

The Klamath Bird

Newsletter of the Klamath Bird Observatory, Fall 2007



Unusual Birds Visit KBO Banding Sites

Bob Frey, KBO Biologist & Banding Program Leader

One of the exciting and fun parts of the work we do at KBO is setting up nets to capture birds, and we never know just what will show up! During the spring and fall migration seasons especially, any number of surprises can be encountered. In years past, we have captured several species considered unusual or rare for southern Oregon and northern California, such as Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Red-eyed Vireo, Ovenbird, and Prothonotary Warbler.

So far this year, we have captured, banded, and released five unexpected species. A Swamp Sparrow was captured in April at our Willow Wind (Ashland) ecological monitoring station. This particular bird was an after-hatch year (AHY; an individual hatched in an unknown year previous to the current calendar year) of unknown sex (males and females look alike when not in breeding condition). This species is widely distributed east of the Rocky Mountains, but considered a rare to uncommon transient and winter visitor in western Oregon. In June, at our Odessa Marsh station

on Upper Klamath Lake's western shore, we captured a Gray Catbird determined to be a second-year (SY: hatched in 2006) of unknown sex. The Catbird is considered rare in southern Oregon, although there is a breeding



Swamp Sparrow. Photo: J. Livaudais

population in northeast Oregon's Blue Mountains.

Also in June, we captured a Black-and-White Warbler, another Neotropical migrant, also at our Odessa Marsh station. This individual was an AHY male in probable breeding condition. The Black-and-White Warbler is a regular transient west of the Rocky Mountains.

Then in early July, we captured an AHY Brown Thrasher of unknown sex at our Wood River Wetland station on the eastern shore of Agency Lake, near Chiloquin. The Brown Thrasher is quite rare in Oregon, with just a handful of previous recorded sightings.

Another Neotropical migrant, the Hooded Warbler, was captured at our Topsy Grade station on the Klamath River near the California border, also in early July, a SY female. Surprisingly, she was then captured again in



Brown Thrasher. Photo: J. Livaudais

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the same net 11 days later! The Hooded Warbler is a regular transient and occasional breeder in the Pacific Northwest.

Tracking of rare bird sightings is one of many functions of KBO's ecological monitoring stations, supported in part by the USDA Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Klamath County, and other cooperators. If you would like an opportunity to visit a station in person, please call KBO at 201-0866.

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made at our website:**

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

Science

President's Perch

Dick Ashford, KBO Board President

Dear Friends,

As a bird watcher, I always hope to find an uncommon or rare bird, and the crew found several this banding season (see page 1 article). Exciting stuff. That being said, did you ever wonder why some birds are "rare" or "uncommon"? It may be because an individual bird has wandered out of its normal range, been blown off course by a storm, etc. In too many instances, however, entire species are becoming rare. We all know it's happening, but there are conflicting views as to why, and what it will take to reverse the trend.

That's where KBO comes in. Through scientific study and analysis, we contribute in an unbiased, objective manner. Simply stated, we let the science do the talking. KBO's products help government agencies and elected officials make informed public policy decisions. Promoting bird and habitat conservation is important work, and we work hard to get it done right. There are many reasons to do so, but the best reason is the simplest – it's the right thing to do.

We couldn't do it without you. Your financial support is essential to KBO's success. To paraphrase airline pilots, we know you have a choice in supporting conservation groups

and we thank you for choosing Klamath Bird Observatory. We value your membership and support.

This year, we've added ways that you can help us (and have fun as well). Please see our Adopt-a-Bird and Adopt-a-Day programs displayed on the newsletter insert; they support our day-to-day operations and they make excellent gifts (hint, hint).

We share your enjoyment of the birds and beautiful landscapes of the Klamath-Siskiyou Bioregion and we're working hard to ensure that same enjoyment will be available to future generations. Thank you for your continuing support. The birds need it and deserve it.

Cheers,



Dick Ashford
KBO Board President

Klamath Bird Observatory Supports Conservation Planning in Oregon

John Alexander, KBO Executive Director

KBO has been involved with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) efforts to complete the Oregon Conservation Strategy (<http://www.dfw.state.or.us/conservationstrategy/>). This strategy is part of international efforts to conserve wildlife and the lands and waters where they live for future generations. Now KBO is working with ODFW and other partners to develop a monitoring plan for evaluating the effectiveness of the Oregon Conservation Strategy with regard to meeting its stated conservation goals.

In 2004, the Partners in Flight Oregon-Washington Chapter and ODFW held an all-bird workshop that provided an opportunity to inject regional bird conservation objectives into the Strategy. At that workshop, KBO presented information about how landbird monitoring aids the development of conservation objectives and can be used to link these objectives with priority management challenges. This process highlights opportunities to implement habitat-based bird conservation objectives that benefit many wildlife species.

Now we are working to identify 'indicator species' that reflect habitat conditions important for the survival of 'at-risk' Strategy species. KBO research and monitoring efforts demonstrate why species assemblages serve as excellent indicators. Standard bird monitoring methods are a cost-effective tool for measuring the ecological effects of general conservation efforts, as they allow us to measure the response of many species at once. The Monitoring Team has adopted this approach and we are relating Partners in Flight conservation focal species to the Strategy's key conservation issues within the state's monitoring framework.

See top of page 3 for more about the Golden-crowned Sparrow in its wintering ground. Photo: J. Livaudais



Counting Resident and Migrant Birds Using Area Search Surveys

Jaime Stephens, KBO Research Biologist

In 2007, KBO has doubled its fall area search survey efforts. Bird monitoring is a proven method for evaluating fuels reduction practices and their effects on native wildlife populations on federal lands. As part of KBO's regional fire management monitoring program, we help assess the effectiveness of fuels treatment efforts and restoration of fire-adapted ecosystems conducted by USDA Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management. We are conducting surveys at Rocky Point and Chiloquin, as in past years, and this year are expanding our efforts into both the Klamath River Canyon and the Ashland Watershed.

In the fall, we survey for resident and migrant birds, as opposed to spring surveys, which quantify the breeding populations. This is an important time of year for migrants, who are stocking up on food during brief stopovers along their migration route. Some migrants, such as the Golden-

crowned Sparrow, are also arriving at their wintering grounds. It is important that we monitor our resident bird populations outside of the breeding season because for many their habitat requirements may vary throughout the year.

KBO surveys bird populations in autumn using a method called *area search*, as opposed to the spring *point count* surveys. During point count surveys, completed at 12 stations per morning, the surveyor stands in place for five minutes and records all birds that are seen and heard. With the area search method, surveyors count birds at six stations each morning for 20 minutes per station, during which all birds seen and heard are counted while walking a 50 meter radius plot. Birds are less vocal in the fall, and the longer survey time and ability to move throughout the plot allows us to detect more birds in the area.

International Intern Training with KBO and the National Park Service

Ashley Dayer, Education & Outreach Director

Locally, KBO and the National Park Service (NPS) collaborate to assess and monitor migratory and resident birds in the Klamath-Siskiyou Bioregion. These groups have trained dozens of bird banding and education interns, many from Latin America. This training program, also supported by Southern Oregon University and Ashland Rotary, is now being integrated into NPS's *Park Flight Migratory Bird Program*.

Park Flight is a cooperative venture of the NPS, National Parks Foundation, American Airlines, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, U.S. Agency for International Development and the University of Arizona. *Park Flight* helps conserve shared migratory bird species and their habitats in U.S., Canadian, Latin American and Caribbean national parks and other protected areas through development of conservation and education projects and technical exchange. Since 2001, *Park Flight* has sponsored 45 international interns who assist parks and partners with monitoring migratory birds and providing bird-oriented education programs.

KBO's and Oregon Caves National Monument's first *Park Flight* intern is Marcelo Araya Salas, from the University of Costa Rica. During the summer of 2006, Marcelo was a banding intern at the Tortuguero Integrated Bird Monitoring Program in Costa Rica, a program administered in part by KBO and the US Forest Service Redwood Sciences



Intern Marcelo Araya Salas of Costa Rica, places a band on a Black-headed Grosbeak at North Mountain Park. Photo: E. Molter, KBO

Laboratory. He is now training in constant effort monitoring techniques, including mist netting and area search surveys, and is working at the long-term breeding season/fall migration ecological monitoring station at Oregon Caves National Monument and other sites. He has assisted with several

community bird banding demonstrations, including the Tule Lake International Migratory Bird Day Celebration hosted by Lava Beds National Monument. Throughout autumn, Marcelo will gain practical experience in field ornithology, while representing *Park Flight* and KBO at outreach events. In anticipation of his return home, Marcelo said: "I plan to return to the University to finish my thesis and degree. I hope afterwards to be able to band with ornithologists from Partners in Flight Costa Rica."

We greatly value Marcelo's energy and emerging expertise, and look forward to a long and beneficial partnership with the *Park Flight* program.

Education

Kids and Birds Become Acquainted With KBO and Scienceworks

Emily Molter, KBO Wildlife Education Specialist

As KBO's busy spring education program drew to an end, new summer education programs began. During July and August, KBO partnered with ScienceWorks Museum and



Campers wowed by the sights during their KBO/ ScienceWorks adventures. Photo: A. Dayer, KBO

led two, week-long summer camps for children ages 7-10. The first camp, Radical Raptors, introduced campers to the exciting world of Birds of Prey. Campers learned what all raptors have in common by viewing owl and raptor

mounts. We examined the difficulties raptors face during migration by participating in a migration obstacle course. We even dedicated an entire day to owls and hosted special guest KBO member Vince Zauskey. Vince taught campers how to hoot like an owl and helped dissect owl

pellets and glue together the skeletons they contained. To wrap up our last day, we learned about the importance of raptor conservation and made tail sheaths, which are used by rehabilitation centers to support injured tail feathers, similar to casts. KBO donated the tail sheaths to Wildlife Images for their raptors in rehab. Wildlife Images states, "These tail sheaths are not only creative and colorful, but will certainly be put to good use in helping many raptors heal successfully and return to the wild."

During the second camp, Partners in Flight, campers learned ways to help protect birds and their habitats. Campers visited KBO's Willow Wind ecological monitoring station to learn how research is aiding bird conservation. We built bird feeders out of recycled water bottles and helped Lomakatsi with a restoration project in Willow Wind's natural area behind KBO headquarters. On the last day, campers received a free nest box, learned what species may inhabit it and how to care for the box throughout the year.

Overall, we had a great time at camp. Campers walked away with new information and more respect for birds and their environments. Antonio, Partners in Flight camper, said it all, "This camp is so much better than bottle rocket camp!"

KBO Welcomes Support from AmeriCorps

Ashley Dayer, KBO Education & Outreach Director

KBO's education program has begun its second year partnering with AmeriCorps through Northwest Service Academy (NWSA). NWSA is an environmental service organization committed to developing community leaders and protecting and restoring the natural environment. Members participate in watershed restoration, environmental education, trail construction, resource conservation and volunteer mobilization projects throughout the Pacific Northwest.

Last fall, we welcomed NWSA member Emily Molter to the KBO crew. During Emily's year of service, she helped expand KBO's K-12 education program into most of the Rogue Valley and Klamath Basin. She reached nearly 1,500 students through classroom and field visits, after-school programs and camps. Emily served as Activity Coordinator for the International Migratory Bird Day Festival in Klamath Falls, an event attended by approximately 1,200 participants. Emily also developed a new brochure and poster for KBO outreach events. Emily has moved to Boulder, Colorado, where she serves as Program Coordina-

tor for Environment for the Americas, a non-profit organization that coordinates the International Migratory Bird Day program.



Melissa Molzahn teaches about birds. Photo: A. Busch, KBO

Melissa Molzahn joins KBO as our 2007-2008 AmeriCorps Education Specialist. Melissa received her B.S. in Plant and Soil Science from Oklahoma State University, where her coursework included ornithology and waterfowl research. Before joining KBO, Melissa worked as a Park Ranger Naturalist Educator in Grand Teton National Park. Melissa is also familiar with avian Citizen Science projects, actively participates in the Christmas Bird Count, Backyard Bird Count, and eBird.

Best wishes Emily! Welcome Melissa!

Avian Education Through Field Journals

Emily Molter, KBO Wildlife Education Specialist

KBO's K-12 classroom education program includes many activities designed to familiarize students with birds and bird habitat. Field journaling, for example, introduces a student-friendly tool that ornithologists and other biologists use when conducting field observations and/or field experiments. KBO has included a field journaling activity in both the Klamath Basin Birding Trail and Basin and Range Birding Trail education kits (see KBO summer, 2007 newsletter for descriptions of these education kits).

Field journals are an essential scientific tool. During field studies, biologists use journals to collect and



Willow Wind student, KBO banding volunteer, and KBO member, Rowan Heglie, participates in a field journaling activity. Photo: A. Dayer, KBO

document critical field data, including animal observations, vegetation characteristics, weather, location, time, and other vital facts and statistics. Journals may also provide more than a mere collection of scientific facts; they can include field sketches and plant presses, as well as reflections about experiences in nature.

Field journaling is a great activity for not only children but adults too. It can help get people outdoors and connect people with the natural world. The next time you are planning to be outside, think about taking along a notepad and pencil. Then when you find a new secret swimming hole, you will be able to record directions and a map and remember it in the future.

To view the comprehensive lesson plan that includes ideas for journaling, please see www.KlamathBird.org/Education/BRBT.

Bird Bio: Gray Catbird

Melissa Molzahn, KBO Education Specialist

The Gray Catbird, our featured bird for this issue, is in the Mimidae family. Like many in this family, it mimics calls of other birds. Their name is derived from one call they make that sounds like the mew of a cat. The Gray Catbird winters from the gulf states to Central America, although a small number can be found in New England. They breed in central British Columbia, eastern Canada, and the eastern United States, with additional populations in the central Rocky Mountains, central Arizona and north-east Oregon in the Blue Mountains. This year KBO banders captured, banded and released a Gray Catbird here in southern Oregon, one of several birds unusual to this area that were encountered this year (see page 1).



Gray Catbird. Photo: J. Livaudais

The Gray Catbird migrates from wintering to breeding grounds beginning in April, arriving in late May through early June. By September they will have left the breeding grounds to return to winter ranges. Their breeding range habitat is very different from that of their winter range. During the breeding season, Gray Catbirds prefer early successional habitat, and in Oregon they are very dependent on dense riparian areas. In their winter range, they seek forested areas. Insects and berries comprise the main components of their diet. In Oregon, they consume elderberry, black hawthorn, mayflies and grasshoppers.

As with many species, catbirds may collide with towers and other tall structures during migration, and at all times are vulnerable to automobiles; some southeast populations have declined. However, Oregon is currently experiencing a gradual expansion of breeding populations as more riparian habitats become protected by improved land management practices. If you live near a breeding population, you can help conserve and enjoy these birds by planting native shrubs and berry bushes for nesting and feeding and by keeping cats indoors.

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 Drs. Alan Poole and Frank Gill; *Birds to Help*, 19 Sept. 2007 National Audubon Society, Inc. <<http://www.audubonathome.org/birdstohelp/>>.

Calendar—Join KBO for Fall & Winter Events

November 3: KBO Birdwalk to Emigrant Lake.

Spot water fowl, waders, raptors, and songbirds wintering at this Ashland lake. Meet at 8am at Northwest Nature Shop (Ashland). Leader: Carolyn Breece. To register, call 541-482-3241.

November 10: KBO Birdwalk to Jefferson Nature Center and nearby Greenway Hotspots.

Explore the site of the new Jefferson Nature Center and nearby locations along Bear Creek in south Medford. Meet at 8am at Wild Birds Unlimited (Medford). Leader: KBO Staff. To register, call 541-770-1104.

December 1: KBO Birdwalk to Bear Creek Greenway Hotspots.

View resident and wintering species in the riparian areas along the Bear Creek. Meet at 8am at Northwest Nature Shop (Ashland). Leader: Frank Lospalluto. To register, call 541-482-3241.

December 8: Hawks! All-Day Field Trip with Dick Ashford.

Information below. To register, call 541-201-0866.

January 9: Hawk Talk with Dick Ashford at North Mountain Park.

A visually-inspiring introduction to the lives of hawks. Excellent preparation for a Hawks! All-day field trip. 7pm-8:30pm. To register, call 541-488-6606.

January 26: Hawks! All-Day Field Trip with Dick Ashford.

Information below. To register, call 541-201-0866.

February 15-17: Winter Wings Festival in Klamath Falls, Oregon. www.winterwingsfest.org

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.

“Hawks! All-Day Field Trips with Dick Ashford”

Hawks and eagles have captured our imagination like few other birds. Easily seen, they push our primal poetic buttons. Want to observe them with an expert? Here's your chance: join Dick Ashford for a guided outing to the Klamath Basin to view these majestic raptors. The Klamath Basin hosts the largest contingent of wintering Bald Eagles in the lower 48 states, and we'll try to see as many as we can.

Additionally, there are large numbers of Ferruginous Hawks, Rough-legged Hawks, Northern Harriers, Red-tailed Hawks and a few falcons as well. Throughout the day, we'll examine the natural history of these magnificent creatures, including behavior, habitat and adaptations for survival. At the end of the outing, we'll be certified raptor enthusiasts!

Meet at 8am at Shop N Kart in Ashland to carpool. Return at 4:30pm. Advance registration required (limit: 15) 541-201-0866. Donation to KBO: \$25 nonmembers, \$15 members.

Trivia Corner—Q&A

Emily Molter, KBO Wildlife Education Specialist

As winter approaches, you should practice which of the following to ensure responsible bird feeding:

- A. Fill feeders with seed foods high in fats
- B. Provide a reliable water source
- C. Protect feeders from weather and predators
- D. All of the above

Responsibly feeding birds in the winter is a great way to help birds survive harsh conditions and enjoy your feathered friends all year round. Set up feeders in late summer or early fall and maintain them through the winter and spring until natural food sources are abundant. Provide foods with a high caloric content and high in fats, such as suet or black-oil sunflower seeds. Care must be taken in feeder placement; while a site near trees or shrubs may protect a feeder from weather, it may make feeding birds vulnerable to predators. Feeders should be cleaned and disinfected

every two weeks with soapy water followed by a rinse in a solution of one part bleach to nine parts water. This will remove bits of moldy seed and bird droppings, both of which can lead to the spread of avian diseases. Feeders should then be dried fully before refilling. Place a birdbath in an open area so there is a reliable water source available. It is essential for the safety of birds that feeders are positioned in a place with ample protection from predators, such as cats. Remember, you can do more for birds than just placing bird feeders outside; landscaping your yard with native trees, shrubs, and flowers can help to sustain a healthy bird population year-round.

Learn more about wild birds on the education link of KBO's website: www.KlamathBird.org.

References: [Living with Urban Wildlife](#); Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife April 2002
Cornell Lab of Ornithology;
www.birds.cornell.edu/

Answer: All of the above

Partnerships

Bird Conservation Supported Through Local Soap Merchant

Ashley Dayer, KBO Education & Outreach Director



Hall displays her wares. Photo: courtesy

Soon after moving her company to Medford, Oregon, Bowerbird & Co. owner Ali Hall met KBO staff at the Klamath Winter Wings Festival, happily finding others who share her dedication to bird conservation. In Hall's words, her unique conservation-focused bath and body business aims to "protect all avian species through the use of ecologically and environmentally safe ingredients, as well as contribute profits to bird conservation". Her all-natural, hand-crafted products feature locally grown

herbs, organic and wild-crafted ingredients, and recycled paper packaging.

For Hall, her business integrates her two passions: bird conservation and art. She refers to the bowerbird as an "avian artist" and "natural recycler", two characteristics that define her business. While bowerbirds do not inhabit the Klamath-Siskiyou Bioregion, Bowerbird & Co. is dedi-

cated to advancing bird conservation locally. Bowerbird & Co. has pledged their Feather Fund to Klamath Bird Observatory in 2007 and 2008. This fund offers a minimum of 5% of the company's profits to support and sustain bird populations. Hall says she chose teaming up with KBO because "KBO has made an impact in the Rogue Valley, especially with their outreach to the younger generation. This is important if we are to keep children interested in and concerned about preserving and protecting their own natural resources."

In addition to the Feather Fund contribution, Bowerbird & Co. will soon unveil their exclusive KBO Juniper-Sage soap, which focuses attention on local bird habitat conservation. Within this habitat, avian diversity is sustained within a mix of historic western juniper stands, large sagebrush, grasses, and other associated native plants. Each bar of the Juniper-Sage soap includes an insert that describes both the importance of this habitat and KBO's efforts to preserve it. These habitats are threatened by loss and fragmentation from agriculture conversion, overgrazing, development, and alteration of natural fire regimes.

To learn more about Bowerbird & Co. and how to purchase your own exclusive Juniper-Sage soap, visit www.bowerbirdandcompany.com

KBO Entertains and Educates at Open House 2007

Ashley Dayer, KBO Education & Outreach Director

KBO friends, family, staff, and board members came together with newcomers to celebrate bird conservation at KBO's Open House on Saturday, September 8. Over 150 bird enthusiasts participated from all over the Klamath-Siskiyou Bioregion including Klamath Falls, Happy Camp and beyond, even Sacramento.

Participants enjoyed a variety of activities that highlighted KBO's science and education programs. Visits to the ecological monitoring station demonstrated bird banding. Bird walks revealed resident and migratory species and taught identification skills. Children dissected Barn Owl pellets, created CD reflectors to decrease bird collisions with windows, and explored the Migration Obstacle Course. Photographer Jim Livaudais, whose



exquisite work graces many KBO publications, displayed recent bird photos and camera equipment.

A total of 14 species, including sparrows, warblers, finches, and flycatchers, were captured throughout the morning. One highlight was the Black-throated Gray Warbler. Over 20 more species were spotted from the ecological monitoring station and on bird walks, including a Green Heron and three species of hawk.

Look for our next Open House in September 2008!

KBO banding intern Hernan Arias of Colombia admires Jim Livaudais' camera gear at KBO's Open House. Photo: A. Dayer, KBO

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