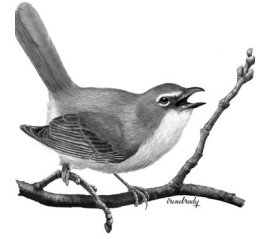


A voice for education and conservation in the natural world  
Rogue Valley Audubon Society  
[www.roguevalleyaudubon.org](http://www.roguevalleyaudubon.org)  
Deadline for the November issue is October 20



## OCTOBER Program

Tuesday, October 22 at 7:00 pm

**“MONARCHS AND MILKWEED”**

**Presented by Stephanie Hazen**

Stephanie Hazen moved to Salem, Oregon in 1977 soon after graduating from Colorado State University School of Veterinary Medicine. In Salem she owned and operated a small animal/exotics veterinary hospital until retiring in 2011. Both Stephanie and her husband Ray Temple are active in Salem Audubon Society and have served in various offices and committees for several years.

A move to the farming country on the outskirts of Salem in 2011 put Ray and Stephanie in touch with Lynda Boyer who produces seeds from native plants for large-scale restoration projects. While monitoring Western Bluebird nest boxes around the milkweed production fields, they counted 25 Monarch butterflies nectaring and laying eggs on those plants in 2015.

This experience caused Stephanie to notify Oregon Field Guide. A videographer from the program came to video the butterflies, and some of Stephanie's own video made it into the resulting Field Guide story on Monarchs in Oregon.

Fast forward to 2017 when Stephanie and Ray raised, tagged and released 50 Monarchs from their back yard. One of the tagged butterflies was reported that winter in Santa Cruz, California six times. This experience, and the knowledge that the West Coast population of Monarchs has declined to the point the species is being considered for listing as Endangered, has caused the couple to be advocates for the Monarch butterfly.

Since then Stephanie has given her talk entitled “Monarchs and Milkweed” more than 25 times across the state. She will bring both milkweed seeds and plants to the talk for people to establish their own butterfly gardens. Her talk will touch on the Monarch butterfly life cycle, how to raise milkweed, and the Citizen Science project involving tagging butterflies to track their migration to the California coast.



Stephanie Hazen, Ray Temple and Cookie

## OFFICERS and DIRECTORS

**President:** Carol Mockridge, 360-829-7505  
[mockridge50@hotmail.com](mailto:mockridge50@hotmail.com)

**Vice-President:** George Peterson,  
[sgpeterson@msn.com](mailto:sgpeterson@msn.com)

**Secretary:** Emily Lind  
[emily.krista.lind@gmail.com](mailto:emily.krista.lind@gmail.com)

**Treasurer:** Susan Stone  
[weaverstone86@gmail.com](mailto:weaverstone86@gmail.com)

Jon Deason	<a href="mailto:jdeason39@gmail.com">jdeason39@gmail.com</a>
Laura Fleming	<a href="mailto:wbumedford1@gmail.com">wbumedford1@gmail.com</a>
Wendy Gere	<a href="mailto:wendy.gere@gmail.com">wendy.gere@gmail.com</a>
Nate Trimble	<a href="mailto:nateltrimble@hotmail.com">nateltrimble@hotmail.com</a>
Erin Ulrich	<a href="mailto:eulrich44@gmail.com">eulrich44@gmail.com</a>

## COMMITTEE CHAIRS

**Archivist:** Linda Kreisman, [linda@ashlandhome.net](mailto:linda@ashlandhome.net)

**Annual Picnic:** Wendy Gere, [wendy.gere@gmail.com](mailto:wendy.gere@gmail.com)

**Birdathon:** Gretchen Hunter, [gretchenhunter@embarqmail.com](mailto:gretchenhunter@embarqmail.com)

**Book Sales:** Sooney Viani, 541-482-5146

**Chat Editor:** Juliet Grable, [chateditor@gmail.com](mailto:chateditor@gmail.com)

**CBC-Ashland:** Carol Mockridge,  
[mockridge50@hotmail.com](mailto:mockridge50@hotmail.com) & Emmalisa Whalley

**CBC-Medford:** Bob Hunter, 541-826-5569

**Conservation:** Pepper Trail, [ptrail@ashlandnet.net](mailto:ptrail@ashlandnet.net) &  
Juliet Grable, [julietgrable@gmail.com](mailto:julietgrable@gmail.com)

**Education:** Erin Ulrich, [eulrich44@gmail.com](mailto:eulrich44@gmail.com)

**Field Notes:** Jeff Tufts, [jeffreytufts@yahoo.com](mailto:jeffreytufts@yahoo.com)

**Field Trips:** Nate Trimble, [nateltrimble@hotmail.com](mailto:nateltrimble@hotmail.com)

**Holiday Party:** Lynn McDonald  
[junelynnjacobs@gmail.com](mailto:junelynnjacobs@gmail.com)

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

**Outreach & Tabling:** Laura Fleming,  
[wbumedford1@gmail.com](mailto:wbumedford1@gmail.com)

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

**Programs:** Katy Reed, 541-245-5095

**Publicity:** Wendy Gere, [wendy.gere@gmail.com](mailto:wendy.gere@gmail.com)

**Volunteers:** Linda Kreisman, [linda@ashlandhome.net](mailto:linda@ashlandhome.net)

## CHAPTER COMMUNICATIONS

**E-mail:** [roguevalleyaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:roguevalleyaudubon@gmail.com)

**The Chat:** [chateditor@gmail.com](mailto:chateditor@gmail.com)

**Webmaster:** Tom Pratum [tkp9551@gmail.com](mailto:tkp9551@gmail.com)

**Web Site:** [www.roguevalleyaudubon.org](http://www.roguevalleyaudubon.org)

**Facebook:** <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

Fall is a time of endings and beginnings. As summer winds down, the Neotropical birds depart from our area, and school starts anew for our own young. I am always sad when I no longer see the “visiting” birds in my yard—the Black-headed Grosbeaks and their inexperienced young pecking at the wrong end of the bird feeder, the beautiful Western Tanagers bathing in my fountain, the Yellow-rumped Warblers darting about in the trees, and the gorgeous Lazuli Buntings singing at the tops of trees, to name a few. And at the same time I am thankful for the year-round “regular” birds that stay in my yard; the enterprising juncos, the ill-mannered Steller’s Jays, the perpetually-present Lesser Goldfinches, the nervous Mourning Doves, and adorably busy Red-breasted Nuthatches.

We were fortunate to see a delightful overlap of fall’s endings and beginnings on Hedrick Middle School’s Swift Watch Night: the twilight roosting of Vaux’s Swifts during their migration south. Young people at Hedrick Middle School, occupied with school, activities, and new friendships were able, one evening, to witness the phenomenon of hundreds of funny looking little birds descending into the school chimney after sunset. The large flock of swifts dove, fluttered, and circulated in tornadic whirls in the sky for minutes after sunset before dropping into the chimney’s depths. When one is a middle schooler, who thinks of birds at all or can imagine the onerous journey of migration? Yet the teachers and administrators at Hedrick Middle School, in wonderful cooperation with the Rogue Valley Audubon Society, have helped, perhaps, to open the eyes of some young people to the “everyday” marvels that birds provide for us.

Thank you for your support for our organization. Your participation, donations, and dues all help to inform people of all ages to the wonder of birds in our beautiful region, and their journeys.

Susan Stone

## HOLIDAY PARTY TIME

As you all know, our holiday gathering is coming sooner than we think.

If you would like to consider something like we had last year – the jewelry and ornament sale – please contact me for pick up or delivery.

Thank you all!

Lynn McDonald, Chairperson  
(541) 708-0532

## Vaux's Swifts: Bringing a School and Community Together

By Sarah Norton

"Whoa! Look how much there are!" exclaimed a young boy watching with his family as a growing flock of Vaux's Swifts gathered at Hedrick Middle School's chimney. The flock of swifts circled the school in a graceful ballet, gathering in size until it was time to drop into the old brick chimney. Visitors watched in awe as the swifts funneled into the chimney just after sunset, with the final swift receiving cheers and applause from the onlookers. It is September, and the Vaux's Swift migration has arrived in southern Oregon.

For this year's fall migration, Rogue Valley Audubon Society (RVAS) oversaw and coordinated the chimney monitoring and education programs at Hedrick Middle School (HMS). Monitoring at Hedrick was conducted by myself as Rogue Valley Audubon's outreach biologist, RVAS Intern Brenda Miller, and Board President Carol Mockridge, along with several local volunteers. Each evening we stationed ourselves at the school's back lot to greet visitors and await the arrival of the swifts. With clickers and binoculars in hand, we would count swifts as they fluttered or speedily dropped into the large chimney. Our highest count was on September 12th with 3,242 swifts roosting in the HMS chimney.

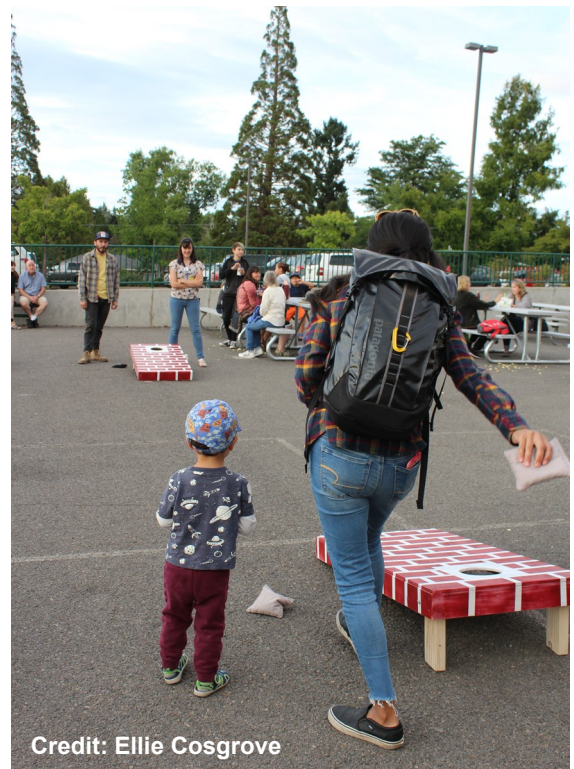
Since migration began, we have been able to reach out to individual visitors and Hedrick Middle School students about Vaux's Swifts and the Rogue Valley Audubon Society. Each evening our monitors have been joined by groups of visitors, sometimes numbering in the thirties. Families and friends within the local community have come out frequently to watch the swifts and enjoy dinner. One group even had a pizza party! Several students joined us in the evenings as well to help count and monitor the swifts after Brenda and I had presented in the seventh grade science classes, reaching 150 students. Along with the presentations, Rogue Valley Audubon provided curriculum for a team from the seventh grade faculty to teach in math, science, language arts, and social studies that revolved around Vaux's Swifts.

Rogue Valley Audubon's biggest outreach project about the importance of Vaux's Swifts and roost sites this year was partnering with and supporting the faculty of Hedrick Middle School's second annual Vaux's Swift Family Fun Night. Rogue Valley Audubon tabled at the event and provided stylish swift headbands, carnival prizes for kids, and two newly constructed Vaux's Swift-themed cornhole games. In attendance for the event was Principal Beth Anderson and new Medford school superintendent Dr. Bret Champion. Hedrick Middle School also provided carnival games, music, snacks, and food truck vendors. Overall, it was a fun and lively event with an estimated 200 people in attendance to watch the swift migration. Next year, the swifts will continue their annual fall migration, and Rogue Valley Audubon looks forward to the continuation of bringing a community together to learn about and admire these tenacious little birds.

*Vaux's Swifts continued on page 4*



Outreach Biologist Sarah Norton explains how to count swifts.



*Vaux's Swifts continued from page 3*

Volunteers also monitored three other chimneys in the Rogue Valley and reported the data to Vaux's Happening. For unknown reasons, the big chimney at Voorhies Mansion at EdenVale Orchards, which has been a significant fall migration roost the past few years, had virtually no swift visitors this year. In August, we recorded only two days that Vaux's Swifts used the chimney at very low numbers and no swifts were observed in early-mid September. Where did they go? Did a Merlin scare them off?

Meanwhile, in Jacksonville at the Nunan Estates the population numbers this fall are significantly higher than last year. Instead of 10 or so bird visitors, we have been seeing 60 or more birds. A new roost in Medford was documented at a church (Iglesia Adventista de Septimo Dia Hispana de Medford) across from McLoughlin Middle School, with up to 75 fall visitors although we don't have many data points.



Credit: Ellie Cosgrove

## Tabling for RVAS is Fun!

**By Laura Fleming**

Tabling is a fun way to connect with our next generation of birders. I am often both alarmed and encouraged each time I table an event—alarmed at the lack of knowledge and awareness the general public displays about birds and nature in general, and encouraged when I engage with a budding youngster who is excited about birds and the natural world. I always come away realizing how crucial it is to be an ambassador for nature, connecting people to birds and protecting their habitats. We are always looking for more volunteers to help table events throughout the valley. If you are interested in being an “Audubon ambassador,” contact Laura Fleming at 541-772-2107 or sign up on the “Interested in Tabling” sheet at any chapter meeting. Signing your name doesn’t commit you to any particular event. I will contact you to see if you are interested and available as tabling needs arise.

The following are events that we have previously tabled or have been asked to table. If you have other ideas/ events you think we should be involved in, please let me know.

- Rogue Valley Earth Day (Science Works Museum)--late April
- Master Gardener's Spring Fair (Jackson City Fairgrounds)--early May
- Rogue Valley Bird Day (North Mountain Park)--mid-May
- Festival on the Rogue (Shady Cove)--early June (requested for 2020)
- Vaux's Happening Swift Carnival (Hedrick's Middle School, Medford)--early September
- Bear Creek Salmon Festival (North Mountain Park)--early October
- Friends of the Animal Shelter Holiday Fair (Phoenix Plaza?)--early December (requested 2019)

## Jackson County Field Notes

August 20 — September 19, 2019

By Jeff Tufts

This month's field notes column will take a slightly unorthodox approach to reporting the birds of Jackson County. We'll start with a review of selected species that have either departed, or are in the process of departing, with tropical locations as their probable destinations.

This is another way of saying that unusual species were not much in evidence during the last month. We had a **Snowy Egret**, a **Forster's Tern**, and a **Black-chinned Hummingbird**. That's about it. More on them later.

*The following are neotropical migrants that are basically gone from our area, and are rarely seen in September:*

**Western Kingbird** -- Amazingly, there hasn't been a single eBird report of this species this month in Jackson County, and only SIX from the entire month of August. Latest report was on Aug. 22 from Emigrant Lake (JK). Latest all-time record was a bird seen in the Pioneer Hills on Sept. 27.

**Ash-throated Flycatcher** -- Another species with zero September reports this year, and only FIVE from August with the latest being Aug. 15 near Eagle Point (HS). Latest all-time record was Sept. 30.

**Bullock's Oriole** -- A few individuals have been known to overwinter in Jackson County, but this year's birds were gone before the end of August. Again, zero eBird reports in September. Latest report was a single bird at the Rogue Valley Manor Aug. 22 (AN). Eight years ago a Bullock's Oriole was seen near Sardine Creek on Oct. 9.

**Purple Martin** -- Reports of potential breeding birds earlier in the year were encouraging, but the only location with a confirmed report of an active nest and young being fed was the Hwy 66 pull-out historically known as the "Lewis's Woodpecker spot." No Purple Martins were reported to eBird in September, and there were only two reports from August with the latest being a single bird at the Kirtland Road ponds Aug. 5 (AL). Six Purple Martins were seen close to the Rogue River Preserve Aug 1. The reporting party was unable to determine if any were juveniles, but there is a traditional nest cavity in that area. Latest ever record for this species is from Emigrant Lake Aug. 13 four years ago.

**Nashville Warbler** -- Hundreds of this species reported through July, but only scattered reports in August and just two so far this month with the latest being a single bird Sept. 4 from the Siskiyou Mountain Park/Oredson-Todd Woods area (FL, KM). Two years ago a

Nashville was seen at North Mountain Park on Oct. 11.

*Now for some migrants that are still in the area and may continue to be seen through the end of September.*

**Willow Flycatcher** -- Several reports this month with the latest being from the Ousterhout Farm on the 17th (BH). Latest ever report in the eBird database was from Emigrant Lake Oct. 2, 2011.

**Western Wood-Pewee** -- Many reports this month including one from the 19th at Wagner Park in Talent (MC). Latest ever record is a bird seen at Agate Lake on Oct. 9, 2011.

**Olive-sided Flycatcher** -- Scattered reports in August and four so far in September with the latest being a single bird outside of Eagle Point on the 18th (HS). Twelve years ago an Olive-sided was spotted at Ashland Pond on Oct. 5.

*The following species are known to regularly appear in the area in small numbers through late September and early October.*

**Western Tanager** -- Dozens of reports thus far this month, and you can expect to see small numbers of this species through October. Latest ever report in the Jackson County eBird records was from Lithia Park Nov. 6, 2013.

**Black-throated Gray Warbler** -- Multiple reports thus far in September, and eBird records indicate that this species will continue to be regularly seen through mid-October. Latest ever report was from Ashland Pond Oct. 26, 2014.

**Common Yellowthroat** -- First to arrive and last to leave. Excluding the three species that regularly overwinter in Oregon (Yellow-rumped, Orange-crowned and Townsend's), Common Yellowthroat is almost always the first warbler species seen in the spring and the last to leave in the fall. This year the first report was from Emigrant Lake on Mar. 24 (FL), and we can expect at least a few birds to linger into November. Last year one was seen at Lynn Newbry Park in Talent on Nov. 10.

That's enough about neotropical migrants. Let's move on to waterbirds. By the time you read this column, large flocks of **Greater White-fronted Geese** will have been seen and heard, and undoubtedly some will settle at one of the valley reservoirs for at least a few days. Emigrant Lake, Agate Lake and Lost Creek Lake are the obvious stopover spots.

Perhaps the most common small waterfowl in our area through fall and winter are **American Wigeon** and **Ring-necked Duck**. Curiously, not a single one of the latter has been reported to eBird at the time of this writing, and there have been only three reports (total 14 birds) of American Wigeon.

*Field Notes continued on page 6*

### Field Notes continued from page 5

Small numbers of **Green-winged Teal**, **Ruddy Duck**, **Northern Pintail** and **Northern Shoveler** have appeared at local ponds. And a single **Blue-winged Teal** was at the Avenue G ponds Sept. 11 (RB). No Scaup yet, and no Goldeneyes. They rarely show up before mid-October.

Shorebird activity has been a bit subdued. Only a few **Baird's** and **Pectoral Sandpipers** have appeared, and **Long-billed Dowitcher** numbers have been generally low.

One **Solitary Sandpiper** was spotted at the Kirtland Road ponds Aug. 26 (JK), and a second bird joined it for a few days. One of the birds remained at Kirtland through Sept. 4.

A **Short-billed Dowitcher** revealed itself with that characteristic “tu-tu” call at Emigrant Lake Sept. 18 (FL). Emigrant Lake also produced a **Semipalmated Sandpiper** Sept. 6 (FL), and another of that occasional species was spotted at Lost Creek Lake Sept. 1 (NB).



Semipalmated Sandpiper (right)  
Credit: Norm Barrett

No shortage of exposed mudflats this summer as water levels are low at all local reservoirs. Agate Lake was down to 15 percent full on Sept. 19, Emigrant Lake was at 26 percent as of Sept. 17, and Lost Creek Lake was 3.4 feet from its “normal fall low pool.”

Very few gulls have been reported in recent weeks with only small numbers of **Ring-billed Gulls** and even fewer **California Gulls**.

**Caspian Terns** have been conspicuous with 20 or more seen by multiple birders at Agate Lake Aug. 27, and 20 were there on Sept. 5. Emigrant Lake also had multiple sightings with the 32 birds seen Sept. 3 (AP) being one of the highest counts for this species ever recorded in Jackson County.

**Forster's Tern** is a species only occasionally seen in Jackson County, so it was notable when a first-year bird put in a brief appearance at Agate Lake Aug. 27 (JK).

**Common Loons** will be seen in significant numbers in the coming months, but they've been a bit slow to show up this year. Only one has been reported since spring migration. It was at Howard Prairie Lake on Sept. 18 (FL).

Also notable was a **Clark's Grebe** at Agate Lake Sept. 19 (FL) and an **Eared Grebe** at Hyatt Lake Sept. 6 (JR).



Great Egrets  
Credit: Gary Shaffer

Large numbers of **Great Egrets** were seen in the county during the annual post-breeding dispersal with the biggest numbers at Agate Lake and the Jackson County Sports Park. The latter site has been a surprisingly productive birding location this summer. The three small ponds there are often devoid of birds, but lately Egrets and shorebirds have been plentiful despite the proximity of a drag strip, a go-kart course and a neighboring shooting range.

Many miles east of Agate Lake and close to the Jackson/Klamath County line a surprising **Snowy Egret** was reported from Fish Lake Sept. 2 (BM). This infrequently-birded location was one of the few natural lakes in Jackson County when it was about one-third its current size. It was enlarged as a result of the construction of a dam that impounds the north fork of Little Butte Creek.

Hummingbird species other than Anna's, Rufous and Calliope are seen only occasionally in Jackson County. A male **Black-chinned Hummingbird** visited a residential feeder in north Medford Sept. 6 and Sept. 7 (JT), and a first-year bird that looked suspiciously like a **Costa's Hummingbird** was at an Eagle Point feeder beginning Sept. 10 (HS). Positive identification was problematic.

Thanks to all who reported their sightings to eBird and to the Rogue Valley Birds listserv: Norm Barrett, Ralph Browning, Matt Cahill, Bob Hunter, Janet Kelly, Alex Lamoreaux, Frank Lospalluto, Kristi Mergenthaler, Brenda Miller, Anne Newins, Andrew Partin, Justin Roach, Howard Sands and Jeff Tufts.

## **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 the rest of 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.

October Walk: Wednesday, October 2

November Walk: Wednesday, November 6

December Walk: Wednesday, December 4

## **The World of eBirding: Using eBird Resources**

### **By Jeff Tufts**

With warblers, flycatchers and vireos leaving our area for tropical destinations and species like Golden-crowned Sparrows arriving from their northern breeding grounds, it's natural to wonder if a certain bird is a late departure or if another is an early visitor. How can you find out if that Yellow Warbler you saw yesterday is a tardy straggler that has to catch up with its fellow migrants or just an individual that is basically on schedule?

The data that you can access on the eBird website may not provide answers to all of your questions, but there's a wealth of interesting information that's easy to find.

Let's go through the process of determining whether a Yellow Warbler seen on September 19 (the date that I'm writing this column) is late coming through Jackson County or basically on schedule. And if it's on schedule, approximately when can we expect the last of that species to be seen locally.

From the eBird home page, click on "Explore" in the horizontal menu at the top of the page, and then click on "Species Map" on the left side of the new page.

You're now looking at a map of the world with a blank space at the top left that shows your cursor blinking on the words "Enter species name..." Type Yellow Warbler in that space—make sure you spell it correctly—and you'll get a large drop-down menu that includes dozens of species or subspecies that have "Yellow" and "Warbler" in their name.

The basic Yellow Warbler is at the top of the list, and you want to click on that one. It will take a second or two, but the map will refresh and zoom in to the extent that you'll see that all eBird reports of Yellow Warbler have been from North and Central American and the northern part of South America.

Now shift to the top right side of the page where a box labelled "Location" has the words "Enter place name or address..." Put your cursor on Enter and type in Jackson County, Or. The resulting drop-down menu will have Jackson County, OR, USA at the top of the list and you should click on that.

*eBirding continued on page 8*

*eBirding continued from page 7*

The map will zoom in on a section of the state of Oregon with Jackson County at the center. You'll briefly see a box that says "creating 20 km grid" then you'll see areas of the map with blocks of various shades of purple (the Frequency table on the right correlates the shades of purple with abundance percentages).

Zoom in more and you'll briefly see a box that says "loading markers," then you'll get a map that shows dozens of blue or red markers indicating locations where Yellow Warblers have been reported.

We're interested first in Yellow Warbler reports from this month, this year, so go to the Date box at the top of the page, click the down marker to display the various search options, and click the button at the bottom left. Then change both of the month boxes to September and click on the Current Year button on the right. Click "Set Date Range," and the map will refresh to show only markers for Yellow Warbler reported in the current month.

There are several reports, including some from today, so clearly the southbound migration of Yellow Warblers is in the "continuing" phase and we can expect to continue to see several of them for at least another week. Notable among the Sept. 19 sightings is a report of 20 Yellow Warblers at Wagner Park in Talent. It's not a big park, but clearly a site worth checking during migration.

So, we're okay with Yellow Warbler in the month of September. What about October?

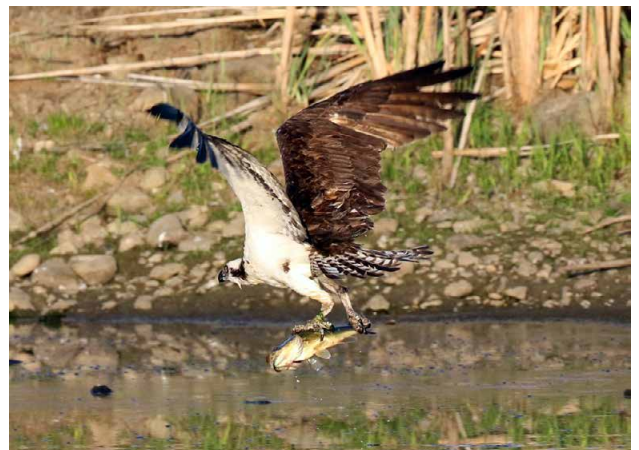
First we'll call up a map that shows Yellow Warbler sightings from October 2018. Just change the two month boxes on the bottom left to October and change each of the year boxes on the bottom right to 2018. Click on "Set Date Range," and you'll see a map with only five locations markers. Four of the records are from the first week of October 2018; the fifth is from October 13.

Go back to the date box and change the option on the right to "All Years." Then click again on "Set Date Range," and you'll see markers for every Yellow Warbler sighting ever reported to eBird for October in Jackson County. Most are from the first week of the month, but there are a few from later in the month, including a report from North Mountain Park on October 28, 2007.

You now know that Yellow Warblers seen in Jackson County in September are not unusual, although numbers will decline in the last week of the month. October sightings are infrequent but not especially rare in the first week, but any Yellow Warbler seen after October 10th in Jackson County is definitely a late bird and worthy of mention on the Rogue Valley Birds listserv.



Gary Shaffer captured this Killdeer with a worm and Osprey with a fish at Jackson County Sports Park.



## It's RVAS Membership Renewal Time

**\*\*Please renew by OCTOBER 31\*\***

The RVAS Board has decided to go back to having membership renewals once a year during the fall. Please renew your membership this October. Renew **online**, by mailing in our membership form, or use forms in *The Chat*. You could also renew at the monthly meeting. Your membership will support all the excellent programs your local chapter provides and the conservation work RVAS supports.

Membership is \$20.00 but if you wish to receive a paper copy of *The Chat* please consider including an extra \$20.00 to cover printing and mailing costs.

Your membership includes:

- 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

### **\*TME TO RENEW!\* 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](http://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.

## The Conservation Column

### By Pepper Trail

October's column is from the National Audubon Society, and covers a major new analysis of North American bird populations. The study, just released, confirms what long-time birders know: bird populations are in steep decline in virtually every habitat and every part of the country. Time to redouble our efforts!

#### **North America Has Lost More Than 1 in 4 Birds in Last 50 Years, New Study Says**

*For the first time, researchers have estimated the volume of total avian loss in the Western Hemisphere—and it's not just threatened species that are declining. Many backyard favorites are also losing ground.*

By Jillian Mock, from [www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org)

Almost anywhere you go, you can find birds. They scurry through the waves on every beach, sing as they wing over every prairie, raise chicks in nests in every wood, and visit every backyard. But while birds remain everywhere, people are actually seeing far fewer of them than just 50 years ago, according to a new study. It estimates that North America is home to nearly three billion fewer birds today compared to 1970—that's more than 1 in 4 birds that have disappeared from the landscape in a mere half a century.

"This was an astounding result, even to us," says lead author and Cornell Lab of Ornithology conservation scientist Ken Rosenberg.

The study, published today in the journal *Science*, marks the first time experts have tried to estimate sheer numbers of avian losses in the Western Hemisphere. The study highlights that many birds we still consider common, ranging from Baltimore Orioles to Dark-eyed Juncos to Barn Swallows, are actually posting heavy population losses over time.

Altogether, the research team—which included collaborators at the American Bird Conservancy, Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute, U.S. Geological Survey, the Canadian Wildlife Service, and other institutions—analyzed the breeding population of 529 species by pooling data from the North American Breeding Bird Survey, Audubon's Christmas Bird Count, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service waterfowl surveys, and 10 other datasets. They also analyzed more recent data collected by weather radar technology that can track large groups of birds as they migrate to estimate their numbers.

Despite gaps in the data, the overall picture is clear, especially because the radar and survey results tell the same story of losses, says Nicole Michel, a senior quantitative ecologist with the National Audubon Society. "Unfortunately for the birds, I think we can be very confident in these results," she says. Scott Loss, an Oklahoma State University ecologist not directly involved in the study, agreed: "We know birds are in decline, but this is a really sobering picture of that decline," he says.

As expected, the study showed that birds that breed in at-risk habitats such as grasslands and the Arctic tundra are declining drastically. Grasslands in particular posted the biggest losses, with more than 700 million breeding individuals lost across 31 species since 1970, a more than 50 percent decline (see habitat breakdown below).

Far more surprising were far-reaching declines across habitats and bird types, says Michel. About 90 percent of the missing birds came from 12 distinct and widespread bird families, including warblers, sparrows, blackbirds, and finches. Common birds found in many different habitats—even introduced, ubiquitous species like European Starlings—experienced some of the steepest drops. Feeder birds like the Dark-eyed Junco declined by nearly 170 million individuals, the study's models estimated, while White-throated Sparrows dropped by more than 90 million.

There isn't one single factor that can account for these pervasive losses, says Rosenberg. Habitat loss is likely an important driver in some biomes, but can't explain the widespread declines on its own. Multiple, complex environmental factors including pesticide use, insect declines, and climate change, as well as direct threats like outdoor cats and glass skyscrapers, are also hitting birds from a range of angles.

*Conservation Column continued on page 11*

*Conservation Column continued from page 10*

For migratory species, long journeys and changes to winter habitats could pose additional challenges. The study itself doesn't look at causes, but the results point to how human influence over the last 50 years has chipped away at bird populations, says Michel.

"In order to prevent another third of our birds disappearing before too long, we need to change how we do things." Kevin Gaston, an ecologist at the University of Exeter not involved in the work, said such a possibility should concern everyone: "We're undermining the role that these organisms have in structuring landscapes, in providing ecosystem goods and services and benefits," he says.

But while the results are troubling, there is some good news. Not all birds declined and some species even showed steady gains over time. Waterfowl as a group, for example, saw a population increase of 34 million individuals since 1970, thanks largely to wetland conservation efforts. Raptors, such as the Bald Eagle, also fared better with a gain of 15 million individuals thanks largely to a ban on DDT in 1972. The numbers show that taking steps like wildlife management, habitat restoration, and political action can be effective to save species in steep decline.

### Habitat Breakdown

**1. Grasslands:** These are among the most threatened biomes on the planet. Loss of habitat to urban and agricultural development, along with liberal pesticide use, has had detrimental effects on the birds that rely on these habitats, like the Western Meadowlark. The study found that grasslands have **lost nearly 720 million birds** since 1970—a greater than 40 percent decline.

**2. Boreal forest:** Clearing for oil and gas development, logging, widespread fires, and climate change all threaten boreal forest habitat. It has also historically been difficult to monitor boreal forest species, like the Evening Grosbeak. Some **500 million birds have been lost in this habitat** since 1970—a more than 30 percent decline.

**3. Forest Generalist:** Habitat loss and fragmentation are a major issue in all forests, home to birds like the Dark-eyed Junco. Logging, wildfires, and human development all threaten to carve up North America's woods. Warming temperatures could also change the plant composition of forests. About **482 million individuals have been lost since 1970**, a nearly 20 percent loss, according to the study.

**4. Habitat Generalist:** These birds, for example, the White-crowned Sparrow, thrive in at least three different kinds of habitat. The considerable loss of generalists that thrive across biomes and across the continent point to multiple factors chipping away at bird populations gradually, over time. About **417 million birds have been lost since 1970**, the study estimates—a more than 20 percent loss.

**5. Eastern Forest:** This biome includes all forests south of the boreal forest in Canada and the eastern United States. Many of these forests were cleared in the 1800s and then regrown in the 1900s. Logging, clearing for development, and climate change all affect these forest landscapes. What's more, many forest songbirds, like the Wood Thrush, are migratory and winter in Central and South America, where they are facing threats that scientists are just beginning to understand. About **167 million birds have been lost since 1970**, the study estimates—a more than 20 percent loss.

**6. Western Forest:** Western forests are all those south of the boreal in western Canada and the United States, and including the mountain forests of northern Mexico, home to species like the Pinyon Jay. Wildfire is a bigger threat in western forests than it is in eastern forests. These forests also face threats from logging, clearing for development, fragmentation, and climate change. About **140 million birds have been lost since 1970**, the study estimates—a nearly 30 percent loss.

**7. Arctic Tundra:** Climate change looms large over the tundra and is the primary threat to this nesting habitat for many birds, like the iconic Snowy Owl. Warming temperatures melt permafrost and threaten to put migrating birds out of sync with the food they depend on during the brief northern summer. About **80 million birds have been lost since 1970**, the study estimates—a more than 20 percent loss—though there is a wide range of uncertainty in this habitat due to data collection challenges.

*Conservation Column continued on page 12*

*Conservation Column continued from page 11*

**8. Arid Lands:** Land clearing for urban expansion is a big threat to this habitat, as major southwestern cities like Phoenix grow. Oil and gas development also threaten to take out swaths of this habitat, vital for birds like the Cactus Wren. About **35 million birds have been lost since 1970**, the study estimates— about a 15 percent loss.

**9. Coasts:** Human activity—like driving on the beach, letting dogs and kids run loose on the beach, bringing gull-attracting food to the beach—can disturb birds attempting to incubate eggs and raise chicks. Climate-related factors pose a threat as well, as sea-level rise encroaches on nesting grounds and an uptick in tropical storms washes out beaches. The study **estimates about 6 million birds** have been lost in this habitat since 1970. However, many coastal birds weren't included in the analysis because there wasn't enough robust population data, says Rosenberg. And some species the scientists looked at, like Oystercatchers, actually showed population increases over time.

**10. Wetlands:** Some wetland species, waterfowl in particular, have seen population gains over the last few decades due in large part to political action and careful land management and restoration. Not all wetland birds have thrived, however. Marsh birds in particular have struggled as their habitat is drained for development, the ocean encroaches on coastal marshes, and contamination of chemicals and heavy metals as well as invasive species make these habitats less than suitable. The study estimates that **this habitat has gained 20 million birds since 1970**, an increase by more than 10 percent.

The study serves, in many ways, as a wake-up call. By making the dramatic losses concrete, Rosenberg hopes people will be jolted into action. Today, Cornell and its partners (which includes the National Audubon Society) launched the website [3BillionBirds.org](http://3BillionBirds.org) to share the findings and promote bird-saving solutions, including seven steps that anyone can take in their own lives.

"The takeaways are that this is disturbing and that we need to do something soon," Michel says. "But we're seeing wonderful reasons for hope as well."

## BIRD-CENTRIC EVENTS FROM AROUND THE REGION

### RVAS OCTOBER BIRDS AND BEERS

Birds and Beers is back for October! We will meet at Ashland Pond for a casual bird walk, to be followed by a social hour at 7:00 pm at The Brickroom (35 N Main Street, Ashland).

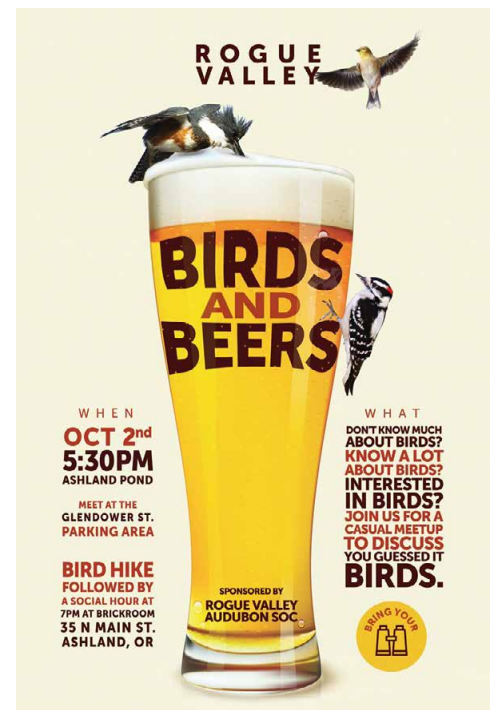
**DATE:** Wednesday, October 2

**TIME:** 5:30 pm--10:00 pm

**PLACE:** Ashland Pond (meet at the Glendower Street parking area)

**COST:** FREE

*Bird-centric Events continued on page 13*



## BIRD-CENTRIC EVENTS FROM AROUND THE REGION

### ASHLAND PARKS AND RECREATION EVENTS AND CLASSES

#### Fall in the Field: All About Birds!

Participants will use binoculars (provided) to observe and record birds and their adaptations while on a scavenger hunt. Families will think about and discuss the importance of birds and learn to care for local bird populations. Come with a sense of adventure and be dressed for the weather. Porta potties will be on site. All program supplies will be provided. Register at [ashland.or.us/register](http://ashland.or.us/register) or call the Nature Center at 541.488.6606.

**DATE:** Saturday, October 5

**TIME:** 9:00 am—12:00 pm

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

**COST:** \$4

**INSTRUCTOR:** Graduate students in the Environmental Education program at Southern Oregon University.

#### Hawks at Your Feeder

Learn how to identify the hawks that are most likely to visit your bird feeder in winter. Discuss the species you're most likely to see and learn some of the finer points of their field identification with this fun and entertaining presentation! Be sure to take notes. Please pre-register online at [ashland.or.us/register](http://ashland.or.us/register) or call the Nature Center for more info: 541.488.6606.

**DATE:** Wednesday, October 16

**TIME:** 7:00 pm—8:30 pm

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

**COST:** \$20

**INSTRUCTOR:** Dick Ashford

#### Inviting Birds into Your Yard and into Your Life

Do you want to learn about the birds in your yard and in your neighborhood? This presentation uses beautiful photography and information about local birds, to help you connect with the birds that live in our area and learn about the ways to invite them into your yard. Various types of feeders, bird baths and native plants will be part of the discussion. Prerequisite: curiosity! Register at [ashland.or.us/register](http://ashland.or.us/register) or call the Nature Center at 541.488.6606.

**DATE:** Wednesday, October 30

**TIME:** 6:00 pm—7:30 pm

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

**COST:** \$15

**INSTRUCTOR:** Shannon Rio

### GUIDED HIKE AT THE TABLE ROCKS

#### Adapt, Hibernate or Migrate?

As part of a series of guided hikes hosted by the BLM and The Nature Conservancy, join **Mandy Noel**, environmental educator, and **Kate Halstead**, ornithologist, for a family friendly hike on the Lower Table Rock Loop Trail (1/2-mile accessible trail) to learn how the wildlife and plants living at the Table Rocks prepare for winter. The hike will include activities for young naturalists. Dress for fall weather and bring your rain gear just in case! For more info visit <https://family-hike-fall2019.eventbrite.com>

**DATE:** Saturday, October 12

**TIME:** 9:00 am

**PLACE:** Lower Table Rock Loop Trail

**COST:** Free

**INSTRUCTOR:** Mandy Noel and Kate Halstead

*Bird-centric events continued on page 14*

*Bird-centric events continued from page 13*

## PRESENTATIONS AND WALKS WITH WILD BIRDS UNLIMITED

### Chickadee Chat: Ground Feeders

This month Erin Linton will focus on **Ground Feeders**, such as Juncos, Sparrows, Towhees, and Thrushes.

**DATE:** Wednesday, October 2

**TIME:** 10:30 am

**PLACE:** Wild Birds Unlimited, 961 Medford Center, Medford

**COST:** Free

**PRESENTER:** Erin Linton

### Monthly Educational Talk: Hawks at Your Feeders

Join hawk enthusiast Dick Ashford for a presentation on the hawks you are most likely to see, and learn the finer points of their field identification. Have any hawk question? Dick is the guy to ask! As space is limited to 25, please reserve your seat today by calling the store at 541.772.2107 or by coming in to register.

**DATE:** Wednesday, October 9

**TIME:** 6:00—7:00 pm

**PLACE:** Wild Birds Unlimited, 961 Medford Center, Medford

**COST:** Free

**PRESENTER:** Dick Ashford

### \*NEW\* Fledgling Camp

Bring your children/grandchildren and join Erin Ulrich at the store for storytelling and games for the younger crowd.

This month's focus: **"Birds on the Move."**

**DATE:** Saturday, October 12

**TIME:** 11:00 am—noon

**PLACE:** Wild Birds Unlimited, 961 Medford Center, Medford

**COST:** Free

**PRESENTER:** Erin Ulrich

### Bird Walk: Agate Lake

Erin Linton will be leading a bird walk to **Agate Lake** this month. Fall migrants will be the focus. Meet at Wild Birds Unlimited at 9:00 am (note earlier time start), wear layers of clothing appropriate for the weather and good walking shoes that can get wet and muddy. Bring binoculars, water, and any snacks desired. 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, October 16

**TIME:** 9:00 am

**PLACE:** Wild Birds Unlimited, 961 Medford Center, Medford

**COST:** Free

**LEADER** Erin Linton

### Saturday Bird Walk at Agate Lake

Max McClarnon will be leading a bird walk to **Agate Lake** this month. Fall migrants will be the focus. Meet at Wild Birds Unlimited at 9:00 am (note earlier time start), wear layers of clothing appropriate for the weather and good walking shoes that can get wet and muddy. Bring binoculars, water, and any snacks desired. 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:** Saturday, October 19

**TIME:** 9:00 am

**PLACE:** Wild Birds Unlimited, 961 Medford Center, Medford

**COST:** Free

**LEADER** Max McClarnon

**NORTHWEST**  
**nature shop**  
SINCE 1985

Intriguing gifts, toys, and  
tools for discovering the  
natural world.



for the explorer

for the scientist

for your garden

"The Northwest Nature Shop proudly sponsors the Ashland Independent Film Festival!"

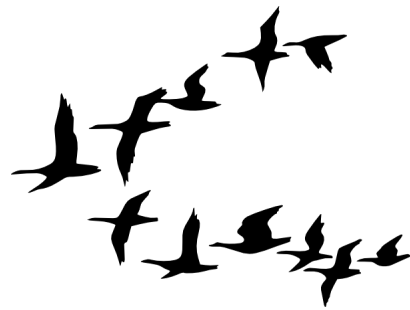
154 Oak Street, Ashland, Oregon 97520  
(541) 482-3241 | [www.northwestnatureshop.com](http://www.northwestnatureshop.com)  
Mon-Sat 10am to 6pm and Sun 11am to 5pm

## Save the Dates!

Holiday Party  
Saturday, Dec. 14, 2019

Medford Christmas Bird Count  
Sunday, Dec. 15, 2019

Ashland Christmas Bird Count  
Saturday, Dec. 28, 2019



## 20% OFF One Regularly-priced Item

\*Valid 2/1/19 thru 12/31/19 at the Medford, OR WBU store. One discount per purchase. Not valid on previous purchases, optics, gift cards, DSC memberships, or sale items.

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

# ROGUE VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

## THE CHAT

Newsletter of the  
**ROGUE VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY**

Post Office Box 8597  
Medford, OR 97501

\*This is the last issue you will receive unless  
you have renewed at the \$40 level.\*

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.

