



# 2014 Mountain Bird Festival Field Trip Highlights



## By the Numbers

- 171 bird species encountered on 30 field trips in four counties (full species list below)
- 90 types of wildflower in bloom on Saturday and ~70 on Sunday
- 21 species of dragonflies and damselflies.



*Red-tail Hawk above, photographs by Graham Lewis*



## Specific Highlights by Trip

### Turkey Vultures and the Cascades (with leader Brandon Breen)

- Saw a juvenile Golden Eagle soaring nearby at eye level
- Saw an American Kestrel with a hummingbird in its talons
- Got a lot of practice identifying Hermit Warbler, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Lazuli Bunting, House Wren, Townsend's Solitaire, and Green-tailed Towhee by sound

### Mist-netting and Klamath Lake (with leader Brandon Breen)

- Great look at a Great Gray Owl sitting on a fence post at the start of the trip
- Visited a Klamath Bird Observatory mist-netting and bird banding station to learn about scientific monitoring of bird populations
- Had a Red-breasted Sapsucker on a nearby tree join us for lunch in the small town of Fort Klamath, Oregon
- Saw a handful of Black Terns flying elegantly over Upper Klamath Lake

### Soda Mountain Wilderness (with leader Jimmy Billstine)

- Sooty Grouse hen flushing at close range and flying to a branch in plain view
- Great looks at a green-tailed towhee singing
- A pair of nesting (presumably) California Towhees moving around in plain view
- Mountain Bluebirds posing at Hyatt Prairie
- A male Lazuli Bunting singing 30 feet away in plain sight for a minute after tussling with another male over territory

- A juvenile Golden Eagle flyover
- Vesper Sparrows flitting all around the car at Hyatt Prairie
- An unexpected Chestnut-Backed Chickadee at a mountain stream

#### Highway 62 to Crater Lake

- Upon stepping out of the car at the Thousand Springs Snow-park, we spotted a Black-backed Woodpecker right across the road in plain sight
- Accommodating Clark's Nutcrackers at Crater Lake National Park
- A satisfying cameo appearance by a single Gray-crowned Rosy-finch, also at Crater Lake NP
- We capped the day off with wonderful looks at a Spotted Owl

#### Mt Ashland and Howard Prairie

- We watched a beautiful male Calliope Hummingbird on Tolman Creek Rd
- On Mt Ashland, we were thrilled to find a male Sooty Grouse slowing walking across the road
- We had great looks at a Green-tailed Towhee, teed up and singing

#### Dragonflies in the Rogue River Valley

- Saw a Pacific Clubtail, and this was only the third ever record for the county and the first for the valley floor
- River Jewelwings were sighted along Little Butte Creek, and they lived up to their name

#### Klamath Basin Top to Bottom

- Immediately following this uttering from a participant, "I hope we see a Pileated," a Pileated Woodpecker flew overhead, calling as it flew
- Lots of opportunities to learn the songs of the Nashville Warbler and Green-tailed Towhee
- Great look at a Great Gray Owl on the drive through the Cascades to the Klamath Basin

#### Ashland Town (with leader John Bullock)

- Two Great-tailed Grackles (rare for the area) flew over Ashland Pond

#### Cascade Mountain Lakes (with leader Harry Fuller)

- We saw nesting White-headed Woodpeckers along Howard Prairie Dam Road
- We had singing Green-tailed Towhees along Keno Access Road and Nashville and Wilson's Warblers near milepost 12 on Dead Indian Memorial Road
- American Dipper below Little Hyatt Reservoir and high-flying skeins of American White Pelicans
- Two adult Great Gray Owls hunting the same meadow at evening twilight

#### Emigrant Lake and Oak Woodlands (with leader Shannon Rio)

- Saw a Golden Eagle pair at a stunningly beautiful spot on Corp Ranch Road
- Observed a Red-shouldered Hawk nest with three young
- Had a Lark Sparrow singing at the top of a snag in good light
- Observed comfy bonding amongst participants as they shared a love of birds



*Tree Swallow near Howard Prairie Lake*

Shasta Wildlife Area (with leader Joey Russell)

- A Black Tern swooping and diving near us on Trout Lake
- A Bald Eagle made several dives and failed attempts to grab something before giving up
- A cacophony of about 50 Pinyon Jays on Red Rock Road near the town of Macdoel

Great Gray Owl Nest (with leader Sarah Rockwell)

- We watched the female Great Gray Owl look at us with her fierce yellow eyes
- We saw the young owlet lift his head up and look around
- We found a Williamson's Sapsucker nest, as well as a Hairy Woodpecker nest, and watched the parents feed young
- We had a Western Tanager, Brown Creeper, Hammond's Flycatcher, and Mountain Chickadee all come down low and near to us to pose for pictures, with the Brown Creeper less than 10 feet away!

North Mountain Park and Lithia Park (with leader Kate Cleland-Sipfle)

- Female Western Tanager sitting on a snag like a waxwing in Lithia Park
- Three male Black-headed Grosbeaks appearing to compete noisily for the same trees in Lithia Park
- Two male Song Sparrows fly-catching and "kiting" over the pasture at the east end of North Mountain Park

Owl Prowl (with leader Vince Zauskey)

- We heard at least one juvenile Barn Owl begging from a nest at a residence in Medford, while the parents hunted in front of the participants
- We noticed one adult Barn Owl had a rodent in its talons

Birding Ashland (with leader Vince Zauskey)

- Screech Owl in a nest box on Granite St to start the morning
- Saw a male Black-headed Grosbeak in Lithia Park fly into a nest only four feet off the ground
- Saw Calliope Hummingbirds on Tolman Creek Rd, at times only five feet from participants, a life bird for many participants



*Spotted Owl, seen on Highway 61 trip and photographed by Anne Goff*

## **A Sandhill Crane Story**

*Shared by Trip Leader Joey Russell*

After we left Shasta Valley Wildlife area, we drove out on Big Springs Road to Cedar Lake. We saw four adult Sandhill Cranes and two juveniles or colts, as I think they're called. Upon observation we noticed there was a coyote stalking the 2 colts who were foraging quite a distance from their parents, and on the other side of a barbed wire fence, making it difficult for the parents to get to their youngsters. After several tense minutes watching this scenario, the colts started heading back to their parents, rather quickly I might add, while the coyote continued to gain ground. One of the parents finally managed to get through the fence and reunite with the colts and quickly started herding them to a nearby body of water. The other parent walked the fence line in the direction of the water too. The problem was that there were about 100 cows near the marshy body of water and it soon became apparent the even though the coyote was now thwarted in its attempt to have Sandhill Crane for lunch (it had turned in the opposite direction and had started hunting for other fare, as it was observed doing the typical stoting behavior coyotes do), the cows were not at all happy with the invasion of a group of Sandhill Cranes. One of the cows turned toward one of the Sandhill Crane adults and started chasing it! While one parent herded the youngsters up another fence line and into the water, the other adult turned tail and started running away with a group of about 5 cows chasing it! At this point the local game warden stopped to watch this scene as well. I went over to talk to him and tell him about our Mountain Bird Festival and he asked me what the cows were chasing. I told him it was a Sandhill Crane, which really was hard to tell because this Sandhill Crane had assumed a hunched over position with wings outspread and head really close to the ground so that it looked like a big ball moving over the ground. When the crane had led the cows far enough away from its family, it took to wing, did a U-turn, and flew straight back to where the other adult had herded the youngsters. Whew, disaster averted! And what a show!



*Sandhill Cranes at Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge in 2007, © Jim Livaudais*

## 2014 Mountain Bird Festival — List of 171 Bird Species Encountered

Canada Goose	Killdeer	Western Kingbird	Cedar Waxwing
Wood Duck	Spotted Sandpiper	Loggerhead Shrike	Orange-crowned Warbler
Gadwall	Willet	Cassin's Vireo	Nashville Warbler
Mallard	Wilson's Snipe	Hutton's Vireo	MacGillivray's Warbler
Cinnamon Teal	Franklin's Gull	Warbling Vireo	Common Yellowthroat
Northern Pintail	Ring-billed Gull	Gray Jay	Yellow Warbler
Canvasback	California Gull	Pinyon Jay	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Redhead	Caspian Tern	Steller's Jay	Hermit Warbler
Ring-necked Duck	Black Tern	Western Scrub-Jay	Wilson's Warbler
Common Merganser	Forster's Tern	Black-billed Magpie	Yellow-breasted Chat
Ruddy Duck	Rock Pigeon	Clark's Nutcracker	Green-tailed Towhee
Mountain Quail	Band-tailed Pigeon	American Crow	Spotted Towhee
California Quail	Eurasian Collared-Dove	Common Raven	California Towhee
Ring-necked Pheasant	Mourning Dove	Horned Lark	Chipping Sparrow
Sooty Grouse	Barn Owl	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	Vesper Sparrow
Wild Turkey	Western Screech-Owl	Tree Swallow	Lark Sparrow
Pied-billed Grebe	Spotted Owl	Violet-green Swallow	Savannah Sparrow
Eared Grebe	Great Gray Owl	Barn Swallow	Fox Sparrow
Western Grebe	Vaux's Swift	Cliff Swallow	Song Sparrow
Clark's Grebe	Anna's Hummingbird	Black-capped Chickadee	Lincoln's Sparrow
Double-crested Cormorant	Rufous Hummingbird	Mountain Chickadee	Dark-eyed Junco
American White Pelican	Calliope Hummingbird	Oak Titmouse	Western Tanager
American Bittern	Belted Kingfisher	Bushtit	Black-headed Grosbeak
Great Blue Heron	Lewis's Woodpecker	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Lazuli Bunting
Great Egret	Acorn Woodpecker	White-breasted Nuthatch	Red-winged Blackbird
Green Heron	Williamson's Sapsucker	Pygmy Nuthatch	Tricolored Blackbird
Black-crowned Night-Heron	Red-breasted Sapsucker	Brown Creeper	Western Meadowlark
Turkey Vulture	Downy Woodpecker	Rock Wren	Yellow-headed Blackbird
Osprey	Hairy Woodpecker	House Wren	Brewer's Blackbird
Golden Eagle	White-headed Woodpecker	Marsh Wren	Great-tailed Grackle
Northern Harrier	Black-backed Woodpecker	Bewick's Wren	Brown-headed Cowbird
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Northern Flicker	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	Bullock's Oriole
Cooper's Hawk	Pileated Woodpecker	American Dipper	Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch
Bald Eagle	American Kestrel	Golden-crowned Kinglet	House Finch
Red-shouldered Hawk	Prairie Falcon	Wrentit	Purple Finch
Swainson's Hawk	Olive-sided Flycatcher	Western Bluebird	Cassin's Finch
Red-tailed Hawk	Western Wood-Pewee	Mountain Bluebird	Red Crossbill
Virginia Rail	Willow Flycatcher	Townsend's Solitaire	Pine Siskin
Sora	Hammond's Flycatcher	Swainson's Thrush	Lesser Goldfinch
American Coot	Dusky Flycatcher	Hermit Thrush	American Goldfinch
Sandhill Crane	Pacific-slope Flycatcher	American Robin	Evening Grosbeak
Black-necked Stilt	Black Phoebe	Northern Mockingbird	House Sparrow
American Avocet	Ash-throated Flycatcher	European Starling	