

Echo



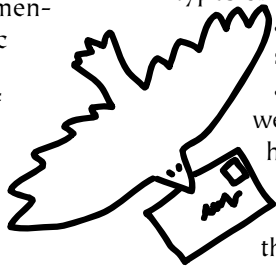
Olympia, Washington
Volume 2012, Number 4
September/October 2012

Thurston County Approves Updated Critical Areas Ordinance

By Donna J. Nickerson

The passage of the updated Critical Area Ordinance (CAO) on 24 July 2012 by the Board of County Commissioners was a long time coming, and is celebrated by many landowners, residents, and environmentalists as a success for maintaining our public health and quality of life in Thurston County. The CAO protects the functions and values of the County's critical areas, including riparian areas, prairies, and shorelines.

The final CAO was the result of a combination of good governance and strong leadership from the County Commissioners. This ensured a thorough and steady approach to the task that was crucial over the two and a half year public process. The County's Planning Department did everything just about right; from the focus on science as a guide and foundation, to sharing information and taking public input during the many public meetings, open houses,



public hearings and regular open meetings and work sessions of the planning commission. One helpful approach included having recognized scientists from state agencies with local experience in the different types of critical areas give a series of talks and be available for questions at planning commission meetings. County staff also maintained an open comment opportunity through their web site. In addition, after the July 2012 public hearing and close of the comment period, county staff posted a summary of the comments received at the hearing along with their official response to these comments.

The crux of the work on the revision and update on the CAO drafts (2005 and 2011) was done through a collaborative and interactive process between the planning commission and county staff. I attended several planning commission meetings over the course of

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Thursday, September 13 White Swans of Winter

Biologist Martha Jordan will present a slide program on Washington's native Trumpeter and Tundra swans. You will learn about their life history, biology, and some swan identification tips. She will shed some light on the problems and controversies these birds face on their wintering grounds and what is needed to insure their future. Get updated on the swan lead poisoning die-off, habitat issues and more. Martha will also show some excellent slides that help clarify the difficult identification of these swans.

BHAS Program Meetings are held on the second Thursday of the month at the First Christian Church meeting hall, 701 Franklin St. SE, in downtown Olympia. Arrive at 7:00 p.m. to socialize. Programs begin promptly at 7:30.

Thursday, October 11 Fishers on the Olympic Peninsula

It has now been four and a half years since the first wild-born, Canadian fishers began their new lives on the Olympic Peninsula. A total of 90 animals were released in Olympic National Park at such sites as Staircase, Whiskey Bend, Graves Creek, and Sol Duc. What has happened to the fishers since then? Olympic National Forest wildlife biologist Betsy Howell will show slides of the reintroduction project and discuss what has been learned since the effort began.

Critical Areas

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this process and was impressed with the ability of commissioners to openly debate on every issue, and particularly on the more controversial issues. On one occasion, I observed a commissioner who first began a discussion voicing strong concerns against a certain recommendation, move later to make a motion for the recommendation. This happened after an extended and open debate by those both for and against, and a sharing of science-based information that was prepared for the planning commission on the subject. The recommendation was approved by a large majority. It was an example of democracy at its best. Thurston County's extensive and consistently inclusive open process during the long update period can serve as an example for other counties.

The BHAS conservation committee began preparing for our participation in the CAO update process in 2009. We started by asking specialists to review the best available science documents and guidances since the 2005 CAO Draft, and to subsequently make recommendations for changes to the 2005 Draft CAO based on the review findings. The three reports were completed in 2010. We made our review results available to other public interest NGOs and the general public through our common networking and our BHAS website. We continued our work on the CAO, writing four comment letters over the course of the public comment period, reviewed two drafts of the CAO (the 2005 draft and the 2011 draft), and testified at the key public hearings in 2011 and 2012.

Some of the key improvements in the newly adopted CAO include:

- ▶ Increased protections for wetlands, freshwater, and marine riparian buffers. This will result in better water quality in our streams and in Puget Sound, and a healthier habitat for a broad diversity of wildlife. While the improved protections will not satisfy the "no net loss" standard of the CAO, they are based on sound science and good policy compromises that are supported by state and federal guidance documents. For marine areas, the County applied more protective buffer widths on the areas of high ecological importance, because this is the best way to protect ecological functions. These marine areas that are still intact include the County's Shoreline Master Plan designations of Natural and Conservancy. The

County has applied a more flexible buffer range to the County's more developed marine areas, which are of lower ecological importance.

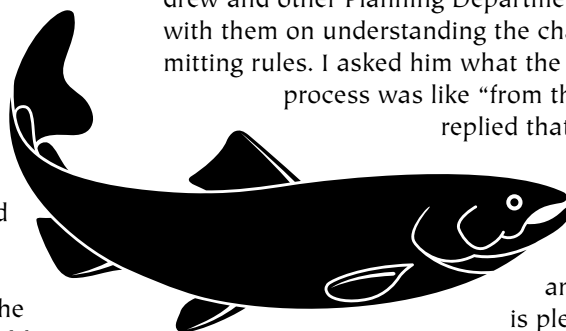
- ▶ The Prairie Ordinance is incorporated in the CAO.
- ▶ The Critical Area Recharge Areas for drinking water are protected under the precautionary approach. The County will continue to evaluate the reclaimed water discharge criteria under the objective of public safety.
- ▶ Fewer exemptions and clearer guidance for exemptions. For example, there is no longer a carte blanche 50% reduction of buffer area within the CAO. The exemptions are now considered on a site by site basis, with clear requirements for justification, and mitigation. In addition, clearing and grading is permitted along with an approved use, however it is limited to the minimum extent necessary in riparian habitat and other critical areas. And the proposed 5,000 sq. ft. exemption for building/altering in riparian areas in small lots is now lowered to a more reasonable 3,500 square feet.

BHAS members' many letters and attendance at the public workshops and hearings were essential in the success of this process. We thank you for your public advocacy. And for those who have the opportunity and good fortune to live along these critical areas, thank you for your good stewardship of these lands.

Finally, a cadre of professional and committed county staff played a critical role in the successful update of this CAO. The lead staff on this effort was Andrew Deffobis, who remained quietly confident throughout the process. His next step is to pass the baton to the Resource Stewardship Department staff, who will be implementing the new rules. Andrew and other Planning Department staff will work with them on understanding the changes in the permitting rules. I asked him what the long CAO update process was like "from the inside." He replied that he has learned a lot, and that it has been a long process but a good one and an open one. He is pleased to see it complete and recognizes that it is a major undertaking for any jurisdiction.

BHAS congratulates and thanks the many individuals, committees, commissions, and the public who

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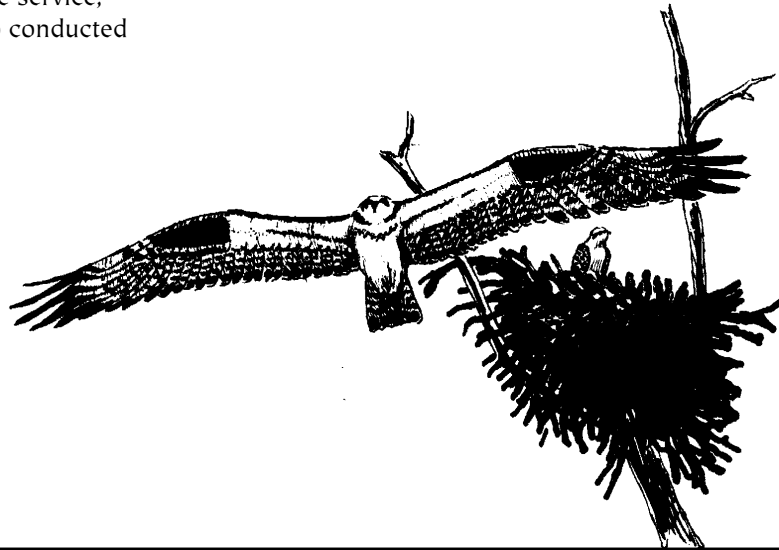


Andrew Beelik

Andrew Beelik, a BHAS stalwart for decades, passed away in July at the age of 87. Andrew was a long-time field trip leader for BHAS, focusing on Mason County where he lived for over 55 years. He generously shared his wonderful mind, gracious manner, and marvelous birding skills. For many years he organized trips to Hood Canal aboard Mason County Transit buses. Interestingly, most of the participants on those many trips, which filled two buses on subsequent weekends, were not BHAS members, but simply Mason County residents. In the last few years, when Mason County Transit could no longer provide service, Andrew's trips were still filled. He also conducted

bird surveys in Mason County, and kept BHAS apprised of opportunities for helping preserve important environmental areas and birding locations in Mason County. Andrew was born in 1924 in the village of Aslo'-Valy, Czechoslovakia. He grew up in the turmoil of World War II, found safety in Canada, and eventually came to Shelton in 1955. He was a true old world gentleman, very articulate and intelligent, and a true pleasure to know. We will all miss him.

Andrew's full obituary can be found on the BHAS website: blackhills-audubon.org. 🦅



Critical Areas

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comprise this jurisdiction of Thurston County for greatly improving the protection for our ecosystems. The new rules in the CAO will benefit both individual landowners and the public. Studies have shown that protecting critical areas with healthy riparian buffers increases the property values of those lands. Healthy buffers stabilize slopes, filter pollutants, and help prevent flooding. These are functions that are essential for public health and well-being, and for our local economy. With the passage of the updated CAO rules that promote stewardship of private lands, the County has made a sound investment towards the sustainability of our community today and for future generations to come. 🦅

Thurston County's Critical Areas webpage is at: www.co.thurston.wa.us/planning/critical_areas/criticalareas_home.htm

Malheur, Anyone?

Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in southeastern Oregon is one of the most celebrated birding hotspots in the Pacific Northwest. Over 320 species of birds and 58 mammals have been observed there. Its abundant water and mix of habitats make it an essential stop for birds - and birders - on the Pacific Flyway.

A BHAS member has proposed a guided field trip to Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. We are trying to determine if BHAS members are in fact interested in a group trip. April and May are the most auspicious times at Malheur for diversity and numbers of birds. The weather is a matter of luck, of course; it can be cold and rainy, even snowy. There are accommodations in or nearby the refuge. We would try to keep costs as low as possible for all participants.

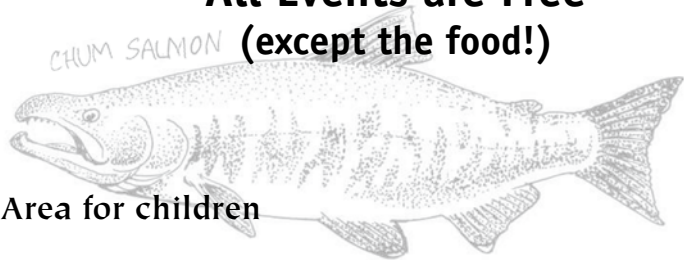
Interested? Willing to commit? If so, contact Bonnie Wood at bwood2800@gmail.com. 🦅

You are invited to the 25th Annual
Nisqually Watershed Festival!

Great Fun for the Whole Family:

- ▶ Music and Live Animal Presentations
- ▶ Tours and Guided Walks throughout the day
- ▶ Great educational displays from around the area
- ▶ Fin, the Wild Olympic Salmon
- ▶ Red Salmon tent, storytelling, and critters parades
- ▶ Marine touch tank
- ▶ Check out the Nature Explore Area for children
- ▶ *And of course, yummy food!*

**Saturday,
September 29
at Nisqually NWR
from 10 am-4 pm
All Events are Free
(except the food!)**



Join us and celebrate the cultural, economic, and natural resources of the Nisqually Watershed!

For more information, go to www.nisquallyriver.org or call (360)753-9467

Beginning Birding—Fall Class Begins in October

This course, taught by ecologist Robin Shoal, will provide an introduction to birding with an emphasis on developing bird identification skills. Other topics will include a review of birding tools including binoculars and field guides, an introduction to birding terminology, and some discussion of basic bird biology and behavior as they relate to identification. The course is designed primarily for beginning birders but should be useful for many mid-level birders as well.

The class is comprised of five classes and two field trips. Classes will be held Tuesday evenings from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Class dates are October 16, 23, and 30, and November 6 and 13. Field trip dates will be determined at the first class. Class location is the Coach House behind the State Capitol Museum on 22nd Ave in Olympia. The cost is \$60.00. Some scholarships are available.

Register by calling Deb Nickerson at 754-5397 or emailing at debranick@gmail.com. Class size is limited to 28 persons. 🐦

Annual BHAS Hospitality Planning Meeting

Please join us on Thursday, September 27th from 6:30 to 8:00 P.M. to plan hospitality for upcoming Audubon events. Topics include:

- ▶ Monthly program meetings
- ▶ Christmas Bird Count dinner
- ▶ Annual Dinner and Auction
- ▶ Coordination for "First Saturday Birds and Breakfast" in Lewis, Mason, Thurston Counties

For more information contact Leslie Lynam at 360-402-9513 or Deb Nickerson at 360-754-5397. 🐦

BHAS Calendar

See the Field Trips and Events on pages 4-5 for details

September

September 7-9, Friday-Sunday – *Event: Puget Sound Bird Fest*
(Edmonds, WA)

September 8, Saturday – *Event: Third Annual Chelan Ridge Hawk Migration Festival* (Pateros, WA)

September 13, Thursday – *Event: BHAS Monthly Meeting – White Swans of Winter*

September 14, Friday – *Field Trip: Swifts at Joint Base Lewis McChord*

October

October 6, Saturday – *Field Trip: BHAS Birding & Breakfast at Theler Wetlands* (Belfair, WA)

October 6, Saturday – *Field Trip: Mt. Rainier – Paradise*

October 11, Thursday – *Event: BHAS Monthly Meeting – Fishers on the Olympic Peninsula*

October 13-14, Friday-Sunday – *Event: Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge Bird Fest* (Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge, SW WA)

October 20, Saturday – *Field Trip: Millersylvania Mushroom Foray*

November and beyond...

November 8, Thursday – *Event: BHAS Monthly Meeting – TBA*

November 10, Saturday – *Field Trip: Birding in Kitsap and Jefferson Counties*

December 13, Thursday – *Event: BHAS Monthly Meeting – TBA*

December 15, Saturday – *Field Trip: Birding in Port Townsend and vicinity*

Field Trips and Events

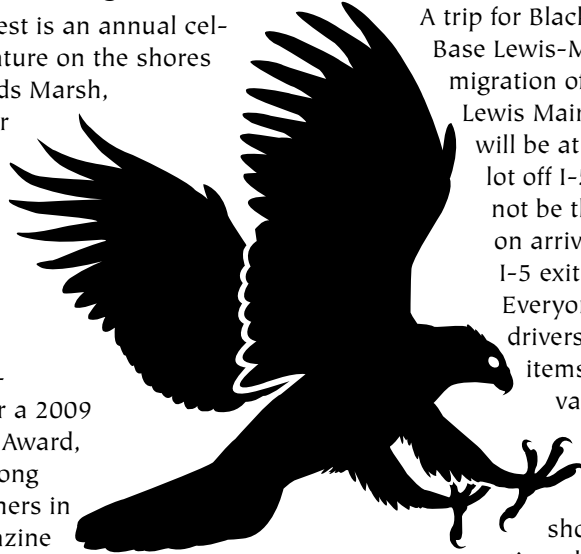
September

September 7-9, Friday-Sunday

Event: Puget Sound Bird Fest 2012

Location: Edmonds, Washington

The Puget Sound Bird Fest is an annual celebration of birds and nature on the shores of Puget Sound, Edmonds Marsh, and other locations near Edmonds, Washington. In addition to guided field walks, kids' activities, exhibits, and more, this year's keynote speaker will be Paul Bannick. His book, *The Owl and the Woodpecker*, was a finalist for a 2009 Washington State Book Award, and he finished first among professional photographers in the 2011 Audubon Magazine Photography Award category "Birds and Their Habitat" for his photograph of a Northern Pygmy Owl. See www.pugetsoundbird-fest.org for details.



September 8, Saturday, 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Event: Visiting with Raptors: Third Annual Chelan Ridge Hawk Migration Festival

Location: Pateros, Washington

Join the Methow Valley Ranger District, North Central Washington Audubon Society, and Hawk-Watch International this fall for the third Chelan Ridge Hawk Migration Festival! This family event combines free activities in Pateros with trips to the Chelan Ridge site to learn about and celebrate raptors as they journey to winter territories. This festival is scheduled to coincide with the peak of southbound migration of raptors at Chelan Ridge – the best place in Washington to view fall migrating raptors. Reservations and information for field trips and the shuttle from Pateros to Chelan Ridge can be found on North Central Washington Audubon Society's website, ncwaudubon.org.

September 13, Thursday, 7:00 p.m.

Event: BHAS Monthly Meeting—

White Swans of Winter

First Christian Church Meeting Hall,

701 Franklin St. SE, in downtown Olympia

September 14, Friday, 5:30 p.m.

Field Trip: Swifts at

Joint Base Lewis McChord

Leader: Valerie Elliott

A trip for Black Hills Audubon members to Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM) to view the fall migration of Vaux's swifts at a chimney on Lewis Main. Limit is 3 vehicles. Meeting point will be at the Martin Way Park and Ride lot off I-5 exit 109 at 5:30 pm. Leader will not be there. The 3 vehicles should plan on arriving at the JBLM Visitor Center off I-5 exit 120 at 6 pm to meet the leader. Everyone must wear a seatbelt. The car drivers will need to have the following items with them at the Visitor's Center: valid driver's license, valid insurance card, and valid and signed vehicle registration. All others will need a valid photo ID. If participants show up without the proper information, they will be left behind. Trip will last until sunset (dusk) or sooner if the swifts roost early. Trip entails no walking. Bringing a chair is recommended. Cameras and video are welcomed. Contact Valerie Elliott (253-966-6450 weekdays at work) for vehicle and passenger sign-up.

October

October 6, Saturday, 7:45 am

Field Trip: Birding & Breakfast at Theler Wetlands (Belfair, WA)

Leaders: Norma and Allan Borden

Meet us for birding at Theler Wetlands (at 22871 NE State Route 3, Belfair, WA 98528), followed by breakfast at 9:45 am at a to-be-determined location. Come for birding, breakfast or both. We are mostly beginners sharing skills with other beginners, although all birders are welcome. To learn more, including what coffee shop we'll meet at, contact Norma or Allan Borden at 360 426-1051.

October 6, Saturday, 8:00 a.m. to late afternoon

Field Trip: Mt. Rainier - Paradise

Leaders: Lonnie Somer and Dave Hayden

Join us for this fall trek starting at Paradise and going up the Golden Gate Trail to Skyline Trail and the snowline. On this hike in October 2011, we encountered several White-tailed Ptarmigan

in partial winter plumage, Gray-crowned Rosy Finch, Sooty Grouse, American Pipit, foxes, black bear, marmots, and more. This trip is somewhat strenuous and involves a fair amount of elevation gain. Wear sturdy shoes or hiking boots. Mountain weather can change rapidly, so be prepared for all eventualities: bring rain gear, warm clothes, etc. Bring food and water for the day. Meet at the Mud Bay Park & Ride at 8:00 a.m. This trip is limited to 12 participants and three vehicles. This trip will depend on the weather. To reserve a spot, e-mail Lonnie Somer at wheelermombi@comcast.net.

October 11, Thursday, 7:00 p.m.
Event: BHAS Monthly Meeting –
Fishers on the Olympic Peninsula
First Christian Church Meeting Hall, 701
Franklin St. SE, in downtown Olympia

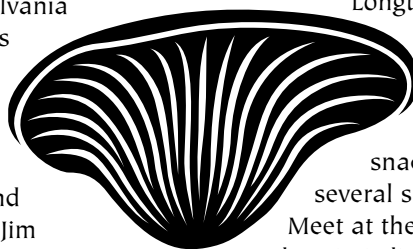
October 13-14, Friday-Sunday
Event: 2012 Ridgefield National Wildlife
Refuge Bird Fest
Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge,
Washington

It's worth the trip to the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge, about 90 minutes south of Olympia. Walk on Audubon-led bird and plant tours. Reserve a spot on a tour to view Sandhill Cranes flying. Kayak on a guided paddle tour. Shop at a birders' marketplace. Visit an authentic replica of a plankhouse and see demonstrations of Native American lives. Sample salmon at a traditional salmon bake. Watch your children have fun for free while learning about nature at craft stations, the storytelling tent, and Audubon children's walks. See www.ridgefieldfriends.org for details and a full schedule of events.

October 20, Saturday, 9:00 a.m. to
early afternoon
Field Trip: Millersylvania Mushroom Foray
Leader: Jim Pruske

(Note: the date for this trip is tentative and may be sooner or later in the month, depending on the wetness of the season and auspicious conditions for mushrooms.)

Always a popular trip, the Millersylvania Mushroom Foray helps participants learn to identify many of the more common mushroom species associated with Pacific Northwest conifer and deciduous forests. With luck, chanterelles, boletes, and other edible species will be found. Jim Pruske will discuss the ecological value of fungi in the overall health of a forest. Be prepared to walk through damp undergrowth and kneel on



wet ground. Bring lunch and water. Bring a basket if you plan to take any specimens home. Plan to look for forest birds and amphibians as well. Meet at the Martin Way Park & Ride at 9:00 a.m. to car-pool. Bring a Discover Pass if you have one. This trip is limited to five cars. Contact Jim Pruske at 360-459-3655 or the BHAS office line at 360-352-7299 to register.

November and beyond

November 10, Saturday, 7:00 a.m. to
late afternoon

Field Trip: Birding on Kitsap and
Jefferson Counties
Leaders: Phil Kelley and Ruth Sullivan

Crossing the Narrows Bridge with Port Townsend as the final destination, the day's emphasis will be water birds arriving for the winter. Several stops along the way include Marrowstone Island and Fort Flagler. In addition to waterfowl and other birds, this trip offers lovely views of Hood Canal, Admiralty Inlet, and the Strait of Juan de Fuca. There will be a little walking over easy terrain. Dress for any possible weather - it is late autumn in the Pacific Northwest. Bring food and drinks. Meet at the Martin Way Park & Ride at 7:00 a.m. or the Sixth Avenue Park & Ride in Tacoma at 7:30 a.m. This trip is limited to four cars. To register, contact Phil Kelley at 360-459-1499 or Scrubjay323@aol.com; or Ruth Sullivan at 253-564-7419.

December 15, Saturday 8:00 a.m. to late
afternoon

Field Trip: Birding in Port Townsend
and vicinity
Leader: Lonnie Somer

This is a great opportunity for beginning birders to see some of the harder-to-find special birds of the Pacific Northwest. Stops will include Fort Worden, Point Hudson, Mystery Bay, and Fort Flagler State Parks, as well as Kah Tai Lagoon. We may see Ancient and Marbled Murrelet, Rhinoceros Auklet, Pigeon Guillemot, Black Oystercatcher, Loons (including possibly Yellow-bellied Loon), Brant,

Longtailed Harlequin and Ruddy Duck, and eight or more species of shorebirds.

It may be rainy, windy, and cold, so wear appropriate winter-weather clothing and rain gear. Bring water, snacks, and lunch, too. The trip will be several stops with short walks on level ground. Meet at the Mud Bay Park & Ride at 8:00 a.m. The trip is limited to 12 participants and three vehicles. To reserve a spot, e-mail Lonnie Somer at wheelermombi@comcast.net. 🦋

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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 second Thursday evening of each month, September through June, at the First Christian Church's Hall at 701 Franklin Street in downtown Olympia (between 7th and 8th Avenues).

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: Robin Shoal. Layout and design by Lee Miller. Graphics by Nature Icons/Ultimate Symbol unless otherwise identified. Titmouse above by Kirsten Munson; osprey on page 3 by Steven D'Amato.

Material for *The Echo* should be sent to PO Box 2524, Olympia, WA 98507, or e-mailed to Robin Shoal at rzshoal@gmail.com. The next *Echo* will be the November/December 2012 issue, the deadline for which is October 2. 🐾

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.

Receive the award-winning national magazine, *Audubon*, and the chapter newsletter, *The Echo*.

Chapter: C 9 Z Y12 0 Z

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

- \$10 chapter newsletter only

Please make check payable to Black Hills Audubon Society.

Receive the chapter newsletter, *The Echo*

- I would like to help Black Hills Audubon's programs of education and conservation. Enclosed is my additional donation of \$_____

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

Name: _____

Address: _____ City/State/zip _____

Phone/Email _____

My check for \$_____ is enclosed.

Please fill out this form and mail it with your check to the appropriate address:

Black Hills Audubon Society is a 501(C)3 organization. Contributions are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Membership
Black Hills Audubon Society
PO Box 2524
Olympia WA 98507

Membership
National Audubon Society
225 Varick Street, 7th floor
New York, NY 10014


Thank you for supporting the Black Hills Audubon Society!





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BHAS Field Trip Guidelines

- ▶ Plan to arrive 10-15 minutes before the designated departure time.
- ▶ Expect to carpool and bring cash for carpooling costs. The customary amount is 25 cents per mile to be divided by the passengers in each car. We carpool because in many cases, field trips travel to places where roads are narrow, or parking may be an issue. Additionally, we want to conserve resources as much as possible.
- ▶ Pets are not allowed on field trips. Please do not wear perfume or other scents as some participants may be very sensitive to them. Also, scents are frequently attractive to insects.
- ▶ Dress in layers and always be prepared for any weather possibility. Field trips in the northwest often take place in rainy, windy, and/or cold conditions. Field trips are not cancelled unless safety is a concern.
- ▶ Bring binoculars, field guides, and also lunch, drinks, snacks, etc, especially for trips that extend past midday.
- ▶ If you have them, bring spotting scopes, walkie talkies, and any park passes such as Golden Age or Golden Eagle. As of July 2011, there is a mandatory Discover Pass requirement for all state owned/managed recreation lands and parks. Please see the link on the Black Hills Audubon website for more information on the Discover Pass.
- ▶ As with most organizations, Black Hills Audubon is now asking field trip participants to sign a release of liability form (that includes emergency contact information) before departure. You may view the form on our website at www.blackhills-audubon.org/fieldtrips-events.htm. 