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BY TED A. GLOVER

Those of you who follow this column know that we have a special place in our "Birding Heart" for the glorious Klamath Basin. Winter time is particularly wonderful around the Basin, beginning in the Klamath Marsh: east of Sand Creek, Oregon, down through Upper Klamath Lake, into Klamath Falls and then across the California border to Lower Klamath, Tule Lake, and Clear Lake refuges.

Winter bald eagle numbers reach their peak in February, with concentrations of 1,000 or more. This is the largest concentration of bald eagles anywhere in the contiguous United States. Other raptors also concentrate in the area, including golden eagles, red-tailed hawks, rough-legged hawks and northern harriers.

The northern harrier is a fascinating bird and one of the most graceful in flight. They do everything from soaring high in thermals, perhaps reaching 4000 feet or more, to flying low over agricultural fields, skimming along the surface searching for small mammals to feed on.

Harriers have been reported to have one of the

longest migrations, moving south from late summer to early winter and then turning north into May. Their numbers are believed to be over one million in the United States.

There are auto tour routes available at Tule Lake Refuge and at Lower Klamath Refuge. A passenger car is all you need. Expect to see hundreds of ducks, plus American white pelicans, black-necked stilts, sandhill cranes, several varieties of grebes and perhaps a great horned owl.

While staying in Klamath Falls, don't miss the Link River Trail, which is about one and a half miles along both riparian habitat and an arid hillside. It cuts through a camp along the river that links the Upper Klamath Lake to the Klamath River. We see hundreds of black-crowned night herons as well as hooded mergansers and it is our favorite place to see barrow's and common goldeneye.

Ted A. Glover • 541-846-0681



Photos clockwise from top: Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge; Western grebe tending nest in Klamath marsh; Pie-billed grebe by Dave Menke; Northern harrier; Amercian white pelicans. All photos taken at the Klamath National Wildlife Refuge, courtesy U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service.



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