

BIRDMAN

Tiny travelers return

BY TED A. GLOVER

Here it is April and the annual Great Spring Migration is underway with literally millions of birds on the wing heading north toward their summer breeding grounds. By keeping your eyes and ears open you can see and hear many of these tiny travelers as they make their incredible journey right here in the Applegate Valley.

Researchers tell us that migratory birds inherit this urge to head north. They travel to their ancestral summer breeding grounds by using the sun in the daytime and the stars by night. There is also a belief that the earth's magnetic field could play a role in the migration as well.

We should begin seeing a lot of familiar birds. In fact, some are already re-appearing. In our area the Tree Swallows are among the first, finding the wooden nesting boxes scattered around the valley or finding tree cavities in open fields or over water. These birds are seen usually in large flocks soaring overhead or sitting on wires. The Tree Swallow has a glossy blue-green back

and flashy white under parts. Of course other swallows make their appearance as spring progresses toward summer; these include the colorful Cliff Swallows, Violet-Green Swallows and Barn Swallows, with their exaggerated forked-tail. Also appearing soon are the Northern Rough-winged Swallows, who are broad-winged and short-tailed like the Tree Swallows, but are brown over-all.

By mid-April the Rufous Hummingbirds are back followed closely by the Black-headed Grosbeaks. The male grosbeak has a deep orange breast, sides and rump with an all black head and white patches in the wings. They also have huge bills that help them eat pine and other seeds.

Keep your eyes and ears alert for all the birds that come our way. Some stay for the season and some just pass through, but all are fun to watch and hear.

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Woodland Stewardship

How to get the most out of your forested property

Do you own a tract of forest land or some woods around your home? Would you like to learn how to take care of it, restore it, or improve it? Are you concerned about maintaining the health of your trees and reducing wildfire risks? Would you like to improve your property values, or habitat for wildlife? Do you want to utilize forest products for sale or personal use? If the answer to any or all of these questions is yes, this class is for you!

"Woodland Stewardship-How to Get the Most Out of Your Forested Property" is a six class series that provides an overview of concepts and practices of forest stewardship for woodland properties, from 5 to 50 (or more) acres. It is designed for owners who are just getting started with woodland management as well as more experienced owners who are looking for new ideas and approaches.

ABOUT THE CLASS: This is a very practical, field based class; we will be outside, rain or shine. Field activities will take place on woodland properties around the area. You will see what other landowners are doing and learn from them. Bring comfortable shoes or boots, raingear, sun/rain protection, and water. Although the class will not be physically demanding, we will be making short walks through the woods.

GRANTS PASS classes: Friday mornings, 9 am-Noon, April 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, May 6.

CENTRAL POINT classes: Friday afternoons, 1:30-4:30 pm, April 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, May 6.

COST: \$50 for all six classes or \$10 per individual class. Feel free to attend individual sessions. Fee covers instruction, handouts, & other materials. The series is offered in both Grants Pass and Central Point. Register for either (see registration form below).

INSTRUCTORS: Max Bennett, Forestry Agent, OSU Extension Service, Master Woodland Managers, and guest instructors.

Session #1: Getting Started: Sustainable Woods Management (April 1)

Owning forest land presents both opportunities and challenges, some that are obvious and many that are not so obvious. This class will cover the basic list of "things to know about your forest" ranging from tree id to property taxes to locating property boundaries. And, it will help you formulate a vision for your own forest, as you see examples of well-managed local woodland properties and get an overview of woodland management practices including thinning and stand improvement, road development, fire protection, timber harvesting, and more.

Session #2: Maintaining a Healthy Forest & Stand Improvement (April 8)

A vigorous forest is a healthy forest, but many stands in southern Oregon are overly dense and have low tree vigor, making them susceptible to insect attack as well as wildfire. Learn how to thin and improve stands based on species, vigor, form, spacing, and other considerations. Slash disposal, utilization of byproducts, equipment needs, potential markets, and other practical considerations will be covered. We'll also discuss some of the most common insect and disease problems of native trees.

Session #3: Protecting Your Home and Property from Wildfire (April 15)

Wildfire is the #1 concern for many forest landowners in southern Oregon, and for good reason: this is one of the most fire-prone environments in the state. Learn what it takes to protect your home and property from wildfire. Discover how to make your woods more resistant to fire and how this can improve forest health and vigor at the same time.

Session #4: Tree Planting & Establishment, Long Term Tree Care (April 22)

What does it take to establish new forest trees that will survive our hot, dry summers? See examples tough site reforestation and care of young trees. We'll cover planting techniques, selecting the right species for your site, planting tools and techniques, weed control, pruning, and more.

Session #5: Wildlife, Water, & Weeds (April 29)

This session will help you make your property more attractive to wildlife by outlining ways to provide the essential habitat for the species of your interest. You'll also learn how to make your property less attractive to noxious weeds, and what you can do about existing weed problems. We'll also look at ways to develop a trail system on your property. Finally, we'll cover practices you can use to protect water quality and streamside areas.

Session #6: Putting it All Together (May 6)

You've seen some great examples, now how do you put it all together on your own land? Learn about management planning, working with contractors, tools and equipment, and sources of technical and financial assistance that can help you accomplish projects. Get acquainted with your responsibilities as a woodland owner by learning about Forest Practices Rules and fire liability.

Registration for Grants Pass session call 541-476-6613 or stop by 215 Ringuette St, Grants Pass. For Central Point session call 541-776-7371 or stop by 569 Hanley Rd., Central Point. Preregistration is required.



Photos clockwise from top left:

Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) by Dave Menke, USFWS. Easily identified from other swallows, the barn swallow has a long forked tail and a buffy-orange colored chest.

Tree Swallow (*Tachycineta bicolor*) by Dr. Thomas Barnes, USFWS. The Tree Swallow winters farther north than any other American swallow, and it returns to its nesting grounds long before other swallows come back.

Female Black-headed Grosbeak (*Pheucticus melanoceph*) by Dave Menke, USFWS. The male and female black-headed grosbeak differ greatly in their plumage, with the male being a flashy black, white, and cinnamon, and the female a drab buff and brown with white stripes on her head.

Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*) by George Gentry, USFS. The feistiest hummingbird in North America. The brilliant orange male and the green-and-orange female Rufous Hummingbird are relentless attackers at flowers and feeders.

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