UPCOMING OUTINGS AND EVENTS

February 11, Tuesday, noon, Oregon Climate Emergency Day of Action, Salem
Oregonians from across the state will convene at the State Capitol Building (across the way on Court Street) at noon to support climate action in the upcoming session of the Oregon legislature. For more information and to sign up for carpooling, go to: http://bit.ly/SignUp4DayofAction2020. Sponsored by Renew Oregon.

February 12, Wednesday, 7 p.m., Oregon’s Ancient Forests: Where to Hike, Coos Bay Library
Chandra LeGue, Western Oregon Field Coordinator for Oregon Wild, will discuss her new book, Oregon’s Ancient Forests: A Hiking Guide, which features 91 awe-inspiring hikes that reveal the very soul of Oregon. LeGue (pronounced le gwee) will talk about what makes an ancient forest, what types exist in Oregon, where they are, why so few still survive, and what threats they continue to face. She’ll also highlight hiking opportunities and experiences, covering natural history, human history, flora, and fauna, so you will come away with a better understanding of these complex ecosystems and their extraordinary value. Sponsored by Cape Arago Audubon Society.

February 13, Thursday, 6 p.m., Movie Night: A River’s Last Chance, Port Orford Public Library
Northern California’s once mighty Eel River ran dry for the first time in 2014. Heavily impacted in the past by logging, damming, and drought, the river faced new challenges from California’s up-and-coming wine and weed industries. This documentary by filmmaker Shane Alexander makes a compelling case for river conservation. For more information, contact Pamela at 541-366-2130. Sponsored by Wild Rivers Land Trust and Port Orford Public Library.

February 14 through 17, Great Backyard Bird Count, Your Backyard or Nearby Birdy Spot
Join birders from around the world for this annual citizen science project sponsored by Cornell Lab and National Audubon. For more information, go to www.birdcount.org.

February 28, Friday, 5:30 p.m., Movie Night: A River's Last Chance, Curry Public Library, Gold Beach
See description above. For more information contact Pamela at 541-366-2130. Sponsored by Wild Rivers Land Trust and Curry Public Library.

March 6, Friday, 5:30 p.m., KAS Annual Meeting and 40th Anniversary Celebration, Port Orford
Join fellow KAS members at a special annual meeting that will mark our group’s 40th anniversary! Bring a potluck dish to share and 10 to 15 bird or nature slides (from adventures near or far) — always fun! The gathering will be held at the home of KAS president Ann Vileisis. Please RSVP by sending an email to annvill@earthlink.net (or call 541-332-0261) so that we know how many people to expect. We look forward to seeing you there!

March 21, Saturday, 6:30 p.m. Let’s Go Birding: Owling on the Rogue River Walk
Join trip leader Gary Maschmeyer for this field trip looking for owls on the Rogue River Walk. We might see or hear great horned owls, western screech owls, and barred owls, and the walk through the forest at dusk is always a wonderful experience. Please note that rain or windy conditions will postpone this outing. It’s best to sign up with Gary ahead of time so he can inform you if there are any last-minute changes in plans. For more information, or to get on the Let’s Go Birding email list, contact Gary at 541-412-0806, or email him at gmasch44@gmail.com.

Please sign up for Kalmiopsis Audubon Society email HOOT-OUTs so we can keep you informed about events and opportunities to help with conservation efforts in between issues of the Storm Petrel.
From the President’s Desk

It's hard to believe we've arrived in 2020. Let's hope it's a year and decade of positive changes. We need them for the environment, and you can count on Kalmiopsis Audubon Society (KAS) being part of that. This year is the 40th anniversary of KAS, and I am proud that our little group has not only persisted but also has made a big difference in our corner of Oregon. By educating ourselves, participating, standing up together, fending off ill-conceived proposals and supporting good ones, we've amassed an impressive docket of important conservation successes over the past four decades. I am also proud of the unique type of grassroots conservation work that still we do — as a group of local citizens, mostly volunteer, working to take care of the extraordinary place we live.

We started our 40th anniversary year with a notable honor. KAS was recognized by U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley at his town hall meeting in Port Orford for “doing good work that is important for everyone.” I was joined by members of the KAS board, KAS founder Jim Rogers, and super-volunteer Gary Maschmeyer, in accepting an American flag that's been flown over the U.S. Capitol.

The honor truly belongs to all KAS members who have helped to support our group's efforts, whether through membership, donating money, pitching in at Petrel mailings, attending important hearings, helping with highway cleanups, writing letters and making calls, and more. I am grateful for our network of wonderful friends and supporters throughout Curry County!

Every January, I like to thank individuals who have helped KAS over the past year. First, a huge thanks to KAS board members who keep our organization humming along. Our new officers, Treasurer Sara Lovendahl, Vice President Foncy Prescott, Secretary Max Beeken, and our membership chairperson Linda Tarr, have all put considerable effort into their new jobs. Penny Suess has continued to make our Storm Petrel an excellent publication, Tim Palmer has helped with conservation work, while at-large members Deb Buitron, Gary Nuechterlein, and former officers Joan and Al Geiser have provided continuing help and support. Thanks also to Gary Maschmeyer for leading our “Let’s Go Birding” field trips, helping out with citizen science efforts, and more.

We all appreciate Jim Rogers for writing his beloved mammal and bird columns in the Storm Petrel and for abiding counsel. Thanks to Tim Rodenkirk for helping with Bird Notes and for organizing the Christmas Bird Count (CBC). Thanks also to all members who helped to make this year’s CBC a success, including Terry Wahl, Rowly Willis, Larry Basch, Neil Holcomb, Don Munson, Joy Wolf, Bruce Follansbee, and Mary Wahl, who helped by hosting the countdown event. I especially appreciate Teresa Bird’s excellent efforts to write grant proposals that have helped her to help us design a new logo, upgrade our website, to continue Marbled Murrelet surveys and outreach, to run the KAS kids’ day camp, to represent KAS at the Wild Rivers Forest Collaborative, and much more.

I also want to thank members who have come to help us with Storm Petrel mailings: Vicki Graham (whom we also appreciate for her wonderful poetry!), Dana Gurnee, Paulianne Balch-Rancourt, Rowly and Chris Willis, Carren Copeland and John Leuthe, Joy Wolf, Kristi Disbrow, Laurie Prouty, Cherry Beeken, and Leilani O’Neil, and a special thanks to Joetta Lawrence, who has helped to sweeten up these work parties with healthy, home-baked goodies! Thanks also to Karen Munson and Tim Scullen, who help us to distribute free copies of the Petrel in public libraries in Brookings and Gold Beach. Karen also helps us keep our Curry County Bird Checklist stocked in the Brookings visitor center.
A big thanks to Peg Reagan for captaining our Highway 101 cleanup service projects and to all members who have come to help out this past year, especially Mark Furler, Laura Greathed, Gary Maschmeyer, Jordan and Gail Dawn, Bonnie Kuppler, Dave Sorensen, Penny Suess, and Dana Gurnee.

I also deeply appreciate all KAS members who helped with conservation efforts over the past year, especially those who attended meetings — again and again and again — regarding the Floras Lake land swap (and especially those KAS members from Brookings — Bonnie and George Kuppler and Julia Bott — and from Gold Beach — Peg Reagan, Mark Furler, and Anne Morgan — but also those from Port Orford and Langlois). There are too many to list! Thanks also to those who attended hearings related to Jordan Cove and those who attended the town halls of our federal elected officials to remind them that rural people care about conservation. I hope I’ve not forgotten anyone; if so, please forgive!

Finally, a big thanks to all who participated in this year’s fundraising appeal. We purposely keep our membership cost low so that we don’t turn away interested friends of conservation who might not be able to afford it, and that means we especially appreciate contributions sent above the cost of membership and raffle tickets.

As we enter this milestone 40th anniversary year, with big challenges on the horizon for our region’s ecosystems, I am going to be thinking hard about how we can ensure that Kalmiopsis Audubon will persist as an effective local conservation group in the coming decades. If you have ideas about how we can do this, please let me know. We welcome your input and members’ participation at our quarterly board meetings. We hope to plan some interesting programs and outings for later this year, so please sign up to receive the KAS email HOOT-OUT, or follow us on Facebook for more news and opportunities between Storm Petrels. Onward into 2020!

— Ann Vileisis

Winners!

KAS Annual Raffle

Again, a big thanks to everyone who sent donations and bought raffle tickets in our annual fundraising appeal. Congratulations to this year’s winners!

Adventurer’s Prize: sea kayaking with South Coast Tours
Jennifer Hammargren, Brookings

Lois Miller Memorial Photo Prize
Stephanie Reynolds, Harbor

Eat-local Prize: lamb from Wild Rivers Lamb
Mark Lankton, Port Orford

Book-lover’s Prize: Tim Palmer’s photo book America’s Mountain Trails
Chris Willis, Port Orford

Art-lover’s Prize: Cherry Beeken’s Great Blue Heron painting
Alex Harvey, Gold Beach

We’ve had trouble reaching some prizewinners by telephone this year so if you’ve not yet been contacted about how to get your prize, please call Ann at 541-332-0261.

Finally, a big thanks to this year’s generous prize donors: Dave Lacey of South Coast Tours, Becky Malamud of Point B Studio, Carol Malley of Uptown Frames in Port Orford, artist Cherry Beeken, Cora Wahl of Wild Rivers Lamb, and author Tim Palmer, plus a fond remembrance of our dear friend Lois Miller.

Membership Report

Greetings for the New Year! Our chapter continues to thrive, with almost 400 members currently subscribed. I am pleased to report that we have some new members as a result of our longstanding members giving their friends a membership as a gift. What a great idea! Thanks go out to all of you who continue to renew your memberships. You are what gives our organization its life force and our conservation efforts vitality.

— Linda Tarr
Conservation News

by Ann Vileisis

Wild Rivers Headwaters Update and Opportunity to Help!

As longtime KAS members know, we continue to support permanent protection of the headwaters of Hunter Creek, Pistol River, the North Fork of the Smith, and the Illinois Rivers from the threat of strip mining. All these areas were temporarily withdrawn from new mining claims for 20 years with the 2017 Southwest Oregon “mineral withdrawal,” which gives Congress time to act on legislation. Last year, Senator Wyden combined the bill that would make this protection permanent with another bill to protect more wilderness on the Rogue River (between Galice and Marial, upstream in Josephine County) in new legislation called the Oregon Recreation Enhancement (ORE) Act. I am very glad to report that in December, Senator Wyden advanced the ORE Act through a markup in the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. This is a critically important step toward making the protections we need permanent.

While it may seem that the push for mining has faded into the background with the 20-year mineral withdrawal in place, Red Flat Nickel Company (RFNC) continues to assert that it has valid existing claims in the headwaters of Hunter Creek that would be exempt from the mineral withdrawal. The Forest Service has yet to make a determination about the validity of the company’s claims. Moreover, on the national level, the mining industry continues to push Congress to roll back already lax regulations that govern hard rock mining, so we need to stay vigilant.

Meanwhile, Senator Merkley has introduced entirely different legislation to expand the Smith River National Recreation Area into Oregon, which would make permanent the mineral withdrawal for the watershed of the North Fork of the Smith River, located at the southern tip of the Kalmiopsis Wilderness.

We need to thank our senators for continuing to work to permanently protect the headwaters of our extraordinary wild rivers — so that they know we are still paying attention and that we still care. Senators Wyden and Merkley are cosponsors of both bills.

Please call with a simple message of thanks. Here is a sample script:

Thank you for your leadership in protecting Southwest Oregon’s wild rivers from the threat of strip mining.

Senator Wyden, thank you for your work to advance the ORE Act, with the Southwest Oregon Mineral Withdrawal, through committee markup, and I hope you’ll keep working to get it passed.

Senator Merkley, thank you for introducing the bill to protect the North Fork Smith, and I hope you will also continue to support efforts to advance mineral withdrawals for our other cherished wild rivers through the ORE Act.

Senator Wyden: (202) 224-5244 / (541) 858-5122
Senator Merkley: (202) 224-3753 / (541) 608-9102

You can also send a brief thank you note through the senators’ websites.

Floras Lake Exchange, Brief Update

Last fall, both the Curry County Board of Commissioners (BOC) and the Oregon Parks and Recreation Commission (OPRC) voted to move forward with an exchange of 90 acres of inaccessible, county-owned land on Floras Lake (adjacent to Floras Lake Natural Area) and 33 acres of accessible, state-owned land on Highway 101 at the corner of Airport Road. Since we’ve been working toward a conservation outcome for the Floras Lake lands for nearly a decade, we are looking forward to celebrating! However, though the BOC signed an agreement on December 5, the exchange is not yet complete. The agreement stipulates a closing date of December 31, 2020 — almost a year from now — and before then, the county needs to “vacate” all of the roads in the parcel to be exchanged. The agreement stipulates that costs of this legal task will be split, with the state paying no more than $3,000 to get the job done. According to county staff, this final work has not yet been budgeted or scheduled and may require additional direction from the BOC. Given the difficulties and politics of getting the agreement signed, we intend to watchdog this until the job is truly complete.

Pistol River Gravel Extraction Project Update

In last quarter’s Storm Petrel, we reported that the Curry County Planning Commission (PC) had denied a proposal for gravel extraction along the lower Pistol River because the application lacked information required by law to inform a proper decision. We also reported that the project proponent had declined to appeal the decision. That was the best information available from the county when we went to press, but, shortly thereafter, he did, in fact, decide to appeal the decision to the Curry County Board of Commissioners.

Meanwhile, neighbors in Pistol River held two local gatherings — one convened by the project proponent and another by the project opponents. KAS was invited to participate in the second meeting, where the project proponent spoke about his desire to, in fact, restore the lower river. We were heartened to hear that and also to learn that the Curry Watersheds Partnership (which includes the South Coast Watershed
Council and the Curry Soil and Watershed Conservation District had already started to work with other willing landowners in the lower river to consider potential restoration projects. They had even submitted a grant proposal to fund hydrologic and sediment studies needed to determine how best to proceed and where gravel removal might be warranted for restoration purposes.

However, despite the hopeful rhetoric, when the BOC considered the appeal at a de novo hearing in mid-November, the proposal remained focused on taking out gravel and still lacked basic information about the amount of gravel to be removed and impacts to the estuary and to salmon. We urged the commissioners to encourage the project proponent to withdraw his appeal and work together with the watershed council to develop a restoration-oriented plan. The record was kept open for several weeks for additional information and rebuttals. Then on January 8, the BOC made a final decision, voting two to one to affirm the PC’s decision to deny the still-deficient proposal. Commissioner Boice voted against, wanting to keep the record open to allow the applicant still more time.

It is critical to carefully scrutinize projects proposed in and around the estuarine zones of our coastal rivers because these areas are especially important for fish that use them for migration, juvenile rearing, and even nursery habitat in the case of some marine species. Even if there is good habitat upstream, degraded estuary habitat can serve as a bottleneck for salmon runs. For this reason, anyone proposing a project in aquatic estuarine habitat must secure permits not only from local government but also from state and federal agencies to assure that impacts to water quality and fish, especially threatened coho salmon, will be minimized.

At this point, the project proponent may decide to appeal the BOC decision to the state Land Use Board of Appeals. Otherwise, he will need to wait for a year to submit a new application to the county. We hope that he will work with a restoration consultant and Curry Watersheds Partnership to develop a proposal that could help to restore the lower Pistol River.

**Jordan Cove LNG Terminal and Pipeline Update**

In mid-November, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) issued a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for Pembina Corporation’s Jordan Cove Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) pipeline and terminal facility. The facility is proposed by a Canadian corporation to export American gas to Asia, condemning Oregonians’ land along the pipeline route and building a dangerous facility squarely in a high-hazard earthquake and tsunami zone. According to the FEIS, constructing and operating the LNG project would impact soil, water, wetlands, vegetation, wildlife, 15 threatened and endangered species, land use, recreation, landscape views, traffic, cultural resources, housing, air quality, and noise levels. In particular, the pipeline would cross more than 300 waterbodies, including the Rogue, Klamath, and Coos Rivers, and would require clearing of more than 2,000 acres of forest, including 750 acres of old-growth.

In mid-January, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) released a “biological opinion” (BiOp) that the project’s impacts would not jeopardize the long-term survival of any federally threatened or endangered species. The FEIS and BiOp are intended to inform FERC’s final decision, which is expected next month.

Meanwhile, on the local front, the Coos Bay City Council on January 7 considered a proposal for dredging Coos Bay in order to accommodate massive ships that would service the proposed LNG facility at Jordan Cove. Analyzing the project as a contractor for the city, planning staff from the Lane Council of Governments determined the project was not in the “public interest” and recommended disapproval. Nevertheless, the city council’s vote was a tie, with three against and three in favor. Ultimately, the mayor broke the tie, tipping the balance for city approval of this part of the LNG plan.

A contingent of about nine KAS members attended the city council meeting to show opposition to this project that would degrade Coos Bay and commit us to another 30 years of burning fossil fuels.
fuels. At a pre-meeting rally, retired Oregon Institute of Marine Biology scientist Alan Shanks explained to the crowd how the proposed dredging would bust into bedrock, permanently changing the flow of seawater in the bay in unknown ways. This could be disastrous for juvenile crabs that rely on the sheltered habitat for nursery grounds, an issue that has not been sufficiently analyzed, in his view. It is likely that the city council’s decision will be appealed. Keep in mind, too, that earlier this year, the state Department of Environmental Quality denied a critical clean water permit. As we go to press, there is big news that Pembina has withdrawn its application for a key state “dredge and fill” permit. Stay tuned for further news about this consequential project.

**Port Orford “Dark Sky” Ordinance Ready for an Upgrade**

Over the past several months, the Port Orford Planning Commission (PC) has been considering upgrades to Port Orford’s Dark Sky lighting ordinance. The intent of the ordinance is to keep light focused downward to the ground where it’s needed, preventing light pollution that would obscure the town’s beautiful starry night sky and light trespass that errantly falls onto neighbors’ properties.

The ordinance was first adopted in 2010 after many years of effort from KAS members, especially Al Geiser, who worked together with Coos-Curry Electric Cooperative, helping to install “night caps” on dozens of lights around town. An upgrade is now needed to address new LED technology, with new terms and units to describe light, such as Kelvins and lumens. Problems with enforceability also need to be addressed. The PC has drawn upon outdoor-lighting ordinances from a number of other small cities to develop language for this upgrade.

Some may take our beautiful night sky for granted in Curry County, but it’s important to note that fewer and fewer places in the world remain unaffected by light pollution. Beyond annoying neighbors and creating pink glare in the night sky, too much light at night has impacts on birds; seabirds such as storm petrels can be drawn to night lights like moths to a candle and become disoriented, with dire effect. Bright lights at night are also known to affect human health. For these reasons, many communities cherish their dark skies as a benefit to residents and visitors alike.

**Forest Reforms Coming to the Ballot Box**

For years, Oregonians concerned about insufficient riparian buffers for logging and aerial spraying of herbicides have tried to reform Oregon’s Forest Practices Act, the law that regulates forestry on private lands, but to little avail, given the power of the timber industry. It’s well known that Oregon’s forestry rules are weaker than those in all surrounding states, including Idaho, so this past fall, forest activists tried a new tack, using the citizen ballot initiative process, aiming to put forest practice reforms directly to voters — in particular, expanded buffers for aerial spraying and logging around waterbodies. However, the secretary of state deemed the initiatives were too complex for the initiative process (and has been accused of siding with industry), and she threw them out. That decision was appealed in December. Meanwhile, activists are aiming to place alternative provisions on the ballot for the 2020 election to accomplish similar goals.

Those of you who live in small watersheds know firsthand the risks of aerial spraying of herbicides and also how lack of buffer zones beside streams can lead to sedimentation that fills up pools and otherwise degrades aquatic habitat. The ballot initiatives will be a good opportunity to make headway on forest practice reforms that are critically important for
Humbug Mountain Blowdown, a Personal Account

by Ann Vileisis

In early winter 2019, the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) cut trees to clear views from viewpoints on the Humbug Mountain Trail. For years people had climbed to the top, and some felt disappointed when they did not find a full ocean view (though all the big trees on the way up have always been worth the hike, as far as I am concerned). I was excited, though trepidatious, to see the new view, because through the years I have been aware of many instances when OPRD has been, let us say, over-zealous with its “vegetation management” at our coastal state parks. I know this not only from personal experience but also because I’ve received many calls from people heartbroken about special places, from Boardman S.P. to Cape Blanco S.P., that were hacked or cut. In general, I’ve defended the agency, recognizing their need to maintain trails, though I’ve wished they might be more thoughtful and careful. Nevertheless, because Humbug is an important place to me and because I could not attend the local meeting OPRD held to discuss this project, I made a phone call to the park superintendent. I am all for clearing the view, I explained to him, but please make sure not to cut too many trees — and please don’t make it like a clearcut up there. He told me others had raised similar concerns and assured me that the job was being planned by a forester and would be professional and appropriate. So I didn't worry.

Tim and I first fell in love with Humbug Mountain more than 20 years ago. He was having trouble with his voice and had to go for six weeks without talking. It was a personally challenging time, and so we took solace in climbing Humbug Mountain. Since then, I’ve run into many people who climb Humbug for fitness, for a nature fix, and for solace. The three-mile climb to the 1,700-foot summit has a way of making anyone feel good, no matter what. But when I climbed to the summit after the trees were cut, I joined the ranks of the heartbroken. It felt like a gut punch. The cut to open the view had been laid out like a timber sale, with a straight-line square perimeter. Now the summit meadow, a place I’d personally considered sacred, felt like a two-acre clear cut. This place I’d come to so many times to restore my spirit now looked like so many other sheared-off mountaintops across Oregon — desecrated. Others have told me they felt similarly.

Though I did appreciate the more wide-open view, I couldn’t help think about how much more beautiful it could have been if only OPRD staff had had training to consider aesthetics. Of course, view-
points don’t consist only of distant scenes, but also of the nearer surroundings. What if instead of cutting trees in a straight-line perimeter (like clear cuts), trees had been selectively cut to create less abrupt edges? What if only the trees obstructing the view had been cut? Professional arborists, landscape architects, and even utility companies carefully consider these matters all the time. How come State Parks does not integrate such expertise into its “vegetative management”?

Most troubling was the fact that trees behind the view, at the summit, were also cut, exposing unique and big-limbed trees north of the mountaintop to the force of winds. From the get-go, I had been worried about windthrow. Observing, and hearing many stories about, timber sales where wind literally toppled forests exposed after nearby trees were cut, I was concerned about what would happen to those big, charismatic trees, especially because there had already been some blowdown on the north side a couple of years ago.

Unfortunately, my worst worry came to pass. A big storm in late November blew right through the summit where the trees had been cut, toppling remaining trees, opening a wide swath, and leaving a chaotic mess of blowdown that closed the trail. Now, our perfectly shaped Humbug Mountain — described in indigenous languages as shaped like a “salmon
Let’s Go Birding: Highlights from 2019

by Gary Maschmeyer

Two highlights stand out from last year’s Let’s Go Birding field trips. The first was our owl outing in March. We have now had four owl outings, and only once did we fail to see an owl. This past year on the Orchard Bar Loop trail we had a Great Horned Owl perch for us on a limb of a snag so everyone got a great look at it. We also heard a Western Screech Owl but were unable to see it. This March we will have another owl outing. As that date approaches, if you know of a location of an owl, I would appreciate it if you would let me know.

The other field trip that did not disappoint (and it never does) was our outing to Gasquet-Orleans (G.O.) Road to find high-elevation birds that you usually can’t see at the coast. Our first stop was at the bridge at the beginning of G.O. Road, where we found a Western Tanager. Farther up the road we found Nashville Warblers, Townsend’s Solitaires, Olive-sided Flycatchers, and Lazuli Buntings, and everyone got great looks at a beautiful Hermit Warbler.

Then at Crissy Field we all had an eerie look at a Bald Eagle as patchy fog blew through the trees where it was perched. On the river, some of us briefly saw a Green Heron before it flew off. Out on the ocean, we saw the usual seabirds and a couple of Marbled Murrelets. Looking for birds is always an adventure, and I look forward to seeing you on 2020 Let’s Go Birding field trips.

2020 Field Trips

Trip leader Gary Maschmeyer has put together a schedule for birding field trips in 2020, so mark your calendars. Field trips are a terrific way to brush up on your birding skills. Birders of all skill levels are welcome. More information and all trips will be posted soon on www.kalmiopsisaudubon.org, our website, . It’s best to sign up with Gary ahead of time so he can let you know if there are any changes of plan. For more information, or to get on the Let’s Go Birding email list, contact Gary at 541-412-0806, or email gmasch44@gmail.com.

Meet up in Brookings (BR) at the Azalea Middle School or in Gold Beach (GB) at the Visitor Center, south of town, at the times listed to carpool.

March 21, Owling Rogue River Walk, BR 5:45pm, GB 6:30pm

May 9, Rogue River Walk, BR 7:15am, GB 8am

June 13, G.O. Road, high-elevation birds, BR 6:30am, GB 5:45am *

Aug. 22, Crissey Field, estuary and seabirds, BR 8am, GB 7:15am *

Nov. 7, Lola Lake Loop, BR 8am, GB 8:15am **

* This is a no-host meet up. If no one else comes, you will need to drive south to join the group at the Brookings meeting site.

** Those coming from Gold Beach will meet at the parking area on the west side of Highway 101 just south of the bridge over Pistol River at 8:30 a.m.

Those of us who love Humbug will now need to find peace with the massive wind damage on the summit, worsened by OPRD “vegetation management” — whether we appreciate the distant view of Humbug from north or south or whether we climb to its peak. Meanwhile, I urge OPRD to take more seriously mat-

Amazon Smile

If you shop on Amazon, you can help KAS! Amazon’s Smile Foundation will donate 0.5 percent of your purchase price to us. Go to smile.amazon.com and choose Kalmiopsis Audubon as your charity. Then, remember to start your shopping at the smile.amazon.com website.
BIRD NOTES
Late Fall 2019 / Early Winter 2020

October 13 – Tim Rodenkirk picked out a Vesper Sparrow in a flock of Savannah Sparrows in a farm field along Ocean View Drive in Harbor.

October 16 – Terry Wahl saw a Chestnut-collared Longspur on his family’s ranch, a rare sighting.

October 24 – Dave Kollen reported seeing a Northern Mockingbird along the south end of Ocean View Drive in Harbor. These seem to be sighted more frequently than in the past.

October 28 – Terry Wahl reported seeing three Rough-legged Hawks near Denmark. Quite often, Terry sees one of these in the winter, but seeing three is unusual.

October 29 – Terry Wahl saw a Western Flycatcher on his family ranch, later than usual.

October 31 – Diane Cavaness and Don Munson reported seeing a Northern Mockingbird in Pistol River.

October 31 – Tim Rodenkirk and Rick McKenzie saw a Gyrfalcon at a ranch on the Coos/Curry border. Tim also saw it at Floras Lake. The Gyrfalcon stayed for about three weeks, eating Aleutian Cackling Geese resting over on their southward migration. This is a rare sighting in our state.

November 1 – Terry Wahl reported seeing a Northern Shrike on his family ranch north of Elk River.

November 2 – Lauren Harter, Amanda Damin, and others reported a Laysan Albatross, two Buller’s Shearwaters, and a Fork-tailed Storm Petrel from a cruise ship. These pelagic seabirds forage in our offshore waters.

November 2 – Howard Sands reported a pair of American White Pelicans in Brookings, a rare sighting in our area. While Brown Pelicans are common on the coast, White Pelicans tend to stick to freshwater in the interior West and have only been seen a few times in Curry over the past decades.

November 4 – Terry Wahl and Rich Hoyer reported seeing a Rough-legged Hawk on the Wahl Ranch. They also saw a Chipping Sparrow and a Clay-colored Sparrow, unusual for this time of year.

November 9 – Dave Kollen reported seeing a Tropical Kingbird on Ocean View Drive in Harbor.

November 10 – Terry Wahl reported seeing 15 to 20 Lapland Longspurs and one Snow Bunting west of Langlois with Rick McKenzie. The bunting is quite an unusual sighting for Curry.

November 18 – Terry Wahl and Rich Hoyer saw four Tropical Kingbirds on the Wahl ranch. Tropical Kingbirds usually show up in September and rarely stay so long.

November 24 – Terry Wahl reported seeing a Western Flycatcher on his family ranch, an unusually late sighting.
November 24 – Buck Wahl saw a Clark’s Nutcracker up on Langlois Mountain. These birds are usually seen in high mountainous terrain.

November 30 – Dave Irons and Shawneen Finnegan reported a Rusty Blackbird in Pistol River. These birds are typically seen only in the East, and so this is a rare sighting for Curry.

December 20 – Charley Kahler reported an Osprey near the mouth of the Chetco River. Over the past decade, there have been increasing reports of osprey wintering on Oregon’s coast, after decades of no winter sightings, possibly owing to the declines from the DDT era. We don’t have local bird records from before then so we don’t really know if wintering osprey is a new phenomenon or a return to old patterns.

December 28 – Twenty birders scoured the Sixes count circle for this year’s Christmas Bird Count, orchestrated by Tim Rodenkirk. The weather was beautiful, and a total of 134 species were seen. Rarities, and first for the local count, were a Bullock’s Oriole in Port Orford and a Snow Bunting west of Langlois.

December 29 – Terry Wahl spotted two Turkey Vultures, which are not usually seen at this time of year.

January 1 – Dave Manzella reported seeing a Townsend’s Warbler in his yard in Gold Beach. These beautiful birds are not uncommon in winter when they are often seen foraging with other birds in mixed flocks.

January 3 – Charley Kahler reported seeing the Osprey again, this time flying over Tanbark Point in Brookings.

January 9 – Lee Ragsdale reported seeing four Townsend’s Warblers at her place in Nesika Beach.

January 11 – Joetta Lawrence reported seeing an Anna’s Hummingbird flying repeatedly in perfect vertical circles at Port Orford Heads. This is a distinctive courtship behavior of male hummers.

January 11 – Ann Vileisis reported seeing a Bald Eagle flying over Port Orford.

January 15 – On this extremely stormy day, Gary Maschmeyer reported seeing the Osprey, hovering about four feet above the surface of the bank between the Chetco River and Tanbark Point. With winds gusting to 67 mph, Gary suspects the chop on the surface of the water made it impossible for the osprey to fish, so the bird was instead looking for mice on the bank.

Compiled by Tim Rodenkirk, with additional input from Jim Rogers and transcription help from Ann Vileisis. Please report your unusual sightings to Ann at annvil@earthlink.net.

POETRY CORNER

New Year’s Day, 2020
by Vicki Graham

Ten days past the solstice
the hard beads of new buds
swell on the willows,
and a ruby-crowned kinglet weaves
in and out, in and out,
gleaning among branches
gold with rising sap.

Solstice. Equinox.
The earth’s axial tilt,
its orbital eccentricity,
and its wobble hold
our world steady.

In 12,000 years,
Vega will be earth’s polestar,
but today, Polaris is due north,
and here on the gravel bar
by a winter swollen river,
a black phoebe sallies forth
catching insects on the fly,
while above the falls, perched
like a river-rounded stone,
a dipper sings counterpoint
to the crash of water on rock.

“There is geometry in the humming of the strings,”
Pythagoras says,
“music in the spacing of the spheres.”

Nothing is still. Galaxies
fly apart, the earth wobbles as it turns,
the river floods, shapes
and reshapes its bed.

Still, year by year,
spring follows winter,
the willow’s hard beads open
to silver furred leaves,
and a dipper builds its nest
of moss under the falls.
What’s Inside
Upcoming Events ............................................. 1
From the President’s Desk
   by Ann Vileisis ............................................. 2
Membership News ......................................... 3
Annual Raffle Winners ................................. 3
Conservation News
   by Ann Vileisis ............................................. 4
Wild Rivers Headwaters, Floras Lake Land
Exchange, Pistol River Gravel Extraction,
Jordan Cove LNG Terminal, Port Orford
Dark Sky Ordinance, Forest Reforms Coming
to the Ballot, Humbug Mountain Blowdown
Native Plant Notes
   by Teresa Bird ............................................. 7
Let’s Go Birding 2019 and Upcoming
   by Gary Maschmeyer .................................... 8
Bird Notes
   by Tim Rodenkirk, with Jim Rogers
   & Ann Vileisis ............................................ 10
Poetry Corner
   by Vicki Graham ........................................... 11

Raffle Winners
Port Orford
Dark Sky
Ordinance
Upgrade
“Let’s Go
Birding” 2020
Humbug
Mountain
Blowdown