



July 18 – 26, 2021
Oregon Birds & Botany

With Guides Bob Meinke and Steve Shunk, and 11 participants:
Sharon, Debra, Alan, Dee, Larry, Lynne, Bill, Alice, Jay, Janie, and Leslie

Compiled by Bob Meinke

(HO)= Distinctive enough to be counted as heard only

(I)= Introduced

Summary: It was great to finally get this new tour off the ground and running, after its postponement in 2020. On what was the first trip sponsored by Naturalist Journeys to northeast Oregon, we saw a good number of birds, mammals, and even a few herps. Gray Catbird, Eastern Kingbird, Clark's Nutcracker, and Lewis's Woodpecker were some of the highlights, along with six woodpeckers, five wrens, and seven tyrant flycatchers. The scenery, especially the alpine vistas and evergreen forests of the Wallowa Mountains, was spectacular, and the drive times between destinations short. Our accommodations were very comfortable and convenient—we had birding just steps away from the Wallowa Lake Lodge, for example, including active Bald Eagle and Lewis's Woodpecker nests. And the amazing array of native wildflowers known from the area, including many endemic species, were in fine form despite some warmer than average weather just ahead of the tour. First-year tours are often more challenging to operate than trips based on longer-running, established itineraries. That said, this inaugural tour was actually a great start to what we hope will be annual excursions into the beautiful Blue and Wallowa Mountains, two of the Pacific Northwest's most underappreciated and little-visited destinations.

BIRDS (121 species recorded, of which 5 were heard only):

DUCKS, GEESE, AND SWANS: ANATIDAE (11)

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*—Found most days of the tour, the largest flocks of this well-known species were seen lounging around the Baker Valley.

Wood Duck *Aix sponsa*—Good views of males and females were had at the McNary National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) south of Pasco, Washington, the second day of the trip (near the HQ complex). Such unique ducks.

Cinnamon Teal *Spatula cyanoptera*—Found on the last full tour day, at Tyson Ponds near McNary NWR.

Northern Shoveler *Spatula clypeata*—A single bird was observed at Coral Ditch (i.e., an eBird hotspot comprising a group of highway ponds just east of Baker City, across I-84), the day we drove north to Wallowa Lake. How often do you see just one Shoveler?

Gadwall *Mareca strepera*—Also just one bird, same location as the Northern Shoveler. It took some effort to pick this one out.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*—Sporadic, but seen in good numbers at several locations, including Coral Ditch in Baker County, and Tyson Ponds in Walla Walla County, Washington.

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*—A single bird occurred near the HQ complex for McNary NWR south of Pasco.

Canvasback *Aythya valisineria*—Same location as Northern Pintail (also one bird), skulking along the shoreline across the water from the McNary HQ nature trail. This required some scope scrutiny.

Redhead *Aythya americana*—See Pintail and Canvasback location; also seen on Day 5 at the Coral Ditch site, near Baker City (a single bird at both locations).

Ring-necked Duck *Aythya collaris*—A convoy of eight birds was spotted in the first pond at the Coral Ditch hotspot, just east of Baker City.

Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis*—Comparatively large numbers (at least compared to most other ducks on the tour) were seen at McNary NWR (at the HQ hotspot) and Coral Ditch (on Day 5 in Baker County).

NEW WORLD QUAIL: Odontophoridae (1)

California Quail *Callipepla californica*—A covey of 12 was flushed out from saltbush thickets, while we walked the trail at the McNary NWR HQ area on Day 2. Curiously, our only visual of the tour.

PARTRIDGES AND PHEASANTS: Phasianidae (1)

Ruffed Grouse *Bonasa umbellus*—Seen briefly (as the bird flushed underfoot) by guide Steve Shunk and a couple folks at the head of the line, as we walked the nature trail at the Elkhorn Wildlife Management Area (WMA) in Union County.

GREBES: Podicipedidae (1)

Pied-billed Grebe *Podilymbus podiceps*—A single bird was in the first pond at the Coral Ditch hotspot, just east of Baker City.

PIGEONS AND DOVES: Columbidae (3)

Rock Pigeon (1) *Columba livia*—Widespread and depressingly common, even in the rural areas of southeast Washington and northeast Oregon. Seen every day.

Eurasian Collared-Dove (1) *Streptopelia decaocto*—Also spotted most days, another introduced species that's unfortunately establishing itself in the inland Pacific Northwest.

Mourning Dove *Zenaidura macroura*—Still holding its own, this native and as yet common species was abundant most days of the tour.

NIGHTJARS: Caprimulgidae (1)

Common Nighthawk *Chordeiles minor*—We had nice looks at this species (all from the vehicles) as several birds zig-zagged across nearby farm fields, during our drive back to Baker City from the Elkhorn Ridge area on two afternoons.

SWIFTS: Apodidae (1)

Vaux's Swift *Chaetura vauxi*—A few were seen pirouetting overhead at the Elkhorn WMA in Union County, and again over Wallowa Lake Lodge (while we sat on the expansive veranda and sipped something cold), as well as at the Wallowa Fish Hatchery in Enterprise.

HUMMINGBIRDS: Trochilidae (2)

Anna's Hummingbird *Calypte anna*—The hint of a reddish gorget, and lack of rufous tones, suggested one of the two hummingbirds we saw on the Elkhorn WMA nature trail was an Anna's.

Rufous Hummingbird *Selasphorus rufus*—Picked up by Steve (also at Elkhorn WMA), another female (or possibly immature) bird, with rufous and green overtones and a faint gorget.

RAILS, COOTS, AND ALLIES: Rallidae (2)

Virginia Rail (HO) *Rallus limicola*—The distinctive grunting was heard twice, once echoing along the trail at McNary NWR on Day 2, and later on Day 7 at the Wallowa Fish Hatchery (where birds were clearly very close by, yet remained stubbornly out of view).

American Coot *Fulica americana*—A wetland staple, common at McNary NWR and in Baker County at the Coral Ditch ponds.

STILTS AND AVOCETS: Recurvirostridae (1)

Black-necked Stilt *Himantopus mexicanus*—Several were seen through the scope from the HQ nature trail at McNary NWR south of Pasco, and again later at the Tyson Ponds (Walla Walla County) hotspot the last full day of the tour. Amazing birds.

PLOVERS AND LAPWINGS: Charadriidae (1)

Killdeer *Charadrius vociferus*—The insistent cries of this species, celebrated by its specific epithet, accompanied our many Killdeer sightings most days of the tour.

SANDPIPERS AND ALLIES: Scolopacidae (7)

Least Sandpiper *Calidris minutilla*—A few restless flocks were seen at several locations, including McNary NWR, Bob's Lake (an obscure, roadside hotspot north of Baker City), and at Tyson Ponds when we drove west from Walla Walla.

Long-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus scolopaceus*—Nice scope views were had of two birds at the Enterprise WMA, and the next day a larger group was seen at Tyson Ponds (on our last full day of birding).

Wilson's Snipe *Gallinago delicata*—Spotted by Bob on a fencepost as we headed north through the Baker Valley one morning—not seen by most of the group.

Wilson's Phalarope *Phalaropus tricolor*—A single, rather subdued bird was seen slowly spinning at the Tyson Ponds hotspot.

Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularius*—Never frequent on the tour, it was nonetheless seen several times along open shorelines—easily recognized by its dark breast spots and characteristic bobbing motions.

Solitary Sandpiper *Tringa solitaria*—Always a nice find, we spotted two birds (good scope views) at the Enterprise WMA in Oregon, and also at the Tyson Ponds site in southeast Washington.

Greater Yellowlegs *Tringa melanoleuca*—Steve brought the group's attention to a bird calling from across the water at the McNary NWR HQ site, on our first day out—another was spotted later on during our stop at the Enterprise WMA.

GULLS AND TERNS: Laridae (3)

Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis*—At least 55 were seen around McNary NWR on Day 2 of the trip, and many hundreds more were informally noted (possibly mixed with the next species) as we drove along the open waters comprising the confluence of the Snake and Columbia Rivers on Day 8.

California Gull *Larus californicus*—About a dozen birds were confirmed near the McNary NWR HQ complex on the morning of Day 2, and another group was spotted later on in Baker County on Day 5 (at the Bob's Lake site).

Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia*—This striking species was seen well in the scope from the nature trail at McNary NWR, also on Day 2—a couple birds were airborne, but most were seen sitting on exposed sand near a teetering group of Black-necked Stilts.

CORMORANTS: Phalacrocoracidae (1)

Double-crested Cormorant *Phalacrocorax auritus*—The best sighting was of several swimming birds at the Coral Ditch ponds east of Baker City, the morning we started north to Wallowa Lake.

PELICANS: Pelecanidae (1)

American White Pelican *Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*—A common and easily recognized species on the Snake and Columbia near Pasco, we spotted several flocks in seemingly effortless flight over the rivers.

HERONS AND EGRETS: Ardeidae (2)

Great Blue Heron *Ardea herodias*—Always rather cryptic despite its stature, we noted this species several times in areas of quiet water, from McNary NWR to the Wallowa Fish Hatchery.

Great Egret *Ardea alba*—Infrequent, and only seen twice (single birds at McNary NWR and Tyson Ponds).

NEW WORLD VULTURES: Cathartidae (1)

Turkey Vulture *Cathartes aura*—A few birds were observed high overhead most days, though oddly not as common as might be expected.

OSPREY: Pandionidae (1)

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*—Recorded our second day out, four ospreys were seen coursing above the water at McNary NWR. Unmistakable.

HAWKS, KITES, AND EAGLES: Accipitridae (4)

Northern Harrier *Circus hudsonius*—Scattered individuals, male and female, were mostly seen hunting open pasture and alfalfa fields in the Baker Valley.

Bald Eagle *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*—We had views of adults and first year birds at the south end of Wallowa Lake, not far from the lodge. An active nest was in the vicinity.

Swainson's Hawk *Buteo swainsoni*—We saw several birds in flight above the open rangeland and farms of Baker and Union Counties, Oregon, occasionally soaring near Red-tails (which provided a nice opportunity for comparison).

Red-tailed Hawk *Buteo jamaicensis*—Several birds were seen every day of the trip, flying or more often perched on telephone poles. This is generally the most common raptor in eastern Oregon.

BARN OWLS: Tytonidae (1)

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*—At least two birds were observed ensconced in a deep nook in a cliff face, along Dodd Road in Walla Walla County, on our last day of the tour.

OWLS: Strigidae (1)

Great Horned Owl *Bubo virginianus*—While we walked the shady trails skirting the marshes at the Wallowa Fish Hatchery hotspot, Steve surprised the group with a beautiful Great Horned Owl, nestled in the riparian vegetation and almost completely out of view. Great observation skills!

KINGFISHERS: Alcedinide (1)

Belted Kingfisher *Megaceryle alcyon*—Heard chattering during our stop along River Lane at the McKean Memorial Kiosk (the day we drove into the Elkhorn WMA)—later seen very briefly at the Enterprise WMA.

WOODPECKERS: Picidae (6)

Red-naped Sapsucker *Sphyrapicus nuchalis*—The cottonwood forest that enshrouds the Elkhorn WMA nature trail is great woodpecker habitat, and we picked up four of the six woodpeckers seen on the tour at this site. Red-naped was represented here by a family of both adults and juveniles—we had repeated, close looks at the group.

Lewis's Woodpecker *Melanerpes lewis*—The unique status of Lewis's Woodpecker among North American Picidae can't be overstated, and this was one of the highlights of the trip. We were fortunate to observe a nest site with adult and juvenile birds present, in mature cottonwood forest abutting Wallowa Lake. Steve Shunk provided an excellent interpretive review of the species as we watched!

American Three-toed Woodpecker (HO) *Picoides dorsalis*—Another great find by Steve, during our subalpine walk near Anthony Lake, high along the Elkhorn Ridge of the Blue Mountains. Although clearly heard, the small group that accompanied Steve up a side trail was oh-so-close to also catching a glimpse of one of the most scarcely seen montane species in the U.S. Again, having an expert woodpecker authority along made the difference!

Downy Woodpecker *Dryobates pubescens*—The most diminutive of our woodpeckers, we spotted two Downys along the trail at Elkhorn WMA, quietly working the outer branches of willows and cottonwoods.

Hairy Woodpecker *Dryobates villosus*—Closely related to the preceding species, it was fitting we also found the bulkier yet otherwise similar Hairy Woodpecker along the same trail (so a great opportunity for contrasting the

two taxa). The twigs and branchlets that attract a foraging Downy would seldom support a Hairy Woodpecker, and we watched as the latter species maneuvered along trunks and primary branches.

Northern Flicker *Colaptes auratus*—We caught glimpses of this common species moving through the canopy (same location as above), but the calls of the Northern Flickers were what attracted our attention.

FALCONS AND CARACARAS: Falconidae (1)

American Kestrel *Falco sparverius*—Utility lines, perhaps the most attractive perch for a kestrel, are abundant across northeast Oregon. So perhaps it's not surprising the species was spotted most days of the tour. Common, yet never taken for granted, seeing a kestrel is like seeing an old friend.

TYRANT FLYCATCHERS: Tyrannidae (7)

Olive-sided Flycatcher *Contopus cooperi*—The call of this species is soon recognizable even to novice birders, and this is what initially caught our attention during our stop at Rhinehart Canyon, on the way to Wallowa Lake.

Always a nice find.

Western Wood-Pewee *Contopus sordidulus*—The call (and silhouette) of this flycatcher are generally a quick clue to its ID. We spotted calling birds most days of the trip, though never in high numbers.

Willow Flycatcher *Empidonax traillii*—Silent empids are seldom easy, but we felt comfortable in our ID of this species, based on plumage, weak eye-ring, and bill length, in addition to habitat. Seen initially at Rhinehart Canyon, and again at Wallowa WMA.

Hammond's Flycatcher *Empidonax hammondii*—After some discussion (the bird was not real close), we were comfortable with this ID, based on its small, pale-based bill, rather peaked crown, and (perhaps most importantly) coniferous habitat. Seen in mixed evergreen forest near Wallowa Lake.

Cordilleran Flycatcher *Empidonax occidentalis*—Another empid. Pacific-slope and Cordilleran (exceedingly similar plumages) reportedly overlap in the Blue Mountains, but the brief calls given by the adult birds we saw at Emigrant Springs State Park (who were attending a nest with three hatchlings), matched Cordilleran. The local eBird reviewer didn't dispute our call.

Western Kingbird *Tyrannus verticalis*—The only yellow Kingbird in eastern Oregon. Good views were had in the foothills of the Blue Mountains near the Elkhorn WMA, with several birds on phone lines. Still in very bright plumage.

Eastern Kingbird *Tyrannus tyrannus*—The black-and-white Eastern Kingbird is utterly unmistakable in Oregon. Occurring here at the periphery of its geographic range (this is largely an eastern North American species), we were fortunate to get great looks at birds in Rhinehart Canyon on our drive to Wallowa Lake.

VIREOS: Vireonidae (2)

Cassin's Vireo *Vireo cassinii*—Singing birds were eventually located along the nature trail at the Elkhorn WMA on Day 4—our best looks of the tour.

Warbling Vireo *Vireo gilvus*—One bird was seen at the same location (above), in a mixed flock with Yellow Warbler, Western Tanager, and Mountain Chickadee.

CROWS AND JAYS: Corvidae (6)

Canada Jay *Perisoreus canadensis*—Less than satisfactory glances were had on Day 2 at Spring Creek Campground, as the birds kept annoyingly out-of-view in the canopy. At least some of us had better looks at Anthony Lake a couple days later, in the subalpine forest on Elkhorn Ridge.

Steller's Jay *Cyanocitta stelleri*—Individuals and small groups of Steller's Jay were seen at Emigrant Springs State Park on Day 2—the species was spotted again from the tram that ascended Mount Howard at Wallowa Lake.

Black-billed Magpie *Pica hudsonia*—A common, distinctive corvid occurring east of the Cascades in the Pacific Northwest, characteristic of low elevation habitats (including agricultural zones). We saw several small, noisy flocks during the tour.

Clark's Nutcracker *Nucifraga columbiana*—Fleeting looks of this iconic montane species were had at Anthony Lake in the Blue Mountains—we later had better views on Mount Howard in the Wallows.

American Crow *Corvus brachyrhynchos*—Spotted just a few times, in the lower elevation farm country around Pasco and Walla Walla.

Common Raven *Corvus corax*—Widespread, seen at low elevations as well as higher sites, usually in flight. Encountered most days of the tour.

TITS AND CHICKADEES: Paridae (3)

Black-capped Chickadee *Poecile atricapillus*—Seen at lower elevations along the paved road to Anthony Lakes, and also at the lake itself, although the next species was much more common. Also seen briefly at Wallowa Lake.

Mountain Chickadee *Poecile gambeli*—Only seen in the Blue Mountains (at several sites) during the tour, but fairly common, and very vocal—everyone had the opportunity for good views.

Chestnut-backed Chickadee *Poecile rufescens*—Initially picked up by Steve, based on calls, then most of the group managed to see a small group. Found at Spring Creek Campground on Day 2, our only encounter with the species (which is much more common west of the Cascades).

SWALLOWS AND MARTINS: Hirundinidae (6)

Northern Rough-winged Swallow *Stelgidopteryx serripennis*—Scattered individuals were seen briefly in flight, mostly in the Wallowa Lake area.

Tree Swallow *Tachycineta bicolor*—Small groups were seen in mixed flocks, at the McNary NWR HQ complex, and a few at the Coral Ditch hotspot site near Baker City.

Violet-green Swallow *Tachycineta thalassina*—Best clear views were had of birds circling over the marshes and trout rearing ponds at the Wallowa Fish Hatchery.

Bank Swallow *Riparia riparia*—Always with other swallow species during the tour, a few birds occurred at McNary NWR HQ area, near the water along the nature trail, and then later a much larger group (flying and perched on nearby fence wires) was seen at the Coral Ditch ponds east of Baker City (on Day 5).

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*—Spotted several days during the trip, the most common swallow on the tour.

Cliff Swallow *Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*—Best views of this species were had during our stop along River Lane at the McKean Memorial Kiosk (as we drove into the Elkhorn WMA). The swallows were soaring over the field below the road, along with a few Violet-greens.

KINGLETS: Regulidae (1)

Golden-crowned Kinglet *Regulus satrapa*—Our first birding stop after lunch in Pendleton (Day 2) was at Emigrant Springs State Park in the Blue Mountains. Shortly after exiting the van, Steve cocked his head and simply said “kinglets.” Now this tiny species is hard enough to hear under ideal conditions, but with I-84 traffic noise so close by? Sure enough, with the help of a bit of playback, the Kinglets came down from the trees on cue. Good ears.

NUTHATCHES: Sittidae (3)

Red-breasted Nuthatch *Sitta canadensis*—Spotted twice in the Blue Mountains on Day 2 (once at Emigrant Springs State Park, and later the same day at Spring Creek Campground), occurring with mostly chickadees in a mixed flock. We later had one bird at the Minam State Recreation Area on our lunch stop prior to Wallowa Lake.

White-breasted Nuthatch *Sitta carolinensis*—Although generally common in Oregon, we saw this species only once, when a pair of birds appeared along the nature trail at Elkhorn WMA.

Pygmy Nuthatch (HO) *Sitta pygmaea*—Another audio gem picked up by Steve’s acute hearing, the calls emanating from pine trees on cliffs above Rhinehart Canyon. A few of the group may have had a distant view.

WRENS: Troglodytidae (5)

Rock Wren (HO) *Salpinctes obsoletus*—Very faint calling of this species was heard by Bob from the cliffs in Rhinehart Canyon, during our stop on the way to Wallowa Lake on Day 5.

Canyon Wren *Catherpes mexicanus*—We had much clearer vocals from this wren, also at Rhinehart Canyon. Good views were had of at least one bird working the rock face across the river from where we parked.

Pacific Wren *Troglodytes pacificus*—A common coastal species in the Northwest, Pacific Wrens extend north into Canada, then (bypassing the arid Columbia Basin) loop south into the coniferous forests of northern Idaho and

northeast Oregon. We heard (repeatedly), and then spotted, a pair of birds in the fern-laden understory of the Subalpine Fir forest bordering Anthony Lake.

Marsh Wren *Cistothorus palustris*—Heard and briefly seen as we walked the nature trail at the McNary Wildlife Refuge HQ area on Day 2. An unmistakable song.

Bewick's Wren *Thryomanes bewickii*—Another wren that was mostly heard but not seen during the tour, we had brief glimpses of the species in the thickets in Rhinehart Canyon on Day 5.

DIPPERS: Cinclidae (1)

American Dipper *Cinclus mexicanus*—Seen well at two locations, i.e., at the confluence of the Minam and Wallowa Rivers (during our lunch stop at the Minam State Recreation Area, on our way to Wallowa Lake Lodge), and then along the Wallowa River where it crosses under the paved road into Wallowa Lake State Park (south of the lake and near the lodge). Both birds were very cooperative.

STARLINGS AND MYNAS: Sturnidae (1)

European Starling (I) *Sturnus vulgaris*—Numerous birds seen daily on the tour. The ecological amplitude of this introduced pest species is remarkable, allowing it to thrive in Oregon from foggy coastlines, to farm valleys, to oak woodlands and the high desert. A serious blight on our native biodiversity.

MOCKINGBIRDS AND THRASHERS: Mimidae (1)

Gray Catbird *Dumetella carolinensis*—Another tour highlight. While catbirds may be ho-hum to easterners, those who bird the western U.S. know that this species is a rarity in the Pacific states, barely squeaking into Oregon in the northeast corner. So it was exciting to see and hear six birds in Rhinehart Canyon the day we drove to Wallowa Lake—a very impressive number.

THRUSHES: Turdidae (4)

Western Bluebird *Sialia mexicana*—Seen the morning of Day 4 along River Lane, when we drove into Elkhorn WMA. Birds were largely seen from the vehicles as we drove slowly along, mostly on fences and in low shrubs.

Swainson's Thrush *Catharus ustulatus*—At least two birds were located along the nature trail at Elkhorn WMA, with one briefly singing. A common species in much of Oregon, we only saw it here during the tour.

Hermit Thrush (HO) *Catharus guttatus*—A single bird was heard during our day in the Elkhorns, as we trekked around Anthony Lake. As with the preceding species, this is a fairly common songbird in the Northwest that we only encountered once on tour.

American Robin *Turdus migratorius*—Making up for the other thrushes, American Robins were recorded every day, and in profusion. They were especially abundant in the foothills of the Blue Mountains. One of the most resilient of our native bird species.

WAXWINGS: Bombycillidae (1)

Cedar Waxwing *Bombycilla cedrorum*—Always a pleasure to see, elegant Cedar Waxwings were common during the tour, with multiple birds seen on several days, including our stops at Rhinehart Canyon, Wallowa Lake, and the Wallowa Fish Hatchery.

OLD WORLD SPARROWS: Passeridae (1)

House Sparrow (I) *Passer domesticus*—Another unfortunate European introduction, House Sparrows are at least (thankfully) more or less confined to areas of human habitation (unlike Starlings and Rock Pigeons, for example). We saw this species daily, whether we liked it or not.

FINCHES AND EUPHONIAS: Fringillidae (5)

House Finch *Haemorhous mexicanus*—Bizarrely, we only recorded House Finch once on the tour, when a small group of birds appeared during our visit to the large pond that comprises the Enterprise WMA. Normally a more common species.

Red Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*—Seen several times, but mostly in the Blue Mountains and primarily at Emigrant Springs State Park, Spring Creek Campground, and along the road up to Anthony Lake. A few birds were also seen near Wallowa Lake. Possibly the Ponderosa (Type 2) crossbills, based on habitat.

Pine Siskin *Spinus pinus*—Also recorded mainly in the Blues, at the same places as Red Crossbill. However, we did see a few birds in the mixed coniferous forest surrounding our lodgings at Wallowa Lake Lodge, as well as at the Enterprise WMA and Wallowa Fish Hatchery.

Lesser Goldfinch *Spinus psaltria*—More a bird of the drier lowlands in the inland Pacific Northwest, we only found Lesser Goldfinches in the saltbush habitat along the McNary NWR HQ complex nature trail.

American Goldfinch *Spinus tristis*—More common than the preceding species during the tour, we saw American Goldfinches at McNary, but also in Rhinehart Canyon, along River Lane near the McKean Memorial Kiosk (on our way into the Elkhorn WMA), and briefly at the Enterprise WMA.

NEW WORLD SPARROWS: Passerellidae (6)

Chipping Sparrow *Spizella passerina*—We had a real paucity of Chipping Sparrows during the trip, with only two birds seen (both in a subalpine meadow at Anthony Lake).

Dark-eyed Junco *Junco hyemalis*—The “Oregon Junco” is the common subspecies group in the area we traveled, and we saw birds at several locations, including various stops in the Blue Mountains as well as near Wallowa Lake.

White-crowned Sparrow *Zonotrichia leucophrys*—As with the Chipping Sparrow, this species was also only seen in the meadows surrounding Anthony Lake, where it was apparently nesting.

Song Sparrow *Melospiza melodia*—Also not particularly common on the tour, we saw this species here and there a few times, typically at lower elevations (such as at the Elkhorn WMA, Rhinehart Canyon, and McNary NWR).

Lincoln’s Sparrow *Melospiza lincolni*—Seen briefly at the Elkhorn WMA, although the best views were at Anthony Lake, where an adult pair and a fledgling put on a feeding show for us in a fir tree bordering the meadow where we parked. It was interesting to see this and the other sparrow species on their high elevation breeding grounds.

Spotted Towhee *Pipilo maculatus*—Best views were of several very active birds in the riparian thickets that bordered the Grande Ronde River, as it snaked through Rhinehart Canyon.

YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT: Icteriidae (1)

Yellow-breasted Chat *Icteria virens*—Chats can be seen almost anywhere at lower elevations in Oregon if there’s water present, but that said, they’re seldom common. So it was a nice surprise to come across a very vocal contingent of several active chats in Rhinehart Canyon. We not only got an earful, but also had great views.

NEW WORLD BLACKBIRDS: Icteridae (6)

Western Meadowlark *Sturnella neglecta*—Another species of the dry lowlands, we had several nice views of meadowlarks (some singing) near Pasco, as well as in the agricultural areas near Baker City.

Bullock’s Oriole *Icterus bullockii*—A beautiful species, we picked up a bright male Bullock’s Oriole during our stop along River Lane (at the McKean Memorial Kiosk), the day we drove in for our hike at the Elkhorn WMA.

Red-winged Blackbird *Agelaius phoeniceus*—One of the most abundant species on the trip, we often saw flocks whenever we happened near open water sites.

Tricolored Blackbird *Agelaius tricolor*—One of the rarities of the trip, Bob and Steve (and perhaps one or two others) saw a lone Tricolored Blackbird among the Red-winged at the Tyson Ponds site (within smelling distance of a vast livestock feeding operation). It was in the open only briefly, before flying below a dike and out of view.

Brown-headed Cowbird *Molothrus ater*—Uncommon on the tour, yet seen in very dissimilar sites, ranging from the pristine, shaded banks of the Wallowa River near our lodge, to the hot, heavily disturbed, open country near the Tyson Ponds (described above). A very adaptable species.

Brewer’s Blackbird *Euphagus cyanocephalus*—The dryland counterpart of the Red-winged Blackbird in Oregon, we usually saw this species any day we spent time near open rangeland or agricultural sites. Very common.

NEW WORLD WARBLERS: Parulidae (3)

Common Yellowthroat *Geothlypis trichas*—Seen and heard along the shoreline of the pond at the Enterprise WMA, on Day 6 of the tour. Only a single bird, but it made its presence known.

Yellow Warbler *Setophaga petechia*—Reasonably common and seen several times. We had good views of brightly plumaged, singing birds around Wallowa Lake, at Enterprise WMA, Wallowa Fish Hatchery, and at the Elkhorn WMA near Baker City.

Yellow-rumped Warbler *Setophaga coronata*—The most common warbler species in North America, yet that distinction wasn't reflected on this tour. We only had brief views of yellow-rumps, both times high in the cottonwoods at McNary NWR.

CARDINALS, GROSBEAKS, AND ALLIES: Cardinalidae (3)

Western Tanager *Piranga ludoviciana*—Occurring the farthest north of any of the world's tanager species, this one is a beauty, rivaling any that live in the tropics. We had looks at both males and females at Enterprise WMA and around Wallowa Lake.

Black-headed Grosbeak *Pheucticus melanocephalus*—Located several times on the tour, we had nice views of this species along the nature trail at the Elkhorn WMA, as well as in the forests around Wallowa Lake.

Lazuli Bunting *Passerina amoena*—Our first look at this species was of a puzzling immature bird along the nature trail at Elkhorn WMA, which did its best to stump us. A more "traditionally" plumaged bird was later spotted by Bob on our drive into Rhinehart Canyon.

MAMMALS (11 species recorded):

American Red Squirrel *Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*—This is the rufous-toned squirrel that we saw above us many times in the forests of the Blue and Wallowa Mountains. No more than a foot in length, they are among the smaller species of tree squirrels.

Columbian Ground Squirrel *Urocitellus columbianus*—Ranging from the plains to high in the mountains, this is the insufferably cute rodent that harassed us as we ate lunch at the open-air restaurant on top of Mount Howard, the day of our tram excursion. Jay may not remember this species with much fondness...

Belding's Ground Squirrel *Urocitellus beldingi*—The lower elevation equivalent to the preceding species, Belding's Ground Squirrel was (regrettably) often seen flattened on the country roads we drove during the tour. This species is known to consume food to the point of obesity to carry them through their 8+ months of torpor (hibernation) each year.

Yellow-pine Chipmunk *Tamias amoenus*—One of the smallest of North American chipmunks, we saw this stripe-backed species in the ponderosa pine habitats we visited.

Golden-mantled Ground Squirrel *Spermophilus lateralis*—Often mistaken for chipmunks, due to its stripes, this species can also become an annoying presence near human habitation, especially around campgrounds, outdoor cafes, and similar settings. Seen by us on the top of Mount Howard, the species occurred near Wallowa Lake, as well.

Yellow-bellied Marmot *Marmota flaviventris*—Only seen a couple times while we were driving, so most of the group likely missed the chubby Yellow-bellied Marmots, the largest squirrel species in Oregon. They were perched on rocky slopes as we switch-backed out of the canyons west of Enterprise, on our way to Walla Walla.

Northern Pocket Gopher *Thomomys talpoides*—A couple of the group saw the whiskered faces of pocket gophers, as they snuffled their way through their dirt piles along the nature trail at the Elkhorn WMA.

Mountain Cottontail *Sylvilagus nuttallii*—This is the small rabbit we saw many times, scampering across roads (where it often met the same fate as the Belding's Ground Squirrel) and along trails, such as near Elkhorn WMA and throughout the Baker Valley. Very cute.

Coyote *Canis latrans*—No introduction needed for this iconic canine of the open plains. We had a couple nice views, but weren't treated to any yipping or howling.

White-tailed Deer *Odocoileus virginianus*—The deer with the bushy white tail that we saw in the foothills and lower mountains once or twice, such as near the Elkhorn WMA. Not near as large as the following species.

Mule Deer *Odocoileus hermionus*—Known for its enormous ears (hence the name), this is the sturdy deer species that populates the lower elevations, often tolerating very dry or even desert habitats. We saw it several times, often bounding away across open fields and hopping fences. A favorite among eastern Oregon hunters.

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS (7 species recorded):

Pygmy Short-horned Lizard *Phrynosoma douglasii*—Apparently seen by a couple of us as we walked to the Millet and Woodland Ponds at McNary NWR, on our last full day of the tour.

Side-blotched Lizard *Uta stansburiana*—Seen at the same location as the horned lizard (above). A common species found all the way south to Arizona.

Western Fence Lizard *Sceloporus occidentalis*—Perched on a rock in the small parking area at the Elkhorn WMA, near the start of the nature trail. The bright blue underside indicated a male.

Gopher Snake *Pituophis catenifer*—The tail-end of a sizeable Gopher Snake was seen by a couple people, as it slithered quickly off the trail and into the brush at the Wallowa Fish Hatchery.

Western Terrestrial Garter Snake *Thamnophis elegans*—Spotted on the road by Bob, while driving, and then seen by the group in the middle of River Lane, where we stopped before continuing on to our hike at the Elkhorn WMA. Steve gets the ID on this one.

Painted Turtle *Chrysemys picta*—A non-native species introduced (perhaps inadvertently) into the wetlands at the Wallowa Fish Hatchery. Who knows what sort of havoc they are wreaking on the native ecosystem there.

Pacific Tree Frog *Psuedaceis regilla*—These are the small frogs located by Steve in the wet meadows around Anthony Lake in the Blue Mountains. This species is found throughout much of Oregon, and can be tan, gray, or green.