

THE GREBE

The Newsletter of the Klamath Basin Audubon Society



President's Message

KEVIN SPENCER

Where will the birds be in February?

Currently the Tule Lake NWR, including Sump 1B has water. This is attracting early waterfowl migrants to that area. That would include swans, geese, and ducks. There were about 200 Swans, 5,000 white geese, and about 6,000 ducks at Sump 1B in mid-December 2023. I am hearing reports of sharp increases in those numbers. I would speculate that Bald Eagle numbers will have corresponding increases above their 20 that were there on the first of January this year. If you do go down there, the roads are frozen and wet. So, please stay on the tour route road. Getting off of that road could mean a stuck situation for you as the roads that are not on the tour route may not have the bearing strength during wet times.

In this issue:

(Click on links to go directly to article)

[UPCOMING PROGRAMS](#)

[UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS](#)

[TULE LAKE CBC REPORT](#)

[KLAMATH FALLS CBC REPORT](#)

[LOCAL CONNECTIONS](#)

[MEMBERSHIP NEWS](#)

President's Message (cont.)

Shrike numbers are in the range of 5-10. Some Northern Shrikes are being reported. They are very similar so it is fun to practice identification skills with subtle details to pay attention to.

I have heard reports of a large Horned Lark flock in the last two weeks at Straits Drain Units on the Oregon side of Lower Klamath Lake Road. If they are present still, it would be interesting to scan through that flock for Longspurs.

Raptor numbers seem to be average. Ferruginous Hawks favoring the alfalfa fields, Rough-legged Hawk and Northern Harriers favoring the stubble-grain fields and Red-tailed Hawks where there are trees and poles in the agricultural areas, are where to look. Golden Eagles can be found by checking the Klamath Hills area along Lower Klamath Lake Road. Prairie Falcons seem to be hanging out in the Straits Drain units, Oregon side of Lower Klamath Lake NWR, and League of Nations lease lands north of Sump 1B, Tule Lake NWR (be careful with wet road conditions in that area). A WHITE-TAILED KITE was being seen for quite a while up until mid-December, along the eastern part of the Tule Lake NWR tour route road, near some dead/burned trees in that area. It has not been reported in over a month now.

Lake Ewauna is rather quiet with low gull numbers for this time of year. The open water is probably the reason. Goldeneye Ducks and Night Herons can be seen above the bridge on Main Street Klamath, Falls. But they are also roosting in the trees just above the dam on the Link River Trail. That is always an interesting walk starting at either end.

President's Message (cont.)

A special treat was a week-long show of a Black-throated Blue Warbler coming to a Running Y resident's water feature. That stay seems to have gone now. But it was brilliant while it lasted. Another interesting report was that of BOHEMIAN WAXWINGS. Two reports of them mixed with Cedar Waxwings were about a week ago. One flock was in the Lynnewood neighborhood, and another in the neighborhood above town, in the area of Lincoln and Second streets. Keep checking waxwing flocks and look for "cinnamon" Bohemians mixed in with the "yellow" Cedars.

Winter birding can be fun. We'd love to hear about what you are seeing!



Black-throated Blue Warbler

Upcoming Programs

March 12 KBAS Program

Birding the Klamath Basin

Presentation by Kevin Spencer

This will be an overview of the best places to go and in what season, routes and stops for day trips by season, specialty trips, and where to see uncommon species in the Klamath Basin. Klamath Basin Birding Trails and Birder's Guide to the Klamath Basin are useful guides and will be referred to. Bird images by local photographers will be used in the presentation to help those in attendance to get enthusiastic about enjoying what the Klamath Basin has to offer.



Upcoming Field Trips

March 9: The Sounds of Snow Geese

With Snow and Ross's Geese numbers peaking, and before they start to leave the basin for northern nesting areas, it's exhilarating to find flocks of thousands and stop nearby to listen to them chatter. If a Bald Eagle flies over to haze the flock, the sound of the entire flock lifting off is unforgettable! Other experiences could be viewing raptors, waterfowl, and sparrows. This trip will leave from Veteran's Park's locomotive area at 9:00 am. We will first visit Miller Island Road of the Klamath Wildlife Area. From there the group may travel to Lower Klamath or Tule Lake NWRs. It will last 4-5 hours. Contact Kevin Spencer for details at rriparia@charter.net

April 20: Lakeside Wetlands

This unique Wetlands is a remarkable partnership between farming and wetland management, with some fish mixed in too. The result is a promising solution to the current situation that the basin faces. This trip is a guided walk at this wetland to learn about this wetland's successes. The trip will also be looking out for the birds that are utilizing it, and possibly shorebird species included. This trip will leave Veteran's Park locomotive area by 9 am. and last until noon. Contact Kevin Spencer for details.

Field Trips leave from the Veteran's Park locomotive area by 9 am unless stated otherwise. Participants are urged to dress appropriately and be prepared with water, food, sunscreen, hat, and binoculars. And bring along positive enthusiasm for finding birds! Contact Field Trip Chair, Kevin Spencer, with questions, at rriparia@charter.net

Klamath Falls Christmas Bird Count, Dec. 16, 2023

BY KEVIN SPENCER

It turned out to be one of the most pleasant count days ever. The lack of wind, warm temperatures, and virtually no snow depth especially preceding the count day made it not only nice for humans, but also for birds to linger further into the late fall season.

The final tally was 111 species seen and heard. This is remarkably close to the all-time high of 113 species. The trend has been that this count consistently is in that range. That can be attributed to both the warmer fall weather patterns and to the overall skill of the participants. This count had only eight observers in the field, but their concentration during the day is incredible.

*Varied Thrush*

Weather related finds included five Varied Thrush, and FOUR Anna's Hummingbirds! Three of the hummingbirds were coming to feeders of participants. Another was seen near a feeder in a neighborhood. I am left to wonder how many hummingbirds are actually wintering in Klamath Falls! I recall seeing the first record of an Anna's Hummingbird on the Klamath Falls CBC, that one being seen on New Year's Day in the early 1980's with a near-zero F temperature. It was coming to a feeder too. They are an incredibly tough bird!

Open water helped to have all the waterfowl species represented. The lack of snowpack might be the reason that Golden Eagle was not reported. They were probably roaming higher hillsides and out of sight. Chestnut-backed Chickadees were seen in two areas. They don't come into Klamath Falls very often. However, Black-capped Chickadee was not seen along Link River or Wingwatcher Trails, locations where they are often seen.

Klamath Falls Christmas Bird Count cont.

All species of finches seemed well below average. It was no wonder that Cassin's Finch and Evening Grosbeak were not seen. Lesser Goldfinch amounted to only 86, American Goldfinch just 29, Pine Siskin – 2, while Red Crossbill and Purple Finch had one each. Even House Finch numbers were low. I wonder what is going on with the finches. Western and Clark's Grebes, Eared Grebe, and Double-crested Cormorant were all represented on the count, and it appears now with mild temperatures in January that they may all make it through the winter as the open water without ice continues.

The open water made finding wintering shorebirds difficult as their habitat was not concentrated by icy conditions, but Greater Yellowlegs, Killdeer, and Wilson's Snipe were still seen. Unusual finds included: Williamson's Sapsucker, Rock Wren, Horned Lark, Peregrine Falcon, and American Pipit.



Horned Lark

Black Phoebe and Red-shouldered Hawk continue to be hardy and are now found on the count every year.

A special thank you to the observers! They include Wes Stone, Dave Haupt, Julie Van Moorhem, Elijah Hayes, Lin Stern, Rick Hardy, Jeremy Webster, Kevin Spencer, BJ Matzen, and Kathy Larson.



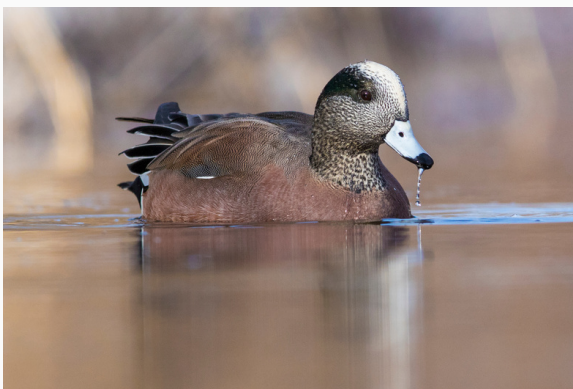
Tule Lake Christmas Bird Count, Jan. 1, 2024

BY KEVIN SPENCER

There is nothing like getting out on the first of the year and taking part in a Christmas Bird Count. However, on this day, it was FOGGY! Seeing much past the hood of a vehicle was a chore. And bird colors and shapes were distorted. American Coots looked like gray blobs. I know, poor coots. They seem like they are always the brunt of humor. But it was true. The group out at Sump 1B on the Tule Lake NWR, which had water, had thousands of Snow and Ross's geese. They were loud! But counting them was impossible. So, their numbers had to be estimated using previous days they were seen; about 5,000.

Overall, the Tule Lake CBC had 79 species. That is an admirable number considering that the previous year there was not any water in either Sump 1A or Sump 1B!! With water in Sump 1B this year the waterfowl were loving it. And without any frozen water they were scattered.

Only 20 Bald Eagles were seen, so either waterfowl numbers were not impressive enough, or the eagles were still elsewhere and hadn't come to the Klamath Basin yet. Despite the fog, a Eurasian Wigeon was seen.



American Wigeon



Eurasian Wigeon

Tule Lake Christmas Bird Count, cont.

The lack of fish in Sump 1B was evident with the absence of Common Merganser on the count. Two Cinnamon Teal were unusual, and a Eurasian Green-winged Teal was spotted with its horizontal white slash marking seen. Large flocks of blackbirds still were seen in the League of Nations lease lands north of Sump 1B. Mixed in were Tricolored and Yellow-headed blackbirds. A lone Barn Swallow was seen patrolling an open water ditch. Insects hatch even when it is cold.



Cinnamon Teal

Unusual finds included: Varied Thrush-1, Red-breasted Nuthatch-1, Black Phoebe-1, Eared Grebe- 2, Northern Shrike-1, American Pipit- 3, and Short-eared Owl- 1. Observers covering the western part of the circle came upon a neglected pony that needed immediate attention.

Fortunately, that situation was reported and handled. The pony is now recovering and getting what it needs. That group is applauded for helping that pony out!

Thanks to all of the participants who came out for that foggy count and making it home safe on the way home through that fog. They included: Dave Haupt, Kevin McKereghan, Steve Sheehy, Frank Lospalluto, Stacy Taeuber, Shannon Rio, and Erica Harris. The group is small, but enduring the day is a special and bonding memory. Thank you all!

How to Connect with Local Birders and Birding News

If you have recently moved to the area, are a new member, or just getting into Klamath Basin birding, here are some resources for you:

- Stay connected with KBAS through our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100068550304405> We have over 700 followers and would welcome all members joining who are on Facebook.
- Join the Klamath Basin Birding Network News google group groups.google.com/g/klamathbasinbirdnews where local residents share recent interesting sightings and other KBAS updates.
- Go to the Klamath Basin Audubon Society website klamathaudubon.org for newsletters, membership information, program and field trip updates, etc.
- Check out the website <https://www.klamathbasinbirding.com/> hosted by local photographers Mary Williams Hyde and Loree Johnson which advocates for the birds of the Klamath Basin.

Diana Samuels
Acting Membership Co-Chair

How Many Birds Can You Find?



The Great Backyard
Bird Count
Watch, Count, Share
February 16-19

CornellLab   **Audubon**  **BIRDS CANADA**  **OISEAUX CANADA**  **Great Backyard Bird Count**
Wild Birds Unlimited
Founding Sponsor

Peregrine Falcon © Marky Mutchler / Macaulay Library

To learn more about how you can participate click on the link below.

<https://www.birdcount.org/participate/>

KBAS Membership News

We welcome our returning KBAS members listed below. Our membership currently stands at 94 local members and 104 National Audubon Society (NAS)/local members. This month we contacted NAS members by mail for whom we have no email address. We're hoping for NAS members ~~will~~ to get more involved in our local chapter and receive periodic updates.

New Members

- Bryan Aptekar
- Randelin Burnett

Renewing Members

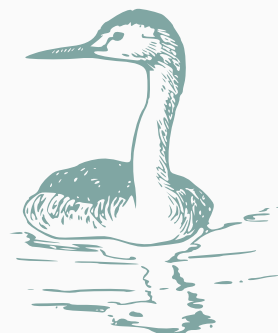
- Gerald and Marsha Breazeale
- Dolores Edson
- Barry Harris
- Norm Holliday
- Ken and Jo Johnston
- Julie Levine
- Sherry Lindley
- Diane Shockey
- Michael Smith
- Anne and Karl Wenner
- Howard West

Renewing Members

- Amanda Alford Family
- Virginia Bary
- Peter Calvo
- Alan Hubbard
- Holly Hubbard
- Mary Williams Hyde
- Jeremy Tchou

We still need members to take on vacant committee assignments and other volunteer roles. Please let us know if you are interested in knowing more about the opportunities.

Diana Samuels/Anne Wenner
Acting KBAS Membership co-chairs
Contact us at dsamuels@charter.net or aewenner@gmail.com



Become a Member:

We invite you to join us in the Klamath Basin Audubon Society, your local chapter of the National Audubon Society. Becoming a member will help you stay involved with local conservation efforts.

Fill out and mail the application below to the listed address.

You can also join or renew online at our website:

www.klamathaudubon.org

KBAS MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL APPLICATION

Local Membership Dues

- Individual: \$20
- Student and Seniors (62 and over): \$15
- Family: \$25
- Here is my tax deductible extra contribution for \$ _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Check here if you are a current member of national Audubon

Not sure of national membership status

Name _____

Address _____

City/State _____ ZIP _____

Phone _____ e-mail _____

Klamath Basin Audubon Society Chapter Code: C9ZT600Z. Should you join National Audubon as a first time member, please use the above Chapter Code on your form - we receive additional \$\$.

Please contact me regarding:

Gift memberships

Volunteering for KBAS Committee activities

Make your check payable to KBAS and mail with this form to: KBAS, P.O. 354, Klamath Falls, OR. 97601

KBAS BOARD

Officers

President: Kevin Spencer
Vice President: Tom Essex
Secretary: Wes Stone
Treasurer: VACANT
(Diana, Anne, Darrel
currently sharing duties)

Members-at-Large

Jeff Kerber

Ron Larson
BJ Matzen
January Bill
Anne Wenner
Jherime Kellerman

Committee Chairs

Conservation: Marshal Moser
Education: January Bill
Field Trips: Kevin Spencer
Hospitality: Katelyn Ferguson
Membership: Diana Samuels &
Anne Wenner (acting)
Programs: Jeff Kerber
Publicity: VACANT
(Madeline Enos, Debra, Diana
currently sharing duties)
Grant Reviews: Jim Rooks
Grebe Editor: Debra Davis
Winter Wings Festival Coordinators:
Diana Samuels and Anne Wenner
Book Sales: Beth Phillips
Webmaster: Debra Davis

Our Mission Statement:

The Klamath Basin Audubon Society will provide the opportunity for all to experience and appreciate our region's wildlife, focusing on birds and other natural resources.

Monthly Meetings:

We meet the 2nd Tuesday of the month, September through June. Everyone is welcome to attend. See our website for current information on the next regular meeting

Board of Directors and Committees

General members are always invited and welcome to attend the KBAS Board meetings to help in planning future activities and to discuss Board policies. We meet the first Wednesday of every month.

Contact Kevin Spencer if you would like to attend.

rriparia@charter.net

Klamath Basin Audubon Society
P O Box 354
Klamath Falls OR
877-541-2473
klamathauduboninfo@gmail.com

Photos: unless otherwise noted all photos are authorized under free license use by Canva/Getty Images