



THE KESTREL

Salem Audubon Society

June 2023

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Updates From the Nature Center

By **Tim Johnson**

Salem Audubon Society President

I have some great news about the staffing situation at the Ankeny Hill Nature Center. In May, the US Fish and Wildlife Service Northwest Regional Office announced its commitment to a new permanent, career GS 5,7 Ranger position for the Ankeny Hill Nature Center. This Ranger will report to the Visitor Services Manager, Sam Bartling. One of the position requirements is that candidates will be bilingual with Spanish proficiency.



Tim Johnson

Previously the Regional Office had only committed to a temporary position at the Nature Center. However, it changed its position for a couple of reasons. First, we were having trouble attracting qualified candidates for a temporary position. The Regional Office was also influenced by Salem Audubon's willingness to provide \$90,000 and the Friends offer to provide \$30,000 to help cover the expense of the new position for up to four years. This support from SAS and the Friends will remain our commitment as the position is established in the annual USFWS budget.

This commitment by the Regional Office to create a new permanent career position at the Nature Center is extraordinary, considering that career positions are currently being cut throughout the Service across the country. You have probably been hearing about the cuts on the news.

The new position is anticipated to be filled quickly now that it is a permanent career position. This will provide much-needed staffing support for the Ankeny Hill Nature Center. I am told by Damien Miller, the head of the Willamette Valley NWR Complex, that this staffing commitment will also help to improve the likelihood that the Service will move forward on funding the extension to Gehlar Hall. The Service previously had paid for the building plans for this extension, expecting it to be built in time.

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We need your contributions of stories and images for the Kestrel. Submit to:

editor@salemaudubon.org

Need to update your mailing address?

Please call or email Salem Audubon at (503) 588-7340 or

laurie@salemaudubon.org

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Meanwhile, the development of the Dave Marshall Classroom continues on schedule. On April 29, we received 65% building plans from the architect. Also, fundraising efforts will continue to help cover the costs of solar panels and an interpretative element for the wetlands node. Finally, we're anxiously awaiting the

results of our Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund grant application, which, if awarded, will cover the cost of a rainwater catchment system and boot/shoe cleaning station for the Dave Marshall Classroom. Fingers crossed.

New Board Members Elected to Two-year Terms

On May 9, in a brief General Meeting held as part of Birder's Night, participating members elected two new directors to the Salem Audubon Board. Both are not new to Salem Audubon. Mary Ritter, a semi-retired grade schoolteacher, is the leader in our Traveling Education Program and has taught various lessons on-site at local schools and the Nature Center. She is also a sector leader for the Salem Christmas Bird Count and participates as a volunteer in many other chapter events.

Dominic (Dom) Valenti, a full-time father, has been a field trip leader and conducted bird surveys for Salem Audubon for the past few years. He also is a sector leader for the Salem Christmas Bird Count and a volunteer at Salem Audubon events. Many thanks to Mary and Dom for their willingness to serve in this vital capacity for our chapter. And thanks to Judy Brunkal, Michael Babbitt, Mike Williams, and Tim Johnson for agreeing to serve an additional term on the Board.

Board members serve a two-year term and can take on various board roles depending on their skills, interests, and availability. Board members play a critical role in our chapter, without whom we wouldn't have one. The Board is the governing body of Salem Audubon. The Board focuses on the organization's high-level strategy, oversight, and accountability, including setting annual goals, an annual budget, and electing the officers of the Board, among other things. If this might be something you would be willing to do or have related questions, please contact Tim Johnson at tim.the.fisherman@gmail.com.

Salem Environmental Education Zoom to Sustainability Series

Electric Vehicles: Opportunities and Challenges

Wednesday, June 14, 7:00-8:00 Online only. Register below.

This online presentation covers why you would want to select an electric vehicle, considerations for picking an electric vehicle, and ways to fuel your electric vehicle, along with other associated information.

Presenter Evan Elias is an Energy Analyst with the Planning and Innovation Division at the Oregon Department of Energy. He has held this position for the last five years of his 26 years with the agency. Among his current work projects, he analyzes information and data regarding Oregon's transportation sector fuel use, which focuses on alternative fuels and transportation electrification.

Eilas is a strong cross-agency collaborator and has worked with ODOT to produce life cycle cost tools that assist in screening alternative fuel options buses. He is also a contributing author for the ODOE Biennial Energy and Biennial Zero Emission Vehicle Reports.

The program is free, but registration is required at www.salemee.org or <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/electric-vehicles-opportunities-and-challenges-tickets-631081520817>

Special Event at Ankeny Hill Nature Center

Visit the Nature Center as a visitor or a volunteer for a first-time **Home School Day** organized by the Marion Soil and Water Conservation District and hosted by the Nature Center on Tuesday, June 13th.

To learn more visit <https://www.marionswcd.net/event/homeschool-day/>

Check out the **Home School Day** volunteer opportunities here: [VOLUNTEER FORM](#)

Helping Our Natural Habitats: Friends of the Willamette Valley National Wildlife Refuge Complex

By Michael Babbitt

Salem Audubon Society Vice President

Natural habitats are among the most important things we share on this Earth. Yet, many agree that not enough wild habitat is provided or protected. For life to thrive, we must work together to protect the habitat we still have, from backyard native plantings to vast public holdings.

The United States Department of Interior, through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), is the largest single owner of wildlife habitat in the United States. Our National Wildlife Refuges, managed by the USFWS, protect more habitat as a primary mission than any other landowner in the U.S.

But the USFWS staff often needs help to protect and maintain its 150 million acres of land and water in the U.S. and over 418 million acres of national marine monuments. This assistance often comes from local volunteers who join "Friends" groups at nearby National Wildlife Refuges.

The USFWS website describes a Friends group as a "... partnership comprising a 501(c)(3) nonprofit Friends organization and a refuge or complex of refuges. The partnership is formalized in a Friends Partnership Agreement. All Refuge Friends organizations share the same primary mission: The support of a refuge, complex of refuges, or program of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service."

The Friends program was created by the Volunteer and Community Partnership Act of 1998. Since then, many Friends groups have been founded and contracted with USFWS.

One such group is the Friends of the Willamette Valley National Wildlife Refuge Complex. The complex includes

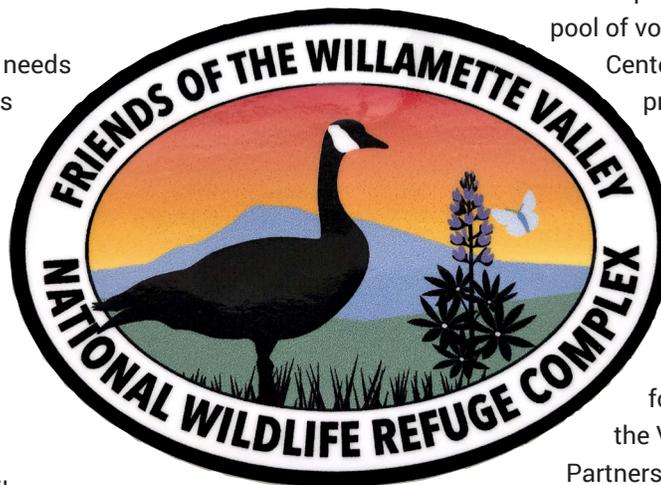
the Ankeny, Baskett Slough, and William L. Finley Refuges, and the Snag Boat Bend Unit. Like hundreds of such groups nationwide, our local group calls itself the "Friends."

If you've belonged to the Salem Audubon Society for a while, you probably know that the Friends work closely with our Chapter. We have worked together for over a decade on the Ankeny Hill Nature Center project. Salem Audubon, the Friends, and USFWS have been the three main partners collaborating in the operation of the Nature Center ever since SAS selected Ankeny Hill as the site.

The Friends provide perhaps the largest pool of volunteers for the Nature Center, conduct robust programming and educational activities, and play a key role in navigating the federal bureaucracy, which requires certain transactions and other official steps to be handled by an organization formally established under the Volunteer and Community Partnership Act.

The Friends are active with all three refuges in the complex, and their members hail from a large part of the Valley. They welcome SAS members or other interested people as members, and they hope one or more SAS members will consider signing on with the Friends' Board of Directors. Many of our members would make excellent board members for the Friends. In addition, since the Friends are largely Corvallis-based, they are interested in having more representation from the Ankeny, Salem, and Baskett Slough areas.

For information on joining the Friends, in whatever capacity, please get in touch with Diane Young, Friends Secretary at secretary.friends@gmail.com



Salem Audubon Society Field Trips

Compiled by Cynthia Donald

Salem Audubon field trips are open to the public, and we have a mix of experienced and new birders. Our field trips are an excellent way to familiarize ourselves with Oregon birds, experience new places, and meet new friends. We don't charge for our trips, but a small fee may be involved, such as a parking pass, depending on our destination. Carpooling is encouraged to reduce our carbon footprint, and if you do a carpool, please contribute to your driver to help cover costs.

SAS-SHORTS are abbreviated versions of our popular field trips. These trips are in the local area, typically last 1 to 2 hours, and cover up to 2 miles on generally even surfaces. New and experienced birders are welcome! Please arrive before the start time as these trips will begin precisely at the listed time.

Some of our field trips meet at the **Airport Park and Ride** on the east side of Airport Road, between Mission and State streets, next to the State Motor Pool, and just south of the bridge over Mill Creek. Take Mission Street to Airport Road (the first signal light east of 25th Street), turn left, and proceed north one block to the park and ride. There are no facilities at this location.

SAS MONTHLY FIELD TRIPS

Sunday, June 4, 2023, 7:30 AM – Minto-Brown Island Park

(Upcoming – Thursday, July 6 at 7:30 AM and Sunday, August 6 at 7:30 AM)

Leaders: Mike Unger (503) 930-8998, Tim Johnson (503) 507-8552, Paul Evans (317) 922-7908

Neotropical migrants have arrived, joining the park's resident nesting birds. Wood Duck pairs have been noted on prior bird walks, and we know they are nesting in the cavities near water. American Kestrels have been seen perching on nesting snags. Summer has arrived.

Birds are in full voice, delivering dawn songs, demonstrating social and territorial behaviors, gathering nest materials, and seeking food for the young. We will choose one of many loop trails to discover which warbler species are around. If spring floods have disrupted some paths, we will investigate others and watch for nesting birds among varied habitats.

Meet at 7:30 AM at Parking Lot #3 (the last parking lot in the park). Dress for the weather. Bring water, snacks, and binoculars! Trails may be uneven, so wear appropriate footwear and plan for considerable walking. We plan to be finished before noon.

Directions: From River Road South, turn west at the signal at Minto Island Road and proceed to the last parking lot. **Please do not leave valuables in your vehicle, and confirm anything inside is out of sight.**

Upcoming Events
June 2023

SUN 4	SAS - FIELD TRIP Minto-Brown Island Park 7:30 AM - Noon Minto-Brown Island Park
WED 7	VOLUNTEER ACTIVITY Audubon Nature Reserve Work Party 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM Ankeny Nature Reserve
THUR 8	SAS - SHORTS Champoeg State Park 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM Champoeg State Park
TUES 13	SAS - FIELD TRIP Ankeny National Wildlife Refuge 7:30 AM - Noon Ankeny NWR
WED 14	VOLUNTEER ACTIVITY Audubon Nature Reserve Work Party 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM Ankeny Nature Reserve
MON 19	SAS - SHORTS Illahe Hills Country Club 8:00 AM - 11:00 AM Illahe Hills Country Club
WED 21	VOLUNTEER ACTIVITY Audubon Nature Reserve Work Party 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM Ankeny Nature Reserve
WED 24	VOLUNTEER ACTIVITY Audubon Nature Reserve Work Party 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM Ankeny Nature Reserve
WED 28	SAS - SHORTS Keizer Rapids Park 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM Keizer Rapids Park
FRI 30	SAS - SHORTS Baskett Slough NWR 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM Baskett Slough NWR

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Tuesday, June 13, 2023, at 7:30 AM – Ankeny National Wildlife Refuge

(Upcoming – Saturday, July 15 at 7:30 AM and Tuesday, August 15 at 7:30 AM)

Leaders: Mike Unger (503) 930-8998, Tim Johnson (503) 507-8552, Paul Evans (317) 922-7908

June is a great month to walk the loop trails in the refuge to explore back ponds and water areas. Shorebirds will be taking advantage of the invertebrates in muddy edges and flats. Green Heron, American Bittern, and Wilson's Snipe may be more visible with glimpses of young birds. Raptors, including Bald Eagles and Northern Harriers, will search for prey. Pied-billed Grebe and their young are in good numbers until the areas behind the gates close on October 1. Next, we can explore the interior wet, grassy, and cattail areas. Adjoining woodland provides a habitat for hummingbirds, flycatchers, warblers, sparrows, bunting, and grosbeak species. Join us and be mindful that the weather does vary and can be warm.

Meet at Ankeny Hill Nature Center (AHNC) Parking Lot at 7:30 AM. There are facilities at this location, and the trails are now open! We will start here before visiting Pintail Marsh and other areas. Bring water, binoculars, and a snack. Trails can be uneven, so please wear appropriate footwear. We anticipate finishing before noon. **Please note that the gate opens at 7:00 AM.**

Directions: From Salem, take I-5 south to the Ankeny Hill Road exit (Exit 243) and turn right (west). At the Ankeny Hill Road/Wintel Road intersection, bear right and continue on Ankeny Hill Road straight (west), approximately 2.2 miles to the AHNC Visitor Center entrance, which will be on your left. An alternate route from Salem is to take Liberty Road south to Ankeny Hill Road, then turn left and continue about 0.4 miles to the AHNC Visitor Center entrance, which will be on your right. **Please do not leave valuables in your vehicle, and confirm anything inside is out of sight.**

SAS-SHORTS

Thursday, June 8 at 9:00 AM – Champoeg State Park

Leader: Dominic Valenti (503) 507-7008

If you like Acorn Woodpeckers and Western Bluebirds, this beautiful state park is one of the best spots in our area to find them any time of year! We'll walk about 2.5 miles through oak trees and a mixed deciduous/conifer forest. We can also expect to encounter finch species, nuthatches, warblers (Orange-crowned, Wilson's, Black-throated Gray), and flycatchers (Willow and Pacific-slope). The colorful Bullock's Oriole, Western Tanager, and Lazuli Bunting may also be spotted, in addition to House Wren (which has nested here in recent years) and Chipping Sparrow. This walk should last about 2.5 hours. Hope to see you there!

Meet in the Oak Grove Day Use Parking Lot. Although a valid Oregon State Parks Pass is required, a \$ 5.00-day pass can be purchased on-site. Please bring water and binoculars! We should be finished by noon.

Directions: This historic State Park is about 23 miles north of Salem. From Salem, take I-5 north to the Brooks exit (exit 263) and turn left (west) on Brooklake Road NE, proceed to River Road NE and turn right (north), take French Prairie Road NE (straight ahead), and continue to the park entrance.

Monday, June 19 at 8:00 AM – Illahe Hills Country Club

(Upcoming – Monday, July 25 at 8:00 AM)

Leaders: Paul Evans, Roxy Evans **Please contact the leader at paulevansdo@gmail.com to register for this trip.**

Illahe Hills Country Club has been graciously hosting limited guided bird walks. Through registration with the leader, walks are open to Illahe Hills CC members, their guests, and limited Salem Audubon Society guests. The course is close to Minto Brown Island Park and abuts local farms. Over 90 bird species have been recorded to date. Ospreys, Bald Eagles, and Great Horned Owls nest here and are regularly seen. New birders are welcome!

Registered participants should meet at the Country Club entrance at 8:00 AM. Please park in the main parking area, not in front of the clubhouse! Dress for the weather and bring water, sunblock, a hat, and binoculars. Restroom facilities are available. We will be finished before 11:00 AM. **Directions:** From Salem, proceed south on River Road to Country Club Road South and turn right (west) on Country Club Road South. Proceed a short distance, and the country club with ample parking area will be straight ahead.

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Wednesday, June 28 at 9:00 AM – Keizer Rapids Park

Leader: Mike Unger (503) 930-8998

Keizer Rapids Park, in Keizer, is an undiscovered local gem for birding enthusiasts. The park has a variety of habitats that attract a wide variety of birds, including sparrows, finches, and towhees. Still, many other birds can be found here, including waterfowl, raptors, woodpeckers, warblers, and creepers. In addition, swallows, Ospreys, and an occasional eagle can be seen near the river. We may go to another nearby location if time permits.

Meet at 9:00 AM at the far parking lot (at the end of the road leading to the boat ramp). Bring water and a snack for the trail.

Directions: From Salem, take River Road North, turn left onto Chemawa Road N, turn left onto Walsh Way N, and proceed to the parking lot at the end of the road near the boat ramp.

Friday, June 30 at 9:00 AM – Baskett Slough NWR

Leader: Harry Fuller (791) 312-1735

Young birds? Early migrants? Family matters? Most bird song is limited at this time of year, but parent birds can be busy. Young raptors are trying to learn the necessary skills. Bushtits, swallows, and other gregarious birds are beginning to flock.

Established in 1965 as part of the Willamette Valley NWR Complex, Baskett Slough is primarily managed to provide wintering habitat for the Dusky Canada Goose, a subspecies of Canada Goose with minimal summer and winter ranges. This refuge also provides wetland and woodland sanctuary for migrant and resident wildlife, including Fender's Blue Butterfly, once thought extinct but rediscovered here!

Meet at the Rich Guadagno Trailhead Parking Lot on Coville Road at 9:00 AM. Restroom and picnic facilities are available. Bring water, binoculars, a snack, and a dress for the weather. Trails may be uneven, so please use appropriate footwear. We will finish around noon.

Directions: From Salem, take Hwy 22 West to 99W. Proceed north to Coville Road and turn west (left). Continue to the trail head, which will be on your right.

Special SAS Trips

Tuesday, June 13 through Friday, June 16 – Great Gray Owl Trip

Leader: Harry Fuller (971) 312-1735, anzatowhee@yahoo.com **This trip is now full.** Please contact leader to be placed on wait list.

Friday, June 23. Luckiamute Bird-banding Field Trip

Leader: Harry Fuller (971) 312-1735, If you plan to attend, email him at anzatowhee@yahoo.com. Or text at 971-312-1735.

A team of ornithologists will be banding birds, and we can watch. The team leaders have worked here for years and will share fascinating data. They finish at 10 AM, and we should return to our cars by 11 AM. Bring water. Meet at 7:30 AM at the parking lot of the north end of the Luckiamute Landing State Natural Area.

Directions: Go to Buena Vista Road south of Independence. First, you will pass a Paddlers' Access parking area. Then further south, Buena Vista crosses the Luckiamute River. There is a narrow gravel road going east just south of this bridge. It takes you to a gravel parking area where we will meet.



Board of Directors

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 Carolyn Homan, Secretary
 Tim Johnson, Treasurer
 Jenny Ammon Judy Brunkal
 Mike Williams Mary Ritter
 Dominic Valenti

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Birder's Night Harry Fuller	SAS Nature Reserve Lee Slattum
Field Trips Cynthia Donald	SAS Woodshop John Jorgenson
Bluebird Project Vacant	Birding Workshops Mike Unger
Kestrel and Web Editor Mike Williams	Christmas Bird Count Tim Johnson, Mike Unger, Gretchen Johnson
Conservation David Harrison	Chapter Meetings Vacant

SAS Office Information

Laurie Buswell, Administrator
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 408 N 3rd Ave, Stayton, OR 97383
 (503) 588-7340
 Email: laurie@salemaudubon.org
 Website: www.salemaudubon.org

Bird & Wildlife Emergencies

Contact: Chintimini Wildlife Center
 (541) 745-5324 chintiminiwildlife.org

**Audubon Reserve
 Work Parties**

Every Wednesday 9:00 – 11:00 AM

Plant and nurture native trees and shrubs.
 Attack invasive plants and help keep our
 Reserve looking great.
 Maintain trails. Eliminate litter.
 BYO work gloves; tools provided or bring your favorites.

FREE! No background check required!
 On-the-job training!
 Possibilities for advancement!

Coffee and conversation after at Urban Grange,
 on Edgewater St. NW

Call Lee Slattum, (503) 364-9325, with any questions.

Audubon Nature Reserve
 Eola Drive, off Edgewater, in West Salem

<http://www.salemaudubon.org/nature-reserve>

See our Facebook Page at
www.facebook.com/Audubon-Nature-Reserve-1636890073202471

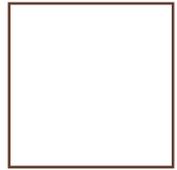
How to Join a ZOOM session

- Participants must “Pre-Register” by clicking on a link provided in the Kestrel, the Salem Audubon website, and the SAS Facebook page. Once registered, you will receive a confirmation email including the link to use to join the meeting. You will receive a reminder email on the day of the program.
- At the start time for the program (or a few minutes before), you may click on the meeting link using a PC, Mac, or smart device to enter the Zoom session. It’s that easy. As a participant, you do not need ZOOM software, microphone or camera.
- Participants may type questions, comments or seek technical assistance using the ZOOM “Chat” button  at the bottom of the ZOOM screen. The program leader will share your questions during the Q&A at the end of the presentation. Technical issues – if any – will be addressed during the ZOOM session.
- For any technical questions, please email Tim Johnson, tim.the.fisherman@gmail.com. For other questions, email Harry Fuller, chair, Birder’s Night Committee, atowhee@gmail.com.





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RETURN POSTAGE GUARANTEED

THE KESTREL

Share Your Creativity

We are always interested in learning how members experience the many ways to enjoy nature.

We are looking for new contributors to provide stories, images or ideas to help make *The Kestrel* even better.

Please send me an email to find out how to add to our coverage:

Mike Williams, editor
editor@salemaudubon.org

Membership Form

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**Required for E-Kestrel Membership*

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