

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

Deadline for the November 2026 issue is October 20



BIRDCENTRIC EVENTS FROM AROUND THE REGION

Attention, Curiosity, Wonder: An Introduction to Nature Journaling: **Sunday October 11, 10:30 am**

SOU [Science Lecture Hall \(1250 Ashland St, Ashland, OR 97520\)](https://www.sou.edu/locations/science-lecture-hall)

FREE! Seating is first-come, first-served.

Join us for a special lecture with scientist, educator, and author John (Jack) Muir Laws! His framework for nature journaling opens doors to rich discovery, creative thinking, and deep connection to place – and it's accessible and welcoming for everyone. All you need is a notebook, a pencil, and your curiosity.

In this lecture, Jack will share his approach to journaling, and you'll get to see how his close observation and curiosity take shape on the page in real time. Expect to be amazed, engaged, and inspired to start or deepen your own nature journaling practice.

Tracking Lewis's Woodpecker Migration Using Motus Technology **with Kaly Adkins**

Tuesday October 27, 2026 at 7PM
Virtual Zoom Presentation Only

Come learn about how wildlife biologists from the state, a variety of NGOs and Cal Poly Humboldt have collaborated to learn about migratory pathways of Lewis's Woodpeckers throughout the PNW using Motus wildlife tracking technology. This technology can be expanded to a variety of small-bodied wildlife and is helping to unravel the mystery of migration for many of these species. Kaly Adkins is a Regional Wildlife Diversity Biologist for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife in Bend that specializes in species of greatest conservation need east of the crest of the Cascades in Oregon.

Kaly Adkins, Regional Wildlife Diversity Biologist for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife in Bend, specializes in species of greatest conservation need. She will be presenting the work of wildlife biologists from the State of Oregon, Cal Poly Humboldt, and non-government organizations and their ongoing efforts to collect data, with assistance from Motus wildlife tracking technology, about the migratory pathways of the Lewis's woodpecker, yellow rail and silver-haired and hoary bats. To gain more information prior to the program, a podcast with Kaly and Northwest Nature Matters is available: <https://myowf.org/nwnm>



The Chat - October 2026

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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.

HOLIDAY PARTY ANNOUNCEMENT!

Help us close out 2026 with our annual holiday party! There will be games, prizes, and a beautiful slide show from Jim Livaudais!

Please bring a potluck item to share with your fellow birders.

Friday, December 4, 2026

6PM - 8PM

Medford United Congregational Church (Lidgate Hall)
1801 E. Jackson Street, Medford.

TIME TO RENEW YOUR RVAS MEMBERSHIP:

It's the start of our Fall programs.

Local chapter membership is just \$20 per year.

To join, mail a check payable to RVAS with your name, address and email address to:

Rogue Valley Audubon Society (RVAS)
PO Box 8597
Medford, OR 97501

Or join electronically through our secure PayPal platform on roguevalleyaudubon.org and clicking "Join". All proceeds go to Rogue Valley Audubon Society and are tax deductible.

Upcoming RVAS events

Kaly Adkins (ODFW) — October 27, 7p.m. Presentation on Motus stations and Lewis' woodpeckers. **Virtual Zoom presentation only.**

RVAS

First Wednesday Bird Walks: November 4

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.

Name Change Update

After thoughtful consideration, the Board of the Rogue Valley Audubon Society is proposing to change the name of our organization to **Rogue Valley Bird Alliance**. In recent years, chapters in Oregon and across the nation have reassessed how the Audubon name relates to their identity and how it affects their ability to connect and engage with their communities. After conversations with our members, volunteers, community partners, and fellow chapters, it is clear that our current name no longer reliably communicates our mission, as many individuals no longer associate the Audubon name with birds or conservation. Therefore, we believe this name change will better serve us in our core mission and work to support the conservation and restoration of ecosystems so that birds and other wildlife may flourish and contribute to our planet's biodiversity.

We will remain part of the Audubon network and have chosen to follow the lead of so many other chapters to include the name "Bird Alliance" in our new name to maintain that connection and better express to the community who we are and what we do. Birds are central to our mission and our work, yet many of the public, especially younger folks, do not recognize us as a friendly local organization interested in going out and seeing birds together and working to conserve their habitats. Therefore, "Bird" should be central in our name. The word "Alliance" indicates that we are allies of birds and other wildlife, as well as allies with our fellow chapters and other conservation groups.

We understand that everyone may not agree with this proposal to change our name and we assure you that we respect all of your opinions. It is important to remember that we are not changing who we are or our vital mission and we are proud of all we've accomplished as Rogue Valley Audubon Society. Our aim is to expand our membership, increase our presence, and become a renewed and vital voice for the conservation of birds and other wildlife and the ecosystems they depend upon throughout the Rogue Valley and beyond.



Please join us at the November meeting (Tuesday November 24, 2026) for a round table discussion with Bob Hunter and Shannon Rio about why other chapters have been changing their names and what our thoughts are.

There will be an opportunity for members to vote on the name change at the November meeting, as well as an option to vote by email. Please join us for this important discussion.

Christmas Bird Counts in the Rogue Valley

The most wonderful community science project of the year is upon us! Rogue Valley Audubon members support two Christmas Bird Counts every year, covering the areas around Ashland and Medford. Please contact the coordinator for each area if you are interested in joining in on the fun:

Ashland Christmas Bird Count
Date: Sunday, December 18, 2026
Coordinator: Jon Pope – jonath.pope@gmail.com

Medford Christmas Bird Count
Date: Saturday, December 26, 2026
Coordinator: Rebekah – rebekah.bergkoetter@gmail.com

Carol Mockridge from the **Black-Capped Chickadees** accepting the Birdathon Trophy from Rebekah Bergkoetter

Rogue Valley Audubon donated \$1000 to combat avian botulism in ducks in the Klamath Basin on Sept. 7, 2026. The donation was made to **Bird AllyX**, who treat sick, rescued birds in collaboration with the Klamath Wildlife Areas. A big thanks to all our members and supporters!



RVAS lost a good friend with the passing of **Sally Peterson** on Sept. 14, 2026. Sally and her husband George Peterson were famous for the remarkable Afghan dinners that they hosted as fundraisers for RVAS. We fondly remember Sally for sharing her love of birds with children at Earth Day and leading RVAS Elementary School Education programs, her many contributions to Audubon Christmas bird counts, and her warmth and enthusiasm in supporting RVAS Holiday Parties and Board Retreats. Her radiant smile and steadfast support will be sorely missed.



September Field Notes 2026

By Frank Lospalluto

As if it were the seasons...all life is song...we sing because we love you

Joseph Jarman

October is here. The whistled song of the Varied Thrush is heard early in the forest now. Yellow and amber colors the world.

The last week in September saw a large movement of **Greater White-fronted Geese** over southern Oregon; a reliable sign of the changing seasons

At the recent Western Field Ornithologists conference during a field trip up Lower Table Rock, Amanda Alford and her group were surprised by a group of 17 **Chukar** who must have managed a nifty prison escape.

Two **White-throated Swifts** were detected flying over Agate Lake Sept 18 during another WFO field trip. And a third was spotted by Richard Cimino on Sept 19 near where the old Siskiyou Highway goes under I-5 near the Mt. Ashland exit.

The last **Rufous Hummingbird** sightings were just before Sept 20 by multiple observers in our region.

Janet Kelly spotted an **AMERICAN GOLDEN-PLOVER** at Agate Lake Sept 6 (see her photo). A rare visitor only spotted and identified every few years here. Two **Pectoral Sandpiper** were at Agate Lake Sept 17 on a WFO field trip led by Janet and Jim Livaudais.



Photo by Janet Kelly

We get few **Forster's Tern** over here in Jackson County as opposed to Klamath County. One was spotted by Paul Schlegelmann Sept 27 at Howard Prairie Lake.

A **Red-necked Grebe** was found on Agate Lake Sept 2 by Gary Shaffer.

A juvenile **American Goshawk** was spotted on a WFO field trip led by Jeff Miller near Meridian Viewpoint on the Siskiyou Crest Sept 19. Another juvenile goshawk was reported on the same date from Soda Mtn by Susan Harrison.

Lewis's Woodpecker are back to the delight of all birders.

A **Prairie Falcon** was over Emigrant Lake seen by Ryan Terrill and his WFO field trip Sept 19. Another was spotted on the backside of Mt. Ashland Sept 21. It is getting to be a harder bird to find in the county in recent years.

A late **Gray Flycatcher** was observed by visiting birder Frank Hall Sept 29 at Howard Prairie Resort. Frank also had a late **Dusky Flycatcher** at Emigrant Lake Campground Sept 30. Ryan Terrill and Matt Brady had a Dusky Sept 17 in Ashland.

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A minor irruptive occurrence of **Clark's Nutcracker** has been occurring in the west. Locally there have been multiple sightings over the last few weeks from areas along the Siskiyou Crest, Mt. Ashland, Pilot Rock, Lily Glen and even in Ashland among other places. Speculation abounds.

Pygmy Nuthatch has also been displaying signs of an irruptive occurrence with birds seen over the last weeks from Mt. Ashland to Ashland to Prescott Park to Lily Glen and elsewhere. Again, much speculation.



Photo by Gary Schaffer

Lin Stern and her WFO group had a lone **Bank Swallow** at White City Lagoons Sept 17.

Howard Sands reported a **Canyon Wren** from Upper Table Rock Sept 4.

Townsend's Solitaire have been moving out of our local forests as they migrate to western juniper woodlands where they will winter. They are a bird that sings in the autumn and winter months as they defend winter feeding territories usually of juniper berries. The junipers near Pilot Rock and in the Coles-

tin don't appear to be hosting a big berry crop this year. When this happens solitaires resort to feeding on other seeds and berries especially juniper mistletoe (*Phoradendron juniperinum* which is closely related to oak mistletoe *P. villosum*) and doing a lot of flycatching. Mistletoe berries are also an important food source for birds like **Western Bluebirds**.

Varied Thrush are back in the local forests along with **Hermit Thrush** with both species being detected throughout the winter. A few **Swainson's Thrush** are being reported but they will be gone by November.

Golden-crowned Sparrow are back. Pepper Trail reported a few Sept 14 from Ashland and that is pretty much their normal arrival time. A few **White-throated Sparrow** are beginning to be reported around the county, a handsome bird are they.

That's all for now. Thank you to everyone including: all the WFO field trip participants and leaders, Janet Kelly, Gary Shaffer, Howard Sands, Jim Livaudais, Jeff Miller, Susan Harrison, Leslie Hart, Mary Kay Wells, Elijah Hayes, Liam Ehrman, Bob Hunter, Brian Barr, Anne Goff, Lin 'Caspian' Stern, Ryan Terrill, Matt Brady, Benjamin Guo, Tanner Martin, Shane Jimerfield, Nate Trimble, Kristi Mergenthaler, Shannon Rio, Myco Shroeder, Marion Hadden, Terry Karlin, Riis Hinrichs, Harry Fuller, Pepper Trail, Tim Sorby, Andres Carvalhaes, Jonathan Pope, and Amanda Alford.

Peace.



Photo by Gary Schaffer



Photo by Frank Lospalluto

The Conservation Column

Thoughts on Conservation

by Erich Reeder

During these trying times for conservation in America with the many-pronged and almost daily assaults on our natural and wild public lands and wildlife (our Inventoried Roadless Areas, Botanical Areas, Areas of Critical Concern, Late-Successional Reserves and Riparian Reserves, Wild and Scenic Rivers, National Wildlife Refuges, National Monuments, and even our National Parks) through the rescinding, rewriting, and/or reinterpreting many of our longstanding, bedrock conservation laws and regulations including the Endangered Species Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, the Roadless Area Conservation Rule, etc., it can all seem so frustrating and overwhelming.

At times like these I believe it is important to remind ourselves *why* we care about these natural places and the birds who live there with so many other wild species among the wildflower meadows, oak savannahs, cascading streams, flowing rivers, vibrant wetlands, majestic forests, and the wave-battered rocky coast of our spectacular region. Most of us got into this conservation business by being captivated by avian visitations and other discoveries made in these beautiful and conserved landscapes, awakening us to moments of sudden awareness, ecstasy, and grace that have enriched our lives with deeper insights into our own lives and all the life around us. These public lands and spaces, and the birds and wildlife who live there, have given us so much that we feel a moral responsibility to reciprocate that gift through protecting these places and passing them on intact to the next generation. It is a fierce, protective love.

I also find it helpful to remember the history of conservation in America, which by no means has been a walk in the park. George Bird Grinnell founded the first Audubon Society in 1886 as the plume hunters were in their heyday and market hunters were decimating shorebird populations and the epic flocks of passenger pigeons. He and others were also outraged by the foreseeable extinction of bison, elk, and other large fauna of North America by indiscriminate poaching. Others were concerned about our disappearing forests, wetlands, and other wild places.

Wildlife Refuges followed, and Forest Reserves, and then our magnificent National Monuments and Parks. More recently, our Wilderness Areas, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and Roadless Areas expanded this network of protected landscapes. None of it was inevitable; it took the dedicated, hard work of many individuals working alone and together over decades, collaborating with other organizations and promoting laws and legislation with the shared vision of conserving our public lands and wildlife—not only for those alive now, but for those untold generations to come. This is our shared legacy.

Thankfully, there have always been, and continue to be, passionate, concerned, dedicated, and joyful people who share this vision and are willing to contribute their time, energy, knowledge, and resources to conserve and protect our wild public landscapes and the birds and other wildlife who inhabit them. It is a deep calling that generally takes hold of the individual in one of these wild places and then resonates outward into the wider community.



Jim Harper surveying for peregrine falcons on the Coast. Photo by E. Reeder

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Unfortunately, there have also been, and continue to be, a small number of people who view what is left of our natural and wild public landscapes as untapped resources, at the great expense of this priceless public legacy. History teaches us that as long as there is anything to gain from our public domain, there will be someone there to go after it. As John Muir warned a hundred years ago, “nothing dollarable is safe.”

It is up to every generation then to discover and cherish these ecologically vital and incredibly beautiful public lands and to meet these threats. By doing so, we may pass on these public lands unmarred to the next generation to discover and be enriched by, and to then love and protect. That’s the way conservation works. Or doesn’t, for if any generation slips into complacency or loses connection with these wild public places, the whole system of our protected landscapes and the birds and other wildlife which depend upon them, so long and hard-worked for, can all fall apart.

Fortunately, as a species our senses are tuned to observe and engage with the natural world and it is deeply embedded in who we are as human beings to notice and wonder at the mysterious lives of other species. That is why it is so important that early in their lives, as children, teenagers, and young adults, people are able to find and make a connection with a particular stream or forest or park or place and connect with the birds, butterflies, wildflowers, trees, or other animals and plants they see there. It gives them an honest affinity for these places and the lives who live there.

A big part of Audubon’s role in the past and hopefully long into the future, has been helping people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds make that connection, by presenting speakers, holding bird-centric events, supporting educational projects and scientific research, and, perhaps most importantly, guiding field trips into some of our beloved natural areas so others too may fall in love with them and speak up for their conservation. We must continue all of these important and proven programs and whenever and wherever think of new ways to expand on them.

The misguided efforts to enter our cherished public lands with more roads, more logging, more mining, and more destruction, may have sway right now, but these incredible public landscapes and the wildlife who live there have the boundless beauty and power to inspire everyone with an open human heart to love and action. Furthermore, all the science supports continuing and expanding conservation of our public lands to mitigate the biodiversity and climate crises. The science also supports all of the laws, rules, and regulations which support their conservation and are under attack. Beauty, inspiration, love, sound science, and the law are a lot to fight back with.

How? Same as always: stay informed, write letters to editors, call your representatives, write comments and attend meetings during the NEPA process on proposed projects on our public lands, assist conservation organizations and legal groups who are challenging this assault on our public lands, support our friends at our strained federal agencies, and think of new ways (or old ways set aside) to engage the public to participate in conservation efforts. Indeed, there’s a lot of work to do, but let it be joyful work.

Finally, autumn is a celebratory season, with harvests and feasts and games and fungi and friends and changing colors and, of course, bird migrations. These migrations themselves are real-life manifestations of hope and faith in the present and future. The high swirling calls of Greater White-fronted Geese passing by overhead this time of year are a hopeful action begun together at their breeding grounds thousands of miles to the north and taken on the faith of a good if uncertain outcome. So, let us remember this in the coming months, to keep our own hope and faith alive in our hearts and share it with each other as we celebrate our lives out in the fields and forests with birds and at our homes with friends and families.

Cheers!



Photo by Frank Lospalluto

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