

# The Chat

Number 388

May 2012

A voice for education and conservation in the natural world

Rogue Valley Audubon Society

[www.roguevalleyaudubon.org](http://www.roguevalleyaudubon.org)

*Deadline for submissions for the next month's issue is the 20th of each month*



Tuesday, May 22, 5:00 pm  
Annual Bird Walk and Potluck  
TouVelle State Park on Table Rock Rd.

## Lithia Dipper Watch

Plan to attend the annual bird walk and potluck dinner at TouVelle Park. The bird walk along the Rogue River begins at 5 pm with dinner starting at 6 pm. Bring a dish to share, your own plate and utensils and plan to have fun. Lemonade and ice tea will be provided. There is a State Park fee for parking, or is free if you have a park pass.



To get to TouVelle State Park, see map below.



Thanks to all who participated in the Annual Dipper Walk led by Bob Quaccia.

Lithia Dipper Watch is a study of the nesting behavior of American Dipper in Ashland, OR, along a stretch of Ashland Creek that flows through Lithia Park.

The study combines the expertise of professional biologists along with the dedicated efforts of many volunteers.

Follow the efforts of the biologists and volunteers on the Lithia Dipper Watch website at <https://sites.google.com/site/lithiadipperwatch/>.

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## President's Column

After three years as President of RVAS I am writing my last president's column for *The Chat*. In these three years I got to know some very nice people and learned to recognize a few more birds. Although sometimes things got a bit hectic, all in all it has been a very enjoyable, satisfying, and educational experience.

Getting down to business, this is my last chance to exhort you to volunteer for an open RVAS position. There's only one open right now, so I hope that you won't let this opportunity slip by. RVAS needs someone to replace Lynda Stevenson as the RVAS publicity person when Lynda Stevenson steps down on June 30. If you're willing to step forward—and I hope that at least one of you will be—please call Lynda at 541-858-7048 to find out what this position entails.

By the time that this issue of *The Chat* comes out, I suspect that Birdathon (don't forget to pledge or donate!) and the Master Gardener's Fair will be over. By that time RVAS will also have elected three new Board members. In my four years on the Board, I have been very impressed by the amount of work that our Board members do—pro bono—on behalf of RVAS. I am sure that our new Board members will fit into this tradition.

I have also been impressed with how generous you, the members of RVAS, have been in providing RVAS with the financial support that we need to keep operating and to carry out our education and conservation activities in Jackson County and beyond. Thank you all.

Regretfully, I will miss the annual RVAS potluck picnic in Touvelle State Park on May 22. However, I urge you to participate in this fun event—no fundraising involved!

I look forward to seeing you again in the fall at chapter meetings and on field trips and bird walks. Thank you for your support and friendship during my tenure as President of RVAS.

Alex Maksymowicz

**Field Notes: The Changing Seasons**  
*Compiled by Stewart Janes*

Okay so winter came in March and early April, but the weather turned warm just in time to welcome the wave of spring migrants that arrived on April 20 plus or minus a day or two. Right on schedule! Enjoy the show for the next month as Mexico gives up its winter residents.

Here are some first reports for migrants in the Rogue Valley to date:

Northern Rough-winged Swallow	3/20	HF
Common Yellowthroat	3/30	HF
Barn Swallow	4/6	FE
Western Kingbird	4/9	HS
Black-throated Gray Warbler	4/13	TW
Chipping sparrow	4/13	KC-S
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	4/14	FL
House Wren	4/17	SJ
Cassin's Vireo	4/17	BH
MacGillivray's Warbler	4/17	HF
Bullock's Oriole	4/17	MR
Western Tanager	4/19	RB
Vaux's Swift	4/19	SJ
Nashville Warbler	4/20	ES,KM
Ash-throated Flycatcher	4/20	RB
Yellow Warbler	4/21	GHr
Wilson's Warbler	4/21	GHr
Calliope Hummingbird	4/21	JB,SB

Waterbird migration is also in full swing. For waterfowl it is actually beyond its peak. **Northern Shovelers**, and **Green-winged Teal** are disappearing quickly as of 4/20. The last **American Wigeon** I saw was on 4/17 though I'm sure a few stragglers remain. Flocks of **Greater White-fronted Geese** continued to be seen flying over Jackson County.

A stray **Ross's Goose** was at the Kirtland Ponds on 4/11 (RB,NB) and a solitary **Snow Goose** at Denman on 4/13 (SJ).

**Northern Pintail** pretty much bypass Jackson County, but one was at Agate Lake on 4/13 (HF). **Ring-necked Ducks** are about the last of the ducks to clear out, and can still be found in diminished numbers as of 4/20.

**Common Loons** are at Howard Prairie, Lost Creek Reservoir and the Medco A Pond (NB,DA). If you want to hear them calling this is your best chance. Go quick before they clear out. **White Pelicans** have been at Agate Lake since 4/13 (HF). A Clark's Grebe was there on the same day (HF). A couple of **Eared Grebes** have been at Emigrant Lake from 4/13 through 4/18 (FL,HF), and a **Horned Grebe** was present at Emigrant Lake on 4/4 (HF).

A rather tardy **Great Egret** was observed flying over Ashland Pond on 4/17 (HF). They should be gone by now.

Shorebird migration is heating up. Sightings start on 3/19 with **Long-billed Curlews** over the Siskiyou Pass (HF). **Greater Yellowlegs** were reported starting 4/7 at the Kirtland Ponds and Table Rock Road with as many as 20 seen at a time (NB,FE,BH). **Dunlin** and **Least Sandpipers** were at the Kirtland Ponds on 4/10 (NB). The four **Black-necked Stilts** between 4/10 and 4/15) at the Kirtland Ponds were unusual (NB,RB,JT).

**Townsend's Warblers** (at least two) continued to scour the conifers at Southern Oregon University (SJ). Additional birds were observed in Lithia Park on 4/9 (HF) and in Medford on 4/20 (RB). The last sighting is probably part of the spring migration.

Some years we don't see **Evening Grosbeaks** in the valley, but this year they came, and a bit early, too. The first were reported on 3/24 (GHr) and they are still here as of 4/21.

*Field notes continued on page 6*

The Conservation Column

By Pepper Trail

**House Passes Radical Anti-Wildlife Bill Disguised as "Sportsmen's Heritage Act"**

On April 17, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the outrageously misnamed "Sportsmen's Heritage Act" (H.R. 4089), which would prevent the EPA from protecting millions of birds and other animals from lead poisoning by hunting ammunition left in the wild; would weaken critical aspects of the Wilderness Act, and would hamstring the President's ability to designate National Monuments under the Antiquities Act. The bill, approved by a vote of 274-146 and likely to be blocked by the Senate, now becomes fodder for anti-environmental riders that Congress periodically attaches to appropriations legislation. Among those voting for the bill were Oregon Representatives Walden, DeFazio, and Schrader.

H.R. 4089 seeks three fundamental roll-backs of conservation laws. First, it would exempt toxic lead in ammunition and fishing equipment from regulation under the Toxic Substances Control Act, despite the fact that affordable, effective nontoxic alternatives exist for lead ammunition and lead sinkers for all hunting and fishing activities. As The Center for Biological Diversity (CBD) noted in a statement, "This bill actually jeopardizes the health of hunters and prevents the federal government from acting to prevent the needless lead poisoning of our wildlife."

Second, H.R. 4089 would undermine long-standing federal environmental law that provides important protections for America's public lands, exempting decisions on hunting and fishing from environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act — including decisions to curtail hunting and fishing in favor of energy development. It would prevent the Bureau of Land Management from protecting national monuments from shooting vandalism.

Third, it would allow the import of polar bear "trophies" from Canada under newly created exceptions to federal law. The declining polar bear is a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act, and is also protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act because of climate change, overharvesting and disease.

"This bill should be renamed the 'Sportsmen's Death Knell Act,' " said Bill Snape, senior counsel for CBD. "It flies in the face of traditional American hunting values to conserve — not needlessly kill — our game. Instead of upholding values dear to many hunters, it degrades wildlife habitat on public lands and mandates continued use of known poisonous lead bullets and sinkers that are unhealthy for hunters and anglers as well as our wildlife. There are powerful reasons we banned toxic lead from gasoline, plumbing and paint; now it's time to finally rid this toxin from our bullets and fishing sinkers."

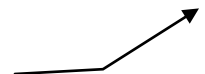
Secondary lead poisoning from spent lead ammunition kills millions of birds annually. More than 150 organizations in 38 states are pressuring the EPA for federal rules requiring use of nontoxic bullets and shot for hunting and shooting sports to prevent lead poisoning of wildlife such as bald eagles, endangered condors, loons and swans, and to protect public health.

Recent scientific studies show that hunters have higher lead levels in their bloodstream, and more associated health problems, than the public at large. Lead poisoning can cause miscarriage, premature birth, learning disabilities and nervous system disorders.

**Background on Lead**

The Toxic Substances Control Act is the federal law that regulates toxic substances; it allows the EPA to regulate any chemical substance for a particular use; the lead used in shot and bullets is defined as a toxic "chemical substance" under the Act.

Conservation Column continues



Although the EPA currently claims lead bullets and shot fall under an exception that exempts regulation of items subject to an Internal Revenue Service section 4181 excise tax imposed on sales of shotgun shells and bullet cartridges; the IRS itself has ruled that section 4181 "does not apply to sales of separate parts of ammunition such as cartridge cases, primers, bullets, and powder." A House report on the legislative history and intent of the Act states it "does not exclude from regulation under the bill chemical components of ammunition which could be hazardous because of their chemical properties."

Despite being banned in 1992 for hunting waterfowl, spent lead shotgun pellets from other hunting uses continue to be frequently ingested by swans, cranes, ducks, geese, loons and other waterfowl. Many birds also consume lead-based fishing tackle lost in lakes and rivers, often with deadly consequences. Birds and animals are poisoned when scavenging on carcasses containing lead-bullet fragments or ingesting spent lead-shot pellets, which contaminate popular hunting grounds at high densities.

Spent lead from hunting is a widespread killer of more than 75 species of birds and nearly 50 mammals. More than 500 scientific papers have documented the dangers to wildlife from lead exposure. Lead ammunition also poses health risks to people when bullets fragment in shot game and spread throughout the meat humans eat. Studies using radiographs show that numerous imperceptible, dust-sized particles of lead can infect meat up to a foot and a half away from the bullet wound, causing a greater health risk to humans who consume lead-shot shot game than previously thought.

State health agencies have had to recall venison donated to feed the hungry because of lead contamination. Nearly 10 million hunters, their families and low-income beneficiaries of venison donations may be at risk.

### **Anti-Wilderness Provisions**

HR 4089 would also undermine America's 1964 Wilderness Act, by allowing noisy, polluting, and destructive off-road vehicles into currently protected areas. HR 4089 would restrict the President's ability to declare new National Monuments, and to protect special places from reckless development schemes. The bill states that no national monument designated by presidential proclamation shall be valid until the Governor and the legislature of each State within the boundaries of the proposed national monument have approved of such designation - despite the fact that presidential declarations concern only federal lands, not lands under state or private authority. Starting with then-President Teddy Roosevelt, National Monuments have been an important tool used by Republican and Democratic Presidents alike to safeguard our nation's natural heritage.

HR 4089 would bypass key environmental safeguards and could open up millions of acres of currently protected land to reckless oil and gas development. Such development has devastated habitat for elk, antelope, mule deer and other wildlife populations in the Rocky Mountains, as well as polluting countless rivers and streams. In an analysis of H.R. 4089, the sportsmen's group Backcountry Hunters and Anglers concluded "While hunters and anglers support numerous parts of this bill, there are specific details that could result in enormous negative consequences for world-renowned hunting and fishing destinations, conservation, and public lands fish and wildlife habitat."

In the light of these "enormous negative consequences" for our wildlife and wildlands, Congressmen Walden, DeFazio, and Schrader owe their Oregon constituents an explanation for their support of H.R. 4089 - and Senators Wyden and Merkley need to hear from us to assure that this terrible bill is rejected by the Senate.

*-- This column drew on information provided by the Center for Biological Diversity, Oregon Wild, and Backcountry Hunters and Anglers.*

**Ashland Breeding Bird Count**  
**Saturday, June 2, 2012**

The Audubon Christmas Counts, which go back more than a century, provide a rich database for research on many aspects of avian biology, and are now proving invaluable to those investigating climate change. I have long wondered why there is no breeding bird count to complement the winter one. Everyone I have discussed this with lately has been very positive, including John Bullock and Harry Fuller, who set up the Ashland CBC two years ago. So John and I are planning to set up a June count (Harry cannot participate as he is busy throughout June). It will be the same circle as was used for the Ashland CBC, and will take place on Sat. June 2 from sunrise to 5PM. We figure that early morning will be the most productive time, and after 5PM (close to the longest day of the year) both the counters and the birds will be ready to quit. So we will find a supper/count summary restaurant in Ashland and tally the results over beer and a restorative supper.

If you wish to participate please email me at [bmassey@mac.com](mailto:bmassey@mac.com). We would be delighted if past area coordinators would take on their same jobs and lend their experience as leaders. And if you want to spread the word to more birders who might like to participate, please do. This count will be more time consuming than a CBC because there will be more accessible roads plus more daylight hours. We have 10 areas planned and would like at least 6 birders for each.

This should be a nifty birding experience. We'll be looking for signs of nesting as well as counting birds. And maybe there won't be so many worries about the weather! Please let me know if you are interested, can participate, want to be a count leader, or if I have missed people who should be notified.

Barbara Massey  
[bmassey@mac.com](mailto:bmassey@mac.com)

*Field Notes continued from page 3*

**Cassin's Finches** have been more common this year at the valley floor. This month birds were in Medford and Ashland from 4/6-4/12 (AC,ES). The last **Varied Thrush** report was on 4/6 (ES).

Other sightings of note this month include **White-headed Woodpeckers** nesting 2.5 miles down the Howard Prairie Dam Access road on 4/21 (DA), an unusual Bank Swallow sighting at Emigrant Lake on 4/16 (FL), and a singing **White-throated Sparrow** at Ashland Pond on 4/10 (HF).

Thanks to this month's contributors including Dick Ashford, Norm Barrett, Linda Browning, Ralph Browning, John Bullock, Stephanie Bullock, Kate Cleland-Sipfle, Alan Contreras, Forrest English, Harry Fuller, Jim Harleman, Bob Hunter, Gretchen Hunter, Gaylene Hurley, Douglas Kirkpatrick, Mo Lolandi, Frank Lospalutto, Kate McKenzie, Maggi Rackley, Gwyneth Ragsosine, Eric Setterberg, Jeff Tufts, and Teresa Wicks. Deadline for contributions to the field notes in the summer edition of The Chat is June 15.



### **Rogue Valley Bird Day, May 12**

Rogue Valley Bird Day will be taking place on Saturday, May 12 from 8:00am until noon at North Mountain Park Nature Center in Ashland.

This is a wonderful, fun educational event for all ages in which RVAS has been a strong partner for several years. In addition to our regular guided bird walks (which include a stop at the banding station), we would also like to offer a couple of junior bird walks for children under 10. We have some "special" binoculars for them to use. If you are interested in leading a small group of kids on a short guided walk that morning, please contact me. Find out more about the event by visiting [www.RogueValleyBirdDay.net](http://www.RogueValleyBirdDay.net).

Linda Chesney, Stewardship Coordinator  
North Mountain Park Nature Center  
620 N MT Ave, Ashland, Oregon 97520  
541-488-6606

### **RVAS Calendar of Events**

- May 5: Birdathon**
- May 5/6: Master Gardener Fair**
- May 12: Rogue Valley Bird Day**
- May 19: Celebrate Together Green**
- May 22: Annual potluck and bird walk at Tou Velle State Park**
- June 6: First Wednesday Bird Walk—Denman**

### **Celebrate TogetherGreen!**

**May 19, 2012**

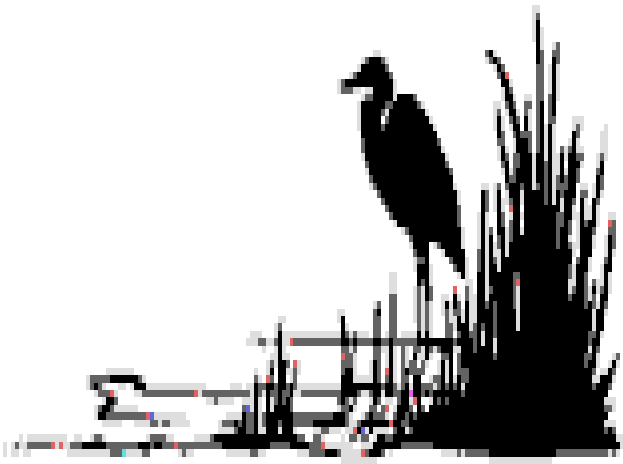
**Spencer Street, Medford**

**(At Siskiyou BLVD and 2th ST)**

**11 AM -- 1 PM**

A walk and Talk to see what 700 volunteers can do in 2000+ hours while learning about flora, fauna, riparian restoration, hydrology -- all in the heart of downtown Medford.

RVAS is a primary partner in Together Green, a grant from National Audubon Society and funded in part by Toyota. See what YOU have accomplished in 8 months and meet the other partners: RVCOG, Bear Creek Watershed Council, Logos Charter School, Lomakatsi and the Medford Tree Committee.



## Upcoming Field Trips

The Klamath Bird Observatory offers a number of field trips throughout the Spring, throughout the Rogue Valley, including the following:

May 2: Birding 101 at North Mountain Park

May 12: Bird walk to Scott Valley, CA

May 12: International Migratory Bird Day

Contact KBO for details on these and other events at 541-201-0866

From the Siskiyou Field Institute

### May 12: Amphibians and Reptiles of the Klamath-Siskiyou

Explore the amazing diversity of amphibians and reptiles found in the Klamath-Siskiyou bioregion. The day will begin with a classroom session to help students learn to identify the many species of "herps" found in our region, and to learn about species distribution, ecology and conservation. Then we will head into the field to visit a variety of habitats found within striking distance of the Deer Creek Center to observe these creatures in their natural environment. Tuition for this class is \$50.00 and advance registration is required.

### May 18-20: Botanizing the Klamath River Canyon with Wendell Wood

Explore the botanical diversity of the Klamath River canyon while staying at the lovely Sandy Bar Ranch in Orleans, CA. This course will provide outdoor workshops in plant identification, as students hike and explore the different habitats found in the canyon. Additional evening programs will discuss plant identification techniques, the natural history of many local plant species and ethnobotany. Class tuition covers lodging and some meals. Enrollment is limited so register early. Tuition for the class is \$250.00, and advance registration is required.

### June 9 and 10: Intermediate/Advanced Birding with Shawneen Finnegan and David Irons

This class, led by nationally renowned birders Finnegan and Irons, teaches the finer points of bird identification—both visual and vocal—with special emphasis on those birds and groups of birds that present ID challenges in the field: flycatchers, warblers, sparrows, raptors, etc. In addition, we will spend time discussing the life histories, plumage and molts, habitat preferences, and species distribution of the birds we encounter during the two day class. Recommended for anyone looking to sharpen their birding skills. Tuition for this class is \$125.00 and advance registration is required.

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## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Because Rogue Valley Audubon Society is an active chapter of the National Audubon Society, everyone who joins NAS is automatically enrolled as a member of RVAS as well. We welcome the following new NAS/RVAS members: David W. Bone, Cindy Degroft, Frances McGovern, James Rockwell, Amy Cook, Mary Vilas, Barbara Bidwell, Florence Hedrick, Matthew C. Morey, Sue Webb, Barbara Bragg Latham, Genita Hamilton, Patrick Hendriksen, Sherrill Massey, Madie Yardley, M. Kingsley, Nancy Devos, John Corson, Hans Doelman, Lois Bernard, Jeanette L. Tate, Thomas Fealy, Linda Sussman, Jean Roorda, Phyllis Trussler, Cheryl Miller, and Elizabeth Sarthou.

Please join us at our annual picnic on May 22nd at TouVelle State Park, come to our chapter meetings next fall, join us on our field trips and bird walks, and let us now how you would like to be involved.

You will be mailed a copy of *The Chat* every month (except July-August) until the end of the year. *The Chat* will always be available on-line at <http://roguevalleyaudubon.org/>. If you would like to continue to receive a copy of *The Chat* in the mail and at no charge, you need to let us know. Call any of the officers or Board Members listed in this issue, or send an e-mail to [roguevalleyaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:roguevalleyaudubon@gmail.com).

Welcome to RVAS!

Alex Maksymowicz, President

## Rogue Valley Audubon Society Membership

Members of the National Audubon Society are automatically enrolled as members of RVAS. If you are not a member of NAS you can still be a member of Rogue Valley Audubon Society. To join, please send a check for \$20.00 annual dues to RVAS, P.O. Box 8597, Medford, OR 97501. Include your name, address, e-mail address and (optional) phone number. If you have any questions about membership, please contact membership chair Bill Hering at 541-488-5886 or [bh@ashlandnet.net](mailto:bh@ashlandnet.net).

Do you have a favorite retailer or service provider? Is there a restaurant you would like to support? You can help them succeed while supporting RVAS. Consider using your personal contact to suggest they buy an advertisement in *The Chat*. For as little as \$100. per year our members can be reminded that a retailer or restaurant supports RVAS every time they see *The Chat*. For details, contact our Treasurer, Kathy Simonsen at [simonsen@mind.net](mailto:simonsen@mind.net).

# ROGUE VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

## THE CHAT

### Newsletter of the ROGUE VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

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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. Send an e-mail [RogueValleyAudubon@gmail.com](mailto: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.

### **MONTHLY BIRD WALK WITH MURRAY ORR**

**First Wednesday Each Month: Little Butte Creek Walk.** Meet at 8:30 a.m. on TouVelle Road in the northeast section of Denman Wildlife Area near White City. Leader: Murray Orr 857-9050. Please contact Murray if you are willing to join him in organizing these bird walks. He needs volunteers to help him open and close the gate and record observed species when he is not available.

