

The Heron Herald



Rainier Audubon Society

April 2018

Rainier Audubon Membership Meeting

“Birds and Climate Change”

By Dr. Trina Bayard & Ben Silesky
Audubon Washington
7:00 P.M. April 16, 2018



Can you imagine winter birding at wetlands without American Wigeon, or lowland forests without the flutelike song of the Varied Thrush? According to a recent study by National Audubon Society, climate change threatens nearly half the bird species in the continental United States and Canada, including dozens of iconic birds like the Common Loon, Baltimore Oriole and Brown Pelican. **At a local level, the data pinpoint 113 “climate-endangered” bird species that occur in Washington state that may lose 50% or more of their existing range by 2050**, according to the projections. Washington species such as the Rufous Hummingbird, Bald Eagle and even the currently abundant Mallard could lose as much as 75% of their existing range, threatening their long-term survival.

Come join Audubon Washington’s Director of Bird Conservation, Trina Bayard, and Field Organizer Ben Silesky, to learn more about what climate change projections mean for the bird life of our region and how you can take action to protect the places on the ground that we know birds will need today and in the future, and work together to reduce the severity of global warming. Together we can build a roadmap to a better future for birds and for ourselves.

As director of bird conservation at Audubon Washington, Trina works to advance the conservation of resident and migratory birds in Washington state through a combination of science, policy and advocacy efforts. Current interests include bridging the urban-rural divide and working to find shared values and solutions with private landowners. Trina earned her PhD in Ecology at the University of Connecticut studying habitat selection behavior in saltmarsh sparrows. Her background includes a diverse range of avian and wildlife studies within the public, private, and academic sectors, with a particular focus on coastal bird species. Trina has lifelong Washington roots and is passionate about preserving the natural world in our state.

Ben is focused on bringing Audubon’s climate advocacy forward through community engagement, grassroots mobilization, and chapter capacity building. He has been a campaign organizer for Carbon Washington, the ACLU, and the Southern Poverty Law Center. Ben has a BA in Communication and Political Culture from the Johnston Center for Integrative Studies at the University of Redlands. He is passionate about strengthening the civic advocacy of the Audubon network in Washington by empowering members to make a difference in their community whether it be coalition building, using new outreach tools, or leadership development. He was born and raised in the Pacific Northwest where his love for the outdoors and political action was nurtured early on.

Rainier Audubon programs are held at 7:00 P.M. at the
Federal Way United Methodist Church
29645 - 51st Ave. So. 98001
(in unincorporated Auburn)

New Rainier Audubon Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/rainieraudubonsociety/>

New Rainier Audubon Google Group / email list

We are combining the old Rainier Leaders email list with the ras-activities list into a new RainierAudubon google group.

The [ras-activities] group has been renamed to [RainierAudubon]. So if you were previously a member of this list, then you are still a member of the renamed group. The only difference being that when you send an email to this group, the address is RainierAudubon@googlegroups.com

If you did not get an invitation, you may request to join the group by going to groups.google.com and searching for "Rainier Audubon". You can then request to join the group.

Alternatively, you can sign up on the RainierAudubon.org website.

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.

Upcoming Programs Dale Meland

- May 2018 - "Bees and Wing Nut Honey" by Emmy Scharnberg

Rainier Audubon Society Directory

| Position | Name | Board Member | Phone | email |
|------------------------|--------------------|--------------|--------------|--|
| President | Heather Gibson | Yes | 206-226-2050 | hedder_swedder@yahoo.com |
| Vice President | Jay Galvin | Yes | 253-939-3094 | gjgalvin@comcast.net |
| Secretary | Open | | | |
| Treasurer | Laura Lavington | Yes | 253-941-7372 | laura.lavington@gmail.com |
| Membership Chair | Pat Toth | Yes | 206-767-4944 | h2opat@msn.com |
| Education Chair | Cindy Flanagan | Yes | 253-941-3933 | camcalcin@hotmail.com |
| Program Chair | Dale Meland | No | 253-946-1637 | dmeland@hotmail.com |
| Field Trip Chair | Barbara Petersen | Yes | 253 389 3204 | bpbatfan@aol.com |
| Publicity Chair | Jay Galvin | Yes | 253-939-3094 | gjgalvin@comcast.net |
| Backyard Habitat Chair | Marie West-Johnson | Yes | 206-817-8754 | crgrie123@yahoo.com |
| Conservation Chair | Dan Streiffert | No | 253-796-2203 | dan_streiffert@hotmail.com |
| Newsletter Editor | Dan Streiffert | No | 253-796-2203 | dan_streiffert@hotmail.com |
| Webmaster | Treesa Hertzell | No | 253-255-1808 | Autumn207@comcast.net |
| Member at Large | Stephen Feldman | Yes | 360-802-5211 | stephanfeldman@gmail.com |
| Hospitality | Sandra Embrey | No | 253-517-3633 | sandra.embrey@gmail.com |
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| Lifetime Members | Max Prinsen | Yes | 425-432-9965 | |

Seen & Heard by Calen Randall



When a gull flies overhead, what immediately comes to mind? Often it can be easy to categorize the gull as a Glaucous-winged or spot a uniform flock of Mew Gulls, but did you know that the Puget Sound is home to nine regular species of gulls? Some of those nine species are year-round regulars while others are seasonal visitors, like our wintering Iceland Gulls and summering Heerman's Gulls. In addition to the regulars, the Puget Sound is also frequented by a rarity of gull species and features a blend of hybrid gulls like the "Olympic Gull" (Western x Glaucous-winged hybrid). With such a range of gulls in the area, it can be a daunting task to identify just the adults of the common species. Here are a few tips to differentiating between our local species of gulls.

When looking at a mixed flock of gulls or identifying a gull flying past, often it is easiest to remember a few defining characteristics to tell them apart. For example, Glaucous-winged Gulls are easily our most prevalent gull, but what makes them so easy to identify? A likely tell-tale characteristic is their wings are devoid of any black colouration. When you spot an adult gull without any black on its wings, you can almost instantly confirm it as a Glaucous-winged. This characteristic is especially helpful as you can use it to identify both standing and flying gulls. For fun, the next time you come upon a large flock of gulls, scan through and see if you can pick out the gulls with black primary feathers and the Glaucous-wings.

Looking for black on the wings applies to Glaucous-wings, but how can you discern between two gulls with black primaries like a Mew Gull and a Bonaparte's Gull? Once again, the black primaries clue is helpful as certain gull species have differences in how far the black feathers extend and the patterns of those black feathers. Usually these differences are noticeable in flight. In the case of a Mew

Gull, you can often spot large white patches spread around their black tipped wings. In contrast, a Bonaparte's

Gull is easily identifiable by a long black stripe along the primaries which is distinct enough that it looks as though someone outlined its wings with a sharpie pen. This line especially stands out against the pure white undersides of the Bonaparte's. Other helpful patterns include those of the California Gull, whose black wings tips extend much further up their wing, giving the impression as though it just dipped its wings in an ink jar. To practice, check out some photos of the different gull species in flight and see if you start to notice some patterns of their black primary feathers.

Another defining characteristic to use is the colour of a gull's legs. In the Puget Sound, our common gulls are split between pink-legged adult gulls and yellow-legged adult gulls, so the trait is useful in narrowing down species. Thankfully, Heerman's Gulls make it easy for us to identify; they are the only Puget Sound regular whose feet are jet black. Beware, using leg colour can be misleading if the gull you are staring down is immature. Nearly all immature gulls sport dark or pink legs, including the yellow-legged species. Identifying immature species is another challenge unto itself, so often it is easier to note the adult species in the area before analyzing immature birds.

Beyond the dark patches on a gull's wings and the colour of its legs, specific defining characteristics are very useful in gull identification. Rather than list a run of features to watch for, here is a chart of the nine gull species in the Puget Sound area matched with their helpful defining characteristics. Good luck on your gulling endeavors!



Glaucous-winged Gull

- Glaucous-winged Gull
Pink legs, no black wing tips, streaking on head and neck, red dot on bill
- California Gull
Yellow legs, long black tips on wings, streaks on neck, one red dot and one black dot on bill
- Ring-billed Gull
Yellow legs, white spot on black tips, streaking on head, black ring on bill
- Mew Gull
Yellow legs, white patches on wing tips, streaking on head and neck, small
- Bonaparte's Gull
Pink legs, black line on wing, dark head in summer, dark ear spot in winter
- Herring Gull
Pink legs, thin black wing tips, lots of streaking on head and neck, pale iris
- Western Gull
Pink legs, black wings tips on dark grey wings, very little streaking, large, red dot on bill
- Iceland Gull
Pink legs, faint black wing tips, lots of streaking on head and neck, dark iris
- Heerman's Gull
Black legs, dark grey body, black wings, bright red bill, white head

(Continued on [page 5](#))

Calen is an 19 year old birder entering his seventh year writing the Seen and Heard. Currently attending the University of Washington, Calen enjoys birding in the South King County and coastal British Columbia region.

Field Trips - Barbara Petersen



Weekly Birdwalks at Nisqually

Wednesdays 8 am to 11 am
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.

Bring: Good walking shoes or boots, rain gear, 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 if you have questions. Phil Kelley, Lacey, (360) 459 1499, scrubjay323@aol.com

Sunday, April 8th, 2018
8:30 AM to 12:30 PM

Duwamish River

Leader - Barbara Petersen

Join Barbara for a morning exploration of birding spots near the Duwamish River. You'll want to return to these places often in the spring when they can be quite busy with bird activity. Common sightings include Osprey, Bald Eagle, Green Heron, Belted Kingfisher, Western tanager, even Bullock's oriole if the timing's right. We'll visit North Wind's Weir, Cecil Moses Park, Duwamish Hill Preserve, Duwamish Gardens and the river path at Tukwila Community Center.

Meet at the Tukwila Community Center in front of the main entrance by 8:30 AM and we'll finish here at 12:30. We'll walk less than half a mile on paved paths. Bring drinks, snacks, binoculars, scopes, cameras as needed to enhance this half day outing. We'll sharpen our spotting skills, as a few of these spots have a lot of traffic noise.

To sign up email Barbara at BPbatfan@aol.com or call/text 253 389 3204 and leave a message.

Olympic Birdfest

April 13-15, 2018.

Enjoy guided birding trips, boat tours, live auction & raffle, gala banquet, and more. Our featured speaker: nature guide/photographer Claudio Vidal. Join our festival pre-trip: a three-day, two-night birding/sightseeing cruise of the San Juan Islands, April 10-12, 2018. Register separately at www.pugetsoundexpress.com/audubon.

Extend your festival with our Neah Bay post-trip on April 16-17, 2018: two days exploring northwest coastal Washington. BirdFest registration at www.olympicbirdfest.org.



Save Weyerhaeuser Campus Earth Day Walk

Save Weyerhaeuser Campus will hold its 2nd annual Earth Day walk on Sunday, April 22nd at 2 PM. Meeting place is at the Christian Faith Center northeast parking lot (33645 20th Ave. S, Federal Way)

Come learn about the progress Save Weyerhaeuser is making towards preserving and maintaining the unique character of the historic Weyerhaeuser Campus. The walk will be along a 2.5-mile route along S 336th and Weyerhaeuser Way to the WDFW Boat Launch and back. Participants can walk a portion or the entire route. As well, the group will be

picking up trash along the route—gloves and garbage bags provided.

In celebration of the Save Weyerhaeuser Campus Earth Day Walk, the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden is offering free admission to the gardens to all walkers after the walk (wristbands will be provided at registration).

Donations will go towards campus conservation.

For more information visit the Save Weyerhaeuser Campus webpage Saveweyerhaeusercampus.org

BACKYARD WILDLIFE FESTIVAL

May 12, 2018

TUKWILA COMMUNITY CENTER

Celebrate wildlife, nature and gardening at the Annual Backyard Wildlife Festival! This event features presentations from local experts, along with a variety of educational exhibitors, arts & craft vendors, speakers and native plant sales. Don't leave the kids at home, there is plenty to keep the entire family entertained and excited – be sure to check out the Kids Garden Party area.

The Backyard Wildlife Festival is always held the second Saturday in May at the Tukwila Community Center. For more information on the event or to hear when vendors applications go live follow us on Facebook. www.facebook.com/BYWildlife

Leavenworth Spring Bird Festival May 17-20

Grays Harbor Shorebird Festival April 27-29

State Budget Includes \$500,000 for Weyerhaeuser Campus Preservation

Great news! In March 2018, the state approved an additional \$500,000 towards our historic Weyerhaeuser Campus conservation efforts! The funds were approved in the supplemental Capital Budget. Special thanks to State Representatives Mike Pellicciotti and Christine Reeves for their hard work to get this included in the supplemental Capital Budget.

We now have \$2.5 million toward purchase of the 54-acres along the lakefront and, with the leadership of Forterra and the city of Federal Way, are hoping to get approval of an additional \$3 million in county and state grants by the end of the year.

Please thank Rep. Pellicciotti as well as the rest of our local 30 th District and 47 th District delegations, Sen. Mark Miloschia, Sen. Joe Fain, Rep. Kristine Reeves and Rep. Pat Sullivan for their support of this \$500,000 allocation!

- Cindy Flanagan



Seen & Heard (Continued from [page 3](#)) Recent Sightings

March 17th (Normandy Park, King, Washington) While searching on eBird for a new birding hotspot along the sound to visit while on Spring Break, I came across Normandy Park Beach. Tucked away into the northern coastal neighborhoods of Normandy Park, the beach was a relatively unknown birding spot, save for the frequent checklists from one local, Toby Bradshaw. The beach, locally known as “The Cove” from the road signs, turned out to be a productive stop. In the water swam dozens of both goldeneye species and numerous **White-winged Scoters** were mixed in with a flock of **Harlequin Ducks**. Near the marsh, I was surprised by my first of the year arrival **Violet-green Swallows** and calls of a **Pileated Woodpecker** rang from the forest. The highlight of the day came just off shore to the north. As I peered into my scope, a white figured duck with a dark black cheek popped into view, amongst a flock of goldeneye. Too big to be a Bufflehead, I squinted at the markings on the back. To my excitement, the

duck in my scope was a lifer species of mine, a **Long-tailed Duck!** Ironically, I could not spot its long tail so it is possible that it was a female (which has a much blunter tail) but the duck dove in and out of the water so frequently, it was hard to get a long look at it. Regardless, it was certainly a beautiful and thrilling bird to see!

March 15th (Auburn, King, Washington) M Street at Emerald Downs is usually an active migration stop during Spring, so in March my mom and I made a stop to search for some shorebirds. In the southern pond we watched a flock of **Green-winged Teal** scamper around the muddy field and pond like a flock of shorebirds. It was a treat to watch the teal's feet scurrying around outside the water; not something you see everyday. Mixed in with a couple dozen Killdeer were a pair of **Least Sandpipers** who were dwarfed by their larger relatives. Every once in awhile one of the Killdeer would walk past the sandpipers and bully them away from feeding at a mud hole. Further back in the field about eight **Dunlin** poked their bills into the water's edge. Over on the second flooded field, we watched a quintet of **Ruddy Ducks** swim about as a female **Western**

Meadowlark flitted overhead with its yellow chest flashing. The most entertaining part of the trip came at the third flooded field on the north side of the barns. A **Great Blue Heron** was snagging some afternoon snacks. It was fascinating to watch as the heron stood still as a post and cocked its head back ready to strike, like someone pulling back the coil on a pinball machine, before striking forward and stabbing into the water, and pulling out its snack.

February 5th (Kent, King, Washington) After a Cinnamon Teal sighting in December was followed up by an American Bittern spotting in January what would 212th Pond's encore be for February? The answer—a **Black Phoebe**. For about a month the phoebe hung around the pond to flycatch before moving on in early March. Further south, a Black Phoebe was also sighted in Tacoma at the Gog-le-hi-te Wetlands

Bird of the Month: Great Blue Heron

Reprint Courtesy of Wild Birds Unlimited, Burien

The Great Blue Heron is a majestic sight whether it is standing motionless at a river bend or cruising along the coastline with slow, deliberate wingbeats. This stately bird with its beautiful blue-gray plumage will pose without moving, scanning for prey or wade belly deep with long, deliberate strides. Great Blue Herons may move slowly but they can strike like lightning to snag a fish or grab a frog.

Great Blue Herons live in both freshwater and saltwater habitats. They usually hunt alone eating fish, reptiles, insects and other birds. They will also forage in grasslands and agricultural fields looking for frogs and small mammals.

When building a nest, the male Great Blue Herons collect much of the material, gathering sticks from the ground, shrubs, trees and unguarded or abandoned nests.

They present the sticks to the females. If the sticks are accepted, the females proceed to weave a platform and a saucer-shaped nest cup. The nest is lined with pine needles, moss, reeds, dry grass and small twigs. Building the nest can take from 3 days up to 2 weeks. Each female will lay 3 - 6 pale, blue eggs.

Great Blue Herons nest mainly in trees but will also nest on the ground, on bushes and on structures such as duck blinds, channel markers or nesting platforms. Males arrive at the colony first and select a nest site. They then begin to court the females. Large, successful colonies may have hundreds of nests.

Great Blue Herons are monogamous during a breeding season but choose new partners each year. They display elaborate courtship and pair-bonding behaviors including a ritualized greeting, stick transfers and a nest relief ceremony in which the birds erect their plumes and clap their bill tips together.

Great Blue Herons defend their feeding territories with much drama, approaching intruders with head

using the down like a washcloth to remove fish slime and other oils from their feathers as they preen. The powder protects their feathers against the slime and oils of swamps.

Great Blue Herons can hunt day and night due to a high percentage of rod-type photoreceptors in their eyes.

Even though Great Blue Herons are impressive standing about 4 feet tall and having a 6 foot wing span, they only weigh 5 to 6 pounds because of their hollow bones.

Great Blue Herons on the coast can be seen poised atop a floating bed of kelp waiting for lunch to swim by.

On March 17, 2003 the Seattle City Council named the Great Blue Heron the official bird of Seattle.

Based on banding records, the oldest Great Blue Heron was 24 years old.

Fish farmers worry about Great Blue Herons

congregating at fish hatcheries, but a study found that the birds ate mostly diseased fish that would have died shortly anyway. The sick fish spent more time near the surface of the water where they were more easily snagged by the herons.

This spring a local heronry will be stirring to life. Numerous nests were accounted for last year at the colony behind the King County Animal Shelter at 21615 64th Ave. S. in Kent. Visit, observe and be awestruck by these magnificent and interesting birds



thrown back, wings outstretched and bill pointing skyward. Offending humans may also witness this behavior.

OTHER COOL FACTS ABOUT GREAT BLUE HERONS

Great Blue Herons are the largest heron in North America.

Great Blue Herons can curl their neck into an S shape for more aerodynamic flight and to quickly strike prey at a distance due to specially shaped neck vertebrae.

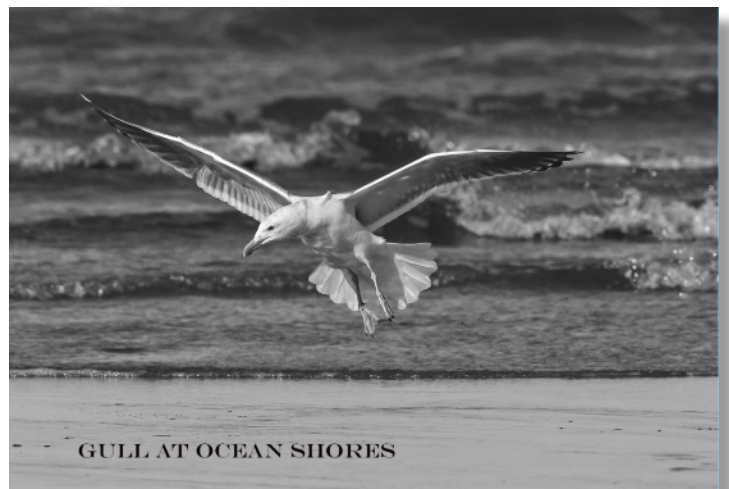
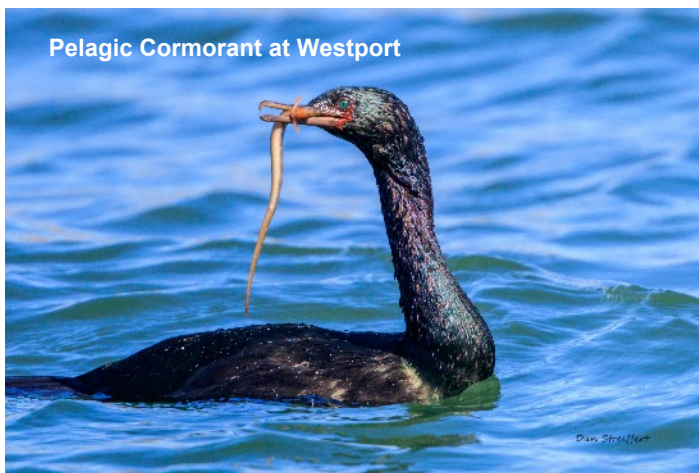
Great Blue Herons have specialized feathers on their chest that continually grow and fray. The herons comb this "powder down" with a fringed claw on their middle toes,

Birding at Ocean Shores & Westport

Dan Streiffert and Jay Galvin loaded up Dan's Subaru with camera gear and headed to the ocean to find some migrants Saturday the 10th. Hopes were high as they headed west to see what shorebirds had made their way to the Gray's Harbor area. The day was setting up to be perfect for bird photography. Clear skies and warmer temperatures were on the horizon as they made their way through Hoquiam headed for Ocean Shores. Driving on to the beach at just before high tide, they were surprised to see it almost empty of avians except for one lone Bald Eagle, several gulls, and scatterings of groups of Dunlin.

After driving along the shore for a few miles, discussion turned to what to do next. How about checking out Bottle Beach and Westport? Forty-five miles later we found ourselves at Westport scanning the docks with our binoculars. Just a few creatures here, also. A group of Surf Scoters intermingled with Lesser Scaup, some Pelagic Cormorants, a smattering in the distance of Common Loons, Western Grebes, and lots of gulls. Ate some lunch then got back in the car and headed for Bottle Beach.

For anyone who hasn't been to Bottle Beach it's a great place to spot migrants at high tide. Unfortunately Dan and Jay arrived at the peak of low tide !! Scanning the water line we were able to see a few large groups of dunlins, a few gulls and not much else. The consensus is a week or two early for migrants.





The Month of May is Birdathon

It's "birding for dollars!" Count as many bird species in one day as you can! Choose any day in May. Get family, friends and co-workers to sponsor you, then go birding! Afterwards, send them a list of what birds you saw, and they will donate X amount for each species you saw (i.e. 25 cents). Or they can just donate a flat fee. 100% of the proceeds support Rainier Audubon activities in south King County.

You can also conduct your Birdathon birding on one of our field trips. Earn money for chapter activities while enjoying a great field trip led by an expert birder. Or just stay at home and count bird species at your feeder. Or be creative and come up with your own Birdathon experience. Sponsors are happy to support your efforts, and many look forward to being asked again the following year. They especially enjoy your list of bird species seen.

Why do it? Rainier Audubon needs the money! The portion of your membership dues to Rainier Audubon covers only a portion of the costs associated with running a successful Audubon chapter. Birdathon is our largest fundraiser, and we depend on it to provide a stable funding base for our many activities and services such as: printing and mailing our chapter's newsletter, general administrative costs, programs (speaker fees), environmental education activities, conservation committee activities, etc., We wouldn't want to have to cut back on any of our activities due to lack of funds! Sponsor sheets are available at Rainier Audubon membership meetings!

Global Big Day Rainier Audubon Bird-a-thon Challenge

Saturday, May 5th, 2018 is Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Global Big Day—24 hours to go out into the field and document as many species as possible and to enter those findings on eBird.org

To learn more about Global Big Day visit <https://ebird.org/news/global-big-day-5-may-2018>

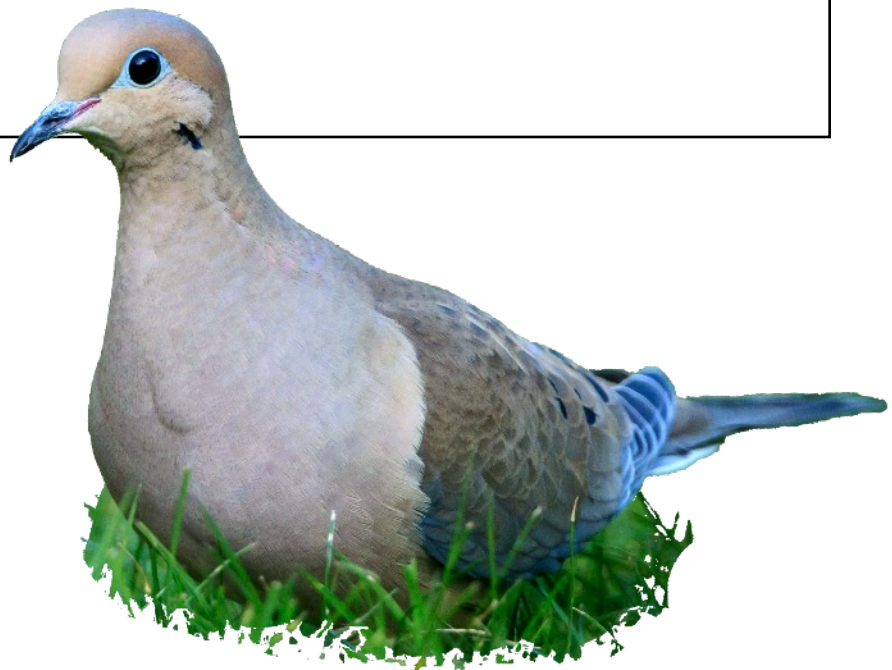
Calen Randall and Cindy Flanagan would like to challenge other fellow birders to go out birding on Global Big Day and raise funds for Rainier Audubon's Bird-a-thon. Money raised will go towards our Rainier Audubon conservation efforts and education. Donations are tax-deductible.

Participating is easy. Get a Rainier Audubon Bird-a-thon sponsor form—from the 2018 April Heron Herald edition (paper or online) or pick up a sponsor sheet at the April 16th Rainier Audubon Program Night at Federal Way United Methodist Church. Find people to sponsor you for your Global Big Day outing. Donations can be \$/species or a flat rate.

If you can't go out in the field but would like to make a donation to Bird-a-thon, send a check payable to Rainier Audubon Society, and make a note "Bird-a-thon donation".

Checks can be mailed to

Rainier Audubon Society
PO Box 778
Auburn, WA 98071





*Away, away, from men and towns,
To the wild wood and the downs, --
To the silent wilderness,
Where the soul need not repress
Its music.*

-Percy Bysshe Shelley



Rainier Audubon Membership Subscription or Renewal Form

One-year Membership in Rainier Audubon
\$25—Individual Membership / \$30—Family Membership

Circle one New / Renewal

For new members:

How did you hear about Rainier Audubon Society?

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

Rainier Audubon Society - Membership

PO Box 778

Auburn, WA 98071



Are you interested in:

- Volunteering?
- Field Trips?
- Classes?

(Please circle)

Name: _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____ Phone _____