

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

Deadline for the October 2024 issue is September 20



September Virtual Program

Monday, Sept. 30, 2024 at 7:00 pm

Birding Under the Influence: Cycling Across America in Search of Birds and Recovery With Dorian Anderson

NOTE: Our first talk of this year will be on an unusual date and VIRTUAL. This talk is in partnership with Lane County Audubon Society (LCAS). The date change is to accommodate the speaker's schedule, and LCAS's schedule.

On January 1st, 2014, Dorian Anderson boarded his bicycle for the adventure of a lifetime. His two-wheeled journey was an eco-friendly twist on the Big Year, a project during which a birdwatcher tries to observe as many species as possible during a calendar year. While his predecessors utilized cars, planes, and boats, Anderson's goal was to replicate their trans-continental travels without the use of petroleum, a herculean challenge no one before him had accepted. He ultimately survived subzero temperatures, drifting snow, gusting winds, lightning storms, mountainous ascents, dog attacks, crumbling roads, and several accidents. By December 31, he'd amassed 618 bird species across 18,000 miles of riding, totals no one imagined possible when he set off with zero cycling experience.

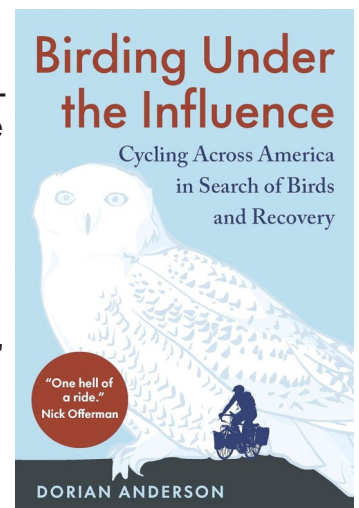
Anderson will speak about the genesis of his bike-birding project, provide a thrilling recount of his travels, highlight the birds he saw, and reveal how



his adventure changed his life. His personality and enthusiasm are infectious, and his tales of birding, cycling, and self-discovery will inspire others to venture into the outdoors, take note of the birds around them, and make positive changes in their own lives.

About the Speaker

Dorian started birding in his Philadelphia backyard at age seven. His interest grew to include the Delaware Valley and Jersey Shore during his preteen years, and he attended several of Victor Emanuel's youth birding camps as a teenager. He envisioned himself as an ornithologist



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

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Chapter Program meetings are held on the fourth Tuesday of the month (unless otherwise noted), 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: Chapter meetings will be held on Zoom if deemed unsafe for gathering, or as otherwise needed.

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until his educational rise and coincident alcoholism extinguished his birding desire. With his focus split between molecular biology and drinking, his childhood passion laid comatose through his twenties, rediscovered only when he got sober at age 30.

Despite the aforementioned alcoholism and coincident drug abuse which plagued his late-teens and twenties, Anderson received his B.S. in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology from Stanford University, did predoctoral biomedical research at Harvard University, and earned his Ph.D. in Developmental Genetics and Molecular Cell Biology from New York University. Returning to Boston after getting sober, he spent three years as a Postdoctoral Fellow in Molecular Neuroscience at Massachusetts General Hospital. Eventually exhausted by the academic rat race and searching for direction, he resigned his postdoctoral position to undertake his [Biking for Birds](#) project.

Momentum from that life-changing pivot opened many doors including public speaking, travel writing, and tour guiding. He worked in Colombia as a consultant for the National Audubon Society and is currently an international birding guide for [Tropical Birding](#). He is an accomplished [bird photographer](#) and has just published his memoir: [Birding Under the Influence: Cycling across America in Search of Birds and Recovery](#).



Status of upcoming events

Field trips: Denman Bird Walk - Oct. 2, Nov. 6, Dec. 4

Zoom Chapter Meeting: Mon. Sept. 30 at 7pm (Note unusual date this month!)



White-faced Ibis
Credit: Jeff Miller



American Avocets
Credit: Janet Kelly

August Field Notes 2024

By Frank Lospalluto

*By dawn the little owls
that chattered in the red moon
have turned into magpies in the ash trees
from September, W.S. Merwin*

A respite of August rain surprises and relieves. A short note to start this new cycle of *Chats*.

Nolan Clements and Samantha Webb deftly identified an immature male **Costa's Hummingbird** in Talent Aug 18.

On Aug 22 at Lost Creek Lake Janet Kelly observed 2 **American Avocets**. A couple of days later Bob Hunter reported 4 out there.

Ryan Terrill had two **Long-billed Curlew** flyover at Agate Lake on Aug 3. Sophia Tribelhorn reported a juvenile **White-faced Ibis** at Hoover Ponds County Park Aug 11.

Barn Owl and Western Screech Owl, two owls that are resident in our area and always nice to see out in the field, are pictured here.

All errors and omissions are my own. Peace.



Costa's Hummingbird
Credit: Tanner Martin



Western Screech Owl
Credit: Tanner Martin



Barn Owl
Credit: Howard Sands

The Chat - September 2024

RVAS Financial Summary for July 2023 to June 2024

Kay Simmons, Treasurer

Total income of \$20,634 for the fiscal year, July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024, came from these sources:

Dues	1,918
Donations	3,610
Holiday Auction	2,156
Birdathon	8,053
<i>Chat</i> printed subscriptions	151
<i>Chat</i> advertising	200
National Audubon Society	1,870
Sale of books	67
Interest from Savings, CDs	2,610

Total expenses of \$8,603 for the fiscal year 2023-2024 included:

Administrative expenses	4,993
Mission-related expenses	3,610

Administrative expenses included: web site, *The Chat* newsletter, printing and mailing, meeting programs, Zoom, storage facility, office supplies, insurance and taxes.

Mission expenses included: Project FeederWatch, Birding in Schools, N. Mountain Park Bird Day, ScienceWorks pollinator garden restoration, Badger Run Wildlife Rehab, Lost Bird Film showing at SOU, and SOU Earth Day.

Thank you, Rogue Valley Audubon Society members for your generous donations and contributions.



Rogue Valley Audubon Membership Application

Mail check to: Rogue Valley Audubon, P. O. Box 8597, Medford, OR 97501 or join online at www.roguevalleyaudubon.org using PayPal. Welcome to the flock. We are a dedicated group.

\$20 Regular membership \$25 for paper newsletter _____ Additional donation (amount)

Name _____

Address _____

City/State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

E-mail (required to receive newsletter online, the preferred method and other RVAS announcements):

Check here if you wish to be sent a printed copy of *The Chat* by U.S. mail. Add \$25 to membership check.

Check here if you would like to volunteer for Rogue Valley Audubon.

Check here to opt out of all electronic communications from Rogue Valley Audubon.

BIRDCENTRIC EVENTS FROM AROUND THE REGION

RVAS

First Wednesday Bird Walks: October 2, November 6, December 4

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

Common Waterbirds of the Klamath Refuge and Inviting the Kids

Presenter Shannon Rio will acquaint you with how to go to the refuge and what you might see when you arrive. Maps of the refuge will be provided. The book *Common Waterbirds of the Klamath Basin* will be featured; its photos and light-hearted script are a guide to both identify and learn about the unique waterfowl that visit this magical place. This book invites you to take some young person (or any age person) to the refuge to learn about the wonders of its waterfowl, and will be for sale at Wild Birds after the talk. Note: portions of this talk will be included in the KBO event on Sept 30.

DATE: Sunday Sept 29

TIME: 1:00 - 2:30 pm

LOCATION: Wild Birds Unlimited, Medford

Siskiyou Audubon Society

Join us for our first Chapter Program meeting of the season! Xerces Society Ambassador Dave Kollen will speak on "Climate Change and Biodiversity: A Critical Nexus for Conservation". Prior to the Program will be socializing, refreshments, Chapter business, and a free raffle.

DATE: Thursday Sept 12

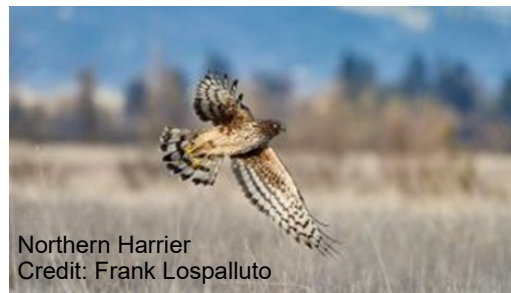
TIME: 6:00 - 8:00 pm

LOCATION: Unitarian Universalists Church in Grants Pass, 129 NW 'E' St.

Klamath Bird Observatory

Patty Buettner Memorial Hawk Watch

This event has been a tradition for many years, observing the migrating raptors moving southward along the escarpment adjacent to Hwy 97 and Upper Klamath Lake. On good days it can be rather birdy, and there is constant discussion of raptor characteristics, overall shapes, and plumages. Among the more common raptors are Red-tailed Hawk; Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks; Bald and Golden Eagles; Northern Harriers; falcons such as Prairie, Peregrine, and American Kestrel; Turkey Vultures; and others. Note that due to the primitive location, there are no restrooms. If interested in participating, please contact Kevin Spencer for more details at rriparia@charter.net.



Northern Harrier
Credit: Frank Lospalluto

Donations to the Patty Buettner Memorial Hawk Watch will contribute to the Avian Internship Memorial Fund (the AIM Fund). The AIM Fund, started by the friends and family of Patty Buettner, helps support KBO's long-running internship programs. For more important information about this event, or about the AIM Fund, visit: <https://klamathbird.org/callnote/patty-buettner-memorial-hawk-watch/>.

DATE: Saturday Sept 28

TIME: 9:00 am - 3:00 pm

LOCATION: Modoc Rim stationary viewing area, north of Klamath Falls

COST: Donation of any amount to the AIM Fund (see above)

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Events, continued from page 5

Klamath Bird Observatory

Water Birds of the Klamath Refuge and the Federal Duck Stamp

Klamath Refuge was designated the first waterfowl refuge in 1908. This presentation is to acquaint you with how to go to the refuge and what you might see when you arrive. We will also introduce you to one of the most successful conservation programs ever created, the Federal Duck Stamp. The purchase of the Duck Stamp provides funds for the Migratory Bird Conservation fund, which supports the National Wildlife Refuge System. To raise funds to conserve all bird species, Klamath Bird Observatory produces a Conservation Science Stamp, which can be purchased with the Duck Stamp. The stamps are for sale [online here](https://klamathbird.org/callnote/water-birds-and-the-federal-duck-stamp/), or you can purchase them during the event. For more information and to register, visit <https://klamathbird.org/callnote/water-birds-and-the-federal-duck-stamp/>.

DATE: Monday Sept 30

TIME: 6:00 pm

LOCATION: KBO office, Ashland (provided at registration)

COST: Free

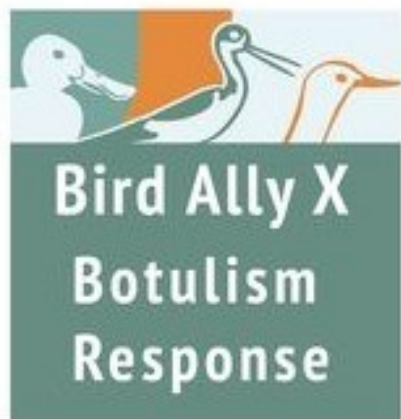


Be a Guest RVS Board member for only 3 months!

The RVAS Board is grateful for all those that volunteer to support birding in the Rogue Valley. We know that you are busy birding and enjoying birding trips. But, the Board would welcome your input and ideas on RVAS programs and worthwhile projects. We invite you to join us as a guest Board Member for just 3 months. No further commitment is expected. The Board meets once a month on the first Thursday of the month via Zoom. The Zoom meetings are at 7 pm, for around an hour.

If you are interested, contact any Board Member. Our emails are posted in *The Chat* and on the website. Or call Kay Simmons, Treasurer, at: 202-870-3404.

We look forward to having you join us!



Join our Team on the Klamath Basin National Wildlife Refuge Complex

Learn the art and science of wildlife rehabilitation. Must be 18 years of age, commit to a weekly work shift, and be a team nature. Interested in volunteering, please email Tracy Hart at tlynn82@icloud.com. To apply for paid internships and technician positions, please contact January Bill at jb@birdallyx.net, and Marie Travers at mt@birdallyx.net.



The Conservation Column

By Juliet Grable

For this month's column, I'm providing an update on the botulism outbreak at Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge in northern California. The update draws from two stories I wrote for Jefferson Public Radio, though I'm sure the tally of birds that have died during the outbreak has increased since the second story was published on August 30. John Vradenburg, supervisory biologist for the Klamath Refuge Complex, says cold nights with frost are key to ending the outbreak; this is because fly maggots – a key vector for spreading the botulism toxin to other birds – can't survive cooler temperatures.



The organization Bird Ally X is operating its rehab hospital on the refuge now. I was hoping to go out and witness the operation and visit with staff last week, but I couldn't get clearance from USFWS in time.

Please donate to their effort if you can at <https://givingtools.com/give/169>.

I believe they are still looking for volunteers, too. You can follow them on their [Bird Ally X Botulism Response](#) Facebook page.

As I'm sure many of you know, the key to keeping a botulism outbreak from happening is prevention, and the key to prevention is circulating water. If there's good news, it's that many Klamath Basin stakeholders understand that the refuges need a guaranteed supply of water and are in-

terested in working together to ensure this happens. I'm guessing there will be opportunities to comment on such proposals in the coming year, and we will make sure to keep RVAS membership informed.

Klamath Basin Refuges Battle Botulism Outbreak

On Aug. 17, the Bureau of Reclamation started flowing water to the Tule Lake and Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuges to help mitigate an outbreak of avian botulism. Thousands of ducks, waterfowl, and shorebirds at the Tule Lake Refuge have died from the disease this month. Both refuges are part of the Klamath Basin Refuge Complex straddling the Oregon-California border near Klamath Falls.

Since the outbreak began in mid-August, refuge staff have been finding up to 500 dead birds per day in Sump 1A, the largest water body in the Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge. John Vradenburg, supervisory biologist for the Klamath Basin Refuge Complex, estimates that about 20,000 birds have died so far, many of them ducks like pintails and green-winged teals.

The circulating water and increased volumes are helping prevent an even greater disaster, says Vradenburg, as sick and dead birds are concentrated in fewer areas.

"We are still seeing sick birds where the water is not moving, but some improvements where there is good flow and places where the water is getting deeper," says Vradenburg.

A rehab hospital to treat sick birds is being operated by the nonprofit Bird Ally X in partnership with Ducks Unlimited. The facility wasn't operating earlier because refuge staff were awaiting test results on dead birds sent to the USGS National Wildlife Health Center in Madison, Wisconsin.

After dead grebes tested positive for Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in July, Vradenburg feared they were dealing with a dual outbreak of botulism and "bird flu." They couldn't risk treating birds possibly infected with HPAI in a confined area, since the virus can be transmitted to humans. So far, samples have only tested positive for botulism.

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The botulism toxin is produced by a soil-borne bacterium and flourishes in warm, shallow, and stagnant water.

The Bureau of Reclamation is responsible for allocating water to irrigators, and for maintaining levels in Upper Klamath Lake and flows on the Klamath River. In 2024, the refuges received more water than they have in recent drought years, drawing an abundance and diversity of birds not seen for decades. Reclamation was even able to send additional water to farms and the refuges to ensure safe conditions downstream while deconstruction of three dams downstream on the Klamath River took place.

In summer, as flows were curtailed and air temperatures rose, wetlands on the refuges drained and warmed. In July, tribes, waterfowl advocacy groups, and irrigators warned Reclamation that conditions were ripe for botulism to flourish and urged the agency to deliver water to the refuges. In August, after birds had begun dying at Tule Lake, 16 conservation groups, including many Audubon chapters, sent a letter urging the agency to release water to help mitigate the outbreak.

In a statement provided to Jefferson Public Radio, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service thanked Reclamation for directing water and acknowledged “sustained inflow” as “one of the most valuable tools for addressing a botulism outbreak in birds.” In addition, the water flowing into Lower Klamath Refuge has stabilized wetland levels there, giving rescuers a disease-free location to release birds that are treated in the rehab hospital

Along with the short-term mitigating flows, the Bureau of Reclamation says it is “supporting and engaging in a number of collaborative forums where Tribes, water managers and stakeholders are working together to develop a long-term operational plan to meet multiple needs with limited water supplies.”

Among the strategies they are considering is flowing water from, through, and within the Klamath Project, the irrigation system that supplies water to farmers as well as the Tule Lake and Lower Klamath Refuges.

Mark Hennelly, vice president of advocacy at California Waterfowl Association, says that flowing water from Upper Klamath Lake, through the farms and refuges, and back to the Klamath River would improve water quality in the river and create permanent and semi-permanent wetland habitat that mimics how the Klamath Basin used to function naturally, before the massive irrigation project remade it. These wetlands could also be used to support struggling populations of endangered suckers (c’waam and koptu), says Hennelly.

“If we could get more water to the refuges, but do it in a way that we help endangered fish, that would be ideal,” says Hennelly. “Certainly too, if we can create more reliability for the farmers.”



With so many demands on a limited water supply, such a solution requires more study, along with funding. Some of that funding could come from the state.

In November, California voters will weigh in on Proposition 4, The Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024. If passed, it would authorize \$10 billion in funding for “environmental and climate projects,” including \$25 million for the Klamath refuges.

Hennelly would also like to see the updated Biological Opinions – documents that guide environmental decision making in the area for threatened coho salmon and endangered suckers – address the needs of the refuges and their importance to birds.

“We’ve got to get past single species management and look more towards an ecosystem-based approach,” says Hennelly. “That’s what’s going to have more consensus with the stakeholders and benefit multiple species.”

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Endangered Species Success Story

By Kate Halstead

Don't we all need some good news once in a while?

On the opposite corner of our country, the 1,000th captive-bred Florida Grasshopper Sparrow has just been released back into the wild!

The wild population of these endangered birds, endemic to grasslands of south-central Florida, at one point dropped below an estimated 100 individuals. A diverse partnership began a captive breeding program, which achieved success in 2016 when the first clutch of babies was hatched at the Rare Species Conservatory Foundation. Less than 10 years later on July 16, 2024, sparrow 1,000 flew free into its dry prairie home.

To read more, visit: <https://www.audubon.org/news/celebrating-1000th-florida-grasshopper-sparrow-released-everglades>



The first Florida Grasshopper Sparrows hatched in captivity
Courtesy: National Audubon Society



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*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.

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THE CHAT

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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.

