



# Audubon Society of Corvallis the **CHAT**

January 2006

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#5

## General Meeting

Thursday, January 19, 7:30 – 9:00 PM  
First Presbyterian Church

### Advocating for protection of Klamath Basin National Wildlife Refuges

*A presentation by Wendell Wood*

Wendell Wood, Oregon Natural Resources Council's long-time advocate for the Klamath Basin will present a slide-show and talk on conservation issues confronting southern Oregon's and northern California's Klamath River Basin. Emphasis will be on the Klamath Forest National Wildlife Refuge (located approximately 20 miles east of Crater Lake National Park). Wendell will discuss the progress that is being made toward the establishment of wetlands and the reduction of pesticide use on the other Klamath Basin National Wildlife Refuges. Wendell's presentation will also include a discussion of the area's natural history.

*-Susan Haig*

### Directions

The chapter meeting is at the meeting hall of the First Presbyterian Church (upstairs), 114 SW Eighth Street. As usual, the meeting will be preceded by a social period, with refreshments, beginning at 7:00.

## Mining Subtitle Withdrawn

### Pombo's attempt to undermine our public lands system is averted

On December 13, 2005, Congressman Jim Gibbons (R-NV) announced that he was officially dropping the controversial mining provisions that he and House Resources Committee Chairman Richard Pombo (R-California) inserted into a budget reconciliation bill.

A bipartisan group of western Senators opposed the mining subtitle, as well as a broad coalition of hunters, anglers, and other recreational users of public lands along with conservationists and business leaders such as jewelry retailers.

The introduction of the mining subtitle, and the resulting public outcry, has highlighted the need for meaningful reform of the 1872 Mining Law (see [www.bettermines.org](http://www.bettermines.org) for more information on this subject)--reform that protects the interests of local communities and natural resources, while ensuring that recreational opportunities and revenues are not threatened.

*From the website of Westerners for Responsible Mining*

## Audubon Applauds Senate For Action to Protect Arctic Refuge

Drilling in ANWR dropped from the defense bill

On December 21, in a 56-44 vote, the Senate blocked drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. The Senate rejected a measure allowing drilling that Senator Ted Stevens (R-AK) added to the Department of Defense appropriations bill. Senator Stevens added the provision to the Defense bill in a desperate, last minute attempt to push forward the Arctic drilling provision, after earlier efforts to insert it into the budget reconciliation process were defeated in the House.

"We do not need to despoil the pristine wilderness of the Arctic Refuge. Readily available alternatives including energy conservation and efficiency with existing technology, can have a bigger impact sooner," stated John Flicker, President, National Audubon Society. "We applaud the members of the US Senate who stood up to the special *See "Senate" on next page*

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## Senate

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interests and voted to block this cynical abuse of power. They have demonstrated their resolute commitment to the environment, to the American people, and to protecting the great natural heritage we all share.”

Two Republicans – Lincoln Chafee of Rhode Island and Mike DeWine of Ohio – joined 41 Democrats in the vote to protect the refuge today. Senator Bill Frist changed his vote to an affirmative vote for procedural reasons.

“Drilling in the Arctic Refuge will provide no relief from high gas prices, while robbing our children and grandchildren of a true natural treasure,” said Bob Perciasepe, Chief Operating Officer, National Audubon Society.

*Editor's note: Gordon Smith voted against blocking oil drilling in ANWR.*

*-From the National Audubon Society website*

## Wildlife Film Festival

**OSU's Fish & Wildlife Club  
brings films to Corvallis**

Oregon State University's Fish and Wildlife Club is hosting a Wildlife Film Festival on Feb. 24 and 25 on the OSU campus. The club will bring several rare and award-winning wildlife films to town and present them to the public for a nominal fee. The films were originally viewed at the renowned Montana International Wildlife Film Festival. Mark your calendars now for this unique opportunity to see these stunning films in Corvallis! Details on films and times will appear in the next Chat.

*-Rebecca Goggans*

## Endangered Species Act

**Audubon denounces new senate bill  
which eliminates critical protections for most  
vulnerable wildlife**

On December 15, Senators Mike Crapo (R-ID) and Blanche Lincoln (D-Arkansas) introduced a bill (S. 2110) that would roll back 30 years of conservation success, cutting essential protections for endangered and threatened wildlife. Since its passage in 1973, the Endangered Species Act (ESA) has successfully protected many endangered species, including the Bald Eagle, Peregrine Falcon and Whooping Crane. Only 9 out of the 1,800 species listed as threatened or endangered have gone extinct. The bill introduced today puts many more species at risk of being lost forever, abandoned to commercial development and special interests.

“Passage of this bill would put another nail in the coffin of our most imperiled wildlife,” said John Flicker, President of the National Audubon Society. “At a time of year when

we traditionally reach out to the less fortunate, this proposed legislation benefits wealthy developers and landowners at the expense of the most weak and vulnerable.”

S.B. 2110 will leave America's endangered species in harm's way.

- It would make it harder to protect the very habitat endangered and threatened species need to live by creating new incentives for development.
- It places barriers to any effort to help plan for actual species recovery and allows those plans to be based on science that is not the best.

“In my experience the biggest failure with the Endangered Species Act has been the lack of funding provided by Congress to actually implement it properly,” stated Bob Perciasepe, Chief Operating Officer of National Audubon Society. “Now it seems that Congress is looking for someone or something to blame for that shortfall – and they've chosen the law itself. Audubon urges all members of the Senate to ensure that our nation continues to uphold its responsibility to protect threatened and endangered species, by voting against this ill-conceived bill and providing the funding needed to implement the existing law.”

*-From the National Audubon Society website*

## Field Trip Schedule

Jan 14	Saturday morning local birding 7:30 AM - Baskett Slough NWR
Feb 11	Saturday morning local birding 7:30 AM
Feb 18	Full day Fern Hill Wetlands and Jackson Bottom - Forest Grove/Hillsboro
Mar 11	Saturday morning local birding 7:30 AM

### Second Saturdays:

Our second Saturday morning 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. We visit the valley National Wildlife Refuges—Finley, Baskett Slough, and Ankeny, as well as other birding areas throughout the year. Field trip leader is Paula Vanderheul 541-752-0470, [vanderp@peak.org](mailto:vanderp@peak.org).

### Full day birding:

On the full day trips we car pool, sharing gas cost with the drivers. Everyone is to bring a large lunch, drinks, binoculars, spotting scope, warm clothing, sturdy shoes, and rain gear. We meet at 7:30 AM at the Benton Center parking lot at 757 NW Polk which can be reached by turning east on Polk at the corner of Polk and 9th street where Borders Books is located.

On Feb 18, 2006 I will lead a birding trip to Fern Hill Wetlands and Jackson Bottom Wetlands. It will be a day

of walking diked ponds, hopefully full of waterfowl. Be ready for rainy weather. Bring lunch, warm clothing, and your boots. We meet at the Benton Center parking lot at 7:30 AM to car pool. We should return by 6:00 PM. Contact Paula Vanderheul for questions. [vanderp@peak.org](mailto:vanderp@peak.org), 541-752-0470.

### Spring weekend birding:

March 17-19: Bandon Coast (two openings available)

April 21-23: Klamath Basin (trip full--waiting list open)

May 5-7: Rogue Valley with Shakespeare play "UP"  
(four openings)

May 18-21: Malheur NWR (trip full--waiting list open)

- For everyone signed up for the Medford/Ashland trip, there is a \$40 deposit due by February 28, 2006.
- For everyone signed up for the Malheur trip, there is a \$50 deposit due by February 28, 2006.

Please send your checks payable to Fred Ramsey at 3550 NW Glen Ridge Place, Corvallis OR 97330. Or you may pay at the general meeting field trip table. Sign-up sheets and trip information will be available at the general meetings, or contact Paula Vanderheul at [vanderp@peak.org](mailto:vanderp@peak.org) 541-752-0470.

## Neighborhood Birding

### Workshop

**2-part course, Sundays, Feb. 5 & 12, 9 AM–2 PM**

Learn how to identify birds common to urban and residential areas of the Mid-Willamette Valley as well as ways to attract birds and other wildlife to your backyard. This workshop is a coordinated program by the Audubon Society of Corvallis, Avery House Nature Center and Wild Birds Unlimited. For information about course content, contact Don Boucher (753-7689, [bouchdon@juno.com](mailto:bouchdon@juno.com)). Cost: \$8. To register, contact the Avery House at [www.peak.org/~ecenter](http://www.peak.org/~ecenter), or (541) 758-6198.

### Tracking Club

Find tracks and other signs of animals and birds. Outings are led by Don Boucher (753-7689, [bouchdon@juno.com](mailto:bouchdon@juno.com)) and Mike Albrecht. Meet at Willamette River Greenway Park in Linn County off Riverside Drive.

Jan. 15 Sunday: 9 AM–noon

Feb. 19 Sunday: 9 AM–noon

Mar. 19 Sunday: 9 AM–noon

## Owyhee River Trip

**April 21-25—Lower Owyhee River, Rome to the reservoir**

Join the Marys Peak Group of the local Sierra Club Chapter in a 2006 rafting adventure on the Owyhee River in Eastern Oregon. Guides, rafts, and excellent meals are all provided for a four-night, five-day raft trip with Ouzel Outfitters through a stunning high-desert canyon with great whitewater, geology, hiking, and birds. The estimated cost is \$850/person plus a 3% government use fee. Transit to and from Rome and lodging in Rome is not included in the price. There is a maximum of 15 participants. For information, contact Randy Selig at 541 745 7055 or [rselig@mindspring.com](mailto:rselig@mindspring.com).

-Randy Selig

## Field Notes

**November 23 through December 27, 2005**

The Corvallis area experienced an unusually cold and dry early December, with temperatures as low as 15 degrees F and daytime temperatures barely rising above freezing for over a week. This caused many ponds to freeze over. The weather began to warm up and turn wet just in time for the Corvallis CBC 20 Dec. A series of warm fronts bringing moisture off the Pacific Ocean dominated the rest of the period, dumping over eight inches of rain. Ducks, geese and swans which stayed around through the cold snap were rewarded by an abundance of soggy habitat, as the rains filled backwaters and flooded bottomlands along the Marys, Luckiamute, and other tributaries of the Willamette River.

Results from the Corvallis CBC 20 Dec and Brownsville CBC 26 were compiled by Marcia F. Cutler and Barbara Combs, respectively.

*Abbreviations & Locations:* CBC = Christmas Bird Count; NWR = National Wildlife Refuge; STP = sewage treatment pond(s); m. obs = multiple observers; p. obs. = personal observation. Baskett Slough (NWR) is near Dallas in Polk Co. Coffin Butte and E.E. Wilson (Wildlife Area) are north of Corvallis along Hwy 99W. Luckiamute Landing greenway is along the Willamette in se. Polk Co. McFadden Marsh is at Finley (NWR) south of Corvallis. Snag Boat Bend in Linn Co. near Peoria is an annex of Finley NWR. Vanderpool Tract is just s. of Luckiamute Landing in ne. Benton Co.

### Inland Reports

A **Greater White-fronted Goose** was at McFadden Marsh 26 Nov (Marcia F. Cutler, Paula Vanderheul). A **Snow Goose** was with a **Canada Goose** flock along Lake Creek Dr. in Linn Co. 6 Dec (Jeff Fleischer).

This month Pat Cummins noticed geese wearing red collars at the Owens Open Space preserve just north of Corvallis. These are "**Dusky**" **Canada Geese**, the large, dark subspecies that nests on the Copper River Delta in Alaska, and has been a focus of protection efforts in the Willamette Valley. Rich Armstrong counted 29 "**Dusky**" there on 26 Nov, eight of them with collars.

Kerri Cawthon reported one **Trumpeter Swan** at Finley and six along De Armond Rd. in s. Polk Co. 27 Nov. At least 30 Trumpeters were in a flock of 90 swans (the rest being **Tundra Swans**) near Airlie 12 Dec. 200 **Tundra Swans** were along Lake Creek Dr. in Linn Co. 6 Dec (J Fleischer).

Marcia Cutler and Paula Vanderheul noted good numbers of **Wood Ducks** as well as **Gadwall** on the pond near Finley headquarters 26 Nov.

An unusual **American Wigeon** with cream-colored cheeks and throat was at Stewart Lake 15-17 & 23 Nov (Jamie Simmons). A winter-



ing **Cinnamon Teal** was near Peoria 21 Dec (Randy Campbell).

**Canvasbacks** were seen at Stewart Lake daily 15 Nov thru 9 Dec, with a high count of 12 on 1 Dec; none were seen after 12 Dec when the lake was 95% frozen over (J Simmons). **Lesser Scaup** were there daily through 16 Dec, when some were still using the small area of open water (J Simmons). Two **Common Goldeneyes** were on the Willamette River just n. of Snag Boat Bend 21 Dec (R Campbell).

Lisa Millbank and Don Boucher spotted a covey of **Mountain Quail** along the Alsea-Deadwood Hwy at South Fork Rd. 20 Nov.

A **Western Grebe** was found on the Brownsville CBC 26 Dec. Two to four **Pied-billed Grebes** continued at Stewart Lake thru 16 Dec, even when the unfrozen portion of the lake was down to a small fraction (J Simmons).

Four **Great Egrets** were at the Vanderpool Tract 16 Dec (Ray Fiori). On 26 Nov, Marcia Cutler and Paula Vanderheul watched a **Great Blue Heron** catch and swallow a large **vole** or **gopher** which was still wiggling as it went down the heron's gullet.

A lone **Turkey Vulture** was soaring over a field along Hwy 20 between Albany and Corvallis 4 Dec (Noah Strycker). One was also seen on the Brownsville CBC 26 Dec.

A **White-tailed Kite** was along the Alsea Deadwood Hwy at South Fork Rd. 27 Nov (D Boucher, L Millbank). I saw one was along Simpson Rd. in se. Polk Co. 12 Dec, and another just s. of Airlie 26 Dec. One was also found on the Brownsville CBC 26 Dec.

Steve Seibel noted two adult **Bald Eagles** at McFadden Marsh 14 Dec, and two subadults there 16 Dec. An adult flew over Rich & Nanette Armstrong's driveway in n. Corvallis 28 Dec.

A **Red-shouldered Hawk** visited Rich & Nanette Armstrong's n. Corvallis yard 4 Dec, briefly landing on a fence.

Jeff Fleischer found amazing numbers of raptors while conducting a winter raptor survey in sw. Linn Co. 6 Dec: 59 **Northern Harriers**, 235 **Red-tailed Hawks**, 7 **Rough-legged Hawks**, and 111 **American Kestrels**. He also found a **Ferruginous Hawk**, a rare species for our area. Jeff suspects these high numbers of raptors (as much as four times the most he has counted in this area in past Decembers, in the case of red-tails) were feasting on the bumper crop of voles which has plagued mid-Valley farmers this year.

Two **Rough-legged Hawks** (a light morph and a dark morph) were at Finley at the hilltop viewpoint along Bruce Rd. Finley 25 Nov; two more (both light morphs) were there December 14 (Steve Seibel).

An adult **Golden Eagle** was along the north flank of Indian Head Mtn 6 Dec (J Fleischer), and again in s. Linn Co. 26 Dec (Mike Patterson). One was also seen flying over the Woodpecker Loop trail at Finley 16 Dec (Steve Seibel).

One **Merlin** near Peoria 23 Dec (R Campbell) was surprisingly the only local report this month. In two checks of Luckiamute Landing greenway in se. Polk Co., which has been the most reliable place to find this species in recent winters, I did not find one.

A **Peregrine Falcon** soared over the Inavale School campus 9 Dec. Others included one in w. Linn Co. 12 Dec (J Fleischer), one eyeing the **Dunlin** and **Killdeer** along Suver Rd. in se. Polk Co. 12 Dec (p. obs.), one along Bruce Rd. 14 Dec and one at McFadden Marsh 16 Dec (Steve Seibel), and one along Swank Rd. w. of Lebanon 24 Dec (Jeff Harding, Bill Thackaberry).

More **Prairie Falcons** than usual seem to be in the mid-Willamette Valley this season. One cruised over Blueberry Rd. near Peoria 24 Nov, and two were near Peoria 23 Dec (R Campbell). One was along Seefeld Dr. in sw. Linn Co. 6 Dec (J Fleischer). Several were found in the Corvallis CBC 20 Dec. One was along Gilmour Ln. near Palestine 23 Dec (J Fleischer). One was along Glaser Dr. near Tangent 24 Dec (J Harding, B Thackaberry). One was along De Armond Rd. near Airlie 26 Dec. Additional reports came from Baskett Slough. While some of these may be repeat sightings of the same birds, it seems likely that at least five or six are around.

Seven **Sandhill Cranes** were at Tennessee Rd. n. of Lebanon 12

& 24 Dec (J Fleischer; J Harding, B Thackaberry), a location which has been favored by cranes in past years.

A **Pacific Golden-Plover** was with a flock of 200 **Killdeer** at Linn High School during the Brownsville CBC 26 Dec (R Armstrong, Mark Nikas). **Least Sandpipers** were found during the week of the Corvallis CBC but could not be located on count day 26 Dec. One was near Brownsville 26 Dec (Mike Patterson). A **Red Phalarope** was at the Philomath STP 23 Dec (R & N Armstrong) and four were along Swank Rd. w. of Lebanon 24 Dec (J Harding, B Thackaberry) after a week of stormy weather pushed many of these pelagic birds onshore at the coast.

A **Burrowing Owl** (unbanded) was along Harmony Rd. near Peoria 23 Nov; Randy Campbell noted that was only third location around Peoria where he had found Burrowing Owls this winter, down from previous years, and possibly this was a single bird in all three locations. One was found along Llewellyn Rd. during the Corvallis CBC 20 Dec.

Randy Campbell found three **Short-eared Owls** were near Peoria 24 Nov, one along Linn Co. Rd. and two along Davis Rd. He saw three owls in the area much of the summer and suspects they nested in one of the roadside ditches.

**Anna's Hummingbirds**, the only hummingbird species that regularly winters over, can be a bright spot in this dark season. An imm. male and a female were seen regularly at Stewart Lake (a location with no feeders) 23 Nov through 9 Dec but were not seen there after the cold snap set in (J Simmons, Bill Looney). One visited Pat Cummins' place along Pettibone Dr. as of 11 Dec; this species is not often seen outside town in Benton Co. A pair at Pat Waldron's place e. of Scio 26 Nov enjoyed the fruit flies in her composter. Jamie Simmons heard one at his place in NW Corvallis 24 Dec, assuring him that this hardy, tiny bird had survived the cold spell. Carol Steckley also had a pair at her place near the Corvallis hospital 28 Dec, and a pair continued at Andrea Foster's place along Brooklane Dr. thru the period.

After a **Red-breasted Sapsucker** made the rounds of his sap holes in NW Corvallis 28 Nov, a curious **Northern Flicker** came in the check the same places (Andrea Foster). A "flock" of at least eight flickers were in a yard near Chip Ross Park 26 Nov, quite a concentration for this species (R Armstrong).

A possible **Pacific-slope Flycatcher** was reported in the Corvallis CBC 20 Dec; this would be an unprecedented sighting for Oregon in winter, if confirmed.

On 10 Dec Tanya Bray had a **Black Phoebe** show up in a small tree right outside her apartment near Willamette Park. One found by Mary Campbell in Peoria 13 Nov continued at there thru 21 Dec (R Campbell). Another was found at Snag Boat Bend for the Corvallis CBC 20 Dec. This species was formerly rare in our area but has expanded its range northward in recent years. A **Say's Phoebe** was flycatching from a fence along the Midge Cramer path at Bald Hill Park 22 Dec (Stacy Drake fide D Boucher).

An adult **Northern Shrike** was along the ne. edge of E.E. Wilson 12 Dec (p. obs.). One found last month continued to be seen at Marys River Natural Area in sw Corvallis thru 24 Dec (M Cutler, P Vanderheul). One was near Brownsville 26 Dec (Mike Patterson).

Sue McGrory photographed a **Blue Jay** which visited her feeder just n. of LBCC in sw. Albany 3 Dec. One found along Peoria Rd. last month was not reported after 12 Nov, so perhaps that bird moved a few miles north along the river.

Don Boucher found the remains of an **American Crow** in downtown Corvallis 14 Dec, plucked in a fashion matching the signs of an accipiter or falcon kill. Two **Common Ravens** flew over Stewart Lake calling 15 Dec (J Simmons).

Several **Tree Swallows** were seen during the period. Two flew over the angling pond at E. E. Wilson 12 Dec (p. obs.). One at Philomath STP 16 Dec landed repeatedly on the ice, until two harriers chased it off (R Armstrong). One was also seen there during the Corvallis CBC 20 Dec.

Five **Chestnut-backed Chickadees** showed up at Dick Bell's feeders in n. Corvallis, the first there in at last two years. A **Winter Wren** made an appearance at Stewart Lake 5 Dec (J Simmons). A **Marsh Wren** in the slough by the Peoria boat ramp 21 Dec (R Campbell) and two near Brownsville 26 Dec (Mike Patterson) were good finds of a species that is seldom found in Linn Co.

16 **Western Bluebirds** were in n. Corvallis along 13th St n. of Walnut 4 Dec (Rana Foster). About 20 were feeding in mistletoe and calling in the oaks on Coffin Butte 15 Dec (p. obs.). Eight turned up in Peoria 21 Dec (R Campbell), and 17 were near Brownsville 26 Dec (Mike Patterson).

A **Townsend's Solitaire** was found along White Oak Dr. in Linn Co. during the Corvallis CBC circle 20 Dec. A **Hermit Thrush** showed up in Andrea Foster's nw. Corvallis yard just in time for the CBC.

A male **Varied Thrush** frequented Jamie Simmons NW Corvallis yard 1 Dec onward. On 19 Dec Rich & Nanette Armstrong were watching two **Varied Thrushes** in their n. Corvallis yard, when a **Sharp-shinned Hawk** zoomed in and nabbed one, then flew off with its prey which was nearly as big as itself.

A wintering **Orange-crowned Warbler** was found in the Brownsville CBC. **Yellow-rumped Warblers** were found in scattered locations, including one patronizing a peanut-butter suet feeder alongside of a **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** in Andrea Foster's Corvallis yard.

A **Townsend's Warbler** was in a pine tree in the Corvallis *Gazette-Times* parking lot downtown 27 Nov (D Boucher). Flocks included seven at Nanette Armstrong's feeders in n. Corvallis 21 Dec, and nine in nw. Corvallis 17 Dec (J Simmons).

A few **Savannah Sparrows** were at the Philomath STP 16 Dec (R Armstrong). **Song**, **(Sooty) Fox**, and **Golden-crowned Sparrows** were reported in abundance as typical for our area in winter. **Lincoln's Sparrows** were reported in small numbers from various spots, including six at the end of the boardwalk at Marys River Natural Area 24 Dec (M Cutler, P Vanderheul).

**White-throated Sparrows** continued to show up. Two visited Jamie Simmons' nw Corvallis yard 27 Nov, with one there sporadically thru the period. One was outside the OSU forest science lab 29 Nov (Cheron Ferland). One began visiting a feeding station in our yard near E.E. Wilson 12 Dec (Wil, Nik & Martha Geier). One was along Garden Rd. in n. Corvallis 13 Dec (R Armstrong). One turned up in Andrea Foster's nw. Corvallis yard 23 Dec.

A leucistic **Dark-eyed Junco** visiting Paula Vanderheul's feeders in n. Corvallis 26 Nov had all-white cheeks, white around the eyes and forehead, resembling the facial pattern of a White-breasted Nuthatch.

While Jeff Fleischer was surveying raptors along Irish Bend Loop in Linn Co. 6 Dec, by chance he pulled over on the shoulder just where a **Snow Bunting** was resting.

42 **Western Meadowlarks** were foraging in the grass at the Vanderpool Tract greenway 16 Dec. Mike Patterson found two wintering **Brown-headed Cowbirds** with blackbird flocks during the Brownsville CBC 26 Dec.

There have been surprisingly few **Purple Finch** reports this winter. On 12 Dec I found just three at E. E. Wilson. Numbers of **Pine Siskins** also seem to be down; Carol Steckley noted that she was only seeing one or two at her feeders near the Corvallis hospital as of 28 Dec, and this was the only report I received of siskins this month.

#### Coastal Notes

A female **King Eider** near the boat ramp in Waldport 5 Dec (Sally Lockyear fide Range Bayer) was seen again 16 Dec (S Lockyear, Jean Weakland) and 17 Dec (Chuck Philo).

Scoters are often taken for granted by coastal visitors, but Phil Pickering's counts of 35,000 **Surf Scoters** and 14,000 **White-winged Scoters** off Boiler Bay 25 Dec were eye-openers as to the importance of Oregon's coastal waters for this species in winter. Phyllis Bailey saw a group of ten **Black Scoters** off Yachats 25 Nov; this is the least common species along the Oregon Coast.

**Northern Fulmars** are usually seen well offshore, so one zipping around inside Yaquina Bay 3 Dec was a surprise (N Strycker et al.).

A juvenile **Black Oystercatcher** was bathing with gulls at the mouth of Ten Mile Creek 28 Nov (Clint Brummitt). Three **Marbled Godwits** were at Hatfield Marine Science Center 3 Dec (N Strycker et al.), and eight were there 13 Dec (Khanh Tran).

This seems to be a good year for **Rock Sandpipers**. Three were along the s. jetty at Newport 3 Dec (N Strycker et al.). Jim Danzenbaker counted a remarkable 13 there at high tide 10 Dec, plus three more at Seal Rock with 75 **Surfbirds**. Khan Tran saw five **Rock Sandpipers** at Seal Rock 13 Dec, along with many **Black Turnstones** and **Surfbirds**.

Storms pushed many **Red Phalaropes** ashore around Newport 22 Dec (fide Dawn Grafe). Jill Grover found a very weak **Xantus's Murrelet** on the beach near Waldport 3 Dec (fide Range Bayer). An **Ancient Murrelet** was flying near the jetties at Yaquina Bay 10 Dec (J Danzenbaker).

A **Snowy Owl** turned up in the dunes just s. of the jetties at Yaquina Bay 26 Nov (P Bailey) and was seen through 17 Dec (m. obs.), joined briefly by a second 8 Dec (Dick Demarest). One turned up at Seal Rock 13 Dec (K Tran).

A **Clay-colored Sparrow** was found on South Jetty Yaquina Bay 17-18 Dec (Alan Contreras; Darrel & Laura Faxon; C Philo). A **Snow Bunting** was near Seal Rock State Park 26 Nov (P Bailey), and later one was seen along the south jetty at Yaquina Bay 3 Dec (N Strycker et al.).

Next issue

Please send your sightings for the next Chat issue to:

Joel Geier, 38566 Hwy 99W, Corvallis, OR 97330

Telephone: (541) 745-5020

e-mail: [jgeier@attglobal.net](mailto:jgeier@attglobal.net)

## Winter Wings Festival 2006 February 12 - 19 in Klamath Falls, Oregon

The 2006 Klamath Basin Winter Wings Festival, which coincides with the presence of wintering waterfowl and eagles, will take place February 12 - 19. The purpose of the Festival is to share information, increase awareness of community resources, and gain an understanding of the area's wildlife resources, especially the birds of the Klamath Basin.

The Festival, formerly known as the Klamath Basin Bald Eagle Conference, is supported by a number of organizations, including the Klamath Basin Audubon Society (KBAS).

Festival participants will be able to take guided tours with local birding experts. In addition, there will be trips to Crater Lake National Park for snowshoeing; Klamath National Wildlife Refuges for birding; and Lava Beds National Monument for caving and rock art.

Dave Eshbaugh, executive director of Audubon Oregon, will be on hand at the Festival to lead presentations and workshops about birding and Klamath Basin birds, the 2006 Great Backyard Bird Count, and IBAs in the Klamath Basin.

*For more information about the Winter Wings Festival, go to <<http://www.winterwingsfest.org/>>.*

# White-Headed Woodpecker a Threatened Bird?

*Note: The following was excerpted from the Audubon Society of Portland website. To read the entire article, go to [www.audubonportland.org/science/wh\\_woodpecker](http://www.audubonportland.org/science/wh_woodpecker).*

Research conducted over the past 13 years through support from the U.S. Forest Service, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Oregon Natural Heritage Program, the Oregon office of The Nature Conservancy, and most recently the Audubon Society of Portland, indicates the answer to the title's question could be yes, at least in the Northwest.

The White-headed Woodpecker's range is confined mainly to the arid ponderosa pine zones of eastern Oregon, Washington, and California. In the southern portions of its range it also uses Jeffrey and Sugar pines. In addition, there are limited populations in southern British Columbia, western Idaho, western Nevada, southwestern Oregon, and northwestern California.

Through much of this range, populations are thinly distributed or isolated, a danger signal because small, isolated populations are subject to extirpation.

To birders, this is one of the most sought-after western birds. It is a striking species with a white head and throat and white wing patches that contrast with a coal-black body. Males have a conspicuous red patch on the back of their heads. Oregon locales where this bird can usually be seen include the Metolius and Black Butte region west of Sisters in Deschutes County, Cabin Lake Guard Station north of Fort Rock in Lake County, Idlewald Campground north of Burns in Harney County, and the western border of Upper Klamath Lake in Klamath County.

White-headed Woodpeckers typically forage on insects deep in the cracks of the bark of large live pines. During fall and winter, they also depend upon pine seeds, which they extract from cones. Nesting cavities are excavated in snags. This woodpecker does not occur in all places where ponderosa pines grow. They are most often found in open stands of large old trees with minimum shrub and young-tree cover. These stands are now missing over much of their range. Through fire suppression and some types of logging, many ponderosa pine forests have changed from open park-like stands of large trees to dense thickets of small trees that often include competing firs.

Shrub growth has also changed the character of these forests. As a boy in the 1930s, while traveling through ponderosa pine forests, my father would decide when it was time to set up camp by his watch. He'd then drive off the road, straight into the forest to assure privacy. Today this is seldom, if at all, possible.

Why the changes? Natural fires originally controlled conifer reproduction and shrub growth in ponderosa pine

forests. Tree ring studies show that most fires occurred at 10- to 30-year intervals and the flames were confined to about four feet in height. The fires also controlled the amount of dead wood that remained on the ground.

Research conducted mainly by Dr. Richard W. Frenzel since 1997 in the Deschutes and Winema National Forests shows an alarming pattern of nest failures. By following the history of White-headed Woodpeckers that carry colored leg bands and over 400 nests, he has found their reproductive success averaged just 23 to 64 percent annually, depending upon the year and site. This has been too low to offset adult mortality. Nesting success was highest at sites with low shrub cover, high canopy closure, and snag densities. Frenzel looks into nest cavities with a specially designed illuminated scope to determine their progress and success.

Predation appears to be a serious problem. He has watched chipmunks and golden-mantled squirrels, which are known to take eggs and young birds, enter the cavities. These mammals are most abundant where there is heavy shrub cover and large quantities of dead wood, which was not typical of pre-settlement conditions in ponderosa pine forests. Assuming adequate funding next year for placing time-lapse motion cameras in place at nest sites, Frenzel hopes to identify which predators cause most of the mortalities. This could more fully define habitat restoration needs.

*-David B. Marshall, Wildlife Biologist*

## Important Bird Areas of Oregon

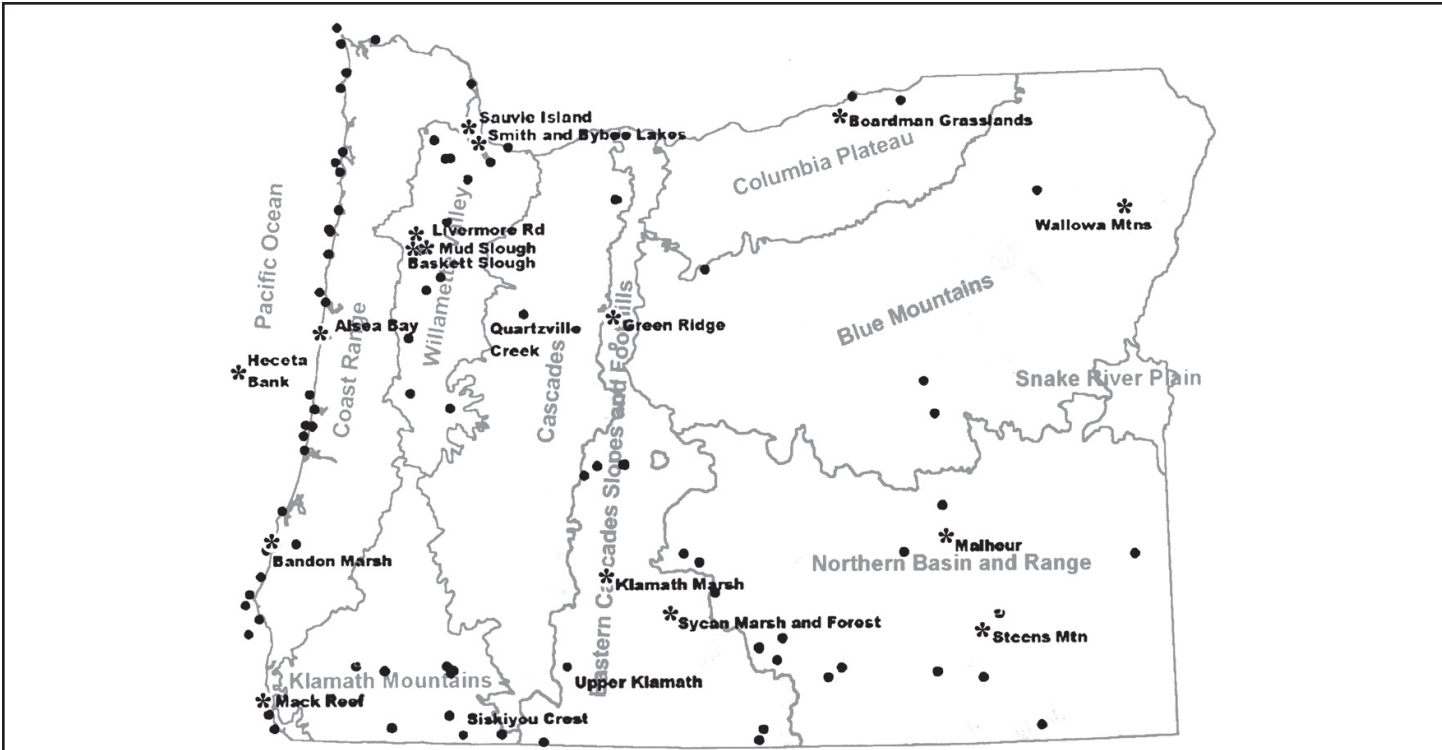
*Note: The following was excerpted from "The Important Bird Areas (IBAs) of Oregon: An ABA-sponsored Project," published on the American Birding Association's website. To read the entire article, go to <http://www.americanbirding.org/pubs/birding/archives/vol37no2p142to146.pdf>*

Oregon's Important Birding Areas (IBA) program is part of a global effort to identify specific geographic locations that are outstanding in their importance for breeding, foraging, or resting birds.

On August 24<sup>th</sup> of 2004, the Audubon Society of Portland publicly unveiled the Oregon Important Bird Areas program as a first step toward raising awareness of critical bird habitats around the state. Excellent press coverage, including a story on Oregon Public Broadcasting, has piqued interest in the program. We highlighted three sites that first day: Sauvie Island and Mud Slough in the Willamette Valley, along with Alsea Bay on the coast. Through the press and other outlets, we will continue to raise awareness and communicate the importance of healthy habitats for healthy bird populations.

104 IBAs have been identified thus far in Oregon. The





The Ecoregions and Important Birds Areas (IBAs) of Oregon. IBAs mentioned in the article are indicated as asterisks (\*). Oregon's other IBAs are indicated as black dots. Map by © Matt Hunter

Oregon IBA program has three major components: site identification, conservation, and education. In building this program, our first task has been to assemble a team of experts to serve as a Technical Advisory Committee. The committee's primary responsibilities are to identify IBAs in Oregon and to provide oversight and guidance for monitoring programs developed for Oregon IBAs. The committee consists of ornithologists and expert birders from around the state, representing different organizations as well as diversity of expertise with species groups and geographic areas. To date, the committee has reviewed 224 nominations and has identified 104 as IBAs in Oregon.

Each IBA in Oregon is unique; each is in a different community, each has a different owner (or combination of owners), and each has a unique management scenario. Some are protected refuges managed for wildlife, while others are on government land with little management consideration for birds. Some have existing "friends" groups, while others are little known and obscure.

**Contributors to the Chat**

Dave Helzer, David Marshall, Joel Geier, Randy Selig, Don Boucher, Paula Vanderheul, Rebecca Goggans, Susan Haig



Although still widespread and fairly numerous in western North America, the Burrowing Owl is disappearing from some regions. By preserving Important Bird Areas in Oregon and elsewhere, population declines may be halted or reversed. Lane County, Oregon; January 1999. © Don Baccus.

-Dave Helzer

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*the* **CHAT**

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**Calendar**

Jan 12	Board meeting
Jan 14	Saturday morning local birding 7:30 AM - Baskett Slough NWR*
Jan 15	Tracking Club 9 AM – noon*
Jan 19	General meeting 7:30 PM
Feb 5&12	Neighborhood Birding Workshop 9 AM*
Feb 11	Saturday morning local birding 7:30 AM*
Feb 12-19	Klamath Basin Winter Wings Festival**
Feb 18	Full day Fern Hill Wetlands and Jackson Bottom -Forest Grove/Hillsboro*
Feb 19	Tracking Club 9 AM – noon*
Feb 24-25	OSU Fish & Wildlife Club Film Festival***
Mar 11	Saturday morning local birding 7:30 AM*
Mar 19	Tracking Club 9 AM – noon*

\*see page 34–35

\*\*see page 37

\*\*\*see page 34

*The Chat* is published 10 times a year by the Audubon Society of Corvallis, PO Box 148, Corvallis OR 97339. Annual ASC memberships are \$20 for an individual, \$25 for a family, \$15 for a student. Chat-only subscriptions are \$10.

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