

The Chat

Number 383
November 2011

A voice for education and conservation in the natural world
Rogue Valley Audubon Society
www.roguevalleyaudubon.org
Deadline for submissions is the 27th of the previous month



Tuesday, November 22

Program Meeting—

7:00 pm:

**Pelagic Birds—Flight Styles
and Plumage by Russ Namitz**

Join Russ as he explore the flight styles and plumage of a variety of pelagic birds.

Russ Namitz began birding in earnest in the summer of 1996. He is the current president of the Oregon Field Ornithologists (OFO). He is also a pelagic guide for The Bird Guide, Inc and worked as a seasonal wildlife biologist for 7 years in the western US & Latin America. He currently teaches high school Biology & Oceanography in Coos Bay, OR.

Program meetings are held at Medford Congregational Church at 1801 E. Jackson St.

THURSDAY—DECEMBER 6—

**6 PM - IS THE START OF
SOMETHING BIG: The Annual
RVAS Holiday Potluck, Raffle,
and Auction Fundraiser**

Will this be your lucky day at the annual holiday good time? A list of raffle and auction items can be found on page 8 and on the RVAS website. Plan to buy a raffle ticket or make a bid during the auction, both help to raise money for RVAS' education programs, all while having fun.

Bob Hunter will be emcee and auctioneer through this fun-filled evening. Plan to attend. The potluck will be held at the Medford Congregational Church 1801 E. Jackson St., Medford.

OFFICERS and DIRECTORS

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Hospitality: Katy Reed, 245-5095

Master Gardner Fair: OPEN

Membership: Bill Hering, 488-5886

Membership Database: Stan McIntosh, 535-2053

Programs: Bob Quaccia, 482-1143 & Robert Mumby, 535-2934

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President's Column

The warblers have left, and the sparrows have returned. Two chapter meetings have already taken place with great presentations by Harry Fuller and Pepper Trail, and other fall activities are coming up. Project Feederwatch kicks off at North Mountain Park on November 12 and at Jefferson Nature Center on November 19. It's a great way to observe birds close up and to participate in an ongoing citizen science project. December 6 is the date of our annual holiday potluck, party, and fund-raising raffle. Bring your holiday spirit, a dish to share with others, and some cash for those last minute raffle ticket purchases.

The second half of December brings two opportunities to enjoy our wonderful winter weather by participating in the Medford (December 17) and Ashland (December 28) Christmas Bird Counts and stuffing yourself with pizza afterwards. And you can help get the birding New Year underway by joining Bob Quaccia on January 7 on his annual walk in Ashland's Lithia Park to spot the elusive American Dipper.

And all this while, come rain, fog, snow, or bulldozers, you can hone your bird spotting skills under adverse conditions by joining Murray Orr on his bird walk in the Denman Wildlife Area on the first Wednesday of each and every month. Citizen science takes no rest, and neither should you—Murray needs all the ears and eyes he can get. Details on all of these activities can be found in this newsletter. Happy birding!

Field Notes: The Changing Seasons
Compiled by Stewart Janes

Okay. I take it back. Last month I said the normal pattern of migration had been restored after a rather weird and very tardy spring. Well it got back on track for some species but not for others. High in the sky things were normal. Migrating kettles of **Turkey Vultures** continued through 10/15 as expected with a straggler seen on the following day bringing up the rear. **Violet-green Swallows** from northern populations poured into the valley by the thousands beginning 10/3. By 10/7 the skies were clear again. A late flock of about 50 was seen on 10/9. The last **Vaux's Swifts** were seen on 9/25 both in Ashland (MM,LM) and Medford (SJ).

Down in the trees and shrubbery it was a different matter with numerous sightings of late birds. It is a rare year to see a **Western Wood Pewee** in October. However, this year there were 9 reports for the month (BH,SJ,HF) with the latest on 10/9 (HF) at Ashland Pond.

Western Tanagers are rarely seen in October. This year there were three reports (HF,AC) with the latest in Ashland on 10/13 (PT). Other rather late sightings include a **Hermit Warbler** at Rye Spring on 9/30 (OS), a **Cassin's Vireo** on 9/30 on the Siskiyou Summit (FL), a **Willow Flycatcher** on 10/2 (JB,SB), a **Warbling Vireo** at Emigrant Lake on 10/4 (FL), and a **MacGillivray's Warbler** in Medford on 10/7 (SJ).

Some warblers typically linger into the first days of October. This year, though, **Black-throated Gray Warblers** outdid themselves with 13 reports in October (AC,SJ) including a loose flock of 5 in Dark Hollow on 10/7. The latest was reported on 10/13 at Ashland Pond (TP). The last **Yellow Warblers** were seen on 10/8 (AC) and 10/15 (HF) and a surprising number (12) of **Common Yellowthroats** at Emigrant Lake on 10/4.

The last **Ospreys** were observed on 10/14 at Emigrant Lake (SJ) and 10/19 at Hyatt Lake on 10/19 (AC). A **Ferruginous Hawk** attended by two nosy **Ravens** was seen on Colver Road behind Talent on 10/24 (SJ).

A number of **Say's Phoebes** were seen in the month including individuals at Lower Table Rock, Dark Hollow, Bateman Road and Airway Drive (JT,MM,LM,SJ).

Shorebird migration continued well into October. **Dunlin** typically bring up the rear of the parade, and this year we were not disappointed. The first were reported on 10/11 at Agate Lake (JT) and sightings continue. Besides a few peeps (**Least and Western Sandpipers**) and the usual **Greater Yellowlegs**, scattered **Semipalmated Plovers** were seen through 10/1 at Agate Lake (CD,JT,RK) and **Pectoral Sandpipers** remained through at least 10/19 (DN). The most noteworthy shorebird report this month was the **Sanderling** at Emigrant Lake on 10/2 (BM).

This was a great fall migration if you were into gulls and terns and grebes. A **Red-necked Grebe** was observed on Lost Creek Reservoir between 10/14 and 10/21 (NB,JT). **Eared Grebes** and **Horned Grebes** are regularly reported in the county but only a few individuals. **Horned Grebes** (up to 6) were found from Lost Creek Reservoir (NB), to Hyatt Lake to Agate Lake between 9/29 and 10/23 (JT,NB,JB,SB) and **Eared Grebes** including at times numerous individuals at Emigrant Lake, Hyatt Lake, Howard Prairie, and Agate Lake between 10/1 and 10/21 (JT,NB,HF).

Common Terns (2) were at Lost Creek reservoir from 10/1 to 10/4 (NB) and two **Forster's Terns** at Lost Creek Reservoir on 10/4 (NB).

A few **Bonaparte's Gulls** have been here and there, but the surprise was the **Franklin's Gull** that joined a flock of **Bonaparte's Gulls** on 10/18 at Agate Lake (NB).

Continued page 5

THE CONSERVATION COLUMN

By Sooney Viani

RVAS Tour of Kenneth Denman Wildlife Area

In his previous two Conservation Columns Pepper Trail described plans for expansion of the RVAS Conservation Committee, with the goal of increasing our local efforts toward bird conservation. The committee plans to monitor specific areas which are important to bird conservation, and which are of interest to our birding community. The Kenneth Denman Wildlife Area, an ODFW property adjacent to TouVelle State Park, is one of those areas. On October 12 nine RVAS members (Barbara Massey, John Bullock, Jeff Tufts, Alex Maksymowicz, Carol Palmer, Ralph Browning, Murray Orr, Larry Wright and Sooney Viani) assembled at Denman headquarters for an informational meeting with Denman manager Clayton Barber. Clayton and the RVAS group talked for close to two hours on matters of mutual concern at two locations in the 1,800 acre Wildlife Area.

Our time at Denman was very informative; Clayton gave us a brief history of the place, explained a part of his land management work (planting grains and sunflowers and taking care of irrigation), and discussed the source of Denman funding. It became clear early on that we both want to know each other's schedule of events. Clayton would like to have RVAS post Denman's events on the RVAS website so we can stay informed of their activities when planning birding events such as the Christmas Bird Count or RVAS Birdathon, or just independent birding. It may also work to our benefit to keep other users of Denman informed of an important bird or birding event.

From the headquarters we drove into Denman at an entrance on Agate Road that can be used by pedestrians but is closed to vehicles.

This road took us to a construction site, where heavy equipment and what looks like a clear cut are part of the project to restore a bend in Little Butte Creek that was eliminated during the Camp White era. This restoration work will go on for two more years, but it will take many years beyond that for planted trees and shrubs to mature. The outcome

will be a healthier Little Butte Creek, slower running and more meandering with more diverse plant and animal life. There will be alcoves, or backwater areas, where fish fry can find refuge and spend some of their days protected from the swollen and fast moving water after winter floods.

We looked around and referred to maps to understand the plans for cutting a new trail around the new section of the creek that will be located to the east of the old trail and on higher ground. Denman management is aware of the RVAS first Wednesday bird walk each month, and Denman biologist Steve Niemala receives the e-bird list after each walk. We emphasized the fact that we are in year two of a three-year study under Murray Orr's guidance, and that it is important for the study that we continue to have access as much as possible to the original study area!

I asked Clayton to send us the electronic version of the Denman wildlife list, which includes a bird list, that was a collaborative effort by Otis Swisher, Jim Collins and Steve Cross. It makes sense to have the Denman bird list reviewed and updated, possibly including TouVelle in a bird list available to RVAS members and other birders.

Clayton told us that 16 wildlife areas in the state will soon be subject to a parking fee, modeled after the system already in use at Sauvie Island near Portland.

Field Notes continued from page 3

Conservation Column continued from previous page

Hunters will not be subject to the parking fee, since it's included in their licenses, but all other users will have to pay. Anyone, whether coming in with horses, dogs, or to bird or fish, will be subject to the fee if they park their vehicle on Denman land. All money from the parking fee at Denman will remain at Denman. Parking along the roads next to Denman is expected to increase, but is legal as long as the vehicle is off the pavement.

Perhaps RVAS can inform and encourage Denman to spend some of the parking fee fund to enhance bird habitat and inform users of critical habitat through signage. For example, it was noted that the Avenue G pond area is a habitat for the Grasshopper Sparrow; however, the practice of parking off road together with people and dogs roaming freely on the grassland conflicts with the needs of the birds. As of now the Grasshopper Sparrow is not on the Denman wildlife list.

Clayton will make a presentation at the chapter meeting in January, which will provide an additional opportunity for dedicated birders to express their concerns to him regarding birds and birding at Denman. I urge RVAS members to keep the conversation with Denman going and to provide them with suggestions for improving conditions for birds and birders at the Denman Wildlife Area.

A first year **Western Gull** was at Lost Creek Reservoir on 10/4 (NB).

Waterfowl migration kicked into high gear this month with numerous flocks of **Greater White-fronted Geese** passing through, most within a couple of days about 9/29. **Cackling Geese** began to appear on 10/1 (NB,BH) though their numbers remain small. **Canvas-back** (5) were seen on Agate Lake on 10/24 (JT) and a **Redhead** on Hyatt Lake on 10/19 (AC).

The **Red-breasted Mergansers** on Agate Lake on 10/18 (NB) and Howard Prairie on 9/20 (HF) are unusual for this normally marine species. Even more surprising was the sighting of between 15 and 30 **Surf Scoters** on Lost Creek Reservoir on 10/24 (NB). **Sandhill Cranes** were seen at Agate Lake on 9/29 (CD), over the Siskiyou Summit on 9/30 (FL), and 10 at Agate Lake on 10/19 (DN).

One of the more unusual sightings this month was the male **Red-naped Sapsucker** in Dark Hollow on 10/9 (SJ). This species rarely visits the county straying from the mountains east of the Cascades.

Horned Larks were reported from the mudflats at Lost Creek reservoir on 10/21 (JT,NB) and at Agate Lake on 10/18 (AC). **Clark's Nutcrackers** were seen at Rye Springs on 9/30 (OS) and at Agate Lake also on 9/30 (FE). What is a nutcracker doing in the flatland?

Other sightings of note include **Gray-crowned Rosy Finches** on Mount McLoughlin on 10/2 (TH), **Tri-colored Blackbirds** at Agate Lake on 10/1 (RK) and a **White-throated Sparrow** at Ashland Pond on 10/13 (JT). One spent the winter at this site last winter. Could it be the same bird?

Thanks to this month's contributors including Norm Barrett, John Bullock, Stephanie Bullock, Alan Contreras, Carol Doty, Forrest English, Harry Fuller, Tod Harrison, Bob Hunter, Ron Ketchum, Frank Lospalutto, Barbara Massey, Lisa Moore, Marjorie Moore, Dennis Niebuhr, Terence Phillips, Otis Swisher, Pepper Trail, and Jeff Tufts. Deadline for contributions to the Field Notes in next month's issue of The Chat is November 20.

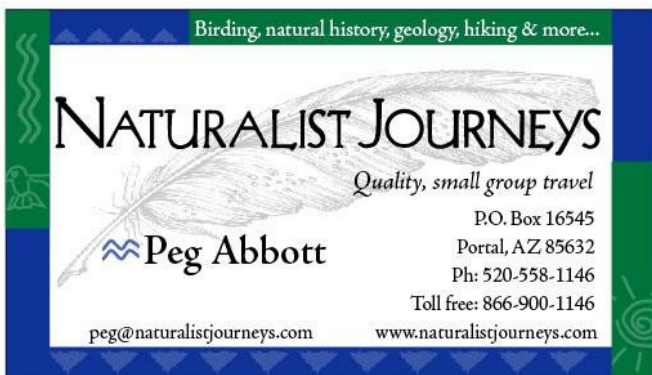
Come to a FeederWatch Near You

The two companion Project FeederWatch programs of RVAS kick off this month 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 binos that are normally used 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.

The Jefferson Nature Center (JNC) is located behind Harry and David Ball Field, just before crossing the bridge to U.S. Cellular Sports Park. Access is from South Pacific Highway (Highway 99) just north of it's intersection with South Stage Road and south of the Grange Co-op and Harry & David's headquarters. The counts will be from 9-10 a.m. on alternate weekends beginning November 19th with Judd Hurley as the host. He may be contacted at chanotin@charter.net. This is the third year of Project FeederWatch at Jefferson Nature Center.

The North Mountain Park (NMP) sessions begin Saturday, November 12th. at 9 a.m, the starting time common to all Saturdays. Contact Denny Niebuhr at rogueden@ashlandhome.net or North Mountain Park at 488-6606 for more information. This is the eighth year the partnership of North Mountain Park and RVAS have conducted Project FeederWatch.

Ten sessions will occur at each site. At JNC, the dates are 11/19, 12/3, 12/17, 12/31, 1/14, 1/28, 2/11, 2/25, 3/10 & 3/24. At NMP are 11/12, 11/26, 12/10, 12/24, 1/7, 1/21, 2/4, 2/18, 3/3 & 3/17.



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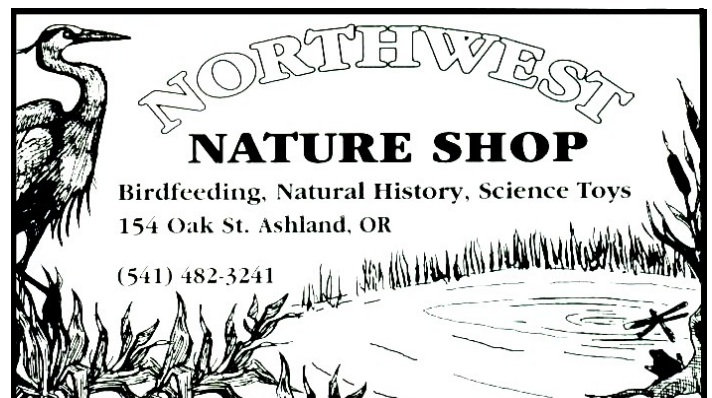
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CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

MEDFORD CBC—DECEMBER 17
CONTACT BOB HUNTER AT
bobhunter@embarqmail.com or at
541-826-5569

ASHLAND CBC—December 29
CONTACT JOHN BULLOCK AT
jas@opendoor.com or HARRY
FULLER AT atowhee@gmail.com
take part

COUNT WRAP-UP TO FOLLOW

RVAS Calendar of Events

- Nov. 22: Chapter Meeting
- Dec. 6: Annual Holiday Party
- Dec. 7: Bird Walk at Denman WMA
- Dec. 17: Christmas Bird Count - Medford Circle
- Dec. 29: Christmas Bird Count - Ashland Circle
- Jan. 4: Bird walk at Denman WMA
- Jan. 7: Annual Dipper Walk along Ashland Creek
- Jan. 24: Chapter Meeting
- Feb. 1: Bird walk at Denman WMA
- Feb. 4: Field trip to Klamath Basin
- Feb. 28: Chapter Meeting



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Mon-Fri 9:30-6:00, Sat 9:30-5:00

The Chat - November 2011

The list of donations to the Holiday Potluck Raffle and Auction continues to grow with the efforts of organizers Kate Cleland-Spifle and Sooney Viani. To date the list includes the following:

Northwest Nature Shop - two nights at **Rocky Point Cabin**

Harry Fuller - Guided Trip to Klamath Basin for two days, lodging at **The Running Y**

Green Springs Inn—One night stay in a Jacuzzi reoom

Two night stay in a vacation home in Langlois for great south coast of Oregon birding—Shelley Tanquary

Vince Zauskey 2-hr. Bird Walk identifying species by vocalizations and sight in **North Mountain Park** to be arranged on a weekend mid-May through Mid-June, 2012- Value \$50

A Goly Ostovar Watercolor

Metal Birds by Cheryl D. Garcia of Great Metal Works

Augusta Lucas Andrae's Colored Pencil Art Greeting Cards

Kathy & Tim Simonsen's Bird Photography on greeting cards

Summer Wildflower Walk on Mt Ashland for up to six people with **Alex & Lillian Maksymowicz**. Difficulty level will be tailored to the wishes of the participants. Includes picnic lunch at Grouse Gap

Sammy's Restaurant gift certificate

Nick Viani's Macintosh Computer Help for 90 minutes. Value \$60

Sounds of Nature Books and CD's by Lang Elliott

Science Works - 2 admissions

Siskiyou Field Institute—\$50 gift certificate for classes

Bear Creek Animal Clinic - office visit and cat/dog supplement, refrig. magnets

Grange Co-op - \$25 gift certificate; **Ashland Food Coop**—\$25 gift certificate

Hinode Farm's wooden tray and \$100 worth of **Bees Wax Candles**

\$75 gift certificate to Wld Birds Unlimited

Bird House Replica of Hwy 62 'Wood House'

An Audubon Clock Knitted Items Jewelry Bird Books Dagoba Chocolate Local Wines Binoculars

Japanese Noren (doorway curtain-art of owls)

AND MORE FABULOUS GUIDED OUTINGS, CERTIFICATES AND ITEMS!

HOLIDAY POTLUCK, RAFFLE AND AUCTION

DEC. 6—6 PM

1801 E. Jackson Street Medford, OR

A complete listed of donated items and funds raised for RAS education programs will be in the December/January issue

Upcoming Field Trips

Saturday, January 7: Annual Dipper Walk on Ashland Creek with leader Bob Quaccia. Meet at 9:30 am at Ashland Plaza, downtown Ashland; The walk will follow both sides of Ashland Creek in Lithia Park (for approx. 1.5 miles) observing and counting American Dippers.

Saturday, February 4: Klamath Basin with leader Jeff Tufts. Jeff will lead an all-day field trip to the Klamath Basin to look for wintering waterfowl at the Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge and the Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge. This trip is limited to 20 participants. Meeting times and places for carpooling will be announced in later issues. Contact Jeff by e-mail at tallahto2aol.com or by phone at 541-779-4582 to sign up.

The Audubon Society of Greater Denver brings you an opportunity to share your beautiful nature photos and have a chance to win up to \$1,000. Any images of the natural world are welcomed--including landscapes, flowers, wildlife, macro shots, aeriels, behaviors, portraits, underwater, abstracts, black & whites, and even urban wildlife. Enter as many images as you like for an entry fee of \$10 per image. The top 10 entries will be awarded cash prizes and the best 250 images will be featured on the contest website throughout 2012.

Proceeds from the contest benefits the Audubon Society of Greater Denver's education, conservation and research programs--a great way to support a premier nature organization, show the beauty of your surroundings, and receive recognition of your photographic efforts. Visit <http://denveraudubon.contestvenue.com/> to enter your photos and register to receive email updates and contest tips. You will also find contest rules, answers to frequently asked questions, and short biographies about our judges. For more information, contact Karl Brummert at kbrummert@denveraudubon.org or Wendy Shattil at wendy@dancingpelican.com.

The Butte Valley Friends of the Library, in conjunction with Klamath Basin Audubon, is sponsoring a day of raptor viewing in the Butte Valley, starting in Dorris, CA. The Tour is a fund raiser for the Butte Valley Library, and we are asking for a \$15 donation, though it is not required. Our Siskiyou County branch libraries have effectively been de-funded, and so we are operating on donations and funds raised, keeping the library open by volunteers. I myself volunteer at the library and am also a member of Klamath Basin Audubon.

Virginia Bary
Butte Valley Friends of the Library

Butte Valley Friends of the Library

BIRDS OF PREY TOUR

Saturday, November 19th, 2011
9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.



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**Meet at the Butte
Valley Library
800 W. Third St.
Dorris, CA**



\$15 donation requested
100% of all donations used to support our local library

- Join us for a fun outing led by a local expert to view some of the spectacular raptors in the Butte Valley.
- Bring binoculars, field guides, snacks, sunscreen and hats.
- Beginners welcome. Binoculars available for those who need them.

More information:
Contact Charlotte Kisling
(530) 397-2770
kiss@cot.net

Local Membership Renewals Are Due

Most of you belong to the National Audubon Society, which automatically enrolled you as a member of Rogue Valley Audubon Society. Some of you prefer to only be members of RVAS, your local Audubon chapter. If you have a local membership, that membership expired on September 30th. This is true for all local Members except those who joined within the last six months.

Please keep your membership and your support of RVAS active, by completing the application below, and mailing it with your check for \$20. If you are uncertain of your membership status, or have any questions about membership, please send an e-mail to: bh@ashlandnet.net, or call Bill Hering at 541-488-5886, or Stan McIntosh at 541-535-2053. Thanks very much!

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.

ROGUE VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

THE CHAT

Newsletter of the ROGUE VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

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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 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.

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 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.

