

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

Deadline for the November 2024 issue is October 20



October IN-PERSON Program
Tuesday, Oct. 22, 2024 at 7:00 pm
Birding Africa Over the Years
With Debbi Paden

Debbi first traveled to Africa in 2014 with two friends from Rogue Fly Fishers, planned by someone who had always wanted to go on a safari. While her friends nicely suggested that the trip would include all the wildlife of Africa, not just the amazing avian species, they became as captivated by the birds as Debbi was. This was also Debbi's first experience photographing African birds. Since then, she has visited Africa seven times, primarily in the southern half, each adventure seeing different areas and species. Debbi will share the wonders of her trips to Africa with some avian knowledge, to encourage everyone to see the great numbers of animals, and to never forget the birds.

About the Speaker

Debbi Paden spent most of her childhood outdoors in the High Sierras, enjoying the wonders of nature and becoming interested in birding. Debbi has been an active member of the Rogue Valley Audubon Society since 1976, serving as a board member, and as a president (1988-1989). She taught elementary school for 30 years, and continued to substitute for 17 years after retirement. She enjoys traveling, birds, photography, and especially combining all three.

Debbi's other interests include fly fishing, scuba diving, hiking, and gardening. She also spent time motorcycling with her husband in Scotland and Ireland, the French and Spanish Pyrenees, southern France, Corsica, and the Ring Road of Iceland. She has had many dogs over the years, but as of now she has two golden retrievers which she has labeled the golden demons as they are quite mischievous.



Debbi and a Mongolian Hunting Eagle (and someone has NOT been skipping arm day!)

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: If a Zoom option is available for the meeting, the Zoom link will be posted on the Rogue Valley Audubon webpage the day of the meeting.

The Chat - October 2024

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Medford, OR 97501

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.

Save the date!

Who: YOU!

What: RVAS Holiday Party and Auction

Where: Medford Congregational Church

When: Saturday, December 7, 2024 at 6:00pm

Why:

- To celebrate the amazing volunteer-based machine that is Rogue Valley Audubon Society!
- To celebrate our past year's successes!
- To eat lots of delicious food and win auctions for fabulous birding experiences!

If you would like to help plan this event, please email Rebekah at Rebekah.bergkoetter@gmail.com.



Project Feeder Watch

By Mary Pat Power

It must be autumn, as Project FeederWatch begins soon! We'll kick off our 23rd season November 9, 2024 at North Mountain Park in Ashland. Over the years this has become a favorite with new birders and "old timers". For the Saturday counts, which are open to the public, often a dozen or more eager souls will show up. Bird feed is provided by RVAS.

The counts take place every other Friday and Saturday from 9-10 am. One observer does the Friday count. On Saturdays, one volunteer heads up the count. We're seeking volunteers to assist with this project. If you can help out once or twice during the season, that would be great! Please contact me at marypat1010@gmail.com.

Status of upcoming events

Field trips: Denman Bird Walk - Nov. 6, Dec. 4, Jan. 1

Chapter Meeting: Tues. Oct. 22 at 7pm

Holiday Party and Auction: Sat. Dec. 7 at 6pm

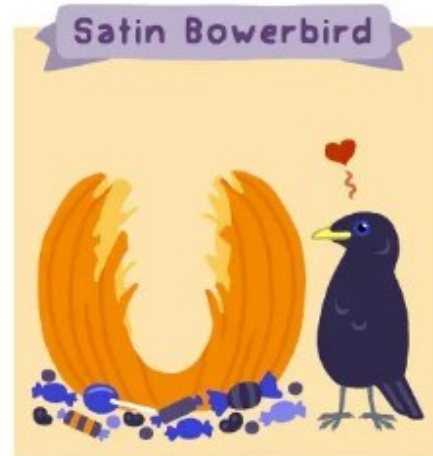
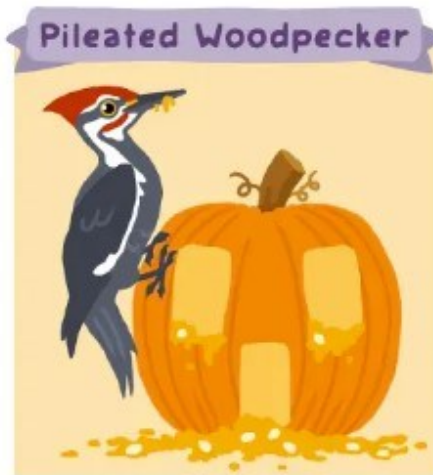
BIRDCENTRIC EVENTS FROM AROUND THE REGION

RVAS

First Wednesday Bird Walks: November 6, December 4, January 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.



Shared with generous permission by artist & author Rosemary Mosco!
Find more at birdandmoon.com or [instagram.com/rosemarymosco/?hl=en](https://www.instagram.com/rosemarymosco/?hl=en).

Avian Botulism Continues to Devastate Birds at Klamath Refuges

By Juliet Grable

I'm sad to report that the botulism outbreak at Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge is continuing unabated. According to the supervisory biologist John Vradenburg, staff were picking up an average of 800 dead birds per day as of last week, and he estimated that 94,000 birds had died altogether. By now, that number has likely surpassed 100,000—a devastating milestone.

The warm, dry weather is prolonging the outbreak. A freeze will arrest the “fly cycle”—birds feed on maggots on carcasses of birds that have succumbed to the disease—but unfortunately, the forecast is calling for more unseasonably warm weather through at least October 20.

John described the course of the outbreak, which took hold in mid-August. Early on, it was affecting nesting and molting birds the most: mallards, cinnamon teal, gadwalls, and redheads; early migrating shorebirds like dowitchers, phalaropes, and sandpipers; as well as local nesting birds like ibis and grebe.

By mid-September, they saw a dramatic increase in green-winged teal, followed by northern pintails. Now, American wigeon are increasing. They've been seeing northern shovelers throughout the event.

Unfortunately, refuge staff are no longer picking up sick or dead birds because hunting season has begun and they don't have enough time in the early mornings to deploy their airboats. This means the carcasses will remain in the field, where they can transmit the disease to yet more birds. The bad news is more and more fall migrants are arriving every day. Stressed from their long journeys, they are especially vulnerable.



Northern Shovelers and other ducks in care at the avian hospital on the Lower Klamath Basin Refuge. Courtesy: Bird Ally X

For over a month, the non-profit Bird Ally X has been operating a M.A.S.H.-style field hospital set up near the Stateline road to treat sickened birds. They have successfully rehabilitated close to 800. They're winding down their operation this week because refuge staff won't be able to deliver new patients.

I visited their operation last week while on assignment for JPR. I learned that they mostly provide supportive care: birds that are completely paralyzed receive IV fluids; those that can at least move a little bit get a tube feeding, Vitamin B complex, and sometimes Vitamin E. Treatment is quite effective, especially for birds at an earlier stage of the disease. Once they rebound from the trauma of capture and initial handling, birds recover in small cohorts in pond enclosures that are set up like mini-wetlands. Once they can fly, they are released in Unit 2 at the Lower Klamath Refuge, which so far has not been affected by the outbreak.

The hospital is staffed by a combination of professional wildlife rehabilitators, interns, and volunteers. They are able to treat many birds with a small staff; the day I was there, nine people were working.

A ray of hope

I know the situation at the refuges is extremely distressing, but there is a bit of good news. In September, the Bureau of Reclamation released its Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) on the Operations Plan for the Klamath Project. For the first time, it includes a dedicated supply of water for the refuges. More generally, the proposed action would rely on a revised water management strategy that would entail continuous tracking of the hydrologic conditions in the Upper Klamath Basin. This would be used to determine the distribution of water among the various uses: irrigators, the Lower Klamath and Tule Lake Refuges, maintaining Upper Klamath Lake, and supporting flows in the Klamath River.

I'm hoping to talk with someone way smarter than me to better understand the implications of this proposed action. Meanwhile, here's the [link](#) to the draft EA.

Keep in mind that this does not represent the final plan. The EA is supposed to be final by end of month. Then NOAA and USFWS will be preparing a Biological Opinion, likely by the end of this year. We will keep you posted!

Conservation Column, continued on page 5

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Conservation Column, continued from page 4

Wait, more good news?

Yes! Earlier this week, the Karuk, Yurok, and Klamath Tribes and the Klamath Water Users Association announced mutual support for 19 restoration and water efficiency projects to address water and environmental problems in the Klamath Basin.

The projects include irrigation infrastructure improvements, wetland restoration to improve water quality and quantity, fish habitat restoration on key Klamath tributaries, and more.

Here's a bit from the press release:

"The total estimated cost of these projects is \$105.5 million, but these projects may be a down payment on salvaging a fishery and agricultural economy valued at over a billion dollars.

This effort seeks to build upon efforts already underway in the Klamath. Four dams that were not used to provide agricultural water diversions are currently being removed to improve the salmon habitat. Funding from the Inflation Reduction Act and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law are already hitting the ground, funding water efficiency projects, new fish hatcheries for suckers, and habitat improvements for salmon.

Much of the additional funding will likely come from the United States Department of Interior's Klamath Basin Drought Resilience Keystone Initiative. This initiative is a new effort to steward investments from President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act and support a wide range of restoration activities that will help recover listed species, create new habitat for fish and birds, and rethink the way water moves across the Klamath Basin to better align agriculture with ecosystem function."

Ultimately, the best hope for the Klamath refuges and the birds they support is to restore ecosystem function and connectivity. It's great to see these groups continue to express the desire to cooperate, despite their conflicting claims over a scarce and precious resource.



Volunteer Coordinator needed for Ashland Christmas Bird Count!

The weather is cooling off, which can only mean one thing, the Christmas Bird Count is coming! The Rogue Valley Audubon reports two CBCs, one for Medford and one for Ashland. This year, the Ashland count needs a coordinator! Tasks include:

- organizing team leaders for 10 count areas,
- establishing the date of the count,
- setting a post-count meeting for people to report their numbers,
- and sharing the data with the national Christmas Bird Count.

Please help keep this wonderful community science event running! There are a lot of resources available from our local chapter and the national count, and many of the Ashland Christmas Bird Count volunteers are frequent flyers of the program. Contact Rebekah

(Rebekah.bergkoetter@gmail.com) for more information and to throw your binoculars in the ring!



American Dipper looking dapper for the CBC crew
Credit: Frank Lospalluto



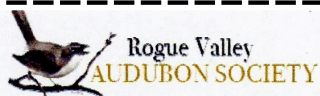
Be a Guest RVAS Board member for only 3 months!

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!

**Don't forget to renew your RVAS membership and support us for another year!
Thanks in advance!**



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)

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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.

September Field Notes 2024

By Frank Lospalluto

*And the danger is in forgetting
that sometime you might go away.
--William Stafford*

Autumn brings the heightened sense of birds moving, though they've been moving all along. **Greater White-fronted Geese** and **Cackling Geese** have been seen and heard flying over the valley.

Waterfowl are returning to various waterways and reservoirs. A group of three to five **Blue-winged Teal** have been regularly spotted at the White City Lagoons over the last few weeks. They are a species that may breed in the county, and the recent regular appearances at the lagoons in July, August, and September is a strong indicator.

Howard Sands had a **Canvasback** at the lagoons Sept 4, and a male **Greater Scaup** was observed there by Bill Feusahrens Sept 19.

Janet Kelly reported an **Eared Grebe** at Agate Lake Sept 18. A lone **Western Grebe** was on Howard Prairie Lake Sept 20.

Howard Sands has been reporting a trickle of **Common Nighthawks** over his location in Eagle Point the last couple of weeks as they journey towards wintering areas in South America.

Gary Shaffer and Janet Kelly observed 12 **American Avocets** at White City Lagoons Sept 2. They stayed for over a week and their presence was enjoyed by many observers.

Bob Hunter and Anne Goff found a **STILT SANDPIPER** at Emigrant Lake Aug 31. The bird was a one-day wonder, compared to the bird in 2023 who stayed for more than a week. This was the fifth record for the county.

Norm Barrett photographed a **Common Tern** Sept 14 at Hammel Pond outside Eagle Point along Highway 62.

Another **White-faced Ibis** surfaced Sept 3 on White City Lagoons and stayed for a week. It was reported by Gary Shaffer and seen by many, like the bird last month at Hoover Ponds.

Raptor migration is here, and there has been an uptick in sightings of immature accipiters in our area.

Turkey Vultures are starting to move out. A **Ferruginous Hawk** was reported by a visiting birder Sept 9 along Hwy 140 in Eagle Point.

Northern Pygmy-Owls are vocalizing in local forests more of late. (Their call is a series of single toots spaced on a 2-3 second interval.) This may be tied to dispersal of birds away from nesting areas, especially the hatch year birds, as they lay claim to hunting territories. They are quite vocal in the spring, especially the males during courtship. They are a common owl in our area, and are about the size of a field notebook. What a fun bird to see and hear.

Lewis's Woodpeckers aka Raspberry-bellied Woodpecker have moved back into the valley and have been widely reported over the last few weeks.

A few **Merlin** have been reported recently, including one along the Bear Creek Greenway Sept 6 by Barry Harris and Emmalisa Whalley. And another out at Emigrant Lake observed by Jeff Miller Sept 23.

Howard Sands observed a **Prairie Falcon** outside Eagle Point Sept 15.



Northern Pygmy Owl
Credit: Frank Lospalluto

Field Notes, continued on page 8

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Field Notes, continued from page 7

Ryan Terrill counted nine **Willow Flycatchers** at Emigrant Lake Sept 4.

An **EASTERN KINGBIRD** was reported by a Harry Fuller field trip to Lily Glen Park on Aug 31.

Jeff Miller observed 3 **Purple Martins** over Emigrant Lake Sept 2.

Ruby-crowned Kinglets are back in force, a true sign of fall and winter birding where almost every outing includes one or more. Marion Hadden reported five on Aug 13 on Little Grayback, and Elijah Hayes had a single on the same day at Agate Lake.

Lindsey Wilcox reported a **Canyon Wren** from the Prospect area Sept 3.

American Pipit, a common wintering bird, has begun to return. Good size flocks can be common at Emigrant, Agate, and Lost Creek Lakes. A flock of 12 was up near the top of Mt. McLaughlin Sept 22.

Norm Barrett and Gary Shaffer had 21 **Red Crossbills** at Lily Glen Sept 21. It appears that it is a good year for Red Crossbill in southern Oregon because of a decent cone crop. I personally heard a number of singing birds (not just the sound of flight calls) over the last couple of months, suggesting some nesting pairs. The one instance I found nesting birds in the county was in late August 2003.

White-crowned Sparrow and **Golden-crowned Sparrow** are back in numbers. A **White-throated Sparrow** was reported from North Mountain Park by Jennifer Garcia and Muriel Garcia -Hart Sept 18.

A female **Bullock's Oriole** has been observed at the RVM campus recently, with reports from Auker Guzzetta Sept 12 and Anne Newins Sept 19.

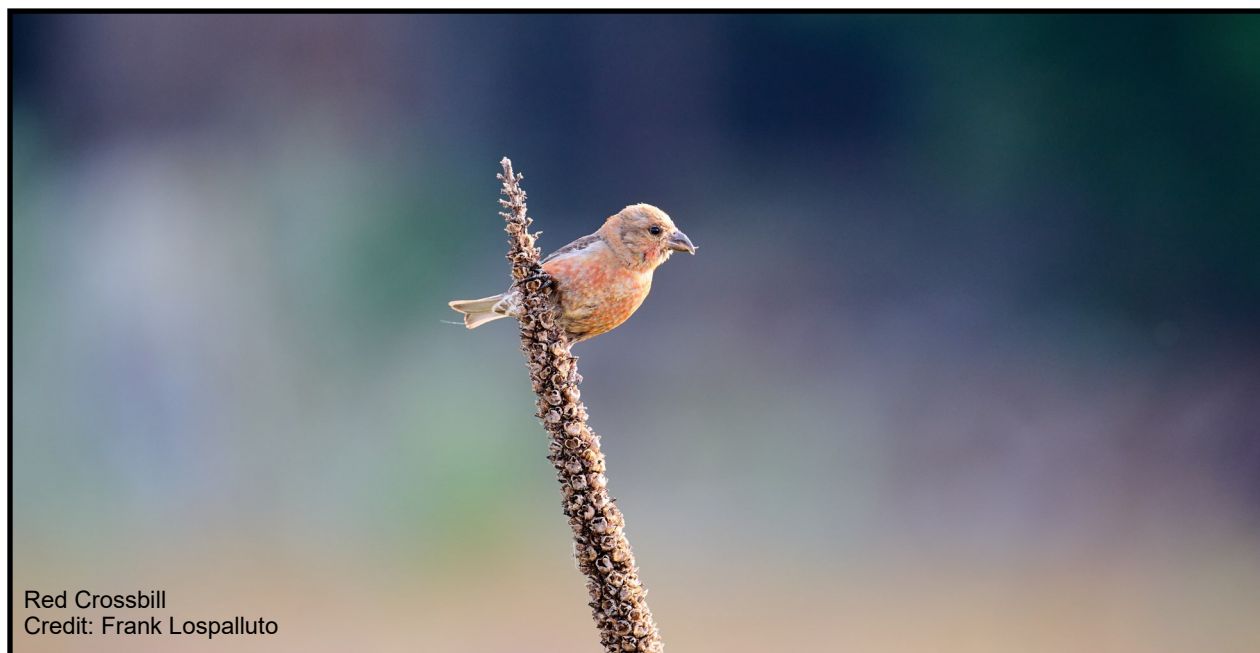
All errors and omissions are my own. Peace.

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>

Rogue Valley Audubon Society (2019). Birds of Jackson County Oregon: Distribution and Abundance; Including the Rogue Valley, Siskiyou, and Cascades. Fifth Edition.

Editor's note: The beautiful Rufous Hummingbird photo by Tanner Martin in the September issue was not a Costa's as labelled. A mix-up, as it is was placed next to the mention of the recent Costa's sighting. A simple error, not a misidentification, and apologies to Tanner!

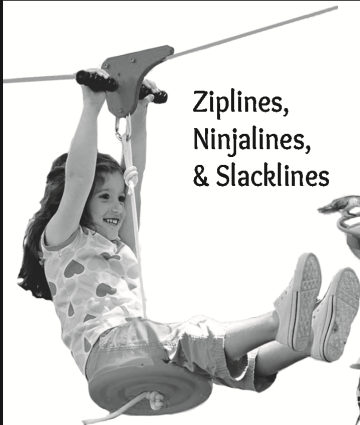


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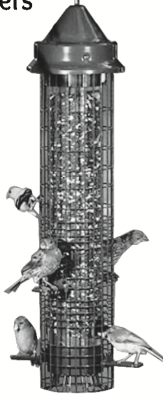
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*BOO! Happy spooky season from
this Shoebill, the creepy-cutest
avian Muppet on Planet Earth*



Credit: Jim Livaudais



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