



# HARLEQUIN HAPPENINGS

Newsletter of the Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society (OPAS)

[www.olympicpeninsulaudubon.org](http://www.olympicpeninsulaudubon.org) ([www.olybird.org](http://www.olybird.org))

Clallam County, Washington

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

Issue 5 Sep-Oct, 2017

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

## OPAS Programs for September and October

by Bob Boekelheide



### September 20, 2017 Program

Dungeness River Audubon Center, 2151 Hendrickson Road, Sequim, WA (Potluck Dinner starts at 6 pm, Meeting and Program begins at 7 pm).

**"Birds of Cuba"** Presented by Dr. Jim Karr, Professor Emeritus of Aquatic and Fisheries Sciences, University of Washington



Dr. Jim Karr

A noted expert on tropical birds and a lifelong teacher and naturalist, Jim spent many years studying forest birds in Central and South America, Africa, South Asia, and New Guinea. Besides knowing birds, he is an aquatic ecologist who created the widely-used Index of Biological Integrity, determining the health of rivers and streams by assessing fish and aquatic invertebrate populations. Even more illustrious, Jim received this year's OPAS Conservation Award.

Within the past year, Jim traveled to Cuba to view the spectacular birds of the largest Caribbean Island. From beaches to forests to mountains, Cuba has many en-

demically species and subspecies, including several distinctive songbirds and the smallest bird in the world, the Bee Hummingbird. Come hear about Jim's adventurous travels to Cuba and searching for its unique birds.

### October 18, 2017 Program

Dungeness River Audubon Center, 2151 Hendrickson Road, Sequim, WA (Meeting and program begins at 7 p.m.)

**"Why You Want to go Birdwatching in Texas during Winter"** Presented by Carolyn Wilcox, ExperienceOlympic Nature Tours

One of the best times to go birding in Texas is during winter. Numerous species from around North America mix with local residents and subtropical specialties, providing some of the best birding in the United States. Carolyn Wilcox tells her stories and shows photos of the spectacular birds she viewed while traveling through the Lone Star State.



Carolyn Wilcox

Carolyn has been the owner and operator of Experience-Olympic Nature Tours since 2013, based in Port Angeles, WA. She has an M.S. in Environmental Science from University of Nevada, Reno and has been an educator since 2003. Her infectious enthusiasm and curiosity about the natural world will keep you hoping for more.

*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@olypen.com](mailto:agift@olypen.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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## President's Notes

By Bob Phreaner



In July, I took over from Ken Wiersema as the new OPAS President. We recognize the difficult time that Ken worked through last year with the illness and passing of his beloved wife, Nancy. Through it all, he endeavored to provide the leadership needed by OPAS. Ken remains on our Board as Past-President and has volunteered to chair the Education Committee, a position previously held by Shirley Anderson. We appreciate the many years that Shirley contributed to the education programs provided by OPAS and the Dungeness River Audubon Center (DRAC). We also wish to recognize the outstanding contributions of our Treasurer for the past seven years, Nancy Bargar. OPAS is in her "debt". Soon, she will turn over bookkeeping duties to Barb Johnson. Nancy remains on our Board and will also represent OPAS on the DRAC Board. We still need new folks, like Barb, to share their skills on the OPAS Board.

This is an appropriate time to state the OPAS goals for 2017-18. Of great importance is recruiting leaders and volunteers for an array of tasks. Most importantly, we are looking for an individual with an interest in preserving local habitat for birds to Chair or Co-Chair our Conservation Committee. After 6 years as Co-Chair of the Conservation Committee, Mary Porter-Solberg is now focusing her talents in communications by managing our website and co-managing our Facebook page. The Conservation Committee has a need for more volunteers to help with our citizen science projects, to learn more about birds while collecting valuable data.

OPAS, along with our regional partners and Audubon WA staff, will host the annual Audubon Council of Washington (ACOW) meeting on October 13-15 at the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe's Red Cedar Hall. Hilary Franz, Washington State Commissioner of Public Lands, will be the keynote speaker. ACOW meetings are stimulating and fun events, and all OPAS members are welcome and encouraged to attend. You can view the agenda and register online at <http://wa.audubon.org/events/audubon-council-washington-0>. OPAS needs volunteers to greet Audubon members from around the state. We also need leaders for Sunday morning field trips, to show our guests why Clallam County is a great destination for birders!

OPAS will lead off the 2017-18 program year on Wednesday, September 20, at 6 PM with our traditional potluck supper followed by a virtual trip to Cuba led by Dr. Jim Karr. Come see the smallest hummingbird in the world and share birding stories with your friends.

The 17th Annual Dungeness River Festival will be reformatted into a one-day event held Friday, September 29. OPAS will host the event and provide bird displays in the main River Center building. We will need some of our skilled OPAS birders and guides to help the many schoolchildren who will attend. Please step forward and help with this fun-filled day.

Volunteering is a great way to meet new people and to give back to our community. Please consider donating some of your time to one of the projects outlined above. Your help will make this year outstanding!

### Hear Ye!

Join us for our Potluck Dinner meeting, September 20, 2017.

**Dr. Jim Karr** will be telling us about the **Birds of Cuba**.

Potluck will begin at 6 p.m.; general meeting will start at 7 p.m.

## OPAS Field Trips in July and August

by Denny AMFJ Van Horn



The change has happened - Summer for early Fall. The birds know it. Black headed Grosbeaks, Bullock's Orioles, Swainson's Thrushes, Common Nighthawk and others are gone. Most of the swallows have left. Can you feel it? The change? But the change means that others are on their way back from nesting grounds to the north, and this is the time of year for vagrants and those awesome Code 5s to show up. We've a few local outings planned to spark your birding enjoyment.

### 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.

### Pitship Pocket to Port Williams

*Date & Time: Saturday, September 23, 9 a.m.*

*Leader: Gary Bullock*

*Meeting place: South parking lot at John Wayne Marina*

*Features: Early Fall! And those arctic nesters, along with birds whose breeding areas are scattered out-there-and-about, are starting to flow back into our area and to gather in their fall-wintering habitats.*

*Further Information: Contact Gary Bullock  
<gbullockak@hotmail.com> / 360 797-4556*

### Shorebirds

*Date & Time: Saturday, Sept 30*

*Leaders: A couple of really good birders!*

*Meeting place: 3 Crabs at 8 a.m.; Dungeness Landing Park at 10 a.m.*

*Features: A vast sandy tide flat from E to W with all those fast moving shorebirds - wanna know what they are? And glean a vast amount of ID knowledge to tuck into your array of "What bird is that?" Join us and we'll figure out what all those feathered critters out there are.*

*Further information: Contact Bob Boekelheide  
<bboek@olympus.net> / 360 808-0196*

### Ediz Hook

*Date & Time: Saturday, October 28, 9 a.m.*

*Leader: Denny AFMJ Van Horn Meeting place: Down by the Coast Guard Station.*

*Features: Gulls, alcids, shorebirds, waterfowl, cormorants, grebes, loons, and all the other waterbirds that have shown up to overwinter on the bay.*

*Further information: Contact Denny Van Horn  
<dennyvanhorn@gmail.com> / 360 406-1584*

## Puget Sound Seabird Survey — Go birding and make a difference!

Are seabirds in Puget Sound and the Strait of Juan de Fuca increasing or declining in numbers? Which species are changing their range? Help us find out. You can contribute to vital seabird science by joining the eleventh season of Seattle Audubon's Puget Sound Seabird Survey. We are now recruiting enthusiastic and dedicated volunteers to help us monitor the status of our local wintering seabirds. Training on survey methodology will be provided at a location near you in September; the first seabird survey will be conducted on October 7, 2017. Volunteers should be able to identify Puget Sound's seabird species and be available on the first Saturday of each month, October through April, to conduct a 30-minute seabird survey. If determining between Lesser and Greater Scaup is a challenge, we'll team you up with more knowledgeable surveyors. Learn more, including training dates, at [www.seabirdsurvey.org](http://www.seabirdsurvey.org) and email Toby Ross, Science Manager ([tobyross@seattleaudubon.org](mailto:tobyross@seattleaudubon.org)) if you would like more information or to take part.



*Barrow's Goldeneye  
Photo by Doug Schurman*

## Education News—Learning Birds 2017-'18

by Ken Wiersema

Some of you have heard by now that I've shifted my focus a bit this summer, to help coordinate OPAS's education programs. I've reluctantly taken this role from Shirley Anderson, who has for over 8 years led, taught, and organized our *(Continued on next Page)*

## Harlequin Happenings

class programs in conjunction with those of the River Center. Shirley, as a retired professional educator, knew what she was doing and did it with skill and enthusiasm. And while I might supply spirit, I know my skill set will be well below the high standard she set -- A BIG Thanks! Shirley.

I'm currently developing some program ideas, and coordinating plans, schedules, and course content with Powell Jones and Jenna Ziogas at the River Center. With the departure of Dave Jackson, who for many years successfully led our Beginning Birder classes, we intend to adjust content and scheduling a bit to provide an array of offerings. We'll build on what we've started, and expand the science-based programs for adult classes and for families at the Center. Shirley will continue with Jenna to do the in school programs.

Along with Bob Phreaner's request of our members to step forward and become Board members, I'll ask you to consider volunteering to lead or teach a class or classes of your choice. We are also considering a beginning teacher's workshop for those who want to understand how the resources of OPAS, Audubon, and the Center can assist you to put together meaningful and fun classes. Stay tuned!

### Backyard Birder programs for this Fall, 2017

Classes will meet at the Dungeness River Audubon Center from 10 am to noon.

- Oct 21 -- **Landscaping for Birds** – leader, Joe Holtrop, Clallam Conservation District
- Nov 4 -- **Being a Birder** -- Field guides, apps, binos, scopes – leader, TBD
- Dec 2 -- **Winter bird feed and water** – leader, Christie Lassen, Wild Birds Unlimited.



Jane Stewart has again offered to be our greeter and publicist for these programs. Thanks much Jane for your help in providing continuity to this series of classes. Please watch our OPAS website, and the River Center website for a fuller description of these classes. I'll have the entire slate for 2018 in the next edition of the Harlequin. Please plan to come to one or more of these classes. They're informative and fun!

## Swan Study Needs Volunteers

by Mary Porter-Solberg



### Swan Study Needs Volunteers

Each winter, birders look forward to the return of swans to the Dungeness Valley. However, did you know that along with simply enjoying the presence of the swans, Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society (OPAS) members are also counting Trumpeter and Tundra Swans as part of an ongoing citizen science project, partnering with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and the Northwest Swan Conservation Association (NWSCA)? Since 2011, volunteers from OPAS surveyed Trumpeter and Tundra Swans to determine where they are feeding and roosting. They also monitored how well the swans were surviving by reporting any sick, injured or dead birds.

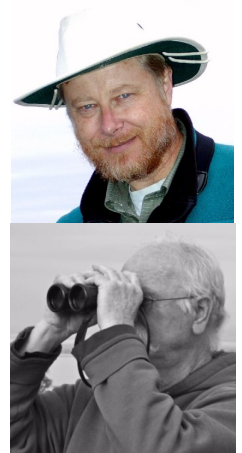
OPAS is doing it again this year and we need your help. The study will be conducted once a week from November until the end of March, with the objective of identifying in what areas they feed, and what areas are used as a night-time roost. If we have enough volunteers, you should anticipate having to survey only once a month as each week is assigned to one volunteer or team.

Martha Jordan, Executive Director of the NWSCA will provide training for the study at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, October 24, at the Dungeness River Audubon Center. Come and see what this project is all about and how you can enjoy a day out in the field and make a difference. Audubon encourages participation in citizen science as a way for you to generate vital information for the conservation of birds. If you can volunteer this winter, please contact Mary Porter-Solberg at 360-683-8072. Please RSVP at the same telephone number if you plan to attend the training class.

## Bird Sightings

by Bob Boekelheide & Denny Van Horn

How can one year be both the wettest and the driest on record? This year, Seattle tallied the wettest period in its recorded history from October 2016 to April 2017, then set the record for the longest period with no measurable rain, 55 days, from June to August. Fortunately, enough of the past winter precipitation fell as snow in the mountains, so river flows on the north Olympic Pen-



insula have stayed above critical levels despite summer drought. Without winter snowpack, we'd be in big trouble. We typically have long dry spells in summer, but is this the new normal?

How have nesting songbirds responded this year? Who knows? Although we have no specific data, it seems like many species quit nesting early this year, perhaps because insect populations dwindled with dry conditions after June. There are always some late nesters that seem to squeak out a few fledglings in late July and August, but the woods this summer have seemed very quiet.

Nesting Canada Geese have done well, with local family groups gathering by the hundreds at Dungeness Bay and feeding in nearby fields and lawns. It's hard to say about duck broods, however. Ruddy Ducks nested again at Kitchen-Dick Ponds, where Michael Barry discovered a female Ruddy Duck swimming with 5 ducklings on 8/18. Charlotte Watts spotted a Hooded Merganser female with 4 ducklings at her pond off Chicken Coop Road on 6/22. Charlotte says the female Hoody later disappeared with 3 ducklings, leaving one duckling behind to fend for itself. Curiously, the orphaned Hoody started hanging out with an immature male Pintail that arrived on 7/10, one of the oddball northern nesters that didn't go north this year. Among other out-of-season/early arrivers included a female Black Scoter found by Michael Barry at Neah Bay on 8/4, and both a Black Scoter and a Common Goldeneye spotted by Adrienne Akmajian at Neah Bay on 8/19. Brad Waggoner found an unusual summer Red-breasted Merganser, a female-type at Neah Bay on 7/8.



*Imm. Pintail and Orphaned Hooded Merganser*

Summer is the time for Golden Eagles in the Olympics, so keep looking up. Mark Hunter reported an adult Golden Eagle soaring over the Duckabush River on 7/13. On 8/4, Fred Werner spotted another adult Golden cruising past Hurricane Ridge as he walked the meadow trail. On 8/8, at Cedar Lake in the upper

Graywolf, Mark Salvadalena and Bob Boekelheide watched an adult Golden soar over adjacent peaks, then glide over a mile across the lake in a couple minutes. Not coincidentally, marmots around the lake sounded their shrill alarms as the eagle flew over. Last, Patrick and Forrest Ellsworth reported another Golden flying over the Morse Creek overlook on the Hurricane Ridge Road on 8/11.

Even though very few Ospreys now nest around here, they still pass by during migration. Carolyn Wilcox and Lindsey Schromen-Wawrin spotted an Osprey flying over Port Angeles Harbor on 8/19, but they weren't the only ones. A Merlin mobbed the Osprey as it passed overhead. Go, SeaHawk!

Sue Nattinger reports a Northern Bobwhite along Onella Road between Port Angeles and Joyce on 8/6, which she guesses may remain from a flock introduced into that area a few years ago.



*Horned Puffin*  
*Photo by Jon Scordino*

Jon Scordino discovered a Horned Puffin at Neah Bay on 7/19 hanging out with Rhinoceros Auklets in the harbor. Many observers (MOBs) made the pilgrimage to Neah Bay to see and photograph the bird, which seemed to disappear after a few days. But Michael Barry rediscovered the bird on 8/4 (assuming it is the same one), and it cooperated very well for the OPAS pelagic trip out of Neah Bay on 8/5. Among seabirds, Horned Puffins are a "dispersive" species, showing up and occasionally nesting outside their normal range. Two other Horned Puffins showed up this summer near Smith Island in the eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca, so could they be making inroads into the Salish Sea? They are apparently regular off our coast during winter, so it will be interesting to see whether more show up during future nesting seasons. *(Continued on next page)*

## Harlequin Happenings



*Black-footed Albatross*  
Photo by Denny Van Horn

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Summer is the time for pelagic trips on the bounding main. The 8/5 OPAS pelagic trip to Swiftsure Bank and the Juan de Fuca Canyon, organized by Denny Van Horn, found large concentrations of Pink-footed and Sooty Shearwaters, a few Fork-tailed Storm-Petrels, and one Black-footed Albatross following a trawler much closer to shore than usual. At Swiftsure Bank, there were several Humpback Whales along with many Cassin's Auklets, both likely feeding on krill. A flock of 4 Ancient

Murrelets flew by at Swiftsure, another sighting of this species off the Clallam coast during the nesting season, so they must be nesting here somewhere. Other birds included at least 17 Tufted Puffins along the coast, 2 Sabine's Gulls, 2 Parasitic Jaegers, and 15 Red-necked Phalaropes. On the return leg along the coast, there was a surprisingly large flock of over 100 Pacific Loons off Shi Shi Beach, and over 60 Black Oystercatchers roosting together on the west side of Tatoosh Island.

Scott Downes reported a Manx Shearwater flying off the Olympic National Park Beach 6 overlook on 7/23. Coincidentally, Alexander Patia reported another Manx from the exact same spot on 8/6. Both Scott and Alex saw the birds in the direction of Destruction Island, which looks like an intriguing place for Manx Shearwaters to be nesting. Are they?

"Fall migration" for shorebirds actually starts when the calendar says early summer. After traveling north, migrant shorebirds return from their breeding grounds very quickly, returning to the mudflats and beaches of the Olympic Peninsula during July and August. Black-bellied and Semipalmated Plovers, Sanderlings, Ruddy Turnstones, Least and Western Sandpipers, both dowitchers and both yellowlegs have been

regular around Dungeness Bay.

But what's with Willets again showing up here in summer? Jerry Tangren spotted a Willet at Neah Bay on 7/26, right about the same days that a Willet occupied Dungeness Bay in 2015 and 2016. Judy Collins reported an unusual Hudsonian Godwit hanging out with a Marbled Godwit at 3 Crabs on 8/1, following the two Hudsonians at Neah Bay in May. Several Baird's Sandpipers, which nest in the high Arctic and spend the winter in South America, passed through Clallam County in late July and August.



*Baird's Sandpiper*  
Photo by Bob Boekelheide

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Summer is Nighthawk time, so keep scanning sunset skies for a few more weeks. Vince Lucas spotted a couple dozen Common Nighthawks feeding over Port Angeles during the Concert on the Pier on 8/2, then Pete Walker spotted a similar number flying over Sequim on the evening of 8/3. Soon they, too, will be leaving for their South American winter haunts.

Denny Van Horn, while walking the marshes at 3 Crabs, spotted a very unusual summer Say's Phoebe on 7/30. Red-eyed Vireos, one of the last migrants to arrive in the spring, made a couple appearances this summer. Joyce Volmut heard the distinctive question-answer voice of a singing Red-eyed Vireo at DNR land on the Miller Peninsula on 6/16, then Alexander Patia spotted one singing in the evening at the Jimmy-comelately Creek estuary on 6/26. Alexander also reported a Lazuli Bunting at Port Hadlock on 7/18, right about the time they usually show up on the north Olympic Peninsula each year. Gary Bullock spotted the first-ever Loggerhead Shrike for the Wednesday morning bird walks at RR Bridge Park on 7/19, by Runnion Road. Gary noted the darker gray head and

back, along with a smaller bill with little hook, in contrast to Northern Shrikes typically found here in winter.

Lucky Michael Shepard, while hiking the beach at Cape Alava, spotted a Northern Mockingbird foraging with sandpipers in the seaweed on 8/5. He says it ran on the beach like a roadrunner, with its tail cocked up. James Boyce reported a Vesper Sparrow at the unlikely location of Lake Crescent Lodge on 6/28.

The singing Rock Wren first spotted by Michael Barry along the Obstruction Point Road in May remained through at least 6/30, last reported by John Gatchet. Another Rock Wren turned up along the loop trail at Hurricane Ridge, seen by Rose Swift on 8/17. They must be nesting up there somewhere.

Perhaps the strangest bird sighting this month comes from Jon Scordino, who reports a vagrant Blackpoll Warbler circling their fishing boat 12 miles offshore of Cape Flattery on 6/30. Jon says he first assumed it was a Black-capped Chickadee, which might be even stranger, considering that chickadees do not fly over long stretches of water. The warbler eventually landed on the boat and allowed an excellent look for Jon and others onboard.

Much more late summer and fall migration is on its way. If you see something noteworthy, please call Bob Boekelheide at 360-808-0196. Right now mark your calendars: the Sequim-Dungeness Christmas Bird Count is on Monday, December 18, this year. Thank you very much for your sightings.

## Notes from a Sometime Birder

by Rob Hutchison



In the back yard of my new house, there are two groups of California Quail that show up on a daily basis. One contains several adults, both male and female; along with well over a dozen chicks nearly fully grown. Actually, this is probably a merger of more than one family. The other group contains two males and two females, and only five chicks, not even half-grown.

As is becoming my regular habit, I was enjoying one morning this past week on my back patio with a cup of coffee and a pipe. The smaller quail family was slowly pecking its way along the edge of the blackberry brambles. When it happened, it happened with startling suddenness. Out of the cedar branches from above dove a Cooper's Hawk. Neither myself nor the quail had any idea it had been perched there. The quail scattered into the blackberry bushes, the hawk in hot pursuit. Nearly everything after that was left to my imagination, since I could no longer see anything. But the sounds were frightening. Normally quiet adults were screeching frantically from widely separated positions. At one point, a sharp squeal issued from the depths of the bushes, and I feared

that one of the chicks had met its end. Then, one of the females burst out of the bushes, the hawk flying close behind her. They disappeared beyond the fence and were quickly out of sight.

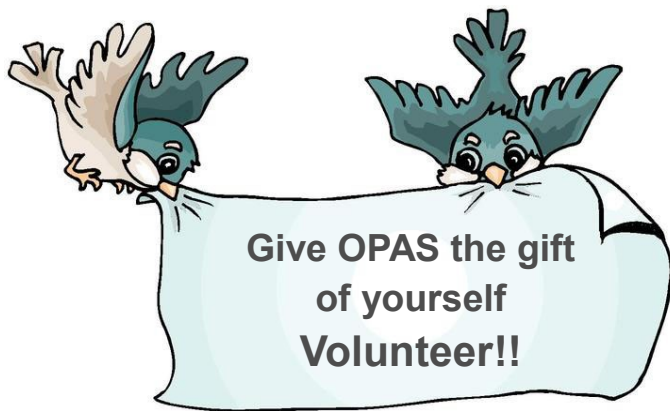
It is difficult not to come down hard against the hawk in situations like this. How can one watch these chicks grow from golf ball size to near adulthood and not have a strong bias in favor of them? Nevertheless, the hawk was doing nothing more than what it exists to do. It is part of the Nature we all say we love and wish to protect. But I digress. Let me get back to my narrative.

All was quiet for at least twenty minutes before I began to hear the clicking of the adults, gathering their covey together again. They were still invisible in the underbrush, and I saw nothing of them for four hours or more. Later that afternoon, they reappeared, very slowly, and I performed my nervous inventory: two adult males, two adult females, and one, two, three, four, ... five chicks!

This time, the Cooper's Hawk had come up empty.

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Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 502  
Sequim, WA 98382-0502



## Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society

P.O. Box 502  
Sequim, WA 98382-0502

NAS Code Y08

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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