

**Black Hills
Audubon Society**
Olympia, Washington

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May/June 2010



May is Birdathon Month!

Why should you participate in BHAS's 3rd annual **Birdathon**? Because Washington's native birds and their habitat need your protection. One of the most effective ways you can help is by joining together with your fellow Audubon members, celebrate Washington's birds and raise funds for Black Hills Audubon Society.

Anyone can participate—as a sponsor, a birder or both!

You do not need to be an expert birder nor even a

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Thursday, May 20th Chair-Hiking with Alan Bauer

Come spend an evening with Alan Bauer, who, among many other things, has been a co-author/photographer for Mountaineers Books. Some of his titles include *Day Hiking-Mt Rainier*, *Day Hiking-South Cascades*, and most recently, *Best Desert Hikes-Washington*. His presentation will be rich in photography and full of information on his adventures in these areas as well as covering conservation issues facing trails and public lands.

NOTE: This meeting will be at the Quaker Olympia Friends meeting hall (219 B St SW, Tumwater) instead of the Coach House. Come share an evening with professional photographer Alan Bauer at this new (but temporary) location.

Thursday, June 17 Annual BHAS Picnic

This month, we invite Auduboners and their guests to the traditional potluck picnic at the Rose Garden Shelter at Priest Point Park in Olympia. We'll begin gathering at 5:00 pm to do a bit of birding, then plan to eat around 6 pm. The shelter is covered, so come—rain or shine!

BYO plate and utensils (but we will supply paper plates, cups, and cutlery for those who forget). Please bring something yummy to share, and we'll provide the soft drinks. In addition, our own David Jennings will be attending in his newly appointed role as one of our state Fish and Wildlife Commissioners. 🦋



The 2010 Jack Davis Conservationist of the Year Award

By Donna Nickerson and Jean MacGregor.

It was most fitting that in the first year of this new decade we found ourselves with a nomination for the award that represented decades of work towards an important achievement, allowing us to give thanks, long overdue, to the key principal behind the success.

Adrian Brown is this year's recipient of the Jack Davis Conservationist of the Year Award. His work is a great lesson and encouragement for us today as we work on new environmental issues and the old issues that just won't go away.

Adrian became a member of Black Hills Audubon in 1984, and served on the conservation committee. He came to Audubon with a clear vision and goal to help reduce Thurston County's reliance on using pesticides to control vegetation along county roads and parks. Adrian was Black Hills Audubon's First Toxics Activist. Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, Adrian Brown chaired the "Toxics Subcommittee" of BHAS's Conservation Committee. He followed pesticide policy at county, state, and federal levels, wrote letters and spoke out about the need to reduce or eliminate the use of the "worst actors" among the thousands of chemical pesticides in circulation across the world. Adrian did all his research before the arrival of the Internet. He diligently tracked down information by writing letters and making phone calls, and piecing together his own understanding of threats to the living world.

He raised the concern about simazine and 2,4-D in the pesticides the County used and the danger of these chemicals entering into Puget Sound through storm water runoff. And, he raised the issues of impervious surfaces—which he called pavement—and stormwater. He also urged the County to plan for better environmental protection given the increases in the County's growth in population. Keep in mind, Adrian raised these issues during the 1980's, when few people envisioned their future significance. These issues are now at the heart of our environmental and economic problems.

Adrian was a central influence behind Thurston County forming an advisory task force in 1987 to

evaluate the use of pesticides in the County. The task force included representatives of the affected county departments (Health, Parks, Public Works, and the Noxious Weed Board), the Squaxin Tribe, the "Washington Friends of Farms and Forests" (a.k.a. the Washington Pesticide Applicators Association), the Washington Toxics Coalition, the Sasquatch Chapter of the Sierra Club, and Audubon. Also asking to be at the table was one of the unit leads for the state Department of Transportation's roadside vegetation maintenance, explaining that he wanted to participate as an "interested citizen," and a representative of the Monsanto Corporation. The Task Force Chair was Tom Fitzsimmons, then the Thurston County Executive (and later to become Director of the Washington Department of Ecology).

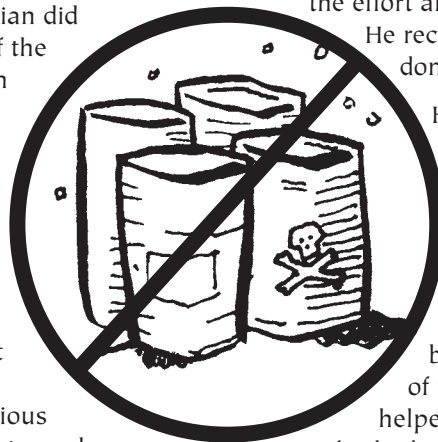
Adrian was essential to the task force's ultimate success in writing a landmark Integrated Pest Management policy that was path-breaking at the time. Within a very short time, herbicides were nearly completely phased out on Thurston County Roads.

He continued working for decades on the monitoring and vigilance that is needed in citizen oversight to ensure and encourage good governance. Adrian was well aware of the need for both diligence during the effort and vigilance afterwards on oversight.

He recently told me, "if you're in a hurry, don't start".

His achievements were accomplished some 20 years ago and we are benefiting from them now. Our groundwater and aquifer recharge areas, as well as Puget Sound, are safer today because of Adrian.

Adrian is 89 years old, and harbors the same encyclopedic memory of facts and objective reasoning that helped him convince others to make difficult choices. It is a tribute to Adrian that the person who nominated him, Hans Littoy, was "on the other side", working for the Department of Transportation at the time. Both Adrian and Hans were good friends of Jack Davis. Jack would be pleased that Adrian is listed along with other important leaders in this community that have made a significant difference in our quality of life, which is directly dependant on the quality of our environment. 🐾



Conservation News

By Donna Nickerson

In this issue, we have a particularly special Jack Davis (JD) Conservationist of the Year Award recipient to celebrate as well as several articles from Conservation Committee members.

The first article, written with input from Jean MacGregor, is about Adrian Brown's achievements and the inspiration to this generation of activists. Adrian is the recipient of the 2010 JD Conservationist of the Year Award.

In the second article, new committee member Eric Myers explores habitat and behavioral characteristics of the Western Scrub Jay. This is the first in what I hope will become a series of articles by Eric on bird species and their habitat requirements.

The third and fourth articles are updates on some of our continuing work: Jerry Parker, also a new member of the committee and a former recipient of the Jack Davis Conservationist of the Year Award

The Western Scrub Jay

By Eric Myers

On a rainy February afternoon, I looked out my kitchen window and saw a glimpse of something blue-gray land in my yard. It took me a few moments to focus on it through the rain spots on the window. I identified it as an *Aphelocoma Californica*, better known as the Western scrub jay. You can identify the Western scrub jay by its long bill and tail and the characteristic blue head, wings, and tail. You can distinguish them from other jays by its light gray underparts, white throat, and incomplete blue necklace. They also don't have a crest.

This individual jay was being followed by two Steller jays as they flew back and forth from the oak trees we have in and around our yard. The Western scrub jays prefer scrub oak, woodlands and chaparral in the western states including Western Washington. This preference makes it a perfect place to spot this bird species here in the area of the South Puget Sound prairies. The scrub jays, like many other jay species, store food in caches in strategic areas in case of stress or disruption. They also have the ability to remember these locations after long periods of time. These caches have a beneficial effect on the ecosystem by provid-

ing a unique natural process of planting the seeds of certain trees in an area. This is especially beneficial to the native oak woodlands we have in this area. So, if you are on a drive in the Tenino area and you see a flash of blue, it could be your friendly neighborhood scrub jay planting that next oak.

Transferable Development Rights Update

By Jerry Parker

At the initiative of Commissioner Sandra Romero, the Thurston County Commissioners have convened a group of interested citizens to explore the possibility of enhancing the County's transfer of development rights program to be used as a tool for addressing land use issues.

The interested parties include representatives of agriculture, forestry, real estate, land trusts, environmental organizations, and academics. At the initial meeting, the concept of transferable development rights (TDR) was explained. In explaining the impetus for this effort, Commissioner Romero cited from recent studies regarding the costs to local governments of providing infrastructure and services (e.g. roads, water, sewer, schools, police) in low density rural development. She emphasized that TDR is a voluntary program that would allow individuals to sell development rights on rural property ("sending areas") to developers within urban areas ("receiving areas"). In exchange for a privately negotiated price, the rural land owner would give up one or more currently permitted development rights while the developer would gain one or more benefits as determined by the local government. These benefits could include an increase in allowable development rights, revised parking requirements, or changes to other current development requirements.

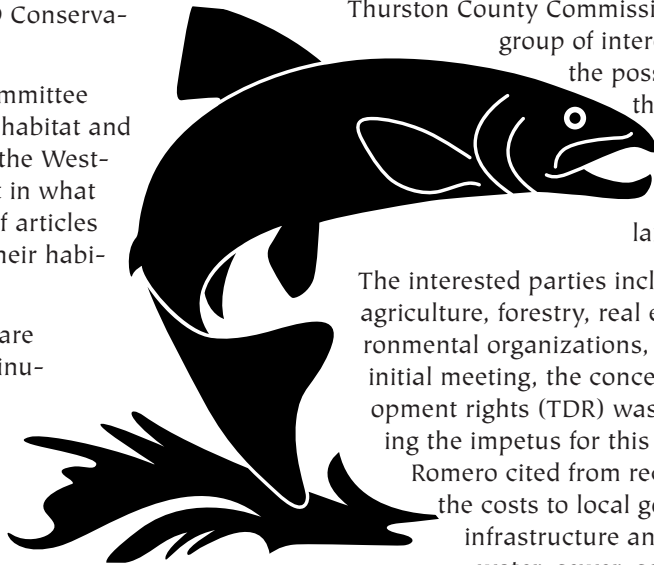
At this time, subcommittees of the larger group are examining the experience of TDR programs both regionally and nationally, and discussing potential criteria for both sending and receiving areas, as well as program details.

Mineral Lands Designation and Asphalt Plant Siting Processes—An Update

By Susan Markey

By publication time, the Thurston County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) were scheduled to

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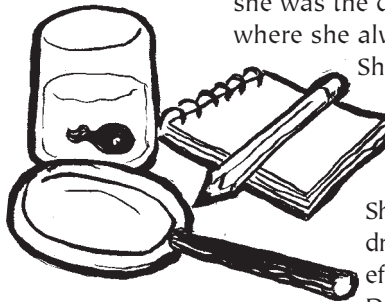


Dave McNett Environmental Educator of the Year Award

Submitted by Debbie Nickerson,
Education Committee Chair

Our chapter was proud this year to recognize Jane Poole, a schoolteacher at Lydia Hawk Elementary, as this year's recipient of the Dave McNett Environmental Education Award. Through an integrated approach to the disciplines, she studies the watershed via Project GREEN. She has inspired other staff to undertake similar curriculum and join the network of Project GREEN teachers.

She inspires in her students a curiosity about the ways of the larger world and a love of learning that transcends the school grounds. For 20 years, she has spearheaded watershed education in Thurston County. One former colleague stated, "She lives and breathes environmental education." Field trips to Mt. Rainier and the Nisqually Wildlife Refuge are a part of the curriculum and while there, students hone their observation skills and see for themselves



how rivers begin and finally come to rest at their journey's end.

Jane's extensive background includes working as a National Park Ranger at five National Parks, including Mt. Rainier. She is a graduate of the University of Michigan where she worked with Dr. Bill Stapp, founder of the Global Rivers Environmental Education Network. For several years while in Yelm, she was the director of their Cispus Outdoor Camp where she always taught her popular bird class.

She is instrumental in local re-vegetation projects, school garden projects, science workshops for teachers and data mapping in Thurston County.

She has left an indelible mark upon hundreds of students through her untiring efforts to bring the best to her children. Like Dave McNett, Jane is gentle, kind, and a fierce believer in children learning all about the natural world through hands-on experiences and quality education. 🐾

BHAS Annual Dinner/Auction 2010

We hope that all of you who attended enjoyed this year's event. We were blessed with good weather, a great presentation by David Jennings, inspirational awards to Adrian Brown (Jack Davis Conservationist of the Year) and Jane Poole (Dave McNett Environmental Educator of the Year), a wonderful array of auction items, and plants (orchestrated by Patt Brady), but most of all, a special feeling of committed camaraderie among attendees.

We are deeply indebted to many local businesses for their generous donations to this year's event which raised \$3880 for BHAS. You are urged to reward them with your patronage. When you do so, please let them know of your gratitude for their support.

- Alpine Experience
- Anthony's Hearthfire Grill
- Applebee's
- Boston Harbor Marina
- Buck's 5th Ave
- Capital Divers
- Casa Mia
- Childhood's End Gallery

- Compass Rose
- Dinners Done Right
- Fireside Book Store
- Fish Bowl Brew Pub
- Gary's Olympia Auto Service
- Gull Harbor Mercantile
- The Iron Rabbit
- Kim Lincoln's Mind Body Spirit
- Mercato Ristorante
- Olive Garden
- Olympia Seafood Company
- Orca Books
- Perennial Gardener
- Diane Sonntag's Seasonals
- Wholesale Sports
- Wild Birds Unlimited
- The Wine Loft


We are also indebted to others who contributed items or services and to those who supported the auction by their purchases. Because of this generosity, BHAS netted approximately \$3700 for our conservation, education and advocacy projects.

Thank you. 🐾

Birdathon


From page 1

Black Hills Audubon member. If you're entirely new to **Birdathon**, it works like a walk-athon. **Birdathoners** will collect pledges for finding and counting bird species. It's a competitive and educational event for any level of birdwatcher, as well as for the family and friends who cheer them on.


You can join our guided trips (a list is in this *Echo* issue on page 8), organize your own trip, or count independently. All guided trips are led by birding experts and are a great way to make new friends and connect with other bird lovers. Guided trips range from intensive all day trips to more relaxing walks in our local birding hot spots. Look for the  icon next to field trip title.

Pledge yourself or have your friends and family pledge you. It's a unique and highly effective way to support Black Hills Audubon Society.



To participate, complete the registration form on the next page. For more information contact the **Birdathon** Coordinator Sheila McCartan at blackhillsbirdathon@comcast.net. Forms are also available on the website at www.blackhills-audubon.org. 

How to Birdathon: Instructions for Conducting a Successful Birdathon


- **Choose a day in May to go birding.** You may go by yourself, with friends, or join one of the five **Birdathon** field trips scheduled for May (Marked with  in field trips listing).
- **Choose a location to go birding and estimate the number of species you expect to see.** You may conduct your **Birdathon** anywhere, your neighborhood, the county, or anywhere else.
- **Get your friends, family, and other likely supporters to pledge** so many cents per species of birds you expect to see, i.g., 25¢ per species.
- **Fill out the pledge sheet** (below). Try to get at least a total of \$1 per species. For example, one person pledges 40¢ per species, another person pledges 60¢, and someone else pledge 50¢ per species for a total of \$1.50 per species). The more pledges you get, the more support for BHAS!
- **Go on your Birdathon trip.** Count all the spe-

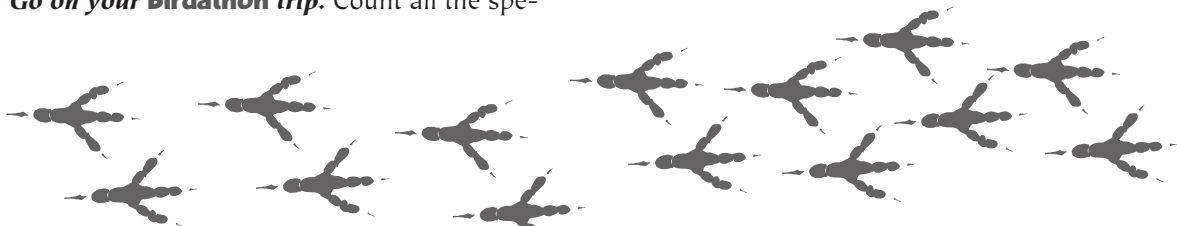
cies you see within a 24-hour time period.

- **Collect your pledges.** It is very helpful to give the people who pledged a write-up about your **Birdathon** with a list of all the species you saw. This way, more people can learn about birds!
- Send a check (made out to "BHAS – Birdathon") to the **Birdathon** Coordinator, Sheila McCartan, 1909 Lakemoor Place, Olympia, WA 98512.

All pledges are due by June 30, 2010.

If you need any assistance or have questions, please contact the **Birdathon** Coordinator, Sheila McCartan, at blackhillsbirdathon@comcast.net, or call (360) 357-9170. Feedback to the coordinator is also welcome.

Thank you for participating in this important fund raising event. We hope you have a very successful and fun **Birdathon!** 



BHAS Calendar

April 30th – May 2nd, Grays Harbor Shorebird Festival,
<http://www.shorebirdfestival.com/>

May 8th, Saturday, Birdathon Walk: Olympia's Waterfront

May 15th, Saturday, Birdathon Field Trip: Kennedy Creek to Capitol Peak

May 16th Sunday, before sunrise, Field Trip: Thurston County—
Big Day in support of BHAS **Birdathon**

May 19th, Wednesday, 8:15 am, **Birdathon** Field Trip:
Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge

May 22nd, Saturday, Birdathon Field Trip: East Grays Harbor County

May 23rd, Sunday, 7:00 a.m., Field Trip/Event: Lawn Chair Swallow
Watching & Photography

May 28th - 31st, Memorial Day Weekend, Wenas Campout

May 29th, Saturday, 8:30 am, Field Trip: Exploring & Birding in Capitol Forest

June 5th, Saturday, 6:00am, Field Trip: Mountains of Mason County

July 25th, Sunday, 6:30 am, Field Trip: Mt Rainier:
Wildflowers and Casual Birding

August 8th, Sunday, 4:00 am, Field Trip: Panorama Point Ptarmigan Trek
(Mt. Rainier).

August 26th, Thursday, 6:30am and **August 28th, Saturday**, 6:00 am,
Field Trip: 2nd Annual BHAS Pelagic Experience

September 19th, Sunday, 8:00 am, Patrick Sullivan Memorial Walk at Nisqually
National Wildlife Refuge

September 25th, Saturday, 8 am, Field Trip: Tokeland

**Reminder: We will not have Monthly Program Meetings in July or August.
They will resume September 16th.**

Field Trip and Event Details

April 30th – May 2nd

Event: Grays Harbor Shorebird Festival
<http://www.shorebirdfestival.com/>

As part of this event, on Friday, April 30th, 7pm, there will be a Dessert Reception Craig Lee: “*Bird Conservation Without Borders*”

This event will be held at Central Elementary School in Hoquiam, Washington starting at 7pm. For reservations, contact 1-800-303-8498. Cost is \$15.

Olympia's Waterfront

Saturday, May 8th, 8:00 am to Noon
Field Trip Leader: Sheila McCartan
Estimated number of species: 30

This **Birdathon** trip is short but rewarding, and a great way for you to easily conduct your **Birdathon**. It is tailored for people of all birding abilities. Sheila will start at Marathon Park, bird around the lake, then drive to points around the east and west bay. To sign up, call Sheila at 360-357-9170.

Rating: easy

Kennedy Creek to Capitol Peak

Saturday, May 15th
Field Trip Leader: Whittier Johnson
Estimated number of species: 40

Whittier will start his **Birdathon** trip as the tide is falling at Kennedy Creek where he hopes to see waterbirds and shorebirds. He'll then travel into Capitol Forest searching for Warblers (including Hermit Warblers), Gray Jays, Western Tanagers, woodpeckers, and other woodland birds. A special attempt will be made to find Northern Pygmy Owl and the elusive Mountain Quail. This trip is limited to 6 people. Call the **Birdathon** Coordinator at 360-357-9170 for all the details and to reserve your spot.

Rating: moderate – challenging

Big Day Thurston County

Sunday, May 16th
Field Trip Leader: Matt Pike
Estimated number of species: 70

Seventy species is a conservative estimate for this all day trip! Starting at dawn and ending at dusk, Matt will take you on a journey through the county looking for everything he can find. This trip is limited to 3 cars. Call the **Birdathon** Coordinator at 360-357-9170 for complete details and to reserve your spot to register.

Rating: challenging!

Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge

Wednesday, May 19th ,
8:15am to mid-afternoon
Field Trip Leader: Phil Kelley
Estimated number of species: 50

Join Phil on his weekly walk at Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge. The spring migrants should all have arrived, and resident birds including nesting waterfowl will be in evidence as well. The walking is easy and level. Folks are welcome to begin the trip, and turn back at any point. Meet at the Refuge Visitor Center at 8:15am. Sign-ups are not necessary.

Rating – easy

East Grays Harbor County

Saturday, May 22nd
Field Trip Leader: Kristin Stewart
Estimated number of species: 40

East Grays Harbor County is a great place to bird. Kristin will seek out the roads less travelled looking for sparrows, forest birds, ducks, raptors, and anything else that's around. Call the Birdathon Coordinator at (360) 357-9170 for all the details and to register.

Rating – moderate

May 23rd, Sunday, 7 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.
Field Trip/Event: Lawn Chair Swallow Watching & Photography
Location: East Olympia, off Rich Road
Leader: Chris Maynard

The group will set up chairs and photography equipment in Chris' front yard at 7:00 am. We will aim to enjoy watching swallows; use and develop photography skills and learn from each other

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BHAS Elections in May

Black Hills Audubon will hold its annual election of Board members at the May Monthly Program Meeting on May 20th. If you, or another BHAS member, are interested in serving on the BHAS Board and contributing to the BHAS mission to *promote environmental education and recreation and to maintain and protect our ecosystems for future generations*, please contact the Chair of the Nominating Committee, Kristin Stewart at kristinstewart@comcast.net or 360-456-5098.

Field Trips

From page 8

while attempting to photograph swallows in the act of catching feathers for their nests. All levels of photography skills are welcome or just watch the swallow antics.

Bring your binoculars, lawn chairs, cameras, tripods, and any other equipment. Please sign up by calling BHAS message phone at 360 352-7299. More specific directions will be provided to the first 10 people who sign up. Limit 10.

May 28th - 31st, Memorial Day Weekend

Event: Wenas Campout
Location: Wenas Campground, southwest of Ellensburg in an Important Bird Area.

You are invited to a free campout (May 28-31, 2010) at Wenas Creek Campground, where you and your family and friends will enjoy field trips, programs, singing, story-telling, and evening campfires.

The Hazel Wolf Wenas Creek Bird Sanctuary is located SW of Ellensburg in an Important Bird Area and has been assured of protective status. The free, "primitive" campground along the north fork of Wenas Creek has exceptional opportunities for birding, botanizing and enjoying spring in the eastern foothills of the Cascades.

Please visit the Wenas Website, www.wenasaudubon.org. You'll find checklists of

Volunteer Swift watchers Needed

Volunteers are needed to find, observe and count northbound Vaux's Swifts. Participants will be part of an ongoing coast-wide swift monitoring effort organized by Pilchuck Audubon.

There are a handful of sites in the greater Olympia area where Vaux's Swifts are known to roost during their migrations. Volunteers will visit those sites in early May to count birds as they fly into chimneys at sunset. The big observation and counting days will be the first two Saturdays in May.

To volunteer contact Whittier Johnson at 866-8156. 🐦

birds and wildflowers, an outline of field trips and programs, directions to the campground, and many photos. For people who don't "do websites," contact Helen Engle, hengle@iinet.com, 253-564-3112, and she will send you printed information.

Bring friends and family, and join us at Wenas Memorial Day Weekend for as many days and/or nights as you want to stay - May 28-31, 2010.

May 29th, Saturday, 8:30 am to late afternoon

Field Trip: Exploring & Birding in Capitol Forest

Leaders: Jim Pruske and Lonnie Somer

Spend the day exploring Capitol Forest from sea level up to Capitol Peak at 2,700 ft. We will be searching for bird species that inhabit streams, mixed forest, and second growth forest. Dipper, Hermit Warbler, Gray Jay, Hermit Thrush, and Fox Sparrows are expected. We should also find Pygmy Owls. Mountain Quail are possible. Unique elements of the flora and fauna of the forest will be examined. Club moss and liverworts are a specialty. We will identify butterfly and other insect species as well.

Meet at Mud Bay Park and Ride at 8:00 am. This trip is limited to 3 cars. Call the BHAS office at 360-352-7299 to

register.

June 5th, Saturday, 6:00am at Mud Bay Park & Ride, to late afternoon.

Field Trip: Mountains of Mason County
Leader: Terry Sisson

We will spend the day driving the back roads of the Olympic National Forest in Mason County. Target birds are Golden Eagle and Hermit Thrush. Bring lunch, snacks, and something to drink.

Limit three vehicles. Preference will be given to drivers of high clearance 4X4 or AWD vehicles.

For reservations contact Terry at 360-918-8542, or terry_sisson@yahoo.com.

July 25th, Sunday, 6:30 am to late afternoon.

Field Trip: Mt Rainier: Wildflowers and Casual Birding

Leader: Kristin Stewart

Join me for an earlier-than-usual Mt Rainier trip. I am thinking the wildflowers will be early this year due to the low snowpack. We will just go for a relatively easy and slow hike to enjoy the views,



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Meet a Volunteer: Ken Fristoe

Thank you, Ken Fristoe, for making Green-Violet Swallow houses for BHAS. They will be used by various schools and community groups to lure more bird life to an area.

We still have some available if you are interested in hanging and monitoring the use of a box. Please contact Debbie Nickerson at 360-754-5397 for more information.



Field trips

From page 9

the flowers, and what birds we happen upon.

We do plan to hike a fair distance, but at a leisurely pace. Folks who do not want to hike too far are welcome to join us for as long as they wish, and to stop along the way. Those who are looking for a more rigorous hike, with White-tailed Ptarmigan as the primary goal, will also want to join Matt Pike on August 8th. We have located them on about half of the semi-leisurely trips in the past, but this year we may not get quite so far. As is usual on the mountain, be prepared for all weather conditions, bring food and water, etc. If you have FRS radios, they might also be useful.

We will meet at the Martin Way Park and Ride at about 6:15, and leave there by 6:30 a.m. Please call Kristin Stewart at 456-5098 to sign up.

August 8th, Sunday, 4 am to mid afternoon.
Field Trip: Panorama Point Ptarmigan Trek (Mt. Rainier).

Leader: Matt Pike

Trip leader Matt Pike will guide ambitious birders to Panorama Point's east flank in search of White-tailed Ptarmigan. Once at Paradise in Mount Rainier NP, the group will take the Golden Gate Trail to the Skyline Trail and approach Panorama Point from the east. The National Park Service describes this route as "strenuous"; it is approxi-


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Mineral lands

From page 3

have held a public hearing on proposed changes to the laws governing the designation of mineral lands of long-term commercial significance. The changes alter the approval process from permit-based to one solely determined by the BoCC via the amendment of the comprehensive plan. Other revisions include setbacks from public preserves and exclusion of some sensitive areas such as important wetlands and critical aquifer areas. Find out more on the county's web site www.co.thurston.wa.us/planning/mineral_lands/mineral_lands_home.htm.

The Thurston County Planning Commission (TCPC) was scheduled to hold a public hearing in early May on its proposed revisions to the county code that regulates the permitting, siting, and operation of asphalt plants.

Under moratorium since 2003, the construction of new asphalt plants has been discussed by the TCPC for almost one year. BHAS supports stricter siting criteria for this industrial use, including large setbacks from sensitive areas and restrictions from rural areas that are not already served by industrial-compatible infrastructure (utilities and major roadways). See the county's web site www.co.thurston.wa.us/planning/asphalt/asphalt_home.htm for the most recent schedule of meetings on this subject. 

Field Trips

From page 10

mately 4 miles roundtrip in length, and includes a near 2000 foot elevation gain. Matt also intends to find Gray-crowned Rosy finch.

The trip will start early to beat the crowds up the hill and hopefully find ptarmigan before they are pushed away from the trails by the day's hikers. Participants should expect a brisk climb up and near singular focus on finding ptarmigan until everyone has their fill of the snow-shod *Lagopus*. Once the ptarmigan is in everyone's notebook, general alpine birding fun will ensue. Contact Matt at hoodedcrow3b@yahoo.com for more information.

Cost: Carpool teams will share the cost of park entrance.

August 26th, (Thursday, 6:30 to 8:30 pm) and August 28th (Saturday, 6:00 am to late afternoon).

**Field Trip: 2nd Annual BHAS Pelagic Experience
Leader: Matt Pike**

Matt Pike returns BHAS to the ocean with the first rate help of Westport Seabirds. Join Matt on Thursday evening for an introductory presentation on pelagic birding and Washington's pelagic species. Then join the magnificent team from Westport Seabirds (www.westportseabirds.com) aboard the Monte Carlo on Saturday for an action packed day at sea 40 miles due west of the mouth of Gray's Harbor. Space is limited. Contact Matt at hoodedcrow3b@yahoo.com for more information. Cost: \$140 (covers cost of trip and classroom).

September 19th, Sunday, 8 am to around noon

**Event: Patrick Sullivan Memorial Walk at Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge
Leader: Those of us who loved and admired Patrick Sullivan**

This will be the 4th annual Patrick Sullivan Memorial Walk. Nisqually is not at its most active at this time of year, but this is close to the anniversary of Patrick's death, and Patrick loved to bird at Nisqually. It is fitting then, that we gather together

in his memory, as we have in past years, to enjoy Nisqually NWR.

We will meet at the Visitor's Center overlook at 8:00 am, and amble through the refuge to enjoy the refuge and remember Patrick. Nisqually is wonderful at all times of the year. Call Kristin Stewart at 360-456-5098 if you have questions.

**September 25th, Saturday, 8 am - end of day.
Field Trip: Tokeland
Leader: Phil Kelley**

Meet at Mud Bay Park & Ride at 8:00 AM. We will carpool to Tokeland for large shorebirds and anything else of note in the area. In addition to Tokeland, home of the Marbled Godwits, we will stop at Midway Beach, Wash Away Beach, John's Landing, and Bottle Beach. Target birds are large shorebirds on fall migration but we will see passerines and small shorebirds as well.

Trip will last all day. Bring food, water and dress for weather. Call Phil Kelley at 360-459-1499 to reserve a spot.

**October 2nd, Saturday, 9am to 3pm
Event: Fall Bird Feeder Cleaning
at Wild Birds Unlimited**

Look for more information on the BHAS Web site....

**October 9th, Saturday, 7:00 a.m
until late afternoon
Field Trip: Ridgefield Wildlife
Refuge
Leader: Scott Morrison**

Ridgefield always holds a potential for unusual bird species. We'll begin with a walk on the trail at the Carty Unit and finish with the (mostly driving) tour of the River "S" Unit. White-breasted Nuthatch is regular and abundant waterfowl. We are likely to see good numbers of Sandhill Cranes, also. Red-shouldered Hawk has been recorded Ridgefield.

We are likely to see good numbers of Sandhill Cranes, also. Red-shouldered Hawk has been recorded Ridgefield.

Meet in the south parking lot of the Labor and Industries Building at 7:00 a.m. Trip is limited to three cars- 12 to 14 people. This is a fairly long day (~ 1.5 hours drive each way) so bring adequate food and beverage. Call Scott Morrison at (360) 412-1260 to reserve space. Please indicate whether you're willing to drive. 🚗



Birding in Earnest; February 2010 – March 2010

By Bill Shelmerdine

To reports sightings, call 866-9106 or send email to georn1@hotmail.com

The period was characterized by early spring arrivals such as **Rufous Hummingbirds**, and **Tree** and **Violet-green Swallows**. Also, **owls** became much more conspicuous, with an increase in calling noted in February. During the same period, a number of **Northern Pygmy Owl** sightings came from several locations around the Olympic Peninsula. Moving into March, local **grouse** detections were up with the first reports of drumming in the Olympics; **Sooty** and **Ruffed Grouse** were first noted during the third and fourth weeks of March respectively.

On 2/1 Bill Tweit reported a drake **Common Teal** on the Hawks Prairie Settling Ponds. Formally considered a “full” species, this is the Eurasian subspecies of the Green-winged Teal. Also on 2/1, Paul Hicks reported a female **Mountain Bluebird** from the Gibson Road area south of Tenino. The previous day, a dozen or so **Western Bluebirds** were seen at Theler Wetlands in Mason County and reported to Tweeters list serve.

On 2/9 a **Western Screech-Owl** was seen near the Highway 8/ 101 Junction by Katie Shelmerdine. Another was heard calling on Johnson Point Road the previous week. Reports of this species have been scarce in recent years. On 2/16 and again on 2/21, at least 2 **Northern Saw-whet Owls** were calling near our place off of Steamboat Island Road. Also a **Barn Owl** was calling overhead on 2/17. Another Barn Owl was reported from Steamboat Island Road near Highway 101 by Lonnie Sommer on 3/25.

Interestingly, resident **Anna’s Hummingbirds** were reported on nests in Kirkland by 2/20 (fide: Hans Littooy). This pre-dates the arrival of the summering Rufous Hummingbirds by a couple of weeks. The first **Rufous** in our area was reported from Nisqually on 3/10 by Phil Kelly.



By late February the first **Tree** and **Violet-green Swallows** of the year were reported from Nisqually by Shep Thorp.

On 3/5, Mel Atwater reported 5 **Evening Grosbeaks** in West Olympia, at Goldcrest. Many were along Nisqually Cut-off road by 3/20. This is another species that has declined in recent years.

On 3/6, Dave Hayden reported the first **Turkey Vultures** of the year in Thurston County. By 3/16, Turkey Vultures were showing up in numbers, with 2 at Steamboat Island Road and 7 to 8 in the Skokomish Valley.

On 3/16, Dave Hayden reported a vocal **Northern Goshawk** in Lewis County near Mayfield Dam. This is an elusive species anywhere on the Westside of the Cascades.

On 3/20, 2 **Sandhill Cranes** were reported from Nisqually, 3 to 4 **Eurasian Collared-Doves** were at Glacial Heritage Preserve, and 2 **Western Bluebirds** were defending a nest box at Mima Mounds.

The week of 3/22, Sue Danver reported the first of the year **Band-tailed Pigeons** near Capitol Forest. Formerly, at least, this was an occasionally wintering species; reports have been coming later in the season in recent years.

On 3/23, Dave Hayden reported a **Northern Pygmy Owl** in west Lewis County along King Road.

Reports from Nisqually by Phil Kelly and company on 3/25 included continuing **Northern Shrike**, **Great-horned Owl**, and **American Bittern**, as well as the first **Wood Ducks** and **Merlin** of the season.

Looking ahead: Passerine migration should be in full swing toward the end of April and throughout May. In addition, shorebird movements should be peaking around the last week of April and first week in May. Unlike the fall southbound migration, Spring brings the majority of birds in fresh alternate (breeding) plumage. The coast is a great place to be at this time; check out the Grays Harbor Shorebird Festival the weekend of April 30-May 2. And finally the first pelagic birding trips of the of the year will begin on May 1; check out Westport Seabirds on-line for a complete schedule of offshore boat trips out of Westport. 🦋

Field Trip Reports: Hood Canal, Early March

By Andrew Beélik

We started at Potlatch State Park, in ideal conditions: light overcast, no rain. We saw a good mix of ducks, three grebes, one loon.

In the two most recent seasons, we saw large flocks, approaching 300 individuals, of **Western Grebes** between the park and the Skokomish Delta. This time, we only saw two or three.

Once again, the small float anchored in front of a home just beyond the north limit of the park offered a special treat: a pair of **Red-breasted Mergansers** hopped onto it for rest and preening, giving all of us unhurried telescope times at 60X. Last year, we saw a male Harlequin duck on that float.

From the park, we hurried straight-away to the Hama Hama to reach it soon after the tide peaked. This was the best site of the day. We squeezed our three cars onto the small shoulder space at the start of the private road leading to the oyster beds of the Hama Hama Seafood Company (we parked there to avoid the suicidal dash across the south bridge). From here, and walking on the way down, we scanned the marshy inner delta. This access is a priceless privilege afforded us, year after year, by the Seafood Company.

We spotted **Green-winged Teal**, **Northern Pintails**, and one male **Eurasian Wigeon**; all new ducks for the day. A flock of **Brant geese**, and half the population of **Great Blue Herons** from the rookery across the highway, added variety. The prize of the day, a pair of **Harlequin ducks**, met us at the mouth of the river. The open canal waters were unusually calm, helping with long distance identification. We had hoped to see **Black Scoters**, but they did not show; just rafts of the other two scoters, and the **Greater Scaup**.

On the way south, in the inner Lilliwaup estuary, we got a good look at pairs of **Common Mergansers**. This increased our confidence in distinguishing between the females of these two species of mergansers.

Our final stop, at the Salmon Hatchery at Purdy, was a disappointment: no dippers. As a consolation, we

had close looks at four of their empty nests under the small bridge over the creek. The species-count for the day was 50, including 15 species of ducks.

Experimental Owl Prowl

Submitted by Kristin Stewart

Gary Wiles led 11 late-night birders into Capitol Forest in a first-ever attempt to hear or see owls on an organized evening BHAS field trip. Gary was, as usual, very well prepared, and had scouted out all the prospective stopping points along the way. Several participants who have spent time in Capitol Forest during the day commented that being there in the dark was a bit disorienting, and Gary ably led the way.

The night was absolutely gorgeous. It was quite cold, hovering near freezing, but totally clear. The stars were amazing, and had we an astronomer along we could easily have had great lessons on the stars.

The method used in this owling adventure was to stop, get out of vehicles as quietly as possible, and listen for owls for several minutes. Then we played a recording of an owl for a minute or so, and then listened again. We only tried for one owl species per stop. Three or four folks thought they heard a distance Great Horned Owl in Thurston County, but we were not sure. We heard no other owls in Thurston County.

But when we moved into Grays Harbor County we heard a **Northern Saw-whet Owl**, and at a later stop faintly heard both a **Barred Owl** and another **Saw-whet**. We heard them without having played a recording, and no birds responded to the recordings at all. We speculated that the Great Horned Owls were on eggs, or even had recent hatchlings, and so were not interested in calling. However a Great Horned Owl in my neighborhood in northeast Olympia was calling at 2:00 p.m. on March 22nd.

I would like to mention that the participants on this trip were amazingly quiet. There was no talking, and no shuffling of feet. It was impressive.

This trip was very popular, and we could easily have filled it a second time. And even though we saw no owls, we considered the trip a great success!

Gary plans to try this again next year. 🦉



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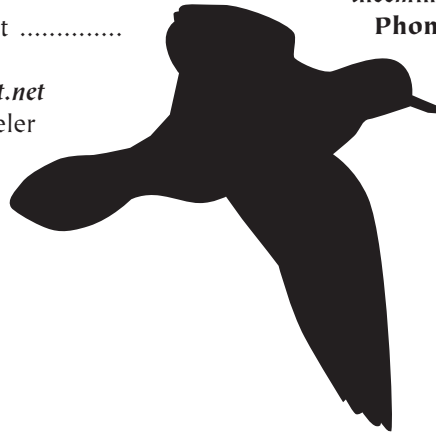
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Black Hills Audubon Society is a non-profit organization. A member chapter of the National Audubon Society, it represents Audubon members in Lewis, Mason and Thurston Counties.

Our goals are to maintain, restore and protect our ecosystems for future generations, and to promote environmental education and nature-based recreation.

Monthly program meetings are usually held at 7 p.m. on the third Thursday evening of each month, September through June, at the Capitol Museum Coach House, 211 West 21st Street, in Olympia.

Board meetings are usually at 5:30 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month. The site varies from month to month; please call the message phone number to inquire as to the location. Phone and e-mail messages are welcome, but please remember that we are a volunteer-based organization, and it may take us a few days to get back to you.

The Echo is published bi-monthly. Editor: Deb Jaqua. Layout and design by Lee Miller. Graphics by Nature Icons/Ultimate Symbol unless initialed.

Material for *The Echo* should be sent to PO Box 2524, Olympia, WA 98507, or e-mailed to Deb Jaqua at webdeb1@gmail.com. There will not be a July-August issue of *The Echo*. The next *Echo* will be the September-October issue, for which the deadline will be July 29th.

Black Hills Audubon Society (BHAS) Membership form

Type of Membership—check appropriate box

Member of Black Hills Audubon Society Chapter (BHAS) only

Singles or household

- \$20, regular member
- \$35, regular member for 2 years
- \$50, regular member for 3 years,
- \$15, senior or full-time student
- \$25, senior or full-time student for 2 years
- \$35, senior or full-time student for 3 years

Please make check payable to Black Hills Audubon Society.

All dues go to support local Black Hills Audubon chapter efforts.

Receive the chapter newsletter, *The Echo*, which describes local chapter conservation action, events, and field trips.

Member of Black Hills Audubon Society Chapter and National Audubon (both)

- \$20, first-time member price
- \$15, Senior or full-time student

Please make check payable to National Audubon Society.

Renewals: please renew your National Audubon Membership by filling out the forms sent to you by National and sending directly to National Audubon. Thanks!

Most of the dues go to support national efforts.

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Subscription only—receive the chapter newsletter, *The Echo* (does not include membership)

- \$10 chapter newsletter only

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Black Hills Audubon offers partial scholarship for a teen to attend bird-banding camp

Over the past 6 years, Puget Sound Bird Observatory has partnered with Seattle Audubon to offer a four-day four-night bird-banding camp for teens ages 15-18 years old. The location is in a primitive campground within Wenatchee National Forest. Teens learn the basics of net placement, extraction and handling, ageing, and sexing. A special emphasis is placed on the use of molt to age birds. The camp will be held August 2010 with exact dates still to be determined.

Black Hills Audubon is offering a partial scholarship in the amount of \$400 to help pay for the cost of attending the camp. The remainder of the cost, \$150, would need to be paid by the applicant. The scholarship is open to

any teen, ages 15-18, from Lewis, Mason, or Thurston County. No prior birding or banding experience is necessary. To apply, send a letter of interest, including two references, to: Black Hills Audubon Society c/o Banding Scholarship, PO Box 2524 Olympia, WA 98507.

The application deadline is June 30, 2010.

For more information on the camp, please see Seattle Audubon's website at: www.seattleaudubon.org. Click on "Environmental Education and High School Programs". For all other questions, please contact Tracey Scalici at trscalici@gmail.com. 🐦