



# THE CHAT

October 2024 Vol 54 #2

## General Meeting

### Great Blue Heron of the Salish Sea Presented by Ann Eissinger

October 17, 2024, 7:30 PM

The program will provide an overview of Great Blue Heron life history, habitat, status, monitoring, and conservation efforts in the central Salish Sea. The information is a result of research, fieldwork, and citizen science over the course of 30 years.

The presenter is Ann Eissinger, a retired biologist previously of Nahkeeta Northwest Wildlife Services of Bow Washington, who currently lives in Corvallis and volunteers as a science advisor for ongoing heron monitoring projects in Northwest Washington.

This month, join us in the Alder Room of the [Corvallis Community Center](#) 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.

The 2024-2025 Monthly Meetings will be held in person and on Zoom. 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](mailto:audubon.corvallis@gmail.com) for more information about accessing the program.

Thanks to Eric Preston for guiding our Zoom meetings and Program Committee Chairperson 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!



*Photo by Lee Karney, USFWS*

*Mai and Eric, Program Committee*

## ASC Member Slide Show December 19!

It's not too early to select your memorable photos for the ASC member slide show! Last year, six ASC members regaled the audience with armchair tours of places or things they enjoy.

Don't be shy - nobody is a professional, and all photos are special. We are more than just birds, so share a little bit about yourself with your birding friends.

The deadline for submission is Dec. 12.

You may email them to me at [jabirusue@comcast.net](mailto:jabirusue@comcast.net), send them to my Dropbox (I will send you the link), or drop them off on a thumb drive.

Since we don't know how many presenters we will have until after they have submitted their photos, I suggest you send 10-20 digital images. We have an hour total for the presentations. So, if we have lots of entrants, you can talk faster as you describe your photos!

Need some help? Send me a note, and I'll do my best to make it easy for you.

*Sue Powell*



*Oystercatcher photo by Tom Heath*

## Get to Know Mid-Willamette Bird Alliance

After voting to change the name of our chapter, The Board of the Audubon Society of Corvallis has chosen Mid-Willamette Bird Alliance as the new name! This name more accurately reflects our geographic area all of Benton AND Linn counties and more clearly informs our community of what we're about.

And we are encouraged that "Bird Alliance" will ensure that our chapter will keep its connections with other Audubon chapters across the country. At least four other Oregon chapters will include "Bird Alliance" in their names, joining more than 20 chapters across the country adopting the change.

Rest assured, we will remain part of the Audubon network, and as we make the transition through all the work involved in this name change, we will be retaining our Audubon Society of Corvallis name for legal and financial purposes.

Even though our name is changing, our mission remains the same: supporting the conservation of natural habitats for wildlife and people.

*Karan Fairchild, Co-President*

### In This Issue:

General Meeting.....	1-2
Get to Know Mid-Willamette Bird Alliance.....	2
Education News.....	3
Conservation News.....	3
Atop The Nest Box.....	4-5
Field Trips.....	5
Community Notes.....	5-7
Board Meeting Summary.....	7-8
Membership Corner.....	8-9
Calendar.....	9

## Education News

### Animal Tracks at Hesthavn

Hesthavn Nature Center just received a very generous donation of over a dozen plaster animal track casts made and donated by Gordon Brown, a volunteer and nature enthusiast. Some of the animal tracks include gray squirrel, river otter, coyote, bobcat, beaver, porcupine, pronghorn antelope, elk, deer, and black bear. Each cast says what animal it is and whether it is the front or back foot if both are included. These animal tracks will be a wonderful addition to our educational materials at Hesthavn. Thanks so much, Gordon, for your kind donation!

*Dodie Wilson, Education Chair*



*Plaster track casts donated by the Browns*



## Conservation News

### Avian Population Studies Through The Fall

Jayshaun has been quite busy this fall planning a pilot study looking at the Population Shifts of Northern Saw-Whet Owls! He has also been participating in Migratory Songbird banding just outside of Corvallis. That study aims to better understand how changes in habitat can affect different bird populations. Here he is holding a Yellow-breasted Chat.

*Jayshaun Talbert, Conservation Chair*

## Find us online



<https://auduboncorvallis.org/>



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



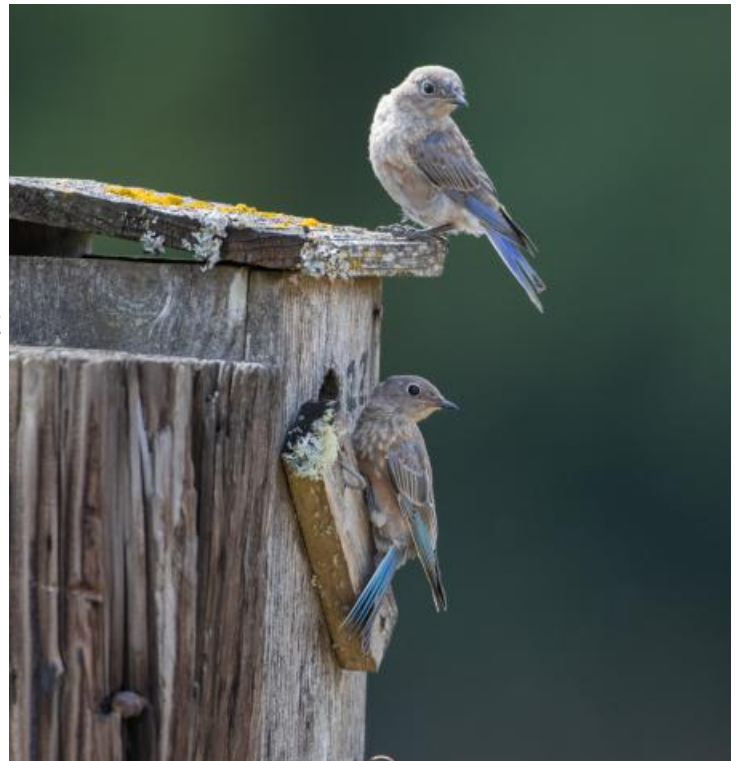
<https://www.instagram.com/auduboncorvallis/>



# Atop the Nest Box: 2024 Bluebird Trail Nesting Report

The 2024 nesting season for Western Bluebirds in the Willamette Valley ended about one month ago. This year, in the nest boxes monitored by Bluebird Trail volunteers in Benton and Linn counties, the first bluebird egg was laid around April 1, and the last chick fledged (i.e., left its nest) around August 29. Table 1 summarizes the nesting data from 2024 and the average nesting data from the years 2009–2023.

In Table 1, a nesting attempt is defined as a nest that contains at least one bluebird egg. You can examine the year-by-year data from 2009–2024 on the ASC website:



*Two Western Bluebirds investigate a nest box at Bald Hill. Photo by Matt Lee*

Table 1	2024	Average, 2009–2023
Nesting attempts	120	218
Eggs laid	607	1,073
Eggs laid/nesting attempt	5.1	4.9
Eggs hatched	433	844
% Eggs hatched	71	79
Chicks fledged	361	718
% Chicks fledged	83	85

[auduboncorvallis.org/bluebird-trail](http://auduboncorvallis.org/bluebird-trail).

As Table 1 shows, all but one of the measures of nesting activity this year were below the 2009–2023 averages. The exception was the number of eggs laid per nesting attempt, which was slightly higher than average this year. From 2009–2023, this number has ranged from 4.1 to 5.2.

This year’s count of 120 nesting attempts was far below the 2009–2023 average, continuing a steady decline from a peak of 268 nesting attempts in 2019. Is this decline a result of volunteers collecting data from fewer nest boxes? To answer this question, we can calculate the number of nesting attempts per monitored box. This year’s 120 nesting attempts were recorded in 372 monitored boxes, giving a ratio of 0.32 nesting attempt per box. Table 2 shows that this ratio has decreased since 2021, the earliest year for which I have the data to

<b>Table 2</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>
Nesting attempts per box	0.53	0.47	0.43	0.32

make this calculation. This indicates that bluebirds are nesting less frequently in the boxes we monitor.

One factor that may have contributed to the drop in the number of nesting attempts this year was the severe ice storm that hit our area in January. When I began checking the boxes on my routes in early April, at the beginning of the nesting season, I discovered that two of them contained a total of four dead bluebirds. Other Bluebird Trail monitors and friends who have nest boxes on their property reported similar findings. The storm appears to have taken a toll on the adult bluebird population, which overwinters in the valley because the weather is typically mild. A blanket of ice and snow on the ground makes it difficult for the birds to find food, and without enough food, they are less likely to survive when the temperature plummets. Bluebirds use nest boxes as roosting sites, which explains why many of the dead birds were found inside nest boxes.

Unusually cool, wet weather in May and June may be at least partly responsible for the lower-than-average percentage of eggs that hatched and chicks that fledged this year. Cool, wet weather that occurs after eggs are laid can cause adults to abandon their nests. Eggs that aren't incubated won't hatch, and chicks that aren't fed won't fledge. The excessive heat we experienced in August may also have killed some chicks before they could fledge.

*Matt Lee*

## Field Trips

### Second Saturday Field Trip

#### October 12th (8 AM - Noon)

We will meet at the shelter in Willamette Park (east end of SE Goodnight Ave.) and tour the park. This is a free four-hour excursion geared toward people interested in learning more about birds found in the Corvallis area. All levels of expertise are welcome. Please register for this free event. Sign up at: [CorvallisAudubonSecondSaturday@gmail.com](mailto:CorvallisAudubonSecondSaturday@gmail.com). Duncan Evered and Caryn Stoess lead excursions. The weather may alter plans. Wear comfortable shoes appropriate for walking paved and unpaved trails. Bring hats and rain gear, as well as water and snacks!

*Duncan Evered and Caryn Stoess*

## Community Notes

### Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde

Through December 2024. "stik." 1983-present. Part four of a year-long, 4-part exhibit. Stories from the forest are featured as told through the perspectives of timber industry workers, conservationists, hunters, weavers, etc. Each narrator reflects on how our interaction with the land has changed from time immemorial to the present. Chachalu Museum, 8720 Grand Ronde Rd, Grand Ronde. Click here for info

<https://chachalu.org/exhibits/stik/>

## **Greenbelt Land Trust**

Sunday, October 13 from 10 AM-1 PM. Fall Family Fun at Bald Hill Farm. Activity stations include nature arts & crafts, apple cider pressing, wildflower seed balls, aquatic insect discovery with OSU Bug Club members, binoculars & birding for kids, pollinator investigation & stream table. Meet a bird of prey from 10:30 AM-12:30 PM (Chintimini Wildlife Center). 11 AM Walk to a beaver dam. For info and directions click here <https://greenbeltlandtrust.org/event/fall-family-fun-fest-at-bald-hill-farm/>

## **Marys Peak Group Sierra Club, Spring Creek Project, OSU School of Language, Culture & Society, Corvallis Sustainability Coalition and the Corvallis-Benton County Public Library**

Wednesday, October 9 at 7 PM. Champinefu Series. Shati pi boom boom (songs and drumming): Traditional Contemporary Indigenous Music of Western Oregon. Hosted by Bobby Mercier and the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde. Free. PRAX Detrick Concert Hall at OSU, 470 SW 15th St. Corvallis, OR. To reserve tickets click here <https://prax.oregonstate.edu/events/shati-pi-boom-boom>

## **Native Plant Society of Corvallis**

Monday, October 7 from 7:30-8:30 PM. Presenter: Dan Luoma, Ph.D. Program: “Plants that Eat Truffles for Lunch.” Free. Cordley Hall, Room 2602, OSU campus, 2701 SW Campus Way, Corvallis. For info & to register click here [https://oregonstate.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJlkdeCrqjsqGd29tj7Ka5Jz5ty9tUg\\_jxMi#/registration](https://oregonstate.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJlkdeCrqjsqGd29tj7Ka5Jz5ty9tUg_jxMi#/registration)

## **Oregon State University, OSU Extension Service**

Wednesday, October 2 from 5:30 to 7:30 PM. Master Food Preservers Fermentation Class. 4077 SW Research Way, Corvallis. \$15. To register & for info click here <https://extension.oregonstate.edu/benton/events/master-food-preservers-fermentation-class>

## **Oregon State University Giustina Gallery & Corvallis Art Guild**

Through October 25, 2024. Erik and Nelson Sandgren. Exhibit: “Pacific Threshold: Sandgren & Sandgren – Painting the Oregon Coast with Friends 1978-2023.” Free. LaSells Stewart Center, OSU, 875 SW 26th St, Corvallis. For info click here <https://lasells.oregonstate.edu/pacific-threshold-sandgren-sandgren-painting-oregon-coast-friends/pacific-threshold-sandgren>

## **PRAX, Oregon State University, Stirek Gallery**

Through December 21, 2024. Art exhibition: “How to Carry Water.” Contemporary visual artists and humanities scholars share observations and questions about watersheds and consider “how the lenses of history, philosophy and creative practice allow for alternative methods of

witnessing the human relationship to water.” Stirik Gallery. 470 SW 15th St, Corvallis, OR. For info click here

<https://prax.oregonstate.edu/visual-arts/exhibitions-prax/how-carry-water>

Suzanne Ortiz

## Board Meeting Summary

September 12, 2024, 7 PM

Present: Jake Keen, Dave Mellinger, Ray Drapek, Mark Baldwin, Bill Gellatly, Carolyn Peterson, Karan Fairchild, Dodie Wilson, Mai Kiigemagi, Jim Fairchild, Phyllis Bailey, Suzanne Ortiz.

### The minutes of the July Board meeting were approved.

**President's Report:** Update on Kate and Chris Mathews: Kate is still in assisted care, following a stroke, but is improving. Chris is living at Stoneybrook. We are still in need of a secretary. Name change: the Board voted to approve the Chapter's new name: Mid-Willamette Bird Alliance. It will be retaining its Audubon Society of Corvallis name only for legal and financial purposes. Karan, Phyllis, and Dodie will work on implementing the necessary changes. Jim will contact Ali Berman from Portland regarding accessing the funds provided to help make the changes.

**Program Committee:** Carl Lucker will be managing the technology for the in-person meetings, while Eric Preston manages the Zoom portion.

**Treasurer:** Because of two large donations, the current balance is around \$140,000. Discussion of ways to use our money included funding student research projects, providing binocular kits to the public library (I am not sure of the specifics of this), an observation tower at Herbert Farm, and a Motus tower at Finley. There is a committee of Bill, Carolyn, Jayshaun, and Mai who will be setting up guidelines for funding student projects.

**Education:** Corvallis Community Center has asked us to participate in their Family Fun Nights. Dodie has been in contact with them. There is a homeschool group who has asked to use Hesthavn, both the grounds and the building, on a regular basis. Dodie will find out more from the organizer, including their insurance coverage. Concerns about liability were raised. A donation of plaster casts of animal tracks will be acknowledged in the Chat.

**Chat:** Jake has been exploring software programs to be used for producing the Chat. He recommended Mail Chimp which is easy to use and moderately priced. The Board approved using Mail Chimp software. Jake commented that editing team members will be leaving their roles in Chat production.

**Conservation:** The Oregon Audubon Council will be meeting the weekend of Oct. 26 in Salem. Jayshaun will be attending a conference elsewhere. Ray will attend in his place.

Jayshaun has been working on a Northern Saw-Whet Owl project, and hopes to take visitors to the station in November. He is also participating in a Migratory Bird monitoring project, led by Joan Hagar.

**Hesthavn:** Ray has a sign on the bridge warning people about wasps, though lately it hasn't been an issue. He will leave it up for now. Bats are living in the newly reconstructed bat house (thank you Bill). The proposed Oak Creek Restoration project that would include Hesthavn did not receive funding. Ray will seek an estimate from professionals for some outside painting of the barn. There are new heaters in the barn. Ray has come across a tent in an area of the property that will be sprayed to eradicate Yellow Archangel. Further investigation is needed.

**Membership:** Bill is planning to introduce new members at the general meetings. He proposed that long-time donor Steve Anderson be granted Life Membership status. He will be recognized in the Chat.

**OSU Non-profit Fair:** Last year Ray and Bill attended and received some sign-ups for volunteering, but not many followed through. At this point we are not planning to participate.

**Christmas Bird Count:** Dec. 17. Potluck/chili feed to follow. We have the Community Center ballroom and the kitchen reserved 4-8 PM. Bring your own table service and a dish to share. Coffee and tea provided.

**Back issues of Chat:** Jamie would like to get rid of his collection. Discussion of locating back issues and having them digitized. We have a hard drive that could be used for storage. This is an ongoing project.

Next meeting Oct. 10, 7 PM at Ray's house.

*Mai Kiigemagi, Acting 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

### 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](mailto: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 [bgellatly@msn.com](mailto:bgellatly@msn.com).

Thank you for your generosity and support!

*Bill Gellatly, 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](mailto:chateditors@gmail.com).

## Calendar

### General Meeting Speaker Schedule

- Oct. 17 Ann Eissinger- Great Blue Herons (Alder Room)
- Nov. 21 Richard Rich- Sage Grouse and Raven Interactions (Alder Room)
- Dec. 19 Member Slide Show
- Jan. 16 Elakha Alliance- Reintroduction of Sea Otters (Alder Room)
- Feb. 20 Vesper Sparrows- Joel Geier (Alder Room)
- Mar. 20 Birds and Animals of the Andes Mountains- Roy Lowe
- Apr. 17 Black-backed Woodpeckers- Mark Kerstens
- May 15 Lights Out Corvallis, or one of his other research projects- Jayshaun Talbert

## Officers

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Co-President	Karan Fairchild	alderspr(at)peak.org
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Bluebird Trail	Matt Lee	BluebirdTrail.corvallisaudubon@gmail.com
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Christmas Bird Count	Bev Clark, Matt Lee	audubon.corvallis@gmail.com
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Interested in volunteering?  
Please let us know:  
[volunteerasc@gmail.com](mailto:volunteerasc@gmail.com)