Press Release
For Immediate Release

May 30, 2018

For media: Friends of the Cascade-Siskiyou Monument will have speakers available for print, radio, and TV interviews including John Alexander, PhD., Executive Director of Klamath Bird Observatory, and Pepper Trail, PhD., Senior Forensic Scientist and Ornithologist at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Forensics Laboratory. We can also provide photos and additional data from the BioBlitz.

To schedule interviews or to get more information please contact: Shannon Browne, Director of Community Partnerships for the Friends of Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument. 971-237-1115 Shannon@cascadesiskiyou.org

Citizen-Scientists Spot Impressive Number of Birds during Friends of Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument BioBlitz

More than 85 people fanned out across the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument early Saturday on a mission to count birds. In small groups, birding experts and citizen-scientists began at daybreak surveying 11 different sites within the monument.

A total of 112 bird species were identified during this BioBlitz, including both resident and migrating species. “It’s remarkable that during one eight-hour period nearly half the number of species that have been reported during the entire month of May in all of Jackson and Siskiyou counties were recorded,” says Klamath Bird Observatory (KBO) Director, John Alexander.

A BioBlitz is a communal citizen-scientist effort to record as many species as possible within a designated time and place. Howard Hunter, a board member for the Friends of the Monument, explains, “A BioBlitz is a great way to engage the community and connect them to their monument while generating useful data for science and conservation. They are also an excuse for naturalists, scientists, and curious members of the public to get together in the great outdoors for fun and to contribute something meaningful.”

KBO is helping to compile the BioBlitz data through eBird Northwest, a regional portal of Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology’s international eBird database (ebird.org/NW). Alexander adds — "Our region is a western hotspot of bird diversity and migratory bird diversity is one of the items of biological interest for which the Monument was established to protect. By engaging our local citizenry in this 1st avian inventory of the newly expanded Monument area we are
increasing our understanding of birds while also increasing community engagement and ownership in the science that has driven, and must continue to drive, the protection and conservation of our Monument.”

Several teams conducted the first bird surveys in the monument’s expansion areas, including Horseshoe Ranch in northern California, Surveyor Ridge, Grizzly Peak, Little Hyatt Lake, and Lower Jenny Creek.

Pepper Trail, a prominent ornithologist from Ashland who led one of the teams, called the event a success. “From hummingbirds to Great Grey Owls, more than 100 species were identified. It was very rewarding to lead others into the monument to document its tremendous biodiversity first-hand. Even on a cold and soggy morning the enthusiasm was palpable.”

Trail classifies birds by the habitats in which they live. He says, “Home is where the habitat is.” His list of monument habitats includes: 1) Oaks and Grassland; 2) Riparian & Wet Meadows; 3) Creeks & Lakes; 4) Chaparral & Brushlands; 5) Mixed Conifer & Hardwood Forest; 6) High Elevation Conifer Forest; and 7) Eastside Pines and Shrub steppe. Each of the BioBlitz teams surveyed birds in one or more of these habitats.

The Friends of the Cascade-Siskiyou Monument host an annual BioBlitz to engage people in understanding what a treasure the monument is by sharing information about the variety of species found there. Board Chair, Terry Dickey, for the Friends notes “Past BioBlitzes included surveys on butterflies, fungi, and herpetology, and next year the Friends plan to engage our citizen-scientists to learn more about dragonflies and damselflies.”

“We often think that biodiversity is found in faraway tropical climates, but there is amazing biodiversity in Southern Oregon and Northern California. The Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument is one of the top ten ecosystems of the world,” adds Hunter.

As we approach the 18th anniversary of the establishment of the monument on June 9, Dickey says, “This weekend’s BioBlitz is a rich example of why the monument is so vital. We see such a wide variety of species all living in close proximity because of the convergence of habitats. I don’t think most people realize just how unique this is.”

The Friends of Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument thanks the Bird BioBlitz leaders and the citizen-scientists for participating. We also thank the Mindful Birding Award, Rogue Valley Audubon, and Klamath Bird Observatory for their generous donations and volunteer collaboration to make this year’s BioBlitz a success.

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Photos and Captions:
A) Dr. Pepper Trail stops at a Douglas fir, which showcases the pileated woodpeckers amazing excavation abilities. PCT near Soda Mt. Wilderness. Photo courtesy of Heather Wilson.

B) On a dreary morning, citizen-scientists hike through Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument to survey and identify birds. Photo courtesy of Christine Smith.

C) Two robins and a great grey owl sit on a fence in the Monument. Location undisclosed due to mindful birding code of ethics. (http://www.mindfulbirding.org/) Great grey owls are a sensitive species and thrive throughout the monument. It is perhaps the largest population of great grey owls in the country. Photo courtesy of Dick Ashford.

D) A hermit warbler peaks out from the moss of a tree. Photo courtesy of Nick Viani.