

A voice for education and conservation in the natural world
Rogue Valley Audubon Society
www.roguevalleyaudubon.org

Deadline for the October 2022 issue is September 20



September Virtual Program

Tuesday, Sept. 27, 2022 at 7:00 pm

Uncovering the Secrets of the Oregon Vesper Sparrow

Oregon Vesper Sparrows are a prime example of what birders call “little brown jobs” – small, drab, hard-to-identify birds that we sometimes overlook. But this little brown job is an imperiled subspecies unique to the Pacific Northwest, one that serves as an indicator of the health of our grassland ecosystems, and needs our attention and protection. With its populations small and declining, the Oregon Vesper Sparrow has recently been petitioned for listing under the Endangered Species Act. Klamath Bird Observatory is undertaking a multi-year, full life cycle study to help determine the causes of its decline – always a challenge for a migratory bird that can be impacted by events on their breeding, migratory stop-over, or overwintering grounds.



Credit: Jim Livaudais

However, new technologies such as miniaturized GPS tags and the Motus Wildlife Tracking System are starting to uncover the secrets of where these birds go when they're away from our study sites. Dr. Sarah Rockwell will share some recent research on this unique at-risk subspecies, including what we've learned from detailed nesting studies and new migration tracking technology.

About the Speaker

Dr. Rockwell is a Research Biologist at Klamath Bird Observatory based in Ashland. She joined KBO in 2013 after completing her doctorate at the University of Maryland and Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center, where she studied the ecology of the then-endangered Kirtland's Warbler in her home state of Michigan. She currently studies avian response to habitat restoration to improve conservation and land management. She also leads research on specific imperiled species, including Oregon Vesper Sparrow and Western Purple Martin. She lives in Ashland with her husband and daughter.

Zoom instructions: If you haven't registered for RVAS virtual events, you will need to do so. Once registered, you will receive a link with the virtual address for the meeting.

Click on this link to register: <https://www.roguevalleyaudubon.org/zoom-signup/>

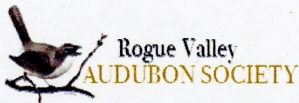
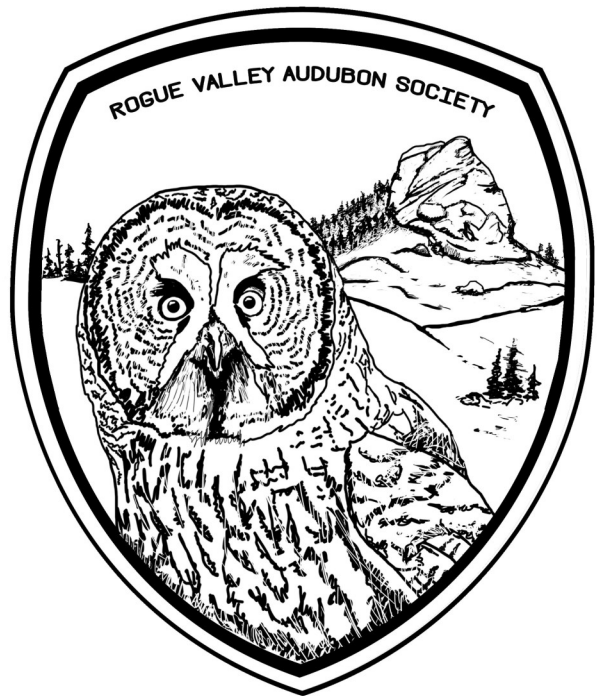
Drumroll Please....Our New Logo is Here!!

One of the Board's main goals last year was to create a logo for Rogue Valley Audubon Society. I am happy to report that after several iterations, we have a logo that we all love! It was created by local artist, wildlife rehabber, and bird lover Erin Linton. It really ties together some of the best of the Rogue Valley, including Pilot Rock and its environs, and the Great Gray Owl which is very special to our region. Erin very generously donated her time and talents for our logo.

A logo will allow us to procure and sell merchandise to our membership, and any other interested party, which will raise awareness of our organization in the community. We will be identifiable at public events, leading bird walks, or participating in other Audubon activities with other Audubon organizations. I, personally, am really excited for us to have an identity now. Don't worry, the adorable chat that graces our monthly newsletter isn't going anywhere. It will stay in its place.

If you have any comments, we would love to hear them. Please send them along to me and I will share them with the rest of the Board.

Erin Ulrich, RVAS President



Rogue Valley Audubon Membership Application

Mail check to: Rogue Valley Audubon, P. O.Box 8597, Medford, OR 97501 or join online at www.roguevalleyaudubon.org using PayPal. Welcome to the flock. We are a dedicated group.

____ \$20 Regular membership ____ \$25 for paper newsletter ____ Additional donation (amount)

Name _____

Address _____

City/State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

E-mail (required to receive newsletter online, the preferred method and other RVAS announcements):

____ Check here if you wish to be sent a printed copy of *The Chat* by U.S. mail. Add \$25 to membership check.

____ Check here if you would like to volunteer for Rogue Valley Audubon.

____ Check here to opt out of all electronic communications from Rogue Valley Audubon.

Letter from the Board

Goals from the RVAS Board Retreat 2022-2023

"Hope is the thing with feathers that perches in the soul..." -Emily Dickinson

Dare I hope that this year will bring more normalcy to the workings of Rogue Valley Audubon? I do dare, and I do hope that we will be back out in the community and raising awareness for our feathered friends once again. We have been so lucky this summer not to have been bombarded by wildfire smoke (knock on wood), and I hope you have all had a chance to get out and enjoy beautiful Southern Oregon, or other parts of the world.

When the Board last met in June, we had a very positive meeting and were all excited to talk about what we hope we can achieve in the coming year. Here are a few of our goals. I hope you can help us achieve them.

1. **Continue support of Hedrick Middle School chimney.** We will stay in communication with the Medford School District regarding the retrofitting of the chimney. We will make sure that Vaux's Swifts have access to this excellent roost site for the foreseeable future.
2. **Partner with Southern Oregon University to make it an official Audubon "Bird Campus."** Board Member Jamie Trammell will be working to establish a student-led group to qualify the school for the Audubon designation.
3. **Partner with Science Works** to support a bird exhibit or feeding station at their future pollinator garden.
4. **Expand RVAS Outreach** at community events and provide educational materials and branded merchandise to the public.
5. **Grow our volunteer base.** Our organization runs on volunteer power! We have several vacancies within our organization, and have some local surveys/projects we can use help with. (Contact Erin at 408-499-0315 or eulrich44@gmail.com if you're interested in helping out!)
6. **Continue and expand Project FeederWatch stations in Jackson County.** We are hoping to install FeederWatch stations at two schools this year, as well as continue with our successful station at North Mountain Park in Ashland.
7. **Update RVAS website.**
8. **Advance our new RVAS logo!** We hope to reveal the new logo very soon, and have merchandise available for purchase so that we can make RVAS more visible in the community.

If you have any questions or would like to talk with us further about our goals for the year, please reach out to any of our RVAS Board members. We are happy to speak with you about how you can get involved!

Erin Ulrich
RVAS President

Financial Summary for Fiscal Year July 2021 to June 2022

Kay Simmons, Treasurer

Total income of **\$10,605** for the fiscal year, July 1 2021 to June 30, 2022, came from these sources:

| | |
|--|---------|
| Dues | \$3,751 |
| National Audubon Society | 1,870 |
| Donations | 4,263 |
| Sale of <i>Birds of Jackson County</i> | 147 |
| <i>The Chat</i> printed subscriptions | 374 |
| Advertising in <i>The Chat</i> | 200 |

Total expenses of **\$7,052** for the fiscal year 2021-2022 went to the following:

| | |
|-------------------------|---------|
| Administrative expenses | \$4,214 |
| Mission expenses | 2,838 |

Administrative expenses included: web site, storage facility, office supplies, insurance, mailing, taxes, *Chat* expenses, Zoom, accounting, meeting facility.

Mission expenses included: Project FeederWatch bird seed, Southern OR Wildlife Crossing project, Rogue Valley Sewer Mudflats (Kirtland Pond) design, Purple Martin boxes, North Mountain Park's Rogue Valley Bird Day.

Thank you, Rogue Valley Audubon Society members for your generous donations and contributions!

The Conservation Column

By Pepper Trail

This summer brought some long-overdue good news: finally, significant federal legislation to address climate change. The name doesn't make it obvious, but the [Inflation Reduction Act](#) is the most significant climate legislation ever to become law. It also provides many other conservation benefits. National Audubon has summarized 12 ways this bill addresses climate change and benefits birds and habitats. You can read the full list at: <https://www.audubon.org/news/12-ways-inflation-reduction-act-will-benefit-birds-and-people>. The six that are most relevant for our region are reprinted below:

Courtesy: US Dept. Of Energy



Reducing Carbon Pollution Through Clean Energy

Birds tell us that we need to take action on climate change. A [2019 report from the National Audubon Society](#) found that two-thirds of North American bird species will be vulnerable to extinction if global temperatures are allowed to rise at the current rate. The best way to do that is by deploying clean energy across the United States.

By directing about \$370 billion toward speeding the transition to clean energy (two-thirds in the form of tax credits for producing renewable electricity, investing in renewable technologies, and clean energy manufacturing), the Inflation Reduction Act will cut annual U.S. greenhouse gas emissions by about 1 billion metric tons by 2030, which will help drive down carbon emissions by about 42 per-

cent according to [a preliminary study by Princeton University](#).

Estimates are that the clean energy tax credit extension and clean energy grants in the legislation will result in more rapid deployment of renewable energy with annual solar deployment projected to increase to 49 Gigawatts per year (10GW in 2020) and Wind to 39 Gigawatts per year (15 GW in 2020). (One Gigawatt equals = approximately 3.1 million solar panels.)

It is also notable that the clean energy investments in this bill are expected to reduce home energy costs while cutting harmful emissions. These savings are driven by a mix of more efficient energy use and lower electricity rates and are estimated to save between \$16 and \$125 per household by 2030.

Building Drought Resilience in the West

The IRA includes \$4 billion in drought resilience funding for the American West, where rivers like the Colorado River—which provides water for 40 million people and 400 bird species—are in crisis. Specifically, this funding allows agricultural and municipal water users to voluntarily reduce water consumption (leaving more water *in* rivers), advance projects for efficiencies in water conservation, and restore habitats impacted by drought. In the face of a hotter and drier climate, all of these actions will help the [Colorado River, the Salton Sea, and other western rivers](#).

The bill includes \$2 billion for wildfire risk reduction, including funds for nature-based solutions like beavers, which can restore natural hydrology and reconnect river systems. Hundreds of millions of dollars are also included for wetland conservation and restoration on National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, and National Wildlife Refuge properties.

In addition, the IRA includes \$220 million for Tribal climate resilience, \$12.5 million for near-term actions to mitigate drought impacts for Tribes, and \$550 million for disadvantaged communities to plan, design, and build water projects that create or improve reliable access to water.

Restoring and Conserving Forests

Healthy forests are important for birds and people. The Inflation Reduction Act will invest more than \$450 million to

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Conservation Column continued from page 5

help private landowners manage forests and to provide incentives that will help protect more forest ecosystems. Forests naturally store carbon dioxide in their trees, shrubs, and soils, and keep carbon pollution out of the atmosphere.

They also build climate resilience in places like the Upper Mississippi River Watershed where [Audubon is working](#) with landowners on forest restoration and management. There, floodplain forests provide communities along the river critical protection from flooding as well as habitat for nearly 200 bird species, including the Prothonotary Warbler, Cerulean Warbler, and Red-Shouldered Hawk.

Managing forests for birds is highly compatible with [managing forests for other purposes](#). Private landowners are already engaged in healthy forest management across the United States, including the Upper Mississippi River Watershed and the [Atlantic Flyway where Audubon is working with private landowners and foresters](#).

Putting Our Lands to Work for Birds and People

The \$20 billion from the IRA going toward the grasslands efforts mentioned in #5 will also help more producers implement climate and habitat-friendly practices on their farms and ranches even beyond grasslands. With an additional \$1 billion in [Conservation Technical Assistance](#), these funds will help support programs at the USDA that have proven to work for farmers, ranchers, and birds together by supporting landowners as they make habitat improvements. There is often significantly more interest in these programs than there is funding to meet that interest.

In [2021, Audubon found that](#) maintaining and restoring important bird habitats can also help mitigate climate change. The majority of these priority areas are on private lands. These funds will support land owners who implement changes to improve carbon storage and hopefully also the habitat on their land.

[Audubon California works](#) with rice farmers to adopt these types of practices, and by doing so their active farmland is able to serve as a habitat for migratory birds like the Tricolored Blackbird, Greater Yellowlegs, and the Northern Pintail.



Northern Pintail
Credit: Jim Livaudais

Protecting People and Wildlife

The Inflation Reduction Act will also invest \$1 billion for federal agencies to conduct robust reviews under the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) for projects using federal funds or on federal lands. NEPA ensures that the government not only accounts for impacts through sound scientific study but also through public input. These reviews are critical, especially as we know energy and infrastructure projects have historically had a disproportionately negative effect on low-income and rural communities, as well as people of color.

The Endangered Species Act has helped recover bird species like the Bald Eagle, Brown Pelican, and Black-capped Vireo. This work is often difficult and underfunded but the IRA injects \$125 million into the implementation of endangered species recovery plans and addressing climate change impacts on key habitats. Government agencies, like the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, work with states, Tribes, and other partners to implement these plans.

Habitat is incredibly important to the conservation and recovery of birds and other wildlife. The IRA also provides \$121 million toward rebuilding and restoring parts of the National Wildlife Refuge System and state wildlife areas.

Assessing the Cost of Methane Pollution

Methane is one of the most dangerous greenhouse gases, and is the second-biggest contributor to climate change, after carbon dioxide. Venting, or burning off, excess methane is particularly hazardous for both people and wildlife, and methane leakage is a common problem in fossil fuel production. Methane from the oil and gas supply chain is often co-emitted with harmful air pollutants.

Conservation Column continued on page 7

Conservation Column continued from page 6



Courtesy: US Dept. Of Energy

Reducing emissions from greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide and methane will help alleviate some of the worst effects of climate change. The IRA includes funds for methane emissions monitoring and fixes, and applies a fee on oil and gas operations of \$900 in 2024 (up to \$1,500 in 2026 and thereafter) per metric ton of methane emitted.

Currently, companies are able to vent or flare excess methane on public lands without paying any royalty like this back to the public. As we address the need to account for climate change and the carbon pollution that contributes to it, these types of regulations are essential to reducing oil field waste and emissions.

The legislation also provides funding through the Environmental Protection Agency to incentivize oil and gas facilities to better monitor emissions and adopt emission-reducing technologies. It also provides support for disadvantaged communities hurt by pollution from oil and gas operations.

Meanwhile, on the local level...

RVAS continues to be very active in local conservation efforts, including providing input on management of the Bear Creek Greenway, proposing changes to Ashland's riparian ordinance, and, as a member of the Southern Oregon Wildlife Crossing Coalition, working to develop wildlife crossings over and under I-5. Watch for updates in the coming months!

IMPORTANT: Second Survey on the Future of the Bear Creek Greenway

As many of you know, there is currently an effort, called Envision Bear Creek, to plan for the future management of the Bear Creek Greenway. Earlier this year, an online survey was conducted to gather information on the experiences and priorities of Greenway users. RVAS as an organization, and many individual members, provided input emphasizing the importance of the Greenway as habitat for birds and other wildlife and as critical protection for Bear Creek. Envision Bear Creek has taken the responses to the first survey and used them to frame a second survey, which is available through September 18 at: <https://envisionbearcreek.com/>.

It is very important for everyone who treasures the wildlife values of the Greenway to respond to this second survey. It appears that concerns about safety dominated the first survey responses, and this second survey is heavily skewed to address those concerns. While public safety is certainly an issue in the urban segments of the Greenway (primarily in Medford and Central Point), we need to send the message to Envision Bear Creek that the wildlife values of the Greenway must also be valued and protected. A "one-size-fits-all" plan that emphasizes heavy vegetation removal, lighting, and safety patrols is not appropriate - yet that appears to be the approach favored by the questions this survey asks. You can spell out an alternate vision in the "More Information" boxes after each survey question.

Remember, the survey deadline is September 18.



Wrentit
Credit: Jim Livaudais

BIRDCENTRIC EVENTS FROM AROUND THE REGION

RVAS

First Wednesday Bird Walks: September 7, October 5, November 2

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.

Fall Migration Bird Walk at Rogue River Preserve

We will explore the riparian and oak habitats on this property owned by Southern Oregon Land Conservancy. We'll be looking for fall migrants, arriving winter resident birds, and year-round residents, from Brown Creepers to Varied Thrush. We will be accompanied by SOLC stewardship director and botanist birder Kristi Mergenthaler. Appropriate clothing and closed-toe footwear required, with some walking on uneven ground. We will have a scope and an extra pair or two of binoculars. Limit 15 persons. Contact Frank Lospalluto to sign-up: fdlospallutoATgmail.com.

DATE: Saturday, September 24

TIME: 8:00 am - 12:00 pm

COST: Free

Wild Birds Unlimited

Lynn Newbry Park Walk

Erin Linton will be leading a walk to Lynn Newbry Park along the Bear Creek Greenway at the Talent exit. A paved path passes through a riparian woodland and a pond for good birding year-round. Limited to 9 participants. Call the store at (541) 772-2107 or come in to register and get directions on where to meet, etc.

DATE: Wednesday, September 28

TIME: 9:00 am

COST: Free

Educational Talk: "My Bee Tubes are Full, Now What?"

Laura Fleming will lead a hands-on demonstration on storing your mason bee cocoons for the winter and getting your bee houses ready for next spring. All "bee supplies" will be 15% off the night of the talk. Limited to 15 participants. Call the store at (541) 772-2107 or come in to reserve your seat.

DATES: Thursday, September 29

TIME: 5:00 - 6:00 pm

COST: Free

Klamath Bird Observatory

Experience Fall Migration at Crater Lake

Fall migration is in full swing. Come see it in person and up close at KBO's banding station at Crater Lake National Park. You will get to meet our amazing and knowledgeable banding crew, learn about the science behind banding, and of course, see birds up close! There isn't a better way to close out the summer. The banding station is welcoming visitors every Tuesday through the end of September.

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 through end of September, rain or shine

TIME: 8:15 - 10:00 am

COST: Free

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In Memory of Richard Cronberg

August 18-1942 – July 26, 2022

By Norm Barrett

Dick Cronberg was one of the Rogue Valley's most avid birders and bird photographers. When I moved to the valley he was the one who introduced me to the local hotspots and his cohort of SOBs (Southern Oregon Birders). He started in the Valley as a camera store owner, and married his interest in cameras and birds to become an outstanding bird photographer. His weekly column on birds in the Mail Tribune (now written by Stewart Janes) was always interesting and informative. For several years he sponsored a bird photo contest through the paper that produced some amazing photographs by locals.

We stayed in touch after he moved to California to be near family. We exchanged photographs and talked birds (and other subjects) through regular e-mails. Though his photography drifted away from birds to landscapes and general wildlife, he remained excited whenever he managed a good shot of a new bird species or an old friend. He will be sorely missed.



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*Valid 10/1/22 thru 6/30/23 at the Medford, OR WBU store. One discount per member. Not valid on bird seed, previous purchases, optics, gift cards, DSC memberships, or sale items.
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ROGUE VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

THE CHAT

Newsletter of the
ROGUE VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

Post Office Box 8597
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