



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 3 May-June 2016

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

OPAS Programs in May and June

by Bob Boekelheide & Tom Butler

May 18, 2016, Program — “Coastal Conservation is for the Birds”, 7 p.m. at Dungeness River Audubon Center. Presented by Dr. Trina Bayard.



Dr. Trina Bayard

We live on the doorstep of one of the most amazing inland waterways of the world, the Salish Sea. Come join Trina Bayard to explore the incredible marine bird life of this region, and to understand why visiting and resident marine birds in the north Olympic Peninsula depend on us to protect their food and habitats. Learn how you can take action to protect the resources they need.

Dr. Trina Bayard is the Director of Bird Conservation for Audubon WA. She researched Saltmarsh Sparrows for her Ph.D. in Ecology from the University of Connecticut. Her responsibilities include leading Audubon Washington’s science and conservation programs, and working to make sure that the best available science is used to protect birds and their habitats in our state.

June 15, 2016, Program — “17 years of COASST”, 6 p.m., at the Dungeness River Audubon Center.

Presented by Dr. Julia Parrish.

Potluck Dinner will begin at 6 p.m. Note time change!

*Program includes:
Presentation of annual awards, election of officers, bird sightings, and announcement of summer programs.*

Our speaker, Dr. Julia Parrish, is the Executive Director and one of the founders of COASST (Coastal Observation and Seabird Survey Team), and is a Professor at the University of WA, specializing in seabird biology, coastal ecosystem health, and marine conservation. Over the last 17 years, Julia has led research along the West Coast, including monitoring the factors affecting population health of seabirds nesting on Tatoosh

Island. When not in pursuit of live and beached birds, Julia’s on-campus lectures focus Marine Biology and Sustainable Fisheries. COASST (also referred to as the Dead Bird Survey) recruits and trains volunteers to walk beaches and collect data on dead seabirds. What can dead birds tell us? Plenty! Join us and find out.

Many OPAS members volunteer on the COASST beaches along the Pacific Coast and on the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Julia has spoken to OPAS many times and was our featured speaker at BirdFest several years ago. Prepare for insights on bird data you helped collect and an enlightening and fun evening.



Dr. Julia Parrish

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

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Birdfest, Vanessa Fuller, 861-4076, rcoffice@olympus.net
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President's Notes

By Ken Wiersema

Olympic BirdFest 2016 – Our 13th and most successful, by far! We attracted over 280 registered attendees, many events were at or over capacity, and we had excellent media coverage. Preliminary accounting reveals about \$27,000 in net income, every bit of which goes toward the programs and operation of the Dungeness River Audubon Center. Many thanks to each of you that worked organizing, attended events, and led field trips. See Bob B's article in this edition. And, a big **WELL DONE** to Shirley, Marion, and Vanessa who led and herded our team of volunteers to get it done. Superb!

Birdathon'16 next – So, on May 14th, you may take a birding break from organizing and leading events, and enjoy a day of watching and counting birds in Clallam Co. Recall that this event is a citizen science, single day bird census for our county. See the info and tally sheet in this edition. You should also have your Birdathon pledge and contribution letter in hand. We look to Birdathon to fund our Chapter operating costs and greatly appreciate your generous support. Pledge by species seen on the 14th or make a lump sum contribution – Your Call!

Conservation and environmental activism – While many of us were immersed in putting on BirdFest, the full array of government and politics proceeded. OPAS, by its charter and our registration with the IRS, cannot engage in partisan politics; we can neither endorse nor recommend against a candidate or party. However, we can and are expected to analyze and ask for or recommend actions that will provide better environments and habitats for birds and other wild creatures. So I urge our members to support the work of our Conservation Committee, to stay informed on habitat and environmental issues, and vote for the issues and candidates you believe will best support Audubon objectives. Please check our OPAS conservation web pages for issues and advocacy actions and also let our Conservation Co-chairs know of issues that you believe we should consider addressing. We also invite members to join our Committee. Thanks to Mary Porter-Solberg and Bob Phreaner for their tireless and thorough research, as well as excellent leadership in conservation matters.

OPAS Field Trips in May and June

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.

Birdathon Warmup

Date: Saturday, May 7, 2016

Time & Meeting places: 8:30 a.m. at Dungeness River Audubon Center at Railroad Bridge Park, and 11:00 a.m. at Dungeness Landing County Park.

Cost: Free

Leader: Bob Boekelheide

Features: This is a preview of the Birdathon, which occurs Saturday, May 14. Expect to see and hear late spring migrants and other forest and grassland birds at Railroad Bridge Park. Later at Dungeness Landing County Park, gulls, water birds, and shorebirds will be the featured attractions.

Bring: Binoculars, snacks, water, and appropriate clothing for any weather expectations.

Further information: Bob Boekelheide 360-681-4867

Neah Bay

Date & Time: Saturday, May 7, 2016, at 9:00 a.m.

Leader: Denny Van Horn

Meeting place: Washburn's Hardware Store on Hwy 112 in Neah Bay.

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

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

Bring: Optics (including scopes if available), snacks, water, lunch, and appropriate clothing for any variations in the weather.

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

Lost Mountain

Date: Tuesday, June 7, 2016

Time: 7:30 a.m.

Cost: Free

Leader: Gary Bullock

Meeting place: SE corner of the Walmart parking lot, Sequim

Features: This is the trip to see and hear the amazing array of land birds that breed on the North Olympic Peninsula! We expect Sapsuckers, MacGillvray's Warblers, House Wren, Olive-sided and Pacific Slope Flycatcher, Purple Finch and much more. We will carpool to DNR land off Olsen Place and make short walks along forest roads.

Bring: Binoculars, snacks, water, sun block, and clothing for any weather changes.

Further information: Gary Bullock 360-681-8611, gbullockak@hotmail.com

Note: Hurricane Ridge field trip, tentatively scheduled for June 28, has been cancelled.

2016 Clallam County Birdathon International Migratory Bird Count

by Bob Boekelheide



The International Migratory Bird Count, and OPAS Birdathon, take place this year on Saturday, May 14. The International Migratory Bird Count is different from the Christmas Bird Count, because it includes all birds counted in Clallam County in one day. You can help no matter where you are in the county, whether you count all day, count an hour or two in the morning or evening, or just hang out around your house and count your feeders. Even the robins and hummingbirds in your backyard are important.

This is a count, so use the tally sheet included with this issue of Harlequin Happenings to tally the birds and keep track of the miles and hours you watch, walk, drive, or boat. If you visit several different areas, keep a count for each. After the count, promptly email your information to me (best!), or snail-mail the sheet within a day to the address on the back.

Birdathon is also a fundraiser, because all the money raised helps support OPAS projects throughout the year. In fact, this is the only fundraiser specifically for OPAS, unlike the Olympic BirdFest that supports the Dungeness River Audubon Center. Please line up sponsors for your count to help support OPAS programs. Or if you wish, you can sponsor the whole count and make a donation of your own.

We learn a huge amount about the birds of the Olympic Peninsula through this count, particularly spring migrants. In 2012 our Clallam County Birdathon set a record for the most species seen in one WA county in one day with 202 species, the first time 200 or more species had ever been seen in one WA county in one day.

Before the Birdathon, join us on Saturday, May 7, for a field trip to review common birds and bird songs. We meet at Railroad Bridge Park at 8:30 a.m. to see and hear songbirds of the local forests, then travel to Dungeness Landing Park at 11 a.m. to see birds of shorelines and bays.

Please call Bob Boekelheide at 360-808-0196 or email bboek@olympus.net to sign up for the Birdathon. Or just do your count and return the tally sheet when finished. *(Continued on next page)*

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If you're so inclined, please sponsor the count and we'll represent you as we tally the birds. Thank you very much for your help!

Conservation Matters

by Mary Porter-Solberg



Wild Olympics Legislation Receives a Hearing – Co-sponsored in 2015 by U.S. Sen. Patty Murray, and 6th District U.S. Representative Derek Kilmer, the Wild Olympics Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 2015 was presented for a first time hearing to the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources on April 23rd. OPAS submitted a 2011 resolution in support of Wild Olympics that was passed and endorsed by Washington State Audubon Conservation Committee (WSACC), representing statewide chapters. The conservation committee remains engaged with providing our support for this important legislation.

Marbled Murrelet Long Term Conservation Strategy –

Since 1997, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has operated under an interim Murrelet conservation strategy that has resulted in an annual 5% decline in Marbled Murrelet populations. Now, DNR and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Agency are working jointly on developing strategy alternatives, and plan to produce a draft Environmental Impact Statement scheduled for later in 2016. OPAS, along with other organizations are members of the Murrelet Survival Project that promotes attendance at the Board of Natural Resource meetings, to advocate for an alternative which will best preserve habitat for the Marbled Murrelet.

I-732 Carbon Tax – Understanding that Climate Change is the number one threat to birds, OPAS plans to discuss I-732 [scheduled to be on the Nov'16 WA ballot] at our next Conservation Committee meeting. We'll consider supporting the initiative, opposing it, or not taking a position. Watch our website to see Committee action. The Audubon Washington board may vote to take a position on May 4th with the same 3 alternatives.

Integrated Roadside Weed Management Plan – Highlights of a new draft of the plan will be presented by Cathy Lucero, Clallam County Noxious Weed Control Coordinator, to the Conservation Committee at our meeting on May 2nd. We are especially concerned about potential impacts to birds, insects, and bees by targeted spraying of noxious weeds along roadsides. Public workshops will be announced soon to explain and gather input on the plan.

Please check our OPAS website and go to our Conservation pages for more detailed information on the above subjects,

along with news, alerts, and other issues. You can readily take action by clicking on the alerts, which will make the process easy to have your voice heard by your congressional leaders on important environmental and habitat topics.

Other Events

Spring Birding Class—Birding by Ear

by Dave Jackson



Dates: Eight Thursday mornings — first class on Mar 10; subsequent classes on Mar 24; Apr 7 & 21; May 5 & 19; Jun 2 & 16.

Times: All sessions 8:30 am to 11:30 am

Meeting place: Dungeness River Audubon Center (first session).

Leader: Dave Jackson

Features: This eight-session class is designed for **intermediate birders**. Master the principles of birding by ear, mostly birding outdoors at Railroad Bridge Park and trips elsewhere. In early sessions, become familiar with the sounds of local residents and winter visitors before the arrival of spring migrants. In later sessions, we focus on the songs of spring migrants. Extensive use of mobile bird apps (smartphone or tablet) and recordings.

Limit: 16 people.

Costs: \$60.00 for River Center partners; \$80.00 for non-partners.

Pre-registration: Please register with the River Center at 360-681-4076 or e-mail rceducation@olympus.net. **For further information:** Email Dave Jackson (djackson@wavecable.com) or call 360-683-1355.



Marsh Wren
Photo by Robert Hutchison

Backyard Birder Series

[Note: the date for the May class was recently changed. The new date is May 7th, 2016.]

The May session of Backyard Birding, “Spring Sounds”, will meet on May 7, at the Dungeness River Audubon Center from 10 a.m. to noon. Join Olympic Peninsula Audubon leaders Ken Wiersema and Dow Lambert as they present a slide, video, and sound program about recognizing your neighborhood birds by their songs and their calls. The program will feature Dow’s recordings of our local birds.

The final class in the Backyard Birder series, “Out of the Nest”, will meet on June 11th at the Dungeness River Audubon Center from 10 a.m. to noon. Ken Wiersema will discuss the vulnerability, feeding, needs, and lifestyle of young birds after they leave their nests, while remaining in your yards and at your feeders.

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. The cost of each session is \$5 and is free for anyone under 18.

Project Bluebird Watch

by Joyce Volmut

The Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society is interested in learning more about breeding populations in Clallam County of the migratory Western Bluebird (*Sialia mexicana*).

Western Bluebird populations began to decline from oak-prairie habitats of the Pacific Northwest during the mid-1900s. Habitat loss, removal of standing dead trees that provided cavities for nesting, and competition with non-native species has contributed to the decline. By providing and monitoring nest boxes to replace lost natural cavities, in other words, by building a bluebird trail, it may be possible to restore this critical, habitat element.

Because most remaining oak-prairie habitats occur on private lands, enlisting private landowners and local neighborhoods is essential to participate and support a bluebird nesting project. For the first few years, we will be collecting data, placing boxes in select areas and educating the public on ways to attract Bluebirds. We ask that you report any Western Bluebird sighting to us and help spread the word about this project.

Here are a few ways you can participate:

- Bluebird Watcher: keen eyes and good birding skills needed. Though nesting occurs between March and July, Bluebirds have been noted on the Christmas bird count in January and February.
- Nest Box Builders and/or Installers: build or install bluebird boxes on approved sites.
- Nest Box Monitor
- Nest Box Host

Contacts for more information: please direct all inquiries for volunteer help/nest box placement, to either Joyce Volmut (785) 554-6379, email: joyce.volmut@gmail.com, or Doris Causey (360) 301-5724.

12th Annual Puget Sound Bird Fest, September 9-11, 2016

Mark your calendars for the return of a fall tradition for nature lovers throughout the Northwest. Puget Sound Bird Fest returns the weekend of September 9th-11th, 2016, in Edmonds. This annual three-day festival celebrates birds and nature on the beautiful shores of Puget Sound with speakers, guided walks and field trips, Puget Sound boat tours, exhibits, and educational activities for children and adults.

Most Bird Fest events and activities are free; however some activities require a fee and advanced registration through the City of Edmonds Parks and Recreation Department. Registration can take place in person at the Frances Anderson Center, by phone (425-771-0230), or RecZone.org starting August 1.

For more information and details on upcoming events – including details on the 2016 Puget Sound Bird Fest Poster Art Contest - please visit our festival website at www.pugetsoundbirdfest.org.

Festival contact: Jennifer Leach, Environmental Education and Sustainability Coordinator, Email address: jennifer.leach@edmondswa.gov, 425-771-0227

Pigeon Guillemot Project—Citizen Science

by Ed Bowlby

Wanted: Citizen-science volunteers to monitor Pigeon Guillemots. After a pilot survey in 2015 at Port Williams, the project is expanding to monitor Pigeon Guillemots
(Continued on next page)

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in the greater Sequim area. If you would like to be trained for the 2016 season, please send a message to Ed Bowlby at edbowlby2@gmail.com. We will have a hands-on training session at the Dungeness River Audubon Center on June 4, followed by an on-site visit to colony nest sites. Volunteers will be trained to conduct weekly one-hour morning sessions at assigned beach locations from June thru Sept. More information can be found at the project website: <http://pigeonguillemot.org/>. Guillemots are very fun and interesting, so please join us.



*Violet-Green Swallow
Photo by Bob Rhodes*

Spring for Swallows

Saturday, May 21, 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Learn about these amazing acrobats in our skies and your backyards! Ken Wiersema will present an illustrated seminar on swallow nesting, breeding, diet, and migration, including a short local field trip. Learn to ID six different swallows that live in our spring and summer skies. New birders and families are welcome. Cost: \$10 donation; please pre-register at the Dungeness River Audubon Center, or call 360-681-4076.

River Center Rally

by Julie Jackson

In May 2009, the OPAS Board helped the River Center launch the activity-based fundraiser we now call the River Center Rally. The objective is two-fold: to raise much-needed funds to help support the Center's education programs and maintain Railroad Bridge Park, and to raise awareness and appreciation of the benefits outdoor activities provide. With the help of OPAS members and the OPAS Board, this effort has raised over \$125,000 for the Center and Park. As in previous years, OPAS members and the OPAS Board deserve much of the credit for this success. The River Center Rally would



not have reached this level of success without your participation and support.

We have much to celebrate this year, including a generous \$2,000 gift from OPAS. Please join us on Saturday, June 18th, as we celebrate the 2016 Rally – starting with our traditional Board walk, run, or bike ride on the Olympic Discovery Trail. Shirley Anderson, (360) 681-3950 or sander-son22@olypen.com, is organizing the OPAS Board Walk team, so contact her to learn more about it. Although some Board Walkers will start at 10:00 a.m. at the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribal Center, you can do as much or as little of the walk as you wish. Just plan to be at the River Center by 3:00 p.m., where we'll be serving celebratory root beer flows to conclude the 2016 River Center Rally Finale. Thank You OPAS!

Olympic BirdFest Wrap-up

by Bob Boekelheide



Olympic BirdFest 2016 was a rousing success. Held this year from April 12 to 19, the BirdFest is OPAS's annual event to share north Olympic birds and raise funds for the Dungeness River Audubon Center at the same time. The BirdFest first occurred in 2004, so this was our 13th year. How time flies!

This year at least 289 registrants participated in field trips, boat rides, classes, and our gala banquet, which featured artist and author Tony Angell as our guest speaker. Tony shared wonderful stories about a Western Screech-Owl family near his home north of Seattle, and delighted the crowd with hoots and toots from owls in his neighborhood. Our banquet venue once again was the lovely Red Cedar Room, generously provided by the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe.

BirdFest 2016 included a three-day pre-festival trip to the San Juan Islands with Puget Sound Express, then three very busy days of events near Sequim, and finally a three-day post-festival trip to Neah Bay, assisted by the Makah Tribe. Participants on the San Juan trip not only found great birds, but also had front row seats watching orcas off San Juan Island, including one pod killing a California sea lion. The Neah Bay trip capped it all off with a "hawk watch" of migrating raptors at Bahokus Peak, seeing Golden Eagles, a Broad-winged Hawk, and numerous other western raptors soaring north.

Most impressive of all is how our little homegrown festival has matured, thanks to widespread publicity by Bob Hutchison on birding websites and other Audubon chapters. Participants this year came from fourteen states besides Washington, including Arkansas, California, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Montana, Ohio, Oregon, Wisconsin, and

also British Columbia. Preliminary results indicate that the event will raise about \$27,000 to support River Center programs.

Many thanks to all OPAS BirdFest volunteers and field trip leaders. Without you, this event would never be possible. Special thanks this year to Marion Rutledge and Shirley Anderson, who chaired the festival during Vanessa Fuller's maternity leave. Put next year's BirdFest on your calendars right now: San Juan trip from Apr 4-6, 2017, BirdFest trips around Sequim from Apr 7-9, and Neah Bay trip from Apr 9-11.

Bird Sightings

by Bob Boekelheide and Denny Van Horn

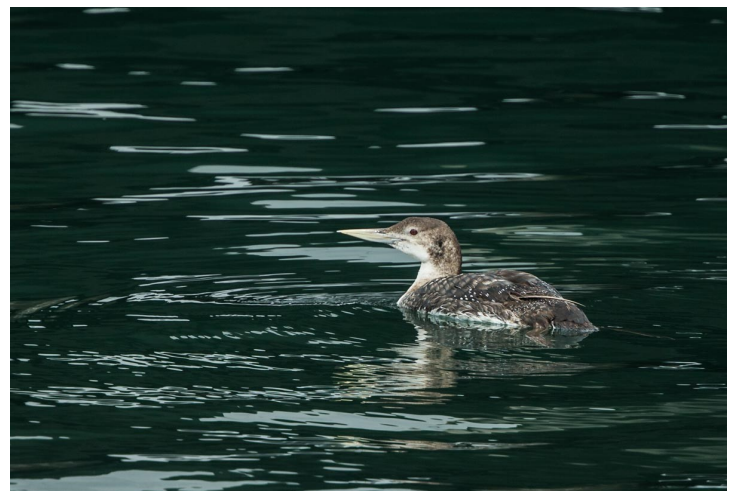
What a winter and spring it has been! First, winter was very wet. Rainfall records were topped around western WA, with the "wettest winter" ever measured at SeaTac. Then, April brought record warm temperatures, with some western WA sites pushing 80-90 degrees early in the month. Predictions suggest the dry spell will continue through summer. Fortunately the snow pack is safely at or above normal, so rivers and streams may have enough water for spawning salmon this summer and fall. If there are salmon, that is. Current predictions suggest there may be historic low returns of many stocks, due to poor ocean conditions related to the Blob and El Nino.



Bullock's Oriole
Photo by Adrienne Akmajian

Along with the warm weather, spring land bird migrants arrived extremely early this year. Wilson's Warbler, a species we normally expect in late April or early May, was first heard by Tonia Signor at Clallam Bay on 4/8. Willie Warblers were all over Clallam County by mid-April. Purple Martins first appeared in Dungeness on 4/7 and at 3 Crabs nest boxes on 4/9, three weeks earlier than normal, according to Ken Wiersema. A lovely Bullock's Oriole visited Bob and Leslie

Bagwell's feeder in Sequim on 3/24. On 4/14, Adrienne Akmajian discovered another lovely male Bullock's Oriole visiting her bird feeder near the Waatch River, along with a Says Phoebe on 3/19. Frank Snow reported the first Pacific-slope Flycatcher at Dungeness Rec Area on 4/15, about 10 days before they usually appear. On 4/16, a very early House Wren appeared for a BirdFest field trip near the Sequim sewage treatment plant. Vaux's Swifts, usually here in early May, first appeared on 4/17 at Bahokus Peak near Neah Bay, seen by Ryan Merrill, Jim Danzenbaker, and Ann Nightengale, and in Port Angeles on 4/19, at Judy Mullally's chimney. Michael Barry reported an extremely early Swainson's Thrush at his home in west Dungeness on 4/27, a late-spring migrant usually not recorded until well into May. Yellow Warbler is usually the last warbler to arrive, but Marie Grad already found one singing at the lower Dungeness River on 4/28. Michael Barry discovered a MacGillivray's Warbler on DNR land by Olsen Rd, also on 4/28. No doubt about it, it's a very early year.



Yellow-billed Loon
Photo by Norrie Johnson

Clallam County has had lots of attention lately, as more people flock here for unusual birds. Very cooperative Yellow-billed Loon(s) hung out in Port Angeles harbor from 4/1 until late April, seen by many observers (MOBs), including BirdFest field trips. The San Juan birdfest boat trip also spotted a YB Loon about 2 miles west of Protection Island on 4/14.

Neah Bay continues to draw MOBs. The big draw in spring is the raptor migration at Bahokus Peak, where OPAS first participated in the mid 1990s. Highlights this year included 5 Swainson's Hawks on 4/7, seen by Charlie Wright and Ryan Merrill, and Broad-winged Hawks on 4/18 & 4/19, (Continued on next page)

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including one seen well by the BirdFest field trip led by Denny Van Horn and Bob Boekelheide. Frequent Golden Eagles passed by Bahokus this spring, seen by many. Numerous Sandhill Crane flocks also passed over on their journey to Alaskan breeding grounds, with a high number of 382 seen by Ryan Merrill on 4/16. Much earlier, Sue Nattinger reported 7 Snow Geese and 7 White-fronted Geese at Neah Bay on 3/5.



*Red Crossbill at River Center Feeder
Photo by Tom Butler*

A few hundred Eurasian Collared-Doves are hanging out in the woods behind Butler's Motel in Neah Bay. On 4/16, Ryan Merrill discovered that one of the doves was actually a White-winged Dove, a species normally found in the southwest deserts of the U.S. and Mexico, and the second

record for Clallam County. The bird stuck around through at least 4/18; it may still be there, disguised as a collared-dove. Speaking of collared-doves, Bob and Leslie Bagwell reported an all-white collared-dove on Lotzgesell Rd on 4/23, perhaps an escaped Ringed Turtle-Dove.

In other raptor news, the Rough-legged Hawk that showed up near Keeler Rd last October was last seen by Gail Cortese on 3/18. Bruce Paige located a very unusual Red-shouldered Hawk at the north end of Miller Peninsula on 3/25. Scott Gremel discovered a No. Goshawk at the Griff Creek Trail on 3/30. Another goshawk sat in a big snag on the slope of Bahokus Peak for the Neah Bay Olympic Bird-Fest field trip on 4/19.

Other winter-holdovers that lasted into March included the Hooded Warbler at Neah Bay, last seen on Denny Van Horn on 3/25, and the Gray-crowned Rosy Finches at Ediz Hook, which peaked at 6 birds on 3/22, seen by Michael Barry. Michael Barry also reported a Pine Grosbeak at Hurricane Ridge on 4/10. The Willet that wintered over in Dungeness Bay was last seen about 4/16. Lee Bowen had an American Bittern fly up at Helen's Pond on 3/28.

Spring shorebird migration always delights. Get out there now, because the shorebirds go north very quickly. Best spots are Dungeness Landing Park, Three Crabs, and, new this year, the flooded area of Dungeness Greens visible from Hogback Road. A beautiful male American Golden-Plover hung out with Black-bellied Plovers at 3 Crabs on 4/28, seen by Bob Boekelheide, Michael Barry, and Gary Bullock. Two Lesser Yellowlegs walked the flood-

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Wood Duck Pair
Photo by Charlotte Watts

ed fields by Hogback Rd on 4/27 (the same place where Bruce LaBar and Marcus Roening reported a Yellow-headed Blackbird on 4/26). Eric Guzman spotted a Solitary Sandpiper at the Kitchen-Dick Ponds on 4/18, where it stayed for at least three days. Bruce Paige discovered an early Spotted Sandpiper at Diamond Point on 4/6, and a Semipalmated Sandpiper at Hobuck Beach on 4/19.

The BirdFest Pelagic Trip from Neah Bay on 4/18 saw a nice contingent of PNW seabirds, including 20 Sooty Shearwaters, two Pink-footed Shearwaters, several groups of Ancient Murrelets, three Cassin's Auklets, and a stout Pomarine Jaeger that flew past going twice as fast as the boat. Hope Anderson found a lovely adult Lesser Black-backed Gull on the docks at Neah Bay on 4/22, a species normally found in the north Atlantic. The first Heermann's Gull of the year showed up on 4/16 in Port Angeles harbor, seen by Eric Guzman.



Martin Box Maintenance (from left to right): Ken Wiersema, Bob Phreaner, Gary Bullock, and Dow Lambert
Photo by Chris Perry

Bluebirds and blue birds made news. Two Mountain Bluebirds appeared at the Dungeness Rec Area on 3/8, seen by Dow Lambert. Mountain Bluebirds also appeared at Bahokus Peak in April, with a peak of 2 on 4/20, seen by Denny Van Horn. John Woolley found 3 Western Bluebirds on the Miller Peninsula on 3/18. An even more interesting blue bird was the Western Scrub-Jay spotted

by Pete Walker near the Sequim Post Office on 4/12, which stuck around for a few days. It's likely just a matter of time until Scrub-Jays move into the area for good. Townsend Solitaires also appeared at 3 Crabs on 4/4, seen by Bruce Paige, and at Bahokus Peak on 4/20, seen by Denny.

Other Clallam County treats: John Gatchet reported an extremely early Western Kingbird at Cline Spit on 4/9. Bruce Paige discovered an early Nashville Warbler near Holland Road on 4/17. Charlie Wright heard a flyover Lapland Longspur at Hobuck Beach on 4/7. Alexander Patia spotted a Red-naped Sapsucker at the shores of Lake Crescent near Nature Bridge on 4/22, where it stayed for several days. Red-naped is the sapsucker of the intermountain western U.S. It's been a good spring for Chipping Sparrows, including 5 seen by John Gatchet at Knapp Rd on 4/21.

The peak of nesting season is happening right now, so get out there and find the birds. Charlotte Watts reports Wood Ducks returned to her pond on 3/21, so little ducklings must be popping out all over by now. Unfortunately little ducklings also feed the world. An adult Bald Eagle snatched up a duckling from the Hogback pond on 4/29, faster than the blink of an eye.

Please call Bob Boekelheide at 360-808-0196 or email bboek@olympus.net when you see interesting or unusual birds. Thank you very much for your sightings.

Martin Box Maintenance

by Ken Wiersema

On the 26th of April, Dow Lambert, Gary Bullock, Bob Phreaner, Ken Wiersema, and Chris Perry with a camera, went out on the 3 Crabs tide flats and replaced some damaged and rusty Purple Martin nest boxes. They also removed European Starling nests that had been built in several Martin boxes. This is part of the regular maintenance and repair work that is done to keep the Martins coming back to the 3 Crabs piers. This season there are 18 boxes on the piers, and the birds have been seen on the boxes, back since April 9th from their winter adventures in South America -- about 2 weeks early this year.

We'll be touring the nests as part of the Swallows class on May 21st as well as a special field trip in July....Watch for it in the Harlequin Happenings and on the OPAS website.

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