

# *Echo*

November 2023  
Olympia, Washington



## November Speaker Program

### Seattle's Adaptable Urban Cooper's Hawks

With Ed Deal, Master Birder & Falcon Enthusiast  
Thursday, November 9<sup>th</sup> – Social time 6:30, Program at 7 pm

**Ed will be speaking to us in person**

**At Temple Beth Hatfiloh**

**201 8<sup>th</sup> Ave SE Olympia**

**Please Join Us!**

To watch at home via Zoom, see link below.

Thirty years ago, Cooper's Hawks began colonizing urban and suburban landscapes throughout the US, developing a tolerance for living in proximity to humans. Ed Deal, from Seattle's Urban Raptor Conservancy, will provide insights into these common but elusive raptors. The Seattle Cooper's Hawk Project is one of several studies in large US cities (e.g., Milwaukee, Albuquerque) and the only one that is all-volunteer. Since 2012 the group has monitored the hawk's nesting density and annual nest productivity. The trend for these birds is definitely on the increase; the population has nearly tripled in just 12 years. Please join us to learn about the hawk, their nest site fidelity, migration and dispersal patterns as well as the protocols used for the study.

**IMPORTANT:** You can participate in this program in one of two ways: live or online.

Live – Join us in person at Temple Beth Hatfiloh at the address above. For those attending the program in person, there will be a social time from 6:30 to 7:00 with snacks and tea, but the program itself starts at 7:00 pm.

Online – Register for the Zoom option at the link below and log on at 7:00 pm.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYvduGuqj8vGNRfpHBaRZrV4p9ppNteoSVU>

## **Friends of BHAS Invited to Remember Burt Guttman**

Burt Guttman's friends and family will gather on Sunday, November 12 at 2 p.m. at the Prosperity Grange on Steamboat Island to share memories of Burt. Burt was a long-time educator, author, and advocate for protecting our planet, but he was especially passionate about birds and birding! Burt was a longstanding volunteer who led the early Birding 101 classes, edited the *Echo*, and was a fieldtrip leader for BHAS for many years; he was recognized as a recipient of the "Dave McNett Environmental Educator of the Year" award in 2012. **All are invited to join this Celebration of Life.** You can RSVP to his daughter as noted in the invitation below, or at <https://forms.gle/WeZi6MvhV8HeyZa87>

March 2, 2024

# SAVE THE DATE!

March 2, 2024

YES! Our Annual Dinner – which has been on hiatus for five years----is being revived! Mark your 2024 calendar for **Saturday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>** at South Puget Sound Community College. Plans are excitedly being made for a Scrumptious Buffet, an Amazing Program and lots of other fun events! Details to follow in the next *Echo*. Happily, this feathered flock is gathering once again!

### **Armchair Birding: Crossings**

**How Road Ecology is Shaping the Future of Our Planet, by Ben Goldfarb**

~ Anne Kilgannon

Recent readers of the New York Times book review of *Crossings* may have come away with the notion that Goldfarb's new book is more about the human side of road infrastructure than the challenge roads present to every other being with whom we share living space. True, he does include important discussions about how roads have been the means of dividing human communities and exacerbating inequalities and spreading noise and pollution, as mentioned in the review, but that comes after a granular examination of how the rest of creation copes—or doesn't—with our miles and miles of concrete spread over hills, dales and rivers.

He generously describes the indefatigable work of many who have for years and presently continue to examine our roads for the dangers and obstructions they present to moose, elk, deer, bears, snakes, salamanders, frogs and toads, birds of all sizes, mice and hedgehogs, chipmunks, coyotes, cougars, foxes, badgers, armadillos, possums... insects! He has a whole section on monarch butterflies! And don't forget—he doesn't—our iconic salmon and other fish and water residents. This book is about their lives and deaths, and how we humans can do better by learning about and addressing their needs to survive and thrive.

The cameo-presented humans themselves are tightly focused on the animals on their watch, first counting them to understand the toll roads exact: literally, how many bodies are roadside to tell the tale of where and how roads pose a danger or an impediment to just getting around or through an area. The death numbers are astonishing, sickening, really, and only represent a portion of the damage done. (Goldfarb explains that many animals will struggle away from the road to die hidden in the bushes where we cannot see them. He also describes the quick work of scavengers—from vultures to insects—who clean up the carnage before we can tabulate it. Their role is also an important part of the story. And not all of them survive their clean-up work; many get hit by cars as they crouch on the side of roads.) He teaches us to see our roads from their points of view, their lives and needs.

Still, field researchers have amassed a pretty clear picture of road impacts, enough to discern patterns and prescribe remedies. The more we can understand animal migrations, feeding habits, nighttime behaviors and the like, the better we can design or mitigate for safer passages, or even relocate roads to areas away from turtle and frog habitats, elk paths to feeding and birthing locations, and young salmon struggling to find the sea and later returning to natal waters for spawning. With knowledge we can design and build bridges, accessible and right-sized culverts and tunnels, guiding fences, warning lights and sensors, and other mechanisms to keep animals and cars separate and safe.

Ironically, many of the improvements in these innovations and practices came about not for the sake of the animals but because of the human toll in deaths and damages to vehicles and structures caused by collisions, especially with the larger animals. But skidding over frogs and insects has its dangers, too! Co-existence, it turns out, can be justified—let's be pragmatic as needed—by the costs of insurance payouts. But more and more, people pressure—you and me—can insist we include animal well-being as a priority when planning transportation projects in the first place and when adapting older structures to the reality of the needs of other creatures. We need to press for better culverts under our roads, for salmon and other creatures using watery passageways for migration, creating greater genetic mixing of populations, and for seasonal foraging. We need to find ways to finance bridges over highways for safer routes for everything from cougars needing mates and better hunting grounds to squirrels that need to extend their ranges.

We need more studies, more imaginative thinking, more empathy for all beings. In short, we need to find more ways to share the earth with all earth citizens, tax paying and not. And we can do it! This book is full of really amazing solutions and practices. As grisly as this topic is—Goldfarb spares neither himself nor his readers in confronting the reality of *roadkill*—he brims with hope and creative ideas of how we can make a difference. As Mary Oliver in her poem, “Wild Geese” advises, “You only have to let the soft animal of your body love what it loves.” To see the world as a deer or a crow or a monarch butterfly does and then cross the road—safely—as they might need to do. Goldfarb has written a much needed primer to get us there.

## Urban Trees Code Update

Next Steps, including YOURS, to Protect Thousands of Urban Trees

Charlotte Persons

The September issue of The Echo had a long article that explained the long term effects of the Washington Wildland-Urban Interface Code – the destruction of thousands of trees in Western Washington. Have Black Hills Audubon Society and other conservation organizations been successful in getting the code amended? Well, not yet! But we are closer to that goal.

And YOU can help convince the SBCC to amend the code by signing the petition at <https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/tree-loss-equals-more-forest-fires?source=direct> [link&](#)

In brief, the WWUIC requires that the owners of new and existing residences use ignition-resistant building materials on the exteriors or create defensible space of 30, 50 or 100 feet around each residence. The WWUIC applies in intermix/interspace areas and wildlands (agricultural lands in Thurston County) designated by a WA DNR map—actually more than half of Western Washington. The net result over the years will be the destruction of thousands of trees.

Since the September issue of this newsletter, Restoring Earth Connections, city and county planning officials, and many others called or met with the fifteen members of the State Building Code Council (SBCC) to explain the many problems with the WWUIC. Michael Feerer of the Whatcom Million Trees Project, Restoring Earth Connections and I wrote a white paper for the SBCC asking for the removal of defensible space from the WWUIC. The Association of Washington Cities wrote a four-page letter that pointed out every confusing, vague and contradictory part of the code and listed seven state laws that conflict with the defensible space requirements.

The result of this work was an agenda item to discuss the WWUIC at the SBCC meeting on October 20. Brad Medrud, Long Range Planning Manager for Tumwater, testified about the WWUIC’s problems, and members of Restoring Earth Connections and BHAS testified about the defensible space requirement. A letter from Chad Hanson, a wildfire scientist, was read into

the record: his research found that trimming trees 10 feet up the trunk was effective in preventing housing from burning in wildfires, but clearing trees was not.

During the discussion, all twelve SBCC members in attendance appeared to agree that the WWUIC has many problems, especially the WA Department of Natural Resources map referenced in the code and the defensible space requirements.

However, the councilors could not agree on a solution, so they asked that the WWUIC be put on the agenda for their November 17 meeting. They will request information from WA DNR on the map and from the Department of Commerce on the state development laws and codes that conflict with the WWUIC.

The effective date for the building code that includes the WWUIC is March 15, 2024. Conservationists want to prevent the WWUIC from being implemented. We hope the SBCC will use one of two procedures, an amendment or an emergency rule, so that the WWUIC does not go into effect until the end of the SBCC's 3-year code cycle in 2026. Then the SBCC will have three years to improve the code.

We need to convince the SBCC that implementing the WWUIC will cause many problems and unnecessarily destroy many trees. Stay tuned for the next part of this still unfolding story...

## **Black Hills Audubon Willapa Hills Field Trip Report: October 14, 2023**

By Grace Thornton

A group of nine met at the Hillburger Road parking area of the Willapa Hills Trail. Cloudy and cool but no rain. There were some Golden Crowned Sparrows and Bewick's Wrens, and we heard a Varied Thrush and Spotted Towhee.

We then headed over to look at Hillburger Pond for possible waterfowl and we did manage to find a few different species. There was a large number of Cackling Geese, mixed with Mallard, Gadwall, Wigeon, a few Ring-Necked Ducks and Greater White Fronted and Canada Geese. Also in the mix were 4 Pied-billed Grebes. Red-winged Blackbirds were in the reeds across the pond, and one Belted Kingfisher gave a flyover.

We worked our way to the trail and spotted many more birds, including Bald Eagle, Song Sparrow, American Robins and many Bewick's Wrens along the route. As we ventured further down the trail, many of the geese from the pond flew over us in formation. We were able to catch a bit of the solar eclipse and it seemed that the bird activity increased as the eclipse waned.

We were able to find a small flock of Yellow-rumped Warblers, some Golden-crowned Kinglets, and the ever present Black-capped Chickadees. We got a nice look at a group of Cedar Waxwings and a Downy Woodpecker, and many Northern Flickers were present.

All in all, we had a nice birding day, with a good species distribution and some new bird enthusiasts joining us for the trip.

## 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).

**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)

**YOUTH LEADER:** The Education Committee is looking for volunteers to participate in OYAS, our youth birding program. We need an individual who is willing to contact Boy and Girl Scout troops, homeschooling groups, etc. to set up bird walks with the children/teens. In addition, we are recruiting additional volunteers to lead those bird walks. For additional information, contact Kim Adelson at [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).

**PHOTOGRAPHERS:** BHAS has a photo gallery on our website and an Instagram account (Blackhills352). We would love to add new bird photographs to these platforms. Please contact Quentin Phillips at [gmp932@hotmail.com](mailto:gmp932@hotmail.com). He will give you the parameters for what we can use.

## WHAT'S YOUR "SPARK" BIRD??

Answers from some avid BHAS Birders

Why are YOU interested in birds? Below we continue our series of articles on which birds “sparked” individuals to become birders. This very question was presented to the monthly “Birds & Brew” gang and here is one of their answers.

**Danielle Thompson**, an enthusiastic birder and Birds & Brew member, wrote:

“My spark bird is the Varied Thrush. I first heard (not saw) this amazing bird on a hike in the Commonwealth Basin (near Snoqualmie Pass). I was just amazed by its beautiful ethereal call resounding out during the day. I just had to find out what was making that call. Now I’m happy to report that we have had our biggest and longest stay of Varied Thrushes in our backyard last winter!”

Fun Fact: One of the first ever birdsong recordings was of another member of the Varied Thrush’s family (Turdidae): the White-rumped Shama. A gentleman by the name of Ludwig Koch from Germany recorded this captive bird in 1889 using an Edison wax cylinder.

Listen to its call here: <https://macaulaylibrary.org/asset/217557971>

Check out a YouTube video here:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VP4kQfFQ2e8&ab\\_channel=AmericanBirdConservancy](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VP4kQfFQ2e8&ab_channel=AmericanBirdConservancy)

Share your own “spark” bird with us----you may well inspire others!

Email [Stephaniemrrs2gmail.com](mailto:Stephaniemrrs2gmail.com)

By Stevie Morris

## **SUMMARY OF THE 2023 BLUEBIRD PROJECT**

Kathleen Snyder

The bluebird team wrapped up the nesting season with our volunteers cleaning out, repairing, and installing new nest boxes in two locations where we had monitors and in two locations where we did not. Everyone involved enjoyed the seeing all the activity on prairies filled with wildflowers; here are the results:

Violet Prairie with 14 boxes –	Western Bluebird successful nests	2
	Violet-green Swallow	2
	Tree Swallow	2
	House Wren	2
Glacial Heritage with 38 boxes –	Bluebird successes	9
	Violet-green Swallow	7
	Tree Swallow	8
	House Wren	2
	Unknown Swallow	5

The two locations that did not have monitoring were Tenalquot Prairie and Cavness Ranch. Cavness had some successful swallow nests but no bluebirds. Bluebirds have been seen in this location so our team will try moving the nest boxes out of the oak trees and onto the fields. Tenalquot did have bluebird as well as swallow and House Wren successes. Some of the nest boxes there are quite old and need replacing and most need a new numbering system. The team will get out there before spring to accomplish these tasks.

If you are interested in joining our team, please let me know at [ksnyder75@gmail.com](mailto:ksnyder75@gmail.com).

## DIY FIELD TRIPS

During the first year of Covid, when all of our field trips were cancelled, a group of dedicated field trip leaders went out on their own to describe destinations that our members and visitors could use to pursue Do-It-Yourself trips. The results were posted on our website and are still available. There are 28 of these excursions with all kinds of adventures for you to enjoy. They range from Taylor Wetlands in Olympia which is around half a mile of walking to hiking through the mountains of east Lewis County. There are outings in all three of our counties – Thurston, Lewis and Mason – for all levels of birders to explore. Please avail yourself of the expertise of our field trip leaders who give directions, bird lists, and other hints to make your outing a success.

Here is the link to these listings:

<https://blackhills-audubon.org/diy-field-trips/>

## SAVE THE DATE – CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT 2023

December is right around the corner and that means it's time to be thinking about the Christmas Bird Count. It will be the 124<sup>th</sup> count this year which is rather amazing. To learn more about the long-



running Christmas Bird Count, the National Audubon Society has plenty of information [here](#). If you have participated in the past or would like to try it for the first time, save these dates for the two counts that Black Hills Audubon sponsors. All the information you need to sign up will be published in our December Echo.

OLYMPIA CIRCLE WITH BILL SHELMEERDINE	SUNDAY	DEC 17 <sup>TH</sup>
LEWIS COUNTY CIRCLE WITH ALLISON ANHOLT	SATURDAY	DEC 23 <sup>TH</sup>

### Next Book Club Meeting!

After spending a lovely evening outside and discussing the BHAS Book Club's previous book choice (*Better Living Through Birding*, by Christian Cooper), it is now time to look ahead to our next book discussion!

Our next meeting will be via Zoom on Tuesday, November 14<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 PM.

The book we will be reading and chatting about next is Jennifer Ackerman's new book, *What an Owl Knows: The New Science of the World's Most Enigmatic Birds*. In this book, Ackerman brings current "research alive with her own personal field observations about owls and dives deep into why these birds beguile us. *What an Owl Knows* is an awe-inspiring exploration of owls across the globe and through human history, and a spellbinding account of their astonishing hunting skills, communication, and sensory prowess. By providing extraordinary new insights into the science of owls, *What an Owl Knows* pulls back the curtain on the nature of the world's most enigmatic group of birds." – (excerpt from publisher's summary).

Please email Rachel Hudson at [lightningdash09@yahoo.com](mailto:lightningdash09@yahoo.com) to be on the mailing list for the Zoom invite link, which we will send out prior to the event.

# WE'RE LOOKING FOR A FEW GOOD FOLKS

Our Black Hills Audubon Board is an engaged group with each Board member involved in different aspects of the chapter's work. Our Board has eleven members at present and we're looking for the next cohort of leaders to come forward – people who are passionate about bird conservation and the environment.

Doesn't this sound like you?

In particular, we need a Vice-President who is organized and willing to “learn the ropes” of our chapter’s mission, structure, and process. We are coming out of Covid restrictions with renewed energy and exciting new projects.

Come and be a part of this!!

**Contact Kim Adelson**

[pres@blackhills-audubon.org](mailto:pres@blackhills-audubon.org)

**Peregrine falcons set off false alarms to make prey easier to catch, study finds**

by Frontiers

“Predators must eat to survive—and to survive, prey must avoid being eaten. One theory, the Wolf-Mangel model, suggests predators could use false attacks to tire prey out or force them to take bigger risks, but this has been hard to show in practice. Now, scientists observing peregrine falcons have found evidence that they deliberately exhaust their prey to improve later hunting success.”

Read more about the hunting strategies of Peregrine Falcons and their interactions with a common prey item for them in the Pacific Northwest—the Dunlin—in this article first published by Frontiers: <https://phys.org/news/2023-10-peregrine-falcons-false-alarms-prey.html>

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## FIELD TRIPS AND OUTINGS

### Birding With Breakfast

**Date:** Saturday, November 4

**Time:** 8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. (still on PDT, but note the later starting time)

**Leader:** Carla Miller

**Description:** **Birding with Breakfast at Capitol Lake.** Participants will view birds on the water on both the North and South Pools, and related areas. Birding with Breakfast walks are especially appropriate for beginning and intermediate birders. Breakfast at the Spar Café, 114 4th Ave E, Olympia, WA 98501.

**Meeting location:** Meet at Marathon Park, 1011 Deschutes Pkwy SW, Olympia 98501.

No registration needed.

### Field Trip to Brady Loop

Saturday, November 11, 8:00 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Leader: Gary Wiles

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, Sandhill Cranes, and a variety of other species. Dress for the weather and bring water, snacks, and a spotting scope if you have one. Meet at the Mud Bay park-and-ride at 8 a.m. and 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.

## BIRDS AND BREW

**MONDAY    NOVEMBER 20<sup>TH</sup>    4:30 – 6:30 PM**

**NEW LOCATION: EQUAL LATIN RESTAURANT & BAR**  
**520 FOURTH AVE E**  
**OLYMPIA**

(Diagonally opposite from Olympia City Hall on corner of 4<sup>th</sup> and Cherry)

Unfortunately, our traditional space to meet, Fish Tale Brew Pub, has closed down. We are excited to find Equal Latin as a replacement. Pros – central location and our own room. Cons – street parking so you might want to give yourself extra time to find a spot. 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.

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

### **Birding With Breakfast**

**Date: Saturday, December 2**

**Time:** 8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

**Leader:** Bob Wadsworth

**Description: Birding with Breakfast at LBA Woods.** Participants will be led on trails in the LBA Woods to see and hear woodland species. These trails have slight ups and downs. Birding with Breakfast walks are especially appropriate for beginning and intermediate birders. Breakfast location TBD.

**Meeting location:** Meet at LBA Woods, 3500 Amhurst Street SE, off Morse-Merryman Rd. SE, Olympia.

No registration needed.