



Audubon Society of Corvallis the **CHAT**

April 2010

VOL. 39

#8

General Meeting

Thursday, April 15, 7:00 – 8:30 pm
First Presbyterian Church

Return To Oz

A presentation by Fred Ramsey

Sixteen members and friends of ASC toured Australia for the entire month of November 2009. This tour complemented (rather than duplicated) the tour many of them took to Australia in 2007. They visited all seven states - New South Wales, Northern Territory, Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria, Tasmania, and Queensland. Their species counts were: 1 amphibian, 16 butterflies, 19 reptiles, 25 mammals, ... and 362 birds.



*Buff-breasted
Paradise-
Kingfisher*

Mellinger at David.Mellinger@oregonstate.edu or 757-7953.

Directions

The chapter meeting is in the meeting hall of the First Presbyterian Church (upstairs), 114 SW Eighth Street.

Dave Mellinger



2010 Homer Campbell Environmental Award

Audubon Society of Corvallis is pleased to recognize Jeff Mitchell of Corvallis as the 2010 recipient of the Homer Campbell Environmental Award. This annual award, begun in 2004 in memory of a beloved ASC leader and conservationist, is meant to honor a person(s) in our region for their outstanding contributions to environmental protection and for stimulating increased public awareness of conservation issues.

In his work as a science teacher at Philomath High School, and previously in Eddyville, Jeff has been a leader in the “No Child Left Inside” movement. A key part of his curriculum involves getting students out of the classroom and into real-life learning situations. He has been instrumental in mentoring and motivating other teachers to do the same. Jeff embodies the philosophy of this movement



Jeff Mitchell

See “Campbell Award” on next page

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Campbell *continued from front page*

which states that exposing students to the natural world, and making it a valuable part of their lives, gives them a personal stake in its protection. Jeff has an outstanding ability to form creative partnerships among diverse aspects of the community in order to provide interesting environmental learning projects for his students.



Jeff Mitchell with children

For instance, his ecology students conducted original research on a population of freshwater mussels in the Willamette River. After rafting to the site, they collected, measured, and returned to the river over 1200 specimens. When they analyzed their data they found that no mussels were shorter than 5 cm. Given the life history of mussels, they concluded that the native mussels ceased reproducing about 40 years ago when their host fish population crashed due to poor water quality and dam construction that blocked access to spawning habitat in the headwaters. Mussels also have to compete with an invasive clam from Asia for food and space.

In another on-going project, students engage in many restoration activities, particularly along Newton Creek and other Mary's River tributaries. His students work with Mary's River Watershed Council to monitor water temperatures, oxygen content and turbidity. Several of these tributaries are now much more salmon-friendly as a result of tree planting and other enhancement activities conducted by Jeff and his students.

For the past decade, Jeff has been taking his classes to study plant and animal ecology in the abandoned mill ponds that were once part of the Clemens Mill just east of Philomath. His students maintain a fleet of 30 bicycles to visit the site half a mile from the school, obviating the need for the expense and carbon expenditure of school buses. In the Spring, students share what they have learned with Philomath and Corvallis middle school students at Stewardship Field Days. In partnership with the Fresh Water Trust and Mary's River Watershed Council, high school

students facilitate at 12 learning stations that feature scientific inquiry activities. Topics range from ethnobotany; wetland soils; reptile, amphibian and mammal surveying and ecology; bio-control of invasive plants; and site history to canoeing and log scaling engage the kids in an all day outing. Also at the mill ponds, students planned and built an 8' x 24' wildlife study blind, funded by a grant from Benton County Soil and Water Conservation District. The blind overlooks North Pond and is used by hundreds of students to collect data on Western Pond Turtles and migrating waterfowl.

Students planned and planted four riparian restoration projects on private landowners and the City of Philomath. They recently removed beaver protection cages from 50 foot cottonwoods, alders, maples and seven other species that were planted ten years ago. Students also planned and planted mitigation wetlands for the City, Gene Tools, and Georgia-Pacific Corp.

In a ten-year partnership with Shoulder to Shoulder and Gathering Together Farms, Jeff's botany students grow and evaluate 20 varieties of organic gourmet lettuce in variety trial experiments. Seed germination rates, flavor, appearance preferences, pest resistance and winter hardiness are all evaluated. Students graph results and make recommendations to the farms in professional research papers. Jeff says students take their jobs seriously, learn to design and carry out experiments, and become passionate salad eaters, while farms get educated input on the public's perception of the lettuce varieties. Botany students have also planned, fenced, and planted a 30-tree mixed fruit orchard for the Philomath Food Bank. They chose trees for resistance to pests and local diseases. The orchard also serves as a pruning lab for the students.

Jeff's experiences at the old mill site made him appreciate the value of the site as an outdoor classroom located conveniently close to Philomath schools. So he became involved in the Mary's Peak Natural Resources Interpretive Center and provided vision to that group to work toward acquiring the site for conservation and outdoor education.

For the past five years Jeff has organized an exciting summer science campfire program at the site, called "Science, Music and Marshmallows" that combines education, entertainment and family fun. This popular event attracts about 100 people each week in August.

Jeff Mitchell has invested a major part of his life in providing motivation and training to the naturalists and scientists and conservationists of the next generation.

His outdoor programs have brought communities with differing political philosophies together by focusing on the science. Thanks to his vision and hard work, our natural areas will be valued and protected by those young people he has inspired. With typical humility, Jeff says, "All I do is give the students opportunities to do relevant work in the community by networking with private businesses, individuals, non-profits and government agencies who have needs. I have found that our high school kids are a valuable resource, as they can apply their knowledge to important on-the-ground projects in our community that otherwise might not get

done. They are passionate about applying the best available science in planning a project and doing a quality job, and they genuinely want to contribute to their community.”

The Homer Campbell Environmental Award consists of a personal plaque for the awardee, as well as the inscription of their name on a perpetual plaque displayed at Hesthavn. We hope you can join us on April 15th when Jeff Mitchell will accept this award.
contributed by Joseph Postman and Linda Campbell

The 2010 Birdathon is Even Closer!

The Birdathon is our yearly fundraiser for Hesthavn Nature Center. This year it is taking place the weekend of April 24, or the weekend just before or after. If you aren't on a team but want to contribute, some of us will have our sponsor sheets out at the next Audubon meeting – come by my table and pledge your support! In past years we've raised thousands of dollars for projects and improvements for this wonderful local Audubon sanctuary.

How it works: Put together a team (or go solo). Ask people to sponsor you at so many cents a bird, or for a flat rate. Then go birding the weekend of April 24 and see how many species you can see! (Another weekend in that time frame is fine too, if you have a birding trip planned or a scheduling conflict.) Bird anywhere – your backyard, the Coast, the Rio Grande... the sky's the limit (literally). If you feel shy about asking people to sponsor you, get creative. For example, you can pledge to your own team, perhaps in honor of a nature-lovin' relative. I always ask my kids' grandparents to sponsor our family team – my parents can't say no to that!

You already have 2 sponsors for your team! **Wild Birds Unlimited** has agreed to be a business sponsor again this year, generously pledging 25 cents/species to every team. ASC member **Don Boucher** has pledged 5 cents/species to every team, or 25 cents/species to any motorless team. Meaning, you get around by human power to do your birding that weekend. Don has consistently topped 100 species this way in past Birdathons, so the gauntlet has been thrown down.

In addition, **Peak Sports** has donated a prize – a set of hiking poles – which we will award to one Birdathoner by random drawing at the May 20 Audubon meeting. To enter the drawing, please be sure to email your [Birdathon Report Form](#) to me by May 18, with all team members' names listed.

If you are participating, please drop me an email to let me know, and download the Sponsor Form and Report Form from the ASC website. I will announce results at the May meeting and in the summer Chat.

If you own a local business, you could generate some good publicity by having your business be a sponsor of the event. Your business could sponsor every team at a certain rate. This encourages more people to form a team and participate, knowing they already have their first sponsor. Beyond raising more funds for Hesthavn activities, this involves more people, who then feel they personally have a stake in

Hesthavn's success and, more broadly, in wildlife and nature conservation. Everybody wins. Good Birding! And email me at Mary_vanbrocklin@yahoo.com.

Mary Derr Van Brocklin, Birdathon Coordinator

Field Trip Schedule

Monthly Year-Round Saturday Field Trips

Apr 10: Meet at the Benton Center at 7:30 am

May 8: Meet at the Benton Center at 7:30 am

Our Saturday morning local field trip meets the second Saturday of every month at the Benton Center parking area, 757 Polk Ave, Corvallis at 7:30 am. This field trip is especially interesting for beginner birders and birders new to Oregon's mid-valley area. We spend a lot of time identifying local birds by sight and song. We visit the valley national wildlife refuges—Finley, Baskett Slough, and Ankeny, as well as other birding areas throughout the year. Contact Rich Armstrong at richarmstrong@comcast.net or 541-753-1978 with questions.

Full-Day Birding Trip

Saturday, May 1 - Newport and Depoe Bay Coast

Please note early meeting time.

We'll meet at 5:00 am to get to Boiler Bay at sunrise to look for seabirds (hope to be back by 3:30).

About three times a year we schedule full-day trips to the coast and to refuges within Oregon. On these trips we carpool, sharing the cost of gas with the drivers.

Everyone should bring a large lunch, water/drinks, binoculars, spotting scope (if available), and layers of warm clothing, sturdy shoes, and rain gear. We meet at the Benton Center (LBCC) parking lot, 757 Polk Ave, in Corvallis. Contact Rich Armstrong at richarmstrong@comcast.net or 541-753-1978 with any questions.

Spring 2010 Weekend Field Trips

Apr 16–18: Klamath Basin

Apr 30 – May 2: Rogue Valley

May 20 – 23: Malheur NWR

June 18 – 20: Summer Lake/Ft Rock/Fremont NFS

Fred Ramsey leads all the spring weekend trips. Fred has been leading these field trips for ASC for over 35 years. He is an amazing field trip guide, sharing his knowledge about finding birds in their habitat and pointing out wildflowers, butterflies, mammals, and reptiles. The field trips fill up early in the fall. Sign-up sheets are available at the general meeting or email Fred Ramsey with your requests at flramsey5@comcast.net.

Please note:

The Rogue Valley and Malheur trips require deposits by February 28, 2010.

The Rogue Valley trip includes a play at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in Ashland. The play this year will be *Hamlet*. A deposit of \$40 is required for the play.

The Malheur deposit is \$50. Each deposit must be made payable to Fred Ramsey at 3550 NW Glen Ridge Pl., Corvallis OR 97330.

Rich Armstrong

Birding Classes

Two classes for bird watchers will be offered by Don Boucher and Lisa Millbank this spring. *NOTE: corrections made here from the listing in the March issue.*

Birding in the Willamette Valley

We'll learn identification skills, how to choose field guides and binoculars, and birding sites. We'll spend time outside with the birds at the peak of springtime.

2-week class:

Wed., May 12: 7-8:30 pm, classroom, Avery House Nature Center

Sat., May 15: 9-11 am, field trip at Avery Park

Wed., May 19: 7-8:30 pm, classroom, Avery House Nature Center

Sat., May 22: 9-11 am, field trip, carpool to Finley NWR

Birding by Ear

Would you like to know your local bird songs and calls? Learn to listen and remember bird sounds. Beginners, take "Birding in the Willamette Valley" first.

2-week class:

Wed., May 26: 7-8:30 pm, classroom, Avery House Nature Center

Sat., May 29: 9-11 am, Field trip to Willamette Park

Wed., June 2: 7-8:30 pm, classroom, Avery House Nature Center

Sat., June 5: 9-11 am, field trip to Jackson-Frazier Wetland

Class information: Don Boucher, 541-753-7689, bouchdon@peak.org. Registration cost will be \$40 for each class. Contact the Corvallis Environmental Center at 541-753-9211 or www.corvallisenvironmentalcenter.org.

Study Skin Preparation Class

In addition to the two classes for bird watchers offered by this spring, a new class on study skin preparation will be offered by Stacy Moore

Over the years, many people have told me that they would be interested in a class on preparing study skins. Study skins consist of the outer skin and feathers of a bird along with its wings, legs and tail. The insides are removed and replaced with stuffing. ASC uses these study skins for our education programs and for displays. Now, I am pleased to announce that Stacy Moore will be conducting a study skin preparation class at Hesthavn on Sunday, May 2, 2010. Stacy is skilled in preparing bird study skins and recently prepared the House Sparrow that was used at the Bluebird workshop last month.

The class will begin at 1 p.m. and run about 3 hours. Class size is limited to 10 people and there is a \$10 preregistration fee for the class. This first class will be limited to persons 18 years of age or older. We hope to be able to offer this class on a regular basis 1-3 times a year. To register and for any questions, please contact Marcia F. Cutler (see back of the Chat).

On a related note, we are seeking freezer birds that people have stored for use in the class. The birds should be less than a year old to avoid freezer burn and be of at least towhee or thrush sized. If you have any, please contact me.

Marcia F. Cutler

Hesthavn News

Earth Day at Hesthavn

Thursday, April 22

10 a.m - 2 p.m. & 5 - 7 p.m.

Come celebrate the completion of our new rainwater collection system and associated native planting success. The system features two storage tanks, a solar pump, multiple drip irrigation lines on timers, and hundreds of new trees and shrubs. Water is delivered directly to the plants with no energy inputs—except volunteers to monitor it, of course. Four different mini-tours, 10-15 minutes each, will be offered at scheduled times, with additional sessions at other times if requested.

12:30 & 5:30--Rainwater collection

12:50 & 5:50--Drip irrigation

1:10 & 6:10--Methods for removing invasive vegetation

1:30 & 6:30--Native plants

There will also be children's activities in the evening. Large community groups are scheduled to attend in the morning. Tours will be offered to coordinate with their arrival. Since parking is limited, others are encouraged to attend in the afternoon or evening, however everyone is welcome anytime.

In addition to the tours, the Nature Center will be open, and you are welcome to come and explore the 7 acre stream-side site at your leisure. Feel free to bring a picnic. If you haven't visited in a while, you will be impressed with the changes, and the spring blossoms should add to the festive spirit.

Volunteer Opportunity

Help with Earth Day Celebration at Hesthavn, Thursday, April 22. A day or two before an event there is always plenty of work to do indoors and out to make the site look welcoming: dust, pull weeds, trim paths, fill birdfeeders. The day of the Celebration: sign-in guests, help with activities, and put up signs.

For more information or to volunteer to help with the event, please contact Paula Vanderheul or Gail Andrews (contact info on back of Chat)

Gail Andrews

Field Notes

29 February 2010 – 26 March 2010

Unseasonably warm weather characterized most of this period with a few stretches of rain. There were still very few rarities, although the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was seen at EE Wilson once. Spring is coming as we report new arrivals.

Abbreviations and Locations: m.ob. = many observers. Observer names are noted in parentheses after their reports. Observations without a name (or with RAA) are the editor's. ASC indicates observations made by Audubon Society of Corvallis field trips. EEW = E. E. Wilson Wildlife Area north of Corvallis. FNWR = Finley National Wildlife Refuge, and includes Cabell, Cheadle, and McFadden marshes. STP = sewage treatment ponds; Philomath STP are off of Bellfountain Drive south of Philomath. Stewart Lake is at Hewlett-Packard in Corvallis. The Diamond Hill Road wetland is in Linn County.

A **Green Heron** was at Snag Boat Bend 3/2 (B Proebsting) and the

1 in Albany continued (Tristen Gholson). A female Blue-winged Teal was with green-winged teal at EEW on 2/26 (J Geier). 2 **Eurasian Wigeon** were at Grand Prairie Park in Albany on 3/13 (ASC). **Canvasback** were at Stewart most of the month (J Simmons, ASC).

A **Mountain Quail** was across from Forest Dell Park 3/19-22 (J Paul, mob) and they were also heard from Tampico Ridge on 3/24 (J Geier). **Wild Turkey** are sort of all around and we wonder how many are really wild. There were 88 on west Lewisburg Rd late Feb. (J Paul) and 19 on Witham Hill on 3/8 (D Mellinger). A weird sighting was a **Chukar** on Mary's Peak on 3/23 (K Hilton, B Proebsting), certainly an escaped bird from somewhere.

About 20 **California Gulls** were near Home Depot in Corvallis on 3/21 (J Geier). About 25 **Glaucous-winged Gulls** and some probably hybrid gulls were at Grand Prairie Park in Albany on 3/13 (J Geier, ASC).

The 1st **Turkey Vultures** were reported on 2/25 (S Seibel), now everywhere. A **Peregrine Falcon** was along Riverside in Linn (D Boucher) and another on 35th St (C Miller) on 3/3. **Merlin** were reported from a few places – downtown Corvallis on 3/8 (D Mellinger), near Forest Dell Park on 3/14 (E Sherr), along 99 south of Corvallis 3/14, and downtown Albany on 3/17 (D Boucher). 16 **Bald Eagles** were on Bellfountain south of sewage ponds on 3/12 feeding on dead sheep (P Rentz). Still **Rough-legged Hawks** past Adair 3/18 (J Geier). The 1st **Osprey** report was near Bruce Rd on 3/18 (W Wright). **White-tailed Kite** was seen near Woodpecker loop at Finley on 3/20 (P Otley).

Owls are always a treat. 2 **Barn Owls** were in Becky Schweibert's back field in Brownsville and 1 was in Corvallis near Circle/14th on 3/13 (J Simmons). A Northern **Saw-whet** was heard near Forest Dell Park on 3/22 (M Garrard).

2 **Eurasian-collared Doves** were at Sunset Park in Albany on 3/13 (ASC) and 1 was at Stewart Lake (J Simmons) as this species continues to expand. **Band-tailed Pigeons** were reported from many locations, **Rufous Hummingbirds** are now all over, and **Violet-green Swallows** are also everywhere.

The famous **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** was seen on 3/2 and may be still around. The problem with rare birds that stay around is not many are looking any more. The FNWR **Lewis' Woodpecker** was seen throughout the period (mob). It has a tree just north of the old HQ where the road makes sharp left.

A **Hermit Thrush** was on OSU campus on 3/5 (D Boucher). A **Townsend's Solitaire** was on NE Conser in Corvallis on 3/6 (R Enck). Unfortunately it was not seen again. **Northern Shrike** was still near Prairie Overlook at Finley 3/19 (H Bruner) and 3/21 (P Rentz).

3 different **Orange-crowned Warbler** reports came on 3/23 – B Proebsting had 1 at his house, 1 from Bald Hill Park (P Comeleo), and along Tampico Ridge (J Geier).

20-30 **Horned Larks** and a lot of **Western Meadowlarks** were at the Diamond wetlands South of Brownsville on 3/8 (Tristen Gholson). About 6 **streaked Horned Larks** (the subspecies only in our area) and a large flock of **American Pipit** were along Glaser Rd on the Corvallis Field Trip on 3/13.

A **Slate-colored Fox Sparrow** (different subspecies from our normal sooty fox sparrows) was reported at EEW 2/27 (J Geier). EEW still had at least 1 **Swamp Sparrow** on 3/12 (J Geier). A breeding plumage **Chipping Sparrow** was off 99w north of Lewisburg on 3/22 (B Altman).

Evening Grosbeaks were reported in many places this month. 40 were at Suffer Springs on 3/2 (J Thomas). **Pine Siskin** were reported a lot more this month than earlier in winter.

During the month the Newport coast area had no significant reports probably because OBOL has had major problems.

Next issue

Please send your reports for the next issue by 24 April.

Rich Armstrong

(541) 753-1978

richarmstrong@comcast.net

Rich Armstrong

Who's Being Seen

April Migrants

During the month of April, birders are afflicted with divided attention. Everyday life is interrupted with more glances out the window, more lunchtime walks and binoculars are always within reach. April transforms our world as several migrant species arrive each week from distant lands. This spirit is celebrated by the annual Birdathon when teams of birders raise money for Hesthavn by pandering to their birding addictions.

It's a good time to go to a forested hill and watch for migrating warblers, vireos and flycatchers. Check out locations like Coffin Butte (across HWY 99W from E.E. Wilson), in Corvallis at Chip Ross Park, Dimple Hill, Bald Hill Park and Oak Lawn Memorial Park and at Finley NWR's Pigeon Butte. Go to forested areas along the Willamette River like Simpson Park in Albany or Willamette Park in Corvallis. The river corridor is a natural migration route for both arboreal and water birds. Find a spot to watch the water for Spotted Sandpipers and swallows. You may find a few Northern Rough-winged Swallows amongst the flocks. You should prime yourself with recordings of warbler songs so your ear is ready for the flood of birdsong. Schedule with your masseuse for the inevitable "warbler neck."

There are a few places to check out for expected migrants. By early April the Osprey nest is occupied in downtown Corvallis next to the Harrison Street Bridge over the Willamette River. Similarly in downtown Albany there is an Osprey nest near the confluence of the Calapooia and Willamette Rivers, west of the Lyon Street Bridge. The Philomath sewage lagoon off Bellfountain Road is great for waterfowl and some shorebirds. Do call the Philomath Public Works Department for access permission, which is typically granted. Many flocks of Greater White-fronted Geese pass through the Willamette Valley and mid-April through early May is the best time to catch a glimpse of them. Try the Philomath sewage lagoon and Finley NWR.

MacGillivray's Warblers are uncommon but a reliable place to find them is on a back road of Peavy Arboretum. Access this site from Hwy. 99W in Adair Village from a parking area located across the road from Vandenberg Ave. There are many other places to numerous to list.



*Band-tailed Pigeon photo by
Matt Lee*

It's a good idea to attend the second Saturday field trip (listed on page 59) this month! Set some time aside now and don't miss this most glorious and exhilarating event of spring.

Don Boucher



Osprey photo by Matt Lee

GreenTip

OF THE MONTH

Approximately 90 percent of the energy used to wash clothes is for heating water, according to the US Department of Energy. You can greatly reduce that amount by washing clothes with cold or cooler temperatures. Hot water amounts for 17 percent of a family's energy use, according to the Ruralite Magazine.

It seemed to me that cold water just would not do a good job, so I checked with *Consumer's Guide* publication. Sure enough, several brands of soap were listed as doing a fine job with cold water. Now it's time for the test. One of the recommended soaps is the Costco brand which is listed as much more economical than the "big boys". My favorite is the Costco 2X ULTRA ECOS which is 100% all natural and is petrochemical free with a neutral pH. It is listed as "septic safe" and biodegradable with a recyclable bottle and cap.

My tests prove to me its every bit as good as the expensive hot water models and will work well on cold water. Why not try the cold water option?

John Gaylord

Atop the Nestbox Bluebird Relocation?

Bob Altman from the American Bird Conservancy is looking for a pair of nesting bluebirds to translocate to the San Juan Islands this spring. As some of you know, ABC has partnered with other organizations and individuals to repopulate the San Juan Islands with Western Bluebirds since 2007. Bob

reports successful nestings of 8 pairs last year, producing 40 fledglings. He needs to introduce as much genetic diversity as possible in order to create a healthy and robust population of bluebirds on the islands. Including Bob, we all understand how possessive people can be of "their" bluebirds, but a gift of one pair could go a long way toward the conservation of this species in its historic range. Anyone who has a bluebird pair localizing to their property right now and would be willing to let Bob trap and relocate them, please contact me at gordin@centurytel.net or 541-258-6625.

To learn more about ABC's Western Bluebird Reintroduction Program, go to www.abcbirds.org/abcprograms/domestic/sitebased/wbb_reintroduction.html.

Raylene Gordin

Photo Contest

The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology announced the launch of the WeLoveBirds.org photo contest.

Anyone can join this free interactive online community and submit one original photograph of a wild bird for the contest. Site members will vote for their favorite photographs. The winning photos will be announced and featured on Earth Day, April 22.

WeLoveBirds.org offers an open social network of people who are passionate about birds; access to information on birds and birding from a leading ornithology lab; and an opportunity to make a positive difference for birds and their habitats. WeLoveBirds.org members can already submit photographs to the site, along with videos, comments, discussions, and blog posts.

The site represents a first partnership between NRDC and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, nationally recognized conservation organizations that will offer NRDC's expertise in policy and advocacy and the Cornell Lab's authoritative bird research, online birding resources, and citizen-science programs.

For contest rules and information, go to:

<http://www.welovebirds.org/page/photo-contest>

Presidential Search National Audubon Society

The National Audubon Society's search for a President is underway. You are encouraged to participate in the search by sending suggestions of candidates to the search firm, Russell Reynolds, at NAS@russellreynolds.com. Your valued input is important and appreciated and the search firm looks forward to hearing from you.

Frank Gill, President, National Audubon Society

NestWatch

Help Study Climate Change Impact

Collecting information about nesting birds in North America is what the NestWatch project at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology is all about—and the new season is just getting underway. Participants submit data about which kinds of birds are nesting, the number of eggs laid, dates eggs were laid, and the numbers of chicks hatched and fledged.

“Collecting this information across the continent over long periods of time is one of the best ways we have to detect widespread changes in bird breeding biology,” says Laura Burkholder, the project leader for NestWatch. “Gathering this information takes on new urgency in light of the State of the Birds 2010 Climate Change Report just released by the Department of the Interior earlier this month.”

“Nesting birds are vulnerable to climate change. Data show some species, like the Tree Swallow, are laying their eggs more than a week earlier than they did just a few decades ago,” says Burkholder. “That could spell big trouble if hatch dates get out of sync with the availability of food.”

Based on NestWatch data from 1997 to 2009, the chart shown here for the Eastern Bluebird suggests that the first eggs are being laid sooner. More long-term data are needed to clarify the impacts of environmental change and human land use on breeding birds.

In addition to its scientific value, NestWatch is fun, free, and open to all. Participation is a great way to connect with nature. Kindergarten students in one New York classroom collected information about bluebirds nesting on school grounds. “This was so exciting for the children and for me too,” said teacher Ruth Taylor. “They named the male Skyboy and the female Bluebell. First we had two eggs and then four eggs in the nest. What a marvelous experience for all of us to enjoy and learn!”

The always-popular NestCams are also back in action. Anyone can get a live peek into nests and nest boxes across the country. Live cameras for Barn Owls, Barred Owls, and Wood Ducks are online right now with Eastern Bluebirds and other species soon to follow at www.nestcams.org.

All NestWatch materials and instructions are available online at www.nestwatch.org, including directions on how to find nests, how to build and put up nest boxes, and how to monitor nests without disturbing the birds.

The NestWatch project was developed by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology in collaboration with the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center and is funded by the National Science Foundation.

Contributors to the Chat

Dave Mellinger, Joseph Postman, Linda Campbell, Mary Derr Van Brocklin, Rich Armstrong, Marcia F. Cutler, Gail Andrews, Don Boucher, John Gaylord, Raylene Gordin, and Paula Vanderheul

Migrant Arrivals

Bird phenology records in Corvallis date from 1970. The last phenology table was published in the Chat in March 1994. This list updates the arrivals through the spring of 2002. (M): Migrant, does not spend the season or breed in our area.

Average	Species	years	Earliest
Feb. 10	Tree Swallow	27	1/10
19	Turkey Vulture	29	1/17
27	Horned Grebe (M)	03	2/03
March 2	Rufous Hummingbird	32	2/14
3	Violet-green Swallow	29	2/21
13	Cinnamon Teal	27	1/31
16	Band-tailed Pigeon	20	2/04
19	Long-billed Dowitcher (M)	20	1/19
21	Orange-crowned Warbler	30	2/11
22	Osprey	30	1/28
31	Cliff Swallow	25	3/17
April 2	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	24	3/22
3	American Bittern	17	2/16
4	Common Yellowthroat	31	3/18
5	Barn Swallow	27	3/22
	Sora	20	2/22
8	Lesser Yellowlegs (M)	19	1/20
10	Black-throated Gray Warbler	30	3/15
	House Wren	24	2/21
11	Chipping Sparrow	26	3/07
14	Vesper Sparrow	13	3/19
15	Nashville Warbler	18	3/18
17	Cassin's Vireo	30	3/26
	Wilson's Warbler	28	4/03
20	Vaux's Swift	30	4/05
21	Solitary Sandpiper (M)	21	4/08
	Yellow-headed Blackbird	20	2/21
22	Hammond's Flycatcher	11	4/14
23	MacGillivray's Warbler	29	4/02
24	Semipalmated Plover (M)	17	2/07
	Warbling Vireo	28	3/20
26	Western Kingbird	23	4/15
27	Calliope Hummingbird (M)	13	4/06
	Western Tanager	27	2/28
28	Hermit Warbler	18	4/01
	Pacific-slope Flycatcher	26	4/02
29	Yellow Warbler	22	4/10
May	Purple Martin	10	3/17
3	Swainson's Thrush	24	4/05
	Western Wood-Pewee	27	4/07
5	Black-headed Grosbeak	29	4/03
	Bullock's Oriole	23	4/11
6	Blue-winged Teal (M)	20	4/21
	Lazuli Bunting	26	4/22
7	Olive-sided Flycatcher	23	4/20
	Red-necked Phalarope (M)	13	4/23
10	Wilson's Phalarope (M)	20	4/20
12	Yellow-breasted Chat	21	4/04
16	Willow Flycatcher	18	4/25
19	Black Tern (M)	07	4/02
June 4	Common Nighthawk	13	5/10
7	Eastern Kingbird (M)	04	5/23

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the **CHAT**

Renew your membership before the date on the mailing label to avoid missing issues of the Chat.

Calendar

Apr 8 Board meeting
Apr 10 Second Saturday field trip, 7:30 am
Apr 15 General meeting
Apr 16-18: Klamath Basin field trip
Apr 24 Field notes submission deadline for April Chat
Apr 22 Article submission deadline for April Chat
Apr 22 Earth Day at Hesthavn
Apr 24 ASC Birdathon
Apr 30 - May 2: Rogue Valley field trip
May 8 Second Saturday field trip, 7:30 am



Western Meadowlark photo by Sue Powell

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