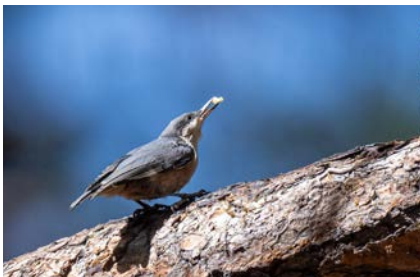


Oregon's Cascade Mountains: Great Birds & Lodges July 9 – 18, 2024 | Trip Report | by Hugh Simmons



With guides Steve Shunk and Hugh Simmons, and participants: Ann, Beth, Carol, Dan, Don, Dori, Jane, John, Joyce and Ron



Sun., July 9

Arrivals | Travel to Crater Lake | Crater Lake Lodge

After picking up everyone at their hotels and the airport we headed south to Crater Lake and our first hotel, the Crater Lake lodge. The first views of the Lake as we entered the Rim Drive elicited a lot of exclamatory noises from everyone. The deep blue of the water and the vastness of the lake just take your breath away. We arrived about 4:30 pm and planned to meet at 6:00 pm in the rustic lodge's lounge for introductions, important announcements and an overview of the trip. Dinner was in the lodge dining room at 7:00, although here reservation times seem to be a bit meaningless and we were not seated until after 7:30.

Mon., July 10

Annie Creek Trail | Mazama Village | Vidae Falls | Sun Notch

For the ambitious birders in the group we met at 6:00 am for a pre-breakfast bird walk. The morning temperature here at 7,000 feet was in the upper 30's. As we were gathering in front of the lodge, Mike spotted a Rufous Hummingbird feeding in one of the flowerbeds; a great first bird! Walking around the grounds we also



had several birds that would become staples of the next few days; Steller's Jay, Clark's Nutcracker, Violet-green Swallow, Cassin's Finch, Pine Siskin, Red Crossbill, Dark-eyed Junco (Oregon race), Yellow-rumped Warbler, Western Tanager and Common Raven. Steve heard an Evening Grosbeak and a Fox Sparrow but we did not find them. A Coopers Hawk swooped through at one point. On the lake side of the lodge there was a white substance that appeared to be leaching from the stone face of the lodge that was attracting the Red Crossbills. A score of them were attaching themselves to the wall around the substance.

We convened for breakfast at 7:30 and left about 9:00 for our day's adventures. The first stop was Mazama Village and Campground where we parked to access Annie Creek Canyon. This is a 1.7 mile trail dropping 200 feet into a verdant valley with walls of volcanic ash. Walking through the campground, and on the edge of the canyon, we encountered a few birds, including Mountain Chickadee, Northern Flicker and Turkey Vulture. Steve gave a running commentary on the identification of the trees along the way. We descended on the single-track trail until we encountered a tree blocking our path that we had to crawl under. Continuing down the trail we encountered yet another tree across, and another, and another. Finally, as we reached the valley floor, we encountered a tree across the trail with a tangle of branches that completely blocked our passage. Reluctantly, we had to turn around and retrace our steps back up to the rim, crawling back under the same trees. We were rewarded, however, with good looks at an Olive-sided Flycatcher when we reached the top. It was time for a well-earned break and lunch at the restaurant in Mazama village.

After lunch, we headed east along the southern crater rim. Our first stop was Vidae Falls, a lovely spring fed, 100 foot tall cascade. While there an Alfalfa Looper moth provided both a subject and a challenge for the photographers in the group as it fed. It was then on to Sun Notch where a gently sloping 0.8 mile trail took us up to the crater rim and stunning views of the lake and the Phantom Ship rock formation. Along the way we spent several minutes watching a young Hairy Woodpecker feed on some downed wood, and we added Red-breasted Nuthatch to our list.

Back at the lodge we had some free time before meeting at 6:30pm for the checklist and dinner.



Tues., July 11

Castle Creek Wildflower Trail | Godfrey Glen Nature Trail

Today a few of us rose before dawn and ventured into the morning chill to photograph the sunrise over the crater rim. With the sun up, a few photos taken, and slightly numb finger tips, we gathered, with others, for another pre-breakfast bird walk around the Lodge and Rim Village. We had all the same birds as the day before but went into the field in front of the lodge to find a couple of Mountain Bluebirds. Wandering along the edge of the parking lot Steve heard a Hermit Warbler singing and we rushed over to find it. After a short while Steve found it and we all got great looks and photos. A beautiful, life bird for several in the group.

After breakfast at the lodge, we headed out to the Castle Crest Wildflower Trail. This relatively level, half mile trail wanders through a verdant, spring fed wetland and rocky hillside rich in wildflowers. Among them were White Bog Orchid, Elephant's Head Lousewort, Pacific Bleeding Hearts, Stream Violet, Red-berried Elder, and Western Bistort. Birds along the way included Townsends Solitaire and Evening Grosbeak, both heard only.

We took a break in Mazama Village and then headed to the Godfrey Glen Trail. This was a lovely trail through old growth forest along the Munson Creek Canyon. Wildflowers included Scarlet Gilia, Pine Mat Manzanita, Princess Pine, Spotted Coralroot, Pacific Coralroot, and Crater Lake Current. There were Golden-crowned Kinglet and Red-breasted Nuthatch. A Hermit Thrush posed for photos, dramatically illuminated by a shaft of sunlight against a dark woodland background. A Pileated Woodpecker flew directly over our heads casting its shadow on the trail. We returned to the Lodge for lunch and then went for a drive along the west and north rim. We were surprised to find the road closed at the Cleatwood Cove trailhead since the published information had indicated that the road was open further. We turned around and made several lake-view stops along the rim on the way back. The first stop was Pumice Point where we could look back across the five-plus miles of the lake to see the Crater Lake Lodge on the southern rim. We next stopped at Miriam Point for more views and photos and then Watchman Peak where we could look straight down on Wizard Island. White Pasqueflower dotted the slope at the overlook. A tour boat motored though while we there giving some context to the immense scale of the lake. We returned to the Lodge with a little time to relax and freshen up before dinner in the Lodge's dining room.



Wed., July 12 Suttle Lake Lodge

There was no pre-breakfast bird walk this morning as we would be packing the vans and heading to our next lodge with a couple of birding stops along the way. At 8:30 am we packed the vehicles and said farewell to the Crater Lake Lodge. Our first stop was at the Crescent Creek Campground. Crescent Creek is a tributary of the Deschutes River and was the first stop on the Cascades Birding Trail. Here Cassin's Vireo and Warbling Vireo were both heard, as were Yellow Warbler and Red-breasted Nuthatch. A small group of Mountain Chickadees flitted about. Some coral-colored spikes were Pine Drops. Other wildflowers seen were Rose Spirea, Wild Rose and Columbine. We took an indirect route on our way north, taking the Cascade Lakes National Scenic Byway and made a roadside stop at Sparks Lake. Looking out over a large field and wetland a large number of Canada Geese could be seen about 100 yards out. Steve heard a Wilson's Snipe and a Spotted Sandpiper. Some small shrubs provided perches for a Western Tanager, Red-winged Blackbird and a Savannah Sparrow that hung around for some good scope looks. Along the distant tree line to the right there was a Great Blue Heron.

We stopped for a delicious lunch in Bend at the Cascade Lakes Brewing Company. In an unusual business model for a brewery this is a not-for-profit that donates its proceeds to local charities.

After lunch we stopped at Shelvin Commons. As soon as we got across the parking lot a Bushtit was spotted darting about some bushes. We followed the trail to where Lewis' Woodpeckers had nested. Violet-green Swallows swooped overhead, and a couple of Northern Flickers flew through. At the nest site we found a couple of juvenile Lewis' Woodpeckers way up on top of a snag and the scopes came out for better views. We watched them for a while to see if an adult would come in, but none did. We next headed down a trail that paralleled Tumulo Creek and someone in the group spotted movement low in the bushes to the left. There was an adult Red-napped:Red-breasted Sapsucker hybrid feeding a fledgling. The fledgling was staying put so we were able to watch this for some time and several in the group got good photos. A little further along there was a very active family of Pygmy Nuthatches.

Our next stop was Suttle Lake Lodge, our accommodations for the next three nights. We unloaded the vehicles and had some free time before having a delicious dinner in the Lodge's rustic dining area.



Thurs., July 13

Suttle Lake Lodge | Indian Ford Campground | Calliope Crossing | Cold Spring Campground | Three Creeks Road | Ponderosa Lodge

This morning we gathered at 6:30 in front of the Lodge for a pre-breakfast walk. A Steller's Jay was seen high in a tree before we even got out of the parking lot. A small bridge on the entrance road gave us views down Lake Creek, an outflow of Suttle Lake. The rapid water and rocks were good American Dipper habitat and, sure enough, it was not long before one was spotted bobbing along the rocks. Up the creek behind the dipper was a group of Canada Geese. We crossed the bridge and took a trail that ran next to the creek. A couple of Belted Kingfishers were actively hunting crayfish. Some of our group got a quick look at a MacGillivray's Warbler but in the dense foliage of the trail more was heard than seen. Song Sparrow, Common Yellowthroat, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Western Wood-Pewee, Western Tanager and Red-breasted Nuthatch were all heard. On the way back to the lodge, along the entrance road, a Douglas Squirrel seemed torn between gathering nuts and being curious about us. Our next stop was The Boathouse, the Lodge's restaurant for breakfast and lunch, for some deliciously prepared breakfast sandwiches, pancakes and granola.

After breakfast we loaded into the vehicles and headed out for the day. The first stop was Indian Ford Campground. Heading down the dusty trail through the woods we came upon the nest hole of some Red-breasted Sapsuckers in the bright white trunk of an Aspen tree. A bird briefly appeared so we settled in to watch the nest hole for more activity. We were rewarded with good looks, and photos, as both adult Red-breasted Sapsuckers came and went to the nest hole, their bold red, white and black patterns striking, in the sun, against the white Aspen. The trail ended at a vast open field with a great view of Mt. Washington, the Sisters and Broken Top. A nest box was active with a pair of Western Bluebirds and a Western Tanager was perched well out in the field. On the way back to the vehicles Steve found a Hammond's Flycatcher on an overhanging branch.

Our next stop was Calliope Crossing. Here we stopped the vehicles just before the dry creek bed and walked over a culvert. A song Sparrow was singing on some bare branches just off the path and a Yellow Warbler was singing on the other side of the road. A Black-headed Grosbeak flew over and briefly perched high in the trees. Walking through the mixed forest of Ponderosa Pine, Aspen and Juniper we had Brown-headed Cowbird, Pygmy



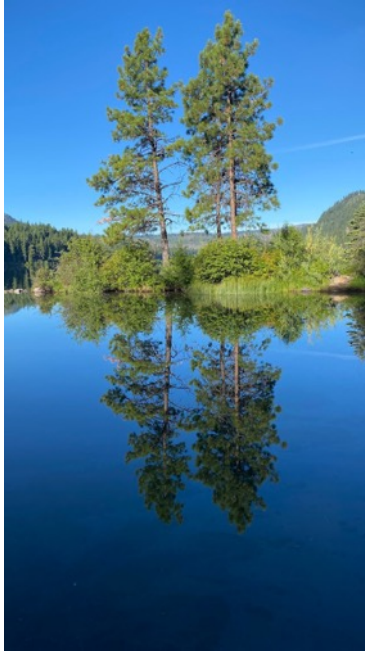
Nuthatch, Mountain Chickadee, and Brown Creeper. A Hairy Woodpecker perched on a small Ponderosa Pine for good views. Steve pointed out the sap pouring out of the fresh sap wells in the trunk of a burned pine. He also found several Peck's Penstemon, an endangered flower found only here. Also found here were the white dandelion-like puff balls of Salsify. We then drove into Sisters and stopped at Oliver Lemon's Store where we all picked from their great selection of sandwiches, salads, chips and cookies for our lunch. We got everything back in the vehicles and headed to Cold Spring Campground for a picnic in the woods. After lunch we did a short walk at the campground, but it was pretty quiet with only Stellar's Jay, White-breasted Nuthatch and Dark-eyed Junco making appearances.

We made a stop on Three Creeks Lake Road where there had been a prescribed burn in hopes of some woodpecker activity, but it was very quiet. There were some flowers emerging from the charred forest floor including Paintbrush and a striking magenta and yellow Sulphur Buckwheat. After about forty minutes we decided to go to the feeders at the Sister Ponderosa Lodge. At the back of their property this hotel puts out bird feeders that are known to sometimes attract interesting species. Here we added California Quail, Eurasian Collared-Dove, House Finch and Lesser Goldfinch. After that it was time to head back to the lodge.

Fri., July 14 Scout Lake | Jack Creek | Deschutes National Forest | Wizard Falls

Today, for our pre-breakfast bird walk, we left at 6:30 for a short drive to Scout Lake. The lake was nearly like glass in the early morning calm, the reflection of the trees on the opposite shore like an impressionist painting. An Evening Grosbeak flew over and perched at scope distance. There were Red-breasted Sapsucker, Northern Flicker and Olive-sided Flycatcher. But the sound of a Williamson's Sapsucker caught Steve's attention and we set out to find it. After some hunting we found a male and a female Williamson's although only the female came close enough to get good looks. None the less this was a great species to add.

We had breakfast again at the Boathouse and then headed to Jack Creek in Camp Sherman. We left the vehicles and hiked through head-high scrub. A Fox Sparrow sang but was hard to see unless you were tall enough to see over the foliage and a MacGillivray's Warbler made a brief appearance before disappearing into the dense green. A Common Nighthawk and a Cassin's Vireo were heard. Further in a Dusky Flycatcher played hard to get



until finally perching up long enough for everyone to see. Other hikers reported that a bear had been seen where we had just been, but we never saw any sign of it. At the end of the trail was the spring that is the origin of Jack Creek with lush green ferns and mosses bordering a series of small waterfalls flowing out of the spring. Next, we made a roadside stop with one target in mind. Perched on a high snag was a Northern Pygmy-Owl. It was very high but sat there for long scope looks and some photos.

Our final stop for the day was the Metolius River at Wizard Falls. Here a bridge afforded great views of the scenic river torrent. A few Vaux's Swifts swooped overhead and an American Dipper, that was likely nesting under the bridge was seen briefly by a few of the group. Steve found a Western Eyed Elator Beetle, a type of click beetle, its name derived from the two large black eye spots on its thorax. From there we made a short, ten minute drive to dinner at Hola!, a Mexican restaurant.

Sat., July 15 **Peter Skene Ogden Rest Area, Timberline Lodge**

There was no pre-breakfast walk this morning as today was a travel day. We met for breakfast at 8:00am and grabbed a group shot in front of the lodge totem pole. At 9:30 we had the vehicles packed and were on the road. On the way out of town we spent about a half hour back at the Sisters Ponderosa Lodge's feeders in hopes of seeing the White-headed Woodpecker that is a regular visitor there. There were Pygmy Nuthatches, White-breasted Nuthatches and a Brewer's Blackbird. Unfortunately, we still had no luck with the White-headed Woodpecker and we had to get back on the road.

After leaving Sisters our first stop was the Peter Skene Ogden Rest Area at the Crooked River Canyon. Here you can walk out on the Rex T. Barker Memorial Bridge for spectacular views down the 300-foot-deep canyon. A bungee jumping rig was set up and there were people jumping from the bridge. None of us thought it seemed like a fun thing to do. While on the bridge a Cliff Swallow flew past. From the canyon rim White-throated Swifts and Violet-green Swallows were tiny as they caught insects over the river far below. A Red-tailed Hawk flew through, and it was a bit strange to have it appear small as we were looking down on it. A Canyon Wren was heard but, despite considerable effort it was never seen. Walking back to the vehicles a Bullock's Oriole was heard and then seen well. While following the Oriole we came across an adult and a juvenile Downy



Woodpecker which we got to watch and photograph for a while as the juvenile seemed reluctant to move around much.

We had lunch in Madras at Rio, a Mexican restaurant which describes itself as having distinctive Mexican food. And boy did it. We all left saying it was some of the best Mexican any of us had ever had. We had a little over an hour drive after lunch to the Timberline Lodge. Everyone had the afternoon to themselves to check in, get settled and explore around the Lodge a bit. There was a lot to take in, both inside the historic lodge and on the surrounding grounds at the timberline of Mount Hood. Dinner was in the lodge dining room. This night we sat off to ourselves in the lounge area just outside the main dining room at one huge wooden table with wooden chairs, all hand carved when the lodge was built in 1937. After dinner the sky was beautiful looking south from the Lodge toward Mount Jefferson. Hazy layers of rugged landscape were topped by wispy pink-orange clouds in a blue-grey sky.

Sun., July 16

Timberline Lodge | Trillium Lake | White River West SnoPark | Mt. Hood Alpine Campground

As was our routine, we met at 6:30 am for a walk around the alpine habitat above the Timberline Lodge. There were Clark's Nutcrackers, Pine Siskin, a Chipping Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco and Violet-green Swallows. The air was crisp and the views spectacular. We walked across a small road maintenance staff used to access the upper slopes. We found a depression where the snow had not yet melted that was teeming with birds that seemed to be actively feeding. There were many Cassin's Finch, Dark-eyed Juncos and Purple Finch. But try as we might, we could not conjure up a Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch, which are often found at snow edges.

Breakfast was a sumptuous buffet in the Lodge dining room after which we headed downslope to Trillium Lake. This 65-acre lake can be seen from the Timberline Lodge, over 4 miles away. From the lake, looking back at Mt. Hood, the scene is stunning with the mountain reflected in the waters of the tree lined lake. We parked briefly at the dam to look at the lake and the view of Mt. Hood and then took a drive along the road that went up behind the lake, stopping and walking periodically. There were Red-breasted Nuthatches, a Brown Creeper and a Western Tanager. Several Swainson's Thrushes were heard and one in particular played hard-to-get until finally showing itself. At one point there was a commotion from about 15 Chestnut-backed Chickadees feeding above us. Hammond's Flycatcher, Canada Jay and MacGillvray's Warbler were all heard.



After lunch back at the Timberline Lodge we went to the nearby White River West SnoPark. Here there was a huge parking lot used as a jumping off point for all sorts of snow sports in the winter. On this very warm, July day the lot was largely deserted and there was only a trickle of water in the wide, rocky riverbed. But that trickle was enough to attract a Spotted Sandpiper! We then headed up-slope for a short hike on a trail into the trees that provided a little break from the sun and the heat. We stopped where a stream ran under the trail and relaxed there for a while, just taking in the peace. Along our way we also had a Western Tanager and a Steller's Jay.

On the way back to the Timberline Lodge we stopped along the entrance road to the Lodge at the Alpine Campground. We parked at the entrance and walked the loop road of the campsites. There were a few birds: Red-crossbills, Red-breasted Nuthatch, and Pine Siskin but there were a lot of wildflowers. Subalpine Mariposa Lily and Roughfruit Raspberry were widespread. There were also Subalpine Fleabane, Pretty Jacobs Ladder, Common Selfheal, Cascade Beardtongue, Cascade Aster and Sit ka Valerian. After exploring the wildflower riches of the Alpine Campground we continued up-slope, back to the Timberline Lodge with a couple of hours to explore the lodge, rest and refresh before dinner.

Mon., July 17 Wildwood Recreation Site

We started this, our last full day, at 7:00 am with a pre-breakfast walk up-slope from the Lodge along a ridge of trees to the right of the central ski slope. A Golden-mantled Ground Squirrel perched on a rock to watch us curiously as we passed. We were following part of the Pacific Crest Trail which crosses the slope behind the Timberline Lodge. Tent campers, scattered among the trees, were emerging from their imaginably, chilly night's rest. The usual suspects, Steller's Jay and Clark's Nutcracker, could be seen and heard as we walked. As we crested the ridge a warm sunrise was welcome relief from the chill on the shady side of the ridge. Purple Finch and Cassin's finch were everywhere. There were about 10 Pine Siskin and scores of Dark-eyed Juncos. We took in the sunrise for a few minutes and then headed back to the Lodge for breakfast.

After breakfast we drove to the Wildwoods Recreation Site along the Salmon River. We first took the Wetland Trail. This is a temperate rainforest on the west side of the Cascade Range. The woods were deep green, rich in



plant life and full of old, gnarled trees covered in moss. Wood Sorel and ferns carpeted the forest floor and the small, white flowers of Salal stood out in the dark green understory. The trail took us over a bridge across the Salmon River where a couple of Vaux's Swifts were wheeling about and two American Dipper were working the rocks up-stream. As we got into the wetland area the dirt trail gave way to boardwalks. An Anna's Hummingbird made a brief appearance and a group of three Evening Grosbeaks surrounded us briefly as they moved through. There was Warbling Vireo, Wilson's Warbler, Pacific Wren, Western Tanager and Black-headed Grosbeak. At the edge of the wetlands a Rough-skinned Newt was spotted in the shallow water's edge.

Continuing in the Wildwood Recreation Site we picked up the Cascade Streamwatch Trail which parallels the Salmon River gorge for much of its length. The trails name refers to the stream viewing structure where glass panes, installed next to the streambed give a view of stream life underwater. A Swainson's Thrush eating berries and a young Hairy Woodpecker, both not far off the trail, seemed unperturbed by our presence and the dozens of photos being taken.

Lunch was at Wraptitude, a colorful sandwich wrap, burger and craft beer restaurant a few miles down the road. We ordered our sandwiches and went outside to the picnic tables. It is always a special treat when you can get a good bird during lunch, and we had a Spotted Towhee slowly hop through giving us all great looks. After lunch we made the short drive back to the Lodge with some free time before an afternoon walk. A few gathered to find Bruno, one of the Lodge's two St. Bernard mascots. We found him in a back hall where his owner had her office. His owner was most gracious, and Bruno gave the dog lovers in our group quite a bit of fur-time. At 3:00pm we took a walk up-slope behind the lodge hiking up and to the left this time. Clumps of Spreading Phlox were everywhere providing splashes of color on the sparsely vegetated, rocky terrain. The birds were old friends at this point, a couple of young Clark's Nutcrackers, a Common Raven and several Dark-eyed Juncos and Cassin's Finch. We returned to the Lodge for some time to pack and get ready for our farewell dinner in the Lodge's restaurant.



Tues., July 18

Hood River Best Western | Multnomah Falls | Departures

We were up early with luggage in the vehicles for a 7:00am departure. Breakfast would be in an hour at the Hood River Best Western. There we had beautiful views of the river from the glass sided restaurant and some truly amazing menu selections. After breakfast we headed to the famous Multnomah Falls. Here a stream of water cascades a total of 620 feet over a breathtakingly tall cliff face. We all walked up to the Benson Footbridge which gives a great view of the base of the upper falls and crosses 105 feet above the pool of the lower falls. After spending about an hour taking in the falls we loaded up in the vehicles and headed to the airport for our final farewells.

Group Birding (Hugh Simmons - HS), Red-breasted Sapsucker (HS), Dusky Flycatcher (HS), Pygmy Nuthatch (HS), Golden-mantled Ground Squirrel (HS), Hairy Woodpecker (HS), Downy Woodpecker (Mike West - MW), Scenic (Ronald Gangnon - RG), Red Crossbill (HS), Group Birding (HS), Hairy Woodpecker (HS), Hermit Warbler (HS), Dark-eyed Junco (HS), Cassin's Finch (HS), Elephant Head Lousewort (HS), Group (HS), Group (HS), Pygmy Nuthatch (HS), Gray Bird Black Beak NEEDS ID (RG), Dark-eyed Junco (HS), American Dipper (HS), Belted Kingfisher (HS), Douglas Squirrel (HS), White-breasted Nuthatch (HS), Golden-crowned Kinglet (HS), Group in the tall trees (HS), Suttle Lake Lodge (HS), Metolius River (HS), Williamson's Sapsucker (HS), Tree Reflections (Joyce Meyer - JM), Group (HS), Crooked River Canyon (HS), Timberline Lodge (HS), Mount Jefferson (HS), Yellow-bellied Marmot (HS), Group at Timberline Lodge (HS), Chestnut-backed Chickadee (HS), Joyce & Mike (Jane Williamson - JW), Ann & Don (JW), Group at Trillium Lake (HS), Western Tanager (MW), Group (HS), Ron & Dori (JW), Beth (JW), Hugh & Steve (JW), Carol & Dan (JW), Jane (JW), Scott Lake (HS) Mariposa Lily (HS)