



Washington Ornithological Society

WOSNews No. 178 February - March 2019

From the Board

Eric Dudley

For our Annual Conference this year, we will be (to borrow a phrase) going “back to the future!” The first WOS Conference was held in Moses Lake in 1989, and we’ll be visiting there again **May 9-13**. Our host will be the Best Western Plus Lakefront Hotel, which is where field trips will originate and where we will have our events and programs. We intend that WOSNews #178 will contain complete conference information, and that

similar info will appear simultaneously (more or less) on our website.

Thereafter, the website will provide updates as they develop, with another edition of WOSNews anticipated for April/May. Thanks to Ron Post and Jane Hadley for their work in getting all this material published!

Moses Lake is in the heart of a wonderful birding region. Bob Flores has worked hard to develop a list of trips that will take us to many iconic birding hotspots in a wide variety of habitats. Counties to be visited (for you county listers) include Grant, Lincoln, Adams, Franklin, Kittitas and Douglas. Many thanks to our fine trip leaders, who have volunteered their time and expertise to help make our trips as productive as possible. In addition to field trips, this publication also includes information on lodging, meals, events and programs, along with the detailed schedule.

Our Keynote Speaker this year will be Nathan Pieplow, a published author with special expertise in the fascinating topic of bird sounds. His

continued on page 7



Golden Eagle

Emilie Chen photo

What’s Inside

- pg. 1 **From the Board**
- pg. 3 **Financial Statement**
- pg. 4 **Conference Registration**
- pg. 5 **Meal Planning for the Conference**
- pg. 6 **Lodging for the Conference**
- pg. 7 **Conference Field Trips**
- pg. 12 **Book Review: “Far from Land”**
- pg. 17 **Under Aspen Groves**
- pg. 18 **New WOS Members**
- pg. 19 **Regular WOS Field Trips**

INSIDE ON PAGE 6

Where to find lodging during the annual conference

INSIDE ON PAGE 7

Complete list of conference field trips, including driving times

WASHINGTON ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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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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Board Member.....Kevin Black.....Kevin@wos.org
Board Member.....Bob Flores.....Bob@wos.org

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

Washington Ornithological Society Financial Statement For Year Ended December 31, 2018

Assets

Bank - General Checking	\$27,337
Bank - General Savings	\$64,308
Patrick Sullivan Young Birder's Fund (PSYBF) (restricted funds)	\$19,434
<u>TOTAL ASSETS</u>	<u>\$111,079</u>

Liabilities

PSYBF [restricted] Equity	\$19,434
Retained earnings	\$84,381
Net Income	\$7,264
<u>TOTAL EQUITY</u>	<u>\$111,079</u>

Income and Expenses

Income

Conference Registration	\$16,275.00
Donations - General Fund	\$1,221.00
Donations - PS Young Birder Fund	\$2,919.00
Membership Dues	\$9,945.00
Sales and Tax	\$2,159.00
Interest	\$27.00
<u>Total Income</u>	<u>\$32,546.00</u>

Expenses

Administrative	\$436.00
Annual Conference Expenses	\$8,233.00
Annual Conference Refunds	\$520.00
Annual Conference Event Management	\$443.00
Bank Charge	\$65.00
Board Meeting	\$500.00
Clothing	\$1,647.00
Facility Rental/CUH	\$3,670.00
Honoraria	\$1,200.00
Insurance	\$2,065.00
Monthly meetings/Hospitality Expenses	\$142.00
P.O. Box Rental	\$180.00
Patrick Sullivan Young Birder Award	\$1,587.00
Postage	\$23.00
Printing	\$2,257.00
Publications	\$61.00
Refund	\$25.00
Storage Facility	\$743.00
Taxes	\$212.00
PayPal Use Fee	\$650.00
Web Hosting	\$123.00
2019 Annual Conference Deposit	\$500.00
<u>Total Expenses</u>	<u>\$25,282.00</u>

Net Income **\$7,264.00**

Conference Registration Begins March 10

Registration for the 2019 WOS Conference will begin at 8 a.m. on Sunday, March 10. The link to the registration site will be available through the WOS website.

We will also send out, via Constant Contact, a direct link to registration prior to the day it begins.

Important dates:

Sunday, March 10, 8 a.m. ---- Registration opens

Thursday, April 18, 11:59 p.m. ---- Regular registration ends, last day for full refund

Friday, April 19 ----- Late registration begins, \$20 fee for cancellation begins

Friday, May 3, 11:59 p.m. ----- Online registration ends, last day for refund for cancellation

Thursday, May 9 through Monday, May 13 --- Annual Conference in Moses Lake (limited onsite registration available)

Events and Programs at the Annual Conference (chronological)

Thursday evening, 7 p.m., Penn Room Board Meeting

Friday evening, 6 p.m., Solar Room

Social hour, with no-host bar and hors d'oeuvres

Beginning at 7:00, "**Stump the Experts**," presented by Dennis Paulson, assisted by Shep Thorp. Prior attendees of WOS Conferences remember the challenge, interest and fun that this event offers, and we look forward to an exciting session this time.

Saturday afternoon, 2:00-4:00, Solar Room

Nathan Pieplow will present a workshop entitled "Becoming an Expert Listener." Learn to be a more informed and perceptive listener on your birding outings. Enrollment for this session will be limited to 30. Nathan's new book in the Peterson Field Guide Series, "Field Guide to Bird Sounds of Western North America," will be available for purchase (and signing) at the Conference on Friday and Saturday, courtesy of David Hutchinson of Flora and Fauna Books.

Saturday evening, 5:30, Solar Room

Social half-hour, with no-host bar and hors d'oeuvres

Beginning at 6:00, **Banquet dinner**

Beginning at 7:00, Awards, Announcements (Toast to Moms, etc.), and **Keynote Speaker, Nathan Pieplow** on the topic of "The Language of Birds." Nathan lives in Boulder, Colorado, where he is an instructor in writing at the University of Colorado.

Sunday afternoon, 2:00-4:00, Solar Room

In this workshop, **WBRC Demystified**, members of the Washington Bird Records Committee will discuss the ins and outs of how our committee goes about its work. What are the procedures and processes? What has changed recently? How can you contribute? What's the value of a state review committee and the work it does? How have we handled tough decisions in the past? We'll talk about this and more, and leave plenty of time for questions along the way. Join Matt Bartels and colleagues. Come one, come all!

Meal Planning at the WOS Annual Conference

With the exception of the Friday Social Hour's appetizers and the Saturday Night Banquet, please plan for all other meals or snacks. For those of you staying at the Best Western Plus Lake Front, because this hotel advertises room and breakfast, and their restaurant is not open until 5:30-6:00 a.m. (depending on weekday vs. weekend), they will be offering us "Grab & Go" bags (muffin, water and a piece of fruit) to take with us each morning at 5 a.m., to be picked up at the Front Desk by showing your room key. They will also have coffee available at 5 a.m. at this same location.

No-host bars will be available both Friday and Saturday night for the evening socials. Friday's appetizers and the coffee/tea service are included in your registration.

The Saturday Banquet Dinner is \$45.00 per person, which includes gratuities.

We hope that you can join your fellow birders for a delightful meal and presentation! You will be able to buy additional meals during your online conference registration process for those accompanying you to the banquet, but who are not registering for the Conference itself. Unfortunately, it will NOT be possible to purchase banquet meal tickets during the Conference itself as the hotel will have already been given our final numbers and is unable to vary from this count. Meal tickets with your meal choice that have been purchased at time of registration will be included in your packet.

Boxed lunches from the hotel will not be available this year. Please bring items from home (there are fridges in each hotel room) or purchase food at local restaurants or groceries.



Loggerhead Shrike

Greg Schechter photo

Saturday Evening Banquet Meal

Dinner (Choose one of these three entrees when you register)

1. Baron of Beef au Jus (carved)
2. Grilled Chicken Breast in Herb Crust
3. Vegetarian Lasagna

Meal Accompaniments

1. Choice of salads
2. Cold Cuts and Paté
3. Fresh Vegetables
4. Roast Potatoes and Rice
5. Fresh Rolls and Butter
6. Desserts
7. Coffee, Tea or iced Tea

Finding a Place to Stay for the Annual Conference

Our 2019 Conference will be hosted by Best Western Plus Lake Front Hotel, Moses Lake.

It is located at 3000 W. Marina Drive, Moses Lake, 98837, on Moses Lake with easy access to I-90.

We have blocked several rooms at a special rate so do book them as soon as you know that you will be attending the Conference!

There is a peak season starting in May through the summer in Moses Lake.

Standard Room with 2 Queens - \$139.99

Lakeview Room with 2 Queens - \$139.99

Lakeview Room with 1 King - \$119.99

Please contact the reservations desk at Best Western Plus Lake Front Hotel directly.

Ask for the Washington Ornithological Society room block (509) 765-9211.

Note that lodging is not included in the Conference registration.

Please make your own arrangement for lodging at Best Western Plus Lake Front Hotel, or elsewhere.

*FERRUGINOUS
HAWK*



LARRY JORDAN PHOTO



A view from the Best Western Lake Front Hotel

MORE OPTIONS:

Hotels

Ten Pin Inn and Suites (4.0 miles)

tenpininn.com.....(888) 724-1575.....(509) 764-7500

Sure Stay Plus Hotel by Best Western (4.5 miles)

bestwestern.com.....(800) 780-7234.....(509) 350-8310

Quality Inn Moses Lake (0.3 miles)

choicehotels.com....(855) 479-0732 ...(509) 765-8886

Ramada by Wyndam Moses Lake (3.3 miles)

Wyndamhotels.com (855) 479-0732...(509) 766-1000

Fairfield Inn and Suites by Marriot (3.1 miles)

Marriot.com/Fairfield/hotels..... (509) 765-0500

Inn at Moses Lake (3.2 miles)

Innatmoseslake.com.....(509) 766-7000

Wingate by Wyndam Moses Lake (3.2 miles)

wyndamhotels.com.(888) 595-3512...(509) 766-2000

Motel 6 Moses Lake (0.3 miles)

motel6.com.....(509) 766-0260

Comfort Suites (3.2 miles)

Choicehotels.com.....(509) 765-3731

RV Parks and/or Camping in or near Moses Lake

Potholes State Park (21 miles)

parks.state.wa.us.....(509) 346-2759

Desert Oasis RV (0.6 miles)

(509) 764-5319

Suncrest RV Park (2.3 miles)

(509) 765-0355

Cascade Campground (4.7 miles)

Cityofml.com.....(509) 764-3805

Moses Lake Mud Flats and Sand Dunes (6 miles)

Grantcountywa.gov.....(425) 443-0141

From the Board: About the Annual Conference (cont.)

most recent book is coming out this April, and will be available for purchase (and signing), courtesy of David Hutchinson.

Nathan will also conduct a workshop on Saturday afternoon geared toward helping us become better listeners in the field!

Matt Bartels and members of the WBRC will also offer a Sunday afternoon workshop to tell us about their work. Please be sure to bring your questions for our presenters to both workshops!

Again, welcome to Moses Lake, and the Board and I hope you have a wonderful time!

Ornithologically yours,

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



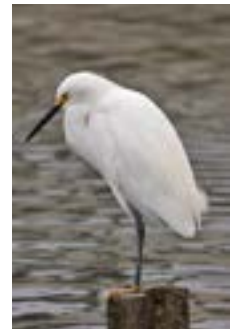
Nicole Beaulac photo

Red-breasted Sapsucker

Annual Conference Field Trips

Bob Flores

“The western Columbia Basin has seen a wholesale conversion from dry shrub-steppe to irrigated cropland. Increased runoff has caused water tables to rise, flooding innumerable potholes and other low-lying spots and creating a diverse, bird-rich mix of habitats. From the Columbia River to Moses Lake, I-90 provides access to cliffs, marshes, lakes, and remnant patches of shrub-steppe, large areas of which are managed by state and federal fish and wildlife agencies”



Tony Morris photo

Snowy Egret

- From A Birder's Guide to Washington, 2nd Edition

What to bring

Remember to bring your National Parks/Forest Pass, Discover Pass, and FRS radios to use during field trips. For your safety, become familiar with possible dangers in the area and arrive prepared. Intense sun, poison oak, rattlesnakes, ticks, mosquitoes, and steep/uneven terrain area are natural hazards in some areas. Select trips that are appropriate for your fitness level, both for your safety and in consideration of your trip co-participants.

eBirding

Whether or not to eBird a trip is left to the preferences of leaders and participants. Leaders are not expected to eBird for their groups, as they have many other things to be concerned about, but some may choose to do so.

continued on next page

Annual Conference Field Trips (continued)

Playback

WOS has received comments regarding playback. Therefore, leaders were asked to indicate: “no playback allowed,” “limited playback allowed” or “playback allowed.” The latter is the least restrictive option.

Departure Times

Full-day trips will depart at 5:30 a.m. (OR THE TIME INDICATED IN THE TRIP DESCRIPTION) and return by 4 p.m. Half-day trips will depart at 6 a.m., and return by noon. Be sure to check your registration materials for meeting location and times. All times listed for trips are departure times, so please arrive at least 10-15 minutes early to check in with your trip leader and for the carpooling arrangements. Trip leaders will have signs with the trip name in the designated meeting area.

It is the responsibility of the participants to reimburse their driver.

Remind the driver to set the odometer before departure. WOS recommends that drivers be reimbursed by a rate of 0.25 per mile divided by the number of passengers in the car (not including the driver). For example if a trip is 100 miles in length and three passengers are in the car, each person would contribute \$8.33 for mileage reimbursement to the driver.

On The Way Trips Thursday, May 9

Davenport to Moses Lake field trip

Leader: Kim Thorburn

This field trip will bird BLM Telford and Twin Lakes Units, Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area, and BLM Wilson Creek Unit. Time permitting, we will bird

Billy Clapp Reservoir and Soap Lake. Possible species include Wilson’s Phalarope, Swainson’s Hawk, Gray Partridge, Lewis’s Woodpecker, Loggerhead Shrike, Sage Thrasher, Yellow-breasted Chat, and Brewer’s and Grasshopper Sparrow.

The field trip will begin from the Safeway parking lot on the west side of Davenport, WA at 7 A.M.

Tacoma and Seattle to Moses Lake

Leaders: Faye McAdams Hands and Diane Yorgason Quinn



White-breasted Nuthatch

Brian Hoffe photo

We will meet at 7 a.m. at the Park&Ride - Exit 143 off from I-5. We will check spots at Snoqualmie Pass for American Dipper, MacGillivray’s Warbler and possible Sooty Grouse, and then continue on for a brief stop at Lake Easton State Park. We will stop at a few places near Cle Elum – including along Hwy 10 – to check for Dipper, Bank Swallow, Grey

Catbird and Veery. If there is time, we will stop at Vantage Ginkgo Petrified Forest State Park.

Meet at 7 a.m. at the Park&Ride on 23rd Avenue South & 320th in Federal Way – Exit 143 off from I-5.

Vancouver going to Moses Lake field trip

Leader: Randy Hill

This trip leaves at 7 a.m. from the Steigerwald Lake parking lot along SR14 and makes short stops at several locations on route that could include Lyle-Balch Cemetery and Brooks Memorial SP

continued on page 9

Annual Conference Field Trips (continued)

in Klickitat County, Toppenish NWR in Yakima County, and along the Old Vantage Highway in Kittitas County. The last leg will be determined from remaining time available, directly to Moses Lake on I-90 or indirectly via SR-26 and Dodson Road, the Royal Slope, or Othello. Discover Pass and 2-way radios helpful.

HALF-DAY TRIPS

All of the following trips will be leaving from the designated meeting location. All half-day trips depart at 6 A.M.

1) City Parks in Ephrata (Patrick, Lions, Oasis Parks and Cemetery) and Soap Lake (Grant)

30 min. one way

Leaders: Penny Rose/Scott Hoskin (Friday, No Playback Allowed), Brian Bell (Saturday, Limited Playback Allowed), Faye McAdams Hands and Diane Yorgason-Quinn (Sunday, Limited Playback Allowed)

Half-day trip with casual walking and public facilities. Ephrata in general is a typical eastern Washington migrant trap and it's parks provide great public access. Anna's Hummingbird a difficult species to find in Grant Co. can be found at Oasis Park. Species expected include Yellow-rumped, Wilson's, Orange-crowned and Townsend's Warbler, Warbling Vireo, Black-headed Grosbeak, Bullock's Oriole, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Hammond's and Pacific-slope Flycatcher. Soap Lake is known for providing surprises often being shorebirds or unusual waterfowl such as scoters. Species expected include a variety of waterfowl, Chukar, Ring-necked Duck, White-throated Swift, Eared and Horned Grebes.

2) Columbia NWR (Grant, Adams)

40 min one way

Leaders: USFWS Staff, days to be offered has yet to determined.

Half-day trip requiring moderate driving

times and little walking. Columbia National Wildlife Refuge is an oasis of wetlands and lakes surrounded by shrub-steppe habitats. Having abundant water habitats, several species of waterfowl can be found including Cinnamon Teal. Uplands provide opportunities to find Long-billed Curlew, Western Meadowlark, Loggerhead Shrike and Swainson's Hawk. Riparian habitats found throughout the refuge offer Bullock's Oriole, Eastern Kingbird, Great Horned Owl, Warbling Vireo, Willow Flycatcher, Yellow Warbler and a variety of other migrating warblers. Shallow wetlands will provide American Pipit, rails, Marsh Wren and a variety of shorebirds including Black-necked Stilt, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Long-billed Dowitcher and Least Sandpiper.

3) Gloyd Seeps, Blue Heron Park, Neppel Park (Grant)

Leaders: Ken Brown and Ed Pullen (Friday, Playback Allowed), Michael Hobbs (Saturday, Playback Allowed)

Half-day trip requiring easy walking and short driving times. Explore wetlands, wetland riparian, lake and park like riparian habitats around Moses Lake. This time of year can bring a mix of landbird, shorebird and waterbird migrations. Birds expected include Blue-winged and Cinnamon teal, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Marsh Wren, Swainson's Hawk, Long-billed Curlew, warblers such as Townsend's, Nashville, Orange-crowned, Wilson's, MacGillivray's and Yellow, Warbling vireo, Bullock's oriole, American White Pelican, and a number of flycatchers such as Willow, Dusky, Olive-sided, Western Kingbird and Western Wood Pewee. Possible are Long-eared Owl, Common Poorwill, White-faced Ibis, Prairie Falcon, Lewis's Woodpecker, Bonaparte's and Franklin's Gull.

4) North Potholes Reserve and Potholes Wildlife Area (Grant)

15 min one way

Leaders: Eric Dudley (Friday, Playback Allowed), Tom Bancroft (Saturday, Playback

continued on page 10

Annual Conference Field Trips (continued)

Allowed), Ken Brown and Ed Pullen (Sunday, Playback Allowed)

This is a half-day trip which requires little walking. Explore the north Pothole Lake although waterbirds may dominate the trip there are good opportunities for land birds throughout and especially at North Potholes Reserve. While driving in look for Swainson's Hawks and Loggerhead Shrike, scan the lake for Common Loon, three species of grebes, Common Goldeneye, Herring Gull and Forster's Tern. Shallow water can produce Blue-winged and Cinnamon Teal, Marsh Wren, Black Tern, Black-necked Stilt, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Baird's Sandpiper and Greater Yellowlegs. North Potholes Reserve offers a large rookery used by wading birds including Black-crowned Night Heron and

Audubon Trail)

30 min one way

Leaders: Bruce LaBar (Friday, Playback Allowed), Kim Thorburn (Saturday, No Playback Allowed), Brian Bell (Sunday, Limited Playback Allowed)

This is a half-day trip which requires moderate walking. Potholes State Park a known vagrant trap is the highlight of this trip. The park is found along the west edge of Potholes Reservoir and is a popular camping park that provides tall trees and riparian habitats surrounded by extensive shrub-steppe habitat. Also Winchester Wasteway and Dodson Road will be visited. These locations include shallow wetlands (Birder's Corner and



Tom Baarnwell photo

Calliope Hummingbird

riparian habitat where Wood Duck, several species of warbler, Bullock's Oriole, Black-headed Grosbeak, Western Tanager, Bewick's and House Wren can be found. Surrounding shrub-steppe offers both Western and Eastern Kingbird and Say's Phoebe.

5) Potholes State Park – Winchester Wasteway (Rd C-SE) – Dodson Rd (Birders Corner,

Audubon Trail) and waterways through shrub-steppe and riparian habitats. Expected birds include Yellow-rumped, Yellow, Wilson's Warblers, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Bewick's and House Wren, Song, Chipping, Golden-crowned, White-crowned and Lincoln's sparrow. Water associated birds include several species of waterfowl

continued on page 11

Annual Conference Field Trips (continued)

including Blue-winged Teal, American Avocet, Spotted, Least and Baird's Sandpiper, Greater Yellowlegs and Long-billed Dowitcher. Searching the reservoir can provide a number of gulls, terns and grebes, Common Loon and waterfowl. Possible species to be seen include Lewis's Woodpecker, Prairie and Peregrine Falcon.

6) Scootney Reservoir (Grant, Adams, Franklin)

50 min one way

Leaders: Kevin Black (Friday, Limited Playback Allowed)

Half-day trip requiring long drive time and moderate level walking. A large reservoir dominating shrub-steppe habitat Scootney provides an opportunity to find water and shrub oriented birds in a small area. Here American White Pelican can be found as well as a large variety of waterfowl. Land birds expected include Western and Eastern Kingbird, Horned Lark, Western Meadowlark, Bullock's Oriole to mention a few. Depending on water levels shorebirds are possible. Soaring overhead both Peregrine and Prairie Falcon could be found while Swainson's Hawks forage in nearby fields. Driving the Coyan Road, Schoolaney (Scootney) Road, Hendricks Road, Sagehill Road loop will provide winnowing snipe, Common Yellowthroat, Lazuli Bunting, Lark Sparrow, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Eastern Kingbird and several sparrows and swallows. A possibility is a Ferruginous Hawk or Golden Eagle passing through. In the shrub steppe one could find Loggerhead Shrikes hunting and flocks of sparrows. Occasionally Tricolored Blackbirds have been found around the reservoir. This trip will involve light walking.

7) Rarity Chase (MONDAY ONLY)

Leaders: Bob Flores and Randy Hill, Limited Playback Allowed

Half-day trip requiring long driving periods in between multiple stops. This trip will allow a group to chase after birds of interest found throughout the conference.

FULL-DAY TRIPS

All of the following trips will be leaving from the designated meeting location. ***IMPORTANT*** Please note the departure time is 5:30 A.M. unless noted in the trip description. Trips with long morning drives depart at 5:15 A.M.

8) Beezley Hills, Moses Coulee, Jameson Lake (Grant, Douglas)

60 min one way to Jameson Lake

Leaders: Scott Ramos (Friday, Limited Playback Allowed) Mike & Merry Lynn (Saturday, Limited Playback Allowed)

NOTE: departure time 5:15 A.M. A full-day trip requiring long driving times and moderate hiking. Spend the day visiting three areas of shrub-steppe, grasslands and lakes. Wildflowers may be abundant at this time. The Nature Conservancy properties protect intact quality shrub-steppe habitats where a rich variety of birds may be found including Lazuli Bunting, Common Goldeneye, Poorwill, Mountain Bluebird, Loggerhead Shrike, Rock and Canyon Wren, White-Throated Swift, Golden Eagle, Sage Thrasher, Sage, Vesper and Brewers Sparrow. In addition Jameson Lake offers three teal species, Ruddy Duck and Barrow's Goldeneye.

9) Douglas Creek (Grant, Douglas)

1 hour 15 min one way

Leaders: Dan Stephens (Saturday, Limited Playback Allowed), Dan Stephens (Sunday, Limited Playback Allowed)

NOTE: departure 5:15 A.M. Full-day trip requiring long driving times and moderate hiking. Douglas Creek Canyon is at the SW corner of Douglas County and drains the Waterville Plateau. It is comprised of 5,370 ha of well-established riparian habitat dominated by black cottonwood, water birch, and willow; surrounded by shrub-steppe uplands and basalt cliffs. A couple of stops along the way will provide an opportunity for Swainson's Hawk and Grasshopper Sparrow. Most of the time

continued on page 14

Book Review: “Far from Land: The Mysterious Lives of Seabirds” by Michael Brooke, Princeton Univ. Press 2018

Reviewed by Wayne H. Bell, Ph.D.
Center for Environment and Society
Washington College
Maryland Ornithological Society

I suspect that a relative and hearty few MOS members are seasoned pelagic birders. I can count the number of my own offshore birding trips on the fingers of one hand. Even so, I also suspect that most of us landlubbers are intrigued by albatrosses, petrels, and shearwaters — seabirds that normally are only seen “far from land.” The title and subject matter of Michael Brooke’s book almost instinctively draws us in for an anticipated good read.

The book delivers in some ways if you have a passion for detail and the patience to sort through a lot of it. But if you are seeking an entertaining summary of seabird ecology that is infused with interesting examples and what a colleague of mine used to call “oh-my” stories, this may not be the book for you.

Seabirds admittedly are hard to study. Much of their life is spent far from land and the inquiring eyes of researchers. Most breed in colonies on oceanic islands that, despite the immense numbers of individuals of some species, are themselves remote and unfamiliar. The world map inside the front and back cover identifies many of the islands mentioned in the text, but it is not the best companion to that text. Some islands groups (e.g., the Crozets at 47 degrees S latitude) are not identified and there is no latitude/longitude grid to help appreciate their location. I dare say that most of these locations are so unfamiliar that a photographic survey would have helped the reader understand the difficulties of seabird research even when that research takes place on land. Photos, however, including an eight-page color insert, are reserved for a selection of the birds themselves.

Brooke’s introductory chapter begins by surveying the “seabirds” he will cover. The range includes penguins; tubenoses (albatrosses, fulmars, shearwaters, gadfly and storm petrels, prions, and diving petrels); the group that includes gannets, tropicbirds, frigatebirds, and cormorants; plus, the gulls, terns, jaegers, and skuas; some shorebirds; and finally, the auks. That is a very wide net, indeed, and it presages the difficulties a reader will encounter comparing apples and oranges in the ensuing chapters.

One important inclusion in the introduction is a survey of the often demanding and remarkably ingenious methods for studying seabird ecology. Even on land, seabird studies require an incredible level of commitment and patience. Researchers may spend days on remote islands to record the nocturnal comings and goings of petrels and shearwaters or, even more difficult, to retrieve a geolocator strapped to an individual bird among many thousands at a breeding colony. More ingenious are the devices used to deduce actual seabird behavior in the field. In addition to geologgers that record global position (with varying degrees of accuracy), data loggers have been invented. Data

More ingenious are the devices used to deduce actual seabird behavior in the field. In addition to geologgers that record global position (with varying degrees of accuracy), data loggers have been invented. Data loggers enable estimates of how much time a bird spends in the air and on the water, whether the latter is spent resting or feeding, and, if the last, how deep it dives and when during the dive it is actually consuming food. Brooke has been there and done that with regard to many modern techniques....

loggers enable estimates of how much time a bird spends in the air and on the water, whether the latter is spent resting or feeding, and, if the last, how deep it dives and

when during the dive it is actually consuming food. Brooke has been there and done that with regard to many modern techniques, and his explanations convey his enthusiasm as well as his personal authority.

The following chapters are organized around themes rather than particular species. They begin with a survey of how various seabirds undertake their first journeys away from home. This is logically followed by a chapter that attempts to unravel what the birds do, during what may be many years, between leaving

continued on page 13

“Far from Land: The Mysterious Lives of Seabirds” (cont.)

home and their first attempts at breeding with a mate they will keep for life.

We then enter the world of adult birds, beginning with seasonal migrations between breeding and wintering areas and winding up with how birds forage during the breeding season when they are tied closer to home – and to land. We are next treated to an exposé on how seabird flight takes advantage of wind and waves. Finally, we learn how seabirds can take advantage of currents and global circulation patterns to increase the likelihood of successful feeding activity.

These chapter themes are intriguing and, like the title of they tend to draw us in. Unfortunately, however, they become examples from different species that quickly becomes befuddling. For example, the chapter on Adult Migrations commingles the long-distance movements of the Red-necked Phalarope, Arctic Tern, Black-legged Kittiwake, Ivory Gull, Cooke’s Petrel, South Polar Skua, Cory’s Shearwater, Murphy’s Petrel (the author’s own research), Manx Shearwater, Wandering Albatross, and Marconi and Rockhopper Penguins.

It turns out that each species exhibits, what appears to be, unique behavior. For example, Cory’s Shearwaters from a single colony on the Savage Islands in the Canaries off Africa, they winter in restricted locations ranging from the Benguela Current (off South Africa) to the central South Atlantic, to the Northwest Atlantic (off Labrador). Some even switch locations year to year, entailing a separation of up to 4,000 miles from where they spent the previous winter. It is next to impossible to tease out any generalized adaptive strategy from such a plethora and diversity of examples gleaned from species that are so different ecologically.

As an evolutionary biologist, I am fascinated by seabirds. Despite a low reproductive rate (only a single egg per nest, with incubation periods of up to 10 weeks and nearly a year to fledgling stage for the largest albatrosses) some species have evolved to become arguably the most numerous birds in the world. This has been fostered through their selection of remote islands on which to breed predator-free and, as Brooke documents again and again, their demonstrated ability to exploit the biological productivity of the world ocean. At the same time, many species have become highly specialized and therefore vulnerable to even minor changes in their environment.

Brooke’s final chapter “The Clash” documents the disturbing interface between human activity and seabird survival. Encounters with fishing activity are bad enough, but the introduction of alien species to the islands where seabirds formerly bred without predation can destroy the reproductive success of whole colonies, if not whole species. What’s more, as numerous as species like Sooty Shearwater and Wilson’s Storm Petrel may be, many other species are restricted to only a few breeding locations — consequently, they are globally rare and endangered. It remains to be seen how many seabird species retain enough adaptive flexibility to survive the rapid advances of climate change.

Michael Brooke’s thoroughly researched book documents the great range of behavioral diversity that seabirds exhibit. That diversity gives us some assurance that many species will persist to grace that 70% of earth that is under water, even if, in order to see and appreciate them, we will still need to travel — yes — far from land.

(Editor’s note: This review was originally published in the September/October 2018 issue of *The Maryland Yellowthroat*. Reprinted with permission.) go to: <https://mdbirds.org/publications/the-yellowthroat/>



the book itself, mired in detail, a litany of dling. For example, the chapter on Adult

Annual Conference Field Trips (continued)

will be spent in the canyon. Likely species include Bullock's Oriole, Lazuli Bunting, Chukar, Rock and House Wren, Say's Phoebe and Lark Sparrow. Possibilities include Golden Eagle, Common Poorwill, Dusky Flycatcher, Gray Catbird, Canyon Wren and Black-chinned Hummingbird.

10) Hwy 21 - Odessa – Wilson Creek – Soap Lake (Adams, Lincoln, Grant)

Leaders: Randy Hill (Friday, Limited Playback Allowed), Scott and Sierra Downes (Saturday, Limited Playback Allowed), Kevin Black (Sunday, Limited Playback Allowed)

Full-day trip requiring long driving times some walking on mostly level ground; limited playback expected. This trip travels through Adams Co. shrub-steppe and dryland wheat to Crab Creek in Lincoln County, then westward to mixed riparian and open landscapes of Grant County through Wilson Creek and Soap Lake. Targets include breeding sparrows, shorebirds and waterfowl, Sage Thrasher, Loggerhead Shrike, Tricolored Blackbird, Ferruginous Hawk and migrants of all types. Spring runoff will establish Crab Creek flood stage and some interesting possibilities.

11) Northrup Canyon (Grant)

One hour and 15 min one way

Leaders: Matt Yawney (Saturday), Matt Yawney (Sunday)

NOTE: departure 5:15 A.M. Full-day trip requiring long drive time and **strenuous** hiking. If hiking all the way to the "lake" it would likely be 4-5 hours. That can be a somewhat tough hike because as the trail gets further into the canyon there is some significant climbing and descending. There's also a rocky portion before the climbing. So if the people on the trip are very frail we might only go in about 1-2 miles. I think all the way to the lake is about four miles. Up to 55 species are expected; Golden Eagle is regular there. House Wren is abundant. Expect

Cassin's Finch, Cassin's Vireo, Canyon and Rock Wren, White-throated Swift, Yellow-breasted Chat, Lazuli Bunting, and Calliope Hummingbird.

12) Para/McCain Ponds – Lower Crab Creek Rd – Corfu Woods - Hwy 26 Saline Pond (Grant, Adams)

35 min one way

Leaders: Randy Hill (Saturday, Limited Playback Allowed), Bob Flores (Sunday, Limited Playback Allowed)

Full-day trip which requires a lot of vehicle time and little walking. A variety of bird species are targeted including Tri-colored Blackbird, Wilson's and Red-necked Phalarope, Black-necked Stilt, American Avocet and possible Long-eared and Burrowing Owl. Spring waterfowl and shorebird migration could provide surprises. Driving Lower Crab Creek Road look for Loggerhead Shrikes and Lark Sparrows perched on fence lines. Corfu Woods, a migrant trap, offers opportunities to find Townsend's, Orange-crowned, Wilson's, McGillivray's, Nashville and Yellow-rumped Warblers, both Warbling and Cassin's vireo, Hammond's, Dusky, Pacific-slope Flycatcher and both Golden-crowned and Ruby-crowned Kinglets. Long-billed Curlew and Loggerhead Shrike are often seen in adjacent fields. Potential birds include Townsend's Solitaire, Lewis's Woodpecker and Gray Flycatcher.

13) Quincy Lakes WMA (Grant)

45 min one way

Leaders: Michael Hobbs (Friday, Playback Allowed), Kim Thorburn (Sunday, No Playback Allowed)

Full-day trip including a moderate hiking trip. Most of this unit is well vegetated with perennial plants including big sage/bluebunch wheatgrass is the most common plant community. Several of the potholes are filled

continued on page 15

Annual Conference Field Trips (continued)

these wetlands, ponds and lakes have added an important diversity to the habitat of this area. Expected birds include Black-necked Stilt, White-throated Swift, Say's Phoebe, Lark Sparrow, Canyon, House, Marsh and Bewick's Wren, Eastern Kingbird, Bullock's Oriole, Warbling Vireo, Chipping Sparrow, winnowing Wilson's Snipe and several species of waterfowl. Possibilities include Gray Partridge, Sage Thrasher, Forster's Tern, Virginia Rail, Lewis's Woodpecker and Yellow-breasted Chat.

14. Sentinel Bluffs, Wanapum Dam, and Desert Aire (possible) (Grant County)

45 minutes one way

Leaders:

Saturday: Bruce LaBar (Playback Allowed)

Sunday: Scott and Sierra Downs (Limited Playback Allowed)

Full-day trip requiring long drive time and moderate-level walking. Found along the Columbia River in Grant County is a riparian strip guarded by Sentinel Bluff. This trip will involve a long casual walk and a stop at Wanapum Dam. White-throated Swifts and swallows soar around the bluff while Chukars call out. Migrants stop at this trap to forage before moving on. On the river, a variety of ducks can be seen as well pelicans, gulls, and occasional loons and terns. Expected birds include Eastern And Western Kingbird, Bullock's Oriole, House Wren And sparrow flocks to name a few. Migrants could include a variety of warblers, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Warbling Vireo, Gray Catbird and several flycatchers. Scanning the river from Wanapum Dam could result in seeing loons, a variety of gulls and waterbird species.

15) Sprague Lake – Sprague Sewer Ponds – Sheep Lake – Crooked Knee – Cow Lake (Lincoln, Whitman, Adams)

One hour one way

Leaders: Jon Isacoff (Saturday, Playback Allowed), Randy Hill (Sunday, Limited Playback Allowed)

NOTE: departure 5:15 A.M. Full day trip requiring long driving times, roadside stops, light walking at public access areas. Sprague area can be haven for migrants during May. We should have strong showings of waterfowl, migrant shorebirds, gulls, terns, and passerines. Stops will include Sprague Lake, Sprague Sewage lagoons, Sprague Lake resort (\$3 per person required), Sprague Cemetery, and Sheep Lake. Target species include Franklin's Gull, Black Tern, Avocet, Black-necked Stilt, Wilson's Phalarope, White-faced Ibis, Tricolored Blackbird, and migrant empids, vireos, and warblers.

16) Sun Lakes – Lake Lenore – Alkali Lake – Blue Lake – Dry Falls (Grant)

45 min one way

Leaders: Doug Schonewald (Friday, Limited Playback Allowed), Bob Flores (Saturday, Limited Playback Allowed), Doug Schonewald (Sunday, Limited Playback Allowed)

Full-day trip requiring long driving times, roadside stops, light walking at public access areas. Travel north on Hwy 17 through the Grand Coulee past chains of lakes surrounded by shrub-steppe habitat and stopping along the way to scan for waterbirds and raptors and Chukars. The trip ends at Sun Lakes State Park a known vagrant trap where the group will look for migrants and waterbirds. Expected are White-throated Swift, Warbling Vireo, Western Wood Pewee, Lazuli Bunting, Black-headed Grosbeak, sparrow flocks including Lark, Song, White-crowned, Golden-crowned and Chipping. Warblers are found in riparian habitat including Townsend's, Orange-crowned, Wilson's, McGillavray's, Nashville, Yellow-breasted

continued on page 16

Annual Conference Field Trips (continued)

Chat and Yellow-rumped. Possible birds include Prairie Falcon, Long-eared Owl, Barrow's Goldeneye, Evening Grosbeak and Common Poorwill.

17) Wanapum State Park – Ginkgo Petrified St. Park – Old Vantage Hwy – Quilomene WMA (Kittitas)

55 min one way

Leaders: Tom Bancroft (Friday, Playback Allowed), Kevin Black (Saturday, Limited Playback Allowed) Scott Ramos (Sunday, Limited Playback Allowed)

NOTE: departure time 5:15 A.M. Full-day trip and requires light walking. Two well-known migrant traps in Kittitas County are on this trip. Expected migrants include kinglets, Black-headed Grosbeak, Western Tanager, variety of warblers and groups of sparrows. Sage areas around Ginkgo Petrified S. P. normally have singing Sage Thrashers while Chukars and Canyon Wrens call from the cliffs along Old Vantage Road. Wanapum State Park is dominated by riverine riparian habitat and surrounded by shrub-steppe. As a migrant trap several species of warblers are expected; also Warbling Vireo, Bullock's Oriole, Red-breasted Nuthatch and Western Tanager. While at the two sites above scan the Columbia River for grebes, Common Loon and American White Pelican. Quilomene WMA provides trails through shrub-steppe dominated coulees where sparrow flocks flourish; also expected are Bullock's Oriole, California Quail, Rock Wren and Chukar.



Trish Gussler photo

Red-necked Phalarope

18) Washtucna – Hooper – Hatton Coulee – Palouse Falls Park (possible) (Grant, Adams, Franklin, Whitman)

One and a half hour

Leaders: Bob Flores (Friday, Limited Playback Allowed), Mike and MerryLynn (Sunday, Limited Playback Allowed)

NOTE: departure time 5:15 A.M. Full-day trip requiring long driving times, roadside stops, light walking at public access areas. Bassett Park located in the small town of Washtucna is the best migrant trap known in Adams County. Multiple species of warblers, flycatchers are very possible. Also kinglets, sparrows, vireos and other migrants should be found.

The small community of Hooper includes both Adams and Whitman Counties and is a good location to find Lesser Goldfinch. If time permits the tour will continue to Palouse Falls State Park where White-throated Swift, Peregrine Falcon and migrant songbirds are expected. One the entrance road to the park a possible Ferruginous Hawk and Grasshopper Sparrow is possible.

The Aspen Grove

By Thomas Bancroft

Rustling sounds filled the meadow while millions of small silvery flashes came from the copse. It was just a gentle breeze that morning but enough to make the leaves flutter. A pale green then green-silver would sparkle, and waves of these flickerings would transverse back and forth, like ripples moving across a small pond. No wonder these trees are called quaking aspens.

A loud commotion came from my left. Just 20 feet away, a 6-foot high post had a birdhouse. Six chattering Tree Swallows were doing acrobatics within a few feet of the box. A pair had a nest there, and perhaps these others were trying to usurp the space. The birds never touched but they came within inches as each twisted and turned, their long pointed wings and broad tails providing precise control. Finally, one bird settled onto the roof, chattering lightly, and the others dispersed. At that point, I suspected this was some kind of social interaction, a morning greeting.

My attention turned to the aspen grove, and the bird I had come to find. The “chebec, chebec, chebec” drifted from deep in the trees. The Least Flycatcher was singing. This species is in the genus *Empidonax*, a group of small, drab birds, which look virtually identical and can be reliably separated only by their songs. This individual, less than six inches long, was probably sitting on a branch four or five feet off the ground, scanning for flying insects, and giving its incessant territorial chant. The remarkable thing was that he was well outside his normal breeding range.

I first saw this species in Western Pennsylvania when I was in high school. It breeds north from the central Appalachians through Canada and west to the Rockies. A few breed in northeastern Washington, but this site at Conboy National Wildlife Refuge in south-central Washington is hundreds of miles out of its normal range.

I was curious to find this bird for I had a strange feeling of connection to it, almost like this little guy was a brother. Except for undergraduate school, I’d spent my first 60 years living in Eastern United States before moving west to Seattle. Since settling here, I’ve felt both out of place and yet extremely content. The flycatcher, also, didn’t seem to care if it was far from its regular haunts. Several dozen birders had heard his song over the last week. He was apparently here for the breeding season.

My left hand clutched the parabolic microphone pointing toward the sound, while my right hand held my binoculars in the ready position. The digital recorder was running while I searched the understory for this elusive bird. No one was allowed anywhere beyond these trails, and if I didn’t want human-made sounds in my soundtrack, I couldn’t move. My best chance to see this individual was if it flew and landed on a visible branch.

Other birds were also singing on this early June morning. The elaborate warbles of a house wren came from the understory to my left, and a warbling vireo’s slurry notes drifted through the quaking leaves above me. White-breasted Nuthatches, Red-breasted Sapsuckers, Western Bluebirds, and Western Wood Pewees also made their presence known. Headsets covered my ears, giving me a stereo concert of this forest patch at the edge of the wet savanna that covered most of this refuge.

Suddenly, I realized a second Least Flycatcher was calling off to my left, so I turned the parabolic reflector in that direction to see if the sound would become more distinct. Yes, it definitely was a second individual. Both sexes sing in this species. The first part of the female’s “chebec” is slightly lower in pitch, but the second part is virtually identical. Males, though, are not evenly dispersed through suitable habitat but rather form clumps of small territories. It is like a classical lek system where the males all compete for females on a stage rather than be spread throughout the theater. My ears weren’t discerning enough to decide if this was a pair or two separate males.

They have an exciting display, but I was there at the wrong time of day. For a short period after sunset, the male will climb up through the branches to the top of the canopy offering warbles, whits, and chebecs as he goes. He then performs a “flight song” in which he flies up from the treetops for 30 seconds, singing non-stop, and then tumbles back down, much the way a butterfly might flutter. Of course, ornithologists think it has something to do with mating, but we don’t know the actual function of this flight song. In my imagination, I can only assume that the male goes high to become visible to a distant female who might be wandering through looking for a mate.

A flash of brown zipped behind an aspen trunk and then landed on a dead branch a few feet off the ground. The Least Flycatcher looked off to my right, gazing up and down into the small opening under the aspens. A second later he was gone, but a surge of energy stayed with me. This bird was living life wherever he was.



New WOS Members - May 2018 through January 2019

Will Brooks

John Davis

Marie Marshall

Jeff & Eileen Hambleton

Russel Smith

Jay Kaplan

Jedidiah Holmes

Soo Goh-Baus

James Bosley

Ken Chamberlain

Rochelle Miller

Shawneen Finnegan

Larry Umthun

Frances Dobny

Robin Melvin

Joyce Fowler

Patrice Britain

Marc Cordova

Armand Lucas

Michael Little

Charley Wilkinson

Jean Siesener

Nancy Knofler

Greg Harrington

Eva Gruber

Peter Petesch

Bruce Barcklow

Ivar Husa

Jane Manderino

Heide Erland

Chris Tompkins

Karl Freiboth

Welcome!



Red Ohara photo

Bar-tailed Godwit

Regular WOS Field Trips (Feb.-March)

February 9, 2019

TRIP NOW FULL Owls by Day with Mike & MerryLynn Denny (contact Mike and MerryLynn Denny at m.denny@charter.net)

February 16, 2019 6 a.m.

TRIP NOW FULL Okanogan Highlands/Waterville Plateau Winter Trip - Leader Shep Thorp (contact Shep Thorp at shepthorp@gmail.com or call 253-370-3742)

February 23, 2019

Clark County late winter search with Randy Hill et. al.

Join Randy Hill, Russ Koppendrayner, Cindy McCormack, and Jim Danzenbaker to explore the diversity of Clark County in the transition from late winter to early spring. This trip will concentrate on finding resident, wintering and maybe early-arriving Vancouver area specialties. Target species include Snowy Egret, Lesser Goldfinch, Red-shouldered Hawk, diving ducks and other waterfowl, loons, grebes and possibly owls.

We will meet at the I-5 Salmon Creek Park-and-Ride off NE 134th St at 7:30 a.m. and explore areas that could include Ridgefield, Vancouver Lake and lowlands and the Columbia River that may reach as far upstream as Steigerwald Lake NWR. Depending on conditions, a Sunday morning upland forest trip might be added. A Friday afternoon exploration of the Woodland Bottoms also will be arranged. For more information and to sign up, contact Randy Hill by email at: re_hill@q.com, or at 360-975-2573 (text preferred)

March 9, 2019 8 a.m.

Whatcom County with Leader Ed Swan

We'll be concentrating on Semiahmoo, Drayton Harbor and Birch Bay but destinations subject to change. We'll chase any good birds found in the CBC, and otherwise start with the fields looking for swans, geese, raptors, Short-eared Owls and Western Meadowlarks and then head for Sandy Point, Pt. Whitehorn, Birch Bay, and Semiahmoo.

Meeting at 8 a.m. in Whatcom County (specific meeting point to be determined closer to trip). To sign up, contact Ed Swan at: edswan2@comcast.net

