



Audubon Society of Corvallis the **CHAT**

October 2009

VOL. 39

#2

General Meeting

Note the new meeting time!

Thursday, October 15, 7:00 – 8:30 pm
First Presbyterian Church

Chintimini Wildlife Center

*A presentation by Jeff Picton, Executive Director,
Chintimini Wildlife Center*

Chintimini Wildlife Center provides care and rehabilitation for approximately 700 injured animals a year at its center in north Corvallis. Chintimini cooperates with local veterinarians, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Humane Society, state and local police, and city and county animal-control personnel to retrieve and care for injured animals found by them or the public. Whether an animal is hit by a car, or flies into a window, or is caught by a cat, CWC is there to provide it with a safe, caring environment in which to recover. CWC also provides outreach, educating residents of the mid-Willamette Valley about wild animals and their interactions with people.

Chintimini is celebrating its 20th year as a non-profit public service organization serving western Oregon. It is operated primarily by volunteers: over 100 volunteers donate over 10,000 hours a year to run the center and answer over 4,000 calls a year on the 24-hour hotline. Rehabilitation and care costs an average of nearly \$100 per animal, but Chintimini receives no funds from federal, state, county or city agencies and is totally dependent on memberships, donations, merchandise sales, grants, and special-event fundraisers to pay for daily operations.

Jeff Picton, Executive Director of the CWC, will recount his 20 years with the organization and many of the interesting and unusual events that have occurred during his tenure.

Please remember that everything happens 30 minutes earlier starting this month: doors open at 6:30 pm for refreshments and visiting. The chapter meeting commences at 7:00 pm, followed by the guest lecture at 7:30 pm. Questions about the series can be directed to Dave Mellinger at DavidKMellinger@yahoo.com or 757-7953.

Directions

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

Dave Mellinger and Carroll DeKock

Prairie Habitat Conservation

For those who have followed this issue, the final comment period for the Benton County take permit application for listed and imperiled prairie species has passed. Now comes time for final revisions before the Board of Commissioners submit their application, called a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP), to the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in the coming months.

This all has little to do with conserving prairie habitats, but more to do with sequestering remnant species out of development's way for the next fifty or more years. I could not sit by and accept such a meager conservation goal—preserving no more than we know remains right now—as a ceiling that we hope to stay near. I would much prefer we focus our time and money building from this current baseline level—seeing it instead as a floor. That is the stated intent of the Endangered Species Act, which drives this whole process—to recover species to the point that their populations are no longer in jeopardy of extinction.

I see two remaining and overarching issues: the soundness of the data and assumptions made in the HCP, and the reliability of funding its implementation. The completed HCP application has not been formally reviewed by anyone outside its authors, and the County would greatly benefit by

see "HCP" on next page

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HCP *continued from front page*

either independent confirmation of its soundness, or recommendations and improvements provided by knowledgeable reviewers. Funding is proposed through non-dedicated County general fund monies and a further draw-down of County reserves that will only divert support from ongoing beneficial programs. Grant funding for mitigation area start-up may be easy to obtain, but ongoing maintenance and monitoring of these prairie reserves will be costly and difficult for any outside grantor to justify.

County officials have not asked citizens to finance this HCP, and when faced with the real circumstances, perhaps they are correct in hesitating. Who would want to pay for the impacts of others' developments that destroy prairie species and habitat in a no-net-gain scenario? There is no benefit offered to the citizenry when all these species remain imperiled. The HCP offers no absolute assurance for the species in question, only assurance that Benton County, and perhaps its cooperators, can proceed unencumbered by endangered prairie species protections.

Meanwhile, many rural residents and Audubon members—and the Chapter itself—want to improve prairie habitat and help recover these species. Whether or not USFWS approves this HCP, I hope that the agencies and non-profits supporting this process will again invest in efforts to actively restore degraded prairies and provide a net benefit to these species and to the public they serve.

Jim Fairchild

Jim and Karan Fairchild are active Audubon members and rural county residents, and have an isolated upland prairie with a number of native species, including the state-endangered Peacock Larkspur.

Be a Local Stream Steward

Re-vegetation grants available to riparian landowners & streamside residents in Corvallis

The City of Corvallis Stormwater Program is offering, for the first time, an exciting opportunity for Corvallis citizens who are interested in being stewards of a local stream stretch.

The Riparian Re-vegetation Grant Program, funded through stormwater utility fees, was created to provide riparian landowners, or residents abutting public riparian corridors, support and incentives to become stewards of their streamside property, while also improving water quality and riparian habitat by increasing the amount of appropriate and beneficial riparian vegetation.

A limited number of competitive small grants up to \$200 are available for the purchase of native riparian plants.

Visit <http://www.ci.corvallis.or.us/downloads/pw/RiparianForm.pdf> to download an application, or contact the City of Corvallis Stormwater Program to have an application mailed to you. All applications are due by Oct 16th at 5 pm. No exceptions.

For more information about this opportunity, please contact the City Stormwater Program at (541) 766-6916 or email gwenn.kubeck@ci.corvallis.or.us.

Tom Kaye

Golden Chinquapins & Hairstreaks

Chinquapin trees (*Castanopsis* or *Chrysolepis chrysophylla*) range northward from Southern Oregon in the Oregon Coast Range up into Benton County, generally south of Highway 20, and typically on drier hillslopes and ridges. Golden Hairstreak butterflies (*Habrodais grunus*) associate with this tree, which is their host plant (along with live and tan-oaks further south). As afternoons are supposedly a good time for adults to be in flight, I went looking in several of our chinquapin groves, and am pretty certain I found some. Actually, quite a few—of the right size, color and flight pattern, flying closely amid just the chinquapin tree crowns in the late afternoon sun. Only problem was the tree crowns are too high for netting the insects, and their rapid flight and choice of landing spots made seeing anything more diagnostic impossible. I'll have to find foliage closer to the ground in late afternoon sun, or else get myself a very long-handled net.

Well, the other problem is my desire to look down under the chinquapin trees this time of year. Nut harvest is in full swing, and the competition for these nuts is fierce. Jays (Steller's and Gray) chase away squirrels, squirrels chase away Band-tailed Pigeons, nutshells show up in seats of racoon, gray fox, and bear. Chipmunks seem to be joining the fray. It may be that forgotten cached nuts are the normal mode for tree regeneration. Most of the nuts I find in the very spiny involucre (burrs) have been passed up due to weevil infestation or growth deformity, but I chance on more than a few good nuts. And unlike acorns or hazelnuts, they can be eaten while still green and raw. They are fragrant and luscious on their own, plain, or very lightly roasted. But a little ice cream underneath doesn't hurt their flavor.

Jim Fairchild

Christmas Bird Count Date

Corvallis CBC—mark the date!

Mark your calendars for the Corvallis Christmas Bird count on Tuesday, December 22, 2009. More information will be in next month's Chat. But if you want to sign up early, just drop me a line (contact information on the back of the Chat).

Marcia F. Cutler, Corvallis CBC Compiler

Bird Deformities Perplexing

Experts ask that we report sightings

A very serious issue with deformities of bird beaks in the Pacific Northwest and Alaska exists despite much testing. Twenty-two species of birds are experiencing critical deformities in our local area. Black-capped Chickadees, Northwestern Crows, Black-billed Magpies, Downy Woodpeckers, Steller's Jay and Red-breasted Nuthatches are particularly vulnerable. OSU scientists are aware of the problem and are monitoring the situation. Funding is presently critical. Wildlife biologist Colleen Handel, USGS PHD from the Alaska Science Center is the lead for the investigation and would like to enlist the help of Audubon Society of Corvallis. She is asking us to report any sightings to her and attempt to get photos if possible. A

web site is being set up for information and reporting forms. For more information, contact Colleen at the Research Science Center, USGS, 4210 University Dr, Anchorage, AK. 99508, 1-907-786-7181, or email cmhandel@usgs.gov.

John Gaylord

Field Trip Schedule

Monthly Year-Round Saturday Field Trips

Oct 10: Meet at the Benton Center at 7:30 am

Nov 14: 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.

Full-Day Birding Trips

Nov 7: Newport and Depoe Bay Coast

Please note early meeting time: We'll meet at 5:30 am to get to Boiler Bay at sunrise to look for seabirds (hope to be back by 3:30).

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 2010 Weekend Field Trips

Mar 19 – 21: Bandon/South Coast

Apr 16 – 18: Klamath Basin

Apr 30 – May 2: Rogue Valley

May 20 – 23: Malheur NWR

June 18 – 20: 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 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 Fred Ramsey with your requests at flramsey5@comcast.net.

Please note:

- The Rogue Valley and Malheur trips require deposits by February 28, 2010.
- The Rogue Valley trip includes a play at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in Ashland. The play this year will be *Hamlet*. A deposit of \$40 is required for the play.

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

Rich Armstrong

Hesthavn News

Work parties and open house scheduled for October 24 and November 21

Adult instructors are needed for Hesthavn Nature Center Educational Program.

The next work parties are scheduled for Saturday October 24 and November 21. Come join us from 9 am to 1 pm to pull invasive teasel, thistle and false brome.

The October 24 date we will need four volunteer supervisors to assist 12 OSU student volunteers to plant 20 shrubs that will boarder the parking lot.

From 10 am until 1 pm on the same dates, Hesthavn will have open house visitation. Stop by to check out the new rainwater catchment system. Take a walk along the trail to discover the fall experience of wildlife, trees and shrubs, streambank habitat and native plants. Visit the nature center museum bird specimens, see the egg and nest display, and browse around.

During the first three weeks of September, Ellen Watrous and Fred Ramsey adopted an area inside the trail to plant 3000 Camas bulbs with help from Susan Brown, Libby DeGroot, Karen Harvey, Ann Brodie and Paula Vanderheul.

Ellen raised the bulbs from seedlings over the past four years. Come April 2010, our new field of blue will be spectacular.

Map directions are available at www.audubon.corvallis.or.us. The nature trail is open daily to the public.

The Nature Center educational program for children age 6 to 11 is in need of adult instructors to present nature classes on birds, habitats, wildlife, and stream ecology at Hesthavn. Our Art and Nature class instructor Leslie Green offers four opportunities through the year for children. The classes are two-hour presentations. Please contact me if you are interested in volunteering with our educational program.

We offer nature classes to schools and other community groups as well.

If you are looking for an opportunity to volunteer during a week day at the nature center, we have plenty of tasks to offer someone who could help with weeding invasive weeds, mowing, watering native trees and shrubs and other odd jobs.

Contact me at 541-752-0470 or vanderp@peak.org.

Paula Vanderheul

Elsie Elzroth on OPB

Our bluebird champion on Oregon Field Guide!

OPB will be airing their Oregon Field Guide's profile of Elsie Eltzroth on Thursday, Oct. 15 at 8:30 pm and again on Sunday, Oct. 18 at 6:30 pm. The program will also be viewable on the OPB website after the Oct 18 airing. Elsie will appear in the third segment of the program.

Diana Brin

Field Notes

26 August – 25 September 2009

We enjoyed some great weather during the period. If you like hot, we had hot. If you like crisp cool mornings, we had those, too. If you need a little rain to keep the dust down, then you were pleased by that, too. In fact, the 28 August rain brought a pleasant surprise for birders, dropping in several groups of Black Swifts. Another surprise was a male Indigo Bunting at E. E. Wilson. Overall, the month was a season of change with many of our summering birds heading south and leaving us until next spring and some of our wintering birds beginning to arrive.

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.

Flocks of **Greater White-fronted Geese** arrived on the morning of 24 Sep, flying high over the Coast Range (K. Fairchild, m.ob.). The first **Cackling Geese** arrived at FNWR the same day (M. Monroe).

Numbers of **Cinnamon Teal** steadily declined as most migrated south; by 24 Sep, only 3 remained at Philomath STP. A single **Blue-winged Teal** was still at Philomath STP, 24 Sep.

Three **Redheads** arrived at Philomath STP, 9 Sep, and one or two continued irregularly there through 24 Sep. The first **Ring-necked Ducks** of fall were two at Philomath STP, 9 Sep. A flock of 13 arrived there, 23 Sep. A male **Lesser Scaup** at Philomath STP, 23 Sep, was the first fall arrival.

A few **Common Mergansers** were reported from the Willamette River during the period (M. Cutler, m.ob.).

A **Northern Bobwhite** was singing along the side of Airport Road near its intersection with Bellfountain Road, 31 Aug (see photo); the bird was almost certainly an escape from captivity as the species is not native here and is introduced occasionally by gamebird breeders.



This Northern Bobwhite was along Airport Road, perhaps looking for a flight back to its normal range (photo by W. D. Robinson).

An **Eared Grebe** visited Philomath STP, the most reliable local site to detect the species, 31 Aug-7 Sep. A different individual appeared there 14 Sep and was joined by a second, 18 Sep. Three were present

there starting 22 Sep.

American White Pelicans continued to please, with up to 33 still at Cabell Marsh during the middle of September (m.ob.).

Small numbers of **Double-crested Cormorants** were reported from the Willamette River beginning 7 Sep (m.ob.).

The immature **Black-crowned Night-Heron** found during last period at McFadden Marsh (fide M. Monroe) continued at least through 19 Sep (P. Vanderheul). Two were at Cabell Marsh, 10 Sep (D. Boucher, L. Millbank).

Red-shouldered Hawks were conspicuous at FNWR, where a maximum of 5 was reported. The species was also detected at Willamette Park and in south Corvallis (m.ob.). A **Swainson's Hawk**, rare during fall, was along Plainview Drive in Linn County, 26 Aug (T. Snetsinger).

American Coots increased steadily in numbers at Philomath STP, rising from six on 26 Aug to 120 on 24 Sep.

Single **Pacific Golden-Plovers** were detected as flybys: one over Cabell Marsh, 6 Sep, and another over Philomath STP, 20 Sep.

A single **Semipalmated Plover** was at Cabell Marsh, 16 and 23 Sep; numbers have been quite low this fall so far.

A **Solitary Sandpiper** stopped by a small pond at FNWR, 1 Sep (B. Proebsting, K. Hilton).

In keeping with the banner year for **Whimbrels** so far, another passed by Cabell Marsh, 6 Sep.

Two **Long-billed Curlews** stopped for a few minutes to bathe and preen at Diamond Hill Road, 15 Sep (R. Moore).

Numbers of peeps declined during the period. A **Semipalmated Sandpiper** at EEW, 2 Sep, was a good record for that site (J. Geier).

Pectoral Sandpipers made a good showing. One was at a small pond at FNWR, 1 Sep (B. Proebsting, K. Hilton), one was at McFadden Marsh, 6 Sep (C. Whelchel), another was at Cheadle Marsh, FNWR, 19 Sep (P. Vanderheul), and one passed by Philomath STP, 19 Sep. Two were at the Pioneer Villa ponds, 30 Aug (R. Campbell). Perhaps the largest flock ever found in the Willamette Valley was a group of 16 at the Diamond Hill Road site, 15 Sep (R. Moore).

A **Short-billed Dowitcher** was at Cabell Marsh, 15 Sep. The high count so far for **Long-billed Dowitchers** was 57 at Cabell Marsh, 19 Sep.

The high count for **Red-necked Phalaropes** was 31 at Philomath STP on 16 Sep.

Gulls were rare during the period. A single **California Gull** visited Cabell Marsh, 12 Sep (R. Armstrong). Terns were also quite rare. Two **Caspian Terns** passed by Peoria, 2 Sep (R. Campbell).

A front with rain and fairly strong winds on 28 Aug brought one of the more memorable events of the period to Corvallis. J. Geier noticed a couple of **Black Swifts** at EEW and alerted others that it might be a good time to see them because cloud cover and rain were keeping them low. Undoubtedly many pass over us during late August and early September but they are typically so high in the sky that we fail to detect them. Down at the Willamette River that afternoon, the Armstrongs found several Black Swifts along with many swallows and **Vaux's Swifts**. At the south end of Willamette Park a group of at least **21 Black Swifts** were seen, representing perhaps the largest number ever seen locally. Three were also seen at Peoria, 2 Sep (R. Campbell).

Flocks of **Vaux's Swifts** were still being reported at the end of the period (m.ob.).

A **Rufous Hummingbird** was still at Bill Proebsting's place on Oak Creek Drive, 24 Sep.

Lewis's Woodpeckers arrived after 20 Sep, when one was at FNWR and another along Bruce Road (J. Jebousek); one was along Brooklane Drive in Corvallis, 24 Sep (W. Wright).

Most flycatchers had moved south, but a few lingered into September. A **Willow Flycatcher** was still at Cabell Marsh, 15 Sep. Three **Hammond's Flycatchers** continued at Marys Peak, 8 Sep. A **Pacific-slope Flycatcher** was still in McDonald Forest, 24 Sep. A **Say's Phoebe** was a nice find; it foraged from a plowed field at FNWR, 15 Sep.

Cassin's Vireos became scarce. The last report was of one at Ca-

bell Marsh, 15 Sep. Four **Warbling Vireos** were present at McFadden Marsh, 16 Sep. A **Red-eyed Vireo** at Luckiamute Landing, 3 Sep, was a nice sighting (B. Proebsting).

Probably the last of the **Purple Martins** of the year were reported during the period. One was still in the Coast Range at Lewisburg Saddle, 30 Aug; 2 were at Philomath STP, 18 Sep, and one was at FNWR, 19 Sep.

Two **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** on Marys Peak, 8 Sep, were the first fall arrivals.

The first report of **American Pipit** was of one at Philomath STP, 11 Sep.

Cedar Waxwings formed large flocks across the area, especially during the first two weeks of September (m.ob.).

Many warblers headed south, leaving our area. A few **Hermit Warblers** and **Black-throated Gray Warblers** were still around, but were becoming quite uncommon. Perhaps the last **Wilson's Warbler** of fall was found 19 Sep at FNWR (P. Vanderheul). A late **Yellow-breasted Chat** was found at EEW, 19 Sep (J. Geier).

A few **Western Tanagers** were still being detected at the end of the period, but numbers had already thinned out by 19 Sep.

Our first **Fox Sparrow** of fall was at FNWR, 19 Sep (P. Vanderheul). A young **White-throated Sparrow** at EEW, 7 Sep, was about two weeks early (J. Geier).

Golden-crowned Sparrows arrived at EEW, 18 Sep, more or less right on schedule (J. Geier).

The last **Black-headed Grosbeak** reported was one at Philomath STP, 20 Sep.

A very rare local record was an **Indigo Bunting** discovered at EEW, 7-9 Sep (J. Geier, m.ob.). The bird was a shabby-plumaged male in heavy molt and it was nearly completely lacking a tail.

On 15 Sep, a **Yellow-headed Blackbird** visited Cabell Marsh.

An **Orange Bishop**, 10 Sep, along Llewellyn Rd was certainly an escaped pet, but still an interesting surprise (J. Jebousek, N. Richardson; see photo).



This stunning male Orange Bishop was at a feed corral along Llewellyn Road, 10 Sep (photo by J. Jebousek).

Next issue

Please send your reports for the next issue by 24 October to:

W. Douglas Robinson
Dept. of Fisheries and Wildlife
Oregon State University
Corvallis, OR 97331
(541) 737-9501

Douglas.robinson@oregonstate.edu

Benton County NAMC Results of the Benton County North American Migratory Bird Count

The Benton Co. North American Migratory Bird Count was held on Saturday, Sept. 19, 2009 and six field counters and four feeder counters saw a total of 113 species. The day started off damp with counters running into heavy drizzle during the morning hours. Clearing skies raised hopes for better birding in the afternoon, but strong cold winds may have kept birds down.

While the county was birded from north to south, areas west of Bellfountain Road were not covered—in other words, little mountain or coastal range birding was done. If you live anywhere west of Philomath, I'd be particularly interested in hearing from you during future counts. The worst miss on this count was the Chestnut-backed Chickadee, which is the common chickadee in those areas.

Noteworthy are the debut of Eurasian Collared Doves (5) to the tally and a rare (audio) appearance by a Ruffed Grouse at Peavy Arboretum.

Here are some highlights:

- **Redhead**—2 at Philomath Sewage Ponds (PSP)
- **Common Merganser**—6 where the Long Tom meets the Willamette River
- **Eared Grebe**—2 PSP
- **White Pelican**—at least 33 at Cabell Marsh, Finley NWR (FNWR)
- **Double-crested Cormorant**—1 FNWR
- **Black-crowned Night-Heron**—1 immature FNWR
- **Osprey**—2 (Adair ODF&W pond, Willamette Park)
- **White-tailed Kite**—1 FNWR
- **Bald Eagle**—2
- **Red-shoulder Hawk**—5
- **Merlin**—1 EE Wilson (EEW)
- **Peregrine Falcon**—1 FNWR and a possible second one observed during the football game at Reser Stadium
- **Greater Yellowlegs**—7 FNWR EEW
- **Western Sandpiper**—10 FNWR & EEW
- **Least Sandpiper**—9 FNWR & EEW
- **Pectoral Sandpiper**—2 FNWR & PSP
- **Long-billed Dowitchers**—57 FNWR and 1 at PSP
- **Red-necked Phalaropes**—17 PSP and 1 at FNWR
- **Purple Martin**—1 FNWR
- **Cliff Swallow**—3 FNWR
- **Ruby-crowned Kinglet**—2
- **Golden-crowned Kinglet**—2
- **Swainson's Thrush**—26
- **Wrentit**—4 EEW & FNWR
- **American Pipit**—42 FNWR
- **Orange-crowned Warbler**—2
- **Yellow Warbler**—1
- **Black-throated Gray Warbler**—6
- **Townsend's Warbler**—1
- **Common Yellowthroat**—55
- **Wilson's Warbler**—1
- **Yellow-breasted Chat**—1 EEW
- **Western Tanager**—7
- **Chipping Sparrow**—1
- **Lincoln's Sparrow**—19
- **Golden-crowned Sparrow**—16 EEW
- **Black-headed Grosbeak**—1
- **Brown-headed Cowbird**—1
- **Evening Grosbeak**—7

continued on next page

I also saw a probable Prairie Falcon on Rifle Range Road a bit south of the Rifle Range facility. However, this was during one of those periods of heavy drizzle and I wasn't able to confirm the ID.

Besides missing any Chestnut-backed Chickadees, the House Sparrow was also a no-show.

Its absence certainly brought no tears to my eyes!

Marcia F. Cutler

Atop the Nestbox

2009 Nesting Data

The following bluebird trail data cover Benton and Linn Counties with a few sites in Marion and Polk as well. When we update our page on the ASC website, we will display our year-to-year nesting data in a consistent format that will allow us to compare and collaborate with other bluebird organizations.

Nesting attempts—170

Failures—30

First broods—88

Second broods—48

Third broods—4

Eggs laid—877

Eggs per attempt—5

Eggs hatched—706

% hatched—80

Banded—632

Fledged—613

% fledged—87

Fledged per occ box—7

My thanks to all of our monitors, banders and bluebird landlords for making these fledges and reports possible. For those who have signed up to help reconnect the trail, you should be receiving your lists in 1 to 2 weeks. Your help is very much appreciated!

Raylene Gordin



Gasohol

The new alcohol blended fuel is creating a host of problems. Sometimes called "gasohol" or "flexfuel," it is blended with at least 10% alcohol. This blend gives less energy per gallon and thus poorer mileage. But wait, more bad news is ahead. Alcohol has the ability to absorb water, which in turn fouls fuel injectors, carbs, fuel pumps, and filters. H₂O freezes at 32 degrees F, which also blocks the fuel system. This can quickly spoil a nice trip to the mountains. Additives such as Heet can help, but it's best to keep the water out if possible. Keep your fuel tank as full as possible during wet, rainy weather. Air space above the fuel in the tank carries water vapor which finds its way into your fuel. This forms an ugly goo which can foul fuel systems. Lawnmowers, chainsaws, and leaf blowers are very vulnerable to the alcohol fuel and often cause owners maintenance headaches. Local repair stations are reporting a remarkable increase in fuel-related problems since gasohol

has been introduced. There is an answer for this situation for the small equipment as it is still possible to buy non-alcohol fuel at specific stations. The non-alcohol fuel must be placed in a suitable container, not the car's fuel tank. Oberson Fuel Company in South Corvallis sells this type fuel. If you are going to store your equipment for 90 days or longer, it a good idea to put a fuel stabilizer in the tank. Brands such as Sea Foam or Stabil have proven to reduce problems associated with fuel jelling or turning to goo. Happy trails to you!

John Gaylord

Backyard Woodpecker

A visit from a young Pileated Woodpecker



Recently, I had an interesting and amusing view of a Pileated Woodpecker in my backyard!

I was headed around to my backyard, which borders thick mixed forest, and down flies a male juvenile P. Woodpecker, low onto a fir tree in the yard.

This is in itself unusual, because I can spot them in the forest, but they never cross the fence boundary! He proceeded to poke around a suet feeder, investigate a bird bath, then flew to the lawn on a fresh mole-mound (those mole critters are an abomination)! The P. W. sat on the mound, poking and flinging fresh dirt all around, then began pressing his breast onto the mound. He stuck his beak into the dirt several times, then flattened the mound completely! Nice of him to do that for me! He then proceeded into some low shrubs to investigate additional mole hills! After apparently satisfying his curiosity, and once more checking out the birdbath, he flew back into the forest. I was dumbfounded and amused—all while standing fairly close by—not moving of course. What a treat to see uncharacteristic Pileated Woodpecker behavior. The young ones can be so entertaining when they haven't yet learned the accepted Woodpecker protocols and expectations!

Perhaps others have seen similar Pileated Woodpecker activity, but this was a first and memorable one for me!

Chris Miller

Lawns that are Green in More Ways than One

Lawn fertilizer and pesticides can cause significant environmental damage. Many fertilizers contain more nitrogen and phosphorus than your lawn needs. The excess washes away and ends up in creeks and rivers, sometimes killing plants and fish.

Suggestions:

- Use compost if you can, either your own or bought from a store. Good compost has billions of living organisms per tablespoon, able to remove nutrients from rock particles and organic matter to feed the grass.
- Add fescue or ryegrass to your lawn. These are lower-maintenance than varieties like bluegrass. Some fescue varieties are native to the Willamette Valley.
- Put clover in your lawn. It takes nitrogen from the air and fixes it in the soil. Even 5 percent clover in a lawn can provide half the lawn's nitrogen.
- Leave grass clippings on the lawn. They too contribute nitrogen to the soil. And when the leaves fall, chop them up with your mower and leave them in place to provide more nutrients to your soil.

Dave Mellinger



This Space Available

Now's your chance to be a published writer!

Do you regularly spend time in a particular corner of our valley, keeping tabs on the wild creatures and plants that live there? Do you occasionally experience unusual bird sightings? Dance with wild beasts? We want to hear about it! Please send us descriptions of your bird- or other creature or conservation-related adventures in our valley, descriptions of upcoming events that might interest Chat readers, or an idea for a regular column.

Or Chat Editor!

We've had a great time editing the Chat for the last few years, but one of us is going back to school full-time and the other is getting lazier. Consequently, we are looking for a replacement editor. If you're interested, please contact us at chateditors@gmail.com.

Neil & Joan

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Douglas's Squirrel photos by Chris Miller

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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

- Oct 8: Board meeting
- Oct 10: Second Saturday field trip, 7:30 am*
- Oct 15: General meeting—now starting at 7 pm!
- Oct 15: Elsie Elzroth on OPB (airs on Oct. 18, too)*
- Oct 16: Deadline for Riparian Re-vegetation Grant applications**
- Oct 24: Field notes submission deadline for Nov Chat
- Oct 24: Hesthavn work party
- Oct 29: Article submission deadline for Nov Chat
- Nov 7: Newport & Depoe Bay Coast full-day trip*
- Nov 14: Second Saturday field trip, 7:30 am*
- Nov 21: Hesthavn work party
- Dec 22: Corvallis CBC

*See page 11
**See page 10



Coyote photo by Matt Lee

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