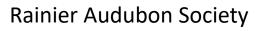
The Heron Herald



May 2018

Rainier Audubon Membership Meeting

"Wild Nut Honey"

By Emmy and Chris **7:00 P.M. May 21, 2018**

We are Emmy and Chris of Wing Nut Honey in Tukwila, WA. We have been urban beekeepers for about 8 years, learning the craft from master gardener beekeepers Paul and Betty Gully. When we moved to Tukwila 17 years ago, our attention was immediately drawn to the beehives in the Gully's yard. Thus began my years of pestering these dear people to

teach me beekeeping. After finding a swarm in the park, they finally relented and thus began the lessons



and sharing of 50 years of gardening and beekeeping experience. The Gully's knowledge, coupled with our mutual backgrounds of being raised by naturalists and gardeners, made beekeeping a perfect complement to how we move in and see the world.

We are excited to talk about our experiences as beekeepers and share some of our research and observations that help create beautiful, useful gardens full of nectar and pollen that nurture and support native pollinators. This in turn strengthens all the native plant life and cultivated gardens in our communities.

Thank you,

Emmy Scharnberg

Join us at 6:30 for conversation and refreshments.





Rainier Audubon programs are held at 7:00 P.M. at the

Federal Way United Methodist Church 29645 - 51st Ave. So. 98001 (in unincorporated Auburn)

New Rainier Audubon Facebook Page

https://www.facebook.com/rainieraudu bonsociety/

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 <u>RainierAudubon@googlegroups.com</u>

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

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

RAS Mission Statement:

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

Last Issue Until September, 2018!

Articles for September issue due August 15th!

Volunteers needed for the Tukwila Wildlife Festival, May 12, 2018,

Please contact Dan Streiffert if you can help.

	Rainier Au	dubon Society I	Directory	
Position	Name	Board Member	Phone	email
President	Heather Gibson	Yes	206-226-2050	hedder_swedder@yahoo.com
Vice President	Jay Galvin	Yes	253-939-3094	gjgalvin@comcast.net
Secretary	Open			
Treasurer	Laura Lavington	Yes	253-941-7372	laura.lavington@gmail.com
Membership Chair	Pat Toth	Yes	206-767-4944	h2opat@msn.com
Education Chair	Cindy Flanagan	Yes	253-941-3933	camcalcin@hotmail.com
Program Chair	Dale Meland	No	253-946-1637	dmeland@hotmail.com
Field Trip Chair	Barbara Petersen	Yes	253 389 3204	bpbatfan@aol.com
Publicity Chair	Jay Galvin	Yes	253-939-3094	gjgalvin@comcast.net
Backyard Habitat Chair	Marie West-Johnson	Yes	206-817-8754	crgrie123@yahoo.com
Conservation Chair	Dan Streiffert	No	253-796-2203	dan_streiffert@hotmail.com
Newsletter Editor	Dan Streiffert	No	253-796-2203	dan_streiffert@hotmail.com
Webmaster	Treesa Hertzel	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	

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, <u>scrubjay323@aol.com</u>

Birdathon at the Streiffert's

Saturday, May 26 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!

Includes Bunch: Home grown fruit, muffins, donuts, breads, and egg casserole (meat or vegetarian).

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

Call or email Dan and Nancy

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

Global Big Day Rainier Audubon Bird-a-thon Challenge

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

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

Calen Randall and Cindy Flanagan would like to challenge other fellow birders to go out birding on Global Big Day and raise funds for Rainier Audubon's Bird-a-thon.

Money raised will go towards our Rainier Audubon conservation efforts and education. Donations are tax-deductible.

Participating is easy. Get a Rainier Audubon Bird-a-thon sponsor form (page 9) or pick up a sponsor sheet at the May 21st Rainier Audubon Program Night at Federal Way United Methodist Church. Find people to sponsor you for your Global Big Day outing. Donations can be \$/species or a flat rate.

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

Checks can be mailed to:

Rainier Audubon Society PO Box 778 Auburn, WA 98071

Tukwila Backyard Wildlife Festival

May 12, 2018

TUKWILA COMMUNITY CENTER

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

The Backyard Wildlife Festival is always held the second Saturday in May at the Tukwila Community Center. For more information on the event follow us on Facebook.

www.facebook.com/BYWildlife

Yakima River Canyon Bird Fest

May 11 - 13, 2018

The Kittitas Environmental Education Network (KEEN) is hosting the 2018 Yakima River Canyon Bird Fest in May. The Yakima River Canyon is an Audubon Important Bird Area (IBA) with some of the highest densities of passerines and birds of prey in the state.

https://www.ycic.org/yakima-rivercanyon-bird-fest

Leavenworth Spring Bird Festival

May 17-20, 2018

See the festival web site for bird lists, event schedule and registration info,

www.leavenworthspringbirdfest.org



One of my favorite months of the year is May. The flowers are in bloom, the sun stays out well past eight, the song of mating calls resonate, and our many migrant species make a return to our backyards. Unfortunately, the Seen and Heard usually misses out on covering these May migrant gems that populate the Puget Sound area during the busiest birding time of year. Usually the reports of spring warblers, migrant packed reports, and nesting birds end up in the following September article. In advance of this migrant and nesting season here are some great local birding hotspots to visit and some birds to keep an eye out for.

Hylebos Wetlands State Park

Located in Federal Way, just west of the 15 and Highway 18 intersection, Hylebos is a great hotspot if you're looking for a nice walk or some nesting season birding. The boardwalk snakes through a woody swamp and in Spring the forest is a symphony of sound. Prominent avian soloists include Swainson's Thrush, Warbling Vireo, and -- if you're lucky--Redeyed Vireo. Hylebos is also a hotbed for warbler species from Yellow Warblers to the elusive Black-throated Grey Warblers. May is a great time to find the resident Barred Owls of the park. Sometimes the owl can even be sighted bathing! While our spring is scant on waterfowl, Hylebos does have a couple pairs of Wood Ducks. Perhaps on your visit to Hylebos you will sight some Wood Duck ducklings as well!

M Street

The M Street fields behind Emerald Downs in Auburn have changed over the past decade; however, they are still a great hotspot to spot rare migrant shorebirds. Odd spring shorebirds that have shown up at M Street include Blacknecked Stilt, Wilson's Phalarope, and last year's shocker, Snowy Plover. Even if a rarity isn't present, M Street is still a good bet to find other shorebirds like yellowlegs, sandpipers, and dowitchers.

Seen & Heard by Calen Randall

Raptors also frequent the 167 corridor so keep your eyes peeled for hawks or a Peregrine Falcon.

Marine View Park

This Normandy Park trail involves some steep walking, but if you're up for a hike you'll see some great views of the sound and, if the weather cooperates, Mt. Rainier. While not as busy as all of the other hotspots on this list, Marine View Park offers a nice mix of birds on land and in the water. Hunting Osprey can be viewed from the beach shore. Marine View Park can also be a good place to pick out Bonaparte's Gulls and Caspian Terns as both frequent the beaches of south King County during May. On the trail, migrants like Western Tanager and Black-headed Grosbeak can be sighted. Several of our warbler species like Wilson's and Orange-crowned are also found at the park.

Flaming Geyser State Park

One of the best hotspots in the entire south King County come May is Flaming Geyser. The park features a wide range of habitat which leads to a large range of species. As you walk through the wide grass fields, keep your ears open for the calls of common prairie species like Savannah Sparrows and Willow Flycatchers. The bank habitat along the Green River is home to half a dozen swallow species, from Bank Swallows to Cliff Swallows. Further up the trail you can view American Dippers, not often seen so close to our urban backyards, hopping along the river pecking through the rocks.

If you get a chance to visit some of these hotspots this Spring or Summer, send your reports to me at <u>calenbirds@hotmail.com</u>.

I hope you have a birdy May!





Red Crossbills

Recent Sightings

March and April featured some exciting sights and sounds. Here are some of the reports and highlights from early Spring:

April 4th, Kent, King County

Dan Streiffert had a pair of **Red Crossbills** come to his feeder in late March and early April. This was the first time that Dan had seen them at his feeder before. If you visit Dan's smugmug site, you can see some of his gorgeous crossbill pictures that he took!

April 15th, Great Falls, Manitoba

While technically Spring started on March 21st this year, it was still clearly hiding during the month of April in the Midwest. While the weather was snowy and frigid, my mom still saw some nice birds while on a visit. At my grandma's feeder some **Hoary Redpoll** stopped to feed. Much of the river was still frozen and my mom *(Continued on page 5)*

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

Seen & Heard (Continued from page 4)

spied a few **Trumpeter Swans** out on the ice flows.

April 1st, San Francisco Bay, California

Earlier in April, my mom took a trip to the much warmer and drier northern California. During her trip she spotted some awesome sightings that don't often stop by Washington. At the **Hayward Regional Shoreline** in Fremont a variety of shorebirds were out in droves from **Long-billed Curlew** to **American Golden Plover**. In the near shore marshes **American Avocet** and **Black-necked Stilts** probed their bills through the water for food. In San Mateo, my mom viewed her biggest highlight of the trip, **Black Skimmers**!

March 22nd Pacific County, Washington & Clatsop County, Oregon

In late March, my family and I ventured out to the mouth of the Columbia River, previously untraveled territory for us. My first birds spotted in Pacific County (the southwestern most county in Washington state) were a Common Raven and a Red-tailed Hawk engaged in a stand off. What was unusual about the pair was they were literally standing on the side of the road staring each other down, not something we see everyday! I was pleased to view many American Kestrels scattered throughout the county, especially as they become more scarce in our region. At the picturesque Cape Disappointment State Park I heard the calls of year bird **Red Crossbill** and watched a flock of **Pacific** and **Brandt's Cormorants** huddle against the side of a craggy rock as waves crashed around them.

Clatsop County, Oregon held several birding surprises. While the ocean gusts were cold and raw at Fort Stevens State Park, adjacent to Cape Disappointment, I did spot a mixed flock of Sanderlings and **Dunlins**. Out on the choppy river a Common Loon preened itself. The highlights of the Oregon segment of our birding came in the town of Seaside, Oregon. Most people visit Seaside to relax at the beach, go surf, or visit the many shopping centers. We, on the other hand, stopped by in search of a surprising arctic sea duck that had spent her winter touring Seaside as well. At first when we arrived at its cove of residence, rain poured down and waves crashed to the rocky shore, not exactly an encouraging scene for finding rare waterfowl. However, to our surprise the first bird we saw playing in the surf was our target, the Steller's Eider! We watched her swim through the crashing waves as graceful as the surfers in the background, and every minute we stood in the pounding rain was worth it to observe such an entertaining lifer. Every couple minutes she would pop up onto the rocks on the shore, but quickly after she would hop back down into the water. She also entertained us by rearing up out of the water like a horse so that she displayed her chest in full with her wings tucked in. Not to be forgotten, we also saw a pair of lifer Surfbirds and viewed a half dozen

Black Turnstone skitter around the rocks, my first in USA!

March 23rd Woodland Bottoms, Cowlitz County, Washington

While riding up I5 on the way home from the Oregon coast, we decided we weren't ready to end the birding fun so we popped into Woodland Bottoms, a Cowlitz County birding hotspot right along the banks of the Columbia River. The bottoms were similar to the Skagit Valley flats, long farm fields and snow capped mountains on the skyline. As we pulled onto a two lane road, out in a field we glimpsed a handful of tall figures, Sandhill Cranes! It seemed that everywhere we turned more kept appearing. In the one field about a hundred cranes picked through the mud, their heads tinted orange from the dirt, like when Trumpeter Swans poke through a farmer's field. Further down the road a massive flock of over 300 mingled with Canada Geese. Overhead. what I initially thought were large flying v's of geese, turned out to be cranes in flight. Like the eider, they were very entertaining to watch. Once in awhile a pair of cranes would have a posturing scuffle. Above all what stood out was the noise; their constant calling was truly a cacophony that echoed across the bottoms. Our final surprise of the trip came up the road, as we watched a flock of over thirty Great Egrets, an interesting sighting for the western side of Washington. With so many great birds, it was hard to pick a favorite moment of the trip, but overall, it was exciting just to get out and explore new areas in the beautiful Pacific Northwest.

Field Trips (Continued from page 3)

Washington State Audubon Campout

Memorial Day Weekend, May 26 - 28, 2018

The Hazel Wolf Bird Sanctuary at Wenas Creek Campground

www.wenasaudubon.org

Green Valley in Early Summer

Saturday, June 9th 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 Way & Main St at 8:00 AM.

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

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

Bird of the Month: Anna's Hummingbird

Reprint Courtesy of Wild Birds Unlimited, Burien

The mesmerizing Anna's Hummingbird is a mediumsized somewhat stocky hummingbird with a straight bill. It is metallic green above and grayish below. The male sports a rose-pink throat and crown that looks dark in indirect light. The female has rose-pink-red spotting on the throat, a tail edged in white scallops and a pale line over the eye. The Anna's Hummingbird is no larger than a ping pong ball and no heavier than a nickel.

The Anna's Hummingbird is common in urban and suburban settings as well as chaparral, coastal scrub, oak savannahs and open woodland. It eats nectar from many flowering plants

including currant, gooseberry, manzanita and eucalyptus. It also eats a wide variety of insects including midges, whiteflies and leafhoppers as well as tiny spiders.



The female chooses the

nest site and builds the nest usually in a tree or shrub. Once in a while one of the ladies will get creative and utilize a porch light, wind chime or other interesting location. The nest is made of plant down and spider webs and is typically one inch tall and one and a half inches in diameter. The outside is lovingly decorated with lichen or moss.

The female usually lays two white eggs the size of coffee beans. She then incubates the eggs for sixteen days and the chicks will fledge twenty days after hatching.

Often in late winter, early spring, people will wonder where their hummingbirds have gone as they are not seeing them at their feeders as often. The Anna's Hummingbird may have two to three broods a year and can nest anytime between December and June. Most typically they nest in February/March in our area and mom will rarely leave the nest while sitting on the eggs. She might venture out at dawn or just before sunset to grab a bite but is very diligent about keeping those eggs warm!

The Anna's Hummingbird is expert at hovering and zips from flower to flower. The male displays a wild courtship dive. He will fly as high as 130 feet into the air then plummet toward the ground as the female watches. A short, explosive, high-pitched squeak is made by the air whistling through his tail feathers before he arcs back up to the point where he began. On sunny days, he orients the dive so that the sun is reflected from his iridescent throat and crown.

As courtship progresses, the male follows a receptive female to her nesting site, perches, then performs a "shuttle display" where he swings back and forth about a foot above the female, keeping his body horizontal and his head down, often singing an intense song.

When not feeding or performing, the male often sits fairly high in a bush or small tree, noisily chattering. The male does not help with nest building or caring for the young.

Other cool facts:

•A flock of hummingbirds is called a bouquet, a glittering, a hover, a shimmer or a tune.

•The throat patch of male hummingbirds is called a gorget. Oddly, the female Anna's has a tiny gorget females of most species have none.

•The Anna's Hummingbird was named after Anna Messena who was a very prestigious woman in Europe. She lived from

1802 - 1887 and was married to the Duke of Rivoli.

- Native Americans held hummingbirds in high esteem. Legends describe them as busily bringing rain to quench eruptions or poking holes in the night sky that became the stars. The Navajo say that the mating dive is a way for them to check what is above the blue of the sky.
- The Anna's Hummingbird normally has a body temperature of around 107 degrees Fahrenheit. When outside temperatures fall, Anna's and many other species of hummingbirds enter torpor, a state in which breathing and heart rate are slowed and body temperature falls as low as 48 degrees. When the temperature warms up, the hummingbirds quickly become active again.
- The oldest recorded Anna's Hummingbird was at least 8 years, 2 months old.

Attract Anna's Hummingbirds to your yard by offering a feeder filled with a mixture of four parts water and one part white granulated sugar. Do not use honey or food coloring. Anna's don't migrate so you can enjoy feeding them all year round!



Hello and Welcome back to my musings!

I've wondered before about birds' sense of vision. I've described the amazing visual acuity of birds of prey and the unique structure and ability of the eyes of an owl. I got to musing about diving birds and birds that hunt for food under water. Do their eyes have anything special about them that allows them see when immersed in the murky depths?

But let's get a little background information first. Vision is the most important sense for birds. Good eyesight

Mewsings from Millie

Reprint Courtesy of Wild Birds Unlimited, Burien



is essential for safe flight and finding food. Believe it or not, the avian eye is similar to that of a reptile. It has a ring of smooth muscle in the middle layer called a ciliary muscle that can change the shape of the lens rapidly

and to a much greater extent than in mammals. The two eyelids usually found in vertebrates is protected by a third transparent movable membrane called a nictitating membrane. It sweeps horizontally across the eye like a windshield wiper to lubricate and protect it. But more about that later.

There are two sorts of light receptors in a bird's eye: rods and cones. Rods contain a visual pigment that aids in night vision. Cones detect specific colors or wavelengths of light. Each cone contains a colored oil droplet. The droplets are



placed so that light passes through them before reaching the visual pigment. They act as filters and increase the number of colors that a bird can discern.

Six types of cone oil droplets have been identified and these vary considerably among species dependent on the niche the bird occupies ecologically.

Seabirds such as terns and gulls that feed at the surface or plunge for food have red oil droplets in the cones of their retinas. This improves contrast and sharpens distance vision especially in hazy conditions.

Birds that have to look through air/water reflections have more deeply colored red, orange or yellow oil droplets that help reduce the glare and heighten acuity.

Birds that hunt fish and look for food under water have far fewer red oil droplets but they have special flexible lenses. Remember that nictitating membrane? It acts as a contact lens to help diving birds see more clearly when submerged.

So once again I am astounded by the uniqueness of birds! They never stop amazing me!

Until next time,

Millie, the Muse of Mews

The Month of May is Birdathon

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

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

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



Trumpeter Swan at Benson Pond, Malheur NWR

Rŝ	Rainier Audubon Birdathon Sponsor Sheet	sirdathon S	ponsor Sheet		
Name	Address	Phone	Email	\$/Species	Set Amount

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Rainier Audubon Society PO Box 778 Auburn, WA 98071

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

-Percy Bysshe Shelley

Nonprofit Organization U.S. Postage Paid Kent, WA 98031 Permit No. 441



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? Are you interested in: To join or renew, mail this application with your payment to: • Volunteering? Rainier Audubon Society - Membership • Field Trips? **PO Box 778** • Classes? Auburn, WA 98071 (Please circle) Name: Address City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Email _____ Phone RAS Chapter membership includes 9 issues of the Heron Herald annually but does not include AUDUBON magazine.