



Tales from a
Sisters Naturalist
by Jim Anderson

Counting noses

It was the winter 1963 that I decided to go on my first "Official Eagle Count." National Audubon was starting counts to establish trends in populations. Eagles occupied my life like never before when I was issued my federal banding permit in 1962. I became more aware of eagles because of banding, finding them shot, trapped, killed by motor vehicles and poisoned by coyote bait stations.

Long before that, in the 1930s, I was a kid on the farm, and eagles — especially golden eagles — were nothing more than images I'd seen in Finley & Bohlman's extraordinary photos. They grabbed me hard.

I think I was about 10, which would have been the spring of '38, when I discovered "Birds of America." That book changed my life! It created a love for books that is as profound today as it was in 1938. It also sent me on a life's journey that is still alive today: my love of birds. Over these 80-plus years, William L. Finley and Herman T. Bohlman kept feeding me on their love of birds.

While I was working with OMSI in the '60s, I rented a little house on the Finley estate, Riverby, in Milwaukie south of Portland, and had access to Finley's vault where his photos and personal papers were still stored. As I sat there slowly sharing

his personal life and accomplishments, I half-expected Finley himself to walk in. If you don't think that was a heavy moment for me, you got another think coming...

Sue and I recently conducted our annual midwinter raptor count for the Oregon Eagle Foundation. It's a route that took us from our house at Sun Mountain to Culver and many points in between. We returned to Sisters the "back way," via Lake Billy Chinook, the old townsite of Grandview and all that wonderful deer winter range that leads one back to Camp Polk Road and into Sisters.

Sue took the photo above very near the old Grandview cemetery, right in the middle of the deer winter range. Seeing those two eagles and about 10 ravens hanging around left no question that somewhere close by a delicious dead deer was going back to the soil, but hurried along by those who need such energy — badly — in winter.

Events like this provide us with another look at bald eagles as they go from egg to adult. As one can see, it isn't all one change of feathers from immature to adult for bald eagles; they go from gray down in the nest to all brown to speckled with gray/brown plumage, to that juvenile adult male with flecks of gray and brown mixed with the emerging white feathers of head and tail, then to that dark brown all over with the bright yellow beak and feet, brilliant white head and tail.

It's that varied plumage difference that sometimes throws birders off when it comes to telling the difference between adult golden eagles and immature bald eagles; in certain lighting conditions it's all too easy to mistake one for the other. But there is no question about different sizes of male and female baldies (and other raptors): Males are smaller



PHOTO BY SUE ANDERSON

Juvenile and immature bald eagles; the big one is a female.

than females.

We had another occurrence that day that I think is worth mentioning: The realization of the difference between "soil" and "dirt." In my opinion, "soil" is that medium in which we grow healthy plants that support a diverse ecosystem. "Dirt" is soil that has been turned into a single use, or so heavily contaminated by Man's selfish desires, it no longer supports anything tied to Nature.

This was so vivid in so many places we looked for raptors, especially those with long irrigation lines and pivots. That soil has been used for so long for a single purpose — and so pumped full of chemicals — all it will grow is a "crop."

Nowhere was the difference more obvious

than on the north side of Lower Bridge Road out of Terrebonne. That area is used for agriculture, but not abused, there's still soil there. It was so noticeable as we pulled up and spotted the first red-tailed hawk feeding on a small rodent.

When we finally totaled raptors in the first area of about 40 acres, it came to 18 red-tail hawks, two rough-legged hawks (down from the Arctic to dine upon Oregon's rodents) and a lovely little male harrier sailing by.

There is only one reason for that plethora of raptors utilizing that small an area; the agricultural lands had a healthy ecosystem, providing habitat for the diversity of rodents supporting the raptor population.



We have what you're looking for!



Jeff Jones
Principal Broker
541-480-7201
jeffjoneslcl@gmail.com



Linda Brooksby
Broker
541-977-4488
lindabrooksbylcl@gmail.com



Ross Kennedy
Broker, CDPE
541-408-1343
ross@myrksolutions.com



Ellen Wood
Broker, GRI, ABR
541-588-0033
woode51@msn.com



Doug Roberts
Principal Broker
GRI, CRB
541-280-6199
dougrobertsMPS@gmail.com



Lana Labuda
Principal Broker,
GRI, SFR, SRES
541-408-4144
lana@sistersproperties.com



Kimberly Gorayeb
Principal Broker
541-639-5551
kiminsisters@gmail.com



Suzanne Carvlin
Broker, RSPS,
E-PRO, GRI, ABR
541-595-8707
Suzanne@HomeInSisters.com



Katie Cam
Broker
971-409-0177
katiercam@gmail.com

Scan to visit our website and view all of our listings!



541-588-6614
290 E. Cascade Ave.
Mon-Fri, 9 am-5 pm
Sat 10 am-4 pm
metoliuspropertysales.com

**BLACK BUTTE RANCH REAL ESTATE
HOWELLS REALTY GROUP**



SOUTH MEADOW 190 • \$995,000
mls #201600520

NEW LISTING!



SPRING HOUSE 14 • \$1,450,000 mls #201506342

PREMIER PROPERTY!

EXCLUSIVE ONSITE REALTOR FOR THE RANCH

- Don Bowler, President and Broker ~ 971-244-3012
- Gary Yoder, Managing Principal Broker ~ 541-420-6708
- Dick Howells, Principal Broker ~ 541-408-6818
- Phil Arends, Principal Broker ~ 541-420-9997
- Joe Dye, Broker ~ 541-595-2604 | Carol Dye, Broker ~ 541-480-0923
- Steve Post, Broker ~ 541-480-5415

Come see us daily at The Ranch, 9 to 5
Our office is adjacent to the new Lodge Pool Complex
541-595-3838 The Ranch • 541-549-5555 in Sisters
see all our listings at blackbutte.com



*Award-Winning
Home Builder & Renovator*

541-549-1575 • LaredoConstruction.com

Maintenance • Repairs • Insurance Work CCB#194489

**Superior
Escrow
Execution**
**Ultimate
Service**



Western Title & Escrow

Stop by and visit with Tiana Van Landuyt & Shelley Marsh.
220 S. Pine St., Ste. 102 | 541-548-9180