

# Predicting the next Oregon bird

How will 2011 predictions stack up against 2007 and 1994 guesses?

Compiled by Alan Contreras

In 1994, Bill Tice conducted a "next Oregon bird" survey of *Oregon Birds* subscribers. The results were published in early 1996 in *OB* 22(2):55). A summary appears in this article. Votes were not weighted, but each person got five.

In 2007 I conducted a "next Oregon bird" survey via OBOL and put the results on my blog. Those results are shown in parallel to the current survey at right.

Given the pile of new birds found in the state in recent years, it seemed to me time to see how close our predictions were, and sucker some birders into making the next set of educated guesses. Only eight people voted in 1994, compared to 24 in 2007. The 24 voters in 2007 cast 5 ranked, weighted votes each for their top five birds most likely to be added to the Oregon list.

In June, 2011 I posted a request on OBOL for votes using the 2007 system. I received 28 responses, nominating 57 species to be among the most likely five to next occur in Oregon.

The clear leaders in 2011 are **Black Vulture** and **Black-tailed Gull**. An additional ten species were given top ranking by at least one voter: **Ivory Gull**, **Bean Goose**, **Reddish Egret**, **Great Black-backed Gull**, **Nelson's Sparrow**, **Temminck's Stint**, **Yellow-green Vireo**, **Yellow-billed Magpie**, **Verdin**, **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** and **Great-winged Petrel**.

The greatest reduction in rank for an estimate is **Siberian Accentor**, ranked third in 2007 and an also-ran in 2011. **Black-billed Cuckoo** ranked 17 in 2007 and did not do well in 2011. **Ivory Gull**, **Dusky Warbler** and

**Yellow-billed Magpie** had the greatest rise from 2007 to 2011. Ten species receiving votes in 2011 received none in 2007.

An astonishing 26 species received votes in 2011 that received none in 2007. Neotropic Cormorant ranked highest of these; of the others, **Magnificent Hummingbird**, **Winter Wren (a split)**, **Gull-billed Tern** **Redwing**, received votes from more than one voter.

2007 V	Tot	Species	2011 V	2011 Rank	Species
		First-place votes shown in parentheses: (2).	39	1	Dusky Thrush
		Those receiving at least one first-place vote	27	1	Cerulean Warbler
		in 2007 shown in bold. V = number of voters		4	Sandwich Tern
		selecting the species in their top 5.	40	2	Xantus's Hummingbird
				3	Red-bellied Woodpecker
				3	Bluethroat
				3	Fieldfare
1	16	<b>Black Vulture (8)</b>	17	1	BB Cuckoo
9	11	<b>Black-tailed Gull (5)</b>	30	1	Parkinson's Petrel
21	7	Mississippi Kite	25	1	Cassin's Sparrow
20	4	<b>Bean Goose (2)</b>		2	Northern Cardinal
16	5	<b>Nelson's Sparrow (1)</b>		2	Sooty Tern
15	4	<b>Chimney Swift</b>		2	Groove-billed Ani
24	4	Great-crested Flycatcher		2	Least Auklet
10	4	Gray-tailed Tattler		2	Lucifer Hummingbird
38	3	Am. Oystercatcher		2	Terek Sandpiper
45	4	Ivory Gull (2)	3	1	<b>Siberian Accentor</b>
13	3	<b>Yellow-green Vireo (1)</b>	18	1	Craveri's Murrelet
	3	Neotropic Cormorant		1	Am Purple Gallinule
22	3	Great BB Gull (1)		1	Grace's Warbler
12	3	<b>Yellow-cr. Nightheron (1)</b>		1	Greater Pewee
28	3	Yellow-bellied Flycatcher		1	Gray Vireo
	3	Winter Wren		1	Kittlitz's Murrelet
34	2	Yellow-billed Magpie (1)		1	White-chinned Petrel
14	2	Temminck's Stint (1)		1	Greater Roadrunner
	2	Magnificent Hummer			
8	2	<b>Common Greenshank</b>			
	3	Gull-billed Tern			
36	2	Dusky Warbler			
	2	Redwing	29		Sulphur-b Flycatcher
7	2	<b>Cave Swallow</b>	31		Far Eastern Curlew
23	2	Brown Shrike	32		Sky Lark
	2	Common Eider	33		Northern Hobby
26	2	Eurasian Kestrel	35		Field Sparrow
	1	Reddish Egret (1)	41		Lesser Frigatebird
	1	Verdin (1)	42		Least Storm-Petrel
37	1	Great-winged Petrel (1)	43		Red-faced Warbler
19	1	<b>Wood Stork</b>	44		Henslow's Sparrow
	1	Inca Dove	46		Common Pochard

Top 5 votes in 2007 (showing rank) but not receiving any such votes in 2011:

## The Voters Share Their Thoughts

**AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHER.** Yes indeed, but beware the similar **Eurasian Oystercatcher**, which is highly migratory and breeds well north of the Kamchatka Peninsula in Russia. That said, it has never occurred in Alaska and oystercatchers are considered weak fliers for shorebirds. And then there are the nasty hybrids. – *Alan Contreras*

**BLACK VULTURE.** This species has occurred within 100 miles of the Oregon border in Humboldt Co., CA. It is readily identifiable and would be immediately recognized by anyone who has seen one previously. – *Dave Irons*

There are a couple of unproven reports for this species and there is a pattern of vagrancy for northern California. – *Matthew Schneider*

**BLACK-TAILED GULL.** This species has already reached Washington twice, with several Oregon birders having traveled to see it. Having a search image (from first hand experience) often results in folks taking a second look at suspect birds. – *Dave Irons*

It has also reached California and such unlikely places as Virginia. – *Alan Contreras*

**CHIMNEY SWIFT.** Way overdue but may be hard to verify. – *Adrian Hinkle*

Rare but regular in California, not even on their review list since the 1970s. A long-distance migrant that breeds fairly far west and wanders widely, e.g., the Pribilof islands and Europe. – *Alan Contreras*

**COMMON CRANE.** This species has become increasingly regular in North America over the past decade. Obviously a slam-dunk ID. The fact that Sauvie Island is one of the largest staging areas for cranes in the Pacific Flyway and lies within a 30 minute drive of half the state's population would seem to favor the discovery of this species if it happened to be among the swarm of Sandhills that stop here each spring and fall. – *Dave Irons*

There has been at least one rumored occurrence of this species on Sauvie Island, and it is easy to identify. No skulking here! – *Alan Contreras*

**DUSKY THRUSH.** The fact that it may inhabit populated settings and is relatively easy to identify increases the chances of finding a vagrant. – *Ed McVicker*

**DUSKY WARBLER.** Yet another skulker, this species has been recorded more than 20 times in California. With increasing numbers of talented birders living on the outer coast, this species' absence from the Oregon List would appear to be on borrowed time. – *Dave Irons*

**FORK-TAILED FLYCATCHER.** This bird is now annual in the U.S. and has shown the capacity to show up

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## How We Did in 2007 and 1994

Predicted in 2007 and have been found, showing 2007 rank and number of first-place votes:

2	<b>White-eyed Vireo (3)</b>
10	<b>Black Skimmer (2)</b>
11	<b>Greater Shearwater (2)</b>
12	<b>Lesser Nighthawk (1)</b>

These twelve species were not predicted by ANY of the 24 2007 respondents but had the audacity to occur anyway: \*

Ashy Storm-petrel	Red-billed Tropicbird
Black-b. Whistling-Duck	Hornby's Petrel
Alder Flycatcher	Wandering Albatross
Painted Redstart	Pyrrhuloxia
Eastern Towhee	Wood Sandpiper
Jack Snipe	Solander's Petrel

\* A 1988 photo of Black-bellied Whistling Duck was accepted. Red-billed Tropicbird had occurred previously outside the 200-mile OBRC coverage area. Painted Redstart was accepted on reconsideration of older reports.

## 1994 table (8 voters)

Of 23 species, 15 have been found (shown in **bold**), some more than once (asterisks). Of the eight voters, each of whom got five unweighted votes, Greg Gillson and Bill Tice picked all five right: they have all occurred.

Rank	Votes	Species
1	4	<b>Red-throated Pipit *</b>
1	4	<b>Eurasian Dotterel</b>
3	3	<b>Cook's Petrel *</b>
3	3	Yellow-crowned Night-Heron
3	3	<b>Connecticut Warbler</b>
3	3	<b>Yellow Wagtail *</b>
7	2	<b>Yellow-throated Vireo *</b>
7	2	<b>Red-billed Tropicbird</b>
7	2	Fork-tailed Flycatcher
10	1	<b>White-rumped Sandpiper *</b>
10	1	Great-crested Flycatcher
10	1	<b>Blue-footed Booby</b>
10	1	<b>Arctic Loon *</b>
10	1	<b>Red-headed Woodpecker</b>
10	1	Gray-tailed Tattler
10	1	Nelson's Sparrow
10	1	<b>Painted Redstart *</b>
10	1	Black-billed Cuckoo
10	1	Mississippi Kite
10	1	<b>Black-vented Shearwater *</b>
10	1	<b>Manx Shearwater *</b>
10	1	<b>Lesser Black-backed Gull *</b>
10	1	Reddish Egret

almost anywhere, including in Washington. Oregon already has one report of this species, which though not sufficient to establish a first state record, was almost assuredly identified correctly. – *Dave Irons*

**GRAY-TAILED TATTLER.** It has occurred in Washington and California and has been reported before in Oregon. – *Christopher Hinkle*

**GREAT-CRESTED FLYCATCHER.** This species is large and easy to identify. My only reluctance in putting it on my list is the fact that most of California's records are from the southern one-third of the state. Northern California records remain quite rare. That said, this would seem to be a logical stray to the oases in se. Oregon. – *Dave Irons*

**GREATER PEWEE.** It has loud distinctive vocalizations, a uniquely tufted crown and propensity to perch out in the open, all of which add to the likelihood of this bird being noticed. Instances of birds far out of range seem to be on the increase, including one in nw. Washington. – *Dave Irons*

**GULL-BILLED TERN.** They have been increasing in recent years in southern California, may wander north. – *Grant Canterbury*

**IVORY GULL.** With the melting of sea ice, this bird seems suddenly to be more prone to wandering far out of range, as evidenced by birds in Southern California and the Mid-Atlantic coast in the past year. This is a slam dunk ID and this species seems to hang around for days once it finds a carcass to scavenge. One nice fat seal or sea lion dead on an Oregon beach could certainly sustain an Ivory Gull for some time. – *Dave Irons*

**MAGNIFICENT HUMMINGBIRD.** Hummingbirds invariably help their cause by showing up at feeders. Given that this bird would dwarf any of Oregon's regular hummers, even a casual feeder watcher is likely to notice it and report it. This is another species that has show great capacity to wander and has reached Humboldt Co., CA. – *Dave Irons*

**MISSISSIPPI KITE.** Has been reported in NE Oregon; the next few months could be a good time for a wandering bird. Range may be expanding. – *Adrian Hinkle*

**NELSON'S SPARROW.** Though this species is a skulker, it is among Oregon's most overdue vagrants. It winters annually along the central CA coast, having presumably flown over or through part of Oregon to get there. Offhand, I can't think of any other north-

south migrant that breeds as far north and west in Canada as this species that remains unrecorded in Oregon. If seen, even briefly, this bird is rather straightforward to ID. – *Dave Irons*

Easy to identify and almost certainly occurs annually, at least passing over southeastern Oregon. The difficulty is that it uses a dense, sometimes inaccessible habitat (thick salt marsh vegetation). It will be a semi-accidental find: someone who intentionally wanders through dense wet vegetation on the south coast, or on some lake margin in the desert, will kick one up. – *Alan Contreras*

**NEOTROPIC CORMORANT.** Expanding northward in the west, with several in northern Utah and one reaching the Farallons. Most likely in e. Oregon, where it would really be obvious next to any Double-crested. – *Alan Contreras*

**NORTHERN CARDINAL.** They seem to be around and just waiting to be properly documented. – *Ed McVicker*

**TEMMINCK'S STINT.** There are past Northwest records and shorebirds are known for being vagrants. – *Matthew Schneider*

**WINTER WREN** (as in "Eastern" Winter Wren). Because it was recently split from Pacific Wren, people are keeping their eyes open for this species and there are record(s) from California. – *Matthew Schneider*

**WOOD STORK.** There are other Pacific Northwest records, it is easy to identify, and it has a tendency to wander. – *Matthew Schneider*

**YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHER.** It has occurred in Washington and is casual in California. – *Christopher Hinkle*

*Participants in the 2011 predictions were Alan Contreras, Dave Irons, Adrian Hinkle, Matthew Schneider, Owen Schmidt, Christopher Hinkle, Rich Hoyer, Sheran Wright, Ed McVicker, Anne Heyerly, Alan McGie, Mike Denny, Wink Gross, Roger Robb, Tom Love, Cindy Ashy, Bill Tice, Brandon Green, Russ Namitz, Grant Canterbury, Shawneen Finnegan, Harry Nehls, Gerard Lillie, Tom Crabtree, Greg Gillson, Daniel Farrar and Ray Korpi.*



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