



## KEEP AN EYE ON THE CANARIES

*Reprinted with permission from the Chinook Observer*

*Published: September 9, 2015*

“Canary in a coal mine” is a dated allusion that increasingly requires explanation in a world in which underground coal mining is declining. It may be that the phrase “Seabirds dying on the beach” will come to replace it.

Canaries are famously sensitive to small concentrations of toxic methane and other gases that accumulate in coal mine tunnels, so they used to serve as living alarm systems. When they fell off their cage perches, miners knew they needed to evacuate immediately or risk death themselves.

Seabirds are in nearly constant contact with the marine environment, spending an average of 80 percent of their lives on the water. Here along the rim of the Pacific Ocean, they are encountering a variety of conditions unlike what they have evolved with. “The Blob,” a peculiarly warm patch of seawater along hundreds of miles of the ocean-land interface from Alaska to Northern California, has brought changes in weather patterns, microscopic life and the entire food chain. Probably related to this warm water, there is an unprecedented bloom of algae that sometimes produces a potent toxin deadly to birds and mammals.

Plastic contamination grows as a problem — both in the form of familiar maritime litter and micro-pellets that are widely used in everything from toothpaste to hand soap. The ocean is intrinsically hazardous and there’s always been a lot of bird mortality. But there now is more than normal. The latest bad news on this subject from the North Pacific is outlined in an Aug. 30 story on National Public Radio, “In the stomach of a seabird, a glimpse of an ocean heating up” ([tinyurl.com/SeabirdStoryonNPR](http://tinyurl.com/SeabirdStoryonNPR)).

Research outlined in this story show major shifts in diet for seabirds, along with plenty of plastic they ingest along the way. The Arctic is changing faster than anywhere else on earth as the oceans and atmosphere warm. This hasn’t yet thrown Aleutian Islands seabirds into crisis mode — birds are adaptable and seabirds are more mobile than most. But seabird populations have been on a decline for a number of years. Troubling die-offs can take big bites out species in just a season. Here at the mouth of the Columbia, far to the south of the Aleutians but on the edge of closely interlinked ocean habitats, seabird deaths and ailments are a continuing source of concern.

A feature on the Wildlife Center of the North Coast on Page B1 today provides a glimpse of efforts to nurse birds back to health after they are found dying on beaches in Pacific and Clatsop counties. Often, they are starving young birds unable to prosper in local waters that ebb and flow in terms of available nutrients. Other individuals are tangled in fishing line or have swallowed plastic, making it difficult to digest actual food. Common murrens have been among the center’s most common patients — about 700 last year, with an expectation of that many again this year. Dead and dying murrens and other small seabirds sometime dotted local beaches, with individuals every few feet — a disturbing

*(Continued on page 4)*

### OCTOBER PROGRAM MEETING

#### Ocean Acidification - A Global Challenge in Washington State

*Jan Newton, Principal Oceanographer & Co-Director*

**Friday, October 9, 7:00 PM**

Due to the abundance of carbon in our atmosphere and the ocean’s ability to absorb it, the surface ocean has become about 30% more acidic over the past 250 years. The Washington Ocean Acidification Center is part of the UW College of the Environment. The Center connects researchers, policymakers, industry, and others to advance the science of ocean acidification, and provides a foundation for proactive strategies to protect marine ecosystems and the people connected to them.

Friday, October 9, 2015

7:00 - 8:30 pm

Everett Firefighter’s Hall

**2411 Hewitt Avenue, Everett**



*Photo by Jack Meyers*

In August, Gary Loyd and Reg Reisenbichler installed two Barn Owl nest boxes on Pilchuck Audubon property in the Jim Creek area of Arlington. The boxes were donated by Pilchuck supporters and are on trees which overlook a 4 acre pasture. Pilchuck salutes the donors, Gary, and Reg for a job well done.

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# PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

By Kathleen Snyder, Pilchuck Audubon President

September was a busy and productive month for Pilchuck Audubon. We co-sponsored the Puget Sound Bird Fest, hosted Swifts Night Out and participated in Sultan's Return of the Salmon Festival. To all our dedicated volunteers – a huge shout out of thanks.

Susie Schaefer, Anne Lawson-Beerman, and Sherrill Miller spent hours on the steering committee for Bird Fest. The result was an impressive slate of classes, field trips, and other opportunities for participants. The keynote speaker, John Marzluff, was very enlightening on how development affects our local songbirds. The highlight bird of that weekend was a Brown Booby spotted on the Point No Point field trip by leaders Virginia Clark and Blair Bernson.

The chairperson for Swifts Night Out was Cindy Easterson. This is a huge job which involves coordinating the Monroe School District, the city of Monroe, many vendors, dozens of volunteers, audiovisual and print work, and other non-profit and profit organizations. Cindy expanded on an already successful event and took it a higher level. I cannot thank her enough. Larry Schwitters, our swift guru, was in attendance and was able to connect hundreds of attendees with the life cycle and conservation needs of the Vaux's Swifts. I want to also mention Leann Jacobsen who was in charge of feeding spaghetti dinners to the crowd. I honestly don't know how she does it except that she has lots of volunteers to help.

Again, thank you and thank you to everyone who volunteered to make these two events so outstanding.

Please check out our new entry for "Close Encounters of the Bird Kind" on our website. I am sure you will enjoy the story which takes place at Audubon Washington's Seward Park in Seattle between a teacher and a reluctant day camper.

## 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 the 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, non-profit 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. Submissions must be received by the 21st of the month preceding publication. We reserve the right to edit.

**To contact Pilchuck Audubon Society, call 425.610.8027.**

The monthly Profile is available online at [www.pilchuckaudubon.org](http://www.pilchuckaudubon.org)

## CALLING ALL MEMBERS! SENDING OUT AN SOS - WE NEED YOU!

### HELP WANTED

We are looking for a few good volunteers!  
Our chapter needs the following leadership positions filled: Treasurer, Avian Projects, and Volunteer Coordinator.

If you like numbers, serving as chapter Treasurer can be a rewarding experience and we now have a bookkeeper to handle the day-to-day finances. If you enjoy more physical tasks, like installing nesting gourds, platforms, or boxes for a variety of bird species, we'd love to have you join our Avian projects team. If you like to help behind the scenes, our Volunteer Coordinator position will challenge your ability to pair interested people with our annual events and special projects. If you've thought of getting more involved, now is your chance!

Finally, if you would like to lead our dynamic chapter as President, we'd love to hear from you. Our current president Kathleen Snyder's term expires in April and the search is on!

If you know someone or are that special someone, please call 425.610.8027 or email [president@pilchuckaudubon.org](mailto:president@pilchuckaudubon.org) to learn more about serving in this important two-year position.



### Board of Directors

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# GRANITE FALLS MOTOCROSS TRACK DEFEATED!

By Katherine Johnson, Forest Practices Chair

In March, the Snohomish County Council denied an appeal by the Mountain Loop Conservancy (MLC), Pilchuck Audubon Society (PAS), and North Cascades Conservation Council (NCCC) by upholding the County Hearing Examiner's decision to allow construction of a motocross racetrack near Granite Falls.

Ginger Amundson, Marty Robinett, and the MLC then filed an appeal with King County Superior Court of the Snohomish County Council's decision to allow the zoning change from 'Forestry' to 'Forestry and Recreation' which allowed the construction of the track. PAS and the NCCC, which had been party to earlier appeals of the track, did not join this suit as it was primarily based on procedural issues rather than concerns regarding effects on Marbled Murrelets that we had raised previously.

On Aug. 25, King County Superior Court Judge Douglass North vacated earlier approvals the track had received from the Snohomish County Council and the Hearing Examiner. Judge North said the county improperly rezoned the property where the track was to be built and had failed to demonstrate any changed circumstances in the neighborhood to justify the new zoning. Without the zoning change, the track cannot be built. The proponent, Gary Strode, has stated that he will not appeal the decision. Snohomish County has not yet indicated whether they will appeal.

# CANDIDATE FORUM

By Kristin Kelly, Smart Growth Executive Director

Pilchuck Audubon Society's Smart Growth Program, Futurewise, Forterra, and KSER Radio are co-hosting a Candidate Forum for County Executive, County Council and City of Everett. The leadership of these important positions will determine our future for many years regarding environmental and wildlife protection, transportation solutions, and building more sustainable urban communities.

7:00 to 9:00 p.m. on Thursday, October 1  
PUD Auditorium, 2320 California Street, Everett

Candidates who have confirmed their participation (as of 9/15/15):

- Dave Somers for County Executive
- Greg Tisdale for Position 2 of the County Council
- Brian Sullivan for Position 2 of the County Council
- Cassie Franklin for Position 4 of the Everett City Council
- Charlene Rawson for Position 5 of the Everett City Council

Candidate and incumbent (and unopposed) County Council District 3 Stephanie Wright has declined the invitation to participate. Scott Bader, incumbent for Position 5 of the Everett City Council, has also declined to participate. Current County Executive John Lovick and City Council Member of Position 4 Ron Gipson have not yet responded.

It is free and no registration required. Please share this information with friends and family and attend this important event.

# WDFW INVITES PUBLIC TO HELP IDENTIFY PRIORITIES

State fish and wildlife leaders are asking people to share their views on the values and priorities that should drive the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) over the next several years.

The opportunity is part of WDFW's new multi-year initiative, "Washington's Wild Future: A Partnership for Fish and Wildlife," which is an effort to strengthen the department's relationships with communities, increase support for conservation and outdoor recreation, and help ensure WDFW programs and services meet the public's needs.

People can talk with WDFW managers at a local forum October 6. Comments will also be accepted through Oct. 31 on WDFW's website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/wildfuture/> and by email to [WildFuture@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:WildFuture@dfw.wa.gov). People may also participate in the conversation through the WDFW Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/WashingtonFishWildlife>.

Public comments and proposals will help determine priorities for conserving and managing Washington's fish and wildlife in the coming years, said WDFW Director Jim Unsworth, who was hired to lead the agency in January.

The local meeting is scheduled for 6:00PM to 8:00PM on October 6 at the WDFW Mill Creek Office, 16018 Mill Creek Blvd, Mill Creek.

Unsworth, senior WDFW managers, and regional staff are scheduled to attend the meeting where people can discuss fishing and hunting and other outdoor recreation opportunities, as well as habitat protection and restoration, licensing, enforcement, and other fish and wildlife management issues.

"We face major management challenges over the next several years, and to be successful, we need the public's support and assistance," Unsworth said. "That can only happen if the department has strong relationships with anglers, hunters, outdoor recreation groups, and others interested in fish and wildlife in Washington."

More information about WDFW is available at <http://wdfw.wa.gov>.

## BIRD SEED SALE!

Please note: September 27 is the last day to order seed for the sale

PRICE LIST: <http://bit.ly/1MGb6EW>

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3  
9:00 AM to 11:00 AM

Contact Carolyn Lacy  
[carolacy@gmail.com](mailto:carolacy@gmail.com) or 206-245-5836



# KEEP AN EYE ON THE CANARIES...

(Continued from page 1)

clue about an unforgiving environment.

The Wildlife Center deserves a lot of praise and support for its efforts to alleviate suffering among birds that are victims of an ocean that can always be deadly, and is made even more so by human actions. More volunteer support and funding are warranted for the center and related efforts elsewhere. Beyond this, ongoing monitoring and research are essential to understand what seabird mortality can tell us about all that is happening off our shores. Bird deaths can serve as an irreplaceable gauge of ocean conditions.

Old coal miners knew they had to keep an eye on their canaries. We would be foolish to ignore emerging trends for seabirds. We, too, depend on healthy oceans.

# CLASSROOM CONSERVATION AWARDS APPLY NOW!

The PAS Classroom Conservation Awards Committee is gearing up for another year of promoting conservation projects in Snohomish County elementary school classrooms. If you are an elementary school teacher in Snohomish County, please apply! If you know an elementary school teacher in Snohomish County, encourage them to apply! We will be giving out multiple awards of \$400 for conservation and science-related learning activities and/or materials that enhance and enrich a classroom program. For an application and more information about the awards, please go to the PAS website (find us under "Programs").

**Applications must be received by November 1st, 2015.**

## REGISTER NOW FOR FALL 2015 ACOW

Register now for the 2015 annual meeting of the Audubon Council of Washington (ACOW), hosted by Skagit Audubon Society and the NW Chapters! ACOW is our annual state-wide meeting where members from all Audubon Chapters in Washington gather together for a weekend of information sharing, knowledge gathering, and fellowship.

This year's meeting will focus on state and federal level policy actions around Audubon's climate initiative, as well as showcase chapter work being done to educate communities about the impact of climate change on birds.

Date: Saturday, October 24, 2015

Location: Best Western Plus, Skagit Valley Inn, 2300 Market Street, Mount Vernon, WA

Agenda and Information: <http://wa.audubon.org/chapter-meetings>

Registration: \$40 at <http://ow.ly/QSS6w>

## UPCOMING BIRD SURVEY OPPORTUNITIES

Ecostudies Institute is excited to announce that the 4th annual Puget Sound Shorebird Count will take place between 15 November and 15 December. This citizen science project is part of a Pacific Flyway-wide effort aimed at better understanding shorebird population trends and habitat use.

We will announce the date and time of the survey in the coming weeks through the Pilchuck e-mail list or you can also check Ecostudies' web page for updates ([www.ecoinst.org](http://www.ecoinst.org)). If you would like more information on how to participate or get on the Puget Sound Shorebird Count mailing list, please contact Gary Slater ([gslater@ecoinst.org](mailto:gslater@ecoinst.org)).

Also, stay tuned for a new citizen science project, developed in partnership with Pilchuck Audubon, to help investigate the effect of estuary restoration on birds at Leque Island.

## WANTED! SENIOR SNOW GOOSER



*Er, that's not quite what it sounds like.*

The Stanwood Snow Goose Festival, after 10 years, is asking Pilchuck Audubon for a little more help in organizing field trips and arranging for speakers and classes.

The Snow Goose Festival is a great event and PAS has provided trip leaders and staffed an event table during past events. However, much of the primary organizational work has been done by the Stanwood Chamber and they'd now like others to take on some of that effort. So, PAS is looking for a dynamic, well-organized, good-looking, energetic, expert, and charismatic individual...OK, not all of those attributes are required. Someone willing to step in and help put this event together is what we really need. Lots of assistance and guidance from past organizers will be available.

Email [president@pilchuckaudubon.org](mailto:president@pilchuckaudubon.org) or leave message at 425-610-8027.

# TRIP CALENDAR

Check our web site at [www.pilchuckaudubon.org](http://www.pilchuckaudubon.org) for the latest information.

## **Tuesday, October 6** **Silvana Roads**

Meet at 8:00 AM at Quilceda Village Wal-Mart west of Marysville( I-5-Exit 200). Park away from store, to the east, near Quilceda Blvd. and next to I-5. Past years we had Northern shrikes, a Pectoral and a Sharp-tailed Sandpiper and three falcon species. If time allows, we may visit the Port Susan Nature Conservancy site. Pack a lunch.  
Trip Leader: Virginia Clark 360-435-3750

## **Sunday, October 11** **Preston-Snoqualmie Trail**

Meet at 8:00 AM in the Ash Way parking lot just west of I-5 in north Lynnwood. We'll carpool to the Preston-Snoqualmie Trailhead, and walk the 1.8-mile paved trail to explore this wooded habitat and take in the view from the overlook at the end of the trail. After the bird walk, participants are welcome (but not required) to join us for a little socializing over lunch, most likely in Snoqualmie.  
Bring snacks, water, and foul weather gear just in case. This is a half-day event.  
Trip Leader: Terry Nightingale

## **Tuesday, October 13** **Point No Point**

Meet at 7:10 AM at the Edmonds Wade James Theater Parking Lot. The theater's address is 950 Main St., Edmonds, 98020, just East of 9th Ave. on the South side of Main St. We'll take the ferry to Kingston and bird the voyage, the docks, Point No Point, and Foulweather Bluff. Always lots of surprises, both in the air and on the water. Pack a lunch.  
Trip Leader: Virginia Clark 360-435-3750

## **Tuesday, October 20** **Serpentine Fen and Blackie Spit**

Meet at 7:00 AM at the Quilceda Village Wal-Mart west of Marysville( I-5-Exit 200). Park away from store, to the east, near Quilceda Blvd. and next to I-5. Expect to see waterfowl, raptors, gulls, shorebirds, songbirds, and scenery, and to do some walking. This is a trip to Canada so bring your US Passport or Enhanced Driver's License. Pack a lunch.  
Trip Leader: Virginia Clark 360-435-3750

## **Tuesday, October 27** **Southern Whidbey Island**

Meet at 7:15 AM at the Eastmont Park and Ride, I-5 exit 189, East side, aiming for the 8:00 AM ferry from Mukilteo. Lots of waterfowl and shorebirds. Crockett Lake is exciting and the scenery is gorgeous. Pack a lunch.  
Trip Leader: Wilma Bayes 360-629-2028

# UPCOMING EVENTS, FESTIVALS, & CLASSES

## **BirdFest and Bluegrass October 2-4**

### **Ridgefield, WA**

Join the Friends of Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge and the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge Staff as we celebrate the coming of fall and the wildlife that make the Refuge their home. BirdFest and Bluegrass is an opportunity to enjoy the sights and sounds of fall migration. <http://ridgefieldfriends.org/birdfest/schedule-of-events/>

## **Birds at the Burke**

**October 12**

**Seattle**

Flock to the Burke Museum of Natural History & Culture for a fun-filled day celebrating all things feathered! See hundreds of specimens, watch as scientists prepare birds for research and get expert birding tips. From 10:00AM-4:00PM [http://www.burkemuseum.org/events/browse/birds\\_day15](http://www.burkemuseum.org/events/browse/birds_day15)

## **Sounds of Fall Migration**

**October 24**

**Padilla Bay**

Join naturalist, Libby Mills to see what's going on in the southbound bird migration. Wear comfortable walking shoes and be prepared to explore Padilla Bay's uplands and the fields of the "west 90" on the Samish flats. From 8:00AM-12:00PM. Registration is required. <http://www.padillabay.gov/classdetails.asp?programID=682&classID=1409>

## **Connections between Water, Land and People**

**October 31**

**Mukilteo**

WSU Snohomish County Extension Beach Watchers is pleased to offer Sound Living -- a community day of learning about the connections between the water, land and people of the Salish Sea. It is a day of inspiration and education, offering everyone who is curious about Puget Sound a chance to learn more about the region and to find their own way to take part in its restoration and protection. Registration required. <http://www.wsusoundliving.org/>

## **ANNUAL MUSHROOM HIKE WITH GREG HOVANDER**

**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25**

Location TBD. Call or email Kathy to reserve your place on this hike, limited to 12 participants.

This is an all-day hike with expert mycologist and pharmacist Greg Hovander. Greg is a walking encyclopedia of mycological knowledge - from identification of hundreds of fungal species, to medicinal qualities, to nutrition and cooking methods. (And, of course, he is a fun guy!).

We'll proceed at a leisurely pace at first, as Greg expounds on the fungi we find.

Trip leader: Kathy Johnson 360-659-7252 or [forest@pilchuckaudubon.org](mailto:forest@pilchuckaudubon.org)

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.

Make checks payable to: Pilchuck Audubon Society

Mail to: Pilchuck Audubon Society  
 1429 Avenue D, PMB 198  
 Snohomish, WA 98290-1742

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
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Send me these via email (check all that apply & include your email address above):

Profile Newsletter     Program Announcements     Action Alerts

Pilchuck Audubon Society is a 501(c)(3) non-profit charitable corporation registered with the Secretary of State's office. Your contributions are tax deductible.