



Audubon Society of Corvallis the **CHAT**

April 2006

VOL. 35

#8

General Meeting

Thursday, April 20th 7:30 – 9:00 PM
First Presbyterian Church

Distribution and Status of Black Oystercatchers.

The April meeting will be a unique presentation by three people working on different but related research and management efforts for the Black Oystercatcher. Recently, there has been concern throughout the species range that there are problems related to their success. Thus, Elise Elliott-Smith (USGS Forest and Rangeland Ecosystem Science Center in Corvallis) will present her efforts to coordinate a species-wide census this next year. Along with Elise, Liz Kelly (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Newport) is examining factors limiting their success in Oregon. Finally, OSU graduate student Caleb Spiegel is carrying out his research on Black Oystercatchers in Harriman Fjord on Prince William Sound in Alaska. Caleb has several cameras on each nest he studies, hence will present footage of breeding birds and their chicks never before recorded. Together, this multi-media presentation should be interesting and bring us closer to a species we need to learn more about.



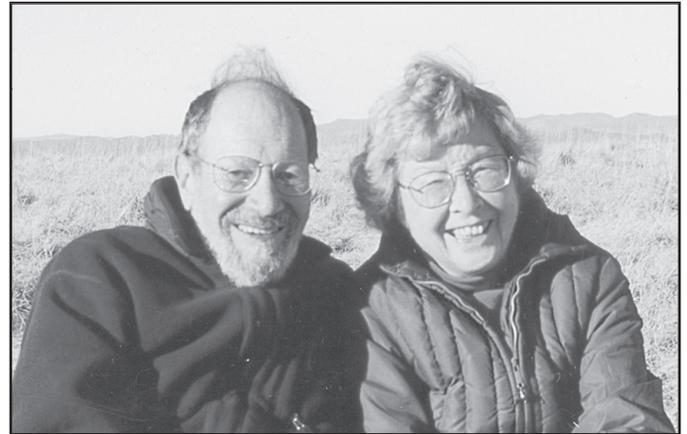
Directions

The chapter meeting is at the meeting hall of the First Presbyterian Church (upstairs), 114 SW Eighth Street. As usual, the meeting will be preceded by a social period, with refreshments, beginning at 7:00.

Sue Haig

Liz and Bob Frenkel

2006 Homer Campbell Award



Liz and Bob Frenkel

In 2004 the Audubon Society of Corvallis initiated the Homer Campbell Award in memory of a beloved ASC leader and conservationist. This annual award is meant to honor a person in our region for outstanding contributions to environmental protection and for stimulating increased public awareness of conservation issues. For the 2006 award, the second to be conferred, Corvallis Audubon has selected Liz and Bob Frenkel, a remarkably tenacious and effective couple. The award will be presented on April 20,

See "Homer Campbell Award" on next page

In this issue:

OFO Annual Meeting	58
Birdathon	58
Hesthavn Open House	59
Atop the Nestbox	63
Protecting Birds with your Food Choices	63

Homer Campbell Award *continued from front page*

at the monthly ASC chapter meeting, beginning at 7:30 PM in the First Presbyterian Church, at Eighth and Monroe. The public is invited to attend.

Liz and Bob have each made great personal contributions, to the extent that either one would be an excellent individual recipient. However, their individual efforts reinforce each other, and because both are so fully committed they are often thought of as a particularly formidable unit: Liz-and-Bob, happy warriors in support of conservation.

The Frenkels moved to Corvallis in 1965, when Bob, a professional wetlands ecologist, joined the OSU faculty. He retired in 1991 as Professor of Geosciences. Both before and after his retirement, Bob and Liz were both committed activists on behalf of the environment. Although Bob has worked on wetland preservation in several areas, including the Salmon River estuary, the Willamette River Greenway, and the Owens Farm, he is best known for his efforts on behalf of the Jackson-Frazier Wetland. He began working in the 1970s to preserve this 144-acre urban "wild island." His contributions included fundraising, personal financial contributions, service on planning commissions, and securing the thousands of hours of volunteer effort needed to complete the 3400-foot raised boardwalk through the wetland, which in 2005 was officially named the Bob Frenkel Boardwalk by the Benton County commissioners

Liz has worked tirelessly as an environmental activist, primarily through the League of Women Voters and the Sierra Club. In 1995 she was described in a Sierra Club listing of "Earth Day Heroes" as "a doggedly tenacious powerhouse who thinks nothing of racking up \$300 home-phone bills for the environmental cause." Her local positions, all volunteer, have included Legislative Coordinator for the Oregon Sierra Club Chapter, Natural Resources Action Coordinator of the Oregon League of Women Voters Action Committee, and member of the Benton County Comprehensive Plan Revision Steering Committee. More recently she has joined forces with the National Sierra Club, as a member of the Smart Energy Futures Conservation Initiative Committee. In these positions she has spent thousands of hours lobbying and testifying before the Oregon Legislature and other governing bodies, earning a reputation as one who knows both land-use planning and how to push the levers of government to make things happen. In recent years she has fought to defend funding for State Parks, to defeat State Initiative 37, to block dam construction on the Upper Klamath River, and to open our Legislature to more public scrutiny. One elected official described her contributions as follows. "Oregon's beauty feeds the soul and strengthens people for meeting the challenges in our lives. Liz Frenkel has spent a good part of her life ensuring that this part of the world continues to be healthy for its creatures one and all."

Chris Mathews

OFO Annual Meeting

May 19-20-21, Gold Beach, OR

Plan now to join Oregon Field Ornithologists for a weekend of great birding on the Southern Oregon Coast. We will be headquartered at the Gold Beach Resort with field trips planned to the Brookings area, Gold Beach and Jerry's Flat, and a possible pelagic trip on Sunday. The weekend will include the OFO Annual meeting on Saturday evening and programs on Friday and Saturday evenings. And, of course, excellent field trip leaders and great food, featuring fresh local seafood!

IMPORTANT: If you are interested in a Sunday morning pelagic trip out of Charleston, or a trip out of Brookings please contact Greg Gillson at greg@thebirdguide.com as soon as possible.

PLEASE NOTE: Gold Beach will also be hosting their annual Wild Rivers Coast Art, Seafood and Wine Festival the same weekend. Motel rooms may be scarce as the date approaches. Be sure to make your reservations early. The Gold Beach Resort offers a 10% discount for 2 or more nights (www.gbresort.com). For more motels and information call the Gold Beach Chamber of Commerce at 541-247-0923 or <http://www.goldbeachchamber.com/> or visit the city of Gold Beach website at www.goldbeach.org.

Official announcements and registration materials will be mailed to OFO members in April. Non-members are always welcome - drop an email to hrndlark@juno.com (Mary Anne Sohlstrom) to request registration packets.

OFO Board of Directors
www.oregonbirds.org

Birdathon!

You Already Have One Pledge!

Remember the Birdathon is coming up on April 29 and 30. This is your chance to get out in the woods and reawaken your senses to the poetry of spring, while doing a good deed for Audubon and local wildlife. Plus, you already have a 10 cents per bird pledge from Elsie Eltzroth, in memory of her late husband Elzy. Throw in a couple of pledges from a friend, your kids' grandparents, and/or a kindly aunt, and that's real money towards improving and enhancing our local natural area and education center. 100% of the money you raise goes directly to Hesthavn.

Remember, you can bird ANYWHERE that weekend – including but not limited to the Big Woods of Arkansas. As a special incentive, the Birdathon committee has decided that if anyone spots an Ivory-billed Woodpecker during the Birdathon, we will re-name our Audubon chapter after you!!* And David Sibley will give you his best spotting scope!**

(*April Fools! Every Board member is now gasping in shock as they read this...)

(** Sibley has formally disputed the video evidence

of the Ivory-billed's rediscovery. Well, we didn't want him on OUR Birdathon team anyway...)

To register for the 'thon, pick up an information packet at the April Audubon meeting, contact me at mary_vanbrocklin@yahoo.com or 745-7170, or go to ASC's website.

Mary vanBrocklin

Hesthavn News

Open House April 30

There will be an open house at the Hesthavn Nature Center hosted by ASC volunteers from 10 to 3 pm on April 30. Come on out for tours, refreshments, and a chance to see for yourselves what exciting projects the Audubon Society is involved in. Hesthavn Sanctuary is located at 8590 NW Oak Creek Road, west of Corvallis. It is a quarter-mile before the OSU Forest Field Station and trail head.

Recent work

On Saturday March 11, members of the OSU Fish and Wildlife Club put in a morning installing a bird and butterfly garden next to the barn at Hesthavn. Several years ago we attempted to install such a garden at Hesthavn with poor success. This time we are very confident of success because we have the expert advise of Esther McEvoy. Esther owns the Willamette Gardens nursery. She grows many native plants and does not use any pesticides or herbicides. Esther has donated her time, truck, expertise, and materials to the cause and we very much appreciate her help.

Another phase of construction has been completed at Hesthavn. We now have a beautiful french door and picture window facing the creek. A landing has been installed below the door using boards recycled from the old corral fencing. Cracks and knot holes in the siding have been filled in so that the barn now is mostly weather-tight. Windows have been installed up in the clerestory. Steve Sever, general contractor and craftsman, did the work this time. Steve did a great job and gave us some breaks with donated materials and time. Steve also informed me that Steele's Glass Service gave us a great discount on the clerestory glass once they learned that the windows were for Hesthavn.

Work parties

Preparation for the open house on April 30 will take some work. Displays that were removed for construction must be re-installed, and other fixes made. Two work parties will be needed this month: April 22 and 29 (8 am - 4 pm). These will both be barn work parties.

Ray Drapek

Field Trip Schedule

- April 8 Saturday morning local birding 7:30 AM
- April 15 Full day Fern Hill Wetlands and Jackson Bottom -Forest Grove/Hillsboro
- May 13 Saturday morning local birding 7:30 AM

Full day birding

The April 15 trip will be a full day of walking diked ponds which contain waterfowl and also migrating shorebirds. Wear comfortable walking shoes, layered clothing, and bring lunch and drinks, binoculars, spotting scope, and rain gear. We meet at 7:30 AM at the Benton Center parking lot at 757 NW Polk (which can be reached by turning east on Polk at the corner of Polk and 9th street, where Borders Books is located). We should return by 6:00 PM. Contact Paula Vanderheul for questions, vanderp@peak.org 541-752-4313.

Second Saturdays: (Year-round)

Our second Saturday morning 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. We visit the valley National Wildlife Refuges-Finley, Baskett Slough, and Ankeny as well as other birding areas throughout the year. Field trip leader is Paula Vanderheul 541-752-0470, vanderp@peak.org

Spring weekend birding:

- Apr 21-23 Klamath Basin (Two openings available)
- May 5-7 Rogue Valley with Shakespeare play "UP" (four openings - \$40 deposit due by February 28, 2006)
- May 18-21 Malheur NWR (trip full - waiting list open, \$50 deposit due by February 28, 2006)

Please send your checks payable to Fred Ramsey, 3550 NW Glen Ridge Place Corvallis OR 97330, or pay at the general meeting field trip table. Sign-up sheets and trip information will be available at the general meetings, or contact Fred Ramsey 541-753-3677 or framsey5@earthlink.net

Paula Vanderheul

Bluebird Booth in Sweet Home

Elsie Eltzroth and Raylene Gordin have been invited to be booth instructors at the Sweet Home Spring Event. They will present materials on the ASC Bluebird Trail. The Sweet Home Spring Event will be held on May 6th from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Sweet Home Boys & Girls Club Gym.

Raylene Gordin

Field Notes:

February 21 through March 27, 2006

Spring got off to a slow start with chilly, wet weather in early March, with snow down to the edges of the valley in the first week and occasional frost thru 17 Mar at our place on the edge of the Willamette Valley. A few warmer, sunny days followed before the weather turned back to showers. Don Boucher and Lisa Millbank noted **western trillium** and **stream violet** blooming at Marys River Natural Area by 11 Mar, and **fawn lily** at Herbert Open Space by 18 Mar. By the end of the period, **black cottonwoods** were leafed out and **big-leaf maples** were putting out buds.

Two very unusual birds for our area created a lot of excitement this month, one more expected in Mexico (a **Crested Caracara**), and one more expected in Siberia (a **Brambling**). Meanwhile, our most eagerly anticipated "usual" migrants, **Rufous Hummingbirds** and **Ospreys**, also showed up to delight birdwatchers.

Abbreviations & Locations: imm. = immature; NWR = National Wildlife Refuge; m. obs. = multiple observers; p. obs. = personal observation. Coffin Butte and E.E. Wilson (Wildlife Area) are north of Corvallis along Hwy 99W. Grand Prairie Park and Simpson Park are in Albany. Herbert Open Space Area is along Herbert Ave. off Hwy 99W s. of Corvallis. McFadden Marsh is at Finley (NWR) s. of Corvallis. Middle Ridge is s. of Lebanon. Poison Oak Hill is the first ridge s. of Coffin Butte. Simpson Park is in Albany. Stewart Lake is on the Hewlett-Packard campus in ne. Corvallis. Thornton Lake is in North Albany. Vineyard Mtn is nw. of Lewisburg on the north end of Corvallis.

Inland Reports:

Two **Snow/Ross's(?) Geese** in a pasture w. of the OSU campus 10 Mar (Noah Strycker) were seen by other observers in the following weeks. As the geese stayed far off the road they were difficult to identify, but on 20 Mar Molly Monroe determined that they were **Ross's Geese**.

Single **Greater White-fronted Geese** were at the w. Brownsville sewage ponds 11 Mar (Jamie Simmons, Joe Fontaine, Rich Hoyer), at Grand Prairie Park 12 Mar (Jeff Harding), and at Toketie Marsh thru the period (p. obs.) A **Brant** was at the w. Brownsville sewage ponds 11 Mar (J Simmons *et al.*); one was near the Benton Co. fairgrounds 27 Mar (Rich Armstrong).

The **Trumpeter Swan** flock that wintered at Suver Junction n. of Corvallis were still there 28 Feb (Carolyn Paynter) and last noted 2 Mar; **Tundra Swans** were last noted there 26 Feb (p. obs.). Two pairs of **Wood Ducks** at Stewart Lake 6 Mar were the only ones seen there this month (J Simmons). The ASC field trip 11 Mar saw some at Simpson Park (fide R Armstrong).

A few **Eurasian Wigeons** were seen with large concentrations of **American Wigeons**. A male **Eurasian Wigeon** joined a flock of up to 130 **American Wigeons** at Stewart Lake 21 Feb thru 1 Mar (J Simmons). In Albany, a Eurasian drake was at Timber Linn Park 26 Feb & 4 Mar (John Snelling; Marcia Cutler), three were in Waverly Park 11 Mar (R Armstrong), and several plus a hybrid **American x Eurasian Wigeon** were at Grand Prairie Park 12 Mar (J Harding).

A pair of **Cinnamon Teal** continued at Toketie Marsh thru the period. Another pair showed up at Finley 17 Mar (M Cutler, R & Nanette Armstrong). **Canvasbacks** were seen throughout the period at Stewart Lake, with high counts of five pairs on 21 Mar (J Simmons) and close to 20 there 26 Mar (Paula Vanderheul). A male **Redhead** which showed up there in mid-Feb was absent 21 Feb, but otherwise present thru the period (J Simmons). Among the more common **Lesser Scaup**, Rich Armstrong picked out one **Greater Scaup** drake at the Philomath sewage ponds and two drakes and two possible females at Knoll Terrace sewage ponds 27 Mar. Four **Hooded Merganser** drakes courted four females at E.E. Wilson 11 Mar (Jeanine & Gil Lawrence).

Seven **Mountain Quail** visited Elsie Eltzroth's yard on Vineyard

Mtn 2-3 Mar. At the end of March, Elsie also noted a male **Blue Grouse** which was displaying down the street.

A **Pied-billed Grebe** was fishing alongside several anglers at the E.E. Wilson angling pond 11 Mar. Up to three were at Stewart Lake early in the period, with the last departing after 21 Mar (J Simmons). Numbers of **Double-crested Cormorants** in the valley thinned this month as they began to return to breeding colonies, but five were still at Finley 26 Mar (Erik Knight).

A pair of **Great Blue Herons** is nesting again at Toketie Marsh, on a snag within view of the heavy truck traffic to and from the Coffin Butte landfill. On 2 Mar Martha Geier and I watched them arranging sticks on the snag as the start of their nest, which was complete by 9 Mar. Brooding commenced by 17 Mar and continued thru the end of March. While canoeing on Thornton Lake in early to mid-Mar, Annette Higinbotham and her family frequently encountered a **Great Egret**.

Turkey Vultures were a daily presence near E.E. Wilson by 26 Feb, when our kids (Wil, Nik & Martha) spotted a kettle of six spiraling on thermals over Poison Oak Hill. On Middle Ridge s. of Lebanon, the first returning vultures were noted 1 Mar (Raylene Gordin).

Ospreys returned by 22 Mar, when one was at McFadden Marsh and a total of five were seen at nests in se. Benton Co. (Steve Seibel; P Vanderheul, M Cutler). The downtown pair returned to their nest by the Van Buren bridge 27 Mar (P Vanderheul & grandson Quentin). **White-tailed Kite** sightings included an adult and imm. near Kings Valley 7 Mar (M Cutler, R & N Armstrong) and three at the w. end of Plymouth Rd. s. of Philomath 12 Mar (Jim & Karan Fairchild).

A total of 117 **Bald Eagles** were tallied in Linn Co. surveys 15-21 Feb (fide Jeff Fleischer). One was near Michael's Landing in Corvallis 2 Mar (C Paynter). On 16 Mar Steve Seibel saw two soaring low over the Hwy 34 bridge as afternoon rush-hour traffic rolled out of downtown Corvallis. Pairs of **Northern Harriers** and **Cooper's Hawks** were courting at Marys River Natural Area 4 Mar (D Boucher, L Millbank). Dave & Riley Mellinger saw a **Cooper's Hawk** fly over downtown Corvallis 6 Mar.

A pair of **Red-shouldered Hawks** were along Norton Creek Rd. near Blodgett 7 Mar (M Cutler, R & N Armstrong). The se. Benton Co. raptor survey 22 Mar tallied 39 **Red-tailed Hawks** including one on a nest, and one **Harlan's Red-tailed Hawk** which will probably be headed north soon (M Cutler, P Vanderheul). Reports of lingering **Rough-legged Hawks** included a dark morph at Peterson Butte s. of Lebanon 10 Mar (S Seibel) and another in se. Benton Co. 22 Mar (M Cutler, P Vanderheul).

On 7 Mar Chuck and Jane Lane saw a very strange raptor in a field near Blodgett, and identified it as a **Crested Caracara**, a Central American relative of falcons which seldom occurs north of Texas or Arizona (fide E Eltzroth and M Cutler). The bird disappeared in the bad weather which followed. However, on 12 Mar it was seen and photographed while feeding on a dead skunk along Airport Rd. s. of Corvallis (M Monroe). The caracara was seen by scores of birders thru 18 Mar, with a possible sighting a week later near the Philomath sewage ponds (fide R Armstrong). After this was reported in the Gazette-Times, Jack Stevenson called to say he had seen the caracara off-and-on since mid-Feb in s. Philomath. Karan Fairchild also heard from a friend who saw a bird that she identified as a caracara near there in January, but did not report it because it seemed so improbable.

More usual falcons included a tally of 30 **American Kestrels** (including a copulating pair) in se. Benton Co. 22 Mar (P Vanderheul, M Cutler), a **Merlin** in the area sw. of Corvallis airport 23 Feb (R Armstrong) and again 13-19 Mar (p. obs; Bill Clemons; Tim Janzen), and a **Peregrine Falcon** that buzzed Steve Seibel at Finley 22 Mar. A **Prairie Falcon** was along Gilmour Rd. ne. of Corvallis 23 Feb (J Fleischer); another was at the Finley prairie overlook 3 Mar (S Seibel).

Nanette & Rich Armstrong found five Virginia Rails Jackson-Frazier Wetland 23 Mar. A flock of Sandhill Cranes flew over the hills e. of Scio 23 Feb (Pat Waldron). Also in late Feb, a flock of about ten flew

calling over Thornton Lake (Annette & Alan Higinbotham).

Shorebird migration started with a **Greater Yellowlegs** near Corvallis airport 22 Mar (M Cutler, P Vanderheul) and another at E.E. Wilson 27 Mar (Ray Fiori). 1500 **Dunlin** foraged around a large puddle along Hwy 99W s. of Corvallis 24 Feb (Becky Geier); 200 were perched on a log in a pond at Finley 3 Mar (S Seibel). **Wilson's Snipe** began "winnowing" display flights in the Griggs area n. of Lebanon by late Feb (Patricia Harding fide J Harding).

A flock of 300 **gulls** ne. of Tangent which were studied by the ASC field trip 11 Mar were mostly **Mew Gulls**, plus **Ring-billed Gulls**, two **Glaucous-winged Gulls**, and one **Herring Gull**; an adult **Western Gull** with five **Glaucous-winged Gulls** and a possible first-year **Thayer's Gull** were at Waverly Park in Albany the same day (fide R Armstrong). A **Western Gull** was at Grand Prairie Park 12 Mar (J Harding).

Band-tailed Pigeons began to return as one was calling near Lewisburg Saddle 4 Mar (N Strycker), and one visited a Bill & Lena Proebsting's feeder along Oak Creek 17 Mar. On 10 Mar Bill saw a **Barn Owl** in the light of his headlamp, as he bicycled to work along the Campus Way bike path near 53rd St. before dawn.

Alan McGie reports that a former neighbor had found a **Western Screech-Owl** nesting in a cavity of a snag in North Albany as of 13 Mar. Raylene Gordin heard a **Western-Screech-Owl** calling 14 Mar on Middle Ridge, where she has put up a nest box with hopes of attracting a screech-owl, or perhaps the **Northern Saw-whet Owl** which she also heard calling there 22-25 Feb.

The resident **Anna's Hummingbirds** at Andrea Foster's and Rich & N Armstrong's place in nw Corvallis will have competition now that **Rufous Hummingbirds** have shown up. The first male **Rufous Hummingbird** reports in our part of the Willamette Valley were 11 Mar on Middle Ridge (R Gordin) and sw. of Philomath (J Fairchild fide K Fairchild). A female was near E.E. Wilson 22 Mar (B Geier) and more turned up on Middle Ridge 26 Mar (R Gordin). Normally the first females arrive about a week after the first males; perhaps this year they were held back by the chilly weather.

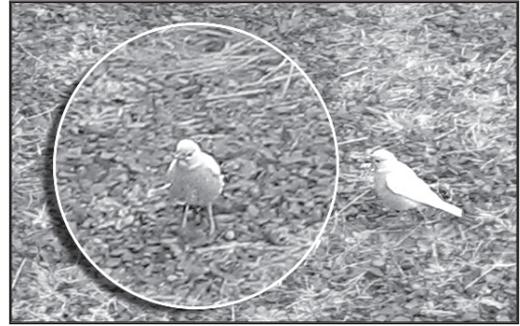
A pair of **Acorn Woodpeckers** were active at Adair Park 3 Mar (p. obs.). The young colony at Stewart Lake seems to have dwindled, with just two sightings of individual birds on 18 & 27 Mar (George Weaver fide J Simmons; P Vanderheul). A pair of **Hairy Woodpeckers** were on Coffin Butte 3 Mar (p. obs.); one at Stewart Lake 17 Mar (Bill Looney fide J Simmons) was unusual for the location. On 13 Mar a male **Northern Flicker** started drumming and calling at Jamie Simmons' place in NW Corvallis, and continued to do so thru the end of the period. A pair of **Pileated Woodpeckers** were foraging in loose association on Coffin Butte 3 Mar.

A **Black Phoebe** was seen several times thru 22 Mar at a small mitigation wetland in the Willamette Landing development in s. Corvallis (M Monroe; Tanya Bray fide M Cutler). A **Loggerhead Shrike** was on the n. side of Ward Butte in Linn Co. 12 Mar (J Harding). A **Northern Shrike** continued at the Marys River Natural Area thru 18 Mar (D Boucher *et al.*); otherwise there were no reports from the area.

A **Hutton's Vireo** was heard and seen at Stewart Lake 3 Mar (J Simmons). Four **Gray Jays** visited feeders for suet daily on Vineyard Mtn as of 4 Mar (E Eltzroth). A **Blue Jay** which turned up near the OSU Lewis Brown Farm on Peoria Rd. in Nov was seen there intermittently 4-19 Mar (Michael Dossett; J Simmons *et al.*; John Houle).

Horned Lark flocks were noted along Harmony Rd. in Linn Co. 11 Mar (J Simmons *et al.*) and at the s. end of 53rd St Corvallis 14 Mar (Ed McVicker, Tom Love). More **Violet-green Swallows** arrived including two at Simpson Park 11 Mar (J Simmons), one at the Herbert Open Space 18 Mar (D Boucher, L Millbank), and some at Middle Ridge 20 Mar (R Gordin).

A **Bushtit** at Stewart Lake 23 Mar appeared to be gathering nesting material, and a pair was working on a nest in a different spot by the lake 28 Mar (J Simmons). A **White-breasted Nuthatch** and two **Brown Creepers** were singing on Coffin Butte 3 Mar (p. obs.). A **Winter**



This is an albinistic American Robin photographed in early March, 2006 by Gary Buhler of Corvallis. Gary saw the bird at his workplace at 3814 Yaquina Bay Road (~3.8 miles toward Toledo from the Embarcadero). The bird is white except for its typical robin-red breast, yellow legs and bill.

Wren turned up 21 Feb under a tree on the Hewlett-Packard campus where this species is infrequent. Four **Marsh Wrens** were very active at Jackson-Frazier Wetland 22 Mar (R & N Armstrong).

Jeanine & Gil Lawrence saw several **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** foraging along the shore of the angling pond at E.E. Wilson 11 Mar. Kinglet flocks on Middle Ridge were 27 Mar were picking thru conifer debris after logging to release an acre of oak savannah (R Gordin).

About 25 **Western Bluebirds** were along Bellfountain Rd. and four more were at E.E. Wilson 3 Mar (R Fiori). Elsie Eltzroth saw a banded male bluebird singing his heart out at the corner of Jack London St. and Hwy 99W, by the Corvallis recycling lot, on 4 Mar. Flocks were also seen at Marys River Natural Area 11 Mar (D Boucher, L Millbank) and w. of Corvallis airport 14 Mar (p. obs.). A **Townsend's Solitaire** perched on a fence near Wren 24 Mar (Amy Schoener, Frank Isaacs, Jane Olson). **Varied Thrushes** were singing daily from Poison Oak Hill by 26 Mar (p. obs.). Thousands of **American Robins** continued to be seen in flocks throughout the mid-Willamette Valley thru mid-March. Among them were several albino birds including one e. of Scio 23 Feb (P Waldron) and two at Finley 3 Mar (S Seibel).

A pair of **Wrentits** were along Upper Calapooia Rd. se. of Holley 11 Mar (J Simmons *et al.*), where this species has been expanding its range northward into the western foothills of the Cascades. A flock of 80 **American Pipits** were at the s. end of 53rd St. Corvallis 14 Mar (E McVicker, T Love). On 6 Mar, Tim Felling and Heather Merfeld saw at least 100 **Cedar Waxwings** in downtown Albany.

As of 8 Mar, Rich and Nanette Armstrong were enjoying four kinds of warblers at their feeders in nw. Corvallis: **Townsend's Warblers**, both "**Audubon's**" and "**Myrtle**" forms of **Yellow-rumped Warbler** (which were coming into breeding plumage), and the wintering **Hermit Warbler** which continued to visit thru 20 Mar. The rest of us can look forward to more warblers as the main migration begins this month.

Wintering **Sooty Fox Sparrows** had begun to leave our area by 21 Feb, when I counted only eight on a walk at E. E. Wilson. Individuals in atypical locations at Stewart Lake 22 & 27 Feb were likely migrants (J Simmons). Two were still at Simpson Park 11 Mar (R Armstrong). A **White-throated Sparrow** was seen sporadically thru the period in NW Corvallis (J Simmons). **White-crowned Sparrows** were singing at the Herbert Open Space 18 Mar (D Boucher, L Millbank) and on Middle Ridge 22 Mar (R Gordin), and from 23 Mar onward in the parking lot plantings at Hewlett-Packard where they nest (J Simmons). A "**Slate-colored**" **Junco** female was with 30 "**Oregon**" **Juncos** at Poison Oak Hill 27 Mar (p. obs.).

A **Lapland Longspur** was along Harmony Drive nw of Halsey 11

See Field Notes on next page

Field Notes

continued from previous page

Mar (J Simmons *et al.*). Three or four near Corvallis airport were coming into breeding plumage by 10 Mar, when one broke into song during a sun break; two **Chestnut-collared Longspurs** which wintered there were also beginning to show breeding plumage (Randy Moore).

30 **Western Meadowlarks** were off Bellfountain Rd. 3 Mar (R Fiori). One was singing along American Dr. near Halsey 11 Mar (J Simmons). Carolyn Paynter has been seeing some along Refuge Rd. near Finley thru 23 Mar.

A **Brambling** turned up in sw. Monmouth, where it was photographed at a feeder which it had patronized for three weeks as of 23 Mar (fide Jessie Leach). This Eurasian finch continued to be seen in the neighborhood thru the end of March (m. obs.). Two **Pine Siskins** in nw. Corvallis 25 Mar (N & R Armstrong) were the only ones reported from our area this month, as this continued to be an extraordinarily low winter for this species. **Lesser Goldfinch** pairs were noted along Peoria Rd. and at Simpson Park 11 Mar (J Simmons *et al.*); another pair was in Avery Park 14 Mar (p. obs.). A few **Evening Grosbeaks** were heard at Stewart Lake 23 Mar (J Simmons) and near Wilson Elementary 27 Mar (P Vanderheul).

Surveys of **Red-legged Frogs** at E.E. Wilson in early March found high numbers of egg masses, well above the average for the past seven years (fide R Fiori).

Coastal Notes

An imm. **Barrow's Goldeneye** was on the bay in Waldport 21 Feb (Sally Lockyear and Jean Weakland fide Range Bayer). On 11 Mar Wayne Hoffman and Rebecca Cheek saw a pair of **Red-throated Loons** swimming within 200 ft of each other and calling, several miles up Yaquina Bay near Nute Slough.

A pelagic trip to Perpetua Bank 19 Mar found a rare **Short-tailed Albatross** (W Hoffman, Greg Gillson *et al.*); the world population of these endangered birds is only 1200-1500, up from a low of about 50 birds 50 years ago, after two million birds were decimated by feather hunters at the end of the 19th century.

A pair of **Peregrine Falcons** were hanging around the Heceta Head lighthouse n. of Florence as of 16 Mar, when Andrea Foster noted that she had been seeing fewer seabirds from that location than usual in March.

Five female **Anna's Hummingbirds** were collecting cotton and wool e. of Waldport thru 7 Mar, where 14 male **Rufous Hummingbirds** had shown up by 10 Mar (Jorrie Ciotti).

Six **Western Bluebirds** were in a clearcut near Siletz, and high numbers of American Robins were "almost everywhere" in w. Lincoln Co. 11 Mar (W Hoffman, R Cheek).

Next month

We can look forward to the main wave of migrant shorebirds and the start of neotropical songbird migration, including warblers, vireos, and flycatchers. Please send me your sightings by 26 Apr (see back page for address/phone info).

Joel Geier

Birding by Ear

A study in the sounds of nature

Become familiar with local bird songs and calls. Learn some tips and techniques for listening and remembering bird sounds. A good opportunity for sight-impaired people to associate names with the bird voices. This is a two-week class.

April 11 7-8:30 PM, Avery House.
April 15 9-11 AM, meet at Avery House for a field trip to Willamette Park in Corvallis.
April 18 7-8:30 PM, Avery House.
April 22 9-11 AM, meet at Avery House for a field trip to Jackson-Frazier Wetland in Corvallis.
Cost: \$8. To register, contact the Avery House at www.peak.org/~ecenter, or (541) 758-6198. Instructor: Don Boucher 541-753-7689, bouchdon@juno.com.

Don Boucher

Neighborhood Naturalist Native Wildflowers of the Willamette Valley

May 27 10am-3pm. Free. Meet at Finley National Wildlife Refuge

Join a guided wildflower walk to see some of the valley's most unique lowland species. Dozens of species in the little-known Willamette Floodplain National Natural Landmark located on the refuge. Bring lunch, water and raingear and expect to walk several miles. May also see birds, reptiles and mammals (such as otter or elk.). For directions or more info Don Boucher 753-7689, bouchdon@juno.com. www.neighborhood-naturalist.com

Tracking Club

April 23 9am-12. Free.

May 21 9am-12. Free.

Find tracks and other signs of animals & birds. Sundays. Meet at Avery Park Rose Garden in Corvallis at 9 AM. Return at noon. We'll carpool to a local tracking spot. For more information, contact Don Boucher, 753-7689, www.neighborhood-naturalist.com

Don Boucher

Bicycle Birding May 28, Chat-O-Rama.

Meet at the Pheasant cage parking lot on the north side of Camp Adair Drive. This is the best site in Western Oregon to see and hear Yellow-breasted Chats. Many other bird species are possible along with colorful snakes, wildflowers and mammals. An easy, flat ride of 10 miles or less. For die-hard bicyclists, you can meet at 8:00 AM at the Benton Center parking lot 630 NW 7th and we'll ride to E.E. Wilson and back

June 25, Meet at the Avery Park Rose Garden

Destination—Mary's River Natural Area in Corvallis (Brooklane Dr).

All trips are 9 AM–noon on Sunday. Easy and flat ride of 3-10 miles. We'll poke along and find birds in every nook and cranny along bike routes in Corvallis. Bring water, binoculars and rain gear. Led by Don Boucher at 753-7689 or bouchdon@juno.com.

Don Boucher

Other Events in the State

May 20-21 - Blooms and Birds Weekend, Siskiyou Field Institute, Cave Junction, OR

“Birding Deer Creek Ranch”, Dennis Vroman and Romain Cooper; “Serpentine Plant Ecology”, Tom Kaye, PhD; “Owls: Their Habits and Habitats”, Lee Webb; “Ecological History of the Klamath Province”, Tom Atzet, PhD and John Roth; “Wild Edible Plants and Plant Uses of the Siskiyou’s”. Janet Yoder; “Wildflowers and Plants of the Illinois River Canyon”, Wayne Rolle.

To learn about Siskiyou Field Institute (SFI) courses or to reserve your place, visit our website www.thesfi.org or call 541-592-3777. Accommodations are available at Out 'n' About Treehouse Resort.

Amy Schell-Lapora

May 13-14 - Silver Falls State Park Mother's Day Birding & Wildflower Weekend

10-5 pm. Bird and wildflower walks, presentations, and a photo hike led by volunteering expert guides. The classes, walks and presentations are free, but pre-registration is required for some activities as space is limited. Parking is \$3.00. For a registration form and full schedule, call Lori Webb at 503-874-0201 or e-mail lori.webb@state.or.us. If you are interested in volunteering for this event, please contact the Friends of Silver Falls at 503-873-8735.

Lori Webb

May 13 – Fern Ridge Wings & Wine

Secret House Vineyards and Fern Ridge Reservoir are organizing birding walks, canoe trips, live raptor exhibits, educational speakers, crafts, a gourmet dinner with an owl walk, wine tasting and other activities. Some activities require pre-registration and fees. For more information, call 541-935-3774.

Chris Mathews

Atop the Nestbox

Problem solving

To stop woodpeckers from drilling holes in structures, make a slurry of flour and water, mix in finely chopped jalapeno peppers, cayenne pepper, tabasco sauce, and just a touch of turpentine, then paint the mixture on vulnerable parts of the house.

To stop birds from flying into windows or territorially attacking reflections in windows or mirrors, try temporarily covering the glass with newspaper, or hanging nylon netting, or aluminum or cloth streamers from eaves.

To keep droppings from mud-building nesters such as swallows off your deck or patio, build a shelf beneath the nest.

Elsie Eltzroth

Protect Birds

With Your Food Choices

Part 1 - The problem

Around the world, about 5 billion pounds of pesticides are used annually, with US agriculture accounting for about 1 billion pounds. In other words, over four pounds per capita of fungicides, insecticides, and herbicides enter our nation's soil, water and air every year.

The different classes of pesticides have varying effects on wildlife, but birds are particularly susceptible to many in common use. Because of their mobility, birds may be exposed to a wide variety of chemicals during migration, and as they move among feeding sites. Insect or rodent prey may be targeted with pesticides and then be eaten by birds. Some, like organochlorines, are fat-soluble and accumulate in birds' fat reserves. During stress, such as migration or food shortage, the fat is metabolized. The pesticides escape and enter the bloodstream, harming or killing the bird.

A very conservative estimate of the number of birds exposed to pesticides in the US is 672 million birds, with ten percent, or 67 million, dying as a result of their exposure. However, the actual numbers may be much higher. No estimate of worldwide bird mortality from pesticides is available, but some highly toxic and bioaccumulative pesticides that have been banned in the US are still in use elsewhere. DDT, the notorious chemical responsible for dramatic declines in raptor populations, is still manufactured for export to Central and South American countries where its use is less regulated. In 1996, up to 20,000 Swainson's hawks in Argentina fell victim to another insecticide used to kill grasshoppers.

Despite the grim statistics, anyone can make a positive difference to birds and help to reduce their exposure to pesticides. As consumers, we can accept the harm being done with agricultural chemicals, or we can reject it with a few thoughtful changes to our lifestyles.

(part 1 of 3, to be continued in the May Chat)

Lisa Millbank

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Audubon Society of Corvallis

the **CHAT**

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

Calendar

Apr 8 Saturday local morning birding, 7:30am*
Apr 11 Birding by Ear starts (pg. 62)
Apr 13 Board meeting
Apr 15 Full day birding*
Apr 20 General meeting, 7:30pm (front page)
Apr 21-23 Spring weekend birding, Klamath Basin*
Apr 22 Hesthavn work party 8-4pm (pg. 58)
Apr 24 May Field Notes deadline
Apr 27 May Chat deadline
Apr 29 Hesthavn work party 8-4pm (pg. 58)
Apr 30 Hesthavn Open House 10-3pm (pg. 58)
May 6 ASC Bluebird Trail booth at Sweet Home Spring Event, 9-2pm (pg. 59)
May 13 Saturday local morning birding, 7:30am*
May 18-21 Spring weekend birding, Malheur*
May 28 Chat-O-Rama, Bicycle Birding (pg. 62)
June 25 Bicycle Birding (pg. 62)

*see Field Trips on page 59

The Chat is published 10 times a year by the Audubon Society of Corvallis, PO Box 148, Corvallis OR 97339. Annual ASC memberships are \$20 for an individual, \$25 for a family, \$15 for a student. Chat-only subscriptions are \$10.

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