



# 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 2014

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

## OPAS Programs for September and October

by Ken Wiersema



*Hal Everett diving off Cocos Is.*

**September 17, 2014 Program** - "Photographs of Nature",  
presented by Hal Everett  
Potluck dinner at 6 p.m.; program at 7 p.m., at the Dungeness  
River Audubon Center

Hal is an ophthalmologist by profession and has, since 1992, been a serious amateur wildlife and underwater photographer. He has won competitive awards in both classes of photography. Some of his favorite subjects include swans and raptors, particularly Peregrine Falcons. He has traveled widely to capture an array of intriguing images of both airborne and underwater creatures. He will present a selected sampling of his photos from recent travels for our enjoyment as our featured speaker. In past years he has also generously shared his skills by leading several photographic workshops for our annual BirdFest. So come out to our meeting, enjoy the potluck, and then feast your eyes on the creatures of the natural world as captured by Hal Everett.

**October 15, 2014 Program** - "Wildlife Response to Unmanned Aircraft Systems during Monitoring",  
Presented by Sue Thomas, Wildlife Biologist for the Washington Maritime National Wildlife Refuge  
Complex (NWRC)

7 p.m. at the Dungeness River Audubon Center

**Note:** This is a joint meeting with the Friends of the DNWR, a nonprofit group that supports the operation of the DNWR.

Each year, use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS or 'drones') is increasing, but what are the consequences to wildlife? A pilot (less) project was conducted on closed Refuge islands along the outer coast of Washington to assess the level of disturbance to seabirds and marine mammals. Additional objectives included assessing  
(Continued on next page)



*Fixed wing Puma UAS system  
Photo credit: USFWS/Sue Thomas*

## OPAS Board of Directors

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## President's Message

by Jim Gift

Welcome to another year of Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society activities. We have a series of interesting programs and a variety of field trips so please join us. We have an active group that continues to improve our website which serves as an excellent vehicle describing what is happening within OPAS.

It also is an important year for OPAS. Your officers and many of your committee chairpersons have served for several years and enjoyed the process. However it is important that we get new blood and ideas into the organization. Please consider joining our committees or leadership. We are willing to mentor anyone interested.

Let's have a great year.

## OPAS Programs for September and October

(Continued from page one)

whether UAS's can be used in place of traditional aircraft during annual aerial surveys and assessing photo quality. Sue will present results from test flights of two different types of UASs, including a fixed wing "Puma" and a rotary blade "Quadracopter" model, both owned and operated by NOAA.

Sue Thomas is the Wildlife Biologist for the Washington Maritime National Wildlife Refuge Complex (NWRC). She has 18 years of experience in wildlife biology with a focus on Ornithology. She began her career working for the USFS conducting forest-wide wildlife surveys for raptors, bats, amphibians and forest carnivores for 6 years. During fall migration, she took time off to count migrant raptors in 4 states and eventually worked her way up to counting approximately 4.5 million raptors in Veracruz, Mexico, the largest raptor count site in the world.

In 1998, Sue began working for the USFWS as the Regional Shorebird Biologist for the Pacific Region. She was responsible for coordinating an international Snowy Plover survey; conducting seasonal aerial waterfowl surveys in the Dakotas; banding shorebirds in a demographic study in Barrow, AK; banding waterfowl in Saskatchewan; and completing Black Oystercatcher detectability and movement studies in the San Juan Islands.

She transferred to the Washington Maritime NWRC in 2009 where she conducts annual seabird colony counts within the Washington Islands NWRs; midwinter waterfowl and shorebird surveys on Dungeness NWR; and research and monitoring of seabirds on Protection Island and San Juan Islands NWRs.



Rotary Blade Quadracopter  
Photo credit: M4 Consulting UAS



Sue Thomas

## OPAS Field Trips in September and October

by Bob Iddins



### 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.

### Neah Bay

*Dates & Time:* Friday & Saturday, September 5 & 6, 2014, 8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

[Note: Although this is a 2 day trip, participants are welcome to attend either day or both (starting times and places are the same for each day). Everyone is welcome to join Denny at Hobuck CG (\$20 per night) for a evening of birds, campfire, beer, wine, and just good bird babbling.]

*Leader:* Denny Van Horn

*Meeting place:* Washburn's Hardware Store on Hwy 112 in Neah Bay

*Cost:* Field trip is free; however a Makah Nation Recreational Pass (\$10 and good for one year) is required for each vehicle. It can be purchased at Washburn's.

*Features:* Denny's favorite hot spots. Anything is possible.

*Bring:* Optics (including scopes if available), snacks, water, lunch and appropriate clothing for all kinds of weather

*Further information:* Denny Van Horn 360-390-8128, [dennyvanhorn@gmail.com](mailto:dennyvanhorn@gmail.com)

### Elwha River Mouth & Port Angeles Harbor

*Date & Time:* Saturday, September 20, 2014, 8:00 a.m.

*Cost:* Free

*Leader:* Denny Van Horn

*Meeting place:* Trailhead for access to the Elwha River mouth (Turn north off of Hwy 112 at Place Road, continue 1.8 miles and turn right.)

*Features:* Lots of gulls, alcids and water birds.

*Bring:* Optics (including scopes if available), snacks, water and appropriate clothing for all kinds of weather.

*Further information:* Denny Van Horn 360-390-8128, [dennyvanhorn@gmail.com](mailto:dennyvanhorn@gmail.com)

### Birding for Beginners & Newcomers

*Date & Time:* Saturday, October 11, 2014, 9:30 a.m. - noon

*Cost:* Free

*Leader:* Dave Jackson

*Features:* For beginning birders or residents new to the area. Familiarization with birding techniques. Meet some of our local birds.

*Meeting place:* Carrie Blake Park (9:30 a.m.). Meet at small pond next to main entrance.

*Bring:* Binoculars, bird book, scope if you have any of these. A few loaner binoculars will be available.

*Pre-registration and further information:* Dave Jackson 360-683-1355 (H); 360-477-1358 (C); email: [djackson@wavecable.com](mailto:djackson@wavecable.com). Limit 16 people.

### Local Bays and Shores

*Date & Time:* Saturday, October 18, 2014, 8:00 a.m.-?

*Fee:* Free

*Features:* Enjoy some of the earlier species of wintering seabirds while looking for rare visitors.

*Leaders:* Jim Gift & Gary Bullock

*Bring:* Snacks, water, optics and appropriate clothing for weather changes.

*Meeting place:* Dungeness Landing County Park (Oyster House)

*Further information:* Jim Gift 360-681-2989 [jgift76@gmail.com](mailto:jgift76@gmail.com) or Gary Bullock 360-681-8611 [gbullockak@hotmail.com](mailto:gbullockak@hotmail.com)

## Other Events

### **Cruise the San Juans, September 28-30, 2014.**

Join Puget Sound Express and the River Center for an exciting 3 day cruise through the San Juan Islands.

Package price: \$675 pp dbl occ/\$750 per single person, includes three days aboard Glacier Spirit, lunch aboard the vessel, and two nights' accommodation at Roche Harbor Resort. To sign up, go to [PugetSoundExpress.com](http://PugetSoundExpress.com) and click RESERVE ONLINE or call (360) 385-5288. Enter code "RIVERCENTER" as you order and PSE will donate a portion of the proceeds to the River Center!

### **Dungeness River Festival at Railroad Bridge Park**

*SAVE THE DATE! September 26th - 27th, 2014.*

Join us for a two-day celebration of the Dungeness River watershed. Local environmental and educational organizations will have booths, activities, performances and much more for people of all ages.

### **Audubon Council of Washington (ACOW)**

*Hosted by:* Grays Harbor Audubon Society and the Southwest Region

*Date:* September 20, 2014

*Location:* Shilo Inn, Ocean Shores, WA ([http://www.shiloinns.com/search\\_results.asp?PI=coswa](http://www.shiloinns.com/search_results.asp?PI=coswa))

*Agenda:* See <http://wa.audubon.org/chapter-meetings>

*Registration:* <http://acow2014.brownpapertickets.com>

### **Chelan Ridge Hawk Migration Festival 2014**

Pateros, WA (City Park), Saturday, September 13, 2014; 8:00 am – 3:00 p.m. Join the Methow Valley Ranger District, North Central Washington Audubon Society, and HawkWatch International this fall for the fifth annual Chelan Ridge Hawk Migration Festival. The festival takes place in Pateros Memorial Park and will have vendors, live raptors, birding field trips, and projects for kids. Pre-registration is required for the trip to and from Chelan Ridge. For more information and on-line registration, go to [www.ncwaudubon.org](http://www.ncwaudubon.org).

### **Climate Change Action on the Olympic Peninsula**

Dungeness River Audubon Center, 2151 W. Hendrickson Rd., Sequim, WA 98382, Saturday, September 20th, 2014, 10 a.m. - Noon

Bob Lynette will present the effects that climate change are expected to have on the Olympic Peninsula, and what Washington State, Clallam County, and local citizens are doing to understand and mitigate the impacts. Bob has over 50 years' experience in project management and development of renewable energy worldwide. All are welcome to attend this presentation. Donations are welcome to support the educational programs of the Dungeness River Audubon Center. Light refreshments will be provided.

### **Financial Planning Seminar - Smart Tax & Legacy Planning Strategies**

Dungeness River Audubon Center at Railroad Bridge Park, 2151 West Hendrickson Road, Sequim, Thursday, October 23, 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.

In the 9th financial planning seminar in this free series, attorney Steve Moriarty will cover:

- >Wills
- >Trusts
- >Community Property Agreements
- >Durable Powers of Attorney
- >Healthcare Directives
- >Estate Planning Strategies for the needs of family members, your charitable giving goals, and for minimizing your taxes (*Continued on next page*)

Stephen C. Moriarty has been in private practice with Platt Irwin Law Firm in Port Angeles for the last 25 years. He holds degrees from Clemson University (B.A., 1983) and the University of South Carolina (J.D., 1989). Pre-registration is advised. Contact Sue Chickman, 360-477-4123 or email [organicallysue@olypen.com](mailto:organicallysue@olypen.com).

## A Tribute to Patricia Holden

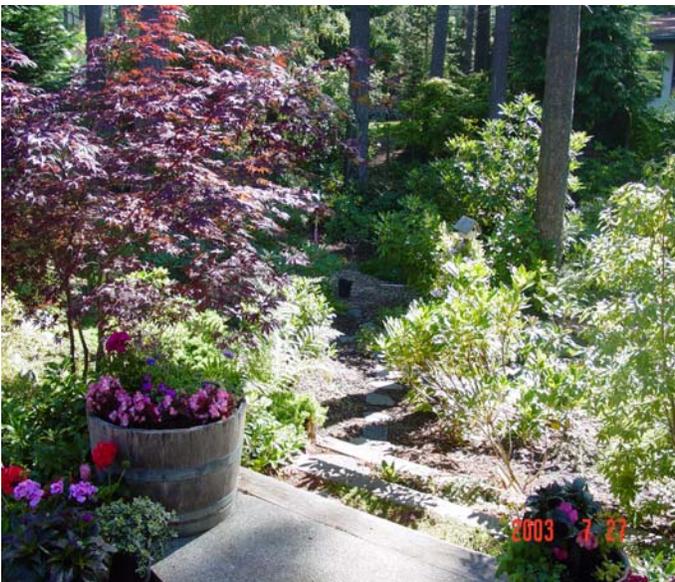
Patricia Holden, long time resident of Sequim, ardent supporter of OPAS and the Dungeness River Audubon Center, passed away July 28, 2014. Her daughter, Diana Manville, found a copy of the March 1992 Harlequin Happenings in which Pat had written an article "Sanctuary For Our Friends". The advice in this article on how to plant a garden that will attract birds and provide cover for them is timeless. It is being reprinted as a tribute to Pat's long love of native plants and birds. Pat is best known to OPAS members as the person who designed and supervised the installation of the native plant garden and landscape at the Dungeness River Audubon Center.

### SANCTUARY FOR OUR FRIENDS

*By Pat Holden - March/April 1992*

As in those imaginative, strange movies like Honey, I Shrank the Kids, "Huge giants move through our country, smashing our homes and destroying all our food". If our wildlife could talk, think, and reason, I am sure that would be their scenario for the I-5 corridor and the Sequim-Dungeness Valley. We have cut trees, burned the brush, and bulldozed the soil leaving little for birds, fish, and mammals. Over 30,000 acres of wildlife habitat are lost every year in the State of Washington to resource and building development. It is no wonder we are losing numbers and species of birds. The wonder is that any can survive.

With increasing population pressure, it is doubtful this rape and pillage will stop soon. But each individual landowner can do something positive. We can restore a habitat for the previous tenants. Plant your landscape with trees, shrubs, and groundcovers that will feed and shelter our native birds. A lone feeder or birdbath, without cover nearby, is not inviting to the shy retiring rare species. Your gardening practices can keep many species alive and well. An added bonus: the joy of watching the yearly parade of our adaptable feathered friends.



*Pat Holden's Back Yard  
Photo by Diana Manville*

With sensible planning and scrounging, you won't have to spend a lot of money either. You do need to know which plants attract wildlife and have the help of the Washington Department of Wildlife to assist you. Even the smallest yard can be aflutter with birds with the right planting.

When planning your landscape, a sketch or plan of the area is definitely required. The size and scope of your plans depend upon the amount of space you have to designate as wildlife habitat. You must know the width and height of each plant at maturity and sketch these in as if you were a bird, looking down upon their oasis. This will prevent mistakes and subsequent moving of trees and shrubs that might crowd too closely together. The birds won't notice. You will.

Choose trees as the major background for all plantings. Pine trees are one of the best sources of food of the coniferous trees. Ten times more birds feed on pines, according to research by the

Washington Department of Wildlife (WDW) and published in their pamphlet, Plants for Wildlife in Western *(Continued on next page)*

## Harlequin Happenings

Washington. Plant pines that fit into your size requirements. Our smallest, the shore pine (*Pinus contorta contorta*) will be dwarfed by other native species. Since it does take many years to reach maturity, we can be forgiven for choosing the Engleman or Colorado Blue Spruce for looks and for a smaller food selection. And the Port Orford Cedar is the best of the cedars to feed the birds. These coniferous trees are great for nesting and security; a place to hide. Plant any of these on the outer perimeter of your yard.

Coniferous trees may cast too much shade on the south. Select a deciduous tree for that background. Far more popular is the native dogwood, *Cornus nuttalli*, but they are very hard to find. Plant instead a common *C. florida*, or a flowering crabapple. White mulberry is a very good bird feeder, as is black gum. There are many beautiful blooming deciduous trees to choose from. Blossoms mean fruit later. Birds like small fruits. Some can give an added bonus; dazzling fall color. Smaller trees can be clumped together in 3's to make a stunning display. The WDW list previously mention also includes the maximum height, width, sun and water tollerances. This can be a great help in your selection.

Width and height of trees is equally important for smaller trees, shrubs and ground-covers. Excellent feeders are the smooth and staghorn Sumacs. Our local Serviceberry only grows to fifteen feet, but many birds were observed on them as on similar sized Indian Plum. All of these are excellent choices; for the Indian plum is our first native to bloom in the winter, followed by the glorious red current. All fruits of these small trees (or large bushes?) are devoured by goldfinches, Steller's Jays, grosbeaks, and even the ubiquitous Robin.

Plant taller shrubs in front of the trees, smaller shrubs in front of them, and groundcovers and flowers in the foreground. There are many excellent choices available in the local nurseries; such as the cotoneaster species, oregon grape, nandina, elaeagnus, barberry, firethorn, spicebush, and viburnums. Most have brightly colored blossoms and berries. If you have ever grown berries for your table, you know how the birds love blackberries, raspberries, and especially blueberries. How about some of these grown just for the birds? There are wonderfully tasty tiny Alpine strawberries grown for groundcovers that bring many grateful native birds. Bunchberry is a particular favorite of the Towhee and other birds that hide among the low shrubbery in the shade of my house.

Birds normally live in the open woods where native bushes and trees provide food and cover. Clear areas of grass, and yes, weeds are often filled with darting, singing and feeding birds. Insects and seeds are available to them, and if lucky, their territories are large. Make your landscape a vital part of that territory by planting thimbleberry, salmon berry, elderberry, red and black huckleberry, as well as highbush cranberry. Another native very popular with the birds is red ozier dogwood. A hedge of wild roses is sure to attract many tiny birds for cover. The scent of lovely blossoms is for your enjoyment.

Grasses and sedges with upright plumes furnish food for a host of species. Plant short grasses as clumps and let them go to seed. Buy them in pots, much as you would perennials. Beware of annual grasses; they can become invassive. Flowers, if left to seed, are definitely in the gourmet section for the birds. Some attract hummingbirds when in bloom, such as the wonderful red Monarda. Speaking of hummingbirds reminds me to ask you to plant red honeysuckle vines. Our native *Lonicera ciliosa* with lovely orange flowers can be alive with hummers in mid-summer. The fruit is quickly removed by birds later on.

It takes more than enticing plants to fill your backyard with birds. Water attracts birds in all seasons. A flock of Red-orange Crossbills visited my garden every time I turned on the sprinkler in my newly planted yard last summer. Feeders of sunflower seed in the winter and early spring will help the birds survive when natural food is scarce. Discouraging active dogs and cats from your area is necessary too.

I hope I have encouraged you to make your yard a sanctuary for the coming years. There are a few reference books available. *[Editor's note: References in this article are somewhat out of date. You can purchase books on landscaping at the Dungeness River Audubon Center bookstore. For example: "Landscaping for Wildlife in the Pacific Northwest" by Russell Link. Other books on this subject are also available.]*

## Education - Backyard Birder Series

by Shirley Anderson

“WHAT BIRD IS THAT?!?”, first in the series of classes in “Backyard Birding” will be from 10 am to noon on Saturday, October 4, 2014, at the Dungeness River Audubon Center, Railroad Bridge Park. Bob Iddins and Denny Van Horn will provide information about getting started on a “Birding Year”. A variety of choices in both binoculars and field guides will be available. Use of websites to be aware of what species are in the area and ways to keep records are included.



The series of classes, hosted by members of the Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society, is intended for residents of this area who are interested in knowing more about birds seen locally each season of the year and learning how to develop good habitats for wild birds.

“Backyard Birding” can be taken either as individual classes or in a series. The cost of each session is \$5 and is free for anyone under 18. After the completion of five sessions, participants will be offered free membership in OPAS for one year.

The next class will be “Winter Bird Feeding and Care”, from 10 am to noon on Saturday, November 8, at the Dungeness River Audubon Center. Christy Lassen of Wild Birds Unlimited will be the guest presenter, hosted by OPAS members Janie and Ken Leuthold.

Mark your calendar for subsequent classes: January 10, “The Inside Story”; February 7, “Bird Nesting”; March 7, “Spring Gardening for Birds”; April 18, “Migration”; May 16, “Enjoying Spring Sounds” and June 6, “Out of the Nest.”

## Conservation Matters - Audubon’s Climate Science and Birds

by Mary Porter-Solberg

This September watch for an announcement about Audubon’s major new science on global warming and its effect on birds. Numerous studies by the world’s top climate scientists and biologists indicate that climate change poses an extremely dire threat to birds and biodiversity. A 2009 Audubon Christmas Bird Count (CBC) Analysis of four decades of CBC observations reveals that birds seen in North America during the first weeks of winter have moved dramatically northward—toward colder latitudes—over the past four decades. Significant northward movement occurred among 58% of the observed species—177 of 305.



Audubon plans to publish a new study that quantifies the specific risk to North America’s birds in a greater level of detail and clarity than has been available so far; we’ll know which birds are most threatened by climate change and where.

With that knowledge in hand, it’ll be our responsibility to figure out what to do about it – how to protect our birds today and tomorrow as climate changes. We already know we must protect the habitats birds need, and we must do everything we can to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This new information about the threat climate change poses to birds will more sharply define how National, State, and local Audubon Chapters can work together to address global warming impacts. Additionally, policy makers can play a critical role by advancing an agenda to help species and habitats weather the climate assault. This may include dedicated funding for natural resources conservation and wildlife adaptation in any comprehensive climate change legislation, and passing legislation creating new funding sources to help migratory birds and their habitats survive climate change.

More information about the new climate science study and the impacts to birds will immediately be posted on the OPAS website under Conservation News/Alerts. Be sure to check our website frequently for this subject and other news and alerts.

## 2014-2015 Calendar of OPAS Field Trips

by Bob Iddins

<b>Date(s)</b>	<b>Trip</b>	<b>Leader(s)</b>	<b>Meeting Time/Place</b>
Sept 5 & 6	Neah Bay	Denny Van Horn	8:30 am, Washburns Store
Sept 20	Elwha River mouth & Port Angeles	Denny Van Horn	8 am, Elwha River mouth Trailhead
Oct 11	Beginning Birders & Newcomers	Dave Jackson	9:30 am, Carrie Blake Park
Oct 18	Local Bays	Jim Gift & Gary Bullock	8 am, Dungeness Landing
Nov 8	Beginning Birders & Newcomers	Dave Jackson	9:30 am, Carrie Blake Park
Nov 15	Ediz Hook	Denny Van Horn & Judy Mullally	8:30 am, boat launch
Dec 6	CBC Warmup	Bob Boekelheide	9 am, DRAC
Dec 15	Sequim-Dungeness CBC	Bob Boekelheide	
Dec 20	Port Townsend CBC		
Jan 17	Diamond Point, Discovery Bay	Bob Iddins & Gary Bullock	9 am, Longhouse
Feb 12	Local Bays	Bob Boekelheide & Jim Gift	9 am, Dungeness Landing
Feb 23 & 24	Skagit Flats	Bob Iddins & Terry Martin	TBA
Mar 12	Kah Tai Lagoon (Port Townsend)	Bill Parker	9 am, Kah Tai Lagoon
Mar 31	Nisqually NWR	Bob Iddins & Terry Martin	9:30 am, visitor center
Apr 28	Dungeness River Dike	Terry Martin & Bill Parker	6 am, Old Dungeness School
May 1 & 2	Neah Bay	Denny Van Horn	8:30 am, Washburns Store
May 2	Birdathon Warmup	Bob Boekelheide	8 am, DRAC
May 9	Birdathon	Bob Boekelheide	
May 19	Dungeness River Dike	Terry Martin & Bill Parker	5:30 am, Old Dungeness Schoolhouse
May 27-29	Eastern Wash (including Wenas loop, Toppenish, Fort Simcoe)	Bob Iddins, Bob & Enid Phreaner	TBA
Jun 9	Taylor Cutoff, Fish hatchery	Terry Martin & Bill Parker	5 am, SE corner Walmart parking lot
Jun 18	Lost Mountain	Bob Iddins & Gary Bullock	7:30 am, SE corner Walmart parking lot
Jul ?	Hurricane Ridge (Date to be determined in June-based on snow conditions)	Bill Parker	
Jul 31	3 Crabs (Purple Martins)	Ken Wiersema	9 am, 3 Crabs
Aug 8	Local Bays	Bob Boekelheide	8 am, Dungeness Landing
Aug 21 & 22	Neah Bay	Denny Van Horn	8:30 am, Washburns Store
Aug 25 & 26	Ocean Shores	Bob Iddins	TBA

## OPAS Volunteer Opportunities

Many opportunities are available in OPAS for volunteers to participate in the activities of the chapter. You will work with good, knowledgeable people who will mentor you as you become acclimated. If you are new to the chapter, this is an ideal way to meet new friends who share your love of birds and the natural world. Look below at some of the opportunities that are possible, and get in touch with one of the chapter officers to talk about your interests.

Membership:	Salesforce specialist	Membership roles Information updates Report Preparation
	Harlequin Happenings distribution	Printed version E-mail notice
Birdfest (April, 2015):	Birdfest chairperson	Call meetings Set agenda Coordinate volunteer work
	Publicity	Leader Audubon chapter notices Internet postings Print ads Radio spots Flyer distribution
	Field trips	Trip leader Support
	Banquet	Organizer Support
	Silent Auction	Acquire donors Support
	San Juan cruise	Publicity Lodging/logistics On-board docent
Bird sightings:	Compile bi-monthly sightings Prepare HH article	
Birdathon (May, 2015):	Send letters Compile counts	
Christmas Bird Count (Dec., 2014):	Trip leader Trip support Compile counts	
OPAS website:	Write articles Proofread postings Publish events Acquire/submit photographs of activities	

*(Continued on next page)*

## Harlequin Happenings

Hospitality:	Hospitality leader Plan events Provide support (food, beverages)	
Field trips:	Trip leader Organize schedule (July, 2015)	
Education:	Student art show Student film festival Backyard birding series School presentations River Festival (Sept. 26-27, 2014)	
Conservation:	Puget Sound seabird survey Purple Martin nest box program Wild Olympics campaign Salmon Coalition monitoring	



## Olympic BirdFest 2015 Leadership Needed!

*A Message from Vanessa Fuller, Birdfest Chair*

Dear OPAS Members,

The planning for next year's Olympic BirdFest starts this month, September 9th at 3 PM at the River Center. At the first meeting we will try to identify committee chairs and a general work plan leading up to the festival itself. This year we are going to try something new and have co-chairs of each committee. That way there will be less burn out with sharing the workload, while tossing the ball back and forth as you go on vacations. Then we will be in need of committee members. As a committee member you will only need to attend the meetings about the

subject you are working on, rather than sitting through meetings focused on subjects that don't concern you. The committees are Field Trips, Website, Marketing/Promotions, San Juan Island Cruise, Neah Bay Pre-Trip, Banquet, Auction, & BirdFest Bird Quest. We will also need a volunteer coordinator. It takes a small army to make this event happen and we need more help!

If you are interested in helping the 2015 BirdFest be the best event yet, please let Vanessa Fuller know, and attend the upcoming meeting September 9th at 3 PM at the River Center. Contact Vanessa by calling 360-681-4076 or by email [rcoffice@olympus.net](mailto:rcoffice@olympus.net)

Thank you,

## Bird Sightings

by Bob Boekelheide



Once again, it's been a Goldilocks summer on the north Olympic Peninsula -- not too hot, not too cold, lots of sun and not much rain, other than a couple days in mid-August. Why live anywhere else? Nesting birds took advantage of the favorable conditions, including some late clutches by robins, towhees, and sparrows. At RR Bridge Park, newly-fledged towhees and Song Sparrows continued to be seen through mid-August, possibly successful third clutches. Gary Bullock reported a three-egg towhee clutch hatched in his yard off Woodcock Road on 8/3. Margie Palmer spotted a juvenile Common Yellowthroat at Dungeness Recreation Area on the same day. A spot-breasted fledgling robin appeared near Dungeness Landing Park on 8/24, very late for our locale.

Hank Warren checked the Great Blue Heron nest sites south of Lake Dawn in Olympic National Park, where herons raised chicks in recent years. Hank found eggshells and feathers on the ground, but no live birds in the nests. While there he watched three Bald Eagles fly through the heronry, leading Hank to comment, "The eagles and feathers explain the absence of herons this year." We thought perhaps this heronry was immune to eagle harassment since it is up in the mountains, but apparently not.



Bald Eagles  
Photo by Robert Hutchison

In general, it was a relatively poor nesting year for Bald Eagles around Dungeness, with many sites not even getting to the chick stage. The one exception is the remarkable nest in the large cottonwood snags on the west side of the Dungeness River mouth, which raised three big chicks to fledging. *Birds of North America* states that three-egg clutches occur in only 4% of Bald Eagle nests. Why would one nest do so well and others fail? The successful nest appeared to be an established pair that clicked on all cylinders, laying eggs about March 1st, two weeks before the average start of laying for most nests around here, and expert providers for their chicks. In contrast, the nest along Marine Drive, which had provided sparkling photographs of eagles over the last few years, seemed to be contested between at least two and possibly three pairs, maybe because of a death or divorce among previous mates. One lone Osprey flew over 3 Crabs on 7/8, carrying a fish inland towards Sequim. Could this Osprey possibly been carrying food to a chick? Denny Van Horn reported

successful nesting by American Kestrels, Northern Harriers and Ospreys at the Waatch River/Hobuck Beach area. Other kestrel sightings include a male spotted 8/1 and 8/3 by Gary Bullock in Dungeness, and another male found 8/1 by John Gatchet along Schmuck Road. A female Kestrel flew by 3 Crabs on 8/12, seen by Denny Van Horn and Bob Boekelheide, followed within 20 minutes by a fast Merlin and an even faster Peregrine. The swallows went nuts! A very dark first-year Peregrine Falcon, likely a Peale's Falcon, has been around Dungeness Bay for a couple months, creating havoc among the shorebirds.

The Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary held "Thank You" cruises for their volunteers out of La Push on 7/14-16. Among the usual nesting species (including several Tufted Puffins standing at burrow entrances on Carroll and Jagged Islands), were two very curious sightings. First was an adult Ancient Murrelet on the water near Carroll Island on 7/14. Carroll is the only site in WA where Ancient Murrelets have been confirmed nesting, just one nest found in 1924. There have been recent nesting season reports of Ancient Murrelets off La Push, even with chicks (which they take to sea when one or two days old). Could they still be nesting at Carroll Island? Next, on 7/15 Bob Boekelheide spotted two Manx Shearwaters, one in a feeding flock by Cake Island, and another flying north. On 7/16, Charlie Wright spotted three more Manx Shearwaters in the same area. Manx Shearwaters normally nest in the North Atlantic, but there have been many spring and summer sightings of Manx off the WA coast for several years. Could they, too, be nesting right under our noses on some offshore island? Both these species nest in burrows and only fly ashore at night, so very difficult to locate. Most islands off our coast are rarely if ever visited by humans, so they could be nesting totally undetected without our knowing it.

Judy Mullally once again had Vaux's Swifts nesting in her chimney along the bluff in east Port Angeles, hearing the usual squeaks and chatters for several weeks in July and August. On 8/11 she says the sky filled with swifts circling and calling overhead, which she thinks may be the prelude to the chicks' fledging. Hank and Raedell Warren also had swifts in their chimney in early August. Is it better to have swifts in your chimney than bats in your belfry?

(Continued on next page)

## Harlequin Happenings

Purple Martins nesting in the OPAS nest boxes at the 3 Crabs pilings had a very successful nesting season. Ken Wiersema, during nest box checks on 8/11, reported at least 42 martins attending the boxes. There were chicks in nearly every box, including some near fledging. The martins were busy returning dragonflies to their chicks, a favorite martin food. In addition, all five nest boxes on Protection Island had eggs or chicks on 7/8, checked by Ken and his colleagues. Martins visited Anita MacMillan's two new boxes near Morse Creek in early July, but didn't nest this year. Denny Van Horn reported successful nesting by martins in old pilings at Neah Bay, at least the sixth year they have used the site.

Following nesting, lots of swallows are now gathering at coastal locations, destined to fly south. Dow Lambert reported a cloud of 50+ adult and fledgling Barn Swallows at Dungeness Spit on 8/11. Bob Boekelheide spotted a possible Bank Swallow flying with 100+ other swallows at 3 Crabs on 8/22.

A few unusual birds showed up this summer. Chris Anderson, a birder from South Dakota, photographed a female King Eider about 1.6 miles out Dungeness Spit on 7/12, but it was never found again. In late June and early July some American White Pelicans made the circuit of the Salish Sea, possibly birds from their closest nesting colony at appropriately-named White Pelican Provincial Park in central British Columbia. A group of 38 White Pelicans showed up in Dungeness Bay on 7/3, stayed overnight, and then flew east the next morning, seen by John Gatchet at Sequim Bay. Two of the pelicans remained in Dungeness Bay until 7/8. Brad Waggoner discovered one Great Egret at La Push on 8/13, the only one so far this year in Clallam, and Denny Van Horn found a Green Heron near the Waatch River in Neah Bay on 8/8.

It's been a wonderful summer for migrant shorebirds. July, as always, saw mostly adults heading south after nesting, most very worn and needing a good molt. In August, the tide quickly turned to juveniles, looking crisp and beautiful in their new feathers. Species present throughout much of the period included Black-bellied and Semipalmated Plovers, Black Oystercatcher, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Whimbrel, Marbled Godwit, Ruddy and Black Turnstones, Sanderling, Western and Least Sandpipers, and Short-billed Dowitcher. Odd appearances included an alternate-plumaged American Golden-Plover in Dungeness Bay from 7/18-20 seen by Bob Boekelheide, an extraordinary 5 Baird's Sandpipers reported by John Gatchet at Blyn on 8/8, 2 faded adult Surf-birds from 8/15-18 seen by Bob Kiernan and Bob Boekelheide, and a Pectoral Sandpiper seen at 3 Crabs by Denny Van Horn and Bob Boekelheide on 8/22. Denny Van Horn also found one Baird's Sandpiper at 3 Crabs on 7/14. Several Semipalmated Sandpipers showed up, first reported by Carol Riddell at Pitship Pocket estuary on 7/8. Dow Lambert and Ken Wiersema discovered a nice flock of juvenile Red-necked Phalaropes feeding offshore Dungeness Spit on 8/23. Several Wandering Tattlers were reported from the outer coast: one at Shi Shi Beach on 8/6 by Jen Krodsma and Don King, one at the same location by Denny Van Horn on 8/9, and three at La Push by Rich Rehrig on 8/19. Winning the Big Schnozzola award, Denny discovered a Long-billed Curlew at Tsoo-yess Beach on 8/6 hanging out with Whimbrel.

Lee Bowen, who lives at 3 Crabs, asked a good question on 8/22: "Is it my imagination, or am I seeing lots more gulls?" Yes, Lee, you are seeing lots of gulls, but it's important to note that the majority roosting on shorelines right now are migrating California Gulls. Large California Gull colonies occur in the Canadian prairies, particularly Alberta. Following nesting every year, thousands of California Gulls migrate over the Rockies and the Coast Range to the nearest salt water, which just happens to be our doorstep in the Salish Sea. On 8/22, after receiving Lee's email, I scanned the gull roosts around Dungeness Bay and estimated 3100 California Gulls in the bay, in addition to the usual Glaucous-winged types and Ring-billed Gulls. These migrating California Gulls join feeding flocks in the Strait of Juan de Fuca, then they head south for the winter in California and Mexico. Even though we have thousands here now, they are almost all gone by November. Our average California Gull tally on the Sequim-Dungeness Christmas Count during the last 20 years is only six birds.

The other migrant gull making waves right now is Heermann's Gulls, the lovely red-billed gulls that migrate here after nesting in Mexico. The largest Heermann's Gull colony in the world is Isla Rasa, a flat island in the Gulf of California where hundreds of thousands nest alongside Royal and Elegant Terns. Vince Lucas reported the high count for  
*(Continued on next page)*



*Green Heron*  
Photo by Robert Hutchison

Heermann's Gulls in our area this summer, seeing about 250 roosting on log booms in Port Angeles harbor on 8/23. Another migrant was the one Parasitic Jaeger seen by Brad Waggoner off Tongue Point on 7/20.

Mew Gulls, which normally arrive in big numbers later in the fall, were surprisingly visible this summer in Sequim Bay, with a high count of 48 at Pitship Pocket on 8/11. Caspian Terns hung out all summer in Dungeness Bay, but their former nesting colony on Dungeness Spit never developed this year. The first fledgling Caspian arrived from somewhere else with great fanfare on 8/22. Jamie Acker went fishing out of La Push on 7/1, seeing the usual offshore species along with one very early Arctic Tern perched on a channel marker.

The mountains call. John Bridge camped in upper Royal Basin on 6/30 and watched a Gray-crowned Rosy Finch gathering nesting material at the base of the Deception Glacier. John also saw 3 Clarks Nutcrackers in the same area, not coincidentally near White-bark Pines, the nutcrackers' favorite. John and Brian Berg hiked up the west ridge of Blue Mountain on 7/2 and flushed a Common Nighthawk off a nest with two eggs at 3900 ft.

Scott Atkinson visited Hurricane Ridge on 8/3 and found a most incredible flock containing a Black-headed Grosbeak, Yellow Warbler, Chipping Sparrow, and Mountain Bluebird, among others. Elsewhere his group heard a Clark's Nutcracker and Gray-crowned Rosy Finch, and even spotted a flyover Northern Goshawk, a remarkable day at Hurricane Ridge.

Other passerine news. John Gatchet reported a Western Meadowlark on Gibson Spit on 7/4, asking whether they could be nesting. Coincidentally, I talked to Nash Huber's workers who farm the fields by Schmuck Road, who say they see meadowlarks during spring and summer. The two spots are actually very close to each other, so could we still have a remnant population of nesting meadowlarks using that area? Lastly, Gary Bullock watched a possible Northern Shrike fly across Woodcock Road on 7/18, which is most interesting because we have no other Northern Shrike records for the summer. Could it have been a Loggerhead?

Fall migration is here! Call Bob Boekelheide at 681-4867 or email at bboek@olympus.net when you see something interesting or unusual. Thank you very much for your sightings!

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