



# Audubon Society of Corvallis the **CHAT**

September 2013

VOL. 43

#1

## General Meeting

Thursday, Sept. 19, 7:00-8:30 pm  
First Presbyterian Church, 8th and Monroe

### California Condors In The Pacific NW



Susan Haig and Jesse D'Elia.  
Photo by USFWS

upon a book, *California Condors of the Pacific Northwest*, that she published this spring with her graduate student, Jesse D'Elia. The book will comprise the introduction to D'Elia's Ph.D. thesis. It describes steps that could be taken to return this

To begin this year's program, we are pleased to present Dr. Susan M. Haig, speaking on California Condors in the Pacific Northwest. Sue, a past president of ASC, is a supervisory wildlife ecologist with the U.S. Geological Survey, and she holds a professorship in the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife at OSU. She is currently serving as President of the American Ornithologists' Union. Sue's talk will be based

majestic bird to its former territories in the Pacific Northwest. Please come on September 19 to our first 2013-2014 chapter meeting and welcome back our own Sue Haig.

### See you there!

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 Chris Mathews at [mathewsc2@comcast.net](mailto:mathewsc2@comcast.net) or 541-754-1172.



California Condor  
Photo by USFWS Pacific Southwest Region

### Directions

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

Chris Mathews

## Field Trip Schedule

### Local Monthly Second Saturday Field Trips

Our Saturday morning local field trip meets the second Saturday of from September through June at the Benton Center parking area, behind the Cannery Mall, 777 NW 9th St., Corvallis, at 7:30 am.

This field trip is geared towards beginning birders and birders new to Oregon's mid-valley area. Contact Bill Proebsting at [proebstw@gmail.com](mailto:proebstw@gmail.com) or 541-752-0108 with questions. Check the Midvalley ListServ, [www.midvalleybirding.org/pipermail/birding/](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. Return to Benton Center by noon.

### Upcoming Field Trips

September 14. Ankeny NWR

Bill Proebsting

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## Bicycle Birding

Sunday, Sept. 22: 9am - Noon

### Benton County Fairgrounds, Bald Hill Park and Campus Way Covered Bridge—Corvallis

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

Meet at the Benton County Fairgrounds near the intersection of 53rd St. and Reservoir Ave. (map: <http://goo.gl/maps/a6nbi>)

*Don Boucher*

## President's Corner

### Welcome All, and Welcome Back!

If you're one of our members, you've likely not spent this splendid Oregon summer indoors watching television sports, or even tracking the latest conservation news. But as long as time passes and birds migrate, politics effect our environment.

We encourage you to be aware of both, and participate wherever you feel contributes to your own well-being, and also to your community's welfare. Our Chapter wants to keep you engaged in our mission, whether attending field trips, or monitoring nesting along the Bluebird Trail, helping maintain our Hesthavn property, or with our Education program.

Beyond participation, we encourage you to share your knowledge and experience. Consider leading a hike or visit to a place you'd like to share with others, or presenting a course, or even a single class, with others. We likely have a way to support your interest, because we already offer field trips, and education classes, and have a spot on the map and the resources to help you make something happen.

Even if you'd like to bring a speaker to Corvallis on a pressing issue, we "have an app for that" as well: on the back of each *CHAT* newsletter, you'll find a list of people you can contact in your area of interest.

We look forward to seeing you at many of our upcoming regular speaker presentations, and at the many conservation related events our community hosts. Thank you for your participation!

*Jim Fairchild*

## Hesthavn News

Thank you to all who have been volunteering their labor at our wonderful Oak Creek nature center. Hesthavn could not continue without significant maintenance effort. Ray Drapek has put in years of effort, and should get a medal for all his hard work. Many others have quietly done their share, and we thank them all.

The new bridge is beautiful and is used daily.

### Hesthavn Work Parties

Fall work parties will be announced at the members meeting on Sept. 19th. As the long summer has produced lots of vegetation, many clean up chores such as mowing, trimming, and alien weed removal will be waiting for any who want to help.

*Ray Drapek*

## Hesthavn Education News

While some of the summer day camps did not take place due to lack of sufficient enrollment, Hesthavn continues to be an ideal location for a variety of education activities. One such opportunity is coming up in September. I have been in contact with Megan from Salmon Watch, and she has asked us if we would be willing to allow them to conduct a training for volunteers at Hesthavn. The training would be on September 22nd from 9 to 1, and would consist of various stations—the training is for volunteers that will then lead students through the same basic rotations. There will be someone on hand to talk about salmon and salmon biology, a riparian area walk and a macro-invertebrate collection station.

*Michelle Shula*

## Conservation Corner

### Forest Service Caught With Their Hands in the Cookie Jar—Again

It is a sad statement when the federal agency entrusted with caring for our forests sidesteps the law, cuts down protected trees, and then tries to cover their hiniies with extremely dubious excuses.

Last April Forest Service employees under the direction of Robin McAlpin, engineer for the Powers Ranger District, were told they could cut down old growth trees as tall as 238 feet in an area known to be occupied by threatened Marbled Murrelets during their nesting season. Although the Forest Service claimed the trees were a hazard to people in the campground, earlier emails between McAlpin and District Ranger Jessie Berner suggest another plan was afoot.

McAlpin wrote to Berner about the need for a refresher course for fallers who cut big trees, and suggested Sunshine Bar as the site.

The Forest Service is required by law to get a permit from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service under such circumstances, but they did not even know about the cutting until an environmental group from Port Orford reported it to them in July. USFW instigated an inquiry and indicated that they were rather displeased with the cutting, but it seems that the only result will be a stern finger-shaking, and the Forest Service will continue on their merry way.

### Other important conservation issues in the spotlight right now include:

- Whopper II: the Wyden/DeFazio forest plan that will topple old growth, fragment the remaining habitat even more, and put OUR public land under who-knows-whos management. DeFazio's plan would double the current cutting on the BLM's O&C lands
- The future of the famous hummingbird place in Patagonia, Arizona, the Paton's house. Arizona Audubon will be able to purchase the property with your generous donation. [www.abcbirds.org/paton/](http://www.abcbirds.org/paton/)
- Continuing efforts by industry to run coal and liquefied gas through either populated areas (health hazards, including the burning of fuel in China which is blown right back to the U.S.) or through our last remaining old growth forest.
- On Aug. 22 a judge allowed releases of water from the

Trinity River to try to avert a massive salmon kill-off like the one that occurred in 2002 with over 33,000 dead fish. No word yet on whether wildlife refuges in the Klamath Basin will get a drop of water, severely threatening hundreds of thousands of migrating and overwintering waterfowl.

*Will Wright*

## Sacrifice of the Commons: O&C Lands to be Given Away

Members of the Oregon Congressional delegation, led by Rep. Peter DeFazio and Sen. Ron Wyden, have developed bills to hand a large portion of these lands into a trust—a privatization of public lands. This legislation will likely move through to passage as early as this month, without sustained pressure to require that all federal environmental laws, like the Clean Water Act and the Endangered Species Act, remain applicable to all actions on these lands, and that citizen right to redress be maintained.

In 1866, the federal government granted Oregon half of a 40 mile wide swath of landscape in western Oregon to encourage the development of an Oregon to California railroad. Eventually, the unclaimed (and lower value) land in that checkerboard forested landscape was returned to the U.S., now known as revested O&C Lands.

These federal forests are now managed by the Bureau of Land Management, under some different laws than U.S. Forest Service lands. Some alignment of those managements occurred with the adoption of the Northwest Forest Plan nearly two decades ago, after it became painfully apparent that sustained yield timber management on both ownerships was not sustaining many other natural resources, as also required by law. Clean water, fish, wildlife, plants, terrestrial and aquatic habitats were being adversely and sometimes irreversibly altered.

This current Forest Plan now provides for more equitable management of resources, even if some land managers still find adhering to laws troublesome, and find themselves again successfully challenged in court. Western Oregon counties have all gained from the consumption of irreplaceable high value old-growth timber.

Private old-growth was liquidated more quickly, but from Lane south, counties have prospered more recently from federal timber extraction. They have become more dependent on federal largess, to the extent that county property taxation no longer provides for even essential public services on private lands. Sen. Wyden's federal payments bill—which gives federal revenue to these counties to make up for anticipated timber revenues—has only extended that dependence.

Conservationists should be alarmed that our Congressional representatives now offer up more federal resources in a belief that sustainable forests, and even sustainable timber production, can only be achieved by feeding more forested landscape to an industry that requires ever more landscape to prove itself sustainable. Please contact your Congressional representatives!

*Jim Fairchild, President*

## Field Notes

5/23/13 -8/29/13

The general area covered by the field notes is a rough circle centered on Corvallis, extending just past Lebanon, Monroe/Harrisburg, Marys Peak

and the nearby Coast Range, and Monmouth/Dallas.

Spring migration was wrapping up when this period began. While June was fairly cool, the remainder of the summer was warmer and drier than average, affecting area wetlands. Shorebird migration was well underway in August, and at the end of the period, birders were noticing movements of songbirds and waterfowl as well.

Location abbreviations: Ankeny = Ankeny National Wildlife Refuge, EEW = E.E. Wilson Wildlife Area, Finley = William L. Finley National Wildlife Refuge, LSNA = Luckiamute State Natural Area, Philomath STP = Philomath sewage treatment ponds

Observer abbreviations: Bob Altman (BA), Don Boucher (DB), Howard Bruner (HB), Randy Campbell (RCa), Pam Comeleo (PCo), Randy Comeleo (RCo), Alan Contreras (AC), Jenna Curtis (JC), Trish Daniels (TD), Barbara Dolan (BD), Jim Fairchild (JFa), Karan Fairchild (KFa), Jeff Fleischer (JFI), Andrea Foster (AF), Mary Garrard (MG), Joel Geier (JG), Roy Gerig (RG), Jeff Harding (JH), Hendrik Herlyn (HH), Oscar Harper (OH), Rich Hoyer (RH), Tyler Hicks (THi), Tristen Hynes (THy), Tyler Hicks Jarod Jebousek (JJ), Tim Johnson (TJ), Carol Karlen (CK), Carolyn Kindell (CKi), Erik Knight (EK), Frank Kolwicz (FK), Peter List (PL), Lisa Millbank (LM), Molly Monroe (MM), Russ Namitz (RN), Kellie Newman (KN), Pam Otley (PO), Paul Rentz (PR), Doug Robinson (DR), Jamie Simmons (JS), Paul Sullivan (PS), Brandon Wagner (BW), Will Wright (WW)

Although our resident breeding “Western” **Canada Geese** and **Mallards** were common, other waterfowl were sparse throughout the summer, but numbers were beginning to increase in August. 62 **Wood Ducks** were at Philomath STP 8/14 (HH), and an impressive 31 **Gadwall** were at Ankeny 8/7 (TJ, BD). Early **American Wigeon** included 1 at Ankeny 8/7 (TJ, BD), 1 at Finley 8/11 (HH, OH, JC), and 4 at Philomath STP 8/14 (HH). There were 50 **Cinnamon Teal** at Ankeny 7/25 (TJ, BD).

**Blue-winged Teal** were reported multiple times from Ankeny in late May and June, which may indicate that they might have been breeding there or nearby. The final spring report of **Northern Shovelers** came from Ankeny 6/7 (TJ, BD), and so did the first report of a southbound migrant 8/7 (TJ, BD). More than 100 were at the Philomath STP by 8/28 (DR). 8 **Green-winged Teal** at Ankeny 7/25, and 12 **Northern Pintail** there on 7/10 represented unusual summer sightings (TJ, BD). A female **Ring-necked Duck** had 8 little ducklings at Ankeny 7/14 (AC, THy); this is an uncommon breeder in our area, but adults were reported occasionally throughout the summer from many wetlands. Broods of **Common** and **Hooded Mergansers** were spotted along rivers and in wetlands, respectively. The last spring report of a **Ruddy Duck** was at Philomath STP 6/18 (HH, OH, RH, THy), but 2 were back at the same spot 8/15 (PS, CKa).

1 **Ring-necked Pheasant** was reported from the Scio area in June (JH). Two families of **Mountain Quail** were seen on Marys Peak 7/28 (DR). **California Quail** had taken up residence at the community gardens at Starker Arts Park in Corvallis, and **Wild Turkey** hens led their half-grown young through the brush at Bald Hill Farm 8/24 (DB, LM). There were 32 **Pied-billed Grebes** at Ankeny 8/7 (TJ, BD), and cute, stripy youngsters could be seen following their parents on many marshes throughout the summer. The first reported **Eared Grebe** turned up at Philomath STP 8/8 (WW).

20 **American White Pelicans** soared over the SW end of McDonald Forest 6/15 (DB, LM). They were frequently reported from Finley throughout August, and from Ankeny 8/29 (JH). One **Double-crested Cormorant** seen on the Willamette R near Corvallis 8/11 may have cut its coastal summer vacation a bit short (LM).

8 **American Bitterns** at Ankeny 8/20 was a very good number (TJ, BD); 3 bitterns were observed walking around in the open at Cabell Marsh at Finley 8/27 (TD). Juvenile **Great Blue Herons** were seen out of the nest as early as 7/4, but some youngsters were still “clattering” in their nests along the Willamette R 8/15 (LM). 12 **Great Egrets** were reported from Ankeny 8/8 (TJ, BD) and will become more common and widespread through the end of summer and into early fall. An adult **Green Heron**

and a youngster it was looking after were seen at Ankeny 8/8 (TJ, BD). **Turkey Vultures** could be seen taking advantage of the rodent carnage created by harvesting hay, grass seed and grain crops. **Osprey** were raising young throughout the summer, and attempting to keep the fish they'd caught from **Bald Eagles**. A **White-tailed Kite** was seen at the Finley prairie 6/2 (WW). A **Northern Harrier** nest with 6 nestlings was found on a site near Philomath 6/9 (JG). A juvenile **Sharp-shinned Hawk** was seen in SW Corvallis in late July, and 2 families with young were along the Willamette R in mid-August (LM). Juvenile **Cooper's Hawks** were squealing as they ventured out of their nests in late July. A **Red-shouldered Hawk** nest in SW Corvallis was successful, with at least one youngster leaving the nest by late June (DB, LM). **Red-tailed Hawk** youngsters also fledged this period. **Soras** were still calling frequently through July, and **Virginia Rail** chicks were observed by quite a few lucky birders in May and June. **American Coots** were beginning to show up in greater numbers at the end of the period. 2 **Semipalmated Plovers** were at Cabell Marsh at Finley 8/5 (WW). **Killdeer** numbers should build in September and October. 2 **Black-necked Stilts** were very uncommon visitors to Ankeny 6/7 (TJ, BD), and they remained there for a few days. Very rare visitors to the Willamette Valley, 3 **Willetts** showed up at Cabell Marsh at Finley 8/5 (WW), and one of these birds may have shown up at Philomath STP 8/8 (WW). Willetts were seen at Finley for a few days. 4 **Greater Yellowlegs** showed up at Ankeny 7/1 (RG), perhaps very early southbound migrants. Reports were sporadic in July, but became more regular in August. 1 **Lesser Yellowlegs** was at Cabell Marsh at Finley 8/11 (HH, JC, OH), and 7 were at Ankeny 8/20 (TJ, BD). A pair of **Spotted Sandpipers** were caring for 4 chicks at Peoria in late June (RCa). 8 **Western** and 1 **Least Sandpiper** at Philomath STP 7/6 (WW) were the earliest report, but by 8/28 there were more than 200 peeps (70% Westerns) at the same site (DR). 2 **Baird's Sandpipers** were reported from Philomath STP 8/12 (HB), and 1 **Semipalmated Sandpiper** was at Ankeny 7/25 (TJ, BD). 1 **Pectoral Sandpiper** was at Philomath STP 7/23 (WW), and 2 were at Ankeny 8/20 (TJ, BD). The first **Long-billed Dowitcher** of the southbound migration was 1 at Ankeny 7/18 (JH), but by 8/7, there were 41 there (TJ, BD). Uncommon inland and difficult to distinguish visually from its Long-billed cousin, a **Short-billed Dowitcher** gave itself away by calling at Ankeny 7/27 (JH). A **Wilson's Snipe** at Ankeny 7/23 was the first one reported since virtually all of them left our area in the spring (RG). 2 **Red-necked Phalaropes** were still lingering at Philomath STP 5/27 (DR), but weren't reported again until 8/12, when one adult and 3 juveniles were there (HB). 4 **Wilson's Phalaropes** were seen at Ankeny 6/9 (TJ, BD) and appeared to be breeding there, as adults and juveniles were seen there through the summer. 8 were also seen at Finley 7/16 (HB). 1 **Red Phalarope** at Philomath STP 8/25 was a rare sighting (PO). 1 **Bonaparte's Gull** was reported from Philomath STP 8/20 (WW). A very rare sighting of a **Franklin's Gull** there on 7/28 may have been the second Benton County record (DR), and it stayed for several days. **California Gulls** showed up at Philomath STP 7/16 (HH) and varying numbers continued there for most of the remainder of the period. A few unusual birds "termed" up at Philomath STP: A **Forster's Tern** made a quick flyby 5/27 (DR), 5 **Black Terns** circled over the ponds 6/27 (WW), and 2 **Caspian Terns** were hanging out with the gulls 8/12 (HB). Over 100 **Band-tailed Pigeons** crowded together on feeders in the foothills SW of Philomath 5/23, landing on one another's backs, up to three "levels" high (JFa). A mixed flock of about 45 **Mourning Doves** and a few **Eurasian-Collared Doves** were congregated on a steep riverbank near Buena Vista 8/13 (LM), possibly a source of minerals. A **Barn Owl** pair had 7 owlets in a barn at Las Brisas Organic Farm near Ankeny in June (TJ, BD). A pair of **Western Screech-Owls** gave a trilled duet at Riverside Landing between Corvallis and Albany 8/11, while their babies begged (LM). In downtown Albany, a pair of **Great Horned Owls** hooted together 8/10 (JF1). A young **Northern Pygmy-Owl** was perched in a Douglas-fir in Dunn Forest 8/18 (RCo, PCo).

At least 3 **Common Nighthawks** were flying over Dunn Forest 7/28

(PCo, RCo), 4 or more were hunting over the Willamette/Santiam confluence at LSNA 8/12 (LM), and at least 3 "boomed" over a Willamette R island NW of Ankeny 8/13 (LM).

**Vaux's Swifts** began to gather into larger flocks at the end of the period, when 1200-1500 birds dropped into the Whiteside Theater chimney in Corvallis (MM, JJ).

Juvenile male **Anna's Hummingbirds** were practicing their singing and display diving, often diving at any other bird that caught their attention. During this period, male **Rufous Hummingbirds** departed for higher elevations before eventually working their way south, while females and youngsters remained relatively common until the end of the period. A very uncommon summer visitor to Corvallis was 1 female or juvenile **Calliope Hummingbird** on 8/16 (HH, OH).

A family of 5 **Belted Kingfishers** sat together on a log at Peoria 6/20 (RCa).

What was likely a **Lewis's Woodpecker** turned up in Peoria in early June (RCa). An **Acorn Woodpecker** fed from a bird feeder in Independence 6/17 (BW). 3 **Red-breasted Sapsuckers** and a pair of **Hairy Woodpeckers** were at LSNA 6/9 (HH, OH, KN, THY). Vocal **Pileated Woodpeckers** seemed to outnumber **Downy Woodpeckers** and **Northern Flickers** at McDonald Forest 8/18 (LM, DB).

Young **American Kestrels** begged along the Willamette River 8/11 (LM). **Peregrine Falcons** (mostly immatures) were reported around Ankeny with surprising regularity for the summer months, and 2 were seen 8/8 (TJ, BD).

An **Olive-sided Flycatcher** was found near Brandis Park in Corvallis 6/27 (MG), and at Dunn Forest 5/25 & 7/28 (PCo, RCo). **Western Wood-Pewee** parents guarded their fledglings against any and all other birds with plenty of angry bill-snapping. 3 **Willow Flycatchers** sang on a hillside just W of EEW 6/5 (JG), and a **Hammond's Flycatcher** was on Marys Peak 7/14 (WW). The sharp little whistles of **Pacific-slope Flycatchers** could be heard in wooded areas until mid-August. The population of **Black Phoebes** seemed to continue to increase, with many reports of adults and juveniles. An **Ash-throated Flycatcher** called from Peterson Butte near Lebanon 5/31 (JG, BA); it is a common species in SW Oregon, but one that rarely makes it to the Willamette Valley. 3 **Western Kingbirds** were at the base of Ward Butte 5/31 (JF1, RN), in addition to a few other sites where individuals were found.

**Cassin's, Warbling and Hutton's Vireos** were at OSU's Soap Creek Ranch, along with a **Red-eyed Vireo** 6/5 (JG). Another singing Red-eyed Vireo was found at LSNA 6/4 (CKi), and continued for several days before he apparently moved on.

**Gray Jays** were noted at relatively low elevations, including Mill Hill at Finley 5/26 (EK), Mulkey Hill W of Corvallis 6/4 (PCo, RCo) and nearby Fitton Green 6/9 (OH, JS). **Western Scrub-Jays** and **Steller's Jays** were making the most of the Beaked Hazelnut crop in late summer, and were beginning to turn their attention toward acorns, walnuts and other foods for storage by the end of the period. Curious **American Crow** fledglings were exploring the world outside the nest in late June. **Common Raven** parents collected sweet cherries to feed their screaming babies 6/25 (KFa).

Our endemic "Streaked" **Horned Larks** were found at a number of locations during their breeding season, including near LSNA 6/6 (LM), at Finley 6/10 (WW), just N of Independence 6/14 (BW), and near Philomath STP 7/22 (WW).

**Purple Martins** were uncommon but reported from numerous areas this year. 14 were at Finley 5/26 (EK) and 14 were at Ankeny 5/30 (JH). 2 **Bank Swallows** showed up at Philomath STP 5/27 (DR) for a brief visit during migration. An eroded bluff on the Willamette R, right at the edge of Ankeny, held hundreds of **Northern Rough-winged Swallow** nest holes (LM). At least 150 **Cliff Swallows** were nesting under the I-5 bridge at Jefferson. By the end of the period, **Barn Swallows** and **Violet-green Swallows** were congregating in huge flocks, and **Tree Swallows** were becoming scarcer as they started to move south.

A family of **Black-capped Chickadees** enjoyed nectar from the hummingbird feeder in a Monmouth yard 7/20 (FK). A couple of

wandering **Chestnut-backed Chickadees** made a surprise summer visit to a Corvallis yard 7/22, where they are not usually seen until winter (WW). A **Bushtit** was seen still feeding nestlings at Finley 7/14 (PO). Juvenile **White-breasted** and **Red-breasted Nuthatches** were following their parents and begging in late June. **Brown Creeper** fledglings were begging in early July.

Young male **Bewick's** and **House Wrens** practiced their singing throughout late summer, often "babbling" softly from deep within a blackberry thicket. A fledgling **Pacific Wren** was hopping around in the open at McDonald Forest 8/18 (LM, DB). **Marsh Wrens** had quieted dramatically by the end of the period, in contrast to their nonstop spring singing.

A report of a **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** from Marys Peak in late July might indicate nesting or a bird that has already wandered away from its breeding areas in the Cascades. **Golden-crowned Kinglets** had begging fledglings in July on Marys Peak.

We were fortunate to have so many **Western Bluebirds** using nest boxes this summer, mostly due to the commitment of ASC's Bluebird Trail volunteers. While the chorus of **Swainson's Thrushes** was just reaching its peak at the beginning of the period, but by late August, their calls could be heard at night as they flew southward. A late **Hermit Thrush** was still at Finley 5/26 (EK). A speckled juvenile **American Robin** was feeding independently at EEW 6/24 (JG). **Varied Thrushes** sang in nearby forested hills, and it won't be long until they return to suburban lawns.

Juvenile **Wrentits** on top of Bald Hill were still within their parents' territory 8/24 (LM, DB). **European Starlings** were raising second broods in June and July. **Cedar Waxwings** were courting and building nests at Jackson-Frazier Wetland 6/1 (LM, DB), and fledglings were begging in Corvallis 7/9 (LM).

Some downslope/southbound movement of warblers became apparent in late July, with many reports of **Wilson's Warblers** outside of breeding areas. Warblers were extremely active on Marys Peak 7/26, where Wilson's, **Hermit**, and **Orange-crowned Warblers** were joined by **Black-throated Gray**, **Yellow-rumped**, **MacGillivray's**, and 2 **Nashville Warblers**. In addition, 2 **Townsend's Warblers** showed up, indicating that these may have bred in the Coast Range (WW). **Common Yellowthroat** fledglings were still begging for food 8/12, but without much success (LM). **Yellow-breasted Chats** were still relatively easy to find at EEW, with 6 or more singing males. One turned up at Jackson-Frazier Wetland 6/1 (LM, DB) and was apparently still there 6/27 (AF). The biggest warbler surprise in our area was a male **Black-and-white Warbler** at Buell-Miller County Park E of Jefferson 6/16 (THi).

**Western Tanagers** were moving downslope in August, with calling birds showing up in yards where they hadn't been seen since spring migration. A pair of **Spotted Towhees** looked after their fledgling under a feeder in Corvallis 6/24 (PL). A nesting pair of **Chipping Sparrows** appeared to be taking advantage of some of the prairie restoration work done at LSNA this year (JG). A **Brewer's Sparrow** at Philomath STP 7/28 seemed to fit into the nearly annual trend of just one or two showing up at the end of summer (DR). OSU's Soap Creek Ranch had at least 12 male "Oregon" **Vesper Sparrows** singing, even more than Bald Hill Farm, another important site for this declining subspecies (JG). 50 **Savannah Sparrows** were at Philomath STP 8/14 (HH); likely a concentration of adults and young from the nearby fields. 14 male **Grasshopper Sparrows** were singing on a ranch near Brownsville 6/21 (BA), quite an amazing site for these very uncommon sparrows. A juvenile was seen at Ankeny 7/23 (RG). Young male **Song** and **White-crowned Sparrows** practiced their singing with unsteady voices. A few **Golden-crowned Sparrows** lingered until the very end of May before heading north, and we should expect the first southbound birds to show up sometime in mid-September.

**Dark-eyed Junco** fledglings were seen around 6/12 (JG). **Black-headed Grosbeaks** were already becoming scarce by the end of the period, with most adult males already gone. The same was true for male **Lazuli Buntings**.

A few **Yellow-headed Blackbirds** were reported from Ankeny

throughout the period, among the many **Red-winged** and **Brewer's Blackbirds** there. They were also reported from Finley 5/25 (PR), but seemed to have left that site as there were no further reports. White-crowned Sparrows were feeding their **Brown-headed Cowbird** "foster child" 6/5 (JG). **Western Meadowlarks** were found at their usual location at the Finley prairie, but also at Ankeny on several occasions. At least 3 young **Bullock's Orioles** climbed out of their "sock" nest and made their first flights 6/28 (RCa).

**House Finches** were still feeding young in Corvallis in the last weeks of August. **American** and **Lesser Goldfinches** enjoyed the bounty of Canada Thistle seed and the seeds of various tarweed species in August and September. **Evening Grosbeaks** were seen in the foothills SW of Philomath 5/23 (JFa) and on Marys Peak 7/14. **Red Crossbills** were still easily heard in the Corvallis area through the end of May and into June, but most reports thereafter were from higher elevations, along with most of the **Pine Siskins**.

Please post your reports to [midvalleybirding.org](http://midvalleybirding.org), send them to [lisaaves@peak.org](mailto:lisaaves@peak.org), or leave a message at 541-753-7689 by 9/26/13.

- Lisa Millbank

## Atop the Nestbox

The 2013 bluebird nesting season was blessed with mild weather for the duration. Preliminary results in Linn County show a 30% increase in the number fledged. Since the Benton County numbers are not yet available, we will have to wait and see if a similar bump was experienced.

Now is a good time to repair and replace nest boxes, before wet weather arrives. If you need replacement nest boxes, please contact Bev Clark at 541-753-4456 or [clark\\_bev9@gmail.com](mailto:clark_bev9@gmail.com).

I would like to thank all of the volunteers who continue to keep the bluebird trail successful, those who provide us with valuable information about our local birds, and those who assist the cause by providing appropriate nesting locations for Western Bluebirds.

Raylene Gordin

## Musical Nest Boxes: Fostering Bluebirds

The ASC Bluebird Trail banders and monitors occasionally come to the aid of nestling bluebirds when we inspect nest boxes during the breeding season. This year in Benton County we found a sequence of events within a short period of time that required fostering eight chicks into other nests with a better chance for their survival.

On 5/18/13 we found two very small chicks in a box (A) with five chicks at Finley National Wildlife Refuge. The nest was wet and the birds unkempt. The single male parent was unable to keep the nest clean, find enough food, and guard the box from invading swallows. We were unable to locate a suitable brood in any of the other active boxes on the trail in which to foster them.

The two went to Elsie Eltzroth's brooder to feed and keep warm where they gained strength and were beginning to act like healthy chicks. Now their best survival route would be a nest box.

On 5/28/13 we located a box (B) in south Philomath with only one chick. The adult pair was feeding but that nestling was too small to try and compete with two more mature chicks so

we exchanged it for the two chicks from box A and watched as the parents began to feed them. Box B chick was fostered into a nest box (C) on Lewisburg Road, where again there was only one small nestling being fed by two parents. Now there were two.

On 6/2/13 the “musical chairs” got into full flight. Home-owners on Arboretum Road discovered the male from their nest box (D) was dead in their yard. The female was also dead in the box with her live brood of four chicks.

We fed them overnight and decided to find a new home for them. We knew that we had two babies in box C. We decided that fostering in the four chicks from box D would put the smallest chick in box C at risk. When we fostered the four chicks into box C we removed the smallest chick and fostered it into a box (E) on Crescent Valley Dr. with 4 same size chicks and two parents.

Our efforts proved successful. All eight fostered nestlings and seven natural chicks fledged from their four “musical nest boxes”

Box monitors: A - Carroll DeKock ; B property - Debbie/ Jim Moum ; C property - Lori/Bob Dodds; D property - Jim/ Brenda Thorson & E property - Rita/Bill Snyder .

Point of interest: Our Bluebird Trail banding project operates under two permits: 1. Federal Bird Banding Permit from the United States Dept. of the Interior; and, 2. Scientific Taking Permit from the Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife.

#### **On public property we are labeling boxes with this message:**

THIS NESTBOX IS PART OF A SCIENTIFIC STUDY FOR AUDUBON SOCIETY OF CORVALLIS BLUEBIRD TRAIL. STATE AND FEDERAL LAWS PROHIBIT MOLESTING OR TAKING ANY NATIVE BIRD, ITS EGGS OR NEST. INFORMATION MAY BE REQUESTED AT: [WWW.AUDUBON.CORVALLIS.OR.US](http://WWW.AUDUBON.CORVALLIS.OR.US)

Benton/Polk County ASC Banders : Rita Snyder, Carole Steckley and Deb Savageau

*Rita Snyder*

## **In Memoriam**

### **Fraser Family Gives Memorial Donations to ASC Bluebird Trail**

Robert (Bob) Fraser and his wife Ina both passed away in the last six months. They began volunteering their services to the Audubon Society of Corvallis’ Bluebird Trail in 1987. They monitored Western Bluebird nest boxes on a weekly basis from March through August, maintained concise records, and assisted in banding the 12 day old nestlings found in boxes.

They began their fifteen years of service at the Noble Lone Star Ranch west of Philomath, climbing the steep hill weekly to check six or seven boxes, but from 1996 through 2002, they monitored at Dave and Margie Buchanan’s Tyee Winery south of Corvallis.

The data from the records, compiled with that from other volunteers on the Trail, were sent to USFWS Bird Banding Laboratory, the North American Bluebird Society, Cornell University, Western Bird Banding Association, and ASC.

Bob and Ina’s records provided material for ASC’s publications that set the Bluebird Trail apart from other bluebird

organizations. We do thank the Fraser family for their service and also their most generous memorial gift to the Trail! A special bluebird box, with a plaque dedicated to Bob and Ina Fraser, will be placed at Tyee Winery in their memory.

*Elsie Eltzroth*

*P.S. The Buchanan family has graciously received several beautiful boxes hand made by Fred Ramsey. Dave Buchanan was shown the preferred location of the box by Ina before she passed, and we have honored her request.*

*ASC Board*

## **Chat Book**

### **Rare Bird by Maria Mudd Ruth**

This second edition release updates the original story of the Marbled Murrelet as told by Ruth. Extensive research, including many interviews, take this story from tribal legends from the 1700’s to the present day quandary over forest protection. A delightful and informative read for birders and conservationists.

*Will Wright*

## **Board Meeting Summary**

### **ASC Meeting**

The summer ASC meeting took place at the estate of Jim and Karan Fairchild, who were very gracious hosts. A gorgeous summer afternoon gave happy partiers the opportunity to lounge in the shade of the locust trees or stroll the grounds and smell the flowers. The meeting was well attended, with about 35 pot-luckers bringing their favorite delicious foods.

New board members were greeted and some inquisitive attendees were encouraged to join in areas needing help and personnel slots that were open—such as Chat Editor. Details of board votes and action will be forthcoming.

*Will Wright*

## **North Santiam River Frontage Goes To Tribes**

### **Prime Fish and Wildlife Habitat to Be Preserved by Grand Ronde Tribes**

June 07, 2013 ([www.cbulletin.com](http://www.cbulletin.com)) A healthy future for what is “perhaps the finest relic of fish and wildlife habitat in the entire Willamette” river valley was guaranteed this week with the acquisition of 338 acres of land, and conveyance of that land to the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde for management and protection. Through a partnership between Western Rivers Conservancy, the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, Bonneville Power Administration and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, two miles of the North Santiam River frontage will be preserved near the base of what the Conservancy calls the “powerhouse of fish production” in the west-central Oregon’s Willamette basin. The acreage is located near Stayton, Ore., in the lower North Santiam.

The acreage has particular significance to the tribes, which have renamed the property “Chahalpam” (meaning “place of the Santiam Kalapuya people” in Kalapuyan). The tribes will serve as the land’s long-term conservation steward.

“This is the most significant tract of intact habitat along the

entire lower North Santiam River,” said Sue Doroff, Western Rivers Conservancy’s president, “and the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde are the perfect steward.” “The tribe has the natural resource expertise to care for this vital habitat and shares WRC’s vision to protect and restore this remarkable block of riverfront, forests and wetlands,” said Reyn Leno, tribal chairman.

Once proposed for gravel mining, the project lands include an extraordinary assemblage of riparian features, including 130 acres of floodplain forest, numerous winding side channels and 20 acres of wetlands, as well as a unique native upland prairie. The riparian features are important to Winter Steelhead, Spring Chinook, Pacific Lamprey, Oregon Chub and other species that inhabit the river. The wild winter steelhead, spring chinook salmon and chub are listed under the Endangered Species Act.

The property is also home to six species of concern: Pileated Woodpecker, Hooded Merganser, American Kestrel, Little Willow Flycatcher, Western Pond Turtle and Red-Legged Frog.

The conservation lands include wetlands, seven side channels and sloughs, and portions of Dieckman Creek, which is key side-channel habitat for salmon and steelhead. A 130-acre stand of mature black cottonwoods, big-leaf maples and red alders lines the river, and willows are commonplace. The property is adjacent to a parcel owned by the Bureau of Land Management and together they form the largest stand of riverine forest along a nine-mile stretch, from an ODFW-managed refuge downstream to an extensive forested area on private lands upstream.

The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde will monitor fish and wildlife habitat and develop a management plan for the land. The public will have an opportunity to provide input on the plan, which will be submitted to BPA for final approval.

The tribe plans to replant several farm fields with culturally important native species. The plan is to convert, over time, the 170 acres of agricultural land into ash-dominated forest with some patches of wet prairie interspersed. It’s a gorgeous piece of property, said Laura Tesler, Wildlife Mitigation coordinator for ODFW.

The North Santiam River drains a large portion of the central Oregon Cascades. It joins the South Santiam in west-central Oregon before flowing into the Willamette River roughly midway between Albany and Salem.

At one time the North Santiam produced about two-thirds of the Willamette River’s steelhead and a third of its spring chinook, but those runs have declined so steeply, primarily due to population growth and development in the Willamette Valley.

That development includes the building of dams that without fish passage facilities have long blocked access to upstream habitat. Passage solutions are now being studied and/or implemented at a number of the dams, include Big Cliff and Detroit on the North Santiam. The newly purchased habitat is located downstream of those two dams.

Most of the funding for the project, \$3.5 million in total, was provided by BPA through the Willamette Wildlife Habitat Agreement. The 15-year agreement, fashioned with the state of Oregon and signed in 2010, provides stable funding for wildlife habitat acquisitions that are expected to pay a debt in terms of wildlife habitat inundated because of the construction of federal dam on the Willamette River and tributaries.

When the agreement was struck, the negotiated total to mitigate for dam impacts was the protection/restoration of 26,537 acres. Nearly 10,000 acres had been protected by 2010, leaving a balance of 16,880 acres still owing on the ledger. BPA, which

markets power generated at federal Willamette hydro projects, pledged \$117.9 million to fund the acquisition/protection over the course of the agreement, 2011-2025. The federal Willamette River Basin Flood Control and Hydroelectric Project in the Willamette basin includes 13 multi-purpose dams and reservoirs as part of the Federal Columbia River Power System.

So far, the state has been chipping away at the deficit, protecting only 160 acres in fiscal year 2011 but adding 1,800 acres in the second year of the program. Tesler said she expected 2,000 acres of habitat to be acquired through the program during the current fiscal year.

The agreement also provides seed funding for continuing basic work on acquisition sites—a new practice for BPA, which historically budgeted for ongoing maintenance, but one that has been a standard in the land trust community for years.

The project is a tremendous step forward in accomplishing what these funds were intended for: “conserving the best remaining fish and wildlife habitat in the Willamette Valley,” said Doroff.

Portland-based Western Rivers Conservancy is a non-profit organization that aims to protect outstanding river ecosystems in the western United States. It acquires lands along rivers to protect critical habitat and to create or improve public access for compatible use and enjoyment. Founded in 1988, Western Rivers Conservancy is the nation’s only conservation program dedicated solely to the protection of river lands. To learn more, please visit [www.westernrivers.org](http://www.westernrivers.org).

The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde is made up of more than 27 tribes and bands in western Oregon, southwest Washington, and northern California. For more information go to the tribe’s web site, [www.grandronde.org](http://www.grandronde.org).

## 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.

## Welcome New Members

Thank you and welcome to Dave and Margie Buchanan of Tye Vineyards.

If you have moved or changed your email address, please forward your new contact information to Suzanne Ortiz at [ortizsv@gmail.com](mailto:ortizsv@gmail.com).

*Suzanne Ortiz*

## Contributors to the Chat

Chris Mathews, Bill Proebsting, Jim Fairchild, Ray Drapek, Michelle Shula, Will Wright, Lisa Millbank, Raylene Gordin, Rita Snyder, Elsie Eltzroth,

## 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.

*Audubon Society of Corvallis*

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**Interested in volunteering?**

Please let us know: [volunteerasc@gmail.com](mailto:volunteerasc@gmail.com)



*Least Sandpiper photo by Matt Lee*

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*Audubon Society of Corvallis*

*the* **CHAT**

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

## Calendar

Sept. 5 Conservation Comm. Mtg.—5:15 pm, New Morn. Bakery  
Sept. 12 Board Meeting—Hesthavn, 7:00 pm  
Sept. 14 Second Sat. Field Trip—7:30 am, Ankeny  
Sept. 19 General Meeting—Hesthavn, 7:00 pm  
Sept. 26 Chat/Field Notes Submissions due

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