



THE AUDUBON SOCIETY OF CORVALLIS CHAT

SEPTEMBER 2015

VOL. 45 #1

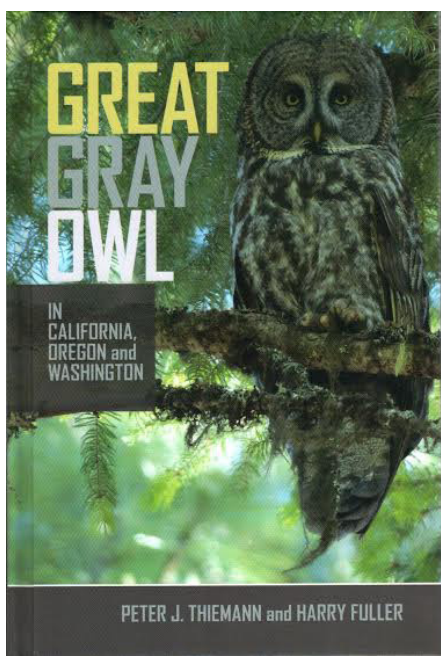
ASC GENERAL MEETING THURSDAY, SEPT 17, 7:00-8:30 PM

**AT NEW LOCATION:
CHINTIMINI SENIOR CENTER**
2601 NW Tyler Ave (& 27th), Corvallis

At this new venue we need a small team to help set up and take down chairs for the meeting, so if you can help us out from 6:15 to 6:30 pm, and/or after the meeting, at about 9, thanks!

THE MYSTERY OF GREAT GRAY OWLS

We are kicking off the 2015-16 monthly speaker series with a program about the elusive Great Gray Owls by author and NW birding guide Harry Fuller.



ASC field trip group to a Great Gray Owl nest site in southern Oregon this May, led by Harry Fuller

Great Gray Owls are one of the most mysterious and sought-after bird sightings in California, Oregon, and Washington. Even though it is the tallest owl in North America, and notoriously approachable by humans, the Great Gray is hard to find. Biologists surveying for other species may happen accidentally on the owl, but finding it intentionally isn't easy due to its nocturnal habits, excellent camouflage, and silent flight. Despite relatively high breeding concentrations in the Willa Walla Mountains and southern Cascades of Oregon, Great Grays are of conservation concern to wildlife managers in Oregon due to possible declines in the overall population and loss of habitat.

Fuller's book on the Great Gray Owls of California, Oregon and Washington was published in May, 2015. He is also author of Freeway Birding, San Francisco to Seattle, featuring local birds and where they can be found within 20 miles of west coast freeway interchanges. He has taught numerous classes at the Klamath Bird Observatory, Pt. Reyes Field Institute, Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Southern Oregon University, Winter Wings Bird Festival in Klamath Falls, and North Mountain Nature Park in Ashland. He is a partner and guide for Partnership for Internation-

ASC GENERAL MEETING

Thursday, Sept 17,
7:00-8:30 pm

At New Location:
Chintimini Senior Center,
2601 NW Tyler Ave, Corvallis

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al Birding, and president of the Klamath Bird Observatory Board of Directors.

ASC's general members meeting is held on the third Thursday of each month from September through May. Social hour begins at 6:30, right after we set up chairs at 6:15, with the chapter business at 7:00, and the free program starting about 7:30.

Directions: Please note the permanent change in meeting site, which now is: Chintimini Senior Center, 2601 NW Tyler Ave.

FALL LINEUP OF SPEAKERS AND TOPICS:

October 15, Peter Moore, Gibson's Wandering Albatross on Adams Island

November 19, Gail Langellotto, Gardening for Bees and Butterflies

December 17, the annual members' slide night
Bill Proebsting, Vice Pres. & Program Chair

FIELD TRIPS SCHEDULE

SECOND SATURDAY HALF DAY FIELD TRIP

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 St., Corvallis at 7:30 am. This field trip is free and geared towards beginning birders, birders new to Oregon's mid-valley area and persons looking for a pleasant outing. Contact Bill Proebsting at proebstw@gmail.com or 541-752-0108 with questions. Check the Midvalley Listserv at www.midvalleybirding.org/pipermail/birding/, a couple of days before the field trip for updates. Weather may alter plans. Watch the weather forecast and dress appropriately. Return to Benton Center by noon.

NEXT SECOND SATURDAY FIELD TRIPS:

Sept 12 Ankeny NWR
Oct 10 Finley NWR

Bill Proebsting

FIELD NOTES

6/26/15-8/25/15

Unusually dry, hot conditions persisted through the period with daily highs topping 90° F on 26 days, and topping 100° F eight times, peaking at 107° F on 30 Jul. The only measurable rain in Corvallis came as scattered showers 25-27 Jul that yielded a total of less than two tenths of an inch. In this dry landscape, waterfowl and migrant shorebirds were concentrated at the few remaining ponds. Songbirds flocked to garden sprinklers and other backyard water sources, especially **Lesser Goldfinches** and **American Goldfinches** which gain little water from their seed-based diets. Patches of brown, yellow, and red foliage appeared mid-Aug as many trees, including Oregon ash, black cottonwoods, and big-leaf maples showed signs of stress from drought.

Locations: ANWR = Ankeny National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), BMF = Beazell Memorial Forest, DF = Dunn Forest, EEW = E.E. Wilson Wildlife Area, FNWR = William L. Finley NWR, HQ = headquarters, JFW = Jackson-Frazier Wetland, LSNA = Luckiamute State Natural Area, MDF = McDonald Forest, PSTP = Philomath sewage treatment ponds, TCP = Teloh-Calapooia Park in Albany, TWG = Talking Water Gardens in Albany. Stewart Lake is a pond on Hewlett-Packard (HP) campus in Corvallis. Cabell Marsh, McFadden Marsh, and North Prairie are locations at FNWR.

Observers: AHk: Adrian Hinkle, BGe: Becky Geier, BPr: Bill Proebsting, BTi: Bill Tice, CCe: Caleb Centanni, CHI: Carol Hiler, CHk: Christopher Hinkle, CO: Catherine Otto, DBO: Don Boucher, DM: Dave Mellinger, ECe: Evan Centanni, EKn: Erik Knight, EST: Eric Stahlfeld, FrK: Frank Kolwicz, GW: Gary Whitehouse, HB: Howard Bruner, HH: Hendrik Herlyn, JBo: Jamie Boulton, JdH: Jordan Hazen, JDS: Jim Smith, JGe: Joel Geier, JGi: Julie Gibson, JHi: Jim Hiler, JiF: Jim Fairchild, JJ: Jarod Jebousek, JLi: Judy List, JrP: Jerry Paul, JSi: Jamie Simmons, JSw: Jenny Swanson, JuP: Judith Paul, KLi: Karen Lippsmeyer, KnF: Karan Fairchild, LM: Lisa Millbank, LPN: Lars Norgren, MAu: Mahogany Aulenbach, MC: Marcia F. Cutler, MG: Mary Garrard, MGe: Martha Geier, MLi: Mike Lippsmeyer, MWe: Margaret Westfall, MRa: Mitch Ratzlaff, MRo: Mitch Rohse, NBa: Nancy Baumeister, OH: Oscar Harper, PGr: Peter Greenberg, PLi: Peter List, PO: Pam Otley, RFo: Rana Foster, RG: Roy Gerig, RHu: Robert Hunter, RHy: Rich Hoyer, RLU: Rie Luft, RMo: Randy Moore, RNz: Russ Namitz, WW: Will Wright.

A lone **Greater White-fronted Goose**: continued at PSTP thru the period (m. obs.). Female ducks tending broods included three **Wood Ducks** with young at PSTP 28 Jun (HH), a **Mallard** with five young at Finley NWR 12 Jul (EKn), two **Cinnamon Teal** with total of 12 ducklings at PSTP 28 Jun (HH), and three **Northern Shovelers** with a total of 23 young at PSTP 28 Jun (HH). **Gadwall** fledglings were noted 25 Jul at BSWNR (OH, HH). Rare for our region was a **Green-winged Teal** with three tiny ducklings at PSTP 28 Jun, after a pair was seen in May (HH). Three nearly full-grown juveniles **Hooded Mergansers** at PSTP 28 Jun were survivors from a brood that started with 7 or 8 (HH).

Other summering ducks at PSTP included two **Blue-winged Teal** 10-20 Aug (OH, HH; WW), two pairs of **Red-heads** 1-4 Jul (WW; PO) with one female continuing thru 20 Jul (HH), a female **Ring-necked Duck** 1 Jul (WW) joined by a second 10-18 Jul (HH; CHk, AHk), and a male **Lesser Scaup** continuing thru 25 Jul (HH; PO; m. obs.). Migrant **Northern Pintails** began to turn up with eight at PSTP 15 Aug (HH, OH). Three **Hooded Mergansers** flew over a wetland s. of Independence in early Aug (MLi).

No **Barrow's Goldeneye** broods were reported from Lost Lake in the Cascades; by 27 Jun much of the lake bed was dry due to scant winter snowpack followed by a dry spring. A **Ruffed Grouse** hen guarded half-grown fledglings and two **Sooty Grouse** hens tended half-grown youngsters in the Quartzville/Yellowstone area 16 Jul; a brood of 15 tiny **Mountain Quail** chicks were also in the area (MGe, BGe,



JGe). Two **Mountain Quail** broods on Marys Peak 5 Aug were still less than half-grown (RLu). Six **California Quail** with ten very small young were at Finley NWR 12 Jul (EKn). A family of **Pied-billed Grebe** at Stewart Lake first noted 29 Jun with 7 juveniles and 2 adults dwindled to 5 juvs. and 1 adult by the end of the period (JSi).

American White Pelicans continued to be seen at Cabell Marsh, with a high count of 62 on 7 Aug (HH, OH). **Great Blue Herons** were seen regularly along the Willamette. The usual post-breeding movement of **Great Egrets** into our area continued with one at Stewart Lake 17 Jul (JSi), regular sightings of small numbers at FNWR, and a remarkable gathering of 54 at BSNWR 23 Aug (MRa).

The ASC bicycle birding trip to Willamette Park 29 Jun enjoyed close looks at **Green Herons** hunting along the river (DBo). One to two (one a juv.) were seen regularly at Stewart Lake 29 Jun onward. Several were at TWG 21 Jul (ESt). An adult with a juv. was near TCP 1 Aug (JDS). One flew north over downtown Corvallis 5 Aug (DM). Two **Black-crowned Night-Heron** called in flight at Trysting Tree golf course 5 Aug (CHk, AHk). Two juvs. were at McFadden Marsh 6-10 Aug (WW; RHu; HH). One flew over the Coffin Butte landfill remedial wetlands 10 Aug (HH).

The ASC bicycle birding trip to Willamette Park 29 Jun examined an abandoned **Turkey Vulture** nest that one participant had found in a ground-level hollow of a cottonwood (DBo). A juv. vulture visited a sprinkler in Highland Dell several times in week of 2 Aug (JrP, JuP). More than 50 vultures feasted in a flail-mowed grass field 17 Jul near EEW after straw-chopping. 30 migrants soared high over Coffin Butte 11 Aug, gaining altitude for a long southward glide. An **Osprey** carried a large fish near Hyak Park 23 Aug (CHi). A **Bald Eagle** was along the Willamette River near Millersburg 15 Jul (JBo). A **Red-shouldered Hawk** perched near the Benton Co. fairgrounds 29 Jun (PLi, JLi). Young **Red-tailed Hawks** begged from tall conifers s. of Hoover Elementary 5 Jul (DBo). A **Rough-legged Hawk** circled several times around the summit of Marys Peak 5 Aug (RLu); fall migrants are rarely seen before October. An imm. **Golden Eagle** flew over a yard w. of Monmouth 21 Jul (CCe).

The noisy begging calls of accipiter fledglings in late summer can reveal the presence of families. A young **Sharp-shinned Hawk** pestered one of its parents in our yard near EEW 11 Aug. Two young **Cooper's Hawks** visited a yard near TCP 10 Jul, watching an active bird feeder with interest, but returned to a nest (which was covered with **Eurasian Collared-Dove** feathers) when the parents brought home dinner (JDS). Another Cooper's Hawk adult with at least one begging juv. was along Riverside Dr 1-3 Aug (GW). A begging juv. **Northern Goshawk** in MDF 26 Jul, accompanied by a less well-seen bird (JSi), was a rare breeding record for the Coast Range. Within five miles of this location, two imm. goshawks were seen in DF 20 Aug (BPr); both locations are within a few miles of where an adult was seen in BMF 20 Jun. A juv. **Virginia Rail** was at Bald Hill 3 Jul (BPr). A **Killdeer** brooded on a nest with 4 eggs at PSTP 28 Jun (HH). Four tiny, downy **Spotted Sandpiper** chicks were on a gravel bar in Albany 6 Aug (CHi).

A pair of **Black-necked Stilts** at BSNWR were fierce defend-

ers of their two chicks, running off a crow, a Red-tailed Hawk, and a pair of Mallards that wandered too close 26 Jun, then eight **Greater Yellowlegs** 27 Jun (MRo; FrK). The adults and two juveniles were seen thru 19 Aug (CCe, ECe). An **American Avocet** turned up at BSNWR 24 Aug (BTi).

Southbound shorebird migration was concentrated to just a few spots that still held water into July. The first **Semi-palmated Plover** was noted at PSTP 20 Jul (HH). A **Solitary Sandpiper** visited a pond in an irrigated field s. of Independence 20-23 Aug (MLi). 12 **Greater Yellowlegs** visited PSTP 27 Jun (HH); three stopped by a gravel bar in the Willamette River near Millersburg 15 Jul (JBo). A **Lesser Yellowlegs** foraged on a gravel bar downstream of Hyak Park 4-5 Aug; two were there 6 Aug (JBo). Numbers of **Least Sandpipers** refueling at PSTP grew from 7 on 27 Jun (HH) to 12 on 4 Jul (PO) and 38 by 27 Jul (WW). **Western Sandpiper** tallies at PSTP included 10 on 29 Jun (HB), 4 on 4 Jul (PO), 2 on 27 Jul (WW), and 3-4 on 17 Aug (OH, HH). Five **Long-billed Dowitchers** turned up 10 Jul (HH); over 50 were at ANWR 3 Aug (RG). A **Wilson's Snipe** was at EEW 31 Jul (RG).

Rarer shorebirds for our region included a **Baird's Sandpiper** at BSNWR 25 Jul (WW) and a juvenile **Semipalmated Sandpiper** photographed at Baskett Slough NWR 9 Aug (FrK); local wetlands also yielded several sight reports of this species which is difficult to distinguish from Western Sandpiper. A **Wilson's Phalarope** continued in nesting habitat at Finley NWR 12 Jul (EKn); one in non-breeding plumage was at PSTP 23 Aug (WW). Three **Red-necked Phalaropes** were at PSTP 8 Aug (PO); variable numbers continued thru the end of the period.

Calls of up to five **Marbled Murrelets** were heard near nesting habitat in the Lobster Creek valley in w. Benton County 12 & 18 Jul (WW; HH, OH, CHk, AHk). Migrant gulls began to turn up at PSTP, with a **Ring-billed Gull** 2 Jul and a **California Gull** 3 Jul (WW). Young gulls flew westbound over coast range 21 Jul (JiF) as the **California Gull** count at PSTP reached 39 by 27 Jul (WW).

Alarm calls from towhees alerted CHi to a **Western Screech-Owl** perched on a red-cedar in North Albany 27 Jul. A juv. **Great Horned Owl** begged in EEW 3-11 Aug (m. obs.) but seemed to be on its own; a week later a road-killed juv. was seen along Camp Adair Rd. Two **Barred Owls** were along Soap Creek 8 Jul (JSi). A male **Long-eared Owl** called from private forest land near EEW early on 2 & 3 Aug, answered by a probable female 2 Aug (JGe). For the past two nesting seasons a pair has been found by owl surveys in MDF a few miles away, in a stand that was logged this year; another **Long-eared Owl** was heard and seen near Blodgett earlier this season (JdH).

Common Nighthawks included one high over nw Corvallis and one e. of Tangent 28 Jun (JSi; JGe); one along Bellfountain n. of FNWR 29 Jun (JJ), one over Mt. Fir Park in Independence in late July (KLi), and one or two calling near Ft. Hoskins 15 Aug (RFo).

A few **Vaux's Swifts** flew around a chimney at 1st and van Buren in Corvallis 4 Jul (PLi, JLi); 30 roosted there 19 Jul (NBa). Groups totaling about 40 investigated the Albany fire station chimney 22 Jul but did not go in (CHi, JHi); none went in on 19 Jul (PGr). A few **Rufous Hummingbirds** (main-

ly females and immatures) continued to visit local feeders along with the resident **Anna's Hummingbirds**. A **Belted Kingfisher** flew along Rock Creek near Alsea 18 Jul (RFo).

Three **Acorn Woodpeckers** at TWG 22 Jul (ESt) seemed to be part of a new colony. Many were in a grove s. of Plymouth on Bellfountain Rd. 23 Aug (RFo). A juv. **Red-breasted Sapsucker** was in MDF 24 Jul (HB). A female **Northern Flicker** with a juv. tagging along visited feeder near TCP 28 Jun (JDS).

A "car-surfing" **American Kestrel** at BSNWR 19 Jul landed on the roof rack of a car rolling slowly along Coville Rd., then rode along for close to ¼ mile (FrK). **Peregrine Falcons** were spotted s. of Alsea 26 Jun and s. of Independence 23 Aug (JSi, RHy; MLI). A large falcon over Marys Peak 5 Aug was either a young peregrine or an early migrant **Prairie Falcon** (RLu).

An **Olive-sided Flycatcher** called on Marys Peak 23 Jul (LPN); a juv. was in MDF 24 Jul (HB). A juv. **Willow Flycatcher** was in MDF 24 Jul (HB). On Marys Peak 23 Jul, along with many **Hammond's Flycatchers** that were still vocalizing, two non-vocal, skulking birds were judged to be **Dusky Flycatchers** (LPN). The dry, hot summer caused a few flycatchers to adopt novel strategies for finding insects, such as a **Western Wood-Pewee** that foraged on the ground at LSNA 11 Jul (JGe). The call of wood-pewees, one of our most familiar summer sounds, was scarce by late Aug.

A **Black Phoebe** hunted insects over the Taylor Water Treatment Facility 29 Jun (DBo); one flew over a residential yard near Kings Blvd in Corvallis 9 Aug (HH) as a further sign of this species' spread in our area. A **Western Kingbird** at FNWR HQ 29 Jun (JJ) may have been from the family that nested on the North Prairie.

A **Red-eyed Vireo** sang at LSNA 29 Jun and 8 Jul (BTi); one was seen 16 Aug (JGe). One sang w. of Corvallis airport 3-4 Jul (WW, PO). Six **Gray Jays** were in MDF near Peavy Arboretum 18 Jul (JSi); two were in DF 20 Aug (BPr).

A color-banded male "**Streaked**" **Horned Lark** at Herbert Open Space in early July (PMo) was banded at Corvallis airport in summer 2012 but not seen there again until Nov 2014 (RMO).

Purple Martins called near a snag sw of Philomath where two strafed a **Peregrine Falcon** 21 Jul (JiF). The ASC bicycle birding trip to Willamette Park 29 Jun heard a **Northern Rough-winged Swallow** and saw numerous **Violet-green Swallows** as well as **Cliff, Tree,** and **Barn Swallows** (DBo).

A **Tree Swallow** family nesting near EEW departed by 19 Jul (JGe). A **Violet-green Swallow** pair tended young near TCP 6 Jul in a box where they started 9 Jun (JDS); a pair using a nest box in nw Corvallis were last noted 7 Jul (JSi). **Violet-green Swallows** departed from a yard sw of Philomath by 23 Jul (KnF), by which date over 300 had gathered at LSNA (JGe). A pair of **Barn Swallows** fed nestlings from a second brood s. of Corvallis 23 Jul (JSw). A pair copulated on wire near Salem 30 Jul (KnF). A fledgling on the ground in the middle of a field at TCP was tended by its parents 6 Aug (JDS).

Black-capped Chickadees in North Albany raised a second brood this year (Chi). An unusual **chickadee** similar to Black-capped Chickadee but with a brown cap was at Iron Mtn 21

Aug (HB). A **Bushtit**: nest Willamette Park was active 29 Jun (DBo); adults fed nestlings near TCP 14 Jul (JDS). A **Brown Creeper** turned up in a rotting cherry tree near TCP 17 Jul (JDS).

Juv. **Bewick's Wrens** were noted at many locations during Aug. A **House Wren** turned up near EEW 19 Jul (JGe); other sightings outside of nesting habitat were frequent by mid-Aug. An **American Dipper** family foraged on Quartzville Cr. 16 Jul (MGe, BGe, JGe).

A silent **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** with some yellow on the bill indicating a hatch-year bird flitted around a rose bush at McFadden Marsh 7 Aug (WW).

Western Bluebirds in n. Corvallis showed cooperative behavior, as a young male from a brood that fledged in May brought click-beetle larvae to younger siblings 17 Jun; the same pair hatched five of six eggs 1-2 Aug despite temperatures up to 107 °F during the late stages of incubation (LM). Early nocturnal migrant **Swainson's Thrushes** called in flight near EEW 11 Aug (JGe). More were heard over NW Corvallis 23-25 Aug (CO; JSi; HH). Two **Varied Thrushes** were at FNWR 11 Aug (BPr). Sharp-eyed Girl Scouts spotted an **American Robin** nest with young at Rock Creek around 23 Jul (fide MC).

A **Wrentit** sang behind the Benton Co. Museum in Philomath 24 Aug (MC). A probable **Gray Catbird** was heard 25 & 26 Jun on the Linn Co. side of the Willamette near Corvallis (MWe). A very early **American Pipit**: was s. of Independence 23 Aug (MLi).

Many **Yellow Warblers** sang at Willamette Park 29 Jun (DBo). A possible male **Black-throated Blue Warbler** near TCP 12 Jun (JDS) was seen briefly but had markings and bill shape consistent with this species. A **Black-throated Gray Warbler** family group was near EEW 19 Jul (JGe); a migrant was at Stewart Lake 24 Aug (JSi), A juv. **MacGillivray's Warbler** was in MDF 24 Jul (HB); a dispersing adult female called near EEW 25 Jul (JGe). A male **Common Yellowthroat** fed young near TCP 12 Jul (JDS). **Wilson's Warblers** dispersing from breeding habitat included one near TCP 5 Jul (JDS), and adults with a juv. near EEW 19 Jul (JGe). **Yellow-breasted Chats** sang at LSNA 29 Jun (BTi), at Martin Luther King Jr Park 5 Jul (DBo), and Alpine 7-8 Jul (MAU). Near EEW, chats were mainly apparent from their "mew" from 4 Jul onward. A hatch-year **Western Tanager** was in MDF 24 Jul (HB). A male with a still-orange-red head snacked on sun-dried cherries near EEW 9 Aug (JGe).

A family group of **Chipping Sparrows** was on Marys Peak 23 Jul (LPN). Both a **Chipping Sparrow** and a **Vesper Sparrow** were at at PSTP 23 Aug (WW). A **Lark Sparrow** turned up at PSTP 17 Aug (RNz; OH, HH; WW). A juv. **Grasshopper Sparrow** was at the Baskett Butte trailhead 16 Aug (EKn), within ½ mile of prairie restorations where a male sang regularly in May-June; another juv. was at PSTP 23 Aug (WW). A very early migrant **Sooty Fox Sparrow** sang near EEW 9 Aug (JGe). A juv. **Song Sparrow** with an adult was near TCP 23 Aug (JDS). A late **White-crowned Sparrow** nestling from a second brood at LSNA 24 Jul was just developing pin feathers 28 Jul, but left the nest and was hopping around in the prairie restoration by 31 Jul. Family groups of **Dark-eyed Juncos** visited water near EEW 30 Jul.



Black-headed Grosbeaks began to head south, with adult males leaving firs. A male was still near EEW 30 Jul. Male **Lazuli Buntings**: were also scarce by 30 Jul when juveniles followed their mom around near EEW.

Surprisingly few **Brown-headed Cowbird** chicks were reported this summer. No **Tricolored Blackbirds** were reported this season from the location se. of Albany where a nesting colony was found last year.

Purple Finches began singing again in late Aug. A possible **Cassin's Finch** female was reported from Marys Peak 23 Jul (LPN). **Evening Grosbeaks** were scarce near Corvallis but one was heard at the Glenbrook log pond w. of Alpine 26 Jun (JSi).

Gray Fox sightings included one near Starker Arts Park early on 28 Jun (JGi) and one that caught a rodent near Dixon Creek in the Timberhill area 18 Jul (DBo). A **weasel** was in the tool shed at Hesthavn 26 Jun, where it should be able to find plenty of mice (JGi). A **mink** bounded along the trail near the entrance of TWG in mid-Aug (CHI).

30 **Red Saddlebags** found at PSTP 3 Aug (HB) turned out to be part of an unprecedented incursion of these dragonflies into Oregon. They continued to be seen thru 26 Aug (JSi).

In **September** many of the neotropical migrant songbirds that we enjoyed over the summer will be heading south, but we can look forward to arrivals of wintering sparrows, raptors and waterfowl. Please post your observations to the Mid-Valley birding list at midvalleybirding.org, e-mail them to me at joel.geier@peak.org, or call (541) 745-5821 by 22 Sep.

ATOP THE NESTBOX

As we wait for our 2015 nesting data to be compiled, we try to make sense of what we saw this year. Warm spring weather favored successful nesting, but prolonged heat discouraged summer nesting. For those birds that chose to brave the heat, drought-like conditions appeared to suppress the insect population and the production of berries, leading to difficulties even for nests with only 2 or 3 chicks. As a result, we expect our numbers to be lower than usual.

Now is a good time to make those needed repairs on the nestboxes that were in use this year. Any unused boxes in the field may be occupied by wasps, so best to wait for cooler weather.

Raylene Gordin

ASC EDUCATION NEWS

Our ASC Education program is now led by a team of volunteers, rather than any individual or chairperson. The goal is to rebuild a more coordinated and active education and outreach program. The team begins with:

- 1) **Jessica Brothers**- leading marketing, outreach, and grant writing, as well as teaching Aquatic Ecology (AE) classes and fielding general inquiries about ASC Education programs and opportunities;
- 2) **Michelle Shula**-coordinating curriculum & program

development with state science standards, & teaching AE classes; and

- 3) **Teri Engbring** - volunteer support.

ADDITIONAL VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED TO:

- 1) help teach the Aquatic Ecology (AE) hands on science classes Thursdays from April-June, 2016 at Hesthavn;
- 2) reach out to the wider public through tabling at community events from the Farmer's Market to the annual Sustainability Fair;
- 3) plan and staff special events, i.e., the Winter Wildlife Field Day that was held at Finley NWR last March; and
- 4) assist other area environmental, service and education groups, i.e., scouts, as needed.

In particular, a volunteer Event Coordinator is needed for the Winter Wildlife Field Day we hope to repeat in March, 2016. This could be a unique opportunity for a special volunteer who wants to make a focused, significant contribution to environmental education. There are also many other opportunities for volunteers to support environmental education in our area.

If you would like to help, please contact us:

Jessica Brothers at: educationaudubon@gmail.com

Michelle Shula at: hesthavneducation@gmail.com

Teri Engbring at: engbring@hotmail.com

Thanks to Kate Mathews, Marcia Cutler, and Sue Powell, who enjoyed designing and guiding a fun, interactive unit on Avian Flight and Bird Watching with nearly 200 local Girl Scouts at their Rock Creek day camp in July.

Thanks, too, to newly appointed Board member-at-large Mark Baldwin for agreeing to help maintain, update and track ASC's extensive collection of Study Skins and Bird Specimens.

Teri Engbring

CONSERVATION CORNER

WANTED: YOUR CONSERVATION INTERESTS!

I'm honored to take the lead in Conservation efforts for the Audubon Society of Corvallis. I look forward to helping accomplish a number of conservation goals in Corvallis, in Linn and Benton counties, in Oregon, and even at the national level. First, I'd like to extend a big thank you to Dave Mellinger for his excellent leadership in identifying our conservation goals, and keeping our members in-the-know.

Despite the official title of ASC Conservation Chair, I look forward to hearing from you with your own conservation concerns, whether it is birds or other wildlife, habitats, drought and water issues, energy development and conservation, pollution, climate, ocean or other concerns. We share many of these concerns with other organizations, through our supporting memberships, letter-writing and lobbying campaigns, and through collaborative planning and actions.

Besides benefiting from the professional expertise and experience of our members, ASC can provide a great venue for advocacy for positive changes to benefit birds, wildlife, and their habitats, as well as human society. We do this best through our collective voice. A recent court victory that

OPEN 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 MEMBER:

Fata Padgitt

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

To renew your membership online go to the ASC website (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, field trip 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: 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

gained protection for golden eagles illustrates the efficacy of collective conservation voices (Audubon lead among them). The team backing plaintiffs convinced a federal court to require the US Fish & Wildlife Service to thoroughly analyze and regularly review the often fatal impact on eagles of expanding wind power developments, instead of issuing eagle take permits for their expected 30 year lifespan. Speaking with a more collective voice means I need to hear what is important to you, and collectively for our Chapter. In November, I'll be taking our Chapter conservation priorities to a statewide Audubon Chapter meeting, where annual priorities for action will be decided.

Please see the back page of the CHAT for my contact information, and thank you for your interest, support, and help.

Jim Fairchild

COMMUNITY NOTES

IT'S TIME TO "TAKE CHARGE"

There's never been a better time – or better reasons – to make your home more energy efficient. Whether you're interested in saving money, reducing your carbon footprint, or helping the whole community move toward a more sustainable future, now is the time to take advantage of energy-saving opportunities.

"Every action counts!" is the primary message of Take Charge Corvallis, the local initiative to compete for the Georgetown University Energy Prize. Corvallis is one of 50 small and medium-sized cities across the country striving to become #1 by reducing their use of electricity and natural gas in homes and municipal buildings. The community that saves the most energy in 2015 and 2016 will win \$5 million to invest in community energy projects. The Corvallis initiative is being led by the Corvallis Sustainability Coalition's Energy Action Team and Energize Corvallis, a project of the Corvallis Environmental Center.

Take Charge Corvallis is offering a lot of support to everyone in Corvallis – renters and homeowners alike. Freebies, rebates, tax credits, and assistance with installing solar are all part of the mix. Choose one or more of the following resources:

- 1) **Communities Take Charge** (energizecorvallis.org/takecharge) – "Shop" on this website for energy-saving actions to do in your home. Enter a drawing for \$10,000 every time you register.
- 2) **Direct Install** (energizecorvallis.org/freelightbulbs) If you're a Pacific Power customer who lives in a single family home, you can receive up to 16 free LED lightbulbs, as well as water-saving faucet and shower aerators. This \$220 value can save you up to \$175 annually.
- 3) **Energy Trust of Oregon** (energytrust.org) If you're a Pacific Power or NW Natural customer, you can take advantage of amazing financial incentives for lighting, appliances, weatherization, heating, water heating, and solar.
- 4) **Clean Energy Works** (cewo.org – Use our local code LGBEN) This option is for people who want a whole home retrofit. If you live in a detached single-family home built before 1993, you can request a free home energy evaluation. Receive additional cash rebates and "no money down" financing when you make energy efficiency improvements.
- 5) **Seeds for the Sol** (seedsforthesol.org) If you own a home that's suitable for solar, but you don't have enough money up front, you can become a Sun Harvester and receive a zero interest loan to enable you to install solar panels on your roof. Or become a Sun Buddy and invest in our community by providing a \$9,000 interest-free loan that will be paid back by a Sun Harvester within 4-5 years.

These are all "win-win" options, since every energy-saving action allows you to save money and reduce your carbon footprint. As a community, we have a small window of time, until Dec. 31, 2016, to make the most of this great opportunity. The sooner you take action, the better. So take charge, Corvallis. Every action counts!

Annette Mills, Facilitator, Corvallis Sustainability Coalition



A SAFER RODENTICIDE?

A few months ago I wrote about the toxicity of anticoagulant rodent baits for hawks and owls which eat rodents. The anticoagulants get passed on to animals that have eaten poisoned rodents. So, I looked around for rodenticide alternatives that are less harmful.

My husband Kirk brought home a product from BiMart, called RatX (TM). ConSeal International, Inc., the maker of RatX claims that it kills rats and mice but has no toxicity to pets, predators or people. The active ingredients listed on the Rat-X label are corn gluten meal and sodium chloride (table salt).

ConSeal claims that corn gluten meal in RatX works to kill rats and mice in 5 to 6 days. Rodents that ingest RatX die by dehydration when they eat the corn gluten, they get dehydrated, their blood thickens and they suffer from circulatory collapse.

ConSeal's website notes that rodents cannot vomit or regurgitate so eaten, the bait coats the lining of a part of the rodent's lower gut, disrupting the message to the rodent brain, causing it to stop drinking. This leads to dehydration, blood thickening, kidney dysfunction, coma and eventual death.

"The specific mode of action of RatX and its inherent safety to non-rodents is based on a range of characteristics unique to rodents." In other words, if another type of animal eats it, it isn't harmful.

The package label lists the non-active ingredients in RatX pelleted baits as: maltodextrin, sorbitol, wheat flour and wheat germ oil (ingredients in a box of cereal?)

There isn't much about RatX online yet. The manufacturer claims that Purdue University is doing tests on it and has pronounced it effective, but I found no such information online.

The ConSeal website suggests that RatX be used in places where anticoagulant baits may endanger people or wildlife, as there's "no risk to children or pets, or of primary or secondary poisoning of birds."

To kill a rodent with this product takes about 4 to 7 days of regular feeding, and they recommend that the pellets be wrapped in plastic wrap to stay dry, and placed down rodent holes. They explain that the user of RatX may notice more rodents during the 4-7 day period after baiting, as rats and mice become lethargic and slower to react to disturbance then. It takes about an ounce of pellets to kill a rat and one-third to a half an ounce to kill a mouse.

I'm glad there are folks out there looking for safer products for rodent control besides anticoagulant baits that endanger wildlife. I baited down the holes in my raised beds with RatX last month. So far, the jury is out.

I will probably also resort to trapping in my garden, and keep you all informed about this product—let's hope it is as good as they say it is! If anyone has tried RatX, please let us know. To learn more, check the website: www.ratxproducts.com/RatXBooklet.pdf.

Carol Savonen

Naturalist, science and garden writer

BOARD MEETING SUMMARY

SUMMER 2015 ASC BOARD MEETING

The summer board meeting was held at Hesthavn July 30th after a potluck dinner. The Board approved the purchase of a laptop for use by the program chairman at the new venue for our general meetings, Chintimini Senior Center. Three members of the Sustainability Coalition gave presentations. The board will allow the Sustainability Coalition to give a 10 min presentation at each of the next 3 general member meetings. The board approved the reorganization of the Education Committee into a team effort without an individual chairman. The next board meeting will be at Hesthavn at 7 pm September 10th.

Gail Nickerson, Secretary

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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 final Thursday of the month. Please submit text using Microsoft Word to: chateditors@gmail.com

AUDUBON SOCIETY OF
CORVALLIS

CALENDAR

Sept 10	ASC Board Meeting, 7 pm at Hesthavn
Sept 12	Ankeny NWR Half day field trip
Sept 17	ASC General Meeting at Chintimini Senior Center, 2601 NW Tyler Ave, Corvallis
Sept 22	Oct Field Notes submissions due
Sept 24	Oct Issue CHAT submissions due
Oct 10	Finley NWR Half Day Field Trip

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 student; \$15 for Chat only subscriptions (email delivery only); \$50 for Supporting Level; \$100 for Patron Level; and \$200 for Benefactor Level.

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

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Please let us know: volunteerasc@gmail.com