



THE CHAT

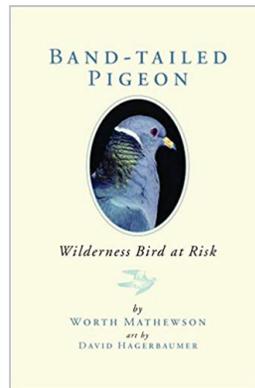
MARCH 2020

VOL. 49 #7

March 19 Program:

Natural History of the Band-tailed Pigeon by Worth Mathewson

Worth Mathewson, author of *Band-tailed Pigeon: Wilderness Bird at Risk*, and Dr. Robert Jarvis, OSU Emeritus Professor in Fish and Wildlife, will discuss the history, habits and research on this remarkable bird. Dr. Jarvis has conducted extensive research on the Band-tailed Pigeon, and Mathewson has written for 42 different magazines and has published seven other books. His biography, *William L. Finley: Pioneer Wildlife Photographer*, will be familiar to many members. He also donated the Finley Papers to the OSU Archives in 1995. An avid birder, he says, "I have seen 541 species of birds in the US and Canada. My goal is 600."



From the dust jacket of *Band-tailed Pigeon: Wilderness Bird at Risk*:

A longtime hunter in the coastal range of Oregon takes stock of his favorite prey, the band-tailed pigeon," reported The New York Times in the summer of 2003. What made Worth Mathewson's writing about the western wilderness pigeon newsworthy is not his elegant evocation of the damp, spicy scent of a Pacific Northwest river valley or his keen observations of bandtails flying high and fast over a canyon. Rather the press took note of an avid hunter blaming overhunting and bad management for the devastation of a species. Wary by nature yet brave under fire, the magnificent bandtail has long thrilled the sportsman. Some attribute the birds decline to habitat loss, but Mathewson, in this complete natural history, carefully builds his case to the contrary. While trichomoniasis and spraying of broadleaf trees may contribute, the human factor is paramount: a persistently callous attitude toward *Patagioenas fasciata* may keep it in a downward spiral. If modest protections are lifted at the first signs of recovery, its fate may be sealed. ...this finely rendered, affecting portrait of a wild bird with a troubled past is nothing short of a call to action.

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.

Upcoming programs:

April 16: Randy and Pam Comeleo: Update on the Benton County Predator Control Program

May 21: James Sumich: Marine Mammals

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

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)

In This Issue

President's Corner	49-50
Field Trips.....	50
ASC Website and Social Media	50-51
Conservation Update.....	51
Wildlife Photo Exhibit Reception Info	51
Education News	51
Hesthavn News	51-52
Atop the Nest Box	52
Community Notes.....	52
Field Notes	53-55
Board Meeting Summary	55
Membership Corner	55
Contributors to this CHAT	55
Calendar	56

President's Corner

Nature's Best Hope

One of my passions is gardening for birds. I no longer understand the point of an ornamental garden if it doesn't form the foundation of an ecosystem supporting a variety of birds and insects.

Some of you may have read *Bringing Nature Home* by Douglas Tallamy, an entomologist from Delaware who has spent his career documenting the overwhelming preference of insects for native plants over non-natives. His data provide objective support for my own observations that birds spend far more time on natives in my garden. Non-natives in our landscapes are nullities, ecologically unproductive.

Tallamy has just published another book, *Nature's Best Hope*, in which he makes the case that our gardens represent a vital piece of the puzzle of how to avoid extinction of earth's ecosystems. He argues that with the huge incentive of commercial interests to exploit nature to support a burgeoning human population and with the government dismantling environmental protections, our personal property, collectively, represents a large acreage under our control.

I make this point in my talks in order to offer encouragement to people to garden for birds. In his new book, Tallamy starts from this idea, arrays a set of arguments in support, and then provides a list of suggestions for implementation. The major points should sound familiar: 1) shrink the lawn and minimize soil disturbance, 2) remove non-native plants and plant natives, 3) be generous with your plantings, i.e. plant several of each species, 4) no insecticides or fertilizers, and 5) evangelize your neighbors.

Spring is coming. Get busy and save nature.

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. For more information and to sign up, contact:

CorvallisAudubonSecondSaturday@gmail.com.

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 Saturday Field Trip: March 14 will be ALL DAY to the coast.

Duncan Evered and Caryn Stoess

Weekend Field Trips

Bandon, March 27-29

There still are openings on our first 2020 field trip to the coast.

This early trip starts with Yaquina Head and proceeds down through birding hotspots along the Oregon coast. Late wintering waterbirds - loons, grebes, scoters, gold-

eneys, 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

Ever want to witness first-hand the mating dance of Clark's Grebes, racing together across the lake's surface? This is the trip. Add the full world population of Ross' Geese, along with thousands of White-fronts, Snows, Cacklers, and Canadas. Then there are dozens of species of migrating ducks. And to top it off, we get our first crack at a few songbirds at Moore Park. Sign up at the March members meeting.

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. Expect to see stilts, avocets, bitterns, three terns, ducks of all sizes and shapes, and migrating passerines. Some people sign up just for the trip over, with stops for Barrow's Goldeneye, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Green-tailed Towhee, and Calliope Hummingbird. For others it is sorting through warblers, tanagers, vireos, kinglets, flycatchers and orioles at refuge headquarters. For all, it is experiencing the wonders of the high desert while staying at the now-comfortable Malheur Field Station.

Summer Lake, June 19-21

Here is a possibility for a rare Oregon swift trifecta: Black (Salt Creek Falls), White-throated (Fort Rock), and Vaux's. Add Snowy Plover, Common Poorwill, American Bittern, Gray-crowned Rosy Finch, and Yellow Rail and you understand that this is a special tour. The mid-June weekend offers a good chance of having Crater Lake National Park open on our return. Maximum tour size: 16 persons.

Steens Mountain, July 23-25

Using Malheur Field Station as our base, we spend a day birding the high country of Steens Mountain, where we search for Gray-crowned and Black Rosy-Finches and for Greater Sage-grouse. Wildflowers and butterflies are abundant. We return (road conditions allowing) through Hart Mountain and the Warner Valley, with a stop at Cabin Lake's guzzler.

Shorebird Search, August 21-23

The aim here is to 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, email Fred Ramsey at flramsey5@comcast.net, or call 541-753-3677.

Fred Ramsey, Weekend Field Trips Chair

For Up to the Minute ASC News

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.

Most ASC members know that part of our mission is to advocate for responsible public policy and to conserve and restore wildlife and their habitats. You can be proud of your



organization with the work we have done locally! Check out the Conserve / Protect homepage on our website (audubon-covallis.org) to see the trails, restoration, and species that we have supported through our efforts. Four local conservation heroes and eight bird species are profiled on the Conservation Priorities page. If you want to be a part of our success, please consider one of the many opportunities on our Volunteer page or present an idea of your own. Contact information is available on the Volunteer page or send a message to audubon.covallis@gmail.com.

Sue Powell, ASC Website

Learn about what's new with ASC, and share your questions, photos and exciting sightings: at Audubon Society of Corvallis or tag us [@covallisaudubon](https://twitter.com/covallisaudubon).

Kai Frueh and Nancy DeMasi, ASC Facebook

Check us out on Instagram at our new "handle," which is [@auduboncovallis](https://www.instagram.com/auduboncovallis)

Christina Linkem, ASC Instagram

April 2 Exhibit and Reception for World-Class Photos in Corvallis

Help us celebrate and enjoy amazing wildlife photographs April 1-22 at the OSU Center for the Humanities, Autzen House Gallery, 811 SW Jefferson Ave. ASC is very excited to be hosting the 2019 Traveling Audubon Photography Awards Exhibit and you are welcome to enjoy them in the gallery between 10 am and 4 pm daily.

ASC will host a **reception on April 2, from 6-8 pm** to kick it all off at the exhibit site. Bluebird Hill Cellars will be pouring their delicious wine and light hors d'oeuvres will be served. It's sure to be a fun and inspiring evening, not to be missed!

These 10 photographic prints are the 2019 National Audubon Photography Contest award winners and honorable mentions chosen from over 2200 entrants. They 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!

Dodie Wilson, ASC Photo Exhibit Coordinator

Education News

Winter Wildlife Field Day at Finley

Join us for this popular, bilingual, environmental education event at William L. Finley National Wildlife Refuge on Saturday, March 14th, 11 am to 3 pm. The refuge is about 10 miles south of Corvallis. A lot of your favorite activities will be back, plus new partners, more stations, tents and seating! With your passport book, visit the 14 stations scattered around the Refuge Headquarters Building and along the trail leading to the Display Pond. This year's theme is "Water: The Life in Wildlife." Just a few of the related activities include: newt obstacle course, osprey fishing activity, nature photography, Chintimini's live birds, owl pellet dissection, art for kids and toddler area, nature walks, pond studies, Bookmobile, fish specimens, and SO much more! For questions, and more information please contact (samantha_bartling@fws.gov)

Samantha Bartling, USFWS

Our partners at Finley NWR are putting out an urgent **request for additional volunteers** to help with the Sixth Annual Winter Wildlife Field Day at Finley on Saturday, March 14. Volunteers are needed from setup at 8 am, through the 11 am to 3 pm event with 14 activity stations, and in closing afterwards. If you can help for all or part of that time, please contact Samantha Bartling, Visitor Services Manager, Willamette Valley National Wildlife Refuge Complex at samantha_bartling@fws.gov / 541-760-3036

Volunteers needed this Spring

Our education team volunteers could use more help at several events and programs in the coming weeks as we try to support nature and our local partners in environmental education. Can you join us for any of these events? No training needed.

Hesthavn Nature Center Open Day, March 7, 1-4 pm,

Winter Wildlife Field Day, March 14, 11-3

Timber Ridge (Albany) Science Night, April 21

2nd grade field trip classes at Chintimini, May & June

Spring Girl Scout Day Camp, May 2

Chintimini Open House, May 10

Get Outdoors Day at Peavy, May 30

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

Teri Engbring, ASC Education Team

How Do You Connect with Nature?

How do you personally connect with birds and nature? Think about it for a while and see where your mind takes you.

At the recent Willamette Valley Bird Symposium, we asked visitors that question and they thoughtfully responded.

Of 49 written responses, 18 said watching or listening to birds and observing their behavior connected them to nature. Another 10 focused on feeding/observing birds in their backyard. Six connected through hiking or trail running, especially on forest trails or along bodies of water. Wildlife photography and native plant gardening each had four happy votes. Citizen science was another big draw with 16 enjoying field work from bird banding, surveys and research to monitoring nest boxes and wildlife rehab. One connected through bare feet, and another through art. Thanks to all who shared these thoughts with us. We hope you all continue to derive great joy and peace through your individual and very personal connection with nature.

Teri Engbring

Hesthavn News

March work parties at Hesthavn:

Sunday March 1, 10 am to 2 pm - Final blackberry pull of the season. With luck, we will finish clearing the west side of the creek.

Sunday March 29, 10 am to 2 pm - Barn and yard work party. We'll be working from a list of tasks. Activities will range from mowing the lawn to checking the mouse traps.

Ray Drapek, Hesthavn Chair

Visit Hesthavn Nature Center Mar 7

ASC volunteers will open the Hesthavn Nature Center to the public on Saturday, March 7, from 1 to 4 pm. Check out the extensive bird specimen collection, displays, games, books, and more inside. And if the weather cooperates, walk the trails, observe the birds and other critters, and immerse yourself in nature on our park-like grounds, lovingly maintained by dedicated volunteers. It's all free and fun for visitors of all ages! Please join us and bring a friend to share the adventure!

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.

Atop the Nest Box

Get Ready for Nesting

Here in the Willamette Valley, many Western Bluebirds hang around during the winter. In February and March, they begin inspecting natural cavities and nest boxes in preparation for nesting. If you have bluebird nest boxes on your property, or if you're a volunteer who checks boxes for the Bluebird Trail, now is the time to make sure your boxes are ready for the 2020 nesting season.

If you forgot to clean out your boxes last fall, you should do that now. Remove any old nests, and use a putty knife to scrape away droppings. But don't dump the discards on the ground near the box. Instead, take them away from the box to lessen the chance of predators finding the box. And be careful when you reach into your boxes, as wasps often use them for their own nests or as roosting sites!

Also check the condition of your boxes to ensure the top is leak-proof, the ventilation holes are unclogged, and the door opens freely and closes securely. If you need help with nest box repairs, contact me (sueandmatt@comcast.net) or Rita Snyder (rsnyder14@msn.com or 541-752-6457).

Matt Lee, Bluebird Trail Chair

Community Notes

2020 Sustainability Coalition Fair & Town Hall is 3/12/20

Come join us at the annual Corvallis Sustainability Coalition Fair and Town Hall meeting on Thursday, March 12, 2020. The Fair is free and open to the public, and runs 5 – 7 pm at the OSU CH2MHill Alumni Center. There will be more than 50 exhibits (including ASC), refreshments and music.

After the Fair comes the Sustainability Town Hall from 7 – 9 pm, which requires registration. The keynote speaker this year is Kristin Eberhard, Director, Climate & Democracy, for Sightline Institute. Sightline is working to make the Northwest a model for sustainability by encouraging green economies & healthy environments. Eberhard formerly worked at the Natural Resources Defense Council in California where she helped the largest municipally owned utility in the US to move to energy efficiency and to renewables. She has taught courses on climate change and energy law at Stanford and UCLA law schools.

The CH2MHill Alumni Center is at 725 SW 26th St on the OSU Campus. Please register for the town hall online by March 6 at: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2020_Sustainability_Town_Hall

Suzanne Ortiz, ASC Sustainability Coalition Rep

10th Annual Dean Hale Woodpecker Festival - online registration opens April 1

The Festival is headquartered in beautiful Sisters, Oregon and takes place June 4-7, 2020. This is a very popular festival and most tours fill quickly, sometimes within a day of registration opening. Festival participants have a choice of 29 guided tours in search of 11 different woodpecker species and 200 other birds that make central Oregon a birding hot spot.

East Cascades Audubon Society (ECAS) sponsors the Dean Hale Woodpecker Festival, which offers a fun, friendly, and casual atmosphere that is all about the birds. Trips are affordable, limited in size and guided by two local volunteers. The proceeds support ECAS education and conservation projects.

Tour details, registration and more information at website: <http://www.ecaudubon.org/dean-hale-woodpecker-festival> Questions can be directed to dhwf2020@gmail.com or Sherrie Pierce 541-548-4641.

Diana Roberts, East Cascades Audubon Society

Willamette Valley Refuges Events

Putting a Face on the Refuge – A Wildlife Photography Workshop

This workshop will include everything from composure, camera abilities, basic functions, and ways to make the experience fun, along with some field anecdotes from the presenter. Prints will be provided for the group to view and consider.

Sunday, March 1st, 2020 from 1:00 to 3:00 pm, at William L. Finley NWR, Refuge Office & Nature Store.

Presenter Mike Larsen has worked at a photo lab in aerial mapping photography for 38 years. The aerial photos in the Refuge HQ were produced by that lab and likely printed by Mike. His photos can be found on the current Finley NWR website and Facebook pages. Taking photos at the Refuges, and learning along the way, has been his hobby for over 20 years.

RSVP and find maps of Finley NWR at: friendswvnr.org/events-volunteer

Vistas and Vineyards Paintings of Finley

Once again, 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 and available for purchase from February-April. A portion of the sale for most paintings will go to the Friends of the Willamette Valley NWR Complex. Come take a look at these beautiful displays, and support local art and the Friends!

For questions please email isabel_justiniano@fws.gov.

For a map of the refuge visit William L. Finley NWR Trail Map. February-April (Monday-Friday 8 am-4 pm, Saturday & Sunday 10 am -4 pm) Refuge Office, William L. Finley NWR (about 10 miles south of Corvallis).

Isabel Justiniano, USFWS

Field Notes

01/25/20-02/20/20

A rainy end to January gave us a total rainfall 3 inches above normal for the month, causing minor flooding along the Willamette River and its tributaries. February settled back into a dry pattern, with less than one third of the average rainfall for the month. At the end of the period, snow pack in the Willamette basin part of the Cascades was just 78% of normal.

Continuing mild temperatures brought February flowers. Andrea Foster noted daffodil shoots coming up in nw. Corvallis by 19 Jan; by 20 Feb these were blooming in many yards along with introduced ornamental plum trees.

A few native shrubs also began to bloom. On 30 Jan Randy and Pam Comeleo found **osoberry** ("Indian-plum") blooming in Dunn Forest. Clusters of blossoms on **Oregon-grape** at Luckiamute SNA started to open by 5 Feb. Carma Henry spotted **camas** putting up shoots on the south slope of Logsdon Ridge near Lewisburg by 17 Feb. By the end of the period, **red-flowering currant** – a favorite nectar source for migrant Rufous Hummingbirds which will be arriving any day now – was also blooming.

Abbreviations and locations: CBC = Christmas Bird Count, GBBC = Great Backyard Bird Count, NWR = National Wildlife Refuge, SNA = State Natural Area, STP = sewage treatment ponds. Herbert Farm & Natural Area is on the south edge of Corvallis off Hwy 99W. Jackson-Frazier Wetlands are in north Corvallis near Cheldelin Middle School. Luckiamute SNA is along the Willamette River northwest of Albany. Philomath STP is south of Philomath and requires access permission. (Bruce) Starker Arts Park is along Dunawi Creek in sw. Corvallis. Sourslaw Slough is an informal name for a new filbert irrigation pond along Sauerkraut Rd. near Airlie. Talking Water Gardens is in NE Albany. Cabell Marsh, McFadden Marsh, and North Prairie are locations at Finley NWR.

Song, romance, and homemaking

Early spring songsters around Corvallis by 6 Feb included **Bewick's Wrens**, **Spotted Towhees**, **Song Sparrows** and **Black-capped Chickadees** (Don Boucher). By 16 Feb **Red-winged Blackbirds**, **House Finches** and (briefly) a **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** were also part of the chorus at Starker Arts Park (Don Boucher, Lisa Millbank). **Varied Thrushes** sang in nw. Corvallis 19 Feb (Andrea Foster).

Great Blue Heron nesting colonies began to show activity by mid-Feb when Peter Greenberg noticed activity at an annual heron colony with 40+ nests along I-5 near Brooks (north of Salem). On 15 Feb I saw a pair circling over poplars where they nested last year at Coffin Butte Regional Landfill; one perched high in the edge of the poplars to keep watch while the other flew down to perch just above an old nest.

On the evening of 30 Jan in Dunn Forest, Pam & Randy Comeleo heard the "ping-pong ball" song of a **Western Screech-Owl**.

On 31 Jan a pair of **American Kestrels** perched close together along Ryals Rd. e. of Adair Village, while a second male tried to sidle up. The trio were perched over a bare muddy field where earthworms were likely the main fare that could be offered up as courtship morsels.

On 7 Feb Lisa Millbank & Don Boucher spotted an **Anna's Hummingbird** gathering cattail fluff to line her nest, south of the water treatment plant at Willamette Park. Lisa notes that, since it's pruning season, it's good to "check for tiny lichen-covered hummingbird nests before doing any work. Females will usually 'tick' incessantly if you get very close to a nest, but are sometimes silent."

A **Common Raven** gathered horse hair from shedding mares in Melinda Suydam's pastures near Dallas on 20 Feb.

Western Meadowlarks sang on Mike & Karen Lippsmeyer's farm s. of Independence by 3 Feb. On 5 Feb Harry Fuller noted that **Red-winged Blackbirds** were defending territories in marshes where they nest at Baskett Slough NWR.

On the weekend of 1-2 Feb, Mike Lippsmeyer found a mating ball of about 8 **Red-spotted Garter Snakes** on his farm s. of Independence.

Early spring migrants and wanderers

A **Horned Grebe** on Detroit Lake 18 Feb (Roy Gerig) may have been an early migrant as this species starts to move inland and northward from coastal waters, though a few can spend winter on large reservoirs in the Cascades.

Turkey Vultures were seen occasionally in small numbers throughout the period, including three over Gathering Together Farm sw. of Corvallis 2 Feb (Viviane Simone-Brown) and two over Blodgett 3 Feb (Carol Savonen). One soared s. of Philomath 17 Feb (Virginia Stanton). It's hard to be sure if these early sightings are true migrants, or birds that temporarily range north from California in periods of warm weather.

A historical eagle nest site near Harrisburg on 11 Feb had one **Bald Eagle** on the nest and another perched close by (Barbara Combs).

A single **American White Pelican**, perhaps wandering north from Fern Ridge Reservoir, turned up at the South Santiam Mitigation Bank ne. of Lebanon on 13 Feb, and continued to be seen there through 20 Feb (Ray Fiori).

On 7 Feb two **Double-crested Cormorants** landed on a shallow vernal pond at E.E. Wilson Wildlife Area, four miles from the Willamette River where they can be seen more regularly in winter. Sometimes these waterbirds move away from the river during high-flow periods, when fast-moving, turbid water makes it harder for them to find fish. Paul Adamus noted that, during the preceding week, he saw a **Common Merganser** and two **Common Goldeneyes** on an even smaller seasonal puddle near Monroe.

An early **Osprey** was along Halls Ferry Rd. near Independence on 18 Feb (Andi Stephens). A few now winter in Eugene and sometimes move around during periods of high water on the Willamette River.

Two early migrant **Band-tailed Pigeons** turned up on Jim & Karan Fairchild's platform feeder sw. of Philomath 3 Feb.

On Monday (3 Feb) Pam Otley noted a **Tree Swallow** flying around at Herbert Farm & Natural Area (south edge of Corvallis off Hwy 99E). An early **Barn Swallow** flew over Talking Water Gardens 5 Feb (Kaplan Yalcin). Three **Barn Swallows** and three **Tree Swallows** were seen there by the ASC field trip there 8 Feb (Duncan Evered, Caryn Stoess).

Continuing winter birds

Sixteen "**Dusky**" **Canada Geese** were at Willamette Park 29 Jan (Duncan Evered).

Eight **Trumpeter Swans** continued on Sourslaw Slough 30 Jan, and at least 11 were there 16 Feb (Roy Gerig). Eight still there 17 Feb. Up to 70 **Tundra Swans** were in the Maple Grove area north of there 30 Jan and again 15 Feb (Ann Wichmann) and 17 Feb. Large flocks of **Tundra Swans** were also seen in their annual location w. of Halsey by 3 Feb (Delores Porch).

Up to 110 **Wood Ducks** perched in the canopy of mature oaks and fed – possibly on acorns – on the ground below, at a private pond in oak savanna near Baskett Slough NWR 9-10 Feb. Frank Kolwicz noted that the ducks would often carry their food items back into the water before consuming them.

Three **Cinnamon Teal** plus dozens of **American Wigeon** and **Northern Shovelers**, **Mallards** and **Green-winged Teal**, were still at Talking Water Gardens for an ASC field trip there on 8 Feb (Duncan Evered).

Eight male **Common Mergansers** swam with a single female on Cronemiller Lake in McDonald Forest 24 Jan (Rana Foster). Three female **Hooded Mergansers** swam at wetland at Starker Arts Park 6 Feb (Don Boucher); up to 5 were seen on nearby Stoneybrook Pond off and on through the period, where a lone **Ring-necked Duck** also visited briefly in late Jan (Julie Gibson).

Four male **Common Goldeneyes** were on the Willamette River at Willamette Park 29 Jan (Duncan Evered). On 18 Feb eight **Barrow's Goldeneyes** were along the North Santiam River near Mill City, in an eddy below the boat launch at North Santiam State Park (Roy Gerig).

Thirty traffic-savvy **Wild Turkeys** waited to cross Circle Blvd in nw.

Corvallis 1 Feb (Rana Foster).

Two immature **Bald Eagles** perched together at the Crystal Lake cemetery in s. Corvallis as another soared nearby 25 Jan (Rana Foster). Barbara Combs counted 49 **Bald Eagles** in a roadside raptor survey between Harrisburg and Coburg on 11 Feb.

A **White-tailed Kite**, a **Northern Harrier** and a dark-morph **Rough-legged Hawk** hunted over the North Prairie 8 Feb (Ellen Cantor).

An adult **Cooper's Hawk** lurking near the Dunawi Creek Community Garden may have accounted for subdued songbird activity there during a Neighborhood Naturalist adventure 16 Feb (Don Boucher).

Red-tailed Hawk numbers were generally very low in the mid-valley this winter, based on results of raptor surveys coordinated by East Cascades Audubon Society. Coordinator Jeff Fleischer speculates that it might reflect poor production during the past nesting season, as numbers of juvenile birds have been especially low.

On Jan 21 Margaret Stephens noticed a **Red-tailed Hawk** with red-orange wing tags, at Talking Waters Garden. Carole Hallett, who monitors raptors at Portland International Airport (PDX), informed Margaret that this hawk – likely a female – hatched in 2018, was caught at PDX in Oct 2018 and released near Brownsville. She was seen near Linn-Benton CC in Nov 2018 and during Jan and Apr 2019. At this age she could now be searching for a place to settle down and nest.

At Herbert Farm & Natural Area just after dark on 5 Feb, Rana Foster noted that many **Killdeer** were massed along the access road, perhaps using this as a nocturnal “roost.” Other open-country birds including our local, threatened **“Streaked” Horned Larks** will also sometimes roost along rural gravel roads at night – a good reason to drive slowly when traveling such roads after dark!

A flock of several thousand gulls in a large field off Washburn Lane s. of Monroe 1 Feb appeared to be mostly **Ring-billed** and to a lesser extent **California Gulls**, with at least a few **Mew** and **Glaucous-winged Gulls**, and possibly also **Herring** and **“Thayer’s” (Iceland) Gulls** (Paul Adamus).

A **Burrowing Owl** wintering near Peoria since December and another that turned up closer to Tangent in mid-Jan were both still using their favored sites when Jeff Fleischer checked on 25 Jan, and again on 6 Feb. Jeff notes that neither bird had leg bands. The second owl was still present through 16 Feb despite considerable attention from birders who were in the area to look for other open-country birds.

Gary Whitehouse heard **Sandhill Cranes** calling near Cabell Marsh 2 Feb. Paul Rentz has heard **Virginia Rails** at McFadden Marsh regularly since November and continuing into early Feb.

Three **Lewis's Woodpeckers** were in oaks near Cox Butte s. of Monroe 31 Jan (Diane Pettey, Vickie Buck). Two more continued through the period at a private oak savanna site near Baskett Slough NWR (Frank Kolwicz; Carma & Steve Henry). As of 30 Jan up to five **Acorn Woodpeckers** were frequenting Pam & Randy Comeleo's suet feeder near Fitton Green, where a pair nested last summer and raised two offspring to our feeders.

The old big-leaf maple by the barn at ASC's Hesthavn Sanctuary has been attracting more woodpeckers as it seems to be losing vitality; on 25 Jan a **Red-breasted Sapsucker** was working on the trunk (Julie Gibson).

A **Peregrine Falcon** was perched near McFadden Marsh 2 Feb (Gary Whitehouse). A **Halcón Esmerejón** (Merlin) was spotted by a bilingual class of Lincoln School 3rd-graders, assisted by volunteers Nate Richardson and Tyler Knapp, during the GBBC on 14 Feb.

Wintering **Say's Phoebes** continued in the area s. of Finley NWR and at several locations in w. Linn Co., including Ward Butte 8 Feb (Tom Gilg). A **Black Phoebe** sallied after insects over McFadden Marsh 2 Feb (Gary Whitehouse). A **Northern Shrike** perched in a tree next to the North Prairie overlook platform 2 Feb (Gary Whitehouse).

Corvids found by third graders participating in the GBBC at

Lincoln Elementary 14 Feb included **Chara Crestada** (Steller's Jay), **Chara Californiana** (California Scrub-Jay), and **Cuervo Americano** (American Crow).

Two to five **Canada Jays** were visiting Pam & Randy Comeleo's suet feeders near Fitton Green as of 30 Jan.

On 15 Feb two **White-breasted Nuthatches** turned up and Shawn & Paul Jacobsen's feeder w. of Bald Hill; Paul notes this was the first time he's seen this species in a 1 1/2 years of residence, but **Red-breasted Nuthatches** visit regularly.

“Huge” numbers of **American Robins** as well as starlings and blackbirds used a stand of overgrown Christmas trees nw. of Albany as a nightly roost in late Jan (Peter Kenagy, Tina Springer).

7 or 8 **Western Bluebirds** visited Judith and Jerry Paul's feeders in the Highland Dell neighborhood of nw. Corvallis 30 Jan. A small group feasted at Louise Barden's mealworm cake feeder in the Timberhill neighborhood 3 Feb.

Three more bluebirds (**azulejos**) foraging around the Lincoln Elementary School garden 14 Dec allowed close views for dozens of delighted third graders.

Townsend's Warblers have been unusually abundant in our region this winter. In early Feb Paul Rentz mentioned that he was hearing from many Willamette Valley birdwatchers who were noticing these bright, conifer-loving warblers in their yards for the first time. The total number recorded for Willamette Valley CBCs this winter was nearly triple the total from last winter. CBCs along the Oregon coast also recorded high numbers, more than double the total from last winter.

Pine Siskins continued to be notably scarce at feeders through 15 Feb (Paul Jacobsen), but **Purple Finches** graced Louise Barden's feeders in early Feb.

Two **Snow Buntings** continued along Davis Rd. near Peoria through the period, along with flocks of **Horned Larks**, **American Pipits** and **Savannah Sparrows**.

Jamie Simmons had two **White-throated Sparrows** in his nw. Corvallis yard through the winter, with at least one continuing through 14 Feb.

A dozen **Western Meadowlarks** were in a field along Oak Creek Dr. near the north parking lot for Bald Hill Park 1 Feb (Don Boucher). At least four male **Tricolored Blackbirds** were at a feedlot along Eicher Rd. e. of Albany 27 Jan; Roy Gerig notes that the property owner has been noticing these along with the more common **Red-winged Blackbirds** there for many years, though local birders only became aware of them in recent years.

Recent **Beaver** activity at Starker Arts Park was evident on 16 Feb in the form of many coppiced willows (Don Boucher). A very small **Gray Fox** was near the top of Witham Hill 30 Jan, headed for the new Witham Hill Natural Area (Julie Gibson).

At Finley NWR 17 Feb, ten male **Elk** with white glistening antlers were in view south of the prairie observation deck; nearby at Turtle Flats, a **Western Pond Turtle** basked atop a log as a pair of Buffleheads swam nearby (Rana Foster).

Rare or off-course birds and other surprises

A male **Tufted Duck** turned up on Fiechter Pond at Finley NWR 27 Jan (fide Jamie Simmons) – six days after the last report of one at Philomath STP – and continued to be seen there through 4 Feb. A male **Redhead** turned up on a small private pond near Baskett Slough NWR in late Jan (Frank Kolwicz), and continued there through 17 Feb (Jim Scott).

A **Red-throated Loon** continuing on the Willamette River at Willamette Park through 12 Feb was heard vocalizing loudly on 25 Jan and 29 Jan ((Julie Gibson; Duncan Evered, Gary Whitehouse).

A **Lesser Yellowlegs** waded alongside 24 Greater **Yellowlegs** and 3000 **Dunlin** in a private wetland along Belts Dr. s. of Brownsville 12-13 Feb (Vickie Buck; Kaplan Yalcin). Two **Bonaparte's Gulls** visited the Philomath STP 30 Jan (Pam Otley; Jamie Simmons). An adult **Western Gull** was seen again at Coffin Butte regional landfill 4 Feb (Duncan Evered).

A crisply black-and-white **Downy Woodpecker** visiting nw. Corvallis 10 Feb (Jamie Simmons) appeared to be of the interior “Rocky Mountains” type usually seen in the mountains of eastern Oregon, rather than the more “grungy” subspecies that we normally



see in the Pacific region.

A **Pygmy Nuthatch** in lodgepole pines northeast of Big Lake in the Santiam Pass area on 9 Feb (Kaplan Yalcin) was just far enough west of the Pacific Crest – by about 150 m – to count as a rare bird for Linn County.

A **Northern Mockingbird** turned up again near Airlie 16-17 Feb (Roy Gerig; Caleb Centanni), in the same spot where one was seen in November.

A **Black-headed Grosbeak** that showed up 22 Jan in Sweet Home

continued to visit a feeder there through 31 Jan (Joseph Sands).

Next month: Returning **Rufous Hummingbirds** and **Violet-green Swallows** are usually our first long-range migrants to return from the tropics, followed by **Orange-crowned Warblers**, **Barn Swallows**, **Cliff Swallows**, and **Ospreys** later in March. 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 Mar.

Board Meeting Summary

For February 13, 2020

1. The Board agreed it would be prudent to require any volunteer working alone at Hesthavn to seek prior permission from the Chair of the committee whose work is being done - usually Teri for the Education Committee or Ray for the Hesthavn Committee.
2. Also in the interest of volunteer safety, any person who may be handling museum specimens must be trained by Teri first.
3. The ad hoc committee on photo policy crafted an agreement for those who wish to submit photos to Facebook or Twitter platforms.
4. The National Audubon Photo Awards exhibit at Autzen House Gallery at OSU will be displayed from April 1 – 22, 1pm-4 pm and by appointment. The Board voted unanimously to cater a reception on April 2nd from 6 pm-8 pm.
5. ASC and our Bluebird Trail volunteers are no longer banding western bluebirds, but counts of adults, eggs and hatchlings will continue.
6. The Board voted unanimously to send a letter to the County Community Development Department and to Benton County Commissioners regarding the parking problem at Hesthavn, which is a result of inadequate parking for OSU recreation trail users in nearby Mac/Dunn forest.

Next Board Meeting:

7 pm on March 12 at Natural Grocers, 1235 NW 10 th St. in Corvallis.

Linda Campbell, Board Secretary

ASC Board Secretary Needed ASAP

Our Board Secretary, Linda Campbell is leaving Corvallis this spring, and we need a replacement to take notes at the monthly (second Thursday of each month) Board meeting. ASC is looking for a Secretary to complete Linda's term, from March through May, and then we will need 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 and would be happy to tell 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:

Barbara & Ralph Reed
Duane Jager
Michael Heher

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 listserv 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, Fred Ramsey, Ray Drapek, Linda Campbell, Sue Powell, Kai Frueh, Nancy DeMasi, Paul Adamus, Duncan Evered, Suzanne Ortiz, Diana Roberts, Isabel Justiniano and Samantha Bartling

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

Mar 1	Hesthavn Work Party, 10 – 2
Mar 7	Hesthavn Nature Center Open 1- 4 pm
Mar 12	Corvallis Sustainability Fair & Town Hall
Mar 14	Second Saturday Field Trip, all-day coast trip
Mar 14	Winter Wildlife Field Day at Finley NWR
Mar 26	Chat submissions due for April issue
Mar 26	Field Notes submissions due
Mar 27-29	First 2020 Weekend Field Trip: Bandon & South Coast
Mar 29	Hesthavn Work Party, 10 - 2
Apr 2	National Audubon Photo Exhibit Opening and Reception, 6-8 pm at OSU Center for Humanities

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:
volunteerasc@gmail.com

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

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