



Audubon Society of Corvallis the **CHAT**

Summer 2014

VOL. 43

#10

Fall, 2014 Programs Announced

We have four excellent programs planned for our monthly general membership meetings this fall. As most of you know, our chapter meetings are held monthly from September through May at Dennis Hall of the First United Presbyterian Church, at SW Eighth and Monroe. Chapter meeting begins at 7:00, with the main program speaker beginning at about 7:45.

Here is the current lineup for fall:

- September 18**—Joe Liebezelt; Avian Conservation Manager, Portland Audubon Chapter, on history and natural history of the Klamath Basin
- October 16**—Noah Strycker; Naturalist and writer, on his new book about distinctive characteristics of birds
- November 20**—Bridget Callahan; Oregon Wild on Fiftieth Anniversary of the Wilderness Act
- December 18**—Member slide show; all members are welcome to present photos

Suggestions for later dates? Contact Chris Mathews, Vice President and Program Chair at: mathewsc2@comcast.net

Chris Mathews

Field Trip Schedule

July 9-13—The Willows

August 14-17—Steens & Hart Mountains

September 5-7—Return to Bandon for shorebirds

Fred Ramsey

Local Monthly Second Saturday/Half-Day Field Trips

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

This field trip is geared towards beginning birders, birders new to Oregon's mid-valley area and persons looking for a pleasant outing. For more info, contact Bill Proebsting at proebstw@gmail.com or 541-752-0108. Check the Midvalley ListServ, www.midvalleybirding.org/pipermail/birding, a couple of days before the field trip for updates. Weather may alter plans, so watch the forecast and dress appropriately. Trips return to Benton Center by noon.

Upcoming Field Trip

September 13—Site TBA. Check ASC Facebook page and Mid-Valley Listserv for more information.

Bill Proebsting

ASC-Home Life Trip to E.E. Wilson Wildlife Area

John Gaylord organized a fun outing to the E.E. Wilson Wildlife Area in May for clients and staff of Home Life, a Corvallis nonprofit serving adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Wildlife Area Associate Tracy Thompson was a fountain of information about the captive birds and site, and even brought out her Ring-necked Pheasant friend, George, for a close up look and touch.

ASC volunteers Suzanne Ortiz and Teri Engbring led tours of the exotic and educational birds from White and Silver Pheasants to Bobwhites and quail in large pens, while Turkey Vultures, a cormorant and swallows flew outside. Then Will Wright showed them his stuffed bobcat, Wood Ducks and Western Scrub-Jay at an education table, while Rana Foster showed guests how to view a (mounted) Barn Owl through the spotting scope. Jody Gaylord presented a feast of healthy snacks, and the outing ended with all participating in the collective planting of a native Oregon White Oak (donated by John Gaylord) in the viewing area.

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photo by Ken Vandehey

A plaque stands in front of the newly planted tree, donated by R3 Engraving of Corvallis, that reads, "Audubon Society Corvallis and Home Life planted this tree May 3, 2014." Thanks to Ken Vandehey for photographing the event for ASC, and to Graham Kislingbury of the *Corvallis Gazette-Times* for participating and his wonderful story with many photos in the May 19 Oregon Outdoors section of the paper. A great time was had by all, and the hope is that we can do it again next year.

Teri Engbring

President's Corner

Dr. Boone Kaufman's excellent March, 2014 presentation to ASC on his research of mangroves around the world reminded me of their importance beyond the incredible carbon storage capacity of mangroves and their ability to support and sustain local human food and other resource needs.

Tsunamis resulting from the 2004 Aceh earthquake caused tremendous devastation and loss of life all around the Indian Ocean, particularly where mangroves have been removed. Whether converted to settlements, shrimp farms, resorts, or industrial use, those previously mangrove-lined shores could not absorb tsunami wave energies, and thereby no longer provide protection for local populations in low elevation lands from the strongest tsunami effects. Although Oregon's climate isn't supportive of mangrove communities, our shores once had another form of energy-absorbing buffer.

Since coming to Oregon 40 years ago, I've always wondered why Oregon state parks, municipalities, and local residents have allowed—and often encouraged—the removal of driftwood from our public shoreline. My early beach experiences always involved clambering over several yards of driftwood before reaching open sand. During normal storms, this intertwined belt of large and long tree trunks, protected our sandstone cliffs much like a suit of chain-mail, buffering and diffusing energy from direct wave impacts. Of course driftwood piles are never a safe place to be in a storm! But now one finds only individual logs that are free to transfer wave energy directly against the cliffs. And in place of driftwood buffers, energy-reflecting rip-rap is now placed by worried cliff-side homeowners and developers, rock that merely sends erosional wave energy elsewhere.

Fifty years ago, tsunamis generated by the 1964 Alaska earthquake caused loss of life and considerable damage along the Oregon coast. Expansive reaches of driftwood might not significantly lessen damage from a large tsunami on the west coast beaches, but they will absorb energy and lessen erosion and damage from storm waves. Seaside development, where it must occur, could apply some lessons from energy-absorbing mangroves and driftwood.

Jim Fairchild

New Board Elected in May

At the May General Membership meeting of the Audubon Society of Corvallis, the following candidates were elected and will begin their terms in September, 2014. Please note that a volunteer or co-volunteers is still needed for the position of President.

President: Vacant (candidates needed)	Members-at-Large: Will Wright Linda Campbell
Vice-President: Chris Mathews	Teri Engbring Karan Fairchild
Treasurer: Fred Ramsey	Oscar Harper Marie Martin
Secretary: Gail Nickerson	Spencer Mair

If you would like to serve as next year's President, please contact Jim Fairchild (contact info on the last page of this newsletter) ASAP.

Teri Engbring

Hesthavn News

Thanks to all the ASC and other community volunteers who participated in the Open House fun at the Hesthavn Nature Center on June 15.

We enjoyed nature walks, birding talks, Chintimini's rescue birds and some aquatic ecology for the kids. We saw lots of new faces and enjoyed getting to meet everyone!

Ray Drapek



Kathleen Dodge of Chintimini Wildlife Center holds a Turkey Vulture during the Hesthavn Open House.

Photo by Teri Engbring

ASC Education News

I hope everyone is enjoying the nice summer days and spending some quality time with wildlife! I am thrilled to present ASC's summer educational events at Hesthavn. We will be hosting the **4th Saturdays Kids Summer Series** at the Hesthavn Nature Center through September. The overarching theme is Nature Hunters, as we actively explore the surrounding wildlife and learn about wild edibles, how to ID trees, and seek out some special night hunters. Each program includes crafts, games, hands-on nature exploration and inquisitive conversation! Please help us spread the word! These learning opportunities are geared to the 5-12 age group, but all ages are welcome! I look forward to meeting everyone and I'm excited to help build our education program! Volunteers are needed, too.

The Coming Programs are:

Tree Detectives: A Tree ID Scavenger Hunt! **Saturday, July 26, 2-4 p.m.**

Join us for a fun afternoon scavenger hunt as we collect and identify different types of leaves, creatively match them to their tree parent, and learn how to identify different patterns and shapes! Come learn about the trees surrounding Hesthavn and take home your very own tree art! \$5 suggested donation

Nights Hunters: An Evening Amongst the Owls! **Saturday, August 23, 7-9 p.m.**

Put on your sneaky shoes and bring your creative hoots as we seek out these special nocturnal creatures! We will be learning all about owls, how to identify different calls, and end with a night walk in search of these stealth hunters. \$5-10 suggested donation

Friendly Foragers: Hunting for Wild Edibles! **Saturday, September 27, 2-4 p.m.**

Learn all about wild edibles, how they benefit the forest life, and how to properly identify them! We will take a nature walk around Hesthavn, play some fun food games, and indulge in some edible delights! \$5 suggested donation

Please RSVP to Jessica at:

educationaudubon@gmail.com if you would like to attend. The program is geared to children pre-school to 6th grade. A \$5 per child donation helps cover our costs.

“Like” Corvallis Audubon’s Hesthavn Nature Center on Facebook to stay updated with upcoming Audubon events and educational programs!

*Jessica Brothers
Outreach & Environmental Ed. Coordinator*

2014 Birdathon

The 14th Annual Birdathon was successful as always, with twelve teams participating. Together we covered Corvallis and surrounding areas, the coast and the Klamath Basin and raised about \$4000, bringing total earnings over the years to nearly \$64,000. These funds go directly to Hesthavn Nature Center, and will be used for routine maintenance, as well as future larger projects, such as roof replacement.

We again this year had a group pledge specifically for motorless Birdathons, from Joel Geier, Bill Proebsting, Don Boucher and Lisa Millbank, Mary Van Brocklin, and Susan Brown’s teams all responded to this challenge! Don and Lisa take the prize for most motorless birds seen, at 120 species over two days biking and walking. They covered Bald Hill Park, McDonald Forest, Finley, E.E. Wilson and many parts between. The weather on the official Birdathon weekend was particularly foul this year, so all motorless participants deserve extra credit!

We also had group sponsors for all the teams, with Elsie Eltzroth continuing the family tradition, and Ken Hilton of Wild Birds Unlimited again contributing to everyone. Thanks very much, Ken and Elsie!

The other teams this year were Dodie Wilson, Jamie Simmons and Adrian Hinkle and Christopher Hinkle, Hendrik Herlyn and Oscar Harper, Jim Philipson, the ASC Klamath Falls field trip, led by Fred Ramsey (a.k.a. Klamath Fools), Pam and Randy Comeleo, Ann and Doug Brodie, and Karan and Jim Fairchild.

And finally, 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!

*Karan Fairchild,
2014 Birdathon Coordinator*

Volunteer Seabird Nest Monitors Needed

The Audubon Society of Portland is starting a citizen science project to monitor seabird nesting colonies adjacent to the recently designated Cape Perpetua Marine Reserve. They are looking for volunteers to “adopt” a colony and monitor nests to determine hatching success of chicks. Audubon’s Joe Liebezeit says now is a critical time to monitor the Cape Perpetua reserve effectiveness for human benefit and for ecological health.

Seabirds’ main prey, forage fish species like sardines, sand lance, and smelt, are protected in the marine reserves. Forage fish species are of conservation concern as they form the prey base for upper level predators, including seabirds, as well as larger fish of economic importance, such as salmon and halibut, and marine mammal species. Forage fish are particularly important in providing vital nutrients for growing seabird chicks. By monitoring nesting seabird populations that use the marine reserve, Liebezeit said biologists can better understand the efficacy of marine reserves with respect to seabirds and the forage fish they depend upon.

“Basically, volunteers will monitor cormorants and common murrelets at their nesting colonies at Heceta Head, Sea Lion Caves and near Cape Perpetua to look at nest productivity,” he said. Volunteers will monitor the seabird nesting colonies twice a month through August, spending three to four hours per visit. For details contact Liebezeit at jliebezeit@audubonportland.org

*Kiera Morgan
Oregoncoastdailynews.com*

Conservation Corner Deadly Snares Haunt Oak Creek Area

In 2011, a neighbor of the OSU Oak Creek Sheep Center stumbled upon the tiny body of a dead fawn between her property and the sheep pasture. The fawn had been strangled by the neck with a metal cable known as a snare. Soon after, in early 2012, she found a coyote in the same area which had starved to death after being caught in a snare by the hind foot. Sadly, this coyote had survived a previous encounter with a snare by chewing off its other hind foot. Later, she came upon a live raccoon dangling from the fence, its rear leg caught in a snare. It was obvious the snares were not being checked and the neighbor complained to OSU and sought help from the Eugene-based conservation organization ‘Predator Defense’ (www.predatordefense.org/features/snares_OSU.htm).



A raccoon, still alive, was found by a neighbor.

Public outcry compelled OSU to remove all snare traps from the Sheep Center in March 2012. One year later, the deadly snares were back and neighbors formed a coalition to work with OSU to find an alternative to lethal predator control. Despite the group's ongoing efforts, OSU is still using snares to kill native wildlife on their agricultural lands.

Using snares to protect livestock is not only inhumane and indiscriminate, research shows that it is ineffective—killing more predators actually leads to more livestock being killed. This paradox can be explained by understanding the reproductive strategy and territorial behavior of highly social predators such as the coyote.

Coyotes compensate for reductions in population with increasing immigration, reproduction, and pup survival rates. In the words of one researcher, "Killing coyotes is kind of like mowing the lawn, it stimulates vigorous new growth." In order to sustain larger litters of pups, breeding adults are compelled to seek larger prey. Nearby sheep—usually ignored by adult coyotes in a stable population—become a ready source of food. Thus, a network of snares becomes the machinery of a self-perpetuating cycle of death for coyotes and sheep.

Another factor leading to increased livestock loss is the disruption of social structure caused by lethal control. Most coyotes are not sheep killers. Snares indiscriminately kill these "non-offending" coyotes who are simply trying to access prime rodent habitat. "Non-offending" coyotes can actually prevent losses by defending their territory from members of neighboring packs who might prefer mutton over meadow vole.

The use of non-lethal predator deterrents such as electric fencing, guard dogs, guard llamas, and human shepherding is a humane and effective approach to breaking the cycle of killing. Non-lethal methods reduce the number of livestock killed by stabilizing coyote population growth, preserving the transfer of pack knowledge, and maintaining territorial boundaries between packs.

OSU is home to cutting-edge research establishing the essential role predators play in ecosystems worldwide, yet it continues the antiquated practice of lethal predator control. Meanwhile, other local producers, such as nearby Bald Hill Farm and Living Earth Farm in Eugene (<http://tinyurl.com/pzkrdzp>), are using non-lethal predator control methods to successfully protect their livestock and coexist with native predators.

Ask OSU to stop lethal predator control and commit to improved, wildlife-friendly, non-lethal predator control:

Edward Ray, Oregon State University President,

541-737-4133, ed.ray@oregonstate.edu

Dan Arp, Dean, College of Agricultural Sciences,

541-737-2331, dan.j.arp@oregonstate.edu

Recommended reading: *The Predator Paradox: Ending the War with Wolves, Bears, Cougars, and Coyotes* by John A. Shivik.

Randy and Pam Comeleo

Field Notes

4/24/14-6/11/14

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.

Many of our wintering birds were leaving the area at the beginning of the period, and by mid-June, all of our neotropical visitors were busy with courtship and nesting. Warm weather this period brought abundant insects to fuel the flights of many migrants and to fill the mouths of baby birds.

Observer abbreviations: Jim Anderson (JA), Don Boucher (DB), Howard Bruner (HB), Pam Comeleo (PCo), Randy Comeleo (RCo), Jennafer Cox (JC), Trish Daniels (TD), Barbara Dolan (BD), Sada Egenriether (SE), Deanna Emig (DE), Jim Fairchild (JFa), Karan Fairchild (KFa), Joel Geier (JG), Martha Geier (MG), Roy Gerig

(RG), Tyler Hallman (TH), Jeff Harding (JH), Oscar Harper (OH), Kaynor Heineck (KH), William Hemstrom (WH), Hendrik Herlyn (HH), Carol Hiler (CHr), Adrian Hinkle (AH), Christopher Hinkle (CH), Charlotte Hottmann (CHt), David Irons (DI), Evan Jackson (EJ), Steve Jagers (SJ), Tim Johnson (TJ), Jim Kopitzke (JK), Karin Lamberson (KL), Glen Lindeman (GL), Spencer Mair (SMr), Sylvia Maulding (SMI), Jenny Meisel (JM), Lisa Millbank (LM), Kasey Moore (KS), Randy Moore (RM), Pam Otley (PO), Catherine Otto (CO), Sandy Pepin (SP), Bruce Pratt (BP), Eric Pratt (EP), Paul Rentz (PR), Doug Robinson (DR), Anne Sammis (AS), Jamie Simmons (JS), Cody Smith (CS), Jim Smith (JSm), Margaret Stephens (MS), Jessica Stewart (JSt), Bethany Trunkey-Modugno (BTM), Mike Unger (MU), Brandon Wagner (BW), Will Wright (WW)
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, Monmouth STP = Monmouth sewage treatment ponds, Philomath STP = Philomath sewage treatment ponds

Numbers of **Greater White-fronted Geese** were much reduced from the huge flocks observed last period, but a few birds continued at Ankeny through the end of the period. One **Snow Goose** flew over Finley 5/7; it was determined not to be a Ross's as its size was comparable to the Greater White-fronted Geese flying with it (BTM, JC, JSt, KM, SE, TH). A **Ross's Goose** was among a migrant flock of **Cackling Geese** at Finley 4/27 (PO). **Canada Geese** had half-grown young on McFadden Marsh at Finley 5/4 (LM, DB). The mass exodus of ducks meant that many wintering species were quite scarce after the first week of May. 31 **Wood Ducks** were at Philomath STP 6/3 (WW). 6 **Gadwall** were at Ankeny 5/5 (TJ). A **Eurasian Wigeon** lingered at Philomath STP until 5/8 (AH, CH), and most all **American Wigeon** were gone by then. A mother **Mallard** was raising a large brood of 11 babies in Albany mid-May (JSm). A female and 2 male **Blue-winged Teal** were seen at Ankeny 6/6 (MS), and the late date suggests they may be breeding there along with the usual **Cinnamon Teal**. McFadden Marsh at Finley still had a small collection of ducks 5/4; many of these were late migrants, including **Northern Shoveler**, **Northern Pintail**, **Green-winged Teal**, **Ring-necked Duck** and **Bufflehead** (LM, DB). One **Redhead** was still at Ankeny 5/15 (DI). Up to 5 **Lesser Scaup** lingered at Philomath STP until 6/4 (WW, HB) and a **Greater Scaup** was there until 5/5 (CS). A female **Hooded Merganser** had 3-4 ducklings with her at Ankeny 6/6 (MS). 5 **Common Mergansers** stopped by the Philomath STP 4/24 (HH, OH, TH). **Ruddy Ducks** were at Philomath STP and Ankeny through the end of the period, indicating that some will probably breed locally.

A **Mountain Quail** was heard at Chip Ross Park 5/19 (AH). At least 1 male **Ring-necked Pheasant** was heard calling in the Finley prairie throughout the period. 2 **Ruffed Grouse** were found at Marys Peak 6/7 (AS). Calling **Sooty Grouse** were noted at McDonald Forest 5/3 (DB, LM) and at Marys Peak 5/31 (WW).

A **Common Loon** was a very unusual bird to fly by the Corvallis Airport 5/25, yodeling as it went (RM).

Pied-billed Grebes were giving their unmistakable calls from marshes and lakes this period; their stripy chicks will venture out next period. A **Horned Grebe** was seen at Ankeny 5/5 (TJ), and 2 **Eared Grebes** were still present at Philomath STP 6/3 (WW); unusually late for this species. A **Western Grebe** with pale plumage stopped by Philomath STP 5/19 (DR).

1 **Double-crested Cormorant** was still at Buena Vista 5/18 (BD, MU, TJ).

Many birders got great looks at **American Bitterns** this period at Ankeny and Finley, with multiple bitterns standing out in the open for extended viewing. Most **Great Egrets** left our area in May, but a few continued at Ankeny through the end of the period. A pair of **Green Herons** "clucked" and squawked to one another at the Corvallis

BMX track 5/12 (LM), which may have been part of their courtship. A **Black-crowned Night-Heron** was seen at Freeway Lakes Co Park 5/18, not at all common in our area, but more likely in fall.

A bicycle birding field trip had a close encounter with **Turkey Vulture** eating an opossum carcass at EEW 5/25 (DB, LM). **Ospreys** were sitting on eggs this period and some chicks may have hatched. A **Northern Harrier** screamed and dove at a **Red-tailed Hawk** at Philomath STP 6/4, probably indicating that the harrier had a nest nearby (HB). A flock of Brewer's Blackbirds banded together to chase a **Cooper's Hawk** who was in pursuit of a juvenile blackbird 6/3; the hawk was successful and carried its prey into the woods (WW). An immature **Bald Eagle** flew over S Corvallis 6/4, pursued by 3 Common Ravens (LM). A dark-phase **Swainson's Hawk** flew over Corvallis 5/4 (HH, OH), and another was at Chip Ross Park 5/23 (CH); Swainson's Hawks are very uncommon migrants or overwintering birds. 1 **Rough-legged Hawk** was still at Finley 4/24 (EP).

A couple of **Virginia Rails** seemed to be quarreling at Finley 5/5, when one surprised a photographer by walking under him and his tripod (PR). The conservation easement along Finley Rd had at least 6 calling **Soras** 5/4 (LM, DB). Fluorescent orange/red-headed **American Coot** babies had hatched by 5/3.

1 **American Avocet** was seen in ponds S of Brownsville 5/24 (DR). A **Black-necked Stilt** visited McFadden Marsh at Finley 5/5 (SP), and another (perhaps the same bird) was found at a mitigation wetland S of the Philomath STP 5/8 (AH, CH). The only **Black-bellied Plover** reported was a single bird at Ankeny 5/5 (TJ). Many **Semipalmated Plovers** were reported this period, with 10 at Ankeny 5/5 the highest count (TJ). A **Killdeer** nest near Albany had 4 eggs 5/22 (DE). 11 **Spotted Sandpipers**, a few hundred **Long-billed Dowitchers**, 1+ **Short-billed Dowitchers**, a **Wilson's Phalarope** with 27 **Red-necked Phalaropes** were all present at Philomath STP 5/8 (AH, CH). **Solitary Sandpipers** were widespread, but usually single birds as their name suggests; 1 was at EEW 4/24 and allowed some good looks (JG, MG). Many **Greater Yellowlegs** continued to pass through early in the period, and 1 **Lesser Yellowlegs** was spotted at Philomath STP 4/24 (HH, OH, TH).

Whimbrels were found surprisingly often this period, with a high count of 5 on Hunsaker Rd in Marion Co 6/6 (JH). A very rare vagrant, a **Hudsonian Godwit** turned up on Duckflat Rd in Marion Co 6/1 (RG); several birders got a chance to see this bird. Only a few **Dunlin** lingered into this period, with a sighting at Philomath STP 5/4 (WW). A couple of very uncommon migrants passed through, including a **Red Knot** flying over Philomath STP 5/8 (DR) and a **Sanderling** flyby at Philomath STP on 5/19 (DR). 66 **Least Sandpipers** and 3 **Western Sandpipers** visited Ankeny 5/5 (TJ). A **Wilson's Snipe** was still at Finley 5/27; it's possible that a few may breed there on occasion (TD).

A few **Bonaparte's Gulls** passed through this period, with 4 at Philomath STP 5/8 (DR), a single one on Duckflat Rd in Marion Co 5/26 (RG, TJ) and 6/1 (GL, TJ, BD). A **Sabine's Gull** was at Finley 4/24, a very uncommon inland visitor (DR). 14 **Ring-billed Gulls** visited Philomath STP 5/8 (DR). Terns were well-represented this period. A **Caspian Tern** flew by the OSU campus 5/8 (AH), and another flew past Diamond Hill Rd wetlands in Linn Co 5/19 (DR). A slough near Oakville Rd had 2 **Black Terns**. 2 **Forster's Terns** paid a visit to the Eicher Rd quarry 6/7 (DR); a very uncommon migrant in our area.

Band-tailed Pigeons have been traveling from forested uplands W of Corvallis to riverside forests where they may be feasting on Red Elderberry. A pair of **Eurasian Collared-Doves** in NE Corvallis seemed to be starting on a second brood by the end of this period. A **Barn Owl** box at EEW contained at least two chicks 5/25 (DB, LM). A **Western Screech-Owl** was "bouncing a ping-pong ball" at Dunn Forest 5/14 (PCo, RCo); a good description of the voice of

this little owl. By 4/27, 2 **Great Horned Owlets** were flapping their wings at Teloh-Calapooia Park in Albany, and by 6/5 they were gone; hopefully they fledged successfully (JSm). A pair of **Short-eared Owls** at the Corvallis Airport pursued a Common Raven vigorously 6/3, meaning they were probably nesting there (RM).

One **Common Nighthawk** called over Coffin Butte Landfill 5/20; the average arrival date is 6/4. 540 **Vaux's Swifts** roosted in the Lebanon Hotel chimney 4/28 (KH) as their migration was drawing to a close. A single **Black Swift** was seen along Campus Way 5/30 (HB); there are usually just a few sightings of these enigmatic birds in our area annually.

Fledgling **Anna's Hummingbirds** were showing up at feeders this period; they can be quite difficult to distinguish from adult females. A female **Rufous Hummingbird** was seen eating ash from beneath a charcoal grill 5/8, perhaps to collect minerals (JM).

A **Lewis's Woodpecker** was still at a reliable site on the N end of Finley 5/2 (WW). An **Acorn Woodpecker** was a surprise visitor to a sunflower seed feeder on Mulkey Hill W of Corvallis 5/11 (PCo, RCo). A **Red-breasted Sapsucker** was finishing excavating a nest cavity by 4/27, and a pair of **Downy Woodpeckers** appeared to be feeding young (JSm). Many **Northern Flickers** left our area for higher elevations or to head north to boreal forests.

An **American Kestrel** and a Red-winged Blackbird joined forces to mob a Red-tailed Hawk at EEW 5/25 (LM, DB). Almost all **Merlins** were gone by the end of April, with 1 reported from Philomath STP 4/24 (HH, OH, TH). Most **Peregrine Falcons** had also departed this period, but there were sightings at Ankeny 5/10 (TJ) and 5/14 (JK). An **Olive-sided Flycatcher** showed up in a NW Corvallis yard 5/3, where it perched in some dead treetops and was present intermittently for a few days (JS). A **Western Wood-Pewee** was found at Philomath STP 5/8, and many more arrived over the next couple of weeks (AH, CH). The first **Willow Flycatcher** report came from the foothills SW of Philomath 5/22 (KF, JFa). A **Hammond's Flycatcher** passing through the lowlands on migration was at LSNA 4/25 (JG), and an uncommon **Dusky Flycatcher** stopped by Chip Ross Park 5/23 (CH). Plenty of **Pacific-slope Flycatchers** were calling and singing in forested areas. **Black Phoebe** numbers seem to have decreased as a result of the harsh winter, but are still reliably found at the Corvallis water intake S of Willamette Park. Birds more characteristic of SW Oregon chaparral, 2 **Ash-throated Flycatchers** were singing on Peterson Butte S of Lebanon 5/20 (DR), and another was along Tub Run Dr S of Brownsville 5/26 (RG, TJ). Another unusual flycatcher was an **Eastern Kingbird** who showed up along Campus Way 6/7 (HH). **Western Kingbirds** continued at the Finley prairie, but 1 was found at Philomath STP 4/24 (HH, OH, TH), a pair was at Manning Butte in Linn Co 5/27 (RG, TJ), and another pair was at Bald Hill Park 6/7 (HH).

Cassin's Vireos were easily found on the east side of Bald Hill this period. Although there was at least one early report last period, **Warbling Vireos** showed up in good numbers in mid- to late May. **Gray Jays** were found at the Mill Hill trail at Finley 6/3 (BP); it's possible they're nesting nearby. A **Western Scrub-Jay** nest in North Albany contained 5 eggs 5/31 (CHR). 1 **Clark's Nutcracker** turned up at Fitton Green 5/22 (JG); an unlikely spot for this subalpine bird, but they do have a tendency to wander. **American Crows** nesting in S Corvallis protected their airspace with great vigilance, even attacking Turkey Vultures who happened to soar a little too close (LM).

Up to 30 "Streaked" **Horned Larks** were at the Corvallis Airport this period (RM), making it one of the most important local breeding sites for this imperiled endemic subspecies.

There were 7 **Purple Martins** at Philomath STP 5/8 (AH). In the first week of May, **Tree Swallows** were singing as early as 4 AM. A **Violet-green Swallow** had laid 6 eggs by 5/15 (CHT). One **Bank Swallow** was spotted at the Philomath STP 5/8 (AH) and another

was at Diamond Hill Rd wetlands S of Brownsville 5/19 (DR). A **Barn Swallow** had laid 2 eggs in a nest in a carport near Ankeny 5/21 (CHt). A **Cliff Swallow** building a new mud nest near the Corvallis skate park finished construction in the first week of June (LM). **Black-capped Chickadee** babies began to emerge from nest cavities in late May, sometimes separable from the adults only by their wheezy begging calls. A **Chestnut-backed Chickadee** was still excavating a nest cavity in a snag SW of Philomath 5/2 (HH, OH, TH). Many baby **Bushtits** had left their little sock nests by early June, and flocks consisting of multiple families with begging young were common around town. **Brown Creeper** fledglings had left the nest by 6/3 at the OSU campus (DB).

7 **House Wrens** were found in the foothills SW of Philomath 5/2 (HH, OH, TH). **Marsh Wrens** were nesting at Jackson-Frazier Wetland by 5/21 (LM, DB).

A **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** turned up in a yard W of EEW 5/4 (JG), and stuck around long enough to have his picture taken by a number of birders. An **American Dipper** was reported on Crooked Creek along Hwy 34 5/17 (KL). A **Golden-crowned Kinglet** sang at McDonald Forest 5/3 (LM, DB). One **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** was still present at Stewart Lake 4/29 (JA).

A recently-fledged **Western Bluebird** was along Campus Way 5/30 (HB). One singing male **Townsend's Solitaire** was found on a slope along Hwy 20, just outside Philomath 5/22 (EJ). A **Swainson's Thrush** had arrived at Bald Hill by 5/3 (LM, DB), and within a week or two, "whit!" calls were a common addition to the bird chorus. One tested out a few phrases of song along Oak Creek 5/13 (CO), and singing really started in the next week. 2 **Hermit Thrushes** were "playing their flutes" at Dunn Forest 3/12 (PCo, RCo). Speckled **American Robin** fledglings were out of the nest and begging for food by late May. **Varied Thrushes** were not reported from the lowest elevations after late April, but could be heard singing in McDonald Forest and other upland forests.

European Starlings raised broods of hungry babies this period; vigilant parents gave alarm calls for every passing American Crow. One **American Pipit** was still present at Philomath STP 5/5 (HH). **Cedar Waxwings** suddenly returned to Corvallis in good numbers 5/14-5/15 after an absence of about 4 months.

A **Lapland Longspur** flew over Philomath STP 5/8 (DR), a very uncommon spring migrant inland.

A migrating **Nashville Warbler** was found at LSNA 4/25 (JG). **MacGillivray's Warblers** were seen frequently in the brushy clearcuts in McDonald Forest this period. Just-fledged **Common Yellowthroats** were being fed by their parents at the Finley prairie 6/3 (JG). A **Yellow Warbler** was reported from Stewart Lake 5/1 (JS, JA), and within a week they were fairly abundant in riparian areas. A few **Yellow-rumped Warblers** lingered at low elevations this period, with 2 reported in Corvallis 5/29 (HH, AH). **Townsend's Warblers** were scarce by mid-May, with the last report coming from the foothills SW of Philomath 5/16 (KFa). A hike in any woodland this period had an assortment of singing **Orange-crowned, Black-throated Gray, Hermit or Wilson's Warblers**. A **Yellow-breasted Chat** turned up at Ankeny 5/5 (MS), with decent numbers reported throughout the period, including one along the Midge Cramer path in Corvallis 6/4 (BP) whose singing was noted through the end of the period.

6 **Vesper Sparrows** were found on a drive around S Linn Co 5/28 (SMI). Fledgling **Savannah Sparrows** were calling in the grass at Finley 6/3 (JG). **Grasshopper Sparrows** were reported from private lands around Corvallis this period, 4 were found S of Brownsville 5/27 (RG, TJ), and 1 was at a prairie restoration site at Finley 6/10 (WW). One **Swamp Sparrow** was still at LSNA 4/25, which is quite late for this scarce species (JG). A **Fox Sparrow** lingered until 4/24, when he was seen and heard singing at LSNA (BW). An exceptionally late individual was reported a month later at Ankeny

5/24 (CS). The last report of **Lincoln's Sparrow** was 1 at LSNA 4/25 (JG). Flocks of migrant **White-crowned Sparrows** were moving through at the beginning of the period, though local breeders were already on their territories. A **Golden-crowned Sparrow** was still at Ankeny 5/12 (RG). By early June, streaky Dark-eyed Junco fledglings were common on the OSU campus.

A singing male **Western Tanager** arrived at Stewart Lake 5/1 (JS, JA) and 3 more were in the foothills SW of Philomath 5/2 (HH, OH, TH). Although there was at least 1 early arrival last period, most **Black-headed Grosbeaks** arrived in the last week of May and the first few weeks of June, when they were conspicuous at feeders. 2-3 male **Lazuli Buntings** sang and chased one another at Bald Hill Park 5/3 (LM, DB); more continued to arrive and stake out territories in brushy areas over the next few weeks.

Red-winged & Brewer's Blackbirds courageously defended their nests all trespassers this period (and for the Brewer's, that included pedestrians!). A Brewer's nest SW of Philomath contained 3-4 nestlings with their eyes closed 5/20 (JG). Up to 6 **Western Meadowlarks** were noted at the Corvallis Airport this period—more may breed there than on the Finley prairie (RM). Many birders observed **Yellow-headed Blackbirds** along Bruce Rd at Finley, but there were also sightings at Philomath STP 5/19 (DR), and a female was seen at Ankeny 5/24 (SJ). An early **Bullock's Oriole** turned up last period, but most arrived during the first 2 weeks of May.

House Finch fledglings were out and about by the beginning of June, complete with downy "eyebrows" which they retain for a few days after fledging. **Red Crossbills** have been scarce, but up to 25 were noted at Marys Peak 6/7 (WH, SMr). Reports of **Pine Siskins** have been even more rare, with just a handful around Corvallis and the nearby Coast Range this period. Female **American Goldfinches** begged like fledglings as part of their courtship this period, although they will not nest until mid-summer. The annual spectacle of thousands of **Evening Grosbeaks** on the OSU campus and throughout Corvallis came to an end this period, as they moved up to higher elevations. A count of 1830 was made 4/24 (AH, CH). Please post your reports to midvalleybirding.org, send them to lisaaves@peak.org, or leave a message at 541-753-7689 by 8/21/14 - Lisa Millbank

Atop the Nestbox

Our bluebird nesting season seems to be off to a good start, with fairly average numbers of nesting pairs. There does appear to be a trend toward later first broods and slightly smaller clutch sizes than usual. Overall, we are lucky. Our neighbors to the north (Prescott Bluebird Recovery Project) are reporting depressed numbers, in some areas drastically so. It appears they had a large die-off in the February snow event. Although the wintry weather was actually worse in the southern part of the Willamette Valley than northward, it is possible that the storm combined with a migratory pulse to affect birds that were traveling (using up physiologic reserves) at the time. Most of the dead bluebirds reported to me this winter were found in the Salem area, but the Salem population itself seems to be fairly intact.

For those of you with bluebirds nesting on your property, all winterizing accessories should be removed from your nest boxes by now. Please note when sustained hot weather arrives and provide some shading or reflective material to prevent heat-related nestling deaths. Details can be found on our web page, or you can call me at 541-258-6625 or Rita at 541-752-6457 with questions or problems.

We appreciate the information we have received when banded birds have been seen. Please continue to help us collect the data so we can reach meaningful conclusions in our longevity study. Happy summer birding!

Raylene Gordin

Get A Certified Wildlife Friendly Backyard

At an ASC meeting a few months ago, members were invited to help Benton County become the first in Oregon to be certified as a Community Wildlife Habitat by the National Wildlife Federation. As of May 8, 162 of the required 200 properties had signed up, including our Hesthavn property!

If you have not already done so, ASC and the Corvallis Sustainability Coalition urge you to join the Backyard Wildlife Connections Team in making our community wildlife friendly. In order for Benton County to be certified, 200 backyards, six common areas, and five schools are needed to register with the National Wildlife Federation. Here's how you can help:

First, TRANSFORM your outdoor space into wildlife friendly habitat by providing these four basic elements: Food, Water, Cover, and Places to raise young.

Then, GET CERTIFIED by visiting the www.nwf.org/gardenforwildlife website and registering your habitat. (There is a \$20.00 application fee to NWF) Whether you register or not, this site gives helpful tips for making your yard a wildlife-friendly place.

Once your backyard is certified wildlife friendly habitat, you get:

- 1) A personalized certificate including your name and the name of your wildlife habitat
- 2) A one-year membership to NWF including a subscription to *National Wildlife* magazine
- 3) A subscription to *Wildlife Online – Habitats* newsletter
- 4) In NWF's national Registry of Habitats
- 5) To be part of Benton County's certification as Oregon's FIRST Community Wildlife Habitat by NWF.

Teri Engbring

Board Meeting Summary May, 2014 ASC Board of Directors Meeting

The only formal board action was a motion to approve that the Conservation Committee (chair Dave Mellinger) write a letter to the president of OSU, and cc the GazetteTimes, supporting a change of direction in dealing with predators in their sheep pastures located in the Oak Creek/ Hesthavn neighborhood. The motion passed unanimously.

Linda Campbell

Motorless Public-Transit Assisted Birding

Two new apps appeared in May that will help transit-assisted birders get up-to-date information about Corvallis bus routes, stops and arrivals. The apps are free and there are versions for both iPhone and Android users.

Oregon State University graduate students created the apps at a hackathon in partnership with the OSU App Club and the OSU Policy Analysis Laboratory (OPAL). The apps use the GPS tracking on the buses so that it can report the real time that the buses will actually appear, not what is listed on the posted schedules.

To download the apps, go to the following sites for either Android or iPhone versions:

Corvallis Transit for Android users:

Note that the Android version has a feature that allows you to set an alarm to remind you to catch your bus so that you won't miss any early morning songbirds! For Android phones:

<http://tinyurl.com/q5sajes>

Transport (Corvallis Transit System) for iPhone users:

<http://tinyurl.com/pnu457k>

Suzanne Ortiz

Open ASC 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.

Membership Corner:

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Mark, Amy, Rosemary & Peter Baur
Oscar Harper & Hendrik Herlyn
Melissa Newman
Virginia Pear
Ricardo Small

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL: To renew your membership online go to the ASC website at: (www.audubon.corvallis.or.us/join.shtml) & renew via Paypal, or you can mail a check to ASC, PO Box 148, Corvallis, OR 97339.

EMAIL NOTIFICATIONS: Please note that you need to opt into the ASC listserve.

After you sign up, you'll receive up-to-date email notifications about ASC events, fieldtrip locations, volunteer work parties and weather-related cancellations. Send an email to our listserve administrator, Karan Fairchild, and request to be added to the listserve at: alderspr@peak.org

HAVE YOU CHANGED YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION? If you have moved or changed your email address, send your new contact information to Suzanne Ortiz at ortizsv@gmail.com.

Suzanne Ortiz

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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. Chat does not publish in July and August.

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Interested in volunteering?

Please let us know: 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

July 9-13 Wallowas Field Trip
Aug. 2 ASC Board Meeting, 6 pm at Fairchild's
Aug. 14-17 Steens & Hart Mtns Field Trip
Aug. 21 Field Notes submission deadline
Aug. 28 CHAT article submission deadline
Sept. 5-7 Return to Bandon for shorebirds Field Trip
Sept. 11 ASC Board Meeting
Sept. 13 Half-Day field trips resume
Sept. 18 ASC General Meeting



Yellow Warbler photo by Matt Lee

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