

# 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

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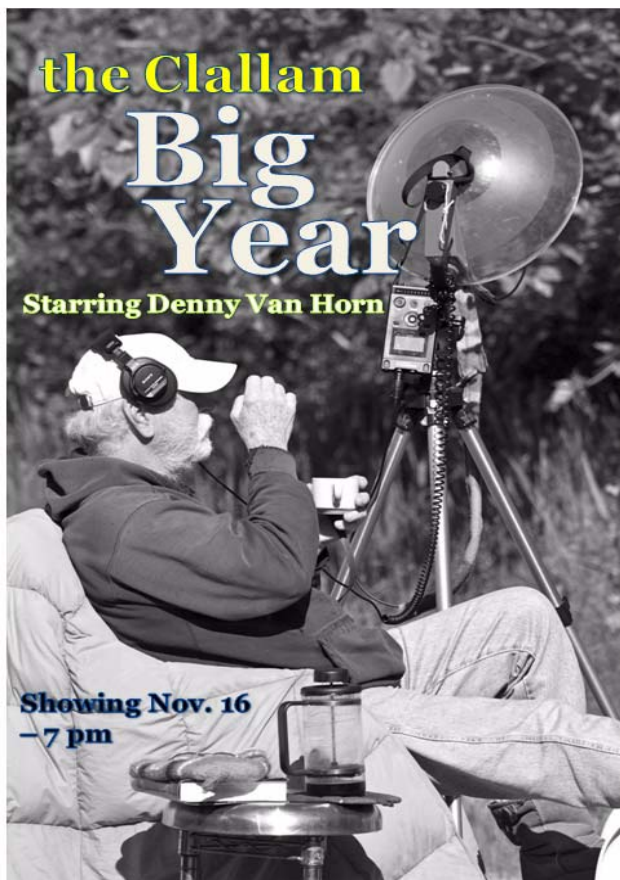
*"Promoting Birding and Conservation  
as Community Educators, Volunteers, and Stewards"*

## OPAS Program for November

by Loretta Flanders and Bill Parker

**2010 - A Clallam County Big Year,  
presented by Denny Van Horn, Nov. 16 at the River Center, 7 p.m.**

You may have read the book, "The Big Year". You may have seen the new movie by the same name. Now you can see Denny live! This is what Denny has to say:



*"So why would anyone choose to spend over 2,000 hours chasing birds from Makah Bay to Diamond Point at all hours of the day in all kinds of weather just so he could say: 'Hey! I did it!?' Well, for one thing you need to be a little obsessed, slightly fanatical, and somewhat tilted towards the extreme end of Birding! In reality, I needed something to do in 2010 that was related to having fun, as I proceeded to learn all that I could about Clallam County's abundant wealth of fauna and flora - a place I've chosen to spend the rest of my years. So! I said, '**Do a Big Year**' break the record for most species seen in 365 days. And what did that mean? For me it meant finding birds in every saltwater nook, Doug-fir canyon, brackish salt marsh, glacier carved meadow, in farmsteads turned to residential neighborhoods. What did I find? What did I learn, see, experience, and anguish over? Who did I meet? How was I helped? And did I have fun? Well, come join me and listen as I spin one tale after another about my pursuit to find as many bird species as possible in Clallam County in 2010."*

Denny Van Horn has settled on the Olympic Peninsula after spending 20 years as a research ornithologist in Alaska and 25 years as an educator. What will he do next?

**Reminder:** There will be no OPAS general meeting and program during the month of December. The next OPAS general meeting will take place on Wednesday, January 18, 2012. Have a wonderful holiday season!

OPAS monthly membership meetings occur at the Dungeness River Audubon Center, 2151 W. Hendrickson Rd, Sequim, WA, on the third Wed. of each month except July, August, and December.

## OPAS Board of Directors

### Officers:

President, Tom Montgomery,  
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V-Pres, Loretta R. Flanders,  
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Secretary, Kendra Donelson  
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### Board-at-Large:

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### Committees:

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Bob Boekelheide, 681-4076  
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## President's Message

by Tom Montgomery



In the last issue I reported that Bob Boekelheide had submitted his resignation as Director of the River Center, effective December 31, 2011, but that he would remain in Sequim and engage in selective volunteer activities for our organization. I am pleased to announce that Powell Jones will be the new River Center Director, effective January 1, 2012. As most of you know, Powell has been a valued RC staff member since 2003, with principal responsibilities as Education Coordinator. Powell is thoroughly familiar with all aspects of the River Center programs and will provide a seamless transition to the new staff structure, which will continue to include Valerie Wolcott as Administrative Services Coordinator. Although RC staff projections for the future include adding more positions, for the present the RC will not expand beyond Powell and Valerie. It is hoped that, with additional volunteer help, all of the existing programs will continue. Congratulations to Powell!!

I am also pleased to announce that Kendra Donelson, longtime volunteer, past OPAS Board member, and past OPAS President, has graciously agreed to rejoin the OPAS Board and to serve as Secretary. Many thanks to Kendra!!

## Education and Outreach - Being a Backyard Birder

by Shirley Anderson

Twenty-two backyard birders joined Ken and Janie Leuthold, Bob Iddins, and Shirley Anderson at the River Center on the first Saturday in October. The idea for "**Being a Backyard Birder**" was brought to the OPAS board last year by former OPAS treasurer Ken Leuthold. The series of nine presentations is intended to encourage residents who might wish to know more about ways to make their own yards and gardens good habitats for local birds throughout the year. Many attending the first session have recently moved to this area and did not own binoculars or field guides.

Bob Iddins described features of both binocular optics and the use of various field guides, and after discussion and questions, people took the opportunity to practice with field guides on 26 local birds on display in

the cases and around the River Center. The final activity was practicing with various types of binoculars loaned by the River Center and the instructors.

Class members were invited to join the Wednesday morning bird walks, the third Wednesday OPAS meetings and programs, and to consider the special bird classes offered at the Center throughout the year. After completion of at least five sessions of "**Being a Backyard Birder**", people will be offered a one year membership in OPAS.

The next session will be **10 am - noon, Saturday, November 5, "Winter Bird Feeding"**, lead by Janie Leuthold and representatives of Wild Birds Unlimited.



## OPAS Field Trips in November - December

by Bob Iddins

### Birding for Beginners & Newcomers

*Date & Time:* Saturday, November 12, 2011, 9:30 a.m. - noon

*Cost:* Free

*Leader:* Dave Jackson

*Meeting place:* Carrie Blake Park (9:30 a.m.)

*Features:* For beginning birders or residents new to the area. Familiarization with birding techniques. Meet some of our local birds.

*Bring:* Binoculars, bird book, scope if you have any of these. A few loaner binoculars will be available.

*Pre-registration and further information:* Dave Jackson 360-683-1355 (H); 360-477-1358 (C); email: [djackson@wavecable.com](mailto:djackson@wavecable.com). Limit 16 people.



### Port Angeles

*Date:* Saturday, November 12, 2011, Noon until ?

*Cost:* Free

*Leaders:* Judy Mullally, Mary Robson

*Features:* Wintering water and shorebirds of Port Angeles harbor and the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

*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

### Christmas Bird Count Tuneup

*Date & Time:* Saturday, December 10, 2011, 9:00 a.m.

*Fee:* Free

*Leader:* Bob Boekelheide

*Meeting places:* 9:00 a.m. at Railroad Bridge Park and noon at Dungeness Landing County Park.

*Features:* Get prepared for the annual Christmas Bird Count (Monday, December 19, 2011) and go birding with the expert!

*Bring:* Optics, field guide, water, snacks and appropriate clothing.

*Further Information:* Bob Boekelheide 360-681-4076 or [rivercenter@olympus.net](mailto:rivercenter@olympus.net)

### Sequim-Dungeness Christmas Bird Count

*Date:* Mon., Dec. 19

*Time:* All day until Dusk. Compilation at 5 p.m.

*Cost:* CBC \$5 per person

*Features:* It is time to count the birds! You can help by covering a special route, joining another group, or by just counting your neighborhood or backyard. Contact Bob Boekelheide at the River Center (681-4076) to sign up for the count. Official tally and chili feed for counters at the River Center beginning at 5 p.m.

### Port Angeles Christmas Bird Count

*Date:* Sat., Dec 31

*Time:* All day. Compilation at 5 p.m.

*Cost:* CBC \$5 per person

(Continued on next page)

## Harlequin Happenings

*Features:* Another great Christmas Bird Count! Contact Barb Blackie at 360-477-8028 to sign up for this count. The count tally will occur at a restaurant in Port Angeles, beginning at 5 p.m.

## River Center Events

### Wednesday Bird Walks

*Date:* Every Wednesday morning

*Time:* 8:30 to 10:30 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.



*Photo by Robert Hutchison*



### Estate Planning Seminar Introduction to Trusts...and More

**When:** Thursday, November 10, 2011

**Times:** 3:30-5:00 PM and 6:00-7:30PM

**Where:** Dungeness River Audubon Center in Railroad Bridge Park  
2151 W. Hendrickson Rd, Sequim, WA

**Cost:** Free

**Presenter:** James D. Hallett, Certified Financial Planner and  
Dungeness River Audubon Center Endowment Advisor

- When trusts are advisable
  - Types of trusts
  - How to select one that's right for you
  - Additional ramifications of trusts
- ALSO:
- Strategies for navigating market volatility
  - How to design financial plans that work regardless of economic circumstances

**Pre-register:** Sue Chickman, [organicallysue@olyopen.com](mailto:organicallysue@olyopen.com)  
or 360-477-4123 (seating is limited)

### Last Thursday Work Parties

*Date:* Nov. 17

*Time:* 1 to 4 p.m.

Three short hours each month to keep RR Bridge Park looking bright and beautiful! Bring your work gloves to assist with gardening, cleaning, trail maintenance and other chores that make our park shine. Sep. 22 we setup for the Dungeness River Festival.

### Natural Science Study Group

*Date:* Nov. 14

*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.

### Holiday Nature Mart - Holiday Shopping at the River Center

*Date:* Saturday, Nov. 19

*Time:* 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

*Features:* Local arts and crafts, baked goods, construction of wreath and table arrangements, and lots of surprises will make this a fun outing for you and your friends and neighbors!

*(Continued on next page)*

## Fall Birds of the North Olympic Peninsula

*Dates:* Four Thursdays, Oct. 27 to Nov. 17th

*Times:* First class meets at 9 a.m.; other class times depend on weather and tides.

*Cost:* \$40 for partners (\$10 per session); \$60 for non-members (\$15 per session)

*Features:* This intermediate birding class teaches identification and natural history of the birds of the north Olympic Peninsula during fall. Class will be outdoors nearly every session plus field trips to local habitats; weather permitting. Limit: 16 people.

## Being a Backyard Birder (BBB) - Session 2: Winter Bird Feeding

*Date:* Nov 5, 2011

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

*Features:* The series of nine monthly classes is intended for anyone interested in knowing more about the birds seen locally each season of the year, as well as learning how to make their homes good habitats for wild birds. "BBB" can be taken as individual sessions or as a series. Each class will cost \$5 for adults, but is free for ages 10 to 18. After the completion of any 5 sessions, participants will be offered membership in the Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society (OPAS).

More information is available by calling 681-4076

### Web Corner

by Dave Jackson

The OPAS News section on the Home Page of our website ([olybird.org](http://olybird.org)) displays fast-breaking news. Example: notice of an 11th-hour, weather-related change to the timing of an OPAS birding field trip can arrive in your email Inbox, as well as on the Home Page, early the morning of the trip. Learn more about OPAS News in a new FAQ page, reachable via a link in the left-hand menu on the Home Page.



### Conservation Matters: Wild Olympics Campaign

by Jim Gift

The Wild Olympics Campaign is heating up as we move toward a period where legislation will be developed. The timber industry has mounted an aggressive campaign against the Wild Olympics objectives. They have conducted a narrowly focused economic study with what appears to be flawed assumptions and some errors. Based on this study, the Port of Port Angeles and the timber industry are claiming that timber jobs will be lost if the Wild Olympics Campaign is implemented.



It is important to emphasize that the Wild Olympics Campaign is not in any way opposing the timber industry. The Olympic Peninsula can support a thriving timber industry, as well as protect and preserve critical natural resources by focused environmental legislation. There will be few timber job losses if the campaign is implemented, and ultimately the legislation will create a more positive job market on the peninsula. The Wild Olympics group has commissioned a much broader economic study, which should be completed in the next several months. This study should provide a more comprehensive look at economic issues surrounding the campaign.

It is also important to recognize that potential sales of timber land to the Olympic National Park would occur only if the timber companies or any other private owners are "willing sellers" of their land and that the Park is a successful bidder. The owners control the sale of their own land.

What can be done now? OPAS members should contact their local County Commissioners and other legislators and express their support for the Wild Olympics Campaign. The timber industry is lobbying these groups and it is very important that we demonstrate broad public support for the Campaign! E-mails, letters, and phone calls are all good ways to show our support. *(Continued on next page)*

## Harlequin Happenings

Here are useful contact data:

Board of Clallam County  
Commissioners  
223 East 4th Street, Suite 4  
Port Angeles, WA 98363-3000  
Telephone: 360-417-2233  
Fax: 360-417-2493

Emails:  
Commissioner Steve Tharinger - [stharinger@co.clallam.wa.us](mailto:stharinger@co.clallam.wa.us)  
Commissioner Mike Chapman - [mchapman@co.clallam.wa.us](mailto:mchapman@co.clallam.wa.us)  
Commissioner Mike Doherty - [mdoherty@co.clallam.wa.us](mailto:mdoherty@co.clallam.wa.us)



### Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge: Comprehensive Conservation Plan

by Mary Porter-Solberg

The Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge was established by President Woodrow Wilson when he signed an Executive Order on January 20, 1915, declaring the area a refuge, preserve, and breeding ground for native birds. Eelgrass beds and tide flats teem with migrating shorebirds in spring and fall; flocks of waterfowl find food and rest in these protected waters during the winter; eel grass beds also provide a nursery for young salmon and steelhead.

The Refuge provides habitat for a wide diversity of wildlife species – more than 250 species of birds and 41 species of land mammals call the Refuge “home” for some part of their life cycle. The bay and estuary of the Dungeness River supports waterfowl, shorebirds, water waders, shellfish, and harbor seals. Anadromous fish like Chinook, Coho, Pink and Chum Salmon occur in the waters of Dungeness Bay and Harbor.

Numerous species of waterfowl stop briefly in the Dungeness area each fall on their journey south for the winter and again when they head north in the spring. Many species of waterfowl winter in the area. Dungeness Bay and Harbor support Black Brant, present from late October through early May, with peak numbers of approximately 3,000-5,000 in April. Shorebirds and water waders feed and rest along the water's edge. Harbor seals haul out to rest and give birth to pups on the end of Dungeness Spit. The tideflats support crabs, clams, and other shellfish.

Dungeness NWR is recognized as an Important Bird Area (IBA) by the National Audubon Society, and it is included in the Olympic Loop of the Washington State Birding Trail map. The Refuge is internationally significant because many of the birds that stop here breed as far north as Alaska and migrate as far south as South America. The Dungeness area is additionally important as a spring staging area for Black Brant and other waterfowl. Canada, Mexico, and the United States have implemented international treaties to ensure that migratory birds are protected and managed on a continental basis.

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## Holiday Nature Mart

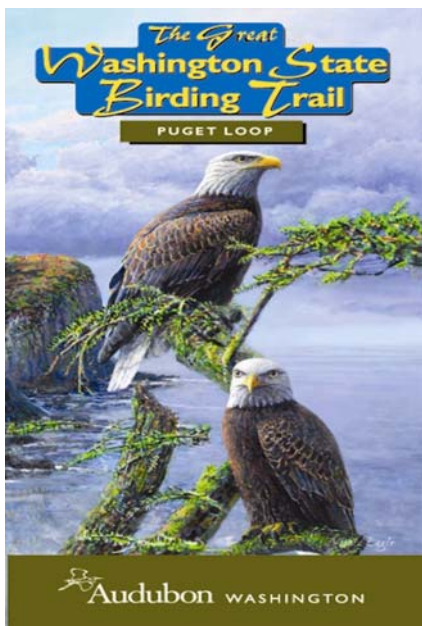
Sat., Nov. 19, 10 - 4

Dungeness River Audubon Center  
2151 West Hendrickson Road

**Handcrafted Gifts Galore plus**  
Table Arrangement & Wreath Making  
Bird Lovers Basket Raffle  
Homemade Baked Goods  
Sunshine Cafe soups & more!

To donate and/or help, call Gretha Davis, 681-8013,  
or Julie Jackson, 683-1355

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has recently launched a planning process to develop a Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) for the Dungeness NWR. The CCP will guide the management of the refuge for the next 15 years. The OPAS conservation committee plans to provide comments that will help identify issues, concerns, and opportunities. You can also play a role in the planning process by viewing the plan online at <http://pacific.fws.gov/planning> and submitting your comments.



## The Great Washington State Birding Trail: Puget Loop

*Submitted by Hilary Hilscher, Washington Audubon*

Delight your favorite birders this holiday season with the newest – the seventh and final – map of the Great Washington State Birding Trail: the Puget Loop. Hot off the press Thanksgiving weekend, this signature route features 220 of our 346 annually recorded bird species around Puget Sound from Seattle to Mt. Rainier, plus Lake Washington, Kitsap Peninsula; and Vashon, Bainbridge, Whidbey and San Juan islands. Travel by car, bus, or ferry, or bike or paddle to the Puget Loop's 42 main sites and 18 "more birding" locations for avian highlights: Bald Eagles, Pileated Woodpeckers, Pacific Wrens, Anna's Hummingbirds, Chestnut-backed Chickadees, Pigeon Guillemots – and more.

Order the Puget Loop, plus all six other routes of the statewide Birding Trail: [http://wa.audubon.org/birds\\_GreatWABirdingTrail.html](http://wa.audubon.org/birds_GreatWABirdingTrail.html).

## Christmas Bird Counts are Coming!

*by Bob Boekelheide*

The days are getting shorter, which could only mean one thing – time for Christmas Bird Counts! This year's Sequim-Dungeness Christmas Bird Count (SDCBC) occurs on Monday, Dec. 19, 2011. The Port Angeles CBC (PACBC) occurs on Saturday, Dec. 31, 2011. Please contact Bob Boekelheide at 360-681-4076 to sign up for the Sequim count, and call Barb Blackie at 360-477-8028 to sign-up for the Port Angeles count.



Both counts need help in a variety of ways. If you live in either of these areas, you can make a huge contribution by counting birds in your neighborhoods or by just tallying them at your bird feeders. Other crazy people count all day in assigned areas, braving winter weather to see and hear as many birds as possible. The counts technically run from midnight to midnight, so hearing owl hoots in the middle of the night count as well.

The center of Sequim's 15-mile diameter count circle is near the intersection of Brown and Port Williams Roads. The SDCBC runs from Dungeness Spit on the north to the Olympic foothills on the south, and from Diamond Point on the east to McDonald Creek on the west. The PACBC goes all the way from Sieberts Creek on the east to the Elwha River on the west, and from the Strait of Juan de Fuca to Hurricane Ridge, perhaps the greatest elevation change of any CBC in the US.

Last year, the SDCBC once again led all WA CBCs with 137 species observed, even though it was the SDCBC's lowest species count since 1996. The PACBC tied its high count from the year before, at 121 species. As always, this year promises great weather and lots of unusual birds, so sign up with Bob and Barb to do your part.

There will be a pre-CBC warm-up field trip on Sat., Dec. 10, starting at Railroad Bridge Park at 9 a.m. and continuing at Dungeness Landing Park at noon. Come learn about counting techniques and get copies of the tally sheets for the count.



## Bird Sightings

by Bob Boekelheide

The bird of the month is a Tropical Kingbird found by Dow Lambert at 3 Crabs on 10/24. Tropical Kingbirds are renowned for their northerly dispersal, or “reverse migration,” from nesting areas in Arizona and Mexico, showing up along the West Coast in fall when they should be flying south to southern Mexico and Central America. Nearly all Tropical Kingbird records for the Pacific NW occur between September and November, so Dow’s bird fits the pattern very well. As I write this, the bird is still here, hanging around the area for several days. Check out Dow’s great photos below and on the OPAS website.



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

To add to the mystery, the Fall Birds class from the River Center also discovered a Tropical Kingbird at Jamestown on 10/27, about two miles from 3 Crabs. Since the Jamestown bird and the 3 Crabs bird were seen within two hours of each other, it appears there are two Tropical Kingbirds visiting our area this fall. The Fall Birds class visited Jamestown originally to find a Lewis’s Woodpecker discovered by Barbara and John Jensen on 10/27.



Photo by Dow Lambert

Watch out, kingbird! At 3 Crabs on 10/27, with the Tropical Kingbird cavorting in the neighborhood, a drooling Northern Shrike actively hunted the weed fields near Helen’s Pond. At the same time, a Peregrine Falcon sat in a nearby tree, seemingly licking its chops. Hope these predators don’t like south-of-the-border cuisine.



Photo by Dow Lambert

Nigel Ball, on one of his journeys to Neah Bay, watched a Broad-winged Hawk sail overhead on 9/11. These small eastern Buteos are highly migratory, so it makes you wonder whether more

Broad-wings fly unnoticed over coastal WA on their way south.

Similar to past falls, particularly 2008, this year many people around Sequim and Port Angeles noticed a distinct passage of Greater White-fronted Geese and Cackling Geese in late Sep. and early Oct, nearly all flying west to east. Jerry Freilich reported wave after wave of geese flying over Port Angeles during the night of 9/27-28, numbering hundreds if not thousands in many different flocks. From their voices, Jerry said they were clearly not Canada Geese. Along that same time, Ken Wiersema reported 19 White-fronted Geese feeding in his pasture near the Dungeness Recreation Area on 9/29.

Migrant Sandhill Crane flocks appeared at the same time as the goose migration in late September. Dave Jackson reported 35 cranes flying over WA Harbor and Port Williams on 9/27, along with 30 at the Kitchen-Dick Ponds. Janie Leuthold reported 50 cranes flying east towards Sequim Bay the same day.

Conversely, big flocks of geese flew over Sequim on the morning of 10/12, nearly all flying in the opposite direction, east to west. On the Wed a.m. bird walk at RR Bridge Park we counted 116 White-fronted Geese, 88 Cackling Geese, and hundreds of unknown geese in several different flocks. Could these birds have rested awhile in western WA, then resumed their migratory flights south? Many goose flocks pass along the outer coast heading to wintering areas in California’s Central Valley, so maybe some turn east in the Strait, then go back to the coast after they fuel up. *(Continued on next page)*



Susan Molin reported a Great Egret at the "new" WDFW wildlife area at Discovery Bay on 10/21, near the exact spot where one occurred in August during the WA Ornithological Society meeting. Could it be the same bird? My guess is no, because egrets stand out pretty well and lots of people drive by Discovery Bay, so you think it would have been seen during the last two months. Others reported the egret in late Oct. as well, so it's not like it's hiding out.

Candy Smith, while sitting in her car at Ediz Hook on 9/27, watched 3 Brown Pelicans sail overhead. On 9/29, also in P.A. Harbor, Linda Carroll snapped a photo of an immature pelican sitting all alone offshore. After nesting in Mexico and southern California, many pelicans fly north along the Pacific Coast, reaching their peak in WA by September. Many of these birds are immatures, with their brown heads and white bellies. Based on numbers of young pelicans at La Push harbor this summer, they must have had excellent nesting success last spring in Baja.

Dana Spontac watched a Parasitic Jaeger fly by the Dungeness Spit on 9/28. Much earlier on 8/24, Bob Sundstrom found an immature Franklin's Gull at Diamond Point, perched on a piling near the boat launch.

Not much shorebird news lately. The best report comes from Coleman Byrnes, who, along with Sue Nattinger, found a Willet feeding with a Whimbrel and Greater Yellowlegs by the mouth of the Twin Rivers west of Joyce on 9/14. It's been awhile since a Willet appeared in Clallam County, even though one wintered in P.A. Harbor for a few years in the 1990s. Scott Atkinson found single Baird's and Pectoral Sandpipers at Graysmarsh during his survey on 9/18.



*Photo by Sue Chickman*

Fall is a wonderful time to visit the Olympic high country, not only for the scenery but also for wayward birds. Rick Klawitter discovered about a dozen Wilson's Snipes along the Obstruction Point Rd on Hurricane Ridge on 10/8. We don't normally consider snipe a montane species, but they do occur at high elevations in the western U.S. Ken and Mary Campbell had a treat on 10/25 while hiking Hurricane Hill, spotting a Mountain Bluebird, Clark's Nutcracker, and Golden Eagle.

Mark Salvadalena, backcountry ranger in Seven Lakes Basin, always comes up with noteworthy sightings. He found Barrow's Goldeneyes at several lakes this summer, including Heart Lake, one of the highest lakes in the basin at almost 5000 ft elevation. One question with the removal of the Elwha River dams is what will happen to the Barrow's Goldeneyes that

formerly nested at Lakes Aldwell and Mills? Perhaps the Elwha goldeneyes are moving upslope to other lakes nearby. Mark also recorded a wayward Horned Grebe at Heart Lake from 9/22-24.

Quenn Charrier delighted in watching a young Pileated Woodpecker learning the ropes in her neighborhood in the Eaglemount area of the Quimper Peninsula for about two weeks in mid-Oct. The bird seemed naively curious about the world, checking out its new environment in Quenn's backyard.

Scott Atkinson visited Deer Park on 9/16, possibly hearing a very unusual White-winged Crossbill flying over, along with a Cassin's Vireo and Ruby-crowned Kinglet. As Scott asks, perhaps the kinglet nests somewhere along Hurricane Ridge. Scott also had a very successful owling adventure in the upper Dungeness early on 9/17, hearing 6 N. Pygmy-Owls, 4 N. Saw-whet Owls, and 4 Barred Owls.

At Graysmarsh, where Scott has surveyed birds for many years, he hit flycatcher gold on 9/18, finding five species, including one Dusky, 2 Hammond's, one Pacific-slope, one Western Wood-Pewee, and a very late Willow. He also found a very late Purple Martin the same day, flying over the marsh. The Fall Birds class from the River Center watched 3 very late Barn Swallows fly over 3 Crabs on 10/27.

Barred Owls are taking over the world! Jane Stewart reports a Barred Owl visiting McComb Gardens on McComb Rd on 10/13. A Barred Owl also sat on a fencepost along Carlsborg Rd at 5:30 p.m. on 10/26, and another sat on a fencepost by lower Towne Rd at 8 a.m. on 10/21. Maybe Barred Owls will start eating Eurasian Collared-Doves?

This is also the time of year that mountain birds move downslope into our backyards and gardens. Larry Rymon reported a family of up to 5 Gray Jays visiting his feeder near Cassidy Creek from mid-September to mid-October, at only 500 feet elevation. Varied Thrushes and Pacific Wrens are back in lowlands, with more on the way as snow flies in the mountains.

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**Harlequin Happenings**

It's been a great fall for Townsend's Warblers in the lowlands, with 6 visiting Norrie and Barb Johnson's backyard along Taylor Cutoff on 10/25 and 4 seen on the RR Bridge Park Wed a.m. birdwalk on 10/19.

Debbie and Mike Nelson have a Western Scrub-Jay visiting their property in west Dungeness, near Cays and Lotzgesell Rds. Mike says that sometimes the scrub-jay is alone and sometimes it travels with Steller's Jays. Scrub-jays continue their move north in western WA, now firmly established as nesters in south Puget Sound.

Western Bluebirds are often seen cavorting in flocks this time of year, such as the flock of at least 8 bluebirds seen by John Woolley in the middle of the Miller Peninsula on 9/1. Could these birds have nested somewhere in the area?

Another "eastern" species that shows up in fall along the West Coast is White-throated Sparrow, including one seen by Dan Waggoner at the RR Bridge Park feeder on 10/10. Another White-throated Sparrow appeared for the Wed am birdwalk on 10/26, perhaps the same bird, but perhaps not. Carolyn Cooper also had a White-throated Sparrow visit her home in Port Angeles on 10/9.

Western Meadowlarks are likely extirpated as a nesting species around Sequim, but they still show up during migration and spend the winter. Bill and Karen Parker found three meadowlarks at 3 Crabs on 10/5, as Bill says, "a nice bird to see." Keep an eye out for meadowlarks this fall and winter.

The Christmas Bird Counts are coming up, so now is the time to go birding and staking out unusual species for the count. If you see something unusual, please call me at 681-4076 or email to [rivercenter@olympus.net](mailto:rivercenter@olympus.net). Thanks very much for your sightings.



Photo by Bob Hutchison

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