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The Quail

News from Lane County Audubon Society



From Our President

Maeve Sowles, 541.343.8664, maeveanddick@q.com

Vaux's Swifts Put on a Free Real-Time Nature Show in Eugene



Photo: Mike Eldredge

Inside Agate Hall Chimney

Vaux's Swifts (*Chaetua vauxi*) are small aerialist insectivore birds. They do not perch to rest, as songbirds do, but spend their entire day on the wing. They are long-distance migrators from Central America to the Pacific Northwest (PNW) in the spring (mid-April to mid-May), where they then nest

in the forested areas as far north as British Columbia. When they first arrive in the PNW they use chimney roost sites to rest and regain their strength before continuing into the surrounding forests and further north to set up nests. These birds eat thousands of insects every day! At the end of their summer breeding season, they gather again into migrating flocks and use the chimneys in the fall, as they prepare for the south-bound migration. In the winter they reside primarily in Mexico and Central America.

It's important to note that the Vaux's Swifts haven't always had brick chimneys to roost in at night along the Pacific Flyway. Originally, they used the hollowed-out spaces in dead

trees — and many still do this. But as much of this habitat has disappeared, the birds have adapted. These birds also use rock crevasses with vertical openings in the western mountains as roost and nest sites. Old brick chimneys, however, have become critical to the migration survival of these birds. The structures are unique in their ability to provide a safe spot for sleeping swifts. The birds' small claws cling onto the rows of mortar that hold the bricks together. Sadly, due to the age of some of these chimneys, many are under threat of being torn down or have been capped. These human-built roost sites protect the vulnerable resting birds from predators and low nighttime temperatures, which they cannot survive.

The Agate Hall Chimney on the UO campus has been a major nighttime migration roosting site for these swifts for almost 40 years! It is an ecologically significant migratory stopover for thousands of Vaux's Swifts during the spring and fall migrations!

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Lane County Audubon Society

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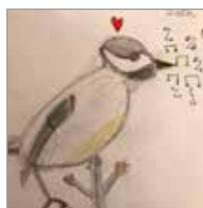
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Conservation

Debbie Schlenoff, 541.685.0610, dschlenoff@msn.com

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Report, 2022

As I write this, it is difficult to look away from news that conveys the horrors of war, which are immediate, malevolent, and devastating. The immediacy of this may have overshadowed another item in this month's news—the release of the IPCC's 2022 report. It may not seem as urgent a problem to many people, but it is already causing harm to millions of people and will continue to devastate more. IPCC assessments are written by hundreds of leading scientists worldwide, who volunteer their time and expertise. They enlist hundreds of other experts as contributing authors, to provide complementary expertise in specific areas.

The report lays out the tremendous costs for humanity. Among them are: food and water insecurity, increased adverse health impacts, removal of livelihoods, destruction of people's homes, and the resulting displacement of masses of people. In addition, it details the impacts of increases in natural disasters, including drought in some areas and flooding in others, heat extremes, and increased wildfires.

This sixth assessment by an international group of scientists and

experts also focuses on ecosystems and biodiversity more than in previous reports. Researchers, 270 of them from 67 countries, analyzed 14,000 scientific publications to write up the report. Due to their analysis of actual data that has been tested for statistical significance, the authors were able to use terms like “high confidence.” Here's just a sampling of problems highlighted in the report: [ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/](https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/).

- Climate change has caused substantial damages, and increasingly irreversible losses, in terrestrial, freshwater, and coastal and open ocean marine ecosystems (high confidence).
- The extent and magnitude of climate change impacts are larger than estimated in previous assessments (high confidence).
- Widespread deterioration of ecosystem structure and function, resilience and natural adaptive capacity, as well as shifts in seasonal timing have occurred due to climate change (high confidence), with adverse socioeconomic consequences (high confidence).
- Approximately half of the species

assessed globally have shifted polewards or to higher elevations (very high confidence).

- Hundreds of local losses of species have been driven by increases in the magnitude of heat extremes (high confidence). Mass mortality events have occurred on land and in the ocean (very high confidence), including the devastation of kelp forests (high confidence).
- Climate-caused local population extinctions have been widespread among plants and animals, detected in 47% of 976 species examined and associated with increases in hottest yearly temperatures (very high confidence).
- Risk of extinction is even greater for endemic species. “~100% on islands, ~84% on mountains, ~12% on continents (high confidence), and ~54% in the ocean (notably the Mediterranean) (low confidence) are projected to be threatened with extinction due to climate change.”
- Marine heatwaves are causing “abrupt shifts in community composition that may persist for years (very high confidence), with associated biodiversity loss (very high confidence), collapse of regional fisheries and aquaculture (high confidence), and reduced capacity of habitat-forming species to protect shorelines (high confidence).”

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IPCC authors

Field Notes: February 2022

Tom and Allison Mickel, 541.485.7112, tamickel@riouisa.com

Thick-billed Murre, White-winged Scoter, Wilson's Warbler, Rufous Hummingbird

The month was drier than normal and ended with record-setting cold. This may have kept a number of our less hardy birders inside. Some of the early migrants have started to arrive, as usual, with many more to come in the next couple months.

Abbreviations:

Fern Ridge Reservoir (FRR), Oregon Birds Records Committee (OBRC), South Jetty of the Siuslaw River (SJSP)



Photo: Greg Thomson/USFWS, wiki commons

Thick-billed Murre



Photo: Alan Schmierer, wiki commons

White-winged Scoter

Blue-winged Teal	Feb 1	Vaughn Rd	SH	Wintering or very early migrant?
White-winged Scoter (1100)	Feb 25	Tokatee Klootchman	RR	Very large flocks still in the area
Surf Scoter (540)	Feb 25	Tokatee Klootchman	RR	Large flocks still in the area
Clark's Grebe (3)	Feb 9	SJSR	S&SG	Uncommon at coast
Band-tailed Pigeon	Feb 14	Oakridge	MLS	Earlier than normal
Rufous Hummingbird	Feb 15	Fox Hollow Rd	RW	Quite a bit earlier than normal
Sandhill Crane (49)	Feb 18	Springfield	A&DH	First report for spring migration
Black-bellied Plover (122)	Feb 22	Amazon Prairie	RR	Large flocks occur in the winter
Thick-billed Murre	Feb 19	Siltcoos beach	JL,NC	First Lane record is accepted by OBRC
Rhinoceros Auklet (80)	Feb 19	SJSR	JL,NC	Very high numbers
Black-legged Kittiwake (8)	Feb 19	SJSR	JL,NC	Still around in good numbers
Black-legged Kittiwake (35)	Feb 25	Tokatee Klootchman	RR	Around in even larger numbers
Northern Fulmar	Feb 19	SJSR	JL,NC	Headed north for the breeding season
Snowy Egret	Feb 22	FRR	MS	Same bird as earlier?
Turkey Vulture	Feb 22	Pleasant Hill area	MJ	First of the year in that area
Violet-green Swallow	Feb 14	Cantrell Rd	JW	First spring arrival
American Robin (1000s)	Jan	McKenzie Bridge	WL	Feeding on Madrone fruit
Chipping Sparrow	Feb 13	KR Neilson Rd	DA	Wintering or very early migrant?
Swamp Sparrow	Feb 15	Bond Rd	VB	Few reports this winter
Orange-crowned Warbler	Feb 5	Eugene yard	S&SG	One of many found this winter
Wilson's Warbler	Feb 19	Springfield	VB	Rare wintering species

A&DH Anne & Dan Heyerly, CP Calvin Penkauskas, DA Dennis Arendt, JL Joshua Little, JW Johnny Westland, MJ Mary Johnson, MLS Mary Lee Sayre, MS Michael Sanders, NC Nolan Clements, RR Roger Robb, RW Rebecca Waterman, S&SG Steve & Susie Gordon, SH Sally Hill, VB Vickie Buck, WL Whitey Lueck

Herb Wisner Will Be Missed

Lane Audubon is sad to report the passing of life-long Audubon member Herb Wisner on February 20. A Lane Audubon Board member and long-time organizer of the Eugene Christmas Bird Count, he was also a teacher, writer, and committed naturalist and environmentalist.

Herb was a truly wonderful human with a keen mind and a kind heart. Our sympathy goes to his family.

Link to the Register Guard Obituary: [registerguard.com/obituaries/p0194072](https://www.registerguard.com/obituaries/p0194072)

—Maeve Sowles

Audubon Adventures Helping Students Draw Connections to Nature

By Cecelia Hagen

Nora Hagerty, a first-grade teacher at Adams Elementary, kindly responded to a request for insight into how educators are using the Audubon Adventures materials. Her creative and innovative ideas clearly help her students appreciate birds and the interwoven world they share with us. Thanks to Nora and all who sponsor Audubon Adventures school kits!

Nora writes: In our first grade class, I projected the “Plants Are for the Birds” issue of Audubon Adventures, and read it aloud to the class (during lunch), as it’s a higher level than some first graders’ reading skills. They were enthused to discuss the newsletter’s elements during and after, making connections to their experiences and background knowledge. One student said her dad also grew coneflower in the garden, the native flower noted in a caption as providing seeds for birds. Another student contrasted the grasshopper being eaten by a bluebird in a photo with her knowledge of a praying mantis. A connection one student shared was that the elderberry

enjoyed by some birds, noted in a call-out section, is also an ingredient in his own daily vitamin.

“And the learning widens: even young children can make impactful connections, as evident when, after hearing the segment about “What’s Best for Pests?”, one student expressed concern for her family friend’s use of chemicals to kill weeds, because she understands it can hurt animals.

“Later, we used an Audubon for Kids’ David Sibley step-by-step video that shows how to sketch a Black-capped Chickadee. We viewed it twice, to garner more time and skill. The students were very engaged and made great drawings. Some even added creative embellishments. The plan is to read more Adventures editions, try other integrated assignments, and do more drawings of birds to place on a temporary mural of a native oak tree in our class hallway.”

To view David Sibley’s drawing lesson, visit audubon.org/get-outside/activities/audubon-for-kids. You can even try it out for yourself, or with any children in your life!



Audubon in the Schools Update

The core group of Audubon in the Schools (AITS) volunteers had a virtual meeting in February to discuss how we might interact with schools and students this year. Our program depends on in-classroom interactions with bird feathers and specimens that the students use as models for their drawing exercises.

The group plans to do two requested Outdoor School sessions in April, and reach out to other Outdoor

School groups for other bookings. We also discussed purchasing some small binoculars, easy for kids to use, to help them find bird decoys placed in trees as part of the training.

One teacher from Edison has asked for in-class AITS programs. If this works out, the group is willing to give it a try! Our group decided to draft a letter to other teachers who have used the AITS program, letting them know we are again open to classroom

sessions, especially if an outdoor venue is included. It will have been two years since the last in-class sessions.

Many thanks to Barb Pope, Janet Barnes, Rose Britton, Marty Merrill, Kathy Wilson, and Evelyn Rosas for being at the meeting. Sue Markley and Rosie Hammond could not attend, but are still interested in helping when we get rolling again.

Good Job AITS Team for doing this important work!

LCAS Program Meeting Tuesday, April 26, 7:00 pm

Dennis Arendt, 541.221.3691, dennisarendt@gmail.com



This LCAS Program will be in person and also on Zoom. The Zoom link and building location will be available on the LCAS website closer to the date. The program will be recorded as well, and accessible to you from our website afterwards.

Native Pollinators and Native Plants: Your Tiny Visitors and the Plants They Love



Bruce Newhouse

Our April presenter is Bruce Newhouse who asks:

Did you ever wonder about all those flying and crawling critters visiting your flowers? Do you know how to tell a bee from a fly? Do you know that hummingbirds and some flies are good pollinators? Do you know how to plant a garden that will be the best possible place for native pollinators? If these kinds of questions go through your mind as you stare at your garden, this presentation is for you! We will familiarize ourselves with the most common native pollinators, and learn a few simple tricks to tell them apart. We'll also learn some of the best things we can do to invite native pollinators into our yards, including which plants "rock the world" of the little creatures that run it.

Bruce is a native of the Willamette Valley, having spent his childhood days mostly in Lake Oswego, and many weekend days on his grandparents' farm in Hillsboro. Eugene has been his home for many years. He probably got his love of plants from his mom and his love of the outdoors from fishing with his dad. After graduating from OSU with a BS in Environmental Science, he worked for 10 years as a county and city land use planner specializing in natural resources. In 1989, he became a private ecological consultant, and still gets excited doing inventory and assessment of sites from city natural



Photo: Bruce Newhouse

Agapostemon virescens



Photo: Bruce Newhouse

Ligusticum apiifolium

areas to wilderness areas. He did botanical inventory and assessment for the Gahr Farm, a site in Gopher Valley, and the Noble Oaks Preserve for TNC. He is a major contributor of images to the Oregon Flora Project, works with several nonprofits including NPSO, and has recently helped co-found the Lane County and Oregon mycoflora projects.

Bruce is the owner-operator of Eugene-based Salix Associates, which offers services in ecologically-based natural resources planning, including botanical/biodiversity surveying, wildlife habitat inventory and analysis, restoration and management planning, and related environmental planning tasks and issues. He also is an experienced science field and classroom instructor (University of Oregon, Oregon State University, Portland State University, Lane Community College, et al.) specializing in the identification of sedges, rushes, grasses, and more generally, rare, native and invasive plant species, butterflies, and fungi. And he serves as a volunteer ecological advisor to several nonprofit groups and committees in the greater Eugene area.

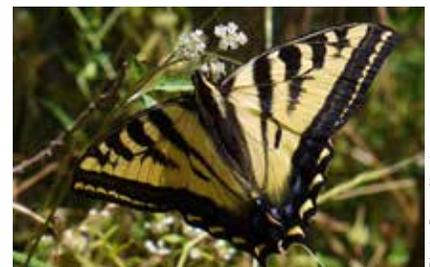


Photo: Bruce Newhouse

Papilio rutulus



Photo: Bruce Newhouse

Boletus edulis

Lane County Audubon Society



The Quail is the newsletter of Lane County Audubon Society, a chartered chapter of National Audubon Society. Local members of National Audubon Society receive a free subscription to *The Quail* but are encouraged to voluntarily join Lane County Audubon Society.

The Quail Subscriptions

Contact Tim Godsil at 541.915.8852 or tgodsil@gmail.com

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Lane County Audubon Society Welcomes You—Join or Renew Today!

We ask you to become a local member of Lane County Audubon Society and support our grassroots efforts in the local community. Your membership dues for National Audubon Society no longer fully cover the costs of a membership in your local chapter. Your local dues stay here to help us work on local education projects and conservation issues related to birds and their habitats. With your support, we will continue to do the things you expect from us. We welcome your suggestions—this is your Audubon! We appreciate your support. — *Maeve Sowles, President*

Lane Audubon Membership Benefits

- *The Quail*—9 issues/yr.
- Field trips and bird walks
- Program meetings
- Educational publications
- Conservation issue representation
- Answers to questions: 541.485.BIRD
- Website: laneaudubon.org

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From Our President

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The swifts' use of the Agate Hall Chimney has been observed and reported for only a few nights each migration and yet it is one of the top chimneys used by migrating Vaux's Swifts in the PNW. Lane County Audubon Society (LCAS) has been sponsoring a viewing event ("Welcome Back Swifts") two or three nights during each migration for 22 years. During last fall's migration 37,779 Vaux's Swifts were counted entering the chimney over 12 evenings. The number is not a total of the birds that may have used it. If we had volunteers do daily counts, the numbers could be higher!

For the last 12 years Larry Schwitters, a Washington resident, has been organizing and compiling the use of major roosting sites and several lesser sites in California, Oregon, and Washington for Vaux's Swifts during their spring and fall migrations. This effort has grown over the years, and the results can be viewed at: vauxhappening.org/

Built in the 1920s, Agate Hall is already designated as an historical structure. After the Agate Hall Chimney was deactivated for use as a building heating system, the University of Oregon installed straps and earthquake mitigation supports on the chimney. In fall 2013, they cleaned out the interior in order to assess and maintain the structural integrity of the building. We would like to encourage the UO to also assign Agate Hall Chimney an official status, preserving it as important habitat for the migrating Vaux's Swifts.

UO's Agate Hall Chimney is a valuable structure that is under-utilized in terms of educational opportunities and public accolades,

which the university community could find beneficial. An educational plaque could be placed outside to inform, educate, and show the ecological value of this structure. Students could use the site to study animal behavior, and learn data analysis techniques, using counts of the Vaux's Swifts at the chimney during migrations. The University of Oregon could include the Agate Hall Chimney, with Vaux's Swifts entering, as part of a virtual campus tour! The University can gain public acclaim through these actions and, if needed, could leverage donations for maintaining this structure.

During evenings in the spring and fall, hundreds of people watch this natural spectacle. Vans of birding tourists have this chimney on their wish list to be able to see, hear, and enjoy the swifts entering. Teachers have brought young students and their families to watch these birds entering the chimney. Families with children of all ages come to have ice cream from nearby businesses and watch the swifts. People bring out-of-town visitors to see this amazing natural phenomenon. The swift-watching experience is an important part of our local community life.

LCAS would like to propose a formal adoption of the Agate Hall Chimney as important bird habitat, and to ask the UO to maintain the chimney perpetually, so it can be a dependable migration stopover for the Vaux's Swifts, and to assure the future enhancement and delight for our human community. If anyone wants to help in this project, we would like your input!

To learn more about Vaux's Swifts: allaboutbirds.org/guide/Vauxs_Swift/overview

For those of you who have not seen the birds using the chimney, check

out this Youtube: [youtube.com/watch?v=1TT07lAdNaM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1TT07lAdNaM)

And/Or look on page 8 to find out where and when LCAS is hosting in-person, real-time spring viewings.



Photo: Steve Kolbe

Vaux's Swift

Conservation

continued from page 2

- "Ecosystem services that are at threat from a combination of climate change and other anthropogenic pressures include climate change mitigation, flood risk management, food provisioning, and water supply (high confidence)."

The report determines that protection for biodiversity and natural ecosystems is essential. For example, ecosystem health secures resources such as freshwater, and coastal habitats shield against the effects of storms. Multiple lines of evidence indicate that to maintain the resilience of ecosystems, we need "effective and equitable conservation of approximately 30% to 50% of Earth's land, freshwater, and ocean areas."

Unfortunately, the harms caused by climate change are accumulating much more quickly than scientists had predicted in earlier reports. The longer it goes unchecked, the more impossible it becomes to stop it.

We must act now to swiftly reduce emissions of carbon dioxide, methane, and other greenhouse gases.



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LCAS Bird Walks & Events

Rebecca Waterman, 541.653.3354, fieldtrips@laneaudubon.org

Masks and distancing may still be required throughout walks, depending on evolving COVID-safety guidelines. Participation continues to be limited due to the ongoing pandemic, so please email Bex at fieldtrips@laneaudubon.org to sign up for any of these walks.

First Saturday Bird Walk, April 2

Our First Saturday Bird Walks, created in celebration of the Lane Audubon Inclusivity and Diversity Statement, are reserved for women, BIPOC, and members of the LGBTQIA+ community. Birders of all levels and backgrounds are welcome to join, particularly those who may have felt intimidated at the thought of birding alone or on other guided walks. Location and leader TBD.

Third Saturday Bird Walk, April 16

Our Third Saturday Bird Walk continues to be open to all participants. We will be exploring Green Island, which is part of the McKenzie River Trust.

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Photo: Marky Mutchler

Vaux's Swift

Vaux's Swift Watch – April 15 and 29 at Sunset

We can expect the Vaux's Swifts to arrive with a warm wind from the south sometime in April.

The timing of the migration varies, so we hope they will show up April 15 and 29 when we will be watching the skies to see the birds ride in on the wind. They use the Agate Hall Chimney to roost for the night as they gather to feed and recover after migration from the south.

Come join us at Agate Hall, on UO campus at 17th Avenue and Agate Street.

FMI: Lane Audubon Facebook page or web site or call the Lane Audubon phone at 541.485.2473.

FMI: about Vaux's Swifts: vauxhappening.org/Vauxs_Happening_Home.html