



Audubon Society of Corvallis *the* **CHAT**

Summer 2003

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#10

Ready for West Nile Virus?

Among visitors expected in Oregon this summer, those least welcome are mosquitoes carrying West Nile Virus (WNV). This virus has been spreading west rapidly, helped along by the wings of birds it infects. State health officials expect the virus to reach Oregon soon, possibly this summer.

The virus infects many species of birds, but crows, jays and their relatives seem to be most susceptible. Mammals – including humans – can be infected when mosquitoes pass on the virus after biting infected birds. Hence public health officials are on the lookout for the first signs of WNV in our area.

The risk to humans is small. Last year WNV was blamed for 284 deaths in the U.S. This compares with, for example, 32,000 deaths from influenza (the common flu) last year, or 400,000 deaths from tobacco-related illnesses. Horses can also be infected, but an effective vaccine for horses is now available.

Most people who are unlucky enough to be bitten by an infected mosquito will notice no symptoms at all. About 1 in 10 may develop flu-like symptoms. About 1 in 150 can develop encephalitis or meningitis, which can be fatal in about 10% of cases (most often among people of advanced age, or with depressed immune systems).

What can you do?

Protect yourself and your family from mosquito bites. Fewer bites equals less risk of WNV infection. Besides, who likes mosquito bites?

Fix those window screens and broken tent zippers. If you need to be outside between dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are active, protect yourself with long sleeves, pants, and repellents.

Officials recommend repellents based on DEET as the most effective, but the higher-concentration formulations are not recommended for children. Natural repellents based on citronella and cedar-oil are available at the Co-op.

Protect your neighbors by getting rid of standing water where mosquito larvae develop. Stagnant water in open containers, old tires and the like is prime habitat for one of the three mosquito species most likely to spread WNV in Oregon (Did you know we have 45 species of mosquitoes?).

Looking in a greenhouse the other day, one of us discovered hundreds of mosquito larvae in a water-filled bucket. We dumped it out.

If you have a bird bath, change the water regularly. For ponds, add a pump or waterfall to keep the water moving, or stock it with fish that will gobble up mosquito larvae – but avoid exotic species that might escape into natural waterways!

Do your part to promote natural predators of mosquitoes! Bats, swallows, swifts, and dragonflies are all voracious mosquito-eaters. See the next page for more information.

Help our health officials by watching for dead birds that might serve as warning when the virus arrives in our area. Since tests for WNV are expensive, only corvids (crows, jays, ravens, and magpies) will be tested, and only if multiple dead birds are found in one area within a few days. If you find a dead corvid, contact your county health department for advice.

Most dead birds you see will not be victims of WNV.

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**Next General Meeting is September 18
No Chat issue in August**

West Nile Virus

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A New York state pathologist's study of dead birds, for which WNV had been suspected, found that most of the birds actually died from pesticides! Also, songbirds that flock to feeders are prone to other communicable diseases such as avian pox. See the web links for information on how to recognize common bird diseases.

Mosquito control plans

If an outbreak of WNV does occur in our area, county officials may consider active mosquito control measures. Current plans favor limited use of biological controls (natural-occurring soil bacteria) that specifically target mosquito larvae at known breeding sites.

However, we can expect that some members of the public will call for more chemical spraying programs to kill adult mosquitoes, even if there is no solid evidence that these are effective in combatting WNV.

If it comes to that, we should remind our neighbors that chemical control measures may create worse problems, in the long run, by disrupting nature's own controls on mosquito populations: healthy wetlands and winged mosquito predators.

One of our most effective mosquito predators, the Common Nighthawk, has nearly disappeared from the Willamette Valley. Ornithologists speculate that use of insecticides to control mosquitoes was one factor in their decline.

Information on West Nile Virus:

Local health department contacts for reporting dead birds:

- Benton County 766-6841
- Linn County: 967-3821

General information about WNV:

www.ohd.hr.state.or.us/acd/w Nile

www.cce.cornell.edu/erie/wnv.html

www.audubon.org/bird/wnv/index.html

Common bird diseases:

birds.cornell.edu/cfw/challenges/bird_diseases.html

Oregon's WNV Response Plan:

www.dhs.state.or.us/publichealth/acd/w Nile

Help Mosquito Predators

You can reduce your exposure to mosquitoes that might carry West Nile Virus, by encouraging mosquito predators to stay around your home.

Swifts: If you have an unlined brick chimney that attracts Vaux's Swifts, you'll be happy to know that a nesting pair will feed over 150,000 flying insects — including many mosquitoes — to their brood by the time they fledge. But be sure any chimneys connecting to stoves or furnaces are screened off, if you use these during swift season (April-October).

Swallows: All species of swallows feed on flying

insects, including mosquitoes. Purple Martins, Violet-green Swallows and Tree Swallows will readily nest in boxes. All Barn Swallows and Cliff Swallows ask is to be left alone, if they decide to nest under your eaves.

Bats: While swifts and swallows sleep, bats patrol through the night. A single Little Brown Bat given refuge in your attic — or in a simple-to-build bat box — can gobble up hundreds of mosquitoes over your lawn in a single hour. See www.batconservation.org for bat box plans.

Dragonflies/Damselflies (Odonates): These voracious insects might eat more mosquitoes than all of the others combined. Nymphs (also called naiads) consume vast numbers of mosquito larvae, while adults catch mosquitoes on the wing. Odonates breed in healthy wetlands and can keep mosquito numbers in check. One concern with bacterial larvicides for mosquito control is that these could kill odonate nymphs. If so, applying larvicides to natural, functioning wetlands could be counterproductive in the long run.

Thanks to Joel Geier and Amy Schoener for compiling and writing this feature on WNV

Hesthavn Sanctuary

Work at Hesthavn has been proceeding apace! In mid May we had a local contractor put in a parking area near the road and a handicapped parking space down by the barn. The parking area is a circular pull-through, with 5 angled spaces. At our May work party, volunteers installed a bench to honor the memory of Ted Regier, longtime member and former field trip leader. At the beginning of our next work party, July 26 at 9 am, we'll be dedicating this bench, set at the edge of the ash grove on the south end of the property.

We are continuing to control nonnative invasive species, and maintaining the established plantings. Our sanctuary manager, Ray Drapek, has instituted a new format of work parties — mornings will be spent on plant control, afternoons will be spent working on the barn, preparing it for conversion to an education center. Everyone is invited to come to either or both of these work parties, held on the last Saturday of each month. The afternoon work party will become increasingly important, as we come nearer to the goal of an education center. The Hesthavn committee would like to urge everyone to come regardless of skill level — there's plenty of demolition and hauling to do, as well as more skilled labor. Any ASC members with construction experience — we really need you!

To help speed the process of barn conversion, the Hesthavn committee is actively pursuing grants, to pay for materials and the time of a contractor. Anyone who would like to help with researching or writing grants would be greatly appreciated!

Birdathon 2003

Audubon Society of Corvallis has concluded another successful Birdathon, as a fund-raiser for Hesthavn. Pledges are still coming in, but we have received about \$3300 to date. Thanks again to all our participants, including birders, pledgers and prize donors. A good time was had by all!

Bluebird Lady

“Retirement” Party a Splendid Event

I hope to reach all of you who shared in the celebration of my retirement, to thank you for your gifts, cards, well-wishes and kind words. Many friends contributed to the generous gift certificate which was presented to me. I am also grateful to the folks who worked on the mundane — set up and took down the exhibits, tables, chairs, and the helping hands in the kitchen. I know that more than one-hundred participated in one or more ways.

The inspired organizers of this event enlisted so many friends of bluebirds who donated time and energy to honor the “Bluebird of Happiness Volunteers.” The beautiful flowers that Meg Campbell artistically arranged for the tables, the twenty or more elaborate plates of assorted ‘healthy’ food, hot and cold drinks, and the huge beautifully decorated cake for Elzy and me were “outstanding,” one of Elzy’s favorite sayings. For me, it was an overwhelming expression of devotion by nest box monitors and home owners for the twenty-seven years during which I coordinated the ASC nest box project.

I traveled thousands of miles to help folks put up the nest boxes on their property which were very important in reestablishing nesting Western Bluebirds in the mid-Willamette Valley. During that time I became intimately associated with bluebirds and realized how much a ‘grass roots’ project could accomplish. I met, and became friends, with hundreds of people in and around Corvallis and Benton County, even reaching across the states to the East coast. Memories of my bluebirding experiences will last a lifetime. Once more, thank you.

-Elsie K. Eltzroth

Thanks for Donation

ASC and the Bluebird Project sends a note of thanks to Dave Spaeth (Spaeth Lumber and Home Center) for the donation of material to build a new aviary for bluebirds, and to Mike Stewart for contributing his expertise and time in building the new structure.

Connect With Your State Legislature

Find your legislative members contact information.
www.leg.state.or.us/findlegsltr/findset.htm

Summer Field Trips

July 22	Tuesday <i>evening</i> Bird Walk 5:45 PM
July 29	Tuesday morning Bird Walk 8:00 AM
Aug 9	Saturday local half-day 7:30 AM
Aug 10	Bicycle Birding 9 AM - Noon
Aug 26	Tuesday morning Bird Walk 8:00 AM
Sept 13	Saturday local half-day 7:30 AM
Sept 30	Tuesday morning Bird Walk 8:00 AM

Local Morning Trip

On Aug. 9 our second Saturday local field trip meets at the Avery Park Rose Garden parking area at 7:30 AM. This field trip is especially interesting for beginner birders and new birders to Oregon’s mid-valley area. We spend a lot of time identifying local birds by sight and song. Leader Paula Vanderheul 541-752-0470, vanderp@peak.org

August 10, Sunday

Bicycle Birding in Corvallis

9:00 AM, Meet at Avery Park Rose Garden. An easy, flat ride of 10 miles or less. We’ve come across unexpected birds on some of these trips. We’ll tour great habitat not accessible to cars and we won’t miss those countless birds that motorist whiz by at freeway speeds. These trips will continue monthly until autumn. Bring water and rain gear. Leader: Don Boucher 753-7689, bouchdon@juno.com

Tuesday Morning / Evening Trips

During the Summer Marcia Cutler will lead a local Birding Walk. Everyone is to meet at the destinations listed for each of the following dates:

Albany Bird and Bat Show

July 22 evening bird walk to meet at 5:45 PM at the Benton Center 630 NW 7th Street to car pool. We will go to Albany to bird watch until 8:30 PM then visit The Costume Loft store at Waters and Montgomery Street along the Willamette River to watch the bat colony emerge from their day roost to find delicious insects.

Bezell Memorial Forest

July 29 morning bird walk will meet at 8 AM at Avery Park to car pool for a visit to Benton County’s Bezell Memorial Forest park on Kings Valley Hwy. near Ft Hopkins. Marcia can be contacted at 541-752-4313, mccarmel@peak.org

Look in the Chat for changes, additions, and updates of field trips each month. Come and join other bird watchers exploring a wildlife adventure in Oregon.

-Paula Vanderheul

Field Notes

April 22 through June 30, 2003

This time of year, when the spiraling song of the **Swainson's Thrush** fills the warm evening air, it's hard to think back to late April when we still awaited the return of these birds from the tropics. The past two months brought the last waves of wood warblers, followed by even more colorful migrants like **Black-headed Grosbeaks**, **Western Tanagers**, and **Lazuli Buntings**, as our more subdued wintering sparrows quietly migrated out.

Many waterfowl also migrated out, leaving just a few breeding species behind. However this year some northern breeders seemed to stick around longer than usual, perhaps prompted by wet, cool weather which kept local farmers out of some fields until May.

But by the time **Common Nighthawks** — our latest regular migrants — showed up in June, earlier arrivals were well along in the business of raising young, and by late June fledglings were starting to appear.

Abbreviations & Locations: NWR = National Wildlife Refuge; SF = State Forest; E.E. Wilson (Wildlife Area) is north of Corvallis along Hwy 99W. Bald Hill Park is on the west side of Corvallis. Baskett Slough NWR is near Dallas in Polk Co. Doerfler Pond is a private pond in Linn Co. Lava Lake and Lost Lake are in Linn Co. west of Santiam Pass. Luckiamute Landing is a Willamette River greenway in extreme SE Polk Co. McFadden Marsh is at Finley NWR south of Corvallis. Snag Boat Bend is a recent annex to Finley NWR, in Linn Co. near Peoria. Stewart Lake is the pond at the Hewlett-Packard (HP) plant in northeast Corvallis. Toketie Marsh is the remediation wetland at Coffin Butte landfill, along Hwy 99W north of Corvallis. Willamette Park is in south Corvallis.

Inland Sightings:

Inland Sightings: Jeff Harding saw **Common Loons**, **Eared Grebes** and **Western Grebes** on Foster Reservoir 27 Apr. Two **Western Grebes** were still there on 13 May (Jeff Fleischer).

An **American Bittern** was at E.E. Wilson from the start of the period through 15 Jun (Dave Budeau; Hendrik Herlyn; Don Boucher). The last **Great Egret** reports this season were single birds at Finley NWR 29 Apr and E.E. Wilson 1 May (Marcia F. Cutler).

A **Great Blue Heron** and a **Green Heron** were at the confluence of the Mary's and Willamette Rivers on 29 May (Marie Parcell), and also on 25 Jun (D Boucher). Two **Great Blue Heron** chicks in the nest at Toketie Marsh were nearly full-sized when I checked on 4 Jun. **Green Herons** were also spotted at a wetland along Peoria Rd. 5 May (J Fleischer) and at Finley NWR 13 May (Paula Vanderheul).

A **White-faced Ibis** visited McFadden Marsh on 1 Jun (Carolyn Paynter; Sandy Bryce; Tom Snetsinger). One showed up later near Portland, perhaps the same bird wandering north.

Migrant **Greater White-fronted Goose** included flocks of 120 at the Tangent sewage ponds 27 Apr and 300 flying along the Willamette River at Luckiamute Landing 29 Apr (J Harding; Roy Gerig). Flocks were also noted at Finley and Baskett Slough NWR through 29 Apr (M Cutler; Karen Sparkman).

A **Wood Duck** hen at Finley NWR on 1 Jun had 9 or 10 ducklings in tow on 1 Jun (S Bryce).

Late-staying **Gadwall** in Linn Co. included a pair along Arthur Lane 5 May (J Fleischer), one at the Villa wetlands 10 May (M Nikas) and one at Tangent sewage ponds 9 Jun (J Fleischer).

Eurasian Wigeons were last noted at Grand Prairie Park, Albany 26 Apr (J Harding) and at Finley NWR 29 Apr (M Cutler). The last **American Wigeon** at Stewart Lake was a male on 3 May (J Simmons). Paula Vanderheul noted some at Tangent sewage ponds on 12 May.

A pair of **Blue-winged Teal** showed up at McFadden Marsh 1 May (H Herlyn) Up to six were in that area 10-25 May (Kent Rodecap; R Hoyer; Erik Knight). Two pairs were at the Tangent sewage ponds 14 May (J Fleischer). **Cinnamon Teal** were at many breeding locations

throughout the period. A **Hooded Merganser** brood was noted during the Benton County migration count on 11 May (fide M Cutler).

The last **Northern Shoveler** report was at Finley NWR 25 May (E Knight). The last **Northern Pintail** was there 29 Apr (M Cutler). Late **Green-winged Teal** were at the Tangent sewage ponds 12 May (P Vanderheul); a female was at Stewart Lake 15 May (J Simmons).

Two **Redheads** visited the Scio sewage ponds 26 Apr (J Harding). 15 were at the Tangent sewage ponds 5 May (J Fleischer); some were still there 12 May (P Vanderheul). Late **Ring-necked Ducks** included one I saw at E.E. Wilson 8 May and two drakes at Tangent sewage ponds 14 May (J Fleischer). Two female **Buffleheads** were at Snag Boat Bend 11 May (M Cutler, P Vanderheul), and **Lesser Scaup** were at Tangent sewage ponds 12 May (P Vanderheul). A late **Ruddy Duck** was at the Philomath sewage ponds 18 May (D Boucher, Andy Dale).

In the Cascades, Jeff Fleischer saw a **Harlequin Duck** pair loafing on a rock in the South Fork Santiam River on 13 May. A **Barrow's Goldeneye** hen on Lost Lake had a brood of seven young on 14 Jun (Wayne Weber). Randy Campbell was expecting more Barrow's Goldeneyes at Patjens Lakes in the Santiam Pass area on 28 Jun, but he was pretty sure a female escorting six ducklings was a **Common Goldeneye**. There are no past records of this species nesting in Oregon, but some were also reported this season in lakes east of Santiam Pass.

Ospreys were seen around active nests in downtown Corvallis, Simpson Park in Albany, and Snagboat Bend. One or two have frequented ponds at E.E. Wilson, flying back and forth to nests near Luckiamute Landing two miles away. **Bald Eagles** were at Snag Boat Bend 11 May, 27 May, & 3 Jun (M Cutler; J Fleischer; S Bryce).

On 9 Jun Jeff Fleischer watched a **Northern Harrier** pair perform a mid-air meal transfer at Doerfler Pond. The female took the food down into the grass, presumably to nestlings. A **Cooper's Hawk** perched atop Raylene Gordin's feeder SE of Lebanon on 13 May, perhaps hoping for an easy meal but forgetting the element of surprise. A **Golden Eagle** was at McFadden Marsh 27 Apr (P Vanderheul); an adult soared near the Finley NWR display ponds 10 May (K Rodecap, M Meyers).

A **Prairie Falcon** in the Oakville area SW of Tangent on 26 Apr (J Harding) was the only falcon reported besides **American Kestrels**.

Blue Grouse were booming on Mary's Peak 16 May (R Hoyer, H Herlyn) and in the Upper Soda area of Linn Co. 2 Jun (J Fleischer). A not-very **Wild Turkey** hen made a practice of following Raylene Gordin around in her garden SE of Lebanon, from 9 May through early June when more showed up. A hen with 8 young poults was at Bellfountain Park on 22 May (R Hoyer).

Mountain Quail were reported this month from the Soap Creek area of McDonald SF on 16 May & 6 Jun (H Herlyn), from Keel Mountain Rd. in Linn Co. on 31 May (J Harding) and the Upper Soda area 2 Jun (J Fleischer). Merlin and Elsie Eltzroth are used to having **Mountain Quail** in their yard on Vineyard Mtn, but a pair of **California Quail** visiting there on 21 May were their first in nine years.

Pat Waldron noticed that the **California Quail** at her place east of Scio did not seem to settle down to nesting; instead they were seen heard calling frequently. Perhaps the wet spring weather caused some early nests to fail, so mating season was prolonged.

A pair of **Sandhill Cranes** were at Lava Lake 27 Apr (J Harding).

Two **Black-bellied Plovers** were at Finley NWR 27 Apr (H Herlyn). Three **Semipalmated Plovers** were along Bruce Rd. 17 May (P Vanderheul). The last **Greater Yellowlegs** report of spring was from Finley NWR 25 May (E Knight). A **Lesser Yellowlegs** was at Finley NWR 13 May (P Vanderheul).

Rice ponds near Brownsville turned up one migrant **Solitary Sandpiper** 10 May (Mark Nikas) and four on 14 May (J Fleischer); another was at Finley NWR 16 May (H Herlyn). On 9 Jun Steve Shunk found a **Solitary Sandpiper** by a pond along the Santiam Wagon Road near Big Lake, in the Linn Co. Cascades. This was late enough to raise hopes of a nesting pair, but the bird did not stay around, perhaps due to disturbance by heavy dirt-bike traffic on that trail.

A migrant **Spotted Sandpiper** stopped by Stewart Lake 9 May (J Simmons). Breeding birds were at Lost Lake 23 May (Pamela Johnston). A **Long-billed Curlew** visited a short-grass field near Ward Butte 5 May (J Fleischer).

Spring “peep” migration peaked at the end of April, then wound down with 10 **Western Sandpipers** at the Gap Rd. rice ponds 10 May (M Nikas) and 2 **Least Sandpipers** along Bruce Rd 17 May (P Vanderheul). 30 **Dunlin** were at Finley NWR 27 Apr, and 16 **Long-billed Dowitchers** were there 16 May (H Herlyn).

Two **Wilson’s Phalaropes** were along Bruce Rd. 17 & 22 May (P Vanderheul; R Hoyer), and noted again 25 May (E Knight). Two were at the Tangent sewage ponds 27 May (J Fleischer). Four **Red-necked Phalaropes** were along Bruce Rd. 16 May (H Herlyn) and 17 were there 17 May (P Vanderheul). Nine stopped by the Philomath sewage ponds 18 May (D Boucher, A Dale).

A **Bonaparte’s Gull** at McFadden Marsh 26 Apr (P Vanderheul) was the only inland gull report during the period. Two **Caspian Terns** visited E.E. Wilson 27 Apr (D Boucher). A **Forster’s Tern** at E.E. Wilson 9 May (Dave Budeau; H Herlyn) was the first one recorded in Benton Co. Five **Black Terns** were at Doerfler Pond in Linn Co. 9 Jun (J Fleischer).

A **Band-tailed Pigeon** visited Raylene Gordin’s feeder near Sodaville on 14 May, and was joined by four more the next day. About 15 were snacking on red elderberries in the bottomland forest at Luckiamute Landing on 10 Jun. On 13 Jun a fledgling showed up with the flock of over 200 partaking of cracked corn at Pat Waldron’s place east of Scio.

The **Monk Parakeet** colony at Shelburn (north of Scio) was still active on 28 May, when Jeff Fleischer saw three tending the nest structure.

Merlin Eltzroth saw a baby **Western Screech-Owl** stick its head out of its nest box on Vineyard Mtn around 23 Jun. He thinks the owl may have fledged, as it was not seen the next week. Hendrik Herlyn and Rich Hoyer called in a **Northern Pygmy-Owl** on Green Peak in the Coast Range 16 May. Don Boucher heard a **Northern Saw-whet Owl** in McDonald SF 25 May.

Common Nighthawks are usually our last regular migrant to arrive. Several were near Pedee 31 May (Sean Burgett). One was SW of Philomath 1 Jun (Karan Fairchild). One over Jamie Simmons’ NW Corvallis yard on 16 Jun was the first there in years. This species has become scarce in the Willamette Valley. Dave Mellinger saw one over Cascadia State Park 21 Jun. Several were “booming” in display flights at Lost Lake 22 Jun (M Nikas). A pair were courting over downtown Albany 24 Jun (J Fleischer).

A female **Anna’s Hummingbird** was feeding on red-flowering currants at 2600 ft elevation on Mary’s Peak on 22 May (R Hoyer).

May yielded a remarkable number of **Calliope Hummingbird** sightings. A male (or several seen separately) was seen daily at scattered locations around NW Corvallis, 9-13 May (Joy Linn; Bill Proebsting; Aaron & Sara Liston; Bobbi & Don Alan Hall). Another male visited Peoria 11 May, and a probable female was there 17 May (Alsie Campbell; Randy Campbell).

Meanwhile **Rufous Hummingbirds** were busy nesting. Numbers of adult males thinned out as they began to move to higher elevations, but one visited our place on 30 Jun.

A **Lewis’s Woodpecker** was along Forry Rd. north of Brownsville 26 Apr (M Nikas). **Acorn Woodpeckers** were noted west of Lewisburg throughout May (Paul Adamus) and near the fairgrounds west of Corvallis on 8 Jun (M Parcell). Mike Lippsmeyer saw single birds in various SE Polk locations where they are not regularly seen, and speculated that these might be birds looking for new spots to colonize.

A **Williamson’s Sapsucker** was near Lava Lake 16 Jun (R Campbell). A **Red-breasted Sapsucker** nested again this year in a snag at Lost Lake (M Nikas, 22 Jun). A pair of Three-toed Woodpeckers were feeding near the gravel piles in Santiam Pass 2 Jun (J Fleischer). A pair of Black-backed Woodpeckers were along the Pacific Crest Trail north of Hwy 20 on 29 Jun (Mary & Randy Campbell).

A **Pileated Woodpecker** visited Raylene Gordin’s yard near

Sodaville several times 18-26 May. On 6 Jun two noisy nestlings were high in a snag in McDonald SF, with an adult close by (H Herlyn).

Early **Olive-sided Flycatchers** in our area were at Stewart Lake 10 May (H Herlyn), Lewisburg 13 May (P Adamus) and near Sodaville 14 May (R Gordin). **Western Wood-Pewees** arrived at Avery Park and near E.E. Wilson 7 May (P Vanderheul; J Geier), at Stewart Lake 9 May (J Simmons), and near Sodaville 14 May (R Gordin).

Jeff Harding and Roy Gerig found **Pacific-slope Flycatchers** at several spots around Linn Co. 29 Apr. I heard one calling at our place the same day. Often calls are the only clue that these inconspicuous, canopy-loving birds are around, but on 18 Jun Raylene Gordin had a nice, close-up view of one at her place near Sodaville.

Hammond’s Flycatchers were at Clear Lake by 27 Apr (J Harding). A well-described **Gray Flycatcher** at Foster Reservoir on 30 Apr (R Campbell) was only the third record in Linn Co., but the second from that location. A vocal **Dusky Flycatcher** at our place near E.E. Wilson 5 May was a rare migrant for the valley floor; another was at Baskett Slough NWR 12 May (R Hoyer).

A **Willow Flycatcher** was at Snag Boat Bend 11 May (M Cutler, P Vanderheul). One showed up in a revegetating clear-cut in McDonald SF by 20 May (Bob Altman). Marcia Cutler found more at the new Fort Hoskins Park on 25 May. The Fairchilds had up to five species of flycatchers at once visit their place SW of Philomath during June: **Olive-sided, Pacific-slope, Hammond’s and Willow Flycatchers**, plus **Western Wood-Pewees**.

Early migrant **Western Kingbirds** included birds near Brownsville 26 Apr (M Nikas) and near Lewisburg 1 May (P Vanderheul). Four were at the prairie overlook at Finley NWR 17 May (P Vanderheul). Two pairs were near Brownsville 18 May (M Nikas). One was in the Richardson Gap area 11-12 Jun (J Harding), well into the nesting season.

Sean Burgett thought a kingbird near Fort Hoskins on 6 May might be a **Cassin’s Kingbird**, based on the tail pattern, but only had a brief look. This species has only been documented twice in Oregon. A well-described **Eastern Kingbird** spent half an hour foraging from a fence near a **Western Bluebird** box at the OSU sheep barns along Oak Creek 5 Jun (Suzanne Austin); this was only the third recorded in Benton Co.

A **Loggerhead Shrike** south of Brownsville 25 Apr seemed to be carrying nesting material (Bill Thackaberry, Don MacDonald). A shrike, probably this species, visited the HP campus 29 May (Bill Looney fide J Simmons).

Cassin’s Vireos were noted at Finley NWR 2 May (M Cutler), at Bald Hill 2 May and Stewart Lake 6 May (J Simmons). A **Hutton’s Vireo** was also calling at Bald Hill 2 May (J Simmons). The earliest reported **Warbling Vireos** were seven at Peavy Arboretum 2 May (B Altman). Jeff Fleischer noted more at Simpson Park, Albany 6 May.

American Crows and **Western Scrub-Jays** were an unusual set of feeder birds near Sodaville during the week of 23 May (R Gordin).

On 30 Apr I saw a pair of “**Streaked**” **Horned Larks** copulating in a stubble field by E.E. Wilson, but nesting was set back when that field was tilled up to plant pumpkins the next week. A pair in a bare patch of a nearby ryegrass field did better, fledging two juveniles by 25 Jun. About six pairs of this imperiled subspecies nested in the area. Two more were detected along Bruce Rd 16-17 May (H Herlyn; P Vanderheul). About 10 were in the Plainview area 25 May (B Altman). Small numbers were also reported from the Brownsville area (M Nikas; Mike Denny) and various places around Baskett Slough NWR (K Sparkman).

Purple Martins nested at Pat Waldron’s place east of Scio again this year, but she notes they were so slow to nest that a pair of **Tree Swallows** took over one pair’s nest box, and she had to provide another. She also has nesting **Violet-green Swallows** and **Barn Swallows**, and saw a pair of **Northern Rough-winged Swallows** copulating in early June. For ten years Pat has wished for **Cliff Swallows**; this year a pair finally tried out one of the prefabricated mud houses she had put up.

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Field Notes

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Joy Linn saw a **Black-capped Chickadee** gathering nesting material on 7 May. A pair near Sodaville fledged seven young on 16 Jun (R Gordin).

On 6 May Raylene Gordin saw and heard a possible **Oak Titmouse** with a chickadee flock on her wooded property; this species has not been recorded north of the Umpqua Valley, apart from one report from North Albany in 1975. A **White-breasted Nuthatch** showed up 26 May, and seven **House Wren** nestlings were about to fledge on 20 Jun.

A **Rock Wren** was calling near Hoodoo Butte in the Santiam Pass area 22 Jun (M Nikas). **Marsh Wrens** were detected regularly at Snag Boat Bend (M Cutler; J Fleischer) as well as at more expected locations in Finley NWR and E.E. Wilson. An **American Dipper** at Lost Lake was feeding a juvenile 22 Jun (M Nikas).

The last kinglets reported at low elevations this spring were **Golden-crowned Kinglets** at our place 29 Apr, and **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** at nearby E.E. Wilson 1 May (M Cutler). A pair of **Mountain Bluebirds** were near the ODOT gravel pile in Santiam Pass 2 Jun (J Fleischer).

A few **Hermit Thrushes** were singing SW of Philomath on 1 May (Jim & Karan Fairchild). A calling **Swainson's Thrush** in our yard 6 May seems to have been the first local arrival. One in Bill Proebsting's yard along Oak Creek was not singing yet by 14 May, but by 25 May many were singing in McDonald SF (D Boucher, Stephanie Haines).

Two **Wrentits** were along Courtney Creek SE of Brownsville 17 May (R Campbell) and one was along Upper Berlin Rd. 28 May (J Fleischer). Some were at Fort Hoskins Park 25 May (M Cutler).

An **Orange-crowned Warbler** fledgling joined adults in McDonald SF 6 Jun (H Herlyn). On 6 May a **Nashville Warbler** was with a mixed warbler flock in ash trees between our place and E.E. Wilson. One was along the Mill Hill trail at Finley NWR 18 May (D Boucher, A Dale). One was in willows at Lost Lake 17-27 Jun (J Fleischer; R Gerig).

A **Yellow Warbler** at Stewart Lake 7 May (J Simmons) was followed by more, with good numbers noted at Snagboat Bend 11 May through 3 Jun (M Cutler; S Bryce).

Yellow-rumped Warbler migration at low elevations wound down with two at Stewart Lake 16 May (J Simmons) and one in Lewisburg 23 May (P Adamus). By then some were singing on breeding grounds at Lost Lake (Pamela Johnston).

More **Black-throated Gray Warblers** showed up; about 10 were singing at Bald Hill Park on 12 May (J Simmons). The latest low-elevation **Townsend's Warblers** reported were a few in Avery Park 15 May (D Boucher). **Hermit Warblers** arrived SW of Philomath 1 May (J & K Fairchild), at Peavy Arboretum 2 May (B Altman) and at Sodaville by 6 May (R Gordin).

A **Northern Waterthrush** singing in willows in the SE corner of Lost Lake, first detected by Wayne Weber 14 Jun, led to the most surprising warbler of the season 27 Jun, when Roy Gerig found a male **Chestnut-sided Warbler** singing in the same area. Both birds remained through the end of June (M Nikas; Don DeWitt).

A **MacGillivray's Warbler** and a **Common Yellowthroat** were at Lava Lake when I stopped by on 11 May. Migration of **Wilson's Warblers** peaked with over 20 at Stewart Lake 9 May (J Simmons); the last migrant there was on 22 May. Joy Linn enjoyed visits by these bright birds on 4 & 9 May.

The first **Yellow-breasted Chats** arrived at E.E. Wilson WA 12 May (H Herlyn) and at Jackson-Frazier Wetland by 14 May (P Vanderheul).

Western Tanagers showed up at Peavy Arboretum 2 May (B Altman) and in downtown Corvallis 4 May (D Boucher). On 6 Jun I watched a pair carry caterpillars into a suspected nest along lower Soap Creek, a rather early date for hatchlings.

Jeff Fleischer found a **Green-tailed Towhee** and a **Brewer's Sparrow** in brushy habitat near Hoodoo Butte 17 Jun. Two days later, Steve Dowlan found three singing male **Brewer's Sparrows** at this location, and caught and banded one in full breeding condition.

Chipping Sparrow migration continued through 2 May when one stopped by Stewart Lake and another was SW of Philomath (J Simmons; K Fairchild). Two foraging alongside **Western Bluebirds** in a pasture near Lewisburg were in likely-looking breeding habitat. On 8 June two showed up to hunt insects in a pasture east of Scio (P Waldron).

Four **Vesper Sparrows** were along Belts Rd. near Brownsville 26 Apr. Dave Budeau saw one at E.E. Wilson 1 May. Two were in the usual breeding spot at Luckiamute Landing 7 May. Don Boucher found one singing in an overgrown field at Willamette Park 22 May. While bicycling near the north entrance of Finley NWR 18 May, Don Boucher and Andy Dale found a **Lark Sparrow**.

A **Grasshopper Sparrow** was singing on the south slope of Ward Butte 25 May (B Altman). **Savannah Sparrows** started to fledge by 20 Jun when I saw a juvenile in a field border near E.E. Wilson; a juvenile **White-crowned Sparrow** was in the same area.

Two **Fox Sparrows** at Stewart Lake 24 Apr (J Simmons) were the last ones noted at low elevations. One was singing on breeding territory at Lost Lake 5 Jun (Mark Miller). The latest **Lincoln's Sparrows** in the valley were at E.E. Wilson 1 May and Stewart Lake 9 May (M Cutler; J Simmons). One was at Lost Lake, a regular breeding location, on 22 Jun (M Nikas).

White-throated Sparrow stragglers were in NW Corvallis 26 Apr and North Albany 5 May (J Simmons; Alan McGie). The last **Golden-crowned Sparrow** of the season was at Stewart Lake 16 May (J Simmons).

Black-headed Grosbeak males arrived in Oak Creek 28 Apr (B Proebsting), North Albany 1 May (A McGie), and near Philomath and Sodaville 2 May (K Fairchild; R Gordin). The first female in North Albany showed up 5 May (A McGie). Two **Lazuli Buntings** were singing in Timberhill Meadows 1 May (H Herlyn). One singing near Lava Lake 22 Jun was an odd bird for that location (M Nikas).

Western Meadowlarks were seen regularly at Finley NWR. Four were off Tub Run Rd south of Brownsville 8 Jun (W Weber). A male **Yellow-headed Blackbird** was at McFadden Marsh 25 May and 1 Jun (E Knight; T Snetsinger); one was at Doerfler Pond, Linn Co. 9 Jun (J Fleischer). **Bullock's Orioles** arrived in Lewisburg 1 May (B Altman) and North Albany 6 May (A McGie). A pair were in oaks near the Benton Co. fairgrounds 24 May (Kent Rodecap).

Seven **Red Crossbills** were near 12th and Dixon in Corvallis 4 Jun (Matt Hunter), an unusual sight in the lowlands. The last low-elevation report of **Pine Siskins** was two in Lewisburg 23 May (P Adamus).

A **pond turtle** was sunning on a log at the freeway lakes near Albany on 14 Jun (fide R Gordin). 121 **Big Brown Bats** and three **Beavers** in the river were highlights of a bat-watching picnic in downtown Corvallis 25 Jun (D Boucher). Two **Black-tailed Deer** does with speckled fawns were along the OSU bike trail 29 Jun (M Parcell).

Coastal Notes

Bill Wysham saw three **albatrosses** while fishing for salmon 5 miles offshore of Newport on 30 Jun, most likely **Black-footed Albatrosses**.

More coastal sightings are documented in field notes of *The Sandpiper* (Yaquina Birders & Naturalists) which can be viewed at <<http://www.orednet.org/~rbayer/lincoln/bird.htm>>.

Next two months

The next Chat will be in September.

Please send your observations by August 25

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*American Goldfinch
and Canada Thistle*

News from Cabell Marsh

Homer Campbell Trail Update

On June 19, 9 booted trailblazers, led by refuge complex director Carol Schuler, bushwhacked through a swampy riparian forest on the west side of Cabell Marsh at William Finley National Wildlife Refuge. Their mission: to locate the future route of the Homer Campbell Memorial Trail, which completes a circular path around Cabell Marsh. The trail will wind through an ash forest, along the bull rush banks of the marsh and over drier upland grassy fields, a distance of about 1 mile. At some point on the trail a side path will take visitors to an elevated observation blind at the edge of the open water. Wet terrain demands that a large portion of the entire trail be elevated boardwalk, an expensive item. Carol has significant funding as well as heavy equipment and operators to get the project started but much more money will be needed. The project consists of three phases, each phase to be completed as funding is obtained. I will be applying for a grant through the Refuge Keeper Program and will need a volunteer group to build the boardwalk and observation blind.

Claire Fiegner (one of the trailblazers) with the Greenbelt Land Trust, whose volunteer group created a wonderful trail (including a boardwalk and blind) at Snagboat Bend, has partnered with Audubon and Land Trust people will be joining us for work parties. Their experience at trail construction will be invaluable to this project.

Other people on the June 19 foray were: Chris Seal, biologist at Finley; Chantel Jimenez, outreach liaison at Finley; Jim and Karl Fairchild; and Audubon Trail committee members Hal Batchelder, Leslie Green and Gary Gibson.

The Homer Campbell Trail will be a grand enhancement to the refuge just like Homer himself was to humankind. To get on the volunteer list for work parties e-mail me at gibgrn@juno.com or phone 929-3804.

-Gary Gibson

The Chat by Email

If you have computer access to email, we will save trees and also money for postage, and email you the Audubon Society of Corvallis' newsletter. Please contact Amy Schoener (Membership Chair) 929-4041, cloudrun@peak.org.

You will receive the CHAT in Adobe Acrobat format. File size will be 300k or less. Adobe Acrobat reading software is free and can be downloaded from Adobe's web site (www.adobe.com).

-Amy Schoener

Walk the Marys River Watershed in a Day!

Kids Day for Conservation

A novel activity being put together by over 30 organizations in the Benton-Linn area is Kids Day for Conservation. Modeled after an event first done in Spokane, Washington, this event will be held at the Benton County Fairgrounds on Saturday, September 13, 2003 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The arena will be transformed into the Mary's River watershed and booths placed along various streams containing hands-on activities for children and the whole family related to various aspects of conservation. ASC will be conducting a game called "Snipe Hunt". We will place about 10 birds throughout the arena and pass out a picture check-list of the birds for the kids to find. To help them find the birds, they can make 'binoculars' out of toilet paper rolls.

Kate Mathews and Marcia Cutler are coordinating the event and are looking for volunteers to help at our booth. We are planning on two shifts: 10 am - 1 pm and 1 PM - 4 PM and would like about 4 people at the booth per shift. If you are interested in helping, please let one of us know. Our contact information is on the back of the Chat.

-Marcia Cutler

Oregon Shorebird Fest.

17th Annual, September 5, 6, 7,

Sponsored by the Cape Arago Audubon Society. Registration is \$15.00 per person, \$25.00 per family. Saturday 6 hour Pelagic trip \$45.00 per person. Saturday night dinner \$13.00. OIMB Dorm lodging \$20.00 per person. Bring your own bedding and towels. Other local lodging available. Friday evening program presented by Dr. Terry Mace about Northern Jacana and their Polyandrous Mating System and Select Australian Birds. Saturday evening presentation by Dr. John Takekawa on Water Migration Along the Pacific Coast. Contact Lyn Topits 541-267-7208 or Barb Griffin 541-756-5688. Send checks payable to Cape Arago Audubon Society, P O Box 381, North Bend OR 97459

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Spotted Towhee

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Audubon Society of Corvallis

the **CHAT**

Calendar

- July 22 Tuesday *evening* Bird Walk 5:45 PM*
- July 26 Hesthavn work party, 9 am (see page 74)
- July 29 Tuesday morning Bird Walk 8:00 AM*
- Aug 9 Saturday local half-day 7:30 AM*
- Aug 10 Bicycle Birding 9 AM - Noon*
- Aug 25 Field Notes deadline (Monday)
- Aug 26 Tuesday morning Bird Walk 8:00 AM*
- Aug 28 Chat deadline (Thursday)
- NOTE: No General meeting or Chat issue in August**
- Sept 11 Board meeting at 7:30 PM
- Sept 13 Saturday local half-day 7:30 AM*
- Sept 13 Kids Day for Conservation 10 AM – 4 PM (see page 79)
- Sept 18 General Meeting, 7:30 PM, 1st Presbt. Church
- Sept 30 Tuesday morning Bird Walk 8:00 AM*

*See page 75 for field trip descriptions
Everybody's welcome, including nonmembers, to any ASC function