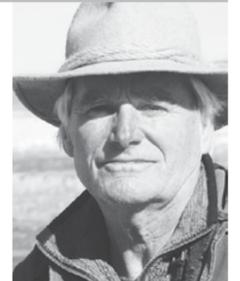


BIRD EXPLORER

The bird tree

BY PETER J. THIEMANN



Peter J. Thiemann

The golden autumn is coming to an end with all the colorful leaves falling to the ground. This is the time for many birds of several species to gather in certain trees to forage for vertebrates like arthropods. This story is about one tree in particular: an Oregon ash on our land. It is a large, mature tree that had golden leaves just a few weeks ago, but is now bare, and its branches are covered with lichen. This is where the arthropods are, in the lichen and flying around.

Like a magnet, the Oregon ash attracts large flocks of birds, often all together. Here are the most prominent species—those that can be seen in a single day when the sun is out: Black-capped Chickadee, Oregon Junco, Pine Siskin, Bushtit, Oak Titmouse, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Yellow-crowned Kinglet, Brown Creeper, and Downy Woodpecker.

While Chickadees, Juncos, Bushtits, and Pine Siskins show up in large numbers and flocks, Kinglets of both species, creepers,

the Oak Titmouse, and woodpeckers are small in numbers but nevertheless can be seen every day. If you are inclined to do some bird photography, try to find a tree like our Oregon ash, which will almost guarantee lots of bird sightings.

But a word of caution about whether to look for these birds with binoculars or with a camera: they are very busy picking up tiny arthropods, which means that they hardly ever sit still, making it difficult to follow with binoculars or focus a camera

lens. In addition, the camera has to be in a telephoto setting, which reduces the field of vision. Using autofocus is a must, as is a sunny day, to allow shooting with a short shutter speed, like 1/1600 second. Most of the species listed above are not particularly shy, so it is quite useful to take a chair, sit down, and let the bird show unfold.

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Oak Titmouse



Ruby-crowned Kinglet



Pine Siskin. All photos courtesy of Peter J. Thiemann flickr photo stream.

You can't miss the supersized Ceanothus Silkmoth

BY LINDA KAPPEN

The Ceanothus Silkmoth (*Hyalophora euryalus*) is a moth of the Saturniidae family. This very large moth has a wingspan of three and a half to five inches. Its wings are reddish to brownish-red and rosy-colored with borders that are black with white. There are two oval black spots on the top of the forewing. The hindwing spots are long and resemble the Nike swoosh or a boomerang. The underside of the wings has more of a brownish color, with the rest of the markings similar to the upper side.

Females will glue their eggs, single or clumped, on the leaves of host plants. Cocoons are spun on the host plants. The larvae are generalist feeders and will feed on species of ceanothus, willows, madrone, Douglas fir, cherry, and a variety of woody shrubs and trees.

Adults are nocturnal and will come to light. Like other large silkmoths, the Ceanothus Silkmoth does not feed as an adult. They can be seen early spring to late summer. Timing can depend on local climates, but usually they are seen

in daylight resting with their wings folded over their back.

The Ceanothus Silkmoth ranges are from British Columbia throughout the Pacific Northwest, to extreme western Idaho and Montana, and down to Baja California. Habitat for this species include a variety of forests and rangelands from low to higher elevations in conifer and hardwood forests, coastal areas, chaparrals, riparian areas, and sagebrush steppe, to name a few.

Many Ceanothus Silkmoths are seen locally in southern Oregon. Their large size makes them amazing to see. Many times over the years, students and staff at Applegate School have alerted me to a sighting on the school grounds. The photo shown here was taken in May 2017. The smaller children found it sitting in the bottom of an empty trash container and were very concerned about it. I brought it into the classroom to show them that it was, indeed, all right and healthy. It is possible they thought it would die since they also find and bring me many broken moth wings.

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Side view of silkmoth (left) taken by Linda Kappen. Hand photo (below) by Kellie Crowe Halsted.





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