



# Pilchuck Audubon Profile



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[www.pilchuckaudubon.org](http://www.pilchuckaudubon.org)

## Ribbon cut on demo garden in Edmonds



Edmonds City Council President Steve Bernheim cuts the ribbon at the Edmonds Wildlife Habitat and Native Plant Demonstration Garden as PAS's Susie Schaefer, Laura Spehar and Mike Blackbird look on. Photo by Paul Spehar.

More than 150 people attended the grand opening of the Edmonds Wildlife Habitat and Native Plant Demonstration Garden on Sunday, April 25. Edmonds City Council President Steve Bernheim cut the ribbon to officially welcome all. Experts were on hand to answer questions about bats, butterflies and bees. And attendees were able to tour a number of backyard wildlife sanctuaries, as well.

The next scheduled program at the garden will be presented by PAS member Julie O'Donald on Saturday, June 26, at 9 a.m.



Congratulations to the demo garden steering committee for their dedication and hard work. Photo by Paul Spehar.

June program meeting  
Friday, June 11, 7 p.m.

### **"Go batty" with Barbara Ogaard**

Bats play an important role in the ecosystem. Join Barbara Ogaard, of Sarvey Wildlife Center and Bats Northwest, as she teaches us about these amazing creatures. Learn about the world of bats and even meet some live bats up close.

Everett Firefighters Hall  
2411 Hewitt Avenue, Everett

**For more information, call 425.252.0926**

**Watch [www.pilchuckaudubon.org](http://www.pilchuckaudubon.org)  
for the most up-to-date information.**

## Osprey success!

Bill Lider very happily reports that three of PAS's five Osprey nest platforms in Port Gardner Bay are now occupied by Osprey pairs. A pair of Double-crested Cormorants is using a fourth pile, and the fifth pile (near Cedar Grove Compost on Smith Island) remains vacant.

The platforms, constructed in 2009, were unoccupied until this season. Earlier this year, PAS volunteers seeded the platforms with sticks in an effort to entice the Ospreys to move from their broken down piles to these new uptown digs.

The females are sitting on the nest and it looks like egg laying has commenced. The dutiful males bring fish to their mates and keep those pesky Bald Eagles at bay.

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# President's message

By Mike Blackbird, President, Pilchuck Audubon Society



As I write this column on a cold day at the beginning of May, I find myself longing for the spring days of March when the crocuses were croaking and newly-arrived Violet-green Swallows swooped overhead. The cold days of April and May have been anything but encouraging that there may be a summer anytime soon.

But, ever an optimist, my optimism has been rewarded today when a pair of Red-breasted Nuthatches, visitors at my feeders all winter, just now appeared with two fledglings. If past springs are any guide, it won't be long before the Black-capped and Chestnut-backed chickadees show up with their young, setting them on the cross arm of the feeder, the little devils shivering their young feathers, begging to be fed.

A book I've had in my library as long as I can remember ("remembering" these days may mean last week) is *The Northern Naturalist*. It chronicles E.O. Hohn's experiences with wildlife on a small piece of acreage he owns east of Edmonton, Alberta. Hohn creates a picture of the wildlife on his acreage through the year. He writes of spring being the most exciting for a naturalist as winter retreats and croaking frogs and chattering squirrels herald winter's retreat north, and the advance of migrating birds.

Spring, to a suburbanite like me, is no less exciting, though perhaps on a smaller scale. Along with crocuses rushing to be the new year's first flower and the arrival of the first swallow, going out to get the morning paper – with a March dawn tickling the eastern horizon – I'm thrilled to hear Pacific Tree Frogs singing from their refuge in the mitigating pond down the block: their choral renderings announcing that the vernal equinox is coming soon to a pond near me.

Watching two industrious nuthatch parents feed suet to their youngsters, I realized I've watched this same scene for the last 13 years from my home office window. For the past couple of years, I've been pleased to see a Piliated Woodpecker couple bring their youngsters to the fir tree near the fence and feed them suet. I've watched impassively as a Sharp-shinned Hawk picks off a Junco, and preoccupied pigeons scatter when a Cooper's Hawk catches them unaware as they gorge at my feeder. If Mother Nature was amenable, I'd like to negotiate a contract with her to have a Cooper's Hawk swing by my backyard twice a day.

I don't know who, but someone in the neighborhood puts out peanuts. Not a week goes by that I don't see a Steller's Jay land on the railing of the back porch to crack open a peanut. Last week, I noticed a squirrel digging at the base of the rose arbor. Later, I found he'd buried a peanut. Planting flowers the other day, I found three or four peanuts buried in the flowerbeds by the industrious little devils. I wonder if they remember where they buried them. I wonder if they get frustrated when they come back for that tasty peanut buried next to the Mallow only to find it gone.

As a telecommuter for 13 years, I watched birds out my office window. No longer under a deadline to finish a spreadsheet that will go (unread) into a corporate file, I've come to realize I'm a kindred spirit with E.O. Hone. I, too, am a naturalist. An urban naturalist, true, but no less a naturalist. Who just happened to notice that office window could stand washing.

I believe I'll go see if Florence does windows.

## 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](http://www.pilchuckaudubon.org)



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Board Consultant

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# Trip calendar

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

## Tuesday, June 1 Smith and Spencer islands

Meet at 8 a.m. at Langus Riverfront Park, Everett. Go north on SR 529 (Broadway) over the Snohomish River. Turn right onto 28th Place NE. Follow signs to Langus Park. Continue to a parking lot after the left curve in the road (under I-5 and just past the shell house and animal shelter). Should see lots of waterfowl and raptors. Walk the Langus trail, maybe try the Everett Sewage Ponds. Lots of walking. Pack a lunch.

Leader: Ed Cushing, 425.438.4146

## June 4-7 Annual trip to Ferry County

The Ferry County trip is full. To add your name to a waiting list, please contact trip leader Susie Schaefer: 425-771.8165 or [susie.schaefer@pilchuckaudubon.org](mailto:susie.schaefer@pilchuckaudubon.org).

## Tuesday, June 8 Everett waterfront

Meet at 8 a.m. at Legion Park off North Marine Drive, Everett. Past trips species have included Osprey, Peregrine Falcon, Purple Martin and Yellow-headed Blackbird. Pack a lunch.

Leader: Art Wait, 360.563.0181

## Tuesday, June 15 Big Four Meadows

Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Frontier Village Park and Ride (9600 Market Place). From SR 9, turn onto Market Place (the street Target is on), then north into the park and ride just west of Target. A beautiful setting for our annual potluck bird trip. Bring something to share. Virginia provides hot dogs and potato salad and will advise if you want to know what to bring. Expect swallows, hummingbirds, swifts, warblers, vireos and dippers. A trailhead pass is required, but is obtainable en route.

Leader: Virginia Clark, 360.435.3750

## Tuesday, June 22 Mid-Whidbey 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 (next to I-5). This is the area between Crockett Lake and Swantown, an always-exciting experience for both birding and scenery. Pack a lunch.

Leaders: Virginia Clark, 360.435.3750  
Wilma Bayes, 360.629.2028

## Saturday, June 26 Buck Island (Monroe)

Meet at 8 a.m. at Everett Station, 3201 Smith Ave., Everett. Park in the northwest corner of the parking lot, across Smith Avenue from the Everett Station building. We'll carpool to Monroe and walk the Al Borlin Nature Trail – a loop through a forest of big leaf maple and cottonwood and alongside the Skykomish River. Total distance is 3.5 miles with no elevation gain. This is a half-day hike, so pack a lunch.

Leader: Terry Nightingale, 206.619.2383

## Sunday, June 27 Snoqualmie Pass

Meet at 7 a.m. at Everett Mall – in the back, near the transit facility by LA Fitness. This hike will be up and back (not a loop). We'll see what the area has to offer. There is a fee of \$5 per car for a Forest Pass. All day. Pack a lunch.

Leader: Jonathan Blubaugh, 425.244.7633

## Tuesday, June 29 Ellensburg

Meet at 6:30 a.m. at the Monroe Park and Ride on SR 2, a half-mile west of the fairgrounds. We will bird portions of Umtanum Creek, Robinson Canyon and other areas. This will be a long, rewarding day. Hope to see Yellow-breasted Chat, Warbling Vireo, Lazuli Bunting and maybe Canyon and Rock wrens. Pack a lunch.

Leaders: Wilma Bayes, 360.629.2028  
Margaret Bridge, 360.862.1694

## Sunday, July 18 Paradise Glacier (Mt. Rainier)

Meet at 7 a.m. at Everett Mall – in the back, near the transit facility by LA Fitness. This hike will be up and back, 5.16 miles total (not a loop). Park entrance fee \$15 or Golden Eagle Pass. Pack a lunch.

Leader: Jonathan Blubaugh, 425.244.7633

## Saturday, July 24 Edmonds wooded park walks

Meet at 8 a.m. at Everett Station, 3201 Smith Ave., Everett. Park in the northwest corner of the parking lot, across Smith Avenue from the Everett Station building. We'll carpool to Edmonds and explore Maplewood, Yost Memorial and Pine Ridge parks which include open fields, forest and wetlands. Total distance is 3 miles with negligible elevation gain. This is a half-day hike, so pack a lunch.

Leader: Terry Nightingale, 206.619.2383

## Saturday, August 7 Mt. Pilchuck

Meet at 7:30 a.m. in the south lot of the Eastmont Park and Ride, 9029 E El Capitan Way, Everett. We'll carpool from there and plan to hike to the top of our namesake, Mount Pilchuck. This is a strenuous, all-day hike, but we will take it slow. Expect to be rewarded with panoramic views of the Cascades, three volcanoes, the San Juan Islands and all of Snohomish County. On past trips, we've seen Hermit and Swainson's thrush and Pine Marten. Bring a lunch, water and dress for weather. If the weather is foul, plan B is a low-elevation hike in the South Fork Stilliguamish basin. A USFS trail park pass is required. Contact Bill Lider at 425.776.0671 or [bill.lider@verizon.net](mailto:bill.lider@verizon.net) for more information.

## Sunday, August 22 Mountain Loop Highway

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. We weren't able to get up there last year due to storm damage. Details to follow.

Leader: Jonathan Blubaugh, 425.244.7633

## Sunday, September 19 Weekend Bird Hike

Any suggestions as to where?

**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

## Birding by ear with Mark Johnston

Thursday, June 3

Tiger Mountain

Join Mark Johnston for a birding-by-ear expedition on the Tradition Plateau. Please note: this trip is limited to 11 total birders, so pre-registration is required! Contact Mark Johnston at 253.297.0705.

Participants will meet at 7 a.m. at the Issaquah park and ride (Tibbett's lot, 1676 Newport Way NW) and spend five hours birding the mix of habitats at the base of Tiger Mountain. The focus will be identifying species by vocalizations. We'll discuss some aspects of the ecology of acoustic communication in birds. This walk involves a five-mile walk. We'll be back by 1 p.m. Carpool cost is \$3 (shared equally by riders).

## CamOcean

June 12, 2010 Cama Beach State Park

Make a commotion at "CamOcean," a World Oceans Day festival on Camano Island. Festivities get underway at 9 a.m. on Saturday, June 12, at Cama Beach State Park on the west side of Camano Island.

Speakers include Bill Lider of PAS, who will give a presentation about Port Gardner Bay Ospreys and PAS's efforts to enhance and protect their vital nesting grounds. Other festival activities include beach walks at low tide, nature walks, environmental displays, live music, boat tours, crafts and recycled artwork.

For more information, check out "CamOcean Day" on Facebook or e-mail [camocean\\_info@verizon.net](mailto:camocean_info@verizon.net).

## Cascades Banding Camp

July 25-31 and August 9-13

Cascade Mountains

Teens and adults can learn to band birds in Washington's Cascade Mountains with trainers Dan Froehlich and Don Norman. This field camp features riparian and mountain birding and banding with opportunities to see and handle a wide variety of Northwest birds. Training focuses on net placement, extraction and handling, ageing and sexing.

The adult camp is scheduled for July 25-31. The cost is \$700, plus \$50 for materials. For more information or to download registration forms, visit [www.pugetsoundbirds.org](http://www.pugetsoundbirds.org).

Teen training is scheduled for August 9-13. The cost is \$450, plus \$50 for materials. For more information or to download registration forms, visit [www.seattleaudubon.org](http://www.seattleaudubon.org).

Mark your calendars for the  
**Pilchuck Audubon picnic**

Sunday, August 22  
Jennings Park, Marysville

More information to come!

# Redmond's Marymoor: not just for the dogs

By Jonathan Blubaugh

On April 18, my friend Joann joined me for the Weekend Bird Hike to Marymoor Park in Redmond. Marymoor is the most popular park in King County and features a large off-leash dog area. It turns out the large off-leash area is the reason for the park's popularity. Needless to say, the off-leash dogs don't make Marymoor the best place to see wildlife.

Much of the rest of the park is made up of ball fields and tracks, plus a venue for outdoor performances. But, the park map I downloaded from the internet showed a series of tempting trails named for birds, as well as boardwalks along the shores of Lake Sammamish and the Sammamish River.

Joann and I were determined to explore the wild areas, riparian areas and wetlands in this large, urban park. We first chose a path which appeared to skirt clear of the dog area. Unfortunately, I forgot the map at home, and we got kind of lost off in a maze of narrow paths through swampy ground.

We got off the beaten path and saw great birds in the dense growth of the swampy land. We found a



Common Yellowthroat, by Don Metzner



Snipe, by Raymond Parsons

group of spectacular Common Yellowthroats. I heard them and Joann finally found them. We also scared up a Snipe.

We eventually wound our way to a soggy dead end and turned around. This backtracking led us to the main trail we'd intended to take in the first place. It led to the boardwalk at the south end of Lake Sammamish. There, we saw gourd nesting boxes inhabited by Purple Martins and Tree Swallows.

Joann chose our next stop: Bear Creek Park in Redmond. We saw few birds there including a pair of "breeding" juncos.

Here's a partial trip list: a Great Blue Heron, 5 Common Mergansers, an Osprey, 5 Bald Eagles, a Killdeer, the Snipe, 2 Rufous Hummingbirds, 2 Downy Woodpeckers, the Martins, 9 Tree Swallows, 2 Bushtits, a Bewick's Wren, 3 Marsh Wrens, a Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 5 Yellow-rumped Warblers, the Yellowthroats, 5 Spotted Towhees, 2 Savannah Sparrows, the juncos, 2 Brown-headed Cowbirds.

# Mearns receives NOAA Distinguished Career medal



Dr. Alan Mearns

Alan Mearns, PAS member and retired charter member of the Snohomish County Marine Resources Committee, was recently awarded a 2009 Distinguished Career Bronze Medal from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). As luck would have it, Alan was unable to receive the medal personally – the Deepwater Horizon oil spill mobilized his entire office for work in the Gulf of Mexico.

Alan's supervisor, Bill Conner, offered the nomination, noting: "Over the past three decades, Dr. Alan Mearns has represented the epitome of what a NOAA scientist should be. Always true to the tenets of objective science, he tirelessly produced

and dispersed scientific information to other government agencies, non-governmental organizations and the public. He is truly a scientific resource to the global community and we make environmental decisions differently today as a result of his work."

Dr. Mearns joined NOAA in 1980 to serve as ecologist for the Puget Sound Marine Ecosystem Assessment Program where he conducted the first synoptic evaluation of Puget Sound health. During the 1980s, he also helped develop the NOAA National Status and Trends Program, which collected the first long-term dataset that allowed tracking of environmental trends in coastal areas.

Dr. Conner continued: "His tireless zeal for science, his infectious enthusiasm for studying the marine environment, and his commitment to serving both his country and the public has garnered him numerous plaudits from the many groups he serves outside of NOAA."

# Vaux's Swifts catch the eye of the L.A. press

By Louis Sahagun, Los Angeles Times (April 24, 2010)

Two dozen naturalists gathered on the roof of a downtown Los Angeles parking structure at sundown on April 23 to witness an



unusual spectacle: tens of thousands of migrating birds spiraling into an abandoned brick chimney for the night.

The aerial display began when Vaux's Swifts – small, cigar-shaped birds with long, crescent-shaped wings – began heading in from all directions, swirling around the chimney of the adjacent 12-story, 84-year-old Chester Building.

The odd locale is believed to be one of the most populous roosting sites for the birds in North America, local avian experts said.

Vaux's Swifts began seeking evening accommodations in the Chester Building about a week before, according to parking structure attendant Tomas Hernandez. "I never dreamed I'd see something like this in the central city," he said.

The birds probably are in the peak of their northward migration from wintering areas in Mexico to breeding grounds as far north as Oregon, Washington, southeastern British Columbia and Alaska, according to Kimball Garrett, ornithology collections manager at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County.

"That chimney is a good place for them to sleep," he said. "They spend all day feeding on nice hatches of insects blown skyward by updrafts along the Los Angeles River and Elysian Park area. At nightfall, they all come together to roost in the same safe resting area."

About 7:20 p.m., the birds began funneling down the chimney. Hungry ravens were waiting for them, using their beaks to snag birds out of the air as they plunged into the chute.

The swift watchers peering through binoculars were not hap-

py about that. "It's like watching bears grab salmon out of a river. Where's the 12-gauge shotgun?" lamented Los Angeles Audubon spokeswoman Mary Locuvam.

"No way! Ravens have to eat, too," Nicole Possert responded with a laugh.

Then there was 2-year-old Avery Van Gundy, who couldn't take her eyes off the chaotic waves of birds overhead. "There's a lot of birds, Mommy," she said, snapping photographs with a camera she learned to use a few days ago.

*Chaetura vauxi* generally spends most its time in flight, foraging on high-flying insects and baby spiders. It pauses at sundown to seek refuge and protection in the hollow trees of old-growth forests – or the next closest thing, brick chimneys.

**All PAS membership dues and donations are tax-deductible. The PAS tax ID number is 96-6183664. Consult your tax professional for full details.**

## PAS board meetings are open to all

The Pilchuck Audubon Board meets on the first Tuesday of each month, at the Sno-Isle Natural Foods Coop meeting room (2804 Grand Ave., Everett), beginning at 6 p.m. All are welcome to attend to learn more about the chapter's goals and priorities. For more information, contact Kathleen Snyder at 425.438.1505.

# Smart Growth report

By Kristin Kelly, Smart Growth Director

## Music, dancing and auction will highlight "Puget Sounds for the Gulf"

Enjoy dancing and fabulous music from 10 different bands – and help renew the ecological health of the Gulf Coast, too. Attend a fundraiser called "Puget Sounds for the Gulf" on Sunday, June 27, at the Highliner Pub, 3909 18th Ave. W. (Fisherman's Terminal), Ballard. Admission is a \$10 donation.

If you can't attend, but would still like to help, consider donating an item for an auction, also taking place at the event. Organizers seek items ranging from \$10 to \$200 in value. Stand-alone items or items suitable for gift baskets are welcome. Or, make donation to the Gulf Coast Fund for Community Renewal and Ecological Health at [www.gulfcoast.org](http://www.gulfcoast.org).

Please contact Kristin Kelly ([kristin@futurewise.org](mailto:kristin@futurewise.org) or 425.923.8625) for more information or to volunteer at the event.

## Save the date for Feast with Friends Thursday, August 26, 6 to 10 p.m.

The fourth annual Feast with Friends is scheduled for Thursday, August 26, in Snohomish. This fundraiser benefits Pilchuck Audubon's Smart Growth Program as well as Futurewise in Snohomish and Skagit counties.

The expense associated with sending hard copy, snail mail invitations is substantial. Please e-mail me today to ensure you're on the list to receive an electronic invitation. And be sure to watch your inbox! Feel free to invite friends and family, too.

The Feast with Friends combines donations from local farmers and wineries with the skills of local chefs and caterers to create great food and wine to enjoy, celebrating the work I do on land use and environmental protection issues!

The event again take place at Angel Arms Works Studio, home and art studio of Snohomish Mayor Karen Guzak and Warner Blake, 230 Avenue B, Snohomish.

If you're interested in volunteering at the event, please contact me at [kristin@futurewise.org](mailto:kristin@futurewise.org) or 425.923.8625.

## Update on county issues

**Urban Centers:** Snohomish County adopted two new ordinances regarding design standards and zoning regulations for the seven Urban Centers currently designated in our area. These centers will provide mixed use residential and commercial development along or near transit, and must provide amenities to residents and workers. The ordinances were heavy on process – which could make it difficult to attract developers. But, overall, they provide opportunity for vibrant centers where people can live, work, play and use transit to get to other job centers. They also offer incentives to the development community to provide affordable housing to low and medium income earners and for transfer of development rights, which would provide more density in exchange for preserving farm and forest land.

**Shoreline Master Plan Update:** The Snohomish County Council will conduct public hearings on the Shoreline Master

Plan update this summer. When hearing dates are set, I'll communicate them to you via an e-mail action alert. The Shoreline Master Plan document is required by the state Shoreline Management Act to help protect Puget Sound shorelines, rivers and lakes. It will mandate what sort of development should occur and which uses should be allowed. If you'd like more information, please send me an e-mail.

**Countywide Planning Policies (CCPs):** Snohomish County Tomorrow (SCT), a partnership of cities, the county and local tribes, is working to update the CPPs to be in line with Puget Sound Regional Council's Vision 2040 for land use, housing and transportation. The SCT planning advisory committee will submit a draft report to the SCT steering committee by the end of summer. The steering committee will submit its final recommendations county council this fall. I anticipate the council will conduct public hearings before adopting the updated policies later this year or in early 2011. The CPPs also guide the comprehensive plan policies and regulations for the county and cities.

**Snohomish County Comprehensive Plan Update:** Under the Growth Management Act, counties and cities can update comprehensive land use plans once a year, and are required to update them every 10 years. Snohomish County has, for years, entertained numerous private land use proposals to expand urban growth areas, rezone rural, resource and urban land.

The process consumes a huge amount of time and tax dollars. In an effort to make this process more sustainable for the county and its citizens, the county council will adopt changes to the yearly Comprehensive Plan Update process. To date, the changes include consideration of major land use changes only every five years and minor land use changes only every 30 months. The county council will take final public testimony on Docket XIV this summer, and will set Docket XV this summer, as well.

Docket XIV includes the proposed land use plan and rezone of the Cathcart Land Fill along Highway 9 and Cathcart Way. The county executive proposes an Urban Village with mixed use residential, commercial and light industrial. At the public hearing, I asked for three changes: more ball fields, a year-round farmers market and an affordable housing demo project based on inclusionary zoning. All 10 planning commission members agreed and recommended these items be included.

I hope you have a great summer and will continue to help in my endeavor to create vibrant, livable, sustainable urban communities while protecting our wildlife habitat, water quality, farmland and forestland.

**Call 24 hours a day for help for injured wildlife**

**Second Chance Wildlife Care Center**  
Snohomish, 425-335-0788



**Deer Creek Wild Animal Rehab**  
Everett, 425-334-8171



**Sarvey Wildlife Center:** Arlington, 360-435-4817

**PAWS:** Lynnwood, 425-787-2500, ext. 817

# The true story of Cher Ami

## The pigeon who saved an entire battalion of US Marines

This true story happened long ago – before there were cell phones, walkie-talkies, or even broadcast radio. It was October, 1918, the height of World War I. Major Charles Whittlesey had led the 500 men of the 77th Division of the Marine Corps (known as the Lost Division) deep behind German lines in France's Argonne Forest. They'd advanced so far that headquarters did not know their location.

The Lost Division dropped into a bowl in the forest and was soon surrounded by German troops. The Germans, having the high ground, could shoot down on the trapped Americans.

Normally, runners communicated back to headquarters for support and to inform them of the division's location. But, this time, none of the runners could make it through the German lines.

The Americans had three Homing Pigeons with them to communicate short messages back to headquarters.

The first pigeon's message read, "Many wounded. We cannot evacuate." The second pigeon was killed by the Germans.

After suffering casualties for nearly six days, and with supplies and ammunition running low, the trapped Americans came under friendly fire from their own artillery. The Marines were literally being blown to pieces.

They had only one pigeon left, Cher Ami, French for "my



*Note the juvenile Band-tailed Pigeon on the right lacks the iridescent patch and white bar on the back of the neck. Like their closest cousin, the Passenger Pigeon, Band-tails faced extinction from overhunting. These skittish birds are not like the Rock Pigeon (park pigeons). They will scatter at the drop of a pin, never let humans get close and are usually seen high in the tops of trees. They can be lured down to backyard feeders with safflower and sunflower seeds. They are especially fond of shelled peanuts. Photo by Bill Lider.*

dear friend." Major Whittlesey penned one last desperate message and strapped it to Cher Ami's leg. The message read: "We are along the road parallel to 276.4. Our own artillery is dropping a barrage directly on us. For heaven's sake, stop it!"

When Cher Ami was released, a German officer spotted the bird. Knowing it would be carrying a message, he ordered troops to fire. Cher Ami was hit several times. One leg was nearly torn off. He was hit in the chest. He was left blind in one eye.

Nonetheless, Cher Ami flew on, covering 40 kilometers in 25 minutes. Bloodied and with one leg still dangling by a tendon, Cher Ami delivered the message and the artillery barrage was halted. Of the original 500

members of the Lost Division who went in, 194 made it out alive, primarily due to this bird.

Medics worked to save Cher Ami's life. They couldn't save his wounded leg, so they carved a small wooden peg-leg for him. For his valor in combat, Cher Ami was awarded the Croix de Guerre Medal with a palm Oak Leaf Cluster. He recovered and sailed back the United States with General Pershing.

Cher Ami lived for one year before finally succumbing to his injuries. He was mounted and donated to the Smithsonian Institution where he is on display today in the Museum of American History's "Price of Freedom" exhibition.

### Leader sought for new Development Committee

PAS is looking for a someone to head a vital new Development Committee – someone who understands the importance of and creativity of fundraising. This committee chair will serve a two-year term on the board of directors and act as liaison between our various fundraising activities and the board.

Currently, we have a few wonderful volunteers who take on our merchandise and book sales, Bird-a-thon fundraiser and generate fundraising letters. However, we need someone to coordinate these, plus look at new ways to expand our fundraising activities. And, if anyone can help with writing grants, we'd love to talk to you, too.

Call Kathleen Snyder for more info: 425.438.1505.

### Don't miss the *Profile!* Provide your e-mail address today.

Attention PAS members: we need your e-mail address so we can notify you when a new issue of the *Profile* is available online.

Please contact Kathy Piland at [kathy.piland@pilchuckaudubon.org](mailto:kathy.piland@pilchuckaudubon.org) or leave a message at 425.252.0926.

Don't miss a single color issue. Act today!

# Birding highlights

By Mara Price, Sightings Coordinator

March 26, 2010-April 25, 2010

Many winter migrants have returned. We are seeing **American Goldfinches**, **Evening Grosbeaks**, **Black-headed Grosbeaks**, **Rufous Hummingbirds** and swallows. I am still waiting for the **Western Tanager**, though. Has anybody seen one?

Annette Hobbs called to report at least four eagles near Marsh Road and Seattle Hill Road in Everett. She doesn't recall seeing so many in her area before. She was wondering about a reason for the increase? If you have any ideas, please let me know.

Carol and Larry Beason reported 47 species from Lake Bosworth this month. They listed 36 **Evening Grosbeaks**. They also reported 18 **Tree Swallows**, 16 **Violet-green Swallows**, 7 **Northern Shovelers**, 2 **Common Loons**, 2 **Greater Scaups**, 5 **Common Mergansers**, an **American Goldfinch**, a **Black-headed Grosbeak**, 18 **Band-tailed Pigeons**, 3 **Rufous Hummingbirds** and a **Swainson's Thrush**.

Reporting from near Lake Stevens, Annette Colombini reported a **Northern Saw-whet Owl**, 5 **Pine Siskins**, 2 **Downy Woodpeckers**, 2 **Hairy Woodpeckers**, a **Pileated Woodpecker**, a **White-crowned Sparrow**, 2 **Trumpeter Swans** flying over, 6 **Black-capped Chickadees** and 3 **Chestnut-backed Chickadees**, 2 **Song Sparrows**, 3 **Spotted Towhees** and 3 **Northern Flickers** for a species count of 14.

A **Rufous Hummingbird** returned to Gail Dibernado's Brier home on April 2. The **Violet-green Swallows** returned April 14. Her total species count of 29 included 2 **Rufous Hummingbirds**, 8 **Violet-green Swallows**, 2 **Red-breasted Sapsuckers**, 17 **Pine Siskins**, 4 **Anna's Hummingbirds**, a **Fox Sparrow**, 2 **Great Blue Herons** flying near the house, 130+ **Brants** (small, black-necked geese about the size of a Mallard) along Edmonds Beach, 5 **American Wigeons** and 4 **Northern Flickers**.

Hilkka Egtvedt reported 2 **Bald Eagles** nesting near her house in Mukilteo. She also reported 6 **American Goldfinches**, 14 **Band-tailed Pigeons**, a **Bewick's Wren**, 4 **California Quail**, a **Golden-crowned Sparrow**, 2 **Pileated Woodpeckers**, a **Townsend's Warbler**, 2 **Violet-green Swallows** and 3 **White-crowned Sparrows** for a total species count of 29.

Kriss Erickson still has 6 **Wood Ducks** in her yard along with 6 **Mallards**, 6 **American Crows**, 3 **Northern Flickers**, 8 **Black-capped Chickadees**, 6 **Western Gulls** flying over, 13 **Bushtits**, 2 **Steller's Jays** and 3 **Song Sparrows** for a species count of 11.



American Goldfinch, by Paul Kusmin



Wood Duck pair, by Nigel

Adeline Gildow spotted thousands upon thousands of **Dunlin** along Juniper Beach. She said they covered at least seven lots in length. She also saw 2 **Eurasian Collared Doves**. Her total species count of 40 also included 8 **Bald Eagles** flying over, a **Barred Owl** and 2 **Barn Owls** at the east end of Juniper Beach, **Great Blue Herons**, 2 **Red-tailed Hawks**, 11 swallow species overhead, 2 **Northern Harriers**, about 800 **Snow Geese** in the Conway fields and 3 **Ring-necked Pheasants** near Smith Road and Juniper.

A **Merlin** was reported by Julie O'Donald this month, flying low over her Brier home. She also listed 6 **American Robins**, a **Bewick's Wren**, a **Great Blue Heron**, 2 **Golden-crowned Sparrows**, a **Killdeer**, 2 **Red-breasted Nuthatches**, a **Red-breasted Sapsucker**, a **Rufous Hummingbird**, 2 **Winter Wrens** and 2 **Anna's Hummingbirds** for a total species count of 23.

Mary Sinker still has 2 **Great Horned Owls** in the trees in her yard near Stanwood. She also reported 2 **Red-breasted Sapsuckers** drumming on their satellite dish mounting pole. Her total species count of 36 included 9 **American Goldfinches**, 15 **Band-tailed Pigeons**, 30 **Dark-eyed Juncos**, 4 **Downy Woodpeckers**, 4 **Evening Grosbeaks**, 2 **Killdeer**, 11 **Mourning Doves**, 2 **Red-breasted Nuthatches**, 5 **Red-winged Blackbirds**, 12 **Steller's Jays** and 6 **Tree Swallows**.

Dick Vanderhoff's report this month included 7 **Red-tailed Hawks** and 15 **Steller's Jays** in his yard in Stanwood. Can you imagine how noisy it must have been? His species count of 14 included 3 **Rufous Hummingbirds**, a **Great Horned Owl** in the woods, 100s of **Snow Geese** in the fields, an **Osprey**, 2 **Evening Grosbeaks**, 2 juvenile **Downy Woodpeckers**, 3 **Bald Eagles** flying over and 6 **Spotted Towhees**.

The flooded fields along 100th Street in Marysville continued to provide food and water for many duck species this month. I spotted at least 12 **American Wigeons**, 2 **Eurasian Wigeons** and 15+ **Mallards**. My total species count of 26 also included 2 **Buffleheads** in the pond, 6 **California Quail** in the yard, 6 **Tree Swallows** flying over, a **Cooper's Hawk** in the yard, 3 **Northern Flickers**, a **Pileated Woodpecker** at the feeder, 6 **Pine Siskins**, a **Bewick's Wren** and at least 30 **Glaucous-winged Gulls** in the school yard on Fourth Street.

Comments and suggestions are always welcome. Please e-mail me at [pricemara@clearwire.net](mailto:pricemara@clearwire.net) or leave a message at 425.750.8125.