



2015 Christmas Bird Count

by Duane Karna

The National Audubon Society's Christmas Bird Count, which began in 1900 as an alternative to Christmas Day bird hunts, is increasingly important. Not only does it document how land-use changes affect birds and the environment, but it is also useful in documenting the effects of climate change on North American bird populations. The data collected by observers over the past century also allow researchers, conservation biologists, and other interested individuals to study the long-term health and status of bird populations across North America. The data shows trends in the loss and gain of bird habitats and help identify environmental issues. For example, local trends in bird populations can signal an immediate environmental threat, such as contamination of water or aquatic life from pesticides, PCBs and other organochlorinated compounds.

The Pilchuck Audubon Society sponsors the 15-mile diameter Everett-Marysville and Edmonds Christmas Bird Counts that will occur on Jan. 1 and Dec. 20, respectively. The former count area is located between downtown Everett and Island Crossing, extending as far west as the SE tip of Camano Island, while the Edmonds count occurs in south Snohomish County, north King County, and the SE tip of Whidbey Island. Some great opportunities exist to join an existing team or start a new team. Boat surveys in the Snohomish River Delta and on marine waters (weather permitting) offer a unique opportunity to see waterfowl and sea birds not easily seen from shore. Counts are made on Camano, Ebey, Spencer, Jetty and Whidbey Islands but not on Gedney (Hat) Island in Possession Sound. Hat Island is open for someone, preferably a resident birder, to start a new team.

You can participate either by joining an existing group of birders covering one of the 28 areas or by independently counting birds at your feeders and in your yard. Also, there are presently one or two open positions for area leaders. New birders, whether experienced, intermediate or beginning are welcomed to join the counts. The CBC Compilers can direct you to one of these areas after knowing your interests and experience.

(Continued on page 4)

2015 Christmas Bird Count



Dark-eyed Junco
Photo by Annette Colombini

Please join us on one or both of our annual bird surveys.

Everett/Marysville -- January 1, 2015

Edmonds -- December 20, 2014

No participation fee

More information on this link:
pilchuckaudubon.org/index.cfm

For more information, call 425-252-0926 or email
president@pilchuckaudubon.org

SAVE THE DATE!



GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT

Training for the next Great Backyard Bird Count.

Will be held in January. Details will be in the January Profile.

February 13 through 16, 2015

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President's Message

By Kathleen Snyder, Pilchuck Audubon President

The October issue of National Audubon's newsletter had an article that caught my eye. It spoke to how professional conservationists keep up their morale when the problems on which they work seem insurmountable. This is something that all of us who are involved in environmental issues deal with constantly. I can't count the number of conversations with Pilchuck members I have had which start to head into doom and gloom. At some point, one or both of us say something to the effect of "I just cannot go there: I will be paralyzed with inaction if I do."

The article interviewed 7 prominent environmentalists for strategies to maintain positive energy in a negative "environment". Here is what they share:

Ron Swaisgood, *Director of Applied Animal Ecology at the San Diego Zoo Institute for Conservation Research* focuses on the successes that have been achieved and the knowledge that the world is a better place now than if nothing had been done.

Heidi Cullen, *Chief Scientist for Climate Central* draws inspiration from her colleagues who work just as tirelessly as she does and how by working together, we can tackle the challenge.

David Yarnold, *president and CEO of National*

Audubon, and Andrew Revkin, *environmental writer*, both use their hobbies of running and playing music (respectively) to de-stress.

James Shepperd, *San Diego Zoo*, and Mark Tercek, *The Nature Conservancy*, both mention getting out in nature to re-energize.

I find it helpful to limit the amount of news to which I listen, particularly around election time. And, of course, I always turn to the birds. What can be better to soothe, revive and restore than to go birding with friends in the beautiful Pacific Northwest?

Happy Holidays to all of our Pilchuck Audubon family and may 2015 bring much positive movement on the environmental issues that concern us all.

About Pilchuck Audubon Society



The Pilchuck Audubon *Profile*, official newsletter of Pilchuck Audubon Society, is published monthly.

Pilchuck Audubon Society (PAS) is a grass-roots environmental organization with members throughout Snohomish County and Camano Island, Washington.

Our mission is to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds and other wildlife for the benefit of earth's biological diversity.

Through education, advocacy, and community activism, PAS is committed to bringing people closer to wildlife in order to build a deeper understanding of the powerful links between healthy ecosystems and human beings, and to

encourage the involvement of our members in efforts to protect the habitat this wildlife depends upon for survival.

We serve as a local chapter of the National Audubon Society. PAS is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt, nonprofit organization incorporated in the state of Washington.

Newsletter Submissions

Submit articles to newsletter@pilchuckaudubon.org

or mail to 1429 Avenue D, PMB 198, Snohomish, WA 98290-1742.

Submissions must be received by the 15th of the month preceding publication. We reserve the right to edit.

To contact Pilchuck Audubon Society, call 425.252.0926.

The monthly *Profile* is available online at www.pilchuckaudubon.org

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Trip Calendar

Check our calendar at www.pilchuckaudubon.org for the latest information

Tuesday December 2 Smith & Spencer Islands

Meet at 8:00AM at Langus Riverfront Park, Everett. Go North on SR529 (Broadway) over the Snohomish River; turn right onto 28th Pl. NE. Follow signs to Langus Waterfront Park; continue past the park to a parking lot past the left curve in the road (under I-5 and just past the shell house and Everett Animal Shelter). Should see lots of waterfowl shorebirds and raptors. Walk the Langus Riverfront Trail, and Spencer Island. Lots of walking. Pack a Lunch.

Trip Leader: Virginia Clark [360-435-3750](tel:360-435-3750)

Tuesday, December 9 Lummi Flats

Meet at 8:00AM at Quilceda Village Walmart. Park away from store, to the east, near Quilceda Blvd. Short-eared Owl, Northern Harrier, Rough-legged Hawk, Northern Shrike and Snow Bunting are very likely. Pack a Lunch.

Trip Leader: Virginia Clark [360-435-3750](tel:360-435-3750)

Saturday, December 13 Corson Natural Area

Meet at 8:00AM at 10114- 54th Pl NE, Lake Stevens. Owned by the WA Dept of Fish & Wildlife but normally closed to the public, Corson will be the site for a half-day bird walk. Features ponds for waterfowl and barley field for upland birds.

Trip Leader: Al Elliott [360-659-3180](tel:360-659-3180)

Tuesday, December 16 Mountlake Hill

Meet at 8:00AM at the Lynnwood Walmart lot at 1400 164th St SW (I-5 Exit 183). This is one of the most productive birding areas in this vicinity. Many rarities have been observed here. If time allows we may visit Foster Island, Magnuson Park and other areas of North Lake Washington. Pack a lunch.

Trip Leaders: Art Wait [360-563-0181](tel:360-563-0181), Virginia Clark [360-435-3750](tel:360-435-3750)

Tuesday December 30 Samish Flats

Meet at 8:00AM at Quilceda Village Walmart. Park away from store, to the east, near Quilceda Blvd. Want to see what a premier winter birding area offers? Come along. Pack a lunch.

Trip Leader: Virginia Clark [360-435-3750](tel:360-435-3750)

Upcoming Events, Festivals, and Classes

Washington Ornithological Society

December 1

Seattle

Dennis Paulson, professor emeritus at University of Puget Sound, will talk about his recent trip to Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. Free and open to the public. Center for Urban Horticulture, UW campus, 3501 NE 41st St. <http://www.wos.org/meetings.html>

Native Plant Demo Garden

December 6

Edmonds

Join our volunteer group in weeding & cultivating at Edmonds Wildlife Habitat Native Plant Demonstration Garden. 10:00AM-1:00PM. Tools & refreshments provided. To sign up your green thumb, contact Susie Schaefer, 425-771-8165 or garden@pilchuckaudubon.org.

Laredo Birding Festival

February 4-7

Laredo, TX

Features the best birding hotspots and scenic South Texas ranches. Focus on the prized White-Collared Seedeater but there are hundreds of other avian beauties that nest throughout the unique river eco-system. Festival favorites are "Bird 'til You Drop" and "Birding on the Rio Grande". www.laredobirdingfestival.com.

Winter Wings Festival

February 12 - 15

Klamath Basin, OR

The Festival hosts 4-days of activities in Southern Oregon for birdwatchers, photographers and families. It includes field trips, workshops and speakers Richard Crossley & Jennifer Wu. Registration begins early December. <http://www.eaglecon.org/>

WANTED

SWIFT NIGHT OUT 2015 CHAIR



Photo by Kathleen Snyder

Pilchuck Audubon's biggest event of the year is in need of a new Chair for 2015. Swift Night Out draws over 1,200 people to enjoy food, kids' crafts, educational booths, and the spectacular vision of thousands of Vaux's Swifts entering the Wagner Chimney in Monroe. All the instructions plus an on-going, dynamic committee are at your disposal.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT KATHLEEN SNYDER at 425-971-8021

2015 Christmas Bird Count...

(Continued from page 1)

If you want to count at your feeder and in your yard, you will need to follow specific directions for conducting the count. These directions can be found <http://pilchuckaudubon.org/userfiles/file/CBC%20Directions%20for%20Home%20Counters.pdf>

The CBC Compilers are:

- Scott Atkinson (scottatkinson@hotmail.com, tel. 425-210-2716) for Everett/Maryville
- Duane Karna (karnadk@comcast.net, tel. 425-776-5756) for Edmonds

Each CBC will have a post-count potluck to share results and enjoy the evening. The Compilers will provide the location and time of this event.

Conservation News

By Allen Gibbs, Conservation Committee Chair

The **federal government Continuing Resolution** now funding federal operations ends December 11th. Among the many things of concern to conservationists at this annual "train wreck" between the Congress and the President is one "bad news item": It may be the end of the annual visitor/use permits charged by the National Park Service, the Forest Service, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, and Bureau of Reclamation. Loss of authority to sell these permits/passes will mean loss of earned funds which help pay for operation and maintenance of these agencies' recreation facilities. At the moment, there is an annual America the Beautiful permit sold for \$80, saving users millions if they visit these areas more than a few times a year. The Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest will lose over \$1 million dollars in 2015 for its recreation programs, if it loses authority to sell its NW Forest Pass which is accepted by all national forests in Oregon and Washington!

PAS members are encouraged to write personal letters/emails to our Members of Congress, urging them to vote **to extend the authorization (Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act of 2004) for the sales of the annual and daily permits to continue.** Status of the "lifetime" permits is unknown. These are the "Senior Pass" purchased once for \$10 for life, and the free "Access Pass" good for life, at all of the aforementioned agencies. **TIME TO WRITE IS NOW!!!** Authorization ends December 11th, 2014.

Recent Actions – PAS commented upon the WA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife's proposed **revision of the State Hydraulic Code rules.** The State Fish and Wildlife Commission adopted new rules which regulate

construction and other projects involving in and over water locations. The permit is to protect fish populations and habitat. Audubon WA hooked up with Sound Action in developing Audubon WA's comments. PAS drew from that letter for its own. Not all changes in the code are victories but there are some. Losses include a new type of Hydraulic Permit Action permit that allows work without a WDFW site visit or even site specific conditions being included in some permits. Something to track!

PAS has co-signed a comment letter sent to the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest concerning another **geothermal consent to lease scoping notice.** This applies to the Mt. Baker Ranger District where geothermal lease applications have been received but not issued over the years. Joan Poor and Kathy Johnson worked on a similar NEPA notice a couple years ago for the Skykomish Ranger District. Tom Uniack, Conservation Director, Washington Wild, has drafted a comment letter which PAS will co-sign along with other conservation and outdoor recreation groups.

Snohomish PUD is pumping out lots of technical reports associated with the **Sunset Fish Passage and Energy Project (FERC No. 14295).** This is the proposed hydro facility on the South Fork Skykomish River near Index which PAS has opposed. PAS is commenting on some, not all, of the reports which include noise, geotechnical, mollusks and raptor studies. Thanks to Joan Poor!

PAS submitted comments to the WA Fish and Wildlife Commission concerning the **Supplemental EIS 2015-2021 Game Management Plan,** which the commission may adopt in December. PAS supports "Objective 8 – Non-toxic Ammunition" section. The objective proposes to, "Reduce the availability and use of lead ammunition where lead poisoning of wild birds is problematic." Strategies include education of hunters and the general public about the availability of non-toxic ammunition alternatives and benefits of same to wildlife. There will also be a survey as to the availability of the non-toxic ammunition to hunters. While most birders want current bans of lead shot broadened very soon to include the hunting of all upland birds and mammals, the Commission will order surveys to assess hunter and public knowledge of the situations about where there are data and lots of anecdotal information. PAS will follow the Commission's effort to gain financing for the surveys and development of education programs, and support that financing in coming years.

Good News from Smart Growth

By Kristin Kelly, Smart Growth Director

On November 18th, the Snohomish County Planning Commission held a public hearing regarding amendments to the Multi-Family Residential Codes. The work of the county planning staff on these amendments is a great step forward. Not only will they open the door for more transit-oriented development along unincorporated portions of Highway 99 but they will also promote opportunities for this type of development along Highway 99 in Everett and Lynnwood.

The ordinance will require that Transfer of Development Rights credits be used for increased density (a win-win for building more affordable housing in areas served well by public transit) and for more protection of our county's farmland. During testimony at the public hearing the Master Builder's Association agreed about the benefits of increasing opportunities for more density in these areas but admit they are opposed to using the Transfer of Development Rights for protecting farmland. However, the Planning Commission agreed with us wholeheartedly and recommended the ordinance go forward without change.

The benefits are many for adoption of this ordinance. The Snohomish County Council will be making their decision in 2015.

Swans Return

by Martha Jordan, Trumpeter Swan Society

The recent severe Alaskan storm has driven waterfowl south. The swans, both Trumpeter and Tundra, have arrived back in good numbers.

Once again, the WA Department of Fish and Wildlife is tracking injuries and mortalities that happen to swans in a wide geographic area, especially Whatcom, Skagit, Snohomish, King and Island counties. If you see a sick, injured or dead swan, please take the time to note the exact location of the bird and then make a call to report the downed swan. It will be appreciated if you phone in the information as emails are often not read for many hours.

Power line strikes are a common cause of death for swans. If you see a swan under or near a power line, please write down the pole number (tag is on pole). This helps get the power company out to mark the lines to prevent further collisions which is good for the birds and good for power customers.

Due to budget restrictions within WDFW and only during the month of November, WDFW has asked me

To view the County's staff report regarding the Ordinance, click here <http://www.snohomishcountywa.gov/DocumentCenter/View/20636>

CREDIT FOR TAX DONATION!

To receive credit for a tax donation to Pilchuck Audubon in 2014, envelopes must bear a postmark of December 31, 2014, before midnight, or earlier.

Donations in envelopes with a 2015 postmark will receive credit in 2015. Thank you for your 2014 contributions.

Every bit helps!



Check out our newest photographer, **John Hollis**, in our website's photo gallery.

<http://pilchuckaudubon.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=page&pageid=364§ionid=151>

(425-787-0258 or my cell 206-713-3684) and Mel Walters of Puget Sound Energy (425-785-4963) to handle the calls for picking up the swans and answering questions. You can also send me a text to my cell phone.

Thank you for your assistance.



*Trumpeter Swan; Photo by Ryan Hagerty/
UFWS*

Note: Be sure to join us on January 9th for a program by Martha on Swans of Washington's Winter.



Pilchuck Audubon Society
1429 Avenue D, PMB 198
Snohomish, WA 98290

Pilchuck Audubon Society Membership Information

Support your local Audubon chapter by becoming a member. PAS dues are tax deductible (consult your tax professional for details). The PAS tax ID number is 91-6183664.

- New Member \$28
- Renewal \$28
- Lifetime Member \$1,000
 - 10 monthly payments of \$100
 - 4 quarterly payments of \$250
 - 1 payment of \$1,000
- Donation \$ _____
 - My employer will match my contribution!
My employer's gift matching form is enclosed with my contribution.

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Send me these via email (check all that apply & include your email address above):

- Profile Newsletter
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