

**Tales from a
Sisters
Naturalist**
by Jim Anderson

**Rare turkey
vulture spotted**

Something new came soaring into the Central Oregon skies last week and it would be wonderful if you'd watch for it: an adult turkey vulture (TV) wearing a patagial (wing/auxiliary) tag.

Bird research scientists use patagial wing tags as a tool to check on the movements of large birds. The best known example are those scientists working with the recovery of the California condor. Anyone attending the condor lecture at the Grand Canyon has seen condors soaring by, waiting to be fed, flashing their colorful patagial wing tags used to keep track of individual birds.

Raptors that wander into the traffic patterns of airports are immediately live-trapped, equipped with patagial wing tags and released several miles from the place they were captured. These birds are carefully monitored to see if one or more return. Through such research more is being learned about the movements of several species of raptors, and now it's the TV's turn.

Jaime Desmarais of Bend sent me an email just the other day about a wing-tagged TV that was spotted flying over one of the trails in the Riley Ranch Nature Preserve. While under observation it came to roost in the top of a ponderosa pine.

Seeing the bird at that location at this time of year could mean it's here for the



PHOTO COURTESY KIM KADLECEK

Wing (patagial) tagged turkey vulture.

breeding season and could be spotted again by some sharp-eyed person. If you are one of the lucky ones who happens to come across it — or vice versa — please take special note of the color of the tag and the identifying numbers and/or letters.

Sea and Sage Audubon Society of Orange County, California, has placed an announcement on the Internet describing a research project being carried out by University of CA, Davis-Wildlife Health Center. It is a study that was begun in 2008 looking at heavy metal exposure in scavenging birds. The turkey vulture was one of the species that has been live-trapped, tagged, and monitored.

If that study is still ongoing, the tagged bird here could be from that work, or it may be as old as I am...

The University of California turkey vultures have been fitted with "large white-with-black-numbers" tags that are easily visible in flight and when perched. If you're patient, the numbers can be easily read with binoculars and/or spotting scopes.

Please report any sightings with exact location, observer's name, date, and tag number to the Bird Banding Lab (BBL). The BBL (www.usgs.gov/centers/pwrc/science/bird-banding-laboratory) has instructions on their website on how to report the sighting of an auxiliary marked

bird. If the tag is white with black numerals and letters, also send an email to chief researcher (Master Bander), Pete Bloom, petebloom@bloombiological.com, and Terra Kelly trkelly@ucdavis.edu.

Another color and numbering pattern could be from Canada, which can also be reported through the BBL website.

I'd also appreciate hearing from you: jimnaturalist@gmail.com.

Who knows, one of these days — if shooters stop using lead-based ammunition — researchers in the condor recovery project may consider it safe to release condors raised in the Portland Zoo into the Oregon Outback, or along the Columbia River where Lewis & Clark saw them when they were exploring the West. Think of the thrill we'll get when we see a majestic California condor go soaring overhead, emblazoned with a tag saying it is the first California condor raised in the wilds of Oregon's Outback.

**Firewood permits
are available**

Personal-use firewood collection is now available on Forest Service and BLM land across Central Oregon and will remain open through November 30. Firewood permits are on sale at Forest Service and BLM offices and at participating retailers across Central Oregon.

Permits sell for \$10 per cord with a minimum two-cord purchase required. Each household may purchase up to 8 cords annually. Permit-holders will receive a "Firewood Synopsis," a publication illustrating the areas where the public has access to collect firewood after purchasing a permit.

It is the responsibility of the permit-holder to read the Firewood Synopsis in order to understand which tree species are available for firewood cutting and gathering in the designated areas. It is prohibited to possess or remove trees that have been cut illegally.

Many areas have different opening dates, and some have off-road vehicle use restrictions. Permit-holders need to pay particular attention to the "Rules and Regulations" as well as the specific cutting designations listed on each cutting area map in the synopsis. Compliance with these regulations will allow the Forest Service and the BLM to continue offering new cutting areas to the public.

Firewood cutters are

required to carry a shovel, an 8 oz. capacity or larger fire extinguisher, and have their chainsaw equipped with an approved spark arrester when cutting wood.

During early spring months, many forest roads are still inaccessible due to snow. Forest visitors are asked to use care to avoid getting stuck or causing extensive and illegal resource damage to the land and vegetation.

As Sisters moves into the hot, dry summer months, federal land managers may raise the Industrial Fire Precaution Level (IFPL). The IFPL system regulates spark-emitting devices on timber sales, service contracts, fuelwood and special-use permits. IFPL restrictions could limit the hours that firewood cutting is available, or prohibit them entirely during periods of high fire danger. Restrictions will be announced by 6:00 p.m. on the day prior to the restriction(s) going into effect and will be posted to Central Oregon National Forest websites and through the Central Oregon Interagency Dispatch Center at <https://gacc.nifc.gov/nwcc/districts/COIDC/>.

Pick up a free copy of the motor vehicle use map for the area where you'll be cutting or download a free version on your smartphone to ensure you are traveling on designated roads: <https://go.usa.gov/xQKGq>.

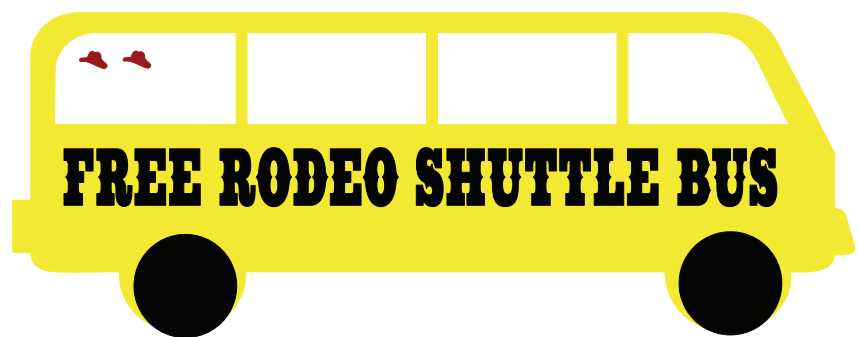
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Shuttle Bus**



From
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1.5 hours before,
to 1.5 hours after the Rodeo.

See ya at the Rodeo!