

# Harlequin Happenings

Newsletter of the Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society (OPAS)

[www.olympicpeninsulaudubon.org](http://www.olympicpeninsulaudubon.org) ([www.olybird.org](http://www.olybird.org))

Clallam County, Washington

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

Issue 2 March-April 2011

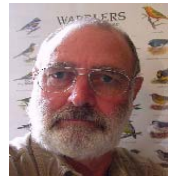
*"Promoting Birding and Conservation  
as Community Educators, Volunteers, and Stewards"*

## OPAS Programs for March and April

by Bill Parker

Wednesday, March 16, 2011, 7 p.m.

Elston and Jackie Hill present "Seabirds of Midway Atoll"



Laysan Albatross  
Photo by Elston Hill

Midway Atoll is a 2.4 square mile atoll located in the North Pacific Ocean (near the northwestern end of the Hawaiian archipelago), about one-third of the way between Honolulu and Tokyo. The two significant pieces of land, Sand Island and Eastern Island, provide habitat for millions of seabirds. The Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge, encompassing 590,991.50 acres of land and water (mostly water) in the surrounding area, is administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The visitor program reopened in January 2008 and there are facilities at the present time for receiving visitors.

Midway is best known as the location of the Battle of Midway, fought in World War II on June 4-6, 1942. Midway Atoll is now home to 67-70% of the world's Laysan Albatross population, and 34-39% of the global

black-footed albatross. While Midway supports nearly three million birds, each seabird species has carved out a specific site on the atoll in which to nest. Seventeen different species of seabirds can be found, the rarest of which is the short-tailed albatross, otherwise known as the "Golden Gooney." Fewer than 2,200 are believed to exist due to excessive feather hunting in the late nineteenth century. The FWS has recently re-introduced the endangered Laysan duck to the Atoll, while at the same time extending efforts to exterminate invasive plant species.

Elston and Jackie Hill visited Midway Atoll in 2010 and will discuss the status of the millions of seabirds that use the atoll. You can see more about their travels at [www.elstonhill.com](http://www.elstonhill.com) Elston and Jackie live near Port Angeles.

Wednesday, April 20, 2011, 7 p.m.

Kit McGurn presents "Conservation in the Columbia Highlands"

Join the Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society and Conservation Northwest for a multimedia presentation that takes an informative look at one of the wildest and least visited parts of Washington State, The Columbia Highlands. This unique landscape in the northeastern corner of WA state hosts an array of native wildlife that still exist together like nowhere else in the U.S. outside of Alaska, from grizzly bear to caribou to the ghost-like Canada lynx and wolverine. Scientific research has identified the Columbia Highlands as an important habitat bridge for wildlife between the Cascade and Rocky Mountains, one that compliments connected habitat running north and south through the Cascades. Also learn about the innovative conservation efforts  
(Continued on page 3)



Canada Lynx  
Photo by Bill Parker

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## President's Message

by Audrey Gift



As president, one of the most enjoyable things I get to do is present the Student Art awards for excellence in art related to birds. For the last three years, OPAS has participated in the student art contest at the Museum and Arts Center. It is amazing what talent we have in this community. The winners were both middle and high school students, yet were able to present birds in a realistic or stylistic manner that represents talent way beyond their years. We are hoping to have their art displayed at the Dungeness River Audubon Center during our Birdfest in April. You can see the list of winners elsewhere in this issue.

OPAS is ready for our annual Olympic Birdfest 2011 to be held at the Dungeness River Audubon Center April 8-10<sup>th</sup>. We made a number of changes this year. First is that we will no longer be charging a registration fee. This will allow people who want to go to one event to join in the festivities without an extra charge. The number of trips and other events has been expanded. But the most dramatic changes are in our Saturday night banquet. We moved the banquet to a larger facility at the Sunland Golf & Country Club, where for the first time we will be offering a choice of entrees and a no-host bar. Our speaker Chris Peterson has planned an excellent presentation. If you like hearing about bird songs and having their songs set to music, then you will want to join us for the banquet. It promises to be an outstanding evening. There are also a wide variety of bird-related offerings during the weekend ... guided trips with leaders helping you see birds, classes to learn how to photograph birds and other natural scenes, and several other offerings, as well. It promises to be a fun weekend. Register now!

Also in April is our San Juan cruise, a three-day, two-night birding cruise through the San Juan Archipelago. It departs from John Wayne Marina in Sequim on Sunday morning April 10<sup>th</sup> aboard the MV Glacier Spirit. While birdwatching is the focus, whales, porpoises, seals, and spectacular scenery are on the itinerary. Overnight accommodations will be at Roche Harbor Resort. A tour of San Juan Island, as well as a visit to Sucia Island (a state wildlife preserve) are planned. You will get to see the awesome Deception Pass on your way home. Sign up soon as the boat is filling early this year.

There is an exciting administrative change that is happening within OPAS. Thanks to the hard work of Dave Jackson, Melissa Coughlin, and others, we will have a better system to give us a clearer picture of our membership. I want to thank those of you who have been patiently (and some not so patiently) waiting for these changes to take place. It won't be long now when we can start testing the system. I want to apologize for the mistakes that have happened during this time of transition. The new database will also facilitate notifying members who wish to know when the Harlequin Happenings is posted on our website. If you are interested in receiving your newsletter on line, let me know.

**(OPAS programs, continued from page 1)**

to protect key parts of this area that are based on years of collaboration and dialogue in Northeastern Washington and seek to balance wilderness, national recreation area, and national conservation area protections with working lands and restoration forest practices.

Our speaker will be Kit McGurn, outreach coordinator for Conservation Northwest. He works to educate and engage WA citizens on landscape and wildlife conservation issues in the Pacific Northwest in order to build demand for protection of the Northwest's unique ecosystems. Previously he worked for the Sierra Club in Seattle and for the Greater Yellowstone Coalition in Idaho on Western Wolf protection and roadless area preservation.

**OPAS Field Trips in March and April**

by Bob Iddins

**Port Angeles**

*Date:* Saturday, 9 a.m., March 5, 2011 (Note date change from original schedule)

*Cost:* Free



*Leaders:* Judy Mullally, Mary Robson

*Features:* Wintering water and shorebirds of Port Angeles harbor and the Straits of Juan de Fuca. Two Snow Buntings and a Glaucous Gull hybrid have been seen several times this winter.

*Meeting place:* At the end of Ediz Hook in the area of the restrooms or boat launch.

*Bring:* Optics (scope would be helpful, if you have one), water, snacks, appropriate clothing for the changing weather conditions.

*Further information:* Judy Mullally, 360-452-5797

**Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge**

*Date:* Saturday, 9 a.m., March 26, 2011

*Cost:* Free (Nisqually NWR has an entry fee- your Federal Golden Age or Senior Pass is accepted.)

*Leaders:* Karen and Bill Parker

*Features:* Nisqually NWR is one of the premier birding destinations of western Washington with over 200 species having been seen. However there have been several changes since our last trip there. The 5.5 loop trail has been permanently closed and a new boardwalk trail has opened. This promises to be an exciting experience for all participants. Time permitting other stops including McLane Creek Nature Trail in Capital State Forest and the Olympia Trader Joe's are planned.

*Meeting place:* Meet at the refuge Visitor Center at 9 a.m. Nisqually NWR is located just off of I-5 between Tacoma and Olympia. Expect a 2 to 2.5 hour trip down to the refuge. Take exit #114 from either direction and follow the signs. <http://www.fws.gov/nisqually/visit.html>.

*Bring:* Optics, water, snacks, lunch and as usual clothing for any possible weather changes.

*Further information:* Bill or Karen Parker 360-504-2801 or [whparker@surfbirder.com](mailto:whparker@surfbirder.com).

*(Continued on next page)*

**Miller Peninsula**

*Date:* Saturday, 9 a.m., April 30, 2011

*Cost:* Free

*Leaders:* Karen and Joe Zook, Terry Martin

*Features:* Look for spring migrants and water birds. Last year, we saw Orange-crowned, Yellow-rumped, Townsend's, and Wilson's Warblers, and saw/heard both Hutton's and Cassin's Vireo in the area at this time of year. Pileated Woodpeckers are frequently seen here as well.

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*Meeting place:* The parking lot of the Longhouse (just east of 7 Cedars Casino) Please note: Parking is very limited so we will need to carpool.

*Bring:* Binoculars, snacks, water and lunch. Wear clothing appropriate for weather changes and bring or wear shoes or boots appropriate for mud and/or water. During the spring there can be large puddles which cross the path in places. Please be aware that there are no restrooms on this property.

*Further information:* Karen or Joe Zook, 360-681-3526 or [gadzooks@wavecable.com](mailto:gadzooks@wavecable.com)

## River Center Events

### Wednesday Bird Walks

*Date:* Every Wednesday morning

*Time:* 8:30 a.m.

*Cost:* Free

Meet at the River Center for a weekly walk to see and hear the birds of the lower Dungeness riparian forest. Information from these ongoing walks helps us understand the annual cycle of the birds of Railroad Bridge Park.

### Last Thursday Work Party

*Dates:* Variable during Winter (contact River Center to be added to contact list)

The volunteers of Railroad Bridge Park and the River Center need help to maintain the beauty of the Park and River Center. Please join us anytime snow removal is necessary.

### Natural Science Study Group

*Dates:* 2<sup>nd</sup> Mon. each month

*Time:* 10 a.m. to noon.

This adult discussion group focuses on the natural world of the north Olympic Peninsula, including climate, weather, rivers, geology, botany, and wildlife. Discussion topics vary with group interests. Come gain some knowledge.

### Introduction to Birds and Birding

*Dates:* Six Tues. Evenings, May 3 to Jun. 7, 7 to 9 p.m.

*Cost:* River Center Partners: \$40; non-members \$60.

This class is designed for beginning birders, new residents, and anyone who wants to better understand birds in general. These seminars include basic bird identification, bird feeders, birdhouses, field guides, and birding optics. Limit: 16 people.

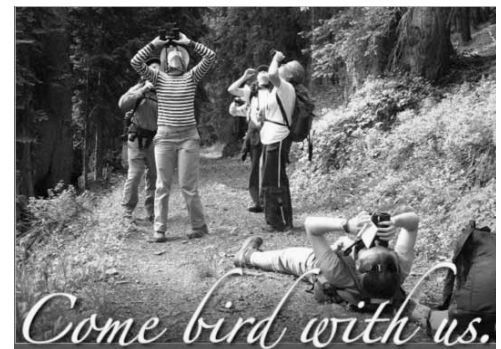
### Early Spring Birds of the North Olympic Peninsula

*Dates:* Six Thursdays, Mar.10 through Apr. 14; 9 to 11:30 a.m.

*Cost:* \$40 for River Center partners, \$60 for non-members

The calendar may say winter, but some birds have already begun breeding activities. This intermediate birding class includes several field trips to local habitats to see and hear the early breeders and winter holdovers. First lesson at the River Center; other sessions will be outside, weather permitting. Limit: 16 people.

*(Continued on next page)*



### Olympic Birdfest 2011 April 8-10, 2011 in Sequim, WA

**A bird watching vacation** for beginners to experts, from leisurely strolls to active hikes. Bird for a few hours, or all day ... from the dawn chorus to the evening owl prow. We will wake you with coffee, nourish you with locally grown organic food, and celebrate a traditional salmon bake.

**Enjoy the show** from guided birding trips, boat tours, a silent auction, banquet, and many other presentations. Our festival has a full slate of extraordinary offerings awaiting you.

**Also this year!** Stay on for a three-day, two-night birding/sightseeing cruise of the San Juan Islands. Register separately at [www.olympicpeninsulaudubon.org](http://www.olympicpeninsulaudubon.org).

**BirdFest program information and registration can be found at** [www.olympicbirdfest.org](http://www.olympicbirdfest.org)

**"Birds of Antarctica and the Falkland Islands" with Frank Todd.**

Date: Thu., Mar. 17, 7 p.m., River Center

Frank Todd is an Antarctic expert who has visited the icy continent many times in the last 40 years.

**"Birds and Natural History of Peru" with Doris Valencia.**

Date: Wed., May 4, 7 p.m. , River Center

Doris Valencia runs HabitatsPeru, a leader and guide for ecotourism trips to the Peruvian Andes and jungles.



Photo by Doug Schwarz

**San Juan Islands  
April 10-12, 2011, Sequim, WA**

Join the Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society this spring for a three-day cruise through the spectacular San Juan Archipelago. Cruise to Roche Harbor Resort and San Juan Island, whale-watching along the way. Picnic on Sucia Island State Park, and cruise home via dramatic Deception Pass. Contact 360-681-4076, or email [opas.birdfest.info@gmail.com](mailto:opas.birdfest.info@gmail.com). Register at [www.olympicpeninsulaudubon.org](http://www.olympicpeninsulaudubon.org)

**Owl Prowl in the Owllympics**

Date: Sat. March 19, 7 p.m. to after midnight.

Cost: \$30 per person

Join Bob Boekelheide on an exploratory journey in the northeastern Olympic foothills to find owls and other night creatures. You must pre-register for this trip at the River Center (681-4076); limited to 10 participants each trip. Dates may change depending on weather.

**Olympic Birdfest 2011**

Dates: Friday, April 8 through Sunday, April 10

Cost: See the Birdfest website ([www.olympicbirdfest.org](http://www.olympicbirdfest.org))

Discover birds of coastal Pacific Northwest - field trips, boat cruise in Strait of Juan de Fuca, gala banquet. A festival with most spectacular setting! See the Birdfest ad on page 4.

**San Juan Cruise**

Dates: Sunday, April 10 through Tuesday, April 12

Cost: See the OPAS website ([www.olympicpeninsulaaudubon.org](http://www.olympicpeninsulaaudubon.org))

Following Olympic Birdfest 2011, stay on for a three-day, two-night birding/sightseeing cruise of the San Juan Islands. Overnight accommodations at Roche Harbor Resort. See the San Juan Cruise ad on page 5.

**Endowment News: Celebrating the Past and Future of the River Center**

by Sue Chickman

The Dungeness River Audubon Center is achieving a milestone this year. Thanks to its partners, dedicated volunteers, and talented staff, the Center opened its doors in October, 2001 -- nearly 10 years ago. Each year, OPAS and the Center's other partners have helped to increase its appeal and value to the community. These accomplishments give us much cause to celebrate, and exciting activities are being planned. *(Continued on next page)*

This 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary year is an opportune time to celebrate and to plan for the future. Making a special anniversary gift to the Center's endowment would help towards fulfilling its mission of inspiring kids and *(Continued on next page)*



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adults to understand, enjoy, and protect our natural and cultural resources well into the future.

In a little over two years, the Endowment Fund stands at 27 percent of its \$5 million goal. If, during the rest of 2011, the Center were to receive gifts of \$10,000 for the Endowment from just 15 of its several hundred RC and partner members, its value would grow to 30 percent of the way to our goal! What a remarkable achievement that would be.

If you are considering a significant gift of any size, please contact the Center's Director, Bob Boekelheide, at 360-681-4076 to hear about the tax-advantaged ways that are available. Or, you can simply review the various gifting options listed in the endowment brochure that we mailed to you last year, or click on the Endowment link at [www.dungenessrivercenter.org](http://www.dungenessrivercenter.org).

Contributing your expertise by serving on the Center's Investment or Endowment Committees is another way you can help the River Center succeed.

The **Investment Committee** meets monthly and oversees the performance of the Center's investments and savings. To learn more about this Committee's activities, or if you have expertise with investments and would like to volunteer a bit of your time, please contact Ken Leuthold, Chair, at [leutholdkj@gmail.com](mailto:leutholdkj@gmail.com).

The **Endowment Committee** is, among other activities, developing and implementing a long-term fundraising strategy for attaining the endowment's financial goal of \$5million. If you would like to help this committee work toward fulfilling the endowment, please contact Sue Chickman, Chair, at 360-477-4123, or at [organicallysue@olypen.com](mailto:organicallysue@olypen.com). Thank you for your support and partnership during the first ten years; we look forward to your continued participation.

### Introduction to Estate Planning

On Thursday, May 12, Sequim Attorney Alan Millet presents the third in a series of financial planning programs sponsored by the Dungeness River Audubon Center. Please join him for an informative session on wills, trusts, durable powers of attorney, health care directives, and community property agreements. The free, one hour program will be offered at two times: 4-5 pm and 6-7 pm at the Dungeness River Audubon Center at Railroad Bridge Park, 2151 W. Hendrickson Rd. in Sequim.

Alan Millet has maintained a law practice in Sequim since 1981, with a general civil practice emphasizing estate planning, estate tax planning, wills, trusts, and probate. He grew up in Sequim on a dairy farm and graduated from Sequim High School in 1969. He received a Bachelor of Science Degree from BYU (*Summa Cum Laude*) in 1974, and a Juris Doctor degree from Ariz. St. Univ. in 1979.

To register for either the afternoon or the evening session, contact Sue Chickman, [\(360\) 477-4123](tel:3604774123) or [organicallysue@olypen.com](mailto:organicallysue@olypen.com). Pre-registration is advised.



Photo by Jim Gift

### Sequim Students Receive Artist Awards

During the First Friday Art Walk in February, OPAS President Audrey Gift awarded prizes to Sequim student artists for bird-related art in the Student Art Exhibit at the Museum and Arts Center. Pictured is Audrey with the first place winner, Sage Brown, who was awarded \$75 for her charcoal and pencil picture of a bald eagle in flight. The other prize winners were Miriam Davitadze, who won \$50 for "Owl" in colored pencil and acrylic; and Miriam Hazel, who won \$25 for her pen and ink "Quoth the Raven". Chancelamay Bailey and Lea Sollman received honorable mentions. All five students have been invited to exhibit their work at the River Center during the month of April.



## Conservation Matters

by Jim Gift

Washington State's financial condition continues to be a challenge to the state's environmental agenda. One of the many issues is how to provide stable funding for recreation on state lands. There is currently not enough money in the state budget to keep State Parks and other DNR recreational lands open. These are important resources to all our state residents.

The legislature is proposing a \$30 per vehicle annual pass for access to these areas. In addition, a free annual pass would be available to residents who volunteer at least 40 hours of time. This fee would provide the funds necessary to keep the recreational areas open. The two bills introduced to enable this fee are SB 5622 and HB 1796.

The OPAS Conservation Committee considered the proposed bills and ultimately agreed to support them. Our State Parks and DNR recreation areas are important areas that provide environmental opportunities to our residents; however, we did have a real concern. While a \$30 annual fee is not a big deal to many of us who use these facilities, there are many of us who are underemployed at this time and a \$30 fee might exclude a number of residents from the use of these important resources. Consequently the committee supported the legislature with the caveat that some provision be made to allow those who can not afford the fee access to our state resources.

This is just one of the issues that the environmental community is facing during the current state budget shortfall.

## Photographer of the month - TTSS Hal Everett

Hal Everett, Sequim birder, photographer, and eye doctor, is The Trumpeter Swan Society's photographer of the month. View his stunning photos and read more about how he took them at the TTSS blog site: <http://trumpeterswansociety.wordpress.com/>. Hal is one of Birdfest's Photography Workshop leaders. Come out and enjoy his knowledge and expertise. Congratulations, Hal!

Martha Jordan  
The Trumpeter Swan Society



## Bird Sightings

by Bob Boekelheide

In the N. Olympic lowlands, fall and winter 2010-2011 was book-ended by significant snowfall early and late, with warmer storms in between. Arctic air and lowland snows occurred before Thanksgiving on 11/22-23, and then again in late Feb. on 2/23-28. One big "Pineapple Express" brought warm rain and melting snow on 12/12-13, causing the third highest flooding in the last 10 years on the Dungeness River. Precipitation at Railroad Bridge Park was quite consistent over the last four months, ranging from 1.75" in Nov., 2.30" in Dec., 2.51" in Jan., to 2.10" in Feb.

How did the winter weather affect local birds? Flocks of small forest birds at RR Bridge Park have been relatively few and far between, particularly flocks of Golden-crowned and Ruby-crowned Kinglets. Whether these little fellows headed south before bad weather hit, or whether they perished in the November cold, we don't know. But we imagine the survivors are looking forward to spring as much as we are.

In waterfowl news, Bruce Paige reported two male Redheads on a pond off Schmuck Road on 1/20, and Jan Sleight reported a female Canvasback at the Kitchen-Dick Ponds on 2/2. Bob Iddins says the female Ruddy Duck continues at the Diamond Point pond, where it has been since at least the Christmas Bird Count. *(Continued on next page)*



[Clipart from Clipartheaven.com](http://ClipartfromClipartheaven.com)

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Elston Hill reported a Canada Goose with a neck collar at Hollywood Beach in Port Angeles last November. He recently received info back that the bird was banded as a gosling in Eureka, CA, in June 2001. Jeff Black, the goose researcher, said the bird hadn't been seen in several years and was assumed dead. Sounds to me like another California transplant that moved to Washington for retirement. Nancy Bargar was lucky to spot 4 Cackling Geese flying by her home at 1000 feet at Deer Park on 3/1.

Trumpeter Swans have been consistent this winter around Dungeness, spending nights in various fields and on salt water near the mouth of the Dungeness River. Their preferred foraging habitat in February seems to have been Nash Huber's carrot fields on the west side of the river, where Nash hopefully harvested most of the carrots before the swans moved in.

As in past winters, at least six more dead swans have been discovered in our area this winter, possible victims of lead poisoning. WDFW sent the swan carcasses for lab analysis to see if lead definitely caused their deaths. Lead shot is illegal for waterfowl hunting, but not necessarily for other shooting, such as for dove hunting and for skeet shooting, particularly if done on private property. But since lead pellets don't disappear from the environment, they could still remain from hunting many years ago.

Following a record number of 969 Double-crested Cormorants on December's Christmas Bird Count, they continued to form large feeding flocks in Sequim Bay throughout the winter, from John Wayne Marina to the south end of the bay. Peggy Anderson reported about 500 DCCO sitting on docks and feeding along E Sequim Bay in mid-January. The Winter Bird class from the River Center surveyed the feeding flocks on the whole bay on 1/27, estimating an amazing 2000 DCCO in the flocks, plus several hundred Common and Red-breasted Mergansers and lesser numbers of Common Murres, Pigeon Guillemots, and Horned, Pied-billed, and Western Grebes. Birds in the flocks continually surfaced with 3-4" thin shiny fish, which WDFW biologists believed might be sand lance. These fish formerly spawned in large numbers in Sequim Bay, particularly in the area where the marina was built, so their appearance is a hopeful sign.



Photo by Bruce Paige

At least one first-year Glaucous Gull spent the winter around Dungeness and Sequim Bays, first seen in mid-December by Judy Mullally and Bob Norton near the Dungeness River mouth, and since then at various locations, including at Washington Harbor by Bill Shelmerdine on 2/12, possibly the same bird.

Bill also spotted a possible Slaty-backed Gull in a field near Port Williams on 2/12, in a flock of 500 gulls. This is close to where Denny Van Horn spotted a Slaty-backed Gull on 12/22, so perhaps it, too, stuck around for the winter.

Slaty-backed Gulls are found in the northwest Pacific Ocean, nesting mostly from Japan to Siberia, with just a handful of accepted records in WA.

At Ediz Hook, a strange light-primaried first-year gull photographed by Bruce Paige on 12/26 has perplexed the

gull experts, who can't decide if it's a runt Glaucous Gull, a hybrid Glaucous X Glaucous-winged Gull, or some weird mix of other arctic gull species, perhaps even some Iceland/Kumlien's blood thrown in. The gull is easy to see because it's joined the low-life garbage gulls near the public restrooms, perhaps the most pitiful mix of half-breeds you've ever seen. As far as we know, Audrey and Jim Gift spotted the only Snowy Owl seen in western WA this winter, one immature female sitting on their neighbor's roof at Bell Hill on 1/12. The last Snowy Owl irruption occurred here in 2005, so we feel overdue. Hopefully, Audrey and Jim's owl won't be the sum total of this irruption and more will appear next winter. Thanks to Audrey and Jim for watching their neighbors so closely. *(Continued on next page)*



The owl prowl from the River Center on 2/19 had a good look at two W. Screech-Owls, watched fly-over Barn Owls, heard a couple of alarmed N. Saw-whet Owls, and finished at midnight scoping Saturn and the full moon while listening to Barred Owls hoot in the upper Dungeness. Bruce Paige reports a Long-eared Owl screaming at Geiren Creek near Graysmarsh on 12/28 and 1/14, which is very interesting since Long-eared Owls are not a common bird in western WA. Karen Zook spotted two Barn Owls along Towne Rd. on 1/4, one of the best spots to find Barn Owls in our area.

Elizabeth Noyes, who lives two miles up Deer Park Rd, sent this interesting message, "As our neighbors have cleared their land, we've had an increased number of Barn Owl flyovers. We had our first Barn Owl a few years back, and they have since become more regular. Our most obvious resident owls are Barreds, with at least 4 calling at once. We still have occasional Saw-whet and Pygmy, though their activity has grown far and few between. Great Horneds used to be our most common nocturnal owl, but they have been nearly completely replaced by the Barreds. It's been some time since we've heard a single GHOW."



Photo by Jim Gift

Among songbirds, Catherine Mix observed 2 male Western Bluebirds on Towne Rd near the Old Dungeness Schoolhouse on 1/11. Another male W. Bluebird surprised Russell Rogers on E. Washington Street by Keeler Rd in Sequim on 1/22. Brenda Nailor has had a White-throated Sparrow visiting her feeder on the west side of Port Angeles since last Thanksgiving, along with regular Townsend's Warblers.

This has been a very slow finch winter, with the exception of Evening Grosbeaks. Many observers have commented about EveBeaks visiting their feeders this winter, including Ron Stecker on Bell Hill, whose largest flock was 26 on 1/2. Many people have had relatively low numbers of Pine Siskins and House  
(Continued on next page)

Finches. Of related interest, Scott Gremel, head of Olympic National Park's owl crew, reports essentially no cones on subalpine firs at Hurricane Ridge this winter.



Photo by Bob Hutchison

Two Snow Buntings continued at Ediz Hook through late February, usually foraging by the logs along the south shore between the small pine trees and the big antenna. Mary Robson first spotted these birds on 12/19, where they've been seen off and on through the winter by many observers.

The first Turkey Vulture award goes to... Karen Zook, who saw one flying over Old Olympic Hwy and Towne Rd on 2/19. The first Band-tailed Pigeon award goes to... Carolyn Iddins, who spotted one visiting her bird feeder at Diamond Point on 2/25 in 24 degree weather. The first swallow award goes to... Bob Iddins, who spotted two Tree Swallows flying over the Miller Peninsula on 2/19. The first Rufous Hummingbird award goes to... no one yet. You could be the winner of this

prestigious award when you report your first Rufous in early March.

Spring is here, so be on the lookout for new arrivals. Within the next month expect Savannah and White-crowned Sparrows to start singing in local fields and hedges. Bald Eagles are hot and heavy into courtship and nest building, with most local pairs starting egg-laying later in March.

Thank you very much for your sightings. Olympic BirdFest is right around the corner, so let us know if different birds come to visit. If you see anything noteworthy, please call Bob Boekelheide at 681-4076 (w) or 681-4867 (h) or email at rivercenter@olympus.net.

## Call for OPAS Officer Nominations

By Bob Hutchison (former OPAS President)

OPAS needs your support, serving as one of our guiding officers. A dedicated group of individuals have been serving the needs of the chapter in this capacity for many years, and it's time you stood up to be counted. You are needed.

Consider one of the following positions:

**Secretary** - Take notes at OPAS Board meetings; prepare and submit them to the Board. Provide additional communication services, as needed.

**Treasurer** - Perform accounting services for the chapter. Be the keeper of the chapter's resources.

**Vice-President** - Arrange for OPAS speakers for general meetings (with much help and input). Provide backup for the President at OPAS Board meetings.

**President** - Preside over OPAS Board meetings. Direct the chapter's activities. Interact the River Center Board members on subjects of mutual interest.

You can help. Too much has been asked of too few. This chapter has a marvelous record of service to the community, and the region. It's your turn. Step forward. Send your nomination to [rbrycehut@wavecable.com](mailto:rbrycehut@wavecable.com).



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### 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Dungeness Spring Fling, May 2011

Spring Fling participants have fun while getting fit ... last year they raised nearly \$25,000 for the Dungeness River Audubon Center and Railroad Bridge Park. Spring Fling hikes and walks are open to all and free for Spring Fling participants. A donation of \$5.00 is suggested for others. You can become a Spring Fling participant, sponsor, or both. Won't you join us? To learn more, please see [www.DungenessRiverCenter.org](http://www.DungenessRiverCenter.org).

**Sunday, May 1: It's ALL about Spring Fling!**

Kick-Off takes place in Railroad Bridge Park with activities GALORE! Come and enjoy the festivities!

**Monday, May 2: Robin Hill Farm Park Hike** (3+ miles round trip) Contact Gretha Davis (360) 681-8013; [gretha.d@wavecable.com](mailto:gretha.d@wavecable.com)

**Tuesday, May 3: Dungeness River in the mountains Hike, Camp Handy** (6.4 miles round trip.) Contact John Bridge (360) 683-3151; [jbridge@olypen.com](mailto:jbridge@olypen.com).

**Saturday, May 7: World Labyrinth Day** "Walk as One at 1:00 p.m." Contact Pam Bedford (360) 683-6376; [tbedford@olypen.com](mailto:tbedford@olypen.com)

**Sunday, May 8: Railroad Bridge Trestle and Olympic Discovery Trail Walk** (3 miles round trip) Contact Lyn Muench (360) 452-6100 or [lynmuench@olypen.com](mailto:lynmuench@olypen.com).

**Monday, May 9: Hike from Salt Creek to Striped Peak**, (5 miles round trip) Contact Gretha & Doug Davis (360) 681-8013; [gretha.d@wavecable.com](mailto:gretha.d@wavecable.com)

**Tuesday, May 10: Dungeness River in the mountains Hike, Lower Graywolf River** (9.6 miles round trip) Contact John Bridge (360) 683-3151; [jbridge@olypen.com](mailto:jbridge@olypen.com).

**Tuesday, May 10: Bird Walk, Dungeness River Dike** 2 miles round trip. Contact Dave or Julie Jackson (360) 683-1355 [djackson@wavecable.com](mailto:djackson@wavecable.com).

**Saturday, May 14: River Runs: 2k and 10k.**  
Details to come!

trip) Contact Lyn Muench (360) 452-6100 or [lynmuench@olypen.com](mailto:lynmuench@olypen.com)

**Monday, May 16: Hike on the Dungeness Spit to the New Dungeness Light Station** (11 miles RT) Contact Gretha Davis (360) 681-8013; [gretha.d@wavecable.com](mailto:gretha.d@wavecable.com)

**Tuesday, May 17: Dungeness River in the mountains Hike** (7 miles round trip) Contact John Bridge (360) 683-3151; [jbridge@olypen.com](mailto:jbridge@olypen.com)

**Tuesday, May 17: Bird Walk, Dungeness Recreation Area** (3 miles round trip) Contact Dave Jackson (360) 683-1355; [djackson@wavecable.com](mailto:djackson@wavecable.com)

**Sunday, May 22: 2:00 PM: Morse Creek Trestle to Hollywood Beach** (3 miles round trip) Contact Lyn Muench (360) 452-6100 or [lynmuench@olypen.com](mailto:lynmuench@olypen.com)

**Monday, May 23: Hike the Miller Peninsula**, (9 miles round trip) Contact Gretha & Doug Davis (360) 681-8013 or [gretha.d@wavecable.com](mailto:gretha.d@wavecable.com)

**Tuesday, May 24: Dungeness River in the mountains Hike, Deer Ridge** (6 miles round trip) Contact John Bridge (360) 683-3151; [jbridge@olypen.com](mailto:jbridge@olypen.com)

**Sunday, May 29: Walk the Elwha River Bridge and the river banks.** Contact Lyn Muench 452-6100 or [lynmuench@olypen.com](mailto:lynmuench@olypen.com)

**Monday, May 30: Fort Worden, Port Townsend.** (5 miles round trip) Cont. Gretha Davis (360) 681-8013; [gretha.d@wavecable.com](mailto:gretha.d@wavecable.com)

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## Membership Application-----NAS Code Y087XCH

Let OPAS be your one-stop Audubon membership initiator. Just check one of the options below:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Local OPAS Memberships**, include subscription to the *Harlequin Happenings* bi-monthly newsletter:

- Annual Membership (\$20.00)                       3-Year Membership (\$50.00, saves \$10.00)  
 6-Year Membership (\$90.00, saves \$30.00)     Lifetime Membership (\$250.00)

**Combined Local OPAS and National Audubon Society Membership**, includes subscriptions to the *Harlequin Happenings* & Audubon Magazine: \$40.00 initial membership; \$35.00 initial membership for seniors and students. Subsequent renewals of National Audubon Society memberships should be arranged directly with National Audubon Society.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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Authorized Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Please make your check payable to **OPAS** and mail with this form to **Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society, P.O. Box 502, Sequim, WA 98382.**

Check here if you would like to be contacted concerning volunteer opportunities at the River Center and/or OPAS.