



# THE CHAT

MARCH 2019

VOL. 48 #7

## ASC General Meeting

**Thursday, March. 21st, 2019, 6:30-8:30 pm**  
Chintimini Senior Center  
2601 NW Tyler Ave (& 27th) in Corvallis

## A Spring Visit to South Australia: Landscapes, Wildlife and Plenty of Birds

At the March meeting, Bill Proebsting will discuss birding in Australia, with photos. He and his wife Lena explored the Great Ocean Road between Melbourne and Adelaide, then joined tours to Kangaroo Island and the mainland from Lyndhurst in the Strzelecki Desert back to Melbourne. Australia is presently gripped in drought, but its ecology is based on low, erratic water supplies and low nutrients, so activity was still pretty good. Periodic rain showers stimulated a flurry of activity just when needed. Enjoy the variety of marsupials, parrots, honeyeaters and more.

Bill lives in Corvallis and is retired from OSU's Department of Horticulture. Besides spending time birding in Oregon, serving in various capacities for the Audubon Society of Corvallis and several gardening projects, Bill and Lena, enjoy traveling to see birds and their habitat. They have particularly enjoyed birding in Latin America over the years until their leap to Oz.

## Future Programs

On April 18th our speaker will be William Sullivan, prolific author of hiking guide books and much more. His talk will be **New Hikes in the Oregon Cascades.**

For our May 16th meeting Matt Lee and Sue Powell will present a program on **Birding in Costa Rica.**



*Bill and Lena Proebsting*



*Lena with Australian King Parrot*

## ASC General Meetings

**Third Thursdays at Chintimini Senior Ctr: September – May**  
2601 NW Tyler Ave (& 27th) in Corvallis

## In This Issue

- Field Trips.....50
- President's Corner .....50
- Education News ..... 50-51
- Hesthavn News ..... 51
- Remembering Elsie.....51
- Community Notes .....52
- Atop the Nestbox .....52
- Field Notes ..... 52-55
- Board Meeting Summary .....55
- Membership Corner .....55
- Contributors to this CHAT .....55
- Calendar .....56

Mark Baldwin, Vice Pres. & Program Chair,  
[mark.baldwin2@comcast.net](mailto:mark.baldwin2@comcast.net)

## Field Trip Schedule

### Local Monthly Second Saturday Field Trips

Our Saturday morning local field trips meet at the Benton Center parking area, behind the Cannery Mall, 757 NW Polk 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, <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 12.

### Next Field Trips:

**March 9: Snag Boat Bend NWR.** Located south of Peoria on a back channel of the Willamette River. We will be looking for waterbirds and probing the thickets for winter residents and perhaps an early migrant. Flat, but probably wet grass, possibly a little mud.

**April 13: Cheadle Marsh, Finley NWR.**

### Weekend Field Trips:

**March 15-17** starts ASC's weekend birding trips with a visit to Oregon's south coast. The BANDON field trip features sea ducks (with a chance at Long-tailed Duck), alcids (including Marbled Murrelet), raptors, such as Red-shouldered Hawk and White-tailed Kite, many other birds, and some hefty mammals - Steller's and California Sea Lion and

Elephant Seal. Here is a look at the route:

**Friday:** Yaquina Head, Newport south jetty, Sea Lion Caves, Jesse Honeyman State Park, Winchester Bay, Coos Bay north sandspit, Coquille, Myrtle Point, and Bandon.

**Saturday:** Bandon Rocks, Bandon Marsh NWR, Bullards Beach State Park, New River, Port Orford, Cape Blanco, and back to Bandon.

**Sunday:** Bandon Marsh NWR, Cape Arago & Simpson Reef, Charleston, Fossil Point, Siuslaw River south jetty, and Corvallis at ~ 7 pm.

We will sample one of the coast's best seafood restaurants and stay in comfortable motel rooms.

Note that the trip precedes the March members' meeting. If you didn't sign up at last month's meeting, you can sign on to this trip - and others - by email to [flramsey5@comcast.net](mailto:flramsey5@comcast.net).

### Looking to the future, these other trips are planned:

Klamath Basin .....	April 12-14
Rogue Valley .....	April 26-28
Malheur NWR .....	May 17-20
Summer Lake .....	June 14-16
Wallowas .....	July 18-22
Steens Mtn. ....	August 8-11
Shorebirds .....	August 23-25

*Fred Ramsey*

## President's Corner

### Opportunities to Pitch In

Our Corvallis Audubon chapter has a lot going on these days, at times more than we feel comfortable with. This month, however, I want to alert you to some good *ad hoc* opportunities, i.e. ones which have a finite commitment of time.

March 9 is the 5th Annual Winter Wildlife Field Day held at Finley NWR. Last year, about 800 kids and parents attended in gorgeous weather, developing into a real phenomenon. ASC spearheads this event in partnership with the USFWS staff and a number of other conservation and educational organizations. With an event of this size, there is considerable demand for help. I urge you to give it a shot. Contact Teri Engbring by email at [chateditors@gmail.com](mailto:chateditors@gmail.com). You can have fun and provide valuable help.

The second opportunity involves the redesign of the chapter website. Sue Powell is capably developing the new site, but we need volunteers to help her design it. As the project progresses, committee members will

review and offer advice. No coding needed, just ideas and opinions of what constitutes a useful website.

*Bill Proebsting, Chapter President*

## Education News

### Winter Wildlife Field Day 2019

Please join us for the Fifth Annual Winter Wildlife Field Day at Finley National Wildlife Refuge on Saturday, March 9, from 11-3.

This free, family friendly adventure in Nature is twelve stations of hands-on fun for all ages. See live Birds from Chintimini Wildlife Center and explore the natural world on the Homer Campbell Trail with the help of ASC's skilled volunteers. This year's theme is Nature's predators. Take a close look at critters from owls and carnivorous insects, to coyotes, bobcats and invasive bullfrogs!

We have had a warm response to our request for volunteers, and all are appreciated, but especially those who have put in so many hours in the planning and preparation for the event. Thanks! A few more helpers

are needed to operate the stations at Homer Campbell Trail and refuge headquarters, from setup at 8:00 am to clean up after 3:00, and 4 hours of programs in between. If you can join the volunteer team on March 9, please contact Teri Engbring at [chateditors@gmail.com](mailto:chateditors@gmail.com) or refuge Visitor Services Manager Samantha Bartling at [Samantha\\_bartling@fws.gov](mailto:Samantha_bartling@fws.gov) And if you have questions about the event, call Sam at 541-757-7236.

*Teri Engbring, ASC Education Team*

## Hesthavn News

### Coming Work parties:

**Sunday March 10:** 10 am to 2 pm. Students from the GEOG 300 class will be joining us to paint the floor in the barn.

**Sunday March 24:** 10 am to 2 pm. Our last dedicated blackberry work party until next winter. There will be too many other things to deal with from April on.

*Ray Drapek, Hesthavn Chair*

## Check out Hesthavn Nature Center

Because our education volunteers are working so hard on the Winter Wildlife Field Day March 9, our next Third Sunday program at Hesthavn will be April 21. Join us for a free, family friendly program on Feathery and Leathery Wings from 1-3 pm. Have fun learning about birds and bats I hands-on activities, explore the museum and trails, and more! Look for more detail on this event in the April CHAT.

Guests who respect Nature are welcome to walk the trails and enjoy the birds on our grounds any day. Information on future programs will be on the ASC website and in future editions of the CHAT.

*Teri Engbring, Education Team*

**Directions:** Hesthavn is at 8590 NW Oak Creek Dr, Corvallis. Take Harrison west from downtown Corvallis and after you cross 53rd, it becomes Oak Creek Drive. Pass Bald Hill Farm and follow the signs for Nature Center. Hesthavn will be on your left shortly before the end of Oak Creek Drive.

## Remembering Elsie Eltzroth

When Kate and I moved from Arizona to Corvallis in 1978, one of the first things we did was to join the Audubon Society of Corvallis. At our first meeting, we met both Elsie and Elzy Eltzroth and were immediately assured that we had found a great home within which to re-establish our love affair with Northwestern birds and their habitats. Elsie's force of personality was unforgettable, as she recruited members of the Bluebird Trail team and coordinated their efforts. Both Elzy and Elsie made unforgettable contributions to local ornithology, and Elzy was honored in 2005 with the first Homer Campbell Award. Elsie soon followed with the 2009 Award. Looking back, I can't remember why we didn't include them both in the first award. Certainly they both made distinct contributions, so it was probably better to honor each one individually.

After Elzy's death, Elsie continued living in their Vineyard Mountain home. Several years later she moved to the Stoneybrook Village retirement community. Kate and I re-established contact when we moved to Stoneybrook last year. In her mid-nineties Elsie had lost none of her force of personality. When we said that we planned to place a bluebird box in our yard, she ordered us not to do so. Bluebirds are territorial, she reminded us, and residents of already-established boxes near our house would cause nothing but trouble if new neighbors appeared. A nice way to remember Elsie, insisting on peace within the local bluebird community.

*Chris Mathews*



We would also like to note that at Elsie Eltzroth's request, her family gave a \$1000 donation to ASC to be used for education and the Bluebird Trail. Thanks one more time, Elsie.

*Suzanne Ortiz*

## Community Notes

### 2019 Corvallis Sustainability Coalition Fair & Town Hall

Thursday March 7, at CH2M Hill Alumni Center, 725 SW 26th St on the OSU Campus

The Fair is free & open to the public and runs from 5-7 pm. There will be more than 50 exhibits, refreshments, music and kid's activities. Town Hall follows at 7, but reservations are required by March 1

*Suzanne Ortiz, ASC Sustainability Coalition Rep*

### 2019 Othello Sandhill Crane Festival

The 22nd annual Othello Sandhill Crane Festival celebrates the spring return of Sandhill Cranes to the greater Othello, Washington area and Columbia National Wildlife Refuge. Lectures on Saturday only; tours on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Other events include art, music and more. The festival is March 22, 23, and 24, 2019. Additional information is available at <https://www.othellosandhillcranefestival.org/>



### Dean Hale Woodpecker Festival

Features include local tours and local guides, with the possibility of seeing 11 species. May 30-June 2, 2019 in Sisters, Oregon. More information is available at [www.ecaudubon.org](http://www.ecaudubon.org)

*Diana Roberts,  
East Cascades Audubon Society*

### Habitat Trees

Every land owner has a unique opportunity to benefit wildlife. How we manage trees in our landscape can especially help cavity dwelling species. Cavity dwellers require dead trees. In fact, life begins for many species during the cycle of a dying tree. Some species that are dependent on tree cavities are: pileated and acorn woodpeckers, great horned owl, kestrel, chickadee, clouded salamander, and flying squirrel.

With this in mind, we should value dead wood and dead trees as important habitat. We can certainly find a correlation between the presence of dead wood habitat and populations of wildlife that depend on it. Species that prefer dead wood are bio-indicators of forest health.

There is far more wildlife inhabiting dead trees than living ones. Hollows and cavities provide a place for thermal regulation, protection, foraging, food caching and raising young. Another species that relies on dead wood is the native Little Brown Bat. These nocturnal creatures roost in small spaces behind peeling bark of branches and trees that have recently died.

As an arborist, I make many decisions with wildlife habitat in mind. I have not found evidence that removing dead wood improves the health of trees. Addition-

ally, we can mitigate risks associated with all parts of trees without removing them entirely, especially in low risk areas.

Retaining dead wood is a management practice that can lead to healthier urban forests. But we can take it a step further. When opportunities arise, we can also enhance habitat value by creating wildlife trees (snags) on our properties. Not all snags are tall or dangerous. Even after a tree dies, it is still valuable to wildlife.

In general, it is good practice to be aware of wildlife protection laws, to leave diverse habitat when possible, and consider what time of year work is being carried out (so as not to disrupt nesting and breeding). Decisions made by land owners and managers do impact wildlife.

My company has started an initiative to enhance urban forests for cavity dwelling species. Rather than removing trees to the ground, we safely retain and enhance valuable tree structure for wildlife. Learn more at: [www.arboriculture.international](http://www.arboriculture.international)



*Brian French*

### Atop the Nest Box

If you have wasps or yellow jackets take over your nest box you may send them packing at the first of the nesting season, preferably before they start to build cells. Some monitors have success preventing these pests from staying by coating the ceiling of the box with either a soft bar of soap or peppermint oil. The soap must be softened with water to the point of "painting" the ceiling. Soaps with strong aroma are best like Irish Spring. You can use olive oil and peppermint flavoring to make a solution of peppermint oil. I use ½ cup oil to ¼ tsp peppermint flavoring. You can use a sponge or paper towel to wipe it on the ceiling. You may have to repeat your treatment.

*Rita Snyder  
Bluebird Trail*

### Field Notes

01/25/19-02/26/19

After a mostly mild early part of winter, colder wet weather arrived in February. Winter storm systems brought dustings snow to the Willamette valley floor on 5 Feb and 9 Feb, then more than an inch in Corvallis 24 Feb, with much deeper accumulations in the western Cascades and in the southern part of the Willamette Valley.

Despite these events, plants continued to come out of dormancy. By 17 Feb a Naturalist Adventure group in McDonald

Forest noted **Snow Queen** (*Synthyris reniformis*) blooming in McDonald Forest, and **California beaked hazels** with many males catkins open though no female blossoms visible yet. (Don Boucher & Lisa Millbank).

At Luckiamute State Natural Area 21 Feb, An **Anna's Hummingbird** probed a few **Oregon-grape** blossoms that were just starting to open.

**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. 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.

## Conservation focus: Western Bluebirds

A familiar yard bird in the Willamette Valley up into the 1940s, Western Bluebirds declined steeply until, by 1973, they came to be seen as just occasional visitors from hilly margins of the valley. According to the species account written by Elsie Eltzroth for *Birds of Oregon: A General Reference*, the decline was due to a combination of factors, especially the removal of snags with cavities suitable for bluebirds to nest, plus competition with introduced Eurasian House Sparrows and European Starling for the remaining nest sites.

Through intensive efforts in which Elsie and ASC played a leading role, in recent year bluebirds have become a more common sight, helped by volunteers who continue to maintain bluebird nest boxes. Starlings can be excluded from nest boxes with sufficiently small, 1.5-inch diameter entrance holes, but continue to compete for natural cavities with bluebirds and other native species such as Violet-green Swallows.

Wintering bluebird flocks benefit from preservation of older oaks with mistletoe. One of the best ways to find bluebirds in winter is to scan oaks with clumps of mistletoe. You might also see them hovering over grassy areas as they hunt for insects, often in the company of Yellow-rumped Warblers.

As our local population continues to recover, it serves as a source for re-introducing Western Bluebirds into parts of their range where they have disappeared, including the San Juan Islands in Washington.

During March, bluebird pairs can be seen scouting nest boxes and other cavities. Now is the time to be on the lookout for House Sparrows that also use these boxes, and discourage them from staying in the neighborhood.

You can also help to reduce local populations of House Sparrows and starlings by screening off attic vents and other niches that they use for nesting. In Sweden, where House Sparrows and European starlings are native species and regarded as desirable, populations have actually declined to the point of concern, due in part to modern energy-efficient building construction which eliminates such niches! So perhaps similar improvements here could help to reduce competition for our native bluebirds.

## Wintering flocks

Up to 17 **Trumpeter Swans** (all adults) and 50 **Tundra Swans** were near Suver in se. Polk Co. through the end of the period Feb. A family group of two adults and four immature Trumpeters continued near Peoria through 1 Feb (Deanna Emig; Vickie Buck). Thousands of **Tundra Swans** continued in the Halsey area through the end of the period. A large flock of **Canada Geese** in a grass field n. of Coffin Butte 5 Feb included at least 40 **Dusky Canada Geese** with red collars, and one **Greater White-fronted Goose**.

Large flocks of **Killdeer** and **Dunlin** plus about 80 **Black-**

**bellied Plovers** were south of Halsey 8 Feb (Nancy Stotz). An ethereal rustling sound, in dimming twilight at Finley NWR 3 Feb, foretold the approach of hundreds of **Dunlin** flying to roost on the conservation wetland near the North Prairie (Howard Bruner).

About 400 **American Pipits** were massed in a grass field just w. of Palestine 30 Jan, shortly after sheep flocks grazed the field, leaving droppings which likely provided a source of insects.

## Early spring singers

Singing birds at Sunset Park 25 Jan included **Bewick's Wrens**, **Song Sparrows**, **House Finches**, **Black-capped Chickadees**, and a **Northern Flicker** (Don Boucher). A **Hutton's Vireo** sang s. of Philomath 30 Jan (Virginia Stanton).

At Dunn Forest on the evening of 31 Jan, Pam & Randy Comeleo heard four species of owls while hiking along the 110 and 100 Roads: first a **Western Screech-Owl** giving its "bouncing ball" song, then a **Northern Pygmy-Owl** tooting, then a **Great Horned Owl** hooting in view very close by (raising its tail as it hooted!), and a brave or foolhardy **Northern Saw-Whet Owl** tooting nearby. Another Northern Pygmy-Owl sang in the Lewisburg Saddle area of McDonald Forest 8 Feb (Paul Adamus).

A **Hermit Thrush** gave its "weee" call in McDonald Forest 3 Feb (Don Boucher, Lisa Millbank). A couple of Pacific Wrens sang there 17 Feb (Naturalist Adventure led by Don Boucher & Lisa Millbank)

**California Scrub-Jays** aren't usually thought of as singers, but in late Jan, Lisa McMaster recorded one singing quietly in the Portland area. Thanks to Matt Hunter, you can watch and listen to this seldom-heard song at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fm5WwH07NfM>  
and

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qsEvuvurL6g>

**Steller's Jays** also have a melodic "whisper song" that you can sometimes hear during this season.

## Courtship and nesting

Courting pairs of **Hooded Mergansers** were noted at Starker Arts Park and Raindance Ranch (Marge Popp; Laurie & Warren Halsey).

A pair of **Bald Eagles** near Halsey were nesting by 20 Feb, with a brooding bird on the nest 21 Feb (Delores Porch).

A female **Anna's Hummingbird** built a nest in a Deodar cedar in nw Corvallis during late Feb, adding bits of lichen and possibly spider's silk on 23 Feb (Nancy Stotz).

## Early migrants or winter strays?

A **Turkey Vulture** soared over Airlie Rd. in s. Polk Co. 16 Feb (Nolan Clements). One visited Teloh-Calapooia Park by 20 Feb (Jim Smith).

About 40 **Long-billed Dowitchers** turned up at Baskett Slough NWR 21 Feb (Frank Kolwicz).

A lone **Sandhill Crane** called as it circled over the Crabtree area 23 Feb, possibly after having been separated from one of the flocks that were migrating north along the east edge of the Willamette Valley in mid-Feb (Jeff Harding).

A **Band-tailed Pigeon** was sw. of Philomath by 21 Feb (Karan Fairchild).

A **Say's Phoebe** was near the Camp Adair Rifle Range 3 Feb; two more were near Shedd 10 Feb (Caleb Centanni, Nolan Clements). One was near Washburne Butte n. of Brownsville 16 Feb (Tom Snetsinger). Another turned up at Coffin Butte 18 Feb (Paul Adamus).

A lone, very early **Violet-green Swallow** was reported flying by Willamette Park 2 Feb (Pete Ziminiski).

Two **Barn Swallows** foraged over Talking Water Gardens 10 Feb (Maureen Leong-Kee, Nicholas Martens) and again 15-17

Feb (Kaplan Yalcin; Pam Otley).

A **bat** flew over the Philomath STP on the evening of 30 Jan, indicating that flying insects were also starting to emerge (Lars Norgren).

### Uncommon wintering species

A **Brant** flew over Willamette Park 28 Jan and a **Greater White-fronted Goose** joined a flock of Canada and Cackling Geese in a nearby grass field 29 Jan (Duncan Evered). 14 **Snow Geese** were with swans nw. of Halsey 25 Jan (Deanna Emig). Five **goldeneyes** were on the South Fork Santiam River in Lebanon 23 Feb (Rana Foster).

A **Green Heron** was noted occasionally in Teloh-Calapooia Park through 20 Feb (Jim Smith). Nine **Double-crested Cormorants** basked and fished on Cheadle Lake 23 Feb as two **egrets** perched in the trees where Great Blue Herons nest (Rana Foster).

At least two **White-tailed Kites** continued to be seen regularly at the North Prairie overlook. Two **Short-eared Owls** perched there 13 Feb (Rebecca Hartman).

Several **Lewis's Woodpeckers** spent the winter on Raindance Ranch near Alpine (Laurie and Warren Halsey).

A **Peregrine Falcon** soared over Timberhill Natural Area 3 Feb (Don Boucher, Lisa Millbank).

**Prairie Falcons** were seen regularly in four different areas west of the Willamette River. In southern Polk Co., one was near Maple Grove in s. Polk Co. 29 Jan (Olin Allen). The next day possibly the same bird was 5 mi sw. of there near the Camp Adair rifle range, with continuing reports from the area through 13 Feb. Another was north of Baskett Slough NWR 1 Feb (Frank Kolwicz). Another was seen occasionally in the area between Corvallis and Finley NWR. Rebecca Hartman saw what was likely this bird several times in the space of three weeks, usually in the area of Starr and Dawson Rd.s north of Monroe. Another cluster of reports came from the area between Fern Ridge and Junction City.

A **Black Phoebe** called at Cheadle Lake in Lebanon 23 Feb (Rana Foster).

A **Northern Shrike** continued on the n. side of of Baskett Slough NWR through 25 Jan (John Pendleton). One was a few miles east of the refuge 14 Feb (Deanna Emig). A juvenile was at the North Prairie 13 Feb (Rebecca Hartman).

Reports of **Horned Larks** were notably scant for the season. Roger Robb found just a single lark during a morning of birding in the Diamond Hill Rd./Belts Rd. area s. of Brownsville 12 Feb. Brandon Wagner noted that larks were scarce north of Independence and around Baskett Slough NWR, except along Livermore Rd. n. of the refuge. A flock of 25 larks was along Davis Rd. 13 Feb, but the ones closest to the road were clearly not from the threatened, endemic "strigata" subspecies that nests in the Willamette Valley (Lars Norgren).

A flock of about 4 **Chipping Sparrows** were in an old filbert orchard e. of Baskett Slough NWR 25 Jan (Roy Gerig). Paul Adamus notes that this species is regularly present in the same orchard during nesting season, so these birds may be residents.

Up to 70 **Pine Siskins** visited Randy Moore's feeders in Philomath in early Feb, and 40 visited Jesse Laney's feeder in nw. Corvallis 19 Feb, but otherwise reports continued to be very sparse.

### Rare or off-course birds

The **Tundra Bean-Goose** and a **Brant** continued to be seen at Finley NWR through 24 Feb; by 2 Feb Jesse Laney noted that the Bean-Goose was using both legs to walk. An apparent (dark phase) Ross's Goose was photographed at McFadden Marsh 31 Jan (Josh Spice).

An intergrade male **American x Eurasian Green-winged Teal** was on the n. side of Finley NWR 12 Feb (Deanna Emig).

A **Red-naped Sapsucker** continued through 15 Feb in the College Hill neighborhood of NW Corvallis where one has been seen for the past two winters.

A female **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** turned up at Bruce Pratt's feeder in sw Corvallis 24 Feb, and continued through the end of the month.

A first-winter **Harris's Sparrow** continued in sw. Lebanon through 10 Feb (Linda Morrison). One was seen again near Jackson-Frazier Wetland 1-5 Feb (Hendrik Herlyn and others).

Up to 4 male **Tricolored Blackbirds** continued to be seen at the Philomath STP through the period.

### Other surprises

On 25 Jan Frank Kolwicz watched a female **Hooded Merganser** near Baskett Slough NWR thrash what appeared to be a **Rough-skinned Newt** in the water for more than 15 minutes, then gulp it down. He noticed that the merganser then sipped water repeatedly for several minutes afterwards, but showed no ill effects. He speculated that the extended "washing" of the newt might have washed off any toxic skin secretions. Frank saw this same behavior again on 3 Feb, but this time with the merganser spending 12 minutes to prepare its meal but then letting the newt go.

About 6 **Wilson's Snipe** were in a clearcut along Alder Creek near Marys Peak on 19 Feb (Rana Foster).

A **Red-tailed Hawk** just nw. of E.E. Wilson Wildlife Area on 21 Feb had pale blue or white wing tags marked 7F. It turns out that this bird was tagged as a juvenile at Vancouver International Airport and released in Chilliwack, British Columbia, on 20 Jul 2018 as part of a project to protect hawks and airplanes from each other (Gary Searing).

Eight **Western Bluebirds** fed on home-made peanut-butter suet near Lewisburg 10 Mar, the first time Paul Adamus has seen them at a suet feeder.

On 16 Feb Carol Hiler saw a **Northern Flying Squirrel** peering out of the entrance of a large nest box in Albany. A **River Otter** swam near the Willamette Park boat ramp 23 Feb (Rana Foster).

### Leucistic and albinistic birds

This month brought several sightings of birds that seemed to be missing pigment in some of their feathers. We use the term "leucistic" or "albinistic" for these birds. Albinism is genetic, but leucism can be caused by other things such as sickness or dietary deficiencies, at the time when a bird was growing out certain feathers.

A flock of 55 **Killdeer** in a field just s. of Corvallis include a strikingly leucistic individual (Duncan Evered). A flock of 20 **Eurasian Collared-Doves** along Robison Rd. n. of Coffin Butte this month included a strikingly pale individual.

An **American Robin** visiting Raindance Ranch near Alpine had bright white tail feathers and some white in its wings, giving the impression of a mockingbird at first glance. (Laurie and Warren Halsey). A **Sooty Fox Sparrow** with white splotches wintered in Gary Gibson's yard through 16 Feb, often scratching under ferns to find food.

### Natural areas

Chip Ross Park in NW Corvallis has been the focus of recent work to restore oak savanna and open oak woodland habitat, by removing many of the Douglas-firs that have invaded due to decades of fire suppression. A network of trails runs through the area, popular with hikers and joggers. On clear days, the upper part of the park affords views of Three Sisters, Mt. Washington, Three-Fingered Jack, Mt. Jefferson, and Mt. Hood.

On 31 Jan I was pleased to run across a nice assortment of oak-associated birds, which seem to be responding well to this project. Woodpeckers were well represented with at least 11



**Acorn Woodpeckers**, 2 **Northern Flickers**, plus **Downy, Hairy**, and **Pileated Woodpeckers** heard. Three **White-breasted Nuthatches** and six **Western Bluebirds** were active in the oaks just east of the parking area. Other oak-associated birds that can often be encountered there include **Black-capped Chickadees**, **Bushtits**, **Lesser Goldfinches**, and **California Scrub-Jays**. A **Red-shouldered Hawk** was in the area 6 Feb (Paul Adamus).

**Next month:** Look for Rufous Hummingbirds, more swallows, rails, Ospreys, and Orange-crowned Warblers toward the end of the month. 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 28 Mar.

## Board Meeting Summary

### For February 14, 2019

- 1 An era has ended with the recent passing of Elsie Eltzroth. Elsie bequeathed her many bluebird display and education items to ASC. The Board gratefully acknowledged that bequest and also a cash gift of \$1,000 from her estate to the ASC General Fund and to the Bluebird Trail Fund. We will miss her.
- 2 A full-time Spring/Summer Biological Internship for the Willamette Valley National Wildlife Refuge Complex, funded in part by ASC, is working its way through various approvals.
- 3 A program is being developed to offer scholarships for young birders (teens) attending future OSU birding camps.
- 4 Carolyn Peterson will take over the position of Treasurer as Fred Ramsey retires this Spring.
- 5 Paul Adamus will take over the position of Membership Chair from Suzanne Ortiz in March.

The next ASC Board meeting will be at 7 pm in the Natural Grocers meeting room at 1235 NW 10th St on March 14th.

*Linda Campbell, Board 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 Board meeting minutes for location.

## Membership Corner

### Welcome New Members!

Nancy Fisher Family  
Erin Maraist Family  
Suzanne McLean  
Margie & John Nairn  
Carol Standley

## New Membership Chair

ASC welcomes Paul Adamus as the new membership Chair, effective March 1, 2019.

## General Membership Renewal Information

For membership renewal online go to the ASC website ([www.audubon.corvallis.or.us/join.shtml](http://www.audubon.corvallis.or.us/join.shtml)) and renew via Paypal. To renew by USPS, mail a check to ASC, PO Box 148, Corvallis, OR 97339.

## Email Notifications/Meeting Cancellations

We encourage members to contact Karan Fairchild to get on the ASC listserve to receive emergency email notifications about meeting cancellations related to weather conditions, 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](mailto:alderspr@peak.org)

## Have You Changed Your Contact Information?

If you have moved or changed your email/mail addresses please update your contact information.

Thank you for your generosity and support!

*Suzanne Ortiz, Membership Chair*

## Contributors to this Chat

Mark Baldwin, William Proebsting, Fred Ramsey, Suzanne Ortiz, Chris Mathews, Teri Engbring, Naomi Weidner, Joel Geier, Don Boucher, Ray Drapek, Diana Roberts, Rita Snyder, Linda Campbell, and Brian French

## Chat Articles

The Chat editors, Teri Engbring and Naomi Weidner, 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](mailto:chateditors@gmail.com).

**Audubon Society of Corvallis**

## Calendar

Mar 7	Sustainability Fair and Town Hall
Mar 9	Winter Wildlife Field Day at Finley, 11-3
Mar 9	Snagboat Bend NWR field trip
Mar 14	ASC Board meeting at Natural Grocers, 7pm
Mar 21	ASC Monthly Members Meeting, 6:30pm
Mar 28	Articles due for April 2019 CHAT
Mar 28	Field Notes submissions due
Apr 13	Cheadle Marsh, Finley NWR field trip
Apr 21	Feather & Leather Wings at Hesthavn

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Interested in volunteering?  
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