

October Program Meeting

The Dinosaurs Among Us

October 9, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

Guest Speaker: Kim Adelson, PhD



Virtually all paleontologists agree that birds evolved from dinosaurs, and most even go so far as to claim that birds are, in fact, living dinosaurs. Come learn about the remarkable similarities between birds and the creatures they evolved from. We guarantee that you will not only be surprised as to how dinosaur-like birds are, but also how very bird-like dinosaurs were. You will never think about *T. rex* in the same way again!

Kim Adelson, who is a board member of the Black Hills Audubon Society, was a professor of psychology for almost 30 years. Before she switched fields so as to better study behavioral evolution, she earned a master's degree in evolutionary biology. Paleontology has been one of her avocations since she was a child. Kim has previously spoken at Pilchuck about the birds of New Zealand.

When: October 9, 2020 at 7:00 PM

Where: The comfiest spot in your home!

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How to Join: Click the link below to register for the Zoom conference. Once you register, you will receive an email with the meeting link, password, and phone number. When you're ready to attend the meeting on Friday, you can join the meeting one of two ways:

By computer

- Click the meeting link in your email. You may be prompted to download the Zoom application if you haven't already, or you can view it using your internet browser. Then enter the meeting ID and password to sign in.

By phone

- If you'd prefer to call in on your phone and listen to the program, you can dial the phone number in your registration email and enter the meeting ID and password.

Register for Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZAodeGqrTMrH9QJ9-WzoXyJalDEmf0xXQrA>

2020 Audubon Christmas Bird Count



On November 15, a determination will be made regarding whether this year's CBC can be conducted safely and in compliance with state and local COVID-19 guidelines.

Save the Date

Edmonds / South County CBC

December 19, 2020

Everett / Marysville CBC

January 2, 2021



In Case You Missed It ...

It's been a busy summer of online programs here at Pilchuck Audubon! While we certainly miss seeing everyone in person, one of the benefits of online programs is that we can record them. We know you all have busy lives and can't always make the live presentations, so in case you missed one, below are the links to watch our line-up of programs from this summer. Enjoy!

A Dead Tree's Excellent Adventure

Presentation by Ken Bevis, Washington Dept. of Natural Resources. [Watch the Recording](#)

Swifts Night In: Vaux's Happening, 15 million and counting. Where we've been and where we're going

Presentation by Larry Schwitters. [Watch the Recording](#)

Leque Island Estuary Restoration Project

Presentation by Loren Brokaw, Washington Dept. of Fish & Wildlife. [Watch the Recording](#)

Puget Sound Bird Fest

Presentations by Dr. Kaeli Swift, Rick Taylor, Alan Mearns, Scott Markowitz, Bev Bowe, and more! [Watch the Recordings](#)

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 425.232.6811.

The monthly Profile is available online at

www.pilchuckaudubon.org

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New Additions to the PAS Board of Directors

The PAS Board of Directors is a devoted group of volunteers who champion and sustain our mission. They ensure that our mission is being fulfilled by providing strategic direction and resources to support our community programs, science, and advocacy.

This year we've gained three new Board members, and we're excited to introduce them to you!

Jeff Hambleton, Chair Development Committee

Jeff's degree in Zoology from UC Berkeley sparked a lifelong passion for birding. In 1983, Jeff moved to Snohomish County and with his wife, Eileen, raised three sons who share their passion for outdoor adventure and the environment. After 36 years as a family doctor, retiring has allowed more time for family (6 grandchildren), travel, camping, gardening, and, of course, birding. As a Board Member, he hopes to engage new members and support the mission of Pilchuck Audubon.



Martha Jordan, Chair Avian Science Committee

As a wildlife biologist, Martha has worked in both the marine and terrestrial areas of the Pacific Northwest. She has a degree in Wildlife Science from Oregon State University with a minor in Oceanography/Fisheries. Her wildlife work has taken her all over the Pacific Northwest, Canada, and to England and Australia.



Her passion for waterfowl and their habitats led her to found the Northwest Swan Conservation Association, of which she is the Executive Director.

She and PAS have a long history together. Many years back she served on the board and has now returned to an active role with PAS. Her other passion is dogs. As an avid dog lover, she has incorporated dogs into her wildlife work as specially trained waterfowl working dogs. She enjoys competition in the show ring, obedience, and other dog sport venues. Currently, her Irish water spaniel, Moss, assists with swan captures and being an ambassador for canines working in wildlife conservation.

Mandy Weger, Member-at-large; Chair, Communications Committee

Mandy has worked in Marketing and Communications for more than 12 years, specializing in content and video marketing. She is currently a tech employee in Seattle, previously worked at Campbell Soup Company in New Jersey, and is originally from Cincinnati, Ohio. Mandy enjoys writing and photography in her spare time. She began birding in 2019 after purchasing a telephoto lens for her camera and started taking photos of the birds in her backyard. She started bringing her camera on hikes, and birding quickly became one of her favorite hobbies. You can follow along with Mandy's bird photography on her Instagram account, @MandyWeger. 🦋



This is a reprint from the Northcentral Washington Audubon Chapter's September 2020 newsletter, *The Wild Phlox*. It is about two of its conservation projects which, when completed, will no doubt become special destinations for birders in the Wenatchee and Rock Island areas. Many thanks to Editor Teri Pieper, Conservation Chair Mark Johnston, and photographer Bruce McCammon.

While in the last several months Covid-19 has significantly impacted many of our organization's primary programs and events, our conservation work has been as busy as ever. Since we last reported, we have been actively working on several important issues including the Icicle Strategy Process in Leavenworth, the proposed expansion of the Mission Ridge Ski Area, our Northern Spotted Owl petition to the State Forest Practices Board, and our proposals for habitat restoration and enhancements in the Horan Natural Area (Horan) in Wenatchee and at the Rock Island



Wood Ducks are often seen at Rock Island Ponds. | Photo by Bruce McCammon, Wenatchee

Ponds. All are works in progress and representative of the complexity and lengthy nature of many of the issues impacting our region's birds. For a detailed overview of our Conservation Program and the issues we are

involved with, please visit the conservation page on our website. Below we focus on recent, very positive developments regarding two of our key projects.

Our Horan Natural Area and Rock Island Ponds Projects Take a Big Step Forward

We have been engaged with our Horan and Rock Island Ponds Projects for about four years now and have developed and promoted a separate vision for each (You can read them on the conservation page of our website). Recently, the Chelan PUD (PUD) sent out a letter soliciting applications for "Early Action Projects" associated with the upcoming relicensing of Rock Island Dam.



The Horan Natural Area is a good place to teach about birds and habitat. | Photo by Bruce McCammon, Wenatchee

We submitted proposals for Horan and Rock Island

Ponds and indicated multiple actions for each that they might consider financing. Both were accepted! As a result, the PUD has agreed as a first step to commit \$30,000 in support of our proposals to be split between the two areas. Most of the money will pay for development of a plan for the redesign of Horan and enhancements of native habitats there. A much smaller portion will underwrite a long-term bird survey at Rock Island Ponds that NCWAS has agreed to design and conduct.



Bald Eagles and many other birds have nested in the Horan Natural Area. | Photo by Bruce McCammon, Wenatchee

Our proposals for each site, if realized, will bring substantial benefits to the region's birds, and provide important, enhanced recreational opportunities for nearby communities. We are thankful for the PUD's support and collaboration on these projects, and believe their involvement provides a critical component and tipping point in seeing them through to completion. These early investments by the PUD are just their initial contributions. They have made clear they are in this for the long run and we can look forward to additional support for both projects going forward. Things are really looking up for a better future for Horan and Rock Island Ponds! 🍃



Ponds and vegetation provide habitat and a pleasant place to walk and watch birds in the Horan Natural Area. | Photo by Bruce McCammon, Wenatchee

“Dzeer” came from over the marsh. It was high in pitch and buzzy in nature. Twice, the call filled the air, and then there was a pause before it appeared more toward my left. I scanned the air above the cattails along Mary Anne Creek. My binoculars were held just below my eyes in the ready mode. There it was, maybe ten feet above the vegetation, making a loop out from a dead snag, an Eastern Kingbird.

This flycatcher breeds across eastern North America and west into Oregon and Washington and then north through much of Canada. Incredibly, they fly to South America for the winter and spend those months in the western part of the Amazon Basin, some going down as far as northern Argentina. I’d come to Washington’s Okanogan Highlands in hopes of finding a few, and by mid-June, they should be in the middle of their nesting.

She looked elegant sitting back on that snag, bigger than many passerines, but still, she weighs only 40 grams, the equivalent of three tablespoons of butter. Her black-and-white body glimmered in the sunlight, and I tried to comprehend her journey of the last several months. I didn’t actually know the sex of this individual, but her elegance gave that impression. If she’d wintered in Northern Argentina, she’d have traveled more than 6,000 miles to reach here, all on her own power. Perhaps, this small bird had flown north to the Yucatan Peninsula, then across the Gulf in one flight, to Texas or Louisiana, and then moved up to here. To think, she probably fueled that trip on flying insects and fruit!

She suddenly shot up, flying rapidly toward a crow that was cruising across the valley. She began to chase that black bird, diving on its back repeatedly. Kingbirds are highly aggressive and will attack crows, hawks, and ravens that dare enter their territories. Their generic name, *Tyrannus*, means “tyrant.” They will forcefully defend their nests and will try to dominate other birds.

However, in winter, these kingbirds travel in flocks, feeding on fruit, and apparently, they migrate in flocks, too. So different from the tenacious, feisty things here in the summer. Right now, I suspect that anything that moved might be attacked. But in winter, apparently, they seem more like a roving band of sorority and fraternity friends—smoking cigars, drinking margaritas or gin and tonics, and looking for fruity hors d’oeuvres. It would be fun to see that communal behavior.

I’d first seen this species when I was in high school. In the late 1960s, several buddies and I had gone on a weekend to northwestern Pennsylvania. Its elegant

black head and back with that white underbelly really stood out, but the white tip to its tail left a mark in my mind. It was as if the bird were dressed in a tuxedo, and his tail had an extra accent. I hadn’t expected to find one on my first trip to the Okanogan a few years ago. It was a fun surprise that brought back fond memories of spring and summer birding trips when I lived in the east.



On this trip, I’d seen Eastern Kingbirds around Forde and Connors lakes in the Sinlahekin Valley and now here in the Okanogan Highlands. Each time their classiness would grab my attention, and I’d stand watching them. They form monogamous pairs, and both members must work together to raise the young. If they both survive the winter, they will likely meet and become a couple again. Ornithologists, though, have discovered that many nests have at least one young fathered by a different male. Pairs raise only one brood per year. The fledglings are fed for up to five weeks after they leave the nest. Catching insects on the wing is demanding and requires a great deal of skill. These parents put that time into their young. Cold, wet weather will decrease flying insects and make it difficult for parents to provide for hungry young. It made me think of my daughter, who now lives in Australia. Had I done enough?

Both members of this pair sat on branches in the same bush. My brain seemed to understand the science of this species’ natural history, but my heart, my soul, saw so much mystery. Here was a small bird that flies between continents, changes personalities, and survives despite the distances traveled, weather, predators, and who knows what else. How remarkable, almost incomprehensible. These little tyrants took off along Mary Anne Creek, making a loop out over the water and then headed down across the marsh, disappearing out of my sight. To me, their flight seemed like a ballet as they twisted and turned in precise movements to pursue their flying morsels. They left me, though, with a treasure, a sense of primal awe. 🦅

Fracked Gas Refinery at Kalama

by Susan Saul, Conservation Co-chair, Vancouver Audubon Society

The fracked gas industry wants to build the world's largest fracked gas-to-methanol refinery in Kalama. The proposed refinery would consume a staggering amount of fracked gas, more than all of Washington's gas-fired power plants combined. The project would convert the fracked gas to methanol, which would be shipped overseas to be burned as fuel or used as feedstock to make plastics.

The Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) has released a new Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) to address the climate impacts of the proposed plant. The SEIS explains that the refinery would cause a staggering 4.6 million tons of climate pollution every year for 40 years. It would contribute to a significant global increase in greenhouse gas emissions. These emissions would undercut Washington's efforts to move toward a clean energy economy.

The SEIS reveals what the project's backers have long denied: that the refinery would cause more methanol to be burned as fuel in China and result in significant methane pollution from fracking. The methanol refinery would quickly become Washington's largest climate polluter by 2025. It would use more fracked gas than all of Washington's gas-fired power plants combined. In addition, up to 6 tankers per month would transport methanol to China, adding to the total

greenhouse gas emissions of this facility.

The Kalama project will drive fracking and methane pollution. Because of its enormous demand for fracked gas, the proposed refinery would be responsible for increased fracking and the methane pollution that fracking causes. Because methane escapes during the fracking process, this "upstream" pollution will exceed one million tons of greenhouse gas pollution each year, using even the most conservative estimates of methane leakage.

Combustion of methanol from the Kalama project will lead to a large "downstream" source of greenhouse gas pollution. Although the proponents tried for years to claim that no one would ever burn the methanol produced in Kalama, the SEIS shows that the Kalama methanol refinery would lead to more methanol being burned as fuel in China.

Unfortunately, the SEIS also relies on speculative mitigation and an unenforceable market analysis to prop up this dirty, climate-wrecking proposal. The SEIS does not offer any proof for its theory that the Kalama plant will displace worse sources of pollution in China.

You can weigh in against this fracked gas project! **The comment period closes October 2.** You can use Ecology's [online comment form](#) or [sign a petition](#) with Columbia Riverkeeper. 🐦

The articles on this page are reprinted with permission from the October 2020 newsletter of the Vancouver (WA) Audubon Society.

National Wildlife Refuge Updates

Ridgefield NWR

Auto Tour Route on the River "S" **Unit is open to vehicle traffic ONLY.** No bikes or pedestrian access at this time. **As usual, the seasonal walking trail, the Kiwa trail, will be closing for the season on October 1.**

Carty Unit: Construction of a new office building at 28908 NW Main Avenue started in September. The parking lot will remain open to the public during most of the construction window. Check the website for intermittent safety closures. **Spur trail from Main Street Bridge Closed During Construction.** Visitors can still drive in or walk in from the sidewalk through the main entrance gate. **Carty Lake Trail/Port entrance closes October 1.** Access to the Oaks to Wetlands Trail and Carty Lake trail is provided from both the Main Ave and the Port of Ridgefield entrances.

The Oaks to Wetlands Trail north of the large oak tree overlook will be closed to all public access on Thursdays to provide work crews safe distancing while they continue work in this restoration area. Please respect this closure for their safety and your own.

Gate Time – **Current gate times are 7AM - 7PM.** Check the website for gate times on the day of your visit. Note that gates



close automatically.

There is no public access to bathrooms, informational kiosks, refuge office, and the viewing blind due to the inability to uphold necessary social distancing guidelines during the pandemic. The Refuge is fee free at this time.

Information current as of publication. Check the alerts on the [website](#) for current information.

Steigerwald Lake NWR

Closed to All Public Access for Restoration

Good news! State Route 14 construction portion of the project is scheduled for completion in early October.

The Steigerwald Reconnection Project has begun. To ensure the safety of visitors and crews, the Refuge's trails are closed to all public access. This closure includes the Refuge's parking lot, restrooms, and access to both the Refuge's interior trails (currently) and the Columbia River Dike Trail (the levee trail) that parallels the Columbia River.

The Refuge Trails and Dike Trail east of Captain William Clark Park will be closed to all public access between July and October of 2020. Please respect this closure while habitat and public use opportunities are enhanced.

For more info, visit <https://www.refuge2020.info/steigerwald-reconnection-project>. 🐦

Pilchuck Audubon Presents

Let's Get You Better Bird Photos!

Online course led by Steve Ball, Olympus Educator



OCTOBER 15, 7:00-8:15PM

We will review some of the bird photography fundamentals as well as tips to improve your images. Learn how to take your photos up a notch or two, and how to look at your images with a critical eye so the next time out you can improve your results.



**Sessions will be conducted over Zoom
(and recorded if you cannot make the live session)**

Pricing:

\$10 for members, \$15 for non-members

Scholarships may be available for those in need, inquire at email below

To Register:

Register online at www.pilchuckaudubon.org/classes
or email director@pilchuckaudubon.org

BACKYARD BIRDING HIGHLIGHTS

July 26, 2020 to August 25, 2020

by Mara Price, Sightings Coordinator

So happy that the smoke is gone. Now I can get back outside; it is better for the birds also.

Carole and Larry Beason's report from Lake Bosworth listed 2 American Goldfinch, 10 American Robin, a Bald Eagle over the lake, 2 Black-capped Chickadee, 6 Black-headed Grosbeak, 50+ Canada Goose in Machias field, a Common Raven over the house, 2 Downy Woodpecker, an Evening Grosbeak, 2 Hairy Woodpecker, a Muscovy Duck on the lake, 3 Osprey over the lake, a Pied-billed Grebe, 13 Purple Finch at the feeders, 50+ Red-winged Blackbird, 3 Rufous Hummingbird, 7 Spotted Towhee, 2 Swainson's Thrush, 4 Violet-green Swallow, 2 Western Tanager, 5 Wood Duck, and a Brown Creeper, for a total species count of 47.

Hilkka Egtvedt's total species count of 22 from her home in Mukilteo included a Cooper's Hawk, 5 Band-tailed Pigeon, 2 Anna's Hummingbird, 3 Northern Flicker, a Pileated Woodpecker, 3 Steller's Jay, 4 Chestnut-backed Chickadee, 2 Red-breasted Nuthatch, 2 Western Tanager, a Song Sparrow, a White-crowned Sparrow, 3 Dark-eyed Junco, 6 House Finch, 5 Pine Siskin, and a House Sparrow.

Reporting from Everett, Kriss Erickson listed 16 Dark-eyed Junco, 17 American Robin, 9 Steller's Jay, 14 American Crow, 6 Western Gull, 23 Black-capped Chickadee, 10 House Finch, 5 Anna's Hummingbird, 4 Black-headed Grosbeak, 5 Northern Flicker, 5 Song Sparrow, a Common Raven, a Cooper's Hawk, and a Varied Thrush, for a total species count of 19.

Walter Zandi's report from Monroe included a Pileated Woodpecker, 4 Steller's Jay eating suet and peanuts, 4 Hairy Woodpecker, 5 Dark-eyed Junco, 2 Downy Woodpecker, 16 Pine Siskin, 10 Black-headed Grosbeak, 3 Band-tailed Pigeon, 3 Dark-eyed Junco, 2 House Finch, 3 Northern Flicker, 4 Anna's Hummingbird, 2 Rufous Hummingbird, 3 Mourning Dove, 17 American Robin, and a Pacific Wren, for a total species count of 17.

My report from my home in Marysville included 4 Anna's Hummingbird playing at the fountain, 5 American Crow, an American Goldfinch, 3 Dark-eyed Junco, 4 Black-headed Grosbeak, 5 House Finch, 5 Mourning Dove, 4 Northern Flicker, 2 Red-breasted Nuthatch, 10 Barn Swallow along the road, 3 Steller's Jay, 2 Red-tailed Hawk flying over, 4 Spotted Towhee, a Western Tanager, a Pileated Woodpecker, 3 Great Horned Owl in the woods, and a Bald Eagle flying over, for a total species count of 21.

If you are interested in participating in the Backyard Birding count, please email me at pricemara1@gmail.com or leave a message on my cell phone at 425-750-8125. 📧

TRIP CALENDAR

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



No Birding Trips in October

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
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