

Black Hills Audubon Society

Olympia, Washington

Volume 2011,
Number 3

July/August 2011



New Date and Location for BHAS Monthly Programs

Starting in September, BHAS monthly program meetings move to a new date and location. Program meetings will be held on the 2nd Thursday of each month at First Christian Church's Hall, located at 701 Franklin Street in downtown Olympia. There is ample street parking, as well as spaces available across the street at the printer's shop. We are making this move to more comfortably accommodate the number of people attending our monthly program meetings.

There are no monthly programs scheduled for July and

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August. Enjoy your summer! We look forward to seeing you all at the new meeting space on September 8th. Arrive at 7:00 pm to socialize – the program will begin promptly at 7:30. The meeting's program topic will be announced in the September-October edition of the *Echo*. 🐦

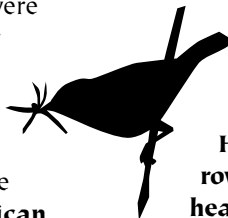
Sue and Kristin's Birdathon Day

by Sue Danver

Editor's note: Long-time Auduboners Sue Danver and Kristin Stewart joined forces for a marathon Birdathon day during the BHAS Birdathon event in May. At day's end they had tallied an impressive 78 species. Here is an abbreviated version of their day's experiences.

After a long stretch of dreary gray and rainy weather, on May 19 Sue Danver and Kristin Stewart were greeted with an absolutely clear sky for their Birdathon day.

Before Kristin arrived at Sue's at 6:00 am, we each began the day's count by listening to the morning chorus. Between them, we heard or saw **Rufous Hummingbird, American Robins, Pacific Wren, Spotted Towhee, Wilson's Warbler, Chestnut backed Chickadee, American Crow, Song Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Canada Goose, Violet-green Swallow, Steller's Jay, Rock Pigeon, Pacific-slope Flycatcher, Black-capped Chickadee, Dark-eyed Junco, Western Tanager,**



Pine Siskin, Evening Grosbeak and Western Tanager. The usually reliable Band-tailed Pigeons were a disappointing no-show.

We started out near Capitol Forest, to get our first uncommon Thurston County bird, the **Gray Jay**. It was awfully quiet, bird-wise, for an early May morning. The 37° air temperature may have contributed to the low level of activity. Moments later, we heard the relatively bland call of a **Hutton's vireo**.

Our first stop was on the Delphi S curves south of Waddell Creek Road. There we observed **Red-tailed Hawk, American Goldfinch, White-crowned Sparrow, Purple Finch, Red-winged Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird,** and the first of the day's many **Barn Swallows** and **European Starlings**.

Next we headed to where 110th SW crosses the Black River, where we encountered **Yellow Warblers** and **Marsh Wren**.

Continued on next page

Birdathon day

From previous page

Then we were off to Glacier Heritage Prairie, where we had been granted permission to bird. On our hike to the local Osprey nest, where we saw two **Ospreys**, we heard **Western Meadowlarks** and saw a male **Western Bluebird** and a **Northern Rough-winged Swallow**. We were looking at a wood duck nest box when an **American Kestrel** flew into it. We saw **Chipping Sparrows** and **Savannah Sparrows**, and heard a **Hammond's Flycatcher** and a **Golden-crowned Kinglet**, and a **Red-breasted Nuthatch**. We scanned for other raptors and for woodpeckers, but no luck. Fortunately the day was warming up.

On a south entrance to Capitol Forest, we saw a **Mourning Dove** (43). At North Creek we found the resident **American Dippers**, and heard **Varied Thrush**. Along a dry gravel road we heard the downward trill of the **Orange-crowned Warbler**. Then we headed off to Nisqually Wildlife Refuge.

High tide had been at 6:30 a.m., and we'd thought we would get to the Refuge at mid-tide. However, it was a significant low tide, around a minus 3.1, which limited our birdwatching opportunities from the new boardwalk.

There were **Cliff Swallow** at the visitor Center, a female **Hooded Merganser** with over ten ducklings, and a male **Wood Duck**. On the refuge we also heard **Swainson's Thrush** and tallied the **Mallard** as well as a few lingering winter ducks: **Gadwall**, **American Widgeon**, **Northern Shoveler**, **Northern Pintail**, and **Bufflehead**. A pair of **Wilson's Phalarope** spinning around in the water. We saw the expected **Bald Eagle**, **Killdeer**, **American coot**, **Glaucous-winged Gull**, and **Great Blue Heron**. A lone **Yellowlegs** waded in MacAllister Creek and a flock of late migrating **Ring-billed Gulls** rested on its bank. Along the Nisqually River we heard **House Finch**, **Cedar Waxwings**, **Common Yellowthroat**, and several **Flickers**.

We headed back to town. Near the water tower in East Olympia, we saw **Scrub Jays**, **English Sparrows** and **Yellow-rumped Warblers**. We watched a **Purple Martin** leave its nest box near the Port of Olympia. We observed **Caspian Terns**, **Double-crested Cormorant**, and a male **Common Merganser** at North Point.

Early in the evening, Sue and Kristin returned to their respective homes, their yards both still empty of Band-tailed Pigeons. Sue heard a **Raven** call from Capitol Forest and Kristin heard the drumming of a **Pileated Woodpecker**. On her way to Littlerock in the evening, Sue saw about 10 **Turkey Vultures** that were circling near Quality Rock Products on the Black River.

Too late in the day to include the additional stops, we learned where Barred, Barn Owls, and American Bittern had been recently observed. We missed several relatively common species, including Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers. Surprises and misses do make a Birdathon fun. We had a great time. Next year, we will scout and plan a bit more with the intention of surpassing this year's total.

Thanks ever so much to the folks who pledged for our birdathon day. Your support gave us added incentive to search for more species. By the way— if you ever see a Smew, please call Kristin or Sue, or any birder for that matter. 🦋

BHAS May 2011 Birdathon

This year's Birdathon was a great success, with a record high total of pledges recorded. Based on preliminary numbers, \$3600 was raised in support of Black Hills Audubon Society. Outstanding pledges can still be sent to Birdathon Coordinator Sheila McCartan at 1909 Lakemoor Place, Olympia, WA 98512. Final numbers will be presented in the September-October *Echo*. 🦋

Birding in Earnest is taking the Summer off. Look for Bill's feature, times two, in the September/October *Echo*.



BHAS Calendar

July 2011

July 30, Saturday – Field Trip: Mt Rainier (probably Paradise).
7:00 am to late afternoon.

August

No BHAS events – have a great summer!

September

September 8, Thursday – Monthly Program Meeting at the First Christian Church Meeting Hall, 107 S. Franklin Street in downtown Olympia. Doors open at 7:00 pm, program begins at 7:30.

September 10, Saturday – Field Trip: Ocean Shores.
7:00 am to late afternoon.

Nisqually Summer Programs

Every summer, The Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge hosts an excellent series of weekend programs. Go to the Refuge's website, www.fws.gov/nisqually, for more information and a complete schedule of weekend programs and naturalist-led wildlife walks.

Field Trips and Events

July

July 30, Saturday, 7:00 am to late afternoon
Field Trip: Mt Rainier—probably Paradise
Leader: Kristin Stewart

This is our annual trek to do very casual high-elevation birding while enjoying the wildflowers. We almost always go to Paradise, but in the event of rainy weather there, Sunrise is another option. In spite of the casual nature of the trip, it does involve a fair amount of elevation gain, and participants should wear sturdy shoes or boots for hiking. Also, weather on any mountain can change rapidly so be prepared for all eventualities, including rain gear, sunscreen, etc. Bring food and water for the day. Contact Kristin at 360-456-5098 or kristinstewart01@comcast.net.

August

There are no field trips or other BHAS events scheduled for August. We look forward to seeing you on Thursday, September 8, when our monthly programs resume at their new location (see next entry). Enjoy your summer!

September

September 8, Thursday, 7:30 pm
Monthly Program Meeting

Our first monthly program meeting at our *new meeting location*—the Meeting Hall at the First Christian Church, 701 Franklin Street in downtown Olympia. Arrive at 7:00 pm to socialize and find a seat. The program will begin promptly at 7:30.

Program topic will be announced in the September-October edition of the *Echo*.

September 10, Saturday, 7:00 am to late afternoon
Field Trip: Ocean Shores
Leaders: Ruth Sullivan and Lonnie Somer

Our first stop is Bowerman Basin, to see the many gulls and ducks utilizing the Hoquiam sewage ponds, and to look for warblers and other passerines in the great habitat adjacent to the ponds.

We will then go on to Ocean Shores Game Range where the focus will be on shorebirds. There will be migrating shorebirds, those arriving for the winter, and hopefully a rarity or two. Last year a Lesser Sand Plover was located in this area, and we will spend some time walking in this large area. We should find dowitchers, and peeps; and hope

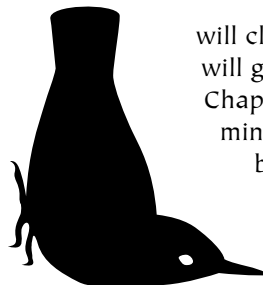
for a Stilt Sandpiper, Red-necked Phalaropes, a Semipalmated Sandpiper, or a Ruff. We will also look at the jetty, hoping for rockbirds such as Wandering Tattler, Surfbird, Black Turnstone, and possibly a Ruddy Turnstone. We will check the water near what is left of Damon Point for loons, grebes, and scoters. There is also the possibility of seeing raptors, including Northern Harrier and Peregrine Falcon. Ocean Shores is a huge area, covered mostly on foot. Wear sturdy shoes or boots, bring rain gear, and dress for windy weather. Bring lunch, drinks and snacks. Meet at the Mud Bay Park and Ride ready to depart at 7:00 am. There will be a limit of 4 cars. Contact Lonnie at wheelermombi@comcast.net. 🦋



Rosemary Bell®

Ongoing Bird Feeder Cleaning Benefits BHAS

At any time of the year, take your bird feeder to Dave, the manager of Wild Birds Unlimited on Cooper Point Road. WBU



will clean the feeder, and \$2 of the \$6 charge will go to the Black Hills Audubon Society Chapter. Keeping your feeders clean will minimize the risk of disease, and help keep birds healthy. We appreciate Wild Birds Unlimited's partnership in our work to protect birds and their habitats and promote local birding. 🦋

Artist Dennis Lyon wins BHAS Logo Contest

Black Hills Audubon Society would like to thank all of the artists who submitted entries for a new BHAS logo in our recent Logo Contest. Each of the 19 designs we received was quite well done; the great care and skill that went into each design was evident. This was an unexpectedly difficult decision for the BHAS Board, and was the reason it took longer than we anticipated.

After long deliberation, the Black Hills

Audubon Board chose a design submitted by local artist Dennis Lyon as the winning design. It will be incorporated into the BHAS web site, the *Echo*, the brochure, and apparel over the next few months. Congratulations Dennis!! For your efforts, you will receive a lifetime membership to Black Hills Audubon Society and a vest or sweatshirt with the new

BHAS logo!! 🦅



Reminders About Your Membership

- If you are a National Audubon Society (NAS) member, you do not need a separate Black Hills Audubon Society (BHAS) Chapter membership: your chapter membership is included in your NAS membership.
- If you wonder when your membership is up for renewal, check the label on your ECHO. Above your name, you should see a number such as 201209. This means your membership expires in September 2012. National Audubon members should renew through NAS which often offers special promotional rates.
- BHAS gives you a grace period of 6 months after your renewal date. You will receive the ECHO and other mailings during this period.
- BHAS only sends renewal notices to those who are chapter-only members.
- If you and your spouse or partner reside in the same household, you do not need two individual memberships, for either NAS or BHAS.

If you have any questions about your membership, please feel free to contact Margery Beeler (Membership Chair); (360)352-5437; mwampcat@aol.com. 🦅

bird haiku

Red Robin proclaims
Spring has arrived! It is true!
Now get out of bed!

Majestically still
Heron waits for witless fish
Strike is quick and sure.

Hummingbird feeder
A full but lonely vessel
Honeysuckle blooms!

Owlets soft and warm
high above the eager crowds
stare with widened eyes.



—ML
May 2011

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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 First Christian Church's Hall, located at 701 Franklin Street in downtown 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: Robin Shoal. Layout and design by Lee Miller. Graphics by Nature Icons/Ultimate Symbol unless otherwise identified. Hummingbird above by Kirsten Munson.

Material for *The Echo* should be sent to PO Box 2524, Olympia, WA 98507, or e-mailed to Robin Shoal at rzshoal@comcast.net. The next *Echo* will be the September/October 2011 issue, the deadline for which is August 5. 🐦

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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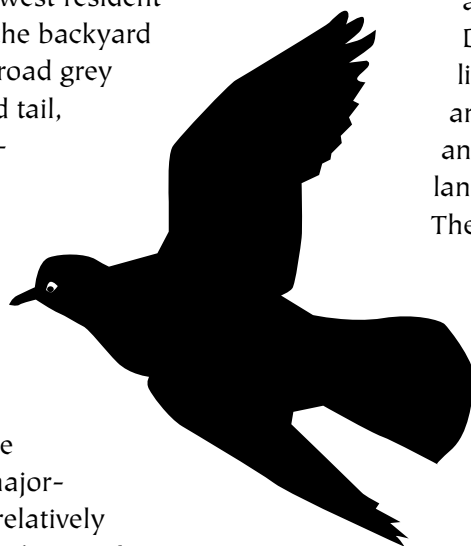
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The Occasional Bird— **Band-tailed Pigeon**

With its bright yellow feet and sometimes ungainly manner, this Pacific Northwest resident is the ultimate “big bird” at the backyard bird feeder. Named for the broad grey band on its wide, fan-shaped tail, *Patagioenas fasciata* is a flocking species, usually moving in groups of four or five to several dozen. Their loud wingbeats announce their arrival. Hearty eaters, Band-tailed Pigeons rival the Evening Grosbeaks in their ability to rapidly deplete recently filled feeders. The majority of the plumage on these relatively large birds is several shades of grey. Their

heads are purplish-pink; their bills yellow with a black tip. Adults have a white crescent around the nape of the neck, with a greenish metallic patch below. Band-tailed pigeons are uniform in appearance, unlike the highly variable Rock Dove (the familiar city pigeon). Also unlike the Rock Dove, Band-tailed Pigeons are generally rural or at most suburban, and are associated with trees and woodlands rather than bridges and buildings. The call of the Band-tailed Pigeon is a low-pitched *whoo-whoo* (sometimes called “owl-like”); members of a flock will natter among themselves as they vie for position on a crowded feeder. Despite their voracious appetites, these stately birds are a welcome addition to a bird-watcher’s list of backyard visitors. 🐦



LM

—RZS