

December's Speaker, Dan Gleason

Once again we've reached our month dedicated to the birds. Every December we have a talk about some aspect of avian natural history and this December is no exception. We had planned for Alan Contreras* to speak Friday evening, but the recent death of his mother necessitated finding a substitute. To Alan the ENHS offers its sincerest condolences. To Dan Gleason, who has so kindly stepped in on short notice, we say welcome and thank-you. We look forward to having Alan speak to us in the future.

Dan last spoke to us in December of 2001 when he showed his excellent photographs and talked of Oregon birds in all of the seasons. This Friday he'll stick to winter--there's a lot more going on out there than even some of us backyard birders might observe. Here's what Dan wrote to me about his talk Friday evening:

"Many of us grew up hearing about birds migrating south for the winter, and perhaps we have an idea of winter as a 'quiet' time for birds, yet, in 2005, observers on the Eugene Christmas Bird Count reported 137 species and 72,270 individual birds. That's a lot of bird activity and implies that perhaps winter is **not** such a quiet time for birds. Of these 137 bird species, many are found here throughout the year, although a few are present only in winter.

Conversely, we tend to think of spring and summer as breeding time for birds, but for a few species, winter is when breeding begins. Why do some birds leave for the winter while others remain? What changes occur and what adaptations do some birds have that allow them to exist in the harsher winter climates? This program will show photos of and explain about many of the birds that are found in the Oregon winter--what kinds of activities some of these birds are involved in, and some of their special adaptations for survival."

Though retired for almost three years from the Department of Biology at the University of Oregon, Dan continues to teach his Field Ornithology course each summer, a course for biology majors. However, he has started a monthly series on the natural history of birds for anyone in the community. Since the class carries no credits, Dan has the freedom to expand on topics that make birds especially interesting, and no one has to worry about grades, exams, papers, etc. The cost is \$15/month and meets for a two hour session on the first Monday of each month from 7-9 PM. It includes one weekend morning field trip. Ask Dan more about this class if you're interested.

Aside from serving Lane County Audubon Society for many years in a number of capacities, Dan has been actively involved in environmental education throughout the area, leading fieldtrips, conducting workshops and giving volunteer guide training. And, did you know? Each month, he writes a column, "Backyard Habitats," for *The Register Guard*. It

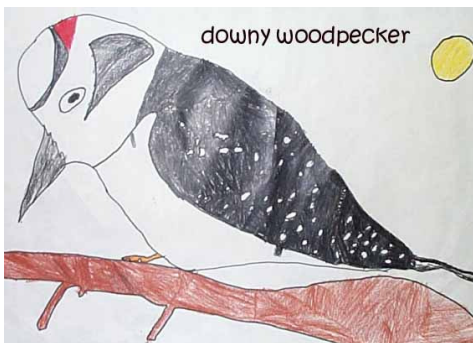
appears in the monthly *Home & Garden* insert, usually the third Thursday of the month. The last article Dan wrote appeared the week before Thanksgiving--you guessed it; he wrote about turkeys, wild turkeys. (More on those from Reida, p. 4, this issue.)

I glanced back at the piece I wrote about Dan in 2001 and thought I'd share with you a few things Dan told me then. He didn't grow up learning bird names and bird calls; he liked all aspects of the natural world somewhat equally. He remembers looking through his grandmother's bird books, but it wasn't until college that his focus narrowed. He went out on excursions with guys then, that not only knew bird names but bird calls as well. He began to ask questions. Could they really tell the difference? And he's been asking questions, finding out answers, and sharing the knowledge with students and the community ever since.

Another part of Dan that hasn't yet been mentioned, but is crucial for his successful talks, is his photographic skill. In third grade he received his first camera. Photographing all aspects of the natural world remains a favorite pastime. Dan is an excellent photographer!

It's not easy to talk about Dan without mentioning his wife, Barbara Gleason, a longtime graphic designer and illustrator for ad agencies, publishers and public agencies in the Pacific Northwest, and a member of the Guild of Natural Science Illustrators. Barbara and Dan often work together in their business CraneDance Publications, specializing in work with small to medium-sized businesses, government agencies and other organizations needing customized creative help with graphic design, illustration and book publishing. Barbara illustrated Dan's introductory textbook, *Birds From the Inside Out*. She is now completing illustrations for his next book due out soon: ***Birds – Life On The Wing***. We'll be sure to include a book review in Nature Trails when the book is released.

Dan's a friendly guy and I know we'll all enjoy his talk this coming Friday. So bring your friends; encourage interest; it's all "for the birds."



This downy woodpecker loves Eugene in the winter.

Artist too shy to share his/her name.

(I think the downy looks a little shy too.) Editor

*More on Alan Contreras and his new book page 5. (Cover photo: Townsend Warbler, wait till you see it in color!)

December's Speaker, Dan Gleason

- describe the one hundred best birding sites in the county, with detailed information on what may be found, and where and when to seek particular birds. All sites are publicly accessible with clear, easy-to-follow directions and maps, and many of the sites are at least partly wheelchair accessible.
- provide species accounts with basic information about the status, distribution, abundance, and movements of each species known to have occurred in Lane County.
- offer useful resources for birders including migrant arrival and departure tables, seasonal charts, a gazetteer, contact information for local birding and natural history organizations, and a species checklist.

Birds of Lane County, Oregon



Edited by Alan L. Contreras

2006. 5-1/2 x 9-1/4 inches.
368 pages. B&W
photographs. Maps. Line
drawings. Index.
ISBN-10 0-87071-182-2
ISBN-13 978-0-87071-182-4
Paperback, \$20.00

"This excellent guide could well set the standard for future county bird publications. Although the book describes birding in only one Oregon county, it will be of interest to all Oregon birders and to many out of state visitors."

--Harry Nehls, author of *Birds of the Willamette Valley Region*

About the Author

Birds of Lane County is the essential guide for anyone - backyard birder or serious observer - interested in the birds of western Oregon. Lane County's bird life is rich with variety; over three hundred bird species may be found in the county during the year. Within an hour's drive of Eugene, birders may encounter Black Oystercatchers, Pelagic Cormorants, and Snowy Plovers on the coast or Black-backed Woodpeckers, Northern Goshawks, and Mountain Bluebirds in the Cascades. With this comprehensive guide, birders at all levels can enjoy this incredible diversity. In *Birds of Lane County*, editor Alan Contreras and a team of expert contributors

Alan Contreras has studied the birds of Lane County for over thirty years. He is past president of the Oregon Field Ornithologists, and has written and edited several books on Oregon birds, including [Northwest Birds in Winter](#) and [Birds of Oregon: A General Reference](#). He lives in Eugene, Oregon.

Generous gifts from the following donors helped make publication of this book possible. The Oregon State University Press is grateful for their support.

Lane County Audubon Society
Margaret Paris
Herbert Wisner
Anonymous