Suiattle EA released for public comment

By Allen Gibbs, Conservation Chair, Pilchuck Audubon Society



The Suiattle River Road Environmental Assessment (EA) was released for public review and comment on March 16. A public meeting is scheduled for March 29, from 6-8:30 p.m., at the Everett Firefighters Hall, 2411 Hewitt Avenue. This is the same venue PAS uses for most monthly program meetings.

The EA was prepared by the Western Federal Lands Highway Division of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in partnership with the Mt. Baker–Snoqualmie National Forest. The EA proposes to repair flood washout sites on the Suiattle River Road. The EA analyzes impacts of the proposed work.

According to the Federal Highway Administration web site, the project could reopen vehicle access to seven major national forest trailheads, two campgrounds, a public rental cabin, as well as dispersed camping, fishing, hunting and gathering areas. It would also include upgraded access to state, private and tribal lands. Current access on the closed road is available by foot, horse, bicycle and motorcycle.

A year ago, PAS's opinion of the proposal (as it then stood) was that it would destroy several acres of old growth forest – important to Marbled Murrelet habitat – imperil endangered fish habitat and degrade what is presently an all-too-rare low-elevation, relatively flat and beautiful river trail.

You can view, download or print the 220-page EA here or here.

Hardcopies are available at the Darrington Ranger Station. Review copies are available at the Darrington Library and Everett Public Library branches on Hoyt and Evergreen Way.

The public meeting on March 29 is informal, with one-on-one conversations among interested persons and public agency officials. The public comment period is March 18 to April 20. You may send comments via e-mail to wfl.suiattleriverroad@dot. gov or by mail to Federal Highway Administration, 610 East Fifth Street, Vancouver, Washington 98661.

PAS members are encouraged to attend the public meeting and to provide written comment.

Background

PAS joined with the North Cascades Conservation Council and Lynnwood civil engineer, Bill Lider, in a lawsuit last April, seeking to halt repair of the Suiattle River Road. The complaint asserted the Federal Highway Administration had, among a number of things, not fully met requirements for a NEPA analysis to determine environmental impacts of the proposed work. FHWA had decided the minimal analysis for a Categorical Exclusion (CE) was sufficient.

(See "Suiattle" on page 11)

April program meeting Friday, April 13, 7 p.m.

One swallow doesn't make it spring: a look at migrating swallows

Join Frances Wood for a lively presentation on the five swallows, one martin and one swift regularly found in our area. She'll cover facts, as well as folklore surrounding these small, but mighty, long-distance flyers. She'll make suggestions for attracting swallows to your backyard and how to keep them returning each spring.

Everett Firefighters Hall 2411 Hewitt Avenue, Everett

Please note: Parking at the hall will be limited for this meeting, as the firemen will be using the east half of the lot. If you can, please carpool. If you are physically able, please park on the street and walk to the hall.

For more information, call 425.252.0926

Watch www.pilchuckaudubon.org for the most up-to-date information.

Correction

Last month's *Profile* neglected to give credit to Carol Riddell for starting the Purple Martin nesting project in 2004. Carol and Kevin Li installed natural gourds at the Edmonds Marina in 2004. In 2009, Carol and Duane Karna replaced them with plastic gourds, which Carol donated. Pilchuck Audubon regrets the omission and thanks Carol, Kevin and Duane for their work in support of avian habitat.

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President's message

By Mike Blackbird, President, Pilchuck Audubon Society



This is my last column as president of Pilchuck Audubon Society. That's not to say it's my last column in the newsletter. Just my last one as president. I thought it would be a good opportunity to review my tenure as president.

Napoleon purportedly once said about his generals: "I have plenty of clever generals, but just give me a lucky one." As president of Pilchuck Audubon, how clever I might be is debatable, but I've certainly been lucky. I've been favored to be associated with exceptional board members that bring varied life experiences, offering insightful and wise counsel, assuring Pilchuck Audubon's status as a preeminent voice in Washington's environmental community.

To be frank, I've been fortunate to be surrounded by competent women. Vice President Susie Schaefer, utterly likable, utterly competent. Secretary Kathleen Snyder, extolling energy, commitment, possessing shear organizational skill. Treasurer Carolyn Lacy, impeccable, a genuine uptick in sensibility. Membership Chair Margaret Bridge, employing her public policy experience with wit, directness and intelligence. Smart Growth Director Kristy Kelly, exhibiting political talent and the gift of persuasion.

This's not to say that Conservation Chair, Allen Gibbs, and At-large Board Member, Jay Ward, bring less to the board. Far from it. Allen's career with the forest service conveys an understanding of how to navigate the bureaucracies of local, state and federal governments – a decided advantage when dealing with these entities, which we frequently do. Jay's life experience as an Alaska fisherman generates a sensible, practical perspective important in board decision making.

The bottom line is that a dedicated and energetic board has positioned Pilchuck Audubon in a strong leadership position to address environmental issues important in the health and preservation of Snohomish County's environment. As the only Audubon chapter supporting a Smart Growth program, Pilchuck Audubon has fended off assaults on the Growth Management Act.

Pilchuck Audubon led the way in establishing the Port Susan Bay Important Bird Area. Determination was the key word in seeing the Port Gardner Bay Osprey Project come to fruition. The Monroe Vaux's Swift Project has gained nationwide recognition and was recently featured in *Smithsonian* magazine. These are all worthy projects that burnished Pilchuck Audubon's image to a fine luster.

One of the first actions I requested when I joined the Pilchuck Audubon board was to do an audit to determine where we stood fiscally so we could define a path to financial stability.

One of our early decisions was to close our unstaffed storefront office and create a virtual office. Doing so put an end to a \$600 per month outlay with little or no return. We moved our important records and equipment to a readily-accessible storage unit. When we closed our storefront office, we donated our large conference table to the Sno-Isle Co-op for its conference room – with one stipulation: that we get to visit it once a month for our board meetings.

We also institutionalized sending four appeal letters to members each year, two supporting Smart Growth and two for

(See "Blackbird" on page 10)

About Pilchuck Audubon Society

The Pilchuck Audubon *Profile*, official newsletter of Pilchuck Audubon Society is published monthly.

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 pas. profile@gmail.com 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.

To contact Pilchuck Audubon Society, call 425.252.0926.

The *Profile* is 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	Kathleen Snyder	
Conservation	Allen Gibbs	
Membership Chair	Margaret Bridge	360.862.1694
Avian Science	* Open * * Open *	
Development	* Open *	
Member at Large	Jay Ward	425.923.0005
Consultant	David Gladstone	

Committoe abaire

Hilkka Egtvedt	425.347.4944
Mara Price	360.722.5752
Laura Zalesky	425.337.2479
* Open *	
Kathy Johnson	360.659.7252
Virginia Clark	360.435.3750
Pete Dewell	206.281.8082
Annette Colombini	.425.501.8125
* Open *	
Judy Alles	.360.793.1343
* Open *	
	Art Wait

Staff

Smart Growth	Kristin Kelly	425.923.8625

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Trip calendar

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

Tuesday, April 3

Mill Creek and vicinity

Meet at 8 a.m. at the Lynnwood Walmart lot at 1400 164th Street SW (I-5, exit 183). Park at the edge of the lot, away from the store, to the west. This trip will include Silver Lake, Martha Lake, Rhody Ridge Arboretum, North Creek Park and whatever else we discover. John is expert on this location. Pack a lunch.

Leaders: Virginia Clark, 360.435.3750

John dePlace, 425.357.0944

Tuesday, April 10 South Whidbey Island

Meet at 7:15 a.m. at the Eastmont Park and Ride (east side of I-5 at exit 189). We'll aim for the 8 a.m. ferry from Mukilteo. Crockett Lake is always exciting and Whidbey always beautiful. Pack a lunch.

Leaders: Wilma Bayes, 360.629.2028

Virginia Clark, 360.435.3750

Sunday, April 15 Wiley Slough and Samish Flats

Done with your taxes? Celebrate by birding with us! Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Quilceda Village Walmart west of Marysville (I–5, exit 200). Park away from store, to the east, near Quilceda Blvd. and next to I–5. We'll carpool to Wiley Slough in Skagit County and walk the trails. There will likely be mud, so bring your hiking boots. We'll look and listen for marsh birds and shore birds. Then we'll drive a short distance further north to the Samish Flats in search of raptors. This will be a half-day or full-day hike, depending on the will of the group. Pack a lunch and snacks for the trail. Discovery Pass is required.

Leader: Terry Nightingale, 206.619.2383, tnight@pobox.com

Tuesday, April 17 Deception Pass area

Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Quilceda Village Walmart west of Marysville (I-5, exit 200). Park away from the store, to the east, near Quilceda Blvd. and next to I-5. We will visit all the lakes, beaches and trails near the pass. Art always enjoys this area and the birds usually cooperate. Pack a lunch.

Leader: Virginia Clark, 360.435.3750

Mark your calendar for 2012 chapter picnic



The annual Pilchuck Audubon picnic is scheduled for Sunday, August 12, at Langus Riverfront Park in Everett. Mark your calendar now and watch for further details in upcoming issues of the *Profile*.

Last year's picnic featured a fun bird walk to Spencer Island, delicious food, fun, games and more. You don't want to miss it! Sunday, April 22

Fort Casey State Park

Meet at 8 a.m. at Everett Mall – in the back, near the transit facility by LA Fitness. Highly varied habitat – from windswept shoreline to high bluffs, fresh to brackish estuarine marsh and shady woodlands. All day. Pack a snack. We'll probably stop somewhere on Whidbey Island for socializing over a late lunch. Plus, we'll do a little pelagic birding on the ferry crossings! Annual Discovery Pass \$35 per car or \$16 daily pass is required. Ferry toll is \$17.80 per car round trip.

Leader: Jonathan Blubaugh, 425.244.7633, aracfi@msn.com

Tuesday, April 24

Nisqually Wildlife Refuge

Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Lynnwood Walmart lot at 1400 164th Street SW (I-5, exit 183). Park at the edge of the lot, away from the store, to the west. This will be a long road trip of some 70 miles each way. Once at the refuge, we'll walk several miles to fully experience the delights and surprises of its marshes, tide flats, grasslands and riparian woodlands. Two hundred species have been seen here. Pack a lunch and expect a long, adventurous day.

Leader: Virginia Clark, 360.435.3750

Walla Walla birding

June 7-11

The trip to Walla Walla is still on. But, please note the dates have changed to June 7-11. The birding will be even better then. Our plan is to look for the Green-tailed Towhee in the Blue Mountains – possibly the only place in Washington to find them. Susie has been working with the Blue Mountain Audubon chapter and is following their web site. We'll spend three days birding there and two days of travel to Walla Walla. This area is unique and offers great birding. The trip will be limited to three cars (12 people). Please contact Susie Schaefer if you're interested: susie.schaefer@comcast.net.

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.

Call 24 hours a day for help for injured wildlife

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: Lynnwood, 425-787-2500, ext. 817

Birdathon is fun and easy. You should try it!

Have fun, be entertained and get smarter

Olympic BirdFest March 30-April 1

Sequim, Washington

Join the Olympic BirdFest 2012 celebration at the Dungeness River Audubon Center, March 30-April 1. The stage is set ... quiet bays and estuaries, sandy beaches, a long sand spit and an island bird sanctuary on the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Wetlands, tide pools, rainforests and lush valleys. Enjoy guided birding trips, boat tours and a gala banquet.

Come bird with us and experience the spectacular landscapes of the Olympic Peninsula ... you just might go home with a new bird for your life list! Check out the offerings at **www. olympicbirdfest.org** or call for a brochure: 360.681.4076.

The way of trout: a conservation classic Friday, April 20 NW Stream Center, Everett

Opening day of trout season is Saturday, April 28. Before you hit the lakes, consider learning about trout habits and habitat requirements. Bring the whole family to the Northwest Stream Center at 7 p.m. on Friday, April 20, to see the classic 1969 film by James Wilkie for Trout Unlimited: *The way of trout*.

Breathtaking underwater photography lets you look into the world of the rainbow trout. You'll never forget this great fish's day-to-day fight to survive ... from predators including aquatic insects, other fish, birds and animals.

After the film, enjoy a tour of the Northwest Stream Center's trout stream exhibit. Plus the Avid Angler Flyfishing Outfitters have donated a pair of men's and women's felt bottom boots to be raffled off, along with an Avid Angler hat. Proceeds benefit the Elevated Nature Walk Challenge Grant!

This is a free event, but reservations are required. Space is limited, so call 425.316.8592 to reserve your spot.

The Northwest Stream Center is located in McCollum Park, Everett. Take the 128th Street exit from I-5 and drive east for one-half mile. Turn right into the entrance of the park and drive to the south end. The Northwest Stream Center is the last structure at the end of the road.

Grays Harbor Shorebird Festival May 4-6 Hoquiam, Washington

Each spring, hundreds of thousands of shorebirds stop to rest and feed in Grays Harbor estuary on their migration north. These Arctic-bound shorebirds are among the world's greatest migrants. This concentration of birds offers people a good chance to view a number of shorebird species, and with luck, to see the birds fly in beautiful formations while trying to escape the fastest creature on earth, the Peregrine Falcon.

This year's festival features field trips to view shorebirds and raptors, plus lectures, workshops, a nature fun fair, a birding marketplace and more. The keynote address will be by Richard Crossley, author, birder and photographer.

For more information, visit **www.shorebirdfestival.com** or phone 360.289.5048.

Leavenworth Spring Bird Fest May 17-20

May 17-20 Leavenworth

Discover the natural beauty of north central Washington at
the tenth annual Leavenworth Spring Bird Festival, May 17

the tenth annual Leavenworth Spring Bird Festival, May 17–20. The Leavenworth area features spectacular habitats rang-

ing from snow-capped mountains to sunny ponderosa pine forests, to lush riparian zones, to shrub-steppe. Learn about the wide variety of migratory birds that come here for a brief, but important part of their year: the breeding season.

Hear the songs sung only during breeding season while you stroll, bike, boat, or van during the height of wildflower season. While birding is the heart of the weekend, activities also include wildflower walks, arts events and family activities to ensure fun for birders of all skill levels, with enough built-in "down time" to explore the friendly Bavarian village, too.

This year's keynote address will be delivered by Dr. David Craig, chair of the biology department at Willamette University. His field research focuses on the response of avian predators to human modified ecosystems and subsequent impact on community structure.

For more info, visit www.leavenworthspringbirdfest.com.

Wenas Campout May 25-28

Near Ellensburg, Washington

For more than four decades, Audubon families have spent Memorial Day weekend at the Wenas Creek Campground.

Officially named the "Hazel Wolf Wenas Creek Bird Sanctuary," it's located southwest of Ellensburg, in an Important Bird Area and has been assured protective status by the Washington Department of Natural Resources.

The primitive campground along the north fork of Wenas Creek has exceptional opportunities for birding, botanizing and enjoying spring in the eastern foothills of the Cascades.

There are wonderful field trips scheduled and there will be an old-fashioned campfire in the approved fire pit device each evening. There'll also be storytelling and recapping the sightings of the day.

Please visit the Wenas web site at **www.wenasaudubon.org** for a bird checklist, wildflower checklist, outline of field trips and programs, directions to the campground, lots of photos and to see Hazel Wolf's familiar smiling face.

Cascades bird banding camp for teens August 6-10 McDaniel Field Station

The Puget Sound Bird Observatory invites teens ages 15-18 to learn birdbanding techniques in Washington's Cascade Mountains. Under the guidance of expert trainers, Dan Froehlich and Don Norman, participants will focus on the basics of net placement, bird handling and net extraction, ageing, sexing, molts and plumage.

This training follows NABC guidelines, includes four mornings of banding at various locations and four nights of camping at a semi-remote campground in the Naches Ranger District of the Wenatchee National Forest.

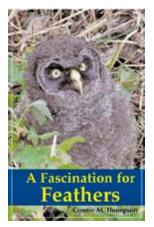
Cost is \$500 per person, plus a \$50 materials fee. The fee covers training, materials, text book, meals and group camping equipment.

Adult training is scheduled for August 12-18 at a cost of \$750 per person, plus a \$50 materials fee.

For more information, visit **www.pugetsoundbirds.org** or contact Emily Sprong at emily@pugetsoundbirds.org.

Review: A fascination for feathers a good read

By Mike Blackbird, President, Pilchuck Audubon Society



Whoa! Fourteen Bushtits just flew to my suet feeder. I've been a birdwatcher for almost 40 years and I never tire of seeing Bushtits as they hurry about like Alice's rabbit with an important date, no time to say hello, goodbye, just time to stop briefly for quick bite of suet and then hurrying on to their way because they're late, late. It's the last day of the Great Backyard Bird Count and the Bushtits will be a nice addition to my list.

Just as the Bushtits hurry off to their important date, a young male Pileated Woodpecker has stopped

by for his daily repast. It's safe to say that I have a fascination for feathers, which also happens to be the title of a book I recently read, *A fascination for feathers*, written by Connie Thompson. Connie lives in Michigan's Upper Peninsula with her husband, Pat. Her book is not aimed at bird experts, but for those casual and non-birders intrigued with birds. It's a compilation of anecdotes, personal experiences and stories – from avid birdwatchers, as well as from novices becoming aware of the outdoor world of Michigan's Eastern Upper Peninsula.

The collection, in part, is gleaned from the weekly column on the lore of birdwatching that Connie wrote for the Sault Ste. Marie newspaper. The beauty of her column was that she attracted a readership of non birdwatchers that not only looked forward to her column, but wrote to her about their experiences with the bird world.

I envy Connie for the forum her column provided to reach out every week to introduce the people of the Upper Peninsula to the emissaries of the bird world and to remind them just how beautiful and extraordinary their part of the world is. Through her column, and now her book, Connie draws in the community at large to realize and understand the positive aspect birds play in our lives.

Connie's book is self-published and sells for \$15.50, plus shipping and handling. You can order the book on her web site: www.ridgeroadenter.com.

PAS board meetings are open to all

The PAS board meets the first Tuesday of each month, at 6 p.m., at the Sno-Isle Coop meeting room (2804 Grand Ave., Everett). All are welcome to attend to learn about chapter goals and priorities. For more info, contact Kathleen Snyder at 425.438.1505.

April program meeting will include election

The April 13 program meeting will also serve as our annual business meeting, which will include elections for board president and secretary (each a two-year term). In addition, there'll be a summary of this year's budget, the Volunteer of 2011 Award presentation and recognition of Mike Blackbird's service to PAS.

The nominating committee has recommended Kathleen Snyder for President and is still considering nominees for Secretary. Please join us for this brief business meeting. Then enjoy the program featuring Frances Wood, who'll talk about local swallows, swifts and martins. As always, excellent refreshments will be provided by Virginia Clark.

Please note: Parking at the hall will be limited for this meeting, as the firemen will be using the east half of the lot. If you can, please carpool. If you are physically able, please park on the street and walk to the hall.

Bird spotters, counters needed for survey

The US Geological Survey will conduct bird surveys at Port Susan Bay to measure bird community response to an upcoming Nature Conservancy restoration project. Surveyors will identify and count all bird species at the restoration site and the surrounding marsh and mudflats. Surveys are planned for every other month at both high and low tides.

We are looking birders able to walk 3 miles on uneven terrain and count large flocks of birds. The next survey is scheduled for May.

If you are interested, please contact Kelley Turner at 707.333.4637 or klturner@usgs.gov or Pete Markos at 216.268.9805 or pmarkos@usgs.gov.

You can help monitor Edmonds heron colony

People for Puget Sound is beginning a new citizen science monitoring project in Edmonds to look after the struggling heron colony on the south side of Edmonds Marsh. This project is led by professional volunteers involved in the PFPS Eco-tech program. They are adapting the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) protocol for use by citizen scientists and will train volunteers in the field to conduct surveys. Initial oversight is being provided by WDFW staff to ensure we collect quality, useable data.

PFPS is looking for enthused folks who can commit to monitoring for one year. If you can help, contact Keeley O'Connell at koconnell@pugetsound.org.

Weekend bird hikers have successful GBBC

By Jonathan Blubaugh

The Great Backyard Bird Count is an annual citizen–science event conceived and created by the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology and sponsored by the National Audubon Society. For more than a decade, people have counted birds visiting their backyard feeders, city parks, or favorite bird patch. Birders are encouraged to submit their checklists online so the information can be studied and stored.

I solicited nominations for areas for us to explore on a Weekend Bird Walk in conjunction with the Great Backyard Bird Count. There weren't any specific requests, so I chose a spot within my counting area (zip code). Seven people showed up – really the ideal group size for bird watching.

We walked around the Narbeck Wetlands Sanctuary, a wetlands mitigation bank in Everett sponsored by Snohomish County Airport/Paine Field, Boeing and others. We

counted a number of species – including a Red-breasted Sapsucker (for the second straight year). We also spotted three Mallards, two of which were flying out from high on a Douglas Fir, impersonating Wood Ducks. None of us had ever seen or heard of this behavior in Mallards. It's just weird.

After our walk around the sanctuary, PAS VP Susie Schaefer



Red-breasted Sapsucker, by Paul Kusmin

suggested we go to the Fluke Corporation's headquarters, across the street. Fluke has a beautiful wooded campus with a pond, stream and clearing. Susie explained that that this has been her route for the CBC for a number of years and that she had received permission to count the birds there.

Among the birds we encountered at Fluke was a group of five Northern Flickers. One proclaimed his territory by drumming on a tall aluminum light pole, which resonated beautifully!

The birds we saw or heard that day included two Canada Geese, two American Wigeons, two Ring-necked Ducks, 13 Buffleheads, a Common Merganser, a White-winged Scoter, four Eared Grebes, a Bald Eagle, a Merlin being chased by crows, a Red-tailed Hawk being chased by different crows, three Glaucous-winged Gulls, a Belted Kingfisher, six Northern Flickers,

the sapsucker, 19 crows, eight Black-capped Chickadees, three Chestnut-backed Chickadees, three Pacific Wrens, a few Bewick's Wrens, a Golden-crowned Kinglet, a Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 13 American Robins, a Yellow-rumped Warbler, four Spotted Towhees, four Song Sparrows, a Fox Sparrow, 11 Dark-eyed Juncos, five Red-winged Blackbirds, a cowbird, a House Finch and 20 Pine Siskins.

Salmonella hits area siskins and finches

A number of lethargic Pine Siskins have been reported in local backyards. According to the Department of Fish and Wildlife, there has been a salmonellosis outbreak for the past couple of years. It seems to be worse in the winter months. The following article is from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and contains good information to limit or eliminate the spread of this disease from bird feeders.

Salmonellosis is caused by a bacteria belonging to the genus Salmonella. It is a common cause of mortality in feeder birds, particularly siskins, goldfinches and redpolls, but the symptoms are not always obvious. A sick bird may appear thin, fluffed up, and may have fecal material on its vent and swollen eyelids. Infected birds are often lethargic and easy to approach. Some infected birds may show no outward symptoms, but are carriers of the disease and can spread the infection to other birds.

Salmonellosis is primarily transmitted bird to bird through fecal contamination of food and water. It may also be transmitted through bird-to-bird contact. Occasionally, outbreaks of the disease cause significant mortality in certain species.

Disease transmission can be reduced by cleaning areas that are contaminated with the bacteria and discouraging large flocks of birds from gathering in one location.

With respect to bird feeding, we recommend the following:

- Clean your feeders and birdbaths with water and a 10 percent bleach solution to kill the bacteria.
- Clean your bird feeding area by washing all structures holding your feeders and raking the ground surrounding the feeders.
- Do not reinstall your feeders for a few weeks (or until sick birds are no longer being reported in your area)

If you do continue to feed birds:

- · Place your feeders in new locations around your yard
- Vary your feeding locations so that birds do not concentrate in one location
- Remove feeders that allow contact between fecal material and food (such as platform feeders)
- Clean your feeders with a bleach solution several times a week. Be sure feeders are dry before filling them with seed

Bird-a-thon: what you need to know

May is an exciting and excellent month for birding. Migratory birds have returned, so the number and variety of birds should be large. Plus, May can be a profitable month for PAS, too. How so? Bird-a-thon, of course!

You've read about Bird-a-thon in past newsletters and heard about it at program meetings. So, you know it's the national Audubon Society's largest fundraiser of the year. Some chapters raise as much as \$15,000 each year. Let's do this!

How Bird-a-thon works:

You need a sponsor form: You can download the form at **www.pilchuckaudubon.org** or get a copy at a program meeting or by contacting coordinator Hilkka Egtvedt at chegtvedt@comcast.net or 425.347.4944.

You need sponsors: Ask friends, neighbors, family members – or complete strangers – to sponsor you, either for a maxi-

mum total amount or for an amount per species. Remember to tell your sponsors their pledges are fully tax-deductible and will be used for our conservation and education programs.

You need to find birds! You can count bird species during the entire month of May, anywhere in Washington. So, plan outings to your favorite birding sites or explore somewhere new.

You need to collect: At the end of the month, report your sightings to your sponsors, collect their pledges and submit the funds to Hilkka or to PAS Treasurer Carolyn Lacy.

You feel good: Bird-a-thon is exciting and satisfying – some even find it competitive. Form a team, bird on your own. Either way, you have the chance to win a fun prize.

If you're new to Bird-a-thon, you might just discover it's the most rewarding, meaningful birding of the year.

American Birding Association's birding ethics

Everyone who enjoys birds and birding must always respect wildlife, its environment and the rights of others. In any conflict of interest between birds and birders, the welfare of the birds and their environment comes first.

Code of birding ethics

Promote the welfare of birds and their environment.

Support the protection of important bird habitat. To avoid stressing birds or exposing them to danger, exercise restraint and caution during observation, photography, sound recording or filming.

Limit the use of recordings and other methods of attracting birds and never use such methods in heavily birded areas, or for attracting any species that is threatened, endangered, of special concern or which is rare in your local area.

Keep well back from nests and nesting colonies, roosts, display areas and important feeding sites. In such sensitive areas, if there is a need for extended observation, photography, filming or recording, try to use a blind or hide, and take advantage of natural cover.

Use artificial light sparingly for filming or photography, especially for close-ups.

Before advertising the presence of a rare bird, evaluate the potential for disturbance to the bird, its surroundings and other people in the area. Proceed only if access can be controlled, disturbance minimized and permission has been obtained from private land-owners. The sites of rare nesting birds should be divulged only to the proper conservation authorities.

Stay on roads, trails and paths where they exist. Otherwise, keep habitat disturbance to a minimum.

Respect the law and the rights of others. Do not enter private property without the owner's explicit permission.

Follow all laws, rules and regulations governing use of roads and public areas, both at home and abroad. Practice common courtesy in contacts with other people. Your good behavior will generate goodwill with birders and non-birders alike.

Ensure that feeders, nest structures and other artificial

bird environments are safe. Keep dispensers, water and food clean and free of decay or disease. It is important to feed birds continually during harsh weather. Maintain and clean nest structures regularly.

If you are attracting birds to an area, ensure the birds are not exposed to predation from cats and other domestic animals, or dangers posed by artificial hazards.

Group birding, whether organized or impromptu, requires special care. Each individual in the group, in addition to the obligations noted previously, has responsibilities as a group member.

Respect the interests, rights and skills of fellow birders, as well as people participating in other legitimate outdoor activities. Freely share your knowledge and experience. Be especially helpful to beginning birders.

If you witness unethical birding behavior, assess the situation and intervene if you think it prudent. When interceding, inform the person(s) of the inappropriate action. Attempt, within reason, to have it stopped. If the behavior continues, document it and notify appropriate individuals or organizations.

Group leader responsibilities (amateur and professional trips and tours): Be an exemplary ethical role model for the group. Teach through word and example.

Keep groups to a size that limits impact on the environment and does not interfere with others using the same area. Ensure everyone in the group knows of and practices this code. Learn and inform the group of any special circumstances applicable to the areas being visited (e.g. no tape recorders allowed).

Acknowledge that professional tour companies bear a special responsibility to place the welfare of birds and the benefits of public knowledge ahead of the company's commercial interests. Ideally, leaders should keep track of tour sightings, document unusual occurrences and submit records to appropriate organizations.

Please follow this code, distribute it and teach it to others. Learn more about the American Birding Association at **www.aba.org**.

Birding highlights

By Mara Price, Sightings Coordinator

I am sorry to report we're losing two of our sightings reporters. Adeline Gildow, who's provided incredible reports from Juniper beach for

reports from Juniper beach for 12 years, is taking a break. Dick Vanderhoff is moving to the Warm Beach Senior Center in April. His last report will be for March. Thanks to both Adeline and Dick for their dedication and observant eye. We will miss your reports and wish you well.

We still have reports of Varied Thrushes throughout the county. Are they waiting for more snow? Lots of Pine Siskins are also being seen.

Carole and Larry Beason reported 49 Pine Siskins from their Lake Bosworth home. They also reported 2 Varied Thrushes, 39 Evening Grosbeaks, 2 Pileated Woodpeckers, 3 Fox Sparrows, a Merlin, 16 Steller's Jays, 2 Great-horned Owls hooting in the woods, a Purple Finch, a Hutton's Vireo, 8 Buffleheads and 33 Mallards on the lake for a species count of 41.

Annette Colombini went to Boundary Bay to see the Snowy Owls. She was fortunate to spot 23 Snowy Owls and counted 179 Bald Eagles on the drive to and from Boundary Bay. Back at her home at Lake Stevens, she reported 24 American Crows, 4 Varied Thrushes, 12 American Robins, 2 Red-breasted Nuthatches, a Northern Flicker, 2 Common Ravens, 6 Black-capped Chickadees, 15 Dark-eyed Juncos and 3 Chestnut-backed Chickadees for a species count of 14.

John Davis's walks through Forest Park produced 37 species this month, including 90 American Crows, 30 American Robins, 4 Golden-crowned Kinglets, 5 Golden-crowned Sparrows, a Great-horned Owl, 2 Hairy Woodpeckers, 2 Hutton's Vireos, 6 Pacific Wrens, 50 Pine Siskins, a Redbreasted Sapsucker, a Townsend's Warbler and 7 Varied Thrushes.

Gail Dibernardo's report from Brier included 43 Pine Siskins, 3 Varied Thrushes, 5 Evening Grosbeaks, 2 Townsend's Warblers, a Cooper's Hawk in the yard, 2 Pileated Woodpeckers at the feeder, 4 Northern Flickers, 8 Black-capped Chickadees, 7 House Finches, a Bewick's Wren and 18 Bushtits for a total species count of 21.

Hilkka Egtvedt has a problem with a Sharp-shinned Hawk: it won't go away. And, because it comes to her yard every day, it's keeping other birds away. She did manage a species count of 24 from her home in Mukilteo, including 16 Band-tailed Pigeons, 5 Bushtits, 5 California Quail, 32 Dark-eyed Juncos, 8 Evening Grosbeaks, 5 Golden-crowned Sparrows, 14 Pine Siskins, a Townsend's Warbler, a Varied Thrush and a White-crowned Sparrow.



Bufflehead, by Paul Kusmin



Wood Duck, by Patty Bruno



Northern Flicker, by Annette Colombini

Kriss Erickson still has Wood Ducks – and a Great Blue Heron – in her yard. Her species count of 24 also included a Varied Thrush, a Townsend's Warbler, 7 House Finches, 32 American Robins, 9 Bushtits, 11 Golden-crowned Kinglets, a Pacific Wren, 11 Black-capped Chickadees, 4 Mallards and a Green-winged Teal.

January 26, 2012-February 25, 2012

Adeline Gildow's report from her Camano Island home listed hundreds of Dunlin on Juniper Beach at midtide, 4 Great Blue Herons, 4 Bald Eagles, a Northern Harrier, 3 Redtailed Hawks near the Mark Clark Bridge, 200+ Snow Geese and at least 150 Trumpeter Swans in a field by Conway, 3 Anna's Hummingbirds, a Varied Thrush and 2 Purple Finches for a species count of 19.

Julie O'Donald spotted a Barred Owl near her home in Brier. She also reported a Varied Thrush, a Yellow-rumped Warbler, 2 Anna's Hummingbirds, 4 American Robins, a Bald Eagle being chased by two crows, 12 Band-tailed Pigeons, 2 Bewick's Wrens, 3 Golden-crowned Sparrows, a Pacific Wren, an Evening Grosbeak, 2 Red-breasted Nuthatches and 2 Pine Siskins for a total species count of 23.

Dick Vanderhoff reported thousands of Snow Geese and hundreds of swans in fields off Marine View Drive. Reporting from Stanwood, he listed 12 Steller's Jays, 10 Song Sparrows, 2 Northern Flickers, 3 White-crowned Sparrows, 6 Dark-eyed Juncos, 6 House Sparrows, 2 Pine Siskins, a Great Blue Heron over the water and 3 Red-tailed Hawks along Marine View Drive for a species count of 13.

I had a very interesting month. When the snow melted, it flooded the fields near my home in Marysville. It soon filled with hundreds of gulls and ducks. There were several hundred Glaucous-winged Gulls and a few

Western Gulls. There were also hundreds of Mallards and at least 75 American Wigeons, a few Eurasian Wigeons and several Northern Pintails. I then counted 12 Ring-necked Ducks in the pond down the street. My total species count of 31 also included 8 Evening Grosbeaks, 2 Common Ravens, a Varied Thrush, 17 Dark-eyed Juncos, a ball of European Starlings over the field, a Merlin, 4 House Finches and 22 Canada Geese in the fields.

Comments and suggestions are always welcome. And, if you're interested in submitting monthly bird sighting reports, please e-mail me at pricemara@clearwire.net or leave a message at 425.750.8125.

Smart Growth report

By Kristin Kelly, Smart Growth Director

This month's Smart Growth Report features information on the Transportation for Washington campaign, led by our partners, Futurewise and Transportation Choices Coalition.

Invest in clean water – keep our communities healthy

The number-one source of water pollution in Washington is polluted storm water runoff. This pollution threatens waterways throughout the state – putting at risk our health, economy and quality of life. By installing green infrastructure projects, implementing new technologies and increasing transportation alternatives, we can improve the beauty, safety and health of our communities, and reduce toxic runoff into Puget Sound and waterways throughout the state.

The problem

We've all seen oil-slicked roads and parking lots on a rainy day. Each year, that oil – along with millions of gallons of toxic chemicals – runs off streets, driveways, parking lots and rooftops into storm drains and then right into our waterways. The water carries with it a toxic blend of oil, gas, pesticides, heavy metals and other contaminants.

In order to stop this flow of pollution, we must update older roads and buildings so they don't pour pollution into drains. And, we need to ensure that future roads and buildings are built in ways that use new technology and techniques to avoid recreating the problems of the past.

Because of outdated and aging infrastructure, polluted runoff often pours untreated directly into our waterways. In all, approximately 14 million pounds of toxic pollutants flow into the Sound each year from polluted runoff. And that number is growing. As homes and businesses sprawl into rural areas, the number of roads, roofs and parking lots increases. When we pave over land, natural systems are no longer able to properly filter runoff.

The impacts of polluted runoff are enormous and widespread. Puget Sound is badly stressed by the continued flow of pollutants that have been building up over time. As a result, 21 species of wildlife species – such as Orcas and Chinook Salmon – are listed as threatened or endangered, massive fish kills plague Hood Canal and sensitive ecosystems have been put at risk.

Polluted runoff endangers drinking water. For example, Lake Whatcom, Bellingham's sole source of drinking water, is contaminated with chemicals from runoff. In Port Angeles, an overflow of 15 million gallons of sewage and polluted runoff closed access to the town's waterfront due to health concerns. And in November, the City of Everett was forced to spill an estimated 25 million gallons of untreated sewage and stormwater straight into the Snohomish River and Port Gardner Bay due to heavy rains and inadequate systems.

Polluted runoff has also contributed to the closure of thousands of acres of productive shellfish beaches – threatening an industry that generates \$100 million in sales each year.

Besides these impacts, toxic runoff carries additional costs. It triggers flooding and landslides. Over the years, it has caused millions of dollars worth of property damage.

Many cities and agencies are making progress. But, as a state, we have not stepped up to solve the problem in a lasting way.

There is a critical need for sustained funding that directly supports local clean water projects to reduce and clean up toxic runoff before it enters Washington's waters.

The solutions

Where and how we build will determine the cleanliness of Puget Sound, the livability of our communities and our quality of life. If cities and suburbs are to grow into great places to work and raise families, our approach to where and how we develop and how we get around must grow and evolve, too.

Communities can be built or retrofitted to reduce toxic runoff, provide transportation alternatives and ensure the ability to absorb growth while remaining attractive places to live. By upgrading the city and county infrastructure that catches and cleans polluted runoff, promoting low-impact development and retaining more tree and plant-covered land, we can create more beautiful, greener and healthier communities.

Aging infrastructure in cities and counties can be updated to ensure polluted runoff is caught and filtered before it enters waterways. These clean water retrofit projects include upgrades such as retrofitting urban streets in Bremerton, building storm drains in Puyallup and retrofitting existing runoff tanks in Everett.

Scientists and engineers have also developed cost-effective, common sense solutions that prevent toxic runoff. These low-impact development, or natural drainage system techniques, capture and filter rainwater naturally and prevent overwhelming aging storm drain systems. These technologies include the construction of rain gardens and swales, the use of plants and vegetation to soak up the water, green roofs and innovative new construction materials, such as permeable concrete that allows water to soak into the ground.

They mimic nature and act as sponges that absorb downpours instead of sending runoff into our waters. Green roofs capture, hold and slowly release rainwater – reducing runoff by up to 50 percent from a conventional roof.

To advance these clean water projects, a coalition of cities and counties, labor representatives and environmental advocates have urged the state legislature to establish a long-term funding source. The state legislature has allocated some stopgap funding, but in order to fully address our state's numberone water pollution problem, we must have a significant and sustained funding source to fund local projects that clean up toxic runoff before it enters our water. Each year we delay a comprehensive solution, Washington gets further behind and the long-term solution gets more expensive.

Community solutions

Many communities have already embraced green infrastructure projects to ensure that new development reduces polluted runoff. In Bremerton's Blueberry Park, the city incorporated permeable pavement and rain gardens to soak up runoff from the adjacent street's asphalt. Bremerton is also using green technologies to treat polluted runoff on a 1,600 foot long bridge. City officials made the case for using these natural filtration techniques because it was less expensive. In Lacey, the city requires new development to soak up all the rain that falls on a site if the ground is absorbent enough. The city's athletic complex features pervious concrete to reduce runoff.

(See "Smart Growth" on page 10)

Scotts admits breaking federal pesticide law

Lawn and garden care company Scotts Miracle-Gro has pleaded guilty to breaching federal pesticide laws by using an unapproved insecticide on bird seed sold nationwide for two years. Scotts is proposing to pay a \$4 million fine and give \$500,000 to help support wildlife conservation and study. US District Court Justice James Graham said he will issue his decision on the plea agreement at sentencing, which has not yet been scheduled.

The government alleges that Scotts produced wild bird food products under names including "Morning Song" and "Country Pride" that contained insecticides. The government says the insecticides, which are toxic to birds and other wildlife, weren't approved for use on bird food.

According to court records, in 2008, Scotts distributed 73 million packages of bird seed coated with the insecticides Storcide II, containing the active ingredient chlorpyrifos, and and Actellic 5E, containing the active ingredient pirimiphosmethyl, intended to keep insects from destroying the seed.

The company continued to produce and market the insecticide-coated seeds despite being alerted to toxicity dangers by a Scotts staff chemist and ornithologist. Storcide II is labeled as "Toxic to birds. Toxic to wildlife," and that "Exposed treated seed may be hazardous to birds." No such warning exists on the Actellic 5E label.

The US Environmental Protection Agency's own fact sheet on pirimiphos-mehtyl states: "Ecological risks are not of concern to the agency." Yet the same fact sheet also states: "Although pirimphos-methyl is highly toxic to birds and fish, these risks are not of concern based on the use pattern of pirimiphos-methyl." This would seem to indicate that the EPA did not anticipate this chemical to be used on anything intentionally fed to birds, says the nonprofit American Bird Conservancy.

"EPA needs to amend the use label for Actellic 5E and any

Blackbird ...

(continued from page 2)

PAS's general fund. I'm pleased to report that while we're far from a rich Audubon chapter, thanks to members like you, Pilchuck Audubon is a financially stable chapter.

Lastly, when I came on the board, Kate Halstead was the PAS newsletter editor. In Kate's last year as editor, the *Profile* won second place in National Audubon's newsletter contest. When Kate resigned to take a new job, I feared that the most important vehicle in disseminating chapter information to our membership would falter and decline. Without missing a step, Annette Colombini picked up the torch as our new editor and never missed a step. There's little doubt in my mind that our Colombini edited online newsletter would win first place in a newsletter contest if National Audubon still held the contest.

Being president of Pilchuck Audubon Society has been a marvelous experience – to be in the company, and bask in the reflected talent of bright, ardent people has made me a paragon of luck.

I see that the Mega Millions lottery is up to \$171 million. I'd better buy a ticket.

other pesticide containing the same active ingredient, pirimiphos-methyl, to agree with their own fact sheet, and ensure that no other birds are poisoned by seed dosed with this toxic chemical," said American Bird Conservancy President George Fenwick.

"This highlights a key problem that it is the pesticide registrant that writes the labels on pesticides, not EPA," Fenwick said. "In some cases, it would seem that EPA is not effectively checking that the labels encompass the agency's responsibilities for birds."

The federal government also alleged that a Scotts manager fabricated federal documents and correspondence to obtain state registrations for two products that were being marketed without EPA registration. The government alleged that the manager "told EPA that these files proved that the products had been properly reviewed and registered by EPA when, in fact, they were not authentic EPA files and when, in fact, the products had not been approved and registered by EPA."

The government also charged that between 2005 and 2007 Scotts sold two pesticides without directions required by the EPA and making claims on labels about the product that the EPA had rejected.

On April 23, 2008, EPA Region 5 today issued a "stop sale, use or removal" order against Scotts Miracle Gro Co., Scotts Lawn Care Service and three affiliates, all of Marysville, Ohio, for illegal, unregistered and misbranded pesticides.

Identified by invalid registration number 62355-4, the two products were marketed as Garden Weed Preventer + Plant Food and Miracle Gro Shake 'n' Feed All Purpose Plant Food Plus Weed Preventer.

A Scotts spokesman declined comment until after sentencing.

Smart Growth ...

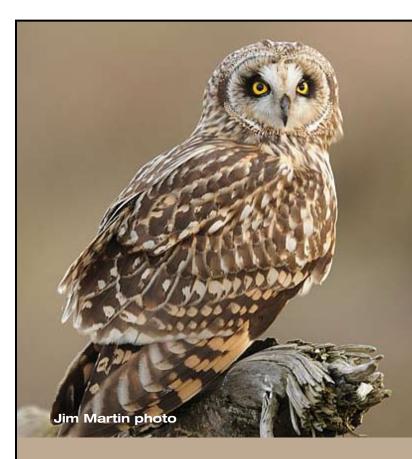
(continued from page 9)

Second Avenue NW in Seattle is a great example of a natural drainage system, nearly eliminating runoff, even during heavy rains. The street was rebuilt a decade ago to catch and clean runoff in a natural way. This project – called SEA Street – has the added benefits of creating inviting places for people in the neighborhood. This neighborhood shows that green infrastructure also helps make communities great places to live – creating green, open, family-friendly spaces.

Here in Snohomish County, the Sustainable Development Task Force supports helping developers find low impact ways of developing.

We can create and maintain beautiful, healthy places to live and, at the same time, significantly reduce toxic runoff. New solutions and technologies, which are common sense and cost-effective, will help us catch and filter pollution in a way that mimics nature.

By installing green infrastructure and increasing transportation alternatives, we can protect our state's beautiful waterways and improve the places we call home. There is a critical need for dependable and sustained funding that directly supports local clean water projects to reduce and clean up toxic runoff before it enters Washington's waters.



QUICK FACTS

- Medium sized owl
- 13-17" long, 33-40" wingspan
- · Mostly mottled brown
- Large buff wing patch on outer wing visible in flight
- Head large and round

The Short-eared Owl is a found on the open grasslands of North and South America, Eurasia and on many oceanic islands.

It flies close to the ground with characteristic floppy flight (similar to a Northern Harrier) as it searches for small mammals and birds by ear. It kills prey with a bite to the back of the skull.

Good places to see Short-eared Owls around here: Conway and Samish Flats.

Bird of the month: Short-eared Owl

Suiattle ...

(continued from page 1)

PAS also objected to earlier work done by the Mt. Baker–Snoqualmie National Forest without environmental analysis, including preliminary road reconstruction requiring the felling of old growth trees.

After the lawsuit was filed, the Federal Highway Administration withdrew its CE and later announced it would reconsider the project impacts. A public meeting took place in Darrington on September 15, 2011. Comments offered then varied widely, from supporting the road's reopening, to converting the road to a trail.

What next?

PAS's Forest Practices Committee will analyze the EA. The committee has many concerns about the proposed reconstruction and its potentially adverse effects upon ESA listed wildlife, fish and water quality and recreational opportunities. The committee will propose a formal comment letter to the PAS board.

No decisions have been made by the Federal Highway Administration. Detours and some closures, as well as road repairs, are proposed. The work could take two to three years to complete.

Questions?

If you have questions or thoughts about the EA or proposal, contact Kathy Johnson (360.659.725 or Katherine@earthlink.net) or Allen Gibbs (425.338.5466 or agibbspr@gmail.com).

Many thanks to Kathy Johnson, Forest Practices chair, and other members of her committee for helping write this article.

Reach your reps

21st District (Lynnwood, Edmonds, Mukilteo, some Mountlake Terrace): Senator Paul Shin (D), representatives Mary Helen Roberts (D) and Marko Liias (D).

38th District (Everett, Marysville, Tulalip and county): Senator Nick Harper (D), representatives John McCoy (D) and Mike Sells (D).

39th District (Arlington, Snohomish, Monroe, eastern Whatcom, Skagit, Snohomish and NE King counties): Senator Val Stevens (R), representatives Dan Kristiansen (R) and Kirk Pearson (R).

44th District (Lake Stevens, Everett, Mill Creek, SW Snohomish County): Senator Steve Hobbs (D), representative Hans Dunshee (D) and Mike Hope (R).

Leave a message for any state legislator at 1.800.562.6000 (toll-free).

Mailing address for all House members: PO Box 40600, Olympia, WA 98504-0600.

Mailing addresses for Senators:

Harper: PO Box 40438, Olympia, WA 98504-0438 Hobbs: PO Box 40444, Olympia, WA 98504-0444 Shin: PO Box 40421, Olympia, WA 98504-0421 Stevens: PO Box 0439, Olympia, WA 98504-0439

Patty Murray: 448 Russell Senate Office Bldg, Wash., DC 20510 Maria Cantwell: 311 Hart Senate Office Bldg, Wash., DC 20510

Audubon membership information

Joint membership in National Audubon Society (NAS) and Pilchuck Audubon Society (PAS) includes NAS's quarterly magazine *Audubon* and PAS's *Profile* e-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 PAS. **All PAS membership dues are tax-deductible.* The PAS tax ID number is 96-6183664.**

PAS receives only a small portion of your national dues to support the work of the chapter. If you do not want to be a national member or you want yourdues to stay local, you can join PAS separately. Local membership in PAS includes a one-year subscription (12 issues) to PAS's *Profile* newsletter. Cost is \$28. A special limited income category is also available for \$16.

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- $lue{}$ Contact me about volunteer opportunities.
- ☐ I am interested in the Conservation Committee.
- * Consult your tax professional for full details.

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(includes PAS membership)

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Make check payable to: National Audubon Society

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