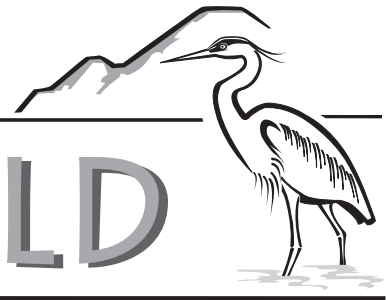


# THE HERON HERALD



Rainier Audubon Society

May 2010

Rainier Audubon Presents  
Monday May 17, at 7:00 PM

## OWLS OF WASHINGTON STATE with Mike Pratt



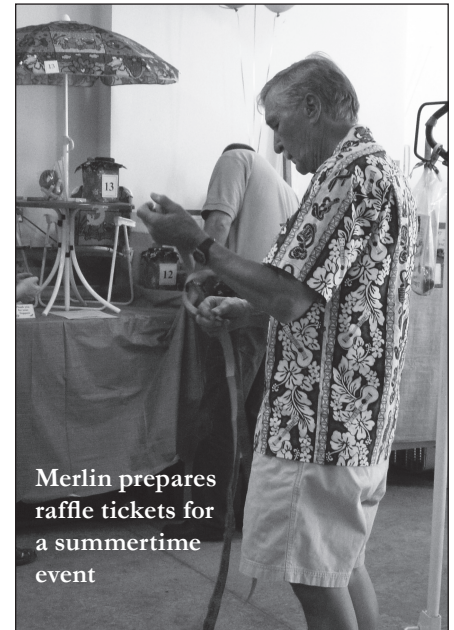
A very special guest will be making an appearance at our season-ending meeting. Orion, the Great Horned Owl, will be here to help answer questions about the owls of Washington! Accompanying Orion will be the “Owl Dude,” also known as Mike Pratt, director of Wildlife Services at West Sound Wildlife Shelter on Bainbridge Island. Mike, together with Orion (the shelter’s owl ambassador) will give a presentation about the owl species of Washington state that will include their adaptations and natural history.

Mike has over 20 years experience in wildlife rehabilitation and avian captive management. He began his life’s work with wildlife in 1989, specializing in birds of prey. He has extensive experience in training wildlife rehabilitators and bird handlers, performing public educational programs, and assisting the public with wildlife questions and problems. Mike served as Bird Curator and Trainer at the Vermont Raptor Center, and as Operations and Bird Husbandry Manager at World Bird Sanctuary in Missouri. Mike, a wildlife biologist who received his degree from Purdue University, is a licensed wildlife

rehabilitator and serves on the board of the Washington Wildlife Rehabilitation Association. Before entering the wildlife profession, Mike worked as a park ranger with the National Park Service.

Everyone is encouraged to attend this wonderful last-of-the-season program! Not only will you learn all about Washington state’s owls, but you will also have the opportunity to say hi to Orion!

As always, good conversation and refreshments available before, during, and following the program.



### Merlin Wiese, 1930 - 2010

Long-time Rainier Audubon member and volunteer Merlin Wiese passed away in early April at the age of 79. After losing his artist wife Marilyn in the mid-1990s, Merlin kept busy by helping out Rainier and Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge. For Rainier, he wrote a monthly column and served as Nestbox Coordinator, Membership Chair, and CBC participant. He was always the first to arrive before meetings and events to get things set up, and the last to leave, cleaning up and putting away chairs. At Nisqually, he worked the front desk, was a trail-rover, and was given his own space and computer for database management by the Nisqually staff. Merlin liked nothing better than being outdoors and having something useful to do. You could always count on him. He was an excellent birder and naturalist, beloved by many, and will be greatly missed.

Rainier Audubon programs are held at  
FEDERAL WAY UNITED METHODIST  
CHURCH

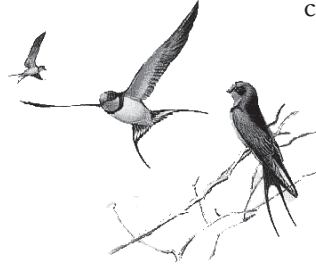
29645 - 51st Ave. So. 98001  
(in unincorporated Auburn)

#### Directions:

In Federal Way, take 320th St.  
EAST past The Commons,  
crossing over I-5 and Military Rd.  
At 321st St, turn left. Stay on 321st  
as it becomes 51st Ave. So. Follow  
51st Ave. to 296th. Church will be  
on your left.

## President's Message by Nancy Streiffert

The Violet-green Swallows are back! Putting away gardening tools after a day warm enough for shorts on April 11, I heard the distinctive chatter of several swallows and returned outside to see. A pair of swallows were churning up from a deep dive, powering their tiny wings so exuberantly that I anthropomorphized them doing a birdy version of the raised, clenched fist YES!!! As if they were exulting, saying, "WE MADE IT!" All the way from Mexico or wherever, over the Gulf of Mexico, through the storms, over newly developed, unrecognizable-now terrain, dodging hawks, resting only briefly, hurrying to get back to perhaps the same yard and garden where they had nested or perhaps been raised. No way to know that but it was a deeply moving moment for me, even if it was only an instinct-driven trip for them. We've had one or more successful broods raised in our swallow boxes every year since being introduced to the specially-designed boxes at a long ago Rainier meeting. One year we were lucky enough to witness the next generation's coming out party from the box on our east-facing front wall - this happens so quickly that, if you are not watching at the time, you suddenly realize there



is no more action at the nest box after a constant flurry just hours ago and now there isn't a swallow in sight. Over the course of maybe an hour, the four youngsters hopped out of the nest and onto the nearby horizontal section of gutter nearby. From there, they hopped to the roof. With parents cheering them on nervously (anthropomorphizing again!), three took off and flew to the apple trees and did little practice flights from there. The fourth dithered, maybe having second thoughts and took much coaxing and flying frantically back and forth by the parents before it joined the others and then they were gone. It's been a mystery to us where they disappear to since we don't see them around the yard or bug-filled pasture for several weeks after the young leave the nest.

I hope you are all enjoying the mysteries and the magnificence of migration, spring, old and new friends and all there is to enjoy in our environment. Be sure to come by our table at the Tukwila Wildlife Fair, May 8. It is a fun, family-friendly event with all kinds of outdoor exhibits and information and includes a bird walk along the Duwamish River by our own Carol Shultz. Volunteering to help staff our table is even more fun! Enjoy your spring and summer and see you next September!

### RAINIER AUDUBON OFFICERS

PRESIDENT-----	NANCY STREIFFERT-----	(253) 796-2203
VICE PRESIDENT-----	STEVE FELDMAN*-----	(360) 802-5211
TREASURER-----	JIM TOOLEY *-----	(253) 854-3070
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FIELD TRIP CHAIR-----	CAROL SCHULZ-----	(206) 824-7618
BACKYARD HABITAT CHAIR-----	CAROL STONER*-----	(253) 854-3207
MEMBERSHIP CHAIR-----	PAT TOTH*-----	(206) 767-4944
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BOARD MEMBER-----	MAX PRINSEN-----	(425) 432-9965
BOARD MEMBER-----	ERIN WOJEWODSKI-PRINSEN-----	(425) 432-9965

\*Also serves as Board member

**RAINIER AUDUBON SOCIETY**  
 PO Box 778. Auburn WA 98071. (253) 796-2203  
 website: [www.RainierAudubon.org](http://www.RainierAudubon.org)  
 email: [info@RainierAudubon.org](mailto:info@RainierAudubon.org)

## Field Trips — by Carol Schulz

### Capitol State Forest

Saturday, May 1

6:30 AM to Approx. 4:00 PM

Leader: Jeff Cohen

Co-Leader: Shep Thorp

This is the first time we have offered a field trip to Capitol State Forest, a 90,000-acre DNR area southwest of Olympia in the Black Hills. Join Jeff and Shep as we travel back roads to view specialty birds of the area. Target species will be warblers, including Hermit, Townsend's, Wilson's, MacGillivray's, and Black-throated Gray! We hope to see and hear Northern Pygmy Owl and returning flycatchers. We will seek out other species in the lowlands near saltwater before climbing to Capitol Peak, elev. 2,659 feet. Trip is limited to 10 people in three cars, so SIGN UP EARLY! We will carpool. High clearance vehicles are not required, but cars may get dusty on dirt and gravel roads. MEET: McDonalds near the Park & Ride at Hwy. 512 and I-5, at So. Tacoma Way south of Tacoma, at 6:30 AM. DIRECTIONS: Take I-5 to exit 127 south of Tacoma (Hwy. 512). Turn right, and immediately get in the left lane. Turn left on So. Tacoma Way, go half a block, and turn left into the Park & Ride. BRING: Lunch, drinks, snacks, clothes for weather at higher elevations, shoes or boots for walking on back roads. We probably won't walk far. Scopes not necessary, but may be useful at times. SIGN UP: Contact Jeff Cohen by email at kokobean2@hotmail.com or (206) 354-5542. Email is preferred.

### Snoqualmie Pass to Vantage

BIRDATHON Field Trip

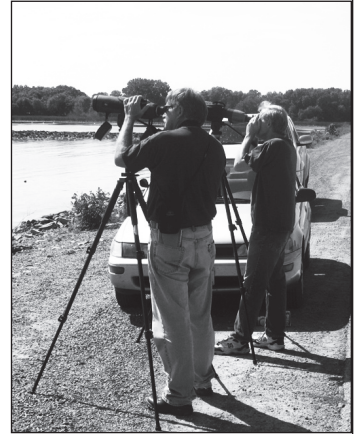
Saturday, May 15 — 6:00 AM to Evening

Leader: Jim Tooley

On this big eastern Washington trip, we will target as many bird species as possible at Snoqualmie Pass, Cle Elum, Teanaway, and Vantage. Sponsor Jim, get your own sponsors, or sponsor yourself to help out RAS Birdathon! This will also be an "accessible" trip for folks who can't walk far; most viewing will be near cars and along level roads. We will visit many stops where there are restrooms. After looking for songbirds at the Pass, we will head east along the I-90 corridor, looking for warblers, flycatchers, and dippers. In the Cle Elum area, we will seek out migrant songbirds. We will search for bluebirds and raptors near Teanaway, and stop at the Teanaway River bridge to look for swallows, ducks, dippers, and more songbirds. In the afternoon, we'll go down the old highway toward Vantage, watching for birds of the sagebrush country. We'll scope the Columbia River and its cliffs before heading for home in late afternoon. People doing Birdathon trips are invited, as we hope to get a large trip list! Non-Birdathoners are also welcome, but it is customary to sponsor the leader for \$5 or more. BRING: Warm clothes, lunch (maybe two), drinks, and plenty of snacks, insect repellent, and sunscreen.

MEET: Auburn Safeway at Auburn Ave. and Main St. Take Hwy. 18 to Auburn and exit at Auburn Ave. (Hwy. 164). Turn north (right) on Auburn Way and go three blocks. Safeway sign and gas station will be on your left. Park in the lot just beyond the gas station straight out from the right entry door at Safeway, before 6:00 AM. We will meet and carpool promptly at 6:00 from there.

SIGN UP: Call before 8:30 PM, 253-854-3070 or email Jim at [actjct@aol.com](mailto:actjct@aol.com).



### 10th Annual Tukwila Wildlife Festival

This year's Backyard Wildlife Festival will be on Saturday, May 8, celebrating its 10th anniversary, and followed by the very popular Certified Backyard Habitat Garden Tour at 3:00 PM. And in honor of the 10th year, the City will be dedicating its newest park and certified Backyard Wildlife Habitat – Codiga Park!

Brimming with activities, the Backyard Wildlife Festival inspires people to welcome wildlife into their backyards, gardens, and communities. The arts and crafts marketplace, educational talks, kids area, and the garden tour will return to delight attendees. In addition, the Guided Bird Tour with Rainier Audubon's Carol Schulz is back by popular demand. Website: [www.backyardwildlifefair.org](http://www.backyardwildlifefair.org)

More Field Trips on Next Page!

## Field Trips — by Carol Schulz

South King County in June  
Saturday, June 5  
8:00 AM to Early Afternoon  
Leader: Steve Johnson

In June, the summer birds should be on their territory near Auburn and in the beautiful Green Valley east of Auburn. We'll visit Emerald Downs areas, Academy Drive, Green Valley Road, and Flaming Geyser State Park (the primitive side). We may see and hear warblers, thrushes, Red-breasted Sapsuckers, Red-eyed Vireos, flycatchers, and more. We may walk up to two miles on trails and roads. People who bring their own cars and want to leave early may do so.

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

MEET: Auburn Safeway at Auburn Ave. and Main St. at 8:00 AM.

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

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

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

Weekly Bird Walks at Nisqually  
Wednesdays 8:00 AM to Noon  
Leader: Phil Kelley

Bird watching has been good at Nisqually. There is a NEW DIKE out past the Twin Barns. It is over half a mile long, and goes toward McAllister Creek, but not quite all the way to it.

Join Phil on his weekly bird walks as he counts the birds at Nisqually. The group walks over to the new area near the Visitors Center to view the entry road estuary, and then takes the boardwalk/trail loop out to the Twin Barns and the Nisqually River overlook area. From there, the group walks the new dike, and back to the riparian forest. The walk totals about two miles.

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

MEET: At the Visitors Center pond overlook.

DIRECTIONS: Take I-5 south from Tacoma and exit to Nisqually NWR (Exit 114). Take a right at the light.

SIGN-UP: Call or email Phil Kelley to confirm details. (360) 459-1499, scrubjay323@aol.com.



## Musings from Millie



Hello, once again and welcome back! Spring is here and although it's been rather chilly, many people are talking about the male goldfinches beginning to turn bright yellow and hearing the songs of the Bewick's Wren, White-crowned Sparrow and Red-winged Blackbirds.

Since it is nesting time for many birds, I thought I would share some information with you regarding some of our common songbirds and their nesting habits.

Black-capped Chickadees nest from April through July. A hole is excavated in rotten wood or an old woodpecker hole is filled with leaves, hair, moss, plant down and feathers. Chickadees are frequent users of nestboxes.

American Robins also nest from April through July. They build a nest of mud and grass usually in a tree but they have adapted so well to human settlement that they will also utilize a fence or a building to support their nest.

Another April through July nester is the Yellow Warbler. Yellow Warblers will nest in backyards if there are dense shrubs. They are also quite tame when building their nests and can be observed while they work. The female builds the nest using plant fibers, grasses, wool and moss and lines it with hair and cotton.

Red-winged Blackbirds nest from March through July. The nest is a loosely woven cup made of rush strands, moss and mud and is bound to the stems of cattails, rushes or other plants often in marshes and over water.

(continued on next page)

## Festivals and Fairs

Leavenworth Bird Festival  
Thursday-Sunday, May 13-16  
[www.leavenworthspringbirdfest.com](http://www.leavenworthspringbirdfest.com)

Four days of field trips and activities are offered at this superb spring festival. New offerings this year include pre-festival events on May 8 and 9. There will be owling trips, rafting trips, trips to the mountains, and to the sagebrush country. Last year, 152 species were seen! eight species of warbler, 11 of raptors, six of swallows, 10 of sparrow including Lark Sparrow, seven species of flycatchers, and much more! This is the birding festival to see migrants!

Tukwila Backyard Wildlife Festival  
Saturday, May 8  
*Bird walk in the park and along the  
Duwamish River — 9:45 to 10:45 AM*

A bird walk in the park and along the river will be offered during this Tukwila festival on Migratory Bird Day. Programs and activities will be presented by several groups including Rainier Audubon, Seattle Audubon, retail stores, and nature groups. This is a fun, local festival! Birdwalk starts near Rainier Audubon booth at 9:45. More info and directions at <http://backyardwildlifefair.org>

Wenas Campout  
Wenas Creek in Eastern WA  
Friday, May 28 - Monday, May 31  
Memorial Day Weekend

A trip to Wenas southwest of Ellensburg is sure to lead to a large bird list including bluebirds, White-headed Woodpecker, Calliope Hummingbird, warblers, and more. Some folks like to camp out, and some like to just visit for a day. Organized events include field trips, exploration, and campfire programs, starting Friday evening. Field trips will be led by advanced birders and naturalists. Many people enjoy hiking, botanizing, and birding on their own. This huge bird sanctuary and other habitats feature the special birds of the eastern Washington forests, lakes, mountains, and valleys. Bring your own water. Sanicans are provided.  
For more information, call Carol Schulz at (206) 824-7618 or email her at [Carol.Schulz50@gmail.com](mailto:Carol.Schulz50@gmail.com).  
MEET: At the camp. Road is rough. Drive last 10 miles slowly. You also can choose to stay at a motel in Ellensburg and drive into the camp for birding. It takes about an hour to travel on the gravel road from Ellensburg.

[www.wenasaudubon.org](http://www.wenasaudubon.org)

## Musings from Millie (continued)

March through August is the nesting time for the House Finch. They build a nest of grasses, leaves, twigs, string, wool and other odds and ends in a tree, cavity or an abandoned nest. House Finches will use standard nest boxes.

The American Goldfinch is one of the last birds to nest. They nest from June through September. Loose colonies of American Goldfinches will nest in bushes or trees. The nest cups are sometimes so tightly woven that they can hold water! The nest is often lined with thistle down which correlates with the fact that their favorite food during breeding time is nyjer thistle.

Although they are not songbirds, the Osprey and the Belted Kingfisher have interesting nesting habits.

Osprey nest near fresh or saltwater. The nests may be near the ground or up to sixty feet high on trees, poles and recently, cell phone towers. The nest is constructed of very large and small sticks and lined with bark, sod, seaweed and grass.

The Belted Kingfisher excavates a burrow in a bank of a river, lake or gravel quarry. It has even been known to use abandoned rabbit holes. The burrows are usually three to six feet deep but some nesting holes can extend up to fifteen feet!

All of this talk about nesting has made me feel all warm and cozy. I think it's time to curl up for a nap! Before I drift off to dreamland, however, I'll leave you with a few more words that describe groups of birds: a FLIGHT of swallows, a TRIMMING of finches and a CAST of falcons.

Until next time,

*Millie, the Muse of News*

### Rainier Audubon Takes a Summer Break

There will be no programs or newsletters in June, July, or August, but we will be back in September. We hope all our members have a wonderful summer!





Rainier Audubon Society  
PO Box 778  
Auburn, WA 98071

Nonprofit Organization  
U.S. Postage Paid  
Kent, WA 98031  
Permit No. 441

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

## Rainier Audubon Membership Subscription or Renewal Form

One-year Membership in Rainier Audubon — \$15

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

Rainier Audubon Society - Membership

PO Box 778

Auburn, WA 98071

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_