

The Klamath Bird



Newsletter of the Klamath Bird Observatory, Winter 2007

Our History—KBO Fledging

John Alexander, Executive Director

As Klamath Bird Observatory wraps up another successful year, our staff and Board of Directors look forward to continuing our efforts to advance bird and habitat conservation during the coming year. Since 1992 we have been building momentum, and as I look back on our history I am truly grateful for all of the people who have helped make the solid foundation from which KBO grows.

KBO's Formative Years: 2000-2003

From an expanding regional bird monitoring program, KBO fledged as an institution supporting observation-based science and its application to conservation and land management. By the time KBO was incorporated in 2000 we were implementing our Klamath Basin bird monitoring plan out of our field stations on Upper Klamath Lake. Realization of this program resulted from the type of diverse partnerships that has been essential to KBO's success. NGO's (PRBO Conservation Science and World Wildlife Fund), academic and research institutions (The Evergreen State College, Southern Oregon University [SOU] and the US Forest Service Pacific Southwest Research Station), land management agencies (Klamath Basin Wildlife Refuge Complex, Fremont-Winema National Forest, Bureau of Land Management Lakeview District, and Bureau of Reclamation), and private industry (PacifiCorp) all contributed to that effort.

At our first board meeting, Stewart Janes (SOU professor), George Alexander (business leader), Margaret Widdowson (biological consultant with international experience), CJ Ralph (ecologist at the US Forest Service Redwood Sciences Laboratory),



Ben Wieland shows a student a banded bird as part of KBO's fledging education program

and I established KBO's operating philosophy. KBO's philosophical approach includes: 1) taking a science-based non-advocacy approach to conservation; 2) providing broad-based information, based on fair, unbiased science to inform the conservation process; 3) sharing data collected; and 4) providing insight to management questions based on science rather than personal opinion.

The Rogue Valley Audubon Society Chapter and the World Wildlife Fund's Siskiyou Regional Program gave KBO a leg up by providing our first non-federal funds as matching dollars for federal grants. We were up and running, working in concert with the Redwood Sciences Laboratory and continuing efforts on the Klamath National Forest in California and in the Klamath Basin. In the Rogue Valley we were developing partnerships with many groups including Medford BLM, Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest, Applegate River Watershed Council, and Friends of the Greensprings. Early members of KBO included colleagues, leaders of the local birding community, and community and

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business leaders from across the region, demonstrating wide public support. After years of volunteer service Glenn Johnson became KBO's first field crew leader.

In 2001 KBO developed an important partnership with the Ashland School District. We moved our headquarters to the District's Willow Wind Community Learning Center, starting our outreach and education program. Ben Wieland, SOU Environmental Education Masters Student, fledged KBO's education program, working with K-12 students, college students, community members, and land managers.

In 2002 Jaime Stephens joined KBO as a Master's student at SOU, taking over our extensive censusing program, and Bob Frey joined KBO in 2003 to oversee our banding and training programs. In 2003, KBO, in partnership with the Redwood Sciences Lab, received the Forest Service and Ducks Unlimited Taking Wing award for increasing understanding of wetland ecosystems and habitat relationships through excellence in science and management applications, testimony that we were heading in the right direction.

With a clear mission, diverse support, exciting projects and a devoted board and staff, KBO was off to a strong start. In the next edition of *The Klamath Bird* I will complete this chronicle focusing on the growth and success stories that the past few years have brought.

Science

Bird Banding and Mist-netting — Success in 2006

Bob Frey, KBO Biologist & Banding Program Leader

Klamath Bird Observatory continued its comprehensive, long-term bird monitoring program in the Klamath-Siskiyou Bioregion of northern California and southern Oregon during 2006. The scientific goals of this program are to collect data that can be used to evaluate the reproductive success and population health of Neotropical migratory and resident birds and to maintain a long-term monitoring effort for tracking landbird population trends. The education goals are to provide technical training to students and professionals and outreach opportunities for students and community members in conjunction with KBO's education program.

KBO conducted monitoring at 22 locations during 2006, primarily at 17 constant-effort stations (CES) in the region. The protocol used includes mist net arrays, banding, censusing, vegetation surveys, and genetic/stable isotope and avian influenza sampling. Our efforts begin each year at the onset of the landbird breeding season in May and continue through October, inclusive of the fall migration. Our flagship station at the Willow Wind Learning Center in Ashland, Oregon is operated throughout the year.



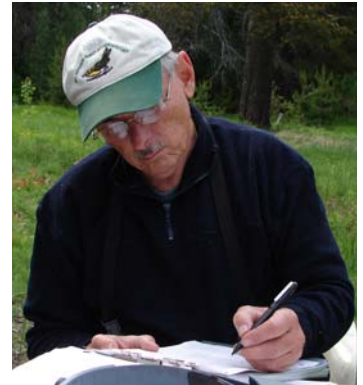
KBO lead intern Ian Ausprey bands a bird

The combined totals for mist net captures from the 22 locations include 11,900 birds of 92 species, 6 subspecies, and one hybrid. They were captured during 279 one-day efforts. 559 surveys (listening and watching for birds) were completed with 156 species and 3 subspecies detected. There were 600 cloacae-swab samples collected in contribution to a continental-wide avian influenza monitoring project and over 3,100 feather samples collected in contribution to Neotropical migratory bird genetics and stable isotopes tracking projects.

This monitoring was accomplished by a group of 12 dedicated interns, including nine from throughout the US, two from Colombia, and one from Jamaica. The internships include instruction in advanced-level ornithological topics and experiential learning at our monitoring sites in specialized methods of bird banding and general field ornithology methods.

KBO provided other training opportunities in advanced bird monitoring techniques to students and biologists as well. We presented an Oregon-Washington Partners in

Flight-hosted techniques workshop, Klamath Demographic Monitoring Network-hosted workshops, and a Western Bird Banding Association-hosted course. KBO biologists contributed as instructors to techniques training courses at La Mancha, Mexico and at Isla San Andres, Colombia. Also, federal agency partner biologists and volunteers were provided experiential training in banding techniques during monitoring efforts at CES sites.



KBO intern Bill Trione records data

Bird banding provides a unique opportunity to provide bird conservation information to students and the public in a very connecting way. In coordination with KBO's Education and Outreach Program, many of these opportunities were offered during the year. Overall, 832 people visited our banding sites during field trips and demonstrations. The Willow Wind site was most visited, scheduled for school and community group outreach efforts that included 598 K-12 students of area schools.

Data resulting from these efforts are contributed to several databases including the USGS North American Bird Banding Laboratory, Institute for Bird Populations' Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship program, Klamath Demographic Monitoring Network, Landbird Monitoring Network of the Americas, UCLA's Center for Tropical Research's migratory bird genetics tracking and avian influenza monitoring projects, and Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology's Avian Knowledge Network.

In 2007 we look forward to working with our partners in continuing this program, the longest-running and most comprehensive in the region. This integrated effort fulfills monitoring goals recommended by the Partners In Flight Inventory and Monitoring Working Group and contributes toward accomplishment of our mission "... to advance bird and habitat conservation through science, education, and partnerships."

Web sites of interest:

Partners In Flight: www.partnersinflight.org

Avian Knowledge Network: www.avianknowledge.net

Bird Banding Laboratory: www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bbl/

Center for Tropical Research: www.ioe.ucla.edu/CTR/

Institute for Bird Populations: www.birdpop.org/

Redwood Sciences Laboratory: www.fs.fed.us/psw/topics/wildlife/birdmon/landbird/

KBO Contributes to Breeding Bird Survey Efforts

Jaime Stephens, KBO Biologist

The North American Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) monitors the status and trends of North American bird populations. The BBS was initiated in 1966 and is jointly coordinated by the United States Geological Survey and the Canadian Wildlife Service. The program was originally developed as a result of concerns over the affects of DDT on birds.

Today the BBS continues to monitor changes in bird populations and identify current threats, such as habitat loss and fragmentation. There are thousands of BBS routes which are surveyed annually by dedicated volunteers. These volunteers follow the same routes each year. At stations along these routes, they spend 3 minutes recording all birds that are seen or heard. Routes are completed by amateur birders as well as professional biologists, and skilled birders are always being recruited to cover local routes.

KBO completes six BBS routes within the Klamath-Siskiyou Bioregion to contribute to this important continental effort. The BBS data is analyzed to yield information about bird populations, including trends in population dynamics to determine whether populations are stable, increasing, or decreasing both at regional and national levels. This information is conveyed to land managers and

conservation scientists to inform decision making. Here at KBO, we are able to compare population trends from our banding sites with regional BBS trends to tell managers how their site is contributing to regional population health.

We are looking for skilled volunteers, who can identify all western birds by sight and sound, to help KBO complete our BBS routes annually. In addition to advanced birding skills, this would require the use of your personal vehicle, and a minimum of a 3 year commitment to 1 or more of the routes. Please contact Jaime Stephens at (541) 201-0866 if you are interested in contributing your time and skills to this very important monitoring program.



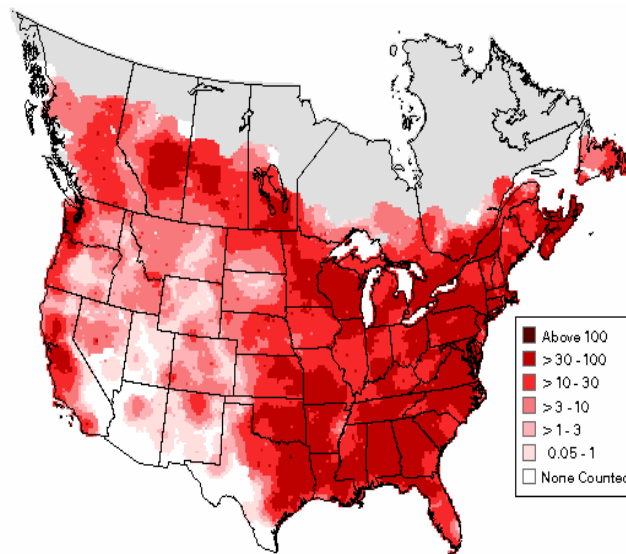
This Klamath Basin field is one of the diverse habitats covered by a BBS route
Photo: KBO File

BBS Data in Action

Nat Seavy, KBO Associate

This past summer, I was invited to attend the Mathematical Biosciences Institute summer program in ecology and evolution. The program brought together ecologists and mathematicians from as far away as Chile to work together on ecological and evolutionary questions. After a week of lectures in mathematics, ecology, and evolution, we broke into small groups to spend two weeks working on focused questions. The group I worked with was lead by Shannon LaDeau, a post-doc at the Smithsonian Institution. LaDeau has been using BBS data to investigate the effects of West Nile Virus on bird populations.

Using the BBS data that LaDeau provided, our group built hierarchical Bayesian models to investigate whether the growth rate of bird populations changed after West Nile Virus was detected. For some species, such as American Crows, there was a change that coincided with arrival of West Nile Virus. For other species, like the House Finch, the BBS data suggested that a change had occurred much earlier, coincident with an outbreak of conjunctivitis, another important disease. This project is an example of how BBS data can be applied to understanding changes in bird populations that occur at large spatial scales and over long periods of time. The results of these types of projects are important for bird conservation, and they provide us with information that may help us predict the spread of other wildlife diseases, such as avian flu.



Breeding Bird Survey Summer Distribution Map for American Crow, 1994-2003. This contour map of relative abundance is based on average counts on each survey for the species. Such maps show large-scale summaries of the BBS data. Finer scale investigations and changes over time are explored using the raw data, such as the analyses of spread of wildlife disease. Map by USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, for more maps or information, see www.mbr-pwrc.usgs.gov/bbs/htm03/ra2003_red_v2.html

Education

KBO Education and Outreach—Success in 2006

Ashley Dayer, Education & Outreach Director

2006 was a year of firsts for Klamath Bird Observatory's growing and diversifying education and outreach program—our first summer camp, education curriculum and kit, classes for Klamath Falls schools, outreach along the Klamath Basin Birding Trail, member open house, Southern Oregon Learning in Retirement course, AmeriCorps member, survey of education program teachers, outreach training for science interns, and events with several new partners. And, even more impressive, it was additionally KBO's second, third, and fourth for many of these firsts.



Ashley Dayer, KBO Education & Outreach Director, teaches students about birds, science, and conservation during a banding station visit
Photo: C. Stokes, Ashland teacher

It was also a year of firsts for many of KBO's program participants—first look through binoculars, first spotting of a Bald Eagle, first exposure with field biologists, first visit to a birding trail site, first time seeing bird banding and mist-netting, first dissection of an owl pellet,

first use of a field guide to learn about birds, and first knowledge about bird science and conservation.

With each of these accomplishments, KBO reached closer to its goal of teaching people about birds, their habitats, and the link between science and conservation.

Numbers of people reached by KBO

If reaching lots of people is a measure of success, KBO soared again this year. KBO educators and volunteers provided:

- 80 classroom and field visits for schools (over 1200 students)
- 28 class sessions for Willow Wind students
- 350 summer campers in Klamath Falls, Central Point, Medford, & Ashland camps related to science, nature, or recreation with a bird educational activity or a banding visit
- 800 kids at 10 festivals and events with the experience of the Migration Obstacle course or learning about birds, feeding behavior, and habitats
- 20 bird walks in the Rogue Valley and Klamath Basin—many including banding station visits

- 24 field biology and environmental education interns trained in education and interpretation
- Bird conservation information to land managers at more than 15 meetings
- Numerous presentations to community groups, college students, local residents, and continuing education groups as part of conferences, workshops, festivals, classes, etc.



KBO Intern Cara Lovell shows students a hummingbird up close Photo: KBO file

Voices of KBO's program participants

The words of participants in KBO's education programs portray again and again the impact KBO has on people:

"Thank you, again, for sharing your birding knowledge with me this morning. You have enriched my experience with birds for the future."

-Local resident

"The entire visit was awesome, and your pacing and expectations are spot on! Clearly, the spark was ignited in quite a few of the kids. . ."

-4th grade teacher

"After that [visit to the banding station], I seriously think I might want to be an ornithologist."

-5th grade student

"The whole experience was fantastic. I believe these partnerships are vital in the education of our kids."

-5th grade teacher

"The bird observatory was awesome. . . If I told someone about it I would say you have to see it to believe it."

-Student



Ashley Dayer, KBO Education & Outreach Director, points out a Western Tanager to Klamath Falls residents birding on their local birding trail
Photo: C. Deas, Klamath Wingwatchers

Wild about Birds!!

Amy Busch, KBO Education Intern

Klamath Bird Observatory has called Willow Wind Community Learning Center its home since 2001. This center offers an alternative education program for Ashland School District's home schooling families. For the past few years, KBO has offered bird classes at Willow Wind. This past fall KBO taught its youngest class. Fourteen 7-12 year old students went wild about birds as they explored



Anastasia Zukowski decorated with items representing the adaptations of a bird grins
Photo: A. Dayer, KBO

birds in a twelve week course. Every Friday morning, these students had the opportunity to learn science through birds with lessons on adaptation, migration, communication, habitats, the scientific process and much more. Hands-on activities, learning games, and outdoor exploration in the many acres of natural land behind

Willow Wind left the students smiling after each class.

Bird Bio: Cedar Waxwing

Emily Molter, KBO Wildlife Education Specialist

The Cedar Waxwing is one of only three species worldwide in the *Bombycillidae* family. Their breeding range extends from British Columbia across Canada, southward to northern California, northern Arkansas, and northern Georgia. Their winter range extends to southern Canada southward through United States and Mexico into Central America. Many birds in Eastern North America prefer the berries of the Eastern Redcedar, hence the "Cedar" in their name. The birds are also named for the red, wax-like tips on the secondary flight-feathers of adult birds. The color of the tips is produced from pigments that are obtained from the birds' fruit diet.

The Cedar Waxwing eats sugary fruits seven months out of the year. They often gorge themselves on fermented fruit, which leads to a flightless intoxication. Many aspects of the birds' lifestyle revolve around fruit because it is the main source of their diet. Cedar Waxwings are a social species that can be seen feeding in large flocks. Flocking is an effective way to search for clumped food sources rather than foraging individually. They are partial migrators and move around to find food. Their breeding season is among the latest of North American passerines coinciding with the seasonal availability of ripening fruits. The birds lay eggs from early June through early August.

The students were inspired about birds and research through visits with ornithologists and birders. They visited the KBO Banding Station at Willow Wind and collected their own data. A local owl expert and KBO member, Vince Zauskey, taught them about owls and how to hoot. As a culminating activity, the students conducted an investigation of barn owl diets. Dissecting owl pellets became quite an adventure, searching for evidence of what their owls were feeding on. They learned that owl pellets contain bones and fur of the animals an owl eats. The owl cannot digest these parts and, thus, regurgitates the remains. Students became quite intrigued as they separated the fur from the bones.



A student sorts through the vole bones in an owl pellet Photo: A. Dayer, KBO

These students now run around Willow Wind taking notice of their local birds, demonstrating that KBO fostered a deeper interest in birds and science among these students.

(Information from [Birds of Oregon](#) edited by D.B. Marshall, M.G. Hunter, & A.L. Contreras; [The Sibley Guide to Bird Life and Behavior](#) by D.A. Sibley; [The Birds of North America](#) by G.R. Geupel and G. Ballard)

Cedar Waxwing populations have increased during the last 20 years over much of North America due to the creation of edge habitats with fruiting trees, the planting of fruiting trees and shrubs in rural and urban areas, and the elimination of the use of DDT from agriculture.



Cedar Waxwing feeding on berries Photo: Brad Sillasen, courtesy of Friends of Sausal Creek

Even though populations are increasing, Cedar Waxwings still have predators including humans. These birds are vulnerable to collisions with windows. Birds can also be struck by automobiles when feeding on fruit near roadways. Collisions can be minimized by keeping fruiting trees away from these potential hazards.

By providing high-protein foods in feeders during the early breeding season and planting fruit-producing shrubs or trees, you can attract Cedar Waxwings to your yard and enjoy their beauty.

KBO Calendar—Join KBO for Winter Events

February 15-18: Winter Wings Festival (Klamath Falls).

Join KBO and partners for workshops, lectures, field trips, and kids' activities. To register, visit www.winterwingsfest.org

February 23-25: Pacific City Birding & Blues (Oregon Coast). Join KBO and partners for workshops, lectures, bird walks, art, and blues music. To register, visit www.birdingandblues.com

March 3: KBO Bird Walk at Ashland Birding Hotspots and Visit KBO Banding Station.

View songbirds up close and learn how KBO's research is contributing to bird and habitat conservation. Meet at 8am at Northwest Nature Shop (Ashland). Leader: Dick Ashford & Emily Molter. To register, 482-3241.

March 10: KBO Bird Walk at Medford Birding Hotspots.

Explore the parks of Medford and view our wintering birds. Meet at 8am at Wild Birds Unlimited (Medford). Leader: KBO Staff. To register, 770-1104.

March 30-April 2: Aleutian Goose Festival (Crescent City, CA). Join KBO, Redwood Sciences Lab, and partners for workshops, lectures, and shorebird watching. To register, visit www.aleutiangoosefestival.org

April 7: KBO Bird Walk at Lower Table Rocks.

Go birding on the trails of Lower Table Rocks

as wildflowers are reaching their peak. Meet at 8am at Northwest Nature Shop (Ashland). Leader: Frank Lospalluto. To register, 482-3241.

April 14: KBO Bird Walk at Bear Creek Birding Hotspots and Visit KBO Banding Station.

View spring migrant songbird species up close. Learn how these birds rely on the greenway. Meet at 8am at Wild Birds Unlimited (Medford). Leader: KBO Staff. To register, 770-1104.

April 20-22: Godwit Days (Arcata, CA).

Join KBO, Redwood Sciences Laboratory, and partners for workshops, lectures, and shorebird watching. To register, visit www.godwitdays.com

April 21: Rogue Valley Earth Day Celebration (Ashland).

11am-4pm at ScienceWorks. Join KBO and partners for activities, games, entertainment, and endless information on conservation. www.parks.ashland.or.us/earthday

May 12: International Migratory Bird Day (Ashland;

Klamath Falls; Yreka, CA). Ashland event at North Mountain Park, 8am-12pm. Klamath Falls event at Veterans' Park, 9am-3pm. Join KBO in celebrating migratory birds at one of these events.

NOTE: School and community groups are invited to schedule a visit to a KBO Banding Station, a classroom visit, or a KBO presentation. Email KBO@klamathbird.org or call 201-0866, ext 3.

Trivia Corner—Q&A

Emily Molter, KBO Wildlife Education Specialist

What species is the smallest North American accipiter?

- A. Red-tailed Hawk
- B. Cooper's Hawk
- C. Sharp-shinned Hawk
- D. American Kestrel

Accipiters are hawks with short, broad wings and a long tail. Only choices B & C are accipiters. Choice A (our most common hawk) is a buteo, and Choice D is the smallest member of the falcon family in North America. The two accipiter species are similar in plumage but the Sharp-shinned Hawk is the smaller of the two (C). The larger female can often be mistaken for the smaller male Cooper's Hawks because of their sexual dimorphic characteristics. Sharp-shinned Hawks ("Sharpies") are the most sexually dimorphic of all North American raptors. Sexual dimorphism is a distinct difference in appearance (color or size) between males and females of the same species. Male Sharpies average only 57% of the body mass of females.

Sharpies are seen throughout the year in the Klamath-Siskiyou Bioregion and can often be seen hunting near bird feeders. This species is one of the few hawks occasionally captured in KBO's mist nets.

Answer: c. Sharp-shinned Hawk.

Partnerships

Avian Knowledge Alliance—New Partnership

Jaime Stephens, KBO Biologist

Countless organizations are currently working to promote bird conservation through a diversity of avenues. The Avian Knowledge Alliance (AKA) has been formed by a group of non-profit organizations, including KBO, in order to take advantage of our unique capacities and roles within the bird conservation arena. AKA is dedicated to collecting, caretaking, and communicating knowledge gained from the study of birds. While international in scope, currently this new alliance is being spearheaded by a handful of organizations involved in the Western Working Group of Partners in Flight, along with several organizations from the eastern states. At the core of the AKA is the Avian Knowledge Net-

work (AKN, Cornell Lab of Ornithology), a sophisticated data management and sharing system designed so that “no data are left behind.” We are currently seeking funding for coordinated efforts to assist with getting data into the AKN, as well as for western region coordinated projects that build on existing data covering various conservation issues. We intend to work with managers and other stakeholders to identify what information and data visualization tools are most urgently needed, and help ensure that important conservation information reaches its intended audiences. Look at the bulletin board (<http://digir.prbo.org/aka/>) to learn more.

Join KBO at Winter Wings

The Klamath Basin of Northern California and Southern Oregon is home to over 350 species of birds throughout the year. It is world famous for spectacular flocks of waterfowl and the largest concentration of wintering Bald Eagles in the lower 48 states.

Winter Wings Festival coincides with the peak number of eagles and other raptors in the Klamath Basin. The four-day event takes place annually on Presidents' Day Weekend with most activities based at the Oregon Institute of Technology campus (Klamath Falls). The purpose of the festival is to share information, increase awareness of community resources and gain an understanding of our wildlife, especially birds, of the Klamath Basin.

Along with our partners (Klamath Basin National Wildlife Refuges, Ducks Unlimited, Oregon State University Extension, and Cornell Lab of Ornithology), KBO will present a bird banding workshop, unveil our local node of eBird, and lead a bird banding field trip. Additionally, KBO's Migration Obstacle course will educate and entertain future birders.

A complete festival brochure with a schedule and description of events and registration information is available at

Thanks Hawks Contributors

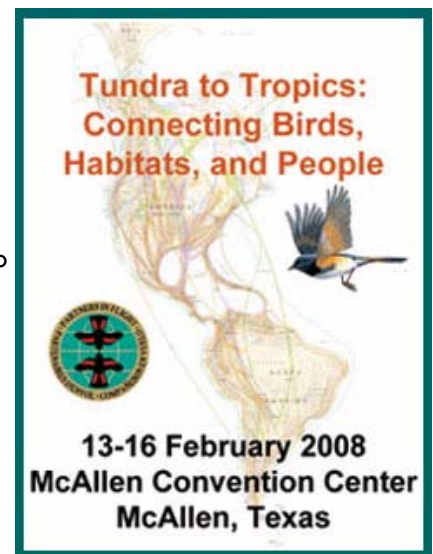
Another thank you to photographers, raptor experts, and educators who have helped make KBO's fall and winter hawks programs a success! Jimmy Dunn, Ned Harris, Joseph V. Higbee, High Desert Museum, Garrett Lau, Jim Livaudais, Lois Miller, Gene Oleynik, Bill Schmoker, Slater Museum of Natural History, Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area, BLM Boise District, Roberta Stacy, Ed Teune, John L. Williams

Also, thanks to field trip volunteers Frank Lospalluto and Bill Trione for sharing their skills.

Partners In Flight 2008 Conference Announced

The 4th International Partners In Flight Conference will be held February 13-16, 2008, at the new McAllen Convention Center in McAllen, Texas. The conference theme will be “Tundra to Tropics: Connecting Birds, Habitats and People”. This theme will be shared with International Migratory Bird Day (www.birdday.org) for 2008. The focus of the conference will be international connections of all sorts that further bird and habitat conservation throughout the Western Hemisphere.

Concurrent paper sessions will focus on issues in bird conservation and will be of two types, 1) standard sessions typical of scientific society meetings, and 2) sessions followed by a facilitated discussion session. The goal of each of the latter sessions will be to produce a strategic action plan to be distributed to all partners within weeks of the conference. There will also be keynote speakers, vendors, social events, a poster session, a variety of single- and multi-day birding field trips, and a proceedings that will include papers developed from posters. Details will be posted on the PIF web site (www.partnersinflight.org) and distributed through various bird conservation listservs as they develop.



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Join the Klamath Bird Observatory!

Contribute to the conservation of birds and habitat.

Become a member and your tax-deductible contribution will support KBO's research and education programs. KBO is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.

<http://www.klamathbird.org/Join/signup.html>