

The Chat

Number 373
October 2010

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, October 26th 7:00 pm

Malheur: Part of Teddy Roosevelt's Priceless Gift to Oregon birders Presented by Harry Fuller

From nesting Trumpeter Swans to dancing Sage Grouse, from Oregon's western most Bobolinks to swarms of Common Nighthawks at mid-day, birding Malheur can be a great Spring adventure. We'll hear about the changes through the spring season and the places to find the birds. There will be flooded fields with hundreds of avocets and stilts, swans and geese. Later on, different flooded fields will have singing male Bobolinks and soaring Common Nighthawks. Harry will show photographs to prove it's all true.



President's Column

Alex Maksymowicz

Welcome back for another great season of field trips, programs, and other birding activities. I was very happy to see so many of you show up for the September chapter meeting at our new meeting location, the Westminster Presbyterian Church in Medford. We will continue to meet at the Westminster Presbyterian Church in October and November. Our annual holiday party and potluck will also take place at the Westminster Presbyterian Church—which is where it was held last year—on December 14.

As I keep reminding you in each of my columns, RVAS is a strictly volunteer organization and can only deliver services to its members and the surrounding communities if members are willing to volunteer. Fortunately, many of you do so, sometimes over and over again. The most recent are Kathy Simonsen and Shelley
(Continued on page 2)

Please Note!

We are now meeting in a new location

Westminster Presbyterian Church,
2000 Oakwood Drive, Medford

Are you a "local member" of RVAS? If so, you need to renew soon. See page 9 for details

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(Continued from page 1)

Tanquary, who were elected to Board membership at the September chapter meeting. Kathy takes over as treasurer from Mary Sinclair, who continues to serve on the Board and to act as our webmaster. Shelley fills the position of secretary vacated by Gaylene Hurley who left the Board at the end of June. And Sue Polich, who also served on the Board through June of this year, has volunteered to monitor RVAS e-mail messages, which had been backed up unread for a few months.

In a similar vein, kudos to Murray Orr for stepping forward to keep the First Wednesday bird walks going. More on this elsewhere in this newsletter.

Membership chair Bill Hering reminded us at the September chapter meeting that some time ago the Board adopted a new policy to synchronize the renewal of local memberships on September 30 of each year. Although the policy had been announced in several earlier issues of The Chat, I must confess that I too had forgotten about it till I heard Bill speak. But I am proud to say that I did manage to get my renewal in the mail on the September 30 deadline. To those local members who have not yet renewed, I challenge you to do the same. Details regarding who is a "local" member and how the renewal process works—but not on the intricacies of time travel—are spelled out in a separate article in this newsletter.

And finally, a reminder to check and contribute to the Rogue Valley Birders message board (<http://groups.google.com/group/rv-birds/>). It's a great way to keep track of and share bird sightings, migratory activity, and other birding news in our area.



Field Notes: The Changing Seasons

Compiled by Stewart Janes

August and September are a time of transition. The beginning of August provides us with the last vestiges of spring. A few of our summer birds continue to sing if only briefly and then only early in the morning. Dependent young are trailing after harried parents hoping for one more free meal before having to fend for themselves.

The summer birds begin to disappear in stages. First it is the male **Bullock's Orioles** and **Rufous Hummingbirds**. Then the **Western Kingbirds**, **Ash-throated Flycatchers**, and **Cliff Swallows** slip away. By late August the trickle of departures becomes a flood. Our forests already quiet begin to take on the silence of winter. There is a bit of a gap between the loss of most of the summer birds and the arrival of the winter visitors that frequent our feeders, but it is brief.

Not only are the birds of forest and garden in transition, but others as well. Shorebirds are streaming out of the Arctic. Other waterbirds, such as terns and grebes, are moving as well. The geese and ducks will follow later. Raptors, too, lag behind.

This year is no different. Several observers noted the typical flocks of forest migrants at the higher elevations beginning in late August and continuing through mid-September consisting of **Townsend's Warblers**, **Hermit Warblers**, **Black-throated Gray Warblers**, **Orange-crowned Warblers**, **Nashville Warblers**, **Wilson's Warblers**, **MacGillivray's Warblers**, **Cassin's Vireos** and others (PT,FL,SJ).

Some last reports for summer birds include:

Swainson's Thrush	8/19	SJ
Cliff Swallow	8/22	JB,SB
House Wren	8/23	SJ
Lazuli Bunting	9/6	MM,LM
Black-headed Grosbeak	9/10	LN
Yellow-breasted Chat	8/23, 9/8	EL,HS
Olive-sided Flycatcher	9/8	DA
Rufous Hummingbird	9/9	SJ
Western Wood Pewee	9/11	LN

The last week of August and first week of September brought the peak of shorebird migration, such as it is in Jackson County.

Some of the more noteworthy sightings include a **Baird's Sandpiper** at Emigrant Lake on 8/27 (DA), a **Semipalmated**

Sandpiper at Agate Lake on 8/30 (GR), and a **Sanderling** at Emigrant Lake on 9/1 (DA). These birds were accompanied by a scattering of **Pectoral Sandpipers**, **Red-necked Phalaropes**, **Long-billed Dowitchers**, **Greater Yellowlegs**, **Semipalmated Plovers**, **Western and Least Sandpipers**.

Other waterbird sightings include Western Grebes at Agate Lake and Emigrant Lake on 8/24 and 9/12 (MM,LM,FE), **American White Pelicans** at Willow Lake on 8/24 (MM,LM), **Caspian Terns** at Emigrant Lake on 9/12 (FE), **Forster's Terns** at Howard Prairie on 8/31 (JB,SB), an unusual **Snowy Egret** at the Avenue G pond on 8/22 (NB), and a **Black-crowned Night Heron** on Mingus Pond on 8/30 (KT).

Although the major movement of waterfowl is ahead, the first ducks have been noted. A flock of 20 **American Wigeon** and a few **Northern Pintail** were at Willow Lake on 8/24 (MM,LM). **Hooded Mergansers** were observed at Agate Lake on 9/13 (JT).

Migrant **Lewis's Woodpeckers** were first noted in late August with sightings becoming more numerous in mid-September (FE,LM,PT,JT,SJ).

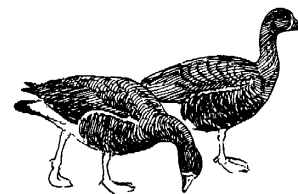
An early **Golden-crowned Sparrow** was seen at Emigrant Lake on 9/1 (DA). I expect the major influx in the third week of the month.

Few raptor sightings were reported though that should change next month. An early **Merlin** was seen on 9/15 in Ashland (FE). **Great Gray Owls** were observed in 9/3 and 9/11 in the vicinity of Hyatt Lake (RK).

Pine Siskins appeared in the valley on 9/15 (FE) and may signal a winter of high numbers after many years of relatively scarce sightings.

Other sightings of note include a **Rock Wren** at Emigrant Lake on 9/12 (FE), a **Common Nighthawk** at Eagle Point on 9/1 (HS), and **Red Crossbills** at Rye Springs on 9/5 (OS).

Thanks to this month's contributors including Dick Ashford, Norm Barrett, John Bullock, Stephanie Bullock, Forrest English, Ron Ketchum, Frank Lospalluto, Edith Lindner, Lisa Moore, Liz Northrup, Gwyneth Ragsone, Maggi Rackley, Howard Sands, Otis Swisher, Keiko Thurston, Pepper Trail, and Jeff Tufts. Deadline for contributions to the Field Notes in next month's edition of The Chat is October 15.



The Conservation Column

By Pepper Trail

It's that time again...election time. While it's easy to be disillusioned with politics these days, it has never been more important to get the facts, and VOTE. Huge amounts of money are being poured into campaigns, much of it by those whose agenda does not include protecting the environment. By examining the statements and records of candidates, we can learn a great deal about what we can expect if they are elected.

Among the most significant local races are for Jackson County Commissioner. Here, Jeff Golden and Don Skundrick are running for the seat formerly occupied by Jack Walker, and Mark Wisnovsky and John Rachor are competing for the seat formerly held by Dave Gilmour. To move our county forward, we need a Board of Commissioners who will work for local solutions to our economic problems, promoting green jobs, local agriculture, and a sustainable economy. I urge you to visit the websites of all four candidates, and look to see which candidates are talking about sustainability and locally-grown jobs, or which are putting the emphasis on growth and property rights.

Jackson County Commissioner, Position 1:

Jeff Golden: <http://www.goldenforjacksoncounty.org/>

Don Skundrick: <http://www.electdonnow.com/>

Jackson County Commissioner, Position 3:

Mark Wisnovsky: <http://www.markforcommissioner.com/>

John Rachor: <http://votejohnrachor.com/>

Measure 76:

Another important environmental issue on the November Ballot is Measure 76, which would continue the present dedication of 15% of state lottery funds to parks and natural resources. The following summary information is from the "Yes on 76" Website (<http://www.waterparkswildlife.org/>):

Measure 76 CONTINUES Oregon's only dedicated source of funding for the protection of our clean water, safe and accessible state and local parks, and our wildlife habitat. Measure 76 builds on the incredible success of its predecessor, Measure 66, which passed in 1998 by an overwhelming 2/3 of the vote.

Twelve years ago, Measure 66 created a brand new program that dedicated 15% of lottery funds to parks and natural resources. The way that it works is simple- half goes to the Oregon State Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) and half goes to the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB). That 15% roughly equals about \$100 million a year, so about \$50 million to State Parks and \$50 million to OWEB.

Measure 76 and our Parks:

Measure 76 will continue an amazing track record. OPRD has used that funding to:

make our state parks safer, more accessible and educational.

create new state parks and natural areas, like Stub Stewart State Park- the first state park to open in 30 years, Clay Myers State Natural Area at Whalen Island and Arizona Beach State Recreation Site, just to name a few

create a Local Government Grant Program, allowing cities and counties throughout Oregon to improve existing neighborhood and community parks, as well as build new playgrounds and athletic facilities.

Protect and maintain Oregon's 362-mile ocean shoreline as a public recreation area for all of us.

Measure 76 at work protecting our water and natural areas:

Measure 76 will continue the astonishing success that OWEB has had in protecting our water and natural resources. This funding has been used to:

provide grants to 95 Watershed Councils and 45 Soil and Water Conservation Districts, community organizations, non-profits and landowners in every county in Oregon to protect our local streams, rivers, wetlands and natural areas. Examples include a 2009 project to restore the bends in the Willowa River along a working family ranch and eradicate invasive species in the Johnson Creek Watershed.

provide grants to acquire Oregon's natural areas and critical wildlife habitat, like the 1,170 acres Table Rocks property in Southwestern Oregon and the Camp Polk Meadow in Central Oregon that will restore Wychus Creek

provide grants to restore 3,000 miles of streams and rivers throughout Oregon since 1998.

What about the "parks vs. education" argument?

(Continued on page 5)

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There's been a lot of talk in this campaign about Measure 76 taking money away from education... a "forced choice" that voters will have to make. That is simply not true. Measure 76 actually **STRENGTHENS** our education system by providing fields for school athletic teams, outdoor science and math education, and protecting Oregon's history for all to visit and learn. And by simply continuing an existing dedicated fund, approved in 1998, it doesn't take a dime away from the classroom.

You see, Measure 76 incorporates the best of what we need to do for our kids:

Protecting our clean water: ensuring that our children are protected from pollutants in our water supply.

Preserving our natural areas, our wildlife habitats and our beaches: providing our kids with the best outdoor classrooms in the world, and teaching them what it means to be an Oregonian and the pride that comes with it.

Improving and creating parks and athletic fields: allowing our kids to have access to safe and healthy recreation, teaching them the values of competition and teamwork, while still reminding them that it's ok to have some fun.

Providing hands-on outdoor education programs: enriching their schoolwork with natural experiences. Overwhelming data shows that spending time in nature can be as effective as medication when it comes to preparing our kids to learn in the classroom.

Oregon State Races

Finally, I note that the following endorsements have been made by the Oregon League of Conservation Voters in Oregon state races (<http://olcv.org/elections-endorsements>):

Oregon Governor: John Kitzhaber

State Treasurer: Ted Wheeler

Senate District 3 – Alan Bates

House District 5 – Peter Buckley

House District 6 – Lynn Howe

How you vote is, of course, up to you. But if you care about our environment, please, get the facts, and DO cast your vote.

Education Committee update

The committee met in September and the idea was put forward to try and have some kind of Scholarship opportunity for school age children. We decided that RVAS should offer some kind education to under served Elementary Schools in some way. How was the question?


It was suggested that KBO offers an excellent program called Songbirds, Science and Schools – a one hr. visit from KBO staff featuring a hands-on engaging lesson about birds. The lesson is aligned to meet 5th grade science curriculum standards. The program would possibly include a field trip around the school, using the students new knowledge finding birds with binoculars.

As chairman, I worked with KBO on a fee schedule. I said we would offer this program to Patrick Elementary, Gold Hill; Sams Valley Elementary; and Eagle Rock Elementary in Eagle Point. We have enough money to offer two classes this year. It will be a first come first served opportunity.

Fellow committee member Sally Peterson and I drove to each school to present this great opportunity, explain the lesson plan and even showed them a "bird skin" (a preserved White Crowned Sparrow). The reception by the schools was very positive and we are waiting for each school to contact KBO to schedule a date.

If this program is successful, we are hoping to make it a yearly opportunity for the County's underserved elementary schools to increase their awareness of birds and conservation.

Lynda Stevenson



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Mountain Lakes Field Trip Report

About a dozen local birders met at the Shop N Kart parking lot early the morning of September 11 for a field trip to the mountain lakes on the Dead Indian Plateau. The trip was led by Ron Ketchum, ably assisted by Murray Orr.

As Ron gave a brief introductory talk before leaving for the field, he mentioned that Murray and he had seen a Great Gray Owl in their scouting trip, but not to expect a sighting on this trip, although a try would be made. This try was made about two miles up the Little Hyatt Lake Road, near the site of an old nesting site. After playing the call a couple of times, an answer was heard and a few minutes later a Great Gray Owl flew across the road ahead of the group. Ron, who was doing the calling, has to admit that he did not see it, but about half of the group did, and it was a lifer for at least one. This kind of luck doesn't happen every trip, which is why birding is fun, there is always something unexpected just around the corner.



Stops were made at the point above, at the meadow with several houses below Little Hyatt Lake, the crossing of Keene Creek, Little Hyatt Lake, Hyatt Lake Campground, Hyatt Lake Viewpoints, and at a point (found by John Bullock) that overlooks the northwestern portion of Howard Prairie Lake.

The species list totaled 53 and included Great Gray Owl, Mountain Quail, American Pipit, four warbler species, seven woodpecker species, and Red-shouldered Hawk. Missing were duck species, as we were just a few weeks early to catch incoming migrants.

Ron Ketchum

RVAS at SOPTV

If you were watching the Southern Oregon Public Television program on hummingbirds September 19th, you may have recognized six members of the Rogue Valley Audubon Society busy answering phones and taking membership pledges.

It was one more way for RVAS to support the community. Thanks to Sally and George Peterson, Kate Siple, Kathy Simonsen, and Bill and Suzanne Hering for their willingness to give up a Sunday evening for RVAS.

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Board Profiles



Kathy Simonsen is our new Treasurer, She was born and raised in the San Francisco Bay Area but she and her husband Tim have lived in Ashland for 27 years. They raised their three children here and now have 5 (soon to be 6) grandchildren. She retired from her job as a medical technologist two years ago. She and Tim first became interested in birding while camping at Hyatt Lake in 2009 when they spotted and photographed a Western Tanager as they hiked the Pacific Crest Trail. Kathy says "We began to participate in local bird walks and everyone from RVAS has been very helpful in teaching me about birds and making me feel welcome as a beginning birder. I am excited to learn more and am looking forward to serving as RVAS Treasurer

Shelley Tanquary, our new Secretary, writes

I moved from Southern California to the Rogue Valley in 1970 and am retired from the Southern Oregon ESD where I worked as a school speech pathologist, mostly in the Ashland School District. Quite a few years back I took some botany and zoology classes, including a class on birds, from the College in Ashland. After that class I was hooked.

I've been interested in the amazing feathered creatures ever since and enjoy birding whenever I can.

This last year I have gone on some of the Audubon bird walks. It's great to learn from the expert birders who lead them. I look forward to working with the local chapter as secretary.

Maggi Rackley

My ancestors came to the Rogue Valley in the 1880s All of them enjoyed nature and the birds in some way. I am sure my birding has some thing to do with genetics. I have always wondered "what bird is that" for as long as I can remember but 10 or so years ago three great guys, Clint Brumitt, Denny Niebuhr and Jim Harleman, showed me how to identify birds and some local birding spots such as Kirkland Ponds and Agate Lake. That got me started and I have been enjoying birding and birders ever since. My husband Clint is my spotter and enjoys a trip now and then with me. He is great at spotting but I still can't convince him that Sandhill Cranes are not "Sidehill Gouggers". I work at Crater High School in the athletic department and am looking forward to retirement someday so I can do more birding trips and photography.



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Field Trips 2010/2011

October 9 - Talent Section of Bear Creek Trail - Dennis Vroman

November 6 - Tou velle State Park - Edith Lindner

January 8 - Ashland Creek Dipper Walk - Bob Quaccia

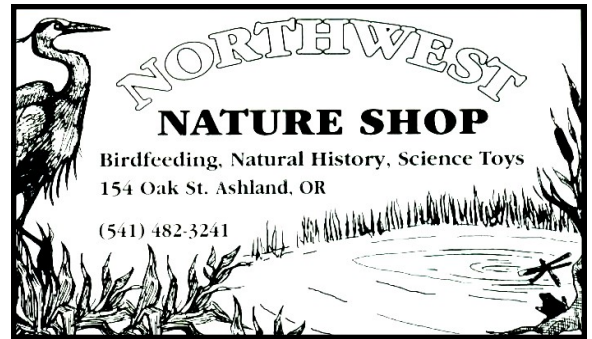
February 19 - Klamath Basin - Gwyneth Ragsine and Jim Harleman(limit of 20 people) -

March 19 Location TBA - Harry Fuller

April 23 - Spring Migrants – Vince Zauskey Location TBA

May 14 - Overnighter - Ron Ketchum (North Coast, probably based in Lincoln City)

June 11 - Still need a volunteer, please contact Ron Ketchum, 541-944-3072 or rketchum@charter.net



Bird Walks

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

Leader: Murray Orr 857-9050

Third Sunday Each Month: Ashland Section of Bear Creek Greenway

Directions: Meet at the Ashland Dog Park, north end of Helman Street. Start out at 8:00 a.m. Wind up around noon. The walk is along the level paved trail that follows Ashland Creek and then Bear Creek. Beginners welcome!

Leader: Jeff Tufts 227-8465

Saturday, October 30. Jefferson Nature Center. Meet in the JNC Parking lot at 8:00 am

Leader Jeff Tanner 646-8095

CHECK OUR WEBSITE FOR UPDATED INFORMATION ON THESE WALKS

Local Membership Renewals Are Soon Due

Did you know that RVAS has over 600 members? Most of these have joined the National Audubon Society, and thus are enrolled as members of Rogue Valley Audubon as well. This national /local partnership is true across Audubon societies on every state. Some of you prefer to be members only of their local Audubon chapter. These are considered "local members". If you are a "local member", and have been a member since last January, your membership expired as of September 30th.

Please keep your membership and your support of RVAS, active, by completing the application below, and mailing it with your check ASAP. If you are unsure 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.

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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Field Trips

Saturday, October 9,

Bear Creek Greenway starting at Talent.

We will begin at 8:00 am from the parking area just off I-5 exit 24 at Talent. Walk will proceed along the trail in the direction of Ashland. We will backtrack to the parking area, arriving back about noon to 1:00 pm. . For Medford area participants, we will carpool at the Jefferson Nature Center, please arrive there by 7:00 am. Leader: Dennis Vroman at (541) 479-4619 or dpvroman@budget.net

Saturday, November 6.

Touville State Park and Denman Wildlife Area

Meet at Medford Food-for-Less (south side behind the hotel) at 8:00 am There is a \$3 per car entrance fee to the park unless you have a Jackson County Parks Pass.

Easy walking . Over by noon Bring snack and drinks
Leaders Edith Lindner 773-7580 and Keiko Thurston 664-3779

Calendar

October 9 - Field trip, Talent Section of Bear Creek Trail

October 17 - Bird walk Ashland Greenway

October 26 - Chapter Meeting, Harry Fuller

October 30 - Bird walk at Jefferson Nature Center, Jeff Tanner

November 23 Chapter Meeting Dan Elster

December 14- Holiday Party and Potluck, Westminster Presbyterian Church

December 18 - Medford Christmas Bird Count

December 29 Ashland Christmas Bird Count