

# *Echo*

October 2022  
Olympia, Washington



## **WHO'RE YOU CALLING A BIRD BRAIN?**

**October Speaker Program via Zoom**

**Dr. Kim Adelson, PhD**

**Thursday October 13<sup>th</sup> 7 pm**

For hundreds of years, birds have been considered incapable of advanced thought or learning. This is why the phrase "bird brain" is commonly used to denote persons who are dolts or simpletons. But... do birds really deserve this bad rap? Are they truly less intelligent than mammals? THEY ARE NOT! In fact, recent research has consistently demonstrated that some birds have remarkably strong cognitive skills, comparable to monkeys and even apes. Some can form abstract concepts; some display prodigious memories; some make and use tools; and some can make complex inferences. Watch this presentation and you will discover the surprisingly strong mental abilities exhibited by a wide variety of birds.

Kim Adelson is Vice-President as well as Education Committee Chair for Black Hills Audubon. She frequently gives presentations to groups across the state on numerous topics that involve birds; this will be the fourth talk she has given to a BHAS chapter meeting (You may remember her as the "birds from dinosaurs" lady). Kim has a master's degree in evolutionary biology and a Ph.D. in psychology. Her main focus in graduate school was the evolution of intelligence. Although her own research concentrated on primates, she has followed the research on bird cognition for more than 40 years. Since teaching and birding are the two things she most loves to do, Kim is very excited at being able to share her knowledge on this topic!

Free registration at:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZcod-6qqjgqGdcayNs2VzhO2q-KIDWp7o2x>

## **Armchair Birding: *Under a Wild Sky*, by William Souder**

~ Anne Kilgannon

When I first read that Seattle Audubon was in process of questioning its name, that its namesake was a slaveholder and a desecrator of Native American graves, I was taken aback by this new information. I was somewhat familiar with Audubon's art and knew some of the history of how the early organization had its beginning, but realized I knew very little about him as a person. It felt timely to dig deeper into the story and share some of my findings with my Black Hills community.

Two places to begin a discussion: How did the bird protection movement come to be named for Audubon? And what do we know about John James Audubon, the man and artist? There are several biographies that can help us with our examination. I was able to find a non-adulatory biography of John James, *Under a Wild Sky*, by William Souder, published in 2004. Other worthy suggestions are *John James Audubon: The Making of an American*, by Richard Rhodes, also published in 2004, and a more recent study, *John James Audubon: The Nature of the American Woodsman*, published 2017 by Gregory Nobles. You can get a quick sense of Nobles' analysis by reading his article recently published in Audubon magazine, linked here:

<https://www.audubon.org/news/the-myth-john-james-audubon> He addresses the concerns of today and puts his finger right on the thorniest issues associated with having Audubon on the masthead of our national and local societies. We will all have to examine this association and how it impacts our mission to be welcoming and supportive to all who are drawn to birds and who wish to join in the work for their protection.

Born in 1795, Audubon's origins are somewhat shrouded. As it happens, Audubon seems to have been a fabulist from his early days, beginning with the story of his birth in the place now called Haiti; it seems, short of exhumation and a DNA test, not possible to be certain if he is of "mixed race" parentage or not. He does seem to have muddied the picture on this point but the obfuscation could have been as much an issue of probable out-of-wedlock birth, class, and other issues shameful as he experienced them. The unresolved issue does complicate his story but I, for one, am not sure what to make of it. He did seem to shrug off any concerns about slavery and readily employed slaves whenever it suited him; Souder did not divulge whether he personally owned slaves. I need to keep reading on this point. He was certainly indifferent to their plight and unreflective about a society heavily based on that institution. Souder doesn't include any stories about Audubon participating in the trade of Native skulls or other degrading practices, but that leaves that issue also unresolved here. Audubon evidently did hold anti-Semitic views, common but still regrettable. How much he was "a man of his times" and how much we should hold that in context is a discussion urgently needed in our own times.

What does seem clear is Audubon's curious and contradictory mix of an ebullient, even exuberant *joie de vivre* nature, punctuated with dark passages of forlorn and abject crashes of mood. He was deeply insecure and yet audacious, notably self-absorbed and emotionally

needy. At one point, Souder loses patience with his notoriously self-promoting subject and remarks, “Despite having lived an adventurous life, Audubon apparently decided the simple truth was not exciting enough, and woven into his episodes are exaggerations and invented exploits...Audubon had taken liberty with the truth about himself whenever it suited his purpose...” Even more problematic were his tall tales about the habits and behaviors of birds and other creatures that mislead his readers and added drama for the sake of drama to bolster his own sense of importance.

Audubon was a deeply troubled individual and certainly an unreliable narrator. But, undeniably, what he was most of all and obsessively, was bird-crazy. Even before he conceived of his monumental project of creating *Birds of America*, Audubon was determined to know the birds of his adopted land. And that meant shooting as many of them as possible. The maxim of a bird in the hand being worth two in the bush—especially if stretched to twenty, fifty, one hundred—was one he assiduously followed. We have to recall that Audubon was conducting his field studies before the invention of cameras and binoculars, let alone iPhones. Ornithologists, then and for many years, followed the same practices: kill as many samples of each bird—male, female, juvenile, seasonal plumages, etc.—for museum and personal collections so that every variation could be studied and catalogued. Still, it’s painful reading for today’s birders.

Audubon’s artistic vision was based, in part, on these specimens he culled so joyfully. It was then possible to study feather patterns, body structures and other details, and, crucially, he was able to rig up action scenes for his compositions by inserting wires throughout the bodies and so position the birds in look-alive poses very new to bird studies. Another innovation was his addition of bits of foliage and other visual nods to each bird’s home environment. But he electrified his viewers with additions of action scenes of birds battling enemies such as fanged snakes and other, predatory, birds. Audubon’s view of “nature” was flush with the adage “red in tooth and claw.” He constructed these scenes against a background of gridded canvas so he could create life-size portraits with mathematical certainty, also a never-before adopted technique or ambition. His art was truly revolutionary. Whatever we think of him as a human being—“flawed ” only begins to describe Audubon, the man—he was a kind of genius in his chosen field and widely recognized as such. Whether that is “enough,” whether genius can cover cruelty and overwhelm other issues of character is a question.

It should be noted, however, that Audubon was not the first in the field documenting American bird life: Alexander Wilson, notably, pioneered with his drawings and research notes. But Audubon out-dazzled Wilson’s early work and captured the international market. It was Audubon’s art that put American birds on the world map and made his name synonymous with our native fauna. But now that name is also freighted with evidence of slave-holding, and dehumanizing treatment of Native peoples’ remains. Should our birding societies continue to saddle themselves with a name associated with such taint?

Let’s go back to the histories to see how the early conservation society came to be known as Audubon. We discover an instance of “what a small world it was” in a story as related by John Taliaferro in his authoritative biography *Grinnell: America’s Environmental Pioneer*

*and his Restless Drive to Save the West.* The boy who would grow up to become one of the earliest and most effective voices in America for conservation, the aptly named George Bird Grinnell, spent his formative years and received some of his most enduring lessons in nature lore from his near neighbor Lucy Bakewell Audubon, the widow of John James. As well as teaching young George the mysteries of arithmetic, Lucy encouraged his curiosity about birds and wildlife in general. When in her home, “his eyes were filled with the specimens and accoutrements once belonging to the naturalist: deer and elk antlers, rifles, shotguns, powder horns, and ball pouches.” There were other romantic trophies from regions cloaked in western legends that fed the boy’s imagination. “Of the Audubon paintings that hung on the walls, one was “The Eagle and the Lamb,” a breathtaking oil from 1828 depicting a golden eagle, its talons extended, wings rampant, poised on a mountain precipice as it delivers the *coup de mort* to its defenseless prey.” Before her death, Lucy bequeathed that painting to George, in recognition of his burgeoning fascination with the world and vision of Audubon.

Grinnell went on to do many things but he never lost his connection to birds and wild places. As founder and chief editor of *Forest and Stream* magazine, he had a readymade platform for promoting conservation values as well as a network of influential friends and colleagues also involved in the early protective movement for birds. Once abundant, birds were being decimated by market hunters and loss of habitat as cities and farms transformed once forested and marshy lands for use by an exploding population, but most devastating were the plume hunters. Fashion demanded hats be-feathered in elaborate and extravagant styles. Grinnell and others pushed back on these trends, founding reserves, hiring guards to warn off the murderous hunters, and working to pass laws to regulate the taking of birds. Grinnell sought to address the source: fashion-loving women: “The reform in America, as elsewhere, must be inaugurated by women, and if the subject is properly brought to their notice, their tender hearts will be quick to respond.” He then announced the formation of a new society, using his magazine to promote “an association for the protection of birds and their eggs.” When thinking of what to call the new group, Grinnell wrote, “In the first half of the century there lived a man who did more to teach Americans about birds of their land than any other who ever lived. His beautiful and spirited paintings and his charming and tender accounts of the habits of his favorites have made him immortal, and have inspired his countrymen with an ardent love for the birds.”

The society Grinnell named for Audubon has its own complicated history, but it retained the name in all its organizational iterations. Now, today, we must reckon with that name and ask what it signifies for this era. As historians, we are trained to not judge the past by the present, but we are also drilled to look for the untold stories, the voices silenced or left out of the story, to hunt for all the pieces of the puzzle. As conservationists, we are keen to invite everyone to be involved in the work of saving the life of the land. History and tradition, accomplishments and accolades for work done are foundational, but not necessarily prescriptive. There are still possibilities and new paths to forge as we face new challenges. What we call ourselves matters. What a rich conversation is before us!

*At our August retreat, the Board decided to implement a new series of articles in The Echo: each month we will highlight the work of a different committee. The purpose is to let you, our members, become familiar with the work that BHAS does. Much of this work is “behind the scenes” and relatively invisible. To start us off, we will report on the recent activity of the Education Committee.*

## **Get to Know the Work of our Education Committee!**

As was the case for nearly everyone, the Education Committee’s work has been somewhat constrained during the past few years due to the Covid pandemic. We could not, for example, go into classrooms and work face-to-face with children nor could we hold live adult education classes. However, despite these challenges we managed to find new ways to fulfill our mission to increase children’s and adults’ knowledge about birds and their place in the ecosystem.

Perhaps our most recent significant achievement was to enter into a partnership with North Thurston Public Schools, Capital Land Trust, and the South Sound Estuary Association. Beginning this coming spring we will be part of a district-wide, full-day outdoor STEM experience that will, over time, involve every third grader in the North Thurston Public School district. Named “Birds in the Woods”, our project will allow the students to go on a simulated bird walk. We located, purchased, and modified life-sized, realistic wooden bird models and developed talking points about each bird; we recruited a sufficient number of volunteers to lead the bird walks. The birds were to have been placed in Capitol Land Trust’s Inspiring Kids Preserve in April 2022, and last year approximately 270 3<sup>rd</sup>-graders from three schools were to have been led on a walk through deep forest where the birds would have been hidden. The plan was for the BHAS volunteer to play the appropriate bird song as the children neared a bird and talk to them about the bird’s lifestyle and adaptations to forest life.

Unfortunately, at the eleventh-hour, North Thurston Public Schools delayed the project until April 2023. (They were suffering from a bus driver shortage and could not arrange transportation for the students.) So, in lieu of the live walk, we developed and produced a ten-minute video of a simulated bird walk. This was shared with each of the teachers who would have participated. The video can be found at [Birds of Inspiring Kids Preserve – Black Hills Audubon Society \(blackhills-audubon.org\)](https://blackhills-audubon.org). We received such positive feedback about the short video that we’ve decided to make more of them, tailored to the specific STEM goals at different grade levels. We hope to make the videos available to teachers in all our local school districts as well as to homeschooling parents.

In addition, we purchased and made available to teachers in every school district in our catchment area an hourlong video with accompanying curriculum called “Bird Flight Patterns and Music”. The video was produced by the New Bedford Symphony Orchestra, and it describes different flying styles (e.g. flap and glide, static soaring) and matches them to similar rhythms in classical pieces of music.

On the adult side of our mission, we offered three classes in 2021-2022: a new, one hour *Introduction to eBird*, taught by Bill Tweit; a new 3-part *Washington Birds by Habitat* class, taught by Kim Adelson; and a 4-part *Beginning Birding* class, also taught by Kim Adelson. Since these courses were on-line, they were easily accessible to persons in Lewis and Mason as well as Thurston counties.

Besides these classes, we offered numerous one-off lectures to multiple external groups such as other Audubon chapters, Master Gardener Societies, etc. Many of those talks involved how to create bird-friendly habitat and the effects of climate change on birds.

We would like to expand our efforts to reach children and adult learners in the coming year and it would be WONDERFUL if more people joined in and worked with us! We are looking for volunteers to:

- 1) Participate in the outdoor “Birds in the Woods” project in April by leading or co-leading a bird walk. (Talking points will be provided so that it is not necessary to be an experienced birder.)
- 2) Help make short videos about birds to be distributed to schools and homeschooling organizations. If you’d like to write a script, star in a video, film a video or edit a video we would love to hear from you.
- 3) Teach an adult class. If you have expertise about a topic related to birds or birdwatching and like to make Zoom (or, later in the year, maybe live) presentations, this might be right up your alley.
- 4) Set up and lead or co-lead a youth birding club.

If you’d like more information about any of these opportunities, please feel free to contact me (Kim Adelson) at [education@blackhills-audubon.org](mailto:education@blackhills-audubon.org).

### **New Book Club Forming!!!**

We are excited to be forming a new book club for Black Hills Audubon Members which will meet every other month during the school year. Our first meeting is Wednesday, November 16th @ 7:00 pm via Zoom. We plan to meet in person in the future as circumstances permit. The discussion for our first meeting will be based on the book What It’s Like to Be a Bird by David Allen Sibley. The subtitle is “What birds are doing and why.” In this book, Sibley has short essays and beautiful life size paintings of familiar birds. Rachel Hudson and Carla Miller will be coordinators. Please email Carla at [cjm1226@comcast.net](mailto:cjm1226@comcast.net) by October 15th if you are interested in joining. There will be 12 available slots per month to ensure everyone has a chance to share.

# *That Which Compels*

By Rachel Hudson

I can sense it.

Even though I don't know exactly what it is, I do know it's always been there. Every year, at certain times of year, I find my very soul stirring for... *something*. That *something* changes as the year marches on. Over time, I have learned that some part of what compels me is based on past experience. After a spring trip to Europe nearly 15 years ago, for many spring seasons afterward, I had a powerful wanderlust that would hit me seemingly from nowhere, when Europe was farthest from my mind. In more recent years, when winter weaves in, my body only wants to be where the migratory waterfowl are. In late spring and early summer, all I can think about are the beautiful deserts and sagebrush steppe of the East side of the mountains. And so, I am driven to go to these places, year after year, giving in to the urges that sometimes hit me like a crashing wave; *I must go here and adventure!*

And fall... oh, when fall comes... that *something* becomes more than a place. It becomes a thrill that never leaves, a restlessness that wakes me up hourly at night, a powerful desire that overwhelms my other senses and focuses my mind. This overwhelming urge is akin to what many birds feel at this time of year, as well; the urge to migrate. The term for this is a German word, *Zugunruhe*, meaning: "migratory restlessness". Captive migratory birds may flutter incessantly in one direction in their cage, trying to fulfill that urge; wild birds who have spent all summer raising young and eating plentifully begin to fitfully dance about, yearning to leave soon; they start to gather and call to one another, preparing to leave their established territories. *Something* compels them, as well.

Fall is my favorite season of the year, for a number of reasons. I adore the colors, I love the temperatures, the weather is perfect to me, the bugs are going away, tourist-y areas are settling down, and... fall migration begins. The *Zugunruhe* that the birds feel seems to resonate in my own soul, as I, too, succumb to the restless urges that tell me, *GO!* And so, I go...

The urges most often compel me to head to the coast, or anywhere saltwater meets land. Summer's end through fall is host to the spectacular migration of my favorite kinds of birds: shorebirds. They mass in flocks of thousands at times, all mixed together, running and flying and searching for food, or resting and preening and giving that cute sleepy head-wiggle that they do when they close their eyes and settle in for a nap. Shorebirding is a thrill like no other for me, a sport that I cannot lose in, for just the act of watching a shorebird, any shorebird, is enough to fill my heart and soul with joy for days afterward. I fall head over heels for their odd, hunched bodies, their tiny heads, their long bills, their twiggy legs and feet, their variety of colors and sizes, their adorable calls. I could watch them run or preen or even sleep all day if I had the chance to. They are fluffy, charismatic, twitchy, inspiring, charming. My body almost

screams at me to go and watch these little bundles of happiness in the fall, and I find it impossible to pay no mind to that which compels me. The joy I feel when shorebirding is unparalleled in all my other birding experiences throughout each year.

Spending time with migrating shorebirds brings another important aspect of fall migration to light: locally rare birds. Some birders don't really mind either way when it comes to seeing rare birds; if they see one, great; if not, that's fine, too. Some birders try to chase as many reports of rare birds as they can, for they, too, are compelled by *something* to do so. Some birders want to see as many species as they can in any given area, so finding something rare would benefit their count tremendously. I, myself, am not much of an "area lister" (despite what my eBird account suggests); I mostly just love birds and want to get a chance to spend quality time with as many different species as I can, photographing them and admiring their behavior. But I also love what many of us will recall pretending to do as children: searching for treasure.

Anyone who has watched birds for an extended length of time can tell you of the thrill they had when they saw "something new". After years of nothing but mixed sparrow flocks in someone's backyard, for example, the day they see something like a Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch in with those sparrows will be unforgettable. These birds are a rare and special "treasure", something you hold dear in your heart and fervently hope to see in person someday. Some of us may actively seek out our treasure; we set sail with an "X" on our maps, marking our destination, yet instead of shovels, we bring cameras and binocs, scopes and field guides. The treasure we hope to find has feathers and wings, and a will of its own... and in fall, its *Zugunruhe* may have compelled it to move in a slightly different direction than the rest of its kind.

Anything can happen in fall migration. First-time migrants can get separated from their families, and end up following a flock of "something similar" down the wrong coastline or wrong side of the mountains. Storms can blow seasoned birds off course, and they make the best of their new situation, still following their urge to head south, but this time into uncharted territories. Many other situations occur, most of which we will never fully comprehend, but sometimes rare treasures of birds appear in fall flocks. And I always find myself compelled to try and find them. Shorebird flocks are easiest (and most fun) for me to search through; no warbler neck here, and no trees to obscure my view. I will never forget seeing so many species from all over the world come through our shores, nor the experiences that led to those encounters, and all the people who have helped me along the way. The phenomenal Lesser Sand-Plover in Ocean Shores, my first Long-billed Curlew at Nisqually, the shock of Sharp-tailed Sandpipers at Oyhut, the wonder of a pair of Buff-breasted Sandpipers strutting past me at Griffiths-Priddy... Oh, the excitement and thrill of the heart when that treasure is found! The relief, the joy, the wonder, the heart-stopping, breath-catching explosion of emotion...!

Inland, the same thing often happens with warbler and sparrow flocks; as they make their seasonal journeys, sometimes these flocks will pick up strays from other lands. It is always, *always* worth checking



every mixed flock of these birds in fall, as you never know what treasures it may hold. Just the other day, I found my very first Chipping Sparrow in Chehalis (they have been documented here before, but only rarely), mixed in with a flock of Savannah Sparrows. I was so taken aback by the little juvenile bird that I wasn't confident in what it was at first, only that it was *different*. Since when do I ever get to see first-year Chipping Sparrows so close to home? I was over the moon when my pictures confirmed its identity. And so many more incredible sparrows and warblers have I seen over the years in the fall... my first Harris's Sparrow in Tacoma, a Clay-colored Sparrow in Puyallup, and a Virginia's Warbler and Magnolia Warbler farther afield in Portland and south of Newport, Oregon, respectively.

The season of fall, and the awe-inspiring migration that accompanies it, delights my heart to no end. My passion for everything fun out in our beautiful natural world is more than ignited; it has become an uncontrollable blaze, overcoming almost everything else in my soul. The urge to see "something new", to see "something happy", to see "something exciting"... all of that compels me to *go* each fall, to stalk the warblers, to sit with the shorebirds, to watch and listen at every opportunity I have until migration ends. Following fall's passing, the waterfowl will most assuredly make their way into my thoughts, as they do each winter, compelling me to *go* once more. As with the birds, my own *Zugunruhe* changes with the seasons, and I cannot ignore that which compels me.

## **Bird of the 2022 Fall Season**

**By Sharon L. Moore**

**COMMON GOLDENEYE**  
***Bucephala clangula***

Order: Anseriformes

Family: Anatidae

"What's that bird diving under those tied jet skis?" my partner asked. As relatively new birders we were focusing our binoculars along the Salish Sea shoreline of Totten Inlet. Lacking a spotting scope, we strained to see the bird through the low light of a wet November day. After a brief discussion on how to correctly identify the bird, we agreed to note its profile and what we could discern of its coloration and special markings. Later, paging through the illustrations in *Birds of the Puget Sound Region* by Morse, Averse and Opperman, 2013, we narrowed our choices until we found the bird's image. There was no mistaking the male's white cheek patch below his yellow eye, his black, puffy, iridescent, distinctively shaped head, and white horizontal wing patches on his black back. He also had plenty of white on his breast and belly. The bird we'd seen was definitely a male Common Goldeneye. "And look at the female's contrasting colors," my partner pointed out. "With a dark chocolate brown head, her body is mottled grey-brown with a white neck collar. She also has a yellow bill tip."

Thus began our fascination with the Common Goldeneye. Once the jet skis were stored away for winter, a few more birds arrived and continued to frequent that relatively shallow inlet. Always at high tide, they seemed tightly pair-bonded as they foraged in that small flock. Then two years ago we began observing larger flocks of birds out in the middle of the Totten Channel and fairly quickly identified them as goldeneyes primarily by head shape and white underbelly. Out there among larger waterfowl such as surf scoters, cormorants and an occasional loon, they were holding their own, fishing hard for prey. From further reading we learned that when underwater they hold their wings tight to their bodies and kick with their feet. An interesting observation is that when a small flock is feeding together they may often all dive at the same time. Now you see them, now you don't!

The Common Goldeneye migrates to our lowland, temperate Western Washington world in October/November from their summer months of nesting, raising young and feeding along the lakes, rivers, estuaries and beaver ponds of the vast boreal forests in Canada and the northern United States. This duck species also migrates in and out of regions in Scotland, Scandinavia, the Baltic States and Northern Russia. Preferring shallow, protected waters of from 5 to 15 ft, when they're here in winter, they inhabit our saltwater inlets and coastal bays. In these environs their diets include highly varied crustacean protein sources like krill, barnacles, seed shrimp, fish lice and crabs. They also feed on mollusks such as snails, slugs, clams, mussels, scallops, squid and oysters. The seeds of water plants such as pondweeds and bulrushes provide important food sources for them as well.

Since these ducks are heavily hunted, they need all the mechanisms for escape they can muster. Unusual for most waterfowl, they only require a running start of 3 to 6 feet to take off from the water. Strong, fast flyers, they can quickly gain altitude, reaching speeds of up to 40 miles an hour. You may hear them approaching overhead with the low, loud metallic whistles of the males as they fly over. Rarely out of the water, they do occasionally walk on land with an erect, vertical stance due to their feet being located close to their tail. This helps them to dive, swim and forage more efficiently under water. At 18" long with a wingspan of 27" they are larger than their close genetic cousins, the Bufflehead, and are considered medium-sized sea ducks. Aggressive, territorial birds, they dominate most other duck species and often challenge them when feeding and nesting.

The birds begin courting soon after they arrive in the fall. Often a group of males will position themselves near a single female and perform an elaborately choreographed routine including throwing their heads back with their bills pointed towards the sky, all uttering a shrill call in unison. They may also make exaggerated short flights close to the female. By December many of the females will have made their choices and formed monogamous pairs. They and their male partners will stay together feeding heavily in anticipation of their northern migration in April back to the boreal forests, lakes, and beaver ponds to breed and procreate.

Since the female does not mate until her second year, once she's flown to her new summer territory she begins looking secretly for a nesting opportunity she'll use the next season. The older females will have generally returned to their previous nest sites; however there is a documented scarcity of those. Though the females will use nest boxes if nothing else is

available, they prefer dead trees with sparse limbs, the cavities in which have been carved by Pileated Woodpeckers. The cavity must be 5 to 60 ft. above the ground and close to water. She may also consider a hole in a live tree that has easy accessibility through the limbs. Once she has chosen the cavity, she forms an 8" bowl of wood pieces and shavings, lining it with her own breast feathers. While she works, the male forcibly defends their territory. Finally in this dark, secret, snug environment she lays one clutch of 4 to 9 green to bluish green eggs that she will incubate for approximately 30 days.

If she's lucky she will raise her brood quietly after the male abandons her midway through the incubation. But wait. What she might not have expected is that other females may crowd into her nest and lay their own eggs there as well. Now the original mother must patiently incubate all those eggs. Parasitic egg laying, both within and between species, is not unusual with the Common Goldeneye. While it's possible for one nest to hold many more eggs than one clutch, in fact the parasitic number can reach upwards of 20 to 40 eggs. How those can fit into a single nest is difficult to imagine and in those crowded conditions successful hatching tends to be low. Another extreme danger to eggs and hatchlings is predation from crows and large gulls. When the hatchlings finally emerge they are fully covered in black and white down and their eyes are open. Ready to jump from the nest in one day after hatching, they quickly follow their mother to the relative safety of the water where they begin feeding immediately. Subsequently, remaining in the boreal region with their mother through the high summer, those juveniles that have survived will take their initial flight at between 56 and 66 days of age. In the fall they begin their first long flight south to overwinter along the Pacific Northwest coast. And so goes the life cycle of the Common Goldeneye with its remarkable physical strength, mental astuteness and innate determination to survive.

You'll find Common Goldeneye beginning in October and in larger numbers by November nearly anywhere locally with a saltwater shoreline, particularly at high tides. Try Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge, Potlatch State Park, Fry Cove County Park, Woodard Bay Preserve, Olympia East Bay, Capitol Lake, and Luhr Beach for a good chance to observe these stunning sea ducks.

## **BLUEBIRD SEASON WRAPS UP**

The Bluebird Project team met out at the Violet Prairie CNLM nursery site in September to finish off the season. Ken Brown, Fred Bergdolt, Mary McCallum, Kathy Prosser, and Kathleen Snyder cleaned out the nest boxes, made repairs, and painted the exterior with heat reflective paint. We hope that the paint will reduce the interior temperature of the nest boxes so that swallow nestlings will have a better chance of surviving heat spells. Bluebird nestlings weren't adversely affected by heat this summer but the swallows were.

In addition to working on the nest boxes, the group installed two twelve foot fence posts in the fields as raptor perches. In the photo above, Kathy and Kathleen (and Finn, the dog) celebrate the installation of the first post. It really, really helped that Andy Hopwood, CNLM staff, used a tractor and auger to make the 3 foot deep hole. The nursery hopes that by encouraging raptors to the fields, the rodent problems they have will be alleviated. There is an actively used kestrel box nearby which the team cleaned out as well.

Now we wait until spring 2023 and hope for even more bluebird nesting events. We had two this year and hope to build on that going forward.

## WHAT'S NEW ON THE BHAS WEBSITE

Under the Birding tab, there is a new posting on "Birding Lewis County". Rachel Hudson, who is a Board member and editor of the Echo, lives in Chehalis and has birded her county extensively. She has written up a thorough description of the places she loves to bird with all the information you will need to have an enjoyable outing.

<https://blackhills-audubon.org/lewis-county-fun-birding-places-to-explore/>

Also under the Birding tab is a new entry for Accessible Birding. Theler Wetlands Nature Preserve is a wonderful destination in Mason County. If you have mobility issues, the trick is to know where to enter it. Suzanne Wilson explored the Preserve and has written a piece that explains all that and more.

<https://blackhills-audubon.org/theler-wetlands-nature-preserve-2/>

For music lovers, we have posted a portion of a video we purchased made by the New Brunswick Symphony Orchestra. The section we chose to share highlights a murmuration of starlings set to music. If you haven't seen starlings in a murmuration, you are in for a treat. It is delightful and will be especially enjoyed by youth. The video can be found under our Youth tab.

<https://blackhills-audubon.org/bird-flight-patterns-music-concert-program/>

## WORLD MIGRATORY BIRD DAY

Light pollution and its impact on migratory birds is the focus of World Migratory Bird Day 2022, a global campaign that aims to raise awareness of migratory birds and the need for international cooperation to conserve them. Activities to mark the day will be held globally under the theme "Dim the Lights for Birds at Night".

World Migratory Bird Day was launched in 2006 to counteract the negative publicity around wild birds across the world, due to their possible role in spreading the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) or

bird flu. Since then, World Migratory Bird Day has grown around the globe, with over 2,000 events organized in over 100 countries since the campaign's inception.

World Migratory Bird Day is celebrated on two peak days each year (the second Saturday of May and October) to highlight the global phenomenon of bird migration and the need for international collaboration to better protect migratory birds and their habitats. Visit the website to learn more:

<https://www.worldmigratorybirdday.org/>

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

All chapter work is done by volunteers for whom we are very grateful. If you are interested in volunteering in something other than the opportunities listed below, please contact Kathleen Snyder [ksnyder75@gmail.com](mailto:ksnyder75@gmail.com).

**EDUCATORS:** Now that school is back in session, we would like to get OYAS (Olympia Youth Audubon Society) active again. Do you have an enthusiasm to connect youth to the natural world? We need someone to reach out to youth groups and school districts to arrange field trips. Kim Dolgin [kgdolgin@owu.edu](mailto:kgdolgin@owu.edu)

**TECHIES:** Our social media presence is solid but could use new leadership. The current Communication Chair does not even use Facebook! If you are looking to build your social media experience for career advancement, maybe this is the means to do so. Kathleen Snyder [ksnyder75@gmail.com](mailto:ksnyder75@gmail.com).

**PROJECT LEADER:** Is there anyone out there who has a passion about a birding issue and would like to take on a leadership role to make an impact? Some possible projects include a Cats Indoors Campaign, Bird Friendly Window Solutions, Lead Fishing Weight Education, and Backyard Habitat Promotion. We are here to assist in every way we can so let's talk! Kim Dolgin [kgdolgin@owu.edu](mailto:kgdolgin@owu.edu)

## BOARD RETREAT REVIEW AUGUST 27, 2022

- The Board met for its annual retreat at the home of Vice-President Kim Adelson. It was the first in-person meeting in one year and it was held outdoors.
- Leadership in a number of areas is our top priority. Board members stepped up to fill in the gaps. Carla Miller and Rachel Hudson will work on having another book club meeting. Sally Nole and Carla will work on finding speakers for our

monthly programs. Charlotte Persons will set up and run an Outreach Committee for at least a year with Stevie Morris helping.

- Kim and the Education Committee have committed to producing more short videos that classroom teachers can use in their science curriculum. The video that Kim and Capitol Land Trust made on the Inspiring Kids Preserve has been distributed to teachers in North Thurston School District; it is posted on our website as well.
- The Board voted to explore hiring an outreach contractor to reach out to the Hispanic population in the Shelton area. The Outreach Committee will head up this effort.
- A budget for the 2022-23 year was discussed and approved.
- The work of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee over the past year was reviewed and commended. This subcommittee of Outreach will be included in the exploration of hiring the Mason County contractor.
- Once again, the Board discussed Covid protocols for field trips and meetings. It was decided to allow carpools starting in October if Covid numbers remain low in the county where the field trip originates. It was also decided to continue holding our program meetings through Zoom, at least until there is a major change in Covid epidemiology.

## **Buy a Duck Stamp**

Purchasing Federal Duck Stamps is easy and a great way to support habitat conservation.

### **Why Buy One?**

Anyone can contribute to wildlife habitat conservation by purchasing a Federal Duck Stamp. Since quality wetland habitats provide habitat for a myriad of species – including threatened and endangered plants and animals – as well as provide clean water, aid in flood control, and reduce the effects of soil erosion and sedimentation, a current Federal Duck Stamp purchase allows you to be an active conservationist. Healthy habitats also enhance outdoor recreation opportunities which can provide an economic incentive to local communities.

As the longest running, single-themed stamp in the world, Federal Duck Stamps are first and foremost miniature works of art. The design itself is chosen each year in the only open juried art

competition sponsored by the federal government. Artists can also become contributors to conservation through this unique opportunity.

## How to Buy One?

Two easy ways -

1. On-line [https://store.usps.com/store/product/stamp-collectors/redhead-duck-2022-2023-souvenir-sheet-S\\_336704](https://store.usps.com/store/product/stamp-collectors/redhead-duck-2022-2023-souvenir-sheet-S_336704)

In person at the office of Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge, open Monday through Friday 9 am – 4 pm.

---

## FIELD TRIPS AND OUTINGS

### **Birding *without* Breakfast, October through December**

**Saturday, October 1: Woodard Bay Conservation Area at 7:30 a.m.** Leader: Bob Wadsworth. Walk through a beautiful forest watching for woodland species of birds to the opening to Woodard Bay for marine species. Beginning and intermediate birders invited. From Olympia: take Boston Harbor Road north, then right on Woodard Bay Road, crossing Libby Road. There is a small parking area requiring a Discover Pass on the left just before crossing the bridge over Woodard Bay; or drive across the bridge and up the hill to a County parking lot that does not require a Discover Pass -- a short walk down to the lower parking lot.

**Saturday, November 5: Meet at 8:00 a.m.** (note the later starting time for winter) **at the parking lot for KGY point** (also known as Northpoint) near the end of Marine Drive (beyond Swantown Marina), overlooking Budd Inlet; **with possible extension to Capitol Lake.** Leader: Carla Miller.

**Saturday, December 3: Mud Bay Area at 8:00 a.m.** (note the later starting time for winter). Meet at Mud Bay Park and Ride, 510 Madrona Beach Road, Olympia. Leader: Bob Wadsworth.

Birding without Breakfast walks are especially appropriate for beginning and intermediate birders. Participants will need to follow current COVID-19 protocols and sign a **liability form** relating to COVID-19.

## Birding at Grass Lake Nature Park

**Date:** Saturday, 1 October 2022

**Time:** 8-10 AM

**Trip Leader:** Lin Stern

**Description:** A slow walk through Grass Lake Nature Park. The park contains the headwaters of Green Cove Creek and one of the most environmentally intact wetland systems in northern Thurston County. Over [100 bird species](#) and [200 plant species](#) have been recorded in the park. Grass Lake Nature Park's primary functions are wildlife protection, wildlife viewing, and environmental education.

**Location:** 814 Kaiser Road NW, Olympia

**Bring:** Binoculars and a field guide if you want one. Merlin Bird ID is a great phone app for identifying birds. Dress appropriately for the day's weather.

Pre-registration for this trip is required. Please contact Miles McEvoy at [smileybirdmiles@gmail.com](mailto:smileybirdmiles@gmail.com) to register.

## Birding at Capitol Lake, North Pool

**Date:** Saturday, 8 October 2022

**Start/End:** Meet at 8 AM and plan around two hours for the walk.

**Trip leader:** Kyle Leader

**Description:** The walk is around the North Pool of Capitol Lake focusing on waterfowl

**Location:** Meet at Marathon Park, Olympia. Look for people with scopes and binoculars. Restrooms are available at Marathon Park.

**Bring:** Binoculars and a field guide if you want one. Merlin Bird ID is a great phone app for identifying birds. Dress appropriately for the day's weather.

Pre-registration for this trip is required. Please contact Kyle Leader at [kchuckles11@yahoo.com](mailto:kchuckles11@yahoo.com) to register.



## **BIRDS AND BREW**

**OCTOBER 17<sup>TH</sup>**

**LOCATION: BOSTON HARBOR MARINA  
312 73<sup>RD</sup> AVE NE OLYMPIA**

We will meet one more time this year at Boston Harbor Marina which is a lovely spot to gather and talk. It has a covered deck area with picnic tables. This is open to Black Hills members and non-members alike. Although it starts at 4:30 pm, it is a drop-in anytime event. The agenda is to enjoy each other's company and talk about birds.

Our hosts are Craig and Vicki Merkel. Questions can go to Craig at [quetsal48@comcast.net](mailto:quetsal48@comcast.net).

**DUE TO THE UNCERTAINTY SURROUNDING SHIFTING COVID PROTOCOLS, PLEASE CHECK THIS WEBSITE ON THE DAY OF OUR GATHERING FOR POSSIBLE CHANGES OF THE LIVE EVENT.**

### **Accessible Birding Trip to Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge**

**When:** Saturday, October 22, 2022, 9 – 11 AM

**Trip leader:** Mary Birchem

**Registration and contact for further information:** Pre-registration required. Please contact Mary Birchem at [mbirchem5@gmail.com](mailto:mbirchem5@gmail.com) to register.

**Description:** This event is in honor of Birdability Week, which is a celebration of birders with disabilities and other health concerns. You don't have to be a "birder" to join, and birders of all levels are welcome. This event is family friendly. We will enjoy each other's company and whatever feathered friends we happen upon. We will be traveling at a slow pace along a one-mile boardwalk trail that is flat and in good condition through woodlands and freshwater marshes. The trail is accessible from the parking lot, there are no curbs, and it is paved leading up to the boardwalk. There is an accessible bathroom at the visitors center and an accessible portable toilet about ½ mile down the trail. There may be distant gunshot noises from hunting activities, and there is some freeway background noise on portions of the trail. No pets are allowed at the refuge. There are three benches along the boardwalk loop.

Group size is limited to 12 people.

**What to bring:** Binoculars and a field guide. Merlin Bird ID is great phone app for identifying birds. Water and snacks. Dress in layers and bring a rain jacket, rain pants, and waterproof shoes if you're able. We may have extra binoculars available for use, email Mary to confirm.

**Directions:** Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge, 100 Brown Farm Rd NE, Olympia. We will start at the pond overlook next to the visitors center.

**Parking:** There are five van accessible parking spaces. There is a \$3 entrance fee at the Refuge.

## **Field Trip to Brady Loop**

**Date:** Saturday November 5

**Time:** 8:00 a.m. - 1 p.m.

**Leader:** Gary Wiles

**Description:** This destination is a seven-mile drivable loop through farmlands and adjoining woodlots and wetlands in the Chehalis River valley in eastern Grays Harbor County. We'll search for raptors, lingering shorebirds, and a variety of other species. Dress for the weather and bring water, snacks, and a spotting scope if you have one.

**Meeting location:** Meet at 8 AM at the Capitol Village Shopping Center parking lot on Cooper Point Road SW in Olympia, in front of the Ace Hardware Store. Plan to carpool. Return time will be about 1 p.m.

Group size is limited to 12 people and three cars. A Discover Pass is needed for each carpool vehicle. Call Gary at 360-943-8786 to sign up.