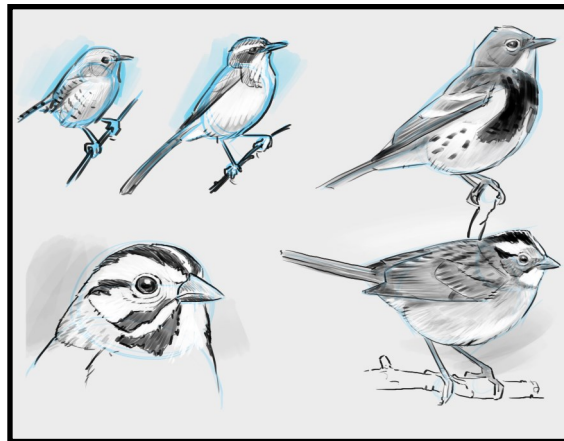


A voice for education and conservation in the natural world
Rogue Valley Audubon Society
www.roguevalleyaudubon.org

Deadline for the May 2022 issue is April 20



April Virtual Program
Tuesday, April 26 at 7:00 pm
Fast Field Sketches For Better Birding!



Learn how to make fast drawings of birds to help you observe and remember the details. You don't need to be an artist to make effective field sketches. The process will help you develop a mental map of bird plumage, and develop fundamental birding skills. John Muir Laws will demonstrate techniques that anyone can use to improve their field notes. Bring a pencil and paper and be ready to draw - even if you tell yourself that you can't draw. You can do this!

About the Speaker

John (Jack) Muir Laws is a scientist, educator, and author who helps people forge a deeper and more personal connection with nature through keeping illustrated nature journals and understanding science. His work intersects science, art, and mindfulness. Trained as a wildlife biologist and an associate of the California Academy of Sciences, he observes the world with rigorous attention. He looks for mysteries, plays with ideas, and seeks connections in all he sees. Attention, observation, curiosity, and creative thinking are not gifts, but skills that grow with training and deliberate practice. As an educator and author, Jack teaches techniques and supports routines that develop these skills to make them a part of everyday life.

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/>

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Letter From The Board

I don't know about you, but I have been enjoying nesting season for the past two months. I've mainly been monitoring hummingbirds, Bald Eagles, Great Horned Owls, and Barn Owls, from Florida to California. I've even been spying on Bermuda cahows and albatrosses in New Zealand.

No, I am not a world traveler. I am a nest cam junkie. YouTube has a plethora of nest cams to follow. Cornell also has several cams, including a Red-tailed Hawk nest at the university itself. This year, "Big Red" has laid an unprecedented four eggs! Nest cams offer a look into the lives of so many different bird species. It's fascinating to see how mother hummingbirds take care of their babies all by themselves, while Bald Eagle pairs are both such caring and attentive parents. Their babies are so adorable at first and then turn into gangly, uncoordinated, pathetic-looking lumps of fluff. They are an absolute joy to watch.

I highly suggest taking a look at the online world of nesting birds if you haven't already. Beware, though. You may find that hours have flown by and you've gotten absolutely nothing done. But maybe that's okay.

Erin Ulrich

RVAS President

Project FeederWatch Update

By Mary Pat Power

Project FeederWatch (PFW) in Ashland completed its 20th season with continued strong attendance and great enthusiasm among the observers. Thanks go to RVAS for providing funds for the bird feed as well as North Mountain Park staff, **Libby VanWyhe** and **Jennifer Aguayo**, for their support maintaining the feeder area and managing supplies. Great appreciation to the lead observers, **Vince Zauskey**, **Bill Hering**, **Alan Hubbard**, **Keiko Thurston**, **Dick Ashford**, **Carol Mockridge**, **Kate Cleland-Sipfle**, **Mary Pat Power**, and **Ron Ketchum**. Mary Pat Power also coordinated scheduling and reported data to PFW.

Status of upcoming events

Field trips: Denman Bird Walk is back! May 4, June 1, July 6

April Chapter Meeting:
Tuesday, April 26 at 7:00 pm

NOTE: Election of Board members will be held online promptly after the program. Please stay tuned in to vote! (Voting is open to RVAS members only)

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.

BIRDCENTRIC EVENTS FROM AROUND THE REGION

RVAS

Birding Grizzly Peak Preserve

Local birding enthusiast Janet Kelly will be leading a birding tour through the diverse habitats of the Grizzly Peak Preserve, a private preserve owned by the Selberg Institute. This will be an easy hike through oak woodland, open meadows, and mixed forest. These habitats bring a nice variety of year-round and migrating birds. Possible sightings of Oak Titmouse, Pacific-slope Flycatcher, woodpeckers, warblers - and maybe a Northern Pygmy-Owl! - are possible, along with many other beauties. 53 different species of birds have been seen on this property, that's a lot! Limited to 8 participants. The Grizzly Peak Preserve entrance is located approximately 2 miles from the DIM Rd on Shale City Rd. Email for more info and to register: chamkell@msn.com

DATE: Saturday, April 30

TIME: 8:00 am

COST: Free

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

Join RVAS for our monthly outing to Denman Wildlife Area. Walks begin at 8:30 am and end before noon, and are led by Jim Hostick. 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's 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.

Wild Birds Unlimited

Emigrant Lake Walks

WBU will be hosting two bird walks at Emigrant Lake in Ashland this month. Each limited to 9 participants. Call the store at (541) 772-2107 or come in to register and get directions on where to meet, etc.

DATES: Wednesday, April 20 (led by Erin Linton)

Saturday, April 30 (led by Erin Ulrich)

TIME: 9:00 am

COST: Free

Klamath Bird Observatory

Walk and Talk at Rogue River Preserve

Celebrate Earth Day weekend with us by birding at the Rogue River Preserve with Amanda Alford as part of our Walk and Talk series. Amanda is a KBO board member and a lover of all things bird and is excited to share. The Rogue River Preserve is located along the Rogue River, and is owned and managed by the Southern Oregon Land Conservancy. Its 352 acres include several distinct habitats that support remarkable biodiversity, including at least 32 rare, declining, and uncommon plant and animal species. There isn't a better way to celebrate Mother Earth! Space is limited. To register, visit <https://klamathbird.org/education/community-education/talk-walk/>.

DATE: Sunday, April 24

TIME: 9:00 - 11:00 am

COST: Sliding scale donation

East Cascades Audubon Society

Dean Hale Woodpecker Festival

After a two-year hiatus due to Covid 19, registration opens April 9 for the 10th annual Dean Hale Woodpecker Festival in Sisters, Oregon. Festival participants have a choice of 14 guided tours in search of 11 different species of woodpeckers and 200 other birds that make the diverse habitat of Sisters and Central Oregon a birding hot spot. Participants have a chance to see not only common woodpeckers like Hairy and Downy, but also much rarer species like White-headed, American Three-toed, and Black-backed Woodpeckers. Few places in the United States are as rich in such a variety of woodpeckers as this area of central Oregon. Find information at:

<http://www.ecaudubon.org/dean-hale-woodpecker-festival> or email questions to Gordon Wetzel at dhwf2022@gmail.com.

DATES: Thursday, June 2 - Sunday June 5

COST: Variable

The Conservation Column

By Pepper Trail

Good News and Bad News for Oregon Forests

First, the good news: the Oregon Forest Practices Act.

In March, the Oregon Legislature passed the Oregon Forest Practices Act (OFPA) (Senate Bill 1501). This creates strong new stream protections covering more than 10 million acres of private forest land in Oregon.

Six environmental groups worked for months with six timber industry representatives, in a process facilitated by the Governor's office, to develop the OFPA agreements. The environmental groups were Portland Audubon, Wild Salmon Center, Oregon Wild, KS Wild, and Trout Unlimited. The legislation will provide much stronger protections on both fish and non-fish bearing streams to benefit federally protected species such as salmon, steelhead, and bull trout, as well as other species such as stream dwelling amphibians. You can read the [full legislation here](#). SB 1501 passed with strong bipartisan support on a 22-5 vote in the Senate and a 43-15 in the House.

After the passage of the OFPA, Governor Kate Brown issued the following statement:



Private forestry operations in progress
Courtesy: USFS

"Thank you to legislators from both parties for coming together to pass this historic legislative package. The Private Forest Accord is a perfect example of the Oregon Way - Oregonians coming together to find common ground, to the mutual benefit of us all. Together, this agreement will help to ensure that Oregon continues to have healthy forests, fish, and wildlife, as well as economic growth for our forest industry and rural communities, for generations to come. I would like to thank everyone involved for their role in making this agreement a reality today."

"This is truly a paradigm shift and a moment in our state's history of which all Oregonians should be proud," said Chris Edwards, President of the Oregon Forest & Industries Council. "This demonstrates it is possible to put differences aside and work together on viable solutions to tough problems. Today we leave the Timber Wars in the past and embark on a new collaborative era of forestry that ensures a future for sustainable active

forest management and wood products manufacturing."

"This is great news for Oregon," said Bob Van Dyk, Oregon Policy Director for the Wild Salmon Center. "Our fisheries, our forests, and our communities will all benefit, not only from the measures adopted today, but also from the spirit of compromise that made this possible."

"The Private Forest Accord recognized, for the first time, the precarious position family forest landowners have to balance [including] economic viability, biological capacity, and social acceptance of active forest management on their smaller forest parcels," said Ken Nygren, President of the Oregon Small Woodlands Association. "Sustaining family forestland ownership is a critical element in a balanced approach to forest land management, and we will work to help family forest landowners understand the complexity of the new regulations and to successful implementation on the ground."

"The passage of the Private Forest Accord legislation today marks a significant moment in Oregon's history," said Sean Stevens, Executive Director of Oregon Wild. "I'd like to again thank the many parties that came together to make the Accord a reality. And I would also like to recognize the countless community members, companies, and

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The Chat – April 2022

Conservation Column continued from page 4

advocates that pushed for this moment. Collectively, we have created a new foundation for the practice of forestry in Oregon - one where science, cooperation, and a willingness to engage in sometimes difficult conversations will drive future decision making."

Now, the bad news: Medford BLM Poised to Log Old-Growth Reserves

From KS Wild (<https://www.kswild.org/conservation-efforts/2022/2/23/ivm>):

"Integrated Vegetation Management for Resilient Lands" (IVM) sure sounds great doesn't it? Unfortunately, those flowery words are agency-speak for logging old-growth forest reserves down to 30% canopy cover and creating four-acre mini-clearcuts across the landscape in southwestern Oregon.

In 2016 the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) finalized a [Resource Management Plan](#) that established several forest land use allocations including: (1) the Harvest Land Base in which timber production was to occur; (2) Streamside Riparian Reserve forests that were to be managed to protect aquatic values; and (3) Late-Successional Reserves that are intended to provide - you guessed it - late successional old-growth habitat for at-risk wildlife species.

Timber planners within the BLM have never really embraced the idea that there are forests on public lands that should be reserved from timber production in order to protect wildlife and watersheds. So, to undermine the idea of forest reserves the BLM has developed the "Integrated Vegetation Management for Resilient Lands" plan that will open the reserves to logging that removes old-growth forest canopy and results in four-acre "openings." For scale, a four-acre clearcut is approximately the size of three football fields. Such logging prescriptions remove the exact wildlife habitat and riparian forests that the reserves were designed to protect.

The BLM will not tell you that they intend to "clearcut" the reserves. What you or I would call clearcutting the BLM euphemistically refers to as creating "open seral habitat." The BLM's intention to convert intact late-successional forests in the reserves into "open seral habitat" renders the forest reserve system meaningless. Essentially the BLM intends to place both the old-growth and riparian reserves into the Harvest Land Base and log them with harvest prescriptions that mirror how they log in the timber base.

Given that the BLM is already engaged in widespread logging of the old-growth and riparian reserves, why are they even bothering with the IVM planning process? The answer is because they hope to do away with meaningful public review and site-specific analysis of their old-growth logging agenda. IVM is intended to provide the overarching analysis and authority for the BLM to log the reserves without the bother of writing an Environmental Assessment or consulting the public about the management of old-growth forests. Instead, the BLM would conduct a brief internal checklist called a Determination of NEPA Adequacy (DNA) for old-growth timber sales of any size within the reserves.

BLM timber planners are chomping at the bit to start logging the reserves without public involvement or environmental analysis. The agency's single-minded focus on logging makes the forthcoming timber sale decisions under IVM inevitable. For instance, the BLM has already laid out the boundaries for the first two IVM timber sales that are located within old-growth reserves. The Penn Butte and Late Mungers timber sales, both in the Applegate, are identified on the BLM's 2022 "annual forest product sale plans" with the exact date that the BLM will offer the forests for sale and the exact amount of timber the BLM intends to log. There is no circumstance in which the environmental impacts of the proposed logging or the content of public comments can influence the BLM whatsoever.

An IVM decision was issued on March 2, 2022, and the Penn Butte and Late Mungers forest reserve timber sales are likely to follow shortly. KS Wild and our allies intend to challenge the BLM logging plans.

To close: the abiding good news: it's spring!

Despite all the troubles of the world, spring returns, bringing with it wildflowers and butterflies, warblers and tanagers, swallows and swifts. Be sure to get out there and enjoy the natural treasures that we all are working to protect. See you on the trail!

Kirtland Lagoon Mudflat Enhancement Project Update

By Erin Ulrich

In December, 2020, RVAS pledged \$1000 towards the design contract for enhancement of a mudflat habitat at Kirtland Road lagoons. We are happy to report that the project is now moving forward. Rogue Valley Sewer Services hopes to have the groundwork for the Mudflat Enhancement Project completed this summer. This project will provide a specially designed habitat for shorebirds and other Spring migrants to the area. Funds for this project were also contributed by the Watchable Wildlife Foundation and the Rogue River Watershed Council. "Kirtland Ponds," as it is known to most of us, is a birding hot spot in the area, so we look forward to seeing the effort completed over the next couple of years.

Ask Kenn: Are American Robins Really a Sign of Spring?

By Kenn Kaufman, Courtesy of National Audubon

Question: People always talk about American Robins being a sign of spring, but sometimes I see the birds year-round. And recently I learned that many robins don't even migrate. What gives?

KK: It happens every year. Between February and April, in birding listserves or on social media, some people will happily announce that they just saw their "first robin of spring." And every year, others will respond by saying there's no such thing, that robins are present at all seasons and that they shouldn't be regarded as signs of spring.

Who's right? Is that first robin a joyous sign of the season, or is its appearance meaningless?

On the range maps in most field guides (including in Audubon's [online guide](#) and [app](#)), American Robins are shown as present all year across a broad swath of the Lower 48 States and up into parts of southern Canada. To the north, up to the northern limit of trees in Alaska and Canada, they are indicated as summer residents only. Most of Florida and the lowlands of the Southwest are mapped as winter range only. These maps are broadly accurate, but they obscure many details- especially where the species is shown as being present at all seasons.

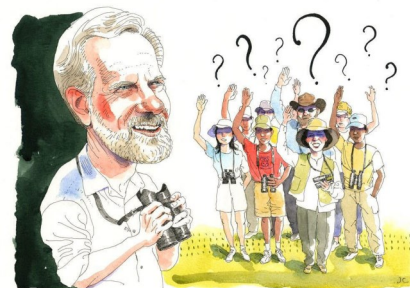
Even where robins are found all year, it would be wrong to call them permanent residents. Few individuals actually stay in one place. It's different with many other year-round birds- among Northern Cardinals or White-breasted Nuthatches, for example, individuals or pairs may stay on the same exact territory throughout the year. But this rarely happens with robins. There have been isolated cases, as far north as Kentucky, of color-banded male robins found on their breeding territories in midwinter, but these seem to be exceptions. The vast majority of robins, even if they don't migrate a long distance, move away from their summer territories in fall.

Migrations and movements of American Robins are surprisingly complex. Banding studies have suggested that most birds move at least 60 miles between summer and winter, and some move much farther: One robin banded in central Alaska was found the next winter in Mississippi, more than 3,000 miles to the southeast. On the other hand, as far north as Michigan and Ontario, some robins have been found in winter within 60 miles of their summer locations. In places like southern Florida and southern Texas, south of the breeding range, there is huge variation in the numbers of robins showing up in winter, and there's reason to believe that some individuals may migrate south in some winters but not in others.

American Robins are omnivores all year, eating insects and other invertebrates and a variety of small fruits, but the proportions vary by season. Insects and earthworms may dominate the menu in spring and summer, but during fall and winter, fruits can make up more than 90 percent of the diet. This shift is reflected in the distribution of the birds. It's easy for pairs to stay in one place during the breeding season, guarding their little territories, because the insects they eat tend to be evenly spread across the landscape. The situation changes in fall because the fruits they seek are often very patchy in their distribution. Flocks of robins start wandering, seeking out trees, shrubs, or vines that are heavily laden with fruit. When they find such a bonanza - a big wild grapevine, a stand of junipers or hawthorns, or a thicket of winterberry holly, for example - the flock may feast for hours or days until they have stripped off most of the fruit. Then they move on.

The amount of fruit produced by an individual plant each year can vary, depending on rainfall and other factors. So, as local weather varies from year to year, the amount of wild fruit available on the local landscape can change dramatically. Flocking frugivores like robins must be flexible: Perhaps staying in the north if the fruit crop is excellent, moving south if it isn't, and always ready to pick up and move any time in fall or winter if the local food supply peters out. Their diet and life-style demand that robins must be nomads in the winter months.

So in my opinion, both views are correct. Yes, robins are around all winter at [some] latitudes, and you can spot your first of the year on New Year's Day if you go to the right places. But when the winter flocks break up, migrants begin pumping in from the south, and robins suddenly reappear in thousands of backyards? That is definitely a sign of spring, and it's worth appreciating and celebrating.



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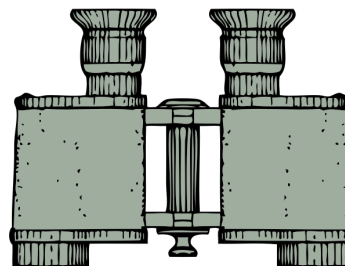
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Seeking Volunteers to Count Migrating Swifts

Spring evenings in Medford are quite pleasant. Enjoying a nice dinner outside while birds swirl around and dive into chimneys is even better. And what's even better than that is contributing to citizen science while you're enjoying your evening out! RVAS is seeking volunteers to help count the migrating Vaux's Swifts that roost in a couple of locations in and around Medford.

Last year, Audubon volunteers counted swifts from mid-April through late May. Each count requires about 2 hours of your time. You will be asked to estimate the number of birds that dive into the chimney, and also record things like outside temperature/weather, time, and when the first bird enters the chimney. Noting things like predator attacks and other behavioral observations is also helpful. So, if you would like to spend a night or two (or more) this Spring and help us out we would really appreciate it!

Please contact Erin Ulrich to help out or to get more information at eulrich44@gmail.com.





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THE CHAT

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