



# *Audubon Society of Corvallis* *the* **CHAT**

October 2006

VOL. 36

#2

## **General Meeting**

Thursday, October 19, 7:30 – 9:00 pm  
First Presbyterian Church

### **Birds of South Africa**

*by Terry R. Steele - photonaturalist*

This month's speaker is long-time ASC favorite and friend photographer Terry Steele. In a departure from his previous presentations on nature in North America, this time Terry's visit brings an entirely new show on South African wildlife. In Terry's words...

Since early childhood and Tarzan movies, I have dreamed of Africa; it was always in my mind, filled with the most wonderful creatures and adventures. It took coming into my second childhood to finally get there. Africa is so well known for its impressive large mammals that numerous smaller species and birds are often overlooked. We sought out every thing. The presence of even penguins was a big draw for my wife, Kay, and limiting ourselves in pursuing our subjects became a unique challenge. Late in 2003, we spent over two months camping, observing and photographing birds and beasts beyond the Big Five (elephant, rhino, Cape buffalo, lion and leopard), although we were delighted to photograph these potentially dangerous creatures as well. What we will be presenting to the Corvallis audience will lean heavily towards birds, but also include such fascinating species as Cape Rain Frog, Cape Cobra, and the African Wildcat. And, we promise you will come away with a whole new feeling about the beauty of starlings.

### **Programs for Upcoming General Meetings**

- Nov 16: Neotropical Migrants and Urban Landscape Ecology, by Dr. Michael Murphy, Portland State University  
Dec 14: Members Slide Show

## **Help Wanted**

One of the great things about Corvallis Audubon is the number of members who are able and willing to pitch in and help out—whether it is showing up for half a day at a Hesthavn work party, staffing a Corvallis Audubon table at a farmer's market, helping Treasurer Judy Hays deal with our finances, or writing letters to public officials about issues we care about, a lot of our members are actively engaged with Audubon.

But we always need more help, and we want to make sure that everyone who wants to be involved has a chance. That's why we are inviting all members to put their names and contact information on our Roster of Volunteers. A signup sheet will be available at all Chapter meetings this year. Alternatively, you can sign up by e-mail. What we need is your name, phone number, e-mail address, and indication of which activities you prefer to be involved in—Hesthavn projects, education/outreach, finances, hospitality, or interaction with public officials. If you indicate an interest in education/outreach, tell us whether you prefer adult activities (e.g., farmer's markets, Christmas count) or children's programs (school visits, Kids Day for Conservation, Hesthavn programs).

Send your information to me ([mathewsc2@comcast.net](mailto:mathewsc2@comcast.net)), and I will see that your name is put on our Volunteer Roster. Thanks.

*Chris Mathews*

### **In this issue:**

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## 100 Species During the Migratory Bird Count

Seven counters in the field and 3 feeder watchers reported a total of 100 species on the North American Migratory Bird Count on Sunday, September 17, 2006. Among the better finds were a White-tailed Kite, Red-shouldered Hawk, Ruffed Grouse, Semipalmated Plover, Pectoral Sandpiper, Red-necked Phalarope, Barn and Great Horned Owls and Red Crossbills – all seen at Finley NWR. Gray Jays and a Hermit Warbler were seen in McDonald Forest. Another Gray Jay and a female Western Tanager were spotted by feeder watchers. Rich Armstrong came across an unusual flock of 15 Chipping Sparrows along the weedy sides of the road by Coffin Butte landfill.

New high counts were set for Great Egrets (10), Kestrel (28, increased numbers each of the past 3 falls), Rock Pigeons (140), Pileated Woodpeckers (6), Black-capped Chickadees (220), Bushtit (62), Red-breasted Nuthatch (63), Western Bluebird (46), Swainson's Thrush (30), Wrentit (16) and Chipping Sparrow (16).

The biggest miss was Warblers. The Hermit Warbler was the only warbler species seen besides several Common Yellowthroats. However a Wilson's Warbler was seen the day before the count.

*Marcia Cutler*



*This napping Greater Yellowlegs was photographed by Don Boucher during the Fall North America Migratory Bird Count on September 17. Location: McFadden Marsh in Finley National Wildlife Refuge. Be looking for yellowlegs as fall progresses.*

## New Claim for Evidence of Ivory Bills

By JAMES GORMAN

*New York Times: September 26, 2006*

Once again, scientists report they have found evidence of ivory-billed woodpeckers, this time in Florida. But having observed the turbulent disputes among ornithologists and birders that followed the report last year that the bird had been found in Arkansas, these researchers are proceeding with caution.

Geoffrey Hill, of Auburn University in Alabama, and Daniel Mennill of the University of Windsor, in Ontario, both biologists and ornithologists, say 14 sightings and extensive sound recordings “provide evidence that ivory-billed woodpeckers may live along the Choctawhatchee River in the Florida Panhandle.”

The report appears online in a Canadian journal, *Avian Conservation and Ecology* ([www.ace-eco.org](http://www.ace-eco.org)).

The ivory bill, the largest woodpecker in the United States, was thought to have gone extinct until scientists at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and others reported in *Science* that at least one had been seen and videotaped in the Cache River National Wildlife Refuge in Arkansas.

That claim was at first widely accepted and then vigorously disputed by bird experts and academic ornithologists who argued that the bird in a few seconds of blurry videotape cited in *Science* was a pileated woodpecker, a smaller, quite common bird. An extensive search in Arkansas last winter led by the Cornell lab did not produce conclusive evidence.

Dr. John Fitzpatrick, director of the Cornell lab, who had consulted with Dr. Hill about the findings before publication, said, “They’ve got a lot of intriguing evidence.”

“This is a perfect illustration of the fact that we need to get a multigroup multistate, comprehensive range-wide search for this bird undertaken,” Dr. Fitzpatrick said.

David Sibley, author of “*The Sibley Guide to Birds*,” a critic of the report on the Arkansas bird, called the Florida report “intriguing,” but said it “really provides very little evidence for the existence of Ivory-bills there.”

In a phone interview, Dr. Hill said only an indisputable photograph or DNA evidence would be scientifically conclusive. He said he knew how heated the subject of ivory bills had become, but asked, “Once we found them, what was I supposed to do?”

“The mistake,” he added dryly, “was ever looking for them.”

## KDC Volunteer Thanks

I'd like to thank Kate and Chris Mathews, Will Wright and Elise Elliott-Smith for their help at ASC's booth at Kids Day for Conservation. Well over 1,000 kids and their families attended the event which was both fun and informative.

*Marcia Cutler*

## Birding In Argentina

Recently Corvallis Audubon was contacted by Guillermo Rivera, a bird guide in Argentina. He has invited Corvallis Audubon to consider a 19-day birding tour in his country. This would be comparable to the Brazil trip that some of us took last year, with the price being lower the greater the number of participants. A link to the trip's itinerary is at [www.cactusexpeditions.com.ar/birdingtour0607.htm](http://www.cactusexpeditions.com.ar/birdingtour0607.htm)

Guillermo himself can be contacted at [rivera@intecar.com.ar](mailto:rivera@intecar.com.ar). If anyone is interested in this trip, please contact Guillermo directly.

*Chris Mathews*

## Soon to be released:

### Birds of Lane County

Watch for the release of a new book, *Birds of Lane County*, by Alan Contreras. Lane Audubon helped with some financial support for publication of this book, and they are very excited to see it on the shelves and in the hand.

*Editors note: No word yet on its availability but check with the Lane Audubon Society.*

[www.laneaudubon.org](http://www.laneaudubon.org)

## Our Very Own Lobbyist

As a retired airline pilot, ASC Board member John Gaylord is able to fly at no cost. This allows him to visit elected officials in Washington at about what it would cost the rest of us to visit with our state legislators in Salem. Recently John spent some time in the offices of Senators Smith and Wyden, telling them why the alternative Endangered Species bill initiated by Representative Pombo (R-Calif.) deserved to be shelved. John reports that Sen. Wyden was already on record against the Pombo bill, but that the Smith and Wyden offices conferred after his visit, with Sen. Smith eventually pledging to keep an open mind on the issue. This kind of direct contact with our senators and representatives is very effective. John would probably like to hear from ASC members with their thoughts about other issues that could benefit from this individual approach.

## Field Trip Schedule

### Monthly Year Round Second Saturday

Oct. 14 Saturday morning local birding 7:30 AM  
—Luckiamute Landing (see page14)  
Nov. 11 Saturday morning local birding 7:30 AM  
Dec. 9 Saturday morning local birding 7:30 AM

Our Saturday morning local field trip meets the second Saturday of every month at the Avery Park Rose Garden parking area at 7:30 AM. This field trip is especially interesting for beginner birders, and birders new 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. Paula Vanderheul is field trip leader. [vanderp@peak.org](mailto:vanderp@peak.org) 541-752-0470

### Full Day Birding – (Sept – May)

October 21 Fern Ridge Wildlife Area  
November 18 Tualatin River NWR

About 3 to 4 times a year we schedule full-day trips to the coast, and other refuges within Oregon. On these trips we carpool sharing gas cost with the drivers. Everyone should bring a large lunch, water/drinks, binoculars, spotting scope (if available), warm clothing, sturdy shoes, 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. Contact Paula Vanderheul for further information.

### Spring 2007 Weekend Field Trips

Bandon Coast March 16-18  
Klamath Basin April 27-29  
Rogue Valley May 11-13  
Malheur NWR May 17-20

*Please note that field trip dates for Klamath Basin have been changed.*

Fred Ramsey leads all the spring weekend trips. Fred has been leading these field trips for ASC over 30 years. He is an amazing field trip guide sharing his knowledge of finding birds in their habitat, pointing out wildflowers, butterflies, mammals, and reptiles. The field trips fill up early in the fall. Sign-up sheets are available at the general meeting or email Paula Vanderheul with your requests. [vanderp@peak.org](mailto:vanderp@peak.org)

# Field Notes

August 29 thru September 26, 2006

The dry weather of late summer continued into early fall, punctuated by a few days with welcome showers in mid-September. These were followed by a return to warm days but some cool, sparkling clear nights, in which nocturnal migrant flocks of **Swainson's Thrushes** could sometimes be heard. As Randy Moore noted after hearing one such flock in Yamhill Co., one marvels to consider how far these 35-gram birds will travel on their journey.

In the Cascades, fires caused closures of trails and campgrounds and generally reduced coverage of migration, especially around the Hoodoo area in Santiam Pass, which served as a staging area for fire crews. However, birders who visited Mary's Peak in the Coast Range were rewarded with splendid encounters with migrant birds that stopped there to rest. Meanwhile most of our colorful summer resident songbirds departed the valley, even as wintering warblers and sparrows trickled in to take their place.

North American Migration Count (NAMC) results for Benton Co. were compiled by Marcia Cutler.

*Abbreviations & Locations:* NWR = National Wildlife Refuge; STP = sewage treatment ponds; m. obs. = multiple observers; p. obs. = personal observation. Cabell Marsh and McFadden Marsh are at Finley (NWR) s. of Corvallis. Coffin Butte and E.E. Wilson (Wildlife Area) are north of Corvallis along Hwy 99W. Knoll Terrace is a mobile home park in the Lewisburg are n. of Corvallis. Middle Ridge is s. of Lebanon. Pioneer Villa is along I-5 in Linn Co near Brownsville. Toketie Marsh is the remedial wetland for Coffin Butte landfill.

## Inland Reports:

**Canada Goose** flocks had swelled noticeably at Cabell Marsh by 15 Sep, but **Cackling Geese** had not yet arrived (Rich & Nanette Armstrong).

A **Mandarin Duck** on the canal in north Lebanon 20 Sep (Pat Whitaker) must have escaped from a private waterfowl collection, but was a spectacular bird to see. A few of our most colorful native ducks, **Wood Ducks**, as well as many **Mallards** were at the Knoll Terrace STP 31 Aug, and a **Gadwall** was at Cabell Marsh 22 Sep (R Armstrong).

An **American Wigeon** was along Bruce Rd. at Finley NWR 17 Sep (Don Boucher, Lisa Millbank). 15 **Cinnamon Teal** were found in Benton Co. 17 Sep (NAMC). Three **Northern Shovelers** were at Philomath STP 15 Sep (R & N Armstrong).

A female **Canvasback** at Philomath STP 22 Sep (R Armstrong) was notably early for the season. Four **Ring-necked Ducks** were in Benton Co. by 17 Sep (NAMC). More **Ruddy Ducks** showed up at Philomath STP, with three there 15 Sep increasing to ten by 22 Sep (R & N Armstrong).

On 8 Sep I saw a young **Sooty Grouse** hobbling across the Mary's Peak road. As I was considering whether to take it by the Chintimini wildlife rehab clinic, it flew up into the high branches of a Douglas-fir. Its flight was strong and it seemed to perch fine despite the bad leg. A healthy female **Sooty Grouse** was along the same road 9 Sep (Aaron & Sara Liston), and a total of six were seen 25 Sep (R & N Armstrong, M Cutler, Paula Vanderheul).

The resident covey of **Mountain Quail** on Coffin Butte has been scarce this summer, but on 6 Sep I encountered at least 25 near the water guzzler. 11 were on Mary's Peak 24 Sep (Doug Robinson).

The first migrant **Eared Grebe** showed up on the Philomath sewage ponds 18 Sep (fide M Cutler). By 22 Sep the ponds held three **Pied-billed Grebes**, a **Horned Grebe**, and three **Eared Grebes** (R Armstrong). A pair of migrant **Red-necked Grebes** visited Suttle Lake just east of Santiam Pass 17 Sep (Bill Tice). A difficult "*Aechmophorus* sp." grebe in basic plumage at Cabell Marsh 14-15 Sep (Tom Snetsinger, Christina Herrman, Joe Fontaine) was apparently a **Clark's Grebe** based on multiple field marks.

A **Double-crested Cormorant** was there 17 Sep (D Boucher, L Millbank). Two **Great Egrets** were at the Pioneer Villa wetlands 30 Aug (fide Mark Nikas). One was at Snag Boat Bend 3 Sep (Chris Miller) and one was at Toketie Marsh 14 Sep (R & N Armstrong). An adult **Green Heron** was at Willamette Park 8 Sep (p. obs) and one as at E.E. Wilson 14 Sep (R & N Armstrong).

67 **Turkey Vultures** were counted in Benton Co. 17 Sep (NAMC), and five were still roosting on Coffin Butte on the morning of 25 Sep (p. obs.). An **Osprey** was at Snag Boat Bend 3 Sep (C Miller) and three were still in Benton Co. 17 Sep (NAMC). A **White-tailed Kite** was at Finley NWR 17 Sep (L Millbank, D Boucher).

A **Sharp-shinned Hawk** pursuing a dove had just grabbed the dove in its talons when it collided with a window at Sandy Thixton's place south of Philomath 20 Sep. The impact killed both the hawk and the dove which had talon wounds to its neck. Three juvenile **Cooper's Hawks** engaged in aerial acrobatics over Mary's Peak 9 Sep (A & S Liston).

An adult **Red-shouldered Hawk** was near the OSU sheep barns along OSU Campus Way 15 Sep (Randy Comeleo). A **Merlin** was atop Mary's Peak 24 Sep (D Robinson) and a **Peregrine Falcon** was at Cabell Marsh 22 Sep (R Armstrong).

A **Virginia Rail** sounded off for the NAMC at Finley 17 Sep (D Boucher, L Millbank). An **American Coot** was at Toketie Marsh 14 Sep and many were at Philomath STP 15 Sep (R & N Armstrong).

1-2 **Semipalmated Plovers** were noted at Cabell Marsh thru 22 Sep (R & N Armstrong). Over 30 **Killdeer** flocked to the sedimentation pond at Toketie Marsh while this was being mucked out, 31 Aug thru 12 Sep (R Armstrong; p. obs.).

Eleven **Greater Yellowlegs** were at Pioneer Villa wetlands 30 Aug (fide M Nikas); smaller numbers were seen at scattered wetlands thru the period. At least two **Lesser Yellowlegs** continued at Toketie Marsh thru 21 Sep; on 6 Sep I enjoyed the chance to compare one alongside of both a **Greater Yellowleg** and a **Solitary Sandpiper**. Three juvenile **Spotted Sandpipers** were at Cabell Marsh 30 Aug (J Fontaine).

"Peep" migration waned after 25 **Western Sandpipers** and 35 **Least Sandpipers** were at Cabell Marsh 17 Sep (M Cutler, P Vanderheul), with just one **Western Sandpiper** still at the Corvallis STP 22 Sep (R Armstrong) and **Least Sandpipers** at scattered wetlands. A **Pectoral Sandpiper** was also at Cabell Marsh 17 & 22 Sep (M Cutler, P Vanderheul; R Armstrong). One **Long-billed Dowitcher** was still there 15 Sep (R & N Armstrong).

A **Red-necked Phalarope** was at Cabell Marsh and 22 were at Philomath STP 15 Sep, when one **California Gull** was also at Philomath STP (R & N Armstrong).

Fifteen **Band-tailed Pigeon** were still in Benton Co. 17 Sep (NAMC). Don Boucher and Lisa Millbank encountered both **Barn** and **Great Horned Owls** at Finley 17 Sep. A **Northern Pygmy-Owl** was on Mary's Peak 25 Sep (R & N Armstrong, M Cutler, P Vanderheul).

A loose flock of at least 30 **Vaux's Swifts** were over Central Park in Corvallis at dusk 22 Sep, perhaps preparing to roost in the Presbyterian church chimney nearby (Jamie Simmons). Late sightings of **Rufous Hummingbirds** included one in n. Corvallis thru 28 SAug (R & N Armstrong) and two at Oak Creek thru 13 Sep with one thru 17 Sep (Bill & Lena Proebsting). **Anna's Hummingbirds** were quick to claim feeders vacated by the more pugnacious Rufous Hummingbirds as they departed. A **Red-breasted Sapsucker** at Avery Park was one of the highlights of the 24 Sep Bicycle Birding Trip (D Boucher).

A late **Olive-sided Flycatcher** was on Mary's Peak 24 Sep (D Robinson). Two **Western Wood-Pewees** were still at the Vanderpool Tract greenway 24 Sep along with a silent "**Western**" (**Pacific-slope** or **Cordilleran**) **Flycatcher** (M Cutler, P Vanderheul, R & N Armstrong). A pair of **Black Phoebe**s were on a small island in the river at Willamette Park 8 Sep (p. obs.).

On 14 Sep Rich & Nanette Armstrong found a **Cassin's Vireo** on Coffin Butte. One was still there 26 Sep (p. obs.). Both **Warbling**

**Vireos** and a first-fall **Red-eyed Vireo** were on Coffin Butte 7 Sep (R & N Armstrong, M Cutler, P Vanderheul).

On 8 Sep Elsie Eltzroth heard **Gray Jays** nearby on Vineyard Mountain, so she quickly put out some suet which was polished off by two of the jays. Elsie says they show up briefly every year about this time. Seven migrant **Horned Larks** showed up on Mary's Peak 9 Sep (A & S Liston).

The wires along Decker Rd. w. of Inavale School sagged under 600 **Violet-green Swallows** 8 Sep (p. obs.). Four late **Cliff Swallows** were at Knoll Terrace STP 31 Aug (R Armstrong). 800 **Barn Swallows** were found in Benton Co. 17 Sep (NAMC). Small numbers of **Violet-green** and **Barn Swallows** continued thru the end of the period.

An albinistic **Black-capped Chickadee** with mottled gray head, a distinct dark eye stripe, and white wing patches was photographed on the OSU Campus 15 Sep (Michael Rauscher).

A **White-breasted Nuthatch** was at Willamette Park 8 Sep (p. obs.). One visited Chris Miller's yard in NW Corvallis 9 Sep.

**Ruby-crowned Kinglets** began to arrive with two on Mary's Peak 8 Sep (p. obs.) and one at Oak Creek 16-17 Sep (B & L Proebsting).

More than a dozen **Western Bluebirds** visited Starker Park 5 Sep (D Boucher). **Nine Townsend's Solitaires** on Mary's Peak 24 Sep (D Robinson) were a remarkable concentration of migrants for Benton Co. **Swainson's Thrushes** have been migrating south mainly at night. At dawn on 17 Sep, a dozen came out the sky and landed in the woods around Don Boucher and Lisa Millbank. A **Hermit Thrush** was on Mary's Peak 8 Sep (p. obs.) On 22 Sep another was in bottomland woods at the Vanderpool Tract, where five **Varied Thrushes** were also present (p. obs.), a surprisingly low elevation for the season.

At least 80 **American Pipits** were on Mary's Peak 8 Sep (p. obs.). Aaron and Sara Liston enjoyed excellent views of these often hard-to-see birds there 9 Sep. Large flocks of **Cedar Waxwings** were at Middle Ridge 26 Sep (Raylene Gordin).

Two **Tennessee Warblers** turned up in our general area this month, both well described. The first was along the north shore of Suttle Lake, just across Santiam Pass in Jefferson Co., on 17 Sep (B Tice). The second, at the Vanderpool Tract greenway 21-22 Sep (D Robinson; J Fontaine; p. obs.), was the second confirmed record for this species in Benton Co. This species is very similar to **Orange-crowned Warblers**, which continued to be seen thru the period. A late female **Yellow Warbler** was also at Vanderpool Tract 22 Sep (p. obs.)

**Yellow-rumped Warblers** began to show up, including an "**Audubon's**" **Warbler** on Mary's Peak 8 Sep and two "**Myrtle**" **Warblers** at Vanderpool Tract 22 Sep (p. obs.).

A **Black-throated Gray Warbler** visited Rich & Nanette Armstrong's Corvallis yard 13 Sep. On 20 Sep two foraged on a vine right outside Raylene Gordin's window on Middle Ridge. A few of these crisply beautiful, shades-of-gray birds continued thru the period, even as their yellow-hued cousins, **Townsend's Warblers**, began to show up with one on Mary's Peak and two on Coffin Butte 25 Sep (M Cutler, P Vanderheul, R & N Armstrong; p. obs.).

Two **Hermit Warblers** were still in breeding habitat high in the firs on Mary's Peak 8 Sep; at least one was still in Benton Co. 17 Sep (NAMC).

A "**Western**" **Palm Warbler** near the top of Mary's Peak 24 Sep (D Robinson) was another unusual warbler for our area. **Common Yellowthroats** continued in small numbers thru the end of the period, and a **Wilson's Warbler** was still in Benton Co. 16 Sep (fide M Cutler).

Three late **Western Tanagers** were at Vanderpool Tract 22 Sep (p. obs.), and one was still there 24 Sep (M Cutler, P Vanderheul, R & N Armstrong).

Migrant **Chipping Sparrows** were encountered on Mary's Peak 25 Sep (R & N Armstrong, M Cutler, P Vanderheul). A **Fox Sparrow** along Oak Creek was one of five found in Benton Co. 17 Sep (B & L Proebsting; NAMC). A **Lincoln's Sparrow** showed up at Cabell Marsh 14 Sep (T Snetsinger, C Herrmann). A **White-crowned Sparrow** on

Middle Ridge 26 Sep decided that fall was a fine time for singing (R Gordin). The first report of a **Golden-crowned Sparrow** came from Oak Creek 8 Sep (B & L Proebsting); many flocks arrived by the end of the period.

A lingering **Lazuli Bunting** on Middle Ridge was last seen 4 Sep (R Gordin). A record-late female (well-described to rule out female Indigo Bunting) was along the Cabell Marsh trail 25 Sep (Rainer Wieland).

A flock of **Red Crossbills** were in the crown of a noble fir on Mary's Peak 9 Sep (A & S Liston). Some were also at Finley 17 Sep (D Boucher, L Millbank). Two **Pine Siskins** were on Coffin Butte 14 Sep (R & N Armstrong). A small flock of **Evening Grosbeaks** visited feeders on Middle Ridge 20 Sep, after a six-week absence (R Gordin).

A **Rough-skinned Newt** that made its leisurely way across a path in the forest at Warren and Laurie Halsey's Raindance Ranch near Alpine 20 Sep was a highlight for middle-schoolers from the Lincoln K-8 School.

On 17 Sep Don Boucher and Lisa Millbank were taking lunch with the **Western Fence Lizards** on Pigeon Butte, when a hovering American Kestrel suddenly took a breath-taking dive right past them, aiming for one of the lizards which narrowly escaped. Later in the day, after a close encounter with three **River Otters**, Don and Lisa had an even more thrilling experience of seeing two bull Elk just after what must have been a grueling duel. They also saw several young bulls sparring as practice for future years.

## Coastal Notes

Andy Frank noted some **White-winged Scoters** among the many **Surf Scoters** off Yachats 3 Sep. A large concentration of 40,000 **Sooty Shearwaters** feeding off Boiler Bay 18 Sep (Phil Pickering) signalled the annual movement of this species.

"Rockpipers" at Yachats over the weekend of 3 Sep included **Black Oystercatchers**, four **Wandering Tattlers**, many **Black Turnstones**, and a few **Surfbirds**, while nine **Whimbrels** and two **Marbled Godwits** were along the sandy beach north of town (A Frank). Three **Marbled Godwits** and a **Heermann's Gull** were at the Hatfield Marine Science Center 4 Sep (Joline Shroyer).

**Common Murres**, **Pigeon Guillemots**, **Marbled Murrelets** and a **Cassin's Auklet** were all offshore at Yachats 3 Sep (A Frank).

An **American Redstart** turned up among more common migrant warblers on Cascade Head 7 Sep (P Pickering). A late migrant male **Lazuli Bunting** was there 10 Sep (P Pickering).

## Next issue

More fall migrants can be expected, including raptors following on the tails of migrant waterfowl and songbirds. Please send me your latest sightings by 23 Oct.

*Joel Geier*  
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# New Luckiamute State Natural Area Needs Your Support

Thanks to input by local conservationists, the new state park lands at the confluence of the Luckiamute and Willamette Rivers have been designated a "State Natural Area" in the planning process. This is good news for Western Pond Turtles, for which the site holds one of the most significant breeding populations in the Willamette Valley. It's also good news for other sensitive species, including Red-legged Frogs, "Oregon" Vesper Sparrows, White-breasted Nuthatch, Western Bluebird, and the critically imperiled "Streaked" Horned Lark.

As described in the December 2005 Chat, the proposed Luckiamute State Natural Area includes over 1000 acres of unique Willamette bottomlands, including the areas which birdwatchers have long enjoyed as the Luckiamute Landing and Vanderpool Tract greenways. Luckiamute Landing holds one of the largest surviving remnants of the bottomland deciduous forest, including huge black cottonwoods which have hosted pairs of Red-eyed Vireos. The Vanderpool Tract has mature oaks as well as ash and maple swales, and secluded ponds. This month it raised excitement as the location of Benton County's second confirmed Tennessee Warbler.

The Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) modified its original plans after learning of the unique conservation value of this area. This includes the importance of existing open habitats for grassland birds, which have lost most of their habitat to intensive grass-seed agriculture. In their second draft plan, OPRD proposed conversion of the small agricultural fields in the Natural Area to native wet prairie and upland savannah grasses and forbs, and to route recreational trails more carefully around sensitive areas.

Despite these very positive developments, we're not out of the woods yet! The process has taken two steps backward, after a few residents raised objections and managed to get the ear of an influential state legislator. OPRD has now scheduled additional public meetings and another cycle of revision in the master plan for this area.

Some of the neighbors' concerns are less controversial, such as the locations of a new trailhead and a canoe paddlers' access which could impact privacy and law enforcement in the area. Some attendees at the last public meeting also raised the need for an adequate game-law enforcement presence, if hunting and fishing are allowed in the area.

Some are opposed to plans to take fields out of agricultural production, even though the state has had some trouble finding farmers who want to rent these fields. They also expressed fears that wetland and other habitat restorations could lead to increased flooding on their land (even though

one adjoining landowner is very supportive of the plans and is working on his own wetland restoration project). Some voiced objections to the whole idea of the state acquiring land for public green space along the Willamette River - even though the land has already been acquired and the only question is how to manage it.

Your support is needed to ensure the conservation value of these public lands is not sacrificed to other interests. Two public meetings are coming up, one in Monmouth Oct. 4 and one in Salem Oct 5. There will also be a written comment period through November 5. For full information on the meeting times and locations, as well as a description of the stages of OPRD's planning process, see:

[http://egov.oregon.gov/OPRD/PLANS/planning\\_luckiamute.shtml](http://egov.oregon.gov/OPRD/PLANS/planning_luckiamute.shtml)

If you would like to experience these remarkable places first-hand, meet us for the second Saturday field trip on October 14, 7:30 am at the Avery Park Rose Garden.

Joel Geier, [jgeier@attglobal.net](mailto:jgeier@attglobal.net) 541-745-5020 or 541-745-5821.

## Naturalist Adventure

*Conducted by the Neighborhood Naturalist program.  
Free, Monthly, Starting in November*

### Meet at Avery Park Rose Garden Tracking - Wild Edibles - Plants - Birding

Each trip will focus on a seasonal topic of interest. Sometimes we may seek edible plants, find mushrooms, visit a tracking spot or even birding. They will be conducted in a 'poke-around' fashion and nothing of interest will be ignored. If the focus is plants for the field trip, we will not pass up good animal tracks if we find them. If we are visiting a tracking spot, we won't pass up a good bird sighting. If you want to learn about tracking, these field trips are for you. Since tracking is best learned as holistic nature observation, other topics we study will be relevant. Children are welcome but trips are not structured for small children. Please leave dogs at home.

Nov. 19      Sunday, 9am-Noon

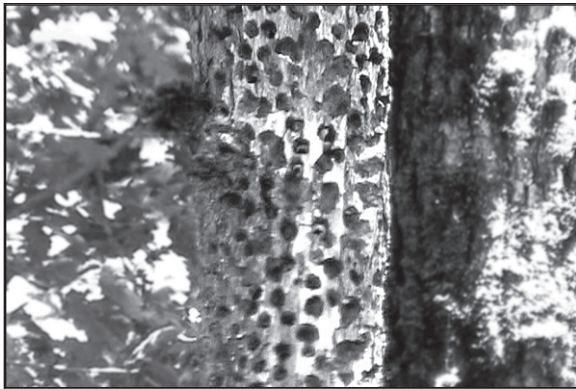
Dec. 17      Sunday, 9am-Noon

Jan. 21      Sunday, 9am-Noon

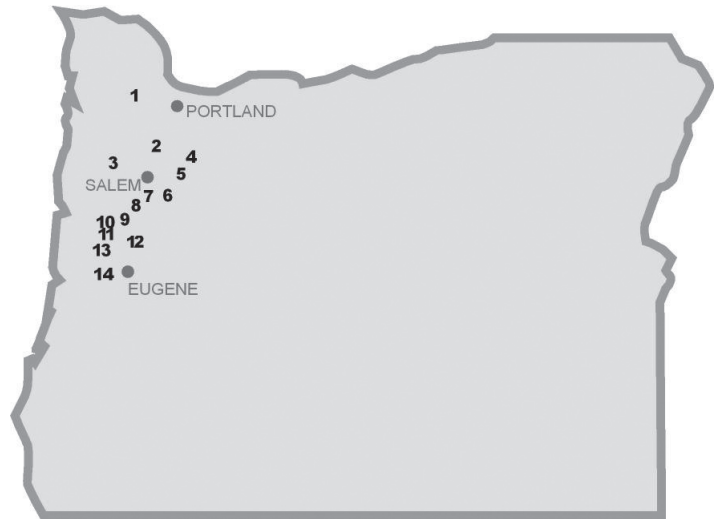
For more information. Don Boucher 753-7689  
[www.neighborhood-naturalist.com](http://www.neighborhood-naturalist.com)



Illustrations and photos  
by Don Boucher



*Acorn Woodpecker granary*



## Favorite Acorn Woodpecker Colonies

I asked birders throughout the Willamette Valley about their favorite places to see Acorn Woodpeckers. These sites are all easy to find and publicly accessible.

- 1) Pacific University in Forest Grove — most popular by far;
- 2) Champoege State Park;
- 3) Wortman Park, McMinnville;
- 4) Molalla Buckeroo Rodeo Grounds
- 5) Mark Twain Middle School, Silverton
- 6) Sublimity City Park, Sublimity
- 7) Ankeny Hill Rd & Liberty Rd, northwest corner of Ankeny NWR
- 8) Adair County Park, Benton Co.
- 9) Woodland Meadows Park, Corvallis;
- 10) Benton County Fairgrounds & Campus Way, Corvallis
- 11) Philomath Elementary School, Philomath
- 12) Fayetteville, Linn Co., Fayetteville Dr & Pugh Rd.
- 13) Mill Hill Barn, Finley NWR
- 14) Fern Ridge Reservoir, Royal Ave & Fir Butte Rd.

Of course, there are many other places to see Acorn Woodpeckers. Find their preferred habitat, native oak stands with a canopy in lowlands and foothills, and start watching.

*-Don Boucher*

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*the* **CHAT**

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## Calendar

- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| Oct 14  | Saturday morning local birding 7:30 am**  |
| Oct 19  | General Meeting 7:30 pm, 1st Presbt. Church<br>Terry Steele—Birds of South Africa                                     |
| Oct 21  | Full day birding—Fern Ridge Wildlife Area**   |
| Oct 23  | Field Notes deadline  |
| Oct 26  | Chat deadline for November  |
| Nov. 11 | Saturday morning local birding 7:30 AM**  |
| Nov 16  | General Meeting 7:30 pm, 1st Presbt. Church<br>Dr. Michael Murphy—Neotropical Migrants and Urban<br>Landscape Ecology |
| Nov 18  | Full day birding—Tualatin River NWR**   |
| Nov. 27 | Field Notes deadline  |
| Nov. 30 | Chat deadline for December  |

\*\*See page 11

*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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