

Pilchuck Audubon Profile



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Next Save our Swifts meeting is April 8

The next Save our Swifts meeting is scheduled for April 8, at 7 p.m., at the Monroe School District Administration offices, 200 E. Fremont, in Monroe.

Last month's meeting drew 35 people and included presentations from US Fish and Wildlife and Larry Schwitters, a swift expert. Local residents and bird lovers discussed what can be done to save the old brick chimney at Frank Wagner Elementary School. The chimney is a roosting site for the second largest colony of Vaux's Swifts in North America during the birds' twice-yearly migration.

The district is working with Pilchuck, Seattle and East Lake Washington Audubon chapters, as well as US Fish and Wildlife, to find a solution to protect both the birds and the students at the school. Fish and Wildlife hopes to set up a "chimney cam" so more people can see – and learn about – these amazing little birds.

A video showing the efforts of Portland Audubon and the Portland School District to protect a roosting spot for the largest flock of Vaux's Swifts in North America is available at www.youtube.com. Search by "OPB" and "Vaux swifts."

April program meeting – Fri., April 11, 7 p.m.

Bear smart

Nan Laney, of the Grizzly Bear Outreach Project, will discuss bear recovery, biology and how to coexist with bears in Washington.

Note new location:

Lauterbach Room at the Snohomish Fire Station, 1525 Avenue D, Snohomish.

*See back page for driving directions.
For more information, call 425.252.0926*

May program meeting

From black gold to the Black Oystercatcher: challenges and opportunities in Alaska

Taldi Walter, Alaska Outreach Coordinator for the NAS, will highlight important natural areas and wildlife in Alaska, plus the challenges facing conservationists.

Date, time and location are still to be determined.

Please watch for information on PAS's website and in next month's Profile.

Visit new and old hot spots during Birdathon 2008

By *Hilkka Egtvedt, Birdathon Coordinator*

If you're an avid birder, there's probably one birding hot spot in the area you've been meaning to get to, but just haven't found the time. Why not find the time during May?

And, why not use the opportunity to raise money for Pilchuck Audubon Society, too? It's possible – if you sign up for this year's Birdathon.

Here's how it works: Ask friends, relatives, neighbors and co-workers to sponsor you – either for a flat amount or a pledge per species you locate. Be sure to tell them their donations are tax-deductible!



Then go birding 24 hours in May. Spread it out over as many days and locations as you wish. Along with that hot spot you've been thinking about, you can also bird in your yard, your neighborhood or at your favorite and reliable birding spots. You report your sightings to your sponsors and collect their pledges.

You'll feel really good about helping PAS in this fun way. As PAS President Mike Blackbird said: "Not everyone can be a marathoner, but everyone can be a Birdathoner. And, it doesn't hurt near as much."

Your non-birding friends will be awed by the "exotic" species

you find. According to PAS Education Chair, Kerry Neijstrom, her donors were particularly impressed with the Downy Woodpecker and Bald Eagle she saw.

But, if that's not enough incentive, then how about the chance to win a prize?

Prizes will be awarded for the most bird species spotted, most sponsors, most money raised and more.

If you've never participated in Birdathon before, you'll discover that this will be your most rewarding, meaningful birding outing of the year. Not to mention fun!

For more information or to get sponsor forms, contact Hilkka Egtvedt at 425-347-4944 or chegtvedt@comcast.net.

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President's message

By Mike Blackbird, President, Pilchuck Audubon Society



Growing up in the 1950s, an annual event was our family vacation, which usually meant a long car ride in the days of two-lane highways and before air conditioning. Car travel then involved two seasons: winter and road construction.

It wasn't unusual stop for a flagger three times a day to allow one lane of alternating traffic to get past miles of construction. Hot August days and road construction were not conducive to making good travelers of the Blackbird siblings.

My parents looked for an occasional diversion to mollify our impatience. We often stopped at roadside attractions, overlooks and historical sites to break the monotony.

It was on a family summer vacation that I visited my first zoo. It was a ragtag affair with a mountain lion, a bobcat and a coyote, all lying panting in their cages. What I remember most was a Bald Eagle in a chicken-wire cage so small he could hardly move. For many years, and long before I became a birder, the vision of that proud bird, our national symbol, embarrassed by his circumstance, colored my attitude about zoos.

Last month, my wife and I visited the San Diego Zoo with my son and his family. And, now, as a birder, I saw a zoo with new eyes.

The San Diego Zoo is home to more than 350 species of birds, some living throughout the zoo in large cages. But, the heart of the zoo is the group of four, huge, walk-through aviaries.

In the Hummingbird Aviary, along with hummingbirds, we found honeycreepers and tanagers. Near a waterfall, Seattle's little winter resident, an Anna's Hummingbird, perches next to a South American Sparkling Violetear. Both flap their wings and ruffle their feathers in the spray.

In the Scripps Aviary, one gets the feel for life in an African

forest. I spot an Open-billed African Stork. In my guide, I read these birds are rare in captivity and use their oddly shaped beaks to extract snails and other mollusks from their shells. Never a fan of starlings, I'm blown away by a Golden-breasted Starling, one of Africa's most colorful and beautiful birds.

The Wings of Australasia aviary houses rare, fantastic birds I would likely never see. Many are endangered, and some, like the Micronesian Kingfisher, are extinct in the wild. Here, also, are the results of the zoo's effort to breed birds of paradise.

The Owens Rain Forest Aviary is a biome replicating South-east Asia. The yellow crest of the Greater Yellow-naped Woodpecker grabs my attention. And a White-Breasted Kingfisher, in a dive from the branch of a tree, arrows into a pool of water. Bird life is all around me. Almost 200 species of birds live in this aviary alone.

My beautiful granddaughter has little interest in elephants, hippos and birds. It's been a long day and I hear her compelling plea, "Enough birds Grandpa, I want to go home!"

I take one last look to the far side of the zoo to the birds of prey exhibit. Looking through grandfatherly bifocals, I can see a Steller's Sea Eagle, a Harpy Eagle and a California Condor, magnificent birds the zoo is responsible for saving from extinction. As the Earth's population approaches 6 billion, almost daily a plant or animal species becomes extinct. I now better understand that zoos are on the frontline of conservation and the San Diego Zoo is leading the way.

As we left, I put behind me the image from my youth of that eagle in his cramped cage. In a pond in front the children's zoo, swimming with a group of Mandarin Ducks, is a pair of Hooded Mergansers. I swear the male winked at me as if to say, "See you up north." I winked back and said, "You bet."

About Pilchuck Audubon Society

The Pilchuck Audubon Profile, official newsletter of Pilchuck Audubon Society, is published monthly September-April, and bi-monthly May-August.

Pilchuck Audubon Society (PAS) is a grass-roots environmental organization with members throughout Snohomish County and Camano Island, Washington.

Our mission is to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds and other wildlife, for the benefit of the earth's biological diversity.

Through education, advocacy, and community activism, PAS is committed to bringing people closer to wildlife in order to build a deeper understanding of the powerful links between healthy ecosystems and human beings, and to encourage the involvement of our members in efforts to protect the habitat this wildlife depends upon for survival.

We serve as a local chapter of the National Audubon Society. PAS is a 501(c)3 tax-exempt, non-profit organization incorporated in the state of Washington.

Newsletter submissions

Submit articles to annette.colombini@pilchuckaudubon.org or mail to 1429 Avenue D, PMB 198, Snohomish, WA 98290. Submissions must be received by the fifth of the month preceding publication. We reserve the right to edit.

Monthly mailing party

Newsletter mailing parties are held the third Monday of the month. If you'd like to have some fun with other PAS members, contact Judy Lowell at organicjudy@juno.com or 425.353.8150 for more information.

To contact Pilchuck Audubon Society, call 425.252.0926.

The Profile is also available at www.pilchuckaudubon.org

Board of directors

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April 2008 trip calendar

Check our web site at www.pilchuckaudubon.org for the latest information.

Tuesday, April 1

Guemes Island

Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Quilceda Village Wal-Mart lot west of Marysville (I-5 exit 200). Park away from the store, to the east, near Quilceda Blvd (next to I-5). Relax and enjoy Guemes and its people, birds and dogs. Pack a lunch.

Trip leader: Virginia Clark 360.435.3750

Tuesday, April 8

Point No Point

Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Edmonds Marsh (south of West Dayton St., turn left just before the railroad tracks). We'll take the ferry to Kingston and bird the voyage, the docks, Point No Point and Foulweather Bluff. Last year, we had 74 species, and much beauty and serenity. Pack a lunch.

Leaders: Virginia Clark 360.435.3750, Art Wait 360.563.0181

Tues., April 15

Snoqualmie River Valley Monroe to Carnation

Meet at 7:30 a.m. at Monroe park and ride on Highway 2, half-mile west of the Fairgrounds. Expect a fun time and exciting birds. Pack a lunch.

Leaders: Art Wait 360.563.0181, Virginia Clark 360.435.3750

Tuesday, April 22

South Whidbey Island

Meet at 7:15 a.m. at the Eastmont park and ride, I-5 exit 189, east side. We'll aim for the 8 a.m. ferry. We saw 77 species last March. Crockett Lake is always exciting. Pack a lunch.

Trip leader: Wilma Bayes, 360.629.2028

Tuesday, April 29

Cle Elum Area

Meet at 6:30 a.m. at the Monroe park and ride, on Highway 2, half-mile west of the fairgrounds. An all-day trip. Bring lunch to augment the bakery stop. Different birds: Red-naped Sapsucker, Northern Goshawk, Calliope Hummingbird, Western Bluebird, Mountain Bluebird, Magpie, Vesper Sparrow and Cassins Sparrow possible. Experience excitement and exhaustion. Pack a lunch.

Trip Leader: Virginia Clark 360.435.3750

Notice to field trip participants: Field trips are open to members and non-members alike. No advance notice required unless otherwise stated in the trip description. Trips go, rain or shine. However, in case of snow or ice, contact trip leader! Bring a sack lunch, beverage, binoculars, scope and field guide if you have them. If not, we'll share. Please, no perfume or cologne. Be prepared to share gas money with carpool drivers. Pets, even leashed, are prohibited on field trips. Please leave them at home.

Spring migration survey plans come together

By Colleen Weber, Project Leader, Port Susan IBA Survey

The action team for Port Susan Bay IBA is putting the final touches on the spring migration survey plan. Training will be conducted by Dennis Paulson on April 3 and 4, 7-9 p.m. at Mariner High School, 200 120th St SW, Everett. Pilchuck Audubon Society is honored to have Dennis share his knowledge and skills in preparation for this survey.

Please note: due to the magnitude of the survey, participants are required to attend both training sessions. If these dates present a problem for you, please contact Colleen Weber at 425.210.5626.

Dates and times for the survey:

- Saturday, April 19 – 4:10 to 7:10 p.m.
- Sunday, April 27 – 7:00 to 9:00 a.m.
- Saturday, May 3 – 2:40 to 4:40 p.m.
- Sunday, May 11 – 7:40 to 9:40 a.m.
- Saturday, May 17 – 3:37 to 5:37 p.m. (if needed)

The sites are:

1. **Kayak Point State Park**
2. **Warm Beach:** Three areas to be surveyed by two teams. One site requires negotiating a steep incline.
3. **Warm Beach** site mentioned in item 2
4. **The Nature Conservancy property**
5. **Davis Slough** on the east side of the slough. This will require walking about two-thirds mile to the survey site.
6. **Sundins Beach**
7. **Livingstone Bay:** Two sites, surveyed by the same team.
8. **Iverson Spit:** Three sites, surveyed by the same team.
9. **Triangle Cove:** Three sites, surveyed by the same team.
10. **South Cavelero Beach Park**



Warm Beach, by Ileen Weber

Some sites are on private property. We have permission for volunteers to walk to the water's edge. More information will be given at the training.

I've sent out an email, asking volunteers to sign up for the dates/times that fit their schedules. If you didn't receive the email, please contact me directly.

We are asking you to volunteer as many weekends as you are able. This is in exchange for the training you will receive.

We need more volunteers. If you're already signed up, please ask someone you know to participate with you. And, have them get in touch with me.

Port Susan is a beautiful bay! By volunteering for this project, you'll help keep it an important part of the Pacific flyway for our avian friends!

Smart Growth report

By Kristin Kelly, Smart Growth Director

The arson fires at the Street of Dreams mega-mansion rural cluster subdivision near Echo Lake were disturbing, to say the least. No matter what, destruction of homes – or any property – is not the answer. Crimes like these can paint a bad picture of environmental groups that are actually working within our governmental system to make positive change.

Since the fires, I have taken several calls from members of the media, asking where the organizations I represent stand on this issue and to learn more about the problems with rural cluster subdivisions. I was even interviewed by a reporter from *The Washington Post!*

As I told the reporters, this action is nothing we condone. Ever. However, the fact remains that big problems with rural development exist in this county; and, I, along with other citizens, are using legal means in an effort to bring about changes.

Rural development has a lot to do with how we go about *urban* development, as well. I, as a right-brained person, never see issues as either this problem or that problem that can be solved singly. I see everything as it relates to everything else; and to solve one problem, we really need to find ways to solve other issues, as well. Perhaps that's my curse. But, I see it as the only way we'll solve problems. Especially when it comes to developing our land, which impacts the way we live our lives, the taxes required to protect the common good, and how we can still protect what most of us hold dear: water quality, air quality, healthy food, homes to live in, and the wonder of wildlife diversity. We need all of this to keep the world – as we know it – sustainable.

Another important problem is housing affordability and homelessness in a county that purports to have low unemployment rates and which hasn't been affected by the mortgage lending crisis to the degree others have. The mantra from both the Master Builders Association and the Realtors Association is that regulations add to the cost of housing, making it unaffordable. Interestingly enough, both industries take great pride in the fact that housing prices have not fallen here while they have in many other parts of the country.

So why are homes no one can afford still being built?

Where are the homes people *can* afford?

Statistics presented at the Housing Consortium breakfast earlier this month showed a 20% decrease in the affordability of homes between 1995 and 2006. What that means, really, is home prices have risen much faster than incomes. In 1995, the median household income was \$42,000 a year, which would buy a \$128,000 home. And the median cost of a home was \$141,950.

In 2006, the median household income of \$60,000 would only qualify for a \$195,000 loan. But the median price for a home in Snohomish County is \$322,950!

What's really fueling the cost of homes is determined by a complex set of factors, the least of which deal with regulations to protect the growth of our communities. I certainly don't have all the answers to these very complex problems, but I will say regulations to protect the environment, wildlife habitat, water quality, air quality – and our attempts to deal with global warming – are not the cause of problems with housing affordability or foreclosures.

While some may try to pin it on regulations aimed to protect these things, it's more complex than that. And we must find

ways to deal with issues without sacrificing the environmental quality that sustains all life.

As we continue to build high-end homes, those who make less are pushed out of the market. But, more people who *can* afford these homes move into the area because they still are priced lower than in King County. The additional population creates an increase in the cost of growth for needed infrastructure, or leads to a decline in quality of life when that infrastructure is not provided.

Some of the reasons rural cluster subdivisions were adopted by this county include to protect more open space, allow for moderate growth in rural areas and to provide affordable homes. The fact is we are not seeing affordable homes in our rural areas. And, while the Street of Dreams rural cluster was the highest of the high-end homes, homes in the \$300,000-\$400,000 range are predominant.

An update to the code governing rural cluster subdivisions is currently underway at the county. Planning commission hearings are complete and the commission will make its recommendations to the county council soon. However, in this update, housing affordability wasn't part of the mix. Nor was the problem of allowing 100% bonus densities for a modest increase in protected open space.

While some of the code changes would help with buffering, setbacks and the number of homes in one cluster, the clusters can occur right next door to each other, further exacerbating the problem of maintaining rural character.

Rural cluster subdivisions are just a part of the mix. Our urban areas must be planned and developed more wisely, with a focus on where our highest density should go. Many neighborhoods once considered single-family residential are seeing more multi-family construction. There are some styles of multi-family that fit well into single-family neighborhoods. But, there are some that do not.

I will be lobbying hard, along with our urban friends, for better regulations on the design of homes, as well as on the zoning issues. It's time to urge cities along the Sounder rail line to start planning for and creating codes that will encourage mixed use, transit oriented development, which I will talk about more in next month's Profile.

Stay tuned.

State legislative session update:

I'm happy to report these major wins on the Priorities for a Healthy Washington:

Local Solutions for Global Warming made it out of the House and soon will be voted on by the Senate. The bill has changed somewhat as it has gone through the process, but is still a great start at meshing land use planning with reducing global warming impacts.

Climate Action and Green Jobs was passed by both the House and Senate. The bill now heads to Governor Gregoire's desk to be signed.

Evergreen Cities has passed in the House, and awaits a Senate hearing.

Local Farms-Healthy Kids passed the House and Senate and is awaiting the governor's signature.

Upcoming local and regional events

Olympic BirdFest 2008

April 4-6, 2008

Sequim, Washington

Discover the birds of the coastal Pacific Northwest – Marbled Murrelets, Rhinoceros Auklets, Harlequin Ducks, Black Oystercatchers, Long-tailed Ducks, and more. BirdFest features guided field trips, a boat cruise on the Straits, a silent auction, and a salmon banquet with the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe.

Contact Dungeness River Audubon Center at 360.681.4076 or visit the web site at www.olympicbirdfest.org.

Spring ACOW

April 11-13

Leavenworth, Washington

Hurry and register for the Spring Audubon Council of Washington, April 11-13, at the Sleeping Lady Resort near Leavenworth. Enjoy an art show, guest speakers, workshops and field trips – all while soaking in the amazing atmosphere and food at the Sleeping Lady.

For more information, visit www.wa.audubon.org or phone Lisa Paribello at 360.786.8020 ext. 201.

Earth Walk Adventure

April 19

Marysville, Washington

Learn about our environment, why it's important and how to protect it at the "Earth Walk Adventure" Earth Day celebration on April 19, 10 a.m. until 2 p.m., at Waterfront Park in Marysville. Along the walk, explore water-themed exhibits and activities for the entire family.

Stations along the walk will cover subjects such as: Where does the rainwater go, salmon recovery in the Snohomish Basin, a watershed puzzle, the Qwuloolt restoration, bird-watching, invasive and native plants and more.

Plus, Marysville's state-of-the-art wastewater treatment plant will be open for tours at 11 a.m., 12 noon and 1 p.m.

For info, call 425.252.6686 or visit www.stillysnofish.org.

Grays Harbor Shorebird Festival

May 2-4

Hoquiam, Washington

Each spring, thousands of shorebirds stop in Grays Harbor on their northern migration. This offers birders a great chance to view a number of species – and perhaps see them evade the ultra-fast Peregrine Falcon. Other activities include an auction, field trips, lectures, a Birder's Bazaar and more.

For more info, visit www.shorebirdfestival.com, or phone 1.800.303.8498.

Ferry County birding adventure

First weekend in June (tentative)

Eastern Washington

A three-day birding trip to Ferry County is currently scheduled for the first weekend in June (not yet confirmed). Last year's trip included such sightings as a Saw-whet Owl, Golden Eagles, a Lazuli Bunting and Yellow-headed Blackbirds.

For more info, contact Susie Schaefer at 425.771.8165 or susie.schaefer@pilchuckaudubon.org. Watch for more details in upcoming issues of the *Profile*.

Please help fill key volunteer positions

Program chair

This important volunteer plans and conducts 10 monthly program meetings per year (no meetings in August and December). The program chair is responsible for arranging a presenter, submitting the meeting announcement to the newsletter editor and publicity chair and chairing the actual meeting. Finding a speaker isn't difficult; there is a network of people with contacts and suggestions.

This position also serves on the Pilchuck Audubon Society's Board of Directors which meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month.

This position is fun and you'll meet knowledgeable people who care about their subject and are excited share.

For more information, please contact Susie Schaefer at 425.771.8165 or susie.schaefer@pilchuckaudubon.org.

Volunteer committee chair

This volunteer is responsible for recruiting, organizing and coordinating volunteers for various PAS activities and events. This person will work with the publicity chair and newsletter editor to promote events and volunteer opportunities.

In addition, the volunteer chair maintains a master list of PAS volunteers and conducts regular surveys of chapter membership to gain an understanding of the skill set available within our dynamic group. The volunteer chair is also responsible for scheduling and conducting regular committee meetings and training new volunteers.

This volunteer serves on the Pilchuck Audubon Society's Board of Directors which meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month.

The position is both fun and rewarding, as it is critical to rallying the membership in support of chapter activities.

For more information, please contact Susie Schaefer at 425.771.8165 or susie.schaefer@pilchuckaudubon.org.

Help for injured wildlife

(not domestic animals)

Call 24 hours a day:

Second Chance Wildlife Care Center
Snohomish, 425-335-0788

Deer Creek Wild Animal Rehab
Everett, 425-334-8171

Sarvey Wildlife Center
Arlington, 360-435-4817



PAWS

Lynwood, 425-787-2500, ext. 817

Conservation corner

By Jon Baker and Jan van Niel, Conservation Committee Co-chairs

This month's offering is brief because many conservation activities are covered in other articles in this issue. But, there are a couple of happenings to report.

Evergreen Cities Act: By the time you read this, we should know if the Evergreen Cities Act is law. Thanks for supporting the bill with letters and calls to legislators. It normally takes three legislative sessions for a successful bill to become law. So, if not this year, we'll be back next.

Spring ACOW: Everyone is invited to register for the Spring Audubon Council of Washington, April 11-13, at the Sleeping Lady Resort near Leavenworth.

Friday evening's program will feature Dr. Nalini Nadkarni, of Evergreen State College, who studies forest canopies. Dr. Nadkarni is also well known for promoting conversation between the scientific community and the general public.

On Saturday, attendees will attend workshops on topics like advocacy, leadership development and fundraising. Saturday's keynote speaker will be Dr. Terry L. Root, who has worked extensively researching climate change. He has won several honors, most recently, lead authorship of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which was co-recipient of the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize.

For more info, follow the link at www.wa.audubon.org or call Lisa Paribello at 360.786.8020 ext. 201.

Fini: As I write this column, a barrel of oil is \$107. Two weeks ago, a commodities soothsayer said \$100 was a barrier. Well, it is blowing right past that and our monthly gasoline bill is also climbing. Because my wife and I (Jon) work close to home, our daily commute is only 20 miles round trip combined. Yet we find the increase impacting our budget. It makes us wonder how it affects low-income folks and Seattle commuters – whether they drive an SUV or Prius.

The rising cost of gas has me looking for alternatives. Which brings me to the '67 Microbus Deluxe sitting in the corner of the yard. Why not electrify it? I learned that with \$8000 and some elbow grease, I can make the bus electric powered and go 50 miles between charges. The \$8000 would be tough on our budget, but if the price of gas keeps going up it, will be worth it. If you are interested in electric vehicles, surf the web, there are many web sites. But, check this one out: www.electroauto.com. Happy motoring.

If you want more information on any of these issues, or have a local issue you would like to bring to the attention of the Conservation Committee, write Jon at jon.d.baker@gmail.com.

Fine birding during Port Susan Bird Fest

By Jonathan Blubaugh

The third annual Port Susan Snow Goose and Birding Fest was Feb. 22-23. I attended both days. Saturday, I took the Iverson Spit tour. Our group enjoyed perfect weather during the walk. And, our guides entertained us as they reminisced about 40+ years as conservation activists in the Camano Island area and their struggle to restore the preserve's habitat. We saw 20+ species during our two-hour visit.

At festival headquarters, we chatted with PAS Hospitality Chair Virginia Clark and VP Susie Schaefer. Volunteers staffed the PAS booth, and they welcomed a steady stream of guests. It looked like everyone was having a great time.

PAS President Mike Blackbird represented birders during a panel discussion Saturday afternoon. All reports indicate the birds were well represented.

On Sunday, I was an assistant tour guide at TNC's Port Susan Bay Preserve. While my group made the three-mile loop around the levy, others lingered near the entrance with TNC's docent. We saw eye-popping numbers of Snow Geese (no surprise), lots of waterfowl – and raptors to prey on them.

One Bald Eagle banked low over our group, then opted not to perch on a pole near us. It was the best up-close view of an eagle in flight I'd ever had.

Some folks in our group hurried to complete the loop before the bus was scheduled to depart. Some strolled leisurely. Others alternated walking with stopping to scope a flock or interesting individual bird.

Here's a partial list the species we saw or heard: Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Snow Goose, Trumpeter Swan, Gadwall, Mallard, American Widgeon, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Bufflehead,

Ruddy Duck, Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, American Coot, Greater Yellow Legs, Killdeer, Glaucous-winged Gull, Short-eared Owl, Belted Kingfisher, Marsh Wren, Bewick's Wren, American Robin, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Black-capped Chickadee, Spotted Towhee, Red-winged Blackbird and House Finch. We also spotted a coyote and a cottontail.

Again, a huge thank you to TNC and their people for a very memorable day.

Help the songbirds

Each summer, PAWS Wildlife Center receives hundreds of orphaned and injured songbirds that need care. Become a volunteer Bird Nursery Caretaker (BNC) and you can make a huge difference.

BNCs are responsible for hand-feeding and monitoring the health of baby songbirds and for keeping the bird nursery organized. It's hard work, but it is incredibly rewarding – especially when volunteers are able to participate in the release of the patients. This is why we do the work we do: to see our patients healthy and able to live life on their own.



Visit www.paws.org for more info and a volunteer application. You will be contacted to schedule orientation, a tour and training.

If you have additional questions, email Candy Brown at candyb@paws.org or Corrie Hines at chines@paws.org. Or, phone Corrie at 425.787.2500, ext. 818.

Birding highlights

By Mara Price, Sightings Coordinator

January 26, 2008-February 25, 2008

You can tell spring is just around the corner because there are robins everywhere you turn. There were still large numbers of **Varied Thrush** and **Pine Siskins** reported this month. A few more **Evening Grosbeaks** were reported near Stanwood and Marysville. I hope they are finally returning to our area.

Carole and Larry Beason's species count of 33 from their home near Lake Bosworth included 7 **Evening Grosbeaks**, 30 **Varied Thrush**, 16 **Pine Siskins**, 24 **Mallards**, 15 **Buffleheads**, 8 **Spotted Towhees**, 9 **Red-winged Blackbirds**, 9 **Purple Finches**, 2 **Fox Sparrows**, 4 **Common Mergansers** and 2 **Downy Woodpeckers**, to name a few.

Even with her busy schedule, Annette Colombini has found time to submit a report for *Birding highlights*. Her species count of 15 from her home in Marysville included 100+ **Pine Siskins**, 3 **Varied Thrush**, 2 **Northern Flickers**, 6 **Dark-eyed Juncos**, 3 **American Robins**, 6 **Red-winged Blackbirds**, a **Common Raven**, a **Great Blue Heron** (flying over), 10 **Bushtits** and 2 **American Crows**.

Gail Dibernardo reported 50+ **Pine Siskins** and 2 **Varied Thrush** from her home in Brier. She also listed 2 **American Robins**, 6 **Anna's Hummingbirds**, a **Townsend's Warbler**, a **Cooper's Hawk**, a **Red-tailed Hawk**, a **Great Horned Owl**, 2 **Golden-crowned Kinglets** and 6 **Spotted Towhees** for a total species count of 22.

Hilkka Egvedt is still reporting the **White-Throated Sparrow** in her yard in Mukilteo. She is hoping he will sing for them before he goes north. Her total species count of 27 also included 6 **American Robins**, 4 **Bald Eagles** (circling over the neighborhood), 9 **California Quail**, 60 **Pine Siskins**, 2 **Red-breasted Nuthatches**, 9 **Steller's Jays**, 14 **Bushtits**, a **Bewick's Wren**, 26 **Dark-eyed Juncos** and a **Pileated Woodpecker**.

Cedar Waxwings made an appearance at Kriss Erickson's Everett location near Lowell River Road. Her report listed 20 **Cedar Waxwings**, 23 **Golden-crowned Kinglets**, 13 **Black-capped Chickadees**, 2 **Bewick's Wrens**, 12 **American Robins**, 17 **American Coots**, a **Rough-legged Hawk** (this type of hawk summers in the Arctic and winters throughout the US), 3 **Western Gulls**, 8 female **American Goldfinches** and 6 **Steller's Jays** for a total species count of 20.

Bald Eagles, **Snow Geese** and **Trumpeter Swans** highlighted Adeline Gildow's report from Camano Island along Juniper Beach. She listed 6 **Bald Eagles** overhead at Juniper, 300+ **Snow Geese** and 300+ **Trumpeter Swans** along the road to Conway, 4 **Great Blue Herons** along the beach, 8 **House Finches**, 4 **Mourning Doves**, 2 **Red-tailed Hawks**, 2 **Red-breasted Nuthatches**, a **Sharp-shinned Hawk** and a **Cooper's Hawk** for a total species count of 26.

Reporting from Lake Stevens, Verna Hisey's total species count of 12 included 17 **House Sparrows**, 5 **Steller's Jays**, 3 **Varied Thrush**, 6 **American Crows**, 3 **Spotted Towhees**, a **Hairy Woodpecker**, 2 **Bald Eagles**, 7 **Black-capped Chickadees** and 3 **Northern Flickers**.

More **Varied Thrush** and **Pine Siskins** reported by Shelia and Michael Huber from the Machias area. Their total species count of 20 included a **Fox Sparrow**, 2 **Mourning Doves**, 5 **Varied Thrush**, 12 **Dark-eyed Juncos**, 6 **Pine Siskins**, a

Pileated Woodpecker, a **Purple Finch**, 2 **Red-tailed Hawks**, 3 **Hairy Woodpeckers** and 27 **House Finches**.

A **Yellow-rumped Warbler** and 2 **Killdeer** made an appearance at Julie O'Donald's Brier home in February. Her report also included a **Winter Wren**, 2 **Golden-crowned Kinglets**, a **Pileated Woodpecker**, 80 **Pine Siskins**, 7 **Steller's Jays**, 18 **Bushtits**, 2 **Anna's Hummingbirds**, a **Varied Thrush** and 40 **American Crows**.

Reporting from his home along Port Susan Bay, Bob Poulin reported 175 **Barrow's Goldeneye**, 50 **Glaucous-winged Gulls**, 200 **Mew Gulls**, a **Great Blue Heron**, 2 **Surf Scoters**, 3 **Bald Eagles** along the water, 22 **Buffleheads**, a **Horned Grebe**, 2 **American Robins** and 30 **Double-crested Cormorants** in his total species count of 15.

Mary Sinker's yard in Stanwood was very busy this month with a total species count of 30. She listed 9 **American Robins**, 9 **Varied Thrush**, 50+ **Pine Siskins**, 20+ **House Finches**, 50+ **Dark-eyed Juncos**, 10 **Black-capped Chickadees**, 15 **American Crows**, 10 **Canada Geese** flying over, 17 **Mourning Doves** and 6 **Evening Grosbeaks**.

The **Red-breasted Nuthatches** are still staying along the shore with two reported by Darlene Walker from Camano Island. Also reported were 3 **Bald Eagles**, 30 **Pine Siskins**, 50 **Trumpeter Swans** in Stanwood, 12 **Mourning Doves**, 6 **Fox Sparrows**, 6 **American Robins**, 3 **Great Blue Herons**, 2 **Common Ravens** and 4 **Downy Woodpeckers**.

The **Pine Siskins** are still swarming the trees and feeders at my home in Marysville. I counted about 80 or so. The **Evening Grosbeaks** are back again with two listed for February. My total species count of 25 also included 15 **California Quail**, 8 **Varied Thrush**, 12 **American Crows** in the trees, 20+ **Dark-eyed Juncos**, 300+ **Glaucous-winged Gulls** in the fields along 100th, 2 **Common Ravens**, 7 **House Finches**, 4 **Purple Finches** and a **Pileated Woodpecker**.

If you are interested in adding to *Birding highlights* or would like additional information included in the report, please contact me at 425.750.8125 or pricemara@clearwire.net.

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