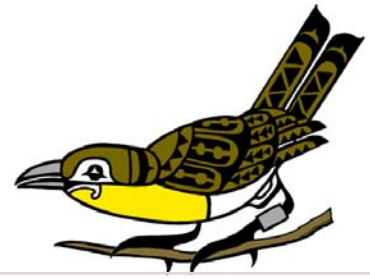


# The Klamath Bird



Newsletter of the Klamath Bird  
Observatory, Winter 2005

## Should I Stay or Should I Go Now?

### Choices by nesting birds

Ornithologists have long recognized that many birds return year after year to breed in the same locations. Such behavior is termed 'site fidelity'. Increasingly, ornithologists recognize that site fidelity has important implications for bird conservation. Understanding these implications is a critical component of bird conservation research at the Klamath Bird Observatory (see box on next page). Specifically, we are interested in why birds return, how birds decide to return, and how this information can be used to inform management decisions that promote bird conservation.

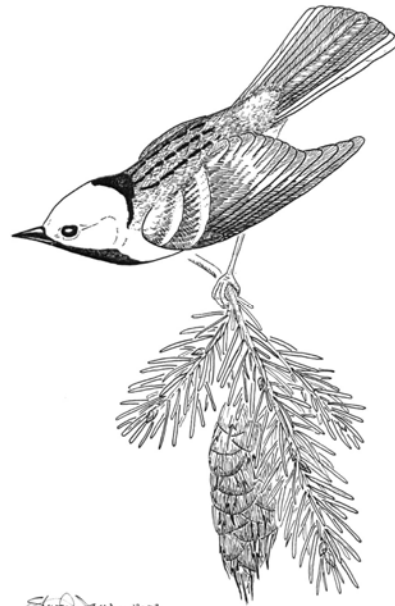
#### What are the advantages of returning?

If adult birds become familiar with the resources in their territory, then returning to the same site may enhance a birds' ability to find food and produce young. These advantages are greatest when food is predictable from one year to the next; when food is unpredictable from year to year, a better strategy is to move to areas where food is abundant. For example, the nomadic Red Crossbill searches widely for crops of ripe pinecones, settling to breed where food is abundant. This nomadic strategy is characteristic of many finches and other seed eating birds.

#### How do birds decide to return?

Birds use information about a site's quality to make their decision. One measure of site quality is whether or not birds are able to successfully produce young. Birds often return to sites

*(Continued on page 2)*



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Hermit Warbler, Stewart Jones

## Tools for Bird Conservation in Coniferous Forests

### California/Oregon-Washington Partners In Flight Meeting

April 7-8, 2005 Ashland, Oregon

*Hosted by the Klamath Bird Observatory*

KBO will host the joint meeting of the California and Oregon-Washington Partners In Flight meeting April 7-8 in Ashland, Oregon. This meeting will focus on the conservation and management of conifer forest birds and their habitats. The objective is to bring together forest administrators, biologists, managers, and researchers, to provide an overview of the important issues and tools available for the conservation of non-listed species in coniferous forests.

Participating in bird conservation through Partners In Flight is the

# Research

## Should I Stay or Should I Go Now, continued, page 1

(Continued from page 1)

where they have bred successfully, but switch to new sites if they fail. This simple strategy is often referred to as a 'win-stay: lose-switch' rule. Lacking information on prior breeding success, young birds and species that depend on newly created habitats (from floods or fire) rely on habitat characteristics, such as the amount of shrub cover or presence of snags, as indicators of habitat quality.

### Implications for bird conservation

As a result of natural processes or human activities, areas where birds have previously bred may no longer provide the same habitat quality. Some birds can respond to such change quickly and immediately move to new areas. Other birds, especially those that use a win-stay:lose-

switch rule, may return and attempt to breed at sites that are no longer suitable for nesting. After failing to successfully reproduce, they will search for better habitat the following year. As a result, bird populations may take several years to respond to changes in habitat quality.

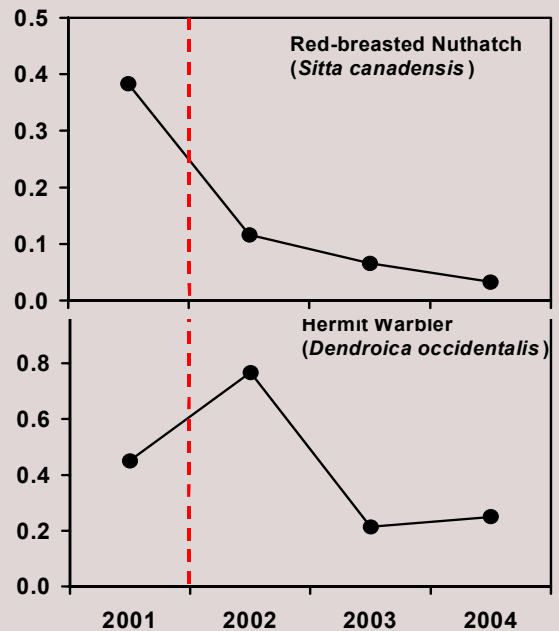
Today, ornithologists are concerned with the effects of human activities on decisions made by breeding birds. For example, using structural cues, grassland birds may choose to nest in apparently high-quality hay fields, but suffer poor reproductive success when fields are mowed during the breeding season. These situations, in which birds are attracted to areas that ultimately result in reproductive failure, are called "ecological traps".

At KBO, we are applying concepts of site fidelity to our

### Site fidelity in the Quartz Fire: differences between residents and migrants

In 2001 KBO surveyed birds in the Little Applegate Valley of southern Oregon. Later that summer, the Quartz Fire burned 2,493 hectares of this area. We now have three years of surveys to show us how birds were affected. Birds that need conifer trees tended to decline after the fire. However, the decline was delayed for some species. This may be due to differences in site fidelity. These graphs show the different responses of two conifer dependent bird species.

Hermit Warblers are long-distance migrants and had bred successfully and perhaps departed the area before the fire burned. Their persistence the first year after the fire may have occurred because they chose to return based on the successful nesting season before the fire. In contrast, Red-breasted Nuthatches are year-round residents or short-



Bird abundance before (left of dashed line) and after (right of dashed line) the Quartz Fire. Hermit Warblers occurred in similar numbers the first year after the fire, whereas Red-breasted Nuthatches immediately decreased after fire.

## Research

### Birds Anticipate Bigger Aspens

Jaime Stephens, KBO Biologist

The Klamath Marsh National Wildlife Refuge is restoring aspen habitat adjacent to the marsh. As a result of fire suppression, historical aspen habitat now contains abundant conifers. Removing small, crowded, encroaching conifers can reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire while simultaneously achieving historic habitat conditions beneficial to a diversity of wildlife. Various bird species will benefit from habitats containing large aspens and aspen snags, as described in an Oregon-Washington Partners in Flight Bird Conservation Plan ([www.orwapif.org/](http://www.orwapif.org/)).

Integrating bird research with on-the-ground management is an important step in promoting songbird and habitat conservation. When we combine information about songbird habitat requirements with research on how birds respond to land management activities, we have the opportunity to learn about ecosystems. For example, abundance of sprouting

and young aspens would result in an increase in birds that nest and forage in shrubs. These results will inform managers whether their actions were helpful for birds, other wildlife, and the associated habitat.

KBO, in cooperation with the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Klamath Marsh National Wildlife Refuge, has implemented a bird-monitoring program to measure the effectiveness of the fuels reduction and aspen restoration project on the refuge. Success of the project will be measured by comparing abundance of aspen-dependent birds, such as the Mountain Bluebird, Northern Flicker, House Wren and Tree Swallow in the years before and after the management occurs. However, it is not until well into the future when aspens regain their historic ground, that the potential success of this restoration project will be truly apparent.



## Winter Fieldwork

### KBO Biologists Count Birds Of Prey

Driving through the Rogue Valley or Klamath Basin during the winter, one is sure to see many birds of prey: most commonly Red-tailed Hawks and American Kestrels. At times it seems as if these raptors are perched on every other fence post or tree. The movement of raptors into these valleys occurs each winter, when these birds feed on small rodents that inhabit grassy fields and roadsides.

Two years ago, Jeff Fleischer started a project to census wintering raptors in the Willamette Valley. This year, Jeff and the East Cascades Bird Conservancy have expanded this project to census wintering raptors throughout low-lying valleys across the state of Oregon. In partnership with East Cascades Bird Conservancy, biologists from the Klamath Bird Observatory have been conducting roadside raptor

surveys along two routes, one in the Rogue Valley and another at the north end of the Klamath

“IMBD was created in 1993 by visionaries at the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center and the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. Now under the direction of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and U.S.

Fish and Wildlife Service, IMBD continues to focus attention on one of the most important and spectacular events in the life of a migratory bird -- its journey between its summer and winter homes. Today, it is



*An American Kestrel, one of the most common birds of prey on our surveys.*

## Education

### Biodiversity Impacts of the Asian Tsunami Tragedy

*The following is reprinted from the Birdlife International Webpage. We are including a reference to this article in our newsletter because it offers an additional perspective on the tsunami disaster of 2004.*

“In the aftermath of the terrible humanitarian disaster that has affected thousands of kilometers of coastal South and South-East Asia, as well as parts of East Africa, the immediate priority is to prevent disease and further mortality amongst the human population in the areas affected, and to begin the process of reconstruction of livelihoods including basic services.

However, the tsunami event is likely to have some significant impacts on biodiversity, and once the situation has been stabilized these will need to be addressed.”

To learn more about the preliminary assessment of bird spe-



cies that may have been affected visit:

[www.birdlife.net/action/ground/asia\\_tsunami/index.html](http://www.birdlife.net/action/ground/asia_tsunami/index.html)

## Collisions: Clear the Way for Birds

### International Migratory Bird Day, May 14, 2005

For the past 5 years, KBO has been celebrating International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD), promoting awareness of birds and conservation. This years International theme is “Collisions: Clear the Way for Birds”. IMDB themes help draw attention to threats facing birds throughout the Americas.

In 2005 KBO will repeat our highly successful Bird Day celebrations at North Mountain Park, Ashland, Oregon; Klamath Falls, Oregon; and Yreka, California. At North Mountain Park, participants can enjoy bird banding demonstrations, sip shade grown coffee, enjoy guided bird walks, participate in “Bird Olympics” and the “Big Sit”, and learn more about our local birds with the Rogue Valley Audubon Society and the Bureau of Land Management. At Veterans Park in Klamath Falls, participants can observe bird banding, participate in bird walks and educational programs

provided by the Klamath Falls Audubon Society, Wing-watchers, and the Bureau of Land Management. In California, join us in Yreka at Greenhorn Park and Shasta Valley Wildlife Area for a bird walk. Don’t miss out on these fun filled community events! For more information on this years celebrations visit

[www.klamathbird.org/Education/Education.htm](http://www.klamathbird.org/Education/Education.htm)

## Education

### Bird Bio– Hermit Warbler

**Distribution:**

Generally breeds west of the Pacific Crest from southern California to Washington. Winters in the mountains of west Mexico to Nicaragua.

**Habitat:**

Breeds primarily in Douglas-fir forests with dense tree canopy and multiple layers of vegetation including a well-developed understory.

**Feeding:**

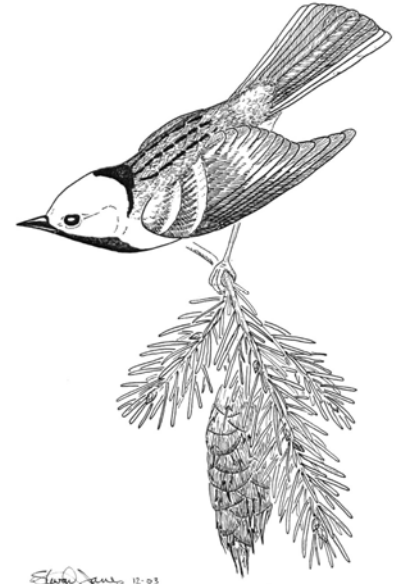
Glean (pick) insects off vegetation and can be seen hovering as they forage.

**Life Span:**

Oldest recorded age – 4 years

**Conservation:**

Oregon-Washington and California Partners In Flight Focal Species,



Hermit Warbler, Stewart Janes

### Trivia Corner– Q&A

How many birds have ever been banded in North America?

- A. 5 million
- B. 57 million
- C. 32 million

Each year, approximately 1.1 million birds are banded by wildlife biologists in North America, as reported by the North American Bird Banding Laboratory. Of those bands, 3 million have been recovered, or found again. The yearly band recovery average is 65,000 bands. These numbers include non-game and game bird species.

Recovering bands, either by re-capturing birds, re-sighting bands, or finding bands on dead birds, provides wildlife biologists with important information about how long birds live, bird migration and dispersal, behaviors and social interactions, bird population trends, and diseases in birds. For game species such as ducks, geese, pheasants, grouse and quail, band recoveries allow wildlife managers to monitor population sizes for hunting limits.

## Partnerships

### Go Wild: Expand Your Fan Club

Meg Kenagy, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Information and Education

The following notice describes an opportunity to support Oregon's wildlife through the Nongame Wildlife Fund. As a KBO partner, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has asked us to share this information. —Melissa Pitkin

There is a spotted frog, a frisky little ground squirrel, and a bevy of native songbirds just waiting to join your fan club. On your part, all it takes is a checkmark in the Nongame Wildlife Fund box on your Oregon state income tax form. Every donation, large or small, matters for the many conservation programs dependent on donations.

Nongame wildlife, animals that are not fished, hunted or trapped, account for 88 percent of Oregon's wildlife. Unfortunately, there is not a stable state funding source for programs to support them; nongame programs receive only a fraction of the amount needed for species and habitat conservation.

To address this problem, the Oregon Legislature estab-

lished the Nongame Wildlife Fund, allowing us to make tax-deductible contributions on our state income tax returns. Donations to the Fund have benefited Oregon's wildlife including: helping bring back the American peregrine falcon, bald eagle, and western snowy plover from the brink of extinction; develop conservation programs for a number of sensitive species including western pond turtle, Willamette Valley grassland birds, yellow legged frog, Townsend's big-eared bat, and the white-headed woodpecker; improve wildlife habitats on private and public lands; provide opportunities to appreciate wildlife in their natural setting; and implement strategic plans to determine the status of various species and establish priorities for programs.



By placing a checkmark in the Nongame Wildlife Fund box on your state income tax form, you can donate \$1, \$5, \$10 or any portion of your refund to support the Nongame

## KBO Membership Events

### Bird Walks and Events

Celebrate birds and wildlife with KBO and our partners at the following Bird Walks and Events:

**Winter Waterbirds** — March 12, 2005 9:00 am-12:00 pm  
On this trip we will test our skills at identifying waterbirds at the Denman Wildlife Area and the Medford sewage ponds. This will involve some easy walking, stopping frequently to learn about local birds.

**Earth Day**—Saturday, April 23, 2005, 11 am - 4pm at North Mountain Park in Ashland. Information table, hands

on activities.

**International Migratory Bird Day**— Saturday May 14, 2005 at North Mountain Park in Ashland (8-12), Veterans Park in Klamath Falls (10-3), and Greenhorn Park in Yreka. Bird banding, bird walks, shade-grown coffee, information table, activities. For more information, visit [www.klamathbird.org/education](http://www.klamathbird.org/education).

## Partnerships

### KBO Fundraising Challenge a Success

2004 was a banner year for the Klamath Bird Observatory for many reasons, one of which being an increased level of financial contributions from our private sector donors. Not only were our scientific and educational programs recognized through the publication of 7 peer-reviewed manuscripts and recognition through 3 national awards, our efforts were acknowledged through an unprecedented amount of public support.

The many individuals who have been KBO members since we were first incorporated continue to show their support

as our membership grows. At the end of the year, through the generosity of an anonymous donor, KBO and our supporters were challenged to meet a \$10,000 fundraising goal. In response to our first ever letter writing campaign KBO supporters came through, exceeding our fundraising expectations! Among many things, funding from the private sector helps our efforts to raise federal dollars through cost-share programs and provides support for our staff to participate in regional and national bird conservation efforts.

The KBO staff and Board of Directors thank you for con-

### Thank You KBO Supporters!

The following people are KBO members and contributors. We deeply appreciate your support. (If you don't see your name here, we apologize. Please contact us so we can update our records!)

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