



The Story of M50

A Trumpeter Swan with an Amazing Story

*By Martha Jordan, Washington Swan Stewards Chair,
Trumpeter Swan Society*

Swans have been picking up lead shot thinking it is grit and then dying from lead poisoning for a long time. Only three lead shot pellets can kill a swan. Until 1999 it was a few each year. Then 100 died in a single season in Whatcom County and British Columbia. The number of deaths continued to climb to alarming numbers of more than 375 per winter season. An international team was quickly formed in 2000 consisting of the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife, US Fish & Wildlife Service, Canadian Wildlife Service, The Trumpeter Swan Society, and Ducks Unlimited-Canada. It was decided to neck band about 250 swans and follow them around during the winter to learn where they were picking up the shot.

On December 3rd, 2001 the first swans were captured in a corn stubble field near Lynden using a rocket net. The red collar with a radio transmitter attached with the code M50 etched in white was placed on an adult female (at least four years old) Trumpeter Swan. She was released with the other birds after being weighed, measured and a blood sample taken for blood lead level. The plan was to track these banded birds every day during the next two years. If any died, we could back track where they had been feeding and hopefully find the sources of lead shot.

The study did provide some information, but only a few of the banded swans actually died. Most of the swan mortality was of unmarked birds; very few of the marked swans have actually been observed. We know that some were killed by power lines, shot by vandals, or found dead of lead poisoning. Some of the swans survived but their collars broke off and were untraceable. A few are still around as we now know, 11 years later!

M50 was seen for about three years and then we lost track of her. She may have stayed up in Canada or some other location where people simply did not see her or know to report her collar number. Then on Friday, November 8th, 2012 I got a call from Sarvey Wildlife Rehabilitation Center. They had just picked up

(Continued on page 2)

No December program meeting Happy Holidays!

January Program Meeting Friday, January 11, 7 p.m.

Bats, Frogs, Dippers, and Deer!

Join Kinoko Noborikawa and Terri Wentworth-Davis to discover wildlife projects that Snohomish County Public Works are doing. Learn about bats and dippers on bridges, amphibian monitoring in mitigation sites, and the wildlife crossing structures in Snohomish County. For more information, call 425.252.0926.

Board Meeting Location Reminder

Beginning in November, the PAS Board meeting has been at 6:00 p.m. on the first Tuesday of the month at the new location: the PUD building, 2320 California Street, Everett. All are welcome to attend. For more information, contact Kathleen Snyder at 425.438.1505.

Smart Growth Report

Check out the December report from Kristin Kelly, our Smart Growth Director. In it, she speaks on the relationship between climate change and the policy decisions we make locally. The Growth Management Act is undergoing its 2015 Comprehensive Plan Updates and Kristin will be watching like a hawk for efforts to weaken it and allow unwise, unsustainable development. Read her report at <http://pilchuckaudubon.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=page§ionid=150>.

In This Issue

About	2	Legislative Workshop	5
Bird Count	3	President's Message	6
Birding Report...	5	Smart Growth	1
Coal Hearing	4	Trip Calendar	3
Feature Article...	1		

(Continued from page 1)

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an injured Trumpeter Swan from the Fred Meyer parking lot at the corner of 132nd and the Bothell-Everett Highway in south Everett. The swan was alive and wearing a red neck band – M50. Her mate watched from the top of a building as she was captured and taken for care. He flew off, hopefully to find a safer, more hospitable place to grieve his loss. What a remarkable set of events to happen all at once for this special bird; down after 11 years in an urban parking lot and rescued by skilled swan rehabilitators. What we do know is that she has survived wild and free through migrations, winters, and breeding seasons for at least 15 years. Found unable to fly, yet she still has a chance.

X-rays showed that she had been shot, grounded by a human vandalistic act. Who did this and exactly where geographically are still unknown. The injury did not appear to be immediately life threatening. However, she needed a lot of

care as she was at least 8 pounds under weight, about one third too light. So far, she has been doing well at the rehab center. The initial blood work showed that she was

malnourished and weak from her injury. Likely she had been down for several days. What is amazing is that her blood lead level is normal, meaning there is no evidence of lead poisoning or elevated lead levels. How and where she has managed to eat healthy for the past 11 years is something we all would like to know. This is rare to have the opportunity to test a swan after so many years, and to find her free of lead poisoning.

What happens next for M50? When she is recovered, her neck band will be replaced with a new one and she will be released back to the wild. Hopefully she will find a new mate and once again make the journey to Alaska and back for many more years.

If you want to contribute to her recovery, please send your donations to Sarvey Wildlife Rehab Center, www.sarveywildlife.org.



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 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, nonprofit organization incorporated in the state of Washington.

Newsletter Submissions

Submit articles to newsletter@pilchuckaudubon.org or mail to 1429 Avenue D, PMB 198, Snohomish, WA 98290-1742. Submissions must be received by the 15th 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

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Trip Calendar

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

Tuesday, December 4 Camano Island

Meet at 8:00 AM at the Quilceda Village Wal-Mart lot west of Marysville (I-5 exit 200). Park away from the store, to the east, near Quilceda Blvd (next to I-5). We will bird Triangle Cove, Eide Road, English Boom, Iverson Spit and wherever else Virginia leads us. Pack a lunch. Leader: Virginia Clark 360.435.3750

Tuesday, December 11 Lummi Flats

Meet at 8:00 AM at Quilceda Village Wal-Mart west of Marysville (I-5-Exit 200). Park away from store, to the east, near Quilceda Blvd. and next to I-5. Short-eared Owl, Northern Harrier, Rough-legged Hawk, Northern Shrike and Snow Bunting are very likely. Pack a Lunch. Leaders: Virginia Clark 360.435.3750

Tuesday, December 18 Samish Flats

Meet at 8:00 AM at Quilceda Village Wal-Mart west of Marysville (I-5-Exit 200). Park away from store, to the east, near Quilceda Blvd. and next to I-5. Waterfowl, seabirds, shorebirds, raptors and passerines to delight and excite. Pack a lunch. Leader: Virginia Clark 360.435.3750

Tuesday, December 25 Happy holidays, no field trip this week



Larry Schwitters goes the distance to install temperature loggers in the Monroe School District Administration Building chimney to monitor Vaux Swift roosting conditions

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

EVERETT AND NORTH COUNTY
SATURDAY DEC 15TH
Contact Terry Nightingale
tnight@pobox.com

EDMONDS AND SOUTH COUNTY
SATURDAY DEC 22ND
Contact Duane Karna
karnadk@comcast.net

Pilchuck Audubon Society coordinates the yearly Christmas Bird Count. This year the Everett count will be held on Saturday, Dec 15th and the Edmonds count will be on Saturday, Dec 22nd. National Audubon Society started this citizen science program in 1900 to stop the competition called the "Christmas Side Hunt" in which hunters would choose sides and go afield with their guns; whoever brought in the biggest pile of feathered (and furred) quarry won.

Data collected by observers over the past century has allowed researchers, conservation biologists, and other interested individuals to study the long-term health and status of bird populations across North America. When combined with other surveys such as the Breeding Bird Survey, it provides a picture of how the continent's bird populations have changed in time and space over the past 113 years. Beginning this year, there will be no charge for participating and all the data collected will be published only on-line.

The CBC areas are 15-mile diameter circles that are divided into smaller subareas in which teams of birders count all birds seen or heard. Each subarea is led by an experience birder who is responsible for recording the numbers of birds seen or heard, the observation times, and distances traveled. Experienced and beginning birders and home feeder watchers are welcomed to join these CBCs. Inexperienced birders will be placed on teams containing veterans.

Those interested in joining these counts either as a team member or providing a count at a home feeder should contact Terry Nightingale at tnight@pobox.com for the Everett count or Duane Karna at karnadk@comcast.net for the Edmonds count.

Coal Export Facility Hearing

By Kathy Johnson, Forest Practices Chair

On November 5th, I attended the combined NEPA/SEPA EIS scoping hearing in Mt. Vernon for the Gateway Pacific Terminal planned for Cherry Point north of Bellingham. There were so many people in attendance that I almost did not get in but finally I was able to listen to about an hour of testimony. As I listened to other speakers list concerns that had not yet occurred to me, I realized that like the ecosystems they will affect, this project presents a veritable web of harmful effects, each connected to many others.

PAS is asking that the Environmental Impact Statement study the following potential harmful effects of the coal export terminal:

- Pollution of waterways from the coal mine to the port, including groundwater and surface waters. These waters could be polluted from the mining activities themselves, from the estimated 500 pounds of coal dust that can be lost from each rail car along the way and during loading, from the inevitable spills that will occur, from the construction of the port itself, from the massive ships required to move the coal to Asia (with more risks of accidents and spills); and finally, from the burning of the coal. This pollution will affect the entire marine ecosystem - coral reefs, herring populations, the ESA-listed Puget Sound salmon and orca populations, and other marine mammals.

- Air pollution—again, from the coal dust, diesel engine exhaust, and burning of coal—will have direct effects on human and animal (including ESA-listed birds and other wildlife) health, causing or aggravating respiratory conditions such as asthma and lung cancer, and perhaps affecting plant growth.

- Traffic will be disrupted by the addition of 18 coal trains per day. This will add up to 2 hours per day to wait times at rail crossings, delay emergency response times, impede commerce to local businesses and increase school bus costs.

- The long coal trains are much heavier than other freight trains and have already caused damage to building foundations near the rail lines; increasing the number of these trains could further harm buildings.

- All of these adverse effects will have economic impacts. Examples include, reducing existing jobs by

hurting local businesses, fisheries, timber, farming and tourism jobs. These losses could far outstrip any jobs created by the proposal.

- The effects of the consequent increased coal combustion on climate change cannot be ignored, and would be a direct impact of constructing this terminal, even though the coal would not be burned in the USA.

Finally, we ask that the agencies DENY THE PERMIT for the construction of the export facility.

PAS members are urged to write their own letters or attend the next hearing in Seattle on December 13th at the Washington State Convention Center from 4:00 – 7:00 PM. Plan to arrive at least an hour early in order to speak. Comments may be given (by January 21, 2013) orally at the hearing, submitted via email (to: comments@eisgatewaypacificwa.gov), or by regular mail at:

GPT/Custer Spur EIS

c/o CH2M HILL

1100 - 112th Ave NE, Suite 400

Bellevue, WA 98004

More information at www.eisgatewaypacificwa.gov and at www.powerpastcoal.org



Demonstrators outside Bellingham Coal Export Hearing
Paul Anderson

Backyard Birding Highlights

By Mara Price, Sightings Coordinator

Good News, the Snowy Owls are back. **Kelly Wallace** spotted a Snowy Owl at the Pilchuck Tree Farm. We have had reports in the past from the Tree Farm. Also, a Northern Pygmy Owl was spotted east of Lake Stevens by **Ethan Roberts**. I appreciate receiving emails of special sightings.

Last month, I reported that the **Beason's** spotted Swallows floating on Lake Bosworth. Actually, they were resting on a float on the lake. **Carole and Larry Beason's** report this month listed 46 species.

Their count included 22 American Robins, a Belted Kingfisher, 12 Dark-Eyed Junco (that have arrived for the Winter), 2 Hutton's Vireo, 4 Golden-Crowned Kinglets, 10 Hooded Merganser on the lake, 6 Purple Finch, a Red-Tailed Hawk, 30 Red-Winged Blackbirds, 5 Golden-Crown Sparrows, 6 Lesser Scaup and 2 Anna's Hummingbirds.

September 26, 2012 - October 25, 2012

Read more birding highlights at www.pilchuckaudubon.org



Snowy owl
Brad Smith

Environmental Priorities Coalition's 2013 Legislative Workshops

Join the Environmental Priorities Coalition for an afternoon as we gear for legislative session, get trained to conquer Olympia, learn about the 2013 Priorities and spend time with legislators.

Registration opens December 3rd, 2012.

Environmentalpriorities.org

Bellevue

Saturday, January 12th

1 p.m. - 5 p.m.

Bellevue College

3000 Landerholm Circle SE

Spokane

Saturday, January 5th

1 p.m. - 5 p.m.

Museum of Art and Culture
(MAC)

2316 West 1st Ave

Save the Dates!

Environmental Priorities Coalition Members

American Rivers • Cascade Bicycle Club • Climate Solutions • Conservation Northwest • Earth Ministry • Environmental Washington • Faith Action Network • Fuse • Futurewise • Heart of America Northwest • The Lands Council • League of Women Voters of Washington • National Wildlife Federation • The Nature Conservancy • NW Energy Coalition • Washington State Chapter of the Sierra Club • Surfrider Foundation • Transportation Choices Coalition • Washington Conservation Voters • Washington Environmental Council • Washington State Audubon • Washington Toxics Coalition • Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition • Zero Waste Washington



President's Message

By Kathleen Snyder, President

Chapter Updates

I have another wonderful addition to our PAS leadership team to announce this month. Sarah Stout has agreed to be our new secretary. She comes from Oregon, has an MBA and is employed full time in the aerospace industry. She and her husband, BJ, are enthusiastic birders and are eager to participate in any field trips and survey efforts that their schedules allow. Welcome to both Sarah and BJ - we are lucky to have you join us.

Suiattle River Road Rebuild Decision Reached

The Federal Highway Administration (FHA) announced its decision on November 8, 2012, to rebuild the Suiattle River Road to its terminus. This comes as no surprise to conservationists who asked for a far less expensive, and less environmentally damaging, solution to restore motorized access to most of the upper reaches of the Suiattle River Road.

The Pilchuck Board preferred an alternative that would have repaired the road to within about four miles of the road terminus. This compromise alternative saved public funds, building a less costly trail bridge at Downey Creek rather than rebuilding an auto bridge, and avoided any new road construction slicing through critical habitat for the Northern Spotted Owl and the Marbled Murrelet.

In May 2011, PAS and the North Cascades Conservation Council filed a lawsuit against the Federal Highway Administration. The lawsuit contested the agency's decision to rebuild without conducting an Environmental Analysis (EA), as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). As a result of the lawsuit, FHA agreed to do a more in-depth study of proposed project area. FHA launched the environmental assessment (EA) process in September 2011. The new EA was issued in March 2012 for public review and comment. Due to substantial public comment, an amended EA was issued for another round of public comment in August 2012. The Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was released on November 8th.

We are pleased the FHA will incorporate our recommendation to narrow the footprint where new road is built, destroying less of the critical habitat. It is not clear whether this will reduce the footprint enough to significantly reduce its impact on that habitat. Nevertheless, the willingness to make some reduction is appreciated. We hope this indicates a positive trend for future road repairs in PNW national forests.

The very nature of our mountain roads, with abundant rainfall and snowmelt in the western Cascades, guarantees future road damage from floods and slides, damaging vitally important fish habitat and municipal water systems. We encourage the public to join with us to think about which national forest roads merit retention, maintenance and repair. The public can help the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest decide which roads are needed for national forest management and to access public recreation areas. We can then support the Forest Service when it selects for removal roads no longer needed or used for these purposes and those now eroding and sliding into our valuable waterways.

Pilchuck Audubon Society Membership Information

Support your local Audubon chapter by becoming a member. PAS dues are tax deductible (consult your tax professional for details). The PAS tax ID number is 91-6183664.

- New Member.....\$28
- Renewal.....\$28
- Lifetime Member.....\$1,000
 - 10 monthly payments of \$100
 - 4 quarterly payments of \$250
 - 1 payment of \$1,000
- Donation..... \$ _____

Make check payable to
Pilchuck Audubon Society
Mail to PAS
1429 Avenue D PMB 198
Snohomish, WA 98290-1742

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