

Tales from a
Sisters Naturalist
by Jim Anderson

Watching for tagged raptors

The photo accompanying this column was taken near Sawyer Park in Bend. The tags made the hawk (a juvenile red-tail) stand out like a sore thumb, even to someone who really isn't interested in birds. It caught the eye of bird photographer Chas Savage. He knew it was important for him to capture an image of it. Afterwards, he went to the Banding Lab website, reported his sighting and discovered it was tagged at the Portland Airport just a couple of weeks earlier.

At last report, the hawk was still hanging around, keeping an eye out for rodents and rabbits in Bend.

Airliners occasionally run into a bird, and visa-versa. The incredible story of the collision between geese and an airliner, now made into a popular movie, "Sully," is an example.

The film is about Chesley "Sully" Sullenberger III, an American Airlines retired airline captain and glider pilot, hailed as a national hero when he successfully executed an emergency landing in the Hudson River on January 15, 2009. His aircraft was disabled when it struck a flock of Canada geese (or the other way around) during climb-out from La Guardia International Airport in New York. All 155 people aboard the aircraft survived with no personal injuries because

Captain Sullenburger immediately understood he had no power and was in a glider. He pushed the nose down to keep up airspeed and took the only action open to him — a water landing in the Hudson River.

Aircraft and birds have been running into each other for just about as many years as both have been sharing airspace. The Wright Brothers' first aircraft just missed shorebirds over the sand hills of North Carolina. Special workers at the Reno Air Races today do all they can to keep birds away from Reno/Stead Airport before, during, and after the air races.

That particular red-tail was tagged at the Portland Airport by a colleague of mine, Carole Hallett. Carole's a wildlife biologist who's part of the team in the Port of Portland Wildlife Hazard Management Program who have the responsibility of doing everything they can to prevent collisions between aircraft and wildlife.

Like falconers of old, who trapped the bird of prey they wanted to train into the art of falconry, Carole captures them with live bait (usually mice). In my opinion, and probably Carole's as well, there aren't enough adjectives in the English language to describe what

a wild-caught raptor is like to handle — and what one can do to someone who is careless.

Patagial markers are attached (carefully) to the leading edge of the raptor's wing, between the elbow and shoulder. That location makes the tag visible whether the bird is flying or perched, and will be sighted quicker than one with just the aluminum band on the leg.

Once the raptor is equipped with the band and tags it is taken at least 40 miles from the airport and released in areas where there are no other hazards. The biologists take into consideration weather conditions when they release the birds. In summer and fall the birds are released on the east side of the airport, while in winter they are released west of the airport.

Hallett has captured, banded and released over 2,500 birds — mostly red-tails and American kestrels — since she began working with the airport in October of 1999.

"It's primarily a safety issue; reducing the incidence of raptor collisions with airplanes (bird strikes), and incidentally benefiting the birds by moving them out of a potentially hazardous environment," she said of her work.



PHOTO BY CHAS SAVAGE

Adult red-tailed hawk wearing orange wing tags.

She has had recoveries of banded and tagged raptors from as far away as Mexico and Canada, and in the USA from Montana, Oregon, Washington and California. The majority of U.S. sightings are from western Oregon. Once Carole started using orange wing (patagial) tags she began getting more reports of live birds. When using just leg bands, 90 percent of reports were of birds found dead, usually hit by car, occasionally electrocuted, shot or dead from starvation or poisoning.

The tags give her a much better idea of where the birds go after release, and

also makes it easier to identify any that return to PDX. Knowing who returns helps the hazard-management crew to evaluate which release sites are working and which are not. The really good news is, 75 percent of red-tails never return, and the majority that do only stay a short while before moving on.

In addition to reported sightings of tagged birds, the USGS Bird Banding Lab in Patuxent, Maryland keeps tabs on all her banded birds. People who see a banded or tagged bird can report it to the Bird Banding Lab at www.reportband.gov.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

Sisters Urban Renewal Agency Annual Report

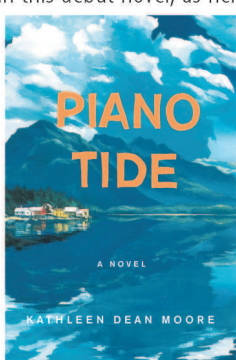
The Annual Financial Report for fiscal year ending June 30, 2016 for the Sisters Urban Renewal Agency has been prepared and is on file at Sisters City Hall, 520 E. Cascade Avenue and is summarized here. In FY 2015-16 Sisters URA received \$266,448 in revenue, spent \$359,016 on projects and administration, and paid \$226,959 in principal and interest. Estimated tax revenues and interest for FY 2016-17: \$167,500. Budgeted expenditures for FY 2016-17: \$74,200 (Capital Projects Fund) and \$206,635 (Debt Service Fund). Interested persons may obtain a copy by contacting Finance Officer, Joseph O'Neill at 541-323-5222 or joneill@ci.sisters.or.us. A copy is also available on the City's website, www.ci.sisters.or.us.

An analysis of the tax collection impact on the permanent rate of other tax districts is shown in the table below.

Taxing District	FY 15/16 Forgone Revenue	FY 15/16 Permanent Rate Levy	% of Permanent Rate Levy
Deschutes County	13,840	26,621,431	0.05%
Fairgrounds Bond	1,380	2,634,080	0.05%
County Library	5,947	11,376,512	0.05%
Countywide Law Enforcement	11,044	21,097,417	0.05%
County Extension/4H	212	463,899	0.05%
9-1-1	1,734	3,347,270	0.05%
City of Sisters	28,635	907,064	3.16%
Sisters/Camp Sherman Fire District	29,218	2,152,341	1.36%
Sisters Park & Recreation District	2,372	268,631	0.88%
School District #6	44,457	7,600,635	0.58%
School #6 Bond 2001	10,548	1,803,149	0.58%
High Desert ESD	1,026	1,969,097	0.05%
C.O.C.C.	6,725	12,664,174	0.05%
Total	157,139	92,905,699	0.17%

Kathleen Dean Moore
Friday • 2/17 • 6:00
Piano Tide
Author presentation

Perennial favorite of PSB shoppers, Kathleen Moore, is returning with her first work of fiction. Fans will not be disappointed in this debut novel, as her background in environmentalism shines through in the story's theme. Her story asks the question "do we belong to the earth or does the earth belong to us?" In her fictionalized town, Good River Harbor, we are introduced to the town father who has grown rich selling off the natural resources in this Alaskan harbor. His new plan to sell off the water in their salmon stream runs into a challenge. Join us for a fantastic evening with Kathleen!



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