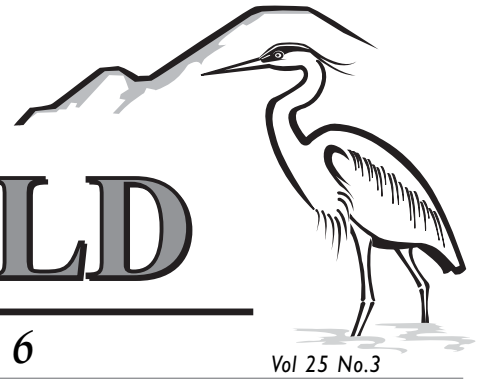


The HERON HERALD



Rainier Audubon Society • March 2006

Vol 25 No.3

Preserved! 25 Acres on Puget Sound

Everyone Welcome at our March Program -Wednesday, March 15th, 7:00 PM

Join us for a virtual tour of Camp Kilworth in Federal Way. This amazing 25-acre property on Puget Sound was donated to the Boy Scouts in 1936. Its location continues the wildlife corridor from Dash Point State Park to the park at Dumas Bay. In 2005, the Scout council decided to sell the property out of financial need, and a private developer stepped up to buy. Many people came together to protest the proposed development, and through their hard work and efforts, were able to stop the sale and preserve the land.

Our March program will be a slide-show presentation of this incredible wildlife habitat, and many of the plants and trees that make Camp Kilworth such a unique place on the west side of Puget Sound. There are stunning views of the Sound as well as beautiful, natural spaces for private contemplation. From huge hemlock trees to tiny wildflowers, and the wildlife this native land supports, this is an amazing place located in the midst of our urban area.

We have many people to thank for their time and efforts that brought about the saving of Camp Kilworth as a unique ecosystem. Their efforts will preserve the Camp as a heritage for many generations to come.



Our Vehicle Choices

Cars and trucks are a significant source (25%) of U.S. carbon dioxide emissions. Any serious effort to address global warming must include reducing emissions from cars and trucks. Many technologies already exist that can do this, while also creating new jobs in the U.S. automotive sector and other industries throughout the country. In addition, American consumers would save billions of dollars on gasoline, and we would reduce our dependence on foreign oil.

(SOURCE: UNION OF CONCERNED SCIENTISTS,
[HTTP://WWW.UCONSUSA.ORG](http://www.uconsusa.org))

For a list of the Best-Rated-for-Air-Pollution 2006 Midsize and Compact Cars, turn to page 7

May is a Great Month to Go Birding

As spring migration goes into full swing, what self-respecting birder can resist the urge to get out and go birding?! Before you go, consider participating in our May Birdathon. Line up one or more sponsors who will contribute X amount for every bird you see. This is Rainier's biggest annual fundraiser and 100% of the money raised goes to support our educational, backyard habitat, and birding programs. For more information, contact Ross at raraifan@aol.com or Nancy at autumn207@comcast.net.

**MARCH
GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
RAINIER AUDUBON SOCIETY
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15, 2006**

7:00 PM

FEDERAL WAY SENIOR CENTER
SEE PAGE 2 FOR DIRECTIONS

Field Trips on Page 4!

Calendar

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 8, 2006

Rainier Audubon Board Meeting

7:00 pm, Federal Way Senior Center

SATURDAY NIGHT, MARCH 11, 2006

RAS Field Trip: Soos Creek Owl Prowl

See page 4 for details.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15, 2006

RAS Membership Program: Preserved! 25 Acres on Puget Sound

See page 1 for details

FRIDAY-SUNDAY, MARCH 24-26, 2006

Othello Sandhill Crane Festival

See page 3 for details

FRIDAY-SUNDAY, MARCH 24-26, 2006

"Wings Over Water" Birding Festival in Blaine

See page 3 for details

FRIDAY-SUNDAY, MARCH 31, APRIL 1
AND 2, 2006

Olympic Bird Fest in Sequim

See page 3 for details.

SATURDAY, APRIL 8, 2006

RAS Field Trip: Nisqually in the Spring

See page 4 for details.

SUNDAY, APRIL 9, 2006

RAS Field Trip: Camp Kilworth

See page 4 for details.

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

Directions to the Federal Way Senior Center

- From Hwy 18 take the WEYERHAEUSER WAY exit.
- Turn south, cross over Hwy 18.
- Take an immediate left turn at S. 344th Way, into a highrise business park.
- Follow S. 344th to MILITARY RD. Turn right (south) on Military Rd.
- Turn right on to S. 352nd St.
- The Federal Way Senior Center will be on your right at 4016 S. 352nd Street, Auburn 98001.

June with the Birds of the Washington Coast

From *The Wilson Bulletin* — No. 61, December 1907

BY LYNDS JONES

June 3rd, 1907, was only a few minutes old when the expedition of which I speak began with the casting off from the wharf at Seattle. We were asleep, but that did not seem to hinder the departure of the boat...

Morning found us steaming outward near the west shore of Admiralty Inlet. Birds were scarce on and over the water until we approached Port Townsend, on the division line between the Inlet and the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Here birds were everywhere, flying in all directions away from the approaching steamer. Perhaps the most numerous were the little Marbled Murrelets, reminding one of flying fish as they started up from the water on rapidly beating wings and skimmed the surface to drop upon the surface or dive when out of harm's way. Pigeon Guillemots were also numerous. A few California Murres, Tufted Puffins, Loons, Harlequin Ducks, and Holbell's Grebes were seen on the water, and flying about were Glaucus-winged and Western Gulls, Baird's Cormorants, and Northwest Coast Herons...

At Port Angeles were recorded Tree, Barn, Bank, Rough-winged and Violet Green Swallows; Yellow, Lutescent, and Pileolated Warblers; Nuttall's, and Western Chipping Sparrows; Shufeldt's Junco, Western Warbling Vireo, Western Flycatcher, Russet-backed Thrush, Western Martin, Rufous Hummingbird, and California Purple Finch; besides the water birds mentioned above. If the study had been pursued in the early morning instead of in the middle of the day there is little doubt that a larger list of species would have been secured. Most of the birds listed were in full song and some were evidently nesting...

Not until nine o'clock had the fog lifted sufficiently to make it safe to venture (back) out upon the water. Once afloat and well away from this inhabited island birds became numerous... A flock of

Northern Phalaropes, thirty or more individuals, swept past on their way northward. Wherever rocks were approached, there two or more Black Oyster-catchers were standing guard and protesting our further advance. Glaucus-winged

Gulls, Pigeon Guillemots, Baird's Cormorants, and Tufted Puffins were everywhere flying about or resting on the ocean.

Loons and Herons were occasionally seen ...

Once afloat upon as calm a sea as one could hope for even on the famed Pacific, our way lay among rocks and islets alive with birds. It was hard to pass them by when so many superb pictures were floating about. The good day's coming when a portable camera will be able to catch the pictures as the eyes see them & are they near at hand? Now we must be content with scarcely more than suggestions of the most that we see. Our course lay to the Indian Village of La Push, near the mouth of the Quillyute river, past Carroll Islet where the best part of our work was to be done. The story of this "Bird Paradise" will be told later.



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.

E-mail material to:

autumn207@comcast.net

cc: hhartist@earthlink.net

Editor: Nancy Hertzell

Layout Artist: Rebecca Westby

Bird Festivals in Washington



Olympic BirdFest in Sequim

MARCH 31, APRIL 1 AND 2, 2006

Visit the rainshadow side of the Olympic Peninsula and discover the birds of the coastal Pacific Northwest - Marbled Murrelet, Rhinoceros Auklet, Harlequin Duck, Dipper, Black Oystercatcher, and so much more. Great field trips, boat cruises in the Strait of Juan de Fuca, and banquet with our partners, the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe. The bird fest with the most spectacular setting!

Visit <http://www.olympicbirdfest.org> or contact the Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society, P.O. Box 502, Sequim, WA 98382, or (360) 681-4076.

Othello Sandhill Crane Festival

MARCH 24, 25, AND 26, 2006
(FRIDAY THROUGH SUNDAY)

OTHELLO, WASHINGTON

Birding tours by boat, car, and bicycle ... lectures on area geology, cranes, bats, owls, squirrels ... Art contests, children's programs, silent auction, banquets, and so much more!

Visit <http://www.othellosandhillcrane-festival.org> or Othello Sandhill Crane Festival, 449 E. Cedar, Othello WA 99344, or (509) 488-2802 ext. 100. Registration phone: (866) SANDHIL (726-3445).

"Wings Over Water" Northwest Birding Festival in Blaine

MARCH 24, 25, AND 26, 2006

A celebration of the wildlife that crowds the estuarine habitat from the Canadian border at Blaine to the beaches of Birch Bay. Wildlife art exhibits, carvings, seminars, field trips, children's activities, wildlife cruise, and much more.

Visit their website at: www.washingtonbrant.org/events/html or contact the Washington Brant Foundation and Blaine Chamber of Commerce, 728 Peace Portal Drive, Blaine, WA 98230, or (360) 466-4749.

Volunteer With Rainier Audubon Conservation Chair

After many years as Rainier Audubon's Conservation Chair, Bruce Harpham is stepping down. The person coming in to fill this position does not need to have any special skills or expertise; all that is needed is an interest in conservation issues. The Conservation Chair would stay informed about current issues and alert the rest of us about what's happening with the environment in the south county area. Call Nancy at (253) 255-1808 or email at autumn207@comcast.net if you can help out.

Ballot Initiative for Clean and Renewable Energy Sources

BY CY BERRYMAN

WASHINGTONIANS FOR ENERGY SECURITY

Washingtonians for Energy Security, a broad coalition of environmental, business and labor organizations, and concerned citizens, is launching an initiative campaign for the November 2006 ballot. This initiative will direct the state's largest electric utilities to purchase 15% of their power from renewable resources, such as wind and solar power. Among other added benefits, this initiative will:

- * Create jobs
- * Stabilize utility rates
- * Boost our local economy
- * Reduce dependence on foreign and polluting energy resources
- * Support family farmers
- * Not raise taxes

Renewable energy provides a viable alternative to fossil fuels. Fossil fuels have a long track record of polluting our air and land, and contributing to global warming. Burning fossil fuels also poses a great threat to our state's wildlife. The sponsors of the Energy Security Initiative support wildlife studies, Environmental Impact Statements and other research and design methods to ensure that wind farms and other renewable energy projects are sited in areas that avoid negative wildlife impacts. Thankfully, we can protect the environment and our health with clean, affordable, and abundant energy sources. But we need your help to do it.

To qualify the initiative for the November ballot, over 300,000 signatures need to be collected by June 30, 2006. Please call the campaign headquarters at (206) 283-3335 or go to <http://www.energysecuritynow.org>.

Soos Creek Owl Prowl

SATURDAY NIGHT, MARCH 11
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 information 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 Ave. SE, Kent.

DIRECTIONS: Take James Street 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. Go 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 chain-link-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 information, email or call Joe Miles, joe.miles@att.net or (253) 639-0123. Joe can answer your questions but cannot arrange the sign-ups.

Othello Sandhill Crane Festival

FRIDAY THROUGH SUNDAY, MARCH 24-26
OTHELLO, WASHINGTON

REPORTED BY CAROL SCHULZ

I'll be heading over to the Othello Sandhill Crane Festival again this year. It was great last year! I learned a lot and saw a lot of birds. I like to go on several of their birding field trips, attend the banquet, and listen to lectures. Birding tours include local trips for Burrowing Owl and Sandhill Crane; and longer field trips featuring birding, geology, and nature. Many of the tours leave Othello in buses each morning and afternoon. Some birds seen last year on the tours were Sandhill Crane, Golden Eagle, Prairie Falcon, and Burrowing Owl. I stay in accommodations over there, and I can recommend some to you. The famous banquet should not be missed—it is very-gourmet! Registration and tour information is available at www.othellosandhillcranefestival.org or call 1-866-726-3445 toll free (after 4 PM). The most popular trips and accommodations fill early, so register ASAP. For more information about the festival, call or email Carol Schulz, linusq@att.net, (206) 824-7618. Email is preferred. Bring your own car.



Camp Kilworth Tour

SUNDAY, APRIL 9
8:30 AM TO 11:30 AM

LEADERS: HAZEL DICKINSON AND CO-LEADER

Come tour Camp Kilworth, an undeveloped jewel of a park in Federal Way, usually closed to the public. This former Boy Scout Camp on a bluff overlooking Puget Sound was recently saved from future development, and still contains some old-growth trees. Visit Camp Kilworth with Hazel and see why everyone wanted to save this unique Federal Way habitat. Our nature walk will include looking and listening for birds.

BRING: Walking shoes, water, and snacks.

MEET: Marista's Coffee in Federal Way at 8:30 AM. Marista's is located in the Safeway Parking lot at So. 320th St. and Hwy. 99. Take I-5 to the So. 320th St. exit. Travel west on 320th about one mile. Go past Hwy. 99 about 1/2 block, and take a left into the Safeway Parking lot next to Marista's.

SIGN UP: Call or email Hazel Dickinson, (253) 939-0951, or 2dickins@msn.com.

FOUR HAIKU

BY JAN McMILLAN

~
*Five artistic ducks
weave checkerboard square of light
across the water*

~
*In winter silence
the heron's wings part the mist
above the river*

~
*I watch the shore birds
as they move in unison
on a foamy beach*

~
*Listening deeply
I hear ten thousand bird songs
welcoming spring-time*

Nisqually in the Spring

SATURDAY, APRIL 8
7:30 AM TO 1:30 PM

LEADERS:
CAROL SCHULZ AND NANCY STREIFFERT

Rainier members and Sierra Club members will get together this spring morning, walking the trails and boardwalks of Nisqually. Migrant birds will be returning and we should hear lots of bird song.

BRING: Hiking boots or shoes, lunch, and drinks. Bring \$3 entry fee or a Duck Stamp or

Golden Pass. Scopes are welcome. We will walk up to four miles on level trails, but some people may want to bird at the wetlands right at the visitor's center, where there are several overlooks.

MEET: 7:30 AM at the 272nd Park & Ride north of Federal Way.

DIRECTIONS: Take I-5 to exit 147. Turn west on 272nd and go one block. Park & Ride is on the right.

SIGN UP: Call or email Carol Schulz, (206) 824-7618 or linusq@att.net. Email is preferred.



Gulls were the main theme of reports for the *Seen & Heard* this month, with a spectacular Slaty-backed Gull as the highlight. A large proportion of King County's gulls roost on the south end of Lake Washington, making Renton a world-class place to view them.

The first part of March is marked each year by a small push of our early spring arrivals: Rufous Hummingbirds, Violet-green Swallows, and perhaps an Osprey? It's time to keep an eye out for northbound migrants!

Two Trumpeter Swans continued to move between Smith Brothers and Kent Ponds through at least 2/16 (m.obs). The flock of 23 Greater White-fronted Geese at Gene Coulon Park was seen occasionally through February, and suspiciously a flock of the same number was at Boeing Ponds. The immature male Tufted Duck in the Kent Valley was seen through at least 1/30 (m.obs). A male Redhead showed up at the Weyerhaeuser pond 2/12 (TB). Up to five Harlequin Ducks were seen at Saltwater State Park 1/19 (AW). A Clark's Grebe was located at Cedar River estuary 1/28 (MD) and seen through at least 2/18 (PP). A Green Heron remained at Boeing Ponds 1/29 (EN) and 1/30 (CC). Five Golden Eagles (three immature and two adults) soaring together on the Enumclaw Plateau 2/16 were unprecedented (FB). A partial albino Red-tailed Hawk was often seen between Orillia Road and Boeing Ponds in January



HARLEQUIN DUCKS

and February (CW/m.obs), while a Red-tail with an abnormally long bill hook was at Kent Ponds 2/12 (m.obs).

An adult Slaty-backed Gull was found at Gene Coulon Park on the afternoon of 2/8 (CC). It returned to the log booms around sunset through 2/16 (m.obs). A Vega Gull (the Siberian race of Herring Gull) was reported at Cedar River estuary 2/14 (CC/JB), where two candidates were seen 2/13 (CW). The gull first reported as an Iceland Gull last month was re-identified as a very unusual adult Glaucous Gull. It was seen at Kent through 2/6, and incidentally found at Gene Coulon Park 2/9 (CW/m.obs). A Barn Owl was roosting in the Anderson Park pines 1/22 (GM), and one was hunting at the silo near 277th Street 2/9 (CS/CW). A Northern Pygmy-Owl was at Foothills Trail 2/3 (CW).

The two reliable pairs of Western Scrub-Jays were seen 2/12; one is along Frager Road and the Green River, and the other is near Kent Ponds (RO/CW). Four Barn Swallows were at Kent Ponds 2/4 (JB), where 12 were seen the next day (GH). Three were seen on the census 2/12 (m.obs). A Tree Swallow was at Gene Coulon Park 2/13 (CW). The Say's Phoebe was sighted near Boeing Ponds 2/5 (MB). A partial albino Marsh Wren was seen at 204th Street near Kent 1/23 to 2/5 (MB). An apparent zaboria Red Fox Sparrow was seen at 287th Street 2/16 (TA). The Clay-colored Sparrow found on the CBC at 287th Street in Kent was seen and photographed on 2/16 (DS/TA). A Swamp Sparrow was heard on the Foothills Trail 2/18. Pine Siskins remained scarce, but slightly increased from earlier in the winter. Decent numbers of Evening



PINE SISKIN (above); GREEN HERON (below)



Grosbeaks were reported, with 45 at Bonney Lake 2/3 being the highest number (CW).

Observers: TA-Tom Aversa; JB-Jessie Barry; TB-Thais Bock; FB-Fred Boesche; MB-Marv Breece; CC-Cameron Cox; MD-Mike Donahue; GH-Gene Hunn; GM-Guy McWethy; EN-Ed Newbold; RO-Roger Orness; PP-Paul Prappas; CS-Carol Schulz; DS-David Wayne; MV-Mark Vernon; CW-Charlie Wright; AW-Andrea Wuenschel; Twtrs-Tweeters; m.obs-many observers.

Going Birding?

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

Two Wonderful RAS Winter Field Trips

REPORTED BY CAROL SCHULZ

We had two outstanding winter field trips this year, both in February. The first was to Vashon Island, the second to the Skagit area. Many of our participants saw life birds!



Vashon. On Sunday, February 5, 2006, we had planned to go to Vashon Island to bird with Ed Swan, the island birding expert who has written the book, *Birds of Vashon*. Ed had given an excellent presentation on the birds and habitats of the island at our January membership meeting. But during the week before the field trip, we had some big storms, and on the day before the trip, there was another big storm. Also, we had scheduled the trip for the day of the Super Bowl, and as it turned out, the Seahawks were going to be playing in it! Luckily, kickoff wasn't scheduled until mid-afternoon.

The day of the field trip dawned sunny and calm, the first day like that for weeks! We took the ferry from Point Defiance, and Ed met us at the other side. Right there at the ferry dock, we were treated to the sight of four Dall's Porpoises with their large two-tone fins and hump behind the fin. Later that day in another area, we saw several of the smaller Harbor Porpoises with their much-smaller fins.

At the Park-and-Ride, we saw lots of birds, including the first of quite a few Townsend's Warblers and Hutton's Vireos. From there, it just got better, and Ed led the way. He was a great leader, and we had a nice group of participants with good eyes, so we saw lots of birds. The south end of the island where the ferry lands is Tahlequah, and that's a good spot to bird. If you turn right on the main road and continue on Bachelor Rd, a small road that leads east, you can see more birds. We did, and Ed said it is great for small birds during migration.

From the south part of the island, we headed up around Quartermaster Harbor and on around to Point Robinson. At Point Robinson, we were especially seeking

Snow Bunting, a bird that had been seen previously there in the weeks before. The sun came out, and we started walking north of the lighthouse along the beach. Jeff Cohen called out, "There it is!" The Snow Bunting was about 50 feet ahead, calmly foraging on the beach. We watched it for quite awhile, setting up scopes to study it in detail. Wow, what a nice, close, life bird for many of the people. After that, we walked up the road from the lighthouse in the sunshine, and saw more birds including Hutton's Vireo and Brown Creeper, both of which were starting to sing. A very early Turkey Vulture flew overhead and Ed pointed it out! From there, we headed north and saw an Eared Grebe at Tramp Harbor. After we left the island, we headed along Dock Street to the 11th St. Bridge in Tacoma. There we viewed a beautiful Peregrine Falcon perched on the counterweight on the bridge. It had been a great day. There were 10 people, and we had seen 56 species.



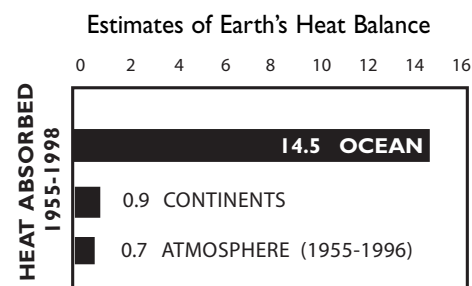
Skagit. The next weekend, February 12, Amy Schillinger and I led a group up to the Skagit. We had nice weather up there, too, and saw a number of wonderful birds. Our highlight was seeing four Snowy Owls at the Skagit Game Range on Fir Island!

We walked the loop at Headquarters, and headed in a clockwise direction, passing by the boat launch. A Peregrine Falcon flew past us at the parking lot. It was quiet along the river trail, except for a flock of about 15 Yellow-rumped Warblers, both Audubon's and Myrtle. We looked for sparrows down the boardwalk bridges, but were unsuccessful in finding them except for Song and Fox sparrow. Later we saw a number of Golden-crowned Sparrows on the other dike. We found a Greater Yellowlegs in a flooded field. Out at the far end of the loop at the salt marsh, we reached a point where there is a junction of trails and some picnic benches. We turned left there and walked out on what Rob Cash calls the "spur dike." I had never been

cont'd on next page

Global Warming

Global average temperatures experienced a net rise over the twentieth century, and the average rate of this rise has been increasing. The six hottest years on record since 1880 are, in order: 2005, 1998, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2001, and 1997. When scientists attempt to reproduce this twentieth century trend in their climate models, they are only able to do so when they include human-produced heat-trapping emissions in addition to natural causes; in other words, human-induced warming is superimposed on natural processes to produce the observed climate.



Data source: Levitus, Antonov and Boyer (2005)
Earth's heat balance presented in units of 10^{21} joules—
equivalent to 94,781,707 trillion Btu (British thermal units).

Oceans comprise 97 percent of Earth's water. They have an average depth of approximately 13,000 feet. It takes a great deal of heat to raise the temperature of this huge body of water, and the oceans have absorbed the bulk of Earth's excess heat over the past several decades. If only a small fraction of the heat currently stored in the oceans were released, it would significantly warm the atmosphere and melt the world's glaciers.

Because most global warming emissions remain in the atmosphere for decades or centuries, the energy choices we make today greatly influence the climate our children and grandchildren inherit. We have the technology to increase energy efficiency, significantly reduce these emissions from our energy and land use, and secure a high quality of life for future generations. We must act now to avoid dangerous consequences.



25 BEST-RATED FOR AIR POLLUTION 2006 MIDSIZE CARS

<u>MODEL</u>	<u>AIR POLLUTION SCORE</u> (10 IS BEST)	<u>FUEL ECONOMY</u>	<u>GREENHOUSE GAS SCORE</u> (10 IS BEST)
TOYOTA PRIUS	9.5	60 51	10
KIA SPECTRA	9.5	25 34	7
HONDA ACCORD	9.5	24 34	7
TOYOTA CAMRY	9.5	24 34	7
HYUNDAI ELANTRA	9.5	24 32	7
NISSAN ALTIMA	9.5	24 31	7
FORD FUSION	9.5	24 32	7
MERCURY MILAN	9.5	24 32	7
MAZDA 6	9.5	24 31	7
MITSUBISHI GALANT	9.5	23 30	6
PONTIAC GRAND PRIX	9.5	20 30	6
BUICK ALLURE	9.5	20 30	6
BUICK LACROSSE	9.5	20 30	6
VOLKSWAGEN PASSAT	7	23 32	7
CHRYSLER SEBRING	7	22 30	6
DODGE STRATUS	7	22 30	6
VOLVO S-80	7	21 30	6
BMW 525I	7	21 29	6
BMW 530I	7	21 29	6
LEXUS ES 330	7	21 29	6
NISSAN MAXIMA	7	20 29	6
ACURA TL	7	20 29	6
CHEVROLET EPICA	7	20 27	5
SUZUKI VERONA	7	20 27	5
JAGUAR S-TYPE	7	19 28	5

25 BEST-RATED FOR AIR POLLUTION - 2006 COMPACT CARS

<u>MODEL</u>	<u>AIR POLLUTION SCORE</u> (10 IS BEST)	<u>FUEL ECONOMY</u>	<u>GREENHOUSE GAS SCORE</u> (10 IS BEST)
HONDA CIVIC HYBRID	9.5	49 51	10
MAZDA 3	9.5	28 35	8
SATURN ION	9.5	26 35	8
FORD FOCUS	9.5	26 34	7
SUBARU LEGACY	9.5	23 30	7
VOLKSWAGEN GOLF	9.5	22 30	6
VOLKSWAGEN JETTA	9.5	22 30	6
VOLVO S-40	9.5	22 30	6
VOLVO S-60	9.5	21 29	6
TOYOTA COROLLA	7	32 41	9
HYUNDAI ACCENT	7	32 35	8
KIA RIO	7	32 35	8
MITSUBISHI LANCER	7	27 34	8
VOLKSWAGEN GTI	7	25 31	7
TOYOTA SOLARA	7	24 33	7
AUDI A-4	7	24 32	7
SUZUKI FORENZA	7	23 30	7
CHEVROLET OPTRA	7	23 30	7
SUZUKI RENO	7	23 30	7
MERCEDES C-230	7	21 30	6
BMW 325I	7	21 29	6
BMW 330I	7	21 29	6
MERCEDES C-280	7	21 28	6
MERCEDES C-350	7	20 28	6
BMW 325XI	7	20 27	6

SOURCE: U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY, 2006

Wonderful Field Trips...

cont'd from previous page

there before. Rob said it eventually stops at the river mouth, but we only walked about three or four blocks and looked out to driftwood near the water on the bay, where we saw a nice white adult Snowy Owl on a log near the water. Two adult Bald Eagles were perched high on some driftwood. Eventually we saw three more Snowy Owls perched in that area; altogether, there were three adult and one juvenile Snowy Owls there and we were glad we had our scopes. The birds were perched at least 1/2 mile away.

Back at headquarters parking lot, we saw three Barn Swallows flying overhead. Along with a group from Seattle, we saw seven swallows with white underparts. The Seattle group identified them as Tree and Violet-green swallows. Bugs were flying in the air. Earlier that same morning, we had seen both a Merlin (perched in the tall fir tree in Conway on Fir Island Rd.) and an American Kestrel on a phone wire. On Fir Island Rd, just before the turn-off to Wylie Rd, we pulled well off the road and had nice comparison views of Trumpeter and Tundra Swans in the field to the north.

Snow Geese were flying to the south, and at Hayton Snow Goose Reserve, there were several thousand foraging in the field. From there we headed north and found a second kestrel perched on a line by the Fir Island produce market (ice cream store). We traveled through the Skagit Flats, which were pretty quiet, and saw a third kestrel on Farm to Market Rd. up on the hill, before dropping down to the Samish Flats. On Bayview-Edison Rd, south of the T, we saw a beautiful adult female Peregrine Falcon on a telephone pole.

At the Samish West 90 it was sunny and warm, and there was no wind! We watched several Short-eared Owls, Northern Harriers, and a Rough-legged Hawk. Then we got to observe something wonderful. In the field just to the north of the West 90 parking lot, a Short-eared Owl, a light-morph Rough-legged Hawk, and a dark-morph Rough-legged Hawk were all flying around and flying at each

cont'd on page 8

The Quizzical Owl

by *Thais Bock*



1. This small, secretive owl lives up to its name in far northern forest habitats.
2. What is the scientific study of bird eggs called?
3. In the mountain forests of New Mexico and Arizona this warbler nests on the ground.
4. What bird will sometimes lay eggs on a stump in semi-open habitat?
5. How many kingfisher species are found in North America? Name them.

ANSWERS ARE UPSIDE DOWN BELOW

Plant of the Month

BY LINDA BARTLETT

Here it is, February, and I walked out into my yard this morning intending to check on the fat, swelling buds of the elderberries which I planned to write about this month, but the *Osoberrys* (*Indian-plums*) all along the woodland edge behind our house changed my mind. Their pendulous little white blossoms are out now, announcing that spring truly is on its way, in spite of the hard freeze we have just been through for the past week. These tough natives are bursting with vigor and clamor to be first in line in the spring parade to clothe their bare branches with fresh new foliage. Hooray, soon winter will be losing its grip! The Song Sparrows are in full song—they know it's time to be staking out territory.

The Indian-plums in my yard have all been planted by the birds, so that tells me that they are a valuable plant to have for anyone who wants birds in their yard. They are fast-growing, happy with wet feet, and tolerant of shade. They're very adaptable and will do okay in dry areas too. Russell Link says in his *Landscaping for Wildlife* book that the Anna's Hummingbird may use the nectar, but because I rarely have Anna's out where I live, I have not observed this. I would be most interested to hear if any of you readers have observed Anna's using nectar from the flowers of Indian-plum.

Another thing to know when planting an Indian-plum is that there are male and female plants, so you need to plant several to make sure they flower and bear



fruit. The plant grows from 4 to 15 feet tall, but it's more compact in full sun.

And it should be no surprise that the fruit of this plant is the first to ripen—as early as June—which coincides nicely with the returning neotropical migrant birds. Thrushes eat the ripe berries, as well as waxwings and other fruit-eating birds and a number of mammals. The bitter fruit is edible but because it is not very flavorful it was used by the Indians only as starvation food. The plant's botanical name is '*Oemlaria cerasiformis*', and '*cerasiformis*' means 'bearing cherry-like fruits.' The fruits do hang down on long stems and inside is a fairly large seed. It's interesting to watch the fruits develop. They begin green, then get a soft peach blush before darkening to a blue black—if the birds do not get to them before that.

The leaves, such a soft pale green in early spring, are the first to turn yellow in late summer and drop very early in the fall—to begin the cycle all over again, forming tiny buds for next year. When you crush the new leaves between your fingers, you get a pleasant smell like ripe cucumber. With their thicket-forming characteristics, the Indian-plum is a wonderful hedgerow plant for wildlife.

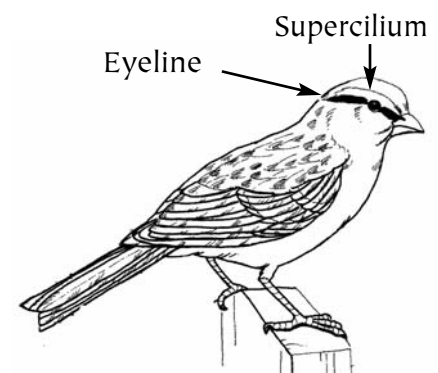
Wonderful Field Trips...

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other. Wow! At first I didn't know what the dark-morph Rough-legged Hawk was (I briefly called it a Vulture), as I had never seen one flying before. But the Seattle group, led by expert raptor leader Jim Flynn ID'd it. Eventually, it landed on a bush in front of the left-most metal barn and we got to study it with our scopes before it flew off, low to the north.

After that, we headed north to Samish Island Park and viewed Samish Bay from the beach below the bluff. There were seven Long-tailed Ducks in the middle of the bay as we looked over toward a bridge on Chuckanut Drive. We saw lots of Bald Eagles of various ages everywhere we went. It was a great day. In the end, our group of six people saw 58 species on this trip.

BIRD ID: March Words-of-the-Month



Answers to Quizzical Owl: 1. Boreal Owl, 2. Oology, 3. Red-faced Warbler, 4. Common Nighthawk, 5. Three: Belted, Green, Ringed.

Rainier Audubon Society

Backyard Wildlife Habitat Consultation Drawing

Learn how to turn your yard into a wildlife-friendly place — If you would like to attract birds and other wildlife to your yard, this is a great opportunity for you. Rainier Audubon is sponsoring a drawing for a personal, one-hour consultation with a wildlife habitat expert, in your own back yard. All you have to do is fill out and send in the application below. That's it! It's free and there are no strings attached. Four names will be drawn at our May 17th membership meeting. You do not have to be present to win. Each winner will receive a one-hour visit from a habitat expert in their own yard.

In addition, four names will be drawn to receive a copy of one of Russell Link's books, either *Landscaping for Wildlife in the Pacific Northwest* or *Living with Wildlife in the Pacific Northwest*.

The drawing is open to all!

You do not have to be a Rainier Audubon member to win.

Application deadline is May 11.

Drawing will be held May 17.

Backyard Habitat Consultation dates will be determined later.

Backyard Wildlife Habitat Consultation Drawing Entry Form

Name _____

Address _____

Phone No. _____ Email _____

I give permission for Rainier Audubon to take photos of my yard during the consultation and also of any improvements I may make in my yard as a result of the consultation, within a one-year time period.

Signature _____

Mail (or email) entry to:

Carol Stoner, Backyard Habitat Drawing
 Rainier Audubon Society
 PO Box 778
 Auburn, WA 98071

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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 AT <http://www.rainieraudubon.org/rehab.htm>

OTHER RESOURCES

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- Falcon Research Group (360) 757-1911
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