

THE CALLIOPE

EAST CASCADES AUDUBON SOCIETY
QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2019 - 2020



President's Report

By Tom Lawler

Another year has come and gone. They seem to go by faster and faster as we age and every year blends with all the others. So what happened with ECAS in 2019? Some short reminders!

First the Annual Event location and format were changed. Harry Fuller gave a captivating talk on Great Gray Owls. **Stu Garrett**, our **resident expert on Greater Sage Grouse**, gave a nice review of what is going on with GSG in our area. The Board once again provided treats and the food truck worked well. We had the Year-in-Review and door prizes. The Board was pleased with the Pine Forest Grange venue and the feedback from attendees was positive. It will likely be used for future Annual Events.

Stu Garrett



Liz Thill



Ken Hashagen



Our **Volunteer of the Year** was **Liz Thill**. Liz, who is on the Membership Committee, played a big part in implementing MemberPlanet. Our **Conservationist of the Year** was **Ken Hashagen** for his work banding Bluebirds (and some other species). The Board sincerely appreciate what these two volunteers have done for birds and ECAS. I also want to mention that Sue Bertsch was also honored for the work she has done organizing Birders' Night. Sue is leaving this position and the Board and I wish her well and thank her for a job well done.

We also had a very successful Dean Hale Woodpecker Festival. This event continues to draw birders from across the country and the world! A small but dedicated committee organizes this each year along with many volunteers that scout and lead the festival's trips. This is the major fundraiser for ECAS. Thank you!

At year's end I want to give a big THANK YOU to all of the volunteers that make this organization function. Thank you to ECAS project leaders and their teams, the various committees that keep this organization functioning, the Field Trip Coordinator and field trip leaders, and Wednesday Birder's organizers. Birders' Night would not be possible without the help from many people. A committee that many members may not be aware of is the Grant Committee. They process grant requests for a number of organizations to improve bird habitat, education and outdoor experiences. Jeff Fleisher puts in endless hours compiling results from the ECAS sponsored raptor surveys. There are many other individuals that make everything work smoothly. We as members have a lot of people to thank for making this organization work. Let them know next time you see one of them!

Lastly I really appreciate those who serve on the Board. It has become increasingly difficult to fill Board positions. We are back to being down two Board members. Would you be interested in serving? It does not involve a lot of time commitment on your part. Please contact me if you are interested in becoming a Board member, or for that matter, on any ECAS issue, at tjlawler@crestviewcable.com

Have a happy and productive 2020 no matter what you enjoy doing but especially when birding.



Photos by Diana Roberts

Thanks to you, too, Tom!

BIRDER'S NIGHTS

By Sue Bertsch

All ECAS members, friends, and supporters are welcome to attend the third Thursday of the month. We start the evening at 6:30 pm with a social half hour followed by announcements and then the presentation. The meeting is held at the Environmental Center, 16 NW Kansas Ave. in Bend. Refreshments will be provided by Nancy Merrick and beverages donated by Strictly Organic Coffee.

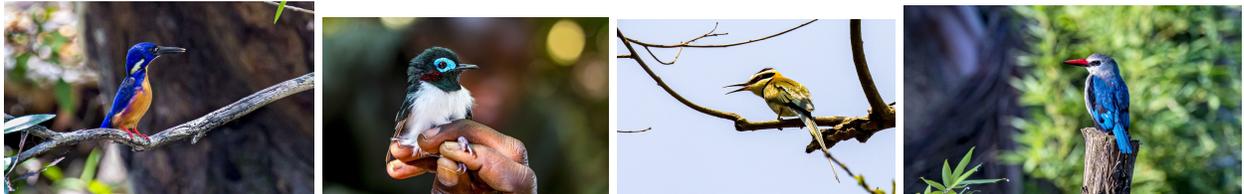
January 16 Birds as an Indicator of Environmental Quality Speaker: David A. Rein

Four long term scientific studies from around the world using birds to help indicate the quality of the natural environment will be presented and illustrated with bird photography: Uganda's Budongo Forest Reserve, the Pyrenees Natural Forest in Andorra, the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge in Texas, and Australia's Queensland Rainforest.

Temporary bird capture and documentation is being used to help determine forest and natural vegetation health conditions during a changing climate. These deep studies, many over two

decades, are being examined and relied on to provide information and possibly predict what animal and bird species are going to be the most affected by a warming climate.

Who are these diversified bird species from around the world that may be the first to feel changes in their worlds? Birds are always sampling with the diets of insects available to them. What birds are adapting and which are currently finding it difficult to thrive? Close-ups of world birds will highlight the research objectives and findings from the painstaking and remarkable work being accomplished.



Living in Bend, Oregon, since 1975, Dave Rein has journeyed the globe seeking to photograph wildlife naturally in wilderness situations. He has participated in fifteen wildlife research expeditions with Earthwatch to conserve wildlife all over the world. His photographs have been published in many magazines and calendars including Audubon, National Wildlife and Outdoor Photographer.

February 20: Judy Meredith and Tom Crabtree will present eBird 101

March 19: Friends of Malheur with Janelle Wicks and Dan Streiffert

Dan's portion: Birding the vast expanse of Harney County's 10,000+ sq. miles can be daunting as it is thrilling. Which birds are where? and when? Dan Streiffert has been birding and photographing in Harney County for 12+ years. This presentation showcases his approach to taking advantage of particular birding 'routes' that cover the diverse landscape and discovers the array of birds and other wildlife available. Dan will share tips and tricks for seeing particular species at different times of the day or throughout the year.

Janelle's portion: The Friends of Malheur National Wildlife Refuge just celebrated 20 years of promoting conservation and appreciation of the cultural and natural resources on Malheur. Executive Director, Janelle Wicks, will share details on the stewardship endeavours of this member and volunteer supported organization.

April 16: Ken Hashagen, Birding New Zealand

August 20: Jim Anderson, Bird Banding

Helping Birds Weather the Winter

By Elise Wolf, Native Bird Care, avian rescue

Birds bring such enjoyment and pleasure to us all that it is natural for us to want to invite them to our yards. With winter weather we also perhaps desire to help them in some way. To that end, let me offer some suggestions on how we all can make it easier for our wild bird neighbors to survive the harsh periods.

Knowing a bit about birds, their anatomy and behaviors, and then thinking about them with that knowledge, we can do much to prevent harm and help birds. So, let's talk about how a bird survives cold. Of course birds can withstand the nights by snuggling up to other birds, getting into a cavity, or having contact with a warmer object, like a tree trunk. And then the really tough ones, ride it out simply fluffed up on their own.

Birds stay warm by increasing their body heat through shivering (muscle contractions) and fluffing up their feathers to contain pockets of warm air. Fluffy down and feathers keep you warm; wet, stuck together feathers lose heat (a wet down sleeping bags won't retain heat either). Oily feathers stick together and can no longer retain heat. Oiled birds are cold; in fact hypothermia, and the subsequent starvation it results in, is one reason oiled birds die.

As caring humans we can try to make our yards and feeders safe for birds, and then offer things that help them survive. Here's **10 Tips** for caring for your winter visitors.

Suet:

If we had to abandon all foods except one in the winter, suet would be the one we'd keep. While birds do not use fat as an insulating, subcutaneous layer as mammals do, they do require it for energy. Fat accumulates in pockets around their bodies and they use it to get to their far-away places, to survive times of food shortages, and to heat themselves internally.

So suet is one of those foods that is good for birds. But here is the caution – it can also be really, really bad for birds. I mean deadly. Because suet is fat, it is a substance that can harm birds' feathers just like oils (think oil spills). In fact, bird rehabbers have been called upon to clean up vegetable oil spills that have oiled birds. PAWS in Seattle responded to a veggie oiling of ducks and geese in Seattle in 2015. Oil spills are oil spills, and what we do not want to do is create the effect of an oil spill for our birds with our suet. *Which we can prevent pretty easily, read on.*

Suet can in fact get on birds' feathers. Those that come into care with suet on them must be washed in the same manner as a petroleum-oiled bird. It takes a lot of get it off too. Washing it off completely takes dish soap and a couple of washes. Birds' saliva simply lacks the solvent elements that soaps do, so the suet stays. However, we can feed suet safely, I will get to that in just a second.



So how does the suet get on a bird? Say a bird lands on the yummy suet wreath we've generously put out with all good intentions. Those feet now have suet on them. In super cold weather – if it's true suet – it will crumble and mainly fall off. But let's say it's a sunny day, and the wreath is just a bit soft. What do birds do with their feet to keep their feathering clean? Preen. That's right, they take their feet and scratch their heads with them. If they've landed in soft suet, that fat is now in their head feathering. Birds also preen their heads by rubbing them on their backs. So now our suet has made its way onto the bird's body, etc.

But it's cold out and the suet surely cannot get soft and spread! Actually any fat will soften, even suet. This is why it is absolutely imperative to feed *true suet*. Suet is by nature hard and crumbly, nearly dry. It comes from the groin of a cow (lard is the same thing but from a pig, and not as good for birds). Melting point is the key. Suet has a melting point of over 95 degrees (not smoke point, that is different). Vegetable oils melt at +/- 75 degrees. Peanut butter, 104 degrees, thus the no-melt suet always has peanut butter for this reason. What is not suet: bacon grease, animal fat, any liquid oils, vegetable oils or Crisco, etc. You want a hard fat that will not melt at the first sign of sun and a warmer day = suet. You want it to crumble and fall off if the bird gets it on themselves.

Tip 1: Feed real suet. Never let a butcher tell you that the leftover fat he'd love to get rid of works as suet. It does not. Neither do vegetable fats or oils. Vegetable fats are not in fact healthier for birds; most suet eaters are insect eaters, they're little carnivores. If a suet has to be held together with oats, cornmeal, or wheat flour, then it's not really suet. Yes, there are a lot of fakes out there. Test 1: If you can squeeze your suet cake and it smooches, choose another. Test 2: how many unnecessary ingredients are in it (corn, wheat, and oats are fillers not food)? Suet should be suet, some seeds or nuts, some peanut butter. If you make it yourself that's fine (warm to make it pliable, suet will be already rendered or it's not suet). (Yes, a tiny bit of vegetable oil is likely ok if the suet turns out super dry). Read ingredients. (My fav, if you wish, is Peanut Delight No Melt, not cheap, lasts a long time, though.)

Tip 2: Protect birds from suet. Always feed suet in a cage or container that keeps them from landing directly onto the suet. This means no netting, no spreading suet or peanut butter in trees, no open wreaths (gelatin seed/nut wreaths are great), no cakes left out open. If a bird can land on it, they are getting oiled (see feet above). The squirrel-proof cages are wonderful as the little birds can hop right in, and the big ones hang upside down. Keep the feeders clean! Wash in hot water at least every week or two if you feed a lot. Log feeders are good, if they have a perch and are hung vertically.





Bird Boxes:

Ever wonder why the nuthatches start pounding on our houses in the fall, well they want in! Our homes are one big, warm, enticing cavity. Getting a little hole in that would be awesome! Penguins aren't the only birds to huddle together and share heat; birds are known to crowd into bird boxes and cavities, and even loose bark and some will tunnel into snow.

Tip 3: Put up bird boxes in winter. Put several up. Clean out the ones you have in early fall (so birds are not getting other birds' mites and parasites). Put a little Aspen bark (pet store) in there for them to snuggle into. Place around the yard or property, or even on the house where they are tap-tap-tapping. However, *remember to take many down*. Too many bird boxes can lead to other serious issues as well (competition, food scarcity, overproduction for the female).

Water:

Dehydration can lead to hypothermia. Remember those warnings to take water with you while skiing or snowshoeing? No different for birds – except winter is a hard time to find water. Warm water even harder. Birds will drink melted snow or rain drops off of plants and trees. But a nice bird bath is so much better. (Wild Birds Unlimited has really nice heated ones!)

Yes, birds love to bathe in the winter. Dirty birds are not warm. A nice shallow bird bath, or putting a flat rock in the one you have works for that. Leave about 1-2 inches of water as that is ideal for bird bathing, and grade it so one end is slightly deeper for bigger birds. Giving your birds a bath on a sunny day will give you some happy, clean birds.

Tip 4: Give them water. No bird bath? Easy. A large plant tray (plastic not clay) can be used instead. Just put on a table or a couple of sawhorses. Keep thawed and warm with an inexpensive bath heater. (The flat aluminum ones work. Wrap the plug in a plastic bag, and place a rubberband around).

Tip 5: Clean, clean, clean that water! Did you know algae produces oil? And an algae-ridden bath can both make your birds sick and ruin their waterproofing. Plus, water gets biofilm superfast (that slimy feeling), and that is bacteria. So, keep the bird bath clean. And poopy...oh yuck. More clean water = more birds.

Food:

Excellent, in-shape plumage, a warm place to sleep, a hot shower and a drink, now it's breakfast time at the ECAS member's bird B&B! You can find lots of info on foods, so I will not take much time on this. However, if you love feeding sunflower seeds shelled, now's a good time. They will not go rancid as quickly (1 month for rancidity in summer heat), and they can eat all they want. Thistle for the little finches. Millet for the ground feeders like doves. Nuts for the jays if you want that. Sunflower with shells for most others. Grosbeaks really go for the safflower, so a nice seed mix is good. Some can get the fruit eaters down with oranges and grapes, good luck.

Tip 6: Ground feeders. I generally will shovel under the feeders and near and around some bushes and put millet and ground feeder foods (fine cracked corn is actually a good winter food for doves). Putting a large piece of plywood out too can keep some feed on the top of the snow. These tricks will help save you money on ground foods and help birds stay out of deep snow.

Hummers:

We could do a whole article just on these squirts. But here's what's most important: Hummingbirds need their solutions to be warmer than simply thawed (50 degrees at least). Imagine being outside on a super cold day and the only thing you had was ice water or frozen smoothies? Birrr. Hummers body temps can easily be brought down by cold solutions, and they simply cannot get it back sometimes. Never pick up a fallen hummer and place back on a feeder – put in a box and call us. Do not even wait to see if she/he wakes up. Just call, we'll get them cared for. Hummer feeders must be cleaned frequently, they are highly susceptible to bacteria. Their tongues can swell from infection and they cannot eat (they will leave their tongue out). They die quickly, so act quickly.

Tip 7: Explore warming options - *heat the entire feeder*, not just keep it thawed. There are now heated hummer feeders online. Heat lamps: *not* the cheap, red glass ones (fire danger for you, disrupts birds' circadian rhythms for them) – white ceramic work great (reptile stores). Electric cup heaters, pet heaters, parrot cage heaters – can all go under a feeder (putting a shelf up to hold them works great. Wrapping feeder in Christmas lights, careful they cannot burn their feet! Anyhoo... I will post some ideas again on this, but the Oregon Birders Facebook page is a good source.

Tip 8: Feed only 4:1 solution. Never change the solution to something other than 4:1 water to sugar, and only use white sugar. Their livers and kidneys can be damaged, and also a thicker solution may not make it up their tongue (which is not a straw, more another time). Also, no syrups, no raw sugar, no honey, no coloring. Just that good ol' white sugar (finally a use for it).

Disease:

Winter birds crowd the feeders at high numbers. Some of these birds – like Pine Siskins – are particularly vulnerable to disease or infections that others can withstand. One of these is salmonella. Hundreds of Siskins can be taken out with this bacteria. But there are other common infectious agents: aspergillosis, trichomoniasis, mites like scaly leg mites, and avian pox. If there was one issue that gets the most attention in debates on whether feeding is good or bad, it is disease. Feeding invites unnatural congregations and keeps the birds in locations longer than they would stay normally. This invites disease.

Tip 9: Clean, clean, clean feeders. At least every 2 weeks generally. Anytime you see sick or sitting birds that do not try to keep up with the flock, you likely have an issue. If a bird actually falls off the perch and lands in the snow, do not simply warm up and return outside. This is a sick bird. Keeping sick birds away from feeders is important to stop disease spread. So bring them to rescue. (Sick Sickens? Take all feeders down, bleach, wash, rinse, wait a week).

(Finally) Downed birds:

Birds who have hit a window especially will not have the ability to stay warm -shock causes hypothermia. One cannot tell if a bird is hypothermic. Every bird will fight to fly away from us as that is their survival instinct. *Many can fly and still be injured, only to perish later.* There is a Western Tanager female in the Native Bird Care Facebook feed. Scroll down and look at her. She has a huge hematoma and infection filled swelling on the top of her head, it actually pushed her eyeball down into her cheek it was so large. That bird could fly quite well! Head injuries and the ability to fly go hand-in-hand with window stricken birds. (Yes, she recovered with medical treatment and time!). So consult us before releasing, its free!

Tip 10: Always pick up and rescue downed birds. If you find waterbirds along roadways, parking lots, or your driveway. Please bring to rescue. Virtually all waterbirds out of water are hypothermic, but also usually sick or injured. Never simply place a waterbird back on water, they left for a reason and injury from landing on pavement is unseen (they *always* 'look ok'). And please take advantage of shock and grab a bird that is in the snow or hit a window. Any bird that sits all day at the feeder is *not ok*. They are either: sick, hypothermic, or injured. Put in a box, and call me. Do not just thaw them out and release.

I know there is a lot of information on the internet. However, in terms of sound advice regarding bird feeding, much of it is simply not well-thought out, and in some cases actually harmful for our birds. There is so much bad advice on the internet it is painful for me to read most of it. And unfortunately, some sites that should be wholly dependable, mistakenly preference creativity rather than wisdom in some of their recommendations.

Anytime you hear advice or ideas on bird care or feeding, put the ol' thinking cap on and ponder 'What could go wrong?'. If we think about birds from the perspective of their anatomy, their behaviors, their needs – and not the human – we can often weed through the bad advice. Keep feeding the birds, enjoying them, and ...helping them. Learn your birds, not just what they look like, but who they are. Birds are some of the most fascinating, extraordinary creations this planet has ever born.

Want more tips? Visit us at www.nativebirdcare.org or [Native Bird Care of Sisters on Facebook](#). (I just posted a gelatin wreath recipe, you if want a fun project!) Happy New Year!

Elise will be presenting at the High Desert Museum's Natural History Pub Monday January 6th. Extraordinary Birds: Up Close & Personal

Join Elise Wolf, founder of Native Bird Care avian rescue in Sisters, for a unique multimedia presentation. Come see and hear about a few of the exceptional species Wolf has cared for over the past 10 years. Get a peek into the lives of these extraordinary birds as Wolf shares stories, photos and videos of their care and release. Why is rescue and rehabilitation so important, and how can we enjoy and support native birds?

For all Natural History Pub events, doors open at 5:30 pm and the program begins at 7 pm. Food and beverage sales in Father Luke's Room help support this popular lecture series. Elise's talk will be held at McMenamins Old St. Francis School, 700 NW Bond St., Bend. This is a FREE event, but seating is limited and an RSVP is required through the Museum's website.

<https://13443.blackbaudhosting.com/13443/tickets?tab=2&txobjid=0bfc402d-6f94-40b2-9420-71b876b2e52e>

Saga of the Sage Grouse

by Gordon Wetzel

Being new to Oregon and the high desert region I was not familiar with sage grouse other than through reading articles in magazines. On my first trip to the High Desert Museum I was intrigued by the display on sage grouse and made it my goal to see a lek in action. Unfortunately, I missed Judy Meredith's Wednesday Birders trip to Millican. Then I found that Stu Garrett, MD (aka the Grouse Whisperer) was giving a talk at the Oregon Native Plant Society meeting on Greater Sage Grouse (GSG) so I attended. What do grouse have to do with native plants? It seems that GSG only eat sage about 6 months of the year. They have a unique organelle in their digestive system that extracts the toxic terpenes in sage leaves. Very few animals can do this. There appears to be no shortage of sage. What's the problem? Well, the other 6 months of the year SGS eat forbs (herbaceous flowering plants other than grass), and the chicks depend on insects to thrive. The insects depend on a healthy suite of native plants. It sounds like a lesson in Ecology 101.



Somehow, I got on Stu's list of people interested in helping the cause of the SGS, which resulted in an invite to help in a habitat restoration effort for the 2018 Tepee fire (2000 acres 10 miles SE of Bend). This was an effort organized by Brock McCormick, a Deschutes NFS Wildlife Biologist. Sage seeds were collected and then sorted by the NFS Native Seed Bank and grown in the Forest Service Nursery. On October 23 & 24, NFS staff plus a group of volunteers (gathered by Stu) planted 2,200 sage

seedlings. The basic idea was to jump-start the growth of sage and mitigate intrusion of trees. It may be just a drop in the sea of sage but it felt good to do something. It also stimulated me to delve further into the issue. Stu gladly led me along. Following is a synopsis of what I've learned.

It seems that what really got peoples' attention was in 2010 the US Fish and Wildlife Service determined that listing the GSG under the Federal Endangered Act was "warranted but precluded". It was incumbent upon stakeholders to devise a plan to forestall "listing". Listing makes doing business-as-usual more difficult and costly. In 2011 the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) issued a Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Assessment and Strategy for Oregon. In the meantime a collaborative effort was jointly convened by the state of Oregon through the Governor's Natural Resources Office, the BLM and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA) called the Sage-Grouse Conservation Partnership (SageCon). The SageCon Partnership developed an action plan and Governor Kate Brown issued an Executive Order on September 17, 2015 adopting the Plan. Let me quote the order – "Together we have charted a clear path forward for our state built on science, partnership,

and responsible wildlife conservation policies.” With all that horsepower and collaborative effort, surely we must be making progress. How have we done?

Let’s look at the ODFW 2019 Annual Report on GSG Population Monitoring (https://www.dfw.state.or.us/.../sagegrouse/.../ODFW_2019_Sage-Grouse_Population_Report_Final.pdf). The good news is that ODFW has been improving their monitoring efforts. “Beginning in 2015, effort has been expended to survey an increased number of leks in Priority Areas of Conservation (PACs).... This increased survey effort is supported by a Cooperative Funding Agreement between the BLM and ODFW.” The bad news is “Results from these surveys indicate the sage-grouse spring breeding population in Oregon declined by 24.9% between 2018 and 2019. This constitutes the lowest sage-grouse population estimate in Oregon during the 1980 – 2019 analysis periods.” See Figure 3 in the report. Our BLM District – Prineville – was consistent with statewide trends. So what’s happening now?

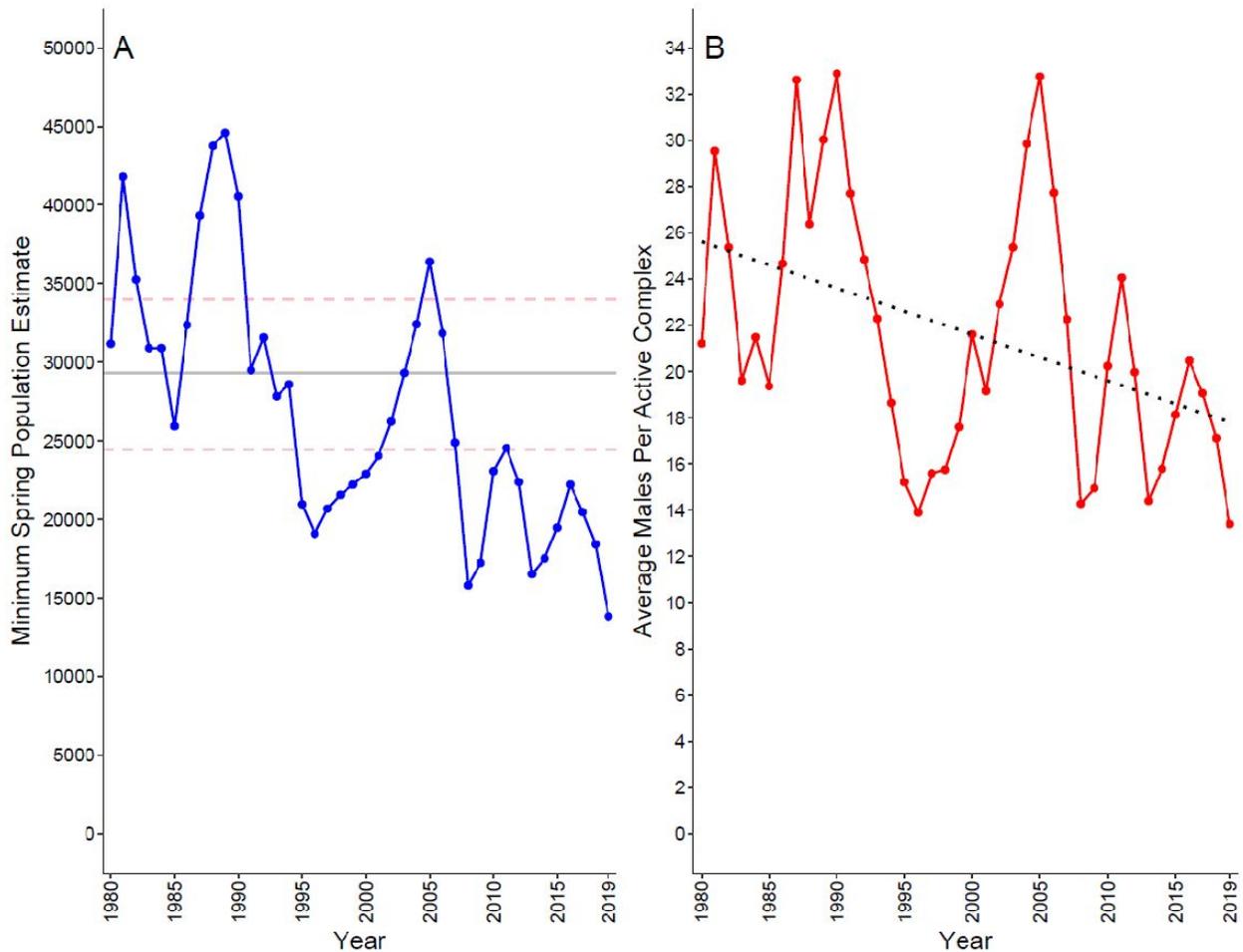


Figure 3. Greater sage-grouse population trends in **Oregon**, 1980 – 2019. A - Estimated spring breeding population of greater sage-grouse, gray line indicates 2003 baseline population level of 29,327 individuals, pink dotted lines indicate the 95% confidence interval around the 2003 baseline estimate. B - Change in average lek complex size (males per active lek complex).

ODFW convened groups called Local Implementation Teams (LIT) in each of the 5 PACs in 2005. These LITs were recognized by the 2015 Oregon Sage-Grouse Action Plan as the primary catalysts for implementing the action plans at the local level. The Prineville LIT re-initiated at a meeting on November 13, 2019. Four ECAS representatives attended. Stu Garrett will be our member on the steering committee. LIT meetings are open to the public.

Why is the GSG population still declining in spite of the efforts of SageCon and the alphabet soup of government agencies, NGOs and trade organizations? I think it's a communication problem. No one has talked to the birds and told them "We care about you. We got your backs. " Likewise the birds have not told us in words what they want, although they have given us many hints. Seriously, this is a tough problem. It requires a long term commitment by all stakeholders.

Stay tuned. I will cover other aspects of this topic in future *Calliope* articles.

A MESSAGE FROM THE MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

By Jan Rising and Liz Thill

As you know, a year ago, ECAS transitioned to Member Planet, an online membership management system. Member Planet has been very helpful to ECAS members and volunteers. This new system allows you to:

- Submit membership enrollments online.
- Submit credit card payments for memberships and donations.
- Receive our emailed monthly Chatter and quarterly Calliope e-newsletters.
- Submit online registration for Dean Hale Woodpecker Festival.
- Signup for field trips.
- Submit field trip waiver forms online.
- Check your membership status with ECAS online when you accept our offer to "join" our Member Planet group.

The Membership Committee will be on hand from 6:15-6:45pm, before Birders Nights at The Environmental Center, to answer questions you have about Member Planet and provide instruction for you about how to "join" and set up your own account. Many members have already done this but if you haven't and you want to try it on your own, here's what you need to do:

How to join/set up your Member Planet account (if you haven't already done this)

1- Go to <https://www.ecaudubon.org/join>. Click on the Online Membership link.

2- Under 'Create an account', enter your First name, Last name, Email and Password. Be sure to write down your password for future reference.

3- You will then see *"Enter your code. We have sent a six-digit code to the email address you provided. Please enter your code in the box below to continue."*

Look in your email inbox. If the email isn't there, look in your junk/spam mail folders. Sometimes this verification code email can take 15 minutes. Please be patient. When you receive the verification code, enter it on the screen. **Click on the 'Continue' button.**

4- **Verify** that your information is correct. **The 'Home phone' entry is required.** (If you only use a cell phone, put that number in the home phone spot). DO NOT ENTER DASHES IN THE PHONE NUMBER. **Click on the 'Continue' button.**

5- **Verify** the additional information form. **Click on the 'Continue' button.**

6- On the next page you should see this message:

"This level has been pre-assigned to you. Your renewal date is MM/DD/YYYY. No payment for this level is required today, but you will be asked to update your payment information on the Checkout step. If you select a different level, you will be charged for that level today."

Don't change the level that is shown if you don't want to make a payment.

7- When you scroll down on this screen you should see this: It says a total of \$XX but you will not be charged \$XX. **Click on the 'Continue' button.**

8- On the next screen you should see: *"No payment is required for your member level today. Unless you are making any additional purchases, your payment method will not be charged until your renewal date."* **Click on the 'Continue' button.**

No charges will be made to your credit card unless you authorize the renewal and the charge.

9- Voila! You are now a member of the ECAS Member Planet group.

10- Please contact the Membership Team at ecasmp@ecaudubon.org if you have any problems.

Fall 2019 Central Oregon Field Notes

by Chuck Gates

It seems like the fall of 2019 went so fast. Now with winter upon us, I'm reminded of the Robert Frost poem about the transient brevity of autumn.

NOTHING GOLD CAN STAY

Nature's first green is gold,
Her hardest hue to hold.
Her early leaf's a flower;
But only so an hour.
Then leaf subsides to leaf.
So Eden sank to grief,
So dawn goes down to day.
Nothing gold can stay.

Below is a summary of the unusual bird activity in Central Oregon during the fall season of 2019. Unfortunately, no green or gold birds made the report.

Water birds top the list of our fall summary every year because so many pass through our area on their evac route from impending arctic winter. SNOW GEESE were plentiful with the first individual arriving on 9/11 (Lewis) and a high count of 300 birds flying over Bend on 9/15 (Kruse). There were no reports of Ross's Goose anywhere in Central Oregon this fall (They are much more often seen in the spring.) CACKLING GEESE were seen at least 9 times with a high count of 37 at Tumalo Reservoir on 9/26 (Jett, Cahill). Crook County TRUMPETER SWANS were noted several times with at least two pairs bearing neck bands of different numbers (Adkins, Halvorson). At least 7 EURASIAN WIGEON were tallied in the area by multiple observers and a hybrid EUWI X AMWI was noted at the Crooked River Wetlands (C. Gates). A late CINNAMON TEAL was found at the Prineville Sewer Ponds on 10/16 (C. Gates, Golden) and GREATER SCAUP were reported from Wickiup Res., Hatfield Lk., Prineville Sewer Ponds and Prineville Res. (Jett, Low, Cahill, Namitz). Around 20 reports of SURF SCOTER were sent in from multiple locations by multiple observers with a high count of 31 coming from Wickiup Res. (Low). Single WHITE-WINGED SCOTERS were tallied at Wickiup and Crane Prairie Res. and 4 individuals were seen at Crane Prairie on 10/26 (Low). Two LONG-TAILED DUCKS were found on Wickiup (Low, Cahill, Thomas) and a single bird turned up at the Prineville Sewer Ponds on 11/28 (Namitz). RED-BREASTED MERGANSERS were found at Wickiup (Low, C. Miller), Hatfield (Low), Haystack (Johnson, Thomas, White) and Prineville Reservoir (Namitz) at various times during the season. PACIFIC LOONS were tallied at Crane Prairie (Low, Cahill Jett), Suttle Lk. (Crabtree, A. Beerman, G. Beerman) and Wickiup (Mult. Obs.). A lone RED-THROATED LOON was spotted by Wickiup regular Peter Low on 9/29. Multiple HORNED GREBES and RED-NECKED GREBES were reported from larger water bodies throughout the season and CLARK'S GREBE sightings occurred at Wickiup (Cahill, Jett, Low, Thomas), Prineville Res. (O'Hara, Bowers) and Hatfield (Low). AMERICAN BITTERN sightings occurred at the expected Houston Lk. location (Brown) and the less expected Crane Prairie site (Tice, Berg).

Scattered GREAT EGRETS were found at Prineville Res. (C. Gates), Tumalo Res. (Low), Crooked R. Wetlands (C. Gates), LaPine (Hibbs) and Farewell Bend Park in Bend (Jakse). The only GREEN HERON of the season came via a kayak trip around Crane Prairie Res. (Weiser) and the only BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON report was a “heard only” record at Haystack Res. (Tice). SANDHILL CRANES were heard migrating at Skull Hollow CG near Smith Rock (Neuman) and at the Crooked R. Wetlands in Prineville (C. Gates).



Green Heron – Claire Weiser – 8/18/19
Crane Prairie Reservoir

Shorebirds and gulls do a lot of migrating through our area and this constant movement creates possibilities for rare lost wanderers. Only 1 AMERICAN AVOCET was tallied all fall this year in our region (Poss) while at least 6 BLACK-NECKED STILTS were seen in Deschutes and Crook (Mult. Obs.). For only the 8th time, a WHIMBREL was spotted in Deschutes County (Low). Normally, SEMIPALMATED PLOVER are too common to make this report but an astounding 16 in one location at Wickiup Res. was quite unusual (Low). BLACK-BELLIED PLOVERS turned up at Wickiup on two different occasions (Jett, Low). Eleven different SOLITARY SANDPIPERS were located at various ponds around Central Oregon (Mult. Obs.). SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPERS seemed to be comparatively easy to find this year with almost a dozen birds seen at multiple locations (Mult. Obs.). A late SPOTTED SANDPIPER turned up at Redmond Sewer Ponds on 10/10 (Golden). Sparks Lk. can produce some good birds but a LONG-BILLED CURLEW in the fall is unusual (Berg). Cindy Zalunardo’s backyard pond produced another rarity with a short visit from a MARBLED GODWIT on 9/20. PECTORAL and BAIRD’S SANDPIPERS were seasonally abundant and widespread but a STILT SANDPIPER at the Crooked R. Wetlands was a true rarity (Bennett,



Stilt Sandpiper – Crooked R. Wetlands –
Chuck Gates – 8/19/19

McDonnell). A SANDERLING also turned up at the Wetlands (Vick) with another found at Wickiup Res. (Jett). The first DUNLIN were recorded at Wickiup on 10/12 (Cahill). SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHERS were tallied at Wickiup and Hatfield (Low). Single FRANKLIN'S GULLS were seen at Hatfield (Low, Cahill) and the Crooked R. Wetlands (Burgess). The only SABINE'S GULL seen this season was at Crane Prairie on 9/15 (Low). As many as 3 HERRING GULLS were hanging out at Wickiup (Jett, Low, Meredith fide) as was a single GLAUCOUS-WINGED GULL on 10/28 for the 10th county record (Crabtree). Wickiup also produced a COMMON TERN on 9/5 (Robinson). Finally, a PARASITIC JAEGER was found loafing at the north end of Davis Lk for the 8th county record (Jett, Centanni).

Game Birds are mostly non-migratory, but some are hard enough to find that they make this report. CHUKAR were noted at Lower Bridge (Gonzalez) and near Culver (Reuland). The lone sighting of MOUNTAIN QUAIL came from near the Jefferson/Deschutes border north of Sisters (Tank). WILD TURKEYS turned up in many disparate parts of Central Oregon with a high count of 70 just east of Prineville (Guyger). RUFFED GROUSE were located at Summit Rd. and Rail Cr. in the Ochocos (Jett) and at Whiskey Sp. in the Cascades south of Sisters (Sutherland, Gates). Only one DUSKY GROUSE was seen this fall with a sighting coming in from the Mill Cr. Wilderness Tr. in the Ochocos (Stotz). Surprisingly for a fall report, SAGE GROUSE were spotted in E. Crook County (Groo) and at the base of Pine Mt. in Deschutes (Tice). BAND-TAILED PIGEONS were seen in the Ochoco Mts. (Buck), Green Ridge (Mult. Obs.), Eagle Crest (Wolf fide) and Shevlin Park in Bend (Cantor).

Diurnal and nocturnal raptors are the shift workers of the bird world. Unusual raptor sightings are always of interest to intrepid birders. On the day shift, the last OSPREY of the fall was a single bird seen at the Crooked R. Wetlands on 11/18 (Burgess, Zalunardo, Jakse). Fall NORTHERN GOSHAWK reports aren't all that unusual because of ECAS's Green Ridge Hawk Watch but this year, 6 other goshawks were seen away from that location (Mult. Obs.). RED-SHOULDERED HAWKS were located a shocking 36 times this fall for a total of as



many as 30 different birds (Mult. obs.). HARLAN'S RED-TAILED HAWKS were found in Terrebonne (C. Gates) and on Pilot Butte in Bend (Low). A couple of BROAD-WINGED HAWKS were tallied on Green Ridge during the ECAS Green Ridge Fall Hawkwatch (Vick fide). The first ROUGH-LEGGED HAWKS arrived on 10/12 and an early MERLIN was seen at Tumalo Res. on 9/8 (Low).

Rough-legged Hawk - Powell Butte – Chuck Gates 11/29/19



PEREGRINE FALCON sightings were reported 15 times throughout the region (Mult. Obs.).

On the night shift, BARN OWLS were in Prineville at known locations (Namitz) and in Bend (Cahill). A WESTERN SCREECH-OWL was photographed perching on a residential porch light in Prineville (Dalton) and 2 BOREAL OWLS were heard calling near Charlton Lk. on 8/3 (Jett). At least 9 BARRED OWL reports were received this fall with all but one coming from Deschutes County (Mult. Obs.). A surprisingly high number of NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWLS (5 from different locations) were located this season (Mult. Obs.) and SHORT-EARED OWLS returned to familiar haunts in western Crook County after being absent for several years (D. Gates C. Gates).

Western Screech-owl - Deserae Dalton - Prineville – 11/10/19

Nightjars, swifts, hummingbirds and woodpeckers are sometimes lumped into one group called Near Passerines. Here are some Near Passerine highlights. COMMON POORWILLS (Tank) and COMMON NIGHTHAWKS (Low, Hitt) stayed as late as 10/10 this year which is a little late.



American Three-toed Woodpecker – Three Creeks Lake – Chuck Gates – 11/7/19

AMERICAN THREE-TOED WOODPECKERS were located at Camp Sherman (Bosket), Three Creeks Lk. (Sutherland, Gates) and Tumalo Falls (Low). A PILEATED

WOODPECKER at the Prineville Juniper Cemetery might be the first ever seen inside the city limits (Golden, Sutherland). BLACK SWIFTS were recorded at the Bend Riverhouse (Villaescusa), Bend Boys and Girls Club (Meredith) and Warm Springs (Pritchett). BLACK-CHINNED HUMMINGBIRDS were seen on River Bluff Tr. In SW Bend (Johnson) and in SE Bend (Low).

2019 brought some fine fall Passerines to Central Oregon. A PACIFIC-SLOPE FLYCATCHER showed up at Lower Bridge about 10 days after most of its ilk had passed through (Crabtree). A late HAMMOND'S FLYCATCHER was tallied on 10/15 in Bend (Mauer). BLACK PHOEBES were reported at Tumalo Res. (Crabtree et al.), Sawyer Park in Bend (Bohnert) and Crooked R. Wetlands (Vine, Zalunardo, Burgess, Meredith). A SAY'S PHOEBE turned up in Powell Butte on 11/28 which is the 3rd latest record for this species in Crook County (Gates). For only the 6th time in Central Oregon, a CASSIN'S VIREO was recorded in the month of October (Choate). BLUE JAYS were found in Bend (Farney, Fagan), south of Prineville (Lewis) and SW of Tumalo (Low). CHESTNUT-BACKED CHICKADEES were tallied at Charlton Lk. (Jett), Deschutes R. Woods in Bend (Moodie), Brown Mt. near Wickiup (Low), Wickiup Res. (C. Miller) and Elk Lk. (Cahill). A hoard of over 1000 BANK SWALLOWS were counted feeding over Wickiup Res. on 8/10 (Low). BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER reports came in from North Shore Road at Prineville Res. (Gates et al.) and Haystack Res. (Burgess). A HOUSE WREN report set a late date Central Oregon record on 10/10 at Eagle Crest (Allendar). For only the 3rd time, a GRAY CATBIRD was reported in October (Low). Tumalo Res. was the local hotspot for a while producing a Black Phoebe (mentioned above), a CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER (Thomas, Love), an AMERICAN REDSTART (Low) and a NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH (Kornfeld et al.). Found by visiting Florida birders, a PALM WARBLER found near Little Willow Res. turned out to be a county first (Goodwin, Haney, Eager). Until 10/8 of this year, LARK SPARROW had only been seen one time in October (Kathol). A very late CHIPPING SPARROW was noted at Bend's Shevlin Park on 10/17 (Thomas). A rare RED FOX SPARROW turned up in a Powell Butte yard on 10/12 (Gates).



Red Fox Sparrow – Powell Butte
Chuck Gates – 10/12/19

Six different WHITE-THROATED SPARROWS were tallied from mostly Deschutes County (Mult. Obs.). Two SNOW BUNTINGS turned up at Wickiup Res. on 10/26 and a late YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD was found on 11/30 at Lower Bridge (Low). Unusual for Deschutes, TRICOLORED BLACKBIRDS were found west of Terrebonne (Low) and PURPLE FINCHES were found scattered around the area (Mult. Obs.). GRAY-CROWNED ROSY-FINCHES were reported from Charlton Lk. (Jett), Wickiup Dam (Low), Obsidian Tr. near Paulina Lk. (Poss) and on Summit Rd. in the Ochocos (Gates, Golden).

It was a brief fall season, but it sure was fun!

OBSERVERS (In order of appearance in this report)

Jennifer Lewis, Mary Ann Kruse, Courtney Jett, Matt Cahill, Aaron Adkins, Ron Halvorson, Chuck Gates, Mike Golden, Peter Low, Russ Namitz, Evan Thomas, Craig Miller, Jim Johnson, Brian White, Tom Crabtree, Aaron Beerman, Gloria Beerman, Neil O'Hara, Wayne Bowers, Lary Brown, Bill Tice, Don Berg, Ondi Hibbs, Kara Jakse, Claire Weiser, Colby Neuman, Mary Poss, Cindy Zalunardo, Craig Bennett, Alec McDonnell, David Vick, Judy Meredith, W. Douglas Robinson, Caleb Centanni, Mark Gonzalez, John Reuland, Sue Tank, Ben Guyger, Don Sutherland, Nancy Stotz, Tyler Groo, Vickie Buck, Elise Wolf, Glenn Cantor, Deserae Dalton, Laura Hitt, Dawn Villaescusa, Damon Pritchett, Chris Johnson, Alan Mauer, Brett Bohnert, Milton Vine, Tara Choate, Janice Farney, Damian Fagan, Scott Lewis, Jim Moodie, Michael Allendar, Tom Love, David Goodwin, Erik Haney, Jim Eager and Kim Kathol.



FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS
OF THE **DESCHUTES CANYON AREA**

By Marilynne Keyser, FANs President

Friends and Neighbors of the Deschutes Canyon Area (FANs) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit conservation organization with the following mission: *We work to preserve and restore the wild landscapes of the Middle Deschutes and Lower Crooked Rivers and Lower Whychus Creek through stewardship, outreach and education.*

I am delighted to introduce ECAS members to FANs. FANs was organized in 2012 by twelve friends living at Crooked River Ranch, a large residential development located on the high plateau created by the Middle Deschutes and Lower Crooked Rivers north of Lake Billy Chinook. Fans currently has 419 members and over 600 non-member participants involved in our educational programs, guided hikes, and stewardship projects. For each of the last three years, our volunteers have donated over 3,000 hours to FANs. We just completed a successful Matching Gift Campaign to raise \$20,000 for major reconstruction on the Steelhead Falls trail. We are privileged to have ECAS as a partner in our hiking program, our conservation activities, and our fundraising efforts.

Last spring, ECAS birder Chuck Gates and I co-led FANs first birding hike—to the Crooked River Wetlands outside Prineville. All of the participants loved it and are eager to have more birding hikes next year. In early June, I teamed up with ECAS birder Clay Croft during the woodpecker festival to lead a wonderful birding/wildflower hike along both the Deschutes and Crooked Canyon rims at Crooked River Ranch.

Finally, for two days in September, MACO leader Dede Steele joined me and two other volunteers, who happened to be birders, to monitor milkweed plantings at FANs monarch waystations along the Deschutes River. We turned both mornings into dual-purpose monitoring for both butterflies and birds. It was a fantastic experience—seeing and hearing a group of Clark’s nutcrackers, finding dozens of Townsend’s solitaires, watching our resident dippers work the currents above the fall, and adding 15 or so birds to our morning list. FANs is eager to add more birding hikes, co-lead by an ECAS volunteer, to FANs 2020 hiking schedule.



The ECAS Board asked me to tell you about FANs and the work we do with American kestrels (*Falco sparverius*). Our original nest box trail was established in 2010, with three kestrel boxes provided by Don McCartney, coordinator of the Central Oregon Kestrel Project. We had one successful nest that year. As we added more boxes, we usually had two or three successful clutches. This trail is entirely on private property at Crooked River Ranch. Karen and Mick Atwood have been monitoring the Crooked River Ranch trail for the last three years. Our new nest box trail is

located on

Crooked River National Grasslands on the peninsula north of Crooked River Ranch. In addition to three kestrel boxes, there are six smaller nest boxes designed for mountain bluebirds. Diane Randgaard has been monitoring the trail since its inception in 2018.

Crooked River Ranch Nest Box Trail

According to monitors Karen and Mick, “the kestrel nest box locations on Crooked River Ranch range from front yards overlooking the Crooked River Canyon to undeveloped acreages overlooking the Deschutes River Canyon. Boxes are placed in juniper trees at a height of eight to thirteen feet which requires us to use ladders to check them. During our first check in mid-May, we look for signs of the adults in the area and check the nest for signs of use: feathers, depressions in the cedar chips. About one month later, we recheck our boxes again, looking for eggs or chicks. We estimate the age of the chicks or condition of the eggs. One week later, we recheck our boxes to age the chicks and/or find newly-hatched clutches. We occasionally find abandoned eggs or eggs that had been predated. When the chicks are between 14 and 21 days old, Ken Hashagan, with East Cascades Audubon Society, bands them. He records the sex, condition and age of each nestling. Each band has a unique number that allows recaptured birds to be identified. Our most successful box, #41, has fledged 17 kestrels over the years.



Crooked River National Grassland Nest Box Trail

According to monitor Diane, “the National Grasslands nest box trail had successful clutches in two of the three kestrel boxes in 2018, the first year. Ken Hashagen banded 5 nestlings. He took a feather sample from 2 of them (one feather sample from each of the 2 occupied boxes) to analyze genetic relationships. Three of the 6 bluebird nest boxes were also used, two were used by mountain bluebirds (*Sialia occidentalis*) and one box was used by ash-throated flycatchers (*Myiarchus cinerascens*). In 2019, we led two guided hikes on the Nest Box Trail in May and June, respectively. We did not find any kestrel eggs this year. An ash-throated flycatcher did occupy one of the kestrel boxes. Mountain bluebirds and ash-throated flycatchers occupied three of the smaller nest boxes.”

We are committed to increasing kestrel nesting success on both our trails. In consultation with Don McCartney, Karen and Mick are moving three unused nest boxes to new locations. On the grassland trail, Diane is exploring adding nest boxes further away from human activity. FANS is working with the USFS, the public agency that manages the National Grasslands, to reduce target shooting, unauthorized motor vehicle traffic and trash dumping in the area. We hope that solving these problems will improve the nesting success of kestrels in this beautiful stretch of native grasslands.



If you are interested in learning more about FANS, please check out our website at fansofdeschutes.org. You can join FANS online for \$10 and receive our monthly online newsletter. Members receive advance notice about our guided hikes, stewardship opportunities, and programs offered in our Lens on Learning series.

DECISION TIME - 3 UPCOMING BIRDFESTS ARE ALL THE SAME WEEKEND

OLYMPIC BIRDFEST

Save the date April 17-19 2020!

Online registration starts January 1, 2020

This festival provides participants the opportunity to view a wide variety of birds normally seen on the Olympic Peninsula. Field trips are planned for Sequim Bay, Port Angeles Harbor, Ediz Hook, Dungeness Spit, the Elwha River and at Neah Bay, as well as trips through wooded areas to view songbirds and locate owls in the evening. Boat trips to Protection Island are also planned. The North Olympic Peninsula is widely known as a great place for bird watching. The day of the Olympic BirdFest is timed to overlap wintering birds and the beginning of spring migration.

In addition to the field trips, birders may participate in presentations, workshops and a banquet. A tour explaining the Jamestown S’Klallam tribal totem poles at the Tribal Center and the Seven Cedars Casino will also be offered. More info: <https://olympicbirdfest.org/>

Speaker: Scott Pearson
Topic: “A Tale of Two Puffins”



SAVE THE DATE: APRIL 17 – 19, 2020



The 15th **Pacific City Birding & Blues Festival** is happening Friday April 17 through Sunday April 19, 2020.

As always, the weekend will be packed with fun activities like hikes, workshops, field trips, and live music for all types of birding and nature enthusiasts.

Don’t miss out on this fun-filled weekend! Mark your calendars to spend April 17 - 19 in Pacific City!

The Birding and Blues Festival is a non-profit community festival celebrating the spring migration of birds and the natural resources of Tillamook County.

For more information call 503-842-2672 or email: birdingandblues@gmail.com



HARNEY COUNTY MIGRATORY BIRD FESTIVAL

Registration will open in February on the website,
www.migratorybirdfestival.com/

Kenn Kaufman will be the Saturday Banquet keynote speaker!
The Festival dates are April 16-19, 2020



EAST CASCADES AUDUBON SOCIETY

P.O. Box 565, Bend, Oregon 97701

www.ecaudubon.org

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Contact information for Board members
Committee chairs, and Project leaders
is posted on the ECAS website under
MORE - Contact ECAS and ECAS

Winter 2020 Board Meetings:
January 7
February 4
March 3

Committee and Event Chairs

Annual Event	ECAS Board
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Vaux's Swifts	Bob Johnson
	Mary Ann Kruse
Volunteers	Mardi Jensen
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Wednesday Birders	Judy Meredith
	Howard Horvath

Board meetings are held at 1pm on the
first Tuesday of the month at the
Environmental Center. All members are
welcome to attend. Board minutes and
upcoming meeting dates are posted at
www.ecaudubon.org.

The East Cascades Audubon Society
(ECAS) is a 501(c)(3) organization
that furthers knowledge and appreciation
of birds and their habitats through field
trips, education, and field studies.

Join ECAS and help preserve the
birds of central Oregon at
www.ecaudubon.org