

The Heron Herald



Rainier Audubon Society

October 2015

RAS Membership Meeting

October 19, 2015

“LOOK UP!”

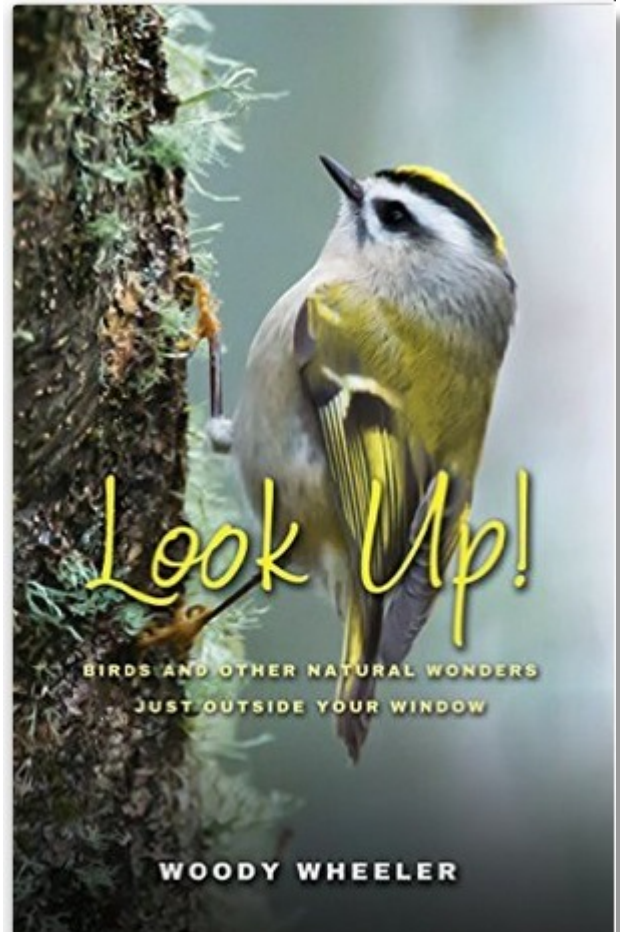
Birds and other natural wonders just outside your window By Woody Wheeler

You don't have to travel around the world or spend a ton of money to enjoy the wonders of nature. Look Up! is a series of well-researched nature essays that will inspire readers to experience the outdoors in an affordable, accessible, and joyful way. The essays encourage backyard and local bird watching, native plant landscaping and restoration, practical energy conservation, and land conservation. They also explore how we can derive psychological benefits from these activities—how nature can help us live happier, more fulfilled and rewarding lives. Look Up! also displays the vibrant beauty of the natural world in all its splendour through 40 stunning full-colour photos. The book is dedicated to one of America's first environmental activists, Woody Wheeler's great grandfather, Jens Jensen, who is featured in a number of the book's essays and is the subject of the recent documentary, Jens Jensen—The Living Green. The documentary opened to rave reviews in Chicago in June 2014, and won major awards at the Chicago International Film Festival and the Wild Rose Independent Film Festival. Wheeler is connected to the film's producer, Carey Lundin.

Woody Wheeler is a nature educator and tour guide for Conservation Catalyst, a business he started eight years ago to inspire people to appreciate birds and natural history. He also guides for Naturalist Journeys, an international birding and natural history tour company. Previously, Wheeler worked for environmental nonprofits including The Nature Conservancy, Audubon Society and Seattle Parks Foundation. He helped these groups protect natural areas and establish nature centres, park lands and bicycle/pedestrian trails.

Woody will be reading several essays from his book along with a Power Point presentation.

Join us at 6:30 for coffee and conversation.



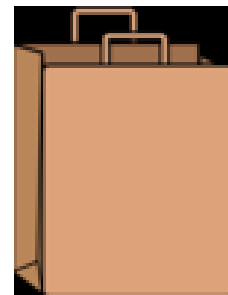
Rainier Audubon programs are held at

Federal Way United Methodist Church

29645 - 51st Ave. So. 98001 (in unincorporated Auburn)



November 16 Brown Bag Auction / Show and Tell



This year's brown bag auction at the November 16 membership meeting is going to be a fun time, as this year instead of having a speaker **we are going to have a photo-sharing event.** That's right, this is your opportunity to show other members your bird pictures. Whether your pictures are of the birds in your yard, birds you saw on a field trip, or birds you spotted on vacation, we want to see them. You can bring prints if you like, or you can bring your pictures on an iPad or laptop: it's up to you. On November 16 you will be able to mingle, see some other members' bird pictures, share your own pictures, and bid on the items up for auction.

limited to them. Perhaps you got a gift card for Christmas last year that you haven't gotten around to spending: it would be great for the auction! Or, you could be a little creative and make a gift basket. The brown bag auction helps pay for Rainier's speakers, so we definitely want this year's event to be a success. If you are donating items, please have those items at the church by 6:30 pm the day of the event.

For more information, contact Treasurer Laura Lavington at 253 941 7372.

Tickets for the brown bag auction are \$1.00 each, and there is no limit on how many you can buy. Of course, Rainier needs people to donate items for the auction. Bird-related items are always popular, but you are not

**The Board Meeting Night
has changed to the 2nd
Wednesday of each month.**

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	Open	
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 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
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-activites?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

Of all the seasons, autumn flies in the quickest. It is almost as though the clock runs faster. The sun sets sooner and the crisp September wind foreshadows blustery gusts of winter. One day the trees are deep green and the next day, royal gold and bright crimson streak the leafy forests like a Van Gogh painting. Accompanied with the changing colours of the leaves is the frequent thump of an apple falling from our backyard tree and the rustle of a raccoon picking through the grapes in our grape vine arbor. The grapes are a tedious task to clean up and the tons of fruit flies and ants don't make the chore any easier. However, the insects and the grapes do attract something positive, dozens of ravenous songbirds. The trickles of grape residue are irresistible to ants and as the ants conglomerate around the fallen grapes, pairs of Juncos and Song Sparrows hop under the arbor, grab "take out", and flap on to the next yard. Spiders loath to miss out on a thanksgiving-sized feast snap up insects that unwarily buzz into their webs, spun tight on the branches of the grape vine. The pair of Bewick's Wrens also forage around the arbor. It is always funny spotting one as it hops up the arbor branch, with spider's legs dangling out its beak like sprouting whiskers. The grapes, spiders, ants, and birds all make a beautiful cycle of life just outside my back door.

In mid September, my Mom and I were scouting out Boeing Ponds when we came across another 'bird-bug' feasting ground. Atop the tall Boeing building perched the Peregrine Falcon. Occasionally the peregrine can be seen surveying the valley, but today it was busy devouring an unfortunate "white bird" possibly a gull or a dove. I trained my binoculars on the falcon while it chowed down its lunch. I noticed that swarms of insects were conglomerated around the meal. Perhaps they hoped to get a bite of the raptor's prey, or sought to stick around

to clean up what was left. However, the ones that were profiting the most from the peregrine's mid-day meal were the Barn Swallows, who, having spotted that the falcon's appetite was satiated from his large lunch, swooped dauntlessly around the falcon's head as they gleaned insects.

The most entertaining bug-feast of the summer came on my drive back from Manitoba. After two weeks of swatting mosquitoes, avoiding bulldogs (horseflies), and scrubbing insects off the front of the car, I was ready to get back to the West Coast where the bug levels were minimal. When we stopped in a North Dakota parking lot, I watched a dozen Song Sparrows while they flitted around the lot. They would skitter up to a car, hover in front of it, and pick the insects off the front of the grill. What looked to me like another cleaning job was an all you can eat buffet to the sparrows. I imagined their tittering conversations. "Now this, son, is the abdomen of a fly. Roasted, it tastes much better than the thorax or legs." or "Oh boy, I call dibs on those dragonfly wings!" For me, it was very entertaining to watch the sparrow clan hop from one car grill to the next, gorging on the insects, but for the sparrow clan and other birds, the insects were a critical source of food. Watching the sparrows, swallows, juncos, and other birds get dinner made me thankful that I can always just go to the cupboard to make myself a peanut butter and jam sandwich. Happy birding!

Recent Bird Sightings:

Thanks to this summer's reporters Pamela Phillips, Sandra Embrey, and Anita Richard.

April 20th, 2015 Pamela Phillips had some new sightings around her yard including **Bewick's Wren**, **Purple Finch**, and a **Rufus Hummingbird**. Her yard was also visited by a stealthy **Sharp-shinned Hawk**. First it scanned the feeder from its hidden perch in a maple tree. There was no activity at the feeder, so it slunk down to the fence and then hopped to the ground and waited for an unsuspecting songbird to stop by the feeder. Unfortunately for the hawk and fortunately

for the bevy of songbirds that congregate at Pamela's feeder, the songbirds were well hidden and the silent hunter swooped off to find a meal somewhere else. Perhaps it thought that mice and voles would be less crafty than sparrows and chickadees. Pamela also discovered a **Dark-eyed Junco's** nest in her garden. Cupped in the thatch work of the nest were four or five little eggs! Pamela also reported a robin's nest on top of a light fixture on the side of her husband's shop.

April 8th, 2015 Anita Richard reported a pair of **Eurasian Collared Doves** that frequented her backyard feeders at her West Hill home. Eurasian Collared Doves have become a regular sighting in the Green River Valley particularly in the southern Kent Valley along West Valley Highway. Exactly 100 were spotted on last year's Christmas Bird Count. The population has shown no signs of slowing down and has recently spread out from their primary roosting grounds around Elliot Farms along Frager Road.

April 29th, 2015 In the last week of April, the Embrey yard was a bird hub, or as Sandra Embrey put it "the skies have been a focus for the past few days." A duo of **Osprey**, a frequent sight at the Embrey house, "chatted" away as they flew over the yard. A pair of **Bald Eagles**, circled the skies above, scanning the ground below them. The Embreys also were surprised to see a **Common Raven**, flapping and calling with three crows in tow "hounding and scolding" him until he turned tail and fled north.

May 15th, 2015 Way back in April, Pamela Phillips kick started her backyard woodpecker count with several Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers. In May, the woodpecker sightings kept on coming. After she spotted a solitary **Red-breasted Sapsucker**, Pamela heard the call of the elusive **Pileated Woodpecker**, a reportedly frequent sound around her yard. This time, the call came with a sighting. Pamela said, "I finally saw a large Pileated Woodpecker on a maple near the feeding are. I have now seen all the 5 woodpeckers that frequent our property!" Congratulations Pamela! Also spotted flying over and around Pamela's yard were **Great Blue Heron**, **Bald Eagle**, female **Black-** **[Continued on page 8]**

Bio: Calen is a 16 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 - We Need a new Chair!



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. In winter the estuary boardwalk will add an additional 1 3/4 miles total, so the whole walk including the boardwalk extension is up to 3 3/4 miles.

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

SEQUIM FIELD TRIP

Sunday, Oct. 18th 6:30 AM - 7 PM

Leaders: Jim Flynn & Marissa Benavente

Itinerary: Birding around Sequim, Diamond Pt. and Dungeness. October is a great time for all sorts of birds from gulls, to late shorebirds as well as ducks, loons and many other waterbirds and late migrating passerines. Traditionally, it is also a good time for rarities although our focus will be on enjoying the return of expected

fall/winter birds. Please bring a Discover Pass if you have one. Carpooling required.

Meet: Star Lake Park & Ride at S. 272nd St and 26th Ave S., just west of I-5

Signup: Jim Flynn 206-399-6418, merlinmania@comcast.net

Beaches And Parks - Fall Color and Fall Birds

Date has changed from November 7th To October 24th!

Saturday, October 24th 8:00 AM to Early-afternoon

Leader: Steve Johnson.

Visit picturesque beaches and parks in King County and Pierce County during a great time of year to look for returning fall birds. We'll travel to Lake Fenwick, Weyerhaeuser Pond, and to local parks and beaches along Puget Sound, searching for many species of sea birds and forest birds. This a good time of year to see scenic views and fall color. Expect to walk short distances from the cars.

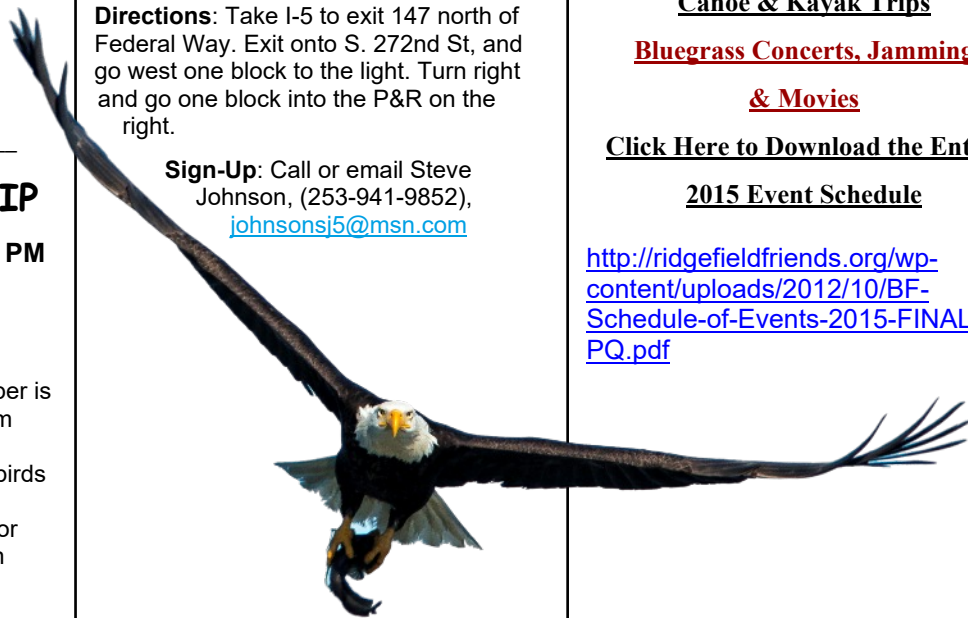
People who wish to leave early may do so.

Bring: Lunch, a thermos and drinks, and warm clothes. A scope is very welcome.

Meet: 8:00 AM at the Star Lake P&R north of Federal Way.

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



16th Annual BirdFest & Bluegrass Celebration

October 3rd and 4th, 2015

Join the Friends of Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge and the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge Staff as we celebrate the coming of fall and the wildlife that make the Refuge their home. BirdFest and Bluegrass is an opportunity to enjoy the sights and sounds of fall migration.

Bird Language, Watercolor, and Photography Workshops & Crane

Tours by Reservation Only

Canoe & Kayak Trips

Bluegrass Concerts, Jamming & Movies

Click Here to Download the Entire 2015 Event Schedule

<http://ridgefieldfriends.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/BF-Schedule-of-Events-2015-FINAL-PQ.pdf>

Birding in Florida - by Laura Lavington

I suppose it sounds a little bizarre for someone to choose to go to South Florida in August. However, that is something that I did this summer: my mom had a short business trip to Hollywood, Florida, in August, and I tagged along. And you know what? I had a good time, even considering the heat, humidity, and mosquitos.

My trip to Florida was not a birding trip, but I figured I was bound to see some birds, so I ordered Smithsonian Handbooks' *Birds of Florida* by Fred J. Alsop III from Amazon in preparation. I considered a few Florida bird books, but I went with the Smithsonian book because I've seen some of the Dorling Kindersley Smithsonian bird books, and I like the species' profiles. So, even though I think there were newer books than this 2002 text, I went with it. I would say that I liked the book, that it was easy to use, and that it only had one drawback: it made me yearn for all the birds that I would not be able to see in my limited time. In fact, because I've only been birding a few years, before this trip I had never birded within the United States east of Arizona. So, *Birds of Florida* was full of birds I had never seen.

As I previously said, it was a pretty short trip, so I only really unofficially birded on two days. What is unofficial birding? For me, it was heading to the beach with my binoculars and bird book tucked inside my bag next to my pleasure reading and sunscreen. I didn't drive up and down the coast to watch birds from different vantage points (which I guess would be more like "official" birding), but I did watch some birds as I relaxed on a beach chair (the beach chair that I had to pay to use—even though it belonged to the hotel I was staying at). Well, naturally I saw brown pelicans, and I must say that they were my favorite that day. There is something calming about the way those birds fly, and it's so interesting to see a pelican dive. When they're up in the sky, pelicans look a little chunky, but when they dive, they certainly can move fast! There weren't as many pelicans as I've seen sometimes on my trips to Mexico, and the only thing that I can figure is that the rest were either further north along the coast still, or else they were on Florida's Gulf Coast instead (Hollywood is very near Ft. Lauderdale, on the Atlantic).

Ok, you're right, one can see brown pelicans in Washington, albeit one must make a trip to the coast, so thus far my trip to Florida doesn't sound too exciting. Well,



I also saw quite a few laughing gulls at the beach that day. At least I think they were laughing gulls: I don't remember them laughing. Too hot in August to laugh? Hmm. Unfortunately, *Birds of Florida* indicates that laughing gulls are in the area year-round, but the book does not give any picture of the winter plumage of a laughing gull. So, I either saw birds that in August were already in their winter plumage, or else all forty-something birds I saw were immature. Yes, the birds did not have the normal black swim-cap that a



laughing gull is known for. *Birds of Florida* tells me that laughing gulls steal fish out of pelican' pouches, but I did not see that. Again, maybe too hot for such vigorousness.

While at the beach, I saw several terns flying overhead. I enjoyed watching them dive, but I had a hell of a time catching one with my camera. I believe that I saw both gull-billed terns and royal terns, but I don't have photographic evidence of it. Hmm, maybe that explains the comfort I get from gulls: they spend so much time standing around doing nothing, I generally have an easy time taking pictures of them.

My other unofficial birding opportunity was on the afternoon that my mom and I visited the Everglades. Yes, that's right, the

Everglades during the rainy season. One of the visitors' centers had an adjustable mosquito sign indicating

the severity of activity: the little arm was pushed to "hysterical." How can the mosquito level be "hysterical"? I wish I'd taken a picture of that sign, but I think I was a little too sobered when I saw that the mosquito level was the worst possible to think of taking a picture. Before we left home, I bought some all-natural insect repellent, thinking that I didn't want to spray strange chemicals all about the Everglades, and about the time I saw the mosquito sign, I began to contemplate that decision. Actually, I think the all-natural insect repellent worked just as well as other insect repellent that I've tried. In fact, I did not get as chewed up as I did last December in the Yucatan Peninsula. I did get some bites, but I think the reason it wasn't worse was because I obeyed the signs. At the Flamingo Visitors' Center, one sign said not go on any hiking trails in that area of the park due to mosquitos. So, we went on a boat ride, instead. Another sign at the visitors' center said to stay off of the lawn and out of the shade. Well, sometimes to avoid the lawn, I had to take a longer route. It was in the 90s and super humid, so my mom decided to take the shortest route (it was hard to move at all in that heat), and she got a lot more chewed up than I did. I guess we had to decide between taking our chances with heat exhaustion and taking our chances with mosquitos, and my mom and I chose differently. That, or I just did a better job at applying the all-natural insect repellent, who knows.

At this point I should make a little confession: I went to the Everglades that day more to see **(Continued on page 8)**




Featherhaven

Native Songbird Rehabilitation
featherhavensr@gmail.com
P.O. Box 242, Enumclaw, WA 98022

Bird of the Month: Turkey Vulture

Reprint Courtesy of Wild Birds Unlimited, Burien

Turkey Vultures are large dark birds with long, broad wings. They are bigger than all other raptors except for eagles and condors. They have long "fingers" at their wingtips and long tails that extend past their toes in flight. When soaring, they hold their wings slightly raised making a "V" and move in wobbly circles.

Turkey Vultures appear black from a distance but up close are dark brown with a featherless red head and pale bill.

These birds are majestic but unsteady soarers characteristically flying with very few wingbeats. They may glide low to the ground looking for food or ride high on thermals for a better vantage point. They may soar alone or in small groups and they roost in large numbers. They may be seen on the ground huddled around roadkill or dumpsters.

Turkey Vultures are usually seen in open areas including mixed farmland, forest and rangeland. They may be found along roadsides and at landfills. At night, they roost in trees, on rocks and other high secluded spots.

Turkey Vultures eat carrion which they find by using their excellent sense of smell. The part of their brain that is responsible for detecting smells is particularly large compared to other birds. They can even find dead animals below a forest canopy.

Mostly they eat mammals but have been known to munch on reptiles, other birds, amphibians, and fish. They are skilled foragers and are even known to leave aside the scent glands of dead skunks. They appear to have a highly developed immune system as they are able to feast on carcasses without contracting diseases like botulism, anthrax, cholera or salmonella. They never attack living prey.

Turkey Vultures don't build full nests. They may scrape out a spot in the soil or leaf litter or arrange scraps of vegetation on rotting wood. Nests may be located in rock crevices, caves, ledges, thickets, mammal burrows, hollow logs and trees, abandoned hawk or heron nests and abandoned buildings. While Turkey



Vultures often feed near humans, they prefer to nest far away from civilization.

Some cultures, such as Tibetan Buddhists, perceive vultures as sacred for their clean up role. Zoroastrians perceive vultures as precious animals that release the soul from the body. The vultures scientific name, *Cathartes aura*, means either "golden purifier" or "purifying breeze".

Turkey Vultures have been increasing in number across North America since 1966. At one time, they were threatened by side-effects of the pesticide DDT which has since been banned. The main concern now is lead shot that ends up in carcasses or material discarded by hunters. The vultures eat the shot and eventually suffer lead poisoning. Other threats include trapping and killing due to erroneous fears that they spread disease. Far from it, Turkey Vultures actually reduce the spread of disease.

(All information courtesy of Cornell Lab of Ornithology)

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 2014.

All you have to do is come to a meeting, join up and get your free Discover Pass. 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.

Mewsings from Millie

Reprint Courtesy of Wild Birds Unlimited, Burien

Ah, Hawaii. I have never been there myself but I've heard it is very beautiful with its swaying palm trees, crystalline blue lagoons, tumbling waterfalls, stunning beaches and the home to some of the most endangered bird species in the world. In fact, many birds that once inhabited the islands have already gone extinct. Bones have been found that prove there were once bird-catching owls, a tremendous variety of honeycreepers and flightless ibises that are no longer on this earth.

Right now one in every three endangered bird species in the United States is Hawaiian which means that Hawaii's extinction crisis has never really ended. Birds are threatened daily by introduced diseases, habitat loss on an epic scale and non-native predators such as rats, cats and mongooses.

Trying to save the birds that are left seems like an impossible task but there is one person who is hopeful. Her name is Hanna Mounce and she is the coordinator of the Maui Forest Bird Recovery Project. After doing research for nine years from the Pacific Northwest to Costa Rica, she came to Maui and devoted her Ph.D. dissertation to a genetic analysis of the island's most endangered bird: the Kiwikiu also known as the Maui Parrotbill. The total population of the Kiwikiu is perhaps 500 birds and the prognosis for its future is dire.

So, what is Hanna, a sole human being, doing about this daunting predicament? While continuing to monitor the remaining birds in the dripping, wet rainforest, she and her team are creating new Kiwikiu territory from the ground up. On the dry, windy grassland that is the leeward side of the towering Haleakala volcano where herds of feral pigs, goats and cows can be seen kicking up clouds of dust as they move across the hardpan soil, tiny seedlings are being planted and fenced off in hopes of rebuilding a vast and complex forest.

Long ago, Maui's leeward side is believed to have been covered by a great dryland and mesic forest. A mesic forest is a type of habitat with a moderate or well-balanced supply of moisture. Fast growing Koa trees were keystones of the forest helping to recharge groundwater, fix nitrogen, stabilize soils and keep the watershed healthy. Today, logging, ranching and the relentless grazing of

ferals have made it impossible for the forest to regenerate.

Currently, the Kiwikiu survives only on the wet side of Haleakala. Hanna believes the birds are out of options having to make do with the forest habitat that is left. The wet forest poses challenges for the bird and she has seen hatchlings die when the parents couldn't find enough food for them in rainy weather.

Moving downslope is not an option because at 4,500 feet the birds will encounter another imported scourge, mosquitoes. If bitten, the birds will develop avian malaria and die. With global warming, the mosquitoes and the deadly diseases they carry will be able to move higher until they invade the last strongholds of the Kiwikiu and wipe them out.



Fortunately, Haleakala is more than 10,000 feet high and could be a haven for all of Maui's birds long into the future if habitat can be restored.

After three years of scouting sites, fencing areas and collecting seeds from native



plants, trees and shrubs, Hanna and her crew began planting 7,000 seedlings in their first enclosure.

Last winter, an additional 39,000 plantings were done and the team is now focusing on creating corridors to connect gulches with remnant forest hoping to build enough habitat for at least a few Kiwikiu.

Within five years it is hoped that as many as six pairs of birds will be introduced. The birds will be gotten from the wild and from captive-bred birds and will be supported with food sources.

The project is getting increasing support from ranchers, sugar cane growers and hotel owners who realize the value of a functional watershed. In addition, there is a waiting list of volunteers who can't wait to fly up to the restoration site to plant a tree.

As Hanna sees it, the high stakes in Hawaii are not signs of hopelessness but of possibility.

If you would like to help or find out more go to: mauiforestbirds.org.

Aloha until next time,

Millie, the Muse of Mews

(information courtesy of Audubon Magazine, Sept.-Oct. 2015)



CHECK OUT THE NEW RAINIER AUDUBON MEETUP GROUP AT

<http://www.meetup.com/Rainier-Audubon-Society/>

Seen an Heard (Continued from page 3)

headed Grosbeak and Red-wing Blackbird.

June 21st, 2015 On the first official day of Summer, Pamela, as she worked on a silviculture study near Winlock, heard an **Olive-sided Flycatcher**.

September 14th, 2015 While scouting around Boeing Pond and the Black River Riparian Forest, I watched three **Belted Kingfishers** at three different bodies of water. The first was perched on a snag overlooking the southwestern corner of Boeing Pond, the second sat on a branch as it scanned the Black River, and the third made a great shrieking call and landed in a tree above a pond near the Black River. The third kingfisher was especially striking with his vibrant blue back and russet-coloured chest marks. My mom also spotted a **Green Heron** along the banks of the Black River. Earlier in September a kingfisher flew over my house. It was a strange sighting as the nearest sizeable body of water is a

mile and a half away. Perhaps he was on the way to Juchem Pond (Rainier Audubon member Alex Juchem's beautiful backyard pond)?

Mystery Bird of the Month

I heard the rich call from this bird and spotted several glide gracefully over the prairies this summer. Can you guess the bird? Here are the clues:

- A group of me can be called a "construction", a "dance", a "siege", a "sedge", or a "swoop".
- My natural feather colour is grey. However, due to preening with iron oxide stained mud, my feathers can have a ruddy-brown sheen.
- I am possibly the eldest bird species on the planet. A ten million year old fossilized skull of a predecessor of mine was found in Nebraska.

- I have a long trachea (and a long neck), which can coil into my sternum. It helps to produce my low, rolling trumpet call.
- Humankind has long marveled about my beauty in the air. My elaborate courtship rituals have mesmerized bird watchers for decades. Environmentalist Aldo Leopold wrote of my kind's "nobility, won in the march of the aeons".
- I mate for life and stick with my mate year round. Some pairs are together for over two decades!
- My chicks are ready to leave the nest as early as eight hours into their life. Their innate swimming ability kicks in nearly from the time of their birth.
- I don't whoop

Who am I? Answer at bottom of page.

Florida Birding (Continued from page 5)

alligators and crocodiles than to see birds. So, instead of taking my chances with the mosquitos on one of the discouraged trails in order to see birds, we went on the mangroves boat trip to see crocodiles. (Crocodiles are still endangered, and it is harder to see them than it is to see alligators.) We didn't see oodles of birds on the boat trip, but due to the heat I didn't really expect to. We did see three crocodiles, and I was happy with the birds that I did see on the boat trip: a white ibis, anhingas, an osprey, a tern, and turkey vultures. Elsewhere in the park, I saw a pile of barn swallows, more anhingas, fish crows, black vultures, quite a few laughing gulls (they were standing around a parking lot), northern mockingbirds, and great egrets. We actually saw quite a few great egrets as we were driving along the main road in the Everglades, but the only picture I took of them didn't turn out. They kept flying into the Everglades' rivers of grass when we drove near. The fish crows were around one of the visitors' centers, but I couldn't get a picture of them, either. When I tried to take a picture of one, he flew up onto the roof. I did listen to their cawing, and I thought about how fish crows are the southeastern version of the northwestern crow, of which I am quite fond.

Before I conclude my little account of my short trip to South Florida in August, I must tell you what I saw on the Everglades National Park website before I left home. The park's official website says: **"Warning - Vultures May Damage Vehicles:** Vultures are attracted to the rubber on vehicles and have been known to cause severe damage to windshields, sun roofs, and windshield



wipers. Vultures are a federally protected migratory species and may not be harmed." Well, I told my mom about this before we left, but due to lack of sleep or something, I failed to mention it to her again at the point when the rental car agent asked if we wanted additional insurance. The seriousness of the situation was reinforced by the warning signs in the park. So, when we got to the parking lot for the Flamingo Visitors' Center, where the boat ride took off from, we spotted vultures nearby, and we ended up moving the car about six

times before it was time for the boat trip. The park suggests that to avoid vulture damage, one should park in full sun and away from vultures. Well, I guess no one else who visited the park that day saw that suggestion on the website, because all day we were the only people parking in the full sun (people must have thought we were nuts). Ultimately, we weren't sure where to put the car while we were on the boat trip: we thought about putting it next to the marina store, since that was a busy area with lots of people and cars moving about, but that area was also nearer to the black vultures. I guess it was kind of a gamble, but we lucked out that day.

To conclude, I will say that it wasn't so bad in South Florida during August. Sure, there were two different hurricanes in the Caribbean during the short time we were in Florida, but that turned out OK. It was hot and humid, for sure: at times I couldn't take pictures with my camera because the lens kept fogging up. The mosquitos, well, I think maybe I just dodged the bullet on that one: I would not expect to get off so lightly every time. If one really wants to see birds, though—and I don't mean mosquitos, which are about the same size there—the winter is a better time to visit Florida. But, it's always nice to have a little trip somewhere.

Audubon Council of Washington (ACOW) Annual Meeting on October 24th, 2015

Register now for the 2015 annual meeting of the Audubon Council of Washington (ACOW), hosted by Skagit Audubon Society and the NW I Chapters! ACOW is our annual state-wide meeting where members from all Audubon Chapters in Washington gather together for a weekend of information sharing, knowledge gathering, and fellowship. This year's meeting will focus on state and federal level policy actions around Audubon's climate initiative, as well as showcase chapter work being done to educate communities about the impact of climate change on birds.

Date: Saturday, October 24, 2015

Location: Best Western Plus, Skagit Valley Inn, 2300 Market Street, Mount Vernon, WA

Agenda and Information:

<http://wa.audubon.org/chapter-meetings>

Registration: \$40 at <http://ow.ly/QSS6w>

In an effort to curb the impacts of climate change on birds and people, Audubon is working to increase the use of renewable energy while reducing carbon emissions output. Learn about multiple carbon reduction action plans being proposed in Washington State including the Governor's carbon cap, the Alliance

for Jobs and Clean Energy's cap-and-trade, and Carbon WA's carbon tax (learn more at <http://wa.audubon.org/carbon-and-clean-energy>). We will also host staff from National Audubon's Policy Office in Washington, DC who will provide the inside scoop regarding federal action on carbon emissions, and how Audubon's grassroots network can be effective advocates for change at the local, state, and national level.



Presentations from Kittitas Audubon Society and Black Hills Audubon Society will highlight just some of the exciting work being done by chapters on behalf of birds in Washington State. Take home tips and tricks on how to engage reluctant audiences in climate action, and how to

transform your neighborhoods into a true bird-friendly community, one backyard at a time.

Expect a dynamic day of discussion and collaboration around meaningful actions we can take together to augment our conservation impact, creating places where birds and people prosper. Additional weekend activities include:

WSACC Meeting – Friday, October 23rd

at 4:30 PM at the Port of Skagit County
Audubon Works Tutorial – Saturday, October 24th at 7:30 AM before ACOW begins

Field Trips – Sunday, October 25th at 8:30 AM, Deception Pass State Park or Washington Park and Ship Harbor

A block of rooms at \$79 per night is being held at the [Best Western Plus, Skagit Valley Inn](#), conveniently located at Exit 227 just off I-405. Hotel reservations may be made by calling (360) 428-5678. AUDUBON SOCIETY is the group name.

All meeting information, including the agenda, accommodations, and weekend logistics may be found on the Audubon Washington website at <http://wa.audubon.org/chapter-meetings>. See you there!

Oil Transport

Birds and people across Washington State are being threatened by an increase in the transport of non-renewable energy sources, including oil.

Numerous [proposals to increase oil-by-rail transports](#) are underway. Oil trains risk catastrophic environmental consequence by way of vessel transfer, accident, and sabotage. We are the [Thin Green Line](#) between most voracious energy markets in the world and huge fossil fuel deposits in the interior of North America.

PARTICIPATE

1) Join the **Stand Up to Oil** campaign - a coalition of groups opposed to new oil terminals and an increase in oil transport through the Northwest, while working to improve safety measures for oil currently traveling through the region.

2) Stay tuned for information regarding comment opportunities and public

hearings for [each oil terminal threat in Washington state](#) (email for more info [Chapter Conservation Manager](#)):

Tesoro Savage (Vancouver) - State DEIS: expect November 24th

NuStar (Vancouver)

Westway and Imperium (Grays Harbor) - State DEIS comment period: August 31 - October 29, 2015

High level findings from DEIS review [available here](#).

[Grays Harbor Resources at Risk](#) (birds on page two), DOE

[Background docs on birds and oil risks in WA](#), Jerry Joyce

[Birds and Oil in WA](#), Call Audio Recording

Public hearings - **RSVP and Carpool Info Here:**

○ Oct. 1, 1:30-4:30pm and 6:00-9:00pm, [Satsop Park](#), Elma, WA

○ Oct. 8, 1:30-4:30pm and 6:00-9:00pm, [D&R Theater](#), Aberdeen, WA

VIEW

[Talking Crude: The Threat of Oil in Grays Harbor](#), Citizens for a Clean Harbor

The [Thin Green Line](#), PNW vs. Fossil Fuel Industry

[Crude Oil by Rail](#), WSJ map of oil transport by County

[Fossil Fuels and Spill Risk](#), Seattle Times Graphic

[Oil Train Blast Zones in North America](#), Forest Ethics

[Photos illustrating fossil fuel transport threats to the Salish Sea](#), Robert Dash Photography



"Money has to serve, not to rule."
- Pope Francis



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

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