

Pilchuck Audubon Profile



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Save our Swifts meeting planned for February 28

Be part of a team working to save the large colony of Vaux Swifts that roosts in the chimney at Frank Wagner School in Monroe twice each year.

Attend the Save our Swifts meeting on Thurs., Feb. 28, from 7-8:30 p.m., in the board room at the Monroe School District Administration Building, 200 E Fremont Street, Monroe.

Program meeting – Fri., March 14, 7 p.m.

Insects return to Mt. St. Helens

Retired UW zoology professor, John Edwards, will talk about the recolonization taking place at Mt. St. Helens.

Note new location: Mariner HS Library,
200 120th Street SW, Everett

For info, call 425.252.0926.

TNC sanctuary to open during Snow Goose Fest

by Jonathan Blubaugh

There's no Pilchuck Audubon Weekend Bird Hike this month. But, yours truly will be conducting a birding walk at The Nature Conservancy's Port Susan sanctuary in conjunction with the Port Susan Snow Goose and Birding Festival.

PAS is co-sponsor of the festival on Feb. 23-24 and volunteers will staff an informational table at the festival headquarters, the Floyd Norgaard Cultural Center, at 27108 102nd Avenue NW in Stanwood.

I'll lead a walk (a three-mile stroll on a level dirt path) on Sun., Feb. 24, along the levy at TNC's Port Susan sanctuary. The sanctuary is normally closed to the public, but the Conservancy will open it for this special event.

Transportation from the festival headquarters will be provided. Please meet there at noon. The walk is scheduled to last three hours.

Past visits to this area have yielded lots of cool birds and other critters, including a female coyote we encountered on the levy. She was frustrated. She wanted to get past us, but couldn't. She didn't want to turn back either. To our astonishment, she clambered into the Sound, swam past us, and scrambled back onto the levy when safely past.

If you can't make it Sunday for my walk, there are three other trips to the sanctuary during the festival. For more information, visit www.snowgoosefest.org.

Birders needed for Port Susan IBA survey

By Colleen Weber, Project Leader, Port Susan IBA survey

"We can't do it without you" is a phrase heard often when an organization needs volunteers. The Port Susan Bay Important Bird Area Survey Committee is no exception.

The survey will be every Saturday from April 19 to May 10. Specifics of time and place are still to be determined. Watch the *Profile* for more information.

Teams of volunteers are needed to canvas 16 sites from Kayak Point to Cavelero Beach. Each team should consist of at least two people. This project offers an opportunity for birders who want to increase their skills, as well as those who want to share their expertise. The committee will try to match expert birders with the less experienced when possible.

Dennis Paulson, author of *Shorebirds of the Pacific Northwest*, will conduct two evening training sessions on dates still to be determined. Attendance at the training sessions is required for participation in this important birding survey.

The committee needs about 30 people to step forward, attend a training session and commit to participating on as many Saturdays as possible during the survey period. Volunteers do not have to be Pilchuck Audubon members.

My list of eager volunteers is growing, and I would love to add your name to this group. Please call 425.510.0760 or contact me via e-mail at colleen.weber@pilchuckaudubon.org.

What it takes to participate:

- Be available the four Saturdays of the survey (April 19 and 26 and May 3 and 10). Watch for the specific time to be announced closer to the April 19 start date.
- Attend the training sessions – dates to be announced.
- Bring a fellow birder along and have a great time!

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President's message

By Mike Blackbird, President, Pilchuck Audubon Society



Uber-lobbyist Jack Abramoff is the personification of the dark side of lobbyists. He put the sleaze in the word sleaze. Despite Abramoff, and with apologies to William Shakespeare, I want to praise lobbyists – not bury them.

The image of lobbyists is of monied hoards who descend on DC and Olympia to influence* a legislator's vote by promising donations to his/her re-election campaign. Despite the derision of the term because of the likes of Abramoff and the cynicism of Ambrose Bierce, lobbyist is not a dirty word. It was coined during the Civil War to describe those who hung around the lobby of the Willard Hotel, waiting for congressmen whose votes they hoped to influence. Lobbying is not just the province of special interests like oil or pharmaceutical giants. It's a tool available to private citizens and non-profit organizations like Pilchuck Audubon Society.

There is nothing inherently wrong with lobbying legislators on issues. In a 60-day session, our state legislators will vote on 200+ bills. It is impossible for them to know the pros and cons of each of these bills. It becomes incumbent on private citizens and interest groups to call, write or meet with legislators to make their concerns known.

On January 23, a bright winter day, with snow-covered Mt. Rainier in the distance, the environmental community gathered in Olympia for Citizens' Lobby Day. Members of environmental organizations statewide participated in a well-organized effort to meet with their legislators to lobby in support of green legislation being considered this session.

There were three of us from the 1st District: Jim Rettig (representing the East Lake Washington Audubon), Amy Johnson (a private citizen) and myself. During our meetings with Senator

McAuliffe and representatives O'Brien and Ericks, we emphasized the importance of Priorities for a Healthy Washington, which includes bills like Local Solutions to Global Warming, Local Farms-Healthy Kids and Evergreen Cities. Jim and I were shameless in telling the legislators that we represented 2200 Audubon members who vote. In other words, a visionary *quo* in exchange for a substantial *quid*.

The halls of the capitol and the John L. O'Brien Building were awash with private citizens and paid lobbyists, there either to testify before a committee hearing, or to buttonhole a legislator on his way to a committee meeting.

Paid lobbyists were easy to identify. They wore name tags with "Third House" under their name, implying they're members of a legislative body like the House or Senate. There was a time when I wouldn't have given it much thought. But after eight years of corporate lobbyists in DC actually drafting legislation, I found the presumption a bit offensive and it spurred my lobby efforts that much more.

On the way to my car as the day ended, I noted the Thurston County Courthouse grounds border the capitol mall. To enter the courthouse, one must pass through a metal detector and have his/her bags checked. In contrast, I felt reassured that the state capitol and legislative buildings are unencumbered by metal detectors. It's comforting to know that access to the legislative process in Olympia isn't hampered by a bunker mentality, that a private citizen can meet with legislators and lobby them on important issues, while democracy shines as bright as snow-clad Rainier on a sunny winter day.

* From Ambrose Bierce's *The Devil's Dictionary*: "Influence, noun. In politics, a visionary *quo* given in exchange for a substantial *quid*."

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

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March 2008 trip calendar

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

Tuesday, March 4 Deception Pass Area

Meet at 7:30 a.m. at Quilceda Village Wal-Mart west of Marysville (I5, exit 200). Park away from store, to the east, near Quilceda Blvd. and next to I5. Oystercatchers, loons, mergansers, LBJs, etc. We will visit Campbell Lake, Rosario Beach, Cranberry Lake and, of course, Deception Pass. Pack a lunch.

Trip leader: Virginia Clark 360.435.3750

Tuesday, March 11 Everett Waterfront

Meet at 7:30 a.m. at Legion Park off North Marine Drive, Everett. A very relaxed, easy trip that always yields surprises. Pack a lunch.

Trip leader: Art Wait 360.563.0181

Sat., March 15 Pt. Susan, Nature Cons. Property

Meet at 10 a.m. at Quilceda Village Wal-Mart west of Marysville (I5, exit 200). Park away from store, to the east, near Quilceda Blvd. and next to I5. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) has agreed to allow PAS members to visit its Groeneveld property and walk the dikes out to Port Susan Bay. This area is normally closed to the public and we will be accompanied by a TNC guide. Expect to see lots of waterfowl and geese! Pack a lunch.

Space is limited to 20 people; carpooling is required due to limited onsite parking. Contact leader Bill Lider at bill.lider@verizon.net or 425.776.0671 to confirm your attendance.

Tuesday, March 18 Port Gamble to Port Townsend

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, go through Port Gamble and across the Hood Canal floating bridge. We'll visit Marrowstone Island, and Indian Island with views of Admiralty Inlet. Expect waterfowl, shorebirds and seabirds. This trip is rewarding. Lunch in a restaurant.

Leaders: Art Wait 360.563.0181, Virginia Clark 360.435.3750

Tuesday, March 25 Anacortes area

Meet at 7:30 a.m. at Quilceda Village Wal-Mart west of Marysville (I5, exit 200). Park away from store, to the east, near Quilceda Blvd. and next to I5. A nice town with lots of birdy parks, piers, heights, and beaches. 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.

Upcoming local and regional events

Aleutian Goose Festival

March 28-30 Crescent City, California

Come to the 10th Annual Aleutian Goose Festival and celebrate the return of the once endangered Aleutian Goose to the extreme north coast of California. The festival, located in Crescent City, offers more than 60 workshops/field trips, Native American cultural experiences and birds-birds-birds.

Learn more at www.aleutiangoosefestival.org.

Sandhill Crane Festival

March 28-30 Othello, Washington

Don't miss this annual festival and the opportunity to see the wonderful Sandhill Cranes. Enjoy lectures, field trips and many other fun activities. Plan ahead and reserve your accommodations early, as this is a very popular event.

For info, visit www.othellosandhillcranefestival.org or contact Susie Schaefer at 425.771.8165 or susie.schaefer@comcast.net (note new e-mail address).

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.

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 Qwulooit 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.

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 nesting Saw-whet Owl, a pair of Golden Eagles, a Lazuli Bunting and good numbers of Black Tern and Yellow-headed Blackbirds.

If you're interested in this birding adventure, contact Susie Schaefer at 425.771.8165 or susie.schaefer@pilchuckaudubon.org. And, watch for more details in next month's *Profile*.

Smart Growth report

By Kristin Kelly, Smart Growth Director

I am delighted to report a success that came about as the result of persistent efforts by community members – who organized themselves, educated themselves, and persuaded the Snohomish County Council to protect the common good. In particular, Barb Bailey (of Bailand Farms outside of Snohomish) should be commended for her work.

The vote to deny public funding for studies needed by FEMA and NOAA was 4-1, with John Koster voting against. The council also listened to the other business owners across the street from Harvey Field along Airport Road, and will be working on code changes to allow modest expansions for these businesses.

This certainly proves our new County Council, under the leadership of Chairman Dave Somers, will be listening to the public, looking at the facts, and making wiser decisions for our future health, safety and welfare.

The lesson to be learned: buying property in a floodplain has consequences. We must protect our floodplains; they will be needed more and more as the impacts of global warming increase. The best use for our floodplains is wildlife habitat and farming.

Which brings me to other issues affecting floodplains: farming and development.

KRKO radio towers in the Upper Snohomish River Valley: Andy Skotland of KRKO has yet to build his four towers. The FCC permit hasn't been issued; and the citizen group, Citizens to Protect the Upper Snohomish River Valley (CPUSRV), continues to work to stop the construction of these towers in the pristine area just east of the Bob Heirman County Park, across from Craven Farms.

The history is interesting. Originally, Skotland requested more and taller towers. After years of wrestling before the hearing examiner, he changed his request to include fewer towers (four), eliminated cables, and reduced the height on three towers. But, *voilà!* He is now back asking for permits for two more towers for another radio station. If he is asking for two more now, before the other four are even built, it won't be long before more requests for more towers come forward. The FCC encourages antennas be located in the same vicinity.

CPUSRV has raised many issues in an effort to get these towers relocated out of the valley. Issues with habitat for waterfowl, economic success of local farming, aesthetic value for current homeowners, health risks associated with electronic magnetic frequencies are all important to consider.

If you'd like to help CPUSRV, contact the group's president, Lee Bennett, at TheLeeBennett@aol.com.

City of Everett Marshland development: In the Feb. 10 issue of The Herald, I read that the City of Everett will start working with stakeholders on a plan to restore and develop the 1000 acres of marshland along Snohomish River Road. The land is farmland, although the railroad runs through it, as well as PUD utility lines. While the City would like to transform this soggy farmland into ballfields, trails, and picnic areas – and restore some of it for salmon habitat – there might be some opposition to such an idea.

Again, this is floodplain. Don Bailey, owner of Bailand Farms (and husband of Barb Bailey), is a commissioner for the Marshland flood control district, which manages more than 6400 acres of floodplains between Everett and Snohomish.

He brings up the same issues of flooding up river at the Harvey Airfield as down river at the Marshland site. The Marshland's drainage system – which cuts through the city's land before spilling into the river – is critical to both agriculture and to keeping SR 9 and Marsh Road from flooding. From Bailey's perspective, as a long-time farmer in the area, it should remain farmland because that is the highest and best use for it, as the Marshland area gets deep during flooding.

If you would like more information, please contact Everett Shorelines Coalition President Peggy Toepel at ptoepe@verizon.net.

Transfer of Development Rights program: This month, the Snohomish County Planning Commission was primed to hear public testimony on the county's Transfer of Development Rights program (TDR) as part of the yearly comprehensive plan amendment process. I was there, representing Pilchuck Audubon Society, to support the TDR program with amendments for even more protections.

TDR is a system which allows landowners to sell the development rights of their property to developers. Then, in order to protect the land (called "sending areas") from development, the developers can then use those rights to develop, usually at higher densities, in areas more suitable for development (receiving areas).

The emphasis of the TDR program in Snohomish County is to protect commercially designated farmlands and to allow development rights in the county's existing urban growth areas, or to allow UGA expansions by using those development rights if all other conditions of the law are met, or to allow for more density bonuses in rural areas.

Cities would be the best places for receiving development, but the county hasn't been able to get most cities to be part of the TDR program.

The hearing never took place. The hearing room was packed with folks, as there were many other issues before the planning commission that day. But, many citizens were there about the TDR program.

At the last moment, folks showed up and were upset that this program was going forward without their involvement. While the county has worked closely with the development community and farmers on this issue for a long time, obviously, for whatever reason, there were some who didn't like being left out.

In a joint letter signed by the County Executive and the County Council, the TDR program has been put on hold. I'm not sure if this is a good thing or not, but Pilchuck Audubon Society will be at the table supporting these elements:

- All farmland, including commercially designated farmland and rural land used for farming activities, and commercially designated forest land, should be included as sending areas
- Cities need to be included in the mix for receiving areas
- Density bonuses for receiving areas should exclude rural areas, and be appropriately located in urban areas and cities so development fits with the character of the neighborhood
- Farmers, developers, the county and cities must make this work! If we don't implement a TDR program soon, we will continue to lose our best land to pavement and housetops.

Conservation corner

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

For many mammals, winter is the season to hibernate. Not for the Conservation Committee. It is the legislative season, so they have to keep watch on bills being debated in Olympia. Also, winter is a good time to do other things, like plan the Port Susan IBA bird survey. Read on to find out about these and more in this month's update.

Evergreen Cities Act – SHB 2844

At press time, the Evergreen Cities Act (SHB 2844) is out of committee and heading to the floor. As currently configured, SHB 2844 will direct the DNR to conduct an inventory and assessment of Washington's urban trees. Then the Department of Community Trade and Economic Development will use that information to prepare model plans and ordinances for cities that wish to be officially recognized as an Evergreen City.

Further, the Evergreen Cities Act will encourage cities to participate by offering incentives. Cities can get points for actions such as water pollution control and habitat acquisition. The Evergreen Cities Act will also fund several pilot cities who wish to assess their urban forests, develop community outreach, plant and maintain trees, and form partnerships.

Audubon Washington developed this act because of the benefits urban forests provide people and wildlife. Citizens receive improved air quality and a better storm water profile. The quality of urban life also improves as people spend more time outside walking, interacting, and shopping when there is a vigorous urban forest. Be sure to follow SHB 2844 and give it your support by contacting your legislators.

Hydraulic Code Enforcement – HB 2785

Under current law, the state's hydraulic code permits can be enforced only if county prosecutors bring a criminal charge. Because approximately 4000 permits are given each year to build bulkheads, docks, and other structures in our waterways, and the Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) cannot enforce the permits under the current system, there

is little enforcement. HB 2785 would authorize the WDFW to issue civil "stop work orders." This would mean that projects violating permits can be stopped before the damage is done. Sounds like a good bill – support it.

Port Susan Bay IBA update

Pilchuck's work on the Port Susan Bay Important Bird Area continues to make progress. A primary goal of the project is to learn which species of shorebirds use the bay during the spring migration. We are also interested in their numbers and distribution. To accomplish this, we will be surveying Port Susan Bay from mid-April to mid-May.

Read the article by Collen Weber on page 1 for more details and please volunteer.

Reinvigorating the Conservation Committee

Look to this column for information about future Conservation Committee meetings. It has been difficult to attract regular attendance, so the committee will now meet two or three times a year with additional meetings as the need arises.

At each meeting, we will discuss the regular business of the committee, but will also focus on a specific conservation topic of concern. A guest speaker will keynote the meeting and provide a talk on the issue. We'll invite conservationists, biologists, managers, and more to speak. The meetings are open to the public as well as PAS members, and we plan to use meeting spaces in local libraries in an effort to connect with the community. We hope this modified meeting structure will encourage both PAS members and the public to attend Conservation Committee meetings and begin to reenergize the committee.

That's it for this month. As the days get longer and winter loosens its grip, the birds are beginning to sing, reminding us why we keep working for them and ourselves. 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, contact Jon at jon.d.baker@gmail.com.

Edmonds 2007 CBC results

By Jan van Niel

More than 30 dedicated birders braved the weather December 29 and found 114 species of birds during the annual Christmas Bird Count. The total bird count was more than 62,000!

A Northern Saw-whet Owl was the highlight from Everett's Howarth Park. Record numbers of Tundra and Trumpeter Swans, Red-throated and Pacific Loons, Green-winged Teal (6400), Mallards (15,800), Northern Pintails (4100), American Widgeon (12,200) and Common Mergansers were seen and recorded. The large total of ducks was due, in part, to counting them as they returned to Shadow Lake to roost for the night.

Other highs noted were for Brown Creepers, Red-winged Blackbirds (because of the wet fall?), Brown-headed Cowbirds and Pine Siskins.

Species we often see, but missed this year, included Eared Grebe, Rough-legged Hawk, Western Sandpiper, Bonaparte's Gull, California Gull, Marbled Murrelet, Hutton's Vireo and Western Meadowlark.

Help wanted: 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 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 information.

For more information, contact Hana Bales-Kogan at 425.609.1935.

Anna's Hummingbird: a loud little bird!

By Kerry Neijstrom, Education Committee Chair

Zzzzz, pop! You're staring at a hawk, admiring its magnificent beauty and formidable talons, when you hear a whiz and pop near your ear. A bird weighing about as much as a penny distracted you from a bird with a four-foot wingspan!

For a long time, I vainly thought these hummingbirds were courting me with their displays and their iridescent feathers. I'd look for a female, but I was the only female around. Oh, I thought, he must know women like shiny things.

But, according to Cornell's *All About Birds* web site, it's not uncommon for hummingbirds to dive at people. And, as you may have noticed, birds orient their dives for maximum exposure to the object of their interest.



Male Anna's Hummingbird, by Matt Knoth

A study of the hummingbird's chirp at the bottom of its dive, published in the *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*, indicated the chirp made by Anna's Hummingbird (*calypte anna*) comes from the tail feathers. This had long been assumed, but recent debate argued it might come from the throat.

Scientists at the University of California studied the displays using high-speed videos and testing feathers in a wind tunnel. It turns out the feathers vibrate. They also found that males who'd had their tail feathers pulled or trimmed could not make the sound. (Don't worry, the feathers grow back.)

This is awesome trivia. But, if you're like me, you also want to know the implications.

In other words: *cool, but so what?*

This study could help explain about other birds that use feathers to create sound. It could also lead to more studies on what birds use these sounds for and why they evolved the way they have. The chirp sound is louder than the Anna's Hummingbird's vocalization, so the scientists believe it may have evolved to overcome the constraints of the syrinx, the bird's voice box. Additional studies on other hummingbirds are planned.

Studies multiply like starlings: a study to answer a question will lead to more questions and thus, more studies. I'm sure we'll be hearing more about these sounds soon!

More trivia about the Anna's Hummingbird

- At the beginning of the 20th century, Anna's Hummingbirds bred only as far north as southern California. They have since expanded their breeding range as exotic flowering trees are planted.
- They weigh .11-.16 ounces (3-6 grams).
- Like other hummingbirds, in addition to nectar, they eat insects and sap from holes made by sapsuckers.

Sources

Birds of North America Online: www.bna.birds.cornell.edu

All About Birds: www.birds.cornell.edu/allaboutbirds

"The Anna's Hummingbird chirps with its tail: a new mechanism of sonation in birds," *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*, 2008.

Education Committee: Are you interested in sharing your knowledge of birds, other wildlife or conservation issues? Consider joining the Education Committee. No significant previous knowledge is required, but a willingness to expand your knowledge is important. Contact Kerry Neijstrom, Education Chair: 425.252.5243 or kerry.neijstrom@pilchuckaudubon.org.

Birdathon a fun, easy way to raise money for PAS

Think you'll go birding in May? If you're going to anyway – and you know you are – why not make it pay off for Pilchuck Audubon Society?

How, you ask? Birdathon, of course!

Nationally, Birdathon is Audubon's largest annual fundraising event, and the world's largest bird-watching competition. Each year, thousands of people around the country participate to count birds, have fun, and raise vital funds for the Audubon Society's mission of environmental conservation, education, and advocacy.

How does it work? Much like a walk-a-thon. You ask sponsors to pledge a set amount for each species you see (instead of each mile you walk). Then, during May, you spend a total of 24 hours birding. You keep track of the number of species you see, then report back to your sponsors and collect their donations.

Hilkka Egtvedt, PAS Birdathon Coordinator, reports last year's Birdathon raised \$4000 for PAS. She knows we can do better. But, we need more participants!

You're going to be birding anyway. Why not make it pay off for PAS?

She said: "Birdathon is fun, exciting and fulfilling. You'll feel really good about having helped our chapter in this way."

It's easy, fun and a super fundraiser. And, as a special bonus, you could win a prize for doing something you love. Prize categories include most species and most money raised.

To learn more, contact Hilkka at 425.347.4944 or chegtvedt@comcast.net.

In addition, more information will be available in upcoming issues of the *Profile* and at program meetings.

Stay tuned and sign up soon!

Birding highlights

By Mara Price, Sightings Coordinator

December 26, 2007-January 25, 2008

This was a big month for bird and species counts from PAS members. Thank you!

Sue Madison is doing the Cornell Lab count at home in Mukilteo. Some birds she listed were 3 **Varied Thrush**, 15 **Bushtits**, 2 **Anna's Hummingbirds**, a **Rufous Hummingbird**, a **Red-breasted Nuthatch**, 13 **Dark-eyed Juncos** and a **Yellow-rumped Warbler**.

Ann McDowell's list from Camano Island included **Evening Grosbeaks**, **Varied Thrush**, **Fox Sparrows**, **Red-breasted Nuthatches**, various **woodpeckers** and **Dark-eyed Juncos**.

Carol and Glenn Lindenmuth have been feeding and watching a pair of **Anna's Hummingbirds** since October. They even added another feeder to keep the hummers happy.

I am happy to report the numbers for **Pine Siskins**, **Bushtits** and **Evening Grosbeaks** are up throughout the county. Carole and Larry Beason reported 16 **Pine Siskins** and a large number of **Evening Grosbeaks** at their home near Lake Bosworth. They also listed 6 **American Coots**, 12 **Buffleheads**, 22 **Canada Geese**, 4 **Northern Flickers**, 2 **Red-breasted Nuthatches**, 9 **Varied Thrush**, 12 **Dark-eyed Juncos** and 3 **Tundra Swans** in their total species count of 41.



Pine Siskin, by Annette Colombini

From Brier, Gail Dibernardo listed 24 species, including 12 **Pine Siskins**, an **American Goldfinch**, 17 **Bushtits**, 5 **Anna's Hummingbirds**, 2 **Brown Creepers**, 2 **Red-breasted Nuthatches**, 35 **Herring Gulls**, a **Bewick's Wren**, a **Townsend's Warbler** and 2 **Varied Thrush**.

Hilkka Egtvedt's Mukilteo location yielded 24 species this month. Her report included 2 **Anna's Hummingbirds**, 18 **Bushtits**, 9 **California Quail**, 19 **Dark-eyed Juncos**, 2 **Fox Sparrows**, 2 **Golden-crowned Sparrows**, 3 **Northern Flickers**, a **Red-breasted Nuthatch**, a **Sharp-shinned Hawk** and 9 **Steller's Jays**.

Kriss Erickson reported **Trumpeter Swans** near her Everett home and 3 near Lowell Road. She also listed 12 **Bushtits**, 17 **Black-capped Chickadees**, 16 **House Finches**, 13 **American Coots**, 8 **Golden-crowned Kinglets**, a **Great Blue Heron**, 6 **American Robins**, 4 **American Crows** and 2 **Western Gulls** for a total species count of 18.

Welcome back to Adeline Gildow. Her report from Juniper Beach included 4 **Bald Eagles**, 8 **Great Blue Herons**, 2 **Red-tailed Hawks**, 8 **Northern Flickers**, 3 **Ring-necked Pheasants**, 2 **Anna's Hummingbirds**, 300+ **Trumpeter Swans** near the highway to Conway, 1000+ **Snow Geese** overhead at Juniper Beach, 9 **Golden-crowned Kinglets** and a **Red-breasted Nuthatch** for a total species count of 24.

Verna Hisey's location near Lake Stevens yielded 12 species this month. She reported 16+ **House Sparrows**, 6 **American Crows** flying over, a **Bald Eagle**, 4 **Steller's Jays**, 5 **Dark-eyed Juncos**, a **Red-winged Blackbird**, 7 **Spotted Towhees**, 5 **Black-capped Chickadees** and a **Hairy Woodpecker**.

Shelia and Michael Huber reported 37 **House Finches** at their feeders near Machais. Their species count of 13 also included 5 **Spotted Towhees**, 3 **Hairy Woodpeckers**, 2 **Golden-crowned Kinglets**, 7 **Varied Thrush**, a **Pileated Woodpecker**, 3 **Northern Flickers**, a **Fox Sparrow**, 13 **Dark-eyed Juncos** and 3 **Steller's Jays**.

Julie O'Donald's Brier yard drew a lot of interesting species. She reported a **Great Blue Heron**, a **Yellow-rumped Warbler**, 15 **Bushtits**, a **Killdeer** at the school field, 80 **Pine Siskins** in the trees and flying over, 6 **European Starlings**, 12 **American Robins**, 10 **American Crows** and a **Varied Thrush**.

Bob Poulin's report from along Port Susan Bay yielded 15 species, including 9 **Surf Scoters**, 30 **Barrow's Goldeneye**, 300 **Western Sandpipers**, 10 **American Robins**, 10 **Dark-eyed Juncos**, 2 **Bald Eagles**, 2 **Belted Kingfishers**, 15 **Glaucous-winged Gulls**, 5 **Hooded Mergansers** and 2 **Great Blue Herons**.

The atmosphere at Mary Sinker's home in Stanwood must be soothing with 20 **Mourning Doves** reported in January. Her total species count of 22 also included 17 **Black-capped Chickadees**, 50+ **Pine Siskins**, 2 **Evening Grosbeaks**, 2 **Great Horned Owls**, 16 **American Crows**, 50+ **Dark-eyed Juncos**, 12 **Steller's Jays**, a **Great Blue Heron** and 4 **Downy Woodpeckers**.

Topping Darlene Walker's report from Camano Island were 30 **Trumpeter Swans** spotted in a Stanwood field. She also listed 8 **Black-capped Chickadees**, 6 **Chestnut-backed Chickadees**, 2 **Bald Eagles**, a **Red-tailed Hawk**, a **Townsend's Warbler**, 2 **Red-breasted Nuthatches**, 3 **Black-headed Grosbeaks**, 5 **Fox Sparrows** and 6 **Mourning Doves** for a total species count of 19.

My report from NE Marysville included 17 **American Crows** along 100th Street, 15 **California Quail**, 20+ **House Finches**, 30-40 **European Starlings**, 300+

Snow Geese in a field near 100th (I had never spotted **Snow Geese** or **Trumpeter Swans** in the area before), 200-300 **Glaucous-winged Gulls** in the fields, 80+ **Pine Siskins** at the feeders and in the trees, 4 **Trumpeter Swans** flying over and finally, 2 **Evening Grosbeaks** at the feeder. I'd been waiting for their return for several years. My total species count was 25.



Snow Geese, by Annette Colombini

Please note: Questions were raised as to the validity of *Northwestern Crow* sightings in our area. Although they have been reported as *Northwestern Crows* in Birding highlights, they are most likely *American Crows*. John Marzluff, who spoke at a recent Audubon meeting, said the *Northwestern Crow* has been hybridized out of existence south of SE Alaska. I will question those reported as "flying over," as there is no way to verify them.

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.

Pilchuck Audubon Society
1429 Avenue D, PMB 198
Snohomish, WA 98290

Return service requested

March program meeting
Insects return to Mt. St. Helens
Featuring John Edwards,
retired UW zoology professor
Friday, March 14, 7 p.m.
Check the web for the latest info:
www.pilchuckaudubon.org
Note new location: Mariner HS Library
200 120th Street SW, Everett

**The newest issue of the
Pilchuck Audubon Profile is here!**

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