



# 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, 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.]*

## OPAS Programs for September and October

By Tom Butler and John Gatchet

### September 16, 2020 Program

*[This program will be a virtual meeting via Zoom. To register, follow the instructions in the **HH Event Registration Box** later in this newsletter.]*

*“Wolf Recovery in Washington State: A Conservation Success Story”, presented by Julia Smith*

Since 2008, Washington’s wolf population has grown by an average of 28 percent per year and has continued to increase for an eleventh consecutive year. The natural return of wolves to Washington is a conservation success story, and Washington’s wolf population is on a path to recovery. Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Wolf Coordinator Julia Smith will provide the history and background about wolves in Washington (including the



Julia Smith

Olympic Peninsula), discuss wolf biology and natural history, give information about WDFW’s conservation and management of wolves, and cover resources for coexisting with wolves.

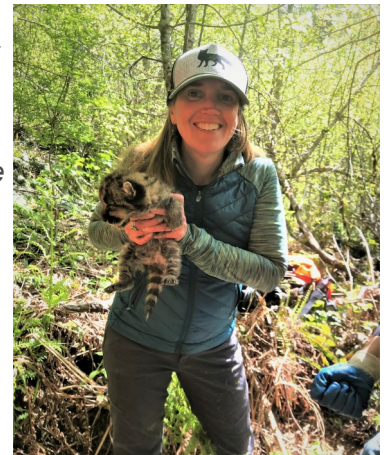
Julia Smith, as the statewide Wolf Coordinator for the WDFW, is leading the effort to develop a new wolf plan. This plan will guide long-term wolf conservation and management, once the population is recovered in our state. As a wolf biologist, Julia has worked on wolf recovery in multiple states for more than seven years. Her previous position was in Arizona as Field Supervisor for the Mexican Wolf Interagency Field Team.

### October 21, 2020 Program

*[This program will be a virtual meeting via Zoom. To register, follow the instructions in the **HH Event Registration Box** later in this newsletter.]*

*“The Olympic Cougar Project: A Collaborative Study by the Olympic Peninsula Native American Tribes and Panthera (a worldwide large cat research and conservation organization)”, presented by Kim Sager-Fradkin*

Kim Sager-Fradkin, the wildlife program manager for the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe, will share study goals, preliminary successes,  
*(Continued on page three)*



Kim Sadler-Fradkin

*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](mailto: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.

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## President's Notes

by Judith White



Activities to fulfill OPAS' mission "to promote birding and habitat conservation through science-based education, advocacy, and stewardship" have continued despite challenges of the COVID-19. OPAS members joined the National Audubon Society 2020 Virtual Seabird Fly-in in July, advocating for policies to protect seabirds, forage fish, and their habitats. Bob Phreaner and I met with Representative Derek Kilmer and Senator Maria Cantwell's office virtually to urge them to protect seabirds from threats like climate change and overfishing. We shared stories of iconic Pacific Northwest seabirds like Tufted Puffin and the challenges they face, including a changing climate.

Expanding the theme of seabird conservation, Judy Willott from Kitsap Audubon and Bob Phreaner from OPAS are representing our Audubon Washington Northwest II Region on the chapter advisory committee for the Puget Sound Conservation Blueprint, a first of its kind conservation decision-support tool for bird conservation in Puget Sound. The goal is to use this tool to help guide strategic conservation, restoration, and policy actions in support of bird conservation.

OPAS continues to work on submitting scientifically-based comment letters; please see the Conservation column for letters sent since the last Harlequin Happenings edition.

If you haven't tried OPAS' Book Discussion Club, Field Trips, the Ascent of Birds series, or upcoming Membership Meetings (all virtual), now's the time. All the events are described in this issue of Harlequin Happenings, and on our [OPAS website](#) under the EVENTS tab (scroll down). Asking for your registration helps us manage the events successfully. If you need help figuring out Zoom, we'd be happy to help. A recording of the July and August virtual Field Trips are available to watch anytime on the new OPAS [Virtual Field Trip Videos](#) page." The link for that page for the HH is <https://olympicpeninsulaaudubon.org/virtual-field-trip-videos>.

The success of the new Purple Martin colony in Port Angeles Harbor was recognized in a recent article in the Sequim Gazette, focusing on the support OPAS volunteers provide to several thriving Purple Martin Colonies in our area, including Protection Island, Three Crabs, and at the mouth of the Dungeness River.

Your Board met for the Annual Retreat August 25<sup>th</sup>, to plan for more activities, keeping members interested and engaged, and setting priority goals for our upcoming year. If you have ideas, please send them along to me at [opaspresident@gmail.com](mailto:opaspresident@gmail.com).

### Donate to OPAS on-line!!

Click on our website at:

<https://olympicpeninsulaaudubon.org/donate>.

## OPAS Programs for September and October

(Continued from page one)

and many amazing images taken from remote cameras. Her work has two primary tracts: the first, to explore wildlife responses to removal of the Elwha dams; and the second, to contribute to tribal subsistence harvest activities by monitoring elk and deer populations and the predators that rely upon them. Kim's most current research focuses on mountain lion genetics, dispersal patterns, and diet across the North Olympic Peninsula.

Kim holds a B.S. degree in wildlife biology from Humboldt State University, and an M.S. in wildlife biology from the University of Idaho. Kim is also active on the North Olympic Land Trust (NOLT) Board, the NOLT Conservation Committee, and is on the board of Naturebridge environmental science camps. Kim has lived in Port Angeles since 1999, and along with her husband is raising two young children.

## OPAS Field Trips for September and October

By Marie Grad & Jean Siesener

### Virtual Field Trip to Elwha River Mouth

*Date and Time:* Friday, September 25, 1-2 p.m.

*Leader:* Judi White

*Cost:* Free.

*Meeting Place:* Zoom.

See [OlympicPeninsulaAudubon.org](http://OlympicPeninsulaAudubon.org) events calendar to sign up

*Features:* From the comfort of your home, take a trip to the Elwha River Mouth. Find out why The Great Washington State Birding Trail and Important Bird Area recognitions were given, with 180 bird species recorded for this eBird Hotspot. Features maps, directions, and photos of birds regularly seen across the seasons. A great planning tool for future birding, or just sit back and enjoy the Elwha River Mouth as it bursts with new life, restoring the estuarine ecosystem following the removal of the Elwha Dam in 2012.

### Virtual Field Trip to Ediz Hook

*Date and Time:* Friday, October 30, 1-2 p.m.

*Leader:* Judi White

*Cost:* Free.

*Meeting Place:* Zoom.

See [OlympicPeninsulaAudubon.org](http://OlympicPeninsulaAudubon.org) events calendar to sign up



*Features:* From the comfort of your home, take a trip to Ediz Hook. Find out why The Great Washington State Birding Trail and Important Bird Area recognitions were given, with 210 bird species recorded for this eBird Hotspot. Features maps, directions, and photos of birds regularly seen across the seasons. A great planning tool for future birding, or just sit back and enjoy Ediz Hook.

## Interested in attending an OPAS virtual event?

All events can be found on the [OPAS website](http://OPAS website) under Events, Event Calendar. Click on the event you're interested in attending, and a Register button will appear. That's easy! A registration message will be sent to you, with information on how to log in to Zoom for the event. It's a good idea to register at least a day before the event.

If you are not sure how to use Zoom or are uncomfortable with how to get started, please contact us ([opaspresident@gmail.com](mailto:opaspresident@gmail.com)). We can walk you through the steps and send you a practice invite, where we can work out the "kinks" before the meeting. This is a good opportunity to learn about Zoom in a friendly environment; we are here to help you fly into the modern communication era.

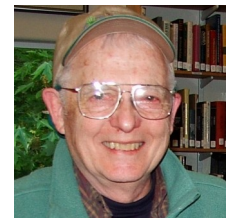
## Education Notes

By Ken Wiersema

### Backyard Birder Programs for '20-'21

Due to several conditions, namely: COVID-19 meeting size and cleaning requirements, loss of our meeting space and specimens due to remodeling and expansion of the River Center facilities, and the health of our members and presenters, we've decided to place the Backyard Birder programs into a state of hibernation. We did consider offering parts of the program via online meeting software, but with the other opportunities folks have for online learning, a good course of action would be to examine the program's content and objectives, and take some time to modify it to fit both facility changes and health of participants. So, we'll not be offering our Backyard Birding programs again till Oct 2021 -- all things being equal.

(Continued on next page)



## Harlequin Happenings

### Other offerings to tune to

There are plenty of alternative online, virtual, learning activities to keep you safe at home and engaged. Please consider the excellent set of presentations by **Jim Karr** in his “*Ascent of Birds*” series, the array of virtual OPAS field trips, the OPAS book discussion group, and our virtual OPAS membership meetings. See a fuller discussion of these offerings elsewhere in this newsletter, and on our OPAS website.

Also consider joining virtual learning events offered at the Dungeness River Audubon Center. On Aug 26<sup>th</sup>, I presented a program on *RAPTORS*, and we had some 140 folks register and over 76 attend. Clearly, we are meeting a need! Check out the following:

- September 9<sup>th</sup> – *OWLS* by Powell Jones
- September 23<sup>rd</sup> – *RACCOONS* by Jenna Ziogas
- October 7<sup>th</sup> – “*The North Olympic Salmon Coalition at 30: Celebrating Three Decades of Salmon Recovery on the Olympic Peninsula*” by Nathanael Roberts
- October 21<sup>st</sup> – “*Big Year(s) In Plants*” by Pat Loafman.

(Note: See the [OPAS website](#) for times of these programs and to register. These four events are offered without fee; however, attendees may make a voluntary donation)

### Plus, a COVID-19 edition of an annual favorite ---- [Virtual Exploration of the Dungeness Watershed](#)

Take a virtual tour through the different zones of the Dungeness watershed, and get to know our local flora and fauna. This course will introduce you to some of the different challenges that our watershed faces, and will look at current restoration projects, as well as potential solutions for the future.

*Dates and Times:* We will meet for an hour on Zoom for four Tuesdays at 10 a.m.

(September 8th, 15th, 22nd, 29th, & October 6th)

*Cost:* \$50

*Instructors:* Powell Jones and Jenna Ziogas

Click [Registration](#) to sign up:

### Purple Martin update.

**3 Crabs** -- We have had numerous visitors and locals view and enjoy our 3 Crabs Purple Martin nest boxes in 2020. It's been a good year for folks to observe these birds during their nesting season. Be sure to watch Cindy Fullwiler's video of Martin fledglings she has generously allowed us to post on our

OPAS website. This year we had 18 nest boxes on pilings in Dungeness Bay, 4 boxes on the tidal pond near the parking area, and 4 boxes on the west side of the Dungeness River on Dungeness Farms property. We have documented nesting in 22 of these 26 nest boxes. Due to high winds and tidal changes we had limited access to the boxes during nesting, but will have a better assessment of the breeding success when we take the boxes down this fall.

**Protection Island** -- Due to COVID-19 rules, the USFWS limited monitoring trips to these boxes this year, so we were only able to install 7 of the 9 boxes we had been putting up. On our single monitoring trip on 15 July, we had 5 of the 7 boxes in use and saw about 9 eggs and 8 or 9 live chicks. Thanks to Dow Lambert and Gary Bullock for doing this box check.

**Morse Creek** – At this location, there are 5 boxes on private property. On Aug 11<sup>th</sup> 3 boxes appeared to have Martin nests, and we were able to count 8 chicks in 2 of them. Because of the near-fledgling age of the chicks, we did not risk sticking an endoscope in one box, as we did not want to prematurely flush young birds.

**Port Angeles Harbor** -- Regrettably, we had limited access to these 4 boxes this year because of the lack of a boat. We did observe Martins in 3 of the 4 boxes, but did not see food being taken into boxes. So, the Martins know the boxes are there and with a better monitoring procedure set up next year, we ought to document a successful colony. We could benefit from having a regular point of contact in PA, who could arrange a boat and monitoring trips to the boxes. Please contact me if you are interested or know someone who might be, [wiersema@olympus.net](mailto:wiersema@olympus.net).

### Status of the addition and remodeling of the Dungeness River Audubon Center

As this HH edition goes to press, the mobilization and initial grading of the new entrance road and parking areas should be underway. The current schedule for occupancy of the new facility is June 2021. Watch for updates as the project moves forward. Thanks to each of you who have contributed to the Capital Campaign. In the near future, as we work with the construction schedules and the various subcontractors, we'll be putting out a call for volunteers to step forward and contribute “sweat equity” to the parts of the work. Please be ready to offer your various skills and hours to help us control costs and get us into a usable building sooner.

## Conservation Matters

By Bob Phreaner

At our August 25th OPAS Board retreat Joyce Volmut was recognized for her service and advocacy with the Conservation Award for 2020. It was a little strange to have President Judi White make this presentation via Zoom. We all cheered and applauded from our little boxes on a shared screen. View the posted award at [olybird.org](http://olybird.org) under "Conservation Matters". Joyce modestly accepted the award by saying that Western Bluebirds have probably always been around these parts; they just need our help with safe nest boxes. She then expressed gratitude to those who have helped her with the nest boxes and the Climate Watch project. Kudos to Joyce. Recently, Joyce has accepted the position of Vice-chair of the OPAS Conservation Committee. Her experience will provide valuable leadership to our conservation team.



## Virtual Groundbreaking for Expansion of River Center

By Sue Dryden, Volunteer with the Capital Campaign Committee

A virtual groundbreaking ceremony on July 13, 2020, celebrated the start of construction for an expanded Dungeness River Audubon Center. The celebration marks the success of a three-year campaign that raised funds through a combination of grants, fundraising events, and contributions from individuals, foundations, and businesses. The ceremony was held via Zoom and featured W. Ron Allen, Tribal Council Chair, Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe; Mike Chapman, Washington State Representative, 24th District; Steve Tharinger, Washington State Representative, 24th District and Chair, House Capital Budget Committee; Annette Hanson, Chair, Inspire Wonder Capital Campaign, Dungeness River Audubon Center; and Ken Wiersema, Education Chair, Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society.



*Pigeon Guillemot volunteers (from left) Bob Phreaner, Dan Stahler, and Joyce Volmut*

The OPAS Conservation committee holds virtual meetings to plan priorities for 2020-21. Dee Renee Ericks and her sub-committee have sent Bird Safe Building information to several building managers in Clallam County, with links to learn best practices to avoid bird collisions with glass.

You can find this

letter on [olybird.org](http://olybird.org) under "Conservation News".

For the past five years, OPAS members have joined the Clallam County Marine Resources Committee under the leadership of Ed Bowlby and Dan Stahler to observe Pigeon Guillemot breeding activity at various sites throughout the county. See [olybird.org](http://olybird.org) under "Community Science Projects". Jean Siesener noticed the need for public awareness of the Pigeon Guillemot activity at Port Williams, and she will lead a 2020-21 project to place an informational sign at Marlyn Nelson Park.

With the ideas and energy of recent Conservation committee members like Dee Renee and Jean, your Conservation committee is striving to fulfill the OPAS mission of being stewards of bird habitat.



*Tribal Blessing by Loni Grinnell-Greninger, Tribal Council Vice-Chair of the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe*

Videos were shared of the Tribal Blessing by Loni Grinnell-Greninger, Tribal Council Vice-Chair of the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe and a video of breaking the ground by Kirk Nelson, Facilities and Construction Manager, Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe. A grant of \$1.5 million from the taxpayers of Washington State contributed significantly to the total amount raised. The Jamestown S'Klallam Tribal Council purchased 4.5 acres of land east of the Center in 2016, and has made major commitments to the project. Tribe leaders agreed to take on the role of general contractor of the project recently, providing many savings and allowing the project to proceed as planned.

*(Continued on next page)*

## Harlequin Happenings

Located in the Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe’s Railroad Bridge Park on the Dungeness River, the expansion will include addition of a new wing, as well as a new access road and parking lot. The current building will be expanded to add a classroom, 150-seat community multipurpose room, commercial kitchen, restrooms, office space, gift shop, a new entry, and concession stand.



Breaking the ground by Kirk Nelson,  
Facilities and Construction Manager, Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe  
Photo by Silas Crews, Story Crane Productions

Construction could begin as soon as August 2020. Completion of the building expansion is expected to be by summer of 2021. Depending on fund raising, the remodel of the existing building is planned to begin shortly after the expansion’s grand opening. Exhibits and interpretive displays are in the planning and grant-writing stages.

Incorporated in 1994, the Dungeness River Audubon Center has become a unique resource for educational activities that connect people with nature. It is run by four organizations: Dungeness River Audubon Center, the Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe, the Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society, and National Audubon. For more information and to contribute to ongoing campaign funding, visit the [Dungeness River Audubon Center website](#).

## Other Events

### Book Discussion Group—Upcoming Titles

By Susan Paulsen

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, we will meet via Zoom at least through August 2020, with a reassessment of the COVID-19 situation for the September meeting as we progress along. I am helping to organize the zoom meetings with Judith White during this Zoom transition.

### September Book Selection

*Title: The Double-Crested Cormorant: Plight of a Feathered Pariah*

*Author: Linda R. Wires*

*Date & Time: Tuesday, September 22, 2020, 4:00 - 5:30 p.m.*

*Discussion Leader: Susan Paulsen*

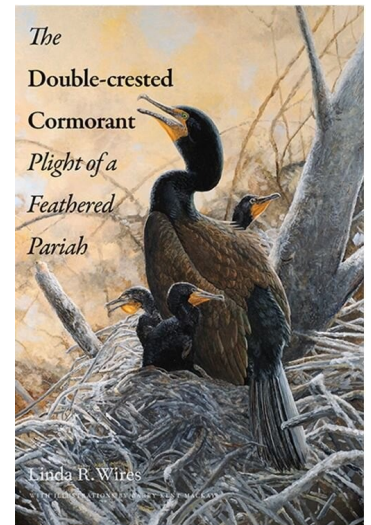
*Virtual Meeting by Zoom: Register at [OPAS website](#) under Events, discussion questions will be posted*

*Cost: Free*

The protection of the Double-crested Cormorant is a conservation concern of OPAS.

### From the Yale University

**Press:** “Found only in North America, this bird is an iridescent black waterbird superbly adapted to catch fish. It belongs to a family of birds vilified since biblical times and persecuted around the world. Thus it was perhaps to be expected that the first European settlers in North America quickly deemed the double-crested cormorant a competitor for fishing stock and undertook a relentless drive to destroy the birds. This enormously important book explores the roots of human-cormorant conflicts, dispels myths about the birds, and offers the first comprehensive assessment of the policies that have been developed to manage the double-crested cormorant in the twenty-first century.



“Conservation biologist Linda Wires provides a unique synthesis of the cultural, historical, scientific, and political elements of the cormorant’s story. She discusses the amazing late-twentieth-century population recovery, aided by protection policies and environment conservation, but also the subsequent U.S. federal policies under which hundreds of thousands of the birds have been killed. In a critique of the science, management, and ethics underlying the double-crested cormorant’s treatment today, Wires exposes ‘management’ as a euphemism for persecution and shows that the current strat-

egies of aggressive predator control are outdated and unsupported by science.”

This book is available on [Amazon](#).

### October Book Selection

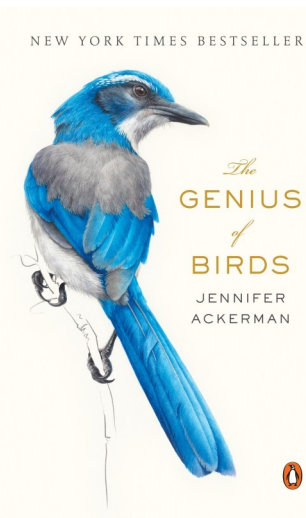
*Title:* The Genius of Birds

*Author:* Jennifer Ackerman

*Date & Time:* October 27, 2020, 4:00-5:30 p.m.

*Leader:* Robert Phreaner

*Virtual Meeting by Zoom:* Register at [OPAS website](#) under Events, discussion questions will be posted.  
*Cost:* Free



An award-winning science writer tours the globe to reveal what makes birds capable of such extraordinary feats of mental prowess. Birds are astonishingly intelligent creatures. According to revolutionary new research, some birds rival primates and even humans in their remarkable forms of intelligence.

In *The Genius of Birds*, acclaimed author Jennifer Ackerman explores their newly discovered brilliance and how it came about.

As she travels around the world to the most cutting-edge frontiers of research, Ackerman not only tells the story of the recently uncovered genius of birds, but also delves deeply into the latest findings about the bird brain itself that are shifting our view of what it means to be intelligent. At once personal yet scientific, richly informative and beautifully written, *The Genius of Birds* celebrates the triumphs of these surprising and fiercely intelligent creatures. Ackerman is also the author of *Birds by the Shore: Observing the Natural Life of the Atlantic Coast*.

This book is available on [Amazon](#).

### The Ascent of Birds: An Invitation to the Spectacular Diversity of Birds

Join Jim Karr, University of Washington Professor Emeritus, for a lecture and discussion series based on John Reilly's pioneering book *The Ascent of Birds: How Modern Science Is Revealing Their Story* (2018). Each session will explore key concepts in bird evolution, biogeography, and special adaptations of a bird

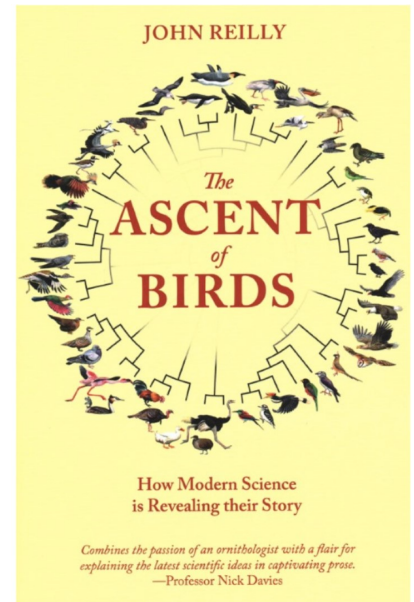
species or group. Recent scientific advances, coupled with a long history of bird study, has given us new insights about the elegance of birds, their family trees, and keys to their survival.

All discussions are illustrated with photos, maps, and other visuals. They will take place on the second Tuesday of each month from 4:00 to 5:30 p.m. Sessions are free, and will be held via Zoom until further notice. Please see [OPAS website](#) under Events to register.

Optional: Read one or two of the book's chapters (about 10 pages) for each session.

**September 8** “The Owl’s Story: Nightlife” (hearing and head shapes): Chapter 10  
 “The Oilbird’s Story: Evolutionary Distinctiveness” (echolocation—and not a bat!): Chapter 11

**October 13** “The Hummingbird’s Story: A Route of Evanescence” (1200 heartbeats a minute, 363 species): Chapter 12  
 “The Parrot’s Story: Vicariance and Dispersal” (unexpected kinships): Chapter 13



### Bird Sightings

by Bob Boekelheide



With technological advances and the growth of online birding resources, bird sightings columns such as this one have become obsolete anachronisms. Bird sightings are now easily available just a few clicks away for everyone with a computer or cell phone. Consequently this will be my last official bird sightings column for Harlequin Happenings.

Bob Norton and I began writing these bird sightings columns almost 25 years ago, in Feb 1996. We took over the job from Dory Smith, who wrote her "Dungeness Diary" in the Harlequin Happenings for many years. Dory and her husband Stan are also renowned for starting and compiling the Sequim-Dungeness Christmas Bird Count from 1975 to 1994.

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## Harlequin Happenings

When we began, Bob Norton started keeping bird records using "Birdbase," the hottest birding software of the time. I then wrote the articles using Bob's data and my notes. In the 1990s, with less-than-reliable dial-up modems, dot-matrix printouts, and floppy disks, Bob and I often met while birding just to transfer data and ideas. Thanks also goes to Denny Van Horn, who filled in writing bird sightings articles when I was not available. I believe this is the 149th bird sightings article since we started.

By now, OPAS members interested in the latest bird sightings should be using eBird, the phenomenal online birding resource from Cornell University. eBird has revolutionized birding, providing a way for community-science birders to conveniently keep track of bird sightings, both their own and from others. It provides almost instantaneous alerts when someone reports unusual birds, along with a cornucopia of information about birds around the world. Even without the alerts, it is an incredible way to learn more about birds.



*House Wren*  
Photo by John Gatchet

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If you haven't used eBird before (or maybe if you already have), go to [www.eBird.org/about](http://www.eBird.org/about) for a quick summary about how eBird works. eBird also has a free online training called "eBird Essentials," through Cornell's Bird Academy. It has been suggested that OPAS teach a class about eBird, but really there's no need to create a new class because an excellent training is already available online at eBird Essentials. If you need more hand-holding, there is

also a "Help" tab at the top of each eBird page that covers Frequently Asked Questions and Troubleshooting.

Get to know the tabs across the top of the main eBird pages: 1) Submit, 2) Explore, 3) My eBird, 4) Science, 5) About, 6) News, and 7) Help. You use "Submit" to enter your data, "Explore" to look at sightings of specific areas and species, and "My eBird" to look at and edit your own eBird lists, and much more.

One of the best eBird tabs is "Science." Cornell experts have compiled millions of eBird records to produce striking graphics about bird migration and movements in North America. Want to know when Warbling Vireos arrive on the north Olympic Peninsula? Watch the spectacular animation that shows the movements of Warbling Vireos all over North America, created from data submitted by our fellow birders. It is community-science at its best. Wow!

You don't need an eBird account to look at recent bird sightings in our area or anywhere around the World. For example, to look at sightings here in Clallam County, go to eBird, click on "Explore," then in the section called "Explore Regions" enter Clallam. When the Clallam page opens, on the right side click on "More Recent Visits," and you'll see a listing of all the recent checklists that birders have submitted. Click on the dates and you'll see their actual bird lists. You can also look at bar charts that show the annual cycle of different species in the area you are exploring. Or to look up sightings of individual species, under "Explore" click on "Species Maps," then enter the species, the time period and location, and you'll get a map that shows where that species has been seen. Click on the locations and you'll see the bird lists. Phenomenal!

If you want to find birds at even more specific locations, under the "Explore" tab go to "Explore Regions," enter Clallam, and then click on the map in the upper right corner. You'll next see a map with all the birding "Hotspots" in our area. Hotspots are good birding places like parks and public areas that birders frequently visit, such as Three Crabs or Railroad Bridge Park. Click on each Hotspot and "View Details" to see what birders have seen at that location.

It is easy to start an eBird account, so please join up and enter your own bird sightings. Just like other online accounts, you must create a user name and password to do this. Your same account also gains access to other Cornell online birding projects, like Project FeederWatch and Great Backyard Bird Count. You can be as private or as open as



you wish, so you can hide your lists from public view if you desire, although it is really nice for people to reveal what they see with others. You don't have to show the exact location and address of your house -- when you designate its location on the map, put the mark at a major intersection down the street and give it a creative name like "Heron Hacienda." It is particularly helpful if you enter comments or photos about the birds on your lists, like if you see interesting behaviors or unusual plumages.

You know it's a rough neighbourhood when you see a bird with an ankle monitor carrying a knife...



If you wish to receive alerts about unusual birds, once you have initiated your account click on the "Explore" tab, then click on "Alerts." At the Alert page you set up the area where you wish to receive alerts, like Clallam or Jefferson County, and how often you wish to receive alerts, like hourly or daily. You will then receive emails from eBird about rare birds seen in your appointed area. It is really quite amazing.

You can also enter eBird data on your cell phone, but you need to first download the free eBird app from the App store to do this. After downloading the eBird app and opening your account, you can conveniently enter eBird data on your phone while you are birding, rather than waiting until you get back to your home computer to enter sightings.

eBird can sometimes be a little intimidating when you begin using it, but don't be frustrated. It is easy to change or delete things if you make a mistake or change your mind. After entering your first 10 lists you will start to feel very comfortable. After entering your first 100 lists you will be a pro.

It's entirely up to you to decide how much you want to use eBird. You can use it to keep records of just the birds you see in your backyard, or you can use it to keep records for the entire world. Please remember that it is not a competition. Some people joke that the "e" in eBird stands for ego, and some aspects of eBird seem to encourage competition, like their "Top 100 eBirders" category. You can choose to not play the game, by opting-out of the listings. I encourage everyone to transcend the competition aspects of eBird and just use it as a very valuable tool to keep track of bird sightings. Remember, it's about the birds, not the people.

One of the biggest concerns with eBird is the accuracy and integrity of bird sightings. What keeps someone from entering the wrong bird, like listing an Elegant Trogan in Port Angeles? In reality it sometimes happens, but rare species get flagged and are checked by experts before becoming part of the public record. Sightings of unusual species require a written description and hopefully a photograph to document the sighting. We frequently get a chuckle around here during the tourist season when oddball birds or unbelievable counts start showing up on eBird lists, but fortunately it doesn't happen too often. Remember, it's about the birds, not the people.

Back to bird sightings. It has been an honor to write the bird sighting articles over the years. The best thing for me has been learning so much about the birds of the north Olympic Peninsula. I'm indebted to everyone who has submitted bird sightings, particularly in the good old days before eBird. Please go birding and enter your sightings using eBird, to add to our collective community-science knowledge about birds. If things work out, I hope to write a much smaller article about individual species in future Harlequin Happenings. Thank you very much -- let's go birding!

# Harlequin Happenings

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: \_\_\_\_\_

**Local OPAS Membership**, includes subscription to the *Harlequin Happenings* bi-monthly newsletter and other programs and birding trips. For more information see our website at <http://www.olybird.org>. To join, complete application below and **mail to address above**.

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