



Audubon Society of Corvallis the **CHAT**

December 2007

VOL. 37

#4

General Meeting

Thursday, December 20, 7:30 – 9:00 pm
First Presbyterian Church

ASC Members Slide Show!

The program for the December ASC meeting is our always-popular Members Slide Show. Please consider sharing with us your top 10-15 best wildlife-nature shots. Please bring the photos on a thumb drive or cd formatted for a PC (not a Mac). They can be formatted as jpg's, pdf's, in a Picasa slide show, or in Powerpoint. Be sure to arrive early (by 7:10 pm) on Thursday 20 December so we can load the pictures on a laptop before the general meeting begins. Send questions regarding the program to Sue Haig (haig_susan@yahoo.com).

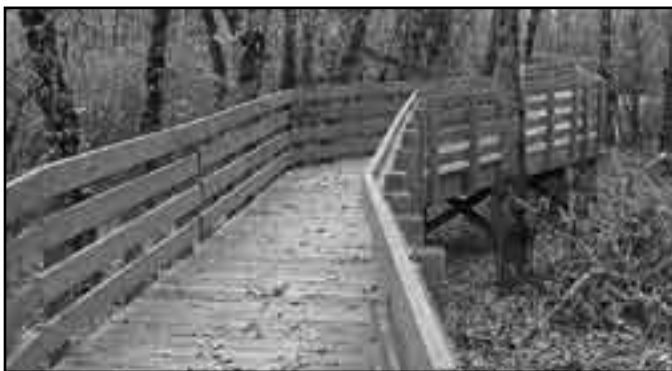
Sue Haig

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.

The Boardwalk is complete!

Homer Campbell Trail dedicated in a downpour



*Newly completed Homer Campbell Memorial trail
Photo by Paula Vanderheul*



Right to left, Meg Campbell, Linda Campbell, and Janet Cornelius at the November 17 celebration of the completion of the Homer Campbell trail

The skies were leaden and soggy on Saturday morning, November 17, but spirits were high among 45 hardy souls who gathered at Finley National Wildlife Refuge for the dedication of the Homer Campbell Memorial Trail. The boardwalk, approach ramp and parking area were completed in late October, barely ahead of the fall rains, and it was time to celebrate! Thanks to refuge staff, a large tent had

see "Homer Campbell Trail" on next page

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Homer Campbell Trail *continued from front page*

been erected near the trailhead, and it kept most of us dry for most of the brief ceremony. Amy Schoener on the saw and bow and Nancy Leman on a portable keyboard played a few of Homer's favorite tunes. Remarks were offered by Homer's daughter Linda Campbell, refuge complex manager Doug Spencer, ASC president Chris Mathews, Friends of the Willamette Valley Refuge Complex treasurer Rick Brown, trail benefactor and ASC member Ann Werner, and Homer's widow Meg Campbell. After refreshments, courtesy of Allann Brothers Coffee and Sheryl Brown, secretary and muffin-chef of the Friends group, and good conversation, we all walked the trail in the misty rain, marveling at its construction and at the beauty of the lichen-draped Oregon ash riparian area through which it passes.

Now we all look forward to next May when the observation blind at the Cabell Marsh end of the trail will have been built, interpretive panels and a spotting scope installed, and permanent signage erected. We will then celebrate completion of the entire project.

Meanwhile, the boardwalk is wheelchair accessible and available for use all winter - a good place to keep your feet dry, see multitudes of waterfowl on Cabell Marsh, and hear the soothing rhythms of nature!

Chris Mathews and Linda Campbell

Nominations Solicited for

Homer Campbell Award

Each year the Audubon Society of Corvallis presents an award for local contributions to conservation or environmental education. The award is made in honor of one of our most beloved former leaders, Homer Campbell. We invite each reader of the Chat to consider possible awardees and to submit nominations. Nominations can be submitted by letter or e-mail to any member of the selection committee: Linda Campbell (lcampbell@peak.org), Dave Mellinger (DavidKMellinger@yahoo.com), or Frances Stilwell (mfstilwell@peak.org). The letter should provide brief biographical details about the nominee and a description, as complete as possible, of the environmental contribution(s) for which the nomination is being made. Seconding letters, in support of the nomination, are helpful but not required. Deadline for receipt of all nomination material is January 31. The award will be conferred at either the April or May chapter meeting. Please consider making a nomination.

Chris Mathews, President, Audubon Society of Corvallis

Don't Forget!

Christmas Bird Count, Tuesday, December 18

The 47th Corvallis Christmas Bird Count (CBC) 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. Participants aged 19 and older need to pay a fee of \$5.00 to cover National Audubon's costs of printing the results. 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

Marcia Cutler

Join the Green Team

for Tree Planting

December 15

Audubon Society of Corvallis will be joining the Sierra Club and Corvallis Sustainability Coalition for a tree planting on December 15 in the downtown Corvallis area. The mayor of Corvallis and numerous officials are expected to attend as well as media representatives. David Eckert will film a video of the community project. ASC green team leader John Gaylord is asking for at least six helpers to assist in the project. He plans on meeting at the Corvallis Library parking lot at 9:45 am to receive our planting assignment. Please bring gloves and a shovel if possible. Refreshments and lunch will be provided. The project should be over by 12:00 noon. Info at 745-5088

John Gaylord

Nature on a Human Scale

See movie about local nature on TV (ch.29)

Discover a dazzling and colorful array of more than 170 local species in a journey through the seasons. Most of the movie was filmed on foot or by bicycle. Meet your wild neighbors and explore the richness of life—right here at home! (27 minutes).

The movie is airing on Corvallis Community Television (cable channel 29) Sundays at 6:30 pm, Wednesdays at 5:30 pm and Saturdays at 9 pm..

A DVD will be available soon at the Corvallis-Benton Library. For more information see:

www.Neighborhood-Naturalist.com

Don Boucher

Reminder:

Important CHAT changes

Increased postal rates and other costs, plus reduced rebates from National Audubon, have led our local ASC chapter board to institute a new policy. After the New Year, only members who are paid-up local members will receive our newsletter. This applies whether you receive the newsletter by email or hard copy.

Until the end of December, Local dues are still \$20 (in-

dividual) and \$25 (family) memberships. As of January 1st, dues will increase slightly, to \$25 and \$35 respectively. Dues can be sent to ASC at P.O. Box 148, Corvallis, OR 97339.

Although we encourage you to belong to the National Audubon Society, and support their conservation efforts, that membership alone will no longer entitle you to find out what the local Corvallis chapter is doing. So, a good option is to support both our local chapter, as well as the National Audubon Society.

Amy Schoener

Field Trip Schedule

Monthly Year Round Second Saturday

Dec 08 Meet at the Avery Park Rose Garden parking area at 7:30 am
Jan 12 Same as above
Feb 09 Same as above

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.

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 and follow the instructions.

Spring 2008 Weekend Field Trips

March 21-23 Bandon Coast
April 18-20 Klamath Basin
May 02-04 Rogue Valley
May 15-18 Malheur NWR

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 of finding birds in their habitat, 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

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 made payable to Fred Ramsey 3550 NW Glen Ridge Pl. Corvallis OR 97330

Paula Vanderheul

2008 Winter Wings Festival

Klamath Falls hosts the 2008 Winter Wings Festival on February 15-17 2008 at the Oregon Institute of Technology. This community event celebrates the return of Bald Eagles, other raptors, and wintering flocks of waterfowl to the Klamath Basin. The Basin is home to the largest concentration of wintering Bald Eagles in the lower 48 states. The Festival arranges field trips to observe Bald Eagles as they fly in and out of their roosting area or forage in the nearby refuges and to view the spectacular flocks of waterfowl. Participants can also enjoy a variety of workshops, mini-sessions, free family activities, and special receptions. Trish Nixon, the raptor specialist at the Peregrine Fund's World Center for Birds of Prey in Boise, Idaho, will be the keynote speaker on Feb. 15, 2008. Her talk will focus on condor recovery and will be preceded by a welcome reception.

To obtain more information, visit the Winter Wings Festival website at www.winterwingsfest.org after mid-December, 2007, or contact Travel Klamath at 1-800-445-6728 or 541-882-1501 for travel information, or call Todd at 541-850-0084 for festival brochures and registration information. Festival participants enjoy reduced hotel rates at several partner hotels and transportation is provided on all of the major field trips.

Darrel Samuels



This Peregrine was patrolling over Cabell Marsh at Finley National Wildlife Refuge. Photo by Don Boucher

Field Notes

23 October to 24 November 2007

Clear skies with crisp autumn air characterized late October. Patchy fog restricted visibility early some mornings, but sunny skies at mid-day caused fall leaves to blaze with color. The strong winds in late October also moved large numbers of geese and ducks out of our area until others arrived in November. Rainfall was lighter than normal from late October through most of November and daily high temperatures were near long-term averages. The only sustained storm with plenty of rain came 16-20 November and provided the season's first snow on Marys Peak. When that storm passed, clear skies and cold temperatures embraced the latter half of Thanksgiving week.

Abbreviations and Locations: m.ob. = many observers. Observer names are noted in parentheses after their reports. Observations without a name (or initials WDR) are the editor's. ASC indicates observations made by Audubon Society field trips. EEW = E. E. Wilson Wildlife Area north of Corvallis. ANWR = Ankeny National Wildlife Refuge in Marion County. FNWR = Finley National Wildlife Refuge, and includes Cabell, Cheadle, and McFadden marshes. STP = sewage treatment ponds; Philomath STP are off of Bellfountain Drive south of Philomath.

Snow Geese are occasional to uncommon fall migrants, so one at ANWR, 27 Oct, was a nice surprise (Cheryl Whelchel). Most counts are in the single digits in our area; a flock of 35, with 19 adults and 16 juveniles, at FNWR, 20 Nov was quite unusual (Tom Snetsinger). Also unusual, but regular each fall, was a **Brant** along Bruce Road at FNWR, 25 Oct (Rich Armstrong). Numbers of migrating **Cackling Geese** reach their maximum during this time period each year as many stop to forage on their way further south for the winter. An estimated 20,000 were at FNWR on 24 Oct. One of them did not have the chance to visit California because it was captured and partially eaten by a **Golden Eagle** that morning; 2 **Bald Eagles** cleaned up the left-overs. Later that day, the flock was also harassed by 2 **Peregrine Falcons** (R. Armstrong). **Tundra Swans** arrived 25 Oct at ANWR (Molly Monroe). Two were at Philomath STP the next day. By 30 Oct, several were at Cabell Marsh, too (M. Monroe). Numbers of Tundra Swans built to 255 at FNWR, 23 Nov.

Three **Eurasian Wigeons**, 24 Oct, were the first fall arrivals at Philomath STP (R. Armstrong, m.ob.). Most **Cinnamon Teal** left our region by early Oct, so 5 males at ANWR, 10 Nov, were a nice surprise (ASC, J. Simmons). 850 **Northern Shovelers** at Philomath STP, 11 Nov, was a very high count for the area. A flock of 40 **Canvasbacks** at Philomath STP, 29 Oct, was exceptional; fall high counts are typically much lower. That flock did not stay long, but one to 4 Canvasbacks were there, 9-21 Nov. **Redheads** are scarce after Aug and Sep, so an adult male at Philomath STP, 9 Nov, was interesting. Numbers of **Ring-necked Ducks** began increasing in mid-November with high counts of 250 at FNWR, 21-23 Nov. Two **Surf Scoters** were at Philomath STP, 24 Oct. (R. Armstrong, m.ob.). The most surprising discovery of the period was two immature **Long-tailed Ducks** at FNWR, 21 Nov (WDR, m.ob.). There were only one or two previous records of this species in Benton County since 1990. Long-tailed Ducks, formerly called Oldsquaw, are normally found along the Oregon Coast, rarely straying inland.

Bufflehead numbers increased throughout the period and peaked at 33 at Philomath STP, 16 Nov. A female-plumaged **Common Goldeneye** was at Philomath STP, 15 Nov (Paula Vanderheul, m.ob.); goldeneyes are rare locally. Several **Hooded Mergansers**, including 2 gorgeous males, were on a pond near Albany in early November (Don Miller). **Ruddy Duck** numbers climbed from about 30 at Philomath STP, early in the period, to 72, 9 Nov.

Loons, despite the southward passage of thousands per hour only 50 miles away from Corvallis along the Oregon Coast, are very rare around Corvallis. A **loon**, probably a Pacific, stopped briefly at Philomath STP, 15 Nov (P. Vanderheul). At a private pond near the Corvallis airport, a **Pacific Loon** was foraging during the 18 Nov rainstorm. A single **Eared**

Grebe was at the Philomath STP during the period. Last year at this time there were up to 7 there.

As many as 4 **Great Egrets** continued at FNWR throughout the period. Steve Seibel learned the trick for discovering how many **White-tailed Kites** spent the period at the FNWR prairie. On 13 Nov he counted them going to roost at dusk and found 6 individuals, about 3 times the number you might expect based on day-time views of Finley prairie. Numbers of **Red-tailed Hawks** increased conspicuously during the period. A high count of 28 on the Benton County raptor survey route was about normal for Nov (M. Cutler, P. Vanderheul) as was a Linn County total of 57 on 24 Nov (C. Whelchel).

A **Virginia Rail** was still at FNWR, 24 Oct. **American Coots** remained abundant at Philomath STP; 1,000 were there during most of the period. Observations of **Sandhill Cranes** carried over from last period. There were 2 at Eagle Marsh, ANWR, from late Oct through at least 10 Nov (m.ob.). Another flew over Philomath STP, 11 Nov; and three were observed at the new wetland along Diamond Hill Road, Linn County (Jarod Jebousek). Shorebird numbers seemed low this period. **Killdeer** numbers do increase in the region during winter when many occupy grass fields. A count of 65 at FNWR, 10 Nov, signified the start of the winter increase in numbers. Later in the month numbers were much higher; a count of 188 along Smith Road, Benton County, 23 Nov, was the highest reported. A **Greater Yellowlegs** was at ANWR, 10 Nov (ASC, J. Simmons), and along Smith Road, 23 Nov. **Least Sandpipers** were rarely reported. **Dunlin** numbers peaked at 95 along Smith Road, 23 Nov, otherwise not many groups were found. **Long-billed Dowitchers** were scarce with only a few reports of one or two individuals during November mostly from FNWR.

Gulls can be surprisingly difficult to find in Benton County, but **California Gulls** appeared regularly throughout the period; up to 3 per day were seen around FNWR, the Corvallis airport, and Philomath STP. Few stayed long. A second-cycle **Glaucous-winged Gull** joined 2 California Gulls that flew over Philomath STP, 9 Nov, headed west-northwest as if aiming for the Oregon Coast. During strong southwesterly winds and steady rain on 10 Nov, a second-cycle and a first-cycle Glaucous-winged Gull circled Philomath STP for about 15 minutes before heading east.

In town, gulls often use light posts as high perches from which to survey the landscape for food. A gull-on-the-post at the Jack-in-the-Box in north Corvallis, 5 Nov, caught Carolyn Paynter's attention. On 11 Nov, 2 adult gulls were there, again lounging on light posts to keep watch for stray scraps; both appeared to be Glaucous-winged x Western Gull hybrids. In nearby Linn and Marion counties, gulls are usually



*A Burrowing Owl on Davis Road, Linn County, 3 Nov
photo by Cheryl Whelchel*

much easier to find, yet an adult Glaucous-winged at ANWR was still a nice find (ASC, J. Simmons). By 23 Nov, gulls were occurring more often in Corvallis (Tara Robinson) and along Smith Road, Benton County, where a flock of 35 gulls contained Ring-billed, Herring, and Glaucous-winged.

A **Burrowing Owl** was along Davis Road in Linn County, 3 Nov (see Cheryl Whelchel's photo below), where they appear to be annual. Two **Short-eared Owls** foraged over fields north of FNWR, 23-24 Nov. Last month the editor mistakenly left out of the notes one of the more interesting finds of that period, a **Common Poorwill** just south of the intersection of Chapel Drive and Bellfountain Road, south of Philomath, 5 Oct. It represented probably the first Benton County record. A late **Rufous Hummingbird** was in Linn County, 28 Oct. (Jeff Harding). A count of 8 **Anna's Hummingbirds** was made by Rich Armstrong in the neighborhood near Jackson-Frazier wetland, Corvallis, 20 Nov.

Northern Shrikes were rarely encountered. The first of the fall was reported at FNWR, 30 Oct (Craig Tumer). A **Blue Jay** was near the intersection of Peoria Road and Highway 34, Linn County, 1 Nov (Michael Dossett). This is close to the location where one wintered 2 years ago. Blue Jays are exceptionally scarce fall migrants and winter residents in western Oregon. **Gray Jays** are uncommon residents in the Coast Range and not regularly detected during outings even in appropriate habitat; 3 were on Marys Peak, 31 Oct.

A survey of Corvallis airport on 28 Oct turned up at least 75 **Horned Larks**, some of which were singing (Randy Moore, WDR). Many were in pairs; the largest flock was of 12 individuals. One lark on Marys Peak, 31 Oct, appeared to be of the *merrilli* or *lamprochroa* subspecies. The invasion of **Mountain Chickadees** continued; up to 7 were on Marys Peak, 24-31 Oct (m.ob.). Also on Marys Peak was a **Townsend's Solitaire**, 30 Oct (R. Moore). Two **Swainson's Thrushes** lingered at FNWR, 24 Oct. **American Robins** were numerous in some locations, but scarce in others; a flock of 100 was near EEW, 20 Nov (J. Geier). **Wrentits** continued to skulk in the hedgerows at FNWR Headquarters (Carolyn Paynter).

Quite unexpected was a **Bohemian Waxwing** flying over Marys Peak, 31 Oct. Perhaps this presages a winter invasion of this irruptive species because a few were also reported a week or two later in eastern Oregon. Observers should keep an eye on all waxwings in the next weeks because **Cedar Waxwings**, which were common last period, became decidedly scarce during this one. A half dozen Cedar Waxwings visited Jan Landau's yard in Corvallis to feast on berries, 12 Nov. Six more were at Lewisburg Saddle, 22 Nov, with 50 American Robins. Fifty **Yellow-rumped Warblers** were at EEW, 27 Oct (J. Geier). Two **Townsend's Warblers** were on top of Marys Peak, 31 Oct, but that species seems to be uncommon at feeders in town so far this fall. Rare in the region, a **Palm Warbler** was on private property near the Corvallis airport, 23 Oct.

Late fall and winter are times to search for interesting birds with flocks of sparrows. Those searches turned up a couple rarities so far. Glen Lindeman reported an **American Tree Sparrow** at Baskett Slough NWR, 5 Nov, for one of few Polk County records. A **Clay-colored Sparrow** was along Old River Road in southeastern Benton County, 16-17 Nov; this is apparently the second county record of the species and the first since early 2005 (WDR; m.ob.). 154 **Savannah Sparrows** were at Corvallis airport, 28 Oct (R. Moore, WDR); interestingly, many of those skulked in low grass and ran away from observers rather than taking flight and bounding away as our local subspecies typically does. The skulkers also appeared to be larger in size, have larger bills and bolder, darker back markings than our local breeding subspecies. A **Swamp Sparrow**, occasional but regular each fall and winter, was along the Cabell Marsh dam, 10-15 Nov; another was at McFadden Marsh, 11 Nov. **White-throated Sparrows** began to show up at Corvallis feeders in the first week of Nov (Becky Schwiebert, Jamie Simmons). Always a pleasure to discover, a first-winter-plumaged **Harris' Sparrow** was a nice surprise at Becky Schwiebert's feeder in Corvallis, 23-24 Nov.

Four **Lapland Longspurs** were along Bruce Road at FNWR, 24 Oct. Two more were at Corvallis airport, 28 Oct. (R. Moore, WDR). A **Snow Bunting** was flying over FNWR on 24 Oct, but apparently did not stop. However, one was foraging on Marys Peak, 31 Oct. Two **Purple Finches** apparently of the Eastern subspecies were at a feeder in Corvallis, 28 Oct. The birds had very clean white underparts, dark brown streaking on underparts, and clean fine streaking within the supercilium. Our local subspecies, in contrast, has blurry streaking on underparts with a pale buffy yellow wash on underparts and face. Stefan Schlick reported a female-plumaged **Cassin's Finch** from the top of Marys Peak, 10 Nov; normally found in the Cascades and east of those mountains, that species is detected in our region only once or twice a year. **Pine Siskins** began appearing in numbers on Marys Peak, where 41 were counted, 31 Oct, but were not noticed in any numbers in the Valley.

Next issue

Please send your reports for the next issue by 22 December.

Douglas Robinson

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Imperiled Birds in Oregon

New Report Identifies Species at Greatest Risk

Fifty-four of the birds that Audubon and the American Bird Conservancy (ABC) have identified as in need of top-priority conservation attention to ensure their continued survival spend at least part of their year in Oregon. This represents 11% of the total number of species found in Oregon. They have the dubious distinction of being included on WatchList 2007, the newest and most scientifically sound list of America's birds at greatest risk. Unlike those on Audubon's recent survey of Common Birds in Decline, these species are often rare and limited in range; consequently, they face a more imminent threat of extinction. For many of them, conservation efforts in Oregon as well as nationally will play a critical role in determining their future health and survival.

The continental WatchList is based on a comprehensive analysis of population size and trends, distribution, and environmental threats, informed and improved by extensive scientific review. The 59 species on its "red list" are those of greatest concern, while the additional 119 merit their spots on the "yellow list" due to a combination of rarity seriously declining numbers. Species found on either part of the WatchList demand immediate help while there is still time to save them.

"All Oregonians have an opportunity and a responsibility to help our birds at greatest risk--- including not only well-known imperiled species such as the spotted owl, marbled murrelet and snowy plover, but also species such as the Lewis' woodpecker, willow flycatcher and greater sage grouse," said Audubon Society of Portland Conservation Director Bob Sallinger. "The species on the Watchlist

see "WatchList" on page 30

WatchList *continued from page 29*

extend from Oregon's oceans to its mountains to its deserts, and some pass through our own backyards. We need conservation action now, while there is still time – and WatchList helps focus that action where we need it most.”

Notable Oregon Species on the WatchList include the following:

Northern Spotted Owl: (WatchList Red) It comes as no surprise that the Northern Spotted Owl has made the 2007 WatchList. The Northern Spotted Owl was listed as “Threatened” under the Federal Endangered Species Act in 1990 due to “loss and adverse modification” of the old growth habitat on which it depends. Despite habitat protections in place since the Northwest Forest Plan was adopted in 1994, the spotted owl has continued to see population declines across its range. Despite this situation, the current administration has attempted to roll back protections for the old growth habitat on which spotted owls and hundreds of other species depend. Audubon is actively opposing proposed reductions in existing old growth protections that are currently proposed in the US Fish and Wildlife Service Draft Spotted Owl Recovery Plan and the Bureau of Land Managements Western Oregon Plan Revisions.

Marbled Murrelet: (WatchList Yellow) Currently listed as “Threatened” under the Federal Endangered Species Act, the Marbled Murrelet is a small seabird that nests in natural mossy depressions of coastal old growth trees. Murrelet declines are directly connected to loss of old growth nesting habitat. However, the murrelet also faces significant threats in its marine environment, including oil spills, declines in prey base and gill netting. Audubon is working to restore Marbled Murrelet Populations through its efforts to protect old growth habitat, establish permanent Marine Protected Areas and by working to prevent rollbacks of existing protections afforded under the Endangered Species Act.

Lewis's Woodpecker: (WatchList Red) Once considered “abundant” across Oregon, this woodpecker has seen dramatic populations declines and has been nearly extirpated from portions of its historic range, including the Willamette Valley. Breeding Bird Surveys indicate a 75% reduction in populations over the past 40 years. Causes for its decline include loss of lowland oak habitat and competition for nest holes from introduced European starlings.

Greater Sage Grouse: (WatchList Yellow) Known for their elaborate courtship displays, the greater sage grouse is found in shrub-steppe habitat across much of Eastern Oregon. The species depends on large expanses of shrub-steppe habitat for breeding. Declines are associated with loss of shrub-steppe habitat, habitat fragmentation and human disturbance.

Snowy Plover: (WatchList Yellow) The Snowy Plover is a shorebird that has been listed as threatened under the Federal Endangered Species Act since 1993. Historically found

along the entire Oregon Coast, Snowy Plovers are today limited to just a handful of nesting sites. The main threats to the ground nesting Snowy Plover include habitat loss due to encroachment of invasive European Beach Grass, predation by wild and domestic animals, and disturbance from human activity

Olive-sided Flycatcher: (WatchList Yellow) The Olive-sided Flycatcher breeds in the coniferous forests of Oregon. Breeding Bird Survey data shows a >80% population decline in Oregon over the past 40 years. Population declines are believed to be associated with habitat alteration due to clear-cutting and fire suppression and loss of wintering grounds. Olive-sided Flycatchers can still be found breeding in the conifer forests around Portland.

Willow Flycatcher: (WatchList Yellow) The Willow Flycatcher breeds across Oregon and is most commonly associated with willow thickets bordering riparian areas, but can be found breeding at elevations of up to 5,000 feet. Once considered “common” in Oregon, the Willow Flycatcher is in decline due to loss of riparian habitat, disturbance from grazing and human development, and cowbird parasitism. Oregon Breeding Bird Survey data shows a >88% population decline over the past 40 years. Some nesting populations can still be found around Portland at Smith and Bybee Lakes and at the Sandy River Delta, but they have completely disappeared in other locations.

Short-eared Owl: (WatchList Yellow) The Short-eared Owl is a ground nesting owl that is found in open country across Oregon. Christmas Bird Counts indicate a 40% population decline in Oregon over the past 40 years. Cause of decline include loss of native prairie habitat and wetlands. It has largely disappeared from significant portions of its historic breeding range including the Klamath Basin and Willamette Valley.

Varied Thrush: (WatchList Yellow) The Varied Thrush was a surprise addition to the 2007 Watchlist. This familiar relative of the Robin breeds in conifer forests of the Coast Range and the Cascades and winters in low elevation woodlands and forests. They are a common winter visitor to forested backyards in and around Portland. Breeding Bird Surveys indicate a -23.9% in breeding populations in Oregon during the past 40 years. Oregon declines are believed to be associated with forest fragmentation. More significant declines are associated with habitat loss and fragmentation in the Northern Boreal Forests of Canada.

The new Audubon/ABC WatchList is based on the latest available data from the Christmas Bird Count and the annual Breeding Bird Survey along with other research and assessment from the bird conservation community. The data were analyzed and weighted according to methods developed through extensive peer review and revision, yielding an improved assessment of actual peril that can be used to determine bird conservation priorities and funding. Listed species may seem unfamiliar to many Americans. Unlike

those on Audubon's recent survey of Common Birds in Decline, these species are often rare and limited in range.

For the complete WatchList, and information on how to help, visit www.audubon.org. To learn more about Audubon Society of Portland's work protecting these and other species, visit www.audubonportland.org. For high resolution photos of priority WatchList species, B-roll and other press resources, visit www.audubon.org/news/press-room/WatchList2007/.

*Bob Sallinger
Birders, Conservation and Refuges*

Dec 19 Salem Audubon Society Speaker

Paul Baicich, author and a national leader in bird conservation, will be the speaker at the Wednesday, December 19, meeting of the Salem Audubon Society.

His talk, "Birders, Conservation and Refuges—Making Better Connections," will cover the history of bird conservation, popular birding, and the development of national wildlife refuges. He will discuss when these movements were parallel, when they separated, and when they intersected. He will also discuss the current and future needs of the wildlife refuges.

Baicich served as director of conservation and public policy for the American Birding Association, where he edited 14 of the "ABA Birdfinding Guides" and the bimonthly magazine "Birding". Baicich then worked for Swarovski Birding, a North American birding project, and more recently for the National Wildlife Refuge Association, promoting support for the refuge system. He is co-author of the book *A Guide to the Nests, Eggs, and Nestlings of North American Birds*, published in 1997.

The meeting begins with a social time at 6:30 pm, followed by the program at 7 pm. The location is the Carrier Room of the First United Methodist Church on the corner of Church and State Streets in downtown Salem. The public is invited; there is no charge.

For more information call the Salem Audubon Society office, call 503-588-7340.

Mary Neuendorf

Aleutian Goose Festival, March 28-30, Crescent City, CA

Come celebrate spring and the return of the once endangered Aleutian Geese to the extreme northern coast of California at the 10th Annual Aleutian Goose Festival, March 28-30 2008 in Crescent City/Del Norte County, CA. Located in the home of Redwood National Park and the Smith River National Recreation area, the festival offers 60+ workshops/fieldtrips, Native American heritage, birds-birds-birds, Spotted Owl, Marbled Murrelets, pelagic trip,

Smith River drifts, geology, botany and more. For more information, go to www.aleutiangoosefestival.org.

Godwit Days, April 18-20, Arcata, CA

Join the flock at the 13th annual Godwit Days Spring Migration Bird Festival April 18-20, 2008 at the Arcata Community Center in Arcata, CA. Pre-and post-festival events are offered to extend your birding enjoyment. Choose from over 100 field trips and workshops and browse the vendors at the bird fair. An extraordinary birding adventure awaits you between the redwoods and Humboldt Bay! Go to www.godwitdays.com for more details and to register on-line.

Rick Hiser

Call for Chat Contributions Please Share Your Stories, Photos, Thoughts, and Discoveries!

What do you want to see in your ASC Chat? It all depends on you! All the items in the newsletter are written or suggested by ASC members. If you enjoy the Chat, that's great – but it could be even better with your help. The ASC Chat needs your help to fill each issue with interesting news of what is flying, swimming, or hopping in the Willamette Valley. Please let your fellow Auduboners see your photos and hear your tales. Send your photos, stories, poems, and personal experiences to the Chat editors: chateditors@gmail.com or 754-3120.

Joan Newhouse and Neil Lidstrom

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A Brown Creeper snatches a tiny insect from the bark of an Oregon Ash. Photo by Don Boucher

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the **CHAT**

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

Calendar

Dec 8 2nd Saturday local birding**
Dec 15 Tree planting**
Dec 18 Christmas Bird Count**
Dec 19 Salem Audubon meeting***
Dec 20 General meeting*
Dec 22 Deadline for Jan Field Notes
Dec 27 Deadline for submissions to the Jan Chat
Jan 12 2nd Saturday local birding**
Jan 31 Deadline for Homer Campbell Award nominations**

*see page 25

**see pages 26 & 27

***see page 30

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