



Audubon Society of Corvallis the **CHAT**

March 2013

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#7

General Meeting

Thursday, March 21, 7:00-8:30 pm

First Presbyterian Church

8th and Monroe



Nassau grouper conservation in the Cayman Islands

Scott Heppell, OSU Dept. of Fisheries and Wildlife

Nassau grouper form large spawning aggregations in the Caribbean once or twice a year on full moons around the time of the winter solstice. They are a large-bodied, top-level predator that plays an important role in Caribbean reef communities.

Overexploitation has led to the species being listed as “endangered” internationally, and in the United States, harvest has been prohibited since 1990. The majority of the decline has been linked specifically to overfishing of spawning aggregations; many aggregations have ceased to form because fishing pressure has been so great.

A collaborative effort between conservation groups, government, and OSU for the last 10 years is determining whether long-term closure of spawning aggregation sites is promoting recovery of this endangered species.

Scott Heppell is an assistant professor in the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife at Oregon State University. Scott grew up in Tigard, OR, where family vacations always seemed to be fishing and camping trips to Mt. Hood or Mt. Jefferson, and exploring the Oregon coast.

See you there!

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 or 541-757-7953.

Directions

The monthly chapter meeting is in Dennis Hall of the First Presbyterian Church, 114 SW Eighth Street.

Dave Mellinger

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 bird-

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ers 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 or 541-752-0108 with questions. Check the Midvalley ListServ, www.midvalleybirding.org/pipermail/birding/, the week before the field trip for updates. Weather may alter plans. Watch the weather forecast and dress appropriately.

Half Day Field Trips

March 9: Snagboat Bend

Bill Proebsting

Weekend Field Trips

Bandon, March 29-31

Get your bins warmed up for spring birding on a trip to Oregon's south coast. As of this writing, there are still four slots open. (See the January CHAT for details.) Klamath Basin, April 19-21

Migratory waterfowl and shorebirds aplenty. We have added a third van, and there are now only four slots available. (See the February CHAT for details.)

Rogue Valley, May 3-5

This tour has the greatest variety of opportunities: splendid wildflowers; migratory orioles, grosbeaks, warblers, vireos; wonderful Ashland restaurants; and a night at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival.

Beginning with stops at Fern Ridge Reservoir outside of Eugene, we reluctantly use I-5 to get us down to Wolf Creek where we exit to take back roads through the Klamath Mountains to meet the Rogue River, which we follow upstream to Merlin.

We settle into a motel in Ashland before our first fine meal. Saturday morning we arise early to beat the crowds to the trail leading to the top of Upper Table Rock, where we find the key species associated with the hot California chaparral country; Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, California Towhee, and Oak Titmouse, along with recent arrivals such as Ash-throated Flycatcher and Lazuli Bunting. After admiring the wildflower bonanza on top, we head to TouVelle State Park along the Rogue River for lunch with Acorn Woodpeckers. If time allows, a trip up into the Cascades will take up the early afternoon.

We arrive back at our motel to nap and clean up before an Indian meal and then the theater, where we see OSF's production of the musical *My Fair Lady*.

Sunday we walk the bikepath following Bear Creek to pick up a host of migrating songbirds before heading back north. But we again are lured away from I-5 to take the Cow Creek loop road. Then, alas, it is back to Corvallis. There are now only four slots left on this trip, and no extra van can be added.

Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, May 23-26

ASC's signature trip to one of America's birdiest spots. Four openings remain.

Summer and Crater Lakes, June 28-30

Currently the trip is full, but we can put you on a waiting list.

Wallowas, July 11-14

Spectacular mountain experience. Ample space still available.

Steens Mountain, August 8-11

Only three spaces left, and the number of birders is strictly limited.

Bandon return, September 6-8

Shorebirds! Only two slots left.

To secure spaces on any of these trips, contact Fred Ramsey at flramsey5@comcast.net or 541-753-3677.

President's Corner

Thinning in Western Oregon Forests—Carbon Cycling Realities, Management Myths

I am ever amazed by the green, lush and dense growth of forests of western Oregon and Washington, not the less in knowing that native forests here are thought to hold the greatest biomass of any forest ecosystem on Earth—not only in living tree trunks, limbs, and leaves, but also in shrubs, forbs, dead and decomposing wood and forest litter, moss, lichens, roots, terrestrial, and subsurface organisms, and much in the soil itself.

Photosynthesis, modeled as primary productivity, remains the driver for all this green, and for the carbon captured in this incredible biomass. Climate change, driven largely by atmospheric carbon, indicates that storing this carbon is the most critical global role for our Northwest forests. Yet our current economic and social patterns continue to emphasize the value of extractable wood fiber.

Forest managers regularly overlook non-marketable forest growth, especially when it comes to carbon sequestration. Management activities always reduce primary production (an exception is fertilization), by removing or killing unwanted weeds, shrubs, or trees, with the goal to focus remaining production on harvestable wood volume.

The carbon credit market (I pay you to store carbon so I can keep emitting) has largely abandoned forest carbon crediting in part because forest managers can't keep their hands out of the woods. It is far more profitable to sell wood fiber than questionable carbon credits. The local Corvallis Watershed Forest management still models this thinking, even if it is globally unsustainable.

Do west side Oregon forests "need" thinning? Dense stands, regardless of origin, do appear less "thrifty", and much wood growth is "lost" to decay. Primary production increase can wane naturally due to wind throw and ice events in these stands, but even densely growing forests

retain tremendous photosynthetic capacity.

Thinning reduces this capacity. And susceptibility to stand-replacing fire here is quite different than eastside forests, where increased fire return intervals normally remove fine surface fuels.

On the west side, when conditions favor wildfire spread, nearly all forest stands, regardless of age, species, or tree spacing, are subject to stand-replacement fire.

I would submit that the need to thin is driven by local market values, rather than global environmental need. And we now need to think and act globally.

Jim Fairchild

Hesthavn News

Hello all. As has been noted Susan has needed to resign as Hesthavn chair and I have agreed to take up the task at least for the next few months. Many of you will recall that I was the chair prior to Paula Vanderheul.

First I want to say that it's good to be back, and second I would like to acknowledge the incredible accomplishments of both Paula and Susan. The place looks great, and with Michelle's education programs it is getting used. This is where we hoped we would be by now when we first started cleaning out the old horse barn and pulling up all the corral fencing. So now my challenge is to maintain the momentum. This last month we were happy to accept the help of OSU GEO 300 students Ian Robinson, Elliott Aurdahl, and others, for our work party. The GEO 300 students worked on planting some native plants at some locations where we had previously laid down garden cloths to clear out some of the invasive weeds. Many thanks to Julie Gibson for her research and careful selection of plants for this project. When the planting was done the students moved on to doing some maintenance work on Paula's trail. We will be contouring the trail and laying some rock. This will make it more able to sustain the traffic that is sure to follow now that we have a bridge across the creek. The Hesthavn committee will be meeting in March to make plans for the rest of the year. I will have more to report on that next month. In the mean time I intend to continue with my tradition of monthly work parties. The next three will happen on 3/16, 4/20, and 5/18 from 9 am to 1 pm. What we work on will depend on the needs for each month, but generally it will include maintenance of the barn, the yard, the trails, and the parking area. As always we will continue to work on maintaining our native plantings and removing the non-natives. Please feel free to come for whatever portion of the work party fits your schedule.

Ray Drapek

Hesthavn Work Parties

March 16: 9–1 pm • **April 20:** 9–1 pm • **May 18:** 9–1 pm

Hesthavn Education News

March is a slow month for education, but we are gearing up for spring and summer programs. The evergreen grant

project was very successful, with hundreds of kids from four schools involved in habitat restoration this past month. Hesthavn will be open to the public this month on Mondays and Wednesdays, so stop by and visit! Look for our summer camp advertisement soon!

Michelle Shula

Conservation Corner

Cat Carnage Causes Consternation

Recent national news coverage of shocking new studies by scientists from the Smithsonian Institution and U.S. Fish and Wildlife show that the number of animals killed by cats has been highly underestimated. The peer reviewed study estimates that bird deaths are in the range of 1.4 to 3.7 BILLION per year and mammal mortalities are from 6.9 to 20 BILLION per year, making cats the single greatest human-caused source of mortalities to wildlife. A well-written article in the American Bird Conservancy newsletter says, "According to Dr. George Fenwick, President of American Bird Conservancy, one of the leading bird conservation organizations in the U.S. and a group that has called for action on this issue for many years, 'This study, which employed scientifically rigorous standards for data inclusion, demonstrates that the issue of cat predation on birds and mammals is an even bigger environmental and ecological threat than we thought. No estimates of any other anthropogenic (human-caused) mortality source approach the bird mortality this study calculated for cat predation.'

"The study's estimate of bird mortality far exceeds any previously estimated U.S. figure for cats. In fact, this magnitude of mortality may exceed all other direct sources of anthropogenic bird and mammal mortality combined. Other bird mortality sources would include collisions with windows, buildings, communication towers, (wind turbines) vehicles and pesticide poisoning.

"The very high credibility of this study should finally put to rest the misguided notions that outdoor cats represent some harmless new component to the natural environment. The carnage that outdoor cats inflict is staggering and can no longer be ignored or dismissed. This is a wake-up call for cat owners and communities to get serious about this problem before even more ecological damage occurs,' Fenwick said." Here is a link to the published study: www.abcbirds.org/abcprograms/policy/cats/pdf/Loss_et_al_2013.pdf.

The implications of the study once again point out the capacity for human beings to impact life on Earth. Although I grew up in a family of cat owners and lovers, I have been irritated for years by neighborhood cats who trespass on my property and use my garden beds as their personal toilet and my yard as their favorite hunting grounds. Aren't dogs required to be on-leash? Why are cats allowed to roam freely? I believe the current City of Corvallis ordinance which says, "An owner of a cat which damages the property of others, including gardens, may be found liable for damages resulting from the animal's behavior,"

Continued on next page

either needs to be enforced or rephrased to be effective. I see that unwanted cats have recently been dumped at the Philomath Sewage Ponds, and they prowl the margins for unwary ducks or shorebirds. People are not taking responsibility for animals they own. A friend who lived up Woods Creek Road took pity on unwanted cats that were being dumped up their road, and eventually was caring for 18 cats. Corvallis Audubon is looking at two ideas for inner-city cats; the Cats Indoors program (link: www.abcbirds.org/abcprograms/policy/cats/materials/cat_brochure.pdf) and the Cat Bibs invention. The first is not a new idea, having been presented some years ago to the City Council. Unfortunately, the mayor at the time was a cat owner/lover and was not interested in restricting the time-honored freedoms of roaming cats. Cat Bibs are hung around the neck of outdoor cats and interfere only with a cat's attempts to pounce. We plan to purchase several and test them for effectiveness. Since the vast majority of killing appears to come from feral cats, or cats unconnected to owners, there lies the larger problem. Many unwanted cats are the result of unintended cat breeding. I believe promoting cat spay/neuter programs will raise awareness and slow the growth of cat population. For cats already in the field, some have tried a trap, neuter and release program, which appears to have backfired. Not only does this leave the wild cats in the field free to kill wildlife, apparently it attracts other cats who add to the problem. The best solutions so far appear to be the Cats Indoors program, spaying/neutering, and outdoor enclosures for cats. There are a wide variety of enclosures that range from portable, small screened types to permanent, fenced types, to screened "tunnels" that criss-cross the yard in the air and on the ground.

As a friend to the birds, the Audubon Society of Corvallis is interested in protecting them and their habitats, as well as encouraging people to get out and enjoy nature. Cats are wonderful household pets and friends, but we need to be mindful of their activities when out of sight. Please consider what you might be able to do to prevent cat predation on wildlife.

Will Wright, Conservation Chair

Birds And Windows Don't Mix

If you hear a loud "thunk" on the side of your house, chances are one of the birds you have attracted to your bird feeder has hit your window and been stunned, or worse, killed. This may happen dozens of times during the day while you are out, and you are unaware of it. It has been estimated that 1 billion birds die each year in the US as a result of window collisions.

One of the main reasons this occurs is that windows reflect the surroundings and birds do not see the window as a solid object. Often birds may be frightened by something and in their haste to escape they hit windows on houses or buildings.

Here are a few simple home remedies:

- Place bird feeders very close (1 foot) to windows,

so they don't have time to build up momentum, or very far from windows (>30 feet);

- Close shades or drapes during the day to reduce the reflections;
- Affix decals on the outside of windows. These must cover the whole window pane and be placed 2 inches apart horizontally and 4 inches apart vertically. One or two decals will have little or no effect;
- Use a patterned film on the outside of the window. With improvements in design, these are becoming more of an option – the film is essentially invisible from the inside, but appears opaque or patterned on the outside. Examples can be found at www.collidescape.org or www.featherfriendly.org. American Bird Conservancy (ABC) produce a tape which can be placed in a grid pattern over small windows (www.abcbirdtape.org).
- Bird netting stretched tightly from dowels or corner brackets and set a few inches away from the window is an excellent solution as birds bounce off uninjured when they fly at a window. This has solved our own problem at home where we have a bird feeder near our lounge window.

Back yard deaths are bad enough but the slaughter on high-rise buildings is on a huge scale. Migrating and resident birds are vulnerable as they fly into multi-stories of reflective glass. There are many programs being developed to educate building designers to improve window design in new buildings and retro-fit others. For example, The Fatal Light Awareness Program (www.flap.org/) and ABC offer bird-friendly building design options.

Some useful websites:

http://web4.audubon.org/bird/at_home/SafeWindows.html;
www.birds.cornell.edu/AllAboutBirds/faq/attracting/challenges/window_collisions
www.abcbirds.org/abcprograms/policy/collisions/glass.html

Peter Moore, Conservation Committee

Birding Classes

Beginning Birding Workshop Sunday, May 5, 8am - 10am

Free. **Registration required.** (contact The AveryHouse) ahnc@corvallisenvironmentalcenter.org, 541-753-9211)
 The basics of binocular use and bird identification. Conducted at the Avery House Nature Center at Avery Park. For class information contact Don Boucher 541-753-7689, bouchdon@peak.org

Birding Field Trip Sunday, May 5, 10am - noon

Free, no registration required. Please join us for a birding field trip at Avery Park immediately following the Beginning Birding Workshop.

Birding by Ear

May 29 - June 15

\$36. Registration required. (contact The Avery House ahnc@corvallisenvironmentalcenter.org, 541-753-9211)
Would you like to know your local bird songs and calls?
Learn to listen and remember bird sounds. Beginners, take Beginning Birding Workshop first.

3-week class:

May 29, Wed., Avery House 7pm - 9pm
June 1, Sat, Field Trip (location TBD) 9am - noon
June 5, Wed., Avery House 7pm - 9pm
June 8, Sat, Field Trip (location TBD) 9am - noon
June 12, Wed., Avery House 7pm - 9pm
June 15, Sat, Field Trip (location TBD) 9am - noon

Field Notes

1/25/13-2/28/13

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.

The gradual transition from winter to spring became apparent this period as wintering songbirds began singing frequently, Pacific Chorus-Frogs began croaking, and hazel, alder and willows flowered. Tree Swallows and Turkey Vultures began to appear, signaling the beginning of the return of many breeding birds. Temperatures were near seasonal averages, but there was very little precipitation.

Location abbreviations: Ankeny = Ankeny National Wildlife Refuge, EEW = E.E. Wilson Wildlife Area, Finley = William L. Finley National Wildlife Refuge, Philomath STP = Philomath sewage treatment ponds, Stewart Lake = pond on Hewlett-Packard campus in Corvallis, TWG/SP = Talking Water Gardens and Simpson Park in Albany

Observer abbreviations: Suzanne Austin (SA), Don Boucher (DB), Howard Bruner (HB), Randy Campbell (RCa), Pam Comeleo (PCo), Alan Contreras (AC), Marcia F. Cutler (MFC), Barbara Dolan (BD), Karan Fairchild (KFa), Preston Filbert (PF), Jeff Fleischer (JF1), Andrea Foster (AF), Rana Foster (RF), Joel Geier (JG), Raylene Gordin (RG), Tyler Hallman (THa), Jeff Harding (JH), Oscar Harper (OH), Hendrik Herlyn (HH), Carol Hiler (CH), Tristan Hynes (THy), Tim Johnson (TJ), Lisa Millbank (LM), Molly Monroe (MM), Pam Otley (PO), James Philipson (JP), Richard Raymond (RR), Paul Rentz (PR), Steve Seibel (SS), Barry Sherr (BS), Ev Sherr (ES), Jamie Simmons (JS), Viviane Simon-Brown (VSB), Jean Thompson (JT), Will Wright (WW)

Among a flock of **Cackling** and **Canada Geese** at Finley 2/3 were 4 **hybrid geese** whose parents were probably a Greater White-fronted Goose and a Cackling or Canada Goose (PO). A single **Greater White-fronted Geese** was at Finley 2/17 (JS). **Trumpeter Swans** continued through the period at Suver, with a high of 25 birds 2/25 (JG), on occasion joined by someone's pet Whooper Swan who likes to hang out with the wild swans before she flies home for a meal. A large flock of more than 100 **Tundra Swans** was reported from the Harrisburg area. 18 **Gadwall** were at TWG/SP 2/9 (JP). Albany's Grand Prairie Park had at least 13 **Eurasian Wigeons** and 1 hybrid among all the **American Wigeons** there 2/18 (AC, THy). **Cinnamon Teal** continued at TWG/SP 2/10 (PO), and 163 **Green-winged Teal** were counted at Ankeny 2/18 (TJ, BD). A Green-winged Teal of the Eurasian subspecies ("**Common Teal**") was at the Philomath STP 2/20 (THa, SA), likely

the same one seen earlier in the winter. 142 **Northern Shovelers** and 38 **Bufflehead** were counted at Ankeny 2/21 (TJ). The Frazier Creek wetland S of Pettibone Rd in Lewisburg had 150 **Northern Pintail** 2/16 (RF). 14 **Canvasbacks** were on Stewart Lake 1/31, the highest count this period at this reliable location, and 1 **Redhead** turned up there 1/28 (JS). 5 **Lesser Scaup** were reported from Ankeny 2/18 (TJ, BD), but no **Greater**s were reported this period. 4 **Hooded Mergansers** were found in a canal E of Lebanon Good Samaritan Hospital 2/10 (RF). A surprising total of 41 **Common Mergansers** were found at Willamette Park in Corvallis 2/8 (HH). Ankeny had high numbers of **Ruddy Ducks**, with 120 there 2/18 (TJ, BD).

A single **Ring-necked Pheasant** was reported from Ankeny 2/18 (TJ, BD). A **Mountain Quail** "crowed" from Tampico Ridge 2/9 (JG).

Pied-billed Grebes were present at low numbers throughout the area, and were the only grebes reported this period.

11 **Double-crested Cormorants** were seen at Willamette Park in Corvallis 2/8 (HH).

At least 20 **Great Blue Herons** were standing on nests in the heronry across the river from Willamette Park in Corvallis 2/24 (DB, LM). 12 **Great Egrets** were counted at Ankeny 2/18 (TJ, BD). The only **Green Heron** reported this period was at TWG/SP 1/31, where the slightly warmer wastewater may make it a more hospitable place to spend the winter.

The eagerly-awaited arrival of **Turkey Vultures** was well underway by the end of the period. One (possibly an overwintering bird) was seen 1/25 over downtown Corvallis (LM), but multiple reports the following weekend indicated that additional vultures were drifting in. 1 **White-tailed Kite** was found on a S Benton Co raptor survey route 1/27 (WW), and another was along the Brownsville route 2/7 (JF1). The high count this period for the Tangent **Bald Eagle** roost was 85 eagles 1/27 (VSB). 8 **Northern Harriers** circled a field near Tangent at dusk 2/6, possibly descending to a night roost (CH). 2 **Sharp-shinned Hawks** were counted on the Brownsville raptor survey route 2/7 (JF1). A **Red-shouldered Hawk** chased a **Cooper's Hawk** at EEW 1/30 (JG); Red-shouldered Hawks have become fairly reliable at most wooded wetlands in the area. 36 **Red-tailed Hawks** were found during the S Benton Co raptor survey route 2/23 (WW). A **Golden Eagle** made a lunchtime raid on waterfowl near the Finley headquarters building 2/13 (MM).

Virginia Rails were heard calling at Jackson-Frazier Wetland 1/31 (HH) and 2/24 (JS), and at EEW 2/18 (JG). 59 **American Coots** were counted at Ankeny 2/21 (TJ). About 60 **Sandhill Cranes** passed over Middle Ridge near Lebanon 2/17 (RG), and another flock of 20 flew E of Peterson Butte 2/27 (SS).

Killdeer appeared to be staking out nesting territories in crushed rock around some transformers at EEW 1/31 (JG). A few overwintering **Spotted Sandpipers** were reported from multiple sites along the Willamette River throughout the period, and at TWG/SP (PO). The Salem Audubon Society field trip to Ankeny found a flock of 110 **Dunlin** on 2/21, hopefully a sign of more to come, as numbers often peak in March. 39 **Long-billed Dowitchers** were at McFadden Marsh at Finley 1/25 (WW). 2 **Wilson's Snipes** flew low over a residential area of Corvallis 2/6, suggesting that they had been foraging in a yard (HH).

A large flock of 100+ **Glaucous-winged Gulls** with a few **Herring Gulls** visited Coffin Butte Regional Landfill throughout the period, and 1 **Western Gull** and 1 **Thayer's Gull** were among them 2/11 (JG). Another Thayer's was at Grand Prairie Park in Albany 2/18 (AC, THy).

A **Rock Pigeon** took evasive maneuvers when it realized a Bald Eagle was chasing it near the Talbot Rd I-5 overpass 2/6 (PO). 1 **Band-tailed Pigeon** visited a feeder in SW Polk Co on 2/9 (JT), quite an uncommon sight in winter. **Eurasian Collared-Doves** in an Albany yard were worried when a Merlin showed up 2/4 (PF). Numbers of their close relative, the smaller, paler **African Collared-Dove** (also known as the Ringed Turtle-Dove) may be growing, as 4 were seen in Monroe at the end of January (WW), and possibly another in Corvallis along Campus Way (OH, HH). About 60 **Mourning Doves** were NW of Coffin Butte 2/7 (JG).

1 **Barn Owl** was reported calling in flight over NW Corvallis 2/4 (JS). 3 **Western Screech-Owls** were found in Willamette and Avery Parks in Corvallis 2/24 (DB, LM). 4 **Great Horned Owls** were calling near EEW 2/17 (JG), and duets between pairs were reported frequently. 1 **Northern Pygmy-Owl** was heard 1/31 along Wynoochee Dr in NW Corvallis (PCo). **Barred Owls** were reported from EEW 2/2 and 2/26 (JG), from SW Corvallis 2/7 (WW) and from NW Corvallis 2/4 (PCo). A **Short-eared Owl** was calling from a field along Riverside Dr in Linn Co 1/31 (DB), and another was at EEW 2/26 (JG). One **Northern Saw-whet Owl** responded to an imitation of its call at EEW 2/26 (JG).

Anna's Hummingbirds are already beginning to nest, made obvious by the males' constant displaying and females gathering nest material. One female was plucking cattail fluff at Jackson-Frazier Wetland 2/15 (MFC).

A **Lewis's Woodpecker**, probably the same one reported last period, was foraging in mistletoe at I-5 and Ankeny Hill Rd 1/26 (JH), and was spotted regularly throughout this period. A **Red-breasted Sapsucker** working on its sap wells at Starker Park in Corvallis had some of its sap pirated by an Anna's Hummingbird 2/14 (LM), and **Downy Woodpeckers** were drumming and acting territorial. 2 **Hairy Woodpeckers** called at Willamette Park 2/24 (LM, DB), where they're reliably found year-round. "Red-shafted" x "Yellow-shafted" **Northern Flicker** intergrades were seen at EEW 2/11 (JG), at Starker Park in Corvallis 2/14 (LM), and throughout the period in NW Corvallis (JS). A **Pileated Woodpecker** gave a territorial call and foraged just S of downtown Corvallis 2/8 (LM).

32 **American Kestrels** and 2 **Merlins** were found on a S Benton Co raptor survey route 1/27 (WW). 2 **Peregrine Falcons** were spotted at Finley 2/11 (PR). A **Prairie Falcon**, the only one reported this period, was at Peterson Butte (SW of Lebanon) 2/18 (SS).

One **Say's Phoebe** was along the Campus Way bike path at OSU 2/25, likely the same one spotted there last winter (KFa). 2 **Black Phoebes** entertained visitors to the Homer Campbell blind at Finley 2/17 (RR, ES, BS), and a male had started singing by 2/18 along Riverside Dr in Linn Co (DB).

The only **Northern Shrikes** reported this period were along the Brownsville raptor survey route 2/7 (JF1). Single **Hutton's Vireos** were reported from a few locations, and will soon be heard giving their monotonous simple song.

A family of **Gray Jays** were at McCulloch Peak in McDonald Forest 2/3 (DB, LM). A pair of **Western Scrub-Jays** gave "whisper-songs" 2/14, possibly courtship-related (LM). **American Crows** appeared to be courting in early Feb, giving long rattling calls and mutually preening one another. 9 **Common Ravens** were flying over Jackson-Frazier Wetland 1/31 (HH).

3 **Tree Swallows** were at TWG/SP 2/9 (JP), and they were fairly widespread at Ankeny by 2/18 (AC, THy).

A **Chestnut-backed Chickadee** visited a feeder in NW Corvallis (AF) where they are not typically seen. Our more typical urban **Black-capped Chickadees** appeared to be inspecting nest cavities at Sunset Park 2/14 (LM). **White-breasted Nuthatches** were occasionally singing this period. **Brown Creepers** were giving their high-pitched songs by 2/8 (DB).

While **Bewick's Wrens** had been singing frequently since just after winter solstice, **Pacific Wrens** took a bit longer to get going, first reported from McDonald Forest 1/31 (JG). Several **Marsh Wrens** sang at EEW 2/18 (JG).

Golden-crowned Kinglets continued to be abundant in most lower-elevation conifers. One precocious male **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** was singing at Stewart Lake 2/14, although most won't start until the end of March.

At least 2 dozen **Western Bluebirds** were seen along Oak Creek Rd in Corvallis 2/3, a testament to the success of local nest box efforts (LM, DB). 1 **Hermit Thrush** was reported from Ankeny on 2/21 (TJ); it was the only report this period of these inconspicuous birds, although decent numbers overwinter in the valley. **Varied Thrushes** were giving full songs in McDonald Forest by 2/3 (DB, LM), and **American Robins** were singing by 2/4.

About 20,000 **European Starlings** were flying southward at sunrise along Riverside Dr in Linn Co, silent except for their wingbeats (DB).

American Pipits were scarce this period, with the only reports from the Suver area 2/1 and 2/8 (JG). Overwintering **Cedar Waxwings** were similarly rare, with a flock of about 15 at EEW 2/15 (JG).

An **Orange-crowned Warbler** was reported from Albany 2/1 (DB), and one was a regular visitor at Peoria throughout the period (RCa), while **Yellow-rumped Warblers** were hard to miss, especially around wetlands. **Townsend's Warblers** seemed to be less numerous than they were earlier in the winter.

Spotted Towhees and **Dark-eyed Juncos** were singing by 1/31 (LM). Two fighting male **Song Sparrows** tumbled into a roadside ditch and attacked one another with their feet 2/18 (DB). Two unusual **Fox Sparrows**, distinct from our typical "Sooty" form, were at EEW 2/19 (JG); one may have been the *altivagans* subspecies, and the other was a slightly different variation of the "Slate-colored" subspecies group. 5 **White-throated Sparrows** at EEW 2/4 was the highest count reported this period, down significantly from numbers there in December (JG). 80 **White-throated Sparrows** were found NW of Coffin Butte 2/7 (JG), and 26 **Golden-crowned Sparrows** were at Ankeny 2/18 (TJ).

Male **Red-winged Blackbirds** continued to sing from atop the cattails at Jackson-Frazier Wetland 1/31 (HH). **Western Meadowlarks** were heard singing along Campus Way several times throughout the period, and a flock of 40 were along De Armond Rd near the Benton Co line 2/8 (JG). A large flock of **Brewer's Blackbirds** along Campus Way at OSU contained 2 **Brown-headed Cowbirds** 2/27 (HH), and cowbirds were also seen at Peoria occasionally this period (RCa).

A **Purple Finch** performed a display toward what appeared to be two females 2/14 (LM), and **House Finches** were commonly heard singing by 2/4. **Red Crossbills** and **Evening Grosbeaks** continued to be detected regularly, but **American Goldfinches** were very scarce, with just a few scattered reports. A male **Lesser Goldfinch** was singing in Corvallis 2/4 (LM). A flock of at least 100 **Pine Siskins** flew along Oak Creek Dr 2/3 (LM, DB).

Male **House Sparrows** were singing throughout the period and attempting to stake out new territories, as one did W of EEW 2/18 (JG).

Please post your reports to midvalleybirding.org, send them to lisaaves@peak.org, or leave a message at 541-753-7689 by 3/28/13.

- Lisa Millbank

National Audubon Convention—2013: Taking Flight Together

Consider taking the opportunity to attend an Audubon National Convention conveniently located in our corner of the world at Skamania Lodge, Stevenson, WA, in the heart of the spectacular Columbia Gorge, 45 minutes from Portland.

WHO: Chapter leaders and members, State and Center Board members, National Board members

WHAT: Four full days of exciting field trips, inspiring speakers, in-depth hands-on workshops, and tens of program options highlighting strategic conservation successes from the four flyways.

COST: Registration fee - \$300 [includes meals except Sunday dinner and entry to sessions]. Lodging \$125-\$145 for double and \$125-\$135 for single.

WHEN: July 12-15, 2013. Save the date and for additional information, check the website at:

www.audubon.org/2013convention#.UJxUrwNlprQ.email

Book Chat

Please take a look at this new book; *Freeway Birding-From San Francisco to Seattle* by Harry G. Fuller. It has many sites to stop and bird, with over 100 maps.

Sally Shaw

The Public as Scientist

We can assist science research by recording our bird observations on the internet or in our *Chat* newsletter. A March, 2013 National Geographic article (p.118) discussed sharing sightings of such critters as the nine-spotted ladybug (via the Lost Ladybug Project), invasive species, or contributing to bird surveys (as European citizen backyard birders have done since the 1700's). "Yard birds" are important!

Andrea and Greg Foster

Board Meeting Summary

ASC Meeting, February, 14, 2013

A motion to get phone & internet service installed at Hesthavn Nature Center passed unanimously.

This year's Nominating Committee is Karan Fairchild, Will Wright & Jim Fairchild. Please contact one of them if you would like to volunteer as a Board Member.(see contact info on ASC website). Ray Drapek was unanimously approved as the new Chair

of the Hesthavn Committee, replacing Susan Atkisson, who did wonders energizing & organizing that Committee. A big "thank you" to Susan, and a big "welcome back" to longtime member and tireless volunteer, Ray! By general accord, the Board approved \$40 to produce a special ASC information sheet to distribute at the Sustainability Fair on March 14th at OSU. Michelle Shula and Suzanne Ortiz will spearhead the effort. The next regular meeting of the Board of Directors will be March 14th, 7pm, at Dave Mellinger's house, 3798 Jameson, Corvallis.(ph.541-757-7953)

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

Karyle Butcher

Elizabeth Waldron

Karen Wilson & Jim Merzenich

Regarding renewals: If there are no changes in your contact information, members can renew their memberships by going to the ASC website and renewing through

Paypal: www.audubon.corvallis.or.us/join.shtml

If you have moved or changed your email address, please forward your new contact information to Suzanne Ortiz at ortizsv@gmail.com.

Suzanne Ortiz

Contributors to the Chat

Dave Mellinger, Fred Ramsey, Bill Proebsting, Jim Fairchild, Ray Drapek, Michelle Shula, Will Wright, Peter Moore, Sally Shaw, Andrea and Greg Foster, Linda Campbell, Lisa Millbank and Suzanne Ortiz.

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.

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www.audubon.corvallis.or.us

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Interested in volunteering?

Please let us know: volunteerasc@gmail.com

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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 9 Field Trip: Snagboat Bend, 7:30 am
- Mar 14 Board Meeting: Dave Mellinger, Jameson Drive near Woodland Park in NW Corvallis, just off Circle Drive
- Mar. 16 Hesthavn Work Party, 9 to 1
- Mar 21 General Meeting: First Presbyterian Church, Corvallis, 7 pm
- Mar 28 Articles & Field Notes deadline for CHAT
- Mar 29 South Coast Field Trip, 3 days
- Apr 19 Klamath Basin Field Trip, 3 days

Save This Date

July 12-15, 2013, Audubon Convention,
Skamania Lodge, Stevenson, Washington.



Varied Thrush photo by Steve Reed

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 student; \$15 for Chat only subscriptions (email delivery only); \$50 for Supporting Level; \$100 for Patron Level; and \$200 for Benefactor Level.

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