels skyrocket, honors biology caused my brain to bubble, and French horn lessons lashed my lips. More than once I showed up to Sunday night horn rehearsals having not showered for two to three days, unshaven, in the same clothes I had put on Friday morning, and completely exhausted. Miraculously, like my year list, my GPA also rose during spring term. Was it too much? Almost certainly. But it was worth it all. The following are very brief accounts of each weekend. I was accompanied by Caleb for all of these trips unless indicated otherwise. At the start of spring term, my year list was at 212 species.

Weekend 1, April 6–7. Stayed on campus. Solo short trip for a Sabine’s Gull on the Lucky 99 Pond along Highway 99 in Polk County. Species added over the weekend: 4

Weekend 2, April 13–14. Chase trip with Caleb to Jackson County for the California Thrasher. Success. Departure time: roughly 7:30 am. Return time: 9:30 pm. Approximately 450 miles, roundtrip. Species added over the weekend: 4

Weekend 3, April 20–21. Big Day scouting run from Salishan Nature Trail in Lincoln County to Perkins Peninsula on Fern Ridge Reservoir in Lane County on Saturday totaling 164 species. On Sunday, I went to Willamette Park for a Big Morning with the Corvallis Young Birders.
Weekend 7, May 18–19. Ladd Marsh Bird Festival in Union County. Caleb found a female Great-tailed Grackle which stayed the entire summer. We also enjoyed a female Great Gray Owl on a nest in the Spring Creek Management Area in Union County. Over 700 miles roundtrip. Species added over the weekend: 2

Weekend 8, Memorial Day Weekend, May 25–27. Not knowing what to do for the long weekend, Caleb and I decided to drive up to Haystack Rock in Cannon Beach, Clatsop County, for nesting Tufted Puffin. This trip provided my first good look at the species. We were also spontaneously interviewed by Oregon Public Broadcasting’s Oregon Field Guide about Puffins and birding in the pouring rain. The following day we found ourselves driving, yet again, to Summer Lake to join Courtney, Eric Carlson, Maureen Leong-Kee, Nic Marten, and Audrey Addison for some birding. Highlights include Black-throated Sparrow, an early Common Nighthawk, and Long-eared Owl in Lake County. I saw my 300th year bird, Northern Waterthrush, at Gilchrist Crossing in Klamath County on the return trip. Maybe 500 miles round trip. Species added over the weekend: 7

Weekend 9, June 1–2. Trip to Malheur with Caleb, Tye Jeske, and Courtney, meeting up with Alan Contreras. Highlights include Bobolink and Burrowing Owl. Round trip, 600 miles. Species added over the weekend: 2

By the end of spring term, I had added 92 species to my year list, reaching 304. The spring of 2019 will undoubtedly be one of, if not the most, intense springs of my life. After I finished spring term, I returned to La Grande to work as an OSU vegetation field technician at Starkey Experimental Forest. The monotonous ten-hour field days were numbed by the presence of Williamson’s Sapsuckers, Red Crossbills, and Mountain Chickadees.

If I was lucky, a Northern Goshawk would fly over, or a Black-backed Woodpecker would call from a nearby snag. Counting the number of berries on a Serviceberry was hard to do while trying to identify that warbler call note or deciding whether or not it was a Dusky or Hammond’s Flycatcher. Josh, my field supervisor, took to imitating an Osprey by whistling to see if he could fool me. It worked the first dozen or so times. Reid and Mary, my co-workers, passively teased me when I would screech to a halt on the trail just to listen to the call of a Pileated Woodpecker. On September 4, a Northern Waterthrush called in a large willow along Meadow Creek in the middle of the Blue Mountains. I was astonished. It was the second county record.

My summer was dotted by gems like the Starkey Waterthrush. Sharing my life Pine Grosbeaks at Anthony Lakes in Baker County with my parents, Noah Stryker, and his father. Spooking my life Spruce Grouse off the trail at McCully Creek in Wallowa County with Dave Trochlell. Enjoying Baker County’s second Snowy Egret at Farewell Bend State Park with Dave. White-winged Crossbills at Woodward Campground in Umatilla County with my parents, Alan Contreras, and Mark Ludwick. Union County’s first Blackpoll Warbler at Thie Valley Reservoir with Russ Morgan and Trent Bray. Those offer a small taste of what I was treated with. It was that point in the year that my additions were all interesting. By late June I was chasing, both birds and a large list.

I spent the summer doing what I was most passionate about: spending time outdoors with the people I loved. My parents endured two treks across the state for pelagic trips and rarities, and small local trips almost every weekend. On the weekend of my birthday in August, instead of venturing off to some remote corner of the state, we stayed local. A hike in the Blue Mountains of Umatilla County was about the best gift I could’ve asked for. My pack was strapped to my back, binoculars swung from their harness around my stomach, and my camera was slung around my neck. I was followed by my parents, who wore similar gear, and our dog, Telley.

We were treated to wonderful weather, stellar views, and quarts upon quarts of ripe huckleberries. 2019 was one of the best huckleberry years in the Blue Mountains that my parents can remember in their 20-plus years of residency. I could’ve been happy with just the sheer density of huckleberries, which begged to be picked as I walked by. We encountered numerous Chestnut-backed Chickadees, always a fun bird in the Blues, several singing “Slate-colored” Fox Sparrows, and a whopping 40 species along our 7 mile hike. A Dusky Grouse scurrying away through the dense underbrush marked my 322nd year bird. While I was chest deep in the Big Year quagmire, I suddenly found dry ground. A splash of cold water, if you will, that grounded me to why I was doing what I was doing. Who doesn’t like racking up a large list? But while my list grew, my appreciation for the outdoors, getting out, and adventuring grew even more. Listing and birding was just a medium to satisfy my craving. It was simple hikes like these, with my parents or with my co-workers through Starkey, that kept me charging ahead.
I returned to Corvallis in late September with 345 species. I had seen an additional 39 species over the summer, eight of which were life birds. I slogged back to school. I knew what had to be done and how I had to do it. I needed to chase and study and chase and study until January 1. And that’s what happened. I added another 19 species in the last three months of the year, seven of which were life birds. On December 31 at 11:30 pm, while sitting in my friend’s living room, I pulled up the My eBird tab on my phone. Oregon year: 364.

Had I gone all out I think I would’ve ended up with a few more species. I missed a Buff-breasted Sandpiper that showed up the day after an August pelagic trip. Of course, I was already halfway across the state by that point. Pacific Golden-Plover and Ruff also eluded me in fall migration. Although I had made two Malheur trips and birded several eastern Oregon oases throughout both migrations, I missed American Redstart. A Lark Bunting in Jackson County in January would’ve been a life bird if Caleb and I had decided to make the drive. The Red-headed Woodpecker in Douglas County was just too far from La Grande for me. I was too early at Summer Lake and too late in Klamath County for Yellow Rails. A Boreal Owl trip never solidified for me and Broad-tailed Hummingbird migrated before I got to the Steens Mountains. Three of the five pelagic trips I had signed up for were canceled due to weather, and as a result I missed Laysan Albatross. Brown Booby was seen two or three times on sea watches that I was not on. Other more extreme rarities that were seen by a single observer, or were one-day-wonders, also occupy my miss list. I am not a greedy person. I do not take the species I saw for granted.

2019 came and went. Many of the people I meet now ask me what I do, and I most often reply, “I like birds a lot.” Hopefully some readers can relate to this. Most of those people, and even most of my friends, don’t know what I did in 2019. I personally have a hard time realizing I saw so many birds in 365 days; I think that is partially because it seemed natural to be out and looking. Even writing this, I laugh at the fact that I saw Hawaiian Petrel and Spruce Grouse in Oregon in the same week. I grin when I think of the Big Day and all of the spring excursions with Caleb. Reviewing the year, I feel the mosquitoes of Malheur, the bite of wind off Boiler Bay, the heat of midday sun at Starkey, and the thunder of 3,000 Cackling Geese in the Willamette Valley. 2019 wasn’t about a number or a record; for me it was about the experiences. I am a lister, not of birds, but of adventures.

Steve Clements and Telley in the Blue Mountains. Photo by Nolan Clements.
THE STATUS OF THE BLACK ROSY-FINCH ON STEENS MOUNTAIN, OREGON

by Elijah Gordon, Steven G Herman

Steens Mountain. Photo by Elijah Gordon.

The Black Rosy-Finch (*Leucosticte atrata*) is one of a handful of congeners that nest in high-altitude sites in the mountains of western North America and Asia. Three species (*L. atrata*, *L. tephrocotis*, and *L. australis*) are known from North America. In Oregon, the Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch is known from several sites, but the Black Rosy-Finch nests only on Steens Mountain, where the Gray-crowned form is currently absent.

Steens Mountain, a ten-mile long, east-facing fault block rising to almost 10,000 feet above the surrounding high desert, is a favorite recreation site and hosts numbers of birders whose primary target is very often the Black Rosy-Finch. This bird, more or less confined to the base of steep slopes near melting snow during the summer, is typically difficult to find and much celebrated when it is. No recent assessment of the species’ status on Steens Mountain had been made when we set out to study the species during the summers of 2017 and 2018.

METHODS

We searched for Black Rosy-Finches on Steens Mountain during the summers of 2017 and 2018. In 2017, 31 days were spent searching between Jul 24 and Aug 23. The 2018 searches were made on 30 days between Jun 30 and Jul 29. While we searched the Little Blitzen and Big Indian Gorges on the west side of the mountain, we observed the species only at Kiger Gorge and in the vicinity of the East Rim. Our observations were typically made in the early morning or afternoon, when the finches were likely to be most active. All of our work involved searching the bases of steep cliffs, concentrating of the interface of the melting snow and adjacent soil, but also looking at the matrix of rock that made up the cliff face.

We also observed and described behavior associated with nuptial activity and nesting.

RESULTS

In 2017 we observed individual finches 74 times and identified five pairs. The total for 2018 was 91 finch observations and 11 pairs. Details are provided in Figure 1. The sex ratio in this species is skewed toward males (French, Miller), and that is what we observed. The maximum number of finches we had in view at one time was 33, on Aug 11, 2018. We found the male:female ratio to be approximately 6:1 in the population we observed.

BREEDING BEHAVIOR

Nuptial activity was first observed on Jun 16. On Jul 25 we saw courtship behavior that ended in mounting. Male finches are aggressively territorial, especially in the vicinity of a female with which he is mated. While displaying, the male faces the female, holds its tail perpendicular to its back, and vibrates it wings rapidly. The female assumes a similar posture, and both sexes vocalize a high pitched, persistent chirp. Other finches and bird species are attacked by the male if they approach the mated female too closely. The authors have witnessed attacks on a Horned Lark and an American Kestrel. We did not find any nests, but the first fledglings were seen on Jul 22. Aggression diminishes as family groups coalesce into small flocks with the advance of the summer.
FORAGING
During the periods of our observations, finches typically foraged along the melting edges of snowfields, apparently eating insects and perhaps seeds trapped in the snow months earlier. These feeding sites are visited regularly, both within days and from day to day. At one of our sites—0.5 miles south of the East Rim Overlook—this behavior was observed for 13 consecutive days in early July 2018. As the snowfields melt and fledging is complete, feeding on seeds and insects associated with the native flora commences. Black Rosy-Finches spend the winter at lower elevations not very distant from their summer homes and often in areas where snow is part of the winter landscape.

DISCUSSION
The Black Rosy-Finch is a unique, beautiful, and often difficult-to-find species. In the summer, it lives only at high elevations in remote areas. In Oregon, it is best known from Steens Mountain.

The species must have few natural enemies, but like all vertebrates obligated to high elevation homes, is stands to fall an early victim of global warming.

Our observations confirm that breeding Black Rosy-Finches are a regular feature on Steens Mountain, and can be seen by diligent (or merely lucky) birders seeking this treasure. We believe that the current population is more than 50 and perhaps as many as 300 individuals.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
Gratitude goes to Dr. Steven G. Herman of The Evergreen State College for assisting and sponsoring throughout the entirety of this project. Special thanks to Phoenix Velasco, Kevin Cowen, Reed Henderson, and Ben Holstein, for assisting with field surveys that took place on Steens Mountain.

LITERATURE CITED

**Figure 1: Summer 2017 Sightings**

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**Figure 2: Summer 2018 Sightings**

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**Black Rosy-Finch. Photo by Elijah Gordon.**
The Oregon birding community remains vibrant, as evidenced by the 68 records that the Oregon Bird Records Committee (OBRC) made determinations on throughout 2019. During the year, 58 records were accepted and 10 were not accepted. Six of the accepted records were new state records, bringing the Official State Checklist to 543 species. Two of those new species were found in 2018, but accepted in 2019.

Only one of the six new Oregon species was available for public viewing. A pair of male Eastern Bluebirds was discovered on Nov 25, 2018 by Eric Carlson in a field adjacent to the Dharma Rain Zen Center in Portland and remained at least through mid-February 2019, allowing ample time for birders from around the state to enjoy the spectacle. Less satisfying, a Zone-tailed Hawk was photographed near Medford on Oct 25, 2018, but not identified until days later after it had long departed. Likewise, on May 16, 2019 a Red-footed Booby landed on a fishing boat off Newport, allowing crew person Don Bok to get a photograph before it left. Frustrating for many twitchers, a Dusky Thrush showed up in a Tigard back yard on Feb 26, 2019, but was not reported until 10 days after it was last seen on March 8. Most unfortunate, Oregon’s first accepted Nazca Booby was found dead on South Beach, Lincoln County. Finally, looking back to ancient history, two birds collected on the east side of Steens Mountain in August 1921 by Stanley Jewett (and now specimens in the Smithsonian) became Oregon’s first (and only) accepted Woodhouse’s Scrub-Jay record.

The OBRC, a committee of the Oregon Birding Association, met in Portland on Jul 27, 2019 to discuss and vote on records that were too problematic to resolve remotely. It also discussed and approved an overhaul to its Rules of Operation. The Rules now clarify that the OBRC has two main purposes: maintenance of the Official Checklist of Oregon Birds; and maintenance of the Permanent Archive of Records of rare birds in Oregon. The Rules also clarified that records can fall into one of three categories: 1) Accepted; 2) Species Unresolved; and 3) Not Accepted. The “Species Unresolved” category recognizes that the reported species is one of two or more similar appearing species, both or all of which are review species.

If you are interested in learning more about the OBRC, accessing the Official Checklist, or how to report a rare bird, you can find that information on the Oregon Birding Association website at https://oregonbirding.org/oregon-bird-records-committee/

**ACCEPTED**

**Tundra Bean-Goose TUBG-2018-02**

**Yellow-billed Cuckoo YBCU-2019-28**
Details Robert Lockett and Ed McVicker.

**Broad-billed Hummingbird BBIH 2019-04**
Malheur NWR headquarters, Harney Co., 14-23 September 2019. Details Trent Bray, Judy Meredith, Craig Miller, Diana Byrne, Owen Schmidt, Tim Rodenkirk Photos Craig Miller, Owen Schmidt, Renee Tressler, Alan Woods.

**Broad-billed Hummingbird BBIH-2019-05**

**Mountain Plover MOPL-2012-14**
Bullard’s Beach State Park, Bandon, Coos Co., 6 December 2012. Details and photos Dave Lauten.

**Upland Sandpiper UPSA-2019-01**
(Note: In light of increasing scarcity of reports, this species was added to the OBRC Review List in 2018.)
Black-vented Shearwater BVSH-2015-11
Seaside Cove, Seaside, Clatsop Co., 11 October 2015.
Details Mike Patterson.

Black-vented Shearwater BVSH-2015-12
Details Hendrik Herlyn.

Black Storm-Petrel BLSP-2015-06
One bird seen from cruise ship off Curry Co., 1 August 2015.
Details Paul Sullivan, Bruce Rideout.

Nazca Booby NABO-2018-01
South of Yaquina Bay south jetty, Lincoln Co., one bird dead on
beach, 14 September 2018. Details and photos Wayne Hoffman;
photos Jim Danzenbaker, Robert Lockett.
First Oregon state record.

Blue-footed Booby BFBO-2018-05
Open ocean, south of Cape Meares, Tillamook Co., 1 bird 27

Brown Booby BRBO-2015-17
Cape Cove, Lane Co., 27 October 2015. One bird perched on
rock. Details and photo MerryLynn Denny.

Brown Booby BRBO-2016-18
Boiler Bay Wayside, Lincoln Co., 30 April 2016. One bird in
flight. Details Christopher Hinkle, Adrian Hinkle.

Brown Booby BRBO-2019-19
Schooner So. (Mile 220), Newport, Lincoln Co., 10 April 2019.
One bird found dead on beach by COASST volunteer.
Details and photos Jill Marks.

Red-legged Kittiwake RLKI-1999-13
North spit Coos Bay, Coos Co., 5 March 1999; one bird
found dead on beach, collected by Turnstone Environmental
Consultants. Details and photos of specimen submitted by

Laughing Gull LAGU-2007-11
Details and photos Mike Patterson.

Laughing Gull LAGU-2019-12
Details and photos Norm and Laura Donelson.

Lesser Black-backed Gull LBBG-2013-11
Details Dave Irons, Shawneen Finnegan.

Lesser Black-backed Gull LBBG-2018-10
Siuslaw River north jetty mudflats, Lane Co., 22 October 2018;
one bird. Report and photos Daniel Farrar.

Lesser Black-backed Gull LBBG-2019-12
Columbia River between Wasco and Sherman counties, 10
March 2019. Details and photos Nick Mrvelj.

Slaty-backed Gull SBGU-2017-12
Details and photos Mike Patterson.

Cook’s Petrel COPE-2012-09
Observed from cruise ship west of Curry Co., 25 September
2012. Accepted as Cokkilaria (species unresolved).
Details Jay Withgott, Judy Meredith.
Oregon Birds
Volume 46 (1) - 2020

Eastern Phoebe EAPH-2005-29
Oak Creek Dr., Corvallis, Benton Co., 24 April 2005.
One bird on private property.
Details Hendrik Herlyn and James Simmons.

Eastern Phoebe EAPH-2007-28
Details and photo Alan Contreras.

Eastern Phoebe EAPH-2017-30
No. of Fort Klamath, Klamath Co., 27 June 2017.
Details and photo Will Wright.

Eastern Phoebe EAPH-2019-31
Report and photos Andy Frank, Nels Nelson.
Note: eBird reports indicate bird was present May 6-23, 2019.

Plumbeous Vireo PLVI-2019-18
Page Springs Campground, Harney Co., one, possibly two adults, and one immature; 1 September 2019 and 7 September 2019.
Details and photos Mark Nikas; details Nick Mrvelj, Peyton Cook.

Woodhouse’s Scrub-Jay WOSJ-1921-01
Two birds collected by Stanley Jewett 8-9 August 1921 at Wild Horse Creek near Andrews on the SE slope of Steens Mtn. and currently in the Smithsonian.
Report and photos of specimens submitted by Tom Crabtree.

Sedge Wren SEWR-2018-05
Waite Ranch, 3 mi east of Florence, Lane Co., first found 13 December 2018, later determined to be two individual birds.
Details Roger Robb; details and photos Nick Mrvelj, Adrian Hinkle; photos Craig Tumer, Nels Nelson.

Eastern Bluebird EABL-2018-01
First Oregon state record.

Dusky Thrush DUTH-2019-01
Metzger area of Tigard, Washington Co. One bird in residential backyard with robins 26 February - 8 March 2019.
Details and photos Steve deMoulin.
First Oregon state record.

California Thrasher CATH-2019-06
Just south of Talent, Jackson Co., first reported 9 April 2019, seen through July 2019, at private residence.
Details and photos Judy Meredith, Shawneen Finnegan, Sylvia Maulding, Nels Nelson, Trent Bray, John Sullivan.

Phainopepla PHAI-2019-13
Details and photos Mark Nikas (photo next page), Chuck Gates; details Judy Meredith; photos David Sowards-Emmerd.

Lawrence’s Goldfinch LAGO-1998-20
Near Ashland, coming to feeder; Jackson Co., 2-5 February 1998. Details Sylvia Maulding, Dave Vroman.

LeConte’s Sparrow LCSP-2018-05
Wood River wetlands, Klamath Co., 15 September 2018; one bird.

Baltimore Oriole BAOR-2014-25
One bird coming to feeder at private residence on Lawson Rd, Crook Co., 19 June 2014. Details and photos Sharon Peters.

Common Grackle COGR-2003-44

Virginia’s Warbler VIWA-2018-21
Details and photos Adrian Hinkle.

Hooded Warbler HOWA-2015-22

Eastern Bluebird. Photo by Nick Mrvelj.
**Hooded Warbler HOWA-2019-24**

**Bay-breasted Warbler BBWA-2018-14**
Bayocean Spit, Tillamook Co., one bird on 29 September 2018. Details and photo Kai Frueh.

**Prairie Warbler PRAW-2019-17**
Newport, Lincoln Co., 5 and 12 October 2019. Details Alan Contreras; photos Alan Contreras and Stefan Schlick.

**Summer Tanager SUTA-2001-27**

**Summer Tanager SUTA-2018-25**

**Summer Tanager SUTA-2018-26**
NE Portland residence, Multnomah Co., 7 November 2018, one female. Details Chad Crouch, Jay Withgott; photos Chad Crouch.

**Summer Tanager SUTA-2019-28**

**Dickcissel DICK-2019-26**
*Note: eBird reports indicate bird was present Jan 5-Feb 8, 2019*

**SELECT SUBSPECIES:**
**Dark-eyed Junco “Gray-headed” GHJU-2011-13**

**NOT ACCEPTED**

**Thick-billed Murre TBMU-2017-19**
Oceanside, Tillamook Co., 29 April 2017. Bird scoped from a distance and not enough details were able to be gathered to confirm identity.

**Wilson’s Storm-Petrel WISP-2015-07**
Pelagic trip to Perpetua Bank, about 35 mi WSW of Newport, Lincoln Co., 3 October 2015. Report submitted in 2018. Brief sighting; could not rule out other petrels, including Leach’s Storm-Petrel.

**Plumbeous Vireo PLVI-1994-17**

**Plumbeous Vireo PLVI-2000-16**

**Plumbeous Vireo PLVI-2018-15**
Chandler Wayside SP, Lake Co., 15 September 2018. Details insufficient; did not rule out Cassin’s Vireo.

**Mckay’s Bunting MKBU-2018-04**
Gearhart ocean beach, Clatsop Co., 27 November 2017 through 4 December 2018. Seen and photographed by many, but uncertainty remained that this may be a hybrid or pale Snow Bunting. Outside experts were consulted and were also not confident that this was McKay’s Bunting.

**Baltimore Oriole BAOR-2000-26**

**Cape May Warbler CMWA-2001-18**

**Blackburnian Warbler BLBW-1994-19**
Malheur NWR, Harney Co., one bird on 23 May 1994. Older record gleaned from eBird; not enough details.

**Dickcissel DICK-2019-26**

**NOT ACCEPTED**

**Phainopepla. Photo by Mark Nikas.**
Thank you to the 145 birders who submitted numbers to Oregon Listing Results this year. We welcome the 21 new participants who joined us for the first time. To give context to this year’s numbers, I have carried forward numbers from 174 other birders, plus 28 deceased birding friends. In total, these Oregon Listing Results include the efforts of 347 birders spanning the last 22 years.

**NOTABLE STATEWIDE ACHIEVEMENTS:**
Judy Meredith, Aaron Beerman, and Ken Chamberlain passed the mark of 400 species in Oregon. Seventy-six birders have now reached that mark.

Nolan Clements and Caleb Centanni posted the top two state year lists for 2019, with 364 and 350 species seen, respectively, earning them spots in the top ten year lists of all time. Sixty-eight birders submitted state year lists for 2019.

Participation in the Birds Photographed in Oregon category increased to 79 people. Tom Crabtree still tops that category with 443.

Tait Anderson tops the Motorless Life Lists with 305 and Andy Frank tops the 2019 Motorless Year Lists with 217. These categories saw 27 and 11 participants, respectively.

The Western Oregon and Eastern Oregon Life list categories grew to 26 and 27 participants, respectively. Paul Sullivan tops the Western Oregon list at 412 and Tom Crabtree the Eastern Oregon list at 387.

**NOTABLE COUNTY LISTING ACHIEVEMENTS:**
Two more birders reached the goal of 100 species in each of Oregon’s 36 counties: Noah Strycker and Paul Adamus. Twenty-eight people have now reached that goal. Gloria Beerman became the fifth birder to record 125 species in each of Oregon’s 36 counties.

**New County Year List Records:**
Columbia 215 Tom Myers
Lincoln 249 Phil Pickering
(breaking his own record from 1986!)
Multnomah 228 Nick Mrvelj

Ninety birders reported county year lists in 2019. However, no birder submitted a year list for Gilliam or Wheeler Counties.

**New County Life List Records:**
Benton 294 Hendrik Herlyn
Columbia 249 Don Coggswell
Coos 360 Tim Rodenkirk
Deschutes 335 Tom Crabtree
Harney 313 Rick Vetter
Josephine 256 Dennis Vroman
Lake 290 Craig Miller
Lincoln 390 Darrel Faxon
Linn 272 Mark Nikas
Marion 279 Roy Gerig
Multnomah (tie) 302 Bob Stites
Multnomah (tie) 302 John Fitchen
Polk 296 Bill Tice
Tillamook 306 Wink Gross
Umatilla 297 Aaron Skirvin
Union 295 Trent Bray

**Notable Local Listing:**
The new 5MR Count Circle idea, which challenges birders to focus on a 5-mile radius around their home, drew enthusiastic participation from 38 birders who reported Life Lists and 37 who reported 2019 Year Lists.

Participation in the 15-mile diameter Circle Count drew 31 birders to report their Life List and 11 birders to report a 2019 Year List.

The Favorite Refuge category drew 40 birders and the Favorite Spot category expanded to 42 birders.

Yard Life List: there are 92 yard lists, representing a variety of sizes, habitats, and duration of observation. Everyone’s yard list is noteworthy just for the fact that it gets us to pay attention to birds, no matter the number of species.

**Congratulations to everyone who participated!**
We hope to hear from even more of our friends next year. The complete listing results can be found on the OBA website at https://oregonbirding.org/listing/
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Spring Editor: Diana Byrne
Fall Editor: Linda Tucker Burfitt

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