

The

Heron Herald



Rainier Audubon Society

May, 2012

January General Membership Meeting
Monday May 21, 2012 7:00 p.m.
Federal Way United Methodist Church

Adventures in Bird Photography

Gary Luhm

Join outdoor photographer Gary Luhm for a bird photography adventure in our spectacular Northwest. Gary loves finding, observing and photographing birds in their natural habitat. Some habitats are local and easy, like the backyard. Many have more difficult access, like the Washington Coast. All of them have particular challenges. Gary will discuss the why's and how's of each site. We'll visit places like Toleak Point on the Coast for Tufted Puffins, Lac Le Jeune in British Columbia for Common Loon, Bethel Ridge for Williamson's Sapsucker, Eagle Creek in Oregon for American Dipper, Bottle Beach for shorebirds, Chuckanut Bay for Harlequin Duck and the good-old backyard. Please come join, us and enjoy some inspiring photography—and a few tall tales—of NW birds.

Gary Luhm is an outdoor photographer specializing in sea kayaking. Many of his bird photos are shot from a kayak. To learn more visit his website at: www.garyluhm.net.

Board Elections!

We will be voting on our new Board Candidates—Ed Stanton, Lisa Mesplay, & Terry Thurber.

Join us at 6:30 for refreshments and conversation.

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

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

Directions: In Federal Way, take 320th St. EAST past The Commons, crossing over I-5 and Military Rd.

At 321st St, turn left. Stay on 321st as it becomes 51st Ave. So. Follow 51st Ave. to 296th. Church will be on your left.

President's Message by ???

Prairie Appreciation Day

Mark your calendars and don't miss the 17th annual Prairie Appreciation Day, a free, family-friendly event in celebration of South Puget Sound's prairies.

This year's celebration is on Saturday, May 12 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. It takes place at two of the largest remaining remnants of prairie in western Washington: Thurston County's Glacial Heritage preserve and the Department of Natural Resources Mima Mounds Natural Area.

The Center for Natural Lands Management works with volunteers and partners to restore both of these sites.

At Glacial Heritage guests can explore two interpretive trails; one is about two miles long and the other, a self-guided trail, is almost five miles. The shorter trail contains many fun, informative stations

with activities geared toward children and the young at heart.

Participants can learn about bugs, birds, butterflies and more.

There will be hands-on booths about prairie ecology and restoration, management of invasive plants, and the wildlife and wildflowers found in this unique ecosystem.

Learn how to make ink from oak galls, talk to experts about how fire is used to restore prairies, and get up close and personal with some of the small prairie critters. Or just bring a picnic lunch and enjoy a hayride.

The prairies themselves are the main attraction. In May, the prairie is spangled with swaths of blue camas with accents of lomatium, buttercups, Oregon sunshine, and many more native flowers. Wild birds, including bluebirds, meadowlarks, swallows and northern harriers, are common sights.

Please note that these are nature preserves and pets are not allowed. There will be a Native Prairie Plant Sale during the event. More information can be found on the Friends of Puget Prairies Web site: <http://www.prairieappreciationday.org/>

RAINIER AUDUBON OFFICERS

President	Open	
Vice President	Steve Feldman*	360-802-5211
Treasurer	Jim Tooley*	253-854-3070
Secretary	Heather Gibson*	253-856-9812
Program Chair	Dale Meland*	253-946-1637
Field Trip Chair	Carol Schulz	206-824-7618
Membership Chair	Pat Toth*	206-767-4944
Backyard Habitat Chair	Carol Stoner*	253-854-3207
Conservation Chair	Dan Streiffert*	253-796-2203
Mailing Chair	Debra Russel	425-271-0682
Hospitality	Sandra Embry	
Newsletter Editor	Dan Streiffert	253-796-2203
Webmaster	Treesa Hertzell	253-255-1808
Ivy Eradication Coordinator	Bernedine Lund	253-839-3729
Education Chair	Annette Tabor*	253-927-3208
Christmas Bird Count Coordinator	Nancy Streiffert	253-796-2203
Board Member	Max Prinsen*	425-432-9965
Board Member	Erin Wojewodski-Prinsen*	425-432-9965
Board Member	Alex Juchems*	253-529-8996
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 in the church conference room and are open to all members.

Rainier Audubon Summer Break

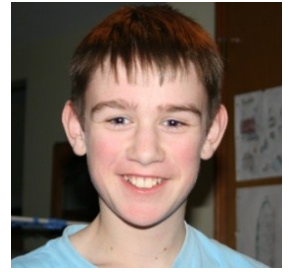
- Our membership meetings will start again on September 17, 2012.
- The deadline for Heron Herald articles for the September issue is August 15, 2012.

Volunteers Needed!

Please contact a Board Member

- Door Greeters for Membership Meetings
- Articles for Heron Herald—send to dan_streiffert@hotmail.com

Seen and Heard by Calen Randall



Spring is fully fledged now: nesting season has arrived, and the flyways are bumper to bumper with birds coming and going. This time of year is a birder's paradise because there are so many surprises. Here are some birding surprises I have encountered this month:

First of the Year Surprise: Every birder waits anxiously knowing new birds will be arriving during migration. The question is what bird will appear and when. For me, on an early April outing, spotting a pair of Osprey nesting in a cell tower in Renton was worth a high five.

Seasonal Departure Surprise: This surprise is dreaded. Every birder knows that unlike our plastic pink flamingoes, not all birds are permanent residents. When our migrants arrive, we are thrilled by their presence. We get used to them being part of our daily lives. Then, all of sudden, they are gone. The Trumpeter Swans at Carpinito field in Kent have been a daily thrill to watch this fall and winter. Though I knew they would leave, I falsely hoped that they would stay longer. The Trumpeters left a month ago, yet I still scan the field for my friends. I then drift off in thought and wonder how they are faring on their journey north and hope to reunite with them and their young in the fall.

Bird Nerd Surprise: Not a bird discovery, but a birding buddy discovery. The Bird Nerd Surprise occurs when you meet another birder unexpectedly. At Easter in Vancouver, I played a game of Old Timer Hockey (the ages ranging from 13-71).

One of my teammates informed me that I was playing against the President of Delta Nature Casual Birder Society. So, instead of using dekes to get past him during the game, I distracted him with bird calls. It is always a thrill to meet a fellow birder.

Plain Jane Surprise: Opposite to the First of the Year Surprise, the Plain Jane Surprise is the gift from an everyday bird. Because we see these birds so often, we tend to overlook their uniqueness. Even birds that we see year round can be special. Ruby-Crowned Kinglets frequent my backyard. Often when I see them, I simply say "There go a bunch of kinglets." Yet, I am thrilled whenever I get to see their brilliant red crown. It is a show stopper.

Blink and You'll Miss it Surprise: A Blink and You'll Miss it Surprise is perhaps the most serendipitous. A birder must be in the right place at the right time for this phenomenon. Near the edge of the Black River Riparian Forest in Renton, Carol Shultz and I spotted a fly-by of six Turkey Vultures who were migrating north in early April. The whole event lasted no more than 60 seconds—yet, the memory for me will be everlasting. I am amazed by their grace in the air and their enormous wingspan.

Absurd Bird Surprise: All birders love this surprise because it makes for a great conversation piece. My absurd bird was none other than Marty the Mallard. I spotted Marty when I was coming home from a dog walk. The sun was setting. I looked up and noticed an interesting silhouette on my neighbour's rooftop. It was Marty. He was perched up there like a weather vane. Perhaps he was dazed by the beau-

tiful rare April sunset. What the heck is a Mallard doing sitting on top of my neighbour's roof? How absurd! Crazy bird!

Final Hope Surprise: The end of the day surprise could be the most rewarding. At the end of a birding trip with Carol Schultz, we stopped at Boeing Ponds. It didn't look like much was out, just an armada of coots and a flock of Canada Geese. Carol reminded me of the important lesson that even though you may think that a bird is just a goose, you never know unless you look. Sure enough, when we looked at the flock of Canada Geese again, it turned out that there were 17 Greater White Fronted Geese! Thanks for checking, Carol!

I have really enjoyed writing the Seen and Heard this year. I hope that your spring and summer birding is filled with the element of surprise. See you in the fall!

Recent Sightings

Thanks to reporters Barbra Peterson (BP), Ralph and Sandra Embrey (SE), Marylin Hobbs-Gibson (MH-G), and Ross and Annette Tabor (AT) Note: Calen Randall (CR)

Common Birds Seen & Heard this month

Bushtits **P**, Golden Crowned Kinglets, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Bewick's Wrens, Red-breasted Nuthatches, Band-tailed Pigeons, House Finches, Fox Sparrows **P**, House Sparrows, Gold-crowned Sparrows, White-Crowned Sparrows, Song Sparrows,

(Continued on page 8)

Bio: Calen is a 13 year old birder. He enjoys birding around Lake Fenwick and Boeing Ponds—especially with Charlie Wright. Calen is thrilled to revive Charlie's 'Seen and Heard'. When not birding, Calen can be seen flying up and down the ice at Kent Valley Ice Center.

Field Trips by Carol Schulz



Birding at the Streiffert's

Saturday, May 5

7:00 to Noon

Birdathon Donation - \$15.

This is much more than a "Backyard" field trip. The Streiffert's yard on the hill in south Kent is very large, and their woods drops all the way down to the Green River. Their area is a migrant wonderland during May. Look for warblers and other birds in the bushes and feeders, in various habitats in the yard, and in the neighbor's pasture. Warblers, vireos, flycatchers, and more can be seen and heard down on the trails in the woods. Learn some spring bird song with us! Maybe get some new species for the year!

Cost is \$15. donation to Birdathon. Includes a light brunch.

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

Call or email Dan and Nancy Streiffert, dan_streiffert@hotmail.com, 253-796-2203 to sign up and get directions.

10th Annual Leavenworth Bird Festival

Thurs-Sun, May 17-20, 2012

Four days of Field Trips and Activities are offered at this superb spring festival, May 17-20. Many field trips are offered including owling trips, raft trips, trips to the mountains and field trips to sage brush country. Last year 148 bird species were seen! There were 8 species of warbler, 10 species of raptors including Golden Eagle, 6 species of swallows, 13 !! species of sparrow including Lark Sparrow, 7 species of flycatchers, 7 species of woodpecker, 6 species of shorebirds including Solitary Sandpiper, and much more. This is the bird festival to see migrants! Some trips require advanced registration.

See www.leavenworthspringbirdfest.com

Flaming Geyser and Green Valley Road

Saturday, June 2

8:00 AM to 2:00 PM

Leader: Steve Johnson

In June, the migrant birds should be singing on their territory near Auburn and in the beautiful Green Valley east of Auburn. We'll visit Academy Drive, Green Valley Road, and Flaming Geyser State Park. We may see and hear warblers, thrushes, vireos, Red-breasted Sapsuckers, Virginia Rail, flycatchers, and more. We may walk up to 2 miles on trails and roads.

People who bring their own cars, and want to leave early may do so.

Bring: Lunch, snacks, drinks, hiking shoes. Scopes welcome.

Meet: Auburn Safeway at Auburn Ave & Main at 8:00 AM.

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

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

Tukwila Backyard Wildlife Festival and Bird Walk in the Park

Saturday, May 12, 2012

Bird walk 9:30am

Festival open 9am - 3pm

A bird walk in the park and along the river will be offered on Migratory Bird Day.

Programs and activities will be presented by several groups at this festival. RAS, Seattle Audubon, retail stores, and nature groups will be there. This is a fun, local festival! Birdwalk starts near Audubon Booth at 9:30.

More info and directions at <http://backyardwildlifefair.org>

Hotspots in South Thurston County

Saturday, May 19

6:30 AM to 4:00 PM

Leader: Tim Brennan

Please join Tim and our group as he leads us to some great Thurston County birding hotspots south and west of Olympia. This trip is in mid-May, a very-exciting time to bird in WA! Most of these areas will be new to RAS folks.

Thurston County has varied habitats including wetlands, prairies, coastal mountains, and streams. We should be able to get a good list of birds. Bird song will be at its peak. Stops may include Mud Bay, Capitol State Forest, Watershed Park near Capitol Lake, and possibly Mima Mounds. We will seek warblers including Hermit Warbler, migrants, flycatchers, songbirds, and more.

Since this is a May trip, Birdathoners are very welcome. Non-Birdathoners are also welcome, but it is customary to sponsor the leader for at least \$5. (or more).

Bring: Layered clothes, lunches (maybe two), drinks, and plenty of snacks, insect repellent, and sunscreen. We may walk 2 1/2 miles or so from the cars on trails and gravel roads. Bring money for Birdathon donation and for carpool gas. Bring Discover Pass and FRS radios if you have them.

Meet: At 6:30 to 6:45 at the McDonalds in Fife. We will meet in McDonalds, eat breakfast if desired, and be READY TO GO by 6:45.

Directions: Take exit 137 in Fife. Turn right and get into the left lane. Drive left onto hwy 99, drive to the second stop light, and turn left into McDonalds.

Sign Up: Contact Tim Brennan, tsbrennon@hotmail.com, 425-227-8283. E-mail is preferred. Trip is limited to 3 cars, so sign up early!

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Field Trips by Carol Schulz

Field Trips by 'Carol Schultz (Continued from page 4)

Wenas Campout

Wenas Creek in Eastern Washington
Friday, May 25 to Monday, May 28,
Memorial Day Weekend.

A trip to Wenas SW of Ellensburg is sure to lead to a large bird list including Bluebirds, White-headed Woodpecker, Calliope Hummingbird, warblers, and more. Some folks like to camp out, and some like to just visit for a day.

Organized events include FIELD TRIPS, exploration, and campfire programs starting Friday evening. Field trips will be led by advanced birders and naturalists. Many people enjoy hiking, botanizing, and birding on their own. This huge bird sanctuary and other habitats feature the special birds of the Eastern Washington forests, lakes, mountains, and valleys.

Bring your own Water. Sanicans are provided. Meet: At the camp. See new website, www.wenasaudubon.org.

Road is rough. Drive last 10 miles slow. You

also can stay at a motel in Ellensburg, and drive into camp. It takes about an hour to travel on a gravel road from Ellensburg.

Bigfoot Adventure Series

Free Family Programs at Seahurst Park

Sunday, June 3rd from 10:00am - noon

Bigfoot Beach: Crab Quest

Do you dare enter the Intertidal Kingdom to seek the wonders of crab and kin? Join Seattle Aquarium beach naturalist to find exciting creatures and learn their secrets of survival

No registration required. Meet naturalist on the beach. Then drop in for additional activities at the Environmental Science Center.

Saturday, June 23rd from 3:00 pm - 5:00pm

Bigfoot Birds: No Angry Birds in my Backyard!

Learn about the birds you can attract to your own home from wildlife photographer, **Dan Streiffert**. Also, check-out displays and activities.

Space is limited, so please pre-register: Outreach@EnvScienceCenter.org

RAS Field Trips

RAS did not offer trips in Jan, but the ice storm and snows kept people at home anyway. On Feb 4, the Soos Creek Owl Prowl led by Joe and Liz Miles was clear and cold. Participants were excited when they saw a pair of Barn Owls soaring above the barn (they nest in the cupola), and heard a N Saw-whet beeping.

Roger Orness's Feb 12th 4-car Raptor trip in the valley was a success. They saw Peregrine Falcons, Cooper's Hawks, a Bald Eagle perched near the big nest at the Kent golf course, and at least one American Kestrel. Steve Johnson's trip Feb 25 to Kent, Fed Way, and Tacoma started windy, but the weather improved. They birded on lakes and salt water. A last stop was at Weyco (Weyerhaeuser) Pond and nearby wetland. On the pond there were a number of diving ducks, including 26 or 27 Redheads!

Joe Miles said that the Mar 10 owl prowl was rainy and cold, but a N. Saw-whet swooped in and perched 10 feet away for all to see. Most of us would kill for that view! On Mar 24, 9 of us had a great time visiting Lk. Sammamish SP. We started at the Newcastle P&R, exit 9 on hwy 405, and got a good-size birds list right there. It was hard to leave the P&R! At Lk Samm, birding for land birds was very good. We got to see birds, and study a lot of bird song and calls, including the little tick from Townsend's Warblers, and various calls from several Red-breasted Sapsuckers. A Fox Sparrow was singing close to the group. I was the leader and barely got in the door when a complete birds list arrived from Calen Randall (our Seen and Heard guy) and his Mom. Thanks, Calen!

The weather is starting to warm and we are eagerly looking forward to late April, and May-June birding. Spring migration is so exciting. Especially after rains, when the birds linger for a while.

By Carol Schulz, Field Trip Chair



Great Blue Herons building a nest at Soos Creek Park

Photo by Dan Streiffert

BIRD OF THE MONTH: Our Hummingbirds

Reprint Courtesy of Wild Birds Unlimited, Burién

The Anna's Hummingbird is 3.9 to 4.5 inches long. It has a bronze-green back, a pale grey chest and belly and green flanks. Its bill is long, straight and slender. The adult male has an iridescent crimson-red crown and throat. The Anna's is the only North American hummingbird species with a red crown. Females and juveniles have a green crown, a grey throat with red speckling and a grey chest and belly. In addition, the female has white tips on its outer tail feathers.

Anna's Hummingbirds feed on flower nectar and they also eat insects by aiming at the bug in the air and opening their beaks very wide.



The Anna's Hummingbird breeds anytime from mid-December to June. She builds a tiny 1.5-2.0 inch diameter nest of small twigs, lichen and mosses. The nest is lined with downy feathers or animal hair and is held together with spider web silk. This allows the nest to expand as the babies grow. The female Anna's raises her young without assistance from the male.

Unlike most hummingbirds, male Anna's sing during courtship. The song is thin and squeaky. During breeding season, the male performs a remarkable display dive. When a female flies into a male's territory, he rises up approximately 98 feet into the air and dives down

over the potential mate. At the bottom of the dive, the male is traveling at a speed of 51 mph and produces a loud sound described by some as an "explosive squeak" with his outer tail feathers.

Anna's Hummingbirds are found along the west coast of North America from south Canada to Baja, California and inland to southern Arizona. They tend to be very territorial. The Anna's is the only hummingbird to spend winter in northern climates. During cold temperatures, Anna's Hummingbirds gradually gain weight during the day as they convert sugar to fat. They are able to survive periods of freezing

weather by lowering their metabolic rate and entering a state of temporary hibernation called torpor.

There are an estimated 1.5 million Anna's Hummingbirds. Their population appears to be stable and they are not considered endangered.

The Rufous Hummingbird is a small hummingbird

about 3 inches long with a long straight and very slender bill. The female is slightly larger than the male. The adult male has a white breast, rufous (reddish brown) face, upper parts, flanks and tail and an iridescent orange-red throat. Some males have green on their back and/or crown. The female has green upper parts with some white, a dark tail with white tips and a rufous base and may have some iridescent orange-red feathers in the center of the throat.

Like Anna's Hummingbirds, Rufous' feed on nectar from flowers and catch insects on the fly. They also become

torpid at night to conserve energy.

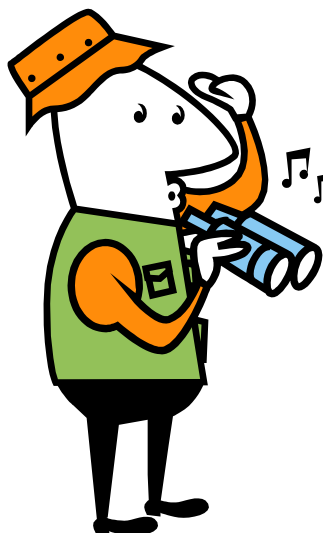
The breeding habitat is open areas and forest edges in western North America from south Alaska to California. Rufous Hummingbirds nest further north than any other hummingbird. The female builds a nest in a protected location in a shrub or conifer.

Rufous Hummingbirds are migratory. Many of them migrate through the Rocky Mountains and nearby locations in July and August to take advantage of the wildflower season. Most Rufous Hummingbirds winter in wooded areas in the Mexican state of Guerrero traveling over 2,000 miles from their summer home.

The Rufous Hummingbird in the west is most likely to stray east. In the past, birds that migrated east in error would usually die but now they usually survive. Provided sufficient food and shelter is available, these little birds can tolerate temperatures down to 4 degrees Fahrenheit.



The Month of May is **BIRDATHON**



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

Sponsors are happy to support your efforts, and many look forward to being asked again the following year. They especially enjoy your list of bird species seen. We will provide helpful hints, examples of solicitation and report letters, prizes for birders, thank-you gifts for sponsors, and one-on-one help as needed.

Why do it? We need the money! The portion of your membership dues that our Rainier chapter receives does not even pay the total cost of preparing and sending out your newsletter. Birdathon is our largest fundraiser, and we depend on it to provide a stable funding base for our many activities. Funds raised go for services and activities such as: our wonderful newsletter, postage and PO box, printing materials, envelopes, programs (speaker fees), environmental education activities, conservation committee activities, etc., We wouldn't want to have to cut back on any of our activities!

Our goal for Birdathon 2012 is \$5,000, which is attainable but only if everyone helps!

Stay tuned for prize announcements! First time birder, Most species seen, Most money raised.

Sponsor sheets available at our Membership Meetings.

Contact: Ross Tabor,
Rainier Audubon Birdathon Chair

Phone: (253) 927-3208
Email: rarailfan@aol.com

Thank you!

If you prefer, you can conduct your Birdathon birding on one of our field trips. Earn money for chapter activities while enjoying a great field trip led by an expert birder. Or be lazy — stay at home and bird at your feeder. Or be creative and come up with your own Birdathon experience! (see *Backyard Birding at the Streifferts* on page 9.)

Bird-a-Thon Sponsor Form

Duplicate as needed

I am happy to support the 2012 Rainier Audubon Bird-a-Thon!

- I am happy to pledge \$ _____ per species
- I prefer to make a flat donation of \$ _____
- I would like ____ tickets to Birding at the Streiffert's at \$15 / individual or \$20 / family for a total of \$ _____

My Check is enclosed, payable to Rainier Audubon Society (Donations are Tax Deductible!!!)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Are you a member of National Audubon? Yes ___ No ___

Mail Pledge to:

Ross Tabor
1004 S 323rd St.
Federal Way, WA 98003-5929

253-927-3208

Seen and Heard (Continued from page 3)

Yellow-Rumped Warblers(Audubon and Myrtle), Anna`s Hummingbird, Rufous Hummingbird, Starlings, Pine Siskins, Dark-eyed Juncos, Oregon Juncos, Black-Capped Chickadees, Chestnut-Backed Chickadees, Spotted Towhees, American Robins, Varied Thrush, Band-Tailed Pigeon, Rock Pigeon, Tree Swallows, Violet-Green Swallows, Red-Winged Blackbirds, Mew Gulls, Bonaparte`s Gull, American Crows, Stellar`s Jays, Red Breasted Sapsuckers, Pileated Woodpeckers, Northern Flickers (red shafted), Downy Woodpeckers, Brown Creeper, American Wigeon, Northern Shovelers, Mallards, Brant, Ring-Necked Ducks, Ruddy Duck, Canada Geese, Bufflehead, Common Loons, Lesser Scaup, Barrow`s Goldeneye, Common Goldeneye, Gadwall, Northern Pintail, Green-Winged Teal, Red-Breasted Merganser, Common Merganser, Hooded Merganser, Red-Necked Grebe, Horned Grebe, Pied-Billed Grebe, Great Blue Heron, Surf Scoter, Common Murre, Pigeon Guillemot, Pelagic Cormorant, Double-Crested Cormorant, Belted Kingfisher, Bald Eagles, Cooper`s Hawk, Red-Tailed Hawk

Special Sightings

Here is a list of this month`s special sightings:

Snowy Owls (SE in Ocean Shores 4/ 21/12)

- Brown Pelicans (SE in Ocean Shore/Damon Point 4/21/12)
- Red Crossbills (MH-G in Federal Way in Backyard 4/22/12)
- Osprey(BP in Federal Way 4/1/12)
- Orange-Crowned warblers and Wilson`s Warbler (BP Federal Way 4/23/12)
- Rhinoceros Auklet (BP in Federal Way 4/1/12)
- Turkey Vultures(CR in Tukwila 4/2/12)
- Greater White-Fronted Geese(CR in Kent 4/2/12)

Mystery Bird of the Month

Our mystery bird was sighted by Ralph and Sandra Embrey in Ocean Shores/Damon Point on April 21. Here are the clues:

- I give a three-syllable call "hoo-hooo-hoo" but I`m not an owl
- I was introduced in the Bahamas
- According to Greek mythology, I was a slave girl before the gods turned me into a bird
- My call echoes cries of my past misery
- A group of me is known as a "bevy", a "cot", a "dole", a "dule", and a "flight"
- I love the urban life
- I may be a domestic descendant of the Barbary Dove
- I don`t mourn, am not white-winged, ringed, or spotted

Who am I?

Send your sightings/hearings to calen-birds@hotmail.com I love reading your reports!

Answer: Eurasian Collared Dove

Thank You from Connie Sidles

*Thank you very much for inviting me to come read my stories to you on Monday at your monthly meeting. And thanks , too, for the generous honorarium. You always make me feel welcome, like one of the "family", and you laughed at my jokes. How great is that? You were an author`s dream come true. I am very grateful as well that you let me share my favorite place on Earth with you. If you`d like me to walk around with you on a field trip here, just let me know.

Regards, Connie Sidles.*

Remembering that I'll be dead soon is the most important tool I've ever encountered to help me make the big choices in life. Because almost everything - all external expectations, all pride, all fear of embarrassment or failure - these things just fall away in the face of death, leaving only what is truly important. Remembering that you are going to die is the best way I know to avoid the trap of thinking you have something to lose. You are already naked. There is no reason not to follow your heart.

-- Steve Jobs



Mewsings from Millie

Hello and welcome once again.

For whatever reason, my mind has a myriad of mysterious musings to mull over. Come with me as I meander through the maze in my mind and ponder some intriguing facts about some of the most common backyard birds.

A lot of people who come into the store have been experiencing the beauty of Varied Thrushes, some for the first time. Varied Thrushes visit feeders far more than other species of thrush. Populations of Varied Thrush noticeably change every two to three years. These cycles are likely related to food supplies although this has yet to be documented.

Pine Siskins rarely return to the same winter destinations twice, and they are also nomadic. The birds visiting your feeder today may not be the ones you saw a few days or weeks ago. Examples of this come from a bird bander in North Dakota, whose marked birds were resighted later

the same winter as far away as 450 miles. Another was recaptured three years later in Connecticut - 2,000 miles to the east!

Black-capped Chickadees are tough little birds that do not migrate. During cold weather chickadees have been found to need twenty times more food than they do in summer. Black-capped Chickadees have excellent coping tactics for surviving harsh weather. They cache food and remember where they are hidden. They do this by using the "scatter hoarding" method - one seed at a time is taken to a unique location and stashed. Black-capped Chickadees also have dense winter coats, diligently find excellent, well-insulated roosting cavities and can perform a regulated hypothermia to conserve energy.

A close cousin to the Black-capped Chickadee, the Chestnut-backed Chickadee, is the smallest member of its family. Chestnut-backed Chickadees lack the whistled song of other chickadees, but make up for this by the complexity of its "chick-a-dee" calls. Unlike its cousins, the Chestnut-backed Chickadee is not a scatter hoarder. Insects and arthropods make up approximately 65% of its diet while seed and plant material make up the remaining 35%.

The Red-breasted Nuthatch will line the entrance to its nesting cavity with drops of sticky conifer resin. It is thought that this may be a tactic to discourage predators or nest competitors. The nuthatch avoids the

resin by diving directly into the nesting cavity without ever touching the sides of the entry hole.

At about 1/5 of an ounce, a single Bushtit weighs only as much as a quarter, ranking them among the world's smallest songbirds. Small size usually means high energy and Bushtits are no exception. They eat up to 80% of their body weight during cold weather. Bushtits are well known for its "confusion chorus". When a predator is detected - usually a hawk - a Bushtit gives an alarm note to alert the rest of the flock. Then all the birds in the flock immediately make a monotonous trilling sound that makes it very difficult to pinpoint the location of any individual bird.

The American Goldfinch is very dependent on thistle for both food and nesting. It is one of the latest breeding songbirds, waiting to nest until mid-to-late summer when thistle seeds and down are readily available. Unlike many birds, American Goldfinches molt their body feathers twice a year, in the spring before breeding and after nesting in the fall.

Perhaps the next time you see one of these birds in your yard you'll recall one of these facts and continue to appreciate just how amazing our feathered friends are!

Until next time,

Millie, the Muse of Mews

Sign up for our new Google Group!

We have recently created a new group to serve as an email list server for Rainier Audubon. The intent of this site is to assist in publicizing our activities 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 our website or at:

<http://groups.google.com/group/ras-activities?hl=en>

Birding Trail's Puget Loop For Sale \$4.95

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

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

All proceeds go to Rainier Audubon.



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