

Black Hills Audubon Society

Olympia, Washington

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January/February 2007



Sightings from the President

On December 2nd our State Audubon office celebrated their 25th anniversary with full attendance by Chapter leader's and dignitaries. John Flicker, President of National Audubon, was our featured speaker and talked about how old and how large our grass roots are. As a nationwide organization that is supported by almost every state in our country, and the many Chapters in each state, together, makes us very strong.

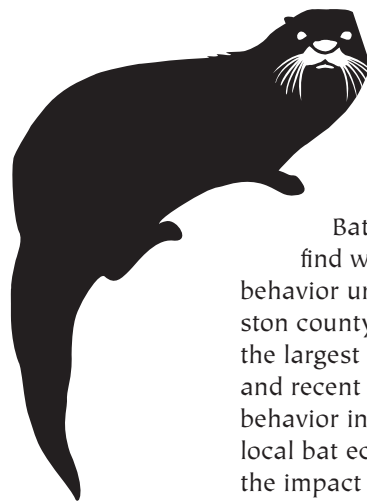
I feel very appreciative to be involved in the work Audubon does and hope that 2007 gives us more opportunity to gain additional strength to accomplish more good work for Mother Earth and all Her creatures. Our own Chapter must continue to be strong and help support the viability of our State office and on to our National success.

I encourage our members to stay in touch in 2007, to support our many programs with your attendance and be active volunteers in all our needs to the best of your capacities. We have a twelve-member board that is enthusiastic, talented and very busy carrying out our work. This is no easy task and the board deserves much credit, both as individuals and as a team. Thanks to all of you for the work of 2006.

So let us go forward this year with the momentum of our own 34 years of history behind our Chapter, the 25 years of State legislative and policy work and over 102 years Nationwide. WOW, what accomplishments, what hope. 🦉

Thursday, Jan. 18 Sea Otter Recovery in Washington

Harriet Allen, program manager for Endangered Species for the Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, will give a historical overview of our small population of sea otters off the northwestern coast of our state, and update us on issues related to their recovery. This is one of our lesser-known endangered species and should be a fascinating presentation, given by an expert.



Thursday, Feb 15 Bats, a lesser- known endan- gered species

Bats are highly adaptive mammals that find ways to use an area's resources with behavior unique to that ecosystem. Here in Thurston county the Woodard Bay NRCA is home to the largest known bat colony in Washington state, and recent research has revealed some unusual behavior in this colony. The presentation will cover local bat ecology including winter records and the impact of development. Greg Falxa will demonstrate using bat echolocation calls for species identification.

BHAS membership meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month at the Capitol Museum Coach House, 211 W. 21st Street, in Olympia. Social hour is at 7pm, with programs beginning promptly at 7:30.

Annual Dinner/Auction: March 3, 2007

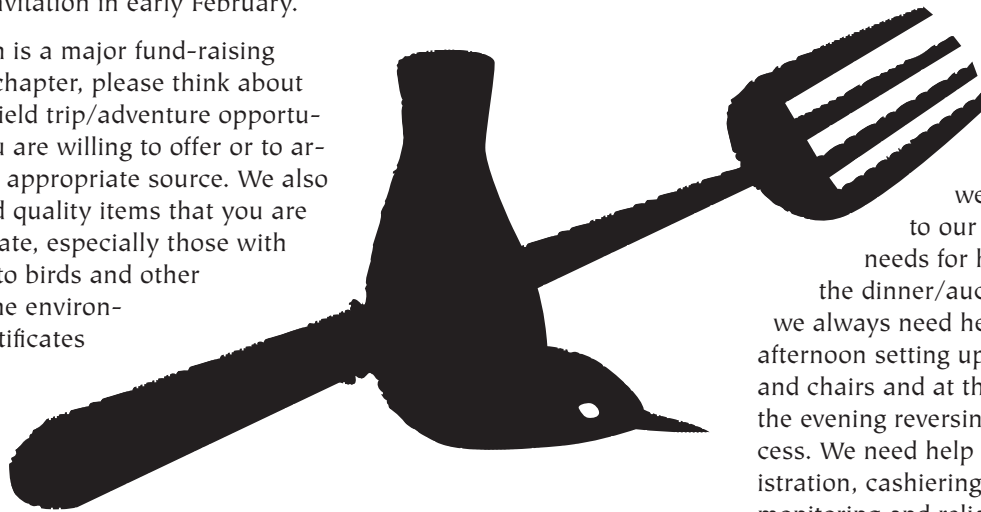
March 3rd is the date for Black Hills Audubon Society's 20th Annual Dinner and Auction. The event will once again be held at the Olympia Center. Our featured speaker will be Jim Lynch, author of the beloved novel *The Highest Tide*. Expect to receive your formal invitation in early February.

As the auction is a major fund-raising event for the chapter, please think about exciting new field trip/adventure opportunities that you are willing to offer or to arrange with an appropriate source. We also welcome good quality items that you are willing to donate, especially those with a connection to birds and other wildlife and the environment. Gift certificates are always popular.

If you are willing to approach a local business and you need a document from BHAS to give you authentication, please contact Margery Beeler, e-mail: mswampcat@aol.com; 943-5709. If using e-mail, please indicate BHAS Auction in the subject line to avoid spam complications.

This year we plan to provide advance notice about auction items on our website www.blackhillsaudubon.com. We will be extremely grateful for early

notification of items. We can arrange for pick up, but we do need to know about items in advance, even if you plan to bring the item to the dinner. This allows us to advertise them and to include them in the Auction Brochure. It also reduces confusion at the event.



We will be making announcements on the website as to our specific needs for help with the dinner/auction. But, we always need help in the afternoon setting up the tables and chairs and at the end of the evening reversing the process. We need help with registration, cashiering, auction monitoring and reliable people

in general to keep the event and all its components moving smoothly. If you can devote extra time on March 3rd, please contact Margery or leave a message on our BHAS phone line: (360) 352-7299. We look forward to seeing you on March 3rd. 🐦

Program on Ports in January

Port Expert to Speak

Chris Fowler, a geography doctoral student at the University of Washington, will present a special program on ports and port competition on the West Coast. In researching his dissertation on the Ports of Genoa, Italy and Vancouver, B.C., Chris has concentrated on attempts by these cities and ports to make themselves competitive in global trade networks. As part of this project Chris is also critically examining the cost/benefit analyses that ports use to support their policies in an attempt to capture more of the impact that ports and port policies have on their local communities. Chris emphasizes that his talk will not concern the specific case of the Port of Olympia, but is designed instead to provide attendees with a

broader framework of understanding with which to assess the proposed changes there.

As the Port of Olympia continues to seek expansion with some major environmental constraints, BHAS is excited to present an academic and broader picture of marine trade and ports.

This special event will be held in the State History Museum Carriage House (211 West 21st, off of Capitol Way S) beginning at 7 p.m. on **January 24, 2007**.

Please RSVP to Sue Danver at 705-9247 or sdanver7@aol.com to guarantee a seat. We anticipate some open seating and should be able to accommodate "drop-ins". 🐦

Conservation Update

Aloha Lumber Cluster Housing Proposal in sensitive area near Black River NWR

Aloha Lumber is in the pre-submission phase of the development process for an over 60 house, cluster development west of the Wilson on Delphi Avenue near the 8800 block SW. It is the “headwaters” of, and very close, to Dempsey Creek where one of the last healthy populations (in the State) of the State Endangered Oregon Spotted Frog has been located and monitored. Nearby land has been purchased by US Fish and Wildlife to protect the frog and other species. Jack Davis, decades ago, highlighted this 312-acre Aloha area to be protected. BHAS, The Nature Conservancy, Capitol Land Trust, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, WDFW and Thurston County all own and protect land within the Black River Watershed. This property provides a corridor for animals between the Capitol Forest and the Black River NWR. The area is rich in birds—woodpeckers, owls, raptors, waders. Salmon recovery moneys were acquired a few years ago to buy a significant portion of this property, but agreement with Aloha never was reached. Unfortunately, the County failed to include this property in its consideration of lands to keep in 1:20 zoning.

Action: Let the County know you are concerned. Ask that there be 1) permanent protection of the wetlands and critical areas on this property, and 2) that the County requires an EIS. (Case # 2006104294, presub) Please send comments to: zellerg@co.thurston.wa.us.

Quality Rock Products (QRP)

The Court of Appeals’ oral argument on whether QRP may expand their gravel mine and construct an asphalt plant next to the Black River National Wildlife Refuge took place December 7, 2006. An oral argument at the Court of Appeals provides an opportunity for a panel of three judges to ask questions generated from their

reading of the legal briefs, which were provided to them prior to the hearing. It is difficult to predict an outcome from most of the forty-five minute oral arguments. We expect a decision in four to six months.

Olympia Airport Habitat Management Plan HMP

On November 27, 2006, BHAS submitted comments on the Port of Olympia’s draft Habitat Management Plan. BHAS asked that some land be set aside for the forty pair of State Endangered Streaked Horned Lark (700 individuals remain) and that protections be put in place for the State Threatened Mazama Pocket Gopher (Olympia Airport best population in South Sound).

Tenino Urban Growth Boundary expansion request

BHAS testified on the November 22nd Comprehensive Plan hearing that BHAS felt was inappropriate to reclassify/annex the suggested sensitive wetlands and prairie into the Tenino Urban Growth area. The area under consideration contains a large amount of

critical prairie habitat and wetlands and a sensitive aquifer. Washington prairies now cover only three-percent of their original area. Many federal and state listed bird species depend upon prairie oak woodland habitat. The county has received statements from natural resource agencies and other experts documenting the rarity of this habitat.



Capitol Lands Adaptive Management Plan Workshop

BHAS attended the November 7 Public Workshop and provided comments on the “Sediment Loading” and “Estuary Feasibility” reports presented at the meeting. BHAS will continue to comment and discuss with project staff and scientists on: 1) nutrient loading by the Deschutes River into Capitol Lake and 2) the resolution of contamination problems in Budd Bay with relationship to Capitol Lake. 🦅

—Sue Danver

Legislative Session

Neighbors of the State Capitol, BHAS members have the extraordinary opportunity to participate in the development of state legislation. For most of us, direct phone calls to legislators are local (besides the Legislative Hotline—1-800-562-6000). Office visits to one's legislators are only a short drive away. Legislators really do appreciate the sincerity of citizen participation; a change of pace from the myriad of lobbyists that frequent the Capitol venues.

Follow the 2007 Legislative Session with Bird's Eye View

Follow all the legislative action in the bi-monthly Bird's Eye View, a publication by Audubon Washington. Well designed, BEV summarizes issues and actions concisely.

- Read about recent activities of the legislature
- Learn the details of legislation and track bills
- Receive action alerts to voice your opinions about key decisions

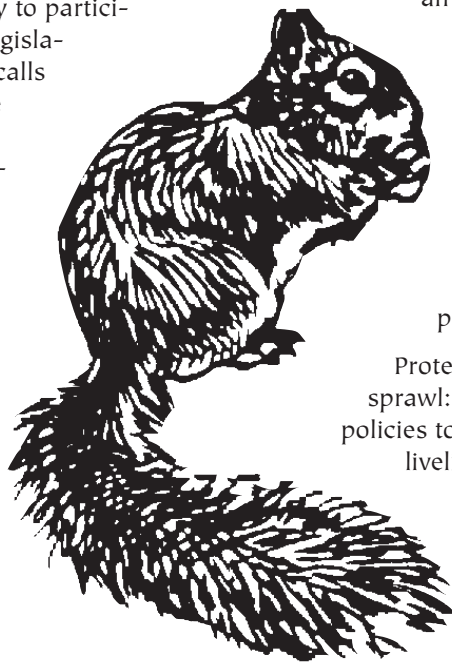
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If you would like to continue to receive BEV in hardcopy, Audubon Washington will mail it to you for the low price of \$20 per year. (Audubon Washington, 1411 4th Ave, Ste. 920, Seattle, WA 98101; for more info call 360-786-8020, ext. 201)

Audubon Votes Count in November!

On Election Day over 18,000 Washington Audubon members, their friends, families and communities spoke resolutely for birds and conservation by passing I-937 and defeating I-933.

I-937: Audubon is already looking ahead to effective



implementation of Initiative 937, which called for increased electricity sales from “appropriately sited renewable energy sources.” By playing an instrumental role in the passage of I-937, Audubon Washington began its efforts to take on global climate change as a priority area. They will continue this effort by ensuring proper placement of wind turbines and transmission lines to minimize impacts to birds, wildlife, and habitat, and by supporting the community priority for clean air and clean fuels.

Protecting Farms and Forests from sprawl: Audubon advocates for reasonable policies to protect birds, habitat and people's livelihoods. Consequently, we have been spearheading efforts to ensure that our working lands (i.e. farms and forests) are protected from rampant, sprawling development. One of Audubon's 2007 legislative priorities is to work directly with those interests to create incentives and tools to protect these working landscapes from sprawl.

2007 Legislative Priorities

Audubon Washington:

- Conserve Washington's Forests
- Keep our Working Lands and Maintain Growth Management
- Watchable Wildlife
- Environmental Education
- Surface Mining Reclamation

Priorities for a Healthy Washington (chosen by Washington environmental lobby groups):

- \$100 Million for Parks and Wildlife
- Save Our Sound
- Eliminate Toxic Flame Retardants

Thanks go to the December 9, 2006, Birds Eye View for much of this article.

Mark Your Calendar: Environmental Lobby Day, Feb. 14, 2007. 🐿

Legislators really do appreciate the sincerity of citizen participation; a change of pace from the myriad of lobbyists that frequent the Capitol venues.

Birding in Earnest, August–September 2006

By Bill Shelmerdine

To report sightings call 360-866-9106 or email
georn1@hotmail.com

August often brings a peak in shorebird numbers and variety to our area. While shore-birding remains very good in September, reports from Nisqually dropped off dramatically. September brings increasing land-birds and the first “wintering” species to inland marine waters. Numbers of gulls and water birds increased as the month progressed. Loons, grebes, scoters and alcids are all part of the mix now.

Continuing the shorebird trend from the previous period Patrick and Ruth Sullivan reported 3 juvenile **Semipalmated Sandpipers** on 8/2 at Nisqually, culminating in 5 individuals on 8/3. This species has only been recently reported with some regularity in our area, perhaps they have been overlooked in the past. Conditions at Nisqually have allowed for better or perhaps more to the point, closer shorebird viewing. On the 5th, two **Semipalmated Sandpipers**, two **Baird’s Sandpipers**, one **Pectoral Sandpiper**, and one **Red-necked Phalarope** were reported.

On 8/6 I recorded my first **Mew Gull** of the season in Squaxin Passage. I know, I know... Mew Gull you say? They are all over the sound in the fall, winter, and spring; but what about summer? Is this an early date? I don’t know, so I challenge readers to keep records and send me an earlier date.

Patrick Sullivan reported a **Black-crowned Night-heron** at Nisqually on 8/9. As far as I know this bird was not re-located. All of the recent sightings that I know of have been one day accounts.

There were 6 **Common Terns** sitting on the tip of Cooper Point the evening of 8/11. This is a species I found to be rather scarce on the South Sound this year, despite spending a fair amount of time on the water in August.

On 8/13/06 Dennis Erickson sighted an adult **Snowy Egret** on his morning rounds at Nisqually. This rare visitor was sought by many and seen by some. As far as I know it is the second county record. Interestingly another individual (this time an immature) was found at Ridgefield Refuge in SW Washington.

Paul Hicks had a 4 **vireo** morning around Tenino on 8/14. His list included a remarkable 3 **Red-eyed Vireos**, along with the more expected **Cassin’s**, **Hutton’s**, and **Warbling Vireos**.

On 8/16 I noted my first **Red-necked Grebe** of the season. By the end of the month they were widely scattered though not yet common.

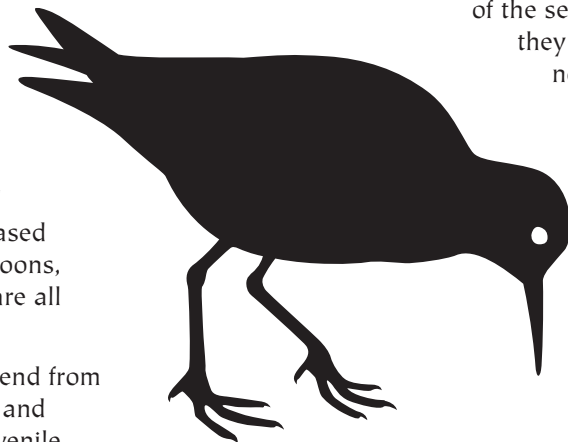
On 8/24/06 the Sullivans recorded one **Solitary Sandpiper**, and 3 **Bairds Sandpipers** among the more regular shorebird species. A **Bank Swallow** was also reported from the area that day. (the **Snowy Egret** was still present as well). On the 30th, Ruth and Patrick sighted an adult **Red-shouldered Hawk** over Highway 101 and Kaiser Road near Mud Bay.

The morning of 9/3 there was a noticeable movement of migrants along Eld Inlet with numbers of **Vaux’s Swifts**, good numbers of **Swallows**, and a group of **Black-Throated Gray Warblers** passing through my area.

A trip to Nisqually on 9/5 produced another nice list for the Sullivans, including the first **White-fronted Goose** of the season, 2 **Bairds Sandpipers**, and 2 **Cassin’s Vireos**. They also reported hearing a **White-breasted Nuthatch**. This species is thought to be extirpated from its historic range in the Puget Sound and South Sound Prairie region.

On 9/14/06 Phil Kelly and company reported a **White-tailed Kite** during one of their regular Thursday outings at Nisqually.

The pre-dawn movement of **Swainson’s Thrushes** seemed to peak on 9/18/06. I had been hearing small numbers of them regularly for the preceding month; after the 18th numbers seemed to drop off rapidly in my area. 🦋



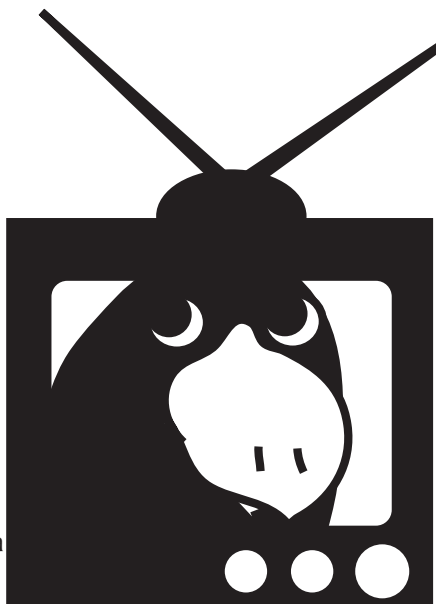
Birds Today are Eating Healthier!

Thanks to Debbie Nickerson, Ruth and Butch of Wild Birds Unlimited and to all of the volunteers who made Fall's Bird Feeder Cleaning Event another great success. Because of the efforts of our 14 workers and donations of hot water by Top Foods' Manager, Daryl Johnson and some delicious food from Brewery City Pizza we cleaned over 130 feeders and cleared \$1000.00.

A special Thank You also to all of you who brought your feeders in for cleaning to support this event. Pass the word as the Spring Feeder Cleaning is set for Saturday, March 10th; so mark your calendars now!!

Alternative Gift Fair

December's Alternative Gift Fair, organized by Debbie Nickerson and tabled by Donna Nickerson was also a success.



Donna was able to get several new memberships on the spot and sent several people home to talk to their family about membership. Black Hills Audubon is very appreciative of the continued dedication of our loyal members to the ongoing success of our Chapter. 🐦

Birds on TV

Black Hills Audubon Society continues to have its own local television show. The 30-minute program is hosted by Tom Schooley, and features birding news, a calendar of events, tips and education. Show times are Thursday evenings at 8:30 P.M. and again on Sunday afternoons at 1:00 P.M. Comcast cable subscribers will be able to watch the program on TCTV's public access—channel 22 or channel 29, depending on your area. If you would like to get involved the show needs guests, writers, bird videos, ideas and set designers. Contact Tom at 357-9170 or e-mail him at schooleymccartan@comcast.net. Give Tom a call to let him know how much you enjoy the show. 🐦

Study Groups from Northwest Earth Institute

The Northwest Earth Institute (NWEI) offers self-facilitated, small study groups to encourage participants to explore their values, attitudes and actions around these principles:

- An earth centered ethic promoting individual responsibility for the earth.
- The practice of engaged simplicity to enrich life and reduce personal impact on the earth.
- The dedication to living fully in place and protecting the unique bio-region in which you live.

NWEI's work has been featured in two PBS documentaries, *Affluenza* and *Escape from Affluenza*, as well as a NPR series, *Deep Ecology for the 21st century*. Since 1993, tens of thousands of individuals and hundreds of organizations have been involved in NWEI courses.

BHAS is considering facilitating courses from the NWEI, particularly *Deep Ecology* and/or *A Sense of Place*. This is a golden opportunity for us to be a catalyst for change in our community and provide an opportunity for full and frank discussions on practical solutions to the ecological problems we face.

The website, www.nwei.org, is very thorough and gives a comprehensive overview of the program. We encourage you to visit the website. Hopefully, you will be motivated to join in this network for personal and global change.

Please contact Connie Christy at (360) 570-1214 if you are interested in more information or would like to participate.

Attracting Backyard Birds

Nearly 300 species of birds are native to the Pacific Northwest. Attracting diverse bird species will depend on the diversity of wildlife features you enhance or create in your yard. All wildlife needs water, food, shelter and a place to raise their young. These are best provided in a natural environment, yet as we occupy more of the earth there is less room for wildlife habitat. Backyards are not replacements for this habitat but can be used to expand or connect areas for wildlife.

Water

Ponds and streams are wonderful backyard features if you have them. Water features can be as big as a pond or as simple as a birdbath. Small birdbaths should have the water changed every few days and scrubbed with water and a brush a few times a month to remove algae and bacteria. Keep the water feature full and never use chemicals to control algae or insects or to keep the water from freezing. Chemicals can be harmful to birds and pets.

Shelter

Different heights of vegetation using ground covers, flowers, shrubs and trees will create "forest floor" with soil covered by mulch or leaf litter for the ground foraging

birds. Remember to have both deciduous and evergreen plants in order to provide cover year round. Brush and rock piles create shelter from wind and predators.

Food

Native plants with fruit, nuts or seeds are a natural source of food for birds. Birds also eat many insects. Selecting plants with varying fruiting seasons will keep food available for birds year round. If you have a vegetable garden, leave some for the birds during winter. Bird feeders provide a supplementary food source. A bird feeder with too many birds can promote the spread of disease through contact between birds. Distribute feeders in different areas and vary the food and type of feeder.

Different birds prefer different food so choosing the right seed is important. Avoid seed mixes with small seeds like Milo and millet. These seeds are not preferred by birds that pay frequent trips to feeders, and the seeds are often scattered on the ground. Select a single seed or a limited mix for a feeder. Using just black-oil sunflower seed may attract chickadees, grosbeaks, and finches. Less is more when it comes to the amount of food; too much might rot or become moldy. Keep food clean. Keep feeder and area around it clean to prevent the spreading of disease among birds. Wash

Continued on back page

Join Audubon! We Welcome New Members!

There are a couple ways for you to join Black Hills Audubon:

► **Chapter members** receive chapter benefits for a year, including our newsletter, *The Echo*. **Please make check payable to Black Hills Audubon.** All of these dues contribute to our efforts at the local chapter level.

\$20 Member

\$15 Senior or full-time Student

► **National members** receive national and chapter benefits for a year, including *Audubon* magazine and our chapter newsletter, *The Echo*. **Please make check payable to National Audubon Society.** Most of these dues contribute to national efforts.

\$20 first-time member

\$15 Senior or full-time Student

► **Newsletter subscription**—receive our chapter newsletter, *The Echo*, for a year without becoming a member. **Please make check payable to Black Hills Audubon.**

\$10

► **Additional contribution:** support our programs of conservation and education. **Please make check payable to Black Hills Audubon.**

\$ _____

BHAS is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. All contributions are tax deductible!

Name _____ Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone number _____ E-mail _____

Mail completed form with your check(s):

Membership, Black Hills Audubon Society, PO Box 2524, Olympia, WA 98507

**Y12
7XCH**

the feeder with a solution of warm water and vinegar once a month or more often during heavy feeding. Rinse and dry the feeder thoroughly before refilling. Place feeders where you can enjoy seeing the birds, away from entrances, busy streets, pets, strong winds and driving rain. A roof or dome over the feeder can keep seed dry for longer periods of time.

Place to Raise Young

Most birds will create a place to raise their young in the branches of a shrub or tree, or on the side of a building. Cavity-nesting birds require a hole in a living or dead tree (snag) to raise their young. Protecting natural nesting habitat is the best way to help these birds. The next best thing is to provide a nesting box.

Birdhouse verses Nesting Box

Birdhouses can be a decorative element for a yard, unfortunately birdhouses can be harmful to birds. The paint can be toxic, and a peg below the entrance can make it easy for predators to reach in and eat the young. A birdhouse can also be a home for non-native invasive aggressive birds like European Starlings and House Sparrows. If you like the decorative birdhouse, just cover the entry hole so birds won't use it, or display your birdhouses indoors.

A nesting box is also a good place where cavity-nesting birds can raise their young. The right size box and entry

hole is important when selecting a nesting box for your yard. When you think about it, a chickadee and a Barn Owl would not have the same size box or entry hole. Smaller birds require small holes and boxes. Violet-green Swallows prefer to fly directly into the nesting box, so a diamond shaped hole works well, while a Tree Swallow prefers the circular hole. Entry holes can vary from one to six inches in diameter depending on the bird. House size varies with species, too. Place nesting boxes out of the reach of predators, at least six feet off the ground with a clear flight path for entry where it will get early morning sun, but shade from the hot afternoon sun, and away from prevailing winds. Tilt the nesting box downward slightly to avoid rain, and a place conveniently for cleaning, monitoring and observing.

Maintenance of the nesting box is very important. Once the young have left, clean out all nesting materials and throw it in the trash. These materials could cause disease in the next nest. Accumulated nest materials can bring the young nearer the opening where they could fall out or be accessible to predators. Use a brush to remove attached materials. Check and repair any damage, clear vents and drains, and if the parent birds have left the area place a wood cover over the hole to keep non-native bird species, hornets or other insects from inhabiting the box. Next spring remove the cover, and the nesting box is ready.

Happy backyard birding! 🐦

Black Hills Audubon Society

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