

BIRDMAN

A picnic by the lake

BY TED GLOVER

Nothing seems so good on a hot summer day as a picnic. We took our granddaughter, Lavendar, and headed out for just such an event over the mountains to Lake Selmac. It's a really nice drive and a good road going from Williams via Deer Creek Road.

The young birds are out now in force—the towhees, juncos, jay, finches—and we hadn't gone far before spotting two mother turkeys, one with an older "teenager" and the other with six babies.

The drive through the woodlands was beautiful with the everlasting peas, ox-eye daisies, chickory, tiger lilies, penstemon and even rhododendron all abloom. The falling leaves of the madrone trees gave a autumn-like feeling

About 12 miles in from Williams is a nice turnout

with spectacular view of the valley below and Mt. McLaughlin in the distance. A pileated woodpecker made an appearance as did several tree swallows and rufous hummingbirds. A turkey vulture made lazy circles overhead.

At the lake many people were enjoying the day swimming, boating and fishing. The resident mute swans were there with two new youngsters along with an assortment of Canada geese and mallards. You could hear the short, shrill whistles of an osprey as it flew overhead. A green heron and a belted kingfisher put in an appearance as did a pair of red-breasted sapsuckers flitting from tree to tree in the picnic area.

We sighted a total of 27 species.

Ted A. Glover • 541-846-0681

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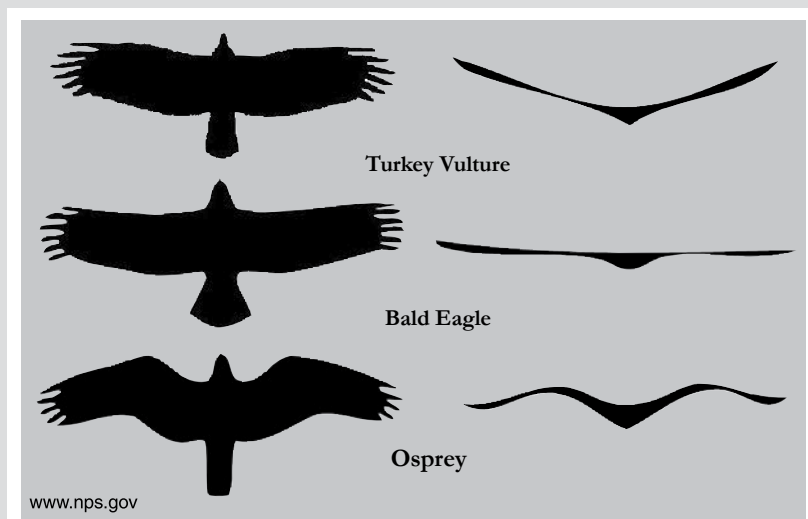
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The bald eagles, with a wingspan of six to seven feet, are the biggest and one of the darkest birds in our skies. If they are close enough you can also identify them by their white head and tail. However, a juvenile bald eagle will be completely dark brown from head to talon. The best way to identify a bald eagle is their flight style. They will hold their wings as solid and as flat as a board, and rarely will they flap. The bald eagle spots its food while soaring high in the sky. They are

Identifying birds in flight

Ever mistake a soaring bald eagle for a turkey vulture or even an osprey? The National Park Service website (www.nps.gov) has some interesting information along with some tips to tell them apart:

Turkey vultures while not real birds of prey are often seen riding in thermals and kettles with other birds of prey so they are lumped into their category. While the turkey vulture has the same sharp, raptor-like beak to tear into meat, it does not have the sharp claws with which to kill it. Someone else does the dirty work; the turkey vulture simply cleans it up. The best way to identify the turkey vulture is their flight style. They will hold their wings in a dihedral, or a V-shape, and they will teeter in the winds (think: teetering turkey "V"ulture).

also good scavengers and opportunists and will spend their days soaring around looking for the easiest meal—dead or alive..

The ospreys are in a league of their own. They are the only raptor built to catch fish exclusively. They are often seen hovering over the water, searching for a meal. Once a fish is sighted, they dive feet first up to a meter deep in the water, then immediately spread their oiled, water-proof wings and get out fast because they cannot swim. They usually surface clutching fish in their talons. Bald eagles often steal fish from these superlative fishermen. Ospreys are relatively easy to identify because they are the only large raptor with "M" shaped, droopy wings. The only other bird to take that shape would be a gull, but an osprey is considerably larger with its five-foot wingspan.

APPLEGATE OUTBACK: MY OPINION

Why does the chicken cross the road?



BY BOB FISCHER

Like most retirees, I have a part-time job. About a month ago, I was rolling down Highway 238, heading out to do a brick job in my old converted Bus Company 1-ton-dually truck, fully laden with sand, cement and brick. It was near Cantrall-Buckley Park where I noticed this chicken crouched down on the side of the road with his feet in starting blocks. As I rumbled nearer I also noticed another chicken off to its right with its left wing held high in the air.

Suddenly, that other chicken dropped its wing and the chicken in the starter blocks came out crossing the road in a blur of feathers, cutting a path in front of my truck.

His little drumsticks were pumping so-o-o-o hard I braked, skidded and cursed as sand filled the front seat of my truck. Well, the chicken made it to the other side of the road, and as I slowly rolled by I gave him a gesture and said a few choice words.

This job I was working on was to take a couple of weeks and every day this chicken seemed to get great enjoyment in beating me across the road. I made up my mind that, enough is enough!

The next day at about 8 am, the sun was up and my truck was only half full which means I can get a little more speed out of her. I put my seat belt on, slowly pulled my driving gloves on, pulled my 4xxxx Beaver cowboy hat down low over my eyes, and headed out.

Traffic was light that morning as I approached the Cantrall-Buckley Park area. Then I saw him, all decked out in jogging shorts and Reeboks warming up on the side of the road. As I got nearer he put his chicken feet in his chicken blocks.

I grasped the steering wheel tighter, sweat was beading up on my forehead as the wing dropped. He was really flying as he neared my side of the road. I saw a look of confidence on his face and a little smile appeared on his beak as he crossed in front of my truck.

I muttered to myself that age-old challenge that crosses every person's mind when confronted by the unknown. "Okay, you running feather duster!" I said, and put my foot down hard on the accelerator. My old Dodge lurched forward in a sudden burst of speed and

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