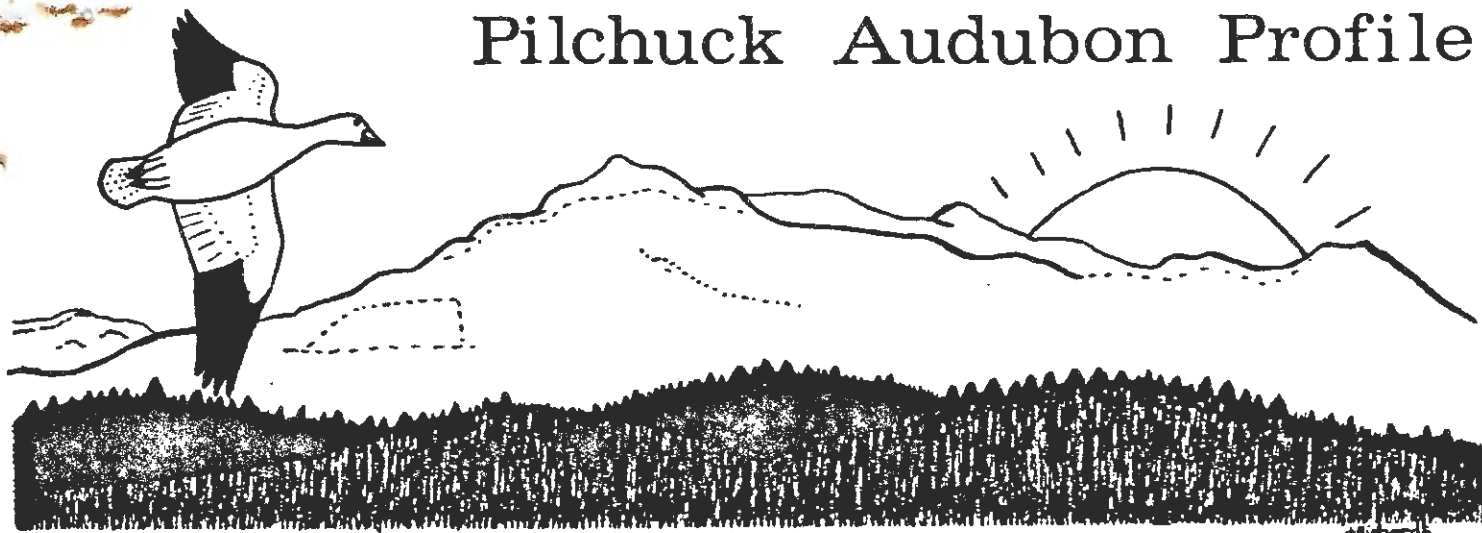


# Pilchuck Audubon Profile



FEBRUARY 1983

VOLUME XI NUMBER 6

## PILCHUCK AUDUBON ACTIVITIES

**FEBRUARY 5th, SATURDAY**

**FIELD TRIP: N.W. TREK/OAK CREEK**

Special bus tour with Extension Naturalist John Munn. Sorry, bus tour is sold out.

**FEBRUARY 7th, MONDAY**

**BOARD MEETING**

7:30 p.m. Call Jan van Niel for place.

**FEBRUARY 12th, SATURDAY**

**FIELD TRIP: WILDLIFE SANCTUARY (P. DYE)**

Leader: Steve Loerch, 659-6901. Meet at 9:00 a.m. in front of the Coast-to-Coast store at Frontier Village on Highway 9. Don't miss this one! See page 2 for details.

**FEBRUARY 18th, FRIDAY**

**MONTHLY PROGRAM MEETING**

Everett Community College at 7:30 p.m. in room 605. Two diverse topics will be the subject of our February meeting. John Munn, Snohomish County Extension Service Naturalist, will present a short slide program about the California sea lions who visit Port Gardner at this time of year. He will also discuss the March 26th canoe trip to view the sea lions. Following John's talk, Bill Stearn will present a slide show about the spotted owl. Bill will explain studies which show the spotted owl's dependence on the rapidly vanishing old growth forest habitat.

**FEBRUARY 20th, SUNDAY**

**FIELD TRIP: GRACE CORNWALL**

Leader: Jan van Niel, 778-7568. Meet at 9:15 a.m. at the bank building at Smokey Point, exit 206 off I-5. This is our annual trip with Seattle Audubon to Grace Cornwall's home on Camano Island. We will drive to Grace's for coffee, followed by bird walks led by Carl Holmes. Don't miss this opportunity to visit with your friends, meet new ones, and learn about the birds of our area. Bring a sack lunch and wear warm clothes. Boots are recommended.

**FEBRUARY 27th, SUNDAY**

**FIELD TRIP: SKAGIT FLATS**

Leader: Eileen Loerch, 659-6901. Meet at 11:00 a.m. at the bank building at Smokey Point, exit 206 off I-5. This is an excellent trip for both novice and experienced birders. We can expect to see a wide variety of birds including snow geese, eagles, hawks, ducks, and shorebirds. With a little luck, we may also see owls and swans. If you have never experienced the sight and sound of the huge flocks of snow geese, don't miss this trip. Photographers should bring their cameras for the wildlife and scenery. Bring warm clothes, boots and a sack lunch. Conservation stickers (article on page 2) must be displayed on cars on this trip. If you do not have one for your car, you may carpool with someone who does.

**MARCH 13th, SUNDAY**

**FIELD TRIP: BREAZEALE/PADILLA BAY**

Leader: Sally van Niel, 778-7568. Meet at 10:00 a.m. at the bank building at Smokey Point, exit 206 off I-5. Breazeale - Padilla Bay Estuarine Sanctuary and Interpretive Center.

## FIELD TRIP: WILDLIFE SANCTUARY (P. DYE)

One of the highlights of the year is a visit to Paul Dye's Northwest Waterfowl Game Farm and the adjoining Corson Wildlife Recreation Area. Paul has had amazing success at breeding different species of native and non-native waterfowl, including many rare and exotic species.

A guided tour will be led by Paul through his game farm to explain about the birds and the remarkable breeding program. The birds will be in their colorful breeding plumage so don't forget your camera. Bring boots and warm clothes.

High top or rubber boots are highly recommended for those wishing to take a walk through the adjoining recreation area after seeing the game farm.

**SPECIAL ADDED ATTRACTION:** A work party will be held following the field trip. We will clear four areas in preparation for planting of spruce trees and other plants. These plots will provide food and cover for grouse and songbirds. If you wish to help, bring tools for clearing such as pruning shears, machetes, pickaxes, shovels, chain saw, etc. Gloves and high-top boots are recommended. Bring a sack lunch.

## WILDLIFE CARE CENTER OF EVERETT

By Jan Richards

Doing alot with very little is what makes the Wildlife Care Center of Everett possible. Doug Yearout and Kaye Bailey started the center in 1980 which they operate out of their homes in south Everett and run solely on donations.

Doug, a veterinarian, says that caring for wildlife and medicine for birds is a relatively new area of veterinary medicine. He feels that the key to success in caring for injured wildlife is not to be too aggressive and to work with nature. The less stress on a wild creature, the better it's chances of survival.

When you find an injured creature, if possible and if there is no threat, put it in a dark, warm box and call Doug or Kaye. They will come and get it if it can't be contained or you can't bring it to the center. **BE SURE TO CALL FIRST!** There is a record-a-phone, 353-8314. Special care should be used when handling raptors. Watch out for beaks and talons that can cause great harm. Don't try to care for injured wildlife yourself. Ignorance of their real needs can be the difference between life and death.

Present at the center now are three red-tailed hawks, a saw-whet owl, a loon in winter plumage that was to be released, a racoon, a kestrel that was shot and has a broken wing, a screech owl also with a broken wing that was hit by a car, a barred owl with a badly broken wing, a snow goose soon to be released, assorted ducks, and a deformed screech owl that will never be released which Doug and Kaye use for educational purposes. Whenever eagles or peregrine falcons are brought in the United States Fish and Wildlife Service is notified and they take control of the injured bird. In 1982, between 1500 and 2000 birds and animals were cared for at the center.

The Wildlife Care Center is a "make do" operation with donations from the butcher and recycling veterinary supplies just a couple of the means for survival for the center. Any donations are gratefully accepted and are tax deductible. Non-profit status approval is in the works. Publicity is improving with the printing of business cards and letters sent to all local vets, pet shops, and the Humane Society. There are hopes for an adopt-a-bird program to help cover the cost to rehabilitate needy birds, a newsletter, and t-shirts to promote the center.

Numbers to call are Doug Yearout, 353-8314 or Kaye Bailey, 337-6900.

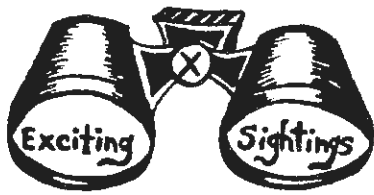
## CONSERVATION DECALS

Conservation licenses for 1983 are now on sale at all hunting and fishing license dealerships in the state. The decals must be displayed on vehicles using Game Department land or water-access sites posted as "Conservation License Areas".

Enforcement of the regulation will probably be more thorough this year, because the decals are being handed out free with all 1983 fishing, hunting and trapping licenses. Outdoor recreationists without one of those licenses, who plan to use posted department facilities, must purchase the decal for \$5. The goal of the program is to share costs of maintaining the land and access sites between all user groups.

Anyone needing another decal for a second vehicle, or wishing to know which facilities in their area are posted should call the Seattle Game Department office at 464-7764.

LEGISLATIVE HOTLINE: 1-800-562-6000  
HOURS: 8:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. Weekdays  
9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Saturday



### Send your sightings to:

Terri Spencer/Steve Howard  
2431 SR 530  
Arlington, WA. 98223

### Or report your sightings to:

Terri Spencer/Steve Howard 652-6481  
Fred Bird (Arlington Times) 435-5757  
Jan Richards 334-2781  
Seattle Audubon Hotline 1-624-2854

Dec. 29 Two **TUFTED DUCKS** were seen on Green Lake. (Audubon Hotline)

Late Dec. A **GOLDEN EAGLE** was reported near Ebey Island. (Lorena Havens, Carl Franz)

Early Jan. A **SNOWY OWL** perched in a tree near Spencer Island. A **BUFFLEHEAD** and a **HOODED MERGANSER** were floating in Steamboat Slough. (Lorena Havens, Carl Franz)

Jan. 1 A **PILEATED WOODPECKER** was reported west of Lake Rosiger. (Paula Wellnitz)

Jan. 1 A **LONG-EARED OWL** was spotted near the south meadow in Discovery Park. (Audubon Hotline)

Jan. 2 A **SWAMP SPARROW** was near the east end of Lake Sammamish. This specie is usually only seen east of the Rockies. (Audubon Hotline)

Jan. 3 An immature **BALD EAGLE** floated in the winds near the El Toro in north Marysville. (Terri Spencer)

Jan. 6 An adult **BALD EAGLE** was perched in the historical cedar snag near Snohomish. (Steven Howard)

Jan. 8 Seven tree sparrows flitted through the bushes along the loop trail at Skagit WRA Headquarters. (Audubon Hotline)

Jan. 8 A **MOURNING DOVE** stopped by a yard at Island Crossing. (Allen Spencer)

Jan. 11 A **SNOWY OWL** was nearly hit on the Marysville-Arlington Highway. (Steve Loerch)

Jan. 11 Two **BALD EAGLES** were seen at a nest in Everett. (John Hanning)

Jan. 11 A **PEREGRINE FALCON** was spotted perched in a tree near Everett. (Steven Howard)

Jan. 11 Several **EUROPEAN WIDGEONS** were seen on the Samish Flats. On the same trip a **HOUSE WREN** was seen at the Skagit WRA Headquarters. (Marge Wiltfong, Eileen Loerch, Marianne McKnight)

Jan. 13 A **SHARP-SHINNED HAWK** perched in a tree near a feeder looking for an easy meal at a residence near Silver Lake. (Marianne McKnight)

Jan. 13 **GREAT HORNED OWLS** were heard at the home of Bob and Freda Loerch in Marysville.

When did you notice the first barn swallow arrive or depart from your favorite area in Snohomish County? Have you seen an intriguing or unusual bird?

We need to develop records of bird species in our county. The more you report---the more concise and important our records become.

We need your sightings with date, location, etc. Call one of the phone numbers or write to the address provided or watch for the book at our monthly meetings. Thank you for your help.

### WILD BIRD FEED SPECIAL

Just in time for the winter feeding season, PAS now has available Black Russian Sunflower seeds for sale. These sunflower seeds have a softer shell than the white-striped sunflower and therefore easier for small birds to open. They are about 70% kernal as compared to 57% for the white-striped sunflower and are higher in fat content for more energy. Perfect for your winter visitors.

Cost will be \$5.00 (tax included) for ten (10) pounds. Minimum order is ten pounds.

To obtain seed call the nearest depot listed below to arrange for pickup. Delivery to monthly program meetings can also be arranged.

Marysville Eileen/Steve Loerch 659-6901

Everett Gerald McKnight 337-4777

Snohomish Joyce Kelley 568-5974

Lynnwood Sally/Jan van Niel 778-7568

**DON'T FORGET** the deadline for artwork for PAS membership promotions is February 15th. Call Marge Wiltfong, 353-1847 for further details.

Washington Environmental Council and Washington Audubon Chapters sponsored a legislative workshop in Olympia January 15th. The turnout was excellent, with citizens from many parts of western Washington attending. The attendees were briefed on issues expected to be addressed in the upcoming legislative session. The following is a summary of those issues.

#### RADIOACTIVE WASTE

Several bills have been introduced and assigned bill numbers. Some hearings have already taken place.

SB 3025 establishes a task force on high level waste management responsible to the legislature. The task force will oversee the federal high level waste characterization study to begin soon at the Hanford reservation. It is likely Hanford will become one of two permanent storage sites for high level waste. The Department of Energy has been directed by Congress to locate these sites.

SB 3026. Prohibition of hazardous or radioactive waste transport in case of potential catastrophic accident.

SB 3027 directs Department of Social & Health Services and Energy Office to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement on a low-level site at Hanford. Although the site has been in existence for many years, an EIS has never been prepared.

SB 3029 prohibits high level waste sites in Washington without legislative approval based on public hearings.

SB 3031 requires legislative reporting oversight of the task force established in SB 3025.

SB 3032 to limit the amount of low level waste accepted by Washington to one-third of what is generated in the U.S.

#### HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES

STATE SUPERFUND: The federal "Superfund" was established to help clean up hazardous waste dumps. Ten sites in Washington have been established as eligible for superfunds, including one of the 10 worst in the nation, Tacoma's Commencement Bay. However, the fund only provides 90% of the cost of clean up of private sites and 50% of the cost of

public sites. The state must provide matching funds. The Department of Ecology is working on a proposal to generate income for the matching funds. One possible source of income is a tax on the producers of toxic waste.

RECYCLING TOXIC WASTES: The Washington Center for Recycling has proposed amendments to the Hazardous Waste Act. These amendments will encourage recycling and reduction of hazardous waste and prohibit indefinite storage of waste at processing facilities. It would require a study for the legislature to determine which wastes in Washington could be recycled and which should be banned from landfills. There will also be legislation introduced to encourage recycling of automotive waste oil. It would primarily be a program to educate citizens to the value of oil recycling.

#### STATE ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY COMMISSION: Over the last two years the Environmental Policy Commission has been studying ways to improve the administration of SEPA. The environmental community favors changes, if necessary, in the guidelines for implementing SEPA, but not the act itself. The act is more difficult to amend or change. If the act was changed, to the detriment of the environment, the effect could be long lasting and difficult to correct. However, the commission did propose three changes to SEPA that are likely to come before the legislature.

FOREST PRACTICES: Forest practices are presently exempt from SEPA, however, a sunset clause eliminates this exemption in July 1983. The proposed change would make the exemption permanent. Timber harvesting is one of the most environmentally damaging activities in the state. No other legislation adequately protects the environment from timber harvesting.

ATTORNEY FEES: Attorney fees would be awarded to the prevailing party in SEPA suits. It is feared that this could be applied to environmental groups. If so, it could drastically effect the groups ability to sue. Environmental groups can rarely afford their own attorneys, let alone the attorney of a large industrial firm. One award of attorney fees against environmental groups could greatly reduce their opportunity to sue in the future. The effect of awards against industry, with their much greater financial resources, would be minimal.

**NOTICE OF APPEAL:** This change would require issuing of permits required by SEPA "in a timely manner." As it stands now, the appeal period is 30 days (90 days in exceptional circumstances). This change would allow local government to reduce the period to 15, 14, 7 days, or whatever they felt was "timely." It is difficult to meet the time limit as it stands now. This would put an unnecessary limitation on initiation of legitimate lawsuits.

#### **AQUATIC LANDS**

State aquatic lands are the state owned tidelands and the sea floor of navigable waters. They are managed for the benefit of the state by DNR. Last year DNR drastically increased the rent of many users of these lands. These users included owners of public and private docks and piers. Some were so unhappy with the rent increases that they requested the aquatic lands be sold to them as allowed by law. This session, legislation is expected to be introduced which would discourage sale of aquatic lands and set fair and reasonable lease rates for aquatic lands.

#### **FOREST TRANSITION LANDS**

These are lands that have been traditionally managed forest lands or agriculture lands that are in transition to other uses. This occurs when suburbia creeps to the edge of these lands. The Department of Natural Resources is expected to introduce legislation to give them the necessary flexibility to sell or exchange these transition lands. However, there is some concern with this bill.

It is feared the forest land base could be reduced if transition lands are sold, putting increased harvest pressure on the remaining forest land. DNR should be encouraged to use flexible management methods and retain transition lands where possible. DNR should provide complete inventory with maps of the 30,000 acres designated transition lands. This has not been done and there is some concern about which lands are considered urban transition. DNR should also be required to provide public notice and hearing on the 16,300 acres of land already designated urban transition. The proposed bill only requires notice and hearing for transition lands designated in the future.

#### **CLEAN AIR ACT**

In addition to the federal Clean Air Act, the state has its own Clean Air Act. Most of the proposed changes transfer setting and

control of air quality standards from local agencies to state or federal agencies. The result of these changes would most likely be reduced air quality.

#### **McNIEL ISLAND**

McNiel Island was formerly the site of a federal prison but is now being leased as a state prison. Because of tight restrictions on access to or near the island, the island has become a refuge for wildlife. A large blue heron rookery, two bald eagles, over 300 deer, and many other animals make the island and its 12 miles of shoreline their home. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has designated the island the fifth most important area of fish and wildlife habitat in the state.

Governor Spellman and several environmental groups have requested five million dollars from the state to purchase the island as the permanent site of a state prison. You are encouraged to support this portion of the state budget. Please write your legislator and request that they also support these funds.

#### **OIL & GAS LEGISLATION**

**SEVERANCE TAX:** One bill has already been introduced. The bill would place a severance tax on the extraction of nearly all minerals including coal, sand & gravel, and oil & gas. The bill has proved unpopular with established sand & gravel operators.

Another bill, drafted largely by Shell Oil could create a severance tax on gas & oil only. There are concerns that this bill does not adequately protect the resource or the environment and that the rate of the tax (6%) would be among the lowest in the country.

**PROPERTY RIGHTS:** A bill is expected to be introduced by the Washington Independent Petroleum Royalty Owners whose prime intent is protection of individual's property rights. As drafted, it does not adequately protect the resource or the environment.

#### **SHORELINE MANAGEMENT ACT**

Last session, the act was under heavy fire. An attempt was made to get special exemption and changes in the act to allow Chicago Bridge and Iron to develop a shoreline near Bellingham that was protected by the act. Some similar proposals presented by the Association of Washington Counties and supported by the state's ports, have resurfaced this year.

**AMENDMENTS TO SHORELINE MASTER PROGRAM:** Presently, the Department of Ecology

negotiates with counties on amendments to the program. Ultimately, 90% of the changes are approved. The counties proposal would have any amendments become law within 90 days unless the DOE challenges the decision. This could lead to an endless string of challenges. It would also shift from the counties the burden to prove the amendment not harmful, to DOE, to prove the amendment harmful.

**HEARING RECORDS:** Presently, in appeal cases, testimony presented at local hearings and the Shoreline Management Board hearings is considered in the decision process. The counties have proposed that only issues and testimony presented at local hearings be considered. This would eliminate procedural safeguards provided by the Shoreline Hearing Board and could result in failure to raise important statewide issues.

#### **"VANITY" PLATES**

A bill has been introduced into the legislature to increase the number of letters allowed on "vanity" license plates from 6 to 7. This would greatly increase the possible arrangements of letters and has proved popular in other states. Funds from vanity plates go into a fund to support non-game wildlife. You are encouraged to support this bill.

#### **NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

The Nominating Committee for electing new PAS officers was named by President Jan van Niel at the January 17th board meeting. If you are interested or know anyone who is interested in being President, Vice-president, Secretary, or Treasurer; please notify a member of the committee. The president's term of office is for two years. All other officers serve for one year.

Pauline Hanson	774-9887
Sally van Niel	778-7568
Marge Wiltfong	353-1847

The slate of officers will be published in the April Profile with elections being held at the April monthly program meeting as set forth in our bylaws.

#### **RECENT WILDLIFE EXPERIENCES**

By Paul Dye

Late one night between Christmas and New Year's Day I was walking near my aviaries when I heard the shrieking of an animal in

distress. Since it came from the direction of a grassy field, I assumed it was a rabbit that had been caught by an owl. The noise continued for a some time and I became curious, grabbed my flashlight, and investigated.

What I saw was amazing! When I got close to the sound, my flashlight was reflected by not one, but two pairs of bright owl's eyes. It seems a barn owl must have been hunting for rodents and was attacked by a great horned owl. The barn owl had twisted around (upside down) in the larger owl's grasp and had the great horned owl by its throat. It was a stand off with the barn owl shrieking in protest and pain, but the great horned owl was unable to dispatch it's prey.

As I approached closer, the great horned owl tried to fly away with his catch, but could only drag it across the field. Eventually they broke apart and each flew it's separate way. What I wouldn't have given for my camera and flash at that moment!

January 8th, I was cleaning an outlet pipe on my new trout pond when I heard a faint "cheeping" sound growing more excited. A moment later a ruffed grouse hen burst out of some swamp land below the dam and lit in a small alder tree near my location. She was oblivious to my presence with her attention rivited on the spot from which she came. A few minutes later I spotted a domestic cat sneaking off through the brush. Soon the grouse regained her composure, discovered me and rocketed off into some evergreens.

#### **BOARD BRIEFS**

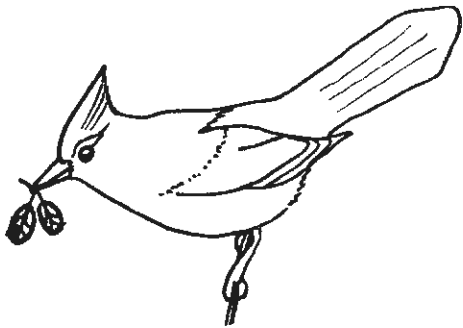
By Eileen Loerch, Reporter

At the January 17th board meeting the Treasurer reported a balance of \$424.25 in our operations account. Board decisions:

The board will send a letter to the Department of Ecology recommending nomination of Hazel Wolf as Environmentalist of the Year. Hazel is secretary of Seattle Audubon and has been active in the environmental movement for many years.

The board will request a \$300.00 advance on dues share from National Audubon. Pilchuck has not received any share of the dues since September because of a troublesome computer system.

Pilchuck Audubon will donate the set of Audubon magazines owned by the chapter Breazeale Interpretive Center on Padilla Bay.



# Kid's Corner



## A JAY'S TOUCH

We often think of how people affect the world, but it is interesting to take note of how other creatures affect it too.

The beautiful, blue-winged Steller's jay buries tree seeds and saves them for food during the winter. It likes the seeds of the Douglas fir very much. Many kinds of trees can be redistributed throughout the jay's forest home in this way.

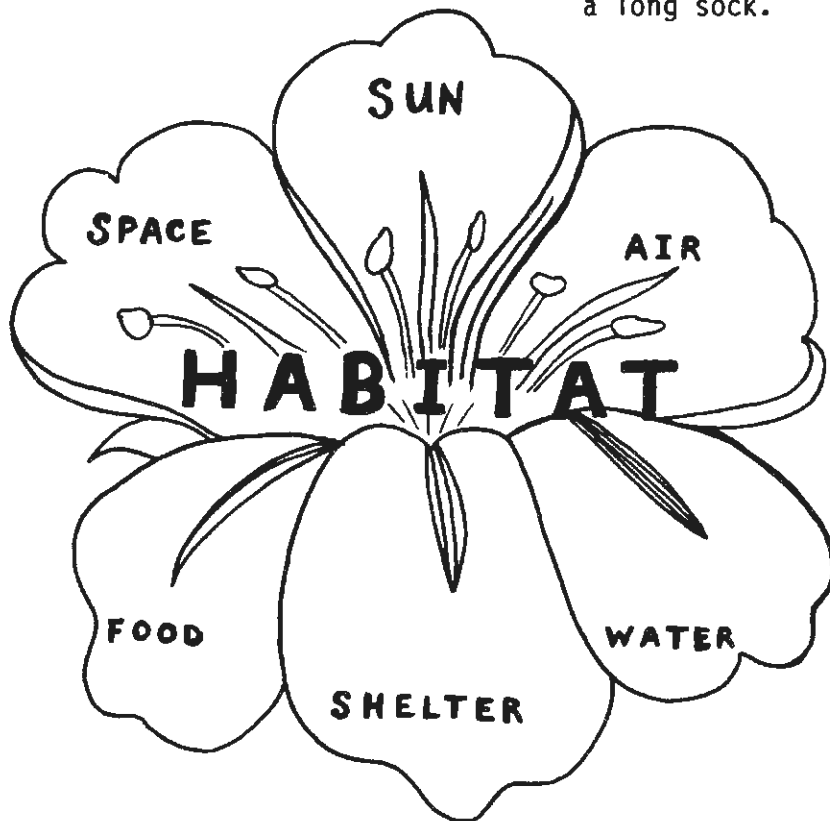
Have you noticed any other kinds of birds, animals, insects, or other creatures who help to rearrange their habitat and add their own personal touch to the landscape?

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*   E   G   R   E   B   E   *
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1. Lady \_ \_ \_ \_
2. \_ \_ \_ \_ study is called ornithology.
3. The \_ \_ \_ \_ is an extinct bird.
4. Bald \_ \_ \_ \_
5. Humming \_ \_ \_ \_
6. Ruddy \_ \_ \_ \_
7. We all breathe \_ \_ \_ \_.
8. Screech \_ \_ \_ \_
9. Tufted tit \_ \_ \_ \_ (pl.)
10. The dipper is also called \_ \_ \_ \_ \_.
11. Barn \_ \_ \_ \_
12. Eared \_ \_ \_ \_
13. The nest of the \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ resembles a long sock.

HABITAT,  
LIKE A  
FLOWER . . . .



MUST HAVE  
ALL THE  
PARTS  
TOGETHER.



### 1982 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

The 9th annual Christmas Bird Count for Pilchuck Audubon Society was a big success. The total number of individual birds sighted was 28,430 with 100 total species seen. New species that haven't been seen in previous counts include the WHISTLING SWAN, MOURNING DOVE, and HERMIT THRUSH. In the following list the new species are underlined while new total highs are emphasized with an \* beside them.

This year's 24 bird counters who traveled a total of 444 miles were treated to the usual overcast weather conditions of the Pacific Northwest with just a few sprinkles. The temperature was 37 - 45 degrees with light winds up to 10 mph. The stormy conditions from the previous days caused a fair amount of flooding and would account for the lower numbers of waterfowl.

Maybelle Nichols just couldn't stand the thought of there being no snow geese counted (previous high 17,000). She managed to find a flock of approximately 5,000 after dark (around 11 p.m.) where they were resting, safe from daytime hunters. That is determination!

Many thanks to Curt and Bonnie Howard for sharing their home for the potluck following the count. Their hospitality added the finishing touch to the spirit of community effort.

Hope you can participate in next year's count. It is a fun, educational and beneficial way to spend a day.

<u>SPECIES</u>	1982 TOTAL	YRS SEEN	PREV HIGH
Common loon	14 *	8	8
Red-throated loon	3	9	3
Western grebe	59	8	245
Horned grebe	27 *	9	15
Eared grebe	1	6	3
Pied-billed grebe	11	8	13

<u>SPECIES</u>	1982 TOTAL	YRS SEEN	PREV HIGH
Red-necked grebe	47 *	6	18
Double-crested cormorant	147 *	5	
Cormorant species	1		
Great blue heron	59 *	9	54
<u>Whistling swan</u>	48	1	
Trumpeter swan	12 *	2	4
Canada goose	460 *	7	400
Snow goose	5000	9	17000
Mallard	470	9	567
Pintail	2	7	4871
Black duck	38 *	4	7
Gadwall	3	4	49
American widgeon	625	9	6512
Shoveler	61 *	5	16
Green-winged teal	22 *	5	17
Canvasback	21	7	23
Ring-necked duck	6	8	35
Greater scaup	165 *	3	2
Lesser scaup	291 *	9	75
Common goldeneye	42	9	86
Barrow's goldeneye	3	9	40
Bufflehead	277	9	3
White-winged scoter	53 *	7	10
Surf scoter	116 *	9	58
Ruddy duck	25	8	123
Oldsquaw	2 *	2	1
Common merganser	30	8	193
Red-breasted merganser	49	6	52
Hooded merganser	12 *	8	11
Ducks species	21		
Sharp-shinned hawk	1	6	2
Northern harrier (marsh hawk)	9	9	13
Red-tailed hawk	31 *	9	30
Cooper's hawk	2	4	2
Bald eagle	7	8	7
Merlin	1	6	2
American kestrel	7	6	8
Ruffed grouse	2	6	4
California quail	1	3	2
Ring-necked pheasant	1	4	2
American coot	29	9	
Killdeer	40	7	95
Dunlin	2900 *	8	1706





SPOTLIGHT ON BIRDS  
NORTHERN HARRIER (MARSH HAWK)

Hawks come in all sizes and shapes. They use a variety of methods to catch their prey. The red-tailed hawk perches on trees and fence posts or soars high above the ground watching for movement in fields below. The osprey dive-bombs into the water for fish.

The northern harrier has a style all its own when searching for food. It glides and weaves low to the ground over marsh and grassland like a bomber avoiding radar detection. It uses acute hearing as well as sight to locate a mouse or small bird in the grass.

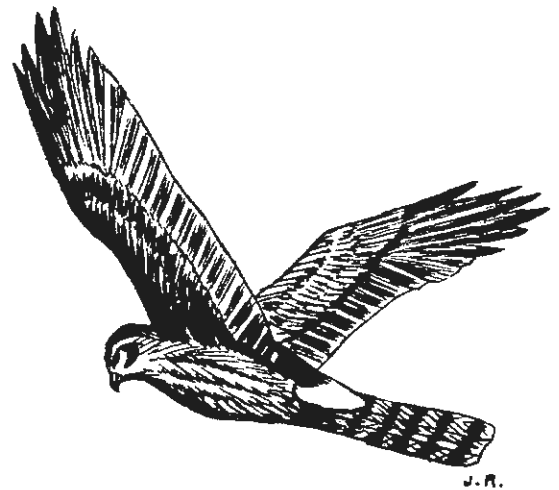
The northern harrier is easily identified not only by its flight pattern, but also by its slim body, long wings and tail, and a distinctive white rump patch. The male is grayish-white while the female is a streaked brown. Young birds resemble the female in color.

Both sexes have a ruff of short feathers around their eyes that make them look more like an owl than a hawk from the neck up.

Northern harriers are common in appropriate habitat throughout Washington. These birds are ground nesters. They build a nest of sticks or grass stalks and lay four to six eggs that may vary in color from white to a chalky blue or green. Some eggs may even have light brown spots. The chicks are downy white when hatched. They take on adult color by their second year.

These hawks may have a wing spread of up to four-and-one-half feet. When swooping over a marsh, they hold their wings in a shallow vee like a vulture rather than flat like most other hawks. Northern harriers often bank sharply to change directions while quartering an open field. At that time an observer may also spot the distinctive black tips on the underside of the wings.

In years past, the northern harrier has been criticized as a predator on waterfowl. While these hawks may take some young birds during the nesting season, the supply of mice in marshlands is abundant year around. The preferred food of most species is that which is most common and easiest to catch. The unfortunate mouse fills this role for many predators, including the hawk.



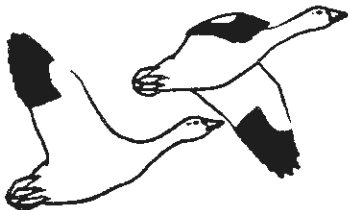
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FEBRUARY 20TH IS DEADLINE FOR MARCH NEWSLETTER

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**Pilchuck Audubon Society**

P.O. Box 1618, Everett, Washington 98206



Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. Postage Paid  
Marysville, WA 98270  
Permit #66

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Gerald & Marianne McKnight  
3526 - 113th Pl SE  
Everett, WA

98204

TIME VALUE MATERIAL