



Audubon Society of Corvallis the **CHAT**

December 2010

VOL. 40

#4

General Meeting

Thursday, December 16, 7:00 – 8:30 pm
First Presbyterian Church

Member Slide Show

Corvallis Audubon's traditional holiday sharing of nature photos offers a great opportunity to experience the interesting sights seen by other Audubon folks over the past year. Any fun or interesting photo or video of a bird or other animal, plant, or nature scene is welcome. To accommodate as many members as possible, please limit your contributions to 10 of your favorites, or about 3 minutes of videos. Unless you can bring a slide projector, all photos must be digital. Please submit them by Tuesday, December 15, by emailing them to David.Mellinger@oregonstate.edu. If you would like to bring high-resolution photos on a thumb drive, please tell me ahead of time how many you have and your general topic (birds, butterflies, scenery, etc.), and then show up at 6:30 for the meeting on the Dec. 16 to allow plenty of time to load your photos.

Doors open at 6:30 pm for refreshments and visiting. The chapter meeting commences at 7:00 pm, followed by the guest lecture at 7:30 pm. Questions about the series can be directed to Dave Mellinger at David.Mellinger@oregonstate.edu or 541-757-7953.

Directions

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

Dave Mellinger

Call For Nominations

Homer Campbell-Asc Environmental Award 2011

The Homer Campbell ASC Environmental Award, established in 2005, recognizes a local (Linn, Benton, Lincoln & Polk Counties) individual or organization that has made significant contributions in the areas of environmental stewardship, awareness, and outreach. Contributions worthy of recognition might include, but are not limited to:

- promotion of environmentally sustainable practices
- leadership on local environmental issues
- classroom education of environmental stewardship
- restoration or preservation of habitat

Both long-standing (life-long) and short-term but significant contributions will be considered for this award.

A committee from the Audubon Society of Corvallis will recommend one of the nominees for approval by the entire Board. The selected awardee will then be presented with an engraved plaque at the April ASC General Meeting. The awardee's name will also be engraved on a permanent plaque that hangs at Hesthavn.

Nominations should consist of a letter that describes how the actions or activities of the nominee fit the above described (or related) criteria. Nominations should include contact information for both the nominee and the nominator and are due by January 31st, 2011.

Email submissions may be sent to Linda Campbell, lcampbell@peak.org, Karan Fairchild, alderspr@peak.org, or Dave Mellinger, David.Mellinger@oregonstate.edu. Snail mail submissions should be sent to ASC, PO Box 148, Corvallis, OR 97339 Attn: HC Enviro Award Committee.

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Homer Campbell *continued from front page*

Previous awardees of the Homer Campbell-ASC Environmental Award:

- 2005- Elzy Eltzroth
- 2006- Bob & Liz Frenkel
- 2007- Wally & Mary Eichler
- 2008- Bill & Carla Chambers, Stahlbush Island Farms
- 2009- Elsie Eltzroth
- 2010- Jeff Mitchell

Karan Fairchild

Field Trip Schedule

Monthly Year-Round Saturday Field Trips

December 11: Meet at the Benton Center at 7:30 am

January 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.

Rich Armstrong

Spring Weekend Field Trips - 2011

ASC offers five weekend field trips to a wide selection of Oregon locations. Four of them are three-day trips covering Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. The other - to Malheur National Wildlife Refuge - covers Thursday through Sunday. All trips are led by Fred Ramsey with Jim Faulkner and Tom Penpraze driving and providing substantial guiding expertise. Except for the Malheur trip (where we stay at the Malheur Field Station, now with an operational mess hall), we stay in motels and eat in restaurants. Enterprise 12-passenger or 15-passenger vans transport us. We have a maximum of 8 participants in each van so that everyone has a window seat. Expenses are shared.

Bandon and the South Coast - March 18-20.

This is a warmup trip specializing in coastal birds - loons, grebes, cormorants, etc. It is too early for puffins, but there some very special birds available: Red-shouldered Hawk, Black Phoebe, and Allen's Hummingbird head the list. We hope to repeat last year's gull bonanza. A single flock of about 60 gulls sat obligingly close enough to study differences between the eight (!) species present. And there are some surprises ... Elephant Seals are often seen basking at Simpson's Reef. Maximum tour size: 16.

Klamath Basin - April 29-May 1.

This trip hits the tail end of the massive migration of ducks, geese, and shorebirds which pause in the Klamath Basin wildlife refuges before continuing north to breeding

grounds. Four refuges offer a variety of habitats. The south end of Upper Klamath Lake nets 8 species of grebe with some doing their unique dance across the surface. And a Sunday morning walk through Moore Park picks up the earliest songbird arrivals. Maximum tour size: 24.

Rogue Valley - May 6-8 (probably).

Here we hit the songbird migration in full swing. A hike to the top of Upper Table Rock presents a magnificent wildflower display as the trail winds through Oregon's little piece of California chaparral. Here we find the chaparral specialties Oak Titmouse, California Towhee, and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. We sample some of Ashland's famous restaurants and then attend a performance at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. The precise date of this trip is still uncertain and awaits the publication of OSF's 2011 schedule. Maximum tour size: 16.

Malheur National Wildlife Refuge - May 19-22.

Our signature trip, and the 40th year led by Fred. The refuge is Oregon's most famous birding area, but this tour also hits many great spots going over the Cascades, following the Crooked River, and coming back through the High Desert. We usually see over 100 species each of the four days and around 175 species overall. Maximum tour size: 32.

Summer Lake and a return to Klamath - June 17-19.

Our 2010 tour scored a rare Oregon Swift Trifecta: Black (Salt Creek Falls), White-throated (Fort Rock), and Vaux's. Add Snowy Plover, Common Poorwill, American Bittern, and Yellow Rail and you understand that this is a special conclusion to the spring offerings. Maximum tour size: 21.

Come join us!

Signup sheets for these trips are available on the Field Trip table at all of the general meetings. Also, you may sign up by sending an email to Fred at flramsey5@comcast.net. But here is a new twist: confirming a reservation on any one of these trips requires a \$50 deposit by February 28. The deposits will be refundable only if a replacement exists on the waiting list.

Fred Ramsey

The Envelope, Please

You saw the envelope in this newsletter. You know it is end-of-year donation time. We know that these are difficult economic times and that many of you have given generously already this year. If you are considering additional charitable donations for tax purposes or as holiday gifts, please think about the Audubon Society of Corvallis. The bottom line is that, like most non-profits, membership dues help with basic operations such as mailing the newsletter and room rent for meetings, as well as some of our activi-

ties. There are additional opportunities for outreach and habitat restoration that are in need of funding.

Consider what your donation could support:

- \$10—Scholarship for one child to attend a class at Hesthavn
- \$50—Printing 100 Birding Corvallis brochures
- \$100—One portable environmental education activity kit
- \$250—Bird Bands and equipment for Bluebird Trail
- \$500—Quality sound system for use at meetings and events

With the talented and dedicated volunteer force working for ASC, your financial contribution goes a long way. If you would like to fund a specific project or item, please contact any board member. Thanks to all of you for donating so freely of your time and money in the past. It is your involvement that makes ASC such a vibrant organization. Be assured that when you mail a check in the enclosed envelope, that money will be used to further enhance the outstanding conservation restoration and education programs coordinated so ably by our membership.

The Board of ASC

Hesthavn News

New Learning Aids Created

Lori McGovern and Susan Brown have each completed separate projects that will help visitors learn about the native habitats stations along the nature trail. Lori coordinated the trail brochure, which provides descriptions of the 8 stations. Garry Gibson and Susan Brown wrote the habitat descriptions. Frank Schramm formatted the layout. Karl Hartzell will mount the station post along the trail. Once the posts are in place there will be a display box available with the trail brochures for visitors to use.

Susan Brown made a wildflower scrapbook of Hesthavn's natives. It is setup seasonally as the flowers bloom. A separate page for each flower, photo, descriptions and room for comments from visitors. Susan says it will enhance the new nature trail brochure providing additional details of the wildflowers. The scrapbook will be available inside the nature center.

At the November 20th work party six volunteers spent 6 hours burning a brush pile that was between the shed and the center. The bare ground was seeded with native wildflowers.

The public is welcome to visit Audubon's Hesthavn Nature Center daily from sunrise to sunset to walk the nature trail viewing native habitat and wildlife.

We have many volunteer opportunities to help with special maintenance projects, landscape restoration projects, educational presentations, administration duties, public relations and advertising programs with the community. Consider a small amount of time to help the management team with a list of obligations and opportunities.

Contact Paula Vanderheul for information about join-

ing the Nature Center volunteer team.

You can find map directions to Hesthavn Nature Center, which is located at 8590 NW Oak Creek Drive, on the ASC website at www.audubon.corvallis.or.us

*Paula Vanderheul
vanderp@peak.org*

Field Notes

28 OCTOBER – 24 November 2010

Winter birds are showing up. Highlights of the month were **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**, **Northern Mockingbird**, **Snow Bunting**, **red Fox Sparrow**, **Gray-crowned Rosy Finch**, **Brown Pelican**, and **gulls**.

Abbreviations and Locations: mob = many observers. Observer names are noted in parentheses after their reports. Philomath means the Philomath Sewage Treatment Ponds. EEW = E. E. Wilson Wildlife Area north of Corvallis. Cabell is the lake on Finley. ASC = Audubon Society field trip.

Western Grebes were still at Philomath 10/31 (D Robinson, P Otley) and 11/20 (W Wright) and 2 were at Cabell 11/21 (E Knight). A **Brown Pelican** was seen flying over OSU 11/22 (D Roby), but could not be relocated. This is only the 2nd ever for Benton County. A **Surf Scoter** was at Elliott 11/6 (Tristen), and at Philomath 11/7 (L McCoy). **Tundra Swans** have arrived at Cabell 11/7 with 26 there on 11/11 (W Wright). A **Snow Goose** was at Baskett Slough 11/22 (R Namitz), and a probable **Snow Goose** flew over downtown Corvallis in a flock of Cackling Geese 11/10 (L Millbank). 2 **Common Goldeneye** were off Ryals Rd (RA) and 5 were at Philomath 11/20 (W Wright). **Canvasbacks** were at Stewart Lake most of the period and that is the most reliable place for them. There were also sightings at Philomath and Elliott. A **Eurasian Widgeon** was at Philomath 11/11 (W Wright) and another at Elliott 11/20 (RA) and 4 in Albany 11/23 (A Booth). 45 **Hooded Mergansers** including 10 adult males was a good number at Elliot Ponds & Ryals pond 11/20 (RA).

A **Black-bellied Plover** was at Baskett Slough 10/31 (R Gerig). 30 **Wilson's Snipes** were seen near EEW (ASC). Another **Red Phalarope** was at Philomath 11/15 (D Robinson). Gulls were surprisingly exciting this period. **Bonaparte's Gulls** were seen at Philomath a few times this period (D Robinson, mob).

A **Herring Gull** flew over Philomath 10/31 (D Robinson). **Gulls** put on a show at the dump, especially because they rest and preen on Toketie pond. About 80 were reported 11/7 (J Geier) and that got others looking. By 11/10 150+ were reported and **Mew Gulls** and **Ring-billed Gulls** were there with the more numerous **Glaucous-winged** and **California Gulls** (J Geier). An adult **Western Gull** was there 11/11 (Tristen). On 11/12 a very dark backed gull was seen (J Geier) and there was speculation it might be a Slaty-backed Gull. Others observed and pictures were taken and the conclusion was that it was probably a



Possibly a dark-colored Western Gull or hybrid. Photos by Doug Robinson

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Fiedl Notes *continued from page 23*

small dark Western Gull or a hybrid, but it was exciting. As many as 200 gulls have been at the dump 11/13. And a **Mew Gull** was at Philomath 11/15 (D Robinson).



Barred Owl photo by Susan Brown

A **Mountain Quail** was seen on the road to Mary's Peak 11/10 (J Thomas), but you can drive up there many times and never see 1. A **Northern Saw-whet Owl** was heard near EEW (J Geier). **Barred Owls** were surprisingly reported quite a few times – off Bellfountain (E Eltzo), Witham Hill (D Mellinger), SW Corvallis (L Millbank), mid Corvallis (T Brown), another mid Corvallis (P Otley), SE Corvallis (W Wright), and EEW (A Hinkle). A **Merlin** was at Avery Park 11/21 (L Millbank) and another over South Corvallis 11/23 (W Wright). A **Northern Goshawk** was near Baskett Slough 10/31 (R Gerig). A **Peregrine Falcon** was at Baskett Slough 10/31 (R Gerig). A **Prairie Falcon** was near Brownsville 11/20 (B Schwiebert). A **Golden Eagle** was at Finley 11/19 (M Monroe).

The **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**, presumably the same bird as last winter but now an adult, has returned to EEW and even the same tree 11/10 (J Geier). It has been seen regularly since then and hopefully will stay all winter again. A **Say's Phoebe** was at Baskett Slough 10/31 (R Gerig). **Black Phoebes** continue – still at Kiger Island 11/1 (D Roby), at Finley HQ various times (mob), and at the Monroe sewage pond 11/22 (W Wright). A **Northern Shrike** was at Philomath 10/31 (W Wright). A **Northern Mockingbird** was at EEW 11/16 (B Proebsting), but was not there in afternoon. Numerous **Varied Thrush** were seen on way to Mary's Peak (mob) and have just shown up in the valley 11/20 (mob) and will hopefully be around a lot this winter.



Northern Mockingbird photo by Bill Proebsting

A **Nashville Warbler** was on Oak Creek 11/14 (P Vanderheul). **Townsend's Warblers** were seen in a few places (mob). **White-throated Sparrows** are uncommon here in winter. The 1st report was from Starker Park 10/31 (L Millbank) and there were 11 around EEW 11/8 (J Geier). A **Red Fox Sparrow** was along Cabell 10/30 (D Robinson). **Swamp Sparrows** showed at Cabell 10/12 (D Robinson) and the normal place



Snow Bunting photo by Doug Robinson

at EEW 10/25 (J Geier), but were not seen since until 3 were at EEW 11/23 (J Geier). A **Slate-colored Junco** was in North Corvallis 11/22 (RA). A **Gray-crowned Rosy Finch** was on Mary's Peak 11/4 (A Far-rand), but was not re-found. A **Snow Bunting** was found on Mary's Peak 11/14 (A Hinkle) and stayed at least a few days.

Next issue

Please send your reports for the next issue by 16 December.

Rich Armstrong

(541) 753-1978

richarmstrong@comcast.net

Rich Armstrong

Correction

Last month these photos were incorrectly attributed. They were taken by Tristen Gholson.



Say's Phoebe



Red Phalarope

Atop the Nestbox

(Editor's note: This report was intended for the Nov. issue of the Chat, and was mistakenly omitted.)

Below is the bluebird trail nesting data for the 2010 season. Heavy losses in spring did not keep us from fledging more birds than ever, since we began the season with many more nesting pairs. Our overall failure rate was 25%, compared to 15% last year. We fledged 4 birds per occupied box, compared to 7 last year. For a look at our numbers each year since 1999, go to the "bluebird potpourri" section of our webpage at www.audubon.corvallis.or.us/bluebird_trail.shtml.

Nesting attempts -232
Failures -58
First broods -174
Second broods -55
Third broods -3
Eggs laid -1122
Eggs per attempt -5
Eggs hatched -880
% hatched -78
Banded -723
Fledged -702
% fledged -79
Fledged per occupied box -4

Raylene Gordin

Cedar Waxwing Mortality

Early last month, Lee Sherman, a research writer in the OSU Research Communications Dept. reported that large numbers of foraging cedar waxwings were dying after colliding with windows of OSU's Kerr Administration Building, even though the windows had decals on them. Ten dead birds were retrieved with several more dead birds outside the building. She was asked to inform OSU Facilities, as the birds were hitting the window so hard, she was not able to work in her office.

Catherine McBride

Marine Reserves Endorsed

Oregon's Marine Reserve Community Teams have developed final recommendations on how to best protect three of the most important areas off shore from Oregon's majestic coast. On the night of November 10, Cape Falcon, Cascade Head, and Cape Perpetua community teams wrapped up nearly a year of intense volunteer work. This process has taken almost ten years to complete. Audubon Society and the Sierra Club were strong proponents of the reserves and worked together to achieve support. The positive recommendations now go forward to ODF&W who will finalize the plans and pass them on to the Governor who is expected to endorse them. We appreciate all the good work done in our local community including the support by the Benton County Commissioners.

John Gaylord

More on Oregon Marine Reserves

After nearly a year of work, community teams reporting to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife recommended establishing reserves in three spots: Cape Falcon south of Cannon Beach, Cascade Head near Lincoln City and Cape Perpetua near Yachats. If approved, those three reserves would add to the state's first two: Redfish Rocks near Port Orford and Otter Rocks near Depoe Bay, scheduled to take effect next June.

Marine reserves are designed to provide a refuge

for fish, increase fish populations, boost ocean research and allow scientists to gauge the effect of fishing on fish stocks. Reserves allow boating and research, but they bar fishing, crabbing, hunting, pipelines, telecommunications cables and industrial activity such as wave and wind energy. Less-restrictive protected areas generally allow some fishing and crabbing but not bottom trawling, seen as most destructive of habitat.

The new reserves and protected areas would take up less than 10 percent of Oregon's territorial sea, a three-mile-wide strip along the 360-mile coast. That's well short of the 14 percent reserve originally proposed in 2008 by ocean conservation groups.

Scott Learn, The Oregonian

Audubon National News

Join Audubon Chapters on Facebook

If you have a Facebook account, please "like" Audubon Chapters at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Audubon-Chapters/13555563162845> (setting up a Facebook account is easy and free at www.facebook.com). On the Audubon Chapters page, we share best practices, successes, and creative ideas from Chapters, provide helpful tips, information and links to Web resources, notifications of important dates, and participate in Q & A discussions.

Participate in the Election of Audubon's Directors

Help shape the future of Audubon by participating in the election of Audubon's directors. Read about the candidates here: <http://www.audubon.org/board-directors>.

You can cast your proxy in one of three ways. First, you can submit one proxy by mail. You can find a proxy card bound in Audubon Magazine, between pages 96-97 of the November/December 2010 issue.

Second, if you allow Audubon to contact you by email, you will receive an email asking you to submit your proxy online. If you have any questions about the online proxy, please contact Proxy_vote@audubon.org. Mail-in and online proxies must be received by Monday, January 24, 2011.

The third option is to join us at the Annual Meeting, if you will be in the area. Audubon's 2011 Annual Meeting of Members will take place at 4:00 p.m. on Friday, January 28, 2011 at the Naples Beach Hotel, 851 Gulf Shore Boulevard North, Naples, Florida 34102. If you will join us in person, you should disregard the mail-in and online proxy options. By participating in the election of Audubon's directors, you help play a vital role in Audubon's conservation efforts.

Annual Christmas Bird Count

Citizen scientists throughout the hemisphere are gearing up for Audubon's 111th Christmas Bird Count. The longest-running Citizen Science survey in the world will take place from December 14, 2010 to January 5, 2011.

Last year's count shattered records. More than 2,100

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Audubon National News *continued from page 25*

counts and 60,753 people tallied 2,319 species and nearly 56 million birds. Citizen Scientists spotted 200 more species than during the previous year's CBC.

Counts took place in all 50 states in the U.S., all Canadian provinces, plus several Central and South American countries, Guam, Mariana Islands, Bermuda, Bahamas, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. Colombia, which encompasses some of the most important bird habitat in the hemisphere, now has more CBC circles than any other country outside the US and Canada. Luis Miguel Renjifo reports that in Columbia the census "is becoming the most important monitoring system for biodiversity in the country".

K.F. Winter Wings Festival

Coordinators for the Winter Wings Festival (February 18-20) in Klamath Falls have been working tirelessly to make sure the 2011 Festival is bigger and better than ever! Canon U.S.A. is now the title sponsor, and they are bringing premier bird photographer Art Morris as a Festival headliner. Jeffrey Gordon, noted naturalist, writer, and newly appointed President of A.B.A. will also be a major speaker and field trip leader. More trips, more sessions than ever before! Below is the first announcement of the Festival. Please distribute it to your membership and/or include in your next newsletter so your members have a heads up for this year's Festival. Registration should begin in early December.

Darrel Samuels, Klamath Basin Audubon Society

2011 Native Plant Sale

Benton Soil & Water Conservation District has 64 varieties for sale: conifers, broadleaves, shrubs, flowers, grasses at \$0.50 to \$4 each.

All plants must be pre-ordered! To get order form call (541) 753-7208 OR Download order form at www.bentonswcd.org

Deadline for Orders: Friday, Jan 14

Order pick-up date: Saturday, Feb 5; Pick up times: TBA

Alice Fairfield

Who's Being Seen

Cold Snaps and Rarities

This being a La Niña weather pattern this year, we can expect colder and wetter winter than average. This may lead to more sightings associated with cold weather. We may see more mountain birds and birds from the north irrupting into the Willamette Valley.

Typically, every winter some species from the nearby mountains migrate to valley. These birds show up in numbers in areas similar to their mountain summer breeding grounds. On forested hills, neighborhoods and parks with numerous, old conifers you'll see birds like Varied Thrush-

es, Townsend's Warblers, Golden-crowned Kinglets and Chestnut-backed Chickadees. During extreme cold weather, these birds gather in high numbers in unusual places like urban residential areas to take advantage of fruiting trees and shrubs,



*Chestnut-backed Chickadee
photo by Matt Lee*

suet feeders and bird baths. I was at the grocery store one year where there were Christmas trees for sale outside. A Townsend's Warbler was happily hunting insects among the "tree tops" in this temporary forest. Another mountain bird, which prefers brush instead, is the Hermit Thrush. It's not uncommon in the valley during winter, but becomes more numerous in residential areas during cold weather.

It's important to point out that birds desperately need drinking and bathing water during cold weather. Even though most people wouldn't dream of outdoor swimming in winter,



Varied Thrush photo by Matt Lee

birds greatly appreciate their bird baths. Snow and ice can prevent access to drinking spots and birds need to keep their feathers clean in order to stay warm.

Many people feed Anna's Hummingbirds throughout the winter. Although they can often find enough small insects and spiders to survive the winter, they come to depend on feeders as well. Anna's Hummingbirds may choose a winter territory based on the availability of nectar feeders, and it can be a vital lifeline for them, especially during very cold weather. Make sure there is thawed nectar for hummingbirds at morning twilight.

Sometimes rare feeder birds turn up. Common Redpolls and Bramblings have been seen some years. But more likely to be seen are birds like "Slate-colored" Dark-eyed Juncos, Orange-crowned Warblers. Some unusual woodpeckers turn up too, like Red-naped Sapsuckers or Red-naped x Red-breasted hybrids. In oak savanna areas Lewis's Woodpeckers can show in numbers some years while almost absent otherwise. "Yellow-shafted" Northern Flickers have been reported sporadically throughout the years. It is, however, extremely rare to see Bohemian Waxwings in our area, and some reports that beginners make turn out to be Cedar Waxwings.

Some birders brave the driving conditions on Marys



Townsend's Solitaire photo by Matt Lee

Peak to see unusual birds. This year the Forest Service is leaving the gate open but *not* plowing the roads. Understand the limitations of your vehicle and be prepared in case you get stuck. Consider it a snowshoeing or cross-country ski trip from the point at which you can no longer safely drive. Sometimes birders see uncommon birds like Gray-crowned Rosy Finches, Snow Buntings, Mountain Chickadees or Townsend's Solitaires.

Birders out in the field try to find rarities like the Swamp Sparrow, Harris's Sparrow or Palm Warbler. It should be noted that winter is great for noticing rare birds in leafless winter trees.

Severe storms can bring rare or unexpected shorebirds and waterfowl. Local birders scan local wildlife refuges, wetlands and the Philomath Sewage Ponds to score on unlikely sightings. In the past they've seen Red Phalaropes, Eared and Horned Grebes, Surf Scoters, Brants, Pacific or Common Loons, Brown Pelicans and others. Of course, don't expect any of these, but consider that this time of



*Sometimes Burrowing Owls are found in open country.
Photo by Lisa Millbank*

year makes these kind of birds more likely.

Check local duck ponds in parks for uncommon birds that may be regularly seen, like Eurasian Wigeons, Lesser Scaups, Canvasbacks and more. Stewart Lake at Hewlett-Packard is a local resource for waterfowl seen more typically at more distant wildlife refuges. Anybody can park in the visitor parking area, which is accessible from Circle Blvd.

In large open fields and open country at least one or two Burrowing Owls show up in our part of the valley every winter. They usually find culvert pipes to roost in and hang around roadside ditches nearby. These owls are tiny and cryptic in color, so they're easy to miss. They aren't very shy and may allow you to slowly drive right up to them. I remember finding one in Tangent a couple years ago and it allowed us to get some close-up photos from the car window. The little guy seemed much more concerned with every passing hawk than our running car.

Also in similar open country, Short-eared Owls may be seen, especially during cold weather. These owls have similar habitat preferences to Northern Harriers, but are spotted more often during morning or evening twilight and occasionally during the day. Areas where Northern Harriers are active and numerous are good places to start looking. Park and watch during sunrise or sunset and see what happens. One winter, when there were heavy snows in northern Oregon, we spotted dozens of Short-eared Owls at the Prairie Overlook at Finley National Wildlife Refuge. That event was an anomaly, but typically, you will see one or a few Short-eared Owls in any given spot. Open country like this is also attractive to Peregrine Falcons, Rough-legged Hawks, White-tailed Kites and Northern Shrikes.

Be open-minded to the possibility that such rare birds might be found among common birds. Don't overlook anything. On the other hand be skeptical and careful in your observations. If you're not sure what something is, avoid posting on OBOL or Mid-Valley Birding what you *think* it might be and instead, carefully describe (or include photos if you have them) what you saw and someone will likely have an answer.

Don Boucher

Contributors to the Chat

Dave Mellinger, Karan Fairchild, Fred Ramsey, Paula Vanderheul, Rich Armstrong, Raylene Gordin, Catherine McBride, John Gaylord, Darrel Samuels, Alice Fairfield, Don Boucher.

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the **CHAT**

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

Calendar

Dec. 9	Board meeting
Dec. 11	Second Saturday field trip, 7:30 am
Dec. 16	December General meeting
Dec. 23	Article submission deadline for January Chat
Dec. 24	Field notes submission deadline for January Chat
Jan. 8	Second Saturday field trip, 7:30 am



Northern Harrier photo by Sue Powell

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