Oregon Birds

The Journal of Oregon Birding and Field Ornithology

Volume 48 Number 2 Fall 2022

Looking Back, Looking Forward

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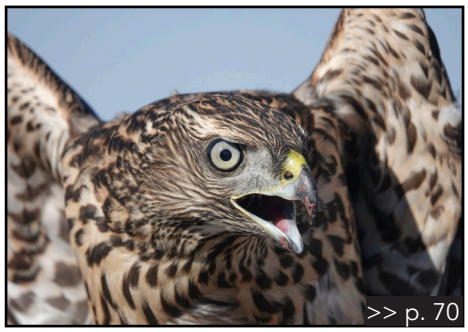
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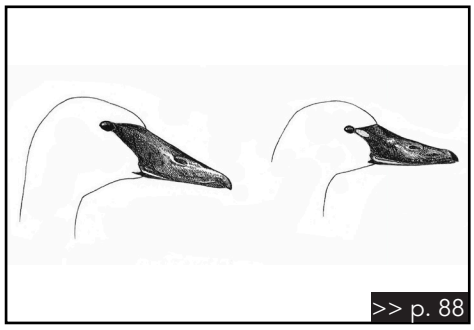
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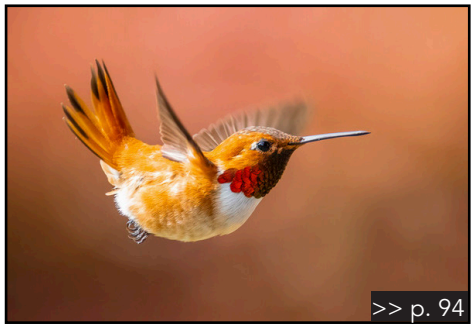
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On the Cover
Arid Lands (detail) from the book *As the Condor Soars.*
Illustration by Ram Papish.

Looking Back, Looking Forward

By Jay Withgott

Jay Withgott

With this issue of *Oregon Birds*, we look back on the past and then ahead to the future. As this journal approaches its fiftieth year, it feels appropriate to begin celebrating our rich history while we look forward to an even more vibrant future.

In the pages that follow, we profile two milestone books published toward the end of 2022. *A History of Oregon Ornithology* traces the study of birds in our state from the early 19th century through the Internet age, revealing the rich interplay of amateur and professional efforts in field ornithology through the decades. *As the Condor Soars: Conserving and Restoring Oregon's Birds* outlines scientific research on birds in Oregon and the efforts made to conserve and restore them in recent decades, giving voice to the many researchers helping to save our state's imperiled avifauna. Every OBA member will love and cherish these two landmark books, and every serious student of Oregon's birds should have copies on their shelves. In our coverage in *Oregon Birds*, we feature articles on these volumes, followed by interviews with their authors. We feature additional interviews with two well-known Oregon birder-authors who also came out with new books at the end of 2022.

We also look back on key individuals we've recently lost who were instrumental in shaping the Oregon birding community we enjoy today. Our memorials for Harry Nehls, Barb Bellin, and Jim Anderson include many contributions from some of the people they touched most deeply.

And yet, so much of birding involves anticipation of the future (what new bird might be around the corner, for instance?). So, looking ahead, this issue profiles a few of the most active and talented young birders in our state. More and more people are taking up birding, and advances in optics and communication technologies continue to transform the ways we bird. As you read through the profiles of today's young birders, I think you'll agree that in Oregon, the future of our birding community is bright indeed.

And of course, amid today's rapid change, there are also constants — and *Oregon Birds* has them covered. Consider the field identification challenges we all face as birders; in this issue we introduce a feature, Ask the Expert, that tackles tough ID questions head-on. Or the importance of scientific research to inform conservation efforts and educational outreach; in this issue we showcase the efforts and achievements of the Klamath Bird Observatory. Or the key role of community-science volunteer efforts by birders to help generate data vital to science and conservation; in this issue, we'll hear about the Breeding Bird Survey and why so many volunteers love doing their BBS routes.

So let's honor the old, celebrate the new, and revel in everything in birding that gives us joy again and again, like the spring migrants that return year after year. I hope you enjoy this issue of *Oregon Birds*.

Introducing The New Editorial Team

With this issue of *Oregon Birds*, we welcome an entirely new editorial team.

Meredith Matthews

Meredith Matthews is our Layout and Design Editor. Meredith is pursuing a B.S. in Ecological Biology at Eastern Oregon University, after having already obtained an Art degree there. In between those degrees she obtained an M.A. in Film at Queen's University in Belfast. Meredith hails from La Grande, Oregon, and has assisted with field research (banding, nest checks, and telemetry) with White-headed Woodpeckers and other species.

Bob Lockett is our Photo Editor. Bob is an Oregon Birding Association board member and brings decades of experience as a birder and photographer to *Oregon Birds*, as well as professional experience in the printing industry. Bob lives in Portland and has traveled to many countries of the world in search of new birds and stunning photographs.

Bob Lockett

Jay Withgott

And I, **Jay Withgott**, serve as Editor. I am a textbook author by profession, a former biologist and science writer, and a lifelong birder. I've lived in Portland for – hard to believe – almost 20 years now.

The three of us are supported in our efforts by the OBA board, officers, and membership secretary, as well as a newly formed Editorial Advisory Board whose members serve as a sounding board for ideas and a valuable source of feedback.

Although this Fall 2022 issue is exceptionally late due to our extended staffing transition (thank you for your patience, dear readers!), we are aiming to get the journal back on time with the Spring 2023 issue just a few short months from now. That issue will feature Field Notes reports detailing 2022's avian highlights from around Oregon, as well as additional articles and features.

Your input is always welcome, and if you would like to get involved with *Oregon Birds* in any way, please be in touch.

– Jay Withgott; withgott@comcast.net

A Dedicated Board Helps Keep OBA Strong

By Brodie Cass Talbott

Brodie Cass Talbott

It's hard to believe that I'm into my fourth year on the board of the Oregon Birding Association. I vividly remember my first board meeting, held at the Woodstock Library. As was tradition in those pre-COVID days, the board went out for a short bird walk beforehand, at Crystal Springs in Portland. I remember being self-conscious about my birding ability, as if they would kick me out if I misidentified a warbler song!

Luckily, the board was just a group of passionate birders like me. They were less interested in birding bona fides, and more interested in working as a team to serve the birding community. Over the years, I've been blessed to work with nearly 20 different board members, all of whom I now call friends, and all of whom have brought a unique range of skills and experiences to the board. We've been proud of our accomplishments: continuing to produce a high-quality journal, sponsoring field trips, funding valuable projects via our grants program, and bringing the birding community together with our annual meeting and in many other ways. All along, we've been buoyed by passionate members who volunteer their time, experience, and input to keep the organization strong.

Looking forward, I feel confident that we will continue to serve as a valuable hub for Oregon birders, mostly because I continue to be impressed by how many great birders we have in our state who are willing to step up and help out. And particularly because I've learned that what makes a great birder is not the ability to identify some warbler song, but rather the desire to help fellow birders enjoy the avifauna of our incredible state. My deepest gratitude to all of you who have proven this to me over and over in the last four years and have worked so hard to ensure that birding is for everyone.

OBA Annual Meeting: 2022 Report

By Brodie Cass Talbott, OBA President

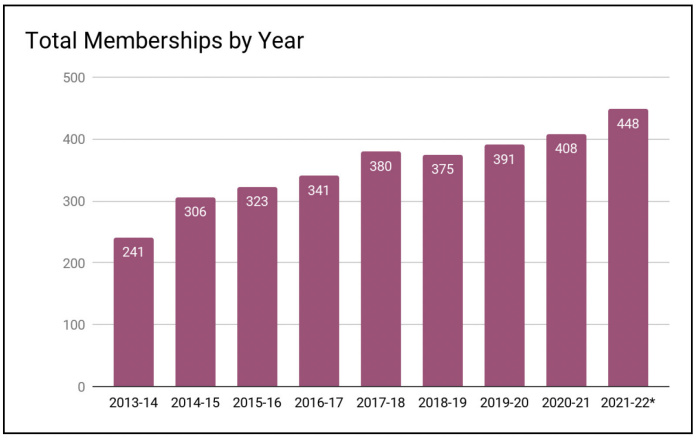
Given the uncertainties of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic — which forced the conversion of our last two Annual Meetings from in-person to virtual — in September 2022 the Oregon Birding Association (OBA) tried its first-ever "hybrid" Annual Meeting. We paired a virtual business meeting, held over Zoom on a weeknight, with an array of in-person trips across the state as part of our Oregon Birding Weekend.

Business Meeting

At the business meeting, organizational updates were shared, OBRC member Bob Archer gave a brief synopsis of the year's activities of the Oregon Bird Records Committee, and we all enjoyed a wonderful keynote presentation from corvid researcher Dr. Kaeli Swift, who shared fascinating insights into the biology of the American Crow. OBA members then voted on important amendments to the OBA bylaws. Some of the proposed changes were minor edits to improve clarity, but some were major. The most important change was to the executive structure of the board. Membership voted to approve a proposal to revert to a typical board structure of a president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer, replacing the model of having a past-president and president-elect. This was done with the aim of reducing turnover, as the old structure, while having some merits, precluded any president from serving for more than one consecutive year. The new bylaws can be seen here: https://bit.ly/3FN37oK.

The membership also nominated and approved four new board members: Rachael Friese, Jenny Jones, Kyle Landstra, and Gerald Meenaghan. A big thanks to all those who participated in the meeting and all of you who are helping to keep our organization strong!

Birders explore Gilliam County with Linnaea Basden and Joshua Myers as part of the OBA Birding Weekend. *Photo by Joshua Myers.*



*2021-22 numbers are partial through 9/5/2022.

OBA membership has been climbing. This graph shows numbers of members over the past nine years.

Oregon Birding Weekend

On September 10th and 11th, the OBA hosted 15 field trips across 11 Oregon counties, in its first-ever Oregon Birding Weekend. More than 100 birders enjoyed these free, volunteer-led walks, and together these trips documented 162 bird species. It was a fun event, and it brought a lot of new members to the organization! Many thanks to all who took part, especially our volunteer trip leaders. Look for another Oregon Birding Weekend in 2023!

OBA birders visit (clockwise from left) Whitaker Ponds, Portland; Tualatin River NWR, Sherwood; Smith & Bybee Wetlands, Portland; Lonerock, Gilliam Co.; and Sitka Sedge State Natural Area, Tillamook Co. *Photos by Eric Carlson, Angela Calabrese, Stephan Nance, Joshua Meyers, and Sarah Risser.*

OBA Grants Update: 2022 Report

By Tom Myers, OBA Board member

The Oregon Birding Association (OBA) offers grants twice a year through its Fund for Ornithology. During each grant cycle, the OBA awards up to three projects as much as $1,000 each. Over the past few years, the OBA has been proud to help fund birding festivals, banding stations, university research projects, young birders' clubs, birding podcasts, nonprofits dedicated to the protection of wild birds, and school and community programs aimed at educating the public about the importance of birds. In 2022, the OBA received an array of collaborative and educational proposals all aimed at promoting birds and birding in Oregon. We are excited to share the following information regarding the five grant projects that the OBA funded in 2022. Your OBA membership dues help fund these projects, so thank you for being a part of the OBA!

About the OBA's Fund for Ornithology

The OBA's Fund for Ornithology was established in 1988. Initially founded with a generous donation from Medford birder and former OBA president Otis Swisher, the Fund supports projects that promote the enjoyment, knowledge, and conservation of birds in Oregon. The program offers three grants of up to $1,000 each during two application periods, with deadlines on February 1st and August 1st of each year.

The OBA Board's goal is to support the diverse community of bird enthusiasts in Oregon. We strongly encourage applications for projects that serve or are led by Black, Indigenous, and other birders of color, birders from working-class backgrounds, birders who identify as women, birders from the LGBTQIA+ community, and birders living with disabilities.

To learn more about the OBA's Fund for Ornithology, please visit oregonbirding.org and find the "Grants"page under the "About OBA" tab.

Harney County Bird Festival: Community Engagement

The Harney County Bird Festival requested support from the OBA this year to help develop new and better ways to engage the local Harney County community in the festival. Festival leaders added two bird-themed activities to their lineup, a movie night and a musical performance. Both activities were free, supported local businesses, and created opportunities for birders and community members to mingle. It was the organizers' hope that birders and local non-birding community members might find some common understanding of one another and build connections.

- Learn more online at https://www.migratorybirdfestival.com/.
- Follow the Festival on Instagram @hcmigratorybirdfestival.

Juvenile Northern Goshawk.
Photo by Jamie Simmons.

Scappoose High School Birding Club

At Scappoose High School, the Birding Club has been helping students explore birding since 2007. The group applied for an OBA grant to help upgrade its equipment and to help fund activities. It purchased new binoculars and field guides and was able to cover food and transportation costs for bird walks and an annual big day outing. The Birding Club's objective is "to nurture a love for birds and birding in the student body of Scappoose High School." It strives to teach students species identification, how to use eBird, how to use a field guide, and proper birding etiquette. The club is mostly student-led, currently has about 15 active members, and is known for having a welcoming and supportive culture and for showing students, teachers, and parents how fun birding can be.

- Follow the Birding Club on Instagram @scappoose_birding_club.

HawkWatch International: Bonney Butte Banding Blind

Thanks in part to funding from the OBA, HawkWatch International was able to replace a bird-banding blind that was in disrepair at Oregon's well-known Bonney Butte hawk-watch site. The effort faced challenges, however, as installing the blind was much more time-, labor-, and cost-intensive than expected. Due to regulations associated with the site's location in a national forest, construction was required to take place away from Forest Service land. HawkWatch International staff had to make two separate trips to Bonney Butte from Salt Lake City, Utah, and once the blind was assembled, the crew had to transport the blind to its final location. The new blind officially began running the first week of October, 2022. The first bird banded was a Sharp-shinned Hawk. As a result of the late start, only 24 birds were banded this fall, but next year staff expect to return to banding 200 to 300 birds per season. HawkWatch International has been banding raptors at the Bonney Butte location for 27 years. Had it not received funding from OBA, it would have lost a year's worth of data.

- Learn more about this project at https://hawkwatch.org/bonney.

Bonney Butte banding blind before (left) and after (right) reconstruction. *Photos by Jesse Watson and Tim Baerwald.*

Klamath Bird Observatory: Providing a More Inclusive Birding Community in Southern Oregon

In 2022, the Klamath Bird Observatory (see page 92) designed and implemented the Bird Conmigo community education project: a fun, family-friendly, inclusive, and safe bilingual Spanish-English bird education project. In its first year it offered in-person group birding trips and, thanks in part to the OBA's funding, the project will grow to include interactive virtual presentations, science demonstrations, and other educational events and activities in both Spanish and English.

Bird Conmigo aims to focus on groups that have traditionally been overlooked by the birding community. The program has joined the Latinx Interagency Committee (LINC) in Medford and has been working with the Black Alliance and Social Empowerment group of Southern Oregon. To address socioeconomic barriers, the group has selected field trip sites in or near the communities it intends to serve and will provide field guides (in English and Spanish) and binoculars to people who attend field trips. In 2023, Bird Conmigo plans to create additional Spanish-language educational materials for distribution throughout southern Oregon and to continue to build relationships with the local community to ensure that the resources are ones the community needs and that they are properly distributed.

- Learn more online at https://klamathbird.org/callnote/birds/bird-conmigo-2/.
- Follow the KBO on Instagram @klamathbirdobs.

Banding crew lead Karl Garrett releases a Northern Goshawk at Bonney Butte.
Photo by Jamie Simmons.

Willamette-Laja Twinning Partnership: Aves Compartidas Youth Education Program

The OBA was thrilled to celebrate the ongoing success of Aves Compartidas (*Oregon Birds*, 47(2): p. 89) and to help fund this unique youth education program for a second year. Aves Compartidas is Spanish for "shared birds." Since 2018, Aves Compartidas has connected dual-language elementary-school students in the Willamette River watershed in Oregon with students in the Laja River watershed in Guanajuato, Mexico, through shared migratory bird education and cultural connections. Youth unite throughout the school year through exchanges of art, letters, photos, and videos. Through the lens of shared migratory birds, students learn the importance of protecting natural resources within their local watersheds and communities.

During the 2021-2022 school year, Aves Compartidas engaged 3rd- to 5th-grade students in five dual-language elementary schools throughout the Willamette Valley. It continues to plan cross-cultural exchanges for conservation practitioners, university students, and primary-school teachers in 2023-2024. The program requested funds from the OBA to support field trips and restoration projects for three new schools in the Portland metro area this year. Starting in September, it was able to hire a full-time instructor and coordinator based in Portland. This enabled it to increase the program's reach to two additional schools in the Portland metro area and to 16 more classrooms in new and continuing schools.

The program's virtual resources can be found at www.willamette-laja.org/resources.

- Follow this project on Instagram @aves_willamettelaja.

Two New Landmark Works Portray the Birders and Scientists Studying and Protecting Oregon's Birds

Fall 2022 marks a milestone in the literary history of works on Oregon's birdlife. Recent months have seen the publication of two momentous books. *A History of Oregon Ornithology* traces the history of efforts by birders, amateur field ornithologists, and professional scientists to understand and document the status and distribution of Oregon's birds, from Lewis and Clark through the Internet age. *As the Condor Soars: Conserving and Restoring Oregon's Birds* presents synopses of scientific efforts to study and conserve our state's most threatened species, complete with biographical sketches of, and essays by, the ornithologists who conducted the research.

Together these two books present a rich and illuminating picture of the people who have loved, studied, and worked to protect our state's birds — and in Oregon we have been blessed with a large and talented array of such people. We should all feel proud to enjoy such a heritage, and we can now be grateful to have two landmark books that memorialize and celebrate the work that's been done while offering guidance and inspiration for future efforts.

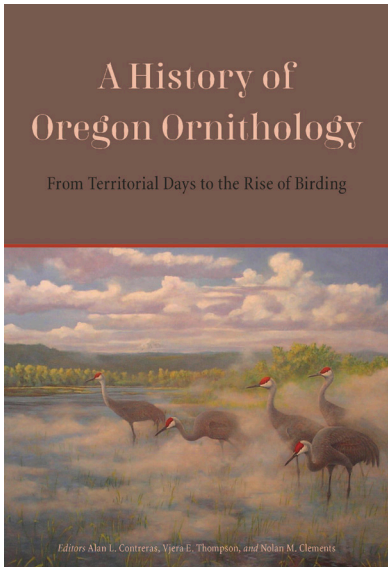
In the following pages we present an article on each book, written by each book's editors. After each article is an interview in which the editors relate their writing experiences and their perspectives on the future. Following these, we present interviews with two authors — each well-known in the Oregon birding community — of additional books of interest that have been published this past fall.

Please enjoy learning about these four wonderful books in the pages that follow — and then do yourself a favor and go out and buy copies for your own library, or as gifts for others.

A History of Oregon Ornithology

By Alan L. Contreras, Vjera E. Thompson, and Nolan M. Clements

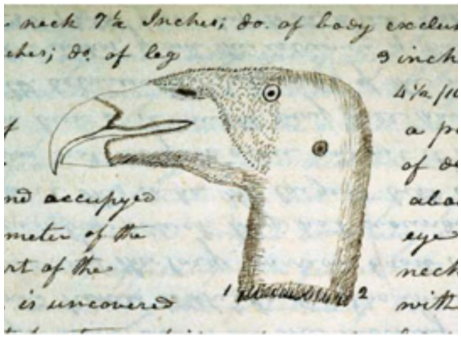
If we understand ornithology as the organized study of birds, the history of Oregon ornithology is relatively recent, essentially beginning with the start of the 19th century. ***A History of Oregon Ornithology*** (Oregon State University Press, 2022) ultimately grew out of a desire to explain how bird study in Oregon got where it is by the mid-20th century, what forms it took over time, and how the expansion of nonprofessional interest in birds happened after mid-century. The concurrently published book, *As the Condor Soars* (see p. 78), helps us understand what has happened in modern conservation and research efforts and how we can help preserve our avian wildlife.



Book cover image courtesy of OSU Press.

The *History* is loosely structured as a chronological tour of ornithological endeavors in Oregon, beginning with a short overview of what bird study consisted of in the period preceding that covered by this volume. The introductory material also outlines some themes that appear later in the book. In particular, these relate to two issues of importance in considering what bird study, and ornithology, are. These are the distinction between amateur and professional study and the difference between scientific and nonscientific work. These topics are related but different, and ornithology as a field has been one of the principal arenas in which these distinctions have been, and continue to be, discussed.

After that comes the study of living birds (as distinguished from museum specimens) and the expanding public interest in bird observation, which occupies the rest of the book. This includes the bird reports of early explorers and settlers, efforts to develop and disseminate accurate information about the state's birds, changes in how birds are studied and who studies them, the advent of Audubon societies and other organizations, the 20th-century separation (and occasional overlap) of professional ornithology and birding, the rise of "citizen science" or "community science" efforts, and the beginning of electronic data management.



Meriwether Lewis's sketch of the head of a California Condor the Lewis and Clark expedition witnessed along the Columbia River.

In addition to introductory material on the nature of ornithology, the first half of the *History* focuses on the work of certain major figures such as Lewis and Clark, David Douglas, Charles Bendire, William L. Finley, Herman T. Bohlman, Ira Gabrielson, and Stan Jewett. It also discusses important stepping-stones in the development of Oregon bird study, in particular the Northwestern Ornithological Association, the Audubon movement and, later in the century, Oregon Field Ornithologists (today Oregon Birding Association).

After mid-century, the *History* takes a path through the great expansion and development of nonspecialist bird study, including surveys, bird counts, the work of David B. Marshall, educational activity outside of major research centers, seabird study, and various Internet-based activities. The substantive chapter on the expansion of seabird study is one anchor of the later chapters, as is the extensive discussion of how the Internet and eBird have affected bird observation.

David Marshall at about age 20 with a fledgling blackbird at what is now Finley NWR. *Photo courtesy of the Marshall family.*

Anyone who spends five minutes looking into the older history of Oregon ornithology will realize that the preeminent historian of the subject is George A. "Chip" Jobanek of Eugene, whose *An Annotated Bibliography of Oregon Bird Literature Published Before 1935* (OSU Press, 1997) is all but a history for that period. His work on the annotated reprint of John Kirk Townsend's journal is also an invaluable

resource. Chip decided to be a consultant to the *History* rather than its lead author, but we built much of the early history using his work with permission. His help has been monumental.

As Alan Contreras began working on the book's early drafts in 2018, it was clear that this was not a one-person project, and several other people became involved, agreeing to write and edit specific parts of the *History*. Although the cast of writers changed a bit as time went by, two of the original contributors accepted new responsibilities, and thus the final book included Contreras as an editor along with Vjera Thompson of Eugene and Nolan Clements of La Grande, who was an OSU undergraduate at the time. Eventually we involved over 20 writers and a dozen artists. Color plates were kindly funded by the board of the Oregon Birding Association.

Irene Finley, nature writer and wife of conservationist William Finley, lugs a box of glass photographic plates in the field.

As this project began, we became aware that very little like it exists in the United States. State ornithological histories are rare, and we are not aware of one from anywhere in the United States that has as broad a reach in time and subject as this one, except for William Behle's ornithological history of Utah through the 1980s. An excellent history exists for colonial and early-statehood Virginia, but it devotes only 11 pages to everything past the year 1900. A history for Kansas covers only professional academic ornithology.

We invite you to dive into *A History of Oregon Ornithology* and enjoy learning about the extraordinarily rich history of bird study in our state that has been unearthed, organized, and presented through the collective effort of our talented team of authors. The youngest contributor to the *History* project was 16; the oldest was 99, which reflects the great breadth of interest and activity in Oregon bird study starting in the 19th century. A couple of our writers were already dead, a tribute to the staying power of their work.

There's history for you.

ABOUT THE BOOK:

A History of Oregon Ornithology: From Territorial Days to the Rise of Birding

Alan L. Contreras, Vjera E. Thompson, and Nolan M. Clements, editors. Published by Oregon State University Press, November 2022; 296 pp.

An Interview with the Editors of *A History of Oregon Ornithology*

The three editors of *A History of Oregon Ornithology* sat down with *Oregon Birds* to share with us their experiences and insights gained from working on the book. Let's hear what Alan Contreras, Vjera Thompson, and Nolan Clements have to say….

OB: ***What did you learn while researching and writing this book that most surprised you?***

NOLAN: This was the first book that I've worked on! From a purely professional development perspective, it was a great introduction to the writing, editing, and publishing process.

Alan L. Contreras

Vjera E. Thompson

Nolan M. Clements

VJERA: For me as well, this was the first time I've been through the entire process of writing and publishing a book. I appreciated seeing the whole process end-to-end — it's a lot of work! We wrote a draft, ran it by reviewers, did some major rewrites, ran it by reviewers again, made more improvements, and then it went to OSU Press to go through the official editing machinery for yet more suggestions and improvements. We used a numbering system to keep track of each version as we passed the manuscript back and forth — 21 versions in all!

I researched and wrote the chapter, "The Internet Age." I thought I would have an advantage, having lived through the time-period, but there were still things I discovered during my research. For example, I hadn't remembered that birdnotes.net started as nw-birds. Having all the back issues of *Oregon Birds* available online was very helpful for my research; I repeatedly consulted the issues from the 1990s as I wrote the Internet chapter.

OB: *What stories from A History of Oregon Ornithology did you find most interesting?*

ALAN: I found it interesting to contrast the informality of how field research was organized in the late 19th and early 20th century with the many requirements that have to be met today.

VJERA: I enjoyed reading about Oregon residents who documented ornithological findings as they went about their regular jobs, like the Tillamook County cheesemakers, Alex Walker and Reed Ferris. I also appreciated learning more about the women who were influential, such as Irene Finley and Annie Alexander.

Tillamook County cheesemaker and amateur ornithologist Alex Walker with specimens in the field.

OB: *Were there many items that had to be left on the cutting-room floor during your editing process?*

ALAN: I think a full-scale history of natural history museums in the Northwest would be worthwhile. We barely mentioned them, and there is a short chapter in *As the Condor Soars.*

VJERA: One of my favorite essays was about Bewick's Wren song research by Donald Kroodsma. I've read some of his books and it was neat to learn that he started in Oregon, and to be able to correspond with him. His essay was not included in the final version of *A History of Oregon Ornithology*. Thankfully, though, it was published in *As the Condor Soars.*

Regretfully, I neglected to mention Harry Nehls's RBA phone service in the Internet chapter. Once he died this summer, I read the many tributes to him and realized the RBA would have been a great example of how birding communications have changed in Oregon.

OB: *If you could go back in time, which historical figure from Oregon's ornithological history would you most like to meet, and why?*

NOLAN: Ira Gabrielson and Stanley Jewett made remarkable contributions to the understanding of the birds of Oregon. What were they like? How did they bird? What was it like to experience Oregon at such a different time? Wouldn't it be incredible to bird with these guys?

VJERA: After looking through the handy Oregon Ornithology Timeline in our Appendix, I would say Florence Merriam Bailey. She inspires me in many ways; for example, she helped people learn about birds by writing several books, and she persuaded people to stop decorating their hats with feathers.

ALAN: Arthur Pope is a fascinating character. He conceived and co-founded the precursor organization to Portland Audubon as a teenager, then died of tuberculosis at age 20. I can't help thinking of what he would have accomplished had he lived a full-length life into the 1960s.

OB: *Your book covers the complex ground between professional scientist and amateur birder, and reveals it to be a wide and colorful landscape. How best can birders contribute toward science? How can birders and researchers communicate most effectively? What has arisen from the interplay of professional and amateur over the years?*

NOLAN: I think the obvious answer is to engage in community-science projects (Christmas Bird Counts, the Breeding Bird Survey, eBird, etc.). The data resulting from such projects won't simply float around in a notebook in someone's closet, never to be deposited into a database or other publicly accessible destination. As I enter the academic side of the bird world, I am discovering how gate-kept it is. I think researchers and the academic world could make more of an effort to make their resources and community more open and available to the general birding public. To me, this can happen in two ways: by removing or lowering financial barriers, and by communicating using less scientific language. eBird, the BBS, banding data to some extent, and most other bird-related community-science programs are phenomenal examples of how the professional and amateur have interacted to produce relevant, intriguing, and sometimes damning, science. An excellent example is the 2019 paper (Rosenberg, K.V. et al., 2019, Decline of the North American avifauna; *Science* 366: 120-124), which documented extreme declines in avian populations across North America.

Oregon ornithologist Ira Gabrielson, a director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, at a waterfowl event.

ALAN: Keeping accurate records in whatever you are doing is always good and helpful, as the information will be there for any researcher who needs it. But they need to be able to find it, so make sure that it is visible.

OB: *Technology has always driven changes in how we study birds. Where do you think we are going in the future?*

ALAN: I think the international travel craze will slowly subside as travel becomes more difficult, expensive, and ethically problematic. We may see a refocus on local information and local habitat protection and improvement. This is a good thing.

NOLAN: Motus automated radio telemetry for tracking wildlife is all the rage right now, as it should be. I think that when GPS and battery technology become small enough to put on warblers, we'll enter into a new era of bird research and recreational birdwatching. We just don't yet understand the fine-scale, long(er)-term movements of passerines.

OB: *The three of you span a wide range of ages. We'd be curious to hear how each of you see the pros and cons of the Internet age.*

VJERA: If you read the "Hopes, Predictions, and Expectations" chapter toward the end of our book, you will see that I am more in favor of technology than Alan is. But I grew up with technology being an everyday, key part of my birding experience. I joined birdnotes.net early on and was one of the most prolific contributors to that database project. OBOL was an important resource for connecting me with birders. Technology does have some downsides. (Can I find, access, and read a high-school floppy-disc report? No.) But the upsides are worth it: up-to-date information at my fingertips, for example, and the connection to other birders.

NOLAN: The Internet was a key aspect of how I got into birding. I could only learn so much by turning the pages of my Sibley guide at age 12 — and to understand the timing, precise distribution, and total diversity of any one region through field observation alone would have taken years. I found eBird when I was 16, and suddenly all that information and more was at my fingertips, accessible instantly and digestible in just a few hours. Still, despite all the great things that the Internet has brought, I think the multitude of tools, programs, software, and so on can be incredibly overwhelming and oftentimes a deterrent for those trying to learn.

Pelagic trips were a new frontier for field ornithology as late as the 1980s, when early outings like this one out of Charleston (Coos County) brought together top birders of the day. *Photo by Steve Gordon.*

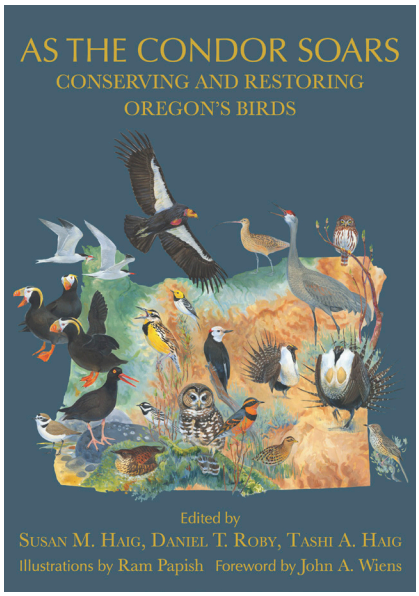
ALAN: The Internet is great for getting fast access to information that happens to be on it. eBird migration maps are amazing. I think, however, that print will outlast digital for record-keeping. So far, we have perhaps a 400-year record or so of bird information available on paper and a 20- to 40-year record of information that is digitally stored in various formats. A few sources like CBC data, BBS route data, and banding lab data extend back further digitally but become patchy. And there is no guarantee that future devices can read the digital data, whereas my eyes can read paper data indefinitely. Check back with me in 100 years.

As the Condor Soars:
A New Model for Promoting Avian Conservation Science

By Susan M. Haig, Daniel D. Roby, and Tashi A. Haig

As the Condor Soars: Conserving and Restoring Oregon's Birds (Oregon State University Press, 2022) takes a novel approach that we hope readers will find compelling. This new book not only provides an engaging summary of scientific research on Oregon's most threatened bird species and the efforts made to conserve them, but it also gives voice to the many dedicated individuals who have carried out the work.

Edited by ornithologists Susan Haig and Daniel Roby with biographical help from author Tashi Haig, *As the Condor Soars* features species-specific essays written by the scientists who have conducted the groundbreaking research that has advanced the conservation of each species. It relates the history of avian conservation efforts in Oregon with the help of more than 80 biographies of the people who directed or performed the work.



Book cover image courtesy of OSU Press.

As the Condor Soars is written in a non-technical manner for all ages and levels of expertise, and includes numerous color photos and illustrations. Want to know what has been done for Marbled Murrelets, or Burrowing Owls, or Long-billed Curlews? *As the Condor Soars* tells us with detail and substance. Timelines put events in perspective, and introductory material clarifies the scientific approaches and tools used, helping to provide a synopsis of complex issues that the state has faced, often for decades.

The book does not delve into deep technical discussions, but offers references for more information. This clear citation of scientific literature provides readers entry to a rich collection of fundamental work as well as the latest research on particular topics and species. Individual essays were peer-reviewed, and then the entire book was peer-reviewed by four nationally or internationally acclaimed avian conservation scientists aware of efforts in Oregon to save birds and their habitats.

Philosophy Behind the Book

Several key motivating factors guided us in creating *As the Condor Soars*.

Showcase species conservation. We wanted to write a simplified and interesting book about avian conservation that would give the public — especially birders — an idea of the considerable efforts extended toward various species. For example, tracking efforts to study, conserve, and monitor the status of the Northern Spotted Owl can be difficult even if you work on the bird, let alone if you try to rely on reports from newspapers and other outlets. However, by consulting *As the Condor Soars*, you can read Katie Dugger's summary of Northern Spotted Owls along with David Wiens's Barred Owl synopsis. Then examine Matt Betts's essay on implications of the Northwest Forest Plan, and together you'll get a fairly good idea of how the species got to where it is today. Finally, reading Eric Forsman's biography will offer tremendous insight into how people became concerned about the species and its old-growth forest habitat in the first place.

Honor pioneering ornithologists. Thanks to strong programs at Oregon State University and other institutions, our state is blessed with passionate and dedicated professionals who have devoted their careers to studying birds and working to ensure their longevity. We wanted to summarize and document the status of species recovery programs while the pioneering ornithologists who have led the efforts were still active and able to contribute their thoughts on the evolution of the work.

Provide educational resources. Another reason we wrote the book was to provide a teaching and learning resource for students and faculty at almost every level. It can be used in classes, for example, or can serve as a gold mine for a new graduate student searching for a thesis or dissertation topic. We've also provided curriculum ideas on the book's website, www.AsTheCondorSoars.com.

Become a trusted guide. Lastly, and perhaps most significantly, we are hoping the book will serve as the go-to handbook for agencies and lawmakers who are searching for a trusted, peer-reviewed source that summarizes complex environmental issues in the state. Oregon's conservation issues are so varied that, without a resource like *As the Condor Soars*, it is not at all simple to grasp the history, intricacies, and pathway forward for a particular topic. Want to solve the

salmon/bird dilemma on the Columbia River? Understand issues for SONEC wetlands in eastern Oregon? How about resolving water disputes in the Klamath region? None of these challenges will be understood in a short period of time. Our hope is that the book will shorten a reader's learning curve considerably by providing a synopsis for each topic and key references with the confidence that information attained from the book is robust and trustworthy. To facilitate this use of our book, we, the co-editors, are joining with OSU Press to each donate 50 books to Oregon legislators and agency heads. Future profits from the book will go toward providing additional copies to these decision-makers.

A Model for Other States?

We feel a handbook of this type could be quite useful in every state and province, or indeed in any jurisdiction where complex conservation issues have been worked on for many years and distillation of peer-reviewed science and management would enable clearer thinking and positive paths forward for managers, scientists, and policymakers. Thus, we are working on a proposal to the American Ornithological Society (the preeminent professional society for ornithologists in North America) to support the development of this type of avian conservation handbook for every state and province in the United States and Canada. Given the desperate need for trusted scientific information in this age of changing climates, we feel the value of such a resource could not be greater.

Oregon scientists have contributed immensely to the conservation of our state's birds. Here researcher Joan Hagar helps Kelly Huber to band birds in a mist net. *Photo courtesy of Joan Hagar and Sue Haig.*

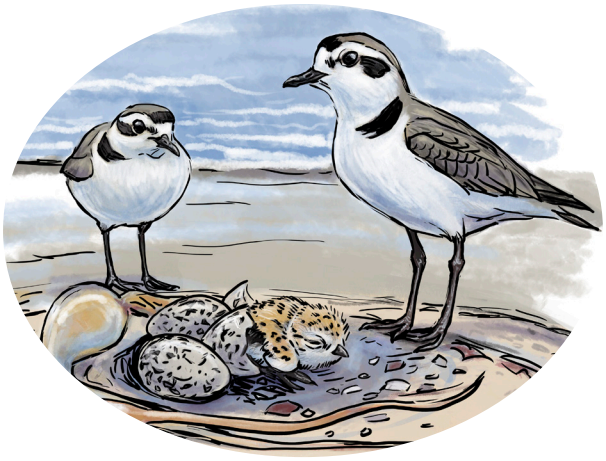
The California Condor is being reintroduced in northernmost California and individuals could soon cross into Oregon. *Photo by Tim Huntington.*

Oregon's Conservation Success Stories

For decades, untold efforts by professional and citizen scientists have provided relief or recovery for bird species in each of Oregon's diverse ecosystems. What is clear from our book is that each situation requires a different approach. Some require a great deal of research, while for others the management needed is straightforward but just needs to be carried out. And for others, it all needs to be done, and is complex at every turn (e.g., Double-crested Cormorants and salmon in the Columbia River).

In each case, the type of people involved varies as well. One victory early on was the phenomenal return of the Western Bluebird to the Willamette Valley via nest-box construction and installation begun in the 1970s by amateur birder Elsie Eltzroth. Her work expanded beyond Oregon and has continued to help stabilize a declining species. Chuck Henny's research on chemical contaminants was vital in bringing back Osprey to the Willamette River, as well as many other raptors across the state. Bob Altman has partnered with many people and groups to protect thousands of hectares of oak-savanna habitat that provides protection for many species at risk. Charlie Bruce, working for Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, was its first non-game biologist and worked on many avian recovery teams.

Conservation efforts for birds in Oregon, like anywhere, are often hard-fought, but conservation successes can have gratifying and far-reaching consequences. When birds are indicator species or keystone species, their recovery can provide a safe haven for many other species. For example, conservation of the Western Snowy Plover has required closing some beaches to the public during certain times of the year and restricting dogs on beaches. However, the birds have



Western Snowy Plover.
Illustration by Ram Papish.

responded so well to the management carried out by ODFW and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that Oregon's plovers now serve as a source population for other states. Moreover, the habitat protected provides nesting, roosting, and migratory stopover habitat for many other shorebirds.

As we look toward our immediate future, we are all anxiously anticipating the first observation of a California Condor in southern Oregon. Perhaps one will have been seen by the time this article comes out. Condors will thrive only if we can convince people to switch to non-lead ammunition. Of course, if they do so for condors, it will help every raptor and scavenger in the state, not to mention the hunters themselves, who suffer when they consume lead-laced meat.

Finally, the efforts underway to bring back Sharp-tailed Grouse to eastern Oregon will take patience, but how thrilling it will be to welcome back another species!

Of course, we live at a time when climates are changing far faster than we ever imagined. The conservation challenges we are facing, and will face, will only get more daunting. But for 400 or so pages, *As the Condor Soars* lets you relax, marvel at some stunning photography and artwork, and contemplate and celebrate what can be done for conservation when we put our minds to it.

High Desert dwellers (detail). *Illustration by Ram Papish.*

ABOUT THE BOOK:
As the Condor Soars: Conserving and Restoring Oregon's Birds
Susan M. Haig, Daniel D. Roby, and Tashi A. Haig, editors
Published by Oregon State University Press, December 2022; 440 pp.

An Interview with the Editors of *As the Condor Soars*

The three editors of *As the Condor Soars* sat down with *Oregon Birds* to share with us some thoughts on their book and on the conservation of Oregon's birdlife. Let's hear what Sue Haig, Dan Roby, and Tashi Haig have to say….

OB: *What main message(s) would you like readers to take from your book?*

SUE: I hope readers will recognize how many ornithologists there are in Oregon, how many have dedicated their lives to saving particular species or resolving particular issues, and what a difference it has made to the overall well-being of the environment in Oregon. What if they had not tried to protect beaches for Snowy Plovers, or forests for Spotted Owls and Marbled Murrelets, or sage habitats for Sage-Grouse? Oregon would not look like the paradise it looks like now.

Susan M. Haig

Daniel D. Roby

DAN: I hope readers see that, so far, the avifauna of Oregon has fared reasonably well in the Anthropocene. Still, a number of Oregon's bird species face serious challenges from climate change and human population growth, with its attendant habitat destruction. Keeping Oregon's avifauna intact will require a better understanding of population status and limiting factors, plus innovative new approaches to conserving and restoring species in decline. Science-based adaptive management is the key to a bright future for Oregon's birdlife.

Tashi A. Haig

TASHI: The message of this book is one of hope, but also a call to action. It showcases how dedicated individuals have brought about appreciable improvements for vulnerable bird species in Oregon. We hope birders, field ornithologists, and other groups such as policymakers will use this model to continue the momentum around conserving crucial animal species in their own local areas and around the world.

OB: *Did you learn anything that surprised you as you prepared the book, or did your perspective on anything change?*

DAN: What changed for me is how I envisioned the final version. In my view, the book evolved into a primer for students of all ages on the conservation biology of Oregon's birds. Because the text is the work of so many authors and comes from so many different perspectives, it provides what I think is a fairly comprehensive treatment of how Oregon's avifauna can be sustained through the 21st century. I really hope our book helps stimulate others to undertake similar efforts in other states, because each state has its own avian conservation challenges and opportunities.

TASHI: As the only non-ornithologist contributor to the book, I was thrilled to gain deeper insight into the field of ornithology overall. While researching the individuals whose capsule biographies appear throughout the book, I was especially struck by how deeply connected the ornithologists and birders of Oregon are. Many Oregon birders are citizen-scientist volunteers or collaborators in research studies or educational projects. And from a collection of seemingly distinct scientists, I found inspiration not only in their individual accomplishments, but in the power of their collective respect for the legacies of the land passed down to them.

SUE: I just came away even more impressed than ever with my colleagues and their dedication to conservation.

OB: *What is your outlook for the future of bird populations in Oregon? What roles can birders play in helping to conserve birds?*

SUE: I'll be honest. The outlook for birds in Oregon, and everywhere, is quite grim. At current rates of decline, we risk losing all birds in the next generation of people. I do not want to envision how close we are to having no birds on Earth, but it is not many years from now unless we do something drastic and immediate.

That said, birders are key to the success of protecting birds and habitats in so many ways. Birders can help by contributing to databases like eBird and going on Christmas Bird Counts. But I believe their best contribution is to walk outside with their binoculars and tell their neighbors they are off to go birding at an area set aside for conservation, or are on their way to an Audubon meeting to learn more about conservation, or are voting for a candidate who cares about conservation, or are keeping their cat inside because they know cats kill birds. Leading by example is key to getting others to realize how important conservation is — not only for birds, but for people. Birds are, of course, the canaries in the coal mine.

Burrowing Owls.
Illustration by Ram Papish.

TASHI: In our current climate of news saturated with environmental disaster and despair, it's refreshing to see evidence of positive change and clear pathways toward improvement as demonstrated in *As the Condor Soars*. The book illustrates how those who care can help to conserve birds. By conducting research; sharing their knowledge; training the next generation; educating the public; and inspiring awe for birds through captivating photos, enchanting art, and compelling stories, ornithologists and birders alike are inspiring a greater appreciation for, and therefore dedication to, the conservation of these species.

DAN: I am optimistic about the future of Oregon's avifauna. I think most Oregonians care about the conservation of native birds, and that science-based management can save most, if not all, species that are in decline. I think birders (and I consider myself a member of that group) can help bend the curve by supporting research efforts that seek to better understand the ecology of species in decline, and management efforts that seek to conserve and restore species that have declined. The time has passed when taking a hands-off approach will effectively conserve most bird species. Birders can and must play a crucial role in conserving and restoring

Oregon's birds by keeping accurate records of their bird sightings and making them available to the scientific community through eBird. The data that birders collect in the process of pursuing their passion are crucial for monitoring the status and trends of Oregon's avifauna.

OB: *Tell us about some inspiring success stories of conservation among Oregon birds. Do you see any general lessons from them?*

DAN: Successes that come immediately to mind are efforts to conserve Northern Spotted Owls and Western Snowy Plovers. The outcome for Northern Spotted Owls is, of course, far from certain. But the monumental effort to understand the ecology of this species, the factors that limit its population, and how it might be conserved and restored, has been truly inspiring to me. If Northern Spotted Owls go extinct, it will not be because we did not work hard to gain the understanding and tools to save the species.

The story with Western Snowy Plovers is much different. Seemingly against all odds, the species has been largely restored to the coastal habitats in Oregon from which it was nearly eliminated. This is even more remarkable because Washington and California have so far been unable to achieve similar success, and plovers raised in Oregon are helping to sustain populations in those two states. The lesson I take from this success story is that a science-based conservation effort where federal, state, and local resource management agencies work together and with the public to protect and restore a species can achieve unexpected conservation goals.

Old-growth denizens (detail). *Illustration by Ram Papish.*

SUE: From a historic perspective, the work by William Finley and others to usher in the 1917 Migratory Bird Treaty Act saved many species in the hemisphere from extinction, as so many birds were being shot or trapped for feathers for women's hats that overall bird numbers had diminished to dangerous levels. The discovery by OSU graduate Chuck Henny and others that DDT was causing eggshell thinning in raptors helped lead to the subsequent banning of the use of DDT, which helped save hawks, eagles, owls, and other raptors from extinction in the 1970s.

Currently, I couldn't be more excited about the impending return of the California Condor to Oregon through the work of the Yurok Tribe and others. I just hope we can keep lead out of mammal carcasses and gut piles so they can make a robust comeback. The general observation I have about these monumental efforts is that the people or groups that shepherd them through generally deserve far more credit than they are ever given, as it often takes years and careers to finally get an environmental law passed.

Streaked Horned Lark.
Illustration by Ram Papish.

OB: *What do you see as the major challenges for Oregon birds?*

SUE: The main challenge is human-induced climate change, with its variety of impacts. For example, how is the Pacific Flyway going to be maintained when there is little to no water in eastern Oregon wetlands and Lake Abert has evaporated to the point where its water is toxic to the brine shrimp and brine flies that hundreds of thousands of migratory birds depend on? There are many straws in the water in eastern Oregon, and working out mitigated water plans, making waterbirds a priority, needs to begin … yesterday. There are untold challenges like this throughout the state. Each needs to be re-examined, with climate change acknowledged as the primary driving force, and mitigated as best as we can.

With climate change, it is tempting to throw up one's arms and just give in. But we are so close to losing all birds, how can we do that? While it's difficult to make a dent in the global carbon budget, we can take small actions that will make a huge difference in Oregon. For example, if everyone in Oregon stopped using lead

Coastal fliers and divers (detail). *Illustration by Ram Papish.*

ammunition and lead fishing tackle and kept their cats inside (or in catios), we would save millions of birds every year in Oregon alone. Millions. How hard would that be? Not very. The results would be phenomenal.

DAN: I think we are just beginning to see the extent of challenges to Oregon's birds from climate change. The threat comes largely from the pace of change, which is so fast that birds are finding it difficult to adapt. Birders can help enormously in the task of monitoring the impacts of climate change on bird populations.

Removing lead from food chains and the environment by replacing lead ammunition with non-toxic alternatives is another major challenge that we have only just started to remedy. If we can truly "get the lead out," it will provide enormous benefits to wild raptors and scavengers in the state, as well as to people who consume wild game.

In addition, efforts to restore harvestable populations of native (and introduced) fish species have repeatedly brought anglers into conflict with native fish-eating birds. Finding ways to manage fisheries and fish-eating birds without resorting to widespread lethal control of native birds will be crucial for sustaining both fisheries and the native bird populations that rely on resources that Oregonians value.

OB: ***How best can recreational birders and professional researchers interact, and how can birders contribute toward science and conservation?***

SUE: Birders can best contribute to science by becoming as skilled a birder as they can: learn the species, be able to determine sexes and ages, and recognize songs. That way, their reports to eBird or on any birding expedition will be accurate! There is a great need for more people to do Christmas Bird Counts and Breeding Bird Survey routes, but those participants need to be good birders.

Recognition of the phenomenal importance of data generated from eBird, the BBS, and CBCs has strengthened the bond between amateur and professional ornithologists, in my opinion. I would also wager that most professional ornithologists started off as birders and still enjoy going out birding when they have a chance; thus I'm not sure I recognize any problematic gap between the two groups.

I think there is a deep appreciation among professional ornithologists for the benefits that amateur birders can provide by supplying information to eBird as well as reporting observations of marked birds. Opportunities also exist for birders to help at banding stations and with research projects as their time and interests permit. There can be limits, however, due to constraints on available field vehicles, housing, training, equipment, et cetera. It's usually best to just send an email outlining skills and politely asking if there is a way to volunteer.

TASHI: In *As the Condor Soars*, we see how birders have bolstered research by logging observations in databases such as eBird and by participating in Christmas Bird Counts, Breeding Bird Surveys, and more. Enthusiastic birders working in other professions can also bridge the gap between pure data collection and human interest in birds. As an educator, I find that every student needs to approach a topic in a unique way. Any student can be shown information, but for them to truly connect with the subject, they need to be given the tools to explore and understand matters on their own terms. While researchers set the crucial groundwork from which to draw an understanding of the subject of conservation, citizen scientists and other dedicated amateurs often wield the tools to present this information to the wider public in a variety of easier-to-digest ways. In this way, professionals and amateurs can combine their strengths to inspire action in others.

Yellow Rail.
Illustration by Ram Papish.

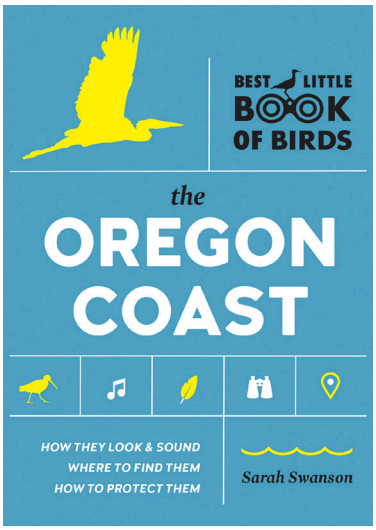
Best Little Book of Birds: The Oregon Coast

By Sarah Swanson

Former Oregon Birding Association president Sarah Swanson is known well beyond OBA circles for her engaging writing in the book *Must-See Birds of the Pacific Northwest* (Timber Press, 2013), co-authored with Max Smith. A valuable contributor to Portland Audubon's events and educational efforts over the years, she sat down with *Oregon Birds* to discuss her latest publication (the first of a new series), ***Best Little Book of Birds: The Oregon Coast.***

OB: ***Describe your book in 25 words or less.***

Sarah: A field guide to birds of the Oregon Coast with photos, ID tips, habitats, sounds, and where to find the birds. And bonus conservation info!



Book cover image courtesy of Timber Press.

OB: ***Tell us more!***

Sarah: My book covers the 124 species that you are most likely to encounter at the Oregon Coast. The introduction provides additional information about coastal birding, habitats, and conservation. The photographs were taken by local photographers.

OB: ***What was the impetus for the book?***

Sarah: Timber Press wanted to create some small-format field guides for popular areas around the Pacific Northwest, and I was happy to take on the task of creating the first one. I was working as a part-time contractor and had some free time and thought it would be nice to write a second book since it had been quite a few years since my first one came out in 2013. Timber Press suggested this series that they had in mind and allowed me to choose where to start. I chose the Oregon Coast as the subject of this book because it has always been my favorite place to bird.

Sarah Swanson, shown here in winter plumage, loves the Oregon Coast and enjoys sharing the wonders of its birds with others — no matter the weather! *Photo courtesy of the author.*

OB: ***What's the main message of the book?***

Sarah: That birding doesn't have to be intimidating. And that the Oregon Coast is rich with birds and worth protecting.

OB: ***What aspect of it are you most excited about?***

Sarah: I honestly love the small size of this book, despite the large amount of information that it holds. I hope that it inspires folks who might not be birders to take it along with them to the coast and start noticing birds.

OB: ***What's innovative about the book?***

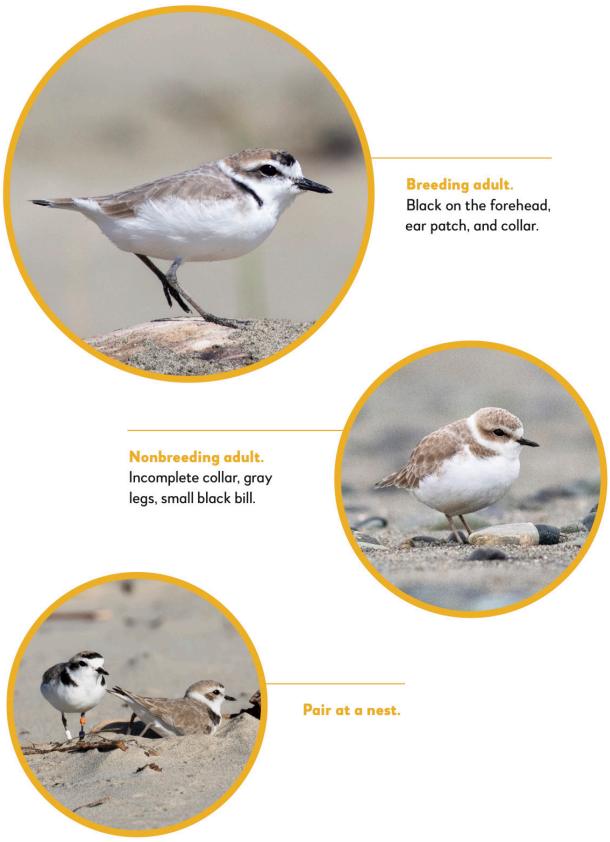
Sarah: I chose to organize the birds differently than most field guides. Instead of the traditional phylogenetic order of families, I have grouped bird families that look superficially similar and occur in the same habitats. For example, the book begins with alcids, ducks, coots, grebes, and loons, which all float on coastal bays in winter. My hope is that this will help newer birders who are still learning how to identify birds to the family level find the bird they are trying to identify in the book more easily.

OB: ***Who is your intended audience, the ideal reader you're trying to reach?***

Sarah: The intended audience for this book is anyone who'd like to learn more about coastal birds. This book would be ideal for a new birder, but will likely have some interesting nuggets of info even for those who have been birding for a while.

OB: ***How did your birding background in Oregon influence your work on the book?***

Sarah: This book is truly a love letter to the Oregon Coast and its birds and ecosystems. I grew up visiting the Oregon Coast, and as a kid birder I loved the puffins, terns, pelicans, and



This page spread from *Best Little Book of Birds* profiles the Western Snowy Plover. *Image courtesy of Timber Press.*

guillemots that I was able to see there. Visiting the numerous parks and refuges that dot the coastline has always been my favorite pastime. Getting to write about these birds and places and learn more about them as I researched the book was a pleasure.

OB: ***What was the writing process like?***

Sarah: I signed the contract to write this book in February of 2020, and was so excited to travel to some parts of the coast that I was less familiar with. Obviously, though, my plans changed a lot with the pandemic that would soon shut everything down, and I didn't actually get to do much travel until right before the book went to press.

OB: ***Your engaging writing is recognizable as you call out notable features of birds, often with a bit of humor. But what about the attractive design of this book? Was that all your idea, or was it a joint creation with your editors and publisher?***

Sarah: The distinctive look of this book is all thanks to the talented designers and editors at Timber Press. I would give them a Word file and a Dropbox full of photos and they would work their magic. My design input was minimal. I really like how this book turned out, and I hope that it will draw people in to read the content that I created.

OB: ***What are you at work on now?***

Sarah: Immediately following this book, I wrote the second book in the *Best Little Book of Birds* series about the birds of the Cascade Range and Columbia Gorge, which will be coming out in Fall 2023. My work on that book is finished now and I can't wait to see how it turns out. These will likely be my last books for a while because in October I took on a full-time staff position at Portland Audubon. I'm the Event Manager there and am managing fundraising events including Birdathon and the Wild Arts Festival.

ABOUT THE BOOK:
Best Little Book of Birds: The Oregon Coast
Published by Timber Press, October 2022; 304 pp.

Birding Basics

by Noah Strycker

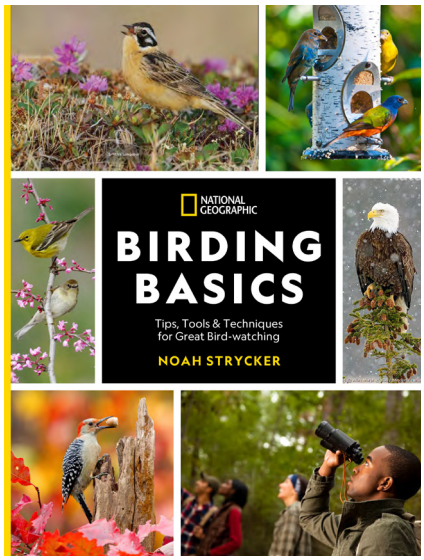
Twelve years ago, Noah Strycker launched himself into the international eye when he published his first book. Then in 2015, he set a record by seeing 6,042 bird species in a single year in a highly publicized round-the-globe quest. Six books and one master's degree later, Noah took a short break from the lecture circuit, his duties as associate editor of *Birding* magazine, and frequent journeys to Svalbard and Antarctica, to sit down with *Oregon Birds* and discuss his latest work, ***Birding Basics***.

OB: ***Describe your book in 25 words or less.***

Noah: *Birding Basics* is a full-length, full-color guide for the brand-new birder, with all the practical info you need to get started.

OB: ***Okay, we'll allow you more than 25 words now....***

Noah: Thanks! This book covers the nuts and bolts of birding, from choosing binoculars to using a field guide, attracting birds to your yard, and finding and identifying birds farther afield. It also considers lots of other topics, including interpreting bird behavior, how to pronounce weird bird names, tips for urban birding, scrappy birder fashion, citizen-science projects, ethical considerations, and the birding social scene.



Patterned after National Geographic's popular *Photo Basics* book, *Birding Basics* was produced on the fast track to tap into the exploding market of new birders prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic. *Image courtesy of National Geographic.*

Noah Strycker wrote *Birding Basics* while locked down at home near Creswell during the COVID-19 pandemic — and while completing a master's degree in marine sciences, remotely, from New York's Stony Brook University. To keep his writing fresh, Noah often took breaks to go birding, as seen here at Fort Rock in eastern Oregon. *Photo by Bob Keefer.*

OB: ***What was the impetus for the book?***

Noah: During the height of the global COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, while we were all staying home, lots of people ventured out into nature and found themselves suddenly fascinated by birds. Wildlife couldn't be locked down! Birding got such a big boost that National Geographic decided to produce a top-to-toe, illustrated guidebook, and I spent much of the pandemic conceptualizing and writing it. *Birding Basics* is the result.

OB: ***Did you have any particular goal in writing the book?***

Noah: My not-so-secret goal was to release an ode to birds in the disguise of a how-to book. I hope when someone reads it, they will be inspired to head outside with binoculars in hand.

OB: ***How did your birding background in Oregon influence your work on the book?***

Noah: We are happily spoiled, here in Oregon, by abundant access to wild habitats and birdlife, even in our biggest cities. It's a spectacular place to learn your birding skills and to revel in year-round diversity. Other places have different playing fields, and it was interesting from my perspective to consider how new birders might approach things in, say, a concrete metropolis or a frigid Arctic winter.

OB: ***Your book is just plain fun! It must have been a hoot to put together. Not only is the writing engaging, but the design of the book is really striking. Was the design all your idea, or was it a joint creation with your editors and publisher?***

Birding Basics covers all the essentials of birding in the author's friendly and engaging style. At the end of each chapter, readers can even go "In the Field With Noah," for colorful anecdotes from the author's own adventurous life. *Image courtesy of National Geographic.*

Noah: I worked with National Geographic's excellent design team, and they produced the pages and sourced most of the images in the book. Their layouts are colorful and elegant, and I really appreciate their efforts on this book's look.

OB: ***How does this book compare with the other two National Geographic books you've co-authored?***

Noah: This is the first book I've written for National Geographic as the sole author, and the two previous ones were entirely different projects. *Birds of the Photo Ark* (with Joel Sartore) is a glossy, photo-essay book. *Backyard Guide to the Birds of North America* (with Jonathan Alderfer) is a portable field guide. Writing an illustrated guidebook was a new and fun experience — almost like being a beginner again!

OB: ***What's next? What are you at work on now?***

Noah: Maybe look out for a large-format title from National Geographic in a couple of years — we're discussing details. In the meantime, I'm enjoying various birding adventures as the world returns to "normal" after the pandemic. Here's hoping to see you all at Fern Ridge, or in Antarctica!

ABOUT THE BOOK:
National Geographic Birding Basics: Tips, Tools, and Techniques for Great Bird-watching
Published by *National Geographic*, November 2022; 256 pp.

DISTINGUISHING TRUMPETER FROM TUNDRA SWANS

By Shawneen Finnegan

Dear "Ask the Expert":

While birding at Sauvie Island one day this winter, I came across a swan and I could see no yellow spot on its black bill. Could I have seen a Trumpeter Swan?

Yours truly,
Sig Ness White

Dear Sig:

Shawneen Finnegan

Your swan absolutely could have been a Trumpeter, but the presence or absence of an obvious yellow spot alone won't always tell you. Distinguishing Trumpeter Swans (*Cygnus buccinator*) from "Whistling" Tundra Swans (*C. columbianus columbianus*) has vexed many an observer, and for good reason! Both species winter in Oregon — Tundra being far more numerous — and this provides us all plenty of opportunity to study and, at times, struggle. So let's dive into this ID challenge, shall we?

Before we get into field marks, realize that knowing the status and distribution of challenging species like this is always helpful. The Tundra Swans that winter in Oregon are high-Arctic breeders, whereas Trumpeter Swans nest at lower latitudes from central Alaska down across western and central Canada. There are also modest numbers of reintroduced Trumpeters that breed and are essentially resident at various sites in central and eastern Oregon. Individuals of both species can be found year-round in our state (Marshall et al. 2003), so care should be taken when attempting identification. Tundras are the more migratory of the two species, creating a somewhat counter-intuitive winter range. Going north towards the Canadian border, the ratio of Trumpeter to Tundra changes drastically, with Tundras becoming the scarcer of the two. Conversely, Trumpeter Swan is very rare in California. In my early birding years (mid-1980s), I bumped into a member of the California Records Committee after seeing what I thought was a Trumpeter at Tule Lake. His curt reply was that without a photo it would almost certainly not be accepted.

We'll focus here on adult swans. Immatures of both species show extensive brown, dusky, or gray feathering, particularly around the head and neck, and a bicolored bill that is a mix of black and pink or grayish pink. Wintering swans often travel as family groups, with two adults accompanied by 2-3 cygnets from the most recent nesting season, and sometimes this can help with species determination. As we'll see, though, swan identification is safest when relying on a combination of multiple field marks.

Size Isn't Everything

While vocalizations of the two swan species differ, identifying silent swans is often difficult unless both species are present and close to one another for size comparison. Trumpeter Swans are distinctly larger and heavier than Tundras. Males average larger than females, with enough individual variation that some small female Trumpeters can be smaller than the largest male Tundras. Human observers aren't very good at judging size, no matter how experienced we may be, so identifications based strictly on apparent size difference are likely to be flawed.

Likewise, Trumpeters are often said to show longer, straighter necks — but while this is generally true, neck shape can be difficult to determine largely because a bird can change its posture. Another thing often claimed to be helpful is the degree of yellow or rusty staining on the pure-white plumage of an adult swan's head and neck, yet in reality this also is not fully reliable.

The Infamous Yellow Spot

With decent views, identifying an adult Tundra Swan that has a yellow loral spot is fairly straightforward. However, this yellow loral spot is extremely variable in size and shape from one bird to another, ranging from none at all to a distinct tear drop to a large irregular splotch. Estimates are that anywhere from 10 to 30 percent of Tundras may have all-black bills with no yellow lore spot. On the other hand, a few individuals have so much yellow that they might be mistaken for the Eurasian subspecies "Bewick's" Swan (*C. c. bewickii*), which is very occasionally found in Oregon. (The "Whistling" vs. "Bewick's" identification issue is better left for a separate article!) Trumpeter Swans can rarely show a pale somewhat yellowish to grayish spot on the base of the bill that is created by wear (Reeber 2015, Patten and Heindel 1994). A Trumpeter should never show an obvious yellow patch, however.

Head to the Head

Find swans that are close enough to see facial details, and start your identification odyssey by assessing head and bill features. In general, Trumpeter Swans have proportionately larger heads and bills with a flatter profile. They look more angular. In profile, Trumpeters show a fairly straight culmen (top edge of the upper mandible of the bill). The top edge is not completely straight and, especially if not viewed exactly from the side, can look a bit concave. Some appear to have a slight bulge between the top of the forehead and the nostrils. Most Tundras, in contrast, show a more concave culmen. However, the culmens of some Tundras can be virtually as straight as those of Trumpeters — thus if straight, then it can be either species. Overall, a good analogy is the head shape of Canvasback (for Trumpeter) compared with that of Redhead (for Tundra).

Proportions are important when it comes to the placement of the eyes. The eyes of a Trumpeter Swan are set further toward the rear of the head, whereas Tundra's eyes appear to be more centrally located. This difference in placement can be assessed by comparing the length of the bill (tip to gape) with the distance between the eye and the nape. In Trumpeters this distance translates to about a 1.5–2.0 to 1 ratio, where the same measurement on Tundra translates to about a 1–1.5 to 1 ratio (Patten and Heindel 1994). In essence, Trumpeters usually look noticeably longer-billed than Tundras, especially in direct comparison.

There is also a difference in the placement of the nostrils. Trumpeters' nostrils are located about equidistant between the eye and the tip of the bill, while Tundras' are closer to the tip of the bill. All of these head features can be studied in the illustration in **Figure 1**.

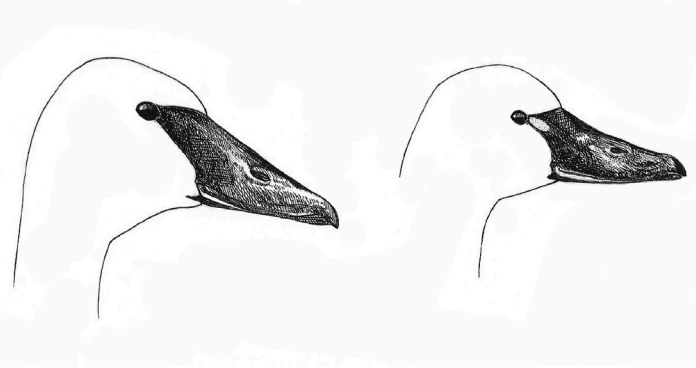


FIGURE 1. Comparative head profiles of Trumpeter (left) and Tundra (right) Swans. Note differences in culmen shape, eye placement, nostril placement, pattern where feathering meets the bill, and overall proportions. *Illustration by Shawneen Finnegan.*

Where the Feathers Meet the Bill

When viewed straight on, the forehead feathering of a Trumpeter forms a "V" coming to a point over the base of the bill. This is unlike the more rounded and shallow "U" shape of the forehead feathering on a Tundra. See **Figure 2** for a comparison. This may be one of the best field marks to use if seen well, as the majority of Trumpeters show the V-shaped point. Again, though, this is a field mark to use in conjunction with others, as there are always outlier individuals. A long-staying Trumpeter Swan in Bend, Oregon, for instance, has been heard bugling and seen in the company of other Trumpeters, yet shows very rounded forehead feathering, as well as narrow loral skin (see **Figure 3**).

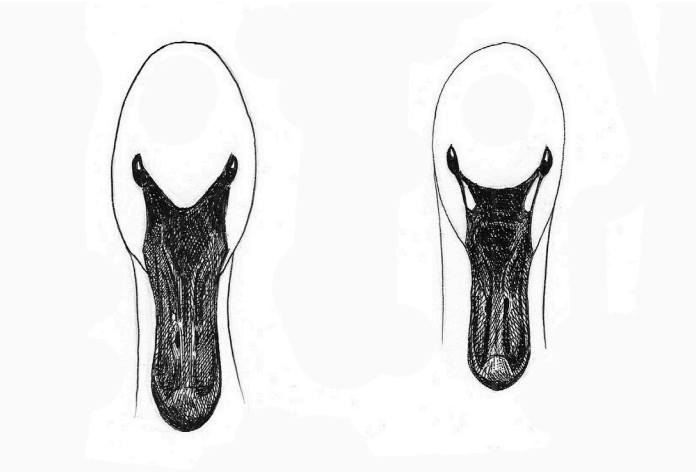


FIGURE 2. Top view of heads of Trumpeter (left) and Tundra (right) Swans. Note the "V" shape of feathering where it meets the bill in Trumpeter, versus the "U" shape typical of Tundra. *Illustration by Shawneen Finnegan.*

Those Lores Again

The next feature to look for is how the head feathering is shaped around the eyes and the base of the bill. To assess these characteristics accurately you need to view them head-on and in good profile. Assessing these field marks cannot be applied when the head is tilted at odd angles.

Both swans have dark eyes and black loral skin. In Trumpeter, the black skin adjacent to the eye is generally wider, forming a more evenly tapered wedge where it meets the eye, such that the eye appears to be more engulfed in black. In Tundra, the facial skin in front of the eye tends to be narrower, particularly immediately in front of the eye. The eyes of Tundra are more surrounded by white, and thus appear more distinct, not blending in as much with the bill. Some describe the facial skin as looking more "pinched." The yellow spot of a typical Tundra tends to reinforce the pinched look by reducing the amount of black skin.

FIGURE 3. The bird on the left has been identified as a Trumpeter but shows some Tundra-like features, such as narrow black facial skin and rounded forehead feathering. This adult Trumpeter (right) was photographed at the same location on the same day. It shows the deep "V" and the wider loral skin typical of its species. *Photos by Tom Crabtree.*

Personally, I struggle with this field mark, as while many Tundras show nicely delineated eyes, some do not. Some seem to have as much black above and/or below the eyes as a Trumpeter, and conversely, some Trumpeters have narrow black facial skin. Position can also influence how much skin is visible. Here is a challenge: Find some good closeup photos of Tundra Swans with yellow lores and replace the yellow with black. This exercise may help you appreciate how variable the loral shape is in Tundras.

The shape of the cheek feathering between the eye and the gape is yet another clue. On Trumpeters, the edge of feathering on the cheek often forms a fairly long and straight line, accentuating the "wedge" shape described above and curving downward only when almost at the gape. This edge line is more rounded on a Tundra, arcing downward towards the gape in a smoother curve. Because the eye is set further forward, the distance between where it begins to turn downward is also shorter. Refer back to Figure 1.

One last field mark often discussed is the size and color of the tomial stripe on the bill. It is often said that only Trumpeter Swans show a red or salmon-colored tomial stripe (think lipstick!). However, while it may in fact tend to be a bit thicker and richer in color on a Trumpeter, Tundras can also show a red tomial stripe, and researchers and observers (e.g. Snowden) have found this mark to be of little value.

Wedges Versus Curves

In sum, the larger Trumpeter Swan is more angular, with a wedge-shaped theme. The overall head shape is more wedged, the eye is in a wedge of black, the forehead feathering and the cheek feathering are shaped more like a "V" or, as I like to think of them, as wedges of feathers. In contrast, Tundra Swans appear softer and curvier, with rounded crowns, with forehead and cheek feathering that looks rounder in shape, and with the concave-shaped bill.

It should be quite apparent by now that all of these identification features are variable. As such, it is important to use several field marks together to come to a conclusion on any given bird — which even then might not be satisfactory (Figure 4)! Remember that there is never any shame in leaving a bird unidentified to species if you are feeling at all uncertain. And if a black-lored swan is giving you fits, then maybe with luck it will vocalize and solve the identification mystery!

FIGURE 4. This swan at Finley NWR was originally identified as a Tundra, given the faint pale markings in the loral area. It shows a mix of features, including eye and nostril placement proportions that favor Trumpeter. The cheek-feathering shape is ambiguous, as it is fairly straight and very steep. From the front, it shows a shallow "V," but, as discussed, this is not a diagnostic field mark. Is this bird a Trumpeter with a faint wear patch, a hybrid, or possibly a very Trumpeter-like Tundra? This is a good example of how difficult swans can be to identify. *Photo by David Provencher.*

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From The Archives

Oregon Birds has a long and storied history spanning nearly half a century. As we near this journal's fiftieth year, we plan to reprint in each issue one item from a past issue, in celebration of the rich variety of its published content over the years. Our inaugural item is this wondrous illustration by David Fix (from *Oregon Birds* 9(3): 124; Fall 1983) conveying the essence of one of our state's most enchanting birds, the Townsend's Solitaire.

To explore back issues of *Oregon Birds*, simply view or download PDF files from the OBA website here: https://oregonbirding.org/oregon-birds/.

Klamath Bird Observatory Promotes Bird Conservation through Science and Education

KBO's 2022 banding interns Axel Rutter, Victor Armando Sanchez Gonzalez, Yuly L. Caicedo Ortiz, Zoya Buckmire, Victoria Langham, and Molly Heal celebrate success in the field. *Photo © Klamath Bird Observatory.*

By Elva Manquera-DeShields

Elva Manquera-DeShields of Klamath Bird Observatory

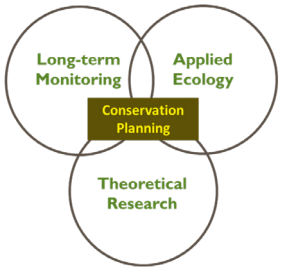
Klamath Bird Observatory (KBO), a nonprofit organization based in Ashland, Oregon, pursues research and education to promote bird conservation in southern Oregon and beyond. At KBO, we conduct high-caliber science and emphasize the role of birds as indicators to inform and improve natural resource management. Recognizing that effective conservation comes from efforts made across many fronts, KBO also nurtures an environmental ethic through community outreach and education.

KBO's education program has three arms: professional education, K-12 education, and community education. Our Professional Training and Information Exchange programming is helping to produce the next generation of conservation practitioners. Through internships, workshops, curriculum development, and international capacity-building, we provide training in technical skills and leadership development for students and professionals throughout the Americas. The KBO website also provides educational resources for teachers, landowners, and resource managers.

KBO's conservation model includes three approaches. One is long-term monitoring, which provides information about changes in bird populations. The second is in-depth theoretical research, which advances our understanding of distribution and movements. The third is applied ecology, which addresses challenges in natural resource management. All three approaches are applied throughout our work in the Klamath-Siskiyou bioregion of southern Oregon and northern California, elsewhere in the Pacific Northwest, and internationally with partners.

Work in the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument

Klamath Bird Observatory was incorporated as a nonprofit in 2000, the same year the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument was established. KBO staff had already been surveying the Klamath-Siskiyou bioregion, helping to contribute to the data used to support the Monument's creation. Upon its formation, KBO used its non-advocacy, science-based approach in a livestock grazing impact study. This study found that reduced grazing would benefit long-distance migrant birds, foliage-glean-



ing species, and shrub-nesting birds in the Monument's oak-woodland habitats, thus helping to meet established bird conservation objectives. This, in turn, helped facilitate the purchase of grazing allotments from ranchers.

Also in 2000, KBO began a long-term monitoring study in the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument, with the support of the Bureau of Land Management. This project has aimed to document and understand bird communities within the oak and grassland habitats in the Monument. Long-term trend data for oak-associated bird species will help inform habitat objectives within the Monument and will have valuable applications for other oak restoration projects in our study region.

Yellow-breasted Chat and Lincoln's Sparrow are two of the many species studied by KBO researchers in the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument. *Photos © James Livaudais (YBCH) and Frank Lospalluto (LISP).*

In 2017, the Monument expanded by more than 45,000 acres. KBO and partners played a role in this expansion by using birds as indicators of critical habitat areas and broader biodiversity. A recent study used modeling to evaluate an existing network of protected areas in the Klamath-Siskiyou Bioregion. Using birds, KBO staff identified and prioritized new areas for protection. Results from the study identified protected areas where grassland and oak-woodland birds occurred, as well as additional areas that, if protected, would increase the number of priority bird species protected by the region's parks and monuments.

Banding, Education, and the Global Reach of Trained Interns

KBO operates several long-term demographic monitoring stations throughout the Klamath-Siskiyou Bioregion. Our bird-banding program has numerous conservation applications. One is to learn whether birds are successfully breeding in an area — an indication of a healthy habitat. Another is to learn whether birds survive migration — information that can inform international conservation efforts. Re-sightings of banded birds provide data on specific locations related to migration routes and overwintering sites. These data cannot be collected in just one year; it can take decades. As a part of our monitoring effort, KBO engages with the public at the banding station locations. Tours are hosted at the Crater Lake station in partnership with the National Park Service. This provides tourists with the opportunity to experience research first-hand.

KBO staff member Claire Stuyck shows a bird to visitors at the Crater Lake banding station. *Photo © National Park Service.*

KBO interns play a big part in the outreach effort. Since 1999, KBO's internship program has hosted 283 young professionals and university students from 17 countries as interns in our long-term monitoring and training programming. Fourteen of these young scientists returned in subsequent years, shouldering increased responsibility in field operations and training opportunities. All returned to their home countries with increased skills and practical experience, empowered to make significant contributions to bird conservation. Many have gone on to earn advanced degrees and are now employed in teaching or research positions. Many others are in management positions for conservation organizations. A few have even created new bird observatories in their home countries.

KBO banding crew members interact with the public at Rogue Valley Bird Day in North Mountain Park in Ashland. *Photo © Klamath Bird Observatory.*

(Continued on Page 102)

Second Place, June 2022. Black-throated Gray Warbler. *Photo by J.J. Furuno.*

Monthly Photo Competition

OBA Contest Winners

For many of us, photography has become one of the prime joys of birding. Whether we manage a photo of a rarely seen species, compose a splendid portrait of a beautiful one, or capture a plain and common species displaying a distinctive behavior, photographic images can convey the magic and excitement we feel in our most memorable birding moments.

Through the Oregon Birding Association's Monthly Photo Contest, you can share some of your own magical moments. Each contest generally features a theme and a time frame during which shots must be captured. Winning images are displayed on the OBA website and selected images are featured in the pages of *Oregon Birds*.

First Place, July 2022. Violet-green Swallow. *Photo by Jim Moodie.*

For questions or to submit photos, please contact contest administrator Zia Fukuda (ziafukuda@gmail.com). For contest rules and full information please consult: https://oregonbirding.org/oba-monthly-photo-contest/.

Third Place (tie), June 2022. Marsh Wren. *Photo by Albert Ryckman.*

Third Place, July 2022. Yellow Warbler. *Photo by Graham Day.*

Third Place (tie), August 2022. Northern Flickers.
Photo by Molly Sultany.

Third Place (tie), June 2022.
Canada Goose gosling.
Photo by Danielle Carrico.

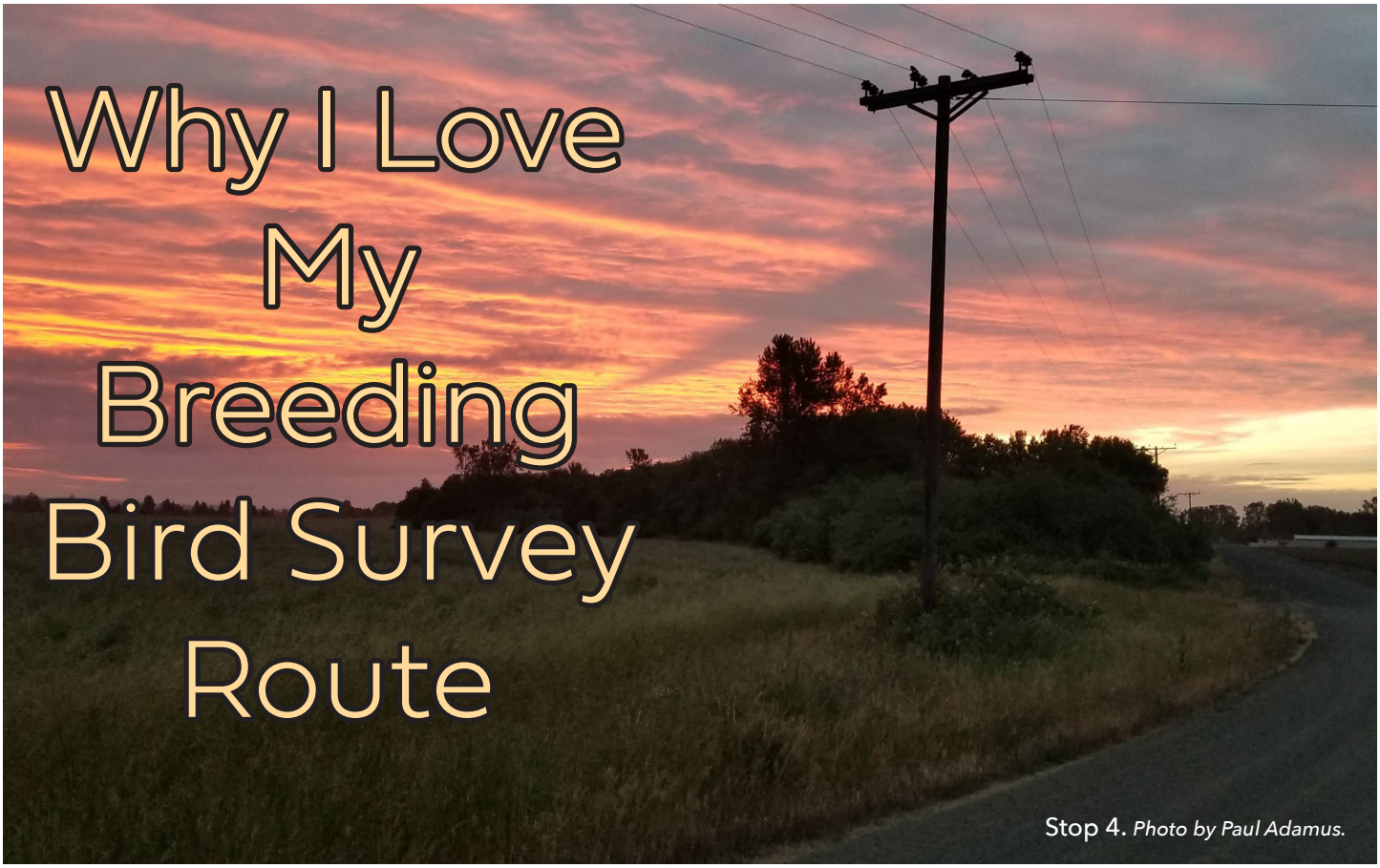
First Place, August 2022. Common Yellowthroat.
Photo by Graham Day.

Third Place (tie), June 2022. Snowy Egret. *Photo by Howard West.*

Second Place, May 2022. Rufous Hummingbird.
Photo by Albert Ryckman.

First Place, May 2022. Caspian Terns.
Photo by Philip Kline.

Why I Love My Breeding Bird Survey Route



Stop 4. *Photo by Paul Adamus.*

Introduction by Paul Adamus

Paul Adamus, Oregon BBS Coordinator

No citizen-science project has provided more data crucial to the monitoring of population trends and the conservation of birds than the North American Breeding Bird Survey (BBS). This continent-wide program has been operating for over 50 years, relying on the volunteer efforts of hundreds of experienced birders. BBS volunteers know they are performing a unique and irreplaceable public service, but they also feel motivated by the special joys of running a particular route year after year, observing and documenting its changes through time. Below, you will hear from a few of the 64 birders currently running routes within Oregon, as to what personally drives them to make their valuable contributions through the Breeding Bird Survey year after year.

In Oregon, 115 routes are scattered across the state. Statisticians selected the routes before the program began in the 1960s. Each BBS route has 50 stops spaced one-half-mile apart, and most routes follow rural roads. Starting before sunrise, you listen for 3 minutes at each stop and record on a data form the numbers of each bird species you hear or see, before driving again and pulling over at the next stop. The whole route takes about five hours, and you're encouraged to have another person do the driving and/or data recording. Your hearing should be normal, and a commitment to doing the route for at least two years is preferred. You don't have to look for nests or know the songs of all species, but should be familiar with those on a list of species likely to be found along the route you select. That list is provided in advance along with a detailed map of the route(s) you chose to survey.

You can see the dozen or so currently vacant Oregon routes (ones for which a volunteer is needed in 2023) here: https://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bbs/. You may choose any day between late May and early July that's convenient to do a route. If you don't live near one of the vacant routes, it will involve driving there the preceding day, scouting the route, and staying overnight. Once you've chosen one of the vacant routes, or if you have any questions, please contact the Oregon BBS Coordinator, Paul Adamus (adamus7@comcast.net).

Now let's hear from our dedicated volunteers!....

Hermit Warbler.
Photo by Tom Myers.

Roger Schnoes

Prospect, Days Creek, and Sams Valley Routes

I've run three BBS routes in southwestern Oregon for decades and really feel good about how it contributes to a larger, national effort. Bird monitoring takes on more and more value with a longer time frame and a wider coverage. The BBS does both.

Beyond contributing to a national data set, there definitely is a personal benefit. I love the challenge of teasing out a faint warbler song beneath the cacophony of robins, tanagers, and House Wrens. Being out and about early in the morning has gotten me into elk, foxes, coyotes, and other wildlife, which makes the morning shine.

It has also given me the chance to view first-hand some of the larger-scale changes in our world. There didn't use to be any Eurasian Collared-Doves in this area. This route has seen extensive timber harvesting and housing developments. Turkeys have increased. Other species seem to be declining —but are they really?

Getting up early is tough, but there is a real satisfaction when I get to stop #50; there is a feeling of a job well done. Another small piece of a huge national effort.

Char Corkran

Albee, Bull Run, Eightmile, and Granite Routes

I get so much pleasure and satisfaction out of participating in the Breeding Bird Survey that I now run four routes.

The primary source of pleasure and satisfaction is knowing that I am contributing data to long-term, statistically meaningful research into the status of bird species throughout their ranges. Secondary is knowing the habitats along my routes, the birds likely to be found there, and how to identify them by sound. Additional fulfillment comes from confidence that I am documenting birds at the same spots and times as the previous birder(s) who have run each route over the years, because I figured out as precisely as possible where each of the 50 stops occurs along each route.

My enjoyment also comes from simpler sources. Hearing beautiful bird songs, or a mixed chorus of Sandhill Cranes, Coyotes, and Elk at sunrise makes getting up so early worthwhile every time. Finding common birds in healthy numbers each year is as thrilling to me as finding the occasional rarer species. There is relief that, amid all the terrible declines in bird populations globally, the same species often are found in the same places — sometimes in the exact same trees — as in previous years. I feel a bond with the landscapes traversed by each of my routes, and a kind of ownership of some very particular spots along each route — often spots where no one else would bother to stop and look for birds.

In 2007, with a Forest Service biologist, I established a new route through the conifer forests of the Bull Run Watershed. Pacific Wrens abound, as do Pacific-slope Flycatchers and Swainson's Thrushes. Occasionally we hear a Sooty Grouse booming or see a Black Bear.

(Continued on next page)

Char Corkran (L) and Donna Lusthoff (R) bequeathed the Badger Creek BBS route to the editor of this journal, who will remain forever grateful, because he … LOVES this BBS route! *Photo by Jay Withgott.*

(Continued from previous page)

In 2013, a friend and I took on the Albee route in the Blue Mountains. Abundant Western Meadowlarks, Dusky Flycatchers, and Mountain Bluebirds always bring cheer, and we occasionally see a Badger. But for the last several years we have not found a Bobolink near Ukiah. This is sad, but important data to have recorded.

In 2017, we added the Granite BBS, which starts conveniently at a campground near the end of the Albee route. Oregon Juncos and American Robins are numerous, but the stars are Ruby-crowned Kinglets and Audubon's Warblers. Often a Townsend's Solitaire sings, groups of Elk graze in forest openings, and pink-purple Elephant's head blooms in one meadow.

Not content with these delights, in 2021 I took on the Eightmile BBS that runs through high grasslands, a canyon, and wheatfields in Gilliam County. Horned Larks far outnumber all other species except for Western Meadowlarks, but a Cliff Swallow colony, Bullock's Orioles, and Yellow-breasted Chats add zest, as do Swainson's Hawks, Ash-throated Flycatchers, and Loggerhead Shrikes.

I derive pleasure and satisfaction from a variety of community science projects, but running these four Breeding Bird Surveys often is the highlight of my year.

Camas in June. *Photo by Kevin Spencer.*

Great Basin Snaketail. *Photo by Jay Withgott.*

Joel Geier surveys the Umpqua BBS route. *Photo by Rebecca Geier.*

Joel Geier

Santiam, Barnhouse, Umpqua, Scio, Twickenham, and Monument Routes

My BBS addiction started with the Santiam route in the western Cascades of Linn County in 2004, then intensified as I added five more routes one by one in Wheeler, Douglas, and Grant counties. Once you've run a route for a few years, you can anticipate most of the likely species for each stop. It becomes almost like checking back to see how old friends are doing, maybe with a few newcomers from year to year.

Each route has its own unique aspect. My longest-term routes — Santiam and Barnhouse — have risen to the level of an annual family ritual, marking the years as our kids, now grown to adulthood, have joined me to camp out the night beforehand. These routes are mainly in forests where we've seen patches get logged, burned over, and sometimes replanted. In some years it's disorienting as we find stumps and slash piles where mature conifers stood a year before. But it's also interesting to watch new species respond to thinning projects (such as Hammond's Flycatcher), or to replanted areas as young trees grow in (such as Willow Flycatcher), or to clearings where a few older trees or snags are left (such as Olive-sided Flycatcher).

The Umpqua and Scio routes run through a mix of ranches, farms, and small towns, and include habitat for grassland species declining in western Oregon, such as Vesper Sparrow and Western Meadowlark. Those birds were my original motivation for picking up these routes, but I've also come to enjoy these unique landscapes and the people you meet along the route.

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It's common for rural people to wonder what you're up to as you stop at odd points along the road. Some end up enthusiastic to talk about birds once I explain what I'm doing. One farmer in Umpqua noticed me looking at his cattle and was worried that I might be from PETA. He didn't seem entirely convinced when I told him that cattle grazing might be beneficial for Vesper Sparrows. But he must have decided that even if I was crazy, it was a benign form of craziness. Since then, he just waves when he sees me.

Last year, a fellow stopped to make sure that I wasn't a "tweaker," because, it seems, meth addicts show the same pattern of making erratic roadside stops. He wound up sharing a very credible account of a Burrowing Owl that visited his farm some winters past.

With such encounters, I've learned it's usually best to take the time to talk to locals and be friendly, even if you hear your 3-minute timer beeping and you're worried about staying on schedule. You might even have an opportunity to be a "good Samaritan." At one stop in Santiam Canyon, I saw a guy with a gas jug trying to flag down motorists. It turned out he just needed a gallon of gas and a short ride to get to where he'd run out of fuel, a mile short of his job as a day-laborer. If he didn't get to work on time, he might not get paid for the week. I was glad to help him out, and I still finished the route with time to spare.

Kevin Spencer
Lakeview Route

The Lakeview BBS is in the North Warner Mountains, a place I have loved since the 1970s. I took on the route around 2000. Getting there, I'm treated to a wash of blooming Camas while passing Rogger Meadow. I camp near Dismal Creek and hike around in the late afternoon the day before. I have heard Flammulated Owl while trying to sleep.

The region is a woodpecker haven, with three sapsuckers, Black-backed, and Pileated. The meadows sing with mountain White-crowned Sparrows, and sometimes Lincoln's. I have heard Mountain Quail numerous times, and once watched in astonishment as three Wild Turkeys paraded across Summit Prairie. Green-tailed Towhee and Lazuli Bunting seem to go together. A hummingbird flew to my face at Stop 14 one year. Near the end of the route I always find a Mountain Bluebird, and one year saw it entering an old birdbox hidden on the other side of a stump. Stops are memorized and I know what should be there, often hearing the same individuals from year to year. I always hear "Western" Flycatcher at Stop 2; there's not enough space to explain what it arguably could be. As long as my hearing holds up, I will be there each June.

Horned Lark. *Photo by Char Corkran.*

Pamela Johnston
McMinnville Route

I didn't know much about the Breeding Bird Survey when I first picked up a route, except that you need to be able to recognize songs you would hear in the area. But I was familiar with having a protocol to observe, and felt it was time to try it out. When I first saw the map for my BBS route, I drove out and scouted it in mid-day. I took a wrong turn and started up a gravel road that soon narrowed, so I retraced my way back to a fork where I'd gone wrong. Days later, when I conducted the count, I nearly headed off on the same wrong fork, but I got a grip and turned back. This has given me a strong connection to the right fork, which every year features a singing Common Yellowthroat.

This is one of the charms of a BBS, the continuity of birds and habitat. The McMinnville route has offered a lot of that continuity, while still bringing surprises, like a large tree loaded with Band-tailed Pigeons, or a pair of Horned Larks in the middle of a dusty road. Other things change, as young orchards grow and cover crops are rotated. After never-ending rain, I went out last June later than ever and was treated to a flock of Cliff Swallows around a barn that previously had been bird-free.

And there's something special about the first stop, when the sun hasn't yet cracked the horizon. I stop near a house surrounded by trees and listen for Swainson's Thrush and whatever might be audible across the road and off into the fields, and nobody else is up except for a few drivers and birds that I can only hear. I think of this with enjoyment many times during the year until June arrives.

Catherine J. Flick
Mt. Hood Route

I do four BBS routes in Oregon and Washington. Two are near each other, one being on the east side of the Cascades and the other on the west side. I love doing these two adjacent routes because it gives me an understanding of the wide diversity and separation of bird species on either side of the Cascade Range. It has been very interesting for me to track over the years!

I also enjoy the surprises, such as locating the first nesting Merlin on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest (on one of my Washington routes) in 2010. I recorded a highly agitated female Merlin on one of the BBS stops — the first and only occurrence of this species for any of my four routes. I returned three more times to this stop with a birding friend to determine whether this Merlin was nesting — and indeed, it was! We watched quietly as an adult male returned with Pine Siskins and Rufous Hummingbirds as food items and transferred them to the adult female. Then we listened to loud calls from the hungry nestlings as the female returned to the nest. The male transferred the food by holding it in his bill while the female flew in with her talons outstretched to capture the food item below the male's bill. The first time I witnessed this transfer, I thought the female was flying to the male to attack him! We ultimately got to see the adults with fledglings on our last of three visits in July of that year.

Sooty Grouse. *Photo by Char Corkran.*

Mountain Bluebird. *Photo by Char Corkran.*

Teresa Wicks
Silvies and Harney Lake Routes

I run two BBS routes, one that runs through the forest north of Burns and one that runs along the southern border of Harney Lake. The Silvies route highlights some of the interesting habitat matrices found in the forest as it travels through ponderosa stands, meadows, and pockets of sagebrush and mahogny. The Harney Lake route similarly traverses diverse habitats, from Rock Wren-filled rimrock to miles of sagebrush and alkali scrub to the wet meadows of the Silver Creek area. The Harney Lake playa has been dry in the years that I have run the route, but I imagine there would be American Avocets out on the playa in wet years, and Eared Grebes when there's enough water.

Combined, these two routes encourage me to visit areas of the Harney Basin that I don't often get to travel to. I get to see and count birds unique to these habitats, which are largely under-surveyed. The routes also give me a sense of the expansiveness of the basin, and are a good reminder of the incredible diversity that attracts nearly 70% of the species found in Oregon to this region. I enjoy the excuse to survey outside of the regular areas I work in, and I'm now scheming to add yet another BBS route to my portfolio — one that seems to have never been run before, in an area of eastern Oregon that I've yet to visit! I'm looking forward to discovering what insights and adventures this new route brings.

Tom Myers
Lone Rock and Nicolai Mountain Routes

For the past few years I've had two BBS routes, one that runs through grassland and irrigated farmland in Sherman County and one that runs through managed forest and farmed floodplain in Clatsop County. What I love most about my two routes is how different they are, and so I love to do them back-to-back. In just a few days, I see a wide variety of species and habitats, and as a teacher it's a great way to kick off summer break.

The Sherman County route is several hours from home, so I usually camp for a night or two along the John Day River and enjoy the change of scenery. On that route I'm excited to see Swainson's Hawks, Say's Phoebes, Mountain Bluebirds, and Horned Larks. It's usually a crisp, clear day that begins with Great Horned Owls calling and ends with Mountain Bluebirds hunting along fence lines. Aside from all the great birds, I've seen American Badgers, Porcupines, and Pronghorns.

The Clatsop County route is close to home and in a much more familiar habitat for me. On this route I enjoy finding Hermit Warblers, Evening Grosbeaks, and Band-tailed Pigeons. The route begins in clearcuts listening to Northern Pygmy-Owls and Common Nighthawks and ends in marshes near the Columbia River with warblers and flycatchers.

Badger. *Photo by Tom Myers.*

Canada Jay. *Photo by Tom Myers.*

Jay Withgott
Badger Creek and Davis Lake Routes

I am eternally grateful to Donna Lusthoff and Char Corkran for passing along the Badger Creek route to me. Our trips doing that route together were a joy, and now each year as I run the route with my wife Susan, it is a highlight of our summer and a great excuse for an extended camping trip.

The route skirts the foothills of the east slope of the Cascades in Wasco County, winding through multiple vegetation zones in a region of impressive botanical diversity. As we twist through conifer forest, open woodlands of stunted oak and pine, and slopes of manzanita scrub, we encounter a rich diversity of birds and almost no people. Nighthawks kick things off, peenting and booming above us at the earliest stops, and the morning progresses with Mountain Chickadees, Cassin's Vireos, Fox Sparrows, and bucketloads of Western Tanagers. The transitional nature of the habitats here results in an unusual intermixing of certain species pairs such as Gray and Dusky Flycatchers and Purple and Cassin's Finches.

Once we're done with the route, we make our way back along it as the sun's warmth brings out bees, butterflies, and dragonflies, and we often enjoy a hike on the trails at School Canyon or Badger Creek.

We've relished these outings so much that we decided to take on the route at Davis Lake as well. Our two trips there so far have given us additional joy with early-morning birds, sun-warmed afternoon insects, and wonderful opportunities for camping and further exploration in fascinating natural areas.

(Continued from Page 93)

Tom Love
Tualatin Route

Running an urban BBS route in a major metropolitan area like Portland's has been full of unexpected joys and disappointments, and certainly differs from the rural BBS routes I'd done before. While you'd expect traffic, we were surprised at how much noise comes from even a few passing cars of people leaving graveyard shifts at dawn in Tualatin's light industrial sprawl. "Wasn't that a (ROAR!) Great Horned Owl (ROAR!)?"

On this route a White-crowned Sparrow valiantly holds down territory in an asphalt parking lot alongside rumbling I-5. And yet, just a few stops ahead, a forested pocket park produces Swainson's Thrush, Brown Creeper, and Hairy Woodpecker! Spotted Towhees are doing just fine, thank you. River View Cemetery is a respite and a birdy oasis. Eastward, the Willamette River always surprises. The Waverly Country Club entrance, some quiet treed neighborhoods, and a few patches of early successional vegetation and oak woodland all generate interesting breeders, some late migrants, and species newly expanding in urban areas, like Common Ravens. Habitat fragmentation is the word here, and such an urban BBS route helps document how wildlife is faring in such a patchy, textured landscape undergoing dynamic change.

Porcupine. *Photo by Tom Myers.*

Restoration along the Trinity River

In 2002, the Bureau of Reclamation began working to restore salmonid populations affected by dams on the Trinity River in northern California. Restoration has involved reducing the slope of deeply channelized river banks and enhancing riparian habitat to benefit fish and wildlife. KBO scientists working here used a suite of focal bird species as ecological indicators, evaluating the health of streamside habitats as they were replanted with native vegetation in restoration projects. Building upon bird-monitoring work initiated by the U.S. Forest Service's Redwood Sciences Laboratory, KBO helped produce 12 years of data from riparian bird surveys, tracking changes in bird abundance and diversity along the stretch of river modified by restoration activities.

The Trinity River in winter. *Photo © Klamath Bird Observatory.*

In 2012–2016, we enhanced our monitoring by implementing new methods to provide targeted insights into restoration response, such as whether birds are choosing territories in the recently restored habitat and, if so, whether they are successfully fledging young. Findings thus far have shown that Song Sparrows readily colonize young riparian vegetation and nest in the restored areas as successfully as they do in areas of mature habitat. In contrast, other focal species appear to require more time (waiting for complex vegetation structure to develop) before occupying the regenerating floodplains in high numbers. These results are being applied within an adaptive management framework to assess and improve policies and actions as managers work to create and maintain ecologically valuable riparian habitats.

The projects discussed here provide a sense of where Klamath Bird Observatory has come from and some of what it has accomplished to date. In future articles, we intend to dive deeper into KBO's currently active research projects. You can visit our website, klamathbird.org, to learn more about our organization and perhaps even consider a donation to help support KBO's bird conservation efforts.

Photo by Char Corkran.

Sunbathing by a Barred Owl

By Char Corkran

On July 1, 2022, at 13:30, I noticed a Barred Owl (*Strix varia*) lying on the ground in the sunniest area of my suburban backyard north of Beaverton, Oregon. At first it appeared to be headless or dead. Grabbing a camera, I approached the motionless form and took photos. From the side, I could see that the owl's head was tipped so far back that it was resting on its upper back. Feathers on the owl's throat were raised, and feathers especially on the left side and flank were raised and spread. The left wing was spread out along the ground. The owl was lying on the edge of a lawn, about 2 meters from some large Western Red Cedars where this species often perches, and it was oriented almost due south, receiving maximum sunlight on its throat and breast. I do not know how long it had been lying there. After a minute of my observation, it returned its head to a normal position and began panting. After another half-minute, it flew into the low branches of the cedars, but then soon returned to the same spot on the ground. When I approached too closely, intending to take another photo, it flew off into denser woods.

This same open area of my backyard is often used for sunning by American Robins, Song Sparrows, Spotted Towhees, and Steller's Jays. However, in all my observations of them, the birds were facing away from the sun and holding their wings and tails fanned out in direct contact with the ground. Over the 50 years I have lived on this property, I have also observed a very few birds taking minor dust baths by scratching and rolling around on a dusty spot, usually a dried-out, flattened mound left by a mole. I have never seen a bird anting here, although Red-shafted Flickers are often on the ground foraging for ants.

As soon as the Barred Owl left, I examined the spot where it had lain. There were no ants and no exposed dirt, just very short grass mixed with fine debris from the cedars. I concluded that the owl had been sunbathing. The air temperature was 75 degrees Fahrenheit, but the ground surface temperature could have been as high as 125°F.

I perused online sources, finding many photos of a variety of owls (including Barred Owls) sunning. According to scientific studies and articles published online, there are several hypotheses to explain why birds sunbathe — as well as for why they show similar behaviors such as anting, dust-bathing, and water-bathing. For sunbathing, hypotheses include the need to warm themselves (e.g., Turkey Vultures) or dry themselves (e.g., cormorants). It is also thought that sunbathing may enhance the absorption of vitamin D, and that it may assist birds in spreading oils from the uropygial gland used for preening. Some have speculated that birds sunbathe for pure pleasure.

The predominant hypothesis to explain sunning on the ground, however, is that it helps rid the bird of feather lice and other external parasites (Bush and Clayton 2018, Wheeler 2020). Heat or dessication from sun exposure may sometimes do the job; studies on Black Noddies on the Great Barrier Reef

Why was this Barred Owl sunning itself on the ground? *Photo by Char Corkran.*

(Moyer and Wagenbach 1995) and on Hooded Vulture feathers in West Africa (Gutierrez et al. 2019) each found that most lice and their eggs were killed when exposed for several minutes to temperatures of 140-150°F. Moreover, ultraviolet light from sun exposure has been shown to reduce bacteria that degrade feathers (Saranathan and Burtt 2007). Sun exposure may also cause ectoparasites to detach themselves and move around, making them easier for a bird to pick off as it preens its feathers (Koop et al. 2012). Indeed, research in Virginia found that Violet-green Swallows experimentally treated with a pesticide spent less time sunning than did untreated swallows, suggesting that pest-free birds have less of a need to sunbathe (Blem and Blem 1993).

For a bird, ridding its body of parasites is important, as ornithologists postulate that heavy infestations of feather lice and other ectoparasites not only can weaken a bird's health and make it vulnerable to diseases, but also can dull the color and/or reflectance of its feathers — important cues used in mate selection. Birds preen with their bills to maintain the condition of their feathers, by cleaning, reordering, and oiling them, as well as "re-zipping" any with unhooked barbules. Distributing oils from the uropygial gland (or powder down in some bird groups) is essential to preserve feathers' waterproofing, flexibility, and freedom from fungi and bacteria. To preen the head, birds use their feet. For raptors including owls, preening the throat to remove bits of flesh or blood may be especially important in preventing a buildup of ectoparasites.

Sunbathing may occur more frequently than suspected. Birds lying spread out on the ground are vulnerable to predation, so they may often use hidden locations or arboreal positions (although these might not reach high temperatures). If it takes only a few minutes of sunning in a hot location to kill most lice, opportunities for birders to observe this behavior could be brief. While preening is well-studied and commonly observed by birders, sunbathing is neither, yet may be critically important to the overall health and reproductive success of birds.

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Today's Young Birders: Bringing Energy and Talent to Oregon

Our birding community is constantly being refreshed and reinvigorated with new talent, especially from those who begin birding at an early age. *Oregon Birds* has long celebrated the skilled young birders in our statewide birding community, and from time to time it has run articles profiling several currently active young birders. In this installment, we feature eight birders ranging from 10 to 21 years of age and hailing from various parts of Oregon.

Each young birder was interviewed by an older birder. The interviews were organized by Alan Contreras. The interviewers asked each young birder: (1) How they became interested in birds, (2) What they enjoy most about birding, (3) What their favorite birding places are, and (4) Whether they intend to pursue birding or ornithology as a career in some way. From their responses, it's clear that the future of Oregon's birding community will be in good hands!

Now, please meet today's young birders of Oregon….

MAXWELL KESECKER

Age 10, Corvallis

Interviewed by Hendrik Herlyn

When I was young, about 3 years old, my grandparents had a bird feeder in their back yard, and I would just sit by the window and watch the birds as they ate. Then I started reading the *Birds of the Willamette Valley Region* guidebook, and it snowballed from there. I still read birding books regularly and right now I tend to read books about birds from other continents. I spend a lot of my free time birding with my grandparents and other family members when I am not in school or playing soccer.

There are so many things I enjoy about birding! Some of them are listing on eBird, chasing rare species, meeting fellow birders, and taking photos. I even post some of my favorite photos on my Instagram account, @maximumbirds, with help from my parents. One of my favorite things is looking for new birds when I travel outside of Oregon. I also enjoy identifying other species of animals when I am birding.

One of my favorite places to bird is Finley NWR because there is so much variety of both habitat and bird species. You can easily spend hours searching for birds there! I also really enjoy the Philomath Sewage Ponds because you never know what you are going to see there. It is also close by so I can do short adventures there after school.

My favorite species is the Snowy Plover because they are so cute. Shorebirds in general are my favorite group of birds because it is amazing to me how such small birds can travel crazy-long distances. Like the Bar-tailed Godwit that just flew nonstop from Alaska to Australia, and it is only 16 inches long! My number-one nemesis bird is the Tufted Duck. I have been minutes away from seeing one, but it always eludes me.

When I get older, I would like to help conserve species all around the world. I would like to help collect information and band birds. Living in Corvallis, I am a big Oregon State Beavers fan, and I would really like to go to school there because they have a strong ornithology program. Birding will always be part of my life.

ABRAHAM FINLAY

Age 13, Roseburg

Interviewed by Matt Hunter

Ever since I was little, whenever my family would go on a trip, we would have competitions to see who could spot the most perched hawks and Bald Eagles along the freeway. Because we played that game all the time, I started noticing more birds all over the place. For my ninth birthday, my mom got me a hummingbird feeder and a suet feeder. I put those up and started watching the different birds that came. I got a bird book and started learning their names, and I've been birding ever since.

Some of my favorite things about birding are the adventure of finding new species, birding in new places, and not knowing exactly what you're going to find when you go birding!

My two favorite places to go birding are Ford's Pond in Sutherlin and the Diamond Lake area. I use the *Birds of Oregon* field guide and *Birds of The Pacific Northwest*, and I also use umpquabirds.org, allaboutbirds.org, Merlin Sound ID, and eBird. One of my goals for this year has been to see how many species I can find in Douglas County in one year. So far this year (as of December 2022), I've seen 156 species here in Douglas County.

I'm definitely going to keep birding as a hobby, and maybe pursue a career with birds in the future.

TRISTA NEWMAN

Age 14, Portland

Interviewed by Vjera Thompson

I have always been interested in the natural world around me. I became interested in birds through summer camps at Portland Audubon. When I got dropped off at camp, we would all wait in Portland Audubon's Heron Hall. There is a window in Heron Hall where you can see the bird feeders. I remember one morning the Steller's Jays were very active. I remember how fascinated I was by their plumage and behavior.

What I like the most about birding is not only the excitement and challenge but also seeing how pretty birds' plumage may be or how they interact with other birds. Just a couple of days ago, I was watching three Great Egrets fighting over a territory. I noticed they had three different ways of holding their heads and necks: defensively, offensively, and submissively. Some of my favorite birding places are Sauvie Island and the Skagit Valley area up in Washington.

I am not pursuing an ornithology career but I do want to go into wildlife biology. My birding and photography go together and I would like to keep them both as side jobs or hobbies. I have an Instagram account, @thnewman27. I am also in the process of starting to sell prints of my photos.

Photography and birding have always gone hand-in-hand for me. After I got my mom into birding, she started taking photos of the birds. That lit a spark for me. I had this little yellow Fuji camera that I carried everywhere. It is funny to look back on, because it was such a small camera compared to the 6-pound rig I work with now!

ELLIOTT BURY

Age 18, Grants Pass & Oregon State University

Interviewed by Caleb Centanni

I started birding in March 2020, a week before quarantine. I had an assignment to identify all the birds in my yard near Grants Pass for a Biology Class. I remember being particularly enthusiastic about this assignment and buying bird seed for the feeders in my yard. My Dad suggested that I try photographing the birds I encountered, and let me use his old Nikon DSLR. Once I learned the basics of the camera, I spent every waking hour that week outside in my five-acre yard, observing birds including Oak Titmice and my favorite, Acorn Woodpeckers. After the assignment was over, I continued to photograph birds and became more and more obsessed with learning about them. Once quarantine started, birding was the hobby that kept me active during a time everyone was stuck at home. I started an Instagram account (@atticusbirding) and was able to connect with tons of other young birders online who helped me learn a great deal about both photography and birding.

I love the way birding makes places significant. Small parks and remote trails become incredible locations where many good memories are formed when you find interesting birds. I have particularly fond memories of a spot on a remote road in Josephine County where a large gorge carves through the mountains. During the spring and summer this gorge fills with Lazuli Buntings singing from every bush and Western Tanagers flitting from the treetops at the bottom of the cliffs nearly at eye level. I never would have discovered this spot if I hadn't been so passionate about birding and discovering new places.

Over the past few years, I've been able to go on birding adventures throughout Oregon. I particularly love birding around Klamath Falls. During the peak of spring migration, the riparian corridors that cut through the high desert fill to the brim with migrants. I've witnessed bushes full of tanagers and warblers. Nearby in the marshes American Avocets and Black-necked Stilts put on a spectacular show during courtship. In Upper Klamath Lake adorable Western and Clark's Grebe chicks ride on their parents' backs at Putnam Point. Far from the desert one of my other favorite areas to bird is around Newport on the Oregon coast. Some highlights include lots of Snowy Plovers and other shorebirds as well as amazing opportunities for sea-watching.

After I finish my degree in Fisheries, Wildlife, and Conservation Sciences at Oregon State University, I hope to work with birds professionally as a wildlife biologist. I am also passionate about bird photography and would love to use my work for conservation and make a career out of my photography. Regardless of what I end up doing, birds will always be a big part of my life!

Red-winged Blackbird. *Photo by Elliott Bury.*

EZRA COHEN

Age 18, Portland

Interviewed by Alan Contreras

I have lived next to Oaks Bottom Wildlife Refuge in Portland for my whole life. In 2017, I began going on Portland Audubon's Bird Song Walks, where I met many "characters" of the Oregon birding community. After participating in the Portland Audubon Birdathon in 2018, I visited British Columbia and saw my lifer Townsend's Warblers and Red Crossbills. These were, looking back, my spark birds. Since then, I have continued birding in Portland and around the state, and now lead Bird Song Walks at Oaks Bottom each spring.

Although the thrill of chasing rare birds is my absolute favorite part of birding, the byproduct of those chases, and of birding in general, is being part of an incredible community, which is certainly one of my favorite aspects of birding. Meeting new birders at stakeouts, local patches, and pelagic trips is a fun and often very rewarding part of birding. I've met birders who have introduced me to bird-monitoring opportunities, connected me with experts in certain fields of research, disclosed new, "secret," migrant traps, and even, if I am lucky, given me a spot in their car on birding trips around the state!

I really enjoy birding in remote, under-birded counties in Oregon — so the eastern Oregon counties, especially ones like Lake and Gilliam, are favorites. In spring, when the oases can hold nearly any species, the thrill of checking patches of trees in desert areas is a part of birding I especially look forward to.

At this point, birding is firmly an obsession, but I am not sure what the next four years in college will bring. I have done a fair amount of bird-monitoring and bird-related research, and I will certainly explore those interests in college through biology and environmental science classes. What I can say for certain is that birding will always be my favorite hobby regardless of whether I choose to study birds professionally.

CLARA OLIVERSON

Age 18, Des Moines, Washington & Oregon State University

Interviewed by Caleb Centanni

I became interested in birds through my mom. My family has always loved to spend time out in nature, and my mom started birding when I was young. As I got older, I became more interested in birds and went birding with her more often. I don't have one specific "spark bird," but there are a couple of birds I remember clearly. My lifer Brown Creeper, seen at a rest stop in Washington, fascinated me and made me curious about what else was camouflaged up in the trees. I also was lucky enough to see the Swallow-tailed Gull that showed up in Seattle a few years ago — and seeing the massive crowd of people so excited over just one bird was really inspiring to me.

I love birding because I like being out in nature, I enjoy noticing the small details, and it's a fun challenge, but one thing I really love about birding is that it allows me to connect with other people. I'm not a very social person and it's challenging for me to easily connect with others, but birding makes it easier. I love being able to interact with like-minded people and learn from more experienced birders and photographers. But I also love the small interactions that remind me how special a single bird

can be. I remember one day at a park in Seattle, I had a great look at a Wilson's Snipe that was feeding just below a boardwalk. An older lady came up to me and I showed her the snipe. She got so excited (it was her lifer) and asked me all about snipe, how I found it, about birding the park, and other things. It was so fulfilling to help her get her lifer and see her so happy.

Back at home in Washington, I like to bird Nisqually NWR and spots around the Puget Sound, but I also love this spot close to my home that's a little marsh off the side of a busy road. It's right by all the Amazon warehouses and lots of neighborhoods, but it's filled with birds and other wildlife. Here in Oregon, I'm still exploring lots of new spots, but right now my favorites are Marys Peak, Newport/Yaquina Bay, Fitton Green Natural Area, and Finley NWR.

I've known since seventh grade that I wanted to go to college for ornithology/wildlife biology. Now, I'm majoring in Fisheries, Wildlife, and Conservation Sciences at OSU with an emphasis on ornithology! I hope to go into a career in ornithology/wildlife biology and conservation. I'd like to do field work and research earlier in my career and then move to more of a management position at a nonprofit or government agency. I really want to spend time researching birds and doing hands-on conservation work.

Red-tailed Hawk. *Photo by Trista Newman.*

WILL KIRSCH

Age 19, Overland Park, Kansas & Oregon State University

Interviewed by Caleb Centanni

I became interested in birding through my dad. He started birding a few months before I did and as he was getting more and more into it, I decided I'd give birding a try. I don't really have a specific spark bird, but an early experience that really stuck with me was watching American Avocets and Black-necked Stilts at a large salt marsh in central Kansas (which is where I'm originally from and where I first started birding). After having this experience, I became much more interested in birds, though it wasn't really until my first spring Kansas Ornithological Society meeting that I became the hardcore lister that I am today. I guess there was just something about the multitude of warblers and waders I saw during that weekend that drove my birding from a hobby to an obsession.

The reasons why I bird and the things I like most about birding change all the time. When I first started birding, and whenever I bird a new area for the first time, my favorite part is always going out and looking for as many species as I can possibly find. As I settle in, though, I find it very enjoyable to return to the same places over and over again to note the changes I see throughout the seasons and throughout the years. Back where I grew up in Kansas, I'd visit a small suburban park near my house almost every day. Many of my favorite birding memories growing up came from discovering something unexpected in this small park. It was also always very fun to take along my non-birding friends to this patch and show them what birding was all about.

My favorite places to bird around Oregon so far have been Finley NWR, Wickiup Reservoir, and the Newport/Depoe Bay area. Back in Kansas, my favorite birding sites are Quivira NWR, Marais des Cygnes NWR, and Roe Park.

I'm currently an environmental science student at Oregon State, and will be studying birds as part of my undergraduate thesis (namely the Evening Grosbeak with Dr. Doug Robinson). I plan to eventually pursue a PhD in ecology (or a similar field) and study birds as part of my professional career.

SEAN COZART

Age 21, Union

Interviewed by Tye Jeske

My first birding spark occurred when I was 9 years old. My oldest sister was a sophomore at Montana State University and took a summer bird-watching class. The professor allowed my family to join one of the trips, and we went to Canyon Ferry Reservoir, the third-largest lake in Montana. I was most interested in the Northern Leopard Frogs, but I remember that my dad tried to show me the Yellow Warbler the group found. That trip started the flame, and my passion for birding grew as I did things like making a bagel bird feeder in Cub Scouts, watching chickadees in my backyard with my dad, and visiting a Bald Eagle nest in town.

I do a little bit of everything when birding. Listing is a big thing for me, but I focus on how many birds I can find for a certain region rather than try to compete for a top listing spot. Since 2015, I've been trying to see if I can find 300 species in one year. I didn't realize just how hard that would be, but I finally exceeded the magic number last October. In 2022, I stayed local and broke the all-time single-year record for Baker County with 227 species. Chasing rarities is definitely the most frustrating aspect of birding, since I usually go home disappointed, but when you do see a rarity, it makes up for the losses! Photography outranks anything in birding for me. To me, the photo, no matter the quality, is a physical item that not only proves you have seen that species but preserves and refreshes the memory. My dad bought my first camera, a Nikon D3000 DSLR, in 2015, and ever since, I'm looking for my next shot. As of today, I've photographed 339 of the 363 species on my life list.

My favorite birding locations depend on the season. During the summer, I can often be found in the mountains. Though mountains tend to have a lower bird diversity, I can't help but want to be somewhere where I can hear Swainson's Thrush, Fox Sparrow, or Townsend's Warbler songs. I get really into shorebird season, so in late summer and early fall, I'm often at lakes that have mudflats. Last winter I wanted to be anywhere that irruptive finches like White-winged Crossbills or Common Redpolls might be. During normal winters, I'm at dams or rivers looking for gulls and ducks. In terms of specific birding locations, my first favorite was probably Central Park Pond in Montana. It was the only lake in the Gallatin Valley that stayed partially thawed throughout the winter, and not only was there always a diversity of duck species, but you were almost always guaranteed over 75 Trumpeter Swans. When I lived in Walla Walla, I was always thinking about Ice Harbor Dam or Burbank Slough in McNary National Wildlife Refuge. My favorite spots in Oregon are Cold Springs NWR and North Powder Pond.

Throughout my childhood, I couldn't decide whether I wanted to be a biologist or an astronomer. I decided sometime during high school that a career in biology was the better choice since I was spending more time looking through binoculars than a telescope. I'm proud to say that due to my interest in this field, I've been included in several scientific projects, such as co-authoring an opinion article in the ABA magazine *Birding*, collecting specimens of undescribed species of katydid in Oregon and Idaho, and writing an ABA classification proposal. I plan to eventually pursue a job in wildlife biology.

BARB BELLIN

by Paul T. Sullivan

Keizer birder Barb Bellin died in the early morning of August 30, 2021. Born in Corvallis, she attended Philomath schools. She earned her bachelor's and master's degrees in English with honors and taught high-school English in Ontario and Lebanon. She married Jerry Bellin of Salem; they lived in Keizer and raised two children. They were avid naturalists and gardeners.

They became involved in birding. Barb had sight in only one eye, but she had very keen hearing. Jerry's hearing was sub-par, but he had keen eyes. They were a good team. For several years, the Bellins birded actively across the state.

Once started, Barb was all in. She paid special attention to her lists in her local counties: Marion, Polk, Benton, and Lincoln, as well as to Jefferson County on the eastern side of the state. She did a number of Big Days. In 2005, Barb became the tenth person to record 100 or more species in each of Oregon's 36 counties. She participated in Christmas Bird Counts through several decades, running the Dallas count and the Keizer section of the Salem count.

Barb served on the board of Oregon Field Ornithologists (now Oregon Birding Association) in the 1980s. She wrote a bird column, "On the Wing," for the *Statesman Journal*. For over 10 years she wrote the extensive field notes for the Salem Audubon newsletter, the *Grape Leaf*, and served as an unofficial source of bird information. Eventually, the Bellins dialed back their birding to devote more time to grandchildren and their backyard birds and flowers.

Barb was proficient on several musical instruments, including piano, accordion, and clarinet. She also enjoyed singing with the Salem Madrigal Singers for many years. The Bellins' faith was also an integral part of their lives. With their passion for nature, they enjoyed hiking, camping, backpacking, organic gardening, and photography.

She is remembered for her zest for life, a powerful fondness for chocolate, and her signature color, red. I remember Barb most for her keen passion for birding and her uproarious laugh when something amused her. Although extremely modest about her own talents and accomplishments, she went out of her way to support others in any situation.

She is survived by her devoted husband Jerry, son Chris, daughter Angela, four grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren.

JIM ANDERSON

by Sue Anderson

Birder, naturalist, environmental educator, raptor researcher, author, columnist, storyteller, and inspirational teacher — Jim Anderson was many things to many people over the course of a very full and colorful life.

Born in Connecticut and raised on a small farm, Jim learned the conservation ethic at age 11. "You eat what you shoot," his grandfather told him after young Jim shot a Great Horned Owl, and he proceeded to teach him about the positive role of birds of prey in the environment. Decades later, one of Jim's favorite activities would be bringing a Great Horned Owl into classrooms and introducing children to the wide world of nature.

Jim was a self-taught naturalist. (In his words, a "naturalist" is a biologist who flunked chemistry.) His love of the natural world would shape his life, but he followed a diversity of pursuits along the way.

Jim rolled into Bend on his Harley-Davidson in 1951, after four years chasing submarines in the U.S. Navy. The next day he was fighting forest fires, using his motorcycle for transportation on mountain roads. An FAA-certified commercial pilot and a flight instructor for gliders, Jim also worked at logging and mined pumice. He spent time with Fort Rock horseman Reub Long, author of *The Oregon Desert* (1964) to see whether he wanted to be a buckaroo. (After pulling calves at 16-below zero, he decided he didn't.)

Jim Anderson with Golden Eagle. *All photos courtesy of Sue Anderson.*

Jim began studying Coyotes, especially their response to poisons (and the subsequent impact on non-target species, such as raptors) and what effect their "control" had on reducing livestock damage. He became involved with the Oregon State Police, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service apprehending criminals who shot raptors and other wildlife. In later years, he contributed to studies for ODFW on bats, eagles, hawks, owls, cormorants, and Osprey.

At the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI) in Portland, Jim worked as a naturalist for several years, implementing outdoor education and scientific activities for families, students, and teachers. He helped to operate OMSI's science camps and led hundreds of children on field trips throughout the Northwest in the OMSI Space Cruiser bus. He subsequently became director of the Children's Zoo and Conservation and Education Programs at what is now the Oregon Zoo in Portland.

Jim studied and banded raptors in central Oregon for over 50 years. He and I recently completed our part of a 10-year survey of Golden Eagles in Oregon, which took us to many remote places in Oregon's outback that we loved. Although we spent most of

In 1951, Jim Anderson rolled into the sleepy little mill town of Bend, Oregon, on his 1947 Harley and soon became a legend. It's no overstatement to say that Jim was Oregon's most important, well-known, and beloved public naturalist — self-taught, to boot. As a conservationist, he fought for preserving every cog and wheel of nature so that all humans could enjoy a better quality of life.

Jim became a naturalist early on as a youth in Connecticut, where he explored the outdoors with family members. Among other experiences, he acquired a pet American Crow whose name was Joe, until she laid eggs and became Josephine.

In Oregon, he is known in part for his decades of banding work, focusing on eagles and including Great Gray Owl; he continued to help band raptors until age 91. Jim was the first staff naturalist at the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI) from 1960 to 1968 and helped found the Children's Zoo in Portland. He then became staff naturalist at Sunriver, the planned resort community south of Bend, where he remained until 1977, developing the resort's conservation and outdoor education plan. Jim then went to Arizona to work at the Ramsey Canyon Preserve until 1980.

Jim's skills as a writer led him to write on natural history subjects for *The Oregonian*, the *Bend Bulletin*, the *Nugget Newspaper* of Sisters, and, since 2011, a regular column called "The Natural World" for the *Bend Source*. His book *Tales from a Northwest Naturalist* (1992) includes many of his best stories from a lifetime in outdoor education, including training his domesticated Great Horned Owls to harass visiting insurance salesmen. One of the owls he raised harvested the neighbor's wandering cat; Jim told the neighbor that the cat had last been seen when it was "here for dinner."

Jim's experience with eagles includes taking one from its rehab site in Portland to its release site in Wasco County. Jim flew the eagle there in his Piper Cub, but the bird managed to chew its way out of its box shortly before landing. Jim was witnessed exiting the aircraft as it was still rolling down the runway, no doubt in violation of multiple FAA regulations. The eagle followed shortly.

Bird photography fit naturally into Jim's educational roles, and his work was of good enough quality to appear in National Geographic. It also appeared in Jackman and Long's iconic book *The Oregon Desert* (1964).

Through all of Jim's endeavors, his wife Sue was a constant. Together they banded hundreds of raptors and in 2020, when Jim turned 92, they completed a 10-year survey of central Oregon's Golden Eagles for the Oregon Eagle Foundation. Jim and Sue were always a team, and Sue's support and participation as a competent naturalist and educator were largely responsible for Jim's accomplishments. They touched more lives than we can ever know.

--David Vick

Jim and colleagues with a Golden Eagle chick.

our time in the field observing Golden Eagles, we were also highly invested in supporting the central-Oregon population of American Kestrels. We put up several hundred boxes with Don McCartney, then banded the young in those boxes for many years, usually with our kids and their families in tow. Jim's banding permit was issued more than 60 years ago!

Jim originated the nature programs at Sunriver in the early 1970s, working with John Gray and the original landscape architect, Bob Royston. He was the first president of Central Oregon Audubon Society (now East Cascades Audubon Society); supported the Deschutes Land Trust; conducted Elderhostel (now Road Scholar) programs for Central Oregon Community College, Sunriver Nature Center, and Southern Oregon University; and enjoyed working with OPB's *Oregon Field Guide*.

Jim Anderson was a master educator. The number of schoolchildren and adults he reached over the years was phenomenal.

Outside of Oregon, Jim traveled to Australia and lived with Aborigines in the Northern Territory for a time, and also studied spiders in Melbourne. He was the manager of the Nature Conservancy's Ramsey Canyon Preserve in southeastern Arizona for three years.

And of course, Jim touched countless people through his writing, especially his well-known nature column for *The Nugget Newspaper* in Sisters and *The Source* of Bend. He also authored a book about his life experiences, *Tales from a Northwest Naturalist* (1992).

Jim was buried at the Fort Rock Cemetery, his final resting place in full view of his beloved Fort Rock. Besides me, he leaves six children, 16 grandchildren, and one great-granddaughter.

Jim Anderson had an infectious enthusiasm and glee for all things natural, and this drew people to admire him and love being around him. This man was legendary with kids and adults alike. One can know a lot and accomplish remarkable things, but getting other people ramped up to speak out and to participate in conservation takes a special energy. Jim had that, and Sue has it as well in her quiet, organized support and advice. Jim and Sue were major movers in our Audubon chapter for years and years. Jim's books are still available at Paulina Springs Bookstore in Sisters. Jim was a delight and an inspiration to innumerable people of all ages and backgrounds, and our Oregon birding community was lucky to have him speaking for us and for the natural world for all these years.

--Judy Meredith

I am one of the many people whose lives were made better by knowing Jim Anderson. Jim taught ecology at the Catlin Gabel School in Portland in 1964-65, my eighth-grade year; I remember it being a wonderful class. I also recall an OMSI expedition to Fort Rock where Jim led us to Reub Long's ranch, Fossil Lake, and Summer Lake. Fossil-hunting on Beverly Beach was another outing. One year I brought a tarantula home in a milk carton on the train following summer camp in New Mexico. My mother was not pleased, and after a few days of trying to feed it flies and mealworms, she insisted I call Jim, who was then director of the Children's Zoo, and offer to donate it. He was more than happy to accept it, and to get me out of that fix.

I was fortunate to go on many expeditions with Jim, including trips in central Oregon to band Golden Eagles, Prairie Falcons, and bats. On one trip, Jim climbed up into a tree to band a Golden Eagle fledgling, but it glided out of the nest just as he reached it. Several of us corralled the youngster on the ground, and after weighing, measuring, and banding it, Jim placed the bird on a tree limb. He had me kneel and poke a stick at it so he could snap a photo as it pulled its wings back in an aggressive pose. A copy of the resulting photograph hung in Mark Hatfield's office in Salem when he was governor.

Jim touched other members of my family, too. My sister had him as a leader when she was an Outdoor School counselor. Years later my wife and our two young children attended an OMSI family camp at Hancock. Afterwards we were invited to join Jim and Joseph Jones on an eagle-banding trip. It felt like old times.

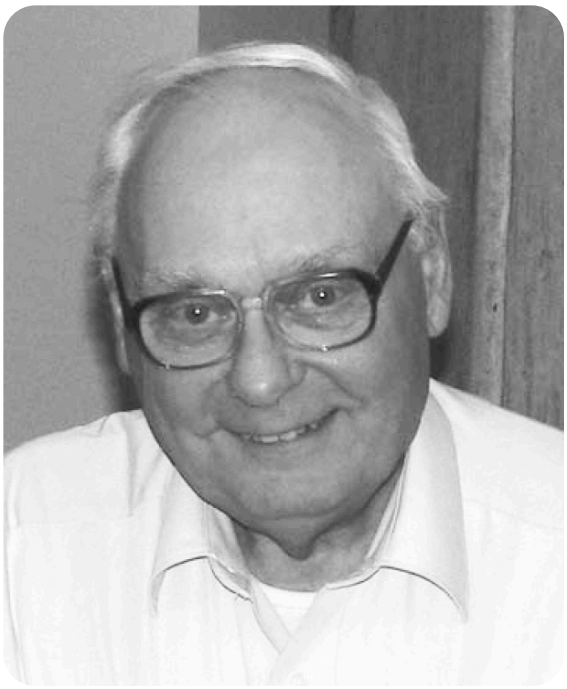
Some people have a spark bird. I had a spark birder! May he rest in peace.

--Michael Krall

Editor's Note: These remembrances are adapted in part from Sue Anderson's obituary of Jim published in local newspapers, David Vick's passage in *A History of Oregon Ornithology*, a personal message from Judy Meredith, and Michael Krall's posting on OBOL.

HARRY NEHLS

by David S. Irons



In July 2022, the Oregon birding community lost a titan.

Modest, humble, and unimposing in stature, Harry Nehls was not someone who captured your attention when he entered a room. If you saw him in the field, he would never flaunt his birding prowess. Though highly skilled as a field ornithologist, it would be completely out of character for Harry to ever trumpet his many accomplishments. As a result, it is left to those of us who bore witness to his greatness to share his story.

Harry was born in Iowa in 1934, and his family later moved to Oregon. He attended Portland's Benson Polytechnic High School, where his interest in birds first took root. Leave it to Harry to have his "spark birds" be the gulls on the athletic fields at the high school! I suppose if you have the rest of your life to devote to identifying birds, why not start with the hard ones? After a stint in the U.S. Army, Harry came home to Portland and began a long career working for the U.S. Postal Service. As his interest in birds continued to grow, he joined the Audubon Society of Portland. It was through his Audubon activities that Harry would leave perhaps his deepest footprint.

> "QUIETLY AND WITHOUT FANFARE, HARRY COMPILED, SYNTHESIZED, AND HELPED PUBLISH RECORDS OF OREGON BIRD SIGHTINGS FOR MORE THAN HALF A CENTURY."

When my family moved to Portland in 1970, Harry was only in his mid-30s but was already a central figure at Audubon, and arguably the chapter's most active field birder. He had been compiling and writing the field notes section for the chapter's newsletter (*The Warbler*) since 1965. He was regularly leading field trips and often giving the program at the monthly potlucks. I was only 10 at the time, and Harry struck me as a bit quirky — and more fanatical about birds and birding than anyone I knew. Little did I know that our paths and passions would intersect as often as they did over the next half-century.

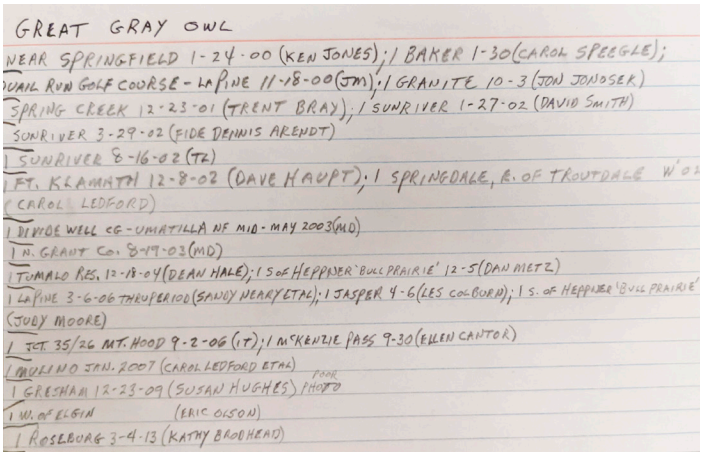
As with Harry, my transition into serious (fanatical) birding started in high school, and it was during this period that I got to know him personally. I regularly went birding with David Fix, Jeff Gilligan, Tom Crabtree, and the late Mark Koninendyke, all of whom shared stories of birding with Harry. Eventually I did some trips with Harry as well and acquired my own set of stories. My favorite Harry episode involved chasing Oregon's first Lesser Sand-Plover ("Mongolian Plover" back then) in 1977. The plover had been found at Tillamook's Bayocean Spit by Dave DeSante, who passed away in October 2022. After re-finding and photographing the bird on the bayside mudflats with Harry, Mark Smith, and Mark Koninendyke, Smith suggested that we take a victory photo with Koninendyke and me hoisting Harry up on our shoulders. Harry's response was: "Why? I ain't done nothin!" In retrospect, I would beg to differ.

As my birding skills grew and I occasionally turned up interesting birds, the first phone call to report my findings would always be to Harry. He was the conduit through which all birding news traveled — not just for the Portland area, but for the entire state. His field notes in *The Warbler* were in essence a report for all of Oregon,

as this predated the statewide field notes now published in *Oregon Birds*. Harry was also the regional editor for *American Birds* (now *North American Birds*), the journal covering avian trends and rare bird occurrences all over the continent. If you wanted your sightings to get published and archived, you'd best make sure he knew of them.

Sometime in 1977, Portland Audubon set up a weekly rare bird alert, with a recorded phone message listing unusual bird sightings around the state. This was nearly 20 years before OBOL came to be. Harry's was the only voice that rare-bird-alert callers ever knew. His familiar sign-off was always: "If you have anything to add, call Harry Nehls at 233-3976." If you were an active birder back then, you probably knew Harry's phone number better than your own.

Very quietly and mostly without fanfare, Harry compiled, synthesized, and helped publish records of Oregon bird sightings for more than half a century. Nearly all the advances in our knowledge about Oregon birds since the publication of Gabrielson and Jewett's *Birds of Oregon* (1940) have been chronicled in reports that Harry authored, co-authored, or contributed to. Harry authored field notes for *The Warbler* for 55 years, through 2020. He was the first statewide coordinator for the Breeding Bird Survey, serving from 1968 until just a few years ago. From 1966 to 1977, Harry and John Crowell were the North Pacific Coast regional editors for *American Birds*. Even after stepping aside from that duty, Harry continued to provide seasonal summaries of Oregon observations to the many regional editors


GREAT GRAY OWL
NEAR SPRINGFIELD 1-24-00 (KEN JONES); 1 BAKER 1-30 (CAROL SPEEGLE);
QUAIL RUN GOLF COURSE - LAPINE 11-18-00 (JM); 1 GRANITE 10-3 (JON JONSER)
SPRING CREEK 12-23-01 (TRENT BRAY); 1 SUNRIVER 1-27-02 (DAVID SMITH)
SUNRIVER 3-29-02 (FIDE DENNIS ARENDT)
1 SUNRIVER 8-16-02 (TZ)
FT. KLAMATH 12-8-02 (DAVE KAUPT); 1 SPRINGDALE, E. OF TROUTDALE W/02
(CAROL LEDFORD)
1 DEVORE WELL CG-UMATILLA NF MID-MAY 2003 (MD)
1 N. GRANT CO. 8-19-03 (MD)
1 TUMALO RES. 12-18-04 (DEAN HALE); 1 S OF HEPPNER 'BULL PRAIRIE' 12-5 (DAN METZ)
1 LAPINE 3-6-06 THRU PER 10 (SANDY NEARY ETAL); 1 JASPER 4-6 (LES COLBURN); 1 S. OF HEPPNER 'BULL PRAIRIE'
(JUDY MOORE)
1 JCT. 35/26 MT. HOOD 9-2-06 (IT); 1 MCKENZIE PASS 9-30 (ELLEN CANTOR)
1 BROOKINGS JAN. 2007 (CAROL LEDFORD ETAL)
1 GRESHAM 12-23-09 (SUSAN HUGHES) PHOTO
1 W. OF ELGIN (ERIC OLSON)
1 ROSEBURG 3-4-13 (KATHY BROADHEAD)

Harry Nehls kept records of uncommon birds reported to him on a series of 5x7" index cards filling several boxes, now housed at Portland Audubon. These notes informed his columns, articles, and books, and provide an archive of notable sightings going back decades. *Photo by Brodie Cass Talbott.*

If there were an official Birder of Oregon, Harry would be high on the list of contenders. We would all do well to be half the considerate, helpful man and birder that Harry was. A huge hole in Oregon birding remains that will never be filled.

— Bob Archer

Harry Nehls with a Common Murre.
Photo courtesy of Portland Audubon.

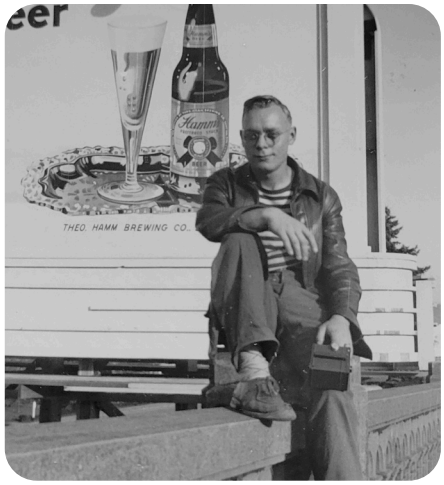
who followed in his footsteps. When I became a regional editor, Harry was the first person I would call with questions about older records or long-term changes in the status of particular species.

Harry also authored or co-authored three books covering the familiar birds of Oregon and the Willamette Valley. These books continue to be incredibly popular with their target audience of beginning birders. In addition, Harry served as the senior contributing author for the landmark *Birds of Oregon: A General Reference* (published in 2003). This monograph is a must-have volume for any scientific library and any serious birder in Oregon.

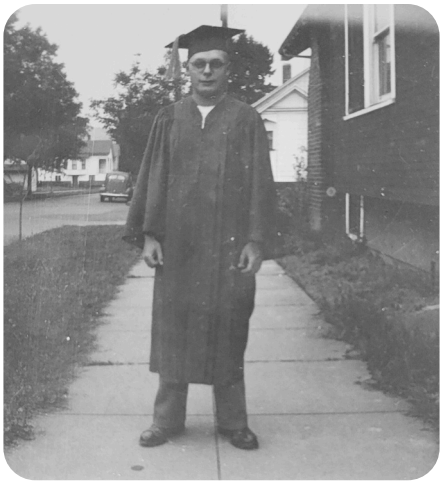
Over several decades Harry authored countless articles and short notes, being one of the most prolific contributors to *Oregon Birds*. He was one of the original voting members of the Oregon Bird Records Committee (OBRC) when it was organized in 1978. In 1990, he replaced Clarice Watson as the OBRC's secretary, a position he held until 2016.

A portrait of the birder as a young man

As a Boy Scout



As a teen



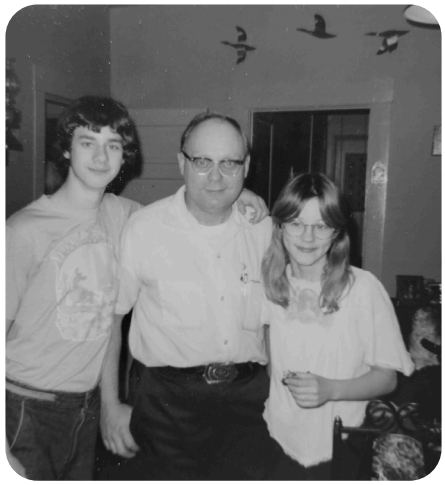
Graduation Day

In the Army

In the Army

Atop Mount Hood

With a sizable Chinook



With nephew Jeff and niece Teresa

All photos courtesy of Jeff Nehls.

At the party celebrating the publication of *Birds of Oregon: A General Reference* in 2003, each attendee was credited with a list of the species accounts they'd written for the book. Harry's list of accounts reached down to the ground. *Photo courtesy of Alan Contreras, shown at right.*

I first found out Harry Nehls existed when I found a Hermit Warbler on the first Cottage Grove CBC in 1971. I was 15. Harry wrote to me (by which I mean a paper letter mailed to me with a stamp), introduced himself, and asked for more information on the bird, which I provided. I think it was a few months later that he said he was coming to Fern Ridge to bird and asked if I'd like to go with him. I did, and we found a female Red-breasted Merganser. It occurred to me a few years later that Harry had actually been checking to see if I knew what I was doing. Over the years, Harry and I worked together on many projects and birded together quite a bit, mostly at Malheur.

It is hard to explain to younger birders how communication worked in the birding community back in the Jurassic Period. In practice, Harry was THE central switching station for Oregon bird sighting and distribution data from the mid-1960s through the early 1990s, and remained active in that kind of role until past 2000. If you found something in the 1970s or 80s, Harry was a mandatory phone call because he'd spread the word and put it in "the" field notes, that is, *American Birds* and Portland Audubon's *The Warbler*.

Harry's role as roundhouse for the birding community faded as Internet communication surged in the late 1990s, but his unique way of communicating (e.g. "those guys see those all the time" in reference to birds we did not know were being seen at all) will remain part of our memories. He was also a kind and helpful person. Bon voyage, my old friend.

— Alan Contreras

Harry was involved with Portland Audubon for so long that he was honored by multiple generations of Audubon staff. So when our current Volunteer Manager, Vicky Medley, presented him with a Lifetime Achievement Award, he told her in his trademark style, "Ahhh, you can keep it. I got two already."

— Brodie Cass Talbott

By his own estimation, Harry led field trips or gave programs for every Audubon Society and bird club in Oregon. His programs, classes, and field trips for Portland Audubon surely number well into the hundreds. One can only wonder how many thousands of Oregonians have learned something about birds from Harry Nehls.

Harry had no formal training in ornithology or nature study, and as far as I know he took no science classes after high school. He was a self-taught amateur ornithologist, guided by his passion and innate curiosity about the natural world around him. And yet, if not for his decades of recording and archiving Oregon bird sightings, much of our avian record as we now know it would simply not exist.

Harry's accomplishments for our community are a legacy that will stand the test of time. But we learned after his passing that ours were not the only lives he touched in profound ways. For a niece and nephew — his brother's children — Harry was "the father we should have had," according to his nephew Jeff Nehls. We also learned that he was an avid stamp

(Continued on Page 124)

Harry made many lasting contributions to the Oregon birding scene. But to me, his most important one was his book, *Birds of the Willamette Valley Region*, with Tom Aversa and Hal Opperman as co-authors. The genius of the book is that it resists the typical urge of birders to focus on rarities, which tend to boggle the minds of newbies. In fact, not a single rarity is mentioned. Instead, it's all about the birds that you're most likely to encounter. It's still the book that I recommend to beginning birders. Nothing else even competes.

— Joel Geier

My encounters with Harry were limited to Malheur NWR at headquarters, where I looked forward to spending time with him on his visits. One thought on a memorial for Harry could be the purchase of a bench for the front lawn of headquarters. Then we could sit next to him, because as has been said, "He's out there; we just don't see him."

– Rick Vetter

I fondly remember Harry's reports at Birders' Night, and the excitement of calling the RBA recording tape at Audubon for the latest information. He was a generous soul.

— Steve Jaggers

I first came into contact with Harry in 1974, when he responded to my report of a Lark Bunting. That began a long exchange of letters, each of Harry's being a response to some question of mine about birds. He was always gracious in his replies, and a wellspring of information. It was from him I learned such things as "the legs of Arctic Tern are shorter than those of Common Tern," and, "You can tell Black-legged Kittiwakes at a distance, because their body seems to go up and down more than the wings seem to move." He was an encouraging person, and I benefited from that encouragement in my early years of birding. He believed the reports of rare birds I sent in, when others, who didn't know me, showed skepticism. He once told me, "If the Records Committee rejects a report, it doesn't mean you didn't see the bird. It just means you didn't send in a report that contained enough detail to eliminate all doubt."

Harry was a gentleman. Never once did I know him to get involved with any of the sometimes-hostile controversies that occasionally sprang up on OBOL. He apparently treated everybody the same, regardless of their birding expertise or lack of it. And even though he had for many years been the dean of Oregon birding, widely known and respected, when age and health issues (and to some extent, modern technology) caught up with him, he bowed out of the Oregon birding scene with the same quiet graciousness he had exhibited during his years of prominence.

It really is unfortunate that the younger generation of birders missed out on Harry's friendship, his willingness to share his knowledge, and the dedication he showed to the Oregon birding community for so many years through his weekly rare bird report. Those among us who are now approaching the final years of our own birding experience were privileged to have known Harry Nehls as a mentor and a friend.

— Darrel Faxon

Harry was a kind and patient man. He did not speak ill of others or engage in controversy. He was a wealth of information about birds in Oregon.

He was the central person Oregon birders would call to report notable sightings. Each Thursday, Harry would gather the week's highlights and go to Audubon House to make a tape that would be available to anyone who called in to "get the scoop." Then we would head out on the weekend to try to find the birds reported.

Harry would collect all this information for each season, separating the eastern Oregon and western Oregon sightings, and put them in taxonomic order — without the aid of a word processor or spreadsheet. He would type these sightings up and send a copy to whoever was writing the Field Notes for that season/region for *Oregon Birds*. I drew heavily on Harry's notes during the time I was a Field Notes editor. These notes contained a lot of the substance of what appeared in print in the journal.

Harry preserved for us a lot of the history of what people saw during the years he served the Oregon birding community.

There will never be another like him.

— Paul Sullivan

I've known Harry since I started birding and went on many field trips he led. The one on May 18, 1980, to Sauvie Island was memorable, as we watched the Mt. St. Helens plume. Thank goodness the wind was blowing east.

No bird observation seemed to surprise Harry. Like the time I rescued a breeding-plumaged Common Loon lying in the middle of the highway west of Chickahominy Reservoir on Memorial Day weekend. I told Harry about it at Malheur headquarters and he said that happens, as they migrate at night and a wet road surface looks like water and once on land, they can't fly off. No big surprise to Harry. I managed to capture the loon, and it was very happy to be released into the reservoir. Harry was an encyclopedia of knowledge about Oregon birds. RIP Harry.

— Bing Wong

Harry once had an Osborne "transportable" computer when they were new and cutting edge. Later he used a Macintosh. He was an early adopter of this technology when many in his generation never did. This surely made his field notes contributions easier, as well as, later, his stint as Secretary of the Oregon Bird Records Committee. When he decided to step down as Secretary, the members of the Committee at that time changed the Rules of Operation of the Committee and declared him the first Secretary Emeritus. Emeritus — a term of honor for those having served their term with distinction and merit.

— Owen Schmidt

I am newer to the birding community and met Harry at my first Wild Arts Festival. My daughter and I lovingly referred to his book as the "Bill Harry Bob" book because we could never remember the authors' names when we were in a panicked state over a bird. That was my first, and still one of my best, field guides. It documents the very beginning of my birding adventure. I remember so many times Trista and I would be standing at the back window of our house, scrutinizing a bird on our shiny new feeder, when one of us would break from the ID spell we were under to holler out: "Get the Bill Harry Bob book!" It documents my first Song Sparrow, and nearly every page became dog-eared.

— Senia Newman

Harry was a Good Guy. We met way back when I went to work for OMSI in the 1960s. He was running the local Audubon stuff back in those days and welcomed me into it all like a lost Little Brother.

—Jim Anderson

Harry Nehls was central to birding in Oregon. He wrote and recorded the Portland Audubon weekly update that you could listen to on the phone. The technology itself (imagine, from today's standpoint, having to wait a week to find out about a rare bird!) tells you how long ago he had already become the go-to guy for birding information. Harry was famous for communicating his understanding of the breadth of possibilities in bird distribution, which he put into cryptic yet motivating remarks like: "They're out there, but nobody sees 'em." A great guy and a devoted and thorough birder.

— Pamela Johnston

I dare say Harry was one of the consummate birders in Oregon birding history. When I came to Oregon in 1977, he was the go-to person for information. He was the voice of the rare bird alert. His knowledge seemed to be encyclopedic and his quiet enthusiasm for birding was infectious. I was amazed that he was willing to spend a significant amount of time on the phone sharing his knowledge. Harry was always kind, patient, and willing to help. His humbleness impressed me. He was always a gentleman. Oregon birders benefited greatly from his presence, and his legacy should not be forgotten.

— John F. Gatchet

It is a shame that the birders newest to Oregon did not get a chance to meet Harry, an institution in the history of Oregon birding. It's difficult to imagine the amount of work and dedication it took to gather and disseminate the large amount of information going to him in pre-computer days. I'm sure he received many calls asking him what a bird could be based on the verbal description of the caller. I didn't realize how difficult that is until I started leading Portland Audubon's Mt. Tabor bird song walks and began getting similar questions.

Harry was also a trickster and I'm sure got a kick out of some of the pranks he pulled. One time I was scoping shorebirds on mudflats at low tide at Sturgeon Lake on Sauvie Island. I had been there a while when he came walking out. We chatted for a while and then he said, "Hey look, there's an arrowhead!" I looked down at my feet and sure enough, one was there. I couldn't understand how I'd missed it. I later told the story to Jeff Gilligan, and he laughed and told me that was one of Harry's old tricks: dropping an arrowhead from his pocket onto the ground next to someone. Yup, he got me good. Harry was an all-around nice guy, always willing to help in any way he could to advance Oregon birding. I can still see him in his tan windbreaker and khaki pants, and I bet you can still reach him at 233-3976.

— Gerard Lillie

I knew Harry Nehls since I was about 12, which was 60 years ago. A friend in my neighborhood in Portland (Ron Klein) and I had become interested in birding, and we and a couple of other friends made a few trips through Macleay Park to the Pittock Sanctuary at Portland Audubon. There we got to know the few active birders of the time and mooched rides on some of the field trips, which Harry frequently led. After a time, we got invited to join him on other trips as well, such as to the coast or central Oregon.

Harry became interested in birds by noticing gulls at the Benson High School football field, went to the library to determine what species he was seeing, and eventually made his way to Portland Audubon, where he started going on field trips and learning from the older birders of the time, such as Leo Simon and Theo Moulton. Birding as a beginner was much more difficult at the time. Birding identification books were usually poorly illustrated, and often inaccurate. When Harry started birding, Peterson's 1941 *A Field Guide to Western Birds* was the standard reference, and was useless for the more difficult-to-identify species. This caused Harry to pore over the written descriptions in sources like Gabrielson and Jewett's *Birds of Oregon* and A.C. Bent's series, *Life Histories of North American Birds*.

I recall a story of then-teenage Harry attending a Portland Audubon meeting and reporting that he had seen an American Redstart on Sauvie Island. His sighting was gruffly received by Stan Jewett, whose opinion would not have been questioned, and he was told that such a rarity needed to be collected.

Soon after I met Harry, he took over writing the field notes in *The Warbler*, and also began co-authoring the regional summaries in *Audubon Field Notes* (later *American Birds*) with John Crowell. When a board member suggested that Portland Audubon sponsor a telephone hotline for weekly bird information, Harry volunteered, proceeding to record a summary every week and drive to Audubon to put it on the call-in phone. I was told that people called night and day to hear his birding news.

Working with others (Ken Batchelder and John Crowell), Harry's book *Familiar Birds of the Northwest* was a popular introduction to the common birds of the region, and used the original R. Bruce Horsfall paintings that ringed the old meeting room of Portland Audubon as illustrations. The profits exceeded expectations, and enabled Portland Audubon to do things that far outstripped the modest membership dues from its several hundred members.

As the first coordinator for Breeding Bird Surveys in Oregon, Harry often did the remote routes himself when there was no one else to run them. He was a regular on several Christmas Bird Counts — Portland, Tillamook, and Sauvie Island particularly. He chaired the Oregon Bird Records Committee for many years. And for years, each Portland Audubon Birders' Night would begin with Owen Schmidt asking Harry, "What's the rarest bird in Oregon right now?" Harry would then give a summary, glancing down occasionally at his notes.

He was always a jovial guy, and willing to take on whatever bird-related function was needed. Harry will long be remembered for his long service to Oregon birding.

— Jeff Gilligan

Shortly after moving to Salem, Oregon, from Ohio, I signed up for a Salem Audubon Society field trip to the Oregon Coast. The weather was pretty miserable that day, and only one other woman showed up. The trip leader was a very nice man from the Portland Audubon chapter who hardly said anything during the drive to and from the Coast. But he was very knowledgeable and generously shared information about birds as he took us on our tour of coastal birding hotspots. I learned his name was Harry Nehls, but I had no idea he was a well-known bird expert until I later saw his name on several books. So I can proudly say that I had my first birding trip in Oregon with Harry!

—Claire Puchy

I was one of Harry's acolytes on my periodic visits back to Oregon during my college days. He would generously welcome me to accompany him to the Sisters area, Green Ridge, Tillamook, and elsewhere. This greatly opened up my horizons on Oregon, as well as general birding — the significance of habitat, the importance of patience, the virtues of experience, the value of skill.

Perhaps my earliest encounter with this gentle man was my eager teenaged report of "maybe 1,000" shearwaters off Long Beach Peninsula, following a family trip. He drolly replied: "They were Sooty Shearwaters, and you probably saw 10,000 or more." My most memorable outing with him was also in southwest Washington, hiking way out to Leadbetter Point in fall 1972, when we saw well over a thousand Black-bellied Plovers, many still in breeding plumage — an impressive spectacle.

— Tom Love

Those of us who are old have many Harry B. Nehls stories. Sharing them is the last best way to not only celebrate and remember him, but to place those memories into a collective archive for those who did not have the opportunity to spend time with him.

Like many others, I first met Harry at Malheur in the early 1970s, chasing a Tennessee Warbler at headquarters, if I am remembering correctly. We spent a lot of time at the South Jetty of the Columbia River. Wednesdays during shorebird season, he'd be there and I'd be there. The only photo I have of Harry is with a Bristle-thighed Curlew.

But the story I want to tell is of Harry the diplomat. I've been birding for over 50 years. I know a lot of really good birders, many of whom have had a profound influence on me as a field observer, birder, and scientist, but Harry taught me something really important about people, which I still try to remember.

There was a lady who lived up the block who was dying of a lung disorder. She had a feeder on her back porch, and I got a phone call about a bird she described as beautiful — black and orange with white in the wings. I suggested Black-headed Grosbeak. She said: "No, its beak wasn't gross." She had an artist friend draw a picture from her description. I doubt I could have drawn a better picture of a Black-headed Grosbeak. So, she called in an expert. Harry Nehls. The voice of Portland Audubon. She told me that Harry told her that it was an Australian woodswallow! When I asked him about it later, he quietly explained that there was no point in arguing. He had not actually told her it was a woodswallow. He'd just suggested it. She needed it to be something rare and special. It did not go onto the Rare Bird Alert; it was between him, that lady, and me.

I have no doubt Harry got a lot of phone calls like that, from folks who needed something more than an identification — and I can't imagine anyone more suited to the task than Harry. To say that I will miss him is an understatement.

— Mike Patterson

Harry was the Dean of Oregon Birding. I first met him leading a field trip on Bayocean Spit in the 1970s. He was pointing out Baird's Sandpipers amid the magnificent shorebird concentrations that you could find there in those days. We stayed in touch for many decades, I called him about many birds, and he was always as gracious as anyone can be. He would say about a rare or unusual bird I would report: "They are out there, people just don't see 'em". Maybe more importantly, he always left me feeling like he believed whatever I'd told him. I am saddened by his passing.

— Roy Gerig

I first met Harry at the Portland Audubon Birders' Nights when I was in medical school at OHSU in the 1980s. Harry liked to emphasize identification points as bird slides were being discussed. Sometimes others would disagree with Harry about something, but Harry was always gracious and never seemed to put people down. His leadership at Birders' Night continued until shortly before the COVID-19 pandemic. We are all in debt to Harry for his service as the secretary of the OBRC for many years. This was a Herculean task and he performed it well. He also taught bird identification classes at Portland Audubon.

I have many fond memories of birding with Harry. One that stands out was in 1991 after a Least Flycatcher had been reported at Sauvie Island. Harry's hearing had been damaged during his time in the U.S. Army, so his hearing wasn't the best. Harry was having difficulty finding the bird, but I heard the familiar "che-bek" call, was able to get him on the bird, and got to enjoy it with him.

Harry and I enjoyed talking about birds in Oregon. On September 4, 1990, I called him and asked if any rare birds had been reported. He said that a Great Knot had just been found in Bandon! I was able to drive down later that day and see it. Another great memory of birding with Harry was in 1994 when Craig Miller, Harry, and I found a Gray-cheeked Thrush together at Malheur NWR headquarters.

Like others, I still have his phone number imbedded in my memory.

— Tim Janzen

I have many great memories of Harry as a teacher, field-trip leader, and CBC arbiter over the past decades: My first field trip to Willapa Bay, gull classes, numerous Christmas Bird Counts, and more. Just one example of Harry's dry sense of humor: On one Portland CBC, our team spotted a Long-tailed Duck at Oswego Lake. Claire Puchy, John Hammerstad, and I wrote the description. I called the Rare Bird Alert. Got to Audubon House for the Count-in. Harry met me at the door and said, "So you got a Long-tailed Duck...." As Leader/Compiler of CBC Area 3, I said, "Yes, and I'm ready to defend it!" Harry said, "You won't have to do that — not much else looks like it!"

— Lynn Herring

Harry Nehls was the hub of Oregon Field Ornithologists. He was the person I'd send rare bird reports to, and occasionally call by landline to report something that might be of interest to others. And he was the person who corresponded with you by mail regarding ultra-rare sightings. He always listened, and that's why he knew everything in the state — because he was the hub, the go-to person. As secretary of the Oregon Birds Records Committee, he archived all the records. We owe a great deal to Harry — for his work, his enthusiasm, for being a great ambassador for birding, for his laugh and humor, and for his love of birding.

— Kevin Spencer

Harry. A guy I will never forget. As the long-time Secretary of the OBRC, he was always super-nice when I corresponded with him. Even when my records were not accepted, he made me feel OK about it and encouraged me to keep sending in reports. He was the go-to person for everything rare and had a voluminous knowledge of Oregon birds.

I was involved with Cape Arago Audubon on the south coast. We have a small chapter and thus were always looking for new speakers. Out of desperation I contacted Harry one year thinking that Portland was really too far to expect him to come down to speak at one of our mid-week meetings. He said "Sure," though, and asked when and what presentation would we like — Raptors? Sparrows? Gulls? I chose shorebirds and he delighted a full house.

My fondest memories, still quite vivid, were hanging with him at Malheur headquarters on Memorial Day weekend on those awesome mornings with limitless possibilities. I have always been an early riser and was usually the first birder on site. I would always go to the southeast corner and sit on the fence there, trying to stay warm, where the first rays of morning sun would defrost us early birders. Harry would often join me as one of the first arrivals. We would talk and visit while watching the first birds fly out from the sage and salt brush there. Many people would stop and say hello, as he knew all the regular birders and would introduce me, and often help me with a name I could not recall. I remember him telling me numerous times that if I just sat still there, the birds would all eventually come to me. I was much too hyper to sit still long, though, and would jump when there was a report of something rare elsewhere at headquarters. I would eventually make it back to the corner, and Harry would ask if I had seen whatever "good" bird folks were chasing. More than once I would say no, not yet, and he would answer: "It was just here!"

Happy Trails, Harry — you will live forever in my memory.

— Tim Rodenkirk

Like many other "old-timers," I had many wonderful birding experiences with Harry. I first met him in 1975 when I had a flock of Bohemian Waxwings outside my apartment. I called the number still etched in my brain, and he came out to check them out. Shortly thereafter, we started going on regular birding trips around western Oregon since I had a flexible schedule and Harry liked mentoring eager young birders. I probably saw one-third of my first sightings of Oregon birds with Harry. Most memorable was a trip to the South Jetty of the Columbia River on Memorial Day 1976, where we joined Jeff Gilligan and Mark Smith and saw Oregon's first Least Tern, along with Common, Black, and Arctic; all three jaegers, Leach's and Fork-tailed Storm-Petrels, and Sooty, Pink-footed, and Manx Shearwaters. That is still one of my best birding memories ever.

Harry was a classy guy. I never heard him criticize anyone and he was a friend to all. I enjoyed his subtle sense of humor and lived for some of his comments on the rare bird alert like "rare birds continue to be uncommon." One of his favorite tricks was, on long trips coming back from the coast, just when one of us would start to drift off to sleep he'd loudly proclaim, "Black Swift!"

It was always a joy to bird with Harry, and I learned an incredible amount on my trips with him. It is really a shame that many of today's younger birders never experienced Harry. He was one of a kind!

— Tom Crabtree

Harry was the BBS coordinator the entire time my husband and I ran a route. Harry always answered my many newbie questions thoroughly and politely — no question was too dumb for his kind patience. He was a great ambassador for Oregon birds and the Oregon birding community, and a tireless champion for Breeding Bird Surveys.

— Linda Fink

Harry Nehls served 27 years as secretary of the Oregon Bird Records Committee. This photo from the 2008 meeting is one of many such annual photos. Upon his retirement in 2016, the OBRC presented him a gift and wrote:
"None of us can possibly thank you enough for everything you've done for the OBRC and for birders and birding in Oregon over the years. You've mentored and educated so many people and have played such a key role in shaping the large and vibrant community we enjoy today. This legacy will always be honored, and just seems to keep on growing." *Photo courtesy of Owen Schmidt.*

In addition to being a big contributor to the Oregon bird scene and a book author, Harry was a former board member and a longtime volunteer at Portland Audubon. He received a lifetime achievement award from Audubon last year: www.audubonportland.org/blog/harry-nehls-a-keystone-member-of-our-flock.

RIP Harry.

— Joe Liebezeit

In August 2022, birders gathered at Portland Audubon for a special memorial Birders' Night event to honor Harry Nehls. *Photo by Brodie Cass Talbott.*

(Continued from Page 118)

and coin collector, loved to go fishing, and (as some of us experienced firsthand) had a zeal for finding arrowheads that rivaled his enthusiasm for finding rare birds. Harry passed along his interest in outdoor activities to his nephew, who frequently joined him to search for Native American artifacts. Harry also loved dogs and had several as pets over the years. At least one of them attended an OBRC meeting or two.

Back in 2007, I was privileged to be involved in presenting Harry with the Lifetime Service Award from Oregon Field Ornithologists (now Oregon Birding Association; see *Oregon Birds* 33(1): 1-3 (Spring 2007)).

In presenting the award, I opened with these words:
Too often in life we fail to fully appreciate and recognize a person's contributions while they are still living. The OFO [now OBA] Lifetime Service Award was created to honor in life those persons who truly enrich the Oregon birding community in an exceptional way. This award will not be presented annually. Rather it will be reserved for those rare individuals who make a lasting impact on us through their long-term service, leadership, teaching, and writings. The person we are honoring tonight is the very embodiment of these ideals and the logical first recipient of this award.

To have witnessed Harry Nehls's efforts and all that he gave of himself to our community over many decades has been both a privilege and personally inspiring. His impact upon our community and his contributions to our lore are without equal.

Many tributes flowed in as news circulated that Harry had passed, and there was one oft-repeated theme. Despite his many accomplishments and lofty status in the Oregon birding community, Harry was always willing to pass forward what he knew with grace and humility.

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On the Back Cover
OBA Photo Contest Winner. Caspian Terns at Sunset Beach. *Photo by Philip Kline.*

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