

ON PAGE 3: NEWS ABOUT VOLUME 12 OF WASHINGTON BIRDS, now available online at wos.org



Washington Ornithological Society

Tom Bancroft writes about Rufous Hummingbirds: pg. 9



WOSNews No. 177 Dec. 2018 - Jan. 2019

From the Board Eric Dudley

Greetings to WOS members everywhere, and I hope you and your families had a wonderful Thanksgiving. It will be my privilege to serve as WOS President for the coming year, and I look forward to continuing many of the initiatives put in motion by our past-President, Cindy McCormack. May I take this opportunity to thank Cindy for all her hard work and success leading WOS over the last year?!

In looking at some recent developments, we have several folks who are very deserving of thanks and appreciation. Our Secretary, Tom Bancroft, has been working with Constant Contact to effectively communicate with our membership about things such as the

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Wait is Over for Urban Raptor Conservancy's 501(c)(3) status

By the Editor

Just like our contented families at a late-season holiday dinner table, most Cooper's Hawks in Seattle are constantly splurging: "It's pigeons, pigeons and more pigeons," said hawkaholic Ed Deal, who with Martin Muller and Patti Loesche has formed the Urban Raptor Conservancy, with the purpose of studying the effects of rodenticides and watching over and keeping track of our fearsome, winged urban predators.

The group's 501(c)(3) status was officially acknowledged recently.

"We have verbal provisional approval, but I am just waiting to get that letter in my hands," Deal said in a phone

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The Status of Washington's Seabirds

Studying Pelagics Takes a Lot of Time and Resources; Pollutants and Warming Ocean Affect Both Habitat and Prey

Ron Post

Well over 100 species of seabirds appear in the Salish Sea and along Washington's coastal waters, while fewer than a couple dozen seabirds breed in these areas. When scientists head out to survey their numbers and location, it can be dangerous work, much like a rural doctor reaching out to victims of some terrible disease.

In the seabirds' case such a metaphor is not quite right, however. The scientists, though they do face hazards, are



Ryan Merrill photo

more like epidemiologists. Human populations benefit from the practice of epidemiology, and those who are interested in seabird populations can also use informa-

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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, in particular those not in the Seattle area, have a way to attend - virtually. You can do this via computer, smart phone or tablet using the videoconferencing program GoToMeeting (GTM). Please consider trying it out at least once, no matter where you live, and remember that remote attendance is yours as a benefit of WOS membership. Watch for a date-specific e-mail with an easy "hyperlink" and "access code" before each meeting, October through June.

WOS Monthly Meeting
Mon [date] [time]

Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone
https://global.gotomeeting.com/joinxxxxxxxxxx

You can also dial in using your phone
United States: +1 (646) 749-3122

Access Code: XXX-XXX-XXX

First GoToMeeting? Let's do a quick system check:
https://link.gotomeeting.com/system-check

Q & A with Ed Swan about the New Washington Birds Volume 12

Q: This edition of WA Birds (Vol. 12) is so full of gems, were you tempted to save some articles for Vol. 13?

A: With the large, active birding community that we have across the state, the deciding factor on articles to include and when to publish came down to we just needed to draw a line and get it done. A couple of articles almost ended up being in Volume 13 because of the timing logistics for getting them in. Washington has a large variety of habitats and landscapes and the expert birders and professional ornithologists to write about the birds that inhabit those areas. There's so much to cover that it's hard to not keep adding just one more article. Finally, I had to set a firm date and see what we all had accomplished.



Q: Tell us about your editorial process in the submission stages. How did most of these articles land - or did you go out and search for them?

A: While there is a lot to write about that could go in Washington Birds, potential articles don't just pop up out of nowhere into the WOS email box. Except for the article on swift predation and the Washington Bird Records Committee (WBRC) Reports, I had to actively solicit and pitch the idea of articles to potential authors. I think that keeping Washington Birds to a consistent publication schedule of every year to two years requires setting one or two broad themes and then seeking out the people who possess the knowledge and skills to flesh out particular pieces within the overall scheme. For Volume 12, I wanted to catch up our WBRC coverage and look at new bird species that joined the Washington State list since 2005, when the last big work on Washington Birds, Wahl et al.'s "The Birds of Washington State" came out. I think we ended up with a volume that will have several items of interest to anyone seriously interested in birds in Washington State.

Q: Does WA Birds now have a set schedule?

A: Following a model of soliciting authors to write specific articles within a couple of overarching themes, I hope we'll see a Washington Birds volume come out now every 12-24 months. We'll be paying a lot of attention to when the WBRC has a report to publish so that we'll hopefully keep to within a few months of their schedule. However, because we're online now, we don't have a minimum page number requirement as we did in the past in order to publish so there may be some volumes that don't include a WBRC report.

Q: Are you awaiting any specific species information for future editions of the journal?

A: Volume 13 will include more species accounts of birds new to the Washington State list since 2005. At this time, we still have about 15 or 16 uncovered, we only got about half of the species in Volume 12. Hopefully we'll get most of the rest in Volume 13 and afterwards just have a few each time to keep up with new records.

I hope in Volume 13 to spread into species accounts that deal with regularly occurring species of Washington birds that are experiencing challenges or changes up or down in population. I think it would be interesting to have articles that follow up on Dennis Paulson's 1992 article, "Northwest Bird Diversity: From Extravagant Past and Changing Present to Precarious Future." There's a lot of focus on particular now rare species such as the Marbled Murrelet or Spotted Owl but perhaps birders could enjoy seeing a wider analysis of changes occur-

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Meet New WOS President Eric Dudley

Newly elected President Eric Dudley is a retired veterinarian and a “vet” in more ways than one. He’s a veteran WOS board member, just entering his fourth year.

“Penny and Jim and Cindy are really dedicated and that has been an inspiration,” he said in a phone interview recently, referring to the past three WOS presidents.

Dudley likes to travel and says he plans to see more of Washington state now that retirement allows him to do more extensive birding. An Oregon native and lifelong birder, he has taken trips to the Galapagos Islands, Svalbard, the far-north Norwegian archipelago, Cape May, Hawk Mountain, and the southern United States. At home in Gig Harbor, he watches the local family of pileated woodpeckers around his feeder, reads extensively and plays music. Dudley is well positioned to lead WOS as he ran his own business for 25 years. “That does have some utility in getting into this job.”

His goals for WOS? “I’d like to help make it easier for members and prospective members to interact with WOS,” he says, mentioning the upcoming membership directory and the use of GoToMeeting, a way for distant computer users to attend the monthly meetings online. “We’ve been doing a number of good things, as always” he adds.

Dudley has a son who is a winemaker in the Willamette Valley and an archeologist-daughter who works for a travel company. He and his wife, who were just wed in July of 2018, take a special interest in raptors and may be seen with their eyes upward outside church, on lengthy walks or any number of places.



American Kestrel

George Lamson photo

From the Board (continued)

monthly meetings in Seattle (and the GoToMeeting option for attendance remotely!), field trips that are upcoming, our recent election of officers, and so forth. The Board's impression is that Constant Contact is working well for WOS, but if anyone is still experiencing problems receiving communications, please let us know! Next,

Next, Ed Swan's magnificent edition of Washington Birds is available at our website, WOS.org: it was some time aborning, but well worth the wait! Thank you, Ed!! Also worthy of special note have been Jane Hadley's, and Randy Robinson's, exceptional efforts recently to 1) get Washington Birds onto the website and available to members as soon as Ed had it ready; 2) succeed in getting the Tweepers archive set up so it can be accessed via tablet and smartphone; and, 3) working with Amy Powell and her husband, William, in recovering the WOS data that had been (shall we say) "misplaced" by our web-hosting service a couple of months ago. Disaster was averted, and the Board will be looking, in our December meeting, at avenues to pursue to avoid similar mix-ups in the future.

And finally, thanks to Jim Danzenbaker for gathering the information on CBCs around the state, which Jane promptly got onto the website. I hope everyone can participate in at least one CBC this year. It's a lot of fun, and excellent "citizen science!"

Plans for our WOS Conference, 2019, are continuing. We had last been to Moses Lake in 1988, the year of WOS's inception, and the Board felt it was time to return there! The dates will be May 9-13, which, we have noted, is Mother's Day Weekend.

The Board felt that it was important to try to catch the window of opportunity for Spring migrants at about that time, and we also felt we should extend ourselves to be sure to include Dennis Paulson and his usual program ("Stump the Experts") on Friday evening. We hope many moms will find it acceptable to be birding with their friends and family in Moses Lake that weekend! I promise we'll toast the moms on Saturday night! Faye McAdams Hands has been working with the Best Western Lakefront Hotel to make the arrangements with them, and Bob

Flores has accepted a call to organize and execute the array of field trips for the conference.

Our Keynote Speaker on Saturday night will be Nathan Pieplow, who has recently published a book on bird sounds in the Peterson Field Guide Series. Nathan also will conduct a workshop for us, likely on one of the afternoons, TBA.

I also think we may have a prospective recipient for the Zella M. Schultz Lifetime Achievement Award this year: stand by for further information!

I hope I have whetted your appetite for all things WOS for the coming year. We have many wonderful volunteers who are working diligently for our members. WOS is entirely "staffed" by volunteers, as you know, and we invite you to "step up" if something we're doing (or SHOULD be doing!) piques your interest in involvement. Ed Swan and Ron Post (our WOSNews Editor) both would love to have articles submitted for publication, whether it be in the newsletter or the next edition of Washington Birds, if appropriate. Elaine Chuang and Jennifer Kaufman will both want me to

urge you to try GTM for the Monthly Meeting: it really is great, and a fine service for members! If you have ideas for areas where WOS should be involved, please let me, or any Board member, know.

My wife, Mary Kay, and I wish you a wonderful holiday season.

Plans for our WOS Conference, 2019, are continuing. We had last been to Moses Lake in 1988, the year of WOS's inception, and the Board felt it was time to return there! The dates will be May 9-13, which, we have noted, is Mother's Day Weekend.

Ornithologically yours,
Eric Dudley, D.V.M., WOS President



Byron Chin photo

Heerman's Gull

Urban Raptor Conservancy now a 501(c)3 (cont.)

interview.

Deal and his partners have seen almost everything there is to see on the urban raptor front. Almost.

“If someone finds a sharp-shinned nest in the city, I would really like to know,” he lamented. Sharpies, he explained, have a somewhat different prey base and thus occupy slightly different habitats than fellow ac-

Banded Cooper’s Hawk



Ed Deal photo

cipiters, Cooper’s, whose urban nests recently numbered about 40.

Deal once found the leg of a sharpie beside the nest of a peregrine falcon on top of a downtown Seattle building. He’s seen stranger things, such as the “Crow Mafia.” If you don’t know the story, figure that one out.

The Conservancy will be working with PAWS Wildlife Center to achieve a large sample of urban raptor tissues that will be sent to Louisiana State University for rodenticide analysis. Among some of its dream projects the group also would like to track raptors using small locators.

“Data loggers would be a really tantalizing thing to use.”

For now, toxin samples and density and health of raptor species are the main focus of the non-profit’s work.

“Those three do a tremendous amount of exhausting field work and they are asking a lot of good questions,” said Bud Anderson, of the Falcon Research Group. Anderson and Deal banded birds together in the San Juan Islands and elsewhere for 17 years.

“Ed is an extremely competent researcher.”

To see more about the group’s work and find out how to donate to the non-profit, see below.



Ed Deal

Go to:

<http://urbanraptorconservancy.org/raptor-science.html>

and to:

<http://urbanraptorconservancy.org/donate.html>

To find out how to report a banded raptor sighting, go to:

<http://urbanraptorconservancy.org/report-a-sighting.html>

To read a Crosscut feature article about Deal’s work, go to:

<http://urbanraptorconservancy.org/urc-in-the-media.html>

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Q & A with Ed Swan about WA Birds (cont.)

ring in the state and region. I'm also interested in articles dealing with changes in habitat in the state and really appreciated the related article in Volume 12 by Mike Denny, "Birding from the Soil Up."

I'll start work on contacting potential writers for Volume 13 in January. If you have a species that you're especially interested in and have some expertise in its status in Washington state and would like to contribute an article, please contact me at edswan2@comcast.net or give me a call at 206.949.3545.

Q: The cover photo - is it a photo because it looks like artwork.

A: I chose Gregg Thompson's cover photo because it is a great work of art but also because the raven is the WOS logo bird. Plus ravens are always cool.

Q: Is there any thought of doing a print run so hard copies will be available?

A: One thing I'd like people to know is that while the WOS board decided for cost reasons to publish the journal online, a hard copy run is possible. If we can get around 50 people to order a print copy, we can bring the price down to a reasonable \$20-25 per book (plus shipping and handling) to cover the print cost. I've heard from about 10 people so far, it would be great to be up to the 50 mark for those of us who still love to actually hold a book in our hands.

Washington Field Notes August to September 2017

Compiled by Ryan Merrill

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.

A Sooty Shearwater in *Kitsap* in late Aug was a surprising find for the Puget Sound while a Manx Shearwater 58km off *Clallam* was unusually far from shore. Two **Brown Boobies** in *San Juan* bring the state total to 20 records. Two **Snowy Egrets** were in *Clark* in early September. More than a dozen American Golden-Plovers on the eastside was a high seasonal tally and included the first recorded in *Columbia*. Rarer still was a Ruddy Turnstone in *Whitman* in early September. Six Baird's Sandpipers in montane *Lewis* was a high count for the mountains. Washington's 12th **Curlew Sandpiper** in mid September was the first to be recorded in *Whatcom*. Four Red Phalaropes in *Walla Walla* were surprising for a species that is not recorded annually on the eastside.

Washington's first and North America's third **Swallow-tailed Gull** delighted birders in *King* and *Snohomish* during its week and a half long stay. A Common Tern in subalpine *Whatcom* was quite a surprise in late August. Two inland Long-tailed Jaegers were found in late August, in *Cowlitz* and *Skamania*. Horned Puffins were in



Steve Thompson photo

Blackpoll Warbler

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WA Field Notes Aug. - Sept. 2017 (continued)

Clallam and *Island* in early August, while a rare *King Tufted Puffin* was found in mid August.

A **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** was in *Stevens* in early September. A Northern Pygmy-Owl at Discovery Park in late September may be the first record in the city of Seattle. An Anna's x Rufous Hummingbird hybrid was seen in *Thurston* in early August. An impressive flight of 58 Lewis's Woodpecker's was observed in late September in *Skamania*. The state's 15th **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** spent the better part of a week in *King* in late September.

Black Phoebes continue to expand their range in the state, highlighted this period by one in *Yakima* in mid September, just the second record for the eastside. Northern Shrikes arrived early with three reports in late September. In a typical year none are found this before October. Impressive migrant flights in *Skamania* weren't limited to Lewis's Woodpeckers in *Skamania* - tallies of 515 migration Steller's Jays and 84 migrating California Scrub-Jays were also reported in late September. A **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** was in *Clallam* in late September which was about the state's 25th record.

Eastern vagrant warblers were plentiful this fall. A **Tennessee Warbler** in *Clallam* was about the state's 40th. More unusual was a **Northern Parula** in Douglas, the first for the county and 19th for the state. Fall **Chestnut-sided Warbler** records have increased in recent years and this fall was no exception with birds found in *Clallam*, *Skamania*, and *Thurston*. **Blackpoll Warblers** in *King* and *Whatcom* were both on the westside where the minority of the state's records have come from and both first records for their respective counties. Finally, a **Black-and-white Warbler** spent a day in *King* in late September. Bobolinks in *Clallam* and *Clark* were nice surprises for this less than annual visitor to the westside. An **Orchard Oriole** near Neah Bay was the state's 14th. Half of these records are from the Neah Bay area since 2009.

Snow Goose Early reports: 1 at Woodinville *King* 8/6 (BSz), 1 at Juanita Bay *King* 8/22 (ACT,JV)

Redhead High count: 15 at Shillapoo WMA *Clark* 8/11 (RH)

Common Merganser High count: 1700 at Jensen Access *Skagit* 9/15 (eBird)

Laysan Albatross Reports included: 1 at Westport Pelagic *Grays Harbor* 8/13 (GRe,SMi) with 2 there 9/10 (CBr) and 3 there 9/11 (BS,SMi)

Buller's Shearwater Reports included: 224 west of La Push *Clallam* 9/15 (RyM)

Sooty Shearwater Rare locally: 1 at Kingston *Kitsap* 8/29 (eBird)

Manx Shearwater Uncommon locally: 1 58km west of La Push *Clallam* 9/16 (RyM)

BROWN BOOBY Rare in WA: 1 dead at Lopez Island *San Juan* 8/19 (Daphne Morris), 1 west of San Juan Island *San Juan* 9/22 9/23 (Melisa Pinnow)

Great Egret High count: 201 at Vancouver Lowlands *Clark* 9/9 (RH)

SNOWY EGRET Rare in WA: 2 at Vancouver Lowlands *Clark* 9/8 (RH,JDz)

Black-crowned Night-Heron Uncommon locally: 1 at Skagit WMA *Skagit* 8/4 (fide RoK), 1 at Juanita Bay *King* 9/22 to 9/27 (eBird)

Red-shouldered Hawk Rare in e WA: 1 at Mabton *Yakima* 9/7 (ErH). Uncommon locally: 1 at Theler Wetland *Mason* 8/29 (eBird)

Broad-winged Hawk High count: 13 at Chelan Ridge *Chelan* 9/13 (eBird)

Swainson's Hawk High count: 148 at Lowden *Walla Walla* 9/16 (MID,MD)

Sandhill Crane Uncommon locally: 1 at Semiahmoo *Whatcom* 9/17 (TMn)

Black-bellied Plover Reports from e WA included: 1 at Swanson Lakes *Lincoln* 8/4 (JoI)

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The Rufous Hummingbird

Thomas Bancroft

A flash of reddish-orange zipped by and dashed into the bushes at the trail's edge. A dozen birders had come to Stillwater Wildlife Area on a beautiful early May morning. Red-winged Blackbirds, Marsh Wrens, and Black-capped Chickadees sang all around, Song Sparrows hopped along the trail, Gadwalls floated in the water, but the group's concentration right then was on this flitting glimpse.

“Look, there it's sitting on top of that branch,” Stewart pointed through a small opening, “a male Rufous Hummingbird.”



Chuck Roberts photo

The motionless bird stared across the marsh; it's back to the group. It then looked one way and the other, totally ignoring all the goggling eyes. Quickly, two spotting scopes focused on the hummer who appeared to be searching for possible intruders. His orangey back glistened in the morning sun.

“That's my first Rufous of the year,” Gordie said. They had only just arrived in the Puget Sound Basin, and this one had chosen Stillwater for its breeding territory.

Recently, Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology has started to use data collected by birders to understand the distribution and movements of birds throughout the year. The eBird program has been running for more than a decade and now covers the entire globe. Sufficient data have been recorded in North America to allow some fascinating analyses for many species.

Rufous Hummingbirds take a clockwise migration path on their annual trek. In the spring, they head north from southern Mexico along the western side of Mexico, through California, and into their breeding range. After nesting, they move south in the summer and fall through the Rocky Mountains, some stopping in Texas and most heading to southern Mexico for the winter. The distribution map Cornell has produced now provides a finer resolution of this species range than previously available. (find a range map at: https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Rufous_Hummingbird/maps-range#)

Also, Cornell created an animation of this hummingbird's distribution. The video shows where these little birds are during each week of the year. Imagine, an organism that weighs a little more than a half-teaspoon of table salt can make this monumental loop.

<https://ebird.org/science/status-and-trends/rufhum/abundance-map-weekly>

Keep birding and keep entering your sightings into eBird. We have much to learn about the natural world and its fascinating inhabitants. We need more field trips and birders!

IBOC 2019 – The World’s Bird Observatories Flock Together

Mark Pearson, IBOC digital media co-ordinator

The 3rd International Bird Observatory Conference (IBOC) takes place in Eilat, Israel, March 28 to April 1, 2019. After very successful IBOCs in Falsterbo, Sweden, in 2014 and Cape May, USA, in 2017, the 3rd IBOC will once again host attendees from all over the world - including personnel from bird observatories, ringing stations and research facilities, outreach specialists, experts in front-line monitoring technology and many others involved in the study of bird migration.

From small, voluntary operations to high tech research laboratories, IBOC brings together the global bird migration community with four days of speakers, workshops, social events (and great birding!), and aims to provide the means by which otherwise disparate projects and operations from across the globe can exchange ideas, provide mutual support, discuss collaboration and forge partnerships.

IBOC is open to all who meet the general criteria, last time bringing together over 100 delegates from 75 observatories across five continents. The conference has been organised to follow on seamlessly from the 2019 *Champions of the Flyway* international bird race, which will be raising funds to help save Africa’s vultures, allowing attendees to take part in both events and experience peak-time passage at this world famous migration bottleneck.

Website - <https://www.iboc2019.com/>

Twitter - @IBOC2019

Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/IBOCon/#IBOC2019>



Status of Washington's Seabirds (cont.)

tion - from sightings and an array of statistics - to grasp what is happening in the birds' ecosystem. The statistics come from Christmas Bird Counts, at-sea surveys, aerial surveys, nest surveys and other information. Funding for these studies comes from state, federal and local sources, even the U.S. Navy.

Scott Pearson's goal is to squeeze data from all of these sources and diagnose what is happening. With a Ph.D. in Wildlife Science from the UW, Pearson is an ecologist who has a large domain in which he oversees scientific study - all of Western Washington - for the state's Department of Fish and Wildlife. He's an expert on seabirds.

A look at Table 1 shows a somewhat bleak picture of the perils faced by most seabirds. This list is long and it has been growing longer. "Right now we are very concerned about very large masses of warm water, which can cause some hypoxia," he said, going over the long list of perils. He points out that

oil spills and "bycatch" are other serious problems, as well as invasive species. "It used to be people moving onto islands," but the other hazards have outdone that invasion.

Data on what will happen to seabirds' prey under anoxic and warming conditions is beginning to be correlated with population studies of the birds, but the process has been slow. It's not easy to track schools of smelt and herring in the wide ocean and correlate their movements with many seabirds.

Pearson and his colleagues can see into the future, beyond the roadblocks and hazards, however. They said a "food web approach" is overtaking the research community, little by little., and like any good epidemiologist, Pearson and a few others are busy calculating which birds face the gravest threats. Not all the news is bad.

"Well," mused Sue Thomas, wildlife biologist for the Washington Maritime National Wildlife Refuge Complex, who covers a very long swath of coastline in her at-sea research, "I'd have to say one positive thing is, I think NOAA has done a fantastic job of trying to stave off oil

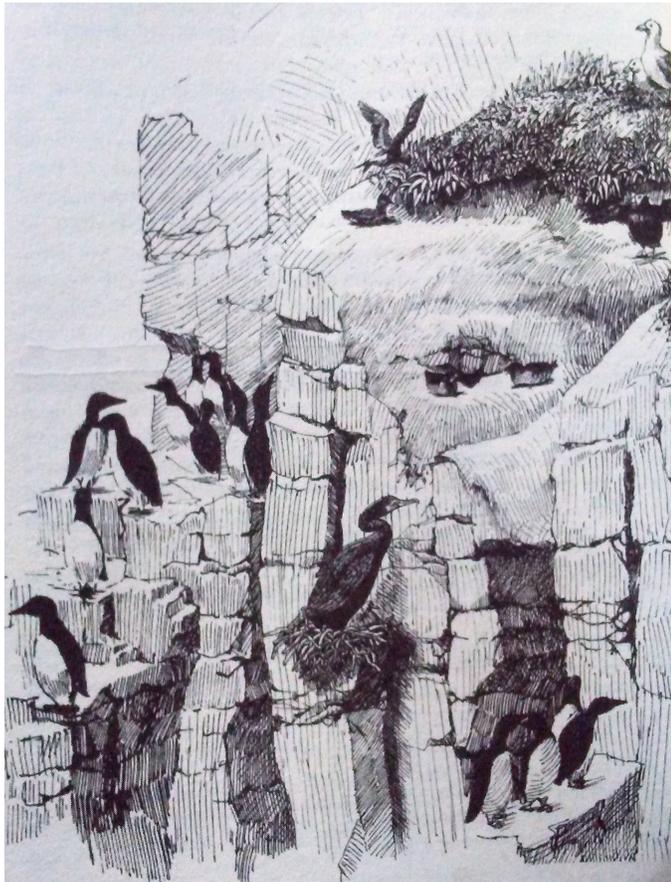


Illustration of an idealized seabird colony by John Megahan, from "The Northwest Coast, A Natural History" - used with permission

Table 1

10 HAZARDS FACED BY SEABIRDS

- Oil spills and toxins
- Plastic ingestion, primary and secondary
- Decline in prey abundance and prey size
- Invasive (or introduced) species on breeding colonies
- Natural predators
- Fishing-gear caused deaths
- Natural disasters affecting breeding areas
- Hunting and egg-taking
- Disturbances due to tourism
- Light pollution
- Sea-level rise

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Status of Washington's Seabirds (cont.)

spills in our area.”

There are entire web sites chronicling a lengthy list of oil spills that have affected wildlife along the coast for decades. Ironically, an infusion of research dollars for wildlife happened after one of the biggest oil spills ever, the Exxon Valdez in Prince William Sound.

Another somewhat positive development, Thomas said, is an indication that Leach's Storm Petrels may be nesting off Cape Alava. She remains upbeat even though she sees the worst seabird problems on a regular basis.

“Ingestion of plastics and Styrofoam is a very big threat to seabirds and shorebirds,” she said, as if addressing an audience of parents who want information about vaccines for their small children.

Peter Hodum is a doctor of sorts, too; he's an ecologist and professor at the University of Puget Sound and a colleague of Pearson's. His expertise extends to recovering plastics from the bodies of fulmars and shearwaters, among other species. He discussed how the plastic “ocean within the ocean” can be fought, adding that he has found plastics in the digestive tracts of almost every seabird species he has examined. Large studies are beginning to determine how plastics become microplastics and where these loads originate. One widely read paper calls for an international agreement on restricting plastics.

Modern seabird research in general, with an emphasis on ecosystem parameters, is beginning to have more influence on policy-makers. One example always cited by scientists is the progress made by the regulators of the world's fishing industry. Ed Melvin, a UW fisheries scientist who is known for his work on the Washington Sea Grant program, is known for helping the industry drastically limit its bycatch of seabirds.

Melvin recently presented the results of some of his work to the Pacific Fisheries Management Council. He is a member of the Seabird Working Group and many people in the scientific and fishing communities are familiar with him. One of those is a fisherman named Ken Lane, who lives near Bellingham and is both a longline fisherman and a birder. Lane keeps his 73-foot wooden boat, the Alrita, in Seattle when he's not fishing.

Short-tailed Albatross



Ryan Merrill photo

Lane is now required to use “streamer lines” on his fishing line to help deflect attacks by seabirds. Other means that have been promoted by Melvin and others are to set nets and lines at night, when most seabirds are not fishing.

The Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels, an international treaty, publishes a free identification guide to seabird species that is widely used by fishing industry observers and others.

Lane says he has seen one seabird, the short-tailed albatross, “hundreds of times.” The bird nests only in a few locations in the western Pacific and when it flies into our waters or around Alaska, it is usually in its juvenile plumage. Lane said he has only seen one adult in 15 or so years.

“I see a lot of banded birds out there, mostly albatrosses,” he said. The short-tailed species is in so much peril, from volcanic soil and weather to plastic ingestion and bycatch, that a search of the literature reveals *all* of its juveniles are banded. Just a few thousand of these birds are left.

Thomas, Hodum and Pearson all agree that a wide range of research is necessary to reverse this sort of drastic seabird decline.

“We know enough to know that something needs to be done,” Hodum said. “But we don't

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Status of Washington's Seabirds (cont.)

know enough to know exactly what is driving the decline” in seabird species.

Thomas adds, “Some species along the coast haven’t been surveyed for 40 years.”

Thomas and Pearson and Hodum have all used geolocators and acoustic monitoring around seabirds colonies. They both talked about the great need for more high-technology devices and more funding to obtain the personnel to attach them to more birds.

Their conversations flew right into the territory of the Tufted Puffin, which is listed by the state of Washington as endangered.

The puffins nest in the Salish Sea and along the outer coast. They are a so-called “neritic” species that usually stays relatively close to their nesting colonies during breeding season. However, one mystery is where they reside in the winters when they leave the colonies. Pearson expressed wonder that these strange birds can last through the winter in the North Pacific swells.

“Petrels or albatrosses can fly above the waves through that weather,” he said. “Puffins are sitting

and fulmars, which are a type of petrel. Bycatch in fishing fleets and plastic ingestion are a constant threat, especially to tubenoses.

Add to Table 1’s long list of perils, at least in the case of the Marbled Murrelet, “interests with deep pockets.”

For much of the 20th century, ignorance and indifference about this species set the stage for the species’ drastic decline due to the logging of its habitat. It first appeared on “threatened” lists along the West Coast in 1992.

More recently, one local source proclaims a 44 percent decline of this species in our state between 2001 and 2015, from 12,400 birds to about 7,500. Pearson’s research also found steady declines, though the species is now holding steady in some areas. A USDA Forest Service report on the murrelet found a “consistent and ominous decline” between 1995 and 2012.

It is federally endangered but didn’t attract widespread scientific attention until the last decade of the century. Area by area from California to

Common Murre Colony off the Washington coast, Sue Thomas photo



there on the surface.”

The “oceanic” species consist of the albatrosses, petrels and others. These so-called “surface-seizing” and “surface-filtering” birds are joined in their feeding behaviors by some gulls, phalaropes

Alaska, the murrelet is now being well studied - and protected to a degree - by conservationists and policy-makers.

“It’s a reality check for all of us,” said Hodum,

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Status of Washington's Seabirds (cont.)

“It’s a really compelling example of the need for, and value of, scientific research to advance conservation.”

The murrelet not only faces human hazards but since it nests in old-growth trees it comes into contact with a variety of wildlife. Many forest dwellers prey on the murrelet’s nests.

Puget Sound birders see this species on a regular basis, sightings which belie the list of threats to its existence in our state. Its story can be found inside the book, “Rare Bird,” by Maria Mudd Ruth. She details how the Northwest Forest Plan became the basis for the federal recovery plan for the murrelet. Pearson is the state’s point person for the conservation of this species, and he is also interested in the Ancient Murrelet.

One of the most studied seabirds, unfortunately in some ways, is the Common Murre. Its numbers were drastically reduced a few years ago when a massive “wreck” occurred in the Gulf of Alaska. Since then, each year has produced another wreck, or die-off, in Alaskan waters. Murres tend to congregate where prey is easily obtainable, and many have tried moving nearer inshore as warming waters have limited prey opportunities.

A paper by Thomas and colleague James Lyons from 2017 assessed the situation of murres in Washington from about the 1970’s until 2015. It cited an overall decline of breeding murres in Washington of 13 percent per year between 1979 and 1995. More recently, nesting birds in our waters have increased in northern Washington waters and declined by roughly the same percentages in southern Washington. As that happens, more nests have become vulnerable to an increase in perils such as predation by recovering Bald Eagles.

One method of keeping track of murre and other seabird numbers is the massive effort by volunteers in the COASST program, directed by Julia Parrish of the College of the Environment at the University of Washington. The Coastal Observation and Seabird Survey Plan relies on some 800 volunteers to survey and gather mortality data on coastal and Salish Sea beaches. Parrish has received many awards for her work setting up this program, and its data

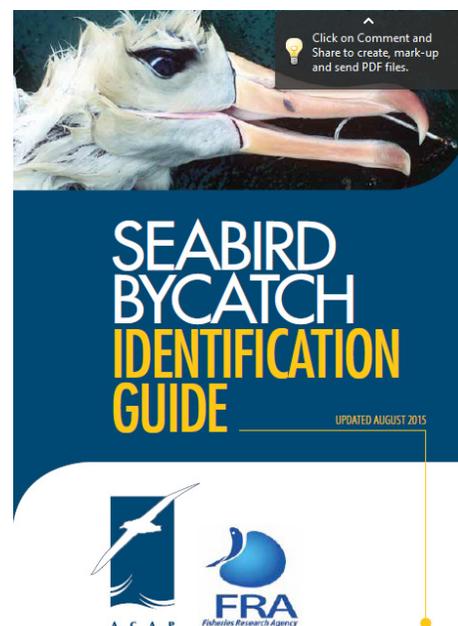
inform the bleak picture that many scientists are helping to bring to the public’s attention in hopes of reversing the seabird decline.

Pearson, like Thomas, Hodum, and Parrish, is among the most dedicated of these scientists. He relates one story about trying to find the number of chicks in a nest of Rhinoceros Auklets, a species that so far seems not to be declining.

The birds dig long nesting burrows that can be bifurcated, so trying to explore the right tunnel gets frustrating sometimes. Using visual technology to see into these tunnels is subject to conditions such as rainstorms, hazardous footing, angry birds and other unforeseen limitations. The most assiduous researchers encounter problems of all types.

Pearson’s work, however, tells the story of a good epidemiologist at work. In a paper involving eight authors, including a recent speaker at one of the WOS monthly meetings, Pearson et. al. made a virtual risk assessment of some seabird types in the Salish Sea. The purpose of this analysis is to find out more about what is

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The ACAP seabird identification guide which is available online

WA Field Notes Aug. - Sept. 2017 (continued)

American Golden-Plover High count: 9 at Dodd Road *Walla Walla* 9/27+ (AxP). Uncommon in e WA: 1 at Lind Coulee *Grant* 8/26 (MaB), 1 at Texas Lake *Whitman* 9/9 (JoI,RJB), 1 at Soap Lake *Grant* 9/25 (MY), 1 east of Starbuck *Columbia* 9/26 to 9/28 (RKO)

Pacific Golden-Plover Reports included: 1 at Foul-weather Bluff *Kitsap* 9/15 (BWg)

Snowy Plover Uncommon locally: 1 at Oyhut *Grays Harbor* 8/3 (JDz)

Solitary Sandpiper Uncommon locally: 1 at Hoquiam STP *Grays Harbor* 8/5 (BS)

Wandering Tattler Uncommon locally: 1 at Sandy Point *Whatcom* 8/21 (EEl), 1 at Edmonds *Snohomish* 9/6 (BS), 1 at Point Whitehorn *Whatcom* 9/23 (BL)

Willet Uncommon locally: 1 at Crockett Lake *Island* 8/4 (DPo), 1 at Tulalip Bay *Snohomish* 9/1 (MRe) to 9/2 (TMn), 1 at Semiahmoo *Whatcom* 9/14 (WW)

Long-billed Curlew Uncommon locally: 1 at Chambers Bay *Pierce* 8/30 (BL)

Hudsonian Godwit Uncommon in WA: 1 at Dungeness *Clallam* 8/1 (eBird), 1 at Semiahmoo *Whatcom* 8/19 to 9/27 (JRm)

Bar-tailed Godwit Uncommon in WA: 3 at Semiahmoo *Whatcom* 8/19 (JRm) with 2 remaining 9/27 (WW) 1 at Bottle Beach *Grays Harbor* 8/26+ (BWg)

Marbled Godwit Reports included: 3 at Nisqually NWR *Thurston* 9/13 (ShT)

Ruddy Turnstone Rare in e WA: 1 at Texas Lake *Whitman* 9/9 (RJB,JoI). Rare locally: 1 at Vancouver Lowlands *Clark* 9/16 (eBird)

Red Knot Reports included: 1 at *Keystone Island* 9/5 (HHg), 1 at Tulalip Bay *Snohomish* 9/26 (MRe)

Sanderling Reports included: 1 at Ridgefield NWR *Clark* 8/27 (RFI), 1 at Vancouver Lowlands *Clark* 9/8 (JDz)

Semipalmated Sandpiper Reports included: 2 at Julia Butler Hansen NWR *Wahkiakum* 8/3 (RKO), 7 at Hoquiam STP *Grays Harbor* 8/4 (BT,WhJ) with 3 there 8/5 (BS)

Baird's Sandpiper Reports included: 6 at Goat Rocks Wilderness *Lewis* 8/7 (ErH), 12 at Fife *Pierce* 8/8 (MCh), 22 at Warm Beach *Snohomish* 8/9 (MR), 1 at Discovery Park *King* 9/29 (MtD)

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper Uncommon in WA: 1 at Theler Wetland *Mason* 9/14 (JRi,FM), 2 at Swinomish Channel *Skagit* 9/15 (MaB) with 1 there 9/17 (GB), 1 at Oyhut *Grays Harbor* 9/15 (JeB)

CURLEW SANDPIPER Rare in WA: 1 at Point Roberts *Whatcom* 9/16



A McLin photo

(Mario Lam)

Stilt Sandpiper Reports included: 3 at Everett STP *Snohomish* 8/11 (DPo), 2 at Lummi Flats *Whatcom* 8/14 (PCa), 5 at Skagit WMA *Skagit* 8/20 (MaB,RyM), 26 at Lind Coulee *Grant* 8/24 (MaB), 6 at Crockett Lake *Island* 9/4 (ScR), 1 at Redmond *King* 9/30+ (GgT)

Ruff Uncommon in WA: 1 at Hoquiam STP *Grays Harbor* 8/18 (JDz), 1 at Dungeness *Clallam* 9/30 (BoB,McB)

Short-billed Dowitcher Reports included: 80 at Skagit WMA *Skagit* 8/25 (GB), 3 at Lind Coulee

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WA Field Notes Aug. - Sept. 2017 (continued)

Grant 9/19 (MY)

Wilson's Phalarope Uncommon locally: 1 at Oyhut
Grays Harbor 8/6 (CzH)

Red Phalarope Rare in e WA: 1 at Dodd Road
Walla Walla 9/14 (JFi) to 9/23 (CLy), 3 at Walla
Walla RD *Walla Walla* 9/15 (MID,MD)

SWALLOW-TAILED GULL Rare in WA: 1 at
Carkeek Park *King* 8/31 (RyM), at Woodway *Sno-*
homish 9/1 (Gil Ewing), at Everett *Snohomish* 9/2
(PDi,Shelley Rutkin), Woodway 9/3 to 9/5 (eBird),
Edmonds *Snohomish* 9/7 to 9/8 (CRi) and Woodway
9/9 to 9/10 (eBird)

Sabine's Gull Uncommon locally: 1 east of Granger
Yakima 9/9 (fide KvL), 1 at Richmond Beach *King*
9/11 (JSy), 1 at Woodland *Cowlitz* 9/14 (RKO), 1 at
Alki *King* 9/22 (ST), 1 at Sprague Lake *Adams* 9/23
(TLi)

Franklin's Gull Reports included: 1 at Chambers
Bay *Pierce* 9/7 (CCl), 3 at Sprague Lake *Adams*
9/23 (TLi)

Black Tern Uncommon locally: 1 at Walla Walla
RD *Walla Walla* 9/15 (MID)

Common Tern Rare locally: 1 at Mount Baker
Whatcom 8/24 (eBird). Reports included: 120 at
Discovery Park *King* 8/26 (MtD)

Elegant Tern Irruptive in WA: 1 at Ocean City
Grays Harbor 8/29 (eBird), 1 east of McGowen
Pacific 8/30 (AE)

Pomarine Jaeger Uncommon in Puget Sound: 1
at Kingston *Kitsap* 8/29 (eBird), 1 east of Winslow
Kitsap 9/29 (RyM)

Long-tailed Jaeger Rare locally: 1 at Woodland
Cowlitz 8/30 (RKO), 1 at Wind River *Skamania* 8/24
(eBird)

Scripps's/Guadalupe Murrelet Reports included:
2 at off La Push *Clallam* 9/15 (RyM)

Scripps's Murrelet Reports included: 2 at off La

Push *Clallam* 9/15, 2 at off Kalaloch *Jefferson* 9/15
(RyM)

Ancient Murrelet Early reports: 1 at Hein Bank
San Juan 8/2 (DaP), 5 at Cape Flattery *Clallam* 9/10
(WiB,JV)

Horned Puffin Uncommon in WA: 1 at Neah Bay *Clal-*
lam remained until 8/6 (eBird), 2 at Smith Island *Island*
8/7 (eBird)

Tufted Puffin Rare locally: 1 at Richmond Beach *King*
8/16 (JSy)

YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO Rare in WA: 1 at
Little Pend Oreille NWR *Stevens* 9/2 (PR)

Northern Pygmy-Owl Rare locally: 1 at Discovery
Park *King* 9/25 (KA)

White-throated Swift Reports included: 125 at
Northrup Canyon *Grant* 9/3 (MY)

Anna's Hummingbird Reports from expanding range
included: 2 at Washtucna *Adams* 8/2 (RFI), 2 at Ephrata
Grant 9/19 (MY), 2 at Spokane *Spokane* 9/25 (eBird)

Anna's X Rufous Hummingbird Rarely reported: 1 at
Tumwater *Thurston* 8/3 (BT)

Lewis's Woodpecker High count: 58 at St. Cloud
Ranch *Skamania* 9/24 (fide CaF). Uncommon in w
WA: 1 at Hart's Pass *Whatcom* 9/3 (IN), 1 at Harstein
Island *Mason* 9/4 to 9/9 (Vickie Anderson), 1 at Sun-
rise, Mount Rainier NP *Pierce* 9/4 (BL), 1 at Packwood
Lewis 9/10 (JVv), 1 at Ridgefield NWR *Clark* 9/13
(RH,CMk)

YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER Rare in WA: 1 at
Juanita Bay *King* 9/22 (AdL,ACT) to 9/27 (JRp)

Black-backed Woodpecker Rare locally: 1 at Easy
Pass *Skagit* 9/4 (BMc)

Black Phoebe Rare in e WA: 1 at Toppenish *Yakima*
9/13 (ErH). Reports from expanding range included: 1
at Ocean Shores *Grays Harbor* 8/7+ (DPo), 1 at Puyal-

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WA Field Notes Aug. - Sept. 2017 (continued)

lup *Pierce* 8/17+ (EdP), 1 at Woodland *Cowlitz* 8/30+ (RKO), 1 at Hawk's Prairie *Thurston* 9/6+ (eBird), 1 at Neah Bay *Clallam* 9/9 (WiB,JV), 1 at Kent *King* 9/21+ (MVe)

Say's Phoebe Uncommon in WA in fall: 1 at Point Roberts *Whatcom* 9/22 (KeK), 1 at Winslow *Kitsap* 9/26 (James Rufo Hill), 1 at Seattle *King* 9/28 (Jeff Birek)

Ash-throated Flycatcher Uncommon in w WA: 1 at Stillwater *King* 8/9 (VSl), 1 at Magnuson Park *King* 9/23 (eBird). Uncommon locally: 1 at Horn Rapids *Benton* 9/3 (LHi) to 9/13 (CzH)

Tropical Kingbird Reports included: 1 at Waatch River *Clallam* 9/29 (eBird)

Northern Shrike Early reports: 1 at Marymoor Park *King* 9/23 (SpH), 1 at Dungeness *Clallam* 9/24 (GG,JAe), 1 at Dike District #9 *Snohomish* 9/26 (PDi)

Red-eyed Vireo Nesting report: 4 at Wawawai *Whitman* 8/7 (RJB). Reports included: 1 at Darrington *Snohomish* 9/25 (DPo)

Steller's Jay High counts: 240 at St. Cloud Ranch *Skamania* 9/24 (fide CaF) with 515 there 9/25 (JDz)

California Scrub-Jay High counts: 84 at St. Cloud Ranch *Skamania* 9/24 (fide CaF) with 52 there 9/25 (JDz). Reports from expanding range included: 1 at Skagit WMA *Skagit* 9/3 (MaB), 1 at Everson *Whatcom* 9/15 (CnK), 1 at Winthrop *Okanogan* 9/25 (KeB), 2 at Sauk Prairie *Skagit* 9/25 (RyM), 2 at Cor-kindale *Skagit* 9/25 (RyM), 1 at Waatch River *Clallam* 9/30 (AAk)

Clark's Nutcracker Rare locally: 2 at Battle Ground *Clark* 9/26 (Andrew Thomas). Reports included: 3 at Larch Mountain *Clark* 9/15 (JDz)

Horned Lark Reports included: 1 at Marymoor Park *King* 9/23 (SpH)

Bank Swallow Reports included: 30 at White's Island *Wahkiakum* 8/12 (eBird)

White-breasted Nuthatch Reports included: 2 near

Weir Prairie *Thurston* 8/9 (eBird)

Rock Wren Reports included: 1 at Hurricane Ridge *Clallam* 8/17 (GMc), 1 at La Push *Clallam* 9/27 (eBird)

BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER Rare in WA: 1 at Neah Bay *Clallam* 9/29 to 9/30 (eBird)

Western Bluebird Reports included: 1 at Kalaloch *Jefferson* 9/28 (eBird)

Mountain Bluebird Reports included: 1 at Mount Ellinor *Mason* 9/15 (DaN), 1 at Dungeness *Clallam* 9/23 (eBird)

Gray Catbird Uncommon in w WA: 1 at Three Forks Natural Area *King* 8/5 (eBird)

Northern Mockingbird Uncommon in WA: 1 at Cape Alava *Clallam* 8/5 (MSh), 1 at Pasco *Franklin* 8/17 (JFi)

TENNESSEE WARBLER Rare in WA: 1 at Neah Bay *Clallam* 9/25 (AxP)

Nashville Warbler Reports included: 1 at Julia Butler Hansen NWR *Wahkiakum* 9/4 (MkC)

NORTHERN PARULA Rare in WA: 1 at Orondo *Douglas* 9/12 (BWg)

CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER Rare in WA: 1 at Nisqually NWR *Thurston* 8/16 (ShT), 1 at Mount Pleasant *Skamania* 9/6 (WC), 1 at Neah Bay *Clallam* 9/23 (RyM)

Black-throated Gray Warbler Uncommon locally: 1 at Richland *Benton* 9/4 (LHi), 1 at Douglas *Douglas* 9/8 (BWg), 1 at Bennington Lake *Walla Walla* 9/26 (MID), 1 at Pasco *Franklin* 9/26 (eBird)

Palm Warbler Reports included: 1 at Discovery Park *King* 9/29 (MtD) with 2 there 9/30 (JRp)

BLACKPOLL WARBLER Rare in WA: 1 at Point Whitehorn *Whatcom* 9/23 to 9/24 (JDz), 1 at Seattle *King* 9/24 (ENe)

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WA Field Notes Aug. - Sept. 2017 (continued)

BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER Rare in WA: 1 at Montlake Fill *King* 9/23 (Blake Hough)

American Redstart Rare locally: 1 at Bottle Beach *Grays Harbor* 8/5 (BS) to 8/6 (ScR). Reports included: 1 at Davenport *Lincoln* 8/14 (GiS), 1 at Sun Lakes *SP Grant* 8/26 (MY)

Northern Waterthrush Uncommon in w WA: 1 at Neah Bay *Clallam* 9/9 (WiB,JV), 1 at Skagit WMA *Skagit* 9/23 (GB)

Clay-colored Sparrow Reports from e WA included: 1 at Flying Goose Ranch *Pend Oreille* 8/14 (MaM), 1 at Cusick *Pend Oreille* 8/16 (MaM), 1 at Kalispel Indian Reservation *Pend Oreille* 8/19 (TLi). Uncommon in w WA: 1 at Neah Bay *Clallam* 9/6 (RyM), 1 at Waatch River *Clallam* 9/8 (RyM), 1 at Griffiths-Friday *SP Grays Harbor* 9/24 (ErH)

Vesper Sparrow Reports from w WA included: 1 at Corral Pass *Pierce* 8/7 (AR), 1 at English Boom *Island* 9/7 (eBird), 1 at Tacoma *Pierce* 9/9 (BL), 1 at Semiahmoo *Whatcom* 9/22 (CMk), 2 at North Bonnevillville *Skamania* 9/24 (WC)

Lark Sparrow Uncommon in w WA: 1 at Waatch River *Clallam* 9/30 (eBird)

Grasshopper Sparrow Late report: 1 at Walla Walla RD *Walla Walla* 9/30 (MID,MD)

White-throated Sparrow Reports included: 2 at Leadbetter Point *Pacific* 9/16 (AxP)

Golden-crowned Sparrow Reports included: 1 at Kamiak *Whitman* 9/16 (RJB)

Lapland Longspur Reports included: 25 at Sandy Point *Whatcom* 9/23 (WW)

Rose-breasted Grosbeak Uncommon in WA: 1 at Port Orchard *Kitsap* 9/6 (fide IP)

Lazuli Bunting Late report: 1 at Hood Park *Walla Walla* 9/24 (MID,MD)

Bobolink Rare in w WA: 2 at Vancouver Lowlands *Clark* 9/8 with 1 there 9/9 (JDz), 1 at Dungeness *Clal-*

lam 9/17 (eBird)

Yellow-headed Blackbird Reports included: 1 at Ocean Shores *Grays Harbor* 9/2 (eBird)

ORCHARD ORIOLE Rare in WA: 1 at Tsoo-Yess *Clallam* 9/24 (AxP)

Purple Finch Uncommon locally: 12 at Orondo *Douglas* 9/12 (BWg), 1 at Windust Park *Franklin* 9/25 (RKO)

Cassin's Finch Uncommon locally: 1 at Lyons Ferry *Franklin* 9/13 (MID,MD), 1 at Larch Mountain *Clark* 9/15 (JDz)

Lesser Goldfinch Reports from expanding range included: 2 at Naselle *Pacific* 8/9 (AR), 8 at Washtucna *Adams* 9/9 (ErH,SDo)

AAk Adrienne Akmajian

ACt Adam Crutcher

AdL Adrian Lee

AE Andrew Emlen

AR Alan Richards

AxP Alex Patia

BL Bruce LaBar

BMc Brendan McGarry

BoB Bob Boekelheide

BrU Barry Ulman

BS Bill Shelmerdine

BSz Bob Schultz

BT Bill Tweit

BWg Brad Waggoner

CaF Catherine J. Flick

CBr Cara Borre

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WA Field Notes Aug. - Sept. 2017 (continued)

CRi Carol Riddell	GMc Garrett MacDonald	KvL Kevin Lucas	RH Randy Hill
CCI Christopher Clark	GRe Gene Revelas	LHi Lisa Hill	RJB RJ Baltierra
CLy Christopher Lindsey	HHg Hank Heiberg	MaB Marv Breece	RKo Russell Koppendraye
CMk Cindy McCormack	IN Isaiah Nugent	MaM Matthew Moskwik	RoK Robert C. Kuntz II
CnK Cindy Klein	IP Ian Paulsen	McB Michael Barry	RyM Ryan Merrill
CzH Chazz Hesselein	JAc Jamie Acker	MCh Michael Charest	ScR Scott Ramos
DaN David Ness	JDz Jim Danzenbaker	MD Mike Denny	SDo Scott Downes
DaP Dave Parent	JeB Jeff Bryant	MkC Mark Crawford	ShT Shep Thorp
DPo David Poortinga	JFi Jason Fidorra	MID MerryLynn Denny	SMi Scott Mills
eBird eBird.org	Jol Jon Isacoff	MR Marcus Roening	SpH Spencer Hildie
EdP Ed Pullen	JRi John Riegsecker	MRe Maxine Reid	ST Sam Terry
EEI Eric Ellingson	JRm Jason Ransom	MSh Michael Shepard	TLi Terry Little
ENe Ed Newbold	JRp Joshua Rudolph	MtD Matt Dufort	TMn Thomas Mansfield
ErH Eric Heisey	JSy Joe Sweeney	MVe Mark Vernon	VSI Vickie Scales
FM Faye Hands	JV Jason Vassallo	MY Matt Yawney	WC Wilson Cady
GB Gary Bletsch	JVv Joe Veverka	PCa Phil Calise	WhJ Whittier Johnson
GG George Gerdtz	KA Kevin Aanerud	PDi Phil Dickinson	WiB Will Brooks
GgT Gregg Thompson	KeB Ken Bevis	PR Penny Rose	WW Wayne Weber
GiS Gina Sheridan	KeK Ken Klimko	RFI Robert Flores	

Want to find the Christmas Bird Count nearest you? Go to: <<http://wos.org/cbc/>>

To read about how the count got started and how the data is used, go to:

<<https://www.audubon.org/conservation/history-christmas-bird-count>>

Status of Washington's Seabirds (cont.)

driving the long-term decline of seabirds in the area. Using data about winter species and how they forage, the eight authors evaluated trends over a period of 16 years, based on more than 100 species that overwinter in the Salish (excluding rare occurrences.) How the birds forage, the depth of their diving and their overall body types, plus wintering habits and prey preference, were taken into account. Risk values were estimated after an analysis of data from both coastal and shallow habitats in the Salish.

A selection of their results is seen in Table 2, which includes only a few seabirds from the order Charadriiformes plus the cormorants. Values are both positive and negative, based on location and number of surveys over the years.

Diving species with heavy wing loads and those not breeding locally accounted for most of the declines. Translate: deep divers with stubby wings and transient populations are dying and going elsewhere..

Some foragers without breeding colonies in the survey areas, and birds that specialize on select forage fish, are at high risk, such as Common Murres and Western Grebes. Others such as two piscivorous-generalists, Pigeon Guillemots and Double-crested Cormorants, are at much less risk of decline. Marbled Murrelets and Rhinoceros Auklets are in great peril if the risk values obtained by the eight scientists have predictive value.

Additionally, **“abundance of wintering marine birds in the Salish Sea has been declining since the mid-1990’s,” the paper points out.**

The paper uses a mound of data for its “epidemiological synthesis.” But the readily available stories from fishermen, other scientific studies and data from citizen scientists studying bird mortality on the state’s beaches add a huge body of anecdotal evidence that Washington’s seabird numbers are facing a sickness.

Hodum and Pearson worry that the nature of the beast - almost invisible at-sea species that may nest hundreds or even thousands of miles from our coastal waters - could mean that fewer

citizens and scientists will engage in policy-making efforts that could help protect these birds. Out of sight, out of mind?

“I do see less funding for graduate students these days” in marine ornithology, Pearson said. “And perhaps even a little less interest.”

That worries Hodum, who summed up what he sees as a conundrum. Science gets better, but the money for the best science is driven by an ill-informed public process. “We have the greatest contribution when policy-makers are making sure management agencies have the best science available. The other part of that equation is outreach - is the public going to be the driver of change? An informed and inspired public is ever more fundamental” these days, he said.

Table 2

(Charadriiformes)

<u>Alcidae</u>	% Decline	% Increase
Marbled Murrelet	9	3
Pigeon Guillemot	-	4.5
Rhinoceros Auklet	9	0
Ancient Murrelet	1.5	1.5
Common Murre	22.4	0

Haematopodidae

Black Oystercatcher	0	4.5
<u>Laridae</u>		
Mew Gull	-	13.4
Glaucous-winged Gull	1.5	3
Thayer’s Gull	1.5	-
Bonaparte’s Gull	4.5	-

(Suliformes)

Phalacrocoracidae

Double-crested Cormorant	-	7.5
Pelagic Cormorant	-	-
Brandt’s Cormorant	-	3