

The

Heron Herald



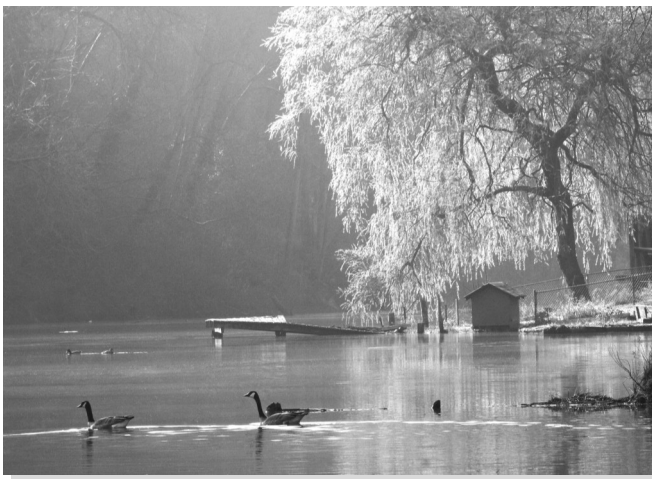
Rainier Audubon Society

November 2011

November General Membership Meeting
Monday November 21, 2011 7:00 p.m.
Federal Way United Methodist Church

Seasons of Change at Fenwick

Jay Galvin



Jay Galvin is a member of the Rainier Chapter of the Audubon Society and has visited Lake Fenwick weekly for the past several years. Armed with his trusty camera, Jay has been documenting the interaction of flora and fauna through its lens.

Jay's philosophy, partially borrowed from Thoreau, is that to fully understand nature one must study it on a continual basis. Lake Fenwick is unique in that a majority of the lake is sparsely populated and left relatively free from the hand of man. This allows for Mother Nature to "Do her thing" with minimal impact.

This is not to say that Lake Fenwick is not affected by man's actions, as Jay will show. On the contrary, Fenwick is reaching a crossroads as are other lakes in the Puget Sound area. It is because of this that Mr. Galvin is finding a purpose to the photographs that he is taking. His hope is that through education and awareness we can understand the need to protect and cherish these "Walden Ponds" in our midst.

The slides Jay has chosen will show Lake Fenwick and its different faces revealed through the changing seasons. Jay will also touch on the ecology and continuing efforts to protect the lake by the City of Kent and various action groups.

Jay has been photographing nature over 7 years, mostly in the Puget Sound area, and has permanent exhibits of his works in Enumclaw and SeaTac as well as businesses in our area.



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.



November is our annual "**Brown Bag Auction.**"

This is the perfect opportunity to possibly pick up some stocking stuffers while supporting your local Audubon. Refreshments and conversation will be available before, during and following the program.

RAS Mission Statement

To conserve and restore natural ecosystems and protect birds and other wildlife for the benefit of humanity and biological diversity in South King County and the world we live in.

President's Message by ???

Rainier Audubon's Christmas Bird Count

Nancy Streiffert

The RAS CBC will be Jan 1, 2012. Our 10 expert leaders will take novice and experienced birders out at dawn to scour the woods, fields and waterways, counting all the birds they see until dark. Other counters can contribute more valuable bird information by counting birds in their own backyard from the warmth and comfort of home! All this information will be compiled by Mark Freeland and sent to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology to add to their enormous database. The database is used by wildlife managers, conservationists, wind and water energy system planners and many other people who need reliable statistics on bird populations and population trends. This amount of information could not reasonably be

gathered except by volunteer citizen scientists – that's YOU! Please join us.

See Nancy Streiffert by our count circle map at the October, November and December meetings or call [253-796-2203](tel:253-796-2203) or email nancy_streiffert@hotmail.com

HELP!

After the count, we gather to discuss our findings and warm up with a potluck dinner where Charlie Wright compiles an informal list of sightings. We usually have the potluck at our usual meeting place but this year, due to the date, that space is unavailable. **We are currently looking for a space to meet.** Contact Nancy if you know of a free or relatively inexpensive place to hold the potluck or a restaurant that would let us use a room without signing up for complete catering. Thanks. Nancy

RAINIER AUDUBON OFFICERS		
President	Open	
Vice President	Steve Feldman*	360-802-5211
Treasurer	Jim Tooley*	253-854-3070
Secretary	Heather Gibson*	253-856-9812
Program Chair	Dale Meland*	253-946-1637
Field Trip Chair	Carol Schulz	206-824-7618
Membership Chair	Pat Toth*	206-767-4944
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Conservation Chair	Dan Streiffert*	253-796-2203
Mailing Chair	Debra Russel	425-271-0682
Hospitality	Sandra Embry	
Newsletter Editor	Dan Streiffert	253-796-2203
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Ivy Eradication Coordinator	Bernedine Lund	253-839-3729
Education Chair	Annette Tabor*	253-927-3208
Christmas Bird Count Coordinator	Nancy Streiffert	253-796-2203
Board Member	Max Prinsen*	425-432-9965
Board Member	Erin Wojewodski-Prinsen*	425-432-9965
Board Member	Alex Juchems*	253-529-8996
Publicity	Tom Sernka	253-529-8970
*Also serves as Board Member.		
Board meetings are held the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 6:30 PM in the church conference room and are open to all members.		

Upcoming Events

- Brown Bag Auction—Nov. 21, 2011—
- December Cookie Exchange—Dec. 19, 2011 - Contact Lori Robertson (loriusa@yahoo.com)
- Christmas Bird Count— Jan. 1, 2012—Contact Nancy Streiffert or Lori Robertson)

Sign up for our new Google Group!

We have recently created a new group to serve as an email list server for Rainier Audubon. The intent of this site is to assist in publicizing our activities members and the general public relating to our club activities. Anyone may join or leave the group at any time. You may sign up on our website or at:

<http://groups.google.com/group/ras-activities?hl=en>

Seen and Heard by Calen Randall



Nine months without fall, one can sure forget a lot about it: the elusive dew that hides on the underside of the grass, only to soak your shoes when you are halfway through the field with no quick escape; the rapidly balding trees; the days shrinking; and the cold setting in. It's hard not to be jealous of the bears that can curl up and hibernate. Though everything may seem to be sleeping or dying in fall, there's hope—the abundance of birds that are filling our neighborhoods!

When I look into my backyard, it looks like an Avian Thanksgiving. The Northern Flickers and Robins are busy gobbling up the Mountain Ash berries. The Spotted Towhees scratching and pecking through the brush and leaves. The Ruby Crowned Kinglets zipping through the pine tree drive-thru. All are entertained by the antics of the Black-capped Chickadees. When I watch these birds, I wonder where they have spent their summer and whether my backyard is where they will call home for fall and winter. The V formations overhead are a reminder that many of our friends are on their journey south. I wonder, what are all of our Rainier Audubon members seeing?

What's been *Seen and Heard* this month?

This month I've received one report from Debi Kraft. Thank you, Debi. Rather than tell you what she saw, I've decided to have you guess what was seen/heard on Lake Easter on Oct. 1. Here are a few clues:

Bird 1

- I have lobes, but not on my ears.
- I like to move at night, but you'll rarely see me in flight.
- A collective group of me is known as 'a water dance'.
- I'm not horned or eared, red-necked, and certainly not least or opposite of east.
- Do you know who I am?

Bird 2

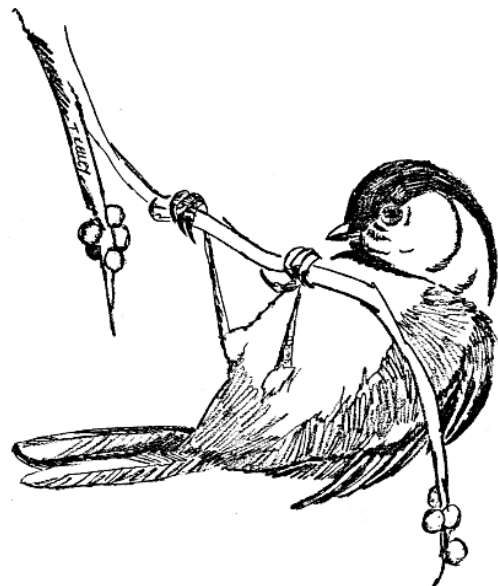
Some say I'm a water chicken, but I'm not afraid of water--only eagles.

- My cousin is a train track,
- And a collection of me is 'a commotion'.
- I, too, have lobes.
- I'm one of America's birds.
- Do you know who I am?

Answers at bottom of the page.

This month's challenge

Definitely we can get more than one report for the *Seen & Heard*. I think our goal for next month should be to **get a report from every member**. I love hearing about birds! Report your sightings to Calen calenbirds@hotmail.com



Bio: Calen is a 12 year old birder. He enjoys birding around Lake Fenwick and Boeing Ponds—especially with Charlie Wright. Calen is thrilled to revive Charlie's 'Seen and Heard'. When not birding, Calen can be seen flying up and down the ice at Kent Valley Ice Center.



Field Trips by Carol Schulz

Weekly Birdwalks at Nisqually

Wednesdays 8:00 am to Noon
Leader: Phil Kelley

Join Phil Kelley on his weekly bird walks as he counts the birds at Nisqually NWR. The group walks over to an area near the visitor's center to view the entry road estuary, and then takes the boardwalk/trail loop out to the Twin Barns, and the Nisqually overlook area. From there, the group walks the dike, and back to the Riparian Forest.

Some may choose to continue on the new estuary boardwalk extension which goes out toward the mouth of McAlister Creek. It has benches and covered viewing areas. The walk totals 2.0 miles roundtrip to the

estuary boardwalk extension. In winter the estuary boardwalk will add an additional 1 3/4 miles total, so the whole walk including the boardwalk extension is up to 3 3/4 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 Visitor's Center Pond Overlook.

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

Sign-up is not necessary. Call or email Phil Kelley, Lacey, [\(360\) 459-1499](tel:3604591499), scrubjay323@aol.com.

East Lake Washington Parks and Trails

(After Thanksgiving "Walk-Off-The-Calories" trip)
Saturday, November 26, 2011
8:30 AM to Mid Afternoon
Leader: Carol Schulz

The Saturday after Thanksgiving will be a great time to visit parks on the Eastside. Several parks along the shores of east Lake Washington should offer good viewing and close looks at many bird species. We will start at Newcastle

Park, and then travel north to Juanita Bay Park, and the newly-restored Juanita Beach Park. Some folks call this our "Diet Trip". We will walk up to 2 miles on paved and unpaved trails. Newcastle

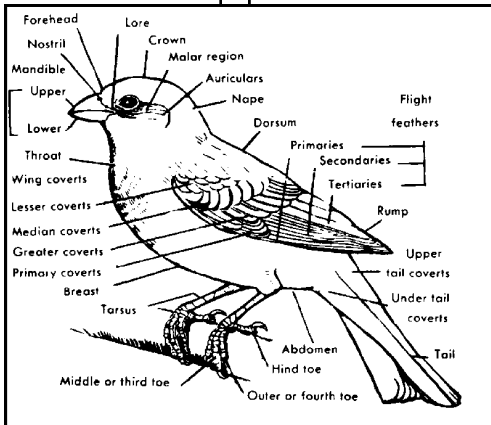
Park north of Renton and the parks in north Kirkland should offer excellent birding this time of year. We will be looking for eagles and hawks, dabbling and diving ducks, geese, woodpeckers, songbirds, and more.

Bring: Warm clothes, lunch (turkey sandwiches?), hot drinks, snacks, and water. Scopes are welcome.

Meet: 8:30 AM at the Newcastle P&R. (People who wish to leave early may bring their own cars.)

Directions: Take I-405 to exit 9 north of Renton. Turn right 1/2 block, and then left into the P&R. Do NOT drive straight ahead onto the highway on-ramp.

Sign-Up: E-mail or call Carol Schulz, [206-824-7618](tel:2068247618), carol.schulz50@gmail.com
E-mail is preferred.



Kittitas County Birding in Winter

Sunday, December 4, 2011
6:30am to evening
Co-Leaders - Charlie Wright and Roger Orness

Come enjoy a day of winter-season birding in central Washington. We will venture over Snoqualmie Pass and visit areas including Swauk Prairie and South Cle Elum along our route. Large numbers of raptors including Rough-legged Hawks and Prairie Falcons are seen wintering in the open, snow-covered fields of Kittitas. Proceeding east we will reach the Columbia River at Vantage, where waterfowl are sometimes present in vast numbers. Some target species will include unusual loons, ducks, American White Pelicans, and possibly rare gulls. Chukar are occasionally seen in the basalt outcroppings here.

Bring: Bring many layers of clothing for cold weather conditions, a lunch, and snacks. Scopes are welcome. Space is limited.

Meet: At 6:30am at Auburn Safeway at Auburn Way and Main St. Take Hwy. 18 to Auburn and exit at Auburn Way. (Hwy 164). Turn north (right) on Auburn Way and drive three blocks north. Safeway sign and gas station will be on the left. Park in the Safeway lot just beyond the gas station and straight out from the Safeway door. We will meet and carpool (promptly) from there.

Sign-up: Contact Roger Orness, r.orness@comcast.net, [253-922-7516](tel:2539227516). E-mail is preferred.

Fun Facts About Chickadees

Reprint Courtesy of Wild Birds Unlimited, Burien

- Chickadees usually mate for life.

- Only about 20% of the Black-capped's daily energy intake comes from feeders, and about half of the overall winter diet is made up of such animal matter as spiders, dormant insects, and even carrion.



- Mountain Chickadees are mainly foliage gleaners, searching for spiders and larvae at the tips of branches.

- In early summer, Mountain Chickadees are able to find and use seeds they hid during the previous autumn.

- Chestnut-backed and Black-capped chickadees keep an eye on the food-finding success of other individuals, if one bird is doing especially well; they adapt their behavior, whereas unproductive tactics are not copied.

- Boreal Chickadee is rarely seen at feeders except in Alaska and Canada.

- The Boreal commonly chooses cache sites on the underside of branches, perhaps because snow covers upper surfaces.

- Chickadees are found across much of North America. The more common species include the Black-capped, Carolina and Mountain Chickadees.

- Chickadees are easily identified by their namesake call "chick-a-dee."

- They are a favorite feeder bird for many and really enjoy sunflower seeds.

- They are inquisitive and found in wooded areas.

- The Black-capped generally sings out a "fee-bee" call while the Carolina sings "fee-bee fee-bay;" however, this song is learned and, in overlapping territories, may be learned from the "wrong" bird.



- Chickadee's wing beats are about 27 times per second. This compares to a hummingbird's 80 beats per second.

- They are cavity nesters. They will excavate their own nest site

in a rotten or decaying wood, use an old woodpecker hole or use a nesting box. (Mountain chickadee may not excavate its own hole and will nest under rock in a bank or in a hole in the ground.) They add a cozy nest on a moss base.

- Usually lay 6–8 white eggs with a light reddish-brown speckling.
- They hatch in about 12 days and fledge about 21 days later.
- Research has shown that while Chickadees are regular visitors to feeders, over 75 to 80 percent of their winter food supply still comes from natural sources.

- When the temperature falls below 10 degrees, research has shown that the survival rate of chickadees almost doubled when they had access to feeders, this resulted in an overall higher winter survival rate of 69% versus a 37% survival rate for populations without access to feeders.

- Have you noticed how ravenously the birds eat at your bird feeders, especially first thing in the morning and just before dusk? Chickadees can gain as much as 10 percent of their body weight each day and lose it all again during a cold winter night.

- Chickadees are a tough little bird that do not migrate. During cold weather Chickadees have been found to need twenty times more food than they do in summer.



- They like to eat seeds, suet and even coconut.

- Chickadees weigh less than one-half of an ounce.

- The oldest banded Black-capped Chickadee recaptured in the wild had lived 12 years and 5 months.

- The oldest banded Carolina Chickadee recaptured in the wild had lived 10 years and 11 months.

- The oldest banded Mountain Chickadee recaptured in the wild had lived 10 years and 1 month.

- The Black-capped Chickadee is the state bird of Massachusetts and Maine.

Great Washington State Birding Trail Program Report

by Christie Norman

The Final Map - Thank you Rainier AS!

- 8 chapters Eastside, Kitsap, Rainier, San Juan, Seattle, Tahoma, Vashon-Maury, Whidbey, and a cameo by Pilchuck Audubon.
- Secrets new places- Sunrise at Mt. Rainier Nat'l Park: hidden coves -Penrose State Park & Possession State Park, new: Foothills Snoqualmie Valley Trail; Soos Creek Trails-
- Don't need a car- Bird By foot - 21 sites by bus in 4 counties - by ferry, and by boat-paddle to 13 Cascadia Marine Trail sites The Puget Loop alone has
- 29 cooperating landowners with 21,431 acres of wildlife habitat,
- 62 volunteers who have contributed over 1,300 hours;
- and six Puget Sound tourism and visitor bureaus.
- 5 newspaper articles, cover story in Seattle Times, plus 12 Top Spots in Seattle Times Environmental Lobby Day Roll-out January 25, 2012 Olympia WA
- Partnering with People for Puget Sound.
- Map unveiling will kick off the Environmental Lobby Day plenary -with live birds and Governor Gregoire is invited as honoree, Puget Sound legislators Audience of 400+.

Chapter Involvement—Your contributions

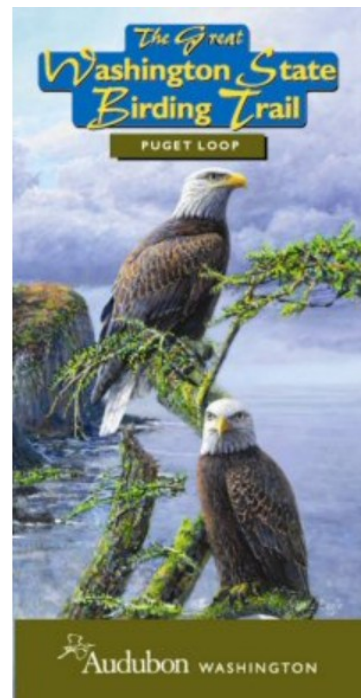
- Helped launch one birding trail blog, streamlining birding trail website with news, featured birds, and links to related sites. Assist 5 chapters for policy positions; Assist Lobbyist Neil Beaver in legislature for resource agencies.
- **ROI on chapter contributions-2:1**
Doubled your contributions because we could show your chapter commitment to funders. Applied for 12 grants and your match made awards possible. Chapter commitment is critical when approaching individual donors and corporations for financial support. Your volunteer time = \$24,000 of in-kind

donations. Conservation on the Trail

- The TogetherGreen alliance between National Audubon Society and Toyota Corporation, largest grant ever to Audubon-\$20 million. It funds volunteer restoration and innovative conservation. Aud WA, Yakima, Spokane AS, Yakima & Kalispel Tribes. The Birding Trail citizen-science project resulted in conservation outcomes addressing IBAs, climate change, education and racial and cultural diversity. Audubon reached beyond our usual to Native American/Latino youth in citizen-science field studies. Scientific data gathered by **40 students and 33 chapter volunteers during 1048 field hours** resulted in Tribal conservation plan to **protect 1,350 acres** of Important Bird Area grassland birds when Yakama Nation Bobolink approved Bobolink Management Plan 2011.

The Path Forward

- **Keep Birding Trail Committees active.**
Install signs on 376 Birding Trail sites - finish June 2012. We will be working with all your chapters to install and have ribbon-cutting ceremonies statewide. This is final task funded by the Birding Trail grant
- Promote map with Tourism groups/press/ as funding is available.
- Convert paper maps into electronic media- iPhone app, iBook, iPad, TV (Nikon 's Birding



Adventures- James Currie), social media -in July 2012 onward.

- **Stewardship and Enhancements** As prescribed by our Birding Trail plan- The future of the Birding Trail is to work to expand TogetherGreen type partnership to include specific bird species and habitats as we find funders and willing partners around the state.
- The next step is to marry our Birding Trail conservation with the National Audubon Strategic Plan.



Birding Trail's Puget Loop Debuts for Holidays

Delight your favorite birders this holiday season with the newest – the seventh and final – map of the Great Washington State Birding Trail: the Puget Loop. Hot off the press Thanksgiving weekend, this signature route features 220 of our 346 annually recorded bird species around Puget Sound from Seattle to Mt. Rainier, plus Lake Washington, Kitsap Peninsula; and Vashon, Bainbridge, Whidbey and San Juan islands. .

On Sale at our December 19 Membership Meeting for \$4.95. All proceeds go to Rainier Audubon.





Mewsings from Millie

Hello and thank you for visiting my musings once again! Many years ago, a former co-worker told one of my people that if you say, "White rabbit, white rabbit, white rabbit" in the morning on the first day of each month before you say anything else, it will bring you good luck for the month. She thought it couldn't hurt and has been doing so ever since. Well, I was listening to Classic King FM on the last day of the month when the deejay came on and said, "Tomorrow's white rabbit day!" I couldn't believe my ears! Although no one knows for sure of its origin, it is an old superstition grounded in folklore. But enough about that. I have many interesting tidbits to share with you this month. Do you know the difference between a bird call and a bird song? Bird calls are usually short and simple. Calls serve a specific purpose such as sounding an alarm or contact between flock members to indicate location. Bird calls are innate meaning birds don't need to learn them and both male and female birds call. Bird songs are long and complex. They are most prevalent among passerines which is why they are called songbirds. Songs are generally learned and only the male sings dur-

ing courting and breeding. Purposes of bird songs are identification of the singer, proclaiming territory, warning other males to stay out of the territory and inviting females in. Bills and beaks are also different. A bill is used for catching things. Wading birds catch fish with their bills, flycatchers catch insects with their bills, seed and fruit-eating birds "catch" seeds and berries with their bills. A beak is used to tear things apart. Hawks, eagles and owls catch prey with their talons and then tear it apart with their beaks. Vultures use their beaks to tear carrion apart. Do you know what else I learned about vultures? Black and Turkey Vultures are not raptors. The word "raptor" comes from the Latin "rapere" which means to seize and carry away. Raptors grab their prey with their feet and carry it away. Vultures do not kill with talons so they are not considered to be raptors. Every once in a while, while I'm napping, I come very close to falling off the counter. Why don't birds fall off their perches when they are sleeping? Birds have tendons that pass from the muscle in the back of the bird's leg down around the back of its ankle (birds have ankles?!) to the inside of its toes. When a bird settles on a branch, the legs bend and the tendon automatically tightens causing the toes to be pulled tightly and clamp around the perch. All conscious actions are bypassed making it impossible for the bird to fall off even when it's sleeping. When the bird straightens its legs, the tendon relaxes and the grasp is released. When it rains around here, we may wish we were ducks! Ducks feathers are extremely waterproof as a result of intricate feather structure

and a waxy coating that is spread during preening. Our web-footed friends are so waterproof that when they dive underwater the downy underlayer of feathers remains dry. Move over Gortex!

Pelicans are very special. There are seven species of pelicans on the planet two of which live in North America: the White Pelican and the Brown Pelican. The Brown Pelican is extra special for a couple of reasons. Number one, it is the only known species that dives head first from the sky into the water to catch fish and number two, during non-breeding season the Brown Pelican's eyes have brown irises. During breeding season the irises change to a creamy white and no one knows why!

Another bird that has a unique characteristic is the Snowy Egret. The Snowy Egret uses a hunting technique called "foot-raking" or "foot-stirring". It flies over the water dragging its feet on the surface. Fish scatter because of its shadow and the movement of the water. The egret stabs down while flying to catch a fish and returns to its perch to eat.

Speaking of eating, I think it's time for a snack. I'll leave you with this final word to muse about: What bird will never, ever glide or soar? A hummingbird, of course!

Until next time,

Millie
The Muse of Mews



Rainier Audubon Society
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"If you're not livin' on the edge, you're takin' up too much space."
 - Anon.

Rainier Audubon Membership Subscription or Renewal Form

One-year Membership in Rainier Audubon

- ◆ \$20—Individual Membership
- ◆ \$25—Family Membership

To join or renew, mail this application with your payment to:
 Rainier Audubon Society - Membership
 PO Box 778
 Auburn, WA 98071



Or go to <http://www.rainieraudubon.org/> to enroll online.

Name: _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

RAS Chapter membership includes 9 issues of the Heron Herald annually but does not include AUDUBON magazine.