

**BIRD EXPLORER**

**Rare winter visitors**

BY PETER J. THIEMANN

We live in an area with a mild winter climate, and every year some rare bird species shows up that comes from the far north or the cold east or that forgot that it was time to head south.

**The Vermilion Flycatcher**, with its exotic red coloring, is a species one would expect to find in summer in southern California, Arizona, or south Texas, with its wintering grounds in

Mexico. But this year, a male Vermilion Flycatcher was seen regularly at the Crescent City Harbor, next to the Marine Mammal Center, where he caught flying insects all winter long. If you go there right now, you may still be able to see this exotic wild bird in the willows at the ocean—a truly spectacular bird.

**The Red-naped Sapsucker** is another brilliantly colored rare bird in

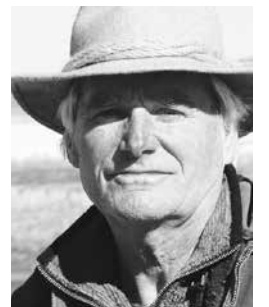
our area that comes from the cold interior west. He has been seen since October 2016 on a single large gum tree off a parking area at Emigrant Lake recreation area near Ashland. That gum tree has many small drinking holes that this sapsucker shares with the common Red-breasted Sapsucker and several Anna's Hummingbirds. The tree is very mature and healthy and provides plenty of sap.

**Finally, there is the Lapland Longspur**, a tundra bird from Siberia, Alaska, and Canada that can be seen with large flocks of Horned Larks that also

come from the north. Mudflats of lakes like Lost Creek are good places to look for this handsome rare bird.

So, next winter take your binoculars and spotting scopes and look for exotic rare winter visitors. You may find a surprise or two.

Peter J. Thiemann  
peterjthiemann@gmail.com  
*Bird photos by Peter J. Thiemann.*



Vermilion Flycatcher



Red-naped Sapsucker



Lapland Longspur

**Save money. Save energy. Stay comfortable.**

**Install an energy-efficient ductless heat pump**

Could this be the year you make your home more comfortable while reducing your utility bills? In 2017, Jackson and Josephine County homeowners and small businesses have a unique opportunity to invest in energy-efficient heating and cooling technology at a reduced price. With a ductless heat pump, you can save 25 to 50 percent on your heating costs when compared to a traditional electric heating system.



for customers, and provides guidance on incentives and financing. In addition to cost savings through the group purchase, customers of Pacific Power are also eligible

for an \$800 rebate if upgrading from another electric heating system.

**Ductless heat pumps are highly efficient** zonal heating and cooling systems that have at least one head unit indoors (see photo), usually placed high on the wall, a compressor located outside, and a refrigerant line connecting them. Because there are no ducts, these systems are often easily installed within a day.

**Energize Rogue is a group purchase program** that reduces the regular price of a ductless system, simplifies the entire installation process

**Energize Rogue is a community-driven campaign** that utilizes two volunteer committees, one to conduct outreach about this opportunity to save energy and money, and another to choose an installation contractor through a competitive bidding process. A locally owned company, Allied Comfort Pro, is the selected contractor for Energize Rogue, and the ductless systems are manufactured by Mitsubishi, which has an excellent reputation for superior technology in the industry.

For homeowners and small businesses to be eligible for the Energize Rogue group purchase, the first step is to participate in a free community workshop. Participants will learn more about the group purchase program, hear from installation professionals and program partners, and have an opportunity to ask questions.

The nonprofits Rogue Climate and Northwest SEED (Sustainable Energy for Economic Development) have teamed up to bring Energize Rogue to our community, partnering with businesses, energy professionals, and volunteers to boost awareness and provide considerable cost savings. This project is made possible by a US Department of Agriculture Rural Business Development Grant.

To attend a *free* Energize Rogue workshop, visit [energizerogue.org](http://energizerogue.org) or call 541-236-5027.

**Upcoming Workshops**  
*Register in advance*

Tuesday, March 14  
Ashland Library, 6 - 7 pm

Tuesday, April 11  
Central Point Library, 6 - 7 pm

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**Growers CLUBS CLASSES**

- Mar 21** 6 to 6:30 pm **March of the Clones** Benefits & hazards of starting plants from clones. Different methods, tips & tools for increased success.
- Apr 18th** 6 to 6:30 pm **Water = Life or Death** When & how to water. Important characteristics of water & how to test & adjust for optimum plant growth & health.
- May 16th** 6 to 6:30 pm **Movin' On Up!** When to transplant starts. Different methods, tips & tools for smooth transitions with minimal plant stress.

**\$10 per Class - Please contact us to reserve your spot!**

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