

# The Klamath Bird

Newsletter of the Klamath Bird Observatory, Fall 2009



## Birds Without Borders

John Alexander, KBO Executive Director

Many people feel a special connection with birds, a connection that transcends religious beliefs, nationality, political affiliation and way of life. Building on this, the Klamath Bird Observatory has demonstrated that science-based bird conservation can bring together diverse people from differing backgrounds with often conflicting opinions. For example, KBO used the challenge of studying grazing effects in the Cascade Siskiyou National Monument as an opportunity to lead a transparent scientific investigation that resulted in participation from diverse stakeholders. The study helped to guide science-informed management decisions that advanced bird conservation in our region. With the Klamath Basin National Wildlife Refuge Complex, we used Partners in Flight bird conservation plans to revise a contested fuel reduction project by developing treatment prescriptions that were based on specific bird habitat conservation objectives, resulting in agreement among opposing groups.

This summer our belief in science and conservation as a tool for developing diverse collaborative partnerships was profoundly deepened through our participation in a U.S. tour taken by Middle Eastern conservation professionals. The US Forest Service International Programs hosted a US tour of Middle Eastern representatives from Egypt, Ethiopia, Israel, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon and the West Bank. The study tour participants are working together to “mainstream” the conservation of migratory soaring birds into key productive sectors along the Middle

East’s Rift Valley and Red Sea Flyway. The project, involving 11 countries, is championing inclusion of conservation objectives and actions within the hunting, energy, agriculture, waste management and tourism sectors as they work to address the most significant threats facing migrant



Each year over 1.5 million migratory soaring birds of 37 species migrate through the Middle East and East Africa. The Rift Valley / Red Sea flyway is the most important route of the Africa-Eurasia flyway system.

birds that pass along this flyway.

The Klamath Bird Observatory’s Upper Klamath Field Station was one of four sites visited in the national tour to explore and discuss models for migratory bird conservation. This stop highlighted the Klamath Bird Observatory’s successful implementation of monitoring that uses various methods at multiple scales to inform land management decision making. Our approach to partnership development and fostering of young biologists was also recognized. Involvement in this Middle East study tour demonstrates international recognition of KBO’s collaborative efforts that transcend our region’s political and social boundaries to link management and bird conservation.

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This study tour was part of ongoing US Forest Service efforts to support innovative and effective approaches to conserving migratory bird habitat. The Forest Service’s International Program is fostering flyway conservation strategies through partnerships between stakeholders that link government agencies, non-governmental organizations and local communities along migratory pathways.

The growth of international bird conservation initiatives demonstrates a profound connection between people and birds. From this connection a deeper significance is emerging as more and more people recognize that healthy bird populations indicate healthy ecosystems, the ecosystems and natural resources on which all people depend.

**“Stakeholder”** was originally used to refer to a person who acted as a neutral party, “holding the stakes” in a bet or dispute between two people. Over time “stakeholder” has come to refer to any person or group that holds an interest in a certain project or outcome.

## The Board's Wisdom

Margaret Widdowson, KBO President of the Board

For the past several years one of Klamath Bird Observatory's goals has been to build a community of supporters around us. Through a capacity

building grant from the MJ Murdock Charitable Trust we have established a strong Education and Outreach Team who have helped to bring KBO into the communities around our region. Through additional challenge grants from an anonymous donor we have had three successful annual campaigns to build membership and bring in private sector funding. Each year we are able to use the private sector funds brought in through membership contributions to secure federal cost-share grants, building on our communities' investment in the Klamath Bird Observatory by leveraging each contributed dollar 2, or in some cases 3 to 1. In past years, our annual campaigns have successfully focused on bringing in new members. This

Announcing our  
2009 Fall Membership Campaign  
Matching your Contributions today!!

efforts to retain the level of contribution we received in 2008. With gratitude for a tradition of giving we call out to KBO supporters, past and future, asking your help in meeting this year's challenge. Your membership will help us to maintain the same level of giving we had last year, as measured by the number of donors and total contributions. With your help we can meet this challenge and receive an additional gift of \$5,000.

Sincerely-



Margaret Widdowson,  
KBO President of the Board

"WISDOM"-a  
group of owls

## Fall Intern Migration Begins: Where will they go from here?

Rachel Werling, KBO Education and Outreach Director

The KBO 2009 banding interns have finished their rigorous summer of pre-dawn waking and long hours at mist nets. Their contribution has provided invaluable data as part of our continuous effort to track vital changes in bird populations. This year they have banded over 10,000 birds! That is roughly 1,250 birds per intern. As the fall migrants head out for warmer climes, so too our interns fly on to new destinations, leaving the resident KBO staff to weather the winter. What are their plans?

**William Garcia** is heading back to his family in Belize. He will continue his conservation science work at the Belize Foundation for Research and Environmental Education reserve as an expert bander/trainer. William takes with him many plans for conservation and community outreach and education. He hopes to pursue a higher level management role in conservation. **Karl Fairchild** plans to study for graduate school entrance exams and apply to Cornell, University of Washington, and other colleges. He would like to visit William Garcia in Belize or go help out with KBO's collaborative efforts in monitoring birds in Tortuguero, Costa Rica. **Lindsey Kufta-Christie** is looking to move to Portland where she plans to investigate graduate school.



All our banding interns passed their rigorous North American Banding Council (NABC) banding certifications this October. NABC is an organization whose mission is to assure bird safety and data quality in bird banding

But first she will take a break to go camping for a few weeks, without trying to catch birds. **Daphne Swope** has applied to work with PRBO Conservation Science on elephant seals in the Farallon Islands. Southern Oregon native **Stuart Fety** has yet to pick his wintering grounds. **Adam Beeler** will be volunteering with the Maui Forest Bird Recovery program, working with the Maui Parrotbill using color banding and spot mapping. Afterwards, he plans to move to Arcata, California and pursue a graduate degree at Humboldt State University. **Danni Morris** is investigating graduate school in environmental education, here in Ashland at Southern Oregon University. **Todd Jones** has returned to Ohio State University to complete his undergraduate studies in Zoology. He will be pursuing field work in the Tropics later this winter. **Whitney Haskell** is investigating graduate schools in Sweden.

Like the birds these interns have so carefully studied, they are now setting off on their next adventure. They leave with a feeling of accomplishment after their enormous contribution to our long-term monitoring efforts. They leave with honed skills and great intention to help make this world a better place for birds and people. We can not thank them enough! Fare thee well.

## What Are All Those Birds Singing About?

Jaime Stephens,  
KBO Research and Monitoring Director

At KBO we are listening to the birds, not just the songs and calls that brighten our mornings, but also what they tell us about our world. Birds quickly respond to changes in their environment, so by studying which birds are present in an area we can gauge the characteristics and the health of the system. Land managers set forth goals for vegetation on the landscape, and we have found that birds can be used to assess whether or not specific habitat qualities have been achieved. For example, a Yellow Warbler singing on its breeding grounds is a good indication that a riparian habitat is healthy. In this way, each bird species serves as a unique measuring stick of habitat quality and when we look at the suite of species present we know not only what plant species are there, but also how old the forest is, whether there are dead standing trees and fallen logs, and whether there is water nearby!

In the words of John Muir, "When one tugs at a single thing in Nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world" --- like the link between the Yellow Warbler and the nearby wetland thicket. By keeping our finger on the pulse of the bird community, we can assess the health of our natural world. The understanding that is gained, will inform how we can improve not only the health of bird populations, but also the environment on which we depend.

## Bird Bio: Black-throated Gray Warbler

Liz Williams, Education Specialist (AmeriCorps)

One of the first warblers to arrive in the Klamath-Siskiyou Bioregion of southern Oregon and northern California each spring is the Black-throated Gray Warbler. Starting in late March, you may see this elegant migrant, returning from its wintering grounds in Mexico. This striking species summers in a variety of habitats in the western United States and as far north as southwest British Columbia. Spanning thousands of miles and multiple cultures in its travels, this species is truly a "bird for all" in North America. This warbler is distinguished from its close relatives, Townsend's and Hermit warblers, by its gray and white plumage, lack of yellow plumage except for a spot of yellow in front of the eye, and bold white wings bars. Identifying this bird by its' song can be a challenge. Listen for a series of sharp, buzzy notes usually followed by a descending slurred note. This species is usually an active insect feeder of the mid-canopy. In our region, it

## Wings and Wine for All!

Annie Kilby, KBO Youth Education Project Lead

The transition of the seasons has always been a time of reflection. Fall flocks of Cedar Waxwings flew overhead during the first *Songbirds, Science, and Schools* field trip and students saw our first White-crowned Sparrow arrival processed at the banding station. Common Yellowthroats and Warbling Vireos leave our backyards to journey to their wintering habitats. This seasonal change in the bird communities causes us to remember and think back upon the familiar and new friends that came out in support of KBO at our Wings and Wine Gala this August.

Our second annual Wings and Wine Gala was one of the strongest showings of support we received from our community this year. Like migration, it brought friends from different areas back together with rare vagrants introduced to KBO for the first time. Over one hundred businesses and individuals donated silent auction items to our event; items spanned the spectrum with gifts ranging from personal beauty treatments and massages, unique pieces from regional artisans and crafters, private birding tours, weekend getaways showcasing the best of the region, and international holidays in New Zealand and Honduras. A live auction, a first for KBO, raised \$3,950, sponsoring four months of banding interns and four scholarships for classes to come and view the wonders of bird migration and the rich habitats of the region.

It is our collective love and appreciation of birds, nature, and wild places that brings our community together to support not only birds, but their habitats and our natural resources. Many heart-felt thanks from all of us!

*Thank You Auction Donors! see page 7*



*During migration and in winter, Black-throated gray warblers will sometimes join mixed flocks of insectivorous songbirds. Photo: Jim Livaudais*

can be found in a variety of habitats, from the canyon live-oak woodlands and chaparral habitat of the Klamath Mountains to the mixed-oak/conifer transition zone of the western Cascade foothills. The Black-throated Gray Warbler is often one of the last migrant warblers to leave its breeding grounds in the fall, so look for it in the region well into October.

References: [Birds of Oregon](#). Corvallis: Oregon State University Books, 2003. [A Field Guide to Birds of North America](#) (Peterson Field Guide Series). Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1997.

## My Park Flight Trip to Oregon

William D.J. Garcia, KBO-National Park Service Park Flight Intern, Belize



KBO Park Flight Intern William Garcia, of Belize, bands a female Bullock's Oriole. Photo: KBO file

My home country Belize is one of the most beautiful places in Central America. It is known to have nearly 600 species of birds of which some 30% are migratory species, wintering in Belize and returning each year to their breeding grounds in North America.

The great diversity of birds and their habitats in Belize presents a challenge for research,

monitoring, and conservation efforts. The Belize Foundation for

Research and Environmental Education ([www.bfreebz.org](http://www.bfreebz.org)) is one of the many places where lots of migratory species spend their winter, while others stopover during migration to and from destinations further south. These areas need protection and through research and monitoring, we can better develop different conservation strategies.

To meet this challenge scientists need intensive study and training, elements that many Latin American biologists such as myself cannot find in our home countries. Through international exchange supported by the National Park Service Park Flight Migratory Bird Program, my experience here in Oregon with the Klamath Bird Observatory and Oregon Caves National Monument has been very enriching professionally and personally. After completing KBO's training program I will be able to go back to my country and apply the research and monitoring skills I have improved upon to help advance bird and habitat conservation in Belize.

**The Park Flight Migratory Bird Program** is a dynamic partnership between the National Park Service, National Parks Foundation, and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Its mission is to protect migrant birds sharing habitats in US and Latin America and support conservation efforts in National Parks and protected areas. KBO and Oregon Caves National Monument have co-hosted Park Flight interns from Costa Rica in 2007, from Colombia in 2008, and William from Belize in 2009. To learn more about Park Flight, visit [www.nps.gov/oia/topics/flight.htm](http://www.nps.gov/oia/topics/flight.htm).

## International Capacity Building: Collaborating for Bird Conservation in the Western Hemisphere

John Alexander, KBO Executive Director

Migratory birds weave together a global quilt of ecosystems and help us recognize that countries must work together as a global community to assure our future wellbeing. While we depend on the food we produce as a nation, we also depend on tropical rain forests as they provide ecological services of global significance, including mass production of oxygen and absorption of greenhouse gasses. The migratory birds that fill our forests and fields each spring also depend on these tropical habitats where they spend the majority of the year. Therefore, conservation strategies designed to benefit all of the habitats that these birds depend on throughout their lifecycle can serve as models for the approach we must take to assure our future wellbeing as a global society.

International conservation organizations will play a key role in implementing conservation throughout the ranges of our migratory birds. Such organizations, including the

Society for the Study and Conservation of Caribbean Birds and the Meso-American Society for Biology and Conservation have identified training in bird monitoring techniques and capacity building for standardized bird monitoring as a priority need for successful conservation of birds in the Western Hemisphere. The Klamath Bird Observatory has been meeting international capacity building needs through our internship programs and participation in monitoring training workshops, fostering collaboration among countries that share migratory birds throughout the Americas and the Caribbean. In cooperation with the USDA Forest Service (USFS) Redwood Sciences Laboratory, Forest Service International Program, National Park Service Park Flight Program, North American Banding Council, Western Hemisphere Banding Network, and others, we are developing training tools that form the foundation of workshop and internship curricula.

Our international training efforts began in the 1990s with a

*International collaboration continued page 5*

## From Baseball Enthusiast to Birder

### KBO Volunteer Profile: Harry Fuller

Rachel Werling, KBO Education and Outreach Director

Those of you who have had the pleasure of joining Harry Fuller for a bird walk know that one comes away from these outings with more than just bird sightings. The



Look for Harry Fuller in KBO's calendar of events and online at [www.Towhee.net](http://www.Towhee.net). Photo: S. Runnels

experience is always rich with notes on natural and human history. With Harry you will learn everything from the stories behind the names of birds like "Wilson's Warbler" and "Bewick's Wren," to knowledge about the species of ground squirrels you see on the roadside, and the type of habitat where you would find a Willow Flycatcher.

Ashland and KBO had the good fortune to inherit Harry from the Bay Area, where he taught and lead birding outings privately, and for many organizations. Harry was a founding member of the San Francisco Field Ornithologists.

Though Harry says as a child he used to make lists of bird species that frequented his mother's feeder, he didn't become an avid birder until later in life. With a career focused on media and television (including a Peabody Award), the revolutionary period of the 1960s was not a time for the quiet contemplation of birding, he relates. He began birding in the 1970s, but it was during a period of free time liberated by a baseball strike in the 1990's that Harry decided to make birding a serious pastime.

As active as the towhee that graces his website, Harry is an author, blogger and guide who teaches about birds and birding in the Rogue Valley and beyond. He says increasing people's appreciation, knowledge and understanding of the web of connections illustrated by birds affects the decisions they make. "It is important for people to learn that every choice from the food they eat to the car they drive has repercussions. Birding helps people see these connections," Harry says.

Harry calls himself an "information junkie." His mind for detail, deep appreciation of nature, and pleasure in sharing combine to make him a fabulous bird walk leader.

**Share Your Passion:  
Become a KBO bird walk leader!**

## International Collaboration

(Continued from page 4)

long running partnership between the Redwood Sciences Laboratory and the Caribbean Conservation Corporation that made possible workshops hosted by our Tortuguero Integrated Bird Monitoring Program in Costa Rica. Simultaneously the Forest Service's Sister Forest Program linked our local National Forests with land managers in the tropics and resulted in exchange efforts including one between the Klamath National Forest and the El Ocote Reserve where training sessions were offered in Chiapas, Mexico. A range of diverse partnerships have now been built that support in-country training workshops and internships that offer intensive 3 to 6 month capacity building opportunities.

Since these beginnings, KBO has been involved with workshops in Trinidad and Tobago, El Salvador, Mexico, Jamaica, and Colombia and this winter we are looking forward to a workshop in Peru. These workshops have been made possible by adding to our list of partners through collaborations among government and non-government organizations including the Bahamas Trust, Asa Wright Nature Centre (Trinidad), Windsor Research Centre (Jamaica), ProAves Colombia, ProNatura Veracruz (Mexico), SalvaNatura (El Salvador), Missouri Department of Conservation, and others.

We continue our long standing tradition of offering internships for international biologists. These internships are made possible through our local monitoring partnerships with the US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service (NPS) and US Fish and Wildlife, as well as sponsorship from the NPS Park Flight Program, US Forest Service International Program Wings Across the Americas, Southern Oregon University's International Programs, and Ashland Rotary Club's World Community Service Committee.

The emergence of global economies makes clear that the protection of natural resources in our own country is not enough to assure the well being of our future generations. We must work collaboratively with our global community to maintain our world's ecosystems and the natural resources we all share. By implementing international strategies for bird conservation, we promote the international collaboration that will be required for us to meet the challenges of population growth, climate change and the global degradation of natural resources. Klamath Bird Observatory is committed to building the capacity for international conservation efforts by providing training opportunities needed to implement the scientific monitoring efforts that are key to informed and successful conservation efforts.

## Calendar—Join KBO for Fall and Winter Events

### KBO Hawk Class and Field Trip to Butte Valley and Lower Klamath Basin.

Hawks and eagles have captured our imagination like few other birds. Easily seen, they push our primal poetic buttons. Want to observe them with an expert? Join local hawk expert **Dick Ashford** for an informative Thursday evening class followed by a Saturday guided outing to Butte Valley (near Dorris, CA) to search for these majestic raptors. In late November, Butte Valley usually has better raptor viewing than its more famous neighbor to the north, the Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge. Past KBO hawk trips have seen Red-tailed Hawks in a variety of color morphs, Rough-legged Hawks, Ferruginous Hawks, Golden Eagle, Northern Harriers and Merlin. Throughout the day, we'll explore the natural history of hawks and their allies, including behavior, habitat and adaptations for survival. At the end of the outing, we'll be certified raptor enthusiasts!

**Thursday November 19<sup>th</sup>, 7-8:30 pm at the Jefferson Nature Center** for an interactive presentation on raptors to prepare you for the field trip.

**Saturday November 21<sup>st</sup>**, meet at 7:45 am at Shop N Kart in Ashland to carpool for the field trip. Return at 4:30pm. Advance registration required (limit: 20). **\$35 Member, \$55 nonmembers.** To register, call 541-201-0866.

**November 7<sup>th</sup>: KBO Bird Walk to Iron Gate Reservoir, N. California.** Visit this beautiful Siskiyou County Lake for some great birding. Dress for fall weather and bring a lunch. We'll depart by 8am from [Northwest Nature Shop \(Ashland\)](#). Leader: Vince Zauskey, KBO volunteer & member. To register, call 541-482-3241.

**November 14<sup>th</sup>: KBO Bird Walk to Lynn-Newbry Park and the Talent Greenway.** This riparian area is bustling with birds in the fall. We'll look and listen for Fox Sparrows, Wrentits, Ruby-crowned Kinglets and Ring-necked Ducks in the ponds. Meet at 8am at [Wild Birds Unlimited \(Medford\)](#). Leader: Frank Lospalluto, KBO contract biologist & member. To register, call 541-770-1104.

**November 19<sup>th</sup>&21<sup>th</sup>: KBO Hawk Class and Field Trip with Dick Ashford:** see above for details.

**December 5<sup>th</sup>: KBO Bird Walk to Emigrant Lake.** Spot waterfowl, waders, raptors and songbirds wintering at this Ashland lake. Bring your scope! We'll depart by 8am from [Northwest Nature Shop \(Ashland\)](#). Leader: Harry Fuller, KBO volunteer & member. To register, call 541-482-3241.

**December 12<sup>th</sup>: KBO Bird Walk Jefferson Nature Center (Phoenix-Medford).** We will seek out the lively winter residents of the riparian areas near Medford's new nature center. Meet at 8am at [Wild Birds Unlimited \(Medford\)](#). Leader: Steve Runnels, KBO volunteer & member. To register, call 541-770-1104.

**December 19<sup>th</sup>: Rogue Valley Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count.** Be part of a great tradition! See [www.roguevalleyaudubon.org](http://www.roguevalleyaudubon.org) for details and other great bird walk opportunities.

### Oaxaca Mexico a Treasure of Diversity: Birds and Culture

Feb 28-March 9, 2010

**Join us on KBO's maiden international birding tour!**

Oaxaca, Mexico is a land of incredible diversity. When it comes to culture and birding there is no better, more lovely or hospitable place! Our travels will take us from the



Photo: Jim Livadeus

UNESCO World Heritage colonial era city of Oaxaca to the stone steps of one of Mesoamerica's great ancient ceremonial centers, Monte Alban. We will travel into a biosphere reserve with some of the densest cactus forests on the globe in search of the rare Military Macaw, explore hidden valleys, thick oak forests, thriving markets, pine covered mountain ridges, crumbling pyramids, and



Photo: Eric Mindling

small villages, while meeting rural artisans, farmers and cooks. Join us with eyes to the sky, on the lookout for some of the 750+ species of birds flying the winds of Oaxaca.

With birder, John Forcey, author of *Birds and Birding in Central Oaxaca*, and professional Oaxaca/Ashland based cultural guide, Eric Mindling, we have assembled an experienced team to open the fascinating world of Oaxaca's birds and culture to you.

**9 nights, 10 days: \$2,300 KBO members - \$2500 nonmember** Visit [www.klamathbird.org](http://www.klamathbird.org) for details.

Call 541-201-0866 to register.

# Heartfelt Thanks to Gala Donors!

(from page 4)

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 Wood I Kid You?

## 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](http://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.

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Please select one and make your tax-deductible donation payable to: Klamath Bird Observatory or "KBO".  
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Please contact me with more information regarding planned giving or endowment donations.

**This year we have a challenge grant from an anonymous donor to match our 2008 membership level. Please keep your KBO membership current! It is worth double its value!**

KLAMATH BIRD OBSERVATORY  
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Rachel Werling, MS—*Education & Outreach Director*  
Lisa Buttrey—*Administrative Assistant*  
Robert Frey—*Biologist & Banding Project Lead*  
Annie Kilby—*Youth Education Project Lead*  
Liz Williams, MS— *Education Specialist (AmeriCorps)*

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Fall Newsletter Editor: Rachel Werling  
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Learn more about KBO: [www.KlamathBird.org](http://www.KlamathBird.org)  
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