



Harlequin Happenings

Newsletter of the Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society (OPAS)

www.olympicpeninsulaudubon.org (www.olybird.org)

Clallam County, Washington

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

Issue 6 Nov-Dec 2012

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

OPAS Program for November

by Loretta Flanders and Bill Parker

**"Sea of Birds: Population Patterns of Coastal Residents and Migrants"
Presented by Julia Parrish**

November 28, 2012 - 7 p.m., at the Dungeness River Audubon Center.

[Please note that this date is a week later than normal in order not to conflict with Thanksgiving activities. Also, there is no December program.]



*Brown Pelican
Photo by Bill Parker*

Oil spills, marine debris, fisheries, disturbances, habitat loss, ocean acidification, global warming, avian influenza, predators, introduced species ... what doesn't affect seabirds? Despite these serious pressures, many seabirds along the Washington coast are thriving. Join us and Julia Parrish to find out who is winning, and who is not, and what we can do about it.

Julia Parrish is the Lowell A. and Frankie L. Wakefield Professor of Ocean Fishery Sciences at the University of Washington, where she also serves as the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Diversity in the College of the Environment. A seabird biologist for over 25 years, Julia is also the founder and Executive Director of the Coastal Observation and Seabird Survey Team (COASST), a citizen science program that monitors the patterns of beached birds from California to Alaska.

Save These Dates!!!

- >> River Center Holiday Nature Mart -- November 16-17
- >> Port Townsend Christmas Bird Count -- Saturday, December 15
- >> Sequim-Dungeness Christmas Bird Count -- Monday, December 17
- >> Port Angeles Christmas Bird Count -- Sunday, December 30

WANTED!!!

Nature Mart Donations & Helpers

To donate greenery, home baked or handcrafted goods or to help at Nature Mart, please contact Julie Jackson at (360) 683-1355 or juliejackson@wavecable.com

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Powell Jones, 681-4076
rivercenter@olympus.net

Committees:

Bird Sightings, Bird Counts,
Bob Boekelheide, 681-4867
bboek@olympus.net

Conservation, Jim Gift, 681-2989
jgift42@msn.com;

Mary Porter-Solberg, 683-8072,
hikerhut@qwest.net

Education, Shirley Anderson,
681-3950,
sanderson22@olyphen.com

Membership, Audrey Gift 681-2989
agift@q.com

Field Trips, Bob Iddins, 681-2840
riddins@olyphen.com

Hospitality, Clare Hatler, 683-6967
donclare@olyphen.com

Newsletter, Bob Hutchison,
683-7265

rbrycehut@wavecable.com

Publicity, Sara-Ellen Peterson,
681-6325

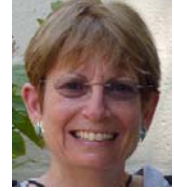
saraellen.mn@gmail.com

Website, Dave Jackson, 683-1355
djackson@wavecable.com

Birdfest, Marjorie Palmer, 417-9574,
grblheron@wavecable.com

Taking Time to Give Thanks

Sue Chickman, River Center Board Member



2012 has been another successful year for events, classes, and programs at the Dungeness River Audubon Center. A few examples: On January 1st, Powell Jones jumped beautifully into Bob Boekelheide's very big shoes with great skill, enthusiasm, and elegance; Railroad Bridge Park celebrated its 20-year birthday with cake and presentations from folks who helped make the Park a reality; and the first Fun Fair add-on to our annual, month-long Dungeness Spring Fling fundraiser was, well, fun, with activities taking place throughout the Park. Classes, festivals, and presentations kept staff, volunteers, members, partners, and visitors busy and fulfilled throughout the year.

November and December brings a seasonal change and, along with it, a change in focus for the Center. We take time to appreciate the things the Center and Park provide: a beautiful natural setting that teaches and nurtures us; a gathering place where people of all ages can watch wildlife, share bird stories, hold meetings, look at beautiful art, and purchase a fun nature gift or two; and to recognize a community of extraordinary people who share their time and talent toward making the Center and Park the special place it is.

It's also a time when the River Center mails an appeal to members and friends for donations to help sustain Park and Center operations for the coming year. We hope you will take this opportunity to show your appreciation and support with a generous financial gift. You might even consider including the River Center in your long-range estate plan or making a legacy gift to the Center's endowment.

We hope you'll agree that the value and experience you receive from our programs and activities are wise investments. Thank you so much for your involvement; we are very grateful.



Photo by Sue Chickman

OPAS FieldTrips in November and December

by Bob Iddins

Ediz Hook and Port Angeles Harbor

Date and Time: Saturday, November 10, 2012, 9 am to ?

Cost: Free

Leaders: Judy Mullally, Bob Iddins

Features: Returning winter water and shorebirds of Port Angeles harbor and the Strait of Juan de Fuca and anything else we can find.

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: Bob Iddins 360-681-2840 rriddins@olypen.com



Eurasian Wigeon
Photo by Robert Hutchison

Birding for Beginners & Newcomers II

Date & Time: Saturday, November 17, 2012, 9:30 a.m. - noon

Cost: Free

Leader: Dave Jackson

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

Meeting place: Carrie Blake Park (9:30 a.m.). Meet at small pond next to main entrance.

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. Limit 16 people.

Christmas Bird Count Tuneup

Date & Time: Saturday, December 8, 2012, 9:00 a.m. - ?

Cost: 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 17, 2012) and go birding with the expert!

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

Further Information: Bob Boekelheide 360-681-4867 or bboek@olympus.net



Photo by Robert Hutchison



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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.

Railroad Bridge Park Work Party

Date and Time: Saturday, Nov 17, 1-4 p.m.;

Help 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.

Holiday Nature Mart – Holiday Shopping at the Center

Date: Friday and Saturday, Nov. 16-17

Time: 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Start your holiday shopping at the River Center! We invite adults and children to purchase and/or make gifts that appeal to nature lovers and your local wildlife alike. See the flier on page 10.

Being a Backyard Birder (BBB)

Date: Saturday, Nov 10

Time: 10 a.m. to noon,

Cost: \$5 per session (under 18 free) - After five sessions, OPAS membership for a year offered.

Session 2: Winter Care and Feeding of Birds

General Bird Feeding: Includes types of feeders and different feeds for attracting specific birds with an emphasis on our over-wintering species.

Speaker: Christie Lassen of Wild Birds Unlimited.

Sequim-Dungeness Christmas Bird Count

Date: Monday, Dec. 17

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

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 begins at 5 p.m.

Port Angeles Christmas Bird Count

Date: Sunday, Dec 30. All day

Another great Christmas Bird Count! The Port Angeles CBC has a wonderful variety of terrain and we need your help covering it! Contact Barb Blackie at 360-477-8028 for more information and to sign up for this count. The count tally will occur at a yet-to-be-determined restaurant in Port Angeles, beginning at 5 p.m.

OPAS Presents Harlequin Award

Congratulations to Kendra Donelson, the recipient of the OPAS Harlequin Award for 2012! Thirty years ago, in June 1982, a resolution establishing the "Harlequin Meritorius Achievement Award" was adopted by the OPAS membership. The following is paraphrased from the official resolution:

Because the Harlequin Duck has chosen the streams and coastlines of the North Olympic Peninsula as its habitat; and the purpose of OPAS, through its members and activities, is to cherish and preserve this same habitat; this Harlequin Award is to be granted to members of OPAS in recognition of outstanding and generous contributions of time, talent and efforts to the conservation of the Olympic Peninsula's environment through scientific, educational and political endeavors.



Photo by Sue Chickman

At about the same time as the Harlequin Award made its appearance, Kendra's parents Ken and Phyllis Donelson retired to Sequim. Kendra began family visits that finally resulted in her adopting this area as her home also.

Kendra has served the greater community, and especially OPAS in a multitude of ways: Vice President, Program Chair, President, and most recently as interim Secretary of the OPAS Board are formal offices that she has held with great skill and fortitude. But Kendra is even more often found where extra pairs of hands are needed at festivals, meetings, classes ... a myriad of activities. From providing that quiet supportive presence during a class or program, taking and selling tickets, to greeting visitors and providing information. Wherever Kendra is, there is great joy.

Thank you Kendra for being the person envisioned thirty years ago, when the Harlequin Award was established.

2012 ACOW Summary

by Ken Wiersema

This Oct 6th, a brisk temperature and a bright fall sun welcomed nearly 100 Washington Auduboners from 21 of our 26 chapters to Poulsbo for our annual Audubon Council of Washington (ACOW). Five OPAS board members participated in the meeting to hear our National Audubon President, David Yarnold, present his vision for Audubon's future and to participate in the ribbon cutting for the final Washington Birding Trail. The agenda also included talks about the Pacific Flyway programs by Mike Sutton, Audubon VP for the Pacific flyways, and the report of the Washington Working Group (WAWG) on a new organization for Audubon in Washington. I extend a special thanks to Poulsbo Mayor Becky Erickson who provided their City Hall facilities, to Jim Ullrich and the Kitsap Audubon folks who hosted a great meeting, and to Gail Gatton and her staff at Seward Park Audubon Center for organizing the agenda.

The Puget Loop birding trail ribbon cutting culminated some 12 years of work by members of almost every Chapter in WA and the leadership and coordination of Christi Norman, the staff director for Birding Trails. The Puget loop is the last link in the birding trail maps, which ties to our Olympic loop distributed in 2007. Copies of the new loop and the Olympic loop can be purchased at the Dungeness River Audubon Center.

David Yarnold laid out the renewed emphasis of Audubon on birds and conservation. The organization has refocused and reorganized on the flyways of birds and connectivity of regional migratory alignments rather than political boundaries. *(Continued on next page)*



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Copies of the 2012 Audubon Strategic Plan can be obtained at the River Center or on the Audubon website. Mike Sutton's talk highlighted projects to be focused on working lands, shores and urban environs; component programs will be on shorebird breeding, feeding, and migration stops from Alaska to California. OPAS is currently reviewing how we might participate in helping monitor and count specific shorebird species we see along the Strait. Our Swan study/census project should be a good fit too.

The WAWG report presented the results of 2 years work. It made three recommendations:

>>The Chapters rejoin a restructured Audubon WA board by selecting one representative from each of 5 regions of the State to serve on the Board.

>>That the new Conservation subcommittee of the Board includes members from Washington State Audubon Conservation Committee (WSACC) composed of the Conservation Chairs in each Chapter.

>>A part-time staff position be created to be called a "Chapter Associate." The new person will work with Chapter leaders to communicate legislative priorities and organize focused actions to achieve agreed on objectives. The Chapter Associate will also help organize regional meetings and the annual ACOW. Chapters, with the State Board, agreed to contribute funding for the new position. Our OPAS board has budgeted a contribution toward that shared funding.

The ACOW adopted the WAWG recommendations with a few amendments and rewordings. A more detailed summary of the ACOW (see: **2012 ACOW summary**) meeting will be posted on the OPAS web site till the end of Dec 2012. Our new Northwest Region II group of Chapters (Kitsap, Admiralty, and OPAS) asked Judy Willott to be our new regional representative. She has graciously and generously accepted that new role. She will be organizing an initial regional leaders meeting in the near future, to be held at our Audubon Center. Judy is well known to many of us and was a participant in our 2011 BirdFest, and the San Juan Cruise. Please see the following introduction from Judy.

Introductory Message from Judy Willott

Hello:

I'd like to introduce myself as I take on the job as your Chapter's regional rep. First, a big thank you to Ken Wiersema who so ably served our NW region on the WAWG as it worked to develop the proposal approved at the recent ACOW, so our Chapters can move forward in collaboration to accomplish shared goals. Ken's are certainly big shoes to fill.

I've been a member of the KAS board for several years, served as President for two terms, and currently as an "at large" board member. Through KAS, I got involved in the Kitsap Forest and Bay Project and now serve as the chair of its outreach and communications working group. In addition, I had a great chance to study winter flocks on Port Gamble Bay in the yearlong survey of the bay's birds we just completed.

I've been noticing birds for a long time, starting with the Steller's Jays in the hemlock outside my childhood home. My original hardback Peterson's Field Guide to Western Birds dates back to 1961 and has the unusual feature of 6 backwards and upside-down pages in the duck section. Of course, our current field guides have their ducks right side up. Things have advanced in our library!

As the representative for the NW II region, I'll do my best to keep my ducks in a row.

Judy Willott, jdwillott@mac.com, 206-842-6939



*Judy Willott, New Regional Representative
for the NW Washington Chapters
Home Chapter - Kitsap Audubon Society*

Education and Outreach - Being a Backyard Birder (BBB)

by Shirley Anderson



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 your homes good habitats for wild birds. "BBB" can be taken as individual sessions or as a series. Each class costs \$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.

The first class in this year's "Backyard Birder" series was held on Saturday, October 13. Bob Iddins presented information on the selection of both binoculars and field guides to a class of 14 people. Attendees tried a variety of both binoculars and field guides during the class. Pat and Shannon Flattery, who attended some of this series last year, were offered free membership in OPAS for this coming year by completing a fifth session on October 13. Each class member received information about upcoming OPAS and River Center field trips and classes.

Future "Backyard Birder" classes:

The next class will meet on Saturday, November 10, from 10 a.m. to noon at the River Center. Christie Lassen of Wild Birds Unlimited will present information on the "Winter Care and Feeding of Birds".

The class will not meet formally in December; however, members are encouraged to join the Christmas Bird Count (CBC) "warm-up" field trip at Railroad Bridge Park on December 8 to get ready for the Christmas Bird Count on December 17. Contact the coordinator of the count, Bob Boekelheide (bboek@olympus.net) for details.

The first class meeting of the new-year will be held on January 12 at the River Center. Ken Wiersema and Shirley Anderson will present "Birds-the Inside Story", anatomy and physiology unique to birds.

Conservation Matters

by Mary Porter-Solberg



Trumpeter and Tundra Swan Study

Once again, expect to observe wintering Trumpeter Swans and some Tundra Swans in the fields surrounding the Sequim-Dungeness area eating leftover grains and vegetables harvested by farmers.

From November until April, you can hear the honking call of Trumpeter Swans as these magnificent birds fly overhead looking for a favorable landing spot. At first, their numbers may be few, but last year, over 100 swans were observed in fields by early spring.

OPAS plans to continue a Trumpeter and Tundra Swan study that began last winter and ended in the spring. In October, an informational discussion and training session was held separately by Martha Jordan, Swan Steward for the Trumpeter Swan Society.

The observations by swan surveyors will provide a data base of information that counts swan numbers and locates feeding areas and night roosts. By immediately reporting an injured, sick, or dead swan, Washington Department Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) can collect and remove the swan to determine the
(Continued on next page)



Trumpeter Swans
Photo by Robert Hutchison

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cause of the injury, sickness, or death; in the case of lead-poisoning, it is important to remove the swan as soon as possible so raptors and animals do not die of poisoning from feeding on the carcass.

Two years ago, there were several cases of swan deaths attributed to lead poisoning, but it doesn't necessarily mean the swans ingested the lead in our area. It takes up to 3 weeks for a swan to die from lead poisoning, so they could have picked it up elsewhere before flying to this area. By monitoring the swans feeding and roosting sites, study participants can help determine and report any problem that needs immediate attention.

When observing swans, please remember always to park your car in a safe place off the road, respect private property, and do not approach the swans. Binoculars, spotting scopes, and telephoto lenses are important to prevent disturbing their normal activities.

If you would like to participate in the study or for more information, please contact Mary Porter-Solberg at 360-683-8072.

Kitsap Forest and Bay Project

Kitsap Audubon Society hosted the Washington State Audubon Conservation Committee (WSACC) meeting on October 5th at the Poulsbo City Hall. There was an excellent turnout with many state chapters represented at the meeting.

All Washington Audubon chapters in attendance voted to pass a resolution presented by Kitsap Audubon supporting the Kitsap Forest and Bay Project. The project seeks to conserve nearly 7,000 acres of forest and 1.8 miles of shoreline in Port Gamble on the Kitsap Peninsula.

The forest, wetlands and Port Gamble Bay shoreline provide habitat for a diversity of wildlife species. The forest is home to bear, deer, and many woodland birds. Port Gamble Bay is an important wintering site for waterfowl. The waters of Port Gamble Bay nourish many shellfish, including geoduck, and forage fish such as the Pacific herring (the second largest spawning site for these forage fish). Protecting these many habitats and species helps to retain a healthy Hood Canal and Puget Sound.

The current landowner, Pope Resources, wants to move out of this region and has given the community an option to purchase the land before an expiration date of March, 2013. For more information, please go to <http://greatkitsapforestbay.org/>.

Christmas Bird Counts are Coming!

by Bob Boekelheide

Mark your calendars! The annual Sequim-Dungeness Christmas Bird Count (SDCBC) will occur this year on Monday, Dec. 17, and the Port Angeles Christmas Bird Count (PACBC) will occur on Sunday, Dec. 30. Last year the SDCBC set an all-time record for the highest number of species seen on a WA CBC, with 151 species, so we eagerly look forward to new discoveries this year.

Christmas counts occur over a 15-mile diameter circle. The center of the SDCBC circle is near the intersection of Brown and Port Williams Roads, so it includes Dungeness Spit, Dungeness and Sequim Bays, Protection Island, Diamond Point, and into the Olympic foothills south of Sequim. The PACBC center is in the Olympic foothills south of Port Angeles, so it includes Port Angeles Harbor, several miles of the Elwha River on the west to Morse Creek on the east, plus all the way up to Hurricane Ridge, a huge elevation range for any CBC.

(Continued on next page)



CBCs need lots of participants to cover as much ground as possible. If you are an experienced counter, you may help with areas not covered well by others. If you are a new Christmas counter, you can help other groups. Even if you can only count your feeder or stroll around your neighborhood for an hour or two (assuming you live in a count circle), you can help out. We must also keep close track of our times and mileages, to make comparisons with other counts and other years. To prepare, please join birdwalks at the River Center on Wednesday mornings and go on OPAS field trips, in addition to going birding as much as possible this fall.

If you are interested in participating, please call Bob Boekelheide at 360-681-4867 or email bboek@olympus.net to sign up for the SDCBC, or call Barb Blackie at 360-477-8028 or email blackieb@olypen.com to sign up for the PACBC.

Note:

You may have heard that Nat'l. Audubon is dropping the \$5 charge for counters this year. I know you must be crushed by this news, but in reality the science folks at Audubon must still rely on donations if you're feeling generous. The printed summary in American Birds that we received each year (if you paid your \$5 and gave your address) is also being dropped in favor of totally on-line access to the data. It's a changing world...



Bird Sightings - Late August through late October

by Denny AFMJ Van Horn

The period from late August through these last days of October has given the Olympic Peninsula some great weather. Over forty-five days of sunshine and warm fall temperatures have provided delightful birding. And the birds have been both fantastic and an enigma as to who's here, who's late, and who's missing - so far. As guest writer for this report, I'm varying the format Mr. Boekelheide normally offers in that I will track

bird sightings "taxonomically", with a special report on birding the far west end of the peninsula. So, let's get started. Note: All sightings in the following report are from Denny Van Horn's records unless noted as another's.

Waterfowl - Greater White-fronted Geese made their fall appearance at Jamestown on Sept 26. A flock of eight Snow Geese were found on the eve of Sept 23 at the Creamery on Towne road and continued to be seen trading back and forth across the face of Dungeness from the Rec Area to Jamestown from Sept 23 to Oct 4 with flock size from six to 10 birds. It was at this time that a Ross's Goose made it's appearance over Dungeness on Sept 28; however the caveats are several: rarity, time of migration, and flock association. This would be the first record for Clallam County. On Oct 18, Tonia Signor reported the first Brant in the county seen at Lincoln Park in P.A. Cackling Geese have made a substantial appearance on the peninsula this fall with flocks scattered everywhere; the population during October has been estimated to be over a 1,000+ birds. The first fall Trumpeter Swans made their appearance on Oct 25, as three flew in over Dungeness, heading to Les Jones' marsh. A very unusual sighting of a Tundra Swan in the Freshwater Bay area was made by Paulette Ache on Oct 28; she reported that the yellow teardrop at the base of the bill was distinct. American Wigeon seemed to make their fall appearance overnight. On Sept 14 there were only a few on Dungeness Bay; yet on the eve of Sept 15 Scott Gremel watched at least a thousand birds fly into the Bay. *(Continued on next page)*



Greater White-fronted Geese

Photo by Robert Hutchison

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And the first Eurasian Wigeon was seen by Paulette Ache amongst 100+ American Wigeon at John Wayne Marina. Ring-necked Ducks showed up on Kirner Pond and the Kitchen-Dick ponds on Sept 9, along with Lesser Scaup. Paulette also had the first fall record of Long-tailed Duck [x9] seen from the bluffs at the DRA. Surf Scoters came in around Sept 8; they are always the first scoters to arrive. Dow Lambert found two female White-winged Scoters on Oct 24; while six Black Scoters were seen off Ediz Hook on Oct 18. Buffleheads arrived on Oct 20 with 13 found at JWM. On Oct 25 Dow had 200+ Red-breasted Mergansers fly over him while he was walking Dungeness Spit. He said that they just kept arriving in waves from off the Strait into the Bay.



Loons to Herons & Rails - All three loons (Common, Pacific, and Red-throated) seem to be showing up in numbers typical for this time of year along the Strait. Horned Grebes and Red-necked Grebes are dribbling in; there was a concentration of Horned Grebes [100+] seen off the east end of Freshwater Bay on Oct 12. Western Grebes continue to be seen in small groups off Jamestown, Ediz Hook, and Salt Creek.

Our local three-year resident Black-crowned Night Heron [named Gale by Coffee Miklos] has not yet returned to Dungeness. We'll keep you posted when and if she returns. Two unusual sightings of American Bittern took place in Dungeness. One the evening of Sept 18, and several nights later, a single Bittern was heard giving it's Gallump-gallump call from the marshy area just south of Helen's Pond. Another surprise from this same area came on the eve of Sept 21 when a Sora was heard giving it's whinny call over and over. This area (from Helen's pond to Les Jones' marsh) continues to be the best place to hear Virginia Rails calling at dusk.

On the nights of Sept 21, 23 & 24, Sandhill Cranes were heard flying north to south over Dungeness late in the night. On the 23 there were probably as many as 20 birds.

Raptors & Owls -

TURKEY VULTURES! On Oct 1 & 2 Diann McRae and Larry Rymon spent two foggy days waiting for these birds to make their annual trip across the Strait from Vancouver Island to the Salt Creek area with no luck. It seems intense fog held the vultures in-check on the B.C. side. The fog lifted though, and they made the journey the next day with a flight of 550+ on the 3rd [unknown observer]. At Clallam Bay on Sept 28, a juvenile Broad-winged Hawk was seen soaring in a thermal along with several Red-tailed Hawks, Common Ravens, a Bald Eagle and numerous gulls. This was an exciting sighting as this small Buteo is rarely seen in the county. A very early Rough-legged Hawk was seen by Bruce Paige in the La Push area on Oct 8. Vince Lucas watched on Oct 1 as a Peregrine Falcon took one of the now numerous Eurasian-collared Doves. Speaking of falcons, there are at least six different Peregrines [1 Anatum, 2 Tundra, and 3 Peale's] working the Dungeness area and have been seen regularly since late September. *(Continued on next page)*



Juvenile Sharp-shinned Hawk
Photo by Gracie Lambert

Also, a single male Kestrel has been seen along Towne road at the bend where one parks for the Dungeness river walk. Currently, there is a significant Accipiter movement along the face of the peninsula with numerous reports [45+] of Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks; both adults and juveniles. Barn, Great-horned, and Barred Owl reports are low at this time; which shouldn't be. Two Barred Owls responded to calling on the Wednesday morning Birdwalk, Oct 3. Great-horned Owls have been heard calling along the Dungeness River near 3 Crabs on several nights lately, while Barn Owls seem to have just vanished. The one owl that has produced some excitement lately is the Northern Pygmy Owl in migration southward from Vancouver Island to the peninsula. I have 18 records of these owls calling late at night and early morning from Dungeness to Neah Bay in the past four weeks.

Gulls, Shorebirds, & Alcids - The most significant questions for shorebirds are where are they? Where have they gone? Or did they simply touch down along the Strait for a while in September and then pick-up and leave? Both numbers of species and total population levels seem at their lowest in years. Dunlins have just arrived in the local area [Oct 26], Sanderlings are few and far between, Westerns and Least are not to be found. Black-bellied Plovers are scattered in very small numbers; however Dow Lambert watched 100+ about a mile out Bay side on the Spit on Oct 25. With that being said, Doug Brown found eight Whimbrel on Dungeness Spit on Sept 26, while Vince Lucas found two Whimbrel at the DRA on Oct 1. On the nights of Sept 28 & 29 several Whimbrel were heard calling as they flew over Dungeness. Vince also watched a single Marbled Godwit at 3 Crabs on Oct 1. Pectoral Sandpipers were seen several times on Helen's Pond in early Sept. A rare find on Helen's Pond was a single Sharp-tailed Sandpiper on Sept 10, which was seen and later photographed. This is the first record for the county since 2005. Three times in October Wilson's Snipe have been flushed on walks south of Les Jones' marsh.

A single Bonaparte's gull was seen at JWM on Sept 8; it seemed out of place amongst the nine Heermann's Gulls and numerous Olympic Gulls using the creek outflow on the south side of the marina. A basic plumaged Franklin's gull was found on Dave Jackson's field trip to Carrie Blake Reclamation Pond area on Oct 20; this bird was also photographed by Vince Lucas. Turning to terns, the last report of a Caspian Tern for our area was on Sept 5. Liz Donadio watched a Parasitic Jaeger chasing gulls off Ediz Hook on Oct 3.

Dave Jackson's Christmas Bird Count team (Julie Jackson, Marion Rutledge, Kate Goschen, and Marie Grad) reports shorebirds at 3 Crabs and the Oysterhouse: Dunlin, 1000x, on Oct. 25; Black-bellied Plover, 200x, on Aug. 30 and Oct. 11, 50x, on Oct. 25; Sanderling, 200x, on Aug. 30 and Sept. 18, 700x, on Oct. 25; Mew Gull, 30x, on Oct. 25; Western Sandpiper, 150-200x, twice in late Aug., 50x, on Sept. 18 and Oct. 11; Wilson's Snipe, 1x at 3 Crabs on Sept. 13.



Franklin's Gull
Photo by Vince Lucas

And all the other birds - On the night of Sept 11, all the swallows in Clallam County made a collective decision to fly south: so they did. There were a few stragglers though; a Barn Swallow here, and a Violet-green Swallow there - but for the most part sometime during that night swallows left us until mid-March, 2013. The first Northern Shrike to be found this fall was a collective effort for the Wednesday morning Birdwalk on Oct 10. A very odd sighting [Sept 23] of two Gray Jays working foodstuff left on a table at a small campsite at the mouth of the Sieku River was a curious sight to watch. While on that same day at the old ranch along Hoko-Ozette road managed by the National Park a single Blue Jay was observed moving [and calling] through the few trees south of the ranch house. One of the mysterious events in our local area this summer was the lack of Western Bluebirds. Only a single male was seen [Sept 13] in the fields east of N Blake Avenue. Two American Pipits were found foraging in the drying mud on the south side
(Continue on next page)

Harlequin Happenings

of Helen's Pond [Oct 7]. Several warblers put in a good appearance as fall began in earnest. A MacGillivray's Warbler was found foraging through blackberry brambles along Seashore road. Nine Townsend's Warblers in two flocks, were tallied along the Birdwalk on Oct 10. Similarly, a half dozen were found in the lower walkway of the DRA several days later. On Oct 11 a Palm Warbler was found working the edge of brambles at the entrance to the Dungeness NWR Spit.



Northern shrike
Photo by Gracie Lambert

The sparrows close out this account with the notable return of both the Sooty Fox Sparrow and Golden-crowned Sparrow from their northern, or altitudinal, breeding ranges seemingly on Oct 2. Four other sparrows records are important here: a single Vesper's Sparrow was found in amongst a group of Savannah's Sparrows on Oct 2 at the old barn site at 3 Crabs; a single Swamp Sparrow was found just south of Helen's Pond on October 10; a tan-striped White-throated Sparrow was at a feeder in Dungeness on Oct 3; and lastly Lincoln's Sparrows put in a good appearance [x8] on the Birdwalk on Sept 26 and more have shown up in their favorite habitats since then.

Special Section / Neah Bay - The far west end of the county has consistently produced unique and rare birds during both spring and fall migrations. And this fall has been no different. What follows is a consolidation of sightings made by Brad Waggoner, Dan Waggoner,

Charlie Wright, Ryan Shaw, Nigel Ball, Bruce Paige, and myself at Neah Bay, Cape Flattery, the Wa'atch River Valley and other environs of the Makah. For the sake of brevity, only bird species, numbers, and dates are noted.

Sooty Shearwater / x15 on Sept 29, x9 on Oct 9 & x10 on Oct 13

Golden Eagle / x1 on Oct 7

Northern Goshawk / x1 on Sept 30

Rough-legged Hawk / x1 on Oct 27

Sandhill Crane / x3 on Oct 21

Glaucous-winged Gull X Herring Gull / x1 on Oct 13

Long-billed Curlew / 1x on Oct 13

Black-legged Kittiwake / x7 on Oct 9 / x1 on Oct 13

Ancient Murrelet x2 on Oct 21

Tropical Kingbird / x1 on Oct 13

Mockingbird / x1 on Oct 21

Palm Warbler / x1 on Oct 13 & x2 on Oct 21

Nashville Warbler / x1 / Oct 21

Clay-colored Sparrow / x1 on Oct 21

Orchard Oriole / Imm. female / x1 on Oct 13

2013 Birdfest Notes - Banquet Planning

by Marjorie Palmer

April 5 through 7, 2013 will see our annual Olympic Birdfest, a very special one, our tenth. I would like to send a large "Thank You" to all of you whose work on past events have brought us here, helping fund the Dungeness River Audubon Center and sharing the love of birds.



The Birdfest Planning Committee is meeting regularly. You can check our website <http://www.olympicbirdfest.org> for updates as work progresses. We always welcome more help for jobs large and small. If you want to get involved, contact Powell or Valerie at the River Center, or Margie Palmer, grblheron@wavecable.com.

(Continued on next page)



Kevin Schafer

We are very excited to make our first 2013 announcement: the speaker for the gala banquet will be award-winning conservation wildlife photographer, Kevin Schafer, whose work appears in **National Geographic, Smithsonian, National Wildlife, Audubon, and Natural History.** Kevin will share some of his spectacular images and unique experiences "In the Company of Animals." Kevin has sought out little known and endangered birds and animals the world over, and used his camera and sensitivity to tell their stories, so we can look forward to quite a special evening! You can preview some of Kevin's incredible photos at his website <http://www.kevinschafer.com>. Mark your calendars for the Olympic Birdfest Banquet, Saturday, April 6!

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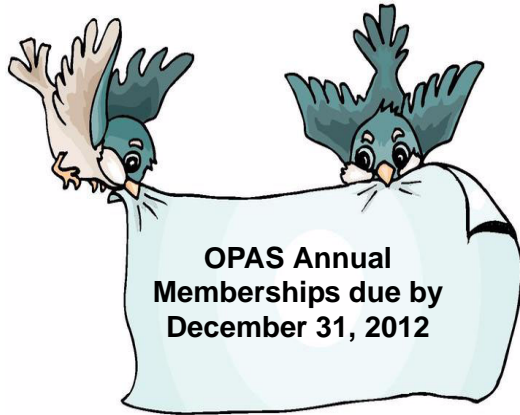
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