

The

Heron Herald



Rainier Audubon Society

March 2014

March 17, 2014 RAS Membership Meeting
Meeting begins at 7:00 pm.

Yard Birds:

**Photographing Birds, An Interactive Meditation
with Betty Udesen, photojournalist**

Betty Udesen, an award-winning photographer based in Seattle, began photographing her neighborhood's birds in 2004. Hey, there's a twist: utilizing her second-floor porch as an outdoor studio, she creates a miniature set suggesting "teatime," then waits for birds to fly in.

On March 17th, Udesen will discuss the evolution of her "Teatime Series," and field questions on her work.

Here's a bio with a focus on this body of work:

I'm not really a bird photographer. At least I don't think of myself that way. As a professional photojournalist, I've spent decades looking through a lens at the world and its myriad inhabitants, from Latin America, Africa and Indonesia to my hometown of Seattle.

It wasn't until after I was badly injured on an overseas assignment that I began photographing birds. The pastime quickly evolved into something much more: a form of interactive meditation, and an important part of my recovery.

With an eye to the season and an ear to the day's weather forecast, I tucked seeds into decorative cups and pitchers, and began work on what would become "The Teatime Series," an ongoing project.

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.

The birds that appear in The Teatime Series are considered "common." I find that remarkable. Marvels of design and engineering, these backyard birds continue to give me an appreciation for a world I'd long taken for granted — the world right outside my windows.

Irish essayist Robert Lynd wrote, "In order to see birds it is

necessary to become part of the silence." My injuries forced me to slow down, to become part of a healing quiet. For years, I'd heard bird song in my urban neighborhood but I didn't know who was singing.

Now I do. Please visit my website at www.udesen.com for more of my work.



Good as Gold ©Betty Udesen



Tiny Teapot ©Betty Udesen

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.

Janet Williams is our new Volunteer Coordinator!

Born in Dallas, Oregon and grew up in a small lumber town called Valsezt, Oregon. Lived and worked in the Salem, Oregon area until December of 2013 when I moved to Kent, Washington.

Work full time for Columbia Bank in Tacoma

The last 3 years I volunteered for the Polk County Oregon Women's shelter answering their hotline for one weekend each month.

In 2004 I took a 4 week beginning bird class offered by Salem Audubon that included 2 field trips to local Wildlife areas. I was HOOKED! I joined Salem Audubon and worked in a few small volunteer roles. I try to join them for one multiple day field trip each year and go on as many weekend day field trips as I can.

Birding has become a way for me to hone my identification skills and get outdoors. I look forward to getting involved in the Rainier Audubon Society.



RAINIER AUDUBON OFFICERS

President	Dan Streiffert*	253-796-2203
Vice President	Steve Feldman*	360-802-5211
Treasurer	Laura Lavington	
Secretary	Heather Gibson*	253-856-9812
Program Chair	Dale Meland	253-946-1637
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Webmaster	Treesa Hertzell	253-255-1808
Education Chair	Annette Tabor*	253-927-3208
Christmas Bird Count Coordinator	Alex Juchems*	253-529-8996
Board Member	Max Prinsen	425-432-9965
Board Member	Erin Wojewodski-Prinsen	425-432-9965
Board Member	Lisa Mesplay	206-946-3820
Board Member	Ed Stanton	206-870-3107
Board Member	Jim Tooley	253-854-3070
Publicity	Tom Sernka	253-529-8970
Volunteer Coordinator	Janet Williams	

*Also serves as Board Member.

Board meetings are held the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 6:30 PM at the Federal Way United Methodist Church, and are open to all members.

Volunteers Needed!

Please contact a Board Member

- Door Greeters for Membership Meetings
- Articles for Heron Herald—send to dan_streiffert@hotmail.com
- Conservation Chair.
- Projection & Sound setup person for meetings.

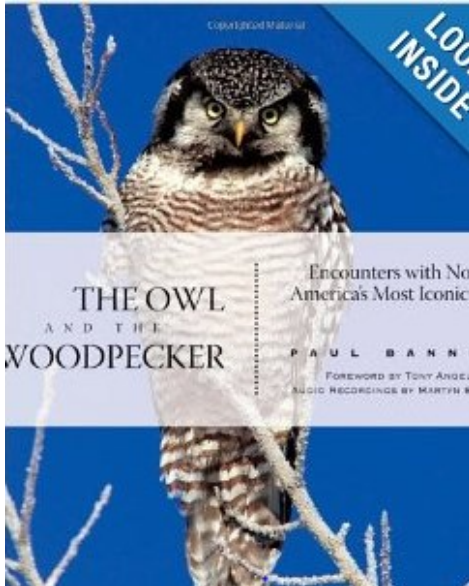
Upcoming Speaker List

- Apr. 21—Dan Streiffert - Tanzania
- May 19—Ed Swan - The Birds of Vashon Island

Book Reviews by Laura Lavington



Author, photographer, and native of Puget Sound, Paul Bannick decided to photograph every owl and wood-

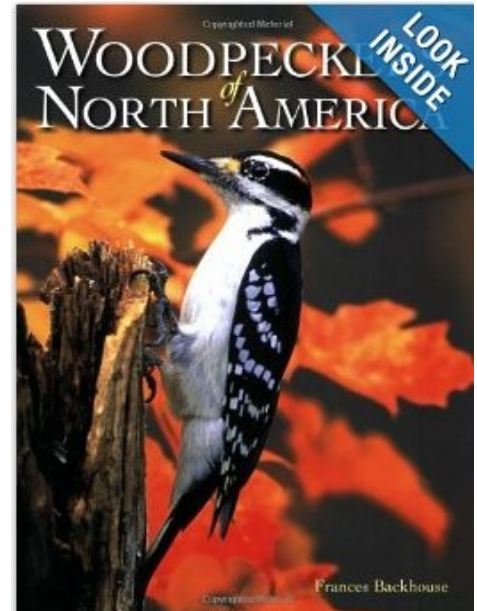


pecker species in North America, and the results can be seen in *The Owl and the Woodpecker: Encounters with North America's Most Iconic Birds*, which was published by Seattle-based The Mountaineers Books in 2008. The book is divided into chapters featuring the various North American owl and woodpecker habitats; Washington State is included in four habitats (Pacific Coast Urban & Suburban,

Northwestern Maritime Forests, Western Dry Mountain Forests, and Grasslands & Shrub-Steppe). *The Owl and the Woodpecker* is worth picking up from the library for its delightful photographs alone. I like the woodpeckers best, but there is something stirring about looking at daytime pictures of nocturnal owls. That said, the text of the book is definitely interesting, as well. In the chapter about Southwestern Dry Lands, I learned that woodpeckers excavate cavities in saguaro cactuses in February, and then they allow the cactus's soft inner pulp to heal and harden for several months before using the cavity for nesting. *The Owl and the Woodpecker* comes with an audio CD that includes calls and drumming of forty-one owl and woodpecker species.

Frances Backhouse's 2005 *Woodpeckers of North America* also includes many lovely color photographs of woodpeckers. This book has all the information that one would need to know about woodpeckers. Doesn't it seem like woodpeckers would get wood chips in their eyes and nostrils when they peck wood? Frances Backhouse tells the reader in the anatomy chapter that woodpeckers tightly close their eyes as their heads lunge forward. In addition, woodpeckers' nostrils have protective tufts of feathers to keep out dust and de-

bris. Also of interest: red-cockaded



and acorn woodpeckers practice cooperative breeding, and they are assisted at the nest by helpers. *Woodpeckers of North America* has full species profiles that run several pages, and it even includes some Mexican species of woodpecker. Both of these books are available through the King County Library System and are for sale on Amazon.

Please vote for your top 5 activities on the enclosed 2014 Brainstorming Session.

Put a check mark before each selected activity. Please either send your sheets in or bring them to the March Membership Meeting. The Board will then tally the results for the April newsletter. Please select activities that you are interested in participating in. Mail your results to:

Rainier Audubon Society
PO Box 778
Auburn, WA 98071

Field Trips by Michele Phiffer



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 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 boardwalk extension. The extension adds an additional 2.0 miles total, so the whole walk including the boardwalk extension is now 4.0 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 if you have questions. Phil Kelley, Lacey, (360) 459 1499, scrubjay323@aol.com

Lake Sammamish State Park

Saturday, [March 22](#)

8:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Leader: Carol Schulz

Join us on a field trip to various areas of Lake Sammamish State Park. We will explore trails (which may be muddy) as

we look for nice birds in the woods, along trails, and at the lake. GBH's should be on their nests at the large heronry. This 506 acre park is a wonderful birding spot. Birds should be singing at this time of year.

Bring: Warm clothes, waterproof shoes or boots, or old tennis shoes, lunch, snacks, and drinks. We may walk up to 2 miles, or folks may bird near the cars. Scopes are welcome. Folks may leave early if they wish. If you bring your car, bring your Discover Pass.

Meet: At the P&R on hwy 405, exit 9 at 8:00. This is north of Renton. Take the exit, turn right 1/2 block, and turn left into the P&R. At the exit, DO NOT drive straight ahead onto the freeway on-ramp.

Sign-Up: Contact Carol Schulz at [\(206\) 824-7618](tel:2068247618), carol.schulz50@gmail.com

Soos Creek Owl Prowls

Soos Creek Owl Prowls

Sat. Night, [Mar 15](#)

10:30 p.m. to 1:30 a.m.

Leaders: Joe and Liz Miles

Join Friends of Soos Creek Park volunteers Joe and Liz Miles for this late night program and walk exploring the world of owls. We'll start indoors for the first hour learning calls, ID, and info about our local owls, then venture outdoors to prowl for owls. There is limited space for this program. Reservations are required. Best for adults and children over 13 years. Group size is limited to 15. The owls program is sponsored by Kent City Recreation Dept.

Meet: Meet at the Soos Creek Park Maintenance Shop. Soos Creek Park/Trail 24810 148th Avenue SE, Kent.

Directions: Take James Street east from Kent. To reach James St, exit I-167 at Willis, turn east to Central, and North to James. Travel east on James as it becomes SE 240th St. Travel about 4 miles, as 240th

dips and turns downhill. Turn right (south) on 148th Ave near the bottom of the hill. The Soos Creek maintenance yard will be down the road about 1/4 mile on the left at a barn and chainlink-fenced parking lot.

Sign-up: Call Kent Commons, Kent City Parks and Recreation, [253-856-5000](tel:2538565000). This trip FILLS EARLY. Please register in advance. For further info: E-mail or call Joe Miles, friendsofsooscreekpark@q.com, (253) 639-0123. Joe can answer your questions but cannot arrange the sign-ups.

Olympic BirdFest 2014

April 4-6, 2014, Sequim, WA

Visit the rain shadow of the *Olympic Peninsula* to discover the birds of the coastal Pacific Northwest—Marbled Murrelets, Rhinoceros Auklets, Harlequin Ducks, dippers, Black Oystercatchers, Long-tailed Ducks, and more. Guided field trips, a boat cruise in the Strait of Juan de Fuca, silent auction, and a gala banquet. Our featured speaker is Noah Strycker: "Bird World: the fascinating parallels between bird and human behavior". The festival with the most spectacular setting!

Immediately following BirdFest, join us for a three-day, two-night birding cruise of the San Juan Islands, April 6-8, 2014.

Website address:

www.olympicbirdfest.org

E-mail address:

opas.birdfest.info@gmail.com

Contact name: Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society, 360-681-4076

(Continued on page 5)

Field Trips (Continued from page 4)

Boat Trip! Circumnavigation of Bainbridge Island

(course #131850-01 for registration)
Saturday March 22nd, 9:45am - 2:00pm
 Winslow City Docks, Cost \$75.
 Leader: George Gerdts

Join expert birder and naturalist George Gerdts on a birding/boat trip around Bainbridge Island. An 80-foot catamaran is suited for wildlife viewing, with a P.A. system, and excellent viewing from outside decks or from comfortable inside seating. View Eagle Harbor, Blakley Rock, Restoration Point, Rich Passage, Port Orchard, and Agate Pass. Expect to see multiple species of loons, sea ducks (including Harlequin and Long-tailed Ducks), grebes (with a chance for Clark's and Eared), cormorants, and rocky-shore sandpipers. Expect great scenery and a unique, close-up view of the Bainbridge Island shoreline.

Meet: 9:45 AM at the Winslow City Dock. Boat leaves promptly at 10:00 AM. Travel to Paulsbo and then Winslow, or take the ferry from Seattle. Ferry participants can meet George at the Bainbridge Island Ferry Terminal and he will lead you on the short 1/4 mile walk to the City Dock.

Sign up: This trip is being offered through the Bainbridge Island (BI) Parks and Recreation Department. **YOU MUST CALL THE BI PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT AT [206-842-2306](tel:206-842-2306) ext. 118 IN ORDER TO REGISTER FOR THIS TRIP!**

Participants can sign up with a credit card and get a receipt right over the phone. The cost is \$75.00. Anyone who is a member of Rainier Audubon Society (RAS) and indicates that when signing up (ONLY WAY BI staff will know) will get 20% of the cost (\$15.00) donated to RAS. If you leave your e-mail address when registering, George can forward explicit directions and a map.

Family Birding Trip around Weyerhaeuser Ponds

Sunday, March 16th, 2014
 9am-11am
 Leader: Calen Randall

Come explore the birding world at Weyerhaeuser Headquarters. We'll start out watching waterfowl--and maybe a turtle or two--at the Weyerhaeuser Pond and then venture into the forested trail searching for owls, woodpeckers and other woodland fliers.

Weyerhaeuser Headquarters Address:
 33663 Weyerhaeuser Way South
 Federal Way, WA 98003
 (Detailed directions will be provided after sign up)

Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Walking distance 1 mile.

Contact: Calen Randall
calenbirds@hotmail.com
 253-941-3933

Hummingbirds at Home Webinar

March 18, 2014, 2pm Eastern

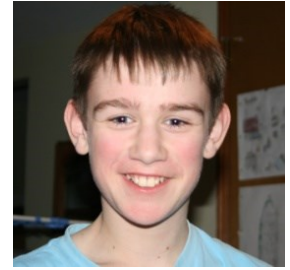
Audubon's Citizen Science team will talk about Audubon's citizen science program, Hummingbirds at Home, including an overview of three types of surveys, new features for 2014 and ideas for using this program to reach out to new audiences.

[Register Now](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1IEILDo02jf0buWjh_qCFPB2muQAcJ8gF4u-p-XltvhA/viewform)
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1IEILDo02jf0buWjh_qCFPB2muQAcJ8gF4u-p-XltvhA/viewform

Background: Hummingbirds at Home was launched in April of 2013 to build a continent-wide network of citizen scientists to help uncover how hummingbirds are affected by climate change. Using a mobile-optimized web portal and smartphone apps, people from across the U.S. can report their hummingbird sightings. The data collected will guide Audubon in devising actions to help hummingbirds thrive despite climate change and other threats. See the [Hummingbirds at Home website](#) for more information and to log sightings.



Special Edition Seen & Heard: Christmas Bird Count Results by Calen Randall



Roll out the red carpet, the results for the compilation of the 2013 Rainier Audubon CBC has arrived! (See page 8) This year's compilation was a combined effort between the compilation veteran Mark Freeland and myself. Mark and Adele Freeland have been compiling Rainier's CBC data for thirteen years and amazingly, Mark has willingly handed the reins to me. The CBC compiling job involves gathering reports from each leader. Then man hours, miles, participants, and birds counted must be entered into an Excel sheet, and translated into the National Audubon site. Because of Mark and Adele's diligence in organizing and recording, the transition has been quite smooth for me. Thank you Mark and Adele for your years of commitment! I am excited to explore a new avenue in compiling and interpreting data. Here are some notable aspects from this year's Christmas Bird Count.

This year marked the highest number of Greater-white Fronted Geese and Trumpeter Swans seen on a count. A flock of 16 Greater-white Fronts were seen in the 6c area (south Kent, north Auburn);

while 130 Trumpeter Swans were seen over several areas, including 90 in the Kent Ponds 6N area. Ironically, despite the high number of swans seen, the Trumpeters seem to have arrived late, we first saw them November 28th and appear to have moved on to better feeding (the last sighting this year was mid-January).

The competition between the dabblers and divers ran afoul. It seems that the fog kept the dabbling ducks home, while the diving ducks were out in full force. Green-



Greater White-fronted Goose—© Dan Streiffert

winged Teal (91) and American Widgeon (813) were the lowest seen on a count. Several other dabblers including Mallards, Northern Shoveler, and Northern Pintail numbers were also low. On the flip side, divers such as Redheads, Ring-necked Ducks, and Red-breasted Merganser were seen in record numbers. 83 Redheads

were spotted on the count! It was a big day for all three mergansers species. The mergansers were widespread throughout the Kent-Auburn circle; however, many were seen in the Green River area. Could this be a result of the Green River restoration efforts of the City of Kent? As well, many loons were seen on the count, with a cumulative total of 29. There were a record number of Common (12) and Red-throated loons (12). Even the elusive Pacific Loon was spotted in area 8. Well done!

Several southern birds seem to be edging further north each winter. One southern surprise was the Red-shouldered Hawk. A couple months ago, one was seen on a snag in Kent Ponds. It was nice that it was still there for the CBC. As well, one Red-shouldered Hawk

was viewed at Gog-le-hi-te wetlands in the Tahoma count circle. Will we be seeing more Red-shouldered Hawks migrating north in the upcoming years? The Western Scrub Jays continue their journey north. In late January, one was even sighted in Marysville! The Western

(Continued on page 7)

Bio: Calen is a 15 year old birder. He enjoys birding around Lake Fenwick, Frager Road, 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

(Seen & Heard Continued from page 6)

Scrub Jay numbers continue to grow in the Kent-Auburn area--we had 17 this year. The Eurasian-Collared Doves, another southern newcomer, were in fewer numbers than last year's 113. However, it is interesting that they are no longer confined to Elliot Farms and Frager Road and have been sighted around the Kent Green River area.

The most notable aspect of the count was the finch absence. Where were they? House Finch (127), American Goldfinch (15), and Purple Finch (14) population trends were all notably down, with House Finches and Goldfinches hitting a record

low. The irruptive wintering Red Crossbill was up to its tricks again. After last year's record count for Red Crossbills (160), a measly five were seen this year. That's a drop of ninety-four percent! The most notable absence of the finches was the Pine Siskins. Not one was seen in this year's count. These numbers were not just low for the Kent-Auburn circle, Tahoma Audubon's finch numbers were down as well. What could make these numbers drop so much?

Thanks to all coordinators, bird watchers, and others who were part of the CBC. I look forward to compiling our results next year!

Recent Bird Sightings:

Thanks to this month's reporters Carol Schultz, Debra K (sorry Debra, I don't

have your last name), Lara Lavington, and Ralph and Sandra Embrey.

Jan 25th After watching a fog bow near Des Moines, Carol Schultz watched quite a few birds. At the mouth of Des Moines Creek, Carol saw half a dozen **Thayer's Gulls**. A couple days later, she saw a **Western Gull**, several **Mew Gulls**, and hundreds of **hybrid** and **Glacaus-winged Gulls**, also at the mouth of Des Moines



Townsend's Warbler—© Dan Streiffert

Creek. Later, Carol observed **Northwestern Crows**. Carol also spotted **Rhinoceros Auklets, Red-breasted Mergansers, Harlequin Ducks, and Common Goldeneye**.

At a park Carol called "Zenith Access" Carol spotted more **Harlequin Ducks, Black Scoters, White-winged Scoters, and Surf Scoters**.

Jan 25th While at Roegher Park in Auburn, Debra spotted a couple of **American Dippers** along the edge of the White River. Debra said "I just love the way that they bob up and down in the water!"

Jan 28th Lara Lavington had a visit from a "handsome **Townsend's Warbler**" at her suet feeders. Lara commented "I always have several **Yellow-Rumped Warblers** in my yard, but the Townsend's Warbler

was a treat!"

Feb 11th Sandra Embrey, another admirer of her "gorgeous" **Townsend's Warbler** and "pretty" **Golden-Crowned Kinglet** in her backyard, observed a pair of **Bald Eagles**, soaring in the wind. Sandra reported that that an adult **Red-tailed Hawk** hangs out in the hemlock trees and is often being harassed by crows. Sandra also stated that "**Northern Flickers** are abundant and make good use of the metal chimney safety cover to hammer out abundant noise!"

Mystery Bird of the Month

Carol viewed a flock of these in Des Moines. Here are the clues:

I used to be a separate species from my grey-bellied brothers on the east coast

*I have a white "necklace" on my neck
A group of me can be called a "blizzard",
a "chevron", a "knot", a "plump", or
a string".*

*A saltwater gland in my throat allows me
to drink salt water.*

*My name is derived from the classical
Greek name for waterfowl, brethos.*

*I have the shortest tail of any goose
I'm not Pink-footed, Cackling, Canadian,
or Greater White-fronted*

I am of the genus branta

Who am I?

Send your sightings/hearings to calenbirds@hotmail.com I love reading your reports!

Answer: Brant

2013 Kent-Auburn CBC Checklist

Species	Count	Species	Count
Gr Wht-fronted Goose	16	Glaucous-Winged Gull	339
Snow Goose		WestxGlc-Winged Gull	[n]85
Cackling Goose	514	Gull sp.	[n]21
Canada Goose	1172	Common Murre	
Trumpeter Swan	130	Pigeon Guillemot	3
Tundra Swan		Marbled Murrelet	
Wood Duck	8	Rhinoceros Auklet	1
Gadwall	94	Rock Pigeon	608
Eurasian Wigeon	2	Band-tailed Pigeon	29
American Wigeon	813	Mourning Dove	23
Mallard	1402	Eurasian Collared Dove	84
Green-winged Teal	91	Barn Owl	1
Eurasian-Gw Teal		Western Screech-Owl	3
Blue-wing Teal		Great Horned Owl	5
Cinnamon Teal		Northern Pygmy-Owl	
Northern Shoveler	197	Barred Owl	1
Northern Pintail	129	Short-eared Owl	1
Canvasback	16	Northern Saw-whet Owl	1
Redhead	89	Anna's Hummingbird	88
Ring-necked Duck	692	Belted Kingfisher	23
Greater Scaup	16	Red-breasted Sapsucker	10
Lesser Scaup	44	Downy Woodpecker	33
Harlequin Duck	21	Hairy Woodpecker	9
Surf Scoter	224	Northern Flicker	128
White-winged Scoter	26	Y-shafted	[n]
Black Scoter	9	Pileated Woodpecker	7
Bufflehead	257	Northern Shrike	
Common Goldeneye	94	Hutton's Vireo	2
Barrow's Goldeneye	87	Steller's Jay	93
Hooded Merganser	158	Western Scrub Jay	17
Common Merganser	146	American Crow	4656
Red-breasted Merganser	43	Common Raven	3
Ruddy Duck	134	Blk-capped Chickadee	433
Ring-necked Pheasant		Mountain Chickadee	
Ruffed Grouse		Chestnut-bk'd Chickadee	131
California Quail	1	Bushtit	221
Red-throated Loon	16	Red-breasted Nuthatch	37
Pacific Loon	1	Brown Creeper	32
Common Loon	12	Bewick's Wren	43
Pied-billed Grebe	66	Pacific Wren	84
Horned Grebe	147	Marsh Wren	69
Red-necked Grebe	35	American Dipper	2

Species	Count	Species	Count
Eared Grebe		Golden-cr. Kinglet	264
Western Grebe	1	Ruby-cr. Kinglet	116
Brandt's Cormorant	7	Hermit Thrush	2
DbI-crested Cormorant	91	American Robin	1014
Pelagic Cormorant	3	Varied Thrush	27
Amer. Bittern		European Starling	1201
Great Blue Heron	46	American Pipit	2
Green Heron	2	Cedar Waxwing	
Osprey		Orange-crowned Warbler	
Bald Eagle	22	Yellow-rumped Warbler	27
Adult	[n]15	Audubon's	[n]7
Immature	[n]5	Myrtle	
No. Harrier	2	Townsend's Warbler	11
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	Common Yellowthroat	
Cooper's Hawk	19	Spotted Towhee	166
Northern Goshawk		Savannah Sparrow	
Red-tailed Hawk	57	Fox Sparrow	201
Harlan's Hawk	[n]	Song Sparrow	549
Rough-legged Hawk		Lincoln's Sparrow	26
Amer. Kestrel	5	Swamp Sparrow	
Merlin	3	White-throated Sparrow	2
Peregrine Falcon	4	White-crowned Sparrow	123
Virginia Rail	12	Golden-crowned Sparrow	210
Sora		Dark-eyed Junco	851
American Coot	513	Slate-colored Junco	[n]1
Black-bellied Plover		Red-winged Blackbird	1065
Killdeer	18	Western Meadowlark	10
Spotted Sandpiper	2	Yellow-Hd Blackbird	
Greater Yellowlegs		Brewer's Blackbird	716
Black Turnstone		Brown-headed Cowbird	1
Western Sandpiper		Purple Finch	14
Least Sandpiper		House Finch	127
Dunlin		Red Crossbill	5
Long-billed Dowitcher		Common Redpoll	
Wilson's Snipe	4	Pine Siskin	
Bonaparte's Gull		American Goldfinch	15
Mew Gull	28	Evening Grosbeak	
Ring-billed Gull	2	House Sparrow	148
California Gull		Red-Shouldered Hawks	1
Herring Gull			
Thayer's Gull		Total Individuals	21980
Western Gull	2	Total Species	118
[n] means "Not countable as species"			



Mewsings from Millie

My people really enjoy checking out various live bird cams on the internet. The newest one they have discovered shows a proud pair of Laysan Albatross and their goofy-looking chick in a nest on the isle of Kauai. Watching these birds and their baby made me curious to learn more about them so off I went in search of albatross information.

Worldwide, there are 21 species of albatross. Although all albatrosses are large seabirds, the Wandering Albatross is the largest with a wingspan of up to twelve feet. Birds we are most likely to see off of our coast are the Laysan Albatross and the Black-footed Albatross.

Albatrosses spend most of their time flying over the ocean. They have perfected soaring techniques that allow them to travel great distances with very little effort. A Laysan Albatross once flew from Washington State to Midway Island in the northwest islands of Hawaii averaging 350 miles a day.

Albatross eat crustaceans, floating carrion, squid, fish eggs and discards

from fishing boats. Unlike most birds, they have a very keen sense of smell that allows them to detect a food source from miles away. They feed while sitting on the water or swimming, often at night. Albatrosses are able to drink seawater because of a pair of bony tubes above or inside the bill or glands above the eyes that excrete excess salt. This prevents them from becoming dehydrated.

Albatrosses build shallow nests on land and nest in colonies. A young albatross does not reach maturity until it is 5 years old. Even then, it may not begin to successfully breed for another 4 or 5 years. This is because albatrosses bond by performing intricate rituals and dancing. Young birds will attend a colony and spend years learning and practicing the elaborate moves which may include preening, pointing the bill skyward, calling, bill clacking, staring, bill touching and head-shaking.

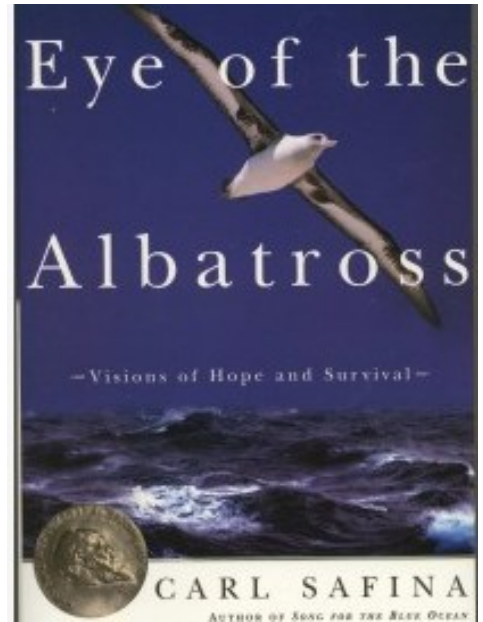
A first-year bird will spend its time out on the ocean. Upon joining a colony, it will dance with many different partners over a number of years until one partner is chosen. The pair then continues to perfect an individual language unique to them and they will stay together for life.

Upon breeding, the mom will lay one egg that is white with brown speckles. Both parents take turns feeding and protecting the chick. Meals consist of squid, fish and krill. They also feed the chick energy-rich stomach oil that is created in a stomach organ from digested prey.

Chicks take a long time to fledge but when they do they are on their own. They receive no further guidance from their parents which suggests an innate, genetically coded migratory behavior.

Most albatrosses live very long lives, most up to 50 years. The oldest known albatross is 63 years old and still nesting.

The albatross is legendary bird. It was the symbolic object of "The Rime of the



Ancient Mariner" by Samuel Taylor Coleridge. From that poem, "having an albatross around their neck" came to mean someone with a burden or obstacle as that was the punishment put to the person who killed the albatross.

It is a myth that all sailors believe it disastrous to shoot or harm an albatross. In truth, according to Captain Cook, albatrosses were regularly killed for food. It also has been reported that sailors would catch the birds then let them go free, believing that the albatrosses were the souls of lost sailors. Killing an albatross is also viewed as bringing bad luck.

Finally, in golf, shooting 3 under par on a single hole has recently been termed an albatross in keeping with the birdie/eagle them.

Until next time,

Millie the Muse of Mews

<http://carlsafina.org/publications/books/eye-of-the-albatross/>

The Red Crossbill

Reprint Courtesy of Wild Birds Unlimited, Burien



Female Red Crossbill—© Dan Streiffert



Male Red Crossbill—© Dan Streiffert

The Red Crossbill is a friendly, stocky finch with a short, notched tail and a thick, curved bill with crossed tips. The head and body of the beautiful male is typically brick red with flecks of green and yellow that give it a metallic sheen. The female is uniformly olive or grayish with a green or greenish yellow chest and rump. Both the male and female Red Crossbills have blackish brown wing feathers with no wing bars and a blackish brown tail.

The Red Crossbill is found in coniferous forests and is dependent on the seeds of the cones that grow there. It is so dependent upon conifer seeds it even feeds them to its young.

The Red Crossbill feeds on the cones by inserting its peculiar bill under a scale and biting down. The crossed tips of the bill push the scale up exposing the seed which the Red Crossbill extracts with its tongue. Inside the bill, on the bird's palate, is a "husking groove". The bird spins the seed in the groove to husk it before swallowing it.

Red Crossbills range widely across the United States and Canada. They will breed whenever they find an abundance of cones even during the winter.

Red Crossbills build a saucer-shaped nest near the ground in a conifer forest constructing it out of twigs and roots and lining it with moss, hair, fur and feathers. The female lays three to five greenish white eggs that are speckled on the wide end with brown and lavender

Because this species can breed throughout most of the year, its molts and plumage vary more than that of other North American passerines.

The Red Crossbill shows a great deal of variation in size, bill shapes and voice. Ten different flight calls have been described and birds giving each type have slightly different shaped bills and prefer to feed on different trees species with different sized cones.

The ten types include: Appalachian Crossbill, Ponderosa Crossbill, Western Hemlock Crossbill, Douglas-fir Crossbill, Lodgepole Pine Crossbill, Sierra Madre Crossbill, Enigmatic Crossbill, Newfoundland Crossbill, South Hills Crossbill, and Sitka Spruce Crossbill.

Although cone seeds are its favorite and preferred food, Red Crossbills will also eat black oil sunflower seed.

FREE DISCOVER PASSES FOR MEMBERS OF RAINIER AUDUBON SOCIETY

To support our state parks – and to boost membership - the local chapter of the Audubon Society, called the Rainier Audubon Society, is giving away free Discover Passes to any new member who joins Rainier Audubon during 2013.

All you have to do is come to a meeting, join up and get your free Discover Pass. The cost of joining is \$20.00/individual and \$25/family. The cost of a Discover Pass is normally \$35.00 dollars so you've just saved \$15.00 and you have a year's membership in the Audubon Society and a year's free access to all of the state parks in Washington.

Each Discover Pass can be used for any two vehicles you own. Just fill out two license plate numbers on the Pass, hang it from the rear view mirror of whichever car you're taking, and you're good to go for a full year of state park recreation.

The Rainier Audubon Society meets monthly at the United Methodist Church in Federal Way, and presents programs on all aspects of nature, birding, conservation, outdoor photography, and many other topics that adults and children who love the outdoors enjoy. For more information go to www.RainierAudubon.org.



Rainier Audubon Society
PO Box 778
Auburn, WA 98071

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Evolution is a fact, not a theory.
- Carl Sagan

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.

2014 Brainstorming Session 1/21/2014

Goal 1: Increase participation in the conservation and restoration of natural ecosystems

- Participate in city projects (Kent Green Stewards)
- Valley Wetlands
 - King County Land – is there an existing plan for these?
 - What is current zoning?
- Get (re) involved in Auburn Environmental Center
- No North Auburn Garbage – can we leverage this group to promote saving of wetlands/
- Talk to County Commissioner
- Talk to other groups (Sierra Club, garden clubs, etc.)
- Coal Trains – can we stop them?
- Tukwila Fair, Seahurst Environmental Center, Kent Cornucopia Days, Auburn?
- Work with Carpinito Brothers on wetland improvements

Goal 2: Increase diversity of membership (youth)

- Multi-lingual / ethnic diversity
 - Do presentations in tribal schools
 - Invite tribal speakers to meetings
 - Education tab on website in different languages
 - Spanish translation of Heron Herald on website
 - ESL classes in schools
 - Advertise free Discover Pass in Spanish
 - Translate pamphlets
- Community outreach
 - Speakers to schools, science clubs, classes
 - 4-H Clubs? Boys & Girls Clubs
 - Story time at libraries
 - Be present at farmer's markets
 - Pathfinders Church Co-ed Group
 - Post activities at community center info sites
 - 5 to 10 min. presentation at daycares
 - Pamphlets in community centers & gardens/libraries
 - Window signs about monthly meeting in various community spots (same as above)
 - Work with public television and radio stations to publicize Audubon events
 - Organize a charity event that specific benefits a bird-friendly site in our area
- Kid-appeal programs
 - Programs that excite kids
 - Live birds programs
 - Family oriented field trips with activities – make it memorable - involve senses
 - Implement a youth award (e.g., hiking the WA birding trails, bird I.D., etc.)

- Work together with Scout groups to put on a birding merit badge workshop, inviting all the Scouts from all over the area to come and work on their birding merit badge
- Build a feeder / house activity
- River of Raptors speaker
- Teach kids about birds similar to how there are naturalists at Des Moines beaches teaching kids about sea creatures (Cindy Flanagan is interested in this)
- Online presence
 - Link website to E-bird, Tweepsters
 - Link to native plant society, bird friendly yards
 - Links to extension agencies of the county

Goal 3: Participate in activities related to the Pacific Flyway.

- Increase communication / coordination with other chapters in the Pacific Flyway
 - Reach out to chapters located in areas covered by specific Pacific Flyway goals to see how we can help
 - Partner with other chapters who are doing activities in Pacific Flyway goal areas such as Important Bird Areas
 - Make connections with Alaska chapters re: birds from AK that winter in RAS territory (e.g., swans, snow geese, etc.) to see what we can do to help those populations (Jay Galvin very interested in this activity)
 - Make connections with Oregon and BC chapters too, perhaps arrange field trips to birding areas (Janet Williams has many contacts in Salem)
 - RAS field trip to Skagit County swan viewing areas
 - RAS field trips to coastal areas in WA located within the Pacific Flyway Save Our Shorebirds goal areas
- Increase education about the Pacific Flyway and its goals
 - Get somebody from Nat'l Audubon, as highly placed as possible, to do a RAS member meeting presentation on the Pacific Flyway to educate membership. Also personally invite every mayor and city council member from RAS-served cities to attend that meeting.
 - Get articles in local papers about the Pacific Flyway
 - Present info about the Pacific Flyway at events where Annette Tabor is already presenting
- Increase government / civic involvement
 - Improve networking with King County natural resources departments (e.g., Solid Waste, Parks & Rec) regarding the whole Green Valley / RAS area, not just the transfer station. Let them know that we are part of the Pacific Flyway. Create a presentation that could be used repeatedly for these audiences. (Cindy Flanagan is interested in this)
 - Send formal thank-you letters to anybody in government who shows support to us (e.g., Dow Constantine)
 - What are the current building codes in our area about commercial / public landscaping – any native plant requirements? Can we influence this to help provide food / shelter for birds in the Pacific Flyway?
 - What are the current building codes in our area about lighting? Can we influence this? Lots of building happening in Federal Way – can we let them know about Dark Sky, and how so much uplighting might interfere with migration in the Flyway?
 - Preserve land via public initiative process (local level – city, county)
 - Come up with a political campaign that other Audubon chapters and conservation organizations in WA will take care of, with the goal being a change in state policy that results in WA being more bird-friendly
- Increase citizen science activities

- How can we get notified about any birding-related research (nest counts, etc.) being done in/near RAS area so we can alert the membership to participate?
- Reach out to any local colleges/universities with birding-related curriculum

Miscellaneous

- More bird tours/bird walks (e.g., Nisqually) for people who work M-F, 9-5
- Keep local air and water clean