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Rogue Valley Audubon Society  
[www.roguevalleyaudubon.org](http://www.roguevalleyaudubon.org)

*Deadline for the September 2022 issue is August 20*



## Letter From the Board

### 2021-22 Recap

It has been an interesting first year as your president! We had set some hopeful goals last summer, and unfortunately, COVID-19 kept us from achieving some of them (again). The Board met at the beginning of June to set new goals for 2022-23. Here is a recap of last year's goals and how we fared:

1. **Continue support of Hedrick Middle School chimney: ON HOLD.** Communication with Medford School District was quiet this year. Covid protocols and opening a new middle school have kept the district busy. We did our Fall migration counts last August-September, and again this April-May. I have communicated with the Superintendent again to make sure that we are still on the radar for the chimney retrofit.
2. **Partner with Southern Oregon University to make it an official Audubon "Bird Campus": TABLED.** Students not fully being back on campus this year made it difficult to establish a dedicated group. We are hopeful that next year will be different.
3. **Get an "official" logo for our chapter: SUCCESS!** Our logo has been created and Board approved, and now we are awaiting the final version. I can say that you will be extremely proud to don this logo on a t-shirt, sweatshirt, cap, water bottle, or any other piece of merchandise and show your support for RVAS. The design has been graciously donated to us by local artist and bird lover extraordinaire, Erin Linton.
4. **Expand Project FeederWatch to a Title 1-A school: TABLED.** Once again, schools were understandably not eager to take on additional projects during this school year. We will try again next year.
5. **Reinstate outreach: SUCCESS!** With events opening back up, we were back out and about during May. Board members Jaime Trammell and George Peterson manned a table at SOU's Earth Day event, and Carol Mockridge helped out with North Mountain Park's Rogue Valley Bird Day (in celebration of International Migratory Bird Day). I was able to do four in-class visits to Central Point's Mae Richardson Elementary School 3rd graders, teaching the students about basic bird identification and common local birds. Lynn Kellogg guided a 3rd grade class, from Patrick Elementary School in Gold Hill, on a trek through TouVelle State Park. Also, in September of 2021, I did an outreach event at a local retirement community, teaching the residents about local birds and migration. We are always looking for more volunteers to talk about RVAS at events like these so please let any board member know if you would like to participate!

Erin Ulrich  
RVAS President

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Chapter Program meetings are held on the fourth Tuesday of the month, September through April, at 7:00 pm. Meetings take place at 1801 E. Jackson St., Medford, in Lidgate Hall of the Medford Congregational Church of Christ.

**NOTE:** If deemed unsafe for gathering, chapter meetings will be held on Zoom.

## Vaux's Swifts Spring Migration Highlights

By Erin Ulrich

Wow, did we have some incredible nights at Hedrick Middle School for the northbound migration of Vaux's Swifts! Our highest numbers occurred from April 29 through May 5:

April 29	3,380
April 30	10,365
May 1	7,200
May 2	130
May 3	11,030
May 4	1,140
May 5	2,073

That's over 24,000 swifts in one week, folks! Now, imagine the numbers of birds coming back down south with their offspring. Fall migration should have huge numbers if they take the same route back home. That being said, we are still in need of volunteers to help us out. Even if you can spare ONE evening during mid-August through September it will be so helpful. Please let me know if you are interested (eulrich44@gmail.com or 408-499-0315).

Tremendous thanks to all who volunteered their time to count this Spring.



Superstar swift counter Kathy Blackshear shows off her incredible estimate of over 10,000 swifts on one of this spring's record-setting nights. Credit: Carol Mockridge

## Status of upcoming events

Field trips: Denman Bird Walk is back! August 3

## Purple Martin Update

By Jon Deason

I was looking forward (without much hope) to another year of gourds at the Rogue River Preserve. Thanks to a group that got together, we have a new direction. Juliet Grable, Frank Lospalluto, Kristi Mergenthaler, and Pepper Trail reviewed the success of several projects using wooden nesting boxes for Purple Martins. They put me in touch with Joan Hagar and Joe Metzler, who had done a successful nest box project at Fern Ridge Reservoir (west of Eugene, OR) along with Oregon Fish & Wildlife and US Army Corps of Engineers.

Joan Hagar provided us with three nesting boxes, and Joe Metzler much information for their use.

I installed the boxes in two locations chosen by Kristi. One near our gourds and two where the creek enters the riparian area. There is no action, so far, but there is new hope.

The pair of Purple Martins are raising their young at the pole and we hope they are checking out the boxes for when they come back next year.



Purple Martin at Fern Ridge nest box  
Courtesy: US Army Corps

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## Trip Report: RVAS Oregon Vesper Sparrow Survey @ Vesper Meadow

By Jeanine Moy



Oregon Vesper Sparrow  
Credit: Nick Viani

On Thursday June 9th, a crew of about 10 folks met up at Vesper Meadow Restoration Preserve for an exploration of the newly acquired portion of the Preserve, a mix of upland wet meadows, conifer forests, and open shrub-steppe hillslopes in the heart of the Cascade-Siskiyou region. It is known habitat for the rare and imperiled Oregon Vesper Sparrow, but formal surveys had not yet been conducted. Participants focused on locating, counting, and noting breeding behaviors of Vesper Sparrows to further the Vesper Meadow Restoration Preserve's ongoing research collaboration with the Klamath Bird Observatory. One new Vesper Sparrow nest was found, and the group had a magical encounter with an elk. Learn more about Vesper Meadow by visiting [www.vespermeadow.org](http://www.vespermeadow.org).

## Rogue Valley Bird Day is Back!

After a 2-year hiatus, the amazing staff at North Mountain Park were pleased to bring back this local celebration of World Migratory Bird Day on May 14, 2022. Community members "flocked" to the park for bird walks, kid's activities, live birds, contests, prizes, and more. Attendees also learned about light pollution; the message to "dim the lights for birds at night"; and the steps that individuals, communities, and governments can take to reduce the impact of light pollution on our shared birds.

As was customary pre-Covid, RVAS again this year donated many of the awesome items at the prize table!





## Field Notes for Jackson County

### May 2022

By Frank Lospalluto

The last few weeks have been a delight for local birders. The stormy and blustery days that brought snow to higher elevations forced many northbound migrants down into the valley and caused some to linger.

Two tardy **Common Goldeneyes** were observed on the Rogue River outside of Gold Hill May 22 (TS). Two **Red-breasted Mergansers** were below the fish hatchery at Lost Creek Lake May 8 (JK). A lone **Red-necked Grebe** was out on Agate Reservoir May 13 (GS, JK, JL, NB).

A single **White-throated Swift** was circling with a flock of Vaux's Swifts above the Savannah Loop Trail at Lower Table Rock May 3 (KBO crew).

A couple of recent reports of **Black-chinned Hummingbirds**; one was visiting a feeder at a home in Ashland May 5 (RT) and another was spotted in Lynn Newbry May 11 (CJ).



The stormy days brought in a nice mix of shorebirds to our area. A trickle of **Black-bellied Plovers** at the Kirtland Rd. Ponds continued into the second week of May. A single **Whimbrel** was at Kirtland Rd. Ponds May 10 (RK). Two Whimbrel were found at Agate Lake May 11 (HS, JL, GS, JK). A single **Long-billed Curlew** was heard calling and then seen flying over the Denman Ave G ponds May 8 (RA, SP). On May 2 Howard Sands



found a **RED KNOT** at the Kirtland Rd. ponds. This is the eighth record for the county and had not been seen here since the late 1980's. More commonly found during fall migration, two **Baird's Sandpipers** were reported from Kirtland Rd. Ponds April 30 (AR). Six **Pectoral Sandpipers** were reported May 10 at Kirtland by two visiting birders. One or three **Short-billed Dowitchers** were observed at Kirtland May 1 (JL, TM, JK, GS, HS). And a single was at Denman Ave G. May 6 (GS, HS). Three and fifty **Red-necked Phalarope** were spinning on the sewage lagoons at Kirtland Ponds (NB, GS). Red-necked Phalaropes were scattered across many ponds and lakes through the past month. **Wilson's Phalaropes** have also been reported at some of the same locations albeit in single digits.

A beautiful adult **SABINE'S GULL** spent a few short hours at Kirtland Rd. Ponds May 6 (NB, HS, JK, JL, GS).

Three **White-faced Ibis** were at Kirtland May 22 (GS, JL) and one was at Ave G ponds the following day May 23 (JK, HS).

And then all the songbird arrivals which are too many and this writer does not have enough time or energy. And besides you are all out birding anyway....

Thanks to all the observers including:  
Sammie Peat, Rene Allen, Gary Shaffer, Janet Kelly, Jim Livaudais, Norm Barrett, Bob Hunter, Brian Barr, Jim Hostick, Tom McEntee, Tanner Martin, Kate McKenzie, Shannon Rio, Nate Trimble, Kristi Mergenthaler, Anne Goff, Leslie Hart, Pepper Trail, Barry Harris, Dick Ashford, Vince Zauskey, Marion Hadden, Timothy Sorby, Amanda Alford, Andres Carvalhaes, Jonathan Pope, Ashley Rappleyea, Dave Garcia, Roxanna Tessmann, and Clint Jones.

All errors and omissions are my own. Peace.

## BIRDCENTRIC EVENTS FROM AROUND THE REGION

### **RVAS**

#### **First Wednesday Bird Walks: August 3**

Join RVAS for our monthly outing to Denman Wildlife Area. Walks begin at 8:30 am and end before noon, and are led by Jim Hostick. The gate will be open from 8:00 - 8:20 am. Participants need to purchase an ODFW Area Parking Permit at the ODFW Office, Sportsman's Warehouse on Delta Waters and Highway 62 in Medford, or at Bi-Mart. We request that all participants be vaccinated for COVID-19.

Directions to meeting spot: We will meet at the entrance off Agate Rd. between 1/4 and 1/2 mile past the fire station on the left side of the road. Coming out Table Rock Rd., turn right on Antelope Rd. and go to the light on Agate Rd. and turn left. The fire station will be on your left at the corner of Ave. G and Agate Rd. Go 1/4 to 1/2 mile past the fire station and the gate will be on your left. Coming out on Highway 62 to Antelope Rd., turn left and go to the next light. Turn right and continue to the gate on Agate Rd.

### **Wild Birds Unlimited**

#### **Fish Lake Walk**

WBU will be hosting a bird walk along Forest Rd. 37 and Fish Lake in higher elevation this month to get out of the summer heat. What will be seen this year??? Limited to 9 participants. Bring binoculars, water and any desired snacks. Call the store at (541) 772-2107 or come in to register and get directions on where to meet, etc.

DATES: Wednesday, July 20 (led by Erin Linton)

TIME: 9:00 am

COST: Free

### **Klamath Bird Observatory**

#### **Bird Banding at Crater Lake National Park**

In partnership with the National Park Service, KBO is hosting visitors at our Crater Lake National Park bird banding station on Tuesday mornings through the first week of October. Trained biologists and an experienced park ranger will show you the bird banding and data collection procedures, including how a bird species is identified along with its weight, sex, identity, wing molt, age, and health. Nowhere else in Oregon is there a banding site at this elevation and habitat, providing a valuable visitor experience and research opportunity!

This is an amazing opportunity for the whole family to see migratory songbirds up close and learn about our long-term bird banding program. For five years, visitors have observed the banding process from which Crater Lake National Park and KBO gain valuable information about the presence and diversity of songbird species, timing of migration, and productivity of local breeding birds.

**Registration is required.** To register and for all important information about this program, visit <https://www.nps.gov/crla/planyourvisit/bird-banding.htm>.

DATES: Every Tuesday morning from July through October 4, rain or shine

TIME: Variable, see website above for details

COST: Free

### **Vesper Meadow Restoration Preserve**

#### **Walk, Weed, and Seed**

Join us for our plant-stewardship walks, enjoying the intersection of recreation and restoration. Collect seeds that will serve both pollinators and our efforts in partnership with the Indigenous Gardens Network, a Tribally-led partnership. You will help to restore areas that also serve as demonstration plots for educational events with youth and adult land stewards. For more information and links to a map of our location, visit <https://www.vespermeadow.org/new-events>.

DATES & TIMES: Sat. July 23, 10:00 am to 2:00 pm

Weds. Aug 3, 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm

COST: Free



**Banding station in action**  
Courtesy: USNPS



## Remembering Barbara Weinberg Massey, 1923-2022

By Sooney Viani

Barbara Massey, a remarkable woman of 98 years and friend of many (especially the birds), died on May 7 in Ashland. Her obituary in the Mail Tribune is an informative read on her life before Ashland: <https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/mailtribune/name/barbara-massey-obituary?id=34692757>.

Within a year of Barbara and Eric's move to Ashland in 1998, and while she continued to engage herself in art, music and literature, she also flew into the world of birds! In 1999, she and others collected data that became her third book, *Guide to Birds of the Rogue Valley*, co-authored with Dennis Vroman and published in 2003.

Monthly bird monitoring at North Mountain Park continues today, thanks to Barbara's inspiration and with the help of Vince Zauskey, Bob Quaccia, Nala Cardillo, and me. The results of data analyses were summarized by Barbara and Brandon Breen in *The Birds of North Mountain Park*: <https://www.ashland.or.us/Files/2017%20Report%20of%20Birds%20at%20NMP.pdf>.

I was introduced to Barbara's watercolor artwork at the Ashland library's exhibit, *Shifting Patterns: Preparing for Unsettled Days*. Her contribution, *Climate Change and the Birds of the Rogue Valley*, can be seen at [http://static1.1.sqspcdn.com/static/f/551504/14168392/1316112561700/shifting\\_patterns\\_rogue\\_response+lr.pdf?token=wmog9pjpnllssu0f1wtkj6qg4dy%3d](http://static1.1.sqspcdn.com/static/f/551504/14168392/1316112561700/shifting_patterns_rogue_response+lr.pdf?token=wmog9pjpnllssu0f1wtkj6qg4dy%3d).



Barbara, always the data collector, began informal monthly Klamath Basin bird surveys in 2013 that provided Terence Philippe, Brandon Breen, and me delightful birding opportunities and friendship as we followed the same route each visit. Barbara enjoyed short stints behind the wheel on some of the unpaved roads within the refuge.

Barbara fancied a Summer Lake and Malheur trip and, in 2017, Nick, Becky Snow, and I were her wheels and birding buddies. She was clear about not needing help on uneven surfaces, although she didn't mind help sighting the Bobolink.

Our time together in the ensuing years consisted of visits at her mosaic studio that Terrance helped create from a storage shed. These visits were short and sweet, because her time was limited and she was intent on completing her bird, flower, and *Baby Animals of the Sea* projects.

We birded and talked as I joined her on several walks around her neighborhood, or making our way around the Ashland Pond and lingering on the bench dedicated to Gwyneth Ragosine (installed thanks to Barbara and RV Audubon).

As our birding outings became less frequent, Barbara and I regularly visited the Tuesday Market to get scones and have coffee together before returning to her residence at Maple Ridge.

My last visit with Barbara was at her bedside, and she lamented about not being in control of her life and not knowing what to do about it. I encouraged her not to worry, to let us love her, and to relish the memories of a life well lived. With a determined voice, she said, "I'll have to think about that," and dozed off with a smile on her face. I sat for a spell thinking of the ways she enriched my life, and my parting gift was a kiss on her warm soft cheek.



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Shared by board member Jon Deason, we thought this text conversation with his granddaughter perfectly captures bird appreciation in the times of Covid :-)



  
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Newsletter of the  
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