

## REEDSPORT CBC: SCHOLFIELD ROAD COUNT AREA 2015 CBC DEBRIEF



Figure 1: December 2015 count area map

### OVERVIEW:

Scholfield Road is a very large, self-contained CBC count area with no real possibility of overlap with other count areas. List everything you see! The main constraints and restraints here are the sheer size of the area, limited legal access, and the need to be especially respectful of the privacy of rural residents who have gone to great lengths to **not** have strangers snooping around their properties and looking at them through binoculars. Safety-wise, this is a heavily logged area in summer, but there was no observed log truck activity the day of the 2015 count. Mountain Lions have been seen in the area, so take the appropriate precautions when birding on foot.<sup>1</sup> Also remember this is gun

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<sup>1</sup> ODFW says there are now more than 6,000 mountain lions in Oregon, while the state management plan only requires maintaining half that number. In areas like the Coast Range Mountains there has been an uptick in what wildlife officials call “non-hunting mortalities” – situations where cougars are killed because of danger to humans or their pets, damage to

country where predator and furbearer species can be legally hunted in winter; wearing a fluorescent-type road-worker's vest at all times will enhance both backwoods and roadside birding safety.

### **SUGGESTED BIRDING APPROACHES AND ACCESS NOTES:**

Going south on Scholfield Road from Hwy 38 (Umpqua Hwy) stop off at the Waste Transfer Site that comes up on the right. If there are open garbage bins, the area may be alive with crows, ravens, and gulls. Check the trees and brush around the site too.



Figure 2: Scholfield Road meadow with Black Phoebe

Heading south on Scholfield Road stop as often as you can along the lowland marshes and pastures. Look for Swamp Sparrow, other sparrows, Common Yellowthroat, Belted Kingfishers, rails, waterfowl, etc.

At about 7/10<sup>th</sup> of a mile from Hwy 38, you can take Oar Creek Rd on the left. There is a “private road” sign, but it is a well-maintained road with many home sites. Staying in the vehicle would probably be most respectful of the residents’ privacy. The road terminates awkwardly at two private driveways; turning around at the large driveway at about the 2-mile point is recommended.

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livestock or unfortunate run-ins with the fenders of cars. [See](#) “Oregon Cougar Hunting Limits Expand As The Big Cats Move Into Populated Areas,” by Jes Burns on OPB, Dec. 23, 2014.

After returning to Scholfield Road, about 1/10<sup>th</sup> mile south of Oar Creek Road there is a gravel road to the left. This is a good place to park and walk around this rich riparian area. The gravel road running east up the hill is unmarked and unnamed, and has not yet been fully investigated. While the road does not appear to serve any home sites, it appears to be all within a fairly homogenous second- or third-growth Douglas Fir mono-forest.

Returning to Scholfield Road, after about another mile you can turn right onto Thorton Oar Lane, which is another dead-end private roadway. There are only a few homes on this road, and staying in your vehicle might again be best. There is interesting habitat for about 4/10<sup>th</sup> of a mile. After that it gets pretty Deliverance-y,<sup>2</sup> and the road ends abruptly at a private residence about 6/10<sup>th</sup> of a mile in. Cut your losses and turn around before you get to the old carpeting fastened to bushes along the road. Seriously.

About 1 mile south of Thorton Oar Lane, Walker Creek Road takes off on the left. This is another private road that dead-ends at two private driveways about a quarter-mile in. Getting turned around is awkward. Consider just walking the lower portion to get good looks at the creek and pasture. Or just bird this area from Scholfield Road. The pastures along both sides of this stretch of Scholfield Road are large and highly viewable, yielding Great Blue Herons, Great Egrets, an American Bittern,<sup>3</sup> and many other riparian and pasture-type birds in 2015.

Approximately 3/10<sup>th</sup> of mile after Walker Creek Road, turn left onto Scholfield Ridge Road. This road shadows Scholfield Creek, and is located entirely on private property. However, Oregon Department of Forestry apparently has right-of-way agreements allowing general use for logging access (road designated "SF5000" on some state documents). Watch the right (south) side for pastures and seasonal ponds, and left (north) side for wooded stands where woodpeckers and other arboreal-type birds are common. At about 2-2/10<sup>th</sup> miles in from Scholfield Road, make a 90-degree right turn and head up over a wooden bridge for another 1/10<sup>th</sup> mile. Stop along here and scope the seasonal stock pond and pastures below on the north side of the road. In 2015 this area late in the day yielded several duck species, some not found elsewhere in the valley (Green-winged Teal, American Wigeon, Mallard, Northern Shoveler, Ring-

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<sup>2</sup> Deliverance is a 1972 American dramatic thriller film produced and directed by John Boorman, and starring Jon Voight, Burt Reynolds, Ned Beatty and Ronny Cox. It has been listed by the United States National Film Registry as being "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant."

<sup>3</sup> Found at about map coordinates [43.665845, -124.089382], just west of Scholfield Road.

necked Duck, Hooded Merganser, Ruddy Duck), Red-winged Blackbirds, Red-tailed Hawk, and Swamp and other Sparrows. From here you can walk or drive uphill another 1-2/10<sup>th</sup> miles to the perimeter of the count circle at about map coordinates [43.642685, -124.064592]. If time permits, a visit here at the beginning and at the end of the day may be productive.

After returning to Scholfield Road, continue heading south, stopping wherever pullouts permit. After about one-quarter mile, JD Lane takes off on the left. This is another private road that dead-ends abruptly in several driveways about 2/10<sup>th</sup> of a mile in. Parking on Scholfield Road and walking just the lower 200-300 yards may be the most respectful approach here.



Figure 3: Swamp Sparrow (uncooperative subject)

Returning to Scholfield Road, the road turns to a mix of gravel and pavement after about another mile, but it remains a public roadway all the way to the edge of the CBC count circle. Continue heading south, stopping to check pastures and tree stands wherever pullouts safely permit.

About 2 miles south of JD Lane there is a gated logging road on the left. This road crosses onto privately owned forestland, but it is probably okay to park (not blocking the gate!) and walk as much of the ridgeline as time permits. Long site lines and a good mix of terrain could yield upland species not found elsewhere. At about 1-1/2 mile in you are standing above the headwater of South Fork Wind Creek, which may be a good turnaround point.

Returning to Scholfield Road, continue south checking overlooks and tree stands wherever pullouts safely permit. After about 6/10<sup>th</sup> of a mile there is a gated forest road on the right. This is the southerly intersection of Thorton Oar and Scholfield Road. While some maps show Thorton Oar Road making a complete loop from here back to the northerly intersection with Scholfield Road, **it does not**. Moreover, this “road” is on private property where the general public has no legal right to pass.

Returning to Scholfield Road, continue south checking overlooks and tree stands wherever pullouts safely permit. After about 8/10<sup>th</sup> mile past Thorton

Oar Road there is what looks like a well maintained, un-gated forest road on the right. However, it quickly dead-ends in an impromptu shooting range and garbage dump. Not much to see here.

Continuing south is Black's Creek Meadow, the last great pasture and creek bottom of this count area, which opens up about 7-4/10<sup>th</sup> miles south of Hwy 38. Be mindful of the rancher whose house lies very close to the road. The usual presence of cattle here adds the possibility of livestock-related species along with the usual riparian and pasture-type birds.



Figure 4: American Bittern

Continuing south there is a railroad crossing with stop signs on each side. From this point, the southerly limit of the count circle intersects with Scholfield Road after about one mile. About 1/10<sup>th</sup> mile before you reach that point, however, there is a gated logging road that takes off to the north. This road does not appear to serve any home sites, and is probably okay for a walking survey.

Backtracking north towards Hwy 38, continue looking for species missed on the way in, but don't add to count of species already found. If time permits, consider a

second trip up Scholfield Ridge Road as far as the seasonal stock pond and pastures. Other pastures and marshes along Scholfield Road may yield late-day species not already seen or heard.

### **PREVIOUS RESULTS:**

The first-ever Reedsport CBC in 2015 found a reasonably good 44 species and taxa in the Scholfield Road area. Species expected or hoped for, but not found in 2015, included grouse, Bald Eagle, accipiters, doves, owls, hummingbirds, Grey Jay, Brown Creeper, American Pipit, Cedar Waxwing, Townsend's Warbler, or finches of any kind. Future CBC teams that don't have to spend as

much time figuring out the area's complex access details should have better luck. There were also no legally-accessible suitable habitats found for the American Dipper, but continued searches may prove fruitful.



Figure 5: Hermit Thrush

Questions regarding this area or report are welcome, and can be directed to Phillip A. White, Tribal Land & Realty Program Director with the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians, via email at [pwhite@ctclusi.org](mailto:pwhite@ctclusi.org).