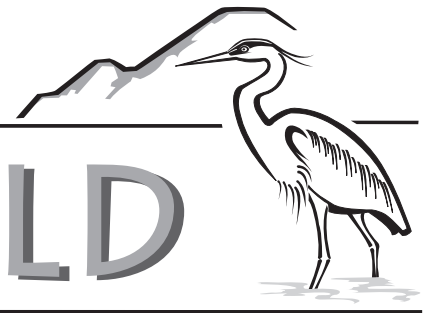


# THE HERON HERALD



Rainier Audubon Society ~ June 2008

Vol 27 No 5

Check us out on the web: [www.rainieraudubon.org](http://www.rainieraudubon.org)

## Newsletter Changes

by Nancy Hertz, "Heron Herald" Editor

This issue of the Heron Herald marks the end of another season, and the beginning of a well-deserved summer break, for our volunteers; we will have no monthly programs or newsletters in July or August. Monthly programs will resume in September. An abbreviated version of the Heron Herald will be sent to subscribing members for the last four months of the year (Sept, Oct, Nov, and Dec) and then beginning in January 2009, will go paperless and will be available on our website for all to print and read ([www.RainierAudubon.org](http://www.RainierAudubon.org)).

Although we won't have programs or newsletters over the summer, we will continue to be involved in local environmental and birding activities, such as participation in the King County Fair in Enumclaw on July 18-20. Information and updates on all our activities can be found on our website, so please check that site out from time to time and see what we're up to—and if you'd like to participate in any of our activities, you can always send us an email at [info@RainierAudubon.org](mailto:info@RainierAudubon.org). We welcome volunteers at any level of participation! Meanwhile, have a great summer from all your friends at Rainier Audubon.



When I took over as Editor of the Heron Herald several years ago, I began regularly reading newsletters from other Audubon chapters in an effort to stay current with what other groups were doing, and to get ideas for our own newsletter. As time went on, chapter after chapter published an announcement that they were ceasing hard-copy publication and mailing of their newsletter in favor of putting it online. I could readily understand their point: Online newsletters have no expensive printing and mailing costs and yet are readily available and completely free for anyone to print and read. I had often thought about whether or not Rainier ought to go this route, as our newsletter has been our biggest financial outlay every month for decades, but I always rejected the idea as one whose

time had not yet come. The Heron Herald was a popular newsletter in our community; Becky and I often got nice compliments on it from our members, and were pleased when it won the national Audubon newsletter contest for chapters of its size, several times. Besides, Becky and I really had a blast working together and weren't ready to give up our monthly "working lunches" at various restaurants in the south county area.

With Becky's decision to retire,

*cont'd on page 5*

## Enjoy Your Summer!



**Field Trips on Page 4**

# From Your President

by Carol Stoner,  
Rainier Audubon President

This has been a year of changes for Rainier Audubon. With Nancy Hertzelt leaving the President's job and Becky Westby completing her wonderful work as the Heron Herald layout artist, we've had to adapt and evolve. Also, Bernedine Lund, who has kept us well fed with delicious munchies for several years, has turned in her spatula, choosing instead to wield a saw and pruners in her crusade against ivy (never fear, Jane Gardner and Patti Coolson have agreed to rustle up food for our meetings).

Our move to Federal Way United Methodist Church has been a successful one; church trustees approved our request to use some of their closet space to store our materials, so we have everything in one place. We have continued to give presentations this year, and will be talking about birds and native plants to a variety of organizations during the summer and fall.

Our field trips, coordinated by Carol Schulz, continue to help our members see and learn about local birds. Deb Russell and I guided a group of excited fourth graders from Talbot Hill to see the Great Blue Heron colony at the Black River Riparian Area in Renton. The trip was organized by the events coordinator at the Renton Chamber of Commerce who wants our help in promoting Renton as a destination for birders.

July will be a busy month for Rainier, too: Put our annual garage sale on your calendar for

July 11, 12, and 13. We'd love donations and your help for an hour or two. We are scheduled to have a booth at the King County Fair the following weekend, July 18, 19, and 20, which will be another chance to use our fabulous new button maker (a huge hit at the Tukwila Backyard Wildlife Festival) and talk to people about birds, plants, and Audubon. The Ivy Pull Team will continue their work in Dash Point State Park on Saturdays, as well. The Rainier board will meet again in August to map out plans for 2008-2009. We've had a busy, successful year, thanks to our marvelous volunteers.

Got ideas for programs or projects? Contact me or any board member. We'd love to hear about them. Meanwhile, enjoy a wonderful summer, keep up with us at [www.rainieraudubon.org](http://www.rainieraudubon.org) (always up-to-date), and join us when we return in September for another great year with great people, devoted to, and caring for, our local flora and fauna.

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# It's Time to Say Au Revoir

After 8 years of doing the layout for this newsletter it is time for me to say farewell. I have greatly enjoyed my time here, and have learned much along the way. I've worked with talented and astute editors who have caught my mistakes if I labeled a bird photo incorrectly or chose the wrong illustration of a species. I couldn't have done it as well without their help. I have had fun in the process, and have made many lifelong friends, and my life has been enriched because of my work here. It has never felt like a "job".

In the past few years my husband and I have made travel a priority—I just returned from a week in Paris!—and I realized a few months ago that I was unable to always be around at the end of each month when I needed to complete the issue for the time-sensitive print deadline. It wouldn't do any good if the newsletter was printed a week after most of the events had already happened! I am relieved that Rainier was ready to switch to an online newsletter at the same time I felt I was abandoning them. I hope all of you faithful readers will keep abreast of events by checking in with the website frequently, as I intend on doing. I am not leaving Rainier, but will try to find other ways to contribute.

Becky Westby,  
Heron Herald Artist

*Note: After reading the messages from my fellow Auduboners on the next page, I am overwhelmed by their generous comments. What a way to go!*

# Thank You, Becky



*Heron Herald layout and design artist, Rebecca Westby, announced to the Rainier Board that she would be retiring at the end of this season in June. Here are some comments from members in response to her decision.*

BECKY & HER HUSBAND BOB ON A MEXICAN CRUISE IN MARCH 2008

■ Becky,

You've done such a outstanding job with the Heron Herald—quietly behind the scenes, making a difficult job look so easy. Thank you for all your excellent work! Your creative talents will be greatly missed. Wishing you Happy Adventures.

*Adele Freeland*

■ Becky has done an excellent job fitting in all the Christmas Bird Count data and participants into the February newsletter layout, year after year. Thank you, you're amazing!

*Mark Freeland*  
*Christmas Bird Count Compiler*

■ We cannot put into words how lucky we were to have Becky put our award-winning newsletter together for these past years. Becky, I wish you all the best and take good care of yourself.

*Deb Russell*

■ When I first joined Rainier, one of the best benefits would arrive in my mailbox every month. The Heron Herald was always full of interesting articles and tantalizing field trips. Becky's work designing the layout and illustrating the material always made our newsletter a pleasure to read. Thank you, Becky, for your countless hours on behalf of Rainier. Go play, have fun, and keep in touch!

*Carol Stoner*

■ Rainier Audubon will sorely miss Becky's dedication and wonderful work on the Heron Herald. As with many organizations, there are always those volunteers who work countless hours behind the scenes and Becky is just such a person. Over the past eight years, she has produced an award-

winning newsletter that Rainier Audubon has used to inform and inspire all those who read the newsletter.

*Bernedine Lund*

■ Becky—Thanks so much for all your hard work and commitment that you have given the Heron Herald over the last several years. You and your beautiful work will be missed! Good luck on your future adventures!

*Pat Toth*

■ What a terrible loss for Rainier! You have done such an outstanding job and beautiful work...you really will be sorely missed...it was always such fun working with you! It's certainly understandable that you and your husband now have the opportunity to go on to other interests, such as traveling—and so many wonderful places to see and experience. And do keep in touch!

*Thais Bock*

■ Becky,

Ross and I thoroughly enjoyed working with you on Rainier Audubon. We really got to know you when we worked on the Girl Scout project at Seward Park. What a rewarding experience! And such an ending to our teaching - your getting locked out of your car was quite the experience! We were sad when you moved south, but it was so good of you to continue doing the Heron Herald. Thanks for all you've done. It was super quality! Take care.

*Annette and Ross Tabor*

■ I think I have every single Heron Herald that has been issued since I joined Rainier Audubon six or eight years ago. I've read every one cover to cover, and keep them for items of interest and as an archive of our activities. When I served as President, I reviewed all the other newsletters that came to us from the other Audubon chapters, and ours was always the best by far. Content, layout, illustrations were all better than any of the others. The Heron Herald just had a professional feel and look to it. All due to Becky's talent. It won't be the same without her. Thanks for years of top quality work.

*Steve Feldman*

# Field Trips

By Carol Schulz

## *Weekly Bird Walks at Nisqually*

**NEW DAY & TIME:** Wednesdays,  
7:30 AM to NOON

**Leader:** Phil Kelley

[Please note. The midweek Nisqually trips have been changed to WEDNESDAYS, 7:30 - Noon starting in April 2008]

Join Phil on his weekly bird walk as he counts the birds at Nisqually NWR. On the first Wednesday of the month, the group walks fairly quickly around the full loop, a distance of over five miles (this longer trip gets back in mid-afternoon).

Other weeks, the trip is shorter, walking out to McAllister Creek, back to the Visitors Center, then out to the Twin Barns and the Ring Dike Trail, totaling 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 Visitors 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 scrubjay323@aol.com.



PHOTO OF SCRUB JAY ©JOSEPH HIGBEE

## *Flaming Geyser Park*

**Saturday, June 21**  
8:00 AM to 1:00 PM

**Leader:** Steve Johnson

In June, the summer birds should be on their territory in the beautiful Green Valley east of Auburn. We'll visit Academy Drive, Green Valley Road, and Flaming Geyser State Park. We may see warblers, thrushes, Red-breasted Sapsuckers, Red-eyed Vireos, flycatchers, rails, and dippers. We may walk up to one mile on trails, but those who don't want to walk should be able to see and hear birds near the cars. People who bring their own cars and want to leave early, may do so.

**BRING:** Lunch, snacks, drinks, hiking shoes. Scopes welcome.

**MEET:** Auburn Safeway at Auburn Ave. & Main at 8:00 AM.

**Directions:** Take Hwy. 18 to Auburn, and exit at Auburn Ave. (Hwy. 164). Turn north (right) on Auburn Way and drive three blocks north.

Safeway sign and gas station is on the left. Park in the lot just beyond the gas station straight out from the right entry door at Safeway at 8:00 AM.

**SIGN-UP:** Call or email Steve Johnson: (253) 941-9852 or johnsonsj5@msn.com

## *Protection Island Bird Cruise*

**Sunday, June 22**  
10:00 AM to 2:00 PM

**Leader:** George Gerdt

George leads tours for Kitsap Audubon, and is an expert birder. Take a Protection Island birdwatching cruise aboard the Glacier Spirit with George Gerdt, Sunday, June 22. The cruise leaves the Port Townsend marina at 10 a.m. and returns about 2 p.m. Protection Island is a 400-acre National Wildlife Refuge at the entrance of Discovery Bay. More than 70% of the marine birds that nest in Puget Sound breed on Protection Island. That includes an estimated 4300 pairs of Glaucous-winged Gulls, 22,000 pairs of Rhinoceros Auklets, thousands of Pigeon Guillemots, Double-crested and Pelagic Cormorants and a few pairs of Black Oystercatchers. One of the main attractions is the nesting colony of 1- to 20 pairs of Tufted Puffins. Harbor Seals and Elephant Seals are often hauled out on the beach. Coffee and snacks will be provided, but bring your own lunch and dress in appropriate layers. The strait can be very cool, even in June.

**COST:** \$75 per person. Make checks payable to Pandion Nature Tours. Send to P.O. Box 4687, Rolling Bay WA 98061.

**SIGN-UP:** Call (206) 842-8138 or email Geopandion@aol.com.



# Spring Field Trips Were Great This Year

By Carol Schulz

Rainier had some terrific spring field trips this year. Guy McWethy led a trip to Ocean Shores on April 19. We saw lots of birds (89 species!) on that trip. It was Guy's first experience leading a field trip for a group. We all thought he did a job worthy of a professional bird guide! The following week, Jeff Cohen led a trip on April 27 which started in Issaquah, went to the Carnation area, and ended up at Snoqualmie Falls. It was wonderful, we saw 68 species, and there were some real highlights. Finally, Jim Tooley led a trip from Snoqualmie Pass to Vantage on May 17. Most people saw or heard over 74 species on a day that reached 100 degrees in Vantage. Here are some reports highlights from these excellent trips.

## Ocean Shores and Hoquiam Report

by Guy McWethy

W had a great day at Ocean Shores today with the Rainier Audubon field trip! Started interesting... up to about 1.5 inches of snow at Mud Bay! Entertaining road conditions between Olympia and Hoquiam! Hoquiam sewage ponds, in the sun. Lots of swallows—Barn, VG [Violet-Green], Tree, Cliff, and Northern Rough-winged. Large flock of Greater White-fronted Geese, with two Snow Geese. Several Hundred Greater White-fronted Geese flew overhead. Cinnamon Teal, Orange-



Whimbrel ©Dan Streiffert

crowned Warblers, Townsend's Warbler, Merlin, and one Turkey Vulture.

The weather was *superb* by the time we got to Bill's Spit, just as the tide was coming in. Marbled Godwit, Long-billed and Short-billed dowitcher, about 2,000 Dunlin, Lots of Western Sandpipers, Whimbrel, Black-bellied Plover, Semi-Palmated Plover, Greater Yellowlegs. Another flock of several hundred Greater White-Fronted Geese flew over. *Marvelous* looks at the shorebirds!

### Point Browns Jetty –

Another Merlin, About 300 Brant flying past, *another* large flock of Greater White-fronted Geese, Sanderling, Black Turnstones, and a Surfbird.

### Oyhut Game range –

Black-bellied Plover, Dunlin, Caspian Tern, Black Scoters. A *great* mixed flock of rock-type pipers: Black Turnstones (~6), Surfbirds (~25), and **Rock Sandpipers** (8) !!!

Then the highlight—We watched a Merlin grab a Dunlin, and then get chased by a gull! He outflew the gull in straight, but ascending flight while carrying it. Then it got exciting!

*Another* Merlin approached the first; they vocalized at each other, bumped, then the first Merlin dropped the Dunlin and the second grabbed it mid-air! They then flew off towards the sewage treatment plant. It certainly seemed to be courtship behavior.

The day ended at Damon Spit in a hail storm. 14 Shorebird species for the day, 89 species total.

A great trip over-all, especially given the start!

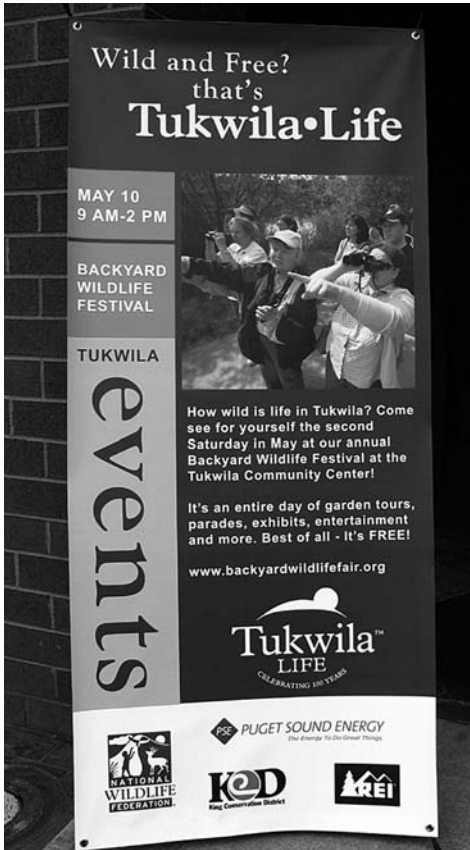
## Carnation and Snoqualmie Falls Trip

by Carol Schulz

J eff Cohen led an excellent trip for Rainier Audubon on Sunday, April 27. Eight of us met at 7:00 AM in Issaquah. Just before the group met, Roger Orness and I went to Tibbett's Field Park & Ride, which is just to the east of Hwy. 900. There we observed one **Osprey** near the large Osprey nest in the middle of the ballfields. American Goldfinches and Purple Finches were singing. They were singing at many of our areas during the day. We traveled to Carnation marsh and observed many bird species including Pine Siskins feeding in a ditch almost at our feet. It appeared that they were

*cont'd on page 7*

# 8th Annual Tukwila Backyard Wildlife Festival



THE POSTER FOR THE BACKYARD WILDLIFE FESTIVAL FEATURED A PHOTO OF OUR OWN CAROL SHULZ, MASTER BIRDER.

Rainier Audubon had a booth at the 8th Annual Tukwila Backyard Wildlife Festival in May, alongside other environmentally-minded organizations such as Cascade Land Conservancy, King County Noxious Weed Control, Friends of the Cedar River Watershed, and many local merchants selling birdhouses, native plants, wild honey, and other goods. In spite of over-cast skies and cool temperatures, the festival was a huge success. Members Deb Russell, Ross Tabor, Nancy Hertzell, Carol Schulz, and Bernedine Lund took turns staffing the booth, handing out materials on birds, and talking to people who stopped by. It was also our first opportunity to use our new professional button-maker, purchased with a grant from National Audubon. Rainier's table was very popular; we gave away all our handouts and made over 100 buttons for children (and adults!) who came up to



our table. Carol Schulz (pictured on the poster at the entrance to the fair) put up signs announcing that she would lead a bird walk down the Duwamish River at 9:45 AM, and when the time came, there were so many people gathered around, it wasn't long before we couldn't see Carol any more! It was a

fun and rewarding day and we all look forward to doing it again next year.



CAROL SHULZ IS BARELY SEEN (IN WHITE CAP NEAR MIDDLE OF PICTURE) AS SHE IS SURROUNDED BY ENTHUSIASTIC PEOPLE JOINING HER FOR A WALK ALONG THE RIVER.



RAINIER AUDUBON MEMBER BERNEDINE LUND IS SHOWN DEMONSTRATING THE BUTTON MAKER



EVENING GROSBEEK ©D-K

eating grass in the flowing water. From there, we drove into the town of Carnation, and took a right onto Blanche St. We turned right again onto Stossel Ave. and went into a lovely park with huge evergreens, called Valley Memorial Park. Here we saw one **Varied Thrush**, and 12 **Evening Grosbeaks**. We continued north through Carnation and turned left on Carnation Farms Rd. Just after crossing the Snoqualmie River, we took a hard right onto a gated gravel road. This is Chinook Bend Wildlife Area. We walked on the road next to the river about two blocks, and saw a pair of **Western Bluebirds** at a bluebird box. The bluebirds were bringing grass into the box. We then traveled to Carnation Farms, which is now a Nestle training center, and parked at a large pullout overlooking the beautiful valley. Jeff heard a **Nashville Warbler**. With his good eyes, he managed to eventually get us all to see warblers rapidly flying about in a thick maple tree below the overlook. There was a **Nashville Warbler**, two **Warbling Vireos**, and four **Orange-Crowned Warblers** in the tree. Wow, thanks, Jeff! We then drove over to a rough-

looking building on the corner, and drove in behind it, where there is an overlook (and a sanican). We could see birds and waterfowl at Sikes Lake, and swallows flew nearby. We then drove down to the bridge near Sikes Lake. In the field by the lake, there were three **Yellow-Headed Blackbirds**. We then drove back to the main highway north of Carnation and north to the Stillwater Refuge. At the refuge, we heard and saw a **Sora**. From there, we drove to Snoqualmie Falls, arriving about 3:15 PM. We got to see both the male and female **Peregrine Falcons**, flying and at the nest, and saw two or three of the downy young birds. The best viewing is down at a lower part of the trail behind the chain-link fence. Many thanks to Jeff Cohen for showing us some new areas and great birds.



ILLUSTRATION OF A SORA BY DANIEL S. KILBY

## *Snoqualmie Pass to Vantage Field Trip*

by Carol Schulz

**J**im Tooley led a Birdathon trip on May 17 to the Pass and to Eastern Washington. Six of us went on the trip in two cars. The day started out sunny up at the pass where there was

*cont'd on page 9*

the Rainier Board felt that it would be a difficult, if not impossible, task to find someone as talented, professional, and giving of their time as Becky; we examined this issue from every angle and finally came to the conclusion that Becky's retirement has led us to the natural and right evolution of the Heron Herald in the 21st century: it is time for us to follow other chapters and convert to an online newsletter. Here is the conversion schedule:

If you are a member who receives a paper copy of the Heron Herald every month, you will begin receiving an abbreviated paper version beginning next fall, for four months—September, October, November, and December. This abbreviated version will include Field Trips, the upcoming Monthly Program Announcement, Seen & Heard, and Quizzical Owl. There will be no "fillers" such as Bug of the Month or volunteer opportunities. Then, beginning January 1, 2009, our abbreviated newsletter will go completely online; printing-and-mailing will cease altogether. An announcement about this conversion will be run in all four of the fall newsletters, to remind our members of the upcoming change.

### Answers to Quiz on Page 8:

1	D	7	P	13	M
2	O	8	H	14	J
3	N	9	I	15	A
4	K	10	B	16	F
5	G	11	Q	17	E
6	C	12	L		



# The Quizzical Owl

by Thais Bock

1. What small shorebird is a circumpolar breeder from northern Alaska to Scandanavia and Russia?
2. This tern can be found sweeping over eastern Wa marshes in summer.
3. Birds specializing in stealing food from other birds are known as \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Resting during daytime, what heron hunts after dark?
5. While storm-petrels live in the NE Pacific, this one remains all year off the coast of Calif. near Monterey.

ANSWERS ARE UPSIDE DOWN BELOW

## Colloquial Bird Names: A Matching Quiz



COOPER'S HAWK

- |    |                    |   |                        |
|----|--------------------|---|------------------------|
| 1  | Whiskey Jack       | A | Greater Yellowlegs     |
| 2  | Fly-up-the-creek   | B | Common Merganser       |
| 3  | Crow Woodpecker    | C | American Wigeon        |
| 4  | Cherry Bird        | D | Gray Jay               |
| 5  | Mud Martin         | E | Short-billed Dowitcher |
| 6  | Baldpate           | F | Lesser Yellowlegs      |
| 7  | Bog-pumper         | G | Cliff Swallow          |
| 8  | Big Blue Darter    | H | Cooper's Hawk          |
| 9  | Little Blue Darter | I | Sharp-shinned Hawk     |
| 10 | Goosander          | J | Snow Bunting           |
| 11 | Honker             | K | Cedar Waxwing          |
| 12 | Mudhen             | L | American Coot          |
| 13 | Sea Swallow        | M | Common Tern            |
|    | COOPER'S HAWK      | N | Lewis' Woodpecker      |
| 14 | Snowflake          | O | Green Heron            |
| 15 | Tell-Tale          | P | American Bittern       |
| 16 | Yellowshanks       | Q | Canada Goose           |
| 17 | Brownback          |   |                        |

Answers on page 7



L-R: CEDAR WAXWING, AMERICAN COOT, CANADA GOOSE





# Field Trip Stories... *con'td from page 7*

still several feet of snow. We walked across the street from the Traveler's Rest and viewed many species of birds including Rufous Hummingbird, and **Yellow-Headed Blackbird**. A very-special stop was down the east side of the pass, where we exited at the Hyak exit, and turned left under I-90. This is Gold Creek. From the snow-covered bridge, we saw some beautiful, bright birds in the morning sunlight. There was a close-in **McGillivray's Warbler**, several **Yellow Warblers**, and **Yellow-Rumped Warblers**, a **Wilson's Warblers**, and a **Varied Thrush**. Wow. The birds were very active. Farther east, we took the Stampede Pass exit, and turned right, going past some ponds. Here there was a special bird, a **Red-Breasted x Red-Naped Sapsucker**. This is a hybrid that can occasionally be seen in the Cascades. We then traveled east to the Roslyn exit, turned left and traveled about one mile to a dirt road intersection. On the left is Bullfrog Basin, a wonderful swamp. Here we saw a number of warblers, and watched Great Blue Herons flying into a heronry in the tops of tall fir trees. After that, some great stops were at the Railroad Ponds in Cle Elum, where we had good views of **Red Crossbills**, the Bar 14 Pond in Ellensburg, and various places along the Old Vantage Highway where we saw and heard some sage species like **Sage Sparrow**, and **Sage Thrasher**. Down in Vantage, several people saw and heard a **Lark Sparrow** on a telephone line by Ginkgo State Park overlook. On the grass in the park, there were two tiny **Killdeer**, with the adult birds enjoying the sprinklers on the hot day. The temperature in Vantage was over 100 degrees. It was late in the afternoon, and at that time, we headed home. Most people saw and heard over 74

species which included seven warbler species, 10 sparrow species, and five species of flycatcher. The participants had very good eyes and ears, and we all thanked them and Jim Tooley for the great day of birding.



KILLDEER

## 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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Inside Your June 2008 Issue

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**RAINIER AUDUBON'S TERRITORY**



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

**Audubon Membership Subscription Form** 

**Rainier Audubon Society (RAS) Membership .....\$15**

A one-year membership in Rainier Audubon Society includes participation in all our field trips and activities; and fun monthly membership meetings. Plus, we'll add you to our email listserv, so you'll get all the latest information online. (Make checks payable to Rainier Audubon.)

**To join RAS or renew, mail this application with your payment to:**

RAINIER AUDUBON SOCIETY  
P.O. Box 778  
Auburn, WA 98071

To join National Audubon, please visit their website at [www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org)

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