

The Heron Herald



Rainier Audubon Society

September 2017

Rainier Audubon Membership Meeting

7:00 PM September 18, 2017

Red Knots

Joseph B. Buchanan

In contrast to other Red Knot populations, comparatively little is known about the population of Red Knots (*Calidris canutus roseaari*) that migrates along the Pacific coast of the Americas. With an estimated population of about 22,000, this is the smallest of 6 Red Knot populations in the world. The majority of the population uses Grays Harbor and Willapa Bay during spring migration. The *roseaari* population appears to overwinter largely in coastal northwestern Mexico and breeds in northwestern Alaska and Wrangel Island, Russia. The presentation will focus on what we have learned about the migration of Red Knots along the Pacific Flyway through surveys, direct observations of color-banded birds, and radio telemetry investigations.

Joseph B. Buchanan is a Natural Resource Scientist with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and is a member of Cascadia Research Collective, a research organization based in Olympia. Joe's work with WDFW has largely involved conservation and management of a variety of species, including the Spotted Owl and numerous migratory bird species. For over 30 years he has studied aspects of the ecology and behavior of shorebirds and falcons at coastal estuaries and beaches



Photo by Tom Rowley



Dan Streiffert

in Washington, with an emphasis since 2006 on the Red Knot.

Join us at 6:30 for conversation and refreshments.

RAS Mission Statement

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

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

Audubon Council of Washington

The annual meeting of Audubon chapters in Washington state.

Saturday, October 14, 2017

8:00am - 4:00pm

Sequim, Washington

Jamestown S’Klallam Tribal Center

1033 Old Blyn Hwy, Sequim, 98382

<http://wa.audubon.org/events/audubon-council-washington-0>

New Rainier Audubon Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/rainieraudubonsociety/>

New Rainier Audubon Google Group / email list

We are combining the old Rainier Leaders email list with the ras-activities list into a new RainierAudubon google group.

The [ras-activities] group has been renamed to [RainierAudubon]. So if you were previously a member of this list, then you are still a member of the renamed group. The only difference being that when you send an email to this group, the address is RainierAudubon@googlegroups.com

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

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

Rainier Audubon Society Directory

Position	Name	Board Member	Phone	email
President	Heather Gibson	Yes	206-226-2050	hedder_swedder@yahoo.com
Vice President	Jay Galvin	Yes	253-939-3094	gjgalvin@comcast.net
Secretary	Open			
Treasurer	Laura Lavington	Yes	253-941-7372	laura.lavington@gmail.com
Membership Chair	Pat Toth	Yes	206-767-4944	h2opat@msn.com
Education Chair	Cindy Flanagan	Yes	253-941-3933	camcalcin@hotmail.com
Program Chair	Dale Meland	No	253-946-1637	dmeland@hotmail.com
Field Trip Chair	Barbara Petersen	Yes	253 389 3204	bpbatfan@aol.com
Publicity Chair	Jay Galvin	Yes	253-939-3094	gjgalvin@comcast.net
Backyard Habitat Chair	Marie West-Johnson	Yes	206-817-8754	crgrie123@yahoo.com
Conservation Chair	Dan Streiffert	No	253-796-2203	dan_streiffert@hotmail.com
Newsletter Editor	Dan Streiffert	No	253-796-2203	dan_streiffert@hotmail.com
Webmaster	Treesa Hertzell	No	253-255-1808	Autumn207@comcast.net
Member at Large	Stephen Feldman	Yes	360-802-5211	stephanfeldman@gmail.com
Hospitality	Sandra Embrey	No	253-517-3633	sandra.embrey@gmail.com
Mailing	Debra Russell	No	425 829 4008	debrarussell@comcast.net
Lifetime Members	Max Prinsen	Yes	425-432-9965	

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

Fife and Tacoma

Sun September 17, 2017
8:00 AM to 12:00 noon

Leader: Barbara Petersen

Take a break from busy schedules and come out with us for this half-day of early fall birding. We'll explore a couple of spots in Fife and Northeast Tacoma, then cross the Fife Valley and travel along the banks of the Puyallup River to see what we can find. We'll walk less than a mile on even ground.

Bring: Binoculars, spotting scope, water and snacks, good walking shoes, hat and layers for the weather.

Directions: We'll meet at McDonald's in Fife at 8:00AM to form carpools. Take I-5 to Exit 137 in Fife. Go north after exiting and move or stay left so you can turn left onto Hiway 99 at the light. Go two blocks toward Tacoma. Turn left at the light there and drive about 1/2 a block to McDonald's.

Sign-up: Email or text/call Barbara Petersen, BPbatfan@aol.com, 253 389 3204 (text or voice message only)

Chelan Ridge Hawk Festival

September 15 - 17, 2017

Join the USFS Chelan Ranger District, HawkWatch International, and North Central Washington Audubon Society this fall for the 9th annual Chelan Ridge Hawk Migration Festival. This free family event combines activities in Pateros, WA and migration trips to the Chelan Ridge migration site to learn about and celebrate raptors as they journey to winter territories.

You will get to visit vendors, see raptor demonstrations, listen to live music, and take a trip to the spectacular Chelan Ridge raptor migration site. During the day, shuttles will run from Pateros to Chelan Ridge where visitors can see raptors such as Cooper's Hawk up close when they are banded and released. More information at:

<https://hawkwatch.org>

Fall Color and Fall Birds

Leader: Steve Johnson
Sat, October 28th, 2017
8:00 AM to early afternoon

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

PUGET SOUND BIRD FEST

SEPTEMBER 15-17, 2017

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

www.pugetsoundbirdfest.org

SHADOW Events

September 30th - 11am to 12pm

Meet a Bird of Prey! - RaptorLife Event

Join us at SHADOW Lake Nature Preserve to make a new fine feathered friend! Meet a live ferruginous hawk (native to Washington State) and learn about what makes birds of prey special. Speak with a local raptor expert and hear about what you can do to keep these majestic animals healthy!

[Learn more about RaptorLife here!](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/meet-a-bird-of-prey-raptorlife-tickets-36978155659)

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/meet-a-bird-of-prey-raptorlife-tickets-36978155659>

Sept 22nd: 10-11

Guided Nature Walk: Tour of the Native Plant Garden

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Seen & Heard by Calen Randall

Think of your favorite birding spot. Is it a brushy forest on a hill where Black-headed Grosbeaks sing and Band-tailed Pigeons noisily flap their wings? Or maybe it is a wide grassy field alive with the calls of nesting Western Wood-PeWee and the flitting Lazuli Bunting. Perhaps it is a rocky river where you can catch a glimpse of a Spotted Sandpiper creeping along the bank. When I think of one of my favorite birding spots, Flaming Geyser State Park, all of these images come to mind, as its diverse range of habitats pull in a wide variety of bird species. Perhaps Steve Johnson, who leads a once a year field trip to the park in June, put it best, "Flaming Geyser is essentially Rainier Audubon's Marymoo Park or Juanita Bay with its different habitats and birds." Steve is absolutely correct. Flaming Geyser State Park is home to those brushy forests, grassy fields, and a rocky river. This summer it became one of my favorite and most frequent places to bird. Following Steve's excellent field trip, I was fortunate enough to visit the park numerous times. The highlight of my excursions to the state park was taking four youth birders who hail from the Atlantic Coast to search for their lifer species, the American Dipper.

One of the four young birders, Kevin, a native of the D.C. area, I met a year prior in July 2016 when I attended the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Young Birder Event (YBE). In fact, Kevin was the first birder I met at the camp and I remember how he talked about getting into birding after reading "To See Every Bird on Earth: a Father, a Son, and a Lifelong Obsession". Over the year we had corresponded with the other young birders on the internet, but little did we know we would encounter each other so soon. In early July of 2017, I got an email from Kevin stating that he and several birding friends from Maryland were enrolled in Camp Cascades, a trip around Whidbey Island and Mt. Rainier, for young birders led by the renowned, Michael O'Brien. Kevin and his three friends Patrick, Matt, and Daniel were to arrive a day before the camp started and as none of them had been to Washington (the non-DC version, as we joked) we quickly decided to go birding, where else, but Flaming Geyser State Park.

After last meeting Kevin on the east coast, where it seemed as though all the bird calls were new to me, it was nice to get to



From left to right: Patrick Newcombe, Matt Addicks, Calen Randall, Daniel Irons, Kevin Ebert

show him and his friends around the area. Not only was it great for them to explore the South King County region, it was also enjoyable for me to watch how excited they were at seeing our local birds that sometimes, we take for granted. For example, the night before our Flaming Geyser trip, the four stopped over at my house for dinner and as we sat down to eat, Daniel pointed into my backyard and asked "would that be a Bewick's Wren on your fence and an Anna's Hummingbird on your feeder?"



"Yes. Would those be lifers?" I enquired. Daniel didn't even have to respond, the grin on his face said it all. It was an awesome experience watching someone see two lifers in my backyard. Definitely not something that happens every day!

At Flaming Geyser, my biggest hope was for the four birders to see group lifer the American Dipper, the only North American songbird that forages underwater. The day prior, my mom, my birder-in-training girlfriend Katerina, and I had spotted it almost at the end of the walkable rocky bank area on the Green River so we prepared to hike down the banks to see it. However, we didn't walk long past the trail when Patrick, ever so calm and intuitive, turned to me and asked "Would that be the dipper right there?"

In reality, Patrick had no doubt; this was the Flaming Geyser American Dipper! Already Matt, Kevin, and Daniel were snapping photos of the Dipper underwater. It stayed perched on a rock in the middle of the river preening itself. "If only the dipper was on that red rock in the sun over there it would be the perfect photo," laughed Matt. Jokes aside, all four of my Maryland friends got some great shots of the dipper and were ecstatic to see it.

Not only was the trip a great adventure, there also was an important message within our excursion. Oftentimes, we can get caught in a rut believing that the younger generation is disinterested in nature and birds or that young birders are few and far

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Calen is an 18 year old birder entering his seventh year writing the Seen and Heard. Currently attending the University of Washington, Calen enjoys birding in the South King County and coastal British Columbia region.

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between. This notion is simply not true and Kevin, his friends, and I are not the exception. Our RAS Youth Naturalists program for ages 5-12 was a big hit with the current families who are thrilled that the program will continue next year. At Cornell, sixteen kids ages 15-18 worldwide were all drawn together because of a deep passion for birds. Each year sixteen more get the same amazing opportunity. Even within our own state of Washington, there are at least a dozen highly knowledgeable young birders with whom I've connected via the internet. As I head into my seventh year writing the *Seen and Heard*, I know our area is greatly changing. However, I encourage all *Seen and Heard* readers to look at the future of birding with some hope and know that there is an entire community of youth that enjoy birds just as much as we at Rainier Audubon do.

Recent Bird Sightings:

As usual, there was lots of activity to report over late Spring migration and Summer. While late July was very quiet, fall migration got started back up in a hurry once August set in. Here are some sightings from Alex Juchems, Cindy Flanagan, Katerina Grishina, the Rainier Audubon Youth Naturalists, Carol Schulz, Steve Johnson, Michael O'Brien, Cascades Young Birders Fieldtrip, and myself.

Juchem's Backyard, Federal Way (May)

A storm during migration usually stirs up a lot of birding activity and this theory was once again proven true on May 5th in Alex Juchem's yard. After a blustery front the night before, one by one the birds (and Alex's sighting emails) appeared. The first email about an **Orange-crowned Warbler** sighting I received while doing some birding of my own before school. An hour later Alex was reporting a **Western Wood-PeWee** with "no eye ring and dark underparts". The PeWee was followed by a **Black-headed Grosbeak** and a **Bullock's Oriole**, spotted by Matthew! Just to cap

off the excellent yard birding day, Alex glimpsed a bright **Western Tanager**. "Today, if there's a bright yellow or orange bird in the state, it's in our yard" gushed Alex. Great sightings!

Des Moines Creek Trail, Des Moines (June)

Just as birding began to taper down, I got out birding with Steve Johnson and Carol Schulz. We spotted a couple interesting species as Carol navigated the back trails near her house. Near the end of the main trail, Steve pointed out a nest of **Orange-crowned Warblers**. Calls of **Black-throated Gray Warbler** rang through the trees. As Carol led us down a side trail, a group of **Common Ravens** decided to check us out. After determining we weren't enough of a threat to be mobbed, they perched in the evergreens eyeing us suspiciously. Later that week Carol also found a nesting **Cooper's Hawk** in Burien. Thanks to Carol for giving us a tour of the additional trails.

204 Street, Kent (July)

In the quiet days of summer birding, I decided to stop by the normally productive 204 Street in Kent. Other than being told by a machinery worker that "all the trails north of the street were private property", the jaunt was quite productive. Several dozen **Cliff Swallows** flocked through the air and a **Green Heron** flew out of the small ditch as I walked past. While the Semipalmated Sandpipers and Long-billed Dowitchers proved elusive, I did spot a trio of **Least Sandpipers**, some **Greater Yellowlegs**, and a **Spotted Sandpiper** patrolling the retention ponds behind the grown-in thicket along the road.

Sunrise, Mt. Rainier National Park (August)

In early August, my Mom and I got up to another of our favorite birding spots, Sunrise Ridge at Mt. Rainier. Once again, we met the Maryland quartet but this time they were with the entire 14 birder camp led by a pair of Cape May, Maryland natives, Michael O'Brien and Louise Zemaitis and Glen Davis. Birding with so many amazing birders, naturally we saw

lots of terrific birds. We didn't even have to leave the parking lot to spot **Clark's Nutcrackers**, **MacGillivray's Warblers**, and **Chipping Sparrows**. On Sourdough Ridge we got great looks at **Nashville Warbler** pairs and a dearth of **Mountain Bluebirds** greeted us on the Fremont Trail. As one young birder commented, "amazing things happen when birding with Michael O'Brien", which proved to be very true as just up the trail, a shocker awaited us. At nearly 7,000 feet elevation a juvenile **Red-necked Phalarope** was swimming in Frozen Lake! I think that has to be a record for the highest elevation a phalarope has been seen, at least in the Cascades!

Dumas Bay, Federal Way (August)

It had been a couple years since my last adventure at Dumas Bay and normally I visit it in winter and spring, so I decided to head down to check out its late summer birds with Katerina. The tide was out very far and as we crept around a plethora of stranded sand dollars, we identified several types of gulls including a large flock of **Bonaparte's Gulls**, **California Gulls**, and a handful of **Mew Gulls**. From the brackish water **Caspian Terns** and **Great Blue Herons** gave their uniquely noisy calls. Out to the north of the bay, I viewed a **Marbled Murrelet**, a first for me in King County! However, surprisingly even the Murrelet was not the highlight of the trip. As I was looking at my photos of foraging **Osprey**, I heard a gull give a screaming call. I looked up and thought "that is one large and very dark immature gull trying to steal food from that Bonaparte's Gull". However, when the "dark gull" turned I could see a lighter yellow stripe on the back of its neck and slowly realized this was no gull. It was a **Parasitic Jaeger** pirating food! Thankfully I had brought my camera and I was able to snap some photos and confirm the seabird. Best of all, for me it was a lifer!

Send your sightings/hearings to calenbirds@hotmail.com

Bird of the Month: American Goldfinch

Reprint Courtesy of Wild Birds Unlimited, Burien

The American Goldfinch is a small finch with a short, conical bill, a small head, long wings and a short-notched tail.

In spring and summer, the adult males are bright yellow with a black forehead, black wings with distinctive white bars and white patches both above and beneath the tail. Adult females are duller yellow beneath and a drab olive color above. Winter birds of both sexes are a dull, unstreaked brown with blackish wings with pale markings.

Although sometimes referred to as wild canaries, American Goldfinches are in the finch family as their name suggests. The genus name, *Caruelis*, is from the Latin word "carduus" which means "thistle". American Goldfinches have been known to be very dependent on thistles for food and for using the down of the plants for nest lining. In recent years, however, it has been reported from all over the country that their preferred food now seems to be medium sunflower chips (black oil sunflower without the shell).

The American Goldfinch is still one of the latest breeding songbirds, waiting to nest until mid-to-late summer. This is when thistle seeds and down are most readily available.

The American Goldfinch prefers to nest in habitats with trees and shrubs. The nest is placed 4 -10 feet off the ground, often near a water source. The female chooses the nest site, builds the nest and incubates the eggs all on her own. The male does help out, feeding the female throughout incubation and helping to feed the nestlings as they grow older.

The nest is made of plant material attached to supporting twigs with spider webs. It is said that the American Goldfinch can weave their nest so tightly that it will temporarily hold water.

When breeding for the first time, young American Goldfinch will begin nesting at least two weeks later than experienced adults.

The female will lay 5 - 6 pale- blue or greenish-blue eggs that will hatch in about 12 days. Nestlings will fledge in about 12 days but the young remain dependent on their parents for at least three weeks after that.

Typically, the American Goldfinch has only one brood each year, although veteran females may produce an additional brood. To facilitate a second nesting, a female will leave her original mate in care of the first brood and find a new male as her partner for the second nesting.

American Goldfinches will use almost any feeder including ones that require them to hang upside down to eat. Being rather acrobatic, they will dip upside down while feeding on cone flowers and sunflowers. Studies have shown, however, that their preference is to sit upright on perches.

Unlike many songbirds, the American Goldfinch completely molts its feathers twice a year, before breeding in the spring and after nesting in the fall. This requires a large amount of nutrients and energy.

The color of the legs, feet and bill changes with each feather molt. In winter plumage, the legs, feet and bill are dark grayish brown. In the spring, they change to a buffy yellow-orange color.

A new set of feathers also grows out in the fall that is much denser than their summer plumage. These soft feathers provide



an additional layer of insulation to help keep them warm throughout the winter.

On cold winter nights, American Goldfinches have been known to burrow under the snow to form a cozy sleeping cavity. They will also roost together in coniferous trees and hedges.

Residential flocks of American Goldfinch roam widely between food supplies during the winter and have been recorded moving over 4 miles between feeding stations during a single day. Other records show movements of over 30 miles in a single winter.

The American Goldfinch is the state bird of New Jersey, Iowa and Washington.

Of the more than 3 million banded American Goldfinches, the oldest one ever recaptured in the wild was at least 10 years and 5 months old.

Mewsings from Millie

Reprint Courtesy of Wild Birds Unlimited, Burien

If you have had the good fortune to picnic or go camping in the beautiful Cascade Mountains, you have most likely encountered a gregarious Gray Jay or two. Also known as Camp Robbers or Whiskey Jacks, these bold birds will swoop into your campsite or land on your table looking for tasty tidbits. Then they will take their stolen treats and store them for future consumption by fastening them in trees with their sticky saliva. The name "Whiskey Jack" comes from the Athabaskan Tlingit name for the species, "wiss-ka-tjon". White settlers pronounced it "whiskey john" and then it was later changed to "whiskey jack".

While watching the criminal antics of the Gray Jays, you may also spot a Mountain Chickadee flitting through the coniferous trees. Mountain Chickadees are very similar to Black-capped Chickadees but have white stripes on their heads. Rarely seen at feeders in the lowlands, Mountain Chickadees have been known to migrate to lower elevations in the winter.

Black-capped Chickadees and Chestnut-backed Chickadees are probably the species that most people are familiar with. But did you know that besides these two and the Mountain Chickadee there are four other species of chickadees found in North America?

The Carolina Chickadee is a close cousin to the Black-capped Chickadee and is found in the southeast United States. The Boreal Chickadee resides in the dense spruce forests of Canada. One can find the Mexican Chickadee in the mountains of southeast Arizona and if you venture far to the north to the extreme northwest

corner of the continent, north of the Arctic Circle in fact, that is where you'll find the Gray-headed Chickadee.

All of these birds call "chick-a-dee" with their own exclusive regional accent. All Chickadees eat insects and grains but Black-capped Chickadees and Chestnut-



Red-breasted Nuthatch

backed Chickadees especially love black-oil sunflower seed, suet and peanut pieces.

Another bird with a distinctive voice is the nuthatch. There are three species of nuthatch that can be found in the lovely state of Washington: the Red-breasted Nuthatch, the White-breasted Nuthatch, and the Pygmy Nuthatch. The Red-breasted Nuthatch is the one most commonly seen at feeders or heard in the backyard. With its comical, nasal chirp, a Red-breasted Nuthatch will call from its perch high on top of a tall fir tree while



doing the "nuthatch dance", pivoting back and forth and rapidly flicking its wings.

Nuthatches scamper up and down tree trunks and along branches. They have long, slender bills ideal for peeling open conifer seeds or poking in the crevices of tree bark looking for insects. That's probably how the bird got its name as it tucks nuts, seeds and insects under bark or in cracks then hacks the tidbits apart with its beak as if using a tiny hatchet.

The nuthatches' ability to climb down a tree headfirst comes with its advantages. They can see and eat all the tasty morsels left behind by the birds working their way up!

To wrap up, here's few more fun facts about birds and the food they eat: a House Wren can feed five hundred spiders and caterpillars to its nestlings during a single summer afternoon; Chimney Swifts can devour one thousand insects in a single day and more than seventy different bird species have been observed drinking nectar from hummingbird feeders! I suppose those feisty hummers are going to need to learn to share some time!

Until next time,

Millie, the Muse of Mews

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

This week, explore seasonal changes happening in the bog - see the fall foliage come into full color and watch the bog plump up with rain water! Learn about why the leaves change color and which plants will be green all year long!

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/guided-nature-walk-fall-foliage-tickets-35466158234>

September 26th: 6:30-8pm

Volunteer Training Night: Haunted Peat Bog

Find your place in the SHADOW Lake Nature Preserve community!

Bring your favorite treat to share and come down to the Nature Preserve for an evening of companionship and fun! Join other environmentally conscious volunteers to discover more about SHADOW's programs, additional volunteer opportunities, and learn something new!

This is a great introduction for new volunteers or an excellent refresher for seasoned volunteers!

This month, join us to learn some spooky bog facts in preparation for our Halloween Celebration! Learn about bog zombies, how bogs are formed, and what they can tell us about people who lived thousands of years ago.

Complete three volunteer trainings and win a SHADOW pin!

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/volunteer-training-haunted-peat-bog-tickets-35466533356>

The Evolution of Beauty

by Richard O. Prum, Ph.D.

There were several great presentations at the recent Audubon National Convention. My favorite was the one by Richard Prum on the Evolution of Beauty.

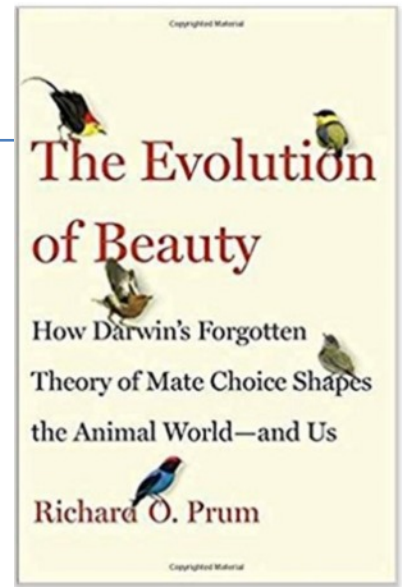
Have you ever wondered why a peacock has such an enormous tail? Or why Sage Grouse perform their strange dances at their leks? Or why there is such a diversity of colors and songs in bird species. So did Darwin. He famously wrote, "The sight of a feather in a peacock's tail, whenever I gaze at it, makes me sick!" Because the extravagance of its design seemed of no survival value whatsoever, unlike other heritable features that are the result of natural selection, the peacock's tail seemed to challenge everything he had said in *Origin*.

This concept of aesthetic evolution by mate choice is the subject of his second great book, *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex*. This idea was considered an unforgivable apostasy by Darwin's orthodox adaptationist followers (Wallace), and has largely been suppressed, misinterpreted, and forgotten ever since.

Only when Darwin's aesthetic view of evolution is restored to the biological and cultural mainstream will we have a science capable of explaining the diversity of beauty in nature. Beauty Happens.

You can view Prum's presentation at <https://vimeo.com/227950555>

Dan Streiffert



(c) Dan Streiffert

Clark's Grebe feeding Chick at Bear River NWR

Upcoming Programs

Dale Meland

- October 2017 - "Swans" by Martha Jordan
- November 2017 - "Birds of Costa Rica" by Sam Merrill
- December 2017 - "Pigeon Guillemots: The Adorable Seabird with Bright Red Feet" by Govinda Rosling
- January 2018 - "The Birds of New Zealand: Past and Present" by Kim Adelson
- February 2018 - "Elwha Dam Removal and Recovery Update" by Jeffrey Duda
- March 2018 - "Wolf Haven International: World of Wolves"
- April 2018 - "Washington Birds and Climate Change" by Trina Bayard and Jen Syrowitz
- May 2018 - "Bees and Wing Nut Honey" by Emmy Scharnberg

Go birding and make a difference!

Are seabirds in Puget Sound and the Strait of Juan de Fuca increasing or declining in numbers? Which species are changing their range? Help us find out. You can contribute to vital seabird science by joining the eleventh season of Seattle Audubon's Puget Sound Seabird Survey.

We are now recruiting enthusiastic and dedicated volunteers to help us monitor the status of our local wintering seabirds. Training on survey methodology will be provided at a location near you in September; the first seabird survey will be conducted on October 7, 2017. Volunteers should be able to identify Puget Sound's seabird species and be available on the first Saturday of each month, October through April, to conduct a 30-minute seabird survey. If determining between Lesser and Greater Scaup is a challenge, we'll team you up with more knowledgeable surveyors.

Learn more, including training dates, at www.seabirdsurvey.org and email Toby Ross, Science Manager (toby@seattleaudubon.org) if you would like more information or to take part.



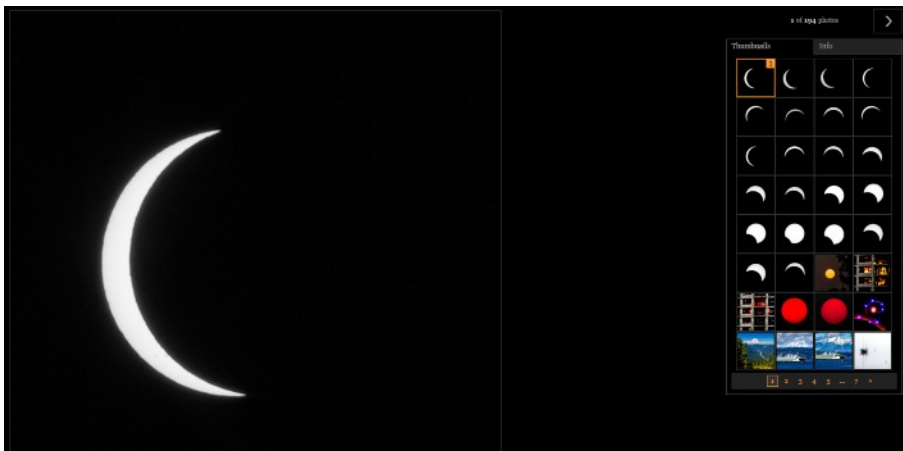
A pair of Barrow's Goldeneye. Photo by [Doug Schurman](#)

Local Volunteer Receives 2017 Dutcher Award

RAS is honored to announce that Dan Streiffert is the recipient of the prestigious Dutcher Award bestowed at the National Audubon Convention in July.

William Dutcher was a prominent amateur ornithologist of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. He was the first president of the National Audubon Society. The 2017 William Dutcher Award was created to recognize outstanding volunteer service by Audubon Leaders that results in bird conservation.

Dan's efforts in local conservation, Carbon Tax, Solar Power and habitat protection were recognized by the Pacific Flyway Conference at the National Convention. RAS is very fortunate to count Dan Streiffert as a positive influence in all aspects of our chapter from being a past President, Conservation Chair, Editor of our Heron Herald, Wildlife photographer and someone always willing to give a helping hand.



Photos of the Eclipse by Larry Engles

<http://www.larryenglesphotography.com/p/554305569/h93d5f6be#h93d5f6be>



"We must adjust to changing times and
still hold to unchanging principles."

— Jimmy Carter



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