

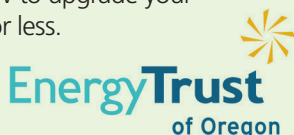
# Connections

## The savings are clear

**Windows can help you save on your biggest home energy expense: heating and cooling.**

As an Avista Natural Gas customer, you can receive Energy Trust of Oregon cash incentives of **up to \$1.50 per square foot on qualifying window upgrades** and Energy Trust can connect you with a contractor in your area.

Visit [www.energytrust.org/windows](http://www.energytrust.org/windows) to learn how to upgrade your windows for less.



## Every single bird counts at Klamath Bird Observatory

### The lives of humans and birds are intertwined in many ways.

We look forward to the return of the swallows, to the first rolling thrills of a red-winged blackbird in spring or maybe the first hoots from the local owl on a warm summer night.

At the Klamath Bird Observatory, in Ashland, Oregon, staff and volunteers approach birding in a strictly scientific manner for very specific reasons. "We use observation-based science, and standard scientific methodology is our approach to counting, capturing and releasing birds and to putting devices on birds to track them," said John Alexander, Executive Director of the Klamath Bird Observatory. "The reason why we do this is that birds are indicator species — we look to birds like the canary in the coal mine."

A paper recently published in the American Journal of Science estimated that there are about 3 billion fewer birds in the skies today, compared to the 1970s. "That means we've lost one in five birds. And we see a continuous decline even of the most ordinary birds, like rock pigeons," Alexander said. "That indicates to us that something is wrong."

Bird numbers may decline because of lack of habitat, the use of chemicals in the environment, or climate change. The only way to know how a bird species is doing is by observing and counting it.

Alexander said that's also how we can document success stories, like how the Bald Eagle and the Peregrine Falcon came back from the brinks of extinction. "It's important to always remember that we can bring birds back," Alexander said.

**Continued on back**







## Continued from front Every single bird counts

The Klamath Bird Observatory also does bird observation training in other countries, and it brings in research interns from overseas. And of course, there's a lot of community education. "I don't know a lot of people who don't like birds," Alexander said. "Our focus has turned toward being more inclusive in educational activities."

What's his best advice to someone who's interested in learning about birding? "Get a good field guide and a pair of decent binoculars really help," Alexander said, adding that there are many birding groups online that arrange group tours. The Audubon Society also has local chapters. He highly recommends the app eBird as a great place to report and keep track of bird sightings.

"Some people say they aren't good enough to enter their observations, but from our perspective every single bird observation is valuable," Alexander said.



## Need help with your energy bill?

**Customers who need help paying their home energy bill may be eligible for a bill discount.** If you qualify, applying is fast and easy. Learn more at [myavista.com/myenergyrate](https://myavista.com/myenergyrate) or call us at (800) 227-9187.



## Rooted in safety

**If planting trees and shrubs is on your spring to-do list, make sure you start your landscaping project by knowing where underground utilities, including natural gas lines, are located.** Planting too close to underground lines can cause safety concerns while digging and as the vegetation matures. It's a good practice not to plant a tree within 10 feet of a natural gas line. Tree roots will spread out at least as wide as the tree's canopy and often much further. As the roots spread and grow deeper, they can entangle or even break natural gas lines or damage protective gas pipeline coatings. Severe storms can also uproot trees which can pull up or break a natural gas line, potentially causing a serious gas leak.

Shrubs, flowers and ground cover are good choices for landscaping near natural gas lines since their root systems are not as extensive as those of trees. When selecting your plantings, consider the size of the root ball, the matured plant's roots and keep in mind the distance to a natural gas line. Before starting any project that involves digging, always call 811 at least two full business days in advance to have your underground utilities located. The service is free. Privately-owned lines can be located for a fee. Otherwise, one strike with a shovel could nick a line, creating a dangerous safety situation. Plus, it's the law.

Visit [myavista.com/811](https://myavista.com/811) to learn more.



**Know what's below.  
Call before you dig.**

## Connect with us

Mailing Address: 1411 E. Mission, PO Box 3727, Spokane, WA 99220-3727

Toll-Free: (800) 227-9187 | Web Site: [myavista.com](https://myavista.com) | Email: [ask@myavista.com](mailto:ask@myavista.com)