



Audubon Society of Corvallis the **CHAT**

Summer 2009

VOL. 38

#10

Board Election Results

The new ASC board was elected by acclaim during the May general meeting. Officers for 2009-2010 are:

President: Will Wright

Vice President & Program Chair: Dave Mellinger

Secretary: Karan Fairchild

Treasurer: Fred Ramsey

Board Members-at-Large:

Gail Andrews, Carroll DeKock, Raylene Gordin,

Gail Nickerson, Jerry Paul, Becky Schwiebert

Alternate board member-at-large: Glen Akins

The new slate will take office in September and all contact information will be updated at that time.

Congratulations to all!

Diana Brin

Audubon Summer Picnic

23 July: Hesthavn Nature Center

Everyone is invited to the ASC Summer Picnic at Hesthavn. The potluck starts at 6 pm. Please bring a dish to share and your own plates & utensils. Hot and cold drinks provided. The ASC board meeting follows at 7 pm.

Will Wright

Birdathon '09 a Big Success

The Birdathon raised more than \$4500 this year for Hesthavn Sanctuary and Nature Center. A big thank you to our seven birding teams and almost 50 sponsors! Particular thanks go to Elsie Eltzroth, and to Ken Hilton at Wild Birds Unlimited, for sponsoring every team.

Paula Vanderheul and her team, the Tule Trotters, saw the most and raised the most: they tallied 144 species on their Klamath Basin field trip, raising over \$1600 in pledges. Other birders included Karan and Jim Fairchild; Don Boucher and Lisa Millbank; Randy and Pam Comeleo, Marge Victor, and Ralph Alig; Dodie Wilson; Susan and Todd Brown and Becky Garrett; and my team, co-captains Alex (8) and Tristan (2 ½) Van Brocklin, and Andy Van Brocklin. Thanks everyone!

Mary VanBrocklin

When birders* drink Folger's

Taken from the website Coffee & Conservation,
<http://www.coffeehabitat.com>

An editorial recently appeared in the scientific journal Conservation Biology. It was titled "When swordfish conservation biologists eat swordfish" (Bearzi, G. 2009, Conservation Biology 23:1-2). As the title implies, it's a riff on the hypocrisy of avowed conservationists when their own lifestyles are inconsistent with the messages they voice. It struck a big chord with me, so I am going to borrow on its theme and major points.

One of my biggest frustrations is the resistance among many birders to change their coffee buying habits. Most birders I've talked to are aware that shade grown coffee preserves habitat and is very important to birds, and that mass produced coffee and grocery store brands are bad for the environment. But the next thing I often hear is some excuse why they still drink unsustainable coffee: they can't find shade coffee, it's too expensive, they don't understand or trust certifications, they don't like the shade/organic coffee they've tried, or...no excuse at all. Just a shrug and an admission of guilt.

Not only is it time for us -- birders -- to acknowledge that our consumption is often in conflict with our professed beliefs and passions, it's time to do something about it.

In an ideal world, corporate conscience or government regulations would see to it that our environment is protected and that habitats are not destroyed needlessly. But in reality corporations and elected officials both respond to the values and actions of public consensus.

For coffee, certifications (such as Fair Trade, organic, or

See Coffee on next page

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Coffee

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Bird-Friendly) help fill a regulatory vacuum. But since they are voluntary and not legally required, they are market-driven. Market forces will favor the standards that are easiest to meet. Participation by producers and distributors is reliant upon them gaining higher prices, better market access, or positive social benefits. Lack of consumer demand for the certified coffees undermines all of these motivations.

Lack of demand has also contributed to the scarcity of certified coffees in the market. Consumers need to grow this market segment. Seeking out sources of sustainably-grown coffee, even if it lacks a certification seal, sends a message to producers. But it means doing a lot of homework. So no matter how you look at it, it is our responsibility to become informed, and we are left to make hard choices regarding our coffee buying habits ourselves.

Of all people, aren't we as birders the ones who should be setting the example for others? Certainly we are far more informed about the habits, natural history, and declines in many migratory birds than the general public. If we can't translate our love for birds into action in our daily lives, who are we to criticize the "drill, baby, drill" mentality of others?

To not make the effort to drink coffee that sustains the habitats not only of the creatures that bring us joy, but also of an enormous chunk of the biodiversity that sustains our planet, is not being a particularly responsible world citizen. It also indicates a belief that the actions of individuals do not matter.

The ConBio editorial ended with a quote from Mahatma Gandhi that I will repeat here:

"You must be the change you want to see in the world."

I want to see a world filled with birds and tropical biodiversity. I want to support that, even with the small but powerful gesture of the coffee I choose to drink.

**You may substitute "nature lovers," "conservationists," "environmentalists," or other green type and still get the picture.*

[The second half of this article will appear in the September Chat. In the meantime, take a look at Julie's website at <http://www.coffeehabitat.com>. She welcomes questions, feedback, and suggestions.]

Julie Craves

Hesthavn Summer News

Work parties & open house: July 25 & August 29

In May, three work parties dug trenches for irrigation line for the rainwater catchments system, laying the water and electrical piping, then back filling the trenches. Five CVHS students volunteered to help with the backfilling for community service credit. I'd like to thank Will Wright, Jim Fairchild, Bev Clark, Ray Drapek, Jerry Paul, Karl Hartzell, John Gaylord, Marjean Austin, and Susan Brown who all helped with the backfilling of the trenches.

Jim Fairchild, our contractor for the rainwater catchments system, has done a remarkable job in planning, purchasing parts, building, erecting hydrants, running water and electrical pipe lines in the trenches, setting up the tanks with connecting

parts; also directing volunteer workers, and hiring the gutter and solar contractors. The result is a rainwater collection system with solar gravity flow drip irrigation and dual electrical pump for water hoses. Collecting and using rainwater catchments system are at this level unique.

Gail Andrew, one of our board members, has taught drip irrigation classes to master gardeners. We appreciated Gail's time and effort in designing and building the drip irrigation system at Hesthavn.

At the June 27 work party and open house, five volunteers weeded the gravel trail, made protective fence covers for trees and shrubs, stencilled the new hydrants with rainwater and nonpotable water markings, worked on drip irrigation setup, and greeted visitors. We thank Ann and Douglas Brodie, Marcia Cutler, Gail Andrews, and Paula Vanderheul for volunteering their time on this day.

The next work parties are scheduled for July 25 and August 29. Come join us from 9am to 1pm to pull invasive teasel and thistle.

Hesthavn will have open house visitation on July 25 and August 29 from 10am to 1pm. Stop by to check out the new rainwater catchments system.

Map directions are available at www.audubon.corvallis.or.us. The nature trail is open to the public daily.

If you are looking for an opportunity to volunteer during a weekday at the nature center, contact me at 541-752-0470 or vanderp@peak.org.

Paula Vanderheul



November Silent Auction

This signed and numbered print by Maine biologist and wildlife artist, Mark McCollough, will be the feature of a silent auction at our November 19th meeting. This framed 33" x 23" print showing a loon and her two chicks is numbered #92 out of a 150 edition. The Maine Department of Transportation has chosen another of McCollough's loon and chick illustrations as a special issue license plate.

This print will be available for viewing at the Book and Raffle table in September and October in preparation for the November silent auction. Bidding can be done through any of our Audubon officers if you are unable to attend the November meeting. Between meetings, the print can be viewed privately at Sally Shaw's home. Call her at 541-757-2749 to make arrangements.

Sally Shaw

Can we do it?

The 2000-Watt Society

The 2000-Watt Society is a vision that each person in the developed world would cut their rate of energy use to an average of no more than 2,000 watts by the year 2050, without lowering their standard of living. This amounts to 17,520 kilowatt-hours per year of all energy use, not only electrical. This is approximately the current world average rate of total energy use, but developed nations use far more. Americans, for instance, use an average of 12,000 watts today.

This vision originated in Switzerland, where researchers believe that this vision is achievable despite a projected 65% increase in economic growth by 2050. This could be done by using new low-carbon technologies and techniques, including better insulated and generally more energy-efficient buildings; improvements in the efficiency of road transportation and aviation; less use of energy-intensive materials; district heating, microgeneration and related technologies; and many other improvements. The Swiss government is backing this idea, and has made Basel a pilot region for the effort. Switzerland's climate is colder than Oregon's, meaning it should be possible here too.

We should take up the challenge!

Dave Mellinger

Field Trip Schedule

Monthly Year-Round Saturday Field Trips

August 8: Meet at the Benton Center 7:30 am

September 12: Meet at the Benton Center 7:30 am

Our Saturday morning local field trip meets the second Saturday of every month at the Benton Center parking area, 757 Polk Ave in Corvallis 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. Contact Rich Armstrong at richarmstrong@comcast.net or 541-753-1978 with questions.

Rich Armstrong

Shorebird Festival

23rd Oregon Shorebird Festival is August 28-30

Experience the wonder of shorebird migration along the scenic Oregon coast at the 23rd annual Oregon Shorebird Festival to be held August 28-30, 2009. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Cape Arago Audubon Society, Oregon Field Ornithologists, South Slough NERR and many other sponsors will have a full weekend of activities planned for birders of all skill levels. The festival is headquartered at the Oregon Institute of Marine Biology in Charleston, OR. Activities include expertly guided land based field trips to Bandon Marsh National Wildlife Refuge, New River and the Coos Estuary. And for those who want to experience birding on the water, The Bird Guide, Inc. will offer two pelagic trips: a long eight-hour trip on Saturday and a short five-hour trip on Sunday. Expected seabirds include albatross, jaeger, shearwater, phalarope, auklets, and

more. Evening programs on birds will feature Geoff Keller "My Most Memorable Field Recording Experiences" and Jim Danzenbaker "A Workshop on the Nuances of Shorebird Identification."

To register for the festival or for more information, please visit our website at:

<http://www.fws.gov/oregoncoast/shorebirdfestival.htm> or contact Dawn Grafe at 541-867-4550.

Dawn Grafe

Bicycle Birding

July 26 Destination: A tour of Avery Park, Pioneer Park and Corvallis Riverfront. For those who cannot ride a bike, Corvallis Pedicab has a special discount offer for this trip (the service will cost something). Please RSVP if interested. For more information on the Pedicab service, see <http://corvallispedicab.com>.

Aug 23 Destination: Campus Way Covered Bridge, Benton County Fairgrounds

Sept 27 Destination: Starker Park, Community Garden & Sunset Park

The rides happen from 9 am until noon. Meet at Avery Park Rose Garden, 1210 SW Avery Drive in Corvallis.

These trips are free. Bring a bicycle helmet, water, and binoculars. We ride slowly, listen for birds, and stop frequently. Trip lengths are usually less than 10 miles. For more information, contact Don Boucher at 753-7639 or bouchdon@peak.org.

Don Boucher

Field Notes

6 May -7 July 2009

May and June provided very different weather. The last 3 weeks of May were dominated by clear skies and glorious weather, whereas much of June was cloudy. By the end of June, however, temperatures were climbing and the Fourth of July weekend was hot. Conditions were dry overall, so few ephemeral wetlands had much water. Snow on Marys Peak melted during May, in contrast to last year when some was still there on the fourth of July. A few exciting rarities were found during the period (American Avocet, Least Tern, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, and Ash-throated Flycatcher, to name a few), while most of our normal birds were busy nesting.

Abbreviations and Locations: m.ob. = many observers. Observer names are noted in parentheses after their reports. Observations without a name (or with WDR) are the editor's. ASC indicates observations made by Audubon Society of Corvallis field trips. EEW = E. E. Wilson Wildlife Area north of Corvallis. ANWR = Ankeny National Wildlife Refuge in Marion County. FNWR = Finley National Wildlife Refuge, and includes Cabell, Cheadle, and McFadden marshes. STP = sewage treatment ponds; Philomath STP are off of Bellfountain Drive south of Philomath. Knoll Terrace STP are off of Elliot Circle in Corvallis. Stewart Lake is at Hewlett-Packard in Corvallis. Toketie Marsh is the remedial wetland for Coffin Butte landfill north of Corvallis, just off of Highway 99W. The Bellfountain Wetland along Bellfountain Drive south of Philomath is also sometimes called the Evergreen Mitigation Bank. The Diamond Hill Road wetland is in Linn County.

A **Greater White-fronted Goose**, very unusual during summer, was at Cabell Marsh, 23 June. Two exotic waterfowl were found, both of which are likely escapees from captivity: a striking **Bar-headed**

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Field Notes, continued from page 75

Goose was at Baskett Slough NWR during mid-May (m.ob.; see photo) and a beautiful male **Mandarin Duck** associated with **Wood Ducks** at McFadden Marsh, 25-26 May (WDR, m.ob.).

The last **Gadwall** of the spring was at Philomath STP until 11 June. Two male **American Wigeons** tarried at Cabell Marsh through 27 June. **Blue-winged Teal** are rare during summer, so one to three at McFadden and Philomath STP intermittently through 30 June established interesting local records (m.ob.). More expected, **Cinnamon Teal** nested at McFadden, Cabell, and Philomath STP this spring. The last **Northern Shovelers** reported from the spring were three at Philomath STP, 28 May. A **Northern Pintail** was still at Cabell Marsh, 26 May, and the last **Green-winged Teal** was at McFadden, 23 May.

Among the diving duck species, a pair of **Ring-necked Ducks** were still at Stewart Lake, 8 May (J. Simmons); the last one detected at FNWR visited McFadden Marsh, 8 June. Scaup did not linger very late. The last **Lesser Scaup** was foraging at Philomath STP, 19 May. Juvenile **Hooded Mergansers** appeared at Philomath STP beginning 18 June; the maximum there was 6 on 6 July. Strangely, a single **Ruddy Duck** duckling was at Philomath STP for 2 weeks in early June, even though no adults were there during that time. One wonders how the duckling arrived at the ponds.

Also quite odd was an adult **Common Loon** in breeding plumage that flew over Philomath STP without stopping on 8 June then continued southward.

A **Western Grebe** stopped by Philomath STP, 18 May.

In keeping with the pattern established the last 3 years, **Clark's Grebes** appeared during mid-June. This year one was at Baskett Slough NWR in mid-June (R. Gerig) and one visited Philomath STP, 17 and 20 June.

To the delight of many, **American White Pelicans** returned for the second summer in a row to Cabell Marsh, when 4 were there, 7 June. Numbers varied a lot over time. The maximum was 58 on 2 July (M. Monroe); perhaps the same birds were soaring over 53rd and Harrison in Corvallis around mid-morning the same day (B. Pratt). About a dozen were flying over Philomath earlier in spring, on 16 or 17 May (C. Weigel).

Three **Double-crested Cormorants** were at Philomath STP, 26 May, where they occur rarely.

At least two **American Bitterns** were at McFadden Marsh throughout the period (m.ob.).

A **White-tailed Kite** was seen along Alsea Road, 20 June (M. Nikas), where they are rather uncommon at best. **Red-shouldered Hawks** were either very quiet or left FNWR for most of the period; one was calling at Cabell Marsh, 6 July. Two were at Willamette Park, however, 10 June (T. Seager). Rare during summer, an adult **Peregrine Falcon** was at McFadden Marsh, 10 June. Steve Seibel reported two **Golden Eagles** at Peterson Butte near Lebanon, 9 June; quite unusual to see these during summer.

Virginia Rails and **Soras** were plentiful at McFadden and Cabell marshes this spring and summer. Many observers had excellent views of both of these secretive species.

American Coots nested at the scrape along Bruce Road, FNWR, this summer. Two coots returned to Philomath STP, 6 July.

The last of the spring shorebirds left during May, only a few weeks before the first southbound fall migrants arrived. The last **Semi-palmated Plover** of spring was along McFarland Road, 16 May. The **American Avocet** detected at Baskett Slough NWR earlier in spring continued and was joined by another; both were there at least through 26 June (R. Gerig).

Spotted Sandpiper migration was apparent in mid-May, which seems later than one might expect. A high count of 16 was at Philomath STP, 20 May. A late **Solitary Sandpiper** foraged in a wetland along McFarland Road, 19-20 May. The last **Greater Yellowlegs** of spring were seen 16 May along McFarland Road (WDR), and the first ones of

fall arrived at ANWR, 29 June (R. Gerig). Not far behind was the first **Lesser Yellowlegs**, which stopped at the Diamond Hill Road wetland in Linn County, 1 July (R. Moore).

It was a great spring for **Whimbrels**, which are usually quite rare here. One was reported from the FNWR prairie, 21 May (fide M. Monroe) and two flew over McFadden Marsh, 31 May (W. Wright). Rare but regular during fall, a **Semipalmated Sandpiper** at the Diamond Hill Road wetland 1 July seemed a bit early (R. Moore). The first **Least Sandpiper** of autumn was at ANWR, 29 June (R. Gerig).

Although spring concentrations of shorebirds were few, a flock of 125 **Long-billed Dowitchers** at Bellfountain Wetland, 13 May, was a nice gathering. By 1 July, the first fall migrants were appearing at the Diamond Hill Road wetland (R. Moore).

Wilson's Phalaropes stayed at McFadden Marsh again this year, at least through 1 June, but it is not clear if they attempted to breed. **Red-necked Phalaropes** were fairly common during spring; they were last seen 19 May when 21 were at McFadden Marsh.

A **California Gull** stopped at Philomath STP, 1 June, but fall migrants did not arrive there until 7 July, when 2 subadults were present.

A remarkable rarity for the Valley, a **Least Tern** was seen at ANWR, 29 June, but did not stay another day (R. Gerig, m.ob.). Along the Willamette River at Peoria, the first **Caspian Tern** of fall flew by Randy Campbell's house, 27 June.

Marbled Murrelets were heard in the Tobe Creek drainage south of Alsea in early July (T. Snetsinger, R. and N. Armstrong). The species is presumably quite rare this far from the Pacific Ocean.

Eurasian Collared-Doves continue to increase in numbers. Many reports from the Corvallis area were received.

Marcia Cutler reports hearing a **Barred Owl** in her Corvallis neighborhood during late June. Barred Owls successfully nested in the Brown Creek drainage of FNWR again this year (M. Monroe, J. Hagar).

A **Common Nighthawk** was at the Fairchilds' place near Philomath, 2 June, where they are detected annually (J. and K. Fairchild). Two were along the Willamette River at Peoria, 8-9 June (R. Campbell). One was heard along Tampico Road, 17 June (R. and P. Cameleo).

A pair of **Downy Woodpeckers** nested in the same snag as last year at Stewart Lake (J. Simmons).

A **Gray Flycatcher** stopped briefly at McFadden Marsh, 19 May, for a rare record west of the Cascades. **Willow Flycatchers** returned to FNWR by 18 May. **Black Phoebes** nested at the bridge near the Hubbard Road and Highway 99W intersection (WDR, M. Nikas). An **Ash-throated Flycatcher**, apparently Benton County's second record, was at Pigeon Butte, FNWR, 22 May.

A **Red-eyed Vireo** was singing at Willamette Park, 13 June.

Purple Martins were found nesting in snags in McDonald-Dunn Forest in two locations (see photo). Eleven, including 4 adults and 7 juveniles, at Cabell Marsh, 6 July, was quite a large number for FNWR. A **Bank Swallow**, still quite rare during summer, but seemingly on the increase, was at Cabell Marsh, 30 June.

Rock Wrens made an incursion into the region on 20 May. They appeared on Marys Peak and the quarry at Pigeon Butte, FNWR, on 20 May (R. Hoyer, M. Monroe; see photo). Two at Bond Butte Quarry, Linn County, apparently stayed to nest because they were still there 25 June (J. Jebousek).

American Dippers were at their usual Alsea Falls site during the period (R. and N. Armstrong, M. Cutler).

A **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher**, probably the second Benton County record, was north of Timberhill in Corvallis, 15-16 May (R. Hoyer, W. Wright, WDR).

The last **American Pipit** was foraging 12 May along McFarland Road.

Identifying spring departure dates of songbird species that breed here can be difficult because the local population obscures detection of the last passage migrants. Stewart Lake, checked nearly daily by Jamie Simmons, presents a nice opportunity to identify departure dates because few species breed in that park. The last **Orange-crowned**

Warbler was at Stewart Lake, 15 May; the last **Yellow Warbler** was a female on 28 May; and the last **Yellow-rumped Warbler** was present 11 May (J. Simmons).

At least four territorial **Audubon's Warblers** nested on Marys Peak; independent juveniles were foraging there, 7 July. Another singing male Audubon's Warbler was in McDonald Forest, 28 June, where they are rare during summer.

A **Yellow-breasted Chat** stopped at Bill Proebsting's place along Oak Creek Drive, 17 May. Four territories were present around Cabell Marsh and the Fiechter House at FNWR this summer.

A **Vesper Sparrow** was at Bald Hill Park, 3 June, where a few breed each year (R. and P. Cameleo). There were also reports of up to 6 birds at Fitton Green (R. Armstrong). **Grasshopper Sparrows** arrived at FNWR prairie by 21 May. At least 4 territories were present through the period (see photo). Another was near Bryant Park in Albany, 16-22 June (D. Boucher). The last **Lincoln's Sparrow** was seen 7 May at Cabell Marsh. A few **Golden-crowned Sparrows** lingered into May; one was at Stewart Lake, 15 May (J. Simmons) and another was at Cabell Marsh, 22 May.

Two pairs of **Yellow-headed Blackbirds** tried nesting at the scrape along Bruce Rd (m.ob.). A female Yellow-headed Blackbird was along Highway 99W near the Arboretum Rd intersection, 3 June (J. Geier).

A very late **Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch** was seen on Marys Peak, 31 May (J. Fairchild).

Red Crossbills moved back into the area by 30 May. The highest count was a flock of 52 in Dunn Forest, 31 May, but small numbers continued throughout the period at Marys Peak, in Corvallis, and in McDonald-Dunn Forest.

Pine Siskins were present at Marys Peak in higher numbers than during the last few years. Typical high counts during the period were 19 to 22 birds.

Evening Grosbeaks were plentiful in Corvallis through late May.

Next issue

Please send your reports for the next issue by August 24 to:

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This handsome Bar-headed Goose was at Baskett Slough NWR in mid- to late May, here 23 May (photo: W. D. Robinson).



Purple Martins nested in McDonald-Dunn Forest this year. This pair investigated a cavity off of Tampico Road, 31 May (photo: W. D. Robinson).



Rock Wrens appeared at Finley NWR and Marys Peak on 20 May. This one was still on Marys Peak the next day (photo: W. D. Robinson).



Grasshopper Sparrows again set up territories at Finley NWR prairie. This cooperative male was singing there on 22 May (photo: W. D. Robinson).

Klamath Birding with Fred

A look back at the 17-19 April 2009 trip



Bufflehead photo by Andy Hoffman



Photo by Susan Atkisson

Light drizzle accompanied our three vans out of Corvallis after stopping for the traditional Acorn Woodpecker check on campus. Twenty-three birders armed with about 10 scopes were treated to a grebe weekend...we saw lots of Western, Clark's, Horned, Eared and Pied-billed, only missing the Red-necked Grebe. A total of 144 species were seen, hopefully providing the Birdathon with generous contributions. We were also fortunate to have two super photographers: Cheryl Wheelchel and Andy Hoffman.

The first special treat was an American Dipper pair with nest and young at Greenwaters Park. Everyone had super looks at these cuties. Lesser Scaup were probably the most abundant bird seen on Friday. Mammal sightings were a pleasant surprise with coyote, elk, Yellow-Bellied Marmot, Belding's Ground Squirrel, Yellow Pine Chipmunk, Douglas' Squirrel and Muskrat.

Saturday's perfect weather yielded Common Goldeneye and superb views of Savannah Sparrow. Common Teal was added to the list along the Lower Klamath White Lake Unit area. This bird was a lifer for many—this rare Eurasian version of our Green-winged Teal is distinguished by its horizontal rather than vertical white bar along the wing. Large rafts of Snow and Ross's Greese floated on lower Klamath Lake as one blue-collared individual from Nunavut was spotted by

Becky Schwiebert and identified by Kim Nelson. Lunch at the Tulelake Headquarters became special with a Great Horned Owl nest in the cliffs complete with 3 owlets. White-throated Swifts were flying around the same cliffs. Other highlights of the day included Prairie Falcon, Rock Wren and Sage Thrasher.



Horned Grebe photo by Andy Hoffman

Perfect morning light on Sunday made sightings of Lesser Scaup, Horned Grebe and Bufflehead absolutely breathtaking. While the grebes were not in the mood to really "dance," Andy captured a nice pair. A hike at Moore Park initially was disappointing as the Juniper Titmouse answered Fred's song recording, but refused to put in an appearance. However, several of us got another lifer as it did show up later. Good views of Anna's Hummingbird and Townsend's Solitaire were other highlights. Two additions to the checklist were added : Thayer's Gull and Cassin's Vireo.

We were looking forward to a visit to Salt Creek Falls, but were disappointed as the road was still unplowed. Thanks to our wonderful drivers, Jim Faulkner, Tom Penpraze and of course, our weather guru, Fred Ramsey.

To see all of Cheryl's photos, go to
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/vgswallow16/>.

To see all of Andy's photos, go to
<http://picasaweb.google.com/Beesorch/KlamathCASAApril09>.

Diana Brin

Rogue Valley Birding

A look back at birding with Fred in the Rogue Valley May 1 – 3

Photos by Cheryl Wheelchel

Twelve birders joined Fred Ramsay for the annual spring trip to the Rogue Valley, for a chance at several regional specialties and a few surprises!

In Sutherlin, Fred quickly found us a Tricolored Blackbird, but then we were pleasantly surprised to find a late Trumpeter Swan, a singing Yellow-breasted Chat and a very large Western Pond turtle.

On Saturday, we were rewarded for the long trek up Lower Table Rock with good views of the local highlights. Fred was able to find us a pair of California Towhees within

several hundred feet of the parking lot. This pair was quite cooperative and everyone got excellent looks.

After gaining some altitude, a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was called up. Although this individual stayed some distance away, everyone got good looks. On the way down, Glen Linde-



California Towhee



Blue-gray Gnatcatcher

man accidentally left his iPod turned on with the Gnatcatcher playing. Glen stopped on the trail to look for a calling but elusive flycatcher and called me over. When we dropped our bins, we had a pair of Gnatcatchers staring at us from six feet away!

The weather was marginal so overall bird activity on the trail was a

little slow, but many good birds were seen. An Ash-throated Flycatcher was quite cooperative. As were a small group of Cassin's Finch, and even a pair of Pacific-slope Flycatchers.

At the top of Lower Table Rock we were greeted with a wonderful field full of wildflowers. Fred and I were walking across it when we spotted two Lark Sparrows "having a good time." The wildflowers and such a beautifully plumaged sparrow made for a wonderful picture.



Lark Sparrow

Saturday's lunch was full of first-of-the-year migrants for everyone: Wilson's Warbler, Western Tanager, Black-headed Grosbeak and Warbling Vireo. A pleasant surprise was an out of range Least Flycatcher—identified by Fred. (See my information on Least Flycatcher identification below.)

Sunday brought rain and wind to Ashland and the group wisely decided to head for home. Fred's habit of wandering the back roads found us at a very interesting clear-cut on Cow Creek Road that was practically swarming with Townsend's Solitaires. We also found a FOY MacGillivray's Warbler and another Western Tanager at this site.

Pictures of many birds and wildflowers from the trip can be viewed at

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/vgswallow16/>.

Least Flycatcher ID

Identification of Empidonax flycatchers is difficult. The reasoning behind this unusual identification rests on the elimination of other possibilities. Here are the other Oregon empies and the reasons for elimination:

- Willow has a barely visible eye-ring; ours had a bold eye-ring.
- Western has all yellow underparts and a large, broad bill; the underparts of our bird were uniformly pale, but not yellow, and the bill was small.
- Dusky has a large bill; ours was small.
- Gray is uniformly gray and has a large bill; our bird differed on both points.
- Hammond's is the tough competitor, as it also has a small bill. The lower mandible of Hammond's is black, while that of the Least (and ours) is pale.
- Hammond's bill is thin at the base, while that of the Least (and ours) is broad.

Cheryl Whelchel

GreenTip OF THE MONTH

Easy Ways to Reduce Power Use

"Green Tip of the Month" is a new regular feature in the Chat! Look on this page of each issue for a new green tip from Dave Mellinger.

What's the first and most important thing every green-minded dweller should do? Look at all the vampire loads that are sucking energy even when you're not using them.

You mean like the toaster with a digital clock and the cellphone charger?

Yes. Anything with a ready light. Collectively, vampire loads cost Americans about \$3 billion a year. The biggest culprits are stereos, DVRs, game systems and plasma TVs. Simply unplug them when they're not in use. Or purchase smart power strips, which cost about \$25 and shut off automatically.

From the New York Times, submitted by Dave Mellinger

Contributors to the Chat

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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

- Jul 23: ASC summer picnic
- Jul 25: Hesthavn work party & open house
- Jul 26: Bicycle birding, 9 am
- Aug 8: Second Saturday field trip, 7:30 am
- Aug 23: Bicycle birding, 9 am
- Aug 24: Field notes submission deadline for Sept Chat
- Aug 27: Article submission deadline for Sept Chat
- Aug 28-30: Oregon Shorebird Festival
- Aug 29: Hesthavn work party & open house
- Sep 12: Second Saturday field trip, 7:30 am
- Sep 27: Bicycle birding, 9 am



Turkey Vulture photo by Matt Lee

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