



Klamath Basin  
Audubon Society

# The Grebe

October/November  
2019

TOGETHER GREEN, ACT TODAY,  
SHAPE TOMORROW

## President's Message

By Darrel Samuels

### Vanishing Wings

Sometimes I'm not sure what to write about in this column as many topics vie for attention in my aging brain, but that is not the case this time. A shocking press release by the journal Science a few days ago screams for the attention of all who love birds and nature. Since 1970 bird populations in the U.S. and Canada have declined an alarming 29 percent or about 3 billion birds! Furthermore, the decline is widespread across species and habitats and includes what we often refer to as "common" birds. Rather than summarizing the press release, I urge you to read the Cornell Lab of Ornithology article:

<https://ebird.org/pnw/news/3-billion-birds-gone-together-we-can-bring-them->

[back?fbclid=IwAR20mrzDEnRdAyQ98UGVIYAIR4xYyDLBbuuqLHbAogLibDu55awh5dXPLI](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/19/science/bird-populations-america-canada.html)

and the New York Times coverage:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/19/science/bird-populations-america-canada.html>

Since bird populations are a barometer of environmental health that are as important as insect or amphibian populations, this is unnerving news to say the least. Of course, there are many factors involved in the precipitous decline of bird numbers and the above articles describe them, including climate change (yes, global warming!), agricultural practices and pesticides, habitat loss,

window strikes, feral and domestic cats, etc. What can we do to help reverse this trend? Absent science-based policies from the current administration, local action becomes much more important. Our KBAS board continues to support local actions that promote research and solutions. Recent grants to Bird Alley X (<https://birdallyx.net>) in support of the Refuge Duck Hospital, Badger Run (<http://www.badgerrun.org>) to improve facilities to rehab injured birds, and Klamath Bird Observatory (<https://www.klamathbird.org>) to support hermit warbler migration study have been made possible by the success of our Winter Wings Festival.

The accompanying graphic highlights what every individual can do. I urge you share this crisis and the actions needed to combat it with your network of friends.



Special note: I would like to thank Emily Strauss, our Grebe editor, for her excellent work on behalf of KBAS. Emily has indicated she is moving on to other projects, and will be stepping down as editor after this issue. We need someone else to step up and keep the Grebe tradition alive! Emily is more than willing to meet with prospective editors and orient them to the task. All that is necessary is a good working knowledge of Microsoft Word. Please consider this opportunity!

## Lake Abert Waterbird Populations, Summer 2019

Ron Larson



KBAS, East Cascades Audubon Society, and the Oregon Lakes Association cooperated this summer on bird counts to better understand how waterbird populations at Lake Abert were doing. The lake is Oregon's only hypersaline lake and is located in Lake County. It is one of the most important waterbird areas in the West, especially for shorebirds, including American Avocets and Wilson's and Red-necked Phalaropes, that come to the lake in the thousands after breeding to buildup fat reserves before

moving on to wintering sites that can be several thousand miles away in South America. While numbers were not remarkable this summer, they showed that most birds are recovering after the being down substantially in 2014-2016, when the lake was nearly dry.

Ron Larson, who heads the effort for KBAS, said “He never tires of seeing this beautiful high-desert lake at the base of the 2,000-foot high Abert Rim. There are always surprises.” In 2019, Ron said, “numbers of avocets, phalaropes, and Eared Grebes were up, but “peeps”, as sandpipers are called, were nearly nonexistent for the first time in his experience. Also, the numbers of shoreflies, which is one of the main foods of the birds, were truly astonishing, being present as a wide black band along the shore and were even out on the lake surface as far as could be seen.”

Ron says this cooperative effort is providing critical data and is part of a larger effort by National Audubon, as part of their “Saline Lakes Program” at the Great Salt Lake in Utah, and other similar efforts at Mono and Owens Lakes and the Salton Sea in California, to better understand how waterbird populations in the interior West are being impacted by climate change and other factors. Like the effort at Lake Abert, volunteers are critical for getting the data that agencies are either unwilling to do or lack the staff to do.







Photos by Ron Larson: American Avocets at Lake Abert. Avocets arrive at the lake in April and sometimes stay into November. They are beautifully-adapted to living at salt lakes being able to nest on mud, tolerate high salinities, and feed on shoreflies and brine shrimp. Numbers of avocets at the lake are among the highest in the West, with up to 30,000 being reported.

## Central Valley Bird Symposium Wilton, CA, November 21-24, 2019

The Central Valley Bird Club will be hosting the 23rd annual Central Valley Birding Symposium Nov. 21-24, 2019, at the Stockton Hilton Hotel in Stockton, CA. The Great Central Valley, in the heart of California and the Pacific Flyway, is uniquely situated for excellent birding. Please join us as the CVBS again celebrates the best of birding in the Central Valley!

The CVBS kicks off with a delicious hors d'oeuvres buffet & no host bar on Thursday night, followed by one of our favorite keynotes, outstanding photographer, birder, and presenter, Ed Harper, with his program, "***Simply in Awe of Birds***".

Friday night's keynote program "***The Language of Birds***" will be presented by Nathan Pieplow, author of the Peterson Field Guide to Bird Sounds.

Saturday night's keynote program, "***The Genius of Birds***" will be presented by acclaimed science and nature writer, Jennifer Ackerman. Learn how birds make and use their own sophisticated tools, teach one another new skills, exercise astonishing feats of memory, create works of art, navigate, communicate in ways that resemble language, and even pass along cultural traditions.

Informative and entertaining workshops include: "***Subspecies for Birders***" with Joe Morlan, "***I Know It When I See It***" by Jon Dunn, and an update on Central Valley bird conservation and research programs. Build your skills at workshops: Nature/Wildlife Photography and Photo Editing (Ben Knoot), Bird Sketching (René Reyes), Beginning Birding (Sal Salerno) and Carving (Jim Burcio).

Field trips, offered Friday, Saturday and Sunday, always turn up exciting birds. Add in the entertaining and educational Bird ID Panel, the wonderful selection of optics, art and gifts at the Birder's Market plus the camaraderie of hundreds of like-minded folks, and you know you'll have a good time! There's something for everyone interested in birds. Come and join us to bird, learn, and just have fun!

To look over the schedule of events, go to: <http://www.cvbirds.org/events/symposium/>  
Registration begins September 6, 2019.

## Winter Wings Festival Update

Diana Samuels and Anne Wenner

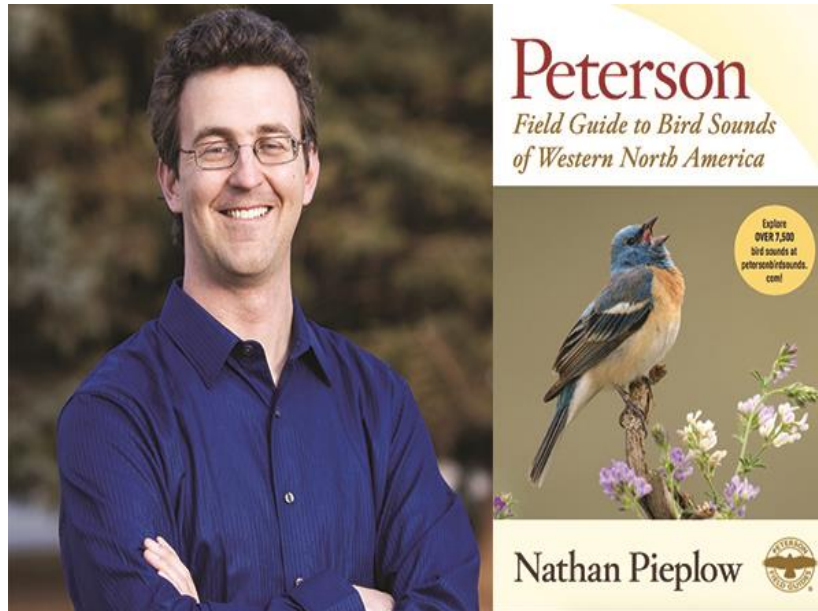


The 2020 Winter Wings Festival is less than 5 months away. We have a fabulous line-up of keynoters; featuring nature cartoonist and writer Rosemary Mosco, wildlife photographer and cinematographer Gerrit Vyn, and author Nathan Pieplow. We hope you save the dates and join us for an extensive array of field trips, workshops, presentations, and receptions that highlight the wonders of the Klamath Basin in winter. The program will be released in mid-November and online registration will begin early this year on December 7, 2019. Be ready and register on the first day to get the most popular trips and workshops! Follow us on Facebook to get insider tips on the festival.

In the last Grebe issue we featured Rosemary Mosco. This issue we'll tell you more about our two other keynoters, Gerrit Vyn and Nathan Pieplow.



Gerrit Vyn is a Wildlife Photographer and Cinematographer for the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, a Senior Fellow at the International League of Conservation Photographers, and has been photographing birds and wildlife professionally for the last 25 years. His most recent book, “The Living Bird,” was a New York Times Bestseller and National Outdoor Book Award winner. He is best known for his work documenting endangered birds and conservation issues around the world and is a sought-after speaker on topics of birds, conservation and photography. His topic at the festival will be “Conservation Media Expeditions: Capturing the Lives of the World’s Most Threatened Birds” and will feature some of his amazing photography work around the world.



Nathan Pieplow is the author of the Peterson Field Guide to Bird Sounds. An avid bird sound recordist and videographer, he is also the author of the bird sound blog, [Earbirding.com](http://Earbirding.com), an author of the Colorado Birding Trail, and former editor of the journal, Colorado Birds. His keynote on the “Language of Birds.” This talk is an accessible, entertaining introduction to a fascinating topic. You’ll learn how one bird sound can have many meanings, and how one meaning can have many sounds—and how, sometimes, the meaning isn’t in the sounds at all.

## Field Trip Report: Running Y September 21, 2019 Darrel Samuels

Tom Essex and I led five other birders on a short tour of the Running Y on a beautiful Fall morning. We combined a version of the Feeder Hop trip we do at Winter Wings with some outdoor birding at three stops. Our first stop was Buck and Susie Hasslebrink’s home at the top of the ridge overlooking the Lodge. Buck is a passionate

birder who has cultivated 9 (or non-cultivated) his backyard with features to attract a wide variety of birds—lots of native shrubs and Oregon grape, several snag trees, a water source, and, of course, a variety of feeders. Buck also dutifully spreads seed across the yard which quail, doves and other ground foragers appreciate. Species seen included



Oak Titmouse, Golden and White-Crowned Sparrows, Northern Flicker, Mountain Chickadee, and Spotted Towhee, Acorn Woodpeckers as well as Scrub and Steller's Jays.

We next headed to my house where I have kept several suet feeders filled and hanging from the trees, a reliable woodpecker, chickadee, and nuthatch magnet. As we parked our cars, my neighbors were walking by the house and asked if we had seen the owl just up the street. Of course not; seven birders in three vehicles had driven right by a Great Horned Owl perched low in a pine tree right next to the road! We walked back up the street and were treated to very close looks at the young bird who showed no concern that we were standing twenty feet away. Todd Kepple used his binoculars and phone to take a great shot of the bird.

Back at my driveway we observed Turkey Vultures perched in the top of a bare incense cedar two lots away. This perch is a favorite of vultures—I have counted as many as twenty—who warm

themselves in the morning before going off to work for the day. Action at my feeders was minimal (of course!). Apparently, the usual cadre of White-headed, Acorn, Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers were all sleeping in. Only a few Northern Flickers and White-breasted Nuthatches provided some viewing.

We then stopped briefly at the Acorn tree at the end of Cinnamon Teal drive. This old snag, now a granary tree for Acorn Woodpeckers, looks more like a vertical slice of Swiss cheese than a tree with hundreds, perhaps thousands, of neatly drilled holes. Three Acorn Woodpeckers entertained us with their antics.

Our last stop was the Skillet Handle birding trail. Although our stop was brief and the birds not plentiful, we were treated to the beautiful mixed oak woodland that was recently enhanced by restoration work done by Lomakatsi. Todd Kepple graciously shared his knowledge and passion for the Oregon White Oaks while we walked the trail. A most enjoyable morning!







## **Bird Banding Invitation**

### **Gary Vequist, Field Trip Committee Chair.**

The Klamath Bird Observatory (Dr. Bob Frey) has invited Klamath Audubon Society members and friends to observe bird banding on Oct. 5, 2019 at the Sevenmile Guard Station (near Fort Klamath).

Meet Darrel Samuels and others at the Running Y Lodge by 7:30 am. We will carpool to the Guard Station. The group will return to the lodge by approximately 11:30 am.

The birds are caught in a mist net, weighed, measured and banded. See how they age the small song birds caught in the nets. It is a very interesting process!

Directions to the Sevenmile Guard Station are shown below in case someone wants to drive from town on Hwy 97. We'd love to see you there!

#### **Directions to the Klamath Bird Observatory's Sevenmile Guard Station (USFS)**

**Directions:** From Klamath Falls go north approximately 21 miles on US 97 and turn west onto OR 62. Take OR 62 to the small town of Fort Klamath. In Fort Klamath, turn west onto Nicholson Road (paved); this takes you to the National Forest Boundary. At this point, the paved road ends and becomes Forest Road 3300. The Guard Station can be seen just ahead at the junction with Forest Road 3200.

**Directions:** From Running Y, take Hwy. 140 west towards Medford. Between milepost 43 & 44, turn north onto Westside Road (there will be a sign pointing to Rocky Point and Fort Klamath). Follow Westside Road to milepost 0, where Westside Road becomes Sevenmile Road (there is a strong bend to the east in the road at this point). Continue for 1.8 miles to Hackler Road and turn left. Continue on Hackler Road for 2.4 miles to Nicholson Road and turn left (west). Nicholson Road will take you to the National Forest Boundary. At this point, the paved road ends and becomes Forest Road 3300. The Guard Station can be seen just ahead at the junction with Forest Road 3200.

## **PROGRAM REVIEW, SEPTEMBER, 2019**

**Beth Philips**

We had a great program in September presented by [Jamie Stephens](#) from the [Klamath Bird Observatory](#). She gave an overview of KBO, their purpose and their long term monitoring and research of birds in several areas. She talked about their work in studying the Vesper Sparrow, the Black Backed Woodpecker, the Common Nighthawk and the Hermit Warbler. KBAS had given Jamie a grant to purchase geolocators to help them in their study of the Hermit Warblers. The geolocators are very tiny instruments that fit on the top of the bird and weigh almost nothing. Jamie is working with other scientists from Oregon State University to track these birds, and really see where they go and how they survive. I was impressed with Jamie's passion for her work and the amount of knowledge she has to study these birds.

## A Day at the Duck Hospital at the Klamath National Wildlife Refuge in Tulelake

### Molly Russell

I wasn't sure what to expect when I volunteered to help at the Duck Hospital. I had heard January Bill's (Co-director Bird Ally X) talk at a general meeting last year and was amazed at all they had accomplished. My first task was to help another volunteer, Margie from Marin County, wash syringes that had been used to give antibiotics, nutrients and vitamins to the birds. The water we had to use came from the Refuge and was a bit green but that is what the birds live in so with a little soap, we cleaned the syringes and dishes that had been used so far that day. It gave me time to familiarize myself with the hospital.

There are shelters outside and inside for the ducks to recuperate in depending on what stage they are in. All are covered with tarps or sheets to keep them safe and from getting scared. Inside are water, food and ponds in the larger areas. After washing dishes Margie and I went to harvest tules to put in the pens so they feel more at home and have places to hide. It wasn't as easy as we thought as tules grow in water and we didn't have waders to get to them. After driving a bit, we found a dry patch with some green ones and brought them back.

I helped clean out a pen by cleaning the pool and filling it with fresh water, adding tules and cleaning the floors. I then helped with the intake of several birds. They were covered with a tea towel so they would not be scared and I held them as Marie Travers, Co-Director Bird Ally X, weighed, took a blood sample, and checked its wings, keel and eyes. All the stats were written down and matched with its band number that was put on earlier. When we were done we put the bird in the new pen after giving it some antibiotics and fluid.

I spent some of the afternoon cleaning playpens that were used to house birds before their intake and transfer to the pens. When I arrived Wednesday, Sept 18<sup>th</sup> they had treated over 200 birds and released 144 with 19 still remaining in care so much of my time was helping clean up different areas. No new birds would be arriving until next week so it was a time to catch up. I also was shown how the blood samples were analyzed that were taken from the intake earlier that day. January and Marie were always offering to let me learn more about the process and help with the birds which I appreciated. At the end of the day one of the birds had died so we made up some nutritional mix to give to others in the pen just to make sure they were getting enough to eat. They have duck weed, grains and meal worms to eat but don't always take advantage of that as they are not feeling well and in a strange place.

I offered to take laundry home to wash as they go through a lot of towels and sheets and don't really have time to do that. It kind of reminded me of washing dirty diapers when my kids were little so not too bad. I will bring them back tomorrow so they can have them to use again. With temperatures getting cooler there is hope that the avian botulism outbreak this year is going to come to a close earlier but there are no guarantees. Either way, Bird Ally X will be there until the last bird is treated and released. Last year they saved almost 300 birds out of the 500 they received which is an 80% recovery rate which is amazing. They are on track to do that again this year. In the past they just picked up the dead birds from the lake and disposed of them, none were treated so we are lucky to have such dedicated people like January and Marie to take this on.

We thank you and most of all the birds thank you!

<https://birdallyx.net/144-botulism-patients-released-lower-klamath-response-update/>

## UPCOMING PROGRAMS

October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019



On October 8th our speaker will be **Mary Coolidge from Portland Audubon**. She will bring us up to date on the current numbers of condors and how well they are doing. It is hoped that some of them make it to Oregon in the future. She will also speak about lead bullets and the harm they do to birds.

The California Condor (*Gymnogyps californianus* or Prey-go-neesh) is a critically endangered species that once ranged from BC into northern Mexico. Between 1982 and 1987, the last free flying birds were brought into captivity to help establish a captive breeding program. Today, there are over 480 birds, over half of which are free-flying, the remainder of which are members of breeding programs in LA, San Diego, Portland, Boise, and Baja. While significant progress has been made to increase their numbers, a number of factors continue to limit the establishment of self-sustaining populations. The most significant among them is exposure to lead in the form of lead contaminated carcasses and gut piles. Condors are long-lived birds that don't reach sexual maturity for 6-8 years, lay one egg per nesting cycle, and may only breed every other year. Their slow reproduction rate coupled with continued lead exposure has slowed recovery efforts for this iconic species.

Plans are underway to reintroduce condors to the Bald Hills of Redwood National Park in Northern California. The Yurok Tribe, together with the National Park Service and USFWS, has spent nearly a decade planning for the return of this culturally and ecologically significant species to Yurok Ancestral Territory. This exciting news portends the return of California Condors to Oregon skies, and challenges us to ensure adequate protection of Condors from lead in Oregon.

Join us for a talk on condor biology, the recovery program, and efforts to reduce the risk of lead exposure for these magnificent birds.



## Upcoming Meeting: November 12, 2019

### Peter Lassen and his Gold Rush Trail.

Ken Johnston is a retired science teacher in secondary education. He presently lives in Klamath Falls, Oregon. Following his honorary discharge from the Navy after the Vietnam War, he earned his Masters Degree in Biology at Chico State and taught in California and Oregon. During the summers, he worked as an interpretive ranger at Lassen Volcanic National Park. He developed a living history program for the Park, using people in period costumes, oxen and a covered wagon to interpret the development of the Lassen and Nobles Trails, which are closely associated with the National Park.

Ken has been over every inch of the Lassen and Nobles Trails. He has been actively involved with California Historic Trails since 1974, and is presently serving on the Board of Directors for both Trails West, Inc. out of Reno and is the president of the CA/NV Chapter of the Oregon California Trails Association.

After intensive historical research, he published his book *Legendary Truths, Peter Lassen and His Gold Rush Trail in Fact and Fable* in 2012. And he published *The Nobles Emigrant Trail* in 2018.

## Poetry of Birds

### Waiting for Rain

Emily Strauss

The dun and buff denizens  
of the upland deserts wait  
wings beating the soil  
beneath drab artemesia—  
tiny leaves conserve moisture  
thorns limit grazing  
heat envelops them, a pulsing  
  
fist of air—the birds rest  
mouths agape to cool, the lake  
low, muddy where geese wade

in the warm algae, the basin  
cooks in summer—  
willetts, snipes, sparrows

all hide by day under the cliffs,  
bushes and culverts waiting  
for rain that seldom comes,  
the change in climate beyond  
their understanding, shriveled  
they will desiccate before winter.

Emily Strauss has an M.A. in English, but is self-taught in poetry, which she has written since college. Over 450 of her poems appear in a wide variety of online venues and in anthologies, in the U.S. and abroad.

# MEMBERSHIP NEWS

## Myki Spindle

KBAS currently has 57 local chapter memberships - 32 of these are individual memberships and 25 are family memberships. We currently have 74 National Audubon memberships assigned to our local chapter - 64 of these are individual memberships and 10 are family memberships. The total number of memberships based upon this data is 131. (Note: KBAS members who hold both a local KBAS and a National Audubon membership are reflected only in the KBAS numbers shown above, to avoid overstating total membership figures. There are eight of these.

To encourage increased membership, we invite each of you to ask friends to join us at any of our monthly meetings or scheduled activities.

We look forward to seeing you at our next General meeting on Tuesday, October 8th. Family and friends are always welcome to join us!

### Thank you to our New and Renewing KBAS Members!

<u>New Members</u>	<u>Renewing Members</u>	
Craig & Anna Dress	Heidi Anderson	John & Donna Snell
Charles & Essie King	Virginia Bary	Karl & Anne Wenner
Janice C. Silvestri & Family	Marshal & Joanne Case	
	Ron & Kathy Larson	



<b>Klamath Basin Audubon Society Officers and Board Members 2019-2020</b>		
<b>President</b>	Darrel Samuels	
<b>Vice-President</b>	Tom Essex	
<b>Secretary</b>	vacant	
<b>Treasurer</b>	Molly Russell	
<b>Board</b>	BJ Matzen	
<b>Board</b>	Ron Larson	
<b>Board</b>	Heidi Anderson	
<b>Board</b>	Rick Hardy	
<b>Board</b>	Beth Phillips	
<b>Board</b>	Kevin Spencer	
<b>Committee Chairs</b>		
<b>Conservation</b>	Marshal Moser	
<b>Education</b>	Jamie Blankenship, Sabrena Pitcher	
<b>Field Trips</b>	Gary Vequist	
<b>Grebe Editor</b>	Emily Strauss	
<b>Hospitality</b>	Heidi Anderson	
<b>Membership</b>	Myki Spindle	
<b>Programs</b>	Beth Phillips	
<b>Publicity</b>	Mary Kelley	
<b>Grant Review</b>	Jim Rooks	
<b>Winter Wings</b>	Diana Samuels Anne Wenner	
<b>Web Master</b>	Debra Davis	
<b>Used Book Sales</b>	vacant	

**LOCAL MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL APPLICATION**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

- Individual: \$20
- Student and Senior (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 \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Note: You will receive The Grebe at this email address

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



# The Grebe

October- November 2019

Klamath Basin  
Audubon Society  
P. O. 354  
Klamath Falls, OR 97601

## Meeting Schedule

### Board Meetings

Where: Chamber of Commerce  
205 Riverside Dr. Ste. A

When: First Wednesday of the Month

Time: 3 pm - 5 p.m.

### General Meetings

Where: Fisher Nicholson Realty  
Office, 403 Main St.

When: 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the Month

Time 6:30 pm – 9:00 pm

The Grebe is posted bi-monthly on the website  
[WWW.KLAMATHAUDUBON.ORG](http://WWW.KLAMATHAUDUBON.ORG)

KBAS general meetings are held at 6:30 p.m. on the second Tuesday of every month except February, June, July, and August.

Website: [www.klamathaudubon.org](http://www.klamathaudubon.org)  
KBAS e-mail address: [klamathauduboninfo@gmail.com](mailto:klamathauduboninfo@gmail.com)  
KBAS phone number: 877-541-2473