



# Shorelines

Newsletter of the Whidbey Audubon Society

September 2021

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 Virtually Thursday, September 9

### Nature's Best Hope: a New Approach to Conservation that Starts in Your Yard

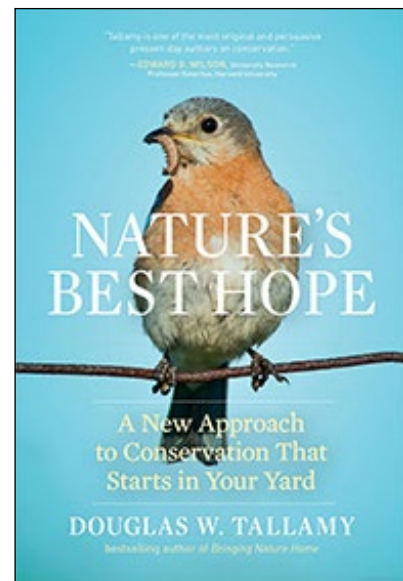
Our speaker for September is Douglas Tallamy, PHD, an entomologist at the University of Delaware. The 3-hour time difference precluded a live presentation, so we will watch a prerecorded webinar.

Tallamy's first book, *Bringing Nature*

*Home* (2007), emphasized the link between native plant species and native wildlife. His empowering new book, *Nature's Best Hope* (2020) expands on that with research conducted in the intervening decade by his graduate students and others.



Dr. Douglas Tallamy, author of the book, *Nature's Best Hope*.



### Raptors of Washington



We are beginning our 2021-2022 class season with this terrific five-part class covering the 19 species of raptors found in Washington.

Sessions are on successive Tuesday evenings, 7 to 8:30 PDT, September 7, 14, 21, 28 and October 5. Cost is \$100. To learn more about this class and the instructor, Thomas Bancroft, click the red text *Whidbey Audubon Society website*. There is a link to register for the class series; register **before noon, September 7**. Expect a Zoom link Tuesday afternoon. Sessions will be recorded and available to registered students for approximately six months.



Tom Bancroft is the instructor for this five-class series

Do you consider birds or pollinators in your landscaping? You have likely selected plants to provide berries or seeds for birds, or flowers to support insect pollinators. But have you thought about the food our songbirds need to raise their young? The most important food source for most of our backyard birds is caterpillars. Nestlings of one pair of chickadees may consume between 6,000 and 9,000 caterpillars before they fledge, all foraged within a 150-foot radius of the nest. We may not have breeding birds if we don't have enough caterpillars.

A 2018 study of Carolina Chickadees in the D.C. area found that chickadees can't reproduce enough to survive in yards made up of more than 30 percent non-native plants. Many plant species in our landscapes are non-natives from Asia or Europe. They look nice, but the researchers found they are terrible for chickadees. Of plant-eating insects, 90 percent only

eat one or a few species of plants, so non-native landscapes have few bugs and less bug diversity. Bugs are the primary source of food for most terrestrial birds.

Tallamy shows how individual homeowners and landscapers can help reverse birds' decline, one yard at a time. He says, "It is not the presence of non-native plants that destroys food webs. It is the absence of native plants."

This presentation will have you marveling over caterpillar diversity and inspired to enhance the ecological productivity of your yard, of whatever size, with keystone native plants that host caterpillars. It will also be a great lead-in to our October 14 program by Carolyn Wilcox on *Birdscaping*.

Join us on Zoom at 7 p.m. Our monthly programs are free and open to all. If you are not a Whidbey Audubon

Best Hope, see page 3



## President's Column: The Window Seat Perch

I hope you have had a wonderful summer, relaxing, birding, sailing, hiking, socializing or whatever. We are gearing up for another year of exciting programs, online courses, field trips, Birds 'n' Beer, Page Peepers, etc.

Thank you to those of you who answered the questionnaire that I recently sent out. As of today, there have been 156 responses. Many of you wanted in-person meetings and even more wanted to continue doing Zoom. Responses were 41 favoring in-person and 124 for Zoom. Comments included: It depends on COVID variants or it depends on where the meetings were going to be. Some respondents noted that they don't want to drive at night or that they live too far from Whidbey. We hope to continue both and we have a team working on presenting simultaneous in-person meetings and Zoom in what's called a hybrid meeting. Bear with us, as it will probably take a few meetings to get the hang of it. The September meeting will be a Zoom meeting only because it will be a prerecorded webinar by Dr. Doug Tallamy in Delaware. There is a three-hour time difference, and we don't want him to stay up until 10 p.m. just to present our program.

We have an exciting online program with Thomas Bancroft on Raptors of Washington that begins on September 7. Check *Shorelines* and the website for more information.

Whitney Neufeld-Kaiser is presenting an online course

for beginning birders and I do mean beginning birders, *Ten Gateway Birds of Whidbey Island and How to Find Them*. The class is on Tuesday, October 19 with a field trip for participants to Deer Lagoon on Sunday, October 24.

We are working with Island County about restoration on the West Dike of Deer Lagoon. We have a special team working on this. I am happy to say that Dr. Carol Russo is leading the team that also includes Steve Ellis and Linda Griesbach. Please contact Carol or the other team members to help with the restoration. Dr. Carol Russo, Lead, Whidbey Audubon Society Planning Team, Deer Lagoon Dike Restoration Project at 408-694-8857; Steve Ellis at 360-678-2264 and Linda Griesbach at 360-678-2274.

I hope I've remembered everything. Yesterday (August 16?) several of our members were on the San Juan Cruise to Smith Island/Minor Island and we got to see **Tufted Puffins**. What a treat! We also got to see **Rhinoceros Auklets, Common Murres, Pigeon Guillemots, Ospreys**, numerous **Bald Eagles** and **Great Blue Herons, Caspian Terns, Heerman's Gulls** and **California Gulls**. A great day on the water.

Happy birding!

— *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.**

## 2021 Birdathon Soars

I am heartened by the obvious dedication towards protecting Whidbey Island birds and their habitats as displayed by the generosity of the donations to Birdathon this year. An amazing \$9,446.25 was raised, richly surpassing our \$5,000 goal. Of these monies, \$4,783.25 is designated for the general fund, and \$4,663.00 for the scholarship fund.

Many thanks to everyone who participated, whether as a team member or a contributor!

As announced in June, **The Coupevillains** (Steve and Martha Elias, Sandy Shields), sighted 118 species, earning them the **Golden Binocular Award**. With all funds now collected and accounted for, the winners of the **Bronze Owl Bank (BOB) Award** for raising the most money goes, for the second year, to the **Wingin It** team (Janet Hall, Sarah Schmidt, Libby Hayward, Dyanne Sheldon), who brought in \$4,085.50. Your hard work is much appreciated!

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

- Penn Sports
- Whidbey Telecom



[www.whidbeyaudubonsociety.org/birdathon](http://www.whidbeyaudubonsociety.org/birdathon)

- Windermere South Whidbey

(Due to changes in how we receive donations, I apologize if I wasn't able to credit your business.)

We appreciate your support and dedication to birds!

— *Kathy Obersinner, Birdathon Chair*

## Conservation Column: Habitat Tour and Fundraiser

On Saturday September 25, Whidbey Audubon is offering a tour of four special private Whidbey Island habitats. This is a fundraiser that will allow us to again offer grants to island non-profits to improve, expand or create wildlife habitats.

The four sites are diverse and include a suburban yard near Bush Point with native plants and an elaborate rainwater catchment system, an actively and sustainably managed forest near Ken's Korner, a large property at the headwaters of Glendale Creek protected with a conservation easement and a ten-acre parcel in the Maxwelton Valley that contains fields, forests, wetlands and edges that support birds and wildlife of all sorts. The owners of the properties will welcome tour members, show property highlights, provide information about the native plants, birds and animals there and answer questions. Lists of plants and birds found at each site will be provided by email. Each property visit will take about an hour.

**Important Information:** The tour will consist of four groups of five people. Each group will be scheduled to visit a site at a set time for an hour, with half an hour to move between sites. There will be a lot of walking, some rough ground and hills. The tour will be rain or shine, so dress for the weather. There are no

### Upcoming Field Trips

*[Editor's note: Whidbey Audubon Society welcomes our new Field Trip Chair, Charlotte Ginn and is happily beginning field trips again. If you would like to plan or help with a field trip or suggest a place to go, please contact Charlotte].*

**Wednesday, September 15: PRICE SCULPTURE PARK.** Meet in the parking lot at 9 a.m. There is limited parking in the lot and extra parking on Parker Road. We will explore the park which will host a number of forest species along with some man-made species. Trip leader will be Charlotte Ginn. This will be a short, easy access walk. Any questions call or text Charlotte at 209-352-6543 or email at [cginnsixbit@yahoo.com](mailto:cginnsixbit@yahoo.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 Charlotte Ginn at [cginnsixbit@yahoo.com](mailto:cginnsixbit@yahoo.com).

dogs permitted on the tour, and there are no restrooms available at the sites. Restrooms can be found at Ken's Korner, Bayview Corner, Bush Point boat launch and South Whidbey State Park. **You must visit each site at the time you are assigned, so please be prompt and be willing to follow the schedule you will receive.**

The tour will begin at 9 a.m. The visits will be at 9, 10:30, 12:30 and 2 p.m. There will be an hour between 11:30 and 12:30 for lunch. Registration is limited to 20 Whidbey Audubon members and guests, with a suggested donation of \$20 per person. **All hosts are vaccinated, and we ask that all participants be fully vaccinated.** Depending on host preferences and/or conditions at the time of the tour, please bring a mask and be willing to wear it if asked.

**Registration** is online only at the [Whidbey Audubon website](http://WhidbeyAudubon.org), or from the home page, scroll down to *Habitat Tour and Fundraiser*. Space is very limited, sign up early! Once registered, you will receive directions, addresses, your site visit schedule and other information a few days before the tour.

### Habitat Grant Application 2021

Grant applications are now available to local nonprofits to create or enhance wildlife habitat with native plants on the island again this year. The dollar amount requested shall not exceed \$200 for any one grant. Applications can be obtained by emailing [conservation@whidbeyaudubonsociety.org](mailto:conservation@whidbeyaudubonsociety.org). **Grant applications are due by October 29**, and successful applicants will be notified in November. The grant cycle is timed so that applicants can purchase native plants from the Whidbey Island Conservation District plant sale. Last year, we were able to give five grants. This year, we hope to give more.

### Best Hope, from page 1

Society member and would like to attend, please register on the Whidbey Audubon Society website. Select *Events*. We'll send a Zoom JOIN link to all members and registered nonmembers. If you do not see our Zoom invitation email by mid-afternoon the day of the program, please check your spam folder. If you still do not find it, contact [admin@whidbeyaudubonsociety.org](mailto:admin@whidbeyaudubonsociety.org). Registration closes at 12 p.m. on the day of the program. And, if you are not a member, please consider joining us. Members receive notifications of upcoming events and do not need to register for our monthly programs.



Photo by Kathy Stetz

Bird-friendly yard



# Sightings Sightings Sightings Sightings Sightings

## Summer Highlights

**June 1:** First **Cedar Waxwings** in our yard this season. The pair stayed long enough to sample some ripe salmon berries then flew off  
Location: Aquila Drive.

— *Paul and Stef Neis*



Photo by George Heleker

### White-throated Sparrow

**June 1:** A late **White-throated Sparrow** (white stripe) hanging out in the cherry trees and bushes and feeding on the ground at our feeder area by the house this morning. Location: About two miles southwest of the Clinton ferry dock.

— *George E. Heleker*

**June 15:** This afternoon I saw three baby **Spotted Sandpipers** at Dugualla Bay. They were near two adult **Spotted Sandpipers** and exhibiting tail bobbing behavior.

— *Mary Jo Adams*

**June 16:** **Horned and Tufted Puffins** at Smith Island.

— *Carlos Andersen*

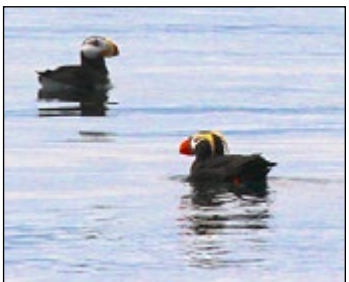


Photo by Carlos Andersen

### Horned and Tufted Puffins

**June 19:** The Clinton **California Scrub Jays** continue their presence along Humphrey. I'm located near a Humphrey &



Photo by Deb Stewart

### California Scrub Jay

Berg (near ferry pay lot) and one showed up in the garden today. I first reported them in October 2017 and have seen them intermittently over the years. Having witnessed juveniles farther south on Humphrey I remain convinced they are breeding on the island. — *Deb Stewart*

**July 1:** There were 47 **White Pelicans** in Crockett's Lake along with a couple of **Greater Yellowlegs** and scores of **Western Sandpipers**. Also present was a **Northern Harrier** and a **Merlin**, the latter flying off to the west.

— *Steve Ellis*



Photo by Libby Hayward

### American White Pelican

**July 2:** 150+ **American White Pelicans** at Deer Lagoon this morning; not unusual but a high number in one group. Also, two adult **Killdeer** and three chicks, very vocal at the trail entrance last evening and this morning.

— *Libby Hayward*



Photo by Mary Jo Adams

### Black Phoebe

**July 4:** There was a **Black Phoebe** at the freshwater pond on the seaplane base this morning. It was perched on dead tree branch-

es near the shore and would fly off to catch prey and then return to the branches. Confirmation: This bird is not listed on Whidbey Audubon's *Birds of Whidbey Checklist* and eBird has it listed as rare in Island County.

— *Mary Jo Adams*

**July 9:** Five **Whimbrels**. Location: Penn Cove west of Monroe Landing.

— *Cathy Queeno-Wall*



Photo by Paul and Stef Neis

### Long-billed Dowitchers

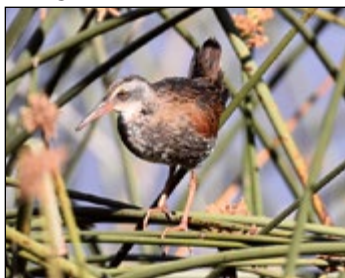


Photo by Paul & Stef Neis

### Virginia Rail

**July 23:** We watched a flock of about 40 birds land at Deer Lagoon... We have **Long-billed Dowitchers**, verified by Dennis Paulson. Also, a **Virginia Rail** in upper part of reeds right by the path.

— *Paul and Stef Neis*

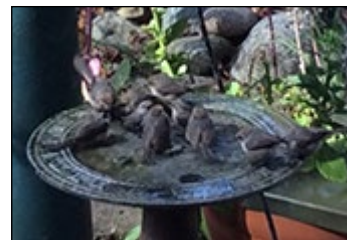


Photo by Marianne Burr

### Bushtits

**July 25:** The **Bushtits** found our shallow pool and have been visiting regularly for the last couple days. Location: Olympic View Drive.

— *Marianne Burr*

**August 1:** Fifteen **Pigeon Guillemots (PG)** off Long Point in Penn Cove. There are two burrows in the first 'hidden' clear bluff area south of the point nestled protectively between the brush, north of the large barren

## Sightings, see page 8

**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](http://www.facebook.com/WhidbeyAudubonSociety).

## Summer Birding with Birding in Neighborhoods North

It was a rather abbreviated summer birding season for Birding in Neighborhoods North (BIN North) this year as we only did two outings rather than the usual three. In June we went to Joseph Whidbey State Park to see the **Cedar Waxwings** and they did not disappoint. Although it was a nice walk, it was marked by the absence of swallows and raptors which made for a low total count of 19 species. We did see a **Western Wood-Pewee**, though, which was a lifer for a few of us.

In July we hit the Keystone and Crockett Lake area. There are usually many gulls in the parking area, but on this day, it was like a convention. We spent quite a while trying to separate out the species but, in the end, came up with **Heerman's, Hybrid** and **Glaucous-winged**. There was much discussion regarding leg color, presence or absence of dark tail feathers,

and bill markings. If they would just hold still and not have all those differences with age and interbreeding, it would be a lot easier to identify them! After spotting an **Osprey** with prey, a male **Northern Harrier** (beautiful Gray Ghost) and **Purple Martins** in the nesting boxes, we drove down to Admiral's Cove and parked the car on the back side of the pond. From our car blind and by patiently waiting, the birds began to appear. **Cedar Waxwings, Spotted Towhees, Nuthatches, Robins, House** and **Song Sparrows** and a **Common Yellowthroat** to name a few. It was a lovely day of birding, and 29 species were seen or heard.

— Marcia Lazoff

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

## Summer Summary — Birding in Neighborhoods South

Early this past summer, we were treated to a visit at Dyanne's place overlooking the Cultus Bay/Catron Roads wetlands. Dyanne welcomed us with a fine tour of grasslands, woods and wetlands, where we saw and/or heard at least 28 species, including the **Trumpeter Swan** — fondly known to some as "Swan Solo" — who has been in residence there since he was but a cygnet. It's been determined that he is a he, as his aggression increases toward the geese. He showed up a couple years ago, with an apparent injury. He does fly up and around now and then, but hasn't left the area yet and so far appears to be content as the Big Swan in a Small Wetland.

We also saw fuzzy families of **Wood Ducks** and **Hooded Mergansers** and practiced some Flycatcher ID. (The **Willow Flycatcher** goes "fitzbeew".)

To view the wetland from the road, use the pullout at a wide graveled road just to the north of French Road, but use *extreme* care at the side of busy Cultus Bay Road.

Just before the BIG Heat Dome of mid-summer, we birded cool and calm Earth Sanctuary, where we did manage to see and/or hear most of the 30 species reported out there at the time, plus we added a few of our own that morning, for a total of 31, including beautiful **Cedar Waxwings** courting one another over the lily pads. We also caught up with a **Hooded Merganser** family and some **Wood Ducks**, and that was just around the wetlands and ponds. If you go, there are even more extensive trails through the upper woods and open field for additional species — a rewarding place to visit nearly year-round.

A visit along Waterman Shoreline Preserve is rewarding during any time of year (except if the wind is blowing through those big trees there).

It does not get more pleasant than a casual stroll down a wide, untrafficked path, with a few birding buddies and their thoughtful musings. A foggy and shady morning was just the thing after 3-digit temps, a now-distant memory.

It was Birding-By-Ear season, with the foliage so dense that it was hard to see who's tut-tutting, chipping, tseeing, whitting, doo-

dling, warbling or tapping there. But we did hear and/or see at least 33 species, and this time one of them was definitely a **Warbling Vireo**. Pretty certain.

Speaking of *almost certain, likely, highly uncertain, best guess* and so on, birders are all a-twitter about a new sound identification feature on the Merlin Bird ID app. It's about as effective as Birdnet, but also entertaining, and sometimes can even get a person on the right track for identifying a bird song or call.

Of course, not a shore or sea bird to be seen over the side of the bluff, as the nettles are as high as warbler's eye, but there was that one lone **Caspian Tern** who flew over. We also saw and/or heard a few varieties of **woodpeckers, doves, corvids, swallows, flycatchers**, plus the **Swainson's Thrushes** that seem to be everywhere this year, and some sort of accipiter shooting through the woods. Probably a **Cooper's Hawk**.

Birding at Greenbank Farm and at Lagoon Point is about as far from birding along Waterman as we get around here.

In spite of yet another drizzly morning (which we seem to hit every time we visit the Purple Martins (PUMA) there), the **Purple Martins** were performing their best, and as always, Mary was generous with her viewing area and information about the care and maintenance of Martins. It is a wonderfully accessible colony, and a treat to see the coming and going and even the occasional singing! At Lagoon Point, we added another five species to those we saw at Greenbank Farm, for a total of 30 that morning.

We finally visited the Glendale **Pigeon Guillemot** Colony. From a fairly close-in log, we were able to sit and watch the PIGU delivering fish to the chicks in their burrows and their near-shore antics, until some disturbance sent the entire colony farther out off shore. Then it was time to walk closer and see just how low on the bluff the burrows are!

After we observed Guillemot burrows, we soon saw the **Bald Eagle** that likely caused the earlier off-shore flight. As if PIGU watching was not enough for a lovely morning on the beach, on our walk

**BIN South, see page 8**



## Message from National Audubon Society: Urge Congress to Support the Migratory Bird Protection Act

Right now, in the United States, birds lack long-standing protections they had held for decades.

Earlier this year, a federal rule dramatically weakened the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), our nation's most important bird protection law. The weakened law no longer holds companies liable for preventable bird deaths from industrial hazards,

giving them a free pass to kill birds.

Legislation has just been reintroduced in Congress to restore and strengthen the MBTA.

**Please urge your U.S. Representative to reinstate protections for birds by supporting the Migratory Bird Protection Act.**

## Pigeon Guillemots —They're Where It's At

And where Pigeon Guillemots (PGs) are, so are over 70 volunteers!

Unless you've been living under a rock with the PGs, you know that the Pigeon Guillemot Breeding Survey is one of the greatest happenings on Whidbey Island beaches during the months of June through September. Possibly, the Guillemots have even noticed us out there around the Island at 26 colonies in the bluffs of Whidbey's 156 miles of shoreline.

However, if you have developed a fantasy of volunteers lazing on the beach all summer, consider some of the obvious realities, such as fog, inclement weather, early ringing alarm clocks and data input.

In 2021, the Guillemot Survey acquired a new data input system, generously developed by the Washington Fish and Wildlife Department, along with immense efforts on the part of many volunteers — especially Dave Krause and Bets Brace.



Photo by Cathi Bower

Two Guillemots preparing to deliver a gunnel to chicks in a burrow.

It's a remarkable thing. Though the steep learning curve has been a challenge for many of us, ArcGIS Survey 123 is a welcome improvement, as the Salish Sea Guillemot Network continues to expand annually and now has grown to include a seventh region, Jefferson County. The new entry system also will archive past data, photos, maps and other information.

Another big annual *Thank You* to Frances Wood, who (along with Phyllis Kind) conceived and hatched

the project back in 2004 and has been delivering sustenance to it ever since, along with her dedicated team of escorts. What? That's what we call the PGs who fly up the bluffs, along with a parent who is feeding its chicks. Often, they will fly with a wingman or two, and sometimes as many as 10 to 20 escorts, all swooping up together, and back to the water, as the one bird with a fish, peels off to deliver the prey to the waiting young maws inside their burrow.

This signature project of Whidbey Audubon continues to add insight and awareness of our habitat around the Island. As we gather data each year, and learn more about the birds themselves, we also learn more about their place in the larger habitat and their role in the complex web that is the Salish Sea. We can keep an eye on their population numbers, which so far remain steady, and theorize, and analyze any changes observed over time.

As another successful study season winds down, to learn more than anyone needs at any one moment, we encourage further reading on the Salish Sea Guillemot Network website, or click "[Why do we study them?](#)"

But viewer beware, you, too, may be swept away by the adorableness that is PIGU.

— Pigeon Guillemot Breed Survey



Photo by Cathi Bower

Pigeon Guillemot egg shells collected from the beach, beneath a burrow at the Glendale Colony. The chicks fledge a little over a month after they hatch.

*Bird of the Month:*  
**Western Sandpiper**  
*(Calidris mauri)*



Photo by Michael Sheldon

Western Sandpipers flutter feeding.

I chose to write about the Western Sandpiper for three quite personal reasons. First, for me, the species represents the spectacle of shorebird migration – the highlight of the birding year on Whidbey in my opinion. Second, shore birding is my favorite kind of birding. Third, of all the varied habitats one can visit, there is none I would rather be in than a mix of marsh and mudflat — where not only shorebirds, but marsh birds and wading birds can be found. Crockett Lake is one such place. I visit frequently in the spring. I try to spend time there every morning from early July into late October and even early November when most of the migratory activity takes place.

Some 27 species of shorebird can regularly be found on Whidbey annually. Six or seven other species stop here occasionally. Western Sandpiper appears in the greatest numbers and is also one of the longer-staying shorebirds — only a handful of others can be seen as often through the year.

Western Sandpiper is included in the group of small shorebirds called “peeps.” Slightly larger and more pot-bellied than Least Sandpiper, obviously smaller than Sanderling, Western Sandpipers show considerable red on the scapulars and around the head and neck in breeding plumage. Female Westerns are larger and longer billed than males.

Western Sandpiper is also one of the most abundant shorebirds in North America. Its population is estimated to be some 3.5 million birds strong.

The chief northerly migration route is along the Pacific coast. Significant stopover locations include San Francisco Bay, Gray’s Harbor (Washington) and river deltas in Canada and Alaska. Daily migratory flights tend to be in the range of four to six hundred miles. Stays at stopover sites last from one to three or more days. A small percentage of Western Sandpipers migrate north along the East coast.

The species breeds in Alaska, where it favors areas with dwarf birch, dwarf willow, crowberry, various shrubs and assorted tussock grasses. Males arrive first on the breeding grounds, where they establish territories and perform display flights. Females follow, choosing



Photo by David Welton

Dan Pedersen at Double Bluff Beach on a winter day.

## Remembering a Whidbey Island Treasure

There is so much to say about Dan Pedersen, a book could be written about him. In a way, that is exactly what Dan accomplished through his own writing. Each Saturday morning, through his blog, readers took a journey, never knowing what to expect, other than it was going to be a fruitful use of time. This humble, kind and thoughtful man, no matter what the subject, also shared a little of who he was. Dan artfully wove his values into all he wrote. His ability to uplift while educating people was remarkable.

Protecting habitat wildlife was one of his core values. His passion for birds spoke to an ever-increasing audience, including Whidbey Audubon Members, who hugely appreciated his generosity.

Dan reached more people than he could have imagined and will continue to do so for some time. His passing is a tremendous loss, but his words still live on. Reread his blogs, *Dan’s Blog*, and books and see what I mean.

Becoming good friends with Dan was life-changing for me as well as Joy. And, as Dan wrote in a recent email, “More than anyone on Earth, you showed me the beauty and richness of my setting in the woods.” We covered many topics in our visits together but often discussed ways to share our reverence for the natural world with others.

Every moment Dan was here, the world was a better place. Perhaps one of the best ways to honor Dan is by being good stewards of land and creatures, as he was.

— Craig Johnson



## BIN South, from page 5

we also identified 27 other species in the woods and at the beach, including some **Bonaparte's Gulls**. Although there was some discussion about the similarity with Franklin's Gulls, the most likely here are the BOGU. But never say always (or never). As it turns out, there was a Franklin reported just a couple miles north around the same time.

As promised, a visit to the new Whidbey Camano Land Trust property — The Possession Sound Preserve — was a wonderful jaunt, and although it was a quiet time of year, there is always something interesting there. The walk down (and back up) is well worth the trip.

In a coincidental gathering, a few of our regular Birders wound up taking a boat trip out of LaConner to see **Tufted Puffins** off Whidbey's northwestern shore. We had an excellent day for it, with sightings of the promised Puffins, which breed out on Smith Island. We also saw many other sea and shorebirds, including **Pigeon Guillemots** (we never get enough of them), **Rhinoceros Auklets**, **Common Murres**, **Bald Eagles**, more types of **Gulls** than we cared to sort out, and along the way, **Black Oystercatchers**, **Ospreys**, dozens of **Herons** and so on. Plus there were bonus **seals**, **dolphins**, and a **minke whale**!

For a late morning stop at Deer Lagoon at a quiet time of day during a quiet time of year, the usual suspects were present, including dozens of **pelicans**, many **Caspian Terns**, **Killdeer** and **Yellowlegs**, still some **Barn Swallows** and also a **Cooper's Hawk** and a **Merlin**!

To join in on future **Birding in Neighborhoods South** fun, contact Cathi Bower at [whidbird@whidbey.com](mailto:whidbird@whidbey.com). We usually meet every other Thursday morning.

## Sightings, from page 4



Photo by Cathy Queeno-Wall

### Pigeon Guillemots

area. One PG was holding, close to the bluff others hanging close to shore. I don't think this colony is being monitored but the site can be accessed by Marine Drive and 400<sup>th</sup> North to the

very sandy beach. I saw them from the water in my kayak.

— *Cathy Queeno-Wall*

**August 7: Green Heron** on our pond this morning (and **Pied-billed Grebe**) with interesting behavior/interactions. Landed 20 feet up on cedar branch, jumped from branch to branch then assumed a hunting stance, and in fact jabbed something in the air. Over the course of half an hour, repeatedly followed behind a **Kingfisher** hunting the pond, following its flight pattern and landing near it or replacing it on its perch. Several times the heron flew across pond to swoop close to and around a **Great Blue Heron** and then return to opposite side

## Dates to Remember

Please check our website for more detailed information and how to enter Zoom for some of these upcoming events on the [Whidbey Audubon Society website under Events](http://Whidbey Audubon Society website under Events). There also might be further information elsewhere in this issue.

### SEPTEMBER

- 7: Online Class: Raptors of Washington**, Session 1. 7 p.m.
- 9: Audubon Meeting: *Nature's Best Hope*** with Dr. Doug Talamy. 7 p.m. via Zoom
- 11-12: Puget Sound Bird Fest**, [pugetsoundbirdfest.org](http://pugetsoundbirdfest.org), Edmonds
- 14: Online Class: Raptors of Washington**, Session 2. 7 p.m.
- 15: Field Trip: Price Sculpture Forest**. 9 a.m.
- 15: Birds 'n' Beer**. Zoom. 5 p.m.
- 21: Online Class: Raptors of Washington**, Session 3. 7 p.m..
- 22: Page Peepers Book Group: *Mozart's Starling*** by Lyanda Lynn Haupt. Zoom. 7 p.m.
- 23: Whidbey Audubon Board Meeting**. 7 p.m. Members welcome.
- 25: Habitat Tour**, page 3
- 28: Online Class: Raptors of Washington**, Session 4. 7 p.m.

### OCTOBER

- 5: Online Class: Raptors of Washington**, Session 5. 7 p.m.
- 14: Audubon Meeting: *Birdscaping*** with Carolyn Wilcox. 7 p.m., hybrid meeting a Coupeville Rec. Hall & Zoom
- 19: Online Class: Ten Gateway Birds of Whidbey Island**. 7 p.m.
- 20: Birds 'n' Beer**. Zoom. 5 p.m.
- 28: Whidbey Island Board Meeting**. 7 p.m. Members welcome.
- 28: Habitat grant applications due**

of pond. I then heard it squawking and looked up to realize the area it had been frequenting on the cedar was now occupied by a **Great Horned Owl**. Location: Upper end of Midvale Road.

— *Sego Jackson*

**August 8: Red Knot** feeding with peeps. Location: Crockett Lake. — *Jay Adams*

**August 8:** Observed adult **Virginia Rail** with two tiny chicks and two juvenile rails all in same area at Deer Lagoon by the drainage grates along the lagoon trail. Location: Deer Lagoon.

— *Stef Neis*

**August 8:** Spotted one **Tufted Puffin** in among a group of **gulls**, **cormorants** and **auklets** about

300 yards off Admiralty Head while out in our boat fishing.

— *Paul Neis and daughter Mosa*



Photo by Michael Sheldon

### Merlin, female

**August 12:** Adult female **Merlin** spotted several times in flight on west dike of Deer Lagoon. She landed in the small, lone madrona where I was able to photograph her.

— *Michael Sheldon*



## Western Sandpiper, from page 7

mates which actively defend nesting sites. Some pairs reunite over multiple years. Nests, made by the male, are little more than a scrape to the sod level. Both sexes line the nest to prepare it for egg-laying.

Pairs most often raise just a single brood. Only if the first clutch fails, might the birds try a second brood. A clutch includes four eggs. Both sexes incubate and help raise the chicks.

Fall migration begins in early July or even late June. They winter anywhere from the Washington coast to Central and South America and in the East from Delaware to the West Indies.

The Salish Sea is the species' most important southbound stop-over destination. Those birds migrating through the interior stop along lake margins and ponds. As is the case with shorebirds in general, adult Western Sandpipers migrate first, juveniles follow some weeks later. This behavior underlies the extended duration of fall migration. Juvenile plumages are recognizable by their always brighter and crisper plumage compared to the worn, post-breeding plumages of the adult birds.

Western Sandpipers most often feed by pecking and probing. The tips of their bills and their tongues are high in nerve endings, which



Photo by Michael Sheldon

Adult Western Sandpiper in breeding plumage.

help the birds locate prey. In deeper water, Western Sandpipers may employ surface-tension or flutter-feeding, during which the birds pick biofilm, a slimy film of bacteria that adheres to the surface, while hovering. Western Sandpipers can also swim. While doing so they sometimes adopt a neck and head-up/bill down position, not unlike that of Red-necked Phalarope.

Western Sandpiper, due to its large population numbers, is considered a species of least conservation concern, as defined by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The IUCN defines "species of Least Concern" when it has been evaluated against all the criteria and does not qualify for Critically Endangered, Endangered, Vulnerable or Near Threatened. Widespread and abundant species are included in this category". Click the red text to go to the *IUCN* website for more.

In contrast, the United States and Canada Shorebird Protection Plan lists Western Sandpiper as a species of *high* concern because of the species' restricted breeding range, its tendency to gather in large numbers, and the migratory distance it travels, all of which make it vulnerable to habitat loss, and sea-level rise associated with climate change.

— Jay Adams

Photographs by Michael Sheldon

See *Birds of the World Online*, available via Sno-Isle Libraries, for more information. For help with shorebird identification, I recommend *Shorebirds of North America: The Photographic Guide* by Dennis Paulson.

## Whidbey Audubon Society Membership

Please make your check payable to **WHIDBEY AUDUBON SOCIETY (WAS)**

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

Or pay online with PayPal or a credit card, [www.whidbeyaudubonsociety.org/membership](http://www.whidbeyaudubonsociety.org/membership)

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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.*

## Online Class: Ten Gateway Birds of Whidbey Island and How to Find Them

Whitney Neufeld-Kaiser, Master Birder presents an online class for beginning birders on **Tuesday, October 19**, 7 to 8:30 p.m. with an optional field trip, limited to 10 on Saturday, October 24, 8 am, Deer Lagoon. The cost is \$20. To register for this class, go to the events page or click [this link to the Whidbey Audubon website](#).

Birds are for everyone, and they are everywhere! They live and love in towns and on farms, in parks and along shorelines. If you've gotten curious about the birds around you and want to learn more, how do you get started? Where do you go to see interesting birds? How do you find the birds, once you get there? Should you go alone or with a small group? Do you actually need to go very far? Using 10 (or so) charismatic birds found on Whidbey Island

as inspiration, we'll explore resources you can use to learn about birds and plan your birding excursions. We'll touch on strategies on how to go from "Duck" to "Gadwall," though *bird ID won't be the focus*.

Whitney Neufeld-Kaiser is a Master Birder and volunteer teacher for Whidbey Audubon. She's lived in Seattle for over 25 years and has been a birder for 20 of those. Whitney spends her weekdays working in a genetics lab at the University of Washington and tries very hard to spend at least part of her evenings and weekends listening to, observing, and being with birds.



Photo by Jim Gage

Junvenile Great Horned Owl

## Welcome New and Renewing Members

### New Members:

Sue Abbott	Denise Aubuchon
Mary Hawkins	Maureen Moriarty
Michael Holtby	Margaret Carney
Kathleen Seasons	Patricia Heavey
Nancy Price	Joan Whittaker
Diana Bedford	Sally Mckenzie
Anne Huggins & Daniel Meyer	
Anne Preston & Kathleen Conroy	
Casey and Nancy Bardue, Spotted Towhee	
Amanda Painter, Pigeon Guillemot	
Lee Benner, Red-tailed Hawk	
Chris Fisher & Judith Howard, Red-tailed Hawk	

### Renewing Members:

Judy G Dixon	Frank & Mary Taylor
Kathryn Hirt	Jean & Tom Ascher
Pam Nodus	Michael & Ellie Sheldon
Patrick Hussey	Lu "Anna" & Mark Orth
Beth Shepherd	Kathy & Mervyn Floyd
Ann Nishimoto	Gregg & Linda Ridder
Patricia De La Chapelle	Marilyn & Brad Thomas
Katy Shaner	Beth & Ferdinand Johns
Babette & John Thompson	
Carole Tyson, Spotted Towhee	
Sharon & Anthony Zoars, Spotted Towhee	
Albert & Sandra Martin, Spotted Towhee	
Christina Baldwin & Ann Linnea, Pigeon Guillemot	
Marge Plecki, Red-tailed Hawk	
Marlys Erickson & Christine Hurley, Red-tailed Hawk	
Mary Jo Stansbury, Osprey	

## Puget Sound Bird Fest in Edmonds

A Celebration of Birds & Nature — September 11-12, 2021

**Saturday Presentations**  
Keynote speaker: Maria Mudd Ruth  
Field Activities  
Boat Cruise

**Exhibits**  
Native Plant Sale  
Photo Contest  
Guided Walks

Learn more and register at [PugetSoundBirdFest.org](http://PugetSoundBirdFest.org)



# 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 may be hybrid by October 2021

## 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
Program Chair.....	Stephanie Neis
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Newsletter Editor .....	Jenny Brown
Conservation Chair .....	Kathy Stetz
Education Chair .....	OPEN
Field Trip Chair.....	Charlotte Ginn
Publicity Chair.....	Susan Prescott
Webmaster.....	Dave Krause
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Board Member-at-Large .....	Joe Sheldon
Board Member-at-Large .....	Dave Krause
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Christmas Bird Count South Chair .....	Govinda Holtby
Birdathon .....	Kathy Obersinner
Scholarship Committee .....	Ann Sullivan
Newsletter Mailing .....	Marcia Lazoff
Specimen Library.....	Robin Llewellyn

## Contents

<i>Nature's Best Hope</i> .....	1
Raptors of Washington.....	1
<i>President's Column</i> .....	2
2021 Birdathon Soars.....	2
Habitat Tour and Fundraiser .....	3
Upcoming Field Trips.....	3
Sightings .....	4
Birding in Neighborhoods North .....	5
Birding in Neighborhoods South.....	5
Support Migratory Bird Protection Act ..	6
Pigeon Guillemots .....	6
Western Sandpiper .....	7
Remembering a Whidbey Island Treasure.	7
Dates to Remember.....	8
Ten Gateway Birds online class.....	10
New and Renewing Members.....	10
Puget Sound Bird Fest.....	10
Board and Committee Chairs.....	11

Thursday, September 9

7 to 8:30 p.m. via Zoom

## Nature's Best Hope: a New Approach to Conservation that Starts in Your Yard

with Douglas Tallamy

Online class series begins

## Raptors of Washington

Tuesday, September 7

7 to 8:30 p.m. via Zoom