



Audubon Society of Corvallis

the **CHAT**

February 2004

VOL. 33

#6

General Meeting

February 19
Thursday, 7:30-9:00 PM
Corvallis Public Library

200 Years of Wildlife Changes: From Lewis and Clark to Today

Bill Ripple, professor in Forestry at Oregon State University, will give a presentation on the wildlife encountered by Lewis and Clark along their trail in 1804-1806. He will then illustrate with image maps the losses of species ranges for many carnivores and ungulates since the time of Lewis and Clark. Finally, with time-series photos, he will demonstrate the benefits to reintroducing one species, the gray wolf, to part of its historical range in Yellowstone, and show how the wolf is connected via the food web to aspen, willow, cottonwood, beaver, birds, and more.

The meeting is in the conference room of the Corvallis-Benton County Library, 6th Street at Monroe, downtown Corvallis. At each meeting we give updates on conservation and Audubon activities. Meetings start at 7:30 PM and speakers begin at 8:00. Come early for refreshments, conversation and browsing at display tables.

Meeting Place Has Changed

The Corvallis-Benton County Library will be our meeting spot, not the First Presbyterian Church.

Future Programs at General Meetings

- | | |
|--------|--|
| Mar 18 | James Davis, Portland Audubon Society:
Owls of Oregon |
| Apr 15 | Bill Sullivan, Oregon author, speaking on
trails and travels in Oregon |
| May 21 | Roy Lowe, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,
speaking on wildlife refuges of the Oregon
Coast |

Atop the Nestbox

Think BLUEBIRDS

Granted it's been raining for days on end, but the bluebirds haven't let it stop them. Several calls have come in to remind us that the season is close at hand. Carole Steckly's friend, Alma Davis, who lives off of Rt. 34 across the Willamette, has had bluebirds inspecting her nest box three years in a row, but the swallows and accipiters have discouraged them from nesting. Three males were seen last week, another this week. These are probably migrant birds headed to Washington and British Columbia. This is the time of year when I get these calls.

Earlier on the Christmas Bird Count fifteen were seen in the oaks on the "Thompson" Greenbelt property. The CBC total of 146 was a reasonable tally. More recently Don Boucher saw 9 flying overhead while at of Jackson-Frazier Wetland. Vi and Clarence Omoto see four from the last brood of 2003 hanging around near their feeder in a NW Corvallis neighborhood. Kristy Kingery feeds nine or more at her feeders and tells me that the one flock (and their friends, the finches) chased off another brood trying to muscle in on the good deal. She can't believe that the pair trying to copulate is really in earnest! Too soon to practice with April and May months away.

see 'Bluebirds' on next page

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Bluebirds *continued from front page*

However, my message should be loud and clear. When the weather blesses you with blue skies and sunshine, please go out to check all of your boxes including the ones other birds nested in. After very cold temperatures and heavy snow such as we had a month ago, birds that have sought shelter in the nest boxes may have perished there. If you find any, banded or unbanded, please bring them to me. Go prepared with something to clean out the box (don't reach in bare handed because queen yellow jackets like these boxes too), plastic baggies, a few tools and a new box "just in case." Close all cracks and crannies with weather stripping knowing that it may rain through May when eggs or chicks are in the boxes. NW weather is deadly for early breeding birds.

I have a few new boxes you are welcome to have. We also have four already mounted on pipe that can be placed over a long piece of rebar which has been pounded into the ground.

I plan to carry on with banding and checking some boxes; I'm always available to answer questions and make suggestions. I would appreciate it very much if you could enlist others in your neighborhood to get interested in our Blue Bird Trail. We can always use more volunteers.

Please go to www.audubon.corvallis.or.us to read THE BLUEBIRD TRAIL AND LINK TO REMINDERS FOR NEST BOX MONITORS.

I'M ANXIOUS TO HEAR FROM ALL OF YOU.

-Elsie Eltzroth

ASC at Master Gardeners

February 28

ASC will have an exhibit at the Master Gardeners meeting on Saturday February 28. The meeting theme was to be Four Seasons of Gardening. I am not sure they completely followed through with that theme. But I told them we could do Four Seasons of Birds in Corvallis. I will get together many bird specimens and other show and tell things for 2 eight foot tables. If anyone would like to help design and arrange the exhibit I would be most delighted. Also, we will need volunteers to watch the tables in 2 hour shifts from 9AM to 3PM. It is fun. Most people have questions and stories about birds and we get a lot of interest.

-Kate Mathews

754-1172

kate.mathews@cmug.com

Hesthavn Report

February 28 will be our annual planting work party. We have removed quite a bit of Himalayan Blackberry along the road. The Himalayan Blackberry is a nasty aggressive nonnative plant, but by removing these blackberry hedgerows we did lose some nice cover for birds, as well as a barrier between the Hesthavn property and road dust. I would like to replace that hedge row with one consisting of native plants. I have placed an order to the Benton Soil and Water Conservation District native plant sale for some Blue Elderberry, Indian Plum, and Ocean Spray. Additionally I have ordered some Vine Maple and Oregon Grape to plant in the woods on the west side of the property where we have removed some of the False Brome. Please come on February 28 and help us to plant these!

Hesthavn Sanctuary is located 8590 NW Oak Creek Road, west of Corvallis. It is a quarter mile before the OSU Forest Field Station and trail head.

-Ray Drapek, 754-7364

Birding at Silver Falls

Silver Falls State Park, part of the Oregon Cascades Birding Trail, wants to invite people to the Park to enjoy the native birdlife while viewing the falls at their peak flows. Below is the schedule of birding events:

Dates:

Sunday, February 22 - Winter Residents

Sunday, March 14 - Winter Residents and First Spring Migrants

Sunday, April 25 - Spring Migration

Sunday, May 9 - Spring Migration; Wildflower Show

Time: 8:00-11:00 a.m.

Place: Meet at the Historic Log Cabin in the South Falls Day-use Area

Fee: \$3.00 parking fee required at Park entrance; birding is free

Oregon Naturalist Steve Shunk from Paradise Birding will be leading these birding events and will focus on identifying birds by both sight and song. Data collected will be used to update the Park's bird checklist. Please bring your own binoculars, dress for the weather, and wear comfortable shoes or boots. All are welcome to attend these events, but the maximum limit is 15 people to allow for the quality of instruction to remain high.

Please call Sara at 503-873-8681 Ext. 25 to sign up or if you have any questions. —

Sara K. Saksewski

(503) 873-8681 ext. #25

Field Trip Schedule

Feb 14 Sat. local, half-day field trip
Feb 21 Lincoln County Coast
Feb 29 Bird Walk at Finley Wildlife Refuge
Mar 13 Sat. local, half-day field trip
Mar 19-21 Bandon Coast weekend
April 16-18 Klamath Basin
May 7-9 Medford/Ashland Area
May 20-23 Malheur NWR

Local Morning Trip

On February 14, 2004 our second Saturday local field trip meets at the Avery Park Rose Garden parking area at 7:30 AM. This field trip is especially interesting for beginner birders and new birders 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, Basket Slough and Ankeny as well as other birding areas throughout the year. Field trip leader is Paula Vanderheul 541-752-0470, vanderp@peak.org

Full day trip

On February 21 Paula Vanderheul will lead a day trip to the Newport coast area. We will meet at 7:30 AM at the Benton Center parking lot that can be accessed from NW 9th street and Polk at the corner of Border's Book store. Polk has been extended to the parking lot behind the Benton Center. Please park on the far north end as construction is in progress seven days a week at the Benton Center. Bring your lunch, warm clothing, and rain gear. We will car pool and should return by 5:30 PM. We share gas expenses of \$3 to \$4 per person.

ASC and MPG Hike Finley

Feb. 29—In a joint venture, Don Boucher will accompany The Marys' Peak Group of the Sierra Club on a Bird Walk at Finley NWR. Bring your binoculars. About 3 miles, nearly level 9:00 AM, meet at Wilkinson Hall Parking lot at 26th and Monroe. Leader: Tasha Wulff 541-929-6272 twulff77@excite.com

Spring Weekend Trips

In the Spring there will be four major long weekend field trips, with the first to Bandon Coast March 19-21; Klamath Basin April 16-18; Medford/Ashland area May 7-9; and Malheur National Wildlife Refuge May 20-23 that are all led by Fred Ramsey. Sign-up sheets will be available at the field trip table at the general meeting each month, or contact Paula Vanderheul directly for sign-up or further information. A \$40 deposit needed for the Oregon Shakespeare Festival production of "A Raisin in The Sun" in Ashland by February 28. A \$50 deposit needed for Malheur NWR by February 28, 2004. Both payable to

Fred Ramsey 3550 NW Glenridge Pl Corvallis OR 97330
541-753-3677 flramsey5@earthlink.net

Watch the Chat for changes, additions, and updates of field trips each month. Come and join other bird watchers exploring a wildlife adventure in Oregon.

-Paula Vanderheul

Filed Trip Report

On January 10, 2004 eight of us ventured out in the 39 degree foggy morning local birding field trip to Finley NWR. We traveled country roads north of Finley checking for a reported Gyrfalcon seen flying west from the Airport Rd valley area the previous week. It was reported flying into the hills of Evergreen road late afternoons probably to roost. We did not find it. On Greenberry road and Buchanan road were 7 TUNDRA SWAN flying over with lots of active noisy geese. On Airport road were WESTERN MEADOWLARK, SAVANAH SP, RW BLACKBIRD and GREAT EGRET. On Llewellyn road were 8 WILSON SNIPE, two DUNLIN, two RAVEN we followed down the road while they looked for prey. At McFadden Marsh we saw a huge flock of gull species flying overhead. Most of the waterfowl were north of the viewing blind. We scoped RUDDY DUCK, RING-NECK DUCK, ONE GREATER-WHITE FRONTED GOOSE on the bank trying to mingle with the Canadas. West of Cheadle Marsh a huge flock of geese munching on the grass. With them were two LIGHT-MORPH IMMATURE SNOW GEESE. Surprisingly 3 WILD TURKEY were a first sighting at Finley for most of us. They were in the oak trees on the north side of Headquarters a bit west of the pond where everyone stops to view the Eurasian Wigeon and Wood Duck. Western Bluebirds were at the tops of the Oak Trees. We viewed 64 species during the morning. Finley is a great place to visit this time of year with Winter migrants visiting the refuge. Finley has a wonderful auto tour route with plenty of turnouts to enjoy the wildlife.

-Paula Vanderheul



American Wigeon

Field Notes

December 23, 2003 through January 26, 2004

The Willamette Valley had a novel aspect this month, after a heavy snowfall on 29 Dec was followed by freezing weather, then an ice storm which left a thick glaze over the lingering snow. The heavy snow and ice flattened blackberry thickets and severely limited foraging opportunities for ground-feeding birds. Many observers reported new birds visiting their feeding stations, including normally skulking species such as **Varied Thrush**, **Sooty Fox Sparrow**, and **Lincoln's Sparrow**.

Abbreviations & Locations: CBC = Christmas Bird Count; NWR = National Wildlife Refuge; Res. = Reservoir. E.E. Wilson (Wildlife Area) is north of Corvallis along Hwy 99W. Baskett Slough NWR is near Dallas in Polk Co. Cabell Marsh and McFadden Marsh are at Finley NWR south of Corvallis. Stewart Lake is on the HP campus in north Corvallis. Vineyard Mountain is north of Corvallis near Lewisburg.

Sightings:

A few unusual geese were seen with **Canada Goose** flocks this month. A **Greater White-fronted Goose** was at Finley NWR 10-11 Jan (Scott Johnson; Paula Vanderheul, Hendrik Herlyn). An adult **Ross's Goose** was near Albany 9 Jan (Jeff Fleischer). Two immature **Snow Geese** were at Cheadle Marsh 11 Jan (P Vanderheul). Two were at Finley NWR 16 Jan (Steve Gordon). On 18 Jan Marcia Cutler spotted either a **Snow Goose** or a **Ross's Goose** along Oak Creek west of Corvallis.

For five winters, **Trumpeter Swans** have shown up in a grass field by our house, along Independence Hwy at the Polk Co. line. This year we saw them from 13 Jan through 26 Jan, when the gathering peaked at 24. 120 **Tundra Swans** were with them 13 Jan. By 25 Jan a mixed flock of 166 swans had gathered along Airlie Rd. (Linda Fink). Another place to look for swans is along Simpson Rd. off Hwy 99W near Helmick State Park. Sometimes you can see them right along the highway, as Don Miller did on 3 Jan.

Wood Ducks were reported regularly from Finley NWR. Small groups of **Gadwall** were noted at Finley NWR 3-11 Jan (Russell McDonald; P Vanderheul) and from several locations in the Albany/Millerburg area 5 Jan (J Fleischer). Three **Eurasian Wigeon** were at Grand Prairie Park, Albany 31 Dec (J Fleischer). On 3 Jan five were with large **American Wigeon** flocks at Finley NWR (H Herlyn; Joe Fontaine); up to 3 were there through 18 Jan (Norm Robinson; Erik Knight). Jim Fairchild described this as a "1 per 100 wigeon ratio," so it takes a bit of looking.

Scott Johnson saw a **Cinnamon Teal** at Finley NWR 10 Jan, probably a wintering bird. 40 to 50 **Green-winged Teal** made an uncharacteristic appearance on Adair Pond 22 Jan (D Miller). **Northern Shovelers** were regular at Stewart Lake through December, but numbers dwindled to just one female which left after 20 Jan (Jamie Simmons).

Canvasback numbers at Stewart Lake increased to reach a high of 16 by 21 Jan; these remained through the end of the period (J Simmons). Two were at the Philomath sewage ponds 3 Jan (J Fontaine). A male **Greater Scaup** was with 15 **Lesser Scaup** on Foster Res. 31 Dec (J Fleischer). The flock of **Lesser Scaup** at Stewart Lake reached a high count of 12 by 21 Jan (J Simmons). On 31 Dec the flock below Foster Res. dam included 7 **Common Goldeneye** drakes and 12 **Barrow's Goldeneye** drakes, plus hens of both species (J Fleischer).

A female **Common Merganser** visited Stewart Lake 26-27 Jan (J Simmons). A **Ruddy Duck** was on Waverly Pond in Albany 11 Jan (D Miller); a female at Stewart Lake since Nov was last noted 17 Dec (J Simmons).

Three **Wild Turkeys** were in oaks near headquarters at Finley NWR 11 Jan (P Vanderheul). On 12 Jan seven **Mountain Quail** made an appearance in Merlin & Elsie Eltzroth's yard on Vineyard Mtn.

A **Pied-billed Grebe** was on Waverly Pond, Albany 5 Jan (D Miller). One at Toketie Marsh 5 Jan kept diving and resurfacing in the same tiny patch of open water, which it had to share with gulls that were

visiting the nearby Coffin Butte landfill.

A **Green Heron** wintering at E.E. Wilson was found for the Airlie CBC 4 Jan. An all-white **Great Blue Heron**, reported last month in the Colorado Lake area, turned up along the highway bypass near downtown Corvallis 22 Jan. Bil Burton says he is "not a birdwatcher" but this bird was so unusual that he took a close look, noting several features that distinguish this rare form from the **Great Egrets** that regularly stalk local fields in the winter.

One to two **White-tailed Kites** continue to be seen at the prairie overlook, Finley NWR (H Herlyn; Steve Seibel; J Simmons; S Johnson). Another was in the north part of E.E. Wilson 7 Jan (H Herlyn). Randy Campbell and Jeff Fleischer found 33 **Bald Eagles** in roadside raptor surveys in Linn Co., 11-15 Jan. Sightings in Corvallis included one over Willamette Park 3 Jan (H Herlyn) and one over Stewart Lake 20 Jan (George Weaver fide J Simmons). **Bald Eagles** are often seen at Peterson Butte in Linn Co., with 4 there 25 Jan (S Seibel).

A male **Cooper's Hawk** was seen four times at Stewart Lake, 9-27 Jan (J Simmons). A large immature **Cooper's Hawk** was near the OSU dairy 18 Jan (M Cutler). A **Red-shouldered Hawk** continues to be seen in the same area (Don Boucher; M Cutler). Others were reported from Finley NWR and the Irish Bend area s. of Corvallis (J Fairchild; J Fleischer).

A very dark **Red-tailed Hawk** was at Finley NWR 4 Jan (Jim, Karan & Karl Fairchild). Hendrik Herlyn reported a **Harlan's Hawk** (distinctive dark race of Red-tailed Hawk) near the prairie overlook 11 Jan. A **Harlan's Hawk** along Airlie Rd. near Suver 18-25 Jan (Bill Tice; L Fink) is likely the same one that has wintered there 13 of the past 15 winters. Becky and Wil Geier saw a pair of **Red-tailed Hawks** copulating along Independence Hwy 28 Jan.

Rough-legged Hawks were reported throughout the period. Joe Fontaine and Steve Dinsmore saw a dark morph near Baskett Slough NWR 3 Jan. They also saw an adult **Golden Eagle** in Linn Co. 3 Jan.

Mid-January raptor surveys around Linn Co. tallied 224 **American Kestrels** (J Fleischer, R Campbell). By then kestrels were being seen regularly as pairs. A **Merlin** was still at E.E. Wilson 3 Jan. Jeff Fleischer saw two while conducting a raptor survey around Finley NWR 16 Jan.

The immature **Gyr Falcon** reported last month along Coville Rd just e. of Baskett Slough NWR was reported regularly through 19 Jan. A second **Gyr Falcon** reported n. of Finley NWR in early January was elusive until Steve Gordon saw one there 16 Jan. **Peregrine Falcons** were reported as usual around large waterfowl concentrations. A pair were at Philomath sewage ponds 3 Jan (J Fontaine).

On 3 Jan I was surprised to flush a **Prairie Falcon** off its kill while walking along a field border e. of E.E. Wilson. The next day a **Prairie Falcon** was found a few miles to the east, along Conser Rd. in Linn Co. (J Fleischer, P Sullivan). One was at Finley NWR 10 Jan (S Johnson), single birds were seen at three locations around the Halsey area 13 Jan (J Fleischer), and one was at Peterson Butte 25 Jan (S Seibel).

Jeff Fleischer saw six **Sandhill Cranes** along Tennessee School Rd. n. of Lebanon on 15 Jan. Three **Black-bellied Plovers** were at the end of Davis Rd, Linn Co. 3 Jan (Jeff Harding). On 19 Jan a **Pacific Golden-Plover** was at Tangent Dr and Country Rd, Linn Co., for the fourth consecutive winter (Mark Nikas). The bird was still there 23 Jan (H Herlyn, Rich Hoyer, Andy Dale).

After the first snowfall 29 Dec, a flock of 500 **Killdeer** mostly disappeared from a field adjacent to E.E. Wilson; only a few remained, foraging in bits of open ground along wet swales. Some of the rest may have gotten lost while looking for better feeding grounds. Just before dawn on 2 Jan, I was astonished to see 50 **Killdeer** hunkered down in deep snow in the parking lot of the Hoodoo ski area, during the Santiam Pass CBC. Later that day, Steve Shunk and Madeleine Landis counted over 100 huddled on a snow-covered Suttle Lake. One wonders how many of these birds ever found their way to suitable habitat.

Two **Greater Yellowlegs** were along Stow Pit Rd. near Monroe 16 Jan (J Fleischer). A **Spotted Sandpiper** was at the Bowman Park boat ramp near Albany 4 Jan (J Fleischer). Two **Least Sandpipers** were at Finley NWR 11 Jan (J Simmons). A large flock of **Dunlin** was along Davis

Rd, Linn Co. 3 Jan (J Harding). Paula Vanderheul found 8 **Wilson's Snipe** along Llewellyn Rd. 11 Jan, so at least a few survived the snow and ice.

Gull flocks in the valley this month included unusual numbers of the larger species, along with the expected flocks of **Ring-billed, California,** and **Mew Gulls**. About 50 **Herring Gulls** were w. of Lebanon 27 Dec (Randy Moore), along with two **Thayer's Gulls** and a few **Glaucous-winged Gulls**. A remarkable concentration of 40 **Thayer's Gulls** was found in n. Polk Co. 25 Jan (H Herlyn).

Among unusual visitors drive to backyard feeders by the weather were three **Mourning Doves** in Adair Village 9 Jan (Don Miller).

A pair of **Great Horned Owl** were "duetting" in broad daylight near E.E. Wilson 15-Jan. A **Western Screech-Owl** was "tootling" on Vineyard Mountain 17 Jan 2004 (M Eltzroth). Randy Campbell found two **Burrowing Owls** SE of Peoria 13 Jan, including the banded owl which again wintered near the south end of Blueberry Rd., and an unbanded owl along Potter Rd. The banded owl was reported again 23 Jan (H Herlyn). On 4 Jan Wil Geier and I saw five **Short-eared Owls** in the Palestine area of NE Benton Co, and five were more along Conser Rd. near Millersburg (J Fleischer). Two were along Hwy 99E n. of Halsey 1 Jan (P Vanderheul).

Corvallis bird lovers hosting **Anna's Hummingbirds** had to work hard to keep the feeders thawed in early January. Andrea Foster reported that on 5 Jan a male hummingbird was trying to feed from a nearly frozen tube. The resident female disappeared during the severe weather, but reappeared on 12 Jan. Audrey Ansell had two males visiting her feeders as of 15 Jan.

Red-breasted Sapsuckers also brightened Corvallis yards this month, including one in Timberhill 5 Jan (A Foster) and one in NW Corvallis (J Simmons). The pioneering pair of **Acorn Woodpeckers** at Stewart Lake was seen sporadically throughout the period (J Simmons). Marie Parcell watched a **Downy Woodpecker** along 19th St. 25 Dec, and a **Northern Flicker** there the next day.

A **Say's Phoebe** was NW of Lebanon 10 Jan (Doug Robinson). Three **Gray Jays** showed up on Vineyard Mtn 11 Jan and stayed for a few days (M & E Eltzroth). A **Hutton's Vireo** was in Walnut Park, Corvallis 24 Jan (D Boucher).

Northern Shrikes were found in Linn Co. along Glaser Rd. 31 Dec and Blatchford Rd. 3 Jan (J Fleischer; J Harding), and at the Finley NWR prairie overlook 4 Jan (Jim, Karan, and Karl Fairchild). An immature bird near E.E. Wilson 3-15 Jan managed to evade the Airlie CBC 4 Jan, but Randy Moore found another one closer to Monmouth. Another was along Bundy Rd. near Irish Bend 16 Jan (J Fleischer).

As part of an OSU study on **Horned Larks**, Randy Moore and Doug Robinson studied flocks along Davis Rd. and Tangent Drive. The latter flock included 86 "**Streaked**" **Horned Larks**, the declining subspecies endemic to our region. The flock at our place numbered 48 on 22 Dec, and 38 on 21 Jan after the snow. A few were also noted along Blatchford Rd. w. of Lebanon 3 Jan (J Harding), along Airlie Rd 18 Jan and along Blueberry Lane near Peoria 23 Jan (H Herlyn).

Tree Swallows, one of our earliest spring migrants, began showing up as a sizable flock of white-breasted swallows was at Jackson-Frazier Wetland, Corvallis 17 Jan (Darrah Thomas). A very early **Barn Swallow** showed up in SE Polk Co. 14 Jan (Karen Lippsmeyer), and more showed up at Baskett Slough NWR later in the month.

A leucistic **Black-capped Chickadee** with frosty back and grayish head and nape, but a dark eye stripe giving it "a look of a tiny shrike" was visiting Marcia Cutler's feeders in Corvallis as of 21 Jan.

Audrey Ansell has had **Brown Creepers** and **Winter Wrens** visiting her NW Corvallis yard regularly. These are remarkably hardy little birds. On 4 Jan, Wil Geier and I watched a **Brown Creeper** take a long bath in an ice-water puddle, seemingly enjoying itself.

Ruby-crowned Kinglets seem to be more affected by cold weather. On 7 Jan Hendrik Herlyn noted that many were foraging on the frozen ground out in the open at E.E. Wilson.

Norm Robinson reported 8 to 10 **Western Bluebirds** at Finley NWR 4 Jan. Nine flew over Jackson-Frazier Wetland 19 Jan (D Boucher).

A **Townsend's Solitaire** joined **American Robins** in the rose hips on Bald Hill 18 Jan (Bill & Lena Proebsting). Many delighted to see **Varied Thrushes**, as these came out in the open to forage during the icy weather. In Adair Village, one joined 50 to 100 robins feeding on a persimmon tree through the week of 7 Jan (D Miller). Tom Griffith found 3 **Hermit Thrushes** in E.E. Wilson 20 Jan.

American Pipits were one species that seemed almost at home in the snow, strutting over snow patches between wet, open ground much as they do on their alpine nesting grounds. About 130 gathered in one field near E.E. Wilson by 21 Jan.

A wintering **Orange-crowned Warbler** in the Millersburg area (J Fleischer, P Sullivan) and a **Common Yellowthroat** on Lower Kiger Island (fide Paul Adamus) were among the most remarkable birds in the Airlie CBC. **Yellow-rumped Warblers** are expected in winter, but 150 at Jackson-Frazier Wetland 18 Jan (D Boucher) was a remarkable concentration. Two male **Townsend's Warblers** were bright spots in Audrey Ansell's Corvallis yard this month.

Open-field birds like **Savannah Sparrows** may have been the most severely affected by the ice storm. The ones wintering in fields at our place declined from about 20 in late December to just four from 11 Jan onward. A flock of 11 at Luckiamute Landing 4 Jan seemed to be absent when I checked 19 Jan. Paula Vanderheul found a few that survived the icy weather near Finley NWR 10-11 Jan

Snowy weather forcing sparrows into the open produced some remarkable counts during the Airlie CBC 4 Jan. A walk at Luckiamute Landing turned up 185 **Song Sparrows**, 18 **Lincoln's Sparrows**, 125 **Golden-crowned Sparrows**, and 5 **White-throated Sparrows**. Overall this CBC turned up record counts of 104 **Lincoln's Sparrows** and 4164 **Dark-eyed Juncos**.

Fox Sparrows also emerged from the thickets during the icy spell. One visited Don Miller's window feeder in Adair Village 7 Jan. Three **Swamp Sparrows** were in the NE corner of E.E. Wilson, 3-25 Jan, sometimes foraging on floating vegetation. Tom Griffith found two **White-throated Sparrows** at E.E. Wilson 20 Jan. 1 or 2 visited Jamie Simmons' NW Corvallis yard throughout the period. One found Jeff Fleischer's thistle feeders in Albany 1 Jan, the first time he has seen one in his yard. A **Slate-colored Junco** was regular in NW Corvallis as of 15 Jan (A Ansell).

While studying a **Horned Lark** flock along Davis Rd. in Linn Co. 30 Dec, Randy Moore noticed a **Lapland Longspur**. Doug Robinson found another in the same situation 10 Jan, at Blatchford Rd and Tangent Rd, Linn Co.

Western Meadowlarks seemed to have difficulty with the icy weather. Of flocks totaling 34 in our neighborhood on 4 Jan, I have only seen one since, a disoriented-acting bird in E.E. Wilson on 9 Jan. A few were noted in the Finley NWR area 10-11 Jan (P Vanderheul).

Up to 45 **Lesser Goldfinches** were at a downtown Albany feeder 31 Dec (J Fleischer). The small flock of up to 12 that has frequented Elizabeth & Donald MacDonald's garden since 1998 disappeared when the snow came. The MacDonalds would be glad to have them back.

A **Red Fox** was to the south of the Hewlett Packard campus in north Corvallis 12 Jan 2004 (J Simmons, Bill Looney, Jim Anderson). A **bat** was flying around the outdoor lights at Jim & Karan Fairchild's place SW of Philomath on 4 Jan, as it was 20 degrees F and snowing. Karan thought that was a bit surprising, as it was to see numerous **spiders** out on the surface of the snow the next morning, walking around or just sitting still.

Next month

Watch for more early migrants, including **Tree Swallows** and maybe **Rufous Hummingbirds** by the end of the month. Please send me your observations by 23 February.

Joel Geier, 14505 Corvallis Rd., Monmouth, OR 97361

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e-mail: jgeier@attglobal.net

Klamath Marsh National Wildlife Refuge

11 Conservation Organizations Go to Court to Protect

In January, Audubon Society of Corvallis and ten other organizations brought a lawsuit against the US Fish and Wildlife Service in response to significant increases in commercial logging, grazing, haying, and the opening of roads previously closed to protect refuge wildlife on the Klamath Marsh National Wildlife Refuge. Some activities have already been implemented without public notice or environmental analysis that conservationists believe to be harmful to the refuge and inconsistent with refuge purposes.

In particular, conservationists are challenging a vague logging plan that has been intentionally misrepresented as necessary to protect residences and structures from risk of fire. Conservationists are not objecting to any logging within one mile of the refuge headquarters, despite the fact that many trees here, and adjacent to a Forest Service Research Natural Area were logged without any public notification and before even a formal decision was signed.

Additionally, the suit challenges the refuge's increase in commercial haying at levels sixfold above what the refuge determined in 1996 to be compatible with its primary wildlife purposes.

While the refuge's plan acknowledges that "future water management, haying, grazing, and pesticide application will continue to impact water resources", the agency's recent decision failed to provide even a cursory analysis of what those impacts will be.

Organizations filing suit are ONRC, Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center, North Coast Environmental Center, Oregon Natural Desert Association, Audubon Society of Corvallis, Klamath Basin Audubon Society, Lane County Audubon Society, Salem Audubon Society, Siskiyou Regional Education Project, Umpqua Valley Audubon Society, and Umpqua Watersheds.

For more information see ONRC's Klamath webpage at www.onrc.org

-Jim Fairchild

The Chat by Email

If you have computer access to email, we will save trees and also money for postage, and email you the Audubon Society of Corvallis' newsletter. Please contact Amy Schoener 541-929-4041, cloudrun@peak.org.

You will receive the CHAT in Adobe Acrobat format. File size will be 300k or less. Adobe Acrobat reading software is free and can be downloaded from Adobe's web site (www.adobe.com).

-Amy Schoener

Corvallis Land Development Code Update

A call to all community activists

The City of Corvallis has been working on a Land Development Code Update that was driven by the State land use planning rules. This program is in the final stretch of a two-year process that started with a Natural Features Inventory and will end with a preferred land use scenario that will be implemented in several documents such as the Comprehensive Plan, Land Development Code and others. A task force, in September made their recommendations of a preferred land use scenario and the city has been working on it since then. There will be pressure to roll back the protections in this recommendation so it is important that citizens make their voices heard about what land use scenarios they want to see implemented in our community. The results of this work will have a big impact on what is done to land within our Urban Growth Boundary. Most of the voices heard at the meetings to date are from developers not wanting any restrictions added to their projects so I am hoping there are people out there that can take some time to attend the upcoming meetings listed below and bring a different voice to the decision makers. There is currently no organized community effort to support the task force recommendation. Again meetings are happening next week, time is very short so I hope some of you can get involved.

Contact Kathy Gager whose contact info is listed below for more information.

-Bruce Hecht

Attend Planning Meeting

The City of Corvallis and Benton County are completing the Preferred Land Use Scenario portion of the Land Development Code Update Phase III Project. You are invited to attend the meetings of the City and County officials and provide comments.

Tentative Schedule for February 2004 through March 2004 Meeting dates, times, and locations are subject to change. Please continue to view the City website at: www.ci.corvallis.or.us for schedule updates.

- February 3, 2004 7:30 PM Benton Plaza Benton County Planning Commission—Prepare Final Comments on County Scenario for Board of Commissioners
- February 4, 2004 7:00 PM Downtown Fire Station Corvallis Planning Commission - Prepare Final Comments on City Scenario for City Council
- February 5, 2004 7:00 PM Majestic Theater Corvallis City Council and County Board of Commissioners Work session -Clarify any agreements and differences

between the City and County Scenarios
February 12, 2004 5:30 PM Downtown Fire Station
Corvallis City Council and County Board of Commissioners - Resolve any differences between City & County Scenarios

March 8, 2004 5:30 PM Downtown Fire Station Corvallis
City Council and the Benton County Board of Commissioners Public Meeting to Accept the Preferred Land Use Scenario

The Preferred Land Use Scenario will be used to guide future amendments to the Corvallis Comprehensive Plan Policies and Map, the Corvallis Land Development Code and LDC Map (zoning), and possibly the Benton County Zoning Ordinance and Map. For questions or to provide comments, please contact Kathleen Gager at:

kathy.gager@ci.corvallis.or.us or (541) 766-6908. Information about the projects on the City's website at: www.ci.corvallis.or.us.

Airlie-Albany Christmas Bird Count

On Sunday (Jan.4) 34 people (about average for this count) enjoyed mostly dry weather in the Airlie-Albany CBC. The circle is centered at E.E. Wilson Wildlife Area north of Corvallis, and includes Ankeny NWR and McDonald-Dunn State Forest among many areas.

The species total this year was 119, three short of the maximum of 122 achieved two years ago. Best finds were: COMMON YELLOWTHROAT, CINNAMON TEAL(4), GREEN HERON, VIRGINIA RAIL, RED-SHOULDERED HAWK (2), SWAMP SPARROW(2), and ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD (a long-overdue count "first"). New high counts for this CBC were achieved for many species, most notably TUNDRA SWAN (779), AMERICAN WIGEON (4402), CALIFORNIA QUAIL (411), gulls (350, of 5 species), BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD, and LINCOLN'S SPARROW (104). Also, with 4164 DARK-EYED JUNCO, we might again bust the year's national CBC record for this species. Worst misses this year were perhaps GRAY JAY, RED CROSSBILL, and N. SAW-WHET OWL, owing partly to the inaccessibility of foothill forests where we usually find these. We also hit 56-year lows for WILSON'S SNIPE, KILLDEER, and PINE SISKIN. We had no shrikes or swallows, and counts of ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK and RED-TAILED HAWK were somewhat less than usual.

I will be emailing the full list and tallies to all participants, including a comparison with previous years totals. If you'd like a copy, too, please e-mail me. Many thanks to all who participated!

-Paul Adamus (Compiler)

6th Annual Aleutian Goose Festival

Spring 2004—March 26-28

Join us for great birding on the extreme Northcoast of California and celebrate Spring with the return of the once endangered Aleutian Canada Goose. Back from the brink of extinction, this little goose now numbers over 50,000. Delisted in 2001, this bird is an Endangered Species Act success story.

Our three day festival offers 65 workshops and field trips highlighting the birds, animals and awesome natural beauty found here in the home of Redwood National & State Parks.

We ask for your assistance in sharing this information with your friends and associates. Please forward this notice to those you know who would find this of particular personal interest.

HIGHLIGHTS from this year's festival.

- a. Keynote Speaker, Peter Pyle formerly with the Point Reyes Bird Observatory, "Trans-Pacific Migrations".
- b. A look at the Klamath River, A Yurok Way of Life from the Yurok American Indian cultural perspective, where the salmon is regarded as a sacred gift.
- c. Examine the "Biscuit Fire" for an on the ground look at what two years of natural recovery has done.
- d. Pelagic Trip during Spring offshore migration, Albatross, Shearwaters, etc.
- e. River Drift Boat Trips on the Wild & Scenic Smith River for birding, redwood ecology, geology.
- a. Del Norte "Big Day"—Gulls—Spotted Owls—Wood Ducks
- b. Klamath Basin 2 day post -festival trip for inland birds.

Visit our web site for complete info and online registration www.aleutiangoosefestival.org

Call to receive our program booklet or for more information: 800-343-8300—707-465-0888

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Audubon Society of Corvallis

the **CHAT**

Calendar

- Feb 12 Board Meeting, 7:30 PM
- Feb 14 Sat. local, half-day field trip, 7:30 AM**
- Feb 19 General Meeting, 7:30 PM, **Corv-Benton Library***, Bill Ripple, Wolves in Yellowstone (see front page)
- Feb 21 Lincoln County Coast**
- Feb 23 Field Notes deadline
- Feb 26 Chat deadline for March
- Feb 28 Hesthavn planting workparty (see page 42)
- Feb 29 Bird Walk at Findley Wildlife Refuge**
- Mar 2 ASC Conservation Committee meeting 5:30-6:30PM, New Morning Bakery, 219 SW 2nd Street
- Mar 11 Board Meeting, 7:30 PM
- Mar 13 Sat. local, half-day field trip, 7:30 AM**
- Mar 18 General Meeting, 7:30 PM, **Corv-Benton Library***, James Davis, Owls of Oregon
- Mar 19-21 Bandon Coast weekend trip**
- Mar 22 Chat deadline for April
- Mar 25 Chat deadline for April
- Apr 6 ASC Conservation Committee meeting 5:30-6:30PM, New Morning Bakery, 219 SW 2nd Street

Everybody's welcome, including nonmembers,
to any ASC function

* General Meeting change this year—see front page

**See page 43 for field trip descriptions

The Chat is published 10 times a year by the Audubon Society of Corvallis, PO Box 148, Corvallis OR 97339. Annual ASC memberships are \$20 for an individual, \$25 for a family, \$15 for a student. Chat-only subscriptions are \$10.

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