



Audubon Society of Corvallis the **CHAT**

May 2006

VOL. 35

#9

General Meeting

Thursday, May 18, 7:30 – 9:00 PM
First Presbyterian Church

Iceland: Land of Fire and Ice

A presentation by Dr. Barry Wulff

This month's speaker is Dr. Barry Wulff, President of the Mary's Peak Sierra Club here in Corvallis. Barry is a retired botanist and leads natural history trips locally as well as internationally. He has frequently taken Corvallis residents to Iceland, so this month he will share his photos and memories of this enchanted land.

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.

Elections for board members will take place at the May general meeting. See page 66 for details.

There will be no general meetings in June, July, or August.

Beware the Grouse

Dendragapus obscurus—Pacific sooty

Braving unseasonably cold temperature, light hail, brisk winds and real threat of injury, this photograph is evidence of a very aggressive Blue Grouse (*Dendragapus obscurus*-Pacific sooty). Until Saturday, April 2, it was I who chased birds not birds who chased me!

Suffering repeated attacks of beak and wing, I come away with stings and bruises. Fortunately, he confined his attacks to my lower extremities. Had I known his propensity for brutality the



day before, I would not have laid on the ground and allowed his approach while trying to get a photograph from the perfect angle.

So, my birding and photography friends, let my experience be a lesson....**BEWARE THE GROUSE!**

Nan Moore

Don L. MacDonald ASC founding member will be missed

Corvallis Audubon lost one of its founding members on April 3 with the death of Donald L. MacDonald from Lou Gehrig's disease. Marcia Cutler, ASC Historian, has compiled an impressive record of MacD's service to ASC. He served as a Board member at large in 1971-72 and again in 1980-81; as Treasurer from 1972 to 1974; as Vice President in 1974-75; as President from 1981 to 1983; and as CHAT editor from 1988 to 1992. In addition he compiled the Corvallis Christmas Bird Count from 1965 to 1969.

MacD was an enthusiastic birder, who traveled widely in the world to observe birds, and who regularly participated in several of Oregon's Christmas bird counts. Although a native of Canada, MacD wore his Scottish heritage on his sleeve and in his speech, and regularly wore a kilt on ceremonial occasions.

I knew MacD better through our shared interests in biochemistry than through birding passions. MacD and

See "Don MacDonald" on next page

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Don MacDonald *continued from front page*

Elizabeth moved to Corvallis in 1962 with their three children, after previous positions at the University of California (Berkeley) and the National Institutes of Health. He was a well-known carbohydrate chemist, and he was serving as Acting Chair of the OSU Department of Biochemistry and Biophysics at the time I was recruited in 1977 to chair the department on a continuing basis. In so many ways MacD eased the strain of our move—overseeing renovations for my laboratory and aiding in the transfer of my students from the U of Arizona to OSU, in the several months before my arrival. He carried heavy responsibilities, including teaching some of our department’s most demanding courses and serving as graduate adviser and chief predoctoral adviser. In 1984-85 he served again as acting chair, while I was on sabbatical.

He was a real gentleman, and his retirement in 1987 was a bittersweet experience for me. But that gave him and Elizabeth more time to visit their children and their families and to stay at Innisfree, their beloved second home in the Coast Range. MacD will be missed, both by Corvallis Audubon and by his colleagues and friends in the University community.

Chris Mathews

Email Address Change

The Chat Editors' email address is changing

The Chat editors' new email address is chateditors@gmail.com. The old address will still work for awhile, but please send all future submissions to the new address.

Board Elections

Are happening at this month's general meeting

Members are encouraged to participate in the election of our board and officer nominees during the May general meeting. Board and officer positions will take effect in September.

The election slate is as follows:

President	Chris Mathews
Vice President/Program Chair	Susan Haig
Secretary	Marcia Cutler
Treasurer	Judy Hays
Board Member-at-Large	Paula Vanderheul
Board Member-at-Large	John Gaylord
Board Member-at-Large	Erin McCabe
Board Member-at-Large	Linda Campbell
Board Member-at-Large, Hesthavn Programs	Elise Elliott-Smith
Board Member-at-Large, Education	Leah Gorman
Board Member-at-Large, Education	Will Wright
Board Member-at-Large, Fund-raising	Karan Fairchild
Board Member-at-Large, Refreshments	Claudia Regier

2005 Bluebird Trail Results

There have been many sightings of bluebirds this spring. Some are headed north to British Columbia and Alberta favoring the Willamette Valley as an easy route. In February, when I took shredded paper files to the Recycling Center at Jack London St. and 99W, a banded male Western Bluebird was singing his heart out for me from the utility wires! Pairs that were successful last year are already defending their territories. The nesting season in 2005 was similar to what we had in 2004.

Total: 563 banded		
Laura Nagy: 212	Benton Co.	
ASC Trail: Western Bluebirds		
Elsie Eltzroth/CS: 297	Benton Co.	
Carole Steckly: 5		Polk Co.
Raylene Gordin: 41		Linn Co.
White Breasted-Nuthatches:		8 Benton Co.
Year	2004	2005
Boxes	75	95
Used	60	68
Pairs	55	56
Attempts	90	91
Success	68	66
Eggs laid	459	446
Hatched	386	338
Banded/fledged	315	292
Avg. clutch	5.1	4.9
First broods	54	
Second broods	34	
Third broods		3

Elsie Eltzroth

Field Trip Schedule

May 13	Saturday morning local birding 7:30 AM
May 20	Fern Ridge Wildlife Area 7:30 AM (full day)
June 10	Saturday morning local birding 7:30 AM
July 8	Saturday morning local birding 7:30 AM
Aug 12	Saturday morning local birding 7:30 AM
Sept 9	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.

Fern Ridge Wildlife Area May 20, 2006

Paula Vanderheul will lead a birding trip to Fern Ridge Wildlife where Virginia Rail, American Bittern, Sora, Black Tern, Purple Martin, Wilson's Phalarope, Yellow-headed Blackbirds, and more should be seen along dike at Fisher Butte Unit. 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 4:00 PM. Contact Paula Vanderheul for questions. vanderp@peak.org 541-752-0470

Spring weekend birding

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

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 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 Fred Ramsey 541-753-3677 or framsey5@earthlink.net

Salem Audubon Field Trip June 8—June 11 - Pendleton Area

Three spaces are available. The leader is Glen Linderman (503-364-6968) or gdalindy@earthlink.net.

Pendleton Birding Club members will be guides to hot birding spots in the area. Contact Glen for further information about the accommodations.

Paula Vanderheul

Bicycle Birding in Corvallis

May 28 Chat-o-rama. Meet at the pheasant cage parking lot on the north side of Camp Adair Drive. 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. For die-hard bicyclists, you can meet at 8:00 AM at the Benton Center parking lot 630 NW 7th and we'll ride to E.E. Wilson and back.

June 25 Sunday: Meet at the Avery Park Rose Garden. Destination: Marys River Natural Area in Corvallis (Brooklane Dr).

July 30 Sunday: Meet at the Avery Park Rose Garden. Destination—Willamette Park in Corvallis.

All trips are 9 AM—noon. Easy and flat ride of 3-10 miles. We'll poke along and find birds in every nook and

cranny along bike routes in Corvallis. Bring water, binoculars and rain gear. Led by Don Boucher at 753-7689 or bouchdon@juno.com.

Don Boucher

Hesthavn Kids Programs

Registration is required for all classes. Please call Elise (750-7390) to register your child. Classes are free, but a \$10 donation is suggested to cover class expenses.

Wild About Butterflies

Sunday, May 7th, 1:00 - 3:00 PM, Ages: 6-11

Spring is a great time to discover new things about our showiest insects, butterflies and moths (Lepidoptera). After we learn about the lifestyles of some local Lepidoptera, we'll go on a caterpillar trek to see which ones make Hesthavn their home and plant native flowers in Hesthavn's new butterfly garden.

Art and Nature

Sunday, May 21st, 1:00-3:00 PM, Ages: 6-11

This workshop encourages each child to experience their own uniqueness through closeness to and interpretation of nature with various art materials.

Spring Bird Day

Sun, June 4th, 10:00 AM-1:00 PM, Ages: 6-11

The sun is out and the birds are singing! Learn more about feathered friends that migrate through or stop to nest in the Willamette Valley. With a little luck, we may even get to meet a few live birds!

Elise Elliott-Smith

Neighborhood Naturalist Events

Native Wildflowers of the Willamette Valley

May 27 10am-3pm. Free. Meet at Finley National Wildlife Refuge

Join a guided wildflower walk to see some of the valley's most unique lowland species. Dozens of species in the little-known Willamette Floodplain National Natural Landmark located on the refuge. Bring lunch, water and raingear and expect to walk several miles. May also see birds, reptiles and mammals (such as otter or elk.). For directions or more info Don Boucher 753-7689, bouchdon@juno.com. www.neighborhood-naturalist.com

Tracking Club

May 21 9am-12. Free.

June 18 9am-12. Free.

Find tracks and other signs of animals and birds. Sundays. Meet at Avery Park Rose Garden in Corvallis at 9 AM. Return at noon. We'll carpool to a local tracking spot. For more information, contact Don Boucher, 753-7689, www.neighborhood-naturalist.com

Don Boucher

Field Notes:

March 27 thru April 24, 2006

Cool, wet weather through mid-April seemed to hold up the arrival of many neotropical migrants, but not wildflowers as Oregon iris, western buttercups and striped coralroot were blooming on Coffin Butte by 7 Apr. Don Boucher and Lisa Millbank found Nuttall's violet, western blue violet, yellow wood violet, and Henderson's shooting star blooming on Pigeon Butte 9 Apr. Oregon white oaks leafed out on Coffin Butte by 24 Apr as warmer weather set in.

Abbreviations & Locations: NWR = National Wildlife Refuge; SAS = Salem Audubon Society; STP = sewage treatment ponds; m. obs. = multiple observers; p. obs. = personal observation. Coffin Butte and E.E. Wilson (Wildlife Area) are north of Corvallis along Hwy 99W. McFadden Marsh is at Finley (NWR) s. of Corvallis. Middle Ridge is s. of Lebanon. Stewart Lake is on the Hewlett-Packard campus in ne. Corvallis. Thornton Creek is in the Coast Range of eastern Lincoln Co.

Inland Reports:

The **Greater White-fronted Goose** which spent early spring at Toketie Marsh was last seen 21 Apr; twenty at Baskett Slough 23 Apr (Erik Knight) were the first migrant flock reported. A small flock of **Snow Geese** flew over Marys River Natural Area 16 Apr (D Boucher, L Millbank). One was also seen near Finley 19-22 Apr (Rich & Nanette Armstrong, Paula Vanderheul, Marcia Cutler, Mary Gerard; Jamie Simmons). A **Brant** seen ne. of Corvallis 9 Apr (Debbie Davis) was perhaps the same bird seen w. of town last month. One was at Finley NWR 22 Apr (J Simmons, Joe Fontaine). A **Red-breasted Goose** which is believed to have escaped last month from a captive flock near McMinnville made its way south, with sightings ne. of Corvallis 9 Apr (D Davis) and at Finley NWR 19-22 Apr (m. obs.). Two broods of the locally nesting **Canada Geese** were cruising ponds at E.E. Wilson by 10 Apr (Ray Fiori). An estimated 6500 to 7500 **Cackling Geese** were still at Finley 22 Apr (J Simmons, J Fontaine).

A lone swan at McFadden Marsh 16 Apr appeared to be a **Trumpeter Swan** based on neck length and facial structure (Chris & Mike Miller). A male **Trumpeter Swan** which attempted to pair with a semi-captive **Whooper Swan** near Suver apparently lingered into early Mar after the main flock departed (fide Mike Lippsmeyer). 19 **Tundra Swans** were at Baskett Slough 23 Apr (E Knight).

A male **Eurasian Wigeon** was at Stewart Lake 5-13 Apr (J Simmons). A male **Northern Shoveler** at Stewart Lake 11 Apr was the last there, but 80 were at Knoll Terrace STP 18 Apr (J Simmons; R Armstrong). Flocks of **Northern Pintail** and **Green-winged Teal** also continued thru the period at Finley NWR. A male "**Common**" **Teal** (Eurasian subspecies of Green-winged Teal) was along Bruce Rd. at Finley 19-22 Apr (R Armstrong et al.; J Simmons). Up to 8 **Canvasbacks** continued at Stewart Lake thru 5 Apr, along with a male **Redhead** which stayed thru 18 Apr (J Simmons). A male **Canvasback** was at Philomath STP (R Armstrong et al.). **Greater Scaup** (two males and two probable females) were at Knoll Terrace STP 18 Apr (R Armstrong). **Lesser Scaup** were present in small numbers at Stewart Lake thru 7 Apr, plus one male there 17 Apr; 50 were at the Knoll Terrace STP along with 20 **Buffleheads** 18 Apr (R Armstrong). **Hooded Mergansers** were noted regularly at E. E. Wilson and Finley. **Common Mergansers** were at Willamette Park 13 Apr (P Vanderheul et al.). A pair of **Ruddy Ducks** were at Philomath STP 19 Apr (R Armstrong et al.).

Mountain Quail were calling at Thornton Creek 9 Apr (Darrel Faxon). A **Pied-billed Grebe** was carrying vegetation to a nest with an egg at McFadden Marsh 21 Apr (p. obs.). Six **Double-crested Cormorants** flew north over Coffin Butte 20 Apr, by which date most had left the valley, but one was still at Finley 21 Apr. The **Great Blue Heron** pair nesting at Toketie Marsh appeared to be tending chicks in the next by the end of the period. A **Great Egret** continued at McFadden Marsh thru 13 Apr (P Vanderheul). A **Green Heron** was building a nest in trees at Willamette Park 26 Apr (D Boucher, L Millbank).

The **Osprey** nest at Hewlett-Packard in Corvallis, usually one of

the last nests to be occupied each spring, held a pair 1 Apr (P Vanderheul). Steve Seibel noted that the returning **Ospreys** put a lot of energy into harassing **Bald Eagles** around downtown Corvallis and elsewhere. **White-tailed Kites** were seen just e. & just w. of Alsea 6 Apr (R Armstrong et al.). **Bald Eagle** sightings over Stewart Lake 28 & 31 Mar (J Simmons) might have indicated stirrings as most migrated out. A nest in the Finley area was attended thru the end of the period (S Seibel).

A **Cooper's Hawk** in the Timberhill neighborhood was vocalizing as if guarding a nest 17 Apr (Andrea Foster). Also in NW Corvallis, one has occasionally nabbed **Mourning Doves** and **Band-tailed Pigeons** from Chris Miller's feeders. An adult **Red-shouldered Hawk** was at McFadden Marsh 22 Apr (J Simmons). A **Peregrine Falcon** dined on a kill in a snag at McFadden Marsh 16 Apr (C & M Miller); one was still nearby at the end of the period (Will Wright).

Virginia Rails were calling at E. E. Wilson 8 Apr (P Vanderheul). **Soras** returned, with one at Finley 19 Apr (Michael Dossett), one at E.E. Wilson 24 Apr (R Fiori), and more at these spots and Jackson-Frazier Wetland as these notes went to press (m. obs.). **American Coots** performed mating displays at Finley 19 Apr (R Armstrong et al.). A **Sandhill Crane** stopped by the north prairie at Finley 27 Apr (R Armstrong et al.).

A **Black-bellied Plover** was at Baskett Slough 8 Apr (B Young), and one was just n. of Monmouth 24 Apr (R & N Armstrong). A **Killdeer** was guarding an egg at Finley 9 Apr (Jim Norton); two chicks with parents were running around at the Corvallis recycling center 16 Apr (Bob Altman). Eight **Greater Yellowlegs** at McFadden Marsh 13 Apr (P Vanderheul et al.) was the high count this month. A **Lesser Yellowlegs** was at E.E. Wilson 10 Apr (p. obs.). **Solitary Sandpipers** were found in good numbers, starting with one at Finley and two at Monroe STP 25 Apr (Noah Strycker; R Armstrong et al.), one at E.E. Wilson 27 Apr (p. obs.) and a remarkable seven in Monroe 27 Apr (R Armstrong et al.). A migrant **Spotted Sandpiper** was at Stewart Lake 24 Apr (J Simmons, Jim Anderson).

A **Long-billed Curlew** in a field by Hwy 99W in s. Corvallis 22 Apr appeared to be a male based on bill size (J Simmons, J Fontaine). A few **Western Sandpipers** were near Corvallis Airport 19 Apr (R Armstrong et al.). A mixed flock of 50 **Least & Western Sandpipers** were near Buena Vista 23 Apr (Glen Lindeman). Flocks of **Dunlin** continued thru the period, as **Long-billed Dowitchers** were also moving thru. **Wilson's Snipe** were still "winnowing" n. of Lebanon 9 Apr (Jeff Harding).

A **Barn Owl** called in NW Corvallis 16 Apr (J Simmons). A **Western Screech-Owl** called at Elsie Eltzroth's yard on Vineyard Mtn 4 Apr, joined at intervals by a second owl nearby (fide M Cutler). A **Great Horned Owl** nest on Middle Ridge was emitting screeches by 30 Mar, with a youngster remaining in or around the nest thru 26 Apr (Raylene Gordin). **Northern Saw-whet Owls** were calling nightly at Thornton Creek 9 Apr, with **Northern Pygmy-Owls** holding down the day shift (D Faxon). The first definite sighting of **Vaux's Swifts** was over Avery Park 12 Apr (D Boucher).

A pair of **Red-breasted Sapsuckers** appeared to be using cavity in a snag along the trail at Coffin Butte 20 Apr (p. obs.). A pair of **Downy Woodpeckers** shared the same tree branch at Stewart Lake 10 Apr (J Simmons). A **Pileated Woodpecker** was calling in NW Corvallis 23 Apr where two have been seen (C Miller).

A **Olive-sided Flycatcher** turned up in near Forest Dell Park 24 Apr (R Armstrong). A non-vocal flycatcher found by the SAS field trip to E.E. Wilson 22 Apr appeared to be a **Hammond's Flycatcher** (John Matthews, G Lindeman, p. obs.). A **Western Kingbird** was along Greenberry Rd. near Tyeen Vineyards 20 Apr (Nate Richardson). A shrike at Finley NWR 9-10 Apr turned out to be a **Northern Shrike** (M Dossett; N Strycker). Bill Proebsting heard what sounded like a **Cassin's Vireo** on the OSU campus on 3 Apr, a very early date so mimics such as Purple Finch or European Starlings might be suspected. The first "heard and seen" **Cassin's Vireo** was on Coffin Butte 22 Apr (SAS field trip). The first one on Middle Ridge turned up 27 Apr (R Gordin).

A **Gray Jay** was along Wynoochee Drive near Bald Hill 27 Mar (Dave Mellinger). A **Steller's Jay** in NW Corvallis 23 Apr was the first

to visit Jamie Simmons' yard in several months, suggesting seasonal movement. A **Western Scrub-Jay** nest near Corvallis had four eggs 8 Apr and a fifth egg 9 Apr (fide Kevin Spencer).

Two male "**Streaked**" **Horned Larks** (the imperiled subspecies endemic to our area) were singing at Finley 21 Apr, as a female foraged on the shoulder of Bruce Rd. An adult male **Purple Martin** scouted nest boxes e. of Scio 18 Apr (Pat Waldron). A spectacular swarm of hundreds of **swallows** were over McFadden Marsh 16 Apr (C & M Miller); by 21 Apr the swarm included **Barn**, **Violet-green**, **Tree**, and **Cliff Swallows**. The first **Northern Rough-winged Swallow** seen was at Willamette Park 15 Apr (D Boucher, L Millbank). **Cliff Swallows** arrived 18 Apr in downtown Corvallis and at the Knoll Terrace STP (D Boucher; R Armstrong). A lone **Barn Swallow** was at Baskett Slough 31 Mar (Quinton Nice), more were at Finley 9 Apr (D Boucher, L Millbank), and some were nesting in s. Corvallis 20 Apr (R Armstrong).

A pair of **Black-capped Chickadees** were cleaning out a nest cavity on Coffin Butte 5-7 Apr. At Stewart Lake, two **Bushtit** nests were in use and a pair of **White-breasted Nuthatches** were going in and out of a nest box by 5 Apr (J Simmons). A **Bewick's Wren** appeared to be building a nest in a stone cairn on Coffin Butte 29 Mar (R & N Armstrong). A **House Wren** sang briefly at Stewart Lake 5 Apr, and one was singing there again 20 & 24 Apr; surprisingly these were the only reports in the state as of 24 Apr (J Simmons). **Marsh Wrens** were noted at 8 Apr at E.E. Wilson, where the boisterous population is expanding in wetland restorations, as well as traditional spots at Finley 9 Apr (P Vanderheul; D Boucher, L Millbank). **American Dippers** were at Alsea Falls and along the Alsea River e. of town 6 Apr (R & N Armstrong, P Vanderheul, M Cutler).

Winter kinglet flocks departed from low elevations this month. **Golden-crowned Kinglets** were last noted at Baskett Slough 8 Apr (B Young). A late **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** was at Stewart Lake 24 Apr (J Simmons). **Western Bluebirds** seemed to be planning to nest in the SW part of E.E. Wilson as of 24 Apr (R Fiori). Those on Middle Ridge were nesting late, with some still traveling and foraging rather than bonding to territory as of 24 Apr (R Gordin).

A few **American Pipits** were still at Baskett Slough 11 Apr (B Young). **Cedar Waxwings** continue to be sparse; three in NW Corvallis 15 Apr were the only ones that Jamie Simmons noted this month.

Spring warbler migration was notably behind average. The first definite **Orange-crowned Warblers** were two bright, singing males on Coffin Butte 7 Apr (p. obs.), two weeks later than usual. Both **Audubon's** and **Myrtle** forms of **Yellow-rumped Warblers** were sporting their bright spring plumage by early Apr (m. obs.), but large migrant flocks were not widespread until 20 Apr. A **Black-throated Gray Warbler** singing and foraging on Coffin Butte 20 Apr (p. obs.) was 10 days later than average; numbers remained low thru 24 Apr when none had yet shown up on Middle Ridge (R Gordin). **Hermit** and **MacGillivray's Warblers** were not found until 27 & 28 Apr, respectively (M Dossett; p. obs.). **Common Yellowthroats** began to show up at Baskett Slough 8 Apr and at Finley 9 Apr (B Young; D Boucher, L Millbank), but numbers remained low at E.E. Wilson until late Apr. The first **Wilson's Warbler** sighting was at Jackson-Frazier Wetland 27 Apr (Michael Dossett). Meanwhile, a few wintering **Townsend's Warblers** continued to brighten yards including three in NW Corvallis 17 Apr (R & N Armstrong).

A **Western Tanager** was at Avery Park 26 Apr (D Boucher). On 18 Apr a **Chipping Sparrow** was singing at OSU Lewis Barn Farm on Peoria Rd., where four nests were found last year (M Dossett); another was singing on Coffin Butte 18 Apr thru the end of the period (p. obs.). **Vesper Sparrows** arrived in the mid-valley by 20 Apr (fide Bob Altman). **Savannah Sparrows** were singing on breeding territory in fields and prairie restorations around Finley by 21 Apr, although a few migrants were still using brushy habitats around McFadden Marsh.

The last wintering **Sooty Fox Sparrow** that I noticed around our place was on 3 Apr. Some were still at Finley 9 Apr (D Boucher, L Millbank) and a migrant stopped by Stewart Lake 23 Apr (J Simmons). A **Song Sparrow** carrying dry grass into blackberries at Coffin Butte 4

Apr was presumably building a nest. A migrant **Lincoln's Sparrow** was in a clearcut east of Sodaville 3 Apr (R Gordin); one was at McFadden Marsh 21 Apr (p. obs.).

In NW Corvallis, a **White-throated Sparrow** was singing 4 Apr (M Cutler) and at least one continued thru the period in Jamie Simmons' yard, with three there 16 Apr and two several times thru 23 Apr. **White-crowned Sparrows** arrived on breeding territory at Thornton Creek 31 Mar (D Faxon). **Golden-crowned Sparrows** continued in good numbers at widespread locations thru the period, though some movement was apparent by mid-Apr (m. obs.) A **Slate-colored Junco** visited a Dallas feeder 29 Mar (Jessie Leach). The **Oregon Junco** flock at our place left after 16 Apr (Wil Geier), with just one pair remaining which will probably nest up the ridge.

A **Black-headed Grosbeak** showed up at Willamette Park 26 Apr (D Boucher, L Millbank). Singing **Western Meadowlarks** were at the Finley prairie overlook thru the period (m. obs.). A **Yellow-headed Blackbird** showed up at Baskett Slough 11 Apr (B Young); one was along Bruce Rd. at Finley 18 Apr with a second arriving 19 Apr (J Norton; m. obs.). A male **Brown-headed Cowbird** was singing at Coffin Butte 5 Apr (p. obs.).

The male **Brambling** which turned up in Richard Bunsie's Monmouth yard last month was seen there thru 5 Apr (m. obs.); a female Brambling turned up in Eugene on 7 Apr (Mark Rudolph), making a pair of these Eurasian finches in the Willamette Valley -- if they could manage to find each other! Singing **Purple Finches** were noted in Corvallis 28 Mar onward (R & N Armstrong) and at Thornton Creek 31 Mar (D Faxon).

After being basically absent from the Corvallis area this winter, a few **Pine Siskins** began to show up at feeders. One was in NW Corvallis 3 Apr and two were there 24 Apr (N & R Armstrong), another was in NW Corvallis 23 Apr (C Miller), and one was on Middle Ridge 26 Apr (R Gordin). These are most likely migrants returning to breed in forested areas around the valley. Darrel Faxon suggests that failure of the Douglas-fir cone crop after cold wet weather last spring may have caused these nomadic finches to abandon our region this winter.

The annual hordes of **Evening Grosbeaks** returned to the OSU campus 25 Apr, about a week later than usual (M Dossett). Modest numbers arrived on Middle Ridge 26 Apr (R Gordin).

The first **dragonflies** and **Sara Orange-tip Butterflies** began to be seen 9 Apr (D Boucher, L Millbank).

Coastal Notes

An adult **Yellow-billed Loon** was on Yaquina Bay 5 Apr (Chuck Philo fide Range Bayer). 130 **Western/Clark's Grebes** were in one large group on the Yaquina Bay estuary 9 Apr (S Seibel).

Kay Carter saw three **Pacific Golden-Plovers** and a **Semipalmated Plover** at the Hatfield Marine Science Center 21 Apr. Nine **Lesser Yellowlegs** were at Yaquina Bay 7 Apr (Cindy Ashy). Four **Whimbrels** were on a log by the Oregon Coast Aquarium 30 Mar (p. obs.). Three **Short-billed Dowitchers** were at Yaquina Bay 30 Mar (D Faxon). On 11 Apr Cindy Ashy watched an immature **Black-legged Kittiwake** following a **Whimbrel** at HMSC, seemingly feeding on arthropods that the Whimbrel stirred up. She also saw six **Caspian Terns** there 7 Apr.

Ten **Pigeon Guillemots** were at Boiler Bay 30 Mar (Mike Patterson). **Common Murres** were on the rocks at the Yaquina Head breeding colony by 11 Apr; an adult **Bald Eagle** has started preying on the murres in the colony (Cindy Ashy).

A **Say's Phoebe** was at Hatfield Marine Science Center 30 Mar (Dawn Grafe; P Vanderheul; Mike Patterson). A **Northern Shrike** was there 21 Apr (Kay Carter). A **Brown Thrasher** was in Yachats for three days around 12 Apr, seen by Michael Smith who was familiar with this eastern species from Missouri (fide R Bayer). A male **Lesser Goldfinch** visited a Toledo feeder 17 Apr (C Philo fide R Bayer).

Next issue

Please send me your sightings for the summer issue by 10 Jul (see back page for address/phone info).

Spring Migratory Bird Count Help Count Birds on May 13

The Spring Migratory Bird Count in Benton County is on Saturday, May 13, 2006. This is a relatively unorganized bird count. You can do it in your backyard, during a walk around your neighborhood or favorite local park, or spend a more intensive time counting birds at county hotspots. There is no sign-up necessary and you can bird alone, with friends, family and/or your pet dog. Just report your results to me by e-mail: marciafcutler@comcast.net or mail it to me (my address is on the back of the Chat). In addition to the number of species and birds seen at each location, I need to know the total amount of time spent and mileage (by car and/or other locomotion). I'd appreciate being informed ahead of time if you plan to do the count, but last minute participation is fine too!

Marcia F. Cutler, Benton Co. Coordinator, NAMC

Siskiyou Field Inst. Courses

The Siskiyou Field Institute (SFI) has a diverse offering of engaging field-based natural history courses throughout 2006. Upcoming courses include the following:

May 19 to 21: Blooms and Birds Weekend in Cave Junction, Oregon.

June 1-4: Illustrating Klamath River Wildflowers at Sandy Bar Ranch along the Klamath River.

To learn about our courses or to reserve your place, visit our website www.thesfi.org or call 541-592-3777.

Melina J. Parrish

Atop the Nestbox Surprise flying visitor

About 8:30 PM on March 14th our three-legged cat was spotted on his one hind leg and reaching for the enclosed bluebird feeder box on our deck railing. When my husband, Bill, peeked into the box using his flashlight, he discovered a four-legged furry animal sitting in the feeder bowl which had chopped raisins, cornmeal and peanut butter in it. We were able to capture the "critter" by covering the openings at both ends and taking the box into the house. To get a better look, we coaxed our prize into a terrarium and covered it with a screen. Instead of the rat we thought we had, it was a beautiful *Glaucomys sabrinus* or flying squirrel. It is a nocturnal animal with very large black eyes, the fur is brown and gray above and the belly cream colored.

A short time later Bill shined the flashlight through the window onto the platform seed feeder on the railing and said, "Look, there's another one in the other feeder". We marveled at our visitors who we had never seen here before and released our captive to join its mate.

Bill and Rita Snyder

Willamette Valley Birding Trail A Willamette Valley Birding Trail in the works

Several local environmental groups, including at least three Audubon Society chapters, are working together to create the Willamette Valley Birding Trail, comparable to trails that have been established in the Cascades and elsewhere in Oregon. Purposes of the trail include (1) to attract overnight visitors to our area, (2) to identify good birding sites, (3) to promote low-impact recreation, (4) to promote habitat conservation, (5) to generate public awareness that birding is an activity that contributes to local economies, comparable to fishing and hunting.

Corvallis Audubon needs to be represented on the planning committee. If you are interested in serving as our representative, attending a few meetings and reporting to the ASC Board from time to time, contact me at mathewsc2@comcast.net or at 754-1172.

Chris Mathews

Native Plant Display

Auduboners who find themselves in downtown Corvallis during May should drop by Footwise, the Birkenstock store on the corner of Third and Madison. From May 2 through 31 the Corvallis chapter of the Native Plant Society will feature a window display of 30 to 40 photographs of native plants from Marys Peak to Iron Mountain, all taken by local photographers. Thanks to ASC members Frances Stillwell and Rana Foster for making us aware of this exhibit.

Chris Mathews

Protect Birds With Your Food Choices

Part 2 - Home, Garden, and Food

Anyone can make a positive difference to birds and help to reduce their exposure to pesticides. As consumers, we can accept the harm being done with agricultural chemicals, or we can reject it with a few thoughtful changes to our lifestyles.

Eliminate pesticides around the home and garden.

Even one granule of some common garden weed killers will kill a small bird. If you feed birds or put up birdhouses, your chemical-free yard will become a safe haven for birds. Your yard will be richer in the insect prey that is vital to breeding songbirds.

Choose organic foods. We are fortunate in the Willamette Valley to have a number of local farmers who choose to keep their land free from pesticides, and far more diverse in bird life. When you support these farmers, you are directly benefitting our local birds. The Corvallis-Albany Farmers Market, farm stands, and some locally-owned food

markets are good sources for local, organic food.

Eat lower on the food chain. Feed production for livestock is pesticide-, energy-, and water-intensive. The National Audubon Society estimates that 50% of the water used in the US is used in livestock production. 106 million acres of US farmland grows pesticide-treated crops to feed livestock. For every acre producing plant foods for human consumption, it takes 20 acres to produce the same number of calories of meat, eggs, or dairy products. In other words, a plant-based meal represents just 5% of the land, water, and pesticides as a meat-based meal. If you eat animal products, switch to organic and you will avoid the pesticides. Buying locally-raised organic meat and reducing the amount of animal products you eat are two of the most positive changes you can make to help reduce pesticide and resource use. You will greatly lessen your "footprint", by reducing the acreage of chemically-treated cropland that supports your diet. You reduce the pesticide impact on birds by 95% if you eat a plant-based meal in place of conventionally-raised meat.

(part 2 of 3, to be continued in the June Chat)

Lisa Millbank

Forest News

Roadless Area News: President Clinton protected 58 million acres of roadless lands just before leaving office, but President Bush repealed the protection and instead decided to let governors submit petitions detailing the roadless lands they want protected. Oregon's Gov. Kulongoski has supported the original protection of roadless forestland with several steps -- by joining a lawsuit against Bush's repeal, and now by submitting a petition to protect about 2 million acres in Oregon.

Take action! Congress is about to vote on a bill by Rep. Greg Walden to allow accelerated logging after wildfires. Although the bill is being described as necessary to remove dead trees from our forests, science (some of it from OSU) shows that downed trees, including those burnt by fire, nourish the forest soil and plant life and are essential for healthy ecosystems, and that logging after a wildfire can cause more harm than leaving the forest alone. More than a thousand different species of birds, mammals, amphibians and reptiles benefit from dead trees for food, nesting or shelter. In addition, the accelerated logging could be permitted after other natural disturbances like rainstorms and snowstorms.

You can help by urging your representative (Rep. Peter DeFazio or Rep. Darlene Hooley) to oppose the bill in question, H.R. 4200. Call Congress at 202-224-3121 and ask for your rep, or write a letter to "Representative (whoever), U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515."

Dave Mellinger

Volunteers Sought

By Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife

ODFW is soliciting volunteers to help them in various capacities. If you would like to consider volunteering, drop me an e-mail (mathewsc2@comcast.net) and I can forward Kendra's e-mail with the attachment, so that you can learn what is involved. Alternatively, you can contact Kendra directly at kendra.g.callahan@state.or.us.

Chris Mathews

The Goal Line Kickoff

Have your say about growth, development, and protection of natural resources

Benton County is now updating its Comprehensive Plan, first adopted in 1982 in response to State mandate. The purpose of this update is to create a more workable document to guide decisions about growth, development and protection of natural resources in the county, outside of the cities and their growth boundaries (because in Benton County, cities themselves are responsible for planning within their urban growth boundaries).

The County's Comprehensive Plan serves as the driving force (along with State regulations) for the County's Development Code, which regulates activities in County jurisdiction.

Come have your say! Hearings with the Benton County Planning Commission are tentatively scheduled for mid-July and August in Corvallis and will be well-advertised. Your comments are eagerly awaited.

Amy Schoener

Contributors to the Chat

Chris Mathews, Nan Moore, Dave Mellinger, Lisa Millbank, Marcia Cutler, Don Boucher, Elise Elliott-Smith, Bill and Rita Snyder, Elsie Eltzroth, Paula Vanderheul, Amy Schoener, Melina Parrish, and Susan Haig



Returning for a second year, Yellow-headed Blackbirds can be seen near Bruce Road at Finley National Wildlife Refuge. Photo by Lisa Millbank

Audubon Society of Corvallis
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the **CHAT**

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

Calendar

May 7 Wild About Butterflies, 1 – 3 PM*
May 13 Saturday morning local birding, 7:30 AM*
May 13-14 Silver Falls Park Mother's Day Birding and Wildflower Weekend (April Chat)
May 18 General meeting, 7:30 PM (front page)
May 18-21 Spring weekend birding, Malheur*
May 19-21 OFO annual meeting (April Chat)
May 20 Fern Ridge Wildlife Area 7:30 AM (full day)*
May 20-21 Siskiyou Field Institute, Blooms and Birds Weekend**
May 21 Tracking Club*
May 21 Art & Nature, 1 – 3 PM*
May 27 Native Flowers of the Willamette Valley, 10-3pm*
May 28 Chat-O-Rama, Bicycle Birding*
June 4 Spring Bird Day, 10 AM – 1 PM*
June 10 Saturday morning local birding 7:30 AM*
June 18 Tracking Club*
June 25 Bicycle Birding*
July 8 Saturday morning local birding 7:30 AM*
July 10: Field Notes deadline for Summer Chat
July 13: Summer Chat deadline
July 23: Tracking Club*

*See page 66 & 67

**See page 70

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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