



# 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 6 Nov-Dec 2014

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

## OPAS Program for November

by Bob Boekelheide

**November 19, 2014 Program - "Birds of the Olympic Backcountry", presented by Mandy Holmgren, Staff Biologist, The Institute for Bird Populations, 7 p.m., at the Dungeness River Audubon Center**

Since 2006, Mandy Holmgren has been leading research teams that track nesting birds in Olympic, Mt. Rainier, and North Cascades National Parks. Every spring and summer, her crews conduct point counts along transect lines in the national park backcountry, trying to document annual changes in bird populations. Mandy received a BS in Environmental Studies from the University of Vermont in 2003, became an IBP intern in 2004, and worked her way up to become the principal supervisor and trainer for field crews for the Pacific Northwest. Much of Mandy's work is in areas where few of us will ever get, so come learn about her intriguing work and about the birds that nest in the backcountry of Olympic National Park.



Mandy Holmgren

**Note: There will be no general membership program in December.**



## President's Message

by Jim Gift

It is my sad responsibility to report the untimely passing of Bill Parker. Bill died suddenly on the 5<sup>th</sup> of October. He and his wife Karen were very active in OPAS. They participated in and led many field trips. Bill also taught a variety of workshops and educational programs at the Dungeness River Audubon Center. He was an enthusiastic birder and bird photographer, always willing to share his experiences both locally and on his many trips with Karen. He will be missed.

When we lose a great birder we have to reflect on the wonderful birding area that we all live in. Over the last few weeks a great variety of both common and rare birds have been seen locally as well as in the Neah Bay area. Many of the unique species that have been observed are reported on CCBIRDS (Clallam County Bird Information Rapid Dispersal System). This email system was developed by Bob Boekelheide and is maintained by Denny Van Horn. If you are a local birder it may be of interest to get on this email reporting system. *(Continued on next page)*

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(contact Denny at [dennyvanhorn@gmail.com](mailto:dennyvanhorn@gmail.com)). Denny also maintains a CC BIRDS blog site (<http://clallamcountybirding.com>). These are both great local birding resources.

Let's get out and appreciate the great birding in our area.

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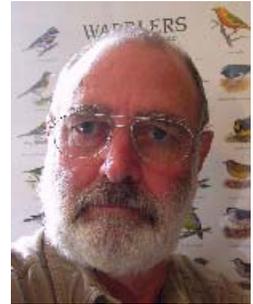
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## OPAS Loses a Good Friend

OPAS member Bill Parker passed away suddenly October 5, 2014. He was born in Rolla, Missouri, and was educated at the University of Missouri, where he earned both bachelor and master degrees in ceramic engineering. Bill traveled extensively during his career and amassed an incredible life list of birds. Following retirement, Bill and his wife Karen moved from Pennsylvania to Sequim and immediately became immersed in the Dungeness River Audubon Center and OPAS. His willingness to share his knowledge made him a wonderful teacher. He led many OPAS field trips, taught Back Yard Birding classes, presented butterfly and moth programs at Sequim Bay State Park and participated in OPAS school programs.



William H. Parker  
1941 - 2014

Bill referred to the Olympic Peninsula as his "playground" and photographed it extensively with Karen and his whippet Zoe. It was Bill's practice to share lines from "The Parting Glass", a traditional Irish song, when circumstances caused him to leave his friends:

"But since it falls unto my lot that I should rise and you should not,  
I will gently rise and I'll softly call, "Goodnight and joy be with you all!"

## OPAS Field Trips in November and December

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.

### Birding for Beginners & Newcomers

*Date & Time: Saturday, November 8, 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.*

(Continued on next page)

## Ediz Hook and Port Angeles Harbor

*Date & Time:* Saturday, November 15, 2014, 8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

*Cost:* Free

*Leaders:* Denny Van Horn and Judy Mullally

*Meeting place:* In the area of the boat launch or restrooms at the end of Ediz Hook.

*Features:* Winter water and shorebirds of Port Angeles harbor and the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

*Bring:* Optics (scope if you have one), water, snacks and appropriate clothing for the weather.

*Further information:* Bob Iddins, 360-681-2840,

[riddins@olympen.com](mailto:riddins@olympen.com)



*Barrow's Goldeneye*

*Photo by Robert Hutchison*

## Beginning Bird Painting in Watercolor

One day workshop taught by Robert Amaral

Sunday, Nov. 9th, 2014 10am-4pm \$70

Dungeness River Audubon Center at Railroad Bridge Park, Sequim



Explore the exciting medium of watercolor! We will cover basic fundamentals - value, color mixing and various watercolor techniques such as wet-into-wet, wet-into-dry and dry brush through demonstrations and your own painting of the bird of your choice from the Audubon Center's extensive collection of mounts. All skill levels are welcome; no previous painting experience is necessary.

The Materials List will be sent to participants upon registration.

Call 360-681-4076 or e-mail [rivercenter@olympus.net](mailto:rivercenter@olympus.net) for information or to register.

## Christmas Bird Count Tuneup

*Date & Time:* Saturday, December 6, 2014, 9:00 a.m. - ?

*Fee:* Free

*Leader:* Bob Boekelheide

*Meeting places:* 9:00 a.m. at Railroad Bridge Park and noon at Dungeness Landing County Park.

*Features:* Get prepared for the annual Christmas Bird Count (Monday, December 15, 2014) and go birding with the expert!

*Bring:* Optics, field guide, water, snacks and appropriate clothing.

## Christmas Bird Counts are Coming

by Bob Boekelheide

The annual Sequim-Dungeness Christmas Bird Count (SDCBC) will take place this year on Monday, Dec. 15, and the Port Angeles Christmas Bird Count (PACBC) will be on Saturday, Jan 3, 2015.

We need your help! Regardless of your birding experience, you can join one of our gallant groups covering a special section of a Christmas Bird Count circle. Even if you can only count birds at your feeder or stroll around your neighborhood for an hour or two (assuming you live in a count circle), you can help out. Everyone must also keep close track of our times and mileages, to make

comparisons with other counts and other years. Contact a CBC compiler (info below) if you're interested.

Christmas counts cover a 15-mile diameter circle. The center of the SDCBC circle is near the intersection of Brown and Port Williams Roads, so the circle includes from Dungeness Spit to the foothills south of Sequim, and from (Continued on next page)

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Diamond Point to MacDonald Creek. The PACBC center is in the Olympic foothills south of Port Angeles, so it includes Port Angeles Harbor, much of the Elwha River on the west to Morse Creek on the east, and all the way up to Hurricane Ridge, a huge elevation range for any CBC. Technically, CBCs take place from midnight to midnight on the appointed day, so you're welcome to get up before dawn or stay up late to listen for owls as well.

To learn the ropes, join us for the pre-CBC warm-up field trip on Sat., Dec 6, starting at 9 a.m. at Railroad Bridge Park, then continuing at 12 p.m. at Dungeness Landing Park. To prepare, please join bird walks at the River Center on Wednesday mornings and participate in OPAS field trips, in addition to going birding on your own as much as possible this fall.

Last year, the SDCBC tallied 146 species, the highest number of species recorded in WA State, and the PACBC tallied 121 species. With your help, we hope this year turns out to be equally productive. You can check results for past CBCs and read more info by going to the National Audubon website: <http://birds.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count>.

If you are interested in participating in the SDCBC, please call Bob Boekelheide at 360-808-0196 or email [bboek@olympus.net](mailto:bboek@olympus.net). To sign up for the PACBC, call Barb Blackie at 360-477-8028 or email [blackieb@olypen.com](mailto:blackieb@olypen.com).

## Other Events



*LagunaDeLosPozeulos flamingos*  
Photo by Peter Morrison

### Pacific Biodiversity Institute Expedition

Pacific Biodiversity Institute invites members of the Audubon Society to join us on an expedition to explore some of South America's birding hotspots and immense wildlands. PBI is involved in a long-term conservation research and education project focused on the wildlands and associated biodiversity of South America. South America contains the top 4 countries in the world in terms of bird diversity, making it a bird and nature lover's paradise.

Our expedition from December 6-18, 2014, is a chance to visit three birding and wildlife hotspots in central western Argentina. We will spend two exhilarating days at Mar Chiquita, a world renowned wetland and bird hotspot. Next we will visit the Sierras de Córdoba and see Andean condors soaring through remote canyons. Participants will have the chance to meet with scientists studying these areas, and investigate the birds, animals and plants that live there. In the second week, we explore deeper into a

remote, wild jewel of South America - the Sierra de Famatina. Pacific Biodiversity Institute is working in collaboration with the Universidad Nacional de Chilecito on scientific studies and the development of a long-term strategy to protect this priceless wild treasure. This expedition will not involve backpacking - only day hikes with comfortable overnight accommodations.

To learn more about this expedition, as well as trips planned in 2015 (**there will be a repeat April 4-16, 2015**), visit our [expedition web page](#). You can also email us at [expeditions@pacificbio.org](mailto:expeditions@pacificbio.org).

**Holiday Nature Mart 2014 - Friday & Saturday, November 14 & 15, 10-4**

The Dungeness River Audubon Center's annual Nature Mart in Railroad Bridge Park is a lively event that raises funds to help support the Center's educational programs. Nature Mart shoppers will find an array of moderately priced handcrafted one-of-a-kind gifts and ornaments with nature themes from scarves and purses made from antique silk to pet toys and treats. Many of the items are made from natural materials. The River Center gift shop is also stocked with many appealing items including the 2015 Railroad Bridge 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary calendar.

**Win a Cowichan Wool Sweater**

Shoppers will also have the opportunity to win the beautiful Cowichan wool sweater that OPAS member Marion Rutledge knit and donated. The soft warm wool, which is water resistant, comes from sheep raised on Vancouver Island. Raffle tickets are \$1.00, and they are on sale at the River Center. The raffle for the sweater will be held at 4:00 p.m. on Saturday, November 14<sup>th</sup>, at the close of Nature Mart. The winner does not need to be present.



Vanessa Fuller models Cowichan wool sweater

**Seeking Evergreens, Bakers, and Volunteers**

If you'd like to help make Nature Mart a success by providing evergreen cuttings, baking for the sale, or working a two- or three-hour shift, please contact Julie Jackson at [juliejackson@wavecable.com](mailto:juliejackson@wavecable.com) or (360) 683-1355.

**Helen Engle Volunteer of the Year Award Goes to Ken Wiersema**

by Mary Porter-Solberg

Congratulations to Ken Wiersema, OPAS Co-Vice President, as the recipient of Audubon Washington's second annual Helen Engle Volunteer of the Year Award! The award was presented on September 20<sup>th</sup> at the Shilo Inn in Ocean Shores, Washington at the 2014 Audubon Council of Washington (ACOW) meeting. Helen Engle, who was honored with an Audubon Lifetime Achievement Award during the 2013 National Audubon Convention in Skamania, WA, inspired the award. The Helen Engle Volunteer of the Year Award recognizes a volunteer statewide - who has contributed outstanding service to Audubon's cause at the chapter, regional, and state level. It is presented at the annual fall ACOW meeting.

*(Continued on next page)*

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Ken was recognized for his decades of leadership and contributions to Audubon programs at the local and state levels including:

>>Current and active Chapter member & leader for more than two decades.

>>Led Olympic Peninsula Audubon in establishing the partnership to create, build, fund, and operate the Dungeness River Audubon Center.

>>Shared his birding skills in developing and presenting programs for beginning birders; and special programs on Corvids, Nest box building, Raptors, and Swallows.

>>Initiated, organized, and helped develop the Olympic Peninsula BirdFest as a unique, annual, educational, and fund raising event to support the Dungeness River Audubon Center.

>>An eloquent voice representing Chapter and regional interests with a spirit of collaboration for over 9 years as a member of the Audubon Washington Board of Stewards.

>>Chapter volunteer and local advocate for the Olympic Loop of the Great Washington Birding Trail.

>>Champion for establishing and participating in the field science to convince WDFW to stop the use of lead shot for upland bird hunting in a Clallam County Park.

>>Built, installed, and formed a team to maintain nest boxes for two Purple Martin breeding sites.

## Education - Backyard Birder Series

by Shirley Anderson

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

by Bob Phreaner, Chairman, Conservation Committee

I have been asked to replace Mary Porter-Solberg in briefing the OPAS membership on the activities of our Conservation Committee. That's a tall order. Since I have served on this committee, I have never seen a more dedicated researcher than Mary. She set such a high standard, one can only try to model her accomplishments.

On September 19 - 20, OPAS conservation committee members attended the annual WSACC meeting and WA Audubon meeting at Ocean Shores. It was inspiring for us to see our mentor Ken Wiersema receive the Helen Engle Volunteer of the Year Award for his long and dedicated service to WA Audubon. Bravo.

At the WA Audubon meeting, we heard Gary Langham ([climatescience@audubon.org](mailto:climatescience@audubon.org)) explain his 6 year study on the field guide to the future ranges of birds. The Audubon Climate Report is now available at [audubon.org](http://audubon.org). Washington was selected as one of four "proof of concept" states, along with North Carolina, Ohio and Minnesota, and we anticipate participating in the Climate Watch bird survey in the spring of 2015 to see if the birds are moving as Gary Langham has predicted.

One of the more dynamic speakers at the meeting was Lynsy Smithson Stanley who discussed climate change as a "Bird Issue". She teaches us to make climate change an emotional issue, because facts alone haven't been enough to translate into action. Lynsy will be our banquet speaker for Birdfest in April.

*(Continued on next page)*



The latest meeting of the OPAS conservation committee leaders passed two resolutions unanimously:

>Support adding remediated lands to the Hanford Reach National Monument to preserve wildlife habitat

>Oppose increasing oil transportation through and exports from the Pacific North West.

WSACC urges upholding the Magnuson Amendment, declaring a moratorium on any new fossil fuel related industrial facilities pending a comprehensive environmental Impact Statement; a halt to oil transport by DOT-111 tanker cars, and immediate improvements to safety measures for all existing oil transportation.

Additional OPAS Conservation Committee activities this month included:

>Submitted comments on September 18, 2014, during the scoping process of the Olympic National Park Mountain Goat Management Plan. OPAS supports the relocation of the goat population out of ONP and the Olympic Peninsula.

>Submitted a comment letter to WDFW on September 15, 2014, supporting strengthening the WA Hydraulic Code to protect habitat for forage fish.

>OPAS will participate again this year in the Swan Study starting in November.

>On October 18, OPAS met with Congressman Derek Kilmer to discuss a variety of conservation issues, in cooperation with National Parks Conservation Association

>On October 30, OPAS filed comments with the USFS, opposing their issuing a special use permit to the US Navy for a Pacific Northwest Electronic Warfare Range; requesting a biological opinion from the USFWS regarding the USFS finding of no significant impact. OPAS asked for an environmental impact study in compliance with the National Environmental Protection Act.

## Bird Sightings

by Bob Boekelheide

The biggest bird news comes from Neah Bay, once again proving how spectacular the northwest corner of Washington can be. Brad Waggoner, Charlie Wright, Ryan Merrill, Ryan Shaw, and Steve Mlodinow journeyed to Neah Bay on 10/25-26, finding a treasure of unusual birds, including the second Washington record of Eurasian Hobby. Hobbies are fast-flying falcons smaller than a Peregrine, but longer winged than a Merlin. This bird spent most of its time around the transfer station and quarry in the Waatch Valley. How did it get here? Who knows? Hobbies are kept by falconers, but there are several records from western North America.



Also at the Waatch River Valley, these fellows found a Grasshopper Sparrow, Clay-colored Sparrow, several Swamp Sparrows, and a possible Eurasian Skylark. In Neah Bay itself, they found an Orchard Oriole near the "Mini-mart Woods," only the second record for Clallam County. Tropical Kingbirds abounded. Adrienne Akmajian discovered one there on 10/18, but people who flocked to Neah Bay to see the Hobby found at least 6 present between Clallam Bay and Neah Bay on 10/25-27.

Brad and Dan Waggoner, along with Ryan Shaw, visited the Neah Bay area on 9/25-26, finding the first documented Lesser Goldfinch for Clallam County across the road from Hobuck Beach campground, along with the first Tropical Kingbird for the fall on 9/26. Stopping by Dungeness, they spotted a Bank Swallow in the swallow hordes near 3 Crabs. Bruce Paige also visited Neah Bay in late September and found two White-throated Sparrows and a female Lazuli Bunting on 9/23 in the exact same pasture where the others saw the Lesser Goldfinch. At the National Fish Hatchery Bruce also found three late Cinnamon Teal.

Nigel Ball journeyed to Cape Flattery on 10/19, scoping offshore for seabirds. Among the hundreds of offshore shearwaters, he felt confident there were Sooty, Short-tailed, at least 9 Pink-footed, and one likely Manx Shearwater. Nigel also found an obliging Palm Warbler by the Warm House Restaurant.

*(Continued on next page)*

## Harlequin Happenings

During a pelagic trip west from Neah Bay on 8/30, several of us watched a distant soaring "white-bellied albatross," that unfortunately never came close enough for identification. We imagine it was a Laysan Albatross, the most likely candidate, but there are several other white-bellied albatrosses in the world, so who knows?

Adrienne Akmajian photographed a lovely Common Tern in Neah Bay on 10/24, late for this species in Washington. Two Common Terns hovered and fed around the parked sailboats south of John Wayne Marina on 9/9, seen by Bob Boekelheide.

The most interesting bird in the Sequim area was an American Avocet in Dungeness Bay on 10/18, spotted by Marie Grad during the OPAS "Local Bays and Shores" field trip. The bird remained for several days, hanging out with ducks and other shorebirds. Lee Bowen wins the Marbled Godwit award, seeing 38 on the beach in front of his 3 Crabs home on 9/23. World Shorebird Day occurred on 9/8, and among the 11 shorebird species at Dungeness Bay Bob Boekelheide found three different juvenile Pectoral Sandpipers, two juvenile Semipalmated Sandpipers, and a Red Knot.

Many people commented about the big flocks of Greater White-fronted Geese and Cackling Geese flying over the north Olympic Peninsula in late September and the first half of October. Hopefully some will stick around for the winter. Michael Barry watched 3 Snow Geese fly by his home on Ridgeview Dr on 9/26.



*American Avocet*  
Photo by Chris Perry



*Western Scrub Jay*  
Photo by Michael Barry

Good news! Gale, the Black-crowned Night Heron that has wintered in Dungeness for the last 6 or 7 years, returned once again this fall, although Denny Van Horn says "she" (is she a she?) is roosting in a more isolated place than in past years.

The best owl news is Bruce Paige's report of a Long-eared Owl giving its long deep hoots near Geiren Cr and Holland Rd on 10/24. Two very late Black Swifts soared with the swallows on the west side of RR Bridge Park on 9/3, seen by the Wed AM birdwalk.

John Gatchet discovered an American Tree Sparrow in his yard in Gardiner on 10/24, and a White-throated Sparrow there on 9/18. While scoping calm waters in Discovery Bay on 9/29, John spotted 29 Red-necked Phalaropes, along with a lone Tufted Puffin off Diamond Point, very late for this

species in the Salish Sea. At the Dungeness Rec Area overlook, John spotted a Clark's Grebe with the Red-necked Grebes on 10/20, and had a flyover of 4 Brown Pelicans. Michael Barry also spotted two Brown Pelicans fly by Dungeness Landing on 10/26.

Western Scrub-Jays have increased throughout western WA, and Sequim is getting its share as well. Barb Shaw discovered a scrub-jay at her feeder off River Road on 10/1, traveling by itself. A scrub-jay visited Michael Barry's feeder on Ridgeview Dr on 10/10-11. It's probably just a matter of time before scrub-jays become residents in our area. Sue Chickman photographed one of two Clark's Nutcrackers at Hurricane Hill on 9/21, then Judy Mullally spotted one sitting atop a conifer in east Port Angeles on 9/26. Elizabeth Kelly discovered a male bluebird in her backyard on Alder St in Port Angeles on 10/6, describing him as totally sky blue, so likely a Mountain Bluebird. *(Continued on next page)*

Kris Ecklund found a very late male Western Tanager in her backyard in Emerald Highlands south of Sequim, on 10/1, still in fancy breeding plumage. Two male Yellow-headed Blackbirds haunted 3 Crabs in early October, seen by Bruce Paige, Denny Van Horn, and Dow Lambert. A single White-throated Sparrow also appeared for the Wednesday AM Birdwalk at Railroad Bridge Park on 9/24 and 10/8. A spry Rock Wren visited Dow Lambert's backyard in west Dungeness on 9/22 long enough for Dow to get great photos of it standing on a rock, no less.



*Clark's Nutcracker*  
 Photo by Sue Chickman

Lastly, a special tribute to Bill Parker, our friend and fellow birder who passed away suddenly in October. Bill regularly submitted bird sightings and gave expert descriptions of the birds he saw. The great thing about

Bill is that he particularly enjoyed the common birds he saw everyday, along with the unusual ones. His last report: "This morning (9-Sep-14) at about 10:45 at least 21 Marbled Godwits flew over Dungeness Landing headed west." Thank you, Bill, for sharing your love of birds with us!



*Rock Wren*  
 Photo by Dow Lambert

The Christmas Bird Counts are coming up, so now is the time to be out birding, staking out unusual species for later. If you see something unusual, please call me at 360-808-0196 or email me at [bboek@olympus.net](mailto:bboek@olympus.net). Thanks very much for your sightings.

News Flash! At the end of October, Neah Bay continues to produce fantastic birds. The Eurasian Hobby is still present, swiftly flying over the Waatch Valley and occasionally perching for excellent photos. A Slaty-backed Gull has been found in the big gull roost at the mouth of the Waatch River. Tom Mansfield, an inveterate birder who traveled to Neah Bay for the Hobby, stopped for a moment where Village Creek flows into Neah Bay by the Senior Center and found a Brambling, a Eurasian finch that rarely shows up in North America south of Alaska. Notice the Asian connection for all these species?

Perhaps something happened in mid-late October that

caused some Asian birds to move south along the North American coastline, with several ending up in Neah Bay. The north Pacific has had several strong storms circulating over the last two weeks, including the zombie remains of Hurricane Ana, so maybe there's a weather connection. Keep looking — more may be out there!

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