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## President's Column

RVAS is off to a great start for this, our forty-second year. The September meeting, featuring Otis Swisher and Vince Zauskey, was a great success. You won't want to miss the next two meetings-- John Alexander this month and Russ Namitz, reflecting on his Oregon Big Year, in November. We end the calendar year with the annual RVAS Holiday Potluck and Auction on December 7<sup>th</sup>. Mark your calendar now.

Earlier this year Bettina and Bob Arrigoni did us all a great service by preparing thirty-four of the 1968 to 1972 birding columns, written for the Medford Mail Tribune by RVAS founder Otis Swisher, for availability on the RVAS website. I encourage you to visit our site, enjoy Bettina's great photos, and read about bird sightings in our valley forty years ago. For members who wanted to own a printed version of this effort, we prepared a few copies and sold them (below cost) at our September meeting. Very few remain. If you wish to buy a copy, send a message to [roguevalleyaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:roguevalleyaudubon@gmail.com) and we will get you details about ordering your copy.

Already many winter residents have arrived, and next month Project FeederWatch will begin. These winter counts are important for bird census purposes. They also give us an opportunity to help the community learn something about bird identification and to appreciate the variety of winter birds in Ashland and in Medford. Many thanks to Denny Niebuhr for coordinating Project FeederWatch at North Mountain Park and for establishing a new site at Jefferson Nature Center. And thanks to Mary Pat Power, who has offered to be the new coordinator this winter. When you see her request for volunteers in this issue, please consider spending one hour as a volunteer once, twice, or even more often. It's a great way to get involved, with a small time commitment, for a very important effort.

Good Birding! -- Bill Hering

Field Notes: The Changing Seasons

*Compiled by Stewart Janes*

It's been a pretty normal late summer. The August heat drug on into September until a couple of early winter storms broke the string of hot days and gave us a taste of things to come later this fall. Some birds moved out a bit early this year. Our local **Violet-green Swallows** skipped out by late-August at least in my part of the valley. It wasn't until mid-September that birds from farther north began to push through. By September 1 the bulk of the summer birds had cleared out, also a bit earlier than usual. That doesn't mean they had all left. A few warblers, **Western Tanagers**, **Western Wood Pewees**, and **Rufous Hummingbirds** are still with us and will continue to be seen into the first days of October.

Shorebird migration peaks in late August, but we will continue to pick up late migrants. Dunlin which normally bring up the rear of fall shorebird migration have yet to make an appearance. **Baird's Sandpipers** have been more abundant than usual this year. In addition to those seen earlier this summer, individuals were seen between 9/11 and 9/16 at Agate Lake and the Kirtland Ponds (RN,JT). Small numbers of **Pectoral Sandpipers**, an uncommon but regular fall visitor, were seen between 9/6 and 9/18 also at Agate Lake and the Kirtland Ponds (GS,RN,JT). **Semi-palmated Plovers** were at Agate Lake and Emigrant Lake between 9/6 and 9/16 (FL,GS,JT,RN). **Red-necked Phalaropes** dropped in on 9/6 at several locations including the Kirtland Ponds, Agate Lake, and Emigrant Lake (FL,GS).

Other waterbirds also made their way to wintering areas with a brief stopover in the valley. **White Pelicans** were reported between 8/30 and 9/16 (JT). **Caspian Tern** flocks of up to 40 individuals were observed at Emigrant Lake and the Siskiyou Summit between 8/21 and 9/5 (FL,HF,FE). Grebes of all flavors were at Agate Lake on 9/13 including **Horned**, **Eared**, **Western** and **Clark's** (RN). **Eared Grebes** lingered at Agate Lake until at least 9/16 (JT), and a **Horned Grebe** was at the Kirtland Ponds on 9/18 (GS).

Waterfowl are just beginning to enter the valley. The first **Greater White-fronted Goose** flock was seen on 9/17 over Hobart Bluff (SJ). **Northern Shoveler** numbers are increasing with 150 at the Kirtland Ponds on 9/13 (RN). Early **American Wigeon** were reported from the Lynn-Newbry Ponds on 9/11 (HF).

**Turkey Vultures** started kettling up and heading south a bit earlier than normal with small flocks and individuals reported from the Ashland area in the second week of September (MP). It's more usual to see the first kettles in the third week of the month. The monster kettles of a thousand birds or more from farther north typically arrive in the first week of October.

Migrating flocks of summer birds were scarce, but a mixed flock of **Cassin's Vireos**, **Hermit** and **Townsend's Warblers** was at the Siskiyou Pass on 9/13 (FL). The movement of **Yellow-rumped Warblers** which trails the movement of other neotropical migrants began in full swing as of 9/20 in the high country (SJ).

Field notes continued from page 3

Wintering birds began to show up on 9/4 with **White-crowned Sparrows** (BH) and 9/10 with **Gold-crowned Sparrows**. The first **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** were seen on 9/12 near Pilot Rock (FL). I've been spending more time in the high country the last couple of years with my students and am beginning to realize that many of our wintering birds arrive first at higher elevations before showing up in numbers near the valley floor. This has certainly been the case with the sparrows and kinglets. Has anyone else noted this pattern?

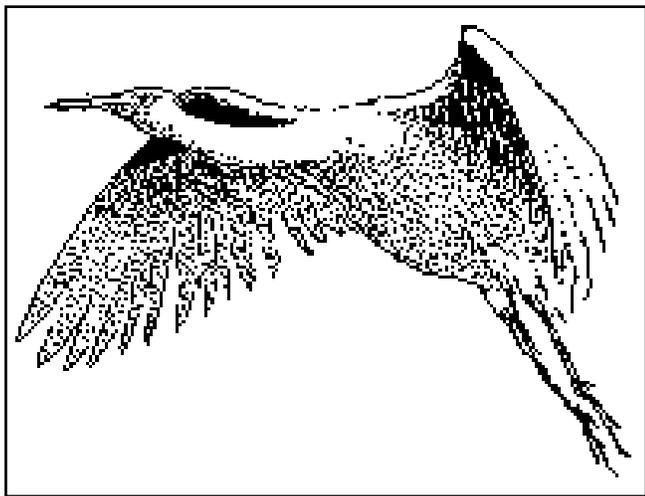
An early **Say's Phoebe** was reported from Eagle Point on 9/9 (BH). **Lewis's Woodpecker** numbers began to increase in late August with 11 seen in the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument on 8/28 (FL).

There has been a strange lack of accipiters moving through the valley so far. Late August and September is usually the time to see numbers scattered about. Maybe I have just missed them, but I am still waiting. A **Prairie Falcon** was at Agate Lake on 9/16 (JT), and a **Northern Goshawk** was on Mount Ashland on 9/8 (FL).

The **Great-tailed Grackles** at Emigrant Lake (up to 5 individuals) were seen through 9/4 (LK,FL,LN). **Common Poorwills** were reported from both Salt Creek Road on 8/28 (RN) and near Pilot Rock on 8/29 (FL). Late summer reports of **Common Poorwills** are few for the area, but this may just represent lack of observer effort.

Other sightings of note include a **Clark's Nutcracker** on Mount Ashland on 9/13 (FL), **Rock Wrens** at Emigrant Lake on 9/4 (LN) and on MacDonald Peak on 9/3 (FL), and **White-headed Woodpeckers** at Wrangle Gap on 9/2 (PT).

Thanks to this month's contributors including Forrest English, Harry Fuller, Bob Hunter, Linda Kreisman, Frank Lospalutto, Russ Namitz, Liz Northrup, Michael Parker, Gary Schaffer, Jeff Tufts, and Pepper Trail. Deadline for contributions to the Field Noted in the next edition of The Chat is October 15.



## RVAS Local Membership Renewals Are Due

The Rogue Valley Audubon Society (RVAS) has over 780 members. Members are affiliated with RVAS in one of three ways: The vast majority pay dues to the National Audubon Society (NAS) and this automatically makes them members of RVAS, which is the local NAS Chapter. Some people pay dues directly to RVAS and are not NAS members, and some members pay dues to both the NAS and RVAS.

RVAS receives a stipend from the National Audubon Society for each NAS member and that is combined with the dues paid by RVAS local members and various donations, to help support a variety of activities and programs in the Rogue Valley. These include: *The Chat* Newsletter (nine issues per year), seven educational and social membership meetings per year, monthly field trips and bird walks, educational programs for students and adults, monitoring of regional conservation issues, work with local wildlife managers to improve access and bird habitats, bird counts for national species censuses, and support for local research projects.

**All RVAS local memberships are for a one year period, and will expire September 30th, 2013.**

If you pay local dues, please keep your local membership, and your support of RVAS, active by completing the application below, and mailing it with your check before September 30th. If you are not an RVAS local member please consider becoming one. (If you are reading this on our web-page, print the form you will find on the "Join and Support" page.) If you are uncertain of your membership status, or have any questions about membership, please send an email to: Gary Palmer at [fgpalmer@charter.net](mailto:fgpalmer@charter.net). Thanks very much!

**The Rogue Valley Audubon Society dues are \$20 per year, per family.**

### RVAS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION OR RENEWAL

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (optional): \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Rogue Valley Audubon Society will not share your information with any other organization.

Check if you are a: New member \_\_\_\_\_; Renewing member \_\_\_\_\_

*The Chat*, our newsletter, is available on the RVAS webpage or by email. Please check YES if you would like a printed copy mailed through the USPS. YES \_\_\_\_\_

Dues alone do not fully support our many activities, conservation, educational and research projects. Please consider a contribution in addition to your \$20 membership. Your additional contribution is tax deductible as RVAS is a 501(C)3 organization. Donation: \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

Please check here if you wish your contribution to be anonymous \_\_\_\_.

Mail this form with your check for **\$20** RVAS dues and any contribution you wish to make, to:

Rogue Valley Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 8597  
Medford, OR 97501

## Project FeederWatch Returns

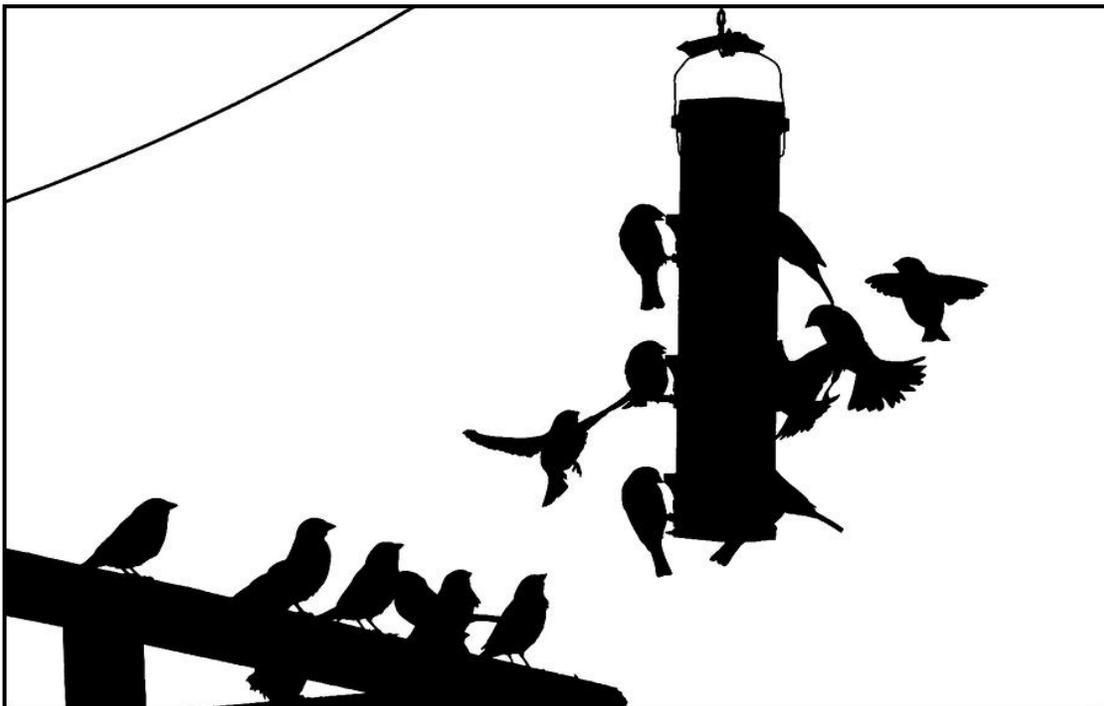
It's that time of year! In November Project FeederWatch begins its 11<sup>th</sup> season at North Mountain Park in Ashland and will expand to Coyote Trails Jefferson Nature Center in Medford.

Organized by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology Project FeederWatch is a winter-long survey of birds that visit feeders at backyards, nature centers, and other locales in North America. FeederWatchers periodically count the birds they see at their feeders from November through March and send their counts to Project FeederWatch. This data help scientists track broad scale movements of winter bird populations and long-term trends in bird distribution and abundance.

Led by a volunteer each free watch is one hour. Birders of all abilities help count and record birds which visit the feeders. This is a great opportunity for novice birders to practice bird ID as there are unobstructed, close up views of 10 - 20 species perched at feeders.

Project FeederWatch begins at North Mountain Park on Friday - Saturday, November 8 - 9 from 9 - 10 am each day and continues on alternate Fridays and Saturdays through March. Project FeederWatch at Coyote Trails will begin Thursday - Friday, November 14 - 15 from 11 am - noon and continue on alternate Thursdays and Fridays through March.

RVAS is seeking volunteers for each session. Emails with additional information will be sent in early October. For more information or to volunteer contact Mary Pat Power at [mary-pat@ashlandhome.net](mailto:mary-pat@ashlandhome.net) or call 541-292-4763.



## Building a Deep Water Marsh at Wood River Wetland

By Juliet Grable

The 3000-acre Wood River Wetland is straddled by Agency Lake to the south and the Wood River to the east. The BLM acquired this former ranchland with the help of groups like The Nature Conservancy in the mid-1990s, with the aim of restoring it to the productive wetland it once was. But as so often happens with drained marshes, the rich peat soils had degraded and the land subsided several feet. If the levees were breached, the acreage would simply become part of the lake. The BLM would rather it serve as a nursery for native fish, habitat for migrating shorebirds and waterfowl and a natural filter for agricultural pollutants.

For about ten years, the agency allowed the marsh to accumulate water in winter and dry out by late summer, but the fluctuating water levels made it hard for emergent vegetation like cattails and tule to establish. Starting in 2006, BLM hydrologist Andy Hamilton switched strategies and started carefully managing water to ensure more or less ideal conditions all year round. This meant pumping water in during later summer and pumping it out in winter. He modeled the strategy after an experiment in the Sacramento River Delta in California, hoping to accelerate the build-up of organic matter and essentially reverse the subsidence that had occurred.

Today the marsh is dominated by tule and cattails. Hamilton uses two sampling methods to track changes in soil organic matter; so far the data shows between one and one-and-a-half inches of material accumulating every year, which far exceeds the natural rate of accrual. Hamilton believes that if they can build the elevation by an average of two feet, the levee can be breached and the marsh will sustain itself.

In the meantime, the Wood River Wetland is a favorite spot for duck hunters and birders alike. You can access the marsh from Modoc Point Road, about 26 miles north of Klamath Falls. No motorized vehicles are allowed, so plan accordingly.



Photo by Jeff Tufts

**The Conservation Committee is seeking more members.**

Bird conservation is at the heart of the Audubon cause. The RVAS Conservation Committee meets twice a year to set objectives, discuss issues and plan local conservation work. Co-Chair Pepper Trail focuses primarily on national and regional issues and writes most of the Conservation Columns for *The Chat*. Co-Chair Robert Mumby focuses on local issues. If you are interested in joining the committee, contact Robert Mumby at 541-535-2934 or [rdmumby@charter.net](mailto:rdmumby@charter.net). We are interested in adding a RVAS liaison with the Klamath Wildlife Refuge Complex, so if that is an interest of yours, please let Robert know. Thanks!

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR DECEMBER 7, 2013!**

**IT'S THE DATE OF THE HOLIDAY PARTY WITH POTLUCK, PROGRAM, RAFFLE AND AUCTION AT THE MEDFORD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**

Back by popular demand will be Pepper Trail as emcee and Jim Livaudais with a program of birds of "some place in the world". For now, we will leave you in suspense about where.

Our auction, raffle, program and potluck make for a fine evening where we have a great time, eat well, learn something, and most of all, raise money to support RVAS educational programs from Project FeederWatch to new outreach opportunities including bird conservation programs to local schools and service organizations throughout Jackson County.

Event organizers are looking for volunteers to help with many tasks. Please contact Sooney Viani at 541-482-5146 or Kate Cleland-Sipfle at 541-482-2933 if you are interested in helping with the event.



**FIELD TRIP LEADERS NEEDED**

Local birders are needed to lead field trips. Field Trip Chairman Maggi Rackley coordinates the events, but leaders have the option of choosing their destinations. Please contact Maggi at [imabrrrder@yahoo.com](mailto:imabrrrder@yahoo.com) to volunteer, or to get further information. Thank you.

## RVAS MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

We welcome the following new members this month: Dawn Bakerink, Retina C. Center, Sally Y. Davis, Barbara Elder, Sue Harrison, Eugene Hart, Bonnie Johnson, Peter & Linda Kreisman, Karin Mack MD, Nancy Monta-Christianer, Gary Pellett, Marian Pitts, Elizabeth T. Robinson, Frances Sharkey, John & Joy Taylor, Sandra E. Thirtyacre, Hans J. Topel, Emmalisa Whalley.

New members receive the current issue of *The Chat* newsletter in a special mailing, along with other Rogue Valley Audubon Society information, and a postpaid, preaddressed postal card so that their preference for future issues of *The Chat* can be recorded. *The Chat*, may be received by mail, at no cost to the member, or it can be viewed online at <http://www.roguevalleyaudubon.org/>. New members are encouraged to join us at our Chapter meetings, field trips and bird walks, and to become involved in the organization. Welcome to RVAS!

## ***CONSERVING OREGON'S ENVIRONMENT Breakthroughs That Made History* by Michael McCloskey**

A review by Robert Mumby

I downloaded this new book from Amazon for \$3. It is also available as a paperback.

McCloskey, who was a key player in some of the environmental protection activities chronicled in this book, covers conservation and environmental protection actions from the 1880s to 2011. Oregon, with a high percentage of its population who go to the forests, streams and ocean for recreation, hunting and fishing, was a leader in many conservation actions and was very innovative in successfully accomplishing protections.

Those who are interested in conservation or environmental protection efforts may find inspiration and ideas from this history. If you are concerned about wildlife, protecting or enhancing our environment, this book will alert you to the need to continuously monitor government policies, practices and the plans and activities of others extracting natural resources. Policies can change and administrators can propose actions without considering the ecological consequences. Individuals and businesses find new ways to cause harm, even if unintentional, such as some of the recent mining operations or some of the windmill installations. Oregon's record on reducing or eliminating pollution has not been as successful as its conservation efforts. For example, it took action by the federal government to stop extensive spraying of forests for some ten years with Agent Orange, an herbicide lethal to all life that was damaging the health of people near the sprayed areas. Many streams continue to be polluted beyond federal standards, our air quality in some areas is poor, herbicide and insecticide spraying has not been fully monitored or controlled and the state government has been reluctant to take action to reduce the pollutants.

I liked the book though it goes into great detail on a limited subject, so a reader should have a strong interest in the history of conservation and environmental protection activities or be seeking ideas to help with their own protection efforts. On that basis I recommend it. It is easy to read and well written though the paging of the ebook is sometimes a bit awkward. It would make a good reference book to seek further information on the issues discussed.

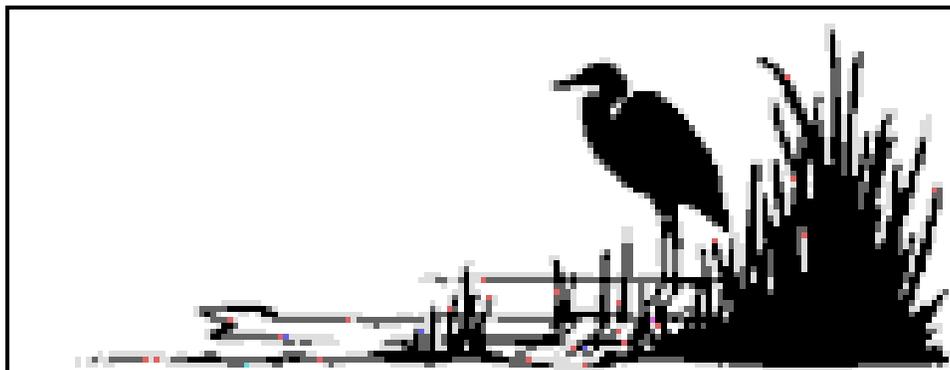
## A THANK YOU FROM SFI SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT KELLEY LEONARD

Being able to attend this class was a wonderful opportunity to enlarge my knowledge of the Smith River watershed, and reaffirm how important intact river systems are. I learned about how the geology affects what plants grow along the river banks, and how dependent the massive old growth redwoods are on the river and creeks that flow through the Redwood National Park. Rachael McCain was a wonderful guide as we floated down the Smith River and walked through Stout Grove. She spoke about the different plants that grow under and around the redwoods, and the wildlife that has adapted to the cool moist forest. I learned about the beavers on the river that build their homes. Those same beaver homes also shelter the young salmon seeking refuge from predators. Rafting along the river Rachael pointed out the deep clear pools, the overhanging brush, the small creeks and the many trees that provide food and homes for diverse birdlife.

Afternoon snorkeling on the South Fork of the Smith River allowed me to see firsthand three different kinds of Salmon and trout that thrive in the crystal waters. Mike McCain shared his knowledge and love of the wild places he has studied in the Smith River drainage. He talked about how the fish survive, how they adapt and how important it is to protect their home. He impressed upon the whole group how the Recreational Area designation was the best way to preserve this special place.

Both Rachael and Mike were our guides the next day as went walked through the Yontocket Slough. The Bald eagle we watched fly over the wide slow Smith River was the highlight, but certainly not the only bird we were able to observe. I was surprised to learn of the Native American village that once occupied the site of the park, and to hear of how the European farmers changed the ecology of the dunes and wetlands to suit their farming and ranching needs. Rachael spoke of plans to restore the native plants which will further help the endemic animals.

Again I would like to thank the Audubon Society for their generous scholarship which offset the cost of this class. I will go back to teaching elementary students with fresh enthusiasm and



## UPCOMING RVAS FIELD TRIPS

### Sat. October 12:

**Birding trip with Romain Cooper around Josephine/Del Norte counties.**

Meet at the O'Brien Store about eight miles south of Cave Junction at 8:15 and depart at 8:30 am. Contact Romain at [romain@frontiernet.net](mailto:romain@frontiernet.net)

Check the website for updates to field trips.

## ACTIVITIES IN THE ROGUE VALLEY

### Winter Birding

Join Harry Fuller for these two Thursday night lectures, as he shows and discusses which birds to seek in winter & where they are found. The class will cover both the I-5 corridor and Klamath Basin. There will be two Saturday field trips, one in Ashland, the other to the Klamath Refuge. Register online at [www.ashland.or.us/register](http://www.ashland.or.us/register)

AGES	13 to adult		
	<b>Lectures</b>		<b>Field Trips</b>
DAYS	Thursdays		Saturdays
DATES	October 17, 24		October 19, 26
TIMES	6:30—8:00pm		8:00am - 3:00pm
PLACE	North Mountain Park Nature Center		
COST	\$25		

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Member, National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys

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# ROGUE VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

## THE CHAT

Newsletter of the ROGUE VALLEY  
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## MONTHLY BIRD WALK WITH MURRAY ORR

First Wednesday Each Month: Little Butte  
Creek Walk. Meet at entrance gate of the  
Denman Wildlife Area at 8:00 and the walk  
will start at 8:30. (The gate is open between  
8 and 8:30 only.) Please contact **Murray Orr**,  
**541-857-9050** for details and if you are will-  
ing to join him in organizing these bird walks.  
He needs volunteers to help him open and  
close the gate and record observed species  
when he is not available. Walks will continue  
through 2013.

## 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 on-  
line. Send an e-mail [RogueValleyAudubon@gmail.com](mailto:RogueValleyAudubon@gmail.com)  
and ask to be added to the e-mail notification list. And  
be assured, we will never share your e-mail address  
with any other organizations.

