

The Heron Herald



Rainier Audubon Society

March 2016

RAS Membership Meeting
March 21, 2016

Orca Conservancy Past, Present and Future Shari Tarantino

A historical look at the Washington state 501c3 non-profit organization working on behalf of *Orcinus orca*, the killer whale, and protecting the wild places on which it depends.

Orca Conservancy collaborates with some of the world's top research institutions and environmental groups to address the most critical issues now facing wild orcas. The organization's urgent attention is on the endangered Southern Resident killer whales of Puget Sound.

These three pods, J-Pod, K-Pod and L-Pod, were decimated by the depletion of prey resources, the accumulation of marine toxins, and the destruction of salmon spawning and nearshore habitats, the nurseries of the Salish Sea. They continue to reel from the effects of the brutal orca capture era of the 1960s and '70s, where some 57 whales were removed from the Southern and Northern Resident populations and sent to marine parks.

They risk being wiped out by a catastrophic oil spill in the Salish Sea, or getting caught in the crossfire of military exercises. And they're potentially threatened by vessels, particularly private boats not following guidelines established by the Pacific Whale Watch Association.

The organization's people are leaders in safeguarding critical habitats, advocating creative oil-spill prevention and response measures, establishing better protocols for the Navy to protect sensitive marine life, and in working with



whale
watchers
and
scientists to
help them
create
effective
new guidelines for sustainable wildlife viewing.



Orca Conservancy is committed to the welfare of all whales and dolphins, and is an authoritative source for information on captive cetaceans and on-going studies on the feasibility of returning these remarkable animals to the wild.

BIO

Originally from the mid-west. Studied Business at Kent State University. Became involved in orca advocacy in 2006 when I discovered that the Southern Resident killer whales were listed on the ESA. Started volunteering with Orca Conservancy in mid 2011, and became board President in late 2011. Worked with Naked Whale Research in Northern California from 2013 to 2014. Currently resides in Seattle, Washington.

Join us at 6:30 for conversation and snacks.

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



Taco Time Coupon Books for Sale



Rainier Audubon Society's March meeting will be the last membership meeting at which you can buy a few Taco Time coupon books. As a reminder, the coupon books will be sold at the welcome table before and after this month's program. The books are \$1.00 each, and they contain \$5.00 worth of coupons. The coupons are valid through April 30, 2016. You can buy as many coupon books as you would like, and the entire \$1.00 goes to Rainier Audubon. So, if you buy a book and use just one coupon, Rainier comes out ahead, and you come out even. For more information, visit www.TacoTimeNW.com, or talk to Laura Lavington at the welcome table before or after membership meetings.

Upcoming Programs

- 4/18/2016 Joy & Craig Johnson - Birds and Backyard Wildlife Habitat
- 5/16/2016 Peter Hodum - Plastic Debris in the Environment

RAS Board Elections

Election of Board Officers takes place at our May meeting. If you are interested in this please talk to a Board Member.

Rainier Audubon Officers

President	Dan Streiffert*	253-796-2203
Vice President	Steve Feldman*	360-802-5211
Treasurer	Laura Lavington*	253-941-7372
Secretary	Heather Gibson*	253-856-9812
Program Chair	Dale Meland	253-946-1637
Field Trip Chair	Barbara Petersen	253-941-4055
Membership Chair	Pat Toth*	206-767-4944
Backyard Habitat Chair	Marie West-Johnson	206-817-8754
Conservation Chair	Dan Streiffert*	253-796-2203
Mailing Chair	Debra Russell	425-271-0682
Hospitality	Sandra Embrey	253-517-3363
Newsletter Editor	Dan Streiffert*	253-796-2203
Webmaster	Treesa Hertzal	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
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 at the Federal Way United Methodist Church, and are open to all members.

Sign up for our Google email list!

The intent of this site is to assist in publicizing our activities to 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 at:

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

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.



Seen & Heard by Calen Randall

One overcast February Saturday morning, I was jolted awake by the ringing of my phone. It was my Mom, out on an early dog walk in the new development in Auburn near our house. As I answered the phone, I heard my Mom exclaim, "Bring the binoculars, Calen, and come here quick! You won't believe what I just saw: Lanius Excubitor, the "butcher bird!" Sleepy-eyed and bedraggled, I raced, binoculars in hand on 61st Street, through the new Calla Crest development, and down to the brambles underneath the towering power lines. As we peered along the tops of the blackberry bushes, sure enough, scanning out over the field was a Northern Shrike. Through my binoculars I could pick out the jet black line over the eye and the flash of black and white on its wing bars. Just as I was studying his long poker-straight tail, he abandoned his perch, hovered for a moment, and shot to the ground, no doubt in an attempt to snag a morsel of food.

Elation rippling through me, I stared around the old cow pasture in search for the shrike. It was always a treat to spot the occasional surprise bird in the neighborhood, but never had I imagined that I would watch a Northern Shrike hunt so close to my home. Out of the blue, the shrike took off from the ground and zipped overhead in his undulating flight, like a Storm Petrel riding the bouncy waves in an ocean storm. After one final swooping dip, the Shrike stopped at the top most point on a cluster of brambles south of the gravel path and once again surveyed the field. After the captivating display of the Shrike's hunting and flight patterns, I decided to check out where other shrikes had been spotted in the area. I knew that none had been spotted on the Rainier Audubon Christmas Bird Count and they were not regularly seen in one specific area, so after some persistence from my Mom, I finally accomplished one of my long-time goals and created an eBird profile. Then, I went on the eBird site to

track where any shrikes had been seen in our area.

eBird provided some interesting results. In late October 2015, Lee and Mark Crawford spotted a Northern Shrike at M Street just west of Emerald Downs which is just down the hill from the power lines where we saw our shrike. Though Northern Shrikes are not known for sticking around in one area, I wondered; could the shrike have stayed the winter in our area? Had we been oblivious to a birding gem almost literally in our own backyard? Over the past couple months, birders have frequently spotted another shrike at Kent Ponds ranging back to October the 18th. Northern Shrikes are partial to pasture and open area; our Green River Valley stretch is prime farmland and offers plenty of songbirds as potential prey.

Extremely small for a predatory bird, the Northern Shrike earns its nickname the "butcher bird" from its rather gruesome style of slaying its prey. When a shrike hunts, it does not use its feet like a Peregrine falcon, but uses its beak to impale its prey in the back of the neck and sever the prey's spinal cord. Shrikes are known to cache their prey, by impaling it on a barbed wire fence or branch, and store it for later. However, my Mom and I did not spot any impaled songbird in the field. While Northern Shrikes are an interesting species to study, there is a dearth of information regarding their behavior patterns in part because of their hard to find breeding grounds. Seattle Audubon recently reported that overall Washington CBC count numbers of Northern Shrikes were decreasing; however, the CBC count numbers of shrikes in Oregon were increasing. Perhaps much of our population has gone south for other farmland.



Not only was our Northern Shrike sighting a great find, it was a good reminder that no matter how well you might know an area--even the brambles that are two minutes from your house--you never know what surprise might flit, flutter, or fly past you. You just need to keep your eyes open and your ears turned on. Have you seen or heard a bird of particular interest in your neighborhood? Got a sighting that you want to add to eBird? Send your reports of what you're seeing and hearing to me at calenbirds@hotmail.com.

Recent Bird Sightings:

Thanks to this month's reporters Sandra Embrey, Marie West-Johnson, and Kenneth Schroeder. What have you been seeing lately? Send your reports to calenbirds@hotmail.com.

January 27th, 2016 Thanks to Sandra Embrey for emailing the first Seen and Heard report of 2016! Sandra viewed a duo of **Fox Sparrows** bathing in a pond in her yard. Sandra commented "They (the fox sparrows) happily take turns with the **Spotted Towhees** and **Song Sparrows**". Other frequenters to the Embrey's yard were **Bushtits**, "a couple very fat grey squirrels", and the "ubiquitous" crows.

February 3rd, 2016 Kenneth Schroeder spotted a **Northern Saw-Whet Owl**, at his house on Lake Holm Road. The owl "sat on the same branch for the entire morning and afternoon" and watched Kenneth wash his car. Great sighting Kenneth!

February 4th, 2016 It didn't take long for another report from Sandra Embrey to roll in. This month, Sandra watched as 45 **Canada Geese** "invaded" the slope next to a neighboring golf-cart path. Sandra stated "although large flocks have been reported as routinely present in other areas of the golf course, this was the first time we have seen them down here near the 14th green." Sandra also noticed that four or five of the geese were very pale and had "nearly white vertical band(s) of color on the front of the wing".

February 5th, 2016 After our **Northern Shrike** sighting, my mom and I saw another highlight bird: a **Hutton's Vireo**. The vireo was out on the east edge of the hill near the power lines looking into the valley. We watched as it

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Bio: Calen is a 17 year old birder. He enjoys birding in the Green River Valley and the Skagit Valley Flats. Calen is thrilled to continue the 'Seen and Heard' for a fifth year. When not birding, Calen can be seen flying up and down the ice at Kent Valley Ice Center or trekking to class at Highline Community College



Field Trips - Barbara Petersen

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.

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

Soos Creek Owl Prowls

Saturday Night, **Mar 26, 2016;**
10:00 PM to 1:00 AM

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.

Sign-up: Call Kent Commons, Kent City Parks and Recreation, [253-856-5000](tel:253-856-5000).

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.

Lakes and Parks of Federal Way & Vicinity

Saturday, March 12th
8:00 AM to 2:00 PM
Leader: Steve Johnson

Steve will be taking us on an excursion. We had a lot of fun doing this trip last year. We'll visit some of the many lakes and ponds in Federal Way, where we will seek rare to uncommon ducks. We will also be looking for songbirds and seabirds in Fife and Redondo.

In early March we will be looking and listening for early migrants. We may walk up to a mile.

Bring: Lunch, drinks (hot drinks?), warm clothes. A scope is welcome.

Meet: 8:00 AM at the Star Lake P&R north of Federal Way. Folks who wish to leave early may do so.

Directions: Take I-5 to exit 147 north of Federal Way. Exit onto S 272nd St, and go west one block to the light. Turn right and go one block into the P&R on the right.

Sign-Up: Call or email Steve Johnson, 253-941-9852, johnsonsj5@msn.com

Beezley Hills/Moses Coulee

Saturday, March 26th, 2016
530 AM

Jim Flynn will lead a field trip to Beezley Hills/Moses Coulee in Eastern WA.

Meet at 5:30 AM at the Kent-Des Moines Rd. Park & Ride. This is the P&R on the EAST side of I-5, on Military Rd., just north of Kent-Des Moines Rd.

This will be an overnight trip. Participants will need to make their own arrangements for an overnight stay.

We will stay to watch the Sandhill Cranes and geese come into evening roosts in the fields near Crab Creek.

Beezley Hills is a Nature Conservancy Preserve, and along with Moses Coulee is good for wildflowers and birds of the native Sage/Shrub Steppe habitats. We might see anything from Sagebrush Sparrows and Mountain Bluebirds to Prairie Falcons and Western Meadowlarks along with the early wildflowers such as Yellow Bells and Sagebrush Violets. We will also spend some time, especially in the afternoon, driving south towards Othello to look for migrating Sandhill Cranes. Their calls can fill the air as they talk amongst themselves and fly about looking for nighttime roosts. Along with hordes of Canada Geese doing the same, it can make for a very memorable experience.

To sign up for this fabulous all day field trip contact Jim by email, text message or phone call, merlinmania@comcast.net, 206 399 6418.

Ellensburg and Vicinity

Saturday, April 30, 2016
6:30 AM - 8:00 PM
Leader Jim Flynn
carpool site to be determined

Bring all the usuals: Bins and scope, sunscreen (think sunny!) and a windproof layer against the famous Eburg wind. Also lunch, drinks and carpool money. Discover passes are helpful.

Spring is a fantastic time in eastern Washington. It is easy to run up a big bird list and the variety of "eastside" species is enticing. We will be a little early for some late migrants such as Nighthawks, Chats and Lazuli Buntings but we should have great wildflowers and butterflies in addition to sparrows (Vesper, Brewer's and others) both Bluebirds, many warblers, woodpeckers, early flycatchers, etc. Raptors are always a possibility in this area also. We will spend time in Cle Elum, the Teanaway River basin and work our way towards Umtanum Rd. and/or the Yakima River canyon as time allows

To sign up for this fabulous all day field trip contact Jim by email, text message
(Continued on [page 7](#))

Bird of the Month: Bewick's Wren

Reprint Courtesy of Wild Birds Unlimited, Burien

If you encounter a noisy, hyperactive little bird with bold white eyebrows flicking its long tail as it hops nimbly from branch to branch, you may have spotted a Bewick's Wren (pronounced "buick's", like the car).

The Bewick's Wren is a medium-sized bird with a slender body and a strikingly long tail often held upright. Its slender bill is slightly down curved. The bird is brown and gray with a long white stripe over each eye. The back and wings are plain brown, underparts are gray-white and the tail is barred with black and tipped with white spots. The male and female look the same.

The Bewick's Wren is a master vocalist and can belt out a string of short whistles, warbles, burrs and trills or scold visitors with raspy calls.

As it skulks through tangles of branches and leaves looking for insects, the wren cocks its long tail up over its back often flicking it from side to side or fanning it.

The Bewick's Wren favors dry brush areas, chaparral, scrub thickets in open country and open woodlands near rivers and streams but they are equally at home in gardens, residential areas, cities and suburbs.

Although the Bewick's Wren primarily eats insects, it will come to suet, shelled peanuts and shelled sunflower seed.

The Bewick's Wren builds its nest in a cavity or on a ledge within 30 feet of the ground. The nest is cup-shaped and made with grasses, rootlets, leaves, moss or



Courting Bewick's Wrens normally form monogamous pairs and the male and female often forage together.

At the sound of approaching humans, a female Bewick's Wren incubating eggs usually flushes quietly from her nest cavity but remains nearby and scolds. Some females, however, sit tightly on their eggs even when disturbed.

The Bewick's Wren population in the eastern United States has greatly declined mainly due to the expansion in range of the House Wren. The House Wren is suspect in the decline because they will frequently remove eggs from nests in cavities.

The oldest recorded Bewick's Wren was at least 8 years old when it was recaptured and rereleased during banding operations in California.

In his 1889 *Ornithology of Illinois*, Robert Ridgway attested that "No bird more deserves the protection of man than Bewick's Wren. He does not need man's encouragement, for he comes of his own accord and installs himself as a member of the community, wherever it suits his taste. He is found about the cowshed and barn along with the Pewee and Barn Swallow; he investigates the pig-sty; then explores the garden fence, and finally mounts to the roof and pours forth one of the sweetest songs that ever was heard."

other plant materials. Some contain spider egg cases. The inside may be lined with feathers, wool, hair or plant down with a final inner lining of snakeskin. The male initiates the nest building and then the female helps out. The female will lay 3 - 8 eggs which will hatch in 14 - 16 days. The babies will fledge in 14 - 16 days.

Other cool facts about the Bewick's Wren:

The species is named after British engraver Thomas Bewick who was a friend of pioneering bird artist John James Audubon.

A young male Bewick's Wren learns to sing from neighboring adult males while growing up in his parents' territory. The songs he develops differ from his father's, with a note changed here, a syllable there. The melodious signature he acquires between the ages of about 30 and 60 days will be his for life.

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

flitted out of the bushes, gleaned insects, and swooped back to the bushes. Needless to say, it was great entertainment!

February 12th, 2016 A clamorous female **Pileated Woodpecker** stopped by Marie West-Johnson's feeders for a quick meal. Over the winter, Marie has occasionally glimpsed an **Orange-Crowned Warbler**. However, the orange-crowned has faced some stiff competition from a surly **Yellow-rumped Warbler**.

Mystery Bird of the Month

This bird is uncommon, but can occasionally be spotted at the Des Moines Marina. Can you guess the bird? Here are the clues:

- I am the largest of my kind, in North America
- I sport a black cap on my head
- A group of me is known as a "water dance"
- My eyes are distinctively red
- I was known regionally as a Dabchick, a Swan-Grebe, and Swan-necked Grebe, hence my notably lengthy neck.

- I am well known for my breeding display, where I skitter across the surface water with my neck stretched out.
- I am not eared, pied-billed, horned and I have no association with Clark.
- West is better than east

Who am I?

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

Answer on page 7.

Mewsings from Millie

Reprint Courtesy of Wild Birds Unlimited, Burien



Hello and welcome back to my musings!

So, what's the big deal about birds? What makes them unique? They have beaks, feathers, wings, lay eggs and walk on two legs all of which are important elements of a bird's anatomy, but which one of these things sets birds apart from all other living creatures?

Could it be their beaks? Nope. Turtles and Duck-billed Platypuses have beaks. Wings are quite special but bats and some insects have wings, too. Humans walk on two legs so it can't be that and snakes, insects and fish all lay eggs.

So, what is it exactly that makes birds stand out? Feathers! Birds are the only living creatures that have feathers.

There is an amazing variety of feathers but all are made up of the same basic parts that have evolved to serve different functions.

The structure of a downy feather is loosely arranged. This helps to trap air close to a bird's body to help it stay warm.

Other feathers feature microscopic hooks that interlock to form a wind and waterproof barrier that allows birds to fly and stay dry.

Wing feathers are called remiges. They have a branched structure that interlocks like Velcro to create a uniform windproof surface that allows lift in flight. They are

typically asymmetrical with a shorter leading edge for improved aerodynamics.

Most tail feathers, or retrices, are also branched and interlock to create a surface that helps birds to steer in flight.

Contour feathers are the feathers that cover a bird's body. The area that interlocks on these feathers is designed to help keep the bird dry. At the base of each feather is a downy section that traps heat.

There are also feathers hidden beneath other feathers on the bird's body that have a loose structure in order to help the bird stay warm. These feathers are called semiplumes.

Plumulaceous feathers, the aforementioned downy ones, spread out into a fluffy, heat-trapping mass. This allows some birds to stay warm even if the temperature is 40 degrees below zero!

Every feather on a bird's body serves an important role in the bird's activities. Feathers help birds fly, stay warm and keep dry but they also help them to show off and hide. Some feathers have become specialized to allow for more efficient flight and others have developed into such an extreme ornamental form that they may even impede mobility.

One bird exclusive of all others in terms of how it uses its feathers is the Club-winged Manakin of Colombia and Ecuador. This exceptional little bird uses its wings to sing! The male flips its wings up over his back and knocks them together at a rate of 107 times a

second. Considering a typical hummingbird beats its wings on an average of 50 - 75 times per second, this is quite an accomplishment! This rapid knocking creates a vibration in the feather shaft that produces a single note that sounds like a high-pitched foghorn.

Sometimes the role of a feather is a mystery. Take, for instance, the tufts of feathers on the head of the Great Horned Owl. Although there are theories, nobody knows the particular purpose of these for sure. One more puzzling secret in the fascinating world of birds.



Until next time,

Millie, the Muse of Mews

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, will reimburse the cost of a Discover Pass to any new member who joins Rainier Audubon during 2016.

All you have to do is join Rainier Audubon, bring the receipt for your Discover Pass to a meeting and give it to our treasurer and she will reimburse you.

The cost of joining is \$25.00/individual and \$30/family. The cost of a Discover Pass is normally \$35.00 dollars so you've just saved \$10.00 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.

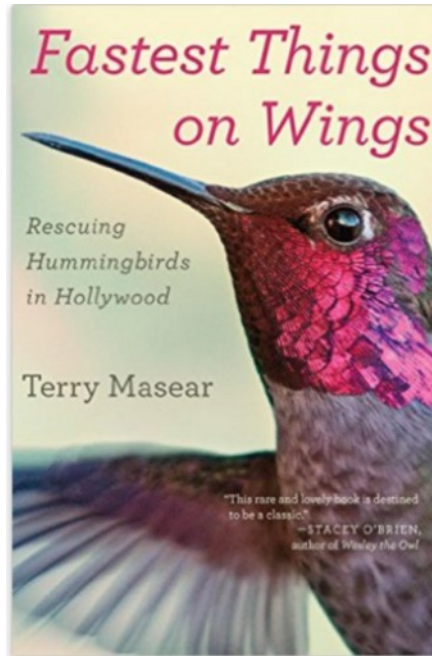
“Fastest Things on Wings: Rescuing Hummingbirds in Hollywood” by Terry Masear

The only recent vacation that I haven't written about yet is the trip I took to Disneyland in November, and I must admit I was a little too busy pursuing Mickey Mouse and celebrating the magic while at Disneyland to pay too much attention to the birds. (However, I think next time I'm at Disneyland, I'm going to try to make an article out of it. I already have some idea of where the birds congregate there.) Thus, it is time for a book review!

I just finished reading 2015's *Fastest Things on Wings: Rescuing Hummingbirds in Hollywood* by Terry Masear. I liked the book a lot; in fact, I liked it even better than the other book that I read about a bird rehabber. Of course, like most folks, I love hummingbirds, so reading about someone who works with them daily is bound to be an interesting read. However, *Fastest Things on Wings* does not just have an interesting subject: the text is also very eloquently and thoughtfully written. In her book, Masear very expertly uses words to convey the details of her experiences and also her thoughts and observations formed by rehabbing hummingbirds

Fastest Things on Wings talks about the author's experiences since 2005 running a one-person rehab facility for hummingbirds in West Hollywood. While the author includes some stories from throughout her time rehabbing hummingbirds, *Fastest Things on Wings* focuses on the summer she rehabbed Gabriel and Pepper (along with 160 other hummingbirds). Most of the hummingbirds that Masear rehabilitates are youngsters: she says that 90 percent of the birds go into a nest in the ICU, which she calls a "nursery for nestlings and pre-fledglings."

Gabriel and Pepper were different, however, as they came to her as seriously injured adult hummingbirds. I don't want to tell you much more about how Gabriel and Pepper were special birds—that might spoil the book for you—but I will mention that Pepper was found in a dish of jalapeños on a film set, and Gabriel was injured by being hit by a limousine in Beverley Hills.



While reading *Fastest Things on Wings*, I enjoyed learning about the hummingbird rehabilitation process, and I also enjoyed learning a little more about hummingbirds. First of all, I was struck by how hard Masear works during the breeding season: she gets up at 5 a.m. and goes to bed at 11p.m. but is still available by



phone all night long. She said that during breeding season, she can't leave the house for more than thirty minutes, as young hummingbirds need to be fed that often. At some points, I felt tired just reading about Masear's busy days!

In her book, Masear makes some interesting observations about hummingbirds. For example, a third of the way through the book, she says: "To label all hummingbirds as mean and combative misses one of the most fundamental truths every rehabber quickly comes to recognize: hummingbird dispositions are as varied and diverse as those of any domestic pet." I learned an important fact a little later in the book: Masear says that cotton towels with the little loops pull out hummingbird claws, which the birds are never able to regrow. Evidently losing a claw is extremely painful. So, if you ever find an injured hummingbird, don't put him or her on a towel! I found a third piece of information toward the end of the book: Masear says that hummingbird bones are so light that they decompose in the ground within a few days.

[Field Trips \(Continued from page 4\)](#)
or phone
call merlinmania@comcast.net,
206 399 6418.

Answer: Western Grebe

Kent-Auburn CBC 2015 Results

By Cindy Flanagan and Calen Randall (compiler)

On Sunday, January 3, 2016, the Rainier Audubon held its 35th annual Christmas Bird Count on what proved to quite the chilly, cold, damp winter day with temperatures varying from 26 degrees to 43 degrees Fahrenheit, with snow falling from 11:30pm-4pm, and many ponds and lakes frozen. Even though the count was on one of the coldest and snowiest Rainier count days on record, most species had solid numbers; however, there weren't a lot of species with terribly low counts.

The 2015 Rainier Audubon CBC had **61** participants (56 field participants and 5 back yard bird participants) who totaled 80.5 party hours by car, 83 party hours on foot and 10.5 hours owling. The total number of miles covered included 500 miles by car, 72 miles on foot, and 6.25 miles owling.

Total number of birds: 32,559 birds (In Rainier Audubon's first CBC the total was 19,564!)

125 species tallied (*count day + count week*)

Count day: 121 species

Count Week: an additional 4 species

Honorable mention of hybrid and subspecies: 3 notables: 1 American Wigeon X Green-winged Teal hybrid; 1 Dark-eyed Junco *Cismontanus*; and 1 Harlan's Hawk (seen during Count week)

Highlights

The following species that are not normally seen during CBC or count week were counted including American Tree Sparrow, Brant, Black Phoebe (Count Week), Dark-eyed Junco *Cismontanus* and an American Wigeon X Green-winged Teal hybrid.

As well, with the colder weather, Area 6S counted a record number of American Pipits (150) and Dunlin (41). Area 3 was able to locate an American Dipper. Area 5 and 6S also had White-throated Sparrows.

As well, during count week a Sora, a Snow Goose, a Swamp Sparrow, a Harlan's Hawk and a Black Phoebe were seen.

Notable misses

No Purple Finch, Hermit Thrush, Pacific Loon, Canvasback or Brown-headed Cowbird were counted.

Low numbers for Red Crossbill (just 1 at Des Moines Creek), Pine Siskins (46)

Low numbers for waterfowl, which may be due to frozen ponds and lakes.

Record high counts

We had high counts of Canada Goose (3235), Cackling Goose (894), American Crows (10,907), Brown Creeper (38), Slate-colored Junco (21) and Red-breasted Merganser (67)

Western Scrub-jay population continues to diversify as the birds have been counted in several areas of the count circle. Five years ago they were only counted in one area.

Participants:

Area 1 Brien Meilleur (Leader), Alex Juchems, Mathew Juchems, Sue Cooper, James Lovellford

Area 2 Barbara Petersen (Leader), Ken Schroeder, Linda Carlson, Dan Streiffert, Jay Galvin, Roland

Cunningham, Michele fifer, Cheryl White, Elizabeth Gould, Peter Zika

Area 3 Ken Brunner (leader), Caren Adams (leader), Mary Frey, Mike Scuderi, Ann Gerner

Area 4 Brenda Tom (leader), Joe Miles (leader), Ron Toonen, Gene Buzzelli, Sandy Buzzelli, Elizabeth Miles

Area 5 Tim Brennan (leader), Jeff Cohen, Merlin Sellard, Hope Anderson, Lynde Eller, Teri Dittman

Area 6 Roger Orness (Leader), Calen Randall (leader), Cindy Flanagan (leader), David Swayne (leader), Etta Cosey, Sharon Cormier, Joanne Cormier, Liz Cormier, Cameron Randall, Barbara Retelle

Area 7 Charlie Wright (leader), Carol Schulz (leader), Linnaea Chapman, Debra Russell, Jeff Jendro

Area 8 Steve Johnson (leader), Susan Livingston, Sandra Embrey, Jim Flynn, Merri Berg, Laura Lavington, Lisa Lavington, Katie Tylczak, Marilyn Jones

Backyard Feeder Count Nancy Streiffert, Sarah Streiffert, Carley Randall, Cathea Stanley, Helen Kubik

Thank you to everyone who participated in the 2015 CBC. On a cold, chilly count day, the event was well attended and our teams did a great job locating the birds! Well done!

Species	Total	Species	Total	Species	Total	Species	Total	Species	Total
Snow Goose	CW	Western Grebe	3	Common Murre	3	American Dipper	1		
Cackling Goose	894	Brandt's Cormorant	5	Pigeon Guillemot	6	Golden-crowned Kinglet	208		
Canada Goose	3235	Double-crested Cormorant	121	Rock Pigeon	728	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	81		
Trumpeter Swan	47	Pelagic Cormorant	4	Band-tailed Pigeon	12	American Robin	649		
Wood Duck	2	American Bittern	2	Eurasian Collared Dove	71	Varied Thrush	68		
Gadwall	169	Great Blue Heron	33	Mourning Dove	4	European Starling	2985		
Eurasian Wigeon	3	Green Heron	1	Barn Owl	5	American Pipit	150		
American Wigeon	826	Bald Eagle	41	Great Horned Owl	2	Orange-crowned Warbler	2		
Mallard	2142	Northern Harrier	6	Barred Owl	1	Yellow-rumped Warbler	16		
Northern Shoveler	210	Sharp-shinned Hawk	5	Short-eared Owl	1	Audubon's			
Northern Pintail	491	Cooper's Hawk	18	Northern Saw-whet Owl	1	Myrtle			
Green-winged Teal	230	Red-tailed Hawk	76	Anna's Hummingbird	73	Townsend's Warbler	4		
Redhead	11	Harlan's Hawk	CW	Belted Kingfisher	15	Spotted Towhee	197		
Ring-necked Duck	697	American Kestrel	5	Red-breasted Sapsucker	8	Savannah Sparrow	1		
Greater Scaup	24	Merlin	4	Downy Woodpecker	25	Fox Sparrow	125		
Lesser Scaup	18	Peregrin Falcon	3	Hairy Woodpecker	9	Song Sparrow	449		
Harlequin Duck	22	Virginia Rail	11	Northern Flicker	127	Lincoln's Sparrow	9		
Surf Scoter	78	Sora	CW	Yellow-shafted	0	Swamp Sparrow	CW		
White-winged Scoter	23	American Coot	891	Pileated Woodpecker	10	White-throated Sparrow	2		
Black Scoter	6	Killdeer	156	Stellar's Jay	114	White-crowned Sparrow	88		
Bufflehead	255	Spotted Sandpiper	1	Western Scrub Jay	24	Golden-crowned Sparrow	197		
Common Goldeneye	94	Least Sandpiper	8	American Crow	10907	Dark-eyed Junco	846		
Barrow's Goldeneye	38	Dunlin	41	Common Raven	10	Slate-colored Junco	21		
Hooded Merganser	123	Long-billed Dowitcher	0	Black-capped Chickadee	352	Red-winged Blackbird	551		
Common Merganser	178	Wilson's Snipe	2	Chestnut-backed Chickadee	93	Western Meadowlark	63		
Red-breasted Merganser	67	Mew Gull	66	Bushtit	317	Brewer's Blackbird	56		
Ruddy Duck	53	Ring-billed Gull	3	Red-breasted Nuthatch	19	House Finch	132		
California Quail	10	California Gull	3	Brown Creeper	38	Red Crossbill	1		
Red-throated Loon	7	Herring Gull	2	Bewick's Wren	51	Pine Siskin	46		
Common Loon	5	Thayer's Gull	1	Pacific Wren	42	American Goldfinch	32		
Pied-billed Grebe	39	Western Gull	1	Marsh Wren	26	Evening Grosbeak	9		
Horned Grebe	122	Glaucous-winged Gull	405			House Sparrow	115		
Red-necked Grebe	10	WestxGlc-winged Gull	264						
		Gull sp.	28						



“You must be the change you wish to see in the world.”

— Mahatma Gandhi



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