Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Viewing Report

by ODFW

Geese and swans move south

The White-fronted Geese moved south several weeks ago but Canada Geese, Snow Geese and Tundra Swans are migrating now. They are often heard overhead before being seen. The flight calls are pretty distinct for each of these species. Look for geese along river corridors and near local wetlands.

Sandhill cranes are also occasionally heard and seen overhead in migration. Their call is easily recognized. Cranes can be seen migrating from Harney Basin, through Warner Basin, the Lake Abert area and south to Klamath Basin and into northern California. They return north starting in mid to late February.

In the central Oregon area, wintering birds are showing up in parks and towns. Varied Thrushes, northern Robins, Cedar Waxwings, Pine Siskins and White-crowned Sparrows are some of the species regularly observed. This time of year Townsend's Solitaire are commonly found calling and singing in juniper and juniper/ponderosa pine habitats in Harney, Lake, Deschutes, Crook, and Jefferson counties. Recent sightings of Black and White-winged Scoters, and a Parasitic Jaeger at inland lakes and reservoirs were reported shortly after the windy storm events of mid October. These marine species are often blown inland, into central Oregon, when big storms hit the coast.

Along the Columbia River

All along the Columbia large rafts of Canada Geese, Lesser Scaup and American Coots can be seen from the freeway. A great place to jump of the freeway for a closer look is Government Cove which provides a sheltered spot off of the Columbia River for a wide variety of wintering waterfowl, as well as bald eagles and osprey.

Here are directions to Government Cove, City of Cascade Locks. From I-84, westbound Exit 47 E of Cascade Locks; N 0.1 mi across railroad tracks to entrance; eastbound Exit 44; E on Hwy 30 (Wa Na Pa Street) for 1 mi; E on Forest Lane for 2 mi; E for 0.9 mi and cross I-84 overpass; bear left and yield; N 0.1 mi under I-84 overpass; cross railroad tracks to entrance.

Madras Area

Haystack Reservoir, Crooked River National Grasslands, is 10 miles south of Madras can provide a good

opportunity to see waterfowl such as common loon, horned grebe, red-necked grebe and eared grebe that stop here during migration. Directions and list of wildlife to see

Prineville Area

This is a good time to view big game, particularly mule deer using private lands along the Crooked River between the eastern end of Prineville Reservoir and the town of Paulina. Drivers will need to turn south off of Hwy. 26 at the east side of Prineville, onto the Post/Paulina highway, with the best viewing between milepost 20 and milepost 60. The largest numbers of animals will be in the early morning or late afternoon, and drivers need to be careful of animals crossing the highway. In addition to big game, viewers will have opportunities to see ducks, geese and a variety of birds of prey.

Recent winter-like weather appears to be triggering increasing movements of winter migrating birds to and through Central Oregon. Local reservoirs offer viewing of waterfowl and shorebirds as they feed, rest and prepare for fall migrations. Flocks of Canadian geese and ducks have been using the mudflats at the eastern end of Ochoco and Prineville Reservoir. Ochoco Reservoir is visible from Hwy. 26, eight miles east of Prineville. Migrating and wintering birds of prey are on the increase, with sightings of Redtail Rough-legged, and Swainsons Hawks; Northern Harriers; bald and golden Eagle; and Kestrels increasing.

The Crooked River between Bowman Dam and Prineville offers spectacular cliff scenery interspersed with close views of the Crooked River. Bald and golden eagles frequent this stretch of river and use the cliffs and pine trees for perching and roosting. Otter, beaver, raccoons and a variety of waterfowl and wading birds are also present in the river.

The Dalles, Mid-Columbia Region and Northern Wasco County

Black-tailed deer

Black-tail deer rut will increase activity periods daily for deer, although the best viewing periods are still early morning and evening. If you are interested in viewing rutting black-tail, focus your efforts on the national forest, especially at lower elevations near the transition between the oak and pine forests.

To see migrating waterbirds, as well as raptors, deer and passerines, visit Pine Hollow Reservoir, which is located near the town of Wamic and ODFWâ€™s White River Wildlife Area.