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## President's Column - May 2014

In preparation for the annual Board of Directors Retreat next month, I've been reviewing RVAS accomplishments for 2013-14. Our two most visible activities are Chapter meetings and birding trips. I want to acknowledge the effort Alex Maksymowicz has made to provide excellent speakers at every meeting for the past two years, and the effort Maggi Rackley has made to coordinate so many excellent field trips over the past year. Many thanks to Alex and Maggi who have completed their terms.

There are other RVAS efforts that are absolutely central to our mission. One of these is Conservation. RVAS has over 800 members supporting the Audubon cause in Jackson County. Our Conservation Committee has been monitoring trail proposals for Prescott Park/Roxy Ann Peak, proposed alterations to Ashland Pond, and the continuing proposals for National Forest land use.

Our Education efforts, led by Lynn Kellogg, provide bird education activities with an anticipated 20 classroom presentations this year. And I am pleased to tell you that we have initiated a program to support classroom offerings from Coyote Trails Nature Center, serving 150 fifth-grade students in local schools throughout Jackson County.

On June 7<sup>th</sup> the RVAS Board of Directors will meet to review what we have accomplished, and to plan what RVAS will be doing in the coming year. Please take a minute to let any Director know where you would like to see RVAS focus our efforts next year. We all look forward to hearing from you.

Good Birding! -- Bill Hering

## Field Notes: The Changing Seasons:

*Compiled by Stewart Janes*

Early spring-like weather, early spring-like birds. As much as birds adhere to a rather strict migration schedule, they are able to adjust by a few days either way, and the adjustments this year were early. Many of our breeding birds made their first appearance a bit early this year. A partial list of first reports is as follows:

Chipping Sparrow	3/25	JH
Barn Swallow	3/29	RN
Cliff Swallow	3/29	PT
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	4/1	FL
Pacific-Slope Flycatcher	4/9	RN
Western Kingbird	4/10	BH, JB, RN
Nashville Warbler	4/14	SJ
Cassin's Vireo	4/14	SJ
Vesper Sparrow	4/14	FL
Vaux's Swifts	4/15	SJ
Bullock's Oriole	4/15	LN,CH
Wilson's Warbler	4/16	BA
Hermit Warbler	4/16	SJ
Calliope Hummingbird	4/17	CH
Black-headed Grosbeak	4/18	RN
Swainson's Thrush	4/18	RK

April is waterfowl migration month. **American Wigeon** cleared out sometime between 4/11 and 4/14. All of a sudden the ponds were empty. The last **Bufflehead** I saw in a pond on the valley floor was 4/8. The **Hooded Mergansers** slipped out without notice. I wasn't watching close enough to note their departure. Only **Ring-necked Ducks** remain as of 4/20. This is the normal pattern. They are the last. Small numbers should be around for another couple of weeks.

It's a different story at Hyatt Lake. Divers hang out much longer here than on the valley floor. On 3/30 hundreds of **Ring-necked Ducks** and over a hundred **Scaup** including a few **Greater Scaup** enjoyed the mountain air. They were accompanied by a number of **Common Goldeneyes** and at least one **Barrow's Goldeneye (FL)**.

In the meantime, **Cinnamon Teal** arrived in time for the breeding season. The first were reported on 3/25 (JH).

The **Greater White-fronted Goose** migration kicked off right on schedule with sizable flocks seen passing north over the county on 3/26 (BH). Flocks will probably be seen throughout April. Two **Snow Geese** continue to relax and tank up in a farm pond along Coleman Creek Road as of 4/20.

Shorebird migration is heating up, starting with 8 **Greater Yellowlegs**, 8 **Dunlin**, and **Least Sandpipers** at the Kirtland Ponds on 3/26 (BH). Then there are the two pair of **Black-necked Stilts** at the Kirtland Ponds beginning on 4/7 (BH). Apparently, the breeding effort last year was successful enough to invite a return engagement, plus friends. **Least Sandpiper** numbers increased to 200 by 4/17 (RN). Others have included a **Baird's Sandpiper** on 4/11 (RN). **Baird's Sandpipers** are regular during fall migration but rarely noted during spring migration. Then there was the **Solitary Sandpiper** and **Semipalmated Plover** at the Kirtland Ponds on 4/17 (RN). A **Lesser Yellowlegs** was at Hyatt Lake on 4/18 (FL). Stay tuned as there are more shorebirds to come.

**Common Loons** began to show up on 3/30 at Howard Prairie at Lost Creek Reservoir with numbers as high as 10 (JT). **Eared Grebes** appeared at the Kirtland Ponds on 3/26 (BH), and 2 **Horned Grebes** were at Howard Prairie on 3/30 (FL). **White Pelicans** were at Hyatt Lake on 4/18 (FL).

**Evening Grosbeaks** made their annual spring appearance starting in the mountains on 3/24 (FL) and on the valley floor on 4/12 (FE,DA). **Red Crossbills** were at Pinehurst on 3/27 (RN). **Pine Siskins** are beginning to return to the valley. *Cont'd on Page 5*

## The Conservation Column

by Pepper Trail

### The Future of Our Forests

[Pepper's comprehensive review of the major legislative proposals to change the management of the O&C Lands in western Oregon began in the March issue of *The Chat* and continues here]

#### WOPR Jr.

The latest Western Oregon Plan Revisions will take the form of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) sometime toward the end of the year. Draft alternatives are currently available, with a comment period for the 'planning criteria' which define how BLM interprets the laws that govern management of the O&C Lands. The table below, drawn up by the southern Oregon environmental group KS Wild, summarizes these draft alternatives.

#### Summary of Preliminary Alternatives for WOPR Jr.

	BLM Option A	BLM Option B	BLM Option C	BLM Option D	Best Option
<b>OLD GROWTH RESERVES</b>	Same as Critical Habitat (dry forest thinning in stands up to 80- years).	Model arranged blocks of owl habitat - managed for owls, murrelets, and resiliency. No logging in older stands.	Based on size and spacing of owl habitat blocks- managed for owls, murrelets and resiliency. No logging old stands.	Reserves encompass old stands (defined below). Reserves managed for owls, murrelets and resiliency	<b>Reserves should provide enough habitat to recover owls and other species dependant on old-growth.</b>
<b>OLDER FORESTS</b>	Reserve forests over 120 years old.	Reserve forests over 120 on productive sites; 140 - moderate; 160 - low.	Reserve all forests 160 years old and older.	Reserve forests over 120 on productive sites; 140 - moderate; 160 - low.	<b>Forests over 80 years provide habitat for late-successional species.</b>
<b>RIPARIAN RESERVES</b>	One tree-height on all streams and an inner "no-cut" 120-foot buffer on perennial and fish-bearing intermittent streams -50 feet on non-fish-intermittent streams. No timber removal in moist forest.	Perennial and fish-bearing intermittent streams - one site potential tree with a 60-foot no cut buffer. Non-fish intermittent streams - 50 (non-debris prone) or 100 (debris prone) feet - 50-foot no cut buffer.	Perennial and fish-bearing intermittent streams - one site potential tree and a 60-foot no cut buffer - non-fish intermittent streams lands - either 50 (non-debris prone) or 100 (debris prone) feet - 50-foot no cut buffer.	One site-potential-tree-height on all streams with an inner no-thin buffer of 120 feet.	<b>Current riparian reserves widths are between one and two tree-heights. They shade streams and provide for connectivity of species across the landscape.</b>
<b>LOGGING</b>	Logging outside of critical habitat includes thin and clearcutting (no retention).	Logging critical habitat but outside reserves: thinning and regen (20-30% retention). Higher in dry forests. Outside critical habitat: thin and regen. (10 to 20% retention). Uneven-aged in dry forests.	Logging outside of reserves (including critical habitat outside of reserves): thin and regeneration harvest with no retention (clear cuts). Uneven aged in dry forests.	Young stands in critical habitat would have uneven logging combining sustained-yield with owl habitat. Outside critical habitat - thin and regen (10 to 20% retention). Uneven-aged in dry forests.	<b>Thinning in dry forests and young plantations is the most appropriate for federal lands in the Pacific Northwest.</b>
<b>SUMMARY</b>	"A" includes the most for species and the least for timber. Reserves and timber base - provides minimum recreation.	"B" provides for a more intense timber approach and would provide the current level of recreation opportunities.	"C" provides for a intense timber approach-clear cuts (except driest forest), and a moderate acreage in a timber base.	"D" contains the least amount of acres dedicated to species and the most acres in the timber base.	<b>Take old-growth and streamside forests off the table, recover listed species and maximize non-motorized recreation.</b>

### Conclusions

Both the Wyden bill and the WOPR draft alternatives are worse for the environment than the status quo (the Northwest Forest Plan) because they focus timber volume on clearcutting, reduce riparian reserves and lessen protections for old-growth reserves. In theory, they both improve on the NW Forest Plan in that they protect older forests (defined as 120 years old for moist forests and 150 years old for dry forests in the Wyden bill). However, those forests are very controversial to cut as it is and not a common part of the status quo due to the determined efforts of conservationists over the past 25 years.

The Wyden bill is worse than WOPR Jr. in that it changes fundamental laws, like the ESA but especially the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which currently mandates thorough environmental review on a project-by-project basis. It would also effectively remove land from public ownership. Public comment would be curtailed. There would be huge Environmental Impact Statements (EIS's) that would last ten years and cover tens of thousands of acres. These could be challenged only during a brief time window, and once they were approved, the remaining projects that are tiered to those EIS's could not be challenged.

Finally, although there are positive aspects to the Wyden bill, including the creation of new Wilderness and National Recreation Areas, these do not balance the many environmentally-destructive provisions.

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### **Field Notes** (continued from page 3)

While we revel in spring appearances, we often fail to note the departures. The last Varied Thrush was reported from Ashland on 4/4 (DA). Dark-eyed Juncos left my feeder on 4/6. White-throated Sparrows continue with us as of 4/5 (RB, BQ). The Swamp Sparrow at North Mountain Park continued to be seen through 4/3 (FL).

Modest numbers of Tri-colored Blackbirds are at Denman. They must be nesting somewhere in the area (SJ). A Purple Martin was at Eagle Point on 4/19 (HS). Great-tailed Grackles are again at the Avenue G Pond. A male was seen on 4/11 (SJ).

Thanks to this month's contributors including Bob Arrigoni, Dick Ashford, Ralph Browning, John Bullock, Harry Fuller, Carol Hannah, Jim Harleman, Bob Hunter, Gretchen Hunter, Ron Ketchum, Frank Lospalluto, Russ Namitz, Bob Quaccia, Howard Sands, Pepper Trail, and Jeff Tufts. Deadline for contributions to the Field Notes in the Summer edition of The Chat is June 1.

**Field Trip Chair and Program Chair Announcement**

As I mentioned in the President's Column this issue, our two most visible activities are monthly Chapter meetings and three birding field trips almost every month. These are both very important member benefits. I'm very pleased to report that Murray Orr will continue to lead the first Wednesday walk at Agate Lake every month. Thank you, Murray!

I'm also pleased to announce that Russ Namitz has agreed to serve as Field Trips Chair for 2014-15. If you have heard Russ speak about his Oregon "Big Year" or accompanied him on field trips, you know that he defines the term "ace birder". Russ represents RVAS on the Oregon Bird Records Committee, and he is a member of the RVAS committee preparing the Fourth Edition of "*Birds of Jackson County*", under the leadership of Stewart Janes. We are very fortunate to have Russ coordinating our field trips. If you would like to lead a trip, or if you have suggestions for trips you would like to see RVAS offer, please let Russ know. Contact him at [namitzr@hotmail.com](mailto:namitzr@hotmail.com). or 541-294-2063.

We have one Leadership Position still open — Chapter Program Chair. I encourage you to consider assuming this responsibility. The Program Chair connects with people who are interested in making presentations to RVAS, and determines if and when those presentations will be offered. RVAS has seven Chapter meetings per year, and so we will need seven presentations. It's not that daunting — there are a number of good presenters right here in our Valley and nearby, and we have people asking to be in the program. Our retiring Chair, Alex Maksymowicz, has already identified several strong candidates for program presenters, and the September presentation is already prepared. The Program Chair needs to identify presenters, coordinate dates presenters are available, and prepare a brief description for use in *The Chat* prior to each program. (Often the presenters have prepared text and photos that can be used for this purpose.) The Program Chair often introduces each program, but that's not essential; other Officers are always available for that task.

Please consider this opportunity to make a significant contribution to RVAS by planning the program for each Chapter meeting, and making it happen. If you like the idea but wonder if it will require too much time, consider asking a friend to share the responsibility, with two or even three members working on obtaining high quality presentations. Call me at 541-488-5886 or send a message to [bh@ashlandnet.net](mailto:bh@ashlandnet.net), and I'll be glad to discuss more fully what's required.

## E-Bird In Oregon

The growing popularity of eBird in the State of Oregon is clearly evident by looking at the annual totals of checklists submitted by birders in the state.

For the year 2000, eBird records show only four individuals who were credited with more than 100 checklists for the year. The 100 level was topped by six birders by 2004, and the number had grown to nine by 2008.

Beginning in 2009, the number of birders with more than 100 checklists hit double figures for the first time. Here are the checklist totals (individuals only) for eBird in Oregon since 2009.

2009 -- 14	2012 -- 82
2010 -- 26	2013 -- 100+
2011 -- 44	2014 -- 46 (thru April 9)

W. Douglas Robinson tops the list each year. He submitted 3118 checklists to eBird in 2013 and already has 1627 in the records for 2014 !!

The total number of species reported to eBird from Oregon has also grown substantially in recent years.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total Species</u>	<u>Best Total For One Birder</u>
2009	381	286
2010	372	291
2011	379	289
2012	407	330
2013	398	342
2014*	283	211

\* Through April 9



## **BIRD AND BIRDING RELATED ACTIVITIES**

### **Rogue Valley Bird Day — May 10, 8 a.m. to Noon At North Mountain Park in Ashland**

Rogue Valley Bird Day celebrates the life cycles and journeys of migrating birds. This year's theme — "Why Birds Matter" — focuses on the many ways that birds matter to the earth, to ecosystems, and, of course, to us. The free, all-ages event offers outdoor activities for birders of all ages, with guided bird walks, a banding station visit to view scientists monitoring wild birds, a bird-calling contest after 10:30 a.m., and live birds of prey from Wildlife Images. Rogue Valley Bird Day is presented by the Ashland Parks & Recreation Department, Rogue Valley Audubon Society and Klamath Bird Observatory. For further information, visit [www.RogueValleyBirdDay.net](http://www.RogueValleyBirdDay.net) or contact North Mountain Park Nature Center (541-488-6606).

### **Beginning Bird Identification — May 17, 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. At North Mountain Park in Ashland**

Spend two hours birding in North Mountain Park during spring migration and learn about common year-round residents as well as the birds that are migrating to warmer climates in May. Bring enthusiasm and curiosity for learning about the birds. We can provide binoculars. Pre-register online at [www.ashland.or.us/register](http://www.ashland.or.us/register) or call the Nature Center at 541-488-6606.

### **Birding For Kids — May 17, 10 a.m. to Noon**

This two-hour visit to the Bear Creek area is for ages 5-and-up, and is sponsored by the Northwest Nature Shop in Ashland. Wear comfortable walking shoes and bring binoculars. Pre-register online at [www.ashland.or.us/register](http://www.ashland.or.us/register) or call the North Mountain Park Nature Center at 541-488-6606.

## **RVAS TO FUND SCHOLARSHIPS FOR SFI CLASSES**

The Rogue Valley Audubon Society recently announced that it will again contribute scholarship funds in 2014 to support Jackson County educators' enrollment in Siskiyou Field Institute classes. Eligible educators include any Jackson County teacher, student teachers, classroom assistants or staff of non-profit organizations involved in outdoor/natural history education.

Siskiyou Field Institute's mission is to educate people about the Klamath-Siskiyou bioregion through field-based natural history classes. The non-profit Institute is based in Selma, Oregon, and conducts classes throughout southwestern Oregon and northwestern California.

For further information, refer to the educational program page of the RVAS website: [www.roguevalleyaudubon.org](http://www.roguevalleyaudubon.org)

## **RVAS MEMBERSHIP UPDATE- WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS**

We welcome the following new National Audubon Society (NAS) members to RVAS, this month: Sandra Carmeci, Stevie Egan, Amy Farrell, Richard C. Frey, Elaine Henry, Judy Jacobi, Jack W. Lentfer, Patricia Parker, Diane Shockey, Nina Smith, Sharon Stewart, Sandra Wine.

New NAS members receive a mailing to acquaint them with the local chapter. This includes the current issue of *The Chat* newsletter along with other Rogue Valley Audubon Society information and a postpaid, preaddressed postal card so that their preference for receiving future issues of *The Chat* can be recorded.

Any member may receive *The Chat* by mail, at no cost, or it can always be viewed online at our website: <http://www.roguevalleyaudubon.org/>. All new members are encouraged to join us at our Chapter meetings, field trips and bird walks, and to become involved in the organization.

## MOUNTAIN BIRD FESTIVAL - MAY 31-JUNE 1, 2014

The first Mountain Bird Festival (MBF) is being organized by Klamath Bird Observatory (KBO). The Board and Staff of KBO thank the members and officers of Rogue Valley Audubon Society for their support and donation of \$1000. The Siskiyou County Audubon Society also made a donation to the Festival.

The #1 goal of the festival is to introduce birders from other parts of the country to our rich avifauna and emphasize the importance of bird science and conservation. MBF has already gotten awards for being a mindful birding festival and also for being a conservation-oriented birding festival. Festival goers should get to see a number of sensitive species during their nesting season. The goal is this to be done without disturbing the birds during that crucial time of the year.

Trips during the Festival will reach from Wildlife Images on the north to Shasta Wildlife Area on the south, from the Siskiyou to the Klamath Basin. If you have birding friends who live outside the area tell them to check out our festival. Just whisper "White-headed Woodpecker"... "Great Gray Owl"... "Hermit Warbler."

Here's the website: <http://www.klamathbird.org/education/mountainbird>



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### FIRST WEDNESDAY BIRD WALKS CONTINUE AT AGATE LAKE

Murray Orr will continue to lead his monthly bird walks on the first Wednesday of each month at Agate Lake. Birders wishing to join Murray should meet him on the far side of the lake across from the boat dock to observe birds on and near Agate Lake. The walk begins at 8:30 and will end before noon. Meet Murray at the gate. We hope you can join us. Contact Murray at 547-857-9050.



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