

NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH SUMMER RANGE IN OREGON

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Northern Waterthrushes (*Seiurus noveboracensis*) have summered and presumably bred in the central Cascade Range of Oregon since 1977. During the 10 years since the first location was discovered, the species has been found in several nearby areas (Figure 1). This note discusses the current status of this Cascade population.

The Northern Waterthrush is steadily expanding its range and increasing its numbers in southern British Columbia (Wayne Weber pers. comm.), and it breeds in north-eastern Washington (Mattocks, P. W., Hunn, E. S., and Wahl, T. R. 1976. A checklist of the birds of Washington State, with recent changes annotated. *W. Birds* 7:1-24). Weber found at least seven singing birds along the Okanagan River and tributaries near Tonasket in north-central Washington in 1987. The Northern Water-

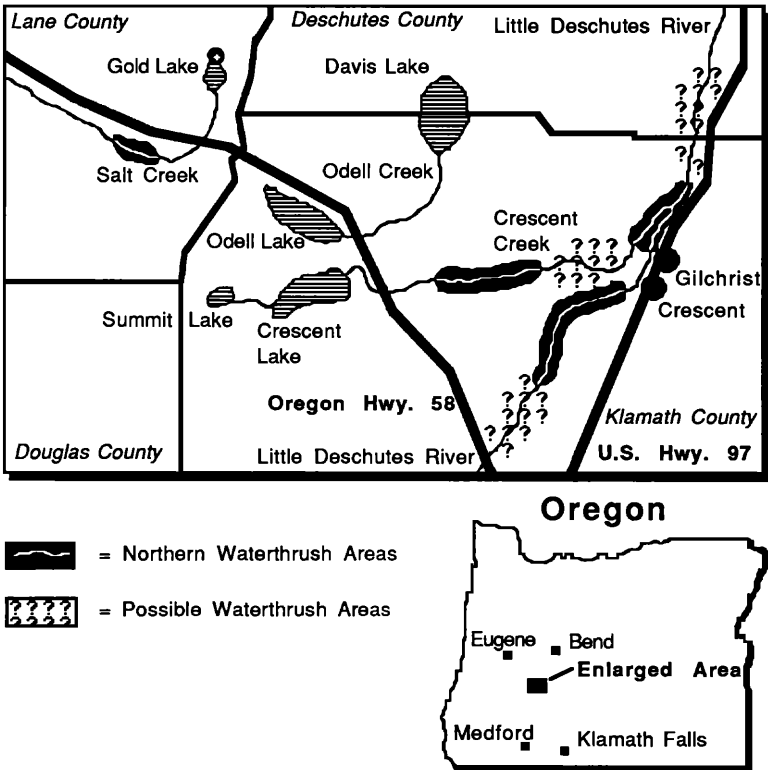


Figure 1. Northern Waterthrush summer range in Oregon.

NOTES

thrush occurs in Idaho at least as far south as the St. Joe River southeast of Coeur d'Alene (David Fix pers. comm.).

On 4 June 1977, Mark Egger, Sayre Greenfield, and I found two Northern Waterthrushes at Crescent Creek Campground, 12 miles east of the Cascade crest in the Deschutes National Forest, Klamath County, Oregon (Egger, M. 1978. A probable nesting record of the Northern Waterthrush in Oregon. *W. Birds* 9:83-84; Greenfield, S. 1977. Northern Waterthrush. *Ore. Birds* 3:83). Later that month Larry McQueen found another bird 12 miles east along the Little Deschutes River north of the town of Gilchrist, Klamath Co. (Rogers, T. B. 1977. The nesting season. Northern Rocky Mountain-Intermountain Region. *Am. Birds* 31:1165). Crescent Creek is a tributary of the Little Deschutes River.

Many observers have subsequently found waterthrushes with some regularity at several locations along Crescent Creek and the Little Deschutes River near the towns of Gilchrist and Crescent (Harry Nehls et. al. pers. comm.).

Waterthrushes have been found at these sites almost every summer since 1977. The area was not often visited by observers prior to discovery of the waterthrushes, so the birds may have been present unobserved for many years.

In July 1983, McQueen found two waterthrushes along Salt Creek, 4 miles west of the Cascade crest and about 15 air miles northwest of the Crescent Creek site (Evanich, J., and Fix, D. 1983. Field notes: summer 1983. *Ore. Birds* 9:97). Singing birds have been found there every year since 1983.

In 1986 a single waterthrush appeared at Gold Lake, about 3 miles northeast of the Salt Creek site. No birds were reported there in 1987.

The birds seem to prefer dense riparian willow (*Salix* sp.) thickets. They are usually found in willow clumps 5 to 8 feet high, with some Sitka Alder (*Alnus sinuata*), intermixed with small grassy patches and pools of water left in old stream meanders. The few efforts to locate a nest have been unsuccessful, in part because this dense, low vegetation is very difficult to penetrate.

The dominant vegetation away from the immediate riparian zone is Lodgepole Pine (*Pinus contorta*) and Ponderosa Pine (*P. ponderosa*) at the east-slope sites, Lodgepole Pine and Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) along Salt Creek. The Salt Creek site also contains some Engelmann Spruce (*Picea engelmannii*).

The willow thickets used by the waterthrushes are common to most of the upper reaches of the Deschutes and other eastern Oregon rivers, and some of the unexamined habitat along Crescent Creek and the Little Deschutes River may also contain waterthrushes.

A single bird was found 7 June 1987 at Cold Springs Campground, Deschutes Co. (Anderson, D. 1988. Eastern Oregon field notes, summer 1987. *Ore. Birds* 14:87). Cold Springs is about 55 miles north of Gilchrist and is an area of open pine and aspen forest with very little streamside vegetation. This bird was probably a vagrant, but nearby areas in Deschutes County contain vegetation similar to that used by the birds at Little Deschutes and Crescent creeks.

Whether the species will expand in Oregon remains to be seen. but the central Cascade population has at least remained stable and may have expanded during the ten years birders have been aware of it.

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