Number 517
November 2026

The Chat



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

Deadline for the December 2026 issue is November 20

November Chapter Meeting
Tuesday November 24, 2026
7 PM Medford
In-person/Zoom Hybrid

Chapter Name Change Discussion

With Shannon Rio and Bob Hunter


Photo by George Peterson

Our chapter meeting this month will engage in a healthy conversation about the complexity of John James Audubon and why we would like to rename our local chapter to the Rogue Valley Bird Alliance. We will vote on this topic at the meeting. If you are unable to attend, but would like to vote, we will post a recording of the talk Wednesday after the meeting with information on how to vote virtually. A list of Oregon community Audubon chapters who have already changed their names can be found on page 8. Members will have until December 2 to vote.

Shannon Rio is on the board of the Klamath Bird Observatory because of its work to conserve birds and wild places in nature. She is a wildlife educator with a goal to connect people (and herself) with nature so that they will want to protect what they love. She teaches classes in various settings and also teaches yoga, works as a nurse practitioner, is devoted to family and friends and community and loves learning anything about the natural world through hiking and birding and sitting quietly observing the wonder of it all.

Bob Hunter is a retired attorney who worked in private practice and then as a staff attorney for WaterWatch of Oregon, a river conservation organization. He has been a lifelong advocate for rivers and refuges and has received numerous local, statewide, and national awards for his conservation work. He has served for over 40 years on the board of various state and local conservation organizations. He is an avid birder, fly-fisher and outdoor enthusiast.

Location: UCC Church, 1801 E. Jackson St., Medford, OR 97504 in Lidgate Hall
Time: 7:00 pm (doors will be open beginning at 6:30 pm)

This meeting will be in-person, with a Zoom option. Zoom link will be posted on RVAS webpage prior to the meeting.

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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 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! Pepper Trail will be the MC and there will be games, prizes, and a beautiful slide show from Jim Livaudais!
Please bring a potluck item to share with your fellow birders and make this a low waste event by bringing your own plates, utensils, & cups.
RSVP: Kay at: mwsimmons1@verizon.net
Friday, December 4, 2026, 6PM – 8PM, Medford United Congregational Church (Lidgate Hall) 1801 E. Jackson Street, Medford, Oregon.

Christmas Bird Counts in the Rogue Valley

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

Ashland Christmas Bird Count
Date: Saturday, December 19, 2026
Coordinator: Jon Pope – jonath.pope@gmail.com

Medford Christmas Bird Count
Date: Saturday, January 2, 2027
Coordinator: Rebekah – rebekah.bergkoetter@gmail.com

Upcoming RVAS events

RVAS

First Wednesday Bird Walks: December 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 & Highway 62 in Medford, or at Bi-Mart.

Directions to meeting spot: We will meet at the entrance off Agate Rd. between ¼ and ½ 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 ¼ to ½ mile past the fires 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.

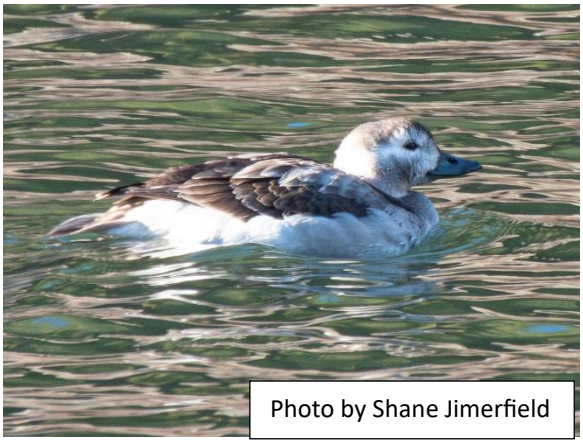
October Field Notes 2026
By Frank Lospalluto

keep going into the world, bird,
Ada Limon

Golden brown November is upon us, the daylight vanishing rapidly. Here are a few highlights from the last few weeks.

Nine **Snow Geese** were been reported from Howard Prairie Nov 7 (SJ, EH, LE). **Cackling Geese** have been spotted near area lakes with 30 at Emigrant Lake Oct 27 (LE). Four **Cinnamon Teal** were in the Denman Wildlife Hall Tract Nov 1 (SJ). Some very handsome **Gadwall** were at Wilson's Pond near Ousterhout Farm Nov 5 (GO). Gary Shaffer spotted a **Eurasian Wigeon** Oct 28 at Agate Lake. The only one reported so far this fall. Five **Canvasback** were on Agate Lake Nov 5 (HS, GS). Two **Surf Scoter** were on Lost Creek Lake Oct 18 (JK).

Leslie Hart and Mary Kay Wells found a first winter male **LONG-TAILED DUCK** on the Holy Waters below the Lost Creek Dam Nov 6. Almost an annual visitor to lakes around our area it can be an elusive bird to re find. *Clangula hyemalis* is an arctic species breeding up in the tundra. The bird is known for its long twin central tailfeathers. The bird is a prodigious diver. A vulnerable species sensitive to rising temperatures, declining in the western part of its range.
The 'little winter babbler' has a nasal call akin to a yodel that can be heard at great distance.


Photo by Shane Jimerfield

(Robertson, G. J. and J.-P. L. Savard (2020). Long-tailed Duck (*Clangula hyemalis*), version 1.0. In Birds of the World (S. M. Billerman, Editor). Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, NY, USA.)

Liam Ehrman had 10 **Barrow's Goldeneye** at the Holy Waters Nov 1. The presence of the dam and the fish hatchery there has accounted for relatively easy observation of this species. Prior to the dam this duck was quite difficult to spot in the county (fide Otis Swisher). They feed on fish eggs, freshwater mussels and other aquatic invertebrates.

A **Sooty Grouse** greeted a hiker on Big Red Mtn. Nov 3 (KM). A number of **Ruffed Grouse** were spotted on the oak initiative project near Lake Creek recently (LE).

Three **Dunlin** were at Denman Hall Tract Nov 1 and 5 were at Emigrant Lake Park Nov 2 (SJ, LE).



Photo by Elijah Hayes

Seventeen **Bonaparte's Gull** were photographed at Agate Lake Nov 4 by two of the remaining Binosaurs (GS, HS). A first cycle **American Herring Gull** was observed by Elijah Hayes Nov 2 on Emigrant Lake. The kiddie pool that ended summer is slowly filling again.



Photo by Liam Ehrman

Liam Ehrman found a **Red-necked Grebe** at Emigrant Lake Nov 2. Another Red-necked Grebe was reported and photographed by Shaun Liddy at Little Hyatt Lake Nov 1.

Black-crowned Night-Heron are being seen again at their roost at Whetstone Pond with multiple reports of late.

American White Pelican are still up at Howard Prairie Lake.

Osprey in November has become a much more regular event in recent years. One bird was up at Lost Creek Lake Nov 6 (LH, MK). **Rough-legged Hawk** have been reported from Vesper Meadow and Howard Prairie area recently. The meadows around the intersection of DIM and Hyatt Prairie Rd.is a regular location to observe this beautiful raptor in the autumn (SJ, LE, KG, HS).

Northern Pygmy-Owl are sounding off at first light and last around the area. Often the short trill followed by a toot or two to signal their presence and feeding territories.

A **Williamson's Sapsucker** was observed in Ashland Nov 3 and at Willow Point Campground Oct 14 (NT, JK). Pepper Trail reported 41 flycatching **Lewis's Woodpeckers** moving along Jenny Creek in the CSNM Oct 23. A recent burn area near there had a few pairs of nesting Lewis's Woodpeckers for 2 or 3 straight years just a few years back. A lone **Black-backed Woodpecker** was heard on the ski slopes of the Mt. Ashland Ski Area doing its unique sounding 'pik call and rattle' Nov 2.

A **Northern Shrike** was spotted out around Emigrant Lake Oct 23 (VZ).

A flurry of **Black-billed Magpie** reports along Indian Memorial Rd. as a few birds are spending a lot of time scavenging roadkill on that windy road where we humans drive too fast and wildlife suffers the consequence. A **Clark's Nutcracker** was seen and heard on Mt. Ashland Oct 27 and another was observed on Big Red Mtn. Nov 3 (KM).

Nine **Horned Lark** were observed at Agate Lake Oct 9 and 7 were at the Medco A flats Oct 24 (GS, SJ). Both locations are often good to find this species and possibly to spot

wintering birds of the federally listed subspecies that is endemic to western Oregon and western Washington: *Eremophila alpestris strigata*.

Pacific Wren can seem rather ubiquitous during the winter as birds from further north move down or disperse out into woodland habitats. A dark and darting, yet, companionable bird.



Photo by Shane Jimerfield

A flock of **Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch** have been up and around the summit of Mt. Ashland for two weeks as of this writing. They were first observed on Oct 26. The numbers have been ranging from 30 to 40 birds. Most of the birds are the expected subspecies of Hepburn's *L. t. littoralis* .



Photo by Gary Shaffer

These birds have the gray head with black on the head and chin. The subspecies that tends to occur more in the interior is the “Brown-cheeked” *L. t. tephrocotis* which has the obvious brown cheek. This is the normal window for migration for these birds. They are regular this time of year. It is a good number that have lingered and many have gotten very close views and photographs as seen here and on eBird. These birds will likely move east into lower elevations in the Great Basin or east side of the Sierras to overwinter. But their movements are not fully known or documented. A couple years back in November there was a flock with both subspecies around the Grizzly Peak trail for an extended period.

A **Lapland Longspur** was spotted by Janet Kelly Oct 11 on the Medco A flats where they are often found during migration. Shane Jimerfeld had the same one or another on Oct 24 at that location.

Five **Tricolored Blackbirds** were photographed along Agate Rd. Oct 18 (HS).



Photo by Ryan Terrill

Laura Lovrien photographed a **Black-throated Gray Warbler** on a walk in Lithia Park Nov 5.

Anne Goff observed a **Black-headed Grosbeak** in Ruch Oct 11.



Leucistic Anna's Hummingbird. Photo by Keeley Kirkendall

That's all for now. Thank you to everyone including: Janet Kelly, Gary Shaffer, Howard Sands, Jim Livaudais, Jeff Miller, Leslie Hart, Mary Kay Wells, Elijah Hayes, Liam Ehrman, Bob Hunter, Anne Goff, Ryan Terrill, Tanner Martin, Shane Jimerfield, Nate Trimble, Kristi Mergenthaler, Shannon Rio, Keeley Kirkendall, Myco Shroeder, Marion Hadden, Terry Karlin, Pepper Trail, Tim Sorby, Andres Carvalhaes, Jonathan Pope, Barry Harris, Laura Lovrien, Shaun Liddy, and Vince Zauskey.

Peace.



Photo by George Peterson

PROJECT FEEDER WATCH

North Mountain Park

Here we go again! On November 6, 2026, Project FeederWatch began its 25th season at North Mountain Park in Ashland. Over the years this has become a favorite with new birders and "old timers". For the Saturday counts which are open to the public often a dozen or more eager souls will show up. The Friday counts are done by one or two RVAS observers and are not advertised to the public.

We are in need of volunteers to assist with this project in one of two ways. The Friday counts need a single observer (or two) to count for one hour on a Friday morning. Saturday counts need a volunteer to fill the feeders before the count, greet those who attend and monitor the count list. That volunteer and others who attend assist with bird identification. .

The counts take place every other Friday and Saturday from 9 – 10 am. If you can help out once or twice during the season that would be great! Please contact me at marypat9195@gmail.com.

All the count data is sent to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology which runs the program along with Birds Canada. This information shows which bird species visit feeders at thousands of locations across the continent every winter. The data also indicates how many individuals of each species are seen. This information can be used to measure changes in the winter ranges and abundance of bird species over time.

Mary Pat Power

White City Library

Thank you, Rogue Valley Audubon Society, for sponsoring the White City Library Project FeederWatch for a second year! Last year we submitted 24 counts and identified 22 different species. We are excited to participate in the count again this year and could not do it without your support. On January 19 we are hosting a children's Project FeederWatch program- open to all ages. Last January – March, we opened the library an hour early on Saturdays from 11:00-12:00 for bird watchers to sit in comfort and observe patio birds (right after we put seed out) from our floor to ceiling windows. Unfortunately, we did not have many folks attend. Please contact me if you would be interested in stopping by on a Saturday morning and I will arrange it. We even supply the morning treats! Feel free to contact me.

Amy Fann
Spark Space Specialist
White City Library
afann@jcls.org



List of Oregon community Audubon chapters that have changed their name to "Bird Alliance":

Bird Alliance of Oregon, previously Portland Audubon Society, birdallianceoregon.org

East Cascades Bird Alliance, previously Central Oregon Audubon Society, serving Deschutes, Crook, and Jefferson Counties, Bend, ecbirds.org

Mid-Willamette Bird Alliance, **previously** Audubon Society of Corvallis, serving Linn and Benton Counties, mwbirdalliance.org

Seven Capes Bird Alliance, previously Audubon Society of Lincoln City, serving Lincoln and Tillamook Counties, sevencapes.org

Umpqua Bird Alliance, previously Umpqua Valley Audubon Society, serving Douglas County, umpquaaudubon.org

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