



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, 2020

"Volunteer educators and stewards for birds and habitat conservation"

[Editor's Note: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all in-person OPAS activities have been postponed or canceled until further notice.]

Election of Officers

By Allyson Simons

Chair, Nominating Committee

Each year OPAS general membership elects a President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. Ordinarily, the Nominating Committee, appointed by the Board of Directors, nominates candidates for officers and presents them at the May membership meeting. OPAS members also may nominate candidates from the floor at that time.

Although these are not ordinary times, OPAS business must go on. Because the May membership meeting has been cancelled, I am pleased to present the candidates to you here as follows:

- President - Judi White
- Co-Vice Presidents - John Gatchet and Tom Butler
- Secretary - Kelly Lenihan
- Treasurer - Wendy Hirotaka

Judi, John, Tom, and Wendy are well known to most members for their dedicated and impressive service to OPAS. Judi White is the incumbent OPAS President, John Gatchet is the Co-Chairperson of the Field Trip Committee, Tom Butler serves as an at-large member of the Board of Directors, and Wendy Hirotaka is the incumbent OPAS Treasurer.

I would like to introduce Kelly Lenihan who has agreed to serve as Secretary. Kelly is an artist and writer with 10 published children's picture books and more in the works. She describes herself as an avid birder and a hobbyist photographer. She holds a B. A. in General Arts from the University of Washington and an Associates Degree in Business.

Now that the June membership meeting has been cancelled in accordance with National Audubon Society guidance (see below), the Board of Directors voted to have the candidates begin serving as Interim Officers on July 1, 2020, with the election at the first OPAS meeting after that.

Many thanks and sincere gratitude to Bob Boekelheide, outgoing Vice President, and Enid Phreaner, outgoing Secretary, for their outstanding service in these positions. I would like to thank Ken Wiersema for his excellent contributions as a member of the Nominating Committee.

COVID-19 Updated Guidance to Chapters

By Judith White

On April 15, National Audubon Society released COVID-19 Updated Guidance to Chapter leadership (see below). All OPAS in-person membership meetings, Backyard Birder classes, bird walks, and Field Trips will be affected through June 30.

Judi

"Thank you for being good community members and doing your best to slow the spread of COVID-19. We have provided a lot of guidance to help your chapters make decisions in this challenging time.

(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@olyopen.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, (360) 681-4076. The public is welcome.

OPAS Board of Directors

Officers:

President, Judi White, 206-641-1842
Vice-Pres, Bob Boekelheide, 360-808-0196
Treasurer, Wendy Hirota, 360-683-7141
Secretary, Enid Phreaner 360-504-2110

Board-at-Large:

Kendra Donelson, 360-683-7793
Bruce Fryxell, 360-797-1564
Allyson Simons, 360-797-4633
Tom Butler, 360-808-4468

Committees:

Bird Sightings/Counts, Bob Boekelheide, 360-808-0196
Conservation Chair, Bob Phreaner, 360-504-2110; Vice-Chair, Pete Walker, 360-683-0194
Education, Ken Wiersema, 360-460-5515
Membership, Audrey Gift, 360-681-2989, agift@olyopen.com
Field Trips Co-chairs, John Gatchet, 503-781-5043, and Marie Grad, 360-620-4035
Hospitality, Clare Hatler, 360-582-6451
Newsletter, Rob Hutchison, 253-293-3801 rbrycehut@wavecable.com
Publicity, Sandy Boren, 408-316-9427
Webmaster, Mary Porter-Solberg, 360-477-5229 .
Website Support: Mary Porter-Solberg, Bob Hutchison, and Chris Perry
Social Media Support: Mary Porter-Solberg, and Enid Phreaner

President's Notes

by Judith White



I hope you are staying healthy and well. While we practice physical distancing in the face of COVID-19, it is the priority of our OPAS Board to stay close to you. As of this writing, OPAS has cancelled all in-person events until further notice, but our Board continues to hold virtual meetings and we are working on ways to sustain our connection with each other and our members. Our website olympicpeninsulaaudubon.org, our Facebook page, and our Harlequin Happenings newsletter are even more important as we use these resources to stay connected to each other. If you hadn't had time when it first went live in January, take some time now to explore the many resources on the new OPAS website under tabs like Conservation and Birds. We also remind you that birds still need help too, for protection of the places they need. Please check the Take Action tab to find opportunities to let our leaders know about issues we care about. There are also two new tabs for memberships and donations which take credit cards, including Birdathon donations.

OPAS Birdathon is being held on May 9th this year, which is also World Migratory Bird Day. Celebrate the birds in our yards and neighborhoods while following physical distancing guidelines, and let us know your bird lists (via ebird, the letter members receive, to Bob Boekelheide, or by e-mail to OPASPresident@gmail.com). Birdathon is our only OPAS fundraiser of the year, and supports Harlequin Happenings, insurance for our field trips, our website, and all of our other OPAS expenses.

We hope some additional free on-line resources, from National Audubon Society, Cornell lab of Ornithology and BirdNote, will remind us of the hope and healing power of birds.

- <https://www.audubon.org/joy-of-birds>
- <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/how-to-make-these-next-few-weeks-a-little-easier-courtesy-of-birds/>
- <https://www.birdnote.org/show/music-inspired-chicks-hatching-mussorgsky-and-ravel>

Audubon Washington shared some exciting news in April – a new Executive Director has been appointed: Dr. Deborah Jensen (previously CEO of the Woodland Park Zoo for 12 years, and previously at The Nature Conservancy); and our Sequim resident and OPAS member Susan Paulsen has accepted the position of Audubon Washington field organizer. Susan is completing her PhD in STEM education. Our online Audubon Washington Northwest Region II meeting on April 23 provided a great opportunity to meet Dr. Jensen, and showcase the strengths of OPAS – our dedicated members, community science projects, conservation advocacy, and educational programs.

We thank you for your support and look forward to the time when we bird together again.

Donate to OPAS on-line!!

Click on our website at:

[https://
olympicpeninsulaaudubon.org/
donate.](https://olympicpeninsulaaudubon.org/donate)

New!! Check it out!! New!!

You can now join or renew your OPAS membership on-line!! Go to OPAS website at:

<https://olympicpeninsulaaudubon.org/membership>

COVID-19 Updated Guidance to Chapters

(Continued from page one)

Below is an update on decisions Audubon has made to do our part to continue to keep our communities safe.

What You Need to Know:

All in-person engagement, education, and outreach activities are suspended until further notice, including bird walks, on-the-beach outreach, volunteer activities, and other gatherings.

All Audubon events and events held in our spaces will be cancelled or postponed through June 30.

All stewardship and monitoring activities are prohibited when local, state, or federal shelter-in-place or equivalent orders are in place.

All Audubon Centers are closed through June 30.

All Audubon summer camps are cancelled or have been transformed into virtual ones.

All non-essential travel is banned through June 30.

Be well,
All of us at Audubon"

Get ready for Clallam County Birdathon and World Migratory Bird Day, May 9, 2020

by Bob Boekelheide



The second Saturday in May is World Migratory Bird Day, when OPAS traditionally holds its Clallam County Birdathon. This is a day for everyone to get outside and count birds in Clallam County, along with helping to raise money for important OPAS projects.

Like many other events, the 2020 Birdathon must change due to COVID-19. Normally we ask that you explore your favorite

Clallam birding spots and count birds over the entire county, but this year many of our favorite birding spots are closed, particularly our lovely parks. We ask that you follow the stay-home guidelines and limit your travel.

The wonderful thing about birdwatching is that we can still find birds around our homes and neighborhoods. No matter where you live in Clallam County, please count birds by yourself or with family members in habitats near where you live. You can go for long walks, or count your neighborhood for an hour or two in the morning, or simply tally birds in your yards and at your feeders during the day. If you know a birdy spot nearby that's still open, please go count the birds. **THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS TO COUNT BIRDS, NO MATTER WHERE YOU ARE.**

On May 9, please keep track of the species and numbers of birds you see, along with where you count and the miles and hours you travel. This helps make comparisons between years, which is particularly important this year. If you have a feeder, enter the high count you see during the day, so for example, if you see 8 House Finches at 8 a.m. and 5 House Finches at 9 a.m., just list 8 House Finches on your count.

There is a [tally sheet](#) available on the OPAS website. After the count, email your lists to me at [<bboek@olympus.net>](mailto:bboek@olympus.net), either by scanning them or by just typing out the species and numbers in the body of your email. Or you can be old-fashioned and mail the tally sheet to the address on the back, but I prefer email. Alternatively, you can enter your data using eBird on the day of the count and I will see your numbers online.

Most years we hold a pre-Birdathon field trip one week before the count, but OPAS has canceled all field trips this spring until the stay-home order is lifted.

Money raised during Birdathon helps support many OPAS necessities, from printing and internet costs, to insurance for field trips, to supporting conservation programs. You can sponsor the Birdathon with a pledge based on total count results, or get your own sponsors to support your individual count, or just send a generous donation with your Birdathon *(Continued on next page)*

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letter if you haven't done so already. If you prefer, you can now donate online to Birdathon on the Donate page of the OPAS website at <https://olympicpeninsulaudubon.org/donate>.

Please email Bob Boekelheide to sign up to count, or simply do your count and send your tallies right away when finished. Our goal remains unchanged -- to produce a one-day snapshot of the birds of Clallam County on the second Saturday in May. Thank you all very much for your help!

Education Notes

by Ken Wiersema

While we persevere through these challenging COVID-19 times, I want our OPAS family to know that the folks who organize and present our education programs are equally disappointed in not being able to interact with you in person. From our OPAS Backyard Birder programs to the array of classes we offer with the Dungeness River Audubon Center, we want to be back with you as soon as it's safe. With the construction scheduled to start on the addition to and remodel of the Center, we'll be dislocated into some alternative facilities until at least mid-2021. We may not be able to offer classes and seminars until fall of 2020, or even into 2021. There are too many unknowns. Watch our website and that of the Center for announcements of online birding supplements and virtual presentations. Please stay safe and care for your families and loved ones. We'll be back!



Purple Martin update

While observing and working within COVID-19 constraints, we've managed to support our seasonal Purple Martin (PUMA) colonies at 3 Crabs and on Protection Island NWR. Through special authorization obtained by Shelly Ament, WDFW biologist, we entered COVID-19-closed WDFW land at 3 Crabs. For an hour on April 10th, we installed our 22 PUMA nest boxes on the steel pilings in the



Purple Martins on reinstalled boxes
Photo by Laura Davis

tide flats and on root wads around the tidal estuary. On April 27th, by Special arrangement with Lorenz Sollmann, Deputy Project Leader WMNWRC, we provided him with seven cleaned and repaired boxes to install on the Protection Island piers for an urgent trip he made to the island. During both of these box installations, the PUMAs were on and in the boxes within five minutes of hanging the boxes. Lorenz reported that birds were in the boxes on PI before he had the anchor wires secured. Amazing!

In addition to these two established colonies, we have built eight new boxes this spring and installed four on pilings in the Port Angeles Yacht Basin and four on an island at the mouth of the Dungeness River on Dungeness Farms property. Carolyn Wilcox led and organized the project for the Port Angeles site. Carolyn obtained the support of the Port Angeles Yacht Club, and appeared before the Port of Port Angeles Commission to obtain authorization for the new PUMA boxes on Port pilings. Matt Heins, property manager of Dungeness Farms, in consultation with Shelly Ament, obtained support from the Dungeness Farms owners to do an installation on their lands. Matt walked the Dungeness Farms land with us and designated some potential sites. We selected two sites. OPAS members should thank these folks for their commitment to bird habitat conservation and support. It takes the cooperation and persistence of many folks and organizations to make things happen.

OPAS folks should be aware of three other sites. At Diamond Point, Wallace Teal has installed twenty PUMA gourds on private property, and has reported birds on them this spring. At the mouth of Morse Creek, Anita McMillian has three PUMA



Dow Lambert & Dan Wilson at Port Angeles Harbor
Photo by Kaiyote

boxes near her home; she also reports 2020 bird arrivals. In addition, Tom Butler and Dave Rasmussen installed two refurbished boxes from my barn on North Olympic Land Trust property west of Joyce.

Needless to say, we can't get our projects done but for the tireless, skilled, and dedicated work of our OPAS volunteer team. These are folks I have called at strange hours, and on numerous times, for counsel and an abundance of "scut" work. Our team is the best: Dow Lambert – photos & video, pipe jointer, ladder scaler; Bob Boekelheide – laborer, box cleaner, gate opener; Laura Davis – photographer, painter, data compiler; Dan Wilson -- skilled craftsman, tree scrambler, wood donor; Jason Bausher -- lead Sherpa, digging specialist; Steve Lambert – (Dow talked him into it!); Tom Butler, artist & craftsman, tree planter; Alan Smith – ladder designer. Our thanks to each. Well done!



*Tube Box on Protection Island NWR
Photo by Dow Lambert*

I am observing the 50th Anniversary of Earth Day by staying home in my garden surrounded by blossoming fruit trees and Anna's hummingbirds. Violet-green Swallows and Black-capped chickadees are furnishing nest boxes with feathers we have strewn about the lawn. A robin is starting a nest in a rhododendron. This is the first rainy day of April, just as I was setting up my irrigation system. I will have plenty of time to do that job while we self-isolate until summer.

Audubon has cancelled all group activities until at least June 30. That doesn't mean we can't be stay-at-home birders. I am fortunate to live on a bluff that overlooks Dungeness In-ner Bay. I can scope flocks of birds and try to understand the distribution of the various species as winter turns to spring. The counts of birds on the Bay have fluctuated. Today we watched a feeding flock of 130 Red-breasted Mergansers trying to gobble down what appeared to be sculpin that were too big for their beaks. On April 13, in the NE corner of the bay, south of Dungeness Spit and west of Graveyard Spit, where I have found abundant eelgrass beds, there were over 1300 Pacific Brant fattening up for their migration. This week I found only 300. I guess Zugunruhe and fair winds are sending them north to breed. As a novice birder, I have to remind myself to differentiate between my observations, such as a count of the birds, from my inferences like expectations that the birds are fueling up for a long flight. Who knows for sure? The numbers might be high again next week. That's a reason to record count observations on eBird so that scientists can make better assessments of bird behavior.

As a conservationist, I appreciate that the Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1915 to preserve this special habitat for birds. Let's try to practice conscientious stewardship of this resource beyond the 100th Earth Day. Protect Birds and We Protect the Earth.

Conservation Matters for COVID-19 Homebodies on Earth Day

by Bob Phreaner

I have memory of celebrating the first Earth Day in Philadelphia's Fairmount Park in 1970. That was an idealistic moment of aspiration during the Vietnam conflict. It seems that Simon and Garfunkel's "Bridge over Troubled Water"

Other Events

Book Discussion Group—Upcoming Titles

By Lori Moilanen

Ordinarily, the OPAS Book Discussion Group meets monthly to discuss a bird- or nature-related title in a friendly and congenial atmosphere. However, in accordance with the recommendations of the National Audubon Society on in-person gatherings during the COVID-19 outbreak, the discussions scheduled for May and June have been cancelled. We hope to resume our discussions in September after the book group's summer break. **Please check the OPAS website to confirm meeting status prior to attending the scheduled discussions. In addition, please note the new temporary meeting location below. (Continued on next page)**

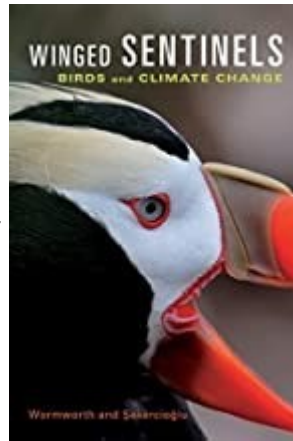


Bob B. and Jason Bausher on Dungeness Farms (note the COVID19 masks) Photo by Dow Lambert

is as timely now as it was then.

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Assuming that we're able to meet as scheduled on September 15, Joyce Volmut will lead a discussion of *Winged Sentinels: Birds and Climate Change* by Janice Wormworth and Cagan Sekercioglu. This generously illustrated book shows how particular groups of birds face heightened threats from climate change, and explores how we can help birds adapt in a warming world.



The OPAS Book Discussion Group is free and open to all readers. It meets from 4:00 – 5:30 p.m. on the fourth Tuesday of the month unless otherwise noted. Because the Dungeness River Audubon Center is currently under construction, the group will meet at the **Solana Community Clubhouse, located at 135 Solana Parkway in Sequim**, until further notice. The 2020 schedule is posted at <https://olympicpeninsulaudubon.org/book-group>. Links to book summaries and discussion questions are posted by date on the Events page at <https://olympicpeninsulaudubon.org>. For more information contact lori_moilanen@wavecable.com.

An Invitation to join Audubon Climate Team Webinar, May 14 at 4:30 p.m.

By Susan Paulsen
Field Organizer- Eastern Washington
National Audubon Society
5902 Lake Washington Blvd S.
Seattle, Washington 98118

[Susan Paulsen is an OPAS member and Sequim resident, and is interested in joining the OPAS Board in a Director-at-Large position next Board meeting, in addition to serving as an Audubon Washington Field Organizer.]

Audubon is in the process of building the climate action teams for the 2020 session. I am reaching out to individuals who are ready to get involved in this new world rebuilding with climate in mind.

The goal is to create a welcoming space for us to come together through our shared love of birds and the shared mission of protecting them through climate advocacy. As the Audubon study *Survival by Degrees* demonstrated, climate is our greatest threat to birds and people. The coming 2020 legislative session will bring a lot of changes and keeping climate as a consideration will take team work from all members of the community. These teams are not limited to Audubon members, and we are encouraging you to invite your family and friends!

Join us for the **Audubon Climate Team Webinar on May 14 at 4:30 pm**. You can register at <https://audubon.zoom.us/j/9128473434>. If you are unavailable at that time, please still register and we will connect with you with information to join the team.

Activities will include:

- Checking in on folks, individually or as a group, and hearing from you about how your community is doing during this time
- Educational programs or speakers
- Updates on local and statewide climate advocacy opportunities
- Assisting with research and outreach projects to continue climate progress

Achieving a just transition to clean energy to protect birds and people is still Audubon's guiding mission, and **your district is still uniquely crucial to that**.

I'm looking forward to meeting you in May. If you have questions, comments, or suggestions, please email me at any time at susan.paulsen@audubon.org.

Bird Sightings

by Bob Boekelheide

What is the official bird of the coronavirus pandemic? My friend Steve Grace, who lives near Port Townsend, has decided it must be the Townsend's Solitaire. There's a lot we can learn about social distancing from a bird named a "solitaire." Coincidentally, it's been a great spring for solitaires throughout western WA, with many recent reports from the north Olympic lowlands. Solitaires are usually seen one at a time, but on 4/18 Jean Siesener found three together at 3 Crabs, clearly violating social-distancing guidelines.

This year's first Rufous Hummingbird award goes to (*drum roll*)... Marje Pederson, who found an early male Rufous at Mats Mats on 2/26. The first local Rufous was spotted by Bob Boekelheide by the lower Dungeness River on 3/1. Anna's Hummingbirds are all over all the time, including new fledglings already visiting your feeders. Some observers have commented that the increase of Anna's Hummingbirds in the Pacific Northwest is causing a decline in the number of Rufous Hummingbirds, even though Rufous often seem dominant at feeders. We have documented the decline in Rufous Hummers at the Wednesday morning bird walk at RR Bridge





Townsend's Solitaire
 Photo by Bob Boekelheide

Park, where prior to 2018 Rufous was clearly the most abundant hummingbird during spring. Since 2018 Anna's easily outnumber Rufous. Rufous have the additional handicap because they are only here for a few months, whereas Anna's are on territories year round. By mid-June, Rufous males will be gone and by early July Rufous females and juveniles will hit the road, so enjoy them now while you have a chance.



Canada Goose Goslings
 Photo by Bob Boekelheide

In goose news, big flocks of Greater White-fronted Geese and Cackling Geese have been winging their way north to Alaska, with a few stopping over to feed in local fields. Listen for them overhead on quiet evenings. In March a flock of up to 32 Dusky Canada Geese, one of the smaller and least abundant subspecies of Canada Goose, took up residence in the field along Anderson Rd. Dusky Canadas

nest in very few places in southern Alaska, mostly in the Copper River delta. At the other end of the Canada Goose size spectrum, the locally-nesting big Canada Geese already have fat goslings running around, as seen at Diamond Point on 4/16 by Robert Rankin.

Judi White found one male Wood Duck at the Lake Farm Pond on 3/29, along with a hybrid American X Eurasian Wigeon there on 4/7. Judi also found a flashy male Cinnamon Teal at Knapp Road on 4/28. She also located a male Ruddy Duck at Kirner Pond on 3/23, where it was last seen by Jean Siesener on 4/9. Ruddy Ducks have a tentative nesting foothold around here, other than good numbers at Kah Tai Lagoon in Port Townsend and the pond at Diamond Point, so please report if you see females with chicks on smaller ponds this nesting season. This is the time of year when big flocks of Red-breasted Mergansers gather in our coastal waters to feed and socialize before migrating north. John Gatchet watched a huge flock of 500 Red-breasted Mergs in Discovery Bay on 3/30.



Cinnamon Teal
 Photo by Judi White

Now is the time to hear male grouse strutting their stuff in the woods. Carolyn Willcox and Lindsey Schromen-Wawrin tallied an amazing 19 Sooty Grouse while bicycling on the Hurricane Ridge Rd on 4/19.

Otis Bush recorded the first obvious migrant Band-tailed Pigeons on 3/4, at the Miller Peninsula. Watch for Band-tailed Pigeons flying over you sometime soon. Clair Miller found the first Vaux's Swift flying over downtown Port Angeles on 4/9, *(Continued on next page)*

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where they have since been seen flying into the chimney at Queen of Angels Church for night roosting.

Sandhill Cranes usually make a good showing in April, particularly along the west coast. At Waatch Valley, Adrienne Akmajian recorded the earliest and largest flock of cranes on 4/5, seeing 185 pass overhead. It's also time to listen for Soras -- Judi White found a cooperative Sora at Lake Farm Pond on 4/19.

Ida Domazlicky heard something at 3 Crabs on 4/11 that she says sounded exactly like a Black Rail, which she's familiar with from other parts of the country. Black Rails have a very distinct call that sounds like "Kick-A-Poo," dropping pitch on the third note. Trouble is, Black Rails have never been recorded in WA, and the closest they've been seen to Sequim is in northern CA. So the challenge is out: if you ever hear "Kick-a-poo" at 3 Crabs, let us know immediately.

It's migration time for shorebirds, although it's difficult to keep track this year with closed coastal parks and refuges. Semipalmated Plovers, Marbled Godwits, Whimbrels, Western and Least Sandpipers, and Long- and Short-billed Dowitchers have all made their appearances. There was an excellent passage of Greater Yellowlegs starting in late March and continuing through April. The only Lesser Yellowlegs so far were two at the west Dungeness River mouth on 3/30, seen by Bob Boekelheide. Sue Nattinger tallied the first Spotted Sandpiper on 3/7 at the Hoko River Estuary. Soon Spotties will be bobbing their bums on all the major rivers of the peninsula.



Long-billed Dowitcher
Photo by Bob Boekelheide

Willie the wintering-over Willet was last seen in Dungeness Bay by Bruce Paige on 3/23. This marks the fifth winter we have had one Willet in Dungeness Bay. Could it be the same bird? Possibly so, but we'll never know for sure. It usually shows up again in September, so you have something to look forward to at the end of summer.

The nesting season has begun at Protection Island, where thousands of Rhinoceros Auklets come ashore to nest in their comfy burrows. Judi White spotted hundreds of Rhinos in feeding flocks offshore of Port Williams on 3/21, with Protection Island in view.

The Glaucous Gull first found at Ediz Hook on 2/24 by Rick Klawitter stuck around until at least 4/20, last reported there by Wayne and Marjorie Sladek. Coincidentally, Sam McCullough, farm manager for Nash Huber's farms, discovered a similar Glaucous Gull following his tractor by Schmuck Rd on 4/27, where it remains on 4/28. Could it be the same bird?



Caspian Tern
Photo by Jerry Freilich

Caspian Terns arrived late this year in Dungeness Bay, first seen by Bob Boekelheide on 4/14 by the Dungeness River mouth. This is a full two weeks later than their typical arrival when they nested at Dungeness Spit between 2003 and 2009.

Yellow-billed Loons are regular in the Protection Island Aquatic Reserve, with two seen during the 3/10 survey and one seen on 4/16, all to the north of the island at the edges of Dallas Bank.

On 3/22, Lee Bowen noticed Great Blue Herons perched in tall trees along Ward Rd south of the Olympic Game Farm.

The herons eventually built four well-built nests, with one bird sitting tight in the nests as if incubating. Unfortunately, by late April the herons abandoned the nests and disappeared. Such a scenario has played out several times around Dungeness over the past 20 years, in which herons build nests, hang out for several weeks, then one day they're gone. It makes one wonder whether disturbance from ever-present eagles or perhaps ever-present humans may cause the herons to abandon nests. Perhaps these are young birds just practicing for the real thing somewhere else.

Speaking of eagles, Bald Eagle eggs have mostly hatched by now, so be on the lookout for bobble-head chicks in their nests. As for Golden Eagles, Marje Pederson at Mats Mats in Jefferson County reported four migrant Golden Eagles, one on 3/16 and three on 3/20. Carolyn Wilcox, Lindsey Schromen-Wawrin, and Cassidy Grattan watched an immature Golden Eagle soar overhead in Port Angeles on 4/26. April is the time when good numbers of Golden Eagles migrate over Bahokus Peak near Neah Bay, but there weren't many birders out there to see them this year. Many migrant Golden Eagles fly all the way to Alaska, where breeding adults arrive as early as mid-March at Denali National Park.

served a Swainson's Hawk passing over Dungeness on 4/10, and Judi White saw a striking Rough-legged Hawk sailing over Lotzgesell Rd on 4/17.

Those tricky Barred Owls are showing up all over the place. Phyllis and Dick Wenger reported two Barred Owls flying through their yard near McDonald Creek on 4/16. Patty Gotz says Barred Owls have been very vocal west of Port Angeles, where one perched on a fence post on 4/27. What about other owls? We need reports.

One of the most intriguing reports this month comes from Joel Hanson, who believes he saw a Lewis's Woodpecker at the DNR land on River Road on 3/18. He says it had a dirty red belly with a black head, and red on the face around the eye. Around the neck was a "band of dirty white," separating the dark head from the rest of the body. The rest of the bird appeared dark. Sounds like a Lewis's Woodpecker to me. Lewis's Woodpeckers are locally common in eastern WA, but are infrequent visitors to western WA.

Stacey Fradkin reports a Red-naped Sapsucker along Lotzgesell Rd, seen by her on both 4/21 and 4/23. Unfortunately it hasn't been seen since, but we'll keep looking.

Many early and some late flycatchers have already been tallied this spring. John Gatchet reported the first Pacific-slope Flycatcher calling at Gardiner on 4/15, perhaps the first recorded this year in WA State. Bruce Paige tallied the first Hammond's Flycatcher on 4/20 at the Miller Peninsula. Bruce also located a very early Olive-sided Flycatcher at Lotzgesell Rd on 4/27 and a Western Kingbird near Schmuck Rd on 4/28. Why so early?



Rough-legged Hawk
Photo by Judi White

Look up for migrating raptors. Several Ospreys flew through our area in April, all apparent migrants. The earliest was seen by Stacey Fradkin at Ediz Hook on 4/3, and the latest was seen by Wayne Sladek in Sequim on 4/24. Among hawks, Bob Boekelheide watched a soaring Harlan's Red-tailed Hawk over the Dungeness River on 3/29. Harlan's is the dark version of Red-taileds, but instead of a red tail their tail is white with a dark terminal band. Stacey Fradkin ob-



California Scrub-Jay
Photo by Bob Boekelheide

(Continued on next page)

Harlequin Happenings

California Scrub-Jay appeared at RR Bridge Park on 4/22, spotted by Marie Grad, Judi White, and Bob Boekelheide. This is the same spot where one hung out for several weeks last year. A single male Purple Martin first appeared at 3 Crabs on 4/9, seen by Bob Boekelheide and Stacey Fradkin. This was one day before OPAS put out the martin nest boxes at 3 Crabs, in just the nick of time. Sharp-eyed Gary Bullock reported the first Northern Rough-winged Swallow by the Old Dungeness Schoolhouse on 3/25 and the first "springtime" Barn Swallow at 3 Crabs on 4/9.



Mountain Bluebird (Fem)
Photo by Bob Boekelheide

Mountain Bluebirds appeared away from the mountains, with three seen by Bob Boekelheide on the west Dungeness delta on 3/20, then four seen by many observers at 3 Crabs on 4/9 (where they stayed for several days), then two seen by Wayne Sladek at Jamestown Beach on 4/21. Western Bluebirds seem to be popping up many places this year, so maybe they'll have a good local nesting year.

April has been a great month for migrant warblers, with several nice fallouts of early spring warblers on the north

Olympic Peninsula. Yellow-rumped (both Audubon's and Myrtle types), Orange-crowned, and Townsend's Warblers dominated the warbler flocks. Lots of Common Yellowthroats now sing in the marshes. Bob Bagwell reported two very early Black-throated Gray Warblers and an extremely early Yellow Warbler at Joyce on 4/12. Typically, Yellow Warblers are one of the last warblers to arrive in May. Adrienne Akmajian heard an early Wilson's Warbler singing at Clallam Bay on 4/18, but they'll be singing somewhere near you any day now.



Lapland Longspur
Photo by Bob Boekelheide

The high Evening Grosbeak count goes to Jean Siesener, with 31 EveBeaks at her feeder on Ridgeview Dr on 3/29. More Red Crossbills are showing up, with a high count of 30 seen by Timothy Leque west of the Elwha River on 2/28 and 27 seen by Bob Boekelheide in west Dungeness on 4/11. Adrienne Akmajian found one Lapland Longspur by the Makah Tribal Center in Neah Bay on 3/29.

You know it's springtime when Black-headed Grosbeaks and Bullock's Orioles show up. Don Baker reported the first Black-headed Grosbeak on 4/26 at his feeder south of Hwy 101. Gary Bullock found the first Bullock's Oriole on 4/28 off Woodcock Rd. Is it mere coincidence that Gary Bullock found the first Bullock's Oriole?

As we approach the OPAS Birdathon, it's very important that we keep track of unusual sightings. If you see or hear any unusual birds, please call Bob Boekelheide at 360-808-0196 (email at bboek@olympus.net). Thank you for your sightings!

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