

Sisters Country birds

By Douglas Beall
Correspondent

The great blue heron is America's largest heron, with a wingspan of up to 79 inches and a height of 40 to 53 inches. It is commonly seen along waterways, swamps and coastal ocean sides.

Around Sisters they can often be seen in wheat and grass fields feeding on moles, gophers and ground squirrels. Also great blues can be seen overhead soaring slowly, traveling to their nests or a new feeding area.

They will form rookeries

in mature forests in which large stick nests two to three feet wide are built for two to six eggs and to accommodate their fast-growing chicks. This community nesting has up to 500 nests and will erupt into loud guffawing when disturbed. Clearcutting and construction near a colony are particularly damaging, and a 1,000-foot buffer zone is recommended. In recent years great blue heron colonies are becoming smaller, numbering 100-200 birds.

For more great blue heron images visit www.abirdsingsbecauseithas.com/recent-journeys.



PHOTO BY DOUGLAS BEALL

Great blue heron.

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By Robert Collins, retired neurologist



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Farm regulators eye 'stop work'

By Mateusz Perkowski
Capital Press

CORVALLIS (AP) — Food manufacturers and pesticide applicators could be subject to "stop-work" orders under new regulatory authority being considered by Oregon's farm regulators.

The Oregon Department of Agriculture may seek new regulatory power to halt specific unlawful actions that endanger public safety.

Currently, the agency can suspend or revoke the license of a food establishment or pesticide applicator that's violating the law, but such sanctions may be overkill in some situations, said Lauren Henderson, ODA's assistant director.

"We don't have anything that's specific to an activity. It's all or nothing," he said during this week's meeting of the Oregon Board of Agriculture in Corvallis.

Revoking a license or obtaining a temporary restraining order in court also involves fairly high legal hurdles, Henderson said.

Taking such drastic steps would be overly burdensome for the agency and the business in the case of minor violations, such as a faulty thermometer in a refrigerated meat cooler, he said.

Under the proposed stop-work authority, the ODA could simply require a company to cease using that cooler until it's fixed, he said.

"We're looking at something very narrow and probably short-term," Henderson said.

At this point, the proposal is in a very early stage but the agency is considering it as a possible "legislative concept" for the 2017 legislative session, he said.

Henderson acknowledged the stop-work idea has met with some trepidation among

regulated companies.

"The industry as a whole is pretty nervous about us having that authority," he said.

Aside from possibly affecting pesticide applications, the proposal could impact on-farm processing, such as dairymen who make farmstead cheese.

Doug Krahmer, a blueberry farmer and board member, said companies should have a way to challenge a stop-work order.

"I would caution you to put some sort of judicial mechanism in there, so if a grower or an owner takes issue with a stop-work order, there is a quick way to get adjudication," he said.

The U.S. Department of Labor did not provide such recourse when it issued "hot goods" orders in 2012 that halted the sale of perishable fruit based on alleged labor violations, he said.

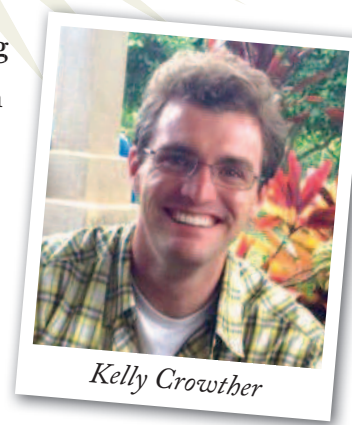
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— Kelly Crowther, Program Coordinator
Sisters Park & Recreation District



Kelly Crowther

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