



THE CHAT

October 2021 VOL. 51 #2

Due to the global Coronavirus pandemic, ASC will slowly restart in-person programs and meetings. But our policy changes with pandemic status and restrictions. So, for the latest info, please visit our website at auduboncorvallis.org.

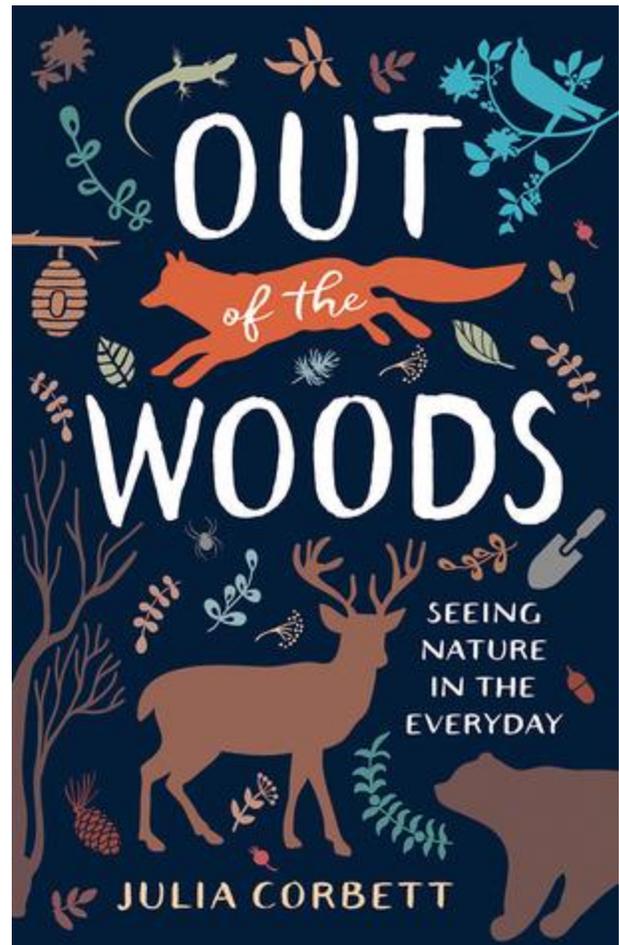
ASC General Meeting Tentatively 10/21/21 on Zoom at 7:00 pm

Julia Corbett will read from and discuss her book *Out of the Woods: Seeing Nature in the Everyday* (winner of the Reading the West Book Award for nonfiction in 2019).

Have you ever wondered why we perceive “nature” differently depending on where it is? For instance, society’s desire to cultivate the perfect lawn or why we view some animals as “good” and some as “bad”? In this fresh and introspective collection of essays, Julia Corbett examines nature in our lives, with its ironies and contradictions, by seamlessly integrating personal narratives with morsels of highly digestible science and research. Each story delves into an overlooked aspect of our relationship with nature—insects, garbage, backyards, noise, open doors, animals, and language.

“This exceptional, eclectic book is the brave future of nature writing.”

— Richard Louv, author of *The Nature Principle* and *Last Child in the Woods*





Julia Corbett is a Professor Emerita (Department of Communication and Environmental Humanities Graduate Program, University of Utah) who relocated to Corvallis this past summer. She authored three other books: *Communicating the Climate Crisis: New Directions for Facing What Lies Ahead* (2021), *Seven Summers: A Naturalist Homesteads in the Modern West* (2013) and *Communicating Nature: How We Create and Understand Environmental Messages* (2006). Before receiving her PhD at the University of Minnesota, she was a park naturalist, reporter, and natural resources information officer. She summers in the mountains of western Wyoming.

Thanks to new volunteer Eric Preston who will help us with our Zoom meetings as the pandemic stubbornly holds on.

In normal times, meetings are held the third Thursday of each month from September through May. Presentations on Zoom will also be held on the third Thursday. We want to keep the sharing, learning and inspiration going, but health and safety are priorities in these times. For login information, see our website at auduboncorvallis.org.

Introducing the Program Committee

This year we are trying something new for ASC. In lieu of a single Vice President, we now have a Program Committee to handle our general meetings; from Zoom coordination, to lining up guest speakers. The Programming Committee consists of co-chair Mai Kiigemagi, co-chair Mikaela Lea, and Zoom facilitator extraordinaire, Eric Preston.

Although we don't know when we will be able to go back to in-person meetings, Mai is in contact with the Methodist Church, and the ASC Board is monitoring CDC guidelines. Co-President Dave Mellinger will host the meetings with Mikaela as his backup.

Mai is a retired educator who has been volunteering with ASC's Education and Outreach Team for the past year. Mikaela recently graduated from OSU with Natural Resources and Sustainability degrees and has been volunteering with the Education and Outreach Team since 2016. She joined the ASC Board last year. Eric is a retired research ecologist and long-time ASC member who has been moderating Zoom for the Academy of Lifelong Learning. Thanks to ASC member recommendations, we have a great line-up of presenters for this year! If you have any speaker or topic suggestions for next year, contact Mikaela at mikaelalea96@gmail.com.

Past 2021 Program

September 16 - Dr. Fred Ramsey: Highlights of 50 Years of ASC Field Trips. See the [ASC website Monthly Speakers tab for the link](#).

Currently Scheduled 2021-2022 Programs

October 21 - Dr. Julia Corbett: Seeing Nature in the Everyday

November 18 - Jamie Cornelius: Migration of Nomadic Finches

December 16 - Member Slideshow, photo contribution deadline 12/12/21

January 13 - Ryan Baumbusch: Recent Barred Owl Research

February 17 - Pending

March 17 - Noah Dolinajec: Tufted Puffins, Pending lab approval

April 14 - Sue Powell & Matt Lee: Adventures in Ecuador and the Galapagos

May 19 - Dr. Jonathon Valente: Recent Marbled Murrelet Research

Mikaela Lea, Program Committee

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ASC Website, Social Media

Occasionally you might find a bird that needs attention. To find contact information to report injured, rare, banded, or dead birds, check the ASC website 'Birding' tab, then the 'Injured or Rare Birds' subtab for email and/or phone numbers. Explore the other pages to find activities for kids, volunteer options, Western Bluebird nesting data, who's who in the ASC leadership, and much more. auduboncorvallis.org

Sue Powell, ASC website

Corvallis Audubon Facebook

Be sure to keep up to date and be inspired by joining our ASC Facebook page. Just "like" us for the latest news and pictures of wildlife that affect our local area. Feel free to post about what is happening in your neighborhood, street and back yard. Let's stay connected. Join us on Facebook at [CorvallisAudubon](https://www.facebook.com/CorvallisAudubon).

Nancy Demasi, ASC Facebook

Audubon Corvallis Instagram

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

Christina Linkem, ASC Instagram

Conservation Report

Migration: Near or Far, It's No Walk in the Park

All who are familiar with birds revel at their seasonal movements. Some calendars will predict when the passage of White-fronted Geese or Sandhill Cranes should be listened for, fewer still realizing when the Swainson's Thrushes no longer 'whit' and the Common Nighthawks no longer "peent." The bright Townsend's Warbler today appears in our yard tree-tops. Along with the visiting Golden-crowned Sparrow they will (too soon!) disappear to their valley winter quarters.



Townsend's Warbler photo by Matt Lee

Whether drawn by seed or fruit or insect abundance, or driven away by paucity or a celestial clock, their journey is not without peril. Young swifts join others at roosts that draw the attention of aerial predators, or the clever crow atop their night roost

awaiting breakfast. Passing through unexplored habitats, young birds are especially prone to the unexpected predator, weird lights on their night's journey, or wide vistas of trees and sky hard as stone.

We have learned of the toll by outdoor cats, window strikes, and the compounding harm of the night lighting of buildings and human infrastructure. Rumors and figures of mortality caused by wind turbines and arrays concentrating solar energy are more ambiguous. More insidious and largely unquantifiable is mortality from the loss of food sources needed directly (by herbicide removal of undesired forage and fruit crops in "managed" forests), or indirectly (by pesticide control of unwanted insects that kill or merely weaken and secondarily poison birds). How many birds don't survive their migration?

Loss of stop-over habitat for migrant birds may pose the most significant cause of population declines. Once out of the nest and lacking food, species that have had thousands of years to "learn" how to make a living now face novel challenges that may prove their undoing. What can we do?

Corvallis and other communities can adopt energy-saving LED lighting standards, but those must include dark skies criteria and lower wavelength emissions, even when the cheapest solution is the most sky penetrating blue wavelengths. County buildings and new building standards must direct architecture towards reducing bird-strike potential and minimize reflective glass arrays. Narrow-spectrum and targeted pest management prescriptions and reducing pesticide use can increase critical food supplies. Follow crop fields, a few more dead limbs or whole trees, unkempt gardens and yards, even some extra bird seed spread in a cat-free location. Giving the shorebird flock a wider berth at the beach.

Not so many Band-tailed Pigeons for us this year. They are away feasting on wild berries and the nuts the squirrels can't reach or bother with. Soon they'll be foraging in central America. We can all lessen the losses and find even more we can do for the birds.

Jim Fairchild, Conservation Chair

Field Trips

2022 Extended Field Trips on Hold Until Pandemic Situation is Resolved AND We Get a NEW Field Trips Chairperson!

While we wait for pandemic conditions to change, it would be great to find a new weekend field trips chair or co-chairs to begin transitioning with and learning from our amazing coordinator of 50 years of fantastic birding trips, Fred Ramsey. Please help us continue the tradition!

As his fun Zoom program for the September ASC member meeting showed, these are terrific opportunities for new and experienced birders.

We are still not in a position to plan for ASC's multi-day field trips as they entail long rides in enclosed passenger vans. COVID-19 conditions don't allow that yet. If that situation changes, AND SOMEONE STEPS UP TO MANAGE THE PROCESS, we will plan for 2022 in: Bandon; Klamath Basin; Rogue Valley with Shakespeare; Malheur NWR; Summer Lake; Wallowa Mtns.; Steens Mtn.; and a Shorebird Search. If these don't work, we can 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 by checking our website. Suggestions are welcome to auduboncorvallis@gmail.com

Second Saturday Field Trips Are Still CANCELLED Until Further Notice

We'll be back out there with groups as soon as it is safe, hopefully later this fall. Take care!

Check the ASC website and CHAT for updates.

Caryn Stoess & Duncan Evered

Education News

Announcing ASC's Second Annual Bird Coloring Contest: Connect with Nature

Our first virtual event was so successful last year, we made it an annual event! Once again folks are scrambling to find activities that are fun, educational and nature-oriented, as pandemic precautions continue, so here we are.

This contest will begin November 1 and end November 30, 2021, so you have a month to get ready to color with your favorite tools, from crayons to water colors.

This contest is for “artists” of all ages, split into 4 groups for children from ages 2 to 17, and 1 for adults. Once again, we invite our whole community to reflect on the beauty of nature, show artistic creativity, have fun coloring, and learn about this year’s four featured local celebrity birds: California Quail, Great Blue Heron, Anna’s Hummingbird, and an unspecified owl. Contestants are urged to personalize their entry by answering “What do you like about this bird?”

The 4 drawings will be posted on the ASC website (auduboncorvallis.org) next month along with contest rules, bird photos, and how to enter. Materials will be available in both English and Spanish.

Electronic distribution also saves money for our all-volunteer, non-profit group from mailing costs.

There are several ways to get your entry form and favorite coloring page:

1. Download it from the [website](#)
2. Email us at asc.educationteam@gmail.com and we will snail mail them to you, or
3. Stop by for copies from our project partner at the Corvallis Office Max Print Center, 1834 NW 9th St. Thanks in advance to our friends at Office Max and especially Store Manager Layla Montes for helping us get materials out.

Have fun, and when you are happy with your art, either scan it AND the entry form or photograph them with your phone. Email both to the address above. Or, snail mail it to us at PO Box 148, Corvallis, Oregon 97339 by November 30.

Winners will be announced and certificates of artistic merit mailed by mid-December to those who provide their address. Prizes will be awarded to winners in each of the 5 age groups.

If you are interested in serving on our judges’ panel, contact asc.educationteam@gmail.com.

Thanks to the team of Education Volunteers who are stepping up to bring this fun event back in 2021: Mikaela Lea (Contest Coordinator), Phyllis Bailey, Tricia Bowlby, Liz Hogan, Mai Kiigemagi, Dale Mitchell, Sue Powell, Meika Vingelen, and Dodie Wilson.

Liz Hogan, ASC Education Team volunteer

Due to increased COVID numbers, the ASC Education team will not be running any in-person programs this fall. Keep watching this column and the ASC website for updates.

*Meika Vingelen and Dodie Wilson,
Education Co-Chairs*

Atop the Nest Box 2021 Bluebird Trail Nesting Report



The 2021 nesting season for Western Bluebirds in the Willamette Valley has come to a close. In the nest boxes monitored by Bluebird Trail volunteers in Benton and Linn counties this year, the first bluebird egg was laid around April 7, and the last chick fledged (i.e., left its nest) on September 5. Table 1 summarizes the nesting data from 2021 and the average nesting data from the years 2009–2020.

	2021	Average, 2009–2020
Nesting attempts	205	227
Eggs laid	1,042	1,118
Eggs laid/nesting attempt	5.1	4.9
Eggs hatched	815	882
% Eggs hatched	78	79
Chicks fledged	693	750
% Chicks fledged	85	85

In Table 1, a nesting attempt is defined as a nest that contained at least one bluebird egg. You can see that this year’s numbers for nesting attempts, eggs laid, eggs hatched, and chicks fledged were lower than the averages for 2009–2020. However, it’s important to note that this table includes only nesting attempts for which monitors were able to collect complete data on eggs and chicks. At least another 16 nesting attempts were observed this year, but results from them are not included in the table because some data points (such as number of eggs laid or hatched) are missing.

Table 1 also shows that this year, the number of eggs laid per nesting attempt, percentage of eggs that hatched, and percentage of chicks that fledged were similar to the average values from the preceding 12 years. You can examine the year-by-year data from 2009–2021 on the ASC website:

auduboncorvallis.org/bluebird-trail.



Western Bluebird Chicks about one week after hatching - photo by Matt Lee

Last year, wet weather during May and the first half of June may have contributed to a lower fledging percentage in the spring than in the summer. This year, most days during May and June were dry (49 of 61 days, according to OSU’s Hyslop Weather Station), but above-average temperature was a major weather-related factor. We had a record-setting heat wave from June 27–29. Excessive heat can kill bluebird embryos and chicks through dehydration and heat stress.

Can we see an impact of the June 27–29 heat wave on bluebird nesting success? To answer this question, let’s split the 205 nesting attempts included in Table 1 into three groups:

- Early season nesting attempts, which were completed before the heat wave began
- Mid-season nesting attempts, which had eggs or chicks in the nest during the heat wave
- Late season nesting attempts, which were started after the heat wave was over

The effect of splitting the data this way is shown in Table 2.

	2021		
	Early season	Mid-season	Late season
Nesting attempts	88	75	42
Eggs laid	466	372	204
Eggs laid/nesting attempt	5.3	5.0	4.9
Eggs hatched	356	289	170
% Eggs hatched	76	78	83
Chicks fledged	293	241	159
% Chicks fledged	82	83	94

Table 2 shows that the percentages of eggs that hatched and chicks that fledged were somewhat higher in the late season group, but they were similar in the early season and mid-season groups. Thus, these results do not strongly support the idea that the June 27–29 heat wave had a large impact on nesting success. Other factors, including predation and competition from other cavity-nesting birds, may mask effects of weather-related influences such as temperature.

Matt Lee, Bluebird Trail Chair

Gardening for Birds

Goldenrod: Magnet for Insects

When I lived in upstate New York, autumn was a gorgeous time of year. Famous for fall foliage color, there were also a few plants flowering at that time. Prominent among them was goldenrod, bright yellow flowers that glowed in the low, autumn sun. These often grew with lavender asters that formed a pairing I have often recalled over the years.



Oregon Silverspot on S. canadensis

Whereas the eastern U.S. has several species of goldenrod, we have one main one in the Willamette Valley, Canada Goldenrod (*Solidago canadensis*) which occurs throughout most of North America. Douglas Tallamy writes in *Nature's Best Hope* that

goldenrod is the most attractive perennial for insects. That is exactly what we are looking for in our ecological garden.

Canada Goldenrod plants can grow to a variety of heights, usually within the 18-36" range. It grows best in full sun and occasional water, but in good soil is very drought tolerant. In fact, it is so tough that it can become a little weedy, spreading by rhizomes and seed, but easy to control. In my garden with its symphylans and ground squirrels, goldenrod is surviving well, but only spreading slowly. Plants can begin flowering in July and continue into September or October. On warm days during this time, a variety of insects will be on the flowers.



Bumblebee on S. canadensis

Almost every mention of goldenrod says that it is wrongly accused of causing hay fever. Goldenrod pollen is transferred by insects, not wind, so exposure should be low. Other species, such as ragweed get the allergy tag.



Wasp on S. canadensis

Last year, I ran across a reference to the yellow/lavender combination of goldenrod/aster. Besides being attractive, the work showed that the combination of plants attracted more insects than either species alone. My guess is that this is not unique to these two species. Our rule of thumb in ecology is that more diverse ecosystems are more productive than poorer ones. Thus, it is always good to add species to your garden. Goldenrod is an easy, reliable plant to start with. Other colors of plants will look good in combination and be more productive than any alone.

William Proebsting

Photos by W.P.

Hesthavn News

Work begins today on new information kiosks. We will be doubling our kiosk space in order to provide the same messages in Spanish. The display box for the kiosk down by the main building will be moved to the wall next to the new ramp and a second box will be installed next to it. An awning will be built to cover the kiosks and the ramp. A second kiosk, similar to the first, will be built up by the parking lot. A nuestras vecinas de habla hispana: ¡Bienvenidos!

We have resumed weekend work parties at Hesthavn twice a month and are making progress. It can still get hot at Hesthavn in the fall. If you come, bring drinking water! We don't have a potable water source on site, but volunteers with access to the building are welcome to use the filtered water in a dispenser I keep in the barn. We'll take it nice and slow with lots of breaks. If you have a serious sting allergy you might want to wait until later in the fall before coming to a work party. Drop-ins are always welcome, but it helps if you contact me to say you're coming. Please bring your mask and plan to continue to social distance until everyone is safe.

October Hesthavn work party schedule (all from 10 am to 2 pm, Sundays):

October 10: Weed work party

October 24: Barn and yard work party

Check the [ASC website](#) or the [Hesthavn Facebook](#) page 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 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.

Community Notes

Report from 2021 ASC Intern

Hello from the Willamette Valley National Wildlife Refuges! Here's an update on this summer's internship, funded by a gift from ASC.

We had a very productive field season. As we've done the previous 2 years, our 2021 Biological Intern, Aiko Goldston, spent long hours at Baskett Slough NWR searching for and monitoring streaked horned lark nests. She and I ultimately found 21 active lark nests at Baskett Slough, as well as 2 others at Finley NWR. Overall nest success (approx. 30%) was lower than during 2020 (67%) but similar to 2019 (33%). Overall breeding adult numbers (approximately 43 pairs) were similar to the last 3 or 4 years, with Baskett Slough again having by far the greatest lark abundance of the 3 refuges. The additional field time that this Biological Intern position has provided the last 3 years has been a great opportunity for us to directly assess lark nesting activity and productivity.

Aiko is a great young adult, and I wish that we'd had an opportunity for her to interact with the ASC membership. Aiko has just started to explore the possibilities of a career in the biology/ecology field, and

I believe that her internship here at the Willamette Valley National Wildlife Refuges was a great experience for her.

Aiko prepared a short report of her internship activities, which you can see [with this link](#), if you have the electronic version of the newsletter.

Huge thanks to the ASC membership for supporting this Biological Internship position. I hope we can continue this partnership in the coming years, and look forward to any opportunities to interact with the Audubon Society of Corvallis. Please let me know if you have any questions or comments.

*Brian Root, Refuge Wildlife Biologist
Willamette Valley NWR Complex*

Mill Race Greenway Project

Those who live in South Corvallis may or may not be aware of a water channel that courses through Southtown. There is an almost unnoticeable bridge on highway 99 that crosses it. This is the Mill Race. Water flowing through it was used at one time to power a sawmill and later a flour mill which were located near the current site of Hollinsworth and Vose. The Mill Race has been reduced to a junk and weed-filled ditch and is one of the most flood prone parts of the city of Corvallis. There is a movement to make a greenway of the Mill Race. The hope is to do vegetation and habitat restoration, clean up the junk, create a pedestrian pathway, create a safer crossing for Highway 99, fix the flooding issues, and provide a connection between the east and west side of highway 99 for which there are issues of equitability. This is a long-term effort that will take many years to complete and could be subject to modifications over time. I have proposed to the ASC that they endorse this effort. They suggested I present this idea to the general membership for comments. We are especially interested to know what residents of south Corvallis think of this. Information on the Mill Race Greenway project can be found on the [YouTube presentation by Dave Eckert](#). General information about the Mill Race can also be obtained from [this link](#).

Ray Drapek, Hesthavn Chair

Board Meeting Summary

September 16, 2021

Present: Phyllis Bailey, Ray Drapek, Karan Fairchild, Jim Fairchild, Mai Kiigemagi, Mikaela Lea, Susan McNutt, Dave Mellinger, Suzanne Ortiz, Sue Powell, and Dodie Wilson,

VP/Program Committee, Mikaela and Mai - Fred Ramsey will present a retrospect on ASC field trips on the 16th. Several program suggestions were made to add to the list for upcoming meetings in 2022, and the final schedule will be listed in CHAT. Mikaela Lea agreed to introduce the speaker and run the September meeting on Zoom.

Committee Reports:

Education - Dodie and Meika holding off on in person classes this fall. The coloring contest, possibly in November, would be virtual.

CHAT deadline September 23 for October edition.

Conservation – Jim Fairchild – Discussed Advisory Committee participation is vital to ensure the future of the Elliott State Research Forest. Kim Nelson's donated books will be in the barn for 2 week for people to see and take. Jim will write an article for GT that he will send around for Board to see.

Publicity/Social Media – Sue Powell reported 13,000 visitors to website last month. Still some hacking on site.

Hesthavn - Ray Drapek – He is working with potential contractors to move kiosk and another to stain the barn. He will check with Carolyn re: how much money is available for the two projects.

Karan will write a letter to Youth Mountain Biking Group telling them our parking lot may not be used as a staging area. New sandwich board signs are working well in the parking lot now.

Old Business – Mikaela is working on G suite begun by Kai.

New Business – Suzanne will write an invitation for people to join a committee on diversity (Dave, Suzanne, Ray, and Teri possible members). Lincoln City Audubon is working on a diversity template.

Next Board meeting October 14, 6:30 p.m. - location TBD

Susan McNutt, Board Secretary

Open Board Meetings

ASC Board of Directors meetings are open to all ASC members, and the Board encourages you to come and see what we do. Our monthly Board meeting is on Thursday, one week before the General Meeting. See the Board meeting minutes or ASC website for location and time.

Membership Corner

Welcome New Members

Michael Gilliam
Debra Garley

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, Don Boucher, Kelly Collins, Ray Drapek, Teri Engbring, Liz Hogan, Matt Lee, Susan McNutt, Sue Powell, William Proebsting, Brian Root, Jamie Simmons, and Naomi Weidner

CHAT Articles

The CHAT editors, Kelly Collins, 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

Oct. 10 Weed work party, 10-2 at Hesthavn
Oct. 14 ASC Board Meeting, 7 pm
Oct. 21 ASC General Member Meeting, 7 pm
Oct. 24 Barn and yard work party, 10-2 at Hesthavn
Oct. 28 November CHAT submissions due

Board and Member meetings may have to be cancelled due to pandemic challenges, so please check our website for the latest scheduling info.

Officers

Co-President	Dave Mellinger	dmell3.14159(at)gmail.com
Co-President	Karan Fairchild	alderspr(at)peak.org
Vice President	Committee	audubon.corvallis@gmail.com
Secretary	Susan McNutt	daisidel@hotmail.com
Treasurer	Carolyn Peterson	chinstrapdreams(at)comcast.net

Board Members

Mark Baldwin	audubon.corvallis@gmail.com
Mikaela Lea	mikaelalea96(at)gmail.com
Christina Linkem	cnlinkem(at)hawaii.edu
Suzanne Ortiz	audubon.corvallis@gmail.com
Phyllis Bailey	pbgrebe2004@yahoo.com
Dodie Wilson	dgwilson802(at)gmail.com

Chairpersons

Birdathon	Karan Fairchild	alderspr(at)peak.org
Bluebird Trail	Matt Lee	BluebirdTrail.corvallisaudubon@gmail.com
CHAT Editors	Teri Engbring, Kelly Collins	chateditors(at)gmail.com
Christmas Bird Count		
Co-Chairs	Matt Lee & Bev Clark	audubon.corvallis@gmail.com
Conservation	Jim Fairchild	alderspring@peak.org
Corvallis Sustainability Coalition		Suzanne Ortiz audubon.corvallis@gmail.com
Education Team		
Co-Coordinator	Dodie Wilson & Meika Vingelen	asc.educationteam@gmail.com
Field Trip - local	Duncan Evered, Caryn Stoess	CorvallisAudubonSecondSaturday@gmail.com
Field Trip - regional	Fred Ramsey	flramsey5(at)comcast.net
Hesthavn	Ray Drapek	raydrapek(at)gmail.com
Historian	Marcia Cutler	marciafcutler(at)comcast.net
Membership	Paul Adamus	adamus7(at)comcast.net
Publicity	Sue Powell	Website.auduboncorvallis@gmail.com
	Facebook, Nancy DeMasi	media.audubon.corvallis@gmail.com
	Instagram, Christina Linkem	cnlinkem(at)hawaii.edu
Refreshments	Becky Garrett	becky.bittern(at)yahoo.com
Sales Table	Sally Shaw	shaws(at)peak.org

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Interested in volunteering?

Please let us know:

volunteerasc@gmail.com

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