

A voice for education and conservation in the natural world

Rogue Valley Audubon Society

www.roguevalleyaudubon.org

Deadline for the February 2025 issue is January 20



January IN PERSON & VIRTUAL Program

Tuesday, Jan. 28, 2025 at 7:00 pm

A Bird's-Eye View of Climate Change

With Dr. Pepper Trail

Plan on joining us on January 28, when Pepper Trail will present his talk “A Bird’s-Eye View of Climate Change.” Pepper will highlight the many ways that climate change is impacting birds, from the polar regions, to the tropics, to right here in Oregon. These include effects on bird distributions, the timing of migration, the availability of food resources, and the spread of diseases. It’s a rapidly changing world, and birds are some of the best indicators warning us of what’s to come.

About the Speaker

Pepper Trail is well-known in southern Oregon as a naturalist and writer. He was the ornithologist at the National Fish and Wildlife Forensic Laboratory for over 20 years, until his retirement in 2021. He is the long-time conservation co-chair of Rogue Valley Audubon Society, and has been active in many regional environmental efforts, particularly the establishment and expansion of the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument. When not pursuing birds, wildflowers, and bumble bees in southern Oregon, he leads natural history expeditions around the world.



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

Zoom instructions: the Zoom link will be posted on the Rogue Valley Audubon webpage the day of the meeting.

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Holiday Party Update

By Kay Simmons

The 2024 RVAS Holiday Party on December 6th was a holly jolly time! The group photo (below) is of Sooney Viani, Pepper Trail, and Diane Garcia. Diane and Sooney led a successful Silent Auction. Pepper Trail was the MC and challenged the group with Bird Trivia questions. Jim Livaudais showed bird photos from Uganda. And good luck with the hat hummingbird feeder to the winner of the Heads and Tails contest!

A total of \$1,560 was raised by the Silent Auction and Rebekah's Heads and Tail Game. Huge kudos to Diane Garcia's major efforts in securing auction items with able help from Sooney Viani. We are so grateful to Diane and Sooney for all the "can-do" spirit that they brought to the RVAS Holiday Party.



Chapter Program meetings are held on the fourth Tuesday of the month (unless otherwise noted), 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: Chapter meetings will be held on Zoom if deemed unsafe for gathering, or as otherwise needed.

Status of upcoming events

Field trips: Denman Bird Walk - Feb. 5, Mar. 5, Apr. 2

Chapter Meeting: Tues. Jan. 28 at 7pm

November Field Notes 2024

By Frank Lospalluto

Put it all down!
-- Joseph Grinnell

The rains and snow have started to refill some of the local water bodies, and waterfowl have been moving in and through our area. On Nov 10 a group of four young California-based birders experienced a grand display of waterfowl at Hyatt Reservoir. Their eBird list was instructive, especially the checklist notes. One of the observers spotted a possible (and from his description likely) **WHITE-WINGED SCOTER** though as none of his cohort ever saw the bird to confirm the identification, he left it off the list. I was reminded of a bird found in Dec 2008 by Ron Ketchum, Barbara Massey, and a few others (likely Gwyneth Ragsine was among that group). It spurred me to think about the power of notes. Not just in collecting a data point but also the human connection of birding.

A few single **Snow Goose** graced our area in November, with singles spotted along Brophy Rd. Nov 14, at Agate Lake Nov 15, and at Howard Prairie Reservoir Nov 10. A late pair of **Cinnamon Teal** were on Ave G pond Nov 3. **Gadwall** are being widely seen again, with 10 in a large flock of wigeon at Hyatt Nov 10, five on Hammel Pond Nov 2, four on Lost Creek Lake Nov 19, and two on a pond near Lynn Newbry along the greenway Nov 23. Three **Eurasian Wigeon** were on Hyatt Reservoir Nov 10, one was at Lost Creek near the fish hatchery Nov 19, and one was at the Medco 3 Pond (which is between the car dealerships on Hwy 62 and the Rogue Valley Expressway) Nov 21. A hybrid **Eurasian x American Wigeon** was on one of the ponds near Lynn Newbry Park in Talent Nov 4.

A lone **Redhead** was out at Lost Creek Nov 8 and 7. Redhead were observed on Hyatt Reservoir Nov 10. Always an outstanding duck of which to get a good view! Three **Surf Scoter** were on Agate Lake Oct 28. Thirty **Common Goldeneye** were counted near the Fish Hatchery up at Lost Creek Nov 28. Seventeen **Barrow's Goldeneye** were at Lost Creek Lake near the fish hatchery Nov 12.

A female **COSTA'S HUMMINGBIRD** has been visiting a feeder in Eagle Point for the last few weeks, first observed Nov 14.

A late migrant **WHIMBREL** was spotted at Agate Lake Oct 28, the latest fall county record for this species. **Dunlin** have been a bit scarce this fall with Agate Lake being the only location from which there have been reports. Six were there Oct 28 and a single was found Nov 15.



Eurasian Wigeon x American Wigeon hybrid (above), photographed by Pepper Trail.

For comparison, a Eurasian Wigeon, photographed by Jim Livaudais (below).



Field Notes, continued on page 4

The Chat - December 2024/January 2025

Field Notes, continued from page 3

A late **Osprey** was spotted over Lynn Newbry Nov 23. A **Rough-legged Hawk** has been in the Vesper Meadow and Lily Glen area reported on Nov 2 and continuing. Another was seen near the weigh station along I-5 in Ashland by a traveler Nov 23. A **Ferruginous Hawk** was observed flying over Eagle Point Nov 24.

A **Burrowing Owl** was found out near the Brophy Ranch Oct 26 for a second winter in a row, and has been reported a few times in Nov. **Short-eared Owls**, first reported in early Nov, have been seen flying after dark out at a couple of Denman locations like in most winters.

A male **Williamson's Sapsucker** was observed tending sap wells in Willow Point Campground Nov 10. Some Williamson's do migrate south but the intensity of the winter may be a factor in the number of birds that linger.

A **Northern Shrike** was reported from Agate Lake Oct 30 and another was on the Denman Hall Tract Nov 15.

Horned Lark were found out on the Medco A flat near Lost Creek as is customary, with nine reported Nov 8. At Agate Lake 18 were observed Nov 7, and four were found out near Howard Prairie Lake Nov 10.

Townsend's Warbler are often found wintering in the Rogue Valley. A single was seen in southwest Medford Nov 25 and another bird was seen along Park St. in Ashland Nov 27.

Thank you to all observers including: Gaylene Hurley, Leslie Hart, Barry Harris, Janet Kelly, Pepper Trail, Jim Livaudais, Tanner Martin, Bob Hunter, Howard Sands, Gary Shaffer, Amanda Alford, Anne Goff, Michael Guss, Elijah Hayes, Jeff Miller, Jim Hostick, Tom McEntee, Ryan Terrill, Norm Barrett, Abram Fleishman, Aidan Brubaker, Sasha Cahill, Lucas Stephenson, Cedrik von Briel, Andre Carvalhaes, Emmalisa Whalley, Bill Feusahrens, and Riis Hinrichs.

Apologies to anyone left off. All errors are my own. Peace.



Kristi Mergenthaler, our trips co-leader, recently took her own trip of a lifetime to Antarctica!

Kristi shared with us this amazing photo, from South Georgia Island, of an elephant seal truly mastering the beach among a thoroughly unimpressed crowd of adult and juvenile King Penguins.

If only we could each enter the New Year with as much gravitas.

Do you have a particularly special photo you'd like to share with the flock? Email us at ChatEditor@gmail.com.



Bob Sallinger releases a Peregrine Falcon in 1995. Courtesy: BOA

Remembering Bob Sallinger

For those who have not heard, we pass along the sad news that Bob Sallinger, director of Willamette Riverkeeper and Bird Conservation Oregon, passed away in November at the age of 57. The birds, and nature writ large, have lost a true advocate. Bob's importance to conservation here in Oregon cannot be overstated. In honor of his beautiful legacy, we share the article at the link below, written to celebrate the 30 years that Bob Sallinger worked with and led the Bird Alliance of Oregon (BOA; formerly Portland Audubon). May he fly free.

<https://birdallianceoregon.org/blog/bob-sallinger-30-years-at-portland-audubon/>

BIRDCENTRIC EVENTS FROM AROUND THE REGION

RVAS

First Wednesday Bird Walks: February 5, March 5, April 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.

Klamath Bird Observatory

Bear Divide Birding Trip

KBO is going back to Bear Divide in southern California! Last April we took 10 people for the first time to Bear Divide to experience bird migration in a new way. This trip is led by Dr. Ryan Terrill, KBO's Science Director, who helped establish bird monitoring there while a postdoc at Occidental College. This is one of the only places in the western United States where you can see bird migration during daylight hours, and calling Bear Divide a migratory hot spot would be an understatement. Every year thousands of birds funnel through the narrow pass, with as many as 13,000 tanagers, orioles, buntings, grosbeaks, and warblers on a single day during peak migration. Volunteers come from all over to contribute to the science and experience the wonder that is Bear Divide. KBO donates a portion of the proceeds from this fundraising trip to support the banding station. Learn more and register at <https://klamathbird.org/callnote/experience-bear-divide/>.

DATES: Apr 23 - Apr 26, 2025

COST: \$1500 per person



Courtesy: KBO

The Conservation Column

By Pepper Trail

As I look toward 2025, I have no doubt that we conservationists are in for the fight of our lives. With the election of Donald Trump, we must expect a massive, across-the-board assault on the laws, regulations, and policies that protect wildlife, public lands, clean air, and water, and that tried – however inadequately – to address climate change. All indications are that the second Trump administration will be even more extreme and unconstrained than the first.

The nominee for Secretary of the Interior is Doug Burgum, the Governor of North Dakota. He is not as wildly unqualified as many other Trump nominees, but is a vocal proponent of Trump's "drill, baby, drill" approach to fossil fuels. He can be expected to attempt an aggressive expansion of oil and gas leases on public lands, including on the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge, and offshore on both coasts.

As far as the Endangered Species Act, we can expect the new Trump administration to follow the anti-conservation vision laid out in the Heritage Foundation's Project 2025. The following are direct quotes from that document's recommendations:

- Delist the grizzly bear in the Greater Yellowstone and Northern Continental Divide Ecosystems.
- Delist the gray wolf in the lower 48 states.
- Cede to western states jurisdiction over the Greater Sage-grouse, recognizing the on-the-ground expertise of states and preventing use of the Sage-grouse to interfere with public access to public land and economic activity.
- Abolish the Biological Resources Division of the U.S. Geological Survey and obtain necessary scientific research about species of concern from universities via competitive requests for proposals.
- Direct the Fish and Wildlife Service to design and implement an Endangered Species Act program that ensures independent decision making by ending reliance on so-called species specialists who have obvious self-interest, ideological bias, and land-use agendas.

Project 2025 also singles out the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument for attack, specifically calling for the BLM to "manage the O&C lands [within the monument] for permanent forest production to ensure that the timber is sold, cut, and removed." More broadly, Project 2025 calls for the abolition of the Antiquities Act, which provides the authority for Presidential designation of national monuments, and for the reversal of many monument designations.

In the area of climate change, Trump is famously on the record calling it "a hoax," and there is no doubt that he will withdraw the U.S. from international efforts to reduce greenhouse gases, and will roll back President Biden's initiative to promote electric vehicles and energy efficiency. His nominee to head the EPA is former New York Congressman Lee Zeldin, who voted against clean water legislation at least a dozen times, and against clean air legislation at least half a dozen times, during his tenure in the House. The nominee for Energy Secretary is Chris Wright, who has no government experience and runs a major fracking company. In an interview last year, he stated "There is no climate crisis, and we're not in the midst of an energy transition either."

I could go on and on, but the point is made. So, what can we do? Here are my recommendations:

- Work locally. We are fortunate to live in Oregon, with its strong environmental protections. We must defend our state from federal attempts to weaken those protections.
- Support our U.S. senators and other conservation champions in Washington, D.C.

Conservation Column, continued on page 7



Cascade Siskiyou National Monument
Courtesy: Kyle Sullivan, BLM

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Conservation Column, continued from page 6

- Donate as generously as you can to environmental organizations, both those working at the local and national levels. One group I personally support is Earthjustice, which has a great record of defending environmental protections in court – which is where many of these battles will end up.
- Stay informed, and inform others. It is very tempting to turn away from the news when it is so discouraging. And we all need to take a break sometimes. But after those breaks, come back to the fight. We turned back many of Trump's worst proposals in his first term, and we can do so again.
- Finally, give yourself plenty of time in nature. This is where we gain our strength to defend what we love. And to find peace and joy in a world that sometimes seems to have gone mad.

Good luck to us all!

CSNM's Hyatt Lake at night
Courtesy: Bob Wick, BLM





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ROGUE VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

THE CHAT

Newsletter of the
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