

Be heard on Lobby Day, January 25



The annual environmental Lobby Day is scheduled for January 25, 2012. This event is sponsored by the Environmental Priorities Coalition, a network of 25 of Washington's leading environmental groups that influence policy at the state level. By working together, we can have an impact far greater than our individual efforts could.

Each year, the coalition picks three issues on which to focus their efforts. This year they are Toxic-free kids, Fulfill our clean energy initiative and Pollution-free prosperity.

Toxic-free kids: Protecting children from cancer-causing flame retardants and urging businesses to use chemicals that won't harm the environment or their bottom line.

Fulfill our clean energy initiative: Sustaining the success of I-937, our state's voter-approved clean energy initiative, in bringing investments, jobs and economic development throughout Washington.

Pollution-free prosperity: Preventing attempts to weaken, delay, or roll back state environmental laws and programs critical for clean air, clean water and healthy communities.

A legislative workshop to prepare for Lobby Day is scheduled for January 7. This is your opportunity to be involved as the state's leading conservation groups prepare for the upcoming legislative session. You'll hear from legislators, environmental lobbyists and others regarding the community's environmental priorities.

When: Saturday, January 7, 9:30 a.m.-2:45 p.m.

Where: UW main campus, Kane Hall 120

Cost: \$20 with lunch or \$10 without lunch.
(Student price – with valid ID – \$10 with lunch)

There will be helpful break-out sessions on how to get your voice heard in Olympia.

Details regarding transportation from Everett to Olympia (and back) on Lobby Day have not been finalized. Watch the PAS web site for the latest info: www.pilchuckaudubon.org. Or, visit EPC's web site at www.environmentalpriorities.org.

Lobby Day is interesting and invigorating. Members of the PAS board will be there. We hope all legislative districts in Snohomish County will be represented.

If you plan to make your voice heard in Olympia on January 25, please consider carpooling. Leave a message on Pilchuck Audubon's voicemail at 425.252.0926. Someone will get back to you. Don't wait until the last minute. Call today!

**January program meeting
Friday, January 13, 7 p.m.**

Rafting the Marsh Fork of the Canning River

Join Dan Streiffert, a wildlife photographer, as he shares a 12-day birding adventure along the western boundary of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, home to 42 mammal species, 36 fish species and 160+ bird species. Many of these birds migrate to and from all 50 states and six continents to feed and reproduce, taking full advantage of the burst of biological growth which blossoms during the long days of the Arctic summer.

**February program meeting
Friday, February 10, 7 p.m.**

Urban wildlife habitat design with Kelly Brenner

Kelly Brenner writes *The Metropolitan Field Guide*, a blog about urban wildlife habitat design. She'll discuss the focus of her blog, the huge resource library, recommended books, favorite urban habitats and stories, as well as other projects she's involved in.

Kelly lives in Seattle and has a degree in landscape architecture. She writes *The Metropolitan Field Guide* and contributes to other blogs, as well. Kelly is a photographer, traveler and naturalist and is working on a book about the urban wildlife habitat of Seattle. Kelly also serves on the board for Seattle Audubon.

Everett Firefighters Hall
2411 Hewitt Avenue, Everett

For more information, call 425.252.0926

**Watch www.pilchuckaudubon.org
for the most up-to-date information.**

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President's message

By Mike Blackbird, President, Pilchuck Audubon Society



In his 1958 Academy Award winning movie, *Wild Wilderness*, the famous animal behaviorist Walt Disney introduced America to a small rodent, the lemming. Disney's film offered proof that, apparently, lemmings are periodically overcome (by deep-rooted impulses triggered by over-population) to deliberately run over a cliff by the millions, to be dashed to their deaths on the rocks below, or to drown in the raging ocean.

It was all a myth. Lemmings do not commit mass suicide. The mass lemming suicide portrayed in *Wild Wilderness* was staged by Disney. Like all animals, lemmings live to thrive and survive. Considering that one rodent, Mickey Mouse, was Disney royalty, it's odd that he would be so unkind to another rodent. Regardless, myth or not, Disney did introduce a metaphor for the behavior of crowds of people who foolishly follow each other, lemming-like, regardless of the consequences.

Lemmings, like most rodents, do achieve a frenetic pace of reproduction, but it is eventually slowed by something called density dependence: the tendency for a crowded population to stop growing. In due course, there are so many predators that the prey population crashes. Faced with a scarcity of prey, predators must emigrate or starve.

Southward autumn invasions – or irruptions – due to the collapse of the prey base occur among North American raptor species such as Rough-legged Hawks, Northern Goshawks, Great Horned, Short-eared and Snowy owls. There are two main cycles of prey base collapses: a four-year cycle among tundra and grassland rodents, and a 10-year cycle that characterizes snowshoe hares. Irruptions of Rough-legged Hawks and Snowy Owls often occur in the same year because both feed largely on lemmings.

The Snowy Owl is our heaviest owl and perches prominently in open areas. They show little fear and it's not unusual to see Snowy Owls perched close to human activity. During irruptions, Snowy Owls range far to the south of normal range, and are often starving and stressed for food and, thus, active in daylight. Healthy birds are mainly nocturnal, like other owls. When there's a dearth of lemmings on the tundra, Snowy Owls seek more hospitable climes to hunt other prey, including marine invertebrates.

This resulted in a happy circumstance for the Tuesday birding group on a recent trip to the Reifel Migratory Bird Sanctuary on British Columbia's Fraser River Delta. On the way home, we made one last stop at Boundary Bay to look for Snowy Owls. A piercing, bone-numbing wind was blowing a cold rain in off the water when we arrived at Boundary Bay. I could think of more amenable climes, but we were soon warmed by the phenomenal sight of 20 Snowy Owls perched on the driftwood accumulated on bay's shore.

The collective noun for a gathering of owls, I suspect because they symbolize wisdom, is a parliament. The parliament of Snowy Owls we found in session on Boundary Bay gave the impression of being in caucus. There were nine Snowy Owls on the left and 11 Snowy Owls on the right. They appeared to be collaborating, determined to resolve their economic dilemma.

I couldn't help but think of this congress of Snowy Owls as a metaphor for cooperation – in contrast to lemmings committing mass suicide by deliberately plunging off a cliff to their deaths. Despite the harsh conditions, it was a magnificent sight to contemplate 20 of nature's most beautiful birds.

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 annette.colombini@pilchuckaudubon.org or mail to 1429 Avenue D, PMB 198, Snohomish, WA 98290. Submissions must be received by the fifth of the month preceding publication. We reserve the right to edit.

To contact Pilchuck Audubon Society, call 425.252.0926.

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



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Trip calendar

Check our web site at www.pilchuckaudubon.org for the latest information.

Tuesday, January 3 **Snoqualmie River Valley,
Monroe to Carnation**
Meet at 8 a.m. at the Monroe Park and Ride on Highway 2, a half-mile west of the fairgrounds. Expect a fun time and exciting birds. Pack a lunch.

Leader: Virginia Clark, 360.435.3750

Tuesday, January 10 **Deception Pass, Lake
Campbell, Rosario Beach, Cranberry Lake**
Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Quilceda Village Walmart west of Marysville (I-5, exit 200). Park away from store, to the east, near Quilceda Blvd. and next to I-5. Oystercatchers, loons, mergansers, LBJs, etc. Pack a lunch.

Leader: Virginia Clark, 360.435.3750

Tuesday, January 17 **Camano Island**
Meet at 8 a.m. at the Quilceda Village Walmart west of Marysville (I-5, exit 200). Park away from the store, to the east, near Quilceda Blvd. and next to I-5. We will bird Triangle Cove, Eide Road, English Boom, Iverson Spit and wherever else Virginia leads us. Pack a lunch.

Leader: Virginia Clark, 360.435.3750

Tuesday, January 24 **Silvana roads**
Meet at 8 a.m. at the Quilceda Village Walmart west of Marysville (I-5, exit 200). Park away from the store, to the east, near Quilceda Blvd. and next to I-5. Pipits, Snowy Owls, falcons, all the winter LBJs. If time allows, we may visit the Port Susan Nature Conservancy site. Pack a lunch.

Leader: Virginia Clark, 360.435.3750

Tuesday, January 31 **Guemes Island**
Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Quilceda Village Walmart west of Marysville (I-5, exit 200). Park away from the store, to the east, near Quilceda Blvd. and next to I-5. Ride a tiny ferry, then relax and enjoy unique Guemes Island, its people, birds and dogs. Pack a lunch.

Leader: Virginia Clark, 360.435.3750

Notice to field trip participants: Field trips are open to members and non-members alike. No advance notice required unless otherwise stated in the trip description. Trips go, rain or shine. However, in case of snow or ice, contact trip leader! Bring a sack lunch, beverage, binoculars, scope and field guide if you have them. If not, we'll share. Please, no perfume or cologne. Be prepared to share gas money with carpool drivers. Pets, even leashed, are prohibited on field trips. Please leave them at home.

Have fun, be entertained and get smarter

**Environmental coalition legislative workshop
January 7** **Kane Hall, UW**
You're invited to the annual Environmental Priorities Coalition Legislative Workshop, scheduled for Jan. 7, 9:30 a.m.-2:45 p.m., in room 120, Kane Hall, on the campus of the UW. It's a fun way to learn about the 2012 Environmental Priorities and how you can take action to support them.

There'll be experts and a panel of legislators to answer questions about this year's priorities. In addition, there will be helpful break-out sessions on building a base, getting your voice heard and immediate ways to take action.

Cost is \$20 with lunch, \$10 without lunch and \$10 for students with lunch. Please register for the workshop by contacting Nicole Keenan: nicole@wecprotects.org or 206.473.0324. Find more information at www.wecprotects.org.

**Edmonds Alive
January 10** **Edmonds Public Library**
Join the Edmonds environmental community for Edmonds Alive at the Plaza Room above the Edmonds Public Library, 650 Main Street on Tuesday, January 10, from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Representatives from various local organizations – including Pilchuck Audubon and the Wildlife Habitat Native Plant Demo Garden – will be on hand to answer questions, discuss current projects and let you know ways you can get involved.

This is an open house event, so drop in anytime. Interested folks of all ages are invited. For more information, contact Sally Lider at 425.771.0227 or lider@ci.edmonds.wa.us.

**Beavers: the biggest dam movie you ever saw
Friday, January 13** **NW Stream Center, Everett**
Take a virtual swim with beavers and experience the rich habitat of one of nature's greatest engineers. Join the Adopt-a-Stream Foundation on Friday, January 13, 7 p.m. for a free screening of *Beavers*. Set in the pristine forest and lakes of the Rockies, the film follows the lives of a family of beavers as they grow, play and transform the world around them.

The movie is free and suitable for all ages. Advance registration is required. Please call 425.316.8592 to sign up.

The Northwest Stream Center is located in McCollum Park, Everett. Take the 128th Street exit from I-5 and drive east for one-half mile. Turn right into the entrance of the park and drive to the south end. The Northwest Stream Center is the last structure at the end of the road.

**Free screening of *Winged Migration*
January 19** **Northwest Stream Center, Everett**
Join the Adopt-a-Stream Foundation for a free screening of *Winged Migration* on Thursday, January 19, at 7 p.m. Follow a variety of bird migrations over the seas and the seven continents and see why USA Today called *Winged Migration* "one of the most beautiful films."

This film is geared to people middle school age and older. It is not suitable for young children. This is a free event, but advance registration is required. Please call 425.316.8592.

The Northwest Stream Center is located in McCollum Park, Everett. Take the 128th Street exit from I-5 and drive east for one-half mile. Turn right into the entrance of the park and drive to the south end. The Northwest Stream Center is the last structure at the end of the road.

(See "Festivals" on page 8)

Document effect of king tides on beaches

Did you know some of the highest tides of the year occur in the winter? These tides, referred to as "king tides," occur naturally when the sun and the moon align, causing an increased gravitational pull on the Earth's oceans. This winter, king tides occur in December and January.

The Washington Department of Ecology (DOE) invites residents and visitors to grab their cameras and head to the beaches to take photos of Washington's king tides. Documenting how very high tides affect the natural environment and our coastal infrastructure will help us visualize what sea level rise might look like in the future.

Help the DOE collect photos of highest winter tides along Washington's shorelines, estuaries and coastal communities by following these steps:

Use the DOE's **king tide map and schedule** to find the time and date of the highest tides in your area.

Take photos during one of the identified high tides in your area. To better illustrate the impacts of the high winter tides, we recommend taking photos in areas where the high water

levels can be gauged against familiar landmarks such as sea walls, jetties, bridge supports, dikes, buildings, roads or other infrastructure. Please do not include people in your photos

Upload your photos to the **Washington King Tides Photo Initiative Flickr Group**. Visit www.ecy.wa.gov for more information.

The Washington King Tide Photo Initiative is in its third year. Its purpose is to involve citizens in documenting high winter tides and gather photos that display potential impacts of rising water levels on coastal infrastructure along Washington's shorelines and estuaries.

The King Tides Photo Initiative began in Australia in 2009. In 2010, Washington and BC began collecting king tide photos. In 2011, they were joined by Oregon and California.

In 2010 and 2011, Washington's King Tides Photo Initiative gathered more than 400 photos. You can see the photos at the **Washington King Tides Photo Initiative Flickr Group**.

Volunteers needed for Dunlin study



Dunlin, by Paul Kusmin

Researchers theorize that the threat from increased numbers of Peregrine Falcons is causing shorebirds to avoid primary feeding areas and resting during high tide. Pilchuck Audubon has partnered with Ruth Milner, District Wildlife Biologist from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, to see if this is happening with our local wintering population of Dunlin. (For more information, see the December 2011 issue of *The Profile* at www.pilchuckaudubon.org.)

This winter, we're monitoring four sites around Port Susan: Warm Beach and the Nature Conservancy Preserve in Stanwood, Iverson Spit on Camano Island and Jensen Access in Conway. We need volunteers at each site on January 17, 18 and 19, to observe Dunlin and raptor behaviors for 2-3 hour periods at high tide.

If you can help, please contact Megan Westervelt at megan.pettebone@gmail.com or 401.662.7545.

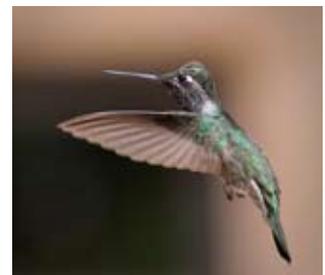
Interested in a new birding adventure?

By Susie Schaefer, Vice President, Pilchuck Audubon

It's only January, but I'm already looking ahead to spring and summer birding! I'm tentatively planning two trips to explore the other side of Washington:

Klickitat County, May 18-20
Walla Walla County, June 1-5

These birding adventure trips are open to all and offer an opportunity to car-pool to see birds we don't usually see in Snohomish County. On past trips, we've had fun looking at wildflowers and mammals, too. Many of us have never birded the Walla Walla area and yet it is known to be one of the hottest spots in Washington.



Black-chinned Hummingbird, by Patty Bruno

We'll take a new route to Goldendale this year – over White Pass to Yakima. We'll stay in local motels and share rooms to keep costs down. Everyone helps pay for fuel and the group food. We usually stop for a picnic lunch everyday so we don't miss any birds.

Look for the updates on the plans for these trips in the February *Profile*.

If you're interested in coming along or need more info, contact me at susie.schaefer@comcast.net or 425.771.8165. I'd like to gauge the level of interest in these trips before I do more planning.

Closure provides opportunity for weekend hikers

By Terry Nightingale

On November 20, the goal of our group of eight birders was to visit the Hibulb Cultural Center on the Tulalip reservation. The center features an indoor museum, as well as a 50-acre natural history preserve. Just a few days before the trip, however, I learned the preserve is indeed preserved. But, its improved trails and signage won't open to visitors until next summer. The best we could do was walk the perimeter and peer in from the edges.

Given this information, and given that we had a few hours on our hands until the museum opened, I asked the group for input. We chose to travel to Stanwood and look for the Snowy Owl Kathleen had seen the day before.

This was a particularly exciting prospect because if seen, this species would represent a lifer for most of the group!

We split up into carpools and followed Kathleen to Stanwood. We wound our way down Marine Drive past sprawling farmland and found Thomle Road.

We saw a large white mass far out in a field to our left. The birders in my car briefly speculated we were seeing a flock of swans or Snow Geese – either could be expected in this habitat at this time of year.

As we raised binoculars to our eyes, one birder cried out, "I see black! They must be Snow Geese! But wait, what are they doing? Why do they all have their necks stretched out skyward?" They were plastic bags put in the field as decoys. Though they clearly weren't fooling the Snow Geese in the area, they had at least briefly fooled us.

Moving on in search of the *real* birds, we traveled around the next bend and saw several cars pulled over and birders with scopes and cameras pointed towards the adjacent field.

Even with the naked eye, we could see a large white dot a distance of about 100 yards. A kind gentleman let us look through his scope and we got nice views of the Snowy Owl perched in the grass. It was amazing how quickly he could turn his head, and how far around before stopping! Our youngest birder remarked, "I don't think his camouflage is working very well for him." Among the owl's admirers was a family who arrived a few minutes later. Every member of the family had a camera with a telephoto lens and began snapping photos.

After a nice, long look at the Snowy Owl, we began to notice the area was alive with other birds as well – notably, other raptors. A Northern Harrier was hunting nearby, showing its characteristic white rump patch while soaring over the fields looking for prey. Also within view were a Rough-legged Hawk, perched in a distant tree, and a Red-tailed Hawk on a nearby electrical pole. In the non-raptor category, a group of a dozen Snow Geese (the real, live ones) flew by and gave us a nice look through binoculars. Very distant, we caught sight of 50 or so peeps, probably sandpipers, but far too distant to be sure. A Northern Flicker, two Glaucous-winged Gulls and a group of about 40 Brewer's Blackbirds rounded out a really nice selection of species.



Snowy Owl, by Rex Guichard

Once we'd had our collective fill, the group set off to look for a Black Phoebe Kathleen had also seen the day before. We made it less than a mile when we spotted interesting bird activity out the car windows and decided to make a quick stop. It turned out to be a good decision, as we soon found an American Kestrel in a fir tree not far from the road.

Then the real action began. Over the road came a pair of Red-tailed Hawks chasing a Short-eared Owl, who was carrying small prey in its talons. Apparently, the hawks were interested in stealing this morsel from the owl. Here again, once the initial excitement was over, we noticed lots of other birds. Three Killdeer called loudly

before flying overhead and four Trumpeter Swans honked as they passed by.

We hit the road again in search of our phoebe. Alas, the bird eluded us and we decided to head back to Marysville for lunch and a visit to the cultural center.

The Hibulb Cultural Center opened last August, and it still smells of freshly carved wood. In addition to a nice collection of artifacts, the exhibits are well laid out and tell both stories of traditional practices and some of the more recent history of the Tulalip Tribes. I learned about a traditional gambling game tribal members played, and how the nearby Shaker Church area got its name. As a point of curiosity for birders, if you visit the museum exhibits, see if you can identify the bird songs that play over the sound system.

As I had hoped when planning the field trip, a tour of the cultural center was a great way to stay indoors for an hour or two and warm up while also learning about the traditions and heritage of the Tulalip Tribes.

Help plan the next weekend bird hike

By Jonathan Blubaugh

Our weekend bird hikes will resume February 19, when I'll lead an outing to coincide with the Great Backyard Bird Count. This event, which runs from February 17-20, is organized by zip code.

To nominate a zip code for the group to explore on February 19, send me an e-mail at aracfi@msn.com. If nobody nominates a zip code, we'll use mine. I know a few good places to walk and find birds around south Everett.

For more information about the Great Backyard Bird Count, see page 8 or visit www.birdcount.org.

Birding highlights

November 26, 2011-December 25, 2011

By Mara Price, Sightings Coordinator

One of our sighters had a question about Northern Flickers. They have several different-looking flickers at their feeders. Some have a red malar on the side of the head. Some have a black malar and a red crescent on the nape. Still others have both a red malar on the face and a red crescent on the nape.

Female flickers just have the black breast band and a spotted belly. The male Northern Flicker usually has the red malar on the face. Yellow-shafted Flickers have a red crescent on the nape. The flickers mingle and the result is a Northern Flicker with the red malar and a red crescent on the nape. They also may have mixed yellow and reddish feathers. I have seen both at my feeders, also.



Flicker hybrid

Carole and Larry Beason reported large numbers of Evening Grosbeaks again. They also reported 10 Northern Flickers at their Lake Bosworth home. Their species count of 46 included 35 Evening Grosbeaks, 29 Buffleheads on the lake, 16 Common Mergansers, 4 Common Goldeneyes, 4 American Coots near the shore, 24 Mallards and also 2 Ring-necked Ducks, 2 Bald Eagles, a Belted Kingfisher, a Great Horned Owl, a Merlin and 12+ Red-winged Blackbirds.

John Davis spotted 6 Varied Thrushes in Forest Park along with a Barred Owl, a Bewick's Wren and a Brown Creeper. His total species count of 33 also included 2 Anna's Hummingbirds, 2 Fox Sparrows, 5 Golden-crowned Kinglets, a Hermit Thrush, 6 House Finches, 4 Pacific Wrens, 2 Pileated Woodpeckers, 2 Ruby-crowned Kinglets and 2 Townsends Warblers.



Barred Owl, by Charles Briggs

Gail Debernardo's report from Brier included 4 Northern Flickers, along with 3 Pileated Woodpeckers at the feeders. Her total species count of 24 also included a Wilson's Warbler, 5 Pine Siskins, 7 American Goldfinches, 16 Dark-eyed Juncos, 4 Golden-crowned Sparrows, a Townsend's Warbler, 2 Ruby-crowned Kinglets, a Golden-crowned Kinglet, 2 Fox Sparrows and 2 Red-breasted Nuthatches.

Hilkka Egtvedt was overwhelmed with 42 Dark-eyed Juncos in her yard this month. She also reported 100+ American Crows flying over. Her species count of 28 also included 4 American Goldfinches, 2 Anna's Hummingbirds, 2 Bald Eagles, 3 California Quail (mine have disappeared), an Eurasian Collared-Dove, 5 Golden-crowned Sparrows, a Red-breasted Nuthatch, 3 Red-winged Blackbirds, 2 White-throated Sparrows, a Townsend's Warbler and 3 Spotted Towhees.

Kriss Erickson reported 18 American Crows in her yard in Everett along with 30 Bushtits, 2 Northern Flickers,

35 European Starlings, 16 Black-capped Chickadees, 12 Dark-eyed Juncos, 4 Chestnut-backed Chickadees, 6 Song Sparrows, 17 American Coots near Lowell, a Kestrel, 3 Steller's Jays and 2 American Robins for a species count of 12.

Adeline Gildow said there was "nothing out of the ordinary" this month from her home on Camano Island. But, then she listed 22 Great Blue Herons, several hundred gull and duck species at Juniper Beach. She also listed 300+ Snow Geese in Conway, 4 Bald Eagles 2 Belted Kingfishers, 8 Caspian Terns, 4 Ringed-necked Pheasants and 5 Anna's Hummingbirds for a species count of 28. Life along Juniper Beach is clearly extraordinary!

Two more Varied Thrushes were reported by Julie O'Donald from her home in Brier. She also listed a Barred Owl, a Bewick's Wren, 78 Bushtits in the shrubs and suet, 3 Chestnut-backed Chickadees, 2 Golden-crowned Sparrows, 3 Hermit Thrushes, a Fox Sparrow, 2 Spotted Towhees and a Yellow-rumped Warbler for a species count of 23.

Mary Sinker reported 50 Dark-eyed Juncos at her home in Stanwood. She also listed 12 Black-capped Chickadees, a Brown Creeper, 4 Evening Grosbeaks, 11 Mourning Doves, 2 Pileated Woodpeckers, 5 Red-breasted Nuthatches, 9 Spotted Towhees, 12 Steller's Jays, 5 Pacific Wrens and 5 Pine Siskins for a total species count of 30.

Tundra Swans are back, along with Snow Geese. Dick Vanderoff reported 30+ Tundra Swans along Marine Drive. He also reported a cloud of sandpipers over the bay near Stanwood. His species count of 12 also included 10 Steller's Jays, 2 Red-tailed Hawks, 10 Chestnut-backed Chickadees, 8 American Crows, a Great Blue Heron and 3 Bald Eagles.

November's rains flooded the fields again and the ducks and gulls came back. I spotted more than 100 Mallards and Glaucous-winged Gulls. Also, the Pine Siskins really like our pond and waterfall and often stop by for a drink. I spotted more than 20 Pine Siskins flying in and out of the pond area. My total species count of 23 also included 22 Evening Grosbeaks, 2 Red-breasted Nuthatches, a Bewick's Wren, 10 Dark-eyed Juncos, 60+ European Starlings, 5 Steller's Jays, 2 Northern Flickers and a Yellow-rumped Warbler.

Comments and suggestions are always welcome. Please e-mail me at pricemara@clearwire.net or leave a message at 425.750.8125.

Smart Growth report

By Nora Haider, Intern, and Kristin Kelly, Smart Growth Director

Transportation for Washington is a statewide campaign to put forward more solutions to our transportation crisis. Transit service is being slashed, leaving Washingtonians stranded. Gas tax revenues are losing buying power, leaving bridges and roadways in a state of decay. More than half the state's greenhouse gas emissions stem from transportation, but revenue challenges leave Washingtonians with fewer clean transportation choices. Supporters of this campaign believe it's time to rise to these challenges and grow the economy by fixing the transportation system, creating more transit, bicycling and pedestrian choices, and building livable communities. The campaign focuses on three main principles:

Fix it first: Fix the crumbling bridges and roads first. Then ensure new investments will create jobs and improve the safety and health of our communities. Prioritize gas tax dollars to fix bridges and roads, preserve the ferry system and make streets accessible for all users. And, invest in new infrastructure to improve the safety and health of citizens, create jobs, reduce dependence on oil and ensure rural safety, social equity and economic opportunity across the state.

More transit: Increasing transportation choices will reduce congestion, improve freight mobility, decrease pollution, connect people to jobs, ensure equitable transportation options for everyone and connect rural communities, provide direct state funding and local funding options for transit, intercity rail and congestion mitigation programs across the state.

Build healthy, livable communities: Development and transportation go hand-in-hand. An efficient transportation system supports both affordable and healthy neighborhoods and connects Washingtonians to jobs, communities and each other. Authorize local share gas tax and other funding tools for local governments to repair, maintain and improve local roads, traffic signals and facilities for safe biking and walking. Provide grants for local governments to support complete streets, safe routes to schools and equitable urban development in high-capacity transit areas. Dedicate funding for clean water infrastructure improvements to reduce toxic runoff.

Key supporters of the T4Washington campaign include Futurewise, Transportation Choices Coalition, AHBL, AFT Washington, Amalgamated Transit Union 576, 587, 843 and 1765, Bicycle Alliance of Washington, Cascade Bicycle Club, Center for Justice, Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition, Climate Solutions, Downtown Seattle Association, Earth Ministry, El Centro de la Raza, Feet First, Friends of Clark and Pierce counties, Fuse Washington, IBEW 46, King County Labor Council, One America, Pilchuck Audubon Society, SEIU Health Care 775 NW, SEIU Local 925, Washington Chapter of the Sierra Club, Tacoma Downtown on the Go, Washington Coalition to Promote Physical Activity, Washington Conservation Voters, Washington Environmental Council, WashPIRG, Washington State Labor Council and Vulcan, Inc.

In the next several issues of *The Profile*, I'll provide more details of the T4Washington campaign as it goes forward during the 2012 legislative session. And there will be opportunities for you to help to ensure a better future for Washington.

So, first, please consider these facts:

In 2009, cities invested \$1.3 billion in transportation – approximately \$245 million for street maintenance alone. Yet this covers an estimated one-third of ongoing needs and does not address a critical maintenance backlog.

As of 2010, counties invested \$965 million in transportation projects, but face an annual funding gap around \$409 million.

Counties own and maintain more than 3300 bridges, 20% of which are either structurally deficient or functionally obsolete. In fact, more than one-third have a sufficiency rating low enough to qualify for federal funding – at current funding levels (federal only). It'll take 20 years to replace them all.

The annual road preservation need for the county arterial system alone is estimated at \$532.8 million. Although county arterials account for just more than one-third (36.5%) of all county roads, they account for almost two-thirds (65.5%) of road preservation costs.

For every dollar invested in transit, the local economy experiences a return of up to six dollars.

A comprehensive study by the Federal Transit Authority found that during the 1990s, transit investments returned:

- \$23 billion/year in affordable mobility for households that cannot afford a car or can't drive due to age or disability.
- \$19.4 billion/year in reduced congestion delays for rush-hour passengers and motorists.
- \$10 billion/year in reduced auto ownership costs for residents of livable neighborhoods.
- \$12 billion/year in reduced auto emissions.
- \$2 billion/year in local human service agency budgets.
- 2% boost in property tax receipts from commercial real estate.

Forty percent of commute trips into downtown Seattle are taken by transit. Twenty percent of commute trips into downtown Bellevue are by transit. Switching from driving to riding public transit could save the average American about \$800 per month or \$9,596 per year, according to the American Public Transportation Association.

For 2010-2020, there is a \$4.5 billion revenue shortfall for transportation in Washington.

Most of the pollution entering our local rivers, streams and Puget Sound comes from streets, parking lots and highways and is carried by rain running over the ground and into street drains.

- 27,000 gallons of runoff from a one-acre parking lot after one inch of rain.
- 71,000 pounds of petroleum contamination that may reach Puget Sound streams annually in surface runoff.
- 45,000 of Puget Sound's 140,000 acres of commercial shellfish growing areas are closed or partially closed to harvesting since 1980 because the water is polluted and the shellfish are unhealthy to eat.
- 33 beaches were closed during the past three years due to sewage-tainted polluted runoff.

Next month, I'll begin focusing on the problems and the solutions. The campaign is growing and you can join the effort by contacting me at kristin@futurewise.org or at 425.923.8625. For more information, visit the T4Washington campaign at www.t4washington.org.

Festivals ...

(continued from page 3)

Environmental priorities coalition lobby day January 25 Olympia

Come to Olympia with hundreds of other citizen lobbyists to push for the passage of the Environmental Priorities Coalition's legislative package.

Test your powers of persuasion as you meet with your state legislators. Receive detailed briefings on each priority and training on how to lobby. We'll fuel your activism with breakfast, lunch and all the coffee you can drink!

For more info about Lobby Day and representing PAS there, contact Kathleen Snyder or Susie Schaefer.

White Birds of Winter January 26 Northwest Stream Center

Come share and learn the facts, myths and legends of Washington's White Birds of Winter. Martha Jordan will present spectacular images and a lecture. She is director of the Washington Swan Working Group, a non-profit dedicated to assuring the vitality and welfare of wild swan populations.

The presentation begins at 7 p.m. Cost is \$5 for PAS members. Advance purchase is required. Please call 425.316.8592.

The Northwest Stream Center is located in McCollum Park, Everett. Take the 128th Street exit from I-5 and drive east for one-half mile. Turn right into the entrance of the park and drive to the south end. The Northwest Stream Center is the last structure at the end of the road.

Great Backyard Bird Count February 17-20, 2012 Your backyard and beyond!

The annual Great Backyard Bird Count provides a snapshot of the whereabouts of more than 600 bird species. Anyone can participate in this free event and no registration is needed. Watch and count birds for at least 15 minutes on any day of the count, February 17-20. Enter your results on the web at www.birdcount.org, where you can watch as the tallies grow across the continent. The four-day count typically records more than 10 million observations.

Results from the 2011 GBBC included:

- Increased reports of Evening Grosbeaks, a species that has been declining.
- A modest seasonal movement of winter finches farther south in their search for food.
- Reports of Eurasian Collared-Doves in Alaska for the first time, more evidence of an introduced species rapidly expanding its range.

The count extends well beyond backyards. Lots of participants head for national parks, nature centers, urban parks, nature trails or nearby sanctuaries. For more info, including bird-ID tips and past results, visit www.birdcount.org. The count also includes a photo contest and a prize drawing for participants who enter their bird checklists online.

The Great Backyard Bird Count is made possible in part by sponsor Wild Birds Unlimited.

Port Susan Snow Goose and Birding Festival February 25-26 Stanwood, Washington

The geese are back and plans are in the works for the 2012 Port Susan Snow Goose Festival on February 25-26. Watch the official festival web site – www.snowgoosefest.org – for an upcoming list of field trips, seminars and other activities.

PAS sponsors the event, so we hope lots of members and friends will join us in Stanwood, as well as volunteer to help out. Please contact Susie Schaefer at 425.771.8165 or susie.schaefer@pilchuckaudubon.org if you can help.

Birds and whales of San Ignacio Lagoon March 5-13, 2012 Baja, Mexico

Join Cabrillo Marine Aquarium March 5-13, 2012, for a trip that truly is the journey of a lifetime, especially for bird fans!

Gray whales return to San Ignacio Lagoon to mate and give birth. During this nine-day excursion, you'll spend three exciting days anchored in the lagoon where friendly gray whales and curious calves swim within arm's length of the skiffs.

For birders, this is a chance to see albatrosses, osprey, frigate birds, a variety of herons and egrets, not to mention all the birds that hang out in the mangroves found in San Ignacio. The trip also includes naturalist-led visits to uninhabited desert islands where passengers will have the chance to see even more birds, unique habitats and tons of other wildlife.

Contact Carolyn Kraft (310.548.7562 or cmaprograms@gmail.com) or visit the aquarium web site at www.cabrillomarineaquarium.org for more info.

Wings over Water Northwest Birding Festival March 17 Blaine, Washington

Don't miss this great event for avid bird enthusiasts and casual observers alike! Fun festival activities take place from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and include guided field trips to Semiahmoo Spit, a wildlife cruise, an art show, live raptor presentations, family activities, prizes and more!

For more information, visit www.blainechamber.com or phone 800.624.3555.

Othello Sandhill Crane Festival March 23-25 Othello, Washington

Plan to attend the 15th Othello Sandhill Crane Festival, March 23-25. The festival features field trips to view Sandhill Cranes, along with other specialty tours such as Columbia National Wildlife Refuge/Potholes wildlife tour, Lower Grand Coulee birding tour and Wahluke Slope/Shrub Steppe birding tour. Trips fill up quickly. Pre-registration is recommended.

With your paid admission into the festival, you're entitled to attend lectures on topics such as falconry, Grouse of Washington, Othello History within the Drumhellar Channeled Scablands, Shrub-Steppe Flora and Fauna, Owls of Eastern Washington and Spring Migration in the Columbia Basin.

For more information, visit the festival web site at www.othellosandhillcranefestival.org or contact Susie Schaefer: susie.schaefer@pilchuckaudubon.org or 425.771.8165.

(See "Festivals" on page 9)

Festivals ...

(continued from page 8)

Olympic BirdFest

March 30-April 1 **Sequim, Washington**

Join the Olympic BirdFest 2012 celebration at the Dungeness River Audubon Center, March 30-April 1. The stage is set ... quiet bays and estuaries, sandy beaches, a long sand spit and an island bird sanctuary on the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Wetlands, tide pools, rainforests and lush valleys. Enjoy guided birding trips, boat tours and a gala banquet.

Come bird with us and experience the spectacular landscapes of the Olympic Peninsula ... you just might go home with a new bird for your life list! Check out the offerings at www.olympicbirdfest.org or call for a brochure: 360.681.4076.

Grays Harbor Shorebird Festival

May 4-6 **Hoquiam, Washington**

Each spring, hundreds of thousands of shorebirds stop to rest and feed in Grays Harbor estuary on their migration north. These Arctic-bound shorebirds are among the world's greatest migrants. This concentration of birds offers people a great chance to view a number of shorebird species, and with luck, to see the birds fly in beautiful formations while trying to escape the fastest creature on earth, the Peregrine Falcon.

This year's festival features field trips to view shorebirds and raptors, plus lectures, workshops, a nature fun fair, a birding marketplace and more. The keynote address will be by Richard Crossley, author, birder and photographer.

For more information, visit www.shorebirdfestival.com or phone 360.289.5048.

Candidates sought for PAS board

The 2012 Pilchuck Audubon Society nominating committee is continuing to identify potential new board members and officers. We would welcome suggestions from current members.

The PAS Board of Directors meets monthly – although not usually in August – on the first Monday of the month from 6-8 p.m. at the Sno-Isle Food Co-op in Everett. Board meetings are rarely dull, as PAS is an active and important organization in Snohomish County. PAS members are welcome to attend and an ever-changing board is vital for this organization.

If you'd like to be considered for the board or know someone who would be willing to help keep PAS lively and important, please contact one of the nominating committee members right away.

Susie Schaefer, 425.771.8165 or susie.schaefer@pilchuckaudubon.org

Bill Davey, ldavey4227@aol.com

Mara Price, pricemara@clearwire.net

Kathy Piland, piland4@earthlink.net

Audubon membership information

Joint membership in National Audubon Society (NAS) and Pilchuck Audubon Society (PAS) includes NAS's quarterly magazine *Audubon* and PAS's *Profile* e-newsletter for one year. Cost is \$20 for an Introductory Membership or \$35 for renewals. When you join National Audubon Society, you automatically become a member of PAS. **All PAS membership dues are tax-deductible.* The PAS tax ID number is 96-6183664.**

PAS receives only a small portion of your national dues to support the work of the chapter. If you do not want to be a national member or you want your dues to stay local, you can join PAS separately. Local membership in PAS includes a one-year subscription (12 issues) to PAS's *Profile* newsletter. Cost is \$28. A special limited income category is available for \$16.

Local PAS membership

- New member \$28
- Renewal \$28
- Lifetime PAS member \$1000
 - 10 monthly payments of \$100
 - 4 quarterly payments of \$250
 - 1 payment of \$1000
- Donation \$ _____

Make check payable to:
Pilchuck Audubon Society

Mail your check and this form to:
PAS Membership Chair
1429 Avenue D, PMB 198
Snohomish, WA 98290

NAS membership

(includes PAS membership)

- Introductory membership \$20

Make check payable to:
National Audubon Society

Mail your check and this form to:
PAS Membership Chair
1429 Avenue D, PMB 198
Snohomish, WA 98290

NAS renewal

(includes PAS renewal)

- Renewal \$35

Make check payable to:
National Audubon Society

Mail your check and this form to:
NAS, Membership Data Center
POB 420235
Palm Coast, Florida 32142

- Contact me about volunteer opportunities.
- I am interested in the Conservation Committee.

* Consult your tax professional for full details.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____