



Shorelines

Newsletter of the Whidbey Audubon Society
September 2019

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

Whidbey Audubon Society Meets Thursday, September 12 in Coupeville

What in the World Are Goatsuckers?

Presenter and Whidbey Audubon Society member Joe Sheldon says the evening program will address three topics:

- 1) Why would an insect ecologist turn his attention to birds? After all, there are more than a million species of insects and less than 11,000 species of birds. *And insects are soooo cool!*
- 2) There are major changes going on in the classification of birds. What new understanding is driving the changes that we are taking place?
- 3) **What in the world are Goatsuckers?** Goatsuckers are members of a highly diverse group of birds that varies from smallest known bird species to a most bizarre species with a wingspan of more than a meter, it roosts in caves and uses echolocation to navigate. We will first do a "forest" level survey of the order *Caprimulgiformes* as it is now constituted and then focus on some of the most interesting species.

Joe attended high school in Saint Helens, Oregon, received his bachelor of science degree at the College of Idaho in biology and his PH.D. at the University of Illinois in entomology, insect ecology. He married Donna in

1965 and they have two children. He had thirty-six years of college teaching at Eastern College and Messiah College, both in Pennsylvania, as well as summer teaching at the Sable Institute of Environmental Science from 1987 to 2007.

Joe served as President of the American Entomological Society (1991 to 1997) and President of the American Scientific Affiliation (1998 to 1999). He was invited to and did present expert testimony on the Endangered Species Act for the House Committee on Resources in 2004.

Joe retired to Whidbey Island in June of 2007. He is a founding board vice chair of Pacific Rim Institute for Environmental Stewardship (2009 to 2015), board Secretary for Whidbey Island Theological Studies (WITS) 2014 to the present and has been a board member of Whidbey Audubon Society since 2016, serving as Field Trip Chair, Secretary and now Member-at-Large.



Photo by Gary Kramer, US Fish & Wildlife digital library

Common Nighthawk



Joseph Sheldon, PH.D.

Join Us!

Thursday evening
September 12

Coupeville
Recreation Hall
901 NW Alexander Street

7:00 socializing
(donations for snacks welcome)

7:15 brief meeting

7:30 program begins

Upcoming Field Trips

Monday, September 23: FIR ISLAND. Jay Adams will lead a field trip to sites on Fir Island including Wiley Sough, Hayton Preserve and Channel Drive. The area is a shorebird haven with many shorebirds and other fall migrants. Leave Coupeville at 7:30 a.m. from the parking lot behind the Coupeville Library and pick up north Islanders at the north end of the Home Depot Store in Oak Harbor about 8 a.m. Bring a bag lunch. We will be home late in the afternoon. The trip is limited to 10 participants. Register by emailing Jay at protectionisland8.9@gmail.com.

com. Registration is first come, first served. No special footwear is required. Spotting scopes are recommended.

Tuesday, October 15: DEER LAGOON. Darwin Wile will lead a field trip to Deer Lagoon starting at 9 a.m. Meet at Bayview Park and Ride. While Deer Lagoon hosts multitudes of birds all year long, it doesn't get much better than October. There will be a profusion of ducks, shorebirds, terns and gulls. Not a bad

Upcoming Field Trips, see [page 2](#)

Conservation Column: The Guilts...

Are you feeling guilty yet? It seems that every day brings more information about new human-caused environmental harm or degradation. Flight-shaming, meat-eating, excess shopping, over-watering, pet-owning, plastic dependence — the ways we are blaming and being blamed are legion.

Climate change is real; global warming is impacting everything and still we wait for someone to find a good solution, or the right solution or even a possible solution. We know we

won't like the answers, because they will require major regulatory changes that will impact the lives we lead. Which is why we are still waiting. We could wait forever.

This year, the Conservation Committee will be looking at small steps that we can all take to reduce our carbon footprint. It may not alleviate the big guilts, but at least we can raise awareness and empower us to feel a bit less helpless. The birds and the orcas needed big changes a decade ago and I believe membership in Whidbey Audubon means we, at least, have to try. If we don't, why should we expect others less vested in the natural world to change? Watch for our suggestions in *Shorelines* each month and see what you can change.

Another thought. You may have received, as I do, lots of requests from environmental groups to sign on to various pleas, responses, critiques and letters in support or opposition to various issues. While such support is good, it is even better if you send an individual response, in your own words (not using a group template or form letter). According to those who know such things (thanks, Mary Hollen), individual responses may actually be read and considered, whereas the big group mails are just tallied. Make your voice count!

— Kim Shepard, Conservation Chair

PSE Powerful Partnership Green Power Update

Thanks to all Whidbey Audubon Society (WAS) members who participated in Puget Sound Energy's (PSE's) Green Power campaign. As one of only nine of the statewide 2019 Powerful Partners selected to benefit from the summer campaign to increase Green Power customers, WAS appreciates the additional funding we will receive for each new sign-up. PSE will provide a final accounting and check toward the end of the year.

Upcoming Field Trips, from page 1

time for raptors either — eagles, ospreys, harrier and perhaps a falcon or two — maybe even a Short-eared Owl. Swallows and waxwings should still be present as well as sparrows and finches. Also, we should see numbers of loons, grebes, and scoters and probably brants and geese in Useless Bay, not to mention a pelican or two still hanging around. But the big numbers are likely to be shorebirds — Yellowlegs, Western and Least Sandpipers, Dunlins, Dowitchers and possibly a Phalarope or two. All in all, October is a splendid time for birding. For more information, contact Darwin at dardrifter@gmail.com.

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 Patty Cheek at pattypipe@gmail.com.

2019 Birdathon Wrap-Up

Many thanks to everyone who participated in this year's Birdathon, whether as a team member or a contributor. Thanks to your support and generosity, pledges and donations came to an amazing \$7,400, of which \$2,692.50 was designated for the general fund, and \$4,707.50 for the scholarship fund.

Many thanks to **all** teams for their great birding and fund-raising. For the first time, the team that raised the most money will receive due recognition by being awarded the **Bronze Owl Bank (BOB) Award** at the September Audubon meeting. This year, the prize goes to the **Winging It** team (**Janet Hall, Sarah Schmidt, Libby Hayward, and Dyanne Sheldon**), who brought in \$2,566! Your hard work is much appreciated.

Whidbey Audubon would like to thank all **businesses** that contributed to our Birdathon effort, including:

- Big Rock Designs
- BCCT'G
- Branch Business Services, Inc.
- Edwards Jones Investment
- Penn Cove Veterinary Clinic, Inc.
- Penn Sports
- Useless Bay Animal Clinic

We appreciate your support!

— Kathy Obersinner, Birdathon Chair

Lagoon Point Purple Martins Sixth Summer (2019)

Successful nests were fewer than last year. English House Sparrows killed Purple Martin adults inside two nests just as they were getting started. Nevertheless, we increased fledglings by season end.

Since last season several residents had their rotting dock pilings replaced with metal, only one of whom succeeded in placing a purple martin nest collar around a metal piling. Sheri Croll used a utility pole collar and Gary Hammer installed his mailbox nest on one of the four arms.

Some nests became infested with northern bird mites. Only I appear to have suffered from their itchy bites. They aren't dangerous and die without a bird host in three weeks.

Here are the season's results from those who reported:

Bert Pack: Two gourds, one piling cavity and two condo nests for a total of five active nests. Bert eventually was able to observe babies in four of the nests, although in one nest the babies died. He most likely fledged thirteen.

Sheri Croll: Her utility collar on a new metal piling and Gary



Photo by Sheri Croll

Pictured here on August 9 are four babies hatched at Sheri Croll's dock on the west canal at Lagoon Point. Gary Hammer built the nest box which has been used successfully for three seasons. This model was used at Sheri's place for the first time this year.

Hammer's mailbox nest produced four very healthy fledglings, which Sheri was able to observe fledging.

Bob Vierra: Starlings and later English House Sparrows took his license plate house this year. But he did have a successful fledging from the house he built a few years back on Dan Brock's dock. Jeri Gregory had all of her pilings replaced with metal and has suspended nest box maintenance until she can get a new ramp secured to ensure safety of the nest monitors.

Mary Hollen: Four gourds, one mailbox and one piling cavity nest for a total of six active nests, only three total active nests this year. English House Sparrows killed Purple Martin adults in one gourd and the mailbox nest and

one gourd was never used. Likely nine fledged.

Neil Kenworthy and Anita Badri: one piling cavity but no nest seen this year.

The colony supported seventeen active nests which is down a bit from last year, but apparently fledged 27.

— Mary Hollen

Dan's Blog: Jann Ledbetter's Wildlife

by Dan Petersen #359, July 20, 2019, pedersenwrites.blogspot.com/2019/07/359-jann-ledbetters-wildlife.html

Editor's note: Dan's Blog is published every Saturday morning. Type this website into your browser: pedersenwrites.blogspot.com. If you'd like to be added to Dan's email list to receive the link to the latest post each week, write to Dan Pedersen at dogwood@whidbey.com.

"I love morning light," says Jann Pulfer Ledbetter, who photographed this coyote in the Coupeville area on central Whidbey Island, as she was commuting to work. She admits that she pads her commute time a little to allow for photo ops like this one.

"I typically leave for work about an hour early and meander through Ebey's Prairie and over to Crockett Lake, stopping to photograph whatever is of interest.

There are plenty of repeat subjects — herons, eagles and such — but there are often surprises, too, such as swans, osprey, coyotes, pelicans, merlin, heron chicks and so much more. Every day brings different light, different skies and different subjects. I typically head back out with my camera about an hour before sunset."

Wildlife live alongside us in every available niche, and the full impact of that reality becomes apparent when we train ourselves to pay close



Photo by Jann Pulfer Ledbetter © 2019

Sightings — Summer Highlights

May 31: A single adult **Band-tailed Pigeon**, the first we have seen in Ledgewood Beach since about ten years ago, when a neighbor cut down the cluster of evergreens where six to eight birds used to hang out. — *Cheryl Bradkin*

June 3: **Western Wood Pewee**. Location: west dike, Deer Lagoon.

— *Darwin Wile*



Photo by Jann Ledbetter

Peregrine Falcon

June 13: **Peregrine Falcon**. Location: Driftwood Beach.

— *Jann Ledbetter*

June 22: Two **Brown Pelicans** from Port Townsend to Coupeville ferry. With thousands of **Rhinoceros Auklets**, **Heerman's** and **Glaucous-winged gulls** and numerous **Marbled Murrelets**.

— *Sarah Schmidt*

June 30: **Marbled Godwit**; location: Deer Lagoon.

— *George Heleker*

July 2: **Tufted Puffin**, from deck of ferry heading to Port Townsend from Coupeville.

— *Sarah Schmidt*

July 20: At Dugualla Bay: a **Sora** which I have not seen at this location before, four **Semipalmated Plovers**, a **Virginia Rail**, and what I believe were four juvenile **Spotted Sandpipers**. The juvenile Spotted Sandpipers were not quite half the size of the adult they were with, had yellow legs, light bellies, and were doing a lot of tail bobbing.

— *Mary Jo Adams*

July 25: **Gray Catbird** seen visiting ground level birdbath. Location: Pennington Loop, Coupeville. — *Patrick Klin*

July 30: We counted 204 **Great Blue Herons** on the mudflats at Dugualla Bay.

— *Ruth Scriven*



Photo by Jay Adams

Hudsonian Godwit

July 31: **Hudsonian Godwit** (HUGO) feeding with **Long-billed Dowitchers** and **Western Sandpipers**. Location: North-eastern end of Crockett Lake.

Confirmation: According to eBird, this may be just the second of HUGO on Whidbey. The species is not included on the official Whidbey Audubon checklist. It is listed on the Washington Birder site as a code 5 bird — fewer than 5 records for Island County.

— *Jay Adams*



Photo by Albert Rose

Virginia Rail

August 1: I was tucked away in the rushes at Deer Lagoon, watching **Pelicans** and **Bonaparte's Gulls**, when out of the corner of my eye, near my feet I saw some movement, it was a **Virginia Rail** checking things out. — *Albert Rose*

August 4: **Green Heron**,



Photo by Michael Sheldon

Green Heron

perched in a snag off the trail from the end of Deer Lagoon Road to the West Dike.

Confirmation: The Whidbey Audubon Society (WAS) checklist shows this species as being accidental here in the summer. **Green Heron** is a Code 4 (meaning rare) bird for Island County on the Washington Birder checklist. — *Jay Adams*

August 18: **Red Knot**, feeding with two **Western Sandpipers** in shallow water. Location:

Southeast end of Crockett Lake, just west of the viewing platform

Confirmation: **Red Knot** is listed as 'accidental' in the fall on the WAS checklist and as "rare" on the Washington Birder checklist for Island County. — *Jay Adams*

August 18: **Yellow-headed Blackbird**. Location: In and around the cattails at the eastern end of Crockett Lake.

Confirmation: Washington Birder lists this species as being rare in Island County. The WAS checklist indicates the bird as occasional in spring, summer and fall. To my knowledge YHBL has been seen at various locations (Deer Lagoon, Lone Lake, Crockett Lake) during each of the last three years. — *Jay Adams*

August 22: **Marbled Godwit**. Location: Seen with six **Whimbrel** on the south shore

Sightings, see page 8

PLEASE POST UNUSUAL SIGHTINGS to the *Whidbey Audubon Society (WAS) website*.

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, on your mobile device at www.m.whidbeyaudubon.org or on the *Whidbey Audubon Society Facebook page*.

An Invitation from the Specimen Library

Are you interested in learning more about what our Whidbey Audubon Society Specimen Library is doing, participating in taxidermy or even joining the specimen library committee? If so, you are invited to attend one of our specimen prep sessions. These sessions of bird prep, learning and laughter occur on the afternoon of the first Sunday and the evening of the third Wednesday of each month.

If you are interested in joining us please contact one of the committee members, Robin Llewellyn (360-320-5480) or Cheryl Bradkin (bradkin@whidbey.net) to arrange to come.

President's Annual Award



President Sharon Gauthier, far right, presents the annual award to Linda Bainbridge, left and Linda Perry Dwight.

Each year the Whidbey Audubon Society (was) President recognizes a member for outstanding service. At the June 13, 2019 general meeting President Sharon Gauthier presented awards to two members, Linda Bainbridge and Linda Perry Dwight.

Linda Bainbridge has served as Membership Chair for 12 years and recently passed the duty on to Jann Ledbetter. Linda has also served on several nominating committees. She edited the bylaw revisions, has led field trips and teaches the class on sparrows and finches for the Birds of Whidbey class series. She currently administers the Dropbox account where was's active and archived material is digitized, kept and accessed by board members.

Linda Perry Dwight served as was Treasurer for the past three years. She recently oriented Sheri Croll as the new Treasurer. Linda has also headed the Birdathon fundraiser and the Scholarship Committee. She took leadership this past year for the Powerful Partnership Grant received from Puget Sound Energy.

Bookmark Whidbey Audubon



Taxidermist Matt Klope demonstrates the preparation of specimens at the Bird in the Hand Event 2016.

Dan's Blog, from page 3

attention. They are a major part of Whidbey Island's appeal, a defining aspect of the lifestyle that draws many to choose the island as where they want to live.

What makes Whidbey attractive to wildlife is its diverse habitats — forests and prairies, lakes, marshes, grasslands and, of course, a saltwater moat for whales.

Not only does the island offer peace and tranquility on a good day, it is close to other natural areas, as well. Jann ventured to the Skagit Flats in February to catch this [see page 3] Short-eared Owl in flight on a snowy day. Among owls, "Shorties" are widely distributed and are some of the most frequently seen during daylight, since they often hunt small mammals and birds at dawn and dusk. Still, I don't see that many!

On a winter day, a photographer's life can seem pretty raw and bleak. But one good wildlife moment like this makes it all worthwhile. Short-eared Owls often turn up at Crockett Lake, which is where I photographed my first one a few years ago. Life expectancy for rodents must be short at Crockett Lake, since so many different predators, with superb eyesight and reflexes, hunt them there.

Jann's image of a gull feasting on forage fish blew me away. She posted it on Facebook this week. She watched a Rinocerous Auklet dive under water to catch some fish.

"That must have caused these fish to scramble to the surface to escape the auklet. The gull saw this from a distance and knew what was going to happen, so he swooped in for the feast. And what a feast it was!"

It makes sense that Jann is so passionate for wildlife. She's not

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Dan's Blog, from page 5

only an avid photographer but a member of Whidbey Audubon, as well.

"I love to share photos of my sightings, hoping that my enthusiasm for nature will encourage others to start paying more attention to the world around them," she says. "Becoming a birder and wildlife photographer has forced me to slow down, be still and quiet, and to be fully present and attentive. This is quite a change from the way I lived as a high-energy, hard working, master-multitasker for most of my adult life!"

For several weeks, Jann has had her eye on a nest of Great-blue Heron chicks at the Keystone Ferry Landing on Whidbey. "The adults leave the nest when the ferry comes in, which makes it easier for me to see the chicks," she posted on Facebook.



Photo by Jann Pulfer Ledbetter © 2019

Great Blue Heron with chicks.

been lucky to witness some pair-bonding displays that include a ritualized greeting, stick transfers and a nest relief ceremony in which the birds erect their plumes and 'clapper' their bill tips. Both parents feed the young by regurgitation."

Another image that caught my attention was one she took recently on the Olympic Peninsula of a Pigeon Guillemot in front of its burrow. Guillemots are the only seabird to nest on Whidbey and Camano islands. They show up in the summertime and cluster together in colonies, where they lay their eggs in burrows in our shoreline bluffs. They've been the subject of population studies here for years now, since they feed small fish to their nestlings and are therefore an indicator species of nearshore health.

Pigeon Guillemots are easily recognized by their orange feet, but they also have orange mouths. Jann got lucky and caught [a] guillemot with its mouth open!



Photo by Jann Pulfer Ledbetter © 2019

A gull sits down to a banquet for one.

"I consider myself a passionate amateur photographer," Jann said.

"I've taken some classes over the years but find that having my camera in my hand just about every day, shooting whatever I'm moved to shoot that day, has improved my photography skills more than anything."

After 30 years living in Sammamish, Jann moved to Whidbey in April of 2018 and rented in Greenbank for a time before buying a house in Coupeville. "I feel so blessed to have landed in such an amazing place with so many photo opportunities."

She adds that shortly after arriving here, she read my books, *Whidbey Island's Special Places* and *Wild Whidbey*, which helped introduce her to her new home.

Many of Jann's images strike me as examples of exquisite portraiture and composition, such as this male Northern Harrier she photographed at Crockett Lake in April. Males, by the way, are grey; females are brown. She dubbed this one the Grey Ghost.



Photo by Jann Pulfer Ledbetter © 2019

The Grey Ghost, a male Northern Harrier.

You can almost bank on seeing a harrier on any given day at Crockett Lake, swooping low over the marshes as it hunts for prey and then pounces vertically.

Much less common is the Peregrine Falcon, which Jann photographed at Keystone Spit in June. "When power diving from great heights to strike its prey, it may reach speeds of 200 miles per hour," she said. "This was possibly my first-ever opportunity to photograph one in nature." She made the most of it, catching this one with wings outstretched.

Bald Eagles are almost too easy to photograph all over Whidbey Island, including Crockett Lake and Keystone. But when two perch together, against a backdrop of the snowy Olympic Mountains, it's pretty hard to resist another eagle photo.

American White Pelicans are relatively new visitors to Whidbey Island in the last few years, extending their range northward, and Jann found [a flock to photograph] on Crockett Lake.

In the category of surprises, I'm sure Jann would include the family of River Otters she encountered one day last June at Ebey's Landing.

"It sure was fun to come across this River Otter mama and her

Dan's Blog, see page 9

PSE Powerful Partnership Osprey Nest Study Update

Whidbey Audubon Society (WAS) has used a portion of our 2019 Powerful Partnership grant from Puget Sound Energy (PSE), our electric utility provider, to engage in a cooperative effort with the Deception Pass Park Foundation to promote Osprey nesting at Cranberry Lake in Deception Pass State Park. The feasibility study supports PSE's Avian Protection Program in enhancing natural sites for the Osprey to build nests, rather than on energized power poles that can cause power outages and

are not safe nesting places for birds. As public education is part of the mission of both WAS and the Foundation, site selection included safe public wildlife viewing opportunities.

Jim Kaiser, a raptor biologist with Osprey Solutions LLC, completed the feasibility study in May. Of five potential nest tree sites that can be safely viewed from public access points and which met other criteria including appropriate tree height and crown structure, two sites, one visible from the Cranberry Lake dock and one visible from the Cornet Bay dock, have been selected for further analysis by Deception Pass State Park staff.

For additional information or a copy of the report, please contact Linda Perry Dwight, dwrightconsult@gmail.org.

Welcome New and Renewing Members

New

Don and Marcia Allen	Betty Knuth
Deborah Baird	David Labrecque
Doug and Lisa Blanchard	Marc Schwieterman
Neil and Pamela Daener	Charles Sutton
Sue Hamilton	Susan and Mark Ross
Lisa Jackson	William and Joyce Kuhn
Carol Dougherty (Scholarship Fund)	
Donald Krafft (Red-tailed Hawk)	
Stephanie Wiegand (Spotted Towhee)	

Renewing

Paul Bigelow	Eric Mayhew
Gwen Coughenour	Ann Nishimoto
Patricia De La Chapelle	Pamela Nodus
Judy Dixon	Kit O'Neil and Tom Leschine
Sharon Dunn	Elizabeth and Christopher Fay
Kathy and Mervyn Floyd	Frank and Mary Taylor
Lidabeth Hicks	Marge Plecki (Red-tailed Hawk)
Kathryn Hirt	Marilyn and John Thomas
Vincent Ho	Toni Schinnerer
Patrick Hussey	Anna "Lu" Orth
Beth B Johns	Linda and Greg Ridder

Lee Kanning and Petra Lopez
Annette Barca (Scholarship Fund)
Jerry and Angie Homola (Scholarship Fund)
Marlys Erickson and Chris Hurley (Pigeon Guillemot)
Nancy Van Wormer (Spotted Towhee)
John Lee (Spotted Towhee and Scholarship Fund)
Mark Wicks and Brad Portin (Red-tailed Hawk and Scholarship Fund)
Kathleen Stetz and David Allen (Scholarship Fund)

Editor's Note: Welcome to our new Membership Chair, Jann Ledbetter. After many years of service, Linda Bainbridge has retired from keeping track of all of us members.

Thanks, Linda!

Jann's address is now on the membership form, so send the form to her. She will send reminders about renewals.

New Website Feature: Quick News

Occasionally, news topics arise between Shorelines editions that may interest Whidbey Audubon members but don't relate specifically to schedule changes. Mainly, they're topics the chapter president thinks members should know about and this "Quick News" feature enables members to receive them by email. Members can subscribe at www.whidbeyaudubon.org/subquicknews.htm

The emails will also include a link for unsubscribing.

— Rob Craig, Webmaster

Dates to Remember

SEPTEMBER

- 12: Whidbey Audubon Society (WAS) meeting: *What in the World Are Goatsuckers?*** With Joe Sheldon in Coupeville
- 13 to 15: Puget Sound Bird Fest,** Edmonds; pugetsoundbirdfest.com
- 19: Deadline** for October *Shorelines* submissions
- 23: Field Trip: Fir Island**
- 26: Puget Sound Seabird Training** 5:30-7:30 p.m. Deception Pass State Park. Contact tobyr@seattleaudubon.org
- 26: WAS Board Meeting.** Greenbank Firehouse. 7 p.m. Members welcome
- 28: Fall Birding at Padilla Bay and the Skagit Flats,** 8 to 11 a.m. padillabay.gov; register and sign up for newsletter to browse other classes

OCTOBER

- 10: WAS general meeting: *Spotted Owls in Washington State***
- 17: Deadline** for November *Shorelines*
- 15: Field Trip: Deer Lagoon**
- 24: WAS Board Meeting**

BIN North Goes Way North...Again

August 14: This summer, besides the usual bird walks, our group decided to visit the John M. Edson Hall of Birds in Bellingham at the suggestion of one of our group, Pat France. The collection of Edson's and others' birds, the oldest specimen dating from the late 1890s, has been housed in the Whatcom County Museum.

In 2017, in collaboration with the North Cascades Audubon Society, the exhibit was reopened and includes hundreds of taxidermized birds, video clips, bird calls and hands-on activities for children. Laminated cards by each exhibit aid in bird identification. It was wonderful to see the birds up close and still to gain an appreciation of the size, coloration and specialized feathers of each one. The museum has some other excellent exhibits as well and is worth the drive. For more information, go to whatcommuseum.org.

— *Marcia Lazoff*

Birding in Neighborhoods (BIN) North explores North Whidbey Island, and beyond, on the second Wednesday of the month. Contact Marcia at mlazoff@comcast.net to be added to the email list.

Sightings, from page 4

of Crockett Lake in the area between the viewing platform and the long line of pilings. The birds flew east and out of sight as we watched.

Confirmation: According to eBird this is probably the sixth **Marbled Godwit** at Crockett Lake since 2009. The species is considered to be rare on both the Whidbey Audubon and the Washington Birder checklists.—*Jay Adams*



Photo by Marcia Lazoff

Woodpecker display at the Whatcom County Museum in Bellingham, Washington.

An Abundance of Summer Birds for BIN South

June 20: The highlight of the latest Birding in the Neighborhoods South (BINS) out at Deer Lagoon was certainly to watch the **Cedar Waxwing** on her nest. It took us awhile to locate it again after two-weeks' shrubbery growth surrounding it. But one of us who is just the right height, spied her yellow tail spots sticking up at the back and her little eye peeking over the side of the nest. She didn't twitch a feather while we all got to see her for a few minutes. When we finally dragged ourselves away, we looked for the **Bushtit** nest just down the way, but found it laying on the trail. There hadn't been any recently observed activity anyway, so it was just interesting to examine it up close and speculate about what brought it down. Oh, and Mr. Industrious was weaving yet another nest for his lady **Marsh Wrens**.

We saw and/or heard at least 37 species, plus whichever **fly-catcher** that we never did puzzle out with confidence or consensus.

July 4: Deer Lagoon never disappoints — today we saw and/or heard at least 52 species. So many young families (with youngsters not quite independent) — **Geese, Mallards, Ruddy Ducks, Hooded Mergansers, Barn and Tree Swallows, Killdeer, Red-winged Blackbirds, Bushtits**, and we weren't sure about the **Cedar Waxwings**. The nest appeared to be unoccupied, but several were hanging around.

So, minus tide is not the best shorebird conditions, though surprisingly, several species of peeps were poking around on the

flats, but among them we did not spy the reported Marbled Godwits. Although we thought we were seeing some Dunlins, upon further research, it appears they are nowhere near us yet.

Every bird was so entertaining, we could have watched all day — and we nearly did.

July 18: Nice morning and surprisingly active at the Greenbank Farm. However — glaringly absent were Herons. Not a single Heron. Some of us went over to the North Bluff Road side where they are rumored to have relocated, but no one was home.

We did see and/or hear at least 31 other species, though, including a long, close look at a couple of **Kingfishers** and some gorgeous and cooperatively-posing **Cedar Waxwings**. Also, if anyone is wondering where their **Bushtits** have gone, they were all up there.

We did venture over to the beach, and although the shore was nearly empty, we were treated to observing a **Purple Martin** pair at the Wonn Road pilings. He even sang for us — well, probably singing for her — so if you have never heard them sing, make a point of it. It appeared that they were possibly nesting there.

August 1: Have I mentioned that Deer Lagoon never disappoints? One of last week's highlights was a quick look at a **Per-**

BIN South, from page 8

egrine Falcon passing through! Some **Pelicans** are still hanging around. We had some **Flycatcher** practice, but we did not spy the Green Heron that was there for a couple days. We saw and/or heard at least 48 species. Oh, yeah — five of those were unique to Phyllis’s pond when some of us visited up there afterwards. Pretty fun treat to watch **Red Crossbills** and **Goldfinches** in her waterfall. Thank you, Phyllis, we’ll do it again sometime.

August 15: Pleasant day on the Lagoon. Not much out of the ordinary, but for the shore-walkers who had us straining our brains over Short/Long/Greater/Lesser/Least/Western, which concluded with: some of each **Yellowlegs**, **Western Sandpipers** and **Long-billed Dowitchers** — all good practice, and one lone **Black-bellied Plover**.

Dozens of **Pelicans** still present, so many **Gulls**, **Terns** and **Geese**, and the path to the dike is still active with the usual suspects. The trail on the upper dike was overgrown enough for us to surprise a **Quail** family. (Maybe they weren’t so surprised as we were.)

We saw and/or heard at least 47 bird species, but the highlight today may have been the little **coyote** watching us from the side of the bluff. There was a short debate about whether or not he was “nice.”

— *Cathi Bower*

Birding in Neighborhoods (BIN) South explores the south/central regions of Whidbey Island every other Thursday morning. Time varies with the season. Contact Cathi Bower for more information at whidbird@whidbey.com.

Dan’s Blog, from page 6



Photo by Jann Pulfer Ledbetter © 2019

Ebey’s Landing River Otters.

the rocks and went out into the water looking for breakfast. I waited quite awhile for her to come back but finally moved on.”

And then there are the photo opportunities that just fall into her lap.

“When I’m home,” she adds, “my camera is always at the ready and there’s always something to shoot outside my window.”

Her photographs really tell the story of our wildlife neighbors.

For the complete story and more delightful photographs visit Dan’s Blog, pedersenwrites.blogspot.com/2019/07/359-jann-ledbetters-wildlife.html.

three pups this morning,” she wrote. “River Otter pups are born blind in May-June and don’t open their eyes for 40 days. These three were really clinging to their mama. It makes me wonder if maybe they’ve only recently opened their eyes. She tucked them away in



Jann Ledbetter

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