



Audubon Society of Corvallis the **CHAT**

October 2011

VOL. 41

#2

General Meeting

Thursday, October 20, 7:00 – 8:30 pm
First Presbyterian Church

Member Photo Night is this month

Corvallis Audubon's traditional sharing of nature photos usually occurs at our December meeting, but this year we're doing it in October – *this month* – for scheduling reasons. This show offers a great opportunity to experience the interesting sights seen by your friends and acquaintances. Any fun or interesting photo(s) of birds or other animals, plants, or nature scenes are welcome, along with any brief stories you want to tell about them. Plan to bring up to 15 of your favorites. Unless you can bring a slide projector, all photos must be digital. Please **submit them by to Tuesday, October 18** via email to David.Mellinger@oregonstate.edu. If you would like to bring slides, or high-resolution photos on a thumb drive (USB), please tell me ahead of time how many you have and your general topic (birds, scenery, butterflies, etc.), and then show up at 6:30 so we have plenty of time to test your photos.

Directions

The monthly chapter meeting is in Dennis Hall of the First Presbyterian Church, 114 SW Eighth Street.

Dave Mellinger



Northern Harrier photo by Sue Powell

ODFW Wildlife Viewing Map

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife recently launched a new Wildlife Viewing Map to help people learn where and when to see Oregon's fish and wildlife species. The Google-based map is available via the ODFW website and details 235 great places to see wildlife in the state.

Through the Wildlife Viewing Map, viewers can discover where to see bald eagles, migrating snow geese and sandhill cranes and many other bird hotspots, as well as Oregon's large mammals including black-tailed and mule deer and Rocky Mountain and Roosevelt elk. Tufted puffins, bighorn sheep and spawning salmon viewing sites are included.

Wildlife viewing from bird watching to tide pooling to mammal and amphibian viewing is a popular recreational activity in the state with about 1.7 million people participating each year. Watching wildlife is also an economic driver: Resident wildlife viewers contributed more than \$1 billion to Oregon's economy in 2008, the most recent year surveyed.

Source: ODFW news release and website:
www.dfw.state.or.us/resources/viewing/wildlife_viewing_map.asp

Peter Moore

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Field Trip Schedule

Local Monthly Saturday Field Trips

Second Saturday of every month, meet at the Benton Center parking area, 757 Polk Ave, Corvallis at 7:30 am. Unless otherwise noted, these trips finish by noon. We identify local birds by sight and sound while enjoying the outdoors.

Contact Bill Proebsting at proebstw@gmail.com or 541-752-0108 with questions. Check the Midvalley List-Serv, <http://www.midvalleybirding.org/pipermail/birding/>, the days before the trip. Watch the weather forecast and dress appropriately.

Current plans:

October 8: Finley NWR, led by Marcia Cutler.
Winter schedule will remain flexible depending on weather and bird activity.

Weekend Field Trips in 2012

ASC conducts weekend birding field trips to a variety of Oregon's many excellent locations. These are typically run Friday morning through Sunday evening, and we offer five in the spring, from March through June. The tentative 2012 schedule is:

Bandon and the South Coast: March 23-25

Klamath Basin: April 20-22

Rogue Valley (including a play at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival): May 11-13

Malheur National Wildlife Refuge: May 31 - June 3 (four days)

Summer Lake and Upper Klamath: June 22-24

In 2012 we may add new trips in the summer months. Possible destinations include the North Coast, the Willa Wallows Mountains of NE Oregon, the Warner Valley and Hart Mountain of SE Oregon, and others at participant requests.

There are two ways to sign up for trips. There are signup sheets at the Field Trips table at ASC general meetings. Alternatively, you can email your name, email address, and phone number to Fred Ramsey at flramsey@comcast.net. Each trip requires a \$50 deposit to confirm reservation, and these are due by January 31, 2012.

Hesthavn News

I hope everyone has enjoyed their summer, and we hope a visit to Hesthavn was included in your list of things to do. The Hesthavn Committee has been very busy with general maintenance and upkeep of the 6 acre facility. There has been lots to do, and we're hoping to have Paula's Trail open to the public, next spring. If you would like to assist with our Habitat Restoration Projects, please contact us at volunteerasc@gmail.com.

A reminder that the Hesthavn Nature Center is open every Saturday, through October 29th, from 9:00AM until 1:00PM, at 8590 Oak Creek Drive. New to the Nature Center is a children's play area, featuring nature-oriented

A Good Year for Western Snowy Plover

A record number of snowy plover chicks have fledged from the Oregon coast this year, good news for one of our most special birds. At the time they were listed as threatened in 1993, there were only 35 plovers left in Oregon. This year there are about 150 to 175 adults in the popula-



Western Snowy Plover
Photo courtesy of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Pitkin, D.

tion, thanks to recovery efforts that have protected nesting areas. The boost in productivity has seen 154 chicks fledge so far in 2011, and with other broods still active, there could be 200 fly independently by the end of the season. The recovery goal is for 200 breeding adults in Oregon, 2750 in the stronghold of California and 50 in Washington, and to keep them above this mark for 10 years before delisting. Fencing and signage have increased public awareness about not disturbing the birds, and the mild weather has also contributed to the successful season.

Federal and state agencies began working on a recovery plan for the plovers in the 1990s. For more than a decade, biologists in California, Oregon and Washington have fenced off nesting areas for seven months of the year when plovers are present. This limits nest losses from people, dogs and recreational vehicles that previously contributed to the birds' decline.

The 2007 recovery plan can be viewed at the Arcata US Fish and Wildlife Service website. http://www.fws.gov/arcata/es/birds/WSP/documents/RecoveryPlanWebRelease_09242007/WSP%20Final%20RPR%2010-1-07.pdf

Sources: The Oregonian and USFWS website

Peter Moore



toys, books, and coloring options. There are environmental education classes held at Hesthavn, as well. Please refer to the ASC Education Section of this issue, or contact hesthavneducation@gmail.com.

We hope you'll visit soon, and see how much this property has been transformed from the horse pasture it once was, to the Nature Center that it is today!

Susan Atkisson

Field Notes

8/30/11-9/26/11

The general area covered by the field notes is a rough circle centered on Corvallis, extending to around Sweet Home, Monroe/Harrisburg, Marys Peak and the nearby Coast Range, and Monmouth/Dallas.

Most of the period was warmer than average, and very dry. Songbird migration increased, with many breeding birds departing and winter visitors beginning to show up. Good numbers of shorebirds continued to use local wetlands for resting and feeding during their journeys. Look forward to the arrival of huge flocks of waterfowl and plenty of raptors over the coming months.

Locations: Finley = William L. Finley National Wildlife Refuge. Cabell Marsh is located at Finley.

Observers: Bob Altman (BA), Don Boucher (DB), Pam Comeleo (PC), Randy Comeleo (RC), Jim Fairchild (JFa), Karan Fairchild (KFa), Jeff Fleischer (JFl), Mary Garrard (MG), Joel Geier (JG), Julie Gibson (JGb), Erik Knight (EK), Frank Kolwicz (FK), Judy List (JL), Peter List (PL), Lisa Millbank (LM), Molly Monroe (MM), Gail Peterson (GP), Doug Robinson (DR), Will Wright (WW), multiple observers (m.obs.)

80 **Greater White-fronted Geese** flew high over the Adair Village area 9/25 (JG). An early **American Wigeon** turned up at Finley 9/4 (EK). Good numbers of **Cinnamon Teals** were reported at the Talking Water Gardens/Simpson Park area of Albany on a few occasions (m.obs.). 36 **Northern Pintails** arrived at Cabell Marsh 9/10 (DR). 16 **Green-winged Teals** were at Cabell Marsh 9/10 (DR). The first report of **Northern Shovelers** was from the Talking Water Gardens/Simpson Park area 9/18 (m.obs.). 2 **Ring-necked Ducks** were seen 9/3 at the Philomath Scout Lodge (LM & DB). The pond on Beta Dr. south of Albany had 2 **Ruddy Ducks** 9/17 (JFl).

A **Wild Turkey** hen still had 3 youngsters accompanying her at Mulkey Hill, west of Corvallis, 9/24 (RC & PC).

2 **Double-crested Cormorants** were reported 9/3 from Willamette Park (LM & DB). Several **American White Pelicans** continued at Finley through the period (m.obs.)

A few **Great Egrets** began showing up around the area throughout the period, although numbers were still small (m.obs.). **Green Herons** were fairly easy to find throughout September, but numbers will decrease as most leave the area for winter.

Turkey Vultures were assembling and slowly drifting southward throughout the period.

An **Osprey** flew over downtown Corvallis 9/20, but most were gone by the end of the period (LM).

A **Bald Eagle** harassed an Osprey at Willamette Park 9/3 (LM & DB). Eagle numbers should rise over the next

period. A **Sharp-shinned Hawk** harassed 2 Northern Flickers near Adair Village 9/5, perhaps a youngster learning to hunt (JG). A few juvenile **Cooper's Hawks** were noted, 1 at Witham Hill 9/18 (JGb) and another at Tangent 9/17. **Red-shouldered Hawks** were reported at Finley on 9/11 (WW) and 9/24 (RC & PC).

Good numbers of **Peregrine Falcons** were spotted throughout the period--over downtown Corvallis, along Greenberry Rd., Finley, and near Brownsville (m.obs.).

A juvenile **American Coot** was at the Talking Water Gardens/Simpson Park area of Albany 9/18 (m.obs.).

Greater Yellowlegs and **Lesser Yellowlegs** were found regularly in suitable habitat all over the area. 3 **Spotted Sandpipers** chased one another and called at the confluence of the Marys and Willamette Rivers in downtown Corvallis 9/21 (LM). 2 **Pectoral Sandpipers**, 2 **Baird's Sandpipers** and 1 **Semipalmated Sandpiper** gathered at Cabell Marsh 9/10; these are all uncommon migrants (DR). **Least Sandpipers** continued to show up at local wetlands, with 66 at Cabell Marsh 9/10 being the most reported this period (DR). 68 **Western Sandpipers** were also there. **Wilson's Snipes** were still uncommon, with 1 at Sunset Park 9/10 (LM) and 6 at Muddy Creek at Finley 9/15 (WW). 2 **Red-necked Phalaropes** visited Cabell Marsh 9/10 (DR).

Good-sized flocks of **Band-tailed Pigeons** were still around, probably feasting on Blue Elderberry and other late fruits (m.obs.).

Western Screech-Owls were calling near Forest Dell Park in NW Corvallis for most of the period (m.obs.). Pairs of **Great Horned Owls** were frequently heard singing duets in many locations during the period: Witham Hill, Bald Hill, Conifer Blvd. and elsewhere (m.obs.). A **Northern Pygmy-Owl** upset a flock of Chestnut-backed Chickadees, Brown Creepers and Red-breasted Nuthatches in the foothills west of Philomath 9/5 (JFa & KFa). A **Short-eared Owl** flew across Bruce Rd. at Finley 9/24 (RC & PC).

2 **Common Nighthawks** flew over the foothills west of Philomath 9/3 (JFa & KFa).

Vaux's Swifts began arriving in large numbers at the beginning of the period, roosting in their usual locations such as the Whiteside Theater and Lebanon Hotel, and showing up at a possible new location at a fraternity in Corvallis. Nearly 1900 swifts entered the fraternity chimney on 9/20 (MG, GP).

Female and young **Rufous Hummingbirds** dwindled noticeably, and were all but gone by the end of the period (m.obs.).

2 **Lewis's Woodpeckers** were northeast of Ankeny NWR 9/22 (BA). **Acorn Woodpeckers** were collecting acorns from Oregon White Oaks near the Benton County Fairgrounds 9/11 (LM). A juvenile **Red-breasted Sapsucker** was spotted at Beazell Forest 9/16 (JGb). **Pileated Woodpeckers** showed some movement outside regular locations when 2 were heard along Riverside Dr. in Linn County 9/16 (DB).

An **Olive-sided Flycatcher** was calling at Dunn

Forest 8/30 (JGb). The summertime sound of **Western Wood-Pewees** calling faded away, but one was still noted at Muddy Creek at Finley 9/15 (WW). **Black Phoebes** were at several locations over the period: Sunset Park in SW Corvallis, the Philomath Scout Lodge, Willamette Park, and Muddy Creek at Finley (m.obs.)

Warbling Vireos were becoming quite scarce early in the period, and **Cassin's Vireos** seemed to be on the move, with the last report from Bald Hill 9/11 (LM).

Gray Jays were noted in the foothills west of Philomath 9/5 (JFa & KFa).

Most have already left, but a flock of **Violet-green Swallows** was at Marys River Natural Area 9/26 (m.obs.). A very late brood of **Barn Swallows** finished fledging 9/14; hopefully, they'll be able to handle the difficulties of migration (BA).

Flocks of **Chestnut-backed Chickadees** at Bald Hill 9/11 may have been residents or new arrivals from higher elevations (LM).

The only **House Wren** report came from the foothills west of Philomath 9/5 (JFa & KFa).

The first reported **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** turned up in the foothills west of Philomath 9/24 (JFa & KFa).

A molting male **Mountain Bluebird** photo stumped quite a few local birders. He was found at Finley 9/10 (DR). The nocturnal southbound migration of millions of **Swainson's Thrushes** was in full swing by mid-September (m.obs.). One bathed by wiggling around in long, dewy grass in a Corvallis yard 9/17 (PL & JL). A **Varied Thrush** showed up on Mulkey Hill, west of Corvallis, 9/24 (RC & PC).

1 **American Pipit** was at Cabell Marsh 9/10 (DR), and 20 were west of Shedd 9/17 (JFI).

Warblers continued their movements downslope and southward. There were multiple reports of **Black-throated Gray Warblers** and **Orange-crowned Warblers**. **Wilson's Warblers** were numerous, with some singing at full volume and also one heard giving a quiet subsong 9/21 (JG). The first **Yellow-rumped Warblers** began to show up during the period. A **Townsend's Warbler** turned up in a Monmouth yard 9/23 (FK). **Common Yellowthroats** remained through the end of the period, with 1 still singing on Riverside Dr. in Linn Co. 9/16 (DB).

A **Chipping Sparrow** was on the road to the Philomath Scout Lodge 9/3 (LM & DB). A **Fox Sparrow** arrived 9/17 in a Corvallis yard (PL & JL). **Golden-crowned Sparrows** turned up near Adair Village 9/15 (JG), and were caught in a mist net at Finley 9/15 (MM), but will soon be abundant. **Dark-eyed Junco** numbers continued to increase through the period.

Western Tanagers were still being seen through the end of the period. **Black-headed Grosbeaks** were all but gone by mid-month, with a few reported from Bald Hill 9/11 (LM). 4 **Lazuli Buntings** in female-type plumage were near Adair Village 9/13, and no more were reported this period (JG).

Next issue

Please post your reports to midvalleybirding.org, send them to lisaaves@peak.org, or leave a voicemail at 541-753-7689 by Thursday, October 27.

Lisa Millbank

Riparian Protection Efforts in Benton County

In Corvallis, you can often see the bumper sticker "We all live downstream". It's a reminder that we are recipients of most everything that happens uphill of us, and in turn we pass our contributions along to those downhill-- because all also live upstream.

Much of Benton County is upstream of the Willamette River, and county officials can be liable when they permit development in stream riparian areas. Benton County has been reminded of its contributions to the Willamette River by state and federal agencies requiring improvements to water quality there, particularly in lowering summer water temperatures, mercury, and bacteria levels.

County officials are most interested in promoting voluntary efforts by landowners to improve stream conditions, and have strong partners towards this in the Luckiamute, Alsea, and Marys River Watershed Councils, and the Benton Soil & Water Conservation District, all of which direct funding to such willing landowner projects. Recent *Corvallis Gazette-Times* articles and letters also indicate that people much prefer being encouraged, and even paid, to benefit our streams, rather than to be restricted or penalized from doing further damage.

Government and regulation are now derided as one in the media. If government can play a role here, certainly spelling out minimum protection standards where streams and human activities intersect is critical. These protections can provide a baseline, below which at some standard level prohibitions and punishments would be necessary. But it can also assist in directing everyone towards good stream protections and activities. With decreased funding, this local government can't be expected to provide significant assistance on its own. Local watershed councils will need to demonstrate that dramatic improvements in stream health can be accomplished at a large scale, in part to avoid further regulation, but mostly to reach healthier stream conditions.

-Jim Fairchild

Conservation Corner

Bird Boxes Available

The Conservation Committee has sourced some fine bird boxes made from hardwoods by a local craftsman. There are 15 different designs ranging from small wren boxes

through to large owl boxes. They will be available both as a kit-set or constructed, and you can buy them at the monthly Audubon meetings.

-Peter Moore



Installing an owl box. Photo: John Gaylord



Peter Moore and John Gaylord installing a kestrel box.

Book Chat

Featured book at the October meeting will be *Insects Of The Pacific Northwest* by Peter Haggard and Judy Haggard, published by Timber Press in 2006 as part of their Field Guide Series. What attracted us to this field guide is its prodigious number of full color photographs. The first section is dedicated to beetles, with over 100 great photos of beetles we're likely to encounter during our birding walks. The Lepidoptera section of this guide is extensive and includes plenty of caterpillars. Particularly interesting is the sec-

tion about insect galls, an area I knew nothing about. This paperback field guide book generally retails for \$24.95. At our Audubon book table you can purchase it for just \$22.00, or buy a raffle ticket and it might be yours for just \$1.00! Thanks to the winners of our September raffle, particularly to John Gaylord who choose two tickets to the Andean Folk Music concert at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship on November 12th. Thank you for your support.

-Sally Shaw

New Book Event

Faith of Cranes: Finding Hope and Family in Alaska

At Grass Roots Book Store

Hank Lentfer will read from his new book, *Faith of Cranes: Finding Hope and Family in Alaska*, on November 2, 7 pm, at Grass Roots Book Store, 227 Southwest 2nd St., Corvallis. This is a meditation on hope and despair; the author tries to answer the question “How can you bring children into a world filled with uncertainty and ecological peril?” framed by his growing fascination with Sandhill Cranes. Hank Lentfer listened to cranes passing over his home in southeast Alaska for twenty years before bothering to figure out where they were going. On a very visceral level, he didn’t want to know. After all, cranes gliding through the wide skies of Alaska are the essence of wildness. But the same animals, pecking a living between the cornfields and condos of California’s Central Valley, seem trapped and diminished. A former wildlife biologist and longtime conservationist, Lentfer had come to accept that no number of letters to the editor or trips to D.C. could stop the spread of clear cuts, alter the course of climate change, or ensure that his beloved cranes would always appear. And he had no idea that following the paths of cranes would lead him to the very things he was most afraid of: parenthood, responsibility, and actions of hope in a frustrating and warming world.

Faith of Cranes is Lentfer’s quiet, lyrical memoir of his home and community near Glacier Bay that reveals a family’s simple acts -- planting potatoes, watching cranes, hunting deer -- as well as a close and eccentric Alaskan community. It shows how several thousand birds and one little girl teach a new father there is no future imaginable that does not leave room for compassion and grace. For information about the reading, please contact Charles Goodrich, 541-737-6198, Charles.Goodrich@oregonstate.edu.



American Coot photo by Matt Lee



Wood Duck photo by Steve Reed

Auction to Benefit Natural Area

On October 6 at The Wheelhouse in Albany there will be a \$20 per person benefit auction to raise money for the purchase of land for the East Thornton Lake Natural Area in North Albany. Thornton Lake is an old oxbow of the Willamette River which flows into the lake during flooding. The time is 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm. For more information, contact azevedom@onid.orst.edu.

Mark Azevedo



Northern Flicker photo by Matt Lee

Looking for some Glory?

The Search for the next Chat editor

The Audubon Society of Corvallis is looking for a new editor of the newsletter you hold in your hand. The job itself is pretty fun and you shouldn't hesitate to call for more information if you think you might be interested. There is a commitment of time and energy, but depending on how quickly you type, it shouldn't take more than half a day, once a month – and remember, there's only one issue in the summer.

The Chat editor collects emailed submissions and enters them into a Microsoft Word template. It isn't necessary to know how to format the newsletter for publication, or how to print or distribute the issue – other volunteers perform those tasks. The Chat editor enjoys the near-deific power of selecting the stories that will appear in each issue (generally everything that is submitted) and then editing to make them fit. Again, if any of this sounds even slightly interesting, you are probably perfect for the job and should call me immediately before somebody else takes it!

The current editor will work with the new editor through the spring to assure a smooth transition. And here's another reason to call right now: for a limited time we are able to offer the following fabulous prize for any and all successful applicants for the post of Chat editor: one large American Dream pizza of your choice. It's all yours when you sign up as the next Chat editor! Think how badly you'll feel if you decide to "think it over" for a day or two, then find the position filled when you finally call? Call now for more information: Jim Sumich at 541-231-8898 or Will Wright at 541-753-4395.

Jim Sumich

Open ACS Board Meetings

ASC Board of Directors meetings are open to all ASC members, and the board encourages you to come and see what we do. Our monthly board meeting is on Thursday one week before the General Meeting. See the calendar on the last page of The Chat for the meeting location.

Contributors to the Chat

Dave Mellinger, Peter Moore, Bill Proebsting, Fred Ramsey, Susan Atkisson, Lisa Milbank, Jim Fairchild, Sally Shaw, Mark Azevedo, Jim Sumich, and Marcia F. Cutler

Volunteers Needed For CBC

This year marks the 50th year that the Corvallis Christmas Bird Count has been held. I've been the compiler for the count for the past 10 years or so and I've also made the arrangements for the countdown potluck afterwards. The potluck has been a hallmark of the Corvallis CBC and the arrangements have traditionally been handled by ASC's board in coordination with the count compiler. Since I was a board member when I assumed compilation duties, I handled both jobs. However, I have informed the Board that I no longer feel able to continue planning the countdown potluck in addition to coordinating the Christmas Bird Count.

The board is looking for volunteers to help plan the countdown gathering. It does not necessarily need to be a potluck dinner. Basically, the job entails finding a place to hold the countdown at the end of the count day and making arrangements for some food and drinks to be available while the countdown is held, it need not be elaborate. If you are interested in helping, please contact one of the members of the ASC board.

*Marcia F. Cutler
Compiler, Corvallis CBC*



Western Gray Squirrel photo by Matt Lee

Audubon Society of Corvallis
www.audubon.corvallis.or.us

Co-Presidents:

Ann Brodie, annbrodie143@comcast.net, 541-757-1728
Jan Landau, landau.jan@gmail.com, 541-908-0039

Vice President and Program Chair:

Dave Mellinger, David.Mellinger@oregonstate.edu,
541-757-7953

Secretary: Linda Campbell, lcampbell@peak.org, 541-929-9420

Treasurer: Fred Ramsey, flramsey5@comcast.net,
541-753-3677

Board Members

Gail Nickerson, gailhops@aol.com, 541-754-0406
Lori McGovern, lorimcgovern@hotmail.com, 541-905-2965
Tom Penpraze, tmpenpraze@comcast.net, 541-752-8814
Stacy Moore, peterandstacy@peak.org, 541-929-2063
Peter Moore, peterandstacy@peak.org, 541-929-2063
Karan Fairchild, alderspr@peak.org, 541-929-4049

Committees and Coordinators:

Conservation Chair: John Gaylord, gaylordjohn@aol.com,
541-745-5088

Education Chair: Michelle Shula,
hesthavneducation@gmail.com, 614-579-1406

Bluebird Trail Chair: Raylene Gordin, gordin@centurytel.net,
541-258-6625

Christmas Bird Count Compiler: Marcia Cutler,
marciafcutler@comcast.net, 541-752-4313

Hesthavn Chair: Susan Atkisson,
susan.atkisson@oregonstate.edu, 541-602-2750

Publicity Chair: Don Boucher, bouchdon@peak.org,
541-753-7689

Webmaster: Tom Haig, tomhaig@hotmail.com, 503-231-6583

Birdathon Coordinator: Mary van Brocklin,
mary_vanbrocklin@yahoo.com, 541-745-7170

Membership Chair: Karl Hartzell, karlerun@yahoo.com,
541-758-2275

Field Trip Chair: Bill Proebsting, proebstw@gmail.com,
541-752-0108

Sales Table team: Sally Shaw, shaws@peak.org, 541-757-2749
Bev Clark, oreflygirl12@earthlink.net,
541-753-4456

Refreshment Chair: Gail Nickerson, gailhops@aol.com,
541-754-0406

Field Notes Compiler: Lisa Millbank,
lisaaves@peak.org, 541-753-7689

Newsletter Editor: Jim Sumich, chateditors@gmail.com,
541-231-8898

Interested in volunteering? Please let us know:
volunteerasc@gmail.com

Audubon Society of Corvallis
P.O. Box 148
Corvallis, OR 97339

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Audubon Society of Corvallis

the **CHAT**

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

Calendar

- | | |
|--------|---|
| Oct 5 | Conservation Committee meeting 5:15 pm,
New Morning Bakery |
| Oct. 6 | Thornton Benefit Auction |
| Oct. 8 | October Saturday field trip, 7:30 am |
| Oct 13 | Board Meeting at Hesthavn, 7:00 pm |
| Oct 20 | October General Meeting |
| Oct 27 | Field notes submission deadline for Nov. Chat |
| Oct 27 | Article submission deadline for Nov. Chat |
| Nov 12 | November Saturday field trip, 7:30 am |



Photo of Double-crested Cormorants by Sue Powell

The Chat is published 10 times a year by the Audubon Society of Corvallis, PO Box 148, Corvallis OR 97339. Annual ASC memberships are \$25 for an individual, \$35 for a family, \$15 for a student. Chat-only subscriptions (email delivery only) are \$15.

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