

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

Deadline for the June 2024 issue is May 20



ROGUE VALLEY BIRD DAY 2024

Enjoy a local celebration of World Migratory Bird Day on **Saturday, May 11th, 8 am – 12 pm** at North Mountain Park Nature Center in Ashland. Rogue Valley Bird Day will include educational exhibits from Klamath Bird Observatory, Wild Birds Unlimited, and more, as well as fun all-ages activities.

Adult's and children's binoculars will be available for checkout, with bird walks leaving every 15-30 minutes. These easy walks will travel along the park's bark-chipped trails, or along the accessible, paved bike path. Visitors may also sit down and enjoy the bird watching from the covered pavilion.

This year's theme "Protect Insects, Protect Birds", highlights the importance of insects throughout a bird's life cycle, especially during migration. Pollinator Project Rogue Valley will share pollinator information and offer activities for kids and adults, to learn more about the vital insects to be found in your own backyard.

Crafts, games, and a self-guided activity booklet will be on hand for kids to learn about birds and earn prizes. At 11 am, all ages are invited to compete in the annual Bird Calling Contest and "Name that Bird" contest, with prizes provided by the Rogue Valley Audubon Society. Join us for a day of birding fun!

To learn more, visit RogueValleyBirdDay.net



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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.

Project Feeder Watch Report from Jacksonville Elementary School



My name is Anne, and I am the lead ornithologist this month for Mr. Williams's 3rd grade class at Jacksonville Elementary school. This month we haven't seen many birds because we ran out of bird seed over spring break. We

have seen a total of nine species! Fortunately, we have seen two golden crowned sparrows that loved to hang around. We continue to have deer come to our feeder. We put cages around our tube feeder and got spicy seeds to stop the deer from coming to the feeder. We went on a bird hike with Erin and saw so many interesting birds like Steller's Jay, hummingbirds, and many more. Thank you, Erin, for all of your help this year.

On April 26, SOU seniors Keeley and Kelsey-Lee selected plants at Shooting Star Nursery for their Capstone Project, a restoration of the Pollinator Garden at Science Works. On behalf of our members, the



RVAS board was delighted to contribute \$490 as part of the Gwentyth Ragsosine legacy project. Thanks to Shooting Star Nursery for the generous 10% discount they provided!

Status of upcoming events

Field trips: Denman Bird Walk - Jun. 5, Jul. 3, Aug. 7

Rogue Valley Bird Day: May 11

April Field Notes 2024

By Frank Lospalluto and Kristi Mergenthaler

*In my dream I saw
this spring wind gently shaking
blossoms from a tree;
and even now, though I'm awake,
there's motion, trembling in my chest.*

Saigyō (1118-1190) translated by William LaFleur

The last couple of weeks have seen the arrival and passage of many migrants. Some will stay and breed; others continue moving north. Exciting times for new and old hands alike. Waking becomes the anticipation of who is first to greet the day in song. And walking out the door - who is here who wasn't here yesterday.

A few photographs from local birders.

Janet Kelly had a transcendental moment with the small group of Pine Grosbeaks seen along the PCT recently.



Karl Schneck had something similar with a Great Gray Owl, it would appear.

The Brown Creeper in Gary Shaffer's photo is a resident bird who has been singing for weeks about the beauty of trees. And the handsome Chipping Sparrow, a recent arrival, comes to breed. Chipping Sparrows (below, also from Gary Shaffer) get right to work when they arrive on breeding grounds. Most pairs have two broods.



Field Notes, continued on page 4

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Field Notes, continued from page 3

I would be remiss if I did not mention the amazing migration of Greater White-fronted Geese that started around the evening of April 16th over the Siskiyou Summit with many flocks streaming overhead for four straight days. The surge over the summit has mostly dissipated but continues through the Klamath Basin. Janet Kelly estimated 600 birds over 1000 Springs Sno-Park April 23. The Yupik people call them the 'laughing goose' because of their two or three syllable call "klow-yo, 'leq leg "

References:

Billerman, S. M., B. K. Keeney, P. G. Rodewald, and T. S. Schulenberg, Eds. (2022). Birds of the World. Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, Ithaca, NY, USA. <https://birdsoftheworld.org/bow/home>

La Fleur, W. R. (2003) Awesome Nightfall, The Life, Times, and Poetry of Saigyo. Wisdom Publications

March Field Notes 2024 correction: Last month's photo of a Tree Swallow dipping water should have been attributed to local legend, Jim Livaudais. *The Chat* editor takes full responsibility. We apologize, Jim! To see some of Jim's amazing photos on eBird, go to <https://media.ebird.org/catalog?mediaType=photo> (you will need an eBird account for access), and then search under "Contributor" for James Livaudais.

Fierce Iridescent Sprites

By Kristi Mergenthaler, reprinted courtesy of Southern Oregon Land Conservancy

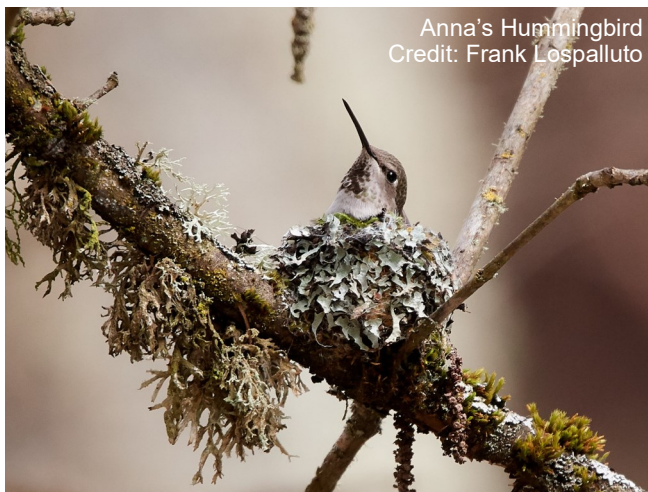
<https://www.landconserve.org/news/2024/4/15/our-hummingbird-neighbors>

Stand on the Grizzly Peak Trail near Ashland in the north-facing wet meadows during August and listen to the buzz, not the buzz of bumble bees, but of wing-whirring hummingbirds nectaring on towering larkspurs and monkshood. The male hummers may also buzz past, defending their flowery territories from intruders, and if you are lucky, one may hover a few feet from your face, staring you down. Pugnacious and brave, glittering sprites.



Anna's Hummingbird
Credit: Gary Shaffer

Hummingbirds only live in the Americas, prefer to visit red to orange tubular flowers (colors bees can't see), and build tiny nests made of spider webs, shield lichens, and botanical downy fluff. Their hearts beat 1200 times per minute to spark their zippity lives, thrumming wings, and ferocious spirits. While hovering, hummers drink flower nectar, often deeply inserting their heads into flowers to reach the sugar water found in long petal spurs. Diminutive birds with dazzling rainbow-colored feathers, hummingbirds have long inspired love, myths, and admiration. In Jackson and Josephine Counties, you are likely to meet three species.



Anna's Hummingbird
Credit: Frank Lospalluto

Anna's Hummingbird

These locally resident birds often visit hummingbird feeders or tree wells left by sapsuckers during the winter, tongue-flicking tree sap infused with insect protein. Before the 1930s, they bred in Baja Mexico but have been moving north with changing climate, extending their range to Vancouver, Canada. During courtship displays, the males fly up to 130 feet high into the sky, then plunge to earth braking at the last minute with a tail flare and chirpy squeak. The sound originates from the tail feathers and males have been clocked going 385 body lengths per second, faster than a Peregrine Falcon, and experience more G-acceleration than a fighter jet pilot.

ID tip: Look for an iridescent pink-red head and throat on males, a straight beak, and a comparatively stocky build, for a hummingbird.

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Field Notes, continued from page 4



Fledgling Anna's Hummingbird
Credit: Frank Lospalluto

Rufous Hummingbirds

When the first pink urn-shaped whiteleaf manzanita flowers begin to bloom in early spring, Rufous Hummingbirds appear in our region. They overwinter in Mexico in the mountains, and some migrate all the way to Alaska to breed. By body size (3 inches), Rufous have the longest migration of any bird in the world and are so feisty, they can even chase away chipmunks. Their population has declined 67% from 1966-2019 due to habitat loss and climate change; the use of neonicotinoid pesticides has also been implicated in their decline.

ID tip: Males have fiery red throats, or gorgets, orange backs and bellies, and the wings don't reach the tail tip

when perched. Similar Allen's Hummingbirds are coastal, and the males generally have bronze-green backs.

Calliope Hummingbird

The smallest bird of the United States, the weight of a ping pong ball, these lively wee birds breed in the mountain meadows of the Northwest and spend winters in the pine-oak forests of Mexico. They travel around 5,000 miles up the Pacific Coast and then south along the Rockies. These impressive travelers are named after Calliope, one of the nine Greek muses and patron of epic poetry. They are found in mixed conifer/hardwood forests, and sometimes in the riparian corridor and near flower meadows. Around here, look for them in manzanita and buckbrush patches or openings with flowering currants. They are often overlooked because of their quiet nature.

ID tip: Males have magenta rays or spangles on the throat and a greenish vest, a hunched posture, and a diagnostic zinging sound during U-shaped flight displays.

Congratulations to Rogue Valley native and local birder Ralph Browning on his new book, *Birder Interrupted!* The author tells us it can be found at Amazon (including a Kindle edition) and Barnes and Noble.

From the publication synopsis: "Inspired by Roger Tory Peterson and James Fishers book *Wild America*, recent high school graduate M. Ralph Browning embarked on a tightly budgeted, year-long trip in the US looking for birds. The year was 1962. His 1955 VW Beetle broke after nine months, which forced a premature end to the journey. In 2005, after matters of military duty, college, a family, and a career in birds at Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History, the author resumed the interrupted trip. This time, he was with the girl he'd left behind in 1962, and they birded Texas, the Southwest, and California."

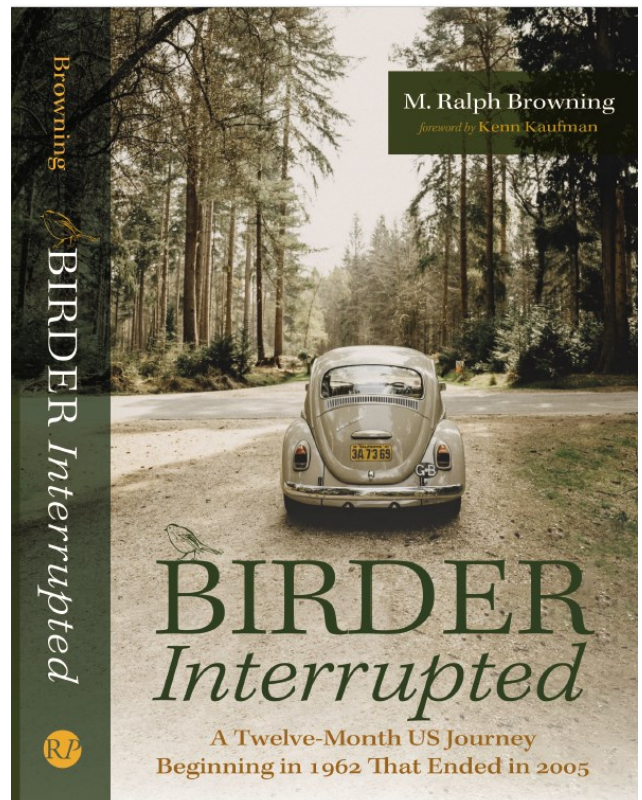
Praise for *Birder Interrupted*:

"Ralph's knowledge of American history, his depth of understanding of science, and his joy in simply seeing birds is unmatched in any birding story."

--Alan Contreras, senior editor of *A History of Oregon Ornithology*

"Readers encounter rich stories of birds, naturalists, special places, unexpected discoveries, and a story of inexorable environmental change across nearly five decades."

--Bruce M. Beehler, research associate, Division of Birds, National Museum of Natural History



BIRDCENTRIC EVENTS FROM AROUND THE REGION

RVAS

First Wednesday Bird Walks: June 5, July 3, August 7

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.

Rogue Valley Bird Day 2024

Enjoy a local celebration of World Migratory Bird Day at North Mountain Park Nature Center in Ashland. Rogue Valley Bird Day will include educational exhibits, bird walks, crafts, games, and activities for all ages. Win fame and prizes at the annual Bird Calling Contest and "Name that Bird" contest, with prizes provided by the Rogue Valley Audubon Society. Join us for a day of birding fun!

DATE: Saturday May 11

TIME: 8:00 am - 12:00 pm

Birding Howard Prairie/Hyatt Lakes Circuit

Join local bird enthusiast & RVAS member Janet Kelly on a birding field trip around the Howard Prairie/Hyatt Lakes area, for observations of our summer migrant and resident breeders. Dress for the weather, and bring binoculars, scopes, and lunch/snacks. Meet at the Rite-Aid parking area in Ashland at 7:00 am. Max 8 participants - carpooling and registration required. To register, email chamkell@msn.com.

DATE: Saturday May 25

TIME: 7:00 am - 12:00 pm

Wild Birds Unlimited

Holy Waters Bird Walk

Max McClarnon will be leading a walk to the Holy Waters on the Rogue River this month. To reserve your spot, come in or call the store at (541) 772-2107.

DATE: Saturday May 18

TIME: 9:00 am

Rogue Riverkeeper

32nd Annual Rogue River Clean-Up & Let's Pull Together!

Volunteer alongside Stream Smart, the Bureau of Land Management, Josephine County Parks, and other community partners for a trash clean-up and weed pull along the Rogue River in Josephine County! After-party with live music, a raffle with prizes, lunch, and informational booths to follow from 12:00 PM to 2:00 PM. Find more info and sign up by visiting our Events website at www.rogueriverkeeper.org/upcoming-events/.

DATE: Saturday May 18

TIME: 9:00 am - 12:00 pm

Beginner's Bird Walk Along Bear Creek

We will meet at the covered picnic pavilion at Lynn Newbry Park, Talent and walk around 0.6 miles upstream along the paved Bear Creek Greenway path. While we walk and look for birds, we'll discuss the recovery from the Almeda Fire and riparian habitat and restoration. This event is wheelchair accessible and appropriate for age 8 and older. Find more info and sign up by visiting our Events website at www.rogueriverkeeper.org/upcoming-events/.

DATE: Saturday May 25

TIME: 9:00 am - 11:00 am



Credit: Rogue Riverkeeper

Birdcentric Events, continued on page 7

Birdcentric Events, continued from page 6

The Nature Conservancy & BLM

Whooo Comes Out at Night?

Look and listen for who comes out at night while hiking the Lower Table Rock Loop Trail (1/2-mile accessible trail) with BLM wildlife biologists Steve Godwin and Emma Busk. No guarantees - but they will attempt to lure Pygmy, Great-horned, and Screech Owls, as well as other creatures of the night. Learn fascinating information about bats and their importance as they fly overhead. Bring flashlights and wear good hiking shoes. Learn more at <https://owl-hike-2024.eventbrite.com>.

DATE: Saturday Jun 1

TIME: 8:00 - 10:30 pm

COST: Free

The Conservation Column

By Pepper Trail

Major Conservation Victory! The Supreme Court Declines to Hear Legal Challenges to the Expansion of the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument

To the great relief of conservationists, on March 25 the U.S. Supreme Court declined to hear two cases challenging the 2017 expansion of the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument. This puts an end to legal challenges to the Monument.

The cases were brought by Murphy Company, an Oregon-based timber company; the Association of O&C Counties (AOCC), a group advocating for increased logging on BLM lands; and the American Forest Resource Council (AFRC), an advocacy group for the timber industry.

The timber groups argued that the expansion limited logging on land where it should have been allowed to occur. They cited the 1937 O&C Act, which designated federal forest land in Oregon to be set aside and used for local governments to fund public services through forest production. Defenders of Monument expansion, on the other hand, argued that the language of the O&C Act allows flexibility in balancing multiple management priorities, including protection of areas of high conservation significance.

The Monument expansion had already been upheld in two earlier rulings: the D.C. Circuit Court had ruled against the AFRC and AOCC in their case, while the Ninth Circuit had ruled against Murphy Company.

Since the Supreme Court decided not to hear the cases, those earlier rulings, and the expansion of the monument, will stand.

"Both appellate courts got it right," said Kristen Boyles, an attorney for Earthjustice, which represented groups supporting the expansion of the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument. "They applied settled statutory interpretation principles to conclude that the O&C Act contains broad, multi-purpose management directives, and that the Monument Proclamation's provisions fit comfortably alongside those directives. The Monument and its expansion are now the law of the land."

The above summary incorporates reporting by Jane Vaughan, correspondent for Jefferson Public Radio.

Draft Management Plan for the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument Released

On April 5, the Medford BLM released their long-awaited *Draft Resource Management Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument*. The plan and related documents can be accessed at: <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2023675/570>

BLM is soliciting public comments on the Draft RMP and DEIS, which must be received by July 5, 2024. Comments can be submitted at the website given above.

RVAS and other groups will be submitting detailed comments, and we will provide updates and links on the RVAS website. We will be paying particular attention to any proposals that could compromise the Monument Proclamation's protection mandate, such as heavy-handed active management in the name of fuels reduction.

Jet Boats Threaten the Upper Rogue River

Many of you are doubtless aware of the problem of commercial jet boats on the Upper Rogue River. A private

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business operating out of TouVelle State Park has had significant negative impacts on fish, wildlife, and recreational users on the river. Longtime RVAS member Bob Hunter has taken a leading role in fighting this inappropriate activity, and provided the following summary of the issue:

Historically, the Upper Rogue River has been a place to peacefully recreate and enjoy nature and the outdoors. There are many public lands that abut this section of river, including TouVelle State Park, Denman Wildlife Area, and SOLC's Rogue River Preserve. This area has been a safe haven for fish and wildlife, and has been a popular area for RVAS members to birdwatch and enjoy the outdoors. There was previously only minimal private jet boat use above the Table Rock Road bridge.



Jet boat and its wake on the Upper Rogue
Courtesy: Darren Campbell, YouTube

This all changed however, when a private jet boat tour company (Rogue Jet Boat Adventures) started operating out of TouVelle State Park in 2015. Initially, there were only a few trips a day with one small ten passenger boat.

However, the number of boats (currently 3), the size of the boats (one 31' feet long that can carry 25 passengers), and the number of trips has increased over the years. These boats are just too large for the river, travel too fast, are extremely noisy, throw large wakes, increase river turbidity, contribute to bank erosion, and dislodge huge amounts of aquatic vegetation. Their operation in the Upper

Rogue River has created unsafe conditions for river recreators, increased user conflicts, disrupted traditional river uses, impacted park users, impacted users of adjacent public lands, impacted private landowners, impacted water quality and the river, and disturbed fish and wildlife.

This would not have occurred but for Oregon Parks and Recreation Department's (OPRD) inexplicable allowance of one private business to seasonally co-opt a portion of TouVelle State Park to operate a commercial jet boat tour business, all at the expense of park users and the broader public interest. OPRD has ignored its own surveys that show the public doesn't support this use, but has continued to allow commercial jet boat operations out of the park without a permit. OPRD's current justification is that the business is just like any other regular park user.

Under current regulations, we can expect new jet boat tour operations to crop up in different sections of the Upper Rogue River over time. We can also expect that the use of personal jet boats will also increase, especially now with the advent of the new mini-jet boats that can go just about anywhere. They have already been observed going from TouVelle State Park all the way to Cole Rivers Hatchery. The negative impacts caused by the current commercial jet boat tours have demonstrated the need to take action to not only protect the Upper Rogue River from its operations, but to protect the Upper Rogue River from the impacts of other potential future commercial jet boat operations and the proliferation of other jet boat use in the Upper Rogue River.

A state process to address the jet boat issue is currently underway through the Oregon's Kitchen Table, a statewide community engagement nonprofit. Pepper Trail will be contacting them to see how RVAS and its members can get involved.

What You Can Do

You can help by letting the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department and Commission know you oppose the commercial operation of a jet boat tour business out of TouVelle State Park, and letting the Oregon Marine Board know you support restrictions limiting the use of watercraft over 15 horsepower in the Upper Rogue.

e-mail for OPRD Director Lisa Sumption: lisa.sumption@opr.oregon.gov

e-mail for OPRD Commission: denise.warburton@opr.oregon.gov

e-mail for Marine Board: Jennifer.cooper@boat.oregon.gov

To get more involved contact the Upper Rogue Guardians: upperroqueguardians@gmail.com

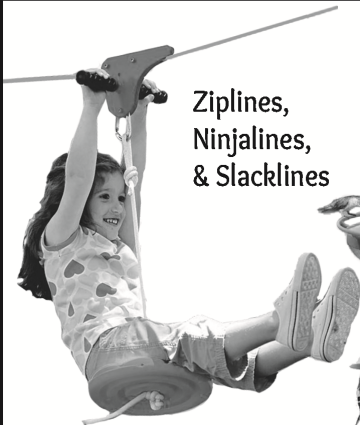
YouTube video on this issue: youtube.com/watch?v=q5BgjzuoJQ

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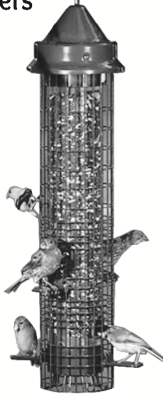
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Editor's Note: I wanted to find an extra special (might I say, *supercalifragilisticexpialidocious*) photo to grace the back cover of the May *Chat*. I believe that this Cedar Waxwing simply glowing in the sunlight, captured by Karl Schneck, truly fits the bill.
Enjoy!



Wild Birds Unlimited
Nature Shop

20% OFF One Regularly-priced Item

*Valid 10/1/23 thru 9/30/24 at the Medford, OR WBU store. One discount per purchase. Not valid on bird food, previous purchases, optics, gift cards, DSC memberships, or sale items.

ROGUE VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

THE CHAT

Newsletter of the
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