



# THE CHAT

NOVEMBER 2019

VOL. 49 #3

## November 21st Program

### Update on Malheur Field Station

On November 21, Vern Beeson will make a presentation about the history, mission, opportunities and current status of Malheur Field Station (MFS), and will share some visions of what the future may hold for MFS. Vern spent most of his working career as a biology teacher at Banks High School in Oregon. He first came to MFS in 1979 with a van full of high school students and has been on the Great Basin Society Board since 2004.

Doors open at 6:30 pm for refreshments and visiting. The chapter meeting begins at 7:00 pm, followed by our guest presentation at 7:30.



*In 2019, upgrades were made to the dorm rooms. Photo courtesy of Malheur Field Station*

### Next month's program:

**Dec. 19:** Members Slide Show – Favorite Nature Photos (and tales) of the past year

*Mark Baldwin, Vice Pres. & Program Chair,  
mark.baldwin2@comcast.net*

## President's Corner

### Our Local Youth Movement

James Fallows, author and journalist for The Atlantic, has been studying local political and civic initiatives around the country. His thesis is that given a paralyzed Federal government, local entities have to figure out ways to take care of their community. Well, ASC is hyper-local, a small environmental group, functioning for nearly 50 years to bring nature and conservation to the mid-Willamette Valley.

Currently, Teri Engbring and our education team are delivering a range of programs, including the Winter Wildlife Field Day, that collectively reach nearly 3,000 attendees. This past summer, ASC sponsored Karen Ibarra as an intern at Finley NWR studying endangered Streaked Horned Larks. Corvallis is blessed with the presence of the OSU Bird Nerds and a talented band of local teenagers who contribute to ASC activities. One of them is Kai Frueh who is making significant contributions as an ASC Board Member. Kai is right in the thick of most discussions and has revitalized the ASC Facebook site. Christina Linkem is another recent addition to the board who has plunged in to start an ASC Instagram account.

I hope you will consider a gift to ASC to support these programs and aspirations. Keep in mind how fortunate we are to be in the midst of a young, vibrant birding and conservation community.



*Northern Harrier chicks hatching.  
Photo by W. Proebsting*

### ASC General Meeting

New Venue for ASC General Meetings on third Thursday of every month, through May, 2020! ASC general meetings this year will be at:

### First United Methodist Church

1165 NW Monroe Ave., Corvallis, in Wesley Hall, upstairs (elevator access is through doors on Monroe)

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*Bill Proebsting, Chapter President*

## Field Trip Schedule

### Local Second Saturday Field Trips

Our Saturday morning local field trips meet at 7:30 am by the Shelter in Willamette Park (end of SE Goodnight Ave.) for pre-birding introductions and social over a cup of tea. We will car pool and leave by 8:00 am, returning noonish. Bring suitable hat and shoes, raingear, bug spray, or sunscreen as appropriate. Remember water and snacks! These five-hour excursions are geared to people with an interest in learning more about birds (and their biology) that can be found in the immediate Corvallis area. All levels of expertise welcome. Led by Duncan Evered and Caryn Stoess.

### Registration required.

[CorvallisAudubonSecondSaturday@gmail.com](mailto:CorvallisAudubonSecondSaturday@gmail.com) for more information and sign-up.

Check the Midvalley ListServ, <http://www.midvalleybirding.org/pipermail/birding/>, a couple of days before the field trip for updates. Weather may alter plans.

**Next two Field Trips:** On November 9 and December 14 we will explore Finley NWR.

*Duncan Evered and Caryn Stoess*

## Check Newly Updated ASC Facebook Page!

Audubon Society of Corvallis is excited to have their Facebook page up to date. You'll get to hear about all of Audubon's events, amazing photos and fascinating articles. You can find us at Audubon Society of Corvallis or tag us @ **corvallisaudubon**. We also have a new group so you can share your questions and exciting sightings! Join us to see and share your nature observations, puzzles, and pictures!

*Kai Frueh and Nancy DeMasi, ASC Facebook*

## Don't Forget to Check out the New ASC Website, Too!

The site is located at [auduboncorvallis.org](http://auduboncorvallis.org), but the original site location will redirect users to the new site. It is also easy to use Google or another search engine to find us. Just type Corvallis Audubon in the search bar. Here's a bit of what you can find on our website:

The Bluebird Trail needs volunteer monitors for next spring to keep track of nesting success, so click on their pages to see what's involved and who to contact. Interested in Hesthavn history or how to help restore the native plants? There's a page for that too.

How about helping kids learn about birds? Education/ Outreach has lots of information and opportunities. Where is a good place to see the local birds? Birding describes field trips, bird counts, and a page of resources to explore. Thinking of joining ASC or making a donation? See About Us for that and more. Enjoy all the pretty birds, and tell us what you think!

*Sue Powell, ASC Website*

## Education News

### Beginning Birding Workshop

**Sat. Feb. 1, 2020 and another Sat. Feb. 29, 2020 – SIGN UP IS NOW OPEN**

"ASC is delighted to announce a beginning birding workshop for teens and adults in February taught by highly regarded local expert Don Boucher," says ASC Education Team Coordinator Teri Engbring.

The entire class is a single-day workshop from 10 am to 2 pm. You should only sign up for one of these classes, though two dates will be offered. It will be a fun introduction to bird identification, field guides, binocular use, bird watching culture, backyard birding and more. This includes a classroom session and time outside looking for birds. The class will be held at Audubon Society of Corvallis' Hesthavn Nature Center. Bring binoculars if you have them, but we'll have loners available.

Don Boucher has 18 years of experience instructing birding classes and leading field trips. Other Audubon volunteer instructors will be on hand for outside birding practice.

**Cost: \$15 per student (\$10 for ASC members)**

Registration (pick only one):

Feb 1, 2020: <https://forms.gle/TE5uG9Jkknwtr3u99>

Feb. 29, 2020: <https://forms.gle/r4kKxTC7vgGo23qP8>

Register early to ensure your spot. Class size is limited, registration will close once class is full. Contact Don Boucher for more information: [donaboucher@gmail.com](mailto:donaboucher@gmail.com)

*Don Boucher*

## Planning for the new program year

The ASC Ed Volunteer Team will meet on Nov 20 at 10:30 am to plan next steps in our program year. The theme for this year is "Connect with Nature." Together we will develop activities and outreach opportunities to enjoy with our friends and neighbors at events throughout the year.

New volunteers and returning team members are all welcome to join us in making learning about science, wildlife, and our environment fun and inspiring. For more information, contact Teri Engbring or other ASC Ed Team members at ASC General meetings or email Teri at [chateditors@gmail.com](mailto:chateditors@gmail.com)

We are still open to additional events that reach out to our community and inspire understanding, appreciation and love of nature.

*Teri Engbring, ASC Education Team*

## Hesthavn News

### Coming Work Parties

Here's the schedule for our Hesthavn work parties for the next two months to give you plenty of advance notice. These work parties are from 10 am to 2 pm.

- Nov. 10** - Weeds, probably yellow archangel
- Nov. 24** - Barn and yard tasks
- Dec. 8** - Weeds, almost certainly blackberries.
- Dec. 22** - Barn and yard tasks

**More details:** Sunday Nov. 10, 10 am to 2 pm. This will be a weed work party, and we'll be working on yellow archangel and stinky Bob. Yellow archangel is an herbaceous perennial plant used as a low-growing ornamental. This Eurasian native is in the mint family. Variegated forms of this plant are popular garden plants, but the species is considered a noxious weed where it has escaped cultivation and invaded forested areas. Stinky Bob (or herb-Robert) poses a threat to plant diversity in the forest understory. It is capable of growing under a full, closed canopy.

Sunday Nov. 24, 10 am to 2 pm. Barn and yard work party. We will work through the usual check-list. Tasks will range from servicing mouse traps to cleaning the gutters.

Come out with us to enjoy our beautiful Nature Center and help protect this precious habitat.

*Ray Drapek, Hesthavn Chair*

### Check out Hesthavn Nature Center

Guests who respect nature are welcome to walk the trails and enjoy the birds on our grounds any day. Information on future programs will be on the ASC website and in future editions of the CHAT.

**Directions to Hesthavn**, at 8590 NW Oak Creek Drive, Corvallis. Take Harrison west from downtown Corvallis, and after you cross 53rd, it becomes Oak Creek Drive. Pass Bald Hill farm and follow the signs for Nature Center. Hesthavn will be on your left shortly before the end of Oak Creek Dr.

## Atop the Nestbox

### 2019 Annual Bluebird Trail Nesting Report

This year the Bluebird Trail collected data that shows a decline in eggs hatched and nestlings that fledged. There can be many reasons for this, even not enough monitors to help gather data. We are in need of help to visit the nest boxes regularly to inspect the activity in the boxes during all stages of the nesting process. This allows us to learn about problems developing at the box like House Sparrows trying to take over. Nesting begins in April or May and can continue through August. We have boxes off of Bellfountain, Llewellyn, Greenberry, and Peterson Roads where our monitor can no longer manage. Monitors are also needed in the Lebanon area. Some monitors like to have a buddy to help on the visits if there are enough monitors. Should you be interested in being a volunteer monitor please contact me. This also applies to home owners with one or two boxes.

The Fall 2019 issue of the Journal of North American Bluebird Society (NABS) has an informative article by its president, Bernie Daniel, disclosing a gradual decline in the Eastern Bluebird population. NABS has collected over 100,000 point observations every year since 1966 for this species. The author states that the challenge now is to find out why the decline and determine what might be done to turn it around.

NABS receives many phone calls from the general public asking for help managing nest boxes. One of the most

common problems is losing the eggs or chicks due to a poor or even improper nest box mounting or placement. Often the box was nailed to a tree or fence post or mounted on a pole with no predator guard. Another common problem is a nest box mounted in House Wren habitat or a failure to recognize the need to deal with House Sparrows. The author also addresses other things that are harder to handle like blow fly maggots that get blood meals from the chicks and can be lethal.

Here's a summary of the data:

Bluebird Nesting Data	2018	2019
Attempts	251	268
Failures	40	28
1st broods	148	161
2nd broods	79	72
3rd broods	7	7
Eggs laid	1216	1273
Hatched	1018	1015
% hatched	84	80
Fledged	919	853
% fledged	90	84
fledged/occ box	5	4.5

I will be glad to email anyone a copy of this NABS Article. Rita Snyder – [rsnyder14@msn.com](mailto:rsnyder14@msn.com) or 541-752-6457

Volunteers interested in helping in the Lebanon area can contact Raylene Gordin, at: [gordin@centurytel.net](mailto:gordin@centurytel.net) or 541-258-6825.

*Rita Snyder*

## Community Notes

### Eagles in Oregon program

The Friends of the Willamette Valley National Wildlife Refuge Complex invite you to their Sunday, Nov 3 event from 1-3 pm. **EAGLES IN OREGON** will be held, rain or shine, at Rich Guadagno Memorial Loop Trail Parking Lot, Baskett Slough NWR, just north of Rickreall.

Oregon has abundant habitat for both bald and golden eagles throughout the year. The nesting population of bald eagles in Oregon has increased substantially since the 1970s, and the golden eagle nesting population appears to have been relatively stable since 2011. Frank Isaacs will discuss the history and current status of both species in Oregon, plus similarities and differences between bald and golden eagles, including tips on identification and aging.

Frank Isaacs worked on bald eagle research at OSU for 31 years and has led the statewide golden eagle nest survey for the past 9 years for Oregon Eagle Foundation. He is a co-founder of the Oregon Eagle Foundation and served a term as chairman of the Bald Eagle Working Team for Oregon and Washington. He has received numerous awards for his leadership in wildlife conservation and protection of eagles.

RSVP at [friendswvnwrc.org/eventsvolunteer](http://friendswvnwrc.org/eventsvolunteer)

*Kris Ebbe and Carolyn Suckow  
Outreach and Education Committee  
Friends of the Willamette Valley NWRC*

## Winter Wings Fest in Klamath Falls

The Winter Wings Festival brings together birders and photographers of all stripes to learn and explore the Klamath Basin, renowned for its winter raptors and its stunning abundance and diversity of waterfowl. The Festival will run from Thursday, Feb. 13 through Sunday, Feb. 16, 2020. This year will feature nature cartoonist and writer Rosemary Mosco, wildlife photographer and cinematographer Gerrit Vyn, and author Nathan Pieplow. Join us for an extensive array of field trips, workshops, presentations, and receptions. For more information, go to our website:

[www.WinterWingsFest.org](http://www.WinterWingsFest.org),

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/winterwingsfest/>, call 877-541-BIRD (2473), or email us at [info@winterwingsfest.org](mailto:info@winterwingsfest.org) Registration Opens Dec. 7, 9 am PST, and many field trips fill fast!

*Diana Samuels, Winter Wings Festival Coordinator*

## Olympic BirdFest 2020

Grab your binoculars and join Olympic BirdFest 2020 at the Dungeness River Audubon Center, Sequim, WA, April 17-19, 2020.

Experience the magic of the North Olympic Peninsula... quiet bays and estuaries, sandy beaches, a five-mile-long sand spit, and a protected island bird sanctuary on the Strait of Juan de Fuca with wetlands, tide pools, rainforests, and lush river valleys. The birds will be sporting their finest spring plumage for this celebration. Enjoy guided birding trips, a boat tour, and a gala banquet. Our featured speaker this year is Scott Pearson, a researcher in Ecology, Marine Biology and Zoology at the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife.

Come bird with us. Check us out online at [www.olympicbirdfest.org](http://www.olympicbirdfest.org). Or contact us by phone, at 360-681-4076, or E-mail at [info@olympicbirdfest.org](mailto:info@olympicbirdfest.org).

Marion Rutledge, Birdfest 2020 Co-Chair

## Snow Goose Festival

The 21st Annual Snow Goose Festival of the Pacific Flyway will be held Jan. 22-26 in Chico, CA. The 5-day event celebrates the millions of waterfowl and thousands of raptors that migrate along the Pacific Flyway and call the Northern Sacramento Valley their winter home. This is one of the most diverse areas of California, with habitats from sweeping plains and grasslands to rolling foothills, and mountain peaks.

Over 70 field trips and workshops cover a wide variety of interests and ability levels. In addition to birding field trips to see waterfowl, raptors, and songbirds, you can tour a nature preserve, visit a local vineyard, or hike the scenic Sutter Buttes. Or learn about nature photography, bird carving, recording nature sounds, identifying backyard birds, and see live raptor demonstrations. Enjoy a wildlife art exhibit at the Museum of Northern California Art. Also, participate in the "Gathering of Wings" Banquet and Silent Auction. The Key-

note Speaker will be Karen Amstutz, Yosemite Park Ranger, Naturalist, and Guide.

Registration begins in early December. Get on our email list ASAP for info on when registration opens, deadlines, and any changes to the program. You can follow us on Facebook, too!

For more information: [www.snowgoosefestival.org](http://www.snowgoosefestival.org) or contact: Jennifer Patten, Event Coordinator, at [info@snowgoosefestival.org](mailto:info@snowgoosefestival.org) or (530) 592-9092.

*Billie Sommerfeld, Snow Goose Festival*

## Field Notes

### 09/28/19-10/24/19

Cooling weather brought snow flurries on Marys Peak 29 Sep, then light frost to the lower elevations of the Coast Range 1-2 Oct and finally down to the valley floor 9-10 Oct. However valley temperatures stayed well above freezing for the rest of the period. Insects including dragonflies were out in abundance on sunny days through the end of the period. Native broad-leaf trees including big-leaf maples, black cottonwoods, and Oregon white oaks turned into fall colors but most still held their leaves through the end of the period.

**Abbreviations and locations:** ASC = Audubon Society of Corvallis, LWC = Luckiamute Watershed Council, NWR = National Wildlife Refuge, STP = sewage treatment ponds. Jackson-Frazier Wetlands are in north Corvallis near Cheldelin Middle School. Lake Filbert is an informal name for a large hazelnut irrigation pond along Hwy 99W north of Suver. Luckiamute State Natural Area is along the Willamette River northwest of Albany. Philomath STP is south of Philomath and requires access permission. Snag Boat Bend is an annex of Finley NWR s. of Peoria. Teloh-Calapooia Park is in south Albany near Linn-Benton Community College, Talking Water Gardens are in NE Albany. Cheadle Marsh and North Prairie are locations at Finley NWR.

## Conservation focus: Lewis's Woodpeckers

**Lewis's Woodpecker** (*Melanerpes lewis*), sometimes called the "crow woodpecker" because of overall dark appearance and slowly flapping style of flight, is an emblematic bird of the West, named for the co-leader of the Lewis & Clark expedition. Now local birdwatchers in our area think of this as a bird to look for on spring/summer trips over the Cascades; the few that show up locally as fall migrants or wintering birds tend to be eagerly sought out.

However, well into the 1940s these strikingly colored woodpeckers were still a regular summer resident west of the Cascades, from Vancouver in the northern Puget Sound region, south through the Willamette Valley, and on through the Umpqua and Rogue Valleys. Locally, nesting continued at Finley NWR into the mid-1970s. The extirpation of the Willamette Valley nesting population is thought to have been mainly caused by loss of large-diameter trees in savanna settings especially big old **valley ponderosa pines** which had relatively soft wood, allowing excavation of nest cavities by this relatively weak-billed woodpecker.

The population east of the Cascades is also in long-term decline, as large-diameter snags have become more scarce



due to logging and high-intensity forest fires. Since 2003, our counterparts just across the mountains in the Bend area, East Cascades Audubon Society, working in cooperation with the American Bird Conservancy, have shown that Lewis's Woodpeckers will use suitably designed nest boxes when suitable natural cavities are in short supply. See <https://www.ecaudubon.org/lewiss-woodpeckers-nestboxes> for more on their findings.

Unfortunately, even if the east-side population can be stabilized through these and other conservation efforts, the chances of Lewis's Woodpeckers returning to the Willamette Valley as a nesting species seem remote. Short of extreme measures such as translocation, the best hope might be to "persuade" some to stick around into breeding season, by putting up nest boxes in oak savanna habitat that they use in winter.

This fall has brought good numbers of migrants to our area. After Briana Lindh found multiple Lewis's Woodpeckers while surveying for native bees on a prairie/savanna site near Jefferson 6 Oct, Bob Altman and I followed up and estimated about ten there on 10 Oct. The woodpeckers were busy catching arthropods and stuffing pieces of acorns into crevices of the ancient oaks on this site. In Corvallis, two more **Lewis's Woodpeckers** flew through the hilltop area on the east end of Chip Ross Park 14 Oct; one pecking at something in a topped and limbed Douglas-fir snag flew on after one of the resident **Acorn Woodpeckers** confronted it (Jamie Simmons). Two more Lewis's Woodpeckers were in trees along Bruce Rd. at Finley NWR 19 Oct (Bruce, Eric & Andrew Pratt).

Frank Kolwicz reported that a **Lewis's Woodpecker** continuing since last month at a vineyard north of Baskett Slough NWR was busy on 19 Oct, cleaning out a nest box designed for kestrels and also caching insects in a crevice in the front of the box. On 23 Oct the woodpecker continued this work, filling the entire crevice with insects so it was filled with tiny legs and wings. As an **accipiter** came through the area, chasing a **kingfisher** which dove into the water to evade the hawk, the woodpecker took refuge in the nest box. Frank's account suggests that nest boxes might be useful to boost survival rates for Lewis's Woodpeckers wintering in our region.

### Very late nesting

An adult **Acorn Woodpecker** caught flying insects and stuffed them into the beak of a fledgling in SE Philomath 24 Oct. According to a 15-year study of this species in the Santa Lucia Mountains near Monterey, Calif., fall nesting is rare but has been observed in years with heavy acorn crops, with fledging dates as late as 1 Nov (Koenig, W.D. and R.L. Mumme, *Population Ecology of the Cooperatively Breeding Acorn Woodpecker*, Princeton, 1987).

### Lingering/late southbound migrants

Ten **Cinnamon Teal** continued at the Philomath STP as of 16 Oct (Mark Baldwin) and five were still there 23 Oct (Vickie Buck).

At least one **Green Heron** was regular at Stewart Lake on the Hewlett-Packard campus through the period, with two seen there by Brand Benson on 23 Oct (Jamie Simmons). Jamie also heard **two Virginia Rails** squabbling there on 22 Oct.

1120 **Vaux's Swifts** roosted in the Lebanon Hotel 28

Sep (fide Larry Schwitters). Numbers in Corvallis peaked with 2210 going into a downtown chimney 30 Sep, then 5000 on 1 Oct (Mary Garrard, Bev Clark). A large flock was west of downtown 4 Oct (Nancy Baumeister). About 600 to 1000 swifts swirled over downtown Albany 30 Sep but no volunteers managed to monitor the swift chimney that was built to replace the former fire station chimney.

A "kettle" of 20 **Turkey Vultures** circled high on a thermal just s. of Philomath, then drifted off to the south 6 Oct (Virginia Stanton). James Philipson saw a group of 35 to 40 flying south rapidly over s. Corvallis, later in the week. Lone vultures soared over sw. Corvallis 18 Oct (Don Boucher) and over sw. Corvallis 22 Oct (Andrew Pratt).

Flocks of **Band-tailed Pigeons** were seen around town regularly in early Oct. Flocks feeding on the heavy acorn crop in the Cardwell Hills neighborhood 9 Oct created a racket by causing acorns to rain down on Randy & Pam Comeleo's metal roof.

A **Western Wood-Pewee** was heard, then seen in Willamette Park 29 Sep (Nicholas Martens, Caleb Centanni). One was still there 30 Sep thru 6 Oct (Duncan Evered). An apparent hatch-year bird still showing yellow-orange at the base of its lower mandible was in Peoria 3 Oct (Greg Metcalfe). A late "**Western**" (Pacific-slope or Cordilleran) **Flycatcher** was banded at Luckiamute State Natural Area 5 Oct (OSU banding class), then seen again later the same morning (Nolan Clements, Caleb Centanni).

A late **Warbling Vireo** and a **Wilson's Warbler** were in Willamette Park 28 Sep (Duncan Evered).

Hundreds of migrant **Barn Swallows** and **Violet-green Swallows** foraged low over Talking Water Gardens during a Luckiamute Watershed Council field trip there 29 Sep. A late **Northern Rough-winged Swallow** foraging along with **Tree Swallows** as well as Violet-green and Barn Swallows gave its distinctive call in Harrisburg 2 Oct (Barbara Combs). Rana Foster also noted possible Northern Rough-winged Swallows among swallow flocks near Peoria 2 Oct. Two **Barn Swallows** were still at Talking Water Gardens 12 Oct (Rana Foster).

**Swainson's Thrush** migration was going strong through the end of Sep. One visited a western crabapple tree in Jim Smith's yard near Teloh-Calapooia Park 6 Oct. One visited a small stream in Claudia Regier's sw. Corvallis yard daily at sunset through 15 Oct. Kai Frueh heard a very late individual calling near Crystal Lake in SE Corvallis 22 Oct.

A late **Hermit Warbler** foraged in an osoberry (Indian-plum) bush in Willamette Park 2 Oct (Duncan Evered). A migrant **Common Yellowthroat** skulked in bushes just east of the OSU campus 2 Oct (Fang-yu Shen). On 11 Oct on a conservation site near Monroe, Paul Adamus had a very brief look at what might have been a very late **Yellow-breasted Chat**.

One **Vesper Sparrow** was still at a nesting site in the Soap Creek Valley 6 Oct (Bob Altman). A **Western Tanager** called at Peavy Arboretum n. of Corvallis 2 Oct (Paul Adamus). A very late first-winter **Black-headed Grosbeak** visited Jim Smith's feeders near Teloh-Calapooia Park through 3 Oct.

### Visitors headed for the coast?

October can be a good month to check mountain lakes, reservoirs and larger ponds in the valley for **scoters**, **loons**, and **grebes** that stop to rest on their migration from Arctic regions toward the Pacific coast.

A **Common Loon** turned up on Detroit Lake 1 Oct (Alex Farrant). An **Eared Grebe** and a **Western Grebe** visited the Philomath STP 16 Oct (Mark Baldwin). Another Western Grebe stopped on Lake Filbert 22 Oct (Bill Tice) but was gone by the next afternoon, presumably continuing on its way to coastal waters.

### Fall arrivals

**Cackling Geese** called over ne. Corvallis 9 Oct (Don Boucher). Three adult **Snow Geese** were at Baskett Slough NWR in the second week of Oct (Frank Kolwicz). Wintering flocks of **Northern Shoveler, American Wigeon, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Ruddy Duck, and American Coot** continued to build at the Philomath and Knoll Terrace STPs.

Numbers of **Great Egrets** in the valley continued to increase. One was at Snag Boat Bend 2 Oct when Rana Foster also noted a large **Western Pond Turtle**. The ASC field trip to Willamette Park 12 Oct noted egrets as well as **Double-crested Cormorants** (Caryn Stoess, Duncan Evered).

Raptors were seen more frequently as wintering eagles, hawks, and falcons continued to arrive. The ASC field trip to Willamette Park 12 Oct noted **Sharp-shinned Hawk, Bald Eagle, American Kestrel** and **Merlin**.

A **Sharp-shinned Hawk** hunting at feeder-level in Claudia Regier's sw. Corvallis yard 18 Oct may have succeeded, as four days later Claudia found evidence of a plucked **Mourning Dove** nearby. A **Rough-legged Hawk** hovering over the North Prairie at Finley NWR 11 Oct (Will Wright) was the first one reported locally this season.

A **Red-tailed Hawk** with wing tags reading "E/K" was photographed at Talking Water Gardens 11 Oct (Carol Hiler). This turned out to be one that was captured at Portland International Airport (PDX) last October, then released farther south in the valley and seen near Albany and Keizer from November through mid-May.

A **Prairie Falcon** was at Twin Buttes s. of Brownsville 8 Oct (Bob Altman, Frank Hall). Another flew by Philomath STP 16 Oct (Mark Baldwin).

A **Peregrine Falcon** hunting over a bare field at Baskett Slough NWR during the LWC bilingual bird walk on 12 Oct put a flock of **Cackling Geese** to flight as it flew over. The falcon turned out to be after smaller prey as it nabbed what appeared to be a pipit or a lark out of the air on a low pass, then landed to feed on its prey.

Wintering **Say's Phoebes** began to turn up with one s. of Philomath 2 Oct (Hendrik Herlyn) and one sw. of Halsey 24 Oct (Nancy Stotz). A first-fall **Northern Shrike** was photographed at Ankeny NWR 11 Oct. Flocks of **American Pipits** also continued to show up, including a flock of more than 200 in a recently tilled field near Jefferson 11 Oct.

Five **Clark's Nutcrackers** continued atop Marys Peak in light snow flurries 29 Sep (Audrey Addison) and four were still there 6 Oct (Nicholas Martens, Maureen Leong-Kee). A **Townsend's Solitaire** was photographed in the summit meadow 4 Oct (Jon. Anderson).

A **Hermit Thrush** turned up in Paul Adamus' Lewisburg Yard 1 Oct; Paul noted that numbers of **American Robins, Varied Thrushes, and Western Bluebirds** were also increasing with the cooler weather. Another **Varied Thrush** turned up in Starker Arts Park 11 Oct (Marge Popp).

A few **Pine Siskins** turned up in NE Corvallis 27 Sep (Don Boucher, Lisa Millbank). Six joined a very large flock of **American Goldfinches** at Jim Smith's feeders near Teloh-Calapooia Park 8 Oct.

A **Fox Sparrow** turned up in Claudia Regier's sw. Corvallis yard 4 Oct and continued through the period. Wintering sparrow species found by the ASC field trip to Willamette Park 12 Oct included **Fox Sparrow, Golden-crowned Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Song Sparrow, and Lincoln's Sparrow** (Caryn Stoess, Duncan Evered).

A male **Slate-colored (Dark-eyed) Junco** turned up in SE Albany 7-8 Oct (Deanna Emig). A "**Cassiar**" **Junco** turned up in Jamie Simmons' nw. Corvallis yard 16 Oct. This type of junco is regarded by some references as distinct subspecies of Dark-eyed Junco (*cismontanus*), but is treated by others as an intergrade between "Oregon" and "Slate-colored" Juncos, nesting where these overlap in east-central British Columbia and nw. from there into Yukon.

### Local movements

Seven **American White Pelicans** flew over Corvallis 8 Oct (Bob Altman). The same number of pelicans flew over the Monmouth area 19 Oct (Frank Kolwicz) – perhaps the same flock wandering around between feeding areas.

During fall and winter, large flocks of **American Crows** can be seen over Corvallis, flying to evening roosts in the hills west of town, then back out toward town in the morning. Don Boucher notes that some of these birds apparently make daily visits to the same territories where they nested during spring/summer, as they readily recognize Don as a source of peanuts outside his workplace.

**Chestnut-backed Chickadees** were regular through the period at suet feeders in Claudia Regier's sw. Corvallis yard, which she notes is unusual. Normally in our area this species is closely associated with conifers, but during fall some may move out into adjoining deciduous habitats. A **White-breasted Nuthatch** (more typical of oak woodlands) also began to visit regularly on 10 Oct. Another turned up 2 Oct in a NE Corvallis neighborhood where Don Boucher and Lisa Millbank rarely see them.

At least twenty **Western Meadowlarks** – several of them singing – foraged on the southeast side of Baskett Butte at Baskett Slough NWR on 12 Oct (LWC bilingual bird walk). Thanks to native prairie preservation and restoration, this site now has one of the most robust nesting populations in the Willamette Valley, so it's possible that these were local birds that have now flocked up. However by mid-Oct migrant wintering flocks were also showing up from east of the Cascades.

### Getting to be familiar (or too familiar?)

A few species that were rare or absent a few decades ago have become regular year-round, but still can catch our attention in various ways.

A **Barred Owl** perched along a power line a block north of the OSU greenhouses in nw. Corvallis on the evening of 30 Sep, seemingly unperturbed by passersby who stopped to look (Susan Brown).

Several **Black Phoebes** were at Talking Water Gardens 29 Sep. One was at Sunset Park 29 Sep (Marge Popp). Another was at Jackson-Frazier Wetland 20 Oct (Neighborhood Naturalist).

In the “too familiar” category, **Wild Turkeys** continue to increase around the outskirts of local towns as a result of successful efforts to introduce them to Oregon as a game species. When thirty invaded a yard s. of Philomath on 9 Oct; Virginia Stanton noted that they were “not welcome” visitors.

### Off-course birds and other surprises

A **Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** foraged along with **Long-billed Dowitchers** at Ankeny NWR 6 Oct (Dena Turner, Jean Bryant), continuing through 7 Oct (Paul Adamus).

A **Great Blue Heron** at Ankeny NWR 6 Oct was submerged nearly up to its chin, possibly to avoid a swarm of wasps (Andi Stephens).

Over the past year, **Beavers** began to work on an old, defunct dam along the deeply ditched channel that routes flow from Jackson-Frazier Wetland through Village Green Park and on to Sequoia Creek in NE Corvallis; Don Boucher noted that by 20 Oct they'd made impressive progress.

A **Gray Fox** ran through a yard on Logsdon Ridge just after dark on 11 Oct, bypassing two young **skunks** that were munching on sunflower seed shells under a feeder (Carma Sue Henry).

Randy & Pam Comeleo found a very young **Rubber Boa** – less than 3 inches wide when coiled up in boa fashion – in Dunn Forest 22 Oct.

### Natural areas:

#### More on Jackson-Frazier Wetland

Howard Bruner notes that **Willamette Valley bittercress** (*Cardamine penduliflora*) found by OSU botanist Dick Halse was another one of the plant species that spurred preservation efforts for this site in the 1990s. The plant seems to require a certain amount of microtopography so Howard suggests that some of the previous disturbance might be beneficial.

**Next month:** Look for more arrivals of birds from the north; a few **Snow Buntings** turned up on Marys Peak just as this was going to press, and Lapland Longspurs were also beginning to be reported from Fern Ridge near Eugene. Please post your observations to the Mid-Valley birding list at [midvalleybirding.org](http://midvalleybirding.org), e-mail them to me at [joel.geier@peak.org](mailto:joel.geier@peak.org), send by post to 38566 Hwy 99W Corvallis 97330, or call (541) 745-5821 by 21 Nov.

*Joel Geier, Field Notes Compiler*

## Board Meeting Summary

### October 10, 2019 Board Meeting

1. The Board discussed financial issues around publishing the Chat. ASC will continue to publish it, and efforts are being made to economize.
2. A Young Birders Club is still being discussed. Portland Audubon may become involved soon.
3. The Facebook page & Facebook Group page are coming alive with Kai Frueh's energy & expertise. Check them out!
4. Unauthorized parking at Hesthavn Nature Center continues to be a conundrum.
5. The 50th Anniversary of the founding of ASC is coming up in 2020. Get ready to celebrate!

*Linda Campbell, Board Secretary*

### Open 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 Board meeting minutes or ASC website for location.

## Membership Corner

ASC has four new members. Welcome to Kathleen Burbey, Robin Comforto, Mary Ann Roberts, and Jill Ziller.

### General Membership Renewal Information

For membership renewal online go the ASC website (<https://auduboncorvallis.org/membership/>) and renew via PayPal. To renew by USPS, mail a check to ASC, PO Box 148, Corvallis, OR 97339.

## Email Notifications/Meeting Cancellations

We encourage members to join the ASC listserve to receive emergency email notifications about meeting cancellations related to weather conditions, updated information about ASC events, fieldtrip locations, and volunteer work parties. Send an email to the listserve administrator (Karan Fairchild, [alderspr@peak.org](mailto:alderspr@peak.org)) and request to be added.

## Have You Changed Your Contact Info?

If you have moved or changed your email/mail addresses please update your contact information.

Thank you for your generosity and support!

*Paul Adamus, Membership Chair*

## Contributors to this Chat

Mark Baldwin, William Proebsting, Teri Engbring, Joel Geier, Don Boucher, Ray Drapek, Linda Campbell, Paul Adamus, Sue Powell, Kai Frueh, Rita Snyder, Kris Ebbe, Carolyn Suckow, Diana Sasmuels, Billie Sommerfeld, and Marion Rutledge

## Chat Articles

The Chat editors, Teri Engbring and Naomi Weidner, welcome articles from all members of the Audubon Society of Corvallis. Please submit articles to the Chat editor by the fourth Thursday of the month. Submit text using Microsoft Word and photos to: [chateditors@gmail.com](mailto:chateditors@gmail.com).

## Audubon Society of Corvallis

## Calendar

Nov. 9	Second Saturday Field Trip to Finley NWR, 7:30 am
Nov.10	Hesthavn Work Party. Weeds, 10-2
Nov.14	ASC Board meeting, 7 pm at Engbring home
Nov. 21	ASC Monthly Members Meeting, 6:30 pm at First United Methodist Church (NEW venue this year)
Nov. 21	Articles due for Dec. 2019 CHAT
Nov. 21	Field Notes submissions due
Nov. 24	Hesthavn Work Party. Barn and yard, 10-2
Dec. 14	Second Saturday Field Trip to Finley NWR, 7:30 am

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; \$150 for Patron Level; and \$250 for Benefactor Level.

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**Please let us know:**  
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