

2015 wrap-up: Finding phoebes, vireos, blue grouse and more

For me, 2015 was a great birding year. The wrap up is... After hiking, scoping, waiting and returning to certain spots over and over, I have compiled a list of 242 different species of our feathered friends for my 2015 annual bird list. Amongst those were 24 species I had never seen before. These will go on my Life List as well!

New species seen this year of special note were the snowy plover. I have done surveys and monitoring for several agencies over the years, watching for plovers expanding their nesting areas to Gearhart, Warrenton and Fort Steven's beaches, never seeing the bird (or evidence of nesting). I even "dragged" Mitzi and Terry (BFFs and Birdathon teammates) out to Manzanita's beaches in February for a long day of searching after several had been spotted there. Well, I finally saw the little sweetie at Sunset Beach in Warrenton on June 3r after several

BIRD NOTES

SUSAN BOAC



evening trips out there.

Another bird that has eluded me for several years was the White-tailed Kite. By all reports they sit at the tops of trees EVERYWHERE in our area. Noting that they are bright white, one would think they are easy to spot! Well, it took a special trip to Tillamook on Nov. 29 to see one. And as a matter of fact, I lost track of how many I saw that day, well over 20 in number!

The other birds I saw for the first time in my life in 2015 are northern pygmy owl, black-headed gull, Eurasian teal, Say's phoebe, Cassin's finch, common and Arctic terns, dusky flycatcher, Cassin's vireo, blue grouse, vesper sparrow, yellow-headed blackbird, marbled

murrelet, sharp-tailed sandpiper, Lapland longspur, short-eared owl, common-ground dove, gyrfalcon, clay-colored sparrow, blue-gray gnatcatcher, American tree sparrow and Leech's storm petrel.

Come Jan. 1, I will be working on my 2016 list!

I hope you will join a group of people for our own birding adventures in the Cannon Beach area. We meet the first Sunday of the month at the Lagoon Trail parking lot on Second Street at 9 a.m. As a group, we decide where the best birding is and bird until about 11. Bring binoculars and wear appropriate clothing. Everyone is welcome! Upcoming dates are and Jan. 3 and Feb. 7.

Also, please mark your calendars for April 9, the fourth annual North Oregon Coast Birdathon. Together we will raise much needed funds for the Wildlife Center of the North Coast. Information on how to help in my next column.



SUSAN BOAC/CANNON BEACH GAZETTE

White-tailed kite in Tillamook County.

Susan has spent her life enjoying the great outdoors from the lakes and woods of Northern Minnesota, Mount Adams in Washington and now the Oregon beach environs. After spending many pleasurable hours driving

her avid birder parents around, she has taken up birding as a passion, to the mixed emotions of her husband Scott. The Boacs reside on the Neawanna Creek in Seaside where their backyard is a birder's paradise.

LETTERS

Recall needed

The hamlets of Cannon Beach and Arch Cape are facing a potentially critical situation. Our fire chief was fired a couple of months ago with the explanation that there were "administrative and personnel issues." This seemed a dissatisfying reason to almost everyone, but especially to his fellow firefighters. This is because there is no one they trust more than Chief Mike Balzer to lead them at the scene of any kind of emergency.

There are several locals who are taking the lead in righting this wrong. We have been handed over 60 letters from the community. But more telling, we have 18 letters from Cannon Beach Rural Fire Department emergency medical technicians and firefighters denouncing the board and in support of their beloved chief.

When one of the board members informed the volunteers of Chief Balzer's abrupt termination in a meeting, they asked "Why?" They were told, that it isn't open

for discussion, it's a closed issue, and to get over it.

Chief Balzer didn't deserve what he was dealt, and his crew certainly doesn't deserve to be talked to like unruly children. Without these volunteers our town would suffer horribly with day-to-day emergencies, let alone a big one.

In a letter it was recommended to the board that this whole matter be considered an opportunity to air differences and reconcile. For the good of all, that would be the best case scenario. There are several reasons for this: It would take years for a newly hired chief to get to know and gain the trust of his team; it would take just as long to attain a working knowledge of the streets and the terrain of the area; and most importantly, for the board to regain the respect and trust of the Volunteer Fire Department.

It appears that they are out of touch with the will of the citizens and fire crew. They displayed a disturbing lack of respect for a man who has dedicated 32 years of selfless duty. Then they

showed disregard for the grief and anxiety the crew has over losing their trusted leader — for no substantiated reason. They obviously have no understanding of the bond responders develop for one another.

So if pride and prejudice shall prevail among their insulated little circle, then the community must do what they believe best for their safety and the future of the fire department that is irreplaceable. That would sadly entail a recall.

**Susan Neuwirth
Tolovana Park**

Firefighters still here

In response to "Recall needed" (The Daily Astorian, Dec. 8) regarding fire protection: To the communities of Falcon Cove, Arch Cape, and Cannon Beach — your protection has not been jeopardized. The dedicated group of well-trained officers and volunteer firefighters have you covered.

**Bob Cerelli
Cannon Beach Fire
District Board Member,
Arch Cape**

OBITUARIES

Scott Mitchell Rice

July 29, 1955 — Dec. 21, 2015



Scott Rice

The family and friends of Scott Mitchell Rice mourn his passing on Dec. 21, 2015. He was a beloved member of his community, and is deeply missed.

Born in Los Angeles, California, he attended Edison High School in Huntington Beach, California. He moved to Oregon in 2000, where he worked at the Cannon Beach Christian Conference Center as a grounds assistant. While there he met his wife, Susan, and they were married in 2001. After working in the construction industry for several years, he started his own company with a showroom in Gearhart: SMR Construction.

He loved sky diving, hang gliding, was a licensed pilot, avid motorcyclist, and enjoyed kayaking and playing practical jokes. As elder for buildings and grounds at Cannon Beach Community Church, he was instrumental in get-

ting the steeple built. Also, he organized the Angel Tree Project of Prison Fellowship at the Community Church every Christmas, this year included.

He is preceded in death by a son, Ryan Rice. He is survived by a son, Cory Rice of Florence, Oregon; his wife, Susan Rice of Cannon Beach, Oregon; his mother, Beverly Rice of Seaside, Oregon; a brother, Gregg Rice and his wife, Julie, of Los Banos, Cali-

fornia; a sister, Alison Rice and her husband, Paul, of Pleasant Valley, Oregon; a sister, Vikki Redhawk of Vancouver, Washington; his nieces, Rose Stewart and Dory Stewart of Mendocino, California; a stepson, Tim Burke, and his wife, Cassia, and son, Thomas, of Bremerton, Washington; and a stepdaughter, Deborah Burke of New York City.

There will be a memorial service at Cannon Beach Community Church on Saturday, Jan. 9, at 1 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Scott's memory may be made to the Angel Tree Project of Prison Fellowship, Cannon Beach Christian Conference Center or Cannon Beach Community Church.

Hughes-Ransom Mortuary is in charge of the arrangements. An online guest book may be signed at www.hughes-ransom.com.

Why the 'Rock' is a seabird sanctuary

On Wednesday, Jan. 13, Friends of Haystack Rock presents "A Sanctuary for Oregon's Seabirds," with Joshua Saranpaa of the Wildlife Center of the North Coast at the Cannon Beach Library.

Saranpaa will discuss descriptions of wildlife rehabilitation and what our mission as an organization is, natural history of the ambassador birds and common threats to these species.

Saranpaa will briefly explain the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, and also cover the "Who and What" of the WCNC. The natural history and threats of each

of the ambassadors will be described. A Q&A will follow the lecture, and the audience will be able to get a closer look at the birds and the other display items.

The Friends of Haystack Rock support the Haystack Rock Awareness Program in cooperation with the City of Cannon Beach, promoting the preservation and protection of the intertidal life and birds that inhabit the Marine Garden and the Oregon Islands National Wildlife Refuge at Haystack Rock. The program is celebrating 30 years of educating and protecting the marine environs surround-

ing Haystack Rock.

The library lecture series is held the second Wednesday of each month, November to April at 7 to 8:30 p.m. Cannon Beach Library, 131 N. Hemlock St., Cannon Beach. The library lecture series is held the second Wednesday of each month, November to April.

Obituary Policy

The Seaside Signal publishes paid obituaries. The obituary can include a small photo and, for veterans, a flag symbol at no charge. The deadline for all obituaries is 9 a.m. the business day prior.

Obituaries and notices may be submitted online at www.dailyastorian.com/forms/obits, by email at ewilson@dailyastorian.com, placed via the funeral home or in person at The Daily Astorian office, 949 Exchange St. in Astoria. For more information, call 503-325-3211, ext. 257.

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