

Pilchuck Audubon Profile



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It's Birdathon time

By Hilikka Egtvedt, Birdathon Coordinator

Finally! Birdathon is here. It's time to take your most exciting, worthwhile and meaningful birding trip of the year – your Birdathon trip. And help PAS in the process.

A brief rundown: ask for pledges from relatives, friends, neighbors, and the parents of all those kids who've hit you up for their fund-raisers all these years. Then do 24 hours of birding. Report your sightings to your sponsors and collect their donations. Contact Hilikka to arrange getting the proceeds to her.

Most Thoners would say they don't need prizes – because the satisfaction they get from helping PAS is reward enough. Traditionally, though, prizes are awarded to the individual or group finding the most bird species, for the most money raised, for the most sponsors, etc. Donations are fully tax-deductible and will be used for PAS' educational and conservation efforts.

Discover how fun Birdathon can be. Sign up today. Sponsor forms are available for download from the PAS web site (click the "Birding" link) or from Hilikka Egtvedt, the Birdathon Coordinator. You can reach her at 425.347.4944 or chegtvedt@comcast.net. Forms will also be available at the May program meeting.

Welcome the Vaux's Swifts back to Washington

By Susie Schaefer, Vice President, Pilchuck Audubon Society

We need a large welcoming committee for the Vaux's Swifts when they return to Snohomish County in the coming weeks. We're calling the project "Swift Watch" and we need your help gathering data from the time the birds return in late April or early May until they head south again in late September.

The steering committee for the Save Our Swifts project includes representatives from three Audubon chapters: Pilchuck, Seattle and East Lake Washington, as well as Department of Fish and Wildlife biologists and other swift experts. We're working closely with the Monroe School District to find a way to protect the swifts' local roosting site – the chimney at Frank Wagner Elementary School – while also protecting the school's students. It's believed the chimney is the roosting site for the second largest colony of Vaux's Swifts in North America.

To make it easy for you to help us gather data, the committee has created a "swift reporting form," which you can download from the PAS web site (www.pilchuckaudubon.org). If you don't have access to the internet, please call PAS at 425.252.0926 or Susie Schaefer at 425.771.8165. Be sure to leave your name and mailing address. Forms will also be available at upcoming program meetings.

It's a simple, one-page form for you to fill out each time you

May program meeting – Fri., May 2, 7 p.m.

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.

Note 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

June program meeting

Michael Dossett

Long-time PAS member, Michael Dossett, returns to share his amazing photography with us. Don't miss it!

Friday, June 13, 7 p.m.

The Everett Firefighters Association's
Firefighters Hall, 2411 Hewitt Avenue, Everett.



observe Vaux's Swifts. The data we collect will be compiled by Larry Schwitters.

There is very little information available regarding the number and distribution of these little birds, so we are hoping many of you will participate and provide completed forms frequently. We are not only interested in observations during swifts' initial spring arrival, but also during the summer nesting season. And, of course, during fall gatherings.

Vaux's Swifts are small, plain brown birds – sometimes described as "cigars with wings." A key characteristic of this little wonder is that they don't perch. They are always flying – except when on the nest or when roosting at night.

(See "Vaux's Swifts" on page 5)

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President's message

By Mike Blackbird, President, Pilchuck Audubon Society



On a recent Tuesday morning, I was up early, working on a presentation I was to give to a key customer that afternoon. Watching Pine Siskins come to my feeder, I was frustrated that I was missing yet another opportunity to be out with the Tuesday birding group, spending the day with expert birders of Pilchuck Audubon Society.

I was reminded of Kafka's story about Poseidon, the Greek god of the sea, who has never seen the ocean because he is so busy with the paperwork required for administering it. He eagerly awaits the end of the world so he can have a look.

Though I'm an avid birder and president of Pilchuck Audubon Society, I find myself too often tied to my desk by the dictates of my corporate responsibilities. Most days, I have to be content watching birds come to feeders outside my home office window. But, with backyard birding, it is the birds that are active. I'm just a passive observer looking past my laptop.

I have never thought of birdwatching as a passive interest. Unfortunately, like most people, there days like that recent Tuesday when I'm *on* the world and not *in* it – preoccupied with writing a presentation for a key customer. That's why I have birdfeeders outside my office window: to remind me that birdwatching is not a mere pastime. Author Jonathan Rosen wrote, "Like writing itself, it's one of those activities that seem simultaneously marginal and utterly central to the business of being human and of figuring out what it means to be human."

When I was born, actuarial tables said my expectation of life was three score and ten. What actuarial tables fail to reveal is that time spent birdwatching is not subtracted from one's time on this mortal coil.

Unlike Poseidon, being only human, I can't wait for the end of the world to go birdwatching. I'm determined to defy the actuarial tables. I suspect that corporate America will survive if I take off an occasional Tuesday and go birding with a group of expert birders who are going to live a long, long time.

Calling bird photographers

If you are a birder – and a photographer – PAS is offering you a unique opportunity to gather your favorite bird photos and share them with your birding friends.

We'd like to make July's program meeting a mega birding slide show. So, pick your 10 favorite shots and e-mail them to me, your Profile editor, at annette.colombini@pilchuckaudubon.org. I'll put together a PowerPoint presentation to be shown at July's meeting.

Please make sure **you** took the photo – because I don't want to go to jail! And, please include a message with the species name, as well as where you shot the photo.

Try to limit the individual file size to 5 MB or smaller. If your files are that large, you'll need to e-mail them individually. If you have a flickr (or similar) account and your photos are available for public download, feel free to send me the URLs of your favorite shots and I'll download them for you.

Please have your photo files to me by June 10. If you have any questions, shoot me an e-mail. Thanks!

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

President	Mike Blackbird.....	425.670.2491
Vice President	Susie Schaefer.....	425.771.8165
Treasurer	Carolyn Lacy.....	360.668.2494
Secretary	Margaret Bridge.....	360.862.1694
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Program Coordinator	* Open *	
Volunteer Coordinator	* Open *	
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At Large	David Gladstone.....	425.252.0926

Committee chairs

Birdathon	Hilkka Egtvedt.....	425.347.4944
Bird Sightings	Mara Price.....	360.651.9234
Database	* Open *	
Field Trips	Art Wait.....	360.563.0181
Forest Practices	Kathy Johnson.....	360.659.7252
Hospitality	Virginia Clark.....	360.435.3750
Legal Advisor	Pete Dewell.....	425.259.6269
Membership Chair	* Open *	
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May 2008 trip calendar

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

Tuesday, May 6 Leavenworth area

Meet at 6:30 a.m. at the Monroe Park and Ride on Highway 2, half-mile west of the fairgrounds. We saw 54 species last year, including many rarely seen around home. We will go up Icicle Creek and certainly try for the Calliope Hummingbird and Lazuli Bunting in Camas Meadows. Pack a lunch.

Trip leader: Virginia Clark, 360.435.3750

Tuesday, May 13 Everett Waterfront

Meet at 7:30 a.m. at Legion Park, off North Marine Drive, Everett. Last year's trip yielded 49 species including Osprey, Peregrine Falcon, Western Sandpiper, Dunlin and Yellow-headed Blackbird. Pack a lunch.

Trip leader: Art Wait, 360.563.0181

Tuesday, May 20 Lyman-Hamilton/Rasar Park

Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Quilceda Village Wal-Mart west of Marysville (I5 exit 200). Park away from the store, to the east, near Quilceda Blvd. (next to I5). We'll venture along the Skagit River and hope to see raptors and waterfowl. Pack a lunch.

Leaders: Art Wait, 360.563.0181; Virginia Clark, 360.435.3750

Tuesday, May 27 Camano Island

Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Quilceda Village Wal-Mart west of Marysville (I5 exit 200). Park away from the store, to the east, near Quilceda Blvd. (next to I5). Camano has so many good birding areas, we can never visit all of them in a day. But, we'll surely go to English Boom for Purple Martin and Osprey. Pack a lunch.

Leaders: Art Wait, 360.563.0181; Virginia Clark, 360.435.3750

Tuesday, June 3 Big Four Meadows Potluck

Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Frontier Village Park and Ride (9600 Market Place). From State Highway 9, turn eastbound onto Market Place (the street Target is on), then north into the Park and Ride just west of Target. A beautiful setting for our annual potluck bird trip. Bring something to share. Expect swallows, hummingbirds, swifts, warblers, vireos and dippers. A trailhead pass will be needed, but is obtainable en route.

Trip leader: Virginia Clark, 360.435.3750

Tuesday, June 10 Yakima Canyon, Wenas Valley

Meet at 6:30 a.m. at the Monroe Park and Ride on Highway 2, half-mile west of the fairgrounds. Mid-May through June are the best birding times for this area. An adventure it will be. Pack lunch and liquids and expect a long day.

Leaders: Margaret Bridge, 360.862.1694
Wilma Bayes, 360.629.2028

Tuesday, June 17 North Whidbey Island

Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Quilceda Village Wal-Mart west of Marysville (I5 exit 200). Park away from the store, to the east, near Quilceda Blvd. (next to I5). Highlights of this trip always include waterfowl, shorebirds and seabirds. Seventy species last year. Pack a lunch.

Leaders: Art Wait, 360.563.0181; Virginia Clark, 360.435.3750

Saturday, June 21 Jim Creek Sanctuary

Meet at 9 a.m. at the Twin Rivers Park parking lot in Arlington, SR-530 at the Stilly. We'll carpool from there; parking at the sanctuary is limited. This diverse part of the Stilly landscape was bequeathed to PAS by Carleen Adams. It's seen few human visitors in the past 15 years (bring pruners or loppers and gloves; dress for bush travel across rough terrain). We'll explore the sanctuary and work down to Jim Creek, an important salmon stream. Dave Ward, Principal Watershed Steward for Snohomish County, will provide interpretation along the way. Come prepared for forest and riparian birds.

Trip leader: Dave Ward, 360.794.7552

Tuesday, June 24 Bob Hierman Park, Ebey Island

Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Snohomish Park and Ride (junction of Highway 9 and Bickford Avenue) or at the park at 8 a.m. Should see warblers, yellow throat, raptors, kinglets and maybe tanagers. If time permits, Ebey Island is full of surprises. Come look.

Trip leader: Art Wait, 360.563.0181

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.

Birds of Ferry County, here we come!

By Susie Schaefer, Vice President, Pilchuck Audubon Society



You might see a Bobolink in Ferry County. Photo by Michael Woodruff

Once again, we are planning a trek to Ferry County. The trip is scheduled for June 6-8. It's a long way to Ferry County, so it will take us three days.

We will leave Snohomish County **very** early Friday morning, June 6, and drive over the North Cascades Highway. We'll make a couple of brief birding stops along the way.

By early afternoon, it will be on to Okanogan County, where we visit PAS member David Gladstone and see the many birds at his place in Aneas Valley. Then we head for

Curlew and Republic, where we will explore and get settled into our accommodations.

Saturday, we will spend a fantastic day birding on private properties owned by several friends. Saturday night, we will more than likely have a barbeque at my friends' in Curlew and do a little owl calling. Sunday, we'll visit more special places in Ferry County and then head home via Coulee City on Highway 2.

If you're interested in coming along, please call Susie Schaefer at 435.771.8165 for more information and to register. We need to carpool as much as possible and need to make decisions about accommodations.

Great Eastern Washington birding, fun and adventure are guaranteed!

Smart Growth report

By Kristin Kelly, Smart Growth Director

County council working hard at positive change. The new leadership on the Snohomish County Council is already working for positive change on a number of important land use and environmental issues. Council Chair Dave Somers, along with new members Mike Cooper and Brian Sullivan, have shown their colors. And the colors are bright. The public will benefit significantly from their strong leadership around smart growth principles, environmental protection, and better control of the cost of new development to current taxpayers.

These council members have voted consistently for the common good on two important issues: first, a wise decision to halt expansion of Harvey Airfield into the Snohomish River floodplain. I believe this is the first of many decisions aimed at protecting floodplains from unnecessary development.

Second, Somers worked for four votes on an emergency moratorium on fully contained communities; specifically, a new city proposed for the west bank of Lake Roesiger or in the rural area around Lake Goodwin. That vote failed for lack of a fourth vote (Somers, Cooper and Sullivan voted for the moratorium), but Somers will push the moratorium in the next several months. We commend Somers for this bold leadership. We ask he continue to lead on these important issues:

Rural cluster subdivisions. PAS is concerned about the impact these developments are having on rural areas. The density bonus issue, in particular, is of concern. The county planning department has repeatedly said it can't deal with this issue during this code update.

We disagree. In theory, allowing more density in exchange for more open space protection sounds good, but the amount of housing being added to rural areas is excessive and does not meet county codes. The current policy allows for a "modest density bonus," but most subdivisions are getting maximum density bonuses. There are also issues with how these subdivisions are affecting water quality and quantity and rural character. The council will review the code updates – proposed by the planning department and approved by the planning commission – in early May. We will be there to request the density issue be addressed this year.

Urban residential design standards. The planning commission will hold a public meeting on April 22 to discuss updates to the urban residential design standards. The commission's position is unknown. However, history shows the commissioners usually just pass on the staff's recommendations to the council. The council will not review these codes until June. We will ask the council to strengthen the codes further to deal with the concerns of urban residents, especially as they relate to existing neighborhood character, water quality of urban watersheds and tree retention.

Shoreline master plan update. This update has been stalled for three years! Somers adopted a strong Critical Areas Ordinance in 2007, and we believe he will lead the other council members to a strong shoreline master plan, as well.

Transit oriented development. How do we really protect rural and resource lands amid constant development pressure? We need to ensure cities and urban areas develop into livable communities that provide means for sustainable lifestyles. One issue is how to get cities to incorporate more mixed-use, transit-oriented development into their redevelopment plans.

In Edmonds, for instance, discussions and planning on a waterfront redevelopment have begun. This may be one of the most important land use issues the city will face.

We are pleased Edmonds is leading the county in reducing global warming impacts with the establishment of a Climate Protection Committee. This is the kind of leadership we need. It will move Edmonds toward solving some of the most pressing issues of our day: global warming, transportation and affordable housing. If Edmonds is successful in redeveloping their waterfront in a way that actually helps with these concerns, it will also meet the needs of future residents, bring tourism and aid economic development. Most importantly, it will be a model for other cities in the county and the region. We want to stress the importance of the city adopting policies and regulations that will master plan the waterfront and other important redevelopment opportunities, and not be guided by just the plans of developers. Land use planning must address long-term solutions, not just short-term gains.

Some Edmonds residents probably believe the development as it exists today isn't all that bad. They clearly aren't looking past their lifetimes. Inner city redevelopment is vital if we are to attack global warming, transportation solutions, affordable housing and economic sustainability. Studies show driving cars creates the highest rate of carbon emissions, which is accelerates global warming. The future of your children and grandchildren must begin with today's leadership.

Providing effective mass transit and creating more affordable housing in mixed use, transit-oriented development can happen with political will and vision. Whether or not you believe in global warming, nobody would dispute the fact that we need to work on providing effective mass transit and more affordable housing in our cities.

Plans for a multi-modal transportation hub, plus redevelopment to provide a mixed use urban center for housing, retail, and open space, will not only make Edmonds a wonderful place to live, it will make it a wonderful place for people to visit and spend money. Current and future leadership must keep the city on that track. Whether Edmonds takes the lead or not, applying better land use practices and smart growth principles will soon be a necessity.

Developing and redeveloping urban areas is a challenge – an important one that shouldn't be diminished. There is resistance to change in our cities, especially when change means higher intensity land uses and adding building height. To be successful, it must bring all stakeholders together: environmentalists, transit supporters, builders and developers. PAS aims to make cities more livable by building support for decisions that encourage good urban development.

Pilchuck Audubon, along with Futurewise, supports good urban development by focusing on the following strategies:

- Promoting decisions that encourage sensible development and redevelopment and increased densities in urban centers while fostering distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place.
- Evaluating and initiating or supporting reforms that reduce barriers and disincentives to desirable development and redevelopment.
- Promoting infrastructure investments that support desirable development and redevelopment.
- Educating the public about the environmental and community benefits of urban development and redevelopment.

Volunteers needed

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 serves on the Pilchuck Audubon Society's Board 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 to 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 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.

Database administrator and membership chair

Two important PAS volunteer positions are now open: database administrator and membership chair.

Maintaining the membership database is vital to the organization. It requires good computer skills – especially familiarity with Microsoft Word and Excel. Some database experience would be helpful, but the good news is salesforce.com donated a user-friendly software to help us. Most of the setup and customization is completed and Ileen will be available to train and help her replacement.

The membership position requires a commitment of about 10 hours per month. A membership renewal program for expired members is much needed and would probably increase the commitment to 15-20 hours per month.

It would be ideal if someone with good computer skills volunteered to take over the database and someone else volunteered to handle updating the membership information.

If you're interested or have additional questions, please contact Ileen Weber at 425.512.0760.

Vaux's Swifts ...

(continued from page 1)



Vaux's Swifts return to their roost in Portland, Oregon, by Ariel Holman

Because of this – and because Vaux's Swifts can be seen in the mountains catching insects while flying over lakes and rivers – it's easy to confuse them with swallows. They are similar in size, but Vaux's Swifts usually fly high in the sky – unless they're feeding on insects.

So, please be careful in your identification. If you have questions or are concerned about identification, please include your questions and as much information as possible on the forms you send to Larry. In addition, we can answer questions and will have information available at PAS program meetings in May, June, July and September.

We, along with other concerned citizens, have formed a community group in Monroe. We are meeting regularly and working on ways to educate the community about swifts, as well as planning and building artificial chimneys and nest boxes.

In addition, we're organizing a "Swifts Night Out" community celebration in September. If you're interested in joining our group, please check the PAS web site or contact Susie Schaefer for the meeting schedule.

And, remember to be on the lookout for these flying cigars!

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

Upcoming local and regional events

Bike Commute Challenge

Entire month of May Throughout Snohomish County

Bicycles are among the most efficient vehicles on earth, saving money, the environment and time at the gym – all at once. Snohomish County Bike to Work and School events give first-time bike commuters, die-hard regulars and fair-weather cyclists a chance to ride and celebrate together.

The challenge is to leave your car at home at least once a week and give healthy commuting a try. Organize a team and you can earn a t-shirt, win a pizza party or pedal your way to the “biking-est new commuters” prize.

Learn more at www.communitytransit.org/go2/biketowork

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.

Community health and green living fair

May 10 Lynnwood, Washington

Peruse booths and displays about native plants, recycling, backyard wildlife, eco-building and more. There will also be seminars, kid's activities, free five-minute massages, blood pressure checks and more. Bring your burned out fluorescent light bulbs or small household batteries for safe disposal. Fair runs 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at Trinity Lutheran Church, 6215 196th Street, Lynnwood.



Puget Sound Bird Fest

September 12-14

Edmonds, Washington

Puget Sound Bird Fest in Edmonds is moving – to a different time of year. After three years, the event is moving from May to September. It will still feature speakers, guided walks, field trips, a marketplace, backyard wildlife habitat tours and the “On Wing” art show. So mark your calendar to be in Edmonds on September 12-14 to celebrate birds and nature.

The weather in September is sunny, so chances are good you will see some delightful – and perhaps unexpected – birds. On the waterfront and Puget Sound, best bets are Common Tern, Parasitic Jaeger and Red-necked Phalarope.

Wooded sites like Yost Park could yield migrating warblers or maybe you'll spot a Hermit Thrush feeding on ripe berries. Pectoral Sandpipers might show up at the Edmonds Marsh, along with shorebirds such as dowitchers and yellowlegs.

Bird Fest will kick off Friday, September 12, with the “On wing” artists' reception. The speaker will be artist Barton Rulon. Rulon lives and works on Whidbey Island. His art has been exhibited in museums and galleries around the world.

For more information on Puget Sound Bird Fest, visit the festival web site at www.pugetsoundbirdfest.org.

You might try birding without binoculars

By Kerry Neijstrom, Education Committee Chair



Some women would never leave home without their favorite purse on their shoulder. Most birders never leave home without binoculars around our neck. They're our favorite accessories. And, to some, birding without binoculars is equivalent to playing tennis without a racket.

If you don't have them, no doubt you'll end up wishing you did. Here's how it might look for me:

I decide to walk to the store. I see my binoculars and think I won't need them. They'll just cause people to stare and wonder if I'm a terrorist as I walk by a flock of starlings or pigeons.

I leave without them.

Halfway to the store, I hear a bird song. Definitely not a starling or pigeon. It sounds familiar, but it's not a song I hear often enough to remember. I see something hopping from branch to branch high up in an evergreen tree.

If only I had my binoculars.

My options for dealing with my predicament:

1. Be irritated for not having the binoculars with me
2. Vow never to do it again
3. Run back to grab them and hope the bird is still there
4. Try to identify the bird without them

Usually, my instinct is to do the first three. Although my recommendation is to try option 4 first (identifying the bird without binoculars), then 3 and maybe 2, but don't worry so much about option 1.

At a hawk migration count, I noticed some of the best birders hardly used their binoculars. They often didn't need them. As useful as binoculars are, birds can often be identified without them.

When I have binoculars, I tend to look for the most obvious field marks first. If I can see those, too often I'll move on to looking for another bird. If you don't have binoculars, you're forced to study a bird more thoroughly. You have to go back to the basics of birding:

(See “Binoculars” on page 8)

Birding highlights

February 26, 2008–March 25, 2008

By Mara Price, Sightings Coordinator

I guess spring is still around the corner with all the snow and cold weather we've had. The Varied Thrush seem to enjoy it and the Robins are toughing it out. Our Pine Siskins are still here along with the Evening Grosbeaks in increasing numbers. The Evening Grosbeaks usually winter in the southern half of the country and head northwest in the early spring. They nest and raise their young in Western Canada. Also, the swallows are returning – that's always a good sign.

Hilkka Egtvedt spotted a lonely **Rufous Hummingbird** at her Mukilteo home on March 13, but it did not stay. Her total species count of 28 also included 60 **American Crows** flying over, 17 **Dark-eyed Juncos**, 2 **Golden-crowned Sparrows**, a **White-throated Sparrow**, a **Fox Sparrow**, 20 **Pine Siskins**, a **Red-breasted Nuthatch**, a single male **Anna's Hummingbird**, 2 **Bald Eagles** and 3 **Violet-Green Swallows**.

Adeline Gildow is still reporting **Snow Geese** and **Trumpeter Swans** from her Camano Island location along Juniper Beach. She reported at least 400 **Snow Geese** and 300 **Trumpeter Swans**. She stopped feeding her backyard birds for a couple of weeks because she spotted a male House Finch with hanta virus. Her total species count of 24 included 8 **Bushtits**, 5 **Great Blue Herons**, 3 **Mourning Doves**, 2 **White-crowned Sparrows**, 3 **Red-winged Blackbirds**, 11 **House Finches**, and 3 **Bald Eagles** on the beach.

American Goldfinches topped the list at Kriss Erickson's Everett location. She listed 8, six males and two females. She also reported 3 **Northern Flickers**, 13 **Bushtits**, 2 **Sharp-shinned Hawks**, 11 **Black-capped Chickadees**, 12 **House Finches**, 12 **Mallards** in her yard, 2 **Double-crested Cormorants** and 30 **American Coots** near Lowell for a total species count of 21.

Verna Hisey's report from Lake Stevens listed a **Mountain Chickadee**. The Mountain Chickadee is similar to the Black-capped Chickadee except for a white stripe over the eye. They are usually found in eastern Washington. She also reported 7 **Black-capped Chickadees**, 4 **Varied Thrush**, 4 **Steller's Jays**, 2 **Bald Eagles**, a



Snowy Owl, by Ellen Hartmeier



Bewick's Wren, by Minette Layne



Barred Owl, by Gale McCullough

Northern Flicker, 2 **Spotted Towhees**, 11 **House Sparrows**, a **Red-tailed Hawk**, 5 **American Crows** and 3 **Rock Doves** for a total species count of 17.

Shelia and Michael Huber reported four different woodpeckers from their home near Machias. They listed 2 **Hairy Woodpeckers**, 3 **Downy Woodpeckers**, a **Pileated Woodpecker** and 2 **Northern Flickers**. Their total species count of 20 also included 18 **Pine Siskins**, 6 **Spotted Towhees**, 5 **Steller's Jays**, a **Varied Thrush**, 9 **Dark-eyed Juncos**, a **Fox Sparrow** and a **Sharp-shinned Hawk**.

A **Western Screech Owl** has been visiting the woods at Julie O'Donald's Brier location all month. She also reported a **Barred Owl** along with 4 **Pileated Woodpeckers** on the telephone poles along her road, 2 **Winter Wrens**, 2 **Anna's Hummingbirds**, 8 **American Robins**, a **Bewick's Wren**, a **Red-breasted Nuthatch** and a **Killdeer** for a total species count of 21.

Mary Sinker spotted her favorite owl, a **Snowy Owl**, while riding her horse at the Pilchuck Tree Farm on March 22. It was a life list bird for her. Her report from Stanwood included 5 **Varied Thrush**, 20 **American Robins**, 22 **Band-tailed Pigeons** at the feeders, 5 **Red-tailed Hawks**, 14 **Steller's Jays**, 20 **Red-winged Blackbirds** in her yard and at the feeders, 2 **Great Horned Owls**, 3 **Evening Grosbeaks**, a **Brown Creeper** and 2 **Killdeer** for a total species count of 32.

Annette Colombini spotted a **Sharp-shinned Hawk** swooping through her yard to grab a **Pine Siskin**. It stayed around for about 10 minutes waiting for the birds to return. Her report from Marysville, near Cedar Crest Golf Course, listed 19 species that included 3 **Varied Thrush**, an **American Goldfinch**, 30+ **Pine Siskins**, a **Killdeer**, 5 **House Sparrows**, 6 **Dark-eyed Juncos**, 2 **Red-winged Blackbirds** and 2 **Canada Geese** flying over.

(See "Birding Highlights" on page 8)

Birding highlights ...

(continued from page 7)

Gail Dibernardo's Brier location was busy with hummingbirds and woodpeckers. Her report included a **Rufous Hummingbird**, 5 **Anna's Hummingbirds**, 2 **Red-breasted Sapsuckers**, 2 **Pileated Woodpeckers**, 2 **Hairy Woodpeckers**, a **Townsend's Warbler**, 2 **Red-breasted Nuthatches**, 20 **Pine Siskins**, 2 male **American Goldfinches** and 26 **American Robins** for a total species count of 21.

Carole and Larry Beason reported 12 **Evening Grosbeaks** in their yard near Lake Bosworth. They also reported 8 **Common Mergansers** on the water, 36 **Pine Siskins**, 12 **Tree Swallows**, 6 **Violet-Green Swallows**, a **Varied Thrush**, 2 **Buffleheads**, a **Red-breasted Nuthatch** and 13 **Canada Geese** for a total species count of 35.

The **Evening Grosbeaks** were around most of the month at my home in



Canada Goose, by Arnette Colombini

Marysville. I counted 9 on the feeders and in the yard. My report also included 10 **American Robins** along the road, 2 **Hairy Woodpeckers**, a **Pileated Woodpecker**, 2 **Song Sparrows**, 2 **Red-winged Blackbirds** at the Marysville YMCA, 30+ **Pine Siskins**, 20 **House Finches**, 15 **California Quail** and 9 **Dark-eyed Juncos** for a total species count of 22.

I am very sorry to report that our long time contributor, Bob Poulin, will no longer be submitting sightings from his home along the beach on the Tulalip Reservation, due to illness. We will miss his input and wish him the best.

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.

Binoculars ...

(continued from page 6)

Listen carefully to its call and its song. The more you practice listening, the better you become at birding by ear.

Observe how it's foraging. Does it spend most of the time perched, and occasionally fly out to catch an insect? Or is it finding insects on the undersides of leaves? If it's a shorebird, does it probe for food or is it picking around rocks?

Is it in a flock or alone? Some species are more likely to be found in large groups and others alone. Some birds may be more likely to be with a group at certain times of the year.

Watch how it flies. How does it flap its wings? Does it fly in a straight line or does it oscillate like a woodpecker or a goldfinch?

Pay attention to habitat. Is it high up in the canopy, or is it on or close to the ground? Is it near freshwater or saltwater?

Shape and movements. What is the general shape and build? Does it hold its tail up like a wren? Does it display any other characteristic movements, such as the bobbing of a Spotted Sandpiper?

You still might not be able to identify the bird. But, it may help tune your birding skills. And it also may prepare you for another frustrating situation: when you have your binoculars, but the light is so terrible they don't help you at all.

Trivia question: *What is Gloger's Rule?*

- Birds breeding in warmer, more humid climates tend to be darker in color than those in cooler and drier climates.
- Birds that migrate longer distances tend to have longer wings than closely related species that migrate shorter distances.
- Birds that have larger clutches tend to have shorter average lifespans.
- A birder will tend to misidentify birds more often in front of an admired expert that they'd like to impress.

Answer: A

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

May program meeting

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

Featuring Taldi Walter, Alaska Outreach Coordinator for the NAS.

Friday, May 2, 7 p.m.

Check the web for the latest info:
www.pilchuckaudubon.org

Note new location:
 Lauterbach Room at the
 Snohomish Fire Station,
 1525 Avenue D, Snohomish

From I-5: take exit 194 onto SR 2 (Wenatchee-Snohomish exit). Cross the trestle, keep right towards Snohomish. Take the SR 9 exit (approx. milepost 5). Turn right (south) on SR 9 and travel about three miles. Take the Snohomish exit onto Avenue D. Turn left and continue about three blocks south on Avenue D. The fire station is on your left (gray block building with big blue doors). Parking is available behind the station.

Art benefits PAS

A special thank you to the three artists – Martha Brouwer, Sandra Kahket and Cheryl Richey – whose show at Gallery North in Edmonds benefited Pilchuck Audubon Society. During the show, the artists donated 10% of their commissions to PAS. And, Sandra Kahler's painting of an American Coot was chosen as the poster bird for the 2008 Puget Sound Bird Fest, scheduled for September in Edmonds.

Mention you're a PAS member and we'll donate a portion of your purchase back to Pilchuck Audubon.

Three locations to serve you:

Everett 4821 Evergreen Way 425-252-2220 Mon-Sat, 10-6 Sun, noon-4	Lake Forest Park 171 Bothell Way NE 206-367-1950 Mon-Sat, 10-6 Sun, noon-5	Monroe 19914 SR 2 360-863-9173 Mon-Sat, 9:30-6 Sun, 11-5
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Wild Birds Unlimited®

Audubon membership information

Joint membership in National Audubon Society (NAS) and Pilchuck Audubon Society (PAS) includes National Audubon Society's quarterly magazine *Audubon* and Pilchuck Audubon Society's *Profile* newsletter for one year. Cost is \$20 for an Introductory Membership or \$35 for renewals. When you join National Audubon Society, you automatically become a member of Pilchuck Audubon Society.

However, PAS receives *none* of your national dues to support its programs. Local membership in Pilchuck Audubon Society includes a one-year subscription (10 issues) to Pilchuck Audubon Society's *Profile* newsletter. Cost is \$25. A special limited income category is also available for \$16.

Local PAS membership

- New member\$25
- Renewal\$25
- Lifetime PAS member..... \$1000
 - 10 monthly payments of \$100
 - 4 quarterly payments of \$250
 - 1 payment of \$1000
- Donation \$ _____

Make check payable to:
Pilchuck Audubon Society

Mail your check and this form to:
PAS, Colleen Weber, Membership Chair
1429 Avenue D, PMB 198
Snohomish, WA 98290

NAS membership

(includes PAS membership)

- Introductory membership \$20

Make check payable to:
National Audubon Society

Mail your check and this form to:
PAS, Colleen Weber, Membership Chair
1429 Avenue D, PMB 198
Snohomish, WA 98290

NAS renewal

(includes PAS renewal)

- Renewal \$35

Make check payable to:
National Audubon Society

Mail your check and this form to:
NAS, Membership Data Center
POB 52529
Boulder, CO 80322-2529

- I'd like to save PAS money and read the *Profile* on the web at www.pilchuckaudubon.org. Please don't mail it to me. I've included my email address at right so you can let me know when each issue is available.
- Please contact me about volunteer opportunities.
- I am interested in the Conservation Committee.

Name: _____

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Phone: _____

Email: _____