
(Fowler, Middle Falls, McCloud River Loop).

Mount Shasta. 284 miles. Highest in northern California, over 14,100 feet, always snow-topped, little oxygen. Gray-crowned (*tephrocotis*) Rosy-Finch, Gray Jay, Clark's Nutcracker.

US Highway 97. 291 miles. Goes northeast to Klamath Basin. Summer: Yellow Rail, Black Tern. Winter: hundreds of Bald Eagles. donb.furfly.net/klamath/index.html

Klamath River (Randolph Collier) Rest Area. 330 miles. Lewis's Woodpecker in oaks on both sides of Klamath gorge. Osprey, Ring-billed Gull, Western Kingbird, Bullock's Oriole (breeding).

Oregon Border. 342 miles. Turn off just inside Oregon to go west up Mt. Ashland, at 7,500+ feet tallest of the Siskiyou. From April until first snow, worth a full morning: Mountain Quail; White-headed Woodpecker; Red-breasted Sapsucker; Dusky and other flycatchers; Mountain Chickadee; Mountain Bluebird; Macgillivray's, Hermit, Yellow-rumped Warblers; Western Tanager; Green-tailed Towhee; Lincoln's Sparrow; Dark-eyed Junco; Lazuli Bunting; Cassin's Finch. Spring visit worthwhile simply to hear Hermit Thrush music from the deep shade.

Northern California Rare Bird Alert: 415/681-7422

Central Valley Rare Bird Alert: 916/783-2331

PETE'S TIPS: Odds-on Pishing

BY PETE DUNNE

As the late, great Dr. Harold Immatore was quick to point out, "Pishing will do one of three things. It will attract birds, scare them away, or do nothing."

Yep. That just about covers it.

What Harold left out was this useful bit of information: How, when, and where you pish will often determine which of these three possibilities manifests itself.

Pishing is most useful in forests or woody habitats where vegetation hampers detection of birds, and perhaps not just coincidentally, forest passerines seem generally more responsive than many open country birds. If you are trying to pique the attention of forest birds, get into or up to the forest.

This sounds like common sense, but I've seen many birders who try pishing from points thirty feet or more back from the wooded edge. You'll have much better success getting closer, within ten feet. Birds will feel more comfortable approaching because they'll still have cover and, most importantly, perches.

They don't call them perching birds for nothing.

In addition, by positioning yourself up against the edge, you are better able to peer into the woodland interior—and to see whether your efforts are having any effect.

I like to find a place that offers a wraparound quality, such as an open pocket with woods on three sides. It also helps to have some perchable limbs or branches overhead, something that allows the birds an opportunity to edge up close.

The key to pishing is getting other species to add their voices to your artificial harangue. Let them do the work for you. Chickadees, titmice, and bushtits rank among the most pishable species. When you hear chickadees, pish! Not only will they sound the charge, they'll lead it. During migration and in winter, chickadees are often the foundation of foraging flocks that include (among other species) woodpeckers, vireos, nuthatches, kinglets, warblers, etc.

One birder of my acquaintance crouches when pishing. He

says that birds respond more readily because a crouching or sitting form appears less threatening. Something that should be avoided is a lot of motion. Birds are more apt to approach a birder who is quiescent than one overtly animate.

It's also likely that birds will be more responsive if you are dressed to suppress. Wear bright colors or white, and the birds aren't going to have to get close to see all they need to see with regards to you. Neutral greens, grays, and browns blend with a woodland surrounding, and I've enjoyed my best success when wearing camo.

Most of the professional bird photographers I know wear camo in the field, and you'd have a tough time convincing them that it doesn't offer an advantage.

POSTSCRIPT

Dear Reader,

Upon reading my recent column treating the subject of optics (*Winging It*, Nov/Dec 2006), I realized that I very inadvertently seemed to pick on Zeiss optics more than other companies while pointing out function foibles. In fairness to Zeiss and to birders in the hunt for better optics, I want to stress that the points I raised there concerned only older and discontinued Zeiss instruments.

Carl Zeiss Optics is well-known for quality instruments, and their current FL series of binoculars is a stellar performer in the birding arena, well worth your consideration.

And no, this postscript was not prompted by a scolding from the folks at Zeiss. It is spurred by accuracy and fairness.

—Pete Dunne

Pete Dunne is the Director of New Jersey Audubon's Cape May Bird Observatory and the author of numerous books, including Pete Dunne on Bird Watching, Pete Dunne's Essential Field Guide Companion, and The Art of Pishing. "Pete's Tips" appears in each issue of Winging It.