



THE CHAT

January 2025 Vol 54 #5

General Meeting

The Sea Otter: Returning a Keystone Species to Oregon's Kelp Forests, Presented by Chanel Hason

January 16, 2025, 7:30 PM

Sea otters once thrived along Oregon's coastline, playing a vital role in maintaining healthy marine ecosystems. Tragically, the fur trade of the 18th and 19th



centuries led to their local extinction, leaving a critical void in our coastal waters. Without sea otters, Oregon's kelp forests have suffered, and now face additional pressures from warming oceans and unchecked populations of purple sea urchins that decimate these vital underwater habitats.



The Elakha Alliance, meaning "sea otter" in the Clatsop-Chinookan language, is dedicated to restoring this lost keystone species to Oregon. Our mission is to reintroduce sea otters to their historic range, bringing ecological balance back to the coastline, supporting vibrant marine life, and honoring indigenous peoples' cultural connections with these animals.

Through research, collaboration with tribal nations and coastal communities, and education, we're working to ensure a future where sea otters and kelp forests

thrive together once again. Join us to learn about this historic effort and how you can help make it a reality.

Chanel brings a wealth of experience in marine biology, animal husbandry, environmental education, nonprofit management, and social media marketing. She earned her degree from CSU Monterey Bay, where she developed a passion for otters through her volunteer work with sea and river otters at the Monterey Bay Aquarium. Chanel has conducted marine science research on the Great Barrier Reef in Australia and worked with Jean-Michel Cousteau’s Ambassadors of the Environment program at the Ritz-Carlton Reserve in Puerto Rico.



Chanel Hason

In 2016 Chanel moved to Oregon to complete her MS in Sustainability Education from Portland State University. Since then, she has remained deeply involved in marine conservation, including volunteering with the Surfrider Foundation in Portland. Chanel is dedicated to fostering connections between people and the environment through education, outreach, and conservation initiatives.

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. Mid-Willamette Bird Alliance 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 [MWBA 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 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!

Mai and Eric, Program Committee

Conservation News

News From the Nature Center

Handicap-accessible trail – The year before last we had great hopes of obtaining some grant money to convert Ray’s Trail into a handicap-accessible trail. At the time we were looking into creating a concrete trail, since

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we had volunteers who were able to work with concrete. But the grant didn't come to pass, the volunteers withdrew, and the project was tabled for the time being. Lately, we have had someone offer to donate money for the project and we are looking into working on it once more. This time we're thinking possibly of either concrete or blacktop. This time work will be completed by contractors. We will explore who could work on it, how they will do it, and how much it will cost. We envision a trail that completes the Ray's Trail circuit, plus a leg that goes over the bridge to a turnaround location on the other side of the bridge where people can stop and look at the creek. We could use: 1) additional support money, and 2) volunteers willing to form a committee to explore the whos, whens and hows of this project.



Bella supervising volunteers

Tiny visitors – For many months now we have had a troop of VERY young visitors who regularly come to Hesthavn. They are from the baby stage to toddlers to pre-kindergarten. Oh yes ... and their parents come too. They come, sit in a circle on the ground in the picnic area, sing songs, and explore the property. They are a tough bunch of little kids. We've seen them bundled up and sitting in the grass on days when there was frost on the ground. It's nice to see the next generation of conservationists get an early start.

Restoration work- Due to so many distractions from other projects and problems, the blackberries got several years free-rein at Hesthavn. They took full advantage of it and some large blackberry thickets formed. Lately, we have been slowly but surely taking out those thickets the old-fashioned way ... With a shovel. The easiest way to get a measure of how much effort has gone into this is to come take a look at the very large blackberry slash pile in the middle of the property. Anyone interested in joining in on the blackberry fun can contact us. A splendid time is guaranteed for all.

Ray Drapek

Find us online



<https://auduboncorvallis.org/>



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



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

Sustainability News

Corvallis 2024 Sustainability Report

The 2024 Corvallis Sustainability Report has been released and is available online. Learn how new state requirements will promote Climate-Friendly and Equitable Communities. For instance, new parking lot construction in excess of half an acre will require tree canopies that cover at least 40% of the new parking area.

The annual report also provides an update on a collaborative project at Starker Park that addressed a 2023 winter flood caused by a beaver dam. In the summer of 2023, a pond leveler was installed that created a permanent leak through the beaver dam. The presence of the leveler doesn't eliminate flooding but does reduce the frequency of flooding and will make faster drainage possible. [Click here to access the report](#)

Suzanne Ortiz

The Same Newsletter with A New Look

A couple more changes are on the horizon for the Mid-Willamette Bird Alliance. Along with our name change, a new logo is in the works, and our newsletter will be changing too. This may seem like a lot of change, but it will help our organization reach more people and make more of an impact.

The newsletter is brought to you by a team of people who have put in many years of work to keep members informed of events, local conservation efforts, educational opportunities, and meetings. Their dedication has resulted in an outstanding newsletter publication.

Next month you will notice the newsletter will be readable from your email inbox. There will be no need to download it and use space on your computer's hard drive. This is only one benefit to our members. Other benefits include linking our website and social media, surveys, special correspondence, and event invitations, allowing MWBA to increase awareness and broaden our membership.

The newsletter team is excited to make this change. Of course, we hope to make a smooth transition. If you are experiencing trouble with receiving or accessing the newsletter, please email the editors at chateditors@gmail.com. We will work to resolve any issues and address your concerns.

Field Trips

Second Saturday Field Trip

January 11th (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. 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

2025 Multi-Day Field Trips

Once again, let's get to know Oregon's wealth of birdwatching locations. Start with a trip to the Klamath Basin wildlife refuges, March 14-16. White-fronted, Snow and Ross's Geese head a splendid array of migratory waterfowl, and we may catch the first few migrating passerines.

The Rogue Valley is April 25-27. Our objective is to find birds of the California chaparral - Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, California Towhee, and Oak Titmouse. Another primary focus will be on the wealth of spring flowers. Top this off with a theater performance at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival: Oscar Wilde's comedy *The Importance of Being Earnest*. A walk along Oak Creek for orioles, tanagers, warblers and other spring migrants rounds out the trip.

Then, Malheur National Wildlife Refuge (May 17-20). This is our signature trip, witnessing the spring migration of waterfowl, shorebirds, and songbirds at one of America's greatest refuges.

The Summer Lake trip of June 13-15 features the search for Snowy Plover, Common Poorwill and Yellow Rail.

Next, the Wallowas trip explores the NE corner of the state (July 17-21) and spectacular scenery.

Steens Mountain (August 14-17) takes us up to Oregon's highest road, where Gray-crowned and Black Rosy Finches forage on snowbanks.

The final trip is to the South Coast in mid-September.

All trips usually have a wide range of expert observers who point out not only the birds, but butterflies, dragonflies, mammals, reptiles, flowers and geology.

Signup sheets for all trips will be available at ASC general meetings, and by email to framsey5@comcast.net. Signing up should be accompanied by a \$25 deposit for each trip - due one month before departure; payable to MVBA and sent to PO Box 148 in Corvallis, 97339. You may also volunteer as a driver (slots available on the signup sheets). Drivers will not be charged for the regular transportation costs. If the signups are not sufficient to run any trip, it will be cancelled and any deposits will be refunded.

Fred Ramsey

Community Notes

Benton County Historical Society Museum

Saturday, February 1 from 10 AM-12 PM. "Discovery Day – Letitia Carson, Black Pioneer." Free. Moreland Room, Philomath BCHS Museum. 1101 Main St, Philomath. [Click here to register](#)

Ankeny Hill Nature Center

Saturday, January 4, 10 AM-12 PM. "Swimming Swans, Golden Geese, and Dapper Ducks: A Waterfowl Program." Story about waterfowl, crafts and a walk to observe waterfowl. Ankeny Hills Nature Center. Free 130 Ankeny Hill Rd. SE, Jefferson.

Corvallis-Benton County Public Library

Tuesdays from 12-1 PM. January 14, 21, 28; February 4, 11 18, 25. "Gearing up for

Gardening" series. Free. Main Reading Room, CBCPL, 645 NW Monroe Ave, Corvallis.

Corvallis Sustainability Coalition

Thursday, January 16, 1-2 PM. Public Seed Library Presentation: "Growing Herbs from Seed." Emily Stimac and Bethany Glanville, co-owners of The Thyme Garden. Free. Corvallis-Benton County Public Library Main Reading Room, 645 NW Monroe Ave, Corvallis. [For more info click here](#)

Luckiamute Watershed Council

Wednesday, January 8 from 6-8 PM. "Beavers: Unsung Climate Heroes on Rangelands Across the US West." Speakers: Hannah Gosnell, PhD and Angie Thompson. Free. Sips 'n' Science event at Divine Distillers, 915 N. Main St, Independence. [Click here for more info and to register](#)

Native Plant Society of Corvallis

Monday, January 13 from 7:30-8:30 PM. Guest presenter Aaron Liston, PhD will give a talk on "Look Around You: The Story of the Wollemi Pine." Free. Cordley Hall, Room 2602, OSU campus, 2701 SW Campus Way, Corvallis.

Seven Capes Bird Alliance, ASC/Mid-Willamette Bird Alliance, Coast Range Association, Sierra Club Oregon Chapter, Wild Salmon Center

Wednesday, January 8 from 6-7:30 PM. "Timber and Tides: Exploring the Salmon Habitat of Our Coastal Streams." Conrad Gowell. Zoom webinar. Free, registration is required. [To register, click here](#)

Suzanne Ortiz

Board Meeting Summary

November 14, 2024, 7 PM

Attending: Dave Mellinger, Karan Fairchild, Ray Drapek, Bill Gellatly, Dodie Wilson, Mai Kiigemagi, Bev Clark, Carolyn Peterson, Suzanne Ortiz, Don Boucher.

REPORTS FROM OFFICERS

VP/PROGRAM: The December meeting will feature the member slide show, coordinated by Sue Powell, and the holiday raffle. Carolyn volunteered to sell raffle tickets during the social time.

TREASURER: Carolyn received the DBA notification from the state for our name change to Mid-Willamette Bird Alliance. She will contact the bank and proceed with other financial matters.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

EDUCATION: Dodie met with the coordinator of the Corvallis Museum's bird exhibit about how we can help. The exhibition will open Feb. 20 and run for 8 months. Other upcoming events are Winter Wildlife Field Days (month of March), C3's family night on Jan. 3, Adams School fourth graders, and middle schoolers' field trip to Marys Peak.

CHAT: Don explained that his former job of newsletter layout will be incorporated into the formatting done by the Chat Editor with the Mailchimp platform.

CONSERVATION: Letters to Oregon's senators supporting the designation of the Owyhee Canyonlands National Monument are encouraged. Karan commented on an Oregon Wild webinar about updating the NW Forest Plan, and has since sent everyone the link.

HESTHAVN: Ray noted that the preschoolers are still coming on Wednesdays, and he has invited them into the barn to warm up on the cold days. He has some good volunteers, including his neighbor John, who will be filling bird feeders while Ray is out of town. There was discussion of consulting with landscape designer Owen Dell about increasing accessibility on the trails. Not sure if anyone is in charge of contacting him to arrange a visit.

FIELD TRIPS: Two are confirmed, Rogue Valley April 25-27 and Malheur May 17-20. Discussion held of having a six-person minimum for a trip to be viable. Also, discussion of raising the deposit fee to \$75.

SUSTAINABILITY: Suzanne will attend the annual meeting of the Sustainability Coalition on Jan. 13. The Sustainability Fair and Town Hall is set for March 13.

OLD BUSINESS:

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT: Around 30 people are signed up, and everyone is excited about the potluck to follow the bird count.

NEW BUSINESS:

NEW LOGO: Don has designed a new logo with our new name, which also includes a Yellow-breasted Chat and the Willamette River, since Willamette is now part of our name. We all liked the new logo. Don will make minor changes and provide the logo in various formats.

Liability form for school groups visiting Hesthavn: Carolyn and Ray will meet with a lawyer.
Next Board meeting will be Jan. 9 at Ray's house.
Meeting adjourned by Dave at 8:40 PM.

Mai Kiigemagi

Open Board Meetings

MWBA Board of Directors meetings are open to all MWBA 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 [MWBA website](#) for the location and time.

Membership Corner

General Membership Renewal Information

For online membership renewal go to the MWBA website (<https://auduboncorvallis.org/membership/>) and renew via PayPal. To renew by USPS, mail a check to MWBA, PO Box 148, Corvallis, OR 97339.

Email Notifications/Meeting Cancellations

We encourage members to join the MWBA listserv to receive emergency email notifications about meeting cancellations related to weather conditions, updated information about MWBA 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 bgellatly@msn.com.

Thank you for your generosity and support!

Bill Gellatly

Chat Articles

The Chat Editors welcome articles from all members of the Mid-Willamette Bird Alliance. 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

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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The CHAT is published 10 times a year by the Mid-Willamette Bird Alliance/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