



THE CHAT

FEBRUARY 2020

VOL. 49 #6

February 20 Program:

Come walk with us - wildflower hikes with Native Plant Society of Oregon

Presentation by Dan Luoma will provide an overview of the programs and activities of the Native Plant Society of Oregon, and will be illustrated with photos from a wide range of wildflower field trips sponsored by NPSO. Some of the conservation and field research that NPSO has helped fund will also be highlighted.

Dan is a professor of forest mycology at OSU in the Department of Forest Ecosystems and Society. He has been a member of NPSO since about 1980 and has served as Chapter President, State President, Vice-President, and director-at-large. His academic training is in ecological plant geography and mycology.

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



Upcoming programs:

March 19: Worth Mathewson: Natural History of the Band-tailed Pigeon

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

President's Corner

February Musing

As we grind through winter, minds leaping ahead to spring, February can seem like an obstacle. Fortunately, life goes on in western Oregon and there is plenty to enjoy hereabouts. This month, we transition from the depths of winter to glimmers of hope.

February is a great month for tree moss, lichen and ferns. These species are at their rain-soaked peak of beauty. The sun is getting higher in the sky and coming out enough that the resulting light in the lush forest is stunning. I hope you have time to get out and savor this classic feature of our Pacific Northwest landscape.

As Joel Geier will no doubt write about this month, Townsend's Warblers are common in northwestern Oregon this winter. A species that I think of as a town-bird feeding on suet during the winter have been easy to find throughout the region and even where I live, Oak Creek. It is very rare to see one at our place in winter. Nonetheless, I have had sightings at Hesthavn and have routinely encountered flocks of as many as 10-15 between our place and Bald Hill. Balm for the spirit!

What is the cause of these numbers? Recently, I happened to look in on OBOL (Oregon Birders On-Line) and came across a thread of discussion about the Townsend's phenome-

ASC General Meeting

Current venue for ASC General Meetings on third Thursday of each month, through May, 2020, is:

First United Methodist Church

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

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Female Townsend's Warbler. Photo by Bill Proebsting

non. It was noted that the species may have had a banner nesting year. Or, there could have been some combination of food availability and weather patterns that enticed, or even trapped, the birds during migration. We don't know, but it has been amazing to come across these little sprites so frequently and in such numbers - far more than I typically see in spring and summer.

Even in winter, our special area has color and life. It is something that Eastern visitors and transplants comment on, and a feature of our home that we don't want to take for granted.

Bill Proebsting, Chapter President

For Updates between CHAT Issues

The new ASC website is at auduboncorvallis.org. Learn about our vast array of programs and services to help this community connect with nature and others who share this goal.

Planning for the 6th annual Winter Wildlife Field Day is in full swing, and you could join the fun. For an overview of the 2019 event at Finley NWR, check out the ASC website - Education - Winter Wildlife Field Day and see 800+ people of all ages enjoying nature in winter!

Sue Powell, ASC Website

Learn about what's current with ASC, and to share your questions, photos and exciting sightings: find us at Audubon Society of Corvallis or tag us @corvallisaudubon.

Kai Frueh and Nancy DeMasi, ASC Facebook

And check us out on Instagram at our new "handle", which is @auduboncorvallis

Christina Linkem, Site Manager

Help Still Needed on Video

I am looking to develop a promotional video for ASC. What I imagine is something similar (but different) to a video by Cornell lab which you can see at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hDUiRcyOV8Q>.

It will help new people to understand what ASC is about, what our cause is, what we do for our community and why

one should support us. I would appreciate help getting footage which I can edit into one longer video

Please contact me if you want to be part of this project, and I will include you in communications. Let me know if you have any thoughts or questions. My contact info is on last page of the CHAT.

Kai Frueh, ASC Facebook page co-manager

Conservation Update

What's Important to Oregon's Audubon Chapters in 2020?

Annually, Oregon's Audubon Chapters meet and determine shared issues, concerns and opportunities that we can work on together and influence in the coming year. Three of our Corvallis members joined representatives of eight other Chapters in Eugene this last November, hosted by Lane County Audubon Society. Besides being a fascinating chance to catch up on what individual Chapters from around the state are doing and experiencing, it is also an important point when Chapter conservation leaders weigh their collective capacities and where their efforts will be most effective.

Our conclusions follow, grouped and **underscored** without order of priority, and again do not include other priorities of individual Chapters. Some issues, like general opposition to the Jordan Cove LNG plant and associated pipeline as an example, may fall under another statewide priority without compromising the interest of an individual Chapter with opposition to only a specific portion of the project.

Working from the ecosystem level then, the Oregon Audubon Chapters will be taking specific actions to provide greater **ocean and forest protections**, to **defend federal lands and laws**, and to provide guidance to **Klamath and Malheur Wildlife Refuge management**.

Several bird species deserve special attention this year, including **Marbled Murrelets**, **Greater Sage-grouse**, **California Condors**, and **Streaked Horned Larks**. And besides birds, the importance of **beavers** to ecosystem function is getting greater attention statewide.

We continue to recognize the importance of **ODFW reform and funding**, where policies are determined by its governing board, appointed by Governor Brown. Protections for bird species listed above can come from this board, just as updated trapping policies can influence the distribution and abundance of **beavers** where they can benefit the landscape. Similarly, predator presence on the landscape has many benefits, but when conflicts arise, judicious methods of **predator control** can be permitted that do not require the removal of predators from the landscape.

There are still bigger things we are ready to take on. We all are on task to tackle **Climate Change**, both statewide and at our individual Chapter levels. At the larger regional scale, Oregon Chapters also recognize the impact of the **Columbia River Hydropower System** on aquatic life and all species dependent on its health, including birds and humans. And as humans continue to urbanize and expand urbanization worldwide, we can still address things like light pollution through the **Dark Skies Initiative** and deterring bird mortality from window strikes.

Jim Fairchild

2019-2020 Traveling Audubon Photography Awards Exhibit coming to Corvallis this Spring

If you love birds and enjoy seeing amazing wildlife photographs, this coming event should not be missed! ASC is very excited to be hosting the 2019 Traveling Audubon Photography Awards Exhibit April 1-22, at the OSU Center for the Humanities. These 10 spectacular photographic prints are the 2019 National Audubon Photography Contest award winners and honorable mentions chosen from over 2200 entrants, and cover a range of species and geographic locations. If you are a member of National Audubon, you may have seen these award-winning photographs in their magazine's summer 2019 issue, but seeing them printed in a large format is truly a treat!

ASC will also be hosting a reception on an evening during the exhibit (check back in subsequent Chats for the date and time). And contact Dodie Wilson (back page of CHAT) if you'd like to help with the reception or setting up the exhibit when it arrives.

Dodie Wilson

Education News

Beginning Birding Workshop

Both of Don Boucher's Beginning Birding workshops are filled. Thanks to Don for filling this obvious need in our community, and to the skilled volunteers assisting him, and to those who signed up! We will keep you posted on other learning opportunities as they arise. Unfortunately, we have had to cancel the March 1 Raptor Identification Workshop due to illness of a key volunteer. We will reschedule ASAP.

Teri Engring

Ed Team Projects Coming Soon

Just last week we had a great time at our first big Education Team event of the year, Science Night at Franklin School. Volunteers Phyllis Bailey, Nancy DeMasi, Dodie Wilson and Teri Engring got to test kids and parents alike on how they connect with nature through their five senses. They heard Bald Eagles and condors, smelled rosemary and lavender, tasted bird food (millet and sunflower seeds), touched hidden items from bear fur to sea shells, and saw our Big Backyard Birds poster, two taxidermied owls and our state bird, the Western Meadowlark. Big thanks to creative Mikaela Lea, Dale Mitchell and Sue Powell for helping with prep and planning.

Field Trip Schedule

Local Second Saturday Field Trips

Our Saturday morning local field trips meet at 7:30am 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 8:00am, returning noonish. Bring suitable hat and shoes, rain gear, 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: Feb. 8, Theme: "Waste Time." Talking Waters (Albany), Regional Landfill. Gull identification, if we can find groups. This trip at normal time and place.

March trip (March 14) will be ALL DAY to the coast.

Duncan Evered and Caryn Stoess

Weekend Field Trips

Bandon, March 27-29

This early trip starts with Yaquina Head and proceeds down through birding hotspots along the Oregon coast. Late wintering waterbirds - loons, grebes, scoters, goldeneyes, Harlequin Ducks - are the main issue. But we take time to sort through a variety of gulls and cormorants.

Old Town Bandon welcomes us with terrific seafood. We explore the Coquille River basin up to Myrtle Point and the south coast as far south as Port Orford. This is an easy way to start a year of birding that should produce something around 275 species for your Oregon list.

Klamath Basin, April 17-19

The great goose-duck-shorebird migration, at three national wildlife refuges.

Rogue Valley, May 1-3

Chaparral specialties with chances for Great Gray Owl; and Oregon Shakespeare Festival's offering of *Peter and the Starcatcher*.

Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, May 16-19

ASC's 51st annual trip to one of America's greatest birding destinations ... at the height of the songbird migration.

Summer Lake, June 19-21

Snowy Plover, Common Poorwill, American Bittern, Gray-crowned Rosy Finch, and Yellow Rail? All are possible on this venture into the high desert.

Steens Mountain, July 23-25

Gray-crowned and Black Rosy-Finches and Greater Sage Grouse are the principal targets. The magnificent Steens Mountain is worth the trip regardless of what success we have with birds.

Shorebird Search, August 21-23

The aim here is to hit find where the shorebird migration is ongoing. The locations and even the dates are flexible.

To secure spaces on any of these trips, sign up at an ASC general meeting or contact Fred Ramsey at flramsey5@comcast.net or 541-753-3677.

Fred Ramsey, Weekend Field Trips Chair

Our education team volunteers will be at several events and programs in the coming weeks to help our neighbors connect with nature; and we could sure use your help! Can you join us for any of these events?

- Sustainability Fair, Mar. 12
- Winter Wildlife Field Day, March 14
- National Audubon Photo Awards Show, April 1-22
- School Field trip classes at Chintimini, April-June
- * Spring Girl Scout Day Camp, May 2
- * 4H Wildlife Stewards Youth Summit, May 7
- Chintimini Open House, May 10
- Get Outdoors Day at Peavy, May 30

**New requests received in January*

If you would like to help with any of these coming events, please email Teri at chateditors@gmail.com. We have so many ways to make a difference and help our neighbors connect with nature. Thanks,

Teri Engring, ASC Education Team

Hesthavn News

February work parties at Hesthavn:

Sunday February 2. 10am – 2pm. Blackberry pull plus covering/pulling shiny geranium.

Sunday February 23. 10am – 2pm. We'll be pulling up the fence along Oak Creek Road. Six OSU students from the GEOG 300 class will be there, but other helpers would be welcome as well.

Hesthavn is a Bee Buddy Site!

As mentioned in a previous Chat, Hesthavn is a "bee buddy." This is a program run through the Benton Soil and Water Conservation District. Qualifying properties are enrolled in the program. They install a bee box seeded with cocoons. From mid-March through May the bees do their thing and in June the Benton SWCD collects the boxes and harvests, cleans, and stores the cocoons until the next active season. Our large box last season came with 100 cocoons. At the end of the season of the 56 tubes, 53 were fully occupied and 3 were partially occupied. A total of 342 cocoons were harvested from our box at the end of the season.

Ray Drapek, Hesthavn Chair

Hesthavn Nature Center will be open for visitors Saturday, Feb. 8

ASC Volunteer Dale Mitchell and others will open up Hesthavn so guests of all ages can enjoy the interactive displays and extensive taxidermied bird collection from 1:00 to 4:00pm. We had 17 visitors Jan. 11 and hope to see more Jan. 25 and Feb 8. We also hope to schedule additional afternoon programs at Hesthavn throughout the year, when our wonderful volunteers have the time and interest.

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

Directions to Hesthavn at 8590 NW Oak Creek Drive,

Corvallis. Take Harrison west from downtown Corvallis; 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.

New CBC Chair still needed

Marcia Cutler is stepping down as coordinator of the Corvallis Christmas Bird Count. Marcia has just completed managing her 15th CBC, thus, we have almost a year to find a successor who can work with Marcia to understand the system and benefit from her extensive experience.

If you would like to take over this key position that operates over two months each year in support of local birding research and a day of fun but intense volunteer field work, please contact Marcia at: marciafcutler@comcast.net.

Community Notes

Short-eared owl survey volunteers needed

Nate Trimble with the Klamath Bird Observatory in Ashland, OR coordinates the Western *Asio flammeus* Landscape Study (WAfLS), a community science project in the western U.S., including Oregon. He is presently recruiting volunteers to run two, 90-minute, road-based surveys this spring. Experience is not necessary, sufficient training will be provided.

This is the largest Short-eared Owl study in the world and is carried out mostly by volunteers. The data gathered from this project aim to fill crucial information gaps about this species and will likely have a significant influence on conservation management efforts for the survival of this bird.

If you are interested, check the website <https://bit.ly/3aEKMU1> or the Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/ProjectWAFLS/>) for more details and contact information.

Bill Proebsting

Willamette Valley Refuges Events

There will be no Friends event on February 2nd due to the Super Bowl.

Ankeny Refuge Riparian Planting

Saturday, February 22nd from 10am – 12pm

Meet at the Rail Trail parking lot at Ankeny Refuge (10am) or carpool from Corvallis (9am)

We are four years into this restoration project and things are looking good. We'll take cuttings from nearby willow and red-osier dogwood plants, plus we'll plant additional trees and shrubs to augment what we've already got going. Wear your rubber boots if it has been raining! There's usually a fun wade-able spot right before crossing into the field.

Winter Wildlife Field Day

Saturday, March 14th

William L. Finley National Wildlife Refuge

Winter Wildlife Field Day is a popular, annual bilingual environmental education event at William L. Finley National Wildlife Refuge. Along with our 13 partners (including Audubon Society of Corvallis) we create a hands-on, interactive and nature-based experience that kids of all ages love! In past years we have had 700-800 people come out to the Refuge to learn about wildlife and explore the 12+ activity booths. Families get a passport book and then travel the site,



stopping at booths to gain stamps and ultimately an ASC "Wildlife Explorer" patch featuring a beautiful Wood Duck. It's a fun, free day for all!

March 14th is also the National Wildlife Refuge System's 117th birthday. Puddles the Blue Goose will be at the Refuge to help celebrate that day!

Over 100 volunteers are needed in multiple shifts and volunteer opportunities. I'll be sending out more information about Winter Wildlife Field Day volunteering soon. For now, please save the date if you're interested!

Questions? Contact Samantha Bartling, Visitor Services Manager, Willamette Valley National Wildlife Refuge Complex at samantha_bartling@fws.gov/541-760-3036

Sam Bartling

Insights into Gardening

Insights Into Gardening is a day-long series of seminars for gardeners of all abilities and levels of experience. Participants choose from 16 classes offered in four concurrent sessions taught by local experts. In addition to classes, there will be exhibitors offering items for sale, a bookstore, and a raffle for some great prizes. Parking is free.

This event is Saturday, Feb. 8, from 8:00am to 4:00pm at LaSells Stewart Center, 875 SW 26th Street, Corvallis, OR.

Sponsored by the Benton County Master Gardener Association, proceeds from this event help fund scholarships and educational outreach.

Please visit our website at bentonmg.org/iig for more information and on-line registration.

Jana Tindall

2020 Eco-Film Festival

Odd Fellows Hall, 223 SW 2nd St, doors open at 6:30pm, film starts at 7pm. A suggested donation of \$5 per person or \$10 per family

Friday, February 7, "Damned to Extinction" - save our wild chinook salmon and orca whales

Friday, February 14, "The Beaver Believers" - taking a bite out of climate change, one stick at a time

Friday, February 21, "Climate Change: The Facts" - world view now, actions for individuals

2020 Corvallis Sustainability Coalition Fair & Town Hall

Thursday March 12, Fair hours 5pm-7pm; Town Hall 7-9pm

CH2MHill Alumni Center, 725 SW 26th St on the OSU Campus

The Fair is free & open to the public & runs from 5-7pm. There will be more than 50 exhibits, refreshments & music

The Town Hall will run from 7-9pm & requires registration. The keynote speaker will be Kristin Eberhard, Director, Climate & Democracy, Sightline Institute.

Register online by March 6 at this website:

www.surveymonkey.com/r/Sustainability_Town_Hall_2019

Final 2019 CBC results

The final, detailed CBC results (data) for the 2019 count are on a separate sheet included in this issue and/or available on the Audubon Corvallis website.

Marcia Cutler

Field Notes

12/27/20-01/24/20

Following a dry autumn and scant rainfall for the season through most of December, most local fields were still unsaturated until 5 Jan when storm systems moved in - just in time to soak volunteers for the last Christmas Bird Count of the season, the Airlie-Albany CBC!

By 11 Jan vernal pools in the remaining Seavey Meadows along Conser St. in ne. Corvallis meadow were full, and Jackson-Frazier Wetlands were filling sufficiently that water was flowing under the boardwalk (Don Boucher).

Temperatures remain mild through the period, with just a few nights and mornings below freezing around 15 Jan. Flower buds were beginning to form on red-flowering currants in Corvallis by New Years Eve (Rana Foster), and Pacific Chorus Frogs could be heard living up to their name around local wetlands by 8 Jan.

Abbreviations and locations: CBC = Christmas Bird Count, NWR = National Wildlife Refuge, STP = sewage treatment ponds. Fort Hoskins County Park is near Kings Valley in nw. Benton County. Jackson-Frazier Wetlands are 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 access permission. Teloh-Calapooia Park is in south Albany near Linn-Benton Community College, Talking Water Gardens are in NE Albany. Cabell Marsh, McFadden Marsh, and North Prairie are locations at Finley NWR. Ward Butte is in the Plainview area sw. of Lebanon.

Observations

2500 **Tundra Swans** fed at Cabell Marsh on the evening of 1 Jan (Rana Foster). Hundreds were along Hwy 99E se. of Halsey 18 Jan (Nancy Stotz). Jeff Fleischer estimated 1500 swans in that field on 20 Jan, along with a hundred **Greater White-fronted Geese**.

Local reports of **Trumpeter Swans** have been sparse this winter, and this species was missed on the Airlie-Albany CBC. But on 16 Jan Deanna Emig saw 14 on a new irrigation pond near Airlie. Six trumpeters (all adults) were still there on 18 Jan, swimming alongside of a large wigeon flock that included at least one **Eurasian Wigeon** drake.

Two **Turkey Vultures** soared over Philomath STP 4 Jan (Karan & Jim Fairchild).

Numbers of wintering **Red-tailed Hawks** found on raptor surveys in the Willamette Valley continued to be low through the end of Dec (Jeff Fleischer). A red-tail over the north side of Ward Butte harassed a **Golden Eagle** until the bigger bird soared off to the north, as another Golden Eagle soared unhindered over the south side of the butte (Howard Bruner).

Six **Bald Eagles** perched in a single tree n. of Shedd 2 Jan (Delores Porch). 26 came in to roost at the traditional site sw. of Tangent by dusk on 2 Jan, and 33 were there on 21 Jan (Mary Garrard, Bev Clark).

A pair of **Bald Eagles** hunted cooperatively at Cabell Marsh as Howard Bruner watched 1 Jan; first the smaller male passed over a group of waterfowl, causing some to dive and others to fly, with the female timing her pass to nab a **Hooded Merganser** just as it came back up as it resurfaced. Howard notes that the male then approached the female hoping for a share of the meal, but she reared up to drive him away, then finished picking the carcass, finally dropping it with a splash

into the marsh where it sank out of sight, prompting palpable despair from her hungry mate.

The **Rough-legged Hawk** noticed along Hwy 99W in n. Corvallis last month continued through the period, hunting in this landscape dominated by large retail buildings. Two more **Rough-legged Hawks** and a **Peregrine Falcon** were at the North Prairie 24 Jan (Mary Garrard, Bev Clark).

Participants in a Neighborhood Naturalist field trip to Talking Water Gardens 19 Jan enjoyed sightings of two cryptic birds: a **Sora**, and a **Wilson's Snipe** that seemed to be content sitting out in the open on a mat of cattails.

Two wintering **Sandhill Cranes** continued along Tennessee School Rd. n. of Lebanon 20 Jan (Mark Nikas).

About 40 **Killdeer**, six **yellowlegs**, and 13 **Dunlin** foraged in the wet edge of a ryegrass field at Fiddlers Green golf course near Junction City 27 Dec (Rana Foster). Reports of **Black-bellied Plovers** were scant except for a single bird noted at the Philomath STP in mid-Jan.

A flock of about 400 gulls at Coffin Butte regional landfill 27 Dec included 8 **Herring Gulls**, 3 "**Thayer's**" (**Iceland**) **Gulls**, and 100 **Glaucous-winged Gulls**; two very dark 1st-winter gulls resembled Western Gulls but their wingtips showed evidence of hybridization with Glaucous-winged (Russ Namitz). A clean adult **Western Gull** was there 3 Jan (Duncan Evered).

Another large flock of 800 gulls n. of Halsey 21 Jan included good numbers of "**Thayer's**" **Gulls** and at least one **Western Gull** (Lars Norgren), along with hundreds of **Glaucous-winged Gulls** (Mary Garrard, Bev Clark).

A wintering **American Bittern** continued at the old Clemens Mill ponds in Philomath through 2 Jan. Six **Great Egrets** hunted in a field along Conser Blvd in ne. Corvallis 11 Jan, then flew nw. to Jackson-Frazier Wetland (Don Boucher).

Three **American White Pelicans** drifted north over Willamette park 9 Jan (Duncan Evered). Five flew over McFadden Marsh 21 Jan (Bert Pooth). This species has lately become a regular presence at Fern Ridge Reservoir year-round, and small flocks sometimes wander north from there into the mid-valley region.

A **Barred Owl** that flew in to perch near the E.E. Wilson Wildlife Area canal pond on the evening of 2 Jan (Martha Geier, Lincoln Worley) somehow evaded detection for the entire week around the Airlie-Albany CBC. A **Burrowing Owl** wintering near Peoria since Nov was still in the same location 23 Dec (Jeff Fleischer); Mark Nikas saw two of these rare and sensitive wintering birds near Peoria and Tangent, while he was out surveying for winter raptors in w. Linn Co. 20 Jan.

Two **Short-eared Owls** were along the edge of a private wetland/prairie restoration on the n. side of Finley NWR at dusk on 24 Jan (Mary Garrard, Bev Clark).

An **Acorn Woodpecker** called in Herbert Farm Open Space 29 Dec (Rana Foster). The Neighborhood Naturalist field trip to Talking Water Gardens and nearby Simpson Park 19 Jan found four species of woodpecker: **Acorn**, **Downy**, and **Pileated Woodpecker** plus **Northern Flicker**. Two **Lewis's Woodpeckers** sallied after flying insects from the oaks along Steckley Rd. w. of Lebanon 20 Jan (Mark Nikas).

An adult female **Prairie Falcon** was near the Oakville church and a male **Peregrine Falcon** was also in the neighborhood 2 Jan (Richard F. Hoyer, Kris Ebbe).

Wintering **Say's Phoebe**s continued along Bruce Rd. at Finley NWR, and at Ward Butte w. of Lebanon. Another was found just ne. of Lewisburg during the Airlie-Albany CBC 5

Jan (Andi Stephens, Jeff Harding) and continued there at last through 9 Jan (Jamie Simmons; Mark Baldwin).

Black Phoebes were noted regularly at Willamette Park, Luckiamute State Natural Area, Finley NWR, and at E.E. Wilson Wildlife Area where 3 or 4 were present on 8 Jan, not counting another in our yard just across Hwy 99W.

Two male "**Streaked**" **Horned Larks** were singing and chasing each other on private grass seed farms along Livermore Rd. north of Baskett Slough NWR 9 Jan, somewhat early in the year for that kind of territorial behavior.

Carol Savonen encountered two **Canada Jays** while hiking at Fort Hoskins Park on 17 Jan.

A **Townsend's Solitaire** was on Coffin Butte 5 Jan (Duncan Evered, Caryn Stoess). A **Hermit Thrush** hopped into Bill Gerth's s. Corvallis yard 20 Jan.

A **Snow Bunting** was found wintering along Davis Rd. nw. of Shedd on 23 Jan, in the company of 54 **Horned Larks** (Mark Nikas).

Many observers noted that this has been a good winter for **Townsend's Warblers** in our area. As of 9 Jan Paul Rentz had several visiting his suet feeder in sw. Corvallis where he has only seen this species once before. Naomi Weidner has regularly had one or more visiting her hummingbird feeder in North Albany. A female **Common Yellowthroat** was on the se. side of McFadden Marsh 1 Jan (Pam Otley).

A **Yellow-headed Blackbird** was with a large blackbird flock n. of Baskett Slough NWR on 30 Dec (Roy Gerig). Another **Yellow-headed Blackbird**, three male **Tricolored Blackbirds**, and 15 **Brown-headed Cowbirds** were with **Brewer's Blackbirds** and **Red-winged Blackbirds** along Eicher Rd. e. of Albany 17 Jan (Jeff Harding). Up to three **Tricolored Blackbirds** also continued to be seen at the Philomath STP through the period.

Rare or off-course birds and other surprises

On 21 Jan a male **Tufted Duck** in adult plumage was on the Philomath STP (Pam Otley), where a male of the same species (but still in first-winter plumage) was seen by many observers in late Dec.

A **Common Loon** showed up on the Adair Village STP 5 Jan (Alex Farrand). A **Red-throated Loon** that turned up on the river off Willamette Park 16 Jan, following several days of sustained westerly winds, continued there through the end of the period.

On 19 Jan a **Red-necked Grebe** turned up on a pond in an old gravel quarry along Hwy 20 e. of Albany at Scrael Hill Rd. (Lars Norgren).

An immature **Swainson's Hawk** was photographed north of Baskett Slough NWR 29 Dec (Audrey Addison). Normally this species winters in the pampas of Argentina but in recent decades there have been a few winter records from our region, of birds that apparently didn't make the long-distance migration.

A female **Hermit Warbler** in Willamette Park 17 Jan was a rare bird for the season, and show no evidence of hybridization with its more expected sibling species (Duncan Evered, Caryn Stoess). A male was also reported from Salem during the period.

A male **Black-headed Grosbeak** – also very rare for this time of year – was photographed coming to a feeder in Sweet Home 22-23 Jan (Joseph Sands).

A herd of more than 200 **Roosevelt Elk** were out in an open field east of Adair Village 5 Jan (Linn Vennerholm, Wil Geier). A special-permit elk hunt on OSU lands may have cause the herd to move several miles from their normal winter grazing areas in

the Soap Creek Valley and Dunn Forest.

Next month: The early part of spring migration gets underway, starting with Tree Swallows and Turkey Vultures then perhaps Rufous Hummingbirds toward the end of the

month. 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 20 Feb.

Board Meeting Summary

From January 9, 2020

1. The Board agreed to discontinue the increasingly expensive printing of the Chat newsletter after the May 2020 issue. The Chat will instead be distributed digitally – as text only and as a full color pdf attachment – to all members who provide an email address. Those who prefer a hard copy need to inform Membership Chair, Paul Adamus, and provide a mailing address. Chats will continue to be available on the ASC website as soon as they are finalized.
2. The Conservation Committee noted the damage from proposed Executive Orders that reverse federal environmental safeguards could be catastrophic, if not stopped in the courts.
3. A new policy for ASC's Social Media (Facebook and Twitter) is being crafted by an ad hoc committee, headed by new Board member, Kai Frueh.
4. Very hearty thanks go out to local freelance graphic designer, Bekki Levien, who volunteered her services to create the new website!
5. New volunteers are working on Hesthavn kiosk designs and contents; work parties and open houses at Hesthavn.
6. The advertising flyer for the Finley Wildlife Intern Program for 2020, which ASC funds, was unanimously approved as drafted. The successful applicant will again be working on streaked horned lark research at Finley.
7. The Board voted unanimously to support partnering with the Sustainability Coalition again, at the same donation level as last year.

Next Board Meeting:

7pm on February 13th at Natural Grocers, 1235 NW 10th St. in Corvallis.

Linda Campbell, Board Secretary

Needed Now: ASC Board Secretary

After alternating several terms as Secretary and Board Member, Linda Campbell is leaving Corvallis this winter. As a result, ASC is looking for a Secretary to complete Linda's term, from March through May, and then elect a candidate for the 2020-21 term.

The Secretary records and maintains the official business of ASC, mainly via minutes of the Board Meetings held ten times per year. Linda and Gail Nickerson are our most recent holders of this office. Both would be happy to visit with you about the position. Their contact info is on last page of the CHAT.

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 members:

Kathy Parks, Sarah Cravens, Heather Shelton, Leslie Reeves, Liz Hogan, Susan Mukatis, Barbara Spreadbury, John & Shirley Byrne, Christy Stevens, Susan Cleary, Jeffrey Macy

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 address- 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, Fred Ramsey, Ray Drapek, Linda Campbell, Sue Powell, Kai Frueh, Nancy DeMasi, Paul Adamus, Duncan Evered, Marcia Cutler, Sam Bartling, and Jana Tindall

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.

Audubon Society of Corvallis

Calendar

Feb 8	Second Saturday Field Trip: "Waste Time" at Talking Water Gardens & landfill
Feb 8	Hesthavn Displays Open to Visitors, 1-4 pm
Feb 13	ASC Board Meeting, 7pm at Natural Grocers
Feb 20	ASC Monthly Members meeting, 6:30pm First United Methodist Church
Feb 20	Articles due for March. 2020 CHAT
Feb 20	Field Notes submissions due
Mar 14	Second Saturday Field Trip: Full-day coast trip
Mar 14	Winter Wildlife Field Day at Finley NWR
Mar 27-29	First 2020 Weekend Field Trip: Bandon & South Coast

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Audubon Society of Corvallis
P.O. Box 148
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AudubonCorvallis.org

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Interested in volunteering?
Please let us know:
volunteerasc@gmail.com

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

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