



THE CHAT

September 2023 VOL. 53 #1

General Meeting

The Role of Fire in Maintaining Habitats of the Willamette Valley

September 21, 2023

The Kalapuya used fire to maintain both the habitats of the Willamette Valley and native plants and animals. In the absence of fire, the prairies, oak savannahs, and woodlands have become dense forests that are dominated by Maple and Douglas-fir trees. Land



Photo by Aaron Groth, OSU

development has resulted in habitat loss and fragmentation, and non-native species often outcompete native plants.

Throughout Benton County, private landowners and organizations now use fire as one of the tools to restore habitats and species. Public acceptance is fairly high, but it is important for people to understand the purpose of the prescribed burn and its intended benefits. Aaron Groth will discuss these concerns and how they are being addressed. He will also consider how prescribed fire can be one part of a larger process towards

achieving fire-resilient communities and landscapes.

Aaron Groth is an OSU Regional Fire Specialist for the Coast, providing fire information for communities. He has worked for city, state, and federal agencies, international cooperation, nonprofits, and served as an Environmental Peace Corps Volunteer in Peru. He hopes to serve as a Public Information Officer (PIO) Trainee during wildfires with the Oregon Department of Forestry this summer.



Photo by Brent Lawrence, USFWS

In This Issue:

General Meeting	1-2
A Message from Our Co-President	2
Conservation News	2-3
Hesthavn News	4
Field Trips	4-5
Community Notes	4-5
Board Meeting Summary	6-7
Membership Corner	7

New Meeting Room This Fall

Starting September 21, the monthly general meetings will be moving to the Chandler Ballroom at the Corvallis Community Center, which is a larger meeting room. The room will provide better circulation for air and people!

For those who have been around for a while, the ballroom is the same room we used back in the days before the C3 update/remodel. Plenty of room for display and refreshment tables.

Mai Kiigemagi

A Message from Our Co-President

Welcome to a new season of fascinating programs, field trips, volunteer activities, and more with the Audubon Society of Corvallis! As the days get shorter and birds finish their breeding seasons, we begin a full slate of chapter activities again. Please see other articles in this newsletter and our website (auduboncorvallis.org) for details on our activities. Our programs will start on September 21, in the Chandler Ballroom of the Corvallis Community Center, a large space with room for plenty of seating, display tables, and refreshments! The first program will be Wildfire Specialist Aaron Groth speaking on "The Importance of Fire in Ecosystem Recovery." September 9 will be the second Saturday field trip; please see the website for registration information. Stay tuned for information on the next season of multi-day field trips! Volunteer activities include helping out at our Hesthavn Nature Center, with invasive plant removal, facility maintenance, and other tasks (Ray Drapek, raydrapek@gmail.com), Education programs (Dodie Wilson, asc.educationteam@gmail.com), Conservation (Jim Fairchild, jim@alderspring.net), Bluebird Trail monitoring (Matt Lee, BluebirdTrail.corvallisaudubon@gmail.com) and more.

I'm looking forward to seeing you all at our first meeting!

A Call for Volunteers

The Audubon Society of Corvallis is recruiting volunteers for open positions. Board members are happy to provide training, so it is okay if you are not an expert. Consider if you may be a good fit for one of our open positions:

Membership Chair - This leader maintains our current member list, welcomes new members, and ensures correct registration and billing.

Conservation Chair - This leader educates and informs our group about conservation news and participates in current state and national legislation related to wildlife conservation.

Assistant Tech Coordinator - help with running our monthly membership meeting Zoom webinar.

Facebook Coordinator - This person posts on our Facebook page daily to publicize upcoming events and educate our community.

Field trip leaders - This person facilitates planning and leads individual trips.

Volunteers for Hesthavn Nature Center and Grounds - outdoor work including mowing, invasive species removal, and other repair/maintenance projects.

Education Team Volunteers - Activities may include leading bird walks, teaching kids about birds and nature, making presentations, and staffing a table at events.

Contact us at audubon.corvallis@gmail.com for general inquiries about how to get involved!

Nikki Cross

Karan Fairchild

Co-President, Audubon Society of Corvallis

Conservation News

Conservation in the Heart of the Valley

Great Basin Saline Lakes

National Audubon and many state and local Chapters support continued funding for saline lake ecosystem research in western states. We are encouraged to support the FY2024 appropriations language proposed by Senators Jeff Merkley and Lisa Murkowski to continue progress on the USGS Saline Lakes Ecosystems Integrated Water Availability Assessment.

Muddy Creek Energy Park Project

A private photovoltaic energy generation company, Hanwha, is now manufacturing solar panels (Q Cells) in the U.S. It has filed a Notice of Intent to install a large commercial array in southwest Linn County, adjacent to and east of I-5 and

north of the Coburg Hills, over an area of nearly 1600 acres, capable of producing 199 megawatts of energy. This is the largest PV proposed west of the Cascades in Oregon or Washington, and takes advantage of nearby transmission lines, an electric substation with available capacity, and leasable flat ground away from urban centers. During its proposed 40-year lifespan, this would displace high-value farming opportunities on some of the highest-value soils in the Willamette Valley. It would qualify as continuing exclusive farm use by allowing grazing around and/or under the panels, an unproven use currently under trial studies at OSU. Impacts may include habitat losses for streaked horned lark and other prairie bird species, western pond turtle, as well as interfering with current elk and waterfowl uses. The scale of the project allows Hanwha to bypass county land use zoning review, and apply directly to the OR Energy Facility Siting Council, which will consolidate all state agency assessments and determine whether the project can go forward. ASC has asked that at least two years of field surveys be completed, instead of relying on results from a single spring season of field observations. Please see

<https://www.oregon.gov/energy/facilities-safety/facilities/Pages/mcep.aspx>

Local Forest Planning: As always, your public comments do matter!

From the Corvallis municipal watershed to OSU's MacDonald Forest to the Siuslaw National Forest, forest management planning provides an opportunity to realign forest management with current science and societal circumstances and needs. The current plans for each of the above are, respectively, 10 years, 20 years, and 30 years out-of-date. Our urgent need to address and mitigate climate change, and the ability of our forests--if left alone—to sequester tremendous amounts of carbon from the atmosphere should alone be enough to inspire land managers to hasten forest plan revision. But in all three cases, stasis reigns. Corvallis continues to reject public sentiment towards any change, the College of Forestry slow-walks its local forest plan revision, and Siuslaw NF awaits regional and D.C. offices while it continues aggressive restoration thinnings across its landscape.

One bright spot emerging is planning for state-owned forests in NW Oregon. The Board of Forestry is pursuing a new forest management plan that recognizes multiple needs: timber revenues for counties, protections for a host of imperiled species, water quality and drinking water source protection, carbon storage, and adaptation to climate change. As currently drafted, the US Fish & Wildlife Service would allow a level of timber volume certainty for affected counties free from legal challenges for covered species for many decades under a Habitat Conservation Plan (Sec. 10, Endangered Species Act), accompanied by an Incidental Take Permit. Still county commissioners remain adamantly against an HCP, while many in the conservation community see this as a better outcome to continued intensive logging across nearly a million acres of publicly owned forests. To learn more, or participate in the Board of Forestry meeting on September 7, please visit <https://www.oregon.gov/odf/board/Pages/bofmeetings.aspx>

Jim Fairchild, Conservation Chair

Find us online



<https://auduboncorvallis.org/>



<https://www.facebook.com/CorvallisAudubon/>



<https://www.instagram.com/auduboncorvallis/>

Hesthavn News

Volunteering at Hesthavn

Summer is here and many activities in Corvallis are taking a break, but I intend to continue with work parties at Hesthavn every week, except for those weeks when I will be out of town. There is much to be done there and I can't afford to take a break. Nowadays, I am flexible from week to week in scheduling work parties to avoid bad weather. In the winter that means cold rainy days; in the summer that means extremely hot days. So every week the decision of when the work party will be is made on Monday. The upshot of this is if you would like to participate in work parties (please do!), contact me (raydrapek@gmail.com) and I will put you on my volunteer email list and let you know when the work parties are. Or alternatively, you could check the "Hesthavn Nature Center" Facebook page where I post work parties as events. I also let our Audubon Society of Corvallis web page coordinator know about work parties, so you probably can find them there as well.

Ray Drapek, Hesthavn Chair

Field Trips

Second Saturday Field Trip

September 10 (8 AM - Noon)

We will meet at the shelter in Willamette Park (east end of SE Goodnight Ave.) and tour the park. This four-hour excursion is free and geared toward people with an interest in learning more about birds that can be found in the Corvallis area. All levels of expertise are welcome. Bring suitable hats, shoes, and rain gear, as well as water and snacks! Free and open to the public, but registration is required. Sign up at: CorvallisAudubonSecondSaturday@gmail.com. Led by Duncan Evered and Caryn Stoess. The weather may alter plans.

Duncan Evered and Caryn Stoess

Multi-Day Field Trips

2024 Field Trips

The Audubon Society of Corvallis is planning a full slate of field trips for 2024. We already have leaders for last year's trips: Rogue Valley, Malheur NWR, Summer Lake, and Bandon in the Fall. Bandon in the Spring, Klamath, Steens, and the Willows were among the trips canceled by COVID, and they were not run when trips resumed last year. Please think about leading one or more of those trips next year. You could even invent your own field trip. I will provide overall coordination of the field trips. All others wishing to participate in the planning will be invited to a November meeting, to be announced in the October Chat.

Fred Ramsey, Field Trip Coordinator

Malheur Field Trip 2023

After a three-year hiatus, a group of 15 Audubon Society of Corvallis members traveled to Harney County and the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. We found 145 bird species, nine mammals, ten butterflies, two reptiles, and dragonflies. All in all, a successful and enjoyable outing.

Highlights of the trip include sightings at Malheur Headquarters: a Black-and-white Warbler stayed around for three days; a juvenile Summer Tanager made an appearance as we were leaving on Saturday morning; and a Magnolia Warbler was seen by a few as we were heading back to Corvallis on Sunday morning.



Photo by Mark Baldwin

Bruce Kelpsas arranged for Teresa Wicks, PhD, the Eastern Oregon Biologist for the Portland Audubon Society, to speak to our group at the Malheur Field Station where we were staying. Her very informative program, Drought and the Pacific Flyway, was rather timely due to the much higher levels of precipitation during the previous winter. Here is a link to that program: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xu93ilVdWQU>

Thanks to Bruce and Tom Penpraze for driving, and to Fred Ramsey for his extensive knowledge and the historical perspective he brings to all of our field trips.

Mark Baldwin

Upcoming Field Trip

ASC field trips are led by experienced birders with rented vans. We stay in comfortable motels/dorms and enjoy meals at local restaurants. Sign-up sheets are available at general membership meetings. To hold your place on a trip, your deposit of \$75 needs to be received within a week of signing up, otherwise, the spot may go to another.



Photo by Matt Lee

Bandon: 3 days: September 18-20; Leader: Tom Penpraze

Email address: md.fieldtrips.corvallisaudubon@gmail.com

Trip Description: The Bandon field trip features sea ducks (with a chance of Long-tailed Duck), alcids (including Marbled Murrelet), raptors, such as Red-shouldered Hawks and White-tailed Kites, many other birds, and some hefty mammals - Steller's and California Sea Lions and Elephant Seals. Here is a look at the probable route: Day 1: Yaquina Head, Newport south jetty, Sea Lion Caves (?), Jesse Honeyman State Park, Winchester Bay, Coos Bay north sandspit, Coquille, Myrtle Point, and Bandon. Day 2: Bandon Rocks, Bandon Marsh NWR, Bullards Beach State Park, New River, Port Orford, Cape Blanco, and back to Bandon. Day 3: Bandon Marsh NWR, Cape Arago and Simpson Reef, Charleston, Fossil Point, Siuslaw River south jetty, and Corvallis at about 7 PM. 2 vans max.

Marge Popp, for the Fieldtrip Team

Community Notes

Benton County Historical Society, Corvallis Museum

Free music at the Museum featuring music of historical and cultural interest; Sundays at 2 PM.; Sunday, September 10 Tin Can Alley-Jazz; September 17, Japanese Koto Kai; September 24, Celtic Nations; Corvallis Museum, 411 SW 2nd St, Corvallis. Click for info:

<https://bentoncountymuseums.org/events/>

Corvallis-Benton County Public Library

Corvallis-Benton Co. Public Library and Benton Co. Master Gardeners Program

Thursday, September 14, 12-1 PM; Seed Library – Growing Lecture; Soil tending from testing to cover crops and covering, Darren Morgan, Shonnard's Nursery. Main Reading Room, CBCPL, 645 NW Monroe Ave, Corvallis.

Luckiamute Watershed Council

Saturday, September 9, 8 AM-12 PM; LSNA Restoration & Bird Banding Tour; Luckiamute State Natural Area – North Unit; LWC Project Manager Aubrey Cloud will lead a walking tour of LSNA's North Unit, followed by a visit to a USGS bird-banding station. Free. Register at this link:

<https://www.luckiamutelwc.org/lсна-restoration-tour.html>

Friends of the Willamette Valley NWR

Thursday, September 28, 6:30 PM; Nature Wanders: Exploring at Finley National Wildlife Refuge. A walk with bird, plant, biology and education experts to explore refuge trails and locations. Everyone welcome and there will be a focus for the novice naturalist. Free. Meet at the Fiechter House parking lot along Finley Refuge Road. For more information: 541-760-3036; for a map click

<https://www.fws.gov/refuge/william-l-finley/map>

Suzanne Ortiz

Board Meeting Summary

July 20, 2023, 7:00 PM

The meeting was called to order by Karan Fairchild at 6:50 PM. Present: Mai Kiigemagi, Ray Drapek, Karan and Jim Fairchild, Jake Keen, Nikki Cross, Mark Baldwin, Suzanne Ortiz, Rachel Handy, Dodie Wilson, Phyllis Bailey, Fred Ramsey, Carolyn Peterson, Marge Popp

Approval of April minutes was moved by Rachel and seconded by Karen. Approved.

President's report: Researching catios (enclosed outdoor spaces for cats) in the area, including other organizations promoting the use of catios, and possible future tours.

Program Committee: In September we will be moving into the Chandler Ballroom at the Corvallis Community Center. Speakers are lined up for all general meetings.

Treasurer: Year-end financials available soon.

Education: Working to schedule upcoming events in the community.

Chat: Researching different email newsletter platforms to use newsletter as a recruiting tool for new members. An opt-in feature would allow non-members to be informed of upcoming events.

Conservation: Making a public records request for information regarding the Corvallis Forest Stewardship Plan. Motion to increase conservation budget to \$750. Motion by Jim; seconded by Carolyn. Motion passed.
Social Media: Nikki is looking to share any info about upcoming events on Instagram.

Hesthavn: Two youth groups have assisted with trail improvements along Ray's Trail. Always looking for more volunteers to assist with various projects.

Renaming Committee: Continuing work on a complex issue, the group is working on compiling documents for background information and conducting a SWOT Analysis for future consideration. A decision on a name change is a far way off.

Field trips: Fred Ramsey has volunteered to coordinate field trips for next year. Motion for treasurer and president to approve new credit cardholders specifically for field trip expenses (Suzanne and Fred); Moved by Carolyn and seconded by Mark. Motion passed.

Sustainability, Diversity: The committee is considering quarterly nature walks, like the MLK Day walk. Also researching possible grants for funding improvements at Hesthavn.

The September Board meeting date is September 14, 5:30 PM at Hesthavn.

Meeting adjourned at 8:06 pm. Motion by Carolyn and seconded by Nikki.

Rachel Handy, Secretary

Open Board Meetings

ASC Board of Directors meetings are open to all ASC members; 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 the ASC website for the location and time.

Membership Corner

Welcome New Members!

Esther & Ted Hillary

David Greenberg

Lee Sherman and Bill Gellatly

Sally Friou

General Membership Renewal Information

For membership renewal online go to 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, field trip locations, volunteer work parties, as well as Zoom links. Send an email to the administrator Karan Fairchild at 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

Chat Articles

The Chat Editors welcome articles from all members of the Audubon Society of Corvallis. Please submit articles to the Chat Editor by the fourth Monday of the month, unless another date is indicated in the Chat calendar. Submit text and photos to: chateditors@gmail.com.

Calendar

General Meeting Speaker Schedule

Sept. 21: Aaron Growth, The Importance of Fire in Ecosystem Restoration

Oct. 19: Dave Kollen, Gardening for Bees and Birds

Nov. 15: Alan Contreras, A History of Oregon Ornithology

Dec. 21: Member Slide Show

Jan. 18: Dr. Stewart Janes, The Secret Life of Feathers

Feb. 15: Dana Ross, Threatened and Endangered Butterflies

Mar. 21: Ann Eissinger, Great Blue Herons

Apr. 18: Nikki Cross, Birding in the Digital Age

May 16: Carina Kusaka, Tufted Puffins

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	Rachel Handy	audubon.corvallis@gmail.com
Treasurer	Carolyn Peterson	asc.treasurer.corvallis.audubon@gmail.com

Board Members

Phyllis Bailey	audubon.corvallis@gmail.com
Mark Baldwin	audubon.corvallis@gmail.com
Bev Clark	audubon.corvallis@gmail.com
Suzanne Ortiz	audubon.corvallis@gmail.com
Marge Popp	audubon.corvallis@gmail.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	Jake Keen, Naomi Weidner	chateditors(at)gmail.com
Christmas Bird Count	Bev Clark, Matt Lee	audubon.corvallis@gmail.com
Conservation	Jim Fairchild	alderspring@peak.org
Corvallis Sustainability Coalition	Suzanne Ortiz	audubon.corvallis@gmail.com
Education Team Co-coordinators	Meika Vingelen, Dodie Wilson	asc.educationteam@gmail.com
Field Trip - local	Duncan Evered, Caryn Stoess	CorvallisAudubonSecondSaturday@gmail.com
Field Trip - regional	Committee	md.fieldtrips.corvallisaudubon@gmail.com
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

Refreshments
Sales Table

Facebook - Nancy DeMasi
Instagram - Nikki Cross
Becky Garrett
Sally Shaw

media.audubon.corvallis@gmail.com
media.audubon.corvallis@gmail.com
becky.bittern(at)yahoo.com
shaws(at)peak.org

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; \$150 for Patron Level; and \$250 for Benefactor Level.

Interested in volunteering?

Please let us know:

volunteerasc@gmail.com