



# THE AUDUBON SOCIETY OF CORVALLIS CHAT

APRIL 2015

VOL. 44 #8

## ASC GENERAL MEETING

THURSDAY, APRIL 16, 7:00-8:30 PM  
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH;  
9TH AND MONROE, CORVALLIS

## ARTIST/BIOLOGIST RAM PAPISH HIGHLIGHTS APRIL MEETING

Our April 16 chapter program features Ram Papish, a professional bird enthusiast, artist, and field biologist. In addition he writes and illustrates children's books, creates mysteries, acts in Shakespeare plays, and enjoys international travel and fantasy football. Ram and his wife live in Toledo.



Ram offered several different programs, and your program chair selected "Seabird Youth Network," a program about getting communities in Alaska involved with sea-bird conservation.

As usual, coffee and cookies at 6:30, chapter business meeting at 7:00, program begins at around 7:30. Questions can be directed to me at [mathewsc2@comcast.net](mailto:mathewsc2@comcast.net).

*Chris Mathews,  
Vice Pres. & Program Chair*

**Directions:** The monthly chapter meeting is in Dennis Hall of the First Presbyterian Church, 114 SW Eighth Street in Corvallis

## FUTURE MEMBER PROGRAMS

Monthly General Member Meeting programs will take a summer break after May 21, when our speaker will be Bridget Callahan, speaking about The Wilderness Society and the fiftieth anniversary of the Wilderness Act. Monthly meetings will resume on September 17.

## FIELD TRIPS SCHEDULE

### 2015 WEEKEND FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE

Spring got off to an early start. We have scheduled five weekend field trips for the time when birds begin arriving from the south, through their breeding season, to when they leave us for warmer climes to the south.

**April 24-26:** Rogue Valley. We start Friday at Finley Refuge, work out way down the I-5 corridor, swing west to meet the Rogue River at Grave Creek, then head into Ashland. After a superb meal of Indian food, we take in *Guys and Dolls* at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. Saturday begins with a hike up Upper Table Rock, where we search for the chaparral specialties: Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher, Oak Titmouse, and California Towhee. We lunch at TouVelle State Park and then head up into the Cascades for mountain species for the remainder of the day. Sunday we hike the Bear Creek bike path to pick up the beginnings of the songbird migration before heading back to Corvallis. This trip is currently full, but one can be placed on a waiting list.

**May 14-17:** Malheur NWR. Three openings.

**June 26-28:** Summer Lake to Crater Lake. Full, with a waiting list.

**August 13-16:** Steens Mountain. One opening.

**September 11-13:** The North Coast: Tillamook to Astoria. Two openings.

Transportation on these trips is in 12-person and/or 15-person vans rented from Enterprise. Expenses are shared. Participants will be provided with tour information a month prior to departure. Bird, mammal, herp, butterfly, and odonate checklists are provided.

There will be signup sheets for weekend field trips at the Field Trip table at ASC general meetings starting in January. Or email

## ASC GENERAL MEETING

Thursday, April 16  
7:00-8:30 pm  
First Presbyterian Church  
9th and Monroe

### In This Issue

Field Notes .....	58-60
Atop the Nestbox .....	60
ASC Education News .....	60-61
Birdathon Time!.....	61
Birding by Ear.....	61
Hesthavn News .....	61-62
One Time Volunteers Needed .....	62
ASC Homer Campbell Award Winner for 2015.....	62-63
March 2105 ASC Board Meeting Summary .....	62
Open Board Meetings.....	62
Contributors to the Chat.....	62
Chat Articles .....	62
Community Notes.....	63
ASC Volunteers Inspire at Annual Sustainability Fair.....	63
Membership Corner .....	63
Calendar.....	64

Fred Ramsey at [flramsey5@comcast.net](mailto:flramsey5@comcast.net). Deposits of \$50 per person per tour are requested. Make checks out to ASC and mail them to ASC at PO Box 148 in Corvallis, 97339.

*Fred Ramsey*

## MONTHLY SECOND SATURDAY HALF DAY FIELD TRIP

Our Saturday morning local field trip meets the second Saturday of from September through June at the Benton Center parking area, behind the Cannery Mall, 777 NW 9th St., Corvallis at 7:30 am. This field trip is free and geared towards beginning birders, birders new to Oregon's mid-valley area and persons looking for a pleasant outing. Contact Bill Proebsting at [proebstw@gmail.com](mailto:proebstw@gmail.com) or 541-752-0108 with questions. Check the Midvalley Listserv at [www.midvalleybirding.org/pipermail/birding/](http://www.midvalleybirding.org/pipermail/birding/), a couple of days before the field trip for updates. Weather may alter plans. Watch the weather forecast and dress appropriately. Return to Benton Center by noon.

### NEXT SECOND SATURDAY FIELD TRIPS:

**April 11:** Basket Slough NWR

**May 9:** Finley NWR

*Bill Proebsting*

## BICYCLE BIRDING

### MAY THROUGH SEPTEMBER

Bring a bicycle helmet, water and binoculars. We ride slowly, listen for birds and stop frequently. Trip lengths are less than 10 miles.

### REGISTRATION REQUIRED

To ensure an optimal birding experience for all participants, this year we will be taking registrations and limiting each trip to 12 participants. There will be waiting lists in case of cancellations. Registered participants will be notified a few days prior to each event and those on the waiting list will be notified if they may attend. There is no deadline for registration, but register early for any or all trips to ensure your spot.

**May 31:** E.E. Wilson Wildlife Area. (Parking permits required from ODF&W)

**June 28:** Willamette Park/Kendall Natural Area—Corvallis

**July 26:** Downtown Corvallis to Sunset Park and back

**Aug 30:** Albany Bike Trails and Talking Water Gardens

**Sept. 27:** Benton County Fairgrounds, Bald Hill Park and Campus Way Covered Bridge—Corvallis

You'll receive meeting locations and instructions upon registration.

To register, contact Don Boucher, [donaboucher@gmail.com](mailto:donaboucher@gmail.com) (email preferred). You may also call for questions 541-753-7689

*Don Boucher*

## FIELD NOTES

### 2/25/15-3/24/15

February's unusually warm weather continued, with just two nights below freezing in early March. Native trees and shrubs responded as **willows** and **osoberry** were in full bloom by 25 Feb

(PRz; LM), followed by **black cottonwoods** at EEW 9 Mar and **big-leaf maples** at LSNA by 15 Mar. Wildflowers also began to bloom, including **Nuttall's toothwort** and **western buttercup** at Bald Hill by 28 Feb (CO), **snow-queen** and **yellow violets** sw of Philomath 6 Mar (KnF), **western trillium** at Avery Park 9 Mar (DBo), and **tough-leaved iris**, **fawn lily** and **calypso orchid** at Bald Hill Park 10 Mar (PCo). Vernal ponds in fields dried up in early March, until 14 Mar when a front brought rain and high winds. In Santiam Pass, unseasonal bare ground up to 5400 ft persisted from late Feb until 23 Mar when a storm finally deposited a bit of snow, but this was expected to melt quickly as a warm rain front followed.

**Locations:** ANWR = Ankeny National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), EEW = E.E. Wilson Wildlife Area, FNWR = William L. Finley NWR, JFW = Jackson-Frazier Wetland, LSNA = Luckiamute State Natural Area, McFadden (Marsh) at FNWR, PCT = Pacific Crest Trail, PSTP = Philomath STP, Stewart Lake = lake on Hewlett-Packard (HP) campus in Corvallis, TCP = Teloh-Calapooia Park in Albany, TWG = Talking Water Gardens in Albany.

**Observers:** AFo: Andrea Foster, AHk: Adrian Hinkle, BA: Bob Altman, BCo: Barbara Combs, BPr: Bill Proebsting, Chi: Carol Hiler, CHk: Christopher Hinkle, CO: Catherine Otto, DBo: Don Boucher, DEm: Deanna Emig, DLa: Dave Lauten, DRo: Doug Robinson, DTh: Darrah Thomas, ESh: Evelyn Sherr, GLi: Gavin Lippsmeyer, GW: Gary Whitehouse, HB: Howard Bruner, HH: Hendrik Herlyn, JBo: Jamie Boulton, JDS: Jim Smith, JGe: Joel Geier, JHi: Jim Hiler, JIF: Jim Fairchild, JKo: Jim Kopitzke, JMe: Judy Meredith, JMs: Jenny Meisel, JpP: Jerry Paul, JSi: Jamie Simmons, JuP: Judith Paul, KCa: Kathy Castelein, KDo: Karin Donoyan, KnF: Karan Fairchild, LHy: Laurie Halsey, LM: Lisa Millbank, LPN: Lars Norgren, LuF: Luke Ferrenburg, MB: Mark Baldwin, MG: Mary Garrard, MLI: Mike Lippsmeyer, MUn: Mike Unger, NNY: Nancy Neary, OH: Oscar Harper, PCo: Pam Comeleo, PO: Pam Otley, PRz: Paul Rentz, RAD: Rich Adney, RCa: Randy Campbell, RFo: Rana Foster, RG: Roy Gerig, SSc: Stephan Schlick, VB: Vickie Buck, VSt: Virginia Stanton, WHy: Warren Halsey, WW: Will Wright.

Eleven **Greater White-fronted Geese** were at FNWR 12 Mar (DEm). Three **Snow Geese** were noted there 6 Mar (MB); three **Ross's Geese** were photographed with about a thousand **Cackling Geese** at FNWR 22 Mar (RAD). About 50 **Trumpeter Swans** were still near Suver 1 Mar (JGe); two continued at Cabell Marsh thru 19 Mar (HB). Lingered **Tundra Swan** flocks included 258 nw of Halsey 26 Feb (HH, OH, CHk, AHk), 100 near Suver 1 Mar (JGe), and 21 at FNWR 12 Mar (DEm).

A pair of **Wood Ducks** traded places in a nest box sw of Philomath 9 Mar (JIF). Four **Gadwall** were at PSTP 21 Mar (PO). A **Eurasian Wigeon** was with with 30 **American Wigeons** nw of Halsey 15 Mar (VB). Two pairs of **Cinnamon Teal** were at TWG 2 Mar (KvH); four were at McFadden Marsh 16 Mar and 21 Mar (WW, RFO). Flocks of **Mallards** and **Green-winged Teal** continued to be seen on area ponds. 850 **Northern Shovelers** were massed at PSTP 15 Mar (HH). **Northern Pintails** were oddly absent from EEW this winter until three showed up 3 Mar; flocks continued at FNWR and PSTP thru the period.

Diving ducks began to migrate out of our area. Flocks of **Ring-necked Ducks** and **Lesser Scaup** continued with occasional reports of 1 or 2 **Greater Scaup**. A **Canvasback** at Stewart Lake 9 Mar was the last there for the period (JSi). Up to 100 **Ruddy Ducks** continued at PSTP thru period. 26 **Barrow's Goldeneyes** were on Fish Lake in the Cascades 19 Mar (MB), taking advantage of open water at higher elevations than usual for the season. Pairs of **Hooded Merganser** with displaying males were conspicuous on valley ponds. Pairs of **Common Mergansers** were at Waterloo County Park and Gils Landing in Lebanon, and a pair of **Red-breasted Mergansers** were with **Common Mergansers** at Cheadle Lake 28 Feb (RFO). A flock of 20 **Common Mergansers** were at LSNA 15 Mar (DBo, NN).



A **Sooty Grouse** boomed on Vineyard Mountain 19 Mar (HB). A **Wild Turkey** tom displayed to hens along Bonney Dr in nw Corvallis 9 Mar (ESH). **Mountain Quail** called sw of Philomath by 9 Mar (JiF).

**Eared Grebes** continued at PSTP with three still there 21 Mar (PO).

Ten **Double-crested Cormorants** fished among the anglers at EEW 5 Mar (JBo). The first **American Bittern** report was from JFW 24 Mar (DTh). A **Green Heron** at TWG 2 Mar (KvH) may have wintered locally. Twelve **Great Blue Heron** nest platforms were visible in cottonwoods at Cheadle Lake 28 Feb (RFo). The proprietors of the Brownsville Rice Ponds reported that three **Great Egrets** continued to roost there thru 17 Mar.

Numbers of migrant **Turkey Vultures** increased, with five along SW 53rd St in Corvallis 26 Feb (LM), 7 near Gibson Hill Road in N. Albany 2 Mar (CHi, JBo), and six over TCP in Albany 8 Mar (JDS). By 15 Mar sightings of multiple vultures were a daily occurrence.

An **Osprey** stopped by Takena Landing Park in Albany 18 Mar (CHi). An immature **White-tailed Kite** was at the FNWR prairie overlook 21 Mar (RFo).

A dozen **Bald Eagles** were drawn to a dead sheep near PSTP 25 Feb (PRz). Two eagle nests were occupied se of Albany 1 Mar (CHi, JHi). Another eagle nest near Corvallis, occupied as of 2 Mar, perhaps explains why an osprey nest on the HP campus just across the Willamette was vacant last year (LM, DBo).

Male **Northern Harriers** performed display flights at Marys River Natural Area 26 Feb (LM) and at Bald Hill Park 4 Mar (HH); one over Stewart Lake 9 Mar was unexpected for the location (JSi).

A pair of **Red-tailed Hawks** circled amorously at Bald Hill Park 4 Mar (HH). A "**Harlan's**" **Hawk** made a one-day reappearance s of Monmouth 18 Mar (MLi), possibly heading back to Yukon or Alaska where this subspecies nests. At least one dark-morph **Rough-legged Hawk** continued near FNWR 25 Feb (PRz). A dark-morph female hovered into a steady breeze in SW Corvallis 26 Feb (LM). A light morph was still n of FNWR 7 Mar (JGe). A **Golden Eagle** flew w over Marys Peak 19 Mar (LPN).

Two **Virginia Rails** called at TWG 2 Mar (KvH). **American Coots** were seen regularly in nesting habitat at EEW and FNWR, but dozens also continued at PTSP thru the period.

Four **Black-bellied Plovers** were nw of Halsey 26 Feb (HH, OH, CHk, AHk). A **Killdeer** pair gave distraction displays near a likely nest at EEW from 15 Mar onward (JGe). A **Spotted Sandpiper** turned up at the conservation wetland along Finley Rd 21 Mar (RFo). Numbers of **Greater Yellowlegs** at the same wetland reached 12 by 16 Mar (WW); ten were on another private wetland restoration se of Albany 6 Mar (BA, JGe). A **Long-billed Curlew** briefly visited a grass field near PSTP 15 Mar (DRo). **Dunlin** flocks included 77 nw of Halsey 26 Feb (HH, OH, CHk, AHk), 112 at Cabell Marsh 28 Feb (WW), 25 se of Albany 6 Mar (BA, JGe), and dozens 16 Mar (WW) along Finley Rd where 71 **Least Sandpipers** were also seen 11 Mar (DEm).

25 migrant **Long-billed Dowitchers** visited McFadden Marsh 12 Mar (MUn). A few **Wilson's Snipe** continued thru the end of the period at EEW.

Most gulls seem to have left the region by late February. There were no local reports of **Mew**, **Ring-billed**, **California**, or **Thayer's Gulls**. Two **Herring Gulls** still nw of Halsey 26 Feb (HH et al.) were the last reported locally. **Glaucous-winged Gulls** visited Coffin Butte landfill thru 7 Mar.

**Band-tailed Pigeons** were regular at feeders in the Coast Range foothills; four wandered out into the valley to visit a hazelnut orchard 21 Mar (MLi). **Mourning Doves** were singing and paired up by mid-Mar.

A **Barn Owl** was heard again in nw Corvallis 4 Mar Corvallis (JSi). A **Western Screech-Owl** called at Hesthavn 18 Feb; a **Northern Pygmy-Owl** called there 2 Mar (JGi). A **Burrowing Owl** sw of Tangent was still there 6 & 10 Mar (ChW; RAd). A **Short-eared Owl**

was sw of Tangent 6 Mar (LuF). Surprisingly this month brought no reports of brooding **Great Horned Owls**; perhaps the early leaving out of cottonwoods helped to conceal their nests.

The resident **Anna's Hummingbirds** had to deal with competition at feeders earlier than usual. At least 17 local birders had a **Rufous Hummingbird** visit their yards by 2 Mar (the average date for the first report in the Corvallis-Albany area). Our feeder was contested by at least four of each species on 11 Mar, but other nectar sources such as **red-flowering currants** helped to limit the conflict.

Near Brandis Park in nw Corvallis, two **Red-breasted Sapsuckers** drummed 9 Mar, and two **Acorn Woodpeckers** swapped off on nest-tending duties 18 Mar (ESH). Up to four **Acorn Woodpeckers** at a time from a resident colony were visiting a feeder near Alpine as of 23 Mar (LHy, WHy). A wintering female **Northern Flicker**, apparently "**Yellow-shafted**" but with a very light red nape patch, came to a feeder in sw Corvallis regularly thru 13 Mar (NNy).

Many hikers who took advantage of bare ground in Santiam Pass were rewarded with sightings of the woodpeckers that have flourished in the aftermath of the 2003 B&B Complex fire. A pair of **American Three-toed Woodpeckers** engaged in a courtship display along the Patjens Lakes trail 8 Mar (PO). **Black-backed Woodpeckers** were paired up along the PCT 4 Mar (DLA, KCa). **Hairy Woodpeckers** were also frequently encountered.

**Merlins** were spotted on Neabeck Hill in Philomath 26 Feb (LM) and at Bald Hill 3 Mar (BPr). A **Peregrine Falcon** cruised over the conservation wetland along Finley Rd 16 Mar (WW). A **Prairie Falcon** continued sw of Tangent thru 6 Mar (LuF).

Two **Black Phoebes** (one singing) were at TWG 2 Mar (KvH). One was by the canal pond at EEW 5 Mar (JBo). A migrant **Say's Phoebe** was at Fish Lake w of Santiam Pass 19 Mar (MB).

A **Northern Shrike** was se of Harrisburg 15 Mar (VB). Another at the north prairie overlook of FNWR 16 Mar may have wintered there, as one was seen there twice earlier in the winter (WW). **Hutton's Vireos** sang at Bald Hill Park 4 Mar (HH), and regularly thru the period at EEW near **madrones** which began to bloom 24 Mar.

A **Gray Jay** called near Dimple Hill 26 Feb (LM). In N Albany a **Western Scrub-Jay** gathered twigs and repeatedly carried them into a rhododendron bush 10 Mar (CHi). A pair of **Common Ravens** might be nesting in tree farm near the corner – soon to be a roundabout – of West Hills Rd and 53rd (JMs).

"**Streaked**" **Horned Larks** in the Tangent area 6 Mar and near FNWR 7 Mar appeared to be dispersed from winter flocks and paired up in usual nesting areas (BA, JGe). Another was singing se of Harrisburg 14 Mar (BCo). However, a wintering flock s of Monmouth still had at least 50 larks on 9 Mar and 25 on 21 Mar (MLi).

**Tree Swallows** showed up to squabble over nest boxes at FNWR by 27 Feb (Molly Monroe). Reports of **Violet-green Swallows** continued to be of just 1 or 2 birds until 3 Mar when multiple birds were seen both in Corvallis and at EEW (DBo; JGe). A pair visited a nest box in Albany 18 Mar (JDS). A few **Barn Swallows** showed up at Baskett Slough 22 Mar (John Thomas).

Four **Mountain Chickadees** were along the PCT in Santiam Pass 5 Mar (HH). A pair of **Black-capped Chickadees** in NW Corvallis appeared to have a communication problem, as they simultaneously cleaned out two different nest holes in a birch tree 20 Mar (JSi). **Bushtits** were also busy building nests by the end of the period. Two **Brown Creepers** were at Waterloo County Park 28 Feb (RFo).

Three **White-breasted Nuthatches** were along the PCT 5 Mar (HH). From photos these appeared to be from one of the more robust interior subspecies, rather than the "**Slender-billed**" **Nuthatches** that nest in the Willamette Valley, and are declining due to loss of oak woodlands. One of the Willamette Valley

nuthatches visited a feeder 15 Mar in Highland Dell where **Red-breasted Nuthatches** are more regular (JuP, JrP). As of 23 Mar several were regularly visiting a feeder near Alpine (LHy, WHy) where the owners have been restoring oak woodlands.

At Bald Hill Park, **Pacific Wrens** were still singing vigorously 28 Feb (CO) along with **Bewick's Wrens** 4 Mar (HH). **Marsh Wrens** sang and one gathered cattail fluff for a nest at TWG 2 Mar (KvH).

Many **Golden-crowned** and **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** streamed over the Homer Campbell memorial boardwalk at FNWR 25 Feb, providing good opportunities for photography (PRz). Ruby-crowns continued to sing in anticipation of migration, but Golden-crowns (some of which nest locally) seemed to stick mostly to their normal high-pitched chatter, waiting for later to sing their full song.

A **Western Bluebird** pair defended a nest box from a swarm of Tree Swallows at FNWR 7 Mar; five were along the Midge Cramer path west of Corvallis 8 Mar (RFo). A pair of **Mountain Bluebirds** excavated a nest cavity at 5200 ft along the PCT in Santiam Pass 6 Mar (Jack Williamson); a stray hawked insects in warm sunshine atop Marys Peak 19 Mar (LPN).

Two **Hermit Thrushes** were still at LSNA 17 Mar (BPr). A few **Varied Thrushes** remained at low elevations thru the end of the period. **American Robins** and **Wrentits** sang regularly at EEW and elsewhere.

**American Pipits** in the Tangent area seemed to be scattered due to dry field conditions 6 Mar (BA, JGe); larger flocks were concentrated around wetlands at FNWR through 16 Mar (WW). No **Cedar Waxwings** were reported apart from an anonymous eBird report at FNWR 9 Mar.

A **Orange-crowned Warbler** chipping in a remnant slough near Irish Bend 7 Mar (BPr) may have been a wintering bird. Singing birds in two different locations at Bald Hill 16 Mar (BPr; HB; MG) seemed to mark the arrival of migrants, as many reports followed in subsequent days. A bright male "**Audubon's**" **Yellow-rumped Warbler** at Stewart Lake in late Mar was first there since last spring (JSi). Although a few "**Audubon's**" **Warblers** wintered in our area, "**Myrtle**" **Warblers** seemed to be more abundant in most locations. **Townsend's Warblers** continued to be unusually scarce; one turned up in nw Corvallis yard 4 Mar (AFo). **Common Yellowthroat** migration was signaled by one in Peoria 23 Mar (RCa).

A **Vesper Sparrow** turned up at Bald Hill Farm 23 Mar (BPr). This is one of the most important nesting sites for the imperiled subspecies that nests in our region. **Savannah Sparrow** numbers were increasing by early March as migratory birds returned to grass fields where they nest. An unusual **Sooty Fox Sparrow** with a white throat was at EEW 26 Mar (HB). **Lincoln's Sparrow** numbers dwindled but at least one stayed at EEW thru the period. A **Swamp Sparrow** was still in the south unit of LSNA 17 Mar (BPr). One to two **White-throated Sparrows** continued in a nw Corvallis yard thru the period with three there 23 Mar (JSi). **White-crowned Sparrows** were singing by 7 Mar as migrants began to arrive. Wintering flocks of **Golden-crowned Sparrows** continued in force. As "**Oregon**" **Dark-eyed Juncos** continued to sing, "**Slate-colored**" **Juncos** were recorded se of Peoria 26 Feb (HH, OH, CHk, AHk) and near TCP in Albany 12 Mar thru the end of the period (JDS).

One of two **Western Meadowlarks** singing at Marys River Natural Area 26 Feb paused to pulled a worm out of the ground between songs (LM). Three sang 7 Mar from perches around the north prairie at FNWR where this species nests. Thirty wintering **Brown-headed Cowbirds** continued at the OSU dairy barn 28 Feb (HH, OH).

Up to 55 **Pine Grosbeaks** continued to be seen along the PCT in Santiam Pass thru 11 Mar (m.obs.). A pair of **Cassin's Finches** were near Big Lake 8 Mar (SSc). Twelve **Red Crossbills** at Alder Spring 21 Mar (KnF) were the largest groups seen during the period. Two **Lesser Goldfinches** and ten **Pine Siskins** made one-

day appearances at Stewart Lake 4 & 16 Mar respectively (JSi). Large flocks of **Evening Grosbeaks** turned up in the Cheldelin neighborhood 26 Feb, feeding on buds and catkins in (LM). Flocks arrived s of Philomath by 24 Mar (VSt).

23 **Western Pond Turtles** were visible from the blind at Snag Boat Bend 8 Mar (RFo). A **Gray Fox** was photographed by a motion-activated camera in N. Albany early on 9 Mar (CHI). Remains of an **Elk**, with numerous **Cougar** paw prints around it, were found along Soap Cr in s Polk Co. 9 Mar (MLi, GLi).

**For next month**, we can look forward to the peak of spring migration for warblers, shorebirds, and more. Please post your reports to the Mid-Valley birding list at [midvalleybirding.org](http://midvalleybirding.org), e-mail them to me at [joel.geier@peak.org](mailto:joel.geier@peak.org), or call (541) 745-5821 by 28 Apr 2015. Enjoy the season!

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## ATOP THE NESTBOX

Mountain Bluebird (MOBL) populations are showing significant regional declines since a peak in the 1990s. At the Ellis Bird Farm in Alberta, Canada, the breeding population had declined by 75% in 2013, without corresponding increases elsewhere. Similar declines are being reported in neighboring provinces. In 2014, researchers and project staff began a geolocator study to track migratory routes, stopovers and overwintering locations, in the hope of determining the likely cause(s) of MOBL declines.

Geolocators were used successfully on Purple Martins nesting at the Ellis Bird Farm in 2012-13. The project logged the longest journey of any martin ever recorded, a female later named Amelia. She left the bird farm on August 24th, headed east to Saskatchewan, then south across the central U.S. From southern Texas she crossed the Gulf of Mexico, spent 28 days in Belize, made her way down Central America, then across northern South America to the eastern Amazon Basin. Amelia spent the winter at three different roosting sites in the Amazon Basin before heading north on April 24th, making it back to the Ellis Bird Farm in just 21 days (375 miles/day)! Out of 22 martins with geolocators, 6 were recovered.

From a few banding recoveries over the years, it is understood that Mountain Bluebirds that breed in Central Alberta overwinter in the southern U.S. and northern Mexico. Other than a severe snowstorm in the spring of 2008, researchers are baffled as to the cause of the significant decline in MOBL populations in their northern range. It is hoped that this year, light-level geolocators and new GPS technology will help shed light on the potential causes of this phenomenon. For more information, go to [www.ellisbirdfarm.ca](http://www.ellisbirdfarm.ca).

*Raylene Gordin*

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## ASC EDUCATION NEWS

We had a "wildly" successful Winter Wildlife Field Day event on March 7th thanks to the talent and dedication of a terrific volunteer team, the beautiful venue at Finley NWR, perfect weather, and broad community support! We ended up helping over 100 kids build their own homemade bird nest boxes to put up back home, guided more than 150 guests on nature hikes, and shared our activities, programs and educational displays with over 300 field day participants! Hopefully we also instilled a greater appreciation of Corvallis' diverse habitats and wildlife with all who joined us.



This event could not have happened without an extraordinary young volunteer, Jeremy Felty, an OSU Forestry student and scout. Jeremy approached our Education team last fall with the idea for the event, and then spent hundreds of hours planning, preparing and executing the big event. ASC Education Chair (and key volunteer herself) Jessica Brothers, supported Jeremy's dreams every step of the way with her own huge donation of time, creativity, communication and management skills. She even designed a unique patch participants could earn for their day of learning and exploration!

Special thanks to volunteers who developed and led key stations: Kathleen Westly, Julie Christianson, Rita Snyder, Will Wright, Teri Engbring, Stacy Moore, Marcia Cutler, Michelle Shula, Sue Powell, Barrett Reeve, Logan Bennett, Juliana Mas-seloux, John and Rose Magee, and the wonderful team from the Friends of the Willamette Valley Refuge Complex. Zach Heesch, with Chintimini Wildlife Rescue Center, brought live raptors to share, a major highlight of the event.

Thanks also go to Finley Refuge staff who encouraged the event in spite of being seriously understaffed, and especially to Molly Monroe, who enthusiastically promoted this event to the community! We had a wide range of Girl Scouts, 4-Hers and Boy Scouts we were able to reach thanks to dedicated local leaders.

Along with individual volunteer help, we also want to send big thanks to:

- ASC Bluebird Trail Team
- Friends of Willamette Valley National Wildlife Refuge Complex
- Chintimini Wildlife Rescue Center
- Corvallis area 4-H, Girl and Boy Scout leaders
- Mary's River Lumber – who donated lumber for nest boxes
- Parr Lumber – who donated lumber and nails for nest boxes
- Alder Spring Woodworking/Jim Fairchild – for cutting, preparing and transporting the nest box materials
- Mary's River Watershed Council
- Institute for Applied Ecology
- Oregon State Bird Nerds

The Audubon Society of Corvallis is 100% dependent upon volunteers and community partnerships for all we do, and such dedication, time, and talents are VERY MUCH APPRECIATED! Thanks!

*Jessica Brothers & Teri Engbring*

## BIRDATHON TIME!

Birdathon 2015 is set for the weekend of **April 25-26**. This is our yearly fundraiser for the Hesthavn Nature Center. 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 25-26 and see how many species you can get! (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-loving relative. Just drop me an email to let me know you are planning to

participate. Sponsor forms and report forms will be on the ASC website under Birdathon. Results will be announced 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.

Good Birding! And email me at Karan Fairchild, [alderspr@peak.org](mailto:alderspr@peak.org), with any questions.

*Karan Fairchild*

*Birdathon Coordinator*

## BIRDING BY EAR

### REGISTER THROUGH THE AVERY HOUSE NATURE CENTER

[www.corvallisenvironmentalcenter.org/averyhouse/](http://www.corvallisenvironmentalcenter.org/averyhouse/)

\$35 (ask us about student or low-income discounts)

Sponsored by the Audubon Society of Corvallis and the Avery House Nature Center. Lisa Millbank and I are instructing this class.

Birding by ear will take your birding ability to the next level, especially in forested areas where birds are difficult to see. During the classroom sessions, we don't try to memorize lists of bird sounds; instead, we learn methods to help remember bird sounds, and get a basic understanding of the ways in which birds use sound to communicate. It's intended to be fun and interesting. Classroom sessions will feature lots of videos and sound clips. During the field trips, there will be listening exercises and many opportunities to practice the techniques learned in class. You'll be amazed by how many birds you'll find by just listening. You should already be familiar with common local birds to take this class. The field trips will focus on habitats: wetland (Jackson-Frazier Wetland), grassland & savanna (Finley NWR), and forest (McDonald Forest & Hesthavn Nature Center). We'll be enjoying the spring bird sounds at their peak.

### 3-WEEK CLASS

Wednesday, May 13, classroom session, 7pm - 9pm

Saturday, May 16, field trip, 9am - noon

Wednesday, May 20, classroom session, 7pm - 9pm

Saturday, May 23, field trip, 9am - noon

Wednesday, May 27, classroom session, 7pm - 9pm

Saturday, May 30, field trip, 9am - noon

If you have other questions about the course, you can contact us [donaboucher@gmail.com](mailto:donaboucher@gmail.com), 541-753-7689

## HESTHAVN NEWS

The Hesthavn Nature Center team has been blessed with many dedicated volunteers over the years who have worked hard to make Hesthavn a wonderful place to savor local wildlife and plants, as well as to learn and explore nature.

Some people like to come to work "parties" while others

## MARCH 2105 ASC BOARD MEETING SUMMARY

As ASC President Jim Fairchild has resigned and no replacement has been identified yet, Vice President Chris Mathews is now serving as President. A Nominating Committee of Karan Fairchild, Dave Mellinger and Will Wright will present candidates for this and other positions at the April ASC Board and General Meetings.

Membership Chair Suzanne Ortiz reported that our chapter now has 357 individual members. Everyone is asked to include all ASC events on our website calendar. Next Board meeting will be at Teri and John Engbring home at 7 pm on April 9.

*Teri Engbring*

## OPEN 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 meeting location.

## CONTRIBUTORS TO THE CHAT

Chris Matthews, Fred Ramsey, Bill Proebsting, Linda Campbell, Joel Geier, Ray Drapek, Raylene Gordon, Teri Engbring, Suzanne Ortiz, Mari-on Gregor

## CHAT ARTICLES

The Chat editors welcome monthly articles from all members of the Audubon Society of Corvallis. Please submit articles to the Chat editor by the final Thursday of the month. Always submit text using Microsoft Word.

prefer to adopt their own project and work on it on their own time. This article is for those of you who might be interested in joining that on-your-own-time group.

Below is a list of tasks that have to be performed on a regular basis at Hesthavn. If any of them sound like something you would be willing to work on, please contact me ([raydrapek@gmail.com](mailto:raydrapek@gmail.com)) or any of the other ASC officers and Hesthavn volunteers. Some of these projects might seem intimidating. For example it would probably be a bit much to offer to control black-berries across the entire property. For projects like that, we can break them down into bite-sized pieces. So you can just work on the blackberries along the road. And remember ... this is guilt-free volunteering. If you so much as show an interest in volunteering you will be on our good-guy list. But if you show interest and follow through, you will have the satisfaction of helping with the valuable education and restoration work that takes place at Hesthavn.

Here's a list from which you can choose your own special spot on the team. Thanks!

**Barn:** Sweep barn, organize barn / clear clutter – (check with education people), check mouse-traps, gutters, check dehumidifiers in museum room, inspection of museum display cases, refill brochure racks (inside and out of barn), drinking water container (i hope to refresh this every month), mini-sink. **Tool shed:** Tools – (fix as the need arises), keep fuel containers filled with appropriate fuel. **Domestic portions of the property (Yard / Parking / Trails):** check sign-in sheet outside barn, empty composting toilet, water composting toilet, clean composting toilet (tp, hand sanitizer, etc.), keep weeds down in gravel around barn, keep weeds down in parking area, mow lawn, sweep or rake handicap ramp, sweep or rake bridge, weed gardens – (Check in with Susan Brown), Paula's trail – (fix blockages as they arise), Ray's trail – (fix blockages, mow weeds growing over trail). **Wild portions of the property:** Weed removal of Blackberry, False Brome, Thistle, Teasel, Yellow Archangel and English Ivy, watering plants (by bucket or hose), restoration plots.

*Ray Drapek*

## ONE TIME VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

In addition to the Hesthavn Team's request for ongoing volunteers, additional helpers are needed for a one- time event this Mother's Day, May 10. ASC friend John Gaylord is organizing a special visit for residents of the Corvallis Home Life (adult care) program and staff to the Chintimini Wildlife Rescue Center. If you can help, or would like more details on a fun day, please contact John at [GaylordJohng@aol.com](mailto:GaylordJohng@aol.com). Thanks

## ASC HOMER CAMPBELL AWARD WINNER FOR 2015



ASC's Homer Campbell Environmental Award is presented annually to acknowledge individuals and/or organizations in our community that contribute to the protection and preservation of wildlife, wildlife habitat, and/or environmental education. A committee of board members makes its choice from among nominations received from the community each winter; the board as a whole votes on that choice. The award is given in honor of the substantial contributions of Homer Campbell, former environmentalist in ASC, who died in 2002.

### The 2015 recipient of the Homer Campbell

**Award is the Oregon State University (OSU) Department of Fisheries and Wildlife.** They have excelled in every criteria and, we believe, will continue to lead in work that helps protect Oregon's precious wildlife.

Members of the Department have played major roles in the preservation and protection of our wildlife and, as a consequence, of our ancient forests. Researchers in the Department provided initial and thorough studies of the Northern Spotted Owl and the Marbled Murrelet - studies that were pivotal to the understanding and protection of our old growth ecosystems, as well as of the birds themselves. Other researchers studied the life cycles of rapidly declining populations of Band-tailed Pigeons and convinced the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to change its hunting season to accommodate the birds' extended breeding activities at mineral springs. That action led to the restoration of a newly vibrant population.



Another group of researchers dealt with a problem with Caspian Terns, whose coastal breeding populations had been eliminated by development. The terns had concentrated on a small island in the mouth of the Columbia River where they fed primarily on young salmon. Researchers successfully moved the colony to an island closer to the ocean where a wider range of prey is available, thereby lessening pressure on threatened salmon species. And they continued by establishing successful tern islands in the Warner Valley, at Summer Lake, and at Malheur NWR.

Yet another research group developed methods of tracking whales. The ability to follow the whales has led to an increasing knowledge of whales' movements, habitat requirements, and susceptibility to environmental threats.

Recently, studies by OSU researchers of the habitat requirements of Greater Sage Grouse led to the clearing of juniper in the Warner Mountains to provide more suitable grouse habitat and may help the grouse escape being listed as an endangered species.

Current research and applications of the department's faculty cover a wide spectrum of activities aimed at the preservation of our wildlife. Faculty members are actively engaged in studying the effects of climate change on aquatic ecosystems, on avian populations, and on riparian ecology. Others study habitat restoration for salmon, terrestrial invertebrates in riparian zones, ecology of high desert streams, songbird ecology, seabird ecology ... the list goes on!

In addition to the sheer volume and breadth of new scientific knowledge generated by the Department, the enthusiasm of faculty members to share on-going research with the community is high. ASC members and the public at large have benefited from many fascinating presentations at General Meetings through the years, made by both faculty and students in the Department.

ASC congratulates the OSU Department of Fisheries and Wildlife for the world-class biological research it continues to produce, much of it concerning our best loved local species and habitats. An accurate understanding of local ecology provides the solid base upon which to craft ways to conserve what is most precious.

*Fred Ramsey and Linda Campbell*

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## COMMUNITY NOTES

### ENDANGERED SPECIES DAY 5-15

Endangered Species Day marks its 10th anniversary on **May 15**. We can celebrate the many success stories of birds brought back from the brink and remind everyone that many plants and animals still need a strong Endangered Species Act to help them survive and ultimately thrive. To learn more: contact David Robinson, Endangered Species Day Director at: [drobison@endangered.org](mailto:drobison@endangered.org).

### HERON ROOKERY AND VOLE INFO

Do you know there is a great blue heron rookery in the riparian zone that is visible from Kiger Island Drive about two miles east of Hwy 99? It is the third year and last summer we were able to use the spotting scope to watch a baby grow.

Regarding Carol Savonen's article about vole bait and raptors; our vole problem was so out of hand that we were tripping in holes in the lawn. We were aware of the potential problem to predators with poisoning the voles. So, we purchased a pickup load of sand and canvased the yard and orchard. Each hole received a dose of bait and then was filled with sand. The voles were trapped inside. It was easy to spot holes that we missed or reopened and repeat the process. We had every intent of keeping the bait and voles underground and away from all other animals. The infestation is managed.

*Marion Gregor*

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## ASC VOLUNTEERS INSPIRE AT ANNUAL SUSTAINABILITY FAIR

ASC's energetic volunteers shared their love of birds and Corvallis wildlife with the wider community at the Seventh Annual Sustainability Fair at OSU March 12. Led by our Sustainability Coalition rep, John Gaylord; a team of Suzanne Ortiz, Sally Shaw, Rana Foster, Michelle Shula and Teri Engbring greeted guests and expounded on our local wildlife and Audubon chapter.

## MEMBERSHIP CORNER

### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Cathy & Pete Frischmann  
Chris Moss  
Tracy Stewart & Fred Hueglin

### MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

To renew your membership online go to the ASC website ([www.audubon.corvallis.or.us/join.shtml](http://www.audubon.corvallis.or.us/join.shtml)) & renew via Paypal, or you can mail a check to ASC, PO Box 148, Corvallis, OR 97339.

### EMAIL NOTIFICATIONS:

Please note that you need to opt into the ASC listserve. After you sign up, you'll receive up-to-date email notifications about ASC events, fieldtrip locations, volunteer work parties and weather-related cancellations. Send an email to our listserve administrator, Karan Fairchild, and request to be added to the [listserve: alderspr@peak.org](mailto:alderspr@peak.org)

### HAVE YOU CHANGED YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION?

If you have moved or changed your email address, send your new contact information to Suzanne Ortiz at [ortizsv@gmail.com](mailto:ortizsv@gmail.com).

*Suzanne Ortiz*

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## AUDUBON SOCIETY OF CORVALLIS

## CALENDAR

April 9	ASC Board Meeting, 7 pm at Engbring home
April 11	Field trip to Basket Slough NWR
April 16	ASC General Meeting, 7 pm
April 23	May 2015 Chat submissions due
April 25-26	Birdathon
April 28	Field Notes submissions due

**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 student; \$15 for Chat only subscriptions (email delivery only); \$50 for Supporting Level; \$100 for Patron Level; and \$200 for Benefactor Level.**

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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

## Audubon Society of Corvallis

[www.audubon.corvallis.or.us](http://www.audubon.corvallis.or.us)

President (Candidates needed)

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Secretary	Gail Nickerson	<a href="mailto:gbnickerson@comcast.net">gbnickerson@comcast.net</a>	541-754-0406
Treasurer	Fred Ramsey	<a href="mailto:flramsey5@comcast.net">flramsey5@comcast.net</a>	541-753-3677

### BOARD MEMBERS

	Will Wright	<a href="mailto:willwright26@q.com">willwright26@q.com</a>	541-753-4395
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	Spencer Mair	<a href="mailto:smwolfus@yahoo.com">smwolfus@yahoo.com</a>	

### COMMITTEE AND COORDINATORS

Field Trip Chair	Bill Proebsting	<a href="mailto:proebstw@gmail.com">proebstw@gmail.com</a>	541-752-0108
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Birdathon Coordinator	Karan Fairchild	<a href="mailto:alderspr@peak.org">alderspr@peak.org</a>	541-929-4049
Hesthavn Chair (interim)	Ray Drapek	<a href="mailto:raydrapek@gmail.com">raydrapek@gmail.com</a>	541-754-7364
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Interested in volunteering?  
Please let us know: [volunteerasc@gmail.com](mailto:volunteerasc@gmail.com)

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

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