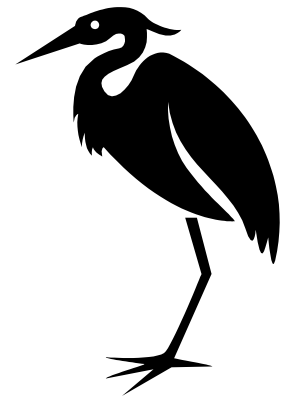


The

# Heron Herald



Rainier Audubon Society

December 2010

**Rainier Audubon Presents**

Monday December 20, 2010

6:30 PM

## Rafting the Marsh Fork of the Canning River

*Dan Streiffert Photography*



Join us on a 12 day wilderness birding adventure along the western boundary of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Called "America's Serengeti" for its tremendous biological productivity and diversity, the coastal plain is one of the most intact and untouched ecosystems in America. The refuge is home to 42

mammal species, including more than 120,000 head of caribou; 36 species of fish, and over 160 species of birds. Many of these birds migrate to and from all fifty states and from six continents to feed and reproduce, taking full advantage of the burst of biological growth which blossoms here in the long days of the Arctic summer.

Beginning on the scenic Marsh Fork, we descend through the rugged mountains of the Brooks Range, northeast to the confluence with the main stem of the Canning River. Wildlife photographer Dan Streiffert lets you experience this trip through his camera with photos of the journey. Our guide, "Curly" Bob Dittrick has led trips for President Jimmy Carter and photographer Art Wolfe. Join us for this trip of a lifetime and please bring treats for our December "Cookie Exchange".



**Join us for our December  
"Cookie Exchange"!**

### Environmental Priorities Coalition Legislative Workshop

**When:** Saturday, January 8th, 9:30 AM - 2:30 PM

**Where:** Seattle Pacific University, Gwinn Commons

### Environmental Priorities Coalition Lobby Day

**When:** Tuesday, February 15, 8:30 AM - 6:00 PM

**Where:** United Churches, Olympia, 110th East 11<sup>th</sup> Ave

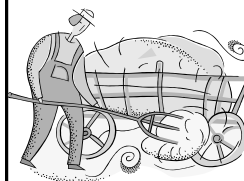
### **Rainier Audubon programs are held at**

Federal Way United Methodist Church, 29645 - 51st Ave. So. 9800  
(in unincorporated Auburn)

**Directions:** In Federal Way, take 320th St. EAST past The Commons, crossing over I-5 and Military Rd.

At 321st St, turn left. Stay on 321st as it becomes 51st Ave. So. Follow 51st Ave. to 296th. Church will be on your left.

## **HOLIDAY HAYRIDES**



The Audubon Center at Seward Park is offering Winter Wonderland Hayrides on three Saturdays in December--the 4th, the 11th, and the 18th. The truck-drawn hayrides leave from the Audubon Center on the hour, between 10 and 3, and cost \$5 per person. A naturalist will be your guide to the old growth forest, Lake Washington and other features of Seward Park.

Tickets are available on line at [www.brownpapertickets.com/event/133406](http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/133406) or you may call 206 652-2444 for more information. The Audubon Center at Seward Park is located at 5902 Lake Washington Blvd. South in Seattle.

## President's Message by Nancy Streiffert



**H**appy Fall/Winter! I believe I once heard that Scandinavians refer to this time of year as "entering the tunnel". I think that is a fitting metaphor as the darkness increases the "deeper" we go until the Solstice when, with a little imagination, we begin to see the light

at the end of the tunnel as the days lengthen, at first barely noticeably and then in increasing increments. So how do you enjoy or endure the darkness, if you are not kin to a mole and truly welcome it? Some people embrace winter sports, bundled up and active. Some cozy up indoors with a good book, a warm blanket and something hot to drink. Others engage in social activities indoors or out – being in good company always brightens one's day. Another option is learning something new by taking a class or attending lectures, formal or informal, like the folks who took advantage of the opportunity to learn more about birds from Carol Schulz recently and those who attend our varied and interesting programs each month. However you choose to spend the fall and winter months, I look forward to seeing you at our meetings where you can combine some of all these options: signing up for bird hikes, enjoying snacks, socializing and learning something new! See you there. Nancy

### Win a Backyard Habitat Consultation!

Rainier Audubon Society is offering a chance for you to win a Backyard Habitat Consultation! An expert native plant specialist/bird enthusiast will come to your "estate", of any size, and help you design a beautiful, water-efficient, bird and wildlife-friendly habitat that both you and the critters you share space with will enjoy.

Tickets are \$1 each and will be on sale starting September 18th at the Frog Frolic at Shadow Lake Bog and from then on at our meetings and events until the drawing at our April meeting. Enter early and often! If you are too far outside our RAS boundaries or would prefer, you can choose Russell Link's book, *Living with Wildlife*. Questions? Nancy at [nancy\\_streiffert@hotmail.com](mailto:nancy_streiffert@hotmail.com)



#### RAINIER AUDUBON OFFICERS

President	Nancy Streiffert	253-796-2203
Vice President	Steve Feldman*	360-802-5211
Treasurer	Jim Tooley*	253-854-3070
Secretary	Heather Gibson	253-856-9812
Program Chair	Dale Meland*	253-946-1637
Field Trip Chair	Carol Schulz	206-824-7618
Membership Chair	Pat Toth*	206-767-4944
Backyard Habitat Chair	Carol Stoner*	253-854-3207
Conservation Chair	Dan Streiffert*	253-796-2203
Mailing Chair	Debra Russel	425-271-0682
Hospitality	Sandra Embry	
Newsletter Editor	Dan Streiffert	253-796-2203
Webmaster	Nancy Hertzal	253-255-1808
Ivy Eradication Coordinator	Bernedine Lund	253-839-3729
Education Chair	Annette Tabor*	253-927-3208
Christmas Bird Count Coordinator	Nancy Streiffert	253-796-2203
Board Member	Max Prinsen*	425-432-9965
Board Member	Erin Wojewodski-Prinsen*	425-432-9965

\*Also serves as Board Member.

Board meetings are held the 2nd Wednesday of each month and are open to all members.



**BIRDNOTE CALENDARS ON SALE AT OUR DECEMBER MEETING FOR \$10!**

# Arctic National Wildlife Refuge



Brooks Range

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## An Irreplaceable Treasure

Called "America's Serengeti" for its tremendous biological productivity and diversity, the coastal plain of Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is one of the most intact and untouched ecosystems in America. The refuge is home to 42 mammal species, including more than 120,000 head of caribou; 36 species of fish, and over 160 species of birds. Many of these birds migrate to and from all fifty states and from six continents to feed and reproduce, taking full advantage of the burst of biological growth which blossoms here in the long days of the Arctic summer.

## The Refuge as a Target

The refuge was established in 1960 under President Dwight Eisenhower, and while much of Alaska remains open to oil and gas drilling, oil and gas interests continue to lobby hard to drill in the refuge.

In recent years, special interests have persuaded their supporters in Congress to force several votes to allow energy extraction in the coastal plain of the Arctic Refuge, putting at risk the incredible array of wildlife that rely on the refuge for their survival. While they have gotten close, conservation groups like Audubon have held firm and helped prevent this pro-drilling legislation from moving forward in Congress.

## The Search for Lasting Energy Solutions

Drilling is a dirty and dangerous business that has historically always resulted in spills and harmed the environment. In addition, it feeds the nation's dangerous addiction to oil, which is also a major cause of climate change. Major and minor spills occur almost daily in Alaska oil fields, and these occurrences can cause lasting damage to the environment.

In addition to the threat of spills, if drilling were allowed in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge the network of roads, pipelines, gravel mines, and heavy machinery that would be needed to produce oil would industrialize the pristine wilderness of the refuge. Despite what drilling supporters have claimed, energy extraction in the Arctic Refuge would do virtually nothing to bring down energy costs or increase energy security, and new supplies of oil would not arrive for years. According to government estimates, oil from the refuge would lower prices at the gas pump by a little more than a penny/gallon and not for 20 years.

There are better solutions to our energy problems that can both protect the pristine habitat found in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and make us less dependent on oil. Audubon endorses raising fuel efficiency standards, energy conservation, and responsible development of renewable energy sources like properly-sited wind farms and solar power.



Wandering Tattler - Photo by Dan Streiffert

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## You Can Help Protect The Arctic

Congress has introduced legislation to permanently protect the coastal plain—the biological heart of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and preserve this pristine wildlife habitat for generations to come. Ask your members of Congress to support permanent protection for the Arctic Refuge by cosponsoring this critical legislation. You can [send a letter to your U.S. Senators and Representatives](#) at the Audubon Action Center.

<https://secure3.convio.net/nasaud/site/Advocacy?cmd=display&page=UserAction&id=394>



## Field Trips by Carol Schulz

### Kittitas County Birding in Winter

Sunday, December 5, 2010

6:30am to evening

Co-Leaders - Charlie Wright and Roger Orness

Come enjoy a day of winter-season birding in central Washington. We will venture over Snoqualmie Pass and visit areas including Swauk Prairie and South Cle Elum along our route. Large numbers of raptors including Rough-legged Hawks and Prairie Falcons are seen wintering in the open, snow-covered fields of Kittitas. Proceeding east we will reach the Columbia River at Vantage, where waterfowl are sometimes present in vast numbers. Some target species will include unusual loons, ducks, American White Pelicans, and possibly rare gulls. Chukar are occasionally seen in the basalt outcroppings here.



**Bring:** Bring many layers of clothing for cold weather conditions, a lunch, and snacks. Scopes are welcome. Space is limited.

**Meet:** At 6:30am at Auburn Safeway at Auburn Way and Main St.

**Directions:** Take Hwy. 18 to Auburn and exit at Auburn Way. (Hwy 164). Turn north (right) on Auburn Way and drive three blocks north. Safeway sign and gas station will be on the left. Park in the Safeway lot just beyond the gas station and straight out from the Safeway door. We will meet and carpool (promptly) from there.

**Sign-up:** Contact Roger Orness, [r.orness@comcast.net](mailto:r.orness@comcast.net), 253-922-7516. Email is preferred.

### Weekly Bird Walks at Nisqually

Wednesdays 8:00 A.M. to Noon

Leader: Phil Kelley

Join Phil Kelley on his weekly bird walks as he counts the birds at Nisqually NWR. [See latest changes happening at Nisqually at bottom of this field trip.] The group walks over to an area near the visitor's center to view the entry road estuary, and then takes the boardwalk/trail loop out to the Twin Barns, and the Nisqually overlook area. From there, the group walks the new dike, and back to the Riparian Forest. The walk totals about 2.5 miles.

**Bring:** Good walking shoes or boots, rain-gear, water, snacks, and \$3 for entry fee unless you have a pass. Scopes are welcome.

**Meet:** At the Visitor's Center Pond Overlook.

**Directions:** Take I-5 south from Tacoma

and exit to Nisqually NWR at exit 114. Take a right at the light.

**Sign-up:** Call or email Phil Kelley to confirm details. (360) 459-1499, [scrubja-y323@aol.com](mailto:scrubja-y323@aol.com).

A new dike was completed in January, 2010. It can be seen from the Twin Barns, and leads from the Nisqually River almost over to McAllister Creek. A BRAND NEW boardwalk extension is being built. It will provide good views of McAllister Creek. The first section of the brand new board walk (roughly 1600 feet) to the McAllister Creek viewing platform should be open by the end of 2010. The last section out to the mouth of the creek will be open approx. Feb 1 after hunting season ends.

For information about the Nisqually NWR estuary reconstruction project and more, go to <http://www.fws.gov/nisqually/>. Click on wildlife, or on other sections. Another website with more up-to-date info and a map is at <http://nisquallydeltarestoration.org/>

### Rainier Audubon Christmas Bird Count December 26, 2010

It's not too late to sign up for our Christmas Bird Count on December 26. We welcome all skill levels and it is a fun way to sharpen your birding skills. Ten teams will cover our 15 mile diameter count circle stretching from Puget Sound at Des Moines east to Maple Valley and from Renton south to the King/Pierce county line. Each team is led by an experience birder – more eyes and ears are always welcome. Learning new places to find winter birds is a bonus when you join a

team. Other people will count birds in their own backyards.

This 111 year Audubon tradition started in 1900 as an alternative to the traditional "side hunt" (a British tradition) when people competed to see how many birds and small animals they could shoot on Christmas day. The annual CBC now involves more than 2,000 count circles and 55,000 volunteers throughout the Western Hemisphere. It has become an important source of data used to monitor population trends and migration patterns.

Please contact Nancy Streiffert with questions or to sign up. 253-796-2203 or [nancy\\_streiffert@hotmail.com](mailto:nancy_streiffert@hotmail.com)

## Native American People's Time Frame

so much enjoyed the Washington Native Plant Society's columns by Heidi Bohan about the Coast Salish and other local native people's seasonal beliefs and customs that I'd like to share another one. While most of these feature more information about native plants and their uses, the columns sometimes mention animals and, although not often mentioned, I know birds were very important to native people for food, feathers and symbolic reasons.

This is the time of the Coast Salish Lushootsheed moon of Calling Elk and Falling Leaves. The equinox is a mystical time when the spirits are close. The Big Dipper rises low on the horizon at this time and it is easy to see the stars representing the hunters and their dogs as they chase elk into the sky world. This is the time the legends are told again around the evening fires as the winter

ceremonies begin.

Those who hunt in the deep forests and high mountains seek courage and guidance from their visions. They hunt with strong bows steambent in pits of seaweed from the wood of western yew, vine maple and Pacific crabapple or red cedar saplings with hand grips reinforced with stinging nettle cordage twined with hair. Arrows are made from straight hard branches of oceanspray, mock orange and serviceberry tipped with finely chipped stone, bone or copper. (Copper mined in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan made its way, via trade, all over the Americas.) Roots are gathered: bracken fern for food, Oregon grape and devil's club for medicine. Bog cranberries are harvested and stored in moss or dried into cakes. Labrador tea leaves can be gathered at the same time to make healthy teas. Rose hips are eaten fresh

as a vitamin-rich snack and breath freshener(!). Stinging nettle stalks can be harvested now for their strong fiber to be twisted into twine for nets while maiden-hair fern fronds are collected for their deep purple stems to decorate baskets that will be woven during the winter. Cattail and fireweed stalks are gathered for their cottony seeds to spin with mountain goat or dog wool into warm robes for the winter.

All the work of the past seasons will now be enjoyed as the days grow short and feasts that may last for days are offered to neighboring villages, sharing the bounty of the land and the skills and knowledge of the people.

If anyone knows more about Native People's relationship to birds, I would enjoy finding out more.

Nancy Streiffert

## Birding Trail Update

One year ago, Spokane Audubon Society inspired other Washington Chapters to join its members in a two-year pledge to support Audubon Washington's Birding Trail program.

Fifteen Chapters generously contributed \$14,600 in 2010. Thank you for your support!

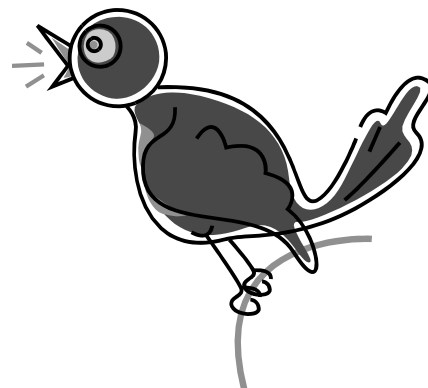
We used Chapter contributions as matching funds and thus doubled your donations. In addition, we received a special grant to reimburse out-of-pocket expenses for Chapter volunteers working on the Puget Loop.

We hope you will now make your second-year gift – or pledge for the first time. Your contributions make a significant difference.

Birding Trail progress in 2010::

- 7th and final map, the Puget Loop: Nine chapters met and nominated 60 sites with site visits through February 2011; publication in September 2011
- 1st conservation grant on Birding Trail/IBA sites: Yakama Nation completed written management plan for Bobolinks/grassland bird protection based on Yakima Valley and Spokane Chapters' citizen science.
- 2nd conservation grant on Birding Trail/IBA sites: 18-month Fellowship will develop habitat protection action with Olympic Peninsula chapters and tribes.

The Birding Trail program is on-the-ground conservation. An Audubon policy presence during the legislature would also contribute to conservation.



Please donate to both these efforts. We'd be happy to give your board and/or membership an in-person update on Birding Trail progress in 2010 and goals for 2011. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Kim Thorburn , Spokane Audubon, State Birding Trail Chair  
Christi Norman, Audubon WA  
Birding Trail Program Director

# Waste Free Holidays

Americans typically throw away an additional 5 million tons of garbage in the 5 weeks between Thanksgiving and New Years. For the last 15 years King County has sponsored a Waste Free Holidays program, but it's gone due to budget cuts.

The Waste Free Holidays effort is now up to us.

The easiest way to minimize unwanted stuff is to give experiences instead of things. Here are suggestions both generic and specific:

- Movie passes
- A gift certificate for a massage or other services
- Restaurant gift certificate for meals simple to gourmet
- Gift cards for books, tools, clothing, food . . .
- Passes to Seattle Children's Theater or Pacific Science Center
- Zoolights at Pt. Defiance
- Garden d'lights at Bellevue Botanic Garden
- Tacoma Little Theater presents "Annie"
- Tacoma Musical Playhouse performs "White Christmas"
- ACT in Seattle does "A Christmas Carol"
- Arts West (in West Seattle) offers "A Tuna Christmas"
- "Nutteracker" at Pacific Northwest Ballet
- Holiday concerts (See KPLU's website - Calendar)
- Ride the Light Rail from Tukwila to Westlake Center
- Give the gift of your time and talents
  - ⇒ Cook a favorite meal or dish.
  - ⇒ Prepare a number of main dish items that can be frozen
  - ⇒ Offer to perform a service over a specific time period
    - ◊ Household chores/maintenance
    - ◊ Putting up/taking down holiday decorations
  - ⇒ Collect and publish the favorite family recipes
- Give the tuition for a class (There are lots of choices from exercise through arts and crafts to home and auto repair.)
- Give a donation to a microfinance, charitable, arts, environmental, or religious organization the friend or family member supports.



The holidays can be a great time to give friends and family things they really need. Just remember that extra 10 billion pounds o'stuff that gets thrown out and give thoughtfully.

If you have another suggestion about how to cut waste during the holidays, please join Rainier Audubon's Google group and post your idea to [ras-activities@googlegroups.com](mailto:ras-activities@googlegroups.com)

Carol Stoner

**Just remember that extra 10 billion pounds o'stuff that gets thrown out and give thoughtfully.**



## The Quizzical Owl

By *Thais Block\**

1. Name a sparrow identified by its harlequin face pattern.
2. What male duck changes into four different plumages?
3. A small volcanic island off Japan is now a National Reserve for this albatross slowly recovering from near extinction.
4. What longer-tailed "peep" can be found during migration?
5. The throat patch of iridescent feathers on hummingbirds is called a \_\_\_\_\_.

*\*Reprinted with permission from Djana Block.*

*Answers are on bottom of page.*

## Mewsings from Millie



**H**ello and welcome once again to my monthly mishmash of musings. I hope you'll find something useful or interesting or both!

Did you know that Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart had a pet starling? He bought the bird on May 27, 1784, brought it home and kept it as his pet for three years until it passed away. When he purchased it, he wrote down the date, price and a musical fragment the bird was singing in his expense book. Mozart was delighted by the bird's song and it is interesting to compare the fragment to the beginning of the last movement of his Piano Concerto in G Major which he was working on at the time. When his little feathered friend died, Mozart buried it in his backyard and wrote a poem to commemorate the occasion which begins: "A little fool lies here, Whom I held dear, A starling in his prime, Of his brief time...." Starling pets are known to connect closely with human keepers and Mozart may have actually bonded with his bird.

Each year many people participate in counting Vaux's Swifts during their spring and fall migrations. One Swift counter, a member of Rainier Audubon, reports that this fall there were one hundred and forty

seven different observers involved who made three hundred and sixty eight observations at sixty six different roost sites in Washington, Oregon, Montana, Idaho, California and British Columbia for a combined total of six hundred six thousand three hundred ninety three birds! The total number of roostings for Washington was three hundred seventy five thousand four hundred fifty two. If you'd like to see all of the results from this fall's count and from previous events, go to Vaux's Happening and click on "Data".

I learned recently about an interesting member of the grouse family that lives on the alpine tundra of our very own Mt. Rainier. It is the White-tailed Ptarmigan which is often seen by visitors to the high country. It is similar to the Common Ptarmigan of the Arctic except for a slight local variation. In spring, the bird is mottled brown and white with white predominating the underparts, wings and tail. In winter, it is entirely white. The ptarmigan's call is a rolling cluck varied with a sharp squeak. It lives the whole year at high elevations preferring the area at the timberline and just above. White-tailed Ptarmigans build their nest on the ground usually in the shadow of a rock using grass, lichens, small leaves and feathers. Their diet consists of buds, leaves and flowers of (especially) willows in the spring and buds and twig tips in the winter. They are tame and unsuspecting birds which makes them very easy to study.

Many people have come into the store wondering where their goldfinches have gone. They haven't flown away, the males are just not bright yellow this time of the

year. After finishing the breeding season in late August and early September, the goldfinches molt and now their feathers are a dullish gray-olive green color. The males also lack the black on the crown of their heads and foreheads. Look for the white wing bars which will still be evident. Although nyjer thistle is the goldfinches favorite food during breeding time, they will eat the meat of black oil sunflower especially as the weather becomes colder. However, they don't have very strong beaks for cracking sunflower shells so offer them medium sunflower chips or some food with medium sunflower chips in it and they'll be happy!

I'll conclude by adding to your growing list of collective nouns used to describe various groups of birds: a rafter of turkeys, a covey of quail and a richness of martins.

Until next time,

*Millie, the Muse of Mews*

## Sign up for our new Google Group!

We have recently created a new group to serve as an email list server for Rainier Audubon. The intent of this site is to assist in publicizing our activities members and the general public relating to our club activities. Anyone may join or leave the group at any time. You may sign up on our website or at:

<http://groups.google.com/group/ras-activites?hl=en>

Answers to Quizzical Owl: 1. Lark Sparrow. 2. Long-tailed Duck (Oldsquaw). 3. Short-tailed Albatross. 4. Baird's Sandpiper. 5. Gorget.



Rainier Audubon Society  
PO Box 778  
Auburn, WA 98071

Nonprofit Organization  
U.S. Postage Paid  
Kent, WA 98031  
Permit No. 441

It wasn't the *Exxon Valdez* captain's driving that caused the Alaskan oil spill. It was yours.

~Greenpeace advertisement, *New York Times*, 25 February 1990

## Rainier Audubon Membership Subscription or Renewal Form

One-year Membership in Rainier Audubon - \$15

To join or renew, mail this application with your payment to:  
Rainier Audubon Society - Membership  
PO Box 778  
Auburn, WA 98071

Or go to <http://www.rainieraudubon.org/> to enroll online.

The RAS board has approved an increase in membership fees, beginning January 1, 2011. The new membership dues will be:  
\$20—Individual Membership  
\$25—Family Membership

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

*RAS Chapter membership includes 9 issues of the Heron Herald annually but does not include AUDUBON magazine.*