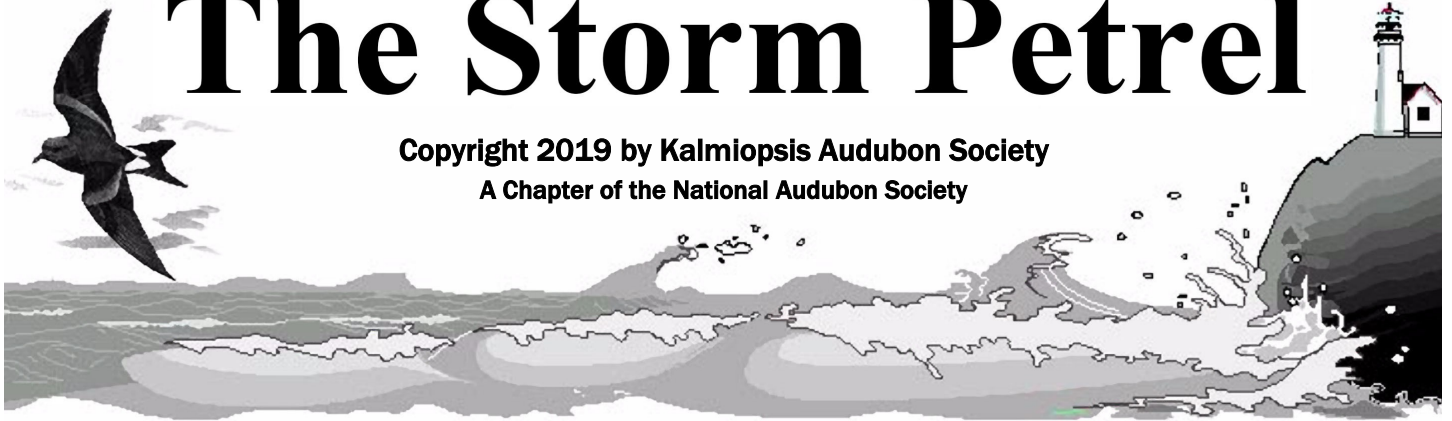


The Storm Petrel

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Volume 42, Number 3

Curry County, Oregon

Third Quarter 2019

UPCOMING OUTINGS AND EVENTS

August 4, Sunday, Let's Go Birding: Crissey Field

Join trip leader Gary Maschmeyer for this outing to view birds in the Winchuck River estuary and also on the ocean. Meet at Azalea Middle School in Brookings (505 Pacific Ave., west of Oak St.) at 8 a.m. to carpool, or at 7:15 a.m. at the Gold Beach Visitor Center for a no-host carpool. (No-host means if no one else shows up, you need to drive down to meet up with Gary in Brookings.) For more information, contact Gary at 541-412-0806 or gmasch@charter.net. It's always good to let him know you are coming in case of any last-minute change in plans. *Sponsored by Kalmiopsis Audubon Society.*

August 10, Saturday, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Cherish the Chetco, Loeb State Park

Free kayaking, river stewardship, and watershed science by the Wild and Scenic Chetco River.

Riverside activities, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.: Guided hike, watershed science, trash pick-up, and free lunch.

River float cleanup and free lunch, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. (limited boat and shuttle spots).

RSVP to Miranda at South Coast Watershed Council, 541-247-2755, ext. 8#, or miranda.gray@currywatersheds.org. *Sponsored by the South Coast Watershed Council.*

August 14 through 16, Audubon Nature Camp for Kids, Port Orford

Kids from grades 2 through 5 are invited with their parents to this free day camp to learn about local birds and their habitats, including our forests, wetlands, and rivers! Contact Teresa Bird for more information and to sign up: teresa.e.bird@gmail.com. *Sponsored by Kalmiopsis Audubon Society.*



August 23, Friday, 6:30 p.m., The Lives of Lamprey, Curry Public Library, Gold Beach

Renowned lamprey biologist Stewart Reid will give a presentation about the lives of the amazing, ancient but little-known lamprey. Like salmon, lamprey have an anadromous life cycle and play many important roles in our river and marine ecosystems. *Sponsored by Curry Watersheds Partnership and Arch Rock Brewing.*

September 8, Saturday, Let's Go Birding: Arizona Beach State Park

Join trip leader Gary Maschmeyer for this outing to look for songbirds in surrounding forests, for Virginia Rail and Black Phoebe in the ponds, and for cormorants, grebes, and possibly Black Oystercatchers from the beach. Meet Gary at the Gold Beach Visitor Center at 7:45 a.m., or to carpool from Brookings, meet at the Azalea Middle School parking lot (505 Pacific Ave.) at 7 a.m. People coming from Port Orford should meet the group at the Arizona Beach parking area east of Highway 101 at 8:15 a.m. Arizona Beach State Park is located just north of Prehistoric Gardens, about halfway between Gold Beach and Port Orford. *Sponsored by Kalmiopsis Audubon Society.*

September 8, Saturday, 1 p.m., Chasing Dragons, Tolowa Dunes, Crescent City

Biologist and dragonfly expert Sandra Hunt von-Arb will give a workshop focused on these amazing, ancient flying insects. Meet at the Lake Earl Information Center, 2591 Old Mill Road, Crescent City. To register, or for more information, call Susan at (707) 465-6191. *Sponsored by the Redwood Parks Conservancy and Tolowa Dunes Stewards, in collaboration with California State Parks and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.*

Upcoming Outings and Events, continued on page 4

From the President's Desk

Summer greetings everyone! I hope you have been enjoying the long and delightful days — with time in gardens, on beaches and headlands, and up our beautiful rivers. In this issue of the *Storm Petrel* I am excited to introduce our new KAS logo (read more below). In the coming months we'll be redesigning a new *Petrel* header to showcase it, so keep your eye out for a new look this fall.

The flight of our new logo symbolizes some big changes at Kalmiopsis Audubon Society (KAS). As longtime members know, one of the things that makes KAS special is that our local group is like extended family. People from all over Curry County

We're now at a time of big transition, with new officers and new tools that will help us become more effective.

become members and stick with us — sometimes for decades. It's been the same with our KAS board, a group that has been deeply loyal and dedicated to doing the work it takes for our small grassroots group to stay effective. We're now at a time of big transition, with new officers taking the reins. As I reported in our last *Petrel*, our longtime Secretary/Vice President Al Geiser and Treasurer Joan Geiser — with a combined record of more than 40 years of service to KAS! — decided to step down on June 30. They have turned over their responsibilities to a new set of officers.

In June, the KAS board elected Foncy Prescott to be our new Vice President, Max Beeken to be our new Secretary, and Sara Lovendahl to be our new Treasurer. With Sara stepping up to be Treasurer, longtime board member Linda Tarr will take on the job of membership coordinator. I am confident this new group of officers — with strong records of service on the KAS board — will do a great job. Already they are working to bring KAS into the 21st century with some new tools that will help us become more efficient and effective. Please join me in giving a big thank you to ALL of these dedicated and capable individuals for their service to Kalmiopsis Audubon!

In particular, I want to thank Sara for her excellent work over the past four years as our membership coordinator. Not only was she attentive to members' questions and concerns, but she brought new ideas

and improved our membership system, which has resulted in more members renewing on time, giving gift memberships, and staying engaged, with the positive outcome of a larger KAS membership overall. Sara's many behind-the-scenes contributions to our board and group have been invaluable!

Meanwhile, as we approach our group's 40th anniversary next year, we have been working to upgrade some of our basic organizational infrastructure. Last year we got a small grant from the Brainerd Foundation to help us develop our new logo, to upgrade our website (so it will be smart phone compatible, since most people now use their phones to access the Web), and to develop better systems to manage our communication (email list), budgeting, and membership. I am grateful that Teresa Bird has taken the lead in implementing these important projects for our group. You can look forward to seeing some of these exciting changes soon! We plan to bring the new website online later this summer. Please don't hesitate to be in touch if you come up against any glitches as we make changes. There may be some need for tinkering until we get things just right.

Finally, Representative Peter DeFazio will be coming to Curry County for his usual summer "town hall"

The Storm Petrel is the quarterly newsletter of Kalmiopsis Audubon Society, P.O. Box 1265, Port Orford, OR 97465, in Curry County, Oregon. Kalmiopsis Audubon Society is a chapter of the National Audubon Society.

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The KAS board meets quarterly. Visitors are always welcome at meetings and other functions. Please call any of the listed officers for the date and location of the board meeting.

Officers

<i>President</i>	Ann Vileisis	(541) 332-0261
<i>Vice President</i>	Foncy Prescott	(541) 332-1032
<i>Secretary</i>	Max Beeken	(541) 373-1599
<i>Treasurer</i>	Sara Lovendahl	(541) 366-2063

Coordinators

<i>Conservation Chair</i>	Ann Vileisis	(541) 332-0261
<i>The Storm Petrel</i>	Penny Suess	(541) 332-3017
<i>Membership</i>	Linda Tarr	(541) 332-1032
<i>Bird Count/ Bird Notes</i>	Jim Rogers	(541) 332-2555
<i>Dark Skies</i>	Al Geiser	(541) 332-6720
<i>Let's Go Birding</i>	Gary Maschmeyer	(541) 412-0806

Directors

Max Beeken	2018 - 2022	maxbeeken@gmail.com
Deborah Buitron	2016 - 2020	grebes@frontier.com
Al Geiser	2018 - 2022	oneocean@frontier.com
Joan Geiser	2018 - 2022	oneocean@frontier.com
Sara Lovendahl	2017 - 2021	sjlovedahl@charter.net
Gary Nuechterlein	2016 - 2020	grebes@frontier.com
Tim Palmer	2019 - 2023	tim@timpalmer.org
Foncy Prescott	2019 - 2023	foncyprescott@frontier.com
Penny Suess	2017 - 2021	penny@net-gain.us
Linda Tarr	2019 - 2023	lindatarr@frontier.com
Ann Vileisis	2016 - 2020	annvil@earthlink.net

KAS Website

<http://www.kalmiopsisaudubon.org>

meetings. On Tuesday, August 27, at 5 p.m., he will be in Gold Beach (Curry Public Library, 94341 3rd St.), and on Wednesday, August 28, at 10:30 a.m., he will be in Brookings (Chetco Community Public Library, 405 Alder St.). Transportation and infrastructure are the topics for both meetings.

It's always good to attend town halls, but it will be especially important for us to give Rep. DeFazio a big thank you for his efforts to help us protect the Wild and Scenic Chetco River and the Wild and Scenic Elk with the Oregon Wildlands Act that passed back in February. Because there is such a prevalent myth that rural people don't care about the environment, I think we always need to show up and voice our concerns to prove otherwise. And of course, I am a firm believer that we need to THANK our elected officials when they do good things!

Also, a reminder: If you don't get our email HOOT OUT, please sign up for updates about news and events between issues of the *Storm Petrel* by sending me an email at annvil@earthlink.net. Have a wonderful summer!



New KAS Logo

I am delighted to introduce our new KAS logo. A board committee worked closely with a graphic artist to come up with the design. It draws upon our traditional Storm Petrel but gives it a simpler, modern style that can be recognizable at a small scale (needed for smart phones). I like the way that the logo captures three things we work on. The bird symbolizes birds and wildlife; the mountains, forests and lands; the wave, rivers and oceans. Most of all, I love the way that land and water come together to be the wind under the bird's wings. It shows how everything is connected, yet it also emblemizes how nature inspires us to come together into a force that can elevate and empower us to soar. May our new logo serve us well and inspire us to continue soaring!

– Ann Vileisis

Membership News

Greetings! I hope everyone is enjoying our glorious coastal summer. A sunny welcome to our new Kalmiopsis Audubon Society members: Bruce Adams, Amy Dial, Laura Greathead, Jennifer Hammargren, Dove Hotz & Eric Signell, Margery McDowell, Joan Samonski, Randall Scholten, and Barbara Taylor.

KAS has wonderful events planned throughout the summer, and we encourage you to join us. Kudos to all who paid their Kalmiopsis dues! Thanks also to those who have given gift memberships to friends and relatives. It's a great way to spread vital info about conservation and to share opportunities for upcoming activities. I am pleased to report that our KAS family has grown to over 400 members!

I want to thank all KAS members for your support during my tenure as Membership Chair. Soon I will be passing the torch to Linda Tarr, who has exciting plans for our membership process. During our membership transition period, you may still contact me at 541-366-2063 or sjlovendahl@charter.net with any membership concerns or ideas for improvement.

– Sara Lovendahl

Oregon Shorebird Festival

Join fellow birders for the Oregon Shorebird Festival September 20 to 22. The festival, housed at the Oregon Institute for Marine Biology (OIMB) in Charleston, is a celebration of Oregon shorebirds and an educational experience, featuring field trips, excellent talks, bird-watching, and shared meals.



Semipalmated Plover

Photo by Lois Miller

Online registration will open around August 1 at www.oregonshorebirdfestival.org. This year's program will feature Janet Essley from The Red Knot Project. Red Knots are endangered shorebirds renowned for their nearly 20,000-mile annual migration from South America to Boreal Canada and back, passing through the eastern United States. The event is sponsored by Cape Arago Audubon Society in partnership with OIMB and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. ■

CONSERVATION NEWS

by Ann Vileisis

Floras Lake Land Swap Moving Ahead

I am pleased to report that, on June 5, the Curry County Board of Commissioners (BOC) finally voted 2 to 1 to proceed with the Floras Lake land swap with Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD). Commissioners Boice and Gold voted in favor, with Mr. Paasch voting against. It was the third such BOC vote after what seemed like an inordinate number of meetings this spring — as those of you who receive our email HOOT OUTS and came to support the effort can attest!

The county agreed to trade 90 acres of its land south of Floras Lake, which is adjacent to Floras Lake State Natural Area and has no public access, for 33 acres of state-owned land located at the intersection of Highway 101 and Airport Road that is fully accessible. The state's land was once proposed as a way-side for travelers, but its timber was cut in the 1960s and it was never developed.

The very final step of this land swap will require an approval by vote of the Oregon State Parks Commission, which will hold its decisional meeting in Brookings on September 18. Once again, we will need to have supporters show up to once and for all push it over the finish line!

Getting to this point has taken more than a decade. As longtime KAS members know, many controversial ideas have been proposed for the county's Floras Lake lands through the years, but all have proven infeasible owing to lack of public access and other constraints, including wetlands. In addition, proposals for development and logging have been met with stiff opposition from the local community, which cherishes Floras Lake and its beautiful lakefront that everyone can enjoy. The lake is a magnet for tourists and campers who stay at the popular Boice-Cope County Park and frequent the local market and restaurants.

Local resident Bob Morrow has called Floras Lake “the soul of Langlois.” All along, KAS has actively worked for conservation because the lake also provides important wintering habitat for waterfowl and rearing habitat for coho, and is a favorite place of many of our members.

KAS and local citizens have long suggested a land swap with State Parks could be a win-win for the county — conserving the stunning but undevelopable lakefront while obtaining property that could be used to generate revenue. Back in 2015, the county's Real Property Task Force, which considered all county-owned properties, recommended a consideration of a land swap with State Parks. That same year, the BOC directed staff to engage with local citizens. It seemed the time was ripe to push for a proactive solution rather than continue fighting off ridiculous proposals.

In 2017, county staff held a public meeting in Langlois about the future of Floras Lake, attended by more than 150 people who voiced overwhelming public support for a conservation or recreation option for the lands. In 2017, the BOC directed staff to work toward a possible swap. Through discussions with State Parks, the current proposal was put forth. In fall of 2018, the county and state properties were each appraised. In early 2019, State Parks proposed minor adjustments to make up for disparities in value.

Though we would have preferred for the county's entire 500-acre parcel to be swapped, State Parks was willing to consider only the westernmost 90 acres adjacent to Floras Lake Natural Area at this time, citing its own budgetary constraints and a new policy priority for acquisition of recreation rather than conservation lands. At an April BOC meeting, Commissioner Boice pressed for OPRD to add a trail plan for the Floras Lake property. Chris Havel of State Parks agreed and suggested the proposed deal could be a good start toward further collaborations in the future. Commissioner Gold concurred with the deal, stating: “A bird in hand is worth two in the bush.”

UPCOMING OUTINGS AND EVENTS *(continued from page 1)*

September 15, Sunday, 8 a.m., Tolowa Dunes Coastal Birding Trip, Crescent City

Join Redwood Audubon Society trip leader Alexa DeJoannis for this field trip looking for birds in Tolowa Dunes State Park, walking 1.5 miles through woods and meadows to the ocean. Meet behind the Chart Room Restaurant on Anchor Way in the Crescent City Harbor at 8 a.m. For more information, contact Alexa at (202) 288-5174. *Sponsored by Redwood Region Audubon Society.*

Please mark your calendars for these additional fall events, and sign up for the Kalmiopsis Audubon HOOT OUT newsletter for updates:

September 20 through 22, Oregon Shorebird Festival, Charleston

October 6, Let's Go Birding: Pistol River

We'll also be scheduling fall Kalmiopsis Audubon Highway 101 cleanups. ■





However, Commissioner Paasch, newest to the board, wanted more time to pursue a bigger deal, for the entire 500-acre property. He called several big corporations — Shell Oil, General Electric, and Pembina (the Canadian Company proposing the Jordan Cove LNG terminal in Coos Bay). His idea was that their need to mitigate for environmental damage elsewhere could help Curry County conserve Floras Lake, but after receiving initial calls back, he conceded at the May 8 BOC meeting that the companies had shown no further interest. He then asked OPRD about swapping for an entirely different State Parks property, south of Brookings at McVay Beach. Chris Havel indicated that a state law prohibited OPRD from trading away oceanfront property, so it would not be an easy transaction, but he suggested it would be possible to consider that matter separately in the future.

Given all the work that had gone into the deal at hand, we were concerned that scrapping it to start negotiating an entirely new deal would lead to a dead end!

After further discussion, Commissioner Gold made a motion to move ahead with the current swap. Commissioner Boice also favored moving ahead, citing his family's long connection to Langlois, the need to conserve Floras Lake, and the possibility of building a better relationship with State Parks. However, Commissioner Paasch wanted more time to research a different solution. County Attorney John Huttl put the brakes on the motion, saying that a more precise resolution was needed to proceed. The commissioners

voted 2 to 1 to direct staff to develop a proper resolution to be considered at the next meeting on May 22.

However, at the May 22 meeting, there was no proper resolution as Boice and Gold had requested, but rather an entirely different and vague proposal put forth — to consider an entirely new deal: to swap OPRD's McVay Rock parcel down in Harbor for the Floras Lake property. It made little sense since the staff report gave the value of the new OPRD property at around \$2 million, while the Floras Lake property was appraised at \$200,000. It also seemed at odds with what OPRD had stated publicly and what I confirmed through a public records request to OPRD, that such a deal would be complicated and would require terminating the current deal.

One person showed up to voice anger and inaccurate information about the current deal and support for Commissioner Paasch's McVay deal, and Mr. Paasch's wife took to Facebook to criticize the existing deal, some of which was picked up by the *Curry Pilot*. It seemed that there were people behind the scenes trying to orchestrate a different outcome. However, with so many supporters, Commissioners Boice and Gold stayed steady and again asked for a proper resolution to proceed with the existing deal.

Though at times it seemed like we might be thrown back to square one, in the end, Commissioners Court Boice and Sue Gold stood with us and carried the day. Boice made a very detailed motion so that it couldn't be scuttled. Gold seconded. ►

◀ KAS members who showed up at meeting after meeting — from all over Curry County, including Brookings, Gold Beach, and Port Orford — were absolutely critical to this positive outcome. Though we don't see eye-to-eye with Commissioner Boice's views on forest management, in this case he showed great leadership as a commissioner, listening to different viewpoints and recognizing the importance of local citizens' concerns, as did Commissioner Gold. So if you've not done so, please send them an email to thank them for their support (or just tell them in person if you get a chance). Here are their email addresses: Court Boice, boicec@co.curry.or.us; Sue Gold, gold@s@co.curry.or.us.

However, beyond this critical success at the county level, there is one more hurdle. We need to pull together one final time on September 18 with the Oregon State Parks Commission, so please mark your calendars. I'll send out more information via our HOOT OUT when the agenda is made public. If you've not yet done so, please sign up by sending me an email, so I can keep you posted. If all goes as we hope it will (fingers crossed!), we'll plan a fun event to "celebrate the swap" in early October. Another reason to sign up for the HOOT OUT.

Jordan Cove FERC Hearing

On June 24, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) held a hearing in Coos Bay regarding the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the proposed Jordan Cove liquefied natural gas (LNG) facility and pipeline. The federal agency picked a highly unusual public hearing protocol, requiring individuals to testify in private with two hearing examiners. This did not allow the general public to hear any of the statements. (Many think the odd format was chosen to intimidate participants.) But nevertheless, citizens opposed to the LNG project showed up in force, with far more red shirts — signifying opposition — than green, which were worn by supporters. Opposition groups also held a lively press conference and rally outside the hearing building.

Proposed by a Canadian corporation (Pembina), the Pacific Connector Pipeline would slice across southern Oregon for 230 miles (with 400 stream crossings) to the Jordan Cove LNG facility, which would



Steller's Jay Photo by Rowley Willis

liquefy the gas and load it onto tankers for 100 percent export to Asia.

KAS board member Tim Palmer presented testimony against the project, stating that the DEIS inadequately evaluated the hazards of the pipeline and gas facility, that conclusions of "no significant impact" were contradicted by information presented in the DEIS, and that "mitigation" proposals failed to address the problems. He also told them that the DEIS did not adequately consider the project's projection for at least 30 more years of burning fossil fuel as a source of global warming. As you may remember, the project would become Oregon's largest source of carbon emissions, at a time when we need to significantly reduce greenhouse gases.

Shortly after FERC's public hearings, the State of Oregon submitted 250 pages of critical testimony, from several state agencies, about shortcomings of FERC's DEIS and its failure to adequately consider environmental impacts and also public safety in such a high hazard earthquake zone. (Earlier this year, the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality denied Jordan Cove a key water quality permit.)

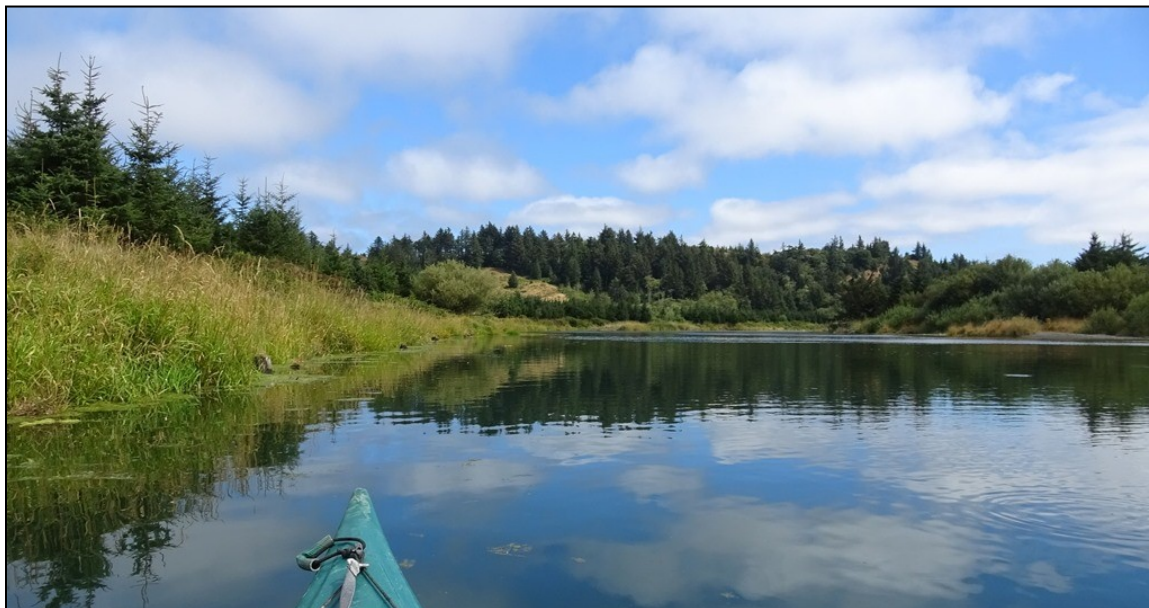
Jordan Cove will next need to respond to public comments. Twice in the past FERC has denied approval of this project based on its negative effects and condemnation of private property along the pipeline route. However, the current FERC includes members appointed by the Trump administration, which has vowed to increase natural gas exports and seems to favor pipelines.

Thanks to all KAS members who sent letters and who attended and provided testimony at the hearing. We need to keep showing up and writing letters, which will hopefully encourage Governor Brown to take a stand against this project. We'll keep you posted on ways to help.

Sixes and Pistol, Risky Business

In June, we got word of two proposals for rock removal projects being considered by the Curry County Planning Commission (PC). I submitted comments from KAS regarding both.

The first was for gravel removal at the head of the Pistol River estuary (where a larger gravel project and asphalt plant was proposed in 2003). Of course, estuaries are extremely important for the rearing of juvenile salmon. They're where little fish fatten and smoltify before they head out into the ocean. The project proponent, a local property owner, wants to remove gravel to sell while also "fixing" the river, which he says is "in disarray," but the plan he presented was extremely vague. Local residents are also quite alarmed not only by potential impacts to the



Sixes River
Photo
bobseyes.net

river but also to their quiet rural neighborhood, since the project calls for a rock crusher. Many of them showed up to testify at the June PC meeting.

Although the Pistol River and its estuary are impacted by historical sedimentation and downcutting, we'd need a serious geomorphology study and plan before proceeding with gravel removal as "restoration." The County Planning Department maintains that the project would still need to get approvals from the Army Corps of Engineers (COE), the Oregon Department of State Lands (DSL), and the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) — all of which have more stringent requirements. The county planner has recommended approval with a "condition" that all these permits be approved before any aggregate can be removed.

The second proposal, for a quarry up Sixes River, was identified in the public notice merely as a "rock quarry." (Upland rock quarries are common in Curry and provide an alternative to in-stream gravel mining, which can damage salmon habitat.) However, at the eleventh hour, we realized it was actually a proposal to remove 440,000 TONS of jetty rock to repair jetties on the Columbia River! The megaquarry site would impact nine tributaries to Edson Creek, which hosts a popular BLM campground and also provides habitat for threatened coastal coho and cool, clear water to the Sixes River.

Local residents are extremely concerned about the river and also about noise from blasting and traffic of 40 big trucks a day hauling giant rocks on their small road. Only adjacent landowners were notified, so many others did not find out about the proposal until the very last minute. Citizens who attended the hearing asked for the record to be left open to allow more time for public input. The PC allowed a week for ad-

ditional written testimony but declined to allow any further consideration from the public. Kiewit, the large construction company proposing the project (based in Omaha, Nebraska), gave the PC a full-on presentation. As with the Pistol River proposal, the county maintains that the megaquarry would still need to get additional approvals from state and federal agencies, all of which have more stringent requirements, and therefore recommends approval with a "condition" that all such permits be approved before any jetty rock can be quarried.

However, as we go to press, the county has received new information from applicants and now recommends that the PC reopen the record for another week and reset the process. It's likely that the record will be open until August 1 and decisions will be deferred until the August PC meeting.

A couple of years ago, Curry County changed the structure of its PC, citing the difficulty of getting volunteers. It used to be that there were three commissioners each from north, central, and south Curry County, meeting once a month. Now there are two from each region and a single "floating" member, who meet on "as-needed" basis, with county planning staff making more administrative decisions. There are currently two vacancies for positions representing north and central Curry County. If anyone out there has the inclination to volunteer, consider these important positions that have a direct impact on the future of our county as good opportunities to make a difference.

Shasta-Agness Project

In late May, the Rogue River–Siskiyou National Forest (RR–SNF) released the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for its proposed Shasta-Agness landscape restoration/timber sale ►

◀ project, slated for the vicinity of Agness, including parts of the Shasta Costa and lower Illinois watersheds. This plan has been many years in the making.

The goal is to allow for timber harvest in areas where it can also accomplish positive aims, such as restoring oak savannas in places where fire suppression has led to conifer forest encroachment. White oak savannas used to be a more common and beneficial habitat type for wildlife but have been significantly reduced since fires have been suppressed over the past 70 years. The project also aims to thin areas around historical sugar pine stands and around Jeffrey pines in areas with serpentine substrate to reduce flammable, brushy undergrowth that could intensify wildfires.

The Forest Service also intends to put fire back onto the land with controlled burns, with the twin goals of reducing what they call “fuel” loads (shrubby vegetation) and also of restoring biodiversity in fire-adapted ecosystems. Some revenue generated from timber sales is to be reinvested in restoration projects, such as decommissioning slide-prone roads and repairing damaged culverts. Before this, the Forest’s last large-scale logging project (Coastal Healthy Forests) focused on thinning of plantations (previously logged areas). Over the past decade, timber sales authorized under that plan, finalized in 2009, have proceeded in almost all of our coastal watersheds. While we appreciate that the Forest has taken a “restoration” approach with this new project, we definitely have some concerns.

Our biggest concern is that the project could lead to a massive influx of noxious weeds, such as Himalayan blackberry. The plan recognizes this high risk, but we don’t feel assured that the Forest can adequately address it. Also, at a spring field trip to the project area, we were dismayed to learn that the Forest Service did not have a robust plan for restoring white oaks to the project area — only plans to log and let oaks come back! The project also lacks detailed planning for how to re-introduce fire in a way that would help rather than harm oak seedlings, and for how the agency will be able to implement regular, controlled burns into the future, given lack of funding, lack of skilled technicians, and narrow time-slots when conditions for such burning are possible.

The most controversial aspect of this project is that the Forest Service has invoked exemptions to the Northwest Forest Plan in order to log thousands of trees over the age of 80, with altered management plans for sensitive wildlife, such as red tree voles and coastal martens. This definitely makes us wary at a time when the powers-that-be in Washington, D.C., have directed the RR–SNF to significantly ramp up its timber harvest — a mandate based on board feet

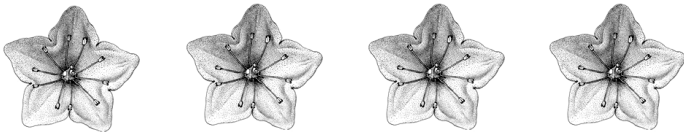
and agency budgets, not ecosystem outcomes.

What makes this project especially challenging to evaluate is that we seem to be on the brink of a paradigm change in terms of thinking about forests and fires in the face of climate change. In dry-side coniferous forested ecosystems (think ponderosa pine forests), foresters say that thinning followed by controlled burns can reduce fire risk and help create a more diverse forest structure that is more resilient to wildfires. The forests around Agness have a historical fire-return frequency of about 15 years, but active suppression has meant that forests in that area have not burned (except for the Klondike Fire) for a much longer period. The hard question is, can forest management, such as thinning and prescribed burning, ecologically replace historic fires?



Now that we have so many noxious invasive weeds, it may not be so easy to “turn back the clock.” Also, many people have experienced how closed-canopy forests of the Coast Range can be cool and moist, while open-canopy forests feel hot, dry, and open to wind. However, foresters say that big trees growing in arid microclimates are under increasing drought stress and will die out (this is already happening in the Agness area, a visible sign of climate change in our place) — so better thin them now to reduce water stress and help some large trees and better-adapted oak trees survive. The bottom line is that there remain a lot of unknowns.

I am grateful that Teresa Bird took the lead on analyzing and writing constructive comments from KAS on this project. Teresa has served as our KAS delegate to the Wild Rivers Forest Collaborative and has attended many field trips related to this project over the past couple of years. One of the key recommendations we made was for the Forest to better plan for adaptive management, proceeding incrementally so that if things don’t work out as intended, adjustments can be made. The Forest must next consider and address public comments. ■



Native Plant Notes

By Teresa Bird

Kalmiopsis leachiana

For our first *Storm Petrel* column about native plants it seemed appropriate to highlight the plant that bears the name of our organization, *Kalmiopsis leachiana*. It is named after Lilla Leach, the first botanist who discovered the plant in 1930. She thought that the small shrub looked similar to black laurel (*Kalmia polifolia*), and so she added the ending “-opsis,” meaning “looks like,” to *Kalmia* to name the genus of her new flower. According to the *Oregon Encyclopedia*, she later wrote of the moment of discovery, “[I] dropped to my knees ... I had never seen anything so beautiful before.”

This small pink flower is indeed enchanting, looking strikingly like a tiny rhododendron — and it is, in fact, the smallest member of the family to which rhododendrons belong (*Ericaceae*). It grows exclusively in (is endemic to) the rocky, high elevation areas of the *Kalmiopsis* Wilderness, so much so that the wilderness was named for this rare plant. It grows on ultramafic soils, which were formed by oceanic crust uplift and are extremely high in minerals and low in nutrients. These soils support a rare community of plants that are uniquely adapted to survive in such harsh conditions.

The *Kalmiopsis leachiana*, in particular, is a relict species that has survived on these rocky soils since before the ice ages, when elevated sea levels left only the highest peaks above water as offshore islands. These areas also never glaciated, allowing the *Kalmiopsis* to persist through time and extreme environmental changes. This is partially why it is restricted to high elevation areas, making those who want to find it really put in the effort!

I had the privilege of seeing this plant for the first time this spring on a backpacking trip in early June. That perfect, delicate pink flower was a delight to find! Some of the blooms were a little past their prime, so I would plan a *Kalmiopsis leachiana* quest for late May. Start at Vulcan Lake trailhead (bring a high clearance vehicle — that road is not in the best shape) and head towards Johnson Butte. It is, conveniently, growing right along the trail on the way to Dry Butte and Johnson Butte — even after the recent wildfires. Happy botanizing! ■

POETRY CORNER



Spotted Owl

by Vicki Graham

Far up Panther Creek,
where wind sings
counterpoint to the curl of water
on rock, I listen.

Aspect ratio. Wing loading.
Lift and drag. Aerodynamics
explains flight, but says nothing
of silence: the fine comb
on your flight feathers
breaking turbulence,
the velvet fringe trailing,
muffling sound.

What would it be like
to live in a body
evolved for silent flight,
to belong, as you belong,
to this forest, this creek,
this darkening night?

If I close my eyes and wait,
will you come?
Will the air ripple
against my cheek
as you sweep silently past?

Photo: AmericanForests.org

BIRD NOTES

Late Spring / Early Summer 2019

by Jim Rogers

May 1 – Nancy Stotz of Brookings had a **Hooded Oriole** on her property.

May 4 – Marius Wasbauer reported the first **Black-headed Grosbeak** of the season at his feeder. On his property off Timeus Ranch Road he also had **Valley Quail**, **Band-tailed Pigeons**, **Mourning Doves**, **Juncos**, **Spotted Towhees**, **Purple Finches**, **Allen's** and **Anna's Hummingbirds**.

May 8 – From a cruise ship in Curry County waters, Skip Russell et al. saw a **Murphy's Petrel**, a **Hawaiian Petrel**, and a **Cook's Petrel**.

May 11 – Tim Rodenkirk was near Game Lake, at about the 4,000-foot elevation, and saw a **Townsend's Solitaire**, **Dusky Flycatchers**, and several **Fox Sparrows**, plus a male **Anna's Hummingbird** feeding on the abundant red-flowering currant. Tim also spotted a **Mountain Chickadee** at the base of Collier Butte (3,700 feet).

May 12 – Tim Rodenkirk was on Iron Mountain (4,000 feet), east of Port Orford, where he heard many singing **Hermit Thrushes**, **Purple Martins** overhead, calling **Sooty Grouse**, **Mountain Quail**, and **Olive-sided Flycatchers**. Jerry Becker witnessed an immature **Golden Eagle** flying above Elk River.

May 14 – Jim and Carrie Rogers have had about 20 **Black-headed Grosbeaks** coming to their feeders on Elk River. Every spring they come for about two weeks before they disperse to nest.

May 15 – Lisa Neher has had six **Black-headed Grosbeaks** and a female **Downy Woodpecker** coming to her feeder, along with the usual **Stellar Jays** and **Chickadees**.

May 16 – Tim Rodenkirk was in the Chetco Bar burn area, where there are standing dead trees but not many green trees, which have been salvage-logged. At every stop he saw several **Lazuli Buntings**.

May 31 – A **Bullock's Oriole** was seen at Floras Lake by Tim Rodenkirk.

June 1 – Terry Wahl saw four migrant **Western Kingbirds** on the family ranch. He has also seen **Black Swifts** most days for the past two weeks, and about two weeks ago he saw a **Mockingbird**.

June 2 – Terry Wahl reported a pair of **Blue-winged Teal** on a pond on the ranch. Joni Dawning spotted a male **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** west of the cemetery on Cape Blanco.



Rose-breasted
Grosbeak

Photo by Lois Miller

June 7 – Joni Dawning observed a “territorial” **Mockingbird** by the footbridge in Arizona Beach State Park.

June 10 – Jim Johnson saw a **Gray Catbird** singing near the pond at Arizona Beach State Park. It then moved to the trees near the footbridge. At 6:40 a.m., Tim Rodenkirk saw four **Black Swifts** flying low over the parking lot at Floras Lake.

June 11 – Tim Rodenkirk got a look at the singing **Gray Catbird** at Arizona Beach. He also saw a first year male **Redstart** near Pistol River on Old Highway 101.

June 14 – The **Catbird** was still singing near the bridge at Arizona Beach, Tim Rodenkirk reported. He also saw two **Heermann's Gulls** in the gull flock near the Pistol River Bridge.

June 16 – George and Donna Converse have been seeing a **Red-throated Loon** under the bridge on the river at Gold Beach for the past several days.

June 19 – Melissa McDowell reports the **Gray Catbird** is still singing away at Arizona Beach.

July 3 – Tim Rodenkirk saw **Bank Swallows** flying overhead at the Ophir Rest Area. Perhaps they are from a Nesika Beach colony that is nearby.

July 10 – Jim and Carrie Rogers are seeing three little fluffballs of baby **Spotted Sandpipers** running along Anvil Creek with their parents. Sharyn Becker says she's seen more **Spotted Sandpipers** on Elk River this spring than she's seen since the 1980s.

July 15 – Ann Vileisis reported a line of **Brown Pelicans** flying off Port Orford Heads. It's always good to see the pelicans return to our area after they finish nesting in Baja and southern California.

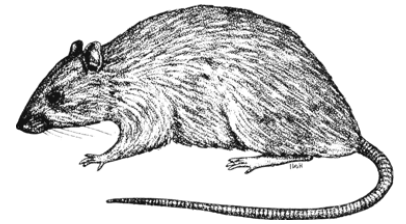
If you have any bird sightings to report, please send me an email at chlparl@wildblue.net. ■

Curry Mammals I Have Known

by Jim Rogers

Norway Rat – *Rattus Norvegicus*

Ever since I've lived in the West, I've been aware of the two rat species that dwell in Curry County — the bushy-tailed woodrat and the dusky-footed woodrat. The former is easily identified by its bushy tail and the latter by its light gray feet (not a very useful characteristic). The bushy-tailed is found throughout the West, where it is commonly called the pack rat because of its proclivity of carrying away small objects. The dusky-footed woodrat is found from the Coast Range Mountains to the ocean. It might better be named the "bare-tailed woodrat," but alas, it isn't. For the past few years I've been hearing reports of non-native Norway rats, *Rattus norvegicus*, in Curry County. Sure enough, our cats and dog have delivered an occasional Norway rat carcass to the doorstep this summer. The main difference between the dusky-footed and the Norway lies in the tail. The tail of the dusky-footed is totally covered with very short hair, while the tail of the Norway is bare and scaly. The dusky-footed's feet are gray/tan while the Norway's feet are white.



Woodrats have been around for thousands of years, whereas, according to *Natural History of Oregon Coast Mammals*, the Norway rat has only been known in America since 1775. They vary in size from that of a big mouse to two feet in length (including the tail), and they may weigh nearly a pound. Norway rats travel quickly from vessels and trains and will eat almost anything. They are active throughout day and night and will thrive wherever humans do. They don't build a nest and are prolific breeders throughout the year, producing six to eight litters of between six and eight offspring per year. As far as is known, they inhabit only areas in close proximity to human abodes. They are secretive, living in underground burrows.

By far, the Norway rat is the most undesirable mammal in the entire world. It carries many diseases, including bubonic plague, leprosy, typhus, spotted fever, tularemia, cholera, tuberculosis, dysentery, hoof and mouth disease, rabies, and more. If it finds a poultry house, it destroys all the chickens and all the eggs. It sometimes kills newborn lambs. It is a filthy animal and destroys a great deal of food by contaminating it. And yet ... I recall visiting an old friend, a cop in East L.A. We were chatting about old times over a cold beer when I felt something scoot up my back and along my shoulder. I looked and found myself face to face with a white rat. My friend laughed at my discomfort and assured me that a white rat was an ideal pet in a small city apartment. It was clean, friendly, and intelligent. I would definitely prefer an albino rat on my shoulder to a snake! *A chacun son goût!* Even the most reviled mammal can find true love with a human who has a tough job. ■

A Three "Cat" Morning

by Sharyn Becker

Each summer, from May 1 through August 5, my husband Jerry and I conduct numerous Marbled Murrelet surveys for a diverse range of clients. We've done so for nearly a quarter-century.



Pacific
Fisher
Photo by
Jeff
Wendorff

A protocol survey to determine murrelet occupancy begins 45 minutes *before* sunrise. Therefore, to visit several of our murrelet stations, we drive a hundred miles in predawn darkness. Unexpected animals often appear during our two-hour commutes, however sightings on this May 12 take the cake.

At approximately 3:30 a.m., Jerry and I were traveling from Elk River to a survey site in the hills above Camas Valley. On a straight stretch of Highway 101 near the Coos County line, we experienced an astonishing sight. In the high beams of our headlights, a Pacific fisher ran across both lanes of the road, giving me time to clearly observe its size, shape, coloration, and movement.

Although colloquially called "fisher cat," fishers are actually part of the *Mustelidae* family and are not related to domestic cats nor wild cats. Additional members of the carnivorous *Mustelidae* include weasels, badgers, ferrets, martens, minks, and wolverines. Approaching our survey site an hour later, we saw a cougar walking along the shoulder of the logging road; then at the end of our survey we saw a young bobcat in the same vicinity.

Fifteen years ago, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service "determined the Pacific fisher warranted protection under the Endangered Species Act in the Pacific states, but its listing was precluded by higher priority species." Last September, a U.S. District Court ordered the Service to revisit the listing. ■

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