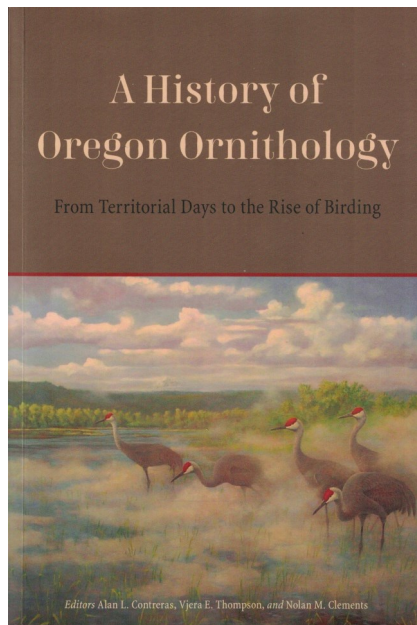


A voice for education and conservation in the natural world  
Rogue Valley Audubon Society  
[www.roguevalleyaudubon.org](http://www.roguevalleyaudubon.org)

Deadline for the June 2023 issue is May 20



**May IN PERSON Program**  
**Tuesday, May 23, 2023 at 7:00 pm**  
***A History of Oregon Ornithology***  
**With Alan Contreras**



Alan Contreras from Eugene will present a program based on his recent book *A History of Oregon Ornithology* (OSU Press, 2022). The program will include some interesting and humorous pieces of Oregon's long and varied history of organized bird study, from the Lewis and Clark expedition through the rise of birding as a hobby, and the impact of the Internet. He will include historic and modern bird art from the book, as well as information about who some of the major players have been, including some from southern Oregon. He will bring copies of the book to sell and sign.

**About the Speaker**

Contreras is co-editor of *Birds of Oregon*, editor of *Edge of Awe: Experiences of the Malheur-Steens Country*, and author of *Afield: Forty Years of Birding the American West*, all from OSU Press.

NOW AVAILABLE: *A History of Oregon Ornithology: from Territorial Days to the Rise of Birding* (Oregon State Univ. Press). Alan L. Contreras, Vjera E. Thompson, and Nolan M. Clements, editors.

**NOTE: This is a reschedule of April's program.**



**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.

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Medford, OR 97501

## Hello, flock!

There is still time to form your teams and sign up for this year's Birdathon.

The event officially kicks off at 6 pm on Friday, May 12 and goes to 6 pm on Saturday, May 13. Most teams include two to five birders, although a single individual may also comprise a team. For all the rules and other important details, please go to the RVAS website under "News and Events", or visit [www.roguevalleyaudubon.org/birdathon/](http://www.roguevalleyaudubon.org/birdathon/).

To sign up your team or for more info, contact Carol Mockridge at 360-829-7505.



## Birding and Beers with the Board Day!

Your RVAS Board has talked about birding together for a few years now. COVID-19 threw a wrench in that for a while, but enough is enough! We are finally going to bird together this year, and we are inviting you to join us! We have designated Saturday, May 20 as Birds & Beers With the Board Day.

Meet up with us at Emigrant Lake for some great birding in the morning, and if you're up for some chit chat and a refreshing beverage afterwards, we'll head on over to Caldera Brewery & Restaurant in Ashland.

**When:** Saturday, May 20, 2023

**Time:** 8:00 a.m. to Noon

**Where:** Emigrant Lake Dam Access Road (across from the Rogue Rowing facility)

**Directions:** Take Hwy 66 to Emigrant Lake Rd. Turn onto this road and take it to the parking lot across from the rowing facility. There is a small parking lot there. We will walk along the dam access road and over to the Isaac Hill Cemetery.

See you there!

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.

## Status of upcoming events

Field trips: Denman Bird Walk - Jun. 7, Jul. 5, Aug 2

May Chapter Meeting: Tuesday, May 23 at 7pm

RVAS Birdathon: May 12 & 13

Rogue Valley Bird Day: May 13

## Rogue Valley Bird Day 2023

Celebrate World Bird Migratory Day on Saturday, May 13, at North Mountain Park Nature Center, Ashland, OR. This year's "Water: Sustaining Bird Life" theme highlights the importance of water to bird populations and the ecosystems they rely on.

Rogue Valley Bird Day will include bird walks (some in Spanish!), an all-ages bird calling contest, and "Name that Bird" game for kids and adults. Rogue Valley Audubon will be providing prizes. Children's activities will include feather painting and a birding activity booklet, with prizes including a real Emu egg and commemorative pins. Klamath Bird Observatory will do a bird netting activity, and Wildlife Images will bring live birds. Dick Ashford will lead a "Big Sit" bird observation.



To learn more, and to find an up-to-date schedule of events, visit [www.RogueValleyBirdDay.net](http://www.RogueValleyBirdDay.net).

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## Conservation Column

By Juliet Grable

### Avian Flu Update

One year ago, Pepper Trail provided an excellent summary on the status of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza, aka HPAI, aka avian flu. At the time, it was evident that the newest subtype of the virus, called H5N1, was infecting and killing wild birds on a scale not seen before.

In that same column, Pepper celebrated the introduction of endangered California Condors in Northern California. These eight young birds, which were released by biologists from the Yurok Tribe and Redwood National and State Parks, marked the first time that condors have soared over redwood country in 100 years.

At the time, Pepper warned that it is conceivable that avian flu could affect California Condors, which fly free in established flocks in Arizona-Utah; Baja, Mexico; Southern California; and Central California. Sadly, that has come to pass. Field crews noticed a sick condor in northern Arizona in late March; since then, 20 of the endangered birds have died, all in Arizona. Thanks to the vigilance of the folks at The Peregrine Fund, which manages the Arizona-Utah flock, they were able to recover eight live birds and most of the dead birds, thereby preventing them from becoming vectors for additional disease. US Fish & Wildlife Service has established an Incident Command Team to respond to the crisis; you can look for updates on [this webpage](#).

So far, no California Condors in other locations have been infected, and managers of those flocks are watching the birds closely for the first signs of illness. Quarantine pens are in the works for the Central and Northern California flocks, so that sick birds can be isolated, tested, and treated as soon as they are detected.

The Peregrine Fund has set up an emergency fundraising campaign. If you'd like to help, please visit: <https://www.peregrinefund.org/condor-crisis>.

If you'd like to contribute to the quarantine pens in Northern California, please visit: <https://www.yuroktribe.org/condor-conservation-donor-information>.

### Why this outbreak is different

Meanwhile, a group of researchers (Harvey et al. 2023) has [published an analysis](#) of the H5N1 outbreak in North America. By synthesizing data from publicly available sources in Canada, the US and Mexico, the researchers

*Conservation Column continued on page 4*

### *Conservation Column continued from page 3*

have been able to sketch out the breadth and depth of the outbreak.

H5N1 was first detected in North America in Newfoundland in late 2021—first in poultry, then in seabirds. Following is a summary of how the virus has spread since then. [Note: In all of the quoted material that follows, I have removed the in-text citations to make for easier reading]:

“As of March 2023, there have been ~33,504 suspected or confirmed detections of H5N1 in the United States and ~1721 suspected or confirmed detections in Canada across 141 wild bird species. Over 58 million domestic poultry have been infected or culled in the United States and over 7 million in Canada. In late 2022, H5N1 began spreading into Mexico, Central, and South America, including 22,000 estimated seabird mortalities off of the coast of Peru.”

You can track cases of HPAI through the USDA APHIS website: <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/avian/avian-influenza/hpai-2022/2022-hpai-wild-birds>

H5N1 has struck birds in Oregon. To filter for those cases, type Oregon in the search box above the spreadsheet in the link above.

The researchers make several notable observations about why this outbreak is so potentially devastating. First, H5N1 is affecting more species of wild birds than ever before. Because the virus is persisting rather than “fizzling out,” migratory species are continuing to carry the virus to new locations. Colony-nesting birds are especially vulnerable, as are waterfowl, shorebirds, and raptors. So far, songbirds have been largely spared.

The outbreak comes at a time when wild birds are already facing serious declines. Again from the North American H5N1 outbreak research study:

“For example, Caspian Terns (*Hydroprogne caspia*) have nesting colonies in the Great Lake region of North America and are listed as endangered in Wisconsin and threatened in all other Great Lakes US states. It is estimated that 62% of the Caspian Tern population in Lake Michigan died of HPAIV in the summer of 2022. Additionally, the Canadian media reported thousands of Northern Gannets (*Morus bassanus*), along with Common Murres (*Uria aalga*), Razorbills (*Alca torda*), and Great Black-backed Gulls have been reported washing up on coastlines in the Gulf of St. Lawrence region of Canada. This region is home to the largest breeding colony of Northern Gannets in North America; this species has historically faced repeated anthropogenic impacts, like DDT contamination, bycatch, and the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. Additionally, some scavenging species have been severely impacted, such as the high nest failure and adult mortalities seen in North American Bald Eagles. Overall, numerous potentially susceptible species have been identified that may be a starting point for vulnerability and prioritization assessments.”

HPAI is likely to become endemic, and we are likely facing more losses from H5N1 in the coming year. On the (slightly) positive side, wild birds that survived exposure likely have some immunity to the variants currently circulating.

Given that HPAI is not going away anytime soon, the researchers are urging a coordinated response among all stakeholders, including the poultry industry and wildlife managers at all levels:

“Our synthesis supports North America facing a future with increased probability of recurrent HPAIV epizootics affecting wildlife, captive species, and poultry, and the potential for continued major economic damage and impacts on food security. Wildlife agencies, industry managers, and public health officials need to make informed, timely decisions in the face of uncertainty, including addressing species of conservation concern, sensitive management areas, and high poultry production areas. A structured decision analysis framework for response to HPAIV mitigation and management across scales would provide tools to identify actions which will best reduce the glaring uncertainties of the HPAIV disease system.”

I realize this is not the cheeriest column, so I'd like to offer at least a glimmer of positive news. Eight sick condors were taken to Liberty Wildlife in Phoenix, Arizona, for treatment. Although four of them died, the other four seem to

### *Conservation Column continued on page 5*



### *Conservation Column continued from page 4*

be recovering. This is a slightly hopeful sign that at least some condors can survive exposure to this devastating virus. USFWS is also working with USDA APHIS to fast-track approval for vaccinating condors.

#### **Ways to help**

I'll leave you with some official guidance from US Fish & Wildlife Service:

- Report bird mortalities to your state wildlife management agency immediately so that bird die-offs can be investigated and tested for avian influenza: Report dead wild birds in Arizona and dead wild birds in Utah to local DWR offices, or call USDA 1-866-536-7593.
- Please follow the below guidance to help limit the spread of the virus and avoid bird-human contact: To report dead or sick animals, please contact your state wildlife agency.
- Keep your family, including pets, a safe distance away from wildlife.
- Do not feed, handle, or approach sick or dead animals or their droppings.
- Always wash your hands after working or playing outside.
- Prevent contact of domestic or captive birds with wild birds.
- Leave young animals alone. Often, the parent animals are close by and will return for their young. For guidance on orphaned or injured wild birds, please contact your nearest wildlife rehabilitation center, state wildlife agency, or local land management agency.
- USDA also has [biosecurity guidance](#) for people who keep backyard poultry

#### **References**

Johanna A. Harvey, Jennifer M. Mullinax, Michael C. Runge, Diann J. Prosser. 2023. The changing dynamics of highly pathogenic avian influenza H5N1: Next steps for management & science in North America, *Biological Conservation*, Volume 282, 110041, ISSN 0006-3207, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biocon.2023.110041>.

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## **Project FeederWatch Report**

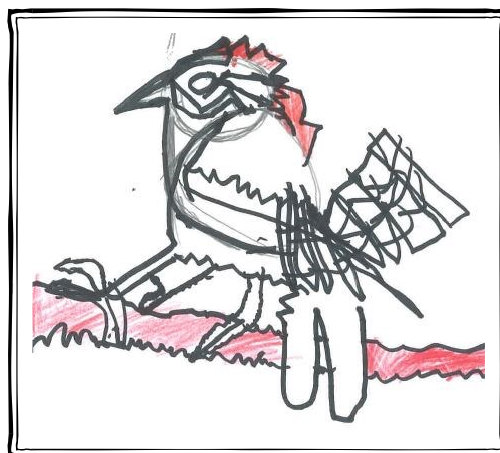
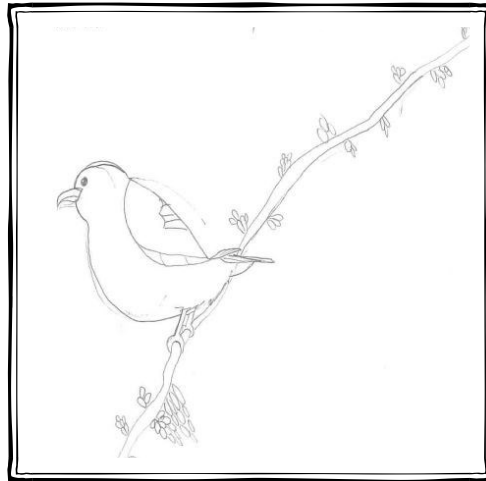
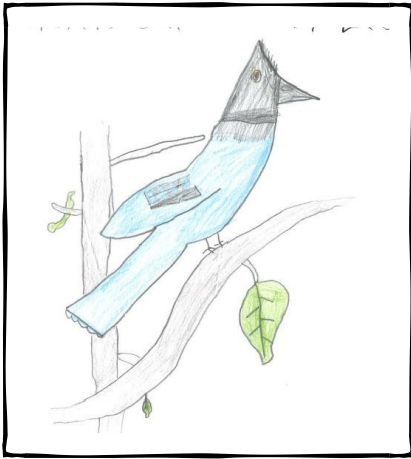
As the Project FeederWatch season comes to a close, what better way for students to apply what they've learned about local birds than with a bird walk! On Monday, April 24, RVAS President Erin Ulrich led Jacksonville Elementary School's 3rd Grade class with teacher Zach Williams and other parent chaperones. We walked around the neighborhood, passing by a local creek, an open field, and a marshy area. Noticeable were the plentiful Yellow-rumped Warblers, Orange-crowned Warblers, and American Crows. We watched a Cooper's Hawk jump around in a tall cedar tree. We thought it was looking for a snack, but it turns out it was looking for just the right branch to snap off in its beak and carry off to its nest. We also saw a flock of Evening Grosbeaks visiting a residential feeder. All in all, it was a great jaunt around Jacksonville and we submitted an eBird list with 27 species! Back at the school, Yellow-rumped Warblers were all over the FeederWatch station, especially on the Bark Butter spreadable suet and the suet feeder. The students have been excited about their project this year and we will be happy to submit a final report in our June edition of *The Chat*.



Credit: Erin Ulrich

## Project FeederWatch Gallery

Please enjoy this incredible gallery of avian art from Mr. Williams's Jacksonville Elementary 3rd Grade Project FeederWatch class!



## BIRDCENTRIC EVENTS FROM AROUND THE REGION

### **RVAS**

#### **Rogue Valley Bird Day, May 13**

See details on page 3 of *The Chat*, or visit [www.RogueValleyBirdDay.net](http://www.RogueValleyBirdDay.net).

#### **2023 RVAS Birdathon, May 12 & 13**

See info on page 2 of *The Chat*, or visit [www.roguevalleyaudubon.org/birdathon/](http://www.roguevalleyaudubon.org/birdathon/).

#### **First Wednesday Bird Walks: June 7, July 5, August 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.

#### **Birding Grizzly Peak Preserve**

Local birding enthusiast Janet Kelly will be leading a birding tour through the diverse habitats of the Grizzly Peak Preserve, a private preserve owned by the Selberg Institute. This will be an easy hike through oak woodland, open meadows, and mixed forest. These habitats bring a nice variety of year-round and migrating birds. Possible sightings of Sooty Grouse, Oak Titmouse, Flycatchers, Woodpeckers, Bullock's Oriole, Warblers - and maybe a Northern Pygmy-Owl! - are possible, along with many other beauties. 53 different species of birds have been seen on this property, that's a lot!

The entrance to Grizzly Peak Preserve is located on Shale City Rd., near Grizzly Peak. Limited to 8 participants. Email for more info and to register: [chamkell@msn.com](mailto:chamkell@msn.com)

DATE: Saturday, May 27 2023

TIME: 8:00 am

COST: Free

#### **Wild Birds Unlimited**

##### **Lithia Park Walk**

Erin Linton will be leading a walk to Lithia Park in Ashland this month. This is a "new" place for a WBU walk. Space is limited to 9 participants. To reserve your spot, come in or call the store at (541) 772-2107.

DATE: Wednesday May 17

TIME: 9:00 am

##### **Holy Water and McGregor Park Walk**

Max McClarnon will be leading a walk to the Holy Water and McGregor Park this month. This section of the Rogue River is north of Medford up Hwy. 62. "Holy Water" is the quiet stretch of the river below the dam. Spring migrants should be present and possibly nesting. Space is limited to 9 participants. To reserve your spot, come in or call the store at (541) 772-2107.

DATE: Saturday May 20

TIME: 9:00 am

##### **"Attracting Hummingbirds to Your Garden" Talk**

Laura Fleming will be discussing the special adaptations hummingbirds have, how to attract them to your garden, and how to care for them to keep them healthy. Space is limited to 20 participants. To reserve your spot, come in or call the store at (541) 772-2107.

DATE: Sunday May 7

TIME: 1-2 pm



## GET NOTIFICATIOS 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 last month, you will receive an alert. Otherwise, we have no timely way to let you know of changes other than a post on our website. Also, we may need to send out other important time-sensitive RVAS information.

Visit [www.roguevalleyaudubon.org](http://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!

### WHAT'S THE FLOCK UP TO?

Explore Southern Oregon's Rogue Valley Audubon. Sign up for our Newsletter!

## National Audubon’s “Birds for Plants” Website



Lesser Goldfinch  
Credit: Jim Livaudais

If you are a gardener, the onset of spring likely has you feeling ready to get some beautiful flowering plants into the ground. As you peruse local garden centers, looking for some fun new plants, remember that native plants are not only beautiful and water-saving, but provide some of the best bird and pollinator habitat. To invite some native plants into your life this year, visit [National Audubon Society's Plants for Birds](#) site, which includes a link to Audubon's Native Plant Database tool!

Explore all of the native plant resources at Birds for Plants, including factsheets on [creating a native plant garden](#) and [how it can save you money](#). And, if you're attracting birds using native plants, you will want to ensure that your space is bird-friendly in every way. Don't forget how close the windows of your home are to your garden and bird feeders! Visit the [Reducing Collisions](#) page to learn more about protecting birds from collisions with glass.

[Audubon's Native Plants Database](#) tool allows you to input your zip code to receive a list of native plants for your area. Listings in the “Best Results” tab are hand-selected by regional Audubon experts and include photos of the suggested plants as well as birds that may use them. All listings can be filtered by type (e.g., grasses, trees), plant resource (e.g., nectar, seeds), and type of bird attracted (e.g., hummingbirds, finches). Best of all, the “Local Resources” tab gives you a listing of nurseries where these plants can be purchased, and organizations like plant societies where you can seek more info.

Get some soil on those green thumbs, and happy planting!!



Rufous Hummingbird  
Credit: Jim Livaudais



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## RVAS Spring Birding Challenge!

### Before you go...

We know that you're gettin' out there right now, enjoying all of the marvels that spring birding has to offer. In that spirit, we offer you the following challenge! If you decide to take part, pick one (or more!) from the list below, and report back to [chateditor@gmail.com](mailto:chateditor@gmail.com) about your experiences by Sat. May 20th. If we get a few responses, we'll print them in your June *Chat*!

- Check out a birding location you've never visited.
- Invite a friend or family member who's never been birding to join you on an excursion (and show them how to use binoculars/scope!).
- Invite a young person to go birding with you.
- Watch for interesting behavior in a common species that you might overlook. Are they showing signs of nest building, feeding young, courting, or defending territory?
- Or choose your own adventure!

And most importantly, have fun!!



## 20% OFF One Regularly-priced Item

\*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  
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