



Audubon Society of Corvallis the **CHAT**

March 2006

VOL. 35

#7

General Meeting

Thursday, March 16, 7:30 – 9:00 PM
First Presbyterian Church

Endangered Species Recovery Efforts in Brazil

*A presentation by Carlos Bianchi,
of the Dept. of Fisheries and Wildlife at OSU*

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.

Programs for Upcoming General Meetings

- April 20 *Distribution and Status of Black Oyster-catchers*, by Elise Elliott-Smith of USGS FRESO, Liz Kelly of the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and Caleb Spiegel of the Dept. of Fisheries and Wildlife at OSU
- May 18 *Iceland: Land of Fire and Ice*, by Dr. Barry Wulff of the Mary's Peak Chapter of the Sierra Club

Susan Haig

Birding in Corvallis

by Merlin (Elzy) Eltzroth

Now available online on the ASC website

Sheridan McCarthy and Don Boucher have worked to make Elzy's local birding guide available online. To access Elzy's enormously useful guide on where to see birds locally, go to http://www.audubon.corvallis.or.us/new/html_pages/birding_in_corvallis.htm, or from the ASC Home page, click on Birding Resources.

Note: This is a Web version of Elzy's popular booklet, which can be purchased at our general meetings or by contacting the sales table coordinator.

Think Globally

and/or Act Locally,
with Regard to Audubon Membership
National or local membership—it's our choice

Every one of you who joins the National Audubon Society automatically becomes assigned to a local chapter by the national office. Our local chapter provides you with benefits closer to home, while National Audubon lobbies for conservation nationally and internationally.

Funds are needed for activities on all scales. In the past, National Audubon agreed that funds are needed for all, and returned to local chapters a portion (about 14%) of your dues. Now, however, they've substantially reduced (to less than 3%), and very nearly eliminated totally, this "allowance" from our parent organization. This makes it difficult for us to meet all Chapter responsibilities, including our newsletter mailing, meeting room rental, speakers' expenses, and associated activities. Some of you, offended by our parent organization's neglectful attitude, have chosen to become local members only (see newsletter back page for dues), foregoing the Audubon magazine, which comes with a National Audubon membership (but not with a local membership).

Since both local chapters and the National Audubon Society promote conservation, the most generous position would be to financially support both offspring and parent alike, but not everyone has that option.

Amy Schoener, Membership Chairperson

In this issue:

ASC Birdathon	50
Atop the Nest Box	50
Dave Eshbaugh leaving Audubon Oregon	54
Update on the Endangered Species Act	54
Migrant Arrival Dates	55

6th Annual ASC Birdathon

April 29-30, 2006

Yes, once again it's time to get it in gear for the Birdathon! Here's a recap of highlights from last year's super-successful 'thon:

- We raised \$5800 for Hesthavn Nature Sanctuary.
- 26 people on 12 teams participated.
- More than 130 people/families sponsored a team.
- Top fundraiser secured 51 pledges, raising \$2050.
- Top birding team saw 139 species in a Benton County Big Day!

Think you can break one of those records? Or just want to get out, see some springtime birds, and raise a few bucks for a good cause? Then we want you on our team! Here's the scoop:

What is the Birdathon anyway?

The Birdathon is a fundraiser for our local nature center, and it raises awareness about birds and the Audubon Society in our community. It's basically a birding marathon. First you ask your relatives, friends, co-workers, and/or neighbors (like the ones who've hit you up to buy cookies and candy bars for their kids' fundraisers) to pledge a certain amount for each species of bird you might see, by yourself or as part of a team. Then, on the weekend of April 29, you go out and bird for however long you want, wherever you can get to in one weekend (Willamette Park, the coast, New Zealand...). This event is **open to all skill levels** and team participation is encouraged. If you're an armchair birder or can't go out that weekend, you can still participate by birding your own backyard or pledging to a team.

If you want to participate but feel uncomfortable asking people for money, consider pledging to yourself, in honor of a favorite aunt or grandparent! Then send them a letter telling where you went, what you saw, and what the money is going for.

Who benefits from the Birdathon?

All proceeds from the Birdathon go directly to Hesthavn Nature Center, ASC's 5 3/4 acre patch-o-heaven out on Oak Creek Road (west of 53rd Street). Hesthavn is dedicated to educating the community about our local environment. In the past 5 years, the Birdathon has raised almost \$23,000 for Hesthavn! Proceeds have gone to such worthy projects as museum display cases, a new floor for the Center, and a composting toilet. The most recent project added a weather-tight door and window to the Center.

The other benefactor of the Birdathon, of course, is YOU. Use this challenge to get yourself out the door, dust off your binoculars, and lift yourself out of that winter slump.

Business owners and teachers take note:

Could your local business benefit from some publicity? Consider being a business sponsor of the 'thon. Teachers: would you like to get your students out of the classroom for a day? Consider forming a student team, with an emphasis on the competition rather than the fundraising.

I'm in – Sign Me Up!

Simply pick up the information packet at our March or April monthly meeting, or contact me, Mary Van Brocklin, and I'll send or email you a packet (745-7170; <mary_vanbrocklin@yahoo.com>). We'll announce results at our May meeting and in the summer Chat, including winners for highest species count and highest amount of pledges collected. Go Team!

Mary Van Brocklin

Atop the Nest Box

Keep those cavity nesters out of your stove pipes and vents

It's time to cover all likely-looking holes, such as stove pipes and attic air or dryer vents. Close wood stove and chimney dampers. Even sewer gas vents from sinks and toilets which protrude from a roof will attract cavity nesters. Use "hardware cloth" with 1/4-1/2-inch wire mesh, but no larger (purchase in hardware stores). Install "spark arrestors" on chimneys. If clothes dryer vents don't close completely, a smart swallow, squirrel or mouse may move in.

Cavity nesters include swallows, bluebirds, wrens, chickadees, swifts, house sparrows and European starlings.

Elsie Eltzroth

Field Trip Schedule

Saturday Morning Local Birding (Year round)

Mar 11 Saturday morning local birding 7:30 AM

April 8 Saturday morning local birding 7:30 AM

May 13 Saturday morning local birding 7:30 AM

Our Saturday morning local field trip meets the second Saturday of every month at the Avery Park Rose Garden parking area at 7:30 AM. This field trip is especially interesting for beginner birders and birders new 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. Contact her at 541-752-047 or vanderp@peak.org.

Full day birding

On the full-day trips we car pool, sharing gas cost with the drivers. Everyone should bring a large lunch, drinks, binoculars, spotting scope (if available), 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.

Spring weekend birding

March 17-19: Bandon Coast (Trip full - waiting list open)

April 21-23: Klamath Basin (Two openings available)

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

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

Sign-up sheets and trip information will be available at the general meetings, or contact Fred Ramsey 541-753-3677 or flramsey5@earthlink.net.

Paula Vanderheul

Bicycle Birding Chat-o-rama

May 28, Sunday, 9 AM - Noon: Meet at the Pheasant cage parking lot on the north side of Camp Adair Drive (29555 Camp Adair Road Monmouth, OR 97361). This is the best site in Western Oregon to see and hear Yellow-breasted Chats. Many other bird species are possible along with colorful snakes, wildflowers and mammals. An easy, flat ride of 10 miles or less. Diehard bicyclists meet at 8:00 AM at the Benton Center parking lot 630 NW 7th and we'll ride to E.E. Wilson and back. Bring water and rain gear. Leader: Don Boucher at 753-7689 or bouchdon@juno.com.

Don Boucher

Birding Classes

Birding in the Willamette Valley

This class is easy and fun bird identification with emphasis on our locality. Learn identification techniques, how to choose field guides and binoculars, and good local birding sites.

This class is two weeks long with only two workshops on Saturdays both in the classroom and outside.

Week 1: **Sat., April 1, 9AM-2PM**—Classroom session at Avery House & field identification at Avery Park in Corvallis.

Week 2: **Sat., April 8, 9AM-2PM**—Classroom session at Avery House & field trip to Finley National Wildlife Refuge 10 miles south of Corvallis.

Birding by Ear: A study in the sounds of nature

Become familiar with local bird songs and calls. Learn some tips and techniques for listening and remembering bird sounds. Beginning birdwatchers should attend "Birding in the Willamette Valley" (above) first. A good opportunity for sight-impaired people to associate names to the bird voices. This is a two-week class.

Week 1:

Wed. night, Apr. 12, Classroom, 7-8:30 PM, Avery House.

Sat. morning, Apr. 15, 9-11 AM, meet at Avery House for a field trip to Willamette Park in Corvallis.

Week 2:

Wed. night, Apr. 19, Classroom, 7-8:30 PM, Avery House.

Sat. morning, Apr. 22, 9-11 AM, meet at Avery House for a field trip to Jackson-Frazier Wetland in Corvallis.

Cost:

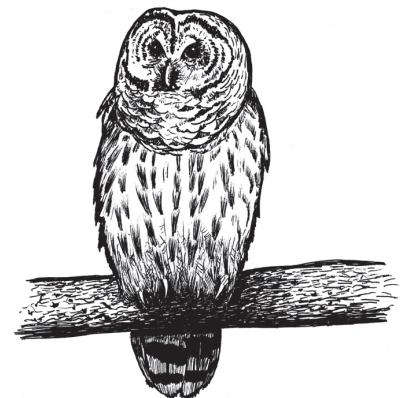
\$8 (Birding in the Willamette Valley & Birding by Ear cost \$8 each.) To register, contact the Avery House at www.peak.org/~ecenter, or (541) 758-6198. Instructor: Don Boucher 541-753-7689, bouchdon@juno.com.

25th Annual John Scharff Migratory Bird Festival and Art Show

April 7-9, 2006 in Burns, Oregon

Spend an amazing weekend witnessing the spectacular spring migration in the Harney Basin of Southeast Oregon. View thousands of migratory birds as they rest and feed in the wide open spaces of Oregon's high desert country. From waterfowl to shorebirds, cranes to raptors, wading birds to songbirds, you'll see it all! The festival offers non-stop birding activities as well as historical and cultural information sure to entertain you and your family. So, whether you're a beginner or a life-long wildlife enthusiast, the festival has something for everyone.

Register online at www.migratorybirdfestival.com, or by telephone at 541-573-2623.



Barred Owl
illustration by Don Boucher

Field Notes

January 24 through February 20, 2006

The soggy January weather finally came to an end, with the sun peeking out a few times on 1 Feb. The Pacific Tree-Frogs wasted no time in striking up their spring chorus. Two weeks of mild weather soon had snow queen blooming in the woods sw. of Philomath (Karan Fairchild), and 5th-8th graders on Inavale School's river walk at Willamette Park found osoberry blossoms as well as fringe cups, stinging nettles, and wild ginger putting up new leaves through the silty flood deposits at Willamette Park 13 Feb.

In the third week of February, a cold snap with temperatures down to 18° F nipped back some of the buds that had been opening on our red-flowering currants, a reminder of why early settlers called the Willamette Valley "the land of frozen buds." However, birds inspired by the increasing daylight were not deterred by a bit of cold; many species were singing and starting courtship by the end of the period. Hawks and owls started nesting, and our first spring migrants began to show up. Some local birdwatchers celebrated early "spring" by participating in the Audubon/Cornell-sponsored "Great Backyard Bird Count" (GBBC). Rufous Hummingbirds were showing up along the coast by the end of the period, and are due to show up inland any day. We can start watching feeders and early-blooming bushes for these most eagerly awaited harbingers of spring.

Abbreviations & Locations: imm. = immature; NWR = National Wildlife Refuge; 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. Hoacum Island is in Benton Co. across the main channel of the Willamette River from Peoria. Luckiamute Landing greenway is along the Willamette in se. Polk Co. McFadden Marsh is at Finley (NWR) south of Corvallis. Vanderpool Tract is just s. of Luckiamute Landing in ne. Benton Co.

Inland Reports

A **Greater White-fronted Goose** continued to consort with the Western Canada Geese at Toketie Marsh thru the period. Two distant white geese (either **Ross's** or **Snow Geese**) were at Finley 18 Feb (Joe Fontaine). An imm. **Snow Goose** was there 20 Feb (Jamie Simmons, Hendrik Herlyn) and a **Ross's Goose** was along Airport Rd. s. of Corvallis 27 Jan (Michael Dossett). On 31 Jan a single Brant was with a large group of **Cackling Geese** just s. of the airport (Molly Monroe).

A flock of up to 56 **Trumpeter Swans** continued at Suver Crossing (Airlie Rd. x Hwy 99W) in s. Polk Co. thru the period, sometimes splitting into smaller groups which were seen at other grass-seed fields around the neighborhood, and often in association with small flocks of Tundra Swans (m. obs.). Two **Whooper Swans** seen with them now and then were confirmed to be casual visitors from a nearby yard where they are kept as pets (fide Mike Lippsmeyer). Over 200 swans (probably **Tundra Swans**) were at McFadden Marsh 10 Feb (Marcia Cutler, Rich & Nanette Armstrong). Dabbling ducks were scattered across an abundance of habitat in flooded bottomlands in late Jan, but became more concentrated as drier weather wore on in Feb. A pair of **Gadwall** were at Finley 5-20 Feb (Erik Knight; Matthew Peterson; J Simmons). Two **Eurasian Wigeons** were with **American Wigeons**, **Northern Shovelers**, **Mallards**, **Green-winged Teal**, and about 200 **Northern Pintails** at Hoacum Island 24 Jan (Randy Campbell). One **Eurasian Wigeon** drake along Stapleton Rd. in s. Polk Co. 3 Feb was joined by two more 21 Feb (M Lippsmeyer); others included one at Finley 6 Feb (R Armstrong), two there 18 Feb (J Fontaine), and one at Stewart Lake 21 Feb (J Simmons). On 18 Feb two **Cinnamon Teal** were at Ankeny NWR, where one wintering bird was present 24 Dec (Howard Bruner, Greg Downing). Five at Toketie Marsh 22 Feb (p. obs.) seemed to signal the start of spring arrivals. At Stewart Lake, **Canvasbacks** were seen throughout the period, with a high count of seven on 16 Feb (J Simmons). A male **Redhead** was there 13-16 Feb (Bill Looney; J Simmons). The **Ring-necked Duck** flock there has numbered fewer than

ten daily in 2006, down from larger numbers in the fall; up to six **Lesser Scaup** were also present (J Simmons). A male **Common Goldeneye** was on the Willamette at Peoria 17 Feb (R Campbell). The Inavale School 5th-8th graders saw several **Common Mergansers** flying past Willamette Park during a field trip 13 Feb. Two **Mountain Quail** and two **California Quail** visited Margo Denison's yard during the GBBC in upper Soap Creek Valley 19 Feb. Up to three **Pied-billed Grebes** were at Stewart Lake throughout the period (J Simmons). Rana Foster counted 40 nest platforms (not yet active) at the **Great Blue Heron** nesting colony across the river from Willamette Park 1 Feb. Over 50 **Great Egrets** were in the Irish Bend area s. of Corvallis 25 Jan & 10 Feb (Paula Vanderheul, M Cutler; Noah Strycker). **Turkey Vultures** began to return, starting with two just n. of Corvallis 4 Feb (p. obs.), one s. of Scio 5 Feb (Dave Mellinger), and one over Oak Creek 8 Feb (Bill & Lena Proebsting). Singles and pairs were reported from scattered locations thru the end of the period. Several **White-tailed Kites** were seen regularly near Airlie. Four were in the Alsea area 3 Feb (M Cutler, Mary Garrard, R Armstrong). One was perched near the s. end of 53rd St. in SW Corvallis 20 Feb (Jim & Karan Fairchild). Good numbers of **Bald Eagles** were seen thru the period, with a total of 84 found on raptor surveys in w. Linn Co. 24-26 Jan (Jeff Fleischer, Kim Boddie; R Campbell). In Benton Co., 11 along Bruce Rd. 19 Feb Steve Seibel were the most reported. Raptor surveys in Linn and Benton Co. 24-26 Jan tallied a total of 146 **Northern Harriers** (J Fleischer et al.). The high numbers drawn by this year's spike in vole populations may have been responsible for some sightings in places where they are unusual, including over Middle Ridge (Raylene Gordin) and one over Thornton Creek in the Lincoln Co. coast range 4 Feb, only the sixth Darrel Faxon has seen there in 57 years. A large **Cooper's Hawk** perched on a fence in the Timberhill neighborhood of Corvallis 17 Feb (Andrea Foster). Reports of **Red-shouldered Hawks** have been sparse in comparison with recent winters; this month brought just four reports of single birds, all from Finley (M Dossett; M Peterson; Eric Knight; Steve Seibel). Nesting of **Red-tailed Hawks** was underway by 1 Feb, when I saw one carrying a stick into tall conifers at E.E. Wilson. An immature **Ferruginous Hawk** continued near Airlie thru 10 Feb (m. obs.), along with **Rough-legged Hawks** which continued thru the end of the period. An imm. **Golden Eagle** was perched along Center School Rd. sw. of Brownsville 24 Jan (J Fleischer). A **Merlin** in SW Corvallis 11 Feb perched on Joyce Derlacki's birdbath for about five minutes before flying off. **Peregrine Falcons** were seen regularly around Finley; on 19 Feb Steve Seibel had four separate sightings around the refuge, representing at least two falcons – one adult and one imm. The imm. bird made repeated attempts at American Robins which were numerous in the fields. **Prairie Falcons** included two near Harrisburg 24 Jan (Jeff Fleischer), one which was regularly along Glaser Rd. e. of Peoria thru 26 Jan (R Campbell), one on Glaser Rd. w. of Lebanon 28 Jan (Jeff Harding, Bill Thackaberry), one across the river from Peoria 18 Feb (R Campbell), and one continuing near Airlie thru 12 Feb (Khanh Tran; Ben Young). **Sandhill Crane** migration started 18 Feb when 300 flew north over Peoria (R Campbell), a flock flew over Middle Ridge (R Gordin), and 18 were flying around Ankeny (H Bruner, G Downing). Large **Dunlin** flocks were at Finley 5-10 Feb (E Knight; M Cutler) and along Eureka Rd. in the Irish Bend area 10 Feb (N Strycker). Linda Campbell saw **Wilson's Snipe** using the OSU experimental fields along Hwy 34 e. of Corvallis, from the January floods thru 14 Feb when 16 were in sight. Flocks of **Mew Gulls** and **Ring-billed Gulls** were in the Peoria area 18 Feb (R Campbell). A **Glaucous-winged Gull** was at 9th and Circle in Corvallis 18 Feb (H Bruner). A flock of 21 gulls along Eureka Rd. near Irish Bend 10 Feb included several **Herring Gulls** as well as **Glaucous-winged** and **Ring-billed Gulls** (N Strycker). **Mourning Doves** began to disperse from wintering flocks, including three in upper Soap Creek Valley 19 Feb (M Denison). As of 30 Jan a pair of **Barn Owls** were regular in evening around the Crop Science Bldg. on the OSU campus (Barry Schrupf fide Don Boucher). In mid-Feb Erez Gordin saw one swoop down to the ground just 50 ft. off the shoulder

of I-5 s. of Brownsville. **Great Horned Owls** started nesting this month; one at E.E. Wilson 7 Feb was brooding in an old hawk nest ENE of the parking lot for the WW II memorial park (M Cutler, P Vanderheul). Raylene and Erez Gordin had been hearing one calling from part of their property on Middle Ridge where they will be thinning Douglas-firs to restore native oaks; Raylene was happy to determine that the owl's nest is outside of the area to be thinned. On 10 Feb she also heard a **Northern Pygmy-Owl** in the area. On 1 Feb Rich Armstrong found a **Barred Owl** roosting in a tree farm near Highland Dell Park in n. Corvallis, where one has been heard occasionally in recent years. Jeff Fleischer watched a **Short-eared Owl** catch a vole from an annual ryegrass field e. of Harrisburg 24 Jan. Another was along Creek Dr. se. of Peoria 26 Jan (R Campbell). A **Northern Saw-whet Owl** at Mike Lippmeyer's place on Stapleton Rd. s. of Monmouth was "yammering away" as of 3 Feb. In NW Corvallis, a pair of **Anna's Hummingbirds** continued to patronize Andrea Foster's feeders thru 17 Feb; a male was singing in Jamie Simmons' yard 28 Jan and 18 Feb. A **Lewis's Woodpecker** flew over Airport Rd. at Hwy 99W 15 Feb (H Herlyn). A **Red-naped Sapsucker** turned up at Finley headquarters 2 Feb, and was seen intermittently through 9 Feb (Chantel Jimenez; N Strycker). A courting pair of **Red-breasted Sapsuckers** played tag from tree to tree in our front yard near E.E. Wilson 18 Feb. Inavale 5th-8th graders watched a **Downy Woodpecker** forage high on a black cottonwood at Willamette Park 13 Feb, as a **Brown Creeper** sang nearby. A nearly pure "**Yellow-shafted**" **Northern Flicker** (a male) visited Will Wright's suet feeder in sw. Corvallis 18 Feb. A **Black Phoebe** was Hoacum Island 24 Jan; together with one wintering in Peoria and another at Snag Boat Bend, this makes three in a 3-mile stretch of the Willamette River (R Campbell). Our earliest migrants, **Say's Phoebes**, turned up near Corvallis airport 23 Jan (P Vanderheul, M Cutler), near Peoria 26 Jan (R Campbell), in North Albany 6 Feb (Matt Hunter fide Elsie Eltzroth), and in Peoria 18 Feb (R Campbell). A **Northern Shrike** continued at the Marys River Natural Area thru 18 Feb (D Boucher, L Millbank; W Wright). **Hutton's Vireos** sang at Avery Park 12 Feb (D Boucher, L Millbank). Two **Gray Jays** and 14 **Steller's Jays** showed up for the GBBC in upper Soap Creek Valley (M Denison). **Common Ravens** have begun to pair up, including two sw. of Finley 20 Feb (J Simmons, H Herlyn). A few **swallows** began to show up, including a mysterious buffy-breasted individual s. of Corvallis 25 Jan (M Cutler). Two **Tree Swallows** were e. of Scio 7 Feb (Pat Waldron); 15 were at Ankeny 18 Feb (H Bruner, G Downing) and three were at Truax Island 19 Feb (D Boucher). On 17 Feb Becky and Nik Geier saw one or two white-bellied swallows at our place, either **Violet-green** or **Tree Swallows**. On 19 Feb a single **Violet-green Swallow** was at E.E. Wilson (B & L Proebsting), and two were there by 21 Feb (p. obs.). Ten **Barn Swallows** were n. of Baskett Slough 26 Jan (R Moore), and one was n. of Monroe 9 Feb (Pamela Johnston). **Black-capped Chickadees**, **White-breasted Nuthatches** and **Brown Creepers** were singing at Avery Park 12 Feb (D Boucher). Jeannine & Gil Lawrence saw **Chestnut-backed Chickadees** and **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** at Bezell Memorial Forest 11 Feb. **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** at E.E. Wilson seemed to be pairing up, with a few singing by 7 Feb (M Cutler, P Vanderheul). Jeannine & Gil Lawrence noted **Varied Thrushes** at Ritner Covered Bridge in Polk Co. 11 Feb, plus **Western Bluebirds** and hundreds of **American Robins** near Airlie. Large flocks of American Robins were conspicuous throughout the area in late Feb; one flock that converged on Middle Ridge in a single day stripped every shrub of the berries that Raylene Gordin was hoping the **Western Bluebirds** would find first. Rana Foster estimated 200,000 **European Starlings** streaming SSE across the river at Willamette Park at dusk on 1 Feb. Flocks of up to 50 **American Pipits** have been regular since Dec in the OSU experimental fields e. of Corvallis along Hwy 34 (Linda Campbell). A small flock of **Cedar Waxwings** in Corvallis 11 Feb (H Herlyn), and six at Stewart Lake 16 Feb (J Simmons), were the only reports this month. During the cold spell 19 Feb, **Yellow-rumped Warblers** were hopping around on pond ice at Truax Island, presumably snapping up stranded insects (D Boucher). An "**Audubon's**" **Yellow-rumped War-**

bler was a regular visitor, along with a **Townsend's Warbler**, at Rich & Nanette Armstrong's feeder in NW Corvallis. On 10 Feb a **Hermit Warbler** showed up, and returned 14 Feb long enough for Nanette to videotape it; it continued to visit thru the end of the period. **Spotted Towhees** started singing in local parks by 30 Jan (D Boucher). Numbers of wintering **Fox Sparrows** at E.E. Wilson seemed to dwindle this month (p. obs.), but on 19 Feb one showed up for the GBBC in the upper Soap Creek Valley (M Denison) and another visited a Timberhill yard (Andrea Foster). Two **Lincoln's Sparrows** at E. E. Wilson 1 Feb (p. obs.) were strangely the only ones reported. **White-throated Sparrow** reports also seemed to be down; however one turned up with **Golden-crowned Sparrows** in Peoria 16 Jan (Mary Campbell), one was at the Vanderpool Tract greenway 27 Jan (p. obs.), and one visited Jamie Simmons' NW Corvallis yard throughout the period, joined by a second 16 Jan and 6 Feb. An unusual, albinistic **Dark-eyed Junco**, with all-white cheeks resembling the facial pattern of a White-breasted Nuthatch, was seen in sw. Corvallis thru 18 Feb (W Wright). A "**Slate-colored**" **Junco** was in NW Corvallis 15 & 27 Jan (J Simmons). While studying a **Horned Lark** flock on a grass-seed farm s. of Corvallis 11 Feb, Randy Moore found two **Lapland Longspurs** and two **Chestnut-collared Longspurs**; the latter have only been found once before in Benton Co., in the same vicinity last year. **Red-winged Blackbirds** and **Brewer's Blackbirds** at E.E. Wilson were singing and squabbling over territory 1 Feb (p. obs.). 30 **Western Meadowlarks** continued at Vanderpool Tract thru 27 Jan; one was singing in the Marys River Natural Area 5 Feb (D Boucher, L Millbank). On 9 Feb Chris Miller wondered where the **Pine Siskins** have been this winter. It seems there have been very few in our area this winter; I have only seen one small flock all winter, and have received no reports since Dec. Jamie Simmons heard at least two **Evening Grosbeaks** in NW Corvallis 20 Feb. The first snake seen this spring was a **red-spotted garter snake** (subspecies of common garter snake) near Ashbrook School 12 Feb (D Boucher, L Millbank). A **black bear** was reportedly struck by a train on the Southern Pacific line, at the Haley Rd. crossing s. of Monmouth 9 Feb.

Coastal Notes

Two **Brants** were by the Hatfield Marine Science Center 23 Jan (D Mellinger). Paula Vanderheul and Marcia Cutler saw pairs of **Long-tailed Ducks** at two different locations on Yaquina Bay 21 Jan. Up to 8 in a single flock were seen inside the jetties during rough weather during late Jan (Wayne Hoffman). A **Barrow's Goldeneye** was seen among the numerous **Common Goldeneyes** on the upper bay 9 Feb (Janet Lamberson fide Range Bayer).

A **Pelagic Cormorant** flying past the south jetty of Yaquina Bay 6 Feb bore the white flank patches which they display during breeding (R Armstrong). Three **Black-bellied Plovers** and a **Marbled Godwit** were at Idaho Flats on Yaquina Bay 21 Jan (M Cutler, P Vanderheul). A **Wandering Tattler** continued at Yaquina Head thru 21 Jan (Cindy Ashy). A **Black-legged Kittiwake** was loafing behind the Hatfield Center at Yaquina Bay 25 & 28 Jan (Steve Shunk; J Harding, B Thackaberry). Bob Loeffel found two dead **Parakeet Auklets** on the beach 5 miles s. of Yaquina Bay 6 Feb (fide R Bayer). A **Snowy Owl** continued thru 10 Feb in the south jetty area of Yaquina Bay (Cindy Ashy, m. obs.). **Anna's Hummingbirds** at Jorrie & Ken Ciotti's place e. of Waldport were gathering cotton for nests from 21 Jan onward. Jorrie notes they became very aggressive around the feeders during the mid-Feb cold snap. The first male **Rufous Hummingbird** arrived at the Ciottis' 15 Feb; one also showed up in South Beach 17 Feb (Rebecca Cheek). A **Palm Warbler** was at the Hatfield Marine Science Center 28 Jan (J Harding, B Thackaberry). Two **Western Meadowlarks** were there 23 Jan (D Mellinger).

Next month

Please send your sightings by 28 Mar to me at:
Telephone: (541) 745-5020 e-mail: jgeier@attglobal.net

Joel Geier

Oregon Audubon Executive Director Leaving

Dave Eshbaugh, Executive Director of Oregon Audubon for the past three years, has announced that he is leaving his position to become Executive Director of the Oregon State Parks Trust. Effective March 3, Audubon Oregon's administrative office in Portland will close. After that date, we are told, Kathleen Nickerson, Administrative Assistant for Oregon Audubon, will answer inquiries related to statewide Audubon activities. The e-mail that Dave sent on February 22 to Audubon chapter leaders around the state didn't give any information about the basis for these developments, but he did say that National Audubon will not be refilling the position immediately. However, he also said that National Audubon Vice President Dan Taylor will be in contact with chapters soon to determine how Audubon can be most effective in addressing conservation needs in Oregon. Stay tuned.

Chris Mathews

Membership Data Audubon Chapters in Oregon

In one of his last official acts as Executive Director of Audubon Oregon, Dave Eshbaugh tabulated membership data for Oregon chapters going back several years. Readers of the Chat may find these data of interest.

As of December 31, 2005, there were 9,325 Audubon members in Oregon, of whom 8,506 (91.2%) were assigned to a local chapter. The other 819 members live in areas not assigned to chapters. Numbers of members in the Corvallis chapter for the past several years are as follows: 2001—676; 2002—657; 2003—624; 2004—585; 2005—642. Let's hope that the recent upturn continues. Interestingly, most of the other chapters also showed membership declines, reaching a minimum in 2004 and then rising last year. Percentagewise, our 2005 gain was larger than those of most of the other chapters.

Chris Mathews

Threat to the ESA Congress's most steadfast foe of the Endangered Species Act, Rep. Richard Pombo, has struck again.

Last fall, Rep. Pombo introduced, and the House hastily passed, a bill with several nasty revisions to the ESA:

- Rep. Pombo's bill eliminates requirements for the designation and protection of critical habitat, making the recovery of endangered species far less likely and the extinction of species far more likely.
- Under the Pombo bill, a developer can demand that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service determine, within 180 days, whether a proposed development will result in the death of threatened or endangered species. If the Fish and Wildlife Service fails to

make that determination in time, the developer is free to go forward with the development regardless of consequences for endangered species.

- "Paying for obeying the law." Even if the Fish and Wildlife Service meets the 180-day deadline and determines that a proposed development will result in the death of threatened or endangered species, the developer can then demand full compensation from taxpayers for the fair market value of the proposed development in exchange for not going forward with it.
- The bill eliminates the National Marine Fisheries Service from marine species conservation. (NMFS has managed such conservation for over 30 years). The bill moves responsibility to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, but fails to provide any additional resources for FWS.
- Federal agencies would no longer have to consult the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or the National Marine Fisheries Service to insure that their actions do not jeopardize the continued existence of threatened or endangered species. Instead of consultation, they could use some unspecified "alternative procedure," potentially allowing agencies to bypass consultation altogether.

What You Can Do:

The most important thing to do is contact your senators. Call the Capitol at 202-224-3121 and ask for the offices of Oregon's senators, Gordon Smith and Ron Wyden. Better yet, write to them at "U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510." Or even better, talk to them in person, when they're either here in Oregon or in D.C. Tell them you object to these revisions to the ESA -- be as specific as possible, and mention the points above.

Dave Mellinger

Evangelical Church Leaders Issue Statement on Climate Change

In February, 86 influential leading U.S. Christian evangelicals said they supported "national legislation requiring ... economy-wide reductions" in carbon emissions. The leaders signed a proclamation that quotes the Bible in support of taking action to stop climate change:

- Christians must care about climate change because we love God the Creator and Jesus our Lord, through whom and for whom the creation was made. This is God's world, and any damage that we do to God's world is an offense against God Himself (Gen. 1; Ps. 24; Col. 1:16).
- Christians, noting the fact that most of the climate change problem is human induced, are reminded that when God made humanity he commissioned us to exercise stewardship over the earth and its creatures.

(Gen. 1:26-28).

Among the signers of the statements were presidents of 39 evangelical colleges, leaders of churches and aid groups like the Salvation Army, and pastors of megachurches, including Rick Warren, author of the best-seller "The Purpose-Driven Life" and pastor of an 85,000-member church in California. More is to come: The statement is only the first step of the Evangelical Climate Initiative, which will

include television and radio advertisements, informational campaigns in churches, and educational events at Christian colleges.

Dave Mellinger

Contributors to *The Chat*

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Corvallis Bird Phenology / Migrant Arrival Dates

Bird phenology records in Corvallis date from 1970. The last phenology table was published in the Chat in March 1994. This list updates the arrivals through the spring of 2002.

Average arrival	Species	Number years	Earliest arrival	Average arrival	Species	Number years	Earliest arrival
Jan 29	Say's Phoebe (M)	04	Jan 07	Apr 22	Hammond's Flycatcher	11	Apr 14
Feb 10	Tree Swallow	27	Jan 10	23	MacGillivray's Warbler	29	Apr 02
19	Turkey Vulture	29	Jan 17	24	Semipalmated Plover (M)	17	Feb 07
27	Horned Grebe (M)	03	Feb 03	24	Warbling Vireo	28	Mar 20
Mar 02	Rufous Hummingbird	32	Feb 14	24	Whimbrel (M)	03	Apr 13
03	Violet-green Swallow	29	Feb 21	26	Western Kingbird	23	Apr 15
13	Cinnamon Teal	27	Jan 31	27	Calliope Hummingbird (M)	13	Apr 06
13	Sandhill Crane (M)	17	Jan 26	27	Western Tanager	27	Feb 28
16	Band-tailed Pigeon	20	Feb 04	28	Hermit Warbler	18	Apr 01
19	Long-billed Dowitcher (M)	20	Jan 19	28	Pacific-slope Flycatcher	26	Apr 02
21	Orange-crowned Warbler	30	Feb 11	29	Yellow Warbler	22	Apr 10
22	Osprey	30	Jan 28	May 01	Pectoral Sandpiper (M)	04	Apr 15
31	Cliff Swallow	25	Mar 17	01	Purple Martin	10	Mar 17
Apr 02	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	24	Mar 22	03	Swainson's Thrush	24	Apr 05
03	American Bittern	17	Feb 16	03	Western Wood-Pewee	21	Apr 07
04	Common Yellowthroat	31	Mar 18	04	Red-eyed Vireo	02	Apr 06
05	Barn Swallow	27	Mar 22	05	Black-headed Grosbeak	29	Apr 23
05	Sora	20	Feb 22	05	Bullock's Oriole	23	Apr 11
08	Lesser Yellowlegs (M)	19	Jan 20	06	Blue-winged Teal (M)	20	Apr 21
09	Black Swift (M)	03	Mar 30	06	Lazuli Bunting	26	Apr 22
10	Black-throated Gray Warbler	30	Mar 15	07	Olive-sided Flycatcher	23	Apr 20
10	House Wren	24	Feb 21	07	Red-necked Phalarope (M)	13	Apr 23
11	Chipping Sparrow	26	Mar 07	10	Wilson's Phalarope (M)	20	Apr 20
12	Black-bellied Plover (M)	10	Feb 26	12	Yellow-breasted Chat	21	Apr 04
13	Long-billed Curlew (M)	05	Mar 18	14	Marbled Godwit (M)	02	May 09
14	Vesper Sparrow	13	Mar 19	16	Willow Flycatcher	18	Apr 25
15	Nashville Warbler	18	Mar 13	18	Black-throated Sparrow (M)	04	May 15
17	Cassin's Vireo	30	Mar 26	19	Black Tern (M)	07	Apr 02
18	Black-necked Stilt (M)	09	Apr 09	Jun 02	Pacific Golden-Plover (M)	02	May 19
18	Willet (M)	03	Apr 03	04	Common Nighthawk	13	May 10
18	Wilson's Warbler	28	Apr 03	07	Eastern Kingbird (M)	04	May 23
20	Vaux's Swift	30	Apr 05				
21	Solitary Sandpiper (M)	21	Apr 08				
21	Yellow-headed Blackbird	20	Feb 21				

(M): Migrant, does not spend the season or breed in our area

-Compiled by Alan McGie

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the **CHAT**

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Calendar

Mar 11 Saturday local birding 7:30 AM*
Mar 17-19 Bandon Coast field trip*
Mar 27-29 Avery House Spring Break at the Beach**
Mar 28 Deadline to submit sightings for April Field Notes
Mar 30 Deadline to submit articles for April Chat
Mar 30-31 Avery House Spring Break at the Beach**
Mar 31-Apr 3 Aleutian Goose Festival**
Apr 1 Birding in the Willamette Valley, week 1***
Apr 7-9 John Scharff Migratory Bird Festival
Apr 8 Saturday local birding 7:30 AM*
Apr 8 Birding in the Willamette Valley, week 2***
Apr 12&15 Birding by Ear, week 1
Apr 19&22 Birding by Ear, week 2
Apr 21-23 Klamath Basin field trip*
May 5-7 Rogue Valley field trip*
May 13 Saturday local birding 7:30 AM*
May 18-21 Malheur NWR field trip*
May 28 Bicycle Chat-o-rama*

*See Field Trips on pages 50-51

**See February Chat for details

***See Birding Classes on page 51

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