



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 2015

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

OPAS Program in November

by Bob Boekelheide & Tom Butler

Note: There will not be an OPAS program in December. The next program will be on January 20. See you then.

November 18, 2015, Program — "Birding Paradise and Broken Bones: My Recent Adventures in Mexico"

Presented by Carolyn Wilcox, Experience Olympic Tours. Meeting begins at 7 p.m. at the Dungeness River Audubon Center.

Imagine setting off on your dream birding vacation to El



Carolyn Wilcox

Tuito, Mexico, but you end up dislocating and breaking your ankle on the first morning of your trip. This happened to Carolyn Wilcox, but she wasn't about to let a minor inconvenience like broken bones stop her from seeing spectacular birds. Come hear Carolyn's talk about one of the best birding areas of the world, western Mexico, and specifically a birding oasis called Rancho Primavera. Like other

areas of western Mexico, Rancho Primavera has remarkable diversity of birds, including such beauties as the San Blas Jay, Cinnamon Hummingbird, and Yellow Grosbeak. Carolyn will also compare birds of Rancho

Primavera with birds of Clallam County, along with species found in both places like Pacific-slope Flycatcher.

Carolyn is the owner and operator of Experience Olympic Tours, based in Port Angeles, WA. She has an M.S. in Environmental Science from University of Nevada, Reno, and has been an educator since 2003. Come experience her infectious enthusiasm and curiosity about birds and the natural world.

OPAS Field Trips in November and December

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.

Ediz Hook and Port Angeles Harbor

Date & Time: Saturday, November 21, 2015, 8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Cost: Free

Leaders: Judy Mullally and Bob Iddins

Meeting place: In the area of the boat launch or restrooms at the end of Ediz Hook.

Features: Water and shorebirds of Port Angeles harbor and the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

Bring: Optics (scope if you have one), water, snacks, and appropriate clothing for the weather.

Further information: Bob Iddins, 360-681-2840, riddins@olypen.com (Continued on page two)

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

The *Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society* meets monthly (except July, August, and December) on the third Wednesday at 7 p.m. at the Dungeness River Audubon Center, 2151 Hendrickson Road, Sequim, WA. The public is welcome.

OPAS Board of Directors

Officers:

President, Ken Wiersema, 683-4763, wiersema@olympus.net
Co-V-Pres,
Bob Boekelheide, 681-4867, bboek@olympus.net
Tom Butler, 681-4076, rceduca-tion@olympus.net
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Powell Jones, 681-4076, rivercent-er@olympus.net
Mary Porter-Solberg, 683-8072, hik-ernut@live.com
Jane Stewart, 681-2827, jane@mccombgardens.com

Committees:

Bird Sightings/Counts, Bob Boekelheide, 681-4867, bboek@olympus.net
Conservation Co-chairs, Bob Phreaner, 504-2110, phreaner@aol.com
Mary Porter-Solberg, 683-8072, hik-ernut@live.com
Education, Shirley Anderson, 681-3950, sanderson22@olypen.com
Membership, Audrey Gift, 681-2989, agift@q.com
Field Trips, Bob Iddins, 681-2840, riddins@olypen.com
Hospitality, Clare Hatler, 582-6451, hetlerclare444@gmail.com
Newsletter, Bob Hutchison, 683-7265, rbrycehut@wavecable.com
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Birdfest Co-chairs: Shirley Anderson, 681-3950, sanderson22@olypen.com; Marion Rutledge, 681-4512, rutledgem2@gmail.com
Webmaster, Dan Stahler, 504-2414, dan_stahler@yahoo.com

President's Notes

By Ken Wiersema

It's Fall! A great array of events awaits us, with OPAS having a role or the lead in many. In addition to our scheduled regular meetings and field trips, an annual Nature Mart the weekend before Thanksgiving, our 2 local Christmas Bird Counts (CBC), on 14 Dec for Sequim-Dungeness and 2 Jan 2016 for Port Angeles, plus the winter Trumpeter Swan count. Please join us for one or more of these events; more info on who to contact will be found in other parts of this edition.

Dungeness River Audubon Center annual Fall Fundraiser. -- Each year OPAS provides a copy of our mailing list to the River Center to use in their yearly funding appeal. Your OPAS board restricts use of your mailing info to essential, local, Audubon communications. However, once each year we allow the River Center to ask our members for donations to support its programs and operations. As a longtime partner in the Center, OPAS believes it's inherent to our commitment to offer our members the opportunity to contribute. We urge you to support the Center generously.

Audubon Washington -- On 23-24 Oct I had the privilege of representing OPAS at the annual Audubon Conference of Washington (ACOW). There were 19 of the 25 WA Chapters represented. We conferred on development of advocacy positions for the 2016 State Legislature, the roles we can support in reducing carbon emissions and lessening the rate of climate change, and Chapter representation on the State Board. From our region, which includes Admiralty Audubon in eastern Jefferson County, and Kitsap Audubon, we asked Rick Jahnke, from Admiralty to be our region's member on the State Board for the next 3 years. You may recall he did a program on Climate Change for us in May '14. He'll ably represent us.

Open Invitation If you have an interest in how OPAS operates (its not a mystery or a secret...) and relates to the State and National Audubon, please attend a board meeting or sit in with our Conservation Committee. Board meetings are the 1st Thurs of every month except for Dec, Jul, and Aug; Conservation Cmtte meets the Mon prior to the Board. Or, ask any of our officers or Board members... We'd be happy to have you... See U at Nature Mart, our Nov meeting, and on the CBCs...Have super Holidays!

OPAS Field Trips *(Continued from page one)*

Christmas Bird Count Tuneup

Date & Time: Saturday, December 5, 2015, 8:30 a.m. - ?

Fee: Free

Leader: Bob Boekelheide

Meeting places: 8:30 a.m. at Railroad Bridge Park and 11 a.m. at Dungeness Landing County Park.

Features: Get prepared for the annual Christmas Bird Count (Monday, December 14, 2015) and go birding with the expert! *(Continued on next page)*

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

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

Other Events

Backyard Birding

The series of classes, hosted by members of the Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society, is intended for residents of this area who are interested in knowing more about birds seen locally each season of the year and learning how to develop good habitats for wild birds.

“Backyard Birding” can be taken either as individual classes or in a series. The cost of each session is \$5 and is free for anyone under 18. After the completion of five sessions, participants will be offered free membership in OPAS for one year.

November 14 Session: Birding 101

So you're a birdwatcher! That's wonderful; but how about becoming a Birder instead. That's what this and the January classes are all about: How to become a Birder. Bird-watchers watch birds; but a Birder knows birds! In this first of two classes, Denny Van Horn will introduce you to the overall basics of birding. We'll start with who birds are: e.g., what makes an American robin. You'll learn how to look at a bird; how to see a bird; how to describe a bird, and how to take notes on a bird; and then how to use these basics with bird guides. We'll look at optics, from the cheap to the mega-expensive, and what you need to know to make these instruments work for you. We'll explore how to take field notes and draw stick-birds for ID purposes. You'll learn about 'basic' trials and tribulations you'll encounter as you begin your pathway to becoming a Birder, and how to overcome and use them to your advantage. And then you'll receive assignments that you will use to explore 25 of our local birds to hone your skills. Between this class and Birding 102 there will be two outings in our area to enhance skills learned in this class; skills that will prepare you for Birding 102.

December 5 Session: Winter Care and Feeding

Christie Lassen of Wild Birds Unlimited will present the December 5 program of the Backyard Birding series, presented by the Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society (OPAS). Her presentation will cover general bird feeding, including types of feeders and different feeds for attracting specific birds, with an emphasis on our over-wintering species. She will include specific ideas for providing con-

tinuing winter water supplies and meeting the needs of the Anna's Hummingbird which has started staying here throughout the year. She will address specific questions from participants.

The remaining classes in the Backyard Birding Series are: January 9, “Birding 102” February 6, “Nesting”; March 5, “Migration”; April 9, “Landscaping for Birds”; May 14, “Enjoying Spring Sounds”; June 11, “Out of the Nest”.

Birding for Beginners and Newcomers II

Date & Time: Saturday, November 14, 2015, 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 Counts are Coming!

By Bob Boekelheide

The annual Sequim-Dungeness Christmas Bird Count (SDCBC) takes place this year on Monday, Dec. 14, and the Port Angeles Christmas Bird Count (PACBC) occurs on Saturday, Jan 2, 2016.

Christmas counts cover a 15-mile diameter circle. The center of the SDCBC circle is near the intersection of Brown and Port Williams Roads, so the circle ranges from Dungeness Spit on the north to the Olympic foothills south of Sequim, and from Diamond Point to MacDonald Creek. The center of the PACBC is in the Olympic foothills south of Port Angeles, so the PACBC includes Port Angeles Harbor, sections of the Elwha River on the west to Morse Creek on the east, and all the way up to Hurricane Ridge.

Please join us for the counts. If you live within a count circle, you can count your yards, bird feeders, and around your neighborhoods. We also have special groups that cover regions of each count circle all day long, trying to see and hear all the birds they can. Technically, CBCs



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take place from midnight to midnight on the appointed day, so please report all the owls and other night birds you hear during dark hours as well.

To learn the ropes, join us for the pre-CBC warm-up field trip on Sat., Dec 5, starting at 8:30 a.m. at Railroad Bridge Park, then continuing at 11:30 a.m. at Dungeness Landing Park. To reinforce your birding skills, please join bird walks at the River Center on Wednesday mornings and participate in OPAS field trips, in addition to going birding on your own as much as possible this fall.

Last year, the SDCBC tallied 140 species, tying for the highest number of species recorded in WA State. The PACBC tallied 123 species, a record for that count. With your help, we hope this year turns out to be equally productive. You can check results for past CBCs and read more info by going to the National Audubon website: <http://birds.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count>.

If you are interested in participating in the SDCBC, please call Bob Boekelheide at 360-808-0196 or email bboek@olympus.net. To sign up for the PACBC, call Barb Blackie at 360-477-8028 or email blackieb@olympen.com.

Make your plans for Olympic Birdfest 2016



Grab your binoculars and join the 12th annual **Olympic BirdFest 2016** celebration at the Dungeness River Audubon Center, April 15-17, 2016.

The stage is set...quiet bays and estuaries, sandy beaches, a five-mile-long sand spit, and a



9th Annual
Holiday Nature Mart
November 20-21
Friday & Saturday, 10 - 4
Dungeness River Audubon Center
2151 West Hendrickson Road, Sequim

Handcrafted Gifts & Ornaments
Table Arrangements & Wreath Making
Sweet & Savory Baked Goods
Holiday Photo Ops
Raffle: *Custom-Knit Child's Sweater*

Proceeds support River Center Education Programs
DungenessRiverCenter.org • Phone: 681-4076

protected island bird sanctuary on the Strait of Juan de Fuca; wetlands, tide pools, rainforests, and lush river valleys. The players are ready ... Marbled Murrelets, Rhinoceros Auklets, Harlequin Ducks, Black Oystercatchers, Peregrine Falcons, Barred and Pygmy owls will be sporting their finest spring plumage for this celebration. Enjoy guided birding trips, boat tour, and a gala banquet. Our featured speaker this year is noted artist Tony Angell, "Revealing the Secret Lives of Owls".

Come bird with us and experience with others the spectacular landscapes of the Olympic Peninsula ... you just might go home with a new bird for your life list! Check out the offerings by going online (www.olympicbirdfest.org).

Precede your BirdFest weekend with a three-day, two night birding

cruise of the spectacular **San Juan Islands** on April 12-14, 2016. Visit San Juan and Sucia Islands, and more. Stay at the historic Roche Harbor Resort. Get cruise information and register online at: www.pugetsoundexpress.com/audubon.

Extend your Birdfest weekend with the **Neah Bay post-trip**, April 17-19, 2016: two and one-half days exploring northwest coastal Washington, a region rarely seen by birders.

Contact us by phone, at 360-681-4076, E-mail us at info@olympicbirdfest.org. Register online at <http://www.olympicbirdfest.org>.

The Story of Roberta's Pond

by Bob Boekelheide

Roberta and Les Jones moved from Anaheim, CA, to Sequim in 1985, buying one of the nicest lots along Three Crabs Road. While building their house, they discovered that a shellfish farm planned to move onto the 30 acres across the road and dredge the pristine ponds on the property. Roberta was particularly upset, saying she "coveted" the land and wished to preserve it. So instead, Roberta and Les bought the 30 acres, and for the next 20 years they watched ducks, swans, and other birds through the seasons.

Eventually, Les became president of OPAS in the 1990s and one of the longest standing members of the Dungeness River Audubon Center board of directors. Following Roberta's death in 2006, Les unfortunately realized he couldn't keep the 30 acres forever, and began looking for a buyer.



*Roberta's Pond
Photo by Bob Boekelheide*

Dissatisfied with conditions set forth by WDFW, Les instead sold the property in 2010 to Dungeness Habitat II, who agreed to keep the land in a conservation easement for perpetuity with the North Olympic Land Trust. So now the property is used for hunting a few days of the year, but available the rest of the year for birds and other wildlife to enjoy.

Matt Heins, manager of Dungeness Habitat II, graciously proposed this year that the property be renamed "Roberta's Pond," in honor of Roberta and the role she played in preserving the property. Down the road is Helen's Pond, named for Helen Marshall and a popular birding site. A sign now marks Roberta's Pond, visible about 2/3 miles down Three Crabs Road.

The next time you visit Three Crabs, look for Roberta's Pond and think about the insightful lady who helped preserve these unique coastal ponds.

Railroad Bridge Trestle Replacement -- Update

by Tom Butler

The ranks of old creosoted pilings put up a brave fight, but they were just no match for a couple of modern excavators. They're on their way to burial, and without much cere-

mony. Our bridge reconstruction is still in the warlike "scorched earth" phase, but is progressing at a brisk pace and on schedule. The temporary bridge to the left in the picture allows equipment to cross the river without disturbing spawning salmon. Amazingly, the Pinks seemed quite unconcerned during the Kapow!...Kapow!... of the pile driving. The pit just visible on the other side of the river contains the driven pilings of the easternmost pier. The first concrete should be poured soon.



Photo by Tom Butler

Ken and Janie Leuthold Receive 2015 Harlequin Award

by Ken Wiersema

Each year OPAS recognizes deserving members for their many years of dedicated, dependable, and high quality volunteer works in support of our Chapter and its mission. Each of our members may nominate persons who they believe have earned recognition. Past awardees, who remain active in OPAS, assume the task of reviewing the nominee's contributions to OPAS, and recommending to the OPAS Board, the most deserving nominee to be recognized.

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Ken & Janie Leuthold

Photo by Bob Boekelheide/ Edited by Chris Perry

Harlequin Happenings

For OPAS's 2014-2015, we presented the Harlequin Award to Ken and Janie Leuthold. Ken served as our Treasurer for 3 years, revised our bookkeeping, rewrote our bylaws, championed the need for fuller insurance coverage, and coordinated OPAS's commitments to the River Center's funding needs. He ably represented OPAS on the River Center Board and served on the Center's endowment's investment committee. His sound fiduciary counsel contributed to a stable framework for establishing and administering the endowment and funding the Center's operations. Janie, in the years that OPAS was without a membership chair, took on the task of preparing welcoming letters to new and potential members.

When Ken left the board he and Janie collaborated with Shirley Anderson to establish, organize and launch the Backyard Birder program. Over the 3+ years of its existence, it had proven to be a great success. Ken now leads one of the sessions. It is a model Chapter level program that provides our community with accurate, easy to understand, timely information on birds; and has also proven to be a superb membership builder. In July of this year our Backyard Birder program was featured at a workshop during the Audubon National convention.

Ken and Janie are a gracious and fun couple that have made an enduring and indispensable contribution to our Chapter, and are well deserving of this recognition. Thank You Ken & Janie!

Note: We scheduled to present this award at our June meeting, however the Leutholds had previously committed to attend a family reunion in Montana in June, so we delayed the presentation till September.

Bird Sightings

by Bob Boekelheide

After last year's Eurasian Hobby and other surprises, Clallam County is now Washington State's birding capital in the fall. This year MObs ("Many Observers") made the trek from Dungeness Bay to Neah Bay, hoping to find unusual birds. It's becoming hard to keep records straight -- they've been coming fast and furious for the last two months.

First of all, El Nino is upon us, bringing Mexican wanderers north with the warm ocean. A juvenile Brown Booby appeared in Dungeness Bay on 10/12, first seen by Bob Boekelheide, Denny Van Horn, Michael Barry, and Dow



Lambert, and still being seen by MObs through 10/28. This is a first record for Clallam County, and one of only a handful of records for WA. Around the same time another Brown Booby flew near Discovery Park in Seattle, so at least two and possibly more are present in the Salish Sea right now.

Elegant Terns, another Mexican breeder that appeared in Clallam County earlier this summer, are still around, with three viewed by Barb and Bob Boekelheide in Dungeness Bay on 9/6, 2 seen by Scott Atkinson off Graysmarsh on 9/6, one seen by Bruce Paige at 3 Crabs on 9/25, and 13 roosting at Neah Bay on 10/22, photographed by Michael Barry.

Not to be outdone by southern wanderers, a spectacular Red-legged Kittiwake from the Bering Sea showed up at Neah Bay on 9/8, found by Charlie Wright and Linnaea Chapman.

At the other end of the rare bird spectrum, this has been an extraordinary year for vagrant warblers, likely because there are so many people out there looking. Best of all, Bob Brezak photographed a beautiful male Prairie Warbler at Rialto Beach on 10/17, only the second record for WA. John



Prairie Warbler
Photo by Bob Brezak

Gatchet along with Merrylynn Denny found a female-type Black-throated Blue Warbler in Neah Bay on 10/18. Following last year's first state record at Neah Bay, Ryan Merrill spotted another Lucy's Warbler in the Waatch Valley on 9/16. Jim Danzenbaker spotted a lovely Tennessee Warbler at Neah Bay on 9/28, and Brad Waggoner reported a Northern Waterthrush at Neah Bay on 9/8. Nashville Warblers, possibly the eastern subspecies, were reported at Neah Bay by Michael Hobbs on 10/3, and by MObs on 10/24. Late

MacGillivray's, Wilson's, and Yellow Warblers also showed up in Neah Bay in October.

Almost daily reports of Palm Warblers are coming from Neah Bay, with at least four different Palms reported by MOBs from 9/27 through 10/25. Even better, Jeremy Coleman reported a Palm Warbler at the Dungeness Lighthouse on 10/3. From Massachusetts, Jeremy said he was really more impressed by the Varied Thrush he found at the lighthouse, a life bird for him.

Among waterfowl, you may have noticed the vocal passage of Cackling Geese in late Sep. and Oct. around Sequim and Dungeness, with more than 1500 in big flocks. A few Aleutian Cackling Geese also appeared with their bold white neck rings, migrating from the Aleutian Islands to their wintering areas in northwestern CA. A flock of Aleutians peaked at 7 birds at Hobuck Beach between 10/13 to 10/20, first reported by Brad Waggoner. Another Aleutian showed up with other Cackling Geese at 3 Crabs on 10/26, viewed by Bob Boekelheide, Denny Van Horn, and Michael Barry. Lots of White-fronted Geese also migrated through; hopefully



Immature Snow Goose
Photo by Bruce Von Borstel

some will stay for the winter. Straggler Snow Geese popped up as well, including one immature photographed by Bruce Von Borstel at Pitship Pocket Estuary on 10/11, and an adult and immature seen by Annette Hanson off Kirner Road in mid-Oct. The first swans of the fall graced our sky on 10/26, with 8 flying over Dungeness.

A late Blue-winged Teal stayed in Neah Bay, first seen by Ryan Merrill on 10/9 and still reported by MOBs through the end of Oct. Two eclipse-plumage Redheads swam among the thousands of Wigeon at 3 Crabs on 9/29, seen by Bob

Boekelheide, Denny Van Horn, and Michael Barry, along with one seen there by Eric Guzman on 10/1. Michael Barry also found one Redhead and 2 Canvasbacks at Kitchen-Dick Ponds on 10/24, following 4 Canvasbacks found there by Denny Van Horn on 10/22. Other Canvasbacks showed up for Bruce Paige at a pond off Schmuck Rd on 10/20 and at the Tsoo-yess River on 10/24. Carolyn Wilcox found a horde of 16 Ring-necked Ducks at the pond by the Elwha River dike on 9/30.

In other waterbird news, Ken and Mary Campbell had a Northern Fulmar approach their boat on 10/22 about 4 miles northeast of Ediz Hook. They say it fed on fish scraps they tossed overboard. Numbers of light-bellied Pink-footed Shearwaters were seen from Cape Flattery by MOBs in mid-Oct., along with the usual dark Sooty/Short-tailed types. Lee Bowen reported a Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel offshore of 3 Crabs on 10/29, a very unusual place for this normally pelagic seabird.

Yellow-billed Loons probably lurk in our coastal waters more than we know. One flew over Neah Bay on 9/26, seen by MOBs, and another swam with Common Loons off the Waadah Island breakwater on 10/16, first spotted by Matt Dufort. An unusual Clark's Grebe also swam in Neah Bay on 10/20, seen by Ryan Merrill and Brad Waggoner.

On the OPAS field trip to Ediz Hook on 9/12, several of us observed a beautiful breeding-plumage Common Loon offshore with a metal band and several color bands on its legs. It was too far



Common Loon
Photo by Robert Hutchison

to read the band number, but I sent the color band combination to the USGS Bird Banding Lab. It turns out this loon was banded as a chick in June 2005 at a lake in northwestern Montana, near the town of Kila. The banders have since contacted me, saying this is the first sighting of this bird as an adult. Since Common Loons begin nesting at 3 to 7 years old, and may live to be over 20 years old, this bird is a happy middle-aged 10-year-old that has probably nested at least once. It's very nice to connect a migrant bird with its history somewhere else.

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Green Herons typically show up in our area during post-breeding dispersal in summer and fall. This year one appeared at the Kitchen-Dick Ponds for several days, first seen by Gra-



Green Heron with Newt
Photo by Carolyn Wilcox

ham Montgomery on 9/12. Another hung out at the Elwha River mouth on 9/19, seen by Carolyn Wilcox. Carolyn says her Green Heron captured and ate a chewy newt. Yum!

Charlie Wright, Linnaea Chapman, and others watched a Golden Eagle kill a Gr. White-fronted Goose in the Waatch Valley on 9/26, just another meal for the big raptor. Another adult Golden Eagle, perhaps the same one, has been soaring around the Waatch River Valley, first seen by Fanter Lane on 10/16 and still reported by MObs on late Oct.



Rough-legged Hawk
Photo by Lois White

Be on the lookout for Rough-legged Hawks, which are surprisingly scarce in Clallam County compared with the Skagit and Samish Flats. Lois White photographed a beautiful light-phase Rough-legged at 3 Crabs about 10/20.

Shorebird migration in Sep. and Oct. paled in comparison to earlier in the summer, but a few interesting birds still showed up. Linnaea Chapman and Charlie Wright discovered a Snowy Plover at Hobuck Beach on 9/7, in the same area where other Snowies have shown up in recent years. The Snowy population in WA is still hanging by a thin thread, with only about 25 pairs nesting at Leadbetter NWR. Blair Bernson spotted a Stilt Sandpiper at Neah Bay

on 9/10, a species that was much more common elsewhere in the Salish Sea this summer and fall.

Way last July, during an OPAS field trip to see Purple Martins at 3 Crabs, one lone Willet roosted on the mudflats with CA Gulls. It was joined soon by a second Willet, and the two of them have continued in Dungeness Bay until at least 10/10. One last Willet was reported by Michael Hobbs on 10/21 hanging with Marbled Godwits. Might the Willets still be around? Like last year, Marbled Godwits continue to increase as a fall migrant and wintering species, with a high count of 45 at 3 Crabs on 10/26.

Hopefully they will stick around for the CBC.



Wilson's Snipe
Photo by Robert Hutchison

Be on the lookout for Wilson's Snipe, which migrate through fall and hopefully stick around for the winter. Judy Burr-Chellin spotted a snipe in her yard at Emerald Highlands on 10/8, and another flew over Helen's Pond at 3 Crabs on 10/26.

This is the time of year when Northern Pygmy Owls move downslope from the mountains and show up in our backyards. Bill Jensen had a pygmy owl in his yard on the north side of Burnt Hill on 9/6, where numerous hummingbirds mobbed the little beast. Mary Porter-Solberg had another pygmy owl hit her window on the Miller Peninsula on 10/20, but the little guy shook it off and flew away.

Tropical Kingbirds are one of those migrants that often moves north after they nest in Arizona and Mexico. In fact, if you see a kingbird around here in October, it's likely a Tropical. They didn't disappoint this year, with one spotted by Adrienne Akmajian at the Tsoo-Yess River Valley on 10/4, one reported by John Gatchet and Merrylynn and Mike Denny at Neah Bay on 10/19, and at least 3 spotted by Adrienne near the Waatch River mouth on 10/25. At least one other Tropical Kingbird showed up in Dungeness, seen along Twin View and Marine Drive for several days in late October. Western Scrub-Jays continue their march north, including one that hung out in Scott Gremel's yard in Port Angeles on 10/4-5.

Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, another species from the south, made a good appearance at Neah Bay this fall. Linnaea Chapman and MObs of guy birders found a gnatcatcher at

the west side of Neah Bay on 9/26. Another one, possibly two, appeared in town on 10/12-13, then Bruce and Michael Paige discovered another near Cape Flattery on 10/25. Could they all be the same bird(s)? A very late House Wren also hung around the west side of Neah Bay on 10/23, seen by Russ Koppendrayer.

Following several sightings from the summer, another two Mountain Bluebirds showed up at the Hurricane Hill trail on 9/9, seen by Ann Inouye.

Several sparrow species normally found east of the Cascades showed up at Neah Bay and the Waatch Valley. A possible Grasshopper Sparrow appeared in the Waatch on 9/18, seen by Bob Boekelheide, another appeared in Neah Bay on 10/9, photographed by Bruce Paige, and another on 10/12 in Neah Bay seen by Brad Waggoner. A Vesper Sparrow, now very scarce in Clallam County, appeared in the Waatch Valley on 10/16, found by Bruce Paige, and another showed up in Neah Bay on 10/17, found by Mike Denny. If that wasn't enough, one and possibly 2 Lark Sparrows appeared at Hobuck Beach on 10/1, and another 2 showed up in Neah Bay on 10/25. Best yet, John Gatchet spotted a Lark Sparrow along Schmuck Road near Sequim on 10/2.

Coming from further afield, one Clay-colored Sparrow appeared for Bruce Paige at the Waatch on 10/8, two Clay-colored were seen by Brad Waggoner in Neah Bay on 10/12-13, and another one or two were in Neah Bay on 10/23-25, seen by Terry Little and Brad and Dan


Waggoner. Lastly, Swamp Sparrows are back for the winter in the Waatch Valley, seen by Bruce Paige on 10/8, and White-throated Sparrows are back in Sequim.

In *icterid* news, a female Rusty Blackbird is again hanging out with other blackbirds at Maple View Dairy along Schmuck Rd, seen by Bruce Paige on 9/27. This is the third winter a Rusty has been there, so is it the same bird? Adrienne Akmajian spotted a female Orchard Oriole near the mouth of the Waatch River on 10/22. Since a female Orchard Oriole spent last winter in Neah Bay, is it the same bird? Bruce Paige located a female-type Bullock's Oriole at Neah Bay on 10/26, very late for this species. Linnaea Chapman and MObs of guys watched a female-type Yellow-headed Blackbird fly from Tatoosh Island to Cape Flattery on 9/27, a daring sea-crossing. The meadowlarks have returned for the winter at Schmuck Road, and Kathe Smith discovered another meadowlark by the Port Angeles airport on 10/5.

During the morning's (10/26) bird survey at 3 Crabs, Denny Van Horn, Dow Lambert, and Bob Boekelheide watched 8 swans flying west to east over Dungeness towards Jamestown. The group had 7 adults and 1 immature. They looked large, so they were likely Trumpeters, but that's not certain. If you would like to join in the 2015-2016 Swan census please contact Mary Porter-Solberg at 683-8072. Teams have been set up and scheduled, so you can be added to an experienced team and learn our local protocols.

Lastly, a wayward Cassin's Finch appeared in downtown Neah Bay on 10/16, first spotted by Fanter Lane, and a small flock of at least 3 White-winged Crossbills hung out on the east side of Neah Bay on 10/24-25, first reported by Jordan Gunn.

The Christmas Bird Counts are coming up, so please go birding and prepare to help with the counts. If you see something unusual, please call 360-808-0196 or email bboek@olympus.net. Thanks very much for your sightings.



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