Brodifacoum: a death sentence for rodents, raptors, wildlife and pets

Jamie Acker

On July 1, 2016, I banded a recently fledged female Barred Owl (*Strix varia*). She was one of two nestlings from a well-established pair near Port Madison, on Bainbridge Island, and was part of my ongoing 20-plus year study of Barred Owls. I research their breeding success, mate fidelity, territory size, diet, longevity, and dispersion. Young owls have a high mortality rate, so after I band them, I rarely hear of them again, and if I do, it is because one has been reported dead, usually from a vehicular collision. This bird proved no exception, except that the cause of death was a new one for me: Brodifacoum.

Because the bird was banded, I was contacted by the USDA Forest Service in Corvallis, OR where a necropsy had been performed at Oregon State University. Exposure to the rodenticide Brodifacoum was

**CORRECTIONS:** Some attributions adjoining photographs in the last edition of WOSNews were incorrect due to an editing error. The correct names of the photographers appear next to their photos in this issue on page 12. We regret the error.
The Washington Ornithological Society was chartered in 1988 to increase knowledge of the birds of Washington and to enhance communication among all persons interested in those birds. WOS is a nonprofit educational organization under 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue code.

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JOIN WOS monthly meetings remotely!

WOS members, particularly those who do not live in the Seattle area, have the ability to join our monthly meetings - virtually. You can do this via computer, smart phone or tablet using the videoconference program, GoToMeeting (GTM). Watch for a date-specific email from WOS before each meeting, October through June. Remember, remote attendance is a benefit of WOS membership.

https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/xxxxxxx
or dial in: 1-646-749-31123
access code: xxx-xxx-xxx
You can try a test session at: http://help.citrix.com/getready

To join a meeting:
February WOS Speaker - “Birding the Border Country: Lake, Harney, Washoe & Humboldt Counties”

John Shewey is a longtime freelance writer and photographer, and co-author of Birds of the Pacific Northwest. He has spent decades exploring the border country. He’s left boot prints in places few people tread, changed flat tires on so-called roads better walked than driven, and rejoiced in finding remote locations teeming with birds. At the very real risk of catching John’s infectious enthusiasm, join him in February for this special presentation at our regular WOS monthly meeting. We will celebrate the diversity of the Northern Great Basin, and learn where, when, and how to explore this remarkable region.

Brodifacoum, a death sentence for raptors ... (cont.)

identified, and appeared to be the cause of death; hemorrhage was observed in several major organs. The owl was otherwise in good condition, and there were no significant injuries or trauma apparent that might have resulted in mortality.

Young Barred Owls typically disperse from their natal area in August, and this bird was no different. However, what was unusual was the distance she flew. Her body was discovered in Mapleton, Oregon, on November 9, 2017, some 250-plus miles from where I had banded her. She was 16 months old, and would have nested this spring.

Brodifacoum (d-CON is an example) is highly lethal to mammals and birds, and extremely lethal to fish. It is commonly sold and purchased by home owners, businesses and farmers who are concerned with rodent problems. It is a cumulative poison, due to its high lipophilicity (stored in the fat cells). A poisoned animal will suffer progressively worsening internal bleeding, leading to shock, loss of consciousness, and eventually death. Because it is a second generation poison, the predators that prey on rodents are at risk, as are pets such as dogs and cats.

Please, help put out the word that rodenticides kill more than rodents. Safe alternatives include single-and multiple-entrance snap traps and electrocuting traps.

For more information about safer alternatives to rodenticides, Google: “Raptors Are the Solution” and “The Hungry Owl Project.”

Also see Audubon’s online magazine article, “Poisons Used to Kill Rodents Have Safer Alternatives, a second generation of ultra-potent rodenticides creates a first-class crisis for people, pets, and wildlife.” (Jan-Feb 2013)

National Geographic Magazine declares 2018 “Year of the Bird”

*From the NAT GEO website: “Through 12 months of storytelling, science research and conservation efforts, Year of the Bird will examine how our changing environment is driving dramatic losses among bird species around the globe and highlight what we can do to help bring birds back.... To get started, visitors to BirdYourWorld.org will discover simple but meaningful steps that anyone can take to help birds each month and join a pledge to participate.”*
Greetings and Happy New Year to all our members, and I hope birding activities thus far in 2018 have been rewarding for everyone! In the last edition of WOSNews (No. 170), Tom Bancroft did an admirable job of explaining several of the important ongoing activities of the board, and this will be an update, with some additional detail, on several of those topics.

First, planning is proceeding for our Annual Conference, which is headquartered at the Best Western Plus Hood River Inn, in Hood River, Oregon, from June 7-11. Our room block is available for booking now (phone (541) 386-2200), and no doubt will fill quickly. Cindy has also researched other lodging and camping options nearby, which will appear on the WOS website very shortly. A full slate of field trips (including owling) is nearly completed, with a few leaders yet to be filled in, and Kevin Black is working hard on all this. Most trips will be in Washington, but we expect to have several to nearby places in Oregon.

Further details about trips will be on the website soon, and we are planning a special issue of WOSNews to be published about March 1 with complete info about the conference.

Dennis Paulson will offer another rendition of “Stump the Chumps,” we’re certain to have an excellent banquet speaker, and we are arranging at least one workshop or similar session on Sunday. Registration will open at 8 a.m. on Saturday, March 31, and will close on May 7 at 11:59 p.m., with late registration following (increased fee) until May 31 at 11:59 p.m. As you know, over 100 attendees generally register within the first couple hours, so be on your toes! We anticipate having a fun conference, with excellent birding and social time, so we hope to see you all there!

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Snow Geese in Skagit Valley
Your Predictions for the Next New Washington State Birds

Matt Bartels
Secretary, Washington Bird Records Committee

What’s next for Washington? Namely, what will be the next five bird species added to the official state list? The predictions for the third round of this contest are in, and now we just need the next new birds to arrive.

This time around we had 31 participants, many more than the 18 we had last time we held this contest in 2015. Not surprisingly, we also had a wider array of species predicted. Sixty-two species were mentioned by at least one person. Previous iterations of this game can be found in WOS News #32 and WOS News #162.

Ten species were mentioned by five or more participants: Virginia’s Warbler came out as the most frequently predicted species, with 12 votes. Black-vented Shearwater, with nine votes, and Nazca Booby, with seven, round out the top three. All three are also notably species with recent increases in sightings close to Washington. I think it is safe to assume this played into many people’s calculations. As I write, there’s a Virginia’s Warbler in Portland – we only need one to go a few miles farther north to have a new state bird.

Black-vented Shearwater moved up the coast in 2015 – three records were accepted for Oregon in 2015, but they haven’t yet been seen across our border. And as for Nazca Booby, a species split from Masked Booby in 2000, all California records have come since 2013, as better understanding of the field marks develops. Nevertheless, the species has yet to be seen north of the SF Bay Area.

The top ten is rounded out by the following species, each receiving five or six votes: Common Scoter, Neotropic Cormorant, Red-headed Woodpecker, Great Crested Flycatcher, Sedge Wren, Pine Warbler and Scarlet Tanager.

By tradition, we break out predictions of the Washington Bird Records Committee members from others – it is interesting to see if the birders most in the weeds of tracking new birds in the state are any better at predicting the future (so far, the answer has been ‘not really’). This time around WBRC members mentioned 27 species in their predictions, with six species receiving three or four votes. Those six were all in that overall top-ten list, so none are particularly surprising.

The 22 other participants listed 54 species, 15 of those species predicted by three or more people. Nine of those fifteen are in the ‘top ten’ listed above, but in addition the following species were popular among the non-WBRC participants: Chimney Swift, Black Skimmer, Least Bittern, Wrentit, Sprague’s Pipit and Worm-eating Warbler.

In previous articles, I’ve broken down the origin of the predicted birds and compared this to the pattern of arrival of past state-firsts. This time around, the breakdown is as follows: 42 percent of the predicted species are birds coming from East of us, 27 percent from the North (Alaska, Canada & Asia), 23 percent from South of us, and 7 percent from the ocean (“West”). That’s not terribly out of line with past records, though it skews a bit low for birds coming from the north.

Rather than focus on that again, it might be interesting to look instead at where these new birds might show up in Washington. Obviously, the first place to look recently has been Neah Bay, out on the NW tip of the Olympic Peninsula. Four of the last seven new species for Washington have shown up in Neah Bay. That’s pretty amazing for such a small area. That said, if we look at the last 50 species added to the state list, only one additional species (Lucy’s Warbler) was first found in Neah Bay. The frantic Neah Bay pace has really only been seen since 2014.

A big part of this has to do with the increased attention given the spot – who knows what else moved through Neah Bay before we were so focused on the spot? But in addition to this, there’s probably a degree to which the ‘Patagonia Picnic Table Effect’ can be invoked: Are more rare birds being found in Neah Bay because so many birders are concentrating their efforts on this one small area? Who knows how many new species might be missed elsewhere because so many birders are focused instead on Neah Bay in October and November?

Unfortunately, nowhere else seems quite as promising for such a wide variety of unexpected birds. A few participants offered suggestions of where we might look: Ocean Shores, along with the Skagit/Samish Flats, both traditionally great spots for shorebirds were mentioned. Obviously, a Westport Seabird trip is the likely place for one of the new pelagic species to show up. And Eastern Washington, where rarities have been less frequently found lately, is worth some thought. You’ve got the migrant traps of the Palouse and Columbia Basin – from Washtucna to

Continued on next page
the Tri-Cities to somewhere like Davenport Cemetery, there are promising locations that could use more eyes. The water around the dams up the Snake River and the Potholes region seem likely spots for a wayward heron or gull. Perhaps the most intriguing location was offered by Ken Knittle: The far southeast corner of the state, where you can explore the south side of the Blue Mountains and find some dry habitat that is more directly connected to Oregon.

Stay tuned to see what actually shows up – odds are at least some of the species mentioned will be found, and it couldn’t hurt to brush up on the field marks of the options included here….

Your Predictions for New State Birds (cont.)

Black-bellied Whistling Duck (GO)
Common Pochard (RH BLB)
COMMON SCOTER
(BS RH BLB CM BM)
Common Ground-Dove
(SF DS AH BLB)
Common Cuckoo (BLB)
Lesser Nighthawk (GO AS)
Chimney Swift (CW MH JI AS)
Rivoli’s Hummingbird (JF)
Common Gallinule (OO CR)
Common Sandpiper (BLB)
Green Sandpiper (RH)
Common Greenshank (SF BM)
Marsh Sandpiper (BB)
Dovekie (MDu)
Crested Auklet (BS)
Atlantic Puffin (EM)
Kelp Gull (MB)
Gull-billed Tern (MDe)
Royal Tern (AS)
Black Skimmer (MDe DK CR)
Streaked Shearwater (BS BT)
BLACK-VENTED SHEARWATER
(MB SD RH AH MH JI BM OO AP)

Black-bellied Storm-Petrel (DSc)
NAZCA BOOBY
(RM BW CW MDu AH JI)
Red-footed Booby (RS BB CM)
Northern Gannet (BT)
NEOTROPIC CORMORANT
(RS DS BT JF JI)
Least Bittern (CM OO AP)
Intermediate Egret (MDe)
Tricolored Heron (MH)
Reddish Egret (MDe)
Black Vulture (SF RS MDu CR)
Swallow-tailed Kite (MB)
Mississippi Kite (BB)
RED-HEADED WOODPECKER
(SF SD MDu DK OO CR)
Red-bellied Woodpecker (DSp)
GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER
(RM BS BW MH JI AS)
Brown Shrike (MDe)
Plumbeous Vireo (KK)
Yellow-green Vireo (SF DS AH)
CAVE SWALLOW (RS BS DS KK)
Winter Wren (RM JI)
SEDGE WREN
(RM RS SD KK EM AS)
Dusky Warbler (CR)
Yellow-browed Warbler (MB)
Arctic Warbler (DSc)
Wrentit (BB RH CM)
Wood Thrush (DSp)
Fieldfare (DSp)
Citrine Wagtail (EM)
Olive-backed Pipit (DK DSc)
Sprague’s Pipit (DK CM BM DSc)
Hawfinch (KK)
Black Rosy-Finch (DK)
Cassin’s Sparrow (CW)
Baird’s Sparrow (MB)
Worm-eating Warbler (AH MH AP)

PARTICIPANTS:

WBRC Members:
MB – Matt Bartels    DS – Dave Slager
SF – Shawneen Finnegan  BT – Bill Tweet
RM – Ryan Merrill    BW – Brad Waggoner
RS – Ryan Shaw    CW – Charlie Wright
BS - Bill Shelmerdine

Non-WBRC Members
BB - Blair Bernson    JI – Jon Isacoff
MDe – Mike Denny      KK - Ken Knittle
SD - Scott Downes      DK - Dave Kreft
MDu – Matt Dufort      BLB - Bruce LaBar
JF - Jason Fidorra     CM - Curtis Mahon
RH – Randy Hill     BM - Brooke McDonald
AH - Adrian Hinkle    EM - Evie Merrill
MH – Michael Hobbs     GO – Grace Oliver

OO – Ollie Oliver
AP - Alex Patia
CR - Chris Rurik
DSc - Doug Schonewald
AS - Alexander Sowers
DSp - Dalton Spencer
A Naturalist’s Notes on Books

Thomas Bancroft

Red-Tails in Love: Pale Male’s Story – A True Wildlife Drama in Central Park by Marie Winn

A Buteo dropped down from a black cherry tree and flew along the edge of the field before curling back into the woods. A hundred yards further down; I spotted the bird sitting on a red maple branch studying the understory. An immature red-tailed hawk was wintering near my sister’s farm in Western Pennsylvania.

The bird sat erect on a side branch with its head cocked slightly looking down into the understory. Its posture made me think of the book I had spotted by my sister’s reading chair that morning. I remember reading about the drama of the red-tail that nested in Central Park in the 1990s, but I had never read Marie Winn’s account.

The book is much more than a description of the red-tailed hawk nesting; it is story about birding in Central Park and the contingent of people who search this urban park for their avian friends. The book begins with a discussion of “The Bird Resister.” This communal notebook resides in the Loeb Boathouse, often near the packets of sugar, mayonnaise and mustard in the café. Birders record their sightings there and exchange information on what is happening in the park, often in much detail. In the next forty pages, she discusses the history of Central Park and a general overview of birding there. A detailed map in the book is helpful in understanding the relationships between all the locations. The main character, “Pale Male,” enters the story as young bird still with a brown-striped tail that has taken up residence in New York City.

The book follows the love life of this red-tailed hawk over six years. Even with its brown-striped tail feathers, Pale Male successfully paired with an adult female. During migration hawks and falcons are regularly seen flying over the park and some even stop to feed on the abundant food there, but this was the first pair of red-tails to take up residence and attempt to breed in decades.

The account of the birdwatchers in Central Park was one of the most enjoyable things about reading this book. A contingent took up the task of following closely the red-tail pair. The birders found a suitable bench for them to sit and watch the daily activity of these raptors. Some of their descriptions of the pair and their reactions to the pair’s behaviors made me laugh. As the details of each nesting attempt spilled out across the page, I felt the joys and sadness with the birders; the writing created a sense that I was present at the scene even though it all took place two decades ago. Pale Male spans the entire six years of this story, but he has to find several mates during this period. The tale about his mates is especially fascinating. In two years, the female wore a fish and wildlife service bands. The effort by the “Regulars” to read these bands, and the reason for their persistence was a beautiful thread of the story. They even talked an astronomer into bringing his huge telescope to the endeavor.

In between sections on the hawks are delightful accounts of other birds in the park. Finding wintering saw-whet and long-ear owls, taking a saw-whet pellet to the Museum of Natural History to discover what this individual had eaten, and following a male downy woodpecker that was discovered drilling a roost hole in mid winter. A human clan forms to watch this roost hole and see when the male enters and leaves, and then how he pairs with a female as spring comes a few months later. Someone is at the tree well before dawn and then again before dusk, watching intently. Often multiple observers are present and the conversations lively.

Continued on page 10
BOOK REVIEW

BIRDING WITHOUT BORDERS: An Obsession, a Quest, and the Biggest Year in the World by Noah Strycker

Cindy McCormack

Noah Strycker’s “Birding Without Borders” looks back to his 2015 quest to find at least 5000 bird species in a world-wide Big Year. This book does not cover the details of every day of his tour of 41 countries over seven continents, but does hit some of the highlights of his quest.

He efficiently summarizes and reflects on his year-long odyssey, considering not only the birds, but other wildlife, habitats, people, and situations. The sheer amount of planning and study he did before he set out is mind-boggling! The book was quite an easy read, and can be enjoyed even by those not afflicted with the birding bug.

“Birding Without Borders” was more about the experience than about individual sightings, although he included enough details to keep any bird enthusiast intrigued. I had to put aside the book several times to research some of the species he mentioned, since they were completely unknown to me. The effort to see such fabulous species such as the Diademed Sandpiper-Plover or Harpy Eagle were epic adventures, especially when compared to such amusing tales as Maria, the Giant Antpitta.

I found it a bit sad that he could not simply sit and enjoy most of the fascinating birds he saw, but as this was not his purpose, it was somewhat understandable. The accounts he did include were my favorite portions, quite memorable and enjoyable.

His goal of birding with local guides was admirable, especially the trust and camaraderie of the people sharing common interests. The excitement some shared for the superlative nature of his goal, and the gift of the surprise planning of his first record milestone of the Sri Lanka Frogmouths was especially appealing. I marveled at the kinship and generosity of complete strangers when it comes to sharing the wonder and excitement for nature. He touched on concerns others have for conservation, climate, and preservation. I was encouraged by increased popularity worldwide for our passion. What true birder isn’t also, to some degree, a conservationist?

I was rather disappointed that some of what I thought were very interesting experiences from his daily blog were not included and felt the book had room to include more of those encounters.

However, I also understand that he could not include every event of his world tour - that would be quite the massive tome! It was quite impressive that he could do so much with so little. I cannot imagine even going for two weeks with as little as he did for an entire year!

Perhaps this will also inspire me to get by with less when traveling. While my goals for birding are quite different, “Birding Without Borders” makes me look forward to my next opportunity to travel and certainly will influence how I plan and enjoy future trips.
...The increase in Anna’s Hummingbirds continues to amaze, as all WA birders know. The first Anna’s recorded on our CBC was one lone bird in 1994, and we never recorded more than three in any year until 2006. In the last decade their numbers increased exponentially, now over 300 this year. They are everywhere -- this year, 11 separate field parties counted 10 or more hummingbirds each. At this rate of increase, Anna’s Hummingbirds may soon become one of our top-ten species!

- Bob Boekelheide

“...The community is Galvin, a dot on my map, but not incorporated. 5:30 AM, and the stars were stunning. It's always so weird to see the spring constellations high in the sky in December - Leo, Cancer, Gemini, Virgo.

I followed a procedure that is pretty common for this kind of surveying - in areas not heavily birded, and with target species that are not particularly threatened in the area. Stopping every half mile or so, I'd listen for a bit....whistle for small owls first, and if unsuccessful, call for larger owls. One can have a bit more success by spending 10 -15 minutes at each stop, but I always start to get antsy about calling for owls for too long, and antsy about getting to enough places.

Around River Heights Road, up Cooks Hill Road, then down Mattson Road to the end (which ends near "Cook Hill"... interesting!). I got a surfeit of stars, a handful of phantom owl sounds that never repeated themselves clearly enough for me to be sure, and a single Barred Owl, calling "Who Cooks for you?" (From Cook Hill... coincidence?)” - Tim Brennan (blog at http://lewiscountybirding.blogspot.com)

**44th Annual Walla Walla Christmas Bird Count**

A record 53 counters along with 6 feeder watchers participated in the 44th Annual Walla Walla Christmas Bird Count on the 16th of December. Weather was good for birding but most areas reported little bird activity and very quiet especially in the higher elevations. 83 species were found on count day (average - had 93 in 2012) with Virginia Rail, Ring-billed Gull and N. Saw-
Highlights of a Few Christmas Bird Counts (continued)

whet Owl as count week additions. A total of 14,437 birds counted.

Record number of several species were found: Eurasian Collared-Dove 392 (previous high 195), Lesser Goldfinch 97 (14), Northern Flickers 366 (283), Common Goldeneye 13 (5) and Canada Goose at 2,598 - although these birds were flying over so may have been counted more than once - still a large number.

Anna’s Hummingbirds - 4, becoming normal here in winter. Higher numbers of both Golden and Bald

Eagles were seen.

Just a few Bohemian Waxwings, NO Common Redpolls, NO Crossbills, 1 Cassin’s Finch, 1 Evening Grosbeak. A reported Wilson’s Warbler has not yet been documented - but would be new to the count.

- MerryLynn Denny

Skagit Bay CBC

“...During pre-dawn owling on Camano Island as part of the Skagit Bay CBC on (January) the 1st, our group had 6 calling Great Horned Owls, for my first bird of the 2018. We went on to tally 97 species for the day, far and away my best outcome for this count (93 in Island County alone). Even though we missed some ‘easy’ birds, we did find several nice ones that made the day special: Townsend’s Solitaire, Black Scoter, Eared Grebe, Hutton’s Vireo, Hermit Thrush, and Orange-crowned Warbler.

- Scott Ramos

“...My son and I observed a Golden Eagle during the Skagit Bay CBC It was located around 3 p.m. at the top of a conifer towards the south end of Bradshaw Road to the east and downhill from the Rexville Grocery store. I’m afraid that the two photos through my spotting scope were rejected by the “list moderator,” so since I don’t know how to “put graphics on the web” as was suggested to me, if anyone would like to see the photos I’d be happy to send them to you via your personal email. After consulting our literature, we concluded that it was a second winter bird ....”

- Brien Meilleur

A Naturalist’s Notes on Books: Red Tails in Love (continued)

For me, one of the fascinating things in this book was how Winn described all the other birders, their contributions to birding in the park, and the conversations that took place. I felt like I had met many of them and learned about their passion for birds and a place important to birds. This is a delightful book, filled with great anecdotes on birds as well as a wonderful story of an individual red-tailed hawk.

Author’s note: For more than a decade, Marie Winn wrote a nature column for the Wall Street Journal. Some of her articles can be found at http://mariewinn.com/articles.htm
Our regional portal for eBird is eBird NW, and last year it had many great articles:

- Grassland Birds in Oregon’s Willamette Valley (Dec 11)
- Using eBird as a Land Trust Stewardship Tool (Sept 19)
- A note by Ryan Merrill on finding the Swallow-tailed Gull (Sep 7)
- Black Tern decline (Aug 8)
- The evolution of nests (July 13)
- White-breasted Nuthatches in the Northwest (Jun 8)
- Klamath raptors (Jun 3)
- Sandhill Cranes in WA (May 25)
- Seattle is an Urban Bird Treaty City (May 22)
- Using eBird data to help evaluate and develop Protected Areas in the Northwest (May 8)
- Analysis of the large Red Phalarope incursion in late fall 2016 (Mar 20)

If you are not looking at eBird NW regularly, you are missing an opportunity to learn more about birds, eBirding and conservation in the Northwest, and ways to help become a better birder. The eBird NW home page also includes a feed for recent rarity photos from OR and WA, and a link to resources for NW Birders. That section “About this Project” on the right hand side of the home page includes links for “About eBird Northwest,” “References for eBirders,” and “Citizen Science Projects.” The references link accesses all of the identification notes that have been posted on eBird NW to date, with treatment of problems that vex NW birders such as flicker races (is it a Yellow-shafted or an intergrade?), crows (what the heck is a Northwestern Crow?), or nuthatches (how can I tell a Slender-billed from Interior White-breasted Nuthatch?). The citizen science link provides information on how to participate in citizen science projects in the Northwest, in addition to eBird.

To get to eBird NW, either go directly to http://ebird.org/content/nw/, or from the eBird home page, click on the Portals link and scroll down to eBird Northwest. And, make sure you set eBird NW as your portal on settings for you eBird App. The eBird NW team is looking forward to a very birdy 2018, and we are eager to hear your thoughts on what else could be included to make eBird NW even more valuable to you. Contact us: Ellie Armstrong at eea@klamathbird.org or Bill Tweit at William.tweit@dfw.wa.gov

Editor's note: Bill Tweit is one of the co-founders of eBird NW.
Northern Spotted Owl
photo by Charles Bergman

Marsh Wren Nest
photo by Bill Anderson

Great Blue Heron Chicks
photo by David Gluckman
Fancher Flats glowed in the fading light. Stefan said, “Scan the cliffs for Chukars. They go to roost up in the rocks. I hope we aren’t too late.” Nothing moved in the freezing air, and it was difficult to see into the shadows.

The light had almost disappeared when a “chuck, chuck, chuck” came from our right. Over the next five minutes at least 50 Chukars climbed up the steep front. When they walked across snow patches, field marks were obvious, but they were just moving blobs on the talus. I noticed Stefan’s body relax as everyone peered through scopes. He didn’t need to be nervous about finding this specialty for he and Randy had shown us so much already. This unique bird closed our day in the Okanogan Highlands and the second of three days with Stefan Schlick and Randy Hill.

Twelve of us had joined these leaders to explore this cold, foggy country.

On the third morning, we raced south to stop by the jet fighter monument in Brewster. Four Red-necked Grebes, a rare bird right then for these inland waters, joined numerous other grebes, ducks, geese and a few loons in Lake Pateros. After a few minutes, we moved to the south side of the jet. A Double-crested Cormorant came flying from the south, heading north. Stefan said, “Watch the cormorant, and you can get that species for both Douglas and Okanogan counties.” I cringed, for I had failed the group; I’d entered everything into one checklist.

A quick stop along Grange Road netted a marvelous look at four American Tree Sparrows. On the way up Bridgeport Hill Road, Stefan pulled quickly off the road’s edge. A single Sharp-tailed Grouse munched buds on

Continued on page 18
The slurp-slurp-slurp followed by a pause then more slurping put me into a trance. For three years, I would visit my daughter weekly at her Georgetown apartment. We would head out someplace: going for a walk, picking up supplies for her, hitting a movie or checking out a bookstore, often stopping on the way back for a fortified fruit smoothie. She’d order tropical fruit, and I’d pick raspberry. My daughter would insist they add some nutrients and antioxidants to mine. We’d grab a seat outside if the weather was nice or a corner table where we could chat and slowly drink our concoctions. Slurping came when we were trying to get the last few sips from the bottom.

I opened my eyes, expecting to be sitting across from my daughter, but no. I was standing on the side of Wylie Slough Road with headsets over my ears and a directional microphone pointing across the road. A thin layer of water covered the fallow field, and the temperature hung in the high 30s. I was shivering but not from the smoothie.

Eight Trumpeter Swans stood in the muddy water, their necks bent in an “S” shape curve, and their bills were half submerged in the mucky mess. Their heads moved sideways, in quick even movements, and their mouths opened and shut rapidly. Four bright white adults fed not more than 50 yards from me as well as four equally large, grayish-white young of the year. Their elephantine legs held their bodies above the muddy water as they crept through the quagmire, gradually approaching where I froze, transfixed by their size.

These birds are large, 25 pounds, as much as a beagle, but larger because birds have hollow bones and large air sacks that displace fluids in their body cavities. In spite of their weight, they are graceful, strong fliers that return each winter to the Skagit from breeding grounds in the north. Two pairs -- each with their two full-grown young -- were having breakfast. These two families probably had flown together from an Alaska wilderness to winter in these agricultural fields.

These swans were pumping the slurry through their mouths, filtering out plant material. The back and forth motion of their heads moved the bills through the fresh brown suspension, continuing to churn up the water. Their bill lamellae acted like a sieve, and occasionally, a green stem or white root disappeared into a mouth.

I had watched Trumpeter Swans dig potatoes and graze on grass or growing grains, but never filter plant material from the dirty ooze.

When the cygnets first hatch, the parents take them to good feeding areas, often stirring up the water to make aquatic plants and animals more readily available. The young must eat on their own; the parents don’t feed them. These thoughts made me think about my younger days and what we ate at home. We had some variation but often certain nights were specific main courses of chicken, beef, or pork, always with potatoes. The vegetables did change with the seasons. I probably bucked eating beans and spinach. Now, one of the things I enjoyed most was trying new recipes, especially when traveling.

Swans have learned to exploit novel foods that weren’t part of the environment before Europeans arrived.

It is hard to imagine that the known Trumpeter Swan population was only 69 individuals in 1935. A few additional unrecorded flocks were hiding at the time in Canada and Alaska. Shooting them for their feathers, skin, and meat had decimated the once-widespread species. Protection and reintroductions have allowed the population to recover. In 2005, scientists estimated that numbers had climbed to more than 34,000. Now, the major threats to these birds are from ingesting lead shot and flying into power lines. Hunters don’t generally shoot them.

The adults started to call softly, so I grabbed my gear to leave them in peace.

Second sound recording:
**From the Board (continued)**

As Tom had discussed previously, the board is aware of the challenges that have developed regarding the ListServe out of Gonzaga, and we’ve been gathering information about alternative approaches. We intend to make a final decision by March 1, and are likely to go with either MailChimp or Constant Contact. The hope is that the service we choose will be able, at minimal cost to WOS, to facilitate record-keeping having to do with membership (easing the burden of time involvement for Ruth Godding, our membership chairperson), enable quick and convenient sending of email information to members from several sources within WOS, and avoid problems with sent emails being diverted to spam. Thank you for your patience as we work through this frustrating problem!

The Board is eager to encourage members to attend the regular monthly WOS meetings at the Center for Urban Horticulture, at 3501 N.E. 41st Street in Seattle. Knowing that attendance in person is impossible for many, the Go-To-Meeting option is being continually refined and improved, thanks to hard work by Elaine Chuang, assisted by Tom Bancroft. Cinny Burrell and Jean Trent have done a wonderful job organizing the presentations, and we appreciate April Carson’s stellar efforts regarding

**Continued on next page**

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### Washington Ornithological Society

#### Financial Statement

**For Year Ended December 31, 2017**

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<thead>
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**Income and Expenses**

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**Expenses**

- Administrative: $88
- Annual Conference Expenses: $9,188
- Annual Conference Refunds: $555
- Annual Conference Event Management - Planet Reg: $305
- Board Meetings: $533
- Clothing: $1,851
- Honorarium: $675
- Insurance: $2,247
- Monthly Meetings/Hospitality Expenses: $67
- Monthly Meetings/CUH Facility Rental: $3,578
- PayPal (Use Fee): $522
- Printing: $0
- PO Box Rental: $0
- PSYBF Awards: $2,493
- Postage: $0
- Publications: $1,061
- Storage Facility Rental: $714
- Taxes: $97

**Total Expenses**: $23,975

**Net Income**: $659
hospitality. We do attempt to send out an emailed notice before each monthly meeting, with details about accessing GTM, so be watching for that!

A couple of final, brief notes. First, the board will be sending out (probably in March) a survey soliciting information updates for a new membership directory, which we anticipate will be available to members either electronically or in booklet form. When this email arrives, please respond promptly with your answers, so this material can be available before the June conference. And second, our wonderful newsletter editor, Ron Post, is always looking for articles for upcoming newsletters, and welcomes submissions from all members. Let’s keep him busy with lots of great material to compile!
Targeted Species List for June Annual Conference at Hood River

Kevin Black

Wood Duck
Blue-Winged Teal
Cinnamon Teal
Hooded Merganser
Harlequin Duck
Ruddy Duck
California Quail
Chukar
Gray Partridge
Ruffed Grouse
Dusky Grouse
Wild Turkey
Western Grebe
American White Pelican
American Bittern
Great Egret
Green Heron
Black-Crowned Night Heron
Northern Goshawk
Red-Shouldered Hawk
Swainson’s Hawk
Ferruginous Hawk
Golden Eagle

Peregrine Falcon
Prairie Falcon
Virginia Rail
Sora
Sandhill Crane
Long-Billed Curlew
Caspian Tern
Barn Owl
Flammulated Owl
Western Screech-Owl
Northern Pygmy Owl
Burrowing Owl
Barred Owl
Northern Saw-Whet Owl

Acorn Woodpecker
Williamson’s Sapsucker
American Three-toed Woodpecker
Black-backed Woodpecker
Peregrine Falcon
Hammond’s Flycatcher
Gray Flycatcher
Dusky Flycatcher
Pacific-Slope Flycatcher
Ash-throated Flycatcher
Eastern Kingbird
Loggerhead Shrike
Warbling Vireo
Gray Jay
Western Scrub Jay
Pygmy Nuthatch
White-Breasted Nuthatch
Rock Wren
Canyon Wren

MacGillivray’s Warbler
Yellow Warbler
Yellow-breasted Chat
Black-Throated Gray Warbler
Hermit Warbler
Brewer’s Sparrow
Vesper Sparrow
Lark Sparrow
Sagebrush Sparrow
Grasshopper Sparrow
Lincoln’s Sparrow
Lazuli Bunting
Yellow-Headed Blackbird
Western Meadowlark
Bullock’s Oriole
Evening Grosbeak
Pine Grosbeak
Gray-Crowned Rosy-Finch
Purple Finch
Red Crossbill
Lesser Goldfinch
Field Trip Report: Winter Birds (cont.)

the top of a water birch. The chase cars saw half a dozen more flush when a Bald Eagle flew by.

The Waterville Plateau was windswept, cold, and foggy, but H Road gave us a large flock of Snow Buntings and Horned Larks as well as eight Gray Partridges. We ran up and down roads across the Plateau, stopping numerous times, pulling out the scopes to scan for Snowy Owls, shivering, but no luck. Four Common Redpolls, though, fed amongst some Horned Larks and fifty Bohemian Waxwings hid from the wind in a tall conifer in Withrow.

As everyone thanked Stefan and Randy for a wonderful three days of birding, I could see the relief on Stefan’s face. He said, “Good day, good day, anytime we can get six tier two birds, is a good day.”

It all had started early on Friday morning when we’d met at Omak Inn. First thing on Cameron Lake Road, a Golden Eagle sat on a pole. Fog enveloped the ponderosa pine forest farther up, and several stops were eerily quiet before the woods coughed up a pair of White-headed Woodpeckers. South of the forested area, we traveled across a wide-open landscape. The wind and fog made birding difficult, but we did find our first Snow Buntings and managed five brief looks at a distant Gyrfalcon. It teased us, flying short distances before disappearing over knolls, then reappearing. It was hunting, and Stefan was able to point out its unique flying style. At one spot, as we searched for the elusive falcon, another, a Merlin, appeared to fly right out of nowhere, almost hitting Randy on the head, before darting across the fields.

Back onto Highway 97, on a poplar tree at the weigh station sat 35 Bohemian Waxwings. As I studied them, Randy rattled off waterbirds in the Columbia River. Stefan hurried us back in the cars before I got a full count for the communal list, my first failure as the group’s eBird recorder. Bridgeport State Park was quiet, no people and little bird activity. Stefan said, “We’ll check each conifer, but please be quiet. We’re looking for Saw-whet Owls.” Sure enough, three individuals sat resting.

Continued on next page
Field Trip Report: Winter Birds (cont.)

No sign of a Sharp-tailed Grouse as we climbed to the Waterville Plateau. At a clump of sage along Heritage Road, several American Tree Sparrows perched in the open until a Northern Shrike appeared. In Mansfield, huge numbers of California Quail and Eurasian Collared-Doves hung around. On the way back out of the plateau, a Sharp-tailed Grouse flew across in front of the lead car. It stopped in a water birch, a nice species to close our first-day birding in Eastern Washington.

On the second morning, the Okanogan Highlands were draped in fog as we climbed Havillah Road. Stopping first to search Fancher Flats and Siwash Creek Road. Everything was quiet; five Bald Eagles slept. A Cooper’s Hawk and Northern Shrike gave us brief looks. Near a house and barn, some Gray Partridges still roosted.

Along Hungry Hollow Road, we stopped by a small ranch. Here I had found Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches just two days before, and Stefan and Randy had seen them near here on their scouting trip, but no luck. The owner drove up with his two big dogs in the front seat. “You guys okay?” “Yup, just looking for birds.” With a deep belly laugh, he said: “Just coming back from breakfast at the tavern in Chesaw.”

A mile down the road, more than 350 Snow Buntings fed among cattle. Eleven Gray Partridge clustered near the cows. Stefan said that if you see them out in the open, exposed; conditions must be tough. The snow did have a thick crust.

As we pulled into Chesaw, 16 Pine Grosbeaks flew into trees behind the tavern. As we studied these finches, a young man ran out of the tavern in his shirtsleeves. “Are the elk on the ridge?” His shoulders sank as he turned to get out of the freezing air when we said grosbeaks. Next 25 Common Redpolls flushed, landing in distant trees. After moving carefully across the ice-covered road, Stefan put his scope on one redpoll that sat in the sun.

Up Bolster Road, the fourth car spotted two Ruffed Grouse, nipping alder buds. On Hungry Hollow Road, a Great Horned Owl sunned itself in an abandoned barn. The rancher had spread fresh hay where the large flock of buntings had been. The bun-

Continued on page 30
Olympic Peninsula BirdFest is April 13-15


BIRD BRAINS

What do you think might happen in 2018?

I'm still trying to wrap my bill around 2017

R. Post cartoon
Birds listed in bold or capital letters represent birds on the state review list which requires documentation to be submitted to the Washington Bird Records Committee. This column strives to present the most unusual and interesting bird records of this reporting period along with a sampling of the more regular but still unusual species. For those looking for the most complete picture of birds reported during this season, one should check the online database eBird (www.eBird.org) in addition to this column.

An Emperor Goose spent the early part of the season in Clallam. Rare in the Puget Sound was a “Dusky” Canada Goose in Island in January. A Falcated Duck in Skagit for just a few days in January was the 5th record for the state, though 3rd for the county. A Common Eider in Pierce was the 4th for Washington and remained through the period after its discovery in early January. The state’s first winter record of Solitary Sandpiper spent the first half of December in Cowlitz. Typically the species is rarely seen after the end of September. Three Slaty-backed Gulls this period included the lingering bird in Pierce plus new birds discovered in Clallam and Grays Harbor.

A Band-tailed Pigeon spent more than a week in Walla Walla in February, well east of their usual haunts. A rare westside Acorn Woodpecker wintered in King. Even more surprising was a male Williamson’s Sapsucker present in Thurston in mid December. Both woodpeckers are found less than annually in western Washington. A Say’s Phoebe in Skagit in December was a species not found annually on the westside during winter before spring migrants start returning in mid February. Very early Northern Rough-winged Swallows were found in Snohomish in mid February. Two Blue-gray Gnatcatchers lingered into December at Neah Bay.

Continued on next page
The Bohemian Waxwing movement that began in November developed into the largest irruption in decades, with reports or dozens to hundreds across much of western WA. A Yellow Warbler in Asotin in early December is one of very few Washington winter records. A Chipping Sparrow in January in Skagit was a surprising winter record. The Clallam “Eastern” Song Sparrow remained at Neah Bay into early December. The state’s 2nd “Gray-headed” Junco spent a month in Klickitat.

A Rustic Bunting spent a week at Neah Bay in early to mid December, the 6th record for the state and first in Clallam. The Skagit Summer Tanager remained into the first week of December. An Orchard Oriole in Thurston in December was the 13th for the state and first for the county. A Cassin’s Finch at Neah Bay in early December was a surprising find, as was a “Type 2” Red Crossbill in Pierce in February, the latter of which has only been recorded on the westside a few times.

**EMPEROR GOOSE** Rare in WA: 1 at Dungeness Clallam 12/11 (JGc) to 1/1 (McB)

“Dusky” Canada Goose Rare locally: 1 at Iverson Spit Island 1/22 (DPo)

**FALCATED DUCK** Rare in WA: 1 at Bayview Skagit 1/15 to 1/17 (RKw)

**Eurasian Wigeon** High count: 112 at Samish Flats Skagit 2/11 (RyM,RSh)

**American Wigeon X Mallard** Reports included: 1 at Arlington Snohomish 1/17 (DPo)

**Mallard x American Black Duck** Rare in WA: 1 at Orting Pierce 2/5 (WiB)

**Cinnamon Teal** Rare locally in winter: 1 at Mount Vernon Skagit 12/4 (GB)

**Mallard X Northern Pintail** Reports included: 1 at Fir Island Skagit 1/16 (RyM), 1 at Bayview Skagit 1/18 (ErH)

“Eurasian” Green-winged Teal Uncommon in WA: 1 at Bingen Klickitat 2/6 (SJ), 1 at Tacoma Pierce 1/15 to 2/19 (JGl,AdL), 1 at Birch Bay Whatcom 1/24 (ErH)

**Canvasback** Reports included: 43 at Mayfield Lewis 1/1 (eBird)

**Redhead** High count: 2,200 at Flying Goose Ranch Pend Oreille 2/17 (TLi)

**Tufted Duck** Reports included: 1 continuing at Waatch River Clallam through 1/30 (eBird)

**Tufted Duck x Scaup** Rare in WA: 1 at Capitol Lake Thurston 12/18 (KBd)

**COMMON EIDER** Rare in WA: 1 at Purdy Pierce 1/5+ (KB)

**Long-tailed Duck** Reports from e WA included: 1 at Electric City Grant 12/17 (RaM)

**Common x Barrows Goldeneye** Reports included: 1 at Samish Island Skagit 12/31 (RyM), 1 at Bowerman
Washington Field Notes (continued)

Basin Grays Harbor 2/23 (eBird)

**Barrow's Goldeneye** Uncommon locally: 3 at Neah Bay Clallam 12/10 (JRp), 1 at Elma Grays Harbor 1/16 (BT,WhJ), 2 at Hoquiam STP Grays Harbor 1/29 (BS)

**Red-breasted Merganser** Reports included: 26 at Banks Lake Grant 12/30 (MY), 3 at Washougal Clark 1/22 (JDz), 3 at Evans Stevens 2/20 (DBg)

**Ruddy Duck** Reports included: 286 at Big Lake Skagit 2/22 (eBird)

**Sharp-tailed Grouse** Reports included: 40 at Scotch Creek WMA Okanogan 12/27 (SSc,RyA)

**Red-throated Loon** High count: 1,630 at Rosario Beach Skagit 12/23 (RyM) with 1,500 there 1/21 (NSa)

**Yellow-billed Loon** Reports included: 1 at Libbey Beach Island 12/4 (Jay Adams), 1 at Shipwreck Point Clallam 12/18 (CWr,LWr), 1 at Ediz Hook Clallam 1/6 (McB), 1 at Rosario Beach Skagit 1/17 (eBird) to 2/4 (TSI), 1 at Port Angeles Clallam 1/23 (JGc), 1 at Port Townsend Jefferson 2/5 (RKw)

**Clark's Grebe** Reports included: 1 continues at Neah Bay Clallam 12/1 (RyM)

**Pelagic Cormorant** Rare locally: 1 continues at Woodland Cowlitz 12/4 (RKo)

**Great Egret** High count: 137 at Woodland Cowlitz 12/11 (RKo)

**Black-crowned Night-Heron** Reports from w WA included: 1 at Ridgefield NWR Clark 1/6 (BWf), 1 at Dungeness Clallam 1/23 (McB)

**Turkey Vulture** Uncommon in winter: 1 at Marymoor Park King 1/12 (MiH), 1 at Ebey’s Landing Island 2/12 (LnS)

**Red-shouldered Hawk** Rare in e WA: 1 at Ellensburg Kittitas 12/3 (SGi) to 12/18 (SAd,MiH). Reports from expanding range included: 1 at Kent Ponds King 12/1 (CCl), 3 at Ridgefield NWR Clark 12/4 (CWr,RO), 1 at Chinook Valley Pacific 1/20 (BWe,PWe) to 2/24 (DSI)

**Ferruginous Hawk** Reports included: 1 at Richland Benton 1/27 (JCr)

**Golden Eagle** Reports from w WA included: 1 at Waatch River Clallam 12/17 (FL), 1 near Port Ludlow Jefferson 1/29 (CWr,LWr), 1 at Stanwood Snohomish 1/31 (MaB), 3 at Acme Whatcom 2/26 (NSa)

**Gyrfalcon** Reports included: 1 at Samish Flats Skagit 1/25 (HJF), 1 west of Mansfield Douglas 1/29 (MSp)

**Prairie Falcon** Uncommon in w WA: 1 at Samish Flats Skagit 1/29 (CzH), 1 at Skagit Flats Skagit 2/5 (MBk), 1 at Skagit WMA Skagit 2/18 (AdL,KIg)

**Sora** Rare in e WA in winter: 2 east of Ephrata Grant 1/30 (MY)

**Sandhill Crane** Reports included: 1 at Point Defiance Pierce 12/11 (ByO), 1 at Snohomish Snohomish 1/6 (JAm)

**Pacific Golden-Plover** Rare in winter: 1 at Sequim Clallam 12/3+ (McB)

Continued on page 25
2018 Trip Schedule for Westport Seabirds

All of these trips go offshore to one of three deep water canyons approximately 28 miles offshore. These canyons are just beyond the edge of the continental shelf and reach water depths in excess of 3,000 feet. The boats have many expert guides. You may want to choose a mid-summer trip leaving at 5:30 a.m. to get a little further offshore, where Leach’s Storm-Petrels could be present.

2018 Sailing Schedule

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Solitary Sandpiper Rare in winter: 1 at Olequa Cowlitz 12/1 to 12/14 (RKo)

Willet Uncommon locally: 1 at Dungeness Clallam 12/10+ (McB)

Marbled Godwit Uncommon locally: 1 at Belfair Mason 2/22 (KB)

Ruddy Turnstone Uncommon in WA in winter: 1 at Semiahmoo Whatcom 1/5 (ErH)

Rock Sandpiper Uncommon locally: 1 at Rosario Beach Skagit 12/4 (AxP) to 2/25 (GB)

Wilson’s Snipe Reports included: 62 at Juanita Bay King 2/6 (AdL)

Red Phalarope Uncommon locally: 3 at Point No Point Kitsap 12/1 (KB,HVo), 7 at Chambers Bay Pierce 12/4 (eBird), 1 at Sandy Point Whatcom 12/4 (IN)

Franklin’s Gull Late report: 1 at Mount Vernon Skagit 12/5 (RyM)

Lesser Black-backed Gull Uncommon in WA: 1 at Walla Walla RD Walla Walla 2/12 (MlD)

SLATY-BACKED GULL Rare in WA: 1 at Tacoma Pierce continues through the period, 1 at Neah Bay Clallam 1/12 (BT,BL) to 1/19 (JGc), 1 at Westport Grays Harbor 2/4 (BS,BL)

Glaucous Gull Reports included: 1 at Neah Bay Clallam 12/1 (RyM), 1 at Seattle King 12/31 (fide MtB)

Ancient Murrelet Reports included: 22 at Point Defiance Pierce 12/5 (BL)

Cassin’s Auklet Uncommon locally: 3 near Tacoma Pierce 12/17 (CWr,BL), 1 near Turn Island San Juan 2/18 (CWr,LWr)

Band-tailed Pigeon Rare locally: 1 at College Place Walla Walla 2/16 (MID) to 2/22 (eBird)

Monk Parakeet Introduced species: 5 at Yacolt Clark 12/11 (JAn)

Snowy Owl Reports included: 1 at Samish Flats Skagit 1/13 (CtS), 1 at Waterville Plateau Douglas 1/30 (MSp)

Burrowing Owl Rare in w WA: 1 at American Camp San Juan continued through 12/18 (eBird)

Long-eared Owl Reports from w WA included: 1 at Leque Island Snohomish 12/2 (eBird) to 1/14 (JaC), 2 at Waatch River Clallam 12/18 (RyM,CWr), 1 at Magnuson Park King 1/13 (SeR) and 2/13 (BPe), 1 dead at March Point Skagit 2/21 (fide PPr)

Anna’s Hummingbird Reports from expanding range included: 3 at Walla Walla Walla Walla 12/5 (eBird), 2 at Clarkston Asotin 12/8 (CTe)

Rufous Hummingbird Rare as a wintering bird: 1 at Ballard King 12/31 (fide MtB). Early reports: 1 at Everson Whatcom 2/13 (PDB), 1 at San Juan Island San Juan 2/23 (fide BJe)

Acorn Woodpecker Rare in w WA: 1 at Sammamish King 1/23 (MtB) to 2/12 (MtD)

Williamson’s Sapsucker Rare in w WA: 1 at Lacey Thurston 12/17 (EK)
Red-naped Sapsucker Uncommon in winter in WA: 1 at Sequim Clallam 12/14 (Sally M. Harris), 1 at Bellingham Whatcom 2/11 (Roger Iverson)

Red-breasted Sapsucker Rare locally: 1 at Pullman Whitman 12/17 (RJB), 1 at Richland Benton 12/25 (JAb,KAb), 1 at Walla Walla Walla Walla 1/8 (fide MID)

Black-backed Woodpecker Uncommon locally: 1 at Stevens Pass King 1/27 (DaP), 1 at Spokane Spokane 2/9 (TLi)

Black Phoebe Reports from expanding range included: 1 at Mount Vernon Skagit 12/5 (StL), 1 at Tacoma Pierce 1/26+ (WiB)

Say’s Phoebe Rare in winter in w WA: 1 at Dodge Valley Skagit 12/25 (Spd). Migrant reports from w WA included: 4 at Steigerwald Lake NWR Clark 2/20 (eBird), 1 at Woodland Cowlitz 2/23 (RKo), 1 at Randle Lewis 2/23 (KK), 1 at Corkindale Skagit 2/26 (RyM), 1 at Norman Snohomish 2/27 (SpH)

Tropical Kingbird Late report: 1 at Ocean Shores Grays Harbor 12/7 (eBird)

Blue Jay Reports included: 1 at Mansfield Douglas 12/4+ (SCf)

California Scrub-Jay Reports from expanding range included: 1 at Ellensburg Kittitas 12/17 (DeE), 1 at Sequim Clallam 12/31 (MiH), 3 at Mount Vernon Skagit 2/27 (GB), 1 at Wenatchee Chelan 2/27 (JVv)

Clark’s Nutcracker High count: 210 at Winthrop Okanogan 1/9 (CWr,LWr)

Horned Lark Reports included: 30 at Steigerwald Lake NWR Clark 1/23 (Russ Smith, RH), 1 at Marymoor Park King 2/16 (MiH)

Northern Rough-winged Swallow Early report: 3 at Tulalip Bay Snohomish 2/18 (MRe)

Barn Swallow Uncommon in winter: 2 at Hoquiam STP Grays Harbor 12/24 (AS,ElS), 5 at Renton King 1/20 (MaB)

Mountain Chickadee Uncommon in w WA in winter: 1 at Coronet Bay Island 12/31 (SEl)

Rock Wren Uncommon in w WA: 1 at Birch Bay Whatcom 1/7 to 2/1 (EEI)

BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER Rare in WA: 2 remained at Neah Bay Clallam 12/1 (RyM) with 1 there 12/6 (CBr,MiH)

Western Bluebird Reports included: 5 at Gardiner Jefferson 1/4 (JGc)

Mountain Bluebird Uncommon in winter: 1 at Conway Skagit 1/1 to 1/3 (KuR)

Townsend’s Solitaire Reports included: 1 at Larch Mountain Clark 12/7 (JDz), 1 at Iverson Spit Island 1/22 (DPo)

Northern Mockingbird Uncommon in WA: 1 at Ocean Park Pacific 12/31+ (eBird), 1 at Kirkland King 1/16 (MiH) to 2/2 (SGi), 1 at Richland Benton 1/18 (JCr), 1 west of Othello Adams 2/24 (RTa)

Continued on next page
Bohemian Waxwing Uncommon and irruptive in w WA: 2 at Marymoor Park King 12/1 (MiH), 88 at Snow Mountain Yakima 12/2 (DGr), 1 at Larch Mountain Clark 12/7 (JDz), 4 at Bellingham Whatcom 12/8 (ErH) and 36 there 1/23 (JMe), 3 at Acme Whatcom 12/9 with 38 there 12/13 (NSa), 102 at Skagit WMA Skagit 12/9 (DPo) with 70 there 12/17 (MaB), 160 at Jamestown Clallam 12/10 (RyM) with 225 there 12/19 (BWg,DWg), 1 at Theler Wetland Mason 12/10 (MtB) and 1/12 (FM,JRi), 6 at Sauk Prairie Skagit 12/12 (RyM), 19 at Darlington Snohomish 12/12 (RyM), 10 at Diablo Whatcom 12/12 (RyM), 5 at Discovery Park King 12/16 (JV) with 25 there 1/21 (MtD), 510 at Pullman Whitman 12/17 (RJB), 1 at Seward Park King 12/18 (JeB), 2 at Juanita Bay King 12/22 (AdL), 3 at Bainbridge Island Kitsap 12/23 (BWg) with 10 there 12/29 (CzH), 7 at Magnuson Park King 12/24 (ScR), 2 at Marrowstone Island Jefferson 12/26 (BWg), 200 at Yakima Yakima 12/27 (DGr), 17 at Tulalip Bay Snohomish 12/28 (MRe), 5 at Port Townsend Jefferson 12/29 (DWg), 1 at Restoration Point Kitsap 1/7 (GG,JAc), 25 at Blaine Whatcom 1/9 (JMe), 1 at Tacoma Pierce 1/23 (WiB), 75 at Deer Park Road Clallam 1/30 (MHg)

Yellow Warbler Late report: 1 at Clarkston Asotin 12/3 (CLb)

Palm Warbler Reports included: 6 at Neah Bay Clallam 12/1 (RyM), 1 continued at Edmonds Snohomish through 1/5 (eBird), 1 at Mount Vernon Skagit 12/5 (RyM), 1 at Vancouver Clark 12/14 (RyA), 1 at Willow Grove Cowlitz 12/17 (Rko), 1 at Hoquiam STP Grays Harbor 12/24 (AS,ElS), 2 at Dungeness Clallam 1/6 (McB,GG), 1 at Ediz Hook Clallam 1/12 (McB), 1 at Tokeland Pacific 2/4 (BL,BS)

Northern Waterthrush Uncommon in w WA: 1 at Skagit WMA Skagit 12/23 (RyM,Daniel Field)

Common Yellowthroat Uncommon in winter: 1 at Longview Cowlitz 12/7 (Rko), 1 at Port Angeles Clallam 12/10 (eBird), 1 at Juanita King through the period (AdL)

American Tree Sparrow Reports from w WA included: 1 at Mount Vernon Skagit 12/3 (BT,WhJ) with 2 there 12/5 (RyM) to 2/16 (SPd), 1 at Vancouver Clark 1/25 to 1/31 (eBird)

Chipping Sparrow Rare in winter: 1 at Sedro Woolley Skagit 1/1 (eBird)

Clay-colored Sparrow Uncommon in w WA: 1 at Waatch River Clallam 12/1 to 12/12 (AAk)

Sagebrush Sparrow Reports included: 1 near Vernita Bridge Benton 2/16 (LN)

“EASTERN” SONG SPARROW Rare in WA: 1 remained at Neah Bay Clallam until 12/5 (eBird)

Swamp Sparrow Reports included: 1 at Neah Bay Clallam 12/1 (RyM), 1 at Lyman Skagit 12/11 to 1/8 (GB), 1 at Asotin Asotin 12/18 (CLd), 1 at Lyons Ferry Franklin 12/26 (TLi), 1 at Washburn Island Okanogan 12/27 (RyA,SSc), 1 at Vancouver Clark 1/23 (KBl), 1 at Hamilton Skagit 2/5 (GB), 1 at Quilcene Jefferson 2/10 (MtB), 1 at Toutle Cowlitz 2/17 (Rko)

“Red” Fox Sparrow Uncommon in WA: 1 at Carkeek Park King 1/26 (SPd) to 2/7 (AdL,JRp), 1 at Bingen Klickitat 2/3 to 2/12 (SJ)

“GRAY-HEADED” DARK-EYED JUNCO Rare in WA: 1 at Trout Lake Klickitat 1/2 to 2/12 (Jim & Kathy White)

Harris’s Sparrow Reports included: 1 at Waatch River Clallam 12/4 to 12/9 (AAk), 1 at Richland Benton 12/9 with 2 there 2/8 (JCr), 1 at Toppenish Yakima 12/17 (ErH,AKW), 1 at Neah Bay Clallam 12/18 (SGr) to 1/30
Golden-crowned Sparrow Uncommon locally: 1 at Bridgeport Douglas 12/22 (MSp)
RUSTIC BUNTING Rare in WA: 1 at Neah Bay Clallam 12/6 to 12/12 (CBr)
SUMMER TANAGER Rare in WA: 1 at Mount Vernon Skagit through 12/3 (RoK,BT)
Western Tanager Uncommon in winter: 1 at Seattle King 12/30 (ScR), 1 at Vancouver Clark 1/17 (eBird)
Western Meadowlark High count: 115 at Samish Flats Skagit 1/15 (RyM) 
Yellow-headed Blackbird High count for winter: 185 at McNary NWR Walla Walla 2/18 (MID,MD)
Rusty Blackbird Uncommon in WA: 1 at Francis Road Skagit 12/3+ (BT,WhJ), 1 at Norman Snohomish 2/4 (MaB)
ORCHARD ORIOLE Rare in WA: 1 at Johnson Point Thurston 12/18 to 12/24 (BT,TS)
Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch High count: 1,000 at Scotch Creek WMA Okanogan 2/18 (ShT,ScR)
Purple Finch High count: 123 at Skagit WMA Skagit 12/23 (RyM,Daniel Field)
Cassin’s Finch Rare locally: 1 at Neah Bay Clallam 12/1 (RyM). Reports included: 4 at Stevens Pass King 1/27 (DaP)
“Type 2” Red Crossbill Rare in w WA: 1 at Fort Lewis Pierce 2/25 (WiB)
White-winged Crossbill Rare locally: 2 at Larch Mountain C Clark 12/22 (JDz). Uncommon locally: 1 at Pullman Whitman 12/12 (fide RJB)
Lesser Goldfinch Reports from expanding range included: 1 at Fox Island Pierce 12/12 (BL), 1 at Electric City Grant 12/27 to 1/8 (RaM), 1 at Yakima Yakima 1/1 (RRe)
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tings and partridges were still there and so were more than 100 Gray-crowned Rosy Finches. Ten scopes gave everyone opportunities to study these magnificent birds.

Mary Ann Road was dead quiet, no Northern Pygmy-Owls! One car spotted another Ruffed Grouse picking grass seeds. All of a sudden, a long-tailed weasel shot out from under a snow bank and then back into cover. The grouse moved into the bush. Then the weasel came out again, carrying a massive vole in its mouth and raced across the opening.

No Northern Pygmy-Owl yet as we started down Havillah Road with the light fading. As we dropped through the ponderosa pine belt, Stefan fretted that we might not find one. All of a sudden, he pushed hard on the breaks as he said over the radios to the other cars, “That bird on the wire a quarter mile back looks promising.” The little round ball of feathers sitting on the power line was clearly our quest. The owl kept twisting its head, one way and then the other, its eyes, sharp, focused and intense. A few Mountain Chickadees scolded in the distance.

Stefan and Randy had pulled yet another good bird out of this frozen landscape. Joy then radiated from our party, and Stefan and Randy had seemed pleased. One last stop, Fancher Flats, was left on our second day. Yes, birding in the winter landscape with great leaders was truly marvelous.