



PHOTO BY DOUGLAS BEALL

Clark's nutcracker.

Sisters Country birds

By Douglas Beall
Correspondent

Clark's nutcracker (*Nucifraga Columbiana*) occupies an integral role in the regeneration and maintenance of high-elevation pine forests.

They store pine seeds, plucked from cones by their strong and sharp beaks, in a pouch behind their tongue. Up to 90 seeds are stored within this pouch, which are then cached in the ground over a large area.

In the fall, up to 33,000 seeds will be stored in the ground, and the Clark's nutcracker is able to remember where they cached the seeds for up to nine months.

The seeds they do not remove become seedlings, which sprout and help disperse healthy and genetically diverse pine trees. Over the entire year, 98,000 seeds may

be cached.

The nutcrackers can begin nesting in January because of their ample buried food source. Two to five greenish eggs are laid and incubated, mostly by the male who develops a brood patch on its chest, which is unlike the other jays and crows within the corvid family. Hatching occurs in approximately 18 days and the nestlings fledge in 20 days.

The Clark's nutcracker normally travels in groups referred to as a "booby, jar," or "suite." A gregarious bird, they can often be heard high in the pines *kraak-kraak-kraaking*. This sound enabled William Clark to locate them, and they were named after him during the Lewis and Clark expedition in 1805.

For more Clark's nutcracker images, visit <http://abirdsingsbecauseithasason.com/recent-journeys>.

Cloverdale fire station progressing

Christmas came a little early to the volunteers of the Cloverdale Rural Fire Protection District.

A week before Christmas, on December 18, contractor Keeton King Construction completed the remodel of the George Cyrus Road fire station to a point that the trucks could be parked indoors.

The remodel provides parking for two fire trucks in the same area that previously had parking for three trucks.

The resulting wider, longer bays provide plenty of room for the current trucks, with room for firefighters to safely move around, and mount or dismount the trucks while inside. With a 13-foot-wide roll-up door on one of the bays, the building should be plenty large enough for the



PHOTO PROVIDED

Cloverdale's rigs are in their new home.

new larger pumpers that are being built in South Dakota.

Finish work continues on the building, with repaving of the front parking lot scheduled for spring.

Fire Chief Thad Olsen says that the district's Board of Directors and the

volunteers are excited to see the results of the voters' backing for their firefighters. Speaking for everyone at the district, Chief Olsen would like to thank all of the constituents in and around the district for their support as these upgrades proceed.

Groups sue Oregon over wolf protections

PORTLAND (AP) — Three environmental groups are suing Oregon wildlife officials over their decision to remove the gray wolf from the state's Endangered Species list.

The Center for Biological Diversity and two other groups say it's premature to delist the animal with only about 80 adult wolves living in the state. The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission stripped wolves of their endangered status in November, after state

biologists said the species won't go extinct.

But some independent scientists disagree with that conclusion. According to wolf advocates, the Commission failed to follow the best available science and its population viability analysis for the wolves was flawed.

"The Commission's decision to delist wolves is plain political kowtowing to the livestock industry. This decision was not based in science, it was not based on Oregon's conservation values," said

Noah Greenwald, endangered species program director at the Center.

Oregon Fish and Wildlife spokeswoman Michelle Dennehy said "ODFW is confident the department followed statutory and legal requirements in its process and that the Commission acted legally..."

Dennehy said the decision to delist wolves was based on their rapidly expanding range in Oregon, their growing population, and the stability of their habitat.

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