

# The Klamath Bird

Newsletter of the Klamath Bird Observatory, Winter 2013



## KBO Increases its Impact: 2004-2013

By John D Alexander, KBO Executive Director

*This article is the third installment in our KBO History series*

Looking back 10 years, it is incredible to see how much KBO has grown and how much our influence on bird conservation has kept pace. During this time KBO has more than doubled its annual revenue—from \$350,000 to more than \$850,000—and become a larger employer in southern Oregon and northern California, increasing our staff from 3 to 9 full-time staff.

This period is also marked by an expanded geographic focus both nationally and internationally. We are now using our conservation model—developed in the ruggedly beautiful and wildlife-rich Klamath-Siskiyou Bioregion of southern Oregon and northern California—to conduct science and reach key audiences throughout the Pacific Northwest and in Mexico and countries farther south where our regional birds migrate and spend the winter. We have initiated partnerships and trained biologists in Mexico, Trinidad and Tobago, Costa Rica, Belize, Colombia, and Perú, thereby increasing conservation capacity throughout the ranges of our shared migratory birds.

We have built an extensive scientific publication record that contributes to the advancement of scientific understanding and the improvement of ornithological field methods. Additionally, we have been a key player in the development of “Decision Support Tools”; these brief documents and online tools deliver relevant science in an accessible

format to targeted audiences who can advance bird and habitat conservation.

More recently, we launched a state of the art avian data center—Avian Knowledge Northwest—which draws from current and comprehensive datasets and acts as a “one-stop shop” for knowledge about birds and their habitats. Such information will increase our understanding about bird population distributions and trends and will help inform ecological planning. Avian Knowledge Northwest is hosted by Klamath Bird Observatory, in partnership with Point Blue Conservation Science and US Forest Service Redwood Sciences Laboratory.

*In this Getting to Know KBO edition of the Klamath Bird, we celebrate the KBO Family and their commitment to bird conservation*

KBO has increased our presence and impact in the community through new outreach activities and the creation of community learning materials freely available on our website (such as our regional birding guides and resources for creating bird-friendly backyard habitat). We are now preparing to host our inaugural Mountain Bird Festival, which will occur May 30<sup>th</sup>, May 31<sup>st</sup>, and June 1<sup>st</sup> of 2014 in Ashland, Oregon. The Mountain Bird Festival will be a unique community conservation event that blends science with art and empowers birdwatchers and community members to elevate bird conservation.

**Our Winter 2013 Issue is all about Getting to Know KBO.**

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Finally, this period is marked by the emergence of KBO as a leader in the world of bird conservation. Our achievements have been recognized during the past decade with the Partners in Flight Leadership, Wings Across the Americas, Joint Fire Sciences Best Scientist-Manager Partnership, and Department of Interior Partners in Conservation awards. Currently our staff serve in leadership roles within the California and Oregon-Washington Partners in Flight (PIF) chapters, and serve as chairs for the PIF Western Working Group, PIF International Steering Committee, and North American Banding Council. KBO personnel also serve on the North American Bird Conservation Initiative's (NABCI) Monitoring Committee, as well as the NABCI committees responsible for producing our nation's annual State of the Birds reports.

Our continued growth has resulted from a commitment to science and its role in informing sustainable management of the natural resources on which we all depend. It also results from a love of birds, and a recognition that birds, like the canary in the coal mine, are the bellwethers of our well-being. This commitment is demonstrated every day, by our staff, by our partners, and by our supporters. That is why, in this *Getting to Know KBO* edition of the *Klamath Bird*, we celebrate these individuals and their commitment to bird conservation.

## President's Perch

By Harry Fuller, KBO Board President

Klamath Bird Observatory's 2014 Budget has been approved by the Board of Directors after hours of labor by the KBO Leadership Team. This budget is realistic, optimistic, and innovative.

The realism takes into account the likely continued funding cuts for all federal agencies that contract with KBO for field work and research that applies to their priority natural resource management challenges. At this point it appears every agency will see a reduction in available contract funds by 10% or more in 2014. That's in addition to cuts already suffered in 2013. The optimism comes from KBO's good position for new contracts with partner agencies, despite the drop in available money at the national level. The innovation refers to new modes of fundraising. KBO will place more emphasis on raising money from membership, donations, foundation support, and our first-ever Mountain Bird Festival. In 2014 our staff will systematically seek grants from foundations active in supporting scientific research, environmental study, and education.

KBO's Mountain Bird Festival will be based in Ashland, from May 30-June 1. If you want to volunteer to help with the festival, let us know. If you have friends and relatives who are birders and live outside the Klamath-Siskiyou Bioregion, tell them this is a festival they don't want to miss. If you have a business that wants to sponsor the festival, let us know.

Here's our festival's webpage: [www.klamathbird.org/education/mountainbird](http://www.klamathbird.org/education/mountainbird). Online registration for the festival will begin early in 2014.

*Harry A. Fuller*



John Alexander, *Executive Director*  
Favorite Bird: Black-throated Gray Warbler

In 1992, I began work on the applied research and bird monitoring projects that eventually gave rise to the Klamath Bird Observatory. This work allowed me to pursue my interest in using science to inform and improve the way we as a society use and protect our natural resources. Over the past 20 plus years I have been blessed to collaborate with a vast community of co-workers and partners in an environment of learning. KBO has allowed me to partner with thought leaders to design and carry out excellent science, apply this science to the local and hemispherical challenges of ecosystem conservation, and to positively influence the lives of people – those I work with as well as the future generations who depend on our ability to care for our Earth and its birds.



CJ Ralph, *Research Advisor*  
Favorite Bird: New Zealand Fantail

I have been involved with Klamath Bird Observatory since the beginning. I am one of the organization's two co-founders, the other being KBO Executive Director John Alexander. In my role as Research Advisor, I review scientific reports and manuscripts and suggest analytical methods and additional datasets that can increase the value of the work we do. I have chosen a career in bird conservation because birds are the most easily and carefully monitored biota on the planet; as such, they can help us see the changes we should be concerned about on our little sphere.



Jaime Stephens, *Science Director*  
Favorite Bird: Mountain Bluebird

I started at KBO in 2002 as a graduate student and my position has evolved along with the growing organization. In my current role as Science Director I am involved in all aspects of KBO's research, including grant writing, study design, field surveys, data management, analysis, and scientific writing. I also share the results of our work with diverse audiences. Early in my career I recognized that what I sought most in a job was the ability to make a difference, and I have found that opportunity at KBO.

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Marcella Sciotto, *Executive Administrator*  
Favorite Bird: The one on a textile that I can craft with!

I started working for KBO in May of this year after moving from Manhattan. My title is Executive Administrator. What does an Executive Administrator do you ask? Well hold on tight it's an exciting position! I assist our Executive Director in the daily aspects of his job while ensuring our financials are in order. As part of this I am inspired when receiving your generous donations that keep us doing our great work at KBO. Bringing my New York City style I help manage Human Resources, the office, and IT. In a nutshell, I keep the KBO waters calm and the ship sailing smoothly, enabling our employees to do their best work so KBO can reach new heights. I'm overjoyed to bring my corporate background to the world of non-profits where each day I feel and see the good KBO does with your generous support.

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Robert Frey, *Research Biologist*  
Favorite Bird: Western Scrub-Jay

My association with KBO began in 1997 as a volunteer bird bander and assistant trainer at banding workshops. I joined KBO as a Research Biologist in 2003. In my role as banding project leader, I am responsible for the operation of a network of long-term monitoring stations and for training the interns and volunteers who complete the monitoring work. What I find most rewarding in my position is teaching our young biologists and fostering their professional growth.

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Brandon Breen, *Science Communications & Outreach*  
Favorite Bird: Turkey Vulture

I started working as a Science Communicator and Outreach Specialist for Klamath Bird Observatory in July of 2012. And what a fun, wild ride it's been! Essentially, I am responsible for telling KBO's story, with its rich and varied threads. There are the dedicated scientists who rise before dawn to survey birds, the generous donors who invest in the future, and, of course, the fascinating birds themselves. I also communicate with conservation partners so KBO's scientific findings can be brought to bear to improve the health of the land. I am drawn to bird conservation because of the power of birds to connect people to the rhythms and values of the natural world.

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Sarah Rockwell, *Research Biologist*  
Favorite bird: Beryl-spangled Tanager

I have worked as a Research Biologist for KBO for almost a year. One of KBO's current projects is working with the Trinity River Restoration Program to monitor birds along the Trinity River in northern California. I supervise field research, analyze data, and write scientific reports to share with land managers. We are collecting data on bird abundance, diversity, and reproduction in order to understand how birds respond to restoration activities that affect riverside vegetation. I have always been drawn to birds as study organisms: they are colorful and charismatic, they exhibit a fascinating diversity of behaviors, and they serve as good indicators of ecosystem health. They also allow me to work outside!





Josée Rousseau, *KBO-Arcata Program Director*

**Favorite Bird:** The song of the White-throated Sparrow brings fond memories.

I began as an intern for the US Forest Service Redwood Sciences Laboratory in 2004. After a few years partnering on specific projects, KBO officially adopted me into their family in 2008. I have since been involved in significant conservation science initiatives such as the Landbird Monitoring Network of the Americas and North American Banding Council. My work focuses on data management and analysis, which I enjoy. I also assist with the rewarding duties of bird banding and associated data analysis. It is exciting to be able to take observations made on individual birds and use them to understand the big picture of conservation needs.



Kim Hollinger, *KBO-Arcata Banding Project Leader*

**Favorite Bird:** Hermit Thrush

I have worked closely with the Klamath Bird Observatory since 1996, and I became a formal member of the KBO staff in 2010. My primary responsibility is maintaining the long-term operation of our bird monitoring stations in northern California. These stations form the heart of KBO's Humboldt Bay Bird Observatory program. In my position I am responsible for crew recruitment and training, outreach programs, and data management; I archive, analyze, and report findings from our data as well as the data of numerous cooperators. I grew up camping and exploring wild areas, and these experiences inspired me to study biology and ultimately participate in conservation and education. Through my work I contribute science-based information that helps shape decisions that can conserve the splendor of our planet and especially northern California.



Ellie Armstrong, *Research and Monitoring Intern*

**Favorite Bird:** American Dipper

I have been interning with KBO since this April when I started as a Trinity River nest searcher. During this spring and summer I lived and worked in Weaverville, California along with five other ornithologists. Here we spent our days searching for and monitoring nests of five riparian bird species—Song Sparrow, Black-headed Grosbeak, Tree Swallow, Yellow Warbler, and Yellow-breasted Chat. We also mapped the birds' territories and completed vegetation surveys. For the past four months I have been in the KBO office entering and managing data collected during the 2013 field season. I also help out one day each week at the KBO bird banding station at Willow Wind. In 2014 I will continue with KBO as a biological technician running our Trinity River field crews. KBO is offering excellent experiences and I hope to continue working in the field of conservation, possibly continuing with a Master's program in Wildlife Biology.



KBO Bird Banding and Field Interns

Student volunteer bird banding and field internships have always been at the core of KBO's conservation efforts. In 2013, we had the good fortune and wonderful company of an inspiring and aspiring group. They brought a tremendous amount of positive energy to their work and learning experiences. The energy contributed by our interns is what makes many of our accomplishments each year possible. And what a remarkable donation they make: three to six months or more of their lives devoted to KBO and bird conservation! It is the appreciation of such a gift, and the need for excellent data, that drives our training program.

List of 2013 bird banding and field interns (and their favorite birds): Hugo Ceja (Red-shafted Flicker), Catalina González (Ruby-crowned Kinglet), Andrés Henao (Golden-crowned Kinglet), Juan Lopez (Evening Grosbeak), Liberato Pop (Harpy Eagle), Teresa Skiba (Happy Wren), Tatiana Straatmann (Red-breasted Nuthatch), Tori Swift (Wilson's Warbler), Brandt Thibodeaux (Downy Woodpecker), Ellie Armstrong (American Dipper), Nathan Trimble, David Lumpkin, Tomás Setubal, and Lauren Granger.



Board of Directors

The KBO Board provides guidance and oversight to ensure the operational, scientific, and fiscal integrity of the organization. The board promotes KBO's mission and the role KBO plays in assuring a sustainable future. The board also inspires the public to support KBO and provides fundraising support for the organization.

*Pictured from left to right (favorite bird in parentheses): John Alexander, Harry Fuller (Shoebill), Marcella Sciotto, BJ Matzen (the next new bird he sees!), Margaret Widdowson (Fox Sparrow), Dick Ashford (Golden Eagle), Shannon Rio (owls), and Laura Fleming (Chestnut-backed Chickadee).*



Partner Spotlight: Barb Bresson  
Favorite Bird: Mountain Bluebird

Barb Bresson works for both the US Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management, coordinating their landbird conservation programs in the Pacific Northwest. Barb works closely with KBO and the partners with whom we collaborate to apply our science for improved natural resource management. Barb has worked with KBO since our beginning to help scope our projects and demonstrate the relevance of our work, both regionally and nationally.

*This year Barb received Partners in Flight's highest honor, the International Leadership Award, for her profound contributions to bird conservation on federal lands in the West. Pictured with other key partners, from left to right, Mike Green (US Fish and Wildlife Service), Geoff Geupel (Point Blue Conservation Science), John Alexander, Barb Bresson, Bob Altman (American Bird Conservancy), Jaime Stephens.*



Supporter Spotlight: Marshall Malden  
Favorite Bird: Bar-Tailed Godwit

I first became acquainted with KBO in 2003 when I met John Alexander at the Rotary Club of Ashland, which I had recently joined. I thought KBO's scientific approach to bird conservation was unique and worthy of support. I was honored to serve on the KBO Board from 2005-2007. In this role, I enjoyed working on the business and financial aspects of KBO and interacting with the great staff, who taught me so much about birds and bird conservation. I have been interested in birds for many years and always have field guides for the places I live and visit. I simply enjoy the pleasure, relaxation, and challenge that observing and identifying birds provides.



Volunteer Spotlight: Terence Philippe  
Favorite Bird: Western Meadowlark

I've been active as a volunteer bird outing trip leader with KBO for three years. As an employee of the Northwest Nature Shop in Ashland it was a natural choice for me to team up with KBO and lead outings. I live in the neighborhood of Ashland Pond and I led my first trips for KBO on these familiar grounds. I later expanded the range of my trips to include the Scott Valley region and Shasta Wildlife Refuge in northern California. The challenge of identifying bird species and the beauty of birdlife keeps me involved and I love to learn and share with the participants on KBO's outings. I appreciate and support KBO's research on behalf of birds, and I encourage people who care about the environment to support KBO and get involved!

## Bird Bio: Acorn Woodpecker

By Ellie Armstrong, KBO Research and Monitoring Intern

The Acorn Woodpecker (*Melanerpes formicivorus*) is common year-round in oak woodlands near the West Coast. Oregon was believed to hold the most northerly population of this species until a colony was discovered in Washington in 1989. Considered clown-faced in appearance, the Acorn Woodpecker's distinctive "waka-waka" call can often be heard whenever oak trees are near. Male and females look similar, although males can be distinguished by the presence of more red on the top of their heads.

There are several morphological adaptations shared by woodpeckers. One of these is the zygodactyl foot. While many birds have three toes pointing forward and one backwards on each foot, woodpeckers have two toes pointing forwards and two pointing backwards; this arrangement allows woodpeckers to cling securely to the sides of trees. They also have extremely long, sticky, and barbed tongues that help them probe crevices and collect insects. Their tongues wrap completely around their skulls and can extend out as far as 5 inches. To accommodate a lifestyle of drumming on wood, the bone at the base of their bill is porous and acts as a shock absorber.

Acorn Woodpeckers are communal breeders, a characteristic shared by only three percent of all bird species. Up to as many as 15 individuals from multiple generations will live together in an established territory. Only some of these individuals breed, while others help raise the young. The number of breeding individuals varies, but usually consists of one or two females and up to four males per female. An Acorn Woodpecker group will excavate several large cavities in dead or live trees; one cavity is typically used for the nest and the remaining cavities are used for roosting.

Acorns and insects comprise the bulk of the Acorn Woodpecker diet. The woodpeckers collect acorns during autumn and winter and store them in dead trees and telephone poles and other manmade structures, including the siding of houses. These acorn storage sites are called granaries, and one granary may contain as many as 50,000 acorns. All of the woodpeckers that live in a community are responsible for collecting and storing acorns. Old granaries are used year after year, but new ones are made as well.



Acorn Woodpecker © Jim Livaudais

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## Join KBO on Upcoming Events

### 2014 Wild Bird Educational Series

Presented by Grange Co-op and KBO

The following three events will take place at the Grange Co-op Pet Country store's Swingle training room at 2833 N. Pacific Hwy., Medford. Tickets can be purchased by contacting Laura at (541) 245-2370 or by e-mail at [lfleming@grangecoop.com](mailto:lfleming@grangecoop.com). Tickets are available in advance for \$15 per session or \$40 for all three. Prices are \$20 per session at the door. Advance registration is encouraged.

**January 11th, 2014 10-11am "Backyard Birds and What They Eat"** a slideshow and presentation by Harry Fuller. Harry is a professional birding guide and the KBO board president. Come view beautiful photos of our wide array of backyard birds and learn how to attract them to your yard. Afterwards, sign up for a bird walk around Agate Lake the following Saturday.

**February 8th, 2014 10-11am "Hawks at Your Feeder"** presented by Dick Ashford. Dick is a hawk expert and longtime KBO board member. He enjoys leading hawk watching trips in southern Oregon. Come learn how to recognize and appreciate the hawks that visit out backyards.

**March 8th, 2014 10-11am "A Vulture Way of Life"** presented by Brandon Breen. Brandon works at KBO in science communication and community outreach. Additionally he serves as vice president of the Turkey Vulture Society. Often maligned for being ugly and grotesque, come learn to appreciate the significant role the magnificent Turkey Vulture plays in nature.

### March 1, 2014, Klamath Basin: Raptors & Waterfowl

Join local raptor expert and longtime KBO board member Dick Ashford for this all-day outing to the Klamath Basin in search of raptors and waterfowl. Depending on water levels and weather conditions, there may be excellent opportunities for viewing thousands of migratory waterfowl. Cost is \$65 and is limited to 10 participants. Meet at 7:45am in the Rite-Aid parking lot in Ashland. To register contact Brandon at (612) 910-6502 or [bmb@klamathbird.org](mailto:bmb@klamathbird.org)

### May 30th—June 1st, 2014, Mountain Bird Festival

Mark your calendar, the first-ever Mountain Bird Festival is coming! Klamath Bird Observatory will host this community conservation event next spring. Come for the guided bird walks and keynote presentations and stay for the fine art, music, and more. Observe Calliope's Hummingbird, White-headed Woodpecker, Mountain Quail, and Great Gray Owl in their serene natural habitats. Online Registration will be available in early January at this site: [www.klamathbird.org/education/mountainbird](http://www.klamathbird.org/education/mountainbird)

### June 5th-8th, 2014, Spring Birds of Malheur NWR

Join professional birding guide and KBO board president, Harry Fuller, and hawk expert and longtime KBO board member, Dick Ashford, for a trip to this world-renowned birding destination and the largest wetland in eastern Oregon. During this truly unforgettable trip we should see Bobolinks, Sage Sparrows, and Eastern Kingbirds. The area also provides important breeding grounds for Sandhill Crane and many raptors! The cost is \$500 (including lodging, two dinners, three breakfasts, a bird presentation and a \$300 tax-deductible donation) Space is limited to 10 participants. To register contact Brandon at (612) 910-6502 or [bmb@klamathbird.org](mailto:bmb@klamathbird.org)

## Support Klamath Bird Observatory!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please select one and make your tax-deductible donation payable to Klamath Bird Observatory or KBO:

- Friend \$100                       Patron \$1,000  
 Supporter \$500                       Benefactor \$5,000                       Other \_\_\_\_\_



*Your contributions help KBO advance bird and habitat conservation*



**PO Box 758  
Ashland, OR 97520**

**Return Service Requested**

## **KBO Staff**

John Alexander, PhD—*Executive Director*  
Marcella Sciotto—*Executive Administrator*  
Jaime Stephens, MS—*Science Director*  
Sarah Rockwell, PhD—*Research Biologist*  
Robert Frey—*Research Biologist & Banding Project Lead*  
Brandon Breen, MS—*Science Communications & Outreach*  
Josée Rosseau, MS—*KBO-Arcata Program Director*  
Kim Hollinger—*KBO-Arcata & HBBO Banding Project Leader*

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Laura Fleming	BJ Matzen

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C. John Ralph, ScD

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Ellie Armstrong	Teresa M. Skiba
Catalina González Prieto	Nathan Trimble
David Lumpkin	Tomás Setubal
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Hugo Ceja	Juan Lopez