



Shorelines

Newsletter of the Whidbey Audubon Society

May 2022

Whidbey Audubon Society is dedicated to the understanding, appreciation, and protection of birds and other wildlife species and their habitat on Whidbey Island and surrounding waters.

Whidbey Audubon Society Meets Thursday, May 12 Rescheduled: The Aerialists: One tough way to make a living



The program was cancelled last month due to illness, but it's been rescheduled for May. Same great topic by our intrepid presenters, Steve and Martha Ellis, who have prepared this description:

All bird species in our area have the ability to fly, and many of them make contact with their food from the air. Of the 232 species on Whidbey Audubon's checklist, however, less than 10 percent feed almost exclusively on flying prey. These are the aerialists: swallows, swifts, nighthawk, flycatchers, accipiters and falcons.

There's a simple reason why seed eating species such as sparrows are so numerous: their food can't escape. And while we rightfully marvel at a Red-tailed Hawk dropping on a vole, try catching an evasive insect traveling six inches above the ground while you're flying 25 to 45 miles per hour. Or attempt to single out a bird in flight from a twisting flock of 500 Dunlin. The slightest miscalculation will result in serious harm.

The aerialists are some of the most overlooked and underappreciated bird species. Each has its unique adaptations and habits that allow them to exploit food sources unavailable to other birds. Each also faces daunting challenges.

All the aerialists, from the frequent flier champ (the Barn Swallow) to the ultimate speed machine (the Peregrine Falcon) share this particular characteristic: they have one tough way to make a living.

Field Trips Past and Future

Field trips have been a lot of fun the last month. We have been coordinating with Deception Pass State Park on bird walks every other Saturday. We have had very enthusiastic groups of new and experienced birders enjoy these little outings. Numerous birds have been seen in a couple of different environments. It has been very rewarding to see novice birders so excited to see some birds for the first time.

April 23: The trip to Rosario Beach was a beautiful day with

Fields Trips, see page 3

Presenters are longtime Coupeville residents Steve and Martha Ellis. Steve is a past president of Whidbey Audubon Society and Martha is a member of the Washington Native Plant Society. Together they have been leading field trips and giving talks on a wide range of natural history topics for more than 30 years.



Photo by Beth Stephens

Steve and Martha Ellis present *The Aerialists*, about birds that catch their prey in flight.

Please join us on Thursday, May 12 at 7 p.m., for Whidbey Audubon's monthly meeting. Elections

will also be held on this evening. This is a hybrid meeting, which means attendees may come in person or participate online via Zoom. Preregistration for in person attendance is required and is limited to 35 people —first come, first served.

The meeting is at the Bayview Cash Store, upstairs in the Front Room, 5603 Bayview Road, Langley. There are restrooms and an elevator. Come by early, downstairs at the Taproom, to meet some of the Birdathon team members. There is still time to make a contribution and you could take advantage of The Taproom's "comfort" food before the meeting.

The program is free and open to the public. All Whidbey Audubon members will receive an email with the Zoom link by the early afternoon of May 12. Anyone wishing to attend in person must preregister under the events listing on the *Whidbey Audubon website*. Nonmembers must also preregister to attend either online or in person.



President's Column: From the Window Perch

As some of you know, there has been an enormous amount of worry generated about Deer Lagoon because we thought the Department of Ecology (DOE) had decided on a proposal to reclassify Deer Lagoon. I have checked it out with numerous people I know and on April 20, I spoke with Railin Santiago, Ecology Shoreline Planner within the DOE. The fear from the emails I received is that Deer Lagoon would go from a Coastal Lagoon designation to a marine body of water without public input or legislative action. The questions raised included how that would affect the Important Bird Area (IBA) designation that is so vital to us as Whidbey Audubon Society (WAS).

According to Santiago and Joe Burcar, Section Manager/ Shoreline and Environmental Assistance Program (DOE), there has been much confusion about the issue. Santiago assured me that there is no intention of making any changes or impacting the present coastal lagoon classification of Deer Lagoon Preserve. They are updating the Shoreline Master Program (SMP), she said, which will include new mapping of the open water area because of errors in the previous map and will result in more protection to the area. She said the map is being revised because the County was able to gather more information, that proved that parts of the Lagoon contain salinity (at levels greater than 0.5ppt); thus,

portions of the feature are connected to marine waters and are a "shoreline of the statewide significance."

The response of John Lanier, Island County Planning and Community Planning, to WAS member Dyanne Sheldon stated that the proposed change has not been approved yet and there will be a public hearing for the Shoreline Master Program before any changes are made. He also stated that the allowed Recreational Uses in Aquatic and Natural are the same and that the Aquatic designation will provide more protections.

For more detailed information, she provided a link on the *County's website*. Click the red text and type into the Search window, upper right, "Shoreline Master Program update." The specific change can be found on that site under Exhibit C. This proposal was open to public comment period from March 26 to April 25, 2021. This was the County's proposal, not Ecology's; however, DOE agrees with their finding that portions of the feature contain sufficient salinity to be considered a marine shoreline — in addition to a coastal lagoon.

— *Patty Cheek, President*

Would that I were under the cliffs, in the secret-hiding places of the rocks, that Zeus might change me to a winged bird.

— *Sophocles – Hippolytus, 428 B.C.*

Deer Lagoon Dike Habitat Restoration Project Completed

The Deer Lagoon Dike Habitat Restoration Project was first proposed in early August to reestablish habitat for birds that was removed during the mowing of the dike on May 13, 2021. The project was completed on February 25, 2022.

A total of two hundred and forty native plants were planted along both sides of the 1,000 -foot long main dike by Bay Renaud and his team from Plantas Nativa who have over 25 years of experience in such projects. The native plants include Nootka Rose, Snowberry, Red Flowering Current and tall Oregon Grape. All of these native plants thrive in the dike environment and provide excellent habitat for birds. The plants are in groups of four with long sections between to enable good viewing of birds in the lagoon. Even when matured, these plants enable a twelve-foot-wide area that can be mowed for emergency egress across the dike.

This project is a partnership between Whidbey Audubon Society and Island County's Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Public Works. The County paid for the materials



Photo by Carol Russo

Commissioner Bacon has strongly supported this project and visited the site during the planting. She is shown in the photo with Bay Renaud, Jennifer Johnson and one of her staff. A job well done; thanks to everyone's support and patience.

and Whidbey Audubon Society paid for the planting. The Island County project lead was Dr. Jennifer Johnson, head of DNR. The project lead for Whidbey Audubon Society was Dr. Carol Russo with strong support from Patty Cheek, Linda Griesbach, Steve Ellis and the Whidbey Audubon Society Board of Directors.

Before the planting, Seth Luginbill, the Island County lead for noxious weed control, removed Scotch Broom and other noxious weeds by hand or cut the plant and treated the stem with an herbicide that is approved by Washington State for aquatic environments. The orange flags denote treated Scotch Broom stems. In addition, Plantas Nativa removed by hand two patches of Himalayan blackberries. These control treatments of noxious weeds will help the native plants become established. In addition, the County retained a water truck for another year to water these plants during dry weather conditions.

— *Dr. Carol Russo, WAS Deer Lagoon Dike Habitat Restoration Project*

Whidbey Audubon Society is dedicated to the understanding, appreciation and protection of birds and other wildlife species and their habitats on Whidbey Island and in surrounding waters....since 1982

That would make this 40 years! We ought to celebrate! Please join in for tales from the past, visions of the future and snacks!

All Whidbey Audubon Society members gathering on Thursday June 2, at 5 p.m. at the M-Bar-C Ranch near Freeland.

Let's come together to appreciate these decades of community dedication and vision and share a pleasant evening in the company of this generation's fellow Island caretakers.

Watch the website, social media and your inbox for addi-

tional information and event details. History — Whidbey Audubon Society.



Do you have a contribution in the way of photos, interesting historical information or other ideas? If you would like to participate in pulling off a fine event, please contact Cathi at whidbird@whidbey.com because helpers will be required for setting up, staffing information tables, cleaning up, refreshment presentation, storytelling and tech-support.

Congratulations Whidbey Audubon!

Birding by Ear Classes: Tackling the Tricky Ones

Register for an online course, three sessions led by Whitney Neufeld-Kaiser, Seattle Audubon Master Birder, class of 2017. There will be one or two field trips too.

Some pairs and trios of Pacific Northwest birds are difficult for almost everyone to distinguish by sound at first. We'll be tackling the tricky ones:

Session 1, Tuesday, June 14: Spotted Towhee, Dark-eyed Junco, Chipping Sparrow, Orange-crowned Warbler and Bewick's Wren

Session 2, Thursday, June 16: Northern Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker, and Cooper's Hawk and Black-capped Chickadee, Chestnut-backed Chickadee and Mountain Chickadee.

Session 3, Tuesday, June 21: American Robin, Western Tanager, Black-headed Grosbeak and House Finch and Purple Finch.

The class series is \$45 for members and \$55 for nonmembers. To register online, click this red text, [Whidbey Audubon Society website](http://WhidbeyAudubonSociety.com), for more details.

Field Trips, from [page 1](#)

great weather. We saw around 20 species in the forest and on the water. The highlight was a river otter running on the trail right behind an unaware birder looking in the other direction.

Future trips at Deception Pass Park are:

Saturday, May 7: Jay Adams will lead a trip to **HOYPUS POINT**. Meet promptly at 8 a.m. at the parking lot near the boat ramp. Jay hopes to hear Hammond's Flycatchers on this trip.

Saturday, May 21: Carlos Andersen will be leading a trip at **WEST BEACH**. Meet at the parking lot at 8 a.m.

More Trips:

Saturday May 14 DEL FAIRFAX PRESERVE. Meet at 9 a.m. at the parking lot at the corner of Zylstra and Fawndrop Road. This is an easy 1 1/2 mile walking trail that takes you through the woods to an amazing meadow. We should be able to see Violet-green Swallows as well as other woodland species. Trip Leader is Charlotte Ginn.

Tuesday, May 17: BIRDING BY EAR at Waterman Preserve Listening field trips are the third Tuesday of the month. Patty

Cheek is leading these new trips. They focus on listening for the birds and their calls. This trip is at 8 a.m. in Langley, Bob Galbreath and Wilkinson Roads.

Field Trip Checklist

- ✓ Field trips are free and open to anyone interested in birding or conservation. Bring your friends!
- ✓ Beginners are very welcome.
- ✓ Carpooling is encouraged and even required for some sites with limited parking.
- ✓ Dress for the weather and in layers.
- ✓ Very bad weather cancels a trip. Check with the trip leader.
- ✓ If you have them, bring binoculars, scope and field guides.
- ✓ If you might need them, bring a drink and snack.

We are always looking for new trip leaders and assistants. If you are interested, please contact Charlotte Ginn at cginnsixbit@yahoo.com.

Sightings Sightings Sightings Sightings Sightings

April 1: There were four **Greater White-fronted Geese** at Dugualla Bay this morning. They were along the far shore of the big lake at the west end but could be plainly seen with the spotting scope. They were too far away for a photo.

— *Mary Jo Adams*

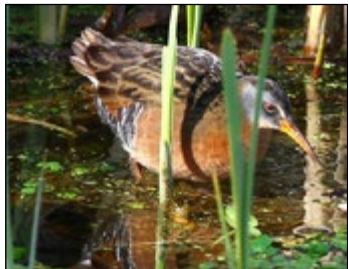


Photo by Carlos Andersen

Virginia Rail

April 5: **Virginia Rail** at Deer Lagoon. — *Carlos Andersen*



Photo by Linda Griesbach

Wilson's Snipes

April 8: Several **Wilson's Snipes** seen scampering about on April 7 and 8. Location: South Lone Lake.

— *Linda Griesbach.*

April 9: Watched two **American White Pelicans** arrive at Deer Lagoon. Four days ear-

lier than we saw them arrive last year. — *Carlos Andersen*

April 11: **Sora** seen along first



Photo by Carlos Andersen

Sora

part of trail at Deer Lagoon.

— *Carlos Andersen*

April 11: One **American White Pelican** on the far west side of Deer Lagoon.

— *Libby Hayward*

April 14: Five **American**

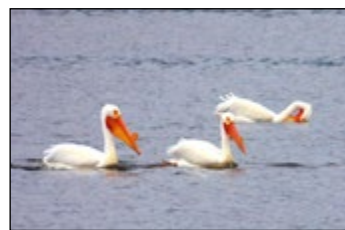


Photo by Libby Hayward

Three of five American White Pelicans seen April 14.

White Pelicans at Deer Lagoon this morning. Bright breeding plumage with “knob” on beak. — *Libby Hayward*

April 14: At Penn Cove north of Grasser's Lagoon at shellfish pier, **Rock Sandpiper** hang-

ing out with **Surfbirds** and **Black Turnstones**.

— *Carlos Andersen*

April 16: **Whimbrels!** First sighting during their annual drop-in and dine cycle. About 70 of them. Location: North shore Penn Cove. Along the beach to the east and west of Monroe Landing.

— *Chris Hurley.*



Photo by Linda Griesbach

Osprey

April 16: Two **Ospreys** seen at Deer Lagoon, sitting on the old fence posts.

— *Linda Griesbach*

April 17: First **Barn Swallow** has arrived. Always later than the Tree and Violet-green swal-

lows; the lovely Barn Swallows have shown up at last. Location: Cultus Bay Road and French Road; our back door.

— *Dyanne Sheldon*



Photo by Carlos Andersen

Surfbird

April 18: **Surfbird** in beautiful breeding plumage. Location: Langleys Seawall Park.

— *Carlos Andersen*

April 23: A pair of adult **Western Purple Martins** arrived this morning. The male inspected the mailbox nest frame. I placed the nest box at highest tide (not very high) and saw him investigating the box later in the day. Location: Steelhead Drive, Greenbank.

— *Mary Hollen*

PLEASE POST UNUSUAL SIGHTINGS to the *Whidbey Audubon Society (WAS) website*. Select the aqua button, “Report a Sighting.” You can also submit a photo using the aqua button labeled “Submit Gallery Photos.”

Sightings should be on Whidbey Island or relate in some way to Whidbey Audubon. Reports should refer to birds or other wildlife that are not commonly seen here. Alternatively, they may refer to migratory birds that arrive outside their normal seasons.

Reports of especially interesting sightings in nearby areas are welcome. Greater selectivity is needed to keep the email volume reasonable so editors will exercise judgment on whether the rarity, proximity and significance of sightings merit inclusion.

These guidelines reflect the interests of local birders. Please respect the essentially scientific nature of the Sightings feature. Thanks for your cooperation.

There are designated spaces to submit your information, such as what you saw, where you saw it and the date and approximate time. Although we are asking those who post to leave a phone number or email address with your sighting, they will not be included on the actual “Sightings” page. Thank you!

Keep up with “Sightings” on the WAS website or on our Facebook page, www.facebook.com/WhidbeyAudubonSociety.

BIN South Visits Lone Lake

April 7: Wow, what a day! Cathi Bower was elsewhere today so I led the group. I took a suggestion from Linda Griesbach and I'm mighty glad I did. We went to Lone Lake along Apollo Road. In just over an hour, we saw 24 species and 86 individuals. The most exciting was seeing **Wood Ducks** in a tree. There were two male ducks and one female. We never saw a fight but

BIN South, see page 5

Birdathon 2022 — Help Protect Birds and their Habitats

With the April Audubon meeting cancelled, we weren't able to rally support in our usual manner for our Birdathon teams, but I'm hoping people are going to the [Whidbey Audubon Birdathon website](#) and making pledges.

So far this year's Birdathon teams include:

- *The Fledglings*, Marcia Lazoff (mlazoff@comcast.net)
- *Wild Women of Whidbey*, Ann Casey (cspcoach@aol.com)
- *Winging It*, Sarah Schmidt (4bats@ixoreus.com) and Janet Hall (birderbiker56@gmail.com)
- *Shore Thing*, Cathi Bower (whidbird@whidbey.com) and Kathy Obersinner
- *All For Knot*, Joe Sheldon (jksbeldon43@gmail.com)

There is still time to form your own team. Just click [here](#) for all the information you need on the Whidbey Audubon website. It's easy and so much fun!

Meet Birdathon Teams

Join us in the Taproom to meet some of the Birdathon team members Thursday, May 12 at 6 p.m. prior to the General Membership Meeting at 7. There is still time to make a contribution and you could take advantage of the Taproom's comfort food before the meeting. It's located on the ground floor of the Bayview Cash Store.

BIN South, from page 4

thought one was brewing. We also saw six **Wilson's Snipe** – no winnowing. They scooted in and out of Mallards. Amazing how small they were in comparison to them. Such a treat. It made the whole trip worthwhile.

Among others we saw, **Canada Geese, Northern Shovelers, American and Eurasian Wigeons** (we saw TWO Eurasian Wigeons), **Mallard, Green-winged Teal, Mourning Dove, Virginia Rail, American Coot, Killdeer, a Bald Eagle, a Northern Flicker, Tree Swallows, Barn Swallows, Marsh Wrens, European Starlings, American Robins, a House Sparrow, a Fox Sparrow, Song Sparrows, Red-winged Blackbirds and a Brewer's Blackbird.**

At the other end of Lone Lake, we saw **Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Rufous Hummingbirds, a Cooper's Hawk, a Black-capped Chickadee, a Violet-green Swallow, a Red-breasted Nuthatch, Dark-eyed Juncos, a Spotted Towhee** and one **Orange-crowned Warbler**. We saw an additional 10 species and 34 individuals. I'd say it was a GREEE-AAAA-TTT day!

— *Patty Cheek*

Birding in Neighborhoods (BIN) South meets every other Thursday morning. Time varies with the season. Contact Cathi at whidbird@whidbey.com.

Global Big Day of Birding falls on May 14. this year. Teams will be choosing a 24-hour period sometime in the first two weeks, recording all species they observe on Whidbey



Photo by Kathy Obersinner

Tree Swallows

Island and surrounding waters. The team that sights the most species will win the prestigious Golden binoculars award (announced at our June meeting), while the team that raises the most money will earn the Bronze Owl Bank (the BOB will be announced at the September meeting when all data is in).

Our goal this year is to raise as much as we can to support Whidbey Audubon's commitment to protect birds and their habitats through education, outreach and research, with the money going into the General fund or the Scholarship Fund (supporting graduating high school seniors going on to a four year college with an environmental focus, our future bird stewards!) **Watch the numbers climb [here](#).**

Remember to let teams know if you are a Microsoft employee or Boeing employee or retiree, as these businesses will match your donation. All business sponsors will be honored in our newsletter and on our website.

— *Kathy Obersinner, Birdathon Chair*

For additional information, go to our webpage or contact Kathy Obersinner at birdathon@whidbeyaudubonsociety.org

BIN North Revisits County Park Loop

April 13: It had been 6 months since we last walked the County Park Loop that joins the Whidbey Camano Land Trust Beach View Farm property. Doing the loop from the west side allows you to check out Swan Lake and the saltwater from the West Beach parking pull out. I had been surprised at the number of species we had seen the first time, and the walk this time did not disappoint.

We saw **Common Loons, Horned Grebes, Pigeon Guillemots, Sanderlings, and both Surf and White-winged**

BIN North, see [page 8](#)

Whidbey Audubon Society Awards Three Scholarships

Our Whidbey Audubon Society Renee Smith Scholarship for Environmental Studies supports Whidbey Island graduating high school seniors who are going on to pursue higher education degrees in environmental programs. Each spring Whidbey Audubon Society awards scholarships to two or three outstanding students.

Three scholarships are offered by the Whidbey Audubon Society, this year, to two Oak Harbor High School graduating seniors: Samantha Zinger, majoring in Environmental Science at Oregon State University; and, Ian Richards, majoring in Environmental Science at Western Washington University. Coupeville High School senior, Logan Martin, is majoring in Industrial Construction and Environmental Science at Central Washington University. Thanks to the generosity of many of the Birdathon participants, and other contributors, you are significantly supporting these



Ian Richards, Oak Harbor High



Logan Martin, Coupeville High

students as they further their education.

Checkout the mini biographies listed under Scholarships on the *Whidbey Audubon Society's website*, click the red text.

— Ann Sullivan, Scholarship Committee

Dates to Remember

Please check the *Whidbey Audubon Society Events Calendar* and *Listings* on its website for more detailed information and how to enter Zoom for some of these upcoming events. There also might be further information elsewhere in this issue.

MAY

7: Field Trip: Hoypus Point, Deception Pass State Park, 8 a.m.

12: Program meeting: Aerialists with Steve and Martha Ellis and Board elections; 7 p.m.

16: Pigeon Guillemot Training, Zoom, 7 p.m.

17: Field Trip: Birding by Ear, 8 a.m.

18: Birds 'n' Beer. 5 p.m.

19: Deadline for June Shorelines

19-22: Leavenworth Spring Bird Fest, www.leavenworth-springbirdfest.org

21: Field Trip: West Beach, 8 a.m.

25: Page Peepers Book Group, *The Ravenmaster* by Christopher Skaife, 7 p.m.

JUNE

2: Whidbey Audubon Society's 40th Anniversary Celebration

9: Program: Homewaters with David Williams, 7 p.m.

14: Birding by Ear Class, Session 1

15: Birds 'n' Beer. 5 p.m.

16 Birding by Ear Class, Session 2

21: Birding by Ear Class, Session 3

22: Page Peepers Book Group. 7 p.m.

24: Pigeon Guillemot Appreciation Day

25: Pigeon Guillemot Field Trip

Field Trip Report: Birding by Ear at Waterman's Preserve

We had five of us all total for the April 19 trip. The first hour, we sat down or stood quietly for 10 minutes to observe the bird sounds in the area. It was difficult for the group to NOT focus on blurting out the identification. After that, we whispered about the birds that we heard. We described the pitch — high or low and whether it was flute-like, screeching, trilling, alarming or whatever it was doing. I encouraged drawing a picture with the hands and pointing, not yelling out, where the bird was. We were concentrated on listening. Later, several people had just become familiar with the Merlin Bird App and wanted to try it. We agreed to use it but only as a last resort. It's not always right. After the first hour, it was just one birder with me. It was fun and for the two hours, we reported 28 species and 83 individuals. Not bad considering that most of them were unseen. We just heard them.

We will be having one trip a month on the third Tuesday through August. I didn't have many register this time and I found out why — my email was wrong. If I didn't answer you, that may be the reason. I can only take 10 people out so if more than 10 register, you will have to take turns going on the trips. Check the website to see the next place we'll meet. Contact me at president@whidbeyaudubonsociety.org or call me at 425-246-1766. Remember, leave me a message if I don't answer because I never answer unknown phone numbers.

— Patty Cheek

Volunteer Corner: Pigeon Guillemot Breeding Season

There are two kinds of people — those who adore Pigeon Guillemots (PG), and those who haven't yet met any Pigeon Guillemots. Whichever sort you are, it's time to dive deeper! (Did you know that the birds themselves "fly" under water and feed at depths over 30 feet!)

The Pigeon Guillemot Breeding Survey welcomes one and all, to join in with even the smallest amount of time you may have this summer, to contribute to this on-going seasonal community science project. To see what it's all about and how to dive in, learn more on the Salish Sea Guillemot Network site.

How can I get involved (pigeonguillemot.org)

Training videos and almost everything you want to know about Pigeon Guillemots are found at this link on the Salish Sea Guillemot Network website, where you may register for online training to get the rest of your questions answered. Survey volunteers receive considerably more guidance than a juvenile guillemot gets (Did you know that they fledge on their own, usually under cover of darkness. They flutter and tumble from their high burrows and scurry to the nearby sea, flightless and feeding themselves!)

Online training for new volunteers is Monday, May 16 at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom. To get registered for the new season, contact [Frances Wood](mailto:Frances.Wood@was.org).

Based upon historical colony activity, again the survey season on Whidbey Island will begin with a sliding start. The earli-



Photo by Cathi Bower

Whaaat? It's a ball cap with a pair of felted, red Pigeon Guillemot feet clipped on by an official Whidbey Audubon Society Pigeon Guillemot Survey pin ...and the bird itself is in the background.

est colonies get started during the week of May 22, all colony surveys will have begun by the week of June 5th, and depending upon burrow activity, run for nine to 12 weeks.

Once we have thoroughly appreciated the Guillemots, we express that with Guillemot Appreciation Days a few weeks into the season.

Save the afternoon of Friday, June 24 to share some wine, socializing and PG appreciating, and the next morning (Saturday June 25) for a field trip to a west side colony.

We also wanted to take a line or two here now to appreciate Emily Terao and all her years of contribution as an intern and a volunteer. She has a lot on her farm-to-table-plate, and we won't be seeing as much of her this season — unless you happen to stop in at the Greenbank Pantry to say hey, and feast on the offerings there.

Speaking of delicious snacks, did you know that after guillemot chicks hatch, both parents catch and carry small gunnels, sculpins, sand lance or herring to the chicks, who consume the entire fish whole! As the youngsters grow their parents feed them larger fish until the young are ready to leave the burrow, after about 35 days, at which point the Pigeon Guillemot survey season ends, and all of our excellent data is compiled and studied in order to better understand the birds, other wildlife and the habitat we share.

See you on the beaches! Pigeon Guillemot Team

Whidbey Audubon - Investing in Our Community

Our Mission Statement: *Whidbey Audubon Society (WAS) is dedicated to the understanding, appreciation and protection of birds and other wildlife species and their habitats on Whidbey Island and in surrounding waters.*

We protect birds through education, outreach and research.

For the past six months a small committee of was Board Members has been looking into ways in which Whidbey Audubon can invest in our community that align with our mission statement.

We have identified several projects and begun to work on them, including:

- Classroom Grants have been offered to local schools. To date, four teachers from Oak Harbor have received grant funding of up to \$200 each for classroom projects to teach their students about birds and their habitat.
- Whidbey Audubon is developing educational signage for the viewing platform at Crockett Lake that the Washington State Parks Department is renovating.

While we have many good ideas, implementation of some of them has been hindered by the need for someone to do the physical labor (building, installing and maintaining bird boxes,

Community Investing, see [page 9](#)

Bird of the Month: Townsend's Warbler (*Setophaga townsendi*) Spirit of the Tree Tops

Flashes of yellow give away the small flock of birds sifting through the top branches of sunlit Douglas-firs. One bird stops to sing its high “Zwee zwee zeze zeer” song, adding a flourish at the end. The Townsend's Warblers have returned to Whidbey Island.

Named for ornithologist John Kirk Townsend, this dynamic warbler is five inches in length with a wingspan of eight inches. Males feature a yellow and black face and a black crown and throat. The wings are bluish-gray with white wing bars. Females have duller versions of the same plumage.

Townsend's Warblers are a western species, with a breeding range of southern Alaska and Canada, south through Washington and Idaho. In the southern parts of Washington, they hybridize frequently with Hermit Warblers, their close cousins.

Spring arrival on Whidbey generally occurs in late April or early May. It takes a month of territorial squabbling between the males before the serious business of nesting can begin. The female builds a nest high in a conifer, sometimes up 100 feet or more. She may start constructing the shallow bulky nest in one tree and then transport the materials to another one nearby. She'll lay 3 to 7 eggs, which are hardier than those of most other warblers, resulting in a high rate of hatching.

The male does not approach the nest site during incubation, but he will defend the area around it, which allows the female to slip away for some much-needed foraging. If the nest is approached by a predator, she will attempt a Killdeer-like strategy of feigning injury to draw off the intruder.

BIN North, from page 5

Scoters from the parking area. The loop gave us practice in identifying **Sparrows** and we saw **White-crowned, Song, Golden-crowned** and **Savannah**. Practicing with the Merlin App we verified the **Savannah Sparrow** and the song of the **Common Yellowthroat**. The very small and loud **Marsh Wren** was easily identified by ear and sight. In and across a marshy area on the path we saw **Green-winged Teal, Tree Swallows, Red-winged Blackbirds** and heard the calls of **Crows, Ravens** and a **Pileated Woodpecker**. A great day of birding with 33 species seen and /or heard.

— Marcia Lazoff

Birding in Neighborhoods (BIN) North meets the second Wednesday of the month at 9 a.m. Contact Marcia for details: mlazoff@comcast.net.



Photo ©Glenn Bartley Birdzilla.com

Townsend's Warbler

Both parents feed the nestlings. Larger prey items are bashed against a tree branch before delivery to the young. Fledging takes 8 to 10 days.

The genus *Setophaga* means “moth eater,” and caterpillars and adult moths are definitely on the menu along with other insects and spiders. During outbreaks of western spruce budworms, Townsend's focus solely on these injurious pests. Prey is captured by picking directly from twigs and needles. They may hover and glean, but hawking flying insects is rare. These active little birds have been dubbed “restless foragers” for their habit of moving continuously and searching for prey.

Late summer and fall find Townsend's flocking with chickadees and kinglets. While a handful choose to overwinter here (and perhaps visit your suet feeder), most migrate southward by October. Coastal breeders migrate to southern Oregon and down through California. Those breeding inland winter in the Mexican highlands south to Costa Rica.

Most recent population estimates show Townsend's holding their own. Major negative factors are habitat fragmentation from logging and climate change-induced wildfires. Squirrels and jays raid their nests; adults are sometimes taken by small owls. We also witnessed a Townsend's feeding a much-larger Brown-headed Cowbird in our yard.

Look and listen for Townsend's Warblers in areas of tall conifers. They breed in the Wilbert Trail section of South Whidbey State Park and at Hoypus Point at Deception Pass. Last year, several males could be heard singing at Goose Rock as I hiked the trail.

I find Townsend's to be quite handsome birds, outshone in the conifer woods only by the brightly-plumaged Western Tanager. Their penchant for forest foraging makes them difficult to study. These factors, along with their role in pest-control, add to their mystique.

— Steve Ellis

Community Investing, from page 7

for example), or by COVID-19 restrictions (maybe lifting soon) or other such hurdles. We remain committed to investing some of the money we have raised as an organization back into our community and we are asking for your input.

Do you have ideas of projects that would fit with our mission? Do you know of groups that could benefit from a Whidbey Audubon Grant? Do you have interest in doing a bird related research project if only you had some funding? Do you want to put together a group to tackle a habitat improvement/protection effort that we could help with?

Among our membership there must certainly be a wealth of great ideas, leadership, willing and able laborers, various skill sets and more. (Each name is hyperlinked to its email address. just click to contact that person.) We want to hear from you!!

— *WAS Committee on Investing in our Community:*

- Jann Ledbetter*
- Sharon Gauthier*
- Jenny Brown*
- Charlotte Ginn*

Welcome New and Renewing Members

New Members

Curt Smith & Debra Kiva

Renewing Members:

- Joseph Cospito & Dorian McGlannan, Osprey
- Shirley Hendricson, Red-tailed Hawk
- George & Lynne Jensen, Spotted Towhee
- Robin Llewellyn, Spotted Towhee
- Jill Hein, Spotted Towhee Christi Shaffer
- Steven Raab, Spotted Towhee Barbara Fournier
- Marcia Wesley, Spotted Towhee Anita Badri
- Don & Marcia Allen P. Gordon Hodge
- Ruth & Mike Scrivner Cheryl Jo Prussia
- Todd & Chris Peters
- Dorothy & Bob Kulwin
- Anne Huggins & Daniel Meyer
- Rob Johnson & Val Woolvett
- Louie (Lou Ann) Shellenberger
- Sheryl Norris

WHIDBEY AUDUBON SOCIETY - MEMBERSHIP

Please make your check payable to: WHIDBEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

Mail to: Jann Ledbetter, 1112 Maple Place, Coupeville WA 98239

Or pay online: www.whidbeyaudubonsociety.org/membership

Name _____ Shorelines Recognition? Yes No

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____ (Our newsletters will be emailed to you.)

Check here to receive your *Shorelines* by mail. Please add an additional **\$10.00** to defray mailing costs.

Select Category of Annual Membership:

- Individual Membership \$20
- Household Membership \$30
- Spotted Towhee \$50
- Pigeon Guillemot \$75
- Red-tailed Hawk \$100
- Osprey \$250
- \$1000 Lifetime Membership

\$ _____ Additional Donation to be used for Scholarships

SPECIAL INTRODUCTORY MEMBERSHIP for first year National Members only. Receive a joint membership in National and Whidbey Audubon for one year for only \$35. Make check payable to National Audubon.

The Whidbey Audubon Society is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Donations are tax deductible. It is Whidbey Audubon policy to never share our membership and subscription information with other groups.

Whidbey Audubon Society

Whidbey Audubon programs are 7 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month except December, July and August

Meetings may be conducted virtually using ZOOM and hybrid March, April, May and June 2022.

Whidbey Audubon Board and Committee Chairs 2021–2022

President.....	Patty Cheek
Immediate Past President.....	Sharon Gauthier
Vice President.....	Dave Allen
Secretary.....	Anita Baldri
Treasurer.....	Sheri Croll
Programs.....	Stephanie Neis
Membership Chair.....	Jann Ledbetter
Newsletter Editor.....	Jenny Brown
Conservation Chair.....	Kathy Stetz
Education Chair.....	OPEN
Field Trip Chair.....	Charlotte Ginn
Publicity Chair.....	Susan Prescott
Webmaster.....	Dave Krause
Board Member-at-Large.....	Cathi Bower
Board Member-at-Large.....	Joe Sheldon
Board Member-at-Large.....	Dave Krause
Board Member-at-Large.....	Kathy Obersinner
Christmas Bird Count North Chair.....	Jay Adams
Christmas Bird Count South Chair.....	Govinda Holtby
Birdathon.....	Kathy Obersinner
Scholarship Committee.....	Ann Sullivan
Newsletter Mailing.....	Marcia Lazoff
Specimen Library.....	Robin Llewellyn

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Hybrid Meeting

Thursday, May 12

Bayview Cash Store & Online
5603 Bayview Road, Langley

PREREGISTER to attend in person

whidbeyaudubonsociety.org

7 p.m. socialize and brief meeting
with board elections.

7:30 program begins.

**The Aerialists: One
tough way to make
a living
with Steve and Martha Ellis**

**Come earlier to meet
Birdathon Teams
in the Taproom**