

The Klamath Bird

Newsletter of the Klamath Bird Observatory, Spring 2010



Keeping Common Birds Common in the 21st Century

John Alexander, KBO Executive Director

Partners in Flight at 20

As the Partners in Flight International Bird Conservation Initiative turns 20 years old, there is growing political, popular, and scientific recognition that birds serve as high level indicators of the health of our natural resources. There is also recognition that local and global conservation issues are interconnected. Our ability to address these issues will effect our social and economic well-being at all scales. This provides an opportunity for Partners in Flight (PIF) to help address the conservation issues of today and tomorrow.

PIF has developed tools for setting biologically-based, spatially explicit, landscape-oriented habitat objectives designed to bring declining bird populations back to historic levels. At various scales, conservation partners are working together to assess current habitat conditions, evaluate habitat driven species distributions and bird-habitat relationships, and identify opportunities to implement broad conservation actions to meet population objectives. This is all within Partners in Flight's proactive approach to keeping common birds common.

State of Our Birds in 2010

In 2009, the first *U.S. State of the Birds Report* presented a set of broad-scale indices that account for the health of America's habitats and the ecological services they provide. This report suggested that, if we take conservation action now, we can address the troubling messages that bird population declines are telling about the state of our environment. The recently released *2010 State of*



Learn more about Partners in Flight's 20th anniversary celebrations at PartnersInFlight.com

the Birds Report presents the first comprehensive assessment of the effects of climate change on bird species. The report highlights the need for conservation efforts including: reducing carbon emissions, protecting key bird habitats, ensuring stable food supplies for birds, and removing invasive species. The report again emphasizes the importance of conservation efforts to protect not only threatened and endangered birds, but also common birds.

Climate change presents greatest threats to ocean birds, island birds, and birds in coastal, arctic/alpine, and grassland habitats. While birds in aridlands, wetlands, and forests are less vulnerable to climate change, their conservation needs reflect a need to manage lands for resilience, a resilience that will depend on restoring natural ecological processes, such as fire and flood.

Conservation in the Klamath-Siskiyou Bioregion

In two decades Partners in Flight has developed tools that will guide

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Role of NGOs in Partners in Flight

Terry Rich, PIF National Coordinator, US Fish and Wildlife Service

My very first allegiance in life, beyond to my own family and friends, was to an NGO (non-government organization)—The Wisconsin Society for Ornithology (WSO). The WSO had protected some wonderful Wisconsin bird habitat. In 4th grade I would go there to hike, bird and botanize—it was great. At that time I had no notion of state government, beyond having learned the counties of Wisconsin and something about Paul Bunyan. And, I had no notion of federal government, beyond I suppose, something about George Washington.

Upon the 20th anniversary of Partners in Flight (PIF), it's informative to think about the roles different sectors have played in the evolution of this partnership. When PIF was created in 1990, I had spent 10 years working for the federal government. It was very clear to me that the federal agencies were where all the action was. They managed hundreds of millions of acres of land, much of that in huge blocks and in protected areas, and that obviously was where any

The Board's Wisdom

Margaret Widdowson, KBO Board President

This year the Klamath Bird Observatory celebrates its 10th anniversary. As we look back on our first 10 years of growth, we celebrate the success of our partnerships. After hatching into a collaboration with the US Forest Service Redwood Sciences Lab, KBO has flourished over the years. KBO has built a model of success through its diverse partnerships—federal, state, and local agencies, educational institutes from local schools to universities, private industry and organizations, and individuals in the community—to list them all would take several pages. From its beginning, helping to build the Klamath Bird Monitoring Network, KBO has fledged into a truly international organization with partnerships throughout North and South America. KBO's example of advancing bird research and conservation through diverse collaboration now stands as a model for other organizations.

This year also marks the 20th anniversary of Partners in Flight (PIF). In this edition of *The Klamath Bird*, we highlight the achievements of PIF in articles that celebrate our partnerships. PIF National Coordinator, Terry Rich, describes the role of NGOs in PIF, and our staff describes KBO's science and education partnerships.

We also celebrate our most important partnership, with you our members, who have sustained and supported KBO from the beginning. We thank you for your support, and invite you to join with us to celebrate this important anniversary, looking forward to the next 10 years.



International Migratory Bird Day 2010
Celebrates
The Power of Partnerships in Bird Conservation

Note from the Executive Director

John Alexander, KBO Executive Director

As Partners in Flight (PIF) celebrates 20 years as a bird conservation initiative, it shares the International Migratory Bird Day theme – “Power of Partnerships.” Ten years of KBO growth and success provide an example of this power. As this newsletter goes to press, we are extremely busy working on various projects and partnerships, both new and

old. We continue our collaboration with the US Forest Service Redwood Sciences Laboratory (RSL) – this collaboration has become a national model of the significant efficiencies that come from a conservation science program that is based on the synergies that arise from an NGO-federal agency partnership. Our staff are busy in the field and in classrooms teaching science and stewardship to the decision makers of tomorrow. Simultaneously we are supporting the decision makers of today with data from our long-running landbird monitoring efforts and our new and growing aquatic bird monitoring program, with our applied research that informs effective ecosystem restoration, and with our efforts to unlock our data through the development of data management and decision support tools. To see the depth of the partnerships that make this action possible visit our new and developing website at www.KlamathBird.org. And, for the part you play in all of this, through your continued support, thank you.

Every Donor Counts

Annie Kilby, KBO E&O Program Manager

Every private sector donation is significant and your contributions to KBO make a difference in many ways. Our recognition of 2009 donors that appeared in the Winter 2010 edition of the newsletter omitted some of our valued members. Below is the list of donors not recognized in 2009.

Dennis Niebuhr
Paul & Janice O'Donnell
Karin Onkka
George & Sally Peterson
Armand Rebeschke
Lisa Renan
Gary Shaffer
John Shaw

Kevin & Carol Spencer
Jeff Stephens
Jeffrey & Lyn Swallen
Curt & Maureen Swift
William R Trione
Dennis & Debi Vroman
L.K. Wright
Vince Zauskey

Thank you for your continued support.

SAVE THE DATE :

Wings and Wine Gala

Saturday, September 25, 2010

6pm—10pm

HANLEY FARMS in Central Point, OR

Local Bird Conservation is Critical to a Tri-National Approach

Jaime Stephens, KBO Research and Monitoring Director

Migratory birds depend on multiple habitats, often spanning more than one country. They have specific breeding and wintering habitat requirements, in addition to habitat requirements for fueling-up along their migratory routes.



Hermit Warblers, which commonly breed in the Klamath-Siskiyou Bioregion, depend on tropical highland forests of Mexico in the winter.

Photo: Jim Livaudais

Often we think of conserving resident and migrant birds differently, but they share the same habitats. An integrated approach conserving areas for resident birds becomes a strategy for providing critical areas for migrants as well. Because of the mobility of migrants, bird conservation must transcend political boundaries and requires international communication and collaboration.

At KBO we work closely with partners in Canada and Mexico, through partnerships ranging from training and capacity building abroad to continental scale conservation planning efforts. KBO has been involved in the development of Partners in Flight's first tri-national bird

conservation assessment, entitled *Saving Our Shared Birds*, which was released this spring. Of the 882 species of landbirds in Canada, Mexico, and the United States, more than one-third are dependent on areas in more than one country. Conserving the bird populations of North America, which are currently facing unprecedented declines, will require a tri-national approach. Immediate conservation measures are needed for 148 species because of declines in population size. The most pressing needs to address the loss of bird diversity are identified in Mexico, where birds are facing multiple threats ranging from habitat loss to trapping for the cage-bird trade. Birds that breed in the northern US and southern Canada and winter in the southern US and northern Mexico, are also experiencing some of the steepest population declines. Many of these species are threatened on their breeding grounds by multiple land-use demands, and on wintering grounds by loss of habitat. The tri-national plan calls for immediate action in six areas (see box) and KBO's work closely aligns with these needs.

The Saving Our Shared Birds plan calls for immediate action to:

- Protect and recover species at greatest risk
- Conserve habitats and ecosystem function
- Reduce sources of direct mortality
- Increase the power of partnerships
- Expand our knowledge base for conservation
- Engage people in conservation action

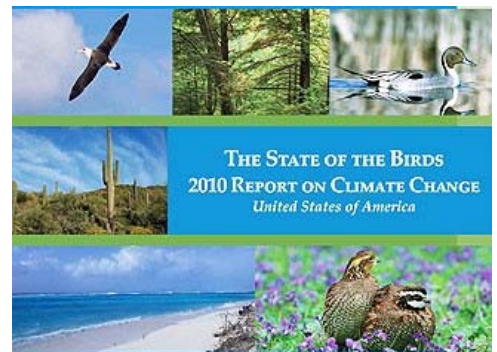
To see the full report, visit See www.SavingOurSharedBirds.org

Keeping Common Birds Common in the 21st Century

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innovative solutions to our conservation challenges. In the Klamath Siskiyou Bioregion of northern California and southern Oregon, a region recognized as a globally outstanding biodiversity hot spot, KBO is employing these tools. Poised with over a decade of experience practicing the Partners in Flight conservation model, KBO applies PIF tools to conservation challenges. Through our collaborations we are using new and improved data management and habitat mapping tools, along with the ability to compile and disseminate large quantities of information, to transfer knowledge to those charged with managing for resilient ecosystems. This knowledge is helping us to identify practical ways to manage dynamic ecosystems. For example, we are using birds to understand how to better manage for intact natural ecological processes, including disturbance associated with fire and flooding. The 2010 State of the Birds report identified the restoration of these natural processes as critical to managing for resilient ecosystems in the face of climate change.

KBO's regional approach is designed to transcend the administrative boundaries that divide landscapes and management decision making (e.g., state borders, and multi-agency management unit delineations), to bring a more seamless strategy to science-based management and conservation planning. With our partners we stand ready to continue contributing to our regional Habitat Joint Ventures and the newly developing applied conservation science partnerships called Landscape Conservation Cooperatives. Our role is to provide scientific and technical support for conservation at landscape scales.



KBO contributed to the State of the Birds, 2010 Report on Climate Change. Read the report at www.StateOfTheBirds.org

Role of Non-Government Organizations in Partners in Flight

Continued from Page 1

significant bird conservation would take place. Then I met Naomi Edelson, with the (International) Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. She contended that if PIF was going to succeed in the long term, we needed involvement of the state wildlife agencies. At first, that seemed silly to me. Those agencies did not control the vast amounts of land that the federal agencies did. However, after seeing the state wildlife agencies deliver bird conservation, funding and political support over the last 20 years, I saw that she was exactly right.

The next crazy idea that was laid on me was that, really, it was the private landowners. Most of the U.S. (as well as Canada, Mexico, Central America and on and on) is in private hands. The statistics were obvious. But how could we harness this sector? I soon learned that the Conservation Reserve Program, the Northern Bobwhite Conservation Initiative and the contributions of private lands within Joint Ventures are just a few examples of how conservation can be delivered on private lands.

But the trouble with federal agencies, state agencies, and

private landowners face is that they are all subject to political vagaries over time. And that brings me back to considering what NGOs can do that the other major sectors cannot. NGOs provide a long-term commitment to a mission. Sure, you can have different leaders, different boards, different management fads, and different fund-raising pressures. NGOs may suffer or flourish, but what they do no matter what is keep their eye on the ball.

The other exciting aspect of NGOs is that they can create and develop novel programs in pursuit of their missions that then frequently become standard operating procedure within the larger bird conservation community. There are numerous examples from PRBO Conservation Science and the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, to name just two examples from the West. And as for Klamath Bird Observatory, their leadership to advance the use of Decision Support Tools and the broader sharing of information via the Avian Knowledge Alliance strikes me as a huge arena in which this NGO is contributing to the larger bird conservation community in very significant ways.

Bird Bio: Horned Guan

Liz Williams, Education Specialist (AmeriCorps)

The Horned Guan, a member of the Cracid family, can be found in the high elevation, subtropical cloud forests of the southern Sierra Madre Mountains of Mexico, and through the highlands of Central Guatemala. Named for the “horn” of bare red skin atop its head, it is an unmistakable bird. Its body is black with a bluish sheen, except for its breast, foreneck and a broad band at the base of its tail, which are all white. The bird has red legs, a yellow bill and white irises. Males have several vocalizations, including a deep low booming “uhmm, uh’mmm uh’mmm, uh’mmm uh’mmm,” while females have around seven distinct vocalizations which include snorts, clicking and bill-clacking. The guan’s diet is composed mainly of fruit, flowers and leaves. Beyond its diet, very little is known about the natural history or breeding biology of this bird.

The Horned Guan’s subtropical cloud forest habitat in southern Mexico and Guatemala has been significantly reduced over the past several decades by extensive logging, firewood gathering, and forest



The PIF Tri-National vision identifies conservation action for the Horned Guan in Mexico that will benefit critical wintering habitats for at risk migrant species.
Photo: St Louis Zoo

clearing for agriculture. It is currently listed as Endangered by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). It is estimated that between 1000 and 2500 Horned Guans currently exist in the wild. Several symposiums have been held in Mexico addressing Horned Guan conservation, and conservation organizations in Guatemala are attempting to promote eco-friendly tourism focused on this unique species. Despite these efforts, its numbers appear to be declining.

The protection of subtropical cloud forests in Mexico and Guatemala is of concern not only for the Horned Guan but for hundreds of other bird species. In fact, many species that we enjoy seeing in the Klamath-Siskiyou Bioregion in spring and summer, including the Hermit Warbler, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, and Yellow-breasted Chat will benefit from conservation of the subtropical cloud forest wintering habitats. All of us who celebrate the arrival of these migratory warblers in the spring should be concerned with the conservation of the Horned Guan and its habitat.

References: BirdLife International (2009) Species factsheet: *Oreophasis derbianus*. (<http://www.birdlife.org> on 30/3/2010)

Partnerships in Environmental Education—AmeriCorps

Annie Kilby, KBO Education & Outreach Program Manager

As an alum of Northwest Service Academy (NSWA), I have experienced first hand the benefits of the unique training and learning opportunities it provides. Klamath Bird Observatory has had the privilege of sponsoring three NWSA AmeriCorps members who have served as Education Specialists.

Liz Williams came to KBO fresh from a field season in Yosemite where she was conducting amphibian surveys. Eager to combine her love of birds and field biology with her passion for inspiring young minds, Liz joined the KBO family. A graduate from University of Montana, Missoula with a Master’s in Environmental Studies, Liz is an instrumental part of KBO’s adult and youth education programs. This spring, Liz is teaching a field ecology course for 4th through 6th grade students at the Ashland School District’s Willow Wind Community Learning Center. Her students are exploring the natural world, including the riparian areas, behind Willow Wind, participating with KBO’s on-site bird banding efforts, and conducting ecological field studies.

As part of her AmeriCorps term, Liz is also coordinating the *Protecting Wetlands, Water, and Waterbirds* program with 3rd through 5th grade classes at Chiloquin Elementary School in Klamath County, Oregon. These students are studying the riparian and wetland habitats near their school and the birds and wildlife that call the Klamath



Field Ecology students at the Willow Wind Community Learning Center dissect owl pellets and reconstruct prey skeletons.

Basin home. As part of this program, students will be monitoring the aquatic birds nesting at the Upper Klamath Lake National Wildlife Refuge and Wood River Wetland, contributing data to the Oregon Coordinated Aquatic Bird Monitoring Program. (For more information on KBO’s aquatic bird monitoring, see *Partnering for Aquatic Birds* on page 7)

As we go to press, we are excited to announce that following her NWSA AmeriCorps term this fall, Liz will be staying on as a full-time KBO staff member.

Volunteers: Critical to Ten Years of Success

Annie Kilby, Education & Outreach Program Manager

Earlier this spring, Klamath Bird Observatory board members and staff extended our deepest thanks and gratitude to our volunteers during our first volunteer appreciation wine and cheese event. Many local community members volunteer to help KBO in many ways. They give their support by leading numerous bird walks for KBO, sharing their passion for birds with our community members. Volunteers brave cold mornings at the banding station, contributing to our long term monitoring efforts. This year, they helped to get our new website off the ground. Volunteers also share their knowledge on natural history topics with school groups and adult education classes. Additionally volunteers serve on KBO’s board of directors, providing an invaluable guidance and support.

Many thanks to our volunteers, for your countless hours contributed in support of KBO and our mission to advance bird and habitat conservation through science, education, and partnerships!



KBO board member and past board president, Dick Ashford, Executive Director, John Alexander, and special guest Sophie Webb (acclaimed artist) enjoy KBO’s first volunteer appreciation event on April 1, 2010.

Partnering Up for Aquatic Birds

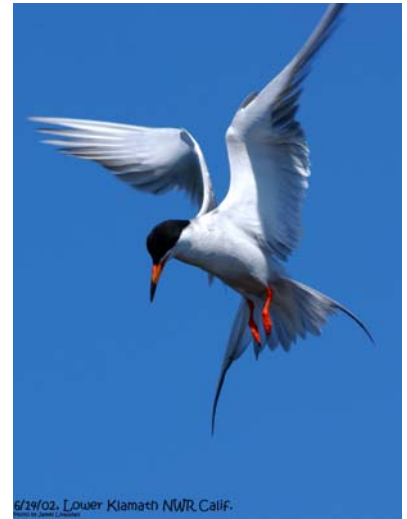
Karen Hussey, Research & Monitoring Program Manager

Imagine it were your job to count the total number of kids in a large playground but you could only watch the swing set in the first hour, the slide in the second hour, and the monkey bars in the third hour. What if most of the kids were at the slide when you weren't counting there? And did you already count that group of boys on the monkey bars when you were watching the swings? Imagine how much easier it would be if other people were helping you so the swings, slide, and monkey bars could all be counted at once.

Kids move around a lot and so do birds! Local aquatic bird populations change from year to year corresponding to environmental fluctuations such as food availability and water levels. An aquatic bird colony could breed in one spot one year and be miles away the next year. In order to get accurate regional population counts we need a lot of people working together. KBO is helping to coordinate the Oregon Coordinated Aquatic Bird Monitoring Program to do just that. By identifying existing monitoring efforts, and implementing new ones, we will gain a more complete understanding of the status of aquatic bird populations to better inform conservation decisions for wetland habitats. Since the program started in 2008 we have been working to coordinate monitoring efforts in Oregon and northern California so that the same species are surveyed at the same time and in the same way. Partnerships are the key to our success! This breeding season, we are working to coordinate surveys for colonial

birds that nest on or near the ground and water, including Forster's and Black Tern, White-faced Ibis, Western, Clark's, and Eared Grebe, and Franklin's Gull. In future years, KBO and partners will work to document species composition, size and location of other kinds of nesting colonies, such as tree-nesting and ground-nesting, throughout Oregon.

Our efforts in this region are part of a larger coordinated aquatic bird monitoring program initiated by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to coordinate monitoring efforts throughout the western US. Currently, we are working closely with the USFWS, American Bird Conservancy, PRBO Conservation Science and many others to accomplish our water bird monitoring goals. With everyone working together we will be able to better understand how birds are doing and be better equipped to help when they need it.



6/29/02, Lower Klamath NWR, Calif.

Forster's Terns are one of 7 aquatic focal species that KBO will be surveying in 2010. Four field crews will be visiting 170 Oregon sites mid May through mid July. Photo: Jim Livaudais.

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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, planned giving, or adopting a bird or day of banding.

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.

_____ Student Membership \$15 _____ Regular Annual Membership \$35
_____ Family Membership \$50 _____ Supporting Membership \$100 or more _____

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

Calendar—Join KBO for Spring and Summer Events

“Better at Birding by Ear Workshop” on June 11th-12th, 2010

It's time to sharpen your birding ear! With a focus on intermediate to advanced skills, we will practice identification of warbler, sparrow, finch, and flycatcher vocalizations and distinguish sound-alike species such as Western Tanager and Black-headed Grosbeak. Expert instruction in the classroom and field will be provided by John Alexander, KBO Executive Director. Classroom on Friday, June 11th from 7pm-9pm. Field trip on Saturday, June 12th from 7am-2pm. Advance registration required, limit: 35. Meet at Jefferson Nature Center (2931 South Pacific Hwy, Medford, Oregon). Call 541-201-0866 to register. Cost: \$35 non-members, \$25 KBO members.

June 5th: Wetland and Riparian Ecology

Full of life both in and out of the water, wetlands and riparian corridors are some of the most complex and distinctive habitats found in our region. Join Daniel Sarr, National Parks Service, and KBO's own John Alexander, as you are introduced to the hydrology, ecology and wildlife of wetlands and riparian areas in the Siskiyou, the legislation that affects them, and the conservation efforts employed for their protection in the Klamath-Siskiyou Bioregion. Course is offered as part of the Siskiyou Field Institute course catalog. Cost \$50; to register call Siskiyou Field Institute at 541-597-8530.

June 5th: Bear Creek Greenway and Ashland Pond

Join Northwest Nature Shop employee and new KBO bird walk leader Terence Philippe for an exploration of Ashland Pond and the Bear Creek Greenway in Ashland. The pond will likely be flush with warblers, flycatchers and other spring migrants. Waterfowl, raptors, and possible Great Horned Owl sightings will round out the morning. Expect about 2 miles of walking on gentle paths. Meet at the Northwest Nature Shop in Ashland at 8:00 am. Limited to 15 participants. To register, call 541-482-3241.

June 11th and 12th: Birding By Ear Workshop and Field Trip

July 3rd: Birding and Wine Tasting in the Applegate Valley

Join KBO for our second birding and wine tasting tour in the Applegate Valley! We will bird a number of locations in the Applegate Valley for the first three hours, looking for Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, Oak Titmice, raptors and more. At 11:00, we'll migrate to the Cowhorn Vineyard (www.cowhornwine.com), a certified biodynamic winery, for a behind the scenes tour and learn how biodynamic practices benefit wildlife. The tour will be topped off by a tasting of Cowhorn's award-winning wine. Meet at 8am at the Northwest Nature Shop in Ashland. Leader: David MacHamer, KBO member & volunteer. Limited to 15 people, so register early! To register, call 541-482-3241. Cost: \$5 KBO members, \$10 non-members.

July 10th: KBO Bird Walk to Hyatt Lake.

Join new KBO Bird Walk leader Kevin Spencer for an

excursion to this popular birding spot outside of Ashland. We will likely spot a variety of waterfowl, waders, raptors, and songbirds on and around the lake. Expect two to three miles of walking on gentle paths. Meet at 8:00 am at Wild Birds Unlimited in Medford. Limited to 15 participants. To register, call 541-770-1104. When registering, carpools from Medford and Ashland to Hyatt Lake will be arranged.

July 31st: Public Banding Station Visit at the Jefferson Nature Center

Visit KBO's ecological monitoring station at the Jefferson Nature Center for an introduction to avian research in action. We will observe mist-netting and bird banding, view songbirds up close, and learn about bird research and conservation from KBO biologists. Banding station visit will be followed up by a bird walk at the Jefferson Nature Center. Limited to 20 participants. Meet at 8:00 am at the Jefferson Nature Center. To register, call 541-201-0866. Cost: \$5 KBO members, \$10 non-members.

August 7th: KBO Bird Walk to Mount Ashland

Escape the summer heat of the Rogue Valley during a birding trip to Mount Ashland. KBO Bird Walk leader Vince Zauskey will lead a trip along the Mount Ashland access road where we will look for woodpeckers (White-headed Woodpecker is a possibility), flycatchers, warblers, Green-tailed Towhees, raptors and anything else that flies our way. Wear sturdy shoes for a mile of walking and bring water and a lunch in case you'd like to eat on the mountain before heading home. Meet at the Northwest Nature Shop in Ashland at 8:00 am. Limited to 15 people. To register, call 541-482-3241.

August 14th: Bird Walk to Agate Lake

Join KBO Bird Walk Leader Jeff Tufts for a visit to this favorite birding spot north of Medford. We may see some late summer shorebirds like Greater Yellowlegs, Semipalmated Plovers, Long-billed Dowitchers, and various sandpipers and Killdeer, as well as ducks, herons, gulls, woodpeckers and other fun species. Meet at 8am at Wild Birds Unlimited in Medford. 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 541-201-0866.

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