

The Chat

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A voice for education and conservation in the natural world
Rogue Valley Audubon Society
www.roguevalleyaudubon.org
The Chat will be on hiatus for the rest of the summer. Deadline for the September issue is August 20.



IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED

**THIS IS YOUR LAST HARD COPY OF THE CHAT...
UNLESS YOU NOTIFY US**

It's been several years since the RVAS stopped mailing hard copies of *The Chat* to every member, so the Board has decided it's time to ask whether you want a hard copy mailed to you or if you would prefer to save RVAS the cost of printing and mailing each issue to you by receiving an email notice and reading *The Chat* on-line. As before, those members who ask to receive a hard copy will still get one.

Please fill in the questionnaire below and return it by e-mail: roguevalleyaudubon@gmail.org or mail: RVAS, P.O. Box 8597, Medford, Oregon, 97501

Name:

I will read *The Chat* on-line.

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Here is some information that may be relevant to your decision:

- The Board feels that *The Chat* is one of our most important services to RVAS members and is committed to making it as useful and relevant as possible.
- Printing and mailing the approximately 200 copies of nine yearly issues of *The Chat* costs approximately \$3,400, about half of our yearly expenses. This works out to \$1.89 per issue, or \$17 of your \$20 annual membership dues. Needless to say, if this expense were reduced, we would have more available to spend on our twin missions of conservation and education.
- Any changes you request will start with our September issue.

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President's Column

This month I want to update you on the changes to the RVAS Board of Directors.

First, the officers for 2015:

- I (Linda Kreisman) will take another turn at being President.
- Anne Goff is leaving the Board, so Mike Guest has agreed to be our new Secretary.
- Mike was our Vice-President, so Jon Deason has agreed to serve as Vice-President.
- Sue Polich will continue as Treasurer.

After an intense effort to find new Board Members by our Nominating Committee (Chair Jon Deason, Sue Polich and Katy Reed) we have two new Board Members: Carol Mockridge and Angela Stormberg.

Many of you know Carol Mockridge, since she comes to most of the Chapter meetings and has agreed to be in charge of setting up the projector for presentations! Carol is also currently on the board of directors of the Klamath Bird Observatory.

Angela Stormberg is a former wildlife biologist who is currently doing the Raptor Runs on Old Stage Road and in Shady Cove. She will be coming to more Chapter meetings so you will meet her also.

We had our yearly board workshop on June 13 and have a good plan for next year. We're all looking forward to seeing you all again on September 22nd, when Pepper Trail will kick off our new season of Chapter meetings.

Linda

Chapter Program meetings are held on the fourth Tuesday of the month, September through April, at 1801 E. Jackson St., Medford, in Lidgate Hall of the Medford Congregational Church.

**Field Notes for Jackson County
(Apr. 20 to Jun. 19, 2015)
Compiled by Jeff Tufts**

Several local rarities were reported during the eight-week period covered in this report, and the rarest of the group was probably the **Baltimore Oriole** seen and photographed at the Expo Ponds in Central Point May 17 (TB via RT). The bird could not be re-located the next day, despite earnest searching, but the photograph was conclusive evidence of what was only the second record for this species in Jackson County. The first record was a bird that spent two days in the yard of a Dead Indian Memorial Road residence in June of 2008.

Most Oregon records of this species, which winters chiefly in Latin America, are from east of the Cascades. From 1973 to 1995, the Baltimore Oriole was officially lumped with our locally-common Bullock's Oriole to form a species known as the Northern Oriole. Despite the temporary snub, the Baltimore Orioles managed to win the 1983 World Series. Take that, A.O.U.

A close second in the rarity column was the **Clay-colored Sparrow** first seen June 5 at Lily Glen (BW). This singing bird, also photographed, was still at the high-country location as late as June 11. There are only three previous reports of this bird in Jackson County, with the most recent being a singing bird spotted in Eagle Point (HS) in June of 2007. The Field Notes column for that month commented that "stray birds will [occasionally] winter in Oregon, but a singing male is rare." Eight years later, that statement is unequivocally confirmed.

Waterfowl are mostly noticed by their absence during this period, as they leave for more northerly nesting grounds, but a few lingering individuals or small flocks were of interest. Most unusual was a male **Common Goldeneye** at Holy Waters. This bird was first spotted May 16 (JK) and continued to be seen as late as June 8. They are common at that location from late Fall to early Spring but are usually gone by mid-May.

Blue-winged Teal are occasionally missed entirely in Jackson County, but there were several recent sightings of this species, which is described as one of the state's "least common ducks" in *Birds of Oregon*. Five individuals—two males and three females—were spotted at Emigrant Lake May 21 (HF), and one or two were subsequently seen at North Mountain Park and the Kirtland ponds as late as May 29.

Other notable waterfowl sightings were three **Canvasbacks** at Whetstone Pond May 16 (RM), two **Redheads** at Emigrant Lake April 22 (LF), four Redheads at Agate Lake May 26 (HS) and a **Hooded Merganser** at Holy Waters May 21 (JK).

Common Loons are usually gone from Jackson County by mid-May, but one was spotted May 30 during KBO's Mountain Bird Festival at Lost Creek Lake (BH). The sub-adult Common Loon seen May 6 at Agate Lake (RVAS) was probably the first recorded at that rather shallow body of water.

Agate Lake also produced a **Red-necked Grebe** May 23 (NB), and the reporting party grabbed a very rare in-flight photo of this colorful species in alternate plumage. **Western Grebes** are much more common in the area, but a Mountain Bird Festival group was surprisingly treated to thirty of them at Howard Prairie May 31 (HF).

Although rising water levels in Spring generally render local reservoirs inhospitable to migrating shorebirds, the best sighting from that group was a **Willet** spotted May 15 at Emigrant Lake (ES). These are common breeders east of the Cascades, but they rarely visit Jackson County. Apparently, this bird's legs were long enough to enable it to feed at least temporarily in the near-shore waters of Emigrant.

Two **Bonaparte's Gulls** at Agate Lake May 1 (RN) were notable, and the same local reservoir produced a pair of **Forster's Terns** May 8 (HS) and a **Black Tern** June 4 (GS). All three species are common in the Klamath Basin in this period.

The same can be said for **White-faced Ibis**, and one of those unusual long-legged waders was spotted flying over Little Hyatt Lake May 30 during the Mountain Bird Festival (eB).

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With at least two professional owl surveyors at work in Jackson County this Spring, there have been several reports of local species, including many **Flammulated Owls**. Most have been seen/heard in the surrounding mountains. Perhaps the most surprising owl sighting, though, was the **Short-eared Owl** spotted near the Medford Airport April 23 (CB). Although this is an expected location for this species, there were few reported sightings there during the 2014-15 Winter-Spring period.

When the first **Common Nighthawk** was reported June 4 (FL), the list of anticipated Spring migrants for Jackson County was complete. This species is a traditional late arrival. Two days later, as many as 35 of them were seen making their way north near the Rogue River (HS).

A rarely-birded area in the vicinity of Yellow Rock (east of Elk Creek and west of Lost Creek Lake) produced the only **White-throated Swift** sighting of the Spring on May 7 (CB). These rarely-seen bughawks are suspected breeders on Lower Table Rock, and perhaps they also nest on Yellow Rock.

Merlin generally depart the area in May, and the last reported sighting of this speedy falcon was from the corner of Main Street and Tolman Creek Road in Ashland May 9 (DA).

Notable reports from the Tyrant Flycatcher family were a **Grey Flycatcher** May 10 in the meadows southwest of Pilot Rock (FL) and an **Olive-sided Flycatcher** along North TouVelle Road May 12 (NB, GS). The latter bird is a common breeder in the mountains, but it is unusual at that low elevation.

Black-billed Magpies occasionally drift down from the Cascade foothills, and two of them were at Emigrant Lake May 13 (FL).

Small numbers of **Purple Martins** were reported from late April to late May at the Kirtland ponds, Agate Lake and Lower Table Rock. Two males and a female were seen as late as June 10 at Kirtland, and the suspicion lingers that they may breed in the vicinity of nearby Lower Table Rock.

Black-throated Sparrows occasionally pop up in Jackson County during late Spring, and

one was spotted at the broad pullout a few miles up Highway 66 from Emigrant Lake May 12 (eB).

One of the more interesting birds of late Spring was the **American Pipit** seen and photographed on Mt. Ashland June 12 (eB). There were no previous records of this species in Jackson County in June, and it's hard to think that this was an early southbound migrant. Individual birds (or pairs) can be especially inconspicuous, so maybe it's not absurd to suggest that they might try to breed in the Siskiyou. It would be a big surprise.

Other sightings during the period that were notable for various reasons (rarity, location, date, numbers, etc.) were five **American Bitterns** at the Avenue G ponds area May 17 (CB), one **Black-chinned Hummingbird** on the Upper Table Rock trail June 2 (eB), one **Bank Swallow** along the Rogue River at TouVelle State Park May 6 (FL), two **Chestnut-backed Chickadees** at the Denman Wildlife Area May 10 (CB), one **Pygmy Nuthatch** near Howard Prairie Apr. 25 (eB), one **Canyon Wren** at the Jenny Creek Falls May 2 (PT), 15 **House Wrens** on Grizzly Peak Apr. 20 (BW), one **American Dipper** along Little Butte Creek in Denman May 10 (CB), one **Varied Thrush** along the Wagner Butte trail June 3 (BW), two **Grasshopper Sparrows** near the weigh station on Hwy 14 east of Lake Creek Road, one Grasshopper Sparrow along the upper reaches of Antioch Road May 30 (BS), one **White-throated Sparrow** at North Mountain Park Apr. 25 (BW), two **Dark-eyed Juncos** in Hawthorne Park June 14 (CB), one **Yellow-headed Blackbird** in a residential area of Central Point from April 20 into mid-May (TC) and another single Yellow-headed Blackbird along Highbanks Road in Central Point May 1 (BW).

Thanks to all of the contributors to this report: Dick Ashford, Norm Barrett, Todd Bartush, Camden Bruner, Tim Crippin, Lee French, Harry Fuller, Bob Hunter, Janet Kelly, Frank Lospalluto, Robert Mumby, Russ Namitz, Howard Sands, Eric Setterberg, Gary Shaffer, Brian Sullivan, Roxanna Tessman, Pepper Trail, and Ben Wieland. (eB) denotes records derived from eBird reports, and (RVAS) denotes birds seen during Rogue Valley Audubon birding events.

The Conservation Column

By Pepper Trail

LOTS going on...

I thought things were supposed to slow down over the summer! Well, not this year. There are a number of local issues with important conservation implications working at the moment, and so many bad ideas coming out of Congress that it is hard to keep up. There's so much going on, in fact, that this column will mostly be a digest of the issues, with links to more information.

The Local Scene

Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument Expansion - As President Obama's second term winds down, there is a window of opportunity for executive action to protect threatened wild places. One local area in urgent need of increased protection is the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument (CSNM). Back in June 2000, RVAS supported and celebrated the creation of the CSNM as a means to conserve this area's treasure trove of biodiversity, scenic beauty and recreational values. However, from the beginning it was clear that the monument's boundaries were not ecologically based, but were instead constrained by administrative and political considerations. Most obviously, the CSNM is truncated at the Oregon-California state line, meaning that the lower reaches of all the monument's important Klamath Basin streams are excluded from the monument's protections. We have joined the Soda Mountain Wilderness Council and other groups to advocate for five expansion areas identified by a group of scientists with research and survey experience in the area, including the Rogue Foothills and Grizzly Peak areas on the west, the South Cascades area on the north and the Jenny Creek and Klamath Ridges areas on the east and south. These areas include important habitat for Great Gray Owls, Sandhill Cranes, Western Meadowlarks and other birds, as well as for many rare plant species.

BLM Forest Plans - the Bureau of Land Management is making yet another attempt to revise the management plans for their approximately 2.5 million acres of western Oregon forests, most of which are covered by the O&C Act. This is a complex effort, with five alternatives (and two sub-alternatives) proposed for public comment. Here's a very brief thumbnail sketch:

At present (the No Action Alternative), 19% of these lands are in Late Successional Reserves and 38% are in Riparian Reserves (designed to protect salmon-bearing streams); thus a total of 57% in these protected categories. All the new alternatives would drastically reduce the amount of land in riparian reserves. Alternatives A and C would incorporate huge amounts of clearcuts (12% and 22% of the total acres, respectively). Alternatives B and D would not include clearcuts, but D would have 26% of the land in the "Harvest Land Base" (designated for logging), compared to 22% for Alternative B and 12% for Sub-Alternative B. Sub-Alternative B is clearly the best for conservation, with 57% in Late Successional Reserves, although only 15% would be in riparian reserves. The final recommendation will certainly combine elements from more than one of the alternatives.

The BLM website for the plan, which includes excellent maps and almost mind-boggling levels of detail, is: <http://www.blm.gov/or/plans/rmpswesternoregon/>. Further information from the conservation perspective can be found at the website for KS Wild: <http://kswild.org/blmheritageforests>. Comments can be submitted by email until July 23, 2015, to: blm_or_rmpwo_comments@blm.gov or by mail to: RMPs for Western Oregon, Bureau of Land Management, P.O. Box 2965, Portland, Oregon 97208.

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Ashland Pond/Water Treatment - Some of you will remember reading earlier conservation columns about proposed changes to the water treatment operations in Ashland, with potential impacts on Ashland Pond. The engineering studies have been painfully slow, but the latest conclusions are that the DEQ-mandated cooling of the treated water cannot be achieved simply by reconfiguring water flow and storage in the Ashland Creek and Ashland Pond areas. Therefore, Ashland Public Works is going back to the drawing board, and it is likely that city-owned property on the east side of I-5 may be brought into the plan to provide more cooling ponds (as was first proposed over 10 years ago). That city property has recently been found to host the largest breeding population of Grasshopper Sparrows in the entire state, so there are obvious conservation concerns there as well. And, as if that wasn't complicated enough, the same property has been proposed as the site for a city-owned solar array. I will continue to monitor this issue, but any definite proposal seems to be at least a year away.

Roxy Ann/Prescott Park - Jeff Tufts, our point man on this issue, reports that no work has begun on the proposed mountain bike trail system. This issue is not going away, but at the moment there are no new developments.

Jetboats at TouVelle State Park - Some of you may have noticed the jetboat operations that have set up at TouVelle State Park, running downstream past Kelly Slough and the old Gold Ray dam site. This was the subject of a story in the *Mail Tribune* back in May (<http://www.mailtribune.com/article/20150518/NEWS/150519552>). This private commercial activity was conditionally approved by the Oregon State Parks Department; the contract will expire in October. The noise and disturbance associated with these jetboat trips could disrupt wildlife (and fishermen!) on this relatively quiet stretch of river. There is an opportunity for public comment, which can be submitted to: opr.d.publiccomment@oregon.gov. I encourage RVAS members who have concerns about this commercial operation at TouVelle and downstream to submit comments. Firsthand observations of negative impacts would be particularly important to share with the Oregon State Parks Department.

The National Scene

Sage Grouse Listing - The US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) is working toward a September 30 deadline on a decision to list the Greater Sage Grouse under the Endangered Species Act. A recent study found that sage grouse populations are collapsing, with a 56% decline in breeding males between 2007 and 2013.---- Thus, it would seem that a listing as endangered, or at least threatened, would be a straightforward scientific conclusion. Of course, science is one thing; politics is another. This will be the most contentious listing decision ever, potentially affecting 50 million acres of federal land in 10 western states. Unfortunately for the sage grouse, one of America's most unique and spectacular birds, much of its once-remote sagebrush habitat is now being subjected to intensive energy development (coal, oil and gas, and wind). This habitat is also largely in states whose political leaders have strong anti-regulatory ideology. Therefore, FWS has been making herculean efforts to enter into cooperative management agreements with the states, which would provide sufficient protections for grouse populations that a federal listing would not be required. However, conservative politicians are attempting to undercut these efforts in various ways (see "Congressional Mischief" below).

The National Audubon Society has an excellent fact sheet on the sage grouse issue at <http://www.audubon.org/news/whats-greater-sage-grouse>.

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Attack on the Migratory Bird Treaty Act - A bill proposed in the House of Representatives, HR 493, is a direct attack on our nation's most fundamental bird protection law, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, as well as the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. HR 493 would require 30-year permits for killing Bald Eagles to be issued under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act if the Department of Interior does not act within one year of the permit application. It also undermines the Migratory Bird Treaty Act by removing protections for migratory species from death traps like open oil waste pits or unshielded power lines. These and other hazards kill millions of birds every year and yet there are simple, low-cost solutions to prevent these bird death traps. HR 493 makes it impossible for the Migratory Bird Treaty Act to help these birds. To speak out against this proposal, go to the National Audubon website: <https://secure.audubon.org/site/Advocacy?cmd=display&page=UserAction&id=1911>.

Congressional Mischief - As if the above wasn't enough, in recent weeks, Congress (especially the House of Representatives) has attached a number of amendments to budget resolutions and other important legislation to gut the Administration's environmental initiatives. These have included amendments that would:

- block FWS from preparing a potential ESA listing rule for sage grouse
- delist wolves in the Great Lakes states and Wyoming
- bar EPA's efforts to regulate greenhouse gas emissions from new and existing power plants
- bar EPA from promulgating stricter guidelines on ozone pollution
- halt the Administration's new rule extending Clean Water Act protections to vernal pools and other isolated wetlands
- limit the government's ability to regulate lead in ammunition and fishing tackle
- limit the government's ability to regulate sales of ivory
- cut funding for land acquisition under the Land and Water Conservation Fund
- authorize a road through the pristine Izembek National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska

Some of these have been withdrawn; others are very much alive. Interior Secretary Jewell and others in the administration have spoken out strongly in opposition to these extreme attacks. It is to be hoped that President Obama would veto any legislation with such anti-environmental riders, but this is difficult when they are attached to budgetary resolutions.

Okay, I'm ready for that summer lull! How about you?

SEPTEMBER PROGRAM MEETING TUESDAY, SEPT 22 at 7 PM

"Birding Adventures in South America: Patagonia, Brazil and the Galapagos" **Presented by PEPPER TRAIL**

Our series of monthly programs will get off to a great start with Pepper Trail's slide show and talk **"Birding Adventures in South America: Patagonia, Brazil, and Galapagos."** Pepper will present highlights from his three most recent natural history cruises, with birds as spectacular (and spectacularly different) as Blue Manakins and Blue-footed Boobies, Andean Condors and Saffron Toucanets, Darwin's Rheas and Darwin's Finches. This is sure to be an entertaining and educational evening - don't miss it!

Pepper Trail is the long-time conservation chair for RVAS, and the ornithologist at the National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Lab in Ashland. During his vacation time, Pepper leads natural history field trips around the world.



Nazca Booby, native to the Galapagos

RVAS BIRDING FIELD TRIPS AND EVENTS

SPECIAL SEPTEMBER FIELD TRIP

This September, Rogue Valley Audubon will host a special birding field trip to the Rogue River Preserve, a 352-acre property just upriver of Dodge Bridge. This incredible location, which includes more than a mile of river frontage and extensive riparian forests, as well as cherished oak-savannah habitat, is targeted for purchase by the Southern Oregon Land Conservancy.

Brian Barr, Executive Director of the newly-formed Rogue River Watershed Council, will lead the event, which is tentatively scheduled for late September. The exact date and instructions for registering will be posted on the RVAS website later this summer.

Birdathon 2015 Wrap-up: Great Grays Prevail

The battle for top honors in the 2015 edition of RVAS's Birdathon was fought between the Great Grays and the Binosaur— the two teams that shared the championship last year. This year's title went to the Great Grays, who logged 157 species. The Binosaur hit 154. Each team had 156 in 2014.

Five teams registered for the annual fund-raising event. Third place went to the Old World Warblers (110) with the Pedal Ducks coming in fourth (103) and the Chattering Wanderers fifth (76).

Bob Hunter captained the Great Grays and was joined by Frank Lospalluto, Forrest English, Brian Barr and Dominic DiPaolo. Gretchen Hunter once again provided invaluable logistical and emotional support while serving as team manager and cheerleader.

With two key members unavailable because of prior commitments, the Falcons were absent from the competition while once again resting on the laurels of their record-setting (162) triumph in 2012.

Howard Sands, formerly a member of the Binosaur, captained the Pedal Ducks who competed as a non-motorized unit. Relying solely on bicycles to cover such lowland locations as Denman, TouVelle State Park and the Kirtland ponds, the three-man team exceeded expectations by cracking the 100-species mark. Tim Johnston and Karl Schneck joined Howard, and their total was remarkable considering that their mode of transportation pretty much ruled out any visits to mountain locations.

The Pedal Ducks also got "Best Bird" honors when Captain Sands spotted a Swamp Sparrow in his back yard while cooling down from the day's efforts. Maybe the bird was responding to the pishing sound of the opening of a can of liquid refreshment. And thus a new birding strategy was born.

With regular captain Norm Barrett sidelined by illness, Gary Shaffer reluctantly took charge of the Binosaur, whose lineup also included chief strategist Russ Namitz, Jim Livaudais and Birdathon newcomer Jeff Tufts. Namitz grudgingly accepted Gary and Jim's embrace of a "photo-centric" team motto that basically said: "We can't hear 'em, but we can shoot 'em."

The Binosaur logged ten unique species, including all three accipiters. The Cooper's Hawk, Sharp-shinned Hawk and Northern Goshawk were each found in the Cascades. Those mountains also produced Red Crossbill, Rock Wren, Common Loon, Western Grebe, Eared Grebe and Caspian Tern.

Victorious Great Grays had seven unique species; fittingly, that list included Great Gray Owl, Gray Jay and Black-throated Gray Warbler. Grayt work, guys!!

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The Old World Warblers had the only Willow Flycatcher sighting, and the Chattering Wanderers checked in with the only California Gull.

Maggie Rackley, Lynn Kellogg, Edith Lindner, Katy Reed (Birdathon chair) and Linda Zercher comprised the Old World Warbler squad, and Anne Goff captained the Chattering Wanderers team, which also included Juliet Grable, Mike Guest, Greg Skoog and Don Morris.

Of the 176 total species seen by the Birdathon competitors, 13 were birds not recorded in 2014.

A post-count dinner and festivities were enjoyed at Jackson Creek Pizza in Medford.

Conservationist Bob Hunter Honored

Bob Hunter, longtime member of Rogue Valley Audubon and coordinator of our annual Medford Christmas Bird Count, was recently honored as the 2015 Conservationist of the Year by the Southern Oregon Land Conservancy. Pat Acklin, President of the SOLC Board of Directors, presented the award to Bob at the organization's annual member picnic and meeting June 6.

Bob served on the Land Conservancy's board in the 1980s and has a long history of working to protect the environments of southern Oregon and other areas in the Pacific Northwest.

Working as an attorney for WaterWatch of Oregon, Bob led the efforts to remove Savage Rapids Dam, the Gold Hill Diversion Dam and the Gold Ray Dam on the Rogue River.

Bob is one of the premier birders in the area, captaining the winning team in the RVAS Birdathon four times; he is also an avid fisherman. He has been the recipient of numerous honors for his efforts in protecting and enhancing the local environment. In 2012, he was presented with the U.S. Forest Service "Rise to the Future" award during a ceremony at the National Archives in Washington, D.C., and he has also received important recognition from the Federation of Flyfishers, the Rogue Flyfishers, the Oregon Water Enhancement Board, River Network and the NOAA Restoration Center.



Siskiyou Field Institute Thanks RVAS Scholarships Make a Difference to Local Educators

This season Siskiyou Field Institute (SFI) has awarded two \$100 scholarships made possible through Rogue Valley Audubon's \$500 donation. An RVAS scholarship enabled Kelley Leonard to hone her writing and photography skills in *The Spirit of the Forest in Words and Photos*. Kelley works as a language arts aide at Oak Grove Elementary School in Medford. Southern Oregon University Environmental Education grad student Erin Krenzer has enrolled in *A Beginner's Guide to Medicinal Plants*, thanks to an RVAS scholarship. Both Kelley and Erin have received scholarship assistance in previous years.

RVAS has donated scholarship funds to SFI since 2011. To date, scholarship awardees have included local high school teachers, classroom assistants and SOU Environmental Ed grad students. Most of the grad students, including herpetologist Peter Kleinhenz and Jeanine Moy (now a charter school teacher), have used the scholarship subsidy to enroll in Stewart Janes' pelagic birding class. James Bowers studied Wilderness First Aid so that he would be prepared for leading classes on outdoor adventures. He teaches at Muir Charter School in Ashland.

We publicize scholarship availability on our website (www.thesfi.org), our field course catalog, on flyers posted in local libraries and distributed to teachers who visit us with their classes and through print and radio advertising. This year, we've also contacted teachers through our network email list, sending out two emails specifically to promote scholarships.

If you know of a Jackson County teacher, aide or non-profit outdoor educator who's interested in natural science continuing education but needs a tuition subsidy, please send them our way! Contact email is programcoord@thesfi.org or call 541-597-8530.



Photo of morning mist in the Illinois Valley by *Spirit of the Forest* student (and scholarship winner) Kelley Leonard.

A Big "Thank You" to the Education Committee

The RVAS Board of Directors is taking this opportunity to thank Lynn Kellogg and Sooney Viani, the co-chairs of the Education Committee, for their activities this past year and to let our fellow members know what they have done on their behalf.

As she has done for many years, Lynn Kellogg presented RVAS' 1-1/4-hour PowerPoint titled "Bird Adaptations" to one retirement home and 10 second- and third-grade classes. One of the second-grade teachers also took Lynn up on her offer to lead a 3-1/2 hour field trip to Touvelle Park with 24 second-graders and six chaperones. Jon Deason, Kathleen Donham and Linda Zerther answered Lynn's call for volunteers and helped her with this field trip. Lynn also led a similar field trip for 29 homeschoolers (who ranged in age from five to 15) and 12 adults. Bob Quaccia, Bob Hunter, Marion Hadden and Jon Deason helped Lynn this time. Lynn reports that the PowerPoint presentation is always well received. The RVAS members who helped with the field trips appreciated the educational games that Lynn uses to keep the kids interested and focused on the birds.

Sooney Viani was instrumental in arranging partnerships with sister organizations to extend the educational efforts of RVAS. She, Lynn and Sue Polich met with Coyote Trails Nature Center (CTNC) staff to reach an agreement on materials that RVAS could fund that would best supplement the birding aspects of both their indoor and outdoor education. This spring, CTNC used the iPad with a birding app and bird identification cards (that we funded) in their classroom visits for the "Finding Home" program. Two hundred and twenty fifth-graders learned about birds, both in their classrooms and in the field at CTNC.

Sooney also found Jeanine Moy (of Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center, teacher of natural science classes at Willow Wind Learning Center, and founder of Ashland Trail Trekkers nature summer camp) and helped her and the Board negotiate an agreement to help fund (in partnership with Northwest Nature Store and KBO) Jeanine's birding education in both classrooms and in the field. Her efforts reached over 350 students this year.

Jeanine's "Birding in the Schools" program offered a range of lessons to encourage students' curiosity in nature and to build science skills. All lessons met education standards and used nature as both inspiration for creativity and for scientific exploration. Inspiring excitement for education in students helps support development of well-balanced individuals and life-long learners.

The Siskiyou Field Institute continues to use RVAS grant money to give scholarships to Jackson County educators who are inspired by SFI classes and want to expand their knowledge of nature and their experiences in it.

The RVAS Board also awarded a grant to Stewart Janes' graduate students, which paid for bus transportation for one classroom's "Fall in the Field" trips.

Thanks, Lynn and Sooney and all your helpers! We appreciate your efforts to help us fulfill our mission of Education.

Field Notes for Josephine County (Apr. 20 to Jun. 19, 2015) Compiled by Jeff Tufts

The final weeks of Spring were highlighted by sightings of significant numbers of migrants, with Whitehorse Park being one of the prime birding locations.

There were a dozen **Yellow Warblers** at the Rogue riverside location May 6 (DV), sixteen **Black-headed Grosbeaks** there the same day (DV), and nine **Lincoln's Sparrows** there April 23 (DV).

Also productive was the area where Graves Creek joins the Rogue. Fifteen **Nashville Warblers** and a similar number of **Black-throated Gray Warblers** were counted at that location April 20 (RN). The same location produced a **Black-chinned Hummingbird** May 15 (eB). Two **Varied Thrushes** there May 15 were also of interest (eB).

At the Williams Creek Preserve, ten **Pacific-slope Flycatchers** and an equal number of **Warbling Vireos** were spotted May 5 (FL, KM).

Two surprising reports came from the area west and south of Grants Pass. There was a **Snowy Egret** seen flying over the Siskiyou Field Institute property in Selma June 9 (eB), and a **Clark's Nutcracker** was spotted at an unusually low elevation west of Cave Junction April 25 (eB).

The Cave Junction region also provided sightings of male and female **Allen's Hummingbirds** on April 22 (RC). They are commonly seen along the coast but are rarer inland.

Thanks to the contributors to this report: Romain Cooper, Frank Lospalluto, Kristi Mergenthaler, Russ Namitz and Dennis Vroman. (eB) indicates sightings obtained from eBird records.

Denman Trees Need Help

Three years ago, Audubon members planted small trees at Denman Wildlife Area. The twelve Mountain Ash and two Cottonwoods are all planted around Whetstone Pond, 10 to 25 feet from its edge. RVAS members have been watering these trees each summer, keeping them alive until their roots reach the water table.

We need a couple of members who are willing to water the trees during the months of August and September—or whatever portion thereof they can manage. The trees are watered with buckets of water drawn from the pond. This may be the last year we need to provide this kind of support for the little trees. They have grown a lot, but we still need help!

Contact Carol Palmer at carol_p@charter.net or Gary Palmer at fgpalmer@charter.net or [541-245-9815](tel:541-245-9815).

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. 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)
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Turkey Vulture, by Peter Kreisman
Peter captured this TV at Emigrant Lake on
June 14.

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