

A voice for education and conservation in the natural world
Rogue Valley Audubon Society
www.roguevalleyaudubon.org
Deadline for the March issue is February 20.



RVAS February 2019 Program TUESDAY, February 26 at 7:00 PM

***Wildfire on the Siskiyou Crest:
Fire Ecology & Fire Effects in the Miller Complex***
Presented by Luke Ruediger

This presentation explores the fire ecology of the Siskiyou Mountains. It focuses on the 2017 Miller Complex that burned in the Upper Applegate Valley in and around the Red Buttes Wilderness and on the Siskiyou Crest. Luke Ruediger looks at fire ecology, vegetation response, and interactions between fire and different species found in the Siskiyou Crest region.



Luke has lived his entire life in southern Oregon and has dedicated himself to the region's ecology, biodiversity and the protection of wild landscapes. He is a self-taught naturalist and fire ecologist with significant experience in the backcountry of the Klamath Siskiyou. In 2013, he published a hiking and natural history guide for the Siskiyou Crest titled *The Siskiyou Crest: Hikes, History and Ecology*. He also runs the [Siskiyou Crest Blog](#). He has worked professionally conducting ecological restoration and environmental advocacy work in the Klamath Siskiyou Mountains for the last 20 years. Currently he works for the [Applegate Neighborhood Network](#), a community and conservation based organization in the Applegate Valley. He also runs the Siskiyou Field Office for [Klamath Forest Alliance](#) and coordinates their [Klamath Siskiyou Fire Reports](#) Program.

RVAS BIRDING FIELD TRIPS

First Wednesday Bird Walks at Denman Wildlife Refuge

Leader: Murray Orr

Murray Orr will continue to lead his monthly bird walks at Denman Wildlife Refuge through 2019. 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 in 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 at Sportsman's Warehouse in Medford (Delta Waters and Highway 62). Walks begin at 8:30 am and end before noon.

February Walk: Wednesday, February 6
March Walk: Wednesday, March 6
April Walk: Wednesday, April 3

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**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

RVAS Serves the Greater Community

Our Audubon chapter serves as home base for the birding community in our area. I've been reminded of this several times in the last week as I've looked for the rare species visiting us. As I talk with the birders I approach at these hotspots, I find out they are often from out-of-town and have seen the postings on eBird or our chapter's Rogue Valley Birds Google list. As I write this on Jan. 24, one birder from Grants Pass this morning was very happy to have seen both the American Redstart and the Lark Bunting.

This makes me proud that our members are so active and willing to share their sightings. For example, Jeff Tufts is now compiling and posting a 2019 Jackson County Species List on Rogue Valley Birds (available on the RVAS home page). He updates it often so the link remains near the top. (If you don't see it, just scroll down a little.) Let's keep up the good work.

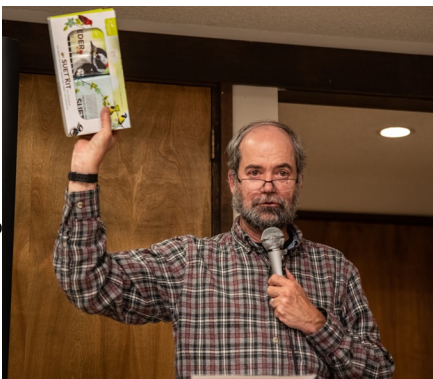
Carol Mockridge, President

Holiday Party a Big Success

By Lynn Jacobs McDonald, Holiday Party Coordinator

Thank you, all participants in the Holiday Potluck and fundraiser on Saturday, 1 December, 2018. Because of all of you, the evening was a successful one. Many board members were on hand to decorate the tables with a bird/nature theme.

Credit: George Peterson



Delicious food was presented and entertainment provided by Jim Livaudais' slide show and the Warblers, who crooned at intervals. Pepper Trail (pictured) was a humorous MC for our auction. Clean-up folks were also greatly appreciated.

This year's event raised over \$3,300 for educational and environmental programs for both children and adults. We are very grateful to our generous bidders who kept the auction lively.

Holiday Party continued on page 3

Holiday Party continued from page 2

We all give thanks to our many donors this year:

Northwest Nature Shop, the House of Mystery, Laurel Hills Golf Course, Del Rio Winery, Rogue Valley Roasting Company, Laura Fleming/Wild Birds Unlimited, Katy Reed, Rocky Mountain Chocolate Company, the Siskiyou Field Institute, Bill McDonald, Laurie Teply, Doug Mason and Wendy Gere, the Ashland Co-op, Bob and Gretchen Hunter, Marge Maddux and Peter and Linda Kreisman, The Blue Door Garden Shop, Emz Blendz, Platt-Anderson Cellars, Carol Doty and Cherry Gregory.

Field trips led by: Alex and Lillian Maksymowicz, Frank Lospalluto, Dick Ashford, Pepper Trail, Harry Fuller, Jeanine Moy, Sally and George Peterson, and Oregon Pelagic Tours.

And our artisans: Nate Trimble, Katy Weaver, Bernadette DeLallo, Marv Teply and Mike Guest. Credit: George Peterson



Medford Christmas Bird Count Summary

By Bob Hunter

On December 15th of last year 65 people drove 352 total miles and walked 57 miles counting 74,430 individual birds and 126 species within the Medford count circle.

There were a number of species that had high counts for the Medford CBC:

Greater White-fronted Goose 122 (previous high 51)
Wild Turkey 280 (previous high 271)
Great Blue Heron 59 (previous high 52)
Long-billed Dowitcher 28 (previous high 22)
Downy Woodpecker 38 (previous high 36)
Oak Titmouse 85 (previous high 72)
Northern Mockingbird 16 (previous high 12)

Wanted: Birding in the Schools Volunteers

Volunteers are needed to assist RVAS Intern Kelsey Hansen on bird walks with elementary school students in April. You'll help students learn how to use binoculars and ID birds at North Mountain Park in Ashland. The walks will last one to two hours.

For more information and to sign up, please email Kelsey at 50khansen@gmail.com

Norm Barret's team had the Avenue G area of Denman and saw two American Bitterns, tying a count high. His team also had the one and only Sora, Spotted Sandpiper and Western Screech Owl for the count. Frank Lospalluto and Kristi Mergenthaler's team found a Harris's Sparrow along Tresham Lane for only the fifth time in a Medford count, and they also had the only Northern Pintail (9). In the old Kelly's Slough area Pepper Trail's team found the only Common Goldeneye (76), Barrow's Goldeneye (1), Tree Swallow (6) and White-throated Sparrow (1). Stewart Janes's team had the only Snow Goose (3), Townsend's Solitaire (2) and Brown-headed Cowbird (2). George Peterson's team had the only Lesser Scaup (6) and Green Heron (1). John Bullock's team had a notable 5 Black-billed Magpies. Bob Hunter's team had the only Dunlin (10). Vince Zauskey's team had the only Loggerhead Shrike off of Highbanks Road, which bird was confirmed after the count by Janet Kelley.

No gulls were seen for the second year in a row and White-tailed Kites were absent though seen in 43 previous counts. The most common bird was the European Starling (26,470) with American Robins coming in a close second at 23,066. Mourning Doves still outnumbered Eurasian Collared Doves 669 to 327.

Thanks to all the team leaders and participants for another successful count.

December 2018/January 2019

Field Notes

By Frank Lospalluto

Happy New Year to everyone! This month we will note a few birds from both December and January. Bob and Carol have written about some of the highlights from the 2018 Christmas Bird Counts. And Jeff Tufts has created a 2019 Jackson County Checklist that records date, observer and location of the first detection for any particular bird species as the year progresses. He has been posting updates on the RVbirds list that can be found on the RVAS website: <http://roguvalleyaudubon.org/>

Obviously that is much of what a reader encounters in the monthly field notes. So I will attempt not to repeat or belabor too many of the sightings from either Jeff's checklist or the CBC summaries. CBC information and results can also be found on the RVAS website.

Before we move on to December, Oregon bird expert David Irons uncovered some Jackson County October bird business recently.

A novice birder near Roxy Ann on Oct. 25, 2018, photographed the first Oregon record of a **ZONE-TAILED HAWK**. It was posted on an Oregon birding Facebook page.

Zone-tailed Hawks mostly reside in South and Central America with only around five percent of the breeding population occurring in the southwest states of New Mexico, Arizona and Texas. A few breeding pairs have been recorded in Nevada, California and even Utah. These five percent are mostly migratory where much of the other populations are residents.

Zone-tailed Hawks like to associate with Turkey Vultures. They look a lot like Turkey Vultures. It is speculated they are vulture mimics who use this mimicry to surprise unsuspecting prey. There are a few records of long-distance wandering birds with a bird being reported in Nova Scotia Sept. 1976¹

I suspect those Turkey Vultures kettles will get a lot more scrutiny in the future.

A good assortment of waterfowl was seen around the area in December during the CBCs but numbers were low as area lakes and ponds were still way below capacity. Recent rains and snows are starting to mitigate the situation somewhat. We can hope more wet systems visit us over the next few months.

Scattered small groups of **Snow Geese** were reported around the area. Three were out in a small pond in the Little Applegate the first part of December (MH). More recently, multiple birds were seen along Hammel and Brophy Roads (HS, JL). Two Snow Geese and a single **ROSS'S GOOSE** were spotted at Emigrant Lake Jan. 14 (VZ). Ross's Goose shows up in the valley often but usually as single birds, and they seem to only

stay a day or two. A couple of good sized flocks of **Cackling Geese** were out along Brophy Rd. during the first week of January (JL, NB).

Good numbers of **Barrow's Goldeneyes** are a delight to view up near the Lost Creek impoundment, aka the "Holy Waters," right now.

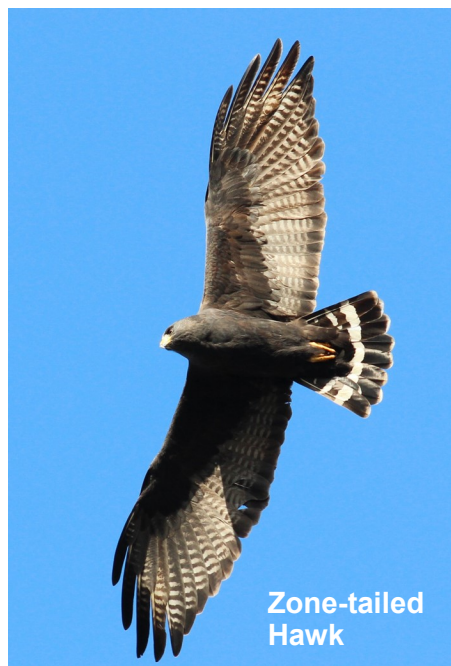
Mountain Quail have been sighted at a number of locations in the New Year from the Little Applegate, Shale City Rd. to the hills above Ashland (MH, AC, BB). A **Sooty Grouse** was found on the Ashland CBC Dec. 29. They can be difficult birds to locate until February when the males start advertising. A **Ruffed Grouse** was seen and heard on the Grizzly Peak Preserve Jan. 5 (TPR). A lone **Band-tailed Pigeon** was seen leaving the state near Siskiyou Summit on the last day of the year (FL). On New Year's Day a small flock was above Strawberry Lane in Ashland (DB). Small numbers of these birds overwinter around the valley while most migrate south.

A lone **Eared Grebe** was on Lost Creek Reservoir Jan. 12 (FL). A **Virginia Rail** visual surprised a few birders near Ashland Pond Jan. 4; this bird is often heard but seldom seen (PT).

Gulls have been scarce since the first part of December. Forty-five **Ring-billed Gulls** were at Emigrant Lake Dec. 5 (JK). A couple of different Ring-billed Gulls have been reported of late at Denman and Emigrant Lake (VZ).

Whetstone Pond has been hosting a group of **Black-Crowned Night-Herons** with up to seven currently being seen (JL). They are cooperative subjects for photographers right now but that won't last.

Field Notes continued on page 5



Credit: Thomas A. Benson

Field Notes continued from page 4

A **Northern Goshawk** was found on Grizzly Peak Preserve Dec. 8 (JK).

White-tailed Kites have been observed at a couple of different locations around the valley recently. A pair has been seen regularly near Butler Creek in the Ashland area and one was spotted off Evans Creek Rd. near Wimer Jan. 8. Another bird was off of E. Dutton Rd. Jan. 13 (JC, MG, KE).

A **Ferruginous Hawk** has been a regular visitor to North Valley View Rd. and the nearby Imperatrice Property. One continues in the Newland Rd. area near the TNC Whetstone Savannah. A **Rough-legged Hawk** has been spotted up on the Imperatrice property again this winter. The Rough-legged Hawk near Howard Prairie continues being seen Jan. 20 at Vesper Meadow (JM).

Great Horned Owls are paired up and hooting about it pretty much everywhere. This is the time of year when **Northern Saw-Whet Owl** males begin advertising. They are more widespread than many birders realize. A single **Short-eared Owl** has been seen at Denman Ave. G Ponds and a bird has again been wintering up on the Imperatrice Property. Good to keep in mind that these and other owls are very sensitive to human approach.

On the Ashland CBC there was an interesting sapsucker originally labeled as a Red-naped Sapsucker. On a follow-up visit, it appeared to be a **Red-naped x Red-breasted Sapsucker** hybrid. We live very near the hybrid zone for these two close relatives. Caution is warranted with any presumed Red-naped (SD, FL).

It has been a good year for **Say's Phoebe**s around the valley. The **Loggerhead Shrike** that was found on the Medford CBC continued into January (KS, BH).

Northern Shrikes have also been found with one continuing near Ousterhout Farm Jan. 12. Recently single birds were seen along Brophy Rd. Jan 16, Denman Hall Tract Jan. 17 and Whetstone Pond Jan. 22 (BH, RT, HS, JK).

A surprising flock of 15 **Horned Larks** were on the mudflats of Agate Lake Jan. 7 (JK). **Tree Swallows** have been seen feeding near Denman Ave. G ponds and Whetstone Pond (VZ, JL, KS, HS). A **Barn Swallow** was out at Ave. G Jan. 17 (NB).

Two likely Tree Swallows were seen during the Ashland CBC (BB).

Two **Rock Wrens** were observed out at Emigrant Lake Jan. 2 (VZ). Some likely overwinter out there. A **Chipping Sparrow** that should have been in southern California or Baja was visiting a feeder in Ashland Dec. 27 (KM). White-throated Sparrows were spotted visiting feeders with a 'white-striped' morph at North Mountain Park first reported Dec. 2 and continuing through Jan. 19. And a young "tan-striped" morph bird was in

west Medford through December and into January (DA, RT, TP).



Credit: Gary Shaffer

An **AMERICAN TREE SPARROW** was found near one of the Denman ponds near Ave G Jan. 10. This was the 7th record for Jackson County according to the Birds of Jackson County 2014 Checklist. The last time one showed up was at the end of old Touvelle Rd. in 2005. They are rare winter visitors west of the Cascades, though they can be found most winters up in some of the northeast counties of Oregon. They breed up in the far north part of the continent, so are not exactly tree sparrows. They were named so because their appearance reminded European settlers of the Eurasian Tree Sparrow. Their population has declined over 50% since 1970. They are migratory with most of the birds wintering in the central U.S. and eastward.²

Stop the press! Another rarity was discovered in Ashland as I was writing these notes. A **LARK BUNTING** was found by Andrew Partin along the bike path near Railroad Park. The bird was seen by a number of birders and it was heard singing. It appeared to be male, likely a first winter bird.



Credit: Janet Kelly

Field Notes continued on page 6

Field Notes continued from page 5

The Lark Bunting is a grassland bird that breeds in the central U.S. It tends to be gregarious and is found wintering in large flocks in the southwest into Mexico and Baja. So most definitely a rare bird to see here.

An **Orange-crowned Warbler** was in east Medford Dec. 13 and another one was in west Medford Jan. 3. Another bird was seen in the area of the American Tree Sparrow Jan. 17 (EL, TP, FL).

On New Year's Day Jennifer Butler spied an **AMERICAN REDSTART** near Ashland Pond. This is the 6th Jackson County record overall and the only winter record in the county. The bird appeared to be female and has entertained many local birders with its fanning tail and foraging forays amidst the brambles—truly a sweet and beautiful bird. Most of her mates are wintering in Baja or central Mexico and even further south into South America. Oregon is at the western edge of their breeding range and birds are sometimes found east of the Cascades, especially northeast into the Willows.



Credit: Nick Viani

Another rare warbler made an appearance during the Ashland CBC: a **PALM WARBLER**. It was discovered by Kent Erskine, Jon Cox and Dick Ashford near the drive that leads up to the Imperatrice Property. This was the first official record as more than one person saw it and could verify. However, it is the second record in the last few years, as Dr. Pepper Trail viewed one from his office window at the Forensics Lab along East Main in Ashland on October 8, 2015. It has been a very good year for Palm Warblers wintering along the Oregon coast. Numbers have sounded like they are near “invasion” levels.

Palm Warblers breed in the boreal forest in bogs and fens in northern Canada and the northern tier of the U.S. They only breed as far west as N.E British Columbia. Most of the birds winter south to Florida and the Caribbean but a small subset winters along the west coast. There are two subspecies of Palm Warbler; the west coast birds are the Western Palm Warbler, *S.p. palmarum*. The primary characteristic in which the subspecies differ is the extent of yellow in the ventral area in

breeding plumage.⁴



Credit: Barry McKenzie

A late **Black-headed Grosbeak** was found at the feeders at North Mountain Park Dec. 2 (KCS). Another late bird is a reported **Western Tanager** being seen coming to a suet feeder in East Medford Jan. 12 (CK).

Thank you to everyone who contributed sightings and information including: Anne Goff, Dick Ashford, Jon Cox, Kent Erskine, Brandon Breen, Carol Mockridge, Jeff Tufts, Janet Kelly, Bob Hunter, Gretchen Hunter, Sonya Daw, Kate McKenzie, Karl Schneck, Norm Barrett, Gary Shaffer, Howard Sands, Russ Namitz, Jim Livaudais, Barry McKenzie, Jennifer Butler, Pepper Trail, Edi Lindner, Sooney Viani, Nick Viani, Kate Cleland-Sipfle, Rene Allen, Sammie Peat, Marion Hadden, Colleen Kent, Andrew Partin, Andre Carvalhaes, Tom Pratum, Tom Phillips, Roxanna Tessman, Vince Zauskey and Violet.

All errors and omissions are my own.

A correction: a Tricolored Blackbird reported on ebird from Ashland Pond Nov. 24 was actually a Red-winged Blackbird.

References:

- ¹ (Johnson, R. R., R. L. Glinski, and S. W. Matteson (2000). Zone-tailed Hawk (*Buteo albonotatus*), version 2.0. in *The Birds of North America* (A. F. Poole and F. B. Gill, Editors). Zone-tailed Hawk (*Buteo albonotatus*) SH Stoleson, G Sadoti - In: Cartron, Jean-Luc, ed. *Raptors of New ...*, 2010 - fs.usda.gov)
- ² (Naugler, C. T., P. Pyle, and M. A. Patten (2017). American Tree Sparrow (*Spizelloides arborea*), version 2.1. In *The Birds of North America* (P. G. Rodewald, Editor). Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, NY, USA., A.L. Contreras, pp. 537-538, American Tree Sparrow in *Birds of Oregon: A General Reference*. D.B. Marshall, M.G. Hunter, A.L. Contreras Oregon State University Press 2003, Corvallis, OR.)
- ³ (Sherry, T. W., R. T. Holmes, P. Pyle, and M. A. Patten (2016). American Redstart (*Setophaga ruticilla*), version 3.0. In *The Birds of North America* (P. G. Rodewald, Editor), A.L. Contreras, American Redstart, pp. 519-520 in *Birds of Oregon: A General Reference* 2003.)
- ⁴ (Wilson Jr., W. H. (2013). Palm Warbler (*Setophaga palmarum*), version 2.0. In *The Birds of North America* (A. F. Poole, Editor))

The Ashland Christmas Bird Count Summary

By Carol Mockridge

There were several days of dense fog in Ashland immediately before the count and heavy rains the day after but on Dec. 29, we enjoyed dry, fairly clear weather. Temperatures ranged from 18 to 45 degrees. New area leaders Rene Allen, Sammie Peat and Janet Kelly joined our regulars. To total of 12,358 individual birds and 119 species were recorded.

Dick Ashford's **Area 1A** Team spotted a rare Palm Warbler perched on fence post at the bottom of a driveway. They also saw the only White-tailed Kites along with seven other raptors species. Junco's sounding alarm calls helped John Alexander's **Area 2** Team spot a "Sharpie" along with eight other raptors. Leader Rene Allen of **Area 3** was surprised to find a Pacific Wren along the Bear Creek Greenway and even a passer -by directed the team to an area where they had just seen an owl.

Area 4 leaders Sammie Peat, Rene Allen and Vince Zauskey found 103 Wood Ducks, six Belted Kingfishers and the only Green-winged Teal and White-throated Sparrow. Thanks to our new GIS area maps, **Area 5** leader Carol Mockridge scouted an open oak area featuring a tall snag with a Merlin perched on top. On count day right on cue, the Merlin was back along with an Acorn Woodpecker poking out of a hole a few feet below. The team was invited into Lee Hood's house to watch a Western Screech Owl on a game cam in her backyard sleeping in his roosting box. While Brandon Breen's **Area 6** team was eating their lunch at Weisinger's Winery, a Peregrine Falcon flew overhead with his lunch. Highlights of the day were two mixed flocks. The first was a flock with all three chickadee species up on Tolman Creek Road and the second was a group of singing Golden-crowned and Ruby-crowned Kinglets and Brown Creepers.

Peter and Linda' Kreisman's **Area 7** team was the only one to record Mountain Quail. Participants named their favorite species sightings as a Barn Owl, Say's Phoebe, Virginia Rail, Prairie Falcon and Varied Thrush.

George and Sally Peterson's **Area 8** team highlights were a Bald Eagle having breakfast, Pacific and Rock Wrens and a Townsend's Solitaire. They also recorded the only Northern Shrike, Rock Wren and Lark Sparrow.

"It was just a beautiful day above the fog with tremendous views," participants on Bob Hunter's **Area 9** team reported. The best bird seen was a Williamson's Sapsucker identified by Barry McKenzie. "We had hoped to get a Rock Wren on Highway 66 but it didn't respond, and we couldn't find the Great Grey Owl that had been seen the day before the count," Bob said. They also saw the only Barrow's and Common Goldeneyes.

Frank Lospalluto in **Area 10** once again found the hard-to-get owls (in 18 degree weather): Great Horned, Spotted, Northern Saw-whet Owl and Northern Pygmy. And he checked off the Sooty Grouse, Purple Finch, Cassin's Finch, Canada Jay, Evening Grosbeak and White-headed Woodpecker.

Count week species added were Golden Eagle, Short-eared Owl, Great Grey Owl, American Redstart and Chipping Sparrow, bringing the species count up to 124.

Thanks to all the team leaders and participants for another successful count.



Team 7 Back row: Tim (Andre's friend), Nick Mantheakis, Max McClaron, Cider, Linda Kreisman, Cheryl Crawford. Front row: Andre Carvalhaes, Billy Crawford, Peter Kreisman

The Conservation Column

By Pepper Trail and Juliet Grable

In early January, the Oregon Department of State Lands held a series of hearings on the Removal-Fill permit for the Jordan Cove Energy Project. The State requires that any person or entity planning to remove or add material to a wetland or waterbody must obtain such a permit, the purpose of which is “to ensure protection and the best use of Oregon’s water resources for home, commercial, wildlife habitat, public navigation, fishing and recreational uses.”

The DSL hearings gave citizens the opportunity to submit public comments, which were limited to two minutes each. The hearings were well-attended, and the vast majority of speakers were opposed to the project and urged the DSL to deny the permit. The DSL is also taking written comments until February 3. Comments may be mailed, faxed or emailed; for more information, please visit this link: <https://www.oregon.gov/dsl/WW/Pages/jordancove.aspx>

Following is the letter RVAS submitted to the Oregon DSL.

To: Oregon Department of State Lands

Re: Application APP0060697

Removal-Fill Permit for the Jordan Cove Energy Project

submitted by:

Carol Mockridge, President
Rogue Valley Audubon Society
PO Box 8597
Medford, OR 97501

Dear Mr. Lobdell:

Please accept the following comments on behalf of the Rogue Valley Audubon Society (RVAS), a chapter of the National Audubon Society with over 600 members in Jackson County.

We urge the Oregon Department of State Lands to deny the Removal-Fill permit for the Jordan Cove Energy Project (Application APP0060697). The Jordan Cove pipeline and terminal threaten catastrophic negative impacts on the waters of Oregon, and the Department of State Lands has a clear legal obligation to deny this permit. These comments will focus on the first criterion that DSL must evaluate, namely whether “the project is consistent with the protection, conservation, and best uses of the water resources of the state.” Clearly, the Jordan Cove project fails to meet these requirements.

Construction of the pipeline is not consistent with the protection and conservation of Oregon’s water resources.

The 229-mile Pacific Connector pipeline would impact Oregon rivers, streams, and wetlands at a minimum of 485 different locations. Of these, 326 are perennial and/or intermittent waterways, seven are lakes and/or ponds, two are estuarine waters, and 150 are wetlands. Techniques for the crossing of wetlands and waterways would include trenching, blasting, fluming, dam and pump, horizontal directional drill (HDD), and other methods. In addition, 95-foot construction easements and 50-foot permanent easements will be created along the pipeline’s full length, and in some places roads will have to be built or widened to gain access to these easements.

Each stream crossing will require removal of riparian vegetation and some combination of dredging, damming, and water diversion. These activities will degrade water quality and aquatic habitat by increasing sediment, by disrupting streambeds essential as habitat for aquatic invertebrates and for fish spawning, by increasing streamside erosion (the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, or FERC, determined that the pipeline would cross over 93 miles of soils with “high or severe water erosion potential”), and by raising water temperatures due to removal of shading vegetation.

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Conservation Column continued from page 8

The pipeline would cross the Klamath River, Lost River, Rogue River, South Umpqua River, Coquille River, and Coos River, as well as such major tributaries as Little Butte Creek, Salt Creek, Cow Creek, Days Creek, both North and South Myrtle Creek, Ollala Creek, and Elk Creek. In all, over 100 streams that would be crossed by the pipeline are fish-bearing, with many home to at-risk populations of salmonids.

Salmonids require cold, clean water to thrive. Warm temperatures can be lethal to young salmon, and fluctuating temperatures can cause physiological stress. Salmonids are keystone species that bring vital nutrients into terrestrial ecosystems, helping sustain both flora and fauna. Dozens of species, including many birds, forage on fish eggs, juveniles, and adults, dispersing these nutrients into the forest. Healthy rivers and streams make for healthy salmon runs, which in turn make for healthy forest ecosystems which support a diversity of creatures.

The Rogue, Umpqua, and Coquille Rivers are world-famous destinations for salmon fishermen. Much of the Umpqua, Coquille, and Coos watersheds are designated critical habitat for the federally-listed Oregon Coastal Coho salmon. The FERC analysis concluded that the federally endangered Lost River and shortnose suckers would also be adversely affected by the pipeline.

Horizontal directional drilling can cause frac-outs.

Horizontal directional drilling (HDD) is proposed to take the pipeline under three major rivers — the Coos, Rogue, and Klamath — and to make two large crossings at the Coos Bay estuary near the LNG terminal. During HDD, a pilot hole is filled with drilling fluid to keep it from collapsing. But “frac-outs” — unintentional releases of mud and drilling fluid which occur when the drilling hole is overpressurized— can smother vegetation, fish eggs, and other organisms near the drilling sites.

In a previous application to FERC, the company [rejected using HDD](#) to cross the estuary, citing the length of the crossing, underground topography, and the presence of potentially unstable soils as factors that make the process riskier. Instead, they initially planned to cross the estuary just once, using the “wet open-cut” method.

Yet Jordan Cove has not explained why, if they determined that HDD was not feasible then, why it would be now, especially since they’re relying on the same set of geological test bores as before.

Pipeline construction may impair water quality and harm drinking water supplies.

Although Pacific Connector Pipeline is required to obtain approval for construction practices which protect waterways, RVAS is concerned that these will be inadequate and in any case dependent on proper implementation, maintenance and oversight, which are often lacking. To support our concerns, we summarize below recent documented water quality violations for several pipelines under construction in East Coast and Atlantic states:

Atlantic Coast Pipeline: The West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection [cited](#) the owners of the Atlantic Coast Pipeline for failing to maintain erosion control devices and failure to uphold the state’s water quality rules by allowing sediment-laden water to collect at the bottom of a tributary.

Mountain Valley Pipeline: A watchdog group has identified over 150 [water quality violations](#) on the construction of the Mountain Valley pipeline. In many cases, *approved erosion and sediment control devices were overwhelmed by storms, allowing sediment to pollute multiple waterways.*

The West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has issued several [notices of violation](#) to Mountain Valley Pipeline, Inc. for unsatisfactory sediment control, and on July 9, 2018, the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality issued a [comprehensive notice of violations](#) to EQT Corp, which owns the pipeline, citing violations of the Virginia Stormwater Management Act, the Virginia Erosion and Sediment Control Law, the Virginia Water Protection Permit Program and the Clean Water Act. Specific violations include failure to build approved erosion and sediment control structures, failure to repair damaged sediment control facilities, and inadequately maintained erosion control devices, which released sediment-laden water into two streams. In addition, the notice cites areas where stormwater overwhelmed barriers and flowed into four streams.

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Conservation Column continued from page 9

Rover pipeline: In 2017, the State of Ohio sued Rover Pipeline LLC for “illegally discharging millions of gallons of drilling fluids into the state’s waterways” and for harming a wetland that requires the state’s highest level of protection. The West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection has served the company with multiple notices of violation and two cease-and-desist orders for failing to maintain erosion controls and for improperly installed silt fences and other perimeter controls. The company has agreed to pay the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection \$430,000 for water pollution violations in the state, but in our view, no dollar amount can be placed on water resources, and the damage was already done.

We do not believe it is possible to guarantee that these types of incidents will not occur during the construction of the Pacific Connector pipeline, and that aquatic habitat and drinking water sources, including private wells, will not be threatened.

The creation of the LNG terminal will fundamentally reshape the bay.

The impacts of the Jordan Cove project to Coos Bay and its estuary are equally severe and unacceptable. Creating the access slip and terminal on the North Spit of the Coos Bay estuary, as Pembina has proposed, would require scooping out 5.7 million cubic yards of material — over half a million dump-truck loads. The existing navigation channel through the estuary would be widened, converting high-quality shellfish habitat into less productive deep water zones, and the presence of LNG tankers would limit access to boaters — an important public trust right. Over 25 acres of intertidal and subtidal habitat would be destroyed, and although mitigation is proposed, the restoration of ecological function in such habitats is notoriously difficult.

Additional Concerns: Climate Change and Earthquake Hazard

In closing, we are compelled to mention two additional points that may be outside the scope of this DSL review, but which should by themselves compel the rejection of this project.

The Jordan Cove project would effectively become the biggest fossil fuel polluter in Oregon, stimulating hundreds of additional fracking wells in Canada and Colorado and adding to the burden of greenhouse gases in our atmosphere. Fracking activity releases methane, a greenhouse gas which is many times more potent than carbon dioxide. We should be doing everything we can to limit emissions. This project goes against Oregon’s stated greenhouse gas goals and will contribute to the climate change conditions that are producing devastating wildfire seasons and harming our health and our environment.

Finally, the only comment to be made about any proposal to locate a liquefied natural gas terminal on the Oregon coast adjacent to a populated area vulnerable to the great Cascadia earthquake is: insane.

We urge you to deny the Removal-Fill permits and protect the waters of Oregon, and the creatures and communities that depend on them.

RVAS Birds and Beers

Rogue Valley Audubon has started up a new Birds and Beers gathering! This informal get-together will be held every few months at various locations around the Rogue Valley and is geared toward anyone with a general interest in birds. This is a casual gathering for folks to chat with fellow birders about anything bird related. Topics may include upcoming field trips, current research, interesting sightings, conservation initiatives, favorite birding hotspots, anything you want to discuss. This new group will hopefully be a chance for birders to meet one another and enjoy a relaxing evening with one another over birds and beers.

DATE: Tuesday, February 12
TIME: 7:00—9:00 pm
PLACE: Howiee’s on Front, 16 North Front Street, Medford
COST: Free

Birdathon 2019: The Ultimate Guide

By Gretchen Hunter

A lot of “our” birds who, for some unknown reason, have gone south for the winter, are beginning to think about coming back. We hope they’ll get here in time for the RVAS Birdathon, the first weekend in May (**6:00 pm May 3 to 6:00 pm May 4**). As chair of the Birdathon Committee¹, I’d like to suggest that you too start planning for spring by assembling an all-star team to join this important RVAS fundraiser² and by the way, join the fun.³ By popular demand, my Committee has drawn up a list of rules to help make sure this year’s contest is transparent and fair.

Basic rules

1. A standard team is four people but your team may have more or fewer members. It may include support members, such as public relations director, fund-raiser, caterer, dog(s), dog handler(s), multiple shift workers, and graduate students (or children) to carry spotting scopes and snacks. In other words: who’s counting?
2. You may only count species (not individual birds) between 6:00 pm Friday (May 3) and 6:00pm Saturday (May 4). You don’t have to bird the whole 24 hours, camp out, use a car, use binoculars, or even actually leave your house⁴.
3. You may only count species seen in Jackson County.
4. Unless you’re a one-person team, two people have to identify each species (by ear and/or eye). If you happen to see a Great Kiskadee while answering a call of nature, but the rest of the team is respecting your privacy, well, too bad.
5. Teams may not split up into separate groups, even if someone is in a snit because no one agrees with that Great Kiskadee ID.
6. Teams should seek pledges⁵ for each species identified, or for a fixed sum. The team that raises the most money will win the coveted Great Horned Owl trophy, handcrafted by Jon Deason. The Great Greys own it now, and my Committee has reason to believe they won’t give it up without a fight. So you better get out there and raise some pledges!
7. All competitors must exhibit the most courteous, friendly behavior at all times, except possibly at the get-together afterwards (at Jackson Creek Pizza in downtown Medford).

In The Interest of Fairness

It has come to the Committee’s attention that certain teams make use of advantages that other teams might not have available. Therefore the Committee recommends that:

1. Any team that consists of more than one PhD ornithologist may choose to deduct 10 species from their total count (but not from their pledges).
2. Due to potential conflicts of interest, grad students may decline to confirm sightings by their major professor if she/he is also on the team, with no repercussions from said professor. And vice versa.
3. No team may use a parabolic microphone on the roof of their car to pick off species without leaving the car.
4. You can’t count any bird found via a tracking collar, unless you notify all other teams where to find it.
5. All birds counted must be alive, allowed by eBird as a countable species (e.g., no chickens), and not in a mist net.

¹ Consisting of: me.

² The 2018 Birdathon raised \$4,146, according to the treasurer’s report. Previous issues of the Chat describe the amazing projects this money supported.

³ It’s just a friendly competition! Except for a certain team that somehow eked out a win last year, but who shall remain nameless because as you all know, I am way too courteous a team-player to ever trash-talk any other team.

⁴ In fact, the Committee recommends that last year’s winners, especially the criminal ornithologist, just stay home.

⁵ As a typical example, if a team identifies 100 species, and someone pledged \$1,000 per species, they’d raise \$100,000.

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Birdathon continued from page 11

Handicapping

Some teams in the past have elected to handicap themselves by competing in a particularly virtuous and/or ethical manner. Thus, we recommend some optional handicapping rules:

1. Any team that follows the ABA code of ethics⁶ – especially by avoiding any disturbance such as audio (vocal or playback) during this critical courtship and nesting season– may choose to add 41 species⁷ to their count.
2. Any team that chooses to compete via bicycle or other non-motorized, non-polluting craft may choose to add 20 species to their count.

Details

To register your team, have the coordinator find you a team, or to ask questions, OR if you'd like to petition the committee for a waiver or handicap not defined above, please contact any member of the Committee at (541) 613-5940 (phone or text), or email: gretchenhunter@embargmail.com
We are looking forward to another outstanding Birdathon and hope to see you there.

⁶ <http://listing.aba.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/abaethics.pdf>

⁷ 41 may appear to be arbitrary, but note that the "No playback woodpeckers" would have tied for first place with the Falcons in 2018. Coincidence?

Rogue Valley Audubon Society Membership Form

Mail check to: Rogue Valley Audubon Society, PO Box 8597, Medford OR 97501
or join online with PayPal at www.roguevalleyaudubon.org
Welcome to the flock! We are a dedicated group.

____ Regular Membership (\$20) ____ Printed newsletter (\$20) ____ Total Donation (amount)

Name(s): _____

Address _____

City, State: _____ Zip _____

Email (required to receive online newsletter and other RVAS announcements):

Phone # _____

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

- ☐ Check here if you wish to be sent a printed copy of The Chat by U.S. mail. Add \$20 to membership check.
- ☐ Check here if you wish to volunteer for Rogue Valley Audubon.
- ☐ Check here to opt out of all electronic communications from Rogue Valley Audubon.

BIRD-CENTRIC EVENTS FROM AROUND THE REGION

PRESENTATIONS AND WALKS WITH WILD BIRDS UNLIMITED

Bird Walk: Mingus Pond

Erin Linton will be leading a walk to Mingus Pond along the Bear Creek Greenway in Central Point. 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, along with paper and pen or smart phone to record/eBird species seen. As space is limited to 15, please reserve your spot today by calling the store at 541.772.2107 or by coming in to register.

DATE: Wednesday, February 20
TIME: 10:00 am
PLACE: Wild Birds Unlimited, 961 Medford Center, Medford
COST: Free
LEADER: Erin Linton

Chickadee Chat: Bluebirds

Erin Linton will lead a chat about bluebirds this month. No registration is required, just show up to learn, share, and have fun with fellow bird nerds!

DATE: Wednesday, February 13 and 27
TIME: 10:30 am (Feb. 13); 3:30 pm (Feb. 27)
PLACE: Wild Birds Unlimited, 961 Medford Center, Medford
COST: Free

Monthly Educational Talk: Birding 101

If you are new to birding, this short and sweet program will give you some tools to go forth and prosper as a new bird watcher. In this class you will learn about some of southern Oregon's most common bird species, how to use binoculars and field guides, and engage in some fun activities to get your eyes adjusted for the skies. As space is limited, please reserve your spot today by calling the store at 541.772.2107 or by coming in to register.

DATE: Wednesday, February 20
TIME: 6:00—7:00 pm
PLACE: Wild Birds Unlimited, 961 Medford Center, Medford
COST: Free
PRESENTER: Emily Lind

FRIENDS OF THE CASCADE-SISKIYOU NATIONAL MONUMENT

Winter Wildlife Walk at Vesper Meadows

Join us for a Winter Wildlife Walk led by Jeanine Moy. Enjoy the serenity of the snow and learn about the hidden worlds of winter in the Cascade hills. We'll explore the wildlife habitat of mixed conifer forest, and upland meadows on the north side of the Monument, the Dead Indian Plateau. To become more familiar with the local winter ecology, our hike will focus on mammal and bird tracking, making habitat observations, and reading the wider landscape for clues of the land-use history. Please wear appropriate water-proof layers, gloves, boots, and bring a day-pack with water and lunch. Some refreshments will be provided. Field guides and camera encouraged! Self-organized carpool available from the Northwest Nature Shop in Ashland at 9:00 am. For more information and to RSVP please visit the EventBrite link listed below.

DATE: Saturday, February 23
TIME: 9:30 am—2:00 pm
PLACE: Buck Prairie II (15.4 miles up Dead Indian Memorial Road from Highway 66)
COST: Free
LEADER: Jeanine Moy
RSVP: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/winter-wildlife-walk-tickets-55003755714>

Bird-centric events continued on page 14

Bird-centric Events continued from page 13

40th ANNUAL WINTER WINGS FESTIVAL

Hosted by the Klamath Basin Audubon Society, Winter Wings brings together birders and photographers of all stripes to learn and explore with top-notch professionals and experienced local guides. The Klamath Basin is renowned for its massive wintering population of Bald Eagles, but is prime habitat for many other raptors, as well as a stunning abundance and diversity of waterfowl. In 2019 the festival will feature three dynamic keynoters: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service forensic ornithologist Pepper Trail; Canon U.S.A. Explorer of Light and author George Lepp; and writer and artist Julie Zickefoose. Join these charismatic speakers and many other skilled presenters for an array of field trips, workshops, presentations, and receptions that highlight the wonders of the Klamath Basin in winter. Learn more and register at <http://winterwingsfest.org/>

DATE: Thursday, February 14--Sunday, February 17

PLACE: Oregon Institute of Technology, Klamath Falls

COST: Varies; some events are free

ASHLAND PARKS AND RECREATION EVENTS AND CLASSES

Project FeederWatch

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

DATE: Alternate Saturdays: Feb 2, 16; Mar 2, 16, 30

TIME: 9:00—10:00 am

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

COST: Free

LEADERS Local birding experts

KBO Short-Eared Owl Survey

Klamath Bird Observatory is looking for citizen scientists to help survey for Short-eared Owls throughout Oregon for the Western *Asio flammeus* Landscape Study (WAFLS), the world's largest survey for Short-eared Owls. This project spans eight western states and is designed to gather information to better evaluate the population status of the Short-eared Owl.

The Oregon Conservation Strategy has identified this species as a "*Species of Greatest Conservation Need*" and National Audubon Society Climate Initiative has identified it as "*Climate Endangered*." These surveys are critical to fill information gaps for this species throughout the western United States. Results will directly influence high-value conservation actions by state and federal agencies. Volunteer and help make a valuable impact!

Volunteers will enjoy rural Oregon at twilight while completing two road-based surveys during late winter and early spring. The surveys consist of driving on secondary roads, and stopping at 8 to 11 points to complete a five-minute survey. At each point volunteers will record detections of Short-eared Owls as well as some brief habitat information. The entire survey is completed within 90 minutes. Training material will be provided and no experience is necessary to volunteer. Participants will need to follow field and data entry protocols, have use of a vehicle, smartphone or GPS device, and be able to identify a Short-eared Owl.

Registration is now open and surveys start March 1. For any questions, please contact Ellie Armstrong at eea@KlamathBird.org. To sign up and for more information, visit the program website:

<http://www.avianknowledge-northwest.net/citizen-science/short-eared-owls>

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THE CHAT

Newsletter of the
ROGUE VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

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