

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

Deadline for the May 2025 issue is April 20

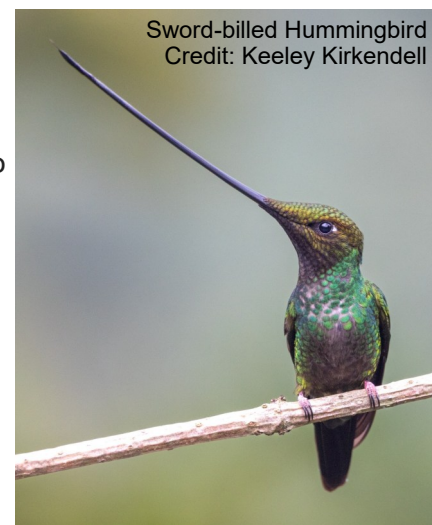


April IN PERSON & ZOOM Program
Tuesday, Apr. 22, 2025 at 7:00 pm
Birding Ecuador
With Keeley Kirkendell and Karen Barrow



Cock-of-the-Rock
Credit: Keeley Kirkendell

Come travel with us through the Andes Mountains in Northern Ecuador! You will see some of the 330 different species Keeley Kirkendell and Karen Barrow encountered last year. For three weeks they toured both the west and east sides of the mountains, from 3,000 feet to over 14,000 feet elevation, looking for birds. Take the time to sit back, relax and enjoy the wonders of Ecuador's bird population.



Sword-billed Hummingbird
Credit: Keeley Kirkendell

About the Speakers:

Keeley started out as a chemical engineer but 5 years later it was time to do something different. After finishing graduate school with an MBA, he advanced to become the chief financial officer of a large corporate division. Finally, Keeley, wanting to be in charge, became president of several corporate divisions. Now retired, he likes photography while birding and volunteers at the Medford Small Business Development Center. Karen has lived in the beautiful Rogue Valley for 44 years and had a long career as a Medical Technologist. She enjoys singing and participates with the Kirby Shaw Singers. She is also one of the leaders with the HeartSong Singers. They became enamored with birding on a trip to Africa in 2015. Since then they have combined the birding and photography delights on many trips to other countries.

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.

The Chat - April 2025

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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.

American Dipper
Credit: Frank Lospalluto



Status of upcoming events

Field trips: Denman Bird Walk - May 7, Jun. 4, Jul. 2

Chapter Meeting: Tues. Apr. 22 at 7pm

Earth Day @ ScienceWorks: Fri. Apr. 25

March Field Notes 2025

By Frank Lospalluto

Lovely weather for Ducks!

Hooded Merganser (*Lophodytes cucullatus*) are uncommon forest cavity nesters in our area, and more commonly nest further north along the coast in Oregon and up into Washington and British Columbia. They are also in forested areas of the eastern US and up around the Great Lakes. Of the mergansers it is the only species that breeds exclusively in North America. They are divers with eyes adapted to underwater vision. They eat fish, crayfish, and other crustaceans, along with aquatic insects. They are striking ducks to behold.

Lee French shared the beautiful photos below from the Rogue River of a male Hooded Merganser in alternate (breeding) plumage.



Credit: Lee French



Credit: Lee French

Some recent notable sightings:

A **Common Poorwill** was spotted on the eastern shore of Emigrant Lake by three visiting OSU Wildlife students (Elliot Bury, Colton Veltkamp, Liam Hopkins) on March 1. Common Poorwill have the ability to enter a deep torpor which, in combination with a warming climate, might be enabling some birds to winter further north than expected. There have been two or three late autumn/winter observations of these birds in our area the last few years.

Osprey are back with many sightings around the valley.

A few **Blue-gray Gnatcatchers** are sneaking into the valley with a couple of observations (by Nolan Clements and Samantha Webb) around the Table Rocks, and a bird down near the border in the Colestin. This is an oak chaparral species. **Lark Sparrow**, an oak savannah-associated bird, has been reported from various locations, with 6 birds at the Provolt Recreation site in the Applegate March 10 by Marion Hadden.

American Dipper (photo page 2) enjoy all the rushing waters and they are back nesting in upper Lithia Park.

A few years back, circa 2012, nest boxes were placed under all the wooden bridges in the park by Eric Setterberg, Bob Quaccia, and a few other members of the Lithia Dipper Watch crew. This eventually led to the interpretive signs with illustrations by Nate Trimble, prompted by Linda and Peter Kreisman getting the parks department to take notice. Barbara Massey was the prime instigator on this project with help from Gwyneth Ragsone and KBO's John Alexander. Barbara wanted to expand on the annual January dipper count that Bob Quaccia led for many years. The group monitored nesting pairs throughout the entire breeding process. The birds took readily to the boxes, building their moss domes inside the simple cubes. Inside the dome the birds build a grass/needle cup to cradle the eggs. We haven't seen this type of waterflow in quite a few years.

If you go, listen for the American Dipper song rising up over the torrent; this is one of the sublime birding experiences in western North America.

Peace.

Sources:

Dugger, B.D., K.M. Dugger, and L.H. Fredrickson (2020). Hooded Merganser (*Lophodytes cucullatus*), version 1.0. In Birds of the World (A.F. Poole, Editor). Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, NY, USA.

BIRDCENTRIC EVENTS FROM AROUND THE REGION

RVAS

First Wednesday Bird Walks: May 7, June 4, July 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.

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.

ScienceWorks & Southern Oregon University

Earth Day Celebration 2025

Join us for an afternoon of hands-on activities, local vendors, and engaging experiences that highlight the science of sustainability. Earth Day is a call to protect our planet for future generations — come learn, explore, and take action for a more sustainable future! The day will include raffle, performances, electric vehicles, food trucks, vendors (including RVAS!), free plants, and more! Visit www.scienceworksmuseum.org/earth-day for more important information, including regarding parking.

DATE: Friday Apr 25

TIME: 3:30-7pm (with after-party concert 6:30-8:30pm)

COST: Free

LOCATION: ScienceWorks Hands-On Museum

Wild Birds Unlimited

Holy Water and McGregor Park Birding Trip

Max McClarnon will be leading a bird walk to the Holy Water and McGregor Park on the Rogue River north of Medford. "Holy Water" is the quiet stretch of the river below the dam. Look for a variety of waterfowl and spring migrants that should be nesting and raising babies. Limited to 9 participants. To reserve your spot, come in or call the store at (541) 772-2107.

DATE: Saturday Apr 12

TIME: 9:00 am

"Native Plants for Birds and Pollinators" presented by Max McClarnon

Max will talk about the advantages of planting native plants for the birds in your garden while discussing what to plant and who they will attract throughout the year. Bring your curiosity and questions. Space is limited to 20 participants, so come in or call the store at (541) 772-2107 to reserve your seat today.

DATE: Sunday Apr 13

TIME: 2-3:00 pm

COST: Free

LOCATION: Wild Birds Unlimited store, 961 Medford Center, Medford OR 97504

Godwit Days

Godwit Days Festival

Come celebrate the Marbled Godwit and explore the lush Redwood Coast. Observe many bird species and other wildlife through our selection of field trips, lectures, and workshops led by experienced local guides during our annual festival each April. Tour the expansive mudflats, the wild river valleys and the rocky ocean coast of this sector of the Klamath bioregion in northwest California. Event includes keynote speakers, vendors, and birding trips. Find registration and important details at www.godwitdays.org, and available trips at www.signupmaster.com/godwitdays/available-list.htm.

DATE: Thursday-Sunday April 17-20

COST: Varies based on registration

LOCATION: Arcata, CA





Ornithologist Report

My name is Everett and I am the lead ornithologist this month for Mr. Williams's 3rd grade class at Jacksonville Elementary. We haven't seen many deer coming to our bird feeder lately because we changed the top of the bird feeder to spicy and we put cages on. Now I'm going to talk about one of Mr. Williams's favorite birds, the Northern Flicker. Their wingspan is 16.5-20.1" and their length is 11-12.2". They eat mainly insects, such as ants and beetles, and also berries and seeds. Lastly, we saw more Lesser Goldfinches than the American Goldfinches. The weather is cold and it is getting warmer outside.

Thank you for your support of our class bird feeders.

What to Do With a Baby Bird

By Catherine Griffin (from National Audubon Society at www.audubon.org/news/what-do-baby-bird)

As I walked to work on a busy New York City street one morning, two peeping baby sparrows on the sidewalk stopped me in my tracks. Should I move them to a safer location? Were they old enough to survive on their own? Just as I started to worry, mom showed up, and I let out the breath I didn't know I was holding.

Most people have probably had a similar experience (an Audubon colleague did just the other day). You see a baby bird, apparently alone and in distress on the ground. Perhaps it chirps a few times, pulling at your heartstrings as you wonder whether you should pick up the creature or leave it alone and let nature take its course.

The later is typically the better choice. However, how you proceed depends on whether it's a fledgling (what I encountered) or a nestling. Nestlings are completely fuzzy or have little to no feathers. Fledglings have entered what's best characterized as awkward teenagerdom. They're no longer as cute as they once were, still mooch off of their parents, and haven't quite learned how to fly. They can, however, flutter quite well and usually get themselves out of harm's way.

Once you've made that determination, you can decide what to do. Say it's a fledgling. There are times when you should think about moving that bird. In a large city such as New York, sidewalk motion rarely ceases and traffic flows endlessly—making neither place a solid option for a bird. "If there's a place nearby that's a little bit safer, I would move the bird," says Tod Winston of New York City Audubon. "But you want to put it somewhere where the parents still have access to it."

Susan Elbin, director of conservation and science at New York City Audubon, suggests that if you have a nestling on your hands, look for its nest. Contrary to popular belief, birds do not have a strong sense of smell and thus will not abandon their young if you touch them. Search carefully—the nest will likely be well hidden. If you find it, simply place the baby bird back in the nest.

According to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, if you can't find the nest, you may have to resort to plan B. Create a substitute nest for the bird—berry baskets lined with soft material (such as a towel) work well. Make sure that there are small holes at the bottom for drainage. Then, tie the new nest securely to a tree and place the bird inside. More than likely, the parents will find their offspring and continue to feed it. Watch from a safe distance; if you're right next to the nest chances are the parents will stay away until you leave.

If two hours pass without any sign of an adult bird, it's time to take more drastic measures. Find your local wildlife rehabilitation center, or go to your local veterinarian. Chances are, they'll know what to do with a baby bird. Organizations such as the Wild Bird Fund or your local Audubon Society can also offer advice. Baby birds may be cute, but they require constant feeding and care so the job is better left to its parents or professionals.



This osprey chick fell from its nest and was brought to a licensed wildlife rehabilitator to be examined for injuries, and was placed back in the nest with its family. Courtesy: USFWS.

2025 Birdathon

By Carol Mockridge

2025 Birdathon is on. Get ready.

The RVAS Birdathon returns May 16 - 17. Now is the 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 16 at 6 p.m. and goes to 6 p.m. on Saturday, May 17. 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/.

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 found. 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 choose "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 2025 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!



What to do about the bird flu?

By Jamie Trammell

Avian influenza, commonly known as bird flu, is a contagious viral disease that primarily affects birds. The severity of the disease varies depending on the virus strain and the species infected. Wild waterfowl, such as ducks and geese, often carry the virus without showing symptoms, though they can sometimes become sick and die. When bird flu spreads to domestic poultry (e.g., chickens, turkeys, peafowl), it can cause large-scale outbreaks, severely impacting farms across the U.S.

To help prevent the spread of avian influenza, practicing good biosecurity is essential. Key measures include:

- Preventing contact between domestic poultry and wild birds.
- Keeping poultry environments clean and sanitized.
- Reporting any signs of illness or unusual bird deaths to authorities promptly.

If you find a sick or dead bird in Oregon, do not touch it. Instead, report it to the Oregon State Veterinarian at AHHotline@oda.oregon.gov or the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife at 1-866-968-2600.

The National Audubon Society advises birdwatchers to observe birds at a safe distance and check with local, state, or federal wildlife agencies for guidance on whether to remove bird feeders. If any agency recommends taking down feeders, it is best to follow their advice. Additionally, the CDC and other health authorities recommend avoiding direct contact with dead birds.

As of the time of writing, there has been one confirmed case of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in Jackson County (2024), one in Josephine County (2023), and three in Klamath County (2023-2025). All cases were found in backyard poultry. For more information and updates, visit <https://tinyurl.com/4w2s5utc>.

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Credit: Keeley Kirkendell



This Chestnut-eared Aracari, a member of *Ramphastidae*, the toucan family (are you surprised?), did not want to be left out of this month's *Chat*. He insisted he perch here to remind you why you've gotta check out Keeley Kirkendell and Karen Barrow's talk on the birds of his native Ecuador at this month's RVAS Chapter meeting.

Please don't let him down! :-)



20% OFF One Regularly-priced Item

*Valid 10/1/24 thru 9/30/25 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.

THE CHAT

Newsletter of the
ROGUE VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY
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