

## Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Viewing Report

by ODFW

As the temperature drops and the snow starts to fall, White River Wildlife area begins to see migrating deer and elk. Visitors wishing to view wintering deer are best served in the Smock Prairie area, where deer will congregate in open meadows to feed, while those wishing to view elk are more likely to be successful in the Friend area.

Wintering raptors are also increasing in numbers throughout the region. Visitors along the Columbia River are likely to find bald eagles congregating near the mouths of tributary streams such as Mosier Creek or the Klickitat River.

For those who may want to watch hawks on the hunt, the open habitats in Sherman and southern Wasco counties can provide ample opportunities to see Redtail, Swainson, and Rough-legged hawks in action. There are also Prairie falcons, northern harriers, and kestrels that can be seen.

### 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 off 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.

### Geese and swans move south through Central Oregon

Canada Geese, Snow Geese and Tundra Swans are migrating. 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.

## 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.

## Events

Kidâ€™s Day at Sunriver Nature Center, Saturday, 11/24, 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

A special day just for kids, filled with nature, science talks and activities. Free admission for all children ages 12 and under when accompanied by an adult.

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