



THE AUDUBON SOCIETY OF CORVALLIS CHAT

JANUARY 2017

VOL. 46 #5

JANUARY 2017 PROGRAM:

LAND-SEA CONSERVATION ISSUES AND STRATEGIES – MARINE RESERVES, FORAGE FISH AND THE MARBLED MURRELET

Chintimini Senior Ctr:
2601 NW Tyler Ave (& 27th) in Corvallis
Thurs., Jan. 19, 7-8:30 pm

The natural wonders of Oregon’s complex marine food web will be the subject of Paul Engelmeyer’s talk about efforts to protect forage fish, the prey base for seabirds, as well as the unique habitat requirements for the ESA listed Marbled Murrelet and update the current status of Oregon’s marine reserves.

Since 1990, Paul has managed the Ten Mile Creek Sanctuary, near Yachats, for the Audubon Society of Portland. The sanctuary resulted from a partnership of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Audubon, the local community and the Siuslaw National Forest to develop a basin-wide protection and restoration program. Their efforts led to a national award in 2005. Paul also serves on Oregon’s Ocean Policy Advisory Council (OPAC), which has developed a system of marine reserves and protected areas for Oregon’s coast, the MidCoast Watersheds Council, which is protecting and restoring over 1 million acres in the Coast Range Bioregion, and the Siuslaw Forest Stewardship program which received the 2010 Two Chiefs’ Partnership Award, a major award recognizing exemplary conservation efforts across public and private land.

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

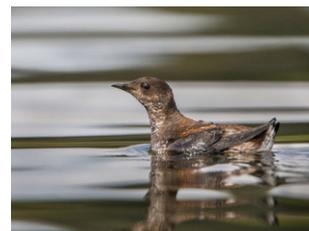
Bill Proebsting, Vice Pres. & Program Chair

NEXT GENERAL MEETING FEBRUARY 16:

Damien Miller, Project Leader, Mid-Willamette Valley Wildlife Refuge Complex, on Wildlife Programs at Finley NWR.



Paul Engelmeyer



Marbled Murrelet



Cape Perpetua

ASC GENERAL MEETINGS

THIRD THURSDAYS AT CHINTIMINI SENIOR CTR:
2601 NW Tyler Ave (& 27th) in Corvallis
Next Meeting: Thursday, Jan. 19, 7-8:30 pm

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FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE

LOCAL MONTHLY SECOND SATURDAY FIELD TRIPS

Our Saturday morning local field trips meet the second Saturday 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 if you have questions. Check the Willamette Valley ListServ <http://birding.aba.org/maillist/OR5>, 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 LOCAL FIELD TRIPS:

January 14 trip. Cheadle Lake, Lebanon. Restored log pond next to the Lebanon Santiam Canal provides good habitat for a variety of ducks, raptors and mixed flocks. Flat, paved path provides easy walking.

Next trip is February 11. Snagboat Bend NWR

Bill Proebsting

TENTATIVE 2017 ASC WEEKEND FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE:

Bandon/ Port Orford, March 3-5
Klamath Basin, March 31 - April 2
Rogue Valley, April 28-30
Malheur NWR, June 1-4
Summer Lake, June 23-25
Wallowas, July 20-23
Steens, August 10-13
South Coast, August 25-27

On these trips, we travel in rental vans, stay in motel-style accommodations, and eat meals wherever we can get them. We share all expenses. There will be signup sheets at the Field Trip table at the ASC general meetings starting in January of this year.

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

As we look toward a new year, I take this opportunity to thank some special ASC volunteers whose efforts in support of our activities go well beyond the ordinary.

Among our 340 members, several dozen contribute regularly to the success of ASC programs. Without intending to slight any of these energetic volunteers, I mention here several members whose efforts go well beyond the ordinary.

Ray Drapek, a former chapter president, has the task of

maintaining Hesthavn, our unique nature center. He has been involved since the early years, when a dirt-floored barn was converted to the comfortable building that we enjoy today. His efforts to maintain the building and preserve the habitats in our surrounding six acres require lots of physically hard work and the coordination of volunteers. Ray has effectively recruited ASC members and others, including OSU students. The time and expertise that he contributes go beyond the call.

Fred Ramsey, one of our chapter's founders, has for many years organized and led a half-dozen multi-day field trips each year, to every corner of Oregon. No other Audubon chapter in Oregon enjoys such a rich field trip program. In addition, Fred serves as our chapter treasurer—preparing annual budgets, handling finances, and reporting to the Board.

Bill Proebsting also wears two leadership hats. As ASC vice president, he serves as program chair. This involves not only engaging a speaker for each of our monthly programs, but also serving as liaison with the managers of the facility we use—in this case, the Benton County Senior Center. In addition to this, however, Bill runs the Second Saturday field trip program, which involves planning and leading a half-day field trip each month, each one involving as many as 24 birders.

Finally, your Chat editor does double duty. Our chapter no longer has an education chair, but Teri Engbring serves as coordinator of the education team. She is currently leading the planning for our signature event, the Winter Wildlife Field Day, held in March at Finley. She already has several dozen volunteers lined up to staff this event. Look for more news about the field day elsewhere in these pages.

Thanks to all of our volunteer leaders, but I hope you will agree that Ray, Fred, Teri, and Bill deserve special thanks.

Chris Mathews, ASC President

CONSERVATION CORNER

PRESERVE VALUES IN THE ELLIOTT STATE FOREST

It is more than four decades since I left the OSU College of Forestry to study Forest Ecology in the Dept. of Botany and Plant Pathology. Ever since then, I am regularly reminded of the ecological costs of adopting regulatory policies that compromise science-based minimum requirements. Compromised policies scaled back spotted owl and marbled murrelet nesting areas, stream buffers, retained leave tree, snag and downed wood needs. We are now beset with depleted fisheries and wildlife, disrupted watersheds and water quality, and more limited recreational opportunities from a decreased resource base. These costs extend into Oregon's economic vitality, and away from the welfare of future Oregonians.

Delaying regulation contributes towards greater depletion of many values on our forest landscapes. But more troubling is the delay in management innovations that could



better conserve and possibly enhance multiple values. The current fate of the Elliott State Forest was precipitated by the Oregon Dept. of Forestry (and its policy-setting Board of Forestry) choosing for years to avoid and minimize protections—whether for clean water or coho salmon, spotted owls or marbled murrelets. Weak and delayed regulation (both here and around the state) only allowed artificially high and unsustainable timber harvest levels to continue, until an outside accounting revealed an unrecoverable revenue generation rate. Sale of the Elliott would be an admission of failure. Although these are Common School Funds lands dedicated "... to obtain the greatest benefit for the people of Oregon, consistent with resource conservation and sound land management," no one seems willing yet to admit that this is only a failure of management. We need to reset the revenue forecast to zero, and revalue this resource for its greatest permanent benefit for all Oregonians.

As a forest manager and woodworker, I am appalled at the conversion of some of the world's finest high-quality timber producing lands into a losing race with global chip and pulp production. Mechanization and automation exacerbate unemployment, but our greatest loss may be forgetting what all was once here, and what once supported a thriving and diverse economy. The Elliott should be kept as an "outdoor school for all," and a reminder.

Jim Fairchild, Conservation Chair

XMAS BIRD COUNT SUMMARY

Participants in the Corvallis 2016 CBC were particularly pleased by the pleasant weather on the count date, Tuesday, Dec. 20, 2016. After a cold snap (that began the previous Wednesday) left a thin but dangerous layer of snow and ice in the region, a warm front accompanied by rain washed it all away Monday night. A few lingering showers in the morning and then the skies cleared for a nice, dry, mild count day.

However, most teams reporting finding fewer than normal numbers of birds. The total species count is 124 species, which is a bit lower than most counts since 2006 (average about 127 – 128 with high last year of 132). Only 2013, when 122 species were recorded, is lower. However, prior to 2006, most counts averaged less than 120 species.

HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE (NUMBER SEEN ON PREVIOUS COUNTS):

- Say's Phoebe (1) – seen on Pigeon Butte, Finley NWR. Area closed until April, but it may show up along Bruce Rd.
- Nashville Warbler (2) – at a feeder near Good Samaritan Hospital
- Clay-colored Sparrow (2) – on Kiger Island, by Isaac Denzer and friends (posted on OBOL)
- Sandhill Crane (1) – heard only
- Lesser Yellowlegs (new) – brief glimpse, but well-heard flight call, Tangent Sewage Ponds

- Burrowing Owl (14) – south of Corvallis, area not accessible by public
- Redhead (7) – Philomath Sewage Ponds
- Western Grebe (14) – Willamette River
- Gray Jay (9)
- Red Fox Sparrow – Philomath Sewage Pond

MISSED

- PINE SISKINS (42) like many other counts
- Greater White-fronted Goose (33)
- Trumpeter Swan (9) – seen earlier at Finley NWR, may be count-week bird
- Ruffed Grouse (31)
- White-tailed Kite (36)
- LEWIS'S WOODPECKER and CHIPPING SPARROW are count-week birds.

Shorebirds and gulls were scarce. A gull flock near Peoria had Mew, Ring-billed, California and 1 Herring Gull. Glaucous-winged Gull was the only other gull species identified, though 1 "Olympic" Gull was seen and several gulls went unidentified.

Marcia F. Cutler, CBC Corvallis Coordinator

EDUCATION NEWS

While all stations leader roles have been filled, we still need a few more volunteers to help between 9 am and 3 pm at the Winter Wildlife Field Day at Finley National Wildlife Refuge on March 18, 2017. This fun event, for kids of all ages, needs volunteers to help guests explore Nature at 10 stations. See live birds, water critters and animal fur and skulls. Take home a prairie plant, meet refuge pollinators, dissect owl pellets, and explore bird habitat with experts..

If you can help on March 18 for shifts from 2-6 hours, please contact Teri Engbring at chateditors@gmail.com or at ASC General Member Meetings in coming months.

Teri Engbring, ASC Education Team

HESTHAVN NEWS

Please consider joining our volunteer work parties. Dates are noted on the ASC website, between 10 am and 2 pm. No need to bring anything. All tools will be provided. Dress for the weather, as it can be cold, wet and muddy.

THIS MONTH WE HAVE TWO SUNDAY SESSIONS:

Weed work party - Jan 22, 10 am - 2 pm.

Barn & yard work party - Jan. 29, 10 am - 2 pm.

Thank you OSU Bird Nerd volunteers, for your help controlling invasive blackberries on Saturday December 3! The weather was beautiful (for a change) and we cleared a large area.

Ray Drapek, Hesthavn Chair

FIELD NOTES

11/23/16 – 12/23/16

This fall's remarkably mild weather persisted until frost finally arrived on the morning of 7 Dec, just two days shy of the all-time record for the latest onset of frost in Corvallis. Truly wintry conditions arrived just seven days later, when freezing rain early on 14 Dec was followed by snow accumulations of up to 4 inches around Adair Village, and temperatures in that dipped into the low 20s F and stayed mostly below freezing.

Some cottonwoods and alders at Luckiamute State Natural Area still had green leaves when this winter weather rolled in, resulting in the odd sight of green leaves falling on fresh white snow.



Photo by Joel Geier

As snow, ice, and cold fog lingered, hungry birds employed new strategies to find food. A **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** searched for insects under the eaves of Jim Smith's house near Teloh-Calapooia Park 15 Dec. In Corvallis, a friend of Elsie Eltzroth's saw a small, drab brown bird that might have been a **House Finch** sipping sugar water from a hummingbird feeder. Warmer weather and rains arrived on 19 Dec, just in time to melt most of the snow ahead of the Corvallis Christmas Bird Count (CBC) on 20 Dec.

Abbreviations and locations: NWR = National Wildlife Refuge, STP = sewage treatment ponds. Jackson-Frazier Wetlands is in north Corvallis near Cheldelin Middle School. Kester Pond is along De Armond Rd. in s. Polk County. "Lake Filbert" is an informal name for a hazelnut-irrigation pond on the east side of Hwy 99W just south of the Luckiamute River. Luckiamute State Natural Area is along the Willamette River northwest of Albany. Philomath STP is south of Philomath and requires access permission. Teloh-Calapooia Park is in south Albany near Linn-Benton Community College, Talking Water Gardens are in NE Albany. Cabell Marsh, McFadden Marsh, and North Prairie are locations at Finley NWR.

OBSERVATIONS

Ten "**Aleutian**" **Cackling Geese** were at Finley NWR 30 Nov (Deanna Emig). This distinctive subspecies nearly went extinct after fur traders introduced Arctic foxes to the Aleutian Islands during the 1800s, but following protection under the Endangered Species Act, they've made a comeback and were delisted in 2001. Sightings in the Willamette Valley are still quite rare.

Twenty **Greater White-fronted Geese** were at Cabell Marsh 18 Dec (Don Boucher, Lisa Millbank). Thirteen **Snow Geese** were near the Corvallis Airport 20 Dec (Hendrik Herlyn, Oscar Harper). A **Ross's Goose** was at Ankeny NWR 27 Nov (Roy Gerig); one was near Baskett Slough NWR 28 Nov (Deanna Emig). A **Brant** was spotted at Finley NWR 4 & 9 Dec (Pam Otley; Bill Tice).

A male **Eurasian Green-winged Teal** was at Cabell Marsh 24 Nov (Isaac Denzer). A pair of **Eurasian Wigeons** were north of Baskett Slough NWR 24 Nov (Frank Kolwicz).

Notable ducks at the Philomath STP 29 Nov included a male **Gadwall**, a male **Greater Scaup**, a female **Redhead**, swimming with 55 **Canvasbacks**, and a female **Common Goldeneye** (Hendrik Herlyn). Two well-described **Red-breasted Mergansers** swam with a flock of **Common Mergansers** in a flooded gravel quarry off Eicher Rd. near Albany 17 Dec (Isaac Denzer). A **Long-tailed Duck** turned up on Lake Filbert 17 Dec (Bill Tice); by 20 Dec it was gone but a **goldeneye** swam alongside of **Ruddy Ducks**.

Tundra Swan flocks continued just west of Halsey area as of 7 Dec (Delores Porch). Six adult **Trumpeter Swans** were north of Airlie 24 Nov, and two adults were still there 11 Dec. Eleven flew over Peoria 7 Dec (Greg Metcalfe). At least one **Trumpeter Swan** was heard among the many **Tundra Swans** on Cabell Marsh 18 Dec (Don Boucher, Lisa Millbank).

Five **Eared Grebes** continued at the Philomath STP 28 Nov (Hendrik Herlyn). A **Horned Grebe** dove in Kester Pond on 9 Dec.

At least 80 **Mourning Doves** were in the south part of E.E. Wilson 13 Dec, feeding in sunflower plantings and in an area that was burned last summer. Thirty crowded onto a seed-feeding platform near Teloh-Calapooia Park during the ice storm 15 Dec (Jim Smith).

A pair of **Anna's Hummingbirds** courted amid snowflakes in Lebanon 15 Dec (Kaynor Heineck). This species can start nesting as early as December.

A **Sora** and two **Virginia Rails** called in response to tapes at Talking Water Gardens 18 Dec (Noah Strycker). As many as two **Soras** and more than twenty **Virginia Rails** were estimated by some other visitors during the period, per reports on eBird. The influx of nutrient-rich, artificially warm water from Albany's wastewater treatment plant likely makes Talking Water Gardens a more hospitable environment for wintering rails, than natural wetlands in our area.

A lone **Sandhill Crane** continued to be seen in fields along Hwy 99E at the south end of Tangent 23 Nov (Russ Namitz). One was just se. of Monroe 10 Dec (Jacob Mathison).

A Neighborhood Naturalist field trip to Finley NWR 18 Dec noted many **Killdeer**, a few **Least Sandpipers** and **Dunlin**, and about 50 **Wilson's Snipe** using muddy spots along Finley Rd. Several **Wilson's Snipe** were also at Jackson-Frazier Wetland 27 Nov (Don Boucher, Lisa Millbank). On 27 Nov I encountered a flock of ten **snipe** at Luckiamute State Natural Area on 27 Nov foraging in an unusual situation under ponderosa pines and shrub plantings. As the cover was too dense for them to flush straight up in their usual manner, instead they made short low flights, landed back on the ground and scampered off under the trees.

A few **Red Phalaropes** from last month's storm-driven influx continued to be seen at local ponds, including two still at Philomath STP 23 Nov (Bill Tice). 28 Nov brought a fresh influx of four phalaropes at Philomath STP 28 Nov, with one remaining 29 Nov (Hendrik Herlyn).

Three **Herring Gulls** were at the Coffin Butte landfill 7 Dec.

A first-winter **Franklin's Gull** was with a flock of **Ring-billed Gulls** 2 miles nw. of Junction City 9 & 11 Dec (John Sullivan, Barry McKenzie; Pam Otley).

A **Bittern** flushed from tall grass along a ditch at Baskett Slough NWR 15 Dec (Frank Kolwicz); this species usually migrates south by Oct but there are a few local records of over-wintering birds. A single **Great Egret** hunted in a field near Suver Junction in s. Polk Co. 2 Dec (Olin Allen). One was at E.E. Wilson WA 1 Dec (Pam & Randy Comeleo).

A **Turkey Vulture** was spotted over Albany 17 Dec (Isaac Denzer).

Numbers of wintering **Bald Eagles** swelled noticeably by 25 when one soared over the South Corvallis co-op (Rana Foster). 39 were using the roost sw. of Tangent 27 Nov (Carol & Jim Hiler). 62 were there 5 Dec, with some leaves still remaining on the roosting trees (Steve Seibel).

A **Cooper's Hawk** hunted over the field near the parking area at Jackson-Frazier Wetland 27 Nov, flushing several snipe (Don Boucher, Lisa Millbank). An **accipiter** perched just nw. of downtown Corvallis 13 Dec was likely the same species (Viviane Simon-Brown).

A **Red-shouldered Hawk** hunched miserably in wet weather at Jackson-Frazier Wetland 24 Nov (Don Boucher, Lisa Millbank). A continuing adult was along Peoria Rd. 18 Dec (Steve Seibel). **Rough-legged Hawks** have been scarce this winter but one was nw. of Baskett Slough NWR 26 Nov (Harry Fuller) and one was hover-hunting near Ward Butte se. of Tangent 27 Nov (Carol & Jim Hiler).

A pair of **Great Horned Owls** "duetted" on Bald Hill 10 Dec (Catherine Otto). Calls of a **Long-eared Owl** were heard along the Intertie Trail at Finley NWR 5 Dec (Jacob Mathison). A **Short-eared Owl** was seen going to roost near Mohoff Pond at Ankeny NWR early on 12 Dec (Roy Gerig). A **Burrowing Owl** was near the Corvallis Airport 20 Dec (Randy Moore).

A few **Northern Saw-whet Owls** began "singing" their monotonous song this month; on 12 Dec Caleb Centanni

heard one on Fishback Hill w. of Monmouth.

A **Lewis's Woodpecker** was along Live Oak Dr. in NW Corvallis 18 Dec (Delores Porch). Two **Acorn Woodpeckers** foraged in a large old oak on Coffin Butte 7 Dec, new for this location. However the new **Acorn Woodpecker** colony in Teloh-Calapooia Park was seemingly abandoned this month, perhaps due to a poor acorn crop there this year (Jim Smith).

A **Red-breasted Sapsucker** drilled new sap wells in a plum tree in the Cheldelin neighborhood in late Nov; the sap wells were also used by **Anna's Hummingbirds** and on 5 Dec a **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** also visited, either drinking sap or catching insects that were drawn to the sap (Lisa Millbank).

A **Merlin** perched in a wetland at E.E. Wilson WA 13 Dec.

A **Black Phoebe** hunted at the north end of the boardwalk at Jackson-Frazier Wetland 24 Nov and one was hunting in the SW part 27 Nov (Don Boucher, Lisa Millbank). One calling nw of the angling pond at E.E. Wilson 29 Nov as a nearby **European Starling** imitated its calls.

A **Say's Phoebe** was found in the gravel quarry on the south side of Pigeon Butte 20 Dec (Jenna Curtis, Peter Kappes, Gabriel Sandoval). At least two other **Say's Phoebes** continued in the Airlie neighborhood (fide Caleb Centanni) and another was photographed at Baskett Slough NWR 20 Dec (Frank Kolwicz). A **Northern Shrike** was near McFadden Marsh 27 Nov (Pam Otley).

On 27 Nov a **Hutton's Vireo** at Luckiamute State Natural Area carried what appeared be a Western Boxelder Bug as flew in to perch on a twig and tucked the bug under one foot, then chomped off its head and proceeded to polish off the rest of the bug.

Several **Marsh Wrens** were in a field in the north end of E.E. Wilson WA 29 Nov. By 8 Dec, a **Bewick's Wren** was roosting nightly in faux evergreen swags below the porch lights at Carol and Jim Hiler's place in North Albany; this also happened last year, but this year Carol added a tiny dried-grass nest to give the wren a more comfortable berth..

Regular winter birds on Bald Hill 11 Dec included **Black-capped Chickadee, Pacific Wren, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Hermit Thrush, American Robin, and Western Bluebird** (Catherine Otto). A dozen **Western Bluebirds** chattered back and forth as they fed in clumps of mistletoe at E.E. Wilson WA 13 Dec.

Varied Thrush reports from low elevations were scant through 5 Dec, as apparently most of them stayed at higher elevations in the Coast Range and Cascades. Large numbers were found in the Coast range north of Grand Ronde 3 Dec (Linda Fink). Two were on Timberhill in Corvallis with the onset of colder weather 7 Dec (Hendrik Herlyn). Meanwhile flocks of **American Robins** were a common sight throughout the area.

On 3 Dec Adrian Hinkle found and photographed a **Bohemian Waxwing** with a flock of 50 **Cedar Waxwings** on the north side of Witham Hill in Corvallis. One was seen again

MEMBERSHIP CORNER

NOTE TO MEMBERS

A recent problem has developed regarding correspondence from our members that was mailed to the ASC PO Box 148. Stamped envelopes were returned to our members as being "undeliverable." At the time of printing, we are still trying to find out why this occurred. All correspondence addressed to our PO Box number should be delivered to our box. Many thanks to the members who let us know about the problem. We also experienced major delays from our Chat printer in November. We regret that any of you were inconvenienced in these matters.

*Suzanne Ortiz,
Membership Chair*

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Debra Belanger &
Dave Gallinger
Mary Bradshaw
TP Connor
Angela Courtney
Kristin Downing
Dale & Valerie Mitchell
Sally Morris

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

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

EMAIL NOTIFICATIONS REGARDING WEATHER CONDITIONS

We encourage members to contact Karan Fairchild to get on the ASC listserv in order to receive emergency

in the Timberhill Open Space 4 & 7 Dec (Isaac Denzer; Hendrik Herlyn). Incursions of flocks of this irruptive species have recently been reported all around Oregon, so it's good to look closely if you see waxwings feasting on berries this winter!

American Pipits fed alongside **Killdeer** among the leftover remains of the pumpkin crop in a field near Luckiamute State Natural Area 29 Nov.

Pine Siskins have been notably scarce so far this winter. A flock of 180 finches feeding in native shrub plantings at Luckiamute State Natural Area 9 Dec appeared to all be **House Finches**, including drab brownish females, many males with reddish markings, and quite a few males with more "apricot" colored markings. **American Goldfinches** were reportedly scarce around Corvallis, but five were at Jackson-Frazier Wetland 25 Nov (Don Boucher, Lisa Millbank). Larger flocks of 50 to 100 continued at E.E. Wilson WA. Six **Lesser Goldfinches** fed in a weedy field in the south part of Luckiamute State Natural Area 29 Nov.

Fifteen **Evening Grosbeaks** flew over cottonwoods at Luckiamute State Natural Area during a prairie planting work party on 11 Dec.

A **Nashville Warbler** photographed near the Corvallis hospital 20 Dec was a very unusual warbler for the Corvallis CBC (fide Marcia Cutler). Wintering flocks of **Yellow-rumped Warblers** are more expected; over 100 were in E.E. Wilson WA through the period. An increase in the proportion of "Myrtle" types relative to "Audubon's" types was noticed near Teloh-Calapooia Park by 27 Nov. On 11 Dec one of the "Myrtles" there nibbled on a shelled peanut, fighting off several juncos (Jim Smith). Two **Townsend's Warblers** were atop Bald Hill 10 Dec (Catherine Otto).

A **Clay-colored Sparrow** was found and photographed on Kiger Island south of Corvallis 20-21 Dec (Isaac Denzer, Kai & Ben Frueh, Jacob Mathison; Jenna Curtis). A **Chipping Sparrow** turned up in the Cheldelin neighborhood the next day (Lisa Millbank, Don Boucher). Both of these closely related sparrow species are quite rare in winter in our area.

A flock of at least 30 **Savannah Sparrows** were in a sunflower planting near Kester Pond 9 Dec, likely pushed into this habitat to forage by snow and ice on the surrounding grass fields.

A "**Slate-colored**" **Fox Sparrow** and a **Swamp Sparrow** were in the south part of Luckiamute State Natural Area 29 Nov. A well-described "**Red**" **Fox Sparrow** was at the Philomath STP 20 Dec (Chris Chappell, Janet & Karin Lamberson).

Lincoln's Sparrows were numerous in a field in the north end of E.E. Wilson WA 29 Nov. Seven were along the Betty Griffiths Trail in the Timberhill Open Space 7 Dec (Hendrik Herlyn).

Three **White-throated Sparrows** and a "**Slate-colored**" (**Dark-eyed**) **Junco** were at Jackson-Frazier Wetland 27 Nov (Don Boucher, Lisa Millbank). A female **Slate-colored Junco** was in the Cheldelin neighborhood nearby on 5 Dec (Lisa Millbank).

A male **Brown-headed Cowbird** visited a yard in the Cheldelin neighborhood 20-21 Dec but did not seem to associate with the mixed flock of **Brewer's Blackbirds** and **Red-winged Blackbirds** (Lisa Millbank, Don Boucher).

On 5 Dec an adult female **Bullock's Oriole** visited a yard in the Cheldelin neighborhood, where she fed on apples and caught a **Western Conifer Seed Bug** from a pine (Lisa Millbank). She returned for a few days but disappeared shortly after the first frosty morning.

Diggings apparently made by a **Black Bear** were noticed during prairie planting work party at Luckiamute State Natural Area 11 Dec. This was near where volunteers have encountered **ground-nesting "yellowjacket" wasps** in recent summers, so possibly a bear was digging out dormant wasp larvae and pupae. **Skunks** will also dig up wasp nests but widely-spaced, deep claw marks on the walls of the excavations, as well as the large scale, pointed to our largest local omnivore.

The Neighborhood Naturalist field trip to Finley NWR 18 Dec found **Bobcat** tracks and scat in the snow along the Homer Campbell Memorial Boardwalk that leads to Cabell Marsh. In some places the bobcat also left tracks on the railing, which was barely as wide as its feet (Don Boucher).

Next month: Christmas Bird Count season continues with the Airlie-Albany CBC on 31





Diggings apparently made by a Black Bear at Luckiamute State Natural Area. Photo by Joel Geier

Dec. Along with the possibility of more Bohemian Waxwings, keep an eye open for Pine Siskin flocks and more rare northern finches such as Common Redpolls. Please post your observations to the Mid-Valley birding list at midvalleybirding.org, e-mail them to me at joel.geier@peak.org, send by post to 38566 Hwy 99W Corvallis 97330, or call (541) 745-5821 by 24 Jan. Meanwhile happy birdwatching in the New Year!

COMMUNITY NOTES

WILLAMETTE VALLEY BIRD SYMPOSIUM

Reminder: The 3rd annual Willamette Valley Bird Symposium will be held Saturday, January 21, 2017, at the CH2M Hill Alumni Center on the OSU campus from 9 am to 4 pm.

ASC sponsors this day-long event bringing together students, professional, and amateur birders from the Willamette Valley to celebrate birds. For more information, go to the website: www.willamettevalleybirds.org

BOARD MEETING SUMMARY

DEC 8, 2016 ASC BOARD MEETING

President Chris Mathews presided over the board meeting at Jim Philipson's house Dec. 8. Chris reported on the Oregon Audubon Council meeting held in Corvallis with the help of volunteers Karan and Jim Fairchild, Kate Mathews, Sally Shaw, and Teri Engbring, who shared the flier and patch for Winter Wildlife Field Day. Karl Hartzell reported that the roof of the barn at Hesthavn is in dire shape and needs replacing. Jesse Laney reported the activities of the OSU Bird Nerds. The next meeting will be at the Natural Grocer Store, 1235 NW 10th St. in the meeting room January 12 at 7 pm.

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 location.

email notifications about meeting cancellations related to weather conditions (as was the case for our December meeting), updated information about ASC events, fieldtrip locations and volunteer work parties. 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 or mail address, please send your new contact information to Suzanne Ortiz at ortizsv@gmail.com.

*Suzanne Ortiz,
ASC Membership Chair*

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS CHAT

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

CHAT ARTICLES

The Chat editors welcome articles from all members of the Audubon Society of Corvallis. Please submit articles to the Chat editor by the fourth Thursday of the month. Submit text using Microsoft Word and photos to: chateditors@gmail.com

**AUDUBON SOCIETY OF
CORVALLIS**

CALENDAR

Jan 12	ASC Board Meeting, 7 pm,
Jan 14	Half Day Field Trip to Cheadle Lake
Jan 19	ASC General Meeting at Chintimini Sr Ctr
Jan 21	Willamette Valley Bird Symposium at OSU Alumni Center
Jan 22 & 29	Work Parties at Hesthavn, 10am-2pm
Jan 24	Field Notes submissions due
Jan 26	December CHAT submissions due
Feb 11	Half Day Field Trip to Snagboat Bend NWR

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; \$150 for Patron Level; and \$250 for Benefactor Level.

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Interested in volunteering? Please let us know:
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