



Audubon Society of Corvallis the **CHAT**

Summer 2011

VOL. 40

#10

General Meeting

There will be no summer general meeting. The next general meeting will be September 15, 2011.

President's Corner

Please welcome your new co-presidents:

Ann Brodie—Ann worked at OSU for 30 years as a cell and molecular biologist. She retired with honors and has since devoted herself to other passions. One of those is gardening. Ann is a Master Gardener and loves to work in her own garden, as well as help others with garden problems. Ann has always felt the call for public service, and has recently completed a tour of duty with the LBCC board, helping improve student education. She has a special interest in promoting women in the field of Science and worked with others at OSU to make this happen. Ann's interest in birds coincides with an enthusiasm for travel. She has been to many countries in search of their unique species, as well as to enjoy their cultures.

Jan Landau—Jan has been in Corvallis since kindergarten and graduated from CHS. She worked in legal affairs for Benton and Linn County governments. Among many other activities, Jan has been on the advisory board for City Parks and Recreation, was Chair of the Open Space Advisory Board, Chair of the Riverfront Task Force, and Chair of the Benton County Library Foundation. With her interest in field trips and birding, Jan gets together with a group of like-minded women from ASC for coffee, dinner, and theater on a regular basis. She has been a member of ASC for years and is looking forward to giving back to our organization, which she says has given her so much.

If one of these people were the new president, our organization would be in good hands. With the two, and their many excellent qualifications and experience, I know Audubon is in a position to keep up our good work, forge new alliances, and complete projects that make our community a better place.

Will Wright, President

The other newly elected officers are:

Vice President and Program Chair: Dave Mellinger
 Secretary: Linda Campbell
 Treasurer: Fred Ramsey
 Board Member-at-Large: Gail Nickerson
 Board Member-at-Large: Lori McGovern
 Board Member-at-Large: Tom Penpraze
 Board Member-at-Large: Stacy Moore
 Board Member-at-Large: Peter Moore
 Board Member at-Large: Karan Fairchild

Summer Potluck

The annual Audubon summer potluck at Hesthavn is set for Tuesday, July 19 at 5:30 with the meeting after. Audubon Society of Corvallis members and family are welcome. Please bring your own table service, and a dish to share! Basic drinks will be provided, such as juice and water, tea and coffee. Anything else you'd like you'll need to bring!

Spring Migratory Bird Count

The spring North American Migratory Bird Count was held in Benton County on Saturday, May 14th. This spring has been unusually cool and damp with many migratory birds showing up later than the average arrival date. The day's weather - also cool and damp and windy, kept many of the birds down low in all respects (in lower elevations and low

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Spring Migratory Count

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in the trees and shrubbery). Despite this, one party visited Mary's Peak for the count which has not occurred very often and, as a result, the count set new highs for Sooty Grouse (9) and Ruffed Grouse (3). The total number of bird species seen was 129, which is the second highest total.

New birds for the count were Canvasback (Knoll Terrace Sewage Ponds) and American Dipper - at the Alsea Fish Hatchery (probably the first time this place has been visited during this count).

Birds not often seen on the Spring count included Greater White-fronted Geese, Red-shouldered Hawk, Hooded Merganser, Mountain Quail, Lesser Yellowlegs, Hammond's Flycatcher, Purple Martin and Golden-crowned Kinglet.

There were new absolute or spring high counts for 21 bird species. Some notable numbers include 10 Virginia Rail, 1083 Cliff Swallows (shattering old record of 253!) and 66 Common Ravens (this was probably an undercount as I couldn't believe my eyes when most of the black birds I identified circling the Coffin Butte landfill were Ravens - there could have been as many as 100 there). Eurasian Collared-Doves (7), Black Phoebe (3) and Yellow-headed Blackbird (5) all continue the trend of expansion of these species in Benton County.

I'd like to thank everyone who participated in this count. A special note of appreciation goes to Rich Armstrong who is moving to Arizona after being a most reliable participant for the past 6 years. His efforts will be missed.

The complete results are posted on ASC's website.

Marcia F. Cutler

Compiler, Benton County

Field Trip Schedule

Local Monthly Second Saturday Field Trips

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 while enjoying the outdoors. We visit the valley national wildlife refuges—Finley, Baskett Slough, and Ankeny, as well as other birding areas throughout the year. Contact Bill Proebsting at proebstw@gmail.com or 541-752-0108 with questions. Check the Midvalley ListServ, <http://www.midvalleybirding.org/pipermail/birding/>, the week before the field trip for updates. Weather may alter plans. Watch the weather forecast and dress appropriately.

Current schedule:

July 9: E.E. Wilson Wildlife Area
Aug. 13: Baskett Slough NWR
Sept. 10: Ankeny NWR
Sept. 17: Full Day at Fern Ridge Reservoir
Oct. 8: Finley NWR led by Marcia Cutler.

Bill Proebsting

Bicycle Birding

Come out and enjoy life and birding at a human pace. By "going green" and forgoing the automobile for a birding trip, you won't be sacrificing your potential bird encounters. I like to think of bicycle birding as high-density birding. When you're driving down the highway, you're whizzing by hundreds of birds without seeing or hearing them. While bicycle birding, we won't miss anything, and we'll be covering more ground than hiking.

Last Sunday of each month. 9am - Noon.

Sundays, July 31, Aug 28, Sept 25, 9am - noon

Meet at Avery Park Rose Garden: 1210 SW Avery Drive in Corvallis.

Trips are free. Bring a bicycle helmet, water and binoculars. We ride slowly, listen for birds and stop frequently. Trip lengths are usually less than 10 miles. For more information, contact Don Boucher, 541-753-7689, bouchdon@peak.org

Atop the Nestbox

The weather this spring was better than last spring, so our bluebird fledging successes will hopefully be better. Initial estimates show a lower number of nesting pairs than last year, which was expected due to the high number of failures in 2010. So, as usual, things may balance out and give us banding and fledging data similar to what we've seen in the recent past. We'll know more when we analyze our numbers at the end of the nesting season.

We've seen some wild and wacky things this year. First, another leucistic bluebird nestling, produced by the same pair as last year's. Unfortunately, the male parent disappeared with the brood in progress, however, one of their sons from last year helped his mother raise and fledge the brood. Strangely, with no other adult male around, the hen is building another nest. Could she be planning to mate with her son? This would be a very rare occurrence. Furthermore, might he have the same gene, with the possibility of producing yet another leucistic chick?

Next, a clutch of 8 eggs, very large compared to the usual 4 to 6, produced 7 fledglings. The very next day after the fledge, the hen began laying a second clutch...of 8? No, try 9! Another hen nearby laid a clutch of seven. Something in the water?

I would like to offer my ongoing thanks to Jim Rivers for his swallow study at OSU that always produces

bluebirds. Molly Monroe and her associates continue to be helpful to the bluebird cause as well. And of course, thank you to the many landowners who have opened their hearts and lands to bluebirds, without whose help we would have a very small program indeed.

For those of you with nest boxes in sunny locations, be sure to open the ventilation holes in preparation for the summer heat. When temperatures are expected to be above 90 degrees for more than 2 days, or more than 95 degrees for even one day, be sure to provide heat relief for your nestlings. Details are available on our web page in the "Nest Boxes" section, or you may call Rita Snyder at 752-6457 or me at 541-258-6625 for suggestions.

Raylene Gordin

Hesthavn News

I hope everyone is enjoying their summer, and I hope you've had a chance to visit Hesthavn during the Saturday Open Houses, this past spring. While spending time there, I've had a chance to look through several of the many bird guides and other reference volumes. Hesthavn has available to visitors more than 250+ books related to birds, wildflowers, and wildlife habitats. It's a treasure trove of information. The newly christened Paula's Trail is still a work in progress, but should be open to the public soon. It will be worth the wait!

A reminder to sign up as a volunteer! A little goes a long way in maintaining this special piece of property. If you would like to volunteer, please let us hear from you. volunteerasc@gmail.com

Susan Atkisson

Hesthavn Sign Work Donation

Two cedar board signs, one engraved "Paula's Trail" and the other advising visitors of our Hesthavn property closure time ("Center Closed Dusk to Dawn") were recently installed. I would like to recognize two people who eagerly gave, without charge, materials and expertise that served to ensure the quality of these signs. Jerry Paul donated and cut to size the cedar planks used. Farra Snook, owner of Foress Sign, performed the exacting letter routing, refusing to accept payment for his excellent work. This crucial and much appreciated help left me with the simple job of merely painting the recessed letters and applying a couple coats of protective spar varnish, prior to their installation. A Big Thanks goes out to both Jerry and Farra!

Karl Hartzell

2011 Birdathon

We had another successful Birdathon this year, with six teams participating. Together we covered Corvallis and surrounding areas, the coast, the Klamath Basin and southern California! Altogether we raised approximately \$4500. These funds go directly to Hesthavn Nature Center.

The highlight of the weekend for me wasn't bird-related this year. It came when we "measured" the depth of water at the Jackson-Frazier boardwalk – with my 4-year-old! He backed up right off the boardwalk and managed to submerge himself almost completely, somehow keeping his face above water. He was a good sport about it (once the shock of the cold water passed); after we stripped him and dressed him in other people's sweaters, he merrily continued around the rest of the walk, boots squelching.

I want to thank our team members, most of whom have been participating in the Birdathon for several years. They are the core of this event and we couldn't pull it off without them:

Paula Vanderheul and ASC's Klamath Basin field trip participants, led by Fred Ramsey
Karan and Jim Fairchild
Susan and Todd Brown
Pam and Randy Comeleo
Ann and Doug Brodie
Dodie Wilson and Mary, Alex, and Tristan Van Brocklin

Our group sponsors also deserve special recognition. Group sponsors offer a pledge per species seen, FOR EACH TEAM. Thank you to Elsie Eltzroth, Raylene Gordin, and Don Boucher for sponsoring our event again this year. Having group sponsors helps give teams both an incentive to participate and a boost in their fundraising.

And finally, of course, we heartily thank everyone who sponsored a team. Hesthavn is a thriving nature center and native plant and wildlife sanctuary largely because of your generosity!

Mary Van Brocklin
Birdathon coordinator



Green Heron photo by Matt Lee

Field Notes

4/29/11– 6/26/11

The general area covered by the field notes is a rough circle centered on Corvallis, extending to around Sweet Home, Monroe/Harrisburg, Marys Peak and the nearby Coast Range, and Monmouth/Dallas.

High temperatures throughout May and June continued to average several degrees below normal, although low temperatures were just about average. May was rainier than average, but showers tapered off, leaving June near average for precipitation. Large numbers of newly-arrived migrants lingered at low elevations well into May, perhaps due to cold weather and lack of food at higher elevations.

Several birding events, such as the ASC Birdathon and the North American Migratory Bird Count, got extra eyes and ears looking for birds. Migration was still underway at the beginning of the period, but by the end of the period, most birds had settled into their breeding territories and were raising their families.

Abbreviations and locations: STP = sewage treatment ponds, EEW = E.E. Wilson Wildlife Area north of Corvallis, Finley = William L. Finley National Wildlife Refuge, Ankeny = Ankeny National Wildlife Refuge. Diamond Hill Wetlands are south of Brownsville, Elliott STP is near Lewisburg at the Knoll Terrace mobile home park.

Observer abbreviations: m.obs. = multiple observers, Amy Hill (AH), Austin Booth (AB), Becky Brenton (BB), Bo Altman (BA), Bruce Pratt (BP), Don Boucher (DB), Doug Robinson (DR), Gail Andrews (GA), Hendrik Herlyn (HH), Howard Bruner (HB), Jamie Simmons (JS), Jarod Jebousek (JJ), Jay Withgott (JW), Jeff Fleischer (JF1), Jeff Harding (JHg), Jim Fairchild (JFa), Joan Hagar (JHr), Joel Geier (JG), Karan Fairchild (KFa), Lisa Millbank (LM), Marcia Cutler (MC), Mark Nikas (MN), Mary Garrard (MG), Molly Monroe (MM), Pam Comeleo (PC), Pam Otley (PO), Paul Rentz (PR), Patti White (PW), Randy Comeleo (RC), Rich Armstrong (RA), Rich Hoyer (RH), Susan Hatlevig (SH), Will Wright (WW), Woody Fitzgerald (WF)

The last reported large flocks of migrating **Greater White-fronted Geese** flew over the area 5/4 (JG, DB). A single **Snow Goose** was on Eicher Rd. east of Albany 5/15 (JF1). Many **Canada Goose** goslings were following their parents by early May (m.obs.). **Cackling Geese** were almost gone by mid-May.

Most of our wintering ducks left the area early in this period or during the last one, leaving only a few species that regularly breed here. **Wood Ducks** had fuzzy little ducklings at Elliott STP by 6/3 (RA), and **Gadwall** were still found on 5/9 near Brownsville (JF1) and Philomath STP 6/19 (WW). They were also reported to be nesting just north of our area (JG). The last **American Wigeons** were reported from the Brownsville STP on 5/9 (JF1). **Mallard** ducklings were paddling around at Stewart Lake by 4/29 (MG). Migrating **Blue-winged Teal** visited a few spots, like McFadden Marsh at Finley 4/30 (RA) and at Ankeny 5/29 (JW). A few **Northern Shovelers** and **Northern Pintails** were still at Finley 5/29 (JW). Scattered **Cinnamon Teal** were present in local wetlands throughout the period. The last local report of **Green-winged Teal** was from Philomath STP on 4/29 (MC). A lone male **Canvasback** showed up at Elliott STP on 6/3. Brownsville STP had a few **Lesser Scaup** on 5/9 (JF1). A pair of lingering **Ring-necked Ducks** were still at Stewart Lake (HH) and at Finley around 5/9 (PR). One **Bufflehead** still remained in a pond along Oak Hill Rd. near Buena Vista 5/15 (JG). A female **Hooded Merganser** with her 4 tiny ducklings was at EEW on 5/2 (JG). A pair of **Common Mergansers** may have been in a breeding location in Pioneer Park in Brownsville 5/29 (JW). There were still some **Ruddy Ducks** at a pond on Oak Hill Rd. near Buena Vista 5/17 (JG).

Ruffed Grouse were drumming near the summit of Marys Peak 5/19 (RH). **Sooty Grouse** continued to “hoot” on Marys Peak and Beazell Memorial Forest through the period (m.obs.). 3 **Wild Turkey** hens were leading their poults in Soap Creek Valley 5/12 (JG). **California Quail** were calling frequently through May. **Mountain Quail** were also spotted on Marys Peak 5/18 (RH)

A stripy young **Pied-billed Grebe** was swimming around at EEW 6/10 (JG). **Western Grebes** were at Philomath STP 5/31 and Cabell Marsh at Finley for a couple of weeks in June (m.obs.) A **Clark's Grebe** at Philomath STP was quite a surprise 6/13 (DR), although some had also been seen just east of our local area, at Foster Reservoir.

A few **American White Pelicans** floated around on Cabell Marsh at Finley through most of the period.

Double-crested Cormorants persisted until at least 5/14 at Finley and along the Willamette River (m.obs.).

American Bitterns were heard “pumping” (and photographed, 6/11, by AH) at Finley, Ankeny and other large marshes throughout the area. **Great Blue Herons** continued nesting. A **Great Egret** was at Finley 5/3. **Green Herons** have been widespread and conspicuous as they fly to fishing spots and back to nests.

A flock of a dozen **Turkey Vultures** fled from a charging elk cow, who may have had a newborn, at Finley 6/11 (m.obs.). **Ospreys** have been nesting and contending with **Bald Eagle** piracy, as nesting eagles continue to increase in our area (m.obs.). A **White-tailed Kite** was a surprise this time of year near Brownsville, beginning 5/14 (BA, m.obs.). What looked like a **Golden Eagle** was flying with a Turkey Vulture in the forested foothills west of Philomath 6/10 (JFa & KFa). A nesting **Northern Harrier** was found in a local mint field 6/24 (SH). Reports of **Sharp-shinned Hawks** tapered off as many left the valley, but **Cooper's Hawks** were common and noisy during courtship. **Red-shouldered Hawks** showed up in SW Corvallis and at Finley 6/9 and 6/11 (LM). While **Merlins** and **Peregrine Falcons** were pretty much gone from our local area, **American Kestrels** were conspicuous in nesting areas such as OSU campus and Marys River Natural Area in Corvallis.

A strange sighting of a **Virginia Rail** was one hanging around the prairie overlook platform at Finley 5/23 (PW). A few folks enjoyed a lucky sighting of a **Sora** at the Bruce Rd. scrape wetland 4/30 (RA). Gaudy **American Coot** babies were spotted at the scrape pond on Bruce Rd. at Finley 5/6 (GA).

Local birders enjoyed a large influx of shorebirds at the end of the last period, after some stormy spring weather. **Semipalmated Plovers** showed up in good numbers and continued to be seen along Llewellyn Rd. and at Finley until 5/10 (m.obs). **Black-bellied Plovers** showed up around the same time but continued a bit longer at scattered sites such as Ankeny, as late as 5/29 (JW). A **Killdeer** pair were sitting on their nest at Finley 6/11 (AH). An **American Avocet** was at Diamond Hill Wetlands 5/11 (JG). **Whimbrels** showed up 5/6 south of Tangent (JF1), poking around in a field near Tangent, and increased to 6 at Llewellyn Rd. 5/9 (AB) A **Long-billed Curlew** showed up 5/6 at the south end of Finley and spent a few days there, sometimes snoozing while being admired by birders (DR). The last report of **Greater Yellowlegs** was 5/7 near Tangent (AB), although likely some stayed beyond that date. A **Lesser Yellowlegs** was reported at Ankeny 5/29 (JW). **Spotted Sandpipers** had to deal with unusually high water, covering their gravel riverbank habitat for much of the period. **Solitary Sandpipers** were along Finley Rd. 5/5 (DR) and at the Sunset Park boardwalk in Corvallis 5/7 (HH). **Least Sandpipers** were common at many shallow wetlands, but a good-sized flock of 58 of them was at Finley Rd. 5/5 (DR). **Western Sandpipers** were present on the same day, with 122. These peeps were almost completely absent by mid-May. Most **Dunlin** had moved on by 5/9, when one was still at the Philomath STP (AB), except for one very late one who was suffering from an injury. A flock of 32 **Long-billed Dowitchers** and a lone **Short-billed Dowitcher** showed up along Finley Rd. 5/5 (DR). A few **Wilson's Snipe** lingered in the area into this period but most had already left. 2 **Red-necked Phalaropes** were still at Philomath STP after large flocks of them passed through at the end of the last period 4/30 (HH), 3 were there 5/9 (AB), and 11 were at the Tangent STP 5/9 (JF1). 2 **Wilson's Phalaropes** were at Finley Rd. wetland 5/5 (DR), 20 on 5/6 (PO), a few mid-month (m.obs.) and a nesting pair on the prairie at Finley 5/29 (JG); this is a rare breeder in the Willamette Valley.

Bonaparte's Gulls were reported relatively often, from Diamond Hill Wetlands 5/13 (JG), Ankeny 5/28 (RG) and 5/29 (JW), Finley 5/28 (PO), and Philomath STP 6/13 (DR). A **Black Tern** and **Franklin's Gull** were hanging out at the Finley Rd. wetland 5/31 (DR). 3 **California Gulls** were still at Ankeny 5/29 (JW).

Many begging **Rock Pigeon** nestlings were under the bridges of downtown Corvallis by early June. **Mourning Doves** are now less common than **Eurasian Collared-Doves** in downtown and residential Albany.

Owl reports were sparse with the exception of **Great Horned Owls**, whose fledglings were squawking throughout the period (m.obs.). A **Barn Owl** apparently had been killed by a Great Horned Owl in late May (SW). **Barred Owls** were found at Witham Hill 5/11 (BP) and EEW 5/29 (DB & LM). A **Northern Pygmy-Owl** called on Marys Peak 5/18 (RH). 2 **Short-eared Owls** were flying in the middle of the day with Common Ravens at Diamond Hill Wetlands 5/3 (PS) and one was west of Lebanon 6/24 (BA).

The first **Common Nighthawk** of the year was a very early individual, seen during a trip to the hospital to deliver a baby 5/20 (MM & JJ)! They were widely reported in the first 2 weeks of June. **Vaux's Swifts** were roosting in large aggregations from late April through early May in their usual places: Lebanon Hotel, Wiegand Hall (OSU), Albany fire station, etc.

A **Rufous Hummingbird** was found dead, inexplicably hanging from a feeder by one foot 5/13 (PR). By the end of the period, male Rufous Hummingbirds were becoming scarce as they moved upslope. Female **Anna's Hummingbirds** were starting on second broods by the beginning of the period.

Most **Belted Kingfishers** were at appropriate breeding habitat (steep, sandy riverbanks) by mid-June, but one continued at Dunawi Creek until at least 6/16 (LM).

Migrating **Lewis's Woodpeckers** were found near Brownsville 5/9 (JF1), Crawfordville 5/15 (MN) and Soap Creek Rd. near Corvallis 5/15 (JHr). **Acorn Woodpeckers** persisted in most colonies, and were breeding, despite a dismal acorn crop last fall. A pair of **Red-breasted Sapsuckers** were excavating their nest cavity 5/14 (PW). A Rufous Hummingbird repeatedly harassed a **Downy Woodpecker** for reasons possibly known only to the hummingbird 6/25 (m.obs.). A **Hairy Woodpecker** was at Stewart Lake 4/29 (MG). A male Red-shafted x Yellow-shafted **Northern Flicker** intergrade and his partner were raising their young in a large willow tree in June (SH). **Pileated Woodpeckers** were nesting along the Powderhouse Trail in McDonald Forest.

Olive-sided Flycatchers arrived in good numbers in the second week of May (m.obs.), with perky **Western Wood-Pewees** trickling in beginning a few days earlier, starting 5/5 (JG). A **Willow Flycatcher** turned up at Stewart Lake 5/23 (JS). **Hammond's Flycatchers** were remarkably easy to find this year for a couple of weeks early in the period,



Black-headed Grosbeak photo by Matt Lee

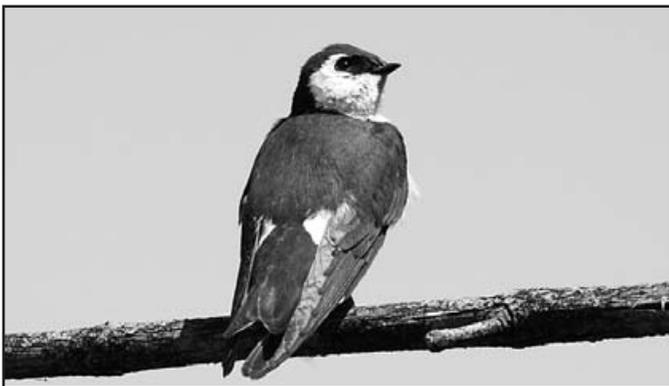
until they continued northward or moved upslope to appropriate habitat. A single **Gray Flycatcher** was reported near Crawfordville 5/15 (MN), but no Dusky Flycatchers showed up this year in our area (though they did just to our north and south). A male **Pacific-slope Flycatcher** was singing in a typical breeding location south of the Taylor Water Treatment Plant in S Corvallis 6/26, in the same place a nest was found last year (LM & DB). Some hardy **Black Phoebes** are year-round residents, and a pair was seen nesting at Ankeny 5/29 (JW). An **Ash-throated Flycatcher**, common in SW Oregon but rare in our area, was on Tub Run Dr. SW of Brownsville. **Western Kingbirds** continued to show up over the first few weeks of the period.

A **shrike** provoked much discussion but little consensus on its species. Found 4/29 near the Corvallis airport (KFa & JFa), the shrike was photographed, and even measured using its perch as a reference point. Eventually, it moved on, keeping its true identity a secret from the birders! **Cassin's Vireos** settled in at various locations; many were singing on the forested slopes of Bald Hill in early May. A pair of **Hutton's Vireos** constructed a nest at Witham Hill 5/11 (BP). The first **Warbling Vireo** was reported at Stewart Lake 4/29 (JS), but numbers exploded as a wave of migrants passed through for a few weeks, with several vireos seemingly in every tree.

Gray Jays showed up at several low-elevation forests, such as Mill Hill at Finley 5/12 (BP). **Steller's Jays** and **Western Scrub-Jays** quieted down a little during their breeding period; scrub-jay fledglings were out of the nest and begging 6/4 (LM & DB). An **American Crow** fledgling had left the nest 6/14 (LM) but got around on foot for a few days before being able to fly. A gathering of 60 to 80 **Common Ravens** was an impressive sight over the dump near Adair (MC).

From Glasser Dr. near Tangent, 7 or 8 **Horned Larks** were reported 5/7 (AB), along with other reports of singles or pairs at scattered locations during the period.

An unusually large flock of 35 to 40 **Purple Martins** were found at Finley 5/29 (JW). **Tree Swallow** babies were fledging by the end of the period, and the predawn chorus of **Violet-green Swallows** was reported 5/29 (DB). **Northern Rough-winged Swallows** were gathering nesting material at Bryant Park in Albany 6/24 (DB). Hundreds of **Cliff Swallows** were reported at the red barn on Finley Rd. 6/4 (HH), and a **Barn Swallow** nest inside a blind held 2 fledglings (with 1 sibling sitting nearby) at McFadden Marsh at Finley 6/14 (AH).



Violet-green Swallow photo by Matt Lee

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The sounds of begging **Black-capped Chickadee** fledglings were heard throughout the period. **Chestnut-backed Chickadees** excavated a nest cavity in a rotten snag along Oak Creek in McDonald Forest 5/7 (LM & DB). Fledgling **Bushtits** traveling with their parents were reported 6/10 (JG) **Red-breasted Nuthatches** and **White-breasted Nuthatches** were nesting in cavities; a parent White-breasted Nuthatch brought insects to a tree cavity 5/15 (WF). Fledgling **Brown Creepers** peeped for food in Avery Park 6/4 (LM)

Bewick's Wrens were tending their young in thimbleberries at Avery Park by 6/18 (LM). **House Wrens** seemed slow to arrive this spring, but by 5/14 one had settled into a Purple Martin house in Dunn Forest (RC & PC). A **Pacific Wren** was singing in Avery Park 6/4 – a late occurrence for the park and possibly breeding there (m.obs.). Male **Marsh Wrens** had build many unfinished “dummy nests” in cattail marshes at Jackson-Frazier Wetland (m.obs.)

Golden-crowned Kinglets were noticeably less common in town by the beginning of the period, and the last local **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** was reported from Willamette Park 4/30 (HH). **Western Bluebirds** began nesting during the period, although no fledglings were reported yet. A **Veery** was singing at Finley 6/11 (DR); this was a vagrant that usually nests in NE Oregon and Washington. The first **Swainson's Thrush** was at Pioneer Park in Corvallis 5/6 (LM). **Hermit Thrushes** continued to migrate through until the last ones were reported 5/8 (HH). **American Robin** fledglings were begging by 6/27 (LM). The last **Varied Thrush** from nonbreeding habitat was one at Bald Hill 5/1 (LM & DB). A few **Wrentits** were singing at EEW 5/29 (m.obs.).

A **Northern Mockingbird** continued at Riverside and Bryant in Albany 4/30 (JHg), and one was at Suver Rd. in SE Polk Co. 5/15 (JG). **European Starling** fledglings were out in full force, with parents alarm calling at every passing crow. 1 **American Pipit** was still hanging out near Diamond Hill Wetlands 5/29 (JW). **Cedar Waxwing** numbers swelled in early May.

A single female **Tennessee Warbler** was at Soap Creek Rd. 5/6 (JG). Migrating **Orange-crowned Warblers** passed through in a strong wave that lasted a few weeks, though some had seemingly already settled into territories early on. The enormous numbers of **Yellow-rumped Warblers** experienced in late April slowly waned until almost all were gone by mid-May. Mixed in with huge numbers of **Wilson's Warblers** and others were a few **Nashville Warblers**, unusually common this spring. As the Wilson's Warblers moved on to breeding habitat, **Yellow Warblers** replaced them in riparian forests by the end of May. A **Mac-Gillivray's Warbler** sang from territory along Oak Creek in McDonald Forest 5/7 (LM & DB). The last migrating **Townsend's Warblers**, and

a **Hermit Warbler**, were found 5/18 at Bellfountain Park (RH). **Black-throated Gray Warblers** seemed to be nesting at Avery Park 6/4. A pair of **Common Yellowthroats** appeared to be feeding a nestling 6/27 (AH).

Yellow-breasted Chat reports seemed fairly numerous this year, but most reports were from the usual locations such as EEW. The first 2 weeks of May brought an incredible wave of **Western Tanagers**, with one person seeing over 100 on 5/8 (HH).

Spotted Towhees' streaky fledglings were just starting to appear at the end of the period. 7 **Chipping Sparrows** was a good number along Oak Hill Rd. in SE Polk Co. 5/17 (JG). Many people searched for imperiled **Vesper Sparrows** and found them singing from a few locations, such as Bald Hill Farm (m.obs.). Fields were full of singing **Savannah Sparrows** throughout the period. **Grasshopper Sparrows** were very scarce, but found on the prairie at Finley 6/6 (DR). A **Song Sparrow** gathered goat hair for a nest 5/15 (WF). A **Lincoln's Sparrow** was still at Bald Hill Park on 5/1. A **White-crowned Sparrow** with a white nape was seen at Soap Creek Rd. 6/12 (JG). **White-throated Sparrows** and **Golden-crowned Sparrows** lingered in a Corvallis yard until 5/11. Just-fledged **Dark-eyed Juncos** were in downtown Corvallis 5/27 (LM & DB).

Black-headed Grosbeaks showed up 5/1 at Bald Hill and in Brownsville. **Lazuli Buntings** turned up on Campus Way at OSU 5/4 (RC) and then in dazzling flocks of up to 35 on Gap Rd. in Linn Co. 5/16 (JFI).

A **Red-winged Blackbird** fledgling was guarded by parents 6/14 (AH). **Western Meadowlarks** were on breeding grounds, singing. **Yellow-headed Blackbirds** have been present at the Bruce Rd. scrape wetland at Finley and at Diamond Hill Wetlands. A **Brewer's Blackbird** with a white forehead patch was on an OSU pasture (LM & DB). **Brown-headed Cowbirds** showed up in large numbers in early May. **Bullock's Orioles** arrived 5/5 east of Corvallis (DB) and at Irish Bend Park (DR).

House Finch fledglings showed up at a feeder 5/4 and **Purple Finch** fledglings 5/6 (MC). **Red Crossbills** flew over the Country Club Hill in SW Corvallis 6/19 (WW). **Pine Siskins** were sticking around in small numbers by the end of the period. A female **Lesser Goldfinch** was gathering nest lining material by picking willow fluff that was stuck on moss 5/15 (LM). Early May saw concentrations of hundreds of **Evening Grosbeaks** and **American Goldfinches** on the OSU campus. **House Sparrows** continued collecting nesting material for additional broods.

Next issue

Please send your reports for the next issue by Sunday, August 28. 541-753-7689; lisaaves@peak.org

Lisa Millbank



Male Purple Finch photo by Matt Lee

Oregon Shorebird Festival

Experience the wonder of shorebird migration along the scenic Oregon coast at the 25th Oregon Shorebird Festival to be held August 26-28, 2011. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Cape Arago Audubon Society, South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve and many other sponsors will have a full weekend of activities planned for birders of all skill levels. The festival is headquartered at the Oregon Institute of Marine Biology in Charleston, OR. Activities include expertly guided land based field trips to Bandon Marsh National Wildlife Refuge, Millicoma Marsh and the greater Coos Bay area. And for those who want to experience birding on the water, The Bird Guide, Inc. will offer a five-hour pelagic trip on Saturday. Expected seabirds include Black-footed Albatross, Parasitic Jaeger, Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel, Sooty & Pink-footed

Shearwaters, Pomarine Jaeger, Red-necked Phalarope, Cassin's Auklets, and more. The Friday evening program will feature a live bird of prey from exhibit by staff and volunteers from the Free Flight Wildlife Rehabilitation Center. The keynote speaker on Saturday will be Samantha Franks from the Centre for Wildlife Ecology at Simon Fraser University. Her presentation is titled "Have Feathers, Will Travel: The Migration Strategies of Shorebirds." Bring your best pair of binoculars as Bandon Marsh and Coos Bay are renowned for shorebird watching and each year a few rarities have delighted festival attendees. Regular migrants include Black-bellied Plover, Semipalmated Plover, Western Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Dunlin, Whimbrel, Long-billed Dowitcher, and Red-necked Phalarope. Please join us on the southern coast of Oregon for a weekend of birding fun and challenges. To register for the festival or for more information please visit our website at www.fws.gov/oregoncoast/shorebirdfestival.htm or contact Dawn Grafe at 541-867-4550.

Dawn Grafe

New Bird Q&A app

It isn't always enough just to watch birds—bird watchers are always asking questions about them too. WHY is that cardinal attacking my car? WHY don't birds fall off branches as they sleep? WHY is bird poop white? Each year, thousands of bird watchers call and write to experts at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. More than 100 answers to common and occasionally off-the-wall questions are packed into the new Cornell Lab Bird Q&A app from Tipitap and available from iTunes for \$2.99. The Bird Q&A app is a fun way to learn more about why birds do what they do. Although it is not a field guide, it includes hundreds of beautiful bird photos accompanied by sounds from the Cornell Lab's Macaulay Library archive—the largest collection of bird sounds in the world. Questions and answers can be explored in categories such



Western Fence Lizard photo by Matt Lee

as "Fact or Fiction," "Nests & Eggs," "Bird Songs," and "Feathers & Flight." Example: Did you know that feathers are composed of a substance found in no other animal tissue except alligator claws?

After absorbing some of this bird lore, users can test themselves with built-in quizzes in "novice," "skilled," and "hotshot" categories. They can choose quizzes on bird facts, identifying bird species, or recognizing birds by their songs and calls. It's never been easier to learn about a subject that is so fascinating. The informative, occasionally quirky content is written by bird expert and author Laura Erickson, and is a perfect complement to *The Bird Watching Answer Book*, from Storey Publishing. The app user's thirst for knowledge will also benefit the birds because a portion of the proceeds goes into bird conservation programs at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology—so the bird experts can keep doing their research to come up with the answers to a never-ending stream of questions about birds.

Pat Leonard

Cornell Lab of Ornithology



Male Flame Skimmer photo by Sue Powell

Open ACS Board Meetings

ASC Board of Directors meetings are open to all ASC members, and the board encourages you to come and see what we do. Our monthly board meeting is on Thursday one week before the General Meeting. See the calendar on the last page of *The Chat* for the meeting location.

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the **CHAT**

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

Calendar

July 9	Second Saturday field trip, 7:30 am
July 19	Potluck and Summer Board meeting 7 pm
Aug. 13	Second Saturday field trip, 7:30 am
Aug. 26	Article submission deadline for Sept. Chat
Aug 28	Field notes submission deadline for Sept. Chat
Sept. 10	Second Saturday field trip, 7:30 am
Sept. 15	September General meeting

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