Klamath Basin Audubon Society

The Grebe

June/July 2015

TOGETHER GREEN, ACT TODAY, SHAPE TOMORROW

President's Message

My name is Sherry Pollock. Thank you Molly for the opportunity to be President of The Klamath Falls Audubon Society. I am excited and am looking at this as a great learning experience.

My home is at Tingley Lake Estates. A small bird flight to the Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge.

Almost every day I wake up to birds singing. Always a joy!

Give me any input. I would like to make this a successful first year. I am counting on you.

My best to you all,
Sherry Pollock
(541) 539-9001

KBAS General Meetings

KBAS does not meet during the summer months. The next general meeting will be September 10. Details in the next Grebe.

Welcome to the New KBAS/National Members and Returning KBAS/National Members

New KBAS/National Members

- Danny Hull
- Hugh & Ciry Null
- Robert DeGarmo

KBAS/National Renewals:

- Jeff Ball
- Ralph Eccles
- Jeffrey Goldsmith
- Mary Phillip Kelley
- Charles Kruse
- Frank Kuonen
- Randy Lemaire
- Joan Lemaire
- Sherry Lindley
- Wendy Spencer
- Anita Ward
- Virginia Gray
- Darrel Samuels
- Diana Samuels

Festivals – Winter Wings and Link River

by Diana Samuels



2016 Festival Planning is Just Around the Corner

Now is the time to get in on the ground floor for planning the 2016 Winter Wings Festival. We have openings in several areas: press release and county tourism grant application writing, youth birding competition organizing, new field trip scoping with private landowners, and social media sharing. We will hold our first key volunteer meeting in July 2015. Contact **Anne Wenner** or **Diana Samuels** with your ideas or for more information.

Link River Festival May 30

The Link River Festival in Klamath Falls is the place to be May 30th, 2015 from 11am-3pm! The Link River Festival is a FREE event that serves to educate and entertain. It features with food and beverage, as well as presenters offering views on the Link River Canyon for historical, industrial, and economical purposes. Included in this year's program is a Passport Program and Farmer's Market so you can test your knowledge while sampling local goodies! Aside from great food, people, and music, the festival also includes free shuttles and prizes! It's an event perfect for children and adults alike! Visit www.klamathgreenways.org for more details and remember to mark your calendar for this exciting event! KBAS will set up two information sharing and birding stations along the trail so if you would like to participate, contact Darrel Samuels at dsamuels@charter.net.

WINTER WINGS FESTIVAL

Winter Wings Festival is Presidents' Day Weekend, February 11-14, 2016. Look for information on the 2016 Winter Wings Festival this summer.

International Migratory Bird Day

A big thank you for those that helped at the International Migratory Bird Day this year.

A big thank you to **Beth Phillips** for organizing the KBAS booth and Hallie Rasmussen for providing the bird banding for the kids**. Rick Hardy and Marshal Moser** each took out about 10 birders along the Wingwatchers Trail where they saw many different species. Thanks also to **Virginia Bary, Sherry Pollock and Diana Samue**ls for hosting the booth and **Jim and Sherry Lindley** for helping to setup and loaning their canopy. Thanks to **Gerald Ingram** for being Ralph the Eagle. The weather cooperated this year and we had over 250 kids and their families attend.

Swainson's Hawks



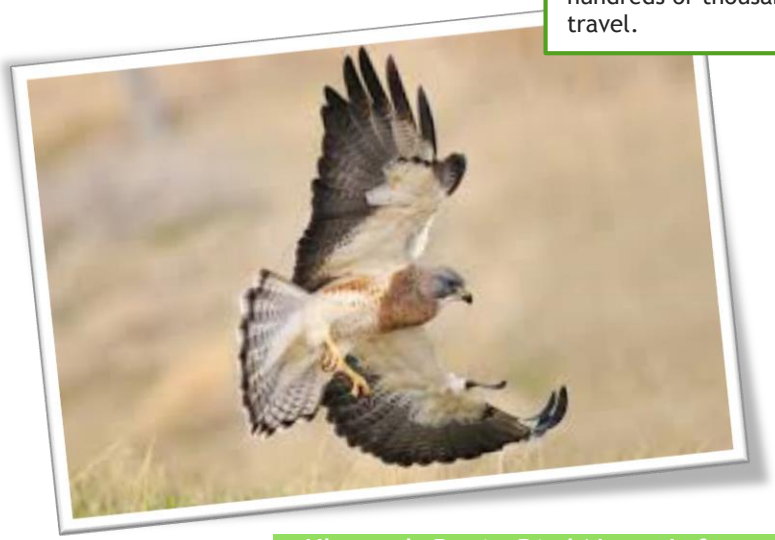
Chris Vennum from the Butte Valley Swainson's Hawk Project spoke at the May general meeting. They have been studying the Swainson's Hawk there since 1979 and Chris has been on the project the past three years. They band the hawks as adults and chicks and then each year go back to their nests and record the bands to determine which hawks have returned. They also take blood samples and other information for data collecting. The number of nests has increased from 2 in 1979 to 94 last year and they are hoping to get close to 100 nests this year. The hawks migrate to the Butte Valley mid-April of each year and the chicks fledge in June. They then stay around until September when they migrate down to Argentina. Some have transmitters for tracking but most do not.

While they are here, Chris's team tries to locate as many hawks as they can to see where they are staying and record their bands. He could use your help as it is more than just Butte Valley, it encompasses most of the Klamath Basin. If you see a Swainson's Hawk in the area and can get close enough to read the band that would really help them. The bands are red and green and have R/7 or G/5 for red or green bands as an example. They also need to know which leg the band is on. If you can't get all this information, just letting him know where you saw it would help as he could then try to track it in that area.

As you are out birding this summer, if you see a Swainson's Hawk, please email Chris at cvennum@nevada.unr.edu with the information.



A classic species of the open country of the Great Plains and the West, Swainson's Hawks soar on narrow wings or perch on fence posts and irrigation spouts. These elegant gray, white, and brown hawks hunt rodents in flight, wings held in a shallow V, or even run after insects on the ground. In fall, they take off for Argentine wintering grounds—one of the longest migrations of any American raptor—forming flocks of hundreds or thousands as they travel.



Klamath Basin Bird News Information

Klamath Basin Bird News [KBBN] Reminder: Klamath Basin Bird News is an informal email network (a mailing list) of over 100 bird enthusiasts in the Basin and elsewhere. You can learn more about the group at its web site https://sites.google.com/site/klamathbasinbirdnews, and it is linked from the "Birds" section of the KBAS web site. Please participate! Sign up online or contact Dave Hewitt at dhewitt37@gmail.com

Field Trips

by Mary Ellen Sargent

Saturday, May 30
The 2nd Link River Festival

Lots of activities with many non-profit groups will be taking place along the Link River. KBAS will again set up scopes to view the dancing grebes and other birds.

Saturday, June 6
Nuss Lake and Lost River at Poe Valley

Migrants and nesters will be focus of this trip. Meet at 9 AM at the USFWS for carpooling/caravanning or meet at Crystal Springs Park at 9:25 AM. Directions to Crystal Springs: From the intersection of HWY 140 and 39, go south to Short Road then east to Reeder Road. Go south to Crystal Springs Road and access the parking lot. Contact Mary Ellen Sargent, 541-850-3926 for questions

Saturday, June 13
Species of the Burn Areas

Join Jean Van Hulzen to find 3-Toed and Black-backed Woodpeckers and other mountain species. Areas to be covered are the burn areas north of Hwy 140 and Lake of the Woods. Meeting time is 8 AM. For meeting place: Pelican Guard Station parking lot. Directions: From Hwy 140 west, turn right on Westside Road then right again into the parking lot.

Saturday, July 11:
Canoe/Kayak the Wood River Wetlands:

Join Gary Vequist at 8:30 AM at the small dock by the Wood River Wetlands parking lot for upclose views of nesting species. Bring a canoe or kayak. Contact Gary for places to rent canoes or kayaks or if you can provide a watercraft and have room for a guest. Those needing a seat on a craft, also contact Gary to coordinate a ride. His phone is 541-205-5527. Those unable to canoe can walk the trail for additional species.

Saturday, August 8 or 15:
KBAS Annual Picnic

Join Jean and Al VanHulzen for our annual KBAS potluck picnic. KBAS members and guests are invited to their Rocky Point home, starting at noon. "Chef" Al will serve his famous shrimp appetizers followed by his famous BBQ tri tip. Bring a dish to share, either main dish, salad or dessert for 8. Also, bring your own beverages and table service. Insect repellent and long-sleeved shirts are recommended. Feel free to come early and bird their great property. RSVP to Jean at jeanatrockypoint@gmail.com or 541-810-2110.

Saturday, September 12
Migration in the Williamson Delta:

Join The Nature Conservancy's Heather Hendrixson as we tour TNC's property, looking for early southbound and northbound migrants. More details to follow.

Late September or early October:

Join Marshal Moser in an upper Klamath Basin trip. More details to follow.

For all field information

Contact: **Mary Ellen Sargent**
Field Trip Chair

542.850.3926, sargentme5@aol.com

to register, ask questions, have suggestions or can lead a field trip. **NOTE:** Please check the KBAS website for updates on additional field trip information:

www.klamathaudubon.com

*Check out the Audubon website and the running account of **Noah Stricker** and his world-wide "Big Year" attempt at logging 5,000+ species of birds. You may remember Noah from two talks he gave at KBAS meetings - he is from Oregon. For this challenge, he has a blog on Audubon at http://www.audubon.org/features/birding-without-borders*

As of May, He was in Mexico, he had tallied 2482 to date.



Klamath Basin Audubon Field Trip to Sycan Marsh

by Craig Bienz



Members of the Klamath Basin Audubon Society toured Sycan Marsh the morning of May 16. The cool moist weather over the previous week and overcast skies limited bird activity and visibility. The tour visited three habitat types; along Long Creek where restored riparian habitats have enticed beaver to construct myriads of dams flooding the valley floor, restored ponderosa pine forest and dry meadows along Coyote Creek. Visiting three different habitats within the morning provided opportunity to discuss how habitat restoration has increased ecosystem resiliency and wildlife diversity. The birds told their story through their unique diversity at each site. Mary Ellen Sargent kept a running tally of the species detected with a list over 50 species.
Yellow Warblers, Barn Swallows, and Mallards, Wood Ducks, and Cinnamon Teal greeted us as we stepped out of our vehicles. Riparian habitats provided the greatest diversity of bird species. Structural diversity with willows, aspens, and conifers, and availability of water with insects strongly influence bird species diversity and productivity. A Cassin's Finch calling from the top of a lodgepole pine was difficult to identify under low light conditions, but the peaked head shape and notched tail plus his song were enough to confirm.

The Nature Conservancy has been implementing practical, science based watershed restoration with activities intended to restore ecosystem function of frequent fire forest landscapes. Our goal is to increase the resistance and resilience of these forested ecosystems to uncharacteristic impacts from natural disturbances regimes. Specific restoration goals include reducing the vulnerability and increasing the "resistance" of Dry Forests to wildfire, drought, insects and pathogens, and improving their "resilience" and ability to accommodate future environmental change while continuing to provide desired ecosystem services, e.g. clear air and clean water, and biological diversity. For example, wildfire can burn through a resistant forest without significantly altering its structure, composition, or function. Not only are the dominant understory and overstory species resistant to fire, but are in fact dependent on this ecological process. The structure and composition of a low-density forest dominated by fire tolerant trees and understory forbs and grasses is perpetuated by frequent, low - to moderate-severity fire as it repeatedly and patchily consumes fuels and regeneration.

A Mountain Bluebird initiated our walk through the forest. The total number of species observed was lower than expected. Our long walk through the forest was enriched with discussions on the spring wildflowers. A Warbling Vireo brought us back to the vehicles for the next stop.

Western Meadowlarks greeted us to the dry meadows. Flower heads of Camas were small and just beginning to bloom signaling the dry conditions. Sandhill Cranes, Long-billed Curlews and Willet were observed. All-in all the group had a wonderful morning.

Lake Abert Meeting Take - Homes

by Jim Fairchild

Asked to wear the Audubon hat, I went to both a workshop and a symposium (Apr 24,25) attended by local stakeholders, agency players, ranchers, a brine shrimp fisher, plus experts in saline ecosystem wildlife, also weather, and Oregon water law.

Not all issues were brought to the table, and the best that might be said was that people stayed pretty respectful, and no one came to blows (publicly at any rate).

I hope any other Auduboners in attendance will amend the following with their perspectives. This could likely become a priority issue for Oregon Chapters, as it is regionally and nationally, even with National Audubon.

The basic issue: Lake Abert has gone dry, and flows from the Chewaucan River, the surface water source for Lake Abert are increasingly restricted.

The concerns: *Lake Abert, a critical breeding and staging area for



Continue on Next page

Wilson's and Red-necked Phalaropes, American Avocets, Eared Grebes, etc. no longer currently exists.

- Oregon's current drought has contributed to a number of lakes in the Great Basin drying up, but most other large lakes dry up more frequently than Abert, which last went dry some 80 years ago. Drought alone does not appear to be the sole factor.

- Surface water withdrawals, on paper, from the Chewaucan have not increased.

- Surface water rights permit applications in the basin continue to come in.

- Hay and particularly alfalfa production for beef cattle has increased, as have the number of wells for irrigation.

- Flood irrigation is considered by some more appropriate here due to some of the area being converted from natural wetlands.

- The local watermaster reported that monitoring wells show a lowering of the water table, but deemed it not significant.

- Decreased snowpack in the Chewaucan headwaters tend to shift peak stream flows earlier and for more brief periods, as is the case generally. The latest peak flow anecdotally reported was December--instead of April.

- A channel-spanning dam, at the aptly named River's End Ranch, continues to impound flows from the Chewaucan, for irrigation and wildlife benefits. The dam's Clean Water Act permit (Sec. 404), issued by the Corps of Engineers, was revoked, and ODFW is not currently enforcing the state's accompanying Certification of that permit. That certification requires, among other things, that the impoundment be drained after June 30th if the lake level is below a threshold level.

- Climate models for the coming decades do indicate a likelihood of decreasing precipitation and increasing temperatures here in most seasons and in the majority of scenarios.

Opportunities:

- Many participants expressed a need for a hydrology report on the area. The Water Resources Dept. representative expressed a reluctance to supplying one internal hydrology report that he referenced. Others have attempted, and I understand Stan Senner, of National Audubon, is working towards helping produce a reputable and rigorous hydrology report. (He was able to attend part of the symposium, and he and I talked only briefly.) *Waterfowl advocates are advocating early-season flood-up of fields here, though due to earlier and briefer peaks this could exacerbate flow losses into Abert, and more likely shift them to the groundwater aquifer and unable to resurface.

- Increased water use efficiencies divert a greater portion of irrigation water into plant growth and transpiration, and away from ground or surface water contribution.

- More inclusive and extensive bird counts here (at least in water years) could boost reported use numbers into the categorization of Lake Abert as having both international and global significance for bird species that many feel it has, which would gain it more political support.

- Witness reports of the Chewaucan flowing at 1000 cfs at the Paisley wier got me to calculate how much water it would take to put water back in the lake. Assuming no losses (more likely in winter to early spring), putting 6 feet over its 16 x 4 mile surface would take only 4 months at that flow rate. Realistically with Abert's average depth more than double that, and continued water use conditions in the basin, this isn't going to happen in a year.

- Brine shrimp cysts can remain viable for a few years, but after a half-dozen years a large percentage of them should be expected to have perished.

  Lake Abert will be dry again this summer

I hope any other Auduboners in attendance will amend this with their perspectives.

Thanks,
Jim Fairchild
Immediate Past President, Audubon Society of Corvallis

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The Grebe is published 6 times a year by the Klamath Basin Audubon Society (KBAS)

Mission: The Klamath Basin Audubon Society will provide the opportunity for all to experience and appreciate our region's wildlife, focusing on birds and other natural resources.

KBAS is a chartered chapter of the National Audubon Society.

The Board of Directors meets 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. the first Wednesday of each month at the Chamber of Commerce offices, 205 Riverside, Klamath Falls. All members are welcome and encouraged to attend.

For **address changes** please contact both National Audubon Society and KBAS, Attn. Sue Romig, P.O Box 354, Klamath Falls, OR. 97601

Comments and information **to The Grebe Editor** are welcomed and encouraged. Send to Grebe Editor, 6212 Osprey Lane Klamath Falls, OR. 97601 or s.alley@charter.net

Check our website:

www.klamathaudubon.org

KBAS e-mail address:

klamathauduboninfo@gmail.com

LOCAL MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL APPLICATION

Date _____

□ Individual: $20

□ Student and Senior (62 and over): $15

□ Family: $25

Here is my tax deductible extra contribution for $_____

Total Enclosed $_____

□ Check here if you are a current member of national Audubon

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Please contact me regarding:
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KBAS, P.O. 354, Klamath Falls, OR 97601

The Grebe

June/July 2015

Klamath Basin Audubon Society
P. O. 354
Klamath Falls, OR 97601

KBAS general meetings are held at 6:30 p.m. on the second Thursday of every month except June, July and August. Next meeting September 10 at Oregon Tech [OIT] Mt. Thielson Room in the College Union.

Website: www.klamathaudubon.org

KBAS e-mail address: klamathauduboninfo@gmail.com