



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 5 Sept-Oct 2013

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

OPAS Programs for September and October

by Bob Boekelheide and Ken Wiersema



September Program - OPAS 40th Anniversary Celebration

September 18, **START TIME 5 P.M.**, at the **RED CEDAR ROOM, JAMESTOWN S'KLALLAM TRIBAL CENTER, BLYN.**

Special Guest Speaker: Dennis Paulson presents "Birds of the Wind - The Lives of Shorebirds"

Registration Requested: As with all our monthly meetings, this event is free and open to the public. However, please go to www.olympicpeninsulaudubon.org to register your name if you plan to attend.

The meeting begins at 5:00 p.m. with a **social and catered appetizers**, followed by **recognition of OPAS' founders**, as well as other key people who over the years helped the chapter move forward with its birding and habitat conservation goals. The meeting concludes with **special guest speaker Dennis Paulson, Ph.D.** in Zoology from the University of Miami, former Director of the Slater Museum of Natural History at Puget Sound University, teacher, and author or coauthor of 90 scientific papers and nine books.

Dennis' presentation this evening will be "Birds of the Wind -- The Lives of Shorebirds." Shorebirds are among the most interesting of birds, with their long and complicated migrations, their great flocks, their fascinating feeding adaptations and nesting biology, and their crying need for good conservation strategies. Join Dennis Paulson for a profusely illustrated presentation about these charismatic birds.

October Program - Return of "Local Bird Photo Night"

October 16, 7 p.m., at the River Center

At this summer's OPAS retreat, our Board endorsed, as OPAS's 40th Anniversary gift, contributing a replacement projector and new flat screen TV to the River Center. The TV will present HD images and enhance other programs. For October, we will repeat last year's program of local photographs that you, our members and friends, have taken of birds in our region. We ask for digital images that we can display through our computer and new TV system. Dow Lambert will be our technical consultant for the meeting, and will help install the TV and computer linkups. So please contact either Dow, or Ken Wiersema, with your special bird images. Limit your photos to 5-10 images, so we can allow as many folks to participate as possible. Please check our new web site for more information on the October Program.



Dennis Paulson

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blueball431@gmail.com

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sanderson22@olypen.com

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agift@q.com

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

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

Newsletter, Bob Hutchison,
683-7265

rbrycehut@wavecable.com

Publicity, Sara-Ellen Peterson,
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saraellen.mn@gmail.com

Webmaster, Selmarie Stacy,
504-2872,
stacys72@hotmail.com

Web Support, Dan Stahler,
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President's Message

by Jim Gift

The first thing that I want to do is to thank Tom Montgomery for his leadership as president of OPAS for the last two years.

Also noteworthy is that Dave Jackson is stepping down as the OPAS web-master. Dave took over maintenance and design of the OPAS website some 9 years ago. He dedicated many hours to upgrading and improving it as a service to our members. OPAS owes Dave a great deal of thanks for this significant effort.

OPAS currently has a new website under development, which we hope will be available for use by late September. Selmarie Stacy will be the new OPAS webmaster. Dan Stahler will support her as backup webmaster. Both individuals have joined the OPAS Board. Bob Phreaner has also joined the board and will Co-Chair the Conservation Committee with Mary Porter-Solberg. We have a lot of changes as we move forward this year.

Bob Iddins led a process to put together an excellent group of birding field trips for the coming year. Check our newsletter or website for upcoming field trips

I would like to close by emphasizing our 40th Anniversary Celebration that will be held on September 18th. The event is free but since space is limited we are requesting you to register. See further details on this event elsewhere in the newsletter. OPAS has an excellent speaker for this celebration, Dennis Paulson. Join us as we celebrate our history and make plans for the future of our Chapter.



OPAS Field Trips in September and October

by Bob Iddins

Bird Walks

Date: Every Wed. morning; Time: 8:30 to 10:30 a.m.

Meet at the River Center for a lovely walk to see and hear the birds of the Dungeness riparian forest. Information from walks helps us understand the annual cycle of birds in RR Bridge Park.

Neah Bay

Date & Time: Thursday, September 12, 2013, 9:00 am - 3:00 pm

Leaders: Denny Van Horn & Dow Lambert

Meeting place: Washburns Hardware Store on Hwy 112 in Neah Bay

Cost: Field trip is free; however, a Makah Nation Recreational Pass (\$10 and good for one year) is required for each vehicle. It can be purchased at Washburns.

Features: Denny's favorite hot spots. Anything is possible.

Bring: Optics (including scopes if available), snacks, water, lunch and appropriate clothing for all kinds of weather

Further information: Denny Van Horn 360-390-8128, dennyvanhorn@gmail.com

Elwha River Mouth

Date & Time: Saturday, September 21, 2013, 9:00 am till about noon

Cost: Free

Leaders: Denny Van Horn & Dow Lambert

(Continued on next page)

Meeting place: Trailhead for access to the river mouth (Turn north off of Hwy 112 at Place Road, continue 1.8 miles and turn right.)

Features: Lots of gulls, alcids, and water birds.

Bring: Optics (including scopes if available), snacks, water, and appropriate clothing for all kinds of weather.

Further information: Denny Van Horn 360-390-8128, dennyvanhorn@gmail.com

Birding for Beginners & Newcomers

Date & Time: Saturday, October 12, 2013, 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.



Cedar Waxwing
Photo by Robert Hutchison

Calendar of OPAS Field Trips for 2013 - 2014

by Bob Iddins

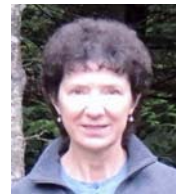
Date	Location	Leader(s)
Sept 12 (Thursday)	Neah Bay	Denny Van Horn & Dow Lambert
Sept 21	Elwha River mouth	Denny Van Horn & Dow Lambert
Sept 27 & 28	River Festival	
Oct 12	Beginning Birder & Newcomers	Dave Jackson
Nov 9	Beginning Birder & Newcomers	Dave Jackson
Nov 30	Local Bays & Shores	Denny Van Horn
Dec 14	CBC Warmup	Bob Boekelheide
Dec 16	Sequim-Dungeness CBC	Bob Boekelheide
Dec 28	Port Angeles CBC	Barb Blackie
Jan 18	Ediz Hook & Port Angeles Harbor	TBA
Feb 15	Local Bays & Shores	Jim Gift & Bob Iddins
Feb 24 & 25 (Monday & Tuesday)	Skagit Flats	Bob Iddins
Mar 8	Elwha River Mouth	Denny Van Horn & Dow Lambert
Mar 25 & 26 (Tuesday & Wednesday)	Nisqually & Ridgefield NWRs	Bill Parker
Apr 4-6	Bird Fest	
Apr 7-9	San Juan Cruise	
Apr 29-30 (Tuesday & Wednesday)	Columbia River Gorge (Bingen area)	Vince Lucas
May 3	Birdathon Warmup	Bob Boekelheide
May 5 (Monday)	Neah Bay	Denny Van Horn
May 10	Birdathon	Bob Boekelheide
May 14-16	Malheur NWR, Oregon	Bob Iddins
Jun 9 (Monday)	Palo Alto road	Terry Martin & Bill Parker
Jun 14	Lost Mountain	Bob Iddins & Terry Martin
Jul 12	Local Bays, etc.	Bob Iddins & Jim Gif
Jul 22	Hurricane Ridge	Bill Parker
Aug 11	3 Crabs' Purple Martins	Ken Wiersema
Aug 25 & 26 (Monday & Tuesday)	Ocean Shores	Bob Iddins



Conservation Matters

by Mary Porter-Solberg

History and Future of the Purple Martin Nest Box Project



Records of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) reveal documented nesting colonies of Purple Martins in Clallam County from the 1920s. There were small colonies under the eaves of the Sol Duc Hot Springs lodge and in the County Courthouse in Port Angeles as late as the 1930s. Since that time, introduction of non-native, cavity nesting birds, such as the European Starling and the House Sparrow, have taken many of the natural and human made cavities found over land sites and forced the Purple Martins to move their nests over water.

In the mid-1990s, Stuart MacRobbie, OPAS board member, began a project to build and install Purple Martin nest boxes on the abandoned pilings in Dungeness Bay, located in front of the intersection of Sequim Dungeness Road and 3 Crabs Road. The birds had been observed nesting in cavities in the deteriorating wood pilings. Stuart and other volunteers decided to build and install better and safer boxes for the birds on the pilings. Initial boxes did not stand up to harsh weather conditions and had to be replaced. Volunteers built 4 simple boxes, and later replaced them with improved boxes designed for the Martins. Stan Kostka, who has been a leader in developing and monitoring Purple Martin nest colonies in Puget Sound, aided us on the project.

Each year since 2005, nest boxes are added and/or improved box designs replace older boxes. Monitoring the nest boxes usually begins in April and ends in August. Nest box replacement and monitoring must take place at extremely low, minus, tidal events to allow volunteers access across the sand flats of Dungeness Bay.

In July 2013 we had 16 nest boxes at the 3 Crabs site, and recorded nesting activity in each of them. We counted 47 eggs or chicks in mid-July, tended by at least 27 Adult birds. In August 2013, 31 adults and juveniles were later counted.

Recently, the WDFW acquired the property adjacent to the pilings and plans a major restoration of both the shoreline and adjacent wetlands. The acquisition and restoration derived from statewide programs to restore Salmon habitat and protect waters adjacent to the mouth of the Dungeness River. Included in the land acquisition is a program to remove the deteriorating pilings, which contain toxic creosote residue. OPAS is participating in the restoration project with the objective of retaining 10-12 pilings that sustain the Purple Martin colony. OPAS has also participated in discussions with WDFW and others to find ways to replace nest box support pilings with nontoxic alternatives either over water or over land.

In 2005, at the invitation of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, OPAS expanded our program to include installation of Purple Martin nest boxes on Protection Island located in the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Protection Island (PI) is a National Wildlife Refuge, which has restrictions on nest box placement to a few onshore locations near the southeast marina area. In 2013 we had 5 nest boxes on the island and in July 2013, there was Martin nesting activity in 4 of them. In Aug 2013, while surveying seabird nesting colonies on the north side of PI, the Refuge biologist reported encouraging news that 2 Purple Martin nests, with young birds in them, were found in natural tree snag cavities.

The 3 Crabs and Protection Island Martin houses are single-unit wooden boxes arranged in clusters. Other areas in our region have been successful at attracting Purple Martins by providing clusters of gourds for nest building.

Each year, data from the OPAS Purple Martin nest box project is sent to, USFWS, WDFW, and to Stan Kostka, who collects data for the Puget Sound/ Strait of Juan de Fuca.

For more information, please contact Ken Wiersema at wiersema@olympus.net.



*Purple Martin pair nesting in 3 Crabs boxes, Aug. 2013
Photo by Dow Lambert*

Web Corner

by Selmarie Stacy



Hello! My name is Selmarie Stacy and I will be managing the OPAS website. I'm really pleased to have the opportunity to be working and learning for and with you.

I grew up the daughter of a serviceman and later became the wife of a serviceman. As such, I've lived my life in many places and experienced many cultures and environments. My oldest sister was a naturalist. We were siblings who roamed together investigating birds nests, gopher holes, ant hills, rabbit babies, and who conspired to smuggle things home in bags, jars, and hats to watch them eat and grow and change. You know how it is. As an adult, I have a sister who is a birder and docent at Railroad Bridge Park, Kathy Bush, and we go around together looking at plants and bark and birds.

Since I've lived life on the move, I've worked a wide variety of jobs, eventually settling in Olympia. At The Evergreen State College I was a financial aid counselor, and built and maintained websites for the college and for scientific projects, non-profits, and small businesses.

I see my purpose at OPAS as a conduit between those who have information to share and those who want to receive it. Please help me do the best I can for you.

Selmarie

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Sponsored by the
Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society

Cruise operated by
Puget Sound Express

Proceeds from this trip help support the educational programs of the Dungeness River Audubon Center

OPAS reserves the right to cancel the trip and refund payments in the unlikely event of low registration. Photos by Bob Boekelheide, Hal Everett, and Michael Packer



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Bird Sightings

by Denny AFMJ Van Horn

Chukar! Let me say this bird's name one more time: **CHUKAR!!** Now to the question as Bob Boekelheide put it: "What the @\$% is a Chukar doing in the Olympics?" It is a bird of eastern Washington, a bird of dry sagebrush-bunchgrass canyons, not a bird of old-growth forests and rain. On July 5th, a Chukar was found on the High Divide trail near Lunch Lake, eight miles SE of Lake Crescent. Photos were taken by an unknown hiker; and these were shown to Mark Salvadelena. On July 17th, Mark relocated the Chukar, took photos, and started a conundrum: What is a Chukar doing in the Olympics? And do we count it? The answer to the first question will never be known; the answer to the second is, why not! Two weeks passed between the initial sighting and the second. This was a healthy, un-banded bird with no known or suspected tampering, and no domestic Chukars are known on the peninsula that might wander deep into the ONP. As Mark put it, "There wasn't much chance for some weirdo to pack in an exotic bird!" So, now we have Chukar on the County List. *(Continued on next page)*



Harlequin Happenings



Chuckar
Photo by Mark Salvadelena

Now, to other unique birds. Almost as unbelievable was a reported sighting of a Mourning Warbler [7.08] at Altaire CG, ONP by Bernard Foy. Although there were no photos, recordings were made. According to several birder-type experts, the recordings sound like a Mourning warbler, but without a photo of such rarity [no record for western WA], the bird remains only probable. A Willet was found at Dungeness Landing [6.26] and stayed in the area for several days. A second record of a Bar-tailed Godwit for the year occurred when a single bird showed up for a day at 3 Crabs [8.03]. Was it the same bird seen in early June or another? It was examined by several birders who noted differences in plumage between this bird and the June bird. A single Long-billed Curlew was found along the Quillayute river in La Push [8.15]. On Aug 25th, Nigel Ball reported two Elegant Terns at Neah Bay. On the 26th, two more were found in La Push off the south jetty, and three were seen late evening by several birders as the terns fished the east end of Neah Bay. In off-shore records, Manx

Shearwater [x4] were found by Ryan Merrill on July 23rd. A Fork-tailed Storm Petrel and a Buller's Shearwater were found off Cape Flattery [7.10] in a mixed shearwater mass of birds. Northern Fulmar and Sooty Shearwater were seen off La Push [7.30] by James Acker. On the same day, a Wandering Tattler was seen on Seal Rock off La Push [J. Acker]. Pink-footed Shearwater [x500], Sooty Shearwater [x3,000], Sabine's Gull [x3], and a lone Pomarine Jaeger were found offshore at La Push [J. Acker, 8.19].

Other good birds include a Long-eared Owl [7.2] found by Ryan Abe up on Hurricane Ridge, when he investigated jays and other birds mobbing the owl as it perched in a low pine tree. Two Clay-colored Sparrows were found in the beach forelands north of Hobuck, Neah Bay [6.23]. Clark's Nutcracker made the county list [6.29], when Brett and Eddie Kasper watched several fly overhead at their Aunt's residence in the lower Deer Park area. A female Rose-breasted Grosbeak was heard as it made its "sneaker-on-gym-floor" squeak from where it was perched in the Silver Poplar in Dungeness [8.20]. The bird was then observed [Bob Kiernan & DVH] as it flew through the area displaying all the right markings. And the last of the goodies was a single Lazuli Bunting seen north of Hobuck late evening on August 26th by several birders.

Now for the usual suspects. In a very early fall entrance, White-fronted Geese [x8] put in an appearance in a fly-by over Dungeness [8.01]. Adrian Akmajian reported Red-necked and Horned Grebes showing up in Neah Bay [7.11]. Brown Pelicans started showing up in good numbers at La Push the last week of July. A male Blue-winged Teal was found in the slough along the shore at the park in Clallam Bay [8.17]. Ruddy Ducks [x5] were reported from the Diamond Point pond by Evan Jackson, and from the Kitchen-Dick pond [x8] within the past week. All three scoter species have shown up from Neah Bay to Sequim Bay. California Gulls have invaded the entire northern peninsula with numbers ranging from 3,000+ in the Neah Bay area to flocks of 400-800 from La Push to Clallam Bay to Ediz Hook to Dungeness Spit. Shorebird species are high but the number of birds per species is very low. Across the face of the Strait these past weeks the following shorebirds have been found [some noted above]: Black Oystercatcher, Semipalmated Plover, Killdeer, Black-bellied Plover, Pacific Golden Plover, Marbled Godwit, Bar-tailed Godwit, Whimbrel, Long-billed Curlew, Willet, Greater Yellowlegs, Lesser Yellowlegs, Solitary Sandpiper, Spotted Sandpiper, Wandering Tattler, Wilson's Phalarope, Red-necked Phalarope, Red Phalarope, Short- and Long-billed Dowitcher, Common Snipe, Ruddy Turnstone, Black Turnstone, Surf-bird, Rock Sandpiper, Red Knot, Dunlin, Sanderling, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Western Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Baird's Sandpiper, and Pectoral Sandpiper. A total of 34 species! Pretty impressive. (Continued on next page)



Elegant Tern
Photo by Nigel Ball



Long-billed Curlew
Photo by Robert Hutchison

Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks are making their appearance noted as they work through woods and rural areas for their prey. A female Peale's Peregrine Falcon has been seen on numerous occasions in the Dungeness area working the shorebird flocks. Of the 19 known Red-tailed Hawk nests in the county, at least 28 young were fledged; and of the 14 known Northern Harrier nesting sites in the county, at least 31 young were fledged. The Osprey nest at Neah Bay fledged two young. Two fledgling American Kestrels were being fed by an adult female in the McDonald creek area in late July.

The last report of Common Nighthawks still in the area came from La Push [8.22], where three were seen late evening as they aerially hunted over the village. Judy Mullally reported that the Vaux's Swifts that annually nest in a chimney in her dwelling fledged their young on August 10. Purple Martin nesting at Neah Bay has finally been confirmed. In the pilings at the west end of the boat docks, at least four active nesting sites were found. On August 26th, at least five fledglings were watched as they were

fed by adults, while adults were still carrying food into the areas where nests are presumed to exist [access is impossible!]. It seems that most of our flycatcher species have vacated the peninsula with only a few Pacific Slope Flycatchers still being seen [Nigel Ball, 8.25]. Swainson's Thrush begin to move south around August 23rd, with many birds heard flying overhead after dark giving their characteristic flight notes. All the swallows are flocking and staging. Along the power lines at 3 Crabs, as many as 300+ have been seen in the past week; at Neah Bay along Makah Passage, 200+ were working the fields along the river [8.26]. A male Cassin's Finch was found in the upper Palo Alto area [8.19]. And to close out this report, a Vesper's Sparrow was found at Lake Ozette, in the same area where one was reported earlier in the year [8.17].

In a last bit of birdy news, the Gibson Spit Burrowing Owl [09/U], that spent the 2012-2013 winter here, made it back to the Kamloops, B.C. area in early Spring. The bird mated with another; she produced nine eggs which all hatched. The nine owlets were banded on June 26th with all little ones reported doing well. Now the question is, will 09/U show up this year at last year's winter burrow? Time will tell; but in the mean time it's time for fall migration and all the vagrants that haven't shown up yet.

Oh yes, one last bit of continuing news: the Clallam County species total is currently at 276 birds! And that is amazing. Will we reach 300 species for the year? Anything's possible! Good Birding . . .

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