

Nature Trails

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Photo by Celeste Searles Mazzacano

More than Monarchs: Migration in Dragonflies & Other Insects

Celeste Searles Mazzacano

CASM Environmental, LLC, Portland, Oregon

Friday, 18 November 2016, 7:30pm,

Room 100 Willamette Hall, UO Campus

Who knew there are dragonflies flying higher than 24,000 feet above sea level and migrating many thousands of miles? Where do such tiny animals store enough energy for a trip that would daunt creatures many times their size? Why do they do it? Why not just hunker down and deal with whatever is going to happen at one end of this trip or the other?

There are as many as eighteen dragonfly species in North America that engage in either regular or sporadic migrations. If this sounds vague, that's because it is. We don't know as much as we should about the phenomenon, given the importance of these insects to the ecosystems they inhabit. Enter the Migratory Dragonfly Partnership. The masthead of this organization's website explains its mission as *Using research, citizen science, education, and outreach to understand North American dragonfly migration and promote conservation*. Among the organizations in the partnership are Conservation International, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Pronatura Veracruz, U.S. Geological Survey, the U.S. Forest Service International Programs, and the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation. Our November speaker has a deep connection to the Xerces Society and served for four years as the Project Coordinator for the Migratory Dragonfly Partnership; her experience and present efforts make her a prime example of how to further each aspect of the Migratory Dragonfly Partnership's mission.

Celeste Searles Mazzacano, who will tell us about these and other fascinating migratory insects and their seemingly quixotic treks, has done some migrating of her own. She lived in six or seven states as a youngster before ending up in Minnesota, where she finished high school and went to college. After college her migrations continued for several years, but more about that later. Her earliest insect memories go back to when she was five, and even younger, when her family lived in Lubbock, Texas. She rescued bugs that fell into the kiddie pool. She watched cicadas emerge from their larval shells—a process she found fascinating. When she was a little older she began experimenting, “smooshing an ant on the sidewalk to see how long it would take for its buddies to come pick up the body, crushing an aphid on a plant to watch the ants that tended it come to the defense of their “herd”, or patiently pushing ants under the surface of a bucket of water to see whether they would drown.”

Her long-standing interest in ‘bugs’ morphed into obsession while Searles Mazzacano was an undergraduate at the University of Minnesota in the

Genetics and Cell Biology Department. She worked for three years as a research assistant in an entomology lab, and it was this experience that tipped her over the edge. After getting her B.S. she became a graduate student in the Entomology Department, still at Minnesota. Her advisor was Ann Fallon, a Distinguished McKnight Professor (this is a big deal at the U of M) whose life work has centered on mosquitoes. In her thesis research Searles Mazzacano applied molecular biological methods to develop a suicide selection system that would add to our arsenal of mosquito control tools. With doctorate in hand Searles Mazzacano next migrated from the state where the Mississippi River begins to the state where it ends: she took a post-doc at Tulane University in Louisiana. Two years later she flew back north, landing this time in East Lansing, Michigan, where she spent two years as a visiting research associate at Michigan State University. From there she embarked

on a teaching career, which involved more migrations.

After five years Searles Mazzacano decided to pull the plug on academia. She began working full-time for the Missouri Department of Conservation, focusing on aquatic invertebrates. This experience made her a perfect fit with the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation, in Portland, Oregon. She applied; they offered her a job. She stayed with the

Xerces Society for eight years, finishing up with them in October 2015 at which time she struck off on her own. She is now principal scientist/owner of CASM Environmental LLC. She has fallen under Oregon's spell, so now, besides working, she kayaks, camps, hikes, cycles, walks long distances (including three Portland marathons), gardens (for insects and for food), takes nature and insect photographs, and of course, always and everywhere, looks for bugs. The dividing line between her work and play is not crisp. For instance, her abilities as an insect photographer will be on display in her talk.

Searles Mazzacano's interest in dragonflies goes back several years—she has been “eating and breathing insects” for decades—but her work with these fascinating creatures began in earnest four years ago at the Xerces Society, which had entered into the collaborative project mentioned above: the Migratory Dragonfly Partnership. She does not limit herself to a single arena, however. Searles Mazzacano's interest



in freshwater mussels, begun in Missouri, was further honed while at the Xerces Society, and a look at Searles Mazzacano's recent activity reveals almost as many talks and articles on freshwater mussels as on dragonflies and other insects. She has been Chair of the Pacific Northwest Native Freshwater Mussel Workgroup since 2014, having replaced Shelly Miller—who you will recall spoke to us in February 2015.

We know about the journey Monarch butterflies make from eastern North America to the forests of the Sierra Madre in Mexico and back. But to almost all of us the fact that Monarchs are by no means the

only migratory insects will come as a surprise. An even bigger surprise is learning that some of these migrations cover much longer distances than the Monarchs' adventure. The dragonfly with the common name "wandering glider" (*Pantala flavescens*) crosses the Indian Ocean on a migratory journey over twice the distance covered by Monarchs. How do we know that, you ask? Come to Celeste Searles Mazzacano's talk at 7:30pm on Friday, 18 November, and find out. We're back to our usual haunts this month: room 100 Willamette Hall on the U of O campus. Leave room for cookies.

John Carter

October Diary

by Reida Kimmel

October began with a perfect fall day. We picked the apple trees by the pond in a blustery wind that felt really chilly. The big cherry tree, useless to us but beloved by birds, was rusty copper, already losing its leaves. Apples, russet and gold, fell into our buckets or rolled to the pond's edge—yards of dried mud and torn water lilies, grazed by sheep and deer. The pond had never filled last winter, and was now as low as we have ever seen it. There was a clean, crisp smell to the air. Puffy clouds raced across the deep blue sky. Showers came in the afternoon, and that night, our first real soaking rain. The next day was mild, hazily sunny. Our family and the neighbors pressed about 30 gallons of apple juice. Over the course of the next two weeks I spent many hours—more than I wished sometimes—picking, canning, pickling, and freezing the extraordinary bounty from this year's garden. I came to regard yet another bucket of pears arriving from the yard with genuine horror. Finally, all the tomatoes were canned or sauced. The last apples, carrots, and cabbages were packed in coolers. I ran out of cucumbers before I was done with all the pickling recipes I wanted to try. The pears we could not eat were canned, or dried to await their happy soak in rum when I make the Christmas fruit cakes. Because the air was so mild and moist, we did not suffer powdery mildew. The chard and kale, beautifully bright and shiny in the fall sunshine, produced and produced. Luckily our nine chickens help with greens as well as spoiled apples.

Most of the big rains came at night. I would wake up hearing the rain start and listen for a while to the satisfying sound of rain coming down hard on the roof or filtering through the fir trees and pattering onto the skylight. The drought-dry ground soaked it up, days and days of rain. There was no mud. The pond did not fill. I felt torn between my passion to preserve the amazing harvest and my longing to be

out in the garden, weeding and digging, but my strongest urge was just to be outside, reveling in the beauty. I walked in the fields and rejoiced at the sight of the golden maples. Our solitary very tall poplar turned from green, to particolored, to brightest almost transparent yellow. The slightest breeze made every leaf dance. But something was missing. In the early morning sunshine I watched a flock of a dozen robins picking orange berries from a glossy-leaved Madrona tree. Later in the day those robins stripped berries from the Rowan tree east of my kitchen window. That was a sight to behold. The tree's delicate branches, bearing yellow leaves and heavy clusters of crimson berries, were not up to the robins' weight. As they fed, it looked like the tree was suffering in a strong gale, branches bending, ruffling, then twisting, snapping back as a robin flew to another branch, only to create another mock storm with its heavy landing. Wonderful. But something was missing. The pasture grass grew very green. Mourning Doves and a late migrating flock of young Goldfinches fed on sunflowers seeds outside the window. Juncos returned to our yard, cleaning up grass, hay, and Polygonum seeds. A pair of Red-tailed Hawks soared high above the field, turning, coming close to each other, turning again, separating only to circle close again. All the while calling. Below them, halfway to the earth, awkward, a third hawk—I presumed the youngster of the year—flapped around, calling too, not yet an aerial acrobat, but trying. Still something was missing.

It was a sound. Despite the squirrels complaining fiercely in the trees, the guttural conversations of the local ravens, or the noisy Kingfisher at the pond, there was a silence, an emptiness. I was longing for our creek to flow and fill our yard and garden with the sound of moving water. It rained and rained. And still the creek was absolutely dry. During the last twenty-five years, the hills behind us suffered

massive clearcutting, and the rainwater poured off the hills into the little stream that ran through our land before joining Fox Hollow Creek at the road. Once a shallow babbling brook, our creek eroded down to bedrock. The water ran brown. The creek banks dropped great slabs of mud into the stream during heavy rains. It was no longer safe for children to play along its banks. The hillsides above the creek felt squishy and unstable in the winter. The shallow dam that Chuck made slowed the water a bit, and silt accumulated, but the damage was done. Now the clear-cut land behind us has healed. The soil is covered with grasses, shrubs and trees. It can absorb rainwater very well. Nearly eight inches of rain had to fall before there were little puddles in the creek. The next day, after 0.9 more inches of rain, we heard the gentle song of water trickling under the stones of our little waterfall. On the third day, after an additional 1.1 inches of rain, the creek was roaring. We'll have that wonderful sound with us until late June or July. It is the spirit of our home.

Every steep hill in the Coast Range has one or more ephemeral creeks like ours. Perhaps these ran all year when great forests covered the land. The tiny creeks

were nurseries for cutthroat trout, coho salmon, and small non-commercial native species including frogs and salamanders, important in the food web. When eggs laid in the wet season hatched, the fry remained in the nutrient-rich and safe, shallow waters until they were ready to move downstream. We have disregarded this fact of nature for more than a century. The little creeks are destroyed by logging, roads, plowing and draining. Culverts prevent adult fish from entering potential spawning areas. We wonder, where have the fish gone? Why are there so few wild-hatched fish when fish can still swim in the rivers? Present law defines a fish-bearing stream as one with fish all year. The others can be disregarded. There are new clear-cut scars on very steep slopes southwest of us, tearing out the banks of a stream I remember as a shallow easy crossing, a place where hedgehog mushrooms abounded, but now an impassable ravine. Our tiny creek is safe for our lifetimes, but what about all the others? Most people do not even know what they are doing when they ruin a little rivulet that does not even have water in it for half the year. Attitudes and the law must change. All water, however insignificant its source, is precious.

Spaciousness by Tom A. Titus

Gray goose feather light floated in through east-facing windows, tickling me awake. I rose and walked onto the cabin deck to watch. Again. The coyotes had been close—their skunky smell still hung in the morning air. Above the vast alkali flat, a waning crescent moon rose into the star-prickled sky. Soon, a pink baby's bottom glow bulged upward, spreading across the low eastern ridgeline in a warm exhalation that snuffed out stars and faded that last sickle of moon. Then the sun crowned the hills like an amber birthstone and spilled its brightness across the basin floor, two hundred square miles of bleached and cracked skin stretching toward the light. Another day gasped and breathed, wet and blinking, wondering what was to be.

Many sunrises greeted me over my four weeks as an artist-in-residence at the Playa Institute, perched on the edge of Summer Lake Basin. Most of my life I've been curled in the womb of the Willamette Valley foothills, bathed in fog and rain and fifty shades of green, a place that has left me forever wet and mossy behind the ears. Yet I'm comfortable in the dry reaches of sagebrush and juniper. I've been visiting Summer Lake Basin for nearly four decades, first as a hunter, then as a birder, and finally as a teacher. Last summer marked two decades of herpetology class field trips to Paisley Caves on the

southeast side of the basin, site of 15,000 years of human occupation.

My years in the great basin are carved into my soul. But in all that time I'm not sure I really internalized the space until I was granted those four weeks with nothing more pressing than to watch sunrises with newborn eyes, pen in hand. An appreciation for *spaciousness* began to take hold. I've always loved the word but rarely taken time to understand it. Spaciousness. Whispered on a long exhalation, it is the sound of hissing rain and soft drops falling on autumn leaves. Spaciousness has resonance, a potential mantram and basis for meditation.

Space opened up everywhere. Spectacular sunrises were accompanied by strong coffee and noodling in my journal, staring across a narrow band of still water that might be cracked open by a swimming Mallard or muskrat. Beyond the pond, the bright alkali reached for six miles, ending in a russet ridge penciled with dark rimrock. Earth gave way to a sky larger than my heart could hold. One morning a soft rush of air announced a Great Horned Owl flapping in to roost in the willow above my deck. She looked down. The depth of her eyes seemed limitless.

Summer strolled into fall, opening more space. The sun began to exhaust itself, drooping lower in the sky. Those blessed photons had to negotiate their way through more of the atmosphere, where they

encountered all manner of obstructions: dust, pollen, pollution, perhaps some wayward coyote hair riding a monstrous updraft into the stratosphere. Shadows lengthened and became more pronounced.

Microshadows formed by leaves and branches moved in small breezes sifting in from the south, creating a kaleidoscopic scattering of contrast. Each morning the sun arrived a little later and moved a little further south. The cottonwoods and aspen began to miss him, their green chlorophylls fading into yellow carotenoids. We would all be lonely together.

Emotions also cracked open. There was the bliss of unfettered, uninterrupted creative time and the company of fellow residents with whom I laughed and talked and drank wine and watched movies. Joy became grief when a morning text arrived that my wife's mother had died, and an email announced that Amy Frohnmayer's beautiful but abbreviated life was over. The playa was emotional, too. In the small space of an hour the flat alkali could move from serene to bright, bright to stormy, stormy to dark. The storm would pass, and sunlight bent through broken clouds, lighting up five miles of blowing dust, a wild palomino mare's tail chased by cloud shadow. In evening, Winter Ridge cast a sharp shadow along the length of the playa that became a dark stain crawling eastward over the whitewash. The margin between shadow and sunlit alkali is called The Line.

Adventurous people chase it on foot across the flat. I understood their compulsion. But on this trip I was content to spend the dying day sitting, awash in pastels that bled across the open sky.

Auditory space was palpable, punctuated by an occasional truck rushing down Highway 31 or quiet

conversation among my fellow residents drifting in like the smell of baking bread. For birds the breeding season had passed, and their calls became well-spaced furniture in an uncluttered room. A particularly garrulous Common Raven often rowed across the playa with rapid-fire croaking. American Coots grunted and Song Sparrows cheeped. Fall flocks of Brewer's Blackbirds clicked as they flew over the yard. Male Redwing Blackbirds seemed duped by a photoperiod that resembled spring. Their territorial *gurglechurr* rose from cattails to my left, as though there was something meaningful left to defend. There's always someone who doesn't get it.

What was a Willamette Valley kid to do with all that space? Why I stole it, of course. There was plenty to go around. Besides, in the end I had to transduce all that external space into something internal and portable. Otherwise, my experience would have been beautiful and valuable in the moment but completely transient.

I remembered my rural childhood. When I was too young to drive I biked everywhere. Occasionally I found my way to a service station, where I could take advantage of the compressed air hose. This was marvelously more efficient than a hand pump, but I wasn't used to the speedy delivery of air, and my tires always ended up overinflated. So I would press my fingernail into the top of the valve stem, depressing the little doodad inside to let off excess pressure. At Playa I expanded, then pressed inward. Excess pressure hissed into the vastness. Decompression. Room to wiggle. Spaciousness. My life felt limitless and enough.

Announcements and Thank Yous

1. A good place to park for our meetings is the Physical Plant lot: turn north (left) from Franklin onto Onyx, go about a block and you will be in the lot. After 6pm it's open to the public.
2. The November meeting will be in **100 Willamette Hall**, on the UO campus.
3. **Thank you** to those who worked the ENHS booth at the Mt. Pisgah Mushroom Festival. Andrew Sermak's live salamanders were a major attraction once again.
4. **Thank you** to the beach cleaners. On Saturday, 5 November, in spite of rain, gusty wind and incredible surf, nine stalwart volunteers had a wonderful time enjoying the storm and cleaning debris off Stonefield Beach, part of the mile of beach we have adopted in memory of Eve McConnaughey, friend and former ENHS president, who watched over this mile for many years. Join us for our next trip. You will enjoy it, rain or shine!

Events of Interest in the Community

The Nature of Gratitude

Sunday, 13 November, 4pm. Nature-inspired authors Tom Titus and Eric Alan will host the 2nd Annual celebration “The Nature of Gratitude” at Tsunami Books in Eugene. They’ll offer perspectives on gratitude using their own writings and photography. Special guests will include emcee Joe Moll, executive director of McKenzie River Trust; performance poet Jorah LaFleur; author Evelyn Hess; and musicians Halie Loren and Ben Bochner. Admission is free. The authors will pass the hat for Occupy Medical and Tsunami Books.

Lane County Audubon Society

Saturday, 19 November, 8am-noon. Third Saturday Bird Walk. Site and leader will be determined by interesting bird sightings posted to OBOL and other pertinent information available before the day of the walk. Details will be posted on the LCAS Facebook page (facebook.com/pages/Lane-County-Audubon-Society/330177413824?ref=hl) and on the LCAS website (laneaudubon.org). All ages and skill levels are welcome. We have a couple of pairs of binoculars to loan if needed. To carpool, meet at 8am at the SEHS parking lot (corner of 19th and Patterson). Remember that it’s not a good idea to leave valuables or your vehicle registration in your car if you leave it at the lot. A \$3 donation is appreciated to help support Lane County Audubon’s activities. For more information, contact Jim Maloney at 541-968-9249 or jimgmal@comcast.net.

Tuesday, 22 November, 7:30pm. Exploring the Elliott State Forest Conundrum. The Elliott State Forest is an irreplaceable Oregon treasure. This approximately 93,000-acre coastal rainforest is nestled between Coos Bay and Reedsport in Oregon’s coastal range. The Elliott is perhaps most well known for the habitat it provides the federally threatened Marbled Murrelet and the Northern Spotted Owl. The murrelet is a small sea bird that spends most of its time at sea feeding on fish, but nests inland in older forest. Its plight has captured the hearts of conservationists. At this point the Elliott is also a drain on the Common School Fund, which it was created in 1930 to help sustain. Herein lies the problem. Policies and regulations to protect threatened species have reduced the timber harvests that previously provided income for Oregon schools. In 2013 the loss from the Elliott was \$3.8 million. To cut these losses, the Department of State Lands has decided to sell the Elliott, putting at risk one of the few remaining tracts of intact Oregon forestland. Due to reduced logging revenue on the forest and a complicated political arena, the sale of the Elliott could lead to privatization and liquidation of this premier murrelet, owl, and salmon habitat. It could also make the area inaccessible to birders, hikers, and others who enjoy spending time amidst its beauty and diversity. **Robin Meacher**, Wildlands Campaign Director at Cascadia Wildlands, will present a visual tour of the Elliott and lead a conversation centering around the role the Marbled Murrelet has played in the complex history of the Elliott and the state’s decision to dispose of this valuable public forest. The meeting is back at the usual venue: 1645 High St.

Mt. Pisgah Arboretum

Sunday, 13 November, 12pm-5pm AND Sunday, 20 November 12pm-2pm. Mushroom Photography Workshop. Learn how to capture our spectacular fall mushrooms with your camera. Join nature photographer Dave Stone for this two-part workshop. You will spend one session learning the special techniques of mushroom photography and time in the field practicing those techniques, plus a follow-up session to review your results. Attendees will carpool to the Fall Creek area for the field session. \$30 members, \$35 non-members. Pre-registration is required. To register call 541-747-3817 or visit <http://www.mountpisgaharboretum.com/learn/workshop-registration/>

Sunday, 27 November, 8:30-11am. Fall Bird Walk. Join Julia Siporin and Joni Dawning for another monthly bird walk intended for people with all levels of birding experience. Please bring binoculars. Option to continue the walk until noon for those who are interested. Rain or shine. Meet at the Arboretum Visitor Center. \$5, members free.

Friends of Buford Park and Mt. Pisgah

Monday Morning Regulars. 9am-noon. Contact volunteer@bufordpark.org for more information.

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9am-noon. Nursery Work. Meet and work at the Native Plant Nursery at Buford Park. Enter Buford Park from Seavey Loop Road. Turn LEFT after crossing the bridge and drive 1/4 mile to the nursery.

WREN (Willamette Resources and Educational Network)

For current WREN events go to <http://wewwild.blogspot.com/>

The University of Oregon's Museum of Natural and Cultural History
Exhibit Hours: Tuesday through Sunday, 11am-5pm

Cascade Mycological Society

For current happenings go to <http://cascademycology.org/category/events/>

Native Plant Society of Oregon, Emerald Chapter

Thursday, 17 November, 7pm. Rimrock, Playas, Petroglyphs and Pronghorns—a Botanical Survey of the Playa Lakes of Hart Mountain and Sheldon Wildlife Refuges. Dr. Dennis Albert of OSU will focus on botanical surveys of playa lakes conducted during the spring and summer of 2012 and 2016. The playa lakes at these two refuges represent two different types. Location: The Stellaria Building, 150 Shelton-McMurphey Blvd. suite 104, in Eugene just south of Skinner Butte. Head east on West 3rd Avenue until it turns into Shelton-McMurphey Boulevard. Stellaria is inside Hummingbird Wholesale.

North American Butterfly Association, Eugene-Springfield Chapter

Go to <http://www.naba.org/chapters/nabaes/> to learn of NABA's next presentation.

Nearby Nature

Sunday, 19 November, and Saturday, 3 December, 9am-noon. Restoration Celebration. Join Nearby Nature volunteers in the stewardship of high value habitat areas in Alton Baker Park's Whilamut Natural Area. We work to maintain and improve trail systems, restore areas that have been damaged by summer use, remove invasive species, and plant native species to increase biological diversity. The meeting location for these work parties will be at the Park Host House of Alton Baker Park, located at 622 Day Island Road. Please bring a water bottle and wear clothing appropriate for the weather and for outdoor work in thorny plants. Nearby Nature will provide all tools, gloves, and snacks for this event. This work is funded by a grant awarded from REI. Please RSVP for this event at <http://www.nearbynature.org/work-party-pre-registration> Questions? Email parkhost@nearbynature.org

Monday, 21 November, 10-11:30am. Green Start Play Day. Enjoy outside nature play in our Learnscape plus pre-school crafts and stories. Rain or shine! Indoor area available for wet weather. Kids 5 and under only, with an adult. Members free, non-members \$5 per family (adult and pre-schoolers). Meet by the Yurt in our Learnscape at Alton Baker Park. Pre-register: 541-687-9699 or online at <http://www.nearbynature.org/pre-registration>

ENHS welcomes new members! To join, fill out the form below. Membership payments allow us to give modest honoraria to our speakers, as well as to pay for the publication and mailing of *Nature Trails*. Our web address: <http://biology.uoregon.edu/enhs>

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<p>Annual dues for renewing members are payable in September. Memberships run from September to September. Generosity is encouraged and appreciated.</p>



Variegated Meadowhawk (*Sympetrum corruptum*)
Photos by C. Searles Mazzacano



Photo by C. Searles Mazzacano

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Schedule of Speakers and Topics for 2016-2017

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| 18 Nov. | – C. Searles Mazzacano | – More than Monarchs: Migration in Dragonflies & Other Insects |
| 9 Dec. | – Claudio Mello | – Of Bird Genes and Bird Brains:
What Science Can Teach Us About Avian Singing and Seasonality |
| 20 Jan. 2017 | – Kelly Sutherland | – Sea Jellies |
| 17 Feb. | – Terry Hunt | – Easter Island Archaeology |
| 17 Mar. | – William Cresko | – Sea Horses and Sea Dragons |
| 21 Apr. | – Svetlana Maslakova | – Pythons of the Sea: Natural History of the Nemertean Worm |
| 19 May | – Ed Alverson | – Southern Willamette Valley Natural Areas Through the Seasons |