

The Chat

Number 378

April 2011

A voice for education and conservation in the natural world

Rogue Valley Audubon Society

www.roguevalleyaudubon.org

Message phone 541-601-3683 (601-DOVE)



This month's program-

Tuesday, April 26, 7:00 pm

(Held at Westminster Presbyterian Church
2000 Oakwood Drive in Medford)

**Local Photographer Dan Elster
will present a program of his photo-
graphs—**

Dan Elster is a wildlife and bird photographer based in Phoenix, Oregon. He has been working hard on his portfolio since his last presentation in 2009 and he's looking forward to showing some of his latest images. Most of his work is from the Rogue Valley, southern Oregon/N. California Coast and Klamath Basin. Dan strives to create art, not just document the natural world. He also loves using his art as means to promote wildlife conservation.

The May Program is the Annual TouVelle Bird Walk and Picnic, scheduled for Tuesday, May 24, beginning at 5 pm. It's a great way to enjoy a early evening bird walk along the Rogue River and share good food and stories with other birders. Plan to bring a dish to share and a plate and utensils. Lemonade and Ice Tea will be available. Call Gaylene with questions @ 541-621-3196. Additional details in the May Chat.

Plan ahead—April means Birdathon!

April 30 is one of the biggest days of the year for RVAS birders—it's "Birdathon's Big Day"

Plan to take part in this fun way to raise funds for RVAS by trying to observe and record as many different species of birds as possible within one 24-hour period. And, after a day of hardcore birdwatching, participants are invited to a post-Birdathon get-together at Bruno's Pizza on Roberts Road in Medford at 6 pm to compare species counts and receive the accolades fundraising birders deserve.

If you have any questions or need assistance in organizing a team for the big day big event, please contact the Birdathon Organizer Alex Maksymowics at 541-482-1964 or by email at maksbox1@gmail.com.

A species list and a pledge form are included in this issue of The Chat for your convenience. All the procedural details were published in the March Chat and are available on our website at www.roguevalleyaudubon.org.

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President's Column—

This is the last issue of *The Chat* before the Birdathon on Saturday, April 30. Birdathon provides a great opportunity for birders to fan out over Jackson County to document how many different species they can identify and how much money they can raise for RVAS. Pledges and donations are raised to help provide services to members—such as *The Chat* and monthly program meetings, and to the community through a range of programs such as environmental education and conservation efforts.

Competition to maximize the number of species identified by each team is an essential component of Birdathon. Most of it is friendly, but it can get quite intense, with birders traveling at break-neck speeds, pulling over where ever, when ever, just to see one more species. All the Birdathon details will be reported in the May issue of *The Chat*.

I would like to encourage as many of you as possible to participate in this year's Birdathon, whether as an individual, as a member of a team, or as a donor. Donations are tax-deductible and can be made on behalf of a team, or individual.

PRESIDENT'S CHALLENGE:

RVAS President Alex Maksymowicz presents two challenges for Birdathon Teams:

- He pledges \$5.00 per species for the largest number of owl species recorded by a single team; and
- He pledges \$25.00 per species for any species new to Jackson County. Introduced exotics such as ostriches, emus, parrots, etc. do not qualify.

Field Notes: The Changing Seasons Compiled by Stewart Janes

It's great to have all the rain. It's wonderful to be laying in a deep snowpack in the mountains, but..... I'm sure we will all be grateful when the blistering summer heat sets in come June. Another year where the threat of wildfire is minimal is a gift. However, right now here in March, it's getting a little old. It's hard on birds and birders alike.

Despite the foul weather, spring presses on. The **Turkey Vultures** have been flooding into the valley all month with sizable kettles almost everywhere you look (HF,CP). Swallow numbers, too, including both **Tree** and **Violet-green Swallows** have swelled, and they have started to leave the riparian corridors spreading out to their breeding areas along the smaller creeks and into the foothills.

I don't know if others are seeing **Rufous Hummingbirds**, but I have seen precious few. The first was reported on 3/11 along Sardine Creek (MR) followed by one in Prospect on 3/14 (ML). This is a species that has been declining in numbers throughout its breeding range. I have to hope that when the weather improves they will show up in greater numbers. Other migrants have been few. An **Orange-crowned Warbler** was at Ashland Pond on 3/6 (HF). **Ospreys** are now back from their Mexican vacation with the first reported on 3/10 (JW). Another sure sign of spring is the arrival of male **Cinnamon Teal** in breeding finery. Several were sighted at Denman on 3/19 (NB).

In other signs of spring, **Hutton's Vireos** are singing up a storm (3/9, NB). Why they choose to begin nesting so much earlier than other small insectivores is a mystery. **Red-tailed Hawks** have selected and prepped their nests and should begin incubation by the first of April. **Red-shouldered Hawks** have also been doing their house-cleaning and will soon follow. The nest overhanging Colver Road near Walden looks like it will be used again this year.

Other raptors have been putting in an appearance, many as migrants heading for their breeding areas both north and east. A **Prairie Falcon** was along Brophy Road on 3/16 (LN) along with a **Krider's Red-tailed Hawk**. This pale form breeds in the prairie country of Canada. A **Rough-legged Hawk** was seen over the Ashland Gun Club on 3/8 (LM,MM). They have only rarely been seen in the valley in recent years. Now the **Peregrine Falcon** sightings may or may not be migrants. There were reports this month from Denman, Brophy Road and Pilot Rock (FL,JW,NB). Now the number of **Golden Eagle** sightings is less easily explained. While some northern birds migrate, they typically remain east of the Cascades. Our birds are mostly residents. There were sightings from Ashland (2), Agate Lake, Ball Road, and Denman (KM,NB,HF,JW,FL).

Wintering waterfowl have already begun to depart. **American Wigeon** numbers are fading though the 6 male **Eurasian Wigeon** at Cedar Links were still present as of 3/6 (NB). **Tundra Swans** can still be seen near Eagle Point and around the Table Rocks (OS,LN,NB). Small numbers of **Greater White-fronted Geese** are about as well as a lone **Ross's Goose** on Hammel Pond 3/2-9 (NB,GR). The most noteworthy waterfowl sighting was an Eurasian form of the **Green-winged Teal** at Emigrant Lake on 3/6 (HF). I am unaware of other sightings of this subspecies in the valley.

A **Horned Grebe** was at Lost Creek Reservoir on 3/19 (NB), and a **Dunlin** was near Agate Lake on 2/22 (LM,MM).

The best sighting of the month was still one more **Lazuli Bunting**. A male was at the Jefferson Nature Center on 3/24 (JO). This has to be another bird wintering over.

Other sightings of note include Band-tailed Pigeons near the Siskiyou Pass on 3/21 (FL), the **White-throated Sparrow** at Ashland Pond on 3/6 (HF),
Field notes continued on page 7

THE CONSERVATION COLUMN

By Pepper Trail

High Profile Western Oregon BLM Pilots Moves Forward

Interior Secretary Ken Salazar and the Oregon congressional delegation continue to advance three high profile forest management pilot projects that could help guide forest management in western Oregon for years to come. There are hopeful early signs that these BLM pilots will be restoration-based, with timber as a byproduct rather than the project goal. As always, however, close monitoring and citizen involvement are essential.

The Knowns

The pilot projects are developed around the restoration principles for both "moist" and "dry" forests, which were developed by expert forest scientists Norm Johnson (Oregon State University) and Jerry Franklin (University of Washington). Two of the projects are geared toward creating "complex young forests" in moist forests in the Roseburg and Coos Bay BLM Districts. The Medford District pilot proposes restoration thinning in dry, mixed conifer forests in the Middle Applegate watershed.

The Middle Applegate is an 80,000-acre watershed of the greater Applegate sub-basin and includes approximate 50,000 acres of BLM public lands. BLM is proposing that the first thinning treatments be contracted this September on about 1,000 acres in the Chapman and Keeler Creek watersheds (near the town of Ruch). The treatments will include timber sales, service work and stewardship contracts.

Many stands in the Middle Applegate Watershed could benefit from thinning. Young plantations and natural forests that have experienced fire suppression for many decades are common in the Applegate Valley.

These forests are often crowded with dense young trees. The BLM pilot project should focus on these most altered forests, and emphasize areas near homes and communities.

The Johnson and Franklin principles call for taking old-growth trees over 150 years old "off the table" in restoration thinning in dry forests. However, in the Applegate Valley many of the oldest forests are just under 150 years old and could be considered "fair game", if the BLM decided to log these older trees. A recent Medford Mail-Tribune story indicated that trees as large as 24 inches in diameter were being marked for cutting in the Middle Applegate. It is vital to save the remaining older trees through a site-by-site review as the pilot moves forward.

The Unknowns

The construction of new roads could be another issue that creates controversy in this project. While the BLM has proposed this possibility, environmental groups and many community members are encouraging the BLM to use the existing road system, rather than require the construction of new roads to facilitate thinning. Road construction is likely to harm aquatic species through erosion and fragment wildlife habitat.

A positive restoration project, one that avoids impacts to older forests and streams while leaving behind healthy intact forests, would be a great step forward for BLM management if it can be developed in the Middle Applegate. But the devil is in the details. Watchdog groups like K-S Wild are closely monitoring this work to forge a good project that could be a model for restoration of dry forests of southwest Oregon. For more information, visit www.kswild.org

The New BLM "Wild Lands Policy" - What Does It Mean?

Last December, Interior Secretary Ken Salazar issued a secretarial order to clarify the status of backcountry areas on BLM lands. Since then, this policy has been the subject of a great deal of misrepresentation, including by our Congressional Representative Greg Walden, who has portrayed the policy as a federal bid to "lock up" public land.

Secretarial Order 3310 directs the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), based on the input of the public and local communities through its existing land management planning process, to designate appropriate areas with wilderness characteristics under its jurisdiction as "Wild Lands" and to manage them to protect their wilderness values. This is NOT the same as Wilderness designation, which can be done only by an act of Congress. Rather, it recognizes lands that merit consideration for this status, and returns BLM policy to its status before 2003.

The BLM, which manages more land than any other federal agency, has not had any comprehensive national wilderness policy since 2003, when the wilderness management guidance in the agency's handbook was revoked as part of a controversial out-of-court settlement between then-Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton, the State of Utah, and other parties.

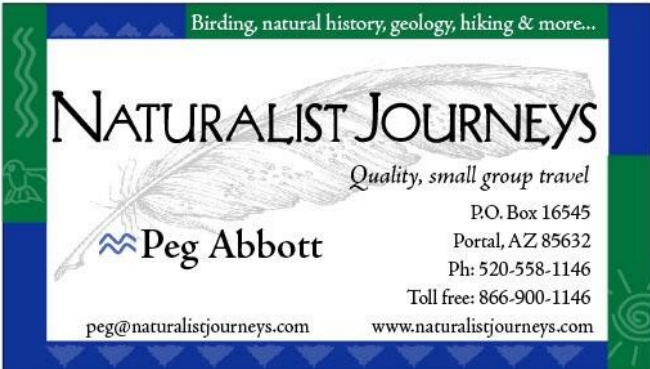
"The new Wild Lands policy affirms the BLM's authorities under the law - and our responsibility to the American people - to protect the wilderness characteristics of the lands we oversee as part of our multiple use mission," said BLM Director Bob Abbey (all quotes are from www.blm.gov).

Abbey said that Secretarial Order 3310 fills an important land management need for the public and the agency. "Wild Lands," which will be designated through a public process, will be managed to protect wilderness characteristics unless or until such time as a new public planning process modifies the designation. Because the "Wild Lands" designation can be made and later modified through a public administrative process, it differs from "Wilderness Areas," which are designated by Congress and cannot be modified except by legislation, and "Wilderness Study Areas," which BLM typically must manage to protect wilderness characteristics until Congress determines whether to permanently protect them as Wilderness Areas or modify their management.

Secretarial Order 3310 also directs the BLM to maintain a current inventory of public lands with wilderness characteristics, which will contribute to the agency's ability to make balanced, informed land management decisions, consistent with its multiple-use mission.

"Simple principles guide this common-sense policy," said Salazar. "First: the protection of wild lands is important to the American people and should therefore be a high priority in BLM's management policies. Second: the public should have a say in designating certain public lands as 'Wild Lands' and expanding those areas or modifying their management over time. And third: we should know more about which American lands remain wild, so we can make wise choices, informed by science, for our children, grandchildren and future generations."

It's hard to argue with that.



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Upcoming field trips and events of special interest

April 23: Field Trip to Whitehorse County Park in Grants Pass

Join leader Vince Zauskey to look for resident birds, early migratory warblers and other species at Whitehorse County Park, Grants Pass. Plan to look and listen for Red-shouldered Hawks, Brown Creepers, Pileated Woodpeckers, Orange-crowned Warblers and whatever else that flies our way. This will be a 1/2 day trip.

Meet at 8 AM, at the Taco Bell side of the Fred Meyer Parking Area, Hwy 62, Medford for Carpooling.

Bring a lunch for eating at Whitehorse Park, if you wish. If you have questions call Vince at home 541-482-035 or at work 541-552-2317

May 13 & 14: Field Trip to the Central Coast—Led by Ron Ketchum

There is a field trip planned for the Oregon Coast May 13-14. We will base out of Lincoln City and while the exact itinerary has not been established, plan to bird in both directions from there. Plan to spend both the 13th and 14th in local motels at a minimum. Lodging possibilities can be found in the Field Trip section of the RVAS website. At the present time only four persons have registered. If you are interested in attending, please contact Ron Ketchum at 541-944-3072.

MONTHLY BIRD WALK WITH MURRAY ORR

First Wednesday Each Month: Little Butte Creek Walk. Meet at 8:30 a.m. on TouVelle Road in the northeast section of the Denman Wildlife Area near White City. Leader: Murray Orr 857-9050***

Please contact Murray if you are willing to join him in organizing these bird walks. He needs volunteers to help him open and close the gate, record observed species, and to lead the walks when he is not available.

Two volunteers are needed for the RVAS booth at the Master Gardener Fair on Saturday, May 7 from 3—5 pm. If you can volunteer, contact Cherry Gregory at CherryLeaGreg@charter.net.

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 on-line. Send an e-mail RogueValleyAudubon@gmail.com and ask to be added to the e-mail notification list. And be assured, we will never share your e-mail address with any other organizations.

BIRDATHON 2011 TEAMS NAMED:

Old Grays: (Defending Champions): Bob & Gretchen Hunter, Brian Barr, Dominic DiPaolo, Frank Lospalluto;

Falcons: Pepper Trail, Stewart Janes, John Alexander, Vince Zauskey;

Binosaurus: Jim Livaudais, Gary Shaffer, Howard Sands; (Norm Barrett will be out of town)

Valley Chicks: Lynda Stevenson, Debi Blair, Sooney Viani, Gloria Heller;

Old World Warblers: Maggi Rackley, Edith Lindner;

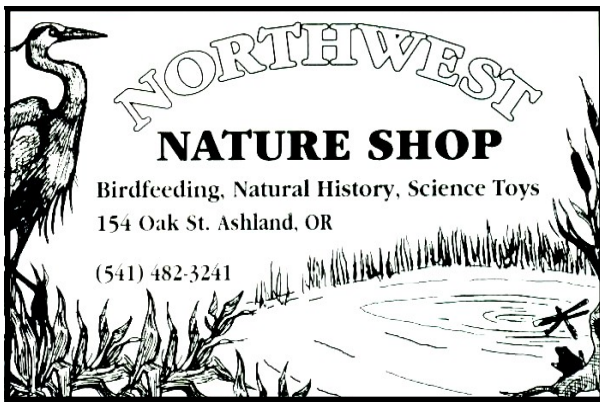
Shelton's Duo: Joe Shelton, Ric Thowless

The Chat - April

Field Notes continued

Other sightings of note include Band-tailed Pigeons near the Siskiyou Pass on 3/21 (FL), the White-throated Sparrow at Ashland Pond on 3/6 (HF), a Say's Phoebe at Agate Lake on 3/12 (HF), a shrike (species unknown) along Brophy Road on 3/16 (LN), and lingering Varied Thrushes in Ashland on 3/24 (GR).

Thanks to this month's contributors including Norm Barrett, Harry Fuller, Mo Lolandi, Frank Lospalutto, Lisa Moore, Marjorie Moore, Liz Northrup, Jeff O'Connell, Carol Palmer, Maggi Rackley, Gwyneth Ragosine, Otis Swisher, and Jill Wallace. Deadline for contributions to the Field Notes in the next edition of The Chat is April 20.



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Riparian Outdoor School

This years' Riparian Outdoor School will again have our own Bob Quaccia giving classes to Medford Schools at Jefferson Nature Center. Volunteers are needed to help with field trips which take place after each class. Class dates are April 21 & 26, May 3 and 12. Each class is divided into a two hour morning session and a two hour afternoon sessions and volunteers are needed for both. This is a great component of our educational outreach programming for elementary schools and teaches students about birds, bird nests and how to find them in the field.

If you are interested in volunteering, contact Lynda Stevenson at 858-7048 OR by e-mail at

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The Chat - April 2011

Rogue Valley Bird Day—May 14—North Mountain Park

Rogue Valley Bird Day is the local celebration of International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD), which celebrates one of the most important and spectacular events in the life of a migratory bird—its journey between wintering and breeding grounds. This year's theme, "Go Wild, Go Birding!," invites new birders to learn about birds and get involved in conservation efforts. Join us on Saturday, May 14, from 8:00am to noon, to celebrate! Enjoy... Wildlife Images exhibits, guided bird walks, shade-grown coffee, and a bird-calling contest for all ages. This outdoor event is admission-free and takes place at North Mountain Park, 620 N Mountain Avenue, Ashland. For more information visit... www.RogueValleyBirdDay.net or call the North Mountain Park Nature Center at 541-488-6606. Pre-registration is not required for the program.

June 9-12: Birding Malheur National Wildlife Refuge

We will take a long weekend and see the breeding birds of Malheur, first set aside for conservation by President Teddy Roosevelt more than a century ago. We'll leave the Rogue Valley on the morning of Thursday, June 9 and return home on June 12. Our target species will include nesting Trumpeter Swans, Sandhill Cranes, Ferruginous and Swainson's Hawks, Black Terns, Franklin's Gulls, Common Nighthawks, Bobolink, Eastern Kingbird, Burrowing Owl, Horned Lark, Brewer's and Sage Sparrows, Loggerhead Shrike, and Sage Thrasher. We will stay in the dorms at the Malheur Field Station which should cost us about \$100.00 each. There we can prepare our own breakfasts and lunches. We can have optional dinners at Diamond Hotel and at Frenchglen Hotel. We will carpool in four-wheel drive vehicles. Harry Fuller and Ron Ketchum will be the field trip leaders. Please contact Ron Ketchum @ rketchum@charter.net or at 541-944-3072 if you are interested in attending, prior to May 1, 2011. There will be a limit of 20 persons on this field trip.

ROGUE VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Name: _____

Address: _____

Town: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ - _____

Phone (optional): _____ Email (optional): _____

(Rogue Valley Audubon Society will not share your information with any other organization.)

Circle if this is for **NEW MEMBERSHIP** **RENEWING MEMBERSHIP** **CHANGE OF ADDRESS**

Would you like to receive a printed copy of The Chat, our newsletter, mailed to you (it is also available on line)?

YES **NO**

Dues alone are not enough to support our many activities, environmental and education efforts. Please consider a contribution in addition to your **\$20** membership. Your additional contribution may be tax deductible as RVAS is a 501 (C) 3 organization.

_____ Please check here if you wish your contribution to be anonymous.

Mail this form with your check for **\$20** RVAS dues and any contribution you wish to make, to: Rogue Valley Audubon Society, P.O. Box 8597, Medford, OR 97501

**Western Field Ornithologists Conference:
Sierra Vista, AZ August 17-21, 2011**

If you've never been to southeast Arizona during the late summer season (or even if you have), this is an opportunity you won't want to miss. Besides a program of speakers and workshops, we will offer field trips to all the southeast Arizona hotspots looking for local specialties like Scaled and Montezuma quail, Gray, Short-tailed, and Zone-tailed hawks, a dazzling variety of hummingbirds and flycatchers, Elegant Trogon, Red-faced Warbler, Cassin's, Botteri's, Rufous-winged, and Five-striped sparrows and much more.

To register and see full details go to www.westernfieldornithologists.org and click on the 'Annual Conference' banner in the middle of the page. You will probably want to download the Conference Details document and review before you begin registration.

Siskiyou Field Institute

The latest version of the Siskiyou Field Institute's schedule of courses is out and course information is available at www.thesfi.org. Courses offered in April are the following:

Birding Lake Selmac: Date: April 30th, Instructors: Romain Cooper and Dennis Vroman

This course is timed to catch the beginning of spring bird migration, and will focus on bird identification, bird/habitat relationships and the seasonal distribution of the bird species encountered at Lake Selmac and nearby habitats. We can expect to see a nice variety of species including waterfowl, resident land birds and early spring migrants. Bring your binoculars and a lively sense of curiosity! Fee: \$50.00

Ecological History of the Klamath-Siskiyou: A Landscape Approach: Date: April 31/May 1

The Klamath-Siskiyou Mountains are renowned for their complex and diverse ecosystems. What makes this area so unique? What happened to create this fascinating landscape? Unravel the mysteries of the Klamath Geological Province with **ecologist Tom Atzet, PhD** and **geologist John Roth, MS**. Discover how the interaction of plant species with the soils, geology and climate has given rise to the unique ecosystems found in the area and examine the influence of disturbances on the characteristics of our forests. Fee: \$100.00

ROGUE VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

THE CHAT

Newsletter of the ROGUE VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

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Field Trips and Activities

A series of field trips are offered by Klamath Bird Observatory (KBO) in the coming months. Contact klamathbird.org for additional details on the following:

- April 9:** Bird Walk to Lower Table Rock
May 7: Bird Walk & Wine Tasting in the Apple gate Valley

Special Events

- April 14-20:** Godwit Days Celebration in Arcata CA (www.godwitdays.com)
April 23: Earth Day Celebration at Scienceworks in Ashland (www.roguevalleyearthday.net)
April 30 Birdathon
May 6-8: California Redwoods Bird and Nature Festival (aleutiangoosefestival.org)
May 14: International Migratory Bird Day Celebration in Ashland (www.birdday.org) (see article on page 8 of this issue)

Calendar (See RVAS website for additional details (roguevalleyaudubon.org))

- April 6:** First Wednesday Bird Walk
April 23: Whitehorse County Park
April 26: Chapter Program Meeting:
Dan Elster
April 30: Birdathon
May 13/14: Trip to the coast
June 9/10: Birding Malheur National Wildlife Refuge-

