

Oregon & Washington



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The summer of 2004 was memorable for the continued increase of interior wetland species west of the Cascades, including Clark's Grebe, American White Pelican, Gadwall, Blue-winged Teal, Red-head, Lesser Scaup, Black-necked Stilt, and Wilson's Phalarope—some of these breeding, others just occurring in ever-larger numbers. From the past few years, Great Egret, White-faced Ibis, and Black Tern could be added to this list as well. Are these increases simple range expansions or movements forced by drought elsewhere? Probably both. The summer's weather was hot and dry, somewhat so in June, but especially so in July, when almost the entire Region had just half its normal rainfall and temperatures averaging 3–6° F above normal. Summer was splendid for rarities, including first state records for both Oregon and Washington. Best represented among this lot were eastern passerines, though there were several seabirds and shorebirds of interest.

Abbreviations: F.R.R. (Fern Ridge Reservoir, Lane, OR); Malheur (Malheur N.W.R., Harney, OR); N.S.C.B. (N. Spit Coos Bay, Coos, OR); O.S. (Ocean Shores, Grays Harbor,

WA); P.S.B. (Port Susan Bay, Snohomish, WA); Ridgefield (Ridgefield N.W.R., Clark, WA); W.W.R.D. (Walla Walla R. delta, Walla Walla, WA); Y.R.D. (Yakima R. delta, Benton, WA). *Eastside* and *westside* indicate east and west of the Cascade crest, respectively.

LOONS THROUGH CRANES

A gathering of 96 Pacific Loons at Clatsop Spit 10 Jul was most unusual for mid-summer (MP). Now nearly annual during summer, a Yellow-billed Loon was at Swantown, Island 26 Jun (SM, D. Koepfel). Two Clark's Grebes at Vancouver L., Clark 16 Jul furnished w. Washington's 2nd summer record (TA); notably 34 Western Grebes, quite rare on freshwater during summer in w. Washington, were also present, and courtship behavior was observed (TA); neither species is known to breed in w. Washington. A Clark's Grebe at Fernhill Wetlands, Washington to 23 Jun was also out of place (HN). Three pelagic trips off Westport (26 Jun, 10 Jul, 31 Jul) and one off the Columbia R. mouth 31 Jul furnished fairly good summer coverage. The 26 Jun venture was an excellent one for albatrosses. In addition to a stunning 993 Black-footeds, there was a Laysan and a Short-tailed Albatross (BLB, G. Revelas, ph. MDo); Laysan is very rare during summer and the Short-tailed was the first for summer since 1889! Northern Fulmars were present in low numbers but above their pitiful spring totals, averaging about 100 per trip. Manx Shearwaters maintained their presence in the Region with 2 off Matia I., San Juan 11 Jun (MDo), 2 near Kalaloch, Jefferson 7 Jul (†CW), and one at Ft. Canby, Pacific 28 Jul (†T. Guy).

American White Pelicans have become a regular, albeit scarce, part of the westside's avifauna over the last decade; this summer 22 were reported from three w. Washington locations and 49 at 2 w. Oregon sites. A count of 8000 Brown Pelicans at Clatsop Spit 31 Jul was likely a Regional record (R. Lowe). In Washington's interior marine waters, Brown Pelicans are rare before mid-Aug, so 10 at Port Townsend 25 Jun (D. Johnson) and one at Olympia 4 Jul+ (JP) were noteworthy.

A Cattle Egret at F.R.R. 10–13 Jul furnished an extremely rare summer record for the westside (E. Cantor). Rare on the eastside, a Green Heron graced Bingen, Klickitat 12 Jun (KK). Black-crowned Night-Herons made an unprecedented showing in the Willamette Valley, with 13 birds reported from seven sites, including 6 that summered at F.R.R., again raising speculation that they are nesting (m.ob.); the last westside nesting record was from 1951. The only White-faced Ibis remaining in Washington/w. Oregon after this spring's modest incursion were 3 at Iowa Beef, Walla Walla 2 Jun (NL) and one at Baskett Slough, Polk 5 Jun (R. Kepler).

SA For birders, discerning the end of "spring shorebird migration" and the beginning of "fall shorebird migration" has always been challenging. For the contiguous U.S., most assume that shorebirds before 10 Jun are northbound and those after 19 Jun are southbound. Close observation of shorebirds through the course of the summer is generally difficult, but the reserve at Port Susan Bay, limited to approximately 100 acres of wetlands, allowed more detailed study than possible at larger wetlands, where birds range far and wide. KW, JW, TA, SM, and DD regularly surveyed this area. Interestingly, outside of breeding species, overwintering shorebirds are considered quite rare in the Puget Trough. Nonetheless, some birds were clearly doing just that. These included 59 basic-plumaged Black-bellied Plovers, 4 alternate-plumaged Greater Yellowlegs, an alternate-plumaged Western Sandpiper, and an alternate-plumaged and a basic-plumaged Short-billed Dowitcher. Quite surprising was a slew of apparently record-early southbound birds, including 3 basic-plumaged Semipalmated Plovers 16 Jun+, 2 alternate-plumaged Lesser Yellowlegs 16 Jun+, a basic-plumaged Western Sandpiper 16 Jun+, 2 basic-plumaged Least Sandpipers 16 Jun+, and a basic-plumaged Dunlin 19 Jun. Far more baffling was the appearance of an alternate-plumaged male Pacific Golden-Plover 16 Jun followed by a different male Pacific Golden with an alternate-plumaged female on 19 Jun. Mid-Jun records of Pacific Golden-Plovers are almost unprecedented in the Region. Equally rare, or perhaps even more so, were 2 alternate-plumaged Red Knots 13 Jun (one to 16 Jun). And finally, an alternate-plumaged Long-billed Dowitcher, considered very rare during mid-Jun, made a one day appearance 13 Jun. In which direction were these mid-Jun transients headed? Is it possible that a Long-billed Dowitcher or a Red Knot passing through Washington on 13 Jun might actually make it to the Arctic to breed? Their bright alternate plumage seems to suggest some intent in that arena. And do a few southbound members of some species, such as Lesser Yellowlegs and Least Sandpiper, regularly appear as early as mid-Jun? Are these failed breeders, or are they first-year birds that had no intention of nesting?

A Greater White-fronted Goose, very rare during summer, lingered at P.S.B. to 13 Jun (SM, TA). A rare breeder in w. Oregon, Gadwall broods were found at Fernhill Wetlands, Washington (GG, HN) and Baskett Slough, Polk (BTi). In w. Washington, Gadwalls have become such common breeders that they are essentially disregarded by today's observers, but as recently as 1987 only four broods of Gadwall were found in the Puget Trough (*American Birds* 41: 1478). By comparison, 15–20 broods were found this summer just in the vicinity of Stanwood, Snohomish (SM). The Region's 3rd summer record of Eurasian Wigeon was provided by 2 males at Gutierrez Ranch, Crook 12 Jun (CG); surprisingly, all summer records have been from the eastside. Another species that has increased greatly on the westside is Blue-winged Teal, with a record high count of 117 at P.S.B. 10 Jun (SM); consider that a tally of 8 in w. Washington was worthy of publication in *American Birds* during summer 1988. Two broods of Northern Shoveler, a very rare breeder on Washington's outer coast, were found at Markham, Grays Harbor and at O.S. (PtS, RS). Scarce breeders on the westside, Green-winged Teal raised a brood at P.S.B. (SM, TA), Ridgefield (TA), Fernhill Wetlands (GG), and N.S.C.B. 13 Jul (TR). Unprecedented for summer was a Green-winged Teal x Common Teal at P.S.B. 15 Jul (†SM, DD). Redheads are very rare in w. Washington from mid-Jun through early Aug, and there was only one breeding record, from 1998 at Kent. This summer, 2 broods were located at Post Office L., Clark 16 Jul (TA), and a lone female was at Everett 2 Jul (SM, DD). In Oregon, Redheads bred for the 2nd consecutive year at F.R.R. (DDW), while Ring-necked Ducks again bred at their only known outer-coast site, N.S.C.B. (TR). Five Greater Scaup were at Soap L., Grant 2 Jun, with one lingering to 9 Jun (TA, DSc); they are very rare on the eastside during summer. Lesser Scaup, rare breeders in w. Washington, were noted with broods at Deer Lagoon, Island and Stanwood, Snohomish (SM). Much more noteworthy was w. Ore-

gon's first breeding record at Baskett Slough 3 Jul (BTi). Virtually unprecedented for the eastside lowlands during summer were 2 Harlequin Ducks at Soap L. 2–9 Jun (TA). The eastside's 3rd summer record of Surf Scoter was provided by a bird at Soap L. 6–9 Jun (K. Andrich), and on the westside huge numbers again summered on Padilla Bay, Skagit, with a maximum of 2540 on 31 Jul (SM, C. Beachell). Astonishing was a Black Scoter on a small pond at Monroe, Snohomish 9 Jun (J. O'Connell); they are very rare, even in marine habitats, during summer. Rare breeders in Washington, a Bufflehead raised a brood at Teal L., Okanogan (M. Fleming).

Matching last year's total, there were 30 active Osprey nests in Everett this summer (E. Schulz); consider that there were only six in all w. Washington in 1978 (*American Birds* 32: 1200). A Bald Eagle at Horn Rapids, Benton 1 Aug furnished the first summer lower Columbia Basin record in 30 years (*vide* NL). A Red-shouldered Hawk near Kelso, Cowlitz 4 Jul will provide Washington's 2nd summer record, if accepted by the B.R.C. (†Simone Lupson-Cook). Single Red-shouldered were at Tumalo Res., Deschutes 15 Jul (WH) and Malheur 26 Jul (LR); this species is a rare, primarily fall, visitor to e. Oregon. Mysterious is the sudden appearance of Gambel's Quail in e. Washington. A pair was well documented at Lyons Ferry, Franklin 6 Jun (†P. Lott), while 3 more were described far away at Cottonwood Campground, Yakima 29 May–1 Jun (†C. Sisson, †T. Sisson); state and federal agencies deny having released this species in Washington, so private individuals or clubs are likely the source. One wonders, "How many are wandering around among e. Washington's numerous California Quails, and could this species be established?" Single Sandhill Cranes near Riverside, Okanogan 26 Jun (M. Hansen) and at Turnbull N.W.R., Spokane 22 Jul (M. Frobe) were well away from any known breeding locale.

PLOVERS THROUGH WOODPECKERS

A Black-bellied Plover at Soap L., Grant 1–2

Jun provided e. Washington's first Jun record (DSc). A record-early American Golden-Plover visited P.S.B. 21 Jun (TA); they usually don't arrive until early or mid-Aug. Per normal, a couple of Pacific Golden-Plovers arrived in late Jul, with singles at Bottle Beach, Grays Harbor, 27 Jul (T. O'Brien) and O.S. 31 Jul (PtS, RS). Amazingly, Snowy Plover numbers in Washington seem to be increasing, with 27 nests found at Midway Beach, Pacific and 6 at O.S. (after near-extirpation there); similar good news came from Oregon, where a record 80–100 young are expected to fledge (D. Lauten). For the 5th consecutive year, Black-necked Stilts nested in the Willamette Valley, with young found at Baskett Slough, Polk (BTi) and F.R.R. (DF). An American Avocet, rare during summer on the westside, was at F.R.R. 20 Jun (R. Robb). Washington's first Spotted Redshank was found by a pair of visiting Swedish birders at Blynn, Clallam 10 Jul (†M. & F. Linde); Oregon has one record, and there are several from sw. British Columbia, all 1970–1982. For the 4th consecutive summer, Solitary Sandpiper numbers were much higher than the long-term baseline, with 16 from 4 Jul+. An Upland Sandpiper, found last summer near Spokane, was seen again this spring. Summer reports, however, suggested that there were 2–3 birds, last seen 19 Jul (m.ob.); breeding has not been documented in Washington since 1993. In Oregon, this species' tiny population clings to existence, with 2 at Bear Valley, Grant 22 Jun (M.A. Sohlstrom) and one near Juntura, Malheur 24–28 Jun (S. Wilson). Whimbrel is among the earliest southbound migrants, but almost all Jun records are from the outer coast, so one at Tacoma 19 Jun was noteworthy (M. Roening). Two Long-billed Curlews were near Sequim, Clallam 17 Jun–23 Jul (TA) and at Blynn, Clallam 14 Jul (BN), while one was at F.R.R. 18 Jul (DDW); this species is rare on the westside away from the outer coast. Marbled Godwit sightings, not annual on the eastside during summer, included 9 at W.W.R.D. 10 Jul (MD, MLD), 3 at Thief Valley Res., Union 10 Jul (PaS), and another at Summer L. 23 Jul (MD, MLD); rare in the

westside's interior, 2 Marbleds also graced F.R.R. on the late dates of 3–4 Jun (R. Sinnett, E. Cantor). A very late northbound Semipalmated Sandpiper was at P.S.B. 5 Jun (GB), while an early southbound bird was there 24 Jun (SM, DD). This summer's total was 3 for Oregon and 93 for Washington, mostly in the n. Puget Trough, with a maximum of 12 at P.S.B. 17 Jul that consisted almost entirely of ads. (SM); the usual surge of juvs. in late Jul was subpar. A Baird's Sandpiper at Summer L. 6 Jun furnished only the 3rd Regional record of a northbound bird during Jun (DI), while one southbound at P.S.B. 30 Jun was exceptionally early (JW, KW); subsequently, a goodly 10 were reported from Washington and 11 from Oregon, 12 Jul+, including one at Paradise, Mt. Ranier 29 Jul (R. Merrill). Eight Pectoral Sandpipers 15 Jul+ was above average. A Dunlin at Summer L. 6 Jun was late for the eastside (DI). The recent trend of extremely early southbound Dunlin continued; in addition to the 19 Jun bird mentioned above, alternate-plumaged birds were found at P.S.B. 30 Jun (KW, JW) and Crockett L., Island 5–10 Jul (KA). As typical, a few over-summered on the outer coast, with a maximum of 18 at Florence, Lane 9 Jul (D. Pettey), but a Dunlin at the Yakima Indian Reservation 5 Jul was only e. Washington's 3rd for summer (K. Turley). An alternate-plumaged Curlew Sandpiper at Summer L. 17–21 Jul was Oregon's 11th and the eastside's 2nd (†DI, ph. NS, ph. S. Maulding); most of the Region's records have been late Jul–early Oct, with three prior Jul sightings. A Stilt Sandpiper at Crockett L. 10–17 Jul furnished a very rare record of a southbound ad. (SM). A Short-billed Dowitcher, not annual during summer on the eastside, was at Hatch L., Stevens 11 Jul (MH), and 2 were at Summer L. 23 Jul (MD, MLD). An alternate-plumaged Long-billed Dowitcher at Paterson Slough, Benton 14 Jun provided a very rare mid-Jun record (BW, NL). Wilson's Phalaropes historically bred, at least intermittently, on the westside, but there were almost no breeding records from the 1970s and 1980s; after increasing during the 1990s in w. Oregon, Wilson's Phalaropes were found breeding at five sites this year: F.R.R., N.S.C.B., Junction City, Lane, Baskett Slough, Polk, and Pioneer Villa wetlands, Linn. In w. Washington, Wilson's Phalaropes bred at P.S.B. last year, providing only the 2nd breeding record since 1975; they nested again this year, with 6 males engaging in distraction displays 26 Jun and 4–8 young successfully fledged (SM, D. Koepfel). The maximum tal-

ly of ads. was 44 on 19 Jun (SM, DD). Four early southbound female Wilson's were near Edison, Skagit 19 Jun (SM, DD).

South Polar Skuas numbers were high offshore, with 7 found on four trips. Pomarine Jaeger counts, however, remained low following the poor spring passage, with only 10 total. A Long-tailed Jaeger at Summer L. 21 Jul was about the 15th for the eastside overall and the 5th for summer (†N. Pieplow, D. Heyerly, A. Heyerly). Washington's 4th Laughing Gull visited Kalaloch, Jefferson 17



This molting adult Curlew Sandpiper at Summer Lake, Oregon 17–21 (here 19) July 2004 was the nineteenth for the Oregon & Washington region but only the second east of the Cascade Mountains. Photograph by Sylvia Maulding.

ly (†BN); two of the prior records were from the outer coast Jun–Aug. Five Franklin's Gulls were at Sprague L. 10 Jun (TA), and 2 were at L. Lenore, Grant 2–6 Jun (TA); this species was not an annual visitor to e. Washington until the mid-1980s. A Franklin's at Gold Beach, Curry 24 Jun provided a very rare westside summer record (DM). Single Little Gulls at Hobuck Beach, Clallam 23 Jul (†CW) and Hood Canal, Jefferson 25 Jul (†J. Bryant) provided Washington's 4th and 5th summer records; additionally, the Clallam bird was only the 2nd for Washington's outer coast. Heermann's Gulls again appeared in good numbers, highlighted by 5500 at O.S. 4 Jul (CW). A Mew Gull at P.S.B. 19 Jun was about two weeks early and furnished only the 5th Jun record during the last decade (SM, DD). Herring Gulls, typically very rare during summer, were reported from Whitman, Grant, Franklin, and Walla Walla. Extremely rare in the Great Basin, a Glaucous-winged Gull at L. Abert 23 Jul was Lake's first (MD, MLD), while one at Y.R.D. provided a most unusual summer record for the Columbia Basin (NL).

A Caspian Tern calling loudly over Snoqualmie Pass (elevation nearly 1000 m) 9 Jul was certainly out of habitat (J. Meyers). Three Common Terns at Colville, Stevens during early Jun furnished an extremely rare eastside summer record (MF). After an apparent absence last year, 4 Arctic Terns were again found at Everett 16 Jun–24 Jul (SM), with a nest found in an abandoned parking lot 17 Jul (G. Aslanian); this tiny colony, first noted in 1977, has never numbered more than 5 pairs, and is 1300 km s. of the nearest breeding area. Amazingly, 3 Arctic Terns were also rumored to have attempted breeding on Dungeness Spit, Clallam adjacent to a colony of Caspian Terns, with the nest destroyed by predators (*vide* BB). Forster's Terns again lingered at F.R.R., with 3 there 4 Jun (DF) and 2 on 11 Jul (T&A Mickel, DDW); this species is a rare summer visitor to the westside. Oregon's 12th Least Tern was at Malheur 5–6 Jun (RCH, AC); all previous Regional records have been from the westside. A Black Tern was near Sedro Woolley, Skagit 17 Jun (GB), and 3 visited P.S.B. 19 Jun (SM, DD, G. Toffic); Black Terns are very rare in w. Washington mid-Jun through early Aug. A Long-billed/Marbled Murrelet was in the Columbia R. near Brewster, Okanogan 8 Jul (H. Stout); there are currently no Marbled Murrelet records e. of the Cascade/Sierra Nevada divide. Five Xantus's Murrelets, all *scrippsi*, off Westport 10

Jul provided the 6th Regional summer record (BT, ph. S. Mills); most records of this rare visitor are Aug–Oct, and the only earlier one was of a bird found dead on an Oregon beach 26 Jun. Two Ancient Murrelets off Westport 26 Jun added to the recent flurry of late spring/summer records (BLB). Cassin's Auklets enjoyed a very successful breeding season in Oregon (*vide* R. Lowe), with a high count of 7000 off Cape Blanco, Curry 14 Jul (D. Pitkin, D. Ledig); numbers on pelagic trips, however, were low, averaging only 12 per outing.

After this spring's strong showing, a Eurasian Collared-Dove was at Rome, Malheur 6 Jun (RCH, AC), and 2 summered near Merrill, Klamath (C.A. Kising). However, a Eurasian Collared-Dove × "Ringed Turtle-Dove" hybrid in Everett early Jul–2 Aug demonstrated that care should still be taken when identifying *Streptopelia* doves in the Region (G. Kadish, vt. SM); this individual's appearance was more that of a collared-dove, but its song was clearly turtle-dove. Now annual in Harney during late spring/early summer, a Yellow-billed Cuck-

oo visited Malheur 12 Jun (LR, M. Murphy). A Long-eared Owl at Ridgefield 1 Aug was suggestive of local nesting, a very rare event in w. Washington (ph. J. Williams). At Salt Creek Falls, the traditional Oregon Black Creak breeding colony, up to 30 birds were noted throughout the summer (DI). Rare in w. Oregon, single Black-chinned Hummingbirds were at Central Pt., *Jackson* 27 Jun (J. Harleman) and Toledo, *Lincoln* 2 Jul (D. Faxon). Extremely rare in ne. Oregon, an Anna's Hummingbird graced LaGrande, *Union* 19 Jul (†Trent Bray). Still not annual during summer, single Costa's Hummingbirds appeared at Chiloquin, *Klamath* 1 Jul (W. Stone) and Portland 3 Jul (T. Murray). Perhaps somewhat overdue, the Region's first Red-headed Woodpecker appeared briefly near Cascade Locks, *Hood River* 5 Jul (†J. Gatchet). An Acorn Woodpecker near Balch L., *Klickitat* 25 Jul demonstrated that this species persists in Washington (BT). A white-bellied Downy Woodpecker with heavily spotted wing-coverts at Fortson Mills, *Snohomish* 13 Jun appeared to be one of the interior races, which are completely unexpected in w. Washington during summer (SM, DD). Prior to 2002, there were no reports of summer flickers bearing Yellow-shafted characteristics, but for the 3rd consecutive summer integrate Yellow-shafted Flicker x Red-shafted Flickers were located in Seattle, with 2 noted 22 Jul (TA); this change is undoubtedly due to increased observer diligence.

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH FINCHES

Washington's 2nd Alder Flycatcher graced Marblemount, *Skagit* 20–27 Jun (S. Atkinson, ph. RS, vt. SM). Eleven Least Flycatchers this spring was about average, with most records coming from the e. slope of the Washington Cascades, the Okanogan Highlands, and ne. Washington; however, one at Dixie 16 Jun–1 Jul was a *Walla Walla* first (P. Rossi), and another at Cold Springs N.W.R., *Umatilla* 27 Jun–5 Jul was quite rare for ne. Oregon (CC, JC). A count of 50 Pacific-slope Flycatchers in *Grays Harbor's* Wynootchie Valley 20 Jun was exceptional (JP). Furnishing ne. Washington's 2nd record, a Cordilleran Flycatcher was at Granite Pass, *Pend Oreille* 29 Jun (†MM, G. Sheridan); substantially closer to its known Washington range in the Blue Mts. was one at Lewis and Clark S.P., *Columbia* 25 Jun (G. Hunn). Rare in e. Oregon, a Black Phoebe at Malheur 30 Jul was about *Harney's* 4th (LR). Oregon's 8th Eastern Phoebe, first found in May, fruitlessly sought a mate near LaPine, *Deschutes* into early Jul (H. Horvath). For the 12th consecutive year, Eastern Kingbirds bred near Troutdale, *Multnomah*, their only known w. Oregon breeding location (J. Fitch); rare elsewhere in w. Oregon, one

was below Fall Creek Dam, *Lane* 22 Jun (DF). A Scissor-tailed Flycatcher near Beaverton 18 Jul was a *Washington* first and about the 19th for Oregon (†S. Hill); most have been May–early Jul.

Oregon's 2nd Yellow-throated Vireo appeared near Brookings, *Curry* 3 Jul (†DM); the first was at Malheur 9 Jun 2000. Oregon's 3rd Philadelphia Vireo visited Malheur 3 Jun, less than a fortnight after Oregon's 2nd and Washington's 3rd this May (RCH, F. Schrock). Still rare in *Pacific*, a Western Scrub-Jay was at Menlo 27 Jun (JP). A pair of Purple Martins nesting at 1000 m near Goose L., *Skamania* 4 Jul was remarkably high (C. Flick, S. Fletcher). Amazingly, an estimated 650 pairs of Purple Martins now breed in Washington (S. Kostka), compared with 39 pairs during summer 1980 (*American Birds* 34: 924); the increase is partly due to more intense surveying but is largely the result of an active nestbox recovery program. A swarm of 2000 Violet-green and 8000 Cliff Swallows at Sprague L. 10 Jun likely set a record high count for Cliff and a record summer tally for Violet-green (TA). Two Pygmy Nuthatches along Coppei Cr. 11 Jun furnished *Walla Walla's* 4th record (BW); the 3rd record was just this spring, raising the possibility that this species is extending its range westward from *Columbia*.

A Rock Wren was near Port Angeles 4 Jun–30 Jul (J. Mullaly); this species is extremely rare during summer in the westside lowlands. More expected, though still rare, were sightings from four locations on the w. slope of the Cascades from *Clark*, Washington, south; nesting was documented at Hoodoo Ski Area, *Linn* 4 Jul (DI, L. Irons) and Timothy L., *Clackamas* 14 Jul (N. Wallwork). Rare in the Willamette Valley, a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher appeared on the s. slope of Mt. Pisgah, *Lane* during late Jun, where they have bred in the past (B. Campbell); this site has Oregon's northernmost patch of Narrow-leaved Buckbrush (*Caenothus cuneatus*), a favored breeding habitat of these birds. A pair of Western Bluebirds with 2 young near Elkhorn Cr. 19 Jul provided *Pacific's* first breeding record (A. Richards). Up to 2 Veeries were noted at that species' only westside breeding location: County Line Ponds, *Whatcom* 13 Jun–7 Jul (SM, DD, S. Terry). A concentration of 18 Swainson's Thrushes at Windust Park, *Franklin* 2 Jun was most unusual for the Columbia Basin, where scattered singles are the rule (CW), while a tally of 142 in *Grays Harbor's* Wynootchie Valley 20 Jun was a Washington record (JP). Five Northern Mockingbirds in Oregon and 4 in Washington was well above average and included a nesting pair at Malheur (L. Hammond).

A Chestnut-sided Warbler, about the 46th for Oregon, was at Malheur 6 Jun, a fairly typical date (RCH, AC). A Magnolia Warbler

at Fields, *Harney* 1 Jun was about Oregon's 37th (M). Washington's 5th summer Myrtle Warbler was at Windust Park 2 Jun (CW). American Redstarts were first suspected of breeding in w. Washington in 1982 and have been detected annually since 1995 at the County Line Ponds, *Skagit/Whatcom*; this year, 9 males and 3 females were found there 13–29 Jun, likely a westside record (TA, SM, DD). Downstream, singing males were found near Marblemount 22 Jun (W. Weber) and near Conway to 11 Jun (K. Ranta), while clearly lost birds appeared on Vashon I., *King* 2 Jul (E. Swan) and at Estacada, *Clackamas* 13 Jul (R. Robb). Three Ovenbirds in Oregon was better than average, with singles at Winter Ridge, *Lake* 9 Jun (J. Fontaine), Hines, *Harney* 18 Jun (L. Hammond), and Gatesville Res, *Douglas* 3 Jul (*fide* DV); the latter was exceptional for being from the westside interior. A Northern Waterthrush at Yellowjacket Cr., *Kittitas* 4 Jul was in potential breeding habitat but far away from this species' established range in ne. Washington (S. Downes). Washington's 4th Hooded Warbler graced Sun Lakes S.P., *Grant* 6 Jun (†SM); of the three prior records, two were from Dec and one was from Jun. Yellow-breasted Chats, rare in w. Washington, were found at two *Thurston* locations and one in *Clark*; this species seems to be returning to w. Washington after decades of absence. Perhaps related to this tentative range expansion was a chat at Seaside 19 Jun, a rarity for *Clatsop* (MP). Washington's 3rd Summer Tanager was near Chimaçum, *Jefferson* 21–24 Jun (ph. B. Kinchen).

Clay-colored Sparrows were unusually evident in e. Washington this summer, with 8 reported from *Stevens*, *Spokane*, and *Lincoln*, including one carrying food along Stroup Rd., *Spokane* 4 Jun (JA) and a pair feeding a youngster at Silver Hill, *Spokane* 30 Jul (M. Woodruff). A Vesper Sparrow was at Gearhart, *Clatsop* 18 Jul (PaS); they are rare on the outer coast n. of Curry, especially outside of migration. A Lark Sparrow at Portland 6 Jun was similarly rare for nw. Oregon, though it was probably a late migrant. A Black-throated Sparrow at Chiloquin, *Klamath* 5 Jul was somewhat w. of its normal haunts (W. Stone). Up to 30 Thick-billed Fox Sparrows were noted near Mann Butte, *Skamania* at elevations of 1000–1200 m on 3–4 Jul (KK, M. Breece); their presence in Washington only came to light last summer. A Gray-headed Junco in the Trout Creek Mts., *Harney* 9 Jun (M) furnished about the 7th Oregon record, though this taxon probably breeds annually in small numbers in se. Oregon (M). Rose-breasted Grosbeak numbers continue to rise quickly. Four were found in nw. Washington 2 Jun–18 Jul, and in Oregon there were 11 ads., including 3 to-

gether at Port Orford, Curry 26 Jul (L. Miller) and a male feeding young of questionable parentage at Myrtle Point, Coos 26 Jul (B. Martin, TR). Consider that w. Oregon acquired its 5th record of this species as recently as the summer of 1988 (*American Birds* 43: 157) and that 10 were recorded there this summer alone. A female Indigo Bunting was at Redmond, Deschutes 23 Jul (†K. Owen); the majority of Oregon's approximately 50 records are of males from mid-Apr to mid-Jun. A male Indigo Bunting x Lazuli Bunting graced Dorena Res., Lane 29 Jun (ph. DF, M. Ewald); the prior Oregon record of this hybrid combination came from Lane during Jun 1997.

The only Washington Tricolored Blackbirds were 2 at Othello 6 & 23 Jul (BF), while in s. Oregon a small flock near Sutherlin 3 Jun was a *Douglas* first (J. Hein). Yellow-headed Blackbirds apparently bred near but not at P.S.B. (SM); there are only three

known active nesting locations in w. Washington, none of which are in *Snohomish*. Coming to light only in Jun, a *Great-tailed Grackle*, Washington's 4th, has resided at a Liberty L., *Spokane* park since approximately 1 Jan and was still present at summer's end (R. Dexter, ph. T. Munson); this bird was almost certainly the grackle reported at a nearby Liberty L. parking lot during Jan (ph. T. Munson, MH). In Oregon, the only report was from Fields, Harney 3 Jun (M); Oregon averages about 3 per summer. A pair of Hooded Orioles summered at Central Pt., Jackson (B. Kleine); most records of this rare Oregon visitor are from mid-Apr to early Jun. The only sighting of the peripatetic White-winged Crossbill came from Mt. Salmo, Pend Oreille 4 Jul (L. Schwitters). A visiting Wisconsin birder found *Cowlitz's* first Lesser Goldfinch in Woodland 24 Jul (S. Fitzgerald); this species' range appears to be expanding in Washington.

Initialed observers (subregional editors in boldface): Kevin Aanerud, Tom Aversa (WA), Gary Bletsch, Bob Boekelheide, Alan Contreras, Merry Lynn Denny, Mike Denny (ne. Oregon), Don DeWitt (DDW), Michael Donahue (MDO), Dennis Duffy, Joe Engler (Clark), Dan Farrar, Mike Force, Chuck Gates (*Crook*), Greg Gillson, Denny Granstrand (*Yakima*), Wayne Hoffman, Mark Houston, Rich Hoyer (RCH), Ken Knittle, Bruce LaBar (BLB), Bill LaFramboise (lower Columbia Basin), Nancy LaFramboise, Maitreya (M), Tom Mickel (*Lane*), Don Munson, Harry Nehls (OR), Bob Norton (Olympic Pen.), Michael Patterson (*Clatsop*), Jason Paulios, Luke Redmond, Tim Rodenkirk (*Coos*), Doug Schonewald (DSc), Noah Strycker, Patrick Sullivan (PtS), Paul Sullivan (PaS), Ruth Sullivan, Bill Tice (BTi), Dennis Vroman (*Josephine*), Jan Wiggers, Keith Wiggers, Bob Woodley, Charlie Wright. ☺

State of the Region

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Many wildlife habitat types are found in Washington and Oregon, including a variety of coniferous, mixed-coniferous and hardwood forests (from low elevation to subalpine), grasslands, shrublands, shrub-steppe, desert playa, open freshwater (lakes and rivers), freshwater wetlands, riparian areas, coastal beaches and dunes, coastal headlands and islets, bays and estuaries, and several zones of marine waters. This rich diversity of habitat types has been subjected to intensive resource extraction, conversion, or recreation activities associated with a rapidly growing human population, resulting in myriad conservation challenges involving a great number of bird species. This account will briefly summarize these conservation issues.

The Oregon & Washington Region contains parts of three Bird Conservation Regions (BCRs). The region west from the Cascade Mountain crest is referred to as BCR 5 (Northern Pacific Rainforest); the east slope of the Cascade Mountains, central Washington and southeastern Oregon comprise a portion of BCR 9 (Great Basin); and the mountainous areas of northeastern and southeastern Washington and northeastern Oregon are included in BCR 10 (Northern Rockies).

Coniferous forests in Washington and Oregon are among the most productive in the world. A substantial loss of mature and old-growth forest to timber harvest has impacted populations of listed species such as the Spotted Owl, Marbled Murrelet, and other species associated with late-successional forests. The U. S. Department of the Interior recently stated that Marbled Murrelet populations in Washington and Oregon were not "distinct population segments" relative to larger populations in British Columbia and Alaska. The status of the murrelet will soon be reviewed, and any subsequent reduction in protection status would likely exacerbate the ongoing Regional population decline. Other species strongly associated with older forests—for example, cavity-dependent birds like the Pileated Woodpecker and Vaux's Swift—have become scarce across millions of acres of non-federally-owned forests managed to produce timber, but not snags, on 50-year rotations. Regional specialties such as Hermit Warbler fare quite well in younger-aged forests; densities of nearly one territory per acre have been reported.

Fire suppression in the dry forests east of the Cascade Mountain crest has altered tree species composition and forest structure, and made some forests more susceptible to catastrophic fire and the effects of forest insects and disease. Conversion of these forests to more sustainable conditions (via timber harvest or fire, etc.) would impact Spotted Owls by removing closed-canopy forest, but would benefit White-headed Woodpeckers, Flammulated Owls, and other species found in generally open Ponderosa

Pine forests. Several catastrophic fires in the last decade eliminated forests used by these species but created opportunities for Black-backed Woodpeckers, a species found in very low densities except in recent burns. Some forests may become more vulnerable to catastrophic fire as the effects of global warming become more severe.

Shrub-steppe and grassland habitats have been converted or significantly degraded throughout the Region. Ferruginous Hawks, Greater Sage-Grouse, and Sage Thrashers have all experienced population declines in Washington's Columbia Basin, where shrub-steppe conversion, largely to agriculture, has eliminated about 50% of the estimated 15 million acres of shrub-steppe habitats present at the time of European arrival. The Greater Sage-Grouse population in Washington declined by about 77% between 1960 and 1999, and population estimates since 2000 have ranged between 730 and 1080 birds. In western Washington and Oregon, prairie grasslands and oak savannahs have been similarly converted for agricultural or other purposes. Formerly common species such as Lewis's Woodpecker, Slender-billed White-breasted Nuthatch, and Streaked Horned Lark are now much reduced or Regionally extirpated. As modern agriculture practices become more specialized (e.g., pattern tiling of fields to control flooding) in the Willamette Valley, even use of agricultural fields by some species has diminished.

Coastal and marine habitats and the species they support are vulnerable to many threats. Dune and estuary conversion has been well documented. Exotic vegetation in coastal dunes (European beach grass in both states) and estuaries (e.g., *Spartina*, particularly in Willapa Bay) reduces the area of habitats used by nesting Snowy Plovers and foraging shorebirds, respectively. A rapidly growing list of exotic invertebrates, some known to alter the structure of invertebrate communities elsewhere, has been documented in coastal estuaries. The influence of these invertebrates locally is unknown but potentially serious for shorebirds and other estuarine species. El Niño events and oceanic warming have been linked to massive changes in populations of Common Murres. El Niño events in the last 20 years have been more severe than earlier ones, and the recent discovery of an oxygen-poor "dead zone" off the Oregon coast may be an indicator of longer-term changes in the marine environment. These changes may be related to recent observations in the Region of wayward forms of marine life and birds such as Manx Shearwater and Elegant Tern. Finally, the ocean has become a dumping ground, intentionally or otherwise, for just about anything. Chief forms of marine pollution are plastic particles, which when ingested by Northern Fulmars and other species may cause health problems, and oil from spills, which have the potential to indiscriminately kill massive numbers of birds along the outer coast, in Puget Sound, and along the Columbia River.

These are not the only conservation challenges. Additional issues include grazing in the arid interior of the Region, conversion or alteration of freshwater wetlands, urban and suburban development, bird collisions with towers and wind turbines (scores of turbines are present in southeastern Washington, and impacts to birds there have not been well documented), and various forms of pollution. In addition, West Nile Virus is on the horizon and will undoubtedly take its toll on a broad range of species in addition to those—such as corvids, Greater Sage-Grouse and some raptors—



Perhaps nothing for birders is more evocative of the mystery of the humid old-growth forests of the Pacific Northwest than the thought of a Marbled Murrelet on its nest, high in the canopy of a giant conifer. These forests, vital for the survival of a host of species including the rapidly declining Northern Spotted Owl, are also of economic value, which has pitted the conservation community against the timber industry. Photograph by Tom Hamer/VIREO.

known to be particularly vulnerable. New species are regularly added to the Region's avifauna, and some establish breeding populations with varying levels of fanfare. The invasion of Barred Owls through the Region has increased the complexity of Spotted Owl conservation and management efforts. Lastly, non-consumptive recreation by humans has become a well-documented source of disturbance to the wilds around us. Outdoor recreation has increased by an estimated 10% per year over the past several decades. Rock climbers disturb cliff-nesting birds, beach-walkers or their dogs flush roosting shorebirds, and boaters (with or without motors) push waterbirds from feeding or resting areas. The list of human disturbances goes on, but the ecological effects are not well understood in many cases.

The past ten years have witnessed a surge in avian conservation planning and action. Bird conservation initiatives (e.g., Partners in Flight, the United States Shorebird Conservation Plan, Waterbirds for the Americas) have emerged to create conservation strategies increasingly

designed at the scale of BCRs. These initiatives are joining forces and, by integrating existing waterfowl management plans, are working on comprehensive "all-bird" strategies and partnerships (NABCI) with which to coordinate bird conservation and even seek expanded conservation funding. Bird conservation has become more efficient, more effective, and has a higher profile. Conservation strategies focus on a wide range of endeavors: identification of Important Bird Areas, ecoregional planning to prioritize important areas, purchase or easement of important habitats, development of best management practices, education, outreach, development of partnerships (including international efforts to address Neotropical migrants), and identification of funding opportunities. Certain larger issues—human population growth, global warming, pollution, aspects of forest management, and invasion of exotic species—require more attention and policy involvement due to the greater political and economic complexities associated with these issues.

Middle Pacific Coast

Last summer we lamented a lack of notable rarities; this summer we celebrate a surfeit of them. Perhaps the most unexpected was the state's first Common Eider, although several surprising species were reported. The amazing influx of warblers, many from the Southeast, which began in spring, continued unabated into summer, not just along the coast but also well inland in places like *Mono*. Suddjian reported that it "was one of the more interesting summers on record for *Santa Cruz*," and that assessment could be applied to the Region as a whole.

Abbreviations: B.S.O.L. (Big Sur Ornithology Lab); C.B.R.C. (California B.R.C.); C.R.P. (Cosumnes R. Preserve, *Sacramento*); C.V. (Central Valley); E.I. (Southeast Farallon I., *San Francisco*); O.S.P. (Open Space Preserve); P.R.B.O. (Pt. Reyes Bird Observatory); S.F. (San Francisco). Reports of exceptional vagrants submitted without documentation are not published. Documentation for C.B.R.C. review species will be forwarded to Guy McCaskie, Secretary, P.O. Box 275, Imperial Beach, California 91933. Birds banded on E.I. should be credited to Point Reyes Bird Observatory (P.R.B.O.) and those banded at Big Sur R. mouth to the Big Sur Ornithology Lab (B.S.O.L.) of the Ventana Wilderness Society.

GREBES THROUGH DUCKS

At least 13 ad. and 2 juv. Clark's Grebes at San Pablo Res. 6 Jun (RSa) represented a first nesting for *Contra Costa*, where breeding by Western Grebes remains unconfirmed. We have much to learn about *Aechmophorus* grebe ecology and behavior in the Region. The only storm-petrels reported included one Wilson's, 3 Fork-tailed, and 128 Ashy near Cordell Bank, *Marin* 24 Jul (RS, SBT et al.). Large numbers of American White Pelicans were reported from the Region starting in early Jun. Breeding Brandt's Cormorants had a banner year on the Coast Guard Jetty,



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