

*Rainier Audubon's
September Program*

*Monday September 18, 2006,
at 7:00 PM
(doors open at 6:30)*

*Federal Way
United Methodist Church
(directions at right)*

THE HERON HERALD

Rainier Audubon Society • September 2006

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Rainier Audubon Presents

"The Trunk Show" with Brett Johnson

Free and open to the public

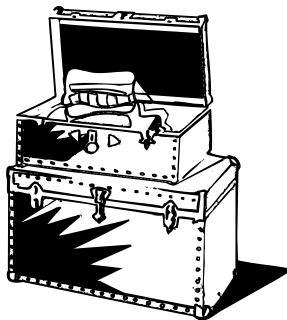
Sounds a bit odd, doesn't it? What the heck is a trunk show? Many of you probably had the same thought as I did: Someone's going to spend an hour talking about tree trunks? Not exactly. The "Trunk Show" is a program given by Native Plant Steward Brett Johnson and it has been raved about by all who have seen it.

The show is really pretty simple. Brett piles a table or two (or three or four...) with plants. After a short introduction about what native plants are and why you should choose natives over exotics for attracting wildlife, he starts lifting up plants, talking about each one and fielding any questions from the audience. Often, this becomes an audience-driven talk, as people ask questions which Brett responds to and then goes off on a tangent, picking up more plants and fielding questions about them, etc. Just be aware, Brett says he can go for as long as we let him, so we'll try to give him as much time as possible. Also, all the plants Brett brings will be for sale. There is a chance that for the September program, he may have bulbs and some bare-root perennials as well. Camas, Trillium, and other native bulbs are a possibility.

Brett has been a Native Plant Steward since 1998, and has been doing garden design and consultation through his business, Green Man Gardens, for about the same length of time. He specializes in native plants and wildlife habitat. He has very much enjoyed working with Rainier Audubon's Backyard Habitat program over the past few years, first as a judge and then as a consultant. The "Trunk Show" will be a welcome chance for him to meet more Rainier Audubon members.

As an added bonus, Brett is happy to bring any native plant you may be looking for. You can contact him at home (206) 232-5734, or cell (206) 819-9805, or via his e-mail address: bnbjohns@comcast.net. The earlier he knows what plant(s) you would like to see, the better chance he has of obtaining it for you.

Please join us as we start a new season with a terrific and very timely program. The fall is a great time for planting and Brett will have the perfect plants to add to your yard. Refreshments and conversation available before, during, and following the program.



Please note: Our programs will be held in a new location this year:

*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.

**Results of Our Spring Backyard
Habitat Drawing on Page 7**

Field Trips on Page 4!

Calendar

THURSDAY MORNINGS

Bird Walks at Nisqually

See page 4 for details

SEPTEMBER 16, SATURDAY

RAS Field Trip: Foothills Trail

See Page 4 for details

SEPTEMBER 18, MONDAY

RAS Program: Trunk Show with Brett Johnson

See page 1 for details

SEPTEMBER 23, SATURDAY

RAS Field Trip: Bottle Beach to Tokeland

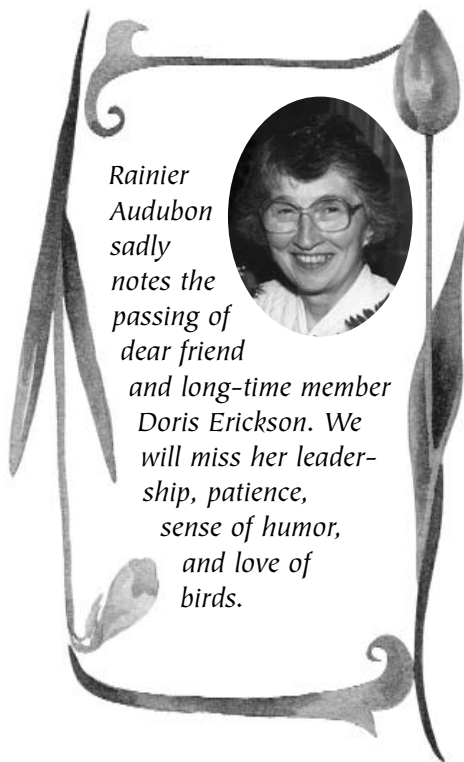
See Page 4 for details

OCTOBER 1, SUNDAY

RAS Field Trip: Bird Photography at Nisqually

See page 4 for details

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



Rainier Audubon sadly notes the passing of dear friend and long-time member Doris Erickson. We will miss her leadership, patience, sense of humor, and love of birds.

President's Message

by Nancy Hertzell

In mid-July, co-workers Jennifer, Stephane, and I spent two hours picking up litter on our Adopt-a-Road stretch of highway one very hot afternoon; sweat literally poured down our foreheads as we bent over and stood up a hundred times; the continual blasts of wind from passing semis nearly blew us over; and those horrid little sticker things stuck to our socks and pants. We felt pretty satisfied when we quit though, because we had filled 20 bags and the road looked so much better. The next day, before the highway department had even picked up the bags, there was "new" litter that people had tossed out during the night. But for some reason, we keep doing it. Every two months or so, we get together and go pick up litter again.

So I was thinking about this: why do we? And why don't we ever just throw up our hands and quit? After all, from one perspective, it could be argued that this is a losing battle. Like the battle against letting cats roam freely outside and killing birds. There are so many people in my neighborhood who let their cats out, it's hopeless to even think about it. Yesterday one killed a robin in my front yard. Haven't these people heard the message about keeping cats indoors? What about all the people who still use weed-and-feed and pesticides on their lawns?

If you are trying to live a life of respect and care for our environment and the wild critters who live outside, you do sometimes wonder if it isn't like voting: How can your one vote, one little backyard, or one small stretch of highway, matter in the overall scheme of things, when there are so many people out there who seem to be actively countering what you do?

Well, I don't think it does matter, really. What matters is being part of

the trend. We have to be patient and keep working to get our message out, to make our bandwagon an attractive, intelligent place that others will notice and want to jump on. It is, after all, not a temporarily fashionable bandwagon, here today and gone tomorrow; this is a strong and permanent bandwagon. And the more people who sit up and take notice, who get on board with the program of natural lawn care, cats indoors, planting native plants - in general, respect for the environment - the more popular the whole thing becomes and the more the tide turns in our direction - away from litter and pesticides and exotic plants, and toward a place where we live harmoniously and respectfully with bugs and birds and bats. Carry the message with you wherever you go — yes, we may be a bunch of environmental freaks and birding nerds, but we're very cool, and we are the future.



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Introduction to Birding Class

Learn Your Birds with Rainier Audubon!

By Carol Schulz

This fall, Rainier Audubon will be offering an "Introduction to Birding" class. This enjoyable class with lectures, quizzes, and field trips gives students a method to identify the birds. Classes will be held at the **Federal Way United Methodist Church** (see address and directions on page 1) on the following Thursdays: October 26, November 2, and November 9, 2006, from 6:30 - 9:00 pm. The class includes field trips on October 28 and November 4, with an optional third trip. The field trips are educational, a lot of fun, and are in our local area. 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 or 4th Edition) as the class text. Please bring this field 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, (206) 824-7618, linusq@worldnet.att.net.

Festivals

16th Annual Wenatchee River Salmon Festival

SEPTEMBER 28, 29, 30, AND OCTOBER 1
(THURSDAY THROUGH SUNDAY)

The **Wenatchee River Salmon Festival** is a four-day natural resource education event held each fall to celebrate the return of the salmon to the Wenatchee River. The Festival is held on the grounds of the **Leavenworth National Fish Hatchery**, located at the mouth of the scenic Icicle Canyon near Leavenworth. We hope you will join us the last weekend of September for a wonderful salmon adventure. Set in the pristine majesty of the Cascade Mountains, the festival is full of fun and entertainment under the canopy of beautiful autumn weather. The festival is great for people of all ages and no admission is required. Interactive exhibits, music, art, and the Native American Encampment. One of the most exciting new features this year comes from "**Inspirations of the Forest**," a Smithsonian exhibit featuring the 100-year centennial of the U.S. Forest Service.

For more information call: (509)548-6662, ext. 250, or contact the Festival Director, Corky Broaddus at corky_broaddus@fws.gov

Dungeness River Festival

SEPTEMBER 22-23 (FRIDAY-SATURDAY)

Meet us at the bridge! Help us celebrate the watershed that keeps the Sequim-Dungeness Valley alive. There will be activities for both kids and adults, music, art, food, and much more. The Dungeness River Audubon Center is located at Railroad Bridge Park, 2151 West Hendrickson Road, in Sequim.

Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge BIRDFEST

OCTOBER 14-15 (SATURDAY-SUNDAY)

Join the **Friends of Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge** for their annual birding celebration, BirdFest! There will be guided nature and bird walks, bluegrass music, a birders' marketplace, children's activities, kayak tours, Sandhill Crane tours, food booths, and much more! To get to Ridgefield, take I-5 south to exit 14, go west three miles, and follow the signs to Ridgefield Refuge. Check out the festival website at www.ridgefield-friends.org or call (360) 887-9495 for more information.

Mark Your Calendars Now

Rainier Audubon's Christmas Bird Count is Set for Sunday, December 17, 2006

By Nancy Streiffert

Autumn is almost here—and the **Christmas Bird Count** is coming in December! Rainier needs your help in counting birds on December 17, 2006. This will be the 27th year we have conducted the Kent/Auburn CBC. Join us and be part of a continent-wide citizen science project that gathers data to understand bird population

changes, habitat needs, and bird migration patterns.

You can join a group in the field as a birder, a recorder, or another pair of eyes and ears. Or you can stay home and watch your feeders. After a day of birding, we will meet at Coco's in Federal Way for dinner, sharing stories, and compiling our results—always an exciting and satisfying end to the day!

Please check out the CBC poster/map at our September 18th membership program to see how our

area is divided up and which area you might be interested



in birding. All are welcome! You do not have to be an expert birder to participate. Contact Nancy Streiffert (253) 852-8394 or Nancy_Streiffert@hotmail.com with any questions you may have, or to sign up. Thanks!

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 National Wildlife Refuge. 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 MacAllister 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 parking lot just past the Nisqually NWR 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. Phil Kelley, Lacey, (360) 459-1499, or scrubjay323@aol.com.



Foothills Trail

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 16

7:30 AM TO NOON

LEADER: CAROL SCHULZ

Please come with us on a tour of the Foothills Trail near Orting in Pierce County. Late summer and fall is the most productive season for birding this trail, which flanks South Prairie Creek and features a restored wetland. Warblers, flycatchers, and shorebirds may be found along this trail in the fall. Several kinds of vireos and woodpeckers may be heard or seen. In late fall, Pygmy Owls may be seen near the trail. We will also look for American Dippers and salmon along the Carbon River and So. Prairie Creek, and check areas in the town of South Prairie itself for unusual birds.

BRING: Lunch, water, and snacks. A scope is welcome. We may walk up to two and a half miles on level trails. There is a road which runs near the trail, for folks who can't walk far. These folks could bring their cars and meet us along the trail at certain points. If it rains, dress for the weather, as the birding just gets BETTER in bad weather during fall migration!

MEET: 7:30 AM at Jack in the Box Restaurant (open 24 hrs.) on Ellingson Rd. in Pacific/Algona.

DIRECTIONS: From the intersection of I-167 and Hwy. 18 in Auburn, travel south on I-167 1.8 miles. Exit onto Ellingson Rd, and go east 0.2 miles toward Algona/Pacific. Go through the 4-way stop. Jack in the Box is on the left.

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

Bottle Beach to Tokeland

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23

6:30 AM TO LATE AFTERNOON/EARLY EVENING

LEADER: KATHY ANDRICH

Join Kathy on an all-day coastal trip to see shorebirds and other migrant birds. Snowy Plover is possible and large group of Marbled Godwits probable. We'll visit famous Tokeland, Bottle Beach, and Midway, with John's River and Brady Loop Rd as possibilities. We'll also try for any local reported rarities.

BRING: Lunch, snacks, and beverages. Gear and clothing for changeable weather. Scope if you have one.

MEET: McDonalds in Fife.

DIRECTIONS: Take I-5 south to exit 137, turn right, and get into the left lane, go left. (You will now be on Hwy 99.) In two blocks turn left at the light; in about half a block, meet at the Park & Ride behind McDonalds.

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

Bird Photography Field Trip at Nisqually

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 1

9:00 AM - 12:00 NOON

Experiment with taking pictures of birds with birder/photographer Dan Streiffert. Bring your camera and meet at the Nisqually Visitor Center at 9 AM.

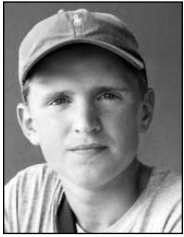
BRING: Camera, binoculars.

MEET: Nisqually Visitor Center at 9:00 AM

SIGN-UP: Contact Dan Streiffert at Dan_Streiffert@hotmail.com or (253) 852-8394.

Seen & Heard

By Charlie Wright



Fall migration is here already, after a fairly slow summer in the local area. Expect to see some shorebirds this month in any open, muddy habitat. Look for

easy-to-miss warblers and other fall migrants in shrubby areas. Swainson's Thrushes can now be heard migrating by night, giving "weep" call notes that most people don't know. Fall migration is more subtle to us than spring, but paying close attention to it is always rewarding. Keep up the reports!

Swans lingered late this spring. A **Tundra Swan** was at Foothills Trail from 5/1 to 6/1 (CW), while a **Trumpeter Swan** was at Kent Ponds 5/17 to 5/25 (m.obs). Two Caspian Terns were at Kent Ponds 5/21 (m.obs). A **Solitary Sandpiper** was at the Foothills Trail wetland 6/31 (CW). A **Red-necked Phalarope** was observed at Kent Ponds 5/21 (m.obs). A **Mourning Dove** was seen in downtown Auburn 6/2 (MJ). A flock of approximately 500 **Vaux's Swifts** was at O'Grady Park 8/5 (CW). Six **Black Swifts** were at Kent Ponds 5/19 (Twtrs). A **Common Nighthawk** was flying over Kent 6/10 (KA). Two nighthawks were over Bonney Lake 8/13, where they used to be much more common (CW).

A **Western Scrub Jay** nest with fledglings was found near downtown Enumclaw 6/28 (GW). A post-breeding flock of 60 **Bank Swallows** was flying nearby the O'Grady Natural Area colony 8/5 (CW). The first **Willow Flycatchers** were somewhat early at Foothills Trail 5/18. A **Hammond's**



YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT ©STEVE PIKE

Flycatcher was in Kent 8/18 (LB). The **Black Phoebe** near Emerald Downs was seen 5/23 (GM). A **Western Kingbird** was at Kent Ponds 5/21 and near Emerald Downs through June (m.obs). A **Yellow-breasted Chat** was heard occasionally throughout the summer at Kent Ponds (m.obs).

Lazuli Buntings nested at Kent Ponds (m.obs) and Buckley (JTL) this year, and were unusually common on the **Foothills Trail**. A rare migrant Lark Sparrow was photographed in a yard near Lake MacDonald east of Renton 5/28 (BoM/BeM). A **Yellow-headed Blackbird** flew over South Prairie 8/13 (CW).



COMMON NIGHTHAWK

Observers: KA-Kathy Andrich; LB-Linda Bartlett; MJ-Mary Johnson; GM-Guy McWethy; BeM-Bernie Meyer; BoM-Bob Meyer; JTL-Joe TerLouw; GW-Gordon Wright; CW-Charlie Wright; m.obs-many observers; Twtrs-Tweeters.

Going Birding?

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

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.

Where Can I Buy Native Plants?

By Nancy Hertzell

One way to compensate the birds and bugs whose living spaces we have cut down and cleared away for our own use, is to replace the native trees, shrubs, and grasses on which they depend. Planting native plants in your yard will encourage these creatures to return and take up residence once again.

As many of us try our hand at creating a wildlife-friendly backyard, one of the first things we do is visit a local nursery looking for native plants. Rainier's Backyard Habitat Chair, Carol Stoner, and I visited nine nurseries around the south King County area, "disguised" as homeowners looking for native plants. We talked to nursery owners and staff persons, walked around and looked at their stock, and took notes.

Being an average gardener who isn't sure what is native and what is not, I knew right away that, without Carol at my side, it would have been a hopeless task for me to make sense of it all. As we walked through a nursery, however, Carol's knowledge and expertise proved invaluable. She would point out any natives we came across. Two nurseries, to my delight, had special sections set aside for native plants — and clearly labeled as such. I found this to be tremendously helpful.

Two nurseries tied for our first-place favorite, and we would recommend anyone looking for native plants start with one of these: **Herr Backyard Garden in Burien**, and **Minters Earlington** in Renton.



HERR BACKYARD GARDENS

Herr Backyard Garden (107 SW 160th St. in Burien) had a lovely, labeled native plant section (see photo), but also had many more natives mingled in with the other plants. They had a good variety of most everything, from ground-covers to trees, and everything was fresh, organized, and well-tended. We found kinnikinnick, salal, bunchberry, serviceberry, ninebark, dogwood, Oregon grape, vine maple, and lewisia, among others.

Minters Earlington (13043 Renton Ave. So. in Renton) also had a wonderful variety of native plants. They did not have a special section set aside for them, but we didn't really need it because the staff person was so helpful and knowledgeable and seemed keen on native plants; he spent lots of time showing us plants and discussing the finer points of what actually defines a native plant. He showed us spirea, elderberry, ninebark, columbine, yarrow, cliff green, salal, viburnum, porcelain berry, goldenrod, coneflower, foxglove, sweet pea, fleece flower, jerusalem sage, Indian plum, dogwood, snowberry, chokecherry, serviceberry, hawthorn, apples, native azaleas and rhodies, ceanothus, geranium. Lots of good perennials.

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Gardening for Wildlife

By Carol Stoner

People who love birds often try to design their backyard garden with birds in mind. Whether your approach to your yard is passionate or perfectionistic, reluctant or random, here are a few simple things you can do at this time of year to encourage birds.

Leave the leaves. Towhees, Song Sparrows, and other ground-feeding birds can find much to eat in leaf litter. Small leaves, such as birch or vine maple, will "compost in place" if you

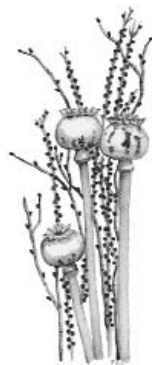


rake them into your flower beds; but large, heavy leaves such as horse chestnut or big-leaf maple can smother the grass and any low-growing plants you may have.

If they are dry, it's easy to shred them with the lawnmower and use them as mulch or add them to your compost.

Leave the seeds. Often "fall cleanup" means getting rid of seed-heads and the dying stalks of annuals and perennials. Juncos, sparrows, wrens, and finches will eat the seeds and search for the insects that shelter in the stalks.

Leave some of your harvest. Birds often help themselves to our fruits and vegetables, whether or not we intended to share with them. As the



cont'd on next page

Results of Our Spring Backyard Habitat Drawing

This spring, 23 people entered our Backyard Habitat Drawing. On May 18, we drew the names of our eight winners. Four people (Laurel Johnson, John Woods, Kathy Kangas Cowin and Marlene Stone) each won a book on local wildlife; they had their choice of either *Living with Wildlife in the Pacific Northwest* or *Landscaping for Wildlife in the Pacific Northwest*, both by Russell Link.

Jackie Reusch, Carol Sterley, Meg MacDonald, and Helen Penor won personal landscaping consultations in their own backyards with native plant expert Brett Johnson of Green Man Gardens. On July 18, Brett and Rainier's Backyard Habitat Chair Carol Stoner visited each yard. The sites varied from lakeside to steep slope, and included both well-established landscaping and new gardens. Brett made specific suggestions to each, based on the site and the existing landscaping. Planting to create low, middle, and canopy layers, and carefully pruning dense shrubbery to give birds easy access to the interior were

frequent recommendations. If native plants are the "good guys," Brett didn't hesitate to identify a few "out-laws"—invasives such as English ivy, cotoneaster, and laurel that crowd out other plants and tend to take over the yard. Each of the winners had questions for Brett, and identified specific problems they were having; the wide-ranging discussions were interesting, as well as lively and fun.

The native plants Brett recommended most frequently were small trees such as serviceberry (*Amelanchier alnifolia*), cascara (*Rhamnus purshiana*), and Oregon ash (*Fraxinus latifolia*); shrubs such as red-flowering currant (*Ribes sanguineum*), mock orange (*Philadelphus lewisiai*), oceanspray (*Holodiscus discolor*), Oregon grape (*Mahonia aquifolium* and *Mahonia nervosa*), evergreen huckleberry (*Vaccinium membranaceum*), and snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*).

Rainier will be having another drawing next spring. Watch for it and be sure to enter!

Gardening for Wildlife... cont'd from previous page

season winds down, leaving behind a few apples or other garden tidbits can bring in special birds. One of my backyard highlights last fall was watching a Pileated Woodpecker snack on the last red apple on our apple tree, while silhouetted against a perfect autumn-blue sky.

Leave the prunings. If you can find an out-of-the-way spot for a brush pile, you will create an ideal place for Winter Wrens, towhees, and Song Sparrows. The insects that use the brush pile will be welcome treats for birds that search them out.

Whether you are a gung-ho, ho-hum, or oh-no kind of gardener, it can

be a good idea to leave some of the harvest, as well as the leaves, seeds, and prunings to support the birds that share our yards. Not only is it less work, it means more birds.



Journal from Costa Rica

By Barbara Petersen

Note: Rainier member Barbara Petersen spent several weeks in Costa Rica this summer. These are excerpts from her journal.

♦ ♦ ♦ **I** brought out my scope because the Red-lore Parrots were in the trees on the hill. And that's not all - a Toucan in one tree and two Aracaris in another! Then, let's see, should I study the four Chachalacas in a nearby tree? Or the Oropendola eating bananas right in front of me?! I asked Tony and he said the parrots don't come to the feeders. I will continue to study them whenever they land. So endearing the way they cuddle with each other, and share food. More than four Chachalacas, and at least one of them is a smaller young one. Did I mention the House Wrens nesting in the patio roof right above me? They come and go, I guess they're used to me... This place is a playground for birders, a big, exciting playground.



Wow! 5:00 and I'm afraid the birds are in second place tonight, it's the volcano that has my attention. It cleared up so I took photos, then just thought I would scope it. Huge hot rocks are breaking off (or erupting?) and rolling way way down the mountain, glowing red and smoking all the way. Some don't roll far, just fall below and stick. A firefall! Darn, 5:20 and show's over, clouds covered the volcano and wind and rain is here, think I'll go in. Oh my, what a storm! That lightning/thunder is

cont'd on page 8

What Did Rainier Do Over the Summer?

By Adele Freeland

Rainier was invited to take part in several gardening events over the summer. Thanks to our volunteers, we were able to participate and help spread the word about native plant landscaping, safe gardening practices without using pesticides, and gardening for wildlife.



ADELE AT RAINIER'S BOOTH AT THE COVINGTON WATER-WISE GARDEN FAIRE

Special thanks to the Covington Water District for inviting us to take part in their *Water-wise Garden Faire*. Rainier members who staffed our table at the event were Nancy Hertzal, Carol Stoner, Bernedine Lund, Merlin Wiese, and Adele Freeland. We were impressed with the Water District's "demonstration garden," an outstanding example of how to create a beautiful yard using Puget Sound climate-adapted native plants; the garden is open for self-guided tours during business hours, and guided tours by arrangement.

Another highlight of the summer was taking part in the *Federal Way Symphony Garden Tour*. Rainier members Peg and Jay Altman graciously agreed to open their Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary adjacent to Dash Point Park



PEG & JAY ALTMAN

as part of this eight-garden tour to benefit the Federal Way Symphony. The Altmans were adamant that Rainier be a part of this from the start to help them educate the public about local birds, the Backyard Wildlife Program, and gardening with wildlife in mind. Thank you to the Rainier members who helped staff our table in the Altmans' yard: Radhika Kumar, Brenda Sanchez, Adele Freeland, Lucia Faithful, Hazel Dickinson, Bob Dickinson, Bernedine Lund, Nancy Hertzal, and Barbara Petersen.

Our last event of the summer was the annual fun and festive *Frog Frolic* at Shadow Lake Bog in Renton. A huge thank you goes out to Max and Erin Prinsen for inviting Rainier to take part in this wonderful event. Rainier was one of a dozen environmental groups that hosted information tables at the Bog. You could not ask for a better place to have an outdoor fair than at Shadow Lake Bog. Thank you to Nancy Hertzal, Carol Stoner, Merlin Wiese, Adele Freeland, Debra Russell and Hazel Dickinson for representing our chapter at this annual fundraiser for SHADOW.

THE CROWD IS ENTERTAINED AT THE FROG FROLIC



Journal from Costa Rica...

cont'd from page 7

By Barbara Petersen

loud - takes one's breath away.

While I read, the storm left, the volcano is visible again, and the hot rocks start up at the top, not just at the spot I saw before dark, though it's the largest red spot. The rocks roll clear to the bottom, bouncing, breaking apart, leaving a trail of smaller hot rocks behind. Lots of activity from that biggest hot spot! When bigger rocks hit the bottom they explode until they can't any more and come to rest. They look just like red fireworks. It's now dark and easy to see with the naked eye. Cooler with the scope though, to see the rocks break and shatter. Oh, a knock on the door - good, I feel better, not so alone. That was Hansel, the guard, checking on the house after the storm. He didn't know I was staying here. He said the mountain has been erupting like this for nine days. Just think, if I had left today, I would have missed this.

Woohoo! Hugest one yet, double river of fire down the mountain. Wow! I'm going back and forth from my scope in the other room to my book. I don't think I can go to bed very early tonight with this show. It's 7:00 so I might get ready but, wow, what an experience! Hansel said he can hear it erupting but when I open the door I only hear water flowing (the stream next to the house). I should have walked up to the project with him to listen, but the insects are ignoring my "Off" and feasting on me as usual. I don't doubt I'm currently sporting 100 bites.

Quadruple river of fire, visible with the naked eye, holy cow! 7:40, I'm climbing into bed. Leaving the porch light on tonight, not sure why. Took my contacts out so will resist one last look at the volcano. Now I've truly seen Costa Rica!

Think globally...Act Locally

Native Plants...cont'd from page 6

Covington Creek: This is a nice, large nursery (intersection of Auburn/Black Diamond Rd. and Thomas Rd. in Auburn). Although it did not have as much variety in native plants as Herr Backyard and Minters Earlington, they did have a small, specially-marked native plant section, and we found many good ground-covers, trees, and shrubs, among them Oregon white oak, vine maple, huckleberry. They also appear to be environmentally aware and market such products as Ecoturf, a mixture of native clover, grasses, and wildflowers, offered as an alternative to lawn.

Weber's Nursery (17006 SE Wax Rd. in Covington) had an impressive selection of native trees—serviceberry, dogwood, and crab apple, among others—and we would recommend anyone looking for good trees to go here. There was quite slim pickings on other natives, although we did find a mock orange, a couple varieties of blueberries, an alpine columbine, viburnum, and red-flowering currant.

Big Dipper Farm: (26130 SE Green Valley Rd. in Black Diamond) We visited Big Dipper on a hot day in mid-July; several Western Tanagers were singing and calling from the trees, a nice bonus to visiting this nursery out in the country. Here, we found a limited number of natives, mostly standards such as serviceberry, Indian plum, Pacific ninebark, garry oak, dogwood, kinnikinnick, and vine maples. The staff person said they are in the process of “setting up a native plant area,” but that they don't want it to get too big or be to the exclusion of other plants; he believed that natives are “not very popular.”

Furneys: This huge, well-known nursery (21215 Pacific Highway So. in Des Moines) had so much stuff, it was

difficult for us to ferret out the natives, which were mixed-in with all the other plants and hard to find. We did locate yarrow, penstemon, hemlock, pulsatilla, elderberry, vine maple, dogwood, and some horticultural varieties of Oregon grape. We did not notice any particular interest in native plants in the over-all planning of this nursery.

GB&E (24004 SE 400th in Enumclaw) seemed to be a bit disorganized, with everything in a kind of hodge-podge; it was not easy to find the natives, but in and among all the stuff (including, unfortunately, English ivy and Himalayan blackberry) were maples, honeysuckle, spirea, columbine, sword fern, astilbe, sedums, Oregon grape, alpine hemlock, cattails and giant reeds, and Solomon's seal. We would advise visiting this nursery only if you know what you're looking for and have the time to



poke around. A nice side benefit to this nursery visit were the Cedar Waxwings and Goldfinches singing and flying among the plants.

Kelly Gardens (3909 So. 320th in Federal Way) does not show much interest in natives. Some kinnikinnick, Oregon grape, one or two dogwood trees, and some nice ground covers such as bunchberry and creeping raspberry. This nursery mostly stocks exotics such as bamboo, hydrangeas, and other non-native ornamentals.

Alpine Nursery (16023 SE 144th St. in Renton) is a nice little nursery, but did not have much in the way of native plants. The nursery attendant said natives are hard to get because they are so popular and in demand. Did have vine maple, serviceberry, red-flowering currant, two very droopy salal.

Annual Native Plant Sales

Another way to get native plants is to attend a Native Plant Sale. These are few and far between, but if you know when one is coming up and get it on your calendar, it can be a good way to get fresh, hearty plants and to get exactly what you want because you can order in advance.

Rainier Audubon's September Program, September 18, Monday, at 7:00 PM (see page 1): Native Plant Steward and owner of Green Man Gardens, Brett Johnson. Order plants in advance by calling Brett at (206) 232-5734, or (206) 819-9805, or sending him an email at bnbjohns@comcast.net.

Lake Wilderness Arboretum in Maple Valley holds an annual plant sale in the Fall on the second Friday/Saturday of September; this year, that is September 8-9. They also have one in the spring on Mothers Day weekend.

The Native Plant Society of Washington has a native plant sale scheduled through their Central Puget Sound Chapter at Magnuson Park in Seattle on October 14, 2006, from 10 AM to 4 PM.

King Conservation District has a once-a-year native plant sale in the late winter/early spring (January-February), but you will have to watch their website to find out when and what will be available, and to place an order: www.kingcd.org. Their phone number is (425) 277-5581 x 105.

Snohomish Conservation District also has a once-a-year native plant sale; theirs is the first week of March. Pre-sale brochures announcing what's available will be on their website (www.snohomishcd.org) or you can call (425) 335-5634 x 4.

Thurston Conservation District has an annual native plant sale which they call Parking Lot Sale Event. The next one is scheduled for Saturday, February 24, 2007, from noon to 4 pm at a location to be announced. Important note: Pre-orders will be accepted beginning October 1, 2006. For further details, contact Kathleen Whalen at kwhalen@thurstoncd.com or call 754-3588 x 114.

The Quizzical Owl

by *Thais Bock*



1. The national symbol of New Zealand is the flightless bird known as a _____.
2. Cryptic markings on some species, making them difficult to I.D., are often referred to as _____ patterns.
3. This waterbird's lower bill is longer than its upper bill.
4. Name the only tern with a yellow bill.
5. In the Rail family, what member can swim like a duck?

ANSWERS ARE UPSIDE DOWN BELOW

Foothills Trail: A Fall Migration Corridor

BY CHARLIE WRIGHT

The Foothills Trail near South Prairie may be one of our area's best places to observe passerine migration, or to add species to your Pierce County list — and with luck an unexpected rarity might pop up, too. It's also a good place to take visiting birders for Northwest specialties such as American Dipper, Red-breasted Sapsucker, and Varied Thrush. South Prairie Creek hosts one of the largest wild salmon runs in the region.

I first birded along the trail in 2001 and was impressed by the potential, but didn't go back with regularity until the fall of 2003. Since then, I've recorded nearly 160 species on a five-mile stretch of the trail. The rich growth along the trail and South Prairie Creek is very attractive to birds; a well-established plant community of red osier dogwood, Pacific willow, red alder, black cottonwood, Douglas fir, big-leaf maple, Sitka spruce, beaked hazelnut, and many others make for a great migrant stop-over.

Fall, in particular late August and September, is the most productive season for birding the trail. Consider these selected high counts from this time period: 51 Willow Flycatchers, 60

Warbling Vireos, 63 Swainson's Thrushes, 73 Orange-crowned Warblers, 67 Black-throated Gray Warblers, 83 Wilson's Warblers. Also occurring in smaller numbers are Cassin's Vireos, Townsend's, MacGillivray's and Hermit Warblers, Hammond's Flycatchers, Lazuli Buntings, Black-headed Grosbeaks, and many more. Turkey Vultures can be seen in good numbers, gradually moving down the ridges. The birding on some days can be astonishing, while on other days it is just "good."

Winter brings sparrows and a few more raptors, but birding is generally slow. There is usually a White-throated Sparrow somewhere along the trail throughout the winter months. Northern Pygmy-Owls descend into the alders along the trail in certain years, and seem most numerous in October. I have found Northern Saw-whet Owl twice; once at night in March and recently a roosting bird I was alerted to by kinglets.

If you can't or don't want to walk the whole trail, an alternative is to drive down South Prairie-Carbon River Road to the southwest. From South

Prairie, drive three miles until you get to a small gravel lot and metal gate on the right side of the road. You can park there and continue walking the trail. A man-made wetland was put in during August 2004. This spot has since been productive for shorebirds, especially Solitary Sandpipers from early August through late September,

and snipes nearly year-round. The mudflat habitat may become overgrown with dense plantings in the future, but we can hope that it stays open. Check the logs and snags for Green Herons. In fall and winter, the brush piles around the wet-

land are good for Lincoln's Sparrow, and have produced Swamp Sparrow.

The Foothills Trail can be a rewarding place to bird. Where else in western Washington can you see 500 migrant passerines on a fall morning?

Directions to the trail: Take Hwy 410 to Bonney Lake and take a right on South Prairie Road. After four miles, turn right on Pioneer Way (Hwy. 162) which will eventually take you into Puyallup. South Prairie lies just across the bridge, and the trailhead for the Foothills Trail is just after Rainier Ave. on the left.



PHOTO OF PYGMY OWL BY CHARLIE WRIGHT

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- Local birds and birding in general
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- Creating wildlife habitat in your backyard
- Information about Pacific Northwest native plants
- Local animal life
- Conservation and environmental issues
- Wildlife of other countries
- Photographing birds
- Egg and nest identification
- Other

2. What do you like or dislike about the Heron Herald newsletter? How can we improve it?

3. How do you think we can improve Rainier Audubon as an organization that is responsive to the needs of our community?

Thank you!

Please mail your completed survey to:

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P.O. Box 778
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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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 Check it out at our website: www.rainieraudubon.org

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PAWS Wildlife Center
 15305 - 44th Ave. West, Lynnwood (425) 787-2500

Sarvey Wildlife Center (360) 435-4817

FOR AN EXTENSIVE LIST OF WILDLIFE REHABILITATORS VISIT OUR CHAPTER WEB SITE
 AT <http://www.rainieraudubon.org/rehab.htm>

OTHER RESOURCES

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 Dept. of Fish and Wildlife (425) 775-1311
 Falcon Research Group (360) 757-1911
 King Conservation District (425) 277-5581 x120
 or fax . . . (425) 277-5588
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