



Shorelines

Newsletter of the Whidbey Audubon Society
January 2018

Whidbey Audubon Society is dedicated to the understanding, appreciation and conservation of birds, other wildlife and their habitats on Whidbey Island and in surrounding waters.

Whidbey Audubon Society Meets Thursday, January 11 in Freeland A Whidbey Veterinarian Shares Wildlife Treatment Tales



Dave Parent, DVM, confers with patient, Mr. Eagle.

Dave Parent, DVM, is the owner of the Useless Bay Animal Clinic. Besides treating dogs, cats, chickens, rabbits and the occasional reptile, he has a license to treat wildlife, including marine mammals.

Come join us for a fun evening of pictures and stories about both successes and failures when treating our wild neighbors. You'll be challenged to answer several questions, such as which is Dave's favorite animal, or can you guess which wild animal is most likely to cause pain and hemorrhage during treatment.

Dave Parent has been interested in wildlife since a very early age. As a child, he was always turning over rocks at the beach and trying (unsuccessfully) to dig up moles. His long-suffering mother allowed him to keep various wild reptiles, amphibians, birds and mammals. While raising a family and keeping them afloat with various jobs, he earned a degree in Wildlife Science at the University of Washington and then a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine at Washington State University (wsu).

While at wsu, he was active in the raptor rehabilitation program. Upon graduation, he worked as a vet in Port Orchard, Washington and then purchased the Useless Bay Animal Clinic in Freeland in 1990. He immediately took the test to become a licensed wildlife rehabilitator in the state and treats between 30 to 50 wild birds, mammals and reptiles each year. He has also been fortunate to participate in wildlife research in the Olympic Mountains, the Selkirk Mountains, Alaska and Madagascar. He enjoys birding, telemark skiing, being out on the open ocean and just wandering around in the mountains and the Olympic coast beaches. He is married, and his combined family includes seven children and eleven grandchildren.

Note: To learn more about care for wild animals, check the [Whidbey Audubon website](#) for Dave Parent's "Wildlife Care Resources" article. (Click red text for hot link.)

Join Us!
Thursday evening
January 11
Unitarian Universalist
Congregation
20103 State Route 525, two
miles north of Freeland
7:00 socializing
donations for snacks welcome
7:15 brief meeting
7:30 program begins

Upcoming Field Trips

Wednesday, January 17: EBEBY'S LANDING AND SURROUNDING AREA. Meet first at the beach at Ebey's Landing at 9 a.m. to look for ducks and seabirds. We will then park up at Sunnyside Cemetery on Sherman Road and walk the Pratt Loop trail looking for hawks, eagles and forest birds. Bad weather will cancel this trip. Trip leader is Kim Shepard, kwshephard@gmail.com.

Saturday, January 27: LOONS AT DECEPTION PASS. Leaders are Sarah Schmidt and Joe Sheldon. Meet at 10 a.m. at the north end of the West Beach parking lot of Deception Pass State Park. We'll bird the beach and lake and hope to see hundreds of Red-throated Loons gathering to feed in the out-

flowing current of Deception Pass. Bring a spotting scope, if you have one. Depending on weather and interest, we will finish at about noon, with a possible stop at Dugualla Bay on the way back toward Oak Harbor. If you like, bring water, a snack or a hot drink. Dress warmly and prepare for wind. To carpool, meet at 9 a.m. in Coupeville at Prairie Station Transit Park on the east side of South Main Street or at 9:30 at Windjammer Park (City Beach) in Oak Harbor, at the end of South Beeksmas near the water. Cars parking at state park will need a Discover Pass. For questions, contact trip leader Sarah Schmidt, at 4bats@ixoreus.com or call 360-929-3592.

Getting to Know Your Board: Cathi O’Nan-Bower

Cathi Bower is the new Member-at-Large on the Whidbey Audubon Society Board. To get to know her better, Cathi has answered the following questions:

How did you become interested in birding?

Years ago we were given a feeder as a gift, which quickly became quite a distraction while I was trying to work. Junco was my first feeder identification. Birding is like having entertainment come to you. One of my bird photo albums is titled “Why I sometimes don’t get much done.”

What’s your favorite bird/birding site?

If we have totem or spirit birds, Turkey Vulture is probably mine, but we rarely are treated to a sighting on Whidbey. To see them, I mostly have to leave my favorite birding site, the wetlands on the lower part of our land here at home in the Maxwelton Valley. This year my Yard List reached 106 species, with the most recent late summer additions of a flock of Purple Martins, a Caspian Tern fly-over and a Greater Yellowlegs down on the very low lakeshore.

Tell us a bit about your history with Whidbey Audubon Society.

The Whidbey Audubon Society Calls for Nominations

At the May, 2018 Whidbey Audubon meeting we will have an election to fill the positions of President and Vice-president on our Board of Directors. Each position is for a term of two years.

In addition, our current Secretary, Joe Sheldon, is stepping down and we are looking for someone to appoint to that position. Due to changes in our recently updated bylaws, that position will be for one year.

We are also hoping to appoint a person to serve as Chair our Program Committee, which will arrange speakers for our meetings and handle the logistics.

We invite you to consider increasing your participation in the running of the Whidbey Audubon Society. Being on the board is a very rewarding experience and provides greater opportunities to give your input into the direction we take in the future.

If you would like to be considered for the upcoming slate or just have questions about what that entails, please get in touch with a member of the nominating committee:

- Linda Dwight 360-678-5255 treasurer@whidbeyaudubon.org
- Linda Bainbridge 360-331-5948 lkgbirder@gmail.com
- Sarah Schmidt 360-929-3592 4bats@ixoreus.com



Cathi O’Nan-Bower peeks out from an owl sculpture.

I’m a recent member — joined a few years back, I think when I attended a meeting presentation about Lyanda Haupt’s *Crow Planet*.

I’m the current Birding in Neighborhoods South notifier/reporter.

Tell us a bit of your personal history: where you grew up, places you have lived, education, work, family, travel experiences, etc.

Plants have been my first passion, and people have known me from gardening and working at local nurseries for years, first with Ace in Freeland, then with Maureen during the beginnings of Bayview Garden Center.

I grew up in Southern California and my family worked our way north, first to the east side of the Sierras, then to the Bay area before my mom found Whidbey — in the late 70s I followed her up to be near her and the Chinook Learning Community. Before that, I’d spent a year trying to get out of the Army, but have since made up for that by being very involved with husband Chuck’s annual Army reunion. Attending reunions have taken us back and forth across the country, and my current goal is to try to see the State Bird of each state I travel to. It’s harder than you might think! I’ve been to every state in the country, but only have 10 birds that I’ve actually seen in their states, since I’ve been keeping track. Pretty sure I’ll see an American Robin in Michigan this next year.

What are your visions for WAS /Whidbey Island?

May we all continue to strive to “Find the Good and Praise it.”
[Quote by author Alex Haley]

Cancellation Policy for Events

If the Whidbey Audubon Society cancels or changes a meeting or event, we will put an announcement on the “*Upcoming Events*” page of our website by 4 p.m. on the day of the event. You will also be sent an email if we have your address. You can sign up to receive special notifications as they are posted, www.whidbeyaudubon.org/subnotifications.htm. Mainly, the notifications will alert you to changes in meetings or field trips when the *Shorelines* newsletter already has been sent out. They may also describe other activities of interest to Audubon members.

Subscribers to the “Sightings” feature already are included and don’t need to sign up on the website. Our goal is keep our members safe and informed.

— Whidbey Audubon Society Board

Note: Clicking on red text will take you directly to the website.

Conservation Column: Looking Ahead to 2018



Kim Shepard,
Conservation
chair

There is lots going on at Audubon Washington, our state chapter. In 2018, we will see a short sixty-day legislative session, and Audubon Washington (with support from local chapters like ours) has four legislative priorities:

- 100 percent clean energy initiative
- Ban Atlantic salmon net pens
- Fire suppression support east of the Cascades
- Funding for data collection in Willapa Bay and Grays Harbor for an ecological atlas.

Audubon Washington is also working with Environmental Priorities Washington (a coalition of 22 groups) on an additional four issues:

- Water availability/rural development: no development unless there is a water plan in place, with mitigation, monitoring and measuring provisions
- Healthy food and packaging act
- Oil safety in Puget Sound: fund safety measures already passed
- Carbon pricing: the group will support a carbon tax bill expected to be introduced by the governor.

You will hear a lot more about these issues — in the news, in the mail, in future columns. It has become clear that environmental advocates are respected and heard, and our voices are important. On December 18, 2017, the state terminated the lease for salmon net pens near Port Angeles and ordered the pens and fish be removed due to safety and health concerns. Public input surely influenced this decision.

Meanwhile, on the local level, Whidbey Audubon is working on access issues, forest practices, bird protection, education and public events, as well as field trips, bird counts and classes. We need more help and we need your voices. Please stay informed, call your representatives about the issues that matter to you, and consider giving Whidbey Audubon some of your time. Thanks!

— Kim Shepard, Conservation Chair

Upcoming Field Trips, from page 1

Saturday, February 10: BIRDING CROCKETT LAKE. Join us for a morning of winter birding at Crockett Lake. We have lots of different habitats to explore here. Meet at the Coupeville ferry parking lot at 9 a.m. (Bring your Discover Pass.) Bundle up and prepare for any weather and lots of birds. The trip leader is Ann Casey, cspcoach@aol.com or 360-331-4679.

Saturday, February 24: WINTER BIRDS OF SKAGIT FLATS, FIR ISLAND AND SAMISH FLATS. Typically, there are great concentrations of waterfowl and raptors. The area is considered one of the top winter raptor viewing sites in the U.S. Some walking will be involved; be prepared for some mud. Meet at 9 a.m. to carpool at Windjammer Park at the end of South Beekma Drive in Oak Harbor. A Discover Pass will be needed for each car. Due to narrow road shoulders and limited parking, carpools are particularly important for this trip. Bring a lunch for this all-day field trip. Return about 4 p.m. Trip leader is Joe Sheldon at 360-678-9060, jksheeldon43@gmail.com or cell phone at 206-940-7539. Bad snow or ice cancels the trip.

Field Trip Checklist

- ✓ Field trips are free and open to anyone interested in birding or conservation. Bring your friends!
- ✓ Beginners are very welcome.
- ✓ Carpooling is encouraged and even required for some sites with limited parking.
- ✓ Dress for the weather and in layers.
- ✓ Very bad weather cancels a trip. Check with the trip leader.
- ✓ If you have them, bring binoculars, scope and field guides.
- ✓ If you might need them, bring a drink and snack.

We are always looking for new trip leaders and assistants. If you are interested, please contact Ann Casey at cspcoach@aol.com.

Sightings

October 30: Snow Bunting. A single bird was seen with **Dunlin** and **Least Sandpipers** at the edge of Crockett Lake, opposite the viewing platform. The bird made a quick flight with the shorebirds, landed on a log, and then flew off on its own headed east across the road. All in our group got to see the bird. — *Jay Adams*

November 3: Surf Scoter. Flock of 80 to 100 swimming together. Many in adult male plumage. Black all over except white patch on nape of neck, white spot on front of crown. Yellow orange triangular bill. Red feet seen through clear water from above on ferry boat. Some flew, displaying no white on wings. Sharp tail held up at angle and large yellow orange bill were source of confusion with eiders. But plumage only matches **Surf Scoter**. Location: Mukilteo Ferry-near ferry dock during crossing.

— *Richard Anderson*

November 3: Blue Jay at our feeders. What a beautiful bird! Location: Goss Ridge Road, Freeland — *John Schuster*

November 3: Heard unusual calls outside and found a **Blue Jay** as it flew to a suet feeder and then a tube feeder in our feeder area outside the kitchen. We watched it for about five minutes before it flew to one of our apple trees and out of sight. Heard some more nearby calls a couple minutes later. Location: On Holst Road, about two miles southwest of Clinton.

— *George Heleker*

November 7: One **Short-eared Owl** foraging over the fresh-water side of west dike at Deer Lagoon.

— *Darwin Wile*

Sightings

November 11: A bevy of **Trumpeter Swans** was seen in a field next to Dugualla Bay Farms. The swans were first spotted on my way to Anacortes. They were still there an hour and a half later on my way back. I'm relatively new to birding, so I'm not sure how rare of a sighting trumpeter swans are for this area. Very beautiful birds none-



Yellow-shafted Flicker, female

Sightings

theless. — *Todd Cavell*

November 11: Female **Yellow-shafted Flicker**. Location: Island View Lane, Langley — *Gideon Seraphine*

November 12: A **White-throated Sparrow** seen. Another one was spotted today in among the other birds under the tube feeder — the one from last month visited for eleven days before departing. Location: Island View Lane, Langley — *Gideon Seraphine*

November 12: **White-throated Sparrow** hanging out with adult and juvenile **Golden-crowned Sparrows** foraging under the cedars and eating seed put out on the patio this morning. Distinct white throat patch, with tan stripes on either side of head and dark rufous overall. Slightly smaller than the Golden-crowned Sparrows. Location: Northwest Broadway Street in Coupeville.

— *Robert and Traci York*

Sightings

Sightings



White-throated Sparrow

November 15: I heard **Golden-crowned Sparrows** giving the alarm call... I looked out back to see a **Northern Shrike** on the ground, mantling over its capture. Then, it moved under the Douglas fir to reveal it had caught a **White-crowned Sparrow**. This is the first Northern Shrike I've seen in our back yard — with its distinctive bold black mask, hooked beak, clean white breast, gray back and black wing bars, it was a clear giveaway. I got a good look at him/her, then it was gone as fast as he/she came in. Whoa! It's listed as Occasional on Whidbey Audubon Society Birds of Whidbey Island.

— *Traci York*

November 17: Single **Horned Lark** at Crockett Lake this morning. — *Carlos Andersen*

December 7: One drake and one hen **Redhead** seen outside of the swimming area of Cranberry Lake, Deception State Park. — *Jay Adams*

December 7: Saw a **Long-tailed Duck**. I was out with the Birding in the Neighborhoods South group at Deer Lagoon this morning when I

PLEASE POST UNUSUAL SIGHTINGS to the *Whidbey Audubon Society (WAS) website*.

Sightings should be on Whidbey Island or relate in some way to Whidbey Audubon. Reports should refer to birds or other wildlife that are not commonly seen here. Alternatively, they may refer to migratory birds that arrive outside their normal seasons.

Reports of especially interesting sightings in nearby areas are welcome. Greater selectivity is needed to keep the email volume reasonable so editors will exercise judgment on whether the rarity, proximity and significance of sightings merit inclusion.

These guidelines reflect the interests of local birders. Please respect the essentially scientific nature of the Sightings feature. Thanks for your cooperation.

There are designated spaces to submit your information, such as what you saw, where you saw it and the date and approximate time. Although we are asking those who post to leave a phone number or email address with your sighting, they will not be included on the actual "Sightings" page. Thank you!

Keep up with "Sightings" on the was website, on your mobile device at www.m.whidbeyaudubon.org or on the *Whidbey Audubon Society Facebook page*.

Sightings, see page 6

Birding in Neighborhoods South: A History

Perhaps you wonder why we gather every other Thursday.

It began with a small flock of curious birders, meeting for well over a decade now!

Over at Deer Lagoon, off the West side of the Island, back in 2005, the first efforts had begun to discourage hunting, and it soon occurred to some Whidbey Audubon members that it would be informative to survey the area's species, particularly resident birds. Frances Wood began to lead a group out to the site every other week, to document what they observed.

One season led to the next, and since 2006, Birding in Neighborhoods (BIN) has gathered to see what can be seen (and heard), and to enjoy the company of other birders — rain or shine, wind or frost or fog — twice monthly for these many seasons.

Between one and 20 participants casually gather with no particular agenda, other than to observe whatever comes our way and to document as many species as possible in a couple hours at various locations around the south end of Whidbey. Occasionally, a special outing is arranged, and suggestions are

welcomed, as well as feedback and comments; especially if, with advanced notice, we might bird on someone's private property.

We gather at the Bayview Park & Ride at the intersection of State Route 525 and Bayview Road, next to the Emergency Medical Technician Station. We choose a destination and car-pool to sites from there. We meet at 9 a.m. during short days of the winter months, and then, as migration ramps up during the spring and in the summer, we meet at 8 a.m. Participants should dress for the weather. Binoculars, spotting scopes, bird field guides are all useful, tho' not required, and birders of every experience level are welcome.

The first BINS of 2018 are January 4 and 18.

We thank Phyllis Kind for notifying us each time for 12 years and now you are hearing from me, Cathi Bower, with notifications and sightings reports — to receive them by email, please opt in at whidbird@whidbey.com.

— Cathi Bower

Birding in Neighborhoods North: A Briefer History

BIN North began in June of 2012. A group of north end birders liked the idea of birding on a regular basis but didn't want to drive down the island to join BIN South. So we created our own group.

We meet the second Wednesday of the month at 9 a.m. Our locations include Deception Pass State Park, Dugualla Bay, Jo-

seph Whidbey State Park and Swan Lake and Fort Ebey. Sometimes we drift as far south as Crockett Lake.

Our leader, Marcia Lazoff, decides on the location of the month and then emails us. We meet at that location. If you would like to join us, email Marcia at mlazoff@comcast.net and she will put you on the list.

BIN South End Sightings

November 9: Today seven hardy birders dodged the drops out at Deer Lagoon again! Does anyone ever tire of watching **wigeons**? Or of trying to spot that one **Eurasian Wigeon** amongst the Americans? We did get to add a Eurasian to today's list, thanks to Annette (and Dillon), who had hung out just a little longer...

Two more highlights and reward for getting a little wet — a **Cooper's Hawk** landed on some driftwood near our group, surprising us all, including the hawk, AND, right in broad daylight, late morning, was a wonderful **Short-eared Owl** sharing the hunting fields with a couple **Harriers**!

Thanksgiving: When a dreary morning is begun with the lowest of expectations, there is only one way to go from there. Three pretty smug birders saw and/or heard at least 24 species over at Lone Lake. At the south end, **Green-winged Teal**, **Killdeer** and **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** (with dozens of **juncos**), and then, a long visit up at the launch was pretty productive. We practiced our **Lesser/Greater Scaup/Barrows/Common Goldeneye** distinctions.

What a surprising amount of action in a couple hours of

steady rain! **Ducks**, of course, but also mesmerizing flocks of **Pine Siskins** and mixed flocks of **Starlings/Red-winged Blackbirds/Brewers Blackbirds** and a mixed group of both **Mourning** and **Eurasian Doves** kept our attention. Even the different duck species were mingling. We decided it was just a day where everyone was living happily together side by side, either that or they just were feeling too bedraggled to be territorial.

Grateful for the birds; especially turkeys.

December 7: Glorious morning out at Deer Lagoon. Eleven of us were having a hard time leaving all that warming sun, and especially, after having finally identified an odd duck — which appears to be missing from our list — winter plumage immature **Long-tailed Duck**! He was on the west side of the west dike. We also spied a **Eurasian Wigeon** amongst the **Americans**.

When we eventually dragged ourselves away; some of us briefly stopped by Sunlight Beach to add a few more species, including a big group of **Brants** and more **Scaup/Goldeneye/Scoter** practice.

BIN South, see page 6



news.nationalgeographic.com/2017/05/flying-squirrel-new-species-north-america/#/01_flying_squirrel.jpg

Humboldt's flying squirrel is the third species of flying squirrel found in North America.

well-known Northern Flying Squirrels that they have been confused with. They are smaller, darker, and based on recent genetic studies, are genetically quite distinct. There is no evidence that they interbreed with the nearly look-a-like northern species to the north and east. Indeed the Northern Flying Squirrel is present in the forests on the east side of the state, but it is the newly named Humboldt's Flying squirrel that resides in the western rainforests.

BIN South, from page 5

We saw and/or heard at least 40 species!

December 21: Winter Solstice. Thanks to Gideon and others who have been trying for weeks to get us down to the Possession Point State Park. How is it that one can get to be of a certain age, with four decades of Island life, and somehow not know about everything — this gem? What a treat for a beautiful first morning of winter, www.wvta.org/home/sites/possession-point. If you go, have your Discover Pass — it is a State Park.

We certainly felt that there were more than only the 21 species we saw/heard, probably because of the always-entertaining flock of **Bushtits** that met us at the beach and the huge flock of **Pine Siskins** overhead. So many seabirds — not large numbers, but a nice variety, as well as a few marine mammals. We very much enjoyed the **Spotted Sandpiper** doing his tippy-tail thing.

See you all in 2018.

— *Cathi Bower, Bird early — Bird often*

BIN South meets every other Thursday morning. Time varies with the season. Contact Cathi Bower at whidbird@whidbeynet.com.

New Species of Flying Squirrel

Not all that flies has feathers! Okay, so flying squirrels don't really fly. They only glide. But for those of you who frequently venture into the woods in Western Washington, there is a newly described denizen in the trees to enjoy. I realize that this note crosses the line and moves from avian friend to a furry mammal, but you might be interested anyway.

News broke this summer with the May 30 on-line publication of the *Journal of Mammalogy*. In reality, it is not a newly discovered creature, but the realization that the population of flying squirrels in western Washington are different from the

So next time that you venture out into a Whidbey Island forest at night, keep your eyes open. Flying squirrels are not easy to find (just ask Steve Ellis in his recent Big Mammal Year quest). But your efforts will be rewarded if you encounter this newly found friend.

— *Joe Sheldon*

2018 Winter Raptor Classes

Join Bud Anderson of the Falcon Research Group (FRG) for a five session class, *Hawk Watching in Western Washington*. The class will focus on identifying characteristics, behavior and life cycles of the raptors that winter in Western Washington. Bud is a world-renowned raptor biologist, whose specialty is peregrine falcons.

They classes are at 7 p.m. every Tuesday from February 6 to March 6 at the Padilla Bay Breazeale Interpretive Center, 10441 Bayview Edison Road. In addition to the five two-hour classroom sessions, the class will be broken down into smaller groups for a daylong Saturday or Sunday field trip on the Skagit Flats. The field trip is a great opportunity to practice identifying raptors with Bud's expertise and assistance. People often comment that the field trip alone is worth the price of the class.

Cost is \$175 per person (you choose the field trip from several weekend dates). To enroll send a check to FRG, Post Office Box 248, Bow, Washington 98232.

Sightings from page 4

spotted this duck floating and diving among the **American Wigeons**, **Buffleheads** and **Northern Pintails** — thanks to others who helped nail down the identification, as I have never seen one here.

— *Gideon Seraphine*

December 9: Eight **Sandhill Cranes** flying over Pacific Rim Institute. They flew northward, then circled above the forest and gaining altitude, flew back to the south and vanished. Just in case they decided to overnight at Crockett Lake I drove there at sunset to scope for them, but didn't find them. — *Sarah Schmidt*

December 11: **White-throated Sparrow** — a single tan-striped morph showed up at

our feeders at this morning on Lindsay Street in Coupeville.

— *Jay Adams*

December 12: Eighteen **Black Oystercatchers** flying in formation across our bow near the entrance to the channel that enters Oak Harbor. They were flying toward the beach at City Beach.

— *Vince Hagel*

December 13: **Leucitic Robin** has visited my bird baths several times this past week. Location: Whidbey Green community, next to the golf course. — *Christine Visick*

December 20: Two **Rough-legged Hawks** at Crockett Lake. — *Carlos Andersen*

Whidbey Audubon Society Scholarship Program

Whidbey Audubon Society, again this 2017–2018 school year, is generously awarding scholarships to graduating Whidbey Island High School seniors who intend to pursue a career in an environmentally-related field.

The **2018 Whidbey Audubon Society Renee Smith Scholarships for Environmental and Conservation Study** amount to several scholarships being offered, ranging from \$1,500 to \$2,500, totaling \$4,500. These scholarships are being offered to students pursuing a four-year university degree in environmental studies.

Application forms are available at all three Whidbey Island high school counseling offices.

Application forms are also posted on the *Whidbey Audubon website*. On the website, select “About Whidbey Audubon,” then select “Scholarships.” Applications are due at the high school counselor offices by Friday, March 9, 2018.

Insightful information about previous scholarship recipients is also available on the website. At the website, and after selecting “Scholarships,” open the file labeled “Scholarship Recipients.”

— Ann Sullivan, Scholarship Chair

Field Trip Report: Smith & Minor Island State Aquatic Reserve and Fort Ebey State Park on November 11

This field trip was in conjunction with the program given at our November meeting. The 25 participants met at Libbey Beach to get a review of the Reserve and take a look at the bird life it supports.

Several **Harlequin Ducks** came close for all to see while a **Bald Eagle** perched halfway down on the bluff. Also noted were scatterings of **Horned Grebe**, **Red-breasted Mergansers**, **Mew Gulls**, **Double-crested Cormorants** and **Surf Scoters**. A couple of **Long-tailed Ducks** were seen by some fortunate attendees and a **Great-blue Heron** casually rode atop a pile of kelp.

As we readied to depart for Fort Ebey, a small covey of

California Quail crossed the road. The trail to Pondilla Lake produced a nice mixed flock of **Golden-crowned** and **Ruby-crowned Kinglets**, **Brown Creepers** and **Chestnut-backed Chickadees**. A flock of noisy **Red Crossbills** alighted in a tree top near the trail, giving us good views of these finches.

Pondilla Lake had **Ring-necked Ducks** and several **scaup**, **goldeneyes** and **Mallards**. Other species noted included **Common Raven**, **Varied Thrush** and **Northern Flicker**.

A total of 39 bird species were tallied. Mammals included **harbor seal**, **sea lion** and **Douglas squirrel** on this half-day trip.

— Steve Ellis, Trip Leader

Dan's Blog: That Bird Isn't Croaking

by Dan Pedersen with Craig and Joy Johnson, #275, pedersen-writes.blogspot.com/2017/12/275-that-bird-isnt-croaking.html.

Editor's note: *Dan's Blog* is published every Saturday morning. From time to time he partners with Craig and Joy Johnson to write about birds. For more, including additional photography, click on this link: www.pedersenwrites.blogspot.com. If you'd like to be added to Dan's email list to receive the link to the latest post each week, write to Dan Pedersen at dogwood@whidbey.com.

At first glance it might look like this Northern Flicker is dying in the yard of my blog partners, Craig and Joy Johnson.

“It's really not keeling over,” Craig says. “It's just sunbathing. Like many birds, it leans all the way over to one side and then all the way back the other way to maximize the sun on both sides of its body. The sun is hot so its beak is open to help with cooling.”

After the dark, wet and stormy November we just had in the Pacific Northwest, the sun broke out this week and Craig thought readers could use some sunny images to lift their spirits.

“Northern Flickers are ant-eaters, and they use their time on



Photo by Craig Johnson

Northern Flicker

Dan's Blog, from [page 7](#)

the ground to multi-task," Craig says. "They spread their wings and let ants crawl all over them, which helps with mite control since the ants carry formic acid. When they're all done with their bath of sun and ants, then they eat the ants."

Birds do most of their sunning in the summertime, but will sun themselves for shorter periods on a winter day, too, Craig adds. This is one of the ways they condition their feathers.

Birds feel safe relaxing and acting a bit goofy in Craig and Joy's yard, since there are no cats or other terrestrial predators to threaten them. In the summer the birds often scratch the earth loose to make dust baths, the shallow depressions or bald spots many people find on the edges of their back yards, Joy says.

"In our yard, they often sunbathe right next to the brushy edge," Joy says. "When they get too hot, they get up and dash into the shade. This also gives them a quick refuge if they see a hawk or other threat approaching."



In addition to the birds that sun themselves on the ground,

A Brown Creeper spreads its feathers to sunbathe on the bark of a fir tree.



Rufous Hummingbird turns its head upside down and spreads its wings for sun.



Photos by Craig Johnson

Anna's Hummingbird conserves heat and energy on a frigid Puget Sound day.

woods, I see Brown Creepers often, but never on the ground. This little bird's natural camouflage is so good it's almost invisible when plastered against the bark. It's hard enough for me to spot a creeper even when it's in motion, working its way up a tree trunk, hunting for bugs

See more of Craig Johnson's photos on Dan's Blog of December 9, 2017, #275, by following this link, pedersenwrites.blogspot.com/2017/12/275-that-bird-isnt-croaking.html.

Welcome New and Renewing Members

New

Jeri Gregory (Scholarship Fund)	Dave Allen
Jim Holmes	Victoria Aylward
Susan Berg (General Fund)	Nancy Gray
Jude Wiebmer	Alex Pulichino
Candace Haines (Spotted Towhee)	
Sarah MacDougall (Scholarship Fund)	
Tom Sparks and Flora Goldthwaite (Spotted Towhee gift from Sandra and Albert Martin)	

Renewing

Stu Ashley and Linda Dwight	Jay Adams
Mary Bloom (General Fund)	Baz Stevens and Sandra Towne
David and Sharon Winkel	Carla and Lenny Corin
Kate and Dave Krause	Emily Terao
Carlos and Toni Andersen	Robin Gardner
Lori Holt	Alice Lindahl
Robert and Traci York (Spotted Towhee)	
Vivian Stembridge (Scholarship Fund)	
Stephen and Janine Shelley (Spotted Towhee)	
Gary and Margie Parker (Spotted Towhee)	
Marie Shaw and Colleen Fox (Red-tailed Hawk)	
The Ruggiero Family (Spotted Towhee)	
Christine Sears (Scholarship Fund)	
Martha and Ed Hollis (Pigeon Guillemot)	
Miriam Nack (Scholarship Fund)	
Louise Abbott and Dave Earp (Red-tailed Hawk)	
Roy and Betty Branson (Spotted Towhee)	
Arthur Misner (Scholarship Fund)	
Sharon Gauthier and Tom Hyde (Red-tailed Hawk)	
Karen Johnson and Cynthia Barrett (Pigeon Guillemot)	
Peter Freund (Scholarship Fund)	
Tom and Sally Cahill (Red-tailed Hawk for Scholarship Fund)	

The expiration month for paper copies is on your address label. I will send email reminders to both regular and email subscribers.

— Linda Bainbridge, Membership Chair

Dates to Remember

JANUARY

- 11: Whidbey Audubon Program: *Bird Rehabilitation* with Dave Parent, DVM 7 p.m. Freeland
- 17: Field Trip: Ebey's Landing
- 18: Deadline for February *Shorelines*
- 25: WAS Board Meeting, Methodist Church, Coupeville. 7 p.m. Members welcome
- 27: Field Trip: Loons at Deception Pass

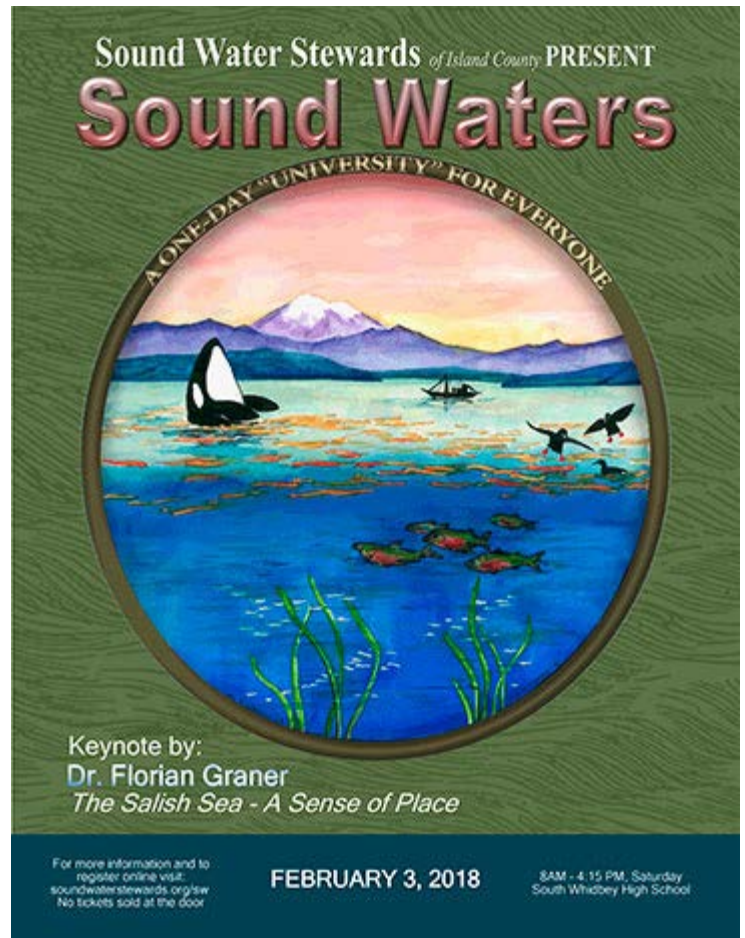
FEBRUARY

- 3: *Sound Waters*, Langley
- 6: Winter Raptor Class begins
- 8: Whidbey Audubon Program: *Bluebirds*. 7 p.m. Freeland
- 10: Field Trip: Crockett Lake
- 15: Deadline for March *Shorelines*
- 16 to 19 *Great Backyard Bird Count*
- 22: WAS Board Meeting. Greenbank Fire Station on Day Road. 7 p.m. Members welcome.
- 24: Field Trip: Winter Birds of Skagit Flats

MARCH

- 9: Scholarship applications due

Clicking on red text links to a website



Visit Whidbey Audubon's table, contact **Sharon Gauthier** if you can help

Click whale for more information about Sound Waters

Whidbey Audubon Society Membership

Please make your check payable to WHIDBEY AUDUBON SOCIETY (WAS)

Mail to: Linda Bainbridge, 4459 Towhee Lane, Greenbank, WA 98253

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- \$ _____ Additional Donation to be used for Scholarships

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_____ **SPECIAL INTRODUCTORY MEMBERSHIP** for first year National Members only. Receive a joint membership in National and Whidbey Audubon for one year for only \$35. **Make check payable to National Audubon.**

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