



# Audubon Society of Corvallis the **CHAT**

May 2007

VOL. 36

#9

## General Meeting

Thursday, May 17, 7:30 – 9:00 pm  
First Presbyterian Church

## Continental Migration of Butterflies in North America

*A presentation by Dr. John Matthews of the University of Texas*

Our final speaker for this year is John Matthews from the University of Texas in Austin. John and his wife recently moved to Corvallis where John is continuing his research on tracking butterflies across North America using molecular markers, stable isotopes, and resightings of individual butterflies. It is remarkable what he has been able to learn about these fragile creatures as they fly thousands of miles from breeding to wintering grounds. Thus, be sure not to miss his incredible tales about “Continental Migration of Butterflies Across North America”.

## Directions

The chapter meeting is in the meeting hall of the First Presbyterian Church (upstairs), 114 SW Eighth Street. The meeting is preceded by a social period with refreshments, which begins at 7 pm.

## Election of Chapter Officers

ASC officers for 2007-08 will be elected at this month’s chapter meeting. Members are encouraged to participate in the election of our board and officer candidates during the May 17 meeting. Board and officer positions will take effect in September.

### The Nominating Committee offers the following slate of candidates:

President	Chris Mathews
Vice President/Program Chair	Susan Haig
Secretary	Diana Brin
Treasurer	Judy Hays
Board Member–at-Large	John Gaylord

Board Member–at-Large	Linda Campbell
Board Member–at-Large	Elise Elliott-Smith
Board Member–at-Large	Will Wright
Board Member–at-Large	Jerry Paul
Board Member–at-Large	Karl Hartzell
Board Member–at-Large, Alternate	Karan Fairchild

## Candidate Biographies:

**Chris Mathews** is a semi-retired OSU biochemistry professor. An ASC member since 1978, he has served the chapter in the past as vice president and conservation chair, and is now completing his second year as chapter president. In addition, Chris is serving as vice president of the Great Basin Society, the governing board for the Malheur Field Station.

**Sue Haig** has served ASC as president for two years and most recently as vice president for two years. Her day job includes work as a Professor of Wildlife Ecology at Oregon State University, a Wildlife Ecologist at the USGS Forest and Rangeland Ecosystem Science Center, and a Research Associate of the Smithsonian Institution. Her research revolves around conservation of a number of avian species, including Spotted Owls, Puerto Rican Parrots,

*See "Board Candidates" on next page*

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## **Board Candidates** *continued from front page*

Micronesian Kingfishers, Pfrimer's Parakeet, and Snowy Plovers. She and her students have also spent many years working on shorebird and wetland conservation issues in the Great Basin, Willamette Valley, and Pacific Coast.

**Diana Brin** moved to Corvallis last September after working for over 12 years in New York City as a sugar futures trader. After early years in Hawaii she completed an M.A. in biogeography from UCLA, then spent a year in Public Health doing encephalitis research focusing on avian transmission. Subsequently, her career switch to commodity and foreign exchange trading caused birding to take a back seat, but she now has time to revitalize one of her first loves. Previously she was active with New Jersey Audubon and more so with the Hackensack Riverkeeper.

**Judith Hays** has been serving as ASC treasurer for the last two-plus years. Her college training was in chemistry and mathematics, but she has served as treasurer of many different organizations and can balance check books and prepare non-profit income tax forms.

**Linda Campbell** moved back to her home valley, where her daughter attends OSU, after 25 years of living on San Juan island. She works for Oregon Department of Fisheries and Wildlife and takes frequent long rambles in the woods where she lives, along the Mary's River.

**Karl Hartzell** has been geared to outdoor pursuits for all his life, both for recreation (such as hiking and biking) and employment (which includes land surveying many years ago, hydrologic studies, and fish and small critter surveys in recent years). Karl loves being in the church of the great outdoors, always relishing the range of fauna and flora to be found within and the comfort and peace of mind accrued while being there. Karl envisions the outdoor (paying) work he continues to do as in some measure helpful in protecting the natural world. The same is true for his many volunteer activities.

**Jerry Paul** was educated formally in Architecture and Urban Planning. He has worked as an urban planner in both private and public sectors. After 15 years as a planner, he changed careers and became the Information Technology Manager for the City of Salinas, CA, from which he retired in July 2004. During their working careers Jerry and wife Judith owned and ran a cow/calf cattle operation. Their interest in landscaping with native plants brought many new species of birds to their ranch—ninety species recorded there before their relocation to Corvallis last August. Other interests include carpentry and woodworking. Jerry has served ASC this year on the Homer Campbell Trail and Hesthavn development and is a volunteer at Chintimini Wildlife Rehabilitation Center.

**Will Wright** is a 3rd/4th grade teacher. He has served as a Teaching Interpretive Naturalist at Mt. St. Helens, Biology Instructor for OMSI, Instructor at Camp Hancock

Outdoor School, and staff member for Puffin Project in Maine for National Audubon Society. He spent one year following Spotted Owls with radios; two seasons doing cavity nesting bird surveys; four seasons doing Marbled Murrelet surveys. He has travel experience for birding and education in Alaska, Canada, Mexico, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Panama, Ecuador, Hawaii, Japan, India, Nepal, Kenya, and Europe.

**Elise Elliott-Smith** completed a B.A. at Pomona College and an M.S. at Southern Illinois University studying shorebird habitat relationships. She became interested in environmental studies and conservation while studying at the Maine Coast Semester and first studied birds in the Australian rainforest with the School for Field Studies. She has conducted songbird, raptor, and shorebird research with the Institute for Bird Populations, PRBO, Northwest Habitat Institute and the Oregon Natural Heritage Information Center. She currently works with Susan Haig, at the USGS Forest and Rangeland Ecosystem Science Center, on projects related to conservation of Black Oystercatchers, Snowy Plovers, Piping Plovers and other shorebird species.

## **Local Endangered Species Benton County developing a Prairie Species Habitat Conservation Plan**

Benton County is developing a Prairie Species Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) to balance conservation of rare species and their habitats with economic development in the County. The HCP will cover eight rare and endangered species that occur in local prairie habitats, including the Streaked Horned Lark, two butterflies (Fender's Blue and Taylor's checkerspot) and five plants (Kincaid's lupine, Nelson's checkermallow, peacock larkspur, Willamette daisy and Bradshaw's lomatium). The HCP process will formalize the County's commitment to conserve rare species and provide legal assurances that the County is meeting its Endangered Species Act responsibilities.

Benton County is taking advantage of a grant from the US Fish and Wildlife Service to conduct field studies of the eight covered species and learn about their distributions and habitats. For example, this spring, a local ornithologist will be investigating the ecology of Streaked Horned Larks on tracts of Benton County maintained roadsides. Benton County also hopes to support investigations into lark reproductive success in core populations within the County. Surveys for the plants and butterflies were initiated in spring/summer 2006, and will continue in 2007 and 2008. Property surveys are being offered free of charge to private landowners with potential habitat for these species.

The County also hopes to encourage landowners to voluntarily conserve and manage for these species whenever possible. Anyone interested in learning more about the species or habitats covered by the HCP, the HCP process, or

the free property surveys offered by the County, is encouraged to visit: [www.co.benton.or.us/parks/hcp/](http://www.co.benton.or.us/parks/hcp/)

*Phillip Hudspeth, Public Information Officer, Benton County Board of Commissioners*

## Thanks for the Treats

### A message from the Refreshment Chairperson

Thank you to everyone, known and anonymous, who donated food and money for refreshments. Some months there would not have been any homemade treats without your generosity.

All contributions were appreciated, and suggestions are always welcome.

*Until next season....*

*Claudia Regier, Refreshment Chair*

## Field Trip Schedule

### Monthly Year-Round 2nd Saturday Trips

May 12	Saturday morning local birding 7:30 am
June 9	Saturday morning local birding 7:30 am
July 14	Saturday morning local birding 7:30 am
Aug 11	Saturday morning local birding 7:30 am
Sept 8	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. Paula Vanderheul is field trip leader. [vanderp@peak.org](mailto:vanderp@peak.org) 541-752-0470

### New Discussion List

Midvalley birding discussion list is a free subscription email list that posts local bird sightings and birding information. I post where the field trip will be going two days before the field trip date on this list. To subscribe go to [www.midvalleybirding.org](http://www.midvalleybirding.org) follow instructions.

### Spring 2007 Weekend Field Trips

May 11-13 Rogue Valley  
May 17-20 Malheur NWR

Fred Ramsey leads all the spring weekend trips. Fred has been leading these field trips for ASC for over 30 years. He is an amazing field trip guide, sharing his knowledge of finding birds in their habitat, pointing out wild flowers, butterflies, mammals, and reptiles. The field trips are full but contact Paula Vanderheul for possible cancelations at the general meeting or email with your requests. [Vanderp@peak.org](mailto:Vanderp@peak.org). The Rogue and Malheur trips require deposits.

### Bicycle Birding

May 27	EE Wilson Wildlife Area
June 24	Start at Avery Park Rose Garden
July 22	Start at Avery Park Rose Garden
Aug 26	Start at Avery Park Rose Garden
Sept 23	Start at Avery Park Rose Garden

Free, Sundays 9am – noon.

Meet at the Avery Park Rose Garden (except May 27). 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, 541-753-7689, [bouchdon@peak.org](mailto:bouchdon@peak.org).

**May 27, Sunday 9am-Noon.** EE Wilson Wildlife Area. Meet at the Pheasant cage parking lot on the north side of Camp Adair Drive. This a great 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.

## Bird Basics Class

### Siskiyou Field Institute presents Bird Basics with Stewart Janes, PhD

June 23, 24 Ashland

Explore the intriguing world of birds. Discover the ecology and biology of birds of the Klamath-Siskiyou. Investigate bird anatomy and evolution; learn about bird ecology and breeding systems using the skins, skeletons and other materials in Southern Oregon University's vertebrate collection. Ornithologist Dr. Stewart Janes will lead you in excursions to various habitats to observe birds and their behavior.

To learn more about our courses or to reserve your place, visit our website [www.thesfi.org](http://www.thesfi.org) or call 541-597-8530.

*Amy Schell-Lapora*

## Malheur Field Station Seeks Volunteers

In addition to my responsibilities to Corvallis Audubon, I also serve on the board that oversees the operation of the Malheur Field Station. At a recent meeting of that board, I was told that the Field Station is looking for more volunteer workers. The Station has numerous maintenance and improvement projects that could be done by volunteers. Volunteering at the Station for a few days can make a nice vacation, if combined with some birding. Lodging is provided in one of the luxurious dorms or trailers. If any member of Corvallis Audubon would like to consider volunteering, please contact Lyla Messick, Co-Director of the Malheur Field Station, at [mfs@highdesertair.com](mailto:mfs@highdesertair.com).

*Chris Mathews*

# Field Notes

March 27 - April 23, 2007

April is supposed to bring showers and this time around was no exception. Mostly rainy weather and mild temperatures brought the usual explosion of greenery. Camas, chocolate lily, and tall larkspur were starting to bloom at Marys River Natural Park by 1 Apr (Don Boucher, Lisa Millbank), and Menzie's larkspur on Coffin Butte was putting out buds on 20 Apr, the date of our last hard frost when snow briefly reappeared on the lower foothills of the Cascades.

*Abbreviations & Locations:* NP = Natural Park; NWR = National Wildlife Refuge; SNA = State Natural Area; STP = sewage treatment ponds; e.o.p. = end of the period; m. obs. = multiple observers; p. obs. = personal observation. Coffin Butte and E.E. Wilson (Wildlife Area) are north of Corvallis along Hwy 99W. Griggs is n. of Lebanon. Jackson-Frazier (Wetland) is near Cheldelin Middle School in n. Corvallis. Luckiamute SNA is at the confluence of the Luckiamute and Willamette Rivers in se. Polk and ne. Benton Co. Cabell Marsh and McFadden Marsh are at Finley (NWR) s. of Corvallis. Mennonite Village is in Albany. Peterson Butte is w. of Lebanon. Stewart Lake is on the Hewlett-Packard campus in Corvallis. Willamette Park is in s. Corvallis.

## Reports

**Greater White-fronted Goose** migration was in full swing 18 Apr when flocks were over Finley (Molly Monroe). At a wetland restoration along Bellfountain Rd. near Philomath, 60 stopped for the night 18 Apr and 370 were there by 21 Apr (Ray Fiori) At Finley on 19 Apr Molly Monroe saw three **white geese** flying with one of the Cackling Goose flocks that were staging for migration. Three **Ross's Geese** there 21 Apr (Doug Robinson, Rich Armstrong) were likely the same birds. A smaller flock of cacklers at E.E. Wilson 4-6 Apr included one apparently of the threatened **Aleutian** subspecies (p. obs.).

Single **Eurasian Wigeons** were at Philomath STP 2 Apr (Noah Strycker) and with **American Wigeons** at Cabell Marsh 21 Apr (R Armstrong). A brood of 10 **Mallard** ducklings on the pond at Mennonite Village 15 Apr was down to just two survivors by 22 Apr (Don Miller). **Cinnamon Teal** numbers have been unusually low at E.E. Wilson this spring (R Fiori) but fair numbers have been seen around Finley (m. obs.); a male was at Mennonite Village 22 Apr (D Miller).

Lingering ducks from northern-nesting species included 10 **Northern Shovelers** and 25 **Buffleheads** at Jackson-Frazier Wetland 23 Apr, and 20 **Northern Pintails** at the Bellfountain Rd. restoration 24 Apr (R Armstrong). **Green-winged Teal** and **Ring-necked Ducks** were widespread thru e.o.p..

A pair of **Redheads** at Finley NWR 15 Apr (Joe Fontaine) was a notable spring occurrence for a species that has started to nest at Fern Ridge Reservoir in recent years. A male **Tufted Duck** was at the Pioneer Villa STP 21-22 Apr (Steve Warner, Tim Shelmerdine; Tom Snetsinger). Six **Lesser Scaup** were at Pioneer Villa STP 22 Apr (T Snetsinger) and four were at Jackson-Frazier Wetland 23 Apr (R Armstrong). Up to six female **Hooded Mergansers** were on the Mennonite Village pond this month, with three still there 20 Apr (D Miller). Two female **Red-breasted Mergansers** stopped by Raindance Ranch near Alpine 22 Apr (Warren Halsey); this species very rarely stops by in its migration from coastal waters.

**Ruffed Grouse** were drumming in McDonald State Forest 28 Mar and at Finley 1 Apr (Julie Gibson). **Wild Turkey** were calling at Marys River Natural Park 1-3 Apr (Don Boucher, Lisa Millbank) and in McDonald SF 7 Apr (J Gibson). A flock frequenting Judith & Jerry Paul's yard near Lewisburg thinned out to just two by 8 Apr, as hens dispersed to nest.

A **Pied-billed Grebe** and some lingering **Double-crested Cormorants** were at Luckiamute SNA 14 Apr (Paula Vanderheul, ASC field trip). Eleven **Great Blue Herons** were still on nests across the river from Willamette Park 29 Mar (Diana Brin). Molly Monroe showed 6-8th graders from Lincoln School another nesting colony along Muddy Creek

at Finley, as the kids took a break from transplanting over 100 **Nelson's Checkermallow** plants on 18 Apr. Two **Great Egrets** at McFadden Marsh 6 Apr (R & Nanette Armstrong) were the last reported this season. A **Green Heron** turned up at Mennonite Village 21 Apr (D Miller).

Two **Turkey Vultures** preened each other in a tree in NW Corvallis 2 Apr (Chris Miller). **Ospreys** were a regular sight along the Willamette River and elsewhere thru the month (m. obs.). Two juvenile **Bald Eagles** sparred above the river in downtown Corvallis 5 Apr (D Boucher) and one soared high on thermals over Stewart Slough 9 Apr (Ron Enck). Although adults were seen at Finley thru the period, a nest north of headquarters was abandoned by 20 Apr (M Monroe).

A pair of **Northern Harriers** hunted together over Jackson-Frazier Wetland 18 Apr (R Armstrong). A young **Sharp-shinned Hawk** with rather haphazard hunting techniques flew just over Chris Miller's head after strafing some bushes in her NW Corvallis yard 5 Apr. Another zoomed through Ron Enck's apple tree while chasing small birds near Stewart Slough 9 Apr. A large **Cooper's Hawk** flew into, then out of an open barn while hunting along Elliot Circle 8 Apr (Elsie Eltzroth, Rita & Bill Snyder).

Single **Red-shouldered Hawks** were at Cabell Marsh 6 Apr and at E.E. Wilson 17 Apr (R & N Armstrong). A **Merlin** ("prairie" subspecies) was at Finley NWR 21 Apr (R Armstrong, D Robinson). A **Peregrine Falcon** stirred up the ducks there 2 Apr (Steve Seibel).

**Virginia Rails** were heard at Jackson-Frazier wetlands 2 Apr (Jamie Simmons) and along Midge Cramer Path (near the fairgrounds) 25 Apr (Bill & Lena Proebsting). A **Sora** called near Griggs 2 Apr (Jeff Harding), another called daily at Marys River Natural Area 10-17 Apr (Will Wright), and four were in the north part of E.E. Wilson Wildlife Area 17 Apr (R Armstrong). 136 **American Coots** were massed at Finley 1 Apr (Erik Knight), with at least 25+ continuing 7 Apr (D Brin).

Four **Black-bellied Plovers** turned up at the Bellfountain Rd. wetland 19 Apr (fide M Monroe) and nine were there 24 Apr (D Robinson; R Armstrong). A migrant **Semipalmated Plover** was at Finley 21 Apr (D Robinson).

**Greater Yellowlegs** migration began to peak 29 Mar when 21 along Robison Rd. (R Armstrong) and 1 Apr when concentrations of 123 were at Finley and over 50 were at a wetland near Lebanon (E Knight; R Fiori), continuing thru 15 Apr when 26 were still at Finley (J Fontaine) with smaller numbers thru e.o.p.. Seven **Lesser Yellowlegs** were at Finley 1 Apr (E Knight), five were still there 6 Apr, and one remained 15 Apr (J Fontaine). A migrant **Solitary Sandpiper** turned up at E.E. Wilson 24 Apr (p. obs.) and another was along Campus way the next day (B Proebsting). A **Spotted Sandpiper** at Willamette Park 28 Mar was just starting to gain its summer spots (Karin Donoyan).

A **Western Sandpiper** was at McFadden Marsh 7 Apr (N Strycker) and 12 were near there 21 Apr (D Robinson). 20 **Least Sandpipers** were at McFadden 21 Apr (R Armstrong). **Dunlin** numbers peaked with 500 there 6-7 Apr (R Armstrong; N Strycker) and smaller flocks thru e.o.p.. 90 **Long-billed Dowitchers** were at Finley 1 Apr (E Knight), 75 were there 2 & 6 Apr (N Strycker; R Armstrong), and two remained after taxes 15 Apr (J Fontaine). The ASC field trip to Tremaine Arkley's Duck Slough farm near Buena Vista 14 Apr found two **Wilson's Snipe** (P Vanderheul).

A third-year **Western Gull** was in downtown Corvallis 6 Apr, and an adult visited Toketie Marsh 17-18 Apr (R Armstrong; D Robinson). A second "pink-footed" gull at Toketie Marsh 17 Apr may have been an adult **Thayer's Gull**; a first-winter **Glaucous-winged Gull** was there 12 Apr (p. obs.).

**Band-tailed Pigeons** mobbed feeders in NW Corvallis as of 2 Apr and west of Alsea as of 11 Apr (C Miller; K Donoyan). A **Mourning Dove** was incubating two eggs in a nest in a serviceberry bush near Philomath 1 Apr (R Fiori). Naomi Weidner and Bruce Miller heard a **Western Screech-Owl** calling in North Albany 6 Apr. A **Northern Pygmy-Owl** tooted in McDonald SF 28 Mar (J Gibson).

Several **Vaux's Swifts** were over Avery Park 10 Apr (D Boucher) and another was at Willamette Park 22 Apr (N Strycker). **Red-breasted Sapsuckers** were regular visitors to a bigleaf maple by the barn at Hesthavn this month (P Vanderheul).

A male **Anna's Hummingbird** made several courtship display flights in w. Corvallis 29 Mar (Marcia Cutler). A female visited Middle Ridge 20 Apr (Raylene Gordin). Lois & Wayne Stoddard reported that **Anna's Hummingbirds** amiably shared a feeder with several **Rufous Hummingbirds** at their place by Springhill golf course in North Albany 10 Apr. From 12-15 Apr they also had a smaller hummingbird that they believe was a female **Calliope Hummingbird** after carefully comparing the wings & tail. This turned out to be a good spring for **Calliope Hummingbirds** as males visited Brownsville 22 Apr (T Snetsinger), n. Corvallis 23-24 Apr (R & N Armstrong; D Robinson), Stewart Lake 24 Apr (Jamie Simmons), s. Corvallis 25 Apr (W & Kim Wright), and in nw. Corvallis and North Albany 26 Apr (Sara & Aaron Liston; L & W Stoddard).

Noah Strycker & Karl Fairchild heard a **Hammond's Flycatcher** at Peavey Arboretum 14 Apr. Will Wright heard a **Cassin's Vireo** in s. Corvallis 4 Apr; Bill Proebsting heard & saw one along Oak Creek 6 Apr. A **Warbling Vireo** sang in Avery Park 6 Apr (D Robinson) but no others were reported until several arrived 22-23 Apr (D Robinson; p. obs.). A **Hutton's Vireo** was at E.E. Wilson 20 Apr (Alan McGie); Raylene Gordin noted good numbers on Middle Ridge this month.

A **Northern Rough-winged Swallow** was at McFadden Marsh 6 Apr (D Robinson). Two **Cliff Swallows** were at Cabell Marsh 2 Apr (N Strycker), and more returned to the nesting area under the bridges in downtown Corvallis 5 Apr (D Boucher). Early **Barn Swallows** were along Wiles Rd. in n. Benton Co. 29 Mar (R Armstrong), at Finley 1 Apr (E Knight), and at Jackson-Frazier wetlands 2 Apr (Barbara Maynes, J Simmons). Close to 1000 **swallows** were at Finley 21 Apr, including **Tree, Violet-Green, Cliff, and Barn Swallows**.

A pair of **Bushtits** gathered nesting material at Marys River Natural Park 3 Apr (L Millbank); at Stewart Lake 11 Apr one nest was completed and another Bushtit pair was being watched by an expectant crow (J Simmons, Neil Lidstrom, Joan Newhouse). **Red-breasted Nuthatches** were regular visitors to feeders at Hesthavn (P Vanderheul). **White-breasted Nuthatches** turned up in Forest Dell Park 3 Apr (R Armstrong) and ne. Corvallis 12 Apr (R Enck).

A vociferous **Winter Wren** west of Alsea River defended his territory from the top of Karin Donoyan's barn 11 Apr. Ray Fiori found an apparent **wren nest** with four heavily mottled eggs inside a forest edge near Philomath 21 Apr. Lingered **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** were at Hesthavn 18 Apr (P Vanderheul) and in Bald Hill Park 21 Apr (Bob Altman).

A **Swainson's Thrush** called at Oak Creek 25 Apr (B & L Proebsting). A **Hermit Thrush** sang at Witham Hill & Dixon Creek 15 Apr (J Fontaine); three more were at Willamette Park 22 Apr (N Strycker). **Variied Thrushes** continued to sing from the forest on Tampico Ridge thru 23 Apr (p. obs.).

A grass-lined basket **nest** built from twigs found at Mennonite Village 22 Apr apparently belonged to a warbler- or vireo-sized bird (fide D Miller). Numbers of **Orange-crowned Warblers** continued to swell, and their trills could be heard almost everywhere with a few trees by mid-Apr. A **Nashville Warbler** sang at Cabell Marsh 5 Apr (D Robinson); migrants also turned up near Griggs 15 Apr (J Harding) and at Willamette Park 22 Apr (N Strycker). Migrant **Yellow-rumped Warblers** showed up on Middle Ridge 4 Apr and were abundant there thru the period (R Gordin). Dozens were noted at Stewart Lake 11 & 24 Apr (J Simmons), Coffin Butte 20 Apr (p. obs.), Bald Hill 21 Apr (B Altman) and Willamette Park 22 Apr (N Strycker); most were "**Audubon's**" but a few "**Myrtles**" remained thru e.o.p..

A **Black-throated Gray Warbler** was in Philomath 8 Apr (D Boucher); one or two males were at Stewart Lake 11 Apr (J Simmons). Three **Townsend's Warblers** in R & N Armstrong's yard near Forest Dell Park were last seen 13 Apr; one sang on Witham Hill 15 Apr (J Fontaine) and a migrant male was at Stewart Lake 24 Apr (J Simmons). A **MacGillivray's Warbler** turned up at Cabell Marsh 19 Apr (D Robinson). **Common Yellowthroats** continued to show up, with one at Finley 1 Apr (J Gibson), one at Philomath STP 2 Apr (N Strycker), at Marys River Natural Park 3 Apr (L Millbank), and ten at Cabell Marsh by 6 Apr (R Armstrong). A **Wilson's Warbler** sang at Finley 18 Apr (Jarod Jebousek).

On 29 Mar Rana Foster and Frances Stillwell saw a **Spotted Towhee** chase a small mammal (shrew or young mouse) across a roadway at E.E. Wilson, perhaps driving off a perceived nest-robber. Migrant **Chipping Sparrows** were near the Siuslaw NF office in sw. Corvallis 3 Apr (D Boucher & L Millbank), at Stewart Lake 11 Apr (J Simmons), and near E.E. Wilson 20 Apr (p. obs.). One sang at Bald Hill 21 Apr near where a nest was found last year (B Altman). An early **Vesper Sparrow** was at Bald Hill by 7 Apr (B Altman). Two **Sooty Fox Sparrows** that wintered at our place 30 Mar departed by 8 Apr, but a couple were still w. of Alsea 11 Apr and at E.E. Wilson 17 Apr (K Donoyan; R Armstrong), and one was still at Oak Creek 21 Apr (B & L Proebsting).

After two **Song Sparrows** copulated in our yard near E.E. Wilson 4 Apr, the female immediately started to gather fiber for a nest, wrestling with a madia stalk thrice her size, while the male hopped up on a shrub to sing. Three **Lincoln's Sparrows** were still at Finley and one was along Oak Creek thru 21 Apr (R Armstrong; B & L Proebsting).

**White-throated Sparrows** sang at Forest Dell Park 3 Apr (R Armstrong) and two locations in sw Corvallis 19 Apr (D Boucher); a flock of seven was in the s. part of E.E. Wilson 8 Apr; lingering birds were at E.E. Wilson 20 Apr, Oak Creek 21 Apr, and Jackson-Frazier Wetland (2 birds) 23 Apr (Alan McGie; B & L Proebsting; R Armstrong). Singing **White-crowned Sparrows** began to show up on nesting territories 3-8 Apr (m. obs.). One on Middle Ridge has been singing regularly at night (R Gordin), a manic habit that this species is noted for. A few **Golden-crowned Sparrows** remained thru e.o.p., but passage of migrant flocks was noticeable around 20 Apr (Alan McGie; p. obs.). **Dark-eyed Junco** flocks thinned out in some yards but swelled in others around 1 Apr, as evidence that these too were on the move. "**Slate-colored**" **Juncos** turned up in downtown Corvallis 4 Apr and w. Corvallis 6 Apr (D Boucher; M Cutler).

**Western Meadowlark**s sang at Finley and at Marys River Natural Park 1 Apr (E Knight; D Boucher, L Millbank). A male **Yellow-headed Blackbird** showed up in the Bruce Rd. Mitigation Wetland 19 Apr (N Strycker).

A few **Pine Siskins** were seen thru the period, some perhaps locally breeding birds; 4 to 6 visiting a feeder near Lewisburg 8 Apr (J & J Paul) were the largest flock reported. 22 **Evening Grosbeaks** perched in a budding bigleaf maple at Highland Dell 8 Apr (J & J Paul), and flocks were swarming the OSU campus by 17 Apr (Mary Garrard).

Six **Western Pond Turtles** basked in the sun at Marys River Natural Park 1 Apr (D Boucher, L Millbank). On 16 Apr three full-grown **River Otters** chased another which had caught a large-scaled fish (probably an invasive **carp**), but the first otter kept his catch to himself (Kirk Lewis). On 2 Apr Steve Seibel watched a **Bobcat** pad along Finley Rd. at the Lincoln Prairie overlook. A **Western Gray Squirrel** sharing a feeder with a Douglas' Squirrel in North Albany 7 Apr got nervous and jumped, launching the latter onto Naomi Weidner's and Bruce Miller's deck where it ran around for a bit before finding a tree trunk. **Spring Azure** butterflies visited burned spots in an "oak release" restoration project on Middle Ridge 13 Apr, presumably to eat the minerals (R Gordin).

## Next issue

Enjoy those migrants as they continue to arrive, and please send me your observations for our summer issue by 9 July

Joel Geier  
38566 Hwy 99W, Corvallis 97330  
(541) 745-5020  
joel.geier@peak.org

## Wings n' Wine Festival

Fern Ridge Saturday, May 12, 2007

Registered activities begin at 7 am

Festival grounds open 9 am - 5 pm

Enjoy this international migratory bird day festival! Featuring birding walks, canoe trips, live raptors, educational speakers, slide show, gourmet dinner with an Owl Walk, wine tasting, children's activities and crafts. For more information, please see [www.wingsandwinefestival.com](http://www.wingsandwinefestival.com).

*Maeve Sowles*

## Help Create the WVBT!

**(The Willamette Valley Birding Trail)**

ASC is co-sponsoring the Willamette Valley Birding Trail. When complete, the WVBT will be a self-guided auto tour that uses existing roads, pull-offs, parking areas, parks and refuges to showcase Willamette Valley birds.

The goals of the WVBT are to:

- Enhance the public's enjoyment of birds and their habitats in the Willamette Valley.
- Promote understanding and appreciation of wildlife habitat conservation and stewardship.
- Enhance year-round low impact recreational opportunities in the Willamette Valley.
- Attract overnight visitors and boost the economic vitality of communities and businesses along the trail.
- Link directly with the Oregon Cascades and Oregon Coast Birding Trails as part of the official Oregon birding trail network.

**Who's involved:** The Willamette Valley's Audubon chapters, conservation organizations, tourism promotion organizations; USDA Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Fish and Wildlife Service, Oregon Dept of Fish and Wildlife, Oregon State Parks, and others.

The Willamette Valley Birding Trail will include the area bounded by the Columbia River on the north, the Cascades foothills on the east, south to Cottage Grove, and to the summit of the Coast range on the west.

The WVBT committee plans to publish the trail during spring, 2008.

We invite ASC members, as well as the public at large, to nominate sites for the WVBT. Nomination forms will be posted in mid-May at:

<http://www.oregonbirdingtrails.org/>

For more information or to volunteer, contact Bill Proebsting, 752-0108, [proebstw@gmail.com](mailto:proebstw@gmail.com)

*Bill Proebsting*

## Green Lines

**Green is Growing**

Most any newspaper you pick up today has articles on GREEN issues. Many organizations, agencies, and clubs have created GREEN lists to follow much like ASC. Ours still stands up very well. (View it on the ASC website.) We need to keep working on these items, including doing something about our use of foam cups at meetings. It has been suggested we do not buy any more foam or paper cups and switch over to ceramic ones. Inexpensive cups are often available at thrift shops. Claudia Regier and her staff doing refreshments have agreed to wash and look after members' donated cups after meetings. Many thanks, Claudia. Let's do all do our share to help out the Planet. Little things do help out. Many thanks.

*John Gaylord, Green policeman*

## Mexican Migrating Shorebird

### Habitat Study

Recently Corvallis Audubon, along with other environmental groups, heard from Rodrigo Alatorre, an ecologist with the Autonomous Technological Institute of Mexico. Alatorre and his colleague, Enrique Sanjurjo, are conducting a survey of North American birders with respect to habitat preservation for migrating birds that winter in Mexico and summer in the U.S. or Canada. The survey can be taken online and requires only a few minutes. At the moment, Rodrigo is concerned that so few North Americans have responded that the data from the study may be statistically unreliable. He asked me to broadcast his request to our entire membership. The survey requires just a few minutes and it can be found on-line at [http://www.ine.gob.mx/dgipea/birdwatchers\\_survey/cuestionario.html](http://www.ine.gob.mx/dgipea/birdwatchers_survey/cuestionario.html).

You can help preserve habitat for migrating birds by filling out his survey. Only a few minutes will be needed. And who knows? This study, when complete, might lead to protection of more land in Mexico.

*Chris Mathews*

## Woodpecker Problems

**(For part one of this article, see "Willamette Valley Woodpeckers" in the April, 2007 Chat.)**

Of all birds, woodpeckers have the hardware and skill to do the most damage to buildings. As with any kind of wildlife, it is easier to accommodate them than to fight or control them. With the following tips, hopefully you will have a wildlife spectacle to behold instead of a woodpecker problem.

I should first mention that preventing access is a common solution for the most damaging activity. Netting is easy to install and safe for the bird. You can obtain netting at a farm supply or hardware store. Make sure you ask for

3/4-inch netting or something close. Leave a three-inch gap between the net and the object of the woodpecker's attention and secure it at all corners so the bird can't get underneath. Alternatives to netting are hardware cloth or plastic sheathing.

### **Woodpecker Deterrents**

Birds can go anywhere they want and it's difficult to stop them. Preventing access to a troubled spot is the most common solution. Mounted owl or hawk decoys are generally ineffective because birds learn to ignore these lifeless objects. Hanging, moving decoys or metallic streamers are a better bet but success is far from guaranteed. Consistent repeated loud noises are more effective at scaring woodpeckers away. You'll have to consider, however, that this control method may be more obnoxious to you and your neighbors than the woodpecker itself.

Last month, I covered the reasons behind woodpecker activity. Here I'll explain how landowners can help woodpeckers.

### **Habitat Protection**

The best situation is when woodpeckers have enough natural habitat to keep them busy, as they are less likely to bother with your house. If you are developing property or building a house, you would do well to keep as many trees around as you can. Keep dead limbs and trees (you might consult an arborist to see which ones are safe to keep). If you have to cut down or remove dead wood, try keeping the half-rotten parts in a safe spot, ideally vertically standing. I have a friend who had to cut down a dead tree near his house. After the tree was de-limbed and cut down, he installed it like a giant fencepost a safe distance away. Now he has a "woodpecker snag" and enjoys watching the woodpeckers which frequently visit. Protecting woodpecker habitat also benefits other native birds because many birds nest in abandoned woodpecker holes.

### **Building Materials for Your House**

If you want a log cabin or rustic house in the woods, you should expect to be tolerant of woodpeckers because that's the kind of structure that attracts them. If not, consider selecting building materials that woodpeckers cannot easily cling to, like smooth, non-wood surfaces or smooth, painted wood. Avoid untreated or stained wood, especially cedar and redwood. Whether you're building a new house or not, do what you can to seal out moisture and cracks to prevent insect infestation. Woodpeckers foraging for insects are the reason for many woodpecker complaints.

*Don Boucher*

## **Eavesdropping of Chickadee Alarm Calls by Nuthatches**

It has long been known that birds can process information heard in the calls of unrelated birds. A study from the Universities of Washington and Montana, published in

the March 27, 2007, issue of Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, reveals the sophisticated nature of this "intertaxonomic eavesdropping."

The black-capped chickadee conveys much information in small variations of its well-known "chick-a-dee" call. Some forms of this alarm call stimulate "mobbing" behavior. In response to a signal that a predator is nearby a flock of birds will dive-bomb the predator, typically a perched raptor, in hopes of driving it from the area.

Generally a small raptor, with greater maneuverability, constitutes a greater threat to small birds than a larger raptor, and the chickadee's alarm can indicate whether a nearby raptor is large or small—or whether it is flying or perched.

The researchers noted that red-breasted nuthatches often flock with chickadees. Working with captive chickadees, they first recorded the calls made when the birds were placed near a perched great horned owl (large) or a northern pygmy owl (small). Then they went into natural habitats, looking for pairs of nuthatches, with no chickadees nearby. When birds were found the authors hid a speaker at the base of a tree, retreated a suitable distance, played a chickadee alarm call, and observed the results. First, they noted that far more nuthatches approached the speaker in response to either predator alarm call, when compared with a control call (the house sparrow). Next, they noted that the nuthatches approached the speaker much more closely in response to a small-predator alarm than to a large-predator call. In response to a small-predator call, 95% of the nuthatches landed on the tree with the speaker, compared to 55% for the large-predator trials, and those birds moved vertically down the tree closer to the speaker than did the birds in the large-predator trial.

These and other data convinced the researchers that red-breasted nuthatches, which are in a different family from black-capped chickadees, are able to discriminate between different forms of the chickadee alarm call, at least to the extent of learning the size of the predator and responding appropriately. The authors conclude, "Our results reveal the remarkable amount of information that animals can learn about their environment by eavesdropping on the vocalizations of other species."

*Chris Mathews*

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*This American Bittern was photographed by Don Boucher at McFadden Marsh, at Finley NWR on April 28*

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## Calendar

May 11 Rogue Valley Field Trip\*\*  
May 12 Saturday local birding\*\*  
May 12 Wings n' Wine Festival\*\*\*  
May 17 General Meeting\*  
May 17 Malheur Field Trip\*\*  
May 27 Bicycle Birding\*\*  
June 9 Saturday local birding\*\*  
June 23 Bird Basics Class, SFI\*\*  
June 24 Bicycle Birding\*\*  
July 9 Submission deadline for Summer Field Notes  
July 12 Submission deadline for Summer Chat  
July 14 Saturday local birding\*\*

\* see page 65

\*\* see page 67

\*\*\* see page 70

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