



# Audubon Society of Corvallis the **CHAT**

March 2011

VOL. 40

#7

## General Meeting

Thursday, March 17, 7:00 – 8:30 pm  
First Presbyterian Church

### Elephants, Impalas, and Large Carnivores in Tanzania

*A presentation by Dr. Clint Epps*

OSU's Clint Epps will be discussing research that he is conducting Tanzania on movement and gene flow of large mammals among Tanzanian protected areas. In 2006-2007, he and his research team surveyed almost 700 km of walking transects across a ~250-km-wide region in central Tanzania linking three protected areas, with the goal of investigating potential elephant movement corridors and surveying the distribution of different mammal species among those reserves. They found considerable activity of large mammals (including elephants and some large carnivores) far outside of existing protected areas, but also documented strong negative relationships between human activity and species richness. Currently, he and graduate student Rachel Crowhurst are using non-invasive genetic sampling to characterize genetic diversity and gene flow among 8 Tanzanian protected areas for multiple species of large herbivores, ranging from impala to the African elephant, in order to reconstruct longer-term patterns of population connectivity.

Dr. Epps was born and raised in Virginia, attended Rice University for a BA in Biology, and obtained a Ph.D. in wildlife ecology from the University of California-Berkeley. His dissertation work examined the effects of climate change and natural and human-caused habitat



fragmentation on population persistence and gene flow in desert bighorn sheep. Currently, he is an assistant professor in the Dept. of Fisheries and Wildlife at Oregon State University. He has research projects investigating movement of American marten on managed landscapes, effects of climate change on bighorn sheep and pikas, ecology of weasels, and gene flow among populations of African ungulates.

Doors open at 6:30 pm for refreshments and visiting. The chapter meeting commences at 7:00 pm, followed by the guest lecture at 7:30 pm. Questions about the series can be directed to Dave Mellinger at [David.Mellinger@oregonstate.edu](mailto:David.Mellinger@oregonstate.edu) 541-757-7953.

### Directions

As in January, our monthly meeting will be in Dennis Hall of the First Presbyterian Church, 114 SW Eighth Street.

This is the meeting space in the new wing of the church. You can get there by entering the church through the usual doors on 8th St., but instead of turning right to go up the stairs, walk down the long hall straight ahead and turn right after you're in the new wing. We'll have signs up directing you. You can also enter the new wing directly from outside if you like, though parking on that side of the building is a bit tight.

*Dave Mellinger*

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## Corrections to the 2010 Corvallis CBC Highlights

A few discrepancies may have been noted by the sharp-eyed reader between the published results and the summary of the count. This is because I had about 48 hours after the count ended to complete the summary. Since the results were an insert to the newsletter I had the luxury of 5 more days to complete them. Here then are some corrections to the summary:

Say's Phoebe is not a new bird to the count, having been seen on one previous Corvallis CBC. The Shrike was determined after several more visits to the spot to be a Northern Shrike. Additional new highs include: Red-shouldered Hawk, Black Phoebe and Evening Grosbeak.

*Marcia F. Cutler*



*This Barred Owl was a count-week bird for the 2010 Corvallis CBC. Photo by John Betich*

## Witham Oaks: Potential Open Space in Corvallis

Witham Oaks is the approximately 90-acre property that sits between the southwest end of Circle Blvd. and Harrison Blvd. Once slated for development, the fate of the property is now undetermined and has the potential to become a unique natural wild area within our city. It spans a variety of habitats and offers an easily accessible area for recreation and peaceful reflection.

A group called Friends of Witham Oaks hopes to raise money to purchase the property from US Bank and donate it to the City of Corvallis for preservation as open space. FOWO envisions a management plan that, through partnerships, will protect and restore the property's natural resources while providing public access to open space and trails as well as opportunities for education and research.

The Big News: An anonymous donor has stepped forward who will donate \$50,000 if FOWO can match that amount by March 31. If you have been uncertain

about contributing, the time is now. And please let others know about FOWO's efforts. The amount of money raised this month will really let the bank know how serious and dedicated the community is to saving Witham Oaks as a natural area. You risk nothing: If no purchase agreement is reached, all donations will be returned.

The earlier FOWO can tell the bank how much money has come in, the better their position is. They would like to get a contract with the bank based on the money raised so far and make a balloon payment in three years. With a signed contract they could apply for grants to foundations and other groups; they need a contract with the bank to apply for those grants.

Please send donations to 3800 NW Harrison Blvd, Corvallis, OR 97330-6516 as soon as possible. Donations can also be made at [www.withamoaks.org](http://www.withamoaks.org) via PayPal. Call Louise Marquering at 541-740-1497 for more details.

*Dave Mellinger*

## ASC/Finley Planting Postponed

Due to a severe storm and temperatures in the low teens, head biologist Jock Beale requested a postponement of the wildflower plant. A new date of March 19 has been selected. The details will remain the same as before and we will meet at Finley Refuge at 10:00am and plant until noon. ASC will provide refreshments, parking assistance and help with the planting.

*John Gaylord*

## Field Trip Schedule

### Monthly Year-Round Saturday Field Trips

March 12: Meet at the Benton Center at 7:30 am  
April 9: Meet at the Benton Center at 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, 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](mailto:richarmstrong@comcast.net) or 541-753-1978 with questions.

*Rich Armstrong*

### Spring Weekend Field Trips - 2011

ASC offers five weekend field trips to a wide selection of Oregon locations. Four of them are three-day trips covering Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. The other - to Malheur National Wildlife Refuge - covers Thursday through Sunday. All trips are led by Fred Ramsey, with Jim Faulkner and Tom Penpraze driving and providing substantial guiding expertise. Except for the Malheur trip (where we stay at the Malheur Field Station, now with an operational mess

hall), we stay in motels and eat in restaurants. Enterprise 12-passenger or 15-passenger vans transport us. We have a maximum of 8 participants in each van so that everyone has a window seat. Expenses are shared.

**KLAMATH BASIN** - April 29-May 1. This trip hits the tail end of the massive migration of ducks, geese, and shorebirds which pause in the Klamath Basin wildlife refuges before continuing north to breeding grounds. Four refuges offer a variety of habitats. The south end of Upper Klamath Lake nets many species of grebe with some doing their unique dance across the surface. And a Sunday morning walk through Moore Park picks up the earliest songbird arrivals. Maximum tour size: 24 persons.

**ROGUE VALLEY** - May 13-15). Here we hit the songbird migration in full swing. A hike to the top of Upper Table Rock presents a magnificent wildflower display as the trail winds through Oregon's little piece of California chaparral. Here we find the chaparral specialties Oak Titmouse, California Towhee, and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. We sample some of Ashland's famous restaurants and then attend a performance of *To Kill a Mockingbird* at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. Maximum tour size: 16 persons.

**MALHEUR NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE** - May 26-29. Our signature trip, and the 40th year led by Fred. The refuge is Oregon's most famous birding area, but this tour also hits many great spots going over the Cascades, following the Crooked River, and coming back through the High Desert. We usually see over 100 species each of the four days and around 175 species overall. Maximum tour size: 32 persons.

**SUMMER LAKE** and a return to **KLAMATH** - June 17-19. Our 2010 tour scored a rare Oregon Swift trifecta: Black (Salt Creek Falls), White-throated (Fort Rock), and Vaux's. Add Snowy Plover, Common Poorwill, American Bittern, and Yellow Rail and you understand that this is a special conclusion to the spring offerings. Maximum tour size: 21 persons.

Come join us! Signup sheets for these trips are available on the Field Trip table at all of the general meetings. Also, you may sign up by sending an email to Fred at [framsey5@comcast.net](mailto:framsey5@comcast.net). But here is a new twist: confirming a reservation on any one of these trips requires a \$50 deposit by February 28. The deposits will be refundable only if a replacement exists on the waiting list.

Deposits for these four trips were due February 28. People who have signed up but not sent in their deposits have been moved to the waiting lists. They can recapture their spaces on the Go Lists by sending deposits, as long as spaces exist.

*Fred Ramsey*

## Hesthavn News

### Who has been there?

Ever wonder just who roams the woods in Oregon? Mammals are difficult to spot, but they leave behind clues for us to find. Learn to identify common Oregon tracks and

scat, how to walk without detection, what you should do in the event you run into large predators, and many more "woody" skills. This program is family friendly, and runs from 12-2 pm at Hesthavn Nature Center on Saturday March 12<sup>th</sup>.

Donations of 10.00 per family are suggested, but scholarships are available. Please dress for the weather; we will be going outside!

Email [hesthavneducation@gmail.com](mailto:hesthavneducation@gmail.com) for more info!

*Michelle Croft*

## Atop the Nestbox

I would like to share another article from the Fall 2010 issue of the Prescott Bluebird Recovery Project newsletter. Pat Johnston wrote about several instances of bluebirds approaching seed feeders and eating shelled sunflower seeds in the spring of 2010. She noted that this phenomenon had been witnessed in 5 or 6 different areas, including Corvallis and Tualatin, and that she is unaware of any previous occurrences of this behavior. She asked to be contacted at [pjoh123@msn.com](mailto:pjoh123@msn.com) or 503-246-1337 by anyone else who has observed bluebirds actually eating seeds at feeders. If you have such a report to make, please include what kind of seed was eaten, which months it was noted and the frequency with which the bluebirds approached the feeders. I have been told by several people that bluebirds were seen at their feeders, but this was on a very sporadic basis and they admitted that they hadn't observed the birds actually eating the seeds. I have never known bluebirds to be seed-eaters, and have always assumed that sporadic appearances at feeders occurred because feeders make decent places to perch, and the activity of other birds would naturally make a bluebird curious as to what type of food was available.

Be sure to join us at the 2011 Spring Bluebird Workshop on March 19th at the Corvallis Public Library from 2:00 to 3:30 pm. This year, we will focus on how to monitor bluebird nesting activity. We will be offering nest boxes and baffles for modest donations. Everyone is welcome!

*Raylene Gordin*



*Acorn Woodpecker photo by Matt Lee*

## Birding Class Schedule

Prices. \$12 per person for one class, *or* \$20 per person for both classes. These classes are held in conjunction with the Corvallis Environmental Center's Avery House Nature Center and the classroom sessions are held at the Avery House at Avery Park. To register, contact them at 541-753-9211 or ahnc@corvallisenvironmentalcenter.org

Classes are taught by Lisa Millbank and Don Boucher. For class information contact Don Boucher 541-753-7689, bouchdon@peak.org

### Birding in the Willamette Valley

We'll learn identification skills, how to choose field guides and binoculars, and birding sites. We'll spend time outside with the birds at the peak of springtime.

#### 2-week class:

**Wednesday, June 1:** Classroom Session, 7 to 9 pm.  
Avery House Nature Center

**Saturday, June 4:** Field Trip, 9 am - noon. Avery Park

**Wednesday, June 8:** Classroom Session, 7 to 9 pm.  
Avery House Nature Center

**Saturday, June 11:** Field Trip, 9 am - noon. Finley National Wildlife Refuge

### Birding by Ear

Would you like to know your local bird songs and calls? Learn to listen and remember bird sounds. Beginners, take "Birding in the Willamette Valley" first.

#### 2-week class:

**Wednesday, June 15:** Classroom Session, 7 to 9 pm.  
Avery House Nature Center

**Saturday, June 18:** Field Trip, 9 am - noon. Willamette Park

**Wednesday, June 22:** Classroom Session, 7 to 9 pm.  
Avery House Nature Center

**Saturday, June 25:** Field Trip, 9 am - noon.  
Jackson-Frazier Wetland

## Field Notes

24 JANUARY 2011– 24 FEBRUARY 2011

Highlights of the month were **Blue Jays**.

*Abbreviations and Locations:* mob = many observers. Observer names are noted in parentheses after their reports. Philomath means the Philomath Sewage Treatment Ponds. EEW = E. E. Wilson Wildlife Area north of Corvallis.

A **Western Grebe** was near Independence 2/23 (B Tice). A possible **Pelagic Cormorant** was reported from Alpine 1/21, but was not refound. **Trumpeter Swans** and 40 **Greater White-fronted Geese** were in Airlie area (J Geier, G Andrews). A **Common Goldeneye** was at Tangent Sewage Ponds 1/30 (R Namitz). A report of 2 **Harlequin**

**Ducks** came from near Alsea, but could not be refound. As many as 150 **Sandhill Cranes** were flying near Brownsville and Lebanon 2/19 (S Seibel, B Schwiebert).

Gulls put on a show again. **Thayer's Gulls** were included in a group of 1000 gulls in Albany 1/31 (A Booth). A probable **Glaucous Gull** was near Lebanon 2/2 (B McKenzie) and another possible one was near EEW 2/24 (J Geier). 5 **Mountain Quail** were in Dunn Forest 2/21 (J Geier)

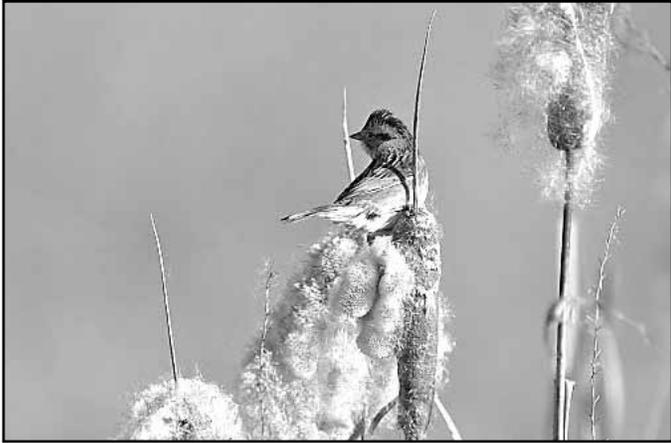
A **Northern Pygmy Owl** called in Dunn Forest 2/21 (J Geier). The 1<sup>st</sup> **Turkey Vulture** of the year report came from Albany 1/29 (Tristen). A **Golden Eagle** was near Harrisburg 1/31 (S Seibel) and another near Dunn Forest 2/21 (J Geier). A **Bald Eagle** survey over 3 counties on 2/6 counted 257 eagles (J Fleischer)! A **Bald Eagle** roost in the valley was found and has had over 100 eagles (S Seibel, mob). A **Merlin** flew past EEW 12/30 (RA), another off Bellfountain 1/19 (M Cutler), another in Albany 1/25 (D Boucher), and 1 at EEW 1/26 (J Geier). A **Prairie Falcon** was on De Armond Rd in Polk 1/14 (G Andrews) and 2 were found on Airlie CBC 1/2. Last report's **Gyr Falcon** was seen again near Tangent 1/29. 4 **Short-eared Owls** were near Brownsville 2/8 (J Fleischer).



*American Dipper photos by Doug Robinson*

The **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** continued all month at EEW (mob). There were 3 reports of **Yellow-shafted Flickers**. A **Blue Jay** was near Alsea 2/4 (D Robinson). 5 **Gray Jays** were at Fitton Green 1/31 (R&P Comeleo) and

a few were in McDonald Forest 2/6 (L Millbank). Black Phoebes continue to be around – Albany 1/29 (Tristen), and at Finley 2/8 (T Penpraze). **American Dippers** were seen near Alsea 2/4 (D Robinson). They nest at Alsea Falls as well.



*Swamp Sparrow photo by Doug Robinson*

A **Black-throated Gray Warbler**, unusual in winter, was in Albany 1/29 (Tristen). Up to 4 **Swamp Sparrows** were at EEW in early January (J Geier, J Simmons) and 1 was at Thornton Lake 1/23 (Tristen).

**Next issue**

Please send your reports for the next issue by 23 MARCH. Rich Armstrong (541) 753-1978 richarmstrong@comcast.net

*Rich Armstrong*

**GreenTip**  
OF THE MONTH

**Consider skipping the anti-bacterial soap.**

Triclosan, a germ-killing chemical commonly used in anti-bacterial products like soap, ends up in our waterways after it washes down the drain. In Corvallis, like most cities, the wastewater treatment plant is not designed to remove all the triclosan that ends up at the plant, and it is discharged to the Willamette River. Triclosan is toxic to fish and other aquatic life and can also cause antibiotic-resistant superbacteria. The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality has identified triclosan as one of the toxic pollutants it wants us to keep out of our rivers and streams.

We can all reduce the amount of this chemical in our waterways by reading labels when we shop and avoiding products that use it. Health experts advise that washing your hands with plain soap is the best way to prevent the spread of germs.

So do your part to clean up Oregon waterways. Avoid products that use triclosan.

*Tom Penpraze*

**ASC Tests the New All-Electric LEAF**

The new Nissan Leaf is a breakthrough car. No gas motor, no pollution; it is a great “around town” car. But a few problems do exist. The following is a short list of the Leaf’s good and bad points. A full review will follow on the ASC website under “Green News” where other hybrids are reviewed.

**What’s good about the Leaf?**

1. Beautiful fit and finish with excellent paint and trim.
2. Nicely laid out interior with easily read instruments.
3. Very quiet inside and out.
4. Lively performance and appears to be quicker than the Toyota Prius. No shifting needed.
5. Good rear view visibility with no blind spots.
6. Nice trunk space.
7. Seats 4 adults comfortably.
8. Excellent steering, brakes and ride.
9. Economy around equivalent of 100MPG. About \$3 to charge at Corvallis electric rates.
10. 8-year or 100K-mile guarantee on batteries.

**What’s not to like?**

1. One year wait for delivery (a new Tennessee plant is being built )
2. Cost after rebates around \$28.5K
3. Limited to a driving radius of about 50 miles or enroute recharge needed.
4. Painfully slow recharge unless 440 volt outlet available.

Overall, I really liked the Leaf as it was a joy to drive. However, carry a very long extension cord.

*John Gaylord*

**Vote to End Single Use Plastic Bags**

Should single use plastic bags be eliminated? This is the question to answer concerning SB 536. The issue, hotly contested, is being defended by the Texas petrochemical industry which put \$12 million into defeating a similar California bill. Plastic bags have long been a horror story for many sea birds and turtles. Oregon has reason to hope, however, since it passed the first USA bottle bill. Now is the time for all conservation-oriented citizens to speak out and call their elected representatives. Your wishes may very well make the difference in this closely contested issue. Place your call today.

*John Gaylord*



*Great Blue Heron photo by Matt Lee*

## Earth Day and BP Blowout Anniversary

The one-year anniversary of BP's catastrophic Deepwater Horizon explosion, which unleashed the devastating 2010 Gulf of Mexico oil disaster, falls on April 20, just two days before Earth Day 2011.

Audubon is assembling a brand new resource kit that will include information about Gulf Coast recovery and renewal, Gulf Coast birds, what your chapter and community can do to make a difference, and a spectacular 24-minute film on the Mississippi River Delta (which makes up most of coastal Louisiana, hit hard by the oil disaster) produced by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and including an interview with Audubon's own Melanie Driscoll. You won't want to miss this! As you plan your Earth Day events and other chapter activities, consider hosting a screening of the film and distributing take-action materials. Ask your community to 'Band Together for Birds', recognizing that even

those of us far from the Gulf Coast can come together to make a difference for Gulf Coast birds and communities, and for the birds much closer to home as well.

Contact [chapterleaders@audubon.org](mailto:chapterleaders@audubon.org) for more information.

*Audubon National*

## Open ACS Board Meetings

ASC Board of Directors meetings are open to all ASC members, and the board encourages you to come and see what we do. Our monthly board meeting is on Thursday one week before the General Meeting. See the calendar on the last page of The Chat for the meeting location.

## Who's Being Seen

### The Great Exchange:

### Winter and Spring Migrants

The spring equinox is this month, woo-hoo! Turkey Vultures and swallows are once again a part of our skies. March is when we have weekly reports of new arrivals. Although many more migrants arrive throughout April and May, in March there is a certain kind of increased migrant activity. As spring migrants are flying in from the south, wintering birds are mobilizing and migrating north or to the mountains.



*Yellow-rumped Warblers sing before their departure from the valley in April. Photo by Matt Lee*

In March, Ruby-crowned Kinglets get all fired up and sing their complicated, spritely song. By the end of April, all of these kinglets will be gone from the valley. Golden-crowned and Fox Sparrows also sing before their departure. Yellow-rumped and Townsend's Warblers become active and start singing, too. Year-round residents have already been singing and will continue to increase as the season progresses. In March, you could familiarize yourself with these resident songs. When migrant singers arrive in April and May, your ears may notice the new migrant songs better.



*Cackling Geese and nearly all Canada Geese will be leaving in April. Photo taken by Sue Powell at Ankeny National Wildlife Refuge.*

March is your last opportunity to see wintering birds at Finley, Ankeny and Baskett Slough National Wildlife Refuges. Geese, ducks, swans and the majority of raptors will be leaving the valley throughout April.

March is when most of our Rufous Hummingbirds arrive. Get your nectar feeders ready. These feisty nectar tipplers will upstage the year-round Anna's Hummingbirds at the feeder.

Here are some other common migrants to look for (in chronological order): Violet-green Swallow, Cinnamon Teal, Band-tailed Pigeon, Orange-crowned Warbler, Osprey and Cliff Swallow. Since next month is when migration really ramps up, start thinking about that now and pencil in some April outings so you won't miss anything.

*Don Boucher*

## Contributors to the Chat

Dave Mellinger, Marcia F. Cutler, John Gaylord, Rich Armstrong, Michelle Croft, Fred Ramsey, Raylene Gordin, and Tom Penpraze



*Rufous Hummingbird Photo by Matt Lee*

## Migrant Arrivals

Bird phenology records in Corvallis date from 1970. The last phenology table was published in the Chat in March 1994. This list updates the arrivals through the spring of 2002. (M): Migrant, does not spend the season or breed in our area.

Average	Species	years	Earliest
Feb. 10	Tree Swallow	27	1/10
19	Turkey Vulture	29	1/17
27	Horned Grebe (M)	03	2/03
March 2	Rufous Hummingbird	32	2/14
3	Violet-green Swallow	29	2/21
13	Cinnamon Teal	27	1/31
16	Band-tailed Pigeon	20	2/04
19	Long-billed Dowitcher (M)	20	1/19
21	Orange-crowned Warbler	30	2/11
22	Osprey	30	1/28
31	Cliff Swallow	25	3/17
April 2	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	24	3/22
3	American Bittern	17	2/16
4	Common Yellowthroat	31	3/18
5	Barn Swallow	27	3/22
	Sora	20	2/22
8	Lesser Yellowlegs (M)	19	1/20
10	Black-throated Gray Warbler	30	3/15
	House Wren	24	2/21
11	Chipping Sparrow	26	3/07
14	Vesper Sparrow	13	3/19
15	Nashville Warbler	18	3/18
17	Cassin's Vireo	30	3/26
	Wilson's Warbler	28	4/03
20	Vaux's Swift	30	4/05
21	Solitary Sandpiper (M)	21	4/08
	Yellow-headed Blackbird	20	2/21
22	Hammond's Flycatcher	11	4/14
23	MacGillivray's Warbler	29	4/02
24	Semipalmated Plover (M)	17	2/07
	Warbling Vireo	28	3/20
26	Western Kingbird	23	4/15
27	Calliope Hummingbird (M)	13	4/06
	Western Tanager	27	2/28
28	Hermit Warbler	18	4/01
	Pacific-slope Flycatcher	26	4/02
29	Yellow Warbler	22	4/10
May	Purple Martin	10	3/17
3	Swainson's Thrush	24	4/05
	Western Wood-Pewee	27	4/07
5	Black-headed Grosbeak	29	4/03
	Bullock's Oriole	23	4/11
6	Blue-winged Teal (M)	20	4/21
	Lazuli Bunting	26	4/22
7	Olive-sided Flycatcher	23	4/20
	Red-necked Phalarope (M)	13	4/23
10	Wilson's Phalarope (M)	20	4/20
12	Yellow-breasted Chat	21	4/04
16	Willow Flycatcher	18	4/25
19	Black Tern (M)	07	4/02
June 4	Common Nighthawk	13	5/10
7	Eastern Kingbird (M)	04	5/23

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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**

- Mar. 10 March Board meeting 7 pm at the Market of Choice public meeting room
- Mar. 12 Second Saturday field trip, 7:30 am  
Hesthavn tracking program, 12 noon-2 pm
- Mar. 17 March General meeting
- Mar. 19 Finley planting, 10 am
- Mar. 20 Field notes submission deadline for April Chat
- Mar. 24 Article submission deadline for April Chat
- Apr. 9 Second Saturday field trip, 7:30 am



*Northern Pintail photo by SuePowell*

*The Chat* is published 10 times a year by the Audubon Society of Corvallis, PO Box 148, Corvallis OR 97339. Annual ASC memberships are \$25 for an individual, \$35 for a family, \$15 for a student. Chat-only subscriptions (email delivery only) are \$15.

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