



# Audubon Society of Corvallis the **CHAT**

Summer 2012

VOL. 41

#10

## Field Trip Schedule

### Local Monthly Second Saturday Field Trips

Our Saturday morning local field trip meets the second Saturday of every month at the Benton Center parking area, behind the Cannery Mall, Corvallis at 7:30 am. This field trip is especially interesting for beginner birders and birders new to Oregon's mid-valley area. We focus on identifying local birds by sight and song while enjoying the outdoors. We visit the valley national wildlife refuges—Finley, Baskett Slough, and Ankeny, as well as other birding areas throughout the year. Contact Bill Proebsting at [proebstw@gmail.com](mailto:proebstw@gmail.com) or 541-752-0108 with questions. Check the Mid-valley Birding listserve, [www.midvalleybirding.org/pipermail/birding/](http://www.midvalleybirding.org/pipermail/birding/), the week before the field trip for updates. Weather may alter plans. Watch the weather forecast and dress appropriately.

### Full Day Field Trip

**August 11.** Fern Ridge Reservoir. Bring lunch and liquids. Return mid- to late-afternoon.

*Bill Proebsting*

## Bicycle Birding 2012

**Sunday, July 22:** McDonald Forest (moderate hills) – just west of Corvallis

Meet at the trailhead at the end of NW Oak Creek Dr. We will slowly tour gently-sloped gravel roads which most bikes can handle. Mountain bikes are not necessary but the skinniest racing tires may not do well. It'll be a cool, fresh ride in the shady forest full of birds, butterflies and wildflowers.

**Sunday, Aug 26:** Albany Bike Trails

Meet at Monteith Park in downtown Albany. There's a parking area at the corner of Water Ave and Washington St. We'll tour the riverfront, pass by the Willamette Community Garden, Bowman Park, Simpson Park, Talking Water Gardens and maybe even Waverly Lake if we have time.

**Sunday, Sept 23:** Benton County Fairgrounds, Bald Hill Park and Campus Way Covered Bridge - Corvallis

Meet at the Benton County Fairgrounds near the intersection of 53rd Ave and Reservoir Rd. We'll tour the bike trails in the Fairgrounds and Bald Hill areas first and then visit the Campus Way Covered Bridge after that. We'll get looks at common birds of open country and oak forests and a good look at a couple Acorn Woodpecker colonies.

*Don Boucher*

## Hesthavn News

I would, personally, like to thank all of you who have participated in this year's Bird-a-thon! As a result of your pledges, our total for the Footbridges Project is just under \$19,000.

Speaking of bridges, we are now in the final stages of the bridges project.

G. Christianson Construction has been chosen for the project construction and installation. However, we have been quite surprised at the costs of the labor and some of the required materials to be used and we will need to continue fundraising until the installation is completed. The price tag for this work will be around \$25,000+. We are anticipating the installation to be in Aug/Sept with a

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ribbon cutting ceremony planned, at that time. Your dollars will really help, no matter how small the contribution. Please consider sending a donation for our project. These footbridges, once completed, will add another pedestrian loop to the property and will be a complement to Ray's Trail, already in existence. Those who contribute \$500 or more will be noted on the plaque that is to be installed at the site of the north bridge.

You may send your tax-deductible donations to the Audubon Society of Corvallis, PO Box 148, Corvallis, OR 97339. Thank you.

*Susan Atkisson*

## Hesthavn Education News

The Corvallis Audubon education team has partnered with Marys River Watershed Council, Institute for Applied Ecology, and Greenbelt Land Trust and has been awarded a Toyota TogetherGreen grant for 2012. We will be involved with bringing students from five schools out to Jackson-Frazier Wetland and a property in Philomath to grow native plants, plant them on site and monitor the progress. We are very excited about this program! Audubon will be leading classes in bird ecology and wildlife for these schools throughout the year. A big thanks to Toyota, National Audubon Society and IAE for the support!

Wednesdays in July and August, our naturalists will be offering Audubon Adventure Days at the Hesthavn nature center from 10am to 2pm. Drop in any time for hands on displays, arts and crafts and a naturalist-led activity running each hour beginning at 10:30am. Stay as long as you like. The program is self-guided and involves parent participation. Cost is \$3 per child.

*Michelle Shula*

## 2012 Birdathon

The 12th Annual Birdathon was very successful, with eleven teams participating. Together we covered Corvallis and surrounding areas, the coast, the Klamath Basin and parts of Texas! Altogether we raised about \$3700. These funds go directly to Hesthavn Nature Center, and this year will be used for the footbridge project.

A new twist this year was group pledges specifically for motorless Birdathons, from Don Boucher, Lisa Millbank and Joel Geier. Bill and Lena Proebsting, Susan Atkisson, Jamie Simmons (with teammates Hendrik Herlyn and Jim Anderson), Ann and Doug Brodie, Dodie Wilson and Mary Van Brocklin all responded to this challenge! Bill and Lena take the prize for most motorless birds seen, at 95 species, and also for most effort, with a bike ride all the way from Oak Creek to Finley! Way to go, motorless 'thoners!

We also had group sponsors for all the teams, with Elsie Eltzroth continuing the family tradition, and Ken Hilton of Wild Birds Unlimited again contributing to everyone. Thanks very much, Ken and Elsie!

The other 5 teams this year were Todd and Susan Brown (and family members Brian, Becky and Chet), Jim

Philipson, Pam and Randy Comeleo, the ASC Klamath Falls field trip, led by Fred Ramsey (aka Klamath Fools), and Karan and Jim Fairchild.

And finally, of course, we heartily thank everyone who sponsored a team. Hesthavn is a thriving nature center and native plant and wildlife sanctuary largely because of your generosity!

*Karan Fairchild*  
2012 Birdathon Coordinator

## Bag Ban Passes Corvallis City Council

In a marathon session, the Corvallis City Council passed the city bag ban. Speaking for the ban were The Marys Peak Sierra Club chapter, Audubon Society of Corvallis, The Surfrider Foundation, the Northwest Grocery Association and the OSU student sustainability group. Numerous individuals came forth to speak in favor of the ban.

Three councilors spoke against the ban but said they would support their constituents and vote in favor of the ban. At the end of the session, only one councilor voted against the ban and indicated he would later support the ban. Final vote: eight in favor and one against.

We need to thank all those who helped this effort and many who wrote individual letters to council members. Audubon Society of Corvallis supported the film showing of the movie *Bag It* at the library and other actions around the community. This was a combined effort that paid off and sent a message to the petrochemical industry and other cities in the state. The wildlife in our oceans has been given a little better lease on life. Thank you, Corvallis.

*John Gaylord*

## Spring Bird Count

The Benton County spring migratory bird count (NAMC), held on Sunday, May 13, 2012, tallied a total of 122 species. The weather, always unpredictable at this time of year, was sunny and warm with an afternoon high of about 85 degrees. Most observers went out in the morning and a few ventured out towards the end of the day. Echoing bird behavior, there was a mid-day lull in the birding.

Areas birded included Finley NWR, Philomath Sewage Ponds, Marys Peak, the Alsea Fish Hatchery, South Luckiamute State Natural Area (aka Vanderpool Tract), Forest Roads 100 and 110 in the Dunn Forest, Jackson-Frazier Wetlands, Avery Park, the Old-Growth Trail in McDonald Forest, Sunset Park and the Corvallis waterfront area.

I have records for this semiannual count starting with the fall count of 1995. This count is the 17th spring count in my records. Since there is a marked difference between the birds present during the spring count and those in the fall count, this summary compares this spring's results with just the previous spring counts, unless otherwise indicated.

Doug Robinson found 2 TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRES on Mary Peak, marking the first appearance of

this species on the count. Other uncommonly reported birds include (number seen/total spring counts):

**Gadwall** (8/17)  
**Lesser Scaup** (9/17)  
**Ruffed Grouse** (4/17)  
**Sooty Grouse** (7/17)  
**Mountain Quail** (7/17)  
**American Bittern** (8/17)  
**Peregrine Falcon** (3/17, 6th time overall)  
**N. Pygmy-Owl** (3/17, 7th time overall)  
**Purple Martin** – 4th time overall  
**American Dipper** – only 2d time overall  
**Hermit Thrush** (8/17)

Recent efforts to place artificial nesting structures in Dunn Forest appear to be quite a success as Hendrik Herlyn and I saw at least 4 different nest structures being used by 8 Purple Martins!

Birds commonly seen on this spring count, but missed this time were:

**Green-winged Teal** (13/17)  
**Ring-necked Duck** (14/17)  
**Ring-necked Pheasant** (14/17)  
**Double-crested Cormorant** (9/17, seen both day before and day after count)  
**Cooper's Hawk** (9/17)  
**Western Kingbird** (10/17)  
**Cassin's Vireo** (15/17)

The complete results have been posted on ASC's website.

I'd like to thank everyone who participated on the count.

*Marcia F. Cutler*  
*Benton Co. coordinator NAMC*

## Conservation Report

### Forage fish in deep trouble

Forage fish are small ocean fish such as sardines, herring and anchovies that are a key link in the marine food web supporting much larger species such as salmon, sea lions and seabirds. They hold tremendous ecological and economic value – but these little fish are in deep trouble.

The National Marine Fisheries Service more than doubled the U.S. sardine quota in 2012, even though sardines are in steep decline and at risk of collapse. Other populations such as herring are also decreasing, while at the same time human demand for forage fish is increasing. They are typically sold in global markets for fishmeal for farmed fish, chicken and pigs. This increased pressure on forage fish harvest has the potential to dramatically alter the ocean food web and impact our coastal economies.

This month the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC), the entity responsible for managing certain forage

stocks, will decide management actions concerning forage fish species. Our local Conservation Committee feels that the PFMC should not expand the fishery quota for forage fish as this would have an impact upon the entire ocean ecosystem.

We feel that managers need to consider the role forage fish play in maintaining a sustainable food web and the needs of marine predators like birds when deciding how to manage forage species. The council has a choice to expand forage fish catches or to adopt a plan that ensures enough forage fish stay in the ocean as vital food to sustain other wildlife and form the base of our coastal fishing and tourism.

You can make a difference. Ask the Pacific Fishery Management Council to support a strong fishery ecosystem plan that takes into account the value of forage fish as prey for ocean wildlife. Write the council at [pfmc.comments@noaa.gov](mailto:pfmc.comments@noaa.gov).

*Stacy Moore*

## Be Prepared

Corvallis is located not far from the Cascadia subduction zone. It's a type of convergent plate boundary that stretches from off-shore Vancouver Island to Northern California. This area has a long history of "mega quakes" of 9.0 or more. The last one was January 26, 1700. Mega quakes are expected about every 300 years. We are in the time zone for activity. Rob Witter, coastal geologist with the Oregon Department of Geology, says of the next quake: "The amount of devastation is going to be unbelievable, and people are not going to be ready for the level of damage." A mega quake will likely take out bridges, electricity, water and sewer services, telephones and gasoline supplies.

You can make life easier for yourself and your family by planning ahead. Whether the emergency is from an earthquake, major wildfire or flood, the preparation is basically the same. You may need to survive on your own and should have food, water and supplies to last for several days. First, put together a simple, basic survival kit. FEMA recommends:

1. Food for at least three days.
2. A gallon of water per person per day.
3. Flashlights and extra batteries.
4. A first aid kit.
5. Moist towelettes, garbage bags and personal sanitation items
6. A wrench to turn off utilities. (Some natural gas valves require a special box wrench)
7. Matches in a sealed container
8. A battery powered radio (car radio)

Excellent camping and backpacking food is convenient, easily packed and has a long shelf life. New LED flashlights last very well and rechargeable lanterns do an

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excellent job. Remember to periodically recharge them. Since gasoline may not be available, try to keep your tank above the half level. This also helps keep moisture out of the fuel. In addition to matches, pick up some candles to add a nice touch to the ambiance. Lastly, discuss with your family a contact plan should you become separated. Hopefully, these preparations will not be needed in our lifetime. However, better safe than sorry. Enjoy your summer.

*John Gaylord*

## Western Bluebird Attack

In mid-May it was the female Western Bluebird reacting while the male bluebird looked on. We had parked the truck at the Lava Beds National Monument campground (just south of Tule Lake, California). Next to us was a giant juniper tree with a perfect nesting cavity five feet above the ground. Within seconds of unwrapping our lunch on the picnic table near the tree, out from the cavity popped a male and a



female bluebird. The little female was immediately drawn to the truck's outside mirror, or so it seemed to us.

While we were eating, we became fascinated by the repeated aggressiveness of the female attacking the truck's side-view mirror. She even flew into the vehicle on two occasions. Could it be she had no patience for any rival females? The male looked on while standing on the truck's open window edge. (see photo) He seemed somewhat perplexed!

We recall past similar behaviors of a Spotted Towhee, Dark-eyed Junco, and a Song Sparrow attacking the side-view mirror and at times the entire vehicle parked in our Corvallis driveway. The Towhee chipped paint off the car (see February 2009 Chat article), but this time the Bluebird did no damage.

What is it with birds and our vehicles?

*Greg and Andrea Foster*

## Board Meeting Summary

### ASC May Meeting

1. Due to unexpectedly high construction and permit costs, the Hesthavn Committee needs more money than has been raised for construction of the 2 bridges planned over Oak Creek at Hesthavn Nature Center. With one opposed, the Board approved a motion to make any funds needed for this project available from the General Fund.
2. By general agreement, the cost of ASC Field Trips

will remain a "break-even" venture. Donations to ASC from field trip participants will remain voluntary.

3. The Board voted to fund the updating and re-printing of the tri-fold, color birding brochure in partnership with the Corvallis Tourism Bureau.

Wed July 18th at Hesthavn-potluck at 6pm; Board meeting at 7pm. All members, friends, and family welcome to the potluck!

*Linda Campbell*

## 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 meeting location.

## Welcome New Members

Yanming Di, Lori Dodds, Virginia Lesser, Roberta Smith, Margaret Livesay, Peter Stoel

*Suzanne Ortiz*

## Contributors to the Chat

Bill Proebsting, Don Boucher, Susan Atkisson, Michelle Shula, Karan Fairchild, John Gaylord, Marcia F. Cutler, Stacy Moore, Greg and Andrea Foster, Linda Campbell, Suzanne Ortiz

## Correction

Correction to May 2012 *Chat* Article entitled "ODFW Conservation Stamps": The author of the article is Pam Comeleo, and not, Meg Kenagy.

## Chat Articles

The *Chat* editors welcome monthly articles from all members of the Audubon Society of Corvallis. Please submit articles to the *Chat* editor by the 4th Thursday of the month. Always submit text using Microsoft Word.

*Anne Schroder, Chat Editor*

## Field Notes

**4/27/12-6/28/12**

The general area covered by the field notes is a rough circle centered on Corvallis, extending to around Sweet Home, Monroe/Harrisburg, Marys Peak and the nearby Coast Range, and Monmouth/Dallas.

Migration was still in full swing at the beginning of the period, but by the end of June, birds were settled into their breeding territories and busy with nesting. A highlight of this period were spectacular waves of migrating shorebirds.

Locations: Finley = William L. Finley National Wildlife Refuge, Ankeny = Ankeny National Wildlife Area, EEW = E.E. Wilson Wildlife Area, Philomath STP = Philomath sewage treatment ponds

Observers: Austin Booth (AB), Don Boucher (DB), Howard Bruner (HB), Pam Comeleo (PCo), Randy Comeleo (RCo), Alan Contreras (AC), Marcia F. Cutler (MFC), Jim Fairchild (JFa), Preston Filbert (PF), Woody Fitzgerald (WF), Jeff Fleischer (JF1), Jeff Harding (JH), Anne Heyerly (AH), Dan Heyerly (DH), Joel Geier (JG), Roy Gerig (RG), Susan Hatlevis (SH), Hendrik Herlyn (HH), Dave Irons (DI), Tim Johnson (TJ), Sharon Kavanagh (SK), Mike Lippsmeyer (ML), Judy List (JL), Peter List (PL), Lisa Millbank (LM), Molly Monroe (MM), Randy Moore (RM), Pam Otley (PO), Bill Proebsting (BP), Doug Robinson (DR), Jamie Simmons (JS), Jana Kay Slater (JKS), Evan Smouse (ES), Bill Tice (BT), Dave Vesely (DV), Ben Wishnek (BW), Will Wright (WW)

Though most passed through last period, several flocks of hundreds of **Greater White-fronted Geese** were seen heading north 4/30 (JG). **Canada Goose** goslings were seen following their parents by early May, while a flock of **Cackling Geese** lingered quite late at Ankeny, where they were seen 5/19 (TJ).

Wintering waterfowl left the area early in this period or before, leaving only a few breeding species. **Wood Ducks** had ducklings at EEW by 5/9 (DB, LM), and **Mallard** ducklings were paddling around throughout the period. A pair of **Cinnamon Teal** had a brood of 7 ducklings at Ankeny 6/16 (RG). Scattered **Blue-winged Teal** passed through the area throughout May, but several pairs at Ankeny 6/16 means they may be breeding there (RG). 3 **Gadwall**, 4 **Northern Shovelers**, 2 **Buffleheads** and 2 **Ruddy Ducks** were still at Philomath STP as late as 6/4 (HH, WW). 1 **Green-winged Teal** and 2 **Ring-necked Ducks** lingered at Ankeny 5/19 (TJ). 2 **Canvasbacks** were still at Philomath STP 4/30 (DR), along with one **Redhead**. The last report of **Lesser Scaup** came from Philomath STP, where there were still 3 on 5/21 (HH). A mother **Hooded Merganser** and her 3 tiny ducklings stood on a log at Finley 4/30 (MFC).

A single **Ring-necked Pheasant** was calling at the Finley prairies 6/4 (HH). Though they started "hooting" in early April, **Sooty Grouse** continued to sing at Fitton Green (RCo, PCo) and at Marys Peak (HH, PO) throughout May and June. A **Mountain Quail** was calling at Fitton Green 5/4 (RCo, PCo).

A parent **Pied-billed Grebe** at Finley 5/20 had 4 chicks, one of whom was persistently trying to climb onto the parent's back and nestle under the wings (WW). A **Horned Grebe** and an **Eared Grebe** were at Ankeny 4/29 (AC), and another Eared visited Philomath STP 4/30 (DR). A **Clark's Grebe** was a surprising visitor at Philomath STP 6/4 (DR).

**Double-crested Cormorants** persisted until at least 5/14 at Starker Park in SW Corvallis.

3 **American Bitterns** were found at Ankeny 5/19 (TJ), and were heard "pumping" at Finley and other large marshes throughout the area. 2 **Great Egrets** were seen S of Brownsville 5/13 (JF1). A **Black-crowned Night-Heron** was an unusual sighting at Ankeny 6/16 (RG). **Green**

**Hérons** were widespread and conspicuous as they flew to fishing spots and back to nests.

What was likely a **White-faced Ibis** flushed from a wetland at EEW 6/5 (JG); a few often turn up at local wetlands during migration.

A **Turkey Vulture** nest in a hollow tree held one downy chick, often being brooded by an adult in late May (JKS). **Ospreys** have been nesting and contending with **Bald Eagle** piracy, such as one at EEW 5/27 (DB, LM). A **Golden Eagle** was flying S along Tampico Ridge 5/14 (JG). Reports of **Sharp-shinned Hawks** tapered off as many left the valley, but one caught a Cliff Swallow in flight 5/16 at Finley (MM). **Cooper's Hawks** were nesting at several sites in Corvallis; a pair in Avery Park were adding sticks to their nest in late May (LM, DB). A **Northern Goshawk** was calling east of Alsea Falls 6/8 (DR). A fledgling **Red-tailed Hawk** was begging for food from a parent 4/30 at EEW (JG). While most **Peregrine Falcons** leave our area during breeding season, one was still present 5/13 SW of

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*Turkey Vulture with chick, photos by Jana Kay Slater*



Tangent, and was being harassed by a **Northern Harrier** (JFI).

Both **Virginia Rails** and **Soras** had chicks at Jackson-Frazier Wetland 6/9 (LM, DB). Many colorful **American Coot** chicks were spotted at the scrape pond on Bruce Rd at Finley 5/29 (SH).

One **Sandhill Crane** was seen flying N over the Corvallis Airport 6/10 (RM).

The end of April and beginning of May had a good turnout of shorebirds locally. There was a possible but unconfirmed **Snowy Plover** at Ankeny 5/26 (RG). The wetlands along Finley Rd attracted huge flocks of migrants 4/30, including 400 **Western Sandpipers**, 240 **Least Sandpipers**, 32 **Long-billed Dowitchers**, an amazing 19 **Short-billed Dowitchers** 1 **Greater Yellowlegs**, 22 **Semipalmated Plovers** and 120 **Dunlin** (DR). 2 **Lesser Yellowlegs** were on McFarland Rd (S of Finley) 4/30 (DR). 13 migrating **Black-bellied Plovers** stopped at Philomath STP, while another dozen were at Finley 4/30 (DR). A likely **Pacific Golden-Plover** was seen at the Finley Rd wetlands 5/7 (DR). 1 **Black-necked Stilt** was at Ankeny 4/29 (AC), and 8 were at the Diamond Hill Rd wetlands 5/12 (DR). An **American Avocet** was another good find at the Diamond Hill Rd. wetlands 5/12 (DR). Good numbers of **Solitary Sandpipers** passed through over a couple of weeks. 3 were in the same puddle just S of Independence 4/28 (ML). At least 6 **Spotted Sandpipers** were at Talking Water Gardens in Albany 5/7 (LM, DB). A surprising number of **Whimbrels** showed up locally, with an amazing report of 23 from the Corvallis Airport 5/22 (DR). **Long-billed Curlews** are rare spring migrants, 1 was in a field at Ankeny 4/29 (DI). An **Upland Sandpiper** was heard calling as it flew high over Bellfountain Rd 4/29 (DR). This species breeds in E Oregon, but it is almost never seen in W Oregon, with just a few scattered records.

Astounding numbers of phalaropes visited our area at the end of May. 360 **Red-necked Phalaropes** were at Philomath STP 5/21 (DR), along with a **Red Phalarope**. More Red Phalaropes were calling as they flew over Corvallis after dark 5/21 (HB). 12 **Wilson's Phalaropes** were seen at the Diamond Hill Rd wetlands 5/12 (DR), and a pair was lingering at Finley 6/4; a potential breeding location (HH, JS).

A **Sabine's Gull** at Philomath STP 5/3 was one of the few gulls reported this period, but a very uncommon sighting (DR). 4 **California Gulls** at Philomath STP 6/4 seemed a bit late as most had headed inland to breeding locations (HH). 4 **Black Terns** were at a pond off Oakville Rd 5/10 (AB). A very unusual find were 2 **Arctic Terns** at Philomath STP 6/7 (DR), and one **Common Tern** was there 5/22 (DR).

Many begging **Rock Pigeon** nestlings were under the bridges of downtown Corvallis by early June. The Corvallis spring migratory bird count had an all-time high of 12 **Eurasian Collared-Doves**.

**Northern Pygmy-Owls** were located at Fitton Green 5/5 (RCo, PCo), at Lewisburg Saddle 5/10 (DB) and on

Marys Peak 5/14 (HH, PO). A nest box had 3 **Barn Owls** near Ankeny 5/19 (TJ). One **Western Screech-Owl** called at EEW 5/27 (LM, DB). 2 **Barred Owls** were at Bald Hill Park 6/4 (BP).

The first **Common Nighthawk** was reported from the Coast Range foothills SW of Philomath 6/6; it was calling in the morning (JFa).

A high count of 825 **Vaux's Swifts** roosted in the Whiteside Theater chimney in Corvallis 5/11 (JG), and numbers slowly tapered off as most of the birds continued to move north, leaving scattered nesting pairs in our area.

By the end of the period, male **Rufous Hummingbirds** were a bit harder to find as they moved upslope. Good numbers of young Rufous and **Anna's Hummingbirds** can be seen now, with the first one or two broods being independent now. A good showing of **Calliope Hummingbirds** continued from last period, as migrants refueled at feeders before continuing upslope in the first 2 weeks of May.

Woodpecker reports were scarce this period. A Red-tailed Hawk on the OSU campus 5/9 caught and ate what was likely a **Downy Woodpecker**, despite being scolded by Western Scrub-Jays (BW). The distinctive drumming of **Red-breasted Sapsuckers** and the drumming and calling of **Northern Flickers** were commonly heard in suburban areas, especially early in the period. The Lewis's Woodpeckers that had spent the winter at Finley seemed to have departed, as they were not reported this period.

**Olive-sided Flycatchers** showed up all over the area, mostly in the second week of May, before moving into more suitable breeding habitat. The first **Western Wood-Pewee** arrived in S Corvallis 5/1 (WF). A **Willow Flycatcher** arrived at Jackson-Frazier Wetland 5/24, and he was singing enthusiastically in the evening (RCo, PCo). **Hammond's Flycatchers** were remarkably easy to find this year for a couple of weeks early in the period, until they continued northward or moved upslope to appropriate habitat. A **Dusky Flycatcher** showed up in a yard W of EEW 5/3 (JG). **Pacific-slope Flycatchers** were moving through in good numbers in the first weeks of May, soon to thin out as they spread into the low-to-mid-elevation foothills. 2 pairs of **Black Phoebes** appeared to be nesting at Finley in mid-May (MM). An **Eastern Phoebe** was a very rare visitor to the area; it was found along Airlie Rd 5/24 (BT). **Western Kingbirds** were easily seen at the Finley prairie, but were also found near Lebanon 4/29 (AC) and along Riverside Dr 5/3 (DB).

**Cassin's Vireos** settled in at various locations; many were singing on the forested slopes of Bald Hill in early May. **Warbling Vireo** numbers rose, and they continued to be quite numerous as migrants passed through for a few weeks in May. A **Red-eyed Vireo** was at Tampico and Soap Cr Rd 6/7 (JG); this species nests very sporadically in riparian forests.

**Gray Jays** showed up at several low-elevation forests, such as Mill Hill at Finley 5/5 (BP) and Peavy Arboretum 5/20 (JS). The **Blue Jay** present at Bald Hill was reported 4/29 (BP) and in early May. Hopefully, it has made its way

back to somewhere within the normal Blue Jay breeding range.

At least 30 **Horned Larks** were reported 6/5 in the grass-seed fields near Brownsville (DH, AH), along with other reports of singles or pairs at scattered locations during the period. These are our imperiled “Streaked” Horned Lark, an endemic subspecies.

Although **Purple Martins** are uncommon in the Willamette Valley, scattered flocks and individuals showed up all over the area. There were 10 martins visiting a few racks of nesting gourds in Dunn Forest (DV). **Tree Swallow** babies were fledging by the end of the period, and the predawn chorus of **Violet-green Swallows** was reported 6/2 (DB). **Northern Rough-winged Swallows** seemed to be using a riverbank nest burrow along the Luckiamute R 6/2 (JG). There was at least one **Bank Swallow** at Philomath STP 6/8, raising the possibility of these nesting locally (DR).

The sounds of begging **Black-capped Chickadee** fledglings were heard throughout the period. A family of **Chestnut-backed Chickadees** were foraging with a Black-capped family in Pioneer Park in Corvallis 6/21 (LM). There was a single **Mountain Chickadee** S of Alsea Falls 6/14 (DR). **Bushtit** nests were active throughout May and early June. **White-breasted Nuthatches** were seen bringing insects to a nest box 5/1 (WF). Fledgling **Brown Creepers** peeped for food at the Corvallis BMX Track Park 6/27 (LM).

**Bewick’s Wren** fledglings were out of the nest at the Corvallis BMX Track Park by 6/10 (LM). Many fledgling **Marsh Wrens** begged for food at Jackson-Frazier Wetland 6/9 (DB, LM). A **Rock Wren** turned up on Marys Peak 5/13 (DR), and lingered long enough for some local birders to get a look.

A typical breeding bird of SW Oregon, a tiny **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** was found 5/15 at Hwy 99W and Old Fort Rd in Polk County (DR).

**Golden-crowned Kinglets** were noticeably less common in town by the beginning of the period, and the last local **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** was reported from the Mulkey Creek trail near Bald Hill Park 4/29 (BP). **Western Bluebirds** were busy nesting during the period. 2 **Townsend’s Solitaires** were on Marys Peak 5/13 (DR); the first time these have been recorded on the Corvallis spring migratory bird count.

A very unusual visitor to the Monroe area was a single **Brown Thrasher** 6/27 (SK).

The first **Swainson’s Thrushes** were reported from Fitton Green 5/5 (RCo, PCo). The last **Hermit Thrush** reported from the valley floor was one at Willamette Park 5/6 (HH).

**European Starling** fledglings were begging and chasing their parents around on lawns, with the adults alarm calling at every passing crow. **Cedar Waxwing** numbers swelled in mid-May.

Migrating **Orange-crowned Warblers** passed through in a strong wave that lasted a few weeks, though some had

seemingly already settled into territories early on. A scattering of **Nashville Warblers** passed through in late April and early May, but 2 seemed to be on breeding territory at Bald Hill Park 5/26 (LM, DB). The enormous numbers of **Yellow-rumped Warblers** experienced in late April slowly waned until almost all were gone by mid-May. **Wilson’s Warblers** were ubiquitous, but as they moved on to breeding habitat, **Yellow Warblers** replaced them in riparian forests by the end of May. **MacGillivray’s Warblers** were singing from brushy areas throughout the period. **Townsend’s Warblers** moved through in the first part of May, and **Hermit Warblers** were first reported from Finley 4/29 (WW). A young male **American Redstart** singing at EEW was a rare find; these are uncommon breeders in NE Oregon and may rarely breed in the S Cascades.

**Yellow-breasted Chats** were reported by 5/5, when one was perched in the open at Soap Creek and Tampico Rds (PL, JL). At least 75 **Western Tanagers** appeared to be eating caterpillars in the oaks at Bald Hill Park 5/26 (DB, LM).

The streaky fledglings of **Spotted Towhees** will soon appear, to briefly baffle birders with their unusual appearance. 6 **Chipping Sparrows** was a good number for SE Polk Co. 5/13 (JG). A search for imperiled **Vesper Sparrows** in the Brownsville area turned up 8 birds 6/17 (JG). Fields were full of singing **Savannah Sparrows** throughout the period. 4 **Grasshopper Sparrows** were found in the Brownsville area 6/17 (JG). In a S Corvallis yard, a **White-throated Sparrow** was still lingering until 5/10 (WF). **White-crowned Sparrow** fledglings were out of the nest and testing out various food possibilities at Starker Park 6/27 (LM). There was a notably late **Golden-crowned Sparrow** at Willamette Park 6/23 (HH). There was a **Lark Sparrow** on Finley Rd 6/2 (ES); only occasionally seen in our area.

**Black-headed Grosbeaks** showed up last period, but it was in early May that they became numerous. **Lazuli Buntings** were heard singing at Finley 5/1 (BP).

**Western Meadowlarks** were on breeding grounds, singing. **Yellow-headed Blackbirds** have been present at the Bruce Rd. scrape wetland at Finley since early April. **Brown-headed Cowbirds** showed up in large numbers in early May. A **Bullock’s Oriole** was seen at Finley 5/3 (PO).

Unusually high numbers of **Red Crossbills** visited lowland conifers this period, including about 40 in central Albany in mid-May (PF). A **Lesser Goldfinch** chick was just about ready to fledge from a nest S of Willamette Park 6/24 (DB, LM). There were still notable concentrations of hundreds of **Evening Grosbeaks** and **American Goldfinches** on the OSU campus in early May.

Please post your reports to [midvalleybirding.org](http://midvalleybirding.org), send them to [lisaaves@peak.org](mailto:lisaaves@peak.org), or leave a message at 541-753-7689 by 8/23/12.

*Lisa Millbank*

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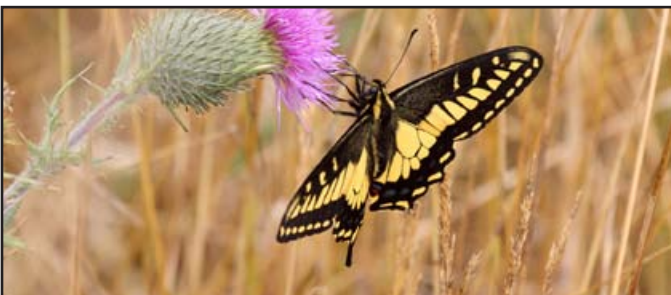
*Audubon Society of Corvallis*

*the* **CHAT**

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

## Calendar

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|---------|--|
| July 22 | Bicycle Birding, McDonald Forest                             |
| July 18 | Board Meeting at Hesthavn Nature Center, 6-8:30 pm           |
| Aug 11  | Second Saturday Field Trip, Fern Ridge Reservoir,<br>7:30 am |
| Aug 23  | Articles & Field Notes deadline for September CHAT           |
| Aug 26  | Bicycle Birding, Albany Bike Trails                          |



*Anise Swallowtail photo by Sue Powell*

*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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