

The Chat

Number 436
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A voice for education and conservation in the natural world
Rogue Valley Audubon Society
www.roguevalleyaudubon.org
Deadline for the November issue is October 20.



RVAS OCTOBER PROGRAM TUESDAY, OCTOBER 24 at 7:00 PM

"Forktails, Snaketails and Spiketails: the Dragonflies and Damselflies of Jackson County"

Presented by NORMAN BARRETT

In this fast-paced program, Norm will take you through a brief introduction to the types of dragonflies in the county, habitats in which they can be found, totally weird breeding behavior, and new discoveries. Like foraging dragonflies we will dart hither, thither and yon in an effort to make you all experts in the science of the Odonata. There will be a test.

Since retiring as a biologist from the US Forest Service, Norm Barrett has been chasing and photographing dragonflies for almost 10 years now. In that time he and his evil twins, Gary Shaffer and Jim Livaudais, have documented and photographed 65 species in Jackson County. With net and camera in hand(s), he has braved the shallowest ponds, stickiest mud and wettest meadows in search of something new.



****Chapter meetings are held at 1801 E. Jackson Street in Medford**
Lidgate Hall, Medford Congregational Church**

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**Chapter Program meetings are held on
the fourth Tuesday of the month,
September through April, at 7:00 pm.
Meetings take place at 1801 E. Jackson
St., Medford, in Lidgate Hall of the
Medford Congregational Church.**

Letter from the Board

Current Volunteer Opportunities

I'm hoping to use this column every month to highlight several current opportunities for RVAS members to volunteer for education, conservation and other activities of our society. The goal is to make it easier for all of you to get involved. As you see elsewhere in this issue, opportunities to help count the Vaux's Swifts during migration are almost over. But surveys of the Sampson Creek Preserve are still ongoing. If you're interested in volunteering for that please contact Ellie Armstrong at KBO (eea@klamathbird.org). And coming up we'll need help with several parts of setting up for the Holiday Party on Saturday, December 2. Please put that on your calendar and contact Sooney Viani (sooneyviani@gmail.com) to offer your help.

Linda Kreisman

Vaux's Swift Survey

I was fortunate to be able to attend the Vaux's Swift survey event that was held at Eden Valley Orchards on Monday, Sept. 11. The survey was led by Karen Hussey, a wildlife biologist with the Southern Oregon Land Conservancy. We watched as a little over 200 Vaux's Swifts (a modest amount, as swifts go), funneled into the historic mansion's chimney just before sunset, while sipping wine and enjoying the company of about 20 other swift enthusiasts. Many thanks go to Edenvale Winery for staying late and hosting this event.

Karen explained that we know very little about how many and where these migrating swifts roost in Southern Oregon—thus, the surveys. Their traditional roosting spots are inside old growth snags. As these are in short supply these days, the swifts are now known to use old chimneys that haven't been lined. Since these birds are unable to perch, (they don't have a hind toe), they spend the majority of their time in the air, only nesting and roosting at night in spaces where they can hang on rough surfaces

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such as the inside of old chimneys. Watching the swifts circle above the chimney as they get ready to enter is like looking at a tornado of birds. They then rapidly start to peel off and enter the chimney feet first. If you have never seen these birds "going to bed," you need to join one of these autumn migration surveys.

Laura Fleming

Introducing New Birding in the Schools Interns

The Rogue Valley Audubon Society is pleased to announce that the "Birding in the Schools" internship for the 2017-18 school year is awarded to Sarah Norton and India Bolding. Both Sarah and India are currently embarking on the journey to a Master's degree in Environmental Education at SOU. We are glad to have them support bird conservation by teaching in Rogue Valley classrooms!



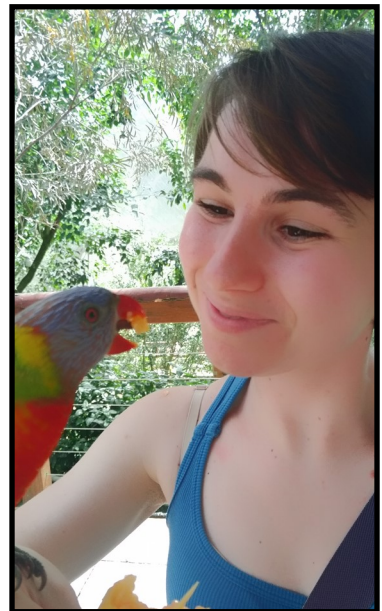
Sarah Norton has a passion for avian conservation and public education, as demonstrated by her extensive resume in these areas. For the last eight years, she has traveled around the country working on avian research projects with a focus on raptor ecology and conservation. For South Dakota State University, she presented to middle school classrooms in a ranching community about their local raptor species. She has also worked with several Audubon members and chapters throughout the country and is now excited to learn the birds and ecosystems in southern Oregon through her time with RVAS.

India Bolding displays great enthusiasm for wildlife and science education. Having worked at ScienceWorks and completed her undergraduate degree at SOU, she is familiar with the Rogue Valley and glad to learn more about the local avifauna. India has worked with school groups in her hometown on tide pool education and is now excited to take her passion and skills to a classroom setting. India's immense energy will carry her along as she will also intern with the BeeGirl organization. She intends to pursue a teaching license in addition to the Master's degree.

We are confident that both Sarah and India will do a great job of carrying on the legacy of local bird education in our schools and being a terrific ambassador for RVAS.

Welcome, Sarah and India!

Jeanine Moy



Jackson County Field Notes: September 2017

By Frank Lospalluto

As I write this the first fall storm is moving through our area, bringing welcome moisture and cleaner air.

Greater White-fronted Geese have been seen and heard migrating over the Rogue and Illinois valleys (RC, LF). **Cackling Geese** too have been sighted at Lost Creek Reservoir and outside of Grants Pass (JK, DV). An early returning **Lesser Scaup** was on the Big R ponds in Denman Sept. 12 (SK).

The winter hawk season is upon us and there have been a number of **Golden Eagle** sightings around the valley. A **White-tailed Kite** was near N. Valley View Rd. outside Ashland Sept. 14 (KS). **Turkey Vultures** are kettling up and making their escape south. Hundreds were seen leaving the valley Sept 23. Keep your eyes open for visiting **Rough-legged** and **Ferruginous Hawks** as they head for winter feeding grounds.

Pectoral Sandpipers visited Kirtland Ponds, Agate Lake and Emigrant Lake on Sept. 11 and 12 (RB, FL). A **Short-billed Dowitcher** was at Emigrant Lake Sept 5 (FL). A **Sanderling** was amongst the **Western Sandpipers** at Emigrant Lake on Sept. 21 (FL). **Caspian Terns** are being seen at various lakes in the valley. A group of 16 birds was at Emigrant Sept. 22. This is the time of year I take a second look, as more uncommon terns and gulls can show up.

Band-tailed Pigeons are conspicuous now in the mid-elevation forests where elderberries grow. **Great Gray Owls** may be seen on the Dead Indian Plateau in the predawn and twilight hours feeding in the meadows.

This is the season for **Vaux's Swifts** to roost in impressive numbers as they move to their wintering grounds. Locally, Hedrick Middle School hosts the largest numbers,

with thousands being recorded entering a nighttime roost. Karen Hussey of SOLC is coordinating our local swifting effort. Contact Karen at SOLC for more info.

(karen@landconserve.org) or visit the

Vaux's Happening website:

<http://www.vauxhappening.org/>

Lewis's Woodpeckers are back, and **Merlins** are beginning to appear around the valley.

Say's Phoebes are also back, and some will linger through the winter. Two were seen near Sampson Creek Sept. 9 (CS, SS). Most of our flycatchers have left or are leaving. There are reports of single **Willow Flycatchers** and **Pacific-slope Flycatchers** along Sampson Creek. A Willow Flycatcher visited Ousterhout Farm on Sept. 21 (BH).

Vireos and warblers are all moving through and becoming scarce as we enter October. **Hutton's Vireos** are year-round residents and are often mistaken for **Ruby-crowned Kinglets**. Try and get a good look at the legs and bill to make sure which you have.

Speaking of Ruby-crowned Kinglets, a few have been seen of late in our local forests (FL). Listen for their contact call amidst mixed chickadee flocks. They move quickly as they feed.

Four **Clark's Nutcrackers** were seen along Road 20 behind Mt. Ashland Sept. 13 (AH). Large flocks of **Violet-Green Swallows** and flocks of **Barn Swallows** are still being seen around the valley—but not for much longer.

Swainson's Thrush were moving back through the valley over the last month. A few were noted on the lower slopes of Mt. Ashland Sept. 2 and 3. One was along the PCT in the CSNM near Pilot Rock Sept. 7. **Varied Thrush** have begun returning with the weather change Sept. 21. A small flock was in the forest near Siskiyou Summit (FL).

Yellow-rumped Warblers may be found most everywhere these next few weeks as they migrate south.

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Golden-crowned Sparrows returned mid-month. **White-Crowned Sparrows** were at Ousterhout Farm Sept. 3, and a **Brewer's Sparrow** passed though the farm earlier in the month (BH). A late **Green-tailed Towhee** was caught in the first snow on Mt. Ashland Sept. 21 (FL).

Finches are flocking, and that's all for now...

Most of this month's notes were gleaned from ebird and the RVbirdlist. Thanks to these observers: Janet Kelly, Bob Hunter, Steve Kaiserman, Romain Cooper, Lee French, Karl Schneck, Cecile Shohet, Susan Schlosser, Peter Kreisman, Linda Kreisman, Dennis Vroman and Ralph Browning.

RVAS BIRDING FIELD TRIPS AND EVENTS

FIRST WEDNESDAY BIRD WALKS AT AGATE LAKE

Murray Orr will continue to lead his monthly bird walks at Agate Lake in 2017. These walks take place on the first Wednesday of each month. In this ongoing citizen science project, the numbers of different species observed by walk participants are entered in the Cornell Ornithological Laboratory's eBird database. Birders wishing to join Murray should meet him at the picnic area off Dry Creek Road on the east side of the lake. Walks begin at 8:30 am and end before noon.

October Walk: Wednesday, October 4

November Walk: Wednesday, November 1

December Walk: Wednesday, December 6

FIELD TRIP TO HYATT AND HOWARD PRAIRIE LAKES

Saturday, October 14, 8:30 am—1:30 pm

Join trip leader Frank Lospalluto and look for fall mountain birds at Howard Prairie and Hyatt Lake. Meet at 8:00 am in the Ashland Rite Aid parking lot. Bring water and lunch. No need to RSVP. Contact Frank at fdlospalluto@gmail.com if you have questions.

FIELD TRIP TO SCOTT VALLEY

Saturday, October 21, 7:30 am—4:00 pm

Dick Ashford will lead this discovery trip to Scott Valley, Calif., (south of Yreka). Scott Valley has the potential for some fair-to-good early season raptor viewing, with each year experiencing varying numbers of wintering hawks and eagles. There are no guarantees, but we'll find out what's there! Enjoy a day in the field with leader Dick Ashford, who will have scouted the area prior to our outing, so we will know where to look for the birds.

We will have fun. No whiners!

Meeting time will be at 7:30 am in Ashland at a place to be determined. Attendance is limited to 15 participants who will be notified of the meeting spot by email. Because we will be driving narrow farm roads, we will carpool in a maximum of four vehicles. Pack a lunch and expect to return between 3:00 and 4:00 pm. The focus will be on raptors, but we'll look at all things avian. RSVP to Dick at dicka@ashlandhome.net to secure your spot.

The Conservation Column

By Pepper Trail

We Learn a Little More about the Trump Administration's Monument Plans

On September 17, the *Washington Post* published a leaked copy of the text of Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke's "Final Report Summarizing Findings of the Review of Designations Under the Antiquities Act." This was provided to the White House on August 24, but has never been released to the public. The report was shockingly sloppy and filled with factual errors; for example, stating that "Motorized transportation was prohibited in the original CSNM designation," which would come as a surprise to anyone driving on Soda Mountain Road, Little Hyatt Road, or, for that matter, the Greensprings Highway. Regarding the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument, the report recommended:

"The Proclamation should be amended, through the use of appropriate authority, including the lawful exercise of the President's discretion granted by the Act, to protect objects and prioritize public access; infrastructure upgrades, repair, and maintenance; traditional use; tribal cultural use; and hunting and fishing rights.

The boundary should be revised through the use of appropriate authority, including lawful exercise of the President's discretion granted by the Act, in order to reduce impacts on private lands and remove O&C Lands to allow sustained-yield timber production under BLM's governing Resource Management Plans until revised regional management plan achieves sustainable timber yield;

The management plan should be revised to continue to protect objects and prioritize public access; infrastructure upgrades, repair, and maintenance; traditional use; tribal cultural use; and hunting and fishing rights.

The DOI should work with Congress to secure funding for adequate infrastructure and management needs to protect objects effectively."

There were no details as to what the monument boundary reductions or management plan revisions would be. But there is no doubt that they would drastically harm the unique biodiversity that the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument was established to protect.

Here is the American Bird Conservancy's statement on the issue, with input from RVAS:

Plan to Shrink National Monument Threatens Habitat for Spotted Owl

The Interior Department review of National Monument designations has led to a recommendation that would reduce protection of endangered species' habitat. One of the targeted monuments is the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument in Oregon and California, the only monument created specifically to conserve biodiversity, including habitat for the federally listed Northern Spotted Owl. The monument also provides important habitat connectivity for the species by protecting a mountain ridge that connects populations in the Coast and Cascade ranges.

"The Northern Spotted Owl is one of the big losers in this decision," said Steve Holmer, Vice President of Policy for American Bird Conservancy. "Reducing protection of the owl's habitat in Oregon and California is a sure way to reduce the population of this threatened species."

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The charismatic Great Gray Owl and many other species could also lose important habitat if the size of the monument is reduced. “The monument area, especially the expansion areas around Howard Prairie Lake and Grizzly Peak, is famous among West Coast birders as perhaps the easiest place to see this species,” said Pepper Trail, Conservation Chair of the Rogue Valley Audubon Society and a Fellow of the American Ornithological Society. “Mountain meadow habitats around Hyatt and Howard Prairie Lakes used by Great Grey Owls for hunting are also important nesting areas for Sandhill Cranes and the sharply declining Oregon Vesper Sparrow.”

Trail noted that the monument expansion to the east, along a ridge known as Surveyor Mountain, is important habitat for higher-elevation birds that may be threatened by climate change in the region, including Red Crossbill, Cassin's Finch, and Gray Jay. The lower-elevation expansion areas to the west and south protect oak savannah and chaparral birds. Oak savannah is critically declining in the region. The expansion areas are home to the slender-billed subspecies of White-breasted Nuthatch, healthy nesting populations of Western Meadowlark and Savannah Sparrow, and important wintering habitat for Lewis's Woodpeckers, among other species.

“The expanded monument not only provides vitally important additional nesting and wintering habitat for a variety of vulnerable bird species, but greatly strengthens the monument's ecological connections in all four directions,” Trail said. “Such strong connections are essential to allow birds and all other organisms to respond successfully to climate change, and the monument was established precisely because of its critical location at the crossroads of multiple ecoregions. To reduce the monument would harm the ecological value it was established to protect.”

In addition to putting birds and other wildlife at risk, eliminating protected areas on National Monuments and other public lands threatens to undermine a sustainable economic engine. According to Headwaters Economics, the community of Jackson County, Ore. — which borders the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument — has experienced strong economic growth since the monument's designation. Jobs grew by 14 percent, real personal income grew by 30 percent, and the population grew by 16 percent.

“This review threatens to diminish one of our country's greatest treasures: our natural heritage,” said ABC's Holmer. “These special places belong to all of us and should be preserved for future generations of Americans. We urge the President to stand behind the American people and reject these harmful recommendations.”

And, in other news from the American Bird Conservancy:

Grouse Plan Revisions Risk Endangering the Species

Conservation of one of the nation's fastest-disappearing birds took a step back in August when the U.S. Department of the Interior ordered revisions to Greater Sage-Grouse management plans, opening the door to expanded development across the American West.

“Habitat protection for the grouse is already at a minimum level based on the plans put in place just two years ago,” said Steve Holmer, Vice President of Policy at American Bird Conservancy. “Weakening these plans puts the grouse at grave risk of further population declines.”

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In addition to one of the West's most iconic species, more than 350 species of High Plains birds and wildlife are also at stake. The existing grouse conservation plans were designed to halt the loss of sage grouse habitat and to balance conservation with limited oil and gas drilling, mining, and renewable energy development. They also include safeguards for adaptive management and mitigation should grouse populations continue to decline, bolstering the decision not to list the Greater Sage-Grouse under the Endangered Species Act.

I'm afraid that environmental protections will be under continual threat by actions like these from the Trump Administration. It's going to be a long haul. Please stay informed and stay involved. The survival of our birds and the preservation of bird habitats are going to depend on all of us. Thank you.

2017-2018 RVAS Program Schedule

November 28: "Climate Change: A Bird's Eye View"
Presented by John Alexander

December: No program, Holiday Party!

January 23: "The Ocean: Threats and Prospects"
Presented by Daphne Fautin and Bob Buddemeier

February 27: "Birds of Patagonia"
Presented by Brandon Breen

March 27: Presentation by KS Wild, TBD

April 24: "Lake Abert: Its Salinity and the Effect on Its Birds"
Presented by Ron Larson

Project FeederWatch Returns

By Mary Pat Power

It's that time of year! In November Project FeederWatch begins at North Mountain Park in Ashland and Coyote Trails in Medford.

Organized by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Project FeederWatch is a winter-long survey of birds that visit feeders at backyards, nature centers, and other locales in North America. FeederWatchers periodically count the birds they see at their feeders from November through March and send their counts to Project FeederWatch. These data help scientists track broad scale movements of winter bird populations and long-term trends in bird distribution and abundance.

The free one hour watches provide novice birders the easiest possible identification practice since there are unobstructed, close up views of from ten to twenty species perched at feeders with the valley's top birder/educators available for help. More experienced birders often attend, jumping at the chance to show off their knowledge as well as to swap tall avian tales with their peers. There is shelter in case of inclement weather and young people are encouraged if accompanied by an adult companion.

RVAS is seeking volunteers to lead each session. The process is easy and takes just a few minutes of preparation and data recording before and after the hour long observation session. For more information or to volunteer contact Mary Pat Power at marypat@ashlandhome.net about Ashland PFW or Wendy Gere at wendy.gere@gmail.com about Coyote Trails PFW.

Project FeederWatch schedule for 2017 – 2018:



Coyote Trails (Medford) PFW

2931 S. Pacific Highway, Medford

Thursdays: Noon – 1:00 pm; open to the public
Nov 16, Nov 30, Dec 14, Dec 28, Jan 11, Jan 25,
Feb 8, Feb 22, Mar 8, March 22

Fridays: Noon – 1:00 pm; open to the public
Nov 17, Dec 1, Dec 15, Dec 29, Jan 12, Jan 26,
Feb 9, Feb 23, Mar 9, Mar 23

North Mountain Park (Ashland) PFW

620 N. Mountain Ave., Ashland

Fridays: 9:00 – 10:00 am; counts done by one person;
not advertised to the public
Nov 10, Nov 24, Dec 8, Dec 22, Jan 5, Jan 19,
Feb 2, Feb 16, Mar 2, Mar 16

Saturdays: 9:00 – 10:00 am; open to the public
Nov 11, Nov 25, Dec 9, Dec 23, Jan 6, Jan 20,
Feb 3, Feb 17, Mar 3, Mar 17

Save the Date: RVAS Holiday Party

When: Saturday, December 2nd at 6:00 pm

Where: Lidgate Hall, Congregational Church, Medford

Come and Enjoy an evening of food, festivity and friends, as we raise money to fund bird habitat improvement projects in the Rogue Valley.

Potluck Dinner: Bring a dish to share and your own place setting. We will provide non-alcoholic drinks and decoration. If you bring wine, please remember to be discreet and take the bottle home with you.

Entertainment: Jim Livaudais will again show us a selection of his recent travel photographs and The Warblers are planning to fly in again and, for small cash inducements, will entertain us with avian melodies.

Live Auction: Pepper Trail will be at his most entertaining over a variety of items and experiences for your bidding pleasure. Gift certificates, chocolates, wines, bird art, oil paintings of ducks by Joan Brown, specialty field trips, and more are in the works.

More Member Contributions: We welcome contributions that you might enjoy donating. One idea is Share a Habitat. Invite a group to your home or a favorite birdy spot. Food could be included by partnering up with another donor. Specialty baskets or hand-crafted items will also be enthusiastically welcomed. Specifics to follow!

To inquire about:

- ♦ helping with the collecting of greenery in advance
- ♦ decorating the tables at 4:00 p.m.
- ♦ assisting with the pot-luck yummies at 5:30 p.m.
- ♦ helping with the payments at the end of the evening
- ♦ being part of a quick clean up crew at the closure

please call **Sooney Viani** at (541)301-1732 or
email her at **sooneyviani@gmail.com**

Bird-Centric Events from Around the Region

PRESENTATIONS AND WALKS WITH WILD BIRDS UNLIMITED

Wintering Birds of the Rogue Valley

Shannon Rio will once again be our speaker and will thrill us with pictures and anecdotes about the birds that spend the winter with us here in the Rogue Valley. Many birds do not migrate away but rather stay here all year long, making every month a good time to enjoy watching birds. Photos and fun facts will be the focus of the presentation.

DATE: Wednesday, October 18

TIME: 6:00—7:00 pm

PLACE: 961 Medford Center, Medford

COST: Free

PRESENTER Shannon Rio is a wildlife educator and president of the board of the Klamath Bird Observatory. She loves teaching about birds using beautiful photography, fun facts, and stories.

ASHLAND PARKS AND RECREATION CLASSES AND WORKSHOPS

Journey through Sacred Place: Birding Arizona

Rather than being a travelogue, this presentation explores a mindful approach to being in a beautiful place where biodiversity includes dramatic and varied landscapes, a high density of birds and fascinating people. The Chiricahua Mountains of Southeast Arizona will be the primary focal point of the pictures and stories of this presentation. *Please register online at ashland.or.us/register or call the Nature Center at 541-488-6606.*

DATE: Thursday, October 5

TIME: 4:30 —7:00 pm

PLACE: North Mountain Park, 620 N. Mountain Ave, Ashland

COST: \$15

INSTRUCTOR Shannon Rio

Wildlife Rehabilitation: Keeping Wild Birds Wild

This presentation will feature photos and stories about the birds at several rehabilitation centers in our area. Learn about the people who are committed to bird rehabilitation and to the process and work involved in the rescue of birds who are orphaned, injured or sick, with the animals eventually returned to the wild world of nature. Participants will meet ambassador birds: those birds who were unable to return to the wild and now are used to educate the public about this work. *Please pre-register online at ashland.or.us/register or call the Nature Center at 541-488-6606.*

DATE: Thursday, October 12

TIME: 6:30 —8:00 pm

PLACE: North Mountain Park, 620 N. Mountain Ave, Ashland

COST: \$15

INSTRUCTOR Shannon Rio

Rogue Valley Audubon Society Membership

If you are not an RVAS Member, we invite you to help support our local activities by becoming a member and participating in society activities. We hope you're aware of the many activities of the Audubon Society, both locally and nationally, that help to further the cause of bird conservation and public education in southern Oregon. Member dues, along with donations and income from local fund-raising events, support our activities and programs, such as:

Educational and social membership meetings (free and open to members and the public)

The Chat newsletter

Website (www.roguevalleyaudubon.org)

Birding forum for posting sightings and active locations

Monthly field trips and bird walks

Educational programs for students and adults

Monitoring of regional conservation issues

Work with local wildlife managers to improve access and bird habitats

Bird counts for national species censuses

Support for local research projects

A one-year family membership costs \$20. To become an RVAS member, please complete the form below and send with your check for \$20 or go to www.roguevalleyaudubon.org and sign up with your PayPal account.

RVAS Membership Form

Please fill in your information:

Name(s): _____

Street: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Email: _____ **Phone #** _____

Rogue Valley Audubon Society will not share your information with any other organization.

- ☐ *Include my email on the RVAS list for notification of activities and posting of The Chat newsletter.*
- ☐ *Send a monthly paper copy of The Chat newsletter (I don't have Internet access).*
- ☐ *Please contact me about volunteering for society activities (see RVAS website for list of opportunities).*

Donation

- ☐ *I am enclosing an additional donation of \$ ____.*
- ☐ *I wish my donation to be anonymous.*

Please mail this form with your \$20 check payable to Rogue Valley Audubon Society, along with any additional contribution you wish to make, to:

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**Please send me your
bird photos at
chateditor@gmail.com
Thanks!**

—The Editor



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THE CHAT

Newsletter of the
ROGUE VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY
Post Office Box 8597
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Sign up to receive easy notification of Chapter activities

Your Audubon Chapter wants to be sure you are aware of upcoming field trips, chapter meetings, the most recent edition of *The Chat*, and other items we post on-line. E-mail RogueValleyAudubon@gmail.com and ask to be added to the e-mail notification list. And be assured, we will never share your e-mail address with any other organizations.

