



# Shorelines

Newsletter of the Whidbey Audubon Society  
June 2017

*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 on Thursday, June 8 in Coupeville The Whidbey Audubon Society Celebrates 35 Years of Making a Difference

At our last meeting of the season, the members and friends of the Whidbey Audubon Society will celebrate the thirty-five-year history of our organization. The festivities start at 6 p.m. when an Open House begins that emphasizes our accomplishments and changes throughout the years. We will have tables set up manned by volunteers who will showcase our history through the activities of the Board of Directors and the various committees that include conservation, field trips, education, membership, publicity and newsletter, hospitality, website, citizen science, programs and the bird specimen library.

One of our most important goals is educating our members and the

### Join Us!

Thursday evening June 8  
Coupeville Recreation Hall  
901 NW Alexander Street

#### AGENDA

- 5:15** Hall open for set up. Volunteers welcome
- 6:00** Food set up, view history tables
- 6:30** Share Potluck Dinner, watch closed-loop slideshow of all of us in action over the past few years
- 7:15** Speaker Susan Starbuck, *Story of Hazel Wolf, Whidbey Audubon Society founder*
- 7:45** Award Presentation
- 8:00** Social Time

Please bring your own plates, glasses and utensils and food for 8 to 10 to share. Coffee, tea, juice and special birthday cake will be provided.

public. We have accomplished this goal by providing excellent programs monthly, creating and sustaining a Birds of Whidbey class (that is usually wait-listed a year in advance) and providing educational programs

in the community through the schools and other organizations that request them. We have also offered bimonthly field trips to a myriad of prime birding spots near and sometimes far. Over the years, some of our experienced birders have volunteered to share their knowledge in the field.

The newly-created specimen library has enhanced many of our educational programs and are usually the highlight of any presentation. Last year, an estimated 1,000 adults and children got an up close and personal look at our specimens. The biennial Bird in the Hand Program will expand into a bird festival in 2018.

Our citizen science projects have also been successful: The Christmas Bird Count now includes two regions and the Pigeon Guillemot Survey has received national recognition and has expanded into other counties. It also allows our members to spend a morning at the beach for a good cause.

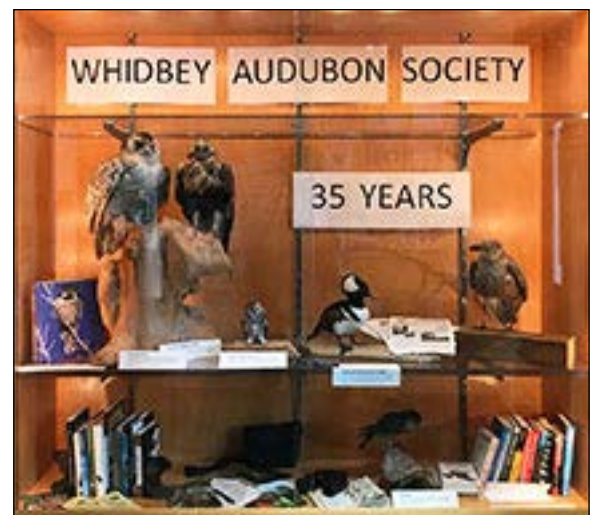


Photo by Sarah Schmidt

This display during the month of May at the Freeland Library illustrates all the things our local Audubon chapter does. Included are bird specimens, field guides, newsletters, brochures and a birder's notebook (Robin Llewellyn's). The creative team who assembled the display are Robin, Cheryl Bradkin and Sarah Schmidt.

**Celebrating 35 Years, see page 8**

## Getting to Know Your Board: Robin Llewellyn

ROBIN LLEWELLYN has been our Program Chair for 11 years. She will be leaving the Board of Directors next season, but will still be an active member through chairing the Bird Specimen Library and organizing the biennial Bird in the Hand educational event.

Here are Robin's thoughts on birding and her experiences with the Whidbey Audubon Society (WAS):

Some of my earliest memories are of watching birds. My father encouraged my budding enthusiasm by taking me on field trips. His idea of a field trip was to go out into hills and forests to look under rocks and logs for (...stuff). We always had field guides and binoculars and we always found the most amazing things. More than once we were followed by curious and not-so-curious cows. Once in a while we had to make a run for a big rock to hide behind until the coast was clear. Nature was exciting!

When asked about my favorite bird, I can honestly say... the one I'm looking at. I am constantly amazed at the adaptations for wings, feet, beaks, feathers and all those stripes, polka dots and iridescent colors.

One of my favorite places to bird is Skagit Flats in the winter. I love to watch the geese, swans, shorebirds and wide variety of raptors. I also like to watch the Osprey nests on SR525 outside Freeland. Which reminds me of the time that Jenny Brown and I met with Mel Walters and the utility people to take down an osprey nest on Race Road. I got to go up in a cherry picker [hydraulic crane — not avian] 100 feet to the platform and see the old nest and help prepare the start for the new one. Yes, it was scary, but I would do it again in a minute! What a view Osprey have in all directions! Great bird, too!

I began coming to WAS programs 12 years ago. What really caught my attention was a nighttime field trip to Pacific Rim to observe migrating birds on the radar with a Bird Aircraft Strike Hazard (BASH) prevention program used by the Navy. Matt Klope explained the night migration pattern of thousands of birds. I had no idea there were so many up there that night even though we could hear the Snow Geese calling each other as they passed in the darkness. I was hooked! It would not be the last time that Matt would inspire me.

When I first joined WAS it was a small but vibrant organi-

zation with lots of potential. I liked the dedicated people and what they were trying to achieve. I wanted a job and decided to fill the long-unfilled position of Program Chairperson. I knew nothing about the job or Audubon. I was intimidated but excited.

At that time attendance was usually about 25 to 45 people and the last one before I started, there were only seven. Now we have an average attendance of 80 and standing room only of 110 is not unusual. At the last Bird in the Hand event we had 450.

I have very much enjoyed the creativity of developing programs over the past 11 years. I believe that they are one of the ways WAS can bring the joy and love of birds to the community. What we love we protect. Public education has become a passion of mine. I also enjoyed meeting the speakers and learning from them. So now after close to 110 speakers, it is time for me to retire from doing programs. Looking back I see a number of things this wonderful organization has allowed me to do that I feel good about: adding the month of June to our program year, initiating the yearly board retreat, the Bird in the Hand event, the Excellence Award, the Recognition Dinner, the Backyard Wildlife Fair, the 25th Anniversary party and creation of the Bird Specimen Library along with Matt Klope, Sarah Schmidt, Sharon Gauthier and Cheryl Bradkin.

In the future I look forward to developing Bird in the Hand into a biennial bird festival. I also look forward to working with the Bird Specimen Library Committee to provide the community with an up close and personal way to connect with birds. It's all about connecting people and nature and it's exciting and fun.



Photo by Sara or George Gray

Robin Llewellyn is flanked by Bird in the Hand volunteers, Andrew, a guest falconer, and Sooja Nehrlich, during the September 2016 event held at the Bayview Farm and Garden Greenhouse.

## Shopping for Graduation Presents?

Help Whidbey Audubon at no extra cost to you! Whidbey Audubon Society is registered to receive donations from Amazon through a program called AmazonSmile.

Details were provided in the September newsletter, but Amazon has just made it easier to select Whidbey Audubon by providing the following unique link:

[smile.amazon.com/ch/80-0488910](https://smile.amazon.com/ch/80-0488910)

This link will take you to *smile.amazon.com* and will ask if you'd like to support Whidbey Audubon Society.

Bookmark and use your link so you don't accidentally shop at *amazon.com* instead of *smile.amazon.com*. Only purchases made at *smile.amazon.com* are eligible for donations.



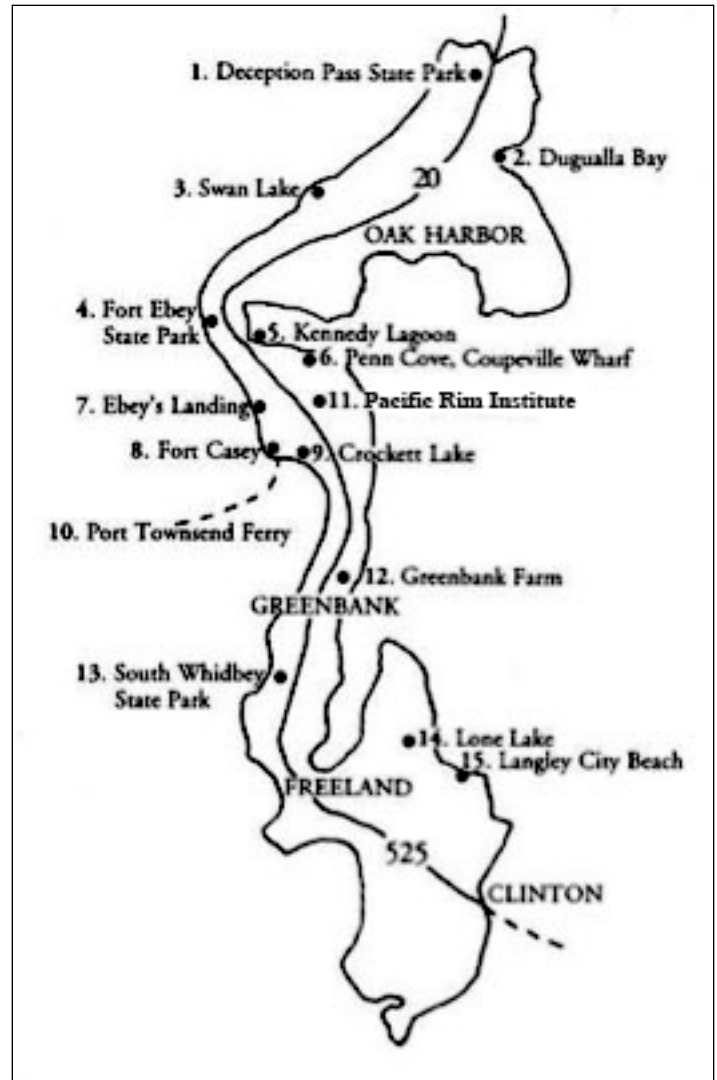
## Upcoming Field Trips

**Saturday, June 24: PIGEON GUILLEMOT COLONY.** Meet at the Trinity Lutheran Church parking lot in Freeland at 8 a.m.

**Note:** No other field trips are scheduled for the summer. However, check out some of Whidbey's special birding spots that are listed on our website ([www.whidbeyaudubon.org](http://www.whidbeyaudubon.org)):

## Whidbey Audubon Society's Guide to 15 Special Spots

- 1. Deception Pass State Park:** Off 20. Old growth forest, wetland, rocky/sandy shore, lakes, tide pools. Loons, grebes, murrelets, other waterfowl, eagles, kingfishers, warblers, swallows.
- 2. Dugualla Bay & Lake:** From Hwy 20, East on Frostad Rd, North on Dike Road. Sheltered bay, mud flats, brackish lake. Swans, dabbling ducks including canvasbacks, other waterfowl, wading birds.
- 3. Swan Lake, Joseph Whidbey State Park:** From Hwy 20, West on Swantown Road to West Beach Road. Rocky/sandy beach, freshwater lake, cattail marsh. Eagles, harriers, wading birds, loons, grebes, sea ducks including harlequin ducks, dabbling ducks, oystercatchers, yellowthroats, marsh wrens.
- 4. Fort Ebey State Park:** From Hwy 20, West on Libbey Road, and South on Hill Valley Road. Second growth forest, thickets, lake, high bluff, beach. Seabirds and waterfowl, kingfisher, crossbill, woodpeckers, other forest birds including nuthatch, creeper, kinglets.
- 5. Kennedy Lagoon:** From Hwy 20, E on Madrona Way. Sheltered lagoon. Kingfishers, waterfowl including hooded mergansers, goldeneyes, bufflehead, scaup, scoters.
- 6. Penn Cove, Coupeville Wharf:** From Hwy 20, North on Main St, West on Front Street Large saltwater cove. Kingfishers, herons, loons, goldeneyes, bufflehead, scaup, pigeon guillemots. Look for river otters, harbor seals, jellyfish and sea stars.
- 7. Ebey's Landing:** From Hwy 20, SW on Ebey Road High and low bluff, beach, farm fields, hiking trail. Loons, grebes, waterfowl, meadowlarks, blackbirds, raptors.
- 8. Fort Casey:** From Hwy 20, South on Main St, becoming Engle Road. Rocky beach, forest. Loons, grebes, auklets, guillemots, mergansers, gulls, great horned owls, passerines including chickadees, nuthatches, creepers, winter wrens, warblers.
- 9. Crockett Lake:** Adjacent to Fort Casey (see #8). Brackish lake, large sandy spit, open bay. Lakeside: abundant wading birds, waterfowl, eagles, harriers, peregrine falcons, other raptors. On spit: swallows, savannah sparrows. Open bay: auklets, cormorants, guillemots.
- 10. Port Townsend Ferry:** Adjacent to Fort Casey (see above). Take a break and walk aboard the ferry for 30 minutes each way on the water. Cormorants, loons, grebes, gulls, guillemots, murrelets. Watch for sea lions and harbor seals.



- 11. Pacific Rim Institute for Environmental Stewardship:** From Hwy 20 S of Coupeville, North on Parker Road. Open prairie and fringing woods. White-crowned and savannah sparrows, swallows, harriers, kestrels, eagles, woodpeckers, occasional western bluebirds.
- 12. Greenbank Farm:** From Hwy 525, East on Wonn Road. Open grassland, cattail marsh, farm pond, viewing platform. Harriers, eagles, red tailed hawks, yellowthroats, marsh wrens, red-winged blackbirds, swallows, herons, waterfowl.
- 13. South Whidbey State Park:** From Hwy 525, West on Smugglers Cove Road. Old growth forest, beach. Osprey, varied thrush, woodpeckers, swallows, passerines including

**Birding Spots, see page 9**



# Sightings Sightings Sightings Sightings Sightings

**April 29: Turkey Vulture** flying over Deception Pass.

— *Ruth Scrivner*

**May 2:** A juvenile **Golden Eagle** made a brief appearance flying over the west dike this afternoon. Location: Deer Lagoon. — *Darwin Wile*

**May 5:** Got home from the Owyhee River last night and woke up to the sounds of **robins** and an **Olive-sided Flycatcher**. It's good to be home! Location: In Greenbank off Towhee Lane.

— *Linda Bainbridge*

**May 5:** With profound apologies to my two marvelous teammates, I feel compelled to report (unfortunately after we have completed our own "big day") two **Marbled Godwits** (in sparkling breeding plumage) which are listed as rare in the fall and nonexistent otherwise on the Audubon bird list. Location: off west dike, Deer Lagoon. — *Darwin Wile*

**May 5:** Two **Marbled Godwit**, two **Long-billed Curlew**, and nine **Whimbrel** Location: East Dike, Deer Lagoon. The Long-billed Curlews were seen from the West looking east.

— *Joe Sheldon, Dave and Travis Parent and Jay Adams*

**May 5:** Male **Western Tanager** at the edge of the woods with some **warblers**. Location: At my home near Goodell Road, Freeland.

— *Louie Shellenberger*

**May 6:** The male and female **Black-headed Grosbeak!** Location: Fifth and Luhn in Langley. — *Lecky Harrison*

**May 6:** A **Red Knot** in full breeding plumage was on an islet in Swan Lake along with some **Black-bellied Plovers**, **Dunlin** and a **Long-billed Dowitcher**. — *Steve Ellis*

**May 6:** We watched a **Short-eared Owl** come up out of the driftwood logs and tall grass at Long Point. The bird flew a foot or two above the water as it crossed the mouth of Penn Cove despite a strong crosswind! It didn't seem to be laboring, just advancing steadily. — *Steve Ellis*

## ***Pelicans Return!***

**May 7:** Five **White Pelicans** circling Deer Lagoon this morning! — *Betty Branson*

**May 7:** Three **White Pelicans** on beach in Useless Bay (Sunrise Beach Road).

— *Darwin Wile*

**May 7:** At around 8:30, I saw and photographed five **American White Pelicans** as they flew around the marsh side of the Deer Lagoon area for a few minutes before circling high and flying off into the distance straight north. At around 10:30, I saw four more flying in from the bay and once again, straight over the marsh, flying high in the area for about 10 minutes before landing in the marsh behind some vegetation, their most favorite spot last year. Later, I saw the four swimming near the southwest corner of the marsh, but I was not able to find them an hour later when I returned.

— *George Heleker*

**May 7:** **American Golden-Plover** seen at Crockett Lake along with a flock of **Western Sandpipers** and some **Killdeer**. Seen by Janet Hall, Dyanne Sheldon, Maribeth Crandell and Sarah Schmidt and identified with scope with the help of Matt Bartells.

— *Sarah Schmidt*

**May 7:** Two **Chipping Sparrows** Location: Main parking

lot area at Pacific Rim Institute. — *Joe Sheldon*

**May 7:** **Black-headed Grosbeak** pair arrived at our feeders.

**May 8:** A **Western Tanager** male arrived at our feeders. Location: Log Cabin Road near Cultus Bay Road in Clinton.

— *George and Lynne Jensen*

**May 11:** Eighteen **White Pelicans** at Deer Lagoon Second count totals 17 White Pelicans, all of them breeding adults. They are congregated on the flats beneath the bluffs along Soundview Drive; visible easily from both dikes.

— *Darwin Wile*

**May 11:** **Chipping Sparrows** nesting in birdhouse. Location: Whales Run, Coupeville.

— *Patty Blouin*

**May 11:** **White Pelicans**. Location: Useless Bay (Sunlight Beach.) — *Charlie Childs*

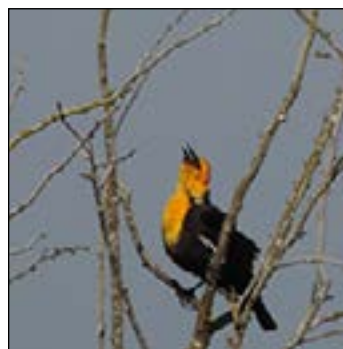


Photo by Gideon Seraphine

Yellow-headed Blackbird

**May 12:** I was at the Apollo Road cul-de-sac of Lone Lake when I heard and saw a male **Yellow-headed Blackbird** sitting on top of a tree, singing away. Although it's not "Rare," it is listed as "Occasional", and this is my first sighting of one.

— *Gideon Seraphine*

**May 15:** **Western Tanager**, both male and female in a tree close to my house. Male chas-

ing female for a good five minutes. Location: Dugualla Bay.

— *Ruth Scrivner*

**May 13:** **Great Egret** at Lone Lake, from the Apollo Road cul-de-sac. We didn't find the Yellow-headed Blackbird we hoped for, but along with the **Mallards**, **Shovelers** and **Green-winged Teal** in the neighboring field was the great egret. It flew away to the north. — *Sarah Schmidt*

**May 15:** **Sora**. Calling out from wetlands near road. Location: Freeland, east side of Double Bluff Road before Newman in Wetland area.

— *Carlos Andersen*

**May 17:** **Blue-winged Teal** male. Location: Hastie Lake, going west from Hwy 20, pond on right after third 90 degree turn. — *Brooks Allen*

**May 18:** **Western Tanager** sited sitting on tip of a tree on the bluff just north of the Clinton Ferry. Sat there for about five minutes before flying into the evergreen trees.

— *Doug Brand*

**May 19:** Three **Bank Swallows** flying together. Nesting here or just passing through? Location: Bluff at end of Greenbrier Lane. — *Dave Parent*



Photo by Linda McFarlane

Red Crossbill with three fledglings.

**May 20:** Spotted a male **Red**

**See Sightings, page 6**

## Whidbey Audubon Society 2017 Scholarship Awards

The Whidbey Audubon Scholarship Committee has selected three high school seniors for Whidbey Audubon Conservation Scholarship awards. A total of \$4,000 is being awarded, of which the first grant is \$2,000 and the two additional grants are \$1,000 each. The students will be attending four-year colleges/universities, where each plans to major in a conservation-related field. They have all participated in mul-

iple environmental activities on Whidbey Island during their high school years.

These young women were recognized and honored at Whidbey Audubon Society's May meeting. Their Bios may be found on the Whidbey Audubon Society website.

— Ann Sullivan, Scholarship Chair



**Alexis Otto**, Coupeville High, Environmental Studies and Outdoor Education



**Bailey Armos**, South Whidbey High, Environmental Science



**Bree Daigneault**, Coupeville High, Marine Biology and Communications

## Guillemot Research Group 2017 Research Internship

We are happy to announce that Caitlyn Connolly will be working with the Guillemot Research Group (GRG) for detailed monitoring of Pigeon Guillemots this summer, beginning in June.

Caitlyn is a graduate of Coupeville High School and a past recipient of the Whidbey Audubon Scholarship in 2014. Caitlyn is currently enrolled in Unity College in Maine, majoring in Captive Wildlife Care and Education and Environmental Policy, Law, and Society. She will be a senior when she returns to college in the fall.

Caitlyn has previous experience in avian research: recording growth data, measuring and banding of songbirds. She is ex-

cited to be learning about Pigeon Guillemots and we are happy to have her as part of the team.

### Pigeon Guillemot Days

We are celebrating Guillemot Appreciation Day with the following events:

**Friday June 23**, 3 to 5 p.m. — Family friendly happy hour at Ott & Murphy in Langley. Wine, snacks, guillemot crafts, and a chance to learn about the Guillemot Research Group.

**Saturday June 24: Field Trip** — Meet at the parking lot of Trinity Lutheran Church in Freeland at 8 a.m. to carpool to a nearby Pigeon Guillemot colony.



Photo by Govinda Rosling

Pigeon Guillemot

### Update: Deer Lagoon Parking

The Useless Bay Colony Board has decided that the members of Whidbey Audubon will not be allowed an exception to park at the east side of Deer Lagoon (near the pumping station). That access is limited to Useless Bay residents and their guests. Signs stating "No Parking" will be posted.



Please park at the Sunlight Beach Road end of the dike. Parking is limited there, so please park legally.

## Sightings, from page 4

**Crossbill** with three fledglings. They were feeding off of the new pine cone buds at the Pacific Rim Institute on the outer walkway from the farm to the woods where the pine trees are located. The fledglings were waiting to be fed. Crossbills have not been known to nest on Whidbey Island but the birds were young, unafraid and it was easy to get close to the four of them. I did not see a female.

— *Linda McFarlane*

**[Sightings Editor's note:** Red Crossbills *are* known to nest on Whidbey, but what a neat behavior, seeing them feeding on the new pine cone buds! Red Crossbills are unusual in that they may breed any time of year. *AllAboutBirds.org* says, "The Red Crossbill is so dependent upon conifer seeds it even feeds them to its young. Consequently, it can breed anytime it finds a sufficiently large cone crop, even in the depths of winter."]

**May 21:** Today is the fourth in a row that I have been unable to find a single shorebird in Deer Lagoon, although another birder put me onto a **Greater Yellowlegs** and a **Spotted Sandpiper** next to the path leading up to the west dike. Also a pair of **Blue-winged Teal**.

A question: there is a female **Purple Finch** singing constantly and robustly this morning at and around my feeder. I know female *carpodacus* (a genus of finches including the purple finch and house finch) finches sing. But this one is acting like a male in female clothing. I'm wondering if this could be a first-year male singing??? — *Darwin Wile*

**May 22:** Just saw two **White Pelicans** land on Deer Lagoon. Was wondering if they would be back this year, guess they are returning. Last year, the flock was so large, we lost count around 40+! Also, spotted a

very large **Golden Eagle** (not a juvenile bald) on Shore Avenue, down near Double Bluff Park about three weeks ago. Have been on vacation for two weeks, so have not seen him since. Location: end of Shore Avenue east of Double Bluff Park. — *Cathy Donckers*

**May 22:** Cathy's two pelicans still there on fresh water side of west dike, Deer Lagoon.

— *Darwin Wile*

**May 23:** A **beaver** hanging out on the beach just north of the Bush Point boat launch.

— *Gergis Maximus*

**May 24: White Pelicans.** Earlier today about three dozen birds joined the two that were already there. They congregated on a couple small islands on the fresh water side of the west dike. Most of the morning the two birds that had already been there remained separate (one with breeding protuberance, the other not). About 11 a.m. they joined the new ar-

rivals. They all were a distance away — difficult to see details, but I think more than half of them were breeding age birds.

— *Darwin Wile*

**Please post sightings** to, the *Whidbey Audubon Society* (WAS) website. There are now designated spaces to submit your information, such as, what you saw, where you saw it and the date and approximate time. These changes are meant to enhance the sightings reports and will be helpful for our readers. Although we are asking those who post to leave a phone number or email address with your sighting, WAS will not include this information on the actual "Sightings" page. Thank you!

Keep up with "Sightings" on the WAS website, on your mobile device at [www.m.whidbeyaudubon.org](http://www.m.whidbeyaudubon.org) or on our *Whidbey Audubon Society Facebook* page.

## Purple Martins on Whidbey Need Homes

The Lagoon Point Western Purple Martins returned in force and are running out of housing. In addition to the three adult males and two females in the picture, there are three more males on the top of the pole. More birds wait at the neighbors, and the pre-adults have yet to arrive. I can't manage any more housing, so would encourage other folks to get involved. They can read the Fact Sheet "Purple Martins" on the *Whidbey Audubon website*, or email me ([maryhollen@whidbey.com](mailto:maryhollen@whidbey.com)) if they still have questions. Jay Adams and Ruth Richards



Photo by Mary Hollen

In addition to the three adult males and two females in the picture, there are three more males on the top of the pole.

are building and installing more boxes at Crockett Lake. The boxes are the really sustainable housing from the bird's perspective (as opposed to plastic gourds) and Jay and Ruth have extra

boxes available.

Jay Adams and Ruth Richards responded, "Mary is right. A group of us built some boxes modeled on those at Crockett Lake. We put up two new boxes at the current Crockett Lake site and will rehang the remaining old one once the water level has dropped. Thanks to the Land Trust, we will also be installing two new boxes at the north end of the line of Crockett Lake pilings. Finally, we intend to check on the status of boxes said to be at Possession

Point. Depending on what happens there, we would be glad for any informed suggestions regarding possible locations for new boxes. There are something like eight boxes at Cornet Bay."

— *Mary Hollen*



## Conservation Column: Deer/Bird Connection

On the island, we see deer everywhere — cute fawns with their mothers, rare white deer, big-antlered stags, large herds of deer at Fort Casey and downtown Coupeville. Most of us have heard that feeding deer is bad. Bad for the deer, bad for those of us who encounter a deer in the roadway, bad for our gardens and carefully chosen plantings. But did you know that there is science that says feeding deer is bad for the birds?

In a study in Britain, it was discovered that certain species of songbirds declined in areas that had rising deer populations. Deer and songbirds? But deer eat a lot of low shrubbery and vegetation that many species use for nesting. The more deer, the less shrubbery and low vegetation. Anyone who has wondered about oddly-shaped *arbor vitae* on Whidbey Island will soon discover that deer browse them as high as they can reach. The plants live without lower branches for a while, but usually die. No nests there! A study of birds and deer on 57 Haida Gwaii islands off British Columbia noted that as deer numbers increased, fewer bird species were found, and fewer total birds. Rufous Hummingbird, Orange-crowned Warbler, Pacific Wren, Fox Sparrow, Song Sparrow and Swainson's Thrush were the most impacted species.

Another bad deer/bird connection is less likely to impact us on Whidbey, but is happening everywhere deer hunting is common. Even though lead shot is no longer widely used, birds, especially raptors and vultures, are being poisoned by lead-jacketed bullets. When deer (or elk or moose) are field-dressed, the remains left behind often contain bullet fragments, which are consumed by scavengers. Copper-jacketed bullets are available but not widely used, because most guns have to be retooled to use them. Lead poisoning in big birds doesn't always kill outright, but can damage the birds' brains and nervous systems and make them physically and mentally slower and less successful at breeding and hunting.

Everything is connected. Keep trying to convince your neighbors that feeding the deer is not a good idea. Maybe explaining the deer/bird connection will help!

— Kim Shepard, Conservation Chair

Here are some sources for this article: The first study was published in 2005, it is [www.scientificamerican.com/article/deer-decreasing-forest-bi/](http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/deer-decreasing-forest-bi/). A more recent update is [www.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/ddi.2016.22.issue-3/issuetoc](http://www.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/ddi.2016.22.issue-3/issuetoc).

## Birdathon Results: Coupevillains Squeak By the All-for-Knots

The Birdathon provides an excellent snapshot of species on Whidbey Island in early May.

During the 2017 Birdathon, a total of 164 species were sighted by six dedicated birding teams. It was close, but the Coupevillains edged out the 2016 winners, All-for-Knot, by three species, for a total of 133 species sighted over a 24 hour period! At the May Audubon meeting, the golden Binoculars Trophy was presented to Coupevillain team leader Steve Ellis (with team members Bill Bradkin, Sandy Shields, and Martha Ellis). Congratulations, Coupevillains!

An exciting aspect of the Birdathon is that each team sees birds that may be a first for them personally or that weren't seen by the other teams. Some new and unusual sightings include the **Yellow-headed Blackbird, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Marbled Godwit, American White Pelican, Red Knot, American Golden Plover, Evening Grosbeak, Willet and Short-eared Owl.**

## Craig and Joy Johnson

Throughout the years, Craig and Joy Johnson have been tireless advocates for birds and other wildlife. They have been especially generous to Whidbey Audubon, donating their time and talents through their photographs, brochures, books and DVDs.

As many of you know, Craig has been struggling with serious medical issues for many years now, and he and Joy need our help.

If you would like to lend your support, please email Linda Bainbridge at [lkgbirder@gmail.com](mailto:lkgbirder@gmail.com) or call her at 360-331-5948.

The Willet, Red Knot, Marbled Godwit and American Golden Plover are not currently on the *Birds of Whidbey Island Checklist* for the March to May period, which was updated last November 2016. The 2017 birdathon results,



Photo by Prescott

Steve Ellis accepts the coveted Golden Trophy award for the most species observed during the 2017 Birdathon. Looking on are Linda Perry Dwight, former Birdathon chair, and Kathy Obersinner, Birdathon chair.

along with the last four years of statistics, will be posted to the website under "Stewardship" in the new format. During this period, a total of 190 species have been observed!

Team leaders are still collecting and submitting pledges and donations. At this point \$4,516.10 has been deposited, with \$2,214 for the scholarship fund and \$2,327.10 for the general fund. Thanks to all team leaders for their great birding and fundraising, with kudos to The Wild Women of Whidbey for raising over \$1, 800 thus far!

## Birding in the Neighborhoods North Visits Lake Pondilla

**May 10:** You never know what you will see or hear on the Lake Pondilla loop at Fort Ebey State Park. The lake and forest may be empty or full depending on the season, and even the salt water beach can be a surprise. Today the forest was a feast for the ears. We heard both **Eurasian-collared** and **Mourning Doves**, **Chickadees**, and **Olive-sided** and **Willow Flycatchers**. **Robins**, **Song Sparrows**, **Red-breasted Nuthatches** and **Pacific Wrens** added their songs and calls. Turning to the sound of wing beats we spied an **Anna's Hummingbird**, landing briefly on her nest. The lake was quiet except for a noisy **Belted Kingfisher**. The beach was unusually empty except for an occasional **Gull**, **Black Oystercatcher** and **Pigeon Guillemot**. The most

unexpected sighting was that of a little **Pine Siskin**, perching on some vegetation by the water. A successful outing with 32 species seen or heard.

— *Marcia Lazoff*

**Birding in the Neighborhoods (BIN) North** meets the second Wednesday of the month at 9 a.m. Contact Marcia Lazoff at [mlazoff@comcast.net](mailto:mlazoff@comcast.net) to find out the location.

## BIN South Visits Deer Lagoon, Lone Lake and State Park

**May 11:** Just beating the weather out at Deer Lagoon this morning, we saw and/or heard 49 species — including ... drum roll.... “our” **American White Pelicans!** We observed an immature **Eagle** chase one of them off over to the Sunlight Beach side. Then after hanging around the east side, near the bluff, the remaining 16 flew up and over us at the west dike, where we could easily see that most of the individuals sported their breeding bill-bump. Seeing them was certainly the highlight, and made up for not seeing the Long-billed Curlews that have been out there. Plenty of **Whimbrels**, though.

In case anyone was wondering, at least the **Yellow Warblers** have decided spring is here.

**May 25:** A glorious day with a nice group out at the Lone Lake boat launch, where we all enjoyed the antics on the multi-species condo snag. We then headed up to the South Whidbey State Park, strolling around the campground area, hearing — emphasis on “hearing” — **vireos, warblers, flycatchers, finches** and **Swainson's Thrush**. Thanks to Sarah's excellent ear, we distinguished a few more species, and spied a **flycatcher** in and out of a nest on the end of a branch of a fir 100 feet up! We saw and/or heard 49 species.

The next BINS will be June 8.

— *Cathi Bower, Bird early – Bird often*

**BIN South** meets every other Thursday. The time varies with the season. Contact Cathi Bower at [whidbird@whidbey.com](mailto:whidbird@whidbey.com).

## Celebrating 35 Years, from page 1

This special evening will also include the presentation by Ann Casey of the Whidbey Audubon Excellence Award to Phyllis Kind and Frances Wood for their work with the Pigeon Guillemot project. This award is given in recognition for outstanding contributions in advancing the mission of Whidbey Audubon Society which *is dedicated to the understanding, appreciation and conservation of birds, other wildlife and their habitats on Whidbey Island and surrounding waters.*

**Note:** There will be no meetings or newsletters in July and August.

*Happy Summer Birding!*

## Plant Natives, Help Birds

I want to share an excerpt from the most recent *Audubon* magazine from National Audubon Society. In my eighteen years on Whidbey, I am saddened to see how often home owners clear out native brush and trees to “prettify” their property. I can only think much of it is from ignorance and adherence to cultural norms. Wouldn't it be great if we could change those norms? We do so much more to help birds if we preserve and restore the habitat they need:

*If you plant it, the birds will come. Such is the growing mantra among ecologists, environmentalists, and now, the birding masses as well. But is it true? The short answer is yes. Native plants give birds the resources they need during migration, over frigid winters, and through nesting season. Did you know that 96 percent of land birds feed insects and spiders to their chicks? A single nest of chickadee babies may scarf down as many as 9,000 caterpillars before fledging. Native oak trees host the caterpillars of more than 557 types of butterflies and moths. Non-native Ginkgo trees? Only five. Plus, sharing your home with birds can make you a better birder. You get a front-row seat to their interactions and life cycle, which in turn will boost your understanding and experiences in the field.”* — Tod Winston, *Audubon*, Spring 2017, p. 44.

Here are some resources, click the red for a hotlink to the site:

- [National Audubon Society](#) searchable database of bird-friendly native plants for your region
- [Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife](#), extensive resources for landscaping for wildlife
- [Washington Native Plant Society](#)
- [The Pollinator Partnership](#), regional guides to selecting plants for pollinators

Maybe through our own choices and by spreading the word to family and friends, we can slow the loss of bird habitat on Whidbey Island.

— *Sarah Schmidt*



## Birding Spots, see [page 3](#)

nuthatches, creepers, winter wrens.

**14. Lone Lake:** From Hwy 525, North on Bayview Rd, then West on Anderson Road, then South on Lone Lake Road. Lake, woodlot, thickets. Steller's jay, bushtit, quail, waterfowl including mergansers, shovelers, scaup, bufflehead.

**15. Langley City Beach and Marina:** Beach access off First Street and Marina at East end of Wharf Street. Saltwater, thickets. Loons, grebes, cormorants, eagles, waterfowl in-

cluding mergansers, scoters. Look for harbor seals, gray whales in spring. Sea stars, jellyfish visible from marina pier.

## Dates to Remember

### JUNE

**8: Whidbey Audubon Society's 35th Birthday Celebration and Pot Luck,** Coupeville

**10 or 11: Sounds of Summer Birds,** 8 a.m. Padilla Bay  
*www.padillabay.gov*

**23: Guillemot Appreciation Day** 3 to 5 p.m., Langley

**24: Field Trip: Pigeon Guillemot colony,** 8 a.m.

### JULY

No events scheduled

### AUGUST

No events scheduled

### SEPTEMBER

**14: Whidbey Audubon Program,** 7 p.m.

**15 to 17: Puget Sound Birdfest,** Edmonds

## Welcome New and Renewing Members

### New

Olof Sander

### Renewing

Steve Ferronato and Sue Sato

Lea Kouba

Lydia Robb

Kathy Stella

Jill Hein

Claudia George

Diane and John McClaine

Alexander William

Margaret Elphick

Ann Linnea and Christina Baldwin (Spotted Towhee)

Bob and Lynda Blakely (Pigeon Guillemot)

Barbara and Mark Jabbusch (Spotted Towhee)

Janet Hall and Nicole Luce (Spotted Towhee)

Deb and Tony Schiro (Spotted Towhee and Scholarship Fund)

Jim Somers and Melissa Merickel (Spotted Towhee)

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

—Linda Bainbridge, Membership Chair

## 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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