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# The Quail

News from Lane County Audubon Society



## From Our President

Maeve Sowles, 541.343.8664, audubon@laneaudubon.org

## Immersion in Nature Boosts My Spirits



Photo: Wikimedia, Dietmar Rabich

With the pressures of politics over the past few months, I feel the need to de-stress in nature as much as possible. Fortunately, this time of year, that is easy. Temperatures are warming, flowers are blooming, trees are leafing out, and songbirds are singing. In Oregon we have lovely habitat diversity, which offers us more opportunities to enjoy nature’s wonders than in many other areas.

Each morning, I open my upstairs window to breathe in the freshness. I listen and watch to discover what is happening out in the yard. I take in the air, the weather, the temperature – a human barometer.

Plants are reaching for the sun. Birds of every kind are singing their dawn chorus of happy sounds. I look and listen for new arrivals of birds. A sense of excitement and anticipation helps me start my day.

Squirrels are giving chase up, down, and around the trees. Swallows chase each other through the sky. Mourning Doves, chickadees, and Steller's Jays are paired up with their mates. Robins hunt for worms to feed their nesting mates. Purple Finches sing from the tops of trees. Song Sparrow chicks

are already begging for food. The animal world is awake and ready to face a new day.

Once I do my stretches, start the coffee, and take the dogs outside, my husband and I can take stock of what we have to be thankful for. I strive to find at least one thing that makes me happy, such as the Rufous Hummingbirds feeding at my Flowering Red Currant plants! We are lucky to live in a beautiful place like Oregon.

I feel strongly that our life in Oregon gives each of us an opportunity to connect with nature and learn to love and appreciate it. If not in the spring, then when can we better feel that interconnectedness and bond with nature? It is a healing balm for the woes of the world. It can make us feel more human and more able to love the world and people around us. We all need some of that!

I hope you, too, can breathe in the freshness of a spring morning and feel a connection to the natural world.

Lane County Audubon Society

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laneaudubon.org

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## Conservation

Debbie Schlenoff, 541.685.0610, debschlenoff@gmail.com

# The Downside of Gas-powered Leaf Blowers; Less Polluting Alternatives



photo: Rosapicci, Wikimedia

*Leave the leaves.*

**O**ur campaign to promote bird-friendly communities is taking flight. We are getting closer to the official launch of the Bird City certification program here in Oregon. Lane Audubon is the lead organization on this promising initiative. As we develop the program, we are always thinking about what we can all do to make our communities friendlier to birds, pollinators, other wildlife, and people too. The following fact gave us pause, “For a commercial leaf blower, one hour of operation emits smog-forming pollution comparable to driving a new light-duty passenger car about 1100 miles – about the distance from Los Angeles to Denver, over 15 hours of driving” (California Air Resources Board). Whoa. So, we did some research: What’s the problem with gas-powered leaf blowers?

### Emissions

Leaf blowers have a two-stroke engine design, powerful but dirtier and less fuel-efficient than car engines.

Exhaust from gas-powered leaf blowers contains hydrocarbons such as methane, nitrous oxides, carbon monoxide, and particulate matter. Many of these are carcinogens and/or respiratory irritants known to impact people’s health. Note that children are very susceptible to these hazards because they breathe more air per pound of body weight per day than adults, and overall, their developing organs make them more sensitive. Workers may suffer from increased risks of noise and unhealthy emissions because of their longer exposure to leaf blower activity. The emissions also contribute to climate change. One study showed that the annual use of gas-powered lawn equipment produced more carbon pollution than the entire city of Los Angeles for the year.

### Noise

Prolonged exposure to noise louder than 70 decibels may damage your hearing. Gas-powered leaf blowers can register as high as 100-110 decibels at the source, which falls in the “Extremely loud” category according to the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) recommends less than 15 minutes per day of exposure to 100 decibels. In addition to hearing loss, exposure to loud sounds can cause hypertension (high blood pressure), high cholesterol, and an increased risk of irregular heartbeats.

Prolonged exposure to noise may increase stress levels and interfere with cognitive development in children. Noise affects the behavior of wildlife, including birds, and can lead to changes in feeding and nesting habits. Noise interferes with birds’ abilities to transmit mating calls and to listen for predators.

### Disturbance

The forceful blast of a leaf blower stirs up particulate matter, dust, mold, pollen, and pathogen-containing animal feces that we (people and wildlife) breathe, exacerbating the health risks from emissions. The blasts may also directly injure and kill pollinators and other beneficial insects, depriving birds of an important supply of food to feed their nestlings. Leaf blowers blow away mulch and sometimes topsoil, while increasing soil erosion and contributing to soil compaction, none of which is good for plants.

### What we can do

- **Leave the leaves.** Leaves provide habitat for overwintering pollinators and other insects. Remember that a hardy population of insects will attract birds to your yard, since many species rely on that food source for their young.
- **Rakes work well.** Rake leaves into piles and use them as mulch around your plants. Leaves are also nutrient rich.
- If you cannot tolerate brown leaves in your yard, **consider leaf-mulching**, wherein you mow over the leaves to break them into smaller pieces that break down more quickly.
- If you continue to use leaf blowers, **switch to electric ones.** They are quieter and emit less pollutants.
- **Support yard care companies that don’t use gas-powered leaf blowers.**

## Field Notes: February 2025

Tom and Allison Mickel, atmickel@gmail.com

# Red-flanked Bluetail, Franklin's Gull, Harris's Sparrow, Long-billed Curlew, American Pipit

It seemed like this month's weather was pretty much normal with sunny cold days, warm wet days, freezing rain/snow, high winds, etc. Though I'm not sure if there is such a thing as normal weather anymore. On the birding front, early migrants started to arrive, with many more to come over the next couple months. Also, another very rare species for Oregon was added to the list for January.



Photo: Wikimedia, Alpsdake

*Red-flanked Bluetail*



Photo: Wikimedia, panfromcalgary

*Franklin's Gull*

**Abbreviations:** Fern Ridge Reservoir (FRR), Oregon Birds Record Committee (OBRC), South Jetty of the Siuslaw River (SJSR)

Brant	Feb 11	KR Nielson Rd	NB	Uncommon inland
Cinnamon Teal (5)	Feb 22	Delta Ponds	RM	Earlier than normal
Cinnamon Teal (3)	Feb 23	Meadowlark Prairie	VT	Earlier than normal
Blue-winged Teal	Feb 26	Coburg area	RA, RG	Earlier than normal
Long-tailed Duck	Feb 22	SJSR	FS	Has been in the area most of winter
Rufous Hummingbird	Feb 15	River Rd area	RH	Quite early for the valley
Rufous Hummingbird	Feb 19	Westlake Co park	NC, MS	Normal time for the coast
Sora (6)	Feb 27	FRR – Royal Ave	JP	Large number for the winter
Sandhill Crane (4)	Feb 8	Marcola area	SM	Earlier than normal
Sandhill Crane (50+)	Feb 24	Pleasant Hill	MJ	A more normal time for their migration
Long-billed Curlew (5)	Feb 6	FRR – Shore Ln	JS	An unusual time for an uncommon migrant
Lesser Yellowlegs	Feb 2	Washburn Ln	RA, RG	Last report for this uncommon winter species
Franklin's Gull	Feb 13	Glenwood area	JS	Rare for Lane Co, especially in the winter
Clark's Grebe	Feb 11	SJSR	GB	Unusual on the coast
American Bittern	Feb	FRR – Royal Ave	M.ob.	Larger numbers than normal in the winter
Black-crowned Night-Heron	Feb 1	FRR – dam	JS, LJ	Not commonly found this time of the year
Green Heron	Feb	C Grove, Delta Ponds	M.ob.	Found in larger numbers than normal
Osprey	Feb 4	Mt Pisgah	KL, SN	Early migrant or over-wintering
Osprey	Feb 16	Elijah Bristow SP	BR	Same bird moving around?
Osprey	Feb 25	Junction City Pond	NW	Or more than one bird?
Osprey	Feb 25	Honeyman SP	LB	Small numbers winter along coast
Hammond's Flycatcher	Feb 15	Glenwood area	JG	Assume it's the same bird as last month

*Continued on page 4*



Photo: Wikimedia, Andy Reago & Chrissy McClarren

*Harris's Sparrow*



Photo: Wikimedia, Ingrid Taylor

*Long-billed Curlew*



Photo: Wikimedia, Kathy & Sam from Beaverton, OR

*American Pipit*



Say's Phoebe	Feb 2	Cantrell Rd	SH, DP	Winter in small numbers most years
Say's Phoebe	Feb 25	Lyle Hatfield trail	RP	Winter in small numbers most years
Wood Thrush	Feb 22	Devil's Elbow SP	RF	Still being seen
Red-flanked Bluetail (photos)	Jan 26	Westlake Co park	JR, et al	Second OR record! – if approved by OBRC
American Pipit (660)	Feb 27	Franklin Rd	RR	A very large flock
Harris's Sparrow	Feb 25	Bailey Hill Rd	H&KR	Rare wintering species
Tennessee Warbler	Feb 2	SE Eugene area	DI, SF	Last report
Hermit Warbler	Feb 10	Ribbon Trail	MP	Rarely seen in the winter

BR Bryan Rebar, DI Dave Irons, DP Diane Pettey, FS Fang-yu Shen, GB Gloria Beerman, H&KR Heidi & Keaton Rebar, JG Joshua Galpern, JP Jesse Pline, JR Joe Roemer, JS John Sullivan, KL Kevin Lester, LB Lary Brown, LJ Laura Johnson, MJ Mary Johnson, MP Magnus Persmark, MS Miles Scheuering, NB Neil Bjorkland, NC Nolan Clements, NW Nate Walsh, RA Ramiro Aragon, RF Rachael Friese, RG Ruth Guzman, RH Rich Hoyer, RM Rooze McKelvey, RP Raya Pruner, RR Roger Robb, SF Shawneen Finnegan, SH Sally Hill, SM Sarah Merkle, SN Sara Newman, VT Vjera Thompson. M.ob signifies many observers.

### Many Thanks to Dennis Arendt

We want to thank Dennis Arendt for his continued efforts to engage speakers, host, and enhance our 4th Tuesday speaker programs through the year.

Recently, to make technical improvements, he purchased a new computer and microphones so the Zoom audience can have better sound quality.

Dennis' efforts are consistently excellent, and we are truly fortunate to have his help with these well-received outreach programs. Over the past year we've engaged about 650 people through the monthly programs! Great work Dennis, and thank you for your ongoing support.

#### KINGLET

by John Witte

A smoke-gray snippet flicking  
 mist from the madrone we had forgotten  
 it zipping through the limbs huddled inside  
 all winter its brisk  
 swagger ramping and sizzling loopy freaked  
 flashing its tiny gold crown as if to say  
 see how in love we are how brief  
 how fitfully burning

## Bike-Path Clean Up

Saturday, April 12th, 2025 | 9am-noon

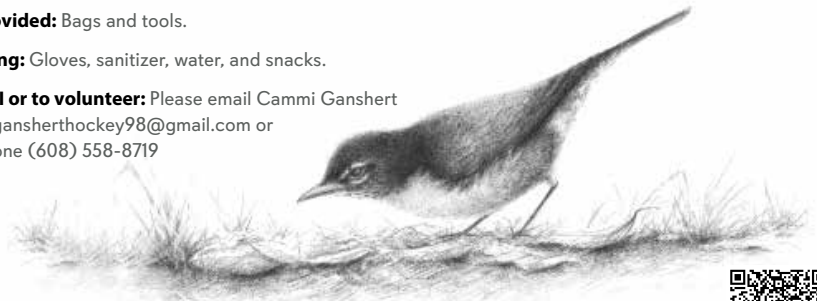


**Where:** We will meet near the Euphoria Chocolate Company at Stewart Road and Bertelsen, just north of West 11th.

**Provided:** Bags and tools.

**Bring:** Gloves, sanitizer, water, and snacks.

**FMI or to volunteer:** Please email Cammi Ganshert at gansherthockey98@gmail.com or phone (608) 558-8719



With support from the Bureau of Land Management



### UO Students of Eugene Bird Society

Lane Audubon is happy to have helped found and continue to support the Students of Eugene Bird Society, an official UO student organization. We are cheered that they will once again help with our Vaux's Swift count this spring. Pictured is their "Puzzles and Pie" event. (We funded the pies!)

LCAS Board member Debbie Schlenoff started out as their faculty advisor. She still serves as both an unofficial advisor to the group and liaison between SEBS and LCAS.



SEBS student group, Puzzles and Pie

## LCAS Program—In Person and Zoom Tuesday, April 22, 2025, 7:00 pm

Dennis Arendt, 541.221.3691, dennisarendt@gmail.com



Photo: Sue Anderson

*Monarch on Milkweed*



Photo: Sue Anderson

*Monarchs*

# The Monarch Butterflies' Phenomenal Journeys



*Sue Anderson*

The Lane County Audubon Society welcomes back Sue Anderson on Tuesday, April 22. She presents information in a humorous and friendly way, making learning a lot of fun. Last year, Sue taught us the basics of butterfly behavior, habitat, and identification. In April Sue will lead us on an exploration of the amazing Monarch butterflies.

This presentation will explain the Monarch's life cycle and migration timetable, with details about where they go and how they navigate along their routes. You will learn the history of how Monarch migration and overwintering sites were discovered and see maps showing the range of the mostly distinct Eastern and Western Monarch populations. You will also learn about milkweed, the only food plant that monarch caterpillars can eat. The presentation will also show Monarch population trends and

explain current threats to Monarch survival.

Sue Anderson has tagged hundreds of these amazing butterflies with her family and will tell listeners what she has learned. She will also offer suggestions that local citizens can employ to find Monarchs and help them along their way. We will have free Showy Milkweed seeds available, for starting plants that are native to this area.

Sue has loved butterflies ever since she was “knee high to a grasshopper.” Fascinated by all sorts of insects and spiders, she focused on butterflies because “they’re beautifully colored and they don’t bite!” She has led 4th of July Butterfly Counts (similar to Christmas bird counts) for more than 38 years in the Ochoco and Metolius areas of Central Oregon and is now learning her Willamette Valley species. She has also taught Adult Ed classes and led numerous butterfly walks for the Deschutes Land Trust.

Join your friends at the Campbell Center for this fascinating program. The doors will open at 6:30 for some social time; the program will begin at 7:00. Mark your calendars for April 22, Tuesday. A Zoom link will be available on the LCAS website one week before the event. This program will be recorded and posted on the LCAS website a few days later.

### Do You Know of an Active Raptor Nest?

Cascades Raptor Center is conducting a survey of active raptor nests in the 2025 nesting season to have available as part of our re-nesting efforts for young raptors. Occasionally, we are unable to return young raptors to their original families. Having a database of active raptor nests on hand will give us the potential to wild-foster those nestlings instead of hand-raising. Knowledge of a wide selection of potential nest sites will afford us the best opportunity for a good match for any given nestling.

Nesting season is underway, and we expect to start receiving owlet calls any day now. Lots more information is available on the survey itself!

FMI: [forms.gle/LMRkDLM82YKSjRjz7](https://forms.gle/LMRkDLM82YKSjRjz7) or [jesse@cascadesraptorcenter.org](mailto:jesse@cascadesraptorcenter.org)

# 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](mailto:tgodsil@gmail.com)

### The Quail Upcoming Content Deadlines

May-June: April 1

July-August: June 1

Submit material to Karen Irmscher at [quailkaren1@gmail.com](mailto:quailkaren1@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](http://laneaudubon.org)

### Lane County Audubon Society Yearly Membership

- Individual \$20.....\$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Students and Seniors (65 and over) \$15.....\$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Family \$25.....\$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Lifetime Membership \$400.....\$ \_\_\_\_\_
- I want to do more. Here's my tax-deductible contribution for .....\$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Total Enclosed (check payable to Lane County Audubon Society).....\$ \_\_\_\_\_

To pay by PayPal, go to [laneaudubon.org/memberships/](http://laneaudubon.org/memberships/)

I am a  Current National Audubon member  Don't know

Please contact me regarding

Gift memberships  Lane Audubon's Living Legacy program

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I would prefer to receive the e-Quail newsletter by e-mail.

I would like to receive e-mail alerts about conservation issues.

I would like to volunteer for Lane County Audubon activities.

Lane Audubon will not release your personal information to other organizations. We will use it only for Lane County Audubon Society communications.

Mail this form and your payment to: Lane County Audubon Society, P.O. Box 5086, Eugene, OR 97405





Photo: Barb Bryson

*Douglas and Gina*



Photo: Barb Bryson

*Douglas and Gina's home*



Photo: Barb Bryson

*Linda*

## Love birds? Habitat Haven Can Help Make Your Yard More Attractive to Them

Spring is here, and we are getting new enrollments daily for our backyard habitat certification program. Habitat loss is a primary reason for declining bird species worldwide. Science informs us that enriching habitat in our yards helps birds reproduce and sustains populations. Replacing lawn with native plants can save water, store carbon, and reduce runoff, plus save you time on mowing and fertilizing.

We are pleased to welcome **Greg Oldson of Landwise Landscape.**

He will be performing many of our site visits this season. Thanks to **Upper Willamette Soil and Water Conservation District** for providing a grant to help us keep up with demand!

Habitat is about more than native plants. Water features are very important for birds and pollinators. Small brush piles can be lifesaving cover for fledglings. Leaf piles nurture bumblebee queens and protect butterfly and moth larvae. Layers of leaves are excellent for smothering weeds and enriching your soil at the

same time. Consider a bat house, as these mosquito eaters need habitat too! And please avoid pesticides.

If you want to purchase native plants, we are lucky to have **Doak Creek Native Plant Nursery** close to Eugene, as well as **Trillium Gardens**. Both have supported our land stewards in Habitat Haven with discounts on native plants. Thank you, **Cynthia Lafferty and Sheila Klest!** Willamette Wildlings provides locally sourced wildflower seed and may supply plants—call to find out.

Go to [Laneaudubon.org/habitat-haven/](https://laneaudubon.org/habitat-haven/) to join our Habitat Haven community!

## Turning Off Outdoor Lights Protects Migrating Birds

Now that spring migration has begun, we want to remind our community members about our Lights Out! Program. Artificial lights at night are disruptive to the health of people and wildlife and may disorient migrating birds, thus increasing the rate of collisions with buildings. Lights Out and Dark Skies programs have been shown to be effective and safe for involved communities. See how you can perform simple actions to protect birds and pollinators and sign our pledge at [laneaudubon.org/field-notes/lights-out-eugene/take-the-pledge-lights-out/](https://laneaudubon.org/field-notes/lights-out-eugene/take-the-pledge-lights-out/)

### Ways you can help Prevent Bird Collisions

- Make your windows visible to birds.
- Turn off unnecessary and decorative lighting.
- Make sure that outside lights are aimed down and are well-shielded.
- Install motion sensors or timers so that lights are on only when needed.
- Choose warm bulbs (under 3,000 Kelvins, closer to 2000 is better) with negligible blue light.
- During migration seasons, draw blinds or curtains to reduce light spill.
- Turn off the lights before leaving the home or office.
- FYI: [birdallianceoregon.org/our-work/protect/habitat-and-wildlife/urban/reducing-wildlife-hazards/tips-for-reducing-window-strikes-at-home/](https://birdallianceoregon.org/our-work/protect/habitat-and-wildlife/urban/reducing-wildlife-hazards/tips-for-reducing-window-strikes-at-home/)
- Sign our Pledge: [laneaudubon.org/field-notes/lights-out-eugene/take-the-pledge-lights-out/](https://laneaudubon.org/field-notes/lights-out-eugene/take-the-pledge-lights-out/)



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your *Quail* subscription expired?  
See page 6 to renew!



## LCAS Saturday Bird Outings & Events

Lalla Pudewell, [tolalla@gmail.com](mailto:tolalla@gmail.com)

### First Saturday Bird Outing, April 5

Our First Saturday Bird Outings, created as part of our commitment to the Lane Audubon Inclusivity and Diversity Statement, are meant to hold intentional space for women, BIPOC, and LGBTQIA+ birders. 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 TBA.

FMI or to sign up, contact Sarah: [1stsatbirdwalks@laneaudubon.org](mailto:1stsatbirdwalks@laneaudubon.org)

### Third Saturday Bird Outing, April 19

Our Third Saturday Bird Outings are open to all participants. Location and leader are TBA.

FMI: Lalla Pudewell, [tolalla@gmail.com](mailto:tolalla@gmail.com), or check the Lane Audubon website and/or the Lane Audubon Facebook page close to the outing date.

### Vaux's Swift Watch — April 25 at Sunset

Twice a year, in the spring and fall, thousands of Vaux's Swifts use the Agate Hall Chimney to roost for the night as they stop to rest during their migration journeys. In April they arrive with warm winds from the south. Most will continue north and east to the mountains for the nesting season. Early September they will be heading back south, returning to overwinter in the welcoming warmth of Central and South America.

LCAS volunteers have a long history of sharing these fascinating natural phenomena with the public by setting up informational tables once or twice each migration season. Migration timing varies, so we hope the birds will make a good showing when we gather on Friday night, April 25, to watch them ride in on the wind and funnel down into the iconic Agate Hall Chimney as daylight fades.

Come join us at Agate Hall, on the UO campus at 17th Avenue and Agate Street. Reluctant family members may be enticed to come by promising ice cream from Prince Puckler's or exploration of the playground between the ice cream store and the chimney. This spectacle has been known to transform non-birders of all ages into avid birders!

FMI: Lane Audubon Facebook page or website or call the Lane Audubon phone at 541.485.2473. FMI: about Vaux's Swifts: [vauxhappening.org/Vauxs\\_Happening\\_Home.html](http://vauxhappening.org/Vauxs_Happening_Home.html).



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