

The

Heron Herald



Rainier Audubon Society

May 2013

May General Membership Meeting
Monday May 20, 2013 7:00 p.m.
Federal Way United Methodist Church

Clever Corvids

Elena Fox



Ed and Ebenezer, American crows and the stars of the West Sound Wildlife Shelter's educational crow team, have given programs to hundreds of children and adults, sharing facts and stories about crows, life in the wild, and wildlife of all types.

Together with their handler, Elena Fox, a licensed wildlife rehabilitator for more than 11 years, these remarkable birds will give you a unique insight into their world.

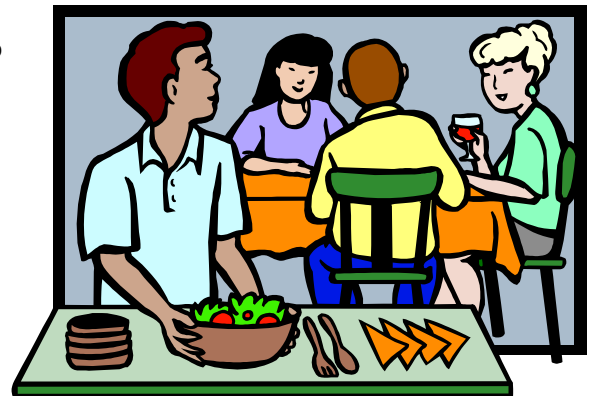
West Sound Wildlife is a wildlife hospital and education center that serves the western Puget Sound. In 2011 we treated over 1,000 patients in our hospital and gave educational presentations to more than 5,000 kids and adults. Our mission is to provide injured, orphaned, and sick wild animals a second chance at life and promote the well-being of wildlife through public outreach, education, and involvement.

Please join Rainier Audubon in welcoming Ed, Ebenezer and Elena to our monthly meeting. This is your chance to really understand crows and ask those questions that we all have concerning crows and their behavior.

Join us for an end-of-season appreciation dinner at 5:30. Enjoy an evening of good food, an engaging speaker and some big THANK YOUs to the folks who make our organization great! Renton Technical College will cater the dinner which will include appetizers, a choice of entrees, salad, bread, 2 sides, beverages and dessert.

Board Elections will be held at this meeting. See the April issue for more information.

This is our last General Membership Meeting until September 16, 2013.



Rainier Audubon programs are held at

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

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

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

RAS Mission Statement

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



RAINIER AUDUBON OFFICERS

President	Dan Streiffert*	253-796-2203
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	Open	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 Hertzal	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
Board Member	Lisa Mesplay	
Board Member	Ed Stanton	206-870-3107
Board Member	Terry Thurber	206-450-5446
Publicity	Tom Sernka	253-529-8970

*Also serves as Board Member.

Board meetings are held the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 6:30 PM at the Federal Way United Methodist Church, and are open to all members.

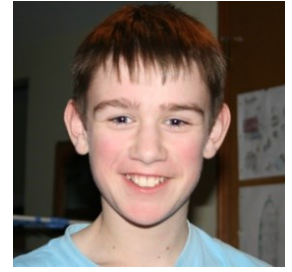
**The May Board Meeting
has been rescheduled to
May 15, 2013. at 6:30 PM.**

Volunteers Needed!

Please contact a Board Member

- Assistant Treasurer—need someone familiar with Quick Books to work with Jim Tooley.
- CBC Coordinator— Contact Nancy Streiffert
- Door Greeters for Membership Meetings
- Articles for Heron Herald—send to dan_streiffert@hotmail.com

Seen and Heard by Calen Randall



Mother Nature has summoned an early spring. Warblers and wrens call joyously through the trees, thanking Mother Nature for her gift. From dawn till dusk the sky, the trees, and the ground are alive with song. With so much activity, it is challenging to keep track of all the sightings. This spring I have been trying to get better at recording my sightings. I have been talking with many of our members about how they record birding data.

Barbara Petersen has over two decades worth of backyard bird records! When she spotted a migrating Turkey Vulture soaring over her house, she was able to check and confirm that it was her first sighting of a Turkey Vulture! Roger Orness is another birder whose recording skills I admire. He has years of information about the Green River Natural Resource area in Kent. His printing is so immaculate that he could put any schoolteacher to shame. One of the first birders who taught me the importance of writing things down was Charlie Wright. He told me about a program called eBird.com. eBird is a great way to store your records of bird sightings and allow them to be used to help conserve habitat and wildlife.

It is amazing to be able to compare the ebb and flow of the birds from year to year, and to be able to look back at one's notes and relive the wonderful memories. However, a more important reason for recording our birds is to help conserve our wildlife and their habitat. This past month, I've learned a lot about how important this documentation can be. I would like to

share this story with you:

King County has proposed to build a new garbage transfer station to replace the current station at Algona. While I applaud King County for upgrading an archaic system, I am appalled that their preferred site is located on a wetland area that is a sanctuary for birds and other wildlife. The proposed site is also adjacent to preserved farmland. The location is 28721 West Valley Highway. It is a Rainier Audubon birding hotspot. Many of you know 287th Street as the home of the 'chicken farm'. The proposal is to replace 15 acres of this precious habitat with a huge concrete laden structure.

At present, King County is conducting an environmental impact study to determine the effects on the environment in that area. King County has stated that it will use scientific data from Audubon and eBird. Thanks to years of birding documentation, it is my hope that King County will recognize that this site should remain the home of diverse wildlife and not become a temporary passing ground for garbage.

I encourage you to visit 287th St. and 285th St. and send in your sightings to eBird. We are the voices for these amazing creatures. This habitat deserves to be preserved. It is the last stand of undeveloped wetland in the Green River Valley.

It is hard to believe that a second season of writing the *Seen and Heard* is coming to a close. Thanks to all birders that have sent in reports this year. You make every article exciting to write, and I love learning about what you are seeing and hearing! I

hope your spring and summer bring you great birding surprises.

Keep sending me reports even though we have a break. Happy birding!

Recent Bird Sightings:

Thanks to birders Barbara Petersen, Ralph and Sandra Embrey, Carol Schultz, and Lisa Mesplay for their reports.

March 25th Ralph and Sandra Embrey viewed a **Bewick's Wren** and a **Red-breasted Nuthatch** at their feeder. They also watched a **Red-Tailed Hawk** soar overhead.—Ralph and Sandra Embrey

March 28th Lisa had a rare sighting, namely a **Black-billed Magpie**. Lisa said "The black and white coloration was so striking and unusual; it was as startling as a penguin in a tree!" At Redondo Heights Park and Ride Lisa has seen "two pairs of **Killdeer** that nest peaceably, sharing nesting territory at opposite ends of a huge center island with several stone 'mountains' between them." The Killdeer pay no attention to the buses that rumble right next to them. Lisa says that Killdeer have been sighted at the Park and Ride for the past three years. —Lisa Mesplay

April 3rd Ralph and Sandra Embrey had a couple of new bird sightings for their yard. They had a **Yellow-Shafted Northern Flicker** come devour some suet at their feeder. They even got some great photos of it! One shows the flicker flashing his orangey wings as he lands on the suet feeder. The other puts into perspective how much bigger the flicker is than the suet feeder. "He is a big flicker and very

(Continued on page 11)

Bio: Calen is a 14 year old birder. He enjoys birding around Lake Fenwick, Frager Road, and Boeing Ponds—especially with Charlie Wright. Calen is thrilled to revive Charlie's 'Seen and Heard'. When not birding, Calen can be seen flying up and down the ice at Kent Valley Ice Center

Field Trips by Carol Schulz



Birding at the Streiffert's

Saturday, May 4

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 lunch.

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.

Tukwila Backyard Wildlife Festival and Bird Walk in the Park

Saturday, May 11, 2013

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://backyardwildlifefestival.org/>

Swan Creek Park

Tuesday, May 7

MIDWEEK Trip - 6:30 am to early-afternoon

Leader: Shep Thorp

Join popular leader Shep Thorp as we walk through Upper Swan Creek County Park near Tacoma. Be prepared for a 4-mile hike through Swan Creek Gulch and undeveloped abandoned neighborhood streets which are part of this little known county park.



We'll explore a well developed mixed forest of firs, alders, and madrone. Swan Creek runs through the bottom of the gulch, and the

abandoned streets provide edge habitat and open shrub. Species anticipated include Barred Owl, Pileated Woodpecker, Common Raven, Hutton's Vireo, West. Wood-Pewee, Pacific-slope Flycatcher, Chipping Sparrow, Blk-headed Grosbeak, several warbler species including Blk-throated Gray Warbler.

Bring: Lunch, drinks, warm clothes, and good hiking shoes or boots. Bring your Birdathon sponsor form if you have one. No restrooms available, but privacy will be assured at times during the walk.

Meet: At the north park entrance at the end of E 56th St East, Tacoma.

Sign-up: Email or call Shep Thorp, sthorp@theaec.com, 253-370-3742(cell)

Directions: Drive south on I-5 to north

Tacoma, exit 135. Exit right onto ramp and drive ahead toward Puyallup/Portland Ave. Turn left onto E Portland Ave (away from the water). Drive south on E Portland Ave about 2.3 miles. Turn left onto E 56th St, and drive to the park entrance.

[For those who wish to carpool w/ Carol Schulz, contact her at carol.schulz50@gmail.com, 206-824-7618]

Capitol State Forest and The Black Hills

Thursday, May 16

MIDWEEK Trip - 6:30am to late afternoon

Leader: Shep Thorp

Join popular leader and expert birder Shep Thorp on a trip to areas west of Olympia. Shep will get you to see the birds! We will drive to Mud Bay, then to McClane Creek, and up into the 90,000 acre Capitol State Forest in the Black Hills. We will travel back roads to view specialty birds of the area. Be prepared for caravan driving, frequent stops with short walks, as we search out target species.

Mud Bay is a tidally influenced estuary which will provide an opportunity to observe waterfowl and shorebirds. Many bird species may be seen here at our first stop. McClane Creek Trail with entry road is a wetland habitat that provides an opportunity to see Yellow Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, American Bittern, and Virginia Rail. The entry road is productive for warblers and forest birds.

The Black Hills has a rugged mountain road through mature Douglas Fir forest with open clearcuts providing opportunities to see target species and

(Continued on page 5)

Field Trips by Carol Schulz



possible unusual to rare birds. These include Sooty Grouse, hawks, Ravens, Cassin's Vireo, West. Wood-Pewee, Pacific-slope and Olive-sided Flycatchers, Varied Thrush, Swainson's Thrush. Target warblers include Hermit, MacGillivray's, Townsend's, and Blk-throated Gray Warblers. Others possibles are House Wren, Western Tanager, Red Crossbills, and Black-headed Grosbeaks.

Bring: Lunch (maybe two), drinks, layered clothes, plenty of snacks, insect repellent. Scopes are welcome. Bring FRS radios and your DISCOVER PASS if you have them. Bathroom stops are available. Bring your Birdathon sponsor form if you have one, as we may get a large birds list!

Meet: At the I-5 and hwy 512 P&R by McDonald's in south Tacoma at 6:30 sharp. (Get there early.)

Directions: Drive I-5 south to exit 127. Turn west (right) 1/2 block, and turn left onto S Tacoma Way. Drive 1 block, and turn left into the big McDonald's P&R lot. Meet at McDonalds, inside or outside.

Sign up: Email or call Shep Thorp, sthorp@theaec.com, 253-370-3742(cell)

[For those who wish to carpool w/ Carol Schulz, contact her at carol.schulz50@gmail.com, 206-824-7618]

11th Annual Leavenworth Bird Festival

Thurs-Sun, May 16-19, 2013

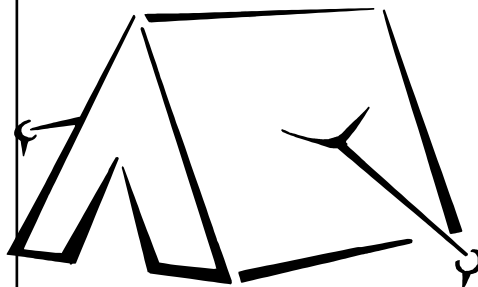
4 Days of Field Trips and Activities are offered at this superb spring festival, May 16-19. Many field trips are offered including owling trips, raft trips, trips to

the mountains and field trips to sage brush country. At this festival, close to 150 bird species are seen! Expect up to 8 species of warbler, 10 species of raptors including Golden Eagle, 6 species of swallows, and close to 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

Advance online registration begins Apr 18, 2013. Sign up early for the most popular field trips.

Wenas Campout - 50TH Anniversary!



Wenas Creek in Eastern Washington
Friday, May 24 to Monday, May 27,
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 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.

Flaming Geyser and Green Valley Road

Saturday, June 8

8:00 AM to Early Afternoon

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

NO NORTH AUBURN GARBAGE Site

King County Solid Waste Division Proposes Garbage Transfer Station in North Auburn

King County Solid Waste Division has identified a 15 acre parcel of land as the 'preferred' site to build a garbage transfer and recycle station. The location is 28721 West Valley Highway, which is approximately 1 mile south of Smith Brothers Dairy Farm (cross streets 287th Street and West Valley Highway). It is one of three identified sites being considered for the garbage and recycle transfer station. Why does this matter?

The lot and surrounding area consists of valuable wetland and farmland and is home to numerous species of birds and other wildlife. The area is one of the last remaining wetland/farmland areas on the Green River. The area is noted as a birding hotspot with both Rainier Audubon and Cornell Lab of Ornithology's *eBird.com*. The well-known 'Chicken Farm' area is a focal point for the annual Rainier Audubon Christmas Bird Count.

Currently, King County has begun its study of the Environmental Impact Statement. The draft for the EIS will be released mid-November 2013. A concerned citizens group, No North Auburn Garbage Site has formed to oppose the North Auburn site. As well, Rainier Audubon has submitted a letter to King County opposing the proposal.

How you can help

Submit any recorded birding (or other wildlife) documentation for 287th St and surrounding area from past years to Calen Randall calenbirds@hotmail.com

Go birding in the area and record and submit what you see to Calen (above email) or to eBird.com

Join No North Auburn Garbage Site concerned citizens group and stop this proposal from happening <http://www.nonorthauburndump.com>

Submit comments or concerns to King County Executive, King County Councilmembers and King County Solid Waste:

King County Executive, Dow Constantine

dow.constantine@kingcounty.gov

King County Council Members <http://www.kingcounty.gov/council/councilmembers.aspx>

King County Solid Waste Division

Eric Richardt (Project Manager) erichardt@kingcounty.gov ph: 206-296-8424

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 family, friends and co-workers 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.

You can also 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 just stay at home and count bird species at your feeder. Or be creative and come up with your own Birdathon experience!

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? Rainier Audubon needs the money! The portion of your membership dues to Rainier Audubon covers only a portion of the costs associated with running a successful Audubon chapter. Birdathon is our largest fundraiser, and we depend on it to provide a stable funding base for our many activities and services such as: printing and mailing our chapter's newsletter, general administrative costs, programs (speaker fees), environmental education activities, conservation committee activities, etc., We wouldn't want to have to cut back on any of our activities due to lack of funds!

Our goal for Birdathon 2013 is \$5,000, which is attainable if everyone helps!

Stay tuned for prize announcements such as most money raised, first time birder, and most species seen.

Sponsor sheets are available at Rainier Audubon membership meetings or on-line at www.RainierAudubon.org.

-Alex Juchems

Rainier Audubon
2013 BIRDATHON SPONSOR FORM

Your Name: _____ Your Phone #: _____
 Your Email: _____

Sponsor Information:

Name	Email	Phone #	Pledge Per Species	Flat Pledge Amount	Total	Date Paid

Make checks payable to Rainier Audubon.
 Checks can be delivered personally to the birder, or mailed
 to Rainier Audubon at:
 PO Box 778
 Auburn, WA 98071

Taylor's Weekend Gardening Guides: Attracting Birds & Butterflies: How to plant a backyard habitat to attract hummingbirds and other winged wildlife

by Barbara Ellis

There are a fair amount of books available about gardening for birds, and they all have pluses and minuses, so ultimately if one is going to tackle a big yard project, I recommend checking out several books from the library, depending upon your needs.

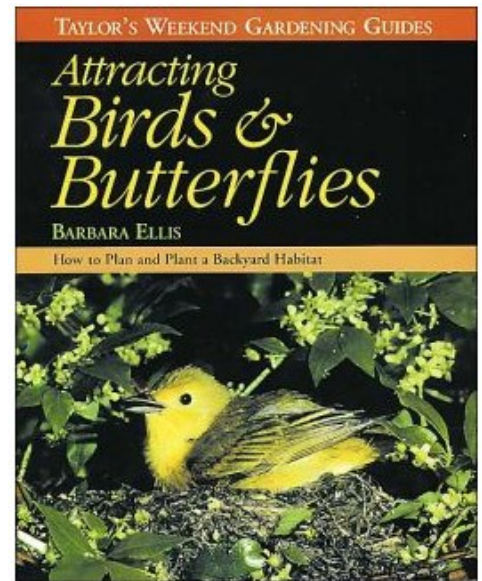
I like this book fairly well, but it is only available through third-party sellers on Amazon; however, the book is inexpensive. It is divided into four primary sections: basic information, information about general birds, information about hummingbirds, and information about butterflies.

First of all, this book has nice photographs, which is always a plus. What I particularly like about the book is that it provides information about useful plants – description, birds attracted, and culture – instead of merely providing lists. This is particularly so in the case of shrubs, trees, and hummingbird plants. For annuals, biennials, perennials, and grasses for non-hummingbirds, only lists are provided, but nicely, there is a symbol next to each plant indicating when the plant is also popular with hummingbirds and/or butterflies.

The beginning section of this book talks about water features, cover and nest sites, and the difference between shade and sun plantings. All of the bird

gardening books that I have looked at start with a general section like this, and sometimes even include information about different types of commercial bird seed. *Attracting Birds & Butterflies* is a somewhat small book, so does not give species information like some books do. Two books that do so are the *Stokes Bird Gardening Book* by Donald and Lillian Stokes and *Bird and Blooms: Birds in your Backyard* by Robert J Dolezal. Sally Roth in her *Bird-by-Bird Gardening* book organizes the chapters around different families of birds, although of course there is overlap. *Better Homes and Gardens: Bird Gardens* gives advice about landscape styles. I like that book because, as well, it provides detailed cultivation and bird-use information about different plants rather than just listing. It is probably a good source for annuals and perennials.

As I said before, I like that in *Attracting Birds & Butterflies* we are given an entire paragraph describing the plants. Looking through, I discovered that 90 species of birds eat dogwood berries (by the way, some types of dogwoods, cornus species, are actually native to our area, including bunchberry, red-twig, and a tree). This book also gives lists of additional plants, and indicates which ones tolerate partial shade. In the hummingbird section, it is the perennials and vines that discuss description and culture information. Some of the information people may



already know, like that hummingbirds like salvias, but other information may be welcomed, such as how to grow and attract hummingbirds with phlox.

I am a gardener, so for any of these books I already know some of the information. However, the books are still worth a look. I think that *Attracting Birds & Butterflies* is a fairly useful book, but I also recommend checking out other bird gardening books. Naturally, talking to fellow birders is an excellent resource, and visiting native plant sales and native nurseries. Plants don't need to be native in order to entice your birds, but planting some native plants is a worthwhile start.

—Laura Lavington

FREE DISCOVER PASSES FOR MEMBERS OF RAINIER AUDUBON SOCIETY

To support our state parks – and to boost membership - the local chapter of the Audubon Society, called the Rainier Audubon Society, is giving away free Discover Passes to any new member who joins Rainier Audubon during 2013.

All you have to do is come to a meeting, join up and get your free Discover Pass. The cost of joining is \$20.00/individual and \$25/family. The cost of a Discover Pass is normally \$35.00 dollars so you've just saved \$15.00 and you have a year's membership in the Audubon Society and a year's free access to all of the state parks in Washington.

Each Discover Pass can be used for any two vehicles you own. Just fill out two license plate numbers on the Pass, hang it from the rear view mirror of whichever car you're taking, and you're good to go for a full year of state park recreation.

The Rainier Audubon Society meets monthly at the United Methodist Church in Federal Way, and presents programs on all aspects of nature, birding, conservation, outdoor photography, and many other topics that adults and children who love the outdoors enjoy. For more information go to www.RainierAudubon.org.

AUDUBON CONVENTION 2013

Taking Flight Together

July 12–15, 2013

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN

Registration for the convention is now available through the website at www.audubonconvention.org! Visit the site for online registration and links to make reservations at one of the three convention hotels. You will also find detailed information about field trips, workshops, transportation options, and scholarships, as well as birding and other activities in the local area. For any questions, please contact convention@audubon.org or Cindy Sherwood at 802-865-5202 or csherwood@audubon.org

Rainier Audubon will pay for 1/2 you're registration fee (\$150)

The RAS Board encourages you to go to this educational event. At the March Board Meeting, we voted to pay for 1/2 the cost of registration for any RAS member that wants to go.

Birdhouses for Sale

Spring is springing and the birds are singing and looking for places to build their nests! Enjoy hosting a feathered family in your yard – add a birdhouse to your habitat. Rainier Audubon has beautiful handmade, sized to order, birdhouses for sale. Our blue-green swallow boxes are specially designed with the preferred type of opening and a starling shield to ensure the comfort and safety of your guests. We are have nuthatch and finch houses. All for just \$9.95. See display at our meeting and pick up information about preferred locations for your house.

Nancy Streiffert



Mewsings from Millie

From what people are saying, it sounds like the birds are on the move again heading northward for the spring and summer. One term I've heard mentioned is "flyway". Is this a new way to fly, an airport runway, the route of a hot air balloon or a spiritual belief of flies? I have no idea. So, of course, being curious, I set about to find out.

A flyway, I learned, is a traditional migration pathway or corridor that birds follow in their annual travels between breeding and wintering areas.

In North America, there are four flyways: the Atlantic, the Mississippi, the Central and the Pacific.

What makes each flyway unique and what do they offer the birds that travel them?

The Atlantic Flyway extends from north east Canada, Newfoundland and Nova Scotia down the eastern coast of the United States through the Caribbean to South America. This avian superhighway is used by more than 500 bird species and millions of individual birds. The United States section of the Atlantic Flyway is home to 139 global Important Birding Areas. Birds of the Atlantic Flyway live in forests, on beaches and coastal wetlands. National Audubon has designated 32 species of the Atlantic Flyway "priority species" meaning birds in need of conservation. This list includes the American Oystercatcher, the Brown Pelican, the Red Knot, the Sanderling and the Snowy Plover.

The Mississippi Flyway hosts nearly half of North America's bird species and about 40% of its waterfowl. The flyway extends north to Canada's tundra and boreal forest. It includes the vast MacKenzie River watershed and then follows the mighty Mississippi River through America's heartland to the Gulf Coast and as far south as Patagonia. Birds of the Mississippi Flyway live in wetlands, forests, grasslands and coastal areas. The Mississippi River Delta ecosystem in Louisiana supports 100 million migratory, nesting and wintering birds! There are 27 priority species in the Mississippi Flyway. These include: the Greater Prairie Chicken, the Piping Plover, the Ruddy Turnstone, the Prothonotary Warbler and the Grasshopper Sparrow.

The Central Flyway extends from the grasslands of the Great Plains, the heartland's wetlands and rivers, and the magnificent Rocky Mountains to the western Gulf Coast. Many of its migratory birds winter in Central and South America. Some migrate across the Western Hemisphere as far north as the Arctic Circle and others south to

Patagonia in southern South America. It is home to 65 global Important Birding Areas. There are 17 priority species that depend on this flyway including the Greater Sage-Grouse, the Least Tern, the Reddish Egret, the Sandhill Crane and the Whooping Crane.

Last, but certainly not least, is "our" flyway, the Pacific Flyway. Each year, right in our own backyard, at least a billion birds migrate from Central and South America to the North Slope of Alaska. These birds depend on a variety of habitats ranging from Arctic tundra and northwest rainforest to tropical beaches and mangroves. The Pacific Flyway is home to 161 global Important Birding Areas. There are 24 species in this flyway that are considered to be priority species including the Black-footed Albatross, the Black-necked Stilt, the Long-billed Curlew, Swainson's Hawk and the Western Sandpiper.

It is interesting to note that each flyway has a Flyway Council which is a formal organization composed of one member from each state and province in the flyway. Recently, Mexico has provided representation at Pacific and Central Flyway meetings.

Well, now you know a "flyway" is not the path of a hot air balloon or a new runway at Sea-Tac. It's for the birds, of course.

Gotta fly!

Until next time,

Millie

The Muse of Mews

Seen & Heard (Continued from page 3)

striking!” Sandra commented. To add to their treasure trove of raptors, the Embreys also saw three **Bald Eagles** and a **Cooper’s Hawk!**—Ralph and Sandra Embrey

April 6th Barbara Petersen observed 64 **Brant** while walking at Redondo Beach Boardwalk. She also spotted a **Pigeon Guillemot**, a **Rhinoceros Auklet**, many **Surf Scoters**, **Barrow’s Goldeneye**, and some **Horned Grebes!** Barbara’s comments on the Brant, “I had noticed the Brant had arrived at Redondo in March, as they seem to every year--a group of 9 at first. Today, we walked there again and counted about 20 Brant who flew away when a **Bald Eagle** perched in a tree.” At home, Barbara had a **Turkey Vulture** soar over her house on April 1st. At first she thought it was an April fool’s joke; but there was no fooling Barbara. It was her first Turkey Vulture in her yard! As well, Barbara’s prized hermitage of **Varied Thrush** stayed late into March. For once, their presence brought warm temperatures rather than snow!—Barbara Petersen

April 8th Ross and Annette Tabor sighted a pair of **Bald Eagles** in their nest at Salt Water State Park. The Tabors said that an

eaglet was still in the nest. They also had male **House Finches** in their backyard feasting on some quince blossoms. The Tabors also heard about a leucistic **American Robin** that was nesting nearby South Center and the airport.—Ross and Annette Tabor

April 14th On a walk around Horseshoe Bend (or Fishermen’s) by the Green River in Kent, Carol spotted some **White-Crowned Sparrows**, the Gambelli subspecies. Carol said “Usually we have Pugetensis White-Crown subspecies...I immediately noticed yesterday’s Gambel’s White-Crowns because they sing a quite different song from our usual Pugetensis birds.” Carol also saw a singing **American Goldfinch**, which was Carol’s first Goldfinch sighting this year! —Carol Schultz

April 7th Out in Manitoba there have been many surprising owl sightings. The latest one came from my grandparents. They spotted a **Northern Hawk Owl**—a first ever for my Grandma who has lived there for 72 years. When I talked to my Grandma about her thoughts on the owl, she said “I want nature to do its thing, but I don’t want to lose all of our little song birds!” — Great Falls, Manitoba

March 22nd While out birding at Redondo, I spotted the same flock of **Brant** that

Barbara saw. There were about sixty of them, but they all flew off when we got within 100 yards. However, unlike Barbara’s observations, they paid no heed to the **Bald Eagle** that was trying to eat in peace while a murder of crows dive-bombed him.— Calen Randall

Mystery Bird of the Month

On April 2nd, I saw a flock of thirty of these elusive birds. Carol Schultz also saw a crookedness of them. It seems that there is quite a frenzy of them being reported all over the Puget Sound. Here are the clues:

- I belong to the family *Fringillidae*
- A group of me is called a ‘crookedness’ or a ‘warp’
- I crave conifer seeds. I depend on them so much, that I even feed them to my young
- As long as there is a large supply of cones where I am, I can breed during any season even in winter
- My oddly shaped bill helps me access seeds in cones that other birds can’t reach
- I am a taxonomist’s dream. There are at least nine different subspecies of me
- I am a dentists’ nightmare. I have a bad case of cross bite

Who am I?

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

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Answer: Red Crossbill



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