

THE HERON HERALD



Rainier Audubon Society ~ October 2007

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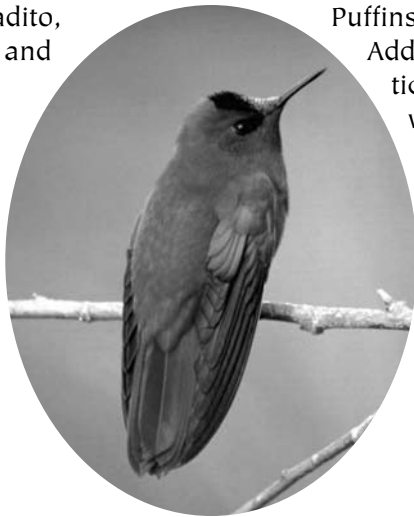
Check us out on the web: www.rainieraudubon.org

Rainier Audubon Presents:

"Conservation of the Threatened Birds of the Juan Fernández Islands, Chile"

Monday, October 15, 7:00 PM

The Juan Fernández Islands have been called the temperate counterpart of the Galápagos Islands, as both sets of islands are characterized by high numbers of unique plant and animal species. Some of the birds that can be seen there include the beautiful Juan Fernández Firecrown, Másafuera Rayadito, and Stejneger's and Juan Fernández petrels, which are currently threatened by human impact. These species have been the focus of a long-term conservation research and education program headed by Dr. Peter Hodum. His presentation will provide an overview of the ecology of the natural systems of the Juan Fernández Islands as well as a look at the bird species, the threats confronting them, and efforts to conserve them.



MALE JUAN FERNANDEZ FIRECROWN

Dr. Peter Hodum is the Director of the Juan Fernández Islands

Conservancy, an organization dedicated to conservation research and education programs in the Juan Fernández Islands. He is also collaborating on a conservation program for the Townsend's Shearwater in Mexico and a study of the breeding and feeding ecology of Rhinoceros Auklets and Tufted Puffins in Washington.

Additionally, he is an enthusiastic educator, currently working as a visiting assistant professor at the University of Puget Sound and regularly participating in community outreach opportunities. He received his Ph.D. in Ecology from the University of California-Davis, and has conducted ecological and conservation research on birds in Chile, Antarctica, New Zealand, the Galápagos Islands, Canada, Washington, and California.

Please join us as we learn about the exotic birds of the Juan Fernandez Islands in their unique and fascinating environment. Refreshments and conversation available before, during, and following the program.



PINK-FOOTED SHEARWATER (TOP)



JUAN FERNANDEZ PETREL (BOTTOM)

PHOTOS ©PETER HODUM

Free
and open
to the public

October Program
Monday, October 15, 2007
7:00 PM
(doors open at 6:30)

Federal Way
United Methodist Church
(directions on next page)

Field Trips on Page 4

RAS Calendar

Celebrating Our Guiding Light

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 10

Rainier Board Meeting

MONDAY, OCTOBER 15

RAS Program: Juan Fernandez Islands with Dr. Peter Hodum

See page 1 for details

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 16, 23, & 30

RAS Introduction to Birding Class

See page 3 for details

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 21

RAS Field Trip: Renton Parks and the Cedar River

See page 4 for details

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 28

RAS Field Trip: Beaches and Parks Des Moines to Tacoma

See page 4 for details

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 11

RAS Field Trip: White-tailed Kites in the Fall

See page 4 for details

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 19

RAS Program & Brown Bag Raffle

See article at right for raffle details

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 30

Kent/Auburn Christmas Bird Count

See page 5 for details

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

**Federal Way United Methodist Church
29645 - 51st Ave. So., Auburn, 98001**

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.

In early September, a group of friends and family gathered at Anthony's at Point Defiance for Thais Bock's 90th birthday celebration. Thais founded Rainier Audubon in 1982 and has served as the guiding light for our organization

THAIS BOCK



ever since, attending every board meeting, program, and activity she could, and serving as Christmas Bird Count coordinator for 25 years. At the birthday celebration, many people stood up to tell stories of their experiences with Thais, some funny, some reflecting her intelligence and knowledge of the birds of the Pacific Northwest, and all thanking her for her wisdom, friendship, and support.

Brown Bag Raffle at Our November Program

At our November program (Monday, November 19), we will be having a Brown Bag Raffle. There will be a huge display of wonderful nature-related gifts and goodies for you to choose from. Come early and browse the items. You can purchase as many tickets as you want for \$1 each. Write your name on your tickets and drop them all into the brown bags next to the items you want. At the end of the evening, we will draw one ticket out of each bag and the winner gets to take that item home. This is the perfect time to "shop" for the upcoming holiday season!

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

The Heron Herald is published by Rainier Audubon Society 9 times a year.

Readers are invited to send in articles, photos or artwork for possible inclusion. Final deadline for material submission is the 18th of the month preceding publication.

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Activities

Introduction to Birding Class

OCTOBER 16, OCTOBER 23, OCTOBER 30
6:30 PM - 9:00 PM.

This fall, Rainier Audubon will be offering an Introduction to Birding class. This enjoyable class will consist of three lectures, and two fun and educational field trips.

Classes will be held at the Federal Way United Methodist Church (see address and directions on page 2) on Tuesday evenings: October 16, October 23, and October 30, from 6:30 PM to 9:00 PM. Field trips will be on Saturdays: October 20 and October 27, with an optional third field trip. Your teachers will be Master Birder Carol Schulz and Assistant Instructor Debra Russell. We will use the *National Geographic Field Guide to Birds of North America* (3rd, 4th, or 5th edition) as the class text. Please bring this guide to the class. Cost will be \$25 for Rainier members and \$40 for non-members. For more information or to reserve a spot in the class, please call or email Carol Schulz at (206) 824-7618 or linusq@att.net

Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteering with Rainier is a great opportunity for you to meet other bird-lovers like yourself and to join in the work we are doing to preserve our natural environment and the wildlife that call it home. If you can help with either of these positions, please contact us at Info@RainierAudubon.org. Thank you!

Conservation Chair This individual would be the point of contact at Rainier for issues regarding environmental and conservation issues in our area.

Hospitality Chair The Hospitality Chair brings simple treats, such as crackers-and-cheese or cookies, to our monthly meetings on the third Monday of each month, September through June. The Hospitality Chair is reimbursed for all expenses.

Attracting Birds with Water

Wild birds love water. Birds that may not stop by your yard to visit your feeder will come for your water. A simple birdbath is fine, but a bubbling fountain will dramatically increase the number of species that come to your yard. Below are stories from three local birders who have installed water features in their yards and learned what works and what doesn't, in the ongoing quest to give our wild birds what they need to survive and thrive.

Linda Bartlett

For a number of years, I have been disappointed that our backyard water feature hasn't been very popular with the birds. It sits in the middle of a grassy field; at one end, water falls into a pond, is re-circulated through a bio-filter to remove the algae, and continues to spill over into the pond. On the other end, there is a dripper which fills a shallow rock for birds to bathe in. It's been nice to see that the salamanders, Pacific chorus frogs and red-legged frogs have called it home and have reared their young in it. However, I always hoped that birds would be attracted to it, also.

In trying to make it look as natural as possible, I let the grass grow in all around the edges of the pond to hide the black rubber liner and grow down a bit into the water, which has given the amphibians something to attach their egg masses to. And I planted several small bushes nearby for perching/grooming/hiding purposes. We don't mow this area often, and the grass has grown very thick and tall around the pond.

I decided to experiment recently and removed some of the grass, adding more rock and a sandy

"beach" to open it up more. And this small thing has made a BIG difference with the birds! A few Pine Siskins turned into a small flock the other morning. Then several tanagers appeared. Shortly, there were three or four Black-headed Grosbeaks in the mix and some goldfinches and House Finches. In the little crabapple tree next to the



PHOTO OF LINDA BARTLETT'S BACKYARD POND WITH PEBBLE BEACH

pond, there were two Black-throated Gray Warblers! A hummingbird flew over the whole scene as if to check out what all the activity was about. When I looked out again, there was a Wilson's Warbler taking a long, vigorous bath! The next day, a tanager was bathing along with a Black-headed Grosbeak and a couple of Evening Grosbeaks flew in and joined them. And more goldfinches and House Finches gathered while I watched with amazement. The Black-throated Warbler returned.

I realize now that the birds must have felt insecure with all that tall grass—never knowing who might be

cont'd on page 4

Field Trips

By Carol Schulz

Weekly Bird Walks at Nisqually

Thursdays 8:15 AM to 12:30 PM

Leader: Phil Kelley

Join Phil on his weekly bird walk as he counts the birds at Nisqually NWR. On the first Thursday of the month, the group walks fairly quickly around the full loop, a distance of over five miles. Other weeks, the trip is shorter, walking out to McAllister Creek, back to the visitor 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 Visitor's 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, scrub-jay323@aol.com.

Renton Parks and the Cedar River

Sunday, October 21

8:30 AM to Mid-Afternoon

Leader: Amy Schillinger

The beaches near Coulon Park in Renton, and the habitats at Cavanaugh Ponds up-river on the Cedar River should provide good bird-watching during fall when the salmon are spawning. Bring your cameras for views of Lake Washington and for the fall colors. We will walk up to one mile on paths at the ponds.

BRING: Good walking shoes or boots, warm clothes, lunch and drinks. Scopes are welcome.

MEET: 8:30 AM at Coulon Park near Ivar's and Kidd Valley Restaurants.

DIRECTIONS: Coulon Park is in Renton, at the south end of Lake Washington. Travel north 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 Amy Schillinger, (425) 443-6931, amyschillinger@comcast.net. Email is preferred.

Beaches And Parks: Des Moines to Tacoma

Sunday, October 28

8:00 AM to Mid-Afternoon

Leader: Steve Johnson

Visit picturesque beaches, woods, and parks in King County and Pierce County during a great time of year to look for returning fall birds. Our first stop will be at Redondo. Then we'll work our way north to parks and beaches along Puget Sound, searching for Harlequin Ducks, all three scoters, and various waterfowl and forest birds. After viewing at the Des Moines Pier, we'll travel south to Brown's Point Lighthouse and to viewing spots near the Hylebos Waterway. Expect to walk short distances from the cars.

BRING: Lunch, a thermos and drinks, and warm clothes. A scope is very welcome.

MEET: 8:00 AM at the 272nd Park & Ride north of Federal Way.

DIRECTIONS: Take I-5 to exit 147 north of Federal Way. Exit onto So. 272nd St, and go west one block to the light. Turn right and go one block into the Park & Ride on the right.

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

White-tailed Kites in the Fall

Sunday, November 11

7:30 AM to Late Afternoon

Leader: Roger Orness

White-tailed Kites are not known to migrate, but the dispersal of the young and the possibility of late nesting pairs can be found in fall. Our trip will take us through several valleys where kites nested in the past. Our main target bird will be a fresh plumaged juvenile. We also should see good numbers of other raptors. This trip is limited to seven people and two vehicles, so sign up early to secure a spot.

BRING: Scopes, binoculars, lunch, and snacks. Be prepared for a long drive, and a long day, returning to Tacoma in the late afternoon.

MEET: At the McDonald's Restaurant at the Hwy 512 Park & Ride at 7:30. Depart promptly.

DIRECTIONS: Take I-5 to Hwy 512 south of Tacoma. Turn right and take an immediate left on South Tacoma Way. Travel south one block, and turn left into the Park & Ride. Meet near McDonalds.

SIGN-UP: Call or email Roger Orness, (253) 922-7516, r.orness@comcast.net.

Attracting Birds With Water...

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lying in wait for them. With increased visibility and all the exposed rock, they seem much bolder about flying in and perching briefly in the bushes while they check it out. Then they descend for a drink and sometimes a bath. Perhaps this may all coincide with the time of year, for birds are beginning to migrate (end of August), so it will be interesting to see if this activity continues on through the winter and what other species may come in. I can hardly keep myself from running to the window every few minutes to see what's going on at the pond throughout the day!

Barbara Petersen

In 1995, I built our water feature by combining two different kits from Avian Aquatics. I used the Bird Creek Single Pool (a liner and pump placed in the ground and covered with pea gravel) with the Finch Favorite, a fiberglass molded pool placed above ground. These kits are not sold any more, but the company currently has many similar products for sale and lots of information

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Join Us for Christmas Bird Count 2007

by Nancy Streiffert

Think globally; act locally. And here's how: Participate in Rainier Audubon's Christmas Bird Count on December 30, 2007. You will be contributing to a nationwide database used by many agencies at all levels of government and the private sector to assess population dynamics and trends and determine such things as wetland boundaries, the status of endangered and monitored species, and plans for parks and refuges.

You don't need to be an expert! A knowledgeable birder will lead a small group to cover an assigned area. You can help by spotting birds, listening for birds, and helping to record how many of each species your group finds. It is a great way for beginners and novices to hone their birding skills, get to know other members, and enjoy a great day outdoors.

Your reward will be a convivial get-together at Black Bear Diner (previously Coco's) in Federal Way to tabulate our results and share

our experiences over dinner. Please contact Nancy Streiffert at (253) 852-8394 or by email at nancy_streiffert@hotmail.com for more information or to sign up.

Thank you

A Quote to Consider:

I believe that there is a subtle magnetism in Nature, which, if we unconsciously yield to it, will direct us aright.

~ Henry David Thoreau



Bug of the Month: Spiders!

Spiders occupy an important niche in the natural world of the Pacific Northwest. For one thing, they are a valuable source of food for many of our native birds, including blackbirds, jays, grosbeaks, chickadees, hummingbirds, and juncos. Other creatures that eat spiders include frogs, toads, lizards, ants, centipedes, wasps, and other spiders.

Spiders are helpful to people because they feed mostly on insects, many harmful to humans, such as grasshoppers and locusts which can destroy crops, as well as flies and mosquitoes, which can carry diseases. Spider silk is a thread both strong and elastic, and some birds—in particular, hummingbirds—use it to build strong, secure nests.



Good Birding Locations

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/Sumner 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.

Going Birding?

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



The Quizzical Owl

by *Thais Bock*

1. This hawk-like raptor will take prey on-the-wing and often devours it while in the air.
2. Name the smallest member of the heron family.
3. In what state is the famous Hawk Mt. Sanctuary located?
4. North America's smallest alcid is the _____.
5. "Dabchick" refers to what species of grebe?

ANSWERS ARE UPSIDE DOWN BELOW

Attracting Birds With Water... *cont'd from page 4*

on water features at their web site, www.avianaquatics.com.



BARB PETERSEN'S DOUBLE POND

It took me two eight-hour days to build our water feature and arrange rocks around the edge to my satisfaction. Within days of installation, I was rewarded with a variety of birds attracted by the sound of the water.

In those days, Avian Aquatics provided a list of birds that had been reported using their products across the nation, and I was pleased to be able to add some northwest species to their list during the first year. Our water feature was indeed a bird magnet. To date, we've observed 51 species of all colors and

sizes visiting our bird creek, from Pileated Woodpeckers to Rufous and Anna's hummingbirds, warblers, waxwings, and many other species that might not otherwise use our yard or our birdfeeders.

Annual cleaning of this water feature is quite a job. And we had to buy a new pump when the old one quit two years ago. It runs year-round so we must occasionally add a heater to prevent freezing in winter. We have to ask our neighbor to refill it for us if we're away on vacation during hot weather. It has been dismantled by raccoons a few times.

The birds repay us for this maintenance many times a day with close views as they drink and bathe in our backyard wildlife sanctuary.

Nancy Streiffert

We dug a kidney-shaped hole, about 8 feet long and 5 feet wide. We bought a small, two-level waterfall to put at the narrow end. We tried various filters, believing that it would be possible to maintain crystal-clear water if we just got the right filter arrangement attached to the small pump. Not possible. Unless you kill it repeatedly, algae grows.

We made some shelves on the edges to set plant pots on, and added some non-native plants (this was before my native-plant phase!)

including a hardy waterlily which was lovely. Also goldfish. The goldfish attracted raccoons periodically and once, a heron; another time, a kingfisher which dove off the roof of the house into the pond!

Every spring, we saw and heard chorus frogs and then found frog egg masses, but never any tadpoles. It took us awhile to realize the dumb goldfish were eating all the tadpoles. The fish went back to the store and the next year, we had tadpoles and oodles of tiny frogs by August. The drawback was that, without the goldfish, there were mosquito larvae (tadpoles are vegetarians!) so I used a strainer to sort out the tadpoles, then discard the mosquito larvae, and put the tadpoles back in, which is rather labor intensive. But by the next summer, we were amazed to see salamander larvae—interesting critters with fringed gills—who ate the mosquitoes, but didn't bother the tadpoles.

As to birds—it is amazing! The two-layered waterfall has two shallow dishes, perfect for bathing or drinking. Some species use this part of the pond almost exclusively—Wilson's Warblers and Western Tanagers in particular. The usual yard birds use it frequently also, and bring their young to try it in the spring. Just thinking about it now, I realize not many have been using it this summer—probably

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Attracting Birds With Water...

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because the plants around it are growing up and provide too much cover for predators. Once the deciduous tree loses its leaves, I think they'll be back.



NANCY STREIFFERT'S TWO LEVEL WATERFALL

Things to consider when installing a water feature:

Placement: Sunnier means more algae, but can mean more flowers on pond lilies and more duckweed or other plants to shade the water and reduce algae; lots of surrounding cover may mean birds will avoid your pond.

Pumps: We had trouble with a little part of our pump breaking off when we pulled the filter and pump out of the water—had to make an extra hose length to prevent flexing of this unflexible part.

Maintenance: Filter should be cleaned when you notice a decrease in water flow, if you are recycling water.

Enjoyment: Wonderful for new discoveries—plants that sow themselves, amphibians, and birds.



A SIMPLE HOME-MADE WATER FEATURE, MADE FROM LOGS, TWO PANS, AND A HOSE

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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RAINIER AUDUBON'S TERRITORY



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 For an extensive list of wildlife rehabilitors
 and other wildlife resources,
 visit our Chapter Web Site at:
<http://www.rainieraudubon.org/>

Audubon Membership Subscription Form 

Rainier Audubon Society (RAS) Membership\$15

A one-year membership in Rainier Audubon Society includes nine issues of the Heron Herald newsletter; 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

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