

The Heron Herald



Rainier Audubon Society

May 2017

Rainier Audubon Membership Meeting

7:00 PM May 15, 2017

The AMAZING BIRDS & PEOPLE OF ECUADOR

Have you ever dreamed of traveling the world in search of beautiful birds? If so, Ecuador should be one of the first countries you visit. The Northwest Slopes of the Ecuadorean Andes Mountains boast a spectacular Choco-Andean bioregion that offers extraordinary diversity and unsurpassed endemic bird species. It also has the greatest hummingbird, antpitta and tanager show on earth!

Cheryl, Pat, Barbara and Marie explored and enjoyed this area with Victor Emanuel Nature Tours (VENT) in November of 2015. We stayed at lovely Septimo Paraiso Lodge in the cloud forest which provided great access to prime birding locales in this diverse region.

Besides experiencing the fabulous birds there, we saw firsthand how many of the local people, native and non-native, are working hard to reforest or save large sections of the jungle from "big agriculture and oil interests" and foster a culture of ecotourism.

Two important pioneers in this effort are Paul Greenfield, illustrator of the "Birds of Ecuador", and his friend and



Cheryl, Pat, Marie, & Barbara

business partner, Juan Veintimilla. Paul served as one of our outstanding tour guides and Juan was the trip's "ground operator" who made sure we made all of our connections and kept things running smoothly. Together they founded the Mindo Cloud Forest Foundation and over the years have reforested and preserved thousands of acres of jungle. The Foundation now owns and operates six forest reserves at different altitudinal levels for conservation and ecotourism.

It was fascinating birding with them every day and meeting all kinds of amazing people who are working industriously to save bird and wildlife habitat in Ecuador. It was truly inspirational!

Please join us as we share photos of some of the fantastic birds we saw and tell stories about some of the awesome people we met.

Join us at 6:30 for conversation and refreshments.

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.

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

Backyard 'n Birds

By Marie West-Johnson

Spring is blooming all around us. Migrating birds are returning and it is time to get outside. PowellsWood Garden in Federal Way is a perfect place to do just that. To help you get going, Kristine Dillinger of PowellsWood Garden is again offering 1/2 price membership to all Rainier Audubon Society members. This means individual yearly memberships to the garden are \$15.00 and a family yearly membership is \$22.50. A few trips to the garden pays for the yearly membership. (With the membership is included a reciprocal membership to other gardens all across the United States. Last November I went to the Phoenix Botanical Garden three times for free.) PowellsWood is beautiful and wild, a great place to go birding. Please consider a membership and support this local treasure. For more information the website is: <http://powellswood.org/>



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.

Rainier Audubon Society Directory

Position	Name	Board Member	Phone	email
President	Heather Gibson	Yes	253-856-9812	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
Mailing	Debra Russell	No	425 829 4008	debrarussell@comcast.net
Lifetime Members	Max Prinsen	Yes	425-432-9965	
Lifetime Members	Erin Wojewodski-Prinsen	Yes	425-432-9965	

Seen & Heard by Calen Randall



Spring migration is in full force, with numerous species sweeping up the Pacific and Atlantic coasts and the Great Plains. Since I did not receive any reports in the last two months, here are some of my recent sightings from this migration season.

Recent Bird Sightings:

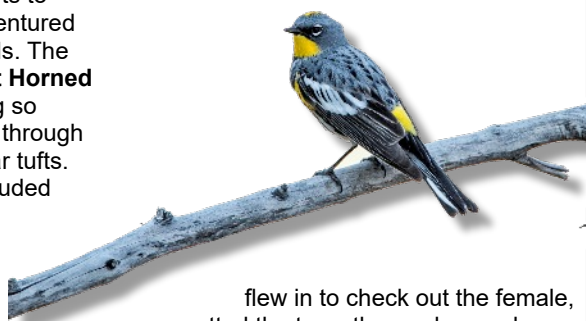
March 16th While driving back home along West Valley Highway, I glimpsed a lone **Snow Goose** amongst a flock of Cacklers.

March 23rd Out on an adventure at Des Moines Marina, I ran into Carol Schulz and her sister on the pier. After watching a **Bonaparte's Gull**, Carol advised me to keep an eye out for **Hutton's Vireo** on the creek trail. Carol's words proved wise and sure enough, a trio of Hutton's greeted me on the trail.

March 24th For the March edition of the Rainier Audubon Youth Naturalists field trip, we headed south, to Nisqually NWR in Thurston County. After recalling the

story of Helen Engle's great efforts to protect the wildlife reserve, we ventured out on the loop to spot some birds. The highlight of the walk was a **Great Horned Owl** perched tight against a snag so everyone got to practice peering through binoculars to spot its "horned" ear tufts. Other highlights from the trip included the first of the year **Common Yellowthroat**, **Northern Harrier**, and **Lincoln's Sparrow**.

March 30th My Mom and I ventured up to Magnusson Park along the shores of Lake Washington in Seattle and on a muddy day, the birds did not disappoint, especially the **Yellow-rumped Warblers**. A mix of Myrtle's and Audubon's greeted us throughout the park, nest building along the lake and flitting through the marsh. We spotted a **Horned Grebe**, three **Common Goldeneyes**, and a pair of **Common Mergansers** out on Lake Washington. However, the highlight of the afternoon was the **Northern Flickers**. In a line of trees a battle between two male flickers was occurring. One appeared to be challenging the other, but every time he made a move to posture his way past, the other would chase him to a branch on another tree. The reason for their competition? A female was perched in a tree at the end of the line, sitting pretty as she watched the two males compete for her. After twenty minutes another male



flew in to check out the female, spotted the two other males, and decided a mate wasn't worth all the trouble and rapidly flew off. It was quite the entertainment for the afternoon!

March 31st I glimpsed a pair of **Wood Ducks** at Lake Fenwick. I did not spy their nest around the lake. If anyone knows of a possible Wood Duck nest at Lake Fenwick, please contact me!

April 8th In April, I ventured down to M Street, behind Emerald Downs to check for any early season migrating shorebirds. In the ponds on the north side of the farm, I spotted a pair of **Greater Yellowlegs**, walking past a couple **Killdeer**. In the bushes near the Interurban Trail several **Marsh Wrens** were singing.

Send your sightings/hearings to calenbirds@hotmail.com

Calen is an 18 year old birder entering his sixth year writing the Seen and Heard. Currently attending Highline College, Calen enjoys birding in south King County and around Ithaca, New York.

June 19th Membership Meeting and Potluck
Join us for a great meal and review of the Birdathon Results
6:30 PM



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

Tukwila Backyard Wildlife Festival and Bird Walk in the Park

Saturday, May 13, 2017

Time: 10am - 3pm

Bird walk 10:15 am

A bird walk in the park and along the river will be offered on Migratory

Bird Day. Programs and activities for adults and children will be presented.

RAS and Seattle Audubon, retail stores, and nature groups will be there.

This is a fun, educational, local festival! The website is

<http://backyardwildlifefestival.org/>

Bird walk starts near main door at 10:15. Last year our bird walk saw two

Green Herons flying and calling right across the river.

Speakers include Composting for Healthy Soil, 11:00AM by Rowan May Lang.

Give Beauty & Bees a Chance, 12:00 by Marianne Benetti. Garden Talk, 1:30PM by Cisco Morris.

Tukwila Community Ctr. 12424 - 42nd S. Tukwila, 98168.

Yakima River Canyon Bird Fest

May 12-14, 2017

Mark your calendars! May 12th - 14th, Kittitas Environmental Education Network (KEEN) is hosting a new birding festival, Yakima River Canyon Bird Fest. Events include guided field trips, workshops (photography, birding by ear, bird illustration), family-oriented activities, a kids' day camp, keynote speaker (Paul Bannick, on owls), with a banquet at Red's Yakima River Canyon Resort, an owl prowl, self-guided field trips (maps provided), and more! You can get all the information on the website:

www.ycic.org/yakima-river-canyon-bird-fest

SHADOW Lake Nature Preserve Events

Please note, all events are free but donations of \$10 to \$15 per participant are suggested. SHADOW Lake Nature Preserve is run off of the generous donations of private individuals. All ages are welcome, but children under 13 must come accompanied by an adult guardian (exception - summer camps do not require an adult guardian).

Friday, May 12th: 10 - 11 am Guided Nature Hike: Tour of the Upland Forest

Blurb: Explore the beauty of our trails with a guide to lead you through the diverse ecology represented at SHADOW Lake Nature Preserve. Guided Nature Walks are outdoor explorations that take place rain or shine. Come with weather appropriate clothes and shoes for moderate levels of walking - inclines or uneven ground may be encountered on this walk.

This month, explore the upland forest of the Nature Preserve. See forest

succession in action, discover what "an octopus tree" could be, and feel like you're walking back in time!

Register here:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/guided-nature-walk-tour-of-the-upland-forest-tickets-32905748981>

Grays Harbor Shorebird Festival

May 5 - 7, 2017

Celebrating Nature and the Spring Migration of Shorebirds in Grays Harbor County

EACH SPRING, hundreds of thousands of shorebirds stop to rest and feed in Grays Harbor estuary on their migration northward. Coming from as far south as Argentina, these Arctic-bound shorebirds are among the world's greatest migrants. Some birds travel over 15,000 miles round trip! Tens of thousands of shorebirds feed on the open mudflats in the estuary. This concentration of birds offers people a great chance to view a number of shorebird species, and with luck, to see the birds fly together in beautiful formations while trying to escape the fastest creature on earth, the Peregrine Falcon.

Leavenworth Spring Bird Festival

May 18th - 21st, 2017

<http://www.leavenworthspringbirdfest.org/>

Birding at the Streiffert's

Saturday, May 20
7:00 to Noon
Birdathon Donation - \$15.

This is much more than a "Backyard" field trip. The Streiffert's yard on the hill in south Kent is very large, and their woods drops all the way down to the Green River. Their area is a migrant wonderland during May. Look for warblers and other birds in the bushes and feeders, in various habitats in the yard, and in the neighbor's pasture. Warblers, vireos, flycatchers, and more can be seen and heard down on the trails in the woods. Learn some spring bird song with us! Maybe get some new species for the year!

Cost is \$15. donation to Birdathon. Includes a light lunch.

Please RSVP and/or fill out a sponsor form so we know how many to plan for.

Call or email Dan and Nancy

Streiffert, dan_streiffert@hotmail.com, 253-796-2203 to sign up and get directions.

Green Valley in Early Summer

Saturday, June 10th
8:00 AM to Early Afternoon
Leader: Steve Johnson

In June, the migrant birds should be singing on their territory near Auburn and in the beautiful Green Valley east of Auburn. We'll visit Academy Drive, Green Valley Road, and Flaming Geyser State Park. We may see and hear warblers, thrushes, vireos, Red-breasted Sapsuckers, Virginia Rail, flycatchers, and more. We may walk up to 2 miles on trails and roads.

People who bring their own cars, and want to leave early may do so.

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

Meet: Auburn Safeway at Auburn Ave & Main at 8:00 AM.

Directions: Take hwy 18 to Auburn, and exit at Auburn Ave (hwy 164). Turn north (right) on Auburn Way and drive 3 blocks north. Safeway sign and gas station is on the left. Park in the lot just beyond the gas station straight out from the right entry door at Safeway at 8:00 am.

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

Audubon Wenas Creek Campout

Washington State Audubon Campout

The Hazel Wolf Bird Sanctuary at the Wenas Creek Campground

Memorial Day Weekend

May 26-29, 2017

<http://www.wenasaudubon.org/>

Spectacular Swifts in Selleck

Just a reminder, May is the month the Vaux's Swifts return to the Old Schoolhouse in Selleck. A half hour before sunset on a dry evening is a great time to watch several hundred swifts assemble and swirl into the chimney. We are fortunate to have such an important roosting site in our area. I hope you take the opportunity to enjoy the spectacle.

PUGET SOUND BIRD FEST

SEPTEMBER 15-17, 2017

(Edmonds, WA) Mark your calendars for the return of a beloved fall tradition for nature lovers throughout the Northwest: Puget Sound Bird Fest returns the weekend of September 15-17th, 2017, in Edmonds. Acclaimed as one of the Seattle area's best events on www.events12.com, this annual 3-day festival celebrates birds and nature on the beautiful shores of Puget Sound with speakers, guided walks and field trips, Puget Sound boat tours, exhibits, and educational activities for children and adults.

www.pugetsoundbirdfest.org

Bird of the Month: Western Tanager

Reprint Courtesy of Wild Birds Unlimited, Burien

The Western Tanager is a medium-sized American songbird. Adults have pale stout pointed bills, yellow underparts and light wing bars. Adult males have a bright red face and a yellow nape, shoulder and rump, with black upper back, wings and tail. Females have a yellow head and are olive on the back with dark wings and tail.



Their breeding habitat is coniferous or mixed woods across western North America from the Mexico-U.S. border as far north as southern Alaska. This makes them the northernmost-breeding tanager.

Western Tanagers migrate alone or in small flocks arriving at their breeding grounds in spring. Breeding primarily occurs from the beginning of May into July.

The Western Tanager builds a flimsy cup nest on a horizontal tree branch. The nest

is made of twigs, rootlets, grasses and pine needles.

The clutch size is typically 3 - 5 eggs. The female incubates the eggs for about 13 days. The young are fed by both parents and usually fledge 11 - 15 days after hatching.

Western Tanagers eat insects, fruit and berries. They typically don't come to bird feeders but you can attract them to your yard with moving water.

Western Tanagers can live for several years. A banded wild Western Tanager has been documented at 7 years, 11 months old.

Save Weyerhaeuser Campus Update

State House Capital Budget Includes \$250,000 for Weyerhaeuser Campus

Good news! The Washington State House of Representatives approved appropriation of \$250,000 from the 2017-19 State Capital Budget for Weyerhaeuser Land Preservation in Federal Way. Key to getting the money in the budget were State Representatives Mike Pellicciotti and Kristine Reeves of District 30. The money would be used for planning, development, acquisition and other activities for pursuing open space conservation strategies for the historic Weyerhaeuser Campus.

This property is a gem that holds regional significance — economically, historically, culturally, and environmentally. A year ago, Industrial Realty Group (IRG) purchased the 430-acre campus and currently plans to develop approximately 120-acres of forested land into industrial warehousing.

A powerful coalition of citizens, organizations and government officials (local, county and state) are working to conserve key areas of the campus, efforts that will preserve and protect the natural features and character of this special property. Time is of the essence — IRG's warehouse development plans proceed, and without immediate action, access to land acquisition may be eliminated.

Next step—Washington State final capital budget

The next step is to reconcile House and State capital budgets, to come to agreement on a final capital budget. District 30's Senator Mark Miloscia has pledged his full support for the Weyerhaeuser Campus Preservation and will advocate to make sure money for Weyerhaeuser Land Preservation is included in the final state capital budget.

- Approving the \$250,000 Capital Budget funds in the final state budget will enable the city of Federal Way and its partner, land conservancy group Forterra, to quickly take initial steps in these conservation efforts:
- Purchase of nearly 54 acres of the western shoreline area of North Lake, headwaters of the salmon-bearing East Hylebos Creek.
- Securing the future of the world-renowned Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden, a key player in scientific study and preservation of species rhododendrons from around the world.
- Protecting the Pacific Bonsai Museum, which draws more than 30,000 visitors annually from the U.S. and overseas.
- Trails that have been used by people from throughout the region for more than 40 years.

The 2017-19 State Capital Budget should be finalized by the end of April.

NOTICE OF ANNUAL ELECTION OF BOARD MEMBERS

Vote to be held at our May 15, 2017 Membership Meeting

Or VOTE BY MAIL_IN BALLOT BELOW

In accordance with our bylaws, Rainier Audubon hereby announces the upcoming Board of Directors election to be held at our Monday, May 15, 2017 Membership Meeting at 7:00 PM at the Federal Way United Methodist Church, 29645—51st Ave. So., in unincorporated Auburn, WA.

If you cannot make it to our May program to vote in person, please take the time to do so now.

Mail in Ballot

You may vote for as many individuals as you wish.

Check the box beside the name of the individual(s) you wish to vote for.

- Heather Gibson:** Heather has been a casual birdwatcher for a while. She especially enjoys the field trips seeing the colorful birds like lazuli buntings. She is currently serving as President of the Board. She appreciates being a member of Rainier Audubon and wants to help as much as she can.
- Laura Lavington:** Laura is currently Rainier Audubon's treasurer and has been on the board for three years. The Bewick's wren is Laura's favorite species of bird. Laura is a freelance copyeditor.
- Steve Feldman:** Steve has been a Board member for over 10 years, and still enjoys meeting with the Board to help direct Rainier Audubon's plans and policies. He attended the National Audubon Convention when it was held in 2013 at the Skamania Lodge, and still feels the momentum from that very positive experience. He is making plans to attend the next one in Salt Lake City this year.
- Write-in _____

Voter Signature _____

Affix
postage
here

Rainier Audubon
PO Box 778
Auburn, WA 98071

Mewsings from Millie

Reprint Courtesy of Wild Birds Unlimited, Burien



To find out, the two scientists lured more than 300 Mallards into traps on ponds and outfitted them with tiny backpacks with GPS loggers in order to record the birds' movements. The loggers were not linked to satellites, so a few weeks later they had to trap the ducks again to download the data manually which was easier

said than done. As Kleyheeg said, "Catching a duck is not as difficult as recapturing a duck. People think that Mallards are stupid, but I think in fact they've become quite smart due to centuries of hunting pressure."

Kleyheeg and Soons combined the GPS-generated record of the ducks' daily wanderings with data on how long it takes for a seed to make its way through a Mallard's digestive tract. This resulted in a mathematical model of how Mallards spread seeds across the landscape and it shows that they play an important role in maintaining connections between wetland habitats.

To Mallards, the landscape is one gigantic buffet table. By eating seeds in one spot and depositing them in another - sometimes as far as five miles away - they knit together islands of habitat that would otherwise be cut off from one another. Without Mallards and other ducks making their rounds, plant seeds from one area wouldn't be able to reach the next, leaving these fragments of wetland isolated and vulnerable to extinction.

Mallards also create new areas of plant biodiversity. After a night of foraging, they return to their roosts to "rest" which means preening, socializing, sleeping and depositing more seeds that they ate earlier. Researchers found that one-third of the seeds deposited by Mallards ends up back at the roost. Given good growing conditions, those seeds will sprout and grow into new plant communities.

So, Mallards unintentionally plant miniature botanical gardens which contain a cross section of local plants at their roost sites. These "wild seed banks" maintain a vault of genetic diversity to



ensure that plant populations can be replenished as the landscape changes around them.

So, next time you see a Mallard, show a little appreciation. If it's a male, tell him he looks good in green and thank both sexes for making the planet's wetlands healthier and increasing their biodiversity for the benefit of all birds and wildlife.

Until next time,

Millie, the Muse of Mews

Hello and welcome again to my musings!

Ah, the much maligned Mallard. Pretty enough to look at, the male with its iridescent green head and bright yellow bill and both sexes sporting a beautiful white-bordered blue patch on their wings.

The poor things. There are just too many of them. People consider them "pond pigeons" which is unfair - they are just trying to survive like the rest of us and since there ARE so many of them, obviously they've done a good job!

And there's another reason to show these dabbling ducks a little more respect and appreciation. A new study out of Europe has found that Mallards play a key role in keeping wetland communities diverse and healthy.

In the fall and winter, Mallards all over the world stick to a predictable daily routine. They forage at night, flying from one patch of wetland habitat to another be it a roadside ditch, a swampy spot near a cornfield, the shore of a lake, looking for seeds, stems, and roots. Come daylight, they return to a communal roost to socialize and rest.

These everyday wanderings are invisible to most people but not to two ecologists from Utrecht University in the Netherlands.

Erik Kleyheeg and Merel Soons wondered if these daily treks might spread the seeds of wetland plants and because Mallards are so numerous they also wondered if they might have an unusually powerful effect on local plant communities.



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“You cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world around you. What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make.” —Jane Goodall



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

Name: _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____ Phone _____

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