

The Nature  
Conservancy



Protecting nature. Preserving life.™



Crater Lake in July

## **Crater Lake: Birds and Natural History**

10-13 July 2009

Optional Extension: Fort Rock, 13-14 July

Tour Leader: Eric Horvath

The spectacular and scenic Crater Lake National Park is the background for this weekend of birdwatching and natural history exploration. The stunning blue color and remarkable purity of the lake instill wonder and admiration in all of its visitors. Crater Lake, the deepest lake in the United States, fills the caldera left by the eruption and collapse of Mount Mazama.

Birding can be very good in the park, providing many species typical of the mountainous West.

Clark's Nutcrackers and Mountain Bluebirds are often seen around the lodge. Rosy Finches are another possibility. We will visit lodgepole and ponderosa pine forests in search of Red Crossbills, Townsend's Solitaires and Mountain Chickadees. Interesting mammals such as pikas, Yellow-bellied Marmots, and Porcupines can be seen. An optional drive to Klamath Lake will provide a variety of marsh birds and an opportunity to see the Conservancy's Williamson River Delta Preserve.

Alpine wildflowers and trees will be emphasized during a walk through the open whitebark pine forest which clings to the caldera rim. We will also discuss the geology of the park. The wonder of how this area was created will boggle your mind as you ponder an eruption fifty times that of Mount St. Helens in 1980. Nearby trails along the rim and through the surrounding forests allow for easy exploration of the area anytime you like. Historic Crater Lake Lodge will provide a luxurious perch where we can rest, relax, and eat with an incredible view of the lake.

## **Itinerary**

**Day 1                      Friday                      July 10                      Arrival at Crater Lake National**

### **Park**

We will meet in the Great Hall of Crater Lake Lodge at 6 PM to discuss our plans for the weekend. Dinner will follow.

**Days 2-4                      Saturday-Monday                      July 11-13                      Crater Lake National Park**

We will have two and a half days to explore the park. Trails through the forest near the lodge will provide us with accessible birding and excellent views of the lake. We will visit forested areas away from the rim to search for plants and animals characteristic of ponderosa and lodgepole pine forests. Two optional trips are planned: a boat ride on Crater Lake and a visit to Klamath Marsh. Our itinerary will be influenced by remnant snow pack conditions and weather. The trip ends Monday at noon.

### **Optional Extension: Fort Rock**

**Monday, 13 July.** After checking out of our rooms and having lunch at Crater Lake Lodge, we will drive north and east of Crater Lake. Those who arrived by car can bring their vehicles to Chemult where we can easily retrieve them the next day. Approaching Fort Rock State Park, we leave the pine forest and enter open sagebrush, where we can expect to find Sage Thrashers and Brewers Sparrows. Fort Rock itself is a huge U-shaped rock formation that dominates the surrounding sagebrush flats. The geologic history is fascinating, and we can investigate wave cut terraces on the cliffs, evidence of a vast Pleistocene Lake which formerly filled the entire Christmas Valley. White-throated Swifts and Prairie Falcons nest on the cliffs; usually we see them here.

In late afternoon we can visit the Cabin Lake campground which is 10 miles north of Fort Rock State Park. Here water is piped to a small pool at an observation blind. Since the surrounding area is very dry in summer, many birds come to drink and can be seen well at close range. We can expect to see Lewis' Woodpeckers, Green-tailed Towhees, Red Crossbills, and perhaps Pinyon Jays. Opportunities are excellent for bird portrait photos in the late afternoon light. Night at a motel in Christmas Valley.

**Tuesday, 14 July.** After Breakfast in Christmas Valley, we will return to Fort Rock State Park where we can explore the trails in the cool of the morning and look for Sage and Vesper Sparrows. A variety of raptors hunt in the alfalfa fields near Fort Rock, and we have good chances of seeing Golden Eagles, Ferruginous

Hawks, Swainson's Hawks and Prairie Falcons. If there is time we can stop by the Cabin lake photo blind on our return to our vehicles in Chemult. The trip ends at noon in Chemult.

## **Preparation**

Participants will be sent maps, an equipment list, bird lists and a list of suggested reading to aid in preparation for the trip. Weather is generally excellent in July, but can be unpredictable at times. Because of the altitude, the sun's rays are especially strong and should be prepared for. Enthusiastic naturalists and birders of all levels are welcome.

## **Leadership**

Eric Horvath holds a degree in Zoology from Oregon State University, and has written a number of scientific papers on birds and mammals. Eric has conducted ornithological research in Oregon, Arizona, Mexico and Australia and has led many birding tours since 1990 for The Nature Conservancy to Arizona, Texas, Florida, and Oregon. Eric's extensive birding experience in Oregon has given him exceptional abilities to identify birds by ear and help others do the same. His interests also include botany and geology. Eric lives on the Oregon Coast with his wife Claire and their children Zachary and Phoebe.

## **Lodgings and Transportation**

We will be staying at the Crater Lake Lodge. The rooms have breathtaking views of Crater Lake. All rooms have private baths, but single participants may share rooms. All meals are included and formal dress is not necessary. The group will be limited to ten participants. Transportation will be by van.



Clark's Nutcracker at Crater Lake Rim

## Rigors

Easy to moderate walks of up to one mile will be incorporated into this excursion. An optional boat trip will require a half-hour to forty-five minute hike down & up a steep, but well maintained, trail (one mile each way). There are benches for resting and shaded spots with superb views of Crater Lake on this hike.

## Cost & Reservations

Each Four-Day Weekend: \$1145 per person. Lodging, transportation, and all meals are included. The fair market value of this trip is \$995. The difference between the fair market value and the price of the trip constitutes a suggested \$150 tax-deductible contribution to The Nature Conservancy. Accommodations are based on double occupancy of a twin-bedded room with a bath. **Single accommodations are available for an additional supplement of \$320.** If you do not have a roommate and we cannot find one to share a room with you, the single supplement will apply (usually we can find you a roommate).

Initial reservation deposit, <b>made payable to Eric Horvath:</b>	\$100
Final payment, <b>made payable to Eric Horvath</b> , due 6 April:	\$895
Contribution <b>made payable to The Nature Conservancy</b> , due 6 April	<u>\$150</u>
Total:	\$1145

Optional Extension, **made payable to Eric Horvath** \$150  
Send all checks to: Eric Horvath Nature Tours

P.O. Box 721  
South Beach, OR 97366

Reservations are made on a first-come, first-served basis. To reserve a space, please send a deposit check of \$100 per person (**made payable to Eric Horvath**) to Eric Horvath. The suggested contribution to The Nature Conservancy is tax-deductible and should be written as a separate check (made payable to The Nature Conservancy). Please make a note of the payment deadlines on your calendar.

## Cancellations

The suggested contribution to The Nature Conservancy is non-refundable, but may be applied to a future trip. If you must cancel and a replacement is found, you will be refunded the amounts paid to Eric Horvath. Otherwise, the following conditions apply: If you cancel more than 60 days prior, you will receive a full refund. If you cancel less than 60 days prior to the trip, you will forfeit the full trip cost. The non refunded portion of the trip costs helps defray non-recoverable expenses. If for any reason The Nature Conservancy cancels a trip, you will be fully refunded the amounts paid to Eric Horvath. Participants are encouraged to buy trip cancellation insurance.

*Questions? Contact the Field Trip Program Manager, Rudy Dietz, at The Nature Conservancy Of Oregon at 503-802-8100, [excursions@tnc.org](mailto:excursions@tnc.org)  
821 SE 14<sup>th</sup> Ave., Portland, OR 97214  
The trip leader, Eric Horvath, can be contacted at 541-867-6791, or by email at [eric@erichorvathnaturetours.com](mailto:eric@erichorvathnaturetours.com)*



Phantom Ship (from Sun Notch viewpoint)



Roadside Penstemons and Paintbrush, July 2008



*Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch, Crater Lake National Park.*