

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

Deadline for the September 2023 issue is August 20



RVAS Board: Status of 2022 Goals

When the Board met last June, we had a very positive meeting and were all excited to talk about what we hoped we could achieve in the coming year. Here are a few of the goals we set for ourselves. As you can see, we have had some successes, but still have some things to work on. As our organization runs sheerly on the power of volunteers, it is imperative that we have more involvement from our members to help us achieve our goals. If you have one free hour a month or ten free hours a month, we'll take it!

The Board will be meeting for our Annual Retreat this month. If you are interested in becoming more involved in RVAS, please get in touch with one of us. We have several vacancies that we need to fill in order for us to run at peak performance. Can you spare some time to help out our birds?

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 a roost site for the foreseeable future. **CONTINUING**
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. **NEXT TIME**
3. **Partner with Science Works** to support a bird exhibit or feeding station at their future pollinator garden. **IN PROGRESS**
4. **Expand RVAS Outreach** at community events and provide educational materials and branded merchandise to the public. **SUCCESS! (mostly)**
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. **NEXT TIME**
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. **NEXT TIME**
7. **Update RVAS website.** **NEXT TIME**
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. **SUCCESS! (mostly)**

Erin Ulrich
RVAS President

OFFICERS and DIRECTORS

President: Erin Ulrich, 408-499-0315, eulrich44@gmail.com

Vice-President: George Peterson, sgpeterson1@msn.com

Secretary: Carol Mockridge, mockridge50@hotmail.com

Treasurer: Kay Simmons, mwsimmons1@verizon.net

BOARD MEMBERS

Kate Halstead katherine.elspeth@gmail.com

Jamie Trammell trammelle@sou.edu

Zoe Templeton zoe.e.templeton@gmail.com

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Archivist: Vacant

Annual Picnic: Wendy Gere, wendy.gere@gmail.com

Birdathon: Vacant

The Chat Editor: Kate Halstead, chateditor@gmail.com

CBC-Ashland: Cat Gould, 541-512-8887, catgould@gmail.com

CBC-Medford: Bob Hunter, 541-826-5569

Conservation: Pepper Trail, ptrail@ashlandnet.net & Juliet Grable, julietgrable@gmail.com

Education: Erin Ulrich, eulrich44@gmail.com

Field Notes: Vacant

Field Trips: Frank Lospalluto, fdlospalluto@gmail.com & Kristi Mergenthaller, coprolitemergie@yahoo.com

Holiday Party : Zoe Templeton,

zoe.e.templeton@gmail.com

Hospitality: Jon Deason, jdeason39@gmail.com

Outreach & Tabling: Vacant

Membership: George Peterson, sgpeterson1@msn.com

Programs: Rebekah Bergkoetter,

rebekah.bergkoetter@gmail.com

Project FeederWatch:

Mary Pat Power, marypat1010@gmail.com

Publicity: Vacant

Swift Monitoring, Erin Ulrich, eulrich44@gmail.com

CHAPTER COMMUNICATIONS

Email: info@roguevalleyaudubon.org

The Chat: chateditor@gmail.com

Webmaster: Tom Pratum, tkp9551@gmail.com

Website: www.roguevalleyaudubon.org

Facebook: Kristi Mergenthaller,

https://www.facebook.com/RogueValleyAudubonSociety/

Mailing Address

RVAS

P. O. Box 8597

Medford, OR 97501

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.

Backyard Birding at Jackson County Libraries

By Erin Ulrich

RVAS recently completed a series of programs at Jackson County Libraries! Pepper Trail, Laura Fleming, Shannon Rio, Amanda Alford, and myself presented at twelve libraries across the county, from Ashland to Prospect! What a great way to get the word out about the work of RVAS as well as get people interested in the birds in their backyards. Thank you to Pepper, Laura, Shannon, and Amanda for your time and expertise. It is most appreciated.



The gorgeous new interpretive sign at White City Lagoons, made possible in part with support from Rouge Valley Audubon - check out our logo!

Birding at North Mountain Park

By Erin Ulrich

Thanks go to Charlotte Hyde from SOU's MS in Environmental Education program, who led a field trip of 1st & 2nd graders from Logos Public Charter School's Outdoor Science class at North Mountain Park on May 18. Students learned about nests, migration, field guides, and binoculars (supplied by RVAS), and a great time was had by all! Parents and siblings of students were reported to have had a fabulous time also!

Status of upcoming events

Field trips: Denman Bird Walk - Jul. 5, Aug 2, Sept. 6

Rogue Valley Bird Day 2023

By Sooney Viani

World Migratory Bird Day 2023 at North Mountain Park (aka Rogue Valley Bird Day) was fun and informative for all who attended. The activities included six guided bird walks (with Spanish language offered); a self-guided activity book for kids (40 handed out!); North Mountain Park's version of a "Big Sit" (with 29 different species seen or heard in two hours); painting feathers; Wildlife Images offering up close visits with a Great Horned Owl and an African Buzzard; partner booths from Watchable Wildlife, Klamath Bird Observatory (KBO), and Wild Birds Unlimited; a bird call contest; and two Name That Bird Contests for different age groups.

All who participated at the mic (10) were happy to select one of the Migratory Bird pins that KBO provided. The kids who listened to sounds and clues were all rewarded with a prize of choice, like an Audubon soft bird toy, a puzzle, a game, or a book. They were beaming! The older kids and adults who participated in the three-tier contest, with 15 different sounds and clues, selected from the prize table that included three types of feeders. They loved showing off their prizes to others. Vince Zauskey orchestrated this event for Shannon Rio and Sooney Viani to pull off!

The kids, their families, and other adults who came for the activities were happily engaged in observing, learning, and sharing their thoughts and stories about birds. It was wonderful and hopeful to witness such interest in and love for birds. It's likely that these bird enthusiasts are working on their bird sounds for next year's contests and will have interesting bird stories to tell.

RVAS funded the purchase of some of the prizes. Thanks to both the Northwest Nature Shop and Wild Birds Unlimited, who offered discounts and donations of items and/or time at an exhibit. A huge thanks to all who made the successful day happen with the enthusiastic coordination by Jennifer Aguayo at the North Mountain Park Nature Center.



Fun feather painting booth!



Laura Fleming from Wild Birds Unlimited in Medford, with some excellent avian education for attendees



Birders flutter near the fabulous prize table, while discussing their best feathery finds of the day

Conservation Column

By Juliet Grable

The 2023 Farm Bill: An Opportunity to Get It Right

Last month, *The Guardian* [ran a story](#) about a new study that highlights how agriculture is devastating bird populations in Europe. For the study, a group of 50 researchers analyzed data gathered from 28 countries over nearly four decades:

“The study, [published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences](#), examined how 170 bird species had responded to four widespread manmade pressures, including agricultural intensification, forest cover change, urbanization and the climate crisis.”

Overall, the number of wild birds has fallen by more than a quarter since 1980. Though birds in all four categories showed declines, farmland species suffered the most, with numbers falling by over half. Here is the breakdown:

Farmland species: 56.8% decline

Urban dwelling birds: 27.8% decline

Woodland dwelling birds: 17.7% decline

According to the article, “Birds that rely on invertebrates for food, including swifts, yellow wagtails, and spotted flycatchers, were the hardest hit. In all contexts, intensive agriculture, which has been on the rise across Europe, was identified as a major factor in decline, with the mass slaughter of invertebrates as pests creating a ‘trophic cascade’ up the food chain.”

Agriculture is no friend of birds in this country, either. We can do better, and there's an opportunity right in front of us. This summer Congress will take up the Farm Bill. Re-authorized every five years, this enormous bill funds everything from food assistance and crop insurance to conservation programs and agricultural research. As [recommended by the American Bird Conservancy](#) (ABC), we need a Farm Bill that:

- Encourages broader use of conservation easements to protect key habitats for birds.
- Incentivizes rangeland rest in grazing systems to capture carbon, conserve birds, and expand grassland-conserving policies.
- Encourages partnership-driven, incentive-based conservation.
- Increases partner technical assistance capacity.
- Reinforces that wildlife will continue to be a co-equal priority in the Farm Bill along with soil and water conservation.
- Prioritizes diverse stands of native plants, limits the use of non-native plants, and reinforces the National Seed Strategy.

Among ABC's top priorities is a “Rest-Recover-Recapture” grazing strategy, which would benefit the grassland bird species that are most at risk:

Approximately 30 percent of the U.S. is rangeland (~770 million acres), mostly in the West. Rangelands are highly diverse, providing livestock forage and habitat for many wildlife species. Healthy rangelands provide conservation services, including carbon storage, water filtration, erosion control, and nutrient cycling. They are vital to recovering grassland bird populations. We support two options to provide expanded incentives for conservation that will store carbon while adding substantial habitat quality for grassland birds:

- Option A authorizes the Rangeland Conservation Program (RCP) under the Farm Service Agency to provide 50 million acres to annually and sequentially rest pastures in a grazing system (see Figure 1.).

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Conservation Column continued from page 4

- Option B authorizes the use of Rest-Recover-Recapture scenarios for Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) programs and mandates short-to intermediate-term contracts to rest specific pastures for foregone income.

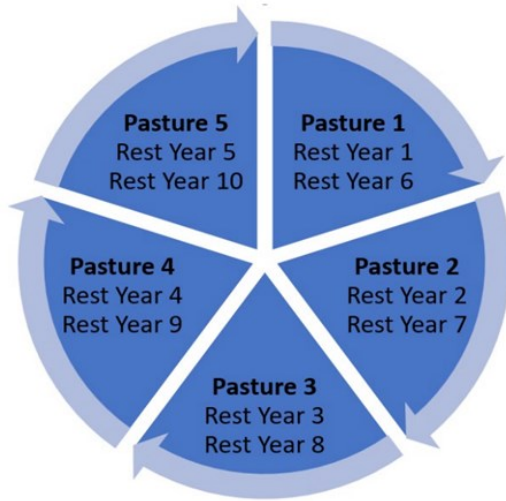


Figure 1. Example of 10-year contract and cycle for RCP.

ABC's other two top priorities are providing more technical assistance so that producers can implement good practices that benefit ecosystems, and bolstering the Conservation Reserve Program, an important program under the Farm Bill's Conservation Title:

Helping Hands — We recommend increasing and stabilizing partner conservation delivery capacity in the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCP). Producers need NGOs and other partners to provide technical assistance, which requires predictable funding. ABC seeks to modify the administrative cap and expand the overall partner Technical Assistance (TA) limit from 25% to 30%.

Strengthening the Conservation Reserve Program — We recommend reauthorizing and increasing Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) enrollment to 70 million acres. CRP provides far-reaching benefits. It has improved conditions for ground-nesting birds by increasing nesting and brood-rearing success. The Inflation Reduction Act was unable to grow CRP as it did with other conservation programs, so we

recommend a similarly aggressive CRP expansion. We also recommend requiring the Farm Service Agency (FSA) to adjust rental rates annually to encourage more enrollment.

The good news is that the Inflation Reduction Act allocates an additional \$19 billion over five years to programs under the Conservation Title. It's absolutely critical that this money is protected and that it goes to funding practices and supporting programs that are good for both climate AND biodiversity.



RVAS is in need of a Secretary!

Why, you ask? Well, long-time RVAS member, Board Member, past President, Christmas Bird Count coordinator, Chat editor, Webpage manager, and current Secretary (I mean, is there anything she hasn't done?) Carol Mockridge is calling it a day and leaving the high life of officialdom. We are so sorry to see her leave her post on the Board, but know that she will still be active in RVAS and will still be sought out for advice from the current President. Her time and expertise have been most appreciated and valued, and we wish her well. Thank you "to infinity and beyond", Carol!



The MVP Trophy for Exemplary Service goes to...Carol Mockridge!!!

Project FeederWatch Epilogue!

Here is a final "thank you" from our 3rd grade teacher at Jacksonville Elementary School, and some final musings from the students. And some bonus bird drawings!

Rogue Valley Audubon Society,

Thank you so much for sponsoring our classroom bird feeders this year. It brought more fun and enjoyment to our class than I could have ever anticipated. In total, we saw 25 different species visit our feeder this year. Every time we saw a new bird we would post it above the window to help identify it in the future. After observing the new species, we would take a moment to learn how to identify it, its range, diet, and behavior. One student each month was designated as the lead ornithologist to conduct weekly feeder counts and fill/clean the feeders and bird bath. There were many unexpected breaks from school work to watch the birds. We also learned a ton from Erin visiting our class and taking us birding in the neighborhood around the school (29 species during a 2-hour hike).

Aside from bird knowledge, the students have picked up so much information across all subject areas. A few examples are geography (the ranges of migrating birds), math (studying the graphs of our FeederWatch data), vocabulary (Mourning Dove, not "morning"), and Latin roots (Grosbeak, gros = big, large). And maybe most importantly, these observations have given the students a greater appreciation of the natural world.

Thank you for your support this school year. I hope to continue inspiring 3rd grade birders for years to come!

Zach Williams
3rd Grade Teacher
Jacksonville Elementary School

And from the students...

My favorite bird moment was when I saw two grosbeaks at the same time, and there was one female and one male right next to each other on the bird feeder. -Jackson

My favorite bird moment was when we were out on our walk. We all saw a Cooper's Hawk with a twig in its beak and our class saw it bring the twig to its nest, which was bigger than a basketball. -Addy

My favorite bird moment was when we saw a Black-headed Grosbeak during math. I thought it was interesting because it had cool patterns and colors. -Jasper

My favorite bird moment was when we went hiking with Erin and we saw a Cooper's Hawk. That trip was so fun! Oh yeah, I want to tell you birds evolved from dinosaurs. -Leo

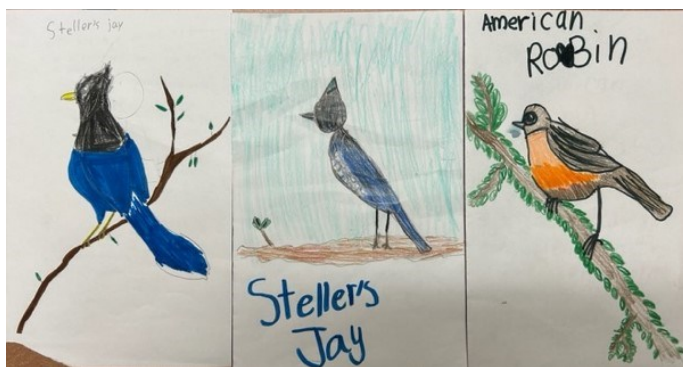
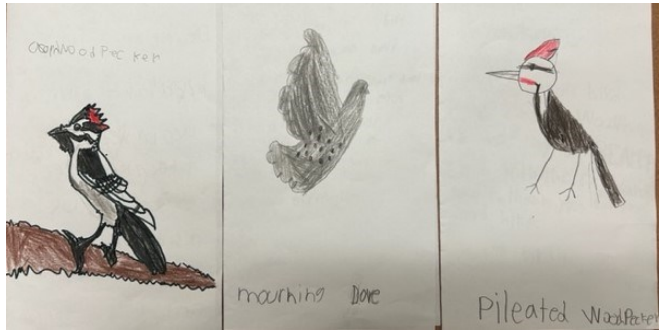
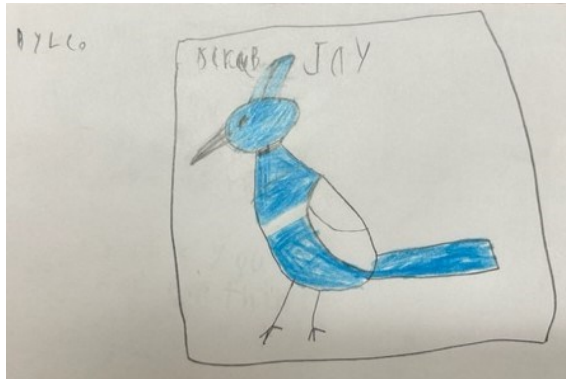
My favorite bird moment was when I spotted my first European Starling while doing my bird count! It made me realize how cool birds can really be. -Henley

My favorite bird moment was when we all saw two Black-headed Grosbeaks. One female and one male and they flew off together! I told the class they were probably mating. -Kloe

My favorite bird moment was finding the first Black-headed Grosbeak on our bird feeder. Also, I saw a lot of American Robins at my house, I found like 20. -Luke

My favorite bird moment was when we were doing a bird count and we saw 8 species! There were 8 Dark-eyed Juncos, 1 European Starling, 1 Spotted Towhee, 2 American Goldfinches, 2 Black-capped Chickadees, 2 House finches, 1 Scrub Jay, and 1 American Crow. - Beau

Project FeederWatch Gallery, Round 2!



BIRDCENTRIC EVENTS FROM AROUND THE REGION

RVAS

First Wednesday Bird Walks: July 5, August 2, September 6

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

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

Wild Birds Unlimited

"Attracting Birds to Our Gardens: Being a Responsible Bird Hobbyist"

Laura will discuss the four elements required for a successful bird habitat, and how to be sure you are feeding birds responsibly. Space is limited to 20 participants. To reserve your seat come in or call the store at (541) 772-2107.

DATE: Sunday, June 18

TIME: 1-2 pm

Klamath Bird Observatory

Bird Conmigo: Spanish/English Bird Walks

Join Klamath Bird Observatory for bilingual bird walks in Medford. We will be exploring local parks highlighting that you do not need to travel far to enjoy birds. For each bird walk, we will cover the basics of birding and introduce you to birds of the Rogue Valley. Making it perfect for beginner birders. You will be able to take the skills and knowledge learned to bird watch in your own backyard. KBO will be providing binoculars and bird guides during the event. An adventure for the whole family! A take-home Bird Brochure is available.

Acompaña a Klamath Bird Observatory en las caminatas bilingües de observación de aves en Medford. Exploraremos los parques locales para que veas que no es necesario ir muy lejos para apreciar a las aves. En cada paseo, te enseñaremos lo esencial para observar aves e introduciremos a las aves que habitan en el Rogue Valley. Esto hará que sea perfecto para principiantes. Podrás usar lo aprendido y practicar las técnicas y conocimientos en tu propio jardín. KBO ofrecerá binoculares y guía de identificación de aves durante el evento. Será una aventura para toda la familia!

Un [folleto de aves](#) en español disponible.

Learn more at <https://klamathbird.org/education/community-education/bird-conmigo/>

DATES / TIMES:

- June 17, 9 – 11 am
- July 15, 9 – 11 am
- August 12, 9 – 11 am

LOCATION: Bear Creek Park, Medford

COST: Free



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THE CHAT

Newsletter of the
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Post Office Box 8597
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