

Drought-stressed trees scorched

By Bradley W. Parks
Oregon Public Broadcasting (OPB)

BEND (AP) — This summer's heat scorched Oregon trees — maybe worse than ever before — and scientists are beginning to piece together what that means for the trees' long-term health.

Reports of fading foliage and crispy conifers started coming within days of a June heat wave, during which many parts of the state endured consecutive days with temperatures higher than 110° Fahrenheit.

Aerial surveys from the U.S. Forest Service, Oregon Department of Forestry and Washington Department of Natural Resources documented tree scorching on about 229,000 acres (92,673 hectares) in Oregon, OPB reported. That's likely an undercount, given the method's limitations.

"By some estimates, it's probably the largest scorch event in history," Oregon State University researcher Christopher Still told OPB's "Think Out Loud" this week. "I mean this is a new thing for us to be seeing on Earth, so it's sort of a dubious milestone."

Researchers like Still, with help from citizen scientists, have spent months documenting the heat wave's effects on

“...this is a new thing for us to be seeing on Earth, so it's sort of a dubious milestone.”
— Christopher Still

Oregon's trees.

People submitted pictures of ailing arbors to an online database, which researchers used to help analyze the damage. The images showed deciduous trees with browning, crunchy leaves, and some even looked like they were melting, Still said. Conifer needles turned bright orange and in some cases fell off entirely.

Most of the scorching happened on the south- and west-facing sides of trees, which endured the most intense sunlight. Satellite images were even able to pick up the burnt edges.

Western hemlock and western red cedar suffered the worst damage. Younger trees

fares worse than older ones.

"There is going to be an impact, I think, going forward, if this young generation had lots and lots of mortality, which we think it did," Still said. "The older trees, they're going to be more resilient, but it's a little bit hard to know if you lose a bunch of your needles what that does to you."

Toasted trees were already stressed from the adverse effects of extreme drought, which in recent years has contributed to tree declines. Still said the combination of drought and heat is a "knock-out punch" for trees.

Those effects are likely to get worse as unchecked burning of fossil fuels drives climate change, which is expected to lead to more extreme heat events as well as longer, more intense periods of drought.

"If this just keeps going, if these are happening every five or 10 years, it's gonna be really grim I think for most of the forests of the Pacific Northwest," Still said.



PHOTO BY DOUGLAS BEALL

A Mt. Jefferson ponderosa takeoff of the Mountain Bluebird.

Sisters Country birds

By Douglas Beall
Correspondent

The Mountain Bluebird [*Sialia currucoides*] seeks out open areas with a mix of grasses, shrubs and trees, in mountainous areas up to 12,500 feet. Clearcuts, meadows, and sagebrush/juniper habitat provide large insect populations for the feeding of fledglings. They require tree cavities or nest boxes for brooding.

The female chooses her mate by the quality of the nest cavity that the male offers. She builds the nest as the male Mountain Bluebird brings insects to her while she brings the grasses and stems to line the nest. A 13-day incubation period of four to eight pale blue eggs commences in May and June, and they often have a second brood.

The young fledge in 17-22 days and will often remain as a family unit for the summer. Their bright azure blue feathers can be seen on fence posts and telephone lines as they catch insects in the air, often hovering before dropping down to the ground. Berries from wild currant, elderberry, sumac, and mistletoe are a portion of their diet in the fall. Average lifespan is four to six years. They migrate

south in September and early October.

They are in the thrush family and in groups are referred to as a "mutation" or a "hermitage" of thrushes. For more Mountain Bluebird photos visit <http://abirdingsbecauseithasasong.com/recent-journeys>.

**YEAR-ROUND
FIREWOOD
SALES**
— KINDLING —
**SISTERS
FOREST PRODUCTS**
541-410-4509
SistersForestProducts.com

Have a Merry Christmas!

Gypsy Wind Clothing

Sweaters & Sweatshirts

Soft & Cozy!
20+ different
styles and
colors!

LOTS OF
**Handbags
& Scarves**
including new
Laurel Burch!

NEW WINTER HOURS:
Wednesday - Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.;
Sunday, 1 to 4 p.m.; Closed Monday & Tuesday
183 E. HOOD AVE., SISTERS • 541-868-4479

PAULINA SPRINGS BOOKS
EST. 1992

GIVE BOOKS!

**ALL BOOKS
FEATURED IN
OUR HOLIDAY
CATALOG**

**15% OFF
THROUGH
12/31/21**

**STOP BY PAULINA SPRINGS
BOOKS TODAY FOR...**

- Personalized recommendations and gift ideas from our booksellers
- Plenty of fun board games & puzzles
- Last-minute gifts and gift cards
- To buy books for Pre-K & K Sisters students from our SMART (Start Making A Reader Today) Holiday Giving Tree at 20% off!

**"READS & ROASTS"
Book & Coffee
Subscription Box**

Order for yourself or a friend at
www.paulinaspringsbooks.com

541-549-0866 • 252 W. Hood Ave., Sisters