

March 2010

# The Quail



NEWS FROM LANE COUNTY AUDUBON SOCIETY

## From our President



### This spring, opt for a pesticide-free garden

Maeve Sowles

541.343.8664

[president@laneaudubon.org](mailto:president@laneaudubon.org)

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Like many of you, I am anxious to get outside into the garden. Spring flowering bulbs are pushing up out of the ground, and soon we will see crocus, daffodils, and tulips blooming around the county. I am also watching for the pair of Western Bluebirds that appear at our property in late February or early March to set up breeding territory. They will gather insects from the air and from the ground. They will come to our watercourse for a drink and a bath. For the bluebirds and other insect eaters, for my pets, for our neighbors, and for ourselves, we will not spray any pesticides on our property.

With alarming speed, winter's drab browns and grays will transform into spring's green growth sprouting over the hillsides. Young leaves will open a tender green, currant blossoms will glow pink, and white osoberry flowers will bloom in the strengthening sunlight. Our yards will begin to grow at a wild rate, mowers will be brought out, and for some people, arsenals of machines and noxious solutions of chemicals will be primed for action.



The sense of being overwhelmed by one's garden can panic people into striking out at "weeds" and other undesired growth. Trying to control, fight back, and beat down the enemies of your garden results in expensive and destructive actions that have unwanted consequences. Please resist the urge to purchase chemical insecticides and herbicides. Advertisers make claims that these products are safe to use, yet many publications and studies show

*continued on page 3*



Debbie Schlenoff

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### Springtime tips for backyard birds

**A**t this time of year, we eagerly await the spring chorus of bird song. One way we can help birds is to recognize that conservation efforts start at home. As human development has expanded and natural habitat has disappeared, birds have become more reliant on the spaces that they share with us.

You can make your garden a welcoming place for birds by taking into account the need for food, water, cover, and nesting sites. As you return to the garden this spring, consider planting for the birds. Choose native plants when possible. They require less water and fertilizer, are more resistant to predators and disease, and are an excellent supply of food and shelter for birds. Many songbirds eat berries, and hummingbirds appreciate nectar-bearing flowers. For information on native plants that are good for birds, see: [www.laneaudubon.org/library-sub/native-food-plant-sp.htm](http://www.laneaudubon.org/library-sub/native-food-plant-sp.htm).

When planting, think vertical. Garden in layers and provide trees, shrubs, native grasses, and ground cover. Birds will make use of brush piles and snags for cover and nesting sites. Supplemental feeding is a great way to attract birds to your yard. Keep feeders and birdbaths clean. A birdbath with moving water or spray is especially attractive to birds but just a shallow bowl does the trick. To create a butterfly “puddling” area, fill a pie pan with gravel and water. If possible, conserve water by using drip irrigation and collecting rainwater. Water your gardens early in the morning to minimize loss through evaporation.

For a bird-friendly garden, do not use chemical herbicides and pesticides. These can be harmful to birds and their food sources as well as other animals, particularly amphibians. Mulch inhibits the spread of weeds and manual removal methods are effective. For non-chemical alternatives, see: [www.pesticide.org/](http://www.pesticide.org/)

Hundreds of millions of birds are killed each year as a result of colliding with buildings. The upcoming spring migration is a particularly vulnerable period. Place birdfeeders and baths within three feet of your windows so birds can't gather up enough speed to do harm should they fly into a window. Birds don't see glass and suffer significant mortality when they try to fly through. Use screens and coverings to cut down on the possibility of windows reflecting trees and sky. Hang streamers in front of windows or try placing densely spaced decals on the windows no more than four inches vertically and two inches horizontally apart.

Another hazard for spring migrants is their attraction to lighted buildings. Turn off the lights and pull down the blinds or close the curtains in homes, apartments, and office buildings. Retain security lights but remove others. Eliminate decorative illumination, floodlights, and other lights not directed downwards. Please speak to building managers where you work and live about the benefits of a “Lights-Out” policy.

Millions of birds are killed each year by cats. Keep cats indoors and supervise your cat if it is outdoors. Protect your cat from injuries and diseases while preventing the deaths of wild songbirds. The Humane Society estimates that indoor cats live an average of three times longer than cats that go outside.



*“Hundreds of millions of birds are killed each year as a result of colliding with buildings. The upcoming spring migration is a particularly vulnerable period.”*



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## Thanks, Lane Audubon booth volunteers!

Ron Renchler 541.345.0834 christyandron@quest.net

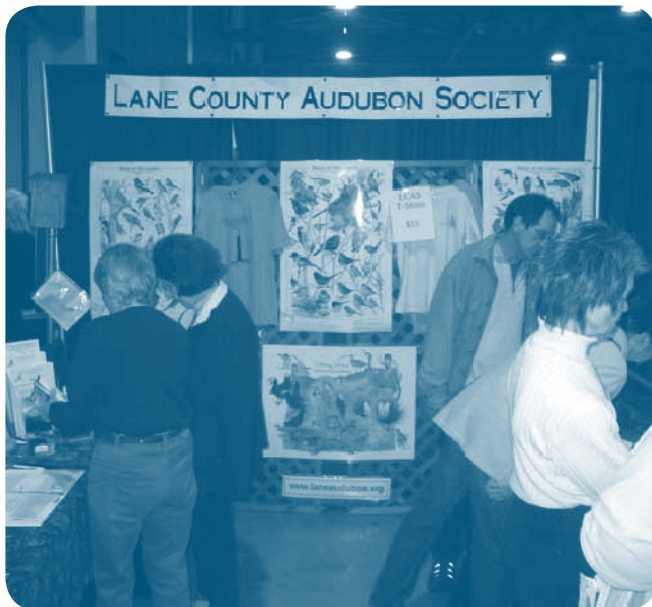
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If you measure the success of the Lane County Audubon outreach booth by the number of individuals who stop by to chat about birds and Lane Audubon activities, then the booth at the Fifth Annual Good Earth Home, Garden & Living Show at the Lane County Fairgrounds during January 22–24 was a smashing success.

Hundreds of show-goers stopped by to ask questions and talk about their bird-related interests. Our crew of dedicated booth staffers handled the foot traffic with their usual grace and aplomb. A hearty “thank you” goes out to each of them: **Flo Alvergue, Connie Berglund, Pat Bitner, Tasker Houston, Diane McInnes, Sally O’Donnell, Debbie Schlenoff, Phil Smyser, Cynthia Stockwell, Dave Stone, Janie Thomas, Suzanne Twight-Alexander.**

Dick Lamster and Kris Kirkeby deserve a special word of thanks for offering workshops at the show and raising the visibility of Lane Audubon in our community.

If you’d like to get involved in spreading the word about Lane Audubon activities at local festivals and community events, contact Ron Renchler, Lane Audubon booth coordinator, 541.345.0834; christyandron@qwest.net.



## This spring, opt for a pesticide-free garden, *continued from page 1*

associations between pesticide use and disease. The toxicity to children, animals, and birds should make us stop and think about what harm we might be causing. At our home we will be mowing, hoeing, and pulling weeds—all the while watching for the arrival of bluebirds.

For more information about pesticide use at home and alternatives to pesticides, please visit:

### **National Audubon’s at Home:**

[www.audubon.org/bird/at\\_home/index.html](http://www.audubon.org/bird/at_home/index.html)

### **Northwest Coalition for Alternatives to Pesticides**

[www.pesticide.org/](http://www.pesticide.org/)

### **The Pesticide Action Network (PAN)**

[www.pesticideinfo.org/](http://www.pesticideinfo.org/)

### **Grassroots Environmental Education**

[www.grassrootsinfo.org/](http://www.grassrootsinfo.org/)

## Springtime tips for backyard birds, *continued*

Many of the birds visiting our yards this spring are returning from southern areas where much of their winter habitat is disappearing. Protect Neotropical migrants by drinking shade-grown coffee that provides critical wintering habitat. Some of our winter birds will be flying north at this time of year to nest in the boreal forest. Help protect the boreal forest by recycling and buying recycled paper products.

Reduce your carbon footprint. Drive less. Turn off lights and unplug electronics when not in use. Reset your thermostat. Eat lower on the food chain. Buy local. Replace incandescent light bulbs. Run full loads in the dishwasher and washing machine. Line dry your towels.

Get outside and enjoy the birds. It’s a healthy activity and reduces stress. Bring a friend with you. Studies have shown that when people have experienced nature they are more likely to take action to protect it. It’s good for you and it’s good for the birds. Happy spring!

## FEATURED BIRDING AREA

### Buckhead Wildlife Area, Willamette National Forest

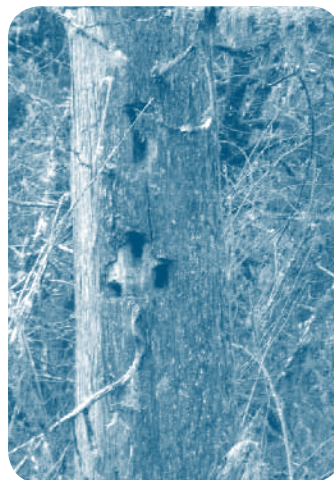
Cheron Ferland

541.654.1122

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*Buckhead Wildlife Area trailhead*



*Pileated woodpecker excavations on an incense cedar tree*

Nestled in the Willamette National Forest a mere mile from the community of Westfir, Oregon is an enchanting trail worth visiting. The trail is part of the 300-acre Buckhead Wildlife Area. The paved, wheelchair accessible trail takes you through a majestic forest of Douglas fir and incense cedar. Winter Wrens flit about in the berry thickets along the riparian edges while varied and hermit thrush move like ghosts between the snowberry and sword fern-carpeted forest floor and the dark-needed branches of the trees. Abundant snags provide ideal habitat for Downy Woodpeckers, Northern Flickers, and other cavity-nesters such as Chestnut-backed Chickadees and jars of Red-breasted Nuthatches. Rectangular cavities in incense cedar give away the presence of charismatic Pileated Woodpeckers. One portion of the trail butts up to the Middle Fork Willamette River floodplain where the tinny call of American Dippers is not a foreign sound. Great-blue Herons and Common Mergansers frequent this portion of the trailside. While hiking this trail you are likely to be serenaded or spied upon by the local pair Common Ravens who are ever aware of events going on in their neighborhood. Also, don't forget to search the tree trunks for moving bark that may transform itself into a Brown Creeper.

The U.S. Forest Service is in the process of improving the trail, and within the next several months there will be a new information kiosk and interpretive signs along the trail. There are pit toilet facilities at the trailhead.



*Buckhead Wildlife Area trail*

**Directions:** From Eugene, take Hwy. 58 East approximately 30 miles to the Middle Fork Ranger District office. Turn left toward Westfir and take another left after crossing the bridge over the Middle Fork Willamette River. Proceed approximately one-half mile to another bridge on the left that crosses the North Fork Willamette River and leads into the old mill community of Hemlock. After crossing this bridge, turn left and proceed through town and over the railroad tracks onto North Shore Road (FSR 5821). Follow this road approximately two miles to the Buckhead Wildlife Area on the left.

# A Message from Lane Audubon Board of Directors

Maeve Sowles, President

541.343.8664

president@laneaudubon.org



We ask you to become a local member of Lane County Audubon Society and support our grassroots efforts in the local community. All of your local dues stay here to help us work on local education projects and conservation issues related to birds and their habitats. With your support, we will continue to do the things you expect from us. We welcome your suggestions—this is your Audubon!

**Lane Audubon Membership Benefits**

- **The Quail**  
9 issues/year
- **Field Trips and Bird Walks**
- **Program Meetings**
- **Educational Publications**
- **Conservation Issue Representation**
- **Answers to Questions:**  
541.485.BIRD

Visit our web site:  
[www.laneaudubon.org](http://www.laneaudubon.org)

### Lane Audubon welcomes you—join or renew today!

Lane County Audubon Society needs your local membership dues to keep our various programs alive! This means that your membership dues for National Audubon Society no longer support a membership in your local chapter. Become a member of Lane Audubon today to help us continue our educational programs and our work in protecting birds, other wildlife, and their habitats in Lane County. We appreciate your support.

**Lane Audubon membership dues**

Individual \$20 ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Students and Seniors (65 and over) \$15 ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Family \$25 ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Lifetime Membership \$400 ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I want to do more. Here's my tax deductible contribution for ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total enclosed (check payable to Lane County Audubon Society) . . . \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Check here if you are a current National Audubon member       Don't know

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Check here if you prefer to receive your newsletter by email.

*Lane Audubon will not release your personal information to other organizations. We will use it only for Lane Audubon communications.*

**Please contact me regarding**

Gift memberships

Volunteering for Lane Audubon activities

Lane Audubon's Living Legacy program

I'd like to receive email alerts about conservation issues.

**Mail this form and your payment to:**

Lane County Audubon Society  
 P.O. Box 5086  
 Eugene, OR 97405

**Electronic version of  
*The Quail* available!**

Beginning in April, Lane County Audubon Society will offer an electronic version of *The Quail*. Each month, Lane Audubon will send a link to your email address that will take you to a pdf version of our newsletter. Of course, you still have the option to continue receiving *The Quail* in the mail.

If you would like to begin receiving *The Quail* electronically or would like more information, please contact Jim Blick: [blick37@comcast.net](mailto:blick37@comcast.net)



*The Quail*

**Deadlines**

April issue: March 13  
 May–June issue: April 10  
 Submit material to  
 Cynthia Stockwell, editor  
[quail@clearwire.net](mailto:quail@clearwire.net)

*The Quail* is the newsletter of Lane County Audubon Society, which is a chartered chapter of National Audubon Society. Nine issues are published per year (May–June, July–Aug. and Dec.–Jan. are double issues).

Local members of National Audubon Society receive a free subscription to *The Quail*, but are encouraged to voluntarily join Lane Audubon (see page 5).

**Subscriptions:** Contact Jim Blick at 541.683.4635 or [blick@toast.net](mailto:blick@toast.net).

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Surf Scoter

Photo by Cary Kerst

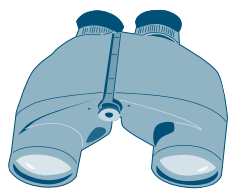
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## Field Notes: January 2010



- Heermann's Gull swings northward
- Ferruginous Hawk at Checkermallow Overlook
- Common Goldeneye uncommon visitor
- Tree Swallows: just passing through?

January was warmer and drier than normal, which may explain some of the sightings below. For highlights of the Christmas Bird Count on January 3, 2010, see the February Quail. Early spring migrants (i.e. Rufous Hummingbird by the end of Feb.) should be arriving soon, so let us know when and where you see them.

### WATERBIRDS

Greater White-fronted Goose	Jan.	Island Park	D&VH	What appears to be the Greenland race
Snow Goose	Jan. 21	Dexter Reservoir	NS	Normally found in flocks near the airport
Canvasback	Jan. 1	Delta Ponds	JC	Unusual location for this species
Common Goldeneye	Jan. 10	FRR–Royal Ave	A&TM	Not commonly found here
American Bittern	Jan. 17	FRR–Royal Ave	A&DH	Not always found in the winter

### RAPTORS

Ferruginous Hawk	Jan. 10	Checkermallow Overlook	S&SG	Rarely found in the county
Rough-legged Hawk (3)	Jan. 2	Eugene airport area	JS	Still being found in normal numbers
Prairie Falcon	Jan. 2	Washburn Lane	JS	They normally winter in very small numbers.

### RAILS, SHOREBIRDS, GULLS, and OWLS

Black-bellied Plover (26)	Jan. 10	Fern Ridge Reservoir	SM	They normally winter in these numbers
Dunlin (6,000+)	Jan. 17	Fern Ridge Reservoir	A&DH	A normal wintering flock
Heermann's Gull	Jan. 17	Klootchman SW	AC	The only report for the month; they're normally on the breeding grounds in Mexico this time of year.
Black-legged Kittiwake (3)	Jan. 17	Klootchman SW	AC	A normal number and location.
Short-eared Owl	Jan.	FRR—Airport Area	m.ob.	There seem to be good numbers around this winter given the number of reports.

### PASSERINES

Eurasian Collared-Dove (15)	Jan. 30	Alvadore	DB	Their numbers continue to increase!
Lewis's Woodpecker	Jan.	Fern Ridge Reservoir	m.ob.	They're still being found in good numbers.
Black Phoebe (2)	Jan. 27	N Fork Siuslaw River	EC	Found while kayaking from Bender Landing
Say's Phoebe	Jan. 2	Stewart Pond area	JS,LJ	An earlier than normal report for the county
Say's Phoebe	Jan. 17	Creswell area	SF,DI	They normally don't show up until mid-Feb.
Northern Shrike	Jan.	Fern Ridge Reservoir	m.ob.	Still being found in good numbers
Clark's Nutcracker	Jan. 8	Deadwood	DC	A rare sighting away from the High Cascades
Tree Swallow (10)	Jan. 2	Fern Ridge Reservoir	LM,DA	An unusual winter record—there haven't been any reports before or after, so it must've been a migrating flock.
Wrentit	Jan. 1	Beltline Rd/Royal Ave	E&VT	A rather unusual location for this species
American Tree Sparrow	Jan. 10	FRR–Royal Ave	A&TM	The same bird as found in Oct?
Pine Siskin	Jan. 11	Ridgeline Trail	TM	The first flocks heard and vocalizations have continued in the area.
Evening Grosbeak	Jan. 11	Ridgeline Trail	TM	Heard calling for three mornings, but not before or since—just moving through?



### Abbreviations

FRR Fern Ridge Reservoir, **m.ob.** many observers, **SW** State Wayside

### Thank you, contributors!

**DA** Dennis Arendt, **DB** Dave Brown, **EC** Ellen Cantor, **JC** Jim Carlson, **AC** Alan Contreras, **DC** Dan Crannell, **SF** Shawneen Finnegan, **S&SG** Steve & Susie Gordon, **D&VH** Don & Vickie Hale, **A&DH** Anne & Dan Heyerly, **DI** Dave Irons, **LJ** Laura Johnson, **SM** Sylvia Maulding, **LM** Larry McQueen, **A&TM** Allison & Tom Mickel, **JS** John Sullivan, **NS** Noah Strycker, **E&VT** Eddie & Vjera Thompson

## Community Calendar, Events, and Opportunities

*A service to Lane Audubon members*

### Singles Hike

#### Mt. Pisgah Arboretum

Get to know Mount Pisgah in winter with the person who knows it best. Come explore Mount Pisgah and the Arboretum's less traveled areas with Tom LoCascio, Site Manager here at the Arboretum. Enjoy a roundabout tour of the west side of Mount Pisgah through valleys and oak-laden meadows. Enjoy great vistas while meeting new friends. Singles of all ages are welcome to join us for this vigorous hike.

**Saturday, March 6, 10 a.m.–noon**

*Wear sturdy shoes and bring water and snacks.  
Rain or Shine. Meet at the Arboretum Visitors Center.  
Fee: \$5. FMI: 651.747.1504*

### Eugene Birder's Night

An informal gathering of birders sharing Lane County sightings. All levels of birding experience welcome.

**Monday, March 8, 7:00 p.m.**

*Conference Room A (across hall from Auditorium),  
Sacred Heart Hospital, 1255 Hilyard St., Eugene*

### Signs of Spring Walk

#### Mt. Pisgah Arboretum

Join Rhoda Love as she leads you on an easy winter arboretum walk to search for signs of spring. Perhaps willows will be in bloom near the river? How about filberts? Or osoberry? If lucky, we may spot the rare dwarf rue anemone in the shade of a large maple tree.

**Saturday, March 13, 10 a.m.–noon**

*Rain or Shine. Meet at the Arboretum Visitors Center.  
Fee: \$5. FMI: 541.747.1504*

### Wildflowers of the Marys Peak Meadows

#### Native Plant Society

Monthly meeting features scientist Steve Carpenter speaking on plant ecology, botanic history, geology and weather of Mary's Peak, the highest promontory of the Coast Range.

**Monday, March 15, 7:30 p.m.**

*EWEB Training Room, 500 East 4th Ave., Eugene.  
FMI: 541.746.9478*





## Program Meeting: Tuesday, March 30



**The Intertwine: Integrating the built and natural environments in the Portland Metropolitan Region, by Mike Houck, Executive Director of the Urban Greenspaces Institute Urban Naturalist, Audubon Society of Portland**

*Herb Wisner*

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*hrwisner@comcast.net*

**T**he Intertwine is an initiative to create the world's greatest systems of parks, trails, and natural areas in the Portland-Vancouver region. Making The Intertwine vision a reality is the work of The Intertwine Alliance, a coalition of non-profits, state and local agencies, businesses and citizens from across the region working to plan, develop and promote The Intertwine—the region's interconnected network of parks, trails and natural areas. The Urban Greenspaces Institute and Audubon Society of Portland co-founded The Intertwine Alliance to provide the resources necessary to plan and build regional parks and trails, restore natural areas, protect habitat and water quality, and realize The Intertwine vision. Mike Houck, Executive Director of the Urban Greenspaces Institute and Urban Naturalist for the Audubon Society of Portland will describe how the Alliance is working to expand participation and the many roles the Urban Greenspaces Institute and Audubon Society of Portland have played in the evolution of The Intertwine over the past 30 years.



*Photo by Urban Greenspaces Institute  
(www.urbangreenspaces.org/)*

### PROGRAM MEETING

*The Intertwine: Integrating the Built and Natural Environments in the Portland Metropolitan Region*

*by Mike Houck*

**Tuesday, March 30**

**7:30 p.m.**

**Eugene Garden Club**

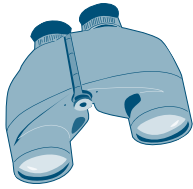
**1645 High Street, Eugene**

The Fifth Annual  
**FERN RIDGE**  
**WINGS & WINE**  
**FESTIVAL**  
May 8, 2010

Presented by Domaine Meriwether and the City of Veneta  
In Association with the Lane County Audubon Society, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,  
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Travel Lane County, Fern Ridge Chamber of Commerce,  
South Willamette Wineries Association & Cascades Raptor Center

**Birding Walks • Canoe Trips • Live Raptors • Educational Speakers**  
**Guided Birding Tour and Tasting at Local Wineries**  
**Children Activities • Native Plant Sale**  
\*Some Activities Require Pre-Registration and Fees\*

**• For More Information: 541 935 8443 •**  
**www.wingsandwinefestival.com**



## Bird Walks and Events

Leila Snow

541.968.5533

leilas@ori.org

**Monthly Bird Walk:** Our monthly bird walks are usually held on the third Saturday of the month, but we often have additional walks or special trips. With knowledgeable leaders and many pairs of eyes to help spot birds, our trips are a great way to increase your birding skills while learning about Lane County birds and their habitats. All birders are welcome, from novice to expert. A \$3 donation is suggested.

### Third Saturday Bird Walk: Delta Ponds, with Paula Graff

**Saturday,  
March 20**

For the past five years, Delta Ponds has been revegetated with native plants, and birders have been surveying the area to determine the effect on avian populations. Paula Graff will lead the bird walk and tell us a bit about vegetation and bird trends in the area. She will also let participants know how to get involved. All levels of birders are welcome, from first timer to expert.

*We will meet, rain or shine, at 8:00 a.m. at the South Eugene High School parking lot (19th and Patterson St.) and will return by noon. Please note: As a precaution, do not leave valuables in your parked car.*

### Third Saturday Bird Walk: Warblers at Skinner Butte

**Saturday,  
April 17**

Ah, Spring! Spring brings more light, earlier birding (note the 7:30 a.m. start time), and migration. There's no better place to view migrating warblers than Skinner Butte, a well-known high point in the Willamette Valley that attracts migrating birds. Our leaders will help us find and identify these small birds of the treetops. All levels of birders are welcome, from first timer to expert.

*We will meet, rain or shine, at 7:30 a.m. at the South Eugene High School parking lot (19th and Patterson St.) and will return by 11 a.m. Please note: As a precaution, do not leave valuables in your parked car.*

## Program Meeting

*The Intertwine: Integrating  
the Built and Natural  
Environments in the Portland  
Metropolitan Region*



*Photo by Urban  
Greenspaces Institute*

**Tuesday, March 30  
7:30 p.m.**

**Eugene Garden Club  
1645 High Street, Eugene**



NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY  
LANE COUNTY CHAPTER

*The Quail*

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