

A voice for education and conservation in the natural world
Rogue Valley Audubon Society
www.roguevalleyaudubon.org

Deadline for the September issue is August 20



Letter from the Board

RVAS Year in Review

When this article is read in the years to come, our accomplishments will start out like other years until March, when the COVID-19 pandemic suddenly rocked our world. Our group activities came to a halt, one at a time, until more permanent stay-at-home orders from the governor were issued. Luckily, solo birding offered welcome solace and a safe way to get outside. While we didn't know what the upcoming months would allow us to do, the board and committee chairs continued to maintain the website, listserv and newsletter to keep us all connected.

Thanks to all our members who contributed to our mission of conservation and education with their time and money.



Green-tailed Towhee
Credit: Peter Kreisman

Membership

Membership Chair George Peterson reported that renewals went smoothly this year. We have 126 paid members and 546 national members. George reached out to national members to encourage them to also become local members.

Attendance at our monthly chapter meeting again averaged over 50 participants. We had to cancel three programs - one due to inclement weather and the other two due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Lynn MacDonald continued to chair the Annual Holiday Party which raised more money than the last five auctions I've attended.

Jeff Tufts passed the writing of the very popular Field Notes column in The Chat to Frank Lospalluto, and also passed the moderator job of the Rogue Valley Birds listserv to Carol Mockridge until a permanent replacement can be found. We thank Jeff for his dedicated work.

Nick Viani designed and maintains a new photo gallery on the RVAS website featuring members' photography of local birds. Look for the link at the top of the home page.

Education

RVAS Outreach Biologist Sarah Norton coordinated the seventh grade Vaux's Swift unit at Hedrick Middle School in the fall. Teachers were impressed with her updates to the lesson plans. She also managed the nightly bird counts at the school and entered data into vauxhappening.org and eBird.

Letter from the Board continued on page 2

OFFICERS and DIRECTORS

President: Carol Mockridge, 360-829-7505, mockridge50@hotmail.com

Vice-President: George Peterson, sgpeterson@msn.com

Secretary: Erin Ulrich, eulrich44@gmail.com

Treasurer: Susan Stone, weaverstone86@gmail.com

Jon Deason
Laura Fleming
Wendy Gere
Kate Halstead
Nate Trimble

jdeason39@gmail.com
wbumedford1@gmail.com
wendy.gere@gmail.com
katherine.elspeth@gmail.com
nateltrimble@hotmail.com

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Archivist: Linda Kreisman, linda@ashlandhome.net

Annual Picnic: Wendy Gere, wendy.gere@gmail.com

Birdathon: Gretchen Hunter, gretchenhunter@embarqmail.com

Chat Editor: Kate Halstead, chateditor@gmail.com

CBC-Ashland: Carol Mockridge, mockridge50@hotmail.com & Emmalisa Whalley

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

Conservation: Pepper Trail, ptrail@ashlandnet.net & Juliet Grable, julietgrable@gmail.com

Education: Erin Ulrich, eulrich44@gmail.com

Field Notes: Frank Lospalluto, fdlospalluto@gmail.com

Field Trips: Nate Trimble, nateltrimble@hotmail.com

Holiday Party: Lynn McDonald, junelynnjacobs@gmail.com

Hospitality: Jon Deason, jdeason39@gmail.com

Outreach & Tabling: Laura Fleming, wbumedford1@gmail.com

Membership: George Peterson, sgpeterson1@msn.com

Programs: Katy Reed, 541-245-5095

Publicity: Wendy Gere, wendy.gere@gmail.com

Volunteers: Linda Kreisman, linda@ashlandhome.net

CHAPTER COMMUNICATIONS

Email: roguevalleyaudubon@gmail.com

The Chat: chateditor@gmail.com

Webmaster: Tom Pratum, tkp9551@gmail.com

Website: www.roguevalleyaudubon.org

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/RogueValleyAudubonSociety/

Letter from the Board continued from page 1

Former board member Emily Lind conducted another free Birding 101 class in Medford.

Education Committee Chair Erin Ulrich launched a pilot feeder watch at an elementary school in Jacksonville. RVAS supplied the feeders, poles and seed. Erin provided the birding expertise. The third graders provided the enthusiasm and citizen science results. We hope to offer it to more schools in the future.

Erin Ulrich also created an opportunity for elementary school teachers to receive the Audubon Adventures Program for free. It's an environmental education curriculum created by the National Audubon Society.

Birding Events

The FeederWatch Program at North Mountain Park in Ashland continued and gave the public many chances to bird with experts. Thanks to Mary Pat Powers for leading this well-attended Saturday morning event.

The first Wednesday of the month bird walk continued at Denman Wildlife Area under Leader Murray Orr until the governor issued her stay-at-home order in April. Records of his impressive species lists are posted on eBird.

Monthly field trips and bird walks covered Southern Oregon and Northern California. We continued to post non-RVAS birding events on our website calendar and Facebook.

The Medford Christmas Bird Count (coordinated by Bob Hunter) had 71 participants, and the Ashland CBC (led by Carol Mockridge and Emmalisa Whalley) had 62 participants.

The 21st Annual Dipper Count (led by Bob Quaccia) counted three dippers along Ashland Creek. The event yielded a great photo op of a dipper catching and eventually swallowing a small fry.

The Birdathon of 2020 was sadly another victim of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Letter from the Board continued on page 3

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.

Status of upcoming events

Field trips - Check online calendar

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 in 2020. 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. **Note:** Due to COVID-19, field trips and other events may be canceled. Check the RVAS website for the latest updates.

June Walk: Wednesday, June 3 ****Final status TBD - Check the website for updates****

July Walk: Wednesday, July 1 ****Final status TBD - Check the website for updates****

Letter from the Board continued from page 2

Conservation Advocacy

Carol Mockridge represented the chapter at the fall OAC conference in Eugene which established state conservation goals.

The Conservation Committee led by Pepper Trail and Juliet Grable continued to research and recommend causes for the board to endorse. They were very busy with many local and national issues that directly impact birds.

Jon Deason's Purple Martin Project continued. No martins are nesting in the gourds yet, but he remains hopeful.

Community Outreach

Hedrick Middle School Swift Carnival was sponsored by RVAS. Outreach biologist Sarah Norton worked with the teachers to set up the games, acted as MC, and conducted the bird count with volunteers from the attendees. Sarah designed and built two corn hole games with the help of Jon Deason and Carol Mockridge which were painted to resemble brick chimneys. Keeping with the theme, the bean bags sported silhouettes of Vaux's Swifts. The games debuted at the carnival and were a big hit with adults and children alike.

Board member Emily Lind continued to host the Birds and Beers gatherings. These informal get-togethers were held every few months at various locations around the Rogue Valley and were geared toward anyone with a general interest in birds.



Credit: Jrod2, Wikimedia Commons

RVAS had an information table at the Vaux's Swift carnival at Hedrick Middle School in Medford and the Bear Creek Salmon Festival at North Mountain Park in Ashland. Until the pandemic hit, RVAS was planning on also attending Rogue Valley Earth Day at Science Works, Rogue Valley Bird Day at North Mountain Park, the Master Gardener's Spring Fair, and the Festival on the Rogue in Shady Cove. We look forward to hopefully representing the excellent work of RVAS at these events in 2021.

~Carol Mockridge

Field Notes for Jackson County May 2020

By Frank Lospalluto

As I write this month's notes light rain showers blanket our region with welcome moisture. A Purple Finch warbles outside my door announcing his place in the world, his world as much as ours.

Eight Wood Ducklings were being paraded by a female **Wood Duck** around Ashland Pond April 30. (AL) And wood ducklings made a surprise appearance at an Ousterhout Farm pond, apparently nesting in the nest box nearby May 14. (GH)

A couple of male **Blue-winged Teal** visited Kirtland Ponds April 27. (GS, JK) They continued to be spotted intermittently over the next couple of weeks. A single bird was at Ave. G pond May 5. (SP, DK) A pair of **Red-heads** was reported from Kirtland Ponds May 5 and again May 10. (RA, AG) Two **Red-breasted Mergansers** were found at Kirtland Ponds May 1 and continued showing up there for almost a week, likely alternating between the treatment ponds and the river. (AL, BH)

Three **Western Grebes** were on Agate Lake April 27 and seven were there May 17. (GS, RA, SP) One **Clark's Grebe** was at Agate Lake April 27 and two were on Howard Prairie Lake May 9. (HS, JK) Two breeding plumaged **Red-necked Grebes** were on Lost Creek Lake May 20. (RN)

Vaux's Swifts have been availing themselves of the chimney at Hedrick Middle School as a roost on their northward migration; a couple of nights featured almost a thousand birds swirling in for a good night's rest. (CM)

A female **Black-chinned Hummingbird** was visiting a feeder in Phoenix May 13. (RDM) A male Black-chinned x Anna's Hummingbird (hybrid) was seen outside of Shady Cove May 12. Reasonably identified as a Black-chinned Hummingbird at first encounter, some close examination of the photos by Howard Sands and Janet Kelly and additional sleuthing by Alex Lamoreaux posited a possible hybrid that was confirmed by hummingbird expert Sheri Williamson. (HS, AL) A **COSTA'S HUMMINGBIRD** was at a feeder in Sam's Valley May 12. Cat Kizer has graciously afforded birders the opportunity to view this handsome male.

Two **Black-necked Stilts** were at Agate Lake April 27 and two were at Kirtland Ponds May 10. (GS, AG) Two **Wilson's Phalaropes** were spinning on Kirtland Ponds May 2. (GS, JL) Another single was with two **Red-necked Phalaropes** May 16. (RA, SP) Red-necked Phalaropes were spotted on Kirtland Ponds and Ave. G pond in early May by the usual suspects. A remarkable 22 Red-necked Phalaropes were at Kirtland Ponds May 18 and up to 30 the day after. (AL) A **Willet** was spotted

at Ave. G pond April 27 in worn plumage, and a brighter breeding plumaged bird was at Kirtland Rd. Ponds May 19 and 20. (AL, RA, SP, GS, JK, AG, RN)

Eleven **Bonaparte's Gulls** were at Agate Lake May 1, with scattered individuals being seen over the last few weeks at Agate Lake and Kirtland Ponds. (GS, JK, AL) A single **Black Tern** was over Whetstone Pond in the evening May 18 and likely the same one continued to forage over the large pond in the Denman Hall Tract the following couple of days. (MC, GS, JK) Another Black Tern was over Lost Creek Lake May 20. (RN) Four **Forster's Terns** were at Agate Lake April 27 and seven were there May 8. (GS, LW)



Costa's Hummingbird
Credit: Cat Kizer

Two **Common Loon** were out on Lost Creek Lake May 20. (RN)

A single **White-faced Ibis** was at the wet area west of Whetstone Pond May 18 in the same location where the Ruff was spotted in April. (AL) Fifteen White-faced Ibis were at Lake Selmac in Josephine Co. May 16.

There were two recent migrating **Swainson's Hawk** sightings: one over Siskiyou Summit May 7 and another over White City May 11. (AL, FDL)

The diminutive dark-eyed **Flammulated Owl** has returned to our local forests. Rarely seen, it is more easily detected through its low soft hoots. A number of birders have submitted eBird reports hearing them in the hills above the Little Applegate over the last few weeks. While out listening for Flammulated Owls there were numerous reports of **Northern Saw-whet Owl**, **Western Screech-Owl**, and **Northern Pygmy-Owl**. All these small owls are cavity nesters.

Field Notes continued on page 5

Field Notes continued from page 4

A very surprised (and longtime Rogue birder) Denny Niebuhr along with his daughter Ellen spotted a very, very rare **NUTTALL'S WOODPECKER** along the Bear Creek Greenway in Lynn Newbry Park on May 9. Unfortunately it was not refound. There was another recent Nuttall's sighting in the summer of 2016 by a well-known ornithologist along Pioneer Rd noted in the Fifth Edition of *The Birds of Jackson County* (2019). Nice spot, Denny!

Speaking of cavities, for the second season in a row an **American Three-toed Woodpecker** was near Thousand Springs Sno-Park along the Crater Lake Highway May 9. (SP, RA) This is one of the 'spots' where people regularly go to find the closely related **Black-backed Woodpeckers** in Jackson County. Both species are



American Three-toed Woodpecker
Credit: Gary Shaffer

found in nearby Crater Lake and in neighboring Klamath and Douglas Counties.

American Three-toed is an especially prized find for our county. Both species have three toes and the males have yellow in their crowns. All other North American woodpeckers have four toes and red in their plumage. The Black-backed is a bigger and somewhat louder bird. Black-backs readily follow fire and feed on boring beetle larvae whereas American Three-toed concentrate more on bark beetle larvae. Black-backed Woodpeckers are famous for following and finding burns to forage in. Our American Three-toed Woodpecker in the West appears to be more sedentary and moves little, evidenced by their rarity in our own county. In *Birds of Crater Lake Na-*

tional Park, Donald Farner lists locations where American Three-toed Woodpeckers were found in the early decades of the 20th century by many of the luminaries of ornithology in Oregon. They can still be found in those same spots today. Both woodpeckers flake the bark off dead trees, which is a good indication of their presence. (Wood-boring beetle larvae and bark beetle larvae spend the first year of their lives in the cambium.)

Olive-sided Flycatchers are back and thirsty, with some of the first sightings near Mt. Isabelle outside Jacksonville April 29. (MH) **Willow Flycatcher** has returned with a single bird in the Little Butte Creek area May 15. (BH) A number were detected on the west side of Whetstone Pond soon after a migrant wave of hungry birds gobbled calories before heading out to wherever they were heading.

Ousterhout Farm HQ reports nesting **Black Phoebe** with young recently hatched. (BH)

A **Clark's Nutcracker** was heard May 20 by a woodpecker chaser near Thousand Springs Sno-Park. (RN)

Fifteen **Purple Martins** were along Modoc Rd. May 5 on the powerlines near the poles where nesting has been reported the last couple of seasons. (AL, LdB) Four Purple Martins were over Rogue River Preserve May 17. (KM) And at least one, but possibly two, was foraging over the Denman Hall Tract when the Black Tern was present May 19. (SP) One bird was spotted near where the utility lines cross highway 66 and they nested last year May 16. (RK)

Single **Bank Swallows** were present at Ave G. April 27 and again on May 20. (AL, JL, RN)

Swainson Thrush were noted at Ashland Pond May 6. (KS) There were still migrants moving north over Siskiyou Summit in the early morning darkness May 20. (FDL)

Two **Grasshopper Sparrows** were seen and heard west of Whetstone Pond May 18. (MC, GS) A rare spring **HARRIS'S SPARROW** male in breeding plumage was at a feeder adjacent to the Whetstone Parking area May 6 (DK)

Our warblers are back along with the **Black-headed Grosbeaks** and **Western Tanagers**.

And this writer is out of steam. Enjoy the summer!

Thanks to all who contributed sightings including: Janet Kelly, Bob Hunter, Andrew Partin, Howard Sands, Gary Shaffer, Vince Zauskey, Alex Lamoreaux, Anne Goff, Marion Hadden, Sammie Peat, Karl Schneck, Matt Cahill, Rene Allen, Kristi Mergenthaler, Lauren diBiccari, Kate Sipfle, Kate McKenzie, Dan Kuhlman, Jim Livaudais, Norm Barrett, Linda Wagner, Russ Namitz, Cat Kizer, and Denny Niebuhr.

All errors and omissions are my own. Peace.

The Conservation Column

By Pepper Trail

As this is the last Chat for a few months, I thought I would present an update on some of the statewide conservation priorities for the Oregon Audubon Council (OAC) that are of particular concern here in our region. This summary is provided by Joe Liebezeit, Chief Scientist of Portland Audubon.

First, though, a quick update on Ashland Pond. As many of you know, the City of Ashland has been working for years on a plan to relocate the outflow from the wastewater treatment plant from its current release into Ashland Creek to a location on Bear Creek just below the confluence of those two streams. The relocation will require the temporary draining of Ashland Pond, and the last information we had was that this work would occur this summer. Well, it won't. I contacted Scott Fleury, Ashland's Interim Public Works Director, and received the following response: "As of right now we don't have a draft permit from DEQ in hand and until we have a draft permit...we won't move into construction of the outfall, as this needs to be approved and covered in the permit itself...I feel now the earliest would be next summer if we finalize the permit. We still need to do final engineering for the outfall and produce the bid documents, which will take some time and the work will need to be completed during the summer season."

Now, on to statewide matters...

OAC PRIORITY UPDATES

Priority # 1: Defense of federal lands and environmental laws

- RVAS joined many other chapters in signing on to a letter written by Portland Audubon opposing efforts to weaken the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). These new rules are scheduled to be finalized in the fall.
- A new [Migratory Bird Protection Act](#) has been introduced into Congress to restore some of the protections that were previously removed from the MBTA by the Trump Administration.
- Several Chapters (including RVAS) signed-on to a variety of group letters that were circulating regarding changes to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Portland Audubon sent out an [action alert](#) in March asking for public comment to oppose the USFWS proposed rule to eliminate the MBTA's prohibition on incidental take, and to abandon this proposed rule and instead adopt the "no action" alternative in the associated Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) scoping process.

Priority #4: Forests

2020 is shaping up to potentially be a remarkable year for forests in Oregon. At the Federal level, hope remains that there is insufficient time left for the Trump Administration to do significant additional damage to the NW Forest Plan. At the State level, there appears to be real opportunity to make substantial progress on both state forest and private lands forest management after years of futility.

- **Elliott State Forest:** The process to convert the Elliott State Forest into an OSU Research Forest is ongoing. Portland Audubon staff are participating in the recreation planning. The process has now entered a detailed negotiation phase. It is not clear whether we can reach an agreement but a draft plan is likely to emerge this summer.



Conservation Column continued on page 7

Conservation Column continued from page 6

Priority #4: Forests (cont.)

- **Oregon Forest Practices Act (OFPA) Reform:** In February 2020, 13 environmental groups, including Oregon Wild and Wild Salmon Center and Portland Audubon reached an agreement, facilitated by the Governor's office, with timber industry representatives to cease efforts to pass ballot initiatives in exchange for meaningful progress on OFPA reform. In the agreement, environmental groups abandoned the Oregon Forest Practices Act Reform Ballot Measure, and in turn got an immediate win with pesticide notification and increased buffers, and agreement to move forward on a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) within 18 months. However, the legislation was not advanced in the 2020 legislative session due to the Republican walkout. Both conservation and timber interests have indicated a desire to move forward on this effort and are continuing to communicate. However, next steps remain murky. Portland Audubon is continuing to participate in the core group.
- **North Coast Forest Habitat Conservation Plans:** Work continues on HCPs for the Elliott and Clatsop State Forests. Portland Audubon is tracking closely.
- **OSU Research Forests:** Several OAC chapters signed onto letters from Steve Cook and Corvallis Audubon, urging OSU to abandon exploitative forestry management practices and adopt a carbon sequestration focus administered by a multi-college consortium. Thanks to Jim Fairchild from Corvallis Audubon for facilitating sign-ons for these letters. The letter from Steve Cook has been delayed to send in July when the new OSU President and Forestry Dean begin their positions.
- **Board of Forestry:** The Audubon Society of Lincoln City attended Oregon Board of Forestry meetings in Salem to testify and observe the Board in action. ASLC urged the Board to establish stronger stream protection measures in the Coast Range and sent a letter to Lincoln County Commissioners after noting that the County's interests were not well served by its representative on the Forest Trust Lands Advisory Committee. In response, Commissioner Kaety Jacobson asked to meet with ASLC on a quarterly basis to discuss forest issues.



Nesting Marbled Murrelet
Courtesy USFWS

- **Siuslaw National Forest** thinning program update: Buffers adjacent to occupied murrelet stands have been incorporated into the Alternatives for Deadwood Creek - approximately 30,000 acres. The goal of no-cut buffers is to deter corvids from predating murrelet chicks. We are waiting to hear from the BLM N Hwy 126 planning area process if they will incorporate key recommendations of improving survivorship as a priority for the restoration work. The next planning area for the murrelet habitat no-cut buffer issue is the Sand Lake Planning / Hebo District.

Conservation Column continued on page 8

Conservation Column continued from page 7

Priority #6: Marbled Murrelet

- **Uplisting Petition:** The May 2020 ODFW Commission meeting has been canceled due to COVID-19. At this meeting the Commission was due to make a decision on uplisting the Marbled Murrelet from Threatened to Endangered under the Oregon ESA. This comes after Portland Audubon et al. sued and successfully won the case for a new decision after the Commission had reversed the 2018 decision to uplist the murrelet. At this point it looks like the murrelet uplist decision will be pushed to the November 2020 ODFW Commission meeting.

Priority #7: Greater Sage Grouse

- ODFW and USFWS have confirmed that they will not kill ravens in Baker County in 2020 to protect Sage Grouse. The agencies acknowledged several of the concerns about this project raised in [comments](#) submitted by Audubon chapters (including RVAS) and other conservation organizations.
- Additional funding for Sage Grouse recovery requested by the governor in the 2020 legislative session was not approved due to walkout by Republicans.

Priority # 8: California Condors

USFWS still working with Yuroks and NPS to finalize the Environmental Assessment (EA). USFWS is also still working on finalizing the 10(j) rule, which will then go through review. USFWS has not shared a clear timeline on publishing the EA and 10(j) documents. Stay tuned.



Priority # 11: Climate Change

- [FERC conditionally approved the Jordan Cove Project](#) in March but at the state level, permits by DEQ, DSL and DLCDC Coastal Zone have all been denied. Several Audubon chapters including Kalmiopsis and Portland Audubon have helped the cause by advocating successfully to deny the permits.

Priority #15: Predator Control

- **Cormorants:** USFWS has proposed to weaken protections for Double-crested Cormorants broadly across the U.S. See [National Audubon story](#) including quotes from Portland Audubon and an [action alert](#). Many OAC chapters, including RVAS, signed onto the comment letter opposing this weakening of protections for cormorants.
- **Coyotes:** In February 2020, Oregon House voted 42-16 to ban coyote killing contests. We had all the Democrats and six Republicans, including the Republican leader of the House, vote for the legislation. HSUS led the effort but Portland Audubon, Oregon Wild, Defenders of Wildlife, and Oregon Humane Society, contributed as well. Unfortunately the bill died as a result of the Republican walkout.

Attentive readers will have noticed that important progress on three Audubon conservation priorities was derailed by the Republican walkout from the Legislature in February – and this doesn't even count the issue that supposedly triggered the walkout, namely the proposed cap-and-trade legislation. Oregon must find a way to prevent a minority in the Legislature (be they Republicans or Democrats) from using this illegitimate and anti-democratic tactic to prevent the passage of legislation. Otherwise, our state will become ungovernable.

I wish you all a safe and healthy summer, full of birds and time spent – with appropriate inter-personal spacing – in our great southern Oregon outdoors. See you in September!

BIRDCENTRIC EVENTS FROM AROUND THE REGION

Wild Birds Unlimited: We are back!

Bird Walk: Newbry Park

Max McClarnon will lead a walk to Lynn Newbry Park along the Bear Creek greenway, just off the Talent exit. Meet at Wild Birds Unlimited @ 9:00am, 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. As space is limited to 9 so social distancing can be observed, please reserve your spot today by calling the store (541-772-2107) or coming in to register.

DATE: Thursday, June 18th

TIME: 9am

PLACE: Wild Birds Unlimited, 961 Medford Center, Medford

COST: Free

Monthly Educational Talk: Build a Bird Friendly Yard

Join Patrice Hanlon for advice on creating a bird friendly habitat in your yard. Large or small, by selecting the right plants, any garden has the potential to become a habitat for our local birds. Patrice will introduce you to a variety of trees, shrubs, perennials, and annuals that create the habitat you need, while emphasizing native plants and their unique benefits. Limited to 10 participants to observe social distancing requirements. We appreciate all wear masks. Call the store (541-772-2107) to reserve your seat today.

(Patrice is the newest certified bird feeding member of our Wild Birds Unlimited team and brings a wealth of information to our area. Come by and meet Patrice!)

DATE: Wednesday, June 24th

TIME: 4 - 5pm

PLACE: Wild Birds Unlimited, 961 Medford Center, Medford

COST: Free

Ashland Breeding Bird Count 2020

Volunteers are needed for Barbara Massey's Ashland Breeding Bird Count, a long-term community science survey to learn about bird species in our region, and how they are shifting their vital spring habits in response to a changing climate. This project was started by long time Ashland birder Barbara Massey in 2012 and revived by her in 2019 with the hope of establishing an annual tradition in Ashland.

Counts will be conducted in independent groups of 2-5 people, within a 15-mile diameter circle of the Ashland area (corresponding to the Christmas Bird Count areas) and follow a similar procedure to the Christmas Bird Count.

If you are able to join this important event and/or would like additional information, RSVP to leaders Nate Trimble and Brandon Breen (see contact below). Let them know if you have a specific area you prefer, otherwise they will set you up with a location. Please plan to conduct your survey solo, or in a team made up with members of your quarantine partner(s). Updates and details will be sent to participants as the date approaches.

DATE: Saturday, June 6

TIME: 6am - 12pm

PLACE: Ashland Christmas Bird Count Area

COST: FREE

CONTACT: AshlandBreedingBirdCount@gmail.com

City of Ashland Parks and Recreation

Due to COVID-19 and social distancing measures in place, many of our events may need to be canceled or postponed. Please check <http://ashland.or.us/events> often as we navigate our 2020 Summer Events Schedule.

Vaux's Swift Spring Migration

By Carol Mockridge

I'm really excited to report that preliminary results from Rogue Valley Audubon Society's counts of the spring migration at Hedrick Middle School are turning out to be amazing. Volunteers started nightly counts on April 27 with a total of 911 birds. The swifts have shown up every night since with counts ranging from a low of 74 (on a rainy night when they might have gone in earlier) to a high of 1,015. On May 18, there were 678. The daily spring count ended on May 25 with 27 birds

Why am I so excited? This is the first time I know of that the spring migration has been counted every night. I had been told that some believed the chimney wasn't used much in the spring, only the fall. Now it looks like it is also an important Oregon roost in the spring. I've been sending the recent data to vauxhappening.org daily. I'll post a summary of the spring migration on the website when it is over.

RVAS is still working with the Medford School District to create a plan to save the chimney. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted our meetings but we are still in contact and are awaiting new estimates of the cost of the seismic retrofit.



Volunteers (L-R) Carey Mercer, Franklin Henry and Kathleen Blackshear count migrating swifts entering the Hedrick Middle School chimney on May 20, 2020. Note the new heating system installed last summer that bypasses the chimney. Photo by Carol Mockridge.



Call for Volunteers: Oregon Vesper Sparrow monitoring

The Vesper Meadow Education Program is looking for volunteers who would like to participate in solo or small groups (specifically, those who are already quarantined together) surveys for the imperiled Oregon Vesper Sparrow, estimated to be down to 2-3,000 individuals across its range.

We are collaborating with the Klamath Bird Observatory to better understand the reasons for their decline and to restore their grassland habitat. Volunteers will collect information on behavior and leg color bands. Volunteers should bring their own binoculars or spotting scope, sturdy shoes, water and snacks.

Contact jeanine@vespermeadow.org to arrange a date in June.

NORTHWEST
nature shop
SINCE 1985

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

Ziplines,
Ninjalines,
& Slacklines

Birdfeeders
Suet &
Seeds

Binoculars
& Field
Guides

\$5 OFF
with any purchase of \$25
or more with this coupon
Redeem at NW Nature Shop
or use at northwestnatureshop.com
Coupon Code:
welovebirds

Personalized Shopping & Curbside Service: 541-482-3241
Visit **NorthwestNatureShop.com** for online ordering
184 Oak Street, Ashland Oregon 97520

Editor's Note

I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to serve as the new editor of the illustrious *Chat*! Thank you to Juliet Grable for the graceful handoff, and to everyone who has contributed to and read this wonderful newsletter over the years. I hope to do it justice. If you have any suggestions for me, would like to submit your beautiful photos for future issues, or just want to say hello while we wait to be able to meet in person, drop a line any time at chateditor@gmail.com.

See you in September!

Kate Halstead

Hang in there,
everybody!
And keep birding!



White-faced Ibis
Credit: Frank LoSpalluto



Wild Birds Unlimited
Nature Shop

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

*Valid 1/2/20 thru 12/31/20 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 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.

