

LEQUE ISLAND ESTUARY RESTORATION PROJECT

PROGRAM MEETING • FRIDAY, MARCH 13, 2020 • 7:00 p.m.

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), Ducks Unlimited, and local contractor Strider Construction completed construction of the Leque Island Estuary Restoration Project in late 2019. After removing the dike surrounding the island on October 14, 2019, the first high tide entered the 250-acre area of Leque Island for the first time in 135+ years, which marks the beginning of the land transitioning back to an intertidal marsh. Leque Island is owned and managed by WDFW, and is the area you cross as you go over the bridge to Camano Island.

Presented by Loren Brokaw

7:00 to 8:30 p.m.

Everett Firefighters' Hall

2411 Hewitt Avenue, Everett ([map](#))

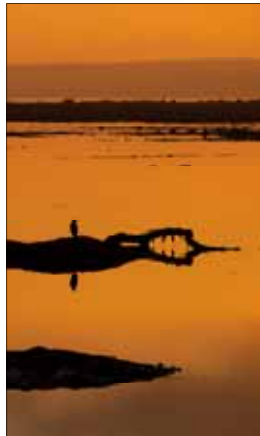
projects on WDFW lands that involve restoration of natural processes to benefit fish, wildlife, and their habitats including a local project at Leque Island. Much of his work involves partnering with local organizations, planning and executing stakeholder outreach plans, and securing grant funding to achieve habitat restoration objectives. Loren was born and raised in Stanwood, and his family has lived in the Stanwood-Camano area for five generations. 🦅



Leque Island Dike Removal

The project is designed to benefit all species that rely on estuary habitat as part of their life cycle, including salmon, shorebirds, waterfowl, and a host of other species. In addition to habitat benefits, there is a new 0.7-mile-long elevated walking trail and a non-motorized boat launch to allow people to continue to enjoy the site. Pilchuck Audubon was a key participant in the stakeholder advisory group that provided input on the project design.

Loren Brokaw is the Restoration Projects Coordinator for WDFW in the North Puget Sound region, which extends from the Washington/Canada border down to just south of Seattle. Loren manages habitat restoration



Above: High tide at sunset

Left: Great Blue Heron

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Where: Evergreen State Fairgrounds, Monroe

When: March 21, 8:30am-4:30pm

Make this the year you revamp your yard, garden, or apartment balcony! Head on down to the [Snohomish Conservation District's Annual Plant Sale](#) and pick up some native plants that will benefit the birds in your community by providing food, shelter, and cover for this year and beyond!

For more information on which native plants are beneficial for birds, please visit <https://www.audubon.org/plantsforbirds>.

From this website, you can search your personal ZIP Code to determine the native plants in your area that will help the birds! 🐦



Memorial Weekend Birding Trip to Klickitat County May 23-26

Once again it is time to start planning for Susie's PAS trip to Klickitat County Memorial Day weekend, leaving Saturday morning, May 23, and returning Tuesday evening, May 26. It has been 10 years since our first adventure; each time, we have had many adventures and fun times. With the exception of 2015, we have gone every year.

The general format for this trip is no more than 12 people in 3 cars, departing early Saturday morning. We share driving and gas costs, and all bring food to share for picnic lunches together for 4 days. We usually dinner out together. There are not a lot of restaurants in Klickitat County. There is one very good Mexican place in Goldendale; we have had many interesting dining experiences. We stay in Goldendale and Glenwood; trip goers have often shared rooms to keep costs down.

I have made friends with a local birder who knows the local birding hotspots, and the manager of the local sewage ponds. At least once on the trip, we go to the Conboy National Wildlife Refuge. Klickitat County has a well-earned reputation for a variety of birds, beautiful native plants, and wildflowers.

Please call or email if you have questions or want to sign up. We have filled up fast in the past; after this many years, I am uncertain of the demand; if there are at least 7 people and 2 cars/drivers, we will go. Because booking lodging in Klickitat County is not easy, I would like to know of your interest before the end of March, if possible. Call 425-711-8165 and leave a message; or text me at 425-478-9383, or email me, Susie Schaefer, at garden@pilchuckaudubon.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 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 newsletter@pilchuckaudubon.org or mail to 1429 Avenue D, PMB 198, Snohomish, WA 98290. Submissions must be received by the 21st of the month preceding publication. We reserve the right to edit.

To contact Pilchuck Audubon Society, call 425.610.8027.

The monthly Profile is available online at

www.pilchuckaudubon.org

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Birding Festivals 2020

Othello Sandhill Crane Festival

Othello, WA
March 20-22

othellosandhillcranefestival.org

Wings Over Water

Northwest Birding Festival
Blaine, WA
March 20-22

wingsoverwaterbirdingfestival.com

Olympic BirdFest

Dungeness River Audubon
Center, Sequim, WA
April 16-21

olympicbirdfest.org

Grays Harbor Shorebird Festival

Grays Harbor, WA
April 24-26

shorebirdfestival.com

Yakima River Canyon Bird Fest

Helen McCabe State Park
Ellensburg, WA
May 8-10

ycic.org/Yakima-river-canyon-bird-fest

Leavenworth Spring Birdfest

Leavenworth, WA
May 14-17

leavenworthspringbirdfest.org

Wenas Audubon Campout

Wenas, WA
May 22-25

wenasaudubon.org

Puget Sound Bird Fest

Edmonds, WA
September 11-13

pugetsoundbirdfest.com

Wings Over Willapa Festival

Ilwaco, WA
September 24-27

wingsoverwillapa.org

MOUNTAIN LOOP HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING

by Kathy Johnson, Forest Practices Chair 360-659-7252 forest@pilchuckaudubon.org

On February 7, I attended a meeting organized by Washington Trails Association (WTA) and the US Forest Service (FS) to bring together interest groups to help gather input on how to better maintain and develop the trails and associated infrastructure on the Mountain Loop Highway between Barlow Pass and Granite Falls. This would include trail and road maintenance, and possibly new trail construction. Apparently, there is the potential for funding through the FS Treasured Landscape Initiative, <https://www.nationalforests.org/grant-programs/campaign-projects>. There is also some potential private money as well, but no details on that yet.

There were about 25-30 people at the meeting, including representatives from WTA, the FS, North Cascades Conservation Council (NCCC), WA DNR, Granite falls officials, The Wilderness society, PNW Outdoor Women, Darrington and Granite Falls historical societies, Glacier Peak Institute (GPI; outdoor education in Darrington) and Darrington Area Resource Advocates (DARA). The major infrastructure issues that people brought up included latrines, transportation and parking, road and trail maintenance, shuttle transport between trailheads and Granite Falls and/or Verlot, a public meeting or retreat center-type facility in Verlot or Silverton, and more campgrounds combined with prohibition on casual roadside camping.

The first step in the process is to collect information and data on current uses, identify infrastructure needs, and canvas the public on how to preserve and improve the recreational potential and resources in this area. A volunteer group is being set up to help gather information and public input. They are calling it "The Cadre." It would be responsible for holding and attending public and private information sessions to get opinions of greatest needs and desires from the public on how to best develop and maintain the Mountain Loop associated lands with a focus on trails and access. These information-gathering sessions might include an information table at town and county fairs and festivals, trailheads, town hall meetings, open house community meetings, targeted group meetings (Mountaineers, hiking groups, outdoor education groups, etc.). This data-gathering process is expected to be completed in early September.

Next, the FS, presumably with input from Cadre members, will come up with a proposal that prioritizes which infrastructure issues should be addressed. This should be completed in late fall, or at least by the end of the calendar year. Specific project plans, environmental review depending on scope, and financial review will likely continue into next year, but the FS seems very keen to expedite the process.

I signed up to represent PAS for "Cadre" activities. The commitment is to a monthly meeting and some data-gathering events. If you are interested in attending meetings and/or getting involved in the data gathering, please contact me. This might mean tabling at a community fair, or hanging out at a trailhead on a Saturday to get feedback from hikers on a questionnaire. Being on the Cadre will keep us in the 'loop' (sorry for the pun) and give us a voice as the inevitable development of the South Fork Stillaguamish watershed continues. ✍

For a novice birder or even a well-traveled, experienced birder, everyone at some point has faced the disheartening ritual of writing these dreaded words on their checklist: gull spp.

As birders, we usually enjoy the challenge of trying to identify a species unfamiliar to us. It makes us think—what’s here this time of year? What family is it? What habitat did I see it using? The process of mentally crossing off possibilities goes on. Let’s be honest: there are some groups of birds that are just plain hard to identify.

Luckily, we are blessed to have many knowledgeable birders in western Washington. One of our goals this year is to provide more educational opportunities for our members, and we’ve been teaming up with these expert birders to offer identification classes.

In January, Mike Donahue taught a much-needed and highly practical class on gull identification. With the useful information he provided during the lecture, several of the attendees were able to identify six gull species (plus the hybrid) on the field trip the following weekend! The highlight of the field trip was seeing a lone Thayer’s Gull at Be’er Sheva Park.

In February, Jean Olson taught an overarching marine birds identification class covering grebes, alcids, loons,



Thayer’s Gull | Brian Zinke

and more. Her field trip to Point No Point and Fort Flagler also had a fantastic species list of 37, including a Long-tailed Duck, Rhinoceros Auklet, and Marbled Murrelet!



Black-bellied Plover (winter plumage) | Peggy Mundy

While many of us are great birders in our own right, one of the most enjoyable aspects of birding is that there is always something to learn. Whether it’s a tip or trick you hadn’t heard for a bird you already knew or learning the key characteristic of a species new to you, birding ensures the adventure of life-long learning.

As an attendee of the gull class, I’m pleased to say my days of writing “gull spp.” are dwindling, though I know there is still much learn.

For more information about our upcoming classes, please [visit our classes page](#) on the PAS website.



Common Loon | Peggy Mundy



Horned Grebe | Peggy Mundy

TRIP CALENDAR

Check our website, www.pilchuckaudubon.org, for the latest information



Tuesday, March 3 **Camano Island**

Meet at 8:00 AM at Quilceda Village Walmart parking lot west of Marysville (I-5-Exit 200). Park away from store to the east, next to Quilceda Blvd. and near I-5. We will bird Triangle Cove, Eide Road, English Boom Iverson Spit, and wherever else Virginia prefers. Pack a lunch.
Trip Leader: Virginia Clark, 360-435-3750

Saturday, March 7 **Camano Island—Barnum Point County Park**

Join Pilchuck Audubon Society for a weekend bird walk to one of Island County's newest parks, Barnum Point County Park. Until recently, it was known as Barnum Point Preserve. Details may be found at <https://www.liveineverett.com/blog/worth-leaving-town-for-barnum-point-county-park>. This site was recommended by one of our frequent participants. Meet at 8:30 AM at Quilceda Village Walmart west of Marysville (I-5 Exit 200). Park away from store to the east, next to Quilceda Blvd and near I-5. We'll carpool to Camano Island. Bring "fowl-weather" [sic] gear; sturdy, waterproof boots; and a warm hat. Also bring binoculars and a field guide, if you have them. Optionally, we might reconvene afterward for a little socializing over lunch at a nearby cafe. Free. Open to all. No registration required. No dogs. Trip Leader: Jonathan Blubaugh, 425-244-7633, aracfi@msn.com

Tuesday, March 10 **Point Roberts**

Meet at 7:00 AM at 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. Bring your US Passport or Enhanced Driver's License. Shorebirds, waterfowl, seabirds, raptors, and maybe a puffin or phalarope. Pack a lunch.
Trip Leader: Virginia Clark 360-435-37

Tuesday, March 17 **Samish Flats**

Meet at 7:00 AM at 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. Want to see what a premier birding area offers at its best season? Come along. Pack a lunch.
Trip Leader: Virginia Clark, 360-435-3750

Tuesday, March 24 **Point No Point**

Meet at 7:10 AM at the Edmonds Wade James Theater parking lot. The address is 950 Main St., Edmonds, 98020, just east of 9th Ave., on the south side of Main St. We'll take the ferry to Kingston and bird the voyage, the docks,

Point No Point, and Foulweather Bluff. Waterfowl, shorebirds, passerines, and much beauty and serenity. Pack a lunch. Trip Leader: Virginia Clark, 360-435-3750

Tuesday, March 31 **Anacortes**

Meet at 7:00 AM at Quilceda Village Walmart parking lot west of Marysville (I-5-Exit 200). Park away from store to the east, next to Quilceda Blvd. and near I-5. So many beautiful birding places: lakes, beaches, marinas, and even a mountain. Pack a lunch.
Trip Leader: Virginia Clark, 360-435-3750

Saturday, April 4 **Howarth and Forest Parks in Everett**

Meet at 8:00 AM at the Everett Mall (1402 SE Everett Mall Way), which is in the vicinity of I-5 Exit 189. Park near the bus station in the parking lot south of LA Fitness. We'll carpool to Howarth Park and to Forest Park. Some parts of the trails are steep, and some parts may be muddy. Trip Leader: Douglas Resnick, 425-776-4811 (cell: 206-617-0019), dresnick1@comcast.net.

Tuesday, April 7 **Smith and Spencer Islands**

Meet at 8:00 AM at Langus Riverfront Park, Everett. Go north on SR529 (Broadway) over the Snohomish River; turn right onto 28th PI NE. Follow signs to Langus Waterfront Park. Continue past the Shell House and Everett Animal Shelter, making a left turn onto 4th St SE to a parking lot on the right side of the street. Trying for raptors and waterfowl. Walk the trails, view the Everett Sewage Ponds. Lots of walking.
Trip Leader: Virginia Clark, 360-435-3750 🦅

Help Us Inspire Kids with Classroom Curriculum About Birds

Pilchuck Audubon is in the early stages of creating a classroom curriculum that will support science and art education using birds in our local schools. Starting small, and with the help of a fabulous teacher in the Everett School District as a facilitator, a small group from Pilchuck Audubon has begun to meet, explore, and develop a suite of materials for elementary age learners.

The ultimate goal is to design kits that contain ready-made lesson plans developed in accordance with State learning outcomes. Borrowed kits would offer fun and engaging activities that support teachers with instruction tools and ways to introduce kids to the birds around us and the habitats they need to thrive.

While the kits would be "ready-made" for use in the classroom, we know that learning happens best when taught by an impassioned docent. If you would like to help with the development of this program or would consider being a classroom docent, please contact Brian at director@pilchuckaudubon.org. 🦅

Since February 7, there have been lots of “cutoff dates” in the State Legislature to move legislation through committees and out for floor votes and passage to the other chamber. February 28 was last day for policy bills from one chamber to be passed to the floor to the other chamber. March 6 is the last day to pass bills received from the other chamber excepting some fiscal bills and initiatives. March 12 is last day of this short session.

Negotiations are underway between party caucuses and the two chambers and with the governor’s office. Budget packages were released the week of February 24. Many of the items have bipartisan agreement. There are still some “sharp tongues” at work when TV camera lights go on. But one hears some caucus leaders saying, “Not everyone in our caucus supports this, but the majority supports it.” That’s usually good news.

Bills which Audubon supported and didn’t make deadlines include Senate Bill 6628 in the Senate. It provided authority to the Dept. of Ecology (DOE) to regulate more comprehensively greenhouse house gas emissions. According to Adam Maxwell, Audubon Washington’s Government Relations Director, DOE has some regulatory authority over refineries but needs to be stronger and to cover other companies associated with distribution of fossil fuels and other manufacturing. House Bill 2311, a twin of SB 6628 which did pass the House, so now the Senate can pass the House version and align greenhouse gas reduction targets with the latest science and make carbon sequestration the policy of the state. By the time one reads this column, we will know fate of 2311.

In other news from Adam, after working with Audubon conservation partners to improve legislation significantly that would create a grant program for carbon sequestration in natural and working forests, Audubon Washington has [endorsed HB 2528](#). This bill has broad, bipartisan support and has been moving swiftly through the statehouse. This bill is complementary to the Sustainable Farms and Fields initiative and an important

part of leveraging our whole landscape to combat climate change.

In the waning days of the legislative session, there are negotiations between Senate and House transportation committee chairs, which includes Senator Steve Hobbs (44th District), to adopt HB 1110 that sets clean fuel standards. The *Herald* editorial (February 26) says, “... if HB 1110 is adopted, its enforcement could be made contingent on passage of a transportation revenue package during the 2021 legislative session....”

Hobbs’ transportation package “... would ... levy a carbon fee or carbon cap-and-trade system as a source of funding. It also includes money to replace culverts beneath state highways and roads that block salmon streams.” There is a US Supreme

Court mandate to Washington state to remove those culverts.

Where there have been differences between Hobbs’ preferences and those of some other legislators on reduction of carbon emissions by a range of transportation vehicles, perhaps a good deal can be reached in this short session, extending into next year’s “long session” to accommodate most stakeholders’ desired outcomes?

Closer to home for PAS is a renewed Snohomish County government effort to make all county vehicles and buildings “effectively carbon free,” according to an *Everett Herald* story (February 26). “A climate action advisory committee began meeting in February to help the government decide how best to attain that goal. Transportation is a focal point. The goal is to be using 100 percent clean, renewable energy by 2045. PAS will assist conservation groups who are in “lead positions,” working with the county advisory group. ✎



Pilchuck Audubon Presents

Birding 101

Led by Elaine Chuang

What is it about birds that engages so many of us? Come enjoy a sampler of the many facets of birds and birding that are so captivating, and intersect a bit with life on the wing, with emphasis on our local avian fauna, their habits and habitats. Optional field trip too!



CLASS:
MARCH 21, 8-10AM

Willow Creek Salmon and
Watershed Education Center
95 Pine Street
Edmonds, WA

FIELD TRIP:
MARCH 21

Included on site, as the
latter portion of this class.

Class: \$5, additional donations appreciated
Ages 8 and up

Class size is limited.
Email director@pilchuckaudubon.org to register

Pilchuck Audubon Presents

Birding by Ear

Listening is an act of loving birds

Led by Whitney Neufeld-Kaiser

Identifying birds by their songs and calls can transform both your birding experience and your everyday life. In Session 1 of this class, we'll practice analyzing the different characteristics of a song (e.g., rhythm, tone quality) - to help with recognition and identification. Sonograms will be introduced in Session 2 as a tool to "see" differences between similar songs and calls.



CLASS:
APRIL 21 & 28, 7:15-9:15PM

Snohomish County PUD
Room TC2-E
2320 California St
Everett, WA

FIELD TRIP (OPTIONAL)
APRIL 26, 7-9AM

Forest Park Recreation Office
802 E Mukilteo Blvd bldg 229
Everett, WA

Class: \$50 for members, \$60 for non-members

Youth (24 and under): \$25

Discount applies to Pilchuck Audubon members only

Class size is limited.
Email director@pilchuckaudubon.org to register

BACKYARD BIRDING HIGHLIGHTS

December 26, 2019 to January 25, 2020

by Mara Price, Sightings Coordinator

I am happy to announce that we have a new member of our bird-sighting group. His name is Walter Zandi and he is reporting from Monroe. So, I will start with his report.

Walter had a total species count of 15 that included a Pileated Woodpecker, 4 Northern Flicker, and a Hairy Woodpecker, all at the suet. He also listed 18 Dark-eyed Junco, 2 Black-capped Chickadee, 2 Anna's Hummingbird, a Red-breasted Nuthatch, 3 Spotted Towhee, 3 Steller's Jay, a Downy Woodpecker, a House Finch, a Fox Sparrow, a Song Sparrow, a White-crowned Sparrow, and 2 Chestnut-backed Chickadee.

Reporting from Granite Falls, Carole and Larry Beason listed 3 Anna's Hummingbird; a Bald Eagle; 8 Bufflehead ducks; 21 Canada Goose on the lake; 5 Chestnut-backed Chickadee; a Common Raven; 40 Dark-eyed Junco in the trees, shrubs, and on the ground; a Brown Creeper; 8 Golden-crowned Sparrow; a Great Blue Heron flying over the lake; 3 Hairy Woodpecker; 4 Hooded Merganser; a Merlin in the rose bushes; 3 Pied-billed Grebe; 2 Pileated Woodpecker; 10 Purple Finch; 9 Spotted Towhee; 6 Steller's Jay; a Sharp-shinned Hawk; 12 Western Gull; and 2 Wood Duck on the lake, for a total species count of 33.

Hilkka Egtvedt's report from Mukilteo listed a Sharp-shinned Hawk, only one California Quail, 2 Anna's Hummingbird, 5 Northern Flicker, a Pileated Woodpecker, 4 Steller's Jay, 5 Chestnut-backed Chickadee, a Bewick's Wren, a Townsend's Warbler, 4 Spotted Towhee, a Fox Sparrow, 2 Song Sparrows, a White-throated Sparrow, 2 Golden-crowned Sparrow, 17 Dark-eyed Junco, 2 House Finch, and 20 Pine Siskin, for a total species count of 24.

Kriss Erickson's report from Everett listed 18 Dark-eyed Junco, 4 American Robin, 2 Bewick's Wren, 22 Bushtit, 124 Northwestern Crow, 6 Western Gull, 7 Chestnut-backed Chickadee, 16 Black-capped Chickadee, 4 House Finch, 4 Northern Flicker, 4 Song Sparrow, a Hairy Woodpecker, 4 American Goldfinch, 2 Mallard Duck, 24 Pine Siskin, a Cooper's Hawk, a Pacific Wren, and 23 European Starling, for a total species count of 23.

Reporting from Stanwood, Mary Sinker's total species count of 28 included 5 American Robin, 2 Bald Eagle, 2 Barred Owl, 12 Black-capped Chickadee, 2 Brown Creeper, 6 Chestnut-backed Chickadee, 125 Dark-eyed Junco, 6 Downy Woodpecker, a Great Blue Heron at the creek, 2 Great-horned Owl, 3 Hairy Woodpecker, 17 Mourning Dove, 5 Northern Flicker, a Pileated Woodpecker, 5 Red-winged Blackbird, 7 Song Sparrow, 11 Spotted Towhee, 12 Steller's Jay, 4 Varied Thrush, 2 White-crowned Sparrow, and 4 Pacific Wren.

My report from Marysville included 5 Black-capped Chickadee, a Downy Woodpecker, 50+ Canada Goose in the fields, 30 Dark-eyed Junco, 2 Kinglet species, 4 Northern Flicker, 2 Pileated Woodpecker, 3 Spotted Towhee, 4 Steller's Jay, 30+ Rock Dove on the wires, 13 Mourning Dove, an American Robin, 50+ European Starling, 5 House Finch, a Varied Thrush, and 50+ Snow Goose in the fields, for a total species count of 20. 🐦

BIRD WALK AT BRIGHTWATER CENTER

1 February 2020

by Douglas Resnick, Trip Leader

Peter and Sarah met me in the morning under overcast skies at the Canyon Park Park & Ride. We carpoled to Brightwater Center, where we found unusually little parking available. After finding a space in a far corner, we walked back to the first parking area, birding along the way. Laurie joined us there, and we paused to observe more birds while we waited for any latecomers.

The weather, though cool, was actually a bit warmer and less windy than might have been expected, and at first there was no rain. We found some Mallards and Canada Goose in the vicinity of the first pond, and soon we observed a much larger flock of geese flying overhead. We heard Red-winged Blackbirds in the background, as well as a Killdeer.

We traversed Brightwater roughly along a figure-eight route, travelling first to the south. At some point, the rain began. It continued throughout the remainder of our visit, but we still found birds. A lone American Robin was in plain view, perched in a tree. Several Golden-crowned Sparrow and a Song Sparrow appeared on the path itself. We heard, then saw two Anna's Hummingbird together on a shrub, the male turning his head to show a brilliant red. As the trail skirted the nearby roadway, a Red-tailed Hawk flew overhead. As we approached our starting point, we could hear Killdeer again, and we decided to look further. By walking eastward as far as we could, we were able to view them through the fence, as they moved along the edge of a lawn.

As we began the northern part of the walk, Laurie observed that the opening through which she had driven in order to park was now closed by a gate. She departed to rescue her car, at which endeavor she later reported success; she was told that the gate should have been closed to begin with but had been sticking lately.

As we walked along the northern trails, we encountered largish flocks of Dark-eyed Junco foraging on the ground, or perhaps we encountered one flock that kept relocating itself. Our approach to a pond seemed to startle a Great Blue Heron,

which grandly flew away. Gaining ground toward the northern hill, we saw a Pine Siskin flock weaving from tree to tree some distance to our right. High-pitched calls attracted our attention to trees nearer at hand, where we found Golden-crowned Kinglets. As we turned once again toward our starting point, a buzzy trill alerted us to the



Pine Siskin
allaboutbirds.org

return of the siskins, this time at much closer range.

We ended our birding at about 11:30 a.m. We had observed 17 species, as reported in eBird. 🐦

Weekend Birdwalk to Riverview Wildlife Refuge with Snohomish Rising *by Jonathan Blubaugh*

On Saturday, January 18, Pilchuck Audubon Society and the North Sound Birders' Meetup conducted a Snohomish Rising Weekend Birdwalk at the Snohomish Riverview Wildlife Refuge and Pilchuck Audubon Society Riverview Sanctuary. These preserves lie along the right bank of the Snohomish River surrounding and adjacent to the Snohomish wastewater treatment plant. The wide, flat trail brings you directly to the WTP perimeter fence, enabling close observation of the waterfowl. The levee between the fence and the river also gives a great overview of both streambanks.

Strong attendance was obtained by several factors. Wendy Poischbeg of the City of Snohomish planned and organized the outing, posting it on the City's website. She recruited Andy Papadatos accompanied by his wife, Ingrid, to lead the walk. Pilchuck Audubon Executive Director Brian Zinke put it on the PAS website, and I put it on the North Sound Birders' Meetup. I had about seven RSVP's from Meetup, of whom one was a returnee. Including myself and PAS Treasurer, Judy Hall, we had four from PAS. In total, there were at least 38 people. The high turnout resulted in a good number of species sighted: 41.

Often on a birdwalk some people see some birds, but most people do not see all the birds or other things that were seen by the group as a whole. However, this day practically everybody saw the most amazing event. First, there were plenty of waterfowl. Treatment ponds, typically fenced, are an important resource, keeping birds relatively safe. In this case, the ponds are also surrounded by preserved lands. Across the river, however, are farmlands, where seasonal hunting was underway. Every now and then we heard shotgun blasts, which inevitably resulted in flushing up huge flocks of geese and ducks. This cycle repeated about three times on our walk. After a couple of these shootings we all heard a third series of gunshots. We looked up at the rising flock of ducks and saw the most heart-stopping spectacle. Almost everyone saw a Peregrine Falcon catch a duck on the wing out of the huge airborne flock! I'm pretty sure its heart stopped. Within seconds, the peregrine was set upon by a pair of raptors. They circled away in front of us toward our right with most of the waterfowl heading away to our left. At first, many of us assumed the interlopers were a pair of Bald Eagles, because we had seen them prominently perched earlier and there is a huge aerie within sight. They caused the falcon to drop the prey beside the levee path ahead of us. Many of us also saw the falcon drop the duck under pressure. Some observers who were closest had a good look when the duck was dropped; they reported that it was actually a pair of Red-tailed Hawks that had stolen the falcon's meal. Until that day, I had never seen a falcon catch a bird on the wing. I have seen a few epic life-and-death chases by raptors. I've seen them strike and kill birds and rodents on the ground and fish in the waters, but I'd never seen a falcon catch a bird. I have seen an eagle take a duck off Shadow Lake (near Snohomish). So, we also witnessed the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat up close on this trip.

Here's a list of most of the birds we encountered: about 100 Snow Goose and 5 Trumpeter Swan flew over, 2 Northern Shoveler, 11 Gadwall, about 1000 American Widgeon, a 200 Mallard, 8 Northern Pintail, about 150 Green-winged Teal, about 75 Ring-necked Duck, about 40 Lesser Scaup, 5 Bufflehead, 2 Hooded Merganser, 4 Common Merganser, a Pied-Billed Grebe, 1 Anna's Hummingbird, 10 Ring-billed Gull flew over, about 100 Glaucous-winged Gull, a Double-crested Cormorant, a Great Blue Heron, 2 Bald Eagle, the 2 Red-tailed Hawk, a Belted Kingfisher flew over, a Downy Woodpecker, a Northern Flicker, a Merlin, the Peregrine Falcon, 3 Steller's Jay, 4 crows, a Black-capped Chickadee, a Chestnut-backed Chickadee, a spectacular Golden-crowned Kinglet, a Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 2 European Starling, 2 American Robin, 3 House Finch, 6 Dark-eyed Junco, a Song Sparrow, 2 Spotted Towhee, and 15 Red-winged Blackbird. Additionally, a couple of Bushtit were heard. This gave a species total of about 41. All were uploaded to eBird via the mobile application.

A huge thank you goes out to Wendy and Andy for organizing and leading this overwhelmingly successful Snohomish Rising event.

At the end of the day, several of us retired to the Snohomish Bakery and the First and Union Kitchen in Snohomish for a wonderful late lunch. The establishment is owned and operated by our wonderful trip leader, Andy Papadatos and his wife, Ingrid. 🍴

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