

Trip report: Tour de Oregon

June 15-23, 2019

Leader: Stefan Schlick



Intro

It's been years that Brian and Tropical Audubon had wanted to come out to Oregon after their nice Washington State trip in 2013. And now we made it happen. The tour included a variety of habitats including the Oregon Coast Range, the coast itself, the Willamette Valley, the Oregon Cascades (pass level and east side), shrub steppe, juniper forest and the vast expanses of marshes at Malheur NWR. We made stops in Seaside, Bend, Burns and Prineville. We saw 189 species as a group and had a lot of fun (well, mostly).

Thanks to everybody for the great spotting and working together as a group so well!

Highlights and Lowlights

- Highs:
 - A morning flurry of activity at a clearcut near Timber
 - Puffins and Harlequin Ducks!
 - A great showing of several target species coming down to drink at Cabin Lake
 - The amazing diversity at/near Malheur NWR
 - The breath-taking moment of excitement when we found a Black-backed Woodpecker near Steins Pillar.
- Lows:
 - The biggest miss of the trip was probably Williamson's Sapsucker. The other species we kind of expected to get were Chukar, Black-crowned Night-heron, accipiters of any kind, Pileated and Lewis's Woodpecker, Gray Jay, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Canyon Wren, Townsend's Solitaire, Varied Thrush, a pure Townsend's Warbler and Lark Sparrow.
 - Due to the nature of the robbery at the Shilo Inn in Bend, I was not able to offer a night outing, so we missed our chance for Flammulated Owl and Common Poorwill.
 - Too much dust and too many dirt roads! Always we thought that we would leave the dirt roads behind us, there was one more.
- Notes
 - Food was generally good, but sometimes on the heavy side for dinner
 - Lodging in Seaside and Burns was good. The Shilo Inn seemed to be a nice place, but after being robbed I have nothing good to say about it now. The Econolodge in Prineville was subpar for a \$90 room.
 - Bugs were not an issue until we got to Malheur NWR. At Page Springs it left us running for the vans!
 - The weather was unexpectedly windy and cool for several days in a row. This was also the reason that we did not do well around Sisters and the morning in the sage.

Day-today account

6/15: Arrival in Portland

Everybody made their way to the Ramada Airport and we went out at 6pm to have a common dinner at the Lakeside Restaurant in the Radisson just a few steps away. After dinner we went shopping for breakfast and lunch for the following day. Overnight at the PDX Ramada.

6/16: Oregon Coast Range around Timber, Rogers Park in Forest Grove, Fernhill Wetlands

At 6am we hightailed it out to the Timber area. Our first stop was Reeher's Camp where a pygmy-owl call drew in Wilson's, Black-throated Gray and Hermit Warbler, Pacific-slope and Hammond's Flycatcher and Red-breasted Nuthatch. A little further on, we worked a clearcut for over an hour. The temperature had warmed up and the birds were coming out in full force. We saw Evening Grosbeak, Purple Finch and Red Crossbill, Yellow-breasted Chat (heard only), Willow and Olive-sided Flycatcher, Western Bluebird and many others. Deeper in, we heard a Sooty Grouse hooting and finally got on a Red-breasted Sapsucker. A Mountain Quail was quorking a little bit further on.



On the way back to Reeher's Camp we stopped at a creek crossing just west of Reeher's Camp and found an American Dipper. Then we had lunch at the camp proper and were somewhat wondering about the racket that a few Red-breasted Nuthatches were making. A few hoots finally brought in a Northern Pygmy-Owl and all had great scope looks. This was a long awaited lifer for Brian!

Back to Forest Grove we first walked around Rogers Park where Acorn Woodpecker, slender-billed White-breasted Nuthatch and Acorn Woodpecker were all easy. We ended the day at Fernhill Wetlands where we traipsed around for another hour before setting off to Seaside. We didn't really find anything special there, but got a good assortment of the more expected birds.



Dinner at Thai Me Up was excellent. Overnight at the Quality Inn.

6/17: Seaside Cove, Haystack Rock, Silver Point, Nehalem Bay SP, Pacific Oyster, Goodspeed Rd, Kilchis Point, Neavanna Wetlands

We briefly stopped at the Cove early morning when it was still socked in and drizzly. The only bird of note was a Black Oystercatcher. After breakfast we hit Haystack Rock. All the targets performed,

with all 3 cormorants, Harlequin Duck, Tufted Puffin and Pigeon Guillemot being the highlights. We left very satisfied. :-)



En route down to Tillamook we pulled into Silver Point where we found 2 Pacific Loons offshore. 2 Brown Pelicans and a Heerman's Gull were moving north.

A Wrentit performed well at Nehalem Bay State Park, but had to be enticed. Our looks were fabulous though I have to admit. :-)

It got real windy after our lunch at the Pacific Oyster, so we bagged it after seeing the Purple Martins and a drake Common Goldeneye that should have been further north right now.

Goodspeed Rd quickly produced a Black Phoebe.

Back at Kilchis Point Preserve we walked about a mile of the beautiful trail. Given the late afternoon time frame, we did well there. We finally had good looks at Anna's Hummingbird (on a nest overhanging the trail!), Brown Creeper (after hearing many sing at various places) and Black-headed Grosbeak. Some also sampled the salmonberries.

The drive back to Seaside was easy, so we pulled into Neavanna Wetlands at the end of the day. There were a bunch of birds, with Yellow Warbler and Common Merganser being new. It was surprisingly active.

Dinner at Ruby's. Overnight at the Quality Inn again.

**6/18: The drive to Bend:
Seaside, Stayton Riverfront
Park, Detroit Flats, Fish Lake,
Santiam Pass, Sisters**

A brief stop at the Necanicum Estuary and Seaside shoreline was largely uneventful even though we saw a large flock of Caspian Terns roosting on the



beach and Brown Pelicans moving offshore.

Mid morning we found ourselves at Stayton Riverfront Park which was very birdy. We finally found our target Bushtit! Also affording nice looks were Purple Finch, Black-headed Grosbeak, both hummingbirds, Orange-crowned Warbler and Band-tailed Pigeon,

Lunch was at Detroit Flats, right next to a Killdeer nest. The bird ended up calming down after a while. The access road and parking area had been freshly redone and there now is a nice restroom available. The usuals included Spotted Sandpiper, Yellow Warbler and Warbling Vireo. Totally unexpected at the location was a well-documented Eastern Kingbird.

After lunch we stopped at Fish Lake and got ok looks at 3 hen Barrow's Goldeneyes with babies. We failed to confirm a drake.

Near Santiam Pass we struggled to find anything else than the fine vista including meadows of beargrass, and mosquitos. A Lincoln's Sparrow came out twice to playback.

We ended the day at the Best Western in Sisters where the White-headed Woodpeckers finally appeared and everybody got nice looks. Many Pygmy Nuthatches and a few White-breasted were frequenting the feeder.



Dinner at the Three Creeks Brewing Company took a while, but ended up being good food. Overnight at the Shilo Inn in Bend.

6/19: Heavenly Acres, Indian Ford CC, Calliope Crossing, FR1018 and Whispering Pines, Black Pine Spring area

After a somewhat late breakfast at 6:30am we dashed over to Sisters and birded the Heavenly Acres. Thankfully, about 12 Pinyon Jays quickly appeared and afforded good looks.

Next up was the Green-tailed Towhee at Indian Ford CG. As soon as we got out, 2 birds flew by us and we got decent looks again.

Calliope Crossing was moderately birdy and we scored with Cassin's Finch, Red-breasted and Red-naped Sapsucker (including a leucistic Red-breasted), Calliope Hummingbird, Western Bluebird and a few others.

We picked up lunch at the Sisters Meat and Smokehouse (great as usual!) and ate at Whispering Pines CG. Only few birds were active, including a Heto Warbler that we wanted to be a Townsend's. We looked hard for woodpeckers along FR1018, but it was close to a complete bust. The strong wind meant that we could not hear tapping and calls were muted. Dusky Flycatcher and Nashville Warbler were new for us. At Black Pine Springs the picture was similar, whatever we tried ended up with few birds and no woodpeckers.



Dinner at Appleby's and overnight at the Shilo Inn.

6/20: Spencer Wells Rd, China Hat CG, Cabin Lake, Ft. Rock

It was a morning that would change my life. Brian and I left our room to have a quick breakfast. When we got back, all my valuables were gone, and Brian's passport and bins, stolen from our hotel room at the Shilo Inn in Bend. The police was called, the robbers are seen on the surveillance video leaving our room. Numb and confused, I decided to continue the tour, without optics.



We arrived mid morning at Spencer Wells Rd. The wind was howling and birds were silent and hunkered down. We still managed to eek out Sagebrush Sparrow and Sage Thrasher. It was a little more protected where you enter the woods, so we added Brewer's Sparrow, Gray Flycatcher and Mountain Bluebird. A Green-tailed Towhee was heard singing in the distance.

China Hat CG was pretty quiet, but a pygmy owl imitation finally brought in

some birds including Mountain Chickadee, Black-throated Gray Warbler and Hermit Thrush (heard only).

At Cabin Lake we found a drip right by the road and Green-tailed Towhee, Red Crossbill, Cassin's Finch, White-headed Woodpecker and Pinyon Jay were seen from up close. At the blind we also found Gray Flycatcher, both bluebirds and 4 Clark's Nutcrackers. That was fun!

En route and at Ft. Rock we saw several Ferruginous Hawks, White-throated Swifts and 2 Prairie Falcons. For the latter we had to hike into the inside of the U.

We were late, so we started our drive to Burns. A stop for an adult Golden Eagle was well worth it.

Dinner at El Toreo in Burns and overnight at the America's Best Value Inn which was clean and well run.

6/21: South of Burns, Malheur NWR, Page Springs CG

In the morning we spent a good hour along Greenhouse Ln and saw many nice birds including Wilson's Phalarope, Long-billed Curlew, Black Tern, Sandhill Crane, Blue-winged Teal, Redhead and Canvasback, White-faced Ibis and a Peregrine Falcon overseeing the scene.

At Malheur Headquarters we found Bullock's Oriole, a baby Great Horned Owl, a Bushtit of the interior race and a pale singing vireo that we chalked up as Cassin's. As usual, many Belding's Ground-Squirrels were zipping around the grounds.

We then drove the Center Patrol Road (CPR) down to Krumbo Pond (many Redheads!) and Buena Vista Overlook where we had lunch. At Benson Pond, a Trumpeter Swan pair on a nest, Eastern Kingbird and Forster's Tern were also nice. At P Ranch we found 2 male Bobolink, but unfortunately they were not singing.



At Page Springs several Yellow-breasted Chats were singing and we had fine views of a Lazuli Bunting. A brief walk uphill had to be aborted because of the hordes of mosquitoes, but we did hear and see a Black-throated Gray Warbler there.

On the way back we stopped for Rock Wren at a spot where the habitat looked suitable, and found a pair.

Along Ruh-Red Rd we saw a pair of Burrowing Owls only after a couple of miles in. A Prairie Falcon - Golden Eagle combo was also delightful.

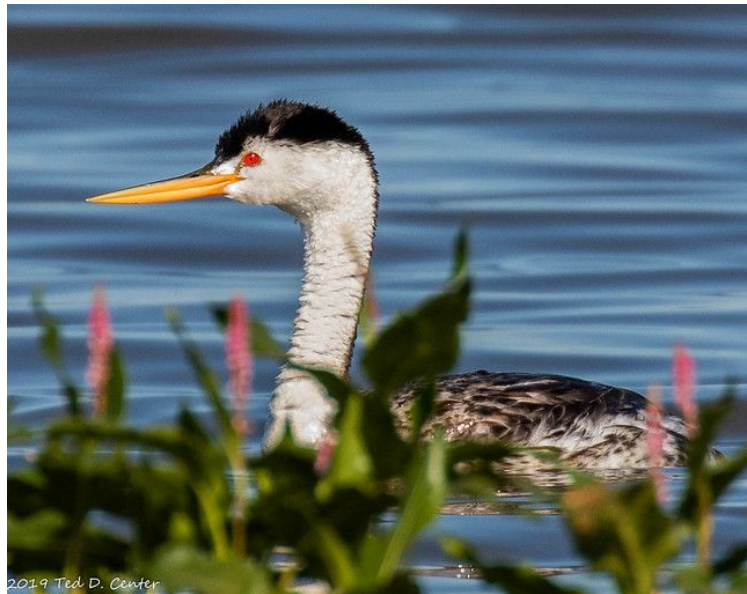
6/22: Sage Hen Summit, Chickahominy Reservoir, around Prineville, Stein's Pillar and Crooked River Wetlands

Our 25min stop at Sage Hen Summit was the best birding for sage/juniper birds of the trip as the wind had finally died down and the sun was out. We quickly found Brewer's and Vesper Sparrow, Ash-throated and Gray Flycatcher, Loggerhead Shrike, Mountain Bluebird and Cassin's Finch. What a fun little stop!

At Chickahominy Reservoir, Western, Clark's and Eared Grebes were all located easily. 2 broods of Bufflehead seemed unusual. Horned Lark, Brewer's and Vesper Sparrow were all present as well. We missed the White Pelican that had been seen minutes before our arrival.

After the longish drive to Prineville we stopped at Campbell Ranch Rd where Tricolored Blackbirds have been breeding the last 2 years. We found several birds nearby, along with a nice Magpie and Bank Swallows.

After lunch at Crooked River Wetlands, Chuck Gates took us up for 2 hours of fun birding near Stein's Pillar in the Ochocos. We finally got a clear Cassin's Vireo, good looks at Brown Creeper, Western Tanagers at every stop and a nice Black-backed Woodpecker which was a great consolation prize for missing Williamson's Sapsucker for the trip. A Cedar Hairstreak and a Pacific Spiketail were exciting for most, even for Chuck. Thanks to Chuck for taking us out, it was great fun!!!



We ended the day at quiet Crooked River Wetlands. A few Marsh Wrens were still singing, Ruddy Duck and Cinnamon Teal were loafing and one or two Common Nighthawks were hunting overhead.

Dinner at the Crossroads BBQ and overnight at the pretty lowly Econolodge.

6/23: Pelton Dam area

On our way back to the Portland airport we made 2 brief stops near the Pelton Dam. It was very mellow and there were some nice birds including a Says Phoebe and many Ospreys and Bullock's Orioles. The target Lark Sparrow did not show.

Then we made a beeline for PDX and everybody was on their way by about noon.

Species list (189 total):

Canada Goose

Trumpeter Swan (pair at Benson Pond)

Wood Duck (Fernhill Wetlands)

Gadwall

American Wigeon

Mallard

Blue-winged Teal (drake on Greenhouse Ln)

Cinnamon Teal

Northern Shoveler

Northern Pintail

Canvasback (2 pairs on Greenhouse Ln)

Redhead

Lesser Scaup

Ring-necked Duck

Harlequin Duck (several at Haystack Rock)

Bufflehead (several with broods at Chickahominy Reservoir)

Common Goldeneye (drake at Bay City Oyster)

Barrow's Goldeneye (3 hens with broods at Fish Lake)

Hooded Merganser

Common Merganser (Seaside area)

Ruddy Duck

Mountain Quail (heard only near Timber)

California Quail

Sooty Grouse (1 hooting bird near Timber)

Pacific Loon (2 at Seaside shoreline and a few more at Silver Point)

Pied-billed Grebe

Eared Grebe (several pairs at Chickahominy Reservoir)

Western Grebe

Clark's Grebe (2 at Chickahominy Reservoir)

Brandt's Cormorant (Haystack Rock)

Pelagic Cormorant (Haystack Rock)

Double-crested Cormorant
Brown Pelican (Seaside coastline)
Great Blue Heron
Great Egret (Fernhill Wetlands)
White-faced Ibis
Turkey Vulture
Osprey
Golden Eagle (1 east of Christmas Valley, 1 along Ruh-Red Rd)
Northern Harrier
Bald Eagle
Swainson's Hawk
Red-tailed Hawk
Ferruginous Hawk (3 at Ft. Rock, 1 south of Burns, 1 near Prineville Reservoir)
Virginia Rail (heard only at Fernhill Reservoir)
Sora
American Coot
Sandhill Crane
Black-necked Stilt
American Avocet
Black Oystercatcher (1 at Seaside Cove, 1 at Haystack Rock)
Killdeer
Long-billed Curlew (1 along Greenhouse Ln)
Wilson's Snipe
Wilson's Phalarope
Spotted Sandpiper
Willet
Common Murre
Pigeon Guillemot (Haystack Rock)
Tufted Puffin (Haystack Rock)
Franklin's Gull
Ring-billed Gull
Western Gull
Glaucous-winged Gull
California Gull (1 at the Safeway in Burns)
Heermann's Gull (Seaside)
Caspian Tern
Black Tern
Forster's Tern (Benson Pond)
Rock Pigeon
Band-tailed Pigeon (near Timber and in Forest Grove)
Eurasian Collared-Dove
Mourning Dove
Great Horned Owl (1 youngster at Malheur HQ)

Northern Pygmy-Owl (1 at Reehers Camp)
Burrowing Owl (2 along Ruh-Red Rd)
Common Nighthawk
Vaux's Swift
White-throated Swift (a few at Ft. Rock)
Anna's Hummingbird
Rufous Hummingbird
Calliope Hummingbird (2 at Calliope Crossing, 1 along FR1018)
Belted Kingfisher
Acorn Woodpecker (Rogers Park)
Red-naped Sapsucker (1 at Calliope Crossing)
Red-breasted Sapsucker (several including a leucistic bird at Calliope Crossing)
Downy Woodpecker
Hairy Woodpecker
White-headed Woodpecker (1 at the Sisters Best Western, 3 at Cabin Lake)
Black-backed Woodpecker (1 along road to Steins Pillar trailhead)
Northern Flicker
American Kestrel
Peregrine Falcon (2 at Seaside Cove, 1 along Greenhouse Ln)
Prairie Falcon (2 at Ft. Rock, 1 at Ruh-Red Rd, 1 along US26 near Hampton)
Olive-sided Flycatcher (near Timber and near Sisters)
Western Wood-Pewee
Willow Flycatcher (near Timber)
Hammond's Flycatcher (Reehers Camp, Whispering Pines CG)
Gray Flycatcher (Spencer Wells Rd, Cabin Lake, Sage Hen Summit)
Dusky Flycatcher (along Trout Creek Butte Rd, near Black Pine Springs)
Pacific-slope Flycatcher (coast range only)
Black Phoebe (Goodspeed Rd, Tillamook)
Say's Phoebe
Ash-throated Flycatcher (Sage Hen Summit)
Western Kingbird
Eastern Kingbird (1 at Detroit Flats, 1 along CPR)
Loggerhead Shrike
Cassin's Vireo (1 near Steins Pillar trailhead)
Warbling Vireo
Pinyon Jay (several near Sisters High School, 1 at Cabin Lake)
Steller's Jay
California Scrub-Jay
Black-billed Magpie
Clark's Nutcracker (4 at Cabin Lake)
American Crow
Common Raven
Horned Lark (3 at Chickahominy Reservoir)

Purple Martin (a few at Bay City Oyster)
Tree Swallow
Violet-green Swallow (several places, but also at Malheur NWR)
Bank Swallow
Barn Swallow
Cliff Swallow
Black-capped Chickadee
Mountain Chickadee
Chestnut-backed Chickadee (coast and coast range only)
Bushtit (Stayton Riverfront Park, 1 interior race at Malheur HQ)
Red-breasted Nuthatch
White-breasted Nuthatch (2 slender-billeds at Rogers Park, rest interior)
Pygmy Nuthatch
Brown Creeper
Rock Wren (only one north of Buena Vista Overlook, Malheur NWR)
House Wren
Pacific Wren
Marsh Wren
Bewick's Wren
American Dipper (near Timber)
Golden-crowned Kinglet
Wrentit (1 stunner at Nehalem Bay SP)
Western Bluebird (near Timber, then again near Sisters and Cabin Lake)
Mountain Bluebird (Spencer Wells Rd, Cabin Lake, Sage Hen Summit)
Swainson's Thrush
Hermit Thrush (China Hat CG)
American Robin
Sage Thrasher (Spencer Wells Rd, but also many other places)
European Starling
Cedar Waxwing
Orange-crowned Warbler
Nashville Warbler (off FR 1018)
MacGillivray's Warbler (near Timber, also heard at Fish Lake)
Common Yellowthroat
Yellow Warbler
Yellow-rumped Warbler
Black-throated Gray Warbler (Coast Range, but also China Hat CG and Page Springs CG)
Hermit Warbler (near Timber)
Wilson's Warbler
Yellow-breasted Chat (3 at Page Springs CG)
Chipping Sparrow
Brewer's Sparrow
Fox Sparrow (Santiam Pass and near Sisters)

Dark-eyed Junco
White-crowned Sparrow
Sagebrush Sparrow (2 birds off Spencer Wells Rd in the sage)
Vesper Sparrow (only at Sage Hen Summit and Chickahominy Reservoir)
Savannah Sparrow
Song Sparrow
Lincoln's Sparrow (2 at Santiam Pass)
Green-tailed Towhee (Indian Ford CG, Spencer Wells Rd and Cabin Lake)
Spotted Towhee
Western Tanager
Black-headed Grosbeak
Lazuli Bunting (near Sisters and Page Springs CG)
Bobolink (2 males just north of P Ranch, Malheur NWR)
Red-winged Blackbird
Tricolored Blackbird (at beginning of Campbell Ranch Rd)
Western Meadowlark
Yellow-headed Blackbird
Brewer's Blackbird
Brown-headed Blackbird
Bullock's Oriole
House Finch
Purple Finch (near Timber)
Cassin's Finch
Red Crossbill (near Timber and Cabin Lake)
Pine Siskin (PCT at Santiam Pass)
Lesser Goldfinch (near PDX and Bend hotel)
American Goldfinch
Evening Grosbeak (well seen near Timber)
House Sparrow

Also: Heto (Hermit x
Townsend's Warbler
at Whispering Pines
CG)

Seen only by some:
Green Heron, Greater
Yellowlegs, Cooper's
Hawk

Other critters:



Mammals:

Townsend's Chipmunk (west side)

Least Chipmunk

Yellow-pine Chipmunk?

Douglas Squirrel (west side)

Golden-mantled Ground-squirrel

California Ground-squirrel

Belding's Ground-squirrel (Malheur area)

Eastern Gray Squirrel

Yellow-bellied Marmot (Malheur area, Bend)

Nutria (Fernhill Wetlands)

Western Cottontail

Black-tailed/Mule Deer

Pronghorn

Coyote

California Sealion

American Pygmy-shrew (dead)

Bullfrog

Red-spotted Garter-Snake

Wood Frog

Propertius Duskywing (Fish Lake)

Echo Azure

Western Tailed-Blue

Western Tiger Swallowtail

Pale Swallowtail

Clodius Parnassian (near Timber)

Cabbage White

sulphur sp

Northern Checkerspot

Cinnabar Moth (the small red moth)

California Tortoiseshell

Painted Lady

Cedar Hairstreak (near Steins Pillar trailhead)



Dark-winged Beetle

Widow Skimmer

Eight-spotted Skimmer

Pacific Spiketail (Steins Pillar trailhead)

Common Green Darner

California Darner (Whitaker Ponds)

darner sp (Steins Pillar trailhead)

Cardinal Meadowhawk

Variegated Meadowhawk (Crooked River Wetlands)

Tule Bluet

Vivid Dancer

Pacific Spiketail near Stein's Pillar trailhead



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