



Pilchuck Audubon Profile



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Swans shot in south Snohomish County

By Martha Jordan



Thank you to Mel Walters of Puget Sound Energy, local resident Shaunie Cockren and Paul Fischbach for helping catch the swan at the Homeacres wetland. It was an adventure. Photo by Martha Jordan.

Have you seen any swans lately?

It's not unusual to see swans in the Snohomish and Snoqualmie valley lowlands. Over the past few years, land use has shifted from mostly dairy farming to other uses. This includes new private hunting clubs between Snohomish and Monroe, wetland improvements to the Homeacres/Fobes Road wetlands and wetland restoration in the Snoqualmie Valley.

In addition, many of the remaining dairy farms now plant corn – especially in the Tualco/Crescent Lake area south of Monroe and Remlinger Farms near Carnation. And, a flock of Snow Geese has begun to use the Marshland Road area just west of Snohomish.

Until this year, we didn't see any conflicts between these new visitors and waterfowl hunters and other shooting activities. During the last three weeks of the hunting season, four Trumpeter Swans were shot in separate incidents: two at the Homeacres/Fobes Road wetlands, one at Tulalip Bay and one near or on the Snohomish River near Thomas Eddy.

Two swans were retrieved – injured, but alive. One died later and the other is recovering at the Sarvey Wildlife Center in Arlington. Two sets of shooters were identified and are being dealt with by law enforcement. The other cases remain unsolved. Anyone with information about the shootings is urged to contact WDFW enforcement at the Mill Creek WDFW office.

Why such an upsurge now, at the end of the season? No one really knows. But, these cases highlight the need for hunters and other gun users to learn waterfowl identification and to know which species are in the hunting areas. And, before you pull the trigger, positively ID your target: Snow Goose or swan? Mallard or pintail? In addition, be sure to use only non-toxic shot, which is required by federal and state law for waterfowl hunting.

(See "Swans" on page 10)

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

Owls!

Join Jamie Acker, long-time birder and owl specialist, as he shares what he's learned about the territory, numbers and distribution of Barred Owls, as well Northern Saw-whet Owl migration. Learn more at www.projectowl.net.org.

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.

Follow PAS on Facebook and Twitter

If you have a Facebook account, please search for Pilchuck Audubon and "like" our page. If you're active on Twitter, follow us at [@pilchuckaudubon](https://twitter.com/pilchuckaudubon).

We'll use Facebook and Twitter to provide program, field trip and other important updates. See you in cyberspace!

It's time to start
thinking about
Birdathon 2011!

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President's message

By Mike Blackbird, President, Pilchuck Audubon Society



Recently, the Pilchuck Audubon Board of Directors discussed the Olo Mountain Too Timber Sale and Pilchuck Audubon vs. the US Forest Service. The 1980s-era lawsuit was an opportunity to establish Pilchuck Audubon as a

Champion for the Environment and clarify PAS' philosophy regarding the conservation issues we should weigh in on. That philosophy is worth revisiting.

First and foremost, PAS is committed to bird conservation, which means preventing habitat destruction and striving to preserve habitat. The Olo Mountain Too suit is a prime example of preventing habitat destruction. In winning the lawsuit, Pilchuck Audubon helped save hundreds of thousands – if not a million – acres of forest land critical to birds, particularly breeding neotropical warblers. Not to mention the Northern Spotted Owl, the basis of the suit in the first place.

There are two examples of current PAS projects aimed at preventing habitat destruction: first, the Reiter Hills ORV Park and the threat to nesting Goshawks if the trails are not designed properly. Second, PAS is party to a suit to block a huge mine which would destroy thousands of acres of forest land in Central Washington.

On the other side of the coin, Pilchuck Audubon's successes in habitat preservation include the Osprey nesting platform project, as well as the Monroe Vaux's Swifts project (which has gained national attention).

Preventing habitat destruction and preserving habitat are important guidelines the PAS Board strives to adhere to when considering whether or not to get involved in a particular

environmental issue. Perhaps, beginning with Olo Mountain Too, PAS' reputation adds weight to any issue we get involved in. As a consequence, the PAS Board is frequently approached to lend the chapter's name to environmental issues. But, we have to be careful.

Pardon the lame analogy, but Pilchuck Audubon has a white horse. If he's ridden in everyone's parade, over time, he'll get muddy, dusty and dingy. We should ride him in our parades, or in a parade that makes an important statement concerning bird conservation.

A good example is the Critical Area Ordinances and the City of Mukilteo. Mukilteo was one of the first cities in Washington to adopt Critical Area Ordinances, as all cities are required to do. The Growth Management Act requires a 40-foot riparian buffer be maintained on wetlands.

However, the Mukilteo City Council succumbed to developer demands and cut the riparian buffer to 20 feet. In 2005, Futurewise and PAS sued the city council and won.

But, this wasn't just a victory over a single city council. It had far-reaching ramifications. Being one of the first cities to enact CAOs, had Mukilteo's been allowed, other city councils would have followed Mukilteo's lead and halved the riparian buffer. It would have led to habitat destruction statewide.

Because Futurewise and PAS challenged the Mukilteo City Council – and won – no city has messed with the 40-foot riparian buffer when drafting CAOs.

(See "Blackbird" on page 10)

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.

March 1

Silvana roads

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. Pipits, falcons, LBJs. If time allows, we may visit the Port Susan Nature Conservancy site. Pack a lunch.

Leader: Virginia Clark, 360.435.3750

Saturday, March 5 River Meadows Park, Arlington

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'll carpool to Arlington's River Meadows Park and wander through its forest, hike riverside trails and tour the eponymous meadows. The park is 145 acres and includes a network of trails spanning up to six miles. The total distance we travel will depend on the weather and the will of the group. Elevation gain is a mere 100 feet. This is a half-day hike, so pack a lunch or plan for a sit-down meal in rustic downtown Arlington.

Leader: Terry Nightingale, 206.619.2383, tnight@pobox.com

March 8

Samish Flats

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. Waterfowl, seabirds, shorebirds, raptors and passerines to delight and excite. Pack a lunch.

Leader: Virginia Clark, 360.435.3750

March 15

Serpentine Fen, Blackie Spit

Meet at 7 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. Expect to see waterfowl, raptors, gulls, shorebirds, songbirds, and scenery – and to do some walking. We'll be crossing the border into Canada, so be sure to bring your passport or enhanced driver's license. A birth certificate and driver's license will no longer get you back into the US. Pack a lunch.

Leader: Virginia Clark, 360.435.3750

Sunday, March 20 West Sammamish River Trail

Meet at 8 a.m. at Everett Mall – in the back, near the transit facility by LA Fitness. We'll carpool Sixty Acres Park in Redmond, walk upstream towards Slough House Park and then return on the Sammamish River Trail on the opposite bank (or vice versa). With any luck, we'll spot some early arriving migrants. This 5.5 mile loop is flat and accessible to folks with disabilities. Pack a snack, although we may stop on the way home for a late lunch.

Leader: Jonathan Blubaugh, 425.244.7633, aracfi@msn.com

March 22

South Whidbey Island

Meet at 7:15 a.m. at the Eastmont Park and Ride (on the east side of I-5 at exit 189). We'll plan to catch 8 a.m. ferry from Mukilteo. Crockett Lake is always exciting and Whidbey always beautiful. Pack a lunch.

Leaders: Wilma Bayes, 360.629.2028
Virginia Clark, 360.435.3750

March 29

Point No Point

Meet at 7 a.m. at the Edmonds Marsh (south of West Dayton St., turn left just before the railroad tracks). We'll take the ferry to Kingston and bird the voyage, the docks, Point No Point and Foulweather Bluff. Waterfowl, shorebirds and passerines – plus much beauty and serenity. Pack a lunch.

Leader: Virginia Clark, 360.435.3750

Sunday, April 17

Saltwater State Park

Meet at 8 a.m. at Everett Mall – in the back, near the transit facility by LA Fitness. Saltwater State Park is located along Puget Sound between Tacoma and Seattle. We will hike a loop from the shore to the top of a ravine and back down the other side to where we park. We will listen for migrating visitors from Latin America. Plus, tidepools and seabirds! She doesn't know it yet, but we're extending a personal invitation to Professor Sue Miller, marine biologist and avid birder, to do show and tell for us in the tidepools. Pack a snack, although we may stop on the way home for a late lunch.

Leader: Jonathan Blubaugh, 425.244.7633, aracfi@msn.com

May 20-22

Kittitas County

More information to come. Reservations will be accepted beginning in January. Contact Susie Schaefer if you're interested: susie.schaefer@pilchuckaudubon.org or 425.771.8165.

June 2-6

Ferry County

This year's trip will go in a different, "loony" direction. Leaders Susie Schaefer and Bill Lider plan to take the group to as many as 11 lakes with a history of nesting Common Loons in Okanogan, Ferry, Stevens and Whatcom counties.

We'll depart Thursday morning, June 2, and return Monday night, June 6. We'll use Curlew as a base. If you're interested in extending your visit beyond June 6, bring your passport and we'll visit a loon lake accessible from the Canadian side.

Expenses for food and gas will be shared. Contact Susie Schaefer at 425.771.8165 or susie.schaefer@pilchuckaudubon.org for more info.

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.

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

Have fun, be entertained and get smarter

Wetland Wigglers: Spring

March 4 Northwest Stream Center, Everett
Aquatic insects are important indicators of wetland health and water quality, as well as vital parts of the wetland food chain. They are also beautiful and fascinating, as anyone watching dragonflies skimming the surface of a pond on a summer's day will attest.

There will be a live exhibition of critters from the NW Stream Center resident pond, so you can view firsthand the insects that live in our local ponds and learn about their lifecycles and habitats. This is a great family event!

The fun begins at 11 a.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.

Invasive plants: how to get rid of them

March 5 Along the Sammamish River
Join Adopt-a-Stream Foundation ecologists and technicians for some on-the-job training along the Sammamish River. During a two-hour training session, you'll receive a short course in NW botany, see examples of invasive plants and learn species control techniques.

At the end of the academic portion of the class, you'll "get your feet wet" guiding volunteers who'll be removing invasive plants from a 1.75 acre site during a three-hour riparian zone restoration project.

This event runs from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Pack a lunch.

This is a free event. However, advance registration is required. Please call 425.316.8592 for more information.

National Wildlife Week at the Demo Garden

March 12-19 Demo Garden, Edmonds
The Wildlife Habitat and Native Plant Demo Garden at Willow Creek in Edmonds will host a number of events during National Wildlife Week, March 12-19. There'll be after-school events, a work party, workshops and more.

Check the final schedule at www.pilchuckaudubon.org. Click on the "programs" tab.

Amphibians of mystery

March 16 Northwest Stream Center, Everett
Salamanders and frogs come in many sizes and colors and their lifestyles are just as amazing. Join Naturalist Tom Noland for a slideshow and discussion to learn interesting facts about these creatures who live double lives – one in the water and one on the land. This is a fun program for the entire family!

The fun begins at 11 a.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.

Wings over Water Northwest Birding Festival

March 19 Blaine, Washington
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 25-27 Othello, Washington
Plan to attend the 14th Othello Sandhill Crane Festival, March 25-27. 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.

Edible wild plants presentation

April 7 Thumbnail Theater, Snohomish
Join John Kallas, author of *Edible wild plants: wild foods from dirt to plate*, for this educational and fun presentation, at the Thumbnail Theater in Snohomish, beginning at 7 p.m. on Thursday, April 7.

Learn how to identify, harvest and prepare nutritious, delicious and abundant wild plants found within walking distance of your kitchen. Signed copies of Dr. Kallas' book will be available for purchase.

This is a free event, but donations will be accepted to cover the cost of the venue. The Thumbnail Theater is located at 1211 Fourth Street, Snohomish.

Olympic BirdFest

April 8-10 Sequim, Washington
Join the Olympic BirdFest 2011 celebration at the Dungeness River Audubon Center, April 8-10. The stage is set ... quiet bays and estuaries, sandy beaches, a long sand spit and a 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.

Follow your BirdFest weekend with a three-day birding cruise in the San Juan Islands April 10-12. Visit San Juan and Sucia Islands – and more. Stay at the historic Roche Harbor Resort.

Get cruise info and registration forms at www.olympicpeninsulaudubon.org. Contact us by phone (360.681.4076), e-mail (opas.birdfest.info@gmail.com) or by mail: Dungeness River Audubon Center, PO Box 2450, Sequim, WA 98382.

(See "Events" on page 10)

Order birdseed by Tuesday, March 8

After many years, Art Wait – also known as Mr. Birdseed – is turning this job over to Jay Ward and Carolyn Lacy. Art has handled birdseed sales for years – and done an outstanding job. Thanks to Art and Shirley. We appreciate your hard work!

It will take two people to replace Art. But, the system will be nearly the same. To order birdseed and related supplies, contact Carolyn at carolynlacy137@frontier.com or 206.245.5836. Orders must be placed by Tues., March 8.

Orders can be picked up in Everett on Saturday morning, March 12, at Bering Sea Fisheries, 3862 Railway Avenue. Jay and other volunteers collect payment and help load the seed.

Bering Sea Fisheries is located on the Snohomish River, east

of I-5. From I-5, take the Pacific Avenue exit and head north on Walnut Street. Turn east onto Hewitt Avenue. Hewitt becomes Highland Drive. After about a mile, turn right onto California Street. California becomes Railway Avenue. Bering Sea Fisheries is ahead on your right.

If you prefer to pick up your order in Edmonds, let Carolyn know when you place your order. You'll need to arrange a pickup time with Paul or Laura Spehar: 425.672.2150.

Please remember: the price of seed fluctuates. So, the price the day you pick it up might be slightly different than what you were told when the order was placed.

April meeting to include board, by-laws vote

The program meeting on April 8 will also include board and by-law elections. Each April, Pilchuck Audubon elects two officers and votes on matters requiring the attention of all members.

This year, we'll elect a vice-president and a treasurer. In addition, we'll vote on extensive revisions to the PAS by-laws. Due to the number of by-law changes, the original by-laws, along with the proposed revisions, will be available on the PAS web site (www.pilchuckaudubon.org).

There won't be time to read the changes aloud at the April 8 meeting. So, it's important for members to read the changes ahead of time.

The changes have been reviewed and recommended for approval by the Pilchuck Audubon Board of Directors.

If you don't have internet access, but would like a copy of the proposed revisions, please contact Kathleen Snyder at 425.438.1505.

Call for PAS board nominations

Nominations are being accepted for two positions on the Pilchuck Audubon Board of Directors: vice president and treasurer. The term for each office is two years.

If you're interested in applying or know someone who might be, please contact Kathleen Snyder by April 5 at 425.438.1505.

Vice president: The vice president shall assist the president in carrying out his/her duties and shall preside at all meetings in the absence of the president.

Treasurer: The treasurer is the custodian of the Society's funds and is responsible for keeping accounts, disbursing funds and providing financial reports in accordance with the Board's direction and society policies. The treasurer shall comply with all financial and tax regulations with respect to any employees of the Society and shall file the necessary reports. The treasurer shall make a financial report at board meetings and annually to the membership and at such other times as may be requested by the Board. The treasurer is responsible for submitting the annual budget for the Society based on Executive Committee guidelines and suggestions, for approval by the Board.

PAS dues to increase

The PAS Board recently voted to increase yearly membership dues from \$25 to \$28. This increase is in response to two issues. First, donations to PAS are down due to the economic slowdown. Second, PAS is collaborating with most other Washington chapters to hire a policy advocate to represent our views to state legislators. This is a new financial commitment for us – and requires new funds.

As budget deficits and cuts impact state government, we strive to be a voice for conservation of state lands and the preservation of wildlife habitat.

Anyone interesting in donating to help fund this new position is invited to contact Jan van Niel at 425.778.7568. Jan represents our region on the state committee coordinating this effort.

PAS board meetings are open to all

The PAS board meets the first Tuesday of each month, at 6 p.m., at the Sno-Isle Coop meeting room (2804 Grand Ave., Everett). All are welcome to attend to learn about chapter goals and priorities. For more info, contact Kathleen Snyder at 425.438.1505.

Birdathon is coming! Birdathon is coming!

Just what, you ask, is Birdathon? It's Pilchuck Audubon's super fun, super easy spring fundraiser. It works like a traditional walk-a-thon – with a twist. Instead of participants walking as far as they can in one day, Birdathoners get to count birds during the entire month of May!

You can form a team of Birdathoners or you can participate on your own. The forms you need are available on the PAS web site (www.pilchuckaudubon.org) under "programs," or by contacting Hilkka Egtvedt at program meetings, chegtvedt@comcast.net or 425.347.4944.

The next step is to recruit sponsors – friends, family, neighbors, co-workers, parents of the kids trying to sell you cookies and magazines. Sponsors can either pledge a flat amount, or they can make a per-species pledge.

Then, in May, Birdathoners busy themselves counting as many bird species as possible in the state of Washington. Hey, it's a built-in excuse to do lots of birding or to go on that special birding trip. It's a perfect time to bird, as the spring migration will be in full swing.

At the end of the month, report your totals to your sponsors and collect their pledges.

It's as easy as can be, really fun – and you can feel good having helped PAS raise money to continue protecting habitat for our fine feathered friends. If you're really lucky, you may even win a prize!

If you can't be a Birdathoner this year, you could sponsor someone. One way or another, we hope you get involved!

American Birding Association's birding ethics

Everyone who enjoys birds and birding must always respect wildlife, its environment and the rights of others. In any conflict of interest between birds and birders, the welfare of the birds and their environment comes first.

Code of birding ethics

Promote the welfare of birds and their environment.

Support the protection of important bird habitat. To avoid stressing birds or exposing them to danger, exercise restraint and caution during observation, photography, sound recording or filming.

Limit the use of recordings and other methods of attracting birds and never use such methods in heavily birded areas, or for attracting any species that is threatened, endangered, of special concern or which is rare in your local area.

Keep well back from nests and nesting colonies, roosts, display areas and important feeding sites. In such sensitive areas, if there is a need for extended observation, photography, filming or recording, try to use a blind or hide, and take advantage of natural cover.

Use artificial light sparingly for filming or photography, especially for close-ups.

Before advertising the presence of a rare bird, evaluate the potential for disturbance to the bird, its surroundings and other people in the area. Proceed only if access can be controlled, disturbance minimized and permission has been obtained from private land-owners. The sites of rare nesting birds should be divulged only to the proper conservation authorities.

Stay on roads, trails and paths where they exist. Otherwise, keep habitat disturbance to a minimum.

Respect the law and the rights of others. Do not enter private property without the owner's explicit permission.

Follow all laws, rules and regulations governing use of roads and public areas, both at home and abroad. Practice common courtesy in contacts with other people. Your exemplary behavior will generate goodwill with birders and non-birders alike.

Ensure that feeders, nest structures and other artificial

bird environments are safe. Keep dispensers, water and food clean and free of decay or disease. It is important to feed birds continually during harsh weather. Maintain and clean nest structures regularly.

If you are attracting birds to an area, ensure the birds are not exposed to predation from cats and other domestic animals, or dangers posed by artificial hazards.

Group birding, whether organized or impromptu, requires special care. Each individual in the group, in addition to the obligations noted previously, has responsibilities as a group member.

Respect the interests, rights and skills of fellow birders, as well as people participating in other legitimate outdoor activities. Freely share your knowledge and experience. Be especially helpful to beginning birders.

If you witness unethical birding behavior, assess the situation and intervene if you think it prudent. When interceding, inform the person(s) of the inappropriate action. Attempt, within reason, to have it stopped. If the behavior continues, document it and notify appropriate individuals or organizations.

Group leader responsibilities (amateur and professional trips and tours): Be an exemplary ethical role model for the group. Teach through word and example.

Keep groups to a size that limits impact on the environment and does not interfere with others using the same area. Ensure everyone in the group knows of and practices this code. Learn and inform the group of any special circumstances applicable to the areas being visited (e.g. no tape recorders allowed).

Acknowledge that professional tour companies bear a special responsibility to place the welfare of birds and the benefits of public knowledge ahead of the company's commercial interests. Ideally, leaders should keep track of tour sightings, document unusual occurrences and submit records to appropriate organizations.

Please follow this code, distribute it and teach it to others. Learn more about the American Birding Association at www.aba.org.

Birding highlights

By Mara Price, Sightings Coordinator

December 26, 2010-January 25, 2011

We had two sightings of **Ring-necked Ducks** in January, which is unusual. I saw several during the Christmas Bird Count, but never in the pond near my home. The Beasons reported 2 from Lake Bosworth. We may be seeing more of them.

Our new reporter, John Davis listed 25 species from his walks through Forest Park, including more than 100 **American Crows**, 6 **American Robins**, a **Bald Eagle**, 6 **Golden-crowned Kinglets**, a **Hermit Thrush**, 40 **Pine Siskins**, 15 **Song Sparrows**, 2 **Townsend's Warblers**, a **Brown Creeper**, 2 **Downy Woodpeckers** and 7 **Winter Wrens**.

From Lake Bosworth, Carole and Larry Beason reported 39 species for January. Their list included 2 **Barrow's Goldeneyes**, a **Belted Kingfisher**, 12 **Buffleheads**, 9 **Common Mergansers**, 22 **Mallards** and 2 **Ring-necked Ducks** – all on the lake. They also listed 42 **Evening Grosbeaks**, 2 **Fox Sparrows**, 2 **Golden-crowned Sparrows**, 12 **Pine Siskins**, 14 **Red-winged Blackbirds**, 14 **Spotted Towhees** and a **Winter Wren**.

Annette Colombini's report from Lake Stevens included a **Varied Thrush**, 10 **Black-capped Chickadees**, 4 **Spotted Towhees**, 5 **Black-capped Chickadees**, a **Downy Woodpecker**, 2 **Hairy Woodpeckers**, 4 **Red-breasted Nuthatches**, 2 **Anna's Hummingbirds**, 15 **American Crows**, 2 **Bald Eagles**, a **Brown Creeper** and a **Northern Flicker** for a total species count of 14.

Hilkka Egtvedt's report from Mukilteo listed an unusual fly-over of about 1000 **American Crows**. Her total species count of 28 also included 2 **Bald Eagles**, 6 **California Quail**, 30 **European Starlings**, 10 **Evening Grosbeaks**, 4 **Golden-crowned Sparrows**, a **Pileated Woodpecker**, 16 **Pine Siskins**, a **Ruby-crowned Kinglet**, 4 **Spotted Towhees**, 8 **Steller's Jays**, 2 **Townsend's Warblers** and 3 **Varied Thrushes**.

Kriss Erickson reported a **White-breasted Nuthatch** from her home in Everett. She also listed 9 **Dark-eyed Juncos**, 13 **Black-capped Chickadees**, a **Hairy Woodpecker**,



Ring-necked Duck, by Paul Kusmin



Lincoln Sparrow, by Marg Hestin



Bushtit, by Jim Martin

8 **Golden-crowned Kinglets**, 4 **Western Gulls**, 38 **European Starlings**, an **Anna's Hummingbird**, 7 **American Goldfinches**, a **Lincoln's Sparrow**, 3 **American Robin**, a **Bushtit** and 2 **Mallards** for a total species count of 21.

Reporting from Brier, Julie O'Donald reported a **Yellow-rumped Warbler** at the suet feeder, along with a **Bewick's Wren**, 2 **Black-capped Chickadees** and 15 **Bushtits**. She also listed 2 **Anna's Hummingbirds**, 5 **Band-tailed Pigeons**, a **Fox Sparrow** in the garden, a **Great Blue Heron** at the pond, 4 **House Finches**, 2 **Red-breasted Nuthatches**, a **Varied Thrush**, a **Winter Wren** and 6 **Golden-crowned Sparrows** for a total species count of 23.

Mourning Doves and **Evening Grosbeaks** – 17 of each – topped Mary Sinker's list from Stanwood. She also reported 50 **Dark-eyed Juncos**, a **Great Blue Heron** at the creek, 2 **Pileated Woodpeckers**, a **Red-tailed Hawk** and a **Sharp-shinned Hawk**, 7 **Spotted Towhees**, 12 **Steller's Jays**, 5 **Varied Thrushes**, 2 **White-crowned Sparrows** and 2 **Winter Wrens** for a species count of 28.

Dick Vanderhoff's report from Stanwood included 220+ swan species, 100+ **Snow Geese** on the bay, 3 **Bald Eagles** overhead, 2 **Red-tailed Hawks**, 10 **Steller's Jays**, 3 **Winter Wrens**, a **Red-breasted Nuthatch**, 6 **Black-capped Chickadees**, 3 **Spotted Towhees** and a **Pileated Woodpecker** for a total species count of 12.

Along with the 2 **Ring-necked Ducks** I spotted in the pond along 100th Street, I also listed 20 **Dark-eyed Juncos**, 4 **California Quail**, 8 **Trumpeter Swans** and 20 **Snow Geese** off Boe Road, 60-70 **Mallards** in the flooded fields along with 15 **Eurasian Wigeons**, a **Pileated Woodpecker**, a **Varied Thrush**, 80+ **Rock Doves** on the wires, a **Common Raven** and a **Killdeer** for a species count of 31.

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

Forest Committee active in road repair planning

By Katherine Johnson, chair, PAS Forest Practices Committee

PAS members have been kept well informed about our involvement in the planning process for the Reiter Forest. Pilchuck Audubon's Forest Committee has been busy with US Forest Service issues, as well.

We submitted comments on the Suiattle Access and Travel Management (ATM) Environmental Assessment. This is the Forest Service's plan for roads in the Suiattle River basin. These roads might be decommissioned, meaning they're permanently closed so they don't wind up in the river. This involves pulling out all the culverts, etc.

Or, roads can be placed "in storage," which means they're closed and supposedly stabilized (by pulling culverts). But, the Forest Service has the option to reopen them later if needed – generally for logging.

Or, roads might be kept open.

This work is long overdue. Roads in the national forests cover thousands of miles more than the Forest Service needs or has funds to maintain, resulting in violations of the Clean Water Act here in Washington. Unfortunately, prior to completing this ATM plan for the Suiattle River basin, the Forest Service



Katherine Johnson, PAS Forest Practices Committee Chair, stands next to a 150-year-old Douglas Fir along Suiattle River Road, which was cut down by the Forest Service in order to relocate a road. Photo by Kevin Geraghty.

decided to reopen several roads and rebuild bridges that were damaged in the storms of 2003 and 2006. Some of this work has already been completed: the Boundary Bridge over the Suiattle River (connecting FS Roads 25 and 26) and the White Chuck bridge to the south (in a different drainage, but connected through the Rat Trap Pass Road #27 to the Suiattle).

But, many roads – most notably the main Suiattle River Road #26 – have not yet had storm damage repaired. Yet, the Suiattle ATM EA treated these repairs as a *fait accompli*, without considering the harmful effects they will have on the environment. Not to mention the effect on taxpayer-

ers' wallets, as these roads and the to-be-rebuilt Downey Creek Bridge will surely fail again and require future repairs. Furthermore, the Forest Service has already made repairs on some roads without first doing the required NEPA analysis.

We also submitted "scoping" comments (solicited prior to the completion of an EA) to the Forest Service on their proposal to decommission 14.5 miles of the Illabot Creek Road #16. We generally supported the plan, and made suggestions for implementation.

Local Wildlife Habitat Community program updates

Did you know there are two certified Wildlife Habitat Communities in Snohomish County? It's true! Camano Island and Edmonds. And, Mukilteo and Brier are in the process of being certified.

In these communities, a team is formed to mobilize the community and get the points required for certification. It generally takes at least two years to get certified. After that, work continues, as each year more points are necessary to stay certified. The story of each team is documented and is always different.

Camano Island boasts 750 certified backyards and is famous for its annual backyard wildlife tour. Learn more at www.camanowildlifehabitatproject.org.

The Wildlife Habitat and Native Plant Demo Garden, sponsored by PAS, is a flagship project of the Edmonds team. Learn more at www.edmondswildlifehabitatproject.org.

Mukilteo is close to earning certification. The team needs more backyard habitats. So, if you're in Mukilteo, consider getting your backyard certified. It's easy! Learn more at www.mukilteowildlifeproject.org.

The new group in Brier will host a series of workshops at the Brier Public Library in the coming months. You can find more information at www.sno-isle.org.

Everyone in these four communities is encouraged to get involved in the certification process. It's a lot of fun!

Become a Sound Steward and local habitat hero!

Beginning March 3, People for Puget Sound will offer a four-part class on becoming a Sound Steward. This program offers opportunities for individuals and groups to get involved in hands-on restoration – no matter their experience. Join in the effort to save Puget Sound.

Classes will cover the history of the Snohomish estuary, introduction to Puget Sound ecology, native and invasive plant identification, invasive plant control and planting techniques.

In return for 16 hours of training, Sound Stewards are asked to commit to 40 volunteer hours on People for Puget Sound restoration sites during the following year.

Space is limited. Contact Gail Lassman at register@pugetsound.org or call Beatriz Tavora at 206.382.7007, ext. 186 for more information. Or visit People for Puget Sound's web site: www.pugetsound.org.

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

Smart Growth report

By Kristin Kelly, Smart Growth Director

As I write this month's Smart Growth Report, two important issues – with potential impacts to Snohomish County – are top of mind.

Rural villages

Perhaps you read about a proposed bill before the legislature which would allow one developer, The McNaughton Group (TMG), to build a pilot project – a rural village – near Lake Goodwin. This project is supported by several politicians who care deeply for environmental protection, wildlife habitat and water quality – and by Cascade Land Conservancy. However, all other environmental groups oppose it, including Future-wise, Washington Environmental Council, Washington Conservation Voters, People for Puget Sound, Transportation Choices Coalition and the Tulalip Tribes.

Why such a sharp divide on this issue? It's all in the details.

Over the years, TMG has purchased roughly 2,000 acres. This is a practice many developers employ: to buy up rural land from owners who see the profit, but don't care what happens after the land is sold. Then, the developers pressure elected officials to allow rezones or new regulations so they can make a hefty profit. It's this scenario I've been working to stop for the last 10 years.

Current county code allows for rural cluster subdivisions. However, TMG realized the cost of water and new roads to support these new subdivisions – about 600 homes – would be expensive. In fact, the local water district told the developer it can't serve this many homes! So, in order to supply water, TMG wants to build more homes to justify the cost of building a water line from Everett.

When TMG submitted its first application for a subdivision, the 7-Lakes community group appealed. The group argued that although the application was for just one subdivision, TMG, in fact, planned to build many subdivisions next to each other. The community group contended county planners were responsible to assess all the subdivisions as one for cumulative environmental impacts. The hearing examiner agreed with the citizens, but the developer appealed to the superior court and won.

It seems odd to me that if each subdivision of 600 homes should be judged separately in regard to environmental impacts, then why would a rural village of 1,600 homes considered one development? It doesn't make sense.

So far, the Senate Agriculture Committee and the House Local Government Committee have conducted public hearings on this bill (SB5425/SB1622). When it comes to rural villages, I believe the cons far outweigh the pros.

From my perspective, one pro is the developer would be required to protect up to 70 percent of open space around three densely developed rural villages. And, the developer would have to secure development rights from other rural or resource lands. However, those development rights would be at a 1:1 ratio. That is troublesome.

The cons include the following:

- This bill allows a new city in northwest Snohomish County with up to 1,600 housing units. This is larger than Granite Falls (1,258 housing units) and nearly as large as Sultan (1,754 housing units).

(See "Smart Growth" on page 10)

Bird of the month: Varied Thrush



Gerald Plowman photo

Quick facts

- Large, robin-like thrush, (9" length, 14" wingspan)
- Burnt orange throat, chest
- Dark face mask, crown, v-shaped breast band
- Buffy orange wingbars, eye stripe

The Varied Thrush breeds in dense coniferous forests from Alaska to northern California. In winter, northern breeders move south within or somewhat beyond the breeding range. Other populations may only move altitudinally.

The Varied Thrush mainly forages on the ground by flicking aside debris to expose insects, earthworms and other small invertebrates, as well as seeds, fruit and acorns.

Males defend and maintain feeding territories near feeders. They're aggressive and can dominate other feeder species.

Cool fact: Christmas Bird Count data shows a biennial abundance of Varied Thrushes throughout their wintering range. The cause is not certain. Researchers believe variation in the availability of food sources, such as acorns, may be responsible.

Swans ...

(continued from page 1)

How can you help?

We need a swan-friendly rehab center in Snohomish County. Swan care is a specialty unlike the care of raptors or other waterfowl. The staff at Sarvey has done well caring for the swans they've seen this year. The Trumpeter Swan Society is working with them to enhance their swan care skills.

Swans are big, heavy birds and need special pens and outdoor areas. Sarvey is creating new and better facilities for swans. The Trumpeter Swan Society is helping them accomplish this goal. Improvements include an area with pond access and a large loafing area. You can support Sarvey in this effort. Contact them at www.sarveywildlife.org.

Blackbird ...

(continued from page 2)

Pilchuck Audubon can't – and shouldn't – lead the charge in every environmental skirmish.

We live in a part of the world replete with environmental organizations focused on all aspects of the environment. Rarely does any threat to a healthy environment go unchallenged. In many instances, there are environmental groups

Events ...

(continued from page 4)

Grays Harbor Shorebird Festival

April 29-May 1 Hoquiam, Washington

Each spring, hundreds of thousands of shorebirds stop to rest and feed in Grays Harbor estuary on their migration north. 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 Bart Rulon, artist, naturalist and photographer. You'll recall Bart spoke at the Puget Sound Bird Fest several years ago.

For more info, visit www.shorebirdfestival.com.

Backyard Bird Festival

May 14 Tukwila, Washington

Join us for this annual event that helps educate and inspire us to welcome wildlife into our backyards, garden and communities! This event will host a variety of activities and educational opportunities, including local gardener Ciscoe Morris speaking on how to attract and support wildlife through garden and landscape practices, and creating and preserving wildlife habitat in our region.

For more info, visit www.backyardwildlifefair.org or call 206.768.2822.

Stilly Festival of the River and Pow Wow

August 12-14 River Meadows Park, Arlington

The Stillaguamish Festival of the River is a fun way to celebrate summer – and the environment of the Pacific Northwest. Enjoy great music, food, crafts, wild bird presentations, kids' activities and much, much more.

This year's event will feature a giant storytelling tent, interpretive salmon habitat tours and a salmon barbeque.

For more information, visit www.festivaloftheriver.com.

There is a good chance the Trumpeter Swan at Sarvey will survive and fly again. This is wonderful news.

Secondly, we need to encourage all levels of law enforcement to take wildlife crimes seriously. Although both the state and federal wildlife enforcement officers are doing a good job apprehending wildlife offenders, the Snohomish County Prosecutor needs to know the public wants his office to charge and prosecute these offenders. If you'd like to get more involved with this effort, please contact me at martha@trumpeterswansociety.org.

better suited to take on a specific issue because it's in their area of expertise.

Pilchuck Audubon should only lead the charge when conservation issues threaten our feathered friends and their habitat. And, so we will, willingly.

Smart Growth ...

(continued from page 9)

- The new city would be located off the beaten track. As a result, there'll be few jobs and residents will be forced to drive long distances to work and for goods, services, schools and recreation. All of this driving will increase air pollution and greenhouse emissions.
- The 3,000+ residents of the new city will generate more traffic and the surrounding area lacks the facilities to accommodate it. Much of the burden will fall on state facilities – such as I-5 – which will increase demands for state transportation funding.
- The new city is not included in *Vision 2040*, the regional growth plan. So, *Transportation 2040* doesn't include transportation facilities to serve it. Given recent service cuts, Community Transit would be hard pressed to effectively serve a new city so far from its existing routes.
- The area surrounding the new city lacks the water system, sewer system, schools, fire facilities, parks and recreation facilities needed to serve it. Water would be piped from Everett – assuming Everett is willing to serve it. Sewers and a treatment system would need to be built. The other facilities would have to be built from scratch.
- Snohomish County has already been forced to cut staff. It would be difficult for the county to provide facilities and services – such as law enforcement. Residences don't generate enough tax revenue to pay for the public facilities and services required.
- This new city will transform a rural area into a city and its neighbors will suffer urban-style traffic jams – with none of the benefits of being in a city. A developer will benefit. The neighboring property owners will suffer. Many area residents oppose the bill.

(See "Smart Growth" on page 10)

Smart Growth ...

(continued from page 10)

- The loss of forest cover and native vegetation will have a negative effect on the water quality of area streams and Puget Sound.
- The new city will compete with the existing cities for residents, jobs, businesses, county tax revenues and state grants and loans.
- The bill exempts the new city from standard protections for rural character legislated in the Growth Management Act.
- This bill uses tools developed for urban areas in a remote rural area without protections.

I believe the county has other, better tools, to manage the vested developments in the area. Taking a problem and making it bigger by allowing more people in the area won't solve the problem.

Thanks to the folks from the 7-Lakes area who traveled to Olympia to testify, and to all who responded to our action alert (more than 100).

Countywide Planning Policies update

Snohomish County Tomorrow (SCT) – made up of representatives from the county, its cities and the tribes – is working on Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs), a framework of policies for land use planning. The CPPs must be consistent with the Growth Management Act (GMA). And, General Policy Plans (GPPs) at the county and city level must be consistent with both CPPs and the GMA.

Last year, SCT began updating the CPPs to be consistent with the Puget Sound Regional Council's (PSRC) *Vision 2040*, the guideline for regional planning in the four-county area (Kitsap, Pierce, King and Snohomish).

The SCT Planning Committee, comprised of planning directors of all cities and the county, met to make recommendations to the executive committee. Then the recommendations moved to SCT's general committee, which includes a member of both the city and county councils. I'm tracking this process on behalf of Futurewise and PAS, and have submitted a lengthy comments on our concerns and recommendations.

The county council will conduct a public hearing on the update to the CPPs. We want to ensure this update is consistent with *Vision 2040* and the GMA. I'll likely send an action alert to PAS members, asking for help to communicate our recommendations to the council. Please make sure I have your e-mail address so you'll receive this important action alert. You can send it to me at kristin@futurewise.org.

**Birdathon 2011:
Try it. You'll like it!**

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 also 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 52529
Boulder, CO 80322-2529

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

* Consult your tax professional for full details.

Name: _____

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