

Harlequin Happenings

Newsletter of the Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society (OPAS) www.olympicpeninsulaaudubon.org (www.olybird.org) Clallam County, Washington A Chapter of the National Audubon Society Issue 3 May-June 2024

"Promoting Birding and Conservation as Community Educators, Volunteers, and Stewards"

OPAS Programs for May and June

by Tom Butler

May Program

"Congruence: With Cranes of the Pacific Flyway" Presented by Bob Steelquist Wednesday, May 15, 2024, at 7:00pm Dungeness River Nature Center, Rainshadow Hall Free to attend.

Bob Steelquist has been a resident of Blyn for nearly 50 years, arriving in 1977 to work for Olympic National Park as a trail crew leader. In the meantime, he devoted his education, career, and volunteer board service to



education and communicating natural history and environmental conservation. Along the way, he has authored 13 books and has presented countless public presentations on a wide range of environment and history subjects.

Bob Steelquist

Over the last six years, he's

embarked on a project to photograph Sandhill Cranes of the Pacific Flyway in every season and in locations as distant as the San Joachin Valley and the Kenai Peninsula, as well as most places in between. Bob illuminates West Coast cranes' lives and migrations and reflects on crane/human connections, past, present and

future. Bob is a proud OPAS member, trip co-leader and photography instructor for BirdFest. Don't miss this



Sandhill Cranes by Dee Renee Ericks

opportunity to gain fascinating insights into these enigmatic, primeval-looking birds. Join us as we explore the congruence between cranes and their environment!

June Program

"Bottoms Up! How Diving Birds Survive and Thrive in the Salish Sea" Presented by Bob Boekelheide Wednesday, June 19, 2024, at 7:00 pm Dungeness River Nature Center, Rainshadow Hall Free to attend

Many water birds in the Salish Sea are "divers," meaning that they submerge themselves from the surface of the water to pursue prey below the surface, using their wings and/or feet for propulsion. Local diving birds include loons, grebes, murres, guillemots, auklets,



cormorants, and diving ducks. Some go all the way to the bottom to capture prey like mollusks and crustaceans, whereas others capture fish and other organisms in the middle of the water column. How

Rhinoceros Auklet by John Gatchet

do they do it? How deep can they go? How do their bodies cope with the physiological changes as they head into the abyss and then return to the surface?

Bob Boekelheide was the first director of the Dungeness River Audubon Center, as well as a biologist at Point Reyes Bird Observatory in California and a high school science teacher in Washington. He loves data.

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Bob Boekelheide

President's Notes

by Ken Wiersema

BirdFest 2024

The forecasted net revenues for

this year almost certainly will exceed those of 2023. Our Great Thanks to the excellent accomplishments of our field trip leaders, again led and organized by Bob Boekelheide. I extend a special thanks to those who stepped up to help with field trips for the 1st time. And there were several new events this year with new volunteer leaders taking the reins. Well Done! Vanessa Fuller, again did a superb job of putting together a successful, educational, and fun event. Many thanks to her and the Center's staff for a week in which we can each take pride. BirdFest is a unique event for the Center, as it's not purely a fundraiser, in contrast to dinners on the Bridge, "Give Big" campaigns, and golf tournaments. Its emphasis on seeing and learning about wildlife and the regional habitats is essential to their lives. BirdFest renews our commitment to the core missions of both OPAS and the Center.

OPAS Board of Directors

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Contact E-mail: <u>president</u> @olympicpeninsulaaudubon.org



Farewell to Powell Jones

On 30 April, Powell Jones departed from his role as Director of the Dungeness River Nature Center. He leaves after serving the Center in progressively responsible roles as one of its 1st AmeriCorps volunteers, then joining the staff as our 1st education lead, and for over 10 years as our Center's Director. He takes with him our respect and appreciation for his leadership and dedication to wildlife and the natural world. He and his family will remain in his native Sequim community, as he takes on his new role as lands manager for the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe. Our best to yah! **Big Thanks** Powell... and we'll see you around! Note: Annette Nesse will be serving as the interim director of the Center until a new director is hired.

Birdathon 2024

As you read this newsletter, you should have received our letter asking you to participate in Birdathon 2024 and to contribute financial support to OPAS's programs. Bob Boekelheide has an article in this edition with bird counting instructions. This year we have decided to commit a portion of our annual income to initiating a scholarship program for local high school graduates. We plan to have this be a continuing annual contribution to the young folks of our community. You will also see in this edition the count sheets for our County wide annual bird census. Please get out and count birds in your yard and neighborhood. Your letter explains Birdathon activities and the ways we encourage you to participate. This year Birdathon occurs on Saturday May 11th, also International Migratory Bird Day. Please join us to Count Birds and to Give! For those who have not renewed their membership yet for 2024, you may also renew as a supplement to your Birdathon contribution. Thanks!

Audubon and Naming

Due to the workload of BirdFest, and Birdathon, we have again delayed polling our members on making a change to our name. As you know, several of the larger urban chapters removed "Audubon" from their name. In the West, those include Seattle, Portland, and San Francisco. Those chapters remain in the Audubon network. Your OPAS board will consider renaming our chapter. We too would plan to stay in the national network. In the near future we plan to survey OPAS members on whether we should remove Audubon from our name. Thanks for your patience and understanding.

Our "Harlequin Happenings" Editor

Our newsletter editor for over 15 years, Rob Hutchison, is in recovery from a 2nd surgery. The timing of his return remains undetermined. Our OPAS Board and article writers have again put together this edition, led by our multi-skilled, and dedicated Webmaster, Mary Porter-Solberg. In times of need, Mary again answers our call! Thanks!

Harlequin Happenings

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Bob has compiled the Sequim-Dungeness Christmas Bird Count and Clallam County Migration Count for OPAS since 1995, as well as initiated several community science projects and surveys. Join Bob as he describes how these birds adapt to life underwater, opening up a whole new world of prey possibilities.

Backyard Birding Program

May and June

by Rhonda Coats



Backyard Birding 2023-2024 Series Update

In March, a record number of attendees (117) enjoyed Bob Boekelheide's presentation on "Bird Migration." Bob focused on the migratory bird species seen in Clallam County—discussing why they migrate, how they navigate, and the routes they travel. He emphasized why migration stopovers in Clallam County, such as Dungeness Bay and riparian forests, are so important for certain species. The series continued in April with "Sounds of Spring," presented by Ken Wiersema and Dow Lambert—featuring Dow's excellent local photos as well as his sound and video recordings. Attendees increased their bird identification abilities by recognizing bird songs and calls of spring heard throughout our local yards, fields, forests, and shores. Coming attractions for the series include:

Backyard Birding: "Bird Insectivores" Presenter: Ken Wiersema Saturday, May 4, 2024 10:30 am-12:00 pm *(please note special start time)* Rainshadow Hall at Dungeness River Nature Center

In May, Ken Wiersema will present on the topic of "Bird Insectivores"—specifically birds that feed mainly on insects, spiders, and invertebrates. Ken has prepared this brand-new seminar as a companion to the May 11th Clallam County Birdathon and World Migratory Bird Day. This year, the theme for World Migratory Bird Day underscores the vital significance of insects for migratory

birds. These birds depend on energy from protein-rich insects being available at the right times in each annual cycle to feed



Western Bluebird with insect by Cindy Fullwiler

chicks at their nesting destinations and to fuel migratory flights. Insectivorous birds are at risk as insect populations dwindle due to a host of reasons, including pesticides, herbicides, climate change, industrialized agriculture, and habitat degradation.

Backyard Birding: "Out of the Nest—the Vulnerability of New Birds" Presenter: Ken Wiersema Saturday, June 1, 2024 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Rainshadow Hall at Dungeness River Nature Center

On June 1st, Backyard Birding continues with "Out of the Nest" presented by Ken Wiersema. This program will delve into the roles parent birds play in protecting,



feeding, and leading their offspring as they grow and leave their nests. Late spring and early summer are vulnerable times in the life of fledglings and new birds. Ken will expand on how different species vary in raising their young.

Barn Swallows by Mick Thompson

Attendees will gain an understanding of changing food needs in early bird development and will learn ways to make their yards more inviting and less hazardous for young birds.

Admission to the series is free. However, we suggest a donation of \$5.00 per person to support our ongoing education and bird conservation programs.

2024 Clallam County Birdathon/World Migratory Bird Count by Bob Boekelheide



May 11, 2024, is World Migratory

Bird Day, a day to celebrate migratory birds. On that day, which traditionally occurs on the second Saturday in May, we hold our Clallam County Birdathon, counting birds throughout Clallam County and raising money for OPAS projects at the same time. We have learned a huge amount about birds of the Olympic Peninsula through this annual count.

The theme for this year's World Migratory Bird Day is the importance of insects for migratory birds. The decline of *(Continued on page 4)*

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many insect populations due to pesticides and habitat loss threatens many insectivorous birds, whose nesting success and migrations depend on energy- and proteinrich insects being available at the right times to feed chicks and fuel migratory flights.

In early May, OPAS members will receive a Birdathon letter, inviting them to contribute through donations or pledges for the count. Regardless of your location in Clallam County on May 11, your bird count is invaluable. Whether you spend the entire day observing, dedicate an hour or two to counting, or simply monitor the birds in your own backyard feeders, every observation matters - even the common sparrows and hummingbirds hold significance.

Participants can record their observations using the tally sheet included with this issue of Harleguin Happenings or use eBird to keep your tallies. If you haven't already, consider setting up an eBird account to streamline your data entry process. Line up sponsors for your count, which will aid OPAS and River Center programs. Or, if you're so inclined, please sponsor other counters and we'll represent you as we tally the birds. Thank you very much for your help!

A message from the field trip chair

by Marie Grad, Field Trip Coordinator

I had hoped to have some upcoming field trips to report. Unfortunately, one of our leaders has had to step back from her trips to attend to a family matter. I am working with others who have led



trips to try and get some trips scheduled. There are two trips scheduled for June. I am leading a trip to the Fish Hatchery and the clearcut above the hatchery on June 10th. Bob Boekelheide plans to do a shorebird trip to 3 Crabs and Dungeness landing on June 30th. Look for the announcements for these trips on the May and June OPAS website Events Calendar. I am always looking for new leaders and ideas for trips. I can be contacted through the OPAS website.

Wednesday Morning Bird Walks

Date and Time: Every Wednesday morning at 8:30 am Meeting Place: Outside Dungeness River Nature Center Features: Easy guided bird walk through Railroad Bridge Park to see birds of the Dungeness River riparian area and adjacent fields and open areas.

Bring: Binoculars, scope, water, snacks, and appropriate clothing for the weather.

OPAS Western Bluebird/Climate Watch May 15 by Joyce Volmut



Spring is here and the birds are

singing everywhere. They are calling you to go birding and take part in the OPAS Climate Watch Survey that starts May 15.

By participating in the Climate Watch Survey volunteers collect data which helps Audubon scientists document how birds are responding to climate change. The climate change survey is different from other surveys. It's based on a research model that requires certain variables. It must be stationary, which means that you stand in one spot and the count period is only 5 minutes at each point.

Although you are asked to count all birds, only specific target birds are documented; the American and Lesser Goldfinch. the Western and Mountain Bluebird, the Spotted Towhee, and the



Mountain Bluebird by Cindy Fullwiler

Red-breasted Nuthatch.

Audubon Researchers are looking at these target birds to see how they will respond to Climate Change. It's worth saying again that Climate Change is the greatest threat to birds in our lifetime and a public health threat to humans. Some only think of Climate Change as normal changing weather patterns. It is, however, the manifestation of changing weather patterns that are the real threat such as severe drought, flooding, wildfires and extremes in temperature and storms. According to Audubon's 2019 climate change report, Survival by Degrees, up to twothirds of North American birds are vulnerable to extinction because of these changes.

There are nine chapters in the state of Washington that now participate in the Climate Watch Survey. Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society was the first. OPAS started the program in search of the Western Bluebird, specifically where it nested, and consequently the Western Bluebird is well-documented in our area. The other target birds are undercounted, however. What we need are more backyard volunteers to capture other birds, such as the

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goldfinch with its bright colors coming to your feeder, the Spotted Towhee hopping and kicking up leaves under bushes, and the Redbreasted Nuthatch calling and bringing its



American Goldfinch by Jim Gift

young to your backyard feeders and suet.

You don't need to be a member of the Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society to participate. Climate Watch is open to the public. Ask your neighbors to join you. Make this the biggest count for all the target birds. If you or anyone you know is interested in volunteering, please contact me at joyce.volmut@gmail.com

Conservation Matters Pigeon Guillemot Breeding Survey begins in June by Bob Phreaner



Pigeon Guillemots (PIGU) are comical, engaging seabirds and an important indicator species for marine ecosystems across the Salish Sea. They harvest the nearshore waters for small fish to feed their developing chicks who are growing in burrows dug in the bluffs above beaches.

To better understand their population dynamics and their role in healthy coastal ecosystems, PIGU monitoring started in 2003 on Whidbey Island and now ranges from South Puget Sound north to Whidbey Island. Our local survey began in 2015 and is coordinated jointly by Clallam County Marine Resources Committee and OPAS.

Volunteer observers enjoy sitting quietly for one hour each week on a local beach, watching and recording burrow visits and being entertained by the sounds and antics of these seabirds. After observing Pigeon Guillemot's clumsy landings in the surf, you will appreciate the evolutionary trade-off these alcids have made to be efficient divers and swimmers needed to capture prey items. In some ways PIGUs remind me of penguins that have become more suited to the water, but unlike penguins these birds are acrobatic fliers as well. Some volunteers video or record the bird interactions and author Maria Ruth, who is a PIGU project volunteer with Black Hills Audubon, expects her newest book about PIGU behavior and vocalizations to be published soon. PIGU's are easily identified. In the summer these medium-sized seabirds are all black with white wing patches and bright red feet. To top that, close observation will reveal that the lining of their mouth is also an overthe-top red!



Pigeon Guillemots by Bob Phreaner

Most volunteers return

year after year, but there is always a need to recruit additional volunteers for newly identified nesting sites or to be occasional substitutes for vacationing regular volunteers.

As a volunteer observer you will have an assigned location on a beach where Pigeon Guillemots are breeding and feeding their developing chicks. After receiving the required online training new volunteers accompany experienced observers until the rookies are comfortable with the procedures. Observations begin the first week of June and continue for at least 10 weeks. Dressed in neutral colored clothing to blend into the beach, you will arrive at the same early morning time each week. You will record the number of PIGU at the beginning, middle, and end of your survey, the time that they visit their burrow and the type of fish they are carrying.

Don't worry, after your first day you will be able to identify the gunnels or sculpins that are the most popular forage for our local PIGU. You will also note the time and duration of disturbances to the PIGU such as raptors, walkers, and boats. You will need a clipboard and pencil to record your data, at least 7x binoculars, and a lightweight folding beach chair is recommended. Pigeon

Guillemots are very photogenic, but you must pay attention to record the data as well.

Does enjoying quiet mornings on the beach watching birds sound appealing? If interested in



Pigeon Guillemot by Bob Phreaner

becoming a Pigeon Guillemot volunteer and enjoying life on the beach, please contact me (<u>phreaner@aol.com</u>) or Ed Bowlby (<u>edbowlby2@gmail.com</u>).

Harlequin Happenings

WILDFLOWER WALKS

Join naturalist **John Bridge** & Education Manager **Montana Napier** on a search for wild treasures! Take a look at flowers from riparian forests up into the alpine.

Each month, we will offer 3 walks within the local watershed. Please sign-up for only **one per month**.

All classes will meet at the Dungeness River Nature Center at **9 a.m.** and aim to return by 3 p.m. (spring) or 4 p.m. (summer)

Lower Elevation	Deer Park, Olympic
Dungeness	National Park
April 16-18	June 19-20
May 14-16	July 23-25
	August 20-22

DRNC Members: **\$30** per class Non-Members: **\$40** per class

Must pre-register on our website: DungenessRiverCenter.org or scan QR code below











Harlequin Happenings is published six times a year. Consider "going green". Receive your newsletter electronically, in living color, by contacting the OPAS Membership Chair, Audrey Gift, at 360-681-2989, or email aggift@gmail.com

The *Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society* meets monthly (except July, August, and December) on the third Wednesday at 7 p.m. at the Dungeness River Nature Center,1943 West Hendrickson Road, Sequim, WA, 98382. The public is welcome.

TALLY SHEET FOR OPAS BIRDATHON/WORLD MIGRATORY BIRD DAY COUNT

Area counted		Route Leader Name		Date
WATERFOWL		SHOREBIRDS, cont'd	DIURNAL RAPTORS, cont'd	WRENS & DIPPERS
	Gr. White-fronted Goose	Whimbrel	Sharp-shinned Hawk	House Wren
	Brant	Marbled Godwit	Cooper's Hawk	Pacific Wren
	Cackling Goose	Ruddy Turnstone	accipiter, sp.	Marsh Wren
	Canada Goose	Black Turnstone	Bald Eagle	Bewick's Wren
	Wood Duck	Red Knot	Red-tailed Hawk	wren, sp.
	Blue-winged Teal	Surfbird	Golden Eagle	American Dipper
	Cinnamon Teal	Sanderling	raptor sp	other
	N. Shoveler	Dunlin	other	
	Gadwall	Least Sandpiper	other	STARLINGS & THRUSHES
	Eurasian Wigeon	Western Sandpiper	OWLS	European Starling
	American Wigeon	sandpiper sp.	Barn Owl	Western Bluebird
		Short-billed Dowitcher	W. Screech Owl	Townsend's Solitaire
	N. Pintail	dowitcher sp.	Great-homed Owl	Varied Thrush
	Green-winged Teal	Wilson's Snipe	N. Pygmy-Owl	Swainson's Thrush
	Ring-necked Duck	phalarope		
	Greater Scaup	Spotted Sandpiper	Short-eared Owl	Am. Robin
	Lesser Scaup	Wandering Tattler	N. Saw-whet Owl	other
	_ Scaup, sp. _ Harleguin Duck	Greater renowlegs	KINGFISHER & WOODPECKERS	WAXWINGS, HOUSE SPARROWS, & PIPIT
	_ Surf Scoter	Lesser reliowiegs		Cedar Waxwing
	_ Surf Scoter _ White-winged Scoter	other		Cedar waxwing
	Black Scoter		Red-breasted Sapscker	House Sparrow
	_ scoter sp.	JAEGERS & ALCIDS	Hairy Woodpecker	An. rpt
	_ Long-tailed Duck	jaegerjaeger	Pileated Woodpecker	
	Bufflehead	Jaeger Common Murre	Plieated woodpecker	FINCHES & SPARROWS
	Common Goldeneye	Pigeon Guillemot	N. Flicker (unk. type)	Evening Grosbeak
	Barrow's Goldeneye	Marbled Murrelet	woodpecker, sp.	House Finch
	_ goldeneye sp.	Ancient Murrelet	woodpecker, sp.	Purple Finch
	Hooded Merganser	Cassin's Auklet	FALCONS	finch, sp.
	Common Merganser	Rhinoceros Auklet	American Kestrel	Red Crossbill
	_ Red-Breasted Merganser	Tufted Puffin	American Kestrer	Pine Siskin
	_ Ruddy Duck	alcid sp.	Peregrine Falcon	Am. Goldfinch
	•	GULLS & TERNS	falcon, sp.	other finch
	_ other	Short-billed (=Mew) Gull	FLYCATCHERS	other
		Ring-billed Gull	Olive-sided Flycatcher	Chipping Sparrow
ROUSE & QU	All	Western Gull	W. Wood-Pewee	Dark-eyed Junco (Ore.)
-	_ California Quail	California Gull	Hammond's Flycatcher	White-crowned Sparrow
	Ring-Necked Pheasant	Herring Gull	Pacific-slope Flycatcher	Golden-crowned Sparrow
	Ruffed Grouse	Iceland (Thayer's) Gull	W. Kingbird	Savannah Sparrow
	Sooty Grouse	Glaucous-winged Gull	other	Song Sparrow
		Olympic Gull (Gw. X W.)	VIREOS	Lincoln's Sparrow
	_ Wild Turkey	large pink-legged gull	Hutton's Vireo	Spotted Towhee
REBES		gull sp.	Cassin's Vireo	sparrow, sp.
	Pied-Billed Grebe	other gull		other
	Horned Grebe	Caspian Tem	other	other
	Red-necked Grebe	other tern	JAYS, CROWS, RAVENS, CHICKADEES	
	Western Grebe	other	Canada Jay	BLACKBIRDS & ORIOLES
	grebe sp.		Steller's Jay	W. Meadowlark
IGEONS & DO	•	LOONS	Crow	Bullock's Oriole
	Rock Pigeon	Red-throated Loon	Common Raven	Red-winged Blackbird
	Band-tailed Pigeon	Pacific Loon	other	Brown-headed Cowbird
	Eurasian Collared-Dove	Common Loon	Black-cppd Chickadee	Brewer's Blackbird
	Mourning Dove	loon, sp.	Chestnut-backed Chckade	e other
	pigeon/dove sp.	TUBENOSES	LARKS & SWALLOWS	
WIFTS & HUN	MINGBIRDS	Sooty Shearwater	Horned Lark	WARBLERS, TANAGERS, ETC.
	Vaux's Swift	other	N. Rough-winged Swal.	Orange-crowned Warbler
	Anna's Hummingbird		Purple Martin	MacGillivray's Warbler
	Rufous Hummingbird		Tree Swallow	Com. Yellowthroat
	hummingbird sp.	CORMORANTS & HERONS	Violet-green Swallow	Yellow Warbler
	other hummingbird	Brandt's Cormorant	Barn Swallow	Yellow-rumped Warbler
		Pelagic Cormorant	Cliff Swallow	Black-throated Gray War
AILS & SHOR	EBIRDS	Double-crested Corm.	other	Townsend's Warbler
	_ Virginia Rail	cormorant, sp.		Wilson's Warbler
	Sora	American Bittern	OTHER SMALL FOREST BIRDS	other
	American Coot	Great Blue Heron	Bushtit	Western Tanager
	_ other	other	Golden-crowned Kinglet	Black-headed Grosbeak
	Black Oystercatcher		Ruby-crowned Kinglet	other
	Black-bellied Plover	DIURNAL RAPTORS	Red-breasted Nuthatch	
	Semipalmated Plover	Turkey Vulture	Brown Creeper	
		Northern Harrier	other	
		1		1

DIRECTIONS: Count birds anywhere in Clallam Co. on World Migratory Bird Day, the second Saturday in May. When finished with the count, return your lists **ASAP** to **bboek@olympus.net**.

Also, if possible please get sponsors for your count and help raise funds to support OPAS and the Dungeness River Audubon Center – Thank you very much!!

<u>Counters: Please fill out the following and turn it in with your tally sheets.</u> 1. <u>AREA(S) COVERED</u>:

2. OBSERVERS: (please include other info if we need to ask about birds seen)

	NAME	ADDRESS	PHONE	email
Leader:				
2)				
3)				
4)				

Information below about TIMES and DISTANCES are essential for count analyses, enabling researchers to make comparisons between years based on party-hours and party-miles. Please keep accurate records and estimates of TIMES and DISTANCES during the day.

3. STARTING TIME:	QUITTING TIME:
DID YOU BREAK DURING THE DAY?	FOR HOW LONG?
4. PARTY MILES AND HOURS:	
HOURS covered on foot:	MILES on foot:
HOURS covered by car:	MILES by car:
HOURS other (e.g. boat, bicycle):	MILES other:
HOURS owling:	MILES owling:
Location owling:	HOURS watching feeder:

5. <u>NOTE</u>: If your party splits up during the day, please compute the time and distances separately for each of these sub-parties, stating how many hours in each sub-party, as well as the hours and miles of the original group above. <u>THIS IS IMPORTANT!!</u>

SUB-PARTY DATA WHILE GROUPS WERE SEPARATED: HOURS on foot:	MILES on foot:
HOURS by car:	MILES by car:
HOURS other (e.g. boat, bicycle):	MILES other:
HOURS owling:	MILES owling:

Harlequin Happenings Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society 1943 W. Hendrickson Rd., Box 2 Sequim, WA 98382-0502

Sequim, WA 98382-0502		
Birdathon May 11!		
	npic Peninsula Audubon Society 1943 W Hendrickson Road, Box 2 Sequim, WA 98382	
Rugubon Society NAS Code Y08	Date:	
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	Cell Phone	
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