



THE AUDUBON SOCIETY OF CORVALLIS CHAT

OCTOBER 2015

VOL. 45 #2

ASC GENERAL MEETING THURSDAY, OCT 15, 7:00-8:30 PM

**AT CHINTIMINI SENIOR CENTER:
2601 NW TYLER AVE (& 27TH), CORVALLIS**

At this 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!



Peter Moore visits an Albatross nest

OCTOBER'S PROGRAM: GIBSON'S WANDERING ALBATROSS ON ADAMS ISLAND

In late December 2014, ASC member Peter Moore traveled on a yacht to Adams Island, part of the Auckland Island group, south of New Zealand, to volunteer for a long-term albatross study and population monitoring program.

Unfortunately, the albatross population has been in decline in recent years. This research was part of an effort to understand the decline and search for ways to reverse it. Entry to Adams Island is by permit only, so few people get the chance to see this largely pristine island. With slides and video, Peter will describe the work and wonderful wildlife found on Adams Island.

Peter worked for 27 years on threatened bird species programs for the Department of Conservation in New Zealand, and spent many field seasons studying and surveying albatrosses on remote subantarctic islands south of New Zealand, particularly Campbell Island. Since moving with his wife Stacy to Oregon in 2009, Peter has worked for Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and currently is a restoration ecologist with the Institute for Applied Ecology in Corvallis. Peter and Stacy live near Philomath and have both previously been board members of Corvallis Audubon.

Social hour begins at 6:30, with the chapter meeting starting at 7:00 and the program starting about 7:30.

*Bill Proebsting,
Vice Pres. and Program Chair*

SCHEDULE FOR REMAINING PROGRAMS

For your information, here's the schedule of remaining programs for the 2015-2016 ASC general member meetings:

- Nov. 19 Gail Langellotto, OSU, on Gardening for Bees and Butterflies
- Dec. 17 Member Slide Shows
- Jan. 21 William Proebsting on Birding the Manu Road in Peru
- Feb. 18 Matt Lee on Birds of Belize
- Mar. 17 Raylene Gordin on The Secret Lives of Bluebirds
- Apr. 21 Scott Black, Xerces Society, on Pollinator Conservation
- May 19 Matt Betts, OSU, on Do birds help trees grow in managed forests? Lessons from a long-term experiment in the OR Coast Range

ASC's general member meeting is held on the third Thursday of each month from September through May.

Bill Proebsting, proebstw@gmail.com

ASC GENERAL MEETING

Thursday, Oct 15,
7:00-8:30 pm

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

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

MANY HANDS MAKE LIGHT WORK

As all Corvallis Auduboners know, we have moved to a new venue for our monthly chapter meetings. The Chintimini Senior Center offered a reasonable rental rate, in exchange for our doing set-up and clean-up. It was heartwarming for Kate and me to arrive at 6:10 PM for the September chapter meeting, and see six or eight Auduboners already hard at work setting up chairs, tables, and audiovisual equipment. Even more heartwarming, as the meeting ended, nearly everybody took a hand in returning chairs and tables, sweeping the floor, and helping Refreshment Chair Becky Garrett close down her operation. Thanks to everyone's help, we were out of the building within our contracted three-hour rental period.

Special thanks to Becky, who did a great job with refreshments under unanticipated and less-than-optimal conditions. Who would have expected that hot water for tea and instant coffee would flow from a tap on the other side of the room?

All in all, a good shake-down cruise on uncharted waters. Thanks to everybody for helping out.

Chris Mathews, President

FIELD TRIP 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 <http://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.

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

October 10 E.E. Wilson (bring ODFW parking permits)
November 14 Finley NWR, Philomath Sewage Treatment Ponds

Bill Proebsting

ATOP THE NESTBOX

Below are the bluebird trail nesting data for the 2015 season. There was a higher failure rate this year, resulting in a 7% decrease in the number fledged compared to last year. In reviewing last year's numbers, there was a 6% decrease in the number fledged as compared to the previous year. It looks like we're in a mild downturn.

Nesting attempts.....	214
Failures	31
% successful	86
First broods.....	119
Second broods	59
Third broods.....	5
Fourth broods.....	0

Eggs laid.....	1082
Eggs per attempt.....	5
Hatched.....	826
% hatched	76
Banded	—
Fledged	700
% fledged	85
Fledged per occupied box.....	5

Once again, my heartfelt thanks go to the bluebird trail volunteers and to all the landowners and donors who continue to make our efforts successful.

Raylene Gordin

CONSERVATION CORNER

OREGON WOLF MANAGEMENT

With humpback whales joining double-crested cormorants and sea lions feasting on scrumptious little fishes inside the mouth of the Columbia River, and greater sage grouse now only afforded protections by western states, the Oregon Wildlife Commission has many little-understood new predator-prey relationships to sort through, regulate for, and manage. It is a formidable task. One relationship they seemed to have gotten largely right—but I won't say on target—has been wolf management.

On October 9th the Commission will be considering removing the gray wolf from Oregon endangered species listing under the Oregon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan (WMP) please see http://www.dfw.state.or.us/wolves/management_plan.asp. That delisting decision is allowable because the threshold level of recovery of 4 successfully breeding pairs in eastern Oregon has been achieved. But is this reason enough to delist Oregon's wolves?

You can e-mail public comments or questions directly to the Commission: odfw.commission@coho2.dfw.state.or.us

Here are several reasons I believe wolves need not be delisted at this time:

The Oregon WMP has been far more successful than other state plans. Phase I conservation principles applied statewide would continue to foster education and dialogue across interest groups, minimize wolf losses to livestock predation conflicts, extend the timeframe for monitoring ungulate prey base changes, and allow for controlled expansion of wolf populations into all suitable habitats.

The WMP recognizes the secure Oregon wolf population relies on Idaho wolves, but does not address the importance of a secure southern Oregon population to wolf recovery in California. Successful range expansion into Northern California, not anticipated in the WMP, would better ensure wolf persistence in western Oregon, as other unanticipated habitat disruptions by fire and climate take their tolls.

Significant portions of suitable habitat, the millions of acres of the Klamath and Coast Range provinces, are still devoid of known wolf populations. Wolf range expansion into these areas is limited by the blanket of humanity in the I-5 corridor. Once occupied, with sparse human populations wolves could have sweeping ecological benefits, even for industrial forestland management. But without maintaining the successful wolf conservation methods of Phase I to address livestock losses and ungulate population changes, wildlife managers will be



compelled to resort to a failed program of the past decades—a wolf hunting season.

Political pressure to resume wolf hunting is considerable, both externally by the hunting lobby and internally by an agency bereft of revenues outside hunting license and tag fees. Backsliding into this model erodes both the ecological importance of wolf predation on the landscape, and from progress gained in learning how we and wolves can live compatibly together. This is the most important lesson gained from Oregon wolf recovery – we are still learning how to get along.

Jim Fairchild

HESTHAVN NEWS

Access to Oak Creek has long been a problem at Hesthavn. The bank is too steep, thick vegetation blocks access, and with each winter flood, conditions can change tremendously.

We often have education programs that require access to the creek, but we want to restrict access to one permanent location.

Several years ago Jerry Paul built a nice set of steps going down to the creek. Unfortunately, it turned out that those steps were located right where we needed to build the bridge, so when that was constructed, the stairs had to be dismantled.

Last year Ross Holloway and Susan Nicholas constructed some temporary steps next to the bridge. At one of our ASC general meetings I had a conversation with Jerry about how we might construct a more permanent set of steps. He offered to direct a crew to take the wood from his previous set of steps and construct a new set.

I submitted this to the GEO 300 class at Oregon State University as a potential class project and a group of six took it on. So on July 25th an enthusiastic group of OSU students showed up and Jerry set them to work re-constructing the steps.

Many thanks to Mia McFaddin, Harry Armstrong, Alex Ahshez, Mengie Chen, Dave Myers, and Mohammed Almaamam. Many apologies to all whose names I may have mangled, since I was attempting to read names from a sign-in sheet. Also many thanks to John Criscitiello who joined in on this work party and frequently participates in Hesthavn work parties.

Sadly, many of our most productive volunteers at Hesthavn have had to deal with time consuming family medical needs recently, and as a result we are VERY short-handed on everything from gardening to building and grounds maintenance help, so please contact me if you can fill in, even on a short term basis. It's a great team of dedicated folks sharing care for our special Nature Center.



*GEO 300 class from
Oregon State University*

FIELD NOTES

8/26/15-9/22/15

Rain showers on 29-30 Aug and 4 Sep gave respites from the dry, hot summer, but just enough rain to dampen the surface of the parched soil. One more hot spell was still in store with thermometers reaching 95° F on 11 Sep. Cooler, moist air 15-17 Sep finally brought half an inch of rain. The prolonged drought shrank wetlands at BSNWR to mere puddles by 31 Aug (FrK; MRo); Lost Lake in the Santiam Pass area was also mostly dry on 10 Sep (JMe, DKo).

Locations: ANWR = Ankeny National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), BHF: Bald Hill Farm, BMF = Beazell Memorial Forest, BSNWR = Baskett Slough NWR, DF = Dunn Forest, EEW = E.E. Wilson Wildlife Area, FNWR = William L. Finley NWR, HQ = headquarters, JFW = Jackson-Frazier Wetland, Kester Pond is along De Armond Rd in s. Polk co. 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. Toketie Marsh is a remedial wetland at Coffin Butte Regional Landfill. Cabell Marsh, McFadden Marsh, and North Prairie are locations at FNWR.

Observers: AIC: Alan Contreras, BA: Bob Altman, BPr: Bill Proebsting, BTi: Bill Tice, BW: Brandon Wagner, CCe: Caleb Centanni, CHI: Carol Hiler, CO: Catherine Otto, DAH: Don Alan Hall, DBo: Don Boucher, DNa: Dileep Nageswaran, DKo: Diane Kook, DRo: Doug Robinson, ECe: Evan Centanni, FrK: Frank Kolwicz, HB: Howard Bruner, HH: Hendrik Herlyn, IDz: Isaac Denzer, JDS: Jim Smith, JGe: Joel Geier, JGi: Julie Gibson, JH: Jeff Harding, JLi: Judy List, JMe: Judy Meredith, JrP: Jerry Paul, JuP: Judith Paul, KH: Kaynor Heineck, KnF: Karan Fairchild, LM: Lisa Millbank, LPN: Lars Norgren, MB: Mark Baldwin, MC: Marcia F. Cutler, MG: Mary Garrard, MLI: Mike Lippsmeyer, MLK: Maureen Leong-Kee, MRo: Mitch Rohse, OA: Olin Allen, OH: Oscar Harper, PCo: Pam Comeleo, PGr: Peter Greenberg, PLi: Peter List, PO: Pam Otley, RCa: Randy Campbell, RCo: Randy Comeleo, RG: Roy Gerig, RHu: Robert Hunter, RNz: Russ Namitz, SHg: Susan Hatlevig, SpM: Spencer Mair, SuY: Sunia Yang, VSt: Virginia Stanton, WFz: Woody Fitzgerald, WW: Will Wright.

Other abbreviations: (e) = reports found in eBird database; e.o.p. = end of period; juv. = juvenile, imm. = immature, m. obs. = many observers.

Hundreds to thousands of migrating **Greater White-fronted Geese** gabbled in flight over many mid-valley locations during the night of 20-21 Sep on through the next morning (WW, MG, BW, MLI, OH). An early flock of **Cackling Geese** over Corvallis 9 Sep (HB) was followed by 50 over BHF 21 Sep (BPr) and 85 at PSTP 21 Sep (HH, OH, IDz). The **American Wigeon** flock at PSTP swelled to dozens by 20 Sep (LPN). Up to two **Blue-winged Teal** at PSTP continued thru e.o.p. (e); two also turned at Toketie Marsh 19 Sep (JGe). **Cinnamon Teal** were recorded thru e.o.p. at PSTP and TWG (e). 900 **Northern Shovelers** were at PSTP 22 Sep (HH). **Northern Pintails** and **Green-winged Teal** were seen by the ASC field trip to Ankeny 12 Sep (SpM); small numbers were noted at PSTP thru e.o.p. (e).

Two **Ring-necked Ducks** were at PSTP 6 Sep (PO); 20 were there by 20 Sep (LPN). Two **Lesser Scaup** were at PSTP 8 Sep (MB). An estimated 200 **Common Mergansers** were on the Willamette River between Albany and Independence 19-20 Sep (BTi). **Ruddy Duck** numbers at PSTP reached 11 by 16 Sep (HH).

On 31 Aug two **Sooty Grouse** and a three-family covey of **Mountain Quail** were seen on Marys Peak (LPN). 45 **California Quail** turned up s. of Philomath for the migration count 20 Sep (VSt).

Two **Common Loons** were on Foster Reservoir 21-22 Sep (JH). 1 or 2 **Horned Grebes** were recorded at PSTP 11 Sep thru e.o.p. (e). **Eared Grebes** were noted there 13 Sep thru e.o.p. (e). An **Eared Grebe** and a **Western Grebe** were along the Willamette below Albany 19 Sep (BTi).

17 **Double-crested Cormorants** were at Peoria 5 Sep (RCa). 50 **American White Pelicans** were at Cabell Marsh 30 Aug (VSt), with six still there 16 Sep (HH); 12 were at BSNWR 10 Sep (MRo).

An **American Bittern** flew out of the reeds at Cabell Marsh

Ray Drapek

16 Sep (HH). As wetlands shrank to puddles at BSNWR, carp and bullfrogs became so concentrated that up to 20 **Great Blue Herons** and 8 **Great Egrets** were hunting nearly shoulder-to-shoulder 30 Aug thru 4 Sep (MRo; DNa). Egrets also turned up at Cabell Marsh 30 Aug and Toketie Marsh 5 Sep (VSt; JGe). **Green Herons** included one at EEW 30 Aug (JGe), one in TCP 2-9 Sep (JDS), and two along the Willamette below Albany 19-20 Sep (BTi).

Migrating **Turkey Vultures** were conspicuous thru e.o.p. Four **Ospreys** and a **Bald Eagle** were along the Willamette below Albany 19 Sep. A **Sharp-shinned Hawk** that perched on the chimney of Wiegand Hall at OSU 18 Sep caused consternation for several hundred **Vaux's Swifts** that were waiting to go to roost (DBo). A **Red-shouldered Hawk** called in Sodaville 13 Sep (KH). One called in Chip Ross Park 20 Sep (DBo). Numbers of **Red-tailed Hawks** in the mid-valley increased noticeably by 11 Sep when a dark morph was along Airlie Rd. (JGe).

A **Sora** fed alongside a **Virginia Rail** at Ankeny 30 Aug (MLK). A late **Sora** was at TWG 16 Sep (JH). **American Coots** were numerous at PSTP by 20 Sep (LPN).

Two **Black-necked Stilts** were still at BSNWR 30 Aug but gone 31 Aug (MRo; FrK). An **American Avocet** stayed thru 30 Aug (FrK; MRo). A **Black-bellied Plover** was at PSTP 31 Aug (HB). A **Semipalmated Plover** was at Kester Pond 31 Aug and 8 were at BSNWR 5 Sep (BTi); the last local was from PSTP 13 Sep (WW). The last report of a **Solitary Sandpiper** was at FNWR 27 Aug (BPr). Migrant **Greater Yellowlegs** continued to be seen wherever there was water, with 19 still at Cabell Marsh 16 Sep along with eight **Lesser Yellowlegs** (HH).

Two well-documented juv. **Sanderlings** were at PSTP 4 Sep (WW, RNz; HB; HH, OH). A **Baird's Sandpiper** was photographed at Peoria 30 Aug (RCa); another was seen at Cabell Marsh 16 Sep (HH). Migrant **Least Sandpipers** and **Western Sandpipers** were noted thru e.o.p. (m. obs.). Two **Pectoral Sandpipers** were at Kester Pond 31 Aug (BTi). Some were found by ASC field trip to Ankeny 12 Sep (SpM). A bright juv. **Short-billed Dowitcher** was with nine **Long-billed Dowitchers** at FNWR 14 Sep (MB). A **Wilson's Snipe** winnowed briefly at FNWR 8 Sep (HB); one was at Lost Lake 10 Sep (JMe, DKo); one foraged on a wet lawn in NW Corvallis 22 Sep (PLi, JLi). The last **Wilson's Phalarope** report was at FNWR 27 Aug (BPr). A juv. **Red-necked Phalarope** was at PSTP 20 Sep (LPN).

Six **Ring-billed Gulls** were at FNWR 16 Sep (MB). A **California Gull** stopped by PSTP 8 Sep (HH; DRo). A **Common Tern** was photographed at PSTP 8 Sep (HH; DRo).

Twelve **Band-tailed Pigeons** perched near an oak grove with ripening acorns at EEW 13 Sep (JGe). **Mourning Doves** began to show up in new places by 31 Aug when one was heard in NW Corvallis (SHg). An unusually ruddy **Mourning Dove** missing its central tail feathers provided an identification puzzle at PSTP 8 Sep (PO).

A **Barn Owl** screeched over a field in n. Corvallis on the night of 1-2 Sep (LM). **Western Screech-Owls** sang their bouncing-ball song along the Scout Trail in Dunn Forest 30 Aug (PCo, RCo); one also sang in Corvallis 7 Sep (HB). A pair of **Great Horned Owls** hooted in NW Corvallis 19 Sep (MG). A **Northern Pygmy-Owl** called from the Witham Hill Natural Area in Corvallis 6 Sep (HH). Another called in McDonald Forest near Chip Ross Park 13 Sep (DBo, LM), bringing in a flock of smaller birds including a **Hutton's Vireo** and three feisty **Anna's Hummingbirds**. A likely **Barred Owl** hunted at JFW in early Sep (HB); one called in Corvallis 16 Sep (JGi). A **Great Gray Owl** perched by a meadow w. of McKenzie Pass 16 Sep (WFz). A **Northern Saw-whet Owl** scolded in response to screech-owl imitations near EEW 19 Sep (JGe).

Common Nighthawks called and occasionally boomed over Dunn Forest 30 Aug; one was still there 4 Sep (PCo, RCo). One flew over North Albany 10 Sep (Chi). One was along the Willamette below Albany 19 Sep (BTi).

Several hundred **Vaux's Swifts** swirled around a chimney at 208 2nd St. in downtown Albany 30 Aug (PGr). Similar numbers flew into chimney at Wiegand Hall at OSU 15 Sep, plus about 200 more seemed to be searching for a chimney near 10th & Jackson in

Corvallis (DBo). **Rufous Hummingbirds** were recorded thru e.o.p. in Peoria (RCa).

An estimated 50 **Belted Kingfishers** were along the Willamette between Albany and Independence 19-20 Sep (BTi). A probable **Lewis's Woodpecker** was in the oak savanna north of Woodpecker Loop at FNWR 13 Sep (DAH). Four sallied after flying insects and probed along moss-covered limbs of ancient oaks near Jefferson 19 Sep (BA, JGe). **Acorn Woodpeckers** stored acorns in a granary tree in Chip Ross Park 20 Sep (DBo). Two juv. **Red-breasted Sapsuckers** were still hanging out together at LSNA 8 Sep. A nest-box inspection near TCP 11 Sep turned up a **Downy Woodpecker**, roosting in a box that was used by **Black-capped Chickadees** and **Violet-green Swallows** earlier this year (JDS). A male **Hairy Woodpecker** began visiting a feeder nearby 26 Aug, and a family group of three **Northern Flickers** fed on ants in TCP 21 Sep (JDS). A **Pileated Woodpecker** fed on apples near Dallas 20 Sep (Nancy Clarke).

American Kestrel numbers increased noticeably in the Airlie area by 11 Sep. A **Prairie Falcon** was photographed at PSTP 10 Sep (JH), earlier than usual for this sparse but regular wintering species.

Late migrant Olive-sided Flycatchers were spotted in TCP (JDS) and w. of Monmouth 7 Sep (CCe, ECe). A migrant flock of eight **Western Wood-Pewees** were at EEW 4 Sep (JGe, HB); smaller numbers were noted thru e.o.p. (SpM; JGe; BTi; RCa). Two **Willow Flycatchers** were on a ranch near BSNWR thru 31 Aug (FrK). Two late **Hammond's Flycatchers** were noted without details at PSTP 21 Sep (DRo). A well-described **Dusky Flycatcher** was at LSNA 15 Sep (BTi). Late migrant **Pacific-slope Flycatchers** included one in TCP 7 Sep (JDS), and single birds at LSNA 8 & 10 Sep and feeding in a shaded grove at EEW 13 Sep (JGe). A migrant **Say's Phoebe** sallied after flying insects during sun breaks n. of Lewisburg 17 Sep (BA). A late **Ash-throated Flycatcher** was reported from PSTP 9 Sep (DRo); the description posted afterwards on eBird seemed to exclude other *Myiarchus* flycatchers.

A **shrike** not identified to species was north of Monroe 20 Sep (fide AIC). A **Hutton's Vireo** faced off with a **Red-breasted Nuthatch** and a **Black-capped Chickadee** in a birdbath s. of Philomath 18 Sep (VSt). A lingering **Warbling Vireo** was at LSNA 10 & 16 Sep (JGe).

Gray Jays visited a feeder near Fitton Green since 23 Aug (PCo, RCo). **Western Scrub-Jays** ferried acorns from an oak grove at EEW 13 Sep (JGe).

Purple Martins were last noted 10 Sep at PSTP (JH). **Tree Swallows**, **Violet-green Swallows** and **Barn Swallows** were all noted thru e.o.p. (e) though large flocks were seldom noted after 17 Sep. A lingering **Northern Rough-winged Swallow** foraged over the Willamette near a nesting site at LSNA 8 Sep (JGe); a late migrant was at PSTP 16 Sep (HH). The last local **Cliff Swallow** report was from PSTP 16 Sep (MB).

A flock of 20 **Bushtits** on the OSU campus took turns showering on the end of a rhododendron branch as a sprinkler ran 10 Sep (DBo). Unusually large numbers of **Red-breasted Nuthatches** visited a sunflower feeder in North Albany in late Aug thru mid-Sep, possibly due to a poor cone crop on drought-stressed Douglas-firs (Chi). Meanwhile the "**Slender-billed**" **White-breasted Nuthatches** native to oak woodlands in our region seemed to have a good nesting year; some were found by the ASC field trip to Ankeny 12 Sep (SpM). **Brown Creepers** were found in Chip Ross Park 20 Sep (DBo). A late migrant **House Wren** scolded at LSNA 16 Sep (JGe).

A **Golden-crowned Kinglet** nabbed gnats while balancing on a twig on the water surface at the St. Louis fish ponds 12 Sep, as **Bushtits** fed in a willow overhead (RHu). Six **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** were on Marys Peak 31 Aug (LPN); one was in McDonald Forest 5 Sep (BPr).

22 **Western Bluebirds** feed in pastures in the Soap Creek Valley 19-20 Sep (JGe; RHu). A **Townsend's Solitaire** was found on Marys Peak 4 Sep (RNz) and again 16 Sep (MB). Nocturnal migrant **Swainson's Thrushes** were noted thru e.o.p. (m. obs.). A low-elevation **Hermit Thrush** was noted without details at BHF 16 Sep (BPr). Migrant **American Robins** began to arrive with 45 in the south unit of



LSNA by 9 Sep (JGe). **Varied Thrushes** were heard at low elevations 21-22 Sep (m. obs.).

Two **Wrentits** were on Witham Hill in Corvallis 6 Sep (HH). One sang near prairie remnant in EEW 11 Sep (SuY).

20 **American Pipits** were at Lost Lake 10 Sep (JMe, DKo); a dozen were near BSNWR 19 Sep (BA, JGe).

Hundreds of **Cedar Waxwings** feasted on Portuguese laurel berries in NW Corvallis 7 Sep (SHg). Large flocks were also noted in North Albany 7 Sep and Corvallis 15 Sep (CHi; HH). Flocks in the Highland Dell area 22 Sep seemed less abundant than last year, feeding on insects more than berries (JuP, JrP).

An **Orange-crowned Warbler** was at Ankeny 12 Sep (ASC field trip, SpM). An adult male **Yellow Warbler** gleaned from an Oregon ash over Soap Creek 19 Sep (JGe).

An "**Audubon's**" **Yellow-rumped Warbler** turned up on Witham Hill 11 Sep (HH). Many lingering **Hermit Warblers** and 50 migrant **Black-throated Gray Warblers** were on Marys Peak 31 Aug (LPN). Seven were at LSNA 16 Sep (JGe). A few **MacGillivray's Warblers** also continued thru e.o.p. (e). Meanwhile **Townsend's Warblers** began to arrive as one took a dip in a N. Albany birdbath 1 Sep (CHi).

Common Yellowthroats, were still numerous in nesting habitat thru e.o.p.; 12 at LSNA 16 Sep included one juv. still begging a bit, apparently from a late nest (JGe). A migrant **Wilson's Warbler** shared a birdbath s. of Philomath with a **Chestnut-backed Chickadee** 18 Sep (VSt).

Late **Yellow-breasted Chats** were detected by their "mew" calls 30 Aug and 2 Sep at EEW (JGe). A **Western Tanager** bathed in a dented piece of scrap metal that held about a cup of water near BSNWR 31 Aug (FrK); a migrant was s. of Monmouth 17 Sep (MLi) and a few were reported thru e.o.p. (e).

Spotted Towhee numbers around EEW and LSNA increased by 8 Sep as wintering sparrows began to arrive. Four migrant first-winter **Chipping Sparrows** were at LSNA 10 Sep and others were reported from PSTP (e), but good numbers were still in nesting habitat on a Christmas tree farm near Airlie 19 Sep (BA, JGe). An adult **Clay-colored Sparrow** was reported from PSTP 9 Sep (DRo). A hatch-year **Brewer's Sparrow** was seen near the North Prairie overlook 10 Sep (BPr). Two **Vesper Sparrows** were still in nesting habitat at BHF 6 Sep (LM, DBo) and one was still there 18 Sep (BPr). An apparent juv. **Lark Sparrow** was near the HP campus in Corvallis 2 Sep, feeding in a sprayed margin of a grass field (LM). Wintering "**Sooty**" **Fox Sparrows** began to show up with three on Witham Hill 6 Sep (HH), one at EEW 13 Sep (JGe), and one in the Highland Dell area of Corvallis 16 Sep (JuP, JrP). Early arrivals of **Lincoln's Sparrows** included single birds at Ankeny and at Starker Forests' Alder Creek tract 3 & 5 Sep (BPr) and at TCP 6 Sep (JDS).

Movement of **White-crowned Sparrows** was apparent as some showed up in new places, including on near TCP 5 Sep (JDS); one sang in Philomath 21 Sep (VSt). Early arrivals of **Golden-crowned Sparrows** included an imm. in s Albany 7 Sep (JDS), two of unspecified age at PSTP 7 Sep (HH, OH), and three at BHF 9 Sep (BPr). Larger groups were widespread by e.o.p. **Dark-eyed Juncos** sw. of Philomath feasted on a termite hatch 30 Aug (KnF). Juncos started to be noticed in many new locations on the valley floor around 14-15 Sep (m. obs.).

Late migrant **Black-headed Grosbeaks** included an adult female in Peoria 10 Sep (RCa) and an imm. at FNWR 17 Sep (MB). The last **Lazuli Bunting** report with details was of a female at PSTP 7 Sep (HH, OH).

Western Meadowlarks were seen by the ASC field trip to Ankeny 12 Sep (SpM). A lingering **Yellow-headed Blackbird** called from a mostly dry cattail marsh near BSNWR 19 Sep (JGe).

A **Purple Finch** sang in oaks near BSNWR 19 Sep (BA). A **Cassin's Finch** was reported from Marys Peak 4 Sep (RNz). Flocks of **Red Crossbills** and **Evening Grosbeaks** were there 31 Aug (LPN). **Evening Grosbeaks** also began to be seen and heard around Corvallis after being scarce during summer, with flocks n. of downtown 10 & 13 Sep (DBo) and near Witham Hill 15 Sep (HH).

A **Northern Flying Squirrel** visited a bird feeder near Fitton Green 9 Sep (PCo, RCo). Five **River Otters** swam in a ditch that still held water amid the depleted marshes at BSNWR 31 Aug (FrK). A **Red-legged Frog** hopped across a trail in TCP 2 Sep (JDS). A **Western Skink** was spotted by a family visiting at Bald Hill Natural Area 6 Sep (LM, DBo).

At least 15 **Red Saddlebags** (dragonflies) were still at PSTP 7 Sep along with numerous **Black Saddlebags, darners** and **damsel-flies**; a few continued 9 Sep (HH, OH). A brown **Praying Mantis** was noted at TCP 26 Aug (JDS). A **Bald-faced Hornet** nest low in a shrub at LSNA was ripped to shreds – likely by a **Black Bear** – sometime between 10-18 Sep; a few hornets continued to use a small core of the nest that was still hanging from the shrub.

October should bring more wintering waterfowl, raptors, and sparrows to our area. 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 27 Oct.

COMMUNITY NOTES

NO ESA LIST FOR SAGE GROUSE

Federal management plans were finalized last week that protect sagebrush habitat from industrial development and wildfires, and adopt new management standards that advance conservation and habitat restoration across 67 million acres of the species' range on public lands. These Bureau of Land Management and USDA Forest Service conservation plans represent a major step forward for grouse conservation and need to be given a chance to work. Based on these collaboratively developed plans, as well as conservation efforts on state and private lands, it was determined that the grouse does not currently need to be listed as an endangered species.

The breadth and scope of the collaborative effort may be unprecedented in the history of bird conservation, said George Fenwick, President of American Bird Conservancy.

"This gives me hope that momentum can continue, more sagebrush habitat can be saved, that new science will be continuously employed for better outcomes, and that this work can become a model of cooperative conservation," Fenwick said. "Real success will require constant monitoring and evaluation—and willingness to make needed changes where we are falling short."

American Bird Conservancy supports the Department of Interior's decision that Endangered Species Act (ESA) protection is currently 'not warranted.' However, it will take time to tell if these plans foster enough habitat protection and effective controls on future developments to justify a final conclusion that the species will never warrant ESA protection.

"We are concerned about continued habitat loss from oil and gas drilling and new power line construction," said Steve Holmer, Senior Policy Advisor for American Bird Conservancy. "We want to see regular reviews of the species' population trend to learn if the current long-term decline is reversed. The plans must be shown to be working, and the extraordinary conservation efforts on private lands continued. If not, the listing issue may have to be revisited in the future."

We applaud the major conservation effort initiated by a range of stakeholders to support grouse recovery. These efforts, under the Natural Resources Conservation Service's Sage Grouse Initiative, have made significant progress to improve grouse habitat on private working lands, which are critical to the conservation of this and many other at-risk species.

BOARD MEETING SUMMARY

SEPTEMBER 10, 2015 ASC BOARD MEETING

The September Audubon Society of Corvallis Board meeting was held at the Hesthavn Nature Center. Program Chair Proebsting reported that speakers for the general meeting are scheduled through October, 2016. The Education committee is planning a second Winter Wildlife Field Day at Finley NWR next March. There are several conservation issues that ASC should be addressing and collaborating with other Audubon chapters. The next board meeting will be October 8, 2015 at 7pm at Fred Ramsey's home.

Gail Nickerson, Secretary

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 MEMBERS:

Bob Forgie
Nancy McArthur
Annette Mills & David Eckert
Pat & David Penfield

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

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

However, threats to the grouse remain. An amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act would prevent the new grouse conservation plans from going into effect. So far this year, ABC supporters have generated over 10,000 letters to Congress opposing this amendment, but it could still be enacted. Please write your Representative and Senators today and urge them to support sage grouse conservation.

Steve Holmer
American Bird Conservancy
sholmer@abcbirds.org

STREAKED HORNED LARK SURVEY RESULTS

Thanks to the many volunteers who responded to last year's request to search for color-banded Horned Larks in the mid- and southern Willamette Valley in the Winter of 2014-2015! This was part of a project to identify wintering locations for two specific populations of the federally threatened Streaked Horned Larks: (1) the South Puget Sound prairies, and (2) the Corvallis Airport.

Researchers in Washington and Oregon have been fitting hundreds of young larks with colored plastic leg bands, so our main goal in this survey was to try to find them.

Thirty-three birders managed to find flocks with a total of up to 585 Horned Larks, most of which were thought to be "streakers" as OSU's Dr. Randy Moore likes to call them.

The largest flock of wintering larks (peaking at 300) was found on Mike and Karen Lippsmeyer's property south of Monmouth (Polk Co.), using sparsely vegetated grass fields and a prairie/wetland restoration area. The next largest flock (up to 125) on Corvallis Municipal Airport lands was in Randy's research area and is generally closed to public access, so we left that flock for him to deal with!

Other sites with substantial lark flocks included Livermore Rd. (Polk Co.) with a peak count of 34, Glaser/Sand Ridge Rds. (Linn Co.) with 30, Blueberry/Smith/Harmony Rds. (Linn Co.) with 22, and municipal lands off of Kuebler Blvd in SE Salem (Marion Co.) with at least 10.

Getting good looks at the legs of larks turned out to be a tough proposition – funny how grass stubble can do that! However by making repeated visits to sites with flocks, an estimated 108 individuals (23%) were seen well enough to rule out the possibility that they were banded.

No banded birds were found. This was disappointing as everyone was hoping to be the first to find a banded lark. However, considering that we got reasonably good looks at more than 100 larks, this "negative" result might still shed light on migration and dispersal patterns from the intensively monitored populations in the South Puget Sound and Corvallis Airport. Wherever they go in winter, it's probably not where we were looking!

Thanks go to the volunteers who donated their time to check locations and send in reports: Deanna Emig, Brandon Wagner, Roy Gerig, Vickie Buck, Barbara Combs, Hendrik Herlyn, Frank Kolwicz, Mark Baldwin, Mark Nikas, Mike & Karen Lippsmeyer, Sally Hill, Caitlin Coberly, Rana Foster, Lisa Millbank, Don Boucher, Jim Phillipson, and Stephanie Hazen. Special thanks go to Streaked Horned Lark researchers Randy Moore (OSU) and Bob Altman (American Bird Conservancy) for sharing data.

Thanks also go to birders who posted Horned Lark reports for this period on eBird: Jeff Harding, Pam Otley, Sylvia Maulding, Chris Hinkle, Dave Irons, Doug Robinson, Jim Leonard, Shawneen Finnegan, Adrian Hinkle, Alan Contreras, Jeff Dillon, and Oscar Harper.

From maps of the results it appears that, at least last winter, the designated "critical habitat" areas for Streaked Horned Larks were not very close to the most important wintering areas. This highlights the importance of private lands as habitat for these federally threatened birds. Under the terms of the Endangered Species Act listing, nothing prevents conversion of the open habitats that Horned Larks require, to crops such as filberts or grapes that tend to fragment open landscapes.

Joel Geier

WILD BIRDS LEARN TO EAVESDROP

As a (semi) retired biochemistry professor, I continue to read research literature and occasionally see articles outside my field that may be of interest to ASC members. One such article, in Current Biology, describes experiments showing that birds can learn to recognize alarm calls from foreign species. The article, from Australian National University, was of interest because it in-



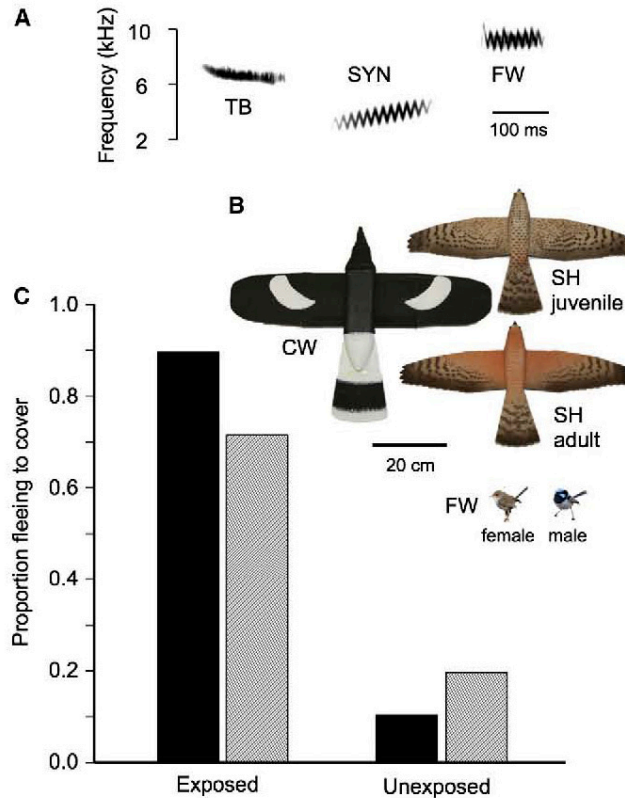
volved birds that Kate and I saw during a birding trip to Australia in 2011.

The article shows that birds “eavesdrop,” i.e., they gain information from calls intended for others. The authors showed that this involves learned behavior. As shown in the figure, individual superb fairy wrens were exposed to two foreign calls—the alarm call of the chestnut-rumped thornbill and a computer-generated call. No response. Then the same birds were exposed to the foreign calls as the model of a pied currawong or a collared sparrowhawk glided by overhead. Next, the birds were exposed to the foreign calls without the predator models present. As shown in the graph, nine of the ten birds tested dived for cover when the foreign call was played, whereas few of the birds had shown that response before exposure to the predator. The same response was seen whether the test was conducted on the day of exposure to the predator model (black bars) or the next day (gray bars).

The authors speculate that the ability to learn foreign alarm calls can help wild populations adapt to changes in community composition, e.g., the appearance of new predators. They speculate that captive birds in conservation programs could be trained before release to the wild to improve their survival. Unfortunately, the authors did not report on the survival of the test birds following their presumed release after conclusion of the study.

Reference: R. D. Magrath et al, Wild Birds Learn to Eavesdrop on Heterospecific Alarm Calls, *Current Biology* 25, 2047–2051 (2015)

Chris Mathews



THE ART OF CHARLES LEACH

Chuck and Jean Leach were instrumental in the founding of the Greenbelt Land Trust and other endeavors that now preserve wild areas and bird habitat in the Corvallis area.

On October 25th, a fundraiser for the Greenbelt Land Trust (GLT) featuring the artwork of Charles (Chuck) Leach will be held at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Corvallis (UUFC).

A public reception and sale will take place at the UUFC Sanctuary (2945 NW Circle Blvd.) on Sunday, October 25th at 3pm, with artwork remaining to be shown and sold through November. The mission is primarily to support Greenbelt Land Trust through a sale of artwork from the estate of Charles Leach, to bring awareness to the mission of GLT, while also bringing together an event in honor of Charles and Jean Leach with their friends, colleagues and family.

For more information, please contact Jessica McDonald (jessica@greenbeltlandtrust.org) at the Greenbelt Land Trust, or go to: <http://greenbeltlandtrust.org/event/uu-charles-leach-art-exhibit/>

Carolyn Peterson

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: alderspr@peak.org](mailto: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 final Thursday of the month. Please submit text using Microsoft Word to:

chateditors@gmail.com

AUDUBON SOCIETY OF
CORVALLIS

CALENDAR

Oct 8	ASC Board Meeting, 7 pm at Fred Ramsey house
Oct 10	Finley NWR Half Day Field Trip
Oct 15	ASC General Meeting at Chinimini Senior Center, 2601 NW Tyler Ave, Corvallis
Oct 22	Nov Issue CHAT submissions due
Oct 27	Field Notes submissions due

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Interested in volunteering?
Please let us know: volunteerasc@gmail.com

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