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Rogue Valley Audubon Society
www.roguevalleyaudubon.org

Deadline for the April 2024 issue is March 20

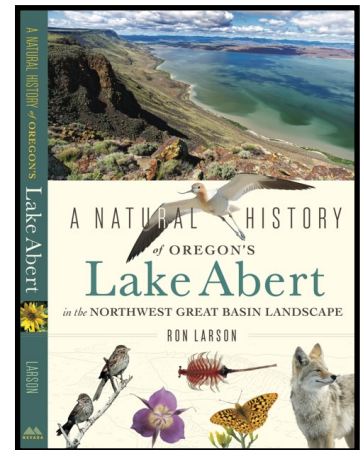


March IN PERSON Program

Tuesday, Mar. 26, 2024 at 7:00 pm

Ron Larson Introduces New Book on Lake Abert Natural History

Ron Larson, a Klamath Falls naturalist and Klamath Basin Audubon board member, will talk about his 10-year project to document the ecology of Oregon's Lake Abert in his new book "A Natural History of Oregon's Lake Abert in the NW Great Basin Landscape." Lake Abert is a globally-important habitat for migrating shorebirds that come to the lake in summer in the tens of thousands to feed on the abundant brine shrimp and alkali flies. The lake is one of just three large, very salty lakes in North America, all of which are currently threatened by upstream water diversions and climate change. In just the past decade, Lake Abert has desiccated twice, with catastrophic impacts to the ecosystem. Although the focus of the book is the lake, and especially the waterbirds, the biota that live around the lake is also discussed -- from lichens to lizards -- as well as the areas' geology, archaeology, and other natural history subjects. The book is richly illustrated with over 100 of Ron's photographs, mostly in color. Please come and learn about the book and the amazing natural history of Lake Abert! Ron will have a few copies of his book available for \$45.



About the Speaker

Having grown up along the Oregon coast, Ron wanted to be a marine biologist. After completing a PhD in marine sciences in Canada, he did a post-doc in Florida, where he used submersibles to study deep-sea animals. Later, he took a job with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in Georgia, then Mississippi, and finally moving (with his wife Kathy) to Klamath Falls, Oregon, where he retired in 2014. His work with the USFWS focused on water development and endangered species, work that was both challenging and interesting. His research interests include the ecology of waterbirds, especially shorebirds using saline lakes, as well as rails and bitterns in marshes. He is currently working with a group of scientists studying the effects of climate change on Great Basin lakes. His hobbies include birding, photography, and travel. Ron is a board member of the Oregon Lakes Association and the Klamath Basin Audubon Society, and is on the Summer Lake Playa scientific advisory committee.



Location: Medford Congregational Church of Christ- Lidgate Hall, 1801 E. Jackson St., Medford
Time: 7:00 pm (coffee/tea/cookies will be served beginning at 6:30 pm)

Zoom option: The Zoom link will be posted on the Rogue Valley Audubon webpage the day of the meeting.

The Chat - March 2024

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Chapter Program meetings are held on the fourth Tuesday of the month, September through April, at 7:00 pm. Meetings take place at 1801 E. Jackson St., Medford, in Lidgate Hall of the Medford Congregational Church of Christ.

NOTE: If deemed unsafe for gathering, chapter meetings will be held on Zoom.



Birds of the Rogue Valley Library Display

Thanks to RVAS member Elaine Sands, a beautiful display of Birds of the Rogue Valley was viewed by hundreds at the Eagle Point Library during the month of February. Elaine and husband Howard are dedicated members of RVAS, and Howard is an excellent photographer. He and fellow member/photographer, Gary Shaffer, supplied the photographs for the exhibit. If you didn't get a chance to see it, stop by the Central Point Library in March to view a smaller version of the display!



Status of upcoming events

Field trips: Denman Bird Walk - Mar. 6, Apr. 3, May 1

Chapter Meeting: Tuesday, Mar. 26 at 7pm

February Field Notes 2024 By Frank Lospalluto

*Or perhaps, once one begins,
there are only endings.
Louise Gluck (1943-2023)*

Kris King spotted a **LONG-TAILED DUCK** on Emigrant Lake Feb 5. This is the sixth county record for this species. Long-tailed Ducks are circumpolar arctic region breeders. They are rare and uncommon winter visitors to both coasts of North America, and are rare on inland waters in Oregon. Given they are divers and prefer deep water, the conditions at Emigrant were not very enticing for a long stay. The water is silty with little deep water. Most of the inland records in Oregon occurred after many of the major impoundments were created. Lost Creek Dam was built in 1977. Lost Creek Lake is the one location where they are more likely to be spotted. The species name, *Clangula hyemalis*, might be translated as 'little winter shouter'. They are aptly named.



Long-tailed Duck
Credit: Kris King

It's the beginning of nesting season for **Anna's Hummingbirds**. With the onset of early spring flowering, sources of nectar and insects, females will start building their nests. They don't seek the company of males until the nest is near completion, with egg-laying usually commencing in short order. This timing affords the young of the year access (without much competition) to the nectar of *Ceanothus* and *Ribes* species, along with other spring-flowering plants.



Anna's Hummingbird
Credit: Frank Lospalluto

An **American White-Pelican** has been seen many times over the weeks at various ponds. Most recently it was spotted at the Boise-Cascade pond in Central Point. This is the pond at the mill on Ehrmann Way off Sage Rd. A lot of commercial traffic during the week with no easy parking, best visited during the weekends. Viewing is from outside the fences. They do have a security patrol.

Another recent rare winter visitor is the **BURROWING OWL** near the Brophy Ranch on Brophy Rd., found in early January by Portland birders Jack Maynard and Kelli Van Norman. It has been seen by many birders at this point. Two individuals were reported Jan 6 and Jan 7 (Bob Hunter, pers comm). Burrowing Owls were common breeders here in the early part of the 20th century, and more regular winter visitors a few

decades back. There were unsuccessful attempts to reintroduce them in the 1980's.

Speaking of nectar, **Red-breasted Sapsuckers** and their wells are often more noticeable during the winter months. Red-breasted Sapsuckers drill two different types of wells into the bark of trees and shrubs. One is a square shallow well that is regularly maintained, and the other is a deeper drilled hole. Hummingbirds readily use the sap wells for nectar and insects, as will some other birds like Orange-crowned Warblers. Sapsuckers are also primary cavity excavators, mostly nesting in the coniferous forest. As cavity creators, they perform another community function when other species - like the Humboldt's flying squirrel - use their cavities for nesting in following seasons.

A sigh of relief for many as **Lewis's Woodpeckers** have returned to the valley this winter, indicating an adequate acorn crop, especially in Oregon White Oak communities. Lewis's Woodpeckers store acorns a bit differently than Acorn Woodpeckers. Instead of stashing whole acorns into a cavity, they shell the acorn and break it into pieces before stashing the pieces into a crack, crevice, or cavity in the tree. They pick the acorns from the branches, not from the ground.

A **Loggerhead Shrike** continues to be seen at White City Lagoons. It's possible there has been a breeding pair in the area over the last couple of years. Ralph Browning, in his USFWS pamphlet on Jackson County birds from the mid 1970's, mentions the Loggerhead Shrike as an 'uncommon permanent resident...most often seen in winter.'



Red-breasted Sapsucker
Credit: Keeley Kirkendall

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Ruby-crowned Kinglet.
Credit: Gary Shaffer

A small flock of **Horned Larks** was noted by Janet Kelly on the Medco A Flats at Lost Creek Feb 8. A single flyover bird was seen and heard Jan 26 in the Denman Ave. G area.

Some swallows are being seen near the river and around Denman, with most being **Tree Swallows**. Now **Violet-green Swallows** are beginning to appear along with **Barn Swallows**.

Ruby-crowned Kinglets are a widespread winter bird familiar to most birders. They are the sole members of the genus *Corthylio* and are in the same family as Golden-crowned Kinglets. Enough physical and molecular differences between them and their cousins had them restored to their own genus in 2021. Wing-flipping and vocal, they are enchanting to the new and seasoned birder. In winter they can be found in a variety of habitats. Both sexes sing (with differences) and the male has a red crest on his crown. They may breed here in Jackson in small numbers. Females lay an amazing dozen eggs per clutch! They nest high up in conifers and close to the trunk, so well hidden.

The flock of **Pygmy Nuthatches** that were along Euclid Ave. on the Ashland CBC were re-found Jan 16 by Nolan Clements and Samantha Webb.

American Dippers are beginning their breeding cycle with pairs forming, nest sites found, and moss collected for their dome nest often placed under bridges or on rockfalls near rushing waters. They usually attempt two broods a season. Inside their dome home, a small cup nest of grasses holds the future.

All errors are my own. Peace.

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American Dipper
Credit: Frank Lospalluto

To Rogue Valley Audubon Society,

Thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to attend the Willamette Valley Bird Symposium at Oregon State University in February! This is not something I would have attended without your help, and I had a marvelous time. Not only did I learn from all of the numerous wonderful talks, but I was able to speak to people from a variety of different organizations. I even took notes on one of the talks to use for a project I'm currently working on in one of my classes. All in all, it was a great way to spend my weekend and I appreciate you making it possible.

Many thanks,
Tallulah, SOU Student
(For more information about the Willamette Valley Bird Symposium, visit <https://willamettevalleybirds.org/>)



The Conservation Column

Klamath River Dams Update

By Juliet Grable

As I'm sure most of you are aware, removal of the Klamath River dams is proceeding on schedule. Drawdown, or draining of the reservoirs, was initiated at Iron Gate Dam on January 9, and on February 15 Klamath River Renewal Corporation announced that initial drawdown is complete. That means the Klamath River is flowing freely through the "reservoir reach" more or less within its historic channel. It's quite something to drive around this transformed landscape and witness the river carving through the mud! For weeks now, RES (the restoration contractor) and crews from the Yurok Tribe have been seeding and planting in the reservoir footprints. The seeds are starting to germinate and will hopefully keep invasive plants at bay. (If you want to know more about this monumental restoration effort, here's a [link](#) to a story I wrote for *The Revelator* about it.)



Credit: Juliet Grable

If you've been downstream of the dams lately, you've likely noticed the river is quite turbid (i.e., mucky). Dissolved oxygen dropped to near zero for several days following drawdown. (The stretch right below the dams has been most affected; major tributaries like the Shasta and Scott Rivers are helping restore oxygen levels further downstream.) As was expected, thousands of mostly non-native fish that inhabited the reservoirs have died. Unfortunately, nearly a dozen deer got stuck in the thick mud shortly after drawdown of the Copco 1 reservoir and also died. Hopefully, these short-term negative impacts will be greatly outweighed in the long-term with healthier river conditions and the opening up of salmon habitat above the dams.

If you're interested, you can access USGS river monitoring gauges online. For some, you can retrieve real-time and historical data on a number of metrics, including flow, dissolved oxygen, turbidity, and suspended sediment.

Deconstruction of the dams is scheduled to begin in June. If all goes well, the structures will be completely gone by fall - just in time for the Chinook run!

And now, for some more good Klamath Basin news:

The Klamath Basin receives amazing Valentine's Day gift

On February 14, Oregon Senators Jeff Merkley and Ron Wyden announced that \$72 million in new federal funding has been earmarked for "critical ecosystem restoration projects and agricultural infrastructure modernization" in the Klamath Basin. Sen. Merkley helped secure \$162 million over five years through the *Bipartisan Infrastructure Law* for restoring ecosystems and boosting drought resiliency in the Klamath Basin. This latest infusion marks the third year of funding; it follows [\\$26 million provided in 2022](#) and [\\$15 million in 2023](#).

In addition, the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) announced a historic agreement with the Klamath Tribes, Yurok Tribe, Karuk Tribe, and Klamath Water Users Association (KWUA) "that cements their commitment to working together to drive long-term solutions to the Klamath Basin's water challenges. This includes collective efforts to restore the region's ecosystem and improve water supply and reliability for the Klamath Project."

Following is a breakdown of the \$72 million.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) will dedicate a total of \$64 million for work to restore the regional ecosystem and repair local economies in the coming years:

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\$25 million for the Klamath Basin Co-Development Process: This funding will go toward the development of restoration projects in the Klamath Basin that will help resolve on-going water-related challenges.

\$20 million for completion of Klamath Falls National Fish Hatchery: This project will increase rearing capacity and help prevent extinction of two federally listed species found only in the Klamath Basin, the Lost River and shortnose suckers (C'waam and Koptu).

\$6 million for Sprague River Collaborative Restoration (Phase 1): This project will provide instream and floodplain restoration along 26 miles of headwater streams in the Sprague River Watershed, develop cost-level design plans and baseline monitoring for instream and floodplain restoration of the mainstem Sprague River, and develop a landowner incentive program to encourage landowner participation in restoration programs and retain economic viability for family farms and ranches.

\$2 million for Upper Williamson River Restoration: Funding will be used for restoring the historical hydrology within the Klamath Marsh through the removal of TPC, Middle, and House bridges and restoration of roughened channels. Additionally, the Cholo Diversion will be demolished and replaced with a horizontal flat plate screen and headgate structure.

\$1.46 million for Klamath Basin Fisheries Collaborative: Passive Integrated Transponder (PIT) Tag Monitoring and Database Project: The PIT Tag coalition is a collaborative effort to develop a basin-wide fish tracking infrastructure to monitor the success of restoration efforts in the Klamath Basin.

\$922,459 for Climate Change Resiliency Stream Restoration within Bootleg Fire Area: Funding will be used for stream habitat restoration within the Bootleg Fire Area.

Additionally, the USFWS will provide \$4 million to support the 14,000-acre Agency-Barnes wetland restoration project at Upper Klamath National Wildlife Refuge; \$1.8 million to support a feasibility analysis of modifications to water supply infrastructure in Klamath Drainage District for the benefit of fish, wildlife, and farms; and \$250,000 to develop a conservation and restoration project database and interactive map.

The USFWS will also engage Klamath Basin conservation partners in the coming year to develop a conservation and restoration project database and interactive map. This tool will track and describe conservation work in the Klamath Basin for the public and help to coordinate restoration efforts among partners in the Basin. It will also house and provide access to important data sets that can help drive long-term restoration success and support science and research efforts.

With resources provided by President Biden's Investing in America agenda, the Bureau of Reclamation is also establishing a robust drought resilience program for basins experiencing long-term drought and the impacts of climate change – including throughout the Klamath Basin. In the coming months, Reclamation will announce significant additional funding throughout the region to facilitate multi-year planning and alignment of water supply and demand as well as to address critical infrastructure needs. Additionally, Reclamation is funding \$2.9 million to the Klamath Tribes, Yurok Tribe, Hoopa Valley Tribe, Karuk Tribe, Siskiyou and Modoc Nation for projects that restore watersheds and revitalize water infrastructure.

Here's a bit more about the new Memorandum of Understanding between Klamath Basin Tribes and the Klamath Water Users Association, taken from the February 14 press release:

A newly signed [Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\)](#) between the Klamath Tribes, Yurok Tribe, Karuk Tribe and KWUA commits the parties to working together to identify, recommend and support projects that advance shared Klamath Basin restoration goals, including improving water and irrigation stability and reliability; strengthening ecosystem resilience; protecting fish populations; and advancing drought resilience.

The MOU also commits DOI to working across its bureaus, other federal departments and agencies, the states of Oregon and California, and non-governmental partners to help secure funding and approval for projects and actions that advance these shared goals, including new investments from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act.

Additionally, the agreement formally recognizes the significant value of Indigenous Knowledge and commits the parties to incorporate it into its restoration efforts throughout the basin.



Project Feeder Watch Report from Jacksonville Elementary School

My name is Jack and I am the lead ornithologist this month. The most exciting bird this month was a Yellow-Rumped Warbler. A problem we had this month is the starlings are hogging our bird feeder. Our solution is we can scare them with our window by closing the window fast! Thank you for giving us the bird feeders and the bird food.

Note from teacher Zach Williams: We saw some warblers (Yellow-rumped and Orange-crowned) a couple weeks ago but haven't seen any since. Looking forward to having the grosbeaks and other spring travelers come back.

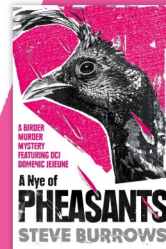
Presenting the *Birder Murder* Mystery Book Series!

Author Steve Burrows has reached out to Audubon chapters to invite them to “clue” their membership into his popular Birder Murder mystery book series. For anyone unfamiliar with the books, they are standalone murder mysteries, with lead characters and general setting typical of an English country village, featuring a detective whose hobby is birding. Audubon Magazine said “Burrows intertwines avians with the classic whodunit in a completely original way.”

The April 9th release date of the newest book in the series, titled *A Nye of Pheasants*, lines up nicely with the spring migration season. The books are all available at bookstores or Amazon, and an audio version is available on Audible.

One further item that might be of interest to our members is that a TV option for the series has been renewed for this year, and there are signs that progress is being made towards a 2024 production date. Any new developments will be posted on Burrows' website at www.steveburrows.org.

Happy reading!



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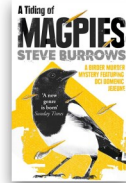
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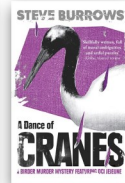
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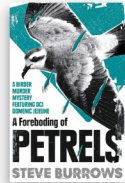
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The Chat - March 2024

BIRDCENTRIC EVENTS FROM AROUND THE REGION

RVAS

First Wednesday Bird Walks: March 6, April 3, May 1

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.

Whetstone Savanna Preserve Bird Walk

Whetstone Savanna, a preserve of the Southern Oregon Land Conservancy, is a beautiful place near White City with valley floor oak savanna, chaparral, and vernal pool-mounded prairie ecosystem types. Join birder Marion Hadden for a birding tour. We are likely to see or hear Acorn Woodpecker, Bewick's Wren, Oak Titmouse, and California Towhee. Northern Mockingbird often is singing this time of year. Registration is free and limited to 12 people. To secure your spot, email Frank at fdlospalluto@gmail.com. Once confirmed, final details will be emailed to you a few days before the hike.

DATE: Saturday Mar 30

TIME: 8-10:30 am

Wild Birds Unlimited

Lynn Newbry Park Bird Walk

Erin Linton will be leading a bird walk to Lynn Newbry Park along the Bear Creek Greenway in Talent this month. A paved path leads through a riparian woodland for good birding year-round. Spring migrants will be arriving to watch for include various warblers. Limited to 9 participants. To reserve your spot, come in or call the store at (541) 772-2107.

DATE: Wednesday Mar 13

TIME: 9:00 am

Lower Table Rock Bird Walk

Max McClarnon will be leading a bird walk to the Lower Table Rock this Saturday. An easy trail loops through oak savanna where you might see Western Bluebird, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Acorn Woodpecker, Towhees, as well as other oak specialized species. A hike to the top of the rock is an elevation gain of about 800 ft. where you might see spring wildflowers. To reserve your spot, come in or call the store at (541) 772-2107.

DATE: Saturday Mar 16

TIME: 9:00 am

COST: Free

"Native Bees of Southern Oregon" Talk

Amanda Huffman is a wildlife biologist out of Southern Oregon with a special interest in native bees. She has created successful pollinator gardens and is a volunteer with the Oregon Bee Atlas run by Oregon State University. Come enjoy a talk on the many native bees you can see and attract to your yard this spring and summer!

DATE: Sunday Mar 17

TIME: 2-3:00 pm

Klamath Bird Observatory

Bear Divide and Brazil Trips

KBO has two trips of a lifetime approaching, with several spots open. In April, join us on a 4-day trip to Burbank, California, where we will explore the wonders of Bear Divide in Southern California. Calling Bear Divide a migratory hot spot would be an understatement. In August, we invite you to join the directors of Klamath Bird Observatory and Mantiqueira Bird Observatory for a 10-day adventure exploring the Atlantic Forest of southeastern Brazil. For more information on upcoming KBO events, visit <https://klamathbird.org/callnote/bear-divide-trip-registration-and-details/> and <https://klamathbird.org/callnote/brazil-trip-registration-open/>.

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Happy spring to our wonderful flock!



Downy Woodpecker
Credit: Keeley Kirkendall



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