

The

# Heron Herald



Rainier Audubon Society

November 2013

November 18, 2013 RAS Membership Meeting  
Meeting begins at 7:00 pm.

## "Shorebirds "

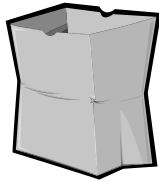
Dennis Paulson

**D**ennis Paulson has been interested in just about all aspects of nature for most of his life, starting with bird watching at age 12. After receiving a PhD in Zoology at the University of Miami, he came to the Pacific Northwest, where he has lived in Seattle for 45 years. He did extensive field work on shorebirds in the 1970s and 80s and wrote *Shorebirds of the Pacific Northwest* (1993) and *Shorebirds of North America* (2005) as a result of the knowledge gained. He spends much of his time now on dragonflies but still retains a special love for shorebirds. He retired in 2004 after being the Director of the Slater Museum of Natural History at the University of Puget Sound, and he wonders why no one told him that retirement meant working more and earning less. But at least it has given him a chance to pursue his passion for nature photography.

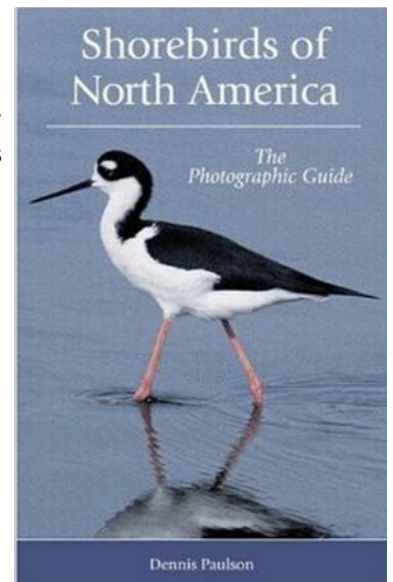


Dan Streiffert

You will share Dennis's interest when you learn how shorebirds go about their lives, with their varied feeding behavior, fascinating breeding biology and long-distance migration. These birds fill our coastal waters in spring and fall with activity and sounds, and we are fortunate to have such a diversity of them.



Join us early for our Brown Bag Auction at 6:30 PM. All bidding will be done before the presentation at 7 PM and winners announced at the end of the program. Contact Lisa Mesplay for details. ((206) 946-3820 )



### 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.

### 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.

## President's Message—Dan Streiffert

### The Birding Chair is Occupied!

Michele Phiffer has volunteered to take on the position of Birding Chair. Please congratulate her and help out with suggestions for Field Trips. Here is a short Bio:

*Washington has been my partner and my home since 1986. Since 1990 we have owned our own home and I became a backyard birder. When Wild Birds began their bird walk each month, I joined to get the wisdom of experienced birders. This great experience led me to Rainier Audubon. I have been a member for 2 years.*



This month is our annual "Brown Bag Auction." This is the perfect opportunity to possibly pick up some stocking stuffers while supporting your local Audubon. Refreshments and conversation will be available before, during and following the program.

RAINIER AUDUBON OFFICERS		
President	Dan Streiffert*	253-796-2203
Vice President	Steve Feldman*	360-802-5211
Treasurer	<b>Open</b>	
Secretary	Heather Gibson*	253-856-9812
Program Chair	Dale Meland	253-946-1637
Field Trip Chair	Michele Phiffer	
Membership Chair	Pat Toth*	206-767-4944
Backyard Habitat Chair	<b>Open</b>	253-854-3207
Conservation Chair	Dan Streiffert*	253-796-2203
Mailing Chair	Debra Russell	425-271-0682
Hospitality	Sandra Embrey	
Newsletter Editor	Dan Streiffert	253-796-2203
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
*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

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

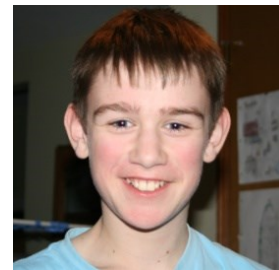
### Welcome new members:

- **Scott & Stacy Cleveland**
- **Sara & Daryl Nichols**

### Upcoming Speaker List

Dec. 16 Matt Knox - Green River Natural Resource Area  
 Jan. 20 Jay Galvin - Photography  
 Feb. 17 Theresa Labriolla - Columbia River Keepers  
 Mar. 17 Betty Udesan - Bird Photography  
 Apr. 21 Dan Streiffert - Tanzania  
 May 19 Open

## Seen and Heard by Calen Randall



A couple weeks ago, I was out birding on Frager Road, south of the Riverbend Golf Course in Kent. Though I found an overabundance of Eurasian Collared Doves, I have yet to see any Western Scrub Jays this fall. I know that if they were around, I would definitely hear their cacophony. Surely these birds would be one of the first birds to be kicked off the church choir. However, when it comes to survival of the fittest, I think that Charles Darwin would definitely rank scrub jays as one of the fittest.

At last year's Christmas Bird Count (CBC), Charlie Wright had mentioned to our group that Western Scrub Jays were not as common in the Green River Valley a decade ago (Last CBC we spotted a half dozen of them). Only in the last few years have they settled into the region. I also read a report from a Pacific, Washington woman who had lived in Pacific for 54 years. She said that this year marked the first time that she had ever seen Western Scrub Jays in her yard. Clearly, scrub jays are on the move north.

Western Scrub Jays are on the move north, in part because of loss of natural habitat—in this case, oak trees. Unfortunately, the scrub jays aren't coming to inhabit our shrinking Gary Oak Tree population, but rather are adapting to living in our urban residential areas, like those around the Green River. Some people say that scrub jays are moving north is bad news for song birds. I wonder what it is that makes the Western Scrub Jay, and other members of its corvid family, adapt to new habitat so easily?

Recently, I was reading about studies done on the Western

Scrub Jay. One interesting topic was on whether humans were the only animals that could plan for the future. Researchers at Cambridge University's Department of Experimental Psychology studied caching and retrieving habits of the Western Scrub Jay. Studies showed that Western Scrub Jays are capable of storing great supplies of nuts in numerous cache places and retrieving the food at a later point in time. Based on these tasks, Raby et al (Cambridge) wanted to further explore Western Scrub Jay capability of anticipating future needs and planning for them. The researchers first trained the birds by putting them in cages with two rooms—a breakfast room and a no breakfast room. In the breakfast room, the birds were given powdered nuts. Later, in the evening, the birds were not given any food. After eight days of this cycle the jays were given whole nuts after they had eaten, and were given the opportunity to cache the nuts in either the breakfast room, or the no breakfast room. More times than not, the scrub jays cached their nuts in the no breakfast room. For this reason, researchers set up another experiment where they placed the jays in two-room cages—only this time, food was given in both rooms. The first room served nuts, while the second room served dog kibble.

The

researchers found that the birds would cache nuts in the dog kibble room and *vice versa*. Researchers believe that the jays cached the different food in the other room so that they would have choices of food for the next morning. Based on this, researchers believe that Western Scrub Jays do plan for the future.

The next time you come upon a Western Scrub Jay caching food, you may be watching the work of a master planner. Could you imagine if scrub jays learned to handle and cache money? Perhaps they could help solve the woes of the federal government.

### Recent Bird Sightings:

Here is some of what was seen and heard during the month of September. Thanks to Jane Gardner, Mark and Adele Freeland, Ralph and Sandra Embrey, Carol Schultz, Marie and Craig West-Johnson, and Beverly Weber for their reports.

**Sept 22<sup>nd</sup>** Jane spotted a pair of **Evening Grosbeaks** at her feeder. Jane said "they looked pretty rough and were here way too early."

**Sept 24<sup>th</sup>** Ralph and Sandra Embrey's month yielded a couple of surprises. The first surprise was a flock of fifty **Cedar Waxwings** all landing in a hemlock tree just below their house. The second surprise came a week later. They viewed a very bedraggled **Evening Grosbeak**.

*(Continued on page 8)*

*Bio: Calen is a 14 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*

# Field Trips



## 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](mailto:scrubjay323@aol.com)

## East Lake Washington Parks and Trails

(After Thanksgiving "Walk-Off-The-Calories" trip)  
 Saturday, November 30, 2013

8:30 AM to Mid Afternoon

Leader: Carol Schulz

The Saturday after Thanksgiving will be a great time to visit parks on the Eastside. Several parks along the shores of east Lake Washington should offer good viewing and close looks at many bird species. We will start at Newcastle Park, and then travel north to Juanita Bay Park, and the newly-restored Juanita Beach Park. Some folks call this our "Diet Trip". We will walk up to 2 miles on paved and unpaved trails. Newcastle Park north of Renton and the parks in north Kirkland should offer excellent birding this time of year. We will be looking for eagles and hawks, dabbling and diving ducks, geese, woodpeckers, songbirds, and more.

**Bring:** Warm clothes, lunch (turkey sandwiches?), hot drinks, snacks, and water. Scopes are welcome.

**Meet:** 8:30 AM at the Newcastle P&R. (People who wish to leave early may bring their own cars.)

**Directions:** Take I-405 to exit 9 north of Renton. Turn right 1/2 block, and then left into the P&R. Do NOT drive straight ahead onto the highway on-ramp.

**Sign-Up:** E-mail or call Carol Schulz, 206-824-7618, [carol.schulz50@gmail.com](mailto:carol.schulz50@gmail.com) E-

mail is preferred.

## Kittitas County Birding in Winter

Saturday, December 7, 2013  
 6:30am to evening  
 Leader - Charlie Wright

Come enjoy a day of winter-season birding in central Washington. We will venture over Snoqualmie Pass and visit areas including Swauk Prairie and South Cle Elum along our route. Large numbers of raptors including Rough-legged Hawks and Prairie Falcons are seen wintering in the open, snow-covered fields of Kittitas. Proceeding east we will reach the Columbia River at Vantage, where waterfowl are sometimes present in vast numbers. Some target species will include unusual loons, ducks, American White Pelicans, and possibly rare gulls. Chukar are occasionally seen in the basalt outcroppings here.

**Bring:** Bring many layers of clothing for cold weather conditions, a lunch, and snacks. Scopes are welcome. Space is limited.

**Meet:** At 6:30am at Auburn Safeway at Auburn Way and Main St. Take Hwy. 18 to Auburn and exit at Auburn Way. (Hwy 164). Turn north (right) on Auburn

Way and drive three blocks north. Safeway sign and gas station will be on the left. Park in the Safeway lot just beyond the gas station and straight out from the Safeway door. We will meet and carpool from there.

**Sign-up:** Contact Charlie Wright, [cwright770@gmail.com](mailto:cwright770@gmail.com), 253-468-4146. Email is preferred.



## Golden-crowned and White-crowned Sparrow

Reprint Courtesy of Wild Birds Unlimited, Burien

The Golden-crowned Sparrow is a large, handsome sparrow that is common in weedy or shrubby lowlands and city edges in the winter along the Pacific coast. During the winter time, it spends time in brush, riparian thickets, chaparral and gardens. They eat many kinds of seeds, some fruit like apples and grapes and insects such as ants, wasps, bees, moths, butterflies, beetles, crane flies and termites. They often flock with other members of their own species and hop on the ground gleaning food in fields, orchards, lawns and gardens.

The nest is a thick cup of twigs, dry bark, moss, ferns and grasses. It is lined with fine grasses, ptarmigan feathers, and hair from moose, deer or caribou. The female collects the nest material while the male follows her around and sings.

The Golden-crowned Sparrow is one of the least known of our songbirds, especially regarding its northern breeding grounds.

This sparrow arrives earlier and stays longer on its California wintering grounds than almost any other bird species.

When day length increases in the spring, the Golden-crowned Sparrow detects the change through light-sensitive cells in its body. Its body responds by putting on fat and getting an urge to migrate.

Miners in the Yukon at the turn of the century referred to this sparrow as the "no gold here" bird because its song resembled that phrase. They also thought it sounded like it was saying, "I'm so tired" prompting them to dub the bird "Weary Willie".

The oldest Golden-crowned Sparrow on record was at least 10 years, 6 months old.

White-crowned Sparrows appear each winter over much of North America. The handsome black- and- white head, pale beak and gray breast combine for a striking look and make it one of the surest sparrow identifications on the continent.



Look for them in thickets, weedy fields, agricultural fields, roadsides and backyards.

White-crowned Sparrows eat seeds and insects, grains such as oats, wheat, barley and corn, and fruit including elderberries and blackberries.

The nest is built out of twigs, grasses, pine needles, moss, bark and dead leaves. It is lined with fine grasses and hair and is usually placed fairly low in a shrub.



Young male White-crowned Sparrows learn the basics of the song it will sing as an adult during the first two or three months of their lives. They don't learn directly from their fathers but from the song environment of its natal neighborhood. Because of this, and because they don't travel far from where they were raised, song dialects frequently form. Males on the

edge of two dialects may be bilingual and able to sing both dialects.

White-crowned Sparrows will share their territories with Fox Sparrows but will chase Chipping Sparrows and Dark-eyed Juncos until they leave.

Male White-crowned Sparrows do most of the singing but sometimes females sing. They usually sing while contesting breeding territories or a winter food source. The female's song is quieter and more variable than the male's.

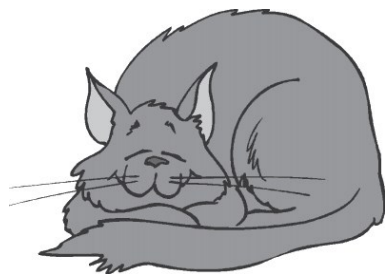
Scientists studying movement and energy found that a White-crowned Sparrow can run on a tread mill at a pace of about 1/3 of a mile an hour without tiring out.

The oldest recorded White-crowned Sparrow was 13 years, 4 months old.

All information courtesy of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology

### **Who was Brandt of Brandt's Cormorant fame?**

Johann Friedrich von Brandt named this cormorant. He was Director of the Zoological Museum at St. Petersburg, Russia. He received the bird from collectors in the Americas, described it and named it after himself!



*Mewsings from Mille*  
Mewsings from Millie

*Hello and welcome back to my musings!*

*You know, some days around the store it can be very quiet and other days, not so much. Sometimes when it gets really hectic I abandon my usual lounging spots on the seed bags or the counter and head for the backroom for a little peace. Well, it has been found that birds change their behavior as well when encountering noise pollution. When there's lots of noise around, male birds begin to sing higher tunes and that shift in tone makes them less attractive to females..*

*Studies show that noise pollution interferes with some birds' ability to communicate during breeding time.*

*Research has also shown that females emerge more often in response to low-pitched songs and that females who mate with high-singing males lay fewer eggs.*

*This puts birds between a rock and a hard place when dealing with traffic and*

*industrial noises that threaten to drown them out. Either they sing less appealing songs or tones in an effort to be heard, or they sing the songs that make them sound appealing and risk not being heard at all.*

*This brings us to One Square Inch.*

*What is One Square Inch? It is an independent research project. It is the quietest place in the United States. It was designated on Earth Day 2005 to protect and manage the natural soundscape in a backcountry wilderness area.*

*It is based on this simple logic: if a loud noise, such as a passing airplane, can impact many square miles, then a natural place, if maintained in a 100% noise-free condition, will also impact many square miles around it. It is predicted that protecting a single square inch of land from noise pollution will benefit large areas.*

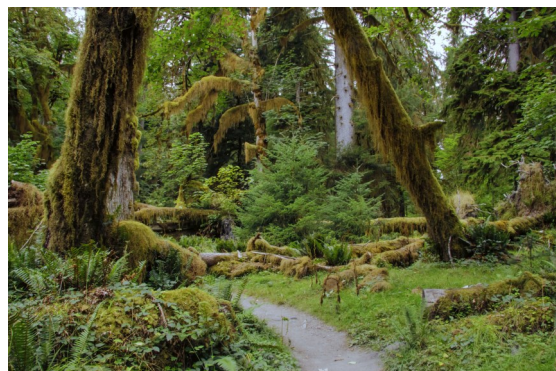
*Where is this One Square Inch of absolute silence? It is right here in our beloved Washington!*

*Located in the Hoh Rain Forest at Olympic National Park, it is 3.2 miles from the Visitor's Center above Mt. Tom Creek Meadows on the Hoh River Trail. The exact location is marked by a small red-colored stone placed on top of a moss-covered log.*

*Olympic National Park was chosen for One Square Inch because of its diverse*

*natural landscape combined with substantial periods of natural quiet. Air tourism is undeveloped and roads do not divide park lands. The variety of natural soundscapes presented by different habitat types such as alpine glaciers, rain forests, lakes and streams and wilderness beach provide meaningful examples of soundscape beauty.*

*Olympic National Park is an area of exceptional natural beauty. It features the largest and best example of virgin temperate rain forest in the western hemisphere, the largest intact stand of coniferous forest in the contiguous 48 states, the largest truly wild herd of Roosevelt Elk, 57 miles of spectacular coastline, numerous offshore islands, heavily forested mountain slopes, alpine parklands, glacier-capped mountains and 12 major rivers and 200 smaller streams that provide a rich habitat for fish and other aquatic creatures.*



*The park contains one of the most pristine ecosystems in the country with over 1200 types of vascular plants, over 300 species of birds and over 70 species of mammals. At least 8 species of plants and 18 species of animals are found only on the Olympic Peninsula and nowhere else in the world!*

*It is truly a very special place.*

*You can visit One Square Inch. A hike from the Visitor's Center takes approximately two hours along a gentle path lined by ancient trees and ferns. At the site is the "Jar of Quiet Thoughts", a depository of notes left by visitors. You are welcome to read and add to the Jar. No quotes from the Jar are allowed in respect for the quiet thoughts that came from a quiet place. Contribute your own and please remember to respect the silence.*

*Until next time, shhhhhhhhh.....*

*Millie the Muse of Mews*

**First Global Great Backyard Bird Count Shatters Records**

(excerpted from Cornell's Living Bird magazine)

People in Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Indonesia, Guatemala, New Zealand, Zimbabwe and elsewhere (109 countries in all), submitted checklists in this February's count. More than 34 million birds were counted on more than 134,000 lists, recording more than 3,600 species – one third of the world's 10,000 species!

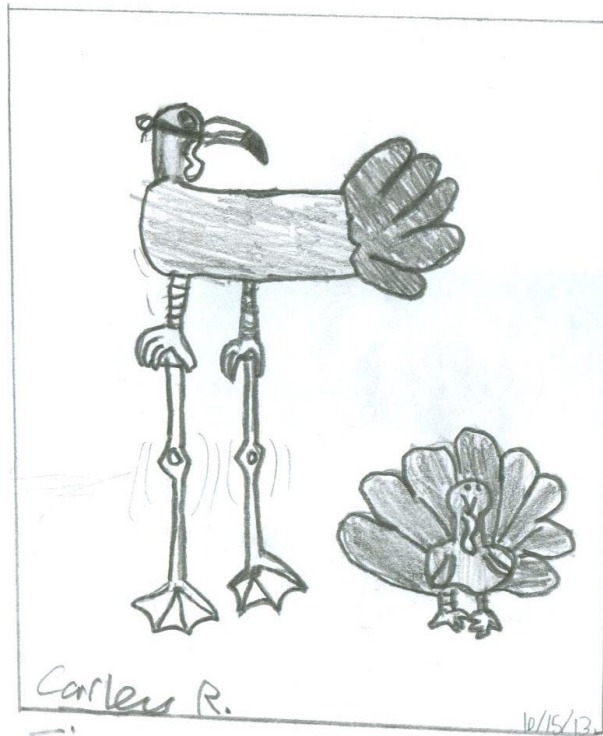
Irruption winter finches were the headliners, their movements into the U.S. called a "superflight" because of the huge numbers that came south, reflecting a natural downturn in crops of conifer cones and other seeds in Canada. the Common Redpoll was the most prominent of these, teaching 36 states. The Hoary Redpoll, which usually stays in Canada, was reported in 11 states.

Cornell Lab director John Fitzpatrick said, "This GBBC is a milestone for citizen science in so many respects – the number of species, diversity of countries involved, total participants and number of individual birds recorded. We hope this is just the start of something far larger, engaging the whole world in creating a detailed annual snapshot of how all our planet's birds are faring as the years go by."

Visit [www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org) to read a detailed summary of this year's historic count and to see the photo gallery. The GBBC is a joint project of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Audubon, with Canadian partner Bird Studies Canada. The count is made possible in part by founding sponsor Wild Birds Unlimited.

# Bird Brainz

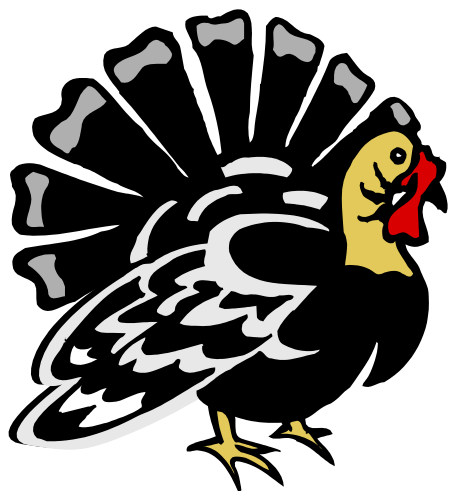
by Carley R



The real reason behind rare bird sightings in November.

## Thanksgiving Bird Count

November 28th, 2013



This is a low-key opportunity to participate in a citizen science project to document the status of our birds in 11 western states and Alaska. It's easy! Pick ONE HOUR on Thanksgiving Day. Pick a 15 foot diameter circle in your yard or near-by park – the same area should be used each year. The circle can be considered a cylinder – you count anything feeding, bathing or flying through the cylinder – but not high-flying eagles or geese. Paper tally sheets will be available at the November meeting or you can send

your results to [thanksgivingbirdcount@gmail.com](mailto:thanksgivingbirdcount@gmail.com). The compiler is Dr. John Hewston at Humboldt State University

## Birding Trail's Puget Loop For Sale

Delight your favorite birders with the newest – the seventh and final – map of the Great Washington State Birding Trail: the Puget Loop. Hot off the press, this signature route features 220 of our 346 annually recorded bird species around Puget Sound from Seattle to Mt. Rainier, plus Lake Washington, Kitsap Peninsula; and Vashon, Bainbridge, Whidbey and San Juan islands. .

**On Sale at our Membership Meeting and at Wild Birds Unlimited (Burien Store <http://www.southseattle.wbu.com/>).**

All proceeds go to Rainier Audubon.

**\$4.95**

**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](http://www.RainierAudubon.org).

**Seen & Heard** (Continued from page 3)

Sandra said, "Must have been molting because his chest and belly area were rather blotched with gray patches and he had not one single tail feather!" I wonder if Ralph and Sandra's grosbeak had a run in with Jane's grosbeaks!

**Oct 3<sup>rd</sup>** Out in the Kent Valley, Carol Schultz was up to her head in geese sightings. At South Center Parkway, she spotted **Greater White-fronted Geese**, **Canada Geese**, and **Cackling Geese**. While heading back to Des Moines, Carol gazed at the sky and saw 38 **Turkey Vultures** circling above! After a while, a **Common Raven** joined them for a while, and they flew south. "I almost never see Turkey Vultures in Des Moines." Carol said. Carol also speculated that the raven was one from the breeding pair in SeaTac.

**Oct 9<sup>th</sup>** Marie West-Johnson's feeder was packed full of sparrows this month. Marie commented, "The **Fox Sparrows** and **Golden Crowned Sparrows** have returned." She also observed her favorite feeder birds when the **Downy Woodpeckers** arrived. "I'm keeping my eyes on my feeders to see who comes to eat at my buffet next!" Marie exclaimed.

**Oct 10<sup>th</sup>** Beverly Weber saw ten **American Goldfinches** eating bird and

flower seed. She also watched four **Golden Crowned Sparrows** feeding under her bird feeder.

**Mystery Bird of the Month**

Adele Freeland spotted this songbird at Brown's Point Lighthouse Park in Tacoma. Here are the clues:

I am part of the Icterid family.  
A group of me is known as a "pod".  
Rarely do I hybridize with my cousin from the east.

My nest is usually covered partially with a grass "roof." Sometimes, I may completely cover the nest, and construct an entrance tunnel  
My scientific name was given by John James Audubon--*Sturnella neglecta*. *Sturnella* means starling-like, and *neglecta* was included because many explorers and settlers didn't think much about me.

Only the Northern Cardinal holds more state bird titles. Some of mine include Montana, Kansas, South Dakota, and Oregon.

Who am I?

Send your sightings /hearings to [calenbirds@hotmail.com](mailto:calenbirds@hotmail.com) I love reading your reports!

**RAS Christmas Bird Count**

**R**ainier Audubon's Christmas Bird Count will be Sunday, December 29, 2012. Come celebrate the end of a busy and eventful year with other birders and the birds who tough out the winter with us in the Puget Sound area. This event has been going on for over 100 years in some parts of our country and over 30 with our own RAS! If you've never done a CBC, it's basically getting up at dawn, joining an expert birder and some hardy helpers and spending the day (very short at this time of year!) in a specific area of our 15-mile diameter circle counting and recording all the birds you see and/or hear. The data has been compiled ever since the beginning of the counts in the eastern U.S. and is a wealth of knowledge available for scientists, policy makers, environmental and other decision-making organizations. Come be a part of this great citizen science project. Contact - Alex Juchems, [cooperjuchems@mac.com](mailto:cooperjuchems@mac.com).

Answer: Western Meadowlark

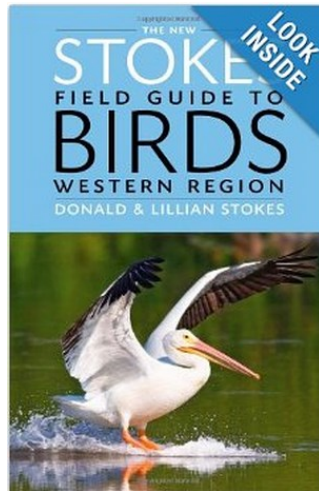


## *The New Stokes Field Guide to Birds: Western Region*

By Donald and Lillian Stokes

**N**ot only is *The New Stokes Field Guide to Birds: Western Region* by Donald and Lillian Stokes new (it came out this year), but it is also a great guide that I will be adding to my collection. The greatest virtue of the Stokes' book is the inclusion of 2,400+ pictures, which is immediately obvious upon flipping through the pages. I personally prefer guidebooks with photographs as opposed to drawings, as I feel that photos make the most realistic depictions and present the truest colors. However, this new book does not just provide one useful photograph per species, but instead several (the number depends upon the species: for example, dark-eyed junco has eleven pictures because of the many subspecies). When necessary, species profiles include: pictures of both male and female, different molts, juvenile plumage, in-flight, and regional variety. In addition to the photos, the guide gives written description of different plumages (which for gulls can be quite a bit of text). In smaller font, the profiles describe subspecies variation. The amount of space for each species profile varies; for example, the fox sparrow profile takes up two pages because of several subspecies, song sparrow gets a page and a half, and Lincoln's sparrow has half a page. Despite the varying space, each species had a full profile, even birds with limited ranges, such as: yellow-eyed junco, various towhees, hepatic tanager, bridled titmouse, gray-headed and Mexican chickadees, Mexican jay, and all our North American hummingbirds. The Stokes' book contains full profiles of 42 species of wood warbler – and that is just for the western region! Because the book is so recent, newer species such as Pacific wren are included. Now this book definitely has a downside: the profiles do not include either feeding or nesting information (details that are not necessarily essential to identification, but interesting for birders nonetheless).

I thought that this review would be most useful if I compared the new Stokes' book to some other western region field guides. The American Museum of Natural History's 2011 photographic *Birds of North America: Western Region* published by Dorling Kindersley (the editor-in-chief is François Vuilleumier) was my previous favorite guidebook (now I cannot commit to a favorite). The DK book has great species profiles – except that many interesting species are thrown in the back, in the "rare" section! After getting back from Southeastern Arizona, I was excited to flip through my book, admiring the regional specialties that I had seen (I only took a book specific to Arizona with me), only to have found that most of those species have tiny sections in



the back of the book, without map and with very little information. Of the birds in the primary section, each species has a full-page profile, which includes several photos, general description, and inclusion of nesting and feeding details (what the Stokes' new book lacks). The full-page profiles have little diagrams showing flight pattern, which I think is fairly neat. I count 25 full-page species of wood warbler, and 8 quarter-page species in the back "rare" section. Published in 2011, the DK book seems pretty recent, but it unfortunately lacks Pacific wren.

Some birders prefer field guides with drawings, rather than photographs. In 2010 the fourth edition of Roger Tory Peterson's *Peterson Field Guide to Birds of Western North America* was published, and it contains drawings. Peterson's book is organized in the traditional manner, with text on the left and a page of drawings on the right. When necessary, the book contains images of multiple plumages, although not as many as the new Stokes' guide. Arrows point at the body features that we are advised to notice. The book includes 50 wood warbler species, but the information is fairly brief. However, there is something quite exciting about Peterson's guide: the larger maps in the back. Typically, one must squint at the range maps, but these ones in the back of the guidebook are easier to see, and add some interesting details. According to text included on the blue jay map, there is a recent increase in blue jay records in the Pacific Northwest. Also, Peterson indicates that there is a slow northward western scrub jay spread in the Pacific Northwest – which I can attest to, as I had a scrub jay visitor in the spring.

There are some other western field guides that I will not discuss at the moment. David Allen Sibley has an illustrated 2003 book, *The Sibley Field Guide to Birds of Western North America*, which includes range maps that are more colorful than usual. There is also *Birds of Western North America: A Photographic Guide* by Paul Sterry and Brian E. Small, published in 2009, and the 2008 *National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of Western North America* (editors Jon L. Dunn and Jonathan Alderfer). Naturally, readers have a few more options if they consider book non-specific to the western region. No matter how many guides you think you need in your collection, take a look at *The New Stokes Field Guide to Birds: Western Region* by Donald and Lillian Stokes, I think you will like it.

– Laura Lavington



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[Abraham Lincoln](#)

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