



THE CHAT

APRIL 2018

VOL. 47 #8

ASC General Meeting

**Third Thursdays at Chintimini Senior Ctr:
2601 NW Tyler Ave (& 27th) in Corvallis
Next Meeting: Thurs., Apr. 19, 2018, 7-8:30 pm**

April 19, 2018 Program

Joan Hagar, The role of disturbance in maintaining biodiversity in Pacific NW forests

Wildlife in forests of the Pacific Northwest have evolved with naturally occurring disturbances such as fire, wind, flood, insects, and disease. By reducing overstory canopy cover, these disturbances temporarily change the forest environment, creating early seral vegetation communities that produce food, shelter, and nesting resources for a rich diversity of native wildlife species. Joan will describe the importance of post-disturbance habitats to forest birds, and discuss the role of forest management in maintaining elements of critical habitat for species that depend on a renewal process triggered by disturbance.

Joan Hagar is a Research Wildlife Biologist for the US Geological Survey, at the Forest & Rangeland Ecosystem Science Center in Corvallis, OR. Her research program broadly addresses the effects of natural disturbance and management strategies on biodiversity, with the goal of providing a scientific basis for management of wildlife and habitat. Forest songbirds are her favorite research subject, but she has also studied arthropods, amphibians, bats, pikas, pygmy rabbits, and flying squirrels.

Doors open at 6:30 pm for refreshments and visiting. The chapter meeting commences at 7:00 pm, followed by Joan's presentation at 7:30.

Final 2017- 8 Program Year Speaker:

May 17: Rich Hoyer, Polyglottal Passerines – Mimicry Is Not Just For Mockingbirds

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

ASC General Meetings

**Third Thursdays at Chintimini Senior Ctr:
September – May
2601 NW Tyler Ave (& 27th) in Corvallis**

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Field Trip Schedule

Half-Day Birding Trips

Our Saturday morning local field trips meet the second Saturday from September through June at the Benton Center (756 NW Polk) parking area, behind the Samaritan Square Buildings, 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/mail-list/ORS>, 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 trip: April 14, Kendall Natural Area-Willamette Park. We will explore the riparian habitat between the boat ramp and Willamette Park. Chance of some early migrants. Level walking, but probably some mud.

Bill Proebsting

Weekend Field Trips

There are still a couple of openings for our trip to the Klamath Basin on April 13-15. See last month's CHAT for details. Grab a slot by emailing flramsey5@comcast.net.

Later in April, ASC visits the Rogue River Valley.

FRIDAY (4/27): We meet at the Benton County Fairgrounds and head south. We make a quick stop for American Bitterns along Bruce Road at Finley refuge, then take Territorial Highway south from Monroe to Fern Ridge reservoir. We continue on Territorial Highway to Drain and meet I-5 at Yoncalla. Leaving I-5 at Wolf Creek, we follow Grave Creek over to the Rogue River, hoping to find the brilliant Red Larkspur in blossom. We expect to arrive in Ashland around 5 pm and check in to Econolodge. We then have a Mexican dinner before enjoying the Oregon Shakespeare Festival's performance of *Sense and Sensibility*, a stage adaptation of Jane Austen's classic novel.

SATURDAY (4/28): The morning's activity is to hike up and down Upper Table Rock, where we expect to find chaparral species: Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Oak Titmouse, California Towhee, and more. Upper Table Rock has a

wonderful explosion of wildflowers. Back down, we go to Tou Velle State Park for lunch with the Acorn Woodpeckers. Then we head up into the Cascades to search for mountain birds including – maybe? – Great Gray Owl. We get back to our motel before 5:00 pm, clean up and rest before we have an Indian dinner.

SUNDAY (4/29): Another morning hike, along the Ashland-Talent bike path bordering Bear Creek. The song-bird migration will have begun, with warblers, vireos, tanagers, grosbeaks, and more. Then we head north, making a stop or six, getting back to Corvallis around 7:00-8:00 pm.

There are also openings on this trip. For later trips [starting with Malheur], there will be signup sheets at ASC general meetings. Or you can sign up by email.

The remaining 2018 weekend trips are:

Klamath Basin	April 13-15	Fri-Sun
Rogue Valley	April 27-29	Fri-Sun
Malheur NWR	May 22-25	Tue-Fri
Summer Lake	June 15-17	Fri-Sun
Steens Mountain	August 16-19	Thu-Sun
South Coast	September 1-3	Sat-Mon

Fred Ramsey

President's Corner

The Impact of ASC's Education/Outreach

With support of our membership, ASC runs many programs of value both to our members and the public, including (but not limited to) our monthly chapter programs, the Chat you are reading now, our multi-day and half-day birding trips, our participation in the Christmas bird count, our development of the Hesthavn Nature Center, and our contributions to the Corvallis Sustainability Coalition.

However, none of these programs reaches as many members of the general public as does our Education and Outreach program. Nowhere was this more dramatically demonstrated than on March 10, at the Winter Wildlife Field Day, presented for its fourth year, at Finley Wildlife Refuge. About one hundred volunteers greeted an estimated eight hundred visitors to a program consisting of a dozen wildlife-themed games and demonstrations. Participation was nearly double the 2017 total, attesting to the essentiality of planning and publicity. Of great importance was the diversity among those enjoying the field day; refuge staff reported hearing five different languages spoken.

Space doesn't permit thanks to all the organizers and volunteers. However, I must acknowledge the efforts of the two dozen members of the planning committee, led by the three-member steering committee. Those three members include Samantha Bartling, representing the Refuge; Mamo Waiianuhea, representing Bird Nerds and ASC; and Teri Engbring, representing ASC. Mamo will be graduating from OSU, but we are already eager to see what Teri and Sam will do for an encore next March.

Chris Mathews, Chapter President

Education News

Winter Wildlife Field Day was HUGE

With the full cooperation of Mother Nature on a mild, dry winter day, guests poured into the Finley National Wildlife Refuge by the hundreds (over 800 actually) for our fourth annual exploration of Nature. We had 11 hands-on learning stations covering a wide range of information and activities, something for everyone.

We SO appreciate the 100 dedicated, skilled and enthusiastic volunteers who made it all happen. Some have put in hundreds of hours in planning and preparation over the last six months! I wish we had room to name each wonderful individual, but this is a full newsletter! All I can say is thanks to each of you and hope you feel sincerely appreciated for your help and contributions. What an impact you made!

Thanks also to our wonderful US Fish and Wildlife Service partners at Finley, especially hard-working, always smiling Visitor Services Manager Samantha Bartling and our supportive refuge complex Project Leader Damien Miller.

Big thanks to local groups who have partnered with us all four years: OSU Bird Nerds, Friends of Willamette Valley National Wildlife Refuge Complex, Chintimini Wildlife Center, and Starker Forests, Inc. We have also enjoyed key vehicle parking help for our two biggest years from Albany Boy Scout Troop 365.

We also welcomed several new partner organizations at the event this year: Oregon State University Extension Service, 4H, OSU Society of American Foresters, and the Benton Soil and Water Conservation District.

We also want to thank Corvallis businesses that donated supplies and materials for the day's activities: Wild Birds Unlimited, Winco, Bi-Mart and Wilco.

We have already had a debriefing meeting with key volunteers and are open to all feedback that will help us



do an even better job next year! We have several intrepid volunteers who have offered to help on the 2019 WWFD, but we'll take a break first and start on that in September. Thanks to the ASC leadership and members for their unwavering support of our big event.

Teri Engbring, ASC Education Team

Hesthavn News

Check out Eggs and Chicks at Hesthavn this spring!

Prepare yourself for Cuteness! Hesthavn Nature Center's April activity is "eggs and chicks!" Yes, bouncing baby birdlings – both in their 'jewel boxes' and busting out! We plan a take-home activity, an experiment in eggshell strength, a matching game and lots of other things to do for 'nestling' humans and their cool flock of adults. As always, the stunning collections of Corvallis Audubon's own facility will be opened to amaze and instruct, and the surrounding beautiful grounds will beckon the explorer. Join us on Sunday, April 22, from 1:00 to 3:00 pm. for the splendor of "Bird-lings in Our Backyard: Eggs, Chicks and the Value of Being Cute." It's free and interesting for all ages. See for yourself: even vultures can be adorable!

*Dale and Valerie Mitchell,
ASC Education Team members*

Hesthavn April work parties:

Sunday April 1, 10 am to 2 pm – Barn and yard work party.

Sunday April 15, 10 am to 2 pm – Invasive weed control.

False Brome will probably be the focus.

If you would like to help us care for the trails, meadows, trees, bird food and homes, and buildings of Audubon's Nature Center, on Oak Creek, please contact Hesthavn Chair, Ray Drapek, at raydrapek@gmail.com, to volunteer.

Ray Drapek, Hesthavn Chair

Birdathon Time!

Birdathon 2018 is set for the weekend of April 28 and 29.

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. Last year we got a much needed new roof on the barn!

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 28 and 29 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

2018 Homer Campbell Award Given to Bob Altman

Bob Altman has worked for decades on the conservation of birds across the Pacific Northwest, with particular attention to species inhabiting grasslands and oak woodlands in western Oregon and Washington.

He was the first to spotlight the decline of Western Meadowlarks, Horned Larks, Vesper Sparrows, White-breasted Nuthatches, and Chipping Sparrows. He organized and conducted a survey of grassland bird species that is now a standard reference for researchers and conservationists working on these species. He initiated and coordinated a large number of bird conservation projects, a few of these include: reintroduction of Western Bluebirds to the San Juan Islands; a Lewis's Woodpecker nestbox project; a Black Swift waterfall nest survey from northern California to central Alaska; a population survey of the local Slender-billed subspecies of White-breasted Nuthatch in oak woodlands of western Oregon; and Flammulated Owl conservation in the East Cascades and Ochoco Mountains region. His work, both research and advocacy, was a primary force behind the federal government's decisions in 2001 to make the Streaked Horned Lark, a subspecies native to the Pacific Northwest, a candidate for listing under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), and in 2013 to list it as Threatened. He has continued work to revise the listing to Endangered, which would provide even greater protection for the lark. He has worked similarly for the Oregon Vesper Sparrow, crafting the recent petition by the American Bird Conservancy to list it as Endangered under the ESA. In the Corvallis area, he has worked with Greenbelt Land Trust and other organizations on the restoration of oak woodland and grassland habitat.

Bob has also brought together non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and government agencies to cooperate on conservation projects. For instance, he worked on Washington-Oregon Partners in Flight to enable cooperation between NGOs – including regional Audubon societies, Oregon Field Ornithologists, and the Klamath Bird Observatory – and government agencies including US Fish and Wildlife, the US Forest Service, and both the Oregon and Washington

Departments of Fish and Wildlife.

Bob has also worked proactively to engage landowners in conservation. Recently he contacted landowners and pushed for an initial biological assessment that led to a permanent conservation easement on a property in Lane County of 1200+ acres with high-quality oak savanna and woodland. This property hosts the largest known remaining population of Oregon Vesper Sparrows in the Willamette Valley.

He has also promoted birds and bird-watching to the public. For instance, his leadership helped launch the Oregon Cascades Birding Trail. This effort not only brought together conservation groups and regional tourism agencies to work toward sustainable ecotourism in Oregon, but also inspired the creation of a still-growing list of birding trails across the state.

For these reasons and others too numerous to list, the Audubon Society of Corvallis is honored to name Bob Altman as the recipient of the 2018 Homer Campbell Conservation Award.

Joel Geier and Dave Mellinger

And thanks to Rana Foster for nominating this year's awardee, as well as her many other contributions to ASC and the Homer Campbell Conservation Award process over the years.

Conservation Update

As I wrote this, another budget bill loomed with threat of yet another government shut-down. It passed and was signed this week, but it was due 7 months ago in September. Now these recurring "must pass" appropriations bills hold hostage dozens of unrelated "wants" bills that could not otherwise see the light of day. Beside the hot political fireballs of border walls and military spending that have huge environmental effects, Pacific Northwest "wants" include disaster funding for fighting catastrophic wildfire, exemptions to endangered species protections and to public scrutiny of multi-thousand acre timber sales.

In the only slightly longer timeframe, assaults on North American nature (including weakening clean air, water and wildlife laws) continue – callously and without mercy. Exemptions for a host of development means and methods are sought, and public lands and resources are pushed towards the auction block.

*The law locks up the man or woman
Who steals the goose off the common
But leaves the greater villain loose
Who steals the common from the goose.*

(From a 17th century English rhyme)

While we have legal remedy in relatively neutral courts, I'm grateful that a federal district court in Alaska rejected a Trump administration executive order lifting a permanent ban on off-shore oil drilling in Alaska and the Atlantic. And Oregon Governor Brown is becoming more environmentally protective, along with other west coast states, in protecting natural resources from extractive interests with the ear of powers in D.C.

I'm also grateful that our federal representatives still listen to their constituents. I urge you to contact yours – early and often!

Jim Fairchild, Conservation Chair

Field Notes

02/26/18-03/22/18

After a remarkably mild winter, March brought a return to more seasonally typical weather, which for March means cool and wet weather. Occasional frosty mornings didn't deter early blooming native shrubs such as **red-flowering currant, osoberry** (also known as Indian-plum), and **tall Oregon-grape** which were all blooming in Corvallis by 14 Mar (Lisa Millbank). Wildflowers blooming along the Old Growth Trail in McDonald Forest during a Neighborhood Naturalist Adventure 18 Mar included **slender toothwort (*Cardamine nuttallii*)**, **snow queen (*Synthyris reniformis*)**, **yellow stream violet (*Viola glabella*)**, and **western trillium (*Trillium ovatum*)**.

Abbreviations and locations: NWR = National Wildlife Refuge, STP = sewage treatment ponds. 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. Stewart Lake is a pond on the Hewlett-Packard (HP) campus; access is restricted to HP employees or accompanied visitors. Cabell Marsh, McFadden Marsh, and North Prairie are locations at Finley NWR.

Observations:

An apparent **Ross's Goose** was with a flock of Cackling Geese and a few "**Dusky**" **Canada Geese** s. of Independence 11 Mar (Mike Lippsmeyer).

Five **Wood Ducks** swam in a flooded ash swale at Sunset Park 16 Mar (Don Boucher). A female **Blue-winged Teal** continued at Talking Water Gardens through 17 Mar (Kaplan Yalcin).

Two male **Cinnamon Teal** at Finley NWR 4 Mar (Rana Foster) might represent arrival of spring migrants. Although small numbers of this species now winter regularly in our area, often taking advantage of sites with artificial warm-water input from industrial or municipal water-treatment systems, most of the ones that nest here spend winter in California or farther south.

Two male **Eurasian Wigeons** visited a pond off Talmadge Rd. s. of Independence 4 Mar (Mike Lippsmeyer). Two female **Greater Scaup** were at the Philomath STP 9 Mar (Russ Namitz). On 17 Mar a **Redhead**, a **Canvasback**, 25 **Lesser Scaup** and 45 **Ruddy Ducks** were on a flooded quarry off Eicher Rd. e. of Albany (Kai Frueh and others).

On 2 Mar a pair of **Hooded Mergansers** turned up on a small pond at the Stoneybrook Assisted Living community, where a pair of **Ring-necked Ducks** were also regular through the period (Julie Gibson). Five **Common Mergansers** swam on the Willamette in downtown Corvallis 22 Mar (Don Boucher).

Two **Trumpeter Swans** were still with a large flock of **Tundra Swans** near Halsey 6 Mar (Craig Tumer). Flocks of 15 to 20 Trumpeter Swans were noted near Airlie and on Cabell Marsh earlier this winter (Deanna Emig; Hendrik Herlyn), with small numbers continuing near Airlie through 15 Mar. Two "**Bewick's**" **Tundra Swans** continued through 8 Mar with a flock of over 800 "**Whistling**" **Tundra Swans** near Halsey (Deanna Emig).

About 200 **Wild Turkeys** along Soap Creek Rd. on 10 Mar included many amorous displaying males (Robert Hunter). One wonders how many will be there next year, as this introduced game species continues to expand its numbers in our area.

On 17 Mar a **Clark's Grebe** turned up along with a **Western Grebe** on the Eicher Rd. quarry pond (Ben Frueh and others). Both grebes continued to be seen there through 21 Mar (Deanna Emig; Kaplan Yalcin). Clark's Grebes were regarded as conspecific with Western Grebes until 1985, and wintering birds can be challenging to separate, so data on their occurrence in our region is still sparse. However from recent years' data they seem to be at least annual in the Corvallis-Albany area.



Rufous Hummingbirds continued to arrive. Early reports included single males s. and sw. of Philomath 28 Feb and 1 Mar (Virginia Stanton; Karan Fairchild) and near Lewisburg 11 Mar (John Tietjen, Pat Cummins). One in ne. Corvallis investigated a bright-orange shop vacuum, before whirring away in search of smaller but honest-to-goodness flowers (Lisa Millbank).

Meanwhile **Anna's Hummingbirds** were busy nesting. In NW Corvallis a female collected cattail fluff for a presumed nest in NW Corvallis 24 Feb, and a female in another location brooded and fed young in a nest 25 ft up in a cedar on 3 Mar; by 17 Mar one nestling was practicing wing flaps at close to adult speed (Nancy Stotz). Another nest s. of Independence had two nestlings by 8 Mar (fide Karen & Mike Lippmeyer).

A lone **Sandhill Crane** flew over the North Prairie 12 Mar (Paul Rentz). An **American Coot** at Stewart Lake was also on its own 19-22 Mar; Jamie Simmons notes that the flocks that sometimes numbered as high as 70 in the prior century have been replaced by just occasional, lone coots in recent years.

A flock of 500 **Dunlin** at Baskett Slough NWR 2 Mar included a few that were beginning to transition to breeding plumage (Frank Kolwicz).

A **Red-throated Loon** turned up on a flooded former gravel quarry along Eicher Rd. e. of Albany 13-20 Mar (Nathan Anderson; Hendrik Herlyn).

One to two **Double-crested Cormorants** were seen regularly at Stewart Lake through the period. Jamie Simmons notes that in decades past, cormorants only turned up there during high-water events when muddy water made it more difficult for them to catch fish in the Willamette, but recently they've been more regular on this pond. **American White Pelicans** were noted frequently at Cabell Marsh including two there 6 Mar (Mark Baldwin) and eleven there 11 Mar (Erik Knight). This species now winters at Fern Ridge Reservoir near Eugene, so occurrences in our area may be wanderers from that flock.

A **Green Heron** was hunched along the shore of Waverly Pond in Albany 27 Feb (Paul Adamus). A **Great Egret** hunting in a meadow along Conser St. in NE Corvallis on 22 Mar was sporting breeding plumes (Don Boucher). This species was known as the "Common Egret" before its population was decimated by hunters seeking plumes for feathered hats in the late 19th century. A boycott initiated by Harriet Hemenway and Minna Hall of Boston in 1896 led to the founding of the Audubon Society and later passage of the Migratory Bird Treat Act of 1918. A full century later, with that legislation under attack in Washington, D.C., this article from Smithsonian Magazine provides interesting reading: www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/how-two-women-ended-the-deadly-feather-trade-23187277/

On 10 Mar more than 20 **Great Blue Herons** flew in to perch in conifers where they've nested in recent years on the south side of Coffin Butte Regional Landfill. As **Bald Eagle** numbers continue to recover, herons seem to have abandoned some relatively exposed nesting locations along the main rivers, in favor of conifer groves that offer more protection from avian predators.

Turkey Vultures continued to arrive and were a regular sight by the end of the period. An **Osprey** was along Buena Vista Rd. just south of Independence 13 Mar (Deanna Emig). A few now winter regularly in the southern Willamette Valley, sometimes ranging north in search of better conditions for fishing, but this one was near a nest so may have been a returning migrant.

A strikingly pale (leucistic) male **Northern Harrier** wintering off Robison Rd. north of Coffin Butte was still there 20 Mar. Five harriers took turns harassing each other in apparent mating-related interactions at the North Prairie 21 Mar (Steve Harder).

At least one **White-tailed Kite** was seen frequently at the North Prairie overlook through the period. On the evening of 26 Feb, Jacob Mathison saw two kites flying west from Finley NWR,

possibly heading for a nearby ridge where kites have roosted in years past. On 10 Mar one flew over Refuge Rd. near the oak savanna overlook, perhaps also heading for a roost (Paul & Shawn Jacobsen). A pair of kites in the Maple Grove area n. of Airlie 17 Mar were seen copulating on 18 Mar (Roy Gerig; Bill Tice), in the same location where breeding was suspected two decades ago.

A **Bald Eagle** nest on the east bank of the Willamette River opposite the Hewlett-Packard campus was occupied on 22 Mar (Don Boucher).

Three eagles found dead near Tangent on 16 Mar may have been shot, according to Oregon State Patrol officers who investigated. A more positive example of human behavior toward eagles was provided by staff of Van Duzer Winery near Baskett Slough NWR, who stopped traffic to protect an injured Bald Eagle along Smithfield Rd. and fetched a dog carrier to take the eagle to a wildlife rehabilitation clinic.

A pair of **Red-shouldered Hawks** called near Woodpecker Loop, a dark-morph **Rough-legged Hawk** continued at the North Prairie, and an immature **Golden Eagle** soared north over Finley NWR 4 Mar (Don Boucher, Suzanne Ortiz, Phyllis Bailey). Likely the same **Golden Eagle** soared and perched near McFadden Marsh 6-7 Mar (Lars Norgren; Paul Rentz).

On 14 Mar Nancy Stotz saw a **Red-tailed Hawk** carry a prey item into the same tree where she had noticed a pair building a nest on 25 Dec.

On 13 Mar a **Barn Owl** called close enough to Jamie Simmons' nw. Corvallis house that he heard it from inside the house, then again when he went outside. A **Barred Owl** "sang" at mid-day near E.E. Wilson Wildlife Area 15 Mar. Three **Short-eared Owls** hunted over a perennial grass field along Davis Rd. sw. of Tangent on the evening of 21 Mar (Jeff Fleischer).

Lewis's Woodpeckers were reported from near Washburn Butte n. of Brownsville 5 Mar (Tom Snetsinger), and regularly through the period at the Finley NWR savanna overlook. An oak grove that has hosted **Acorn Woodpeckers** near Buena Vista for many years was bulldozed near the end of the period (Danny Jaffer). A **Pileated Woodpecker** visited a Peoria yard 14 Mar (Greg Metcalfe).

A **Merlin** visited Kris Ebbe's s. Corvallis yard 15 Mar. **American Kestrels** continued to pair up as nesting season approaches.

A **Say's Phoebe** sallied after flying insects at the Fairview Cemetery sw. of Mill City 9 Mar (Linda & Johnny Fink). Another caught insects along a fenceline near Washburn Butte 9 Mar (Tom Snetsinger). One continuing at at Finley NWR headquarters continued at least through 6 Mar.

Two **Black Phoebes** were flycatching at the Corvallis water treatment plant south of Willamette Park 10 Mar (Rana Foster). One that wintered at Stewart Lake was last noted there 7 Mar (Jamie Simmons).

A **Hutton's Vireo** sang in our backyard near E.E. Wilson Wildlife Area 15 Mar.

A family of **Gray Jays** were in the Lewisburg Saddle area of McDonald Forest during the Naturalist Adventure there 18 Mar (Don Boucher).

Common Ravens seem to be showing up in Corvallis more often, despite harassment by the resident **American Crows**. On 3 Mar two crows pestered a raven over the 9th St/Circle neighborhood, and on 11 Mar crows dove at a raven perched near Kings Blvd and Buchanan Ave (Richard F. Hoyer). Jamie Simmons also noticed an up-tick in ravens over north Corvallis, with a total of seven sightings between nw. Corvallis and Stewart Lake.

A lone **Barn Swallow** spending late winter north of the typical range continued to be seen at Talking Water Gardens

through 7 Mar (Craig Tumer). A few **Violet-green Swallows** showed up in Corvallis 11 Mar (Don Boucher; Hendrik Herlyn) with more in nw. Corvallis and in s. Albany 12 Mar (Jamie Simmons; Jim Smith). Migrant flocks of **Tree Swallow** were noted through the period.

White-breasted Nuthatches began investigating nest boxes near Crabtree by 17 Mar (Jeff Harding). A **Brown Creeper** was in the picnic area at Willamette Park 10 Mar (Rana Foster). **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** were singing frequently by 15 Mar.

Western Bluebirds were noted frequently through the period around Corvallis. A **Varied Thrush** sang as snowflakes fell in Corvallis 27 Feb (Delores Porch).

Dozens of **Pine Siskins** sang, called, and buzzed in elms near the Corvallis-Benton County Library 10 Mar (Mary Garrard). More than 50 flocked to feeders near Teloh-Calapooia Park 20 Mar (Jim Smith). Reports of goldfinches were generally sparse, but one or two **American Goldfinches** were noted occasionally at Stewart Lake (Jamie Simmons) and eight **Lesser Goldfinches** turned up in s. Albany 15 Mar (Jim Smith). **Evening Grosbeaks** were noted occasionally around town in the first half of March (Jamie Simmons; Lisa Millbank).

A wintering **Nashville Warbler** showed up again at Jed Irvine's nw. Corvallis feeder on 10 Mar, after going undetected for several weeks. A male **Common Yellowthroat** at Cheadle Lake 4 Mar (Jeff Harding) may have been a wintering bird.

An early migrant **Chipping Sparrow** turned up in nw Corvallis 11 Mar (Jamie Simmons). A few wintering **White-throated Sparrows** continued through the period. **Golden-crowned Sparrow** flocks also continued, with many transitioning into spiffy breeding plumage by the end of the period.

Dark-eyed Juncos were heard singing on sunny days through the period. Most of our wintering juncos are from the western "Oregon" subspecies, which also nests here. This winter seemed to produced fewer reports of "Slate-colored" Juncos (the eastern subspecies) than usual. However there were a few reports of "Cassiar" Juncos, an intermediate form that some experts consider to be a distinct subspecies, while others regard as an intergrade between "Oregon" and Slate-colored" occurring where the breeding ranges of these subspecies overlap in Alberta. A male "Cassiar" Junco wintering in Jamie Simmons' nw Corvallis yard was last seen 11 Mar.

A **Western Meadowlark** sang at Baskett Slough NWR 26 Feb, just s. of Baskett Butte which hosts one of the most robust local surviving populations of our state bird. On 20 Mar two male meadowlarks sang and patrolled territories at the Camp Adair rifle range, another place where this species still nests.

Participants in the Naturalist Adventure to McDonald Forest 18 Mar noted many **Rough-skinned Newts** breeding in a quarry pond, then watched a **Coast Mole** working near the surface emerge briefly to nab and eat a spider. Around dawn that morning, a **Common Gray Fox** was spotted near Good Samaritan Hospital (Don Boucher, Lisa Millbank).

Next month: Spring migration of neotropical migrants will be in full swing, with an abundance of vireos, warblers and other migrant songbirds. 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**.

Community Notes

Malheur Field Station Crisis

The idea of the Audubon Society of Corvallis (ASC) was born at Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. In 1970, five Corvallis bird enthusiasts ventured to the refuge for a full weekend. On their return, they decided to create an organization that would enable others to learn about the wonders of the high desert ... and about other Oregon birding hotspots. (They also brought back Jan Small's new station wagon full of high desert dust.)

A Job Corps center was built on the refuge and in 1985 turned over the Great Basin Society (GBS) as an educational facility sponsored by a consortium of universities: the Malheur Field Station (MFS). Since that time, ASC has lodged at the field station on all its trips to the desert. Audubon Societies throughout Oregon, school groups, and Road Scholars also visit MFS regularly. It provides, lodging, meals, and a wide variety of educational programs.

As we prepare for our visit in May, we have learned that the water system at the field station has failed and needs total replacement. It is a tough environment, as visitors know well. A preliminary estimate of the cost: \$257,000. Without major contributions, MFS may be lost.

The university consortium has long since dissolved, and MFS has limped along on user fees and individual contributions. ASC now plans to contribute toward a new water system. Please join the effort by making whatever individual contributions you can muster for the new water system. Checks should be made out to and sent to, either ASC at P.O. Box 148, Corvallis, OR 97339; or directly to MFS at 24848 Sodhouse Lane, Princeton, OR 97721. Time is crucial, as the high season comes soon. If you cannot contribute now, but may in the future, send a pledge. Send it to malheurfieldstation@gmail.com.

Fred Ramsey

Woodpecker Fest in Sisters

Check out the 8th Annual Dean Hale Woodpecker Festival in Sisters, Oregon from May 31 – June 3. Festival participants have a choice of 20-guided tours in search of 11 different species of woodpeckers and 200 other birds that make central Oregon a birding hot spot. Sponsored by East Cascades Audubon Society, this festival offers a fun, friendly, casual atmosphere that is all about the birds. The trips are affordable and guided by two local volunteers with the proceeds supporting the many ECAS projects and programs fostering bird conservation.

Online registration opens April 2 at 9 am PDT and more information is on the website at: <http://www.ecaudubon.org/dean-hale-woodpecker-festival>. You can email questions to dhwf2018@gmail.com. Trips fill quickly.

Diana Roberts, East Cascades Audubon Society

Let's Hear it for the Birds – OWLS

Yet another vote for the immense value of birds is a topic in a recent NATURE Journal article. The focus was on the use of Barn Owls as natural rodent controls instead of the use of rodenticides in Middle Eastern farms and orchards. The use of birds as biological controls isn't new. But with widespread use of pesticides, the field called "economic ornithology" got less attention.

Now, the practice is being revived, although more "robust



data on the use of owls to control rodents" is needed. Owls are being used in many places: Malaysia, Spain, Argentina, and California.

A memorable quote: "Birds have the power to bring people together because they know no boundaries." Yossi Leshem, Tel Aviv University

From an article: Owls for Peace, Nature, February 1, 2018, Vol. 554, No. 7690, pp 22-23

Andrea and Greg Foster

OSU Bird Nerds

The Oregon State University Bird Nerds will be hosting its third annual Birdathon on May 12th, 2018. Join the competition in teams of 3 to see the most species of birds in a 24-hour period while raising money for the club and for charity! 25% of the funds raised will be presented to Greenbelt Land Trust. The rest will go towards funding educational OSU Bird Nerds trips and events in the future. The team with the most species detected will earn major bragging rights, a trophy, and free Bird Nerds hats and highlighters! Please contact Andrew Stokes to join the competition, pledge/donate, or with any questions you may have.

Andrew Stokes, stokeand@oregonstate.edu

Board Meeting Summary

Summary of March 2018 ASC Board Meeting

1. The Board voted unanimously to accept the nominee recommended by the Homer Campbell Award committee, Bob Altman.
 2. Nominations for most of next year's officers and board members have been secured and will be announced in the May CHAT.
 3. A new projector has been purchased which will make images brighter & sharper for presentations at Chapter meetings & elsewhere.
 4. The Board voted unanimously to sign on to a Portland Audubon letter opposing any drilling off Oregon's coast.
 5. The internship program sponsored by ASC at Finley Wildlife Refuge has been postponed for another year.
- Next Board meeting at 7 pm, April 12 at Natural Grocers, 1235 NW 10th Street.

Linda Campbell, Board Secretary

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 Board meeting minutes for location.

Membership Corner

Welcome New Members!

Steven Brooks
Leah DeMers
Debra Garley
Caroline Siegel

Membership Renewal

To renew your membership online, go to the ASC website (<http://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 to receive emergency email notifications about meeting cancellations related to weather, 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](mailto: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

Contributors to this Chat

Bill Proebsting, Chris Mathews, Fred Ramsey, Jim Fairchild, Karan Fairchild, Joel Geier, Dave Mellinger, Suzanne Ortiz, Teri Engbring, Naomi Weidner, Linda Campbell, Ray Drapek, Valerie & Dale Mitchell, Andrew Stokes, Andrea & Greg Foster, and Don Boucher

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

Calendar

Apr 1	Hesthavn Barn & Yard Work Party, 10-2
Apr 12	
Apr 14	Second Sat Field Trip to Kendall NA, 7:30 am
Apr 15	Hesthavn Work Party, 10-2
Apr 19	ASC General Meeting at Chintimini Sr Ctr
Apr 26	May CHAT stories & Field Notes submissions due
Apr 28-29	ASC Birdathon weekend

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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CorvallisAudubon

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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