

The Kingfisher

Volume 15, Issue 1

Summer/Fall 2020

NOTES FROM DAWN



Looking out my window, I have a half-dozen brightly colored American Goldfinches at my feeder. Their bright colors are a welcome sight on this grey day! Spring migration is such a fun and musical time of year, in spite of our current circumstances. It reminds us that life does go on, this pandemic will eventually end, and we will be able to rejoin our friends and families. In the meantime, our hearts go out to all of those who are impacted—from the people who continue to work to ensure that we have healthcare, food, and other necessities, to those who are suffering with the virus or have family members with it.

Our Audubon volunteers are continuing to work on key conservation efforts. I'm sure you've noticed our emphasis on coastal habitats recently, particularly Rocky Habitats and estuaries. We received funding to help us with a special project that centers around improving protections for specific coastal habitats in Lincoln and Tillamook counties. Our two counties make up nearly one third of the Oregon coastline, with spectacular headlands and thriving estuaries, from Cape Falcon south to Cape Perpetua.

When the Rocky Shore portion of Oregon's Territorial Sea Plan was last adopted in 1994, several sites in Lincoln and Tillamook were designated for protection at various levels. The State is now looking to update these designations, and we want to be sure that existing protections are continued while looking at the potential for additional protections for these sites and others that

may have been overlooked. We're excited about this unique opportunity! Watch our webpage and Facebook pages for updates on our progress. And let us know if you want to become involved!

Lastly, we'd love to hear from you - what do you love about the work we are doing? Is there anything you'd like to see us add in the way of projects, classes, or just information? Email me (dawnv@birdlover.com) and let me know! Stay safe and healthy.

Red-breasted Sapsucker

Recently the National Audubon Society released an online tool, "Birds and Climate Visualizer" to identify birds at risk from climate change across the USA. For Lincoln and Tillamook Counties, one of the species that is most immediately at risk is the Red-breasted Sapsucker.

According to Camden Bruner, Wildlife Biologist of the Siuslaw National Forest, Hebo Ranger District, the Red-breasted Sapsucker is a common year round resident on our coast and can be found locally although not easily, in almost any forested habitat from near sea level to the highest peaks in the coast range. They utilize coniferous forests as well as hardwood and riparian trees including Douglas Fir, Western Hemlock, Sitka Spruce, Red Alder and Big Leaf Maple. Sapsuckers are also known to use fruit trees planted by humans. They nest in cavities in snags or dead portions of living trees. Both parents make their nest by drilling holes high in a tree to house their eggs. Both sexes will incubate the eggs and feed their young.

Red-breasted Sapsuckers are known for eating tree sap (how they get their name). They also eat a variety of insects, tree cambium, fruits, and seeds. They primarily forage on the trunks and large limbs of live trees though they also forage on snags extensively. Sapsuckers often create small wells in live trees for sap to coagulate where they can easily consume it. Sometimes multiple generations of Sapsuckers will use the same wells on an old tree. Forest Service employees record



photo by Ernie Rose

trees with extensive sapsucker use as "Wildlife Trees" which are then protected.

The Siuslaw National Forest conducts avian point counts and deploys acoustic recorders to monitor local bird populations. These surveys are designed to census a variety of bird species. Bird species known to utilize specific habitats or forest features can be used as indicators of current conditions and ecosystem function. With these indicator species, Forest Service land managers use avian survey results to help assess the success of different restoration treatments. The goal is to manage for a healthy, diverse, and functioning forest ecosystem that will be resilient to threats like climate change.

The majority of the Siuslaw National Forest is suitable habitat for Red-breasted Sapsucker. Tips for finding sapsuckers (as well as other woodpeckers), include listening for 'drumming' when sapsuckers and woodpeckers are pecking on trees.

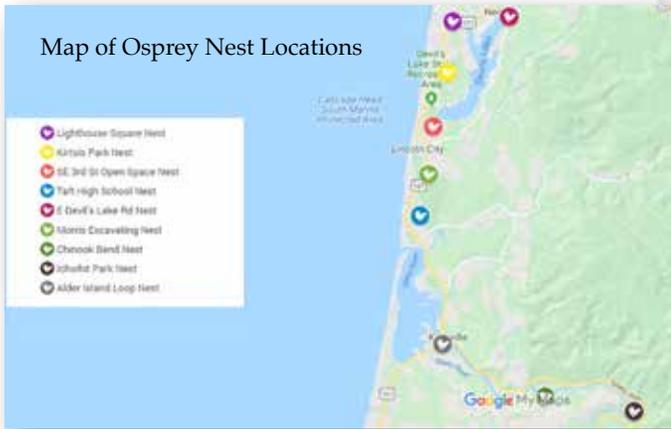
You can help protect these birds by urging local, state and federal governments to support legislation that protects bird habitat and combats climate change. The Washington Legislature passed the strongest clean energy bill in the Pacific Flyway last year which was promoted by statewide grassroots efforts by Audubon Washington and partners. Your action in Oregon can produce results that help birds. Go to <https://www.audubon.org/climate/survivalbydegrees> to find more about how birds are affected by climate change.

—Victoria McOmie,
ASLC Conservation Action Committee

Osprey on the Central Oregon Coast

The Osprey is Oregon's state raptor and Lincoln City alone has at least six Osprey pairs nesting this year (*see map inset*)! One of the nests is in the broken top of a huge tree in Nesika Park, Lincoln City's newest park. Because their diet is fish, they always nest near water sources such as the ocean, lakes, and rivers. Osprey winter in the south and come north to breed.

"Some Ospreys that breed in Oregon begin returning from the wintering grounds in late Feb and early Mar, but the large influx generally starts near the first day of spring (20 Mar) and continues over the next several weeks. Older experienced breeders generally arrive first, younger breeders a few weeks later (Poole 1985). Established pairs nearly always return to their old nest sites." (Source: *Birds of Oregon, Marshall, Hunter, and Contreras, c 2003*)



Our Audubon Society of Lincoln City education team takes advantage of the many nearby nests with "Our Neighbor the Osprey" classes for school children in Lincoln City (Oceanlake and Taft Elementary schools) each year.

Fun Facts about Osprey

- Osprey plumage feels dense and oily giving them an advantage when plunging in water.
- Like other raptors, they have a nictitating membrane to protect their eyes when diving in the water.
- Like water birds, they have membranes that help close off their nostrils.
- Their legs are bare of feathers and the bottoms of their feet are covered with short rough spines (like coarse sandpaper) for hanging onto fish.
- Their talons are long, curved, and needle sharp.
- They have a reversible outer toe that swings back and forth to help hold fish.

Osprey feed exclusively on fish, usually twice a day. When sharing food with a female, the male will often bring her a fish with the head missing.

-- Caren Willoughby, Education Coordinator

Crowley Creek Nest Box Cleanup

Due to the social distancing required by the COVID-19 virus, ASLC's education coordinator Caren Willoughby and her husband, Tom, took on the task of cleaning the six Crowley Creek swallow boxes by themselves. ASLC has maintained nest boxes on the property since 2009. The old boxes were replaced last year by students from Lincoln City Career Tech High School (*see article in The Kingfisher, Volume 14 Issue 1*).



Armed with gloves, ladders, pliers, and whisk brooms, Tom and Caren cleaned all six boxes. Caren reports that there were old nests in boxes 1, 2, 4 and 5. Box 3 had remnants of paper wasp nest as reported by the students last year. She adds, "There were Tree Swallows flying over our heads, so I would say that we were there just in the nick of time!"

photo by Caren Willoughby

Please help support our birding, education, and conservation programs!

YES! I'd like to support ASLC by becoming a member:

- \$20 Individual
- \$30 Family
- \$50 Wood Duck
- \$100 Osprey
- \$200 Western Meadowlark
- \$300 Red-tailed Hawk
- \$500 Bald Eagle
- In support of your programs, I submit a donation of \$_____

Please mail your check payable to:

Audubon Society of Lincoln City
(ASLC)
PO Box 38
Lincoln City OR 97367

Or Join, Renew, or Donate online at:
lincolncityaudubon.org/membership.html

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www.lincolncityaudubon.org
PO Box 38
Lincoln City OR 97367
541-992-9720
info@lincolncityaudubon.org
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Looking Out for Cape Lookout

by Nora Sherwood



photos by Steve Griffiths

Cape Lookout is a jewel of a state park named for the long, thin promontory of land that juts out a mile-and-a-half into the Pacific Ocean. With sheer cliffs plummeting 400 feet on either side, it is the remnant of an ancient lava flow that stretched all the way from eastern Oregon into the sea.

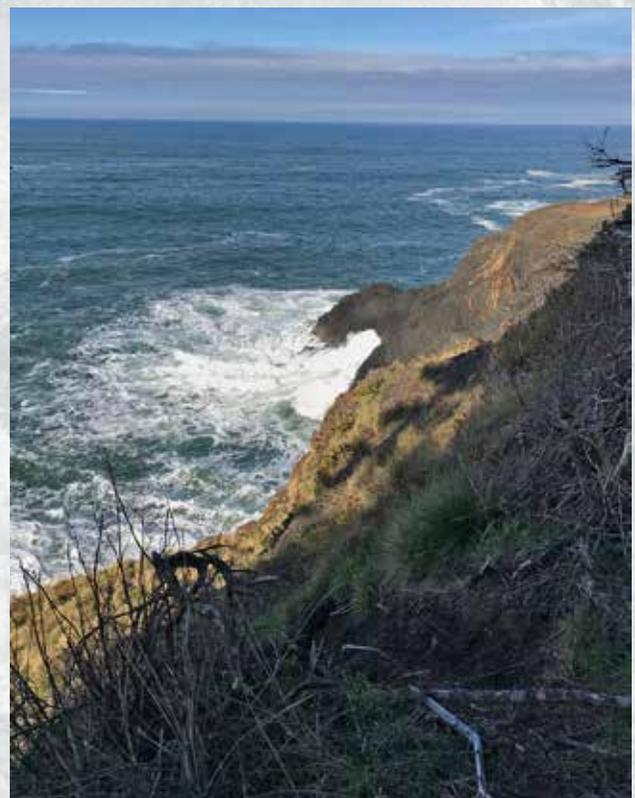
Located 10 miles south of Tillamook and about 35 miles north of Lincoln City, it is best known for its beautiful day hike out to the very western tip of the cliff. Standing there makes you feel like you are at the end of the world!

If you are lucky when you're out on the point, you may see a gray whale quite close in. This is one of the best places to see them during migration, as they detour around the peninsula heading north for the summer and south for the winter. In addition to the stunning views and bracing sea air, the promontory's thick Sitka and hemlock forest is one of the few places to experience old growth trees right on the coast.

The base of the promontory is heavily populated by seabird colonies such as Common Murres, Black Oystercatchers, Brandt's Cormorants, Pigeon Guillemots and the ever-present Western Gulls. The inaccessibility of the rocky sides of the promontory mean fairly safe food sources such as mussels, mollusks, sea stars, crustaceans and fish are close at hand for birds as well as seals and sea lions. The interplay between undisturbed offshore and rocky shore habitats benefits the entire ecosystem from algae and kelp to anemones to crabs to scoters and Bald Eagles and all the way up to those gray whales.

Community-wide efforts are needed to take action to fully conserve environments like Cape Lookout and Cape Foulweather, and even improve their available protections. The Audubon Society of Lincoln City is involved in identifying locations that offer high impact opportunities

to preserve pristine and critical rocky habitats, and are considering whether Cape Lookout and Cape Foulweather should be on that list. What do you think? Send your thoughts to us at coastalhabitat@lincolncityaudubon.org.



Foulweather: Not a Foul View

by Halle Renn



Just south of Depoe Bay, Cape Foulweather rises 500 feet above the ocean, creating fantastic views of the Central Oregon coast. It is given the moniker “where Oregon began” as it is the first land formation seen by Captain Cook on that fateful voyage in 1778. While it was named for the terrible weather conditions Cook encountered here, this basalt headland is a true gem of Oregon’s natural beauty. Standing at the viewpoint on a calm and sunny summer day, you are more than likely to have unbeatable views of gray whales cavorting and feeding in the abundant kelp beds below.

Looking south from the cape viewpoint you are treated to a stunning view of the famous Devil’s Punchbowl and the craggy beaches of Otter Rock. The Punchbowl is a spectacular and imposing cave that is inundated with water during high tide. During these tide events, the bowl churns and roils the ocean water angrily, creating fascinating and awe-inspiring viewing. Gulls and cormorants are commonly seen as they move to and from Gull Rock in the distance.

On the other side lies a one-way road that winds its way up the north side of the cape. The Otter Crest Loop road begins near Rocky Creek and Rodea Point and gives one spectacular view after another. Black Oystercatchers, Surfbirds, and Black Turnstones can be seen at the rocky viewpoints and as you drive higher towards the top of the cape you may be lucky enough to view a Bald Eagle or two soaring between the cliffs. The road up offers a nice respite from the traffic of Highway 101. Whether biking or driving, take in the ancient and dramatic forest scenery and enjoy those cliff-top views.



photos by Steve Griffiths;

artwork by Nora Sherwood



AUDUBON SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CITY

PO Box 38, Lincoln City OR 97367 ~ 541-992-9720 ~ www.lincolncityaudubon.org

SUMMER AND FALL EVENTS CALENDAR

SPECIAL NOTICE: Due to the pandemic, all of the following events are subject to cancellation or postponement. Please follow us on Facebook (@audubonlincolncity) or check our website (lincolncityaudubon.org) for timely announcements.

About Our Field Trips: All ASLC field trips are free and open to the public, no pre-registration is required. Beginners are welcome, binoculars are provided. Our field trips are held rain or shine, so dress appropriately for coastal weather.

JULY

Saturday, July 11, 9-11am - Nesika Park in Lincoln City. Join us for a walk through the newest Lincoln City Park! We will enjoy the new trails while we look for nesting songbirds and raptors. We will meet at the dead end at Keel Street, before SE 3rd Street on west side of the park. Sponsored by Lincoln City Parks and Recreation and Explore Lincoln City.

AUGUST

Friday, August 7, 9-11am - Alder Island Loop Trail at Siletz National Wildlife Refuge. This easy one-mile trail loops through riparian and wetland habitat along the Siletz River. Will look for a variety of warblers, raptors, and Great Blue Herons. Meet in the parking lot on the east side of Hwy 101 at the south end of the Siletz River Bridge. Sponsored by Lincoln City Parks and Recreation and Explore Lincoln City.

Saturday, August 8, 9-11am - Ona Beach/Beavercreek State Natural Area. This walk includes both marsh and upland habitat. At this time of year we may see wintering ducks before they leave for the north, songbirds including warblers and swallows, resident wading birds, sparrows, hawks, and woodpeckers. Meet in the Ona Beach parking lot.

SEPTEMBER

Friday, September 11, 9-11am - The Villages Open Space and Roads End State Park. This easy stroll takes us through meadows, woods, and marshes ultimately arriving at the ocean beach. We should see fall-arriving song and shorebirds, raptors, and more. Meet at the culdesac at the north end of NE Devil's Lake Blvd, off Hwy 101 just north of Lincoln City. Sponsored by Lincoln City Parks and Recreation and Explore Lincoln City.

Saturday, September 12, 10am-Noon - Sitka Sedge State Natural Area. Please note time change. The trail winds through tidal marsh, mudflats, dense forest, and sand dunes to the ocean. Will look for Marsh Wrens, raptors, warblers, and other migratory birds. The park is located 1 mile north of Tierra del Mar (north of Pacific City) on the left side of Sandlake Rd. Meet in the parking area.

OCTOBER

Friday, October 9, 9-11am - Salishan Nature Trail (Siletz Bay). Join us for a walk along Siletz Bay and on to the ocean beaches on the Salishan Nature Trail where we will enjoy newly arrived wintering waterfowl. Bald Eagles often put on a show and Great Blue Herons and Great Egrets are always present. Meet in the west marketplace parking area at Salishan Resort. Sponsored by Lincoln City Parks and Recreation and Explore Lincoln City.

Saturday, October 10, 9-11am - Boiler Bay State Scenic Viewpoint to Devil's Punchbowl State Natural Area. Excellent offshore seabird watching. Possible Marbled Murrelets and Rhinoceros Auklets. At Depoe Bay we may find Black Turnstones and Surfbirds. And Devil's Punchbowl may have Harlequin Ducks and Black Oystercatchers. Meet in the parking lot at Boiler Bay wayside.

NOVEMBER

Saturday, November 14, 9-11am - Salmon River in the Cascade Head Scenic Area. This two-hour walk along the Salmon River starts at Knight Park and wanders through woodlands, marsh, and along the river. We will look for grebes, gulls, cormorants, and raptors. Meet in the Knight Park parking lot. Sponsored by Lincoln City Parks and Recreation and Explore Lincoln City.

DECEMBER

Friday, December 5, 9-11am - Regatta Park and Devil's Lake. Join us for a walk through the Regatta Park old growth looking for wintering songbirds. After the walk, we'll check the lake for waterfowl and Bald Eagles. Location: Meet in the Regatta Park parking lot. Sponsored by Lincoln City Parks and Recreation and Explore Lincoln City.

Sunday, December 20, all day. Join a team to count birds for our 8th annual Christmas Bird Count. Or, if you live in the Lincoln City area, you can participate by counting birds in your backyard. Details will be posted on our website and on Facebook later in the year.

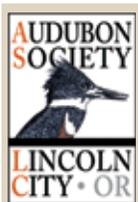
Sonnet for the Wake-Up Crow

Your get-up-and-go at dawn, crow
disturbs my sleep. All's well, you say?
No refuge in dreams. Besides a Hopi-eye
on the sunrise, you keep an eye on me,
leave your pitching branch for a bow-
legged walk like a tar in port for the day.
At my approach, my attempt to reply,
a croak in your dialect, you flee.
By tonight, crow, will your flock,
rising and falling in raucous flight,
a ragged belch of dischronicity,
gather even me, at last, to talk,
tongues converging in the fading light
with one intention, one commodious tree?

—Libby A. Durbin



ILLUSTRATION: "Summer Secrets," illustration by local artist Wendy Thompson, CPSA, MPAS. WendyThompsonArt.com



P.O. Box 38
Lincoln City
Oregon 97367

541-992-9720



Be sure to visit
www.lincolncityaudubon.org
for more news and activities of the
Audubon Society of Lincoln City



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Report from Your Conservation Action Committee

Covid-19 has changed our world since our last conservation report, but our priorities haven't changed. Your Conservation Action Committee is pleased to take this opportunity to update you on what we've accomplished in the last few months.

Forests and Streams: Joe Youren attended Oregon Board of Forestry meetings in Salem to testify and observe the Board in action. He urged the Board to establish stronger stream protection measures in the Coast Range. And he drafted a letter we sent to Lincoln County Commissioners after noting that our County's interests were not well served by its representative on the Forest Trust Lands Advisory Committee. In response, Commissioner Kaety Jacobson asked to meet with us on a quarterly basis to discuss forest issues.

Joe is keeping a close eye on the Siuslaw National Forest, checking to see how forest management practices impact Marbled Murrelet habitat in forests near Cape Lookout, Whalen Island, and Sand Lake. At Sand Lake, the U.S. Forest Service is converting a plantation forest into a natural coastal forest, and Joe reports the results are impressive.

Climate Change: In December, we hosted a presentation on climate change by Martin Desmond of Oregon 350. He shared the results of a climate change questionnaire his group administered and urged that Lincoln County strive to reduce its carbon emissions. Many thanks to Jeanne Sprague for organizing and publicizing this event.

Plastics: In the fall we hope to offer for sale shopping bags made of recycled plastic. Nora Sherwood has created two beautiful illustrations for the bags. One will feature a Black Oystercatcher and the other an Osprey.

Oregon's Marine Reserves: Are you "Heartwired to Love the Ocean?" Steve Griffiths and Dawn Villaescusa attended an excellent communications workshop in Newport that addressed this question. We learned that we should keep



photo by Steve Griffiths

an issue message clear and simple and that we should elicit an emotional response by connecting the issue with how people experience the Oregon coast. The workshop was sponsored by the Marine Reserves' Community Advisory Committee, which is gearing up for a campaign to renew Oregon's Marine Reserves in 2023. Steve sits in on the Committee's monthly conference calls.

Rocky Habitats: See related articles on Rocky Habitat in this issue of *The Kingfisher*. Speaking of which, thank you to the newest member of our Conservation Action Committee, Tory McOmie, for writing this issue's feature article. You, too, can join us!

– Steve Griffiths

ASLC Conservation Action Committee

OUR MISSION: ENCOURAGING RESIDENTS AND VISITORS TO PROTECT AND ENJOY THE BIRDS, WILDLIFE AND HABITATS FOUND ALONG THE CENTRAL OREGON COAST