



Audubon Society of Corvallis the **CHAT**

December 2003

VOL. 33

#4

General Meeting

December 18

Thursday, 7:30–9:00 PM
Corvallis Public Library

Member Photography Exhibition

Members are invited to bring no more than 10 of their best slides or photos depicting birds, wildlife or nature of some kind. Be prepared to talk about your slides during our program. For the presentation part of the program, you may supply 35mm slides or digital photographs for display in MS PowerPoint® format. Bring your PowerPoint slides on a CD ROM disc (for technical questions contact Sue Haig, 753-5068). There will be a slide projector and a PC hooked up to a projector monitor.

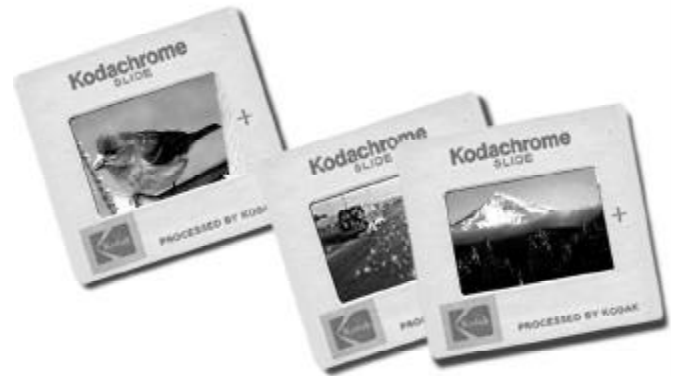
Please Come Early for Setup

Time will be needed to get participants checked in and slides organized. We advise showing up by 7 PM. Tables will be available for display of 10 your photographic prints or digital printouts. There will not be presentation time for the prints so please bring labels for each one.

The meeting is in the conference room of the Corvallis-Benton County Library, 6th Street at Monroe, downtown Corvallis. At each meeting we give updates on conservation and Audubon activities. Meetings start at 7:30 PM and speakers begin at 8:00. Come early for refreshments, conversation and browsing at display tables.

Meeting Place Has Changed

The Corvallis-Benton County Library will be our meeting spot, *not* the First Presbyterian Church.



Future Programs at General Meetings

- Jan 15 Fred Ramsey, Corvallis Audubon/OSU faculty, speaking on his latest interest (butterflies)
- Feb 19: Bill Ripple, OSU faculty and U. S. Forest Service: the wildlife encountered by Lewis and Clark
- Mar 18: James Davis, Portland Audubon Society: Owls of Oregon
- Apr 15: Bill Sullivan, Oregon author, speaking on trails and travels in Oregon
- May 21: Roy Lowe, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, speaking on wildlife refuges of the Oregon Coast

In This Issue:

Local Christmas Bird Counts	26
Class on Winter Birds	26
Hesthavn Update	27
ASC Field Trips	27
New Park, Fitton Green Natural Area	30
Klamath Basin Update	31

Christmas Bird Count

Corvallis: Sunday, December 14th

Everybody is invited to join us on Sunday, December 14th for the 42nd Corvallis Christmas Bird Count. Whether you are a beginner or experienced CBCer, every set of eyes and ears is needed to help tally all the birds within a 7.5 mile radius of the Corvallis airport. The Christmas Bird Count is an organized, continent-wide, survey that documents every bird seen on a given day from sunrise to sunset. Since the turn of the 20th century, the Christmas Bird Count has contributed to the knowledge base of wintering birds in North America. This has aided conservation efforts as well as documented good bird watching sites.

The count is an all-day event open to anyone wishing to participate. This is an excellent opportunity for novice bird watchers to join with seasoned veterans and learn more about identifying and finding the local avifauna. Half-day participants and home feeder-watchers are also welcome. Participants need to pay a fee of \$5.00 to cover National Audubon's costs of printing the results. As in the past, the Corvallis count circle will be divided into 13 units, with a team of 3-6 individuals assigned to each section. Team leaders for each section will make arrangements with the rest of the group for a meeting place and time (usually between 7:00 and 7:30 AM) the morning of the count. Participants should bring cold- and wet-weather gear, binoculars and snacks for the day. A notepad and pencil, field guides and a thermos with something hot are always good ideas as well.

If you are interested in participating or would like further information, please contact me at 752-4313 or e-mail me at mccarmel@peak.org.

-Marcia Cutler



Are You a Night Owl?

Some Christmas Bird Count participants go out during nighttime hours and encounter owls.

Other Willamette Valley Christmas Bird Counts

Dallas, Oregon

Sunday, December 28 in Dallas, Oregon. Contact Roy Gerig 503-851-2974, roygerig@hotmail.com Everyone is to meet at 7 AM at Farrol's Restaurant in Rickreall, south of Hwy 22 along Hwy 99W.

Brownsville, Oregon

Thursday, January 1 is the Brownsville, Oregon count date. Jeff Harding 541-451-2613, pjh@centurytel.net Everyone is to meet 6:30 - 7 AM at Pioneer Villa Restaurant Hwy 228 and I-5 exit at Brownsville.

Airle-Albany, Oregon

Sunday, January 4 is the Airle-Albany, Oregon count date. Paul Adamus 541-745-7092, adamus7@comcast.net Contact Paul for detailed information.

Class on Winter Birds

Charismatic Birds in Colossal Quantities

The Willamette Valley offers spectacular birding during the rainy season, like eagles, falcons and flocks of waterfowl in the thousands. The 2-week class will cover the wintering birds, identification, tools and field trips to local wildlife areas.

Outline

January 13 Tuesday evening 7–8:50 PM:

Rainy season birding, tools and methods, wetland birds

January 17, Saturday 9:00 AM–11:50 AM:

Field trip, Finley National Wildlife Refuge

January 20, Tuesday evening 7–8:50 PM:

Resources, open country birds, feeder birds

January 24, Saturday 9:00 AM–11:50 AM:

Field trip, Bald Hill Park

Registration is \$25

Linn-Benton Community College

The class is held in Corvallis at Corvallis High School. Sign up at the Benton Center, 630 NW 7th St., Corvallis 541-917-4991 or <http://sis.lbcc.cc.or.us> CRN: 33861

For information about class content, contact Don Boucher, 541-753-7689, bouchdon@juno.com

Searching for a Field Notes Editor

Since 1970, the ASC has published notable bird reports in *The Chat*. Our current Field Notes editor, Joel Geier, has been doing a splendid job for the last couple of years but now has other commitments. We are looking for a bird savvy replacement to glean reports (by email, phone and mail) for noteworthy reports of Mid-Valley and Central Coastal birds and occasional other wildlife. We are hoping for a year's commitment for this volunteer position but will accept any help that is offered. Tell you birder friends!

For more information contact me, see back of the Chat.

-Don Boucher

Hesthavn Work Parties

January 22, February 28

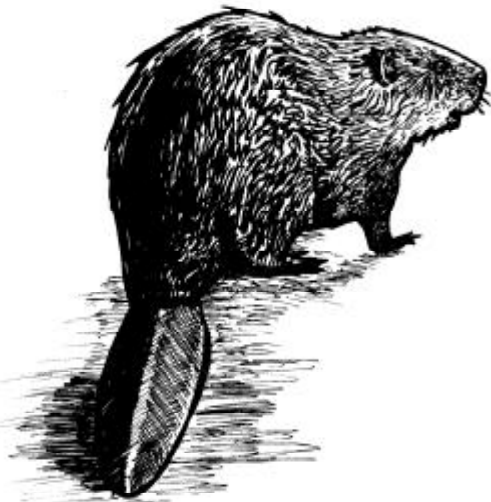
9AM–12PM: Restoration

1PM–4PM: Barn Renovation

Hesthavn Sanctuary is located 8590 NW Oak Creek Road, west of Corvallis. It is a quarter mile before the OSU Forest Field Station and trail head.

There is no workparty scheduled for December due to Holiday activities. Contractor work on the barn ensues. We need volunteers for the ongoing plant restoration.

-Ray Drapek, 754-7364



Field Trip Schedule

Dec 13 Saturday local morning 7:30 AM

Dec 14 Corvallis Christmas Bird Count

Mar 19-21 Bandon Coast weekend

April 16-18 Klamath Basin

May 7-9 Medford/Ashland Area

May 20-23 Malheur NWR

Local Morning Trip

On December 13, 2003 our second Saturday local field trip meets at the Avery Park Rose Garden parking area at 7:30 AM. This field trip is especially interesting for beginner birders and new birders to Oregon's mid-valley area. We spend a lot of time identifying local birds by sight and song. Field trip leader is Paula Vanderheul 541-752-0470, vanderp@peak.org

Spring Weekend Trips

In the Spring there will be four major long weekend field trips to Bandon Coast March 19-21; Klamath Basin April 16-18; Medford/Ashland area May 7-9; and Malheur National Wildlife Refuge May 20-23 that are led by Fred Ramsey. Sign-up sheets will be available at the field trip table at the general meeting each month, or contact Paula Vanderheul directly for sign-up or further information. \$40 deposit needed for Medford/Ashland and \$50 deposit needed for Malheur NWR by February 28, 2004 payable to Fred Ramsey 3550 NW Glenridge Pl Corvallis OR 97330 541-753-3677 flramsey5@earthlink.net

Watch the Chat for changes, additions, and updates of field trips each month. Come and join other bird watchers exploring a wildlife adventure in Oregon.

-Paula Vanderheul

The Chat by Email

If you have computer access to email, we will save trees and also money for postage, and email you the Audubon Society of Corvallis' newsletter. Please contact Amy Schoener 541-929-4041, cloudrun@peak.org.

You will receive the CHAT in Adobe Acrobat format. File size will be 300k or less. Adobe Acrobat reading software is free and can be downloaded from Adobe's web site (www.adobe.com).

-Amy Schoener

Field Notes

October 28 through November 20, 2003

After our first real frost on 31 Oct, November weather turned wet, with particularly heavy rains in the third week when one storm brought heavy snow to the Cascades, and even a bit of snow on the fringes of the valley. However, even these rains were not enough to produce much ponding in the fields, following the relatively dry fall, so most reports of waterfowl came from the larger, permanent bodies of water.

The Christmas Bird Count (CBC) season is a great time for birders of all experience levels to get out and enjoy the amazing diversity of birds that winter in Oregon, while helping to build scientific understanding by contributing to the longest-running bird survey on the continent. Many nearby CBCs would welcome your participation.

The Corvallis (14 Dec), Brownsville (1 Jan) and Airlie-Albany (4 Jan) CBCs give you an excuse to explore our local area. You can even help out by reporting the birds at your feeders. Also close by are Salem (20 Dec), Dallas (28 Dec), Upper Nestucca (2 Jan), and Silverton (3 Jan).

If you'd like to see some coastal birds, try Yaquina Bay (3 Jan). And for real adventurers, strap on your skis or snowshoes to join the Santiam Pass CBC on 29 Dec. For a complete list of CBCs in Oregon, and information on whom to contact, see:

<http://home.pacifier.com/%7Empatters/cbc/cbc2003.html>

Abbreviations & Locations: NWR = National Wildlife Refuge; Res. = Reservoir; SF = State Forest; s.p. = sewage ponds. E.E. Wilson (Wildlife Area) is north of Corvallis along Hwy 99W. Baskett Slough NWR is near Dallas in Polk Co. Big Lake is in the Santiam Pass area of Linn Co. Cabell Marsh and McFadden Marsh are at Finley NWR south of Corvallis. The Pioneer Villa ponds are alongside I-5 west of Brownsville. Snag Boat Bend is an annex of Finley NWR near Peoria. Stewart Lake is on the HP campus in north Corvallis.

Sightings:

Tens of thousands of **Canada Geese** were at valley refuges by 30 Oct (Karen Sparkman). A **Greater White-fronted Goose** was at Baskett Slough NWR 30-31 Oct (K Sparkman; Wayne Hoffman).

On 20 Nov Randy Campbell saw a **Snow Goose** flying with a flock of **Canada Geese** s. of Halsey, and then watched it land at the airport pond.

Swan flocks including a family group of four **Trumpeter Swans** and up to 28 **Tundra Swans** were at Baskett Slough NWR 31 Oct (Wayne Hoffman). 45 **Tundra Swans** were at Ankeny NWR on 7 Nov (Joe Fontaine, Randy Moore), and two were at Big Lake 9 Nov (Jeff Harding, Tom Snetsinger, Jeff Fleischer).

Jamie Simmons estimated a total of 2000 ducks at the Philomath sewage ponds 9 Nov, including 3 **Gadwall** drakes plus **Wood Ducks**, **Green-winged Teal**, **Mallards**, **Northern Pintails**, **Northern Shovelers**, **American Wigeon**, **Ring-necked Ducks**, **Buffleheads**, and **Ruddy Ducks**.

Single **Wood Duck** drakes were at Stewart Lake on 30 Oct and on 10 Nov, when a **Gadwall** drake was also there (J Simmons). A male **Eurasian Wigeon** was at the Philomath sewage ponds 7 Nov (J Fontaine, R Moore).

A **Blue-winged Teal** north of Finley NWR was identified after being shot by duck hunter 8 Nov, a notably late date for this species (Andy Walker fide Merlin Eltzroth). 30 **Northern Shovelers** were at Tangent sewage ponds and more were at the Brownsville ponds 11 Nov (Paula Vanderheul, Marcia Cutler).

Ten **Green-winged Teal** were at the Tangent sewage ponds 11 Nov (P Vanderheul, M Cutler). On 4 Nov two female Green-winged Teal were at Stewart Lake, an unusual location (J Simmons). Up to 2 **Northern Pintails** there 1-5 Nov were also unusual for the location (J Simmons).

A pair of **Canvasbacks** were at Stewart Lake 4-12 Nov, and a hen made an appearance there 18 Nov (J Simmons). A drake was at the

Philomath sewage ponds on 7 Nov (J Fontaine, R Moore).

A male **Greater Scaup** in eclipse plumage was at Philomath sewage ponds 7 Nov (J Fontaine, R Moore). 15 **Ring-necked Ducks**, 10 **Lesser Scaup**, 30 **Buffleheads**, and 2 **Ruddy Ducks** were at the Tangent sewage ponds 11 Nov (P Vanderheul, M Cutler). Up to 2 **Lesser Scaup** were seen irregularly at Stewart Lake from 4 Nov onward, and the **Bufflehead** count there reached a high of 7 on 3 Nov (J Simmons).

A female **Common Goldeneye** was at the Brownsville sewage ponds and another was at the Tangent ponds 11 Nov (P Vanderheul, M Cutler). By 6 Nov the Tangent ponds held 3 drakes. 40 **Barrow's Goldeneyes** were at their usual wintering spot below the dam at Foster Reservoir 7 Nov (J Fontaine, R Moore), but one female was still high in the mountains at Big Lake 9 Nov (J Fleischer).

Ten **Hooded Mergansers** were at Stewart Lake 4 Nov, a high count for the period (J Simmons). 14 were at Toketie Marsh when I dropped off our recycling on 9 Nov. Ten **Common Mergansers** were at Big Lake 9 Nov (J Fleischer). Five were visible from the end of the public road to Stahlbusch Island 11 Nov (P Vanderheul, M Cutler). Two female or eclipse male **Red-breasted Mergansers** were on Foster Reservoir 7 Nov (J Fontaine, R Moore). were at the Tangent sewage ponds 11 Nov (P Vanderheul, M Cutler).

Roger Robb saw a Ruffed Grouse on Mary's Peak 2 Nov. **Wild Turkeys** continued along Gap Rd. in Linn Co. as of 11 Nov (P Vanderheul). Pat Waldron counted 17 **Mountain Quail** crossing through her orchard e. of Scio on 1 Nov. On 4 Nov a group of 4 or 5 Mountain Quail there were joined by a female "**Valley**" (**California**) **Quail**.

A **Pacific Loon** and Eared Grebe were at Big Lake 9 Nov (J Harding, T Snetsinger, J Fleischer).

Four **Pied-billed Grebes** at Stewart Lake on 14 Nov tied the highest count there in 11 yrs (J Simmons). Two **Horned Grebes** were at the Brownsville sewage ponds on 11 Nov (P Vanderheul, M Cutler).

Horned Grebes and at least one of the two **Red-necked Grebes** at Foster Reservoir since last month continued through 9 Nov (J Fleischer). Five **Eared Grebes** were at the Philomath sewage ponds 7 & 9 Nov (J Fontaine, R Moore; J Simmons). Eight were at Foster Reservoir 7 Nov (J Fontaine & R Moore), and two were at the Brownsville sewage ponds 11 Nov (P Vanderheul, M Cutler). Western Grebes were seen regularly at Foster Reservoir through the period.

After a **Great Blue Heron** flew low over Dan & Pat Waldron's pond e. of Scio on 2 Nov, Pat was glad to see all seven of their koi were still accounted for. **Great Egrets** included six at Finley NWR 9 Nov (Erik Knight), one that landed in a tree at Stewart Lake 10 Nov (J Simmons), and one on Stahlbusch Island 11 Nov (P Vanderheul, M Cutler).

A **Turkey Vulture** flew south over Stewart Lake 3 Nov (J Simmons). A couple were seen near Fern Ridge in Lane Co. later in November, raising the question of whether a few may try to winter over in the Willamette Valley.

A **White-tailed Kite** was at the north entrance to Finley NWR 5 Nov (J Fontaine). Two (one an immature) were there 9 Nov (J Simmons). Four were just south of Kings Valley on 31 Oct (Wayne Hoffman).

An adult **Bald Eagle** was at the Tangent sewage ponds and an immature was near Ward Butte 11 Nov (P Vanderheul, M Cutler). Two adults were at Cabell Marsh 15 Nov (Steve Seibel).

In late September, Margaret Parkerson and her husband had quite an adventure which started with a bang, as an immature **Cooper's Hawk** flew into her window in hot pursuit of a **Cedar Waxwing**. The hawk was knocked out and upside down, but did not appear to have broken its neck. After ten minutes they turned the hawk over, and it stood blinking and dozing on their back steps for another ten minutes.

Then, when Margaret approached it, the hawk panicked and flew into the house through an open door, then tried to get back out via a window full of orchids. Margaret's husband was able to catch the hawk by the tarsi (a bold move with those talons!) and get it back outside. The hawk flew skyward. Since then they have seen it hunting around their

neighborhood, near Corvallis High. Margaret notes that the Cedar Waxwing did not fare so well. She did not give a count of casualties among the orchids.

On 9 Nov Erik Knight spotted a **Red-shouldered Hawk** in the woods near McFadden Marsh.

On 7 Nov I stepped out the door on my way to our mailbox in SE Polk Co., and saw an unusual-looking, long-winged hawk flying low over the field and heading straight toward me. It was a **Rough-legged Hawk**, truly spectacular as it veered around me and lifted up to continue north over the line of oaks. A dark morph **Rough-legged Hawk** was along Greenberry Rd and Hwy 99W s of Corvallis on 12 Nov (S Seibel). Randy Campbell got to see another of these remarkable winter visitors along Gap Rd. on 20 Nov. Another impressive raptor, a **Golden Eagle**, was near Ward Butte on 11 Nov (P Vanderheul, M Cutler).

Dave Mellinger saw a **Merlin** fly over the s. end of Research Way in SW Corvallis 6 Nov. A **Peregrine Falcon** was seen regularly at Baskett Slough NWR through 11 Nov (Bill Tice). A falcon probably of this species was cruising through the mist at Snag Boat Bend 14 Nov (R Campbell). A **Prairie Falcon** was at the s. end of Blueberry Rd. near Peoria on 9 Nov (Barbara Combs), and one was along Bond Butte Dr in Linn Co 20 Nov (R Campbell).

Pat Waldron heard a few **Sandhill Cranes** e. of Scio 10 Nov. One or possibly two were at Baskett Slough NWR 11 Nov (Roy Gerig).

A **Black-bellied Plover** was at Pugh Rd. north of Fayetteville 9 Nov (R Campbell). A tilled-up pumpkin field by our place near E.E. Wilson WA attracted about 600 **Killdeer** by 14 Nov.

A **Spotted Sandpiper** and two **Dunlin** were at the Tangent sewage ponds, and 30 **Least Sandpipers** and 6 **Dunlin** were at the Pioneer Villa ponds on 11 Nov (P Vanderheul, M Cutler). An adult **Pectoral Sandpiper** was near McFadden Marsh 9 Nov (Erik Knight).

A **Wilson's Snipe** made a rare appearance at Stewart Lake on 3 Nov (J Simmons). On 9 Nov I watched a flock of close to 30 feeding along the edge of Toketie Marsh, alongside of three **Long-billed Dowitchers**.

14 **Ring-billed Gulls** and 9 **California Gulls** were at Foster Reservoir 7 Nov (J Fontaine, R Moore). A **Herring Gull** was chewing on a dead sheep along with five **Common Ravens** along Linn West Rd 14 Nov (R Campbell).

In the late fall and winter months, **Mourning Doves** tend to flock up so they are either seen in numbers or not at all. Paula Vanderheul noted some at the Crystal Lake Dr boat landing s. of Corvallis 6 Nov, and more near Ward Butte on 11 Nov. Toward evening on 14 Nov, I saw 15 roosting in a bare willow at E.E. Wilson WA, along with about 30 **American Robins**.

Sean Burgett found a **Northern Pygmy-Owl** perched in a 12 foot tall Douglas-fir tree on Bald Mtn in the Polk Co. Coast Range on 6 Nov. Two **Spotted Owls** and a **Barred Owl** were heard in the Tombstone Pass area on 9 Nov (J Harding, T Snetsinger, J Fleischer). Three **Short-eared Owls** were along Conser Rd w of Millersburg near dusk on 13 Nov (Randy Campbell). Five were along Farmer Rd e. of Baskett Slough NWR on 9 Nov (Ray Korpi).

A female **Anna's Hummingbird** visited Stewart Lake 14 Nov (J Simmons). One has been occasional at Paula Vanderheul's feeder in NW Corvallis.

On 15 Nov Andrea Foster saw a **Belted Kingfisher** rattling atop an evergreen tree in the Timberhill neighborhood of Corvallis, rather far from the nearest water. A male **Acorn Woodpecker** joined the female already at Stewart Lake, from 6 Nov through the end of the period (J Simmons).

A **Say's Phoebe** and a **Loggerhead Shrike** were along Manning Rd near Ward Butte 11 Nov (P Vanderheul, M Cutler). A **Loggerhead Shrike** was also seen at Sevenmile Rd. and Ridge Rd. 18 Nov (R Campbell). An adult and an immature **Northern Shrike** were at Baskett Slough NWR 11 Nov (R Gerig). Another immature was w. of Shedd 18 Nov (R Campbell).

A **Horned Lark** was atop Mary's Peak 7 Nov (J Fontaine, R Moore). At least five were still in NE Benton Col. near our place in the fog on 14 Nov. Roy Gerig reports large numbers along Livermore Rd n. of Baskett Slough NWR as of 11 Nov.

Paul Adamus had nice assortment of tree-clinging birds at his place near Lewisburg on 9 Nov: two **Red-breasted Nuthatches**, a **White-breasted Nuthatch**, and a **Brown Creeper**. Two **Golden-crowned Kinglets** were also around, marking the first arrivals at low elevations this season. More showed up at Stewart Lake 14 Nov and in Jamie Simmons' NW Corvallis yard on 17 Nov.

Regulars at Paula Vanderheul's feeders this month have included **Red-breasted Nuthatches**, **Black-capped Chickadees**, and **Bushtits**.

25 **Western Bluebirds** were along Belts Rd 11 Nov (P Vanderheul, M Cutler). On 9 Nov two were in Lewisburg (P Adamus) and 37 were at Finley NWR, mainly along the Woodpecker Loop trail and Bruce Road (E Knight).

A **Hermit Thrush** was at Stewart Lake on 14 Nov (J Simmons). Two were calling e. of Scio 31 Oct (P Waldron). A Varied Thrush under the feeder there 20 Nov was the first of the season (P Waldron).

Roy Gerig reported large numbers of **American Pipits** along Livermore Rd n. of Baskett Slough NWR 11 Nov. So far I have just seen small numbers in the grass fields around our place.

Some **Cedar Waxwings** were at the Crystal Lake Dr boat landing s. of Corvallis 6 Nov (P Vanderheul). **Yellow-rumped Warblers** were at Stewart Lake daily throughout the period, with a high count of ten on 3 Nov (J Simmons).

About 70 **Savannah Sparrows** seem to be wintering in grass fields near our place in the Camp Adair area, as of 3 Nov. Another flock was noted near Ward Butte 11 Nov (P Vanderheul, M Cutler). **"Sooty" Fox Sparrows** are now abundant in blackberry thickets throughout E.E. Wilson WA. Wintering flocks of **White-crowned Sparrows** and **Golden-crowned Sparrows** are also common throughout our area.

A **White-throated Sparrow** was at the Crystal Lake Dr boat landing s of Corvallis 6 Nov (P Vanderheul). One to two were present through the period in NW Corvallis (J Simmons).

Ten **Western Meadowlarks** were along Belts Rd 11 Nov (P Vanderheul, M Cutler). 20 were in a perennial grass field near our place in the Camp Adair area 3 Nov.

Two **Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches** were atop Mary's Peak 2 Nov (R Robb). A **Purple Finch** that flushed from a grass field in the Camp Adair area 7 Nov had me confused for a while, since this is not their usual habitat. 30 were atop Mary's Peak 7 Nov, along with 30 **Red Crossbills** and at least 300 **Pine Siskins**, most of which were in a single flock feeding on Douglas-fir and noble fir cones (J Fontaine, R Moore).

29 **Lesser Goldfinches** were hanging on Jeff Fleischer's thistle seed feeders in Albany on 3 Nov. Five or six have been frequenting Paula Vanderheul's feeders in NW Corvallis throughout the period. Two **Evening Grosbeaks** were in Lewisburg 9 Nov (P Adamus), and 90 were atop Mary's Peak 7 Nov (J Fontaine, R Moore).

The **chickarees (Douglas's Squirrels)** which colonized Jamie Simmons' NW Corvallis neighborhood in late August continue to be seen. A **Western Gray Squirrel** and a large chipmunk (likely a **Townsend's Chipmunk**) are new visitors to Paula Vanderheul's yard in NW Corvallis.

Next month

Please send me your observations by 22 December.

Joel Geier, 14505 Corvallis Rd., Monmouth, OR 97361

Telephone: (541) 928-2815

e-mail: jgeier@attglobal.net

New Benton County Park

Fitton Green Natural Area Good for Birding

I recently explored the new Benton County Park called Fitton Green Natural Area. It's muddy during the rainy season, but the trails are nice and wide. The area is a mosaic of forest and sloped meadows. Common trees are Douglas Fir, Oregon White Oak, Grand Fir and fewer are Big Leaf Maple and Pacific Madrone. In Spring and early Summer there will be plenty of wildflowers to see.

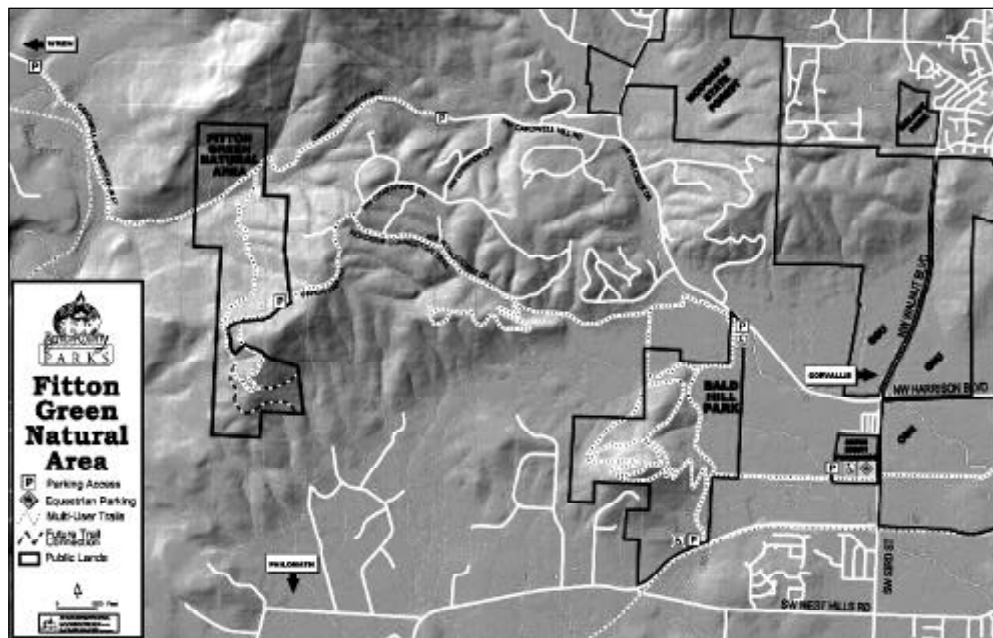
Rainy Season Birds

The frequent meadows contain plenty of edge habitat to scan with your binoculars. Common song-bird species are, Steller's Jay, Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned Kinglet, Black-capped and Chestnut-backed Chickadee, American Robin, Varied Thrush, Winter Wren, Bewick's Wren, Dark-eyed Junco, and Song Sparrow. Look for White-breasted Nuthatches in the oaks, the Brown Creepers on tree trunks and Red-breasted Nuthatches clinging to branches just about anywhere else. It is good woodpecker habitat and you may encounter Red-breasted Sapsuckers, Northern Flickers (common), Hairy Woodpeckers, Downy Woodpeckers and the occasional Pileated Woodpecker. With all these birds, it's sure to attract birders as well as bird hunters like the Cooper's Hawk, Sharp-shinned Hawk and Northern Pygmy Owl.

I visited the rural-residential roads nearby this last summer and found warblers, vireos, Pacific-slope and Olive-sided Flycatchers and Wild Turkeys.

Mammals

There is high deer activity in the area and it is possible to spot one. Coyotes visit the area and their scat, which usually contains animal hair and bones, looks similar to bobcat but may have the telltale signs of berry seeds. There are plenty of dog tracks so be studious in distinguishing the mid-sized dog tracks from the coyotes. The area seems as good habitat for cougar (although I had not seen any positive signs) because the area is relatively undisturbed by humans and there is plenty of appropriate cougar prey, deer. Consider yourself quite lucky, however, if you spot a cougar. A cougar is so afraid of people and dogs that it will hide long before you can spot it. Look for their asymmetri-



Fitton Green Natural Area is a splendid hike and good wildlife habitat with easy access from Corvallis.

cal, clawless tracks in muddy areas. The tracks look almost exactly like your house cat but are 3-4 in. wide. Cougar scats are long and tapered, and contain coarse deer hair. Also in the area, there are plenty of forest rodents such as Townsend's Chipmunks, Chickarees (Douglas Squirrels) and Western Gray Squirrels.

How to Get to Fitton Green Natural Area

There are three access parking areas, one on the west side and two on the east side. Here are simple driving directions from Corvallis to access the one on the northeast side.

- Go west on Harrison Blvd.
- Cross the intersection at 53rd (traffic light) and proceed west along NW Oak Creek Dr.
- After more than a mile, stay left on NW Cardwell Hill Rd.
- Take Cardwell until it turns into a gravel road and dead end, at the top of a hill at the trail head

Also, see the map on the Benton County website

http://www.co.benton.or.us/parks/Map_atlas/photos/photo_4.html

-Don Boucher

Klamath Basin Issues Update

Often considered the Everglades of the West, the upper Klamath River Basin of south-central Oregon and northeastern California hosts the largest wintering colony of bald eagles in the lower 48 states, an irreplaceable staging area for migratory birds of the Pacific Flyway, and a water resource under siege. No longer capable of providing for the native fish, bird or human population it once supported, the Klamath Basin suffers from decades of mismanagement, politicians in denial, and a deeply entrenched local population.

On Nov. 15th I attended a Klamath Marsh NWR tour given by refuge managers to conservationists-there is a lot more to this refuge than most people know! Much of the discussion concerned logging plans for all the refuge forestlands. These approximately 3,000 acres rim much of the refuge marshlands along the Williamson River, but now have higher than historically normal fuel loads and changing forest composition and function. By the end of the day, most everyone agreed that site-specific treatment prescriptions must be documented and available for public review before decisions on any logging or treatment. Walt Ford, current KMNWR manager, and Ron Cole, Klamath Basin Refuge Complex project leader, gave every indication that inconsistencies in documentation could be remedied, and that they are eager to involve more user- and interest-groups. So don't hesitate calling headquarters to express your interests! (530-667-2231) (<http://klamathbasinrefuges.fws.gov>)

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has finally released a report that was withheld for months after completion. In the report, scientists concluded that the lack of water in the Lower Klamath River, withdrawn for irrigation use, contributed to the massive die-off of Chinook and federally listed coho salmon. In a Nov. 20 editorial "Policy Thirst" (The Columbian, Clark Co. WA), the newspaper minces no words: "The Bush administration tried its best to deny that its own actions led to the largest die-off of adult Pacific salmon in recorded history. When government scientists concluded otherwise, the White House sat on the report for months." (<http://sacramento.fws.gov>)

The Klamath Tribes are developing a plan to regain former tribal lands now held within the Winema and Fremont National Forests. Roughly 600,000 acres of the former 2 million-acre area reserved for tribal use would revert to Tribal control, but held in trust by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The Klamath peoples hold an unspecified amount of water rights, and currently will have to compromise those rights in exchange for any land settlement. Our Chapter Board has decided that we can not support some of the current plan, but look forward to presentations planned by the Klamath Tribes. (www.klamathtribes.org)

-Jim Fairchild



*The Klamath Basin has habitat needed
by the American White Pelican*

Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival

January 16-19, 2004

Migrate to one of the country's preeminent birding spots and join the Morro Coast Audubon Society (MCAS) for the 8th Annual Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival. Morro Bay, an important stop on the Pacific Flyway is recognized worldwide for its diversity of both resident and wintering birds with over 200 species identified during past Festivals. This event is sponsored by MCAS and gives you the chance to join local and national birding experts on a variety of field trips and workshops

The Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival limits field trip group sizes to maximize spotting and identification opportunities. The Festival also offers workshops aimed at sharpening your birding skills, as well as evening programs with outstanding speakers.

Please note that the Morro Bay State Park campground will be closed during this year's festival; however, the area offers a number of other nearby campgrounds, such as Montana de Oro State Park and Atascadero State Beach.

For more information about the Festival, check out our website at www.morro-bay.net/birds, where you can request that your name be added to the mailing list for our 2004 brochure, due out in October. Registration deadline is December 31, 2003 and early signups are encouraged as the most popular events fill up quickly.

Contributors to *The Chat*

Paula Vanderheul, Joel Geier, Audrey Ansell, Marcia Cutler, Don Boucher, Elsie Eltzroth and Jim Fairchild.

Chat Distribution: Fran Gates, Alberta Pierce, Eleanor and Ken Kidd, and Joan Siegienski

Audubon Society of Corvallis
www.audubon.corvallis.or.us

President: Susan Haig, 1646 NW Crest Pl., Corvallis, 97330,
753-5068, sue_haig2003@yahoo.com
Vice President/Program: Chris Mathews, 3336 SW Willamette
Ave, Corvallis, 97333, 754-1172, mathewsc2@attbi.com
Secretary & Historian: Marcia Cutler, 835 NW Merrie Dr.,
Corvallis, 97330, 752-4313, mccarmel@peak.org
Treasurer: Susan Ford, 2301 Wooded Knoll, Philomath, 97370,
929-6207, sandsford@peak.org

Board Members at Large

Hal Batchelder, 24566 Elderberry Lane, Philomath, 97370,
929-3537, hbatchelder@coas.oregonstate.edu
Gay Brier, 6791 SW Randall Way, Corvallis, 97333, 754-7385,
gaybrier@yahoo.com
Susan Brown, 107 NW 31st Street, Corvallis, 97330, 753-9444,
todd.g.brown@comcast.net
Paul Catullo, 830 SW Bridgeway, Corvallis, 97333, 762-1019,
arboles@hotmail.com
Dave Mellinger, 3798 NW Jameson Dr, Corvallis, 97330, 757-7953,
mellinger@pml.noaa.gov
Bill Proebsting, 7350 NW Oak Creek Drive, Corvallis, 97330,
752-0108, proebstw@science.oregonstate.edu
Siobhan Van Lanen (alternate), 4535 Big Oak Place #6,
Corvallis, 97330, 760-8590, mabhanipoo@hotmail.com

Committees and Coordinators

Hesthavn Sanctuary Chair: Ray Drapek, 3273 SE Hathaway,
Corvallis, 97333, 754-7364, drapek@fsl.orst.edu
Conservation Chair: Jim Fairchild, 31540 Homestead Road,
Philomath, 97370, 929-4049, alderspr@peak.org
Education Chair: Kate Mathews, 3336 SW Willamette Ave,
Corvallis, 97333, 754-1172, kate.mathews@cmug.com
Membership Chair: Amy Schoener, 24362 Cardwell Hill Dr,
Philomath, 97370, 929-4041, cloudrun@peak.org
Newsletter Editor/Outreach: Don Boucher, 913 NW Tyler Ave,
Corvallis, 97330, 753-7689, bouchdon@juno.com
Field Trip Coordinator: Paula Vanderheul, 991 NW Sequoia,
Corvallis, 97330, 752-0470, vanderp@peak.org
Publicity: Bob Smythe, 2758 SW Fairmont Drive, Corvallis, 97333,
757-6357, patbobsmy@peak.org
Birdathon Coordinator: Karan Fairchild, 31540 Homestead Road,
Philomath, 97370, 929-4049, alderspr@peak.org
Refuge Keeper/Sales: Gary Gibson, 25071 Evergreen Road,
Philomath, 97370, 929-3804, gibgrn@juno.com
Electronic Communications: Sheridan McCarthy, 2807 NW
Morning Glory Drive, Corvallis, 97330, 602-1470,
sheridan@larkonline.net
Chat Distribution: Fran Gates, 2960 NW Bryant Street, Corvallis
OR 97330, 757-0036
Chat Email Distribution: Joe Fontaine, fontaine_joe@hotmail.com
Field Notes Editor: Joel Geier, 14505 Corvallis Rd, Monmouth OR
97361, 928-2815, jgeier@attglobal.net
Hospitality: Rana Foster, 1415 SW Brooklane Dr, Corvallis OR
97333, 753-7944, tweet37@juno.com
Bluebird Trail Liaison: Elsie Eltzroth, 745-7806, 6980 NW Cardinal,
Corvallis OR 97330, eltzroth@peak.org

Audubon Society of Corvallis
P.O. Box 148
Corvallis, OR 97339
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Audubon Society of Corvallis

the **CHAT**

Calendar

- Dec 11 Board Meeting, 7:30 PM, Paula Vanderheul's
- Dec 13 Saturday local morning 7:30 AM**
- Dec 14 Corvallis Christmas Bird Count**
- Dec 18 General Meeting, 7:30 PM, **Corv-Benton Library***,
Member slides of Nature (see front page)
- Dec 22 Field Notes deadline
- Dec 25 Chat deadline for January
- Dec **No Hesthavn workparty in December**
- Jan 6 Conservation Discussion, New Morning Bakery, 5:30 PM
- Jan 8 Board Meeting, 7:30 PM
- Jan 10 Saturday local morning 7:30 AM**
- Jan 15 General Meeting, 7:30 PM, **Corv-Benton Library***,
Fred Ramsey on butterflies
- Jan 22 Hesthavn Workparty (see page 27)
- Jan 26 Field Notes deadline
- Jan 29 Chat deadline for February
- Feb 3 Conservation Discussion, New Morning Bakery, 5:30 PM

Everybody's welcome, including nonmembers, to any ASC
function

* General Meeting change this year—see front page

**See page 27 for field trip descriptions

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