

Family Picnic & Birdwalk to Evergreen Arboretum

December 8, 2019

By Jonathan Blubaugh

On December 8th Pilchuck Audubon Society, Academia Latina, and the North Sound Birders' Meetup visited Evergreen Arboretum & Gardens and Legion Park in Everett for a picnic and birdwalk.

Academia Latina leader, Rosamaria Graziani, informed me that we 28 participants. I'm not sure if that included the PAS and Meetup contingents. We had about seven people from meetup plus myself and PAS Treasurer, Judy Hall in attendance as well.

As many of you know Legion Park is where Everett has held their Independence Day fireworks display, which I once briefly attended.

We had good weather for December in Washington, cool, mostly cloudy, and free of rain for the duration of the event. We started out in the arboretum, which I particularly enjoyed because many of the plantings are labeled. From there we also spied the neighbors' backyards for birds because the residents had feeder that were attracting a variety of winter birds. The arboretum also abuts a city golf course where a flock of Canada Geese announced their arrival with familiar honking.

Rosamaria, having set up feeders at her home as well, was excited to share the results. Along with the expected hummingbirds and usual backyard suspects she has also been feeding the crows. The crows are loyal and appreciative. Rosamaria shared that they had brought her shiny bobbles as gifts. We've heard of such behavior before on TV, but it was so cool to hear it firsthand! Please see the attached photo of her collected treasures bestowed upon her by her murder of crows.

After the gardens we kind of wandered apart. I went off in one direction towards ball fields beyond which we found our national symbol (Bald Eagle) calling loudly. They were perched just north of the park high in a tree with a commanding overview of the mouth of the Snohomish River. The park sits on a bluff with great vistas to the north and west where the Snohomish flows into the sea. Some of the others went the opposite way towards the west with its view of the harbor, city, Jetty Island, Hat Island, Possession Sound and Port Gardner. We doubled back and rejoined them. From the overlooks we added a few marine birds to our list. The chatter of a kingfisher far below alerted us to his presence as well as with a flock of Killdeer. There was some unwelcome noise from an off-road four-wheeler splashing through the mud on the Highway 529 right away below.

Next we returned to the gardens for those who missed them on the first go 'round. Photo ops and selfies also proved to be in order.

Here's a list of most of the birds we saw: forty Canada Geese, thirty Mallards, three feral pigeons, a pair of Anna's Hummingbirds, a dozen Killdeer, a Ring-Billed Gull, 34 Glaucous-

Winged Gulls, a Double-Crested Cormorant, a Cooper's Hawk, two Bald Eagles, the Belted Kingfisher, six crows, a Chestnut-Backed Chickadee, 54 European Starlings, 14 American Robins, three Dark-Eyed Juncos, and a Spotted Towhee. I also heard a couple of Black-Capped Chickadees, a Red-Breasted Nuthatch, a Song Sparrow, a Red-Winged Blackbird, & a Yellow-Rumped Warbler. All were uploaded to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology via the eBird mobile application.