



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 1 Jan-Feb 2017

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

OPAS Programs for January and February

by Bob Boekelheide

January 18, 2017, 7 p.m. at the Dungeness River Audubon Center, "The Natural World Always has a Story to Share - Celebrating What is Right with the World!" Presented by Alan Bauer.



Alan Bauer

Alan Bauer is a professional photographer, specializing in the natural history of the Pacific Northwest. His excellent photographs have appeared in numerous magazines, newspapers, books, and even in a special exhibit about spiders at Woodland Park Zoo in Seattle. As Alan says, "The greatest value of my photographic art is to better educate people about the beauty surrounding us."

Celebrate what is right with the world! Sometimes we need to slow down, look more closely, and appreciate beauty right around us. Alan will share an image-intensive presentation displaying many of his personal celebrations, from hiking to birding to just standing still looking at something worth celebrating nearby.



Sooty Grouse
Photo by Alan Bauer

February 15, 2017, 7 p.m. at the Dungeness River Audubon Center, "OPAS Member Photo Night 2017", Organized by Dow Lambert.

Time for our annual members' photo show! Do you have photos of birds you would like to share with others? Lucky for you, because other OPAS members want to see them, too.

Please submit your digital photos to Dow Lambert, who has generously offered to assist us projecting the images. If you wish to offer your photos for the evening, please contact Dow so you can get the information you'll need, at dow.lambert@wavecable.com. The deadline to contact Dow about your photos is Friday, Feb. 10. (Continued on page three)

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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Reminder!

It is time for OPAS members to renew their memberships.

All annual memberships expire on December 31st. Questions about memberships should be directed to Audrey Gift at <agift@q.com>.

President's Notes

By Ken Wiersema



A thank you -- As 2016 closes its books, I believe it's deserving to recognize our officers and board members who each contribute in special ways to OPAS. You as members, can be very proud and appreciative of the productive and dedicated work our board contributes to the success of our Chapter.

Organizing events and classes; keeping our financial records & paying bills; maintaining accurate membership rolls; putting out a timely, informative, and readable newsletter; posting to and upgrading our website; leading and organizing field trips; recording meeting minutes; BirdFest committee chairs, Wednesday Birdwalk leaders; putting together count teams and compiling results of several bird counts; swan census organizer, etc.... So thank you OPAS Board! And a special appreciation goes to Coleman Byrnes for ably representing OPAS on the Clallam County TLAC throughout 2016 --- Well done all --- and thanks! And if you would wish to be a part of OPAS leaders and Board, please contact any officer or board member and we'll fit you into a project that fits your skills, interests, and that needs doing!

OPAS awarded Collaborative Grant from Audubon WA - Bob Phreaner and Mary Porter-Solberg, with input from Ed Bowlby, prepared our application for partial funding of the Pigeon Guillemot Citizen Science Study. OPAS will match the Audubon WA grant and we'll partner with Whidbey Audubon to continue local data collection started last summer. If you want to help out and learn about these birds, watch for the announcement of observer training classes which will be scheduled in late spring.

Reminder – If you've not done so, Please dig out your Fall Fundraiser letter from the Dungeness River Audubon Center and contribute to its operation. The funds contributed help underwrite the education programs at the Center. Now, if you lost your letter, just contact the Center and ask for a replacement, or bring in a check, and your contribution will be gratefully processed and accepted. Thanks...

Personal note: I'm drafting these notes at my wife Nancy's bedside as she gets yet another blood transfusion. She has been diagnosed with Adult Leukemia (AML). Some of you know, I've been off line since the day before Thanksgiving. I've missed a lot of meetings and an array of bird counts. Believe me, I'd rather have been out in the cold and wind counting "Gulls" with Bob B, than what I've been doing. Our board has been supportive, compassionate, and understanding. I may be compelled to step away from OPAS leadership to attend to family needs, and I'd ask you to help your other officers and board members to keep OPAS fully functioning and serving our birds and our community. Thanks again.

OPAS Programs (Continued from page one)

This is NOT a contest. Photos will not be judged or critiqued. We ask that you submit no more than 10 photos each, to allow as many members as possible to partici-



Townsend' Warbler
Photo by Alan Bauer

ate. You'll be asked to say a few words about your photos, like to identify the bird, location, and time of year.

If you don't have a stockpile of photos, there is plenty of time right now to take photos for the show. All bird photos are welcome, but should we receive too many photos for the evening we will give priority to local birds. Please

submit your bird photos and come enjoy the evening. Even if you don't submit photos, come watch the show!

OPAS Field Trips in January and February

by Denny AMFJ Van Horn



OPAS Field Trips Needs Your HELP! We need VOLUNTEERS to lead and/or co-lead outings, whether it's in a local area or one that's an adventure Out-there-and-about. We have a few dedicated individuals who lead all of our outings. But we need new people, new areas, new ideas, new interests. You don't have to be an expert or a guru at birding. Novices and beginners can work wonders in finding birds and sharing the excitement of discovery and learning. So PLEASE, come out and be a leader. Create an outing and we'll assist you from there. Or volunteer to lead one of the TBAs noted below. Get in touch with Denny Van Horn (see Elwha Gulls below) and come out and play - Thanks!

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.

Elwha Gulls

Date & Time: Jan 14, 9 a.m.

Leader: Denny Van Horn

Meeting place: Parking area at mouth of Elwha River off Place Road.

Features: Gulls - if they cooperate, we just might find x8 species; and if they don't - well, it's a nice walk out to the mouth of the river.

Further Information: Contact: dennyvanhorn@gmail.com, or text. Phone 360-406-1584.

Carrie Blake Park Walk-about

Date & Time: January 21, 9 a.m.

Leader: To be announced

Meeting place: Meet in the S parking lot at Carrie Blake Park, Sequim.

Features: Wigeons, especially those elusive Eurasians; Falcons and Dicky-birds.

Further Information: Contact: To be announced.

Ediz Hook

Date & Time: January 28, 9 a.m.-Noon

Leader: To be announced.

Meeting place: Boat launch at CG Station on E end of Hook.

Features: Bay and Strait-side birds.

Further Information: Contact: To be announced.

PitShip Pocket & Sequim Bay

Date & Time: February 11, 9 a.m.-Noon

Leader: Denny Van Horn

Meeting place: The S parking area at John Wayne Marina.

Features: Alcids & Ducks.

Further Information: Contact dennyvanhorn@gmail.com, or text. Phone 360-406-1584.

The Woods Road - Palo Alto Loop

Date & Time: February 26, 9 a.m.

Leader: To be announced.

Meeting place: The Longhouse parking lot in Blyn.

(Continued on next page)

Harlequin Happenings

Features: This is a drive, stop, look, and listen outing for winter-time woodland birds. It could be cold and snowy back there, so be prepared.

Further Information: Contact: To be announced.

Other Events

Birding by Ear

Dates: Eight Thursday mornings -- first class on Mar 9; subsequent classes on Mar 23; Apr 6 & 20; May 4 & 18; Jun 1 & 15.

Times: All sessions 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

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: E-mail Dave Jackson (djackson@wavecable.com) or call 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.

The **fourth** class in the BB series, '**The Inside Story**', will be from 10 a.m. to noon on Saturday, January 14, 2017, at the Dungeness River Audubon Center, Railroad Bridge Park. Shirley Anderson and Ken Wiersema will illustrate and lead a discussion about the unique anatomy, physiology and behaviors of birds. Topics include bird eye structure, how they vocalize, plus feathers and bones.

The fifth class in the BB series, '**Nesting**' will meet at the Dungeness River Audubon Center, Railroad Bridge Park, from 10 a.m. to noon on Saturday, February 11, 2017. Because it is time to think about birds and spring, attendees will learn about bird nests, how and where birds nest, the care and maintenance of nests and nesting boxes. The class will be presented by Ken Wiersema.

The class will also show how to participate in the 'Great Backyard Bird Count' (GBBC), a National annual census of bird populations sponsored by both the Audubon Society and the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. Following a short field trip to tally birds in Railroad Bridge Park, you will learn how to enter data in the GBBC computer database. The GBBC census occurs February 17-20, 2017. You may participate by counting species in your own garden and backyard feeding areas for a minimum of 15 minutes or as extensively as you wish.

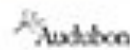
A poster for the 20th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count. The top half features a close-up photograph of a robin perched on a branch with red berries. The text on the poster reads: "How many birds will you find?" in large, bold, black letters. Below that, in purple and black, it says "20th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count February 17-20, 2017". Further down, in smaller black text, it says "Join in! Count birds in your backyard, local park, or wherever you spot a bird, and submit your observations online." At the bottom left of the poster, it says "birdcount.org" and "American Robin Photo: Shinya Nishida/GBBC".

How many birds will you find?
20th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count
February 17-20, 2017

Join in! Count birds in your backyard, local park, or wherever you spot a bird, and submit your observations online.

birdcount.org

American Robin
Photo: Shinya Nishida/GBBC



Subsequent classes will include: 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.

Olympic Birdfest 2017—Come Bird with Us

Grab your binoculars and join the 13th annual **Olympic Bird-Fest 2017** celebration at the Dungeness River Audubon Center, April 7-9, 2017.

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

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 at www.olympicbirdfest.org.

Precede your BirdFest weekend with a three-day, two night birding cruise of the spectacular **San Juan Islands** on April 4-6, 2017. 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 9-11, 2017: 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, or write to us at:

Dungeness River Audubon Center
P.O. Box 2450
Sequim, WA 98382

2016 Sequim-Dungeness Christmas Bird Count Results

by Bob Boekelheide



In the history of the Sequim-Dungeness Christmas Bird Count (SDCBC), there have been some exceptionally beautiful count days, such as last year when we set a record count with 154 species. Conversely, there have also been some very challenging days, when weather and circumstances conspired to decrease count totals lower than we hoped. I'm afraid 2016 falls into the latter category.

We held our 41st SDCBC on December 19, 2016, following a week of cold weather and nighttime temperatures dropping into the low 20s. Owling on the 19th started with occasional heavy rain, along with snow at higher elevations of the count circle. West winds rose along the coast after most people began counting at 8 am, eventually peaking at 34 mph at the Dungeness Lighthouse. Fortunately winds decreased after midday, but the damage had been done. The count ended up tallying 140 species, the lowest total since 2010, another year with challenging winds. The total number of individual birds this year was 65,073, actually a very respectable number above our 20-year average, but solely due to high numbers of a few species. 126 people participated in the count this year, combining field observers and feeder watchers (see adjacent table of results).

(Continued on next page)

Olympic Peninsula April 7-9, 2017
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Harlequin Happenings

The two most abundant species this year, as is typical for this count, were American Wigeon (13,848) and Mallard (8121). Other abundant species, in decreasing order, were: American Robin (4994), Northern Pintail (3933), Dunlin (3042), large pink-legged gulls (Glaucous-winged Gull and Olympic Gull hybrids) (2622), European Starling (2063), Dark-eyed Junco (2017), Brant (1823), and Bufflehead (1356). These top ten species comprised about 2/3rds of all the birds seen on our count.

Very few species set all-time high counts this year. We scored a record high for Trumpeter Swans thanks to Bob and Ann Sextro, whose sole mission was to count swans. Following large number of migrant geese this fall, both Canada and Cackling Geese also set record highs. It was a record-setting year for disparate species like Merlin, Brown Creeper, and American Pipit. It was the second highest year for Anna's Hummingbird and the third highest for California Quail. Bald Eagles also set a record, with the largest group seen along the Dungeness River south of Hwy 101, undoubtedly feasting on old salmon carcasses.

Some other species had very low numbers, or were missed altogether. Wood Ducks only made count-week this year, missed on count day. Harlequin Ducks continue their downward decline. Black Scoters had the second lowest count in the 41 years of the SDCBC, and Long-tailed Ducks and American Coots had their second lowest count of the last 20 years. Sanderlings, Pigeon Guillemots, and Marbled Murrelets were well below their long-term averages. Some of these low numbers were likely due to the challenging weather, particularly to frozen ponds and to rough conditions for the offshore boat. Last, irruptive finches scored low, particularly Evening Grosbeaks, which were totally missed this year.

As usual, several unusual species showed up for our count. Fortunately, many of these had been present for several days, so we knew they were here:

Emperor Goose - 1 at Dungeness Spit, first found by John Gatchet on 12/11.

Snow Goose - 2 at the Olympic Game Farm, grazing with the bison.

Black-crowned Night-Heron – 2 birds at Dungeness, present for the last 6 CBCs.

Turkey Vulture - 1 count week seen on 12/16 at 3 Crabs, by Katie and Andrew Schepers.

Pacific Golden-Plover - 1 bird with Black-bellied Plovers along Schmuck Rd, present since 12/3.

Willet - 1 at Dungeness Bay, possibly present since August. This is the second year in a row with a wintering-over Willet -- could it be the same bird?

Red Phalarope - 1 seen by the boat party.

Cassin's Auklet - 1 seen at Discovery Bay.

Glaucous Gull – 1 at Dungeness Spit.

Bohemian Waxwing - The Bird of the Year. We tallied 404, ranging from 3 Crabs to Graysmarsh, with 225 just at Jamestown. This is only the second SDCBC to record Bohemian Waxwings -- last time was 1983, when they tallied 16 BOWAs.

Swamp Sparrow - 2 at Graysmarsh

Special thanks to property owners and agencies who allowed access for the count, including USFWS, Olympic Game Farm, Dungeness Farms and Habitat, Graysmarsh, Maple View Farm, Battelle, WA State Parks, WA DNR, Clallam County Parks, and more. Great thanks also to Durkee Richards for providing the offshore boat, and to Gary Poor for ferrying counters to Dungeness Spit. To our esteemed observers who came great distances to help with the count, we couldn't do it without you. And of course huge thanks to all the great cooks who provided food for the compilation dinner. It was enjoyed by all!

Counters and feeder-watchers included: Dungeness Spit-Jamie Acker, George Gerds, Gary Poor (boat); Dungeness Rec Area-Coleman Byrnes, Sue Nattinger, John Rehr, Sue Thompson, K.C. Nattinger, Ron Hansen, Nancy & Ken Wiersema; West Dungeness-Denny Van Horn, Dow Lambert, Shirley Anderson, Carol & Tim Fleming, Kendra Donelson, Wendy Worth, Barb Boekelheide; Three Crabs-Scott Gremel, Mark Salvadalena, Mandy Holmgren, Blaine Dalton, Lee Bowen; Jamestown-Sue Chickman, Brad & Dan Waggoner; Graysmarsh-Bob Boekelheide, Michael Barry, Ted Stadtmueller; Port Williams/WA Harbor-Bruce & Sharon Paige, Roger Hoffman, Dana Scott, Steven & Nancy Smith, Ron Miller; Battelle-Nancy Kohn, Heidi Stewart, Colleen Trestle, Kate Pullman, Kate Hall; West Sequim Bay-Jim & Audrey Gift, Bob Hutchison, Margaret Levitan, Susan Savage, Bob Blush, Carol & Bruce Von Borstel; East Sequim Bay-Judy Mullally, Dan McDougall-Treacy; Miller Peninsula-Powell Jones, Greg Voyles, Katherine Bush; Diamond Pt/Gardiner-John Gatchet, Bob Bagwell; Offshore Boat-Charlie Wright, Mike Crim, Durkee Richards (boat); Chicken Coop-Charlotte Watts; Palo Alto-Carolyn Wilcox, Lindsey Schromen-Wawrin, Kaiyote Snow, Ed Mensing, East Bell Hill-John & Diana Anderson; South Sequim-Kendra Donelson, Pat

MacRobbie, Doris Causey, Bev Swaringen, Happy Valley- Peter Walker, John Acklen, Dungeness Mdws-Kristiana & Paul Nielson, Neil & Patti Hathaway; Taylor Cutoff/Fish Hatchery/Hooker-Quenn Charrier, Norrie & Barb Johnson, Sally Harris, Anna & Josie Johnson; Cassidy Ck/Robin Hill/Solmar-Barb Blackie, Heidi Pedersen; MacDonald Ck- Tom Guobis, Joan McDermott, Margie Palmer, Mike Barnes; McDonnell Ck Ranch-Barb Vanderwerf, Sarah Bird, Carol Young; West Kitchen-Dick-Betty Kramp, Carlsborg-Marie & Brian Grad, Jane Stewart, Carl Siver, Ridgeview/Hogback-Steve & Forest Koehler, Sharle Osborne, Kathe Smith, Sara Blake, Phil & Julie Roe; Blue Ribbon Farms-Pat Schoen, Janet Bruening, Janet Oja; Sequim City-Bob Iddins, Karen Parker; East of Dungeness River to Sunland-Gary Bullock, Enid & Bob Phreaner, Towne Rd Levee/Brigadoon/Kirner-Dave & Julie Jackson, Kate Goschen, Marion Rutledge; Annette Hanson, Joy Bertman, Tom & Diane Marciniac; RR Bridge Park/ODT-Mary Robson, Syrene Forsman, Jenna Ziogas; and Swans- Bob & Ann Sextro.

Conservation Matters—The Marbled Murrelet needs your help!

by Mary Porter-Solberg and Bob Phreaner

Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) released two linked, draft environmental impact statements on December 2; the Sustainable Harvest Calculation (SHC) and the Long Term Conservation Strategy (LTCS) on the Marbled Murrelet. (See below for more information about these reports).

Here is what you can do:

1. **Attend the DNR public presentation on both draft environmental impact statements on January 17, Port Angeles High School, Commons/Lunch Room at 304 E. Park Ave from 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.**

2. **Attend a DNR Marbled Murrelet Webinar planned for January 24, 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. Link will be available at: www.dnr.wa.gov/mmltcs**
3. **Watch the Conservation pages of the OPAS website or the OPAS Facebook page for more details about commenting on these proposals.**
4. **Provide written comments. The deadline for comments on the Sustainable Harvest Calculation and the Marbled Murrelet Long Term Conservation Strategy statements is March 9.**

The Long-Term Conservation Strategy for the Marbled Murrelet Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) - The DNR and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service worked together to develop six alternatives within the range of the Marbled Murrelet to analyze in this DEIS, including the no action alternative. The alternatives differ in the amount of forest land designated for marbled murrelet conservation, where conservation is located, and how conservation areas will be managed. Independent scientific analysis has shown that none of the current alternatives are sufficient to protect and restore this bird's population on state forest lands. The Draft EIS and additional information about this proposal can be viewed on DNR's website at <http://www.dnr.wa.gov/mmltcs>

The Sustainable Harvest Calculation – This proposal will establish a sustainable forest harvest level for the 2015 to 2024 fiscal planning decade for state trust lands in western Washington.

Five alternatives are analyzed in this DEIS, including a no action alternative. One of the objectives of the SHC is to coordinate with the Marbled Murrelet Long-Term Conservation Strategy (LTCS) environmental analysis, so that the Board of Natural Resources can integrate the effects of the range of Marbled Murrelet LTCS alternatives on the sustainable harvest level and arrearage. Arrearage volume is the difference between the planned sustainable harvest level and the actual harvest level in a planning decade.

The Draft EIS and additional information about this proposal can be viewed on DNR's website at <http://www.dnr.wa.gov/sustainable-harvest-calculation>.



SDCBC results inserted here.



sdcbc2016Vert.pdf

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Led by Ken Wiersema

Sat Jan 28th 2016 -- 10 AM
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90 Min seminar & 2 hr local field trip
Tuition \$10 (funds toward Ed pgms at Center)
Please pre-register Call 681-4076

Common Raven, Dungeness NWR '11
Photo by Dow Lambert

American Crow,
Sequim, '15
Photo by Chris Perry

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Harlequin Happenings

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