

# CROOK COUNTY SPOTLIGHT

## Blitz Dates

Friday, June 16 to  
Sunday, June 18 in  
Prineville, OR

What is a Blitz? Birders from around the state gather in a single county to survey as many birds in as many places as possible in just one weekend. Multiple stationary counts within Oregon2020 Hotspot Squares are encouraged (click [here](#) for our protocol). Participation in Blitzes is free! To register, visit: <http://oregon2020.com/crook/>



## Fast Facts

- All-Time Bird Species Total: **280**
- Breeding Season Bird Species Total: **249**
- Total number of eBird checklists: **3,806**



Photo: Francesco Veronesi

### Crook County Species Highlights:

- Mountain Bluebird
- Black-billed Magpie
- Brewer's Sparrow
- Gray Flycatcher

### Top Birding Locations in Crook County:

- Ochoco Reservoir
- Prineville Reservoir
- Houston Lakes

## Overview of Crook County



Above: Just east of Bend and Redmond, Crook County contains the Ochoco Mountains and the city of Prineville.

Located in the heart of Oregon, Crook County is known for its agriculture and forest products, as well as its fantastic recreational areas. Fishing is very popular all year-round. Below the Bowman Dam, the Crooked River is one of the most productive trout streams in Oregon. Visit the Ochoco National Forest and explore geological oddities, hunt for gemstones, and experience dense pine forests with nearly 95,000 acres of old growth.

## The Feisty and Vocal Gray Flycatcher

The Gray Flycatcher is commonly found in semi-arid woodlands, sage brush, shrub-steppe, pinyon-juniper, and yellow pine forests. This flycatcher actively defends its territories and forages for insects from shrubs or branches low in trees. It maintains its territories using vocalizations and displays such as tail-pumping, crest-raising, and elaborate fighting. Gray flycatchers defend territories against both Gray and Dusky flycatchers, because they cannot distinguish between these intruders by appearance alone. Gray Flycatchers have a comparatively long and narrow bill, whitish eye ring, and slightly notched tail.

Schlossberg, S. and Sterling, J.C. 2013. Gray Flycatcher (*Empidonax wrightii*), *The Birds of North America Online* (P.G. Rodewald, Ed.). Ithaca: Cornell Lab of Ornithology.



Photo: Francesco Veronesi

Look for Gray Flycatchers and other sage-associated birds on our Crook County Blitz

## THE HISTORY OF CROOK COUNTY



Crook County was established in 1882. It named after U.S. Army Major-General George Crook, a hero of the Snake Indian Wars. The area developed slowly in early years because the Cascade Mountains

formed an imposing barrier to travel. But the discovery of the Santiam Pass in 1859 and the subsequent development of the Santiam Wagon Road helped spur the settlement of Crook County. Prineville was named in honor of the town's first merchant, Barney Prine. Primary crops in the region include hay, grain, mint, potatoes, and seed.

## LODGING FOR THE CROOK COUNTY BIRDING BLITZ

**Our headquarters and daily meeting location for the Crook County Blitz will be Prineville, Oregon.**

Prineville and the surrounding area markets itself as “forever country”, and local accommodations reflect this. Much of the area’s lodging can be found at campgrounds, reservoirs, and lakeside resorts, including the popular Prineville Reservoir



State Park. Beyond several traditional hotels and motels, visitors can also rent hotel rooms and cabins outside of town at the Brasada Ranch. For more, visit: <http://www.prinevillechamber.com/>

## Birding Hotspot: Prineville Reservoir State Park

The 15-mile long Prineville Reservoir State Park incorporates over 3,000 acres of designated wildlife management land. The reservoir was created as part of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamations, Crooked River Project. Arthur R. Bowman Dam was finished in 1961, flooding a juniper and sagebrush filled canyon with mountain waters of the Ochoco Mountain Range that form the Crooked River. Fishing at the Prineville Reservoir can be good anytime of the year. The high desert lake supports rainbow trout, small and largemouth bass, catfish, and crayfish to name a few. Many visitors also enjoy the incredible waterskiing, wakeboarding, windsurfing, paddle boarding, kayaking, hiking, star gazing and wildlife viewing. Expect to see lots of waterfowl, shorebirds, and raptors when visiting.



### Recently Reported at Prineville Reservoir SP:

- Townsend’s Solitaire
- Mountain Bluebird
- Pinyon Jay
- Cassin’s Finch
- Red-breasted Sapsucker



### FUN FACT:

**DID YOU KNOW...** Crook County contains the oldest geological formation in Oregon: an outcropping of Devonian limestone formed by a reef when Oregon was still submerged underwater!

Don’t forget to register for the **Crook County Birding Blitz**, June 16-18! Free registration and more information available here: <http://oregon2020.com/crook/>