



# Audubon Society of Corvallis the **CHAT**

November 2007

VOL. 37

#3

## General Meeting

Thursday, November 15, 7:30 – 9:00 pm  
First Presbyterian Church

### Cougars and the Importance of Predators in Wild Systems

*A presentation by Bill Ripple, Oregon State University*

#### 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.

## BLM WOPR

### Revision Still Threatens Public Lands

*Public Comment period extended to Dec 10*

The Western Oregon Plan Revision (WOPR) threatens to radically change forest management practices in 2.6 million acres of Oregon's Coast Range and Cascades that are administered by the Bureau of Land Management. The plan is to increase timber harvest to reach pro-market goals mandated by the Bush Administration, while essentially dismantling the Northwest Forest Plan, the compromise between ecology and logging that has been the basis for forest planning since 1995.

In last month's Chat, Jim Fairchild outlined some reasons why the WOPR is really one "whopper" of a disastrous idea. These include expansion of clearcutting and off-road vehicle use, and reductions in stream buffers and protections for threatened salmon, spotted owls, marbled murrelets, and native plants, all without tangible economic benefits for local counties.

When I looked at the maps for the WOPR's recommended plan for forest management, I saw that some Spotted Owl locations that I've had the privilege to visit in the Cascades will be turned into virtual "islands" surrounded



*Spotted Owl photo by Curt Porter*

by vast areas of "Timber Management Areas." According to the plan, "these areas would be managed to achieve a level of continuous timber production" on an 80- to 100-year rotation with "no green tree retention" after harvesting. In other words, small preserves will be surrounded by vast clearcuts with thin strips of "riparian management areas" along streams. That creates perfect habitat for the invading Barred Owl which has emerged as a major threat to

*see "BLM WOPR" on next page*

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## **BLM WOPR** *continued from front page*

Spotted Owl survival.

The Administration's original idea was to ram this mammoth (1600 page) plan through with just 90 days for public comment. Thanks to public complaints (including by our Benton County commissioners), the deadline has now been extended to December 10, which is still a very short period.

The WOPR is based on the Bush Administration's recent rewrite of the Northern Spotted Owl recovery plan, which ASC's conservation chair Dave Mellinger has alerted us to. That "recovery plan" has already been discredited due to selective use of science on the habitat needs of this species. It has been sent back to the drawing board, and so should the WOPR.

The full text (1600 pg) is available at <http://www.blm.gov/or/plans/wopr/index.php>. Other information sources can be found by a web search for "BLM WOPR". Chuck Willer of Benton Forest Defense ([chuckw@coastrange.org](mailto:chuckw@coastrange.org)) has set up an e-mail list to help get more information out about how the WOPR will impact Benton County forests.

Please send your comments by December 10th to:  
Bureau of Land Management  
333 SW 1st Avenue  
Portland, OR 97208

*Send copies to Congress and your County Commissioners, and please consider submitting a letter to the editor of your local newspaper.*

*Joel Geier*

## **ASC Change in Dues Policy** **Local membership now required for Chat**

As all Chat readers know, Audubon Society of Corvallis (ASC) is chartered by the National Audubon Society (NAS) as a separate organization, each with distinct functions. Hence, each society has its own membership costs and dues. For some years, ASC has encouraged all chapter members to belong also to the National Audubon Society. In reviewing our membership records, we find that some local members belong to both ASC and NAS, while some belong to only one of the two societies.

When someone joins NAS, the new member receives a welcoming letter in which he or she is told that membership is included in the local chapter as well. ASC has conformed to this policy and has not strictly required that members of NAS also pay dues to ASC. However, we find that membership costs don't come close to matching what we receive from NAS. Of the dues each member pays to NAS, about \$2.50 per year is distributed to our chapter. If you receive the Chat by mail, the annual cost to our chapter for that alone exceeds \$2.50 by severalfold. We have additional costs not covered by contributions from NAS, including renting our

meeting facility, paying travel expenses for some program speakers, maintaining the ASC website, and maintaining Hesthavn. ASC has received several welcome grants and gifts, but these are conveyed for specific purposes, such as developing Hesthavn or building the Homer Campbell Trail, and those funds are not available to help meet ordinary operating costs.

Many, if not most, local Audubon Society chapters require dues payments separate from those to NAS. Accordingly, the ASC Board is adopting a similar policy and has decided that all ASC members must pay dues to ASC, whether or not they pay dues to the National Audubon Society. This policy will take effect on January 1, 2008. Those who continue paying dues only to NAS may continue participating in ASC activities, but they will no longer receive the Chat.

On January 1 there will also be a modest increase in chapter dues (the first in many years), to \$25 for an individual and \$35 for a family. Payments received before December 31 can be at the present rate (\$20 and \$25, respectively). Dues can be mailed to Membership Chair Amy Schoener at P.O. Box 148, Corvallis, OR 97339 or paid in person at a chapter meeting. Alternatively, dues can be paid by credit card through the ASC website, <http://www.audubon.corvallis.or.us/>

*Chris Mathews, President, ASC*

## **Yes...I Want to Help!**

The Audubon Society of Corvallis is in its 38th year of providing the people of Linn, Benton, and part of Lincoln Counties with opportunities to enjoy and learn about birds and other wildlife and the importance of their habitats. The society provides a forum for advocating responsible public policy and personal behavior that respects, conserves, and restores wildlife habitat. Through community events, educational programs for outdoor school students, Kids Day for Conservation, birding classes, and Art in Nature classes at Hesthavn, we reach out to a wide spectrum of the local population. Our society is fortunate to have one of the finest Western Bluebird Trails thanks to the help of local homeowners and volunteer trail monitors. The Conservation Committee provides information on local and national issues affecting the environment and encourages us to write letters about protecting wetlands and important habitats from misuse. Birding field trips are held monthly throughout the year for beginners and birders new to Oregon. Birding classes are provided for adults each spring. The Chat, our newsletter, is published ten times a year informing members about current ASC activities and local bird sightings. Our Wildlife Watch coordinator works with state and federal authorities to combat illegal killing of protected non-game birds. ASC Hesthavn Nature Center, a six-acre natural area with a barn, is being restored to provide learning experiences for students and families.

ASC coordinates the local Corvallis Christmas Bird Count with a countdown potluck at the end of the day. From September through May, the society provides excellent nature programs featuring guest speakers that are free to members and the public.

It is totally amazing that volunteer members of ASC provide all of this! We are proud to have their wealth of talents to provide informative and well-balanced events for the community. While the labor has been freely donated, the society still incurs cost for supplies, mailing services for the Chat, rent for the meeting room, insurance costs, and more.

The membership dues go far toward meeting expenses of the chapter, but they do not totally sustain our wide range of activities. ASC needs your support to maintain the quality of service of the above-listed programs. Your generosity is deeply appreciated. If you would like further information about programs or volunteering your services, please contact any board member listed on the back of the Chat or at the ASC website [www.audubon.corvallis.or.us](http://www.audubon.corvallis.or.us).

The annual donation envelope is included. All members will receive the November Chat as a hard copy because of the presence of the annual donation envelope.

*Paula Vanderheul*

## Field Trip Schedule

### Monthly Year-Round Saturday Field Trips

- Nov 10: Meet at the Benton Center parking lot due to OSU Football game 7:30 am  
Dec 8: Meet at the Avery Park Rose Garden parking area at 7:30 am

Our Saturday morning local field trip meets the second Saturday of every month at the Avery Park Rose Garden parking area (with the exception of Nov 10—see above) 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.

### Midvalley birding discussion list

A free subscription email list 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) and follow the instructions.

### Full-Day Birding Schedule

- Nov 17: Newport Coast

About three or four times a year we schedule full-day trips to the coast, and other refuges within Oregon. On these trips we carpool, sharing gas cost with the drivers. Everyone should bring a large lunch, water/drinks, bin-

oculars, spotting scope (if available), and layers of warm clothing, sturdy shoes, and rain gear. We meet at 7:30 am at the Benton Center (LBCC) parking lot in Corvallis, which can be reached by turning east on Polk at the corner of Polk and 9th Street, where Borders Books is located. Contact Paula Vanderheul (541-752-0470, [vanderp@peak.org](mailto:vanderp@peak.org)) with questions.

### Spring 2008 Weekend Field Trips

March 21-23: Bandon Coast

April 18-20: Klamath Basin

May 02-04: Rogue Valley

May 15-18: Malheur National Wildlife Refuge

Fred Ramsey leads all the spring weekend trips. Fred has been leading these field trips for ASC over 35 years. He is an amazing field trip guide, sharing his knowledge about finding birds in their habitat and pointing out wild flowers, butterflies, mammals, and reptiles. The field trips fill up early in the fall. Sign-up sheets are available at the general meeting or email Paula Vanderheul with your requests. [vanderp@peak.org](mailto:vanderp@peak.org)

#### Please note:

The Rogue Valley and Malheur trips require deposits by February 28, 2008.

The Rogue Valley deposit is \$40 for the play: *The Clay Cart*, by Sudraka. Jewels are stolen. A Brahmin faces execution. A beautiful courtesan is at the mercy of the King's bad-boy brother. Journey through world where gamblers, holy men, political fugitives, and royal scoundrels intersect and good people triumph. Bursting with music, dance, color, action, and romance, this 2,000-year-old Indian classic - utterly Shakespearean in spirit - proves that great storytelling transcends the centuries. The new Artistic Director of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Bill Rauch, directs this play.

The Malheur deposit is \$50. Each deposit must be made payable to Fred Ramsey at 3550 NW Glen Ridge Pl. Corvallis OR 97330.

*Paula Vanderheul*

## Volunteer Recognition

### Thank you to Susan Brown

Susan Brown has many special talents that she shares with Hesthavn Nature Center. She has created an artistic scrapbook that tells the story of how Allen and Helen Berg donated the six-acre pasture land in 1991 and the progress of events through 2005. Whenever visitors come for open house, the scrapbook is used to point out what the barn looked like when it was just a horse stable, and other interesting points of interest. Susan's scrapbook provides precious eventful memories. Besides volunteering for work parties, Susan regularly works on weekdays weed-

*see "Susan Brown" on next page*

**Susan Brown** *continued from page 19*

ing around the blue tubes, which protect young planted ninebark, snowberry, elderberry, serviceberry, white oak trees, and willow trees. The wildflower rock garden in front of the barn shows off Susan's artistic arrangement of rocks she and others donated. Susan helped me to spread compost into the rock garden and the demonstration native plant garden during the first week of October. Susan spent a whole week in October working with me building the Hesthavn interpretive trail frame, laying ground cloth and spreading gravel. This fall, Susan will start work on a second scrapbook starting with 2006 with photos she has been collecting from volunteer Hesthavn participants. When you see Susan let her know how much her volunteer projects are appreciated. Three cheers for Susan!

*Paula Vanderheul*

## ASC Green Plans

### Plant a tree

In keeping with our goal of becoming a "green" society, Audubon Society of Corvallis is planning a tree planting event with the help of the local Sierra Club and the Corvallis Sustainability Coalition. The city of Corvallis needs trees, and ASC has indicated a willingness to help out. The trees have been selected by experts and are paid for by the city. We will plant at Finley Refuge in early 2008. We need willing folks not only to plant, but also to help us serve refreshments and a nice hot chili lunch. If you can help, please let us know at 541-745-5088.

*John Gaylord*

## Field Notes

### September 25 through October 22, 2007

Some of the best days Oregon has to offer occurred during the period. Overnight rains refreshed the air, and sunrise brought early morning rainbows. Yet, for those of us who prefer full sun, the month disappointed us with precipitation 24 days in a row. The rainy weather kept daily high temperatures slightly below long-term averages, but brought out hordes of newts and other amphibians. Birding can be better in rainy weather, too, as birds that normally fly over us during good weather sometimes stop for a visit when low clouds and rain preside. Late September through October is a time of transition in our bird communities, with the last of many breeding migratory species heading south to warmer climates and the arrival of waterfowl and wintering songbirds. Activity at bird feeders increases and birds of the mountains begin descending into the valleys.

*Abbreviations and Locations:* m.ob. = many observers. Observer names are noted in parentheses after their reports. Observations without a name are the editor's. EEW = E. E. Wilson Wildlife Area north of Corvallis. FNWR = Finley National Wildlife Refuge, and includes Cabell, Cheadle, and McFadden marshes. STP = sewage treatment pond; Knoll Terrace STP is on the east side of Knoll Terrace mobile home community off of Elliot Circle in Corvallis; Philomath STP are off of Bellfountain Drive south of Philomath. Toketie Marsh is the remedial wetland for Coffin Butte landfill north of Corvallis, just off of Highway 99W. Willamette Park is in s. Corvallis. Vanderpool Tract is the southern section of the Luckiamute State Natural Area in northeast Benton County off of Buena Vista Rd.

The arrival of autumn was trumpeted by flocks of geese on 28 Sep. 653 **Greater White-fronted Geese** and 80 **Cackling Geese** were over FNWR that day. Flocks of white-fronts continued to pass over, often in the wee hours of the night, for the next ten days (Randy Moore, m.ob.). 6,000 Cackling Geese were foraging at FNWR on 22 Oct. The first **Dusky Canada Geese** of the season were 4 at FNWR on 17 Oct. **Gadwalls** are uncommon migrants, so 9 at McFadden Marsh, 22 Oct, was a good count. 47 **Wood Ducks** at Cabell Marsh, 30 Sep, was a good high count. The highest count of **American Wigeons** so far this fall was 89 at Philomath STP, 9 Oct. **Mallards** began crowding into McFadden Marsh as it re-hydrated after its summer drought; by 20 Oct there were more than 2,600 present, along with 544 **Northern Pintails** and 800 **Green-winged Teal**. As some dabbling duck species arrived, others departed. The last report of **Cinnamon Teal** was 4 at Cheadle Marsh, FNWR, 6 Oct.

An early **Canvasback** was an adult male at Philomath STP, 28 Sep; 9 there on 22 Oct were about on schedule. Four **Redheads** that spent most of last month at Philomath STP were last seen 30 Sep. **Greater Scaup** arrived with the first overnight rainstorm of the period, with 1 at Cabell Marsh along with 6 **Lesser Scaup**, 28 Sep. Four **Greater** were at Philomath STP, 18 Oct (Tom Snetsinger), and 28 **Lessers** were there 20 Oct. **Surf Scoters** arrived at Philomath STP, with 5 on 5 Oct; 8 were there 7-9 Oct. During the wind storm on 18 Oct, when gusts reached 45 mph, 2 Surf Scoters rested at Philomath STP. Another was at Camp Tadmor, Linn County, 21 Oct (Marcia Cutler). The season's first **Bufflehead** arrived 5 Oct at Philomath STP and stayed through the period. **Common Mergansers** were regularly detected in small numbers along the Willamette River, where they find plenty of fish. One stopped at Philomath STP for 5 minutes on 19 Oct, just long enough to determine that no fish in its right mind would live there.

**Sooty Grouse** and **Mountain Quail** were detected a couple times on Marys Peak (Noah Strycker). Back in the Valley, a **Horned Grebe** was at Philomath STP, 28 Sep, and 6 stopped briefly there during the strong winds of 18 Oct (T. Snetsinger). **Eared Grebes** arrived at Philomath STP, 29 Sep (Jamie Simmons) and 2-3 continued there throughout the period. A **Western Grebe** slept during a rainstorm at Philomath STP on 30 Sep and 1 was at Cabell Marsh on 3 Oct. During the windy afternoon 18 Oct, a **Clark's Grebe** was at Philomath STP. It was gone by the next morning. There are fewer than 7 Benton County records of Clark's Grebe.

Up to 7 **Great Egrets** foraged at FNWR throughout the period. **Turkey Vultures** made a strong movement south in mid-Oct, including several reports of kettles numbering up to 25 individuals. The last report was of 4 at FNWR 21 Oct (D. Boucher, L. Millbank). **White-tailed Kites** arrived at FNWR, 26 Sep and 2 foraged south of the prairie overlook most of the period (Molly Monroe, m.ob.). Two adult and 2 immature **Red-shouldered Hawks** were frequently encountered at FNWR (m.ob.). Numbers of **Red-tailed Hawks** increased throughout the period as migrants arrived; seven in one field was a good count (Andrea Foster). On 21 Oct, the first **Rough-legged Hawk** of the fall was along Llewellyn Road south of Corvallis. An adult **Golden Eagle** was at FNWR on 29 Sep (Don Boucher, Lisa Millbank). **Merlins** arrived there 2 days earlier. One to two **Peregrine Falcons** spent the period at Philomath STP eating shovelers and Green-winged Teal, and complaining about ravens and Red-tailed Hawks trying to take some of the left-overs (m.ob.). Along Llewellyn Road on 21 Oct, a Peregrine Falcon found the presence of **Prairie Falcon** to be rather disagreeable. After a scuffle and lots of posturing, both parted ways. The last report of a **Sora** was 10 Oct at Cabell Marsh, but a few of these are probably around much later into fall. **American Coot** numbers peaked at 1,050 at Philomath STP, 16-22 Oct.

Quite surprising for the west side of the Valley were 3 **Sandhill Cranes**. Two adults apparently spent the night at McFadden Marsh, leaving just after dawn on 12 Oct. Meanwhile, a juvenile foraged at Turtle Flats and Cabell Marsh, FNWR, 13-16 Oct (M. Monroe, m.ob.). Little

to no shorebird habitat was present in the Corvallis area throughout the period; water levels at Cabell Marsh were too high to expose mudflats whereas other locations were completely dry. Noticing the shortage of mudflats, a **Black-bellied Plover** flew over Philomath STP, 10 Oct, without stopping. B. & L. Proebsting reported a **Pectoral Sandpiper** at EEW, 13 Oct; this species is not detected every year in Benton County. Ten **Dunlin** arrived at McFadden Marsh, 20 Oct (R. Armstrong). Up to 21 **Long-billed Dowitchers** were at Cheadle Marsh, FNWR, 27 Sep-20 Oct (Rich Armstrong, m.ob.). Along DeArmond Rd in southern Polk County, Joel Geier found 15 **Long-billed Dowitchers** and a **Greater Yellowlegs**, 15 Oct. Two **Red-necked Phalaropes** showed up at Philomath STP, 19-20 Oct. On 5 Oct, a **Bonaparte's Gull** visited Philomath STP. Following up last month's **Sabine's Gull** in Corvallis was a juvenile hit by a car near Waterloo, Linn County, 9 Oct. (Kerstin Williams); unfortunately, the bird died shortly after it was discovered. Passing by the Philomath STP for about 10 minutes during the 18 Oct windstorm was a 1st-winter **Thayer's Gull**, a rare visitor to the area.

A late **Common Nighthawk** was west of Lebanon, 15 Oct (R. Armstrong). The last **Vaux's Swifts** were 2 at FNWR, 10 Oct. Two **Lewis' Woodpeckers** continued at Cheadle Marsh (D. Boucher, L. Millbank, m.ob.), but one may have met its demise at the talons of a Merlin, which repeatedly chased and harassed it, 6 Oct; only one woodpecker was there after that date. A **Northern (Yellow-shafted) Flicker** was in the same area, 27 Sep. One or two Yellow-shafteds are detected each fall in our area. Migration of **Northern (Red-shafted) Flickers** was noticeable throughout the period, with daily counts of 7-9 birds. **Pileated Woodpeckers** wandered into Corvallis from the nearby hills, with one at Good Samaritan Medical Center, 8 Oct (Linda Gelbrich).

The last reported **Western Wood-Pewee** of the season was at FNWR, 27 Sep. The last **Hammond's Flycatcher** was at FNWR, 1 Oct, and the last **Western-type Flycatcher** was there 12 Oct. A **Black Phoebe** was noticed during a raft trip, 30 Sep, along the Willamette River (N. Strycker, Karl Fairchild). Another was at its usual place near the Monroe STP, 20 Oct. (R. Armstrong). A southward migrating flock of 37 **Steller's Jays**, 27 Sep, at FNWR, was an interesting spectacle. The subspecies of **Horned Lark** occurring locally is *strigata*, the Streaked Horned Lark, which has not yet been detected on Marys Peak. The large, pale race, *arctica*, is a migrant from the north and a few winter here. One lark, probably *arctica*, was on the peak, 7 Oct (N. Strycker). Two *arctica* flew over Cabell Marsh, 17 Oct. Thousands of **Violet-green Swallows** moved through the region in late Sep and early Oct (K. Fairchild, N. Strycker); the last stragglers were 88 at Cabell Marsh, 10 Oct. A lone and cold-looking **Barn Swallow** was still at FNWR, 17 Oct.

**Mountain Chickadees** were surprising finds, with 1 at FNWR, 1 Oct, and 2 near the top of Marys Peak, 12-14 Oct (N. Strycker, photo). The last **House Wren** was at FNWR, 10 Oct. **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** arrived in good numbers, and one tried the suet feeder at Andrea Foster's home, 6 Oct. **Swainson's Thrushes** moved south, the last one reported was at Philomath, 16 Oct. A large flock of 266 **American Pipits** were at



A Mountain Chickadee near the top of Marys Peak, Benton County, 14 Oct 2007 (photo by Noah Strycker)

McFadden Marsh, 12 Oct. **Yellow-rumped Warblers** steadily increased in numbers through the period, with numbers rising noticeably by 6 Oct. The first Audubon's Yellow-rumped Warbler was 23 Sep, in Philomath, whereas the first Myrtle was at FNWR, 21 Sep. While Yellow-rumps moved in, most warblers moved out. A **Black-throated Gray Warbler** was still at FNWR, 12 Oct, and a **Common Yellowthroat** was still there 22 Oct. The last **Western Tanager** was at FNWR, 12 Oct.

A few **Chipping Sparrows** lingered into Oct; the latest was at FNWR, 20 Oct. **Savannah Sparrows** passed through in flocks in late Sep and the first week of Oct, with the top count 26 at Philomath, 30 Sep. A **Vesper Sparrow**, infrequently encountered during fall migration, was seen with the Savannahs at Philomath that same day. The first **White-throated Sparrows** of the fall were 3 along the Cheadle Marsh trail, 6 Oct.

**Lapland Longspurs**, rare but easily overlooked in the region, were detected at FNWR, 13 Oct, with a flock of larks and pipits (N. Strycker), and one was calling while flying over Cabell Marsh, 17 Oct. No reports of **Red Crossbills** or **Pine Siskins** were received, but 60 **Evening Grosbeaks** were on Marys Peak, 12 Oct (N. Strycker) and a few were in Corvallis during Oct (M. Cutler, m.ob.).

### Next issue

Please send your reports for the next issue by 24 November to:  
 Douglas Robinson  
 Dept. of Fisheries and Wildlife  
 Oregon State University  
 Corvallis, OR 97331  
 (541) 737-9501  
 Douglas.robinson@oregonstate.edu

## Cooperative Breeding The Importance of Nonparental Nurturing in Passerine Birds

A recent article in Science by five authors from universities in Australia, England, and South Africa reveals a novel aspect of bird behavior (A. F. Russell et al, Science 317, 941 [2007]). It is well known that in many bird populations there are cooperative breeders, or nonbreeding helpers—nonparental birds that feed the chicks of parental birds. A puzzling feature of this behavior is that, although birds fed by both parents and helpers receive more food than those fed only by parents, they do not grow up to be larger. In short, the benefits of being fed by helpers are not immediately apparent. Working with an Australian bird called the superb fairy-wren, the authors of this study have learned the basis for this apparent paradox. Mothers who live in cooperative breeding systems lay eggs that are smaller and lower in nutritional content than do mothers who cannot rely on helpers. Moreover, their chicks are smaller. So the



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## Cooperative Breeding *continued from page 21*

extra feeding by helpers allows these smaller chicks to catch up to birds not fed by helpers, thereby obscuring any difference between birds in helper and nonhelper populations. The energy saved by the mothers increases their own survival. Mother birds in a cooperative breeding population show a 30 percent decrease in mortality from one breeding season to the next, thereby increasing the likelihood that they will survive to breed again. So the apparent paradox is resolved; nurturing by helpers replaces energy that would otherwise be expended by mothers, reducing their own reproductive output. However, a more interesting question is left unresolved. How do female birds, consciously or otherwise, control the size and nutritional quality of the eggs that they lay?

*Chris Mathews*

## Christmas Bird Count

**Tuesday, December 18, 2007**

Everybody is invited to join us for the 47th Corvallis Christmas Bird Count (CBC) on Tuesday, December 18th. Whether you are a beginner or experienced CBCer, every set of eyes and ears is needed to help tally all the birds within a 7.5 mile radius of the Corvallis airport. The Christmas Bird Count is an organized continent-wide survey which documents every bird seen on a given day from sunrise to sunset.

The count is an all-day event open to anyone wishing to participate. This is an excellent opportunity for novice bird watchers to join with seasoned veterans and learn more about identifying and finding the local birds. Half-day participants and home feeder-watchers are also welcome. I would particularly like to encourage anyone with feeders in the count circle who can spare at least one hour to watch their yard to participate. Winter feeder watching can be quite rewarding as birds try to expend the least amount of energy to get the most amount of food.

Participants aged 19 and older need to pay a fee of \$5.00 to cover National Audubon's costs of printing the results. As in the past, the Corvallis count circle will be divided into 13 units, with a team of 3-6 individuals assigned to each section. Team leaders for each section will make arrangements with the rest of their group for a meeting place and time (usually between 7:00 and 7:30 am) the morning of the count. Participants should bring cold- and wet-weather gear, binoculars and snacks for the day. A notepad and pencil, field guides and a thermos with something hot are always good ideas as well.

If you are interested in participating or would like further information, please contact me at 541-752-4313 or e-mail me at [marciafcutler@comcast.net](mailto:marciafcutler@comcast.net)

*Marcia Cutler*

## Hesthavn News

### Interpretive trail, open house & more

Hesthavn Nature Center had a busy October. Fifteen cubic yards of compost were added to the wildflower rock garden and demonstration garden, and native seeds which have been sprouting nicely with the October rains were broadcast. Three days of brush hogging by Jerry Paul were spent mowing the pasture grasses and some brambles. During the third week of October, volunteers worked daily building the 1000-foot interpretive trail of wood frames, adding ground cloth, and finishing with gravel during a two-day weekend work party. The trail is not quite finished so another work party will be scheduled in November. October 27 was the final work party tackling blackberry brambles and false brome. Also on October 27 an open house was held for the community. I'd like to thank the eleven OSU Geosciences students that volunteered for the two weekend work parties. I'd also like to thank Susan Brown, Jerry Paul, Barrett Reeves, Ann Brodie, Fred Ramsey, Gail MacLean, Karl Fairchild, John Gaylord, Ray Drapek, and Diana Brin for all their volunteer help during the month of October.

You can get map directions to Hesthavn Nature Center which is located at 8590 NW Oak Creek Road, from our website at [www.audubon.corvallis.or.us](http://www.audubon.corvallis.or.us).

The website also has information on how to subscribe to the Hesthavn email bulletin board that publishes work party dates and other events as they happen at Hesthavn Nature Center.

*Paula Vanderheul*

## Save a Local Wetland

### Although not all wetlands are created equal, no wetland should be left behind

What formerly served as a log pond near Hwy 20, between Corvallis and Philomath, now years later has become a functioning wetland. It didn't take all that long to transform it into an awesome wetland, one that attracts lots of bird life (cinnamon teals, nesting geese), Northwestern Pond Turtles, and even a beaver lodge and several beaver dams. These interconnected ponds are close enough to Philomath High School to serve the classes as field sites introducing students to nature and ecological principles. The community also was invited to participate during the last four summers in natural resource education programs—"Science, Music and Marshmallows."

I am not alone in thinking this 122-acre area worthy of safe-guarding. The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board is allotting 3/4 million dollars towards the purchase of this land, which will eventually house a Marys Peak Natural Resources Interpretive Center (MPNRIC). But community support and more funds, indicating community willingness to contribute, is needed, and quickly. Since the project is a 501C3, non-profit, donations could be considered tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Please invite oth-

ers to join the effort, and if possible, send donations to: MPNRIC, P.O. Box 1267, Philomath, OR 97370.

*Amy Schoener*

## **Bald Eagle Safari**

**Nov 24 - Feb 17**

Canadian Outback Adventures is offering a Bald Eagle Safari viewing tour from November 24, 2007 – February 17, 2008. The tour is run out of Squamish, British Columbia, Canada (near Vancouver).

Our trip leaders meet guests at the Squamish Adventure Centre for an introductory film clip about bald eagles in the area (we can offer transportation from Vancouver and/or Whistler if need be). Upon arrival, guests will be given Mustang Survival Suits and rubber boots, and are then loaded into the bus for a short ride to the launch site on the Cheakamus River. What follows is a two-hour, ultimate bird-watching safari adventure, including a spectacular scenic river journey without the worry of white water to spoil camera shots or observation opportunities. The pace is leisurely and relaxing; a perfectly tranquil way to fully experience bald eagles up close, in their natural habitat. The 16-kilometer float takes place down the gentle lower sections of the Cheakamus and Squamish Rivers. There is an occasional paddle stroke to maneuver the boat as the guide fills the guests in on eagle lore and what they should keep an eye out for. Approximately two hours later, guests are brought back to the Howe Sound Inn where a hearty lunch is served.

Afterwards, you may like to combine our Eagle Safari with a self-guided hike and/or tour of the Tenderfoot Creek Hatchery, also located in the Squamish area. This is a wonderful way to become even more knowledgeable about this fascinating ecosystem, and complete your eagle bird watching experience.

If you are interested in more information about this trip, please check out our website at [http://www.canadianoutback.com/raft\\_eaglesafari.php](http://www.canadianoutback.com/raft_eaglesafari.php). If you have any further questions, or wish to discuss group pricing, feel free to give me a call or email me at 800-565-8735 or [adventurerez@canadianoutback.com](mailto:adventurerez@canadianoutback.com)

*Meghan Tabor, Tour and Travel Coordinator*

## **Nat'l Refuges in Jeopardy**

**Audubon Testimony in DC**

On October 9, 2007, the House Fisheries and Wildlife Subcommittee heard testimony from former senior Clinton Administration officials Bruce Babbitt and Carol Browner, respectively, on whether the 1997 "National Wildlife Refuge Improvement Act" is working. Ms. Browner is Audubon Chair. The current head of the Fish and Wildlife Service, Dale Hall, also testified. Rep. Ron Kind (D-Wis.), one of the leaders of the congressional refuge caucus, presided over the hearing.

The oversight hearing examined whether the law has lived up to its goals to oversee and improve management of the refuges. Signed into law by President Clinton in 1997, the bill created an "organic act" to oversee management of the refuges for the first time.

Last April, a coalition of conservation groups including Audubon issued a report saying the nation's wildlife refuge system is operating at half the budget it needs. The groups also said that the wildlife refuge system is threatened by invasive species, habitat fragmentation, and global warming; all of which are exacerbated by chronic under-funding.

Ms. Browner told the committee in her written testimony:

"Unfortunately, despite its value and importance, for decades the Refuge System has been under-appreciated, under-funded, and under-prioritized. Its tremendous potential, to be the bedrock of ecosystem protection in the country, and to be a driver of habitat protection in the larger landscape surrounding the refuges, has gone largely unrealized. In many ways, refuges have been passive recipients of a wide range of environmental threats, places where destructive activities were too often permitted, and where ecosystems were too often degraded by broader landscape-level threats such as invasive species, limited water supplies, and pollution.

"In 1997, the Congress sent a strong signal that the era of under-appreciation, rampant unaddressed threats, and unrealized potential was coming to an end. The passage of the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act, with unanimous bipartisan support in the House and Senate, for the first time gave the Refuge System a clear mandate to promote wildlife conservation above other uses, widely known as the "wildlife first" mission of the system. The Improvement Act also gave refuges powerful tools to begin to tackle unaddressed threats and to manage the system with an ecosystem approach.

"Ten years after passage of this landmark legislation, however, implementation of several key requirements is grossly inadequate."

Millions of migratory birds and hundreds of endangered species rely on the United States' more than 545 national wildlife refuges and thousands of waterfowl production areas. Over 39 million people visit units of the National Wildlife Refuge System each year, according to the Interior Department.

*From the National Audubon Society website*

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*the* **CHAT**

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**Calendar**

Nov 8 Board meeting  
Nov 10 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday local birding\*\*  
Nov 15 General meeting\*  
Nov 17 Newport coast full-day birding\*\*  
Nov 29 Submission deadline for December Chat  
Dec 8 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday local birding\*\*  
Dec 10 BLM WOPR public comment deadline\*

\*see pg 17

\*\*see pg 19

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