



THE CHAT

AUDUBON SOCIETY OF CORVALLIS

APRIL 2017

VOL. 46 #8

APRIL 20, 2017 PROGRAM:

CORDI ATKINSON, 'THE OPPORTUNITY OF A LIFETIME, TRAINING PHILIPPINE EAGLES AND HELPING TO SAVE THEM FROM EXTINCTION'

CHINTIMINI SENIOR CTR: 2601 NW TYLER AVE (& 27TH) IN CORVALLIS

Cordi and Joe Atkinson have rehabilitated and trained Golden Eagles for release back into the wild for more than 30 years. Their eagles have appeared on many nature programs and films, most recently *The Sagebrush Sea*, produced by Cornell Lab of Ornithology and shown on PBS.

In 2015 they were given the unprecedented opportunity in the Philippines to work on another project with Cornell Lab of Ornithology, training two Philippine Eagles to be used for some very specific shots in an upcoming documentary about this critically endangered eagle.

Cordi is an internationally published photographer and through her lens you will have a very rare opportunity to see this powerful and exotic bird. With only about 300 of these magnificent eagles left on the planet their hope is to bring awareness to its plight and the efforts being made to prevent its extinction. Cordi became particularly interested in the Forest Protection and Management Program implemented by the Philippine Eagle Foundation, which targets indigenous tribes to become 'forest watchers' in return for a service provided to their village. This unique program recognizes that the well-being of the eagles, the local communities and their forest environment are inextricably linked and Cordi has become dedicated to raising awareness and support for the establishment of more of these groups that are key to the protection and survival of the remaining forest and eagles.

Social hour begins at 6:30, with the chapter meeting starting at 7:00 and the program starting about 7:30.

Bill Proebsting, Vice Pres. & Program Chair, proebstw@gmail.com

NEXT GENERAL MEETING MAY 18:

John Laundre, 'How top predators aid survival of ground-nesting birds.'



Philippine Eagle photo by Cordi Atkinson

ASC GENERAL MEETINGS

THIRD THURSDAYS AT CHINTIMINI SENIOR CTR:
2601 NW Tyler Ave (& 27th) in Corvallis
Next Meeting: Thursday, April 20, 7-8:30 pm

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FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE

LOCAL MONTHLY SECOND SATURDAY FIELD TRIPS

Our Saturday morning local field trips meet the second Saturday 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 ASC Facebook page, the Willamette Valley ListServ, <http://birding.aba.org/maillist/OR5>, 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 LOCAL FIELD TRIPS:

April 8: E.E. Wilson Wildlife Management Area. We will walk the roads of E.E. Wilson looking for migrant birds, both departing and arriving.

May 13: Finley NWR.

Bill Proebsting

2017 ASC WEEKEND FIELD TRIPS:

Sign up, at the Field Trip table at our general meeting or contact Fred at flramsey5@comcast.net or 541-753-3677.

THE 2017 SCHEDULE:

Rogue Valley, April 28-30

Malheur NWR, June 1-4

Summer Lake, June 16-18

Wallowas, July 20-23

Steens, August 10-13

South Coast, August 25-27

On these trips, we travel in rental vans, stay in motel-style accommodations, and eat meals wherever we can get them. We share all expenses. There will be signup sheets at the Field Trip table at the ASC general meetings starting in January.

If there are parts of Oregon you want to add to the schedule, please consider organizing a tour. Assistance in the planning and execution is available.

Fred Ramsey

BIRDATHON TIME!

Birdathon 2017 is set for the weekend of April 29 and 30. 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 29 and 30 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.

We have a number of teams who go motorless every year, and get special support for that. The criteria for going motorless are:

- No driving at all during the Birdathon. The motorless trip starts from and ends at your home.
- Any human-powered method is acceptable.
- Any public transit is acceptable.
- Motorized wheelchairs and other mobility devices acceptable.

Good Birding! And email me at Karan Fairchild, alderspr@peak.org, with any questions.

Karan Fairchild, Birdathon Coordinator

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

The March 3, 2017, issue of *Science* contains a two-page article by Rosemary and Peter Grant, "Watching Speciation in Action." The Grants became well known for their long-term research program focused on natural selection among four species of Darwin's finches in the Galapagos Islands. Many Chat readers have doubtless become familiar with this work by reading Jonathan Weiner's book, *The Beak of the Finch*.

In the recent *Science* article the Grants summarize their observations of rapid divergence among medium ground finches following environmental challenges, particularly in terms of beak size and shape. These observations led them to conclude that natural selection can lead to the emergence of new species far more rapidly than had previously been thought. The recent paper also mentions how their collaborations with molecular biologists identified regulatory elements that control beak size and shape. Finally, they discuss recent work in which other biologists have identified new examples of rapid divergence leading to emergence of new species.

This article was of particular interest to me, because when Kate and I toured the Galapagos in 1999, our tour leader was the Grants' son-in-law. He made sure that our small ship cruised to within a few feet of Daphne Major, the exceedingly inhospitable-appearing uninhabited island where the Grants set up camp for forty consecutive summers. As a scientist whose own work was limited to a laboratory, I felt an odd mixture of envy and awe from the sight of that island—a sensation that returned upon reading the Grants' recent article.

Chris Mathews, ASC President

CONSERVATION UPDATE

BENTON COUNTY CAN REDUCE LOSSES TO WILDLIFE, LIVESTOCK, AND PETS

Wildlife Services, the euphemistic name for the US Department of Agriculture Animal Damage Control program, has once again made national news for all the wrong reasons. Too often their lethal predator snares kill non-target animals, even as their efforts to reduce livestock losses are demonstrably ineffective. This time, near Pocatello, Idaho, young Canyon Mansfield's pet Labrador Casey died. Canyon could have lost his life had he not wiped sodium cyanide off with snow, and sought immediate medical attention after watching his companion die. The M-44 baited explosive device that killed his family dog was placed just off his family property, with no posted hazard signage or local notifications.

Local community members hope to convince Benton County to divest itself of Wildlife Services lethal predator control contract, offering instead a comprehensive alternative program to accomplish effective improvements to wildlife and livestock losses, at a lower cost to both county and residents. We hope the Environmental Issues Advisory Commission will recommend that the county budget committee adopt this alternative program.

"Benton County Agriculture and Wildlife Protection Plan 2017-2019" is available for review on our ASC website. The first Budget Committee public hearing will be April 10th, 6-9 pm at the Benton



County Sunset Building, Sunset Room (1st Floor), 4077 SW Research Way, Corvallis.

BIRDS NEED YOUR HELP IN THE FEDERAL BUDGET (FROM AMERICAN BIRD CONSERVANCY)

Please act now! Tell your Senators and Representative to make protecting migratory birds, and the conservation programs they depend upon, a priority.

President Trump's proposed 2018 federal budget would gut major programs and protections for birds and America's public lands, putting decades of conservation achievements at risk. With so much on the line, it's imperative that we send Congress a loud, unmistakable message that such extreme cuts are not acceptable.

Drastic reductions in the proposed federal budget would reduce on-the-ground conservation at a time when one-third of migratory bird species are already in decline. Birds are sensitive indicators of environmental health as a whole, and the loss of migratory birds signals a potential crisis that Congress must act now to reverse.

But that's not all: Three federal agencies critical to bird conservation—the Department of Interior, the Department of Agriculture, and the Environmental Protection Agency—are facing deep budget cuts that will significantly reduce federal bird protections.

IF WE WANT MIGRATORY BIRDS TO BOUNCE BACK, IT'S CRITICAL THAT CONGRESS PRIORITIZE AND FUND THE:

- Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act, critical to the restoration of habitat for migratory birds throughout the Western Hemisphere.
- Migratory Bird Joint Ventures, North American regional partnerships that work across political boundaries and levels of government to achieve conservation success for birds and their habitats.
- Endangered Species Act, in order to fully recover endangered and threatened bird species.
- Farm Bill conservation program like the Conservation Reserve Program, which preserve habitat for birds by providing conservation incentives to private landowners.
- EPA's Pesticides Program, critical to protecting birds from deadly pesticides like neonicotinoids used in agriculture.

Please act now! Tell your Representative and Senators to make protecting migratory birds, and the conservation programs they depend upon, a priority. Thank you.

Jim Fairchild, Conservation Chair

EDUCATION NEWS

2017 WINTER WILDLIFE FIELD DAY BLOSSOMS!

Thanks to an incredible team of dedicated volunteers and partner organizations, the 2017 Winter Wildlife Field Day at Finley NWR was a huge success.

Over 450 visitors came to the refuge for the 4-hour event March 18, 150 more than last year! More than 70 volunteers contributed their time, skills and energy that day (plus several who helped with prep but couldn't come Saturday). Volunteers donated over 950 precious hours for WWFD 2017, half on March 18, and the rest over nearly 6 months of planning and preparation.

Despite heavy rain braved by the setup team, temperatures were mild and rain miraculously stopped soon after guests began to arrive. Comments from children and adults as they left were enthusiastically positive. We accomplished our goals of making interaction with nature fun, educational, and exciting. I'm not sure who was more energetic, guests or volunteers, but the result was magical.



Volunteers who led the Wildlife Watch station at Homer Campbell Trail on March 18. Suzanne Ortiz, John Criscetiello, Marcia Cutler, Jesse Laney, Gabriel Sandoval, Spencer Mair and Kris Downing.

We were welcomed by a dedicated refuge staff at all levels. Special thanks to Visitor Services Manager Samantha Bartling and her intern Beatrice Serrano-Martinez, Project Leader Damien Miller and Deputy Laila Lienesch. They were joined by 70 skilled and hard-working volunteers from Audubon Society of Corvallis, several OSU groups (including our official partners in Bird Nerds, Society of American Foresters, Organic Growers Club, and College of Ag Sciences), the Friends of the Willamette Valley National Wildlife Refuge Complex, Chintimini Wildlife Center, Albany Boy Scout Troop 365, and Starker Forests, Inc. As *Corvallis Gazette-Times* noted in a full page WWFD story on March 19, this was a strong community-wide effort with many dedicated and capable partners.

Thanks also for loaned equipment from OR Fish and Wildlife (pelts and skulls), and Streamwebs (pond kits), and beekeeper Jim Faulkner. So many USFSW staff and volunteers went the extra mile and it showed. Special thanks to the key planning team members: Jeremy, Sam, Beatrice, Sue (and Matt for doing our awesome graphics), Nancy, Mamo, Mark, Christina, Suzanne, Marcia, Phyllis, Spencer, Marie, Mike, Karl, Kris, Gail, Ann, Amanda, Jim, and Bob. What a team! Sorry we don't have room to list each volunteer by name here, but you know who you are and how much you are appreciated by your teammates and winter Wildlife Field Day guests. Great job, everyone!

Teri Engring, ASC Education

AQUATIC ECOLOGY VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Our third year of a formal science classes at Hesthavn with the Aquatic Ecology program begins April 7. There are still a few volunteer openings to guide this popular hands-on, interactive scientific exploration for elementary school classes at our Hesthavn Nature Center on Oak Creek near McDonald forest.

Field days will be Friday mornings including three stations (macroinvertebrate collection, water quality testing, and a riparian plant walk along Oak Creek).

TIME COMMITMENTS ARE FROM 8:30 AM-1 PM. AE ON:

April 7th, 21st, and 28th

May 5th, 12th, 19th, and 26th, and June 2nd and 9th.

If you can help, please contact Jessica Brothers at educationaudubon@gmail.com

Jessica Brothers, Aquatic Ecology Coordinator

HESTHAVN NEWS

Hesthavn is not just for the birds. This spring we signed on to become “bee buddies” in the Benton Soil and Water Conservation District program. They loan nesting kits and make sure the bees are properly maintained during their life cycle. Also we are working with Molly Monroe and Esther McEvoy to plant milkweed to expand Monarch butterfly habitat.

WE HAVE TWO APRIL WORK PARTIES SCHEDULED:

Sunday 4/16, 10 am - 2 pm. Barn and yard work party. It's the time of the year when the grass grows like mad. Some mowing and trimming will be a certainty. We need to spread some crushed rock on a few thin sections of the trail. And then there's the usual list of monthly chores that we go through.

Sunday 4/23, 10 am - 2 pm. We either will be digging Yellow Archangel or False Brome. Yellow Archangel is actually a pretty plant with multicolored leaves and bright yellow flowers, but it is an extremely aggressive non-native and could take over large sections of the property if not kept in check. False brome is a perennial bunch grass native to Eurasia and North Africa. It too is rather nice looking, but extremely aggressive. McDonald Forest is loaded with it. Questions? Email: raydrapek@gmail.com

Ray Drapek, Hesthavn Chair

HOMER CAMPBELL ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD 2017

The Homer Campbell ASC Environmental Award, established in 2005, recognizes a local individual or organization that has made significant contributions in the areas of environmental stewardship, awareness, and outreach.

This year The ASC Board is pleased to announce that local botanist & artist, Frances Stilwell, was selected for this award. She will be presented with a personal plaque at the April 2017 General Meeting on April 20th, and her name will be added to the perpetual plaque at Hesthavn Nature Center.

ASC recognizes Stilwell's unique contribution in creating, displaying, and publishing artwork illustrating Oregon's Botanical Landscape: An Opportunity to Imagine Oregon before 1800. This book is a compilation of her art in pastels and watercolor of botanical landscapes in each of eight eco-regions of Oregon. The purpose of the book, in her words, was to share “how to educate ourselves about our natural world, to slow down and stop, to consider colors, shapes, and shadows.” Stilwell's solo exhibit of 72 paintings in 2011 at the Benton County Historical Society and Museum's Moreland Gallery became the basis for her book. The live exhibit, shown in venues around the state, will next be shown at the Columbia Pacific Heritage Museum in Ilwaco, Washington from May 12th to July 8th.

Creative people like Stilwell who use their gifts to portray the natural world and a sense of history are, in the broadest sense, environmental educators. Those who see her work, whether in live exhibit or book form, are given an unusual & alluring view of our historical habitat, and she has made her work widely available to the public.

Her advocacy for the natural world is based on her early background in science and fueled by a lifelong passion for conservation, expressed not only in her art but in frequent communications with public officials about state & local environmental issues. She is a longtime active member of the Native Plant Society and several arts societies. Those who see Stilwell's vibrant & impressionistic

work can be further inspired toward preserving the rich biodiversity we still have in our home state.

Linda Campbell

FIELD NOTES

02/22/17-03/21/17

The weather was mostly cool as typical for the season, with daytime highs mainly in the high 40s to mid 50s (F), and nighttime lows in the mid-30s to low 40s. Rainy conditions prevailed, but the morning of 6 Mar brought a surprising snowfall in Corvallis and Albany. The thermometer reached the mid-60s several times in the later part of the period, but dipped below freezing for a light frost on 19 Mar.

Osoberry/Indian-plum (*Oemleria cerasiformis*) bloomed on the valley floor by 7 March. Blue elderberries put out leaves and cottonwoods were blooming at E.E. Wilson Wildlife Area by 12 March. Red-flowering Currant (*Ribes sanguineum*) was in full bloom by 20 Mar. Thin-leaved Peavine (*Lathyrus holochlorus*) plants began to emerge in Teloh-Calapooia Park by 20 Mar (Jim Smith).

Abbreviations and locations: NWR = National Wildlife Refuge, STP = sewage treatment ponds. Jackson-Frazier Wetlands is in north Corvallis near Cheldelin Middle School. Luckiamute State Natural Area (SNA) 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.

Observations

A **Brant** associating with **Cackling Geese** was n. of Harrisburg 25 Feb (Pam Otley), and at Finley NWR 3 & 12 Mar (John Sullivan; Jacob Mathison). Flocks of **Tundra Swans** and **Greater White-fronted Geese** continued in the Halsey area through 2 Mar (Delores Porch).

Wood Ducks began to pair up in anticipation of nesting season; a pair was on the Dunawi Creek wetland in Sunset Park 21 Mar (Julie Gibson). A well-described pair of **Greater Scaup** swam alongside **Lesser Scaup** on the Philomath STP 15 Mar (Hendrik Herlyn).

A male **Hooded Merganser** swam on Dixon Creek just east of Corvallis High School 27 Feb (Don Boucher). A pair on the Dunawi Creek wetland in Sunset Park engaged in a courtship display 6-8 Mar.

A male **Smew** was spotted at McFadden Marsh on 1 Mar (Bud Helsenstell). This small Eurasian merganser species only rarely shows up as a wild bird in North America. Adult males are distinctive due to their mostly white plumage. The species is also popular with waterfowl fanciers who raise captive birds, so the possibility of an escaped bird should also be considered.

On 12 Mar a **Mountain Quail** gave its “quee-ark” call in Dunn Forest near the intersection of the 300 and 420 roads (Pam & Randy Comeleo).

A **Horned Grebe** joined a raft of Ruddy Ducks on the Philomath STP 14 Mar (Hendrik Herlyn). Three **Western Grebes** and an **Eared Grebe** were also there 15 Mar (Howard Bruner; Jacob Mathison).

A **Band-tailed Pigeon** showed up at a nw. Corvallis feeder 5 Mar, no doubt a scout for larger flocks to come (Susan Hatlevig). By the 15 Mar territorial **Eurasian Collared-Doves** could be heard calling in many locations.

A male **Rufous Hummingbird** visited Ron Jameson's feeder in



Corvallis 3 Mar. Males also turned up s. of Philomath and near Chel-delin 5 Mar (Virginia Stanton; Don Boucher). At least five swarmed the feeders at Finley NWR headquarters 11 Mar (Gayle Peterson). A female turned up near Teloh-Calapooia Park 11 Mar, two days after the first male at that location (Jim Smith). At Luckiamute SNA on 20 Mar, a male displayed while a female perched next to a red-flowering currant bush.

Virginia Rails were heard regularly at Talking Water Gardens and at Jackson-Frazier Wetlands. A flock of 88 **Sandhill Cranes** flew north over Springfield at 11:45 AM on 22 Feb (Tim Rodenkirk). A large flock was heard over Lake Oswego at 2:30 PM on the same day. Paul Sullivan of McMinnville calculated that, if this was the same flock, they covered the 100 mile distance at a speed of 36 mph. On the evening of 23 Feb Steve Seibel heard another flock heading north over Sand Ridge School w. of Lebanon.

On 26 Feb Nancy Stotz recorded the remarkably coordinated maneuvers of several thousand shorebirds (apparently **Dunlin**) flying over the Halsey STP. Another flock flew back and forth along the Willamette River in downtown Corvallis 10 Mar (Jed Irvine). A **Lesser Yellowlegs** was photographed in a flooded field at Finley NWR 6 Mar (Sally Hill).

A field along Midway Dr. just se. of Albany 25 Feb held 1200+ **Mew Gulls**, 10 **Ring-billed Gulls**, 2 **Western Gulls**, a **California Gull**, 50+ **Herring Gulls**, 40 **Thayer's Gulls**, 100 **Glaucous-winged Gulls**, and a well-described first-cycle **Glaucous Gull** (Shawnee Finnegan).

25 **American White Pelicans** flew west over downtown Albany 22 Feb (Karin Lamberson). A **Great Egret** hunted in a wetland along Dunawi Creek at Sunset Park 23 Feb (Julie Gibson). **Great Blue Herons** began nesting by 8 Mar when three were standing on branches near nests at a colony north of Monmouth (Frank Kolwicz). At least nine nests were active along Beaver Creek near Crabtree 9 Mar (Jeff Harding). Another "heronry" with 10 active nests along the Willamette River just north of Albany was active by 12 Mar.

Turkey Vultures began to be seen in numbers on 1 Mar when Karan Fairchild saw three circling over n. Corvallis, and 11 roosted in trees in the Highland Dell neighborhood (Judith & Jerry Paul). Seven roosted in Douglas-firs along Tampico Ridge north of Adair Village the next evening. By 19 Mar at least 24 were in the area covered by the Harrisburg-Coburg raptor survey route (Barbara Combs).

At least one **White-tailed Kite** continued to be seen regularly on the North Prairie. An immature **Golden Eagle** was chased by a young **Bald Eagle** over Finley NWR 24 Feb (Paul Rentz). 130 **Bald Eagles** roosted in trees off of Seward and McLagan Rds. sw. of Tangent on the evening of 25 Feb (Jeff Fleischer). A pair was using an established nest north of the Halsey paper mill by 1 Mar (Delores Porch).

Buteos found by Jeff Fleischer during raptor survey in sw. Linn County 25 Feb included 47 **Red-tailed Hawks**, six **Rough-legged Hawks**, and two **Red-shouldered Hawks**; 12 **Northern Harriers** were also in the area. Jeff noted that numbers of Red-tailed Hawks as well as American Kestrels were low this winter, only 40% to 50% of typical numbers from past winter surveys. Data from the National Agricultural Statistics Service show that Oregon's acreage of perennial grass seed crops (which tend to support populations of voles that are important as prey for many wintering raptors) has declined by nearly 20% since 2013.

A **Red-tailed Hawk** with orange patagial tags reading "9P" was along Hwy 99W just north of E.E. Wilson Wildlife Area 4 Mar (Steve Seibel), the same location where this hawk spent last winter after being tagged and relocated from Portland International Airport to

the mid-valley.

A pair of **Red-shouldered Hawks** copulated in an oak tree at Bald Hill Farm 27 Feb (Mary Garrard). One was displaying there on 10 Mar, making a series of swooping dives with its wings tucked (Nancy Stotz).

A **Western Screech-Owl** sang its bouncing-ball song in nw Corvallis 11-12 Mar, answered by a distant **Northern Pygmy-Owl** 11 Mar (Pam & Randy Comeleo). Five **Short-eared Owls** were along Malpass Rd. n. of Harrisburg 25 Feb (Paul Sullivan fide Jeff Fleischer). A **Barred Owl** called along the 300 Road in Dunn Forest 12 Mar (Pam & Randy Comeleo).

A **Belted Kingfisher** was along Dunawi Creek at Sunset Park 23 Feb, and regularly through the period (Julie Gibson). Territorial kingfishers were also noted at Teloh-Calapooia Park throughout the period (Jim Smith).

A **Red-naped Sapsucker** that wintered in nw Corvallis continued to be seen through 3 Mar (Joshua Little, John Sullivan). A **Red-breasted Sapsucker** visited Patrice Thomas' suet feeder in Lewisburg 8 Mar. On 22 Feb a **Hairy Woodpecker** turned up at a suet feeder on Spring Hill in North Albany, where a pair of **Downy Woodpeckers** visited regularly through the winter (Naomi Weidner). A male **Hairy Woodpecker** at Stewart Lake 8 Mar was a rare visitor for that location (Jamie Simmons), as a further indication of local seasonal movement.

A raptor survey in sw Linn County 25 Feb yielded a remarkable five falcon species including 57 **American Kestrels**, a **Merlin**, a **Peregrine Falcon**, a **Prairie Falcon**, and a gray-phase **Gyr Falcon** (Jeff Fleischer). The Gyr Falcon continued to roam the area between Harrisburg and Halsey at least through 19 Mar (Rich Adney; Deanna Emig; Tom Crabtree).

A **Say's Phoebe** was spotted along McFarland Rd. at Finley NWR 6 Mar (Sally Hill) and continued through 19 Mar, in the same location where one was seen repeatedly last March. Another turned up at the Philomath STP 15-16 Mar (Howard Bruner; Hendrik Herlyn).

A **Hutton's Vireo** was heard on 12 Mar near the west end of NW Lincoln Ave in Corvallis (Jamie Simmons).

A pair of **Common Ravens** on Mulkey Ridge collected oak twigs and carried them into dense conifers on the north slope of the ridge 10 Mar (Nancy Stotz).

Six **Horned Larks** were along Davis and Smith Rds. near Halsey 27 Feb (Deanna Emig).

An early **Purple Martin** was spotted at Cabell Marsh 14 Mar (Bill Proebsting). 16 **Violet-green Swallows** foraged along with 42 **Tree Swallows** over the old Clemens Mill Pond in Philomath 4 Mar (Isaac Denzer). Three **Tree Swallows** investigated nest boxes sw. of Philomath 10 Mar (Karan Fairchild). Several pairs of **Violet-green Swallows** squabbled over nest boxes near Teloh-Calapooia Park 12 Mar (Jim Smith). A **Barn Swallow** joined a swallow swarm over the Philomath STP 15 Mar (Hendrik Herlyn). Eight **Cliff Swallows** turned up at Cabell Marsh 18 Mar (Isaac Denzer).

A **Pacific Wren** along Mulkey Creek 10 Mar was alternately singing and collecting moss for a nest in a hole under a horizontal stump (Nancy Stotz).

Jamie Simmons noted that this seems to have been an exceptional year for **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** both in his nw. Corvallis neighborhood and around the Hewlett-Packard campus, with double or triple the number of sightings compared to recent winters. By 4 Mar some of them were singing around Jamie's yard, and more could be heard singing elsewhere through the end of the period. One of several in a swale at the base of Witham Hill displayed the often-concealed red crown feathers that give this species its name (Julie Gibson).

A pair of **Western Bluebirds** checked out a nest box in ne. Cor-

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 location.

MEMBERSHIP CORNER

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Lloyd Klemke
Patty Petzel

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

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

EMAIL NOTIFICATIONS REGARDING WEATHER CONDITIONS

We encourage members to contact Karan Fairchild to get on the ASC listserve in order to receive emergency email notifications about meeting cancellations related to weather conditions (as was the case for our December meeting), updated information about ASC events, fieldtrip locations and volunteer work parties. Send an email to our listserve administrator, Karan Fairchild, and request to be added to the listserve: alderspr@peak.org.

HAVE YOU CHANGED YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION?

If you have moved or changed your email or mail address, please send your new contact information to Suzanne Ortiz at ortizsv@gmail.com.

Suzanne Ortiz,
ASC Membership Chair

vallis 6 Mar (Lisa Millbank). Around 13 Mar a sizable flock of bluebirds was behind Linus Pauling School, where bluebirds have used nest boxes in years past (Elsie Eltzroth).

A few **Varied Thrushes** sang on the nw side of downtown Corvallis 1 Mar (Don Boucher). Single birds were also heard on 8 Mar and 21 Mar at Stewart Lake (Jamie Simmons). A single **American Robin** was on the snowy summit of Marys Peak 12 Mar (John Sullivan, Laura Johnson).

Purple Finches began to turn up in nesting habitat by 12 Mar when several sang at Finley NWR (Mary Garrard). A single **Pine Siskin** turned up in the Cheldelin neighborhood 16 Mar (Lisa Millbank).

After being scarce for much of the winter in a residential neighborhood near Teloh-Calapooia Park, **American Goldfinches** began to return with four at a feeder 2 Mar, increasing to twelve by 15 Mar (Jim Smith). A female **Lesser Goldfinch** at Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Park collected spiderwebs to line a nest on the branch of an ash tree 18 Mar (Nancy Stotz).

Reports of **Evening Grosbeaks** have been exceedingly scarce this winter, but on 12 Mar John Sullivan and Laura Johnson found 30 (along with 12 **Red Crossbills**) when they snowshoed to the summit of Marys Peak.

On 1 Mar Lisa Millbank saw a **Nashville Warbler** near Good Samaritan Hospital, near where one was found during the Corvallis Christmas Bird Count. The warbler was associating with a flock of **Gold-en-crowned Kinglets, Chestnut-backed Chickadees, Brown Creepers** and **Red-breasted Nuthatches**. An **Orange-crowned Warbler** foraged high in an ash tree at Luckiamute State Natural Area 20 Mar.

A female **Common Yellowthroat** called at Cabell Marsh 18 Mar (Isaac Denzer). A male sang along the Witham Hill bike path in w. Corvallis 21 Mar (Hendrik Herlyn, Oscar Harper).

A **Yellow-rumped Warbler** (probably of the "Myrtle" subspecies) sang in ne. Corvallis 4 Mar (Lisa Millbank). Two **Townsend's Warblers** were in conifers just e. of the OSU campus along Monroe St. 1 Mar (Don Boucher). One in shrubbery on the south side of Corvallis HS 28 Feb was gleaning and sallying after insects 28 Mar (Rana Foster).

An **American Tree Sparrow** found on the west side of Millersburg 24 Feb (Mark Nikas) was still there along with 12 or more breeding-plumage **Chipping Sparrows** on 25 Feb (Roy Gerig). The Clay-colored Sparrow was reported through 3 Mar (fide eBird).

A **White-crowned Sparrow** singing on 10 Mar was the first one heard this season on their annual "parking lot area" nesting grounds at Hewlett-Packard P (Jamie Simmons). Two **White-throated Sparrows** continued throughout the period in Jamie Simmons' nw Corvallis yard. Another was in Virginia Stanton's yard s. of Philomath 5 Mar.

Most of the **Dark-eyed Juncos** in our area year-round belong to the subspecies known as "**Oregon**" **Junco**, but in winter feeder-watchers sometimes see a few migrant "**Slate-colored**" **Juncos**, from the subspecies that nests in northern forests across the continent, from New England to Alaska. Several "Slate-colored" Juncos were visiting Lisa Millbank's ne Corvallis yard regularly as of 23 Feb, along with a male "**Cassiar's**" **Junco** (an intermediate form between "Oregon" and "Slate-colored" subspecies, which some ornithologists regard as a distinct subspecies while others consider it to be an intergrade form).

Western Meadowlarks sang at the North Prairie 12 Mar (Mary Garrard). One or two continued to sing at Mike and Karen Lippsmeyer's wetland/prairie restoration south of Independence through 22 Mar, after most of their wintering meadowlarks departed. As the population that nests around Basket Slough NWR has benefited from expansion of restored prairie habitat, in recent years there have been more reports of meadowlarks showing up at other Polk County sites south of Dallas.

Male **Brewer's Blackbirds** began to strut and sing in commercial parking lots along 9th St. in nw. Corvallis by the end of the period. A female **Bullock's Oriole** that wintered in the Cheldelin neighborhood of ne Corvallis showed again in Lisa Millbank and Don Boucher's yard on 23 Feb, nearly four weeks after Lisa's last sighting on 17 Jan.

Rough-skinned Newts were seen frequently in forested areas. A **Northwestern Garter Snake** came out to bask in the sunshine in ne. Corvallis 12 Mar (Lisa Millbank).

A **Beaver** along Dunawi Creek in Sunset Park 23 Feb had noticeably orange teeth (Julie Gibson). This characteristic color of teeth in adult beavers results from the iron content in their enamel, which scientists recently determined helps them by preventing tooth decay. A **California Ground Squirrel** ventured out of its burrow 3 Mar (Lisa Millbank).

200 **Roosevelt Elk** grazed in a pasture at OSU's Soap Creek ranch 26 Feb (Rana Foster). Julie Gibson has been seen a **Gray Fox** near the top of Witham Hill after dark in recent weeks.

Next month: Spring migration will be in full swing, with migrant shorebirds, swallows, warblers, swifts, flycatchers and vireos all expected. 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 25 Apr.



COMMUNITY NOTES

OSU BIRD NERDS – COMING EVENTS

Bilingual Nature Walks: Join us on our final family-friendly, bilingual (Spanish and English) nature walks at local refuges. The host is looking for volunteers who could help point out and identify birds for the group during the walk. Volunteers do not necessarily need to be able to speak Spanish. Join us for a morning of birds and outdoor education! All walks are on Saturdays and begin at 10 am:

April 8: Ankeny NWR - auto tour with stops at Eagle Marsh and/or Rail Trail/Marsh Boardwalk (meet at Ankeny Hill Outlook)

April 15: Baskett Slough NWR - Rich Guadagno Memorial Loop Trail (meet at trailhead parking lot)

Please email Mamo at waiuanuhl@oregonstate.edu if you are interested in helping or have questions.

Mamo Waiuanuhea

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON SIGHTINGS OF BANDED OREGON VESPER SPARROWS



Vesper Sparrow photo by Bob Altman

Oregon Vesper Sparrow, the subspecies of Vesper Sparrow that nest in western Oregon and Washington, are being color-banded at various sites around Corvallis and in a few other locations in the Willamette Valley. The study is being done to examine two potential factors that may be contributing to their population declines: 1) survivorship (Are birds returning after their migrations and wintering?), and 2) recruitment and dispersal (Is there movement of birds between local sites, and if so how far and what are the conditions that facilitate that exchange). Knowledge gained from this effort will help to target how and

where to direct conservation actions for recovery.

We would greatly appreciate information on sightings of any color-banded Vesper Sparrows. Each bird has been marked with an aluminum band on the bottom of the right leg and a color-band on the top, along with two color bands on the left leg. The colors being used include red, orange, yellow, green, dark blue, light blue, black, and white.

If you see a color-banded bird please contact Bob Altman, baltman@abcbirds.org, 541-745-5331 or Joel Geier, Joel.Geier@peak.org, 415-868-0655 with as much of the following information as possible: date and location (general site name or specific location or GPS coordinates), and the color band combinations by leg. For example it could be "red over aluminum on the right leg, and yellow over green on the left leg." Even partial information (e.g., only able to see the colors on one leg) can be useful. Thank you in advance for any help.

Bob Altman, American Bird Conservancy

BOARD MEETING SUMMARY

March 9, 2017 ASC Board Meeting, Chris Mathews presided. The board approved the Egner Construction Company's bid to replace Hesthavn Barn roof with metal. The internship program at Willamette NWF complex should begin in April. Mamo Waiuanuhea will be the Bird Nerds representative on the ASC board next year. The Homer Campbell award will be presented to Frances Stilwell. Nominations for next year's ASC officers have been made. The next board meeting will be at Natural Grocers, 1035 NW 10th St, April 13th at 7 pm.

Gail Nickerson, Secretary

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS CHAT

Bill Proebsting, Chris Mathews, Karan Fairchild, Jim Fairchild, Suzanne Ortiz, Ray Drapek, Joel Geier, Mamo Waiuanuhea, Teri Engbring, Naomi Weidner, Gail Nickerson, Bob Altman, Don Boucher, Linda Campbell

CHAT ARTICLES

The Chat editors, Teri Engbring and Naomi Weidner, welcome articles from all members of the Audubon Society of Corvallis. Please submit articles to the Chat editor by the fourth Thursday of the month. Submit text using Microsoft Word and photos to: chateditors@gmail.com

AUDUBON SOCIETY OF CORVALLIS



Cooper's Hawk photo by Matt Lee

CALENDAR

Apr 8	Field trip-EE Wilson State Wildlife Area
Apr 13	ASC Board Meeting, 7 pm, Natural Grocers
Apr 15	Bird Nerds Walk at Baskett Slough NWR
Apr 16	Work Party at Hesthavn, 10 am-2 pm
Apr 20	ASC General Meeting at Chintimini Sr Ctr
Apr 23	Work Party at Hesthavn, 10 am-2 pm
Apr 25	Field Notes submissions due
Apr 27	May CHAT submissions due (no June issue)
May 13	Field trip-Finley NWR

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; \$150 for Patron Level; and \$250 for Benefactor Level.

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

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

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