



Audubon Society of Corvallis the **CHAT**

May 2012

VOL. 41

#9

General Meeting

Thursday, May 17, 7:00 – 8:30 pm

First Presbyterian Church, 8th and Monroe

Invasive Species at Malheur Refuge

Tim Bodeen, Malheur National Wildlife Refuge Manager

On August 12, 1908, the U.S. Congress established Malheur National Wildlife Refuge “to preserve the habitat values of [Malheur Lake] for migratory waterfowl, and especially, the colonial nesting species.” The Refuge’s lakes and wetlands were world-renowned for their productivity and amazing populations of waterfowl and other birds. Then in the 1920s, the Common Carp was introduced into the local watersheds to control vegetation in irrigation canals. They soon entered the Refuge’s aquatic systems and since then have decimated the Refuge’s aquatic ecosystem productivity. It is estimated that carp’s aquatic degradation has reduced use by waterfowl/birds by several million birds per year as well as undocumented impacts to the endemic fish and mussels. The Refuge to date continues to be unable to fulfill its established purpose because of the carp infestation.



From the 1930s through the 1990s, rotenone treatments were used to control carp in the Refuge’s aquatic systems, which temporarily restored productivity and waterbird/fowl use on a short-term

basis (2-4 years), before rebounding to pre-control levels. This non-selective method impacted native fishes (e.g., redband trout, suckers) and mussel populations. A variety of carp control strategies are needed to reduce their populations, which could include collection and passage deterrent structures, commercial harvest, chemical attractants/detractants, passive fishing, and reestablishment of nesting piscivorous colonial waterbirds such as herons, egrets, grebes, ibis, pelicans, terns, and cormorants as well ospreys.

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 David.Mellinger@oregonstate.edu or 541-757-7953.

Directions

The monthly chapter meeting is in Dennis Hall of the First Presbyterian Church, 114 SW Eighth Street.

Dave Mellinger

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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, behind the Cannery Mall, Corvallis at 7:30 am. This field trip is especially interesting for beginner birders and birders new to Oregon's mid-valley area. We focus on 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 ListServe, www.midvalleybirding.org/pipermail/birding/, the week before the field trip for updates. Weather may alter plans. Watch the weather forecast and dress appropriately.

Half-Day Field Trip

May 12. Bev Clark and Mary Garrard will lead this month's trip. They are planning to go to Willamette Park and Avery Park.

Bill Proebsting

Multiple Day Field Trips:

ROGUE VALLEY - May 11-13. Here we hit the songbird migration in full swing. A hike to the top of Upper Table Rock presents a magnificent wildflower display as the trail winds through Oregon's little piece of California chaparral. Here we find the chaparral specialties Oak Titmouse, California Towhee, and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. We sample some of Ashland's famous restaurants and then attend a performance at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. Maximum tour size: 16 people.

MALHEUR National Wildlife Refuge - May 31 - June 3 (four days). Our signature trip, and the 40th year led by Fred. The refuge is Oregon's most famous birding area, but this tour also hits many great spots going over the Cascades, following the Crooked River, and coming back through the High Desert. We usually see over 100 species each of the four days and around 175 species overall. Maximum tour size: 32 people.

SUMMER LAKE and a return to KLAMATH - June 22-24. Our 2010 tour scored a rare Oregon Swift Trifecta: Black (Salt Creek Falls), White-throated (Fort Rock), and Vaux's. Add Snowy Plover, Common Poorwill, American Bittern, and Yellow Rail and you understand that this is a special conclusion to the spring offerings. Maximum tour size: 21 people.

WALLOWAS - July 12-15. This is a return to a tour seldom offered. We will visit Wallowa Lake, go up the Brown Mountain gondola to the high mountains, and explore The Nature Conservancy's Zumwalt Prairie Natural Area, Oregon's hot spot for raptors. We have two nights in Enterprise, and the final night in LaGrande, with access to Ladd Marsh Wildlife Management Area (Bobolink colony) and Spring

Creek (Flammulated and Great Gray owls possible).

Maximum tour size: 24 people.

If interested, contact Fred Ramsey at flramsey5@comcast.net or 541-753-3677

Bicycle Birding 2012

May through September, 2012

Note: We will be meeting at a different location for every trip. We changed from previous years where most trips met at Avery Park. This gives us convenient access to more birding areas. See trip descriptions for meeting places.

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

All trips are on the 4th Sunday of each month.

May – Sept., 9 am - Noon

Sunday, May 27: E.E. Wilson Chat-o-Rama—north of Adair Villiage. Meet at E.E. Wilson Wildlife Area. **Parking at E.E. Wilson requires a permit** (see www.dfw.state.or.us). We'll start at the pheasant cage parking area, north of the road, 29555 Camp Adair Rd, Monmouth, OR. Consider parking for free at Adair County Park (get there 20 minutes early) and riding the 2.8 miles north to E.E. Wilson.

Sunday, June 24: Willamette Park/Kendall Natural Area—Corvallis. Meet at the Crystal Lake Sports Fields/boat landing parking area on Fischer Lane.

Sunday, July 22: McDonald Forest (moderate hills)—just west of Corvallis. Meet at the trailhead at the end of NW Oak Creek Dr. We will slowly tour gently-sloped gravel roads which most bikes can handle.

Sunday, Aug 26: Albany Bike Trails—Meet at Monteith Park in downtown Albany. There's a parking area at the corner of Water Ave and Washington St.

Sunday, Sept 23: Benton County Fairgrounds, Bald Hill Park and Campus Way Covered Bridge, Corvallis—Meet at the Benton County Fairgrounds near the intersection of 53rd Ave and Reservoir Rd.

Don Boucher

Hesthavn News

Spring at last! I hope you were able to visit Hesthavn for the "April Artist Appreciation Reception" for Katie Johnson. It was a beautiful day, with 75 people in attendance. Our next special Saturday will be May 12th's "May Madness Wildflower Weekend." There will be a tour of Hesthavn starting at 10 am with an emphasis on the wildflowers blooming in our flowerbeds and in locations throughout Hesthavn.

Our bridge fund efforts have been successful enough to be able to install the footbridges this summer, rather than next year, as we had originally planned. We still need your help to cover the labor costs. If you would like to help

us complete this project, please send your tax-deductible donations to the ASC, PO Box 148, Corvallis, OR 97339. I am hoping for a ribbon-cutting event in September.

A reminder, that our next Habitat Restoration Project work party will be on May 19th from 9 am-12 pm. Volunteers are always needed. If you would like to join us, you may stop by Hesthavn for any amount of time you may have to help. There is always something to do. For more information about volunteering, please contact volunteerasc@gmail.com.

Susan Atkisson

Hesthavn Volunteer Opportunities

The Hesthavn Nature Center and Sanctuary require care throughout the year to maintain the nearly six acres of riparian, mixed hardwood forest, ash forest and upland prairie habitats. Ongoing efforts from volunteers are needed to keep invasive species of plants from spreading out of control. To meet this challenge, Hesthavn committee members are holding a work party on May 19th, 2012 from 9 am-12 pm. All you have to do is show up ready to work. You can choose to work the entire three hours or one--any effort is appreciated! Make sure you dress for the weather. Check our website for location and directions.

Lori McGovern

Atop the Nestbox

It looks like the bluebirds are off to a bit of a late start this year, though we do have a couple of uber-early broods. Please be sure your nest boxes are ready for any bluebirds or swallows that have localized to your property. If the boxes are occupied by wasps or mice, or if they are chock full of old nest material, the birds will not be likely to use them.

We had very poor attendance at this year's workshop, but we still managed to recruit two enthusiastic monitors. Welcome, Judy and Chris!

We plan to have a photographer in the field this year to help identify banded bluebirds for our longevity study. She will visit nest sites on one or two days in the spring and one or two days in the summer. If you have bluebirds nesting on your property and need some help seeing any bands on their legs, please let us know and we will include you on the photographer's list.

Happy spring!

Raylene Gordin

ASC Board Elections

REMINDER- Audubon Society of Corvallis will be holding its annual election for the Board of Directors at the next regular general meeting, on May 17. Please refer to the April Chat for the slate of candidates. If anyone else wishes to run for an office or nominate someone to do so, please contact Karan Fairchild alderspr@peak.org.

Karan Fairchild

Field Notes

3/23/12-4/26/12

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.

April brought near-average temperatures and precipitation, abundant flowers, insects and unfurling leaves to our area. It was a month of transition, with birds both arriving and departing our area. By the middle of the month, birders were detecting new species arriving almost daily, but wintering birds such as Ruby-crowned Kinglets and Varied Thrushes became scarce.

Locations: Finley = William L. Finley National Wildlife Refuge, Ankeny = Ankeny National Wildlife Area, EEW = E.E. Wilson Wildlife Area, Philomath STP = Philomath sewage treatment ponds, Monmouth STP = Monmouth sewage treatment ponds, TWG/SP = Talking Water Gardens/Simpson Park in Albany, Stewart Lake = pond at Hewlett-Packard campus in Corvallis

Observers: Amber Beck (ABk), Austin Booth (AB), Don Boucher (DB), Pam Comeleo (PCo), Randy Comeleo (RCo), Barbara Dolan (BD), Woody Fitzgerald (WF), John Gatchet (JGt), Joel Geier (JG), Julie Gibson (JGb), Susan Hatlevig (SH), Hendrik Herlyn (HH), Amy Hill (AH), Ken Hilton (KH), Frank Kolwicz (FK), Dave Mellinger (DM), Lisa Millbank (LM), Mark Nikas (MN), Pam Otley (PO), Jim Philipson (JP), Bill Proebsting (BP), Holly Reinhard (HR), Lee Rengert (LR), Marilyn Rengert (MR), Doug Robinson (DR), Em Scattaregia (ESc), Steve Seibel (SS), Jamie Simmons (JS), Evan Smouse (ESm), Margaret Stephens (MS), Brandon Wagner (BW), Will Wright (WW)

Enormous flocks of **Greater White-fronted Geese** began passing over Corvallis day and night in late April on their way back to their far northern breeding areas. A **Snow Goose** was among the large flocks of **Cackling** and **Canada Geese** at Ankeny 4/5 (BD), and another was at Finley 4/8 (SH). A white goose that was either a Snow or Ross's was seen on Hwy 34 between Corvallis and Albany 4/22 (AB). Although **Tundra Swans** were moving out of the area, there were still 52 in a field S of Halsey 4/1 (PO). A male **Eurasian Wigeon** visited the **American Wigeon** flock at Bruce Starker Arts Park duck pond in Corvallis 3/26 (LM). There were 2 **Canvasbacks** at the Diamond Hill Rd wetlands E of Harrisburg 4/1 (PO), and 2 females were the last ones noted at Stewart Lake 4/5 (JS). A female **Common Goldeneye** was at Philomath STP 4/15 (WW). While the large concentrations of most species of ducks and geese were on their way out, **Cinnamon Teals** were arriving in marshes all over the area. **Northern Shovelers** were last noted at Stewart Lake 4/20 (JS), and the last female **Bufflehead** stayed until 4/16 (JS). 2 **Gadwall** were at TWG/SP 3/23 (DB). A pair of **Common Mergansers** on a gravel bar in Willamette Park in Corvallis appeared to have 2 very early ducklings 4/11 (JS).

Sooty Grouse were "hooting" in Dunn Forest by 4/6 (PCo, RCo), and were soon widely reported as they began calling in many forested areas. A **Mountain Quail** was calling on Tampico Ridge (W of EEW) on 4/18 (JG).

Double-crested Cormorants were in breeding plumage by 3/23 (DB), and most will depart our area soon.

An **American Bittern** flew out of the pond along Bruce Rd at Finley 4/8 (SH), and one was calling at Jackson-Frazier Wetland in Corvallis 4/17 (HH). A **Green Heron** was seen on a pond along Riverside Dr in Linn Co 4/10 (DB).

A single **Osprey** flew over downtown Corvallis 3/24 (LM, DB), and shortly thereafter many were seen reclaiming nests throughout the area. At least 30 **Bald Eagles** shared sheep carcasses with **Turkey Vultures** and Common Ravens ENE of Shedd 4/4 (SS). Most Bald Eagles were departing our area this period, with just a few locally breeding pairs remaining. A pair of **Red-tailed Hawks** SW of Lebanon grasped talons and began a whirling descent together, 3/31, a behavior that was presumably part of their courtship (SS). One was sitting in a nest across the river from Willamette Park 4/15 (LM, DB). One **Northern Goshawk** was seen at Ankeny 3/31 (JGt). A **Gyr Falcon** was seen at Finley 4/8 (WW), likely the same one from last period. **Merlins** seemed to be leaving the area this period, but one was still at Finley 4/8 (SH). The sole report of a **Peregrine Falcon** came from Finley, where it sliced through a flock of sandpipers 4/26 (BP).

Virginia Rails continued to call vigorously at marshes, while a few **Soras** began to show up. One came into full view in the Bruce Rd pond at Finley 4/5 (PO), and in the following weeks they were heard from many locations.

3 **Black-bellied Plovers** were in full breeding plumage at Ankeny 3/31 (JGt), and one was seen at the wetlands E of Finley 4/15 (WW). **Killdeer** were beginning to perform distraction displays at nesting territories.

Black-necked Stilts showed up at a wetland E of Finley in the first half of April; these occasionally make brief stops locally, and have sometimes nested N and S of our area.

Greater Yellowlegs began to show up at almost all area wetlands this period; 25 were seen at Finley 4/9 (HR), and 35-40 were there 4/12, along with 6-8 **Lesser Yellowlegs** (BP, KH). A **Solitary Sandpiper** at Turtle Flats at Finley 4/26 was the first to be reported (BP). A **Spotted Sandpiper** (presumably the same one that had overwintered there) was at TWG/SP 3/23 (DB), but one was also seen at Independence 3/27 (FK). 8 **Western Sandpipers** were at the wetlands E of Finley 4/15 (WW), and among the small flocks of **Least Sandpipers** on their way north was a single leucistic individual at Finley 4/24, with about half its plumage being white (MN). Sizable flocks of **Dunlin** moved through, with 64 at Ankeny 3/31 (JGt) and 30 at Finley 4/12 (BP, KH). A single **Long-billed Dowitcher** was with the yellowlegs at Finley 4/12 (BP). One **Long-billed Curlew** was seen on Finley Rd 4/23 (DR), a very uncommon find.

Numbers of **Band-tailed Pigeons** increased dramatically this period, with plenty showing up at feeders in forested areas.

A pair of **Barn Owls** had 3 newly-hatched nestlings at a farm near Ankeny 4/8 (BD). A fuzzy **Great Horned Owl** nestling was standing in a nest at EEW 4/2 (JG), and youngsters had presumably fledged in Avery Park by 4/14 (WF). A **Northern Pygmy-Owl** was singing at Fitton Green Natural Area 4/18 (RCo, PCo). **Barred Owls** in McDonald Forest were calling, sounding like “a circus of apes, dogs, owls, and monkeys” on 4/3 (JGb). A **Western Screech-Owl** called in Willamette Park in Corvallis 4/22 (JS), a spot where they seem to nest annually.

The first report of a **Vaux’s Swift** came from Independence on 4/9 (BW), but no more were reported until another single was seen over Corvallis 4/17 (LM, DB).

An **Anna’s Hummingbird** was on a nest in Avery Park 4/7 (LM, DB), and a fledgling was reported at EEW 4/25, which is probably the first record of a successful nest there (BP, KH, JP). A female **Rufous Hummingbird** was collecting nest material in Avery Park 4/7 (LM, DB), and one had a nearly-finished moss nest in Willamette Park 4/15 (LM, DB). A male **Calliope Hummingbird** was an unusual visitor to a

hummingbird feeder in SW Corvallis 4/21 (WW); likely just passing through before making his way to the foothills and then on to higher elevations.

One **Lewis’s Woodpecker** was still being reported from Finley 4/3 and 4/21, where two were overwintering (BP). A male Yellow-shafted **Northern Flicker** was at EEW 4/2, and a male Red-shafted/Yellow-shafted intergrade was there 4/16 (JG). A **Hairy Woodpecker** showed up at Stewart Lake 4/12, one of only a few sightings at that location in 15+ years (JS).

A **Olive-sided Flycatcher** showed up at EEW 4/18, which is a somewhat early date for these migrants (JG). **Hammond’s Flycatchers** began to show up at EEW 4/23 (JG), along with some possible Dusky Flycatchers that are very difficult to distinguish visually. **Pacific-slope Flycatchers** were calling in the forest in the Coast Range foothills SW of Philomath 4/23 (DB, LM). **Black Phoebes** were regularly reported from numerous wetland locations throughout the period, but one was at an unusual location at EEW 4/10 (JG), and two pairs were noted at the Rail Trail at Ankeny 4/11, where a nest seemed to be under construction (LR, MR). **Western Kingbirds** showed up at their usual location at the prairies of Finley 4/26 (BP).

A **Northern Shrike** continued at EEW 4/7 (PO). The first reported **Warbling Vireo** was singing at Pigeon Butte 4/23 (PO); but numbers of these passing through often peak in the second week of May. A **Cassin’s Vireo** was on the east slope of Pigeon Butte at Finley 4/21 (BP).

A **Western Scrub-Jay** welcomed sunny spring weather by engaging in a trance-like sunbathing behavior at the Corvallis BMX track 4/8 (LM, DB). 6 **Gray Jays** foraged on the ground at Beazell Memorial Forest 4/7 (RCo, PCo). **American Crows** were busy at work on their nests and could often be seen affectionately preening one another.

3 individuals of our endemic **Horned Lark** subspecies, the Streaked Horned Lark, were seen near traditional breeding sites at Finley 4/25 (ESm).

Purple Martins showed up in Dunn Forest 4/20, revisiting a snag in which they’ve nested in the past (PCo, RCo). There are only a few regular nesting sites locally. A large flock of **Cliff Swallows** arrived in downtown Corvallis 4/5 (HH), seemingly checking out their nesting colony under the Harrison St bridge. **Northern Rough-winged Swallows** were seen at Finley 4/20. Some **Tree and Violet-green Swallows** had already begun to claim nest boxes by the end of the period. A single **Barn Swallow** at Bald Hill Park on 4/1 was the first local report (ESc).

Newly-hatched **Black-capped Chickadee** nestlings were heard begging in the third week of April, and a pair of **White-breasted Nuthatches** were bringing moss into a nest box 4/11 (WF).

A **House Wren** showed up in the oak savanna at the Mill Hill trail at Finley 4/21 (BP). **Pacific Wrens** had largely moved back to breeding territories in forests.

Ruby-crowned Kinglets were seemingly everywhere in early and mid-April as they migrated to northern and mountain forest breeding areas, and had nearly disappeared by the end of the month. One little fellow performed a full display for a female at Starker Park in Corvallis 4/7 (LM, DB).

An uncommon migrant, a **Townsend’s Solitaire** made a quick stop at EEW before continuing on its way north 4/22 (JG). **Varied Thrushes** gave their mysterious songs early in the period, but had begun to move upslope and northward by the end of the period. Movement of **Hermit Thrushes** was apparent in mid- and late April, when one was heard giving a soft subsong 4/19 (LM). The large flocks of **American**



Yellow-headed Blackbird photo by Paul Rentz

Robins present throughout the winter had largely moved on, leaving the local breeding population.

American Pipits were departing the area, but 30 were noted at the Monmouth STP 4/5 (BW), and at least 60 were at Finley 4/12 (BP, KH).

While just a few had trickled in last period, **Orange-crowned Warblers** quickly increased in numbers this period. The first local report of a **MacGillivray's Warbler** came from the Coast Range foothills SW of Philomath 4/23 (DB, LM). A **Nashville Warbler** was moving with a flock of other warblers W of EEW 4/22 (JG), but were soon widely reported as a surge of migrants moved through. A **Common Yellowthroat** was reported from Finley 4/3 (BP), but they were soon singing from nearly every wetland and brushy area. The first reported **Wilson's Warbler** turned up near Bald Hill Park 4/20 (RCO), and a **Yellow Warbler** was reported from Ankeny 4/24 (MS). A huge movement of Audubon's and Myrtle **Yellow-rumped Warblers** became apparent this period. A male Audubon's was in his full breeding plumage by 3/25 (AH). **Townsend's Warblers** were singing by 4/7 (DB, LM). The first report of a **Black-throated Gray Warbler** from Corvallis was on 4/8 (WW), and over the next couple of weeks, their songs became a prominent feature of area woodlands.

A **Western Tanager** gave its distinctive *pitikit* call in Corvallis 4/25 (DM); we can expect a spectacular movement of these colorful birds next period.

The ASC field trip on 4/14 had a notably rare migrant—a **Brewer's Sparrow**. 5 **Chipping Sparrows** had arrived at the Bald Hill Park area by 4/8 (BP). 2 **Vesper Sparrows** showed up at Bald Hill Park 4/20 (RCO), and 1 was there the next day (HH). **Savannah Sparrows** were heard singing 4/9 (DB). Throughout most of the period, flocks of **White-crowned** and **Golden-crowned Sparrows** passed through, with scattered **White-throated Sparrows** accompanying them. A few **Lincoln's Sparrows** still remained in typical habitat, but many were moving through, with some turning up in unusual habitat such as yards in S Corvallis 4/21 (WF) and NW Corvallis 4/24 (JS). **Fox Sparrows** and some non-resident subspecies of **Song Sparrows** sang frequently as they migrated. Many **Dark-eyed Juncos** have left the valley for the mountain forests.

The first report of a **Black-headed Grosbeak** was one visiting a S Corvallis feeder on 2/22 (WF). A single, first-year male **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** showed up at a feeder in W Linn Co. in the first week of April, a notably rare occurrence. The first **Lazuli Bunting** appeared in the Scio area 4/26 (ABk).

Yellow-headed Blackbirds were noted at the Bruce Rd pond at Finley 4/8 (PO).

While scattered flocks were numerous at the end of March,

the annual arrival of hordes of **Evening Grosbeaks** on Corvallis and surrounding areas (especially the OSU campus) was underway by early April. These joined large flocks of **American Goldfinches** and **Pine Siskins** congregating in town. About a dozen **Red Crossbills** made a brief stop in SW Corvallis 4/22 (LM).



Rose-breasted Grosbeak photo by Robert Heald

Please post your reports to midvalleybirding.org, send them to lisaaves@peak.org, or leave a message at 541-753-7689 by 6/28/12.

– Lisa Millbank

Spring Migratory Bird Count

The 2012 Spring Migratory Bird Count for Benton County is scheduled for **Sunday, May 13th**. The North American Migration Count (NAMC) is like the Christmas Bird Count, but with a few twists. The area is not a 15-mile diameter circle but an entire county. The big twist is the timing: unlike Christmas Bird Counts, which are spread over several weeks, this count is done in Oregon over a single weekend.

Among the goals of the NAMC are:

- To have fun.
- To obtain a “snapshot” of the process of spring and fall migration.
- To obtain information on the abundance and distribution of each species.

In Oregon, the East Cascades Audubon Society coordinates the event and there is no fee to participate.

The count has been designed so that it is outside everyone's house, and not limited to defined circles. After all, migratory birds are everywhere and should be of concern to everyone. But you should remember to count all the birds (not just migrants). Participation by ALL birders, irrespective of skill or style, is encouraged. So whether you just count the birds in your yard, visit a favorite spot for an hour or two or spend the entire day birding, I would appreciate a report from you. Please provide a count for each bird seen listed by location (this way, I can amalgamate counts from the same location such as Cabell Marsh, Philomath Sewage Pond, etc.). Also provide the amount of time spent birding and mileage broken down by method of transportation (i.e. foot, car, bicycle, etc.).

If possible, please let me know ahead of time if you plan to participate. Also feel free to ask me any questions. I can be contacted at marciafcutler@comcast.net or 541-752-4313.

Marcia F. Cutler

Grant Success

Hearty congratulations! The OSU Folk Club Thrift Shop Foundation approved a grant of \$613 toward the purchase of bird anti-collision window decals, videos for education events, and a bluebird nesting box kit. Fred Ramsey deposited the \$613 in the bank and credited the Conservation Committee.

Fred Ramsey

Wildlife Art

Longtime ASC member Leslie Green will exhibit her recent ceramic sculpture series at The Arts Center, Corvallis, June 1 - July 14. Opening reception Thursday, June 7, from 5:30 - 7:30 pm. The work honors contemporary large predators in the style of prehistoric cave art. <http://lesliegreenart.com/>

Leslie Green

Conservation Report Voluntary Compliance?

National Audubon recently (Mar. 23) supported the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in an advisory committee decision to recommend voluntary guidelines for wind power companies. The White House hailed the committee work with industry as a win for both sides. But is it? As with all decisions that have the potential to gain or lose millions of dollars, and in this case, give industry a 30-year permit exempting them from legal penalty regarding eagle kills, we need to read the fine print and try to estimate the long-term effects.

While the advisory panel had wonderful representation from conservation organizations, such as Audubon, Defenders of Wildlife, Bat Conservation International, tribal groups, and The Nature Conservancy, the key words everyone is looking at are “voluntary guidelines”. There is no question that the committee went over this issue with a fine-toothed comb, exploring all of the current problems known to occur with wind development, and their recommendations and suggestions as how to mitigate concerns are excellent. But will industry comply?

The Wind Turbine Guidelines Advisory Committee (WTGAC) forwarded their document to be reviewed by White House advisors, eventually to end up on Secretary of Interior, Ken Salazar’s desk. The WTGAC group was warned that their work was only a recommendation and that any part, or all of it might be dismissed by those who were to see it. In a short 19 days, Salazar made a public announcement that the “voluntary guidelines” would be implemented immediately.

Now comes the hard part: compliance. Will the wind turbine industry follow through? How will we know? Is someone monitoring implementation of the recommendations? As we know, with voluntary guidelines, there is no enforcement mechanism. And what is in these guidelines that might make a wind turbine company nervous or uncomfortable about enforcing? Do these recommendations contain measures that will cost the company money?

I know; I’ve asked too many questions. But there they are. To answer some, yes, following the recommendations will cost the turbine companies money. One of the first considerations is siting. The WTGAC is asking wind power companies to take sensitive wildlife areas out of consideration for development. That will limit development areas (Steens Mt./Sage Grouse) and take possibilities off the board.

Companies will be asked to modify operations in response to problems that arise. That could be changing the design of the turbine (Altamont Pass) to lower the amount of kills, or limiting hours of activity. Monitoring the turbine sites for impacts is important, but this is a sword that cuts both ways for industry. Hiring biologists for monitoring and long-term research is costly and might prove that their operations are causing significant harm to wildlife.

In short, many of the guidelines will be irksome and costly to the wind industry. WTGAC anticipated this and is suggesting that incentives be offered to companies that follow through. Is this becoming more convoluted? Now we are offering industry incentives to voluntarily comply with suggested guidelines that no one is enforcing.

Someone, somewhere was shying away from the other possibility: Mandatory guidelines. I think someone was worried about a constant complaint that we have heard from some quarters that “all these regulations make it impossible to make a profit!” Yes, regulations can be onerous. But I don’t know a single successful business operation that doesn’t have rules. And rules that are not enforced are not followed.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is being saddled with most of the responsibility for implementing these recommendations. In this economy, where will they find the money? After all of the hard work over more than four years, I would not like to see the advisory committee’s efforts be in vain. But when I think back to the era of the railroad barons, and then to our current day Wall Street money grabs, my confidence in voluntary guidelines ebbs, and I feel the WTGAC document may be nothing more than window dressing.

Will Wright

ODFW Habitat Conservation Stamps

A New Way to Support Oregon’s Native Wildlife
Adopted by the 2011 Oregon State Legislature, the new Habitat Conservation Stamp allows Oregonians to purchase an annual stamp to benefit conservation of Oregon’s native species and habitats. Revenue will be used to fund habitat conservation projects linked to the Oregon Conservation Strategy. The Oregon Conservation Strategy is a blueprint for conservation of the state’s native fish and wildlife and their habitats. It provides information on at-risk species and habitats, identifies key issues affecting them, and recommends actions.

In February 2012 the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife held an art contest to design Oregon's first Habitat Conservation Stamp. All entries were required to feature one of the fish or wildlife species identified in the Oregon Conservation Strategy in its respective Strategy habitat. Eighty-six entries submitted by artists from across the country were evaluated by a panel comprised of a Fish and Wildlife Commissioner and four citizens selected by ODFW's Director. The winning entry was a beautiful painting of a singing Western Meadowlark in a Willamette Valley grassland submitted by Sara Stack of North Bend.



Habitat Conservation Stamps sell for \$40 a year and include a free ODFW Wildlife Area Parking Pass (a \$22 value). In addition to the collectable stamp and parking pass, you will also receive a window decal! Stamps are available for purchase at ODFW license sales agents and ODFW offices that sell licenses and online at: www.dfw.state.or.us/conservationstrategy/habitat_conservation_stamp.asp

Habitat Conservation Stamps will not be available until June 2012 but you can purchase them now and ODFW will mail you your stamp in June. Your ODFW Wildlife Area Parking Permit will be mailed to you within 10 days of purchasing the stamp.

Take advantage of this opportunity to show ODFW that you support conservation of Oregon's native wildlife species and their habitats! Buy a Habitat Conservation Stamp now and you can have your parking permit in time for the E.E. Wilson Chat-o-Rama!

If you would like more information on the Oregon Conservation Strategy go to:

www.dfw.state.or.us/conservationstrategy/

For questions about the Oregon Conservation Strategy or the Habitat Conservation Stamp contact

Meg Kenagy, Oregon Conservation Strategy Communications Coordinator, meg.b.kenagy@state.or.us, (503) 947-6021.

Meg Kenagy

Board Meeting Minutes

Summary

April 12, 2012

1. The Board voted unanimously to sign on to a letter to Congress, written by American Bird Conservancy, supporting mandatory rather than voluntary guidelines for the siting of wind farms.
2. The Board authorized a payment of \$100 toward Kids Day for Conservation.
3. If the Bluebird Trail's income falls short of expenses this year, the Board voted to cover those expenses from the General Fund.
4. The Oregon Audubon Council meeting will be held in Salem May 18-20. The Board voted to reimburse expenses for two Board members of ASC to attend this meeting.

The May Board of Directors Meeting will be held at Hesthavn at 7 pm on May 10th. Any ASC member is welcome to attend.

Linda Campbell

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 meeting location.

Next Board Meeting: May 10, 2012, 7 pm at Hesthavn, 8590 NW Oak Cr Dr., Corvallis

Welcome New Members

Welcome to our new ASC members –

Martha Clemons & Charlie Miller

John & Teri Enbring

Amy & Steve Hill

Laura Nolan

Judith Rickard

Carlie Trajic.

Suzanne Ortiz

Contributors to the Chat

Dave Mellinger, Bill Proebsting, Don Boucher, Lisa Millbank, Susan Atkisson, Lori McGovern, Raylene Gordin, Karan Fairchild, Marcia Cutler, Fred Ramsey, Leslie Green, Will Wright, Meg Kenagy, Linda Campbell, and Suzanne Ortiz.

Chat Articles

The *Chat* editors welcome monthly articles from all members of the Audubon Society of Corvallis. Please submit articles to the *Chat* editor by the 4th Thursday of the month. Always submit text using Microsoft Word.

Anne Schroder, Chat Editor

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www.audubon.corvallis.or.us

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volunteerasc@gmail.com

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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

- May 10 May Board Meeting, 7 pm at Hesthavn, 8590 NW Oak Cr Dr., Corvallis
- May 12 Half-day Field Trip, Willamette Park and Avery Park
- May 12 Hesthavn Tour, 10 am
- May 13 Spring Migratory Bird Count, Benton County
- May 19 Hesthavn Work Party, 9-12 pm
- May 17 General Meeting & Board Elections, 7 pm. 1st Presbyterian Church, Corvallis
- May 27 Bicycle Birding Field Trip, E.E. Wilson Chat-o-rama – north of Adair Villiage
- June 7 Leslie Green Wildlife Art Reception, The Arts Center, 5:30-7:30 pm
- June 28 Articles & Field Notes deadline for Summer CHAT



Chipping Sparrow photo by Matt Lee

The Chat is published 10 times a year by the Audubon Society of Corvallis, PO Box 148, Corvallis OR 97339. Annual ASC memberships are \$25 for an individual, \$35 for a family, \$15 for a student. Chat-only subscriptions (email delivery only) are \$15.

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