



THE AUDUBON SOCIETY OF CORVALLIS CHAT

APRIL 2016

VOL. 45 #8

APRIL PROGRAM

Thursday, April 21, 7:00-8:30 pm
At Chintimini Senior Center:
2601 NW Tyler Ave (& 27th), Corvallis

BRINGING BACK THE POLLINATORS



Scott Hoffman Black

Scott Hoffman Black will present an "Integrated Landscape Approach to Pollinator Conservation." Despite the recognized importance of pollinators and the services they provide, a growing body of evidence suggests they may be at risk due to loss of habi-

tat, widespread use of pesticides, climate change, disease and parasites.

Scott is the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation's executive director. He also serves as chair of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Butterfly Specialist Group, deputy chair of the IUCN Invertebrate Conservation Subcommittee, chair of the Migratory Dragonfly Partnership, co-chair of the Monarch Joint Venture, and as an ex officio member of the Federal Monarch Butterfly High Level Working Group. Scott has extensive experience in endangered species conservation, pollinator conservation, and sustainable agricultural and range and forest management issues.

APRIL SECONDARY PROGRAM: PROPOSED DOUGLAS-FIR NATIONAL MONUMENT

A TEMPLATE FOR 21ST CENTURY NATIONAL FOREST CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

Stephen Sharnoff will give an overview of the initiative he and Andy Kerr have begun to establish a Douglas-Fir National Monument in the upper Santiam River watershed. The proposed Monument would be over 760 square miles, from the Opal Creek and Bull of the Woods wilderness areas south to the divide between the Santiam and Mackenzie Rivers, from just above Green Peter Reservoir to the Cascade Crest. It would mostly be in what is now Willamette National Forest but include significant BLM land as well. It would exclude Detroit and Idanha, and the Detroit Reservoir. It would include the Middle Santiam and Menagerie wilderness areas and part of the Mt. Jefferson Wilderness.



Sharnoff is a botanical photographer and forest advocate based in Berkeley, CA. His published work includes for *Lichens of North America* and *A Field Guide to California Lichens*.

ASC GENERAL MEETING

Thursday, April 21,
7:00-8:30 pm
At Chintimini Senior Center:
2601 NW Tyler Ave (& 27th),
Corvallis

Thank you to everyone who helps us set up chairs at 6:15 and take them down afterwards, and to Becky Garrett for coordinating our beverages and treats.

In This Issue

Field Trips.....	58
President's Corner	58
Conservation Corner	58-59
Homer Campbell Award	59-60
ASC Education News	60
Hesthavn News	60
Field Notes	60-63
Board Meeting Summary	62
Membership Corner	62-63
Atop the Nestbox	63
Community Notes	63
Contributors to this CHAT	63
Calendar.....	64

Social hour begins at 6:30, with the chapter meeting starting at 7:00 and the program starting about 7:30. Questions can be directed to Bill at proebstw@gmail.com.

Bill Proebsting, Vice Pres. & Program Chair

NEXT MONTH'S PROGRAM: MAY 19

Matt Betts, OSU, on Do Birds help trees grow in managed forests? Lessons from a long-term experiment in the OR Coast Range

FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE

SECOND SATURDAY FIELD TRIP

Our Saturday morning local field trip meets the second Saturday of each month 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 or 541-752-0108 with questions. Check the Midvalley ListServ at 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 after noon.

NEXT HALF DAY FIELD TRIP:

April 9. Luckiamute SNA. We will check the north unit first and should arrive there about 0800. We will be looking for migrants and flowering shrubs and perennials. Footing is generally good, but the trail in the gallery forest can have some muddy spots. Depending on time and weather, we will look in at the south unit afterwards.

Flood damage this winter forced construction of a new, smaller parking lot at the north unit. It will be important to carpool to this site. Too many cars will force us to shuttle from the south unit or the paddle unit.

Bill Proebsting

WEEKEND FIELD TRIPS FOR 2016

By the time this is printed, ASC's trip to Bandon and the south coast will be history. So the field trip season is ON.

One change to notice in the schedule is that the Rogue and Malheur trips - which have been Friday to Sunday and Thursday to Sunday in past years - are now Saturday to Monday and Friday to Monday.

Klamath Basin comes soon—lots of waterfowl, lots of shorebirds, and dancing grebes. Next is the Rogue Valley trip for wildflowers, spring migrants, and maybe even a Great Gray Owl. The Rogue trip includes a play at Ashland's Oregon Shakespeare Festival, and this will be the first time we will see a play that was actually written by Shakespeare - the delightful comedy *Twelfth Night*.

THE REMAINING TRIPS THIS YEAR ARE:

April 22-24 Klamath Basin
May 6-8 Rogue Valley
May 20-23 Malheur NWR
June 10-12 Summer Lake
August 11-14 Steens Mtns
September 9-11 South Coast

These are group affairs, where we travel in rental vans from Enterprise, lodge at interesting facilities, and share expenses. Signup sheets are available at all ASC general meetings. You can also sign up by email to framsey5@comcast.net.

Fred Ramsey

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

MALHEUR FIELD STATION AND THE REFUGE OCCUPATION

The occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge has ended, but the effects will linger for some time. Of particular interest to ASC members should be effects of the occupation on the independent Malheur Field Station. When the occupation ended, it was found that damage to Field Station buildings was, fortunately, minimal. As I write this, in mid-March, the Field Station has reopened, and much of the Refuge is open as well (Headquarters being a significant exception).

Malheur Field Station depends for its existence on lodging and meal charges to group and individual visitors, and on contributions by MFS members and supporters. As expected, reservations at the Field Station are down for this spring's migration season. Some of the loss was made up, if it can be seen this way, from the fact that law enforcement personnel were housed at the Field Station during the occupation (MFS director Duncan said during an OPB interview that some FBI members became enthusiastic birders). But serious needs remain.

ASC members can help the Field Station to survive by planning visits to Malheur, either during this spring's migration or later in the year. Last August Duncan and Lyla conducted a 24-hour bird survey—by bicycle!—and spotted 118 species! So any time is a good time for birding at Malheur. Supporters can help also with financial contributions, either on-line through the MFS website—www.malheurfieldstation.com—or by a check mailed to Malheur Field Station, 34848 Sodhouse Lane, Princeton, OR 97721.

Chris Mathews, ASC President

CONSERVATION CORNER

OREGON AGENCIES BEHIND THE TIMES: OREGON FOREST PRACTICES, FISH & WILDLIFE

For many years the Oregon Board of Forestry, the governing body for state and private land forest rules, and policy arm of the Department of Forestry (ODF), has refused to adopt scientifically-based revisions to the Oregon Forest Practices Act. These changes are needed to protect streams, their inhabitants, and the water flowing through them, needed more than ever with climate changes towards warmer and seasonally drier conditions. By ignoring facts on the ground that have already been incorporated into stricter regulations in both California and Washington, weak Oregon forest rules allow logging practices to continue to degrade stream habitats, increase stream temperatures with inadequate shading, and pollute streams with runoff from inadequate soil and steep slope protections from roads and logging. Aerial application of pesticides on forestlands upstream, particularly near rural residents, add to public concern about pollution.

The science is clear enough that two federal agencies contacted the Governor's office. EPA and NOAA have denied Oregon \$1.2 million in grants for this fiscal year, even while noting there has been some moves toward improvement. That latest decision, claimed as by ODF very significant, added 10 feet of buffer, short again by half of what studies show is needed. This is a time-out for bad behavior.

For urban folks, I will remind Corvallis citizens that their Rock Creek watershed is being logged under these same inadequate state forest standards, while Corvallis remains negligent in low-



ering water temperatures discharged into the Willamette River (EPA Clean Water Act requirements).

Meanwhile, the Dept. of Fish & Wildlife (ODFW) and its governing Commission (OWC) still labor under the misimpression that its constituency still lives behind the trigger and the reel. Consumptive fish and wildlife interactions provide much, but not all, of its funding, but the overwhelming majority of Oregon wildlife-based recreation is non-consumptive—birding or other viewing, photography, and nature explorations. One attempt to expand non-consumptive funding by halving the \$40 annual Habitat Conservation Stamp was accompanied by no increased marketing of the stamp. Plus a bizarre decision to no longer include a state wildlife area parking permit for stamp purchasers—as if non-consumptive wildlife supporters prefer to just stay indoors! Let's hope their significant federal grant funding is also not withheld for bad behavior.

Their misimpression is echoed best by the wolf de-listing supercedure just signed by Governor Brown. Contrary to considerable testimony of independent biologists, to most of the public testimony received, and to many Audubon members who signed petitions from Oregon Chapters (thank you all just the same), the wolf de-listing was completely unnecessary. This supercedure serves only to thwart judicial review of the de-listing decision.

Oregon agencies need to serve the interests of all Oregon citizens, even the constituents that don't walk in their office doors.

Jim Fairchild, Conservation Committee Chair

HOMER CAMPBELL AWARD TO WARREN & LAURIE HALSEY

ASC presents the Homer Campbell Environmental Award annually to acknowledge individuals and/or organizations in our community who contribute to the protection and preservation of wildlife, wildlife habitat, and/or environmental education. A committee chooses from among nominations received from the community each winter; with approval of the ASC Board. The award is given in honor of the substantial contributions of Homer Campbell, former environmentalist in ASC, who died in 2002.

The 2016 recipients of the Homer Campbell Award have excelled in all criteria and made a significant contribution toward protecting Oregon's precious wildlife: Laurie and Warren Halsey of Raindance Ranch.

In 1992, the Halseys' newly purchased 270-acre ranch, south of Corvallis near Alpine, contained much marginal farmland. As in so much of the Willamette Valley, the natural hydrology had been subverted to serve the dominant farming paradigm. Native plant species were eradicated in favor of Christmas trees, rye grass and fescue monocultures.

To return much of the farm to wildlife habitat, the Halseys enlisted the help of agencies with programs and personnel dedicated to helping landowners: OR Dept. of Fish & Wildlife, Ducks Unlimited, US Fish & Wildlife Service/Partners for Fish & Wildlife, and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service/Wetlands Reserve Program.

The first step was to restore the natural hydrology of 66 acres of the wetland areas associated with Muddy Creek. By 1997 ponds were reestablished along the creek; native forbs and grasses were planted; and other native wetland plant species came back on their own. In just one year, the number and diversity of bird species went from nearly zero in the monoculture grass habitat to 26 wetland-associated species. Thousands of birds were documented using newly restored ponds.

Now, nearly 30 years later, these wetland areas host native residents including red-legged frogs & Western pond turtles, and serve as a stop-over for migrating waterfowl. More than 170 bird species use this restored habitat.

Over the years, riparian corridors, upland prairie & oak savannah habitats have all been nudged from remnants into prominence at Raindance Ranch. The Halseys re-introduced controlled burning (Native Americans in the valley traditionally burned large areas of the Willamette Valley each year to keep the land open for wildlife & edible plant species, like camas) on portions of the property - experimenting with different plant re-introduction regimes. Starting with local seeds, then transplanting rhizomes, they established dozens of milkweed clusters, some containing hundreds of plants, to aid the dwindling Monarch butterfly population, a milkweed obligate species. Kincaid's lupine, planted for the Fender's Blue butterfly, is also flourishing.

Benefits to the human community have been equally rich. The Halseys have generously let area school children and volunteer groups get involved with hands-on work, thereby giving folks, from pre-schoolers to retirees, a vivid learning experience of just how fun helping wildlife can be. University students and independent professionals have carried out many research projects and surveys focusing on diverse subjects, such as the native honeybee, white-breasted nuthatch, Wilson's snipe, and bullfrogs. Even international groups, hosted through OSU, have come to learn from the multi-faceted and ever evolving restoration projects.

The Halseys are quick to say they didn't do much - everyone else did the work. But their vision for the land they so lovingly care for preceded and continues to direct the efforts that benefit so many wildlife species, right alongside the fields of rotating commercial crops.

While this award focuses on local contributions, it is worth noting that the Halseys are involved in a number of other habitat restoration projects on land they own elsewhere. Areas of the lower Sacramento River, Tule Lake/Klamath Refuges, and Yosemite National Park are also benefiting from their vision of enabling native plants and wildlife to thrive amid carefully managed human uses.

As Homer Campbell was fond of saying - "Wildlife need only three things: habitat, habitat, and habitat!" Today the Halsey's ranch is a rich mosaic of diverse habitat: wetlands, upland prairie, oak savanna, managed cropland, and conifer forest. ASC is grateful to recognize the Halseys for their wonderful work on behalf of nature.

Note: Several documentaries featuring Raindance Ranch restorations were made by OPB's Oregon Field Guide: *Monarchs and Milkweed*, 2016 and *The Halseys' Wildlife Habitat*, 2001.

Linda Campbell

ASC EDUCATION NEWS

WINTER WILDLIFE FIELD DAY 2016 REPORT

Despite typical cold, wet, windy winter weather, over 260 brave folks of all ages came out for our second annual Winter Wildlife Field Day at Finley refuge March 12. Thanks to 60 outstanding volunteers, we learned, played and explored Nature together and had lots of fun!

Special thanks to our event chair and OSU forestry undergrad Jeremy Felty, Finley visitor services manager Samantha Bartling, and Jessica Brothers from Audubon's Ed team. An amazing group of volunteers helped with over 6 months of planning

and prep including: Mark Baldwin, Stacy Moore, Marie Martin, Amanda Gray, Karl Hartzell, Spencer Mair, Logan Bennett, Kate Mathews, Marcia Cutler, Nancy DeMasi, Sue Powell, Jim Phillipson, Barrett Reeve, Camden Bruner, Ann Brodie, Jennifer Beathe, and Mikaela Lea.

We also had lots of support from our partners at Chintimini Wildlife Center, who showed off 3 impressive raptors, a crew of energetic OSU students from forestry and the Bird Nerds, Friends of Willamette Valley Refuge Complex, Institute for Applied Ecology, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and Jennifer Beathe of Starker Forests.

There will be more volunteer opportunities with Audubon education coming up soon including our Aquatic Ecology classes at Hesthavn this spring under Jessica, and summer camps and the Hesthavn Open House in June. So please email me if you can help. Thanks, Team!

Teri Engring, ASC Ed Team

HESTHAVN NEWS

WORK PARTIES IN APRIL

In April I have two work parties scheduled at Hesthavn. On Sunday, April 3 from 12pm to 4pm we will probably pull false-brome. Why do we care about false-brome? To answer I am shamelessly copying from the Invasive Plant Alert put out by the False-brome Working Group. False-brome is capable of completely dominating understory and open habitats to the exclusion of most other native species. The species has an exceptionally broad ecological amplitude, occupying forest floor and open environments such as pastures and prairies at a variety of aspects and elevations. The palatability of this grass for wildlife appears to be very low. It may displace threatened and endangered species, such as Kincaid's lupine (host plant for the endangered Fender's Blue butterfly). Many years ago when we only had a small patch I was warned of it and unfortunately did not remove that patch right away. Today it is widespread throughout the property and indeed has shown an inclination to fill in all spaces to the exclusion of all other understory plant species. I hold no illusion that we will exterminate it from the property, but we can hold it at bay and give the other plants a fighting chance.

Sunday, April 17 from 12pm to 4pm will be a barn and yard work party. What we do will depend in part on what needs to be done. If the weather is good, we will install a patch for the hole in the drive where cars tend to spin out as they attempt to pull out onto Oak Creek Drive. Also we will be providing relief to the bottoms of all Hesthavn volunteers and visitors. The splintery old wooden seat in the composting toilet will be replaced. The new seat should also be much easier to clean.

Please come to either of these work parties if you can. I maintain guilt-free volunteerism at Hesthavn. Any portion of your time will be greatly appreciated. Anyone who shows up even once to one of our work parties is forever on the "Heroes of Hesthavn" list, even if you never come back again (but those who come back are super-heroes).

Reminder: The 2016 Hesthavn Open House will be Saturday, June 18, from 10 am to 2 pm. Look in next month's CHAT and on the ASC website for details next month.

Ray Drapek, Hesthavn Committee Chair

FIELD NOTES

02/24/16-03/24/16

Mild, wet weather continued this month with measurable rain on all but six days in the period, and no frost on the Willamette Valley floor. Native wildflowers and trees responded: **Western trillium**, **yellow violet**, and **spring beauty** began to bloom at Karan and Jim Fairchild's place sw. of Philomath by 27 Feb. On the valley floor, willows were blooming and leaves were beginning to unfurl on **black cottonwoods** by 29 Feb, and **big-leaf maples** began to bloom by 3 Mar. In Dunn Forest, Randy and Pam Comeleo found **tough-leaved iris** (*Iris tenax*) blooming 3 Mar, **Pacific hound's tongue** (*Cynoglossum grande*) 8 Mar, **coltsfoot** (*Petasites frigidus*) 11 Mar, and **fairy slipper** (*Calypso bulbosa*) 13 Mar. The last two along with **fawn lilies** (*Erythronium oregonum*) were blooming in Chip Ross Park 20 Mar for the Naturalist Adventure there. By 22 Mar **red elderberry** was in bloom at Luckiamute State Natural Area, providing another nectar source for hummingbirds along with the continuing **Oregon-grape** and **red-flowering currant**.

Abbreviations and locations: NWR = National Wildlife Refuge, STP = sewage treatment ponds. E.E. Wilson Wildlife Area is north of Adair Village. Jackson-Frazier Wetlands is in north Corvallis near Cheldelin Middle School. Luckiamute State Natural Area is along the Willamette River northwest of Albany. Philomath STP is south of Philomath and requires access permission. Teloh-Calapooia Park is in south Albany near Linn-Benton Community College, Talking Water Gardens is in NE Albany. Cabell Marsh, McFadden Marsh, and North Prairie are locations at Finley NWR.

Five **Greater White-fronted Geese** flew north over the North Prairie 21 Mar (Hendrik Herlyn) but 18 near Peoria were headed in the opposite direction 24 Mar (Greg Metcalfe). A **Snow Goose** continued at Finley NWR thru the end of the period; Nate Richardson saw another at Diamond Hill wetlands 17 Mar. Isaac Denzer spotted a **Ross's Goose** flying with cacklers near the North Prairie on 27 Feb. Flocks of **Cackling Geese** and **Canada Geese** continued through the period. The resident "**Western**" **Canada Geese** were alternately conspicuous in their noisy nuptial flights, and sneaky on wetlands near their nesting sites.

33 **Trumpeter Swans** were in the Airlie area 28 Feb, and 12 continued north of Airlie thru 11 Mar. (Deanna Emig; Jordan Hazen fide Cody Smith). A family group of three were at Finley through 7 Mar, and photographed again on 22 Mar (Sonya Spaziani). Flocks of **Tundra Swans** were seen at Finley through 20 Mar.

Wood Ducks began nesting by 21 Mar when a female flew out of a nest box as a male Wood Duck swam on a side channel of the Willamette near Peoria (Greg Metcalfe). A pair of **Cinnamon Teal** turned up on McFadden Marsh 25 Feb (Hendrik Herlyn). A **Eurasian Wigeon** drake was with American Wigeons at Philomath STP 9 Mar (Hendrik Herlyn, Oscar Harper). A few **Gadwall** were at Finley and Talking Water Gardens thru the period. Wintering flocks of **Northern Shovelers**, **Northern Pintails**, and **Green-winged Teal**. continued though pintail numbers declined in late Mar.

About 12 **Barrow's Goldeneyes** were in their usual wintering location below Foster Dam 15 Mar. A **Canvasback** and two **Common Goldeneyes** turned up on McFadden Marsh 18 Mar (Deanna Emig). Flocks of **Ring-necked Ducks**, **Buffleheads**, **Ruddy Ducks**, and **Lesser Scaup** continued at Philomath STP and other deep-water sites thru the period, along with a few **Greater Scaup**. A **Lesser Scaup** pair were at Talking Water Gardens 24 Mar (Andrea Foster). Eight **Buffleheads** dove actively on Cheadle Lake in Lebanon 27 Feb (Rana Foster).

Hooded Mergansers displayed on ponds at Finley, EEW and elsewhere. On 3 Mar one near Baskett Slough NWR seemed to think that a water-logged acorn might be edible and carried it around,



dodging another who was also interested (Frank Kolwicz). One near Teloh-Calapooia Park “softened up” a surprisingly large fish up by pounding it on the water before then swallowing (Jim Smith). Wintering **Common Mergansers** were still massed below Foster Dam 15 Mar, but on 22 Mar one was at the base of Bailey Cr. bridge near Alsea (Hendrik Herlyn), suggesting movement into nesting habitat on smaller streams.

On 20 Mar a **Mountain Quail** sw. of Philomath called between showers and **Wild Turkeys** called at Chip Ross Park (Jim Fairchild; Don Boucher).

Up to four **Eared Grebes** were seen intermittently at PSTP through 13 Mar. Two **Western Grebes** showed up on the Philomath STP 5 Mar, but opted for different ponds (Pam Otley); some continued on Foster Reservoir through the period. **Pied-billed Grebes** began to pair up, with two at Talking Water Gardens 24 Mar (Andrea Foster).

Ten **Great Blue Herons** were on nests near Monmouth 26 Feb (Frank Kolwicz). **Great Egrets** continued to be seen around the area, but numbers waned by late Mar. **Turkey Vulture** sightings increased in late Feb though many local observers didn’t get their first view of this unglamorous harbinger of spring until March.

On 19 Mar an **Osprey** flapped high above the E.E. Wilson angling pond where one arrived last month. Along the Willamette River, one was in Independence 22 Mar and one turned up in Peoria 24 Mar (Deanna Emig; Greg Metcalfe).

An adult **White-tailed Kite** was at the Ray Bentley savanna overlook at Finley NWR 18 Mar (Mary Ratcliff). Another stopped by E.E. Wilson Wildlife Area 22 Mar. A male and female **Northern Harrier** there interacted but were not yet in full courtship on 21 Mar.

A **Bald Eagle** nest sw. of Tangent was occupied by 27 Feb, but 12 eagles were still using the nearby winter roost (Deanna Emig, Viviane & Dale Simon-Brown). A subadult **Golden Eagle** at Baskett Slough NWR 10 Mar pestered an adult **Bald Eagle**, twice forcing the latter to change perches (Linda Hadfield). A subadult **Golden Eagle** was also seen regularly at Finley NWR thru the period.

A **Cooper’s Hawk** called near Teloh-Calapooia Park on 16 Mar as a **Eurasian Collared-Dove** watched warily from the next tree (Jim Smith). **Red-tailed Hawk** numbers on raptor surveys in Linn County this winter were close to all-time lows, perhaps due to a marked increase in annual grass plantings rather than perennial grasses which support larger vole numbers (Jeff Fleischer). Two **Rough-legged Hawks** continued to hunt over the North Prairie thru 21 Mar.

A **Virginia Rail** called at Talking Water Gardens 24 Mar (Andrea Foster), possibly a wintering bird. A few **Soras** continued to be reported from local wetlands. The very mild conditions this winter seem to have been favorable for rails that decided to stay in Oregon. **American Coots** were paired up and diving for food at Cheadle Lake 27 Feb (Rana Foster).

56 **Black-bellied Plovers** were at the Evergreen Mitigation Bank along Bellfountain Rd. 19 Mar (Isaac Denzer). A **Pacific Golden-Plover** at the south end of Smith Loop Rd. was seen and photographed from 28 Feb (Jesse Laney) thru 10 Mar, frequently feeding on earthworms. **Killdeer** and **Dunlin** flocks were notably scarce in Linn County this winter (Jeff Fleischer). 12 **Dunlin** and 70 **Least Sandpipers** at the Philomath STP 5 Mar (Pam Otley). **Spotted Sandpipers** were noted occasionally at Willamette Park, a typical wintering location. Scattered reports of **Greater Yellowlegs** were likely wintering birds rather than migrants. **Wilson’s Snipe** began winnowing displays at Finley NWR by late Mar, but most will likely migrate out rather than stay to nest.

Gulls reported from soggy fields this month included the usual wintering suite: **Mew**, **Ring-billed**, **California**, **Herring**, and **Glaucous-winged Gulls**.

Band-tailed Pigeon numbers visiting feeders increased gradual-

ly thru the period.

Near the Marys River confluence in downtown Corvallis in late Feb, Don Boucher and Lisa Millbank sometimes heard the screech of a **Barn Owl** in early evenings. On 3 Mar they saw one fly into a crevice in the overpass at the skate park, making a tinkling sound that could be a solicitation call for mating.

A **Western Screech-Owl** peered out of a Wood Duck nest box near Peoria 7 & 23 Mar (Greg Metcalfe). On 18 Mar one called in daylight near a nest box at the Homer Campbell Memorial Boardwalk at Finley NWR (Hendrik Herlyn, Oscar Harper). **Great Horned Owls** continued to call. A very large female in Teloh-Calapooia Park was very pale, more like Great Basin or eastern types than our typical dark NW birds. A **Northern Pygmy-Owl** called in McDonald Forest 25 Feb and again 19 Mar (Paul Adamus). Two **Barred Owls** called back and forth in McDonald Forest above Peavy Arboretum 28 Feb (John Tietjen). No **Short-eared Owls** were reported since mid-Feb.

Rufous Hummingbirds continued to arrive with males near Philomath and Monroe 25 Feb, in Corvallis and sw. of Philomath 26 Feb. One fed on red-flowering currant that was blooming at Esther McEvoy’s native-plant nursery in Corvallis 4 Mar (Rana Foster). The first report of a female was sw. of Philomath on 27 Feb (Karan Fairchild) and another was at Lewisburg 28 Feb (John & Pat Tietjen). By mid-Mar they were present in force and competing for feeders with the resident **Anna’s Hummingbirds**.

A **Belted Kingfisher** near Teloh-Calapooia Park 22 Mar was showing territorial behavior (Jim Smith).

A good place to watch **Acorn Woodpeckers**, one of our most fascinating species due to their cooperative nesting behavior, is on the west side of Finley NWR headquarters where a colony was active thru the period. **Red-breasted Sapsuckers** can be seen year-round at the north trailhead of Luckiamute SNA; one was drumming there 18 Mar. Another visited Judith & Jerry Paul’s yard in the Highland Dell area of n. Corvallis on 19 Mar, on the same day as two **Pileated Woodpeckers**. A male “**Yellow-shafted**” **Northern Flicker** was among the flickers at EE Wilson 3 Mar.

American Kestrel counts in Linn County were lower than average this winter (fide Jeff Fleischer). A **Merlin** was chased by a crow w. of Corvallis High School 5 Mar (Don Boucher, Lisa Millbank). A **Prairie Falcon** wintering near Finley NWR continued to be seen occasionally near the North Prairie through 6 Mar. A **Peregrine Falcon** flew over E.E. Wilson 3 Mar, heading for the Adair Village STP.

A **Black Phoebe** called near the Corvallis sewage treatment plant on the north side of town 26 Feb (Don Boucher); others continued to be seen at E.E. Wilson, Finley, Snag Boat Bend, and Peoria. A **Say’s Phoebe** along McFarland Rd. on the s. side of Finley NWR was regularly seen flycatching from 12 Mar through the end of the period. Another **Say’s Phoebe** was on the south side of the North Santiam River near Gates 17 Mar (Linda Fink).

The last report of a **Northern Shrike** in Benton Co. this past season was 7 Mar at North Prairie, but another was still hunting sw. of Monmouth 14 Mar (Deanna Emig). **Hutton’s Vireos** continued to sing thru the period.

Five **Gray Jays** were along a trail in the Lewisburg Saddle area of McDonald Forest 25 Feb (Paul Adamus, Nancy Clarke). On 13 Mar following strong winds, a **Steller’s Jay** turned up at a feeder in a Peoria yard where this species is unusual. **Common Ravens** performed courtship flights over Coffin Butte by late March.

Reports of **Horned Larks** were scant, with just 4 birds reported in Benton Co., 10 in Linn Co., and 1 in Polk Co. according to eBird. Twelve (all as pairs) were along Smith Rd. in Linn Co. 27 Feb (Mark Nikas). Three pairs plus a male were along Glaser Rd. 15 Mar (Martha Geier, Joel Geier).

Flocks of **Tree Swallows** were seen regularly thru the period. On 26 Feb a pair checked out nest boxes sw. of Philomath (Karan

BOARD MEETING SUMMARY

MARCH 10, 2016 ASC BOARD MEETING

The March ASC board meeting was held at Mark Baldwin's house. The board approved the selection of Laurie and Warren Halsey of Raindance Ranch in Monroe for the Homer Campbell Award. The nominating committee reported that the current officers are willing to serve next year and two new at-large board members will be elected. The next meeting will be April 14th at Hesthavn.

Gail Nickerson

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.

MEMBERSHIP CORNER

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

To renew your membership online go to: 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)

Fairchild). A **Violet-green Swallow** was over the OSU campus 26 Feb (Maureen Leong-Kee); flocks were seen from early Mar onward. Three checked out nest boxes near Teloh-Calapooia Park 17 Mar. An early **Barn Swallow** was over the Philomath STP 3 Mar (Hendrik Herlyn). An early **Cliff Swallow** flew in a mixed flock of swallows near the North Prairie 21 Mar; two more along with four **Barn Swallows** joined Trees and Violet-greens feeding over the Philomath STP 23 Mar (Hendrik Herlyn; Pam Otley). A **Northern Rough-winged Swallow** was at the old mill ponds on the ne. side of Philomath 23 Mar (Isaac Denzer).

A pair of **Black-capped Chickadees** worked to enlarge a cavity in a mostly-dead peach tree in Peoria 7 Mar (Greg Metcalfe). A **Mountain Chickadee** that wintered north of Lebanon continued to visit a feeder near Griggs through the end of the period. By late Mar **Bushtits** could be seen poking their heads into willow blossoms, sometimes coming away with a dusting of yellow pollen.

A **Pacific Wren** sang on the OSU campus 25 Feb (Don Boucher); many more could be heard singing in local forests. **Marsh Wrens** sang in cattail marshes at Finley and EE Wilson and Talking Water Gardens and Bewick's Wrens sang in brushy habitats thru the period. An **American Dipper** was in Bailey Cr. near Alsea, near a nest site under the Hwy 34 bridge (Hendrik Herlyn, Oscar Harper).

Wintering flocks of **Golden-crowned Kinglets** continued at low elevations, but soon will be shifting into nesting habitat in conifer forests. **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** began singing by 26 Feb (Don Boucher) and seemed to be singing everywhere by late Mar.

Western Bluebirds began to check out nest boxes. A few **Hermit Thrushes** and **Varied Thrushes** were still present thru the period at low elevations. **American Robins** began to sing in late Feb and were in full dawn chorus by late Mar.

Orange-crowned Warblers arrived on 19 Mar when one sang in McDonald Forest, a female gleaned insects from willow blossoms in E.E. Wilson Wildlife Area, and one foraged along with a dozen "**Audubon's**" **Yellow-rumped Warblers** in trees high over Witham Hill. By late March

Yellow-rumped Warblers were starting to molt into breeding plumage, making it easier to tell the "Myrtles" from the "Audubon's."

A **Grasshopper Sparrow** singing at the North Prairie 19 Mar thru 21 Mar, initially heard by Doug Robinson, appeared to be moving around on a territory of similar size to what would be expected during nesting season. This is a very early date for migrants, so this might be a bird that overwintered. Normally this species winters in California's Sacramento Valley and farther south, but there have been several winter records from grasslands in the Fern Ridge area near Eugene. A **Vesper Sparrow** seen at Bald Hill Farm 17 Mar (Bill Proebsting) was also a very early grassland sparrow; that bird however was not singing. **Savannah Sparrows** were singing regularly at both Bald Hill farm and North Prairie by 18 Mar.

An early (or perhaps wintering) **Chipping Sparrow** was in Teloh-Calapooia Park 8 Mar (Jim Smith). Another, still in winter plumage, turned up in Monmouth 14 Mar (Frank Kolwicz).

Bill Percy and Amy Schoener noticed an unusual "**Oregon**" **Dark-eyed Junco** with an entirely white head on their farm near Wren 20 Mar. A "**Slate-colored**" **Dark-eyed Junco** was at EE Wilson 3 Mar; another was in Teloh-Calapooia Park 17 Mar. **White-crowned Sparrows** began to sing on territory in nesting habitat at Luckiamute SNA by 18 Mar. Migrant flocks of **Golden-crowned Sparrows** were often seen nibbling on cherry buds. A few of the wintering **White-throated Sparrows** continued.

Spotted Towhees and **Song Sparrows** sang thru the period. A few **Lincoln's Sparrows** continued, but numbers at E.E. Wilson were noticeably low this winter. The last local report of a **Swamp Sparrow** was at Finley 27 Feb (Isaac Denzer).

Western Meadowlarks sang along the Campus Way bike path 27 Feb (Don Boucher). By late March several were singing on territories at North Prairie where this species nests. **Red-winged Blackbirds** began to shift away from wintering flocks. Two showed up at Judith and Jerry Paul's feeder in n. Corvallis 19 Mar; others were singing around wetlands by late Mar. **Brewer's Blackbird** pairs began to turn up in their usual nesting areas, including along in parking lots along NW 9th St. in Corvallis where stores have taken the place of their former grassland habitats. Research suggests that they do surprisingly well in this setting, possibly because there are fewer free-roaming house cats than in residential neighborhoods.

House Finches and **Purple Finches** began to sing by late March. **Lesser Goldfinches** also began to sing in oak savanna habitat around Bald Hill. **American Goldfinches** also began to sing by late February but remained sparse around town. **Red Crossbill** sightings were also sparse. **Pine Siskin** flocks continued to visit feeders around Corvallis, but most observers reported that numbers were reduced from early in the winter. **Evening Grosbeaks** began to make their usual spring appearance in valley locations, with small flocks s. of Dallas 28 Feb (Jean Thompson), s. of Philomath 5 Mar (Virginia Stanton), and along the Mulkey Creek Trail west of Bald Hill 21 Mar (Mary Garrard).

House Sparrows began to prospect for nesting sites by 27 Feb when a male showed up at our place north of Adair Village.

An early **dragonfly** report came on 26 Feb when Todd Thompson spotted and Jamie Simmons then photographed a female **Variagated Meadowhawk** near Stewart Lake in NE Corvallis. **Bumblebees** were noted by 7 Mar (Rana Foster).

Rough-skinned Newts were "coupling like crazy" in a pond sw. of Philomath 27 Feb (Karan Fair-



child). Tadpoles of **Pacific Chorus-Frogs** were already half-grown in our backyard pond near E.E. Wilson Wildlife Area by 29 Feb.

California Ground Squirrels were of their winter dens and active out by 5 Mar (Don Boucher). In mid-March while doing a late-night "trash run," Randy Comeleo found a **Northern Flying Squirrel** sneaking sunflower seeds from a bird feeder in the dark of night.

Next month: Spring migration will be in full swing! Warbler migration continues with Common Yellowthroats and others to follow. Keep an eye on the skies Greater White-fronted Goose flocks. Nesting season also begins for many birds. In the forest, listen for grouse drumming and hooting. In grasslands, watch for the roller-coaster display flights of Northern Harriers. Killdeer should be nesting soon. *Please remember and encourage your friends* to keep dogs on leash in areas where ground-nesting birds will be trying to start new families.

Please post your observations to the Mid-Valley birding list at midvalleybirding.org, e-mail them to me at joel.geier@peak.org, send by post to 38566 Hwy 99W Corvallis 97330, or call (541) 745-5821 by 26 Apr.

ATOP THE NESTBOX

For those of you with nestboxes on your properties, please make sure your boxes are in good repair and ready for nesting activity. We have some reports of nests in progress already.

For those who enjoy watching bluebirds elsewhere, here are some of the public and other well-traveled places in the Corvallis area where bluebirds typically nest:

- Bald Hill Park
- Corvallis Country Club
- Crystal Lake Sports Park
- Finley National Wildlife Refuge
- Good Samaritan Hospital Campus (Aumann Bldg and Pastega House)
- OSU Campus (Campus Way; Beef, Dairy, Sheep and South Farms)
- Sunset Community Gardens
- Woodland Meadows Park

Although we don't typically get bluebirds at Hesthavn, foraging pairs and/or flocks are frequently seen nearby on Oak Creek Rd. Happy spring birding!

Raylene Gordin

COMMUNITY NOTES

CORVALLIS SUSTAINABILITY FAIR

Volunteers from ASC joined 60 exhibitors at the Alumni Center at OSU for the annual Corvallis Sustainability Fair & Town Hall Meeting held on March 10th. The Fair showcased local organizations and action teams that are partners in the Corvallis Sustainability Coalition.

An audience of 500 people attended the event and participated in the interactive town hall meeting. An introductory "Community Scrapbook" showed slides of the Coalition partner organizations and their 2015 sustainability accomplishments. ASC was featured in slides that highlighted projects in a variety of sustainability areas, including education, through the aquatic stream ecology workshops at Hesthaven Nature Center; community inclusion by sponsoring a fieldtrip to Chintimini Wildlife Rehabilitation Center with participants from Home Life; and in natural areas week as cosponsors of the first annual Winter Wildlife Field Day @ Finley NWR that attracted over 300 participants.

Corvallis mayor, Biff Traber, presented a brief update on the steps the city has undertaken regarding sustainability, including the on-going project to install LED (light emitting diode) fixtures on power poles.

Keynote speakers for the Town Hall were James Reismiller and Cassandra Robertson. The co-owners of Abundant Solar spoke about a 2015 trip to Germany where their itinerary included visits to the towns of Freiburg, population 220,000, and Wildpodsried, population 2500. Both communities are examples of net-positive energy use.

Freiburg has incorporated solar requirements into its building code, uses passivhaus insulating standards that reduce the requirement for space heating and cooling, has car-free neighborhoods, and extensive public transportation. The rural town of Wildpodsried produces 500% of its energy use by using solar panels, a cooperative wind farm and biogas generated from dairy farms.

Link to information on Freiburg's environmental policy at this site:

www.freiburg.de/pb/Len/372840.html

Watch the video https://youtu.be/3ldb4_0F_xw

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.

*Suzanne Ortiz,
ASC Membership Chair*

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS CHAT

Bill Proebsting, Chris Mathews, Fred Ramsey, Joel Geier, Jim Fairchild, Linda Campbell, Ray Drapek, Teri Engbring, Gail Nickerson, Suzanne Ortiz, Sherrie Pierce, Raylene Gordin, Samantha Bartling

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. Please submit text using Microsoft Word to:

chateditors@gmail.com

AUDUBON SOCIETY OF CORVALLIS

CALENDAR

April 9	Half Day Field Trip to Luckiamute SNA
April 14	ASC Board Meeting, 7 pm Hesthavn
April 21	ASC General Meeting at Chintimini Senior Center, 2601 NW Tyler Ave, Corvallis
April 26	Field Notes submissions due
April 28	May Issue CHAT 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

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Audubon Society of Corvallis

www.audubon.corvallis.or.us

President.....	Chris Matthews.....	mathewsc2@comcast.net	541-754-1172
Vice President	Bill Proebsting	proebstw@gmail.com	541-752-0108
Secretary.....	Gail Nickerson	gbnickerson@comcast.net	541-754-0406
Treasurer.....	Fred Ramsey.....	flramsey5@comcast.net	541-753-3677

BOARD MEMBERS

.....	Teri Enbring.....	engbring@hotmail.com	541-829-2601
.....	Linda Campbell.....	lcampbell@peak.org	541-929-9420
.....	Marie Martin	martinm2468@icloud.com	
.....	Spencer Mair.....	smwolfus@yahoo.com	
.....	Mark Baldwin.....	mark.baldwin2@comcast.net	
.....	Jim Philipson.....	parrphil@comcast.net	
Alternate.....	Will Wright.....	willwright26@q.com	541-753-4395

COMMITTEE AND COORDINATORS

Membership Chair	Suzanne Ortiz.....	ortizsv@gmail.com	917-273-4917
Conservation Chair	Jim Fairchild.....	alderspring@peak.org	541-929-4049
Christmas Bird Count	Marcia Cutler.....	marciacutler@comcast.net	541-752-4313
Birdathon Coordinator	Karan Fairchild.....	alderspr@peak.org	541-929-4049
Historian	Marcia Cutler.....	marciacutler@comcast.net	541-752-4313
Hesthavn Chair	Ray Drapek	raydrapek@gmail.com	541-754-7364
Publicity Chair.....	Juliana Masseloux.....	masselaj@onid.orst.edu	415-847-0738
Sales Table Chair.....	Sally Shaw.....	shaws@peak.org	541-757-2749
Refreshment Chair	Becky Garrett.....	becky.bittern@yahoo.com	541-757-7474
Bluebird Trail Chair.....	Raylene Gordin.....	gordin@centurytel.net	541-258-6625
Webmaster.....	Tom Haig.....	tomhaig@hotmail.com	541-231-6583
Chat Newsletter Editor	Teri Engbring	chateditors@gmail.com	541-829-2601
Field Notes Compiler.....	Joel Geier.....	joel.geier@peak.org	541-745-5821

EDUCATION TEAM:

Volunteer Support	Teri Engbring	engbring@hotmail.com	541-829-2601
Communication, Outreach, Grants.....	Jessica Brothers	educationaudubon@gmail.com	

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

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

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