November IN PERSON Program
Tuesday, Nov. 22, 2022 at 7:00 pm
Catching Up With Rogue Valley Audubon

This month, we will hear updates on two of Rogue Valley Audubon’s projects - one volunteer-based, and one that we have supported financially. The first is the Kirtland Lagoons restoration project. RVAS member, Bob Hunter, will give an update on the Mudflat Habitat Enhancement Design and Management Plan for Kirtland Lagoon. This project will have a great positive impact on migratory shorebirds that use the area. The second project is the Vaux’s Swift counts that RVAS is involved in during Spring and Fall migrations. Erin Ulrich will provide an overview of the process and discuss this year’s numbers in relation to the other roosts up and down the Western US. The meeting is planned to be a hybrid presentation - that means IN PERSON with the option of watching on Zoom if you are unable to attend.

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: The Zoom link will be posted on the Rogue Valley Audubon webpage the day of the meeting.
**Status of upcoming events**

**Field trips:** Denman Bird Walk is back! December 7, January 4, February 1

**November Chapter Meeting:** Tuesday, Nov. 22 at 7:00 pm

**RVAS Holiday Party:** Saturday, Dec. 3

**Medford CBC:** Saturday, Dec. 17

**Ashland CBC:** Sunday, Dec. 18
October Field Notes 2022
By Frank Lospalluto

A change in the weather…we will be brief.

Snow Geese have been migrating over our region with a flock of forty spied during a Bear Creek Community Bird Survey (BCCBS) Oct 11 over an Ashland Transect (PT). Nine were reported from Lost Creek Lake (LCL) Oct 15 (JK). A flock of thirty Cackling Geese were observed over Bear Creek Oct 15 during another BCCBS Oct 15 (EU). A single Redhead was on Willow Lake Oct 12 (JK). Another single was on Lost Creek Lake Oct 16 (TM, NB, JL). Two Surf Scoters were on LCL Oct 22 (JK, JL).

A Herring Gull was observed flying around at LCL Oct 12 (TM). These gulls are occasional visitors to our lakes in the fall and winter.

An elusive White-tailed Kite was observed by one lucky birder Oct 1 at Emigrant Lake (KK). This species has all but disappeared from Jackson County in recent years after a two-decade incursion from the coast to become a breeding bird here. Oddly it doesn’t trigger the ebird RA-RE filter in Jackson County so details are often lacking. Observers of White-tailed Kites who use ebird should try to add details with photos when possible. A Ferruginous Hawk was seen near Mingus Pond Oct 16 (NT, EU).

A Northern Shrike was photographed at Denman Ave G and H ponds Oct 18 (BF). It was noted as a juvenile which represent the overwhelming majority of Northern Shrikes that we see in the winter.

Horned Larks are being seen on the Medco A flat with two being reported Oct 12 and nine Oct 22 (TM). Large flocks of American Pipits are being seen now especially on the dry lakebeds and sparsely vegetated flats.

Varied Thrush are beginning to be glimpsed and heard in the forests around our area as the days shorten and the rains start.

This brings us to our noted observation: a CHESTNUT-COLLARED LONGSPUR was seen, photographed and recorded at Medco A flats Oct 22 by birder extraordinaire Janet Kelly. This is the fifth county record.

Bill Feusahrens, Erin Ulrich and Violet. All errors and omissions are my own. Peace.

Ashland Christmas Bird Count
By Cat Gould

The Ashland CBC will take place Sunday, December 18. The count circle is centered at the northwest corner of Emigrant Lake, including both the northeastern slopes of Mount Ashland and the western slopes of the Cascades (as far east as Little Hyatt Lake). Also included are the steep Siskiyou Mountain woodlands, extensive farmland, grassland and oak savannah habitats in the eastern section, as well as the entirety of the city of Ashland with its parks, gardens, and riparian habitats. Count area maps are at www.roguevalleyaudubon.org/cbc-maps-page/.

Under the guidance of experienced area leaders, teams go from dawn to dusk regardless of weather. While some leaders welcome volunteers of any skill level, others may need experienced, hardy birders who can cope with difficult terrain and a fast pace. Newcomers are welcome!

Anyone living in the count circle can participate by doing a feeder watch and adding their sightings to the tally. CBC feeder watch instructions and a tally sheet can be obtained by contacting Cat Gould (contact info below). Area birds not sighted on count day but within count week (December 14-21st) can also be added to the tally.

Teams will gather to tally the birds and share the adventures of the day from 4:30 - 6:30 pm at La Casa Del Pueblo at 1209 Siskiyou Blvd in Ashland. Separate tickets and no host full bar are available! Everyone is welcome to come to the tally even if you did not participate. The Ashland CBC is coordinated by Cat Gould and Emmalisa Whalley. To join a counting team or for more information, contact Cat Gould by December 8th at catgould@gmail.com or 541-512-8887.
RVAS & Northwest Nature Shop Co-Sponsored Talk: Richard Crossley

Richard Crossley’s field guides have been Northwest Nature Shop favorites for years. Richard is an internationally acclaimed birder, photographer, and award-winning author of “The Crossley ID Guide” series. Born in Yorkshire, he also lived in Japan, and bided worldwide before settling down in the USA.

Richard will talk about birding lessons learned from living on three continents, and paying back through conservation initiatives and youth birding. It will be a fast-paced story told in a Yorkshire brogue, through a camera lens that loves color and art, but with a strong point of view.

Crazy, wildly passionate, driven, and single-minded are just a few of the words used to describe Richard’s love of birding and the outdoors. He quickly became obsessed with the newfound opportunities provided by digital technology, Photoshop, and book design. Thus, The Crossley ID Guide series was created. The innovative design shows a more lifelike and complete picture, challenging many of the traditional ‘old-school’ book layouts. With humor and depth, Richard will highlight the thoughts behind the revolutionary “The Crossley ID Guide” series, to self-publishing his latest guide on Western Birds – some of it will surprise you!

Come and listen to Richard’s optimistic outlook for birding, lifestyles, and conservation. It’s sure to change the way you think!

Free admission, no assigned seating. November 30, 7 pm. Doors open at 6:30 pm.

This presentation will be held at Bellview Grange, 1050 Tolman Creek Rd, in Ashland.

We’re thankful for you!! Please renew your membership this November, and continue your generous support of RVAS programs!
Tributes to Gwyneth Ragosine: A Fond Farewell

Last month Gwyneth Ragosine, one of our most valued members and a decades-long supporter, passed away. In addition to serving as President of RVAS, Gwyneth was a regular field trip leader, *Chat* editor for eight years, and Medford Christmas Bird Count manager for several years. She was always working behind the scenes to encourage and support RVAS volunteers. Gwyneth loved the Klamath Basin, her Tuesday outings with her “Birding Buddy” friends and the drive to Howard Prairie and any surrounding areas where birds could be spotted.

I remember being so very impressed with her energy and her efforts in taking the introductory text she had written for the RVAS “Birds of Jackson County” pamphlet to produce “Birding Hotspots of Jackson County” — a publication that is valued by so many Rogue Valley visitors as well as RVAS members today. Her legacy lives on. Please remember Gwyneth as you read the following memories and tributes from six of her RVAS friends.

-- Bill Herring

**From Ron Ketchum and the Birding Buddies:** Gwyneth was a member of our small group called the “Birding Buddies.” We are a group of older birders who have met weekly for over twenty years. She obtained the rank of “Pretty Good Birder,” which is the highest rank any of us could attain. She was much appreciated as a Friend and Mentor to our members. Her sense of humor did much to keep the group together. There was time where health reasons kept her away and much exaggerated rumors of her immediate death abounded. She fooled us all and returned to a regular for four more years before the last few months kept her away again. We all now miss her sharp wit and loving friendship. May she rest in peace, leaving a legion of friends and admirers with the memory of a very good person.

**From Frank Lospalluto:** Gwyneth not only loved birds and birding, but she gave back to others what it meant to her so that the birds she loved would be here in the future.

**From Jeff Tufts:** Gwyneth’s favorite birding destination was the Klamath Basin, and we made several trips over there together in her Subaru. One of those trips was on a Christmas Day when neither of us had a family get-together scheduled. Our private joke was that she was going to visit her Uncle Roughie and Aunt Ferroogie. (Only birders will get that one). The roads were blissfully free of vehicles—we were able to park the Subaru in the middle of Township with no fear of blocking trucks—so the birding was both rewarding and peaceful. We pulled down one of the picnic benches stacked next to the little park in Dorris and had our Christmas dinner: turkey sandwiches al fresco. One of the genuine joys of birding is the companionship of others, and Gwyneth was a shining example of that pleasure.

**From Linda Kreisman:** My most vivid memory of Gwyneth is walking with her along Ashland Creek in Lithia Park when she convinced me to run for Rogue Valley Audubon board president. She was very persuasive in her quiet way. When I was president, she was always very helpful with any issue. I quickly realized how instrumental she had been in creating the structure of RVAS and making it into a thriving organization. The RVAS history section she kept on the RVAS Google Drive is an amazing resource. The small dedication for the bench at Ashland Pond in her honor demonstrated the respect and love so many local birders feel for Gwyneth. And the fact that her bench was absolutely untouched by the Almeda fire that destroyed everything else around the pond must be another sign of the power of Gwyneth’s protection.

**From John Alexander:** In our lives, we are lucky to find even one teacher, mentor, or champion who makes a fundamental difference in our lives by lifting us up, opening doors for us, identifying and helping us to realize opportunities, and encouraging us to make our dreams come true. For me, Gwyneth was one of those rare individuals. Gwyneth took an acute interest in me as I was transitioning from a Forest Service employee to a graduate.

Tributes to Gwyneth continued on page 6
student and Research Associate at Southern Oregon focused on building a bird conservation program in the Klamath Siskiyou Bioregion. When the time came to incorporate the Klamath Bird Observatory in 2000, Gwyneth became our fiercest champion. She brought me into the fold of the Rogue Valley Audubon and lobbied for the chapter to support us as we worked to create KBO. I will be forever grateful for the interest Gwyneth took in me and KBO, and for her enabling support. I intend to continue to pay that forward through my mentorship of the bird conservation communities' next generation.

From Pepper Trail: When I arrived in Ashland in 1994 and attended my first Rogue Valley Audubon Society meeting, I was struck with what a welcoming group it was. Two individuals in particular from those early days stick out in my memory. One was a modest and soft-spoken gentleman who I came to realize was one of the foremost birders in Oregon: Otis Swisher. The other was a tart redhead with a strong British accent and unmistakable leadership skills: Gwyneth Ragosine. In their very different ways, these two made enduring contributions to southern Oregon birding and stand as sterling examples of the RVAS volunteer spirit. Otis passed away in 2017, and now we have lost Gwyneth. Gwyneth - thank you for your sharp eyes, dry sense of humor, and unmatched ability to get things done. Ta!

Birds of a Feather...
A few photos from recent RVAS activities!

Credit: Kay Simmons

Above: Carol Mockridge hangs with volunteers at the RVAS Table at the Bear Creek Salmon Festival at North Mountain Park, Ashland, on Oct 1, 2022.

Below: Participants at the RVAS Bear Creek Greenway Bird Walk led by Pepper Trail on Oct. 29, 2022. A Peregrine Falcon was the first species of the day.

From left: Pepper Trail, Bill Hering, Gaylene Hurley, Kris King, Zoë Templeton.

Above: Happy birders at October's RVAS First Wednesday Bird Walk, led by Jim Hostick (left) at Denman Wildlife Area. Forty-one species were spotted, including a Golden Eagle and two Pileated Woodpeckers. No wonder they look so pleased!
The Conservation Column
By Pepper Trail

By now, everyone should have received their ballots in the mail. Please, remember to VOTE! It’s one of the most important things you can do to make your voice heard for conservation – and for all the other issues you care about.

This Conservation Column features a local conservation victory, and a national warning on the state of the birds. First, the good news, from a KS Wild press release.

Old Growth Logging Stopped
In early October, a judge in the District Court for the District of Oregon ruled that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) justification for Bureau of Land Management (Bureau) timber sales totaling nearly 18,000 acres including in old growth forest violated the Endangered Species Act. The judge ruled against the Service’s claim that old-growth logging in the Poor Windy and Evans Creek timber sales on 15,848 acres of threatened northern spotted owl habitat would not harm the imperiled bird species.

“While we are pleased with this result, it goes to show how emboldened our public land managers have become in pursuing the almighty board-foot, that they are willing to tell the American people and a federal judge that logging thousands of acres of habitat occupied by a threatened species like the northern spotted owl will cause zero ‘harm,’” said Sangye Ince-Johannsen, attorney at the Western Environmental Law Center. “The agencies’ singular focus on extraction over stewardship should concern every Oregonian, but today I’m grateful the law forbids that in some cases.”

“This ruling should serve as a wake-up call to the BLM,” said George Sexton, conservation director for KS Wild. “It’s time for the BLM to work with stakeholders to thin second-growth timber plantations to reduce fire hazard instead of chasing around controversial old-growth timber sales in the backcountry.”

Judge Aiken also found that the Bureau and the Service illegally failed to consult on the effects of the East Evans Creek and Milepost 97 wildfires that actively burned the timber sale area as the Service concluded its evaluation. The Milepost 97 fire burned 4,706 acres of northern spotted owl habitat and reduced canopy closure below 40% in a narrow but vitally important east-west habitat bridge.

“These are fire-prone, dry areas, and we opposed this massive logging project because it would increase fire risks and hazards for the surrounding community,” said Nick Cady with Cascadia Wildlands. “The agencies keep pushing logging projects that are putting our communities at risk, and it is past time that fire impacts drive our land management decisions, especially on public lands.”

Finally, Judge Aiken faulted the agencies for failing to analyze the effect of habitat loss resulting from these logging projects on the competitive interactions between the Barred and Spotted Owl.

Judge Aiken wrote that the Service “was not faced with scientific uncertainty, but unanimity concerning the negative impact of reduced [nesting, roosting, and foraging] habitat and the barred owls’ threat to the spotted owl based on the barred owls’ ability to out-compete for food and shelter … In offering an explanation counter to the evidence after considering important aspects of the problem, [the Service] ultimately minimized the effect of the action and its conclusions are not supported by the evidence.”

“The agencies need to recognize that when two territorial species are competing for the same rare old-growth habitat, any reduction of habitat from logging will increase the chances of extinction,” said Doug Heiken of Oregon Wild.

Conservation Column continued on page 8
The State of the Birds…Is Bad

Next, the sobering news contained in the newly released State of the Birds report for the United States. Data show birds in the United States are declining in almost all habitat types — forests, grasslands, deserts, and oceans. The only bit of good news is for waterfowl, which show strong increases due to investments in wetland conservation that have improved conditions for birds and people.

Published by 33 leading science and conservation organizations and agencies, the 2022 U.S. State of the Birds report is the first look at the nation’s birds since a landmark 2019 study showed the loss of 3 billion birds in the United States and Canada in 50 years.

Findings included in the report:

- More than half of U.S. bird species are declining.
- U.S. grassland birds are among the fastest declining with a 34% loss since 1970.
- Waterbirds and ducks in the U.S. have increased by 18% and 34% respectively during the same period.

Seventy newly identified Tipping Point species have each lost 50% or more of their populations in the past 50 years, and are on a track to lose another half in the next 50 years if nothing changes. Fortunately, relatively few Oregon birds are on the list of “Tipping Point Species,” but it does include Greater Sage-Grouse, Pinyon Jay, Tricolored Blackbird, and both Rufous and Allen’s Hummingbirds.

“What affects birds affects us, and birds are telling us they are in trouble. The State of the Birds Report underscores both the serious threats facing birds as well as opportunities to forge solutions that will benefit birds and the places they need. It also shows that what’s good for birds is good for people when it comes to addressing threats like climate change. Ensuring healthy landscapes across our forests, grasslands, wetlands, and more will help protect birds and people alike by storing carbon, providing essential habitat, and building more climate-resilient communities,” said Marshall Johnson, chief conservation officer for the National Audubon Society.

“The rapid declines in birds signal the intensifying stresses that wildlife and people alike are experiencing around the world because of habitat loss, environmental degradation and extreme climate events,” said Dr. Amanda Rodewald, director of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology’s Center for Avian Population Studies. “Taking action to bring birds back delivers a cascade of benefits that improve climate resilience and quality of life for people. When we restore forests, for example, we sequester carbon, reduce fire intensity, and create habitat for plants and animals. By greening cities, we provide heat relief, increase access to recreation, and create refuge for migrating birds.”
Given widespread declines, the report emphasizes the need for proactive conservation across habitats and species.

“Despite best hopes and efforts, 70 Tipping Point bird species have a half life of just 50 years—meaning they will lose half their already dwindling populations in the next 50 years unless we take action,” said Dr. Peter Marra, director of The Earth Commons—Georgetown University’s Institute for Environment & Sustainability. “What we’ve outlined in this State of the Birds is a recipe for how conservation biologists can work with communities and use surgical precision to solve environmental problems—blending new technology and data to pinpoint the cause of losses and to reverse declines while we still have the best chance—now, before more birds plummet to endangered.”

The report advises that meeting the tremendous need will require a strategic combination of partnerships, incentives, science-based solutions, and the will to dramatically scale up conservation efforts.

“Everyone can make a difference to help turn declines around,” said Mike Parr, president of American Bird Conservancy. “Everyone with a window can use simple solutions to prevent collisions. Everyone can help green their neighborhood and avoid using pesticides that harm birds. Everyone who lives in a neighborhood can bring the issues and solutions to their community and use their voice to take action.”

Letter From the Board
By Kate Halstead

Although fall migration is only just behind us, I’m sure many of us are already yearning for the next round. In the meantime, check out this article excerpt and the exciting new Bird Migration Explorer online tool from the Audubon Society and partners. As a bird lover and an ornithologist, it completely blew me away, and I promise you will not be disappointed. Choose a bird species, and learn about its natural history and the migration challenges it faces - or select by location and explore hotspots. There is enough here to keep any birder occupied until next spring!

The Bird Migration Explorer Lets You Interact With Nature’s Most Amazing Feat
--courtesy of Audubon Magazine editors. See full article here.

Humans have long been captivated by migratory birds, awed by the animals’ biannual treks between their breeding and wintering grounds. A new digital platform, the Bird Migration Explorer, brings this natural phenomenon to your screen, enabling you to pore over the movements of individual species, discover the birds at a specific location, and learn about challenges these far-flying creatures face.

Created by Audubon and nine founding partners, using science contributed by hundreds of researchers and institutions, the platform paints the most complete picture ever of the journeys of 458 avian species that breed in the United States and Canada.

Users are met with a colorful map composed of routes of more than 9,300 birds captured by tracking devices and shared by scientists across the Western Hemisphere. The effect is astounding, says Melanie Smith, program director for the project: “You can see how birds trace the outlines of continents, rivers, lakes, mountain ridges.” Smith and her colleagues envision a broad audience utilizing the Bird Migration Explorer, from conservationists looking to identify and protect the places migratory birds need to members of the public curious about their seasonal neighborhood visitors. Available in English and Spanish, the platform makes it possible to delve into the fascinating world of migratory birds.

Enjoy!!
BIRDCENTRIC EVENTS FROM AROUND THE REGION

RVAS
First Wednesday Bird Walks: December 7, January 4, February 1
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 /12 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.

Project Feeder Watch (co-sponsored by North Mountain Park)
Project FeederWatch kicks off its 21st season 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.

Volunteers are being sought to assist with this project. If you can help out one or twice during the season that would be great! Please contact Mary Pat Power at marypat1010@gmail.com.

DATES: Every other Friday & Saturday, beginning Friday November 11
TIME: 9 - 10:00am
COST: Free

RVAS Co-sponsors “The Klamath Mountains” Talk and Book Signing

Filled with mystery conjured by unparalleled biodiversity, the Klamath Mountains tell numerous stories of evolution and resilience shaped over long periods of time. Geology is the defining character of this range, with numerous smaller ranges—including the Siskiyou, Marble, and Trinity mountains—forming a jigsaw puzzle of big-shouldered river canyons and sharp ridgelines. Within the Klamath Knot, geology also shapes climate with wet coastal rainforests in the west and dry semi-deserts in the east.

Michael Kauffmann and Justin Garwood co-edited a new work titled “The Klamath Mountains: A Natural History” with the help of 32 other authors. Experts in all aspects of the region’s natural history came together and are the first to tell the entire story.

Michael and Justin will be discussing and signing books on December 2nd at the Northwest Nature Shop from 6-8 pm, and on December 3rd will be presenting at Southern Oregon University from 7-9pm. These events are co-sponsored by the Northwest Nature Shop, Rogue Valley Audubon Society, and KS Wild.

The December 3rd presentation will be held at Southern Oregon University, Science Room 151, 1250 Ashland St., Ashland, OR.
GET NOTIFICATIONS FROM RVAS!

If you do not currently receive emails from us, please go to our webpage right now and sign up for notifications! In case we have changes to our meetings, as happened in October, you will receive a notification. Otherwise, we have no timely way to let you know of changes other than a post to our site. Also, we may need to send out important time-sensitive RVAS information.

Visit www.roguevalleyaudubon.org, and scroll to the bottom of our homepage to the “What’s the Flock Up To” banner (see below), fill out your name and email address, and click “Join”. Being in the know is as easy as that!
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 online. At the bottom of every page on our website 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.