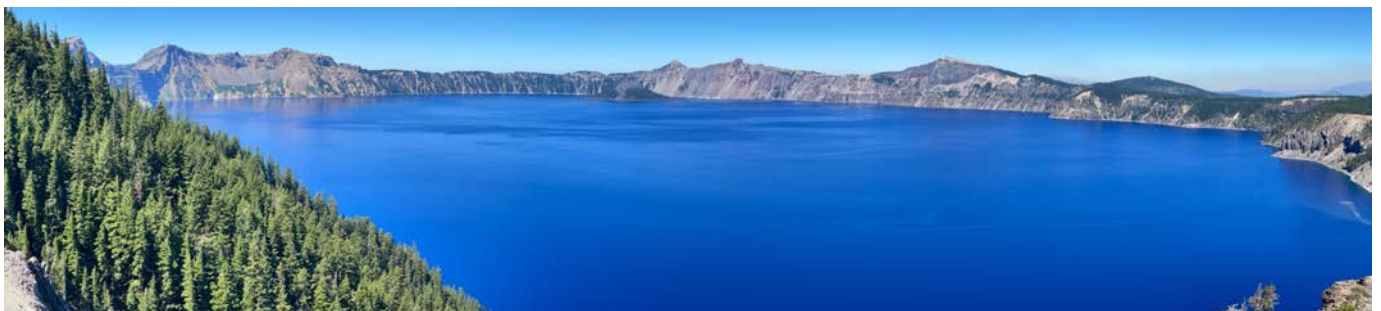


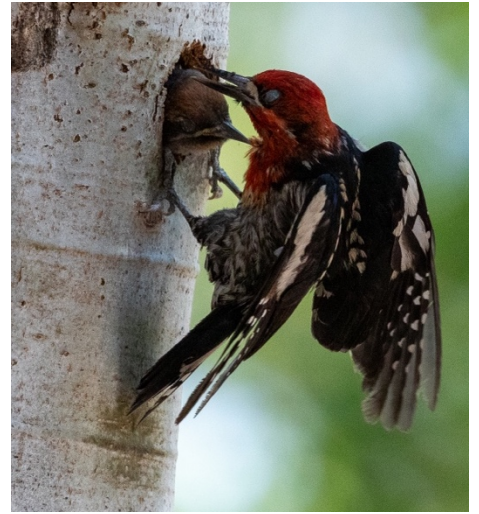
# Oregon's Cascade Mountains: Great Birds & Lodges With Naturalist Journeys & Caligo Ventures



**With Guides Peg Abbott & Steve Shunk, and participants Regina, Ralph, Carol, Judy, John, Dan, Therese, Jacque, Roslyn, & Larry**







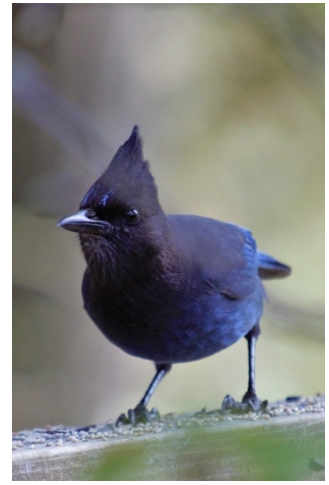
## **Tues., July 6 Welcome to Bend (Redmond Airport) and Drive to Crater Lake**

Several of our group came in early to rest up a bit and were ready to go at the Redmond/Bend Municipal Airport shortly after Noon. We were glad to get underway as we wanted to add a special stop, Shevlin Park in Bend where Steve had scouting active nests of Red-breasted Sapsucker and Lewis' Woodpecker. What a great way to start! Both were visible from the parking lot where we set up scopes and our photographers had a heyday.

We then stopped a couple of times to stretch and pick up a few species as we made our way to Crater Lake. Little can prepare for that first "oh wow" moment as you approach the spectacular views at the rim of Crater Lake. The color of the water and its expanse is a blue beyond imagination, a color of its own. Backing our view were big white, puffy clouds, perfect to set off the landscape until we learned this was the beginning cloud of what would be one of the biggest fires in history, the Bootleg Fire complex on the California and Oregon border. Today there was no smoke, but it was huge and billowing.

The historic Crater Lake Lodge was to be our home for the next three nights. So nice to unpack and know we'd have ample time here to explore. Our rooms were in the main lodge and after we settled in, we met outside the dining area where a lovely patio has a view of the lake. Steve gave an orientation for the week with a map, and we had introductions. Already a jovial group, there were smiles and laughter and such a good feeling to be out traveling again after the many long months of the 2020 Covid—19 pandemic. From this outside deck in rocking





chairs with cocktails in hand, we felt happy to start our journey. Dining was adjusted to the lodge being short on staff, so it would be buffet for dinners, but they had plenty of nice selections and some good desserts—we were not going to go hungry here.

### **Wed. July 7 & Thurs., July 8 Two Days at Crater Lake National Park**

Peg and Steve put their heads together on how best to approach the many intriguing pull-outs, trails and viewpoints available to us during our stay. Each day we paired a hike with more leisurely time at viewpoints or from the lodge. As the group was keen on birding and seeing wildflowers and wildlife, we chose trails in wetter habitats where oasis-like conditions in this unseasonable hot and dry summer across the West, were pleasant and attractive to a variety of species.

We loved the walk to Plaikni Falls and the flower show that filled the runoff channel, including bright pink monkeyflower, yellow monkey flower and a variety of other species. The walk was through forest, and here we got to see good views of a Golden-crowned Kinglet showing off its crown, Pacific Slope Flycatcher, and cracking views of Western Tanager, a favorite of the group from this point onward.

We also gawked at several of the key overlooks, with views of the Phantom Ship most intriguing. Clark's Nutcrackers were common and vocal, their cousins the Steller's Jay made themselves known as well. We sorted out Whitebark and Limber Pine, marveled at massive Douglas Fir trees and appreciated the graceful flight of Violet-green Swallows.

The hike on Annie Creek was a highlight of the trip, nice to get away from the road and have such a sense of wild country. Walked first along the top of a ravine and then descended into an almost fairyland of flowers, pinks and yellows and deep reds lined the creek and we contorted ourselves bending to get the perfect shots. We had great views of American Dipper in the swift waters of the creek and a Pacific Wren serenaded us and flew across the creek for those in the rear (our lollygaggers including Peg) to view.

From Annie Creek we drove a short way back to the CCC-built administrative buildings, something to behold for their architecture and craftsman care in construction. A nearby trail there was rumored to be at the peak of bloom and it did not disappoint us. We all lined up on the bridge for a group shot, what a crew!

We found that dining in the national parks was a bit tricky as they were SO popular this summer, yet due to Covid, they had a hard time hiring help or bringing help from overseas. The poor manager at the restaurant near the cabins and our hike area tried so hard to help, not knowing we were just fine to sit in comfortable chairs, surrounded by shade trees with cold drinks, and wait longer than normal. We were an agreeable group!



The Pinnacles trail was another trip highlight, displaying odd and eerie rock features, made of ash and weathered to fantastic spires that seemed to erupt from the landscape in several colors and hues. By the time we went, late afternoon, some smoke from the nearby fires was starting to settle, making them even more dynamic. We had a nice mixed flock here with Yellow-rumped Warbler and Mountain Chickadee and a cooperative Hairy Woodpecker, our first for the trip made a pass through.

Birding was good just outside our door at the rim. Jacque, John, Therese and Dan were out early each day, and spotted Mountain Bluebirds that in time we all got to see. There was a pair of Hermit Warbler, and a real treat, an adult, Gray-crowned Rosy Finch feeding its fledgling at the edge of one of the few remaining snowfields, wow!

Inside the lodge we loved the cozy spaces, brightened by light pouring through artisan windows. We did our bird list each afternoon ahead of dinner and watched it grow day by day.

### **Fri., July 9 Travel to Suttle Lake | Bend**

We had a travel day from Crater Lake to Suttle Lake, but stopped several places along the way.

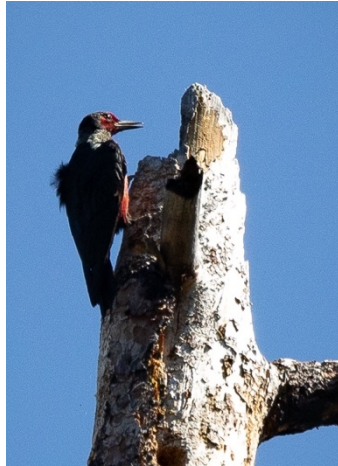
Our afternoon intent to let people sample the fun of Bend was a bust—it was almost 100 degrees and people melted—indeed most of the group took refuge in a coffee shop and were happy to continue our way up into the mountains and to our lakeside lodgings at Suttle Lake. We will leave this bit out next year!

The road up to Suttle Lake is lovely, with tall pines and then a mix of conifers lining the route. And what a beautiful lodge! A shade Ramada at the lakeshore beckoned us with comfortable chairs and tall trees grew close around the multistory wooden structure. Sunset over the lake held a rosy glow. We ate casually in the lodge great room where they had a simple but very nice menu on which salmon was a big hit. All too soon it was time to turn in for another full day in the morning. Ralph and Regina heard a Great Horned Owl hooting off their balcony this night.

### **Sat., July 10 Woodpecker Wonderland | Wizard Falls | Hola's Camp Sherman**

Several of us walked early before breakfast and found the grounds and edge of the stream pouring out of the lake to be quite birdy. We saw signs of a recent feeding bout by a Pileated Woodpecker right away. Happily, from the bridge we spied two adult and a fat fledgling American Dipper—they put on quite a show. They were feeding, calling, dipping, and flying about to perch on various rocks and logs in the stream channel. The youngster was newly fledged and still cautious, but over our three days here, we could see it grow bolder. Several of us kept returning here to watch them in between our outings, what a treat. We also had good looks at Common Yellowthroat and MacGillivray's Warbler.









Steve led us to some of his favorite woodpecker haunts, an aspen regeneration area and then to Cold Springs Campground where when he first arrived in Oregon, he remembers seeing eight species of woodpecker and knew he'd found home. The ponderosa pines around the aspen area were massive. We had super looks at Hammond's Flycatcher and found an endemic penstemon in bloom. At the campground we were fortunate to very quickly find a White-headed Woodpecker, Fox Sparrow and a pair of Cassin's Vireo. Walking back to the vehicles, Steve said "stop" and right alongside the road was a young Townsend's Solitaire, a youngster sporting the spotted plumage they have for a time. It held an unsure perch on a berry-filled shrub that it did not want to leave, so was tolerant of our cameras and viewing. We found an adult up at a spring just a bit farther down the road.

We had lunch at the general store at Camp Sherman, a country store that obviously served a sophisticated crowd judging by the grocery. We all ordered sandwiches and enjoyed them on picnic tables under tall pines—enjoying the quintessential Northwest feel. A few of our crew opted out of the afternoon, drawn by the relaxing nature of Suttle Lake Lodge and its setting.

The afternoon route was to a burned area up the Candle Creek Road, where we had good looks at Lazuli Bunting and Lewis' Woodpecker, one which posed for us on a drumming tree. There were Oregon Grape plants loaded with fruit and we walked one trail past trees larger than our heights in diameter. Carol and Judy posed here to give us perspective.

We made a stop at Wizard Falls where we found more American Dipper and where we drank in the cool and shaded conditions by the stream. Dinner was at Camp Sherman as well in one of our favorite restaurants of the trip, Hola's. They served Mexican and Peruvian fare and it was good. We dined outside under bright red shade umbrellas and shared some very good food.



## Sun., July 11 Cascade Mountain Passes | Sisters

We walked again in the early morning, this day a Western Tanager came down to drink, affording us lovely views. Belted Kingfisher rattled up and down the channel, and an Osprey made a few passes over en route to the lake.

It was time to go a bit higher in elevation, so after breakfast we ventured out to a mountain pass where we had a good chance to find both of the three-toed woodpecker varieties in a burned area. We had success with Black-backed which came into a call, but only briefly so some got better looks than others. Nearby at a small pond we found both White-crowned and Lincoln's Sparrows.

We tried another pass in the afternoon, this one an impressive but barren volcanic landscape, where lava flows seemed to have stopped overnight. We could look off to glaciers on the Three Sisters which stood in contrast to this 65-square mile lava field. An ancient trail skirting the edge of the lava was made into a toll road in the 1870's, and today a modern state highway. We walked a small trail at the top of the pass, and then descended to a roadside birding stop at the edge of the GW Burn area of past years where we were rewarded with good views of Green-tailed Towhee.

Passing through Sisters, a California Quail perched up on the phone wire was a fun find, and near the High School we picked up a Killdeer. We wanted a change of pace for dinner and went into Sisters to a lively local brewpub. Carol (from Philadelphia) found their baked pretzels pretty good, fun to find what was a local specialty from home in this distant place. People enjoyed the brews, and various dishes from burgers to steaks and seafood.

## Mon., July 12 Suttle Lake to Mt. Hood's Timberline Lodge

We left Suttle Lake after one last fun breakfast down at the boathouse with birds in view. The American Dipper came by and fed on the dock, then on to a rocky outcrop beyond, probably getting ready to draw the chick to new feeding areas as it gained strength and coordination.

Steve had to try one more place, Trout Creek Swamp, for our hoped-for Three-toed Woodpecker, so we pulled off the side of a forest road to walk. We heard Williamson's Sapsucker and though we'd found them, then got a good lesson in discerning the plumage of fledglings—these were two Red-breasted in view. Always new things to learn! We also had cooperative Brown Creepers to view here. We then did a short but steep hike down to Dark Lake. There we found a female Barrow's Goldeneye with her chick, and both Dusky and Olive-sided Flycatchers.

We lingered a bit too long there, so we switched our lunch plans to eat in Redmond as we passed back by the





airport. Along the way, a family group of Black-billed Magpie grabbed our attention and despite the traffic, we pulled over and got a view. There was a fire brewing up west of Redmond, not all that far from our route and we could see the tanker helicopters passing overhead.

It was our route today to venture from the central Oregon Cascades to Oregon's highest peak: Mt. Hood, at 11,250 feet elevation. Along the route, we stopped at Crooked River gorge where two bridges, one old and one new, spanned the picturesque chasm. Dan got a great shot of a truck on the bridge, saying he'd send it to his engineering buds to calculate the stress load. Peg spied a fast-flying White-throated Swift that in time we all got to see and walking through the shade of the park we found a family of Bullock's Oriole and a few Lesser Goldfinch.

Timberline Inn is historic, a tribute to Roosevelt's Works Project Administration (WPA) aimed at bringing the nature forward from the Great Depression. It was completed in just a year and a half and is known for its bold and impressive architectural style. The lodge holds a fine collection of 1930's art, roaming around it to discover its features was a lovely way to end the day. This lodge is a National Historic Landmark and at 5,900 feet in elevation it afforded us and sweeping views back to Mt. Jefferson and over many ridges of the Cascades. The sunset was many layers of pink due to some smoke by the nearby fires, but thankfully each day while here we woke to blue skies. We enjoyed a lively dinner in the beautiful hotel great room.

## **Tues., July 13 Birding in the Shadow of Mt. Hood**

This morning we joined a local guide, Nanne, to explore the area of a popular local attraction, Trillium Lake. He took us in a back way, so we had time to explore deep dense woods, a little marshland, and then the lakeshore with its superlative views of Mt. Hood. In the woods he was delighted to find us a Barred Owl, wow! At the marsh we got a mixed flock with Hermit Warbler and our first Chestnut-backed Chickadees. A cooperative Pileated Woodpecker also put on a good show. We enjoyed some snacks and treats at the lakeshore where a family of Mallard swan by. Lunch was in town, at a place specializing in huckleberry everything—we had fun sampling shakes and pie.

We returned to have some free time at the lodge—enjoying its art, cozy places, and displays of various artifacts including a chair custom designed for the officiator at the Inn's opening, none other than President Roosevelt's himself. Carved banisters, light fixtures, so much to see.

The road up and down was lined with blooming flowers, including huge white plumes of Bear grass. Red Crossbills were numerous but hardly lit down, often joined by Cassin's Finch as well.

We met up for our bird list in the upstairs lounge, then enjoyed dinner again in the great room.





### **Wed., July 14 Mt. Hood | The Tram | Wildwood Recreation Area**

Steve led an early bird walk near the lodge, finding Brewer's Blackbird and Chipping Sparrow as well as Clark's Nutcrackers and Cassin's Finches. We then took the tram up, a few not so keen on heights but it was short and certainly scenic. It was fun to watch all the people who had come up for skiing on a July summer day. We found a few alpine flowers in the dry conditions, but the highlight was being eye-level with a Bald Eagle spotted by Jacque. She gave a shout so we all could see it.

After lunch we descended a long way, down to about 1500 feet to walk at the Wildwood Recreation which has some lovely riparian areas. We found American Dipper, good views of Swainson's Thrush, Cedar Waxwing, Black-headed Grosbeak, Song Sparrow and a cooperative Wilson's Warbler.

The day passed quickly, tonight we joined tables to all be together in the great room.

### **Thurs., July 15 Columbia Gorge | Hood River Marina | Departures**

After breakfast and some casual birding around the lodge, we headed down the eastern flank of Mt. Hood. We decided to have breakfast at the Lodge, though Peg missed it thanks to a lost wallet furor that turned out just fine in the end... We said good-bye to Ralph and Regina in the parking lot as they were off to see friends and had their own vehicle. Sad—our flock was dispersing!

Today's drive was through the Columbia Gorge to the Portland Airport. We stopped at the Hood River Marina, where we added quite a few species, including California Gull, Least Sandpiper and Caspian Tern. California Scrub Jay was a lifer for several, and American Crow and Cliff Swallow gave us a few "ticks". The airport was busy, so we said our good-byes curbside.

This was a trip that Steve Shunk designed and one he's wanted to run for years. A good time was had by all!

### **Photo Credits:**

Castle Gardens, Peg Abbott (PA); Group on Mt. Hood, PA; Green-tailed Towhee, PA; Belted Kingfisher, PA; Oregon Junco, PA; Steve pointing out Kingfishers, PA; Therese & John, PA; Barred Owl, PA; Group birding Plaikni Falls, PA; Crater Lake Panoramic, PA; Crater Lake Rim view, PA; Red-breasted Sapsucker, PA; Steve Orientation, PA; Crater Lake Lodge, PA; Plaikni Falls, PA; Phantom Ship, PA; Steller's Jay, Jennifer Uppendahl via Unsplash; Yellow-rumped Warbler, PA; Carol & Judy Big Tree Stump, PA; Suttle Lake Lodge, PA; Townsend's Warbler, PA; Lewis' Woodpecker, PA; Ramada Lakeshore, PA; Hammond's Flycatcher, PA; American Dipper, PA; Group on bridge, PA; Western Tanager, PA; Carol's Philadelphia moment, PA; California Quail, PA; Ralph & Regina on log, PA; Bear Grass, PA; Therese taking photo, PA; Swainson's Thrush, PA.