

The Chat

Number 405

April, 2014

A voice for education and conservation in the natural world

Rogue Valley Audubon Society

www.roguevalleyaudubon.org

Deadline for submissions for the May 2014 issue is April 20.



APRIL PROGRAM MEEING, TUESDAY, APRIL 22 —7 PM.

THE MOST EXOTIC AND UNUSUAL
BIRDS IN THE WORLD—Presented
by John and Joy Taylor

John and Joy Taylor have gathered a collection of photos and information on exciting and little known avian life from around the globe. Their presentation features live narration and reveals little-known facts about such birds as the Bassian Thrush which finds its food by flatulence, the smelliest bird, and the Cuban Tody which is the most voracious bird known, as well as much more.

John and Joy have searched for new birds in Hawaii, Canada, the US, Central America and Egypt. They have been members of both the Rogue Valley and Siskiyou Audubon Societies for more than 14 years. John is a graduate of the Laboratory of Ornithology at Cornell with a degree in Bird Biology.



Chapter Program meetings are held at 1801 E. Jackson St., Medford, in Lidgate Hall of the Medford Congregational Church.

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President's Column

Rogue Valley Audubon Society is one of 465 National Audubon Society chapters, serving over 800 NAS members in Jackson County. I mention this because the campaigning for election to the NAS Board of Directors, as well as our own process of nominating and electing RVAS Directors, is well underway. You are welcome to participate.

RVAS is in the NAS Pacific Flyway - North Region, which includes Oregon, Washington and Alaska. There are two very qualified nominees for the position which represents our Region. Jack Doyle is a retired engineer and manager of engineers in a large technology corporation. He has served as a director on several non-profit organization boards including seven years at the Sitka Center for Art and Ecology, ten years at the Cascade Head Music Festival, and seven years as President of the Audubon Society of Lincoln City. Art Wang is Vice President of the Tahoma Audubon Society, and will become President in May. Most of his career has been in Washington State government, in which he served as elected State Representative for seven terms, Chief Administrative Law Judge and Judge on the Washington Court of Appeals.

Your RVAS Board of Directors will discuss these two candidates at their April 3 meeting, and determine who RVAS will support. If you would like to let your preferences be known, please contact any RVAS Director; all are listed in the column to the left.

We will elect new members to our own Board at our April 22th Chapter meeting. The Board sets policy, monitors the budget, and oversees chapter operations, including our education and conservation programs. It's an important responsibility, and a very rewarding effort. Please consider nominating yourself or someone you think would serve RVAS well. I urge you to call Nominations Chair Mike Guest at 541-857-6334, to discuss what's involved, and how you can contribute to the Audubon cause.

Good Birding! -- Bill Hering

Field Notes: The Changing Seasons:

Compiled by Stewart Janes

Spring weather is here, but the birds are holding to their own schedule. They know it can turn in a heartbeat. An **Orange-crowned Warbler** was at the feeder of Carol Hannah, probably a spring migrant. The **Rufous Hummingbird** on Sardine Creek on 2/22 is right about on schedule (MR). It's fun to watch the Oregon Birders on Line postings. The Rufous Hummers work their way up the coast first. Then they show up in Josephine County, then western Jackson County and finally throughout. The wave of migrants slowly pushes its way east as it pushes north. The same is true for many other spring migrants.

The first **Osprey** was reported on 3/11 (RK). A second followed on 3/15 (JT).

Tree and **Violet-green Swallows** have been building in numbers. The iridescent swallow colors were bright in the afternoon sun at the Avenue G Pond on 3/20. In addition to the abundant **Tree Swallows**, there were two bright **Barn Swallows**, a **Northern Rough-winged Swallow** and a **Cliff Swallow**. Add to that the bright male **Cinnamon Teal** first reported on 2/27 (JT), and it was quite a satisfying first day of spring.

Waterfowl migration is picking up speed. **Canvasback**, **Ring-necked Duck**, **Hooded Merganser**, and **Bufflehead** numbers are diminishing but the **American Wigeon** are still at most, but not all, of their winter ponds.

Many have noted the spring movement of geese. Two **Snow Geese** tanked up on grass from 2/18-3/14 along with 5 **Greater White-fronted Geese** on the pond along Coleman Creek Road south of Medford. A far more impressive appearance of 500 **Snow Geese** was seen over Butte Falls on 3/2 (RN). Two hundred **Greater White-fronted Geese** were at the Kirtland Ponds on 3/7 (RN). Twenty five remained on the Boise-Cascade Pond in Medford as of 3/20. Small numbers of **Cackling Geese** have also been scattered about the valley in the first three

weeks of March (RN,SJ). A family of **Tundra Swans** was still present along Table Rock Road as of 2/25 (MM,LM).

Other waterbirds are moving, too. No one reported the flocks of **Lesser Sandhill Cranes** passing over the north county this spring, but the **Greater Sandhill Cranes** have arrived on the Dead Indian Plateau as of 3/16 (DA). Gulls have returned to the county after a mid-winter absence. **Ring-billed** and a few **California Gulls** were at the Kirtland Ponds and the Boise-Cascade Pond beginning in early March (RN,SJ). The **Mew Gull** that appeared at the Kirtland Ponds on 3/17 was unusual for the county (BH). They are usually confined to the coast.

Shorebirds are also beginning to move. Twenty seven **Greater Yellowlegs** were at the Kirtland Ponds on 3/17 (BH). **Dunlin** were present on 2/15 and 3/17 (BH) and a **Least Sandpiper** joined the party on 3/18 (JT). A **Horned Grebe** was at Agate Lake on 2/27 (JT).

The visiting **Red-tailed Hawks** began moving out in late February but the wintering **Rough-legged Hawks** were seen as late as 3/1 (EA). **Prairie Falcons** were seen on 2/18 and 2/23 undoubtedly on their way north and east (MM,LM,SJ). A **Say's Phoebe** was seen on 3/4 also heading north and or east (MM,LM). **Northern Shrike** were seen on 2/18 and 3/1 (MM,LM,EA) but will be leaving soon.

The **White Stork** that leaves its Applegate home to wander the valley and points farther afield made an appearance at Whetstone Pond on 3/19 (RM).

Now for the oddballs. A male **Great-tailed Grackle** appeared on the property of Bob and Gretchen Hunter on 3/10. It's almost to the point that they never leave. A **Costa's Hummingbird** was in Ashland for a few days beginning 2/14 but proved camera shy.

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The Conservation Column

by Pepper Trail

The Future of Our Forests

Regular readers of this column are familiar with the "O&C Lands," over 2 million acres of federal forests in western Oregon managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). For decades, these lands were heavily logged under a formula that provided generous support for the budgets of what have come to be called Oregon's "timber dependent counties," including Jackson, Josephine, Douglas, Coos, and Curry. Due to changing economics, timber over-harvest, and stricter environmental laws, this source of revenue has greatly diminished over the past 20 years, contributing to budget crises in counties that still have some of the lowest property tax rates in the state. Elected officials are under intense pressure to restore this revenue, even though economic analyses make it clear that timber harvest will never again be able to "balance the books," no matter how much environmental regulations are loosened.

In previous columns, I've mentioned the two major legislative proposals to change the management of the O&C lands in western Oregon. These are the "Restoring Healthy Forests for Healthy Communities Act" (H.R. 1526) by Oregon Representatives DeFazio, Schrader, and Walden; and Senator Ron Wyden's "Oregon and California Lands Act of 2013" (S. 1784). In addition to these, the BLM is conducting its own management plan revisions for the O&C lands. This effort is commonly called WOPR Jr., to distinguish it from BLM's original and highly controversial Western Oregon Plan Revision, which was developed during the Bush administration and thrown out by President Obama shortly after taking office.

Needless to say, this is a complex issue. I'll simplify things by discussing only Wyden's Senate bill and the WOPR Jr. Although a version of DeFazio's bill was passed by the House last fall, it appears to have little chance in the Senate, where the focus is on Wyden's bill. Moreover, the Obama administration has promised to veto the DeFazio bill if it came to the President's desk, due to its transfer of most of the federal O&C lands to a state trust.

The Wyden Bill

An excellent summary of the problems with Wyden's proposal is provided by two scientific groups, the Society for Conservation Biology and the American Fisheries Society. In testimony before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee (<http://fisheries.org/afs-and-scb-statement-for-the-oregon-and-california-lands-act-of-2013>), the organizations raised serious concerns that the Oregon and California Lands Act of 2013 (S. 1784) abandons science-based management of public lands. S.1784 is intended to double logging on O&C lands. It roughly divides 2.1 million acres of BLM lands into "Forestry Emphasis Areas" where logging will be the primary use and "Conservation Emphasis Areas" where a portion of older forests are removed from intensive logging. Timber-dependent counties would be guaranteed about 65% of the revenue from increased logging, but the projected funding will not come close to addressing the budget shortfalls facing some counties.

Further, the bill's ecological impacts have been greatly underestimated as reflected in the reviews by scientists.

"Doubling logging on BLM lands will elevate extinction risks to threatened wildlife, pollute streams with sediment run off, and increase global warming pollution," said Dominick DellaSala, President of the Society for Conservation Biology (SCB) North America Section, and Chief Scientist of the Ashland-based Geos Institute. "At a time when President Barack Obama is calling on federal agencies to do more to stem runaway climate change, this bill moves Oregon forests from being part of the solution to part of the problem."

The societies found six major scientific flaws in the legislation, including that it:

- Eliminates or weakens protective provisions of the scientifically based Northwest Forest Plan;
- Re-writes and weakens science-based recovery actions for threatened species, reducing protections under the Endangered Species Act;
- Increases habitat fragmentation and cumulative impacts to fish and wildlife by requiring the functional equivalent of clearcuts over vast acreages;
- Relies on risky, untested "ecological forestry" provisions in the habitat of threatened species to generate funding for county budgets;
- Provides insufficient funds for rigorous effectiveness monitoring; and elevates carbon dioxide emissions by promoting extensive logging.

Robert Hughes, President of the American Fisheries Society, also questioned provisions of the Wyden plan designed to shrink buffers around streams currently protected from logging under the Aquatic Conservation Strategy of the Northwest Forest Plan. Under Wyden's bill, streamside buffers are initially reduced by half from current levels in logging zones, and buffers could be further reduced after a watershed analysis. Logging is allowed within the reduced riparian buffers.

"Water quality and stream-side areas may be recovering from decades of logging because of the science-based Aquatic Conservation Strategy that this legislation abandons," Hughes said. "With a changing climate and even greater logging on private lands, the science supports increased Northwest Forest Plan stream protections, not narrower buffers."

The Northwest Forest Plan was established in 1994 by President Bill Clinton to implement science-based management on 25 million acres of America's public lands. The plan has been widely endorsed by scientists and reaffirmed as the best available science for recovering fish and wildlife dependent on older forests.

It is estimated that approximately 200,000 acres of older forests currently protected by the Northwest Forest Plan would be shifted into logging, including clearcutting, under S.1784. The Societies concluded that such risky changes to the Northwest Forest Plan will intensify conflicts over threatened species on both federal and nonfederal lands, because private landowners, for instance, rely on protections afforded to threatened species on federal lands so they can log in the habitat of threatened species.

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Spring Fever and Birdathon 2014

In case you haven't noticed, Spring has arrived, ahead of schedule. Many of you are no doubt dusting off garden trowels and sorting through seed packets, and keeping an eye out for those first spring migrants. Birdathon 2014 is right around the corner, so now is the time to finalize your teams and gather sponsors. Pledge forms are included in this month's Chat; you can also download the forms from the RVAS website or pick some up at the next Chapter meeting.

This year's Birdathon will take place on Saturday, May 3. The event technically begins at 6:00 pm Friday and concludes 24 hours later. We'll top it off with a celebration and re-cap at Jackson Creek Pizza in Medford.

If you're not in the loop yet, the point of Birdathon is to form teams and count as many species as possible within a 24-hour period. Teams can cover as much ground as they wish, so long as they stay in Jackson County. The event is one of our important annual fundraisers, too. Teams find sponsors to pledge either a fixed amount or amount per species.

You can tailor your team's Birdathon outing to your style and ambitions. Here are six recommended stops for your Birdathon route:

Denman Wildlife Area Just outside of Central Point off Table Rock Road, this marshy area supports a wide range of species. You have a good chance of adding an Osprey to your tally, too.

Bear Creek Greenway Many spots along the greenway are havens for herons, hummingbirds, woodpeckers and many songbirds. The Jefferson Nature Center in Medford and North Mountain Park in Ashland are always hot spots.

Lithia Park Pick up an American Dipper and Wood Duck along Ashland Creek.

Agate Lake This reservoir is a great place to spot waterfowl and sparrows.

The Mountain Lakes Hyatt and Howard Prairie Lakes are good places to hunt for raptors, ducks, cormorants and higher elevation species like Crossbills, Mountain Chickadees and Steller's Jays

Your Back yard Remember, you don't have to travel over hill and dale to participate in Birdathon. You can count species from the comfort of your back yard. Anne Goff recommends lawn chairs and a glass of wine.

Match-making services. We have a short list of people looking for a team to join. If you're looking for a team, or have room on your own, let us know so we can make a match. Email or call Juliet at julietgrable@yahoo.com or (541) 778-8174 or Bill Hering at bh@ashlandnet.net

**Rogue Valley Audubon Society Birdathon
May 3, 2014**

Birdathon Quick Facts

Who? You and your friends/fellow birders

What? Record as many different bird species as you can

When? During the 24-hour period starting May 2, 6:00 pm through May 3, 6:00 pm

Where? Anywhere in Jackson County

Why? To have fun and raise funds for the Rogue Valley Audubon Society

BIRDATHON 2014. Please Donate.

You can either make a donation of a set amount or pledge a certain payment per species seen. This allows you to compile your own Birdathon species list, put together your own Birdathon team, or support a team of your favorite birders. If you are participating as a birder, please ask friends and team members to pledge as well.

--My tax-deductible donation of \$_____ is enclosed.

--I pledge \$_____ per species.

--This pledge is for birds I will see myself.

--This pledge is for birds seen by _____ (name of Birdathon team or other birder).

Please mail your check to:

Rogue Valley Audubon Society

P.O. Box 8597, Medford, OR 97501

(An envelope is included in this issue of *The Chat*)

RVAS is a non-profit 501 (c) 3 organization, and all donations to RVAS are tax-deductible.
RVAS will mail you a receipt for your tax records if you provide us with your address.

BIRD AND BIRDING RELATED ACTIVITIES

Saturday, April 19th - Cantrall-Buckley Park

Leader Anne Goff. Meet/park at the Ruch Store 8:15 - depart at 8:30. We can car pool out to the park. There is an entrance fee or use County Park pass. If questions, contact - annegoffar@charter.net

Saturday, April 26 -- Dennis Vroman will lead this day trip to the Klamath River in California. The group may visit such sites as the Collier Rest Area, Ash Creek Bridge, Tree of Heaven Campground and Cayuse Pond. There will be short hikes from the parking areas. Meet at 7:15 a.m. at dirt parking lot adjacent to Shop N' Kart in Ashland for carpooling. Dress for predicted weather and bring needed food and drink.

Olympic BirdFest 2014

Dates: April 4-6, 2014

Location: Sequim, WA

Visit the rain shadow of the *Olympic Peninsula* to discover the birds of the coastal Pacific Northwest—Marbled Murrelets, Rhinoceros Auklets, Harlequin Ducks, dippers, Black Oystercatchers, Long-tailed Ducks, and more.

Guided field trips, a boat cruise in the Strait of Juan de Fuca, silent auction, and a gala banquet. Our featured speaker is Noah Strycker: "Bird World: the fascinating parallels between bird and human behavior". The festival with the most spectacular setting!

Immediately following BirdFest, join us for a three-day, two-night birding cruise of the San Juan Islands, April 6-8, 2014. Register separately at www.pugetsoundexpress.com/audubon.

Birdfest website address: www.olympicbirdfest.org

E-mail address: opas.birdfest.info@gmail.com

Contact name: Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society, 360-681-4076

There are two Pre-Festival trips available, see website.

Saturday, May 10: Rogue Valley Bird Day

8 am to Noon, North Mountain Park, Ashland. Learn more at RogueValleyBirdDay.net

Tuesday, May 27: Annual RVAS Member Potluck and Bird walk at TouVelle Park. See details in May Chat.

MAY 31—JUNE 1, 2014 See details on the Mountain Bird Festival on page 10.

Conservation Column - continued from Page 5

On the positive side, the Wyden bill:

- Designates the Wild Rogue and Devil's Staircase Wilderness areas.
- Creates the Molalla and the Rogue National Recreation Areas, expands the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument, establishes the Illinois Valley Salmon and Botanical Area, and designates a number of Primitive Backcountry Areas and Special Environmental Zones to be managed for conservation (but some logging can still occur).
- Adds Wild & Scenic River protections to more than 150 miles of rivers and streams.

While these provisions are welcome, they do not compensate for the many negative aspects of the proposed legislation.

The April Conservation Column is presented in two parts, Part 1 given here and Part 2 will be included in the May issue of The Chat.

RVAS MEMBERSHIP UPDATE- WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new members to RVAS this month: William J. MacBean, Kristi Mergenthaler, Shelley Tanquary and Jerry & Susan Wade

We also welcome the following new National Audubon Society (NAS) members to RVAS, this month: Barbara Anne Wagner, David Barnes, Karen Basin, Jeffrey Beaupain, June Fuge, Jo Graham, Jacklyn Hinds, Ross Lovington, Mary Lumsden, Cary Spiker and John Thompson.

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 <http://www.roguevalleyaudubon.org/>. New members are encouraged to join us at our Chapter meetings, field trips and bird walks, and to become involved in the organization.

If you would like to join, dues are \$20 per year, per family. See the website.

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>

We also need bird scouts who'll help us locate species of interest, especially those with active nests in late May. If you want to volunteer to do some scouting, contact Linda or Peter Kreisman. Emails: linda@ashlandhome.net and/or pkreisman@bekainc.com

--Harry Fuller

FOR THE LATEST INFORMATION ON FIELD TRIPS SPONSORED BY ROGUE VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY VISIT THE WEBSITE AT www.roguevalleyaudubon.org

FIELD TRIP LEADERS NEEDED

Local birders are needed to lead field trips. Field Trip Chairman Maggi Rackley coordinates the events, but leaders have the option of choosing their destinations. Please contact Maggi at imabrrrder@yahoo.com to volunteer, or to get further information. Thank you.

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.

Field Notes continued from Page 3

A **Rusty Blackbird** appeared with a flock of Brewer's Blackbirds near Kirtland Ponds on 2/15 (BB) and was seen again on 2/17 (TJ). A small flock of **Tri-colored Blackbirds** was also in the area on 2/17 (TJ). Four! **Red-naped Sapsuckers** were at the Provolt seed orchard on 2/24 (RN).

Pine Siskins reappeared as of 3/17 (FE) after abandoning the county this winter. **Yellow-rumped Warblers** are beginning to move through the county in numbers. Forty or more were seen on RoxyAnn on 3/4 (JT). There are more to come, and this is just setting the stage for the flood of migrants to come.

Thanks to this month's contributors including Dick Ashford, Ellie Armstrong, Forrest English, Carol Hannah, Bob Hunter, Tim Johnston, Ron Ketchum, Lisa Moore, Marjorie Moore, and Russ Namitz. Deadline for contributions to the Field Notes in the next edition of The Chat is April 15.



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THE CHAT

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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 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.

