

The Klamath Bird

Newsletter of the Klamath Bird Observatory, Spring 2008



KBO's John Alexander with Terry Rich of Partners in Flight; Photo Ashley Dayer, KBO

KBO Executive Director Given Prestigious Award

By Ashley Dayer, KBO Education and Outreach Director

KBO's Executive Director John Alexander received a *Partners in Flight Leadership Award* at the International Partners in Flight Conference in McAllen, Texas on February 16, 2008. This award recognizes outstanding contributions to the field of bird conservation. Awardees are recognized by Partners in Flight and the American Birding Association for efforts to protect migratory and resident landbirds and their habitats through innovative leadership.

Continued, see "Award" on page 2

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Tundra to Tropics: Celebrating Migration

Contributed by Environment for the Americas, home of International Migratory Bird Day

Migratory birds travel thousands of miles between their wintering and breeding grounds, stopping at various habitats along their route. More than 800 species of migratory birds spend all or part of their lives in the United States, and many depend on healthy habitat in the tropics to support them during migration and winter.

Through national and international partnerships, many organizations and individuals are working to restore and conserve migratory birds and the natural systems on which they depend. As a result of the North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI), bird conservation measures are being implemented to benefit landbirds, waterbirds, shorebirds, and waterfowl. Many of these conservation activities are expanding southward into the Caribbean and

Mesoamerica, thus, covering the full spectrum of bird migration from the tip of South America northward to the Arctic Circle. To successfully conserve native bird species from the Tundra to the Tropics together we must identify and assess the decline of migratory bird species, restore habitat, remove or reduce the impacts of invasive species, reduce the effects of pollution or hazardous spills, and assess the status and trends of habitats.

International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD) celebrates one of the most important and spectacular events in the life of a migratory bird—its journey between wintering and breeding grounds. IMBD events take place at over 350 sites across the Western Hemisphere, through bird festivals, bird walks, and other activities. Each year KBO collaborates with partner organizations to sponsor and



2008 IMBD Poster by noted Mexican wildlife artist Eleazar Saenz

coordinate International Migratory Bird Day celebrations around the Klamath-Siskiyou Bioregion.

Join us in celebrating the miracle of bird migration. For more information on 2008 events, see the calendar page 6.

Science

President's Perch

Dick Ashford, KBO Board President

Dear Friends,

I usually use this column to tie the newsletter articles together for a feeling of continuity. That being said, here's the theme of this newsletter: "Migratory Birds, Tundra to Tropics".

I want to share with you a recent event in which Klamath Bird Observatory was a major participant: The Fourth International Partners in Flight (PIF) Conference, held in McAllen, Texas, from February 12-16. The conference theme was "*Tundra to Tropics: Connecting Birds, Habitats and People*" and the focus was on international connections that further bird and habitat conservation throughout the Western Hemisphere.

The PIF conference was attended by over 750 ornithologists, habitat scientists and bird conservation educators from throughout the Americas. One might expect that a small bird observatory headquarters in southern Oregon would play a small role in such a large gathering. Not so. KBO played a key role in the conference's success. On the scientific front, we were represented by John Alexander and Jaime Stephens. Ashley Dayer and Amy Busch represented our education team.

Each of our attendees not only participated, but took on major leadership roles. Simply stated, the conference

would not have been the success it was without KBO's involvement. Here are some highlights of our contributions: KBO made six scientific presentations, moderated two sessions, led an education evaluation workshop, chaired the day-long Bird Education Working Group meeting, and led group discussions in the Western Hemisphere Bird Banding Network meetings. Every time I encountered a colleague, I was greeted by something like, "Hey, I just attended a meeting led by KBO. You should be proud!" Hey, I *am* proud. What a great group of people we have: talented, energetic, professional and devoted to bird conservation. I hope you're proud as well.

Finally, just in case you're thinking I might be engaging in hyperbole, John Alexander received a Partners in Flight Leadership Award at the conference banquet. It's a BIG deal (see Award Article, page 1). Clearly KBO is leading bird conservation efforts from Tundra to Tropics! As always, thank you for your continuing support. The birds need it and deserve it.

Cheers,

Dick

Dick Ashford
KBO Board President

Award, continued from page 1

For over fifteen years, Alexander has dedicated himself to bird conservation in the Klamath-Siskiyou Bioregion of northern California and southern Oregon, and beyond.

Along with C. John Ralph of the United States Forest Service Redwood Science Laboratory, Alexander founded KBO. Alexander and Ralph were also instrumental in the development of the Klamath Bird Monitoring Network, one of the most comprehensive regional bird monitoring and research programs worldwide. More recently, they have been instrumental in the development of the Landbird Monitoring Network of the Americas, which fosters international bird monitoring partnerships.

Through partnerships with local land managers and involvement with the California and Oregon/Washington Partners in Flight chapters, Alexander has been instrumental in implementing bird conservation measures that integrate bird conservation objectives into state

wildlife action plans and local and regional land management programs. Alexander also serves on several national-level conservation committees, promoting national and international conservation and management programs. Further, Alexander founded an education and outreach program at KBO that serves as a national model. The program reaches thousands of school children, community members and land managers annually, building broad awareness of bird conservation and its basis in science, education and partnerships.

Partners in Flight was launched in 1990 in response to declines in many land bird populations. It is a cooperative effort involving federal, state and local government agencies, philanthropic foundations, professional organizations, conservation groups, industry, the academic community, and private individuals. KBO participates actively in various Partners in Flight chapters, committees, and working groups.

Science

Conservation Through the Americas - Banding Networks and Training

By John Alexander, KBO Executive Director

The data gathered at bird banding stations help determine causes of bird population trends. The data tell us if breeders successfully produce young and if migrants survive their post breeding journeys. Such information helps direct conservation efforts where they will most benefit birds of concern. This information cannot be gained by simply counting birds. This is why KBO is committed to maintaining long-term constant effort banding stations throughout our Klamath-Siskiyou Bioregion. This is also why, in collaboration with the US Forest Service Redwood Sciences Laboratory (RSL), we are committed to promoting regional, national, and international banding networks and providing training in advanced banding techniques.

For over 15 years KBO and RSL have been coordinating the Klamath Bird Monitoring Network in Northern California and Southern Oregon, which is one of the densest networks of banding and survey stations in the world. This network provides the Institute of Bird Populations with one of their most significant banding data contributions in support of the continent-wide, breeding season-focused Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS) program. The KBO-RSL Avian Data

Center is now taking a lead in bringing together banding data contributed by partners at a greater scale--the Western Hemisphere. The data will be brought into a shared database through the Landbird Monitoring Network of the Americas node of Avian Knowledge Network.

Recently, we have participated with many partners, including ProAves Columbia and the North American Banding Council, to form the Western Hemisphere Banding Network. This network will help to facilitate coordinated banding efforts throughout North, Central and South America. On a recent trip to Central America, KBO, RSL and the Forest Service International Program helped Costa Rica Partners in Flight host a meeting with many of that country's bird banders, resulting in the forming of a Costa Rica Bird Banding Network.

KBO is also furthering the use of bird banding as a conservation science tool throughout the Americas through our intensive banding internships with numerous international participants; our long-term monitoring and training program in Tortuguero, Costa Rica; and our participation in international training workshops in affiliation with the North American Banding Council.

Recapture Data Reveals World Traveling Survivors

By Molly Schreiner, KBO Banding Intern and Bob Frey, KBO Banding Project Leader

Although banding data in general reveal a great deal of a bird's life story, when we recapture birds that have been previously banded, we learn additional details regarding the birds' lives, such as longevity and habitat use.

For instance, on 2 August 2006 we recaptured a banded adult male Black-headed Grosbeak, number 8081-80288. By checking past records, we found that this long-distance migrant had been banded nine years previously at the same ecological monitoring station. This species migrates to central and southern Mexico, some 2,000 miles or more from southern Oregon, for the winter, and this specific eight-inch, one and a half ounce bird had successfully completed this journey at least 18 times for a lifetime total of at least 36,000 miles! The longevity record for Black-headed Grosbeaks, according to North American Bird Banding Program data, is 11 years 11 months.

Another migratory survivor is Yellow Warbler band number 2220-43031, first captured and banded on 24 May 2001. This male was recaptured 21 times between 2001 and 2006

at the same station! At least three years old in 2001, he was at least eight years old when recaptured in 2006. If nothing else, this is evidence of a life well lived, and, as with the grosbeak, an impressive feat, given that it likely winters just as far south. The longevity record for Yellow Warblers is 10 years 11 months.

You can adopt a bird that KBO has captured recently and contribute to our science and education programs. Adopters will receive a certificate, a photo of your bird species, the bird's band number and an update of recaptures at the end of the year. For more information about KBO's Adopt-a-Bird Program, please visit our website at <http://www.klamathbird.org/donate>.

Some information for this article collected from [Birds of Oregon: A General Reference](#), edited by D.B. Marshall, M.G. Hunter & A.L. Contreras; and USGS Bird Banding Laboratory <http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/BBL/homepage/longyrec.htm>.

Science and Education

Molt and Stable Isotopes: The Stories Feathers Tell

By Ana Maria Gonzales and Molly Schreiner, KBO Banding Interns

During the past five months, KBO has been working on a new project at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Forensics Lab, near KBO's headquarters in Ashland. We have been collecting feather and tissue samples for stable isotope and feather molt research directed by Keith Larson of KBO, Keith Hobson of Environment Canada and Pepper Trail, ornithologist at the Forensics Lab.

We have processed over 840 specimens, representing about 100 different species. We have focused primarily, although not exclusively, on raptors such as the American Kestrel, Snowy Owl, Great-horned Owl, and Red-tailed Hawk. Specimens were donated by the Forensics Lab and rehabilitation centers. We processed frozen specimens dating as far back as 1985, in addition to some that died during this past year's migration. For each specimen, we documented the bird's age and sex using standard measurements, plumage characteristics, gonad examination and molt.

In general, birds replace feathers every year, a process called molt. Usually this occurs in a single season, after reproduction and before migration. However, some species and age classes show unique molt patterns. For example,

some large species, such as raptors, and others that spend the majority of their time in flight, such as swallows, may be unable to molt completely in a single year. This results in multiple generations of feathers (as many as four) growing within the same feather tract. Knowing that each feather generation represents a different year allows us to determine the age of the bird.

Isotope analysis adds an important new dimension, allowing us to determine not only the age of the bird, but where the feathers were grown, reflecting migration patterns, diet, and habitat use. Unique isotope ratios are present in the environment where a given feather develops. The isotope patterns are incorporated into the feather material and can be analyzed in a laboratory. This added information provides important implications for conservation efforts.

As the first phase of the project comes to a close, we will be taking away a better understanding of and appreciation for the complexity of bird life processes. Studies such as this are key to determining the age structures within populations, as well as complex life history strategies.

KBO Education & Outreach Director Completes Management Program, Wins Award

This Spring KBO's Education and Outreach Director Ashley Dayer earned the Certificate in Nonprofit Management from Southern Oregon University's School of Business. In addition, Ashley received the 2007-8 Nonprofit Management Student Award from the Dean of the Business School. This multifaceted program includes coursework in nonprofit theory, board development, fundraising, accounting, and program development and evaluation. Ashley enrolled in the program with the American Humanics ProCorps program through AmeriCorps to improve her understanding of best practices in nonprofit management. Ashley looks forward to continuing to apply her knowledge and skills to her work at KBO and also to her position on the Boards of Directors of local nonprofit Jefferson Nature Center and the state-wide Environmental Education Association of Oregon.

KBO Welcomes New Intern

By Ashley Dayer, KBO Education and Outreach Director

KBO welcomes our newest Education Intern, Nala Cardillo, who arrives highly qualified and eager to contribute to our education program. Nala considers herself a "lifelong nature enthusiast [who] realized I was 'a birder' at KBO's spring 2006 bird walk around Jefferson Nature Center." Nala has been living in Ashland part-time for the past few years and worked as a naturalist for a dolphin retreat center in the Bahamas. As a graduate from Princeton University, Nala has had many careers including a Field Director for research of Head Start effectiveness, a Project Manager for a financial services firm, and a US Army Military Intelligence Captain.

Nala now hopes to combine full-time environmental education work in the Rogue Valley with art and community service. This spring she is teaching classes at

Jefferson Nature Center, earning a Naturalist Certificate from Siskiyou Field Institute, coordinating volunteers for Earth Day, and serving as Vice-Chair for the



Nala teaching students; Photo Ashley Dayer, KBO Regional Environmental Education Leaders (REEL).

Nala will contribute to KBO's K-12 program in the schools and at summer camps and play a key role in coordinating KBO's summer fundraising event.

Education

Bird Bio: The Yellow Warbler

Melissa Molzahn, KBO Education Specialist



Yellow Warbler male singing; Photo James Livaudais

The Yellow Warbler, in comparison to other North American wood-warblers, is brilliant yellow. It is often heard singing a beautiful spring song tucked away among willows.

Yellow Warblers breed from Alaska and Canada, south to Baja California, and east throughout central Oklahoma, Arkansas, Georgia, and North Carolina. The winter months are spent from southern California and Arizona to Middle

Trivia Corner—Q&A

Melissa Molzahn, KBO Education Specialist

Q: How many nations contain tundra habitat for birds?

- a. 5
- b. 10
- c. 4
- d. 8



and South America, as well as Amazonian Brazil and Peru. Spring migrants tend to arrive in Oregon during late April to early May. They take off early for their winter homes mid-August to early September. During the breeding season, they are very dependent on riparian habitat for nesting. They are found among willows, cottonwoods and native shrubs. They prefer diversity in plant species, especially within the shrub layer.

Due to their reliance on riparian habitat throughout Oregon and California, the Yellow Warbler is vulnerable to habitat destruction. Livestock grazing in riparian areas can lead to decreased plant diversity and destruction of willows and shrubs. Therefore, conservation plans call for grazing to be actively managed or eliminated. Yellow Warblers are Brown-headed Cowbird hosts. When cowbirds lay their eggs in a Yellow Warbler's nest the cowbird chick often out competes the warbler chicks for the parents attention.

The Yellow Warbler is a Partners in Flight conservation focal species in California and Oregon and benefits from the protection and restoration of riparian habitats.

References: Birds of Oregon, first edition 2003, edited by D.B. Marshall, M.G. Hunter, & A.L. Contreras; The Birds of North America, first edition 2005, edited by Dr. Alan Poole and Dr. Frank Gill.

Answer: d. The United States, Canada, Greenland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia all contain tundra habitat. Within the Western Hemisphere, many bird species migrate from their breeding grounds (summer) in the tundra of Alaska and Canada to their non-breeding grounds (winter) in the continental US or beyond to the tropics. The Savannah Sparrow is such a species that breeds in these tundra habitats, as well as other open country habitat in the continental US. At the far north range limit it may spend only two months during the breeding season. From there, the Savannah Sparrow migrates as far south as Honduras and Guatemala to winter. In the winter, the Savannah Sparrows can often be found in a variety of open habitats including salt marshes. Despite its prevalence in grassland habitat, the Savannah Sparrow continues to be a songbird about which we have limited breeding ecology knowledge in Oregon. For the Savannah Sparrow, as well as numerous other bird species that migrate to and from the tundra and the tropics, there is continued need for migratory bird research, conservation, and awareness.

Calendar—Join KBO for Spring and Summer Events

Birding by Ear Field Trip with John Alexander on June 14, 2008

Enhance your skills and grow your appreciation of the birds in the area. Learn calls and songs of birds of the Rogue Valley in oak woodland and conifer habitat. Join John Alexander, KBO Executive Director, in exploring his favorite birding by ear loop through the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument. Learn to identify warbler, sparrow, thrush, and flycatcher vocalizations and distinguish sound-alike species such as Western Tanager and Black-headed Grosbeak. Meet at 7am at Shop N Kart in Ashland to carpool. Return by 1:30 pm. Advance registration required, limit: 15. Call 541-201-0866 to register. Cost: \$25 nonmembers, \$15 KBO members.

May 3: KBO Birdwalk to Lower Table Rock .

Go birding on the trails of Lower Table Rock. Look for Orange-crowned Warbler, Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher, and California Towhee. Meet at 8am at Wild Birds Unlimited (Medford). Leader: Harry Fuller, KBO Birdwalk Leader. To register, call 541-482-3241.

May 10: International Migratory Bird Day

Ashland. Join KBO and partners in celebrating migratory birds at North Mountain Park from 8am-noon. Take a bird walk and visit KBO's ecological monitoring site where we mist net and band birds. See Wildlife Image's raptors up close, sip shade-grown coffee, and take flight on the Migration Obstacle Course.

Klamath Falls. Join OSU Extension, KBO, and partners in celebrating migratory birds at Veterans' Park from 9am-3pm. Take a bird walk at a Klamath Basin Birding Trail site, check out live raptors and waterfowl, participate in numerous kids' activities, and view KBO mist net and bird banding demonstrations.

Montague, California. Join Klamath National Forest, KBO, and partners for bird watching at Shasta Valley Wildlife Area from 8am to after lunch. For more info, call Sam Cuenca at 530-468-1207.

May 17: International Migratory Bird Day Continues!

Tule Lake Refuge. Join KBO and partners in celebrating migratory birds at Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge from 8am to 3pm. Tour Tule Lake Marsh, watch bird banding, or visit the historic Civilian Conservation Corps Camp near the visitor center.

June 7: KBO Birdwalk to Willow Witt Ranch (Grizzly Peak).

Conifer forest and mountain meadows provide habitat for Wilson's Snipe, Western Tanager, Mountain Quail, and Pileated Woodpecker. Learn about the restoration efforts underway on the ranch's wetlands and the wildlife and water monitoring efforts by KBO and our partners. Meet at 8am at Northwest Nature Shop (Ashland). Walk to end at noon; hike Grizzly Peak trail on your own following the walk. Leader: Ashley Dayer, KBO Education & Outreach Director. To register, call 541-482-3241.

June 11: Birding by Ear Workshop at North Mountain Park.

In this workshop we will explore bird songs and calls through a variety of means including sound recordings, mnemonic devices, sonograms, and drawing. The workshop will incorporate lecture, images, guided listening, and participation. Excellent preparation for the Birding by ear! field trip. Instructor: Ashley Dayer, KBO Education & Outreach Director. 7pm-8:30pm. To register, call 541-488-6606.

July 12: Birds in the Hand at North Mountain Park.

See songbirds up close. Visit one of Klamath Bird Observatory's seventeen ecological monitoring stations and observe scientists mist netting and banding songbirds. Learn about these birds using the North Mountain Park habitat and how such research is teaching us about the health of bird populations and their habitats. Leader: Ashley Dayer, KBO Education & Outreach Director. 9am-10:30am. To register, call 541-488-6606.

August 2: KBO Birdwalk to Mount Ashland.

View the bird life on the highest peak of the Siskiyou Mountains. Mountain Bluebirds, Green-tailed Towhees, White-headed Woodpeckers, Red-breasted Sapsuckers, and Gray Jays may be spotted. Meet at 8am at Northwest Nature Shop (Ashland). Bring water. Leader: Harry Fuller, KBO Birdwalk Leader. To register, call 541-482-3241.

August 9: KBO Birdwalk to Wagner Butte.

Follow the Wagner Butte trail through conifer forest and mountain meadows. Sagebrush and plentiful wildflowers surrounding the trail will add to the bird sightings. Meet at 8am at Wild Birds Unlimited (Medford). Bring lunch, water, and sturdy shoes for a full day of hiking. Leader: Frank Lospalluto, KBO Contract Biologist. To register, call 541-770-1104.

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.

Partnerships

KBO Partner Jefferson Nature Center Opens Its Doors

Susan Cross, Jefferson Nature Center Executive Director

The Jefferson Nature Center concept emerged in 2000, when a small group recognized a need for education about the Klamath-Siskiyou Ecoregion, a biodiversity hot spot. As a result, the Jefferson Nature Center (JNC) was founded in 2003 as a 501(c)3 non-profit whose mission is to instill a lifelong desire to understand, appreciate, and connect with the natural world using natural history study and the arts.



Newly completed Jefferson Nature Center, on the grounds of US Cellular Community Park in south Medford. Photo JNC Staff.

Medford was identified as an ideal site for JNC's nature center. The JNC board and staff attended planning meetings for the development of a new multi-use sports park along the Bear Creek riparian zone, encouraging inclusion of a nature center in the park's master plan. The city of Medford then selected JNC to implement the nature center. A lease agreement was signed in 2005 for an existing farm house and approximately five acres of riparian corridor for JNC headquarters.

Membership & Contributions

Your contributions help KBO advance bird and habitat conservation. Additionally, we are able to leverage dollars from matching grants and demonstrate public support when applying for new grants. Check out www.KlamathBird.org/donate to see how you can contribute through an in-kind donation, endowment donation, or planned giving.

Name _____ Address _____
Telephone _____ Email _____

Please select one and make your tax-deductible donation payable to: Klamath Bird Observatory or "KBO". Send to KBO, PO Box 758, Ashland, OR 97520.

- _____ Regular Annual Membership \$35 _____ Student Membership \$15
- _____ Supporting Membership \$100 or more _____
- _____ Lifetime Membership One-time donation of \$1,000 or more

Please contact me with more information regarding planned giving or endowment donations.

With generous support from Jeld-Wen Corporation, Medford Fabrication's Oregon Community Foundation Fund, a State of Oregon Small Community Incentive Fund Grant, and private individuals, JNC was able to raise \$70,000 to renovate the farmhouse. Labor was supplied by volunteers, youth from the Oregon Building Congress's Construction Academy, Jobs Council crews and the Rogue Community College Construction Department. The City of Medford built the parking lot and established water, sewer and electrical connections.

During renovation, JNC began school programs in 2004, and has provided nature and science programs for approximately 1,200 students per year in the Medford and Phoenix/Talent districts. JNC collaborates with partner groups, Klamath Bird Observatory (KBO), Rogue Valley Audubon, Bear Creek Watershed Education Partners, Oregon Trout, and Bear Creek Watershed Council to deliver education programs.

KBO will open a new office at JNC that will complement KBO's Ashland headquarters and Upper Klamath Field Station. At this site, KBO will replicate our Songbird, Science, and Schools model of environmental education. With support from the Carpenter Foundation and the West Family Foundation, KBO has started a new ecological monitoring station that now serves as a platform for education efforts at JNC.

JNC will host a benefit Natural History Book Fair and Auction the evening of May 30 (5:30pm), featuring local brews, wines, food and music. For more information about this or other events, see www.jeffersonnaturecenter.org.

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www.KlamathBird.org



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