



# THE KLAMATH BIRD

The Official Newsletter for the Klamath Bird Observatory  
Spring 2004



## KBO Wins National Awards

### Honors for 10 Years of Excellent Research

The Klamath Bird Observatory, and our partner the US Forest Service Redwood Sciences Laboratory (RSL), won prestigious national bird conservation awards for our efforts to integrate bird conservation objectives with land management programs through the Klamath Demographic Monitoring Network (KDMN). Two awards recognizing our efforts to coordinate the KDMN were presented at the 69th North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference in Spokane, Washington. We are grateful to the Network's many partners and contributors who continue to make our regional bird-monitoring program an international model for integrating bird conservation and land management through science.

#### **Taking Wing Award**

John Alexander, KBO Executive Director, and CJ Ralph, RSL Ecologist and KBO Research Director, received the Taking Wing Award for increasing understanding of wetland ecosystems and habitat relationships through excellence in science and management applications. This award is the first Taking Wing Award granted for a landbird research program. This represents the furthering of All-Bird Conservation where waterfowl, landbird, shorebird, wading bird, and seabird conservation



issues are united under the North American Bird Conservation Initiative.

*Taking Wing, led by the USDA Forest Service and Ducks Unlimited, is a partnership program with 14 years of experience and accomplishments in building, maintaining, and enhancing partnerships to conserve waterfowl and wetland-dependent wildlife. For more information visit:*

<http://www.fs.fed.us/biology/wildlife/takingwing/>

#### **Partners In Flight National Award**

The US Fish and Wildlife Service, the American Birding Association and Swarovski Birding, honored CJ Ralph and the Klamath Demographic Monitoring Network with the National Partners In Flight Award for Leadership. CJ and the Network were awarded for furthering the goal of protecting migratory and resident...



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#### **Learn more about KBO in this edition:**

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## Science Findings:

### Predicting Patterns of Fire Severity- *Preliminary analyses from the 2001 Quartz Fire*

In much of the Klamath-Siskiyou ecoregion the effects of wildland fire are highly variable; some areas burn hot, killing even the largest trees (high severity), whereas nearby areas of the same fire may burn much cooler, having relatively little effects on forest vegetation (low severity). To document fire severity, the U.S. Forest Service creates Burned Area Emergency Rehabilitation (BAER) maps that classify areas as being burned with high, moderate, or low severity. These classifications are used to prioritize management actions that stabilize soils and prevent post-fire erosion.

Fire behavior is controlled by characteristics of weather, topography, and fuels. The relative importance with which these factors contribute to fire behavior is critical information for land managers making decisions about fuels treatments (thinning, prescribed burns) on fire-prone landscapes. In May and June of 2001 KBO biologists surveyed birds and vegetation at approximately 1,000 stations in the Little Applegate Valley of southern Oregon in partnership with the Applegate Watershed Council and the Rogue National Forest. The goal was to collect data on bird-habitat relationships within the watershed in order to monitor bird populations through time. Just two months later, (August 9<sup>th</sup> - August 31<sup>st</sup>), the Quartz Fire burned 2,493 hectares (6,160 acres) of

the Little Applegate Valley, including 57 stations where we had collected our data. This presented us with the unique opportunity to investigate the ability of topography and pre-fire vegetation structure to predict fire severity.

*Continued on Page 3 (Quartz Fire)*



### **National Awards** *(Continued from Page 1)*

... landbirds and their habitats through innovative leadership. CJ continue to demonstrate outstanding guidance and direction that contributes to advancing PIF conservation efforts. CJ's creation of significant partnerships, demonstration of leadership skills at regional and national levels, and coordination of groups and individuals with diverse interests and expertise to effectively implement bird conservation planning have far-reaching implications.

*"These folks have really put out a tremendous effort to help us design monitoring and management strategies on federal lands. I am honored to work with them, their dedication to our avifauna is infectious." -- Barb Kott, US Forest Service and BLM Pacific Northwest Regional Avian Program Manager.*

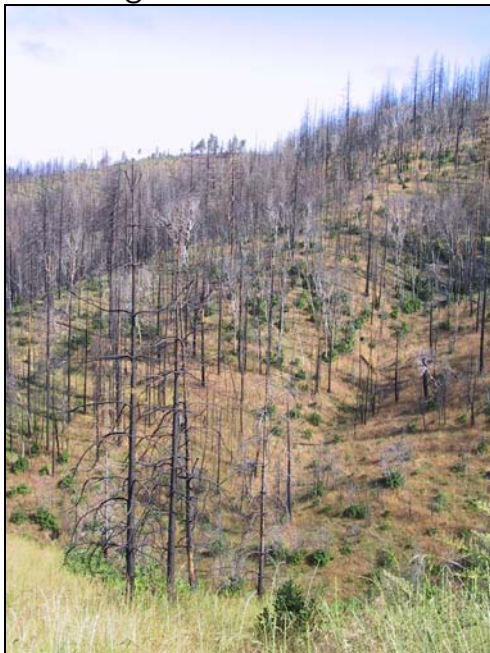
***The Taking Wing and National Partners In Flight awards are highly competitive, award winners are recognized from a large pool of nominees through a rigorous peer review process.***

-Melissa Pitkin, KBO Education and Outreach Coordinator



### **Quartz Fire** (Continued from Page 2)

As part of our on-going fire research, funded by the Joint Fire Sciences Program, we have begun to analyze these data. Our preliminary analysis of characteristics that may predict fire severity suggests three major trends: (1) stations with large trees were more likely to burn with low severity than stations with smaller trees, (2) stations with more ladder fuels (e.g., high shrub cover and areas where the shrubs reach into the forest canopy) were more likely to burn with greater severity, (3) high elevation stations burned less severely than the low elevation stations; a pattern that may be related to changing weather conditions as the fire burned. This analysis will provide land managers with decision-making tools about fuels treatments and wildfire management.



*This photo taken after the Quartz fire burned in the Applegate Valley is an example of a high severity fire.*

Continuing analysis of the data collected will provide insight into how the Quartz fire affected bird populations. For more information on our research on wildland fire and fuels treatments in the Klamath-Siskiyou ecoregion visit our web-page:

<http://www.KlamathBird.org/Projects/fire.htm>

-Nat Seavy, KBO Research Associate

Nat Seavy is a PhD student at the University of Florida and is leading KBO's Joint Fire Sciences research as part of his dissertation work.

## Mist-Netting Spotlight

### Willow Wind - Winter Capture Results

As part of the Klamath Demographic Monitoring Network, KBO operates a year-round banding station at our headquarters in Ashland, Oregon. Located at the Ashland School District's Willow Wind Community Learning Center, the Willow Wind station (WIWI) consists of 11 mist-nets used to monitor bird populations. This site, located along Bear Creek, was formerly a small farm with livestock grazing until ten years ago. The dominant vegetation is White Alder (*Alnus rhombifolia*), Red Alder (*A. rubra*), willow species (*Salix*), Himalayan Blackberry (*Rubus discolor*), and Cattails (*Typha* sp.). Eight of our mist-nets are situated within or adjacent to the well-established marshy riparian zone; the remaining three are located where willow, alder, and pine were planted in 2000. These plantings are part of an ongoing...

*Continued on Page 4 (Winter Banding)*



**Winter Banding** *(Continued from Page 3)*

...habitat restoration effort of this formerly grazed hillside, which is otherwise dominated by non-native grasses and thistle. The Lomakatsi Restoration Project and students at Willow Wind are conducting the restoration project.

From November 7, 2003 through March 20, 2004, the WIWI station was operated for five hours following local sunrise once a week. Here are the top 5 species caught during that time period:

<b>Species</b>	<b>Number caught</b>
Golden-crowned Sparrow	63
Song Sparrow	26
Bushtit	17
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	17
American Goldfinch	15



*Bushtit*

These results are much what you would expect for winter in Ashland's riparian habitats. Golden-crowned Sparrows spend the winter in Ashland, before returning to the Arctic Tundra to breed. Song Sparrow's, Bushtits, and American Goldfinch are year-round residents commonly found in riparian habitats. Ruby-crowned Kinglets are short-distance



*Student from Southern Oregon University's Masters in environmental Education Program visit the KBO's Willow Wind banding station.*

migrants, spending the winter in the lowland valleys and nesting in high-elevation forests east of the Cascades.

The WIWI station serves as KBO's nature education demonstration site. During the winter months, KBO and the Northwest Nature Shop (Ashland, OR) presented public tours of the WIWI station. As part of KBO's continuing effort to provide training opportunities, we initiated an internship with a student from South Medford High School who worked with KBO as part of his senior research project. This young scientist will be entering a full-time internship with our summer program before beginning studies at Oregon State University in August (See page 4 for more!).

KBO thanks the Jackson County's Title III program, the Bureau of Reclamation, the Ashland School District Community Learning Center, and the Northwest Nature Shop for supporting this project.

-Bob Frey, KBO Research Biologist





## High School Senior Project: *Tracking Birds at Willow Wind*

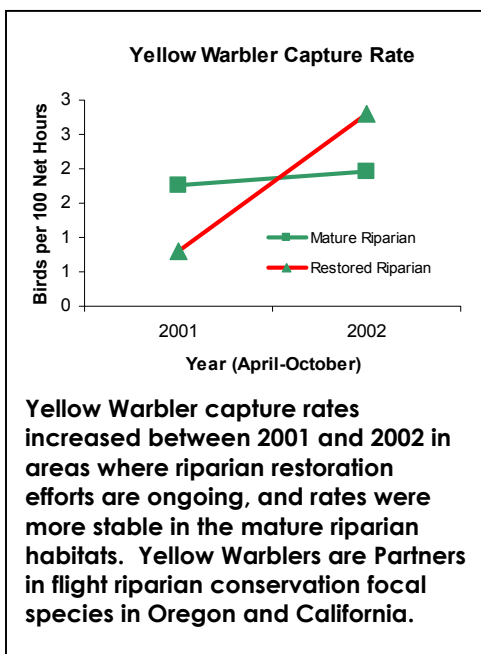
For my senior project at South Medford High School, I wanted to do something that would enable me to study and learn more about one of my favorite groups of animals: birds. I accomplished this by helping band birds in the winter of 2003-2004 and by examining past mist-netting data from the Klamath Bird Observatory's station at their Willow Wind headquarters. Volunteering for KBO has been a life-changing event. It has introduced me to an entirely different field of biology. The first bird I took out of a mist net was a Song Sparrow--what a thrill that was. Under the supervision of primary banders, I was able to experience what it is like to properly hold a bird in my hand while measuring and recording scientific data. I have now handled many birds ranging from Belted Kingfishers and Northern Flickers to Ruby-Crowned Kinglets and Lincoln's Sparrows. For more than three months I was up before the crack of dawn each Saturday to help set up the 11 mist-nets. After setting up the nets, the wait was on. If the weather permitted, the birds were usually cooperative and we would find them in our nets on our rounds every 20 to 30 minutes.

After finishing with the fun part of my senior experience---the mist netting--- I started to look into what would be interesting to research for my senior paper. I soon came to the answer, with help from my mentor, John Alexander. My paper would be on the effects of changing habitat, resulting from habitat restoration, on passerine birds. John provided mist-net data for the period of April 2001 through December 2002. With help from Bob Frey and Sherri Kies we compared monthly capture rates between nets located in mature riparian habitat and nets located in a restoration area to determine if there was an increase or decrease in capture rates. We graphed capture rates of Lincoln's Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Yellow Warbler, and Lesser Goldfinch to illustrate differences between the mature and restored riparian habitats to assess if a common trend could be identified.

Over the two-year period, capture rates for Lincoln's Sparrow, Song Sparrow, and Yellow Warbler generally increased during most months in the restoration nets, while the capture rate for the Lesser Goldfinch decreased. One explanation for the increase in capture rates for the sparrows and warbler could be explained by habitat change. The restored habitat became more desirable as the vegetation grew and matured which could provide better cover and foraging ground. Capture rates for these species, may continue to grow over the next several years as the plants mature. The general decline in Lesser Goldfinch capture rates can also be explained by habitat. Goldfinches are generally found in open fields eating seeds from plants. The restored riparian zone, is displacing the open habitat.

Working for KBO was definitely a hands-on, fun and educational experience that I would recommend to anyone that has a fondness for nature. I plan to continue my bird banding experience this summer by working with KBO at a variety of their stations in northern California and southern Oregon.

-Josh Williams, KBO Intern and South Medford High School graduating senior





## KBO's Education and Outreach Programs Expanding

As the new education and outreach coordinator for the Klamath Bird Observatory, I am pleased to give an update on some new directions and expansions within KBO's growing education and outreach programs!

For school-aged students, we have added to and expanded our after school and classroom education to include hands-on bird identification activities, an excellent preparation for a follow-up visit to our mist-netting demonstrations at Willow Wind. In the classroom, students focus on honing their observational skills as they sketch, label and describe stuffed bird specimens of common birds found in the Rogue Valley. Once described and sketched the students face the challenge of identifying their bird using a field guide. This activity is a favorite for all ages and the students rise to the challenge of bird identification. In the last 6 months we have visited 33 classrooms and 933 students in Ashland, Talent, and Medford.

As a follow-up to a classroom visit, groups are invited to learn about and witness science in action through a mist-netting

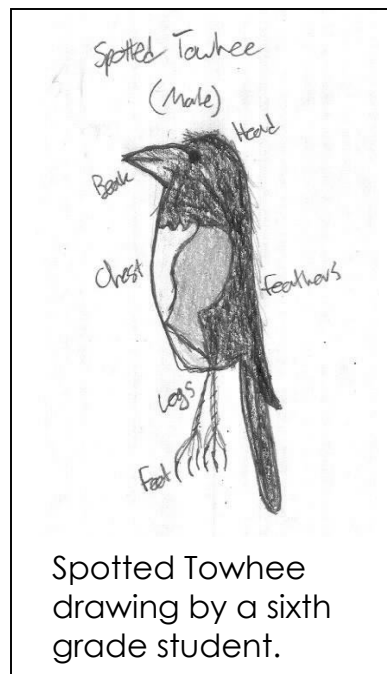
demonstration. The hour-long experience involves checking mist-nets for birds, learning about the banding process and observing these beautiful migrant and resident birds up-close. In the last 6 months we have had 8 classes and 210 students participate in mist-netting demonstrations at Willow Wind.

To improve our presence in the community and to further communicate the findings of

our research, we are increasing our involvement in public education events. This spring was busy as we distributed information to hundreds of people at the Master Gardner's Fair, the Bald Eagle Conference, an SOU Elderhostel birding trip, presenting talks at local lecture series including the SOU science seminars, Bear Creek Watershed Education Partners meetings, leading bird walks in partnership with The Nature Conservancy at Table Rock and the Northwest Nature Center, and delivering 3 presentations at the Rogue Valley Audubon Society's annual Bird

Symposium. In keeping with tradition, we also celebrated International Migratory Bird Day in Klamath Falls and Yreka with biologist-led bird walks and mist-netting demonstrations. New this year was an International Migratory Bird Day celebration at North Mountain Park in Ashland. It was well attended by approximately 75 people participating in bird walks, mist-netting demonstrations,...

*Continued on Page 8 (Education and outreach)*





## Why Take a Klamath River Birding Trip?

### Introducing: The Klamath River Bird Finder

Since plenty of good field guides for identifying birds exist, what the birder needs today is more information on new places to visit and how to enjoy them. *Klamath River Bird Finder*, a recent publication of Living Gold Press, does just that. The book details tours from Irongate and Copco Lakes down the Klamath River nearly 150 miles to its confluence with the Trinity River, as well as up to the Marble Mountain and Siskiyou Crests in California and a portion of Oregon. The experience of nearly 30 years living in and birding the region, plus the collaboration with other local birders and artists has resulted in a very thorough guide.

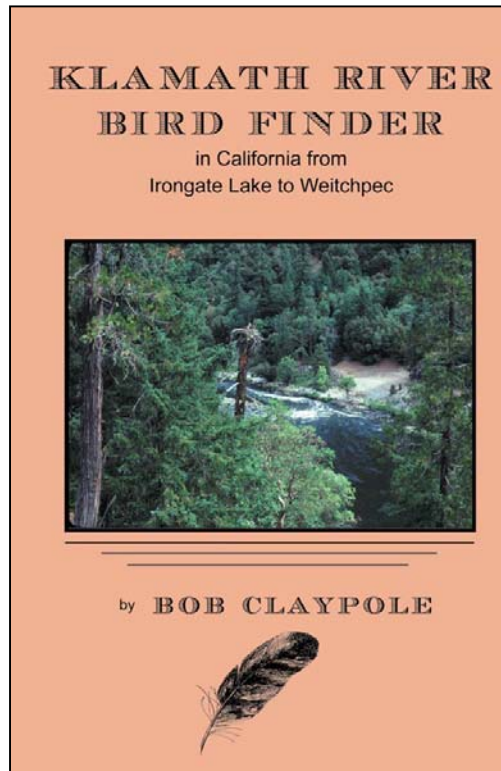
The Klamath River bisects the Klamath-Siskiyou Bioregion, renowned for its diverse geology and plant species. The area may support the most endemic serpentine plants in California. Some of these interesting plants, such as Baker's Cypress, Brewer's Spruce and Foxtail Pine, plus a few endemic flowers, crop up along the tours beside the many bird species. About 250 birds have been recorded here, a considerable number since no coastline or

large marshes exist within the List Area. (Nearby Scott and Shasta Valleys are excluded from the List Area but are briefly touched on in *Bird Finder*.)

Tours detail how to find such diverse species as American (Blackbilled) Magpie in the juniper woodland, Allen's Hummingbird and Ruffed Grouse in the more forested downriver areas, or Gray Jays in the highlands and California Thrashers in the lowlands. The river corridor is sparsely populated (by primates, that is), largely "wild" National Forest lands, and is very scenic, and so is a great place for the naturalist to explore.

*Bob Claypole has kept detailed accounts of the bird life along the Klamath River for nearly 30 years. He provides all the birding statistics and even includes pertinent notes on*

*local geography, flora, fauna, and lore.*



KBO contributed mist-netting and point count data to help predict breeding status, arrival and departure dates and for many of the species found in this guide.

The *Klamath River Bird Finder* can be purchased online at:

**[www.livinggoldpress.com](http://www.livinggoldpress.com)**

Contact Living Gold Press (PO Box 2, Klamath River, CA 96050) to request ordering information.

- Bob Claypole, KBO Partner



**Education and Outreach** (Continued from Page 6)

...“Bird Olympics” game for kids, and free shade grown coffee. The event was truly a success made possible by the cooperation of KBO, North Mountain Park, Rogue Valley Audubon and the BLM. And finally, a huge accomplishment was the re-organization of the KBO website. All the staff has worked hard to get the most up-to-date information about KBO’s outstanding projects on the web. Take a look, and let us know what you think:

**[www.KlamathBird.org](http://www.KlamathBird.org)**

As the summer approaches, our outreach efforts focus on creating posters, talks, and flyers summarizing our latest results on bird response to wildfire and fuels treatments. In addition, we are excited to be working on the creation of 3 signs for the Bear Creek Greenway expansion focusing on bird conservation. Watch for them as the summer draws to a close!

If you have any questions or great ideas for future education and outreach efforts, give me a call or email: (541) 201-0866, **[mp@KlamathBird.org](mailto:mp@KlamathBird.org)**.

*KBO’s Education and Outreach Program is funded in-part by Jackson County Title III Program*

-Melissa Pitkin, KBO Education and Outreach Coordinator



**KBO Announcements**

**September 9 - 12, 2004** The Western Bird Banding Association (WBBA) will hold its 79th Annual Meeting in conjunction with the Western Field Ornithologists (WFO) and Oregon Field Ornithologists (OFO). The Klamath Bird Observatory will host the joint Annual Meetings in Ashland, Oregon, September 9 - 12, 2004.

**KBO has a new website!**  
**[www.KlamathBird.org](http://www.KlamathBird.org)**



Ruby-crowned by Kathy Cooper

*The Klamath Bird* is the official news letter for the Klamath Bird Observatory, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. We can be reached by mail at PO Box 758, Ashland, Oregon 97520 or by email at [KBO@KlamathBird.org](mailto:KBO@KlamathBird.org). Our phone number is (541) 201-0866 and our home page is located at [www.KlamathBird.org](http://www.KlamathBird.org).





Klamath Bird Observatory - 2004  
Membership Sign-up Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ -

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please cut and mail this Klamath Bird  
Observatory membership sign-up  
form, with annual dues to:

**Memberships, Klamath Bird Observatory**  
**PO Box 758, Ashland, Oregon 97520**

Membership Type; Check One:

\_\_\_\_\_ - Regular annual membership - \$1-35.

\_\_\_\_\_ - Supporting Membership - \$100 (Receive  
an embroidered KBO hat).

\_\_\_\_\_ - Lifetime Membership - \$1,000 or more.  
(Provides enough funding for a KBO Intern  
housing and stipend for one month. Receive  
an embroidered KBO hat and a collector's  
edition Klamath Demographic Monitoring  
Network T-shirt).

Donations made payable to KBO are tax  
deductible.

Membership form - Klamath Bird Spring 2004



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