

# The Chat

**Number 431**  
**March 2017**

**A voice for education and conservation in the natural world**  
**Rogue Valley Audubon Society**  
**[www.roguevalleyaudubon.org](http://www.roguevalleyaudubon.org)**  
*Deadline for the April issue is March 20.*



**MARCH PROGRAM MEETING**  
**TUESDAY, MARCH 28 at 7:00 PM**  
**"Galapagos Wildlife: A Sampling"**

Presented by **GEORGE PETERSON** with **SALLY PETERSON**

Join George and Sally on their adventure trip of a lifetime—the Galapagos Islands of Ecuador. This trip, which took place last May, included hiking, kayaking, snorkeling and panga rides, all with the intent to view wildlife. Photos from all of these activities will be part of the slide presentation.

George and Sally Peterson have been members of Rogue Valley Audubon ever since moving here ten years ago upon retirement from their respective careers in the Bay Area. George has recently joined the RVAS Board and is a regular attendee at our meetings. Regretfully, we don't see Sally quite as often because of another conflicting passion: the Siskiyou Singers. She more than makes up missing the meetings by helping with our educational programs and coming on field trips, etc. George has been a birder since high school in Iowa; Sally considers herself a more recent birder.



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

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**Field Notes:** vacant

**Field Trips:** Russ Namitz, 541-294-2063,

[namitzr@hotmail.com](mailto:namitzr@hotmail.com)

**Holiday Party :** vacant

**Hospitality:** Jon Deason, [jdeason39@gmail.com](mailto:jdeason39@gmail.com)

**Master Gardener Fair:** vacant

**Membership:** George Peterson, [sgpeterson1@msn.com](mailto:sgpeterson1@msn.com)

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## CHAPTER COMMUNICATIONS

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**Facebook:** [https://www.facebook.com/](https://www.facebook.com/RogueValleyAudubonSociety/)

[RogueValleyAudubonSociety/](https://www.facebook.com/RogueValleyAudubonSociety/)

**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

### Two more new Board Members!

Last month we were happy to be able to say that George Peterson and Nate Trimble have joined the RVAS Board of Directors. This month, we have two more new members: John Ward and Laura Fleming. Most of you know Laura as the owner of Wild Birds Unlimited in Medford. Katy Reed served many years as a valuable Board Member when she owned WBU and we welcome the partnership we will have with Laura. Here is a little more about Laura, in her own words:

I consider myself a life-long student of birding, finding there is always more to learn and discover. My main focus in life is on conservation of the environment and the promotion of healthy habitats for birds and other wildlife. I currently serve on the Board of Directors for the Klamath Bird Observatory based in Ashland. I became a "Wild Bird Specialist" at Wild Birds Unlimited in 1999 when the Felkers first owned and operated the Medford store. For the past 15 years,



I have been the buyer for wild bird supplies for seven farm and garden stores in southern Oregon. When the opportunity to buy my own Wild Birds Unlimited store presented itself, I jumped in with both feet! I look forward to many years ahead helping customers develop and enjoy their own backyard bird habitats.

*Letter from the Board continued on page 3*

*Letter from the Board continued from page 2*



John Ward is our intern this year for Birding in the Schools. He is filling a new Student Board position the Board created with an amendment to our By-Laws, Article III, Section 6:

A position for a Student Board Member shall be available for each calendar year: January through December. This Board member shall serve as a liaison with the Southern Oregon University Environmental Education's Fall in the Field program and the Board.

With these recent additions we now have a full Board of twelve members, although there will be more positions available in June when the terms of a few present members end. Please let any Board member know if you are interested in joining us.

—Linda Kreisman

### **The Chat gets a Facelift**

The drawing of the Yellow-breasted Chat that is perched on the upper right corner of our newsletter was updated recently. We contacted the artist, Renie Brady, to get a high resolution file of the drawing. Instead, she emailed us: "That Chat was drawn many decades ago, before I had much experience as an artist. My work improved markedly after that, and as I don't have a higher resolution of the piece, I redid it for you." Renie (AKA Irene) now lives in Belize. Thanks, Renie!

—Carol Mockridge

### **UPCOMING RVAS PROGRAMS**

April 25: "Vaux's Swifts in the Rogue Valley"  
Presented by Karen Hussey

May 23: Annual RVAS Potluck  
Tou Velle State Park

Summer hiatus begins in June!

## 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 and end before noon.

See map at [www.roguevalleyaudubon.org/First\\_Wednesday\\_Count.html](http://www.roguevalleyaudubon.org/First_Wednesday_Count.html)

March Walk: Wednesday, March 1

April Walk: Wednesday, April 5

May Walk: Wednesday, May 3

### BIRDING THE KLAMATH BASIN

Saturday, March 11

Leader: Dick Ashford

The Klamath Basin is a premier birding destination known for its wintering populations of waterfowl and raptors, which can make for a wonderful birding spectacle. Enjoy a day in the field with leader Dick Ashford, who will have scouted the area several times prior to our outing, and will know where to look for the birds. We'll focus on raptors and waterfowl (hopefully in large numbers), and we will have fun. No whiners!

Important note: This trip is limited to no more than 19 participants. For safety reasons, we will carpool in five vehicles (four people per car). It will be an all-day outing, departing Ashland at 8:00 am and returning around 5:00-ish. RSVP to Dick Ashford [dicka@ashlandhome.net](mailto:dicka@ashlandhome.net), who will notify attendees of meeting time and place.

### NORTH MOUNTAIN PARK

Saturday, March 11

Leader: Nate Trimble

Nate Trimble is pleased to announce a series of seasonal guided bird walks centered in the Rogue Valley. These walks will be local, involve minimal or no driving, and are aimed at providing a free family friendly educational experience for beginner and serious birders alike. For the first walk, we will be meeting at **9:00 am on March 11 at North Mountain Park in Ashland**. North Mountain Park has been expertly managed to provide varied habitat for an astonishingly wide variety of birds on such a small piece of land right in the middle of town. We will be in search of winter migrants to the Rogue Valley, such as Golden-crowned Sparrows, White-crowned Sparrows, and Varied Thrushes, as well as some of our charismatic resident birds such as Red-shouldered Hawks, Bushtits, and Wood Ducks. North Mountain Park is sure to provide close looks at a variety of colorful species and is a perfect birding destination for kids and beginners. Nate will bring a few extra pairs of entry level binoculars for those who don't have their own. For more info email Nate at [nateltrimble@hotmail.com](mailto:nateltrimble@hotmail.com)

*RVAS Field Trips continued on page 5*



***RVAS Field Trips, cont.***

**\*NEW\* MONTHLY BIRD WALK AT IMPERATRICE**

Nate Trimble is pleased to inform you of a great birding opportunity here in Ashland. The city of Ashland owns a large parcel of grassland habitat known as the Imperatrice property. It is located on the east side of I-5 at the end of East Ashland lane near the Ashland Greenhouses. Nate is a new member to the RVAS board, has several years of professional and recreational birding experience, and will be leading guided bird walks on this property for the Spring. The property offers wide open spaces perfect for raptor viewing with the opportunity to see Golden Eagles, Rough-legged Hawks, Prairie Falcons, Ferruginous hawks, and many other raptor species. Whether you are looking to increase your skills at raptor identification or simply want to enjoy watching Kestrels and Red-tails kiting and riding the wind at close range, this property offers one of the best raptor viewing opportunities in the Ashland area. For those willing to hike a little further, the margin of the property also offers oak woodland habitat with the possibility of Black-billed Magpies and Lewis's Woodpeckers. Accessing and exploring the property will involve some uphill hiking, possible muddy conditions, and exposed and windy terrain, so come prepared to exercise and get dirty. For more info email Nate at [nateltrimble@hotmail.com](mailto:nateltrimble@hotmail.com)

March Walk: Saturday, March 25

April Walk: Saturday April 22

**MORE SPRING FIELD TRIPS—DETAILS TO COME!**

**ROGUE RIVER PRESERVE**

Saturday, April 22

Leader: Pepper Trail

**GIVEN RANCH PARK**

Saturday, May 13

Leader: Howard Sands

RVAS Board members on a recent trip to the Imperatrice property (photo by Peter Kreisman). While there, George Peterson photographed this Kestrel.



## New Opportunity for Citizen Scientists

By Ellie Armstrong, KBO

Klamath Bird Observatory, in partnership with The Selberg Institute, is launching a new citizen science project. We are looking for volunteers who enjoy birding and being outdoors. The project will take place on a large parcel of private property along Sampson Creek. This property is in the foothills of the Cascades and holds a variety of oak habitats as well as coniferous forests and riparian woodlands. Just outside of Ashland, it is a terrific spot for birding and will give the public a unique opportunity to visit and bird in diverse habitats managed for conservation.

Citizen Scientists will participate in a training event in mid-April to learn how to collect data, and the opportunity for monthly surveys will continue throughout the year. If you enjoy looking for owls, you are in luck as well. This project will also include guided night surveys to inventory the local owl population. Participation will include some walking and/or hiking, recording all birds observed by sight and/or sound, and entering and submitting your findings. Klamath Bird Observatory has completed baseline breeding surveys on this property in the past, but with this project we aim to add to the existing knowledge by harnessing the power of Citizen Scientists to collect robust data throughout the breeding, migratory, and winter seasons.

If you are interested in participating or would like more information please contact Ellie Armstrong at [eea@KlamathBird.org](mailto:eea@KlamathBird.org) or come to the Rogue Valley Audubon March chapter meeting on March 28<sup>th</sup> to hear a short presentation on the project.



George Peterson captured this Bald Eagle at Agate Lake in early February.

## The Conservation Column

By Pepper Trail

This first conservation column of the Trump Administration is all bad news—and I'm sorry to say that we're going to have to get used to that. With anti-environmental forces in full control of Congress and the Presidency, it is going to be a very long four years of playing defense. But poll after poll shows that a majority of Americans are in favor of environmental protection and are concerned about climate change. So, we have to mobilize our fellow citizens and hold our elected officials accountable—and work to replace them when necessary.

And speaking of elected officials, our own Rep. Greg Walden was one of the vast majority of Republican Congressman who recently voted to pass HJ 69, an almost unbelievable bill that removes virtually all controls on the killing of bears and wolves in **federal national wildlife refuges** in Alaska, **even when they are in their dens**. Here is a report on the bill from the respected website Snopes.com:

### U.S. House Votes to Lift Ban on 'Predator Control' Hunting Practices in Alaska

*H.J. Res. 69 nullifies federal protections for hibernating bears, denning wolves, and other predators on national preserves in Alaska.*

In a party-line vote overriding the objections of the Sierra Club, the Humane Society, and Alaska wildlife protection groups, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a resolution on 16 February 2017 nullifying Obama-era Department of Interior regulations that prohibit the use of such tactics as baiting, spotlighting, and aerial spotting to hunt predatory animals on national preserve lands in Alaska.

If passed by the Senate and signed by President Trump, H.J. Res. 69 will hand jurisdiction over the hunting of bears, wolves, and coyotes on Alaska's 20 million acres of federally-protected national preserves back to the state, which, since 1994, has had "predator control" laws on the books aimed at maximizing wild game populations for recreational hunting.

After years of disputing the legality of some of these practices, the National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service implemented new rules in 2015 and 2016 permanently banning them in national preserves. The rules, which do not apply to subsistence hunting nor to lands not under the protection of the federal government, prohibit the following:

- *Taking black or brown bear cubs or sows with cubs (exception allowed for resident hunters to take black bear cubs or sows with cubs under customary and traditional use activities at a den site October 15 – April 30 in specific game management units in accordance with State law);*
- *Taking brown bears over bait;*
- *Taking of bears using traps or snares;*
- *Taking wolves and coyotes during the denning season (May 1 – August 9); and*
- *Taking bears from an aircraft or on the same day as air travel has occurred. The take of wolves or wolverines from an aircraft or on the same day as air travel has occurred is already prohibited under current refuge regulations.*

*Conservation Column continued on page 8*

*Conservation Column continued from page 7*

Despite support from scientific, environmental, and animal welfare advocacy groups, the regulations have been unpopular with many Alaskans. In January 2017, Alaska officials filed a lawsuit contending that the regulations amount to federal overreach and will have an adverse impact on the ecosystem and citizens of the state. In February 2017, with the support of the National Rifle Association (NRA) and Safari Club International, Rep. Don Young (R-Alaska) introduced H.J. Res. 69 to redress what he termed a “wrongful seizure of authority” by the federal government:

*From the beginning, I said I would do everything in my power to overturn this illegal jurisdictional power grab by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Today, we’re one step closer to delivering on that commitment and eliminating a wrongful seizure of Alaska’s fish and wildlife management authority. I’m thankful to all those that played a role in moving this important resolution of disapproval, including that countless state and local stakeholders that worked with me to fight a very serious and alarming overreach by the Executive Branch. I look forward to seeing the swift consideration of H.J. Res. 69 in the Senate.*

The Humane Society of the United States took exception in a 16 February 2017 statement arguing that passage of the bill should “shock the conscience of every animal lover in America”:

*The U.S. House of Representatives overturned a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service rule that stopped a set of appalling and unsporting predator control methods on national wildlife refuges in Alaska. These egregious practices include shooting or trapping wolves while at their dens with cubs, using airplanes to scout for grizzly bears to shoot, trapping bears with cruel steel-jawed leghold traps and wire snares and luring grizzly bears with food to get a point blank kill. Republicans, with only a few dissents, provided the votes for the measure, which passed by a vote of 225 to 193.*

H.J. Res. 69 is now before the Senate, where it must be passed and sent to President Trump for signature before it can take effect.

Next up, an editorial from the February 21 edition of the *Los Angeles Times* about Republican plans to dismantle the Endangered Species Act:

### **With this Congress, the Endangered Species Act itself might be endangered**

Elections have consequences, as the saying goes, and here’s another one arising from conservative Republicans taking complete control of the federal government: The Endangered Species Act, which played a significant role in saving the bald eagle and the California condor from extinction, is now itself endangered. Were Congress and President Trump to accede to the demands of anti-regulatory zealots and gut the nature-protecting act, it would be calamitous for hundreds of plant and animal species, local ecosystems, and the complex interconnections that sustain the natural world.

The usual argument against the act is roughly that it is not used to protect species, but to stifle development. “States, counties, wildlife managers, home builders, construction companies, farmers, ranchers, and other stakeholders are all making it clear that the Endangered Species Act is not working today,” Sen. John Barrasso (R-Wyo.), said at a recent Senate Environment and Public

*Conservation Column continued on page 9*



*Conservation Column continued from page 8*

Works Committee hearing he chaired. How is the act not working? According to its detractors, only 47 of 1,652 species to receive protection since the act was passed in 1973 have recovered enough to get promoted off the endangered species list.

What that argument misses, according to the Center for Biological Diversity, is that the act has helped keep nearly every species added to the list from fading into extinction. Success here should be measured by saves, and by that yardstick, the Endangered Species Act has been a clear success – only 30 species have disappeared after being placed on the list. Some scientists argue that adding species to the list earlier, before they reach a crucial state, would add to that success. So if Barrasso and his colleagues want to “modernize” the act, as they claim, they would work to make it more robust.

But no. Their goal isn't to nurture species to recovered status, but to make it easier to develop wilderness areas and encroach on crucial habitats. Barrasso is among the western Republicans who want to turn federal land over to state control under the spurious argument that states know best how to care for it. They're really trying to open public land for private exploitation, the environmental costs be damned.

The act does have its shortcomings. The focus is on habitat preservation, which is important, but scientists now believe there need to be more adaptive solutions, such as public-private partnerships to integrate wildlife habitats with development, and more efficient use of the act as the nation adapts to changing habitats. That should be the road map for revising the act, and conservationists from the left and right need to pressure Congress to ensure pro-development forces don't destroy the act under the guise of fixing it.

Well, enough bad news for one column. Let's not forget that there are still amazing wildlands and beautiful wildlife all around—and take the time to get out there and enjoy them. And, yes, I'm mostly reminding myself!

View from the Imperatrice property east of Ashland. The Ashland Parks and Recreation Department is considering purchasing this special acreage from the City of Ashland. Photo by George Peterson.



## Bird-Centric Events from Around the Region

### PRESENTATIONS AT WILD BIRDS UNLIMITED

#### Baby Birds and Nests

Learn about the stages of nesting, from courtship to fledglings. Pictures of nests, eggs, and babies will give insight into how birds mate in spring, how eggs become baby birds, and how and when these babies learn to fly and sing. Pictures will include nesting owls and robins, mating flickers, baby killdeer and blackbirds and many others. By learning the five stages of nesting: courtship, nest building incubating eggs, feeding the babies and then becoming fledglings, you will be more likely to see and hear these springtime bird behaviors.

**DATE/TIME:** Wednesday, March 22, 2017 6:00—7:00 pm

**PLACE:** 961 Medford Center, Medford

**COST:** Free

**PRESENTER** Shannon Rio is President of the Board of the Klamath Bird Observatory. She interweaves poetry, pictures, stories and fun facts to teach about the lives of our local birds.

### ASHLAND PARKS AND RECREATION CLASSES AND WORKSHOPS

#### Birds You Love to Hate

With photos and sound, we will take a look at why some birds are so disliked and what humans have to do with the presence and abundance of these birds. Take the hated starling: Did you know that Mozart had a pet starling that influenced his musical compositions, and that he wrote a poem for the bird and read it at its funeral? Come prepared to be informed, entertained and willing to look into how we love to hate some birds that are so much like us! P. S. Mozart's poem will be read!

**Please register online at [ashland.or.us/register](http://ashland.or.us/register) or call the North Mountain Park Nature Center at 541.488.6606.**

**DATE:** Wednesday, March 1

**TIME:** 6:00—7:30 pm

**PLACE:** North Mountain Park Pavilion, Ashland

**COST:** \$15

**INSTRUCTOR** Shannon Rio interweaves poetry, pictures, stories and fun facts to teach about the lives of our local birds. She also teaches classes about plant medicine and yoga.

#### Project FeederWatch

Help count birds that visit the feeders at North Mountain Park while learning to identify species with expert guidance. This is a great opportunity for all-level birders to get acquainted with local birds and mingle with other birders under a covered pavilion. The information collected will be submitted to Cornell University's FeederWatch project, a nationwide bird-monitoring effort. Pre-registration is not required for this free program. For more information, call 541.488.6606.

**DATE:** Saturdays: March 4, 18

**TIME:** 9:00—10:00 am

**PLACE:** North Mountain Park Pavilion, Ashland

**COST:** Free (Pre-registration is not required)

**INSTRUCTORS:** Rogue Valley Audubon Society Volunteers

## REMINDER: SIGN UP YOUR BIRDATHON TEAMS!

Birdathon returns on **Saturday, May 6**. There is still plenty of time to form your teams and sign up.

Birdathon is an important fundraiser for RVAS. The object of Birdathon is for sponsored teams to count as many species as possible within a 24-hour period. Teams can range widely or stick close to home, so long as they stay in Jackson County. The event officially kicks off on Friday, May 5 at 6:00 pm. A celebratory dinner on Saturday night allows teams to compare notes and claim bragging rights.

Most teams include two to five birders, although a single individual may also comprise a team.

**A task equally important as picking your all-star team is finding sponsors—that's the fundraiser part.** A person can sponsor your team with either a fixed donation or an amount per species your team sees.

If you've never participated in this annual event, why not make 2017 your year? To sign up your team or for more info, contact Katy Reed at [kmreed24@hotmail.com](mailto:kmreed24@hotmail.com) or **541-245-5095** or Linda Kreisman at **651-303-6671**.



Greg Skoog photographed these Wild Turkeys at Emigrant Lake (left), while George Peterson caught a Great Blue Heron in flight at Agate Lake in February.

## 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)
- The Chat* newsletter
- Website ([www.roguevalleyaudubon.org](http://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.

### RVAS Membership Form

Please fill in your information:

**Name(s):** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Street:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**City, State, Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

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.*
- ☐ *Do not send a paper copy of The Chat newsletter.*
- ☐ *Send a monthly paper copy of The Chat newsletter.*

### 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:

**Rogue Valley Audubon Society**  
**PO Box 8597**  
**Medford OR 97501**



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**Thanks to everyone who  
has contributed their  
wonderful bird photos.  
Keep them coming!**

**—The Editor**

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## THE CHAT

Newsletter of the  
**ROGUE VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY**  
Post Office Box 8597  
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



### 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](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.

