

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

*Deadline for the May 2024 issue is April 20*



**April IN PERSON Program**  
**Tuesday, Apr. 23, 2024 at 7:00 pm**  
***Incredible Journeys: Marvels of Migration***



Arctic Tern foraging for fish in the Norton Sea in Alaska  
Credit: Peter Pearsall/USFWS

### 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.



Join us for the last RVAS program of the season!

From Arctic Terns to Bar-tailed Godwits to Sooty Shearwaters, birds are the undisputed champions of long-range migration. In this month's talk, Pepper Trail will highlight the amazing feats of endurance and navigation performed by migratory birds, and will present the latest research on how birds find their way across the globe with uncanny accuracy.

**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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### Mailing Address

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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.

## Project FeederWatch 2024 Update

Project FeederWatch (PFW) in Ashland completed its 22nd season with continued strong attendance and great enthusiasm among the observers! Thanks go to RVAS for providing funds for the bird feed and North Mountain Park staff **Jennifer Aguayo** for her efforts maintaining the feeder area and managing supplies. Great appreciation to the lead observers, **Vince Zauskey, Bill Hering, Alan Hubbard, Keiko Thurston, Dick Ashford, Carol Mockridge, Sooney Viani, John and Stephanie Bullock, Mary Pat Power, and Ron Ketchum.** Mary Pat Power also coordinated scheduling and reported data to PFW.

## Project Feeder Watch Report from Jacksonville Elementary School

My name is Kate. I am the lead ornithologist this month in Mr. Williams class. We have seen mostly the same birds, but we have seen some Yellow-rumped Warblers and Starlings. We have also seen a lot more Crows and Black-capped Chickadees. We haven't had as many problems this month, but we've had some deer run by and some cats as well. Thank you for listening to my bird report.



### Status of upcoming events

Field trips: Denman Bird Walk - Apr. 3, May 1, Jun. 5

Chapter Meeting: Tuesday, Apr. 30 at 7pm

Birdathon: May 3 & 4 (see pg 7)



**Rogue Valley Bird Day 2024**

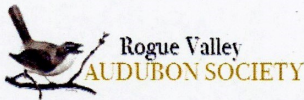
Credit: Environment for the Americas

Please join us to celebrate World Bird Migratory Day on Saturday, May 11 at North Mountain Park Nature Center in Ashland from 8am to 12pm. This year’s theme highlights the importance of insects as essential food sources for migratory birds. Rogue Valley Bird Day will include bird walks in English and Spanish, and the “Big Sit” bird observation. There will be bird calling contests and “Name That Bird” contests for youth and for adults, and other children’s activities and games will be offered. RVAS will be providing contest prizes. Sponsors include RVAS, Klamath Bird Observatory, Northwest Nature Shop and Wild Birds Unlimited.

Learn more about World Bird Migratory Day and the 2024 “Protect Insects, Protect Birds” theme [here!](#)

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**Friendly reminder: make sure your membership is up-to-date!**



**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)

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.

## March Field Notes 2024 By Frank Lospalluto



Brant & friends  
Credit: Gary Shaffer

Recent weeks have been marked by an influx of swallows, a return of hummingbirds, and the ancient calls of cranes flying overhead. Where there was darkness, a sliver of light and a precious sound.

A **BRANT** was at White City Lagoons Mar 23 spotted by Gary Shaffer. It was the 7<sup>th</sup> Jackson County record for the species. A small dark goose, they average a little over 2 lbs and have a 3.5 ft wingspan (with males being slightly larger than females). The bird at the lagoons appears to be the expected Black Brant or the Pacific Black Brant. This subspecies breeds in lowland Arctic regions of western North America, and winters along the Pacific coast down to Baja California. The population numbers

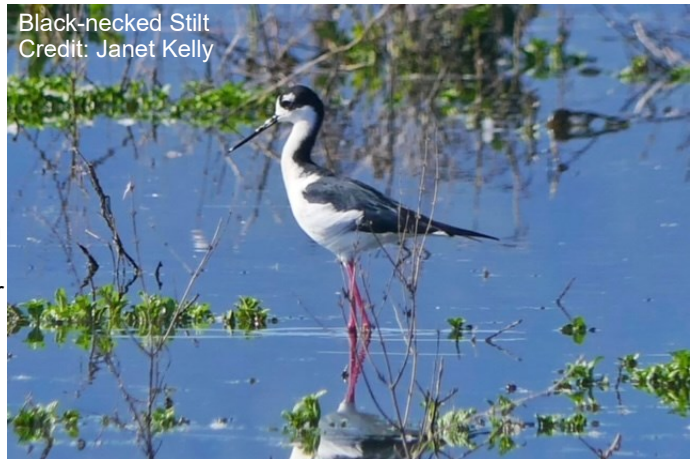
around 150,000 birds. Our visitor was probably a northward migrant storm blown up the Rogue River. They are mainly herbivorous, and eelgrass (*Zostera* spp.) a type of seagrass that forms large meadows underwater, is an important food source. Eelgrass beds are an important estuarine ecosystem, not only for Brant and other waterfowl but for native fish nurseries, other marine life, oxygen production, clean water, and carbon sequestration.

**Rufous Hummingbirds** are returning. Maggie Rackley who most often has some of the earliest arrivals had a bird at her feeder Feb 28 on Sardine Creek. We are in the southern portion of their breeding range and they do breed in our region. Females arriving on breeding grounds are quick to start nest building. They arrive on average a couple of weeks after the males.

Three **Black-necked Stilts** dropped in to visit the White City Lagoons (Janet Kelly). They are regular migrants through our area and have bred out at the White City site a couple of times in the not so distant past. Part of the White City mud enhancement project includes islands which are meant to attract and shelter such nesters.

The last few days of February saw the migration of **Sandhill Cranes** over the Siskiyou Summit area. Every year in the last half of February, a few hundred to a thousand cranes move over the valley to the excitement of any who spot them - or more likely - hear their "gru, gru" calls. Locally they are found breeding in wet mountain meadows or prairies up near the mountain lakes.

**Turkey Vultures** are swirling into the valley at the time of this writing. The kettles they form and disperse out of are fun to watch and examine. Sometimes other raptors are joining them, like the tiny prize in a cracker jack box.



Black-necked Stilt  
Credit: Janet Kelly

**Osprey** have returned to the area to the delight of even the most casual birder. Osprey were significantly affected in the past by the use of DDT and other polychlorinated biphenyl chemicals.

The use of artificial nest structures, along with their relatively high tolerance of human activity near nest sites, has significantly aided Osprey populations. The recent proposals to allow mini jet boats on the Upper Rogue River is of concern.

**Bald Eagles, Golden Eagles, Red-tailed Hawks, and Red-shouldered Hawks** are nesting now. Many are incubating eggs. Hawk and eagle nests are often conspicuous, but best to keep your distance and enjoy scope viewing, as close approach and flushing adults off nests should be avoided.

*Field Notes, continued on page 5*

## The Chat - April 2024

Field Notes, continued from page 4

Rock Wren  
Credit: Frank Lospalluto



**Golden-crowned Kinglets** are regular morning singers now up in the forest. **Brown Creepers** are also starting to seriously sing about the pretty trees they climb. Both are high-pitched singers whose songs are often lost in our noisy world. Worth a quiet ramble far from roads and human activity. Trees, trees, pretty little trees....

Bob Quaccia reports that on a recent kayak around Emigrant Lake he spotted 20 **Rock Wrens** on the eastern shoreline, and that they all appeared to be paired up! It's possible some of these birds have retreated from higher up. They are purported to be a partial migrant and perhaps weather drives them to warmer areas. Emigrant Lake is a good place to encounter Rock Wrens near the rock dams and the boat launch area. Agate Lake along the dam is also a great place to find them. Rock Wrens nest in rock crevices, cavities, small lava tubes, ground

squirrel burrows, and even metal pipes. They have nested in yellow pipe gates at Emigrant and elsewhere. They tend to build a small rock and stick patio or walkway that leads to their nest cup. It is common for them to have two broods a season. Most Rock Wrens in Oregon are found on the on the east side of the Cascades. We are fortunate to have these curious and active birds in our area.

**Mountain Bluebirds** are starting to return to the county and the higher elevations. The recent spell of warm weather brought a good movement of them. **Cassin's Finch**, and **Purple Finch** also have been moving into and through the mountains and valleys.

An early **Common Yellowthroat** was observed near Ashland Pond Mar 4 by Jeff Miller. A couple of other singles were observed along Bear Creek. Janet Kelly reported one near Mingus Pond Mar 21. Just the beginning of warbler movement. A few male **Townsend's Warblers** were turning up recently, likely overwintering birds. Ryan Terrill had one singing in Ashland Mar 21. And on Mar 20 Bill Ypsilantis had one in his yard singing.

All errors and omissions are my own. Peace.

### References

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Reeber, S. 2015. Waterfowl of North America, Europe, and Asia: An Identification Guide. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ.



Tree Swallow  
Credit: Frank Lospalluto

### BIRDCENTRIC EVENTS FROM AROUND THE REGION

#### **RVAS**

##### **First Wednesday Bird Walks: April 3, May , June 5**

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.

##### **Bear Creek Greenway Birding @ Lynn Newbry Park, Talent**

Bear Creek Greenway Birding @ Lynn Newbry Park, Talent

Bird the Bear Creek Greenway with Dr. Pepper Trail and look for resident and migratory birds along the creek and flood-plain ponds. Learn about post-fire monitoring through the Bear Creek Community Bird Survey, and the importance of native multi-story streamside forests for wildlife. Meet at the Lynn Newbry parking lot at 8am. To register for this free outing, contact [fdlospalluto@gmail.com](mailto:fdlospalluto@gmail.com).

DATE: Sunday Apr 21

TIME: 8-11 am

##### **Southern Oregon University**

##### **SOU's Rogue Earth Day 2024 at The Farm**

Join Southern Oregon University and community partners for exhibits, live performances, bike rodeo, art, food trucks, and more - all in celebration of Earth Day! More than 30 community organizations and sustainability-minded businesses will be hosting exhibits featuring education and opportunities for action. Many will also participate in the "Earth Day Ecoquest", where you can win prizes for completing activities at designated booths! Live entertainment will be featured throughout the event on The Farm's Thalden Pavilion stage. ScienceWorks Hands-On Museum, The Farm's next-door neighbor and a valued partner of SOU, is offering extended hours (open until 7 pm) and free afternoon admission on the day of the event.

Much more info available at the event website: <https://sustainability.sou.edu/earth-day-24/>.

DATE: Friday Apr 19

TIME: 3:30-7 pm

##### **The Nature Conservancy & BLM**

##### **For the Early Birds @ Lower Table Rock**

Join other early birds to listen for and observe the birds of Lower Table Rock with Bob Quaccia of the Rogue Valley Audubon Society and Frank Lospalluto from the Klamath Bird Observatory. Learn ID tips and conservation information while viewing the spring birds. Bring binoculars and ID books if you desire. Find more info at <https://early-birds-2024.eventbrite.com>.

DATE: Saturday Apr 20

TIME: 8-11:00 am

##### **Wild Birds Unlimited**

##### **North Mountain Park Bird Walk**

Erin Linton will be leading a bird walk to N. Mountain Park in Ashland this month. What spring migrants will you see? Come join us and find out! To reserve your spot, come in or call the store at (541) 772-2107.

DATE: Wednesday Apr 17

TIME: 9:00 am

##### **White City Lagoons Bird Walk**

Max McClarnon will be leading a bird walk to the White City Lagoons area in Medford/White City. This is a new spot for our walks. To reserve your spot, come in or call the store at (541) 772-2107.

DATE: Saturday Apr 27

TIME: 9:00 am

*Birdcentric Events, continued on page 7*

## The Chat - April 2024

*Birdcentric Events, continued from page 6*

### **Wild Birds Unlimited cont.**

#### **“Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument ” Talk**

Join Friends of Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument Executive Director, Collette Streight, as she shares about the Monument (a national treasure in our backyard!) and the work the Friends is doing to support its protection and restoration. She will share about the Friends' upcoming Beaver Scavenger Hunt to be held on June 1, 2024. This big volunteer event will support efforts to increase beaver populations in the Monument by providing baseline data about where the beavers are now and what they are doing. Waterways under beaver management create healthy and vibrant habitats for wildlife, including birds.

DATE: Sunday Apr 7

TIME: 2-3:00 pm

### **The Birdathon is coming, and so are the migratory birds!**



Black-throated Gray Warbler  
Credit: Jim Livaudais

The RVAS Birdathon returns May 3 - 4. There is still plenty of time to form your teams and sign up. The Birdathon is an important fundraiser for RVAS. And it's fun!

The object of the Birdathon is for sponsored teams to count as many species as possible within a 24-hour period. Teams can range widely or stick close to home, so long as they stay in Jackson County. The event officially kicks off on Friday, May 3 at 6 pm and goes to 6 pm on Saturday, May 4. Most teams include two to five birders, although a single individual may also comprise a team. For all the rules, and other info, and to find the pledge form, visit [www.roguevalleyaudubon.org/birdathon/](http://www.roguevalleyaudubon.org/birdathon/).

.A task equally important as picking your all-star team is finding sponsors - that's the fundraiser part. A person can sponsor your team with either a fixed donation or an amount per species detected by your team. Get pledges and send in your money and the official form (located on the RVAS website). Donors can also use PayPal to send in their donations. Look for the “Donate” button at the top on the home page and chose “Birdathon” on the form. The team that raises the most money WINS and gets the famous Birdathon traveling trophy for a year.

If you've never participated in this annual event, why not make 2024 your year? To sign up your team or for more info, contact Carol Mockridge at 360-829-7505. A celebratory dinner on Saturday night allows teams to compare notes and claim bragging rights. Join us at Jackson Creek Pizza at 700 Biddle Rd., Medford.

Good luck!

### **Seeking Volunteers to Count Migrating Swifts**

Here we are again! Will the birds show up this Spring or not? I am ever hopeful...

Spring evenings in Medford are quite pleasant. Enjoying a nice dinner outside while birds swirl around and dive into chimneys is even better. And what's even better than *that* is contributing to citizen science while you're enjoying your evening out! RVAS is seeking volunteers to help count the migrating Vaux's Swifts that roost in a couple of locations in and around Medford. Last year, Audubon volunteers counted swifts from mid-April through late May.

No prior experience is necessary! Each count requires about 2 hours of your time. You will be asked to estimate the number of birds that dive into the chimney, and also record things like outside temperature/weather, time, and when the first bird enters the chimney. Noting things like predator attacks and other behavioral observations is also helpful. So, if you would like to spend a night or two (or more) this Spring and help us out we would really appreciate it!

Please contact Erin Ulrich to help out or to get more information at [eulrich44@gmail.com](mailto:eulrich44@gmail.com).

## Portland Audubon Changes Name to Bird Alliance of Oregon

Excerpted from press release [here](#).

Feb. 6, 2024

Portland, OR – Portland Audubon, a 121-year-old nonprofit dedicated to environmental advocacy and education, has officially changed its name to Bird Alliance of Oregon. A year ago today, the organization shared its decision to drop the name “Audubon” and launched a community listening campaign to help find its new name.

“We couldn’t be happier to become the Bird Alliance of Oregon,” said Stuart Wells, executive director. “John James Audubon’s legacy as an enslaver who opposed abolition and as a man who desecrated the graves of Native Americans still causes harm today. Our adoption of a new name is one of many steps in our years-long equity journey to create a more welcoming place.”



The organization spent four months reaching out to the public to help find a name that would connect with broader, more diverse communities, especially those who have historically been excluded from the environmental and birding movements. Nearly 2,000 people shared their thoughts, providing insightful feedback that was foundational to selecting the name Bird Alliance of Oregon.

“We knew that community feedback was going to be the key to finding a name that resonated with more people,” said Stuart. “Across all demographics, the same themes kept emerging. People wanted a name that was clear and accessible, that referenced birds, that created a sense of unity, and that shared our geographic reach. We listened, and found a name that we hope everyone can be proud of.”

In addition to dropping the name Audubon, the new name also better reflects the organization’s geographic reach. The word “Portland” in the prior name consistently created confusion since the organization’s work has been statewide since its foundation in 1902. The organization’s earliest advocacy efforts were essential in establishing Malheur, Klamath, and Three Arch Rocks National Wildlife Refuges. More recently, statewide work has been pivotal in helping to establish Oregon’s first marine reserves, increasing protections for forests across the state, and gaining more protections for endangered species like the Marbled Murrelet. Advocacy and education programs touch every part of Oregon, with staff on the coast, in Portland, and in Harney County. And in some instances, our work stretches beyond Oregon borders, following bioregions, like in the Klamath Basin, where our work extends into Northern California.

Bird Alliance of Oregon is pleased to join other former Audubons around the country, including Chicago Bird Alliance, Detroit Bird Alliance, Badgerland Bird Alliance, and Golden Gate Bird Alliance. By also becoming a “Bird Alliance”, the organization hopes to continue the momentum to inspire other Audubons to adopt a name using that phrase to help maintain connectivity between more than 450 Audubons around the country.

“Our name has changed, but our work remains the same,” said Debbie Elliott, Board President. “We continue to fight for the survival of birds, other wildlife and their habitat. We are dedicated to educating youth and adults in environmental education, rehabilitating injured wildlife, and increasing equitable access to nature for all people. Our new name can only make us stronger, removing barriers to participation, and creating an alliance of people working together for nature.”

We are proud to continue our mission under our new name, and make our organization a more welcoming place for all people. For more information, visit: <https://birdallianceoregon.org/about-us/name-change/>.

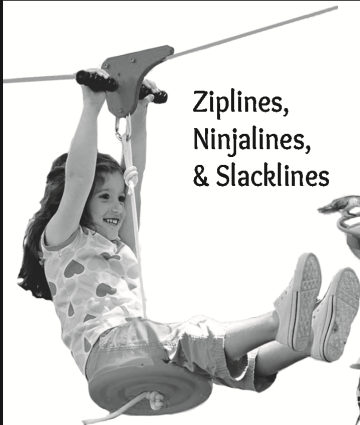


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Bar-tailed Godwit  
Credit: Jim Livaudais



For more amazing birds like  
these, join us for April's  
program with Pepper Trail!



Sooty Shearwater  
Credit: USFWS / Ronald Woan



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Nature Shop

## 20% OFF One Regularly-priced Item

\*Valid 10/1/23 thru 9/30/24 at the Medford, OR WBU store. One discount per purchase. Not valid on bird food, previous purchases, optics, gift cards, DSC memberships, or sale items.

# ROGUE VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

## THE CHAT

Newsletter of the  
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Post Office Box 8597  
Medford, OR 97501

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



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### 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](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.

