

A voice for education and conservation in the natural world  
Rogue Valley Audubon Society  
[www.roguevalleyaudubon.org](http://www.roguevalleyaudubon.org)

*Deadline for the November 2022 issue is October 20*



## October IN-PERSON Program with Virtual Option

Tuesday, Oct. 25, 2022 at 7:00 pm

### Hummingbirds and Penguins and Tanagers, Oh My! An Ecuador Birding Extravaganza

Join Pepper Trail as he takes us on a birding adventure from the Galapagos Islands to the highlands of Ecuadorian Andes. Swim with Galapagos Penguins and Flightless Cormorants, puzzle over the identification of Darwin's finches, and be overwhelmed by the dazzling array of cloud forest hummingbirds and tanagers. Oh, and don't forget the umbrellabirds...



Blue-winged Mountain Tanager  
Credit: Pepper Trail

#### About the Speaker

Pepper Trail is the long-time conservation chair of the Rogue Valley Audubon Society, and one of the ornithologists at the National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Lab in Ashland. In his vacation time, he leads natural history trips around the world.



Location: Medford Congregational Church of Christ- Lidgate Hall, 1801 E. Jackson St., Medford  
Time: 7:00 pm (coffee/tea/cookies will be served beginning at 6:30 pm)

Zoom option: A link to the Zoom meeting will be posted on our website home page the day of the meeting (note that this is different from how the link was previously distributed):

<https://www.roguevalleyaudubon.org/>

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## Letter from the Board (TBD)

Hello friends and bird enthusiasts! My name is Zoë Templeton and I'm the newest addition to the RVAS board. I was born and raised in Ashland. Currently I work in nonprofit fundraising for an organization called OHRA (Options for Helping Residents) in Ashland. OHRA serves folks who are unhoused or living in poverty on their road to stability and permanent housing. I am new to RVAS and still new to birding. I've been a birder for about two years. The bird that got me hooked was a Steller's Jay. I was sitting in Lithia Park when one landed on the bench next to me. I thought, "Wow, that's a pretty rock 'n' roll bird with a Mohawk! I wonder what type of bird that is...", and the rest is history. I started with the guided bird walks through the Wild Birds Unlimited store in Medford. Eventually I attended the Winter Wings festival in the Klamath Basin and then got more involved with RVAS. I'm excited to grow more in my birding knowledge, meet more birding friends, and be a part of all the amazing things RVAS does.



Zoë Templeton

## A Sad Announcement

Gwyneth Ragsine, past RVAS President and decades-long supporter, passed on September 10th. The November *Chat* will include tributes to Gwyneth. Her family has requested that donations in her memory be made to the Rogue Valley Audubon Society.

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.

## Save the Dates! Christmas Bird Counts

Medford - Dec. 17, 2022

Ashland - TBD

Look for more information in the November *Chat*



## Late Summer Field Notes

By Frank Lospalluto

Fall arrived this past week with rain showers and wind. Our summer birds have vacated the premises and birds from further north are on the move. Some come to visit, oh so briefly, and others stay the winter.

Waterfowl are returning and moving through, the familiar calls of Greater White-fronted Geese are heard overhead. Our lack of water, the interminable duration of our current drought is impacting these water-lovers. No place to stay. No vacancy posted seemingly everywhere.

Here are a few highlights from the past few weeks:

Two **Blue-winged Teal** were seen at Kirtland Rd. Ponds Sept. 11 (KK). Two **Ring-necked Duck** were on Emigrant Lake Sept. 19. A single **Bufflehead** was at Kirtland Rd. Ponds Sept. 11 (AC). A single **Hooded Merganser** was at Little Hyatt Lake Aug. 1. Thirty **Ruddy Duck** were on Lost Creek Lake Sept. 10 (NB, JL).

A single **Horned Grebe** visited Kirtland Rd. Ponds Sept. 18 (HS, TS). Five **Eared Grebe** were on Lost Creek Lake Sept. 10 (NB, JL).

A flock of 35 **Band-tailed Pigeon** were seen in a large Ponderosa snag in the Little Applegate Sept. 18 (MH). Good sized flocks of these pigeons are not uncommon this time of year. A good location to look for them is places in the mountains around our area with good elderberry stands. (Many other birds feed on the berries as well - everything from Lewis's Woodpeckers to Fox Sparrows).

**Vaux's Swifts** are moving (though numbers have been low at the Hedrick roost). Ninety-five were counted over a BCCBS Ashland Transect Sept. 10 (ST, SR). A visiting birder spied two **White-throated Swifts** over Lower Table Rock June 9 (PB).

Two **Black-necked Stilts** were at Lost Creek Lake Sept. 10 (NB, JL). Four were at one of the ponds on the Denman Hall tract Aug. 19 and four **White-faced Ibis** were in the area that same day (JK).

A lone **Black-bellied Plover** was at Kirtland Rd. Ponds Sept. 11 (HS, GS, KK). Five **Whimbrel** were spotted flying over Denman by one alert birder Sept. 07 (LW). A single juvenile **Sanderling** was found along the Lost Creek Lake shoreline on the Medco A flats Sept. 16 (NB). An uncommon **Short-billed Dowitcher** was seen and photographed at Hoover Ponds Sept. 15 (JK).

Forty-two **Caspian Terns** were seen loafing at Emigrant Lake Sept. 20 (VZ). A lone **Bonaparte's Gull** was on Lost Creek Lake Sept. 10 (NB, JL).

Some small owls like Northern Pygmy-Owl and Western Screech Owl have been noted vocalizing by a few birders. Much of this late summer singing may be attributed to dispersal of juveniles. Great Horned Owls can also be quite vocal this time of year as pairs reestablish their bonds and define their territories.

**Lewis's Woodpeckers** are returning to the Rogue Valley with fifteen seen along N. Valley View Sept. 20 (KS). A couple of nesting pairs were found this summer not far from Copco Rd and Jenny Creek, but it is important to remember that is the Klamath River Drainage. Lewis's are found breeding along the Klamath and occasionally pairs make their way up Jenny Creek area and nest (in this writer's experience anyway).

A **Merlin** was spotted along Bear Creek Aug. 26 during a BCCBS survey (VF). And a bird was reported in late Aug. from Emigrant Lake (VZ). A remarkably late Merlin was seen near Hyatt Lake Jun. 2 by a seasoned visiting birder (FH).

**Western Wood-Pee-wee** and **Willow Flycatchers** are still around and moving through, with a number having been reported during the last couple BCCBS survey rounds. (One of many reasons to join the Bear Creek Community Bird Survey effort! See the RVAS website for information.) These two are very similar and sometimes present an identification challenge when not vocalizing.



Black-bellied Plover  
Credit: Gary Shaffer

*Field Notes continued on page 4*

*Field Notes continued from page 3*

**Gray Flycatchers** appeared to have bred again this year up on the Indian Plateau (HS). **Say's Phoebes** are back with one heard singing Sept. 21 along Bear Creek near Coyote Trails (VL).

A **Loggerhead Shrike** has been reported out at Kirtland Rd. Ponds on multiple occasions the last few months, with an observation or three of two birds present out there. On Jul. 20 a juvenile Loggerhead Shrike was photographed out at Kirtland (JK) - possibly some local breeders.



Loggerhead Shrike  
Credit: Gary Shaffer

A late **Northern Rough-winged Swallow** was spotted over Willow Lake Sept. 18 (AA, BH, JK). **Violet-green Swallows** are flocking and beginning to exit our area. One hundred forty-five were over Emigrant Lake Sept. 13 (VL).

**Ruby-crowned Kinglets** are starting to trickle in with singles being seen and heard in multiple locations around the valley. Three **Blue-gray Gnatcatchers** were out at the south end of Emigrant Lake along Rosebud Lane Sept. 13.

**Northern Mockingbirds** are well established in the valley and birders barely raise an eyebrow when they appear. A single was at Kirtland Rd. Ponds Sept. 11 (KK).

For the second year in a row a **PHAINOPEPLA** was observed out on Denman in the Military Slough area Aug. 02 (JH, TM).

Twenty-five **American Pipits** were out at Emigrant Lake Sept. 19 (VZ) attempting to avoid becoming a Peregrine's snack. The falcon was unsuccessful.

This past week's storms brought in large numbers of sparrows including **Golden-crowned**, **White-crowned**, **Fox**, and **Lincoln's Sparrows** along with numerous Dark-eyed Juncos. Many will spend the winter here.

A **Yellow-headed Blackbird** was at Howard Prairie Lake Sept. 11 (BH, JK) and five were at Kirtland Rd. Ponds the same day (AC). A **Tri-colored Blackbird** was at Kirtland Sept. 11 as well (AC).

Our Western warblers have been moving through over the last few weeks, substituting confusing chip notes and flight calls for the vigorous song that seems to diminish all too early in the summer.

We will end with probably one of the best finds of the summer. Tanner Martin photographed a male **SUMMER TANAGER** near the trail up to Lower Table Rock Jun. 07. This may be the first county record for this species! Janet Kelly and Jim Livaudais were able to refind the bird the next day but no other observations were recorded.

Thank you to all including: Gary Shaffer, Janet Kelly, Jim Livaudais, Norm Barrett, Bob Hunter, Jim Hostick, Tom McEntee, Tanner Martin, Nate Trimble, Leslie Hart, Pepper Trail, Barry Harris, Vince Zauskey, Marion Hadden, Timothy Sorby, Amanda Alford, Linda Wagner, Andre Carvalhaes, Kris King, Phil Bartley, Frank Hall, Stacy Taeuber, Shannon Rio, Howard Sands, Karl Schneck, and Violet.

All errors and omissions are my own. Peace.



Summer Tanager  
Credit: Jim Livaudais



## The Conservation Column

By Pepper Trail

Happy fall! This might be the last Chat that reaches you before Election Day (November 8, but most of us vote well before that). So, let me remind everyone that one of the most important conservation actions you can take is to **VOTE**. Rogue Valley Audubon of course does not endorse candidates, but I urge you to examine the environmental platforms of all candidates, from County Commissioners to Senators and the Governor. An excellent source of information is the Oregon League of Conservation Voters. Their endorsements can be found here: <https://www.olcv.org/2022-general-election-endorsements/>.

### The Klamath Basin Refuges: From Bad to Worse

I have received several questions recently about conditions in the Klamath Basin, so here is an update. I am afraid that the news is all bad. This information is taken from a briefing provided by the Refuge managers, which can be seen in its entirety at: [https://www.fws.gov/sites/default/files/documents/KBNWR%202022%20habitat%20conditions\\_508.pdf](https://www.fws.gov/sites/default/files/documents/KBNWR%202022%20habitat%20conditions_508.pdf)

The Klamath Basin is entering a third year of severe drought and water shortages. Habitat conditions are the worst they have ever been.

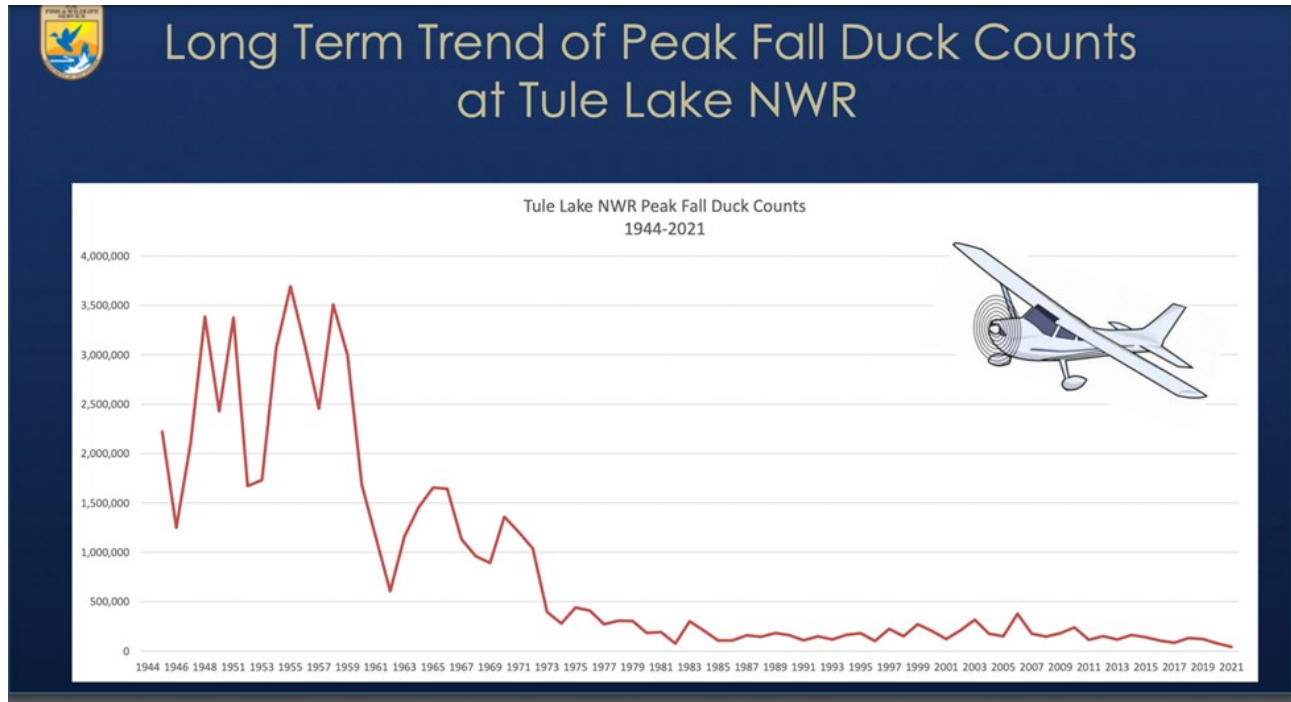
- National Wildlife Refuges in the Klamath Basin continue to face the greatest threats they have experienced since the 1920's. Waterbird populations are not only the lowest in the refuge's history but importantly Klamath Basin-wide, indicating a collapse of the most important staging area in the Pacific Flyway.
- Drought conditions are impacting everyone - Klamath basin wetlands, waterbirds, fish, and communities (Tribes, conservation, recreation, agriculture) are all suffering due to the challenges around water availability and delivery.
- The Klamath Basin is losing wetlands at a rapid rate, including both the physical loss of acres and functional loss of flooded habitat.
- The Klamath Basin is not alone! Drought conditions are plaguing the western United States and at this time there is concern that little wetland habitat will be available to support fall staging and wintering waterbirds in the Pacific Flyway.
- The refuge's goal is to increase the staging population of migrating waterfowl on LKNWR and TLNWR.
- Refuge staff want to increase the value of these refuges throughout the year with special consideration on increasing waterbird populations during the spring breeding and fall migration months.
- Beginning September 17, 2022, and continuing through March 10, 2023, Tule Lake and Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuges will be closed to all public upland game bird and waterfowl hunting.
- The decision to close the hunt season was based on the ongoing and severe drought conditions and lack of available habitat, including food, water and shelter, to support upland game and migratory water birds.



*Conservation Column continued on page 6*

*Conservation Column continued from page 5*

Here is the summary of fall-migration duck numbers at Tule Lake since the 1940s:



Unfortunately, there are no obvious solutions to this tragic situation. The ultimate and intractable cause is the ongoing drought, which is general across much of the West, and appears clearly related to climate change. But unquestionably the water crisis in the Klamath Basin Refuges is made worse by the current Bureau of Reclamation “biological opinion,” which prioritizes water deliveries to Upper Klamath Lake (for endangered suckers), the Klamath River (for endangered salmon), and irrigated agriculture – leaving the refuges with no water at all. For more discussion of this, see my article for Audubon this spring, at <https://www.audubon.org/news/the-klamath-basins-water-crisis-growing-disaster-waterfowl>.

If solutions are to be found for this and many other pressing environmental crises, we need political leaders who prioritize environmental health, respect science, and recognize climate change as an existential threat. So, please – **VOTE!**

### Project Feeder Watch

By Mary Pat Power

Project FeederWatch kicks off its 21<sup>st</sup> season November 11, 2022 at North Mountain Park in Ashland. Over the years, this has become a favorite with new birders and “old timers”. Often a dozen or more eager souls will show up for the Saturday counts, which are open to the public. Bird feed is provided by RVAS.

The counts take place every other Friday and Saturday from 9 - 10 am, starting November 11. One observer does the Friday count. On Saturdays, one volunteer heads up the count. We’re seeking volunteers to assist with this project. If you can help out one or twice during the season that would be great! Please contact me at [marypat1010@gmail.com](mailto:marypat1010@gmail.com).

## BIRDCENTRIC EVENTS FROM AROUND THE REGION

### **RVAS**

#### **First Wednesday Bird Walks: October 5, November 2, December 7**

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.

#### **Waterbird Walk at Rogue River and Lost Creek Lake**

Local birding enthusiast Janet Kelly will be leading a two-part fall bird walk on Saturday October 15. The first part of the walk will be at the "Holy Waters" of the Rogue River (below Lost Creek Lake Dam), the second part will be along the shoreline of Lost Creek Lake.

Fall is such a vibrant time of year. Along with beautiful colors there will be a wide variety of wintering waterfowl gathered including Lesser and Greater Scaup, Bufflehead, Common and Hooded Mergansers, and maybe even one of the goldeneyes. Along the lake shoreline sandpipers, Ring-billed, California and Bonaparte's Gulls, and a tern or two are possible. Other birds on the lake this time of year often include Surf Scoters, Common Loons, and various grebe species. We will look for Horned Larks and American Pipits foraging on the ground among the rocks as we walk the shoreline and the flats.

Both parts of the walk are easy. The river walk is level, along an old road with some pavement and gravel. Getting to the shoreline of the lake for part two, from Medco A access point, will be on a dirt road with a slight incline and some gravel. We will meet at Cole Rivers Fish Hatchery Public Parking. Restrooms will be available. Bring binoculars (optional), spotting scope & camera, good pair of walking shoes, food & water. Limited to 10 participants. To register and for more info email Janet Kelly: [chamkell@msn.com](mailto:chamkell@msn.com).

DATE: Saturday, October 15

TIME: 8:00 am - open

COST: Free

#### **Bear Creek Greenway Bird Walk**

Join ornithologist and naturalist Pepper Trail for a beginner friendly bird walk on the Bear Creek Greenway in Ashland. We'll discuss the ecological importance of the Greenway, look at vegetation recovery in the burned area, and welcome winter migrants. Meet at the parking area off Oak Street. Free. For more info or to sign up: please

email [fdlospalluto@gmail.com](mailto:fdlospalluto@gmail.com)

DATE: Saturday, October 22

TIME: 8:00 am

COST: Free

### **Wild Birds Unlimited**

#### **North Mountain Park**

Erin Linton will be leading a bird walk to **North Mountain Park** in Ashland this month. Habitat in the park is carefully conserved to attract migrants, as well as our resident birds. The area lies adjacent to Bear Creek and has two small ponds on the property. Limited to 9 participants. Come in or call the store at (541) 772-2107 to reserve your spot.

DATE: Wednesday, October 19

TIME: 9:00 am

COST: Free

*Birdcentric events continued on page 8*



**BIRDCENTRIC EVENTS** *continued from page 7*

**Klamath Bird Observatory**

**Vesper Sparrow Short Film Premiere**

Join Klamath Bird Observatory and Vesper Meadow Education Program for the premiere of the short film "From the Field – A Study of the Oregon Vesper Sparrow" by Daniel Thiede. We will hear from Vesper Meadow Program Director Jeanine Moy about the restoration work and connection to the community being done at Vesper Meadow. Dr. Sarah Rockwell will give a brief talk about the research KBO is conducting on the Oregon Vesper Sparrow, followed by a short walk in Vesper Meadow to a Motus node. The afternoon will conclude with a showing of the film, with time afterward for discussion and questions. Come learn about this little brown bird and experience one of the beautiful places it calls home!

This event is hosted at Vesper Meadow. Refreshments and light appetizers are included. Dress for the weather as this event will take place outside at Vesper Meadow in an open-sided barn. Wear sturdy walking shoes if you plan to join the walk.

Attendance is limited. Proof of Covid vaccination is required. To register and for more information, visit

**<https://klamathbird.org/callnote/vesper-sparrow-video-premier/>**

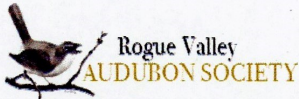
DATE: Monday, October 10

TIME: 4:00 - 6:00 pm

COST: Free

**It's Membership renewal time!**

Please renew your membership in October and continue your support of all the RVAS programs.



**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](http://www.roguevalleyaudubon.org) using PayPal. Welcome to the flock. We are a dedicated group.

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

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Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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



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## THE CHAT

Newsletter of the  
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Post Office Box 8597  
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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 online.

At the bottom of every page on our website [roguevalleyaudubon.org](http://roguevalleyaudubon.org) you will find a form where you can request to be added to our mailing list. And be assured, we will never share your e-mail address with any other organizations.

