



# THE CHAT

AUDUBON SOCIETY OF CORVALLIS

FEBRUARY 2016

VOL. 45 #6

### FEBRUARY PROGRAM:

Thursday, Feb 18, 7:00-8:30 pm  
At Chintimini Senior Center:  
2601 NW Tyler Ave (& 27th), Corvallis

### BELIZE BIRDS...AND BEYOND WITH MATT LEE

Belize is a small Latin American country with a variety of habitat types that are relatively intact, a result of a relatively small population and a strong conservation ethic. Thus, Belize is a leading ecotourism destination close to the U.S. This month's program features gorgeous photographs taken by ASC's Matt Lee and Sue Powell on their two trips to the country. Matt will present photos of a number of Belize's 600 bird species, as well as many of the other wonderful plants and animals found there.

Matt Lee and Sue Powell have lived in Benton County for 10 years (8 in North Albany and 2 in Corvallis). Sue worked for the USGS in Corvallis as an outreach biologist, and Matt worked from their home as a biology textbook editor for Pearson Education. They have both been retired for the past three years and have been pursuing their shared interest in nature and wildlife photography. Their photos have appeared in 59 issues of the Chat since January 2008. A new book, *Birds of the Pacific Northwest*, by Canning, Aversa, and Opperman (publication expected in spring 2016), will include 12 of Matt's photos.

Social hour begins at 6:30, with the chapter meeting starting at 7:00 and the program starting at about 7:30. Questions can be directed to Bill at [proebstw@gmail.com](mailto:proebstw@gmail.com).

*Bill Proebsting, Vice Pres. & Program Chair*

### NEXT MONTH'S PROGRAM:

Mar 17: The Secret Lives of Bluebirds, By Raylene Gordin

### FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE

#### SECOND SATURDAY 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](mailto:proebstw@gmail.com) or 541-752-0108 with questions. Check the Midvalley ListServ at [www.midvalleybirding.org/pipermail/birding/](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 after noon.

#### NEXT HALF DAY FIELD TRIP: FEB 13, NEWPORT AREA.

We will meet at 7:30 AM as usual, but will return by mid- to late-afternoon. Bring lunch and water, dress appropriately. We will start on the estuary at the bottom of John Nye Road and progress through the usual haunts.

### ASC GENERAL MEETING

Thursday, Feb. 18  
7:00-8:30 pm  
At Chintimini Senior Center:  
2601 NW Tyler Ave (& 27th),  
Corvallis

Thank you to everyone who helps us set up chairs at 6:15 and take them down afterwards, and to Becky Garrett for coordinating our beverages and treats.

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## WEEKEND FIELD TRIPS FOR 2016

Sign up has already begun for this year's popular weekend field trips, and they tend to fill up fast.

Please note that the Rogue and Malheur trips, which were Friday to Sunday and Thursday to Sunday in past years, are now Saturday to Monday and Friday to Monday. The Rogue trip includes a play at Ashland's Oregon Shakespeare Festival, where we will actually see a play written by Shakespeare - the delightful comedy *Twelfth Night*.

Klamath Basin is back on the schedule. But the July Willowa trip is gone. There is a possibility that a February trip to the Willowa might be organized on short notice.

April 8-10	Bandon
April 22-24	Klamath Basin
May 6-8	Rogue Valley
May 20-23	Malheur NWR
June 10-12	Summer Lake
August 11-14	Steens
September 9-11	South Coast

These are group affairs, where we travel in rental vans from Enterprise, lodge at interesting facilities, and share expenses. Signup sheets will be available at the ASC general meeting. You can also sign up by email to [framsey5@comcast.net](mailto:framsey5@comcast.net).

If there are parts of Oregon you want to add to the schedule, please consider organizing a tour. Assistance in the planning and execution is available.

*Fred Ramsey*

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

### MALHEUR OCCUPATION

As I write this, it is day 17 of the occupation of Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. Who knows where we will be by the time you read this? Some basic facts, which will be apparent to most readers of this article:

Malheur National Wildlife Refuge was created in 1908 by order of President Theodore Roosevelt, from land already owned by the Federal government (after removal of the original occupiers, the Paiute Tribe). The Refuge expanded to its present 187,757 acres through legal land purchases in the 1930s

Although conflicts arose in the 1970s between Refuge personnel and local cattle ranchers, cattle grazing has continued on the Refuge, partly to control invasive plant species.

From 2008 through 2013 the Refuge conducted a comprehensive planning process, with all stakeholders involved. Cattle grazing on Refuge land will continue in accord with that plan.

Archaeological sites on the Refuge, the carp removal process in Malheur Lake, wildlife management programs, and the educational and outreach activities of the Refuge are threatened by the unlawful occupation of the so-called Citizens for Constitutional Freedom.

My chief concern, as a long-time Board member of the Great

Basin Society (recently retired), is the fate of the Malheur Field Station. The Great Basin Society is a nonprofit corporation created to operate the Field Station—some thirty buildings originally serving as a Job Corps center. The Great Basin Society owns the buildings, and the 320 acres of land on which they sit is held on long-term lease from the Refuge.

Duncan and Lyla, the Field Station directors, have left their home on the Field Station for their own safety. News reports indicate that the Refuge occupiers descended on the Field Station several days ago.

The Refuge will have the resources of the Federal government to repair the damage created by the occupiers. However, the Field Station is private property, operated with extremely limited resources—hostel and naturalist services to the several thousand annual Field Station visitors, financial contributions by Great Basin Society members, and occasional foundation grants. If the continued occupation jeopardizes the 2016 high season (April through October), the Field Station may not survive. ASC has supported Malheur Field Station in many ways, and its long-term survival should concern us all.

*Chris Mathews, ASC President*

## CONSERVATION CORNER

### A NEW ALBANY SWIFT ROOST— A TOWER FOR THE BIRDS

Each year Vaux's Swifts migrate north from their wintering grounds in Central America to Pacific coast forests as far north as British Columbia and Alberta to nest. On their journey to and from summer nesting, they gather at dusk into communal roosts, from dozens to thousands together, often taking advantage of shared body warmth and the moderated temperatures of hollow standing trees and snags. With the continued loss of old forests and the large snags they develop, these swifts have adapted to artificial structures like chimneys, requiring only a rough surface it cling to, minimal air current, and enough thermal mass to help maintain warmth during over cool nights. We actually named their eastern counterparts "Chimney" Swifts as they lost their own primeval forests.

We are delighted to announce the construction of a Vaux's Swift roosting tower in Albany at Cool Swanson Park (SE 6th between Railroad and Jackson), planned to be completed in time for the April swift spring migration! Several blocks away, Albany Fire Station No. 1 will soon be demolished, and along with it, an important swift roosting chimney will be gone. Important, because by roost count records, this ranks 12th on the entire west coast, with more than 19,000 birds seen entering on a single night!

This story began, as always, with the interest of people who wanted to protect 'their' birds, this time Fire Station personnel. Through the Audubon network of Chapters, the guidance of Larry Schwitters of Vaux's Happening and funding by Pilchuck Audubon, we are grateful for the enthusiastic cooperation and assistance of Albany Parks, Stability Engineering (Corvallis), Advantage Precast (Salem), all who have made this possible. Larry helped enliven our January meeting with pictures and stories, and has us ready to help introduce this year's migrating swifts



to a new roost.

We all can now add to the effort by 'baiting' the new tower with familiar scents and sounds. We'll soon have 10 pounds of swift poop collected by Umpqua Valley Audubon volunteers to put in the tower bottom. And we will need volunteers to broadcast the circling calls of Vaux's Swifts each evening during the spring migration period in early April. If anyone has suitable amplification equipment, please contact me. I already have the digital audio file ready for broadcasting.

If this first tower is adopted, a dozen more all along the west coast are planned. And though economical in design, \$10,000 is a lot for any Audubon Chapter. We are very grateful that Pilchuck Audubon is willing to fund this construction. And we hope you can help contribute to this effort.

We look forward soon to a successful new swift roost, an interpretive display about swifts, and a broadened exposure of our Chapter mission into Albany and Linn County.

*Jim Fairchild, Conservation Chair*

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## ASC EDUCATION NEWS

Families, nature fans and kids of all ages are invited to our second annual Winter Wildlife Field Day (WWFD) 2016 on March 12 at Finley National Wildlife Refuge from 10 am to 2 pm. Please help us get the word out regarding this fun, fascinating, active day at our local refuge.

Twelve activity stations will allow guests to see live raptors and mounted birds up close, view them in the wild on guided hikes, and draw them with art supplies we provide. Volunteers will show how birds fly and migrate and how wildlife interacts with our local forests. For more information, see the ASC website.

Volunteers from Chintimini Wildlife Rescue Center, Corvallis Audubon, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Institute for Applied Ecology, Friends of Finley, OSU Bird Nerds, and Starker Forests, Inc., will all be there to help.

Additional volunteers are still needed and asked to contact WWFD Volunteer Coordinator and CHAT newsletter editor, Teri Engbring at [chateditors@gmail.com](mailto:chateditors@gmail.com).

ASC's education team is also recruiting volunteers to help teach their popular hands on Aquatic Ecology program to elementary school classes this spring. Classes will run for 4 hours each Thursday from April 7 to June 9 at the Hesthavn Nature Center. Please email Education Team leader Jessica Brothers at [educationaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:educationaudubon@gmail.com) if you can help with some or all of these classes.

*Teri Engbring*

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## HESTHAVN NEWS

There are two work parties scheduled for February at Hesthavn. On Sunday February 7 from 12 to 4 pm we will be pulling blackberries and Yellow Archangel. Yellow Archangel is a nasty invasive which threatens to take over the west side of Oak Creek. On Sunday February 28 from 12 to 4 pm, we will be working on the native plant gardens next to the barn raking leaves and spreading mulch. We will have some students from the OSU GEO 300 class on-hand to help, but additional help

from Audubon regulars would also be greatly appreciated. It's always fun to hang out with the students, catch some of their youthful energy, and maybe impart some of our enthusiasm for birds and conservation. On a more long-term note .... on Saturday June 18 from 12 - 4 pm we will have our biennial OPEN HOUSE. This will include walks, talks, demonstrations, and hopefully some live birds from the Chintimini Wildlife Rehabilitation Center. Details have yet to be worked out, so mark the date on your calendar and stay tuned for further news.

*Ray Drapek ([raydrapek@gmail.com](mailto:raydrapek@gmail.com))*

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## ATOP THE NESTBOX

I recently learned of the impending move of my neighbor from her 25-acre organic farm to a property in eastern Oregon. We had nestboxes on her farm for 4 years with only one bluebird nesting attempt. Unfortunately, the only bluebirds she ever got to see were two males (one adult, one juvenile) who died in a collision with her freshly washed sliding glass door last year.

Her heartbreak led me to a renewed search for solutions to the glass collision problem which claims the lives of hundreds of millions of birds each year in the U.S. alone.

A couple of years ago, John Gaylord informed our chapter of a product called CollidEscape, which is a film that can be applied to the external surface of windows to prevent bird strikes.

While very effective, it can be a costly solution for people with many-windowed houses.

A method I chose instead is the hanging of coarse netting outside the window with weights on the bottom to create a vertical trampoline. This has served me well on my ground-floor windows, but the upstairs windows needed something easier to install and something more effective than the decals I have been using in the interim.

Enter the American Bird Conservancy, with a webpage full of products, including ABC Bird Tape, Acopian Birdsavers (aka 'Zen curtains'), CollidEscape, Feather Friendly adhesive dots and Solylx film, in addition to traditional decals. Architectural solutions include various forms of inked or patterned glass.

Many of these solutions are inexpensive and are rated 'highly effective.' If you have any unprotected windows, I urge you to visit <http://abcbirds.org/get-involved/bird-smart-glass/>.

On a different note, I hope you will all attend the March 17th general meeting to see our presentation, "The Secret Life of Bluebirds." Like children, they do the darnedest things!

*Raylene Gordin*

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## FIELD NOTES

### CHANGES IN FORMAT AND SCOPE OF CHAT FIELD NOTES

Thank you to all of you who sent in comments and suggestions on the Field Notes column. The opinions expressed were diverse, but one common theme was that most would be happy with a less detailed column that focuses more on just a few of the most interesting birds, trends, and stories, and tips

on how to look for birds, rather than trying to document every species, and the details of “who, when and where.”

Since my previous stint as compiler (1999-2006), there have been big changes in how birds get reported and the role of these field notes. In 1999 many local observers were beginning to use new methods for sharing reports, including the state-wide birding e-mail lists OBOL and the regional web-based database [www.birdnotes.net](http://www.birdnotes.net). Others were still typing up reports to send by post, or calling to report their most exciting birds by phone.

One way or another, just about all of these folks were connected to ASC, so the field notes represented a local community with strong ties to this organization and its conservation mission of.

The next five years were a period of strong growth in “birding” as a recreational past-time. By 2005, many local birders were also sharing reports via an informal local e-mail list that, in April 2006, became the MidValley birding list ([www.midvalleybirding.org](http://www.midvalleybirding.org)). Around the same time, some birders also began to use a new web database called eBird ([www.ebird.org](http://www.ebird.org)).

These reporting tools have both grown enormously in importance over the past decade. The MidValley list now has over 400 subscribers, and eBird regularly gets dozens of reports per day, for Linn and Benton Counties alone. While some birders who use these tools are active ASC members, some may never even see these field notes.

Recognizing this new situation, I hope to focus the field notes more in the direction of supporting the conservation mission of ASC and promoting a sense of community among the membership.

I’ll still welcome reports of unusual birds, especially birds that were enjoyed by many local birdwatchers. I’ll also welcome observations of bird behavior, and encounters with common birds that were in some way meaningful for you as an observer. But I’ll look for ways to streamline the format, and to give more attention to input from ASC members and birds of conservation concern.

You can expect this to be a work in progress, so I’ll welcome your comments!

### 11/25/15-12/27/15

A cold snap in late December lasted through 3 Jan when freezing rain caused treacherous conditions for the Airlie-Albany Christmas Bird Count. From 5 Jan onward the weather was mild but soggy, with nearly daily rain adding a total of 5.5 inches to the already saturated landscape. As daily high temperatures climbed into the 50s, daffodils began to emerge and native Western Meadowrue plants near E.E. Wilson Wildlife Area began to put up shoots by 23 Jan.

**Abbreviations and locations:** NWR = National Wildlife Refuge, STP = sewage treatment ponds. Jackson-Frazier Wetlands is in north Corvallis near Cheldelin Middle School. Luckiamute State Natural Area is along the Willamette River northwest of Albany. Philomath STP is south of Philomath and requires access permission. Stewart Lake is on the Hewlett-Packard campus in NE Corvallis. Teloh-Calapooia Park is in south Albany near Linn-Benton Community College, Talking Water Gardens is in NE Albany. Cabell Marsh, McFadden Marsh, and North Prairie are

locations at Finley NWR.

A **Ross’s Goose** continued near Finley NWR 3 Jan (Will Wright; Pam Otley). A **Snow Goose** and small flocks of **Greater White-fronted Geese** were also reported occasionally along with larger flocks of wintering **Canada Geese** and **Cackling Geese**.

Up to 23 **Trumpeter Swans** were seen regularly in southern Polk County, usually along Airlie Rd between Suver and Airlie, or a few miles farther north. This is still fewer than typical counts of this flocks from past years. Usually numbers build in late winter as family groups start to coalesce into larger flocks, before they migrate out in late February. Larger flocks of **Tundra Swans** were seen in the same area, as well as near Halsey and at Cabell Marsh where Camden Bruner counted 718 on 10 Jan.

Reports of **Wood Ducks** were surprisingly scant, with Jackson-Frazier Wetlands producing the only reports of more than half a dozen. **Gadwall** were seen regularly at Talking Water Gardens, at Finley, and at Philomath STP. A reliable place to see **Eurasian Wigeon** each winter is Grand Prairie Park in Albany, where a few regularly join the large flock of **American Wigeon**. One was also seen regularly at the Philomath STP. Other common wintering dabbling ducks at widespread locations included **Mallards**, **Northern Shovelers**, **Northern Pintails**, and **Green-winged Teal**. A few **Blue-winged Teal** and **Cinnamon Teal** seem to be wintering in the area, with reports mainly from Talking Water Gardens and Philomath STP.

A **Ring-necked Duck** dove and caught a snail in Lyons City Park 14 Jan (Jim Leonard). This is one of our most common types of diving ducks on deep ponds in winter, along with **Buffleheads** and **Lesser Scaup**. Less common was a first-winter **Greater Scaup** and several **Canvasbacks** continuing at Philomath STP through 17 Jan (Hendrik Herlyn). A **Canvasback** at Stewart Lake was last seen 14 Jan, around the same time that Jamie Simmons began to see a **River Otter** there. Up to four **Common Goldeneyes** turned up on Adair Pond 10-16 Jan (Mark Baldwin; Pam Otley); three were on the Scio sewage ponds 18 Jan (Jeff Harding). No **Barrow’s Goldeneyes** were reported from their usual wintering spot at the base of the Foster Dam in Sweet Home.

**Common Mergansers** turned up in some surprising spots including small field ponds in the Willamette River floodplain, perhaps feeding on fish that were stranded by receding floodwaters. **Hooded Merganser** males displaying around females are one of the most spectacular sights of this season; often they can be seen on wetlands around Finley NWR.

A huge flock of over 180 **Wild Turkeys** were on OSU’s Soap Creek Ranch 1 Jan, as further evidence of this non-native species’ expansion since being introduced as a game bird in Oregon. There were few reports of our resident native species **Ruffed Grouse**, **Sooty Grouse**, and **Mountain Quail**, probably due to limited coverage of their montane habitats, but **California Quail** were seen regularly in valley locations.

Along with our resident **Pied-billed Grebes**, a few wintering **Eared Grebes** continued to be noted at the Philomath STP.

Rising, muddy waters on the Willamette River pushed **Double-crested Cormorants** into quieter ponds such as Stewart Lake, where Jamie Simmons noted a peak count of 6 on 20 Jan. **Great Blue Herons** and **Great Egrets** were conspicuous





as they stalked prey in wet fields through the period. At least one **Green Heron** continued at Talking Water Gardens for the Airlie-Albany CBC on 3 Jan, but a previously reported **American Bittern** could not be found.

A few single **Turkey Vultures** were spotted this month, in what seems to be turning into a regular pattern of sightings in mild winters, well before the main wave of migrants is expected in late Feb. **White-tailed Kites** continued to be seen regularly at the Finley NWR North Prairie overlook.

Good numbers of **Bald Eagles** have been seen again this winter at the regular winter roost east of the intersection of McLagan & Seward Rd. near Tangent, with a peak count of 93 there on 19 Jan (Jeff Fleischer). One member of a courting pair off Riverside Drive 31 Jan (most likely the male) brought a dead opossum which its mate then devoured while perched high in a tree (Gary Whitehouse). Now there's an idea for Valentine's Day!

An adult **Golden Eagle** flew over Mill Hill at Finley NWR 2 Jan (Hendrik Herlyn). Numbers of regular wintering raptors including **Northern Harriers** and **Red-tailed Hawks** were registered on winter raptor surveys coordinated by East Cascades Audubon Society. Good numbers of **Rough-legged Hawks** were recorded. Two even showed up within walking distance of town on 20 Jan when a light-phased bird was near the llama pens along the Campus Way bike path, and a dark-phased bird was farther west near the fairgrounds (Lars Norgren). An immature **Red-shouldered Hawk** in a heavily grazed field off Airport Rd. 18 Jan seemed to be feeding on earthworms (Richard F. Hoyer).

On the evening of 7 Jan Amber Beck and her daughter Elizabeth found a young **Red-tailed Hawk** in their small rabbit barn near Lacombe, after it knocked over a pet dove's cage that was visible through a opening. The hawk then perched in the rafters above the terrified rabbits. Amber and Elizabeth covered the rabbit hutches with blankets to calm the rabbits and hide them from the hawk's line of sight. The next morning the hawk was still roosting there so Amber called Chintimini Wildlife Rehabilitation Center. However the hawk flew out on its own and perched in a nearby maple. It was favoring one leg that it must have injured when it struck the dove cage, but otherwise seemed OK.

Wintering **Virginia Rails** continued to be heard at Jackson-Frazier Wetland and Talking Water Gardens. A **Sora** at the latter spot was last reported 3 Jan. A lone **Sandhill Crane** was in a field west of Brownsville 25 Jan (Pete Brandstetter).

Regular wintering shorebirds reported from wet agricultural fields and wetlands during the period included flocks of **Killdeer** and **Dunlin** plus a few **Black-bellied Plovers**, **Greater Yellowlegs**, and **Least Sandpipers**, and **Long-billed Dowitchers**. The total of 243 **Wilson's Snipe** found during Airlie-Albany CBC 3 Jan included one flock of nearly 80 in a single unfrozen swale.

Large numbers of gulls continued to be reported from agricultural fields in Linn County, including the regular wintering species: **Mew Gull**, **Ring-billed Gull**, **California Gull**, **Herring Gull**, **Thayer's Gull**, and **Glaucous-winged Gull**. Up to 500 gulls have been using Waverly Pond in Albany as a nocturnal roost, but as they fly out at dawn, no one has managed to sort out the composition of the flock.

**Great Horned Owls** were heard calling more frequently as nesting got underway. Virginia Stanton heard three calling

simultaneously and moving around in oaks south of Philomath on 2 Jan. However last year's nest near Teloh-Calapooia Park was apparently not active, as Jim Smith heard no warning calls in the nest area.

A few **Northern Pygmy-Owls** continued to be found well outside of their normal Coast Range habitat, including two at Luckiamute State Natural Area on 3 Jan, and one in riparian forest along the Luckiamute River a north of Airlie 14 Jan (Bill Tice). A wintering **Burrowing Owl** was seen at several different culverts SW of Tangent 2-17 Jan, possibly forced to move by rising waters (Linda Morrison) but least once it was flushed out by a young man with a rifle who chose to use the same culvert, apparently as a seat for "varmint" hunting (Peter List, Judy List).

**Short-eared Owls** hunting over a field on the n. side of Seward Rd. sw. of Tangent (near McLagan Rd.) were a regular evening attraction for birders; Carol and Jim Hiler counted 19 there on 17 Jan. One to three were also seen at the Finley prairie overlook through 25 Jan (Will Wright).

**Anna's Hummingbird** males were noticeably more "tolerant" of females around feeders by late Jan, in a sign that these birds may soon be nesting. A pair briefly perched side by side in nw Corvallis 18 Jan (Andrea Foster).

The recently established **Acorn Woodpecker** colony at Talking Water Gardens was still going strong with three there on 11 Jan, using a cavity in a dead tree on the NE corner by the railroad tracks, just outside the boundary fence (Deanna Emig). A young male **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** on the east side of Cheadle Lake in Lebanon continued to be seen at least through 10 Jan (Will Wright).

Along with high numbers of **American Kestrels**, a few **Merlins** were seen including one at Stewart Lake 5 Jan (Jamie Simmons). Wintering **Peregrine Falcons** continued to be seen around waterfowl flocks, and **Prairie Falcons** continued to be seen especially in western Linn Co. and near Baskett Slough NWR. A very large falcon SW of Tangent 21 Jan may have been a **Gyrfalcon** (Jeff Fleischer), possibly the same bird that was seen near Shedd last month.

**Black Phoebes** were noted at Finley NWR, E.E. Wilson Wildlife Area, and Philomath STP. One was flitting around the waterfall at the entrance of Talking Water Gardens 24 Jan (Robert Hunter). A wintering **Say's Phoebe** continued along Morgan Dr e. of Seven Mile Lane through 19 Jan (Jeff Fleischer).

**Northern Shrikes** were seen at Finley NWR along Bruce Rd. 31 Dec (Jon Hazen; Paul Rentz) and at the North Prairie overlook 9 Jan (Pam Otley). Five **Gray Jays** hopped around in the meadow just below the summit-trail parking lot on a mostly snow-free Marys Peak 25 Jan (Hendrik Herlyn).

Camden Bruner spotted a **Tree Swallow** at Talking Water Gardens 11 Jan. More of these hardy swallows could be showing up soon.

Two **Black-capped Chickadees** matched each others' songs from either side of the street in a NE Corvallis neighborhood 4 Jan. As Don Boucher noted, it "sounds very cute but ... to them it's a pretty serious challenge." **Mountain Chickadees** visiting feeders near Crabtree and Lewisburg continued to be seen through 23 Jan and 17 Jan respectively (Jeff Harding; Kerry Mammone). **Chestnut-backed Chickadees** were new "yard birds" in Olin Allen's yard near Airlie, in a winter when many seem to have moved out of the Coast Range onto the valley

## 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!

Jeanne & Alan Taylor  
Fata Padgett  
Shari Sands

### 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](mailto:ortizsv@gmail.com).

### MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

To renew your membership online go to: [www.audubon.corvallis.or.us/join.shtml](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.

### 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).

Suzanne Ortiz,  
ASC Membership Chair

floor.

A flock of **Bushtits** near Teloh-Calapooia Park have taken a liking to shelled peanuts, carrying off peanuts to hiding spots (Jim Smith) – a big payload for a tiny bird! 54 **Pacific Wrens** found for the Airlie-Albany CBC was a new record for this count.

**Western Bluebird** pairs began to investigate nest boxes near Basket Slough NWR by 20 Jan (Frank Kolwicz). **American Robins** fed on hawthorn and holly berries near Teloh-Calapooia Park in early Jan (Jim Smith). Along with a few **Hermit Thrushes**, good numbers of **Varied Thrushes** continued to be seen and sometimes heard giving their “tin whistle” songs in the lowlands.

A **Townsend's Warbler**, one of our brightest regular winter birds, continued in nw Corvallis hard 18 Jan (Andrea Foster, Greg Foster). Single **Orange-crowned Warblers** in two different nw Corvallis yards 10-11 Jan (Aaron Liston, Sara Liston; Jamie Simmons) were likely wintering birds, as migrants aren't due until late March. A **Common Yellowthroat** at Cabell Marsh 10 Jan (Pam Otley) was also likely a wintering bird; we'll need to wait until April for most others to arrive.

Among regular wintering sparrows including **Spotted Towhees**, **Savannah Song**, **Lincoln's**, **White-crowned** and **White-throated Sparrows**, high numbers of **Sooty Fox Sparrows** were noted by many observers, and a record high count of 1195 **Golden-crowned Sparrows** were recorded on the Airlie-Albany CBC, including some flocks foraging far out of expected habitat in the middle of grass-seed fields. A **Swamp Sparrow** briefly sat up in response to “pishing” at Turtle Flats in Finley NWR 2 Jan (Hendrik Herlyn).

Twelve **Red Crossbills** turned up at Stewart Lake 21 Jan (Jamie Simmons). **Pine Siskin** numbers tapered off at some feeders and many feeder watchers noted low numbers of **American Goldfinches**, though **Lesser Goldfinches**, **House Finches**, and **Purple Finches** were still well-represented.

A large herd of **Elk** in the Soap Creek Valley can often be seen south of Tampico Rd. On 13 Jan Peter and Judy List saw them farther north along Hwy 99W north of Coffin Butte, and counted at least 130.

**Next month:** Watch for our earliest spring migrants including Tree Swallows and Turkey Vultures by mid-February, and possibly even Rufous Hummingbirds and Violet-green Swallows toward the end of the month. By then some wintering waterfowl beginning with Trumpeter Swans will begin to head north, so now is the time to enjoy their presence! Please post your observations to the Mid-Valley birding list at [midvalleybirding.org](http://midvalleybirding.org), e-mail them to me at [joel.geier@peak.org](mailto:joel.geier@peak.org), send by post to 38566 Hwy 99W Corvallis 97330, or call (541) 745-5821 by 23 Feb.

## COMMUNITY NOTES

### THE MESSENGER MOVIE

A gorgeous new movie, *The Messenger*, about the beauty and importance of songbirds has recently been released (<http://songbirdsos.com/>). In case we can't persuade a local cinema to bring in and show this film, ASC is interested in taking this on independently. The producers have set up a procedure to work with independent efforts. It has been proposed that we try to set this up in time for Natural Areas Celebration Week in early May.

If you would like to lead an ad hoc and short term project to bring *The Messenger* to Corvallis in an effort to reach as many people as possible, please contact Bill Proebsting ([proebstw@gmail.com](mailto:proebstw@gmail.com)).

Bill Proebsting

## CORVALLIS CBC 2015 RESULTS

The 54th edition of the Corvallis CBC was held on Dec. 15, 2015, with 47 field participants and about a dozen feeder watchers. The count set a new record of 132 species, which is noted in the results in an insert to this issue of the CHAT! New high counts for a species are indicated in **bold italics**.



## HERE IS THE CBC AREA KEY:

- 1A: Oak Creek; NW Corvallis (west of 36th St and Witham Hill Drive, North of Walnut)
- 1B: NE Corvallis (east of 9th St. and north of Circle)
- 1C: Central Residential Corvallis, including main OSU campus
- \*2: Orleans (Tangent Dr. to Riverside Dr.)
- \*3: Oakville
- 4: Peoria
- 5: SW Corvallis, Neabeck Hill
- 6: S. Corvallis
- 7: Airport
- 8: Greenberry
- 9: Finley, Eureka Rd.
- 10: N. Philomath, West Hills
- 11: S. Philomath, Evergreen
- 12: Beaver Cr.

2015 –The portion of Area 2 east of Oakville Rd. and south of Hwy 34, including the Tangent Sewage Ponds, was moved into Area 3.

I really appreciate the efforts of all the participants, both those in the field and those who participated in a feeder count.

*Marcia F. Cutler, Compiler*

## MESSAGE FROM AN OLD FRIEND

### 2015 WILSON'S SNIPE—IT'S BACK

I was having breakfast on Tuesday, December 1st, watching a Song Sparrow whack the tiny fruit of the Prairie Crab Apple tree on the edge of the frozen bird bath. Our world was in a deep freeze. I caught a glimpse of a much larger bird in my peripheral vision.

WOW! IT'S BACK! A little Wilson's Snipe\* walked across the grassy area and began probing under the tree about 15 feet from where I was sitting at my kitchen window.

I watched it with my binoculars for about five to ten minutes while the radio played at least three songs and my coffee got cold. Finally it moved out of my line of sight, so I moved to the patio door, now about 30 feet away. It was still there under the tree but it was motionless, and I wondered if it was wary of some perceived threat.

NO! It had hunkered down into its neck feathers, with the tip of its beak resting on the ground! Was it sleeping, exhausted, cold? It remained in that position for another five minutes while I waited and watched. I left to warm my coffee again and when I returned, the Snipe too had moved on, hopefully into a neighbor's yard.

\*Rita Snyder and I saw a Wilson's Snipe on October 16, 2015 when it walked through my back yard.

*Elsie Eltzroth, Stoneybrook Village*

## BOARD MEETING SUMMARY

### JANUARY 14, 2016 ASC BOARD MEETING

At the January meeting the board authorized Joel Geier to modify the format of the Field Notes in the CHAT so that they are less time consuming, and more anecdotal with rarities, trends and patterns. The board also discussed sponsoring two OSU undergraduate interns at Finley NWR. The next Board meeting will be at Chris Mathews', 3336 SE Willamette Ave., February 11th, 2016.

*Gail Nickerson*

## CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS CHAT

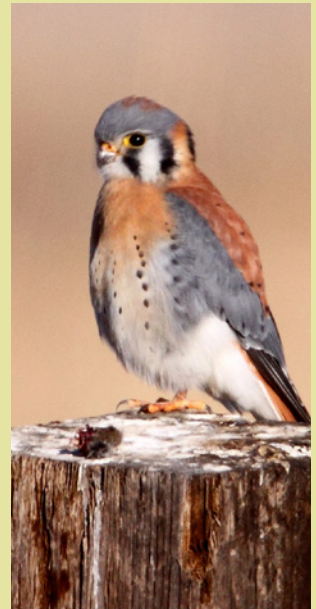
Bill Proebsting, Chris Mathews, Joel Geier, Jim Fairchild, Ray Drapek, Teri Engbring, Marcia Cutler, Gail Nickerson, Suzanne Ortiz, Will Wright

## 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](mailto:chateditors@gmail.com)

## AUDUBON SOCIETY OF CORVALLIS



*American Kestrel photo  
by Matt Lee*

## CALENDAR

Feb 7	Hesthavn Workparty 12 to 4
Feb 11	ASC Board Meeting, 7 pm at Chris Mathews house
Feb 13	Half Day Field Trip to Newport
Feb 18	ASC General Meeting at Chintimini Senior Center, 2601 NW Tyler Ave, Corvallis
Feb 23	Field Notes submissions due
Feb 25	March Issue CHAT submissions due
Feb 28	Hesthavn Workparty 12 to 4

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.

Audubon Society of Corvallis  
P.O. Box 148  
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Communication, Outreach, Grants.....	Jessica Brothers .....	<a href="mailto:educationaudubon@gmail.com">educationaudubon@gmail.com</a> .....	

Interested in volunteering? Please let us know: [volunteerasc@gmail.com](mailto:volunteerasc@gmail.com)

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

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## 2015 Corvallis Christmas Bird Count Results

Species	1A	1B	1C	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Fdr	Totals	Historic High	Counts seen	
Gr. White-fronted Goose											2					2	122	32	
Snow Goose								cw								cw	39	28	
Canada Goose (lg. form)				23	1	194			13	242	1267	60		130		1930	38623	10	
Cackling Goose		42		10	130	45			1288	1240	1492	570		450		5267	44469	10	
Can/Cac Goose, sp.								724		11						735	78141	53	
Trumpeter Swan											1					1	5	8	
Tundra Swan				19	28				41		391					479	1313	45	
Swan, sp.				24												24	6	2	
Wood Duck				2		8		20			13		2			45	518	50	
Gadwall					3				2		13					18	31	42	
Eurasian Wigeon						1					2					3	9	32	
American Wigeon				40	170	30	9		73		5541	5		3		5871	15630	52	
Mallard	1	10		21	14	8	8	5	51	3	4238	16	4	3		4382	40627	52	
Northern Shoveler				180	205	2			15	12	81		200			695	2268	49	
Northern Pintail						15				12	6288					6315	25475	51	
Green-winged Teal					100	2			18		11820	7	2	120		12069	21309	52	
Canvasback		8			2								40			50	104	25	
Ring-necked Duck				24	40			6	1		477	26	2	12		588	2743	42	
Lesser Scaup		2			25					14			100			141	488	40	
Bufflehead		1		40	10				3	2		3	14	135	2	210	357	43	
Hooded Merganser		2					4	2	4	9	39			2		65	51	40	
Common Merganser							3	14	21	5						43	196	40	
Ruddy Duck				3					1					167		171	448	42	
Ring-necked Pheasant					1											1	194	48	
Wild Turkey	5	4							2			70	47		8	136	146	16	
California Quail				10		3			15	39	8			18		93	560	52	
Common Loon													cw			cw	2	2	
Pied-billed Grebe		1		14		13			26							54	135	45	
Horned Grebe				2												2	2	5	
Eared Grebe													16			16	6	16	
Western Grebe								cw					cw			cw	4	14	
D-c Cormorant	2	3		10		6		2	84	11	5	1				124	565	32	
Great Blue Heron	4	1	1	4		2	1	2	8	5	11			1		40	100	52	
Great Egret		1				1	1	5			1					9	21	24	
Green Heron				1												1	3	15	
White-tailed Kite											2					2	13	34	
Bald Eagle				7	48	4		1	17	3	35		6	1		122	119	39	
Ad./Im.					2/2				3/1	0/3						5/6			
Northern Harrier	3	1		6	22	4	1	2	22	5	25	2	1	1		95	135	52	
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1		4			2					1	1	2	1	1	13	22	50	
Cooper's Hawk	1	1	1		1	2			1							7	14	49	
Red-shouldered Hawk	2	1	1						2		6	1		1	1	15	17	10	
Red-tailed Hawk	12	2	2	13	17	31	1	3	56	13	22	4	6	4		186	273	52	
Rough-legged Hawk				1	1	10			11		12		1			36	47	48	
Buteo, sp.						1										1	x	1	
Hawk, sp.								1								1		1	
Golden Eagle											1					1	2	8	
American Kestrel	4	2	2	12	13	21	2	13	20	17	21	5	6	10		148	170	52	
Merlin		1									1					2	10	32	
Peregrine Falcon		1		1	1						2					5	6	22	
Virginia Rail		3									1					4	9	14	
American Coot				25					665		14	2	20			726	1924	51	
Black-bellied Plover					1											1	105	6	
Killdeer				23	301	520		45	301	113	78		50	8		1439	10728	52	
Greater Yellowlegs										1	1					2	27	13	
Spotted Sandpiper						1										1	13	29	
Least Sandpiper					100											100	80	15	
Dunlin					10						1					11	2937?	48	
Long-billed Dowitcher											9					9	305	28	
Wilson's Snipe				7	1	6					4			2		20	829	52	
Bonaparte's Gull													cw			cw	1	1	
Mew Gull					250											250	1050	17	
Ring-billed Gull					50						2					52	2145	40	
California Gull					20	15										35	335	30	
Herring Gull					150	130										280	210	14	
Thayer's Gull					80											80	28	5	
Western Gull					1											1	5	5	
Glaucous-winged Gull				1		120	1									122	188	26	
Gull, sp.						500	23									523	241	21	
Rock Pigeon			135			4									2	141	750	40	
Mourning Dove	2	1	3	47	150	2		1	26	8	61	7	31	5	3	347	496	52	
Eurasian Collared Dove	1		77	3	65	42	12		14	15			8	2	2	241	158	6	
Barn Owl										1	3					2	6	13	44
W. Screech-Owl	1														1	2	6	31	
Great Horned Owl		2	1			1		1	1	2						8	25	49	
Northern Pygmy-Owl											1					1	3	27	
Burrowing Owl					1											1	2	13	
Barred Owl								1								1	1	7	
Short-eared Owl									6							6	29	40	
N. Saw-whet Owl			1													1	6	23	
Anna's Hummingbird	3	3	6	5	1	3	4	4	1			1	4	2	7	44	64	39	
Belted Kingfisher	1	3		2		2		1	1	1	6			1		18	22	52	
Acorn Woodpecker	2		4	1	3	3			15	9	16	5	5	3	2	68	112	52	
Red-breasted Sapsucker	1		2		1				1	1				1	1	8	29	52	
Downy Woodpecker	4	6	2	3		7			4		4		1	1	3	35	358	52	

## 2015 Corvallis Christmas Bird Count Results

Species	1A	1B	1C	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Fdr	Totals	Historic High	Counts seen
Hairy Woodpecker	1		2			2			2					2	1	10	19	47
Northern Flicker, red-s.	10	19	11	7	11	20	5	9	18	15	48	15	3	13	8	212	427	53
Pileated Woodpecker	1													1	2	4	12	45
Black Phoebe						2			1		3		1			7	13	14
Northern Shrike				1							1					2	11	45
Hutton's Vireo											2					2	19	40
Gray Jay														1		1	6	8
Steller's Jay	20	13	3	7		4		3	11	27	20	1	12	28	10	159	379	52
Western Scrub-Jay	22	16	52	24	9	43	12	14	26	27	12	45	18	6	16	342	675	52
American Crow	23	68	278	22		7	39	56	84	6		63	26	48	9	729	2491	53
Common Raven	3		1	2	17	9			122	6	13	3	5	3		184	158	48
Horned Lark					100				71							171	315	41
Bl.-capped Chickadee	37	47	53	27	35	47	20	31	24	24	19	14	10	8	39	435	879	53
Mountain Chickadee															1	1	3	4
Ch.-backed Chickadee	6		13						5				2	13	5	44	362	51
Bushtit		22	74	6		22	15									139	554	52
Red-breasted Nuthatch	4		6			1			1	1	1	2		1	9	26	120	52
White-breasted Nuthatch	3	4	7	1	2	4			5	3	8		1	1	2	41	99	53
Brown Creeper	2		7		4	6	1	3	6	1	7			5		42	50	53
Bewick's Wren	3	1	5	2	1	5	1		5		4	2		4		33	153	51
Pacific Wren	6	2	6						4		12	1		6		37	129	53
Marsh Wren							1		1		6					8	30	42
Golden-crowned Kinglet	18	7	37	10	50	9			62	4	33			100		330	908	53
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	7	28	11	6	1	5	3	2	6	2	9	1		11	1	93	346	52
Western Bluebird	17	55	2						12	4	15	18		18	2	143	440	49
Hermit Thrush			1						1		1			2		5	46	43
American Robin	32	77	325	185	25	301	94	60	122	44	165	142	23	352	32	1979	9386	52
Varied Thrush	16	4	12	4		2	2	2	3	10	7		11	10	2	85	356	51
Wrentit									1		1			4		6	30	28
European Starling	280	84	372	1964	3,615	1254	35	244	11,244	834	1660	353	100	114	150	22303	99683	52
American Pipit					40	12			244	4	52					352	1581	52
Cedar Waxwing			25								18					43	346?	50
Yellow-rumped Warbler - Audubon	3	60		1		2					36	4		6	10	122	334	51
- Myrtle									6		1				1	8	151	28
Townsend's Warbler			6		1				6		12					19	93	28
Spotted Towhee	28	25	18	18	6	19	1	11	15	8	24	16	10	9	19	227	451	53
Chipping Sparrow									1							1	9	13
Savannah Sparrow					20	45	1		83		16					165	542	47
Fox Sparrow	11	5	12	9		9	2	1	1	12	7	6	4	3	3	85	422	52
Song Sparrow	41	42	12	49	9	64	5	11	23	24	43	18	4	18	2	365	1418	53
Lincoln's Sparrow	6	3	1			2				2	5					19	71	43
Swamp Sparrow			1													1	9	13
White-throated Sparrow	1	7	5		1	1	1		2				1		1	20	30	46
White-crowned Sparrow		1		32	20	47	2	1	11	31	9	40		20	2	216	539	52
Golden-crowned Sparrow	54	12	17	52	40	34	15	4	36	68	38	62	34	42	14	522	990	52
Dark-eyed Junco - slate-colored	144	72	77	122	60	119	36	35	202	212	183	275	158	187	114	1996	3518	53
Sparrow, sp.			1		1					15						3	9	8
Lapland Longspur																15	1	2
Snow Bunting																15	13	7
Red-winged Blackbird		13	56	9	20	16		2	276	6	1409	25	10	32		1874	23111	52
Western Meadowlark									3	12	14					29	892	53
Brewer's Blackbird		21	6	252	25	90		62	109	101	69	12	400			1147	8735	53
Brown-headed Cowbird			3						8							11	320	42
Purple Finch			1			3	4		1		1					10	104	50
House Finch	9	10	13	6	30	54		3	23	12		1	10	11	16	198	739	50
Pine Siskin	204	25	358	63	10	85	51	11	35	10	9	54	87	94	143	1239	2699	41
Lesser Goldfinch			4	1							1				1	7	110	37
American Goldfinch		2		39			11		4						6	62	367	51
Evening Grosbeak	2									12	1		4			19	247	31
House Sparrow		5	5	3		13	6	2	17							51	614	52
<b>Total birds</b>	<b>1064</b>	<b>852</b>	<b>2143</b>	<b>3477</b>	<b>6662</b>	<b>3636</b>	<b>454</b>	<b>1425</b>	<b>15786</b>	<b>3315</b>	<b>36017</b>	<b>1974</b>	<b>1791</b>	<b>1958</b>	<b>653</b>	<b>81207</b>		
<b>Total Species</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>130</b>	
<b>Scoops</b>			2	2	7	1		1	3		6		1		1			
<b>Hours Foot</b>	6	6.5	7		7.33	4	2	3	13.3		4.5	3.45		4		61.08		
<b>Hours Car</b>	0.5	2.5	1	8.25	1	5	6	5	4.25		10.5	3.05	8	4		59.05		
<b>Hours Kayak</b>						4.5										4.5		
<b>Miles Foot</b>	8.5	5.5	7.7		0.25	2.25	2	4.5	3.6	1.2	4	1.95		4		45.45		
<b>Miles Car</b>	31	33	14	38.8	28.8	50	30	33	34.5	30	42	25	35	46		471.1		
<b>Miles Kayak</b>						4										4		
<b>Hours Owling</b>	0.2	1	0.5					0.43	0.5							2.63		
<b>Miles Owling</b>	0.1	0.5	0.5					1	0							2.1		
<b>Hours Feeder</b>	1		0.5												27	28.5		
<b>Parties Feeder</b>	1		1												12	14		
<b># Participants</b>	3	4	2	4	3	4	3	5	6	2	6	3	3	2		47		
<b># Parties</b>	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	2	3	1	3	1	1	1		19		