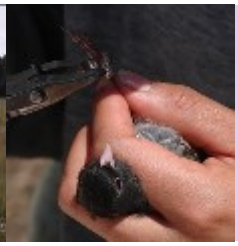
The Klamath Bird

Newsletter of the Klamath Bird Observatory, Summer 2018

A Field Day Edition!

Observations from Our Biologists Afield



Wings and Wine Gala Returns!

See page 11

Wait, what is that?

Caitlyn Gillespie, Research Biologist

I'm approaching my next point on a late-May morning, the cool night air rapidly fading as the sun warms the path in front of us. A series of high-pitched calls come from the mixed oak and pine trees and we puzzle over the unknown sounds and scan the tree tops for clues.

"It sounds like crossbills—but they wouldn't be here. But what… Oh!" My companion stops suddenly and raises his binoculars. "Look, see?" A Hairy Woodpecker carrying a large caterpillar suddenly appears on a tree trunk close to the road, and the mysterious sounds are now clear. As he approaches a small cavity with his green prize, we hear it again —the begging calls of tiny nestlings

Continued Page 4—Wait, what is that?

Vesper and I *Jim Lawrence, Oregon Vesper Sparrow Study Field Technician*

"Sitting here on top of my tree
The tall guy, with his binos I see
Watch out, he is headed my way
Looks like he's after my nest today"

At last I found her, perched up over there
I've been sitting three hours just staring at air
Where did she come from, appeared out of the blue?
Time to get closer for a better view.

"He's almost here. Time for something slick
A fake nest carry, ought to do the trick.
I will fly this big juicy worm, way over there.
He'll take the bait and get out of his chair."

Continued Page 5—Vesper and I

Field Day's End *Lauren diBiccari, Banding Program Coordinator*

Hearing excited exclamations from outside, I unzip my tent and look out over the river. The clouds are lit from beneath, a pearlescent gray rimmed in incandescent pink. Dozens of nighthawks careen through the air above the current with acrobatic grace on staccato wing beats like enormous bats, the white of their wings flashing. I can make out the figures of Said and Ricky in the near dark of the river bank taking in the spectacle.

The dusk is full with the sounds of birds: Red-winged Blackbirds, their metallic cries ringing out from the tops of riverside willows; the plaintive whistled calls of Western Wood-Pewees (perhaps the pair whose nest we noted across

Continued Page 7—A Field Day Ending

Note From the Executive Director *John Alexander*

This year we celebrate the *Year of the Bird*. This celebration focuses on the actions, stories, and art that represent how we as a community can protect birds every day. KBO takes action every day by advancing bird and habitat conservation through science, education, and partnerships.

In this newsletter we present stories from the field to bring attention to a central aspect of our work, our tradition, our art—our art of Field Biology. KBO's explicit protocols and well-designed studies make up the medium that we use to meticulously document the natural world through intentioned observation. Each observation becomes a brush stroke on a canvas of scientific information. Each observation is a piece of data, and each data stroke is combined and interpreted using the scientific method to make up KBO's works of art. We display our collection of works as KBO's body a science—it includes datasets, peer-reviewed publications, technical

Continued Page 3—Note From the ED

About the Oregon Vesper Sparrow Study—A Bird on the Brink *Jaime Stephens, Science Director*

This spring KBO expanded our study of the Oregon Vesper Sparrow, in partnership with American Bird Conservancy and others. Previous work estimated an extremely low number of individuals of this subspecies, estimated at approximately 3,000 individuals throughout their range in Oregon and Washington.

Plastic color bands being applied to an adult Oregon Vesper Sparrow. The color bands are used in different combinations for each bird so that individuals can be resighted without recapturing them. © 2018 Daniel Thiede

Now we are working to uncover the potential causes of decline. Are they breeding successfully? Are they surviving the winter? How do individuals in the Rogue Basin genetically relate to individuals in the Willamette and farther north? Answers to these questions will inform a range-wide strategy to increase population numbers to a healthy level.

KBO 's Jim Lawrence applies color bands to an Oregon Vesper Sparrow nestling. The nestlings are returned to the nest—banded shortly before they fledge. © 2018 Daniel Thiede

6:00 AM *Emily Lind, Research Associate and Southern Oregon University Graduate Student*

It is 6:00 AM and Howard Prairie is alive! The elk were in their usual meadow on my morning commute. The House Wren welcomes me at Lily Glen Campground. The Sandhill Cranes honk and rattle as they fly low overhead on to their next destination. Red-shafted Flickers with their white rumps flush from the grass and land on their favorite stump. I catch a glimpse of the Tree Swallows copulating on their favorite snag. The Mountain Bluebirds pop into their nest to feed their fresh hatchlings. And the song of the Vesper Sparrow, the reason I am here, calls me deeper into the meadow.

KBO Research Associate Emily Lind recording an Oregon Vesper Sparrow singing at Lily Glen (Howard Prairie (Jackson) County Park). © 2018 Daniel Thiede

This morning is especially rich with activity. The KBO banding crew is here to mist net and color band adults, the nest monitoring crew is busy both nest searching and banding nestlings, I am here recording the "here here, where where, all together now" song of the Oregon Vesper Sparrow, and a photographer is here to document it all.

It is incredibly rewarding to spend the day in the field with people who are dedicated to preserving the birds that need this place to survive. To top off this morning's excitement, coyotes howl from inside the forest, reminding us all how wild, abundant, mysterious, and awe-inspiring this place truly is.

Come listen for yourself.

About the Salmon River Restoration Project

Sarah Rockwell, Research Biologist

This year KBO started a new partnership with the Salmon River Restoration Council, located in Sawyers Bar, California. The Salmon River has a long history of human impacts, particularly due to mining, and the SRRC has plans to restore various sites along the North and South Forks by reconnecting the floodplain to the river and planting native vegetation over old mine tailings.

KBO's role will be to monitor the abundance and reproductive success of birds before and after the restoration actions take place. Successful restoration would lead to more abundant and successfully reproducing bird populations—if not, KBO will advise on how to modify the revegetation treatments to create better habitat for birds and other wildlife. We have chosen a few key birds that breed in riparian (streamside) zones to study, including Yellow Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, Song Sparrow, and Black-headed Grosbeak. Field technicians Alex Flores and Tessa Wardle visited the first two Salmon River sites once a week to map bird territories and record their breeding stage. 2018 is the first pre-restoration year of this new project.

Black-headed Grosbeak nest with 2-day old chicks. The chicks are in their natal down plumage which functions only as insulation. They will replace all their feathers before fledging. © 2018 Sarah Rockwell/KBO

Having a Field Day Teresa Wardle, *Salmon River Restoration Project Field Technician*

At KBO, the phrase "Have a field day" is synonymous with saying "Have a good day." On May 30th this rang especially true for me. The project I am working on involves spending time at the end of a survey classifying the breeding stage of riparian birds whose territories we have identified on the study site. Prior to that day, this meant watching a male bird sing and trying to locate his potential mate—she would give a better idea of the pair's breeding stage—listening for her soft "chips" or watching for her movement in the brush.

Warily, I made my way to the first territory I was to observe, where I had only heard a single chip of a female Black-headed Grosbeak during the survey. After twenty minutes of observation, a flurry of motion and strong melodious singing drew my attention to a nearby fir tree. Squinting, I was able to make out a barely visible clump 10 meters up the tree and halfway out a branch. I had found my first nest of the season!

Unlike most songbird species, both grosbeak males and females incubate the eggs in the nest, and when they switch off they characteristically sing and chip, so this part of what I was seeing was not unusual. What was different, in terms of KBO's observations of Black-headed Grosbeaks along the Trinity River, was their decision to nest in a Douglas-fir tree, especially so high off the ground. I jubilantly found two more nests that day, also high in the branches of gently swaying firs. In the coming weeks it will be interesting to observe other grosbeak nest locations by the Salmon River, to see if these three nests are an anomaly or a trend in this area. [Editor's note: In KBO's Trinity River study, the most common places for grosbeak nests were willows or blackberry shrubs, usually no more than 4 meters high—but along the Salmon River they seem to have different nest preferences.]

Note From the ED—*from Page 1*

reports, data-rich decision support tools, and engaging educational programs and materials. We are building a virtual gallery of science that is intended to inform and improve the way our society manages the ecosystems on which all of Earth's life depends.

In this Year of the Bird KBO is also celebrating 25 years science-riven conservation. We are following a century's old tradition of ornithologists using observation-base science to shed light on alarming patterns of population decline and environmental degradation. As ornithologists influenced the ambitious conservation agenda that President Theodore Roosevelt sewed into our country's policy more than 100 year ago, our science is being contributed to an international effort that will leave a legacy of conservation and sustainability in the 21st century.

The Year of the Bird is about recognizing that our environmental, economic, and social well-being is inseparably tied to the fate of our birds. Through celebration we unite our voices recognizing that we have the science and tools that we need to reverse declines of at risk species and keep our common birds common. With many conservation challenges yet to be overcome, Klamath Bird Observatory is striving to keep our tradition of Natural History and Field Biology alive and well, by ensuring its practice informs effective conservation and helps us to realize tangible benefits for birds and people. We thank you for joining us in celebrating The Year of the Bird and recommitting ourselves to protecting all of our shared birds.

Thank you for supporting our work as a part of your investment in our century's legacy of science-driven conservation.

Wait, what is that?—from Page 1

crying out for their meal.

Stopping frequently to identify what I am hearing has become a habit this week as I've been doing point count surveys in Whiskeytown National Recreation Area, near Redding, California. It's a change from the recreational birding my companion is used to—he's agreed to accompany me while I'm working this week. Instead of focusing on finding and getting a good look at individual birds, we are stopping at specific points on a route so that I can record everything I see or hear within a 5-minute period. It's fast-paced, challenging work, but we still get the opportunity to stop and admire the sights and sounds of a bird breeding season in full swing.

"That one… what species is that?" We stop and listen to a partially buzzy but variable song for a minute. A Fox Sparrow pops out of the shrubs right in front of us, and then we hear it again—"oh cool! That's a new one for today."

KBO Biologist Caitlyn Gillespie conducting a point count in Whiskeytown National Recreation Area in May 2018. © 2018 KBO

Many of our days in the field are long, and always early: point counts start at sunrise, and sometimes when that alarm goes off at 4:30 am it can be difficult to convince myself to crawl out of my sleeping bag. Morning bird surveys are followed by vegetation surveys, and in summer those afternoon suns can be intense. Still, as field biologists, these days are when we have the most fun with our jobs.

As I'm hiking to my next point, some movement catches my eye on the side of the trail. Peeking through the shrubs, I see fledgling Wrentits, running and hopping a bit through the branches. We stop for a minute to watch them clumsily try to follow their parents. "It's funny how baby birds don't really know how to act likes birds yet … still, they're pretty cute."

Hairy Woodpeckers—an adult male and nestling at their cavity nest. © 2018 Jim Livaudais

About KBO's Citizen Science in 2018

Ellie Armstrong, Field & Data Manager, Citizen Science Programming Coordinator

Over the past two years Klamath Bird Observatory's Citizen Science program has continued to grow with volunteers throughout the state collecting data for multiple projects. One of those projects is just outside of Ashland and is in partnership with the Selberg Institute, a local organization currently managing two private preserves for conservation.

Each preserve spans close to 5,000 acres in the foothills of the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument. KBO citizen scientists have been inventorying birds at the Sampson Creek Preserve and the Grizzly Peak Preserve for over a year. From April 2017 to April 2018, 17 citizen scientists surveyed the Sampson Creek Preserve, with some completing regular biweekly surveys throughout the entire year! These dedicated volunteers submitted over 100 eBird checklists recording 119 species of birds for what is now a robust inventory of what species can be found on the preserve during different times of the year. After a full year of surveys at Sampson Creek, citizen scientists have now moved on to monitor the birds at the Grizzly Peak Preserve. Heading out every other Saturday until next spring, groups will continue to bird the preserve's mosaic of grasslands and woodlands.

To get involved with KBO's Citizen Science Programs contact Ellie Armstrong at eea@klamathbird.org!

In the Field

Alex Flores, Salmon River Restoration Project Field Technician

Early morning sun
a Black-headed Grosbeak sings
good morning to you

One Song Sparrow barks
no sign of Yellow Warblers
at least there are chats

There goes a raven
a Steller's Jay shrieks and scolds
am I friend or foe?

Some birds are hiding
blackberry bushes rustle
bird work needs patience

Song Sparrow barking. © 2018 Jim Livaudais

Vesper and I—*from Page 1*

I'm sure that she saw me, I'm a big walking tree
I'll just sit here in my chair and see what I see
Alright! There she goes into the grass with a worm
Let's stroll over there and see if it makes her squirm

"Yes, he fell for it, he's up off his ass
Just sit here real tight behind this piece of grass
Then when his big boot is about to step on me
I'll jump up and fly to a far distant tree."

Go slow, be patient, I'm getting real hot.
I swear she went down, right at this spot.
Be alert for her to flush like a mouse
Then I'll know for sure that I've found her house.

"Five steps. Four steps. Three and now two
Time to get going, before I meet his shoe.
A flap of my wings. I fly over a stump
A chip of joy, I think I made him jump."

There she goes, freeze! Don't move a bit
Behind that clump of grass, that's got to be it.
Slowly, slowly, one step then one more
I know that I'm knocking on Vesper's front door.

"Look at him, way over there, far from my nest
I hate to say it, but I'm really the best.
10 minutes from now he'll give up his quest.
Then maybe he'll leave and give me some rest."

Dang it, dang it, I know I'm standing on it
5 more minutes then I've got to quit
Okay I can't find it, you win, I forfeit.
I'm going back to my chair for a sit.

"Yay! He's gone, my nest is safe once again
Keeping bands off my chicks, is what I call a win
Two days from now, they'll fledge and be free.
Another successful nesting season for me."

Congrats mama, you're one tricky bird
I won't bother you again, I give you my word.
Trying eight times, is more than enough
You're the Queen of the Vespers, you've got the best stuff.

A triumphant Oregon Vesper Sparrow. © 2018 Karl Schneck

Citizen Science Adventures

Christine McCullough, Citizen Science Volunteer

I have been surveying birds for KBO and Selberg Institute at two different locations, Sampson and Grizzly preserves, and it has been an extremely rewarding experience. I am relatively new to birding—I've spent most of my life looking at flowers, not at birds. Working on this project has helped me to grow as a birder, which has helped me to notice more about the areas I walk through and to appreciate everything that is there, not just the plants. It has been truly wonderful to be able to explore these properties and experience the lovely oak woodlands outside of Ashland. There are so few oak woodlands left, it is great to see these protected.

One of my favorite things about being out in the field is how unpredictable things can be. On one of my surveys, I spent over an hour walking around without seeing any birds at all. Just as I was about to give up and just head back home, the forest and fields came alive with birds and birdsong. Especially meadowlarks, more meadowlarks than I have ever seen before! There were warblers, bluebirds, and sparrows everywhere. The birds made me wait a little bit, and sometimes it can be frustrating, but it seems to make it even more special.

Mountain Bluebird on the mountaintop. © 2018 Jim Livaudais

Sometimes you find something during the survey that you don't expect at all. While on Grizzly, my Mom and I encountered a very friendly horse that proceeded to follow us everywhere we went. He almost followed us into our car! Every day that I spend outside in the field is a new adventure, and birding on these properties has given me so many new experiences.

Words On the Wind

A celebration of birds in literature

"Hope" is the Thing with Feathers - (314)
By Emily Dickinson

'Hope' is the thing with feathers –
That perches in the soul –
And sings the tune without the words –
And never stops – at all –

And sweetest – in the Gale – is heard –
And sore must be the storm –
That could abash the little Bird
That kept so many warm –

I've heard it in the chillest land –
And on the strangest Sea –
Yet – never – in Extremity,
It asked a crumb – of me.

Editor's note: Dickinson's inner and constant "hope" as a bird singing brings her encouragement through difficult times. What a pretty (and practical!) thought.

Oregon Birds, Mexico Birds *Said Quintero Felix, Banding Program Volunteer Student Intern*

Let's just say it is awesome to have this experience, I really enjoy the landscape that is so different than the place I come from. But there's one more important thing, birds, I have had several new species for me, my favorite is the Oregon Junco. It is an elegant bird, with grayish to blackish head, small pink bill, and white outer tail feathers … it was my first time banding one of them, and is more common here than I thought.

Many other birds we capture include some species that I'm so familiar with, because they migrate in the fall to my home country Mexico. That is one of the best parts, we share some birds, and it is so important to help the bird conservation in both countries—sharing our work and our efforts in keeping watch for those beautiful birds.

At the end of my internship I hope to know more about ageing and sexing birds that will help continue similar work in Mexico. This is one my personal goals and I'm so positive to reach it soon!

TOPSY *Ricky Murphy, Banding Program Volunteer Student Intern*

This place is more than birds

and if it had a name

it would be spelt with the babbling of its river, the pinkish strokes of its sunset, and the buzz of its pewees

it would be proof read by the erect needles of its ponderosa pines
whose confident and sturdy postures harmoniously stand at attention like a platoon
making mental preparations to die for their sergeant and the sweat beads that hesitantly fall off their brows as the dew drops fall and bell out a pound, a thud, a reverberation down streams and up slopes

and it would be edited by the weight of its clouds
its falling rain erasing what is old and tired
transforming cracks into streams, divets into ponds, and trenches into gullies
and as twilight wanes they would give if not a kiss then a shrewd nod for another day lived

Editors Note: Topsy is one of KBO's network of long-term monitoring banding stations operated each year May-October—this one since 1997. It is located at the Bureau of Land Management's Frain Ranch Campground about 15 miles west of Dorris, California on the Klamath River. It is accessed via the old Topsy Grade Road—originally a stage and wagon road that drops down into the river canyon from a dry open pine forest into mixed oak-conifer and a lush riparian forest along the river. A very birdy site that has left a strong impression on many of our biologists over the years!

Oregon Junco about to be banded. © 2018 Daniel Thiede

New Places, New Birds *Jelicsa Peña, Banding Program Volunteer Student Intern*

Seeing the US flag flying for the first time in Medford made me realize that my long and wearying trip from Peru was truly worth it, although my English was barely good enough to tell Bob how happy I was to meet him. I felt very fortunate to be an intern at KBO, where I have wanted to go for a long time. Best of all I am able to practice and learn what motivates me most (bird banding) at a new level, which I enjoy very much.

Field days are fun and unpredictable (that is a lot of the fun). I will not forget the first night at our Antelope Creek monitoring station in Klamath National Forest, where my tent withstood the thunderstorm while I (mostly) slept peacefully. The next morning we set up nets and every bird we captured was new for me, and told us a new story as we examined its plumage, took measurements, and assessed breeding condition. As I learn more and more about these (still pretty new for me) species, I can really appreciate the challenges they face—like travelling great distances (as I have!) and loss of good habitat (as we hear large equipment working nearby). I can only say that already I have learned much more than I expected, and we have more months to go!

Field Day's End—*from Page 1*

the clearing from our camp); the clear, ringing song of Yellow Warblers proclaiming, "sweet sweet sweet, I'm so sweet!"; and the chirruping calls of robins, sounding ever-harried. All is underlain by the river's languid burbling and the deep static roar of rapids. Fog rising up behind the trees covers the peak beyond like a gauzy shade.

Yellow Warbler: "I'm so sweet!" © 2018 Jim Livaudais

In the morning, hundreds of butterflies gathered at still seeps of water and explode upward and away ahead of our footsteps as we walk along checking nets. After our day's banding tomorrow morning, we will pack up and move on somewhere entirely different and equally beautiful; a site crisscrossing a creek nestled in a forest of towering pines and firs festooned in lime-hued wolf lichen.

Here we'll fall asleep to the eerie, spiraling trills of Hermit Thrush and the busy babble of the creek. And then on again: we have seven long-term banding stations to visit every 10 days during the field season. These experiences in peaceful out-of-the-way places, still rich with wildlife, are a large part of why I so deeply love what I do and why I feel so passionately that they should remain.

Reflections of Field Days *Dan Popelka, Point Count Program Field Technician*

And just like that, another field season has come and gone. As challenging and physically and mentally strenuous as a field season can be, it is also very fun and exciting. Most importantly, however, is that it is so rewarding on so many different levels.

Not only does the work we do have a positive impact on the environment here and on a broader scale, it also has had a positive impact on me personally. During the field season, I have learned many new skills and gotten to explore new areas. Living in Ashland, I am very grateful for the opportunity to work with such a great organization and to have grown as an individual from the experience.

There are so many little moments out in the field that make the job so rewarding that it would take a few pages to talk about them all. Some of the highlights, however, include adding a few bird species to my life list, close encounters with bears and rattlesnakes, getting to spend a few minutes with a California Sister butterfly perched on my hand, and experiencing the vast beauty of the great American West.

Dan meets a California Sister butterfly. © 2018 Dan Popelka

Of all I am most grateful for in the past few months is the time for reflection while out in the field. Though I am busy at work while out in the field, I find myself constantly lost in thought, reflection, and wonder. Being in the woods does that to you—it is a humbling and sometimes spiritual experience, and provides the opportunity to reset and readjust one's mind, body and soul in many different ways.

About the Point Count Program in 2018

Caitlyn Gillespie, Research Biologist

Field season at KBO is a busy time of year, and for good reason: with a relatively small staff, we are collecting data for many research projects simultaneously. Point counts are designed to assess the presence and abundance of all species in a breeding bird community in a very short amount of time. Collecting data as a KBO point counter during the field season means traveling throughout our study region in the Klamath-Siskiyou Bioregion and beyond to study where bird species occur and how they use habitat.

Our crews are in the field collecting data for only about six weeks during the first part of the breeding season when birds are singing. The songs both alert us to the presence of the birds (most of our observations are by sound) and also let us know that the birds are defending territories in that habitat. Using birds as indicators is a key part of the research program at KBO, and allows us to ask questions about the overall health of an ecosystem. In other words, if we know that a bird species with specific needs is breeding in an area, it is a good sign that those habitat features are intact.

Each year we have a different collection of point count projects, including some long-term monitoring and some that have shorter timeframes to answer focused applied research questions. In a 30-year study with the National Park Service's Klamath Monitoring and Inventory Network, we survey birds at six national parks within our region on a 3-year rotation. This year, we surveyed at Whiskeytown National Recreation Area and Lassen Volcanic National Park. Our applied research programs this year included studying bird responses to oak restoration projects in Siskiyou County, California, riparian areas along the Salmon River, variable timber harvest practices in Coos County, and we even made it all the way to Cannon Beach for baseline monitoring at a new preserve on the Ecola Ridge. It's been a whirlwind season of traveling! Still, bird surveys give us the opportunity to spend plenty of quality time observing nature: the point counters' accounts are just a sample of what we've experienced. Hope they inspire your own field days!

Crater Lake National Park and KBO are presenting a bird ecology program series this summer and into the fall. These Park Ranger-led programs feature a visit to KBO's bird monitoring station within the Park.

The programs are on Thursday mornings, but not every Thursday—call (541) 594-3100 for information and to register (free). KBO also offers banding demonstrations at its Upper Klamath Lake Field Station near Fort Klamath. For more information and to arrange a visit contact Bob Frey at bif@klamathbird.org.

About the Banding Program in 2018

Robert Frey, Biologist and Banding Program Manager

Since its beginnings over 20 years ago, KBO's Banding Program has been integral to our long-term monitoring and education endeavors. The information this type of work provides informs analyses of population trends and physiological study in greater detail than other bird survey methods. However, it requires several people with particular skills in the safe trapping, handling, and age-sex determination of songbirds. For this reason the program has always engaged whole-heartedly in professional training with internships and workshops; these training opportunities ensure high-quality data and create professional learning opportunities for young scientists. Since 1996 we have hosted over 250 interns and over 20 workshops. In 2018, we have four interns and hosted a workshop at our Upper Klamath Lake Field Station.

Having a bird in the hand is not only better than two in the bush but also an excellent opportunity to share what we do and a conservation message with the public. We have hosted public banding demonstrations as a component of KBO's community education programming at bird festivals and during long-term monitoring operations for many years. In 2018, we held public demonstrations at the Rogue Valley Bird Day festival in Ashland and several at our monitoring station within Crater Lake National Park (see opposite column this page).

The banding program has grown beyond our Klamath-Siskiyou Bioregion study area with our efforts toward international capacity building in bird conservation. Through international internships and our participation with workshops in other countries, we have hosted 54 interns from 16 countries and have participated as instructors in 17 banding workshops in nine countries. This year we are hosting interns from Mexico and Peru and participating in a workshop in Ecuador. KBO is also continuing collaborative and mentoring partnerships with bird observatories in Brazil, Costa Rica, Mexico, and Trinidad & Tobago.

KBO Research Associate Josée Rousseau and KBO Biologist Jim Field examining a Wilson's Warbler during a banding workshop in 2007.
© 2018 KBO

The program contributes data to the North American Bird Banding Program, Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship Program, Center for Tropical Research's Bird Genoscape Project, the National Phenology Network, and the Avian Data Center Northwest.

President's Perch Shannon Rio, *KBO Board of Directors President*

Our recent Malheur Birding Expedition was a grand success, led by birding expert and bird guide author Harry Fuller. The group of 13 left early on June 2nd and spent the first night at Summer Lake Lodge after birding from Ashland to the Summer Lake Refuge. There were many favorites from that day: the Lazuli Bunting male singing at the top of a pine tree, the profoundly elegant avocets probing in the mud for insect snacks, and then there were the five American Bittern sightings! We were joined by another intrepid birder that night and trekked over to the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge area for the next 3 nights.

At the end of the trip we tallied 18 sightings of Great Horned Owls and also enjoyed the Burrowing and Short-eared owl views. We watched two badgers digging their burrow up close and personal! And when we weren't birding we were eating dinner at the historic Diamond Hotel or soaking in Crystal Crane Hot Springs. Our species count from the trip was 125! But for many of us, the vast and dramatic landscape was the most exciting part of the trip. And we helped KBO with this conservation birding event—which made it extra special.

Lazuli Bunting, Summer Lake Refuge © 2018 Kirk Gooding

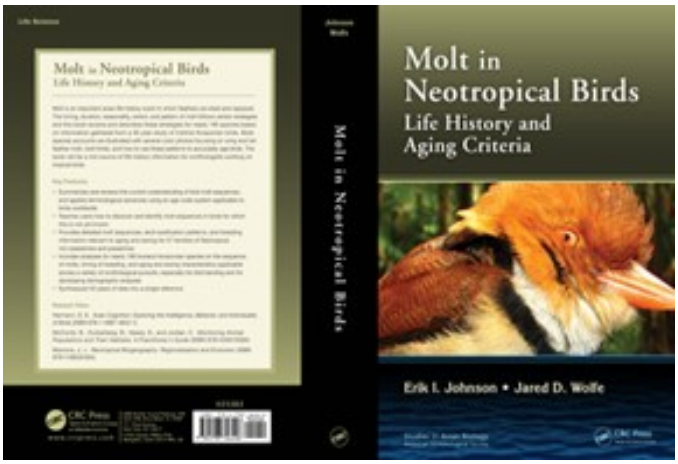
We look forward to more adventure birding trips in the future and KBO's Talk and Walk series will continue in the fall. Hope you can come along—to help bird conservation and have a wonderful time!

KBO Research Associate Publishes Book on Amazonian Birds

The Amazon rainforest hosts 15% of the world's bird species. Despite the staggering diversity of birds, relatively little is known about their natural history. To better understand the timing of life cycle events such as breeding and molting seasonality of Amazonian birds, a team of biologists began a long-term monitoring project in 1978 in the north region of Brazil. Findings from this impressive study are featured in a forthcoming book titled *Molt in Neotropical Birds: Life History and Aging Criteria* by Drs. Erik Johnson and Jared Wolfe.

"In addition to over a decade of personal research experience in the Amazon, we relied on the long-term dataset to document breeding and molting patterns for nearly 190 bird species, representing 37 families" says Dr. Wolfe, co-author of the book and KBO research associate. "The type of information provided in our book is readily available for birds in North America. Until now, these resources were not available for ornithologists interested in tropical birds."

The book relies on hundreds of figures and photos to describe breeding seasonality, and unique molt patterns (replacement of feathers) that often vary by age, thereby allowing practitioners to categorize captured birds into age classes. "This book provides the information necessary to determine the age of captured birds, which lays the groundwork for detailed demographic studies of tropical birds" says Dr. Wolfe.



Front and back cover of Molt in Neotropical Birds: Life History and Aging Criteria. Image provided by CRC Press.

The information detailed in this book is certain to be widely used by ornithologists interested in the natural history, demography, and evolution of tropical birds. In his recent *Journal of Field Ornithology* (Vol. 89:105-107) review, renowned ornithologist Peter Pyle summed "… I consider this an 'absolute must' for any student of either avian molt or avian tropical systems, and it has already become one of the eight or so most critical molt reference works within immediate reach of my desk." *Molt in Neotropical Birds: Life History and Aging Criteria* is available through CRC Press.

Bird Bio: Mountain Quail *Robert Frey, KBO Biologist*

A clear "quee-ark" blows through the leaves on a western mountain forest. A small stream gurgles a backing chorus—and you know you're where the Mountain Quail struts about and calls home.

The Mountain Quail is found in mountainous chaparral west of the Rocky Mountains—primarily of northern California and southern Oregon, but extending to the Baja Peninsula and (introduced) to British Columbia and some areas of Washington. It can be found up to 9,800 feet above sea level. It's the largest of the six North American quails—easily identified from the others by two thin and long head plumes and rich chestnut-colored sides with bold white barring. The male and female are similar in appearance, although females tend to be a bit duller and have a shorter plume.

Mountain Quail are secretive ground-dwelling birds—moving about primarily by foot and surprisingly quickly through dense brush and undergrowth. Spotting them, always a challenge, will usually be fleeting. One of its courtship displays is known as the stand-crouch where one bird will crouch flat on the ground, obscuring the bold chestnut and white-barred plumage of the flanks, while the other stands above it—displaying the bold plumage as much as possible. This particular behavior is not known in any other species. They feed primarily on seeds, succulent greens, flowers, berries, and insects—pretty much paleo! Adult females and recently-fledged chicks consume more insects than the adult males. The chicks are precocial, which means they are active and able to leave the nest with their parents very soon after hatching. Mountain Quails prefer a humid forest habitat, so a year-round water source will usually be nearby wherever they are found.

This bird's various names all refer to what it looks like or where it will be found. The scientific name *Oreortyx pictus* is translated as Oreortyx, a Greek-Latin mix meaning "mountain quail" coined from the Greek horos ("mountain") and the Latin ortyx ("quail"); pictus is from the Latin picta ("painted"), for the intense coloration in its plumage. In Mexico, it is known as Colín Serrano meaning "quail of the mountains".

The Mountain Quail, like most quail species, does not migrate but disperses from higher to lower elevations for winter months in much of its range. This behavior is one of the reasons why there is concern for its future in a changing climate and shifting habitats. Recently, Audubon Society scientists used a huge dataset of citizen-science observations and sophisticated climate models to predict how birds in the US and Canada will react to climate change (found online at http://climate.audubon.org/). They defined the habitat and climate conditions birds use now, and then mapped where those conditions will be found in the future as habitats shift in response to changing temperatures and moisture of the Earth's air, land, and seas. It is the broadest and most detailed study of its kind to date and gives due notice that many birds are in trouble.

KBO's 2018 Conservation Science Stamp featuring the Mountain Quail. Artwork by Nathan Trimble © 2018.

The Audubon report's modelling for Mountain Quail projects loss of 58% of current summer range and 44% of current winter range by 2080. In other words, in just over 60 years only half of their current available habitat will remain—which likely means half the Mountain Quails. Due to its limited mobility, Mountain Quail may have trouble tracking eastward into potential new winter range projected by Audubon's climate model, so this species will certainly need assistance in weathering climate change's effects on its remaining core range within northern California and southern Oregon. The Audubon report is a conservation alarm going off—the Mountain Quail is just one of 314 species identified as imperiled by the expected effects of climate change in the next 60 years.

A mountain stream's splashed and bubbling chorus fades in … and another "quee-ark" echoes downslope. A clarion call from an imperiled species—if we are listening.

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