



# Audubon Society of Corvallis the **CHAT**

February 2009

VOL. 38

#6

## General Meeting

Thursday, February 19, 7:30 – 9:00 pm  
First Presbyterian Church

### Columbia Condors: The Forgotten Giants of the Skies

*A presentation by David Moen*

If you've been fortunate to see a condor soaring, you'll look forward to hearing about the Pacific Northwest history of this magnificent bird from David Moen. David is the species recovery biologist at the Oregon Zoo and a graduate student in the Leadership for Ecology, Culture, and Learning program at Portland State University. He is a Portland native and is currently piecing together the mysterious past of the condor in the Pacific Northwest.



David's research has taken him to Texas for the Aplomado Falcon reintroduction, up to Barrow, Alaska for a Steller's Eider survey, and down to Big Sur, California with the condor reintroduction program. He also was involved with the first nesting habitat surveys for California Condors in the Pacific Northwest.

Join us on Thursday, February 19 to explore what hap-

pened to the Condor in the Pacific Northwest and whether there is any connection to salmon. Is there a connection between Thunderbird and the Condor? And most intriguing: Will condors return here? Come to the meeting hall of the First Presbyterian Church, 114 SW Eighth Street. Doors open at 7:00 p.m. for refreshments and visiting. Chapter Meeting commences at 7:30 p.m. followed by the guest lecture at 8:00 p.m. Questions about the series can be directed to Diana Brin, 908-6166, [dianaasc@gmail.com](mailto:dianaasc@gmail.com).

### Directions

The chapter meeting is in the meeting hall of the First Presbyterian Church (upstairs), 114 SW Eighth Street.

*Diana Brin*

## Call For Nominations

### Homer Campbell-ASC Environmental Award 2009

The Homer Campbell ASC Environmental Award, established in 2005, recognizes a local (Linn, Benton, Lincoln & Polk Counties) individual or organization that has made significant contributions in the areas of environmental stewardship, awareness, and outreach. Contributions worthy of recognition might include, but are not limited to:

*see "Call For Nominations" on next page*

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## Call For Nominations, *continued from page 41*

- promotion of environmentally-sustainable practices
- leadership on local environmental issues
- classroom education of environmental stewardship
- restoration or preservation of habitat

Both long-standing (life-long) and short-term but significant contributions will be considered for this award.

A committee within the Board of Directors will recommend one of the nominees for approval by the entire Board. The selected awardee will then be presented with an engraved plaque at the April ASC General Meeting. The awardee's name will also be engraved on a permanent plaque that hangs at Hesthavn.

Nominations should consist of a letter that describes how the actions or activities of the nominee fit the above described (or related) criteria. Nominations should include contact information for both the nominee and the nominator and are due by February 28th this year.

Email submissions may be sent to Linda Campbell, [lcampbell@peak.org](mailto:lcampbell@peak.org) or Karan Fairchild, [alderspr@peak.org](mailto:alderspr@peak.org). Snail mail submissions should be sent to ASC, Attn: HC Enviro Award Committee.

### **Previous awardees of the Homer Campbell-ASC Environmental Award:**

2005: Elzy Eltzroth

2006: Bob & Liz Frenkel

2007: Wally & Mary Eichler

2008: Bill & Carla Chambers, Stahlbush Island Farms

*Linda Campbell*

## **Benton County Prairie Species Recovery plan or 50 years in lock-up?**

The Endangered Species Act is intended to recover species from the peril of extinction. But sometimes trying to do the right thing for a species can go wrong even with the best of intentions. Hence the law allows "incidental take"—some may die so that others can live. This law's last provision, section 10, even allows a kind of holding pattern "take" permit for species whose circumstances in an area may prove better over time. For species in areas where Section 10 is applied, their only crime is not fitting in with humans. "Take" is allowed for all but those held captive for a half-century or so while humans figure out how to coexist with these imperiled species. Figuring out of recovery plans for species is usually independent of the calculated level of loss permitted under this take permit.

Thus we have the Section 10 "take permit," euphemistically called a Habitat Conservation Plan—the holding cell. This is what we hope to pass on to our children's children with all of the parts we just can't deal with right now. In the last decade, these national "HCP" holding cells are being filled with cast-offs that get in the way of forest logging, mineral extraction industries, water control structures, and

building developments. These HCPs are used not to recover species—but to get them out of the way. If you live in the Pacific Northwest, you've heard of some the species.

It might be considered progressive for Benton County to be one of the first local governments in the nation to initiate Section 10 holding pens for a number of their own at-risk-of-extinction prairie species. But a closer look reveals flaws. For instead of curtailing development or their standard operations where these species will be harmed, the county would rather create reserves they can watch and hold judgment over, and hope the inmates happily breed and coexist, without fouling their cells—a consequence which is ecologically typical of these early-seral prairie species. Yet there is so little experience maintaining these holding cells that no one knows what they will look like in twenty years, much less than in fifty.

It would be preferable to see recovery efforts for the species properly funded and current species protections enforced, and let the imperiled species themselves draw the line where further development in the county stops. Only after we recover these species will we have learned how to coexist, for this is but one of the small but hard choices we need not leave our children.

Public comment on the draft plan, available online at [www.co.benton.or.us/parks/hcp](http://www.co.benton.or.us/parks/hcp) is due by April 2, 2009 and should be directed to Jeff Powers, Natural Areas and Parks Director for Benton County.

*Jim Fairchild*

## **Christmas Bird Count 2008**

Due to snow and icy conditions, the Corvallis CBC, originally scheduled for December 17<sup>th</sup>, was postponed to December 30<sup>th</sup>. The weather was much improved, there was some fog and a few places were flooded, but participants were thankful that there was not a single drop of rain or snow. Thirty-six participants and nine feeder-watching parties found a total of 127 species, tying the record set two years ago. New to the count were Pyrrhuloxia (yes, it did show up) and Eurasian Collared-Dove (a count week bird last year). Lapland Longspurs were found for the second year in a row (3d time overall) on private property. Several other birds uncommon to the count have shown up now for three straight years including Redhead, Greater Scaup, Red-shouldered Hawk and Black Phoebe.

Birds in decline appear to be Ruffed Grouse – seen 33 (out of 48) times but not this count and very infrequently in the past decade, and Ring-necked Pheasant – seen on every count before last year when it was a count week bird and missed on this count.

Other good birds were Green Heron, Western Gull, Barred Owl, Orange-crowned Warbler and Swamp Sparrow. Gray Jay and Least Sandpiper were count week birds.

Besides Ring-necked Pheasant, the worst misses were Mountain Quail and Northern Pygmy-Owl. A Palm Warbler

seen in Peoria as late as December 14<sup>th</sup> eluded watchers until after count week was over, when it then reappeared. An immature Ferruginous Hawk was also seen on December 14<sup>th</sup> at Finley, but with the postponement of the count, did not make the list.

I'd like to thank everyone who participated.

*Marcia F. Cutler*

## Field Trip Schedule

### Monthly Year-Round Saturday Field Trips

Please note the new meeting place for all future local Saturday and full-day trips.

Feb 14: Meet at the Benton Center at 7:30 am

Mar 14: Meet at the Benton Center at 7:30 am

Apr 11: Meet at the Benton Center at 7:30 am

Our Saturday morning local field trip meets the second Saturday of every month at the Benton Center parking area, 757 Polk Ave, Corvallis 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. Contact Rich Armstrong at richarmstrong@comcast.net or 541-753-1978 with questions.

### Half-Day Trip

Mar 11: E.E. Wilson

We will join the Salem Audubon group for this special half-day exploration of E.E. Wilson Wildlife Area. Meet at the pheasant pens near the parking lot on the north side of Camp Adair Road at 7:30 am.

### Full-Day Birding Schedule

Mar 7: Newport Coast to study gulls—meet at Benton Center at 7:30 am

About three or four times a year we schedule full-day trips to the coast and to refuges within Oregon. On these trips we carpool, sharing the cost of gas with the drivers. Everyone should bring a large lunch, water/drinks, binoculars, spotting scope (if available), and layers of warm clothing, sturdy shoes, and rain gear. We meet at the Benton Center (LBCC) parking lot, 757 Polk Ave, in Corvallis. Contact Rich Armstrong at richarmstrong@comcast.net or 541-753-1978 with any questions.

### Spring 2009 Weekend Field Trips

Mar 20-22: Bandon Coast

April 17-19: Klamath Basin

May 1-3: Rogue Valley

May 28-31: Malheur NWR

June 12-14: Summer Lake/Ft Rock/Fremont NFS

Fred Ramsey leads all the spring weekend trips. Fred has been leading these field trips for ASC for over 35 years.

He is an amazing field trip guide, sharing his knowledge about finding birds in their habitat and pointing out wildflowers, 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

### Please note:

- The Rogue Valley and Malheur trips require deposits by February 28, 2009.
- The Rogue Valley deposit is \$40 for the play. The trip date will be announced in future issues of the Chat after the Oregon Shakespeare Festival schedule has been posted.
- The Malheur deposit is \$50. Each deposit must be made payable to Fred Ramsey at 3550 NW Glen Ridge Pl. Corvallis OR 97330.

### 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.

*Rich Armstrong*

## January's Half-Day Field Trip

I led about 15 Corvallis Audubon birders on the January half-day trip to Bruce Road and the Philomath ponds. We began at McFadden Marsh where there were about 500 Tundra Swans. Everyone got good looks at Pintails, American Wigeon, Green-winged Teal, Gadwall, Coots, Ring-necked Ducks, and Shovelers. There was one greater White-fronted Goose. We heard a Virginia Rail (maybe two). Cheryl Whelchel used a tape to call the bird into view for everyone. Also a Marsh Wren was fairly cooperative. At the bridge at McFadden Marsh we had Pied-billed Grebe and two weird Canada Geese - twice as much white on head and they were together. Then we had a mixed flock of Purple Finch (got them in scope), Golden- & Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Yellow-rumped Warblers, and Chickadees. At the Cheadle Marsh overlook we had scope looks at Rough-legged and Red-tailed Hawks, Northern Harrier, and distant looks at Bald Eagle. There was one Snow Goose among all the Cacklers and Canada Geese - all saw it well. At the first house we had scope views of Acorn Woodpecker and Western Bluebird. Varied Thrush and White-breasted Nuthatch were seen but less cooperative. At 25401 Bruce Road we looked for the Northern Mockingbird. Cheryl saw it for an instant but we could not refind it at all. There were many Killdeer in the field and Western Scrub-Jay, Mourning Dove, House Finches, and Northern Flicker in trees. We stopped at Philomath Sewage Ponds. Everyone saw Ruddy Duck, one female Bufflehead, and Lesser Scaup. We were back by noon and I think all enjoyed the morning.

*Rich Armstrong*



*This Barred Owl was noticed by Susan and Todd Brown at about noon on a December afternoon in their yard near 31<sup>st</sup> and Jackson. It sat in their tree approximately 15 feet above the ground until about 4 pm. Photo by Todd Brown.*

## Field Notes

25 December—22 January, 2009

After our cold, snowy first three weeks of December, temperatures warmed back up to near normal the rest of December. The combination of melting snow and rain produced local flooding, but we still fell short of our average level of winter flooding. Compared with long-term averages, it was quite dry and cold. January warmed back up slightly, but a 2-week long dry spell kept most of Corvallis shrouded in fog for a week before we dried out enough to allow the sun to shine. Then, a week of great, but cool, weather was quite enjoyable. The event of the period was the Corvallis CBC, which was rescheduled to 30 Dec owing to icy road conditions. Most results from the CBC are reported in the CBC summary.

Abbreviations and Locations: m.ob. = many observers. Observer names are noted in parentheses after their reports. Observations without a name (or with WDR) are the editor's. ASC indicates observations made by Audubon Society of Corvallis 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. Knoll Terrace STP are off of Elliot Circle in Corvallis. Stewart Lake is at Hewlett-Packard in Corvallis. Toketie Marsh is the remedial wetland for Coffin Butte landfill north of Corvallis, just off of Highway 99W. The Bellfountain Wetland along Bellfountain Drive south of Philomath is also sometimes called the Evergreen Mitigation Bank. The Diamond Hill Road wetland is in Linn County.

A **Greater White-fronted Goose** was at FNWR, 10 Jan (ASC). A flock of 11 were in Linn Co. the same day (J. Fleischer). An **Emperor Goose** was at the Diamond Hill Road wetland, 26 Dec. (D. Irons) and again on 10 Jan (J. Fleischer). Up to 3 white adult **Snow Geese** were at FNWR, 28 Dec-15 Jan; five were found on the Corvallis CBC. A **Ross' Goose** was with 15,000 **Cackling Geese** at FNWR, 5 Jan. **Cackling Goose** numbers peaked at just over 40,000 on the Corvallis CBC.

More than 1,100 **Tundra Swans** were at FNWR, 9-10 Jan, with about half at Cabell Marsh and half at McFadden Marsh (m.ob.) Four

**Trumpeter Swans** flew over Peoria, 8 Jan (R. Campbell); an immature was at Cabell Marsh, 19 Jan.

The dry spell dropped water levels at FNWR, making foraging habitat for ducks quite good. That attracted large numbers of dabblers. An estimated 20,000 **American Wigeon** were flying over the FNWR Prairie Overlook at dusk, 18 Jan (L. Millbank, D. Boucher). **Green-winged Teal** and **Northern Pintail** numbers both broke 10,000 on the Corvallis CBC. The Eurasian form of Green-winged Teal was encountered 3 times; one was at Turtle Flats, FNWR, 20 Jan; on 21 Jan, 1 was at McFadden Marsh and 1 was at Philomath STP; all were males. **Cinnamon Teal** are rare during winter; one was found on the Brownsville CBC, 26 Dec (D. Irons), and one visited Toketie Marsh near EEW, 10 Jan (J. Geier). As many as 4 (3 males and 1 female) were at the latter location in the following days. At Stewart Lake, 19 **Canvasbacks** were present late in period (J. Simmons). Three hundred **Ruddy Ducks** was the peak count at Philomath STP, 25 Dec.

A **Green Heron**, rare during winter, was at Snag Boat Bend, 17 Jan (R. Campbell).

Also rare during winter, a **Turkey Vulture** flew over EEW, 18 Jan (R. Gerig).

A very impressive count of 128 **Bald Eagles** was made in southern Linn Co., 10 Jan (J. Fleischer). Many of the eagles were attracted to sheep carcasses. A **Golden Eagle** at McFadden Marsh, 18 Jan, was a nice surprise (L. Millbank, D. Boucher).

Uncommon during winter, a **Virginia Rail** was heard and seen at McFadden Marsh, 10 Jan, delighting the ASC field trip participants.

One of the most reliable places to find gulls around Corvallis is the Coffin Butte Landfill. Gulls forage on waste, then fly west to the new wetland just beyond the quarry section of Coffin Butte and rest. Numbers of gulls and the species present are quite variable, so it is worth checking often. On 27 Dec, 134 gulls were present including 71 **Herring Gulls**, 47 **Glaucous-winged Gulls**, 6 **Thayer's Gulls**, 4 **California Gulls**, 3 **Ring-billed Gulls**, 2 **Western Gulls**, and 1 **Glaucous-winged x Western Gull hybrid**. In flooded fields along Irish Bend Road, 10 Jan, 101 **Mew Gulls** and 28 Ring-billed Gulls foraged for earthworms.

A gathering of about a dozen **Short-eared Owls** and 12 **Northern Harriers** at FNWR prairie at dusk, 28 Dec, must have been quite a sight (L. Millbank, D. Boucher).

In keeping with the recent run of mid-January swallow arrivals, four **Tree Swallows** were at Ankeny NWR, 15 Jan (M. Kleinbaum). Six **Barn Swallows** arrived at Baskett Slough NWR, 16 Jan (J. Withgott).

A rare abnormality, an all white **American Crow**, was seen near Corvallis, 7 Jan (J. Sukle).

**American Robins** invaded EEW in large numbers, 26 Dec, when 650 were there (J. Geier).

A **Brown Thrasher**, quite the rarity for Oregon, was discovered north of Silverton, Marion County, 26 Dec (M. Schneider). A **Northern Mockingbird** was at the corner of Bruce and Bellfountain Roads, 4-14 Jan (J. Plissner, m.ob.).

A **Northern Shrike** stopped by Elliott Circle, Lewisburg, 3 Jan (R. & N. Armstrong).

The Peoria **Palm Warbler** was re-discovered 8 Jan after having gone missing since 22 Dec (R. Campbell).

Eighty **Yellow-rumped Warblers** at EEW, 26 Dec, was a good mid-winter count (J. Geier).

The **Pyrrhuloxia** survived the bitter temperatures and snow cover and was nice enough to be available for the Corvallis CBC; it continued at least through 18 Jan (R. Campbell). One should note that the season of giving has come and gone, yet stingy Peorians have refused to share their wonderful desert friend with those of us in Benton County. Despite Benton County being just a short flight across the river, Peorians appear to want all the glory for themselves and their Linn County friends.

A shy **Henslow's Sparrow** was found, 15 Jan, in the same field at EEW that has attracted Sedge Wren twice. It would have been a first record for Oregon if it had been seen by others. Unfortunately, attempts

to find it again have so far failed. A **Swamp Sparrow** was at Snag Boat Bend, 17 Jan, perhaps the same bird found on the Corvallis CBC (R. Campbell). Another **Swamp Sparrow** was along Eureka Road, 10 Jan. The high count of **White-throated Sparrows** was 14 at EEW, 15 Jan.

An unusual sight locally was a flock of 42 **Purple Finches** in a single tree along Airport Rd, 30 Dec (R. & N. Armstrong).

**Western Meadowlarks** seem less and less common over time, so 17 along Crook Drive in Linn Co., 10 Jan, was a nice count (J. Fleischer).

Establishing a new high count for the Corvallis CBC, 7 **Lapland Longspurs** were at Corvallis airport, 30 Dec.

Next issue:

Please send your reports for the next issue by 25 February.

W. Douglas Robinson

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Douglas Robinson



*American Coot photo by Lisa Millbank*

## Don't Forget the Tree Plant!

**ASC/Finley tree planting Feb 28<sup>th</sup>, 10 am**

Don't forget to come out to Finley on February 28<sup>th</sup> to help plant native Spurred Lupine and Nelson's Checkermallow. The selected area is near Woodpecker Loop trail. Parking, sign in, and refreshments will be nearby. Signs along the road at Finley will indicate the planting area. Please come help with the planting! We also need help with set up, refreshments, parking, and carpooling. Call John Gaylord at 541-745-5088 or 908-2898 (cell) for information and to volunteer.

*John Gaylord*

## Volunteer Opportunity

**Volunteers needed to lead naturalist programs at local wildlife refuges**

Do you enjoy sharing your passion about nature with people from around the world? Do you find yourself talking to complete strangers about that cool mushroom under the decaying log on the trailside or pointing out an elusive American Bittern at the marsh edge? Can you give a gift of four hours a month to share your time and knowledge with others? The Willamette Valley NWR Complex is recruiting volunteers to lead Naturalist Programs on William L. Finley, Ankeny, and Baskett Slough National Wildlife Refuges. The free public programs may cover subjects like Beginning Birding, Wildflower Walks, Owl Prowls, and Nature Photography. Other programs, like Interpretive Roving, allow volunteers to set up at various "hot spots" on the refuges and point out interesting wildlife or answer visitor questions. There are also many opportunities to spark a life-long interest in nature and conservation issues among our youngest visitors, as the refuges get numerous requests for programs from school groups. With your imagination and enthusiasm for the outdoors, together we can share the wonder of our natural world. If you would like to find out more, please contact Refuge Ranger Sallie Gentry at (541) 757-7236 or email at [sallie\\_gentry@fws.gov](mailto:sallie_gentry@fws.gov). See you on the trail!

*Sallie Gentry*

## February Hesthavn News

Feb 21: Hesthavn work party, 9 am – 1 pm

OSU Geoscience's students will volunteer to remove blackberry brambles, brush, and limb debris during the work party on February 21. I would like to have three or four ASC member volunteers to supervise the 18 student volunteers. Please contact me if you are available that day to help with the work party. Bring your shovels, loppers, weeding tools, gloves, boots, and work clothes for a morning of service work.

Hesthavn Nature Center has received a grant for riparian vegetation restoration using rainwater collection from the Benton Soil and Water Conservation District. This project will plant nursery-grown native trees and shrubs. These plants will have established root balls and be big enough to become established quickly (and more quickly benefit the landscape). Since a key to survival of restoration plantings is adequate water during the one- to three-year establishment phase, this project also involves setting up a rainwater collection and distribution system. We will need volunteers for planting nursery-grown native trees and shrubs, irrigation setup, and watering throughout the coming year. Contact me if this project is of interest to you.

*see "Hesthavn News" on next page*

## Hesthavn News, continued from page 45

Hesthavn Nature Center is located at 8590 NW Oak Creek Drive. You can find map directions on the ASC website at [www.audubon.corvallis.or.us](http://www.audubon.corvallis.or.us). The nature trail is open to the public every day of the week for visiting.

A volunteer email bulletin board that publishes work party dates and other events as they happen at Hesthavn Nature Center is available at [www.corvallisaudubon.org/mailman/listinfo/hesthavn-news](http://www.corvallisaudubon.org/mailman/listinfo/hesthavn-news). The website has information on how to subscribe to the Hesthavn-news bulletin board.

*Paula Vanderheul*

## Iceland

### Summer Sustainability Seminar

The OSU International Programs Office is seeking Auduboners who might be interested in a trip to Iceland as part of a Summer Sustainability Seminar. Enrollees enjoy the opportunity to study around the country while hosted at universities throughout Iceland. The program features an interdisciplinary approach to learning about Iceland's alternative-energy economy, natural resources, history and culture. Students conduct independent study projects in consultation with OSU faculty and experts and scholars in Iceland.

Organizers describe the program as follows. "We will have opportunities to see melting glaciers, hydrogen-fuelled buses, biotechnology laboratories, fisheries factories and museums. Field trips will include geothermal energy sites, folk museums, historical archaeological excavations, marine and freshwater aquaculture stations, horse farms, genetic research institutions and incredible natural sites as varied as glaciers and arctic deserts. We will visit waterfalls, volcanoes, hot springs, whale watching tours, biotechnology laboratories, museum archives, the National Parliament, fish farms, horse training farms, music studios, hot springs, fish processing plants, reforestation projects, glacial rivers and historical buildings."

For further information, contact Rachel Machacha ([rachel.fabermachacha@oregonstate.edu](mailto:rachel.fabermachacha@oregonstate.edu)) or go to the trip website: <http://oregonstate.edu/international/studyabroad/programs/iceland/iceland-summer-sustainability-seminar>

*Chris Mathews*

## Bluebird Adventures

### A meeting with an old friend

While visiting the Benton County fairgrounds about half a mile from our home, using my vehicle as a blind and intending to photograph Acorn Woodpeckers, I spotted some banded Western Bluebirds and whipped out my binoculars to see if I could get the band colors. Much to my surprise, I saw Pinky, named for the color of her bright band. I knew



*Photo of Western Bluebird by Nan Moore*

her well because one of the males from the last of our three broods last season had brought her home with him to feed with the rest of his family. At that time, we were feeding them mealworms.

Because we often call softly to the bluebirds just before feeding, I thought I would give it a try and much to my surprise, Pinky flew right over and landed on a bench just beside my vehicle. I spoke to her as I usually do and was amused by her cocking her little head in what I perceived to be an inquisitive manner.

After getting used to the mealworm feeder, and being the boldest of our family group, I knew that Pinky would come to my hand if I'd had something squirmy to offer her. I stuck my arm out the window and cupped my hand as I would if I'd had a treat. Up she flew without any hesitation. When she saw that I had nothing for her, she looked me in the eye, chirped sharply and flew off in the direction of other bluebirds in the nearby oaks.

What surprises me is that she recognized my voice away from our usual place of contact and responded as she would have had we been at home. I didn't expect that! I think bluebirds may be smarter than I had given them credit for.

I'll save for another day the story of how Pinky was near starving when our Boy Blue first brought her home with him and how he so gently taught her to feed from our mealworm feeder ... now they are inseparable and we suspect we may have two breeding pairs in our yard this spring.

*Nan Moore*

## Song Sparrow Mania

### Is it devotion, dementia, or defensive warfare?

In the past, our house windows and/or car windows have been assaulted in the late winter or early spring by various birds. One year it was an incessant Spotted Towhee, the next, a manic Dark-eyed “Oregon” Junco. But this year a driven Song Sparrow topped them all!

Starting in mid-January, 2009, a male Song Sparrow began a daily pattern of going from one car to the other in our driveway, landing on an outside mirror, then on a side window ledge or hopping frantically across the car hood from one side mirror to the next.

We were at first amused by his frenetic behavior until we saw the path of destruction he was leaving behind! The side mirror paint job that I had to repaint a few years back to repair damage left by another spring winged scrapper was becoming chipped yet again. The side mirrors were so smeared they needed cleaning to be functional. The paint under the side windows was also being chipped. What to do?

I covered all of the outside mirrors and side window ledges with opaque plastic bags. I thought that would deter him or at least discourage him, but—No! Without losing his momentum, he started focusing his undying attention (whether positive or negative, we could not tell) on anything chrome, be it car door handle or front bumper! His typical MO was this: He sang in the nearby tree, grabbed a bite from the fat cake feeder, wiggled his tail, fluffed his wings, and flew to the vehicle where he sang some more, then pecked with gusto on the object of his affection or opposition. On and on he continued for days. You had to hand it to him for his persistence. Both our vehicles will need a wash when this is over!

*Andrea J. Foster*

## Book Chat

Book Chat is a new monthly column focusing on new books available at the Book and Raffle Table at our monthly Audubon meetings.

This month we’re featuring *One Inch Above the Water: Running Away on America’s Rivers* by Jim Payne. Payne writes about his year-long solo kayaking trip on waterways in the eastern half of the U.S. and Canada. What makes Payne’s adventure distinctive is that he’s a retired academic who, while in his late 50s, simply decided he needed to look at his life and country from a different perspective. Whether your choice of travel is kayak, foot, or car, Payne’s observations are worth considering if you’re looking for personal adventure and insight, or are considering a boyhood dream of “running away” yourself. Published in 2008 by Lytton Press in Sandpoint, Idaho, *One Inch Above the Water* retails for \$14.95. Audubon member price is \$13.50.

The second book we’re featuring this month is Steve

Gordon’s and Cary Kerst’s popular *Dragonflies & Damselflies of the Willamette Valley, Oregon: A Beginner’s Guide*. Gordon and Kerst, familiar to us through their work with the Lane County Audubon Society, co-authored this guide published by Eugene-based Crane Dance Publications. It is the first in a series of nature guides sponsored by the Willamette Resources and Educational Network. This beginner’s guide introduces fifty-two species of dragonflies and damselflies, collectively called Odonates, which are found in our Willamette Valley. The photographs and descriptions in this practical guide are excellent. Regular retail price is \$15.00. Audubon member price is \$13.50.

Beverly Clark and Sally Shaw, Audubon book and raffle table organizers, welcome your ideas for new titles. We’ll also special order and do title searches for you. Come talk to us on February 15 at our monthly meeting.

*Sally Shaw*

## Contributors to the Chat

Diana Brin, Linda Campbell, Jim Fairchild, Marcia Cutler, Rich Armstrong, Chris Mathews, Paula Vanderheul, Douglas Robinson, Sallie Gentry, Nan Moore, Andrea J. Foster, Sally Shaw, Todd and Susan Brown



*Northern Shoveler photo by Matt Lee*

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*Audubon Society of Corvallis*

*the* **CHAT**

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

**Calendar**

- Feb 12: Board meeting
- Feb 13-16: Great Backyard Bird Count
- Feb 14: Second Saturday field trip, 7:30 am
- Feb 19: General meeting
- Feb 21: Hesthavn work party
- Feb 25: Field notes submission deadline for March Chat
- Feb 26: Article submission deadline for March Chat
- Feb 28: Homer Campbell Award nominations due
- Feb 28: ASC/Finley NWR tree planting
- Mar 7: Full-day birding trip to Newport
- Mar 11: Half-day trip to E.E. Wilson
- Mar 14: Second Saturday field trip, 7:30 am
- Mar 20-22: Bandon Coast field trip
- Mar 20-22: Nebraska Rivers & Wildlife\*

\*see January Chat



*Red-breasted Nuthatch photo by Matt Lee*

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