



Audubon Society of Corvallis the **CHAT**

December 2006

VOL. 36

#4

General Meeting

Thursday, December 14, 7:30 – 9:00 pm
First Presbyterian Church

**Mark December 14 on your calendar!
The general meeting is early this month.**



Member Photography Show

Members are invited to bring no more than 10 of their best slides or photos of birds or other wildlife, or nature in general. Be prepared to talk about your slides during our program. For the presentation part of the program, you may supply 35 mm slides or digital photographs for display in MS PowerPoint format. Bring your PowerPoint slides on a USB drive (preferred) or a CD-ROM disc. For technical questions, contact Sue Haig at haig_susan@yahoo.com (preferred) or 753-5068. Bring labels for prints. There will be a slide projector and a PC hooked up to a projector monitor. Please come at 7 pm to check in and get your slides organized.

Susan Haig

Directions

The chapter meeting is in the meeting hall of the First Presbyterian Church (upstairs), 114 SW Eighth Street. The meeting is preceded by a social period with refreshments, which begins at 7 pm.

Corvallis CBC and More

Still time to sign up for December 19 count!

There's still time to sign up for the Corvallis Christmas Bird Count which will be held on Tuesday, December 19th, 2006. Don't miss out on a wonderful opportunity to explore a local area in depth with the wonderful companionship of fellow birding enthusiasts! Afterwards, there will be a countdown potluck at the First Presbyterian Church for all participants and their families. Bring a side dish or dessert along with a place setting and enjoy chili (meat or vegetarian) and drinks and share your adventures with everyone.

If you are interested in signing up, contact Marcia F. Cutler at 541-752-4313 or marciafcutler@comcast.net

Other Oregon Christmas Bird Counts

Listed below is information on some other local CBCs. For information on all CBCs in Oregon and Washington, you can check Mike Patterson's website:

http://home.pacifier.com/~mpatters/cbc/cbc_WAOR_reg.html
(*there are underlined spaces between "cbc" and "WAOR," and between "WAOR" and "reg.html"*).

- Airlie-Albany CBC: 12/31/06, Paul Adamus, 541-745-7092, adamus7@comcast.net
- Brownsville CBC: 12/28/06, Barbara Combs, 541-689-6660, bcombs@dialoregon.net
- Dallas CBC: 12/26/06, Roy Gerig, 503-589-4636, roygerig@hotmail.com

See "Christmas Bird Count" on next page

In this issue:

2006 Western Bluebird Season	26
Homer Campbell Memorial Trail News	26
International Birding	27
Benton County Big Year	30
Green Lines	30
National Audubon's Holiday Suggestions	31

Christmas Bird Count

continued from front page

- Santiam Pass: 1/1/07, Steve Shunk, 541-408-1753, steve@paradisebirding.com
- Yaquina Bay: 12/30/06, Rebecca Cheek, 541-867-4699, nelsoncheek@charter.net

Marcia Cutler

'06 Western Bluebird Season

Annual report on ASC's bluebird trail

This is a summary of data for the 2006 Western Bluebird nesting season on the Audubon Society of Corvallis Bluebird Trail. Bluebirds nested at ten new sites that included Martin Luther King (Walnut) Park and Benton County Fairgrounds. Many boxes used for a three-year EPA research project by Laura Nagy were no longer monitored. They are south of Llewellyn Road on private property and on Finley National Wildlife Refuge.*

Fifty-six pairs of bluebirds nested successfully producing 56 first broods, 29 second broods, and one third brood. We banded 422 nestlings and three adults. Sub-bander Raylene Gordin, banded at eight boxes in Linn County, Carole Steckly banded at two in Polk County; Rita Snyder, Deb Savageau and I banded at 80 boxes in Benton County.

We removed twenty chicks to rehabilitate and place in other nests, a few for two or three days, others for a week or more. Size, weight and feathering were the determining factors in taking these nestlings. Ten were the "runts" of their brood and were kept warm in a brooder and well fed until they were a better fit in another nest box. All fostered chicks fledged successfully. Four were hand raised and released in Kristy Kingery's Bluebird Backyard on July 25th. A brood in late August gave us a lively little female that I called "the last rose of summer." She went to Kristy's on the 24th. Five chicks died in rehab.

The bluebirds lost 34 nesting attempts with 77 eggs and 94 chicks in the boxes. With some clues to these failures we can assume that predation by gopher snakes accounted for seven (the largest number in 30 years), five to raccoons, one to a long-tailed weasel, four to prolonged high temperature this summer, five to competition with other species, one to human activity, and two failed when the females died in the nest. Ten nests were abandoned when adults disappeared for unknown reasons.

We must make an effort to protect the boxes that snakes and raccoons can access. These boxes should be replaced with another that is also equipped with a protective "skirt" below the box. Please get in touch with me for a replacement box and directions for constructing and adding the inverted cone.

*Laura Nagy gave me maps for the nest boxes south of Llewellyn Rd. ASC is looking for a volunteer to coordinate these nesting sites for a new trail.

Elsie Eltzroth

Homer Campbell Trail News

Help build a boardwalk trail and observation blind

ASC is joining William L. Finley National Wildlife Refuge, Friends of Willamette Valley Refuges, and Greenbelt Land Trust to build a boardwalk trail and observation blind in memory of life-long valley resident, scientist, ASC chapter leader, Chat editor, and legendary environmentalist – Homer J. Campbell. The wildlife refuge that he loved is 12 miles south of Corvallis and contains some of the last remaining unchanged Willamette Valley prairie, as well as several other habitat types representative of this area. Its location near four metropolitan areas makes it readily available to hundreds of thousands; it is a very popular site for birding, wildlife studies, and environmental education.

The approximately 1,700-foot boardwalk trail will wind through deciduous riparian forest habitat in the Muddy Creek flood plain north of Cabell Marsh. It will begin from a parking lot off Finley Refuge Road near the Muddy Creek Bridge and travel south through the forest to an observation blind overlooking the 125-acre Cabell Marsh, which is outstanding waterfowl habitat. While most refuge trails are closed from November through March to protect wintering dusky Canada geese, this trail will be one of just four open year-round. It will also be the first wheelchair accessible trail on the refuge.

We are in the process of raising the necessary funds to complete the trail – labor and materials have been secured for the first half. The building contract has been awarded, and trail construction is expected to begin in the spring of 2007. The observation blind, which will feature benches and educational panels elucidating wetland ecology and describing some commonly observed inhabitants, will be built with volunteer labor concurrently with the trail. National Audubon's Collaborative Projects Funding just awarded this project \$1,000. Other grant proposals are in the works. Private donations to the Homer Campbell Memorial Trail Fund are always welcome.

Come help us hand-clear the proposed trail site on Saturday, Dec. 9th! ASC is organizing a half-day effort to clear brush from the trail site so that refuge personnel can monitor winter water levels and calculate the necessary boardwalk height. Pack a lunch and meet us at 10 am at Refuge Headquarters. We'll arm ourselves with clippers and pruners (bring your favorites, if you have them), and head down to the Muddy for a few hours of bush-whacking. Come dressed for wet weather. Call Linda Campbell at 929-9420 for details, ride shares, questions.

Linda T. Campbell

Field Trip Schedule

Monthly Year-round Second Saturday Outings

- Dec. 9 Saturday morning local birding 7:30 am
Finley NWR
- Jan. 13 Saturday morning local birding 7:30 am
- Feb. 10 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 541-752-0470

Full Day Birding (Sept – May)

About three to four 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. There are no trips scheduled in the coming months. 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 |

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 wild flowers, 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

Note: The Rogue Valley and Malheur trips require deposits by February 28, 2007. The Rogue Valley deposit is \$40. The Malheur deposit is \$50. Each deposit should be made payable to Fred Ramsey, 3550 NW Glen Ridge Pl. Corvallis, OR 97330.

Paula Vanderheul

Hesthavn Nature Programs

Art and Nature: Sunday, February 11 at 1-3 pm
Ages 6-11. Local artist, Leslie Green, encourages each child to experience their own uniqueness through closeness to and interpretation of nature using various art materials.

Kids at work during previous Art and Nature programs



Elise Elliott-Smith

International Birding

Information about exotic birding opportunities

From time to time I am contacted by bird guides from various locations, mostly exotic. Some of the contacts simply advertise their trips, while others invite us to organize a group for a reduced rate, as Kate and I did for the Brazilian trip last year. Some of these opportunities find their way into the Chat (see Argentine Birding Trip on page 30), but most do not. I would be happy to forward these messages to anyone who expresses interest in seeing them. Right now my computer has descriptions of a Kalahari Desert trip in South Africa, a birding lodge in Ecuador, and a birding festival out of Galveston. If you would like to see these solicitations, send me an e-mail, and I will forward anything that comes in.

Chris Mathews

December Green Suggestion

Buy energy-efficient compact fluorescent light bulbs for your most heavily-used lights. This may save 70KG of CO2 per year.

Image that will appear on the new ASC cloth bags (see Green Lines on page 30)



Field Notes

October 26 thru November 27, 2006

One of our wettest Novembers on record made up for dry weather in early fall, and even caused some localized flooding. Official measurements aside, a 12-inch deep plastic bucket left in our yard was overflowing by the end of the month. Some of this came as “pineapple express” weather with strong SW winds that pushed a few coastal birds inland. The weather turned colder at the very end of the period, with a half-inch of snow blanketing E.E. Wilson 27 Nov.

Abbreviations & Locations: NWR = National Wildlife Refuge; STP = sewage treatment ponds; juv. = juvenile; p. obs. = personal observation. Baskett Slough (NWR) is north of Dallas. Cabell 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 area n. of Corvallis. Peterson Butte is near Lebanon. Toketie Marsh is the remedial wetland for Coffin Butte landfill. Vineyard Mtn. is just nw. of Lewisburg.

Inland Reports:

An immature Greater White-fronted Goose joined Canada Geese n. of Monroe 25 Nov (Rich & Nanette Armstrong, Marcia Cutler, Paula Vanderheul). A Snow Goose was at Finley 19 Nov (Erik Knight). Seven Tundra Swans were at Cabell Marsh 31 Oct (R Armstrong et al.) and ten flew over Corvallis airport 11 Nov (Steve Seibel). On 18 Nov I saw 17 Trumpeter Swans on a pond along De Armond Rd. near Airlie.

A **Eurasian Wigeon** was with the **American Wigeons** at Philomath STP 30 Oct (Joe Fontaine); three were there 8 & 14 Nov (Doug Robinson; P Vanderheul, M Cutler). One was at McFadden Marsh 24 Nov (J, K & K Fairchild, Ulo Kiigemagi). A hybrid **American x Eurasian Wigeon** was at Grand Prairie Park in Albany 10 Nov (Jeff Harding).

Flocks of dabbling ducks continued to arrive. 500 **Mallards** gathered at Cabell Marsh by 31 Oct (R Armstrong et al.). Several hundred **Northern Shovelers** were at Philomath STP 2 & 13 Nov (R Armstrong et al.; J Fontaine). 2000 **Northern Pintail** gathered at Finley NWR by 19 Nov (E Knight). 200 **Green-winged Teal** were at Cabell Marsh 31 Oct (R Armstrong et al.). A male **Cinnamon Teal** at Toketie Marsh 21 Nov (R Armstrong et al.) was surprising after most migrated south for the winter.

Among diving ducks, five **Canvasbacks** were at Philomath STP 28 Oct, increasing to a peak count of nine there 13 Nov (J Fontaine). At Stewart Lake, one was present 4 Nov (R Armstrong et al.) and eight were there by 6 Nov (P Vanderheul). A lone male was at the Knoll Terrace STP 7, 12 & 22 Nov (R Armstrong). A male **Redhead** was at Philomath STP 3-4 Nov and three were there 25 Nov (J Fontaine; R Armstrong et al.).

A male **Tufted Duck** visited the Philomath STP 5-6 Nov (J Fontaine, Randy Moore; R Armstrong et al.) but was gone by 8 Nov (D Robinson). This Eurasian species resembles the **Ring-necked Duck**, which is our most common diving species in winter. The duck was described as having dusky flanks, perhaps due to transitional plumage as it did not have any other characteristics pointing to a Tufted x Ring-necked Duck hybrid.

A few **Greater Scaup** joined the **Lesser Scaup** flock at the Philomath STP 30 Oct thru 25 Nov, with a peak count of 10 on 13 Nov when 50 Buffleheads were also present (J Fontaine). A **Surf Scoter** stopped by on 14 Nov (P Vanderheul, M Cutler). A **White-winged Scoter** was at Foster Reservoir 4 Nov (J Harding, Bill Thackaberry).

A first-winter male **Common Goldeneye** was at Philomath STP 30 Oct (J Fontaine). An apparent female was there 3-4 Nov (J Fontaine; R Armstrong et al.) and 6-7 were there 13-25 Nov (J Fontaine; R Armstrong et al.). **Barrow's Goldeneyes** were at their usual wintering spot below Foster Dam 4 Nov (J Harding, B Thackaberry).

On 15 Nov, a female **Common Merganser** rode the rapids of the Alsea River right past Lincoln School 6th-8th graders who were

participating in the Salmon Watch at Clemens Park—almost as exciting as close views of the spawning **Chinook Salmon**.

18 **Hooded Mergansers** were gathered at Knoll Terrace STP 7 Nov (R Armstrong). The ASC field trip to the Baskett Slough area saw a remarkable 80 on a pond near Perrydale 11 Nov (P Vanderheul). Over 100 **Ruddy Ducks** were at Philomath STP 2 Nov (R Armstrong et al.)

Mountain Quail visited Elsie Eltzroth's yard on Vineyard Mtn occasionally thru early Nov. Six were pecking at the gravel atop Marys Peak 8 Nov (Michael Dossett).

A **Horned Grebe** was at Philomath STP 2 Nov and two were there the next day (R Armstrong et al.; J Fontaine). **Eared Grebes** were there thru the period, with a peak count of six on 5 Nov (J Fontaine, R Moore) and four still there 25 Nov (R Armstrong et al.). Both **Eared** and **Western Grebes** were on Foster Reservoir 4 Nov (J Harding, B Thackaberry). A **Western Grebe** was at Philomath STP 2 & 16 Nov; one was found dead there 5 Nov (R Armstrong et al.).

In last month's column I mistakenly wrote that some **Double-crested Cormorants** at Willamette Park 27 Sep were the “last ones noted inland this season.” That should have been “first ones...” as fall is when cormorants show up to winter along the Willamette. Small numbers were reported by many thru Nov but no large concentrations. **Great Egrets** were likewise seen in small numbers thru the period.

Two **White-tailed Kites** were at the prairie overlook at Finley 16 Nov, and one was there 24 Nov (S Seibel; Jim, Karl & Karan Fairchild, U Kiigemagi). **Bald Eagle** sightings increased as wintering birds began to show up in the valley. Two were at Philomath STP 4 Nov (R Armstrong et al.), an adult and an immature were at Peterson Butte 14 & 15 Nov, respectively, and three were at McFadden Marsh 14 Nov (S Seibel).

Marcia Cutler and Paula Vanderheul saw six **Northern Harriers** during a survey of east-central Benton Co. 16 Nov, along with 19 **Red-tailed Hawks** and 26 **American Kestrels**. A large **Cooper's Hawk** visited Paula's NW Corvallis yard regularly 6-26 Nov, sometimes perching for an hour or more to digest meals taken from the finch flock at Paula's feeders. A **Rough-legged Hawk** was just e. of McFadden Marsh 14 Nov, and two were along McFarland Rd. near Finley 16 Nov (S Seibel).

On 28 Oct Andrea, Greg & Rana Foster were watching a **Merlin** perched on treetops in the Timberhill neighborhood, when suddenly it departed, with an **Anna's Hummingbird** apparently in hot pursuit. Talk about pugnacity! Steve Seibel saw two **Peregrine Falcons** (adult and imm.) interacting at McFadden Marsh 11 Nov. Five days later, he saw two of undetermined age a few miles e. along Smith Loop Rd.; one took a **starling** from a flock and dropped it to the second which then perched and ate the starling. Single **Prairie Falcons** were at Cabell Marsh 31 Oct (R Armstrong et al.), at Peterson Butte 14 Nov (S Seibel), and along Plainview Rd. 22 Nov (Tom Snetsinger).

A **Black-bellied Plover** was along Smith Loop Rd. 16 Nov (P Vanderheul, M Cutler), along with 300 Dunlin (S Seibel). 70 **dowitchers** were at Cabell March 31 Oct (R Armstrong).

This month's rain created plenty of the soggy ground that **Wilson's Snipe** (formerly called **Common Snipe**) like to feed in. Iva Wilson photographed one of these cryptic birds at 29th and Hayes in SW Albany 30 Oct, and Darlene Woodke saw another in field behind Albany Secure Storage 31 Oct (fide E Eltzroth). Up to 4 were in the OSU fields off Hwy 34 in the last week of Nov (Linda Campbell).

Three **Bonaparte's Gulls** visited Philomath STP 11 Nov (J Fontaine). A **Ring-billed Gull** was at Foster Reservoir 4 Nov (J Harding, B Thackaberry). An adult **Western Gull** was at Toketie Marsh 21 Nov (R Armstrong et al., photos by P Vanderheul), and the same day 15 large gulls flew over our place just s. of there (Becky Geier). Four apparent **Glaucous-winged Gulls** were along Bellfountain Rd. 25 Nov (R Armstrong et al.).

A **Band-tailed Pigeon** near Brooklane in s. Corvallis 27 Nov, joined by a second 28 Nov (Will Wright fide M Cutler), was a notable species for late fall. 55 **Mourning Doves** festooned two small bare trees

in the snow at E. E. Wilson 27 Nov (p. obs.).

Great Horned Owls started calling this month, including one at Woodland Acres Park in Corvallis 13 Nov (Dave Mellinger), and a pair “duetting” on Tampico Ridge near our house 27 Nov. A **Northern Pygmy-Owl** visiting Bill & Lena Proebsting’s yard along Oak Creek 11 Nov drew a horde of irate songbirds. A **Barred Owl** spent 14 Nov perched behind an apartment building on NW Grant Ave in Corvallis 14 Nov (fide R Armstrong, P Vanderheul). A **Short-eared Owl** was at Philomath STP 11 Nov (J Fontaine).

The resident pair of **Anna’s Hummingbirds** at Andrea Foster’s Timberhill neighborhood yard were often near each other, but “not peaceably” and still not in active courtship as of 23 Nov. Paula Vanderheul has also been seeing a male and a female daily as of 26 Nov. 4 to 5 visited Rich & Nanette Armstrong’s NW Corvallis yard thru the period. A **Belted Kingfisher** was at Peavy Arboretum 19 Nov (Don Boucher, Lisa Millbank). **Acorn Woodpeckers** were at the regular colonies along Bruce Rd. w. of Finley 25 Nov and at Forest Dell Park thru the period (R Armstrong).

A **Say’s Phoebe** along the Campus Way bike path 8 Nov (B Proebsting) was still there 13 Nov (R & N Armstrong, P Vanderheul). A **Loggerhead Shrike** briefly visited Philomath STP 8 Nov (D Robinson). A **Northern Shrike** was at McFadden Marsh 24 Nov (J, K & K Fairchild & U Kiigemagi) and at the remedial wetland w. of there 25 Nov (R Armstrong et al.). A **Hutton’s Vireo** was at Jackson-Frazier Wetland 6 Nov (P Vanderheul).

Two **albinistic Black-capped Chickadees** visited David Barte’s feeder in NW Corvallis 22 Nov, one about 80% and the other about 60% white.

A few **Chestnut-backed Chickadees** returned to Chris Miller’s NW Corvallis yard by late Nov. Flocks of about 30 **Bushtits** were seen in downtown Corvallis 25 Oct (D Boucher) and in the Timberhill neighborhood 24 Nov (A Foster). **Bushtits** and **Red-breasted Nuthatches** enjoy the suet offerings in Paula Vanderheul’s yard, while a **Bewick’s Wren** occasionally partakes of fat-seed cake at Andrea Foster’s yard.

12 **Western Bluebirds** were at the n. end of 29th St near Chip Ross Park 24 Oct (D Mellinger); 20 were along Campus Way 13 Nov (R Armstrong et al.). A large flock of **Cedar Waxwings** patronized native hawthorn and cascara trees in NW Corvallis thru the period (P Vanderheul). Tom & Jeanne Griffith encountered 20-30 **Yellow-rumped Warblers** at E.E. Wilson WA 20 Nov; smaller groups were visiting NW Corvallis peanut-butter & suet feeders by the end of the period (A Foster; P Vanderheul). A male **Townsend’s Warbler** also patronized a suet feeder 2-26 Nov (P Vanderheul)

A rare **Clay-colored Sparrow** was at Sunnyside County Park in Linn Co. 4 Nov (J Harding, B Thackaberry). On 20 Nov, along with the usual multitudes of wintering **Spotted Towhees**, **Sooty Fox Sparrows**, **Song Sparrows**, and **Golden-crowned Sparrows**, I came across a first-winter **Chipping Sparrow** and a **Swamp Sparrow** in the s. part of E.E. Wilson, then a flock of nine **White-throated Sparrows** in a brushy



Western Meadowlark photo by Don Boucher

sump in the ne. part of E.E. Wilson, where similar flocks have turned up in recent winters. The next day two more **White-throated Sparrows** were found in the s. part of E.E. Wilson, as well as 20 **Lincoln’s Sparrows** (R Armstrong et al.). Don Boucher and Lisa Millbank also noted **Lincoln’s Sparrows** at Marys River Natural Area 4 Nov. An unusual, leucistic **Dark-eyed Junco** near Philomath 14 Nov had a whitish head and whitish-brown back and chest (P Vanderheul, M Cutler).

Many **Red-winged Blackbirds** were at McFadden Marsh 12 Nov, and **Western Meadowlarks** were at the prairie overlook at Finley 16 Nov (S Seibel).

On 8 Nov I encountered 26 **Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches** feeding among the rocks atop Marys Peak 8 Nov, and possibly another 12-15 that flew over in the fog. Dozens were seen there thru late Nov when the summit road was gated off due to snow. On 18 Nov Khanh Tran saw flocks at four different places along the summit road, and estimated a total of 60 to 70. These are remarkable numbers compared with the small handful present in most years, though 40 were recorded on the peak in Feb 1974.

After last year’s drought of **Pine Siskins**, I was happy to see 22 at E.E. Wilson 24 Nov. Paula Vanderheul and Chris Miller had a few show up at their feeders in late Nov. A few **Common Redpolls** have been showing up elsewhere in w. Oregon this winter, so check those siskin flocks closely!

Three **River Otters** were in the main pond at E.E. Wilson WA 20 Nov (T & J Griffith).

Coastal Notes

On 18 Nov 104 **Brant** were at the Hatfield Marine Science Center in Newport and 50 were at Seal Rock along with 7 **Harlequin Ducks** plus **Surf Scoters** and **Black Scoters** (J, K & K Fairchild). A **Long-tailed Duck** was between the jetties of Yaquina Bay 9 Nov (fide J Harding).

Also on 18 Nov, 12 **Horned Grebes**, four **Red-necked Grebes**, and three **Eared Grebes** were on Yaquina Bay (J, K & K Fairchild; John Sullivan), and eight **Brown Pelicans** were at Seal Rock (J, K & K Fairchild).

A **Red-shouldered Hawk** was in alders at the Hatfield Marine Science Center 18 Nov (J, K & K Fairchild). A **Rough-legged Hawk** soared over the bay front in Newport 22 Oct (Peter Lawson fide Range Bayer).

Three **Rock Sandpipers** were along the south jetty of Yaquina Bay and two more were at Seal Rock 18 Nov, along with the “standard rockpiper mix” of **Black Oystercatchers**, **Black Turnstones**, and **Surfbirds** in both places (J Sullivan; J, K & K Fairchild). Storms brought 1000 **Red Phalaropes** close to shore off Boiler Bay 23 Nov (David Tracy).

A huge flight of **gulls** flew south past South Beach 24 Nov; Rebecca Cheek estimated 100 to 200 per minute in a steady stream which lasted all morning. Among them were many small flocks of **Bonaparte’s Gulls**, but most were too far out to identify. A **Cassin’s Auklet** swam inside the mouth of Yaquina Bay 26 Nov (Darrel Faxon). A rare **Parakeet Auklet** seen during sea watches at Boiler Bay 16 Nov and again 22 Nov (Phil Pickering).

A **Snow Bunting** was along the south jetty of Yaquina Bay 9 Nov (J Harding). Six **Pine Siskins** fed on alder catkins along Beaver Creek Rd. 18 Nov (J, K & K Fairchild).

Next issue

Enjoy the Christmas Bird Count, and please send me your latest sightings by 26 Dec

please note that I have a new e-mail address!

Joel Geier
38566 Hwy 99W, Corvallis 97330
(541) 745-5020
joel.geier@peak.org

Benton County Big Year

Good News and Bad News

The record for birds found in Benton County for a year is 202, by Trent Bray in 2000. We are not doing a “big year” this year, but simply trying to build up a respectable Benton County life list as we explore Benton County. In just doing that we are at 191 for the year as of this writing (Nov 30th). However, we have missed many birds that we tried for and many others we weren’t here to try for. Following the posts on our local listserve and the Chat reports organized by Joel Geier, there have been at least 223 bird species seen in Benton County so far this year. And there are another 10 that have been seen in the last few years. We think someone who wanted to work at it should have a good chance to break the 202 record.

First is some very Good News. Benton County is easy to bird because it is small. Lane County stretches from the coast to the Cascades. If you live in Corvallis you can only go about 12 miles north to E. E. Wilson and Coffin Butte. You can only go 20 miles south to Monroe Sewage Ponds. You can’t go east at all! Even going west you can only go about 26 miles to the top of Marys Peak (highest point in coastal range and best place for gray-crowned rosy finch and snow bunting compared to neighboring counties) or to Alsea.

And there are many good places to bird in Benton County at various times of the year. Just to name a few: the many parts of Finley, sewage ponds (Philomath, Monroe, Corvallis, and Knoll Terrace), E. E. Wilson, Marys Peak, Willamette Park, Lewisburg Saddle area, Alsea Falls area, anywhere along the Willamette River or Alsea River, Bald Hill, Fitton Green, McDonald Forest, Beazell Memorial Forest, Fort Hoskins, and more.

There is Bad News, but that makes Benton County more of an opportunity! Benton seems to be bird-challenged compared to neighboring counties, and in many ways. Benton is shorebird-challenged. This year there were black-necked stilts, Wilson’s phalaropes, Baird’s sandpipers, red knots, black-bellied plovers, and others seen at Fern Ridge and Basket Slough. Benton County is in-between and these were rarely seen here. Benton is gull-challenged. There are regularly western, mew, Thayer’s, glaucous-winged, Herring, Bonaparte’s, California, and ring-billed at Fern Ridge in winter. There are fields in Linn County with gulls, and there are gulls in Albany (Linn side) and Salem. There seems to be nowhere that gulls can be seen regularly in Benton. Benton is deep water-challenged. Where can you find common loon, western grebe, or white pelicans here? Benton is even somewhat migration-challenged compared to Mt. Tabor (Portland) and Skinner Butte (Eugene) where migrants seem to be abundant and rarities occur. There are certainly places in Benton, but no standout place. There are other interesting birds that

seem to avoid Benton County such as purple martins seen at Fern Ridge and in Scio. Again, Benton County is in-between, but it is hard to find them. All of these hard-to-find birds probably spend more time in Benton than is reported. This can make Benton birding more exciting in trying to find more of these birds. Now, many birds are simply harder to find anywhere. For instance, there are 10 very possible species of owls in Benton, and we think none are easy to find.

So if you love to bird, but don’t want to do the long trips, you might consider a Benton County list. Or if you already have a Benton list, but want a new challenge, then you might try a Benton County big year. With some excellent local birders including ornithologists from OSU who bird a lot, and with our local listserve (list@midvalleybirding.org) that alerts everyone quickly to what is being seen, it is easier to find those rarer species that don’t stay very long. And you could be the next to find something spectacular like the crested caracara Benton enjoyed this year. We enjoy the challenges of Benton County and hope others will as well.

Rich and Nanette Armstrong

Green Lines

Interest about the Corvallis Audubon Society’s “Green” project continues to grow. A new Audubon cloth tote bag to carry groceries was displayed at last month’s general meeting. The Osprey image on the bag was drawn by Corvallis Audubon’s own Don Boucher. Thanks Don for the beautiful pen and ink work, Don! The bags will be ready soon and the cost will be kept to a minimum.

We are asking all members to support our Green project and sign onto the 14-point pledge. (See the November Chat or the ASC website for the list.) You may send an email to me at Gaylordjohng@aol.com. When we have a majority of members on board, the GT newspaper has expressed interest in doing a feature article on the project. We are also asking members for useful ideas to help save water, fuel, and electricity. We plan to have feature articles on Green topics. Travel safely.

John Gaylord

Argentine Birding Trip

The thirteen Corvallis Auduboners who visited Brazil on a 2005 birding trip were instructed not only by their Brazilian guide, Paulo Boute, but by Sergio Corbet, an Argentinian bird guide who was on the tour as Paulo’s guest. Now Sergio would like to lead a group of six to eight birders on a fifteen-day trip to Argentina, in late 2007. Anyone interested is invited to contact Chris Mathews (mathewsc2@comcast.net) for the itinerary and other information.

Chris Mathews

Think Green this Holiday Season

National Audubon asks people to add birds and other wildlife to their gift lists by keeping the holidays “green.”

Conserving Paper

A virtual forest goes into wrapping gifts and sending cards each holiday season. For example, Americans send nearly 2 billion holiday cards annually. That adds up to a mountain of paper and an enormous vat of chemical inks. Fortunately, there are many ways to share good wishes and cheer with friends and family and to do your part for trees and wildlife at the same time.

- Choose cards printed on recycled paper with vegetable-based inks. Better still, recycle favorite greeting cards from past years as holiday postcards, or make your own cards with recycled or tree-free paper. Magazine pages can be turned into eye-catching envelopes. For recycled or alternative fiber cards, see www.coopamerica.org/pubs/greenpages/results.cfm?category=PS.
- Most gift wrap is not recyclable, and neither is ribbon. Wrap your presents in something that is, such as the Sunday comics, road maps, or plain brown paper decorated with stamps or sponge art.
- Place gifts in reusable bags or baskets, and don't wrap presents for Fido.
- Children's artwork makes heartfelt cards and wrapping paper, especially for relatives.
- Wrap one present inside another, such as a scarf or cloth napkins.
- Snip the front of old greeting cards into colorful gift tags.
- Drop off extra packing material and Styrofoam peanuts at mailing centers or moving companies for reuse.
- Save ribbons and gift wrap from one year to the next. If a large piece of wrapping paper is slightly damaged, at least part of it can be used to wrap a smaller gift.

Gift Giving

Consumers are projected to spend more than \$457 billion on gifts and other goods this holiday season. Think of how much money could be diverted to environmentally responsible organizations and businesses by choosing your gifts wisely. And imagine how much money you could save by giving the gift of your own time!

- Make a date with your friend or family member to participate together on the Christmas Bird Count in December and the Great Backyard Bird Count in February during the President's Day weekend. If the gift recipient is new to bird watching, such as a youngster, give binoculars, a field guide, and a notebook to go along with the outdoor citizen science experience.

- Consider gifts that support your community and create minimal waste, such as theater tickets or certificates to local restaurants and businesses, or memberships in a museum or botanical garden.
 - Give yourself to friends by offering to take them hiking or birding, or by volunteering to tutor, baby-sit, or help clean house.
 - A hand-painted pot with a bag of compost and native plant seeds is a gift that will keep on growing.
 - Everyone enjoys home-baked goodies. Package them in a shoebox or cookie tin and be sure to include the recipe.
 - Don't be afraid to re-gift a past present you didn't need to give to someone you know would really appreciate it.
 - Give memberships to organizations like Audubon that work toward a better world.
 - Encourage others to embrace an environmentally friendly lifestyle by giving things like countertop composters, bird feeders and seed, and gift baskets of organic foods and shade-grown coffee.
 - If you purchase any electronic toys or other items, make sure to include rechargeable batteries with them.
 - “Adopt” an animal, a butterfly garden, or even a classroom in someone else's name. They'll get a unique, meaningful gift and your money will have gone to support wildlife and nature education.
 - Give a subscription to Audubon Adventures to a classroom in your community. (800) 340-6546
 - Contact an Audubon Center near you to send a classroom on a nature adventure. (916) 649-7600
 - Wild Puffins: Adopt a puffin through Audubon's Project Puffin (607) 257-7308
 - Injured Raptors: Sponsor an injured bird through the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey (407) 655 0190
- www.audubon.org/bird/at_home/Holiday_Greening/index.html



Rough-Skinned Newt photo by Lisa Millbank

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

President: Chris Mathews, mathewsc2@comcast.net, 754-1172
Vice President/Program Chair: Susan Haig,
haig_susan@yahoo.com, 753-5068
Secretary: Marcia Cutler, marciafcutler@comcast.net, 752-4313
Treasurer: Judy Hays, haysj@comcast.net, 745-5692

Board Members-at-large

John Gaylord, GaylordJohng@aol.com, 745-5088
Linda Campbell, lcampbell@peak.org, 929-9420
Hesthavn Programs: Elise, Elliott-Smith,
eelliottsmith@yahoo.com, 754-3906
Education: Leah Gorman, leah_gorman@mail.com, 929-6314
Education: Will Wright, Will_Wright@Monroe.k12.or.us, 753-4395
Refreshments: Claudia Regier, 753-0879

Committees and Coordinators

Birdathon Chair: Mary Van Brocklin,
mary_vanbrocklin@yahoo.com, 745-7170
Bluebird Trail: Elsie Eltzroth, eltzroth@peak.org, 745-7806
Conservation Chair: Dave Mellinger,
DavidKMellinger@yahoo.com, 757-7953
Education Chair: Kate Mathews, kate.mathews@comcast.net,
754-1172
Field Notes Compiler: Joel Geier, joel.geier@peak.org, 745-5020
Field Trip Coordinator: Paula Vanderheul, vanderp@peak.org,
752-0470
Hesthavn Sanctuary Chair: Ray Drapek, drapek@fsl.orst.edu,
754-7364
Historian: Marcia Cutler, marciafcutler@comcast.net, 752-4313
Membership Chair: Amy Schoener, cloudrun@peak.org,
929-4041
Public Relations: Don Boucher, bouchdon@peak.org, 753-7689
Sales: Bob Smythe, smythe@stat.orst.edu, 757-6357
Chat Editors: Joan/Neil Newhouse/Lidstrom,
chateditors@gmail.com, 754-3120
Fund-raising and Board At-large Alternate: Karan Fairchild,
alderspr@peak.org, 929-4049

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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit Org
U. S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 56
Corvallis, OR



Audubon Society of Corvallis

the **CHAT**

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

Calendar

- Dec 9 Saturday morning local birding 7:30 am Finley NWR*
- Dec 9 Trail clearing for Homer Campbell Memorial Trail at Finley 10 am**
- Dec 14 General meeting, member photos 7:30 pm***
- Dec 17 Naturalist Adventure (Nov Chat)
- Dec 19 Corvallis Christmas Bird Count***
- Dec 26 Field Notes deadline
- Dec 29 Chat deadline for January issue
- Jan 12-15 Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival (Nov Chat)
- Jan 13 Saturday morning local birding 7:30 am*
- Jan 21 Naturalist Adventure (Nov Chat)
- Feb 10 Saturday morning local birding 7:30 am*
- Feb 11 Art and Nature at Hesthavn 1-3 pm*

*See page 27
**See page 26
***See page 25 (front page)



Great Egret photo by Lisa Millbank

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.

Printed on Recycled Paper