

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

Deadline for the April 2022 issue is March 20



March Virtual Program
Tuesday, March 29 at 7:00 pm
The Secret Lives of Feathers

Feathers are the most complex structure made by the skin of any animal. How they grow is even more incredible. Inside a tiny sheath in a blood-rich environment, the intricate fine structure is assembled and the colors are applied all while rolled tightly. Within a few days the finished feather unfurls to produce the spectacular “eye” of a peacock feather or the banded pattern on a Red-tailed Hawk primary - beautiful, but also strong enough to support flight. It’s almost like simultaneously building a toaster and painting the Mona Lisa while curled up in a phone booth. (You remember those.)

You are invited to learn about the magic of feathers and more!

About the Speaker

Dr. Stewart Janes, a UCLA graduate, is a longtime resident of the Rogue Valley. He recently retired from Southern Oregon University where he was responsible for the Environmental Education master’s program, training science teachers and teaching both ornithology and mammalogy among other classes. Apparently, he was enthralled with birds from the tender age of two and a half (according to his mother). For a decade, he researched hawks in the inter-mountain region of western North America and switched to studying the singing of warblers as job responsibilities limited his field time. Even in retirement, he refuses to cut his research short.



Zoom instructions: If you haven’t registered for RVAS virtual events, you will need to do so. Once registered, you will receive a link with the virtual address for the meeting.

Click on this link to register: <https://www.roguevalleyaudubon.org/zoom-signup/>

OFFICERS and DIRECTORS

President: Erin Ulrich, 408-499-0315,
eulrich44@gmail.com

Vice-President: George Peterson,
sgpeterson1@msn.com

Secretary: Carol Mockridge,
mockridge50@hotmail.com

Treasurer: Kay Simmons,
mwsimmons1@verizon.net

BOARD MEMBERS

Jon Deason jdeason39@gmail.com

Kate Halstead katherine.elspeth@gmail.com

Jamie Trammell trammelle@sou.edu

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Archivist: Vacant

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

Birdathon: Gretchen Hunter,
gretchenhunter@embarqmail.com

The 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: Vacant

Holiday Party : Lynn McDonald,
junelynnjacobs@gmail.com

Hospitality: Jon Deason, jdeason39@gmail.com

Outreach & Tabling: Vacant

Membership: George Peterson, sgpeterson1@msn.com

Programs: Vacant

Project FeederWatch:

MaryPat Powers, marypat@ashlandhome.net

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

Swift Monitoring, Kate Halstead,
katherine.elspeth@gmail.com

CHAPTER COMMUNICATIONS

Email: info@roguevalleyaudubon.org

The Chat: chateditor@gmail.com

Webmaster: Tom Pratum, tkp9551@gmail.com

Website: www.roguevalleyaudubon.org

Facebook: Erin Ulrich,

<https://www.facebook.com/RogueValleyAudubonSociety/>

Mailing Address

RVAS

P. O. Box 8597

Medford, OR 97501

Bear Creek Bird Survey Seeking Volunteers

By Juliet Grable

The Bear Creek Community Bird Survey has been going strong for over a year. This citizen science project is collecting data about bird abundance and diversity at seven different sites along Bear Creek. One purpose of the survey is to determine how birds are responding after the Alameda Fire. Kudos to the many volunteers who have made this effort possible!

We could use some additional help, especially as we move into the busy spring migration period. In particular, we need people to conduct surveys at our Dean Creek and Mingus Pond sites. If you are a current volunteer, please consider filling in at these locations. If you want to volunteer but don't feel confident about your birding skills, don't worry! We won't ask you to lead a survey if you don't feel comfortable doing so, and the project offers a great opportunity to hone your skills with expert leaders.

If you are interested in volunteering, feel free to email us at bearcreekbirdsurvey@gmail.com



Can you spot the Great Horned Owl?

Credit: Frank Lospalluto

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.

NOTE: Until further notice, chapter meetings will be held on Zoom.

Status of upcoming events

Field trips - Denman Bird Walk is back! April 6,
May 4, June 1

March Chapter Meeting:
Tuesday, March 29 at 7:00 pm

Letter From The Board

It's almost time to "spring forward" again. Yes, Daylight Savings is upon us - March 13th to be exact. At the expense of my precious hour of sleep, I'm looking forward to that extra hour of daylight so I can sneak in some more backyard birding after work!

As we move into migration season, I'm looking forward to some of my favorites returning to my property: Rufous Hummingbirds, Tree Swallows, Western Bluebirds, Western Wood Pewee, and Black-headed Grosbeaks. Also, I intend to participate in Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Nest-Watch again. Last year, I watched a pair of Western Bluebirds successfully raise five babies (see photo). It was so exciting! I hope they will be back and will tell their friends, as I plan to add more nest boxes to my property this year.

Which birds are you most excited to see the return of this Spring?

Erin Ulrich, RVAS President



BIRDCENTRIC EVENTS FROM AROUND THE REGION

Wild Birds Unlimited

Lynn Newbry Park Walks

Max McClarnon will be leading a walk to Lynn Newbry Park along the Bear Creek Greenway at the Talent I-5 exit. Limited to 9 participants. Call the store at (541) 772-2107 or come in to register and get directions on where to meet, etc.

DATE: Saturday, March 12

TIME: 9:00 am

COST: Free

Erin Linton will be leading a walk to Lynn Newbry Park along the Bear Creek Greenway at the Talent I-5 exit. Limited to 9 participants. Call the store at (541) 772-2107 or come in to register and get directions on where to meet, etc.

DATE: Wednesday, March 23

TIME: 9:00 am

COST: Free

Southern Oregon Land Conservancy

Birding Whetstone Savanna Preserve

Whetstone Savanna is a beautiful preserve near White City with valley floor oak savanna, chaparral, and vernal pool-mounded prairie. Join bird biologist Frank Lospalluto and SOLC staff member/naturalist, Kristi Mergenthaler, for a birding tour. We are likely to see or hear Acorn Woodpecker, Bewick's Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Lewis's Woodpecker, and California Towhee. Registration is limited to 15 people; we will follow State and CDC Covid guidelines. To secure your spot, email Frank at fdlospalluto@gmail.com (please replace <AT> with @ when emailing Frank). Once confirmed, final details will be emailed to you a few days before the hike.

DATE: Sunday, April 3

TIME: 8:30-10:30 am

COST: Free

First Wednesday Bird Walks: April 6, May 4, June 1

First Wednesday Bird Walk has resumed at the Denman Wildlife Area. Walks begin at 8:30 am and end before noon. Jim Hostick is the leader. The gate will be open from 8:00 - 8:20 am. Participants need to purchase an ODFW Area Parking Permit at the ODFW Office, Sportsman Warehouse on Delta Waters and Highway 62 in Medford, or at Bi-Mart. We request that all participants be vaccinated for COVID-19.

Directions to meeting spot: We will meet at the entrance off Agate Rd. between 1/4 and 1/2 mile past the fire station on the left side of the road. Coming out Table Rock Rd., turn right on Antelope Rd. and go to the light on Agate Rd. and turn left. The fire station will be on your left at the corner of Ave. G and Agate Rd. Go 1/4 to 1/2 mile past the fire station and the gate will be on your left. Coming out on Highway 62 to Antelope Rd., turn left and go to the next light. Turn right and continue to the gate on Agate Rd.

Field Notes for Jackson County February 2022

By Frank Lospalluto

*...hear those "gr ru gru u g rr ruu"
calls from the sky
step out and squint at the bright
nothing in sight
just odd far calls
echoing, faint,
from One Thousand Cranes,
Danger on Peaks, Gary Snyder*

Cinnamon Teal returned early in this past month, with three birds being spotted at Denman Military Slough Unit Feb. 10 (JH). Up to eight birds were at the Ave. G ponds recently (JK). Single **Eurasian Wigeons** continue to be reported from various ponds. A single continued at the Stewart Meadows Golf Course Feb. 10 (NB), another single was found at Lost Creek Lake below the dam Feb. 5 (LP), and one was in a farm pond along Meridian Rd. Feb. 17 (JK).

Band-tailed Pigeon are returning, with a flock of over 100 birds seen along the Rogue River near the old Gold Ray Dam site Feb. 11 (BH). Forty birds were observed near the East Applegate Ridge Trail Feb. 21 (AG).

The first **Rufous Hummingbird** of the season was seen in Gold Hill Feb. 18 (MR), and one was seen in Eagle Point Feb. 22 (HS). These are early dates for our area as they generally arrive at the beginning of March.

Sandhill Cranes were spotted heading north over the valley on multiple days starting Feb. 15 by many observers. This is a highlight of the birding year for many, sparking a distant yearning and connection through time. They are one of the oldest living bird species on this blue globe.

Two **California Gulls** were at Kirtland Rd. Ponds Feb. 12 (BH, JK, AG). An **American White Pelican** was still being seen in the valley, with one being spotted on a private pond below Upper Table Rock Feb. 9 (TM). Waiting for its mates who won't be back until April.

Turkey Vultures are also returning, with multiple birds being reported with greater frequency this past month. **Golden Eagles** are being spotted around the Rogue Basin as they soar and dance in courtship ritual. Also, the elegant **Red-shouldered Hawk** is being seen and heard by many as they engage in courtship and breeding along with the **Red-tailed Hawks** of our area. Seem

ingly Chaucer had it right in *The Parliament of Fowls*. A **Rough-legged Hawk** was seen hunting over the Imperatrice Property Feb. 22. Two **Ferruginous Hawks** were noted on the Medford Raptor Run Feb. 12 in Sams Valley (AG, JK). Ferruginous Hawks were spotted in this area by a number of observers in late Jan. with three birds Jan. 29 (ZF).

Hutton's Vireos are becoming more vocal with their simple repetitive song in the mixed conifer hardwood woodlands in our region, especially those with plenty of Douglas fir. They are year-round resident birds. They, along with birds like the **Oak Titmouse** and the **White-breasted Nuthatch**, take advantage of their residency to establish territories well ahead of actually breeding. Other birds actively singing now are **Bewick's Wrens** and **Wrentits**.



Two different **Loggerhead Shrikes** continue to overwinter, with one bird at Kirtland Rd. Ponds and another up Campbell Rd. outside Phoenix. There has been a paucity of **Northern Shrike** reports this winter. A single bird was at Whetstone Savanna Preserve Jan. 31 (JL). Another single was at Denman in the Hall Tract Feb. 6 (JK).

A single **Clark's Nutcracker** was heard calling near Thousand Springs Sno-Park Feb. 14 (TM). A group of six **Canada Jays** were seen in the area as well.

Ten **Violet-Green Swallows** were over Kirtland Rd. Feb. 22 (JK). Two **Barn Swallows** were spotted over Ave. G. ponds Feb. 6 (JH). A single was seen in the same area Feb. 14 (JL, JK, BH).

Cedar Waxwings are being admired as they feed on madrone berries and in oak mistletoe throughout the valley.

Field Notes continued on page 5

Field Notes continued from page 4

Purple Finch are being seen and heard more widely. Twenty birds were seen in the Little Applegate Feb. 20 (MH). A few **Cassin's Finch** are being observed, with one bird in the Jacksonville Woodlands on a KS Wild/SOLC group hike Feb. 19 (BH).

Five **Lark Sparrow** were recorded in a backyard count Feb. 20 in Medford (DJ). Lark Sparrow overwinter in small numbers. A **Harris's Sparrow** was at a residence in Eagle Point Feb. 21 (BB).

A **Great-tailed Grackle** was reported from Paschal Winery Feb. 22 (WT).

A **Wilson's Warbler** was observed near Bear Creek on

the Suncrest Transect of the BCCBS survey project Feb. 26 (JK, EW). Likely the third or fourth winter record for our county.

Thank you to all observers including: Janet Kelly, Gary Shaffer, Norm Barrett, Jim Livaudais, Rene Allen, Sammie Peat, Tanner Martin, Karl Schneck, Leslie Hart, Roxanna Tessman, Bob Hunter, Anne Goff, Timothy Sorby, Andre Carvalhaes, Howard Sands, Kristi Mergenthaler, Pepper Trail, Nate Trimble, Dave Garcia, Jim Hostick, Tom McEntee, Erin Linton, Erin Ulrich, Jennifer Bagshaw, Susan Harrison, Kay Simmons, Donna Jerden, Walter Thorne, Elijah Hayes, Brian Barr, Maggie Rackley, Zia Fukuda, Lucky Penny, and Violet.

All errors and omissions are my own. Peace.



The Conservation Column

By Juliet Grable

The Crisis in the Klamath Basin

Last month I attended the annual Winter Wings Festival in Klamath Falls. This year, event planners revamped the festival's programming to focus on the drought and the crisis in the Klamath refuges.

The Basin is alarmingly dry, and birds are scarce. Last fall, many migrating birds [skipped the Klamath Refuges](#) altogether and were spotted in California refuges weeks ahead of schedule.

That birds are passing over what used to be the most significant wetlands complex on the Pacific Flyway should alarm us all. This is not simply an effect of the ongoing drought, said Klamath Basin Refuge Complex Supervisory Biologist John Vradenburg, who talked about the situation in the Klamath Refuges Friday afternoon. "Everyone in the basin is suffering the effects of decisions that were made 100 years ago."

A talk and tour of the Klamath Irrigation Project, led by Klamath County Museum Director Todd Kepple, helped convey the magnitude of changes wrought in the Klamath Basin since the turn of the 20th century.

Ninety-five percent of the Klamath Basin's permanent wetlands and 75% of its seasonal wetlands have been lost. Much of the acreage has been converted to farmland, and water is managed through a complex series of canals, many of which are over 100 years old. The farms are a legacy of the 1862 Homestead Act and the 1902 Newlands Reclamation Act, which directed the federal government to "reclaim" desert and "swamp lands" in the arid West for farming. Many recipients of the parcels were World War I veterans.

Lower Klamath Lake, a vast wetland which once straddled the Oregon-California border, has long been cut off by a raised railroad. Upper Klamath Lake, stripped of the fringe of wetlands which once absorbed phosphorus and other nutrients, suffers from chronic degraded water quality.

Climate change and overallocation of water are worsening the crisis, says Vradenburg. "We are desertifying at a

Conservation Column continued on page 6

Conservation Column continued from page 5

rapid rate,” he said, adding that we are now facing ecosystem collapse in the Klamath Basin.

Vradenburg stressed that the enormous loss of wetlands, so important for “hydrological resiliency,” lies at the heart of the crisis. In his view, we must confront this fact if we have any hope of coming together and moving forward with sound restoration and conservation.

Historian Todd Kepple speaks at Winter Wings
Credit: Juliet Grable



Vradenburg mentioned several ongoing restoration efforts by the Klamath Tribes, The Nature Conservancy, and others. Congress, through the Infrastructure Bill, has allocated \$162 million for restoration projects in the Klamath Basin. Let's hope stakeholders can get together and make good things happen.

Fortunately, Vradenburg's talk was followed by a pair of more hopeful presentations:

Lakeside Farms: Restoration with Multiple Benefits

Karl Wenner is one of the owners of Lakeside Farms, a 400-acre operation that abuts Upper Klamath Lake just north of Klamath Falls. Wenner leases the land to barley and potato farmers. Last year, he partnered with a consortium of federal and state agencies and the Klamath Watershed Partnership to institute a restoration project that was designed to create bird habitat, improve water quality, and provide critical nursery ponds for *C'waam* and

Koptu, two species of endangered suckers that inhabit the Upper Klamath Basin. The suckers are reproducing, but young fish are not surviving, likely due to a combination of factors, including poor water quality, predation, and competition from invasive fish species.

The project uses a 70-acre treatment wetland to filter nutrients (mainly phosphorus) from water pumped from flooded fields in spring. The wetland also provides bird habitat—shortly after it was completed, Wenner captured video footage of thousands of ducks alighting there. Two spring-fed ponds provide nursery habitat for young wild suckers. The suckers will remain in the ponds for a couple of years before being released into Upper Klamath Lake. The hope is that more of them will survive once they are released.

Wenner believes this project could and should be used as a model across the basin. Here's a [link](#) to Alex Schwartz's article about the project, which appeared in the Herald & News late last year.

Securing Water Rights for the Lower Klamath Refuge

In total the Klamath Basin NWR Complex consists of six refuges in southern Oregon and Northern California. Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge, established in 1908, was the first waterfowl refuge in the United States. But Lower Klamath NWR is last in line for water; ironically, when farmers are cut off from irrigation water, so too is the refuge. In 2020, over 60,000 birds died from avian botulism; a similar situation was avoided last year when refuge managers managed what little water there was to avoid creating the shallow stagnant pools that favor pathogens.

Mark Hennelly, vice president of advocacy for the California Waterfowl Association, discussed his organization's [strategy to procure water rights](#) for the Lower Klamath NWR from willing landowners in the Wood River Valley. So far, they have procured one water right, and while it only amounts to 3,500 acre-feet, it was the only water delivery to the refuge last year, and it represents a test case for other purchases.

To learn more, visit CWA's [dedicated page](#) on the Lower Klamath NWR.

Dam Removal on Schedule

There was a bit of good news last week. The Federal Energy Regulatory Agency, or FERC, has issued the [draft Environmental Impact Statement](#) (EIS) for the license transfer and decommissioning of four Klamath River dams. A public comment period has opened; individuals and organizations have until April 18 to submit comments. FERC will then release a final EIS. This timely issuance should keep dam removal on schedule. The drawdowns of the dams are slated to begin in January of 2023, and deconstruction will hopefully happen that summer. Dam removal will open up hundreds of miles of salmon habitat and will benefit birds and fish in the Upper Klamath Basin by improving water quality downstream.

NORTHWEST
nature shop 
SINCE 1985

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

Ziplines,
Ninjalines,
& Slacklines

Birdfeeders
Suet &
Seeds

\$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

Binoculars
& Field
Guides

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




Wild Birds Unlimited
Nature Shop

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

*Valid 10/1/21 thru 6/30/22 at the Medford, OR WBU
store. One discount per member. Not valid on bird seed,
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

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 online.

At the bottom of every page on our website roguevalleyaudubon.org you will find a form where you can request to be added to our mailing list. And be assured, we will never share your e-mail address with any other organizations.

