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President's Column

Alex Maksymowicz

The year-that-was was a year of multiple transitions for the Rogue Valley Audubon Society.

After 15 years at the First Presbyterian Church our chapter meetings moved to the Westminster Presbyterian Church—new location, same denomination.

After 40 years the annual Christmas Bird Count returned to Ashland complementing the on-going Medford CBC.

After an unknown number of years, the fund-raising portion of the annual holiday party and potluck changed from an auction to a raffle—different format, same irrepressible Pepper Trail.

After 10 years' residence on Ric Thowless' home computer the RVAS website migrated to Yahoo, and the Birder's Message Board found a new home on Google.

Other changes included synchronized renewal of local membership in September of each year, the revival of overnight field trips, and a collaboration with KBO to provide presentations on birds and birding in Jackson County schools.

No doubt there will be additional changes in the new year-that-is. But the RVAS commitment to eyes-on birding experiences and birding related education and conservation activities remains unchanged.

Happy New Year to both birders and birds.

Chapter Meetings

The monthly chapter meetings in January, February, March and April of 2011 will continue to be held at the Westminster Presbyterian Church. The Church is located at 2000 Oakwood Drive in Medford. Please use the parking lot and entrance facing Oakwood Drive. The entrance to the Church from the parking lot facing S. Groveland Avenue may be closed. Thank you.

Field Notes: The Changing Seasons

Part 1: October 15 to November 15

October produces beautiful Indian summers with little rain. Then the monsoons arrive on the first of November and don't let up until May. Such was my experience growing up in the Willamette Valley. In recent years we have had the Indian summers of October, but the monsoons waited until January or later leaving us to wonder how bad the drought would be this year. Well this fall was a little closer to the pattern I recognize from years ago. The rains began in earnest on 10/24, and the snowpack is already beginning to build. Good news.

However, some of our summer birds have shorter memories and may pay the price. The **Violet-green Swallows** at Emigrant Lake on 10/17 (HF) were a little late but not extremely so. I'm more worried about the **Black-headed Grosbeak** on 10/19 at Maggi Rackley's place. I hope it got a move on before the storms arrived. An October sighting is most unusual.

The female **Black-chinned Hummingbird** at my feeder south of Medford on 10/31 and 11/2 was unusual on two counts. First, we rarely get them in Jackson County. As a breeding species, they are sparsely distributed in riparian areas east of the crest of the Cascades. Second is the extremely late date. Then there was the **Long-billed Curlew** at Agate Lake on 11/12-11/14 (FL,GR). They are not often seen in Jackson County, and they usually depart the Klamath Basin where they breed by mid-September. The tardiest of the lot was the female **Lazuli Bunting** reported from 11/14-16 in Eagle Point by Bob Hunter.

Shorebird migration also continued until the end of October, a little later than usual. **Least Sandpipers** were seen all month at Emigrant Lake (HF). A **Western Sandpiper** was present on 10/17 and 10/20 (HF). The first **Dunlin** was reported on 10/21 at Agate Lake (JT) along with a **Black-bellied Plover** and **Long-billed Dowitchers**. The **Dowitchers** remained until the end of October (HF).

The end of salmon spawning on the Rogue River complete with the carcasses washing up on the gravel bars attracted several gulls normally found along the coast. **Thayer's, Glaucous-winged, and Herring Gulls** were seen on 10/29 and 10/30 at the Holy Water

Scattered **Snow Geese** were seen about the valley from 10/17 through 10/31 (FE,RB). **Cackling Geese** were at Emigrant Lake on 10/17 (HF) and over Colver Road on 11/4. Duck numbers and diversity didn't begin to rise until the first of November when **American Wigeon, Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Ducks, Bufflehead** and **Hooded Mergansers** started to show up at farm ponds around the valley. I have yet to see Northern Shovelers.

The best waterfowl sighting this fall have been the male and three female **Surf Scoters** at Lost Creek Reservoir on 10/30 and 11/1 (MR,RK).

Yellow-rumped Warblers swept through the valley in the middle two weeks of October. A few remain but we will have to wait until late March for the return flight. A major movement of **American Robins** heading over the Siskiyou was noted on 11/4 (SJ). These were accompanied by a few **Varied Thrushes** and **Cedar Waxwings**. Apparently our madrone berry crop is too meager to hold them in the valley in large numbers. The last of the fall **Evening Grosbeak** flocks was noted on 10/16 in south Medford. Three **Gray-crowned Rosy Finches** were spotted on Grizzly on 11/4 (KH). It seems they show up every couple of years in the fall on one of the hilltops in the County.

Unlike last winter when you couldn't buy a **Varied Thrush** in the valley, small numbers are scattered about this fall. Although not an invasion year, a few **Mountain Chickadees** have been seen at the lower elevations. This month one has been in Ashland (HF).

Other sightings of note include the **Northern Goshawk** near Emigrant Lake on 10/20 (HF), a **Northern Shrike** at Agate Lake on 11/12 (FL), and a **Ferruginous Hawk** along North Phoenix Road on 11/4 (RB). It's nice to have a Ferruginous Hawk again after their absence last year. Two **White-throated Sparrows** have already been reported this fall (MR,HF).

Thanks to this month's contributors including Norm Barrett, Ralph Browning, Forrest English, Harry Fuller, Bob Hunter, Karen Hussey, Ron Ketchum, Frank Lospalutto, Maggi Rackley,

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Gwyneth Ragosine, and Jeff Tufts.

Part 2: November 15—

December 15:

This is the fall when the summer birds refused to go away. The female **Lazuli Bunting** at the home of Bob Hunter remained all month. I've been to Mazatlan (where you need to go most winters to see Lazuli Buntings) and Bob Hunter's place looks nothing like Mazatlan. It's a fine place and all but there are no palm trees, no parrots, no coati mundis. I don't get it.

Then there was the **Swainson's Thrush** at Carol Palmer's on 11/20. That's just wrong. In late November one expects Hermit Thrushes not Swainson's Thrushes. They should all be in southern Mexico by now. But here it is sharing her yard

with a Hermit Thrush.

And the oddness continues. A **Violet-green Swallow** was at Lost Creek Reservoir on 11/21 (NB). The third week of October is as late as I've ever seen them. We often have a few Tree Swallows try to stick it out through the winter, but not Violet-green Swallows. The **Long-billed Curlew** at Lost Creek Reservoir on 11/26 (RB) was even more unusual. They are usually gone from the state by mid-September.

And finally, there was an immature male **Hermit Warbler** in my backyard on 12/4. Small numbers of Townsend's Warblers winter in the state but not Hermit Warblers. It's all craziness, and I can't begin to say why.

Come to a FeederWatch Near You

The two companion Project FeederWatch (PFW) programs of RVAS have been underway since November at the Jefferson Nature Center (JNC) in Medford and North Mountain Park (NMP) in Ashland. They are part of the world's largest Citizen Science effort organized by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society and offer birders of all abilities a chance to collect data on Western Hemisphere bird populations. The Saturday sessions, which start at 9 a.m. are open to the RVAS membership and the public at large with the location alternating from week to week. The free one hour long watches provide novice birders the easiest possible identification practice since there are unobstructed, close up views of from ten to twenty species perched at feeders with the valley's top birder/educators available for help. Binoculars and field guides are available for use, though it is best to bring one's own familiar binoculars if possible. More experienced birders often attend, jumping at the chance to show off their knowledge as well as swap tall avian tales with their peers. Both locations offer shelter in case of inclement weather and welcome youth with an adult companion. And, individuals can take part by watching their own feeder and documenting their sightings. Contact PFW at <https://www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw/>.

This is the second year of Project Feeder Watch at Jefferson Nature Center (JNC). Remaining count dates are 1/15, 1/29, 2/12, 2/26, 3/12, and 3/26. Judd Hurley is the organizer for PFW at JNC and can be reached at 541-621-3918 or at chanotin@charter.net. See the website for location of JNC.

This is the seventh year the partnership of North Mountain Park and RVAS have conducted PFW. Remaining count dates at NMP are 1/8, 1/22, 2/5, 2/19, 3/5 and 3/19. Contact Denny Niebuhr at roguerogueden@ashlandhome.net or North Mountain Park at 541-488-6606 for more information.

Denny Niebuhr reports some early returns include Brown Creeper, White-crowned Sparrow, at JNC and Purple Finches galore and a White-throated Sparrow at NMP. Both sites are averaging close to 20 species per session.

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Field Notes Part 2 *continued*

The normal winter birds have been, well, more normal. **Varied Thrushes** made an appearance during fall migration, but for the third year in a row their numbers remain low. Still, there are more than last winter. **Pine Siskins** numbers are also on the low end of normal. A flock of 50 along Ashland Creek on 12/5 (PT) has been the best we can muster.

A few **Mountain Chickadees** have drifted down from the high country including birds in east Medford (EL), SW Medford (LN), and Ashland (RH). This is more than normal but not by much. **Cassin's Finches** also came to the valley floor in small numbers (DA,GR,EL,SJ). Early May is when we usually host **Evening Grosbeaks**, but scattered groups showed up all fall, and some are still here. This month they were recorded at several locations in Medford (JH,GH,EL) and on Mount Ashland (JB).

Waterfowl provided little excitement. **Tundra Swans** are once again wintering in the Eagle Point area and Agate Lake in small numbers as they have for decades. However, they also showed up at Mingus Pond on 12/1 and 12/9 (RB,KT) and at Emigrant Lake on 12/5 (HF). **Canvasbacks** were at Mingus Pond on 12/1 (RB) and a **Redhead** on the Holy Water on 12/3 (NB). A few **Snow Geese** and **Greater White-fronted Geese** are scattered across the valley, but this is normal. Add a fair number of **Cackling Geese** to the mix and fold these all in to a very healthy population of resident **Canada Geese** and you have our standard winter goose recipe for the valley.

Other waterbird sightings of note include 7 **Bonaparte's Gulls** and 6 **Common Loons** on Lost Creek Reservoir on 11/21 (NB). A **Horned Grebe** was in the pond on Sage Road in Medford on 12/4 (SJ).

A **Ferruginous Hawk** was at the Medford airport on 12/7 (HF) though it appears to have moved on. Until last year we have had at least one remain with us throughout the winter. **Short-eared Owls** are again wintering in the overgrown fields next to the airport off Vilas Road. A

Northern Pygmy Owl was at Emigrant Lake on 12/13 (FL).

Other sightings of note this month include a **Loggerhead Shrike** at Denman Wildlife Area on 12/12 (BH), a **White-throated Sparrow** at the Jefferson Nature Center on 12/5 (JH), a **Horned Lark** at Lost Creek Reservoir on 12/3 (NB), and a **Marsh Wren** along Hersey Street in Ashland on 12/5 (HF). **Purple Finch** numbers have been erratic this fall, but large numbers were in Ashland on 12/12 (GR).

Thanks to this month's contributors including Dick Ashford, Norm Barrett, Ralph Browning, John Bullock, Harry Fuller, Jim Harleman, Rowan Heglie, Judd Hurley, Gaylene Hurley, Ron Ketchum, Edith Lindner, Frank Lospalutto, Liz Northrup, Carol Palmer, Maggi Rackley, Keiko Thurston, and Pepper Trail. Deadline for contributions to the Field Notes in the next edition of The Chat is January 15.


TREASURER'S REPORT: NOV/DEC 2010

Treasurer's Report: Nov./Dec. 2010

By RVAS Treasurer Kathy Simonson

Balance on November 1, 2010	\$15,335.09
Income	4,864.25
Expenses (Nov/Dec)	2,318.81
Balance on December 31, 2010	\$17,880.53

Income sources include membership dues, donations, national dues and holiday raffle. Expenses include office, meeting, admin., programs, and Chat printing and mailing.



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The Conservation Column, Winter 2010-2011

A New Year Brings Both New and Continuing Conservation Priorities

The Oregon Audubon Council (OAC) is the umbrella organization for all Audubon chapters in the state. The Council meets twice a year—in the Spring to share information on Chapter programs and practices, and in the Fall to establish Conservation priorities. The most recent OAC conservation meeting was held on November 6-7, 2010 at the Audubon Society of Portland. I represented Rogue Valley Audubon Society at the meeting. Our task was to sort through many Conservation issues of mutual concern and identify those which would be OAC Conservation Campaign Priorities for 2011. This was not a simple task. To identify the most urgent among a large number of concerns required extended discussion, and consideration of many points of view. I'm pleased with the outcome-- the six Draft Priorities that were identified:

1. Wind Power
2. Greater Sage Grouse Protection
3. Raptor Protection
4. Forest Protection
5. Proposed Wild Bird Conservation Act
6. Important Bird Areas



Identifying these six priorities brings immediate attention to their need, and demonstrates that Oregon Audubon stands behind each effort. Your RVAS Board will review and discuss these priorities, and determine how RVAS wishes to endorse and support the effort. Based on the OAC Draft Report, here's a condensed description of all six priorities. Each Priority is very important; they are not listed according to any order of significance.

WIND POWER: The National Audubon Society and the Oregon Audubon Council have always fully supported the development of wind facilities at appropriate locations. However, the current lack of regulatory oversight of wind development and lack of comprehensive planning for wind development in Oregon has led to a situation where development unnecessarily threatens wildlife populations and critical wildlife habitats. Improperly sited or overly large wind facilities pose a significant threat to wildlife. During the 2011 legislative session a bill may be introduced that would define a "single wind facility" to keep developers from subdividing projects to avoid regulatory oversight. The Oregon Audubon Council has agreed to support and endorse this proposed legislation during the 2011 legislative session which will help ensure that wind developments are appropriately sited. RVAS will be asked to sign on to letters of support. You may be asked to write a letter of support as well. We must of course support efforts to implement carbon alternatives, but these efforts must not come at the expense of the environment in other ways

GREATER SAGE GROUSE PROTECTION: In 2010 the US Fish and Wildlife Service determined that listing of the Greater Sage Grouse under the Endangered Species Act is "warranted but precluded" due to lack of resources. Like the Northern Spotted Owl, the Greater Sage Grouse

represents not only a species but an entire imperiled ecosystem. All western states within the Greater Sage Grouse's range are developing science-based plans to protect this species. Oregon Greater Sage Grouse guidelines were supposed to go before the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Commission in December 2010 for approval but were removed from the agenda under heavy pressure from wind developers and counties. Wide support is necessary to ensure that ODFW quickly adopts science-based guidelines and ensures adequate regulatory authority to enforce protections for Greater Sage Grouse. Again, you may be asked to help, by sending letters of support, and participating in town hall meetings where Sage Grouse protection will be discussed.

RAPTOR PROTECTION LEGISLATION: Despite the fact that it has been illegal since 1918, birds of prey continue to be illegally taken in Oregon. In 2009 Oregon Audubon played a lead role in passing legislation to increase protections for birds of prey in Oregon. The legislation specifically increased the amount of damages that the state could recover for illegal take of raptors from the former level of \$50 to current levels of \$2000-\$5000 per bird. In 2011 Oregon Audubon Council would like to support legislation to increase penalties (fines and jail time) associated with these crimes. RVAS will be asked to endorse proposed legislation; individual members will be asked to sign-on to letters of support to write their own letters of support, and to take advantage of any op-

opportunities they have to let legislators know how important we consider this legislation to be.

FOREST PROTECTION: As Rogue Valley Audubon members know, protection of old growth forests, especially as they relate to the recovery of the Northern Spotted Owl and Marbled Murrelet, has been a longstanding priority for OAC. You may have thought the WOPR was put to rest, but the same issues continue to appear. During 2011 there will be critical opportunities to comment on revised versions of the Spotted Owl Recovery Plan, WOPR and critical Habitat Designations, as well as the proposed take of Barred Owls. Oregon Audubon Council will monitor this. Individual Audubon members may, and should comment on these revised plans and proposed policies. In addition, Audubon Oregon Council has decided to support legislation being introduced by Sierra Club et al during the 2011 session to increase protection for old growth habitat on State Forests: RVAS will be asked to endorse legislation, send chapter letters in support of legislation, and contact key decision-makers.

WILD BIRD CONSERVATION ACT: Hunters and Fishermen have paid a tax on hunting and fishing gear for the better part of a century--this provides the primary source of revenue for ODFW. As a result, 88% of the species in Oregon which are not hunted or fished receive less than 2% of the ODFW budget.

(Column continued on page 11)

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Wild Birds Unlimited



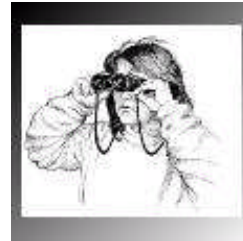
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And much more!

712 Crater Lake Avenue 770-1104
(Across from Providence Medical Center)
Mon-Fri 9:30-6:00, Sat 9:30-5:00

Bird Walks

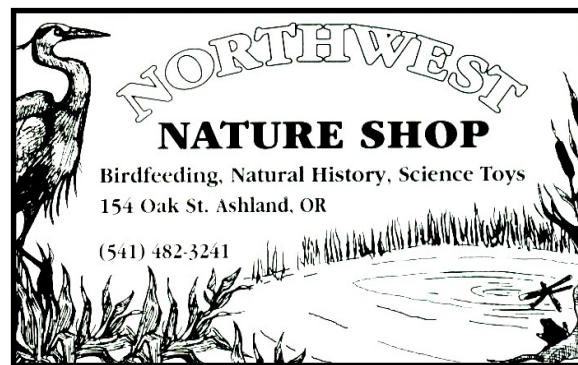
First Wednesday Each Month: Little Butte Creek Walk. Meet at 8:30 a.m. on TouVelle Road in the northeast section of the Denman Wildlife Area near White City. Leader: Murray Orr 857-9050***



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.

Sign up to receive easy notification of Chapter activities

There is an easy way to be reminded of upcoming field trips and chapter meetings and the most recent edition of *The Chat*. 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.



Upcoming field trips of special interest

March 19: Trip to Whetstone Savannah

We will meet at 8:30 am for a field trip to Whetstone Savannah and then make time for a stop at Medford Airport to see if we can find wintering Short-eared owls. We hope to find wintering raptors, beat the bushes for some unusual sparrows and enjoy the mixture of grasslands and oak woodland habitats at Whetstone. Stay tuned for meeting place details in next issue.

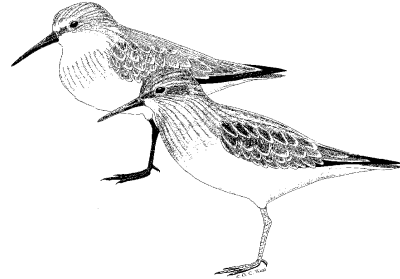
June 9-12: Birding Malheur National Wildlife Refuge

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.

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RVAS was very active in this campaign. In 2011 we need to ensure that marine reserves are adequately funded via the state budget process and build upon our 2009 success by expanding the marine reserve system. This includes supporting expansion of Marine Reserve System through the 2011 legislative process. We will again be asked to endorse legislation, sign on to letters of support, write our own letters of support, and participate in meetings with legislators and other key decision-makers. It is important for the Marine Reserve effort that legislators understand that this is not something of concern just for coastal Oregon, and that citizens and Audubon chapters in the interior fully support an expanded Marine Reserve system. All of this sounds like a lot of work, and in fact, it will be.

Audubon was founded to address concerns about bird conservation, and conservation continues to be our focus. It's important that our Audubon priorities for the environment are made explicit, understood by all our members, and supported by Audubon chapters across Oregon. You will hear more about each of them throughout the year, and you will be asked to assist in implementation. Thanks for your efforts, and for your support.



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

MEDFORD CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Forty-seven individuals braved the rainy weather on December 18th as participants in Medford's 58th Christmas Bird Count. Despite the weather, 133 species and 38,594 individual birds were counted. The most common bird was the European starling at 12,771 individuals, followed by the American robin at 4,021 individuals. Though the total robin count was down this year from last year, Pepper Trail and Chris Uhtoff observed almost twice as many robins flying out of Kelley's Slough this year, though the slough is now drained with the removal of Gold Ray Dam. This forced Pepper and Chris to actually have to walk their area this year rather than just leisurely paddle around the slough.

Three new count birds were observed this year: a semipalmated plover by Vince Zauskey's team, a herring gull by Denny Niebuhr's team, and a lazuli bunting by Stewart Janes' team. This year 20 American bald eagle were seen, the highest number from any previous Medford count (previous high 16). This year's count also had count highs for Red-tailed hawk, 250 (previous high 214), Wilson's snipe, 67 (previous high 55), Eurasian collared dove, 127 (previous high 27), and Northern mockingbird, 12 (previous high 10). One bird not seen this year that has been seen in 53 of the past 57 Medford counts was the Lewis's woodpecker. In the 1970 count, a count high of 300 Lewis's woodpeckers were observed. Back in 1973, a count high of 43 Short-eared owls were observed, while now only 2 to 5 Short-eared owls are regularly seen in the count. Bob Hunter

Holiday Potluck Leftovers

Left at the festive Christmas Potluck was a serving spoon with decorative edge on the handle and a very sharply honed edged midsized knife. They will be brought to the January meeting or can be pick up from Edith Lindner.

In 2010, RVAS donated discarded binoculars to Cornell's Laboratory of Ornithology. Karen Purcell of the Lab writes in response to the donation: *"I can't tell you how much we appreciate your donation of binoculars . . . [it] will open doors for many youth who would otherwise not have the remotest possibility of ever getting their hands on a pair of binoculars. . . . Many of the organizations we work with are serving some of the most at-risk communities in the US. . . ."*

Chapter Announces Completion of Oregon State Birding Guide

East Cascades Audubon Society has completed the state online birding guide "Birding Oregon", a guide packed with information on more than 1,000 birding locations throughout the state. Each location contains: Delorme Map information, geographic coordinates, Google Map and Google Earth links, detailed directions to each site, descriptions of the kind of birding to be experienced at each site, additional links to resources such as bird lists, site brochures, or alternative activities that are site-specific. To access the site go to <http://birdingoregon.info/> and click on the county of your choice. In addition to the previously mentioned resources and links, below the site guide map is information about local blogs, birding projects, birding news, Oregon birding organizations, and all kinds of birding information which will help improve birding experiences and birding skills. - *National Audubon Society*

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To address this disparity, legislation will be introduced during the 2011 legislative session to implement a 5 cent per pound fee on bird seed ("A Nickel for the Birds!"). This Wild Bird Conservation Act would provide approximately \$2 million year which would be used to fund a single avian conservation coordinator at ODFW with the rest of the funding going into on-the-ground avian related restoration and education projects. Because the fee will be collected at the wholesale level, it will not appear on consumer purchase receipts. The fund would have an oversight committee and would have a sunset clause in 2017 to help ensure that it was appropriately administered. Having birders contribute financially to statewide avian conservation efforts will help ensure adequate and stable funding to protect the birds we so greatly enjoy. The OAC has agreed to support this effort, which was developed by Portland Audubon, Backyard Bird Shops, and the Wildlife Society. There will be opportunity to provide input into the proposed legislation, to endorse legislation, and to send letters of support. It will also be essential to educate members and the public about the legislation, sign-on to letters of support, send out action alerts to members, and if necessary, participate in meetings with legislators and other key decision-makers

IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS: Oregon's 97 designated Important Bird Areas represent the most important locations in our state for bird nesting, resting and breeding. (IBA's in Jackson County include the Cascade -Siskiyou National Monument, Denman Wildlife Management Area, Siskiyou Crest, and Table Rock.) Many chapters conduct protection, restoration, monitoring and educational outreach activities at their local Important Bird Areas. For the 2011 Priorities, the OAC identified five IBA opportunities where collective resources and expertise can have a significant impact.

Malheur National Wildlife Refuge and Klamath

National Wildlife Refuge: Both refuges are in the process of developing Comprehensive Conservation Plans (CCP) which will guide Refuge activities for the next two decades. The CCP process represents a critical opportunity to ensure that two of the premier Refuges in the west are restored to health. The OAC agreed to engage in CCP Process through participation in public meetings, commenting on CCP drafts, and to develop strategies to strengthen OAC connections to and support for both the Malheur and the Klamath National Wildlife Refuge.

Lake Abert: Competition for limited water resources has resulted in a situation in which Lake Abert's water has fallen to dangerously low levels, increasing salinity, reducing brine shrimp populations and jeopardizing avian populations. There is a need to focus attention on this IBA and develop strategies to address water concerns. The OAC will form a working group of Audubon Chapters and other interested parties to develop short and long term strategies and solutions to address Lake Abert water issues.

Steens Mountain: Audubon played a central role in passing the Steens Act nearly a decade ago, protecting vast areas of Steens Mountain from development. However, federal funding to acquire development rights was never appropriated by Congress. This funding is critical to ensure that new development pressures on the mountain are not realized. The OAC, with leadership from the Audubon Society of Portland, will lobby Oregon's Congressional Delegation to support appropriation of federal funds. The OAC also agreed to oppose wind development within the Steens Mountain Cooperative Management Area. RVAS can support this lobbying effort through signing onto letters, writing individual letters, and meeting with legislators.

Marine Reserves: In 2009 Audubon played a pivotal role in establishing the first marine reserves in Oregon. Audubon ensured that the needs of avian species were considered and incorporated into the Marine Reserve process.

(See page 9 for Conservation Column conclusion)

ROGUE VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

THE CHAT

Newsletter of the ROGUE VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

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Field Trips:

January 8: 12th Annual Ashland Creek Dipper Walk on Saturday, Jan. 8. Meet Bob Quaccia at 9:30 am at the Ashland Plaza, downtown Ashland. The walk will follow both sides of Ashland Creek in Lithia Park (approx. 1.5 miles) observing and counting American Dipper.

First Wednesday Each Month: Little Butte Creek Walk. Meet at 8:30 am on TouVelle Road in the north-east section of the Denman Wildlife Area near White City.

February 26: Klamath Basin Field Trip- All day field trip to the Klamath Basin—primarily a car trip with stops for scoping. Meet at Ashland Shop n' Kart at 8:00 am for carpooling. Bring snacks. Leaders: Jim Harleman and Gwyneth Ragosine. Limited to 20 birders. Contact Gwyneth @ 541-552-1945 or Jim @ 541-664-7124. Also see website for additional details.

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

January 5— First Wednesday Bird Walk

January 8—Ashland Creek Dipper Walk

January 25— Chapter Meeting—Pepper Trail

February 2—First Wednesday Bird Walk

February 22—Chapter Meeting—Dick Ashford

February 26— Klamath Basin Field Trip

March 2— First Wednesday Bird Walk

March 19—Whetstone Savannah Field Trip

March 22—Chapter Program Meeting

April 6— First Wednesday Bird Walk

April 26—Chapter Program Meeting