

A voice for education and conservation in the natural world  
Rogue Valley Audubon Society  
[www.roguevalleyaudubon.org](http://www.roguevalleyaudubon.org)

*Deadline for the December 2024/January 2025 issue is November 20*



**November VIRTUAL Program**  
**Tuesday, Nov. 26, 2024 at 7:00 pm**  
***Badger Run Wildlife Rehab***  
**With Liz Burton**



Liz Burton from Badger Run Wildlife Rehab will be talking about how she got started in wildlife rehabilitation, her original vision for Badger Run Wildlife, what happened along the way, and where they are now. She will also give a brief "case study" of one of their Educational Ambassadors from injured bird intake to today. If time allows, she will be happy to answer any questions about wildlife rehab or exotic pet rescue.

**About the Speaker**

Liz Burton is the Founder and Animal Care Manager of Badger Run Wildlife Rehab in Keno, OR. She has been devoted to wildlife rehabilitation for almost 50 years, ever since she was 16. Her catalyst was discovering that most veterinarians won't touch wildlife, and how much injured creatures need advocates and caregivers. Liz holds a B.S. degree in Animal Ecology, Behavior, and Evolution, training which she uses to help keep the wildlife in Badger Run Wildlife Rehab's care comfortable and in good health both physically and mentally. She is also active in exotic pet rescue and educating exotic owners in the proper selection, husbandry, and care of their animals.



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

### OFFICERS and DIRECTORS

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### Mailing Address

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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.

## Christmas Bird Counts in the Rogue Valley!

The most wonderful community science project of the year is upon us! Rogue Valley Audubon members support two Christmas Bird Counts every year, covering the areas around Ashland and Medford. Please see below for information on each of these birding extravaganzas! Please contact the coordinator for each area if you are interested in joining in on the fun.

### Medford Christmas Bird Count

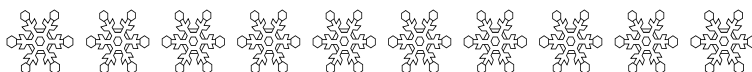
Date: Saturday December 14, 2024

Coordinator: Rebekah – [rebekah.bergkoetter@gmail.com](mailto:rebekah.bergkoetter@gmail.com)

### Ashland Christmas Bird Count

Date: Saturday, December 21, 2024

Coordinator: Jon Pope – [jonath.pope@gmail.com](mailto:jonath.pope@gmail.com)

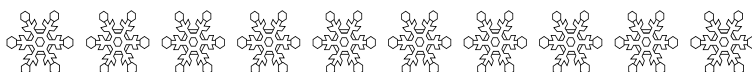


## Holiday Party Time!

It's almost party time... Our party planning volunteers have been tirelessly gathering some wonderful items for this year's silent auction, including decorative birds, hummingbird feeders that attach to your hat, and guided bird walks! Please join us on December 7<sup>th</sup> for food, games, and fabulous auction items.

This will be a potluck event, so you are encouraged to bring a dish to share. We also want to attempt to make this a low-waste event, and ask everyone to bring their own plates, utensils, and cups if you are able.

We will see you at the Medford Congregational Church, December 7<sup>th</sup>, at 6 PM!



## Status of upcoming events

Field trips: Denman Bird Walk - Dec. 4, Jan. 1, Feb. 5

Chapter Meeting: Tues. Nov. 26 at 7pm

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

Medford CBC: Sat. Dec. 14

Ashland CBC: Sat. Dec. 21

## Project FeederWatch Report

Hello Rogue Valley Audubon Society,

My name is Zach Williams, and I'm a 3rd-grade teacher at Jacksonville Elementary School. Our student ornithologist has been out sick this month, so I wanted to take this opportunity to share how important bird watching has become in my classroom.

Incorporating bird watching into our daily routine has truly enriched my students' learning experience. Whenever we spot a new bird, we pause to discuss its traits and behavior, then display a card with the bird's information above our window for easy reference. While the feeders can be a bit distracting at times (birds occasionally hit the window, deer sneak a snack, or someone mistakes a goldfinch for an eagle), the benefits far outweigh the interruptions. We also participate in the FeederWatch program, using the data and graphs to complement our math and science lessons. This not only supports academic learning but also fosters a lifelong love of birding. Every fall, I'm thrilled when former students return, excited to share their bird sightings and stories.

I'm incredibly grateful for the support from the Rogue Valley Audubon Society, and I'd like to give a special thanks to Erin Ulrich for sharing her passion and expertise with our class over the past three years. Your contributions have helped establish a birding legacy at Jacksonville Elementary, one I hope will continue for many years.

Our student ornithologist will soon be back to give our next bird report, and we'll also be creating bird drawings in the near future.

Sincerely,  
Zach Williams



Credit: Zach Williams

## New Book From Local Author

By Jeff Miller

Ashland birder Jeff Miller has written a quirky and informative watchable wildlife guide for the fauna of the greater San Francisco Bay Area. *Bay Area Wildlife: An Irreverent Guide* is much more than a practical guidebook. The book's 55 chapters cover 100+ native wildlife species, from furry mammals to blubbery marine creatures, and critters feathery, scaly, and slithery. Jeff picked some of the Bay Area's most interesting and unusual fauna - creatures that are iconic, endemic, or have dramatic behavior or stunning congregations. His humorous and salacious introductions to these charismatic animal ambassadors provide inspiration to get outside to explore and experience nature, and spark interest in conservation. Chapters on Sandhill Cranes, night-herons, rails, raptors, Bald Eagles, Burrowing Owls, Peregrine Falcons, woodpeckers, and rare warblers will be of interest to Southern Oregon birders.



*Bay Area Wildlife* is intended as an antidote to dry nature guides and scholarly ecology papers - informative, but also amusing and engaging. Meet the "screaming death parrots" (aka Peregrine Falcons). Or go tidepooling to commune with "disco slugs dressed for a P-Funk concert" (nudibranchs). Find out where to encounter "rototillers with fur" (badgers). Jeff's colorful descriptions offer a compilation of each species' natural history and fun facts. Each section also includes tips on when, where, and how to best find and observe each animal. The wildlife species are beautifully illustrated in watercolor by writer, artist, and eco-philosopher Obi Kaufmann, along with color photographs. You can learn more and purchase the guide at <https://irreverentnaturalist.com/>

## The Conservation Column

By Pepper Trail

### Jet Boats on the Upper Rogue

In previous issues of *The Chat*, we have highlighted our opposition to the operation of jet boats, especially commercial jet boats, on the Upper Rogue River. We have provided comments on this in a variety of forums, most recently to the Oregon State Marine Board, the key regulatory body for Oregon's waterways. Below, I attach the written comments submitted on behalf of RVAS to this Board in early October.

Dear Oregon State Marine Board:

I am a Ph.D. biologist (US Fish and Wildlife Service, retired), and submit these comments as the conservation co-chair of the Rogue Valley Audubon Society, a chapter of the National Audubon Society, with over 500 members in Jackson County. Our members regularly bird, fish, boat, and hike on this stretch of the Upper Rogue River.

The Upper Rogue provides vital aquatic and riparian habitat for a diverse array of wildlife species, is a treasured recreational resource, and is the source of drinking water for thousands of Jackson County residents. These resources are under current and increasing threat from unregulated commercial and private jet boats, and we urge you to use your authority to restrict those activities. Specifically, we request that you restrict commercial and private jet boats in the Upper Rogue River upstream of the Table Rock Road bridge, and enact a 15 horsepower limit on all watercraft operating from the bridge to Lost Creek Dam.

What resources are under threat? Let's start with the salmon for which the Rogue River is famous. The entire stock of spring chinook salmon in the Rogue Basin spawn in this section of the Upper Rogue, and they are struggling to survive. The wakes and turbulence of jet boats disturb spawning gravels, essential to successful salmon reproduction, and also disrupt the salmon's spawning behavior, forcing them to expend limited energy.

Next - birds, which are a particular concern for members of the Rogue Valley Audubon Society. Jet boat noise and wakes disturb birds that nest on gravel bars in the river, such as Spotted Sandpipers and Killdeer, and also the many birds that nest adjacent to the river, including Belted Kingfishers and Northern Rough-winged Swallows, that make nesting burrows in streambanks, and Great Blue Herons, Osprey, and Bald Eagles, which nest in large riverside trees. It must be noted that the rules of Denman Wildlife Area just upstream from the Table Rock Road bridge prohibit use of motorized watercraft in order to protect wildlife, yet somehow jet boats are permitted to speed up and down this section of the river, disturbing wildlife and refuge users.

Finally, jet boats threaten the resource of quiet, undisturbed recreation in and along the river. The Upper Rogue is treasured by drift boat fishers, families on float trips, and birders, hikers, and picnickers along its banks. How can the quiet enjoyment of all these groups be sacrificed to benefit a small group of jet boat enthusiasts - much less a commercial operation focused on maximizing trips and profits?

The public has ample opportunities for jet boat experiences on the Lower Rogue River downstream from Grants Pass, with its relatively wide and deep channel. We urge the State Marine Board to use its authority to protect the fish, wildlife, and recreational values of the narrow, shallow Upper Rogue by restricting jet boats and enacting a 15 horsepower limit on this fragile stretch of river.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments,  
Pepper Trail, Ph.D.  
Conservation Co-Chair  
Rogue Valley Audubon Society

### And Most Important: VOTE

*Note: Although the 2024 Presidential election has passed, we decided to keep the following in, as an important reminder of why elections matter, as a thank you to everyone who did their civic duty this year, and as an encouragement to stay engaged and involved. Your voice and your vote matter!*

I hope this issue of *The Chat* will reach RVAS members before November 5. We are on the brink of one of the most consequential elections of our lives. Every American needs to support our democracy by fulfilling that most basic

*Conservation Column, continued on page 5*

## The Chat - November 2024

*Conservation Column, continued from page 4*

civic duty: VOTE. Do it for the birds, who have donated a few of their feathers to spell it out for you.

And whose feathers are these? The V is composed of the axillary (underwing) feathers of American Flamingo, to offer special encouragement to Florida voters. The O is, of course, the "eyespot" plume of the Indian Peacock, keeping an eye out for any incidents of voter intimidation. The T are the wing feathers of Green Parakeet, a primarily Mexican species that is expanding its range into Texas, acknowledging how much is at stake in this election for our friends of Latin heritage. And the E are the wing and tail feathers of Northern Mockingbird, which will just NOT stop talking about how important it is to vote.



### BIRDCENTRIC EVENTS FROM AROUND THE REGION

#### **RVAS**

#### **First Wednesday Bird Walks: December 4, January 1, February 5**

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.

#### **Klamath Bird Observatory**

#### **Nuestras Aves Compartidas (Our Shared Birds)**

Many birds of southern Oregon, like the Rufous Hummingbird, Wilson's Warbler, and Audubon's Warbler, migrate long distances using their natural strength. Oregon's location in the Pacific Northwest is crucial for the breeding of these migratory species. These birds breed in the temperate forests of Oregon and, in the fall, fly south to Mexico, where they spend 6 to 8 months in states like Jalisco, Colima, and Michoacán. Come learn about the shared birds of southern Oregon and the western region of Mexico with Martín López Aguilar from Jalisco, Mexico. After his presentation on the migratory birds that connect us. Martín will lead a bird walk at Lynn Newberry Park. Binoculars will be available to borrow. The presentation will be in Spanish and English.

DATE: Saturday Nov 23

TIME: 9:00 am - 11:00 am

LOCATION: Talent Library (101 Home St, Talent) & Lynn Newberry Park

COST: Free



Martin with a Squirrel Cuckoo

## A 500<sup>th</sup> Chat Photo Extravaganza

In honor of this momentous issue, a few of our talented and tenacious local photographers have shared some of their work to grace our pages. How lucky are we? Enjoy!



Blue-gray Gnatcatcher on nest  
Credit: Marion Hadden & Jim Sartorio



Jim Livaudais shared this lovely Western Cattle Egret he found in spring 2024 (above), only the second confirmed record since 1980.



**Note from Janet Kelly:** This photo (above) was taken on the mudflats at Lost Creek Lake on October 22, 2022. This female Chestnut-collared Longspur, which I'd never seen before, blends in well with its surroundings. Because she was so cooperative, I was able to get close for some really good photos. To get a great photo of a rare migrant and life bird made it super special.



Oak Titmouse  
Credit Marion Hadden & Jim Sartorio

*Photos, continued on page 7*

## The Chat - November 2024

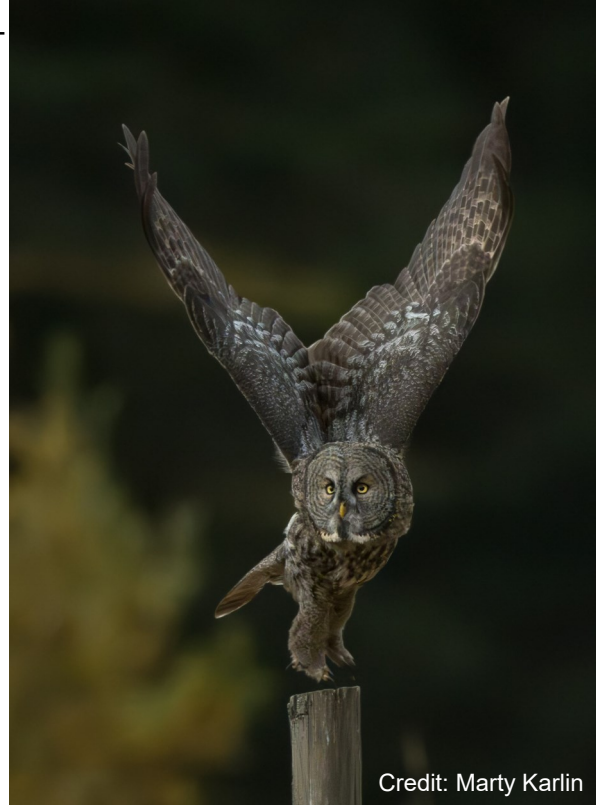
*Photos, continued from page 6*

The RVAS logo never looked so good! These beautiful Great Gray Owl photos by Marty Karlin and Lee French were all taken up in the Howard Prairie area. Many local birders know this area as a real hotspot for these charismatic owls. Many know of this because of the book, presentations, and field trip efforts of Harry Fuller and Peter Theimann.

Great Gray Owls, while concentrated on the plateau, are known to breed in the mountains around the Little Applegate and Applegate Rivers and parts of the Siskiyou Crest. They also breed in areas around Evans Creek, above Sam's Valley and Butte Falls. During the winter, birds have been noted lower down in all these areas, such as right outside Eagle Point and Jacksonville.



Credit: Marty Karlin



Credit: Marty Karlin



Credit: Lee French

*Photos, continued on page 8*

## The Chat - November 2024

On October 25<sup>th</sup>, a group of 14 birders participated on an evening foray in attempt to see some owls along Keno Access Rd. While we were not successful in observing our target species, the majestic Great Gray Owl, we did manage to encounter a parliament of Northern Saw-whet Owls. We had three to four owls calling and flying about, and one long look at the owl seen in Andrew Donnelly's photo (right). Frank Lospalluto captured one individual stooping over a prey item (left).

Photos, continued from page 7



## The Chat Turns 500 (issues)!

By Kate Halstead

Imagine my delight when, during prep for editing work on this issue, I realized it was to be our 500th *Chat*! I call myself fortunate to see this milestone for RVAS, but I immediately realized that I was naïve about the beginnings of *The Chat*. Our Treasurer, Kay Simmons (aided by Kate Cleland-Sipfle and Carol Mockridge), was able to track down the very first issues of our newsletter.

We learned that *The Chat* debuted in September 1971 as a simple two-pager - sans photos, banged out on a typewriter, with "The Chat" handwritten across the top. The first issue reported that we had just received our charter from National Audubon, in July 1971. Issue #2, the next month, revealed that this was only the fourth Audubon chapter in Oregon (as of today, there are 12). The nascent Field Notes consisted of the following: "On Labor Day a large number of *Empidonax* flycatchers came through the valley on migration southward. 51 of those interesting and baffling-to-identify birds were captured and banded along Bear Creek. Since then, both white- and gold-crowned sparrows have made their appearance. Be on the lookout for other migrants." A short-but-sweet pre-Conservation Column reported on the nesting of Roseate Spoonbills (a personal favorite of mine) at Audubon's Paul J. Rainey Wildlife Sanctuary in Louisiana; at the time, this was only their second successful breeding season there since 1924!

The first issue reported that an official name for the newsletter still needed to be selected. "The Chat" was the best that the Temporary Editor (the team was still being assembled) could think of at the time, as, quoting the Audubon Land Bird Guide, "the chat utters a disjointed series of noises, often at widely spaced intervals." Apparently the name stuck, but I think we've done a great job keeping our utterances quite regular and not too widely spaced. If you'd like to take a little walk back in time and check out our historical record for yourself, you can find the original *Chats* bound and carefully stored in SOU's Hannon Library periodicals section.

## October First Wednesday Walk Report

Jim Hostick leads the First Wednesday Bird Walks at Denman Wildlife Area each month. Jim (left) and birders on Nov. 6, 2024 (photo). Birders spotted 44 species, including Pileated Woodpecker, Northern Harriers, and 49 Acorn Woodpeckers.





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## 2024 Birdathon final results

The final results are in, and Team Chickadees are the big winners. They raised over \$5,000 to bring home the coveted trophy again this year. Overall, this annual event raised over \$8,000 for RVAS programs. Bravo! For a detailed account of the 2-day Birdathon, please refer to the June/July *Chat*.



# 20% OFF One Regularly-priced Item

\*Valid 10/1/24 thru 9/30/25 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  
**ROGUE VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY**  
Post Office Box 8597  
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



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### Sign up to receive easy notification of Chapter activities

Your Audubon Chapter wants to be sure you are aware of upcoming field trips, chapter meetings, the most recent edition of *The Chat*, and other items we post online.

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