



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 2016

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

OPAS Program for November

by Bob Boekelheide

**[Note: There will not be a December Program.
Plan to join us on January 18, 2017.]**

November 16, 2016, 7 p.m., Dungeness River Audubon Center, "Swans of the Sequim-Dungeness Valley", Presented by Bob Boekelheide and Kendra Donelson.

Nearly hunted to extinction in the 19th and early 20th centuries, Trumpeter Swans now number several thousand in Washington during winter. First recorded on the Sequim-Dungeness Christmas Bird Count in 1982, these giant white birds with their bellowing voices are now regular winter residents of the north Olympic Peninsula, thrilling birdwatchers wherever they occur.

In 2011, under the direction of Martha Jordan of the Swan Society, Shelly Ament of WDFW, and Mary Porter-Solberg of OPAS, a select group of volunteers began counting local swans to determine the birds' preferred foraging locations and habitats in our area. The project began because several swans had been found dead of lead poisoning, possibly because they ingested lead shotgun pellets as they foraged in the muddy fields.

In this presentation, Bob will try to answer some basic questions, like how do swan numbers change through each season, and where do the swans go while they're here. OPAS swan volunteer Kendra Donelson will share how they collect data during their regular surveys.

Bob is the former director of the Dungeness River Audubon Center and current Vice-President and Bird Count

Compiler for OPAS. Kendra is a former President of OPAS, current board member, and has participated in the swan surveys for several years.



*Trumpeter Swan
Photo by Bob Boekelheide*

OPAS Field Trips in November and December

by Denny AMFJ Van Horn

Late Fall! Rain! Wind! Mountain snow. And a general realization of weather in turmoil while birding out-there-and-about! But it's also the time when overwintering birds come back to stay; when waterfowl fill the bays; Dunlin and Sanderling move in huge mobs along shores; and hawks hunt from snags, hover over fields, and flit through deciduous woodlands. And it's a time when birding celebrations come tap-tap-tapping at our doors -- once again. November will be shy of outings; but December will harvest the northern peninsula's Christmas Bird Counts -- four of them this year! *(Continued on page 3)*

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.

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President's Notes

By Ken Wiersema

Audubon Council Of Washington (ACOW) — In early Oct., Five OPAS members represented us at the 2016 ACOW Audubon in Wenatchee. We met at the Confluence Center, a very impressive and functional facility. We heard presentations from Peter Goldmark the outgoing WA Commissioner of Public lands and other WA and federal officials on the resources and priorities that apply to the fighting wildfires and the increasing threat our state faces due to climate change. We also had an interesting presentation from David Ringer, newly appointed National Audubon Chief Network Officer, on the NAS new, 5year, strategic plan and the opportunities for Chapters to participate in and support many elements of the plan. David's Job also includes of the Audubon membership database, and he discussed improvements that are being implemented. Our attendees had the chance for face-to-face discussions with these leaders as well as members of the Audubon WA staff and the leaders of 23 of the 25 Chapters in WA. We also met with the State's Conservation committee; see the Conservation Committee notes and our web site for salient issues covered at that meeting. For the 1st time in 6 years a meeting of Chapters was held to exchange information and programs on Education. Our Board will be reviewing these issues.

I – 732 — By the time this newsletter reaches our print edition members the results of the election will be known, however online readers who have yet to vote are again encouraged to vote **YES** on this ballot issue. See OPAS web site for a full discussion of the initiative.



Fall Fundraiser for Dungeness River Audubon Center — Each fall since 2001, our Board approves a onetime use of our membership rolls by the River Center for their Fall Fund raiser. In November our members will receive a letter asking for a contribution to support the operations of the Center. OPAS folks have reliably been generous in the past and I urge you again to step up and contribute to the Center.

River Center building Addition — For the past 8 months, I and other members of our Board have worked with the Center's Board and Tribal Staff to develop conceptual plans and cost estimates for a major addition to the River Center. The initial presentation of the conceptual plans occurred at the River Center Board retreat on 24 Oct. We will present these plans to the OPAS Board Nov. 4. Many more details will be forthcoming as plans develop. Stay tuned!

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Opas Field Trips in November and December

(Continued from page one)

Note: There is no cost to attend OPAS field trips. Bring binoculars, scopes, and personal accoutrements, as desired .

Wednesday 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

Date & Time: Saturday, November 12, 9a.m. - Noon

Leader: Judy Mullally

Meeting place: East end of Ediz Hook, near Coast Guard Station

Features: Bay birds as well as alcids out on the Strait.

Further Information: 360 808 2736

Port Townsend

Date & Time: November 25, 9a.m. – Noon

Leader: Denny Van Horn [& Monica Fletcher]

Meeting place: NE corner of Point Hudson, just N of the marina near Pygmy Boats.

Features: Searching for deep water alcids, loons, grebes, and a perusal of all land birds, while looking for elusive oddities.

Further Information: 360 406-1584 or <

dennyvanhorn@gmail.com>

Sequim-Dungeness CBC Precount

Date & Time: Dec 10, 9a.m.

Leader: Bob Boekelheide

Meeting place: Railroad Bridge Park

Features: This is an intense scouting venture to see what birds are out-there within our count circle.

Further Information: 360 808 0196 or <

bboek@olympus.net >

Port Townsend CBC

Date: Dec 17

Leader: Dan Waggoner

Meeting place: Individual teams and count locations, as assigned

Further Information: < danwags57@gmail.com >

Neah Bay CBC

Date: Dec 18

Leader: Charlie Wright

Meeting place: Assigned CBC area

Further Information: < cwright7@uw.edu>

Sequim-Dungeness CBC

Date: Dec 19

Count Coordinator: Bob Boekelheide

Meeting place: Assigned CBC areas

Further Information: 360 808 0196 or <

bboek@olympus.net >

Port Angeles CBC

Date: Dec 31

Leader: Barb Blackie

Meeting place: Assigned CBC areas

Further Information: <blackieb@olypen.com>

Other Events

10th Holiday Nature Mart 2016

Friday & Saturday, November 18 & 19, 10a.m.to 4p.m.

If you're searching for unique, high-quality hand-crafted gifts, come to the River Center's 10th Holiday Nature Mart, Friday, November 18th, and Saturday, November 19th, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Many of the Nature Mart items have been creatively crafted from natural, repurposed, or recycled materials.

Selected items are already on sale in the Center's new 'Nature Mart Nook', where you can also see the rustic but beautifully finished table Tom Butler donated for the Nature Mart raffle. Tom used boards salvaged from the old Railroad Bridge decking to craft the 45-inch long table. This one-of-a-kind table with artistic inlays will look stunning in any home behind a sofa, or in an entry or hall. You may purchase raffle tickets before and during Nature Mart. The winning ticket will be drawn at 4:00 p.m. on Saturday, November 19th, and you need not be present to win.

During Nature Mart, we will also be taking orders for custom signs that Tom has agreed to make, and we will be selling a limited number of boards from the Bridge – these are collector's items!

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Harlequin Happenings



*Railroad Bridge Table
Fashioned by Tom Butler
Photo by Gretha Davis*

Come join the festivities! Enjoy a cup of hot cider, browse, shop, and have fun as you:

- Make your own fresh wreath or purchase a wreath or fresh holiday arrangement already made for you
- Order a fresh flower holiday centerpiece to be picked up at a later date
- Have your picture taken with one of the River Center's special animals
- Choose a handmade suet feeder or nest box for your feathered friends, or homemade Buddy Biscuits for your dog
- Sample our Sweet and Savory Bake Sale of freshly made pies, cookies, scones, and breads

Our goal is to raise \$10,000 for River Center Educational programs. Even if you can't come to Nature Mart you can contribute to its success by:

- Providing Wreath-making materials of evergreen cuttings two-feet or smaller in length (fir, cedar, all colors of Oregon grape, etc. but no hemlock because it doesn't keep). Put greens on the drop cloths on the River Center porch beginning Friday, Nov. 11.
- Making delectable pies, cakes, cookies, breads, or candy for the bake sale, but please nothing that requires refrigeration. Deliver your baked goods – labeled and wrapped in clear wrap or in clear bags on Thursday, Nov. 17, between

1 and 4 p.m. Please identify ingredients, such as nuts, that may cause allergies.

- Taking a Nature Mart shift Two- and three-hour shifts are available in the Center as well as outdoors, where the wreath-making, photo booth and bake sale take place. Contact Julie Jackson at juliejackson@wavecable.com or (360) 683-1355.

Backyard Birding

The Backyard Birding 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 as 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.

'Being a Birder', second in the series of ten classes of "Backyard Birding", is from 10a.m. until noon on Saturday, November 12 at the Dungeness River Audubon Center, Railroad Bridge Park., presented by Denny Van Horn, who says, "So you're a birdwatcher! That's wonderful; but, how about becoming a Birder instead. Birdwatchers watch birds, but a Birder knows birds!"

This class will introduce you to the overall basics of birding. We'll start with who birds are: for example, what makes an American Robin 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 practice using these tools. We'll take a look at optics from the cheap to the mega-expensive, and what you need to know to make these instruments work for you. A variety of choices of both binoculars and field guides will be available for the class. We'll explore how to take field notes and draw stick-birds for ID purposes. You'll be exposed to the basic trials and tribulations that you'll encounter as you begin your pathway to becoming a Birder, and how to overcome them and use them to your advantage. In addition, Denny will provide information about getting started on a 'Birding Year', and how to use online website sources describing species in the area and ways to keep records are included.

'Winter Care & Feeding in the Garden', third in the series of ten classes, Christie Lassen of Wild Birds Unlimited will present the December 10 program, from 10 a.m. until noon, hosted by the Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society (OPAS). Her

presentation will cover general bird feeding, including types of feeders, different feeds for attracting specific birds, with an emphasis on our over-wintering species. She will include specific ideas for providing continuing 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.

Subsequent classes in the BB series will include: January 14, 2017, Inside Story, with Shirley Anderson and Ken Wiersema; February 11, Nesting, with Ken Wiersema; March 11, Spring Gardening for Birds, with Joe Holtrop; April 15, Migration, with Ken Leuthold; May 13, Sounds of Spring, with Dow Lambert and Ken Wiersema; June 10, Out of the Nest, with Ken Wiersema; July 8, Gulls and Shorebirds, with Bob Boekelheide.

Christmas Bird Counts

by Bob Boekelheide

The annual Sequim-Dungeness Christmas Bird Count (SDCBC) will occur this year on Monday, Dec. 19. If you are interested in participating, please call Bob Boekelheide at 360-808-0196 or email bboek@olympus.net to sign up.

Other local counts include the Port Townsend CBC on Saturday, Dec. 17, the Neah Bay CBC on Sunday, Dec. 18, and the Port Angeles CBC on Saturday, Dec. 31. The compiler of the Port Townsend CBC is Dan Waggoner (contact danwags57@gmail.com), the compiler of the Neah Bay CBC is Charlie Wright (cwright7@uw.edu), and the compiler of the Port Angeles CBC is Barb Blackie (blackieb@olympen.com).

Christmas bird counts occur over a 15-mile diameter count circle. For example, 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 some of 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, Morse Creek on the east, and all the way up to Hurricane Ridge.

This is an auspicious year for the SDCBC, because last year we set an all-time record for Washington State with 154 species seen. It was only the third time that 150 or more species have been recorded on a Washington CBC, and the only others were our very own SDCBC in 2007 and 2011. Hopefully the weather and birds will cooperate for another excellent count.

CBCs need lots of participants to cover as much ground as possible. 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 also have field parties assigned to specific areas of the count circle. If you are an experienced counter, you may be able to help with areas not covered by others. To prepare, please spend time this fall studying the birds of our area, and go on OPAS field trips and Wednesday morning birdwalks at RR Bridge Park.

We will have our annual pre-CBC warm-up field trip on Saturday, Dec. 10, starting at the Dungeness River Audubon Center at 9 am. We view land birds at RR Bridge Park, then travel to Dungeness Bay to observe water birds. Please join us!

Bob Phreaner Receives Conservation Award for 2016

by Ken Wiersema & Mary Porter-Solberg

As we announced at our June Awards meeting, the OPAS Conservation Committee recommended to the Board that the Conservation Award for 2016 be presented to Bob Phreaner. Due to a family health matter that required Bob's presence in Pennsylvania in June, he was unable to accept at that time, so we presented it in September. The Co-Chair of our Conservation Committee, Mary Porter-Solberg, presented the award on behalf of OPAS.

In the four short years Bob has lived in Sequim he's committed his time to identifying pollution sources in our irrigation ditches, streams, rivers, and bays, as a volunteer with Streamkeepers, City of Sequim Stormwater project, Clallam County Baywatcher project, and Clallam County Health Department. He and his wife, Enid (with the company of their Water Dog, Charlie), regularly survey Dungeness Bay and Murdock Beaches as volunteers in the COASST program. Bob trains annually to maintain his skills in HAZWOPER and Oiled Wildlife Response to be ready to lead and help in the event of an oil or toxic chemical spill. His participation in OPAS citizen science projects: CBC, Trumpeter Swan count, Purple Martin nest boxes, and Pigeon Guillemot study, provides important bird census and habitat monitoring data to OPAS for regional birding and wildlife analysis. He readily volunteers to help where needed, whether it's for OPAS, the River Center (he was a regular helper in placing forms when the Trails Coalition re-decked the Center's Howe Truss Bridge), or the Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge.

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*Bob Phreaner accepts Conservation Award
from Mary Porter-Solberg
Photo by Ken Wiersema and Chris Perry*

Bob provides an informed and effective voice for OPAS as our representative on the Dungeness River Management Team.

He and Enid have made a long term contribution to reducing their personal carbon footprint and in turn its contribution to climate change by the installation of a 9.5 kilowatt solar system on their home. He frequently expands his knowledge of the environment and ecology of our region by attending classes at the River Center and from NOSC.

We are indeed fortunate that Bob also is a leader in OPAS, serving on our Board in a leading role as Co-chair of our Conservation Committee.

Marbled Murrelet Status Update

by Mary Porter-Solberg

Recently, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) sought comments to uplist the Marbled Murrelet from its 1993 *State Threatened* species listing to a recommended *State Endangered* species listing. OPAS submitted comments October 9, 2016 in support of the urgent need to uplist this imperiled seabird to *State Endangered*. Further, we requested that WDFW create and adopt a

state recovery plan for the Marbled Murrelet with explicit recovery goals that include habitat and population recovery strategies based on the best available science.

In Washington, nesting habitat losses due to timber harvest since 1993 are substantial, with an estimated loss on nonfederal lands of 30%. At-sea population monitoring from 2001 to 2015 indicates a 4.4% decline annually, which represents a 44% reduction of the population since 2001. The 2015 population estimate for Washington is about 7,500 birds.

Other factors that contribute to the population decline include predation, oil spills at sea, net fishing, and depletion of the small fish that it consumes. Without solutions that can effectively address these concerns in the short-term, wildlife biologists believe the Marbled Murrelet could become extirpated in the state within the next several decades.



Marbled Murrelet on nest

In October, 2015, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and U.S Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) approved six alternative strategies to manage DNR's state trust lands for protecting the Marbled Murrelet, while timber harvesting will continue to generate revenue for trust beneficiaries (schools, hospitals, libraries, and other state services). The DNR holds monthly board meetings regard-

ing the Sustainable (Forest) Harvest Calculation (SHC), and, importantly, holds discussions and presentations related to the Long Term Conservation Strategy (LTCS) of the Marbled Murrelet. OPAS Conservation Committee members received confirmation from DNR staff at the October, 2016, meeting that the draft Environmental Impact Statements (DEIS) for both the SHC and the LTCS will be released on December 2, 2016 – 19 years after DNR’s “interim” Marbled Murrelet LTCS was approved.

The Conservation Committee will analyze and provide comments on the draft EIS. We will keep you informed of the public comment period process in the next newsletter and on our Conservation News and Conservation Alerts pages of the OPAS website. Background information is available here: <http://www.dnr.wa.gov/mmltcs>.

Bird Sightings

by Bob Boekelheide & Denny Van Horn

It's official! October, 2016, will go on record as the wettest October for western Washington, with over 9 inches of rain in Seattle. You may recall that last winter also set a record for the most precipitation between October and March. Why so much rain? Cliff Mass, UW weather guru, says the trend may be related to atmospheric warming, because warm air holds more water vapor than cold air, increasing the likelihood for extreme precipitation events. Despite the rain, local rivers and streams are well below flood levels, because, being October, it's still too warm for much snow to have accumulated in the Olympics. If this much warm rain had fallen on a large snow pack, it would have flooded for sure.



Regardless of weather, one of the most impressive migratory bird movements lately has been big flights of Cackling Geese over the coast and Sequim-Dungeness Valley. Thousands of Cacklers have taken up temporary residence in harvested cornfields by Schmuck and Port Williams Roads. Bruce Paige estimated a peak number of Cacklers at 5500 on 10/19. Bruce also recorded up to 105 Snow Geese mixed with the Cacklers on 10/28. Other Snow Geese appeared in small numbers elsewhere in October, including Neah Bay, Dungeness Bay, Carlsborg, and even Annette Hanson's backyard. Trumpeter Swans have also arrived, with single swans at Schmuck Rd,

seen by the OPAS field trip, and at Kitchen-Dick Ponds, seen by Michael Barry, both on 10/29.

Look for Aleutian Cackling Geese among the other Cacklers, with their white rings at the base of their necks. Aleutian Cackling Goose is an endangered subspecies, nesting in the Aleutians and nearly all wintering in the Central Valley of CA. Some stop in WA on their way south, particularly in the Waatch River Valley. Their peak occurred this year on 10/21, with 280 seen by Ryan Merrill and Brad Waggoner. Michael Barry reported an Aleutian Cackling Goose with a numbered neck collar and USGS replied that the goose was an adult female originally banded in Dec., 2010, in Manteca, CA. Imagine the stories this goose could tell, flying back and forth to Alaska every year.

Duck migration is similarly in full swing. At least 2 late Blue-winged Teal showed up at Neah Bay in early October, seen by many observers (M.Obs.). Giant flocks of wigeons are back in Dungeness Bay, including Eurasian Wigeons mixed with the flocks as early as mid-September. Eric Guzman spotted a female-type Barrow's Goldeneye at Heart Lake on 9/13, where they may have nested. An early Common Goldeneye appeared at the Elwha River mouth on 9/22, seen by Howard Towle. Michael Barry discovered a Canvasback at Kitchen-Dick Ponds on 10/29.

One Eared Grebe has been hanging with the Horned Grebes in Neah Bay, first spotted by Al Westphal on 8/27 and continuing through September.

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Horned Grebe
Photo by Robert Hutchison

Harlequin Happenings

At least one and possibly two Clark's Grebes have been hanging with the Western Grebes outside the Neah Bay breakwater, first reported on 10/23 by Dan Waggoner and since seen by M.Obs.

Lucky Ryan Merrill participated in WDFW surveys off the west coast of Clallam County, encountering many interesting birds. On 9/7 they recorded up to 4 Flesh-footed Shearwaters among the large rafts of Pink-footed Shearwaters. Ryan also spotted perhaps the highest number of Scripp's Murrelet ever for Clallam County, with 29 on 9/9. They found these mysterious little murrelets over deep water far offshore, adding even more to their mystery. What are these little guys doing way out there?

On 9/10, the OPAS pelagic trip out of Neah Bay, headed by Denny Van Horn, encountered big feeding groups of shearwaters and gulls around the southern edge of Swiftsure Bank, including thousands of Pink-footed and Sooty Shearwaters, and perhaps the largest group of Sabine's Gulls ever recorded in WA, with over 5000 of these beautiful small gulls. The trip also found hundreds of Red-necked Phalaropes and Cassin's Auklets, along with South Polar Skuas, Pomarine Jaegers, Parasitic Jaegers, Arctic Terns, and Black-legged Kittiwakes. Most interesting of all were 2 adult Brown Boobies actively plunging for food in one of the feeding flocks. In addition to the birds, humpback whales put on a spectacular show, with up to 75 feeding in the area.

Sabine's Gulls were not only offshore, but small numbers have also been seen from land at Neah Bay and Cape Flattery. Ryan Merrill, Bruce Labar, and Bill Tweit found up to 2 off the Neah Bay jetty on 10/27 & 10/28, along with one at Cape Flattery on 10/28.



Rough-legged Hawk
Photo by Chris Perry

Migrating Ospreys have been exceptionally visible, seen on RR Bridge Park Wed. morning bird walks on 9/21, 9/28, and 10/5. Bruce Paige spotted an Osprey flying over Salt Creek County Park on 10/21. Enid Phreaner suggests that one Osprey may have remained around Dungeness Bay for several days in October, frequently seen between Cline Spit and 3 Crabs.

Among other hawk news, Michael Shepard reported a Northern Goshawk gliding through the forests at Mt Walker on 9/25. A single Golden Eagle soared over Hurricane Ridge on 10/6, seen by Alex Patia, and another was at the Waatch River Valley on 10/22, seen by Brian Pendleton. Also at Hurricane Ridge, Carolyn Wilcox found a juvenile Rough-legged Hawk on 9/30, and Vern Wilkins spotted another Rough-legged Hawk hover-hunting over alpine meadows on 10/7. One Broad-winged Hawk appeared at Bahokus Peak on 9/9, first spotted by Brad Waggoner, in the same area where their migratory flights occur in spring. Shep Thorp spotted a Harlan's-type Red-tailed Hawk at the Waatch River Valley on 10/23, the really dark subspecies of Red-tail. Last but not least, a Red-shouldered Hawk possibly remained around Gardiner for several weeks in September, first reported by John Gatchet on 8/31, then seen off and on by him all the way until 9/27.

Migrating Sandhill Cranes appeared several places around Clallam and Jefferson Counties in mid to late September. High counts go to Jon Purnell, who watched 37 fly over the Bogachiel River on 9/14, and Dan Waggoner, who saw 49 flying off the Strait at Neah Bay on 9/11.

The 3 Crabs Restoration Project provided excellent habitat for shorebirds in September, when water from Meadowbrook Creek was pumped onto adjacent saltmarsh and created standing pools. One Reeve (female Ruff) liked the new habitat, first spotted at 3 Crabs by Jeanelle Richardson on 9/9. At least one, maybe two, Reeves also appeared at Neah Bay, first reported by Dan Waggoner and Barbara Webster on 9/10. The 3 Crabs Ruff remained for a couple days, but the Neah Bay bird possibly stuck around until at least 10/23, typically seen walking on the shoreline by the marina.

While looking at the Ruff on 9/9, Dow Lambert and Denny Van Horn spotted a wayward Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, which remained in the area until at least 9/11. Howard Towle, Doug Johnson, and K.R. Eckert reported another Sharp-tailed Sandpiper near Helen's Pond on 9/22. The

Sharp-tailed Sandpipers almost always stuck with similar-looking Pectoral Sandpipers, making for great comparisons. The high count of Pectoral Sandpipers at 3 Crabs was 12 on 9/16. John Bridge photographed another Pectoral near Sand Point on 9/13.



Migrating Sandhill Cranes
Photo by Bob Boekelheide

Other interesting shorebirds include two sightings of Snowy Plovers at Tsoo-Yess Beach, one by Ryan Merrill and Bill Tweit on 9/17, and one by John Gatchet on 9/26. One Willet continued to be seen in Dungeness Bay through September and October, possibly the same one first seen by Michael Barry in August. Alex Robinson and Annie Meyer discovered a Solitary Sandpiper at the Elwha River on 9/7, foraging on muddy shorelines.

Franklin's Gulls made their fall appearance, with one immature at 3 Crabs on 9/3, spotted by Bob Boekelheide, and one adult at Neah Bay on 9/17, spotted by Ryan Merrill and Bill Tweit. Two Elegant Terns, one adult and one immature, showed up at Neah Bay on 10/7, photographed by Brad and Dan Waggoner with Ryan Shaw. Common Terns used to show up here by the hundreds, but this fall only one was reported by John Gatchet at Port Angeles on 10/8.

Common Nighthawks usually migrate south in August, but this year they were spotted in Neah Bay on 9/9 by Brad & Dan Waggoner and on 9/10 by Ethan Goodman. Swifts also depart around the same time, but Gary Bullock watched 5 Black Swifts soaring over his yard near the Dungeness River on 9/6, along with one Vaux's Swift for comparison.

In flycatcher news, a wayward Black Phoebe perched in the trees near Jamestown Beach for Bob Boekelheide on



Franklin's Gull
Photo by Dow Lambert

9/6. A very late Hammond's Flycatcher perched at Gardiner for John Gatchet on 10/2. Tropical Kingbirds, regular here in the fall, have not disappointed this year. The first Tropicals showed up at Neah Bay on 10/11, with three reported by John Gatchet, Michael Barry, and Chris Brown. They're still there at the end of the month, with a high count of 6 reported on 10/28 by M.Obs.



Western Scrub Jay
Photo by Jackie One Tree

A California Scrub-Jay hung out in Port Townsend on 10/9, seen by Kurt Rantam. Mark my words, soon they'll be nesting around here. Among swallows, Ryan Merrill and Bill Tweit watched 3 very late Purple Martins at Neah Bay on 9/16 and 9/17.

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Harlequin Happenings

Other late swallows included 2 N. Rough-winged Swallows on 9/30 seen by Bruce Paige at Neah Bay, and 2 Violet-Green Swallows on 10/9 at Dungeness Rec Area seen by Bob Boekelheide.

September is the time to find beautiful bluebirds in the high country. Eric Guzman spotted both Mountain and Western Bluebirds near Klahane Ridge on 9/20. Iris Sutcliffe had the high count of 12 Mountain Bluebirds in the same area on 9/5. Carolyn Wilcox found 2 flocks of Western Bluebirds on Hurricane Hill on 9/30. A very late Swainson's Thrush occurred at Neah Bay on 10/11, reported by Bruce Paige. Lovely Lapland Longspurs appeared for Carolyn Wilcox at Ediz Hook on 9/30, and for Scott Gremel at Hobuck Beach on 10/28.



Swamp Sparrow

Several species considered rare in western WA may now be considered regular fall visitors at Neah Bay, thanks to the persistence of M.Obs looking for rare birds. One species is Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. Between 10/7 and 10/28 at least one gnatcatcher was seen multiple times along the Neah Bay waterfront and in neighborhoods near Butler's Motel. Another species is Palm Warbler, with at least 2 seen in Neah Bay between 10/9 and 10/28, and at least 6 reported at Hobuck Beach between 10/9 and 10/28. A third species is Clay-colored Sparrow, with at least 2 present in Neah Bay between 10/18 and 10/28. Lastly is Swamp Sparrow, with at least 2 as well, both in Neah Bay and the Waatch Valley from 10/18 to 10/28. One report of a Swamp Sparrow away from Neah Bay was by Bruce Paige in a hedgerow near Schmuck Rd on 10/16.

Among other warblers, the most unusual is the first Clallam County record of a Blackburnian Warbler, photographed in a flock of chickadees and kinglets behind the Makah Museum in Neah Bay by Bill Tweit and Ryan Merrill on 9/18. Other very late warblers included a Nashville Warbler found in Neah Bay by Alex Patia on 10/16, a Black-throated Gray Warbler spotted in Neah Bay by Charlie Wright on 10/22, and single Yellow Warblers seen by M.Obs. at Neah Bay between 10/7 and 10/21.

Lark Sparrows showed up in September, with one at Bob and Leslie Bagwell's home in Sequim on 9/11, and another found by John Gatchet at 3 Crabs on 9/25. Scott Gremel spotted a young Harris's Sparrow in his back yard in Port Angeles on 10/16, present until a cat showed up.

Could you separate a female Rose-breasted Grosbeak from a female Black-headed Grosbeak? A female-type Rose-breasted Grosbeak showed up at Butler's Motel in Neah Bay, first reported by Hope Anderson on 10/17 and last reported on 10/22. A very late female-type Black-headed Grosbeak skulked around Neah Bay on 9/18, spotted by Bill Tweit and Ryan Merrill.

More excitement at Neah Bay was one, possibly two, Dickcissels, a species more at home on the prairies of Kansas or Venezuela rather than back yards in Neah Bay. Hope Anderson first spotted one at Butler's Motel on 10/17, but after a couple days it disappeared. Coincidentally another Dickcissel showed up at Adrienne Akmajian's feeder on 10/22 about 4 miles away at the Waatch Valley. Same bird? Maybe.

Orioles also graced Neah Bay. One Bullock's Oriole visited Backtrack Rd on 9/9, seen by Dan and Brad Waggoner. Another Bullock's showed up on 10/19, photographed by Blair Bernson. But the treasure of them all was an Orchard Oriole that appeared near the Warmhouse Restaurant on 10/28, seen by M.Obs. You may recall an Orchard Oriole spent the 2014-15 winter in Neah Bay, visiting hummingbird feeders. Hopefully this one will stick around as well.

Lastly, John Gatchet spotted a Cassin's Finch at Neah Bay on 10/19, near Butler's Motel. Among the abundant Red Crossbills at Neah Bay, there are several reports of White-winged Crossbills, from one seen by Charlie Wright at Baho-kus Peak on 8/29, to one seen by Ryan Merrill in Neah Bay on 10/27.

It's time to review for the Christmas Bird Count, so please get out and look at the birds this fall. If you see something

noteworthy, please call Bob Boekelheide at 360-681-4867 (email at bboek@olympus.net). Thank you for your sightings.

President's Notes (Continued from page two)

Passings — While we don't regularly comment the deaths of our members in this newsletter, I believe that the deaths this year of these three special folks deserve to be noted. Their lives and contributions to OPAS, the Center, and our community will remain in our hearts and minds.

Nell Backus (1925-2016) Nell lived among us since 2000. She had a brilliant and long career as an entomologist, and while retired was a Center volunteer, contributor to OPAS & Center education programs, and a regular at numerous community volunteer projects.

Mary Whitmore (1935 - 2016) Mary was a warm, happy, and generous person who attended many OPAS and Center events and classes. She was the major contributor of funds to build the Bird viewing platform at Dungeness Landing County Park.

Tom Golding (1918-2016) Tom was a longtime member of OPAS and a strong and generous supporter of the

Center. He served on our Board for several years and was regular at meetings, potlucks, and field trips. I remember him at age 94 trudging out on the 3 Crabs tide flats to help with our Purple Martin project. His generosity in the early years of the Center helped insure its success.

Malheur verdicts -- I was stunned and disappointed at the October 27th verdicts. I sent a note to our local DNWR folks thanking them for their dedication to protecting our wildlife and restoring wildlife habitat; and expressing OPAS's continued support. These verdicts set back protection and preservation of wild lands, especially in the West. They increase our burden but also our resolve. Also, please note what our National Audubon Society President, David Yarnold, said on Oct 28th -- he's outraged, and "wild lands belong to everyone, not the people who hold them at gunpoint". He said the verdicts "undermines the rule of law."

And -- November & December events !

Special again this year, plan to come to **Nature Mart Nov 18 & 19**

And be sure to sign up for at least 1 or 2 CBCs. Lots to do -- See yah...



*Bob Phreaner and Friends
Grey Jays*



*Trumpeter Swan
Photo by Bob Beokelheide*

Olympic BirdFest 2017

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