



THE CHAT

DECEMBER 2019

VOL. 49 #4

December 19 Program:

Members Slide Show – Favorite Nature Photos of the past year



December is our annual Member Slide Show. Select your best nature photos to share with the group at the Dec. 19 meeting. Photos should be nature-themed, i.e. any interesting, beautiful or fun photo(s) of birds, other animals, plants, nature scenes, etc. are welcome. Bring no more than 20 of your favorites, along with accompanying stories. Plan your presentation to be 5 minutes or less.

If possible, email your photos to VP Mark Baldwin prior to the meeting. Email photos or questions to: mark.baldwin2@comcast.net. You may also bring them on a USB memory device that evening. If so, plan to arrive about 6:30 so we can get them loaded on the computer. Placing your photos in a Powerpoint presentation seems to work best. This simplifies the overall presentation.

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

Upcoming programs:

January 19: Tom and Ginny Stevens: Travels in South Africa

February 20: Dan Luoma: Wildflower Adventures and the Native Plant Society

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

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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President's Corner

Short Days

The winter solstice is closing in. Short days. Dark days, too, though less so as our weather becomes strange.

Speaking of dark, the study of North American bird populations published in Science this autumn confirmed what most bird watchers experience on a daily basis. Continual decline of most bird species. Rosenberg et al. estimated losses of 17-53% across major groups of birds.

Clearly, a profound assessment about how we manage and protect habitat on a global scale is in order. As the titans battle over that, however, I will pass along a list of suggestions provided by Audubon, the American Bird Conservancy and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Most of us are aware of these ideas, but given the winter solstice, various festivals of light and the coming New Year, it is well to revisit them and perhaps ratchet up our efforts.

1. Make windows safer. The Proebstings installed the Acopian BirdSaver system a number of years ago and have observed zero bird deaths since then. Simple, cheap, effective.



Acopian BirdSaver

2. Keep cats indoors.
3. Reduce lawn, plant natives. Native plants host many more insect species and numbers of insects, a.k.a. bird food, than non-natives. Search for Tallamy's Lepidoptera Index for an example. Tallamy has reported that as many as 9,000 larvae are required to raise a brood of four chickadees.
4. Avoid insecticides.
5. Drink bird-friendly coffee.
6. Reduce plastic use.
7. Keep birding, report your data to eBird or other databases, participate in Christmas Bird Counts. CBC data was important in the bird population study. The 2019 Corvallis CBC is scheduled for Dec. 17.
8. Keep bringing light to the world. Enjoy your holidays.

Bill Proebsting, Chapter President

Corvallis CBC Will Be Tuesday, December 17, 2019

This year the Corvallis Christmas Bird Count will be held on Tuesday, December 17th, 2019. Everybody is invited to join us - and participation is free.

The Christmas Bird Count is an organized, continent-wide survey which documents every bird seen on a given day from sunrise to sunset. It has been held yearly since 1900, making the Christmas Bird Count a major contributor to the knowledge base of wintering birds in North America.

The count is an all-day event and an excellent opportunity for novice bird watchers to join with seasoned veterans and learn more about identifying and finding the local birds. Half-day participants and home feeder-watchers are also welcome. I would like to particularly encourage participation by anyone with feeders in the count circle who can spare at least one hour to watch their yard. Some counts, particularly in Canada, are mostly made up of feeder watchers. Even Eugene has about 30 feeder watchers compared to the 6-8 Corvallis usually gets, so there is room to grow in this area. Winter feeder watching can be quite rewarding as birds try to expend the least amount of energy to get the most amount of food.

The Corvallis count circle with a 7.5 mile radius is centered near the Corvallis airport and is usually divided into 13 sections, with a team of 3-6 individuals assigned to each section. A link to a map of the count circle is posted on ASC's website under bird counts. Team leaders for each section will make arrangements with the rest of their group for a meeting place and time (usually between 7:00 and 7:30 a.m.) on the morning of the count. Participants should bring cold- and wet-weather gear, binoculars, a spotting scope, if you have one, and snacks for the day. A notepad and pencil or electronic recording devices, field guides, camera, and a thermos with something hot are always good ideas, as well.

There will be a countdown potluck held after the count. Information on the countdown potluck will be given to all participants.

If you are interested in participating or would like further information, I will be happy to hear from you; my contact information is marciafcutler@comcast.net.

Marcia F. Cutler, CBC Coordinator

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.

Contact CorvallisAudubonSecondSaturday@gmail.com for more information and sign-up.

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

Next Field Trip: On December 14 we will explore Finley NWR.

Duncan Evered and Caryn Stoess

Check Out our Newly Updated Website and Facebook Page

For an easy update of ASC's programs and events, check out auduboncorvallis.org. Want more details? Click on the links provided to skip to detailed descriptions. Most of the birds in the website photos are local, so guess their common names, then hover the cursor over the picture to see how well you do. Use the menu on every page to explore **Birding, Education/Outreach, Conservation, and About Us**.

Sue Powell, ASC Website

For a quick way to learn about all of ASC's events, amazing photos, puzzles, and fascinating articles, check out our Facebook page. Share your questions and exciting sightings! Find us at Audubon Society of Corvallis or tag us [@corvallisaudubon](https://www.facebook.com/corvallisaudubon).

Kai Frueh and Nancy DeMasi, ASC Facebook

Education News

Beginning Birding Workshop

Reminder: there are limited spaces available for two beginning ASC birding workshops by local expert Don Boucher.

The class runs from 10 am to 2 pm on either Feb 1 or 29, 2020. 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 Corvallis Audubon's Hesthavn Nature Center on Oak Creek Dr.

Led by Don Boucher and other Audubon volunteer instructors. Don has 18 years of experience instructing birding classes and leading field trips.

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

Registration (pick only one):

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

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

Don Boucher

Here's what else your Ed team is working on for this year

Our dedicated education team volunteers are tackling several events and programs in the coming months to help our community Connect with Nature!

Look for us and save these dates for:

- Franklin School Science Night 1/23/2020
- Willamette Valley Bird Symposium 1/25/2020
- Beginning Birding Classes at Hesthavn in Feb
- Insights into Gardening 2/8/2020
- Raptor Identification Workshop 3/1/2020
- Sustainability Fair 3/12/2020
- Winter Wildlife Field Day 3/14/2020
- National Audubon Photo Show in April
- Field trip classes at Chintimini April-June
- Chintimini Open House 5/10/2020
- Get Outdoors Day at Peavy 5/30/2020

Our volunteer team is always open to additional members who want to help inspire others to preserve, protect and enjoy Nature. For info, email Teri at chateditors@gmail.com! Thanks,

Teri Engring, ASC Education Team

Hesthavn News

Coming Work Parties

There will be a weed work party on Sunday, Dec. 8 from 10 am to 2 pm. We will most likely be pulling blackberries on the far side of the creek.

There will be a barn and yard work party on Sunday, Dec. 22 from 10 am to 2 pm. We will be working from the usual check-list. Top items this time of the year include servicing the dehumidifiers, keeping the bridge and ramp clear of leaves and twigs, and checking mouse traps.

I could use some help creating a back-drop graphic for the parking lot kiosk. It would be great if someone with graphic arts skills could take this on. I can give you text, photos, and a general description of how we would like this laid out. Send me a note at raydrapek@gmail.com if you are interested.

Ray Drapek, Hesthavn Chair

Hesthavn Nature Center will be open for visitors on 3 coming dates

ASC Volunteer Dale Mitchell and others have offered to open up Hesthavn so guests of all ages can enjoy the interactive displays and extensive taxidermied bird collection from 1:00 to 4:00 pm on three coming Saturdays: December 14, January 11 and January 25.

Guests who respect Nature are also welcome to walk the trails and enjoy the birds on our grounds any day. See the ASC website for more information.

Directions to Hesthavn

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

New Bluebird Trail Chair

After serving as chairperson of the Bluebird Trail since 2009, Raylene Gordin stepped down from that position in October 2019. She plans to remain active as a bluebird nest box monitor in Linn County for the foreseeable future. Thank you, Raylene, for your decade of service heading the Bluebird Trail.

I have offered to take the reins from Raylene and become the new chairperson of the Bluebird Trail. Our goal will remain the same: to promote the conservation of Western Bluebirds. One of the main ways we do this is by monitoring nest boxes in Benton and Linn counties during the breeding season, which runs from April through August.

We need more monitors for 2020! Two specific locations where we could use volunteers are near Lebanon and the area south of Corvallis, on Bellfountain, Llewellyn, Greenberry, and Peterson roads. If you would like to help, please contact me (Matt Lee) at sueandmatt@comcast.net. You may also contact Rita Snyder at rsnyder14@msn.com or 541-752-6457.

Matt Lee, Bluebird Trail Chair

Community Notes

Airlie/Albany Christmas Bird Count

This year's Airlie/Albany Christmas Bird count is Saturday, January 5, 2020. No fee is required to participate, and newcomers are welcome to join up with more experienced birders. The count includes the E.E. Wilson Wildlife Area, Luckiamute State Natural Area, Helmick State Park, and most of the city of Albany. It also extends to parts of the Ankeny National Wildlife Refuge, McDonald-Dunn Forest, and the Lewisburg area. See the map at the link below. For details on meeting place and times, contact Paul Adamus (541) 231-3095, adamus7@comcast.net; Joel Geier (541) 745-5821, joel.geier@peak.org

Paul Adamus

From Our Friends at Finley NWR Vistas and Vineyards Paintings of Finley

November through January (Monday-Friday 8 am-4 pm, Saturday & Sunday 10 am-4 pm) Refuge Office, William L. Finley NWR (~10 miles south of Corvallis). The Refuge office has some new artwork on display featuring the buildings, landscapes and wildlife of Finley provided by the Vistas & Vineyards painting group. These beautiful paintings will be on display & available for purchase from November-January. A portion of the sale for most paintings will go to the Friends of the Willamette Valley NWR Complex. Come take a look and support local art and the Friends! For questions please email isabel_justiniano@fws.gov. For a map of the refuge visit https://www.fws.gov/refuge/William_L_Finley/map.html.

Short-eared Owls

Sunday, December 1st, 3 pm to 5:30 pm Prairie Overlook, William L. Finley NWR (~ 10 miles south of Corvallis OR) Fun/Educational Event. One of the great experiences at Finley NWR is to observe raptors at the North Prairie Overlook on a fine winter's evening. This restored prairie often supports a high population of mice and voles that attract a fantastic number of birds of prey. Around sunset, we should be able to see an emergence of Short-eared Owls (and occasionally a Barn Owl). Bring binoculars, and/or a spotting scope. Make sure you dress warmly and be prepared for rain or wind. The presenter, Duncan Evered, has extensive birding experience including 21 years as the director of the Malheur Field Station at Malheur NWR. Please RSVP if you plan to attend, via Short-eared Owls <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/N9TDPG7>. For questions please email fwnwrc.outreach@gmail.com. For a map of the refuge visit https://www.fws.gov/refuge/William_L_Finley/map.html

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

Field Notes

10/25/19-11/21/19

Temperatures on the Willamette valley floor dipped down to 25 F on 29 Oct but otherwise stayed mostly above freezing through the period, with just occasional light frosts. Rainfall was scant for the season, as a high-pressure weather system settled over the region in late October through early November. This brought morning fog and air-quality advisories, making it difficult to see the Cascades. However by 29 Oct Tom Gilg reported that a light dusting of snow covered north facing slopes in the Santiam Pass area, and ice crystals pushing up through the mud in the lake bed of Fish Lake.

A yellow wood-violet in full bloom 17 Nov in Karan & Jim Fairchild's woods sw. of Philomath was a very surprising sight for so late in the season; Karan noted that a few bees and



yellowjackets were also still active.

Abbreviations and locations: NWR = National Wildlife Refuge, STP = sewage treatment ponds. Jackson-Frazier Wetland is in north Corvallis near Cheldelin Middle School. Luckiamute State Natural Area is along the Willamette River northwest of Albany. Philomath STP is south of Philomath and requires an access permit from the Philomath Public Works Department. Cabell Marsh, McFadden Marsh, and North Prairie are locations at Finley NWR.

Conservation focus: Burrowing Owls and Horned Larks

When the Scottish botanist David Douglas traveled up the Willamette Valley in late September and October of 1826, he marveled at the expansive grasslands – prairies and savannas – that covered the valley floor for tens of miles on either side of the river, maintained by the native Kalapuya people's practice of annual burning. Settlers arriving by wagon trains later in the mid-1800s saw these grasslands as prime farmland, just waiting for the plough. After widespread conversion of native prairie to agricultural and residential uses, prairie is now our rarest native habitat, with less than 1% of the pre-settlement area remaining.

With that severe loss of habitat has come the decline of prairie flora and fauna. Some grassland birds have become rare, including Common Nighthawks, Horned Larks, Vesper Sparrows and Western Meadowlarks, and others such as Short-eared Owls and Lark Sparrows have practically disappeared as nesting species.

Burrowing Owls are one of the species that apparently no longer nest in the Willamette Valley, though winter visitors still occur. According to a review of historical data by Bob Altman (Historical and Current Distribution and Populations of Bird Species in Prairie-Oak Habitats in the Pacific Northwest, *Northwest Science* v. 85 p. 194-222, 2011), Burrowing Owls were likely a regular though uncommon nesting species in the Willamette Valley until the early 1950s, based on local observations during breeding season. OSU herpetologists mentioned encountering these curious owls while collecting rattlesnakes atop Peterson Butte, and R.H. Eddy mentioned seeing them along Peoria Rd. while traveling to one of the field sites for his 1953 OSU Master's thesis on summer bird habitats in the Corvallis area. The late Corvallis soil scientist Joel Norgren encountered Burrowing Owls in Camas Swale near Creswell while doing summer surveys for the Bureau of Land Management in the late 1960s or early 1970s (fide Lars Norgren).

Recent decades have yielded no evidence of continued nesting by Burrowing Owls in the Willamette Valley. However a few still show up to winter, mainly in sw Linn County and se Benton County, where grass-seed cultivation maintains open, mostly treeless landscapes, and roadside culverts provide daytime roosts.

One local wintering owl monitored by Jeff Fleischer in recent years turned out to be a banded bird from the former chemical weapons depot near Umatilla, where biologists and volunteers have installed artificial "burrows" as part of an effort to preserve this declining species:

<https://www.opb.org/news/article/oregon-burrowing-owls-umatilla-chemical-depot-conservation/>

This year a different (unbanded) owl showed up at the same location by 25 Oct. From the amount of guano on the culvert, Jeff judged that it had already been there for a while.

Burrowing Owls are very sensitive to disturbance. Longtime Linn County birder and biologist Roy Gerig cautions that if you happen to see one along a rural road, please don't stop for photos. The owls that winter in our area seem to be accustomed to cars that keep moving along the road. But if you stop, you'll likely cause the owl to fly, exposing it to diurnal predators. So

it's best to keep rolling by at 5 or 10 mph, enjoy your drive-by view but leave the owl in peace.

Another Willamette Valley grassland bird that could benefit from your attention this month is the "**Streaked**" **Horned Lark**, the subspecies endemic to western Oregon, western Washington, and formerly sw British Columbia. These larks were listed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) as Threatened under the Endangered Species Act in 2013.

Since then government agencies have made efforts to protect and enhance lark habitat on a few pockets of public land. However on private lands there are no significant protections or even landowner incentives to accommodate larks. Six years after listing, the USFWS has yet to conduct roadside surveys to estimate how many larks still nest on private agricultural lands, even though experts agree that agricultural lands in the Willamette Valley likely account for a large majority of the total population.

Thanks to a successful lawsuit by the Center for Biological Diversity, in July a federal judge ordered the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to reconsider the status of these larks. The USFWS has now prepared a draft recovery plan which is available at:

<https://www.fws.gov/pacific/ecoservices/endangered/recovery/larkrecovery.html>.

Public comments on this recovery plan are being accepted through December 30, 2019. **Please check the ASC website** for a summary of the key issues, and a link to the federal website where you can comment to support stronger protection for these endangered grassland birds.

Greeting the season in the mistletoe

Pacific mistletoe (*Phoradendron villosum*) grows as a parasitic plant on several types of native trees, especially Oregon white oak. Though regarded as toxic for humans, the white berries can be a source of winter food for birds. On 3 Nov Rana Foster noted **Acorn Woodpeckers**, **Western Bluebirds** and **European Starlings** all feeding in mistletoe in the oaks around Finley NWR headquarters.

Western Bluebirds and **Cedar Waxwings** foraging in the tops of mistletoe-laden oaks in Chip Ross Park 11 Nov were joined by a migrant **Townsend's Solitaire** (Duncan Evered).

Lingering birds

A lingering **Cinnamon Teal** was on the Brownsville STP 27 Oct (Tom Gilg). A female **Blue-winged Teal** and up to five **Cinnamon Teal** continued on the Philomath STP through the period Nov.

One **American White Pelican** was still at Cabell Marsh during the ASC field trip to Finley NWR 9 Nov (Caryn Stoess, Duncan Evered).

An injured female **Band-tailed Pigeon** was released after rehabilitation on 26 Nov, at an oak savanna site near Jefferson where lingering flocks were still feeding on this fall's abundant acorn mast (Elise Wolf).

A well-described **Black-throated Gray Warbler** in Peoria 10 Nov (Greg Metcalfe) was notably late for this species.

At least 60 **Cedar Waxwings** flew over a residential neighborhood just w. of Willamette Park 27 Oct (Rana Foster). Large flocks of waxwings continued around Corvallis through the end of the season, often foraging in trees with berries alongside of American Robins.

Mountain movements

A **Pacific Loon** and three **Surf Scoters** were on Suttle Lake just e. of Santiam Pass 27 Oct (Tom Crabtree). Two **Surf Scoters**

were on Big Lake 2 Nov, along with a lingering **Barrow's Goldeneye** (Tom Gilg).

A **Clark's Grebe** swam with three Western Grebes on Foster Reservoir 26-27 Oct with a **Common Loon** also present the second day (Tom Gilg; Kaplan Yalcin).

On the peak known as Chintimini or Marys Peak, at least one **Clark's Nutcracker** continued on through 2 Nov (Mark Baldwin). A **Townsend's Solitaire** also continued there through 2 Nov (Jill PUNCHES).

Two carefully described female **Mountain Bluebirds** were near the top of Chintimini 7 Nov (Howard Bruner), along with **Western Bluebirds** which are seen regularly atop the peak in fall.

Four **Snow Buntings** turned up on the summit 26 Oct (Gary Meenaghan, John Polo; Nolan Clements). Seven were there 28 Oct (Paul Sullivan). The buntings were joined atop the peak by up to thirteen **Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches** 31 Oct (Hankyu Kim, Fang-yu Shen; Pam Otley). At least a few buntings and rosy-finches continued to be seen around the summit through 15 Nov.

Wintering birds

Wintering **Tundra Swans** began to show up by 28 Oct when five flew south over Willamette Park (Duncan Evered). 110 were on McFadden Marsh 30 Oct along with four **Snow Geese** and a mix of **Cackling Geese**, **Canada Geese**, and a good variety of ducks (Nancy Stotz).

A single **Trumpeter Swan** turned up with **Tundra Swans** at Ankeny NWR 2 Nov (Laura Vigeland). About 15,000 **Cackling Geese** and/or small subspecies of **Canada Geese** grazed in a field along Philomath Blvd. in sw. Corvallis 3 Nov (Rana Foster).

A **Great Egret** was in the ash swale near the Old Mill Center in sw. Corvallis 28 Oct (Don Boucher).

Killdeer flocks began to gather in bare fields, including a flock of 55 s. of Independence by 31 Oct (Mike Lippsmeyer). Shorebirds at Cabell Marsh during the ASC field trip to Finley NWR 9 Nov included **Dunlin**, **Long-billed Dowitchers**, and two **Least Sandpipers** (Caryn Stoess, Duncan Evered).

Six **Mew Gulls** were on Foster Reservoir 27 Oct (Kaplan Yalcin). Larger gulls began to gather at the Coffin Butte regional landfill by 29 Oct when I saw a flock of at least 30 flying out in early evening. They were heading in the direction Albany, where during winter hundreds of local gulls roost at night on Waverly Pond. Upward of 140 large gulls were back at the landfill 31 Oct, likely mostly **Glaucous-winged Gulls** or **Western x Glaucous-winged Gull** hybrids. On 17 Nov Paul Adamus picked out an **Iceland (Thayer's) Gull** among the flock.

Wintering **Rough-legged Hawks** continued to arrive from their arctic breeding grounds. One was along Perrydale Rd. n. of Baskett Slough NWR 2 Nov (Harry Fuller) and another was seen occasionally at the Finley NWR North Prairie.

The first-fall **Lewis's Woodpecker** that took up winter residence at a private property n. of Baskett Slough NWR last month was beginning to show adult colors by 7 Nov (Frank Kolwicz). Another turned up in a Greenbelt Land Trust oak savanna restoration site west of Corvallis 15 Nov and continued through the period.

Highlights of the ASC field trip to Finley NWR 9 Nov included two **Peregrine Falcons**, a **Merlin** chasing starlings, and a **Northern Shrike**, all seen from the North Prairie overlook platform (Caryn Stoess, Duncan Evered).

A **Say's Phoebe** continued at the Philomath STP through 31 Oct. Another was just north of Buena Vista 4 Nov (Roy Gerig). One was at McFadden Marsh 11 Nov (Isaac Denzer); likely the

same bird was later seen south of there along McFarland Rd. 19 Nov (Pam Otley). Another was at Ward Butte near Plainview on 22 Nov (Tom Gilg; Vickie Buck).

At least twenty **Horned Larks** were along Livermore Rd. n. of Baskett Slough NWR 28 Oct (Roy Gerig). Forty flew over a field s. of Independence 31 Oct (Mike Lippsmeyer). Another winter flock of about 20 seen along Davis Rd. e. of Peoria 1 Nov (Tom Gilg) was still there through the end of the period.

White-throated Sparrows were among the wintering sparrows noted during the ASC field trip to Finley NWR 9 Nov (Caryn Stoess, Duncan Evered).

Late nester or just a late riser?

Along the Betty Griffiths Trail in nw Corvallis where **Acorn Woodpeckers** nested earlier this year, on 9 Nov Nancy Stotz saw a male poking its head of the nest hole that they used in spring. After a few minutes the woodpecker flew out and did not return while Nancy continued to watch for ten minutes. Nancy noted that Acorn Woodpeckers will sometimes use old nesting and roosting holes to store acorns when there is a heavy mast in the fall, but this woodpecker's beak was empty as it emerged from the hole. This would be remarkably late in the year for Acorn Woodpeckers to be nesting, but as Nancy remarked, it also seemed late in the day for one to just be waking up and leaving a nocturnal roost.

Owls and a pussycat

A pair of **Great Horned Owls** in the Witham Hill neighborhood have been vocal just about all through the past year, and were at it again 6 Nov (Dave Mellinger).

Barred Owls were noted frequently as the population of this invading species continues to swell. One was outside the LBCC Benton Center in downtown Corvallis 5 Nov (fide Jamie Simmons). Jerry Paul saw one roosting in willows along Sequoia Creek in the Highland Dell neighborhood of nw. Corvallis 3 Nov. Another slept in a maple tree in Carol & Jim Hiler's North Albany backyard 6 Nov.

A **Northern Pygmy-Owl** perched on a snag atop Marys Peak 2 Nov (Caleb Centanni, Nolan Clements). A **Northern Saw-whet Owl** called at dusk at Herbert Farm Natural Area 10 Nov (Rana Foster).

A **Bobcat** visited a pond along Finley Rd. 11 Nov (Carol Hiler).

Oddballs, off-course birds and other surprises

An apparent hybrid **Northern Shoveler x American Wigeon** swam with a mixed flock of both species on the Brownsville STP 27 Oct (Tom Gilg).

Another odd duck at the Philomath STP 6 Nov (Nancy Stotz) proved puzzling. Although resembling a female **Tufted Duck** (a Eurasian species that has strayed into our region occasionally in past winters), some commentators thought that it might be a hybrid between Tufted Duck or Ring-necked Duck and some other species in the *Aythya* (scaup) complex.

While biking to work along Wynoochee Rd (the gravel road between Fitton Green and Bald Hill Farm) on 6 Nov, Randy Comeleo flushed an apparently healthy **Northern Pintail** from the roadside grass. The duck sprang into the air and flew strongly down the road and over top of the tall oak and Douglas-fir trees.

A **Mountain Quail** outside the Turtle Flat restrooms at Finley NWR 5 Nov (Howard Bruner) was a rare flatland sighting of a species that usually sticks to the Coast Range and Cascades foothills. A **Ring-necked Pheasant** at Mike & Karen Lippsmeyer's farm s. of Independence 29 Oct was the first they've seen there in about 3 years.

A **Northern Mockingbird** was along Sauerkraut Rd. near Airlie 3-4 Nov (Paul Adamus; Roy Gerig).

Next month is a good season to watch for Bald Eagles,

hawks, falcons and other raptors in the open landscapes of our region. It also brings us into Christmas Bird Count (CBC) season, which is a chance to get out and celebrate the birds that spend winter in our area. Local counts include the Brownsville CBC on 15 Dec and the Corvallis CBC on 17 Dec. The Airlie-Albany CBC will be on 5 Jan. A complete schedule of Oregon CBCs, plus

information on whom to contact to get involved is posted at <https://oregonbirding.org/cbc/>.

Meanwhile please post your observations to the Mid-Valley birding list at midvalleybirding.org, e-mail them to me at joel.geier@peak.org, send by post to 38566 Hwy 99W Corvallis 97330, or call (541) 745-5821 by 26 Dec.

Board Meeting Summary

For November 14, 2019

1. Planning for the Winter Wildlife Field Day on March 14, 2020 at Finley Wildlife Refuge is underway!
2. Matt Lee is now the de facto Chair of the Bluebird Committee. There is an effort to access early bluebird data from the late Elsie Eltzroth's records in our possession & those archived at Cornell.
3. The Board voted unanimously to contribute youth registration fees up to \$500 for the Willamette Valley Bird Symposium in January.
4. A request that ASC donate to starting a school in Mexico was voted down by the Board.
5. The Board voted unanimously to sign on to the Corvallis Climate Action Alliance petition to the Corvallis City Council to provide funding & public resources towards a regional response to climate change.
6. Next meeting: December 12th at Natural Grocers.

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

Welcome to new member:

Juan Guerra

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) 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, Naomi Weidner, Joel Geier, Don Boucher, Ray Drapek, Linda Campbell, Paul Adamus, Sue Powell, Matt Lee, Kai Frueh, Nancy DeMasi, Kris Ebbe, and Carolyn Suckow

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.

What's Your Opinion on an Online-Only CHAT?

ASC is considering ceasing publication of the print edition of The Chat and having it appear in only online form. We would do this to save paper and hence trees, save cost, and save energy. We would make an exception for the handful of members who do not have Internet access, hand-printing and hand-mailing their copies.

But before we take this step we would like to hear from you. Would this adversely affect you? Would you no longer read The Chat if it were available only as an emailed PDF? If you have any comments or suggestions about this idea, please send them to Chat editors Teri Engbring and Naomi Weidner at chateditors@gmail.com. Thank you.

ASC Board of Directors

Audubon Society of Corvallis

Calendar

Dec 1	Short-eared Owl Program at Finley, 3-5:30
Dec 8	Hesthavn Work Party. Weeds, 10-2
Dec 12	ASC Board meeting, 7 pm at Natural Grocers
Dec 14	Second Saturday Field Trip, 7:30 am
Dec 14	Hesthavn Barn Exhibits open to public, 1-4
Dec 17	Christmas Bird Count
Dec 19	ASC Monthly Members Meeting, 6:30 pm at First United Methodist Church (new venue this year)
Dec 22	Hesthavn Work Party, Barn & Yard
Dec 26	Articles due for Jan. 2020 CHAT
Dec 26	Field Notes submissions due

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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