

The Chat

Number 442
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A voice for education and conservation in the natural world
Rogue Valley Audubon Society
www.roguevalleyaudubon.org
Deadline for the June issue is May 20.



RVAS ANNUAL MAY PICNIC TUESDAY, MAY 22 at TOUVELLE STATE PARK

This event replaces our May chapter meeting. Come celebrate our valley birds. All members and guests are welcome!

Bird Walk: 6:00 pm (sharp!)

A guided bird walk will wind through the park and along the Rogue River.

Potluck dinner: 7:00 pm

Bring a dish to share, plus your own plate, cup and utensils. Tea and lemonade will be provided.

The potluck will take place in the main area of the park; enter on the east side of Table Rock Road. Look for the group at Shelter A. There is a daily parking fee unless you have an Oregon State Parks pass or a Jackson County Parks pass.



Directions to TouVelle State Recreation Site in Central Point:
From Biddle Road in Medford, turn right on Table Rock Road and drive 4.5 miles.
Park is on the right.

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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

Ethical Birding

Spring is in full swing. Our migrants are arriving daily and are joining our resident birds in nest building. And even fair-weather birders are spending more time at their favorite birding hotspots.

We encourage you to be mindful of your impacts on birds and other people, mindful of safety, and mindful of your own birding experience. Please keep in mind the birding code of ethics:

1. The birds' welfare is the highest priority, so please:
 - Bird quietly, walk slowly, drive cautiously
 - Respect the birds' territory; do not approach too closely
 - Be extra cautious when in the vicinity of nests
 - Refrain from using audio playback
 - Do not imitate Northern Pygmy-Owl calls
 - Do not harass birds by flushing, shining spot-lights, or pointing lasers
 - Refrain from using flash when photographing birds.



Great Horned Owl owlets.
Photo courtesy Carol Mockridge

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2. Preservation of, and access to, habitat is important, so please:
 - Do not damage habitat (breaking branches, trampling vegetation)
 - Stay on established paths and roads
 - Respect private property; do not enter without express permission
 - Follow rules & regulations of public areas
 - Avoid aiming optics at people, residences, and businesses.
3. We're all in this together, so please:
 - Be courteous to others in your group; your actions affect their birding experience
 - Remember that the group leader is responsible for the behavior of the group.
4. As you bird, we encourage you to be mindful of your impacts on birds and other people, mindful of safety, and mindful of your own birding experience.

Carol Mockridge

Accessing Kirtland Pond

Kirtland Pond, located in Central Point, is one of the valley's favorite birding hotspots. It is an active facility of Rogue Valley Sewer Services. While birders are welcome, it is very important that no birders, cars or tripods with cameras and scopes block the road into the facility or the gate. Large trucks need to be able to drive in and out of the plant seven days a week unimpeded.

Parking is very limited, especially when the gate is locked. Park only if there is room for your vehicle without blocking the road. Thanks for your cooperation. Please remind fellow birders of these restrictions.

For those of you who have never been to Kirtland Pond, we highly recommend it!

The official address is
1100 Kirtland Road.

From Exit 30 in Medford, head
north on Biddle Road past the
airport.

Turn right on Table Rock Road,
then left on Kirtland Road.

The facility is on the right.
Photo by Carol Mockridge.



Project FeederWatch Re-Cap

By Mary Pat Power

Project FeederWatch in Ashland completed its 16th season with continued strong attendance and great enthusiasm among the observers. Thanks go to RVAS for providing funds for the bird feed and North Mountain Park staff, especially Brigitte Cooke, for maintaining the feeder area and publicizing the watches. Great appreciation to the lead observers **Barbara Massey, Bob Quaccia, Vince Zauskey, Bill Hering, Kate Cleland-Sipfle, Sooney Viani, Keiko Thurston, Dick Ashford, and Nala Cardillo. Mary Pat Power** coordinated scheduling and reported data to PFW.

This season 32 species were observed, compared to 28 the previous season and 36 species two years ago.



Birding Rock Cemetery on a recent RVAS field trip to the Wimer area.
(L-R) Lisa Stucker, Linda Kreisman, Emmalisa Whalley and Leader Cathy Souther
Photo by Carol Mockridge

RVAS BIRDING FIELD TRIPS AND EVENTS

FIRST WEDNESDAY BIRD WALKS AT DENMAN WILDLIFE REFUGE

Murray Orr will continue to lead his monthly bird walks, but at Denman Wildlife Refuge instead of Agate Lake. 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 parking area accessed from Agate Road in White City. Participants will need an ODFW parking permit. These can be purchased at the ODFW office, Bi-Mart, or Sportsman's Warehouse in Medford (Delta Waters and Highway 62). Walks begin at 8:30 am and end before noon. Please arrive 10 minutes early.

May Walk: Wednesday, May 2

June Walk: Wednesday, June 6

July Walk: Wednesday, July 4

FIRST ANNUAL OTIS SWISHER MEMORIAL FIELD TRIP

The Rogue Valley Audubon Society will be honoring a longtime advocate for birds and one of the beloved founders of RVAS on Saturday, May 19, with the first annual Otis Swisher Memorial Field Trip. As most members are aware, Otis passed away June 7, 2017 after a brief illness. Otis' close friend, Vince Zauskey, will lead the first field trip to Lower Klamath/Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge, one of Otis' favorite birding sites. Otis not only led several field trips to this refuge in the 1970s and 80s, but also took numerous photographs of birds he later used for programs or for educational purposes. Subsequent annual trips will be led by other RVAS field trip leaders who had birding experiences with Otis.

When: Saturday, May 19, 2018 from 9:30 am—5:00 pm

Where: Worden Truck Stop, 19777 Hwy. 97, Klamath Falls.

Cost: \$20

Leader: Vince Zauskey

Note: The \$300 fee collected will be used for RVAS educational activities Otis Swisher supported.

HOW TO REGISTER: The field trip is limited to 15 participants for safety and practical reasons. Registration begins on May 1 to give everyone an equal chance to participate. Contact Nate Trimble (natetrimble@hotmail.com or 832-419-5086) on or after May 1st to sign up. Nate will confirm enrollment upon receipt of payment. Make check payable to RVAS and mail to:

Nate Trimble
355 ½ High St.
Ashland, OR 97520

Please get payments to Nate no later than May 9 to confirm your place on the list. When the 15 participant limit is reached, a waiting list will be generated in order of requests received. For those who must cancel, please notify Nate by email or call him no later than Monday, May 14th. The first person on the waiting list will then be notified for the vacated slot by Tuesday, May 15th. Nate will send an email with trip details to all participants by Thursday, May 17th.

Siskiyou Field Institute Courses Announced

SFI's 20th Season includes birding and other natural history studies

Siskiyou Field Institute celebrates its 20th year as a natural history educational non-profit with birding, botany, invertebrates, geology and ecology studies. Birding field courses include:

Birding the Wood River by Canoe: June 16

with Klamath Basin birders Dave Haupt and Kevin Spencer

Birds and Botany of the South Warner Wilderness: June 29 – July 1

with botanists Cheryl Beyer and Janel Johnson and birders Dave Haupt and Kevin Spencer – this course is sold out.

Birds, Blooms and Bumbles on Mt. Ashland: July 22

with RVAS members Kristi Mergenthaler and Frank Lospalluto

Birds and Botany of Crater Lake National Park: August 3-5

with Frank Lospalluto and Sean Smith

Marine Biology Field Adventure (includes a pelagic birding trip): August 10-12

Based at the Oregon Institute of Marine Biology in Charleston

SFI will also partner with the Kalmiopsis Audubon Society to offer a weekend series of Curry County/Pistol River field courses in tribute to the late botanist Veva Stansell. Series includes **Botanizing Signal Butte** with Linda Vorobik, **Ecology of the Pistol River** with Larry Basch, **Wildflower Photography** with Lee Webb and **Botanical Sketching** with Linda Vorobik.

The 2018 SFI field course schedule also includes three river rafting trips exploring the natural history of the Illinois, Rogue and Trinity/Klamath Rivers.

For details, visit www.thesfi.org or call 541-597-8530 to request a catalog by mail.



No Field Notes this month!

Frank will provide Field Notes for April and May in the June Newsletter

The Conservation Column

By Juliet Grable

The Cormorants of East Sand Island

In April, Portland Audubon and the Center for Biological Diversity announced the release of a film called *Scapegoat: The Cormorants of East Sand Island*, by Portland filmmaker Trip Jennings. The film documents the Army Corps of Engineers' war on the world's largest Double-crested Cormorant colony, which is located on East Sand Island. You may view the video [here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qL4xecmqlkg&feature=youtu.be):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qL4xecmqlkg&feature=youtu.be>

East Sand Island is a 62-acre island located near the mouth of the Columbia River. The Army Corps of Engineers owns the island and has greatly modified it over the past many decades. Because it hosts large numbers of roosting and nesting colonial waterbirds, the American Bird Conservancy has designated the Island an Important Bird Area.

Since 2004, the East Sand Island Double-crested Cormorant colony has averaged 12,900 breeding pairs. The Army Corps targeted the colony because (according to the agency) the birds were consuming too many salmon smolts (juveniles)—up to 11 million in a single year. In 2015, the Army Corps received a permit to start killing cormorants and destroying nests (by oiling eggs) on East Sand Island. The agency hired Wildlife Services to do the dirty work. So far, Wildlife Services has shot over 5,000 cormorants and destroyed over 6,000 nests. The agency's goal is to reduce the population to between 5,380 and 5,939 breeding pairs.

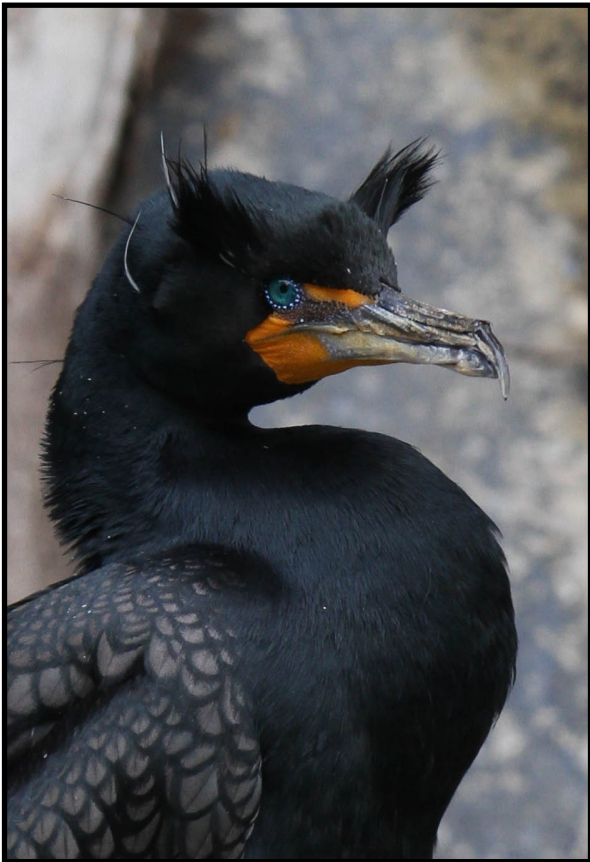


Photo courtesy Mike Dumont, Flickr

In spring of 2016, soon after Wildlife Services resumed the killing for the season, the cormorants began abandoning their nests. By late spring, all of the cormorants were gone. The gulls enjoyed a feeding frenzy, consuming every last egg. Some cormorants did return later in the summer and fall, but the colony failed to form in 2017.

The Army Corps claims this had nothing to do with the shooting and oiling, and instead says the birds fled because they were being harassed by an unusually large number of bald eagles. (Afraid the eagles would drive the cormorants further inland, where they might eat even more young salmon, the agency even dumped a whale carcass near East Sand Island, hoping to lure the eagles away.)

But Dr. Dan Roby, whose research group has monitored terns and cormorants on East Sand Island for many years, says harassment by eagles is not new, and that cormorants are very sensitive to human disturbance. He suspects that the human harassment combined with the eagles proved too much for them.

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Dr. Roby also feels that the cormorant colony could have been reduced using non-lethal means, as was successfully demonstrated with a colony of Caspian Terns on the same island.

Because the cormorant colony has been so altered, the Army Corps announced that it would not be killing any birds in 2018. Instead, the agency applied for permits to destroy up to 500 eggs—if the birds return to the island—and plans to modify the nesting habitat to restrict access.

Here are some excerpts from a press release from the Center for Biological Diversity on the decision:

“We’re pleased the U.S. Army Corps has indicated it will stop shooting adult cormorants in 2018, but that doesn’t go nearly far enough,” said Portland Audubon Conservation Director Bob Sallinger. “The relentless killing and persecution of these cormorants over the past three years has put the world’s largest colony of cormorants at risk of permanent collapse and the entire western population of Double-crested Cormorants at risk. The agencies must stop all nest destruction, habitat modification and harassment at this colony and allow the colony to recover.”

While the agencies claim this project protects federally listed salmon, it is nothing more than a diversion from the real cause of salmon decline: the federal hydropower system. In a report that was hidden from the public until a court order forced its release, Fish and Wildlife Service fish biologists concluded that killing cormorants would do nothing to help recover salmon.

Five times in the last 20 years, federal courts have rejected federal agency plans for recovering salmon in the Columbia Basin because of their failure to adequately address the dams. Just this week, the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals acknowledged the harm dams cause to listed salmon and steelhead, agreeing that dams on the Columbia River must release additional water to help the endangered fish.

What You Can Do

- Watch the [video](#)
- Contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and tell them that their mission is to protect native wild birds, not to permit their wanton slaughter: 503-231-6120
- Call USDA Wildlife Services (the agency actually doing the shooting) and tell them you oppose their killing of cormorants on East Sand Island as well as their lethal control programs, which result in the deaths of more than half a million birds every year: 503-326-2346
- Call the U.S. Army Corps’ public affairs office at 503-808-4510 and let them know what you think of cormorant killing on East Sand Island.
- Contact Governor Brown’s office and tell her you want the State of Oregon to promote non-lethal solutions to salmon recovery: oregon.gov/gov/Pages/share-your-opinion.aspx |



East Sand Island Double-crested Cormorant colony.
Photo courtesy USACE

Bird-Centric Events from Around the Region

PRESENTATIONS AND WALKS WITH WILD BIRDS UNLIMITED

Bird Walk at Lynn Newbry Park

Erin Linton will lead a walk to Lynn Newbry Park along the Bear Creek Greenway near Talent. Meet at Wild Birds Unlimited at 10:00 am, wear layers of clothing appropriate for the weather and good walking shoes that can get wet and muddy. Bring binoculars, a field guide, water and any snacks desired, and paper and pen to record species seen. As space is limited, please come by the store or call 541-772-2107 to reserve your space.

DATE: Wednesday, May 16

TIME: 10:00 am

PLACE: Wild Birds Unlimited, 961 Medford Center, Medford

COST: Free

LEADER: Erin Linton

May and June Chickadee Chats

Calling all "bird nerds"! Join us for our bi-monthly get-together to talk about birds. We'll drink some Bird Friendly coffee or tea, join with fellow birders, and "chat." In May, Erin Linton will be discussing nectar feeding birds, (hummingbirds and orioles). In June, the topic will be Grosbeaks (Black-headed and Evening) No reservations required, just come to share, learn, and join the fun with fellow bird nerds.

DATE: Wednesdays: May 19, May 23, June 13, and June 27

TIME: 10:30 am (May 19 and June 13); 3:30 pm (May 23 and June 27)

PLACE: Wild Birds Unlimited, 961 Medford Center, Medford

COST: Free

LEADER: Erin Linton

The Klamath Basin

Harry Fuller will talk about places for great birding in each season, the best viewpoints for your camera's eye, and some of the other animals you might find in the Klamath Basin. In the Basin you can visit one of the original national wildlife refuges set aside by President Theodore Roosevelt over a century ago. You won't want to miss this program about the Klamath Basin! Harry's classes always fill up fast so register early for your seat.

DATE: Wednesday, May 23

TIME: 6:00—7:00 pm

PLACE: Wild Birds Unlimited, 961 Medford Center, Medford

COST: Free

PRESENTER: Harry Fuller

See more WBU events at <https://medford.wbu.com/>

Bird-centric Events continued on page 10

Bird-Centric Events, cont.

ASHLAND PARKS AND RECREATION CLASSES AND EVENTS

Rogue Valley Bird Day

Rogue Valley Bird Day is the local observance of International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD), which celebrates one of the most important and spectacular events in the life of a migratory bird—its journey between wintering and breeding grounds. Join us at North Mountain Park to celebrate! Enjoy Wildlife Images exhibits where you can meet some magnificent birds of prey. Join the experts for guided bird walks and compete in a bird-calling contest for all ages. For more information on this fun, family-friendly event, please call the North Mountain Park Nature Center at 541.488.6606 or visit **RogueValleyBirdDay.net**. RVAS is a co-sponsor of this event.

DATE: Saturday, May 12

TIME: 8:00 am—noon

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

COST: Free

Summer Saturday Morning Bird Walks at North Mountain Park

Enjoy an opportunity to see and hear a variety of birds that spend the summer in the Rogue Valley on this easy walk through NMP. Binoculars and field guides will be available for check-out. Pre-registration is required at ashland.or.us/register or call the NMP Nature Center at 541-488-6606.

DATE: Saturdays: May 19 | Jun 16 | Jul 21 | Aug 18

TIME: 8:00 am—9:00 am

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

COST: Free (donations welcome)

LEADERS: Local birding experts from the Rogue Valley

KLAMATH, MALHEUR AND SUMMER LAKE: LET'S GO BIRDING!

Join Harry Fuller and co-leader Shannon Rio for a birding adventure! We'll be leaving Ashland on Saturday, June 2nd for a full day of birding from Ashland to Summer Lake and lots of stops along the way, including Collier State Park and Klamath Marsh. We will bird the Summer Lake Refuge that late afternoon and stay at the lodge across from the refuge entrance. Accommodations will be shared rooms (two folks per room) with two double (or two queen) beds. Dinner will be provided while we tally up our bird counts from the day. The next day we head for Malheur Wildlife Refuge where we will spend three nights at Malheur Field Station. Accommodations there are a dormitory style facility with a full kitchen. You will need to bring bedding and towels for this part of the trip. Dinners are provided and one dinner will be at the famous Diamond Hotel. You will need to bring your own breakfasts and lunches. Harry will be renting a van and some folks may bring their own vehicle. If you are interested or have questions, contact Shannon: shannonrio@aol.com or 541-840-4655

DATE: Saturday, June 2--June 6

PLACE: TBA

COST: \$575 (includes \$300 tax deductible contribution to the Klamath Bird Observatory)

LEADERS: Harry Fuller and Shannon Rio

Bird-centric Events continued on page 11

Bird-Centric Events, cont.

SPRING HIKES AT THE TABLE ROCKS

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and Bureau of Land Management Medford District are co-sponsoring a series of free guided educational hikes at the Table Rocks weekends in April and May. Registration is required: <https://TableRockHikes2018.eventbrite.com>

Lower Table Rock Loop Trail: Whoo Comes Out at Night?

BLM wildlife biologist Steve Godwin will lead a night hike to look for and listen to the creatures of the night on the Lower Table Rock Loop Trail (1/2 mile accessible trail) He will attempt to lure Pygmy, Great Horned and Screech Owls—no guarantees! A short presentation about the unique characteristics and adaptations of the common bats, owls and other animals that are active at night in this area will precede the hike. Bring flashlights and wear good hiking shoes.

DATE: Saturday, May 12
TIME: 7:30 pm
PLACE: Lower Table Rock, Medford
COST: Free
LEADER: Steve Goodwin

Lower Table Rock: Bug Out on the Lower Table Rock

Hike with Dr. Bill Schaupp, entomologist with the USDA Forest Service's Forest Health Protection, to observe and discuss the incredible insects that live on or flutter by the Table Rocks. On this hike, you will gain a deeper appreciation for how insects live and their essential role in the environment.

DATE: Saturday, May 19
TIME: 9:00 am
PLACE: Lower Table Rock, Medford
COST: Free
LEADER: Steve Goodwin

BIRD BIOBLITZ IN THE CSNM

Friends of Cascade Siskiyou National Monument will be holding a Bird BioBlitz on May 26, 2018. It's a great chance to raise awareness for the monument, participate in Citizen Science AND see some of our mountain birds in the company of expert leaders! Stay informed on the latest BioBlitz details by signing up for the Friends' newsletter <http://www.cascadesiskiyou.org/subscribe>. See you in the monument on May 26th!

DATE: Saturday, May 26
TIME: TBA
PLACE: Details TBA
COST: Free

8th ANNUAL DEAN HALE WOODPECKER FESTIVAL May 31—June 3 in Sisters, Oregon

During this popular event, festival participants have a choice of 20 guided tours in search of 11 different species of woodpeckers and 200 other birds that make central Oregon a birding hot spot. Sponsored by East Cascades Audubon Society, this festival offers a fun, friendly, casual atmosphere that is all about the birds. The trips are affordable and guided by two local volunteers with the proceeds supporting the many ECAS projects and programs fostering bird conservation. Online registration opens April 2 at 9 am PDT and more information is on the website:

<http://www.ecaclubon.org/dean-hale-woodpecker-festival>

You can email questions to dhwf2018@gmail.com Trips fill quickly!

Rogue Valley Audubon Society Membership

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

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

The Chat newsletter

Website (www.roguevalleyaudubon.org)

Birding forum for posting sightings and active locations

Monthly field trips and bird walks

Educational programs for students and adults

Monitoring of regional conservation issues

Work with local wildlife managers to improve access and bird habitats

Bird counts for national species censuses

Support for local research projects

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

RVAS Membership Form

Please fill in your information:

Name(s): _____

Street: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Email: _____ **Phone #** _____

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

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

Donation

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

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

Rogue Valley Audubon Society
PO Box 8597
Medford OR 97501

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Your favorite Birding App**

Is it Merlin? iBird? Please send me your favorite birding app and a short description of your favorite features. I will compile the results in a future article.

Send to Juliet at
chateditor@gmail.com

Thank you!



**20% OFF One
Regularly-priced Item**

*Valid 4/1/18 thru 12/31/18 at the Medford, OR WBU store. One discount per purchase. Not valid on bird food, previous purchases, optics, gift cards, DSC memberships, or sale items.

961 Medford Center, Medford, OR 97504
541-772-2107

THE CHAT

Newsletter of the
ROGUE VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY
Post Office Box 8597
Medford, OR 97501

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 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.

