



Shorelines

Newsletter of the Whidbey Audubon Society

May 2021

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 Virtually Thursday, May 13

Phenology: the Study of the Seasons

Erin Posthumus, from the National Phenology Network, was scheduled to be our speaker last April, but it was canceled because of Covid-19. She did agree to present for Whidbey Audubon this May.

Phenology may be an unfamiliar term, but it's something that you see every day in nature. Phenology is the study of the seasons — when plants leaf out and bloom, birds migrate and insects emerge. These life cycles are a critical part of nearly every ecological relationship. As temperatures warm and precipitation patterns change, phenology of many species is advancing and not always at the same rate. Migratory birds in particular face mismatches in timing between breeding periods and food resources, with cascading impacts on their ecosystems. In this presentation we will look at what we know about the challenges birds are facing, how they are coping, and what you can do to help document the changes in phenology happening around us.

Erin is the Outreach Coordinator and Liaison to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for the National Phenology Network, a science initiative that aims to collect, store and share information

Phenology is the study of the seasons — when plants leaf out and bloom, birds migrate and insects emerge.

on plant and animal seasonal activity. Trained as a wildlife biologist, Erin received a BA in environmental biology at the University of Colorado, Boulder and

an MS in wildlife conservation and management from the University of Arizona. She has worked on a variety of bird ecology projects throughout her career including banding 'I'wis (an endangered native bird, Honeycreeper) on the Big Island of Hawai'i, counting wading bird nestlings in the Florida Everglades and surveying bird diversity on top of a 10,000-foot mountain in Southern Arizona. Raised in Seattle, she currently lives in Tucson, Arizona where she enjoys hiking the Sky Islands, rescuing cacti and watching her desert tortoise eat.

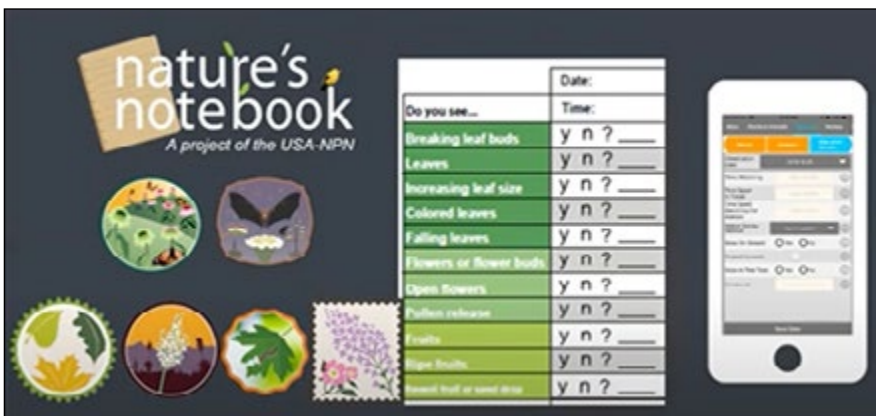


Erin Posthumus of the National Phenology Network

Our monthly programs are free and open to all. If you are not a Whidbey Audubon Society member and would like to attend, please register on the website whidbeyaudubonsociety.org. We'll send a Zoom link to all members and registered nonmembers. If you do not see our Zoom invitation email by mid-day the day of the program, please check your spam folder. If you still do not find it, click to contact the [webmaster](#). Registration will close at 10 a.m. on May 13.

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.

The program begins at 7:30 after a brief meeting when we will vote for the Treasurer and Secretary positions on the WAS board. Also, come early to meet our latest scholarship recipients.



Phenology as a tool for understanding habitat change, October 6, 2020, www.youtube.com/watch?v=PpEkmZ9KM2o

Learn how to participate in the National Phenology Network data collection and gain a better understanding about climate change.



President's Column: The Window Seat Perch

I wake up hearing a European Collared-Dove singing repeatedly. He's very loud. Covering up all the other birds on this April morning. One of the birders who talked about listening to bird sounds called it "walking all over the other birds."

Now that I'm really listening, I am aware of new sounds and delights. The garden, the birds, the frogs, the deer, the raccoons, the insects are bursting with energy and I immerse my ears in the sounds. I sit in the garden with my eyes closed. What do I hear? Bushtits, high pitched what I think of as glitter falling, buzzes from Spotted Towhees, whistles and melodies from sparrows. I steer away from mnemonics right now because I want to concentrate on other things.

How am I learning to describe these sounds? There are so many words. Let's see, for texture – buzzy, burry, whining, bawling, mewling, trills, slurs, whistles, crystal-clear, husky, hoarse, plaintive, happy, cheerful, metallic, flute-like, oboe-like, liquidity, spiraling, breezy, ethereal, bubbling, crashing, splashing, humming, sawing, rambling, hard, rough, lumpy, gargling, musical, raspy, hooting, cooing, shrieks, screeches, ticks, clicks. I could go on and on. Such a wealth of descriptive sounds.

Dates to Remember

Please check the [Whidbey Audubon Society website, Events page](#), for more detailed information and how to enter Zoom for some of these upcoming events.

MAY

Early May: Birdathon. Participate and/or donate!

5: Pigeon Guillemot Training on data input on Zoom; 7 p.m.

12: Pigeon Guillemot Training for beach volunteers via Zoom; 7 p.m.

13: Whidbey Audubon Program: Phenology, via Zoom

16: Birds 'n' Beer, Zoom 5 to 6 p.m.

20: Deadline for June Shorelines

26: Page Peepers Book Group, 7 p.m. via Zoom

27: Board Meeting via Zoom, 7 to 9 p.m. Members welcome, contact [the President](#) for the link

JUNE

10: Whidbey Audubon Program: a Birder's Evolution with George Armistead, via Zoom

16: Birds 'n' Beer, via Zoom, 5 to 6 p.m.

17: No Shorelines in July and August

23: Page Peepers Book Group, via Zoom, 7 p.m.

24: Board Meeting, 7 to 9 p.m. via Zoom; members welcome, contact [the President](#) for the link

How about words for tone? I'm talking emotional words. Yeah, there's anthropomorphism at its best. Lively, joyful, whimsical, humorous, serene, gleeful, silly, nostalgic, cheerful, wistful, tranquil, hilarious, calm, excited, bossy, blunt, derisive, anxious, critical, playful, zealous, confident, proud, optimistic, etc.

Some days, I just want to hear the chorus of birds and not identify every sound I hear. I want to identify the family I hear rather than the individual species. It's great! Other days, I want my journal so I can write descriptive words that lead to identification. I draw the sound in the air to indicate different pitches, rhythm, tempo, pauses, etc., draw the sound in my journal and then I try to find the bird. They are being hidden now by the leaves on the trees. There are mystery sounds. I later draw the bird, if I see him/her and use all the descriptive words I can in my journal. Being a detective in this novelty of sound. Wow! I like it! A bird detective.

It is *An Act of Loving Birds*, with Whitney Neufeld-Kaiser, our online class presenter in April. Thanks, Whitney, for inspiring me further in my exploration of bird sounds.

— *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.

Two Officers Up for Vote

It's time again to participate in the organizational part of bird land habitat conservation. This time all you need to do is cast a vote for candidates for two Whidbey Audubon Society board positions, both running unopposed.

Sheri Croll has expertly filled the Whidbey Audubon board position of Treasurer for the past term and has accepted the nomination for the upcoming two-year term.

Anita Badri has accepted the nomination to run for the Secretary's next term. She is a new member who may be familiar to some for her work with Island Senior Resources.

Each of the elected officials assumes their duties and begins their terms at the close of our May 27 board meeting.

This year, during the May 13 general meeting on Zoom, current Whidbey Audubon Society members will take the opportunity to vote for these two positions. Before the beginning of our program, our President, Patty Cheek, will explain the process and request a vote.

Thank you for your support as a member of Whidbey Audubon and for participating in the workings of the Chapter!

— *Nomination Committee: David Allen, Cathi Bower and Mary Hollen*

Scholarship Recipients for 2021 Announced

Meet and celebrate two 2021 awardees of the Whidbey Audubon Society's Renee Smith Scholarship for Environmental Studies during the 7:15 p.m. business session of the May 13 general meeting.

With a life-long interest in the Salish Sea, Catherine Lhamon will be majoring in marine science/marine biology.

Drake Borden will be majoring in environmental engineering. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Drake has voluntarily reforested a 29-acre Whidbey/Camano Land Trust property near his home with 1,000 newly planted trees and built/installed 100 nesting boxes for various bird species.

We celebrate these Coupeville High graduating seniors in their educational pursuits.

— Ann Sullivan, Scholarship Committee



Catherine Lhamon



Drake Borden

Help Us Reach Our \$5,000 Goal to Protect Birds and Their Habitats — Birdathon 2021!

Teams are plotting their routes for our annual Birdathon Competition as May fast approaches, with Global Big Day of Birding falling on May 8 this year. Choosing a 24-hour period sometime in the first two weeks, participating teams will record all species they observe on Whidbey Island and surrounding waters. The team that sights the most species will win the prestigious Golden Binoculars Award (to be announced at our June meeting), while the team that raises the most money will earn the Bronze Owl Bank (the BOB will be announced at the September meeting when all data is in).

It's not too late to join in this annual fundraising fun. This year it is especially easy to form your own team. Just click the red

text go to [Instructions on the Birdathon page](#) of our website or make a pledge or donation to the team of your choice at on the [Birdathon page](#).



Photo by Cathi Bower

Golden-crowned Kinglet

Our goal this year is to raise \$5,000. All pledges and donations help support Whidbey Audubon's commitment to protect birds and their habitats through education, outreach and research with the money going into Audubon's General fund or the Scholarship Fund (supporting graduating high school seniors going on to a four-year college with an environmental focus, our future bird stewards!).

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

So far this year's Birdathon teams include:

- **The Coupevillains**, email [Steve and Martha Ellis](#)
- **Wild Women of Whidbey**, [Ann Casey](#)
- **Wingin' It**, [Sarah Schmidt](#) and [Janet Hall](#)
- **Shore Thing**, [Cathi Bower](#) and Kathy Obersinner
- **Fledglings**, [Kathy Stella](#)

— Kathy Obersinner, Birdathon Chair

For additional information, go to our webpage or email Birdathon chair [Kathy Obersinner](#).

The Bird Specimen Library Is Open Again

The Bird Specimen Library is once again accepting dead birds that are found from window or car strikes and a variety of other reasons. These unfortunate bird deaths are turned into wonderful teaching tools used for WAS adult and student bird classes, The Bird in The Hand Festival and a number of outside organizational requests that help to expand outreach beyond Whidbey Audubon Society.

Please carefully wrap the birds in newspaper or paper towel and place in a zip lock bag with the finder's name and contact information, date found, location found and how it died if known, then place it in the freezer.

Email [Robin Llewellyn](#) for pick up arrangements or call me at 360-320-5480.

— Robin Llewellyn, Specimen Librarian

Sightings Sightings Sightings Sightings Sightings

Spring is definitely here, and many of our summer favorites are returning!

March 24: California Scrub-Jays continue presence on south Whidbey in the area of Humphrey Road and Olive. I live near Humphrey and Berg and had up to four birds daily back in late 2017/2018 for a six-month period. I started seeing them again last August just south of me along Humphrey and am of the opinion that they've been nesting on the island for a while — just under-reported.

— *Deb Stewart*

March 25: Sharp-Shinned Hawk sitting on an arbor in the front yard. Location: Property off Fort Casey Road near Patmore. — *Rachel Price*

March 26: California Scrub-Jay. Location: Along Humphrey Road, Clinton. Confirmation: Not on the checklist for Whidbey and a code 5 on Washington Ornithological Society checklist.

— *Carlos Andersen*



Photo by Brian Kenney

California Scrub Jay

March 27: Great looks at two **California Scrub-Jays** in the area of Olive and Simmons in Clinton (right near Humphrey Road where other sightings have been). May have heard whisper song of pair the day before (March 26) in shrubbery in yard there —

reminiscent in tone of Blue Jay's 'squeaky pump' call but quieter, more ongoing/warbly, less repetitive.

— *Brian Kenney*

March 27: I was walking down Cascade into Langley when I heard the **Black Turnstones** chattering down at the marina — hurrying to the dock I saw close to 100 of them hanging out on the corner of the floating dock along with a few of their **Surfbird** companions.

— *Gideon Seraphine*

March 28: Northern Saw-whet Owl calling as well as two **Great Horned Owls** and a **Barred Owl**. With Carlos Anderson and his wife. Location: Edge of the eastern forest at Pacific Rim Institute.

— *Joe Sheldon*

March 29: White-throated Sparrow. Location: Under Useless Bay Animal Clinic feeders, Freeland.

— *Dave Parent*

March 30: Slate-colored Fox Sparrow. Unusual for Western Washington. Location: Feeders at Useless Bay Animal Clinic. — *Dave Parent*

March 30: First of season **Black-headed Grosbeak** sighted near Libby and West Beach. A couple weeks earlier than usual. — *Ed Hollis*

April 1: Male and female **Mountain Bluebird.** Location: Going west on Hill Road from South Engle Road, on right side sitting on fence just before forest begins.

— *Joanne Pelant*

April 3: A pair of **Horned Larks** at Keystone Spit just west of the viewing platform. Rare in spring on the Whidbey Audubon list. Apparently

these birds (or others) have been around for a little while.

— *Carla Corin*



Photo by Carla Corin

Horned Larks.

April 4: There was a banded **Caspian Tern** on the seaplane base in Oak Harbor this afternoon. I reported it to the US Geological Survey (USGS) Bird Banding Laboratory.

— *Mary Jo Adams*



Photo by Mary Jo Adams

Banded Caspian Tern

April 7: Chipping Sparrow. Location: Under the Useless Bay Animal Clinic feeders, Freeland. — *Dave Parent*

April 11: Red-naped Sapsucker, working a large cedar with many sapsucker holes and then a large, big-leaf maple. Location: Private property on Langley Road, near the South Whidbey Parks and Recreation District's upper soccer fields.

— *Brian Kenney*

April 12: Four American White Pelicans at Deer Lagoon estuary this morning!

— *Libby Hayward*

April 12: Adult **Townsend's Solitaire** observed sitting in a tree in backyard. Of note: bird was of the "drab" versus "bright" plumage. Location: Pennington Loop, Coupeville.

— *Patrick Kline*

April 12: A flock of **Yellow-rumped Warblers** that included both races, **Audubon's** and **Myrtle**, in the Fort Casey State Park picnic grounds. I had a total of 25 bird species, five mammal species and six native wildflower species in the park. — *Steve Ellis*

April 14: First of the year **Orange-crowned Warblers** singing along the road to the Fort Ebey State Park group camping area. At least five males present. Seventeen bird species from the gate to the group camp.

— *Steve Ellis*

April 17: First **American Goldfinch** landed on our artichoke stalks this morning. Location: Log Cabin Road, Clinton. — *Lynne Jensen*

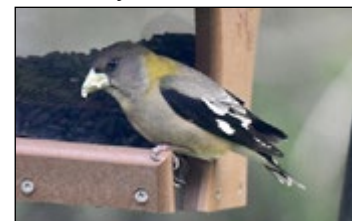


Photo by Paul and Stephanie Neis

Female Evening Grosbeak

April 18: First **Evening Grosbeak** sighting this season, female at black oil sunflower seed feeder. Location: Aquila Drive.

— *Paul & Stephanie Neis*

April 19: Swamp Sparrow. (And **White-throated Sparrow** still ongoing.) Location: Under the Useless Bay Animal Clinic feeders,

More Sightings, see page 8

*Volunteer Corner:***Pigeon Guillemot Breeding Survey Sets Training Sessions**

A signature program of the Whidbey Audubon Society is our on-going Pigeon Guillemot breeding survey, which has been occurring since 2002. Every summer volunteers spend one hour per week on the beaches of Whidbey Island recording population numbers and behaviors of these engaging seabirds. Volunteers typically work in teams at the approximately 26 guillemot colonies around the island. We will train you and assign you a team. You only need binoculars and a willingness to commit to recording activities of these birds from late May to the end of August (this year a few colonies will begin earlier than in the past due to consistently identified earlier activity).

Due to ongoing concerns with the COVID 19 pandemic, the training will be comprised of online videos and a live virtual meeting via Zoom on the following dates:

Wednesday, May 5 at 7 p.m. via Zoom — Training for data input with the new Survey123 system. This is for all colony leads who will be responsible for adding their colony data.

Wednesday, May 12 at 7 p.m. via Zoom — Training for beach volunteers. All new volunteers are expected to attend. Returning volunteers are welcome and encouraged to attend.



Photo by Govinda Holtby

Pigeon Guillemot breeding pair on a bluff.

New volunteers will also receive a beach orientation to their colony. Specifically, along with volunteers needed for other sites on the island, we are looking for folks with access to the Naval Air Station Whidbey as there are three active Pigeon Guillemot colonies on the base that need monitoring. Please visit our [Salish Sea Guillemot Network website](#) for a description of our survey. For further information email [Frances Wood](#) or [Debbi Williams](#). We look forward to having you join us!

*Volunteer Corner:***Breeding Bird Survey Help Requested**

Whidbey Audubon Society recently updated the chapter's bird checklist. An important component of the list is noting which birds breed on the Island. A surprising number of species have been recorded nesting here.

It's important we fill in the blank spots: those species that possibly breed here.

An ad hoc group — Sarah Schmidt, Joe Sheldon and Steve Ellis — is asking for birders to help confirm nesting activity for the following species:

Specific protocols will be sent to anyone interested in this

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1) Blue-winged Teal | 10) California Scrub-Jay |
| 2) Northern Shoveler | 11) Bank Swallow |
| 3) Ring-necked Duck | 12) Western Bluebird |
| 4) Common Nighthawk | 13) Varied Thrush |
| 5) Wilson's Snipe | 14) Evening Grosbeak |
| 6) Caspian Tern | 15) Yellow-headed Blackbird |
| 7) American White Pelican | 16) Western Meadowlark |
| 8) Merlin | 17) Bullocks Oriole |
| 9) Western Wood-Pewee | |

project.

Some points to consider before agreeing to help:

- Ensure you are positive of your identification of the species before proceeding.
- Differentiating between female ducks can be difficult, for example.
- We very much need someone with excellent access to the navy base to survey the habitats found there.
- Agree to strict rules against trespassing on private land and not removing vegetation or otherwise harassing nesting species.

If you note one of the 17 species listed above after spring migration and would like to participate, email [Joe Sheldon](#) and we'll get you started with the breeding bird protocols.



Look for the new Birds of Whidbey Checklist at local visitor centers, Wild Birds Unlimited stores and more. Or download it from the Whidbey Audubon Society website.

BIN South's Latest Adventures at Deer Lagoon

April 8: Chilly but typically delightful out at Deer Lagoon Thursday, where we saw and/or heard 47 species, including a nice **Whimbrel**. Some of us weren't quite ready to call it a morning, so we wandered over to Sunlight Beach, where it was far less brisk, and we added another eight species (totaling 55), including a **Cinnamon Teal** hanging with the **Green-winged Teals**. Also a **Merlin** (we're pretty certain) shot by between the houses, scattering the **pigeons, sparrows, blackbirds** and **finches!**

Some of the **Black-bellied Plovers** are sporting beautiful breeding plumage, and were close in, so it was fun to compare them with their nonbreeding associates. (Perhaps "compare" is too harsh — plumage-shaming is unacceptable in this polite company.)

Word on the dike is that the Pelicans are back. Four were reported this week at Deer Lagoon.

April 22: One word for Earth Day morning at Deer Lagoon: *Eventful*.

Here come the rest of the words.

Before everything else, let's reflect a moment on the **Peregrine** chasing the **Canada Goose** pair. A Peregrine going after geese? They all came shooting over the dike and the dive-bomber falcon, at 1/6 the weight of a goose, eventually gave up the fight and picked on a few ducks his own size before circling around over the bluff until we lost sight of him. We never saw him actually nail down his brunch, but maybe everyone was just practicing.

A **Whimbrel** flew in to feed (on less visible prey), and there's something about a Whimbrel that makes us all smile and take our minds off other predators.

We were so focused on so much entertainment, that twice, after staring and scoping for minutes on a spot, someone would say something like, "What are those brown blobs near the Terns?" We'd been looking right past two **Cinnamon Teal** all along (thank you, Ann) and then "Do we have **Snow Geese** now?" Sure enough, not all of the big white birds were **Pelicans!** Three of them were SNGO (thank you, Patricia).

We also enjoyed the short window that is the full breeding plumage of **Bonaparte's Gulls**, **Dunlin** and **Black-bellied Plovers** and the chance to compare side-by-side, the **Bonaparte's**, **Mew** and **Olympic Gulls**. You thought the Mews are small — the BOGU are adorbs.

Not present — Kingfisher, Harrier, Pigeons. I know, right? But in the "surprise" category and with exquisite timing, on the way back along the path we spied a **Rufus Hummingbird** landing on its nest waaaay overhead in an alder. Midday and sunny is not the time to look for her.

Birding in Neighborhood Bonus

But wait — there's more. Inspired by a funny little article in the current issue of *Birdwatcher's Digest*, in which Al Blatt (in Minnesota) lists most of the letters of the alphabet per bird species sighting for the day, here follows your local Birding in Neighborhood's ABCs (not taxonomic order). Not all of our morning's 64 species have a letter, but most of the letters (but for I, U, X or Z) have a bird. Al may have had an Indigo Bunting, but we have Quail!

Anna's hummers	Least Sandpiper
Bonaparte's Gull	Marsh Wren
Cinnamon Teal	Nuthatch
Dunlin	Osprey
European Starling	Pelican
Peregrine Falcon	Quail
Gadwall	Rufus hummer
Hooded Merganser	Savanna Tern
(a reminder that there is no	Virginia Rail
"I" in a Birdathon team)	Whimbrel
Junco	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Killdeer	

— Cathi Bower, *Bird early – bird often*

Birding in Neighborhoods (BIN) South meets every other Thursday morning. Email Cathi Bower for more information.

Birding in Neighborhoods North Goes East

April 14: Occasionally our group goes off-Island to check out nearby birding spots on the other side of the Bridge. It was a beautiful day for birders to visit Wiley Slough, between Conway and La Conner. The sun was out and so were the birds. Many **Greater Yellowlegs**, and after much research and deliberation, a **Spotted Sandpiper**, were close to the dike by the parking area for our viewing pleasure. On our walk to look for the Ruff which had been spotted previously by a small duck blind, we also saw **Dunlin**, **Bewick's** and **Marsh Wrens**, and **Fox**, **Savannah**, **White-crowned**, **Golden-crowned** and **Song Sparrows**. Linda identified the descending call of a **Sora** in the marsh, but we didn't get to see it. There were a huge number

of **Green-winged Teal**, along with **Wigeons**, **Gadwalls**, **Coots** and **Mallards** in the pond by the observation blind.

When we went back to the shelter at the other parking lot for lunch, we were all surprised and thrilled to find that the **Black Phoebe** was still in residence! Not only that, but there were two of them. A little side trip to Hayton Reserve yielded little as the tide was too low by then. A trip for next time. In all we saw or heard 43 species.

— Marcia Lazoff

Birding in Neighborhoods (BIN) North meets the second Wednesday of the month. Email Marcia Lazoff for details.

Bird of the Month:

The American Goldfinch (*Carduelis tristis*)

As I sit in my living room watching TV, out of the corner of my eye, I catch a flash of yellow outside my window. It's a male Goldfinch flying from the Nyjer feeder! The Goldfinches are back! Or at least in their fancy breeding feathers. In some areas, the Goldfinch does not migrate, but may be overlooked in winter because its drab colors allow it to blend in with other Little Brown Birds. Also, people often take down their Nyjer feeders.



Photo by Peter Pearsall, US Fish and Wildlife Service

American Goldfinch atop a Foxglove.

Also known as the Willow Goldfinch and the Wild Canary, the American Goldfinch is the state bird of Washington as well as Iowa and New Jersey. In 1928, the state legislature let the school children of Washington select the state bird, and the Western Meadowlark won hands down. However, seven other states had already chosen the Meadowlark, so another vote was taken in 1931 by the Washington Federation of Women's Clubs this time. The Goldfinch won by a wide margin. Now there were two state birds and the legislature decided to leave the final choice to the children. In 1951, the kids voted for the Goldfinch.

When not breeding, the Goldfinch will flock in groups that often include Pine Siskin and Redpolls. It prefers open areas that include weedy fields and other low-vegetation areas. In nature it feeds almost exclusively on small seeds including thistle. At feeders, it will eat sunflower hearts and its favorite, niger seed.

Niger is the seed of the African yellow daisy. The birdseed was originally called *niger* in reference to Nigeria, the plant's geographic origin. The name was trademarked as Nyjer® in 1998 by the Wild Bird Feeding Industry. Many birders continue to call the seed thistle, but it is not related to the native plant that the Goldfinch eats — and uses the down for nesting. As anyone who buys it for the Goldfinch feeder knows, Nyjer seed is expensive.

The American Goldfinch nests later than almost every other songbird, probably because it uses the down from thistle to make its nest. The nest is made in the fork of a shrub or small tree edging an open space. After an incubation of 10 to 12 days by the female, the nestlings remain in the nest for 11 to 17 days and are fed by both sexes.

The American Goldfinch may not be the first sign of spring — we'll attribute that honor to the Robin — but it lets us know that summer is almost here in a most colorful way.

— Jenny Brown

Welcome New and Renewing Members

New Members

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------|
| Meg Olson | P Gordon Hodge |
| Gayle Austin | Sequoia Durham |
| Anita Badri | |
| Delia Mulholland & Steven Scher, | Spotted Towhee |

Renewing Members

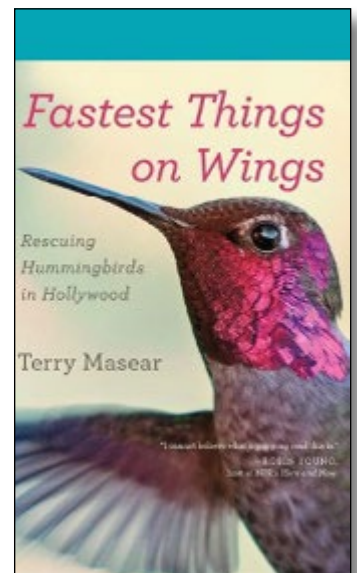
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| Barbara Paul | Todd & Chris Peterson |
| Cathleen Queeno-Wall | Val & Joe Hillers |
| Mimi Bommersbach | Wayne & Eileen Clark |
| George & Lynne Jensen | Alice Lindahl, Spotted Towhee |
| Judy & Lyall Bishop | Judy Tomassene, Spotted Towhee |
| Raven Jirikovic & Sego Jackson | |
| Paul & Stephanie Neis, Spotted Towhee | |
| Forrest Anderson, Spotted Towhee | |
| Lois & Bill Mathews, Spotted Towhee | |

Page Peepers Book Group

Whidbey Audubon Society's book group is reading *Fastest Things on Wings* by Terry Masear.

Review: *Fastest Things on Wings* shows the dedication, hard work, and emotional resilience it takes to be a rehabber The book is a paean to birds and a plea for us to keep caring for them and for the world surrounding us. It is well-written, heart-grabbing, and mind-boggling.

— FangirlNation



The book group meets for the book discussion via Zoom on Wednesday, May 26 at 7 p.m. Email [Patricia Duarte](mailto:Patricia.Duarte@whidbeyaudubon.org) for more information.

If you are new to the group, register under *Events* on the [Whidbey Audubon website](http://WhidbeyAudubon.org).

Purple Martins Return to Lagoon Point

Western Purple Martins returned to Lagoon Point on Whidbey Island for their eighth season. Three adult birds swooped and called at me as soon as I opened the door this morning. ‘Cher-cher’ was the greeting I have been waiting for; they seem a bit late this year.

They quickly checked out the nest boxes on my dock — currently closed to prevent House Sparrow nesting — and disappeared into the fog. Later they made a brief appearance atop a neighbor’s sailboat mast. After a brief period resting and preening, they disappeared for the day.

Bruce Cousens of the Western Purple Martin Working Group has cautioned us to expect that the first adults we saw would only be passing through on their way north. These birds seemed

to recognize our colony as nesting habitat, since they looked in places where nests have been in the past. Perhaps they were raised here, who knows? Others will surely follow and it was reassuring to see these first scouts.

I plan to provide updates as the season progresses.

— *Mary Hollen*



Photo by Mary Hollen

Purple Martin checking out Mary’s nest boxes, closed to prevent House Sparrow nesting.

More Sightings, from page 4

Freeland. — *Dave Parent*



Photo by Dave Krause

Mountain Bluebird

April 19: Mountain Bluebird on driftwood on the beach. *eBird* shows that Island County does have sightings of this bird in April, primarily in the middle two weeks of April. It appears to be very unusual in any other month. Location: Rocky Point. — *Dave Krause*

April 21: Three adult Western Purple Martins checking out my dock and boxes this morning. Location: Steelhead and Salmon Street.

— *Mary Hollen (See article above,)*

April 25: There were about 100 **Caspian Terns** resting on the asphalt parking lot behind the Navy Exchange (Seaplane

Base) yesterday afternoon. I noticed one was banded. When I took a closer look, I realized that at least five of them had banded legs. I took photos of the bands and submitted them to the USGS Bird Banding Laboratory. None of the bands matched those on the banded tern I saw in early April. Two of the birds had a similar pattern of bands but the other three were completely different from each other.

— *Mary Jo Adams*

April 26: First of the year **Black-throated Gray Warbler** and **Northern Rough-winged Swallow** at Admiralty Preserve today. Twenty-seven total bird species including a **Common Loon** just offshore that was giving the Tremolo Call. Also, three mammals and one amphibian plus 14 native wildflower/shrub species in bloom. — *Steve Ellis*

April 27: Wood Duck drake seen with a few mallards and wigeons. Location: North end of Lone Lake on private property. — *Linda Griesbach*

April 28: Three nesting pair of **Purple Martins** on the Washington state parks marine crew pier located at Cornet Bay in

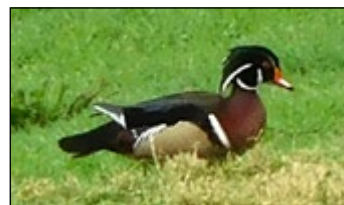


Photo by Linda Griesbach

Wood duck.

Deception Pass State Park. I have not observed this species in the park since my employment in 2017.

— *Jason Armstrong*



Photo by Jason Armstrong

Purple Martins at Cornet Bay.

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.

Heart Song

Oh, dear friend take out your
 earbuds.
 And listen to the Earth.
 She has so much to tell you!
 Open your eyes and see the
 beauty the world has to offer.
 For she shares with us so willingly and
 We are no more worthy of her graces than the flowers, trees,
 the sparrow, or raccoon.
 The wonders of nature always amaze...did you know.
 A Raven can sound like a babbling brook.
 A hummingbird may scold you if you come too close.
 And the sparrow will serenade you all day long.
 The mountains will marvel.
 And the ocean sparkles.
 We must love the Earth as much she loves us.
 As I walked on Whidbey this morning
 I wept twice.
 Once I cried listening to the chorus of birds for their songs
 bring my heart such joy.
 And then tears of sadness at the slaughter of the trees.
 For as the tree falls a piece of my heart is broken and a nest



for the birds, a den for the raccoon or a bed for the deer
 are gone forever.
 Replaced with a human house and a concrete drive and
 nothing Given to the earth only Taken from it.
 I hope we learn quickly to care for our earth.
 We must live in harmony with nature.
 For when the birds, the bees and the trees disappear –
 the silent spring that follows will be the prelude to
 the silence of the Earth.
 One week to Earth day.
 Let us pray each day.
 we wake up and
 listen with our hearts.
 And care for our Earth.
 Not just on *#earthday*
 but **EVERYDAY!**

*by Suzy Hutchinson
 April 16, 2021*

Editor's note: Suzy wrote this poem after walking near her home in Greenbank and noticing the clearcutting of trees.



Photos by Suzy Hutchinson

Fallen trees

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

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All memberships include 9 issues of *Shorelines* annually, a WAS window decal, discounts and early registration in our educational classes.

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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.*

Whidbey Audubon Society

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

Meetings are conducted virtually this year using ZOOM, register at www.whidbeyaudubonsociety.org

Whidbey Audubon Board and Committee Chairs 2020-2021

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Christmas Bird Count South Chair	Govinda Holtby
Birdathon	Kathy Obersinner
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Hospitality Chair	OPEN
Newsletter Mailing	Marcia Lazoff
Specimen Library.....	Robin Llewellyn

Contents

Phenology: the Study of the Seasons ..	1
President's Column: Window Seat Perch	2
Dates to Remember.....	2
Two Officers Up for Vote	2
Scholarship Recipients for 2021	3
Birdathon 2021!.....	3
Bird Specimen Library Is Open Again	3
Sightings	4
Guillemot Breeding Survey Training...	5
Breeding Bird Survey Help Requested	5
BIN South's Adventures at Deer Lagoon...	6
BIN North Goes East	6
The American Goldfinch	7
New and Renewing Members.....	7
Purple Martins Return to Lagoon Point..	8
Heart Song.....	9
Membership Form.....	9
WAS Board & Committees	10

Thursday, May 13

7 to 8:30 p.m. via Zoom

Phenology the Study of the Seasons

with Erin Posthumus
National Phenology Network

Also

Board Elections for
Whidbey Audubon Secretary
and Treasurer