



notes from dawn

It's a unique and challenging experience to write my "notes" several weeks before The Kingfisher goes to print. In this age of instant everything, whatever we write, such as my monthly eNews, goes out almost as soon as we type it! Right now, staring out the window over my laptop, clouds are heavy and the ocean roiling, but summer is coming and will be nearly here by the time you read this. In the meantime, several things will be happening!

Our education team's Spring Birding Basics class will be in June. Lead by Caren Willoughby and Laura Doyle, this class has been a key part of our education program for many years. Laura retired from the board a couple of years ago but has continued to co-lead the classes.

Caren (right), who built our education program from the ground up and has served as education coordinator since 2009, is stepping down this year. Caren has been a Board mainstay since 2008, not only creating and leading our education program, but also coordinating all of our bird walks, annual meeting, and many other events. We are sad to see her retire from the Board, but excited that she'll continue to be involved. Caren always brings a smile and some fun to our events!



As I mentioned in our last issue, our Board of Directors is making decisions about the future. I asked about The Kingfisher, and your resounding response to keep mailing the paper copy. We will do that! Also, our new website will go live this month, and we'd love to get your feedback. Finally, we need you. We're looking for Board members who can attend our monthly meetings (live or via Zoom) and help in our decision-making. We'd love to hear from you!

--dawn villaescusa, ASLC President

The Kingfisher

Volume 17, Issue 1

Summer – Fall 2022

OUR OSPREY NEIGHBORS

Article and Illustration

by Nora Sherwood

High-pitched chirps ring out in the forest behind my house. It's really loud, but surprisingly sweet and melodic. I scan the treetops—if I'm lucky, I'm about to spy an Osprey perched high in the tall Sitka spruce. There it is! I watch as it spreads enormous wings to continue its flight to the ocean. A few minutes later, I again hear the loud call as it flies back over my house and returns to its nest. I catch a glimpse of it with a fish grasped in powerful talons and imagine the young chick tucked into the nest, about to enjoy a very good meal.

How fortunate we are to live in a place with a healthy population of Osprey! Lincoln City alone has ten known nests occupied during the breeding season.

There's excitement each year in the birding community as breeding pairs return in spring to fix up those enormous nests made of sticks and lined with moss, grass, and bark. Osprey prefer sites high up in trees or on fabricated structures like cell towers that allow for an unobstructed approach. Lucky for us, that makes observing their activities relatively easy.

The City of Lincoln City maintains an online map of known nests*. If you spend time near one of them, you're likely to see the Osprey coming and going around the nest as they complete the engineering work of building/repairing the nest, feeding, and rearing their young. Later in the season, you might witness flying lessons for the fledglings. By October, the chicks will have grown strong enough to join their parents in migrating south for the winter. Exposed nests take a battering through the stormy winter season, but come spring the cycle starts again.

The ocean, Devils Lake, and the Siletz River offer Osprey their preferred diet: fish. Osprey have many physical and



behavioral adaptations that make them fishing machines; in fact, they're the only bird in North America that subsists almost entirely on a fish diet. Osprey talons are powerful, sharp rounded hooks that help snatch prey from the water. Skin on their toes is covered with small scaly barbs that help clutch a slippery catch. The outermost forward-facing toe can be turned either forward or back, to whichever position grasps the fish more firmly. To reduce the amount of energy needed to bring a fish back to the nest, they'll hold it aerodynamically facing forward as though it were swimming through the air. A nictitating membrane acts as a transparent eyelid that protects the Osprey's eye and improves vision during water dives, and nostrils can close as well. Dark feathers around the eyes and across the cheeks cut down glare, helping them spot fish in the water.

The next time you hear loud chirps and whistles overhead, look up to see if you spot an Osprey!

*<https://www.lincolncity.org/departments/parks-recreation/osprey-nests-in-lincoln-city#ad-image-1>

INTRODUCING NORTH AMERICA'S MOST ATTRACTIVE WATERFOWL

By Tom Rice

Do you know *Aix sponsa*? This scientific name for the Wood Duck can be loosely translated as “water bird in a wedding dress.” Thought to be the most attractive waterfowl of North America, the male (drake) Wood Duck’s coloration is nothing short of exotic, making it one of the most easily recognized of all birds.



A Wood Duck pair inspects a Devils Lake nesting box. Photo by Ruth Shelly



A one-day-old Wood Duck jumps from a nesting box. The drop here was approximately 15 feet, although jumps from 40–50 feet are not uncommon, and jumps of up to 290 feet have been observed. Photo by Al Rice, circa 1995

With no close relatives except the Mandarin Duck of eastern Asia, “Woodies” are found primarily from the eastern U.S. to the Midwest, as well as the western portions of Washington, Oregon, and California. We’re fortunate to have Wood Ducks here in Lincoln and Tillamook Counties, although their numbers have declined.

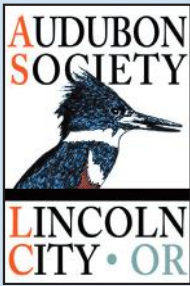
The female Wood Duck (hen) lays an egg a day, usually 6–16, and begins incubation once the final egg is laid. Eggs hatch 25–30 days later. The next morning, the hen will carefully check to confirm no predators are in the area. She then flies to the ground or water beneath the nest and calls to the chicks. One by one, they make the “leap of faith” from the nest. From that point, they’re cared for by the hen for approximately two months until they can fly.

Wood Ducks are cavity nesters, preferring to nest in natural tree cavities or sometimes abandoned woodpecker nests. Trees with cavities are becoming rarer over time due to wetland loss and other causes. If tree cavities are unavailable, Wood Ducks will readily use fabricated nest boxes. Nest boxes have been used since the 1930s to restore Woodie population after their numbers were devastated during the late 19th century due to uncontrolled hunting and loss of nesting sites. In fact, the Wood Duck return to healthy numbers is one of wildlife management’s early success stories.

In an effort to increase the Wood Duck population in our area, Audubon Society of Lincoln City has nesting boxes available for people willing to install and monitor them. At this time, the ASLC has ten boxes installed around Devils Lake. This year’s nesting season is already underway; for the future, anyone with access to a nearby wooded lake, pond, or stream who is interested in installing a nest box should email info@lincolncityaudubon.org



A sight not seen for many years: a flock of 15 Wood Ducks on Devils Lake in the Neetsu area. Photo by Al Rice, circa 1995



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Summer and Fall 2022

All ASLC bird walks are free and open to the public; no pre-registration or experience is required. Binoculars and guidebooks are provided. Walks are held rain or shine, so dress appropriately for coastal weather. Be sure to carry water. Walks are easy to moderately easy unless indicated. All are family-friendly. For details, including updates and cancellations, check our website (lincolncityaudubon.org) or Facebook (@audubonlincolncity).

NEW! Lincoln City EXPLORIENCE bird walks! The Explorience program was created to add some local knowledge to the souvenirs you bring home from Lincoln City. Topics range from clamming to bird watching to exploring tide pools, and more are added throughout the year. Participants can also become members of the Explorience club, making them eligible for monthly prize drawings and to possibly win our annual grand prize, a vacation package!

JULY

Friday, July 8, 9-11 am

EXPLORIENCE Nesika City Park, Lincoln City's newest city park! "Nesika" means "Our Place" in the Chinook language. We'll explore the new trails, visit the nesting Osprey pair, and look for songbirds in the woods and wetlands.

Location: Meet at the dead end at Keel Street, before SE 3rd Street on west side of the park.

Sponsored by Explore Lincoln City and Lincoln City Parks and Recreation.



Photo by Ruth Shelly

Saturday, July 9, 9-11 am

Yaquina Head Outstanding Natural Area. Join us at Yaquina Head Lighthouse and Natural Area on the Oregon Coast just north of Newport. We will see colonies of Common Murre, and Brant's and Pelagic Cormorants. A popular attraction is the pair of Peregrine Falcons who nest on the cliffs near the interpretive center.

Location: Meet in the Interpretive Center parking lot.

AUGUST

Saturday, August 13, 9-11 am

EXPLORIENCE Alder Island Loop Trail in the middle of Siletz Bay National Wildlife Refuge! An easy one-mile trail loops through riparian and wetland habitat along the Siletz River. We'll look for resident and migratory songbirds, along with nesting birds such as the Great Blue Heron and Osprey. The trail allows intimate views of a variety of habitats: estuarine, marsh, river, and woodland highlighted by interpretive signage.

Location: Meet in the Alder Island trail parking lot just south of the Siletz River bridge.

Sponsored by Explore Lincoln City and Lincoln City Parks and Recreation

SEPTEMBER

Friday, September 9, 9-11 am

EXPLORIENCE Cutler City Open Space, a unique wooded wetlands habitat. Large trees host species such as Pileated Woodpecker, while the marshy brush is home to Common Yellowthroat and other songbirds. We'll look for early fall migrants, then move on to Josephine Young Memorial Park where we'll watch for migrating shorebirds.

Location: Meet at the pull-out on SW 63rd west off Hwy 101.

Sponsored by Explore Lincoln City and Lincoln City Parks and Recreation

Saturday, September 10, 9-11 am

Baskett Slough NWR and Mill Creek Park. Join us for a birding road trip to enjoy this huge refuge with diverse habitat including wetlands, meadows, oak savannas, and woodlands. We'll see residents such as Bald Eagles and Northern Harriers. In addition, songbirds and shorebirds will be migrating south through the refuge, and the first flocks of winter resident waterfowl will be arriving. Bring a lunch and continue with us to Mill Creek Park for a picnic and more birding!

Location: From Hwy 22, turn north on Smithfield Rd (across from Kings Valley Hwy) and take the first right onto Colville Rd. Travel about a mile on the gravel road until you see our ASLC sign.

OCTOBER

Friday, October 7, 9-11 am

EXPLORIENCE The Villages Open Space and Road's End State Park, one of our most popular bird walks! This easy stroll takes us through meadows, woods, and marshes, ultimately arriving at the ocean beach. We should see Black-headed Grosbeaks, warblers, sandpipers and more as we walk through mixed woodlands, forest, marsh, and coastline.

Location: Meet on NE Devil's Lake Blvd up past the golf course entrance. Look for the ASLC sign along the road.

Sponsored by Explore Lincoln City and Lincoln City Parks and Recreation

Saturday, October 8, 9-11 am

Boiler Bay to Devil's Punchbowl. Join us for a driving tour of prime rocky habitats starting at Boiler Bay State Natural Area, for some excellent seabird watching and possible



Photo by Ruth Shelly

glimpses at nesting Black Oystercatchers. We'll continue with stops at Depoe Bay and Otter Crest loop, where we'll explore the proposed Cape Foulweather rocky habitat complex. Finally, we'll visit Devil's Punchbowl where we hope to find Surfbirds, Black Turnstones, and more.

Location: Meet in the Boiler Bay parking lot.

NOVEMBER

Saturday, November 12, 9-11 am

EXPLORIENCE the Salmon River estuary 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'll look for grebes, gulls, cormorants, waterfowl, and raptors.

Location: Meet in the Knight Park parking lot.

Sponsored by Explore Lincoln City and Lincoln City Parks and Recreation

DECEMBER

Friday, December 2, 9-11 am

EXPLORIENCE Siletz Bay, our local winter resting grounds for thousands of waterfowl including Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, and American Wigeon. Bald Eagles often put on a show and Great Blue Herons and Great Egrets are always present. We'll observe from the Taft dock, then drive south along the bay, ending at Salishan Nature Trail (time permitting).

Location: Meet at the Taft Waterfront parking area.

Sponsored by Explore Lincoln City and Lincoln City Parks and Recreation

Christmas Bird Count (dates TBD)

Considered the longest-running Citizen Science survey in the world and led by the National Audubon Society, the Christmas Bird Count provides critical data on bird population trends. Volunteers tally as many species and number of individual birds as they can from sunup to sundown. All skill levels and ages are welcome! Watch our website for more information.

Visit www.lincolncityaudubon.org for more calendar details and ASLC news updates!

CONSERVATION ACTION TEAM REPORT

Article by Steve Griffiths

Thanks to your positive responses to our calls for action, we've recently scored big wins:

Legislature approves Senate Bills 1501 and 1546.

We asked you to contact your state representatives and urge them to support 1) Senate Bill 1501, which is the first step forward in implementing the Private Forest Accord; and 2) Senate Bill 1546, which would turn the Elliott State Forest into a Research Forest with durable protections for its older trees and imperiled species. The CAT met with Rep. David Gomberg to express our support for the bills. In cooperation with Oregon Coast Community College, we sponsored a webinar that featured Kelly Burnett, research fish biologist, and Sean Stevens, Executive Director of Oregon Wild, who was a key participant in negotiations that led



Photo by Steve Griffiths

to the Private Forest Accord. Gomberg supported both bills and mentioned our webinar in an email to his constituents; turnout was excellent with more than 110 participants.

In its very short session, the state legislature approved both bills—the first time in 30 years they passed significant forest legislation. Although most environmentalists agree that SB 1501 is a modest gain in the overall scheme of things, it's a step in the right direction.

Drone rules in state parks will consider wildlife impacts.

We asked you to contact Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) and let them know that drones should be prohibited in state parks and the ocean shore, except in areas determined by scientists where drones neither disturb wildlife nor mar the visitor experience. There's no question that wildlife disturbances due to improper drone use are increasing on the Oregon coast. Nesting seabirds perceive drones as a threat and may temporarily leave or completely abandon eggs and chicks. When that happens, eggs can cool and lose viability, and both eggs and chicks are exposed to predators.

The original Rules Advisory Committee (RAC), charged with developing proposed rules for drone take-off and landing, was dominated with industry representatives and included no environmentalists. The RAC's initial stance was that take-off and landing should be allowed in all state parks and ocean shores, with possible exceptions to be considered later at an unspecified time. Industry representatives stated explicitly that they intended to establish a precedent that would expand drone flight into state and national parks across the country.



Photo by Steve Griffiths

At the insistence of Audubon chapters and other wildlife advocates, two environmentalists were added to the RAC, and the tide began to turn. Thanks to strong public opposition to drone use, OPRD is redoing the drone rule process. OPRD is putting together a work group that will meet over the summer to draft criteria for where drone take-off and landing could be allowed and where it should be restricted. The work group will apply the criteria to draft maps and deliver them to OPRD, which will then restart the drone rule process by reconvening the RAC. The two environmentalists on the RAC have been invited to serve on the work group.

Our two rocky habitat proposals reviewed. The Rocky Habitat Core Team (Jim Carlson, Kent Doughty, Steve Griffiths, Nora Sherwood, dawn villaescusa, Dennis White, and Joe Youren) spent considerable time preparing for further evaluation workshops on our proposals to designate Cape Lookout and the Cape Foulweather Complex as Marine Conservation Areas. The two, three-hour workshops were held at the end of April. Coastal Coordinator Kent Doughty capably presented each proposal to state agency representatives and answered their questions. We're hopeful that the Ocean Policy Advisory Council will approve both proposals at its fall meeting.

What's ahead?

This summer and fall, we'll be working in cooperation with the Oregon Marine Reserve Program to build support for renewing Oregon's five Marine Reserves in 2023. (See newsletter insert.) Four of these reserves—Cape Falcon, Cascade Head, Otter Rock, and Cape Perpetua—are in Tillamook and Lincoln Counties, our service area.



Photo by Ruth Shelly

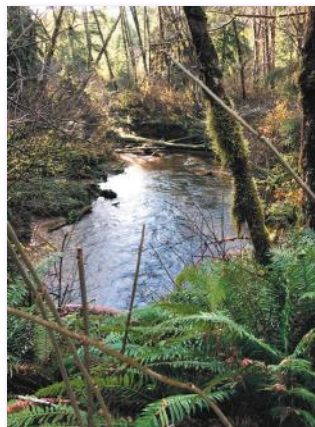


Photo by Steve Griffiths

Are you looking for something to do?

Consider sharing your time, skills, and interests with the Conservation Action Team! Interested in protecting birds and their habitat, or streams and drinking water in the Coast Range? Concerned about a changing climate and its impacts on Coastal Oregon? Think it's important to leave a resilient landscape to your children and grandchildren? We have volunteer roles both big and small to fit your schedule. Tell us where your interests lie, and

we will find a productive niche for you! Email Steve Griffiths at steveg@lincolncityaudubon.org

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

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

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$20 Individual | <input type="checkbox"/> \$200 Western Meadowlark |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$30 Family | <input type="checkbox"/> \$300 Red-tailed Hawk |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Wood Duck | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 Bald Eagle |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Osprey | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 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

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State, Zip _____

Email _____

BOOK REVIEW

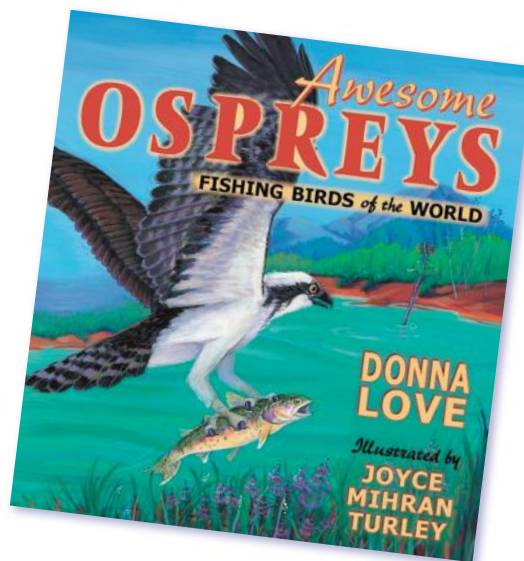
by Laura Doyle

Awesome Ospreys: Fishing Birds of the World

By Donna Love; Illustrated by Joyce Mihran Turley

Awesome Ospreys might be the book for anyone who is "osprey curious" about these amazing birds who have made Lincoln City their summer nesting and breeding home. Lincoln City now has at least ten Osprey nesting pairs, so these exciting birds are easy for everyone to observe, and now is a good time to get to know them better. This generously illustrated book is appropriate reading for 8 years and up, but it's a great resource for parents and teachers who want to satisfy both children's and their own curiosity about our awesome neighbors. Since Osprey are courting, hunting, nesting, and raising their chicks in full view, most of us have questions about these behaviors that *Awesome Ospreys* can answer.

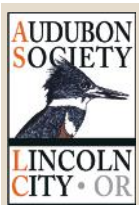
The book's illustrations are colorful and exciting impressions of Ospreys behaving in their habitat. The 27 full-page images are paired with text on the facing page, featuring a short, fun headline and an Osprey cartoon. Topics include the Osprey's behaviors, anatomy, ecology, and natural history, which have enabled this species to become one of the most successful raptors living on all continents except Antarctica. Each page also includes three to five bold-font vocabulary words with explanations included in the text.



Since there are probably more than 100 vocabulary words defined in context, this lazy reader wished for a dictionary at the end of the book, but the index provides some partial help. A fun learning bonus is that the text includes six "Osprey activities" which illustrate more abstract concepts or vocabulary words. Since these are appropriate for all ages and don't require much preparation or gear, students could do them on their own, or the activities could be incorporated into group learning activities for younger children.

To Order: Mountain Press (mountain-press.com) or Amazon: \$12 (used from \$2.25).

Details: Paperback, 64 pages, 8.375" x 9", ISBN 978-0-87842-512-9. (2005).



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



Audubon Society of Lincoln City is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Tax-exempt #20-3795649



Here Come the Puffins!

By Halle Renn

As we move into summer, some of my favorite visitors are making their way back to Oregon's offshore sea stacks. I feel privileged and lucky to live on the Oregon Coast where a good scope is all I need to observe the charismatic Tufted Puffins. Places like Haystack Rock at both Cannon Beach and Pacific City, Three Arch Rocks, Yaquina Head, and Cape Meares host Tufted Puffins every year as pairs seek out their underground burrows on the cliff faces. The unmistakable birds with their bright orange beaks nest here from April to August, usually returning to the same burrow year after year. While you won't be able to see the puffin chicks when they hatch in June deep down in the burrows, there's plenty of activity around the rocks as parents come in with their fresh catch of fish. Cannon Beach is the easiest place to view puffins, where the birds are so close all you need is a pair of binoculars and some patience.



Photos by Ruth Shelly

These birds are an endearing part of our coast, but their numbers in Oregon are in sharp decline (even though the northern range of this bird appears relatively stable). In 1988 there were an estimated 5,000 puffins in Oregon, but in 2008 those numbers were down to just 142. A lot is unknown about this decline. Some theories suggest loss of food sources, through both overfishing of their forage fish and climate change impacts on the ocean. Research is ongoing to better understand these complexities, but the public can help. Attending puffin watches, spreading the word about their decline, and participating in community science projects are all ways to help ensure this iconic bird is a presence on the coast for years to come.