

oregon-washington region



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It was quite a summer, with lots of rarities and some valuable discoveries from Breeding Bird Atlas work in southeastern Oregon. More than average numbers of winter ducks over-summered, and western Oregon had an unusual number of uncommon waterfowl breeding.

For most of June, temperatures were below average and succeeded the month of May that seemed continuously overcast. In the interior, July had above-average temperatures, with some in triple digits. Malheur Lake's water level continued to rise, for a total of 7.8 inches during June, peaking at a depth of 6.25 feet in early July, and then dropped 4.2 inches during the remainder of July. Sea surface temperatures remained above the long-term average, but were dropping by late summer as the El Niño event waned.

Abbreviations: Fields (*Fields, Harney Co., OR*); Malheur (*Malheur N.W.R., Harney Co., OR*); O.S. (*Ocean Shores, Grays Harbor Co., WA*); Sauvie (*Sauvie I., Columbia Co., OR*); S.J.C.R. (*south jetty of the Columbia R., Clatsop Co., OR*).

LOONS THROUGH RAPTORS

A Yellow-billed Loon was at Swantown, *Island, WA* July 5–19 (SM), the 3rd consecutive summer on the w. shoreline of Whid-

bey I. The **Arctic Loon** found in May at Yaquina Bay, *Lincoln, OR*, was last seen June 7 (D. Bailey). The 22 pairs of Eared Grebe at Copeland Res., *OR*, June 30 (M&MLD) represent the largest known breeding colony in *Malheur*. Non-breeding Clark's Grebes were at Baskett Slough N.W.R., *Polk, OR*, through June 4 (BTi) and at Boiler Bay, *Lincoln, OR*, June 14 (KM). They nested again with W. Grebes on Fern Ridge Res., *Lane, OR* (*fide* TM), and new breeding records from e. Oregon were noted at Copeland Res., *Malheur*, June 30 (M&MLD), and at Greaser L., *Lake*, July 12 (RG). Five Laysan Albatross reports from Washington were our 2nd-highest summer total: singles off Ozette, *Clallam*, June 27 (BL); off LaPush, *Clallam* June 28 (BL); off Queets, *Jefferson*, June 30 (BTw); and two off Westport July 11 (TRW). Northern Fulmar numbers were quite low off Oregon, about 20 per trip (GG). Larger numbers were found off Washington in late July, with a count of 1346 July 25 (BTw). A Flesh-footed Shearwater off Copalis, *Grays Harbor, WA*, July 3 (BTw, BB) was the only report. A surprising cluster of June reports of Buller's Shearwater included three off Oregon June 10 (GG) and 15 off the Olympic Pen. June 26–28 (BL). Sooty Shearwater numbers were relatively low until late July when 30,000 were seen from shore at Willapa Bay, *Pacific, WA*, July 29 (TA). One Short-tailed Shearwater off Westport July 11 (TRW) was unusual. Two **Manx Shearwaters** were found in Washington, continuing their startling incursion into the n.e. Pacific: one off Tokeak Pt., *Jefferson*, June 30 (†BTw, †BB) and one off Westport July 25 (†BTw). A Leach's Storm-Petrel seen on Siuslaw Bay, *Lane, OR*, June 22 (DP) was an unusual onshore report for c. Oregon.

Six Am. White Pelicans at Seattle June 12 (P. Couzens) were locally rare, and the pair at Grays Harbor, *WA*, remained through the summer (BW, m.ob.). Following the strong spring movement of Brown Pelicans, a count of 425 at Tokeland, *Pacific, WA*, July 18 (SM) indicated above-average numbers along the outer coast. Surveys of seabird colonies off Oregon found that Pelagic Cormorants started nesting late and in low numbers. Brandt's and Double-crested cor-

morant numbers were down significantly and in some colonies there were no nestings (RL, U.S.F.W.S.). Up to 60 pairs of Great Egrets nested at 2 *Coos* locations (TR, AC); contra the spring report, the species had bred previously in *Coos*. This year's numbers represent an increase in breeders. Other indicators of the increasing Regional population were reports from *Spokane, WA*, June 3 (JA) and *Clark, WA*, July 16 (TA). There were 4 reports of Green Heron from e. Oregon, where the species is rare. There seems to be a gradual, but steady, increase in westside numbers of Black-crowned Night-Herons, where they are not known to breed. Fourteen included a count of 11 immatures at Aloha, *Washington, OR*, June 16–18 (M. Turbush, *fide* HN). The **White-faced Ibis** at Monroe, *Snohomish, WA*, June 7–9 (†SM, DD) furnished the first summer report from w. Washington.

A pair of Trumpeter Swans at Baskett Slough N.W.R., *Polk, OR*, July 16 onward (RG, BTi) was unexpected. A possible nesting pair in e. *Crook, OR*, June 13 (C. Gates) was also intriguing, as the only known Oregon breeders are the introduced population at Malheur. The Tundra Swan at Stanwood, *Snohomish, WA*, June 4 was out of season (TA). The intermediate morph Snow Goose remained at Everett, *WA*, throughout the summer (SM). Brant were noted in unusual numbers into June. There were five reports of breeding Green-winged Teal, scarce on the westside. Very large westside counts of Blue-winged Teal in early June included 46 at Stanwood, *Snohomish, WA*, June 4 (TA); and 52 at Ankeny N.W.R., *Marion, OR*, June 17 (JL). Very rare breeders in w. Oregon, N. Shoveler broods were noted at 4 locations. Redhead are uncommon on the westside at any season, but a pair at Cannon Beach, *Clatsop, OR*, June 15 (JG) and one at Ridgefield N.W.R., *Clark, WA*, June 9 (TA) represented very surprising summer records. Two broods of Ring-necked Duck on the N. Spit of Coos Bay July 24 & 26 (TR) provided a rare coastal breeding record. Several Greater Scaup summered at Malheur (RH, HN). Coastal Oregon held several unusual summering divers: Black Scoters at New R. June 5 (TR)

and at Heceta Head, *Lane*, June 22 (RRb); an Oldsquaw at S.J.C.R. July 22 (MP); and a Com. Goldeneye on Yaquina Bay July 19–31 (KM, BTi). Equally unusual were several summering Red-breasted Mergansers in the interior: one at Umatilla N.W.R., *Benton*, WA, June 23 (BW) and at Cultus L., *Deschutes*, OR, July 2 (FI).

A White-tailed Kite nest along the lower L. Nestucca R., *Tillamook*, OR, June 18 (F. Schrock) was one of few documented along the outer coast. In Washington, kites were found at 3 locations: at Boistfort, *Lewis*, June 5 (BTw); at Glacial Heritage Park, *Thurston*, June 20 (SM), and two at LeBam, *Pacific*, July 25 (*vide* RR). Red-shouldered Hawks were at 2 *Lane*, OR, locations where birds have summered for the past 2 years. They are not yet known to breed in the s. Willamette valley. The Rough-legged Hawk near Millican, *Deschutes*, OR, in late June and again July 27 (S. Nelson) was unusual for summering. Golden Eagles w. of Veneta, *Lane*, OR, June 24 (F. Chancey) and at Tillamook July 27 (JG) were noteworthy. Two Merlins on the s. Oregon coast, in *Curry* June 24 (TJW) and Coos Bay July 19 (DL), were both unseasonal. On the eastside, a Merlin apparently on territory at Potamus Pt., *Morrow*, July 10–11 (M&MLD) was remarkable.

PLOVERS THROUGH ALCIDS

A Pacific Golden-Plover at the New R., OR, June 12 (DL) was late; the first southbound migrant was at S.J.C.R. July 12 (MP). A Black-bellied Plover on upper Crab Cr., *Grant*, WA, July 23 (TA) provided an early interior date. The Oregon coastal survey of Snowy Plovers took a dive this year, 63 adults were found (ODFW, M. Stern), 20 fewer than the 2 previous summers. In Washington, four were at Leadbetter Pt., *Pacific*, July 5 (BL). There were immense counts of Semipalmated Plover in mid-July: 1530 at O.S. July 18 (SM) and 1500 at Midway Beach, *Grays Harbor*, WA, July 21 (RR). An Am. Avocet at Fernhill Wetlands, OR, June 1 (HN, PaSu) was the last of the spring overshoots. Virtually all Lesser Yellowleg reports were from the interior: nine in e. Oregon, 21 in e. Washington, and one in w. Washington. Single Solitary Sandpipers were in e. (SM) and w. Washington (TA). A Bar-tailed Godwit at Tokeland, *Pacific*, July 11 onward (†PL) furnished Washington's earliest summer record. The Semipalmated Sandpiper tally was average to below: 39 in w. Washington, one in e. Oregon, and 10 in e. Washington. Fourteen Pectoral Sandpiper reports was very high. Two unusually large

groups accounted for most: five at Bottle Beach, *Grays Harbor*, WA, July 21 (RR), and six at Yaquina Bay, OR, July 28 (S&K Sparkman). Stilt Sandpipers at O.S. June 11 (TA) and at New R., OR, June 30 (DL) were rare on the outer coast and unprecedented for June. One at Wilson Cr., *Grant*, WA, July 21 (MC) represented a more typical time and place. Wilson's Phalarope breeding was confirmed at Ankeny N.W.R. in July (SD) and they may have bred at Baskett Slough N.W.R. as well (RG, BTi). Red-necked Phalarope numbers were low.

Two Pomarine Jaegers were found in Puget Sound, very unusual for summer: one at Edmonds June 11 (DD) and one at Cultus Bay July 5 (SM). Three South Polar Skua off the Olympic Pen. June 26–July 3 (BL, BTw, BB) were early. The westside reports of six Franklin's Gulls included three in June (TA, DL). As heralded by the spring numbers, Heermann's Gulls appeared early in Puget Sound: 50 were at Edmonds by June 27 (DD) and 500 were at Cultus Bay July 5 (SM). Coastal numbers were high; 686 were at Westport July 11 (TRW). Summer Glaucous-winged Gull reports from the interior indicate their changing status: one at Wallula, *Walla Walla*, WA, June 7 (D. Rockwell) and one at Memaloose S.P., *Wasco*, OR, June 26 (JS).

There were 10,000 pairs of Caspian Terns nesting at Rice I. in the lower Columbia R. (HN). We believe this constitutes the largest Caspian Tern colony in the world. Over 80 Elegant Terns appeared in Oregon, primarily in *Curry* on the s. coast, and they did not reach Washington. The earliest reports were from June 22, when singles were at Yaquina Bay (RRb, *vide* TM) and Florence, *Lane* (DP). Numbers in *Curry* included 40 at the Rogue R. mouth by the end of July (CD), and 35 at Gold Beach July 9 (DM). To the north two reached *Clatsop* July 12 (MP). Four Arctic Terns were at their colony in Everett, WA, June 7 (C. Hill). Two reports of **Least Tern** from Oregon were amazing, there are only 3 previous records: one seen at Harris Beach S.P., *Curry*, July 9 (†B. Stewart, *vide* DM) and one on Yaquina Bay July 26 onward (W. Hoffman, m.ob.).

How long can the Oregon population of Com. Murre continue to survive without reproducing? The last year with successful reproduction was 1990! This summer, murre began abandoning nesting colonies in the first week of June, and by mid-June aerial surveys revealed some colonies completely abandoned and others in the process (RL, U.S.F.W.S.). A few colonies persisted, such as the one at Yaquina Head, *Lincoln*,

and some murre chicks were produced, but they were scarce. Of 1400 murre counted off Westport, WA, July 25, only three were chicks (TRW). On the positive side, there has been very little mortality of adult birds, unlike the previous 2 years (RL). A **Xantus' Murrelet** was found dead on the N. Spit of Coos Bay June 26 (DL); there are less than 15 records for Oregon. A goodly sprinkling of Ancient Murrelet records included one at Heceta Head, OR, June 22 (RRb); two at Yachats, *Lincoln*, OR, June 28 (KM); two off Destruction I., *Jefferson*, WA, June 30 (BTw, BB); and one off Grays Harbor, WA, July 4 (BTw). We continue to bemoan the dearth of Cassin's Auklets: only two were found on 2 trips off Westport in July (TRW). Nine were reported from shore. Tufted Puffin numbers are also poor, but four seen off Westport July 25 (TRW) were more than were seen in all of 1997.

DOVES TO MIMIDS

A Band-tailed Pigeon at Frenchglen, *Harney*, June 28 was rare for s.e. Oregon (SD). At least two Yellow-billed Cuckoos were in *Harney*: one or more at Malheur June 1–July 20 (m.ob.) and one at Fields June 26 (M). A juv. Barred Owl found dead July 9 in *Clatsop*, OR, may provide the first conclusive evidence of breeding in that county (MP).

An Anna's Hummingbird was in Spokane July 20 (W. Hall). Broad-tailed Hummingbirds were found at 2 *Malheur* locations during BBA work: one male and two females at Twelve Mile Cr. June 19 and three males in Fish Cr. Canyon on Mahogany Mt July 2 (M&MLD). One-two Acorn Woodpeckers were reported from the Lyle area, *Klickitat*, June 6 (BL) and July 18 (SM), their only known location in Washington. Sapsuckers in the wrong place included a Red-naped at *Joyce*, *Clallam*, WA, July 4 (BN), and Red-breasteds near Morgan Butte, *Lake*, OR, June 1 (JS), at Lakeview, *Lake*, OR, June 14–28 (FI), and at Prairie Farm Spring, *Jefferson*, OR, June 21 (PaSu). A Red-naped × Red-breasted Sapsucker was also at Lakeview June 14 (FI).

Least Flycatcher reports totaled 9, the 3rd highest summer total in this decade. Most were in the interior. The only westside record was a male at Weir Prairie, WA, June 8–13 (BTw) for a first *Thurston* record. Three territorial Dusky Flycatchers were on Mt. Bolivar, OR, July 13, their only known breeding location in *Coos* (S. Brown). A Black Phoebe feeding an immature at Albany, *Linn*, OR, July 10–19 (MP, RRb) furnished likely the most northerly nesting to

date The **Eastern Phoebe** at Malheur May 31–June 13 (PaSu, m.ob.) provided Oregon's 3rd record. A Say's Phoebe on the coast at the N. Spit of Coos Bay June 2 (DL) was well w. of normal breeding range. A **Tropical Kingbird** at Cape Blanco, Curry, OR, July 26–Aug. 8 (ph., †TJW) was heard calling and was well described. This may be the only July record for the Pacific coast (Mlodinow 1998, FN 52: 6–11); the only August record was *T. m. obscurus*. Up to 20 W Kingbirds still on the outer coast at the Elk R mouth, Curry, OR, June 1 (TJW) were quite surprising, although spring numbers were elevated. To the north, one at Everett June 3 (T. Peterson) and two at Steigerwald Lake N.W.R., Clark, WA, June 4 (W. Cady) were also remnants of the spring incursion.

Bank Swallows are generally regarded as an interior species in the Region, but they do nest on the westside, including s. coastal Oregon, where a large colony was found at Nesika Beach, Curry (J. Rogers, N. Wander, *fide* CD), 28 mi n. of the known Chetco R. colony. A census of Purple Martins in Oregon found a total of 781 pairs, all w. of the Cascades (*fide* E. Horvath). Most were in the Portland area (299 pairs). In Washington, they are restricted to the Puget Trough, so coastal records at 3 locations were of note.

A Clark's Nutcracker on the outer coast at Westport July 26 (MC) was at an odd spot for a montane species. The Canyon Wren in the Kalmiopsis Wilderness, OR, July 7 (M. Stevens) furnished the 3rd Coos record. A pair of Blue-gray Gnatcatchers on Mt. Pisgah, Lane, through the summer (BC) were at the n. limit of their breeding range, and a pair 10 mi n.e. of McDermitt, Malheur, OR, June 21 (RH) were at the e. limit. The Gray Catbird at Willow Cr., near Brogan, OR, June 24 (PaSu) provided the first Malheur record since 1910. Seven N. Mockingbirds were found, four in the interior.

VIREOS THROUGH FINCHES

A **Bell's Vireo** at Fields June 6 (M, SD, PaSu) represented the 2nd Oregon record. Plumbeous Vireos were reported from Fields June 1 (M) and Klamath Marsh N W.R., Klamath, June 19 (JG). There were 4 reports of Red-eyed Vireo from s.e. Oregon two from Harney and two from Klamath. On the westside, one–two at Luckiamute Landing, OR, June 13–29 (BTi, RG) furnished a Polk first.

Atlas work in Malheur found several notable range extensions. Nashville Warblers were not known to breed in s.e. Oregon, but 2 or more pairs were in upper Two Mile

Cr. July 4 (M&MLD), and one was in Brogan Canyon June 28 (AC). Even more exciting was the discovery of **Virginia's Warblers**, changing their status in Oregon from casual visitant to local breeder. All were located in isolated dense curlleaf mountain mahogany groves: two males and one female were nine mi n.e. of McDermitt June 18 (RH, CM, SD), with one male through June 27; two or more pairs near Twin Buttes June 19–20 (M&MLD); and one male in upper Two Mile Cr. July 4 (M&MLD).

It was the best spring/summer ever for vagrant warblers, with another 20 individuals added to the spring tally of 20. Virtually all were found in s.e. Oregon. Two Tennessee Warblers included one at Malheur June 6 (AC, HN, PaSu) and one at Fields June 7 (HN). Three Chestnut-sided Warblers included a female at Malheur June 13–23 (DE, m.ob.), one at the Arid Lands Ecology Site, Benton, WA, June 27 (*fide* N&BL), and one male at Rockport, Skagit, WA, June 12 (†SJ). A Magnolia Warbler was banded at Malheur June 2–3 (DE, L. Messick, m.ob.) and a Blackburnian Warbler was photographed at Fields June 16–17 (M, M&MLD). The Palm Warbler at Malheur June 1 (DE, CH, m.ob.) was probably the latest ever for the Region. Seven Black-and-white Warblers were in Harney June 1–7 (m.ob.); a male at Klamath R. Canyon, OR, June 14 (KS); a female at Basque, OR, June 20 (RH) for the first Malheur record; and a male at Rockport, Skagit, WA, June 22 (†SJ). A female Am. Redstart was at Basque June 23 (RH) and one came aboard a ship 30 mi w. of Queets, Jefferson, WA, June 30 (BTw, BB). At least five Am. Redstarts were at upper Skagit R. valley locations June 8–22 (W. Weber, PtSu, SJ); breeding was only recently documented there. Several N. Waterthrushes were singing in Mule Prairie, Lane (*fide* TM). Yellow-breasted Chats were found at 3 w. Washington sites.

Ten more Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were added to the spring total of eight, all but two in Oregon. The 2 Washington records were a male in Seattle May 31 (†G. Eddy) and one in Northrup Canyon, Grant, June 7–11 (D. Mann, JA). Following last summer's first breeding record of **Blue Grosbeak**, a female was near Brogan, Malheur, OR, June 28 (RH), upstream from last year's breeding. An Indigo Bunting, an annual Oregon vagrant, was near the Applegate R. in Josephine, OR, July 13 (†DV). The California Towhee at Mt. Pisgah July 15 furnished the most n. Oregon record (†D. Wendt, D. Rosenthal) and the first Lane record. Clay-colored

Sparrows were more widely distributed than ever. A **Lark Bunting** on the 13th Division Prairie, Ft. Lewis, Pierce, July 18–19 (†RR) furnished about the 10th Washington record. The only Black-throated Sparrow reports were of a handful in Malheur, found during BBA work (M&MLD). The male Grasshopper Sparrow at Weir Prairie, Thurston, June 27–July 9 (ED, m.ob.) provided the first w. Washington record.

The discovery of a **Tricolored Blackbird** colony of at least 30 birds, near Soap Lake, Grant, July 5 onward (D. Beaudette, m.ob.) extends the species known breeding range n. by about 120 mi. This is the first Washington record. Yellow-headed Blackbirds are local breeders on the westside; this summer 3+ pairs nested at Baskett Slough N.W.R., Polk, OR (BTi, RG), and a juvenile was at Ankeny N.W.R., Marion, OR, July 23 (JL). Red Crossbills seemed numerous on the outer coast, in the Oregon Coast range (TM), and on Whidbey I., WA (SM). The only White-winged Crossbill report was from Freezeout Ridge, Okanogan, WA, June 27 (SM). Pine Siskins were common on Steens Mt., Harney, OR, June 22–23 (RH) and on Whidbey I. in July (SM).

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