



The CHATTER September 2021

September Birders' Night

Birders' Night will be back on **September 23 at 7 PM via Zoom** - just click here=> [What's that Little Brown Bird?](#)

SPARROWS OF CENTRAL OREGON - Join Chuck Gates as he navigates the murky waters of Central Oregon Sparrow Identification. This slide show will feature local species only and will cover some juvenile plumages, seasonal differences and key field marks of our common sparrows. After a discussion about field marks, Chuck will talk about a few rarities that occasionally visit us and end the talk showing some sparrow look-a-likes that often cause confusion.

Chuck Gates is a retired teacher and local birder. He has been on the Board of Directors for the East Cascades Audubon Society and the Oregon Birding Association. He is the regional Field Notes Editor for Oregon Birds Magazine and the Field Notes Editor for the Calliope. He is the creator of the online [Birding Oregon Site Guide](#) and Co-creator of [the Central Oregon Bird Nests, Eggs, and Young Website](#). He has been the ECAS Project Coordinator for the Green Ridge Hawkwatch, Gray Flycatcher Nesting Survey and helped establish the Winter Raptor Surveys. He was the State Coordinator for the North American Migration Count and manages the official bird checklists for all 36 of Oregon's counties.

October Birders' Night will feature Jeff Fleischer, the originator and Project Manager of the Winter Raptor Survey. This will be on October 21st via Zoom.

Local Birding Opportunities

Although the resurgence of Covid continues to curtail any ECAS-sponsored activities, there are still some local opportunities to join in birding.

Sunriver Bird Walks

Tom Lawler, ECAS Board President, leads weekly bird walks in the Sunriver area. You can sign up in advance and participate for a small fee. Check out the schedule at <https://snco.org/> on the Events page.

Crooked River Wetlands Bird Walks

Come join us as the Crooked River Wetlands Volunteers and the Prineville Bird Club take you on our inaugural bird walk at the Wetlands. We will meet next Saturday (Sept 4) at 7:45AM and will walk out to the ponds that have water. We should be back in the parking lot by 10:00ish. Shorebirds will be our main target but we'll be on the lookout for all things birdy. Cindy Zalunardo and I, Chuck Gates, will be your guides. I will be driving the golf cart so feel free to join me if you have mobility problems. Please drop me an [email](#) if you plan to attend. I just want to have an idea of how many will be present. The next walk is scheduled for September 18th. Until further notice, masks will be required at these walks. There will be some loaner binoculars and a golf cart available for those with mobility issues. For a complete schedule go to [Crooked River Wetlands Walks](#).

Vaux Swift Counts

Project co-coordinator Mary Ann Kruse reports that Southern migration numbers continue to increase at the Bend Boys & Girls Club chimney in downtown Bend. On the Monday through Thursday (23-26 August) counts were 204, 292, 530, 610. The north parking lot is easier on one's neck for viewing. Arrive 20 minutes or more prior to Bend sunset time. Counting will continue until numbers are at virtually zero.

Redmond Wetlands Complex Planning

In a recent COBOL (Central Oregon Borders Online) post, Chuck Gates detailed how to escape the Redmond Sewer Ponds area if locked in. This is a popular birding site in Northern Deschutes County. Like other municipalities in Central Oregon, the City of Redmond is experiencing dramatic population growth resulting in the need for increased sewage treatment capacity. Luckily, the City owns 610 acres of land surrounding the current sewage treatment ponds, hayfields, and the solid waste processing plant. These solids are used as fertilizer on the ag fields, which are irrigated by treated water.

To meet the need for this increased treatment capacity, the City has hired the same engineering firm that designed the Crooked River Wetlands complex and is moving forward to develop a similar approach for Redmond sewage treatment. The current solid waste treatment plant

would be moved to this city property accessed off of Northwest Way. A series of ponds will be constructed to treat the “clean” water produced by this plant including the current large pond and adjacent land. The ag fields would remain for hay production.

Similar to the Crooked River Wetlands Complex, the Redmond ponds will be designed for appropriate wildlife habitat including birds. The complex plan includes parking and paths allowing public access.

As a first request for public input, the City invited a group of local birders to meet with City Wastewater managers and planning engineers. Chuck Gates was the primary contact person since he has had involvement with the Crooked River Complex since its outset. Also invited were Tom Crabtree who has historic experience with the Bend Sewage treatment process including Hatfield Lake. Others were more local Redmond birders who live within proximity of the Redmond ponds or have been involved with East Cascade Audubon Society.

Chuck developed a list of issues to consider in the planning, particularly for public access and birding habitat and shared these with the City. An informative and positive discussion was had with promised further inclusion as the planning process goes forward. Additional forums will be held with neighborhoods and Redmond residents. When these public meetings and local forums occur it might be beneficial for any local birders to attend and voice support for this project. It is a win-win for the City of Redmond, local birders, birds, and recreation. Obviously this project will take several years, but this is an early alert to the big changes coming to the Redmond sewage treatment property.



GOOD BIRDING!