



THE CHAT

November 2023 VOL. 53 #3

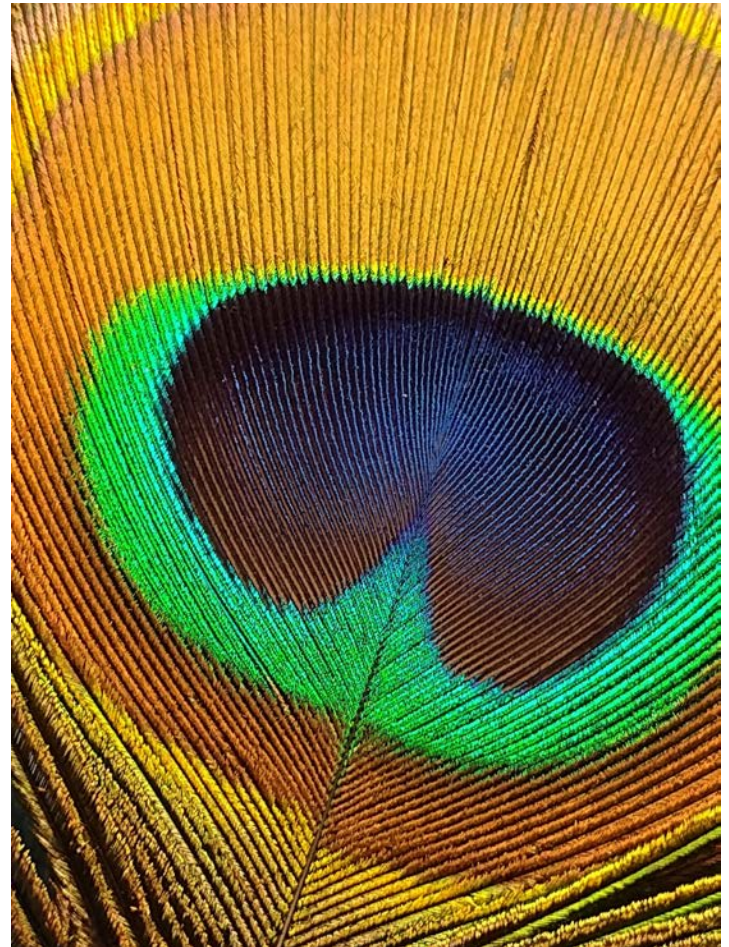
General Meeting

The Secret Lives of Feathers Presented by Stewart Janes

November 16, 2023 7:30 PM

Feathers are by far the most complex structure produced by the skin of any animal. Hair and scales don't come close. The story becomes more amazing when you learn how feathers grow, how different shapes are produced, how patterns such as stripes and bars are embedded into the growing feather and the many ways colors are incorporated. I invite you to come learn more about what makes birds even more special than you may already appreciate.

Stewart Janes is a retired biology professor from Southern Oregon University. He has spent many enjoyable years in the field studying raptor ecology in the intermountain west of North America and later studying the function of birdsong focusing on Hermit, Townsend's, and Black-throated Gray Warblers. The latter started as a small project that took him down the rabbit hole for much of his career. Who knew how complex the song systems of these birds would prove to be, and he continues to work to unravel the problem in retirement. Stewart was raised in the Portland Audubon Society. He fledged to earn his B.A. at the University of Montana, his master's degree at Portland State University, and his PhD at UCLA. He was thrilled to be able to return to Oregon for his career which involved teaching ornithology and science teachers, and coordinating the Environmental Education master's program at SOU.



The 2023-2024 Monthly Meetings will be held in person and on Zoom. Join us in the Chandler Ballroom of the [Corvallis Community Center](#) located at 2601 NW Tyler Ave. in Corvallis.

Doors open at 6:30 PM followed by a business meeting at 7:00 PM. The program begins at 7:30 PM and lasts about an hour.

ASC members who provided their email address with their membership dues will receive an invitation and instructions the week of the presentation. Programs are posted on the [ASC website](#) after the meeting. Meetings are open to the public. Email audubon.corvallis@gmail.com for more information about accessing the program.

Thanks to Eric Preston for guiding our Zoom meetings and Program Committee member Mai Kiigemagi for booking guest speakers. We need another volunteer or two to help with our program committee! Please contact us at the website noted above to help Mai and Eric!

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Mai and Eric, Program Committee

Conservation News

Elliott State Research Forest

Legislation allowed the creation of the largest research forest in Oregon, with OSU College of Forestry managing what is now the Division of State Land ownership, under supervision by a governor-appointed Elliott Forest Authority. The 800+ page forest management plan released on October 8th for public comment has been extended to November 8th. Recent significant changes concern both the conservation community and College scientists. Planning delays have created an extremely compressed time frame for public comment, in part because under that legislation the entire scheme expires if the Plan and its accompanying federal HCP + incidental take permit are not finalized before 2024. ASC plans to endorse comments by the conservation community.

Floating Off-shore Wind Development

ASC has endorsed an extensive comment being finalized by conservation, fishery, and tribal groups to the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, and will also make that final comment available on our website.

Western Pond Turtles Are in Trouble

Long a species of concern across Pacific coast states, on Oct 3rd the US Fish & Wildlife Service determined both recently split Northwestern and Southwestern Pond Turtles are now threatened species. [Read more here.](#)

Corvallis Forested Watershed Losing Its Water Supply

Yes, drier and warmer summers can reduce summer water supplies, but older intact forests, even without a summer snowpack, moderate stream flows by storing and then releasing more water through longer periods of drought. The cyclical growing and harvesting of trees, used by the Siuslaw National Forest and the City of Corvallis in the Rock Creek watershed, still practice forestry to produce wood and revenue not water or biodiversity. This must be replaced by management focused on producing the



highest quality water at the lowest cost, rather than the most water regardless of treatment cost. This transition would restore lost biodiversity and begin decreasing the city’s significant carbon footprint.

Creating a Bird-Friendly Community

Oregon’s Audubon Chapters are meeting to develop a community recognition system across our state. Like the Tree City and Bee City programs, there are many activities municipalities can encourage, model, and support to highlight their bird-friendliness. Criteria will be developed to evaluate how a community meets or exceeds threshold requirements to be certified. We can model how our community reduces the big threats to birds of outdoor cats, night lighting, and building strikes, or show how landscaping, native plantings, and even bird feeding methods can contribute to avian well-being. Are Chapter members interested in helping create a Bird-Friendly Community Program for Oregon? Send us an email at audubon.corvallis@gmail.com and let us know your thoughts.

Jim Fairchild, Conservation Chair

Find us online



<https://auduboncorvallis.org/>



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



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

Atop the Nest Box

2023 Bluebird Trail Nesting Report

The 2023 nesting season for Western Bluebirds in the Willamette Valley ended about two months ago. In the nest boxes monitored by Bluebird Trail volunteers in Benton and Linn counties this year, the first bluebird egg was laid around April 15, and the last chick fledged (i.e., left its nest) around September 10. Table 1 summarizes the nesting data from 2023 and the average nesting data from the years 2009–2022.

Table 1	2023	Average, 2009–2022
Nesting attempts	154	222
Eggs laid	767	1,095
Eggs laid/nesting attempt	5.0	4.9
Eggs hatched	589	863
% Eggs hatched	77	79
Chicks fledged	492	734
% Chicks fledged	84	85

In Table 1, a nesting attempt is defined as a nest that contained at least one bluebird egg. You can examine the year-by-year data from 2009–2023 on the ASC website: auduboncorvallis.org/bluebird-trail.



What can we make of the data shown in Table 1? First, note that the number of nesting attempts in 2023 was much lower than the 2009–2022 average. Was this decrease simply a result of fewer volunteers collecting data from fewer nest boxes? We can answer this question by looking at the number of nesting attempts per monitored box. This year’s 154 nesting attempts were recorded in 362 monitored boxes, giving a ratio of 0.43 nesting attempts per box. As Table 2 shows, there has been a decline in this ratio since 2021. (I don’t have the information needed to make this comparison for prior years.) Thus, it appears that bluebirds have been nesting less frequently in the boxes we monitor, at least over the past three years.

	2021	2022	2023
Nesting attempts per box	0.53	0.47	0.43

What might be causing bluebirds to nest less frequently in our boxes? Perhaps they’re losing out in the competition for boxes with Tree Swallows, Violet-green Swallows, House Wrens, or other cavity-nesting birds. Alternatively, there could be a reduction in the availability of food (mainly insects) that bluebirds need before they begin nesting. However, the Bluebird Trail doesn’t collect quantitative data on nest box use by other species or hunting success by bluebirds, so we can’t test either of these hypotheses.

Despite the recent decline in bluebird nesting activity in our boxes, the number of eggs laid per nesting attempt, the percentage of eggs that hatched, and the percentage of chicks that fledged in 2023 were very close to the 2009–2022 averages (see Table 1). In other words, when bluebirds did build nests and lay eggs in our boxes this year, those nests were about as successful as the nests built during the preceding 14 years, on average.

Matt Lee

Corvallis Christmas Bird Count

The first Corvallis CBC was held on December 26, 1912. The second count was not held until 1962, and the CBC has been held every year since then. The Corvallis CBC is traditionally held on the Tuesday before Christmas. Everybody is invited – and participation is free. The count is within a 7.5-mile radius circle, centered near the Corvallis airport. It is usually divided into 13 sections, with a team of 3-6 individuals assigned to each section. Team leaders provide additional information about what to bring and where to meet. Home or bird feeder counters are also welcome.

The next Corvallis CBC will be held on Dec. 19, 2023. If you would like to participate as a counter in one of the sections, please contact Bev Clark before the count date. Team leaders for each section will make arrangements with the rest of their group for a meeting place and time (usually between 7:00 and 7:30 AM the morning of the count). Participants should bring cold- and wet-weather gear, binoculars, a scope if you have one, and snacks for the day. A notepad and pencil or electronic recording devices, field guides, a camera, and a thermos with something hot are always good ideas as well.

Bev Clark

Should We Change Our Name?

ASC Members,

We’re reaching out to gather your thoughts about keeping or changing the name of our organization, the Audubon Society of Corvallis. As many of you know, the organization’s namesake, John James Audubon, recently has [come under fire for his family’s enslavement of Black Americans prior to Emancipation](#). J. Drew Lanham provides more context on the Audubon name issue in his Audubon Magazine article, "What do we do about John James Audubon" available here:

<https://www.audubon.org/magazine/spring-2021/what-do-we-do-about-john-james-audubon>

In response, some local chapters have dropped the Audubon name. The National Audubon Society, on the other hand, decided in March to retain the Audubon name and identity.

What do you think? Please weigh in on this informal, preliminary survey, designed to gauge member attitudes and help the Re-naming Committee weigh the pros and cons. Once we have collected your ideas, we will present the results to the ASC Board of Directors.

Your survey responses will be strictly confidential. We plan to keep this survey open through the end of November 2023.

Take the Survey Here:

<https://questionpro.com/t/AWtVLZzuNg>

Re-naming Committee

Hesthavn News

Volunteering at Hesthavn

Work parties are scheduled week-to-week to avoid bad weather. In the winter that means cold rainy days; in the summer that means extremely hot days. So, on Mondays the decision is made of when the work party will be. 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. 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

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 from last year's trips scheduled for 2024: 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.

Fred Ramsey, Field Trip Coordinator

Second Saturday Field Trip

November 11 (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

Community Notes

Benton County Soil & Water Conservation District

Annual Winter Native Plant Sale 2023-2024. Order online for pickup on February 24, 2024, at the Benton County Fairgrounds.

<https://bswcd.square.site>

Corvallis-Benton County Public Library

Friday, Nov 3 from 4-6 PM. Día de los Muertos film, *Coco*. Free; all ages. Corvallis-Benton Co. Public Library & Benton Co.; Main Reading Room, CBCPL, 645 NW Monroe Ave, Corvallis.

Friends of the Willamette Valley National Wildlife Refuges

Saturday, Nov 4, 10:30-12:30. Presentation by authors Carole & William Finley III on their new book titled, "For the Love of Nature" based on the achievements of William L and Irene B Finley. \$5 suggested donation. William L Finley NWR Visitors Center, 926208 Finley Refuge Rd., Corvallis.

Mary's Peak Group Sierra Club, CBCPL, Spring Creek Project, CSC, OSU/SLSC

Thursday, November 9, 7-8:30 PM; Champinefu Lecture Series Webinar – "Fire is Life: Living in Relation with Indigenous Fire Practices of Western Oregon." Joe Scott, Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians. Free. Sponsored by Marys Peak Group, Sierra Club. Corvallis, Benton County Public Library, Spring Creek Project, Corvallis Sustainability Coalition & OSU School of Language, Culture & Society.

For information and to register:

<https://bit.ly/2023champinefuseries2>

Luckiamute Watershed Council and Marys River Watershed Council

Friday, November 10 from 6-8 PM. "Beaverland." Author Leila Philip will explore the relationship between beavers and humans, and discuss the history, the present and the future of this relationship. Whiteside Theater, 361 SW Madison Ave, Corvallis. Sponsored by the Luckiamute and Marys River Watershed Councils.

<https://www.luckiamutelwc.org/beaverland.html>

Native Plant Society of Corvallis

Monday, Nov 13, 7:30-9 PM. Doug Glavich, USFS Ecologist. "Marys Peak Meadow Restoration: Coast Range plant community response to restoration and disturbance. Room 2602, Cordley Hall, OSU campus, 2701 SW Campus Way, Corvallis. Advance zoom reservation:

https://oregonstate.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJkdeqprTltE9IS-o5Mj42I5IUeVY90Fp_1#/registration

Luckiamute Watershed Council, Polk Soil & Water Conservation District, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians

Video: "Cultural Burn at Smithfield Oaks: Re-Kindling a Relationship with Fire" CTSI Tribal member Joe Scott and other Tribal members share their understanding of indigenous fire science, including how fire is used as a tool in traditional land management, and as a sacred foundation of Tribal communities. The video recording of the Cultural Burn event took place on 6/29/23 and includes a video of a return visit to the site on 9/9/23.

<https://www.luckiamutelwc.org/smithfield-oaks-cultural-burn.html>

King Tides Dates

November 26 and 27 (unusually high tides); Dec 14 (king tides)

<https://www.oregoncoast.org/blog/oregon-king-tides/>

The Arts Center

November 28 through December 30, 2023. "In the Woods and Wetlands," exhibit by Sarah Ferguson; Corrine Woodman Gallery, The Arts Center, 700 SW Madison Avenue, Corvallis

Suzanne Ortiz

Board Meeting Summary

October 12, 2023, 7:00 PM

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 PM. Present: Karan Fairchild, Dave Mellinger, Mai Kiigemagi, Rachel Handy, Carolyn Peterson, Jim Fairchild, Ray Drapek, Mark Baldwin, Suzanne Ortiz, Phyllis Bailey, Marge Popp, Bev Clark, Bill Probsting, Lee Sherman (renaming comm) and Bill Galatley (membership)

Approval of September meeting minutes was seconded by Suzanne and approved.

President's Report: Considering future meeting locations and start times.

Program Committee: Links to materials from the September Presentation by Aaron Growth.

Treasurer's Report: Credit Card balance offset related to field trips.

Secretary's Report: Received a statement from someone interested in being Conservation Chairperson.

Conservation: Mark Baldwin and Ray Drapek planned to attend the annual meeting focused on state-wide conservation priorities. Republic Services has not yet filed for another Conditional Use Permit seeking to expand the landfill. "Friends of the Watershed" continues to pressure the City Council to reclaim its

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:

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

authority to determine policy from the Public Works Dept. and are in discussion with journalists interested in telling the story of municipal water supplies across the Oregon Coast Range. Planners came up with several management strategies for the McDonald-Dunn Forest Plan. Within each of those there could be different scenarios across the landscape. Over the summer, the College farmed out the first computer modeling effort of what these alternatives might look like. Delays have held up any review by the two advisory bodies appointed to this work. Release for public comment now looks to be after mid-November. These delays further compress any period for reasonable community evaluation. I continue to serve on the Stakeholder Advisory Committee as a representative for ASC. The Forest Management Plan for the Elliott State Research Forest was released Monday, with comments due October 27, 2023. Oregon Audubon Chapter activists Joe Liebezeit (Portland) and Ann Vileisis (Kalmiopsis) asked for other Chapter endorsements in requesting a comment period extension on floating offshore wind energy development, regulated by the federal Bureau of Energy Management.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee: Sent an email to NAACP requesting sponsorship of the January MLK Day Walk. Corvallis Sustainability Coalition already signed on.

Hesthavn: Linnea Birdwell runs young kids' program on Weds AMs. Would like a tour of Barn and set date Nov 15th at 10:00. Volunteers needed. Considering replacement of sign in the parking lot.

Field Trip Committee: Meeting planned for the end of November.

Sustainability Committee: Attended quarterly CSC meeting. There were many great presentations. The next event is in March. Suzanne would like to get someone new involved to train as a replacement.

Old Business: OAC meeting in Klamath Falls covered many great topics including conservation priorities, changing the organization's name, and renewable energy sources. Planning to share "Catio" information through social media and newsletter in the spring.

New Business: Doug Robinson has requested help with the Benton Bird Survey. He is asking for funding to encourage grad students to participate. Approval of funding was motioned by Carolyn, seconded by Marge, and approved. Christmas Bird Count is set for December 19th with meeting place TBD. The November Board meeting date is November 9th, at 7 PM location TBD.

Meeting adjourned. Motioned by Karan and seconded by Phyllis.

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!

Jennifer Lommers

Melanie Feder

Cathy Kerr

Sophia Nagl-Mermelstein

Leigh Harrod

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

Nov. 16: Dr. Stewart Janes, The Secret Life of Feathers

Dec. 21: Member Slide Show

Jan. 18: Alan Contreras, A History of Oregon Ornithology

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

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Co-President

Karan Fairchild

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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
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Membership	Paul Adamus	adamus7(at)comcast.net
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	Instagram - Nikki Cross	media.audubon.corvallis@gmail.com
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