



THE CHAT

December 2020 VOL. 50 #4

Due to the global Coronavirus pandemic, all ASC in-person programs and meetings through 2020 have been cancelled or postponed. But we are safely continuing online. For the latest info, please visit our website at auduboncorvallis.org.

ASC General Meeting

(webinar via Zoom)

December 17, 2020 at 7 pm

ASC Annual Member Photo Show



Lazuli Bunting photo by Matt Lee

Select your best (up to about 20) nature photos to share with the group. Photos should be nature-themed, i.e., any interesting, beautiful, or fun photo(s) of birds, other animals, plants, nature scenes, etc.

Submissions: Please send your completed Powerpoint slide show and accompanying stories, descriptions or other narrative via email to Mark Baldwin by December 10th. This will prevent possibly unsettling “dead air” time. Since we won’t be meeting in person it won’t be possible to accept last minute entries as in the past. Please contact Mark via email (audubon.corvallis@gmail.com) if you want to submit a video (mp4 files should work) or other format. Also, contact Mark if your file is too large for email and a drop off can be arranged.

To join the meeting: ASC members who registered their email address with their membership should receive a meeting invitation prior to the webinar. The programs will begin at 7:00 PM followed by a short business meeting, if needed. For more information, contact Mark Baldwin.

Future Speakers:

January 21 – Randy Comeleo, Update on the Benton County Predator Control Program

February 18 – Todd Katzner, Raptor Migration and Tracking

March 18 – James Sumich, Marine Mammals

April 15 – Steve Perakis, Forest Biogeochemistry and Ecosystem Studies

May 20 – Matt Lee/Sue Powell/Carla Olson/Mark Baldwin – Birding in Kenya

Worth Mathewson, on Natural History of the Band-tailed Pigeon, will join us if we are able to meet in person later this year.

If you have questions or suggestions for future speakers please contact me at audubon.corvallis@gmail.com.

Check the ASC website for updated information at: auduboncorvallis.org

Mark Baldwin, Vice President & Program Chair

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Our Website Connects You

Upcoming events, such as the annual Christmas Bird Count, are highlighted on the website. Did you miss our September to November speaker seminars? Links to the recorded presentations can be found on the Monthly Speakers page.

Are you housebound and looking for something to do? Explore your universe on the Birding Resources page of the ASC website (auduboncorvallis.org/birding-resources). A plethora of

links offer lists of bird sightings, attracting birds to your gardens, identifying a mystery bird call, matching a feather to a bird species, connecting with young birders, and more. Expand your search with links to Butterflies and Mammals of Oregon.

Sue Powell, ASC Website

Learn about what's new with ASC and share more Backyard Spotlights, questions, photos and exciting bird sightings: at Audubon Society of Corvallis or tag us on [Facebook at corvallisaudubon](https://www.facebook.com/corvallisaudubon).

Want to see an inspiring video about Audubon Society of Corvallis by our teenage board member, Kai Frueh? See it on [ASC's Facebook page!](https://www.facebook.com/asc_corvallis)

Kai Frueh and Nancy DeMasi, ASC Facebook

Or check us out on [Instagram at auduboncorvallis](https://www.instagram.com/auduboncorvallis).

Christina Linkem, ASC Instagram

Conservation News

There is palpable relief as a changing U.S. Administration approaches. For some it cannot come soon enough! For others, there is the strain of last ditch efforts to further weaken bedrock laws that protect clean air, water, imperiled species, and those that preserve citizens' right to comment and educate, advocate and litigate on federally funded activities: the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Administrative Procedures Act. Just now these allow our Chapter to comment on funding and location of new federal communications facilities on Marys Peak, and to pursue better protections for imperiled marbled murrelets when Siuslaw National Forest relies on outdated science, agreements and management plans when planning and implementing timber sales. And yes, Siuslaw still sells timber, mostly from thinning plantations within late-successional reserves – hoping to protect old-growth dependent species.

In the coming weeks before spring, while we all try to maintain our sanity within our COVID-isolating bubbles, virtual learning and armchair advocacy is a perfect winter pastime. Your state and federal representatives seldom get personal notes; those and

phone calls are very effective. And you can easily find online petitions to support your passion, just personalize your response when you can. Try these weblinks to get started:

<https://www.audubon.org/takeaction>

<https://abcbirds.org/action/petition-federal-funding-2021>

There is much news about western Oregon forests: the calamitous wildfire season and what we could learn from it, changes in forest practices and how the state will manage its forests, and a likely new OSU research forest – more news soon there! Statewide Audubon Chapters continue efforts to fund and protect birds, their habitats, marine reserves and rocky shore habitat, wildlife refuges, and reduce the deadly impacts of outdoor cats, night-time lighting and human-induced climate changes on our feathered friends.

Jim Fairchild, Conservation Chair

Education News

Connect with Nature Bird Coloring Contest Update

Our first virtual interactive learning opportunity during the pandemic is drawing to a close as we prepare this newsletter. All entries must be received by November 30 to qualify.

With just a few days to go for submission of hand-colored bird drawings, we have already received more than 30 entries from throughout Benton County and a few from other states, spread over all 5 age groups. Only Benton County participants qualify for the prizes, but every entry qualifies for a certificate of artistic merit and a 2020 Wildlife Explorer Patch, which will be mailed in early December. The most entries so far are from 6-8 year olds. We have one special Grandmother who single handedly encouraged 8 entries! Our youngest entrant is 11 months old, from New Jersey, and included a copy of her Baby's First Guide to Birds.

Thanks to the dedicated and dynamic volunteer team that has pulled off this event. The team is led by

our OSU intern and Board member Mikaela Lea, and also includes Board member Dodie Wilson, and volunteers Dale Mitchell (who designed the certificate of artistic merit), Liz Hogan (queen of community outreach), Mai Kiigemagi (who will personalize each certificate with her calligraphy), and Teri Engbring. Initially we were able to meet safely at Hesthavn to prepare, but with new COVID restrictions, we are working online through zoom now. That will include judging of the submissions beginning Dec 1, coordinated by Mikaela with judges Mai, Dodie, and Dale.

Thanks also to the management and staff of the Corvallis Office Depot/OfficeMax store off of 9th Street. They have been wonderfully supportive of Audubon education in offering us a display table for the whole month in their Print Center. They made sure everyone had access to contest drawings and entry forms, in English and Spanish. They had us covered, even if you don't have a printer! They also helped us maintain copies for that display throughout November. They even offered to collect entries for us to pick up and email to our judges.

The team hopes to develop other virtual programs in 2021 to help our community with fun, creative and safe ways to learn and Connect with Nature. If you have an idea how we can do that, please contact us at asc.educationteam@gmail.com.

And if you want to get in a last minute entry by November 30, information is available on the Audubon Society of Corvallis website at auduboncorvallis.org

Teri Engbring, ASC Education Team

Backyard Spotlights

I want to encourage Audubon members to share a corner of their yard with us. Show us how you encourage and shelter wildlife in your yard and have fun doing it. We ask that you submit a photo or two and accompany the photo with a paragraph or so explaining what you do to make your yard, or part of it, a mini refuge for wildlife around us. Or feel free to share a poem or journal entry describing your world. Remember that we won't disclose your address or any other personal information, only what you wish to

share. Your entry may appear in the Chat and/or ASC Facebook page and Instagram.

Thanks to ASC Education team member Nancy DeMasi for sharing her lovely backyard with us this month and telling us what inspires her to create and maintain her mini refuge.

Phyllis Bailey, ASC Backyard Spotlight Coordinator

Nancy's Backyard

Photos by Nancy DeMasi



My mom didn't appreciate nature, but I was born a bird lover. My love for birds took flight when I was 10 years old and at Girl Scout Camp in Pennsylvania. Funny, how you remember life changing moments in your life. I was walking with a counselor and saw an unusual bird and I asked her what kind of bird it was. Her answer changed my life. "I don't know, look it up!" She directed me to the camp library and the biggest, most beautiful book I ever saw in my whole life!

I moved to Oregon 5 years ago and once again was thrilled to see birds that I only knew before in books. I instantly was determined to fill my patio with shrubs, trees and flowers that would attract and nurture birds and other beasties. So, I planted bleeding hearts, willows, gray dogwood, milkweed and flowering

currants. I added geraniums, sunflowers, strawberries and lots of flowers. I was sure to provide several different water sources which I kept fresh and clean. I supplement with black oil sunflower seeds, hummingbird feeders (stationed where the birds can only see one at a time) dried corn, different flavor suets, and Niger seed, in season for the gold finches. Oh, and peanuts for the jays and squirrels and chipmunks. I have to admit, however, that in spite of all my planting, weeding, watering and feeding, the birds love and are also drawn to the area behind my fenced in patio where the wild flowers/weeds grow in a riot of color in wild abandonment. There, daisies, black berries, thistle, sweet peas, tansy and who knows what (!) grow without watering or cutting or attending, according to nature's season.



Anna's Hummingbird (year round)



Black-headed Grosbeak (spring and summer)

So, if you can, leave a little wild for the wild birds, provide lots of clean water, use no chemicals at all, and most of all, enjoy.

Nancy DeMasi

Hesthavn News

Work Parties

Due to the latest COVID restrictions, Hesthavn work parties are cancelled for the time being. Check the ASC website for up to the minute info.

Ray Drapek, Hesthavn Chair

Our Trails Are Still Open to Enjoy Nature

Hesthavn's trails and outdoor facilities are still open to our guests during daylight hours, as long as you observe social distancing and wear a mask if you are within 6 feet of others.

Directions to Hesthavn

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 brown signs for 'Nature Center.' Hesthavn will be on your left shortly before the end of Oak Creek Dr.

Gardening for Birds

Photos by Bill Probsting



Fig. 1 Cooper's Hawk adult

Do you remember 'The Far Side' cartoon depicting the vegetarian lions of the Serengeti stalking the wild tofudebeest? Wouldst that raptors could be so, but alas they have to eat meat. Accipiters, Cooper's (Fig. 1) and Sharp-shinned Hawks (Fig. 2), are adapted to pursuing other birds and some of them have learned that seed-eating birds often concentrate in people's backyards. It must be productive because they keep checking through. I have heard the story more than once that some accipiters have learned to flush prey towards windows. The dead or stunned bird is then snatched away. (Recall an earlier article about Acopian Window Savers.)



Fig. 2 Sharp-shinned Hawk adult



Fig. 3 Native trees and shrubs near feeders

In fact, this past autumn a Cooper's Hawk rushed our garden. An American Robin and a Swainson's Thrush flushed. The robin flew to safety, but the thrush hit a window, despite the window savers. I was

standing next to this as it occurred and instinctively checked the thrush. It was alive, though it's right eye was severely damaged. I left it out, but apparently the hawk had departed. About two hours later, the thrush fluttered off to the thicket to meet its fate.

Perhaps you don't consider yourself a gardener for birds, but if you have some feeders out in the yard you may be able to improve this experience for the birds and, therefore, yourself by ensuring sufficient cover near feeders. Figure 3 shows one of the setups in our garden. This gives birds a chance to escape accipiters and other predators, including cats. Feeling more comfortable around your feeding area will attract more birds for longer periods of time.

I had a recent inquiry from someone who had begun, enthusiastically, to feed birds in her yard. She contacted me asking why the feeders on one side of the house were busy, while those on the other side were vacant. My reply asked whether there was cover near the unused feeders. Too much exposure will dissuade birds from using the feeders, too risky. Turned out this person thought that was indeed the answer. She could then remedy the problem by planting trees and shrubs nearby or moving the feeders to a safer location.

Any plants can be grown to provide cover for birds, but we are missing a bet if we don't use natives. Native plants provide fruit and more insects as a resource in addition to cover. Of course, birds also eat non-native fruit, but then spread the seed across the landscape. English hawthorn, English ivy, Blackberry, and some other species are a plague on the Willamette Valley landscape by lowering ecological productivity. Use of native plants improves landscape production of more birds.

I originally used Mugo Pine for our escape thicket. A colleague was selecting dwarf-types for the nursery industry and gave away the larger plants. As physical security, this worked fine, but as the importance of natives as insect hosts dawned on me, I started phasing out the pine. Presently, Red-flowering Currant, Mock Orange, Cascara and Chokecherry form the core of our thicket. Nearby are Red Elderberry, Vine Maple, Madrone, Pacific Dogwood and Coyote Bush. All are well-adapted to our summer drought, though I water

deeply about once a month to keep the plants healthy and productive.

Plants grow, of course, and we have to monitor squirrels' ability to launch from a branch onto the feeders. We often see them clambering around calculating footing, angles, and distances. If they successfully make it to the feeder, then the pruning shears come out to remove the launch pad.



Fig. 4 Wilson's Warbler

Planting native trees and shrubs for shelter provides an additional benefit of attracting the occasional neotropical migrant, e.g. warblers, vireos, and tanagers, as well as other birds looking for insects (Fig. 4). This will occur at a far lower rate than seed use, of course, but you will be thrilled when these species come through. When fall migration is in full swing, I spend a lot of time surveying the garden for these little nuggets.

William Proebsting

2020 Corvallis Christmas Bird Count Cancelled Due to COVID

Unfortunately, our 2020 Corvallis CBC has been canceled due to safety issues during the pandemic. Individual or family counts of birds in our area are welcome on Tuesday, Dec. 22 or during that week.

Each count is for one day. You can check the CBC map (see below) to locate the specific area where you did your count. Then ask Fred Ramsey for the data entry form, fill it out, and [email it back to Fred Ramsey](#), or mail a printed copy to Fred at 3550 NW Glen Ridge Place, Corvallis, 97330.

Corvallis: The first Corvallis CBC was held on December 26, 1912. The second count was delayed until 1962, and the CBC has been held every year since. The Corvallis CBC is traditionally held on the Tuesday before Christmas.

What about the continuity of CBC records and their scientific value? The national organization has weighed in the matter (naturally). Apparently, their statisticians opine that not having any results at all is easier than trying to figure out how to adjust 2020 results for the pandemic effects. They state:

“There will be little to no impact on the scientific value of the Christmas Bird Count by missing or altering one count season. So again, we urge you to prioritize your safety and the safety of others when making your decision.”

Assuming that Oregon is not in total lockdown, you may still want to individually get out to look for birds in our area on or around Tuesday, Dec. 22, our usual CBC date. (You might even choose a day during “count week” that promises the best weather.) Then fill in the data entry form as usual and email it back to Fred, who will make a summary for ASC records. (Not sent to National.) If you want him to send you a map of our count circle so that you could record where you birded, let him know.

CBC Compiler Needed (HELP!)

I am NOT taking over the job of count compiler. I’ve had my turn. But someone needs to step up for 2021 and beyond, to continue the remarkable legacy that Marcia Cutler has left. Please contact Fred or write to audubon.corvallis@gmail.com if you can help. It’s only once a year! Marcia has been our compiler for many long years. She merits huge thanks, and our best wishes for a happy retirement!!!

Fred Ramsey

[CBC Map - Corvallis](#), [ASC 2019 compiled results](#)

Airlie-Albany CBC Is Still ON

Airlie-Albany: This year’s count is **Sunday, January 3, 2021** using modified protocols. If new COVID orders are issued before then, [please check this site](#) for updated information. No fee is required to participate. 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.

[Airlie-Albany CBC Map](#)

CBC information is also available on the Audubon Society of Corvallis website at auduboncorvallis.org

Throughout the year there are many organized bird counts in our region. The scope ranges from national to regional, and the formats from defined protocols to whatever you can count. These surveys are examples of citizen science, a collaboration between scientific researchers and the general public. When you participate, you help provide data that will contribute to further understanding bird populations, their distribution, and any population changes. Two bird counts are held locally: the Christmas Bird Count (CBC) for Corvallis and Albany areas and the North American Migratory Bird Count (NAMC) which covers Benton County. Check out [National Audubon compiled CBC results](#).

Sue Powell

Field Trip Schedule

Second Saturday Field Trips Are CANCELLED Until Further Notice

We’ll be back out there with groups as soon as it is safe to do so. Take care!

Check the [ASC website](#) and Chat for updates.

Weekend Field Trips

2021 Extended Field Trips Will Not Occur Unless Pandemic Situation is Resolved

ASC's multi-day field trips ordinarily entail long stretches of riding enclosed in passenger vans. This is definitely taboo until COVID-19 has been defeated. If that rosy prospect occurs, we will plan for 2021: Bandon; Klamath Basin; Rogue Valley with Shakespeare; Malheur NWR; Summer Lake; Wallowas; Steens Mtn.; and a Shorebird Search. If not, we will try to find other venues and/or other transportation, so that we may enjoy this great state of ours. Stay tuned and keep up to date on our website. Suggestions are welcome.

Fred Ramsey, Weekend Field Trips Chair

Community Notes

Winter Wildlife Field Day 2021 Info

We are looking at a two-week event, March 1 – 14, 2021. This Winter Wildlife Field Day will be a “virtual” event. This means that most, but not all, educational activities of the event will be held online.

Any member of Audubon who wants to get involved in the planning of WWFD 2021 is invited to attend the next (Zoom) meeting of the Planning team, by e-mailing Samantha Bartling at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, at samantha.bartling@fws.org

The Audubon Society of Corvallis will soon begin planning our own role in the event. If you want to help, contact Robert Murray, Audubon's representative on the WWFD Steering Committee, at robert.murray@maine.edu

Robert Murray, ASC WWFD Representative

Local Refuges Open with Restrictions

Our three nearby national wildlife refuges in the Willamette Valley National Wildlife Refuge Complex are open! Now is a great time to get out and enjoy the

wealth of visiting winter waterfowl and other wildlife treasures at William Finley, Basket Slough and Ankeny sites.

If visiting one of these three refuges, please follow CDC guidelines and maintain adequate social distancing, avoid overcrowding and exercise good hygiene. If a parking lot or pullout is full when you visit, please do not stop. We understand that the outdoors can help relieve stress, support mental health and provide comfort, but these guidelines must be followed for everyone's public health and safety. For now, the refuge offices remain closed and most scheduled events have been postponed.

The Wild Goose Nature store in the Finley visitor center is still closed due to the pandemic, but they have a selection of nature related items for sale online. It's a great resource for educational materials such as field guides and kids' books, as well as other Nature themed gifts. Please check out:

<http://friendswvnwrc.org/events-volunteer/>.

The Friends Group also is offering a “2021 Faces of the Refuge” calendar which you can see at their website, friendswvnwrc.org/. It is a labor of love by local wildlife photographers to benefit the Friends, a key local partner in education and conservation for Audubon Society of Corvallis.

Thank you for supporting the Friends group and the National Wildlife Refuge Complex.

*Info from Diane Young,
Secretary, Friends of WVNWR*

Board Meeting Summary for November 12, 2020

- Board meetings continue to be held on Zoom.
- Mark Baldwin is working on the December program which has been traditionally a member slide show. December 10 deadline for people to mail PDFs or Power Points to Mark to be included in the Dec. 17th program, addressed in Nov. Chat.

- Treasurer Carolyn Peterson submitted annual reports and mentioned we have limited expenses this year due to COVID shutdowns.
- Education, Teri Engbring and Mikaela Lea are working on the **Coloring Contest**. Flyers have been posted around town and at Office Max display table. **Backyard Spotlight** – Phyllis Bailey ‘masterminds’ the project and her yard was featured in Nov Chat. We want to show what people are doing in our local area to help wildlife. Looking for people to volunteer their yards. Hesthavn cleaned up and will be ready for in person education efforts when we can. Big thanks for all the help.
- **Winter Wildlife Field Day(s)** – March 1-14, 2021. Planning committees are hard at work.
- **Conservation** – Jim Fairchild reported on Marys Peak issues regarding moving communications equipment off the summit.
- **Hesthavn** – Ray Drapek appreciates the student workers who have been helping, and expressed appreciation for Chris Matthew’s hours of work even after Parkinsons made it difficult. A contractor has been recruited to re-do the ramp, put in a hand rail, and maybe a small area at the top of the ramp for handicapped visitors sometime next year.
- **Field trips** postponed until next year.
- **Christmas Bird Count** (cancelled in Corvallis but not Airlie-Albany) and Great Backyard Bird Count discussed.
- December 10 next board meeting.

Submitted by Board Secretary Susan McNutt

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 and time.

Membership Corner

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 administrator (Karan Fairchild, alderspr@peak.org) and request to be added.

Have You Changed Your Contact Info?

If you have moved recently or changed your email/mail addresses, please update your information by emailing it to adamus7@comcast.net.

Thank you for your generosity and support!

Paul Adamus, Membership Chair

Contributors to this Chat

Paul Adamus, Phyllis Bailey, Mark Baldwin, Don Boucher, Nancy DeMasi, Ray Drapek, Teri Engbring, Duncan Evered, Jim Fairchild, Mikaela Lea, Christina Linkem, Susan McNutt, Dave Mellinger, Robert Murray, Sue Powell, Fred Ramsey, Naomi Weidner and Diane Young

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, unless another date is indicated in the Chat calendar the previous month. Submit text using Microsoft Word and photos to: chateditors@gmail.com.

Calendar

- Dec. 10 ASC Board Meeting on Zoom, 7 pm
- Dec. 17 ASC Members Meeting on Zoom, 7 pm
- Dec. 21 Submission deadline for January 2021 Chat
(early due to holidays)

Due to increased COVID restrictions, Hesthavn work parties in December are cancelled. Check our website for the latest scheduling info in 2021.



Golden-crowned Kinglet photo by Matt Lee

Officers

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** temporary until filled

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 students; \$15 for Chat-only subscriptions (email delivery only); \$50 for Supporting Level; \$150 for Patron Level; and \$250 for Benefactor Level.

Interested in volunteering?

Please let us know:

volunteerasc@gmail.com

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