

The Heron Herald



Rainier Audubon Society

October 2016 (revised)

Today's Nature Conservancy: Changing times require changing strategies

October 17th, 2016

John Rose

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is known for its acquisition of important lands, including Yellow Island, Ebey's Landing, and Moses Coulee. Land acquisition is still part of the mix, but the conservation goals require us to do more. John will talk about our work with tribes to bring back wild salmon runs, our work with governments to accelerate storm water runoff projects, and our work in the East Cascades to make forest restoration economically sustainable.

John has been a Member of the TNC WA board since 2000, is a recipient of TNC's global Oak Leaf award. He was the former CEO of Seattle-Northwest Securities, the Northwest's largest underwriter of municipal bonds.

He is currently founder and Chair of Practical Steam, reinventing the steam engine so wasted energy can be put to productive use.

John was born and raised in Washington, past mayor of the Town of Beaux Arts Village and currently lives in Seattle.

Join us at 6:30 for conversation and refreshments.



Yellow Island



Moses Coulee



Ebey's Landing

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

SEATTLE, Wash. (July 13, 2016)— Today, [Audubon Washington](#), steward of bird conservation in the Evergreen State, formally [announced its support for Initiative 732](#), a carbon tax measure appearing on the ballot this November.

Audubon Washington, the state office of the National Audubon Society, works across the state to conserve natural ecosystems and build healthy communities for people, birds and other wildlife.

“Climate change is a threat to birds and people, and a carbon tax is a proven solution to reduce greenhouse gases,” said Gail Gatton, executive director for Audubon Washington. “Not only will passing I-732 help reduce carbon pollution, but it will encourage clean sources of energy and secure a sustainable and prosperous future for our state. I-732 is the best option available today to protect birds from this threat, and we can't afford to stand on the sidelines.”

Audubon Washington will be asking its



21,000 members to take actions in support of the ballot initiative between now and the November 8 election.

In 2014, Audubon released its [Birds and Climate Change Report](#), which details the threat that climate change poses to birds in the United States. More than half of America's bird species are threatened or endangered by climate change, including [189 species](#) found in the state of Washington.

The report details how rising temperatures influence the range of 588 North American bird species, and found that 314 of those were threatened or endan-

gered by climate change. In Washington state, 189 species of birds are at risk. Birds have specific sets of environmental requirements governed by climate and, during the past 50 years, more than 60 percent of wintering North American bird species have shifted their winter ranges northward.

Audubon Washington's recent work to protect birds and wildlife across Washington has included working with the Department of Fish and Wildlife to gather data on songbird species, instilling in young adults the importance of conservation through the Tenacious Roots Program, and working with the chapter network to restore habitat and build species resiliency, such as a chapter installing nest boxes for [climate-threatened Barn Owls](#).

To learn more about Audubon Washington's efforts in support of Initiative 732, please visit <http://wa.audubon.org/732>.

To learn more about Audubon Washington's work, please visit <http://wa.audubon.org>.

Rainier Audubon Society Directory

Position	Name	Board Member	Phone	email
President	Heather Gibson	Yes	253-856-9812	hedder_swedder@yahoo.com
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Secretary	Open			
Treasurer	Laura Lavington	Yes	253-941-7372	laura.lavington@gmail.com
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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
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Lifetime Members	Max Prinsen	Yes	425-432-9965	
Lifetime Members	Erin Wojewodski-Prinsen	Yes	425-432-9965	



Recently, while looking on eBird or reading about the Western scrub-jay, you may have noticed something a little different about its taxonomic listing. No longer do “western” scrub jays exist in the Kent and Auburn Valley, nor anywhere else in the world. While the birds themselves haven’t changed, their species has been split in two, California scrub-jay on the Pacific Coast and Woodhouse’s scrub-jay in the Rocky Mountains. While words like splits and lumps might sound more familiar when describing a painful gymnastics routine, they are key components of the birding world in taxonomy. Over the years numerous species or subspecies, regional variants and forms have been split apart into their own species, or lumped together under one name. The Western-scrub jay was this year’s victim or victor of taxonomic progress, depending on your opinion of splits and lumps.

Further down the taxonomy list is another familiar avian species who’s taxonomic history is a detailed one, namely the Yellow-rumped Warbler. A particularly adaptive bird, the Yellow-rumped Warbler displays an ability to get creative when foraging from darting in and out of a tree like a flycatcher to hunt insects, to digesting the waxes from wintering berries, to picking unfortunate bugs out of spider webs. Some reports claim that yellow-rumps will occasionally skim river surfaces like a swallow to catch insects. While these types of behavior provide excellent entertainment and research for birders, their adaptive nature allows their species to range and winter over a much larger area than most warblers. However, through the past half century, a question has baffled ornithologists: is the Yellow-rumped Warbler a single species?

Prior to the spring of 1973, the name Yellow-rumped Warbler was nowhere to be found in a field guide, instead our two “forms” or subspecies of yellow-rumps we see today, Myrtle’s and Audubon’s were separate species of

Seen & Heard by Calen Randall

warbler. They looked nearly identical, save for the difference in throat colouration, gold for the Audubon’s and white for the Myrtle’s, but their wide ranges were both spread out on either sides of the US. With totally different ranges, how could the two warblers be the same species? In 1969, ornithologist John Hubbard wrote of a region in western Canada where the two ranges overlapped and inter-breeding was extremely common for two birds considered to be in separate species. Armed with Hubbard’s research and ready to alter the life-lists of birders across the country (or so many ornithologists claimed), the American Ornithologists’ Union spent the spring of 1973 lumping together a number of species together. Thus, the Myrtle and Audubon’s Warblers became united under one name, the Yellow-rumped Warbler.

Over four decades later, the Yellow-rumped Warbler is accepted as a single species by the grand majority of birders; however, the debate about whether Yellow-rumped Warblers are a single species has resurfaced. With forty years of genetics research added to the tool kit of taxonomy, our definition of a species has evolved greatly so the thinking has shifted back to splitting instead of lumping. This time, ornithologists suspect that the warbler may, in fact, be three if not four separate species. Recently, another ornithologist, David Toews, conducted genetic research on the Myrtle’s, Audubon’s, and hybrids in the 80 mile long strip of area where interbreeding between the forms occurs. Toew’s research actually found that the Myrtle’s and Audubon’s forms even in the hybridization zone are genetically quite different. He hypothesized that the hybrid’s genetics were weaker and couldn’t breed with the other forms, thus they remained in the same small strip of land. Meanwhile, ornithologists in Mexico and Guatemala are confronted with another taxonomic dilemma; there are two southern variants of Yellow-rumped Warbler that may also be their own separate species. One, the Goldman’s form of Yellow-rumped Warbler is native to Guatemala and genetically distinct from other yellow-rump forms. The Black-fronted form of Yellow-rumped Warbler, found in the highlands of northern Mexico, is a much darker coloured form, but genetic testing has proven inconclusive whether it is genetically distinct. Are the

two separate species? Should just the Black-fronted stay with the Audubon’s form because its genetics haven’t been proven to be fully distinct? Hopefully, further research will give us better insight about the best way to group the forms.

Whether the Yellow-rumped Warbler, or “butter butts” as they are affectionately called in some birding circles, stays one species or is split into four separate ones will be left to the American Ornithologists’ Union and they won’t decide until July 2017. Needless to say, Yellow-rumped Warblers of all forms will be of great interest to birders in the months leading up to the decision. Whether you are a zealous birder eager to add three more species to your life list from the split, or a birder who enjoys reading about the differing genetics, plumage colouration, and ranges, the taxonomic story of the Yellow-rumped Warbler is a fascinating discussion.

Recent Bird Sightings:

Notable eBird Sightings: In early September, three **Marbled Murrelet** were sighted at Dumas Bay Park and Brown’s Point in Federal Way and Tacoma (Sep 4th). Also spotted at Dumas Bay was a **Black-throated Gray Warbler** (Sep 4th). A **Ruff** was spotted at Dungeness Spit and another at Wylie Slough in Skagit County (Sep 10-12th). Also in tow at Dungeness spit was a **Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** (Sep 9-11th).

What to Look for in the Month of October:

While most of our shorebirds pass through the area before you can say pectoral sandpiper, several notable species become more prevalent in late October and early November.

- An October bird list just wouldn’t be complete without the return of the Trumpeter Swans (Tundra Swans too if we’re lucky). The last few years the first swan sightings ranged from between October 26th to November 24th, so the date of the first sighting is up in the air. Information about the return of the Swan Mania Guessing Game will be provided at the October Rainier Audubon meeting.
- Northern Shrikes make their return to the

(Continued on page 5)

Bio: Calen is a 17 year old birder entering his sixth year writing the Seen and Heard. Currently attending Highline College, Calen enjoys birding in the Green River Valley and around Ithaca, New York.

Field Trips - Barbara Petersen



Weekly Birdwalks at Nisqually

Wednesdays 8 am to 11 am
Leader: Phil Kelley

Join Phil Kelley on his weekly bird walks as he counts the birds at Nisqually NWR. The group walks over to an area near the visitor's center to view the entry road estuary, and then takes the boardwalk/trail loop out to the Twin Barns, and the Nisqually overlook area. From there, the group walks the dike, and back to the Riparian Forest.

Bring: Good walking shoes or boots, rain gear, water, snacks, and \$3 for entry fee unless you have a pass. Scopes are welcome.

Meet: At the Visitor's Center Pond Overlook.

Directions: Take I-5 south from Tacoma and exit to Nisqually NWR at exit 114. Take a right at the light.

Sign-up is not necessary. Call or email Phil Kelley if you have questions. Phil Kelley, Lacey, (360) 459 1499, scrubjay323@aol.com

Dumas Bay, Federal Way

Sun. Oct. 23rd
Leader Jim Flynn

Dumas Bay is a hidden gem of a park. A nice walk (about 1/4 mile) through the woods to a quiet bay and you almost feel like you're far away from the city. The bay attracts a variety of water birds from ducks, gulls, a few shorebirds and more. It has also produced a surprising number of rarities both major and minor such as Franklin's Gull.

Time 8 AM to Noonish.

Call Jim Flynn at 206-399-6418 or email merlinmania@comcast.net to sign up and get the meeting place.

Fall Color and Fall Birds

Sat, Oct 29th, 8:00 AM to early-afternoon

Leader: Steve Johnson

Sign up early for this popular annual trip with Steve. Visit picturesque parks and beaches in King County and Pierce County during a great time of year to look for returning fall birds. We'll travel to local parks and beaches along Puget Sound, searching for many species of sea birds and forest birds. This is a good time of year to encounter scenic views and fall color. Expect to walk short distances from the cars.

People who wish to leave early may do so.

Bring: Lunch, beverages, and warm clothes. A scope is very welcome.

Meet: 8:00AM at the Star Lake Park&Ride 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 (north) and go one block, then turn into the P&R on the right.

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

Whidbey Island

Saturday, November 19th
6:30 AM - 8 PM

Leader Jim Flynn

Whidbey Island is a great year-round birding destination as it has a great mix of terrestrial and aquatic habitats for the birds. A day list there could include anything from loons and sea ducks to auklets, hawks, sparrows and blackbirds. The scenery is also lovely and there is the added bonus that the central and north parts of Whidbey are in the Olympic Mts. rain shadow - an important consideration for a November trip in wet, Western Washington!

We will meet at the downtown Burien Burger King parking lot and then carpool from the Park and Ride garage which is right across the street.

Bring food and drinks, ferry and gas money as well as lots of layers for possibly cold, wet weather.

Call Jim Flynn at 206-399-6418 to sign up, or email merlinmania@comcast.net

Port Townsend (Quest for the Ancient Murrelet)

Saturday, December 10th
6:30 AM - 8 PM

Leader Jim Flynn

The northern reaches of Puget Sound are where birders head in search of the uncommon Ancient Murrelet during late fall and early winter. These small, sociable and attractive alcids are regularly found here between late November and mid-January and can be fairly reliably found in places like Point No Point (Kitsap County) and Fort Flagler and Fort Worden near Port Townsend. Any other time of year they are nearly impossible to find, as they are out at sea or on the breeding grounds in B.C. and Alaska. This trip should be great for many other waterbirds, possible Oystercatchers and land birds. The scenery is always a plus in this area as well.

We will meet at the Star Lake Park and Ride at S. 272nd St and 26th Ave S., just west of I-5 (caution, there are other nearby park and rides with similar names and addresses. Please call or e-mail if you are unsure about this location)

Bring food and drinks, gas money as well as lots of layers for possibly cold, wet weather. A scope is also a great help in searching for murrelets.

Call Jim Flynn at 206-399-6418 to sign up, or email merlinmania@comcast.net

Education Matters

by Cindy Flanagan

In September, our Rainier Audubon attended the well-attended 20th SHADOW Habitat Frog Frolic. Kids and adults enjoyed learning to use eBird, birding tours led by Calen Randall and the Nature Drawing and Cartooning by Carley Randall. Also on hand were Marie West-Johnson and Dan Streiffert sharing information about Supporting Initiative 732. If you have never been to SHADOW Bog, mark it on your list and come to next year's Frog Frolic! Check out their website Shadowhabitat.org

Rainier Audubon Youth Naturalists (ages 7-13)

October – June

Inspire a fledgling bird watcher, nature lover with the new Rainier Audubon Birding Club!

Children will explore the world of birds (and other critters), their habitats and participate in conservation activities to protect wildlife and their habitat.

We will meet twice a month to explore birds in our area: once for a fun monthly activities meeting (Second Wednesday early evening) and once for a monthly fieldtrip (4th weekend in morning TBD).

Meetings at Federal Way United Methodist Church



29645 51st Ave. S
Auburn, WA 98001

The activities are open to children aged 7-13 and their parents (or other adult family members/guardians) interested in nature. There will be fun learning activities for the adults too!

No experience is necessary. An adult may be accompanied by up to 3 children.

Membership with the Rainier Audubon required (annual family fee is \$30).

Email **Education Chair Cindy Flanagan** for more information:

camcalcin@hotmail.com

TAHOMA AUDUBON PRESENTS: Beginning Birding

Ages 18 and up, \$67/participant. \$60/TAS Member

Want to identify the birds on your feeder? Are you still trying to sort out all those ducks out on the water? Are you interested in learning skills to identify birds on your own? Then this is the class for you! Instructor Marcus Roening is a Master Birder and past-President of both Washington Ornithological Society and Tahoma Audubon Society. Marcus loves to share his joy of birds with beginning bird watchers. Class includes two local field trips on November 7 and 14, 9 am - noon. Participants are responsible for their own food and transportation during field trips. Carpooling is encouraged. Class meets at the Tacoma Nature Center. Classes are either held at the Adriana Hess Audubon Center (2917 Morrison Rd W, University Place) or Tacoma Nature Center (1919 S Tyler St, Tacoma).

How to register. To register and pay for the following classes, visit the Tacoma Nature Center website at www.metroparkstacoma.org/adult-education-nature-center or call 253-591-6439.

November 7 - 21 6:45pm - 9:00pm 82622

TAHOMA AUDUBON PRESENTS: Fall Common Birds of Washington

Ages 14 and up, \$28/participant. \$25/TAS Member

Join us for a look at 75 of the most common bird species that are found in Washington State in the fall. This class is a great starting place for novice bird watchers. Topics include tips on identification of fall birds in Washington State and the best places to find them. David Kaynor is a member of the Washington Ornithological Society. Required Materials: National Geographic Society Field Guide to North American Birds, 6th Edition. Class meets at the Adriana Hess Wetland Park in University Place. Classes are either held at the Adriana Hess Audubon Center (2917 Morrison Rd W, University Place) or Tacoma Nature Center (1919 S Tyler St, Tacoma).

How to register. To register and pay for the following classes, visit the Tacoma Nature Center website at www.metroparkstacoma.org/adult-education-nature-center or call 253-591-6439.

November 7 6:30pm - 8:30pm 82623

Sean & Heard (Continued from page 3)

Green River Valley during late October. One is most likely to spot a Northern Shrike at Kent Ponds, along M Street in Auburn, or Discovery Park in Seattle.

- A late wintering shorebird, Dunlin flocks return in full force during the months of October and November.

eBird Quiz

Quiz: This July, a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher was spotted at this hot spot in King County. Can you name the birding hot spot?

Hint: The hot spot lies in the Eastside Audubon vicinity.

How to Explore eBird Info:

1. Search eBird.org online
2. At the top of the screen there will be a list of tabs. Click on **Explore Data**
3. From there another list of options will show up. Select **Species Maps**

4. In the tab bar at the top left of the screen (titled species), enter Scissor-tailed Flycatcher
5. The purple zones are areas where sightings have occurred
6. Zoom in or enter King County into the area tab. There should be one sighting in the King County area.

Answer on last page.

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

RAS OPPOSES PROPOSED WEYERHAEUSER CAMPUS DEVELOPMENT (revised October 12, 2016)

- Cindy Flanagan

The developer has identified 6 areas of development: 1. Ring Road (Weyerhaeuser Headquarters, zoned Corporate Park (CP-1)), 2. Rhododendron Garden (Zoned CP-1 will continue to lease but not to perpetuity), 3. Bonsai Garden (Zoned CP1) will continue to lease but not to perpetuity), 4. Technical Center (zoned CP-1—area where preliminary applicant 721,000 warehouse would be located), 5. Office area (Zoned OP-1), 6. North Lake (Zoned CP-1). NOTE: Zoning designation is 1994 zoning, as per 1994 Weyerhaeuser Concomitant Agreement



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Currently, IRG plans to lease two sections of land for industrial warehouse operations. A land use application for the first property—a 319,000 sq. ft. fish processing plant by Preferred Freezer and Orca Bay Seafoods—is in process and public comment ended on August 22. The Community Development Director is reviewing the application to determine if an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is required or if the project can move ahead. If an EIS is ordered, public comment will be gathered. If the project is approved, several public groups plan to appeal and the application will go to a Hearings Examiner and the public will have opportunity to comment.

The second preliminary applicant, a 721,000 square foot warehouse, is in pre-application stages. Once the applicant submits the land use application, citizens have the opportunity to submit public comment.

On September 1st, 2016, the City of Federal Way held a study session to learn more from IRG about the proposed property development and to hear from the public. Over 500 people attended. The Rainier Audubon submitted comment opposing the development of the Weyerhaeuser Campus.

On September 6th, the City of Federal Way Council meeting heard public comment of 40+ concerned citizens and organizations, including Rainier Audubon. The City Council was urged to order a Moratorium to do a Comprehensive Review of all remaining Weyerhaeuser Campus land that was not vested in a land use application. So far, the Council and the Mayor have not taken any action.

The Rainier Audubon opposes the proposed development and future development of the Weyerhaeuser Campus for the following reasons:

1. Environmental Significance: The 1994 Weyerhaeuser Concomitant Agreement that has been passed on to IRG development impacts how Critical Areas such as wetlands are defined; affects the size of buffer allowances; and alters types of mitigation required. With the proposed development application, the wetland loss and impact is not being viewed cumulatively for the entire Campus, rather it is being done piecemeal. Concern is the significant wetland loss to the North Lake Watershed and the Hylebos Watershed.

2. Increased Storm water Runoff: Cumulative deforestation in CP1 zoned areas of the Weyerhaeuser Campus will increase storm water run-off and impact the North Lake Watershed and the Hylebos Watershed, which is an important salmonid bearing watershed. The US Environmental Protection Agency states storm water run-off increase comes from impervious roads, parking lots, rooftops and driveways and impacts water/sediment quality, temperature, hydrology, physical habitat and energy sources of stream ecosystems.

3. Historical and Cultural Significance: Weyerhaeuser Campus, (the headquarters and its lands) is of historical and cultural significance. Historical preservationists believe the campus qualifies for listing as a National Register of Historic Places. The entire campus should be preserved. The building and the landscape architecture have won National Awards.

4. Zoning: the Federal Way Codes of 1994 are very different from the Federal Way Revised Codes of today.

- a. Several areas of the Weyerhaeuser Campus are zoned as Corporate Park. IRG is interpreting these areas as light industrial. Light industrial development in the North Lake area is not compatible next to residences, churches and schools.
- b. Building heights of 1994 allow 70 foot high buildings, whereas current height allowances are 40 feet.
- c. The proposed development conflicts with the King County Growth Management Act and The Federal Way Open Space Requirements (FWRC Titles 18 and 19);

5. Traffic Congestion and Pollution: the proposed Preferred Freezer warehouse and the preliminary 721,000 sq. ft. warehouse will increase semi-truck and vehicle traffic significantly. The infrastructure is not set up to support industrial activity and will create major choke points in traffic. Increasing traffic increases carbon pollution—which is a National Audubon Climate Initiative that we are working diligently to reduce.

As of October 10, 2016, a response letter from the City of Federal Way has been issued to the land use applicant, Preferred Freezer/Orca Bay. The

[\(Continued on page 9\)](#)

Bird of the Month: The Ferruginous Hawk

Reprint Courtesy of Wild Birds Unlimited, Burien

The Ferruginous

Hawk is found in prairies, deserts and open



range of the West. Its species name is "regalis" and it really is regal being the largest of all North American hawks. It has a unique gray head, rich rusty shoulders and legs and gleaming white underparts.

This hawk is an open-country bird that breeds in grasslands, sagebrush country, shrub lands and edges of pinyon-juniper forests.

Its diet consists of small mammals such as rabbits, ground squirrels, prairie dogs and pocket gophers. Occasionally it will eat reptiles, amphibians, insects and birds. It will hunt any time of day using four methods: standing on the ground and striking, detecting prey from a nearby perch, searching on the wing, and hovering (kiting) in place.

Both the male and female Ferruginous Hawk build the nest. The male brings the material and the female constructs it. The nest is made of sticks, twigs, metal and plastic debris and sometimes, bones. It often

measures 3 feet high and 3 feet across. It may be lined with cow dung, sod and bark that the female strips from trees. They usually finish the nest within a week but if they are disrupted, they may abandon the site and choose a new one.

The Ferruginous Hawk is usually found alone or in pairs but in winter they may hunt within a few feet of each other and roost in groups of 6 - 12. It seems to be a monogamous bird and some may keep their pair bond throughout the year. Courting pairs soar in wide circles and the male "sky dances" by repeatedly diving and ascending. The pair may then grasp beaks and talons and spiral toward the ground. This hawk will often share habitat with the Swainson's Hawk and Red-tailed Hawk.

Other cool facts about the Ferruginous Hawk:

- In winter, groups of 5 - 10 Ferruginous Hawks congregate in prairie dog towns, striking prey as it emerges. They threaten each other by hopping and flapping their wings, creating a feeding frenzy that may attract more Ferruginous Hawks, Golden Eagles and Bald Eagles.

- When bison roamed the west, the nests of these birds often contained bison bones and hair.

- The bulky sticks are not easily woven into the nest so they often

build on the remains of pre-existing hawk or crow nests.

- Ferruginous Hawks and Rough-legged Hawks (and the Golden Eagle) are the only American hawks to have feathered legs all the way down to their toes.

- Ferruginous means rust-colored and refers to the reddish back and legs of light-morph birds. Light morphs are more common than dark morphs.

- The Upland Buzzard of Central Asia rivals the Ferruginous Hawk in size and may be a close relative from the days of the Alaska-Siberia land bridge.



- The oldest Ferruginous Hawk on record was at least 23 years, 8 months old when it was found in Nevada in 2006.

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.

Mewsings from Millie

Reprint Courtesy of Wild Birds Unlimited, Burien

Staten Island, the southernmost shoreline of New York State, was created when the Pleistocene ice thawed 6,000 years ago. Water levels began to rise and the channels those floods created carved a moat around the hilly spit that is 14 miles long and 8 miles wide. The island is wedged between Central New Jersey and Manhattan Island and remained fairly unchanged until 1928. Then, the Goethals Bridge was built and provided access to New Jersey. Two more bridges to New Jersey were built before the construction of the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge, the largest suspension bridge in the U.S., connected the island to southern Brooklyn in 1964. This brought an influx of mostly second and third generation immigrants and a real-estate boom.

Now Staten Island is a county of around 500,000. It is easily the smallest, most suburban borough of New York City and it's also the most biologically diverse. The island has more than 12,300 acres of protected parkland.

Why am I telling you all of this? Because Staten Island is where two Bald Eagles have nested making them the first nesting pair of Bald Eagles in New York City in 100 years.

There have always been fish here. Menhaden, or mossbunker, a forage fish of the herring family, makes for a tasty treat along the southern coast. Gannets, Red-breasted Mergansers, Osprey, gulls and Brant have been enjoying the buffet for centuries returning every autumn to spend the winter.

Bald Eagles were sporadic, distant flyovers.

Then, in 2009, Bald Eagles began appearing on the island. Vito (named after Vito Corleone, patriarch of The Godfather) arrived about three years ago and carved out a territory. He would spend his time hunting gulls, snakes, Brant and menhaden, perching on trees, telephone poles and chimneys. In 2014, a young female joined him and after a brief fling, he left her for a more mature adult female

Later that year, the pair began carrying twigs to some wetlands near Mount Loretto and built a nest in a tall pine tree. In 2015, Vito and his new mate, Linda (named after a local wildlife advocate) became the first Bald Eagles to nest in New York City in over a century.

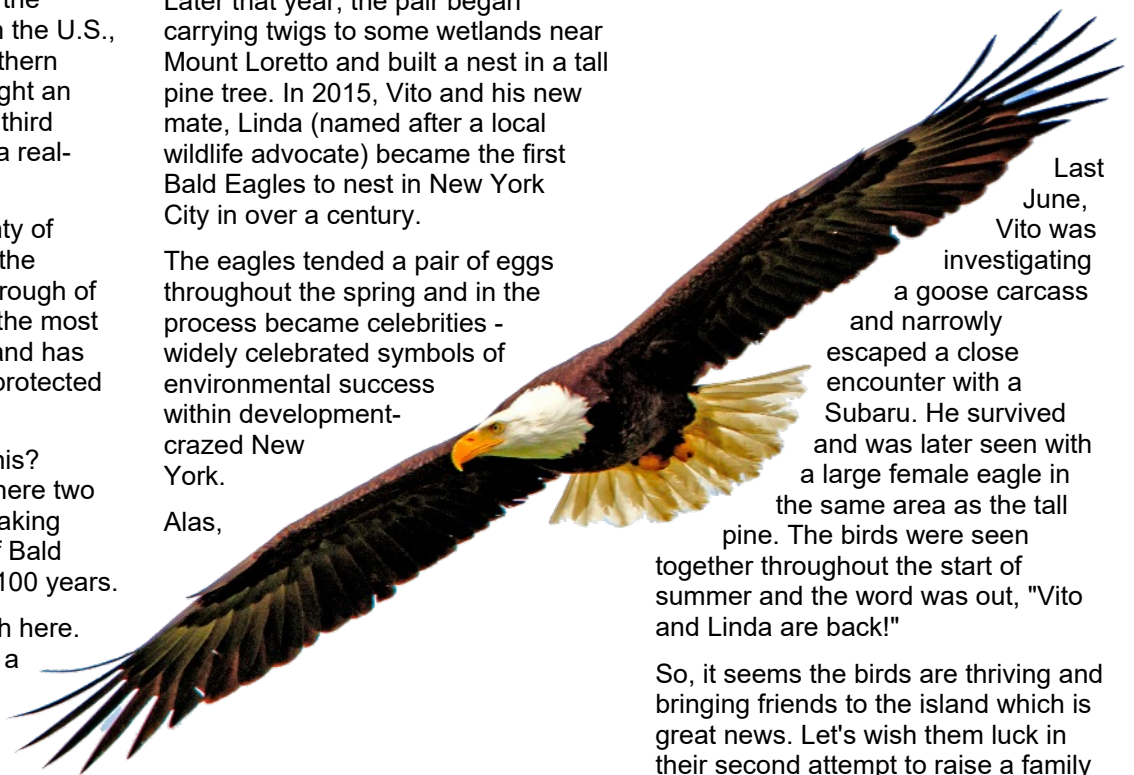
The eagles tended a pair of eggs throughout the spring and in the process became celebrities - widely celebrated symbols of environmental success within development-crazed New York.

Alas,

for whatever reason, Vito and Linda's nest failed to produce eaglets. They stopped frequenting the large pine and were seen together less and less.



Finally, word spread that Vito and Linda's life together was over. Vito, though alone, persisted as the symbol of the Bald Eagle's reemergence in New York City.



Last June, Vito was investigating a goose carcass and narrowly escaped a close encounter with a Subaru. He survived and was later seen with a large female eagle in the same area as the tall pine. The birds were seen together throughout the start of summer and the word was out, "Vito and Linda are back!"

So, it seems the birds are thriving and bringing friends to the island which is great news. Let's wish them luck in their second attempt to raise a family of national symbols.

Until next time,

Millie, the Muse of Mews

Bird Friendly Communities - Plants for Birds

Birds depend on native plants for many reasons. Native plants provide food, shelter, and places for birds to nest. Native plants also help birds weather the effects of climate change, and they reduce pollution and water use, promoting more healthy habitats for birds. This is Audubon's unique role in the native plants conversation: We're in it for the birds, and our powerful network makes a difference on the ground.



We're rolling out a brand new website and establishing an initial goal of engaging 50,000 people to put 1 million new native plants in the ground. That's an all-Audubon goal, and I challenge you today to start thinking about what portion of that goal your chapter, center, state, or flyway will claim.

The website contains some great content, and its centerpiece is a database of more than 3,000 bird-friendly U.S. native plants that visitors can search by ZIP code. Once you search, you'll see information about your local Audubon center and chapter, and you'll see two locally tailored lists of native plants – one is an illustrated list of garden-friendly plants curated by Audubon field staff and chapter leaders,

and the other is a more comprehensive list. There's also information about nearby native-plant retailers. The landing page for all content is <http://www.audubon.org/PlantsForBirds>, and the local search is at <http://www.audubon.org/native-plants>.

A toolkit of resources to help promote the program is available here: [https://works.audubon.org/groups/bird-friendly-communities/plants-birds-](https://works.audubon.org/groups/bird-friendly-communities/plants-birds-engagement-and-outreach-toolkit)

[engagement-and-outreach-toolkit](https://works.audubon.org/groups/bird-friendly-communities/plants-birds-engagement-and-outreach-toolkit)

If you have comments about the plants that show up in your ZIP code (plants that you think should be highlighted, or should not), you can let us know

here: <https://www.audubon.org/native-plant-database-comment-form>

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(Continued from page 6)

letter states that the city requires more information for the following areas: noise, traffic, wetlands, emergency response/risk management, building design, historic preservation and more.

WHAT ACTION DO WE NEED TO TAKE?

1. Send in letters to Federal Way Mayor, City Council, Chief of Staff, and the Community Development Director to ask for a Moratorium and a Comprehensive Review on all Weyerhaeuser Campus Land that is not vested in a land use application.
2. Ask Community Development Director to require Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for all proposed land use applications on Weyerhaeuser Campus.
3. Attend a Rainier Audubon Field trip on Weyerhaeuser Campus or go birding

at Weyerhaeuser Campus and document your observations on eBird.

4. Join the Rainier Audubon Weyerhaeuser Campus Committee: We need help to read information released about the development, attend City Council Meetings and other special meetings, create talking points and deliver communications. (contact Dan Streiffert dan_streiffert@hotmail.com or Cindy Flanagan camcalcin@hotmail.com)

5. Talk to family, neighbors, friends and citizens about supporting opposition of the Weyerhaeuser Campus Development

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Answer - Marymoor Park



"A man generally has two reasons for doing a thing: one that sounds good, and a real one."

— J.P. Morgan



Rainier Audubon Membership Subscription or Renewal Form

One-year Membership in Rainier Audubon
\$25—Individual Membership / \$30—Family Membership

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To join or renew, mail this application with your payment to:

Rainier Audubon Society - Membership
PO Box 778
Auburn, WA 98071



Name: _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____ Phone _____

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