

THE

HERON HERALD



Rainier Audubon Society • December 2006/January 2007

Vol 25 No.10/Vol 26 No.1

Check us out on the web: www.rainieraudubon.org

Rainier Audubon Presents:

Monday, December 18, 2006, 7:00 PM

Wildlife Photographer Paul Bannick

Wild Wings, an Intimate Look at the Cavity Nesters of the Pacific Northwest

Free and open to the public

Join us for an evening of wildlife photography with award-winning photographer Paul Bannick. Paul specializes in the natural history of North America and in particular his beloved Pacific Northwest. At our December 18th program, he will focus on the rich diversity of owls and woodpeckers in our



© 2005 Paul Bannick

area. Fifteen of the 19 owl species, and 13 of the 22 woodpeckers seen in North America can be found here. Paul will share memorable images of many of these remarkable birds and look at their unique habitat requirements. His photographic objective is to foster a sense of intimacy between the subject and the viewer with the ultimate goal of motivating conservation of habitat.

An experienced naturalist and outdoor educator, Paul creates most of his images while kayaking, hiking, or snowshoeing in the Pacific Northwest. After graduation from the University of Washington, Paul worked for 15 years in the computer software industry, beginning as one of the original 75 employees of the Aldus Corporation, and then for Adobe Systems, and Microsoft. Wanting to combine

his passion for wilderness conservation with his career, Paul then focused his attention on non-profit work and currently serves as the Director of Development for Conservation Northwest. His work has appeared in several books, magazines, wildlife calendars, and at the Woodland Park Zoo and on interpretive signs in Southern California, Mt. St. Helens, the Seattle area and in the North Cascades. Paul's photography was the feature story of Pacific

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Rainier Audubon Presents:

Monday, January 15, 2007, 7:00 PM

Costa Rica

Free and open to the public

Now that we are in the midst of winter, it's the perfect time to take a virtual trip south to the tropical land of Costa Rica. In December 2005, Rainier Audubon members Ted and Kris Ripley went to Costa Rica with Caravan Tours. They traveled on a bus with 45 people and not only saw gorgeous natural sites, but experienced the culture of Costa Rica as well. They loved the organic, yummy food and the friendly people. Some of the birds the Ripleys saw in Tortuguero, the

cont'd on page 3

Please note: This is a combined December/January issue of the Heron Herald. Our next newsletter will come out in February.

**Rainier Audubon's
December and January Programs**

Monday, December 18, 2006

Monday, January 15, 2007

both at 7:00 PM

(doors open at 6:30)

**Federal Way
United Methodist Church**

Field Trips on Page 4!

Calendar

THURSDAY MORNINGS

Bird Walks at Nisqually

See page 4 for details

DECEMBER 9, SATURDAY

RAS Field Trip: Kittitas County Birding in Winter

See Page 6 for details

DECEMBER 13, WEDNESDAY

RAS Board Meeting, 6:00 PM

Duke's Chowder House at Kent Station

DECEMBER 17, SUNDAY

Rainier Audubon Christmas Bird Count

See Page 3 for details

DECEMBER 18, MONDAY

RAS Program: Wildlife Photographer Paul Bannick

See page 1 for details

DECEMBER 30, SATURDAY

RAS Field Trip: Renton Rivers, Ponds, Parks

See page 4 for details

JANUARY 6, SATURDAY NIGHT

RAS Field Trip: Soos Creek Owl Prowl

See page 6 for details

JANUARY 10, WEDNESDAY

RAS Board Meeting 7:00 PM

Federal Way United Methodist Church

JANUARY 15, MONDAY

RAS Program: Costa Rica

See page 1 for details

JANUARY 20, SATURDAY

RAS Field Trip: Oak Bay to Fort Flagler

See page 4 for details

FEBRUARY 3, SATURDAY

RAS Field Trip: Des Moines to Burien Parks & Beaches

See page 4 for details

<http://www.rainieraudubon.org/>

**Federal Way United Methodist Church
29645 - 51st Ave. So., Federal Way**

DIRECTIONS:

Coming from the west: Take 320th St. heading east, past SeaTac Mall (now called The Commons). Cross I-5 and keep going east down towards Peasley Canyon Rd. At the first light after Military Rd. (321st St.), turn left. Stay on 321st St. as it winds up and around and becomes 51st Ave. So. The church will be on your left at 296th.

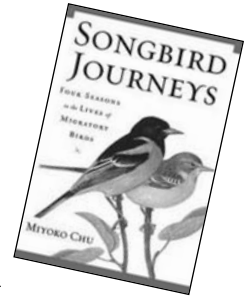
Coming from the east: Take Peasley Canyon Rd. going west towards Federal Way. At the light at 321st St, take a right. Stay on 321st St. as it winds up and around and becomes 51st Ave. So. The church will be on your left at 296th.

Book Review

By Nancy Hertzell

Songbird Journeys — Four Seasons in the Lives of Migratory Birds

by Miyoko Chu; Published by Walker & Company, New York, 2006



This is a beautiful little book and a wonderful gift for anyone, birder or non-birder. The text is divided into four simple sections - Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter. The author follows songbirds as they move through these seasons, from their North American breeding grounds to their wintering territories in the south, explaining with both facts and stories how their plumage and behavior change across the habitats. What do we know about how birds can find their way on those long journeys? Chu discusses all the latest evidence suggesting that birds use magnetic fields, polarized light, and stars to find their way. There are many intriguing anecdotes about the interaction of migrating birds and human beings; for instance, the author relates the history of the modern study of migration, from those first curious individuals who sat up all night listening to the call notes of birds flying overhead and wondering what species they were, to the years of painstaking work with ever-more-sophisticated technology, as scientists recorded and identified all those sounds. The tone of the text is quiet, almost understated, smooth and readable, as Chu weaves stories of birds and the people who love them in and around scientific facts and data.

In the epilogue, the author writes:

"The choices that we make as consumers reverberate all the way to the boreal forests of Canada (where) some three hundred bird species breed ... Many trees from these habitats are logged for such consumer products as paper towels, tissues, and toilet paper. Kimberly-Clark, the maker of Kleenex, Scott, Cottonelle, and Viva products, uses 1.1

million cubic meters of trees from Canada's boreal forest every year ... The Natural Resources Defense Council and other conservation groups are pressuring tissue products companies to reduce their consumption of virgin wood and encouraging consumers to buy recycled products. (Kleenex and Scott contain no recycled wood pulp, in contrast with the Canadian company, Cascades, which uses 96 percent recycled fiber.) Consumers can also help stop wasteful clear-cutting by taking their names off of mailing lists for catalogs. Each year about eight million tons of trees are turned into catalogs, according to Audubon. More than one billion catalogs, largely from the boreal forest, are produced each year for Land's End, J. Crew, Victoria's Secret, J.C.Penney, and L.L.Bean, according to the National Wildlife Federation."

**Rainier Audubon Society is the
Washington State
South King County Chapter
of the National Audubon Society.**

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Final deadline for material submission is the 18th of the month preceding publication. Informative articles may be reproduced with credit given to the author and Rainier Audubon Society. However, all creative content is subject to copyright (as indicated on appropriate pages) and may not be reproduced without permission from the author. Please also send in any photos or artwork you would like considered for inclusion.

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cc: hhartist@wildblue.net**

Editor: Nancy Hertzell

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Volunteer Opportunities

Christmas Bird Count 2006

BY NANCY STREIFFERT



WHAT: An opportunity to join Rainier Audubon members and friends, seeing and hearing as many birds as you can in one area on one day, culminating in a celebratory dinner together at Coco's in Federal Way.

WHEN: December 17, 2006 from dawn till dusk, or any time you can spare that day.

WHERE: An assigned section of Rainier Audubon's territory or in your own backyard.

WHO: Everyone interested in enjoying a day (no matter what the weather!) outside observing birds - beginners to expert level are needed.

WHY: To document bird numbers and species for habitat conservation, to discover population trends, to add information about our corner of the world to a huge database researching amazing things like global warming, and to improve your own ability to identify birds - all in the company of compatible folks!

HOW: Call Nancy Streiffert at (253) 852-8394 or email Nancy at Nancy_Streiffert@hotmail.com.

Tree Planting on the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge

SATURDAYS FROM 9:00 AM TO 1:00 PM

Getting vegetation established along the bank is vital to lowering the temperature, stabilizing the banks, and providing habitat for wild animals. Volunteer events from now through March will bring people out to plant cuttings on the Carty Unit of the Refuge. No experience or supplies needed. Just come prepared for the weather with rain gear, gloves, and waterproof shoes. Loaner boots and gloves may be available if requested ahead of time. Plantings will be held on Saturdays from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM. Dates are subject to change so please contact us before the event.

DIRECTIONS: From I-5, take Exit 14, on Pioneer Street go west into the town of Ridgefield until Pioneer Street 'T's' with Main Ave.. Take a right turn on Main Ave. and proceed north for one mile. The refuge entrance is located on the left side of the road.

For more information, contact Josie Finley at (360) 887-3883 ext. 18 or email Josie_Finley@fws.gov



December Meeting Wild Wings *cont'd fr page 1*

Northwest Sunday Magazine for July 30th, 2006, written by Pulitzer Prize winner William Dietrich.

Join us for a very special evening of spectacular photography and the beauty of nature.

We will also be holding our annual holiday cookie and treat exchange.

Anyone who would like to share some of their favorite holiday treats is encouraged to bring some for all to enjoy before, during, and following the program.



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NORTHERN FLICKER



January Meeting Costa Rica *cont'd fr page 1*

Rain Forest National Park along the Caribbean, were the Bare-throated Mini, Fascinated Tiger Heron, Anhinga, Jacana, and Great Curassow, as well as other animals such as the Howler Monkeys, Water Buffalo, and Crocodiles. Barbara Petersen, also a Rainier Audubon member, will be joining the Ripleys for this presentation. Barbara has been to Costa Rica several times to visit her brother and will be sharing some of her pictures.



TIGER HERON ©BARBARA PETERSEN

Field Trips

By Carol Schulz

Kittitas County Birding in Winter

Saturday, December 9, 2006
6:30 AM to Evening

Leader: Charlie Wright
Co-leader: 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 possible rare gulls. Chukar are occasionally seen in the basalt outcroppings. Bring many layers of clothing for cold weather conditions, and a lunch. Space is limited.

MEET: At 6:30 AM behind Denny's at Auburn Way So. (Hwy 164) & Hwy. 18 in Auburn.

SIGN-UP: Contact Charlie at (253) 862-0520 or c.wright7@comcast.net. Email preferred.

Weekly Bird Walks at Nisqually

Thursdays 8:15 AM to 12:30 PM
Leader: Phil Kelley

Join Phil on his weekly bird walks as he counts the birds at Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge. The group walks out to MacAllister Creek and back to the visitor center, then takes the boardwalk/trail loop out past the Twin Barns to the Ring Dike, coming back along the Nisqually River Trail. It is a distance of about four miles.

BRING: Good walking shoes or boots, raingear, water, snacks, and \$3 entry fee unless you have a pass. Scopes are welcome.

MEET: At the Nisqually visitor center.

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, or scrub-jay323@aol.com.

Renton — Rivers, Ponds, and Parks

Saturday, December 30, 2006
9:00 AM to Mid-Afternoon

Leader: Kathy Andrich

Winter is a wonderful time to view birds at the parks, rivers, ponds, and beaches near Renton. We will visit Coulon Park at the south end of Lake Washington, the nearby mouth of the Cedar River, and various ponds and wetlands known for their winter waterbirds. The Kayak Center pier at the Cedar River is a terrific spot for bird viewing.

BRING: Warm clothes, rain gear, hot drinks, lunch, and water. Scopes are very welcome.

MEET: 9:00 AM at Coulon Park near Ivars & Kidd Valley restaurants.

DIRECTIONS: Coulon Park is in Renton, at the south end of Lake Washington. Travel on I-405 to exit 5. Turn down the hill two blocks, and right (north) at the bottom of the hill onto Lake Washington Blvd. Travel two blocks, and turn left into Coulon Park. Turn right, and drive about three blocks north inside the park. The Ivar's and Kidd Valley parking lot will be on the left.

SIGN-UP: Call or email Kathy Andrich, (206) 390-3159, chukarbird@yahoo.com.

Christmas Bird Count Field Trip Opportunities

Saturday, December 16
(for Tahoma Audubon)

Sunday, December 17
(for Rainier Audubon)

The first trip is for Tahoma Audubon; Thais Bock is the coordinator for this one; call her at (253) 839-2044 to sign up.

The second trip is for Rainier; call Nancy Streiffert at (253) 852-8394 to sign up for this one.

Soos Creek Owl Prowl

Saturday Night, January 6, 2007
10:30 PM to 1:30 AM

Leaders: Joe and Liz Miles

Join Friends of Soos Creek Park volunteers Joe and Liz Miles for this late night program and walk exploring the world of owls. We'll start indoors for the first hour learning calls, ID, and info about our local owls, then venture outdoors to prowl for owls. There is limited space for this program and reservations are required. Best for adults and children over 13 years. Group size is limited to 15. This year, the program is being sponsored by Kent City Recreation Dept.

MEET: At the Soos Creek Park Maintenance Shop. Soos Creek Park/Trail 24810 - 148th Avenue SE, Kent.

DIRECTIONS: Take James St. east from Kent. To reach James St, exit I-167 at Willis, turn east to Central, and north to James. Travel east on James as it becomes SE 240th St. Travel about four miles, as 240th dips and turns downhill. Turn right (south) on 148th Ave. near the bottom of the hill. The Soos Creek maintenance yard will be down the road about 1/4 mile on the left at a barn and chainlink-fenced parking lot.

SIGN-UP: Call Kent Commons, Kent City Parks and Recreation, (253) 856-5000. This trip FILLS EARLY. Please register in advance. For further info: Email or call Joe Miles, joe.miles@att.net or (253) 639-0123. Joe can answer your questions but cannot arrange the sign-ups.



Field Trips...cont'd

Oak Bay to Fort Flagler State Park

Saturday, January 20, 2007
7:00 AM to Late Afternoon

Leader: Jeff Antonelis-Lapp

Seabirds, waterfowl, and shorebirds are possible on this trip to Fort Flagler State Park north of Hood Canal. We hope to see a large variety of birds including Loons, all three scoters, Black Brant, Harlequin Ducks, and Long-tailed Ducks. We may see several species of shorebirds. This trip should be a highlight for the winter season.

BRING: Warm clothes, lunch, drinks. Scopes are welcome.

MEET: McDonald's restaurant in Fife. Take I-5 to exit 137. Turn right, and get in the left lane. Turn left onto Hwy. 99 and drive to the second light. Turn left and drive back to McDonald's parking lot.

SIGN-UP: Call or email Jeff Antonelis-Lapp, (360) 825-541, jal_1@hotmail.com

Parks and Beaches - Des Moines to Burien

Saturday, February 3, 2007
8:00 AM to 2:00 PM

Leader: Amy Schillinger

Come out with us to visit some new and little-known parks, beaches, and accesses to birding in the Des Moines and Burien areas. We will look for all three scoters, Harlequin Ducks, forest birds, and water birds which can be uncommon in south King County. Birding can be very good in these areas. We may walk about one mile.

BRING: Warm clothes (it may be windy at the beach), drinks, and lunch. Scopes are welcome.

MEET: 8:00 AM at the Kent-Des Moines Park & Ride.

DIRECTIONS: Take I-5 to exit 149. Turn toward Kent (east) 1/2 block, and take a left onto Military Rd. Park & Ride is on the left.

SIGN-UP: Call or email Amy Schillinger, (425) 443-6931, amyschillinger@comcast.net. Email is preferred.

A Wonderful Field Trip

On Sunday, October 29, 2006, Steve Johnson led a group of us Rainier Audubon folks on a field trip to parks and beaches in Pierce County and south King County. It was a day of predicted rains, and after a thorough drenching in the early morning at Des Moines, the others and I showed up anyway to meet Steve. Almost immediately — at 8:00 AM — a vee of about 45 SNOW GEESE flew south overhead! They veered to the east in their flight, and we were hoping they'd land in the Green River valley, but they continued south. All of our group got to watch them.

Our next stop was down in Fife, just past the Milgard factory on 8th St, where there is a turn-in to a parking lot. Toward the back of the parking lot is a gate in the fence that looks locked, but is not; you can walk through it and down to a small pond surrounded by vegetation, to view ducks and small birds. You also can see this pond from the street. At the rear of the parking lot is a large field in a restored area. I call this field Doris's Field after Doris Erickson, a very good birder and trip leader who used to live on the bluff overlooking this field; sadly, Doris recently passed away. With the now-clearing skies, Doris's Field was magic. A juvenile Sharp-shinned Hawk flew. A Song Sparrow and Lincoln's Sparrow approached in the blackberries. Up over the bluff in the distance, a Sharp-shinned Hawk and a crow performed aerial combat for about 10 minutes. Some Cackling Geese flew through. A bare tree half way up the bluff held nine Band-tailed Pigeons. A flock of Cedar Waxwings flew over the field. We also saw a flying Bald Eagle and a Red-tailed Hawk from the vantage point of the parking lot. Doris used to tell us that there are trails back by the bluff near Hylebos Creek, and nesting Barn Owls in cavities below her house.

From there, we traveled north to the mudflats near the 11th St. bridge on SR 509. Here, you can walk down to the mudflats and also out

toward the bridge. The tide was coming in, and there were a number of ducks and other birds including nine Great Blue Herons and one SPOTTED SANDPIPER. The summer-resident Purple Martins had already flown south. We walked out toward the open bridge; Roger Orness had given us a heads-up before the trip, and sure enough, an adult PEREGRINE FALCON was perched up near the top of the underside of the bridge on the far side of the waterway. Roger said it likes to perch there in bad weather (it was windy).

We proceeded north on 509, and turned into a pullout that is just before the road goes up-hill from the marina, looking out over the logbooms on Commencement Bay. Here we observed many gulls including Mew Gull, California Gull, and Ring-billed Gulls, lots of seals, and one Pelagic Cormorant. We couldn't find any shorebirds on the logs, and continued on up the hill. At Brown's Point lighthouse, it was quite windy, and there were few birds to be seen. We continued north around the bend where the eagles sometime perch in the trees, and on to Dash Point Pier. Here, we saw a flock of 15 Bonaparte's Gulls, a few Western Grebes, three Red-necked Grebes, and Horned

Grebes. Two flocks of Green-winged Teal flew by, as well as two Common Murres. By now, it was high tide. We continued north on 509 along the beaches of Federal Way, and stopped for a bit at Dash Point State Park, at the upper campground and then down the road to the beach. It was quiet on the upper trails, but we saw a Cooper's Hawk and an Anna's Hummingbird in the lower area. At Dash Point Road and 44th Ave, we turned left and drove down to Dumas Bay Park parking lot, where there were two EURASIAN WIGEONS in with the hundreds of American Wigeons on the pond across the street. From the parking lot, we took the gravel trail down to the sound. It was windy and there were white caps farther out in the bay. Here we observed two Common

AS WE WALKED UP THE DUMAS BAY TRAIL, SUDDENLY WE HAD A DUCK FALLOUT! LOTS OF AMERICAN WIGEON BEGAN RAPIDLY FLYING OVER OUR HEADS COMING FROM THE POND UP THERE, AND WE HEARD SOME THUMPS! AS WE GOT TO THE TOP OF THE TRAIL, WE SAW MANY STUNNED AND UNCONSCIOUS DUCKS ALL AROUND US IN THE FALLEN LEAVES.



At the time of this writing, our area is experiencing one of the wettest months on record.

Flooding was prevalent in the first part of November, and the Green River was

higher than it has been in years. This should make birding interesting for the whole winter, as waterfowl abound when the fields are flooded in the valley.

Join us on the Kent-Auburn Christmas Bird Count; we need your help! See further details in this newsletter.

Twelve swans flew over Lake McDonald 10/30 but were not identified beyond Trumpeter/Tundra (Twtrs). Two more swan, sp. flew over near South Prairie on 11/11 (CW). A juvenile *Brant* was found at Boeing Ponds and nearby fields from 10/25 to 10/30 (DS/MB). Up to 1,200 *Cackling Geese*, and two *Greater White-fronted Geese* were at Boeing Ponds 11/1 (CW).

A skein of about 45 *Snow Geese* flew south over the Federal Way Park & Ride at 272nd St. and I-5 on 10/29 (SJ/CS). The flock of 20 Greater White-fronted Geese returned to Gene Coulon Park by 10/28 (DB). Two *Eurasian Wigeon* were at Dumay Bay Park 10/29. Five *Black Scoters* were at Dumas Bay 10/29 (SJ/CS). The first *Bufflehead* of the season was at Kent Ponds 10/22 (RO/m.obs), a later arrival than usual. Sixty-five *Killdeer* were in a flock on the Foothills Trail 11/11 (CW). A *Spotted Sandpiper* was at Gene Coulon Park 11/10 (KA). Nine *Long-billed Dowitchers* were at Smith Brothers Dairy 11/4 (CW). A *Northern Shrike* was present at South Prairie



KILLDEER

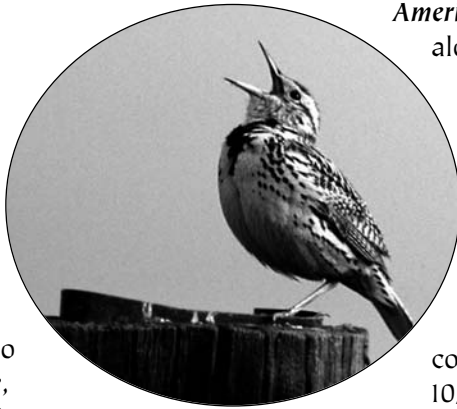
10/28. A *Western Scrub-Jay* and a *Steller's Jay* were hanging out together at the historic Green River bridge on Frager Road 11/4 (CW). A flock of 55 *Cedar Waxwings* was at Emerald

Downs 11/4 (CW/GW). Seven *American Dippers* were along Foothills Trail 11/11. A *Swamp Sparrow* was seen

on the Foothills Trail 10/21, with a different one there 10/28 (CW). Up to 19 *Lincoln's Sparrows* were

counted at Kent Ponds 10/22 (RO/m.obs). A tan-striped *White-throated Sparrow* was

observed on Frager Road south of the Fishin' Hole 11/11 (KA). Two '*Slate-colored Juncos*' were at South Prairie 10/21. An extremely high count of 61 *Western Meadowlarks* was made at Smith Brothers Dairy 11/4 (CW).



WESTERN MEADOWLARK ©UGAFS

Observers: KA-Kathy Andrich; FB-Fred Boesche; TB-Thais Bock; MB-Marv Breece; SJ-Steve Johnson; RO-Roger Orness; DR-Debra Russell; CS-Carol Schulz; DS-Dave Swayne; CW-Charlie Wright; GW-Gordon Wright; KZ-Karen Zook; JZ-Joe Zook; Twtrs-Tweeters; m.obs-many observers.

Going Birding?

Report your sightings to Charlie at (253) 862-0520 or email c.wright7@comcast.net.

Birding Locations Mentioned in Seen & Heard

Boeing Ponds (Kent): From I-5, take exit 152 onto Orillia Rd. Go east on Orillia; Orillia will become So. 212th St. Turn left at the light at So. 59th Pl. and go half a mile. Just past the Boeing Kent Space Center, you will see the first of the ponds. Park anywhere you can and view the ponds. From there, continue on 59th about two blocks to a blocked-off road on the right. Park there and view birds in the water below. Walk to the other ponds on 62nd Ave So. (2005 Thomas Guide: King 685, F-5)

Kent Ponds (Green River Natural Resource Area) —This area is bounded generally by the Green River to the west, So. 212th St. to the north, 64th Ave. to the east, and the Puget Power pedestrian/bike trail to the south. Two public gates allow pedestrian access to the site along Russell Road, and another may be accessed by foot or bicycle, along the south bike path. (2005 Thomas Guide: King 685, F-5)

204th St. —Small road between Orillia and Frager Roads, just north of 212th.

McMillin, Orting, and Buckley trailheads —Take Hwy. 410 east to the Orting/Summer exit (Route 162). Turn right towards Orting. The McMillin trailhead will be on the right just after the bridge. The Orting trailhead is two miles further on the right, located in Orting City Park. For the Buckley trailhead: Take Hwy. 410 to the Park Avenue exit and turn right (east). Turn at the first left onto North River Ave. Go straight to the National Guard parking.

Des Moines Beach Park —22030 Cliff Avenue South in Des Moines

Nolte State Park —Located north of the town of Enumclaw, Wash., at the western edge of the Cascade Mountains. From east of Enumclaw: On SR 410, turn north on 284th Ave., S.E., (look for sign) and continue approximately seven miles to park entrance.

Flaming Geyser State Park —From SR 18: Take the Auburn-Black Diamond Rd. exit. Travel east to Green Valley Rd. Turn right (southeast). Continue on Green Valley Rd. about nine miles to park entrance.

Smith Bros. Dairy Farms in Kent valley —27441 - 68th Avenue So, Kent.

South Prairie (town). Take Hwy 410 to Bonney Lake and take a right on South Prairie Rd. After four miles, turn right onto Pioneer Way (Hwy. 162) into Puyallup. Just across the bridge is South Prairie.

Foothills Trail —Follow directions to South Prairie (above). Trailhead for the Foothills Trail is in South Prairie just after Rainier Avenue.

Field Trip...Cont'd from page 5

Loons, hundreds of American Wigeon, two DUNLIN, five BLACK SCOTERS, some COMMON MURRES, and a small flock of GREATER SCAUP. There were also two Northern Shovelers, one Barrow's Goldeneye, and a few Bufflehead. As we walked up the Dumas Bay trail, suddenly we had a DUCK FALLOUT! Lots of American Wigeon began rapidly flying over our heads coming from the pond up there, and we heard some thumps! As we got to the top of the trail, we saw many stunned and unconscious ducks all around us in the fallen leaves. We figured that a predator such as a Bald Eagle must have flown by, and the ducks had taken such rapid flight from the pond, several of them had hit the deciduous trees as they flew! We didn't know what to do, as some of the ducks were on their backs, and many appeared dead. It took almost 10 minutes, but eventually they all revived and waddled or flew back toward the pond. I estimate that we saw 20 or 30 ducks rise up from the leaves and the woods, and return to the pond. None of us had ever heard of such an occurrence before.

The weather had remained clear, but we had seen huge black clouds all around us. As we drove north and approached Redondo Beach, a hail storm hit. Steve decided to end the trip at that point, and we returned up the hill from Redondo to the Park & Ride. It had been a wonderful field trip. ■



AMERICAN WIGEONS

Dippers Along the Green River

By Thais Bock

From its origins high in the Cascade Mountains, the Green River flows and tumbles through coniferous forests and a closed watershed before reaching Kanaskat State Park in south King County. After rushing through spectacular Green River Gorge, the river wends its way to Flaming Geyser State Park and eventually into Puget Sound. By following a route between these two state parks, birders have many good opportunities to find American Dippers at any season of the year.

From either I-5, Valley Freeway (SR 167), or West Valley Highway, travel east on SR 18 to the Auburn-Black Diamond Road exit. Turn right and right again onto Green Valley Road. Fishermen line the river banks; the meandering Green River is never far away. It is a scenic nine-mile drive through open farm country, pumpkin and strawberry fields, ranches, and hedgerows. Two small parks along the way are worth a stop: Metzler County Park at five miles and Whitney Bridge County Park near the intersection with 212/218th SE.

Bald Eagles course the river, an occasional Osprey challenges the eagles, Green Herons and Spotted Sandpipers find suitable nesting sites, and kingfishers rattle along the river.

After entering Flaming Geyser State Park, continue one mile to the end of the road. Walk straight ahead to locate the trail to the river. This is a favorite dipper stop-over point. Also watch for action along the ever-changing river channels next to the picnic shelters. The marsh at Flaming Geyser is noted for Virginia Rails. The "flaming geyser," located past the steelhead smolt ponds,

now produces only a tiny 6" flame. The "bubbling geyser" in a nearby spring leaves a dense gray coating on the creek bed.

Upon leaving the park, turn right and continue four miles to the intersection with SR 169. Before turning left, pull onto a wide shoulder overlooking a marsh next to Big Dipper Farm for viewing possible Wood Ducks, Ring-necked Ducks, and Hooded Mergansers. Less than a mile further is the small rural town of Black Diamond. (A quick stop at the town's famous brick-oven bakery, in continuous use since 1911, is almost a necessity.) Turn



AMERICAN DIPPER ©JOSEPH HIGBEE

right onto Lawson St. and drive along the huge open pit gravel operation. Another four miles through sparsely settled country brings you to an unexpected traffic light controlling the one-way bridge over the gorge. Parking is practi-

cally non-existent, but a small pull-out before the bridge is possible. In any case, a pedestrian walkway across the bridge allows marvelous views into the depths of the gorge and is not to be missed. Scout the rapids far below for a dipper; you might even hear its vibrant song. Less than one-half mile past the bridge (and its once fashionable resort), make a sharp left turn uphill onto SE Green River Gorge Road, continuing to the end of Veazie-Cumberland Road. Turn left and go less than two miles to Kanaskat State Park where trails along the Green River offer great views. Dippers nest here.

Both state parks offer fine birding in all seasons. Kanaskat, the more heavily wooded of the two, has a campground and is one of our less-crowded state parks. ■

The Quizzical Owl

by *Thais Bock*



1. Of three ptarmign species in North America, which one is the smallest?
2. Name the gull with a forked tail and yellow bill tip.
3. The first coat of bird feathers is called _____ (two words)
4. These brightly colored blackbird relatives are called _____.
5. Name the woodpecker choosing to nest in desert saguaro cactus.

ANSWERS ARE UPSIDE DOWN BELOW

Global Warming

A November 14, 2006, report from the World Wildlife Fund finds a clear and escalating pattern of climate change impacts on bird species around the world, suggesting a trend towards a major bird extinction from global warming.

The report, *Bird Species and Climate Change*, reviews more than 200 scientific articles on birds in every continent to build up a global picture of climate change impacts.

“Robust scientific evidence shows that climate change is now affecting birds’ behaviour,” said Dr. Karl Mallon, one of the authors of the report. “We are seeing migratory birds failing to migrate, and climate change pushing increasing numbers of birds out of synchrony with key elements of their ecosystems.”

The report, prepared by international climate change specialists, identifies groups of birds at high risk from climate change: migratory, mountain, island, wetland, Arctic, Antarctic, and seabirds. While bird species that can move and adapt easily to different habitat are expected to continue to do well, bird species that thrive only in a narrow environmental range are expected to decline, and to be outnumbered by invasive species.

The report also shows that birds suffer from climate change effects in every part of the globe. Scientists have

found declines of up to 90 per cent in some bird populations, as well as total and unprecedented reproductive failure in others.

Scientists also analyzed available projections of future impacts, including bird species extinction. They found that bird extinction rates could be as high as 38 per cent in Europe, and 72 per cent in northeastern Australia, if global warming exceeds 2°C above pre-industrial levels (currently it is 0.8°C above). “Birds have long been used as indicators of environmental change, and with this report we see they are the quintessential ‘canaries in the coal mine’ when it comes to climate change,” said Hans Verolme, Director of WWF’s Global Climate Change Programme. “This report finds certain bird groups, such as seabirds and migratory birds, to be early, very sensitive, responders to current levels of climate change. Large-scale bird extinctions may occur sooner than we thought.”

If high rates of extinction are to be avoided, rapid and significant greenhouse gas emission cuts must be made, WWF says. The global conservation organization also believes that the current approach to bird conservation, focused on protecting specific areas with a high bird diversity, will fail because climate change will force birds to shift into unprotected zones. A major change in approach to bird conservation is required.

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Global Warming: What You Can Do

Individual choices can have an impact on global climate change. Reducing your family’s heat-trapping emissions does not mean forgoing modern conveniences; it means making smart choices and using energy-efficient products. We can all make choices that will greatly reduce our families’ global warming impact.

1 THE CAR YOU DRIVE: THE MOST IMPORTANT PERSONAL CLIMATE DECISION.

When you buy your next car, look for the one with the best fuel economy in its class. Each gallon of gas you use releases 25 pounds of heat-trapping carbon dioxide (CO₂) into the atmosphere. Better gas mileage not only reduces global warming, but will also save you thousands of dollars at the pump over the life of the vehicle. Compare the fuel economy of the cars you’re considering and look for new technologies like hybrid engines.

2 CHOOSE CLEAN POWER.

More than half the electricity in the United States comes from polluting coal-fired power plants. And power plants are the single largest source of heat-trapping gas. None of us can live without electricity, but in some states, you can switch to electricity companies that provide 50 to 100 percent renewable energy.

3 LOOK FOR ENERGY STAR.

When it comes time to replace appliances, look for the Energy Star label on new appliances. (Refrigerators, freezers, furnaces, air conditioners, and water heaters use the most energy.) These items may cost a bit more ini-

cont’d on next page

What you can do...cont'd from previous page

tially, but the energy savings will pay back the extra investment within a couple of years. Household energy savings really can make a difference. If each household in the United States replaced its existing appliances with the most efficient models available, we would save \$15 billion in energy costs and eliminate 175 million tons of heat-trapping gases.

4 UNPLUG A FREEZER.

One of the quickest ways to reduce your global warming impact is to unplug the extra refrigerator or freezer you rarely use (except when you need it for holidays and parties). This can reduce the typical family's carbon dioxide emissions by nearly 10 percent.

5 GET A HOME ENERGY AUDIT.

Take advantage of the free home energy audits offered by many utilities. Simple measures, such as installing a programmable thermostat to replace your old dial unit or sealing and insulating heating and cooling ducts, can each reduce a typical family's carbon dioxide emissions by about 5 percent.

6 LIGHT BULBS MATTER.

If every household in the United States replaced one regular light bulb with an energy-saving model, we could reduce global warming pollution by more than 90 billion pounds over the life of the bulbs - the same as taking 6.3 million cars off the road. So, replace your incandescent bulbs with more efficient compact fluorescents, which now come in all shapes and sizes. You'll be doing your share to cut back on heat-trapping pollution and you'll save money on your electric bills and light bulbs.

7 THINK BEFORE YOU DRIVE.

If you own more than one vehicle, use the less fuel-efficient one only when you can fill it with passengers; driving a full minivan may be kinder to the environment than two midsize cars. And whenever possible, join a carpool or take mass transit.

8 BUY GOOD WOOD.

When buying wood products, check for labels that indicate the source of the timber. Supporting forests that are managed in a sustainable fashion makes sense for biodiversity, and it may make sense for the climate too. Forests that are well-managed are more likely to store carbon effectively because more trees are left standing and carbon-storing soils are less disturbed.

9 PLANT A TREE.

You can make a difference in your own backyard: Plant a tree. Or get a group in your neighborhood together and contact your local arborist or urban forester about planting trees on private property and public land. In addition to storing carbon, trees planted in and around urban areas provide much-needed shade in the summer, reducing energy bills and fossil fuel use.

10 LET POLICYMAKERS KNOW YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT GLOBAL WARMING.

Our elected officials and business leaders need to hear from concerned citizens.

SOURCE: UNION OF CONCERNED SCIENTISTS, 2006. REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION.

Rainier Audubon Society

Rainier Audubon Society is the Washington State South King County Chapter of the National Audubon Society. Our mission is to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, and to protect birds and other wildlife for the benefit of humanity and biological diversity in South King County and the world we live in.

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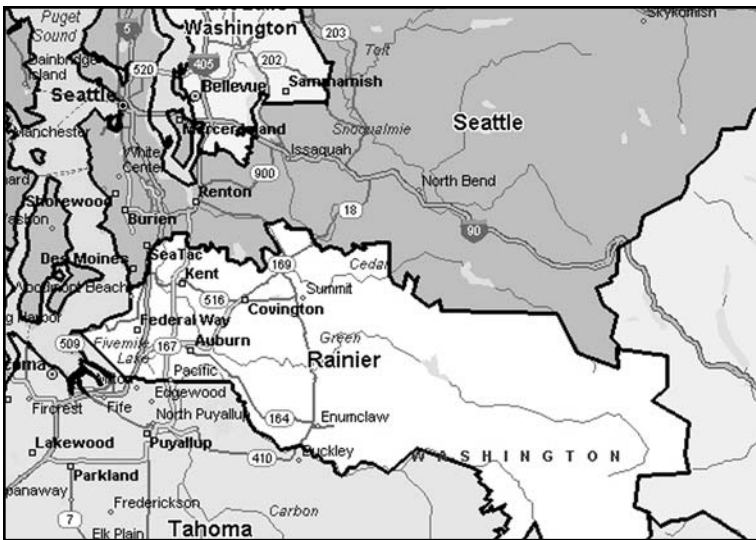


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RAINIER AUDUBON'S TERRITORY



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 visit our Chapter Web Site at:
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