



# Shorelines

Newsletter of the Whidbey Audubon Society

April 2023

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 Holds Hybrid Meeting Thursday, April 13 Seabirds, Citizen Science and Saving the World

In 2009, thousands of Surf Scoters washed ashore along the outer coast of Washington. In 2014, tens of thousands of Cassin's Auklets littered beaches from Haida Gwaii in British Columbia south to Newport, Oregon. In 2015, hundreds of thousands of Common Murres were found from California north to the Gulf of Alaska. And in 2016, thousands of Rhinoceros Auklets died in the Salish Sea. Is this normal? Join Dr. Julia Parrish to learn more about seabird patterns and COASST (Coastal Observation and Seabird Survey Team) — the largest beached bird monitoring program in the world. Click red text to see the [COASST](#) website for more information.



Photo provided by COASST

Julia Parrish, Ph.D.

Julia K. Parrish is a marine scientist whose research follows three major routes: marine conservation, seabird ecology, and citizen science. She is the Executive Director of the Coastal Observation and Seabird Survey Team (COASST; [coasst.org](#)), a project that enlists participants from California to Alaska to walk beaches in search of dead birds and

marine debris, based at the University of Washington. Julia is also a Lowell A. and Frankie L. Wakefield Professor of Ocean Fishery

Sciences, and the Associate Dean of the College of the Environment.

Join us **Thursday, April 13** for the general meeting of the Whidbey Audubon Society at 7 p.m., featuring a program about the work of COASST, *Seabirds*,

*Citizen Science and Saving the World*, beginning at 7:30, with Julia Parrish. **Julia will present in person at the Coupeville Recreation Hall**, 901 Northwest Alexander Street in Coupeville. Refreshments will be available. **This meeting is hybrid and attendees may register to participate via Zoom.** [Please click to register online](#) to receive the Zoom link.



Photo provided by COASST

Volunteer surveyor examining deceased Pelagic Cormorant.

During the business meeting there will be a request for nominations to the Whidbey Audubon Board for Secretary and Treasurer. Also the winner of the Wings over Whidbey poster contest will be introduced, June Braunstein of Oak Harbor High School.

## Upcoming Field Trips

Field trips at Deception Pass have been very popular with many braving the rains and cold.

**Future trips at Deception Pass:** All trips are 10 a.m. to noon. Be sure you bring your Discover Pass and dress for the weather.

**April 15: WEST BEACH** with Dave Parent leading it.

**May 6: ROSARIO BEACH** with Sarah Schmidt who will lead the trip.

There should be a lot of different species to see as the spring season approaches. Dress for the weather.

— Charlotte Ginn, [cginnsixbit@yahoo.com](mailto:cginnsixbit@yahoo.com)

## Volunteer Corner: Weeds

**WEED WRANGLING RESUMES** at Deer Lagoon on **Monday, April 17 at 10 a.m.** Spring's arrival brings warmer temperatures, longer days and a welcome renewal of plant growth. It also means a not-so-welcome renewal of Scotch broom growth. The *Weed Wranglers* made some great progress last autumn in removing thousands of baby Scotch broom plants but there are

**Weed Wrangling, see page 6**



## President's Column: From Tucson

My Tucson vacation in February was spectacular. I saw 80 different species and scored three new lifers. I was staying with Carol Russo in her new home in Green Valley right on the road to Madera Canyon. The first day, of course, we went to Madera Canyon, the Santa Rita Lodge site. It is a wonderful area to observe various birds. I saw an **Inca Dove** for the first time. It has scalloped edges and hides out in the grassy area. Very secretive. Among all the doves, **Mourning Doves**, it was almost invisible.



Photos by Carol Russo

Vermillion Flycatcher,

I also saw 11 **Wild Turkeys**. It was interesting to hear them as they were making a sound that I am not familiar with — kind of a *purr*. There were **White Nuthatches** and scores of **Mexican Jays** and **Acorn Woodpeckers**. Seeing the **Arizona Woodpecker** with its brown feathers was a neat experience, too. It was hard to tear away from Madera.

We went to Florida Canyon/Box Canyon Area in a wild, adventurous ride on a dusty road. No new birds there. But, Las Cienegas Conservation Area was most interesting. I got to see my first **Loggerhead Shrike** there. Actually two shrikes. We were

sitting nearly in the middle of a dirt road when a woman in a truck stopped to ask us if we were ok. You bet! We're birding and having the time of our lives.

The next day started out somewhat cold and a little cloudy. By the time we arrived at Lake Patagonia State Park, it was drizzling. We spent about an hour and a half at the entrance to the birding trail where we were entranced by four male **Cardinals** and two female **Cardinals** cavorting around. We saw **Ruddy Ducks** out on the lake, **White-winged Doves**, **White-crowned Sparrows** and **Verdins**. As we walked on, we discovered benches with bird names on each one in the habitat areas the birds actually live in. At the first bench, it said "Rail" and a **Virginia Rail** piped up. Kind of eerie. Lots of woodpeckers — both **Ladder-backed Woodpeckers** and **Acorn Woodpeckers**. They were all around us. It started sleeting and then went back to rain. Carol turned back and I continued on. Next stop, the Elegant Trogon bench. I was hoping, but, no luck. By the time I returned to the car, it was a full blown snow white-out. We had to drive back in



Loggerhead Shrike

From Tucson, see page 3

### Whidbey Audubon Society

[www.whidbeyaudubonsociety.org](http://www.whidbeyaudubonsociety.org) • 509-906-1663 • [contact.us@whidbeyaudubonsociety.org](mailto:contact.us@whidbeyaudubonsociety.org)

P.O. Box 1012, Oak Harbor, WA 98277

A chapter of National Audubon Society and a nonprofit organization EIN #80-0488910

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Sharon Gauthier  
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#### At Large Appointments

Cathi Bower  
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Janet Jernigan  
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Salish Sea Guillemot Network – Frances Wood

Salish Sea Guillemot Network – Cathi Bower  
Christmas Bird Count North – Jay Adams,  
Christmas Bird Count South – Govinda Holtby  
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Birding in Neighborhoods North – Denise Marion  
Nancy Luenn

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Birdathon – Kathy Obersinner  
Birds 'n' Beer – Patty Cheek  
Bird in Hand Festival – Robin Llewellyn  
Wings over Whidbey Festival – Stephanie Neis

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Public Presentations OPEN  
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Birds of Whidbey Class – Dyanne Sheldon  
Scholarship Program – Ann Sullivan



# Whidbey Audubon Birdathon 2023

## *The Sky Is the Limit!*

### What is the Birdathon?

Spring has arrived with buds opening and birds increasing the volume and intensity of their songs. It is a reminder to start thinking about how you can take part in this year's annual Birdathon.

Whidbey Audubon remains committed to protecting native birds and the natural spaces they need to thrive. Funds raised during the Birdathon support this mission to connect people to nature through community education and conservation. It is our major fund raiser for the scholarship



Photo by Jim Gage

Great Blue Heron in the Obersinner/Gage pond.

fund, providing scholarships for high school seniors going into environmental studies. Thanks to your support and generosity, 2021's Birdathon pledges and donations came to an amazing \$9,446.25! Modeled on Global Big Day of Birding which this year falls on May 14, this annual Whidbey Audubon Society (WAS) fundraiser brings birding teams into the field, in a friendly competition that is similar to a walk-a-thon, but instead of getting a pledge per mile walked, there is a pledge for each bird species spotted. Team participants collect pledges per species or a flat amount from family, friends, work colleagues

and others who want to support Whidbey Audubon. Then in early May, during peak bird migration, they count and record as many species as they can see in a 24-hour period, anywhere on Whidbey Island and surrounding waters.

## From Tucson, from page 2



Photos by Carol Russo

### Ladderback Woodpecker

the thick of it having missed the other sights in Patagonia.

We went birding each day but, before I go, I want to mention wow Arizona B&B, just north of the Catalina Mountains. You have to reserve a place for four hours to stay on the property and bird. It was well worth it. I saw **Ladder-back Woodpeckers** with their crests up.

They were aggressive due to the oncoming breeding season. There were hummingbirds, **Costa's, Anna's** and **Broad-billed** flying around diverting our attention from three, count them, three **Harris Hawks**. Wow! There were two adults and one juvenile. Sensational! They were hunting squirrels in the front yard. There were **Pyrrhuloxias** and **Cardinals, Woodhouse Scrub-jays** (recently split from California Scrub-jay) and **Gambel's Quails**. The weather was pretty cold, some Sun Belt vacation, but it was glorious. I cannot say enough about the owner, CJ, of the bed and breakfast. He told us stories about the wildlife in the area and how you could watch the Harris Hawks to know when they were watching coyotes. We got to see a sample of this behavior. If you go to Arizona, wow is a tantalizing place to go.

— *Patty Cheek, President*

Oh, my last sighting was a **Painted Redstart** at Madera Canyon again. What a bird! So colorful and that white arc under the eye. Stunning!



Painted Redstart

### How can you participate?

- You can make a pledge per species or one-time donation to an existing team. On the WAS webpage is a list of this year's participating teams. At the push of a virtual button, you can make a difference for birds while supporting the team of your choice!
- You can form your own team. This is really pretty easy! Again, go to the WAS webpage, under events, Birdathon, where you'll find all the information you need to create a team of your own.
- Solo Birdathon! You can bird alone, whether in your own backyard, neighborhood or any public greenspace on Whidbey Island. The Birdathon webpage has all the information you need to turn in a list of species you spot and the pledges or donations you gather.
- Backyard Birding: Maybe you just want to see what birds come to your backyard space. Simply write down all species that come to your feeder or yard, either by yourself, with someone in your "bubble" or outdoors, socially distanced.

Please see the website under **Birdathon** under the Events menu for more information on making a pledge/donation or forming a team.

As usual, the coveted Golden Binocular Award will go to the team that sights the most species, while the team that raises the most money will earn the Bronze Owl Bank.

The annual Audubon fundraiser is a huge success because of people like you who care about birds and protecting our natural environment. No matter how you choose to participate, we thank you for being proactive and for all your support.

Birdathon coordinator Kathy Obersinner will answer questions at the April 13 meeting. For more information, email **Kathy** by clicking the red text.

## Unusual Bird Sightings

**March 14:** Rufous (male) **tailed Ducks** were in a **Hummingbird** at our feeder group off Joseph Whidbey State Park this morning. — Location: Goss Ridge Road, Freeland — *John Schuster* *Steve Ellis*

**March 14:** **Tree Swallows!** A pair flying low and perching; unusual behavior for the first of the season birds. They are very late based on my 10 years of records here in Clinton. Also last night the first chorus frogs calling; not a full chorus yet, but several frogs calling from the wetland. They are nearly a month “late” this spring. — *Dyanne Sheldon*

**March 23:** Thirty **Long-** **March 25:** A good size flock of **Violet-green Swallows** were flying over Ewing Marsh this morning. First of the year! A pair of **Wood Ducks** were perched on an old wooden fence at the edge of the marsh. — *Steve Ellis*

**POST YOUR SIGHTINGS** on the *Whidbey Audubon Society website*, under “Birds” then “Sightings and Photo Gallery.”

## Earth Care in April

Whidbey’s Earth and Ocean Month is every April and is a chance for organizations and individuals to take part in ways to heal and improve the earth we depend on for survival. A special kickoff for Whidbey Earth & Ocean Month is on **Wednesday, April 5 from 4 to 6:30 p.m. at the Bayview Cash Store, 5603 Bayview Road, Langley.** There will be table displays from local environmental groups and nonprofits, volunteer opportunities and activities. Pick up the calendar of events for the month and connect with others of every age, skill set, and background. At 5 p.m., enjoy an artist talk and performance with Joan Green and Melissa Koch as part of the Rags, Rubbish & Refuse show.

Then at 6:30, join us in the Front Room on the second floor of the Bayview Cash Store for a live talk with Jennifer Atkinson, Ph.D. *Climate Grief, Hope, and Action: Inner Strategies for our Age of Crisis.* It is a hybrid presentation. To tune in remotely, scroll to the bottom the *Kickoff page* and click the green Zoom link.

As the impacts of climate change worsen, our mental health has joined the ever-growing list of casualties. Across the world, an alarming number of people report anxiety and despair as extreme weather and biodiversity loss unfold around us. To successfully navigate the long emergency ahead, we will need to build inner resilience, not just seawalls and solar panels. This talk outlines some strategies for channeling anxiety and grief into meaningful action and change.

**Earth Care, see page 7**

## BIN North: Cornet Bay to Hoypus Point

In the sunny crisp morning of **March 8**, our group met at Cornet Bay. In the cove at the marina, we saw **Buffleheads**, **Wigeons** and **Hooded Mergansers**. At the boat launch, we spotted **Double-crested** and **Pelagic Cormorants**. Moving into a warm patch of sun uphill from the trail, we identified forest species by sight and sound, including **American Robins**, **Dark-eyed Juncos**, **Song Sparrows**, **Chestnut-backed Chickadees** and **Spotted Towhees**.

The highlight of the day was hearing and seeing **Red Crossbills**. Three landed to drink from a nearby puddle, providing an excellent view.

Along the trail, we identified **Hairy Woodpeckers**, **Bewick’s** and **Pacific Wrens**, a **Hermit Thrush**, **Ruby-crowned** and **Golden-crowned Kinglets** and **Purple Finches**. **Red-breasted Mergansers** and a female **Golden-eye** swam near shore.

At Hoypus Point, we watched an outboard motorboat pulling a canvas-bottomed net. Four young people hauled it toward shore. Their leader explained they were surveying juvenile salmon for the Skagit River System Cooperative. We asked questions and she provided answers in her educator mode.

Walking back to our cars, we watched four deer browsing next to the trail. One passed us on its way into the forest, healthy and completely unafraid.

— *Nancy Luenn*

**Birding in Neighborhood North (BIN North)** meets the second Wednesday of the month at 9 a.m. Click to contact *Denise Marion* or *Nancy Luenn*.



## Scavenger Hunt to Benefit Boys and Girls

For the third year in a row, Whidbey Audubon Society is participating in the Whidbey Island Scavenger Hunt, Wish 2023, sponsored by Big Brothers Big Sisters of Island County (BBBS IC). The promotion of this event endeavors to “...build and nourish community connections with other Whidbey nonprofits. Participating organizations create fun tasks for scavengers to do.” The scavenger entry fee \$10 to begin to explore the Island while completing hundreds of tasks to earn points and prizes. The hunt is from March 31 to April 11. To learn more, visit the *BBBS website*.



# Wings over Whidbey Festival 2023 — Get Engaged!

I am excited to say that we are getting close to having the entire festival program finalized! The following updates have been made, and links to sign up are on the Whidbey Audubon Society website, [Wings over Whidbey Festival page](#). Check the full schedule there.

**Saturday, May 20**

**UPDATE Pacific Rim Institute (PRI) Prairie Walks** — There will be two long tours, one at **8 a.m.** and another at **9 a.m.** The long tours are an hour and a half to two hours. At **10 a.m.** is a one-hour shorter tour for those who might not want to or be able to do the longer walk. Comfortable walking shoes for the fields are recommended. Each tour will require registration and be limited to 12 people per tour. Please print out your confirmation to use as your ticket and bring it with you to PRI.

The location is 180 Parker Road, Coupeville. There is ample parking, enter the driveway past the house into the lot. To learn more, click here to see the [PRI website](#).

**NEW 11 a.m. – Puget Sound Energy** presentation at the Coupeville High School, more details to come. This will be a live-only event at Coupeville High School and limited to 40 people.

**NEW 2:30 p.m. – Bird Banding: An Important Tool for**

**Supporting Avian Conservation.** The Puget Sound Bird Observatory tells how bird banding is one of the oldest and most important techniques used for studying and identifying individual birds. The banding of millions of birds worldwide annually contributes greatly to the study of birds' habits that can lead to a greater understanding of their needs. This will be a live-only event at Coupeville High School and limited to 40 people.

**UPDATE Bird in the Hand Event – 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.** at the Coupeville High School Commons. Coordinator Robin Llewellyn is still in need of volunteers to assist with the Bird in the Hand event. Please [click to contact her](#) as soon as possible. Learn more on the [Whidbey Audubon website](#).

**NEW Information Tables** – We are also excited about our affiliate organizations that will have tables at this event.

- Puget Sound Birds Observatory
- Whidbey-Camano Land Trust
- Pacific Rim Institute
- Whidbey Watershed Stewards
- Puget Sound Energy Conservation Program
- Salish Sea Guillemot Network

We are waiting to hear back from two others. If you know of another affiliate nonprofit organization that you think might be interested in having a table, please click to [contact me right away, Stef](#).

**UPDATE Guided Bird Walks** – we now have the eight all-star guides for the bird walks for the mornings of May 19 and 20.

**Friday, May 19 guides are:**

- Steve Ellis at Fort Ebey State Park
- Sarah Schmidt at the trails by Pacific Rim Institute
- Carlos Anderson at Deer Lagoon
- Patty Cheek at South Whidbey State Park

**Saturday, May 20 guides are:**

- Nathan Pieplow – location TBD
- Dyanne Sheldon – location TBD
- Carlos Andersen at Deer Lagoon
- Jay Adams at Hoypus Point, in collaboration with Deception Pass State Park nature walk series.

We plan to open online registration for the bird walks by the week of **April 24** so check the website then. All guided bird walks, with exception of Jay Adams at Hoypus Point, will require registration as spaces will be limited to 8 to 10 per tour. Directions and parking will be posted on the sign-up page.

**K-12 Bird Photography Contest is launched, March 15 to April 28!** All three school districts on Whidbey Island have posted our fliers in the schools and sent out



## Poster Contest Winner

The high school invitational festival poster contest was a great success with 36 awesome submissions from students. I would like to give special thanks to Oak Harbor High School teacher for graphic arts, Ms. Jansen, and her class for their participation. Her student, June Braunstein, was chosen as the first-place winner and Loresa De Guzman came in as a very close second place.



Photo by Lisa Jones, Communications Specialist, Oak Harbor Public Schools

Stephanie Neis, Wings over Whidbey Festival coordinator, with June Braunstein, poster contest winner.

June will be presented with her award at our next monthly meeting on April 13 at the Coupeville Recreation Hall. I hope we will have high in person attendance at this meeting in support of June.

— Stef Neis

**Wings over Whidbey, see page 7**

## Field Trip Reports

# Eagles and Snow Geese and Swans – Oh my!

### The Skagit Flats Field Trip

Over the years, at least once during each winter, Whidbey Audubon has offered a trip to the Skagit area, where we observe Snow Geese, Swans, Eagles, Rough-legged Hawks and Short-eared Owls, among many other exciting bird species. This is the time of year and an area where, if an observer is very fortunate, it is possible to spot five different falcons!

We are very appreciative of Joe Sheldon's past leadership, but birders will bird, so we faced the Flats without him. Thank you, Joe for the many previous introductions to this rewarding adventure.

This year on February 22, the winter Big White Birds field trip continued, and though the weather conditions were not ideal, we all know how much less comfortable it can be up there when rain fogs our optics and the wind wiggles our tripods. On this trip, only the sideways blowing snow obscured Short-eared Owl watching! Just one of us briefly glimpsed one owl at that stop. But most of the day afforded rewarding observations of the geese and swans, Northern Harriers everywhere we looked, and dozens and dozens of Bald Eagles, of course. Among our favorites were the Rough-legged Hawk hovering close to the road near Edison, and the Western Meadowlarks over on Fir Island.

For something totally different, The Padilla Bay Interpretive Center made for a warming and informative midday reprieve from the elements, as we enjoyed the aquariums and the various local nature displays. We picked up their bird checklist, and ticked at least

40 species off that. We spotted others along the way, and finally, on the way back down the Island, the last birders standing swung by Crockett Lake, where we spotted a **Snow Bunting** and then watched some sort of disagreement between a **Harrier** and the **Short-eared Owl** there.

If you go...

Here is a link to a map with area

descriptions, from *A Birder's Guide to Washington*, compiled by the Washington Ornithological Society with the American Birding Association, "Skagit Flats."

— Cathi Bower



Photo by Cathi Bower

Intrepid birders ventured out to see the big white birds through this wintery lens. Notice the **Bald Eagle** perched on the top snag and a **Northern Harrier** in flight.

## Conservation Column: Conservation Matters

**NATIVE PLANTS:** April is Native Plant Appreciation Month, and what a great month for appreciating native plants! Longer days, warmer temperatures (well, maybe), a smattering of rain (or a soaking) — buds are swelling and plants are reawakening. You may be tempted out into the yard to inventory, to assess to plan . . . . If your future plans include mak-

ing additions to your yard or garden, think about giving native plants a chance. The Washington Native Plant Society, [www.wnps.org](http://www.wnps.org), is a great resource for learning the benefits of planting with natives. They invite you to join them in celebrating the importance of native plants in our yards and the greater environment. Visit their website for valuable information and invitations to attend virtual presentations on a variety of topics from gardening for the future, underground allies, resilient gardens, and more. So go ahead, celebrate Native Plant Appreciate Month. Hug a native tree! Hug a native shrub! Or better yet, hug a native plant lover!

— Linda Griesbach

## Deer Lagoon

March 15 broke a little cool but mostly sunny at Deer Lagoon. A group of 20 friendly and engaged birders had a fun and productive morning. We saw lots of **dabblers** and plenty of **divers** ending up with a total of 36 species. As always it is hard to pick out a special treat as almost all the birds are fun to see. However, after the group had thinned out and we were heading back towards the trail head, two beautiful **Short-eared Owls** were spotted being harassed by seven **American Crows**. Luckily, the Owls landed next to each other on two posts, the Crows headed out and we got good scope views. That was a great end to a great morning. Fun group of interested and enthusiastic birders! Thanks to everyone who came out. Be sure to check the *eBird* app for the full list of birds we spotted.

— Carlos Andersen, Trip Leader

## Weed Wrangling, from page 1

still plenty left to pull. No special skills or tools are needed, just gardening gloves and a bit of time. You can help out and become a Weed Wrangler by joining a work party on Monday, April 17 at 10 a.m. Just meet fellow Wranglers out on the Deer Lagoon dikes. There may be additional "pop up" weeding sessions added in early April, depending on the weather. Meet on Deer Lagoon Road. If you have questions or would like to be notified of upcoming "pop up" sessions, click to contact [Linda Griesbach](#).

## Wings over Whidbey, from page 5

the fliers online to the families. I am excited and hopeful to see their submissions soon! Just a reminder that if you know of a Whidbey Island student that is not in the public school district, please let them know that they are welcome to join in too. If you know of a private school that you would like me to send our flier to, please click on the poster on page 5 or [contact me](#).

**Sponsorships** – We have some very awesome sponsorships so far but are looking for more. If you are interested or know someone I should contact, I would sincerely appreciate if you would please reach out to me soon by clicking the “Be a Sponsor” bubble below.

### Be a Sponsor!

Please reach out to Stef at  
[programs@whidbeyaudubonsociety.org](mailto:programs@whidbeyaudubonsociety.org)

I want to make a special acknowledgement to Rick Matsen for his \$1,000 sponsorship gift in memory of his wife, Anne Matsen, his best birding partner. At my request, Rick contributed some information about himself and Anne, please see the insert on the right.

Our other major sponsors to date are listed below. Check the [was Wings over Whidbey website](#) for new sponsorships as they come in. Please be sure to say thank you to the local businesses we list so that they know how much we appreciate them stepping up to support our first-time festival.

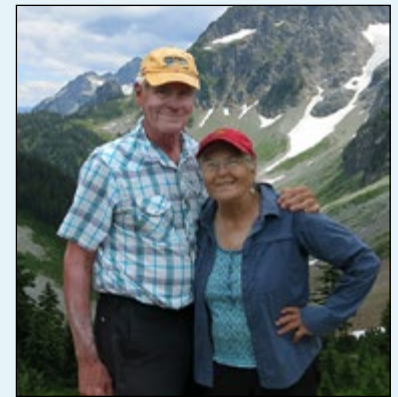


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## Wings over Whidbey Sponsorship in Memory of Anne Matsen

Anne and I were from Texas, born in 1944 and married there in 1966. I was lucky enough to land a position at University of Washington Orthopedics in 1971. (I'm still here!) In our cross-country drive to the Pacific Northwest, we were stunned by its natural beauty. When



we reached the Cascades, Anne said, “We’re never leaving here.” Initially we were climbers, backpackers, cyclists and skiers. As age slowed our pace, we discovered bird watching. She was the eyes and I was the ears. We were never listers, but just enjoyed looking and photographing birds.

While we enjoyed many trips to Malheur and Madera Canyon, we increased our focus on bird watching, birding festivals and Audubon Societies in our home state of Washington. Among those, we found Whidbey Audubon to be one of the most welcoming — both in person and with the online video meetings. Even though we never met Patty Cheek or Jann Ledbetter in person, we felt like we knew them. Through Whidbey Audubon we were inspired to set up a bird friendly back yard. While we live in a very urban neighborhood, we’ve managed to see some beautiful birds at home and nearby.

Anne passed away peacefully in our home on December 9, just before our 56th anniversary on December 24. Her spirit remains with me as I go on bird walks.



Anne Matsen

I so appreciate what Whidbey Audubon does for all of us in the Pacific Northwest and for what it meant to Anne and me.

— Rick Matsen

## Earth Care from page 4

Dr. Jennifer Atkinson is an Associate Professor of environmental humanities at the University of Washington, Bothell. Her seminars on Eco-Grief & Climate Anxiety have been featured in the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *National Geographic*, *Seattle Times*, *NBC News* and many other outlets. Dr. Atkinson is currently working on a book titled *An Existential Toolkit for the Climate Crisis*, which offers strategies to help young people navigate the emotional toll of climate breakdown. She leads pub-

lic seminars on climate and mental health in partnership with youth activists, psychologists, climate scientists and policy makers. Her podcast “Facing It” also gives people tools to channel eco-anxiety into action.

Whidbey Audubon has a number of activities scheduled during April for Whidbey Island’s Earth and Ocean Month 2023. Check them out on both its [website](#) and [whidbeyearthday.org](http://whidbeyearthday.org).

— Prescott, Outreach and Publicity



## Sensitive Bird Habitat Signage

Sensitive bird habitats are areas that are crucial for the survival and well-being of various bird species. These habitats can include a variety of environments, such as wetlands, grasslands, forests, and coastal areas. What makes these habitats “sensitive” is the delicate balance of resources and environmental factors that they provide for the birds that live there. While these habitats may offer an abundance of food and nesting sites, they can be easily disturbed by human activity. By respecting sensitive bird habitats, we can help to preserve the natural balance of these ecosystems, which benefits both the birds and the broader environment.

Whidbey Audubon has had signs designed to bring attention to some of the sensitive bird habitats on Whidbey Island. We have partnered with Washington State Parks, Whidbey Camano Land Trust and Island County Parks Department, to get these signs installed in appropriate areas. If you have suggestions for locations that could benefit from one of these signs, please click to send a note to [Jann, administrator](#).

— *Jann Ledbetter, with help from ChatGPT (Artificial Intelligence that can write based on prompts. In its own words.)*



Photo by Jann Ledbetter

Jen Gray, Washington State Parks Department Interpretive Specialist, mounts the Sensitive Bird Habitat sign at Crockett Lake.

## Bird of the Month:

### Cedar Waxwing (*Bombycilla cedrorum*)

I have always had an affinity for crested birds. From the universally loved Northern Cardinal of my Midwestern youth, to the Tufted Titmouse of the South and East and the Steller's Jay of the Pacific Northwest. Crested birds say, “Look at me!” That feathery mohawk begs you to take a second look. Moving from the land of the Blue Jay and Cardinal I was missing that distinctive silhouette until one day on a walk through Freund Marsh I spotted a distinctive looking bird in a tree by the path.

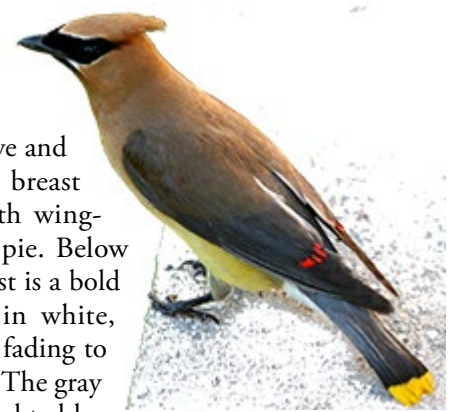
## Update: Search for a SSGN Program Coordinator

Brendan McGarry, our engaging and effective Salish Sea Guillemot Network Pigeon Guillemot Summer Breeding Survey Program Coordinator for several years, is leaving to pursue other endeavors. Thanks to the hiring team of Frances Wood (chair), Terence Lee, Cyndy Holtz and Betsy Brace, job description and scope of work documents for that Program Coordinator position, along with instructions for applying, are now posted on the [guillemot website](#) and the [Whidbey Audubon website](#).

Now we need to spread the word. First, to all Pigeon Guillemot surveyors, a pool of possible candidates who already know the survey and could easily step into this position. Next, to all supporting organizations, local Audubon societies, nature centers, the Marine Resources Committees, asking them to post the position and to include a link to the [Salish Sea Guillemot Network](#) (SSGN) website.

In advance, thank you for your help securing the best person for this position.

Smaller than a Jay at five and a half inches it has a breast like melted butter with wing-tips dipped in cherry pie. Below the colored, apricot crest is a bold black mask outlined in white, apricot head and chest fading to the melted butter belly. The gray back and tail are highlighted by the cherry pie scapulars and a lemony tip to the tail. Pardon all the food allegories but looking at this beautiful bird gives me the same pleasure as eating one of those foods. One would expect that a bird so lovely would have an equally lovely song. Instead they communicate by high pitched trills or whistles.



They are named for both the cedar berries that are their most available winter food and the waxy looking droplet of red on the wings which are not always visible. The tail, which is usually tipped in yellow can be of an orangy tinge dependent on the food source.

Cedar Waxwings (cw) are flocking, social birds. A group of waxwings, known as an “ear-full” or a “museum,” will also nest together. The female takes five to six days to build her nest and has been known to pilfer building materials from Robins or Yellow Warblers. She may make 2,500 trips to the nest before collecting all the twigs, grasses and cattail down into a cup about five inches across. It is lined with roots and pine needles. A clutch contains two to six pale bluish gray eggs and after incubating for almost two weeks, remain in the nest for 14 to 18 days. They are often seen in woodlands, farms or orchards where there are fruit trees or

**Cedar Waxwing, see page 10**



# 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.

## APRIL

Earth and Ocean Month [whidbeyearthday.org](http://whidbeyearthday.org)

- 1: **Field Trip: West Beach**, Deception Pass
- 4: **Online Class; Spring and Summer Birds**, Session IV
- 5: **Kick-off for Whidbey Earth and Ocean Month**. Bayview Cash Store. 4 to 6:30 p.m.
- 11: **Online Class: Spring and Summer Birds**, Session V
- 11: **Boys and Girls Club Scavenger Hunt Deadline**
- 13: **Program: COASST/Seabirds with Julia Parrish**. 7 p.m. Coupeville. Hybrid
- 13 to 16: **Olympic Peninsula Birdfest**, Sequim. (Register soon. Some sessions are filling up fast!)
- 15 **Field Trip: West Beach** with Dave Parent
- 17: **Weed Wranglers**, Deer Lagoon. 10 a.m.
- 19: **Birds 'n' Beer Get-together**. Zoom 5 p.m.
- 24: **Wings over Whidbey Field Trip** registration begins
- 27: **Whidbey Audubon Society Board Meeting**. Members welcome, 6 to 8 p.m.
- 28: **Deadline for Youth Photo Contest** submissions, Wings over Whidbey Festival
- 29: **Whidbey 101: Living on an Island**, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., Trinity Lutheran,

## MAY

- Early May: **Birdathon**
- 6: **Field Trip: Rosario Beach**, Deception Pass with Sarah Schmidt
- 11: **Monthly Meeting: Dinner, Awards, Elections**. 5:30 to 8 p.m. Coupeville Recreation Hall

- 17: **Birds 'n' Beer Get-Together**, 5 to 6 p.m.
- 18 to 20: **Wings over Whidbey Festival**, Coupeville
- 24: **Page Peepers**. 7 to 8 p.m. ZOOM
- 25: **Board Meeting**. 6 to 8 p.m. Freeland Library. Members welcome.

## Welcome New and Renewing Members

**New Members:**  
 Barbara Hardman & Dave Davis, Household (\$30)  
 Katie & Eric Simmons, Household (\$30)  
 Joyann Troutman, Individual (\$20)  
 Andrea Malott, Individual (\$20) Linda Gisbrecht, Individual (\$20)

**Renewing Members:**  
 Christie Hammond, Red-tailed Hawk (\$100)  
 Roland & Susanne, Red-tailed Hawk (\$100)  
 Robin Llewellyn, Pigeon Guillemot (\$75)  
 Stephanie and Paul Neis, Spotted Towhee (\$50)  
 Marianne Edain & Steve Erickson, Spotted Towhee (\$50)  
 Susan Hutchinson & John Bathurst, Spotted Towhee (\$50)  
 Karen & Dave Anderson, Household (\$30)  
 Thomas & Patricia Duarte-Pocock, Household (\$30)  
 John & Barbara Schuster, Household (\$30)  
 Sego Jackson & Raven Jirikovic, Household (\$30)  
 Peter Bunin, Individual (\$20)

Thanks to all those who joined or renewed, but chose not to be recognized in *Shorelines*.

## 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](http://www.whidbeyaudubonsociety.org/membership)

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Shorelines Recognition?  Yes  No  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Newsletters will be **emailed** to you —OR—  **Check here** to receive your *Shorelines* by mail.  
 Please add an **additional \$10.00** to defray mailing costs.

### Select Category of Annual Membership:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Membership \$20 | <input type="checkbox"/> Red-tailed Hawk \$100                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Household Membership \$30  | <input type="checkbox"/> Osprey \$250                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spotted Towhee \$50        | <input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime Membership \$1,000                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pigeon Guillemot \$75      | <input type="checkbox"/> Additional donation 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.*

# Annual Membership Meeting and Dinner on May 11

Whidbey Audubon will be hosting a buffet dinner and potluck dessert bar as part of our annual membership meeting on Thursday, May 11. Dinner will start at 5 p.m. with an annual business meeting from 6 to 7 p.m. followed by a potluck dessert bar. Location will be the Coupeville Recreation Hall, 901 Northwest Alexander Street.

The dinner menu will include:

- Roasted chicken from Prairie Center Red Apple
- Various side salads that will include gluten-free and vegetarian options
- Veggie and pickled goods platters with dips
- Beverages will include coffee, hot and cold tea and water.

**Registration will be required** for the dinner as we need

an accurate count for quantity calculations. Register on the [Whidbey Audubon Society website under Events](#).

We will also need a minimum of 10 to 12 desserts that serve six to eight people per dessert. If you are interested in bringing a dessert, please click to [email Jann](#) know what you plan to bring and if it is gluten-free and/or vegan (we hope to get a few of these types)

The annual business meeting will include:

- Voting in two new officer positions,
- Presentation of the Birdathon results and awards,
- Presentation of the Scholarship awards,
- Updates of Wings over Whidbey Bird Festival May 18 to 20.

— *Steff Neis, Programs chair*

## Cedar Waxwing, from page 8

fruiting shrubs. They also eat small insects on the wing.

An interesting fact is that Catbird eggs which hatch in Cedar Waxwing nests will not survive, as they cannot thrive on a diet of fruit.

Cedar Waxwing populations have been stable and are of low conservation concern. They are found year round in our area

but are most commonly seen in June through September when berries and fruits are ripening.

To attract cw, plant trees such as cedar, dogwood, juniper, serviceberry and small fruits.

— *Marcia Lazoff*

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**Thursday, April 13**  
Both In-person and Virtual  
Meeting and Socializing at 7,  
Program at 7:30 p.m.

## Seabirds, Citizen Science and Saving the World

with Julia Parrish of  
COASST

Coupeville Recreation Hall  
901 NW Alexander Street

*or click to  
Register for Zoom*

**Wings over Whidbey  
Bird Festival Updates**