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A cedar waxwing pauses to check its surroundings Jan. 13 while eating berries from a tree near the Old Mill District.

## On top of it all in the off-season at Tam-a-Lau trail

BY MAKENZIE WHITTLE  
The Bulletin

Visiting Lake Billy Chinook off-season can bring a feeling of peace and quiet that you'll rarely have in the middle of August. With the marinas closed for the season and the boaters on the water focusing on the ends of their lines rather than the end of a tow rope, the reservoir north of Redmond is calm if a little cold.

But the water and fishing aren't the only reasons to check out the lake at the Cove Palisades State Park.

For those who want an up-close look at some of the stunning geological features and for a bird's eye view of the Deschutes and Crooked rivers, take a hike up the 6-mile Tam-a-Lau trail.

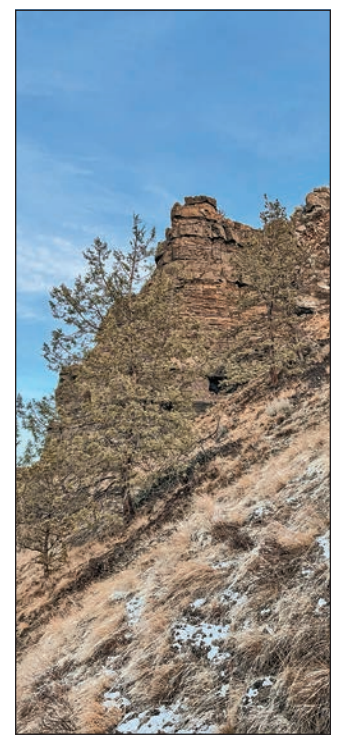
### Big rocks

One chilly, beautiful recent Saturday, I took my father, Mike, up to the park for a day hike. We equipped ourselves with my 2021 Oregon State Park pass (still required, otherwise day passes are \$5) plenty of water, snacks and hiking poles just in case.

You won't necessarily need the poles unless, like my dad, you have a bad knee or, like me, you have occasional vertigo.

Tam-a-Lau, listed as moderate, is open year-round for hiking only with dogs allowed on a leash. The best time to hike up is in cooler conditions as the trail is largely exposed up at the top and can be extremely hot in the summer months, as well as loud from the activity on the lake below.

See **Trail** / B9



Makenzie Whittle/The Bulletin  
A basalt rock feature from the Deschutes Formation as seen from the Tam-a-Lau trail.

## Central Oregon birders thrive in winter with rare sightings

BY BRIAN RATHBONE  
The Bulletin

Some days, a message is sent out on WhatsApp, alerting birders of a northern saw-whet owl, others it might be a message on the Central Oregon Birders Online website informing the close to 1,000 members on the site's message boards about a swarm of purple finches and hermit thrushes taking over a birdbath.

And if you are lucky, rare birds like white winged junco or a American redstart might find their way into your yard.

"The first spring I was here, I was putting a swingset together and had a gyrfalcon flying over the house," said Tom Crabtree, a longtime Central Oregon birder. "There were only half a dozen on record of people who saw that falcon."

See **Birds** / B10



A swan feeds on aquatic vegetation in the Deschutes River on Jan. 15.  
Ryan Brennecke/  
Bulletin photos

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