

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

Deadline for the October 2025 issue is September 20



## September ZOOM Program

Tuesday, Sept. 23, 2025 at 7:00 pm

### *RaptorQuest: Chasing America's Raptors*

With Scott Harris

**Note:** The speaker will be virtual this month, but during the presentation we will be hosting a watch party with snacks and refreshments at the church (location below). Please join us!

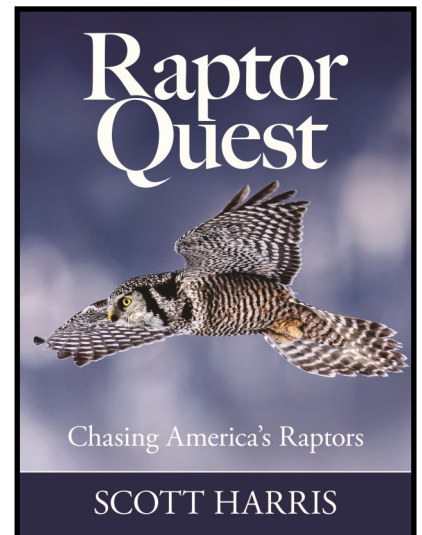
Scott Harris spent 17 months, chasing 53 raptors across 34 states – his version of a Raptor Big Year. His book *RaptorQuest: Chasing America's Raptors* is about his adventures, misadventures, successes, and failures along the way. From -36 degree days, to ones over 100 degrees, to just getting on the bird just in time, to the frustrations of missing one by minutes. It's about the birds – of course – but it's also about the people he met, the things he learned, and why he's already working on his next adventure.



#### About the Speaker:

Scott Harris became an avid birder when he and his wife, Randi, retired to South Carolina in March of 2020. It was a hobby he never imagined himself participating in, but now can't imagine living without. Scott has written more than fifty books in the past ten years, but *RaptorQuest* is his first entrée into the world of birding and birds. In addition to his writing, Scott also hosts a podcast – *NaturallyScott* – that focuses on birds, wildlife, and the great outdoors, and just signed a book deal for his upcoming book *Why We Love Birds: 52 Birders on Birding*.

In addition to his bird-related hobbies, Scott has the largest collection of John Steinbeck's *Travels with Charley* in the world, and plays harmonica in a blues band.



**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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## Mailing Address

RVAS

P. O. Box 8597

Medford, OR 97501

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 programs are often available via Zoom. The Zoom link is posted the day of the meeting on the RVAS website.

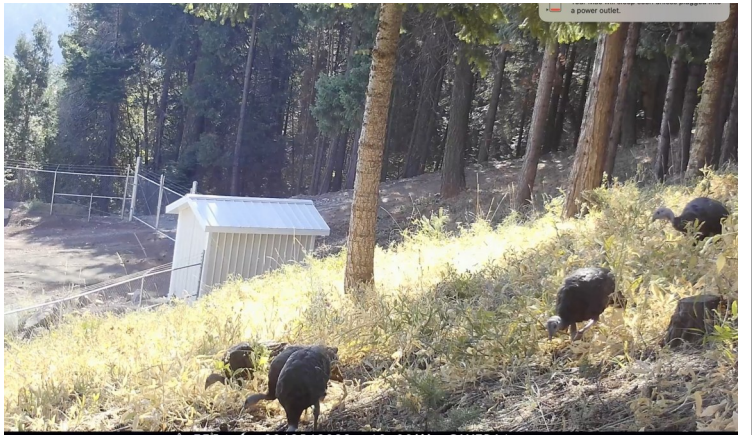


## RVAS Supports SOU Wildlife Camera Trap Research

By Karen Mager

Rogue Valley Audubon made a \$3000 donation in June 2025 to support camera trap monitoring research for the Mount Ashland exit highway underpass, which will undergo wildlife habitat improvements next summer to facilitate wildlife passage across Interstate 5. This research is led by Dr. Karen Mager, from Southern Oregon University. Funding will help support field experiments to document wildlife, including birds, using the north and south embankments of the underpass both before and after habitat improvements.

A couple of cool examples of the camera captures: Golden Eagle near I-5 (above), and Wild Turkeys moving towards the Mount Ashland underpass from adjacent forest (below).



## Status of upcoming events

Field trips: Denman Bird Walk - Oct. 1, Nov. 5, Dec. 3

Chapter Meeting: Tues, Sept. 23 at 7pm

## RVAS Financial Summary for July 2024 to June 2025

Kay Simmons, Treasurer

Total income of \$18,883 for the fiscal year, July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025, came from these sources:

Dues	\$1,477
Donations	4,597
Holiday auction	1,755
Birdathon donations (PayPal costs subtracted)	4,583
Chat printed subscriptions	201
Chat advertising	200
National Audubon Society	1,870
Sale of books	43
Interest from savings, CDs	4,157

Total expenses of \$12,358 for the fiscal year 2024-2025 included:

Administrative expenses	\$4,471
Mission-related expenses	\$7,887

Administrative expenses included: web site, *Chat* newsletter printing and mailing (\$1,100), meeting programs, Zoom subscription, storage unit, office supplies, insurance, and taxes.

Mission expenses included: Project FeederWatch, Birding in Schools, N. Mountain Park Bird Day, Badger Run Wildlife Rehab, SOU Earth Day, binocular purchase for N. Mountain Park Nature Center, updating Birds of Jackson County, and I-5 Wildlife Crossing research).

Thank you, Rogue Valley Audubon Society members for your generous contributions!

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## Drumroll for this year's Birdathon winners....

By Carol Mockridge

The Black-capped Chickadees did it again! For the third year in a row, the team raised the most money - \$3,395 to win the famous traveling owl trophy. The total for the 2025 RVAS Birdathon was almost \$5,000.

A big thanks to the three other teams for their fundraising efforts. It's not too early to plan to put together a new team for next year and join in the fun! You can read highlights from the two-day birding extravaganza in the June/July issue of *The Chat*.



The Black-capped Chickadees (above) - the team who tallied the most species AND raised the most money this year! From left to right: Amanda Alford, Janet Kelly, Kay Simmons, Leslie Hart, Carol Mockridge. Credit: Leslie Hart

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## Updates to RVAS Membership and *Chat* Subscription

**Annual Membership** is \$20. Pay via credit card through PayPal link on the website. Or mail a check to: RVAS, PO Box 8597, Medford, OR 97530

RVAS now recognizes any donation of \$20 or more as payment of the annual membership fee. That includes donations for the Birdathon.

**The *Chat* monthly newsletter:** The Chat is posted on the RVAS website. You can request to receive an email alert when a new issue of *The Chat* newsletter is released. Make the request on the "Home" page of the RVAS website: <https://www.roguevalleyaudubon.org/>.

**Mailing of the printed *Chat* is ending with the Dec. 2025 issue.** This is because printing and mailing costs exceed income from *Chat* printed subscriptions. Last year, printing and mailing costs were \$1,100, while income from our eight printed newsletter subscriptions was \$200.

-- Kay Simmons, Treasurer & George Peterson, Vice-President, Membership Chair.



## The Conservation Column

By Pepper Trail

I'll admit it. I am overwhelmed and devastated by the Trump Administration's all-out attacks on environmental protections, green energy, and climate science (well, science in general). It is hard to know where to begin to fight this many-headed monster, especially when Congress and the Supreme Court seem to have abdicated their roles in providing checks and balances under our Constitution.

We are fortunate to live in Oregon, where (most) of our elected officials understand that protecting the environment is critical to healthy communities, clean air and water, and a livable future – as well as simply our responsibility as the stewards of the planet (whether we like it or not). Unfortunately, decisions in D.C. have the potential for catastrophic impacts on our state, and indeed the world.

One recent terrible decision was the announcement that the US Forest Service would rescind the Roadless Rule. An outstanding summary of this issue was written by Haleigh Martin of KS Wild, and is reprinted below. A link to the article on the KS Wild website (with some beautiful photos) is: <https://www.kswild.org/conservation-efforts/roadless-rule-rollback>.

Things to note:

- The process of rescinding the rule is still ongoing. The USDA must publish a proposed rescission in the Federal Register, which will initiate a new public comment period under federal law.
- Public input is crucial. During the original 2001 rule's comment period, the public overwhelmingly supported the protection of roadless areas, with 95% of the record-breaking 1.6 million comments favoring the rule.

### What Happens Next?

1. Federal Register Notice: The USDA is expected to publish a proposed rule to formally rescind the Roadless Rule.
2. Public Comment Period: A public comment period will be opened, providing another opportunity for the public to submit formal written comments on the proposed rescission.
3. Final Rule: After considering the comments and finalizing an environmental impact statement, the USDA can issue a final rule to officially remove the Roadless Rule.

Once a comment period is announced, we will be sure to publicize it on the RVAS website, so that your voices can be heard.

## Rolling back the Roadless Rule could open up some of the nation's last remaining wild landscapes for exploitation.

Written by Haleigh Martin of KS Wild, July 2025

Across southwestern Oregon and northwestern California is some of the wildest, undeveloped land in the lower 48 states. One could venture out into the woods for a week and never see another single human but would likely find fascinating plant life, trees that have survived numerous generations, birdsong filling the air and dozens of sneaky critters scurrying along the forest floor, and cold, clean water rushing through creeks and streams.

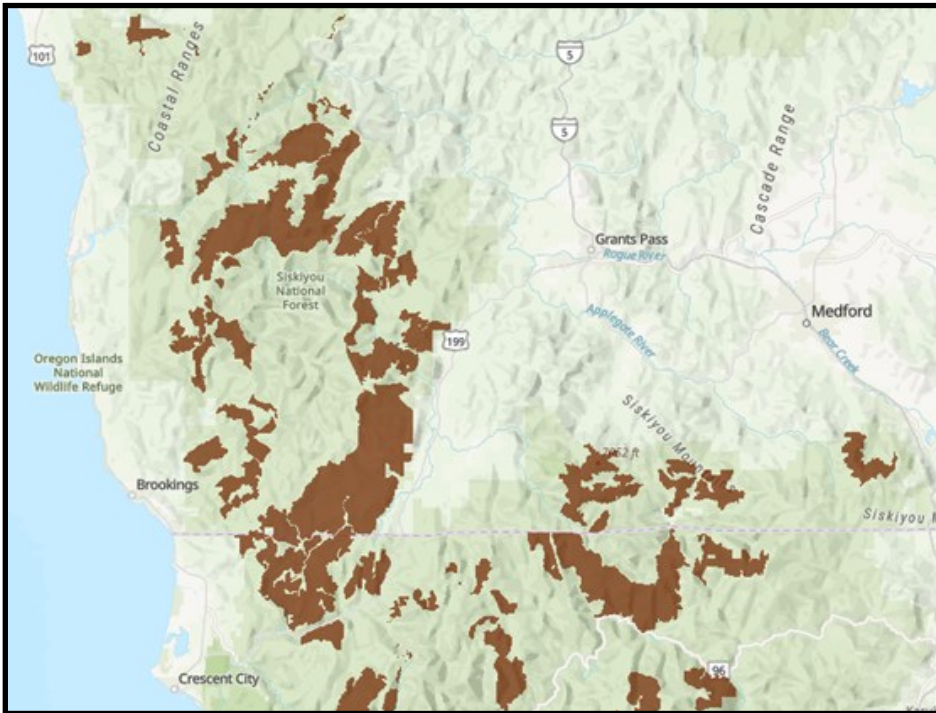
What we have here in our backyards is not an experience that every American gets to have.

Not everyone across the country has such ample access to public lands right outside of their front door. In fact, many people across the country may have to drive hours to get to their state's singular national forest. There is a reason why the rivers in this corner of the country have some of the best salmon and steelhead runs in the country. There is a reason why people travel from states away to backpack and raft and camp. There is a reason why many wildlife species populations have persevered here but have gone extinct in many other parts of the country. This region is extremely unique in its wild nature.

This wild nature doesn't just persist without protection. The vast wildlands of this region exist because people have fought for conservation of these landscapes. From the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act to the Wilderness Act to the Endangered Species Act, many policies in recent U.S. history have garnered the support of the public and decision-makers in order to keep the wild *wild*.

*Conservation Column, continued on page 5*

Conservation Column, continued from page 4



Unfortunately, those policies aren't carved in stone, and from time to time, folks in power will seek to revoke protections that keep them and their allies from exploiting and developing the very places many people have worked so hard to protect. We are currently watching this play out with the proposed rollback of the 2001 Roadless Rule.

[Click here](#) to play with an interactive map of all the Inventoried Roadless Areas across the United States, made by our friends at the Outdoor Alliance.

**What is the 2001 Roadless Rule?**

In 2001, the Roadless Area Conservation Rule was adopted with massive public support to protect 58.5 million acres of roadless national forest land in 39 states. The Roadless Rule was the result of years of work and public input. The public comment period set a record with 1.6 million public com-

ments submitted. The rule protects 58.5 million acres of national forests over 39 states from new road construction, and prohibits the logging of roadless areas in the National Forest System.

**What's happening with the Roadless Rule right now?**

In late June, Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins said that the US Forest Service (USFS) would be rescinding the Roadless Rule. Secretary Rollins, President Trump, and other GOP supporters of the rollback have framed the rule as "overly restrictive," claiming it impedes wildfire mitigation and local forest management. But [researchers](#) and folks who are familiar with the nation's few remaining roadless forests caution that the opposite is true.

Eliminating the Roadless Rule would not only destroy some of the most cherished recreation areas (11,337 climbing routes, more than 1,000 whitewater paddling runs, 43,826 miles of trail, and 20,298 mountain biking trails as well as sections of the Continental Divide, Pacific Crest, and Appalachian National Trails) — it would also threaten drinking water sources, imperil wildlife species and their habitats, and cost taxpayers money. Also, contrary to the Agriculture Department's rationale, rescinding the rule would increase the risk of wildfires. [New research](#) now in peer review shows that from 1992-2024, wildfires were four times as likely to start in areas with roads than in roadless forest tracts.

For many of us in southern Oregon and northern California, we will see the direct impacts of this policy rollback right in our backyards.

I believe I can speak for myself and many others when I say that the forests, rivers, meadows, and other wild spaces are what make this region so special. They offer recreation experiences like no other, they house some of the most unique wildlife and plant species in the country, they offer ample hunting and angling opportunities, and they are important spaces for many of us to escape to unplug and recharge from the day-to-day world. The contiguous wild spaces of this region and the nation are necessary for the future of many ecosystems, and rolling back the Roadless Rule to increase logging and resource extraction will undoubtedly cause more harm than good.

**Prepare for Action**

Dozens of U.S. representatives and senators have signed onto the Roadless Area Conservation Act of 2025 which would codify the Roadless Rule so that only an act of Congress could roll it back.

**BIRDCENTRIC EVENTS FROM AROUND THE REGION**

**RVAS**

**First Wednesday Bird Walks: August 6, September 3, October 1**

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.

**Wild Birds Unlimited**

**Touville State Park Birding Trip**

Join Erin Ulrich for a walk along the Rogue River at Touville State Park on Table Rock Rd. You might see Acorn Woodpeckers, Belted Kingfisher, Osprey, sparrows, Brown Creepers, nuthatches, and swallows, among others. Easy trails lead out of the park into the adjacent Denman Wildlife Area, which can be good for raptors. Limited to 9 participants. To reserve your spot, come in or call the store at (541) 772-2107.

DATE: Sunday Sept 14

TIME: 9:00 am

COST: Free

**"Learning Common Backyard Birds " presented by Shannon Rio**

Using photos, stories, bird song, and fun facts we will learn about the birds that live close around us in the Rogue Valley, some right in our own backyards! Focus will be on these birds: American Robin, Acorn Woodpecker, Red-tailed Hawk, Scrub Jay, Screech Owl, Mallard, Great Blue Heron, Black-capped Chickadee, Northern Flicker, American Kestrel, American Crow, American Bald Eagle, and a few special guest birds. More than identifying these birds, we will identify with them by learning their songs and behaviors. Space is limited, so come in or call the store at (541) 772-2107 to reserve your seat today.

DATE: Sunday Sept 14

TIME: 2-3:00 pm

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

COST: Free

**Klamath Bird Observatory**

**Banding Trip to Wildlife Images**

Come experience bird science in action with Klamath Bird Observatory! We'll carpool from Ashland to visit our banding station near Wildlife Images for a half-day, family-friendly outing. Get an up-close look at both resident and migratory birds, including fledglings from this season! Meet KBO scientists and bird banding interns, and learn about mist netting, data collection, and the bird life cycle. Explore career pathways in wildlife biology, ornithology, and field research. We especially encourage students and young folks to attend! This is a donation-based event, and your contributions help support our dedicated scientists and interns. Space is limited. For more information and to register, visit <https://klamathbird.org/callnote/join-kbo-biologists-for-our-final-bird-banding-trip-of-the-year/>.

DATE: Friday, September 19th

TIME: 6:30 AM - 12 PM

LOCATION: Wildlife Images, Grants Pass

COST: Donation-based





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# ROGUE VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

## THE CHAT

Newsletter of the  
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Post Office Box 8597  
Medford, OR 97501

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



### 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.

