

*The beauty -
and local peril
- of trumpeter
swans - pg. 3*



Washington Ornithological Society

New info about two
more recipients of
the Patrick Sullivan
Young Birders Fund
award: page 4

WOSNews No. 179 April - May 2019

From the Board

[Kevin Black](#)

The 2019 WOS Annual Conference is coming fast! The WOS Board and other officers have been working hard to plan a conference that I wouldn't want to miss! We hope our efforts result in an educational and bird-filled experience. Conferences in Eastern Washington often allow those of us who live on the West-side to explore new habitats and birding locations. The vastness of Eastern Washington and its under-birded areas seem to make the trip through the gorge or over the cascades worth it. We are looking forward to seeing sagebrush and grassland species during our upcoming conference. When I think of Eastern Washington in the spring I think of rolling

[Table of Contents](#) green hills, shrub-steppe,
[has moved to page 2](#) and the many species that
call that sparse, beautiful

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PSYBF Recipient: My White-crowned Sparrow Project and Some Plans for the Future

Will Brooks

Hybrids are something we encounter on a daily basis when we bird in Washington. Most of our gulls are hybrids, most of the sapsuckers in the Cascades are hybrids, and recent studies show that our crows are likely hybrids as well.

From a birding perspective these hybrids make identification harder, but from an evolutionary perspective these hybrid zones provide valuable avenues for understanding speciation. Hybridization typically occurs in a secondary contact zone, where populations meet again after being geographically isolated. When populations are geographically isolated, different environmental pressures and random changes (called genetic drift by evolutionary biolo-

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More Than Just a Chase: Confessions of a County Lister after Seeing 200 Species in all 39 counties of Washington

Matt Bartels

Every birder eventually finds that there are different ways to pursue this 'birding' hobby. You don't have to choose just one 'lane' – few people limit themselves to just one type of birding. Instead, we shift modes regularly, finding some things that appeal more than others, some that are occasionally fun, and some that never quite seem interesting. There's feeder watching, citizen science surveys, field trips, life list building, patch birding and plenty other ways to be a birder. For me, somehow, county listing within Washington has become a bit of an... obsession. I've birded elsewhere in the US and beyond, and I have a weekly 'patch walk' led by Michael Hobbs at Marymoor Park that I rarely miss. But tracking my life list for each of Washington's counties seems to be the hook that keeps me most excited when planning my next outings.

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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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The Grace of Trumpeter Swans

Thomas Bancroft

The low-pitched trumpet came from behind us. Turning, I spotted two large white birds that then flew right over us. Their translucent flight feathers glowed in the early morning sun. Their wingspan, more than six feet, created a moving shadow across Fir Island. Long white necks extended in front of solid bodies, and elephantine black legs and feet were tucked tight against their underside. More than 25 pounds each, these Trumpeter Swans flew with grace, style, and dignity. The pair circled the field a quarter-mile east of our location, then set their wings, dropped their black feet, and landed without a stumble among several hundred swans. A few trumpets and calls drifted toward me from the crowd. Most of these largest of North America's waterfowl seemed to be resting on the green grass. The trachea in these birds is more than three-feet long, about a half-inch in diameter, and has a volume three to four times what one might expect for a bird this size. The trachea folds back and forth in the chest and creates the resonating chamber for the beautiful call that caught my attention.

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Some Swans in Trouble



Martha Jordan of the Northwest Swan Conservation Association is seen here in her boat with her dog Moss and a live swan during a recent rescue attempt.

Unseen are five dead swans and another live bird, also inside the boat.

Another swan mortality event happened in the Snoqualmie Valley and into the upper Snohomish Valley area in March. More than 40 Trumpeter Swans were dead in just over a week, more than likely from ingestion of lead shot causing lead poisoning. Martha Jordan, Executive Director of Northwest Swan Conservation Association along with Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife has been out picking up the sick and dead and counting feather piles (predated dead). Most swan have migrated north out of the area with only a few healthy stragglers hanging around. Many of the live swans you see are likely sick. These sick and dead are still being found in all types of wetlands and even fields. If you observe a sick or dead swan please call 206-713-3684 to report it.

- Martha Jordan

Say Hello to Two More PSYBF Award Winners

Tom Mansfield

Two up-and-coming birders will be honored at the 2019 WOS Conference in Moses Lake with grants from the Patrick Sullivan Young Birders Fund (“PSYBF”). We are pleased to announce the honorees this year are Sierra Downes, 13, of Yakima, and Hayley Rettig, 20, of Tacoma.

Each is making her own unique contribution to birding in Washington and their honorariums, thanks to the generosity of WOS members, will help them pursue worthy goals.

Sierra: With her well-known birder/biologist Dad, Scott Downes, providing the encouragement (and transportation!), there is no wonder Sierra has racked up an impressive Life List since she began keeping track at age 6: she’s at **600** species on the ABA North America list. And by attending Camp Chiricahua in southeastern Arizona on the PSYBF honorarium, she hopes to add more. The camp, organized by VENT Nature Tours, runs for 11 days in July each year. It is so popular, Sierra felt fortunate her application was accepted for the 2020 season.



Sierra Downes

The area is home to a dazzling array of unique and colorful birds like Elegant Trogon, Red-faced Warbler, Juniper Titmouse, Montezuma Quail and the Mexican Chickadee, Jay and Spotted Owl, to name just a few.

“I am hoping to see many new and amazing birds, mammals and reptiles since I have not been in that environment. This trip will enhance my knowledge of birding by learning more about birds (migration, habits, songs) in a different ecosystem while learning from new leaders and other young birders,” Sierra wrote in her application. “By being with other young birders I can learn from some that are my age and this will help my birding skills. Being a better birder will help me contribute to the Washington birding community.” And Sierra already does that, co-leading field trips with her Dad for Yakima Valley Audubon and WOS, including trips during the upcoming Moses Lake

conference.

Our first honoree from Eastern Washington, Sierra is a seventh grader and active in a variety of school pursuits including soccer (she’s on a year-round academy team), band (plays trumpet), basketball, photography and drawing. But her non-soccer weekends and school holidays are ALL birding with her Dad usually at the wheel and carefully planning their field trips.



Hayley Rettig

Avid county listers, Sierra and Scott are familiar faces at all the great rarities and she’s already ticked the Swallow-tailed Gull, Guadeloupe Murrelet, Brown Booby (yes, she is a veteran of several pelagics), Painted Redstart and some special owls including Burrowing (her favorite), Great Gray and Flammulated.

She and her Dad were at Neah Bay with Eric Heisey discovering the state’s First Record Field Sparrow in 2016. Having birded in 30 of the state’s 39 counties, Sierra’s Washington checklist is at 372 species, her Yakima County List is a lofty 266 and she has seen 102 species in her yard.

It’s too early for Sierra to be focusing on a career but she is quick to add that zoology has caught her interest – but she hasn’t “thought about it that much” because there are good birds to be seeing!

Hayley: While relatively new to birding, Hayley’s grant application was unique: support for a Methow Valley project involving beavers, breeding birds and forest fires.

“I will be examining the effects that beavers, and their dams, have on bird diversity in landscapes affected by fire. Conducting this kind of research is important, since there has been little research done on beaver dams and how beavers may interact with the negative effects of fires on stream ecosystems and the surrounding communities,

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About the Conference Artist, Watercolorist Lisa Hill



I live in Richland and am a Washington native. My love of plants began 35 years ago with a vegetable garden providing home-grown food for my young family. Growing flowers and other landscape plants was a natural step to earning a horticulture degree in 1996 and starting my own landscaping business in Spokane. I hold an AAS degree in horticulture from Spokane Community College. One year, I took a workshop and two-day birding field trip with a local expert through Spokane Parks & Rec and I was hooked! Most of my travels in the U.S. and South America since then have been centered around birding adventures and attending watercolor painting workshops.

I began painting with watercolor in 2007. I prefer realistic portrayals, and I enjoy playing with other styles and techniques. I have taught watercolor classes for seven years in my home studio. I am a member of the Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society and crazy about birds. Also, I sing regularly with the Mid-Columbia Mastersingers chamber choir in the Tri-Cities.

With my experience as a horticulturist, Master Gardener and avid birder, I instinctively seek out plants and birds as subjects for many of my paintings. The seasonal succession of buds, leaves, flowers and fruit in the plant world, and the great variety of plumages and behaviors among birds, are continuous artistic inspirations.

-- Lisa Hill

From the Board (continued)

habitat home. In the spring, vagrant traps also can have the potential of producing uncommon or even rare species. I also think of the smell of sage and pungent smell of farmland.

In a way, the recent WOS member meetings have foreshadowed the conference. Christi Norman & Cindy Easterson spoke on the Sagebrush Songbird Survey in February and WFDW Biologist Jason Fidorra spoke on his experience with Burrowing Owl conservation efforts in March. Members who attended the recent monthly meetings might be on the edge of their seats, ready for the annual conference's field trips, hoping to see a Burrowing Owl or a Sagebrush Sparrow. Superlatives aside, I hope you all are excited for the upcoming conference. I'm looking forward to seeing familiar faces, meeting new birders and learning new information whether that information is from a guest speaker or fellow birders. The annual conference is always one of the highlights to my year.

The Best Western Plus Lake Front in Moses Lake is providing lodging and hosting conference events. Moses Lake receives run-off from Crab Creek and also flows out to Potholes Reservoir. These bodies of water receive runoff from irrigation canals and are dammed thus creating lakes. The lake front is easy to scope from the hotel grounds.

Not only do we have an exciting night of discourse, but a few awards will be given out Saturday night! This year's conference is special as giving out awards to three different individuals is not a common occurrence. Saturday evening, **the Zella M. Schultz award will be granted to a special individual and two aspiring young birders will be granted the Patrick Sullivan Young Birders Fund award.**

Our keynote speaker is Nathan Pieplow, who will be speaking Saturday evening. The topic of Nathan's talk is "The Language of Birds." Nathan will also be facilitating a workshop, "Becoming an Expert Listener" on Saturday afternoon. Sunday afternoon, Matt Bartels and members of the Washington

Bird Records Committee (WBRC) will be revealing WBRC processes to us with a talk titled, "WBRC Demystified." An interesting Q & A session with Matt and WBRC members will follow. Both talks seem intriguing and will help us learn more about the birding world and the WBRC's procedures. Bob Flores has put together a wide range of field trips spanning a variety of habitat including sagebrush, shrub-steppe, various sized-lake habitat including vast open lake, open grasslands, vagrant/migrant traps and the unique ponderosa habitat of Northrup Canyon. The trips hold amazing potential for county birders, with half- and full-day trips covering Grant, Adams, Franklin, Douglas, Lincoln, Whitman and Kittitas counties.



Lisa Hill (see page 5 for her bio) has crafted a superb painting (at left and on page 5) of four blackbird species (Red-winged, Yellow-headed, Tri-colored and Brewer's) for our conference t-shirts and other memorabilia. Several WOS board members, officers and other volunteers have and will continue to be integral to the production of the conference. Please don't forget to thank those board members, officers and volunteers who help you register and answer your questions during the conference. Numerous hours of coordination, communication and brainstorming go into the creation and production of a WOS conference.

We are compiling a WOS directory in order to promote birder fellowship. Staying in contact with your WOS community at-large can be an important factor. We are hoping to provide this directory in the coming months. WOS sent you an email in January 2019 requesting you to fill out your contact information and decide whether or not you would want to be in the directory. If you did not get this email please contact us by emailing secretary@wos.org. In this current-day, privacy is important to many of you. Whether you seek privacy or better connection with your fellow birders, we want to meet your needs with the updates to the directory.

Say Hello to Two More PSYBF winners (cont.)

including birds,” she wrote in her application.

“With the increased frequency of forest fires, understanding the interactions between beaver dams and fires can narrow the gap in knowledge about the use of beavers as tools in **post-fire recovery and riparian habitat restoration**.

Understanding the potential of beaver-created habitats as fire buffers and the role of beavers in the acceleration of recovery from fire, allows for better policy decisions about where beavers are being reintroduced and their potential use in fire management.”

A native of Tacoma, Hayley is a sophomore at University of Puget Sound (“UPS”) studying biology. She graduated from Curtis High School where she ran cross country, participated in choir and volunteered at Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium. At UPS her birding really picked up as she joined the weekly bird walks and volunteers at Slater Museum.

In her Methow study, Hayley will collect data using bird surveys. Bird surveys will be conducted using 10-minute point counts. Surveys will be conducted between 5 and 9:30 AM, and, if necessary, after 10 AM. Bird songs will be recorded during these counts. She will do three surveys per site each morning, sometimes at multiple sites. Two automated recording units (ARUs) will be deployed remotely to increase number of sites that can be sampled each day, and that is the primary use of the \$1,000 PSYBF honorarium. Because her study will occur during breeding season, Hayley wrote that sites will be approached to create as little disturbance as possible. Birds will be counted using visual and auditory cues, where humans are counting. Whether birds were seen or heard will be recorded. Species abundance and diversity will be recorded. Surveys will not take place when weather, such as wind or rain, interferes with intensity or audibility of bird songs or when weather shuts down bird song activity. The recordings will be analyzed with the software Audacity and she plans to double check the recordings from observers and record data from the ARUs, all similar to other research she has conducted for her ecology class.

As her UPS advisor Dr. Peter Wimberger noted, Hayley’s proposal dovetails with other researchers using the same Methow Valley sites to study vegetation diversity and complexity, aquatic invertebrate diversity, sedimentation and bats. Adding research on birds and beavers will help better understand the interplay.

The PSYBF proudly honors Sierra and Hayley as the 10th and 11th recipients of grants. It is significant that our youngest honoree, Sierra, is also the first from East of the Cascades. Out of the 11 honorees since the fund’s founding in 2005, 3 have been from Pierce County, 2 from King, 2 from Kitsap and 1 each from Snohomish, Whatcom, Lewis and, now, Yakima.

We encourage any “young” birder to seek more information and apply by visiting the WOS website and clicking on the Young Birders Fund tab.



Jean Barrell photo

Field Sparrow

Will Brooks on a Project and Future Plans (cont.)

gists) cause the populations to diverge. This divergence can lead to speciation, or smaller divergence between populations.

When secondary contact occurs, it becomes possible to observe how strongly diverged the populations became when they were in isolation. Because the populations are still closely related, hybridization will often occur. By studying these hybrids and the mechanisms affecting their interbreeding, we can learn about speciation. As an undergraduate student looking for a summer research project on evolution, I was looking for a project on hybrid zones. So when Dennis Paulson and Peter Wimberger brought up the idea of studying a new secondary contact zone occurring in White-crowned Sparrows in the Cascades, I jumped at the opportunity.

During the past 30 years a small overlap zone has emerged in the North Cascade Mountains in Washington between the Puget Sound White-crowned Sparrow and the Gambel's White-crowned Sparrow.



Subspecies *pugetensis*

These two subspecies are members of the two main White-crowned sparrow populations: the coastal and interior populations. These populations are believed to have been separated for about 250,000 years; even though they are not distinct species, we can learn a lot about how divergence can evolve.

It appears that clear cuts from logging have allowed the sparrows to expand into the mountains, overlapping along the Cascade Crest. There are a number of things that make this study special. First, the secondary contact is recent. This means that we can observe evolutionary mechanisms occurring in real time. Next, White-crowned Sparrows are widely used as a model species for research. There have been over 10,000 papers written about them, many focusing on behavioral and evolutionary questions.

Some studies have even examined hybrid zones between other White-crowned Sparrow subspecies. These hybrid zone studies tend to focus on song recognition as an isolating mechanism.

White-crowned Sparrows have distinctive songs that males use to attract females in reproduction. These songs vary geographically by subspecies and within subspecies, called dialects. West coast White-crowned Sparrows recognize their own songs better than those of other subspecies and dialects. If birds distinguish their song from other songs they are more likely to breed with their own songs, causing reproductive isolation.

Based on these previous observations, my aims in studying these two subspecies of White-crowned Sparrow were to better understand their distribution, look for evidence of hybridization, and measure song recognition between them.

To do so, I chose study sites across the Cascades from Crystal Mountain to the Okanogan. Some of these sites had known mixed populations, others seemed promising, and some provided pure populations of each subspecies (*pugetensis* or *gambelii*). At each site I spent time mapping male territories and checking subspecies by plumage and song. The main experimental portion of my study was what is known as a playback experiment. In each male's territory I would set up a speaker in a central location and play a recording of a singing male White-crowned Sparrow of a particular subspecies. From a distance I would note the male's behavior and record his vocalizations with a microphone. Then the next day I would return and play a recording of the other subspecies.

This provided a comparison of how aggressive each male was towards its own subspecies and the other subspecies. Aggression can be used as a measure of song recognition, with greater aggression demonstrating greater recognition. I carried these out across all my study sites, using random recordings each trial. This left me with a comparison of subspecies recognition for the Puget Sound White-crowned Sparrow and the Gambel's White-crowned Sparrow. Additionally, since I was recording their responses, I was able to analyze the song structure of the birds.

By the end of the summer and after many long days in the field I had a series of results on this new secondary contact zone.

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Will Brooks on a Project and Future Plans (cont.)

First, the overlap between the two subspecies was smaller than expected. Multiple sites that were supposed to have both subspecies had only Puget Sound White-crowned Sparrow. There were some sites that had small populations of both, like Windy Gap and Green Mountain. It also seemed that the Puget Sound White-crowned Sparrow was expanding its range further northeast, as I documented two in Okanogan County where they have never bred before. Secondly, there was limited evidence of hybridization. Three birds had intermediate plumage and song characteristics, suggesting that they were hybrids. There were also two mixed-subspecies pairs.

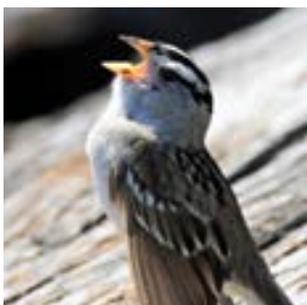
Finally, some of the most interesting results came from the playback experiments. As expected, both subspecies recognized the songs of either subspecies, so they behaved like the same species. However, the Puget Sound White-crowned Sparrow did discriminate between the subspecies, responding more aggressively to their own subspecies.

Finally, some of the most interesting results came from the playback experiments. As expected, both subspecies recognized the songs of either subspecies, so they behaved like the same species. However, the Puget Sound White-crowned Sparrow did discriminate between the subspecies, responding more aggressively to their own subspecies. The Gambel's White-crowned Sparrow, on the other hand, responded equally to both subspecies. This asymmetric response was unexpected. It seems likely that if they were separated for the same amount of time they would demonstrate the same degree of recognition. However, it seems that recognition has evolved differently in these two subspecies.

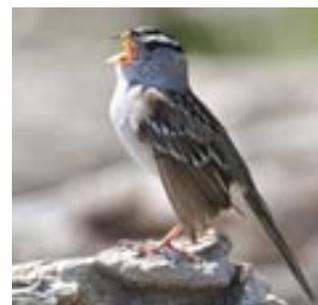
We believe that the observed asymmetric response pattern is best explained by a difference in tolerance for song variation. The Puget Sound White-crowned Sparrow has a variety of dialects across its range. These dialects are song variants that are sharply divided geographically within the subspecies range, with birds recognizing their own dialect more. The Gambel's White-crowned Sparrow has no dialects, with only general differences across large distances. This means that within a small area, one can find many different Gambel's White-crowned Sparrow song types. Since they are living together, these sparrows must be able to recognize all of these song types. If they already recognize multiple song types as their own species, it seems likely that they would recognize the Puget Sound White-crowned Sparrow song as well.

I will continue and extend the research this summer. Once again I will be doing playback experiments on White-crowned Sparrows in the Cascades. However, this time I will be adding genetics. Genetics will allow me to see if the Gambel's White-crowned Sparrow is driving the hybridization. It seems likely that if Gambel's females are less "picky" they would be more willing to interbreed. If these females are causing hybridization more it will be visible in the genetic data.

I would like to extend a huge thank you to WOS for supporting my research last summer. Through the Patrick Sullivan Young Birders Fund I was able to buy the necessary equipment to carry out this study and pay for travel throughout the hybrid zone. In addition, the ability to do the research has provided me the opportunity to give a talk at this summer's American Ornithological Society meeting. I found last summer truly enriching, and I believe that it has started me on a career path towards evolutionary ornithology that I am genuinely excited about.



photos provided by Will Brooks and Tom Bancroft



Confessions of a County Lister (continued)

On December 29, 2018, I managed to reach a goal that's been long in the chasing – 200 species seen in each of Washington's 39 counties. The first person to make it to this 200x39 mark was Tom Mansfield on September 27, 2014. Before that, it seemed like a mark that couldn't be reached, but Tom took county listing to a new level and encouraged those of us who get excited by such things to keep trying.

Steps along the way

I think as soon as I heard about county listing I was hooked by it. Ken & Laurie Knittle baited the hook with Washington Birder and its annual compilation of birding efforts in every county. Ruth and Patrick Sullivan gave me a free copy of a 2003 issue of Washington Birder, and by the end of that year I was submitting all my totals for the annual round-up. Because everyone has to construct their own little hurdles, I decided early on to only count birds that I'd actually seen – despite relying on hearing to track down most of the birds I now see. I made the rule that would only put a bird on my list if I got a look at it.

By 2008, I'd seen 100 birds in all 39 counties. In 2010, I'd made it to 150. In 2011, for a change of pace, I decided to go for 100 species in every county within a single year. 175x39 came in 2013. Then it was a long five years of plugging away to reach 200x39. In 2017, I focused mostly on Eastern Washington counties, getting all of them over the 200 mark by the end of the year after spending an awfully long time in the northeastern corner of the state. That left seven counties in Western Washington to dive into for 2018 – I didn't *need* to reach the goal in 2018, but I was hopeful that it was possible with a little luck and focused birding.

Clark County made it over the hump in March with one of the Randy Hill and company's classic winter WOS trips. Jefferson came next, also in March, thanks to bluebirds. In April,

I reached 200 in Island Co. with Mountain Bluebird & Rock Sandpiper. I spent much of the summer revisiting the last four counties hoping for surprises and making slow progress. Finally, after fall migration the pace picked up again. In Skamania county, I settled a grudge match with Swamp Sparrow as #199 – In 2013, I'd heard the county-first Swamp Sparrow, but couldn't count it on my list because of my no heard only rules. Snow Goose, also in November, was #200 for Skamania. And the same day, on the way home from Skamania, I snuck over 200 in Cowlitz with a Northern Shrike. Two trips to San Juan County in December netted a Swamp Sparrow and a Red Phalarope. And that left Wahkiakum.... I'd already added seven new birds to my Wahkiakum list by the beginning of December, but still needed one more. I returned from a trip to Minnesota with plans to spend the last three days of the year in Wahkiakum dreaming of just one more bird. Then, the night before I got there, Dalton Spencer reported a Lesser Goldfinch county first on Puget Island. A target! Sure enough, by 9 a.m. on the 29th, I was looking at my 200th as the small group of Lesser Goldfinch posed for great views.

What's so great about county listing?

Beyond chasing

There's something especially fun about finding something new for a region – state firsts are of course great, but they are so few and far between that a smaller goal like finding county firsts is one that offers semi-regular rewards. I've been fortunate enough to find about 30 county firsts, several of those as part of a group but 20+ on my own while wandering around the state.

Birding the under-birded corners of the state is a great way to raise the odds of finding something new. We live in the information age of birding right now – especially with eBird, there

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Confessions of a County Lister (continued)

is no shortage of detail about what is being seen by others. It is far too easy to just dial up the Birders Dashboard and chase whatever has most recently been reported. Taking on a state-wide project like 200x39 though is great for pushing beyond just chasing. One of the best parts of 39-county listing is that you are forced to explore counties beyond the expected birds and best-known stops. Until the last stages as 200x39 drew near, the scope of possibilities was always wide, with every weekend offering the chance to try somewhere different.

Seasonality

One of the best lessons county listing teaches is seasonality— there's huge benefit to paying attention to the windows of presence that make migration exciting. A migrant like Say's Phoebe in Western Washington or Common Yellowthroat in Eastern Washington are much more likely across the board if you've got the timing right. Some of my most fun random outings have revolved around chasing a species in multiple counties when the timing was right – on Dec. 8, 2005, during an irruption year, I tried to see how many counties I could see Snowy Owl in, in a single day – so I tried in seven counties and saw them in five before the day was over. This past winter, with all the reports of Swamp Sparrow showing up, I took advantage of the irruption to look for Swamp Sparrows in all the remaining counties of Western Washington where I'd previously not seen them. Rather than going to the reliable spots, I was happy to find them in places like San Juan Island, Crow Butte Park in Benton Co., and many places in between. All told, this winter I saw Swamp Sparrow in nine Western Washington counties and two Eastern Washington counties.

Habitat

County listing is also a great excuse to pay attention to habitat. I can remember following

directions to finally track down my lifer Grasshopper Sparrow – it took me several years to really internalize the habitat clues to look for, but eventually I was able to track this little sparrow down in all but one Eastern Washington county by focusing on habitat clues. With so many counties to work on, it becomes more and more important to pay attention to those habitat clues in the hope that they might be transferable somewhere else. Wanting to target each species up to 39 times (or more, when year lists come into play) helped me appreciate and learn more about habitat than I ever would have without being a county lister.

All that said, there were times when the project got a bit tiring. Especially after seeing most of the more regular species, a lot of chasing is involved in the last stages. Despite all the appeal of exploring and seeing new corners of the state for those last few ticks, there's little better than setting up email alerts on eBird to see what others have found. In addition, for some of the toughest counties, there's just no escape from returning over and over again. For some, this proved really fun – I grew to enjoy all my repeated trips to Garfield and Columbia – even though the odds of finding something new were limited. Wahkiakum, my last county to reach 200, just about did me in – In 2018, I visited Wahkiakum 26 times. It is a tiny county, and when it had become the only county left it began to feel like a battle of the wills.

What's next? That's easy – more! After seeing Lesser Goldfinch for #200 in Wahkiakum County, I stuck around a bit longer in the county but rather than celebrating too much, I pushed on – There were new birds to be found in Pacific County (Swamp Sparrow and Clay-colored Sparrow popped up in a lucky stop!). I don't have a specific numerical goal in mind right now, but still am working to expand

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Confessions of a County Lister (continued)

the list in every county, especially those tougher ones. And no matter how many birds I've seen, there are always more to look for – I'm still awaiting my first Rock Pigeon in Wahkiakum (grrrr....) See you out there.

Don't Stop Believing



Image courtesy of the artist, Karen Dedrickson

<http://www.karendedrickson.com/>
Georgetown Studio 5519 Airport Way S. 98108
w/ FOGUE STUDIO AND GALLERY W-SAT 11-6
or by appointment

WFO Youth Scholarships offered for August Conference

Western Field Ornithologists is pleased to announce the availability of a youth scholarship for the WFO 2019 Conference to be held in Albuquerque, New Mexico, from 21–25 August, 2019.

The scholarship is open to youths between the ages of 12 and 22, with six scholarships for youths in grades 6 through 12, and two scholarships for collegiate youths working towards a Bachelor's degree.

The annual WFO conference is a four-day event that includes scientific presentations, workshops, field trips, experts' sounds and visual identification panels, and social activities. The conference offers the opportunity for motivated youth to meet those who earn their living and/or volunteer in field ornithology, bird conservation, and other fields related to the bird biology.

Please feel free to post the scholarship application on facebook pages, listservs and any other ways to spread the word.

For more information or questions about the scholarship, please contact WFO Scholarship Committee Chair, Homer Hansen (youthprog@westernfieldornithologists.org)

- Chris Swarth, Board Member

Washington Field Notes Oct. - Nov. 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 on-line database eBird (www.eBird.org) in addition to this column.

A Redhead x Ring-necked Duck in *Pierce* was likely the first of this cross to be reported in Washington. Three Leach's Storm-Petrels were found in inland waters in *Mason*, *Pierce*, and *King*. Two **Brown Boobies** in *Clallam* and one in *Pierce* added to 20 prior WA records. Two **Snowy Egrets** lingered through the period in *Clark*. The state's first **Zone-tailed Hawk** spent several days at Neah Bay in early November.

Brown Booby



Tom Benson photo

A tally of 11 American Golden-Plovers in Walla Walla in early October was an extraordinary count for the eastside. A Snowy Plover in *Clallam* was a rare find away from *Pacific* and *Grays Harbor*. Three Black-legged Kittiwakes strayed to *King* while another reached *Clark*. In mid-October a **Little Gull** joined a flock of Bonaparte's Gulls in *Kitsap*. A third cycle **Slaty-backed Gull** stopped by Neah Bay in mid October, while the eastside bird from the previous winter returned to *Benton* in late November,

bringing the state's total to about 25 records.

In mid-October a Say's Phoebe was found in the subalpine at Hurricane Ridge. Steller's Jays were found out of range in both *Benton* and *Franklin* where not found annually. A Clark's Nutcracker was found in *San Juan* in early October. A **Eurasian Skylark** spent several days at the same *Clallam* location that hosted one in May 2017. A Canyon Wren in far eastern *King* was a very rare westside record away from *Skamania*. Five **Blue-gray Gnatcatchers** were noted this period, with birds in *Benton* and *Whitman* in addition to three somewhat expected birds at Neah Bay. A tally of 1,165 Varied Thrush were observed while actively migrating at Neah Bay in early October.

Common Redpolls were widespread and in *Lincoln* a **Hoary Redpoll** was found in late October. White-winged Crossbills had an exceptional season with many dozens of birds found associating with Sitka spruce along the coast. A Sagebrush Sparrow was a first for *Skagit* and just the second fall record for western WA. It was a good season for both Swamp and Harris's Sparrows, with counts peaking at six and four respectively, both at the same *Walla Walla* location. A White-crowned x Golden-crowned Sparrow returned to Neah Bay in mid October. A Rose-breasted Grosbeak made a brief stop in Seattle in early October. The state's 3rd **Blue Grosbeak** appeared at Neah Bay in late October. The state's 4th **Painted Bunting** was a male that spent most of a week in *Skagit*. A **Dickcissel** at Neah Bay in mid-November was the state's 15th, and 5th for Neah Bay.

"Blue" morph Snow Goose Rare in e WA: 1 at Anaton *Asotin* 11/18 (CTe)

Ross's Goose Uncommon in WA: 1 at Vancouver Lowlands *Clark* 11/9 (JSn), 1 at Clarkston *Asotin* 11/11 (eBird)

Redhead Reports included: 10 at Everett STP *Snohomish* 10/27 (PDi)

Redhead x Ring-necked Duck Rare in w WA: 1 at Fort Steilacoom *Pierce* 11/14 (eBird)

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Washington Field Notes (continued)

Surf Scoter Reports from e WA included: 15 at Rock Lake *Whitman* 10/15 (RJB)

White-winged Scoter Reports from e WA included: 1 at Rosalia *Whitman* 11/12 (JoI)

Black Scoter Rare in e WA: 1 at Dry Falls *Grant* 11/4 (MY)

Long-tailed Duck Reports from e WA included: 1 north of Kettle Falls *Stevens* 11/6 to 11/13 (DBg)

Common x Barrows Goldeneye Reports included: 1 at Carkeek Park *King* 11/6+ (RyM), 1 at Richmond Beach *King* 11/17 (JSy)

Red-breasted Merganser Uncommon locally: 7 at Philleo Lake *Spokane* 11/5 (JoI), 1 at Green Lake *King* 11/11 (LKr), 2 south of Ellensburg *Kittitas* 11/12 (AS,SDo)

Red-throated Loon Uncommon locally: 1 at Vancouver Lake *Clark* 11/21 (JDz)

Pacific Loon Uncommon locally: 2 at Little Goose Dam *Columbia* 10/29 (MtB), 1 at Montlake Fill *King* 10/29 (CSi)

Leach's Storm-Petrel Rare locally: 1 at Theler Wetland *Mason* 10/23 (JG), 1 at Chambers Bay *Pierce* 11/7 (BL), 1 at Discovery Park *King* 11/11 (MtD)

BROWN BOOBY Rare in WA: 1 at Point Defiance *Pierce* 10/2 (BL), 1 at Cape Flattery *Clallam* 11/4 (AHn), 1 at Dungeness *Clallam* 11/15 (Stephanie Lotze)

American White Pelican Reports from w WA included: 4 at Vashon Island *King* 10/4 (eBird), 16 at March Point *Skagit* 10/8 (RyM,GB), 400 at Ridgefield NWR *Clark* 10/8 (RH), 6 at La Conner *Skagit* 10/12 (PDB), 8 at Edmonds *Snohomish* 10/15 (eBird), 8 at Carkeek Park *King* 10/15 (RyM)

Great Egret Uncommon locally: 1 at Ballard *King* 11/16+ (HFI), 1 at Hayton Preserve *Skagit* 11/17 (MaB)

Canyon Wren



SNOWY EGRET Rare in WA: 2 at Ridgefield NWR *Clark* 10/7 to 11/27 (RH)

Northern Goshawk Uncommon locally: 1 near La Conner *Skagit* 11/8 (Wes Jansen), 1 north of Olympia *Thurston* 11/25 (fide David Bailey)

“Harlan’s” Red-tailed Hawk Reports included: 1 at Waatch River *Clallam* 10/20 (BWg,JDz)

Red-shouldered Hawk Uncommon locally: 1 at Dungeness *Clallam* 10/1 (eBird) to 10/23 (AxP), 1 at Ilwaco *Pacific* 11/23 (eBird)

ZONE-TAILED HAWK Rare in WA: 1 at Neah Bay *Clallam* 11/5 to 11/7 (AHn,EmS)

American Golden-Plover High count for e WA: 11 at Dodd Road *Walla Walla* 10/13 (MID,MD). Reports included: 1 at Tulalip Bay *Snohomish* 10/11 (MRc), 2 at Samish Flats *Skagit* 10/22 (GB), 1 at Hayton Preserve *Skagit* 10/26 (MaB)

Pacific Golden-Plover Reports included: 1 at Samish Flats *Skagit* 10/22 (GB)

Snowy Plover Rare locally: 1 at Dungeness *Clallam* 10/23 (McB)

Black Oystercatcher High count: 130 at Sneeh Oosh Beach *Skagit* 10/14 (eBird)

Willet Reports included: 1 at Dungeness *Clallam*

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Washington Field Notes (continued)

10/15+ (DVHo)

Red-throated Loon Lee Jaffe photo

Bar-tailed Godwit Reports included: 1 at Westport *Grays Harbor* remained through 10/7 (SSc)

Marbled Godwit Uncommon locally: 1 at Belfair *Mason* 11/1+ (KB)

Ruddy Turnstone Uncommon locally: 1 at Tulalip Bay *Snohomish* 11/4 (MRe)

Red Knot Uncommon locally: 3 at Tulalip Bay *Snohomish* 10/11 (MRe), 1 at Hayton Preserve *Skagit* 10/26 (MaB), 1 at Samish Island *Skagit* 10/27 (WW)

Baird's Sandpiper Late report: 1 at Crockett Lake *Island* 10/6 (eBird)

Pectoral Sandpiper Late report: 3 at Dodd Road *Walla Walla* 11/12 (MID,MD)

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper Uncommon in WA: 1 at Hayton Preserve *Skagit* 10/1 (MaB) to 1 at Hayton Preserve *Skagit* 11/5 (GB), 1 at Dungeness *Clallam* 10/21 (BcP,McB)

Rock Sandpiper Uncommon locally: 1 at Sandy Point *Whatcom* 11/1 (PCa) to 11/1 (EEL,PCa)

Stilt Sandpiper Uncommon locally: 1 at Redmond *King* remained through 10/3 (eBird)

Black-legged Kittiwake Rare locally: 1 at Magnuson Park *King* 11/10 (Scot Duncan), 1 at Richmond Beach *King* 11/10 (AxS), 1 at Discovery Park *King* 11/10 (JGn,SpH), 1 at Washougal *Clark* 11/27 (RyA)

Sabine's Gull Reports included: 1 at Richland *Benton* 10/1 (LHi,LN)

LITTLE GULL Rare in WA: 1 at Hansville *Kitsap* 10/13 (Kelly Beach)

Franklin's Gull Reports included: 1 at Dash Point



King 10/10 (ST), 1 at Everett STP *Snohomish* 10/21 (SP)

Lesser Black-backed Gull Rare in w WA: 1 at Tacoma *Pierce* 10/5 (WiB) to 10/6 (BL). Reports from e WA included: 1 at Walla Walla RD *Walla Walla* 11/29 (MID,MD)

SLATY-BACKED GULL Rare in WA: 1 at Hobuck Beach *Clallam* 10/16 (WiB), 1 at

Bateman Island *Benton* 11/25+ (JCr)

Forster's Tern Late report: 1 at Walla Walla RD *Walla Walla* 10/23 (CLy,MID)

Ancient Murrelet Reports included: 32 at Discovery Park *King* 11/11 (MtD)

Cassin's Auklet Uncommon locally: 2 at Edmonds *Snohomish* 10/2 (KA)

Snowy Owl Reports included: 1 at Sandy Point *Whatcom* 11/1+ (PCa), 1 at Puyallup *Pierce* 11/10 (eBird)

Long-eared Owl Uncommon in w WA: 1 at Sauk Valley *Skagit* 11/18 (RyM)

Northern Saw-whet Owl High count: 12 banded at Bainbridge Island *Kitsap* 10/1 (JAc)

Gyrfalcon Reports included: 1 at Tsoo-Yess *Clallam* 11/11 (RyM,CWr), 1 at Savage Road *Asotin* 11/16 (KeC,RiW)

Prairie Falcon Uncommon in w WA: 1 at Samish Flats *Skagit* 11/8+ (MRe), 1 at Hayton Preserve *Skagit* 11/18 (GB)

Black Phoebe Reports from expanding range included: 1 at Woodland *Cowlitz* 10/2+ (Jim & Gloria

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Washington Field Notes (continued)

Lawrence), 1 at Nisqually NWR *Thurston* 10/4+ (eBird), 1 at Snohomish *Snohomish* 10/25+ (JAm), 1 at Skagit WMA *Skagit* 10/27+ (eBird), 1 at Chinook Valley *Pacific* 10/28+ (eBird)

Say's Phoebe Rare locally: 1 at Hurricane Ridge *Clallam* 10/15 (SGr,McB)

Tropical Kingbird Reports included: 1 at Ocean Shores *Grays Harbor* 10/16 (MD,MID) with 2 there 10/17 (eBird), 1 at Neah Bay *Clallam* 10/16 (BWg,WiB), 1 at Hoquiam *Grays Harbor* 10/17 (MD,MID), 1 at Chinook Valley *Pacific* 10/22 (SzW), 1 at Hobuck Beach *Clallam* 10/27 (JGn,SPd), 1 at La Push *Clallam* 10/31 (Peter Gurney)

Warbling Vireo Late reports: 1 at Magnuson Park *King* 10/13 (JB), 1 at Battle Ground *Clark* 10/15 (JDz)

Gray Jay Uncommon locally: 1 at Leadbetter Point *Pacific* 10/12 (RH)

Steller's Jay Rare locally: 1 at Kennewick *Benton* 10/17 (fide DGr), 9 at Crow Butte SP *Benton* 10/19 (LHi) with 8 there 11/16 (MID,MD), 1 at Chiawana Park *Franklin* 11/12 (eBird)

Blue Jay Reports included: 1 at Republic *Ferry* 10/11 (eBird), 1 at Spokane *Spokane* 10/26+ (KD), 1 at Kennewick *Benton* 10/27+ (fide DGr), 1 at Palouse Falls *Franklin* 10/28 (eBird) to 10/29 (MtB), 1 west of Starbuck *Columbia* 10/28 (eBird), 1 at Coupeville *Island* 10/29 (Dave & Kate Krause), 2 at Walla Walla *Walla Walla* 10/29+ (fide MID), 1 at Dayton *Columbia* 11/2 (eBird), 1 at Clinton *Island* 11/3 (GeH), 2 at West Plains *Spokane* 11/3 (Dave McNeely), 1 at Freeland *Island* 11/3 (John Schuster), 1 at Pullman *Whitman* 11/5+ (RJB), 1 at Port Orchard *Kitsap* 11/17 (eBird)

California Scrub-Jay Reports from expanding range included: 1 at Sequim *Clallam* 10/7 (SPd), 2 at Dungeness *Clallam* 10/8 (DVHo), 1 at Neah Bay *Clallam* 10/9 (McB), 3 at Clinton *Island* 10/27 (eBird)

Clark's Nutcracker Rare locally: 1 at Stuart Island

San Juan 10/8 (eBird)

Eurasian Skylark Rare in WA: 1 at Hobuck Beach *Clallam* 11/7 (RyM,JGn,CWr,JKg) to 11/10 (MiH)

Bank Swallow Late report: 1 at Scootenev Reservoir *Franklin* 10/27 (PB)

Cliff Swallow Late report: 1 at Hayton Preserve *Skagit* 11/3 (DPo)

Mountain Chickadee Uncommon locally: 1 at Ediz Hook *Clallam* 10/6 (eBird), 1 at Tulalip Bay *Snohomish* 10/11 (MRe), 2 at Green Lake *King* 10/15 (SpH,AxS), 1 at Seattle *King* 11/5 (HeG), 1 at Alki *King* 11/12 (ST,H-Fl) with 3 there 11/29 (DPo), 1 at Kirkland *King* 11/16 (MiH)

Rock Wren Uncommon in w WA: 1 at False Bay *San Juan* 10/9 (eBird), 1 at Sudden Valley *Whatcom* 10/16 (PhW)

Canyon Wren Rare in w WA: 1 west of Snoqualmie Pass *King* 10/2 (eBird)

BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER Rare in WA: 1 at Central Ferry *Whitman* 10/8 (RJB), 1 at Neah Bay *Clallam* 10/15 (SDo), 1 at Hobuck Beach *Clallam* 10/24 (AxP) to 10/26 (BcP), 1 at Crow Butte SP *Benton* 10/27 (CLy) to 11/14 (LN), 1 at Waatch River *Clallam* 11/7 (DPo,AMW)

Mountain Bluebird Reports included: 1 at Hurricane Hill *Clallam* 10/15 (SGr), 1 at Yellow Island *San Juan* 11/8 (PhG)

Townsend's Solitaire Reports included: 1 at Discovery Park *King* 11/18 (AIG,SpH)

Varied Thrush High count: 1165 at Bahokus Peak *Clallam* 10/1 (BWg,RyM,JGn)

Northern Mockingbird Reports included: 1 at Sequim *Clallam* 11/8 (McB), 1 at Neah Bay *Clallam* 11/17 (AxP)

Sage Thrasher Reports included: 1 at Swanson Lakes *Lincoln* 10/1 (JoI)

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The Calliope Hummingbird is North America's Smallest Breeding Bird and It Is a Compact Bundle of Energy

Andy McCormick

Calliope Hummingbird *Selasphorus calliope*

Length 3.25" Wingspan 4.25"

Weight 0.1 oz (2.7 g)

AOU Alpha Code CAHU

A Star of the Mountains

The Calliope Hummingbird is a bird of high elevation, breeding most often above 3,500 feet. During flight display the male Calliope performs a U-shaped flight making a short ending with a scratching noise at the bottom of its dive. With a female present the male will fly directly in front of her and spread his gorget into a star shape. This usually happens in spring and this is the time of year that a male Calliope will perch high in a tree. Most of the year both sexes prefer lower perches and will forage low in shrubs. Some think this species has adapted this behavior to avoid more aggressive hummingbirds.

Calliope Hummingbird is now in the genus *Selasphorus*, flame-bearer, from the Greek *selas*, brightness or flame, and *phoros*, bearing, referring to the males of this genus which appear to have a flame at their throats. The Calliope joins three other hummingbirds in this genus including the Rufous Hummingbird (*S. rufina*) with which it shares breeding habitat and migration pattern. Prior to 2013 the Calliope was considered monospecific in the genus *Stellula*, from the Latin for star, for its brightness and small size, and possibly its gorget which takes on the star shape during display. What we have gained in accuracy in the taxonomy, we may have lost a bit in the poetry of the bird name. You can see video and hear audio of the Calliope Hummingbird at the [Macaulay Library](#).

Small is Challenging

Identification of the male Calliope Hummingbird is straightforward. Its flowing elongated gorget is variously described as rosy, magenta-red, and purple-carmine, and it is unmistakable. Contrasting against its white breast the male's gorget is quite striking. The female Calliope has much less rufous coloration and lacks the white collar of the female



Nancy Magnusson photo

Rufous Hummingbird. It has a thin white line above the gape of the bill and the sides are more buffy-colored than rufous. In Washington it is safe to rule out the other *Selasphorus* hummingbirds, Broad-tailed (*S. platycercus*) and Allen's (*S. sasin*), which are not present in this state.

In other parts of the country where the ranges of several hummingbirds overlap other field marks may be needed for identification of the female. In the case of the Calliope Hummingbird the relationship of the wingtips to the tail is cited as a possible clue for identification. However, this relationship of the wingtips to the tail may not be reliable. Authors vary in their perception of this feature. The wingtips are variously described as reaching the tail (Sibley), extending slightly beyond the tail (Dunn & Alderfer, Dunne), and tail of a perched bird as extending beyond wingtips (Aversa, Cannings, and Opperman).

In all fairness, with a bird this small it is understandable that observers may vary in their description of field marks. In general terms the Calliope is a very small bird with a short straight bill, and a short tail. It will be the smallest hummer when others are present for comparison.

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Washington Field Notes (continued)

Bohemian Waxwing Uncommon in w WA: 20 at Johnson Ridge *Snohomish* 10/26 (DPo,AMW), 1 at Neah Bay *Clallam* 11/11 (RyM,BWg)

Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch Uncommon locally: 1 at Discovery Park *King* 10/15 (eBird), 1 at Edmonds *Snohomish* 11/1 (Rick Ells), 23 at Sauk Prairie *Skagit* 11/4 and 4 at Sauk Valley *Skagit* 11/4 (RyM), 1 at Shelton *Mason* 11/7 (eBird), 1 at Discovery Park *King* 11/15 (Mike Freund)

Pine Grosbeak Uncommon locally: 1 at Cypress Island *Skagit* 10/28 (fide PPr), 2 at Discovery Park *King* 11/4 (Peter Gurney) with 1 there 11/18 (Al-G,SpH), 1 at Seattle *King* 11/22 (Scot Duncan)

Purple Finch Uncommon locally: 3 at Lyons Ferry *Franklin* 11/3 (CLy), 5 at Fishhook Park *Walla Walla* 11/8 (MID,MD)

“Type 2” Red Crossbill Uncommon in w WA: 1 at Waatch River *Clallam* 11/7 (CW, RyM)

White-winged Crossbill Rare locally: 1 at Neah Bay *Clallam* 10/7 (CW, LWr) with 29 there 11/4 (AHn,EmS), 1 at White Pass *Yakima* 10/29 (AS,EIS), 1 at Madame Dorion SP *Walla Walla* 10/30 (eBird), 7 at Hobuck Beach *Clallam* 10/30 (AxP) with 30 there 11/7 and 45 there 11/10 (RyM,CW), 1 at Little Goose Dam *Columbia* 10/31 (DPo), 1 at Washtucna *Adams* 11/1 (LAP), 13 at Point Whitehorn *Whatcom* 11/5 (IN), 1 at Pullman *Whitman* 11/8 (fide RJB), 4 at Clarkston *Asotin* 11/11 (CLb), 65 at Tsoo-Yess *Clallam* 11/11 (RyM,CW), 1 at Point Defiance *Pierce* 11/19 (LN), 1 at Richland *Benton* 11/21 (LN,PP), 1 at Barnaby Slough *Skagit* 11/24 (DSg), 1 at Julia Butler Hansen NWR *Wahkiakum* 11/24 (RyM), 6 at Cape Disappointment *Pacific* 11/24 (RyM) with 20 there 11/29 (RKO) and 45 there 11/30 (RHu)

Common Redpoll Reports included: 1 at Sauk Prairie *Skagit* 10/28 (RyM), 33 at Spokane *Spokane* 10/28 (MWO), 4 at Reardan *Lincoln* 10/29 (JoI), 1 at Neah Bay *Clallam* 10/29 (SDo) with 14 there 10/30 (AxP), 2 at Palouse Falls *Franklin* 10/30 (RKO), 30 at Liberty Lake *Spokane* 10/31 (JoI), 3 at Darrington *Snohomish* 11/4 (RyM), 4

at Point Whitehorn *Whatcom* 11/5 (IN), 1 at Hobuck Beach *Clallam* 11/7 (RyM,JGn), 1 at Discovery Park *King* 11/10 (JGn), 1 at Yakima *Yakima* 11/12 (DGr), 5 at Green Lake *King* 11/13 (LKr), 1 at Tacoma *Pierce* 11/17 (MCh), 2 at Morton *Lewis* 11/24 (ACt,JV,JGI)

HOARY REDPOLL Rare in WA: 1 at Reardan *Lincoln* 10/29 (JoI)

Lesser Goldfinch Reports from expanding range included: 4 at Centralia *Lewis* 11/4 (DSp), 2 at Cashmere *Chelan* 11/8 (DSI), 10 at Rosalia *Whitman* 11/14 (Marlene & Bob Cashen), 70 at Wawawai *Whitman* 11/22 (JoI), 1 at Morton *Lewis* 11/24 (ACt,JGI), 1 at Spokane *Spokane* 11/27 (TLi)

Snow Bunting Reports from w WA included: 1 at Discovery Park *King* 10/30 (KaS), 1 at Crockett Lake *Island* 10/30 (eBird), 1 at Sauk Valley *Skagit* 11/4 (RyM), 4 at Ediz Hook *Clallam* 11/4 (Dee Renee Ericks), 1 at Brown's Point *Pierce* 11/6 (WiB,MiH), 4 at Leque Island *Snohomish* 11/7 (Jim Forrester), 30 at Sandy Point *Whatcom* 11/8 (DBn), 1 at March Point *Skagit* 11/12 (GB)

American Tree Sparrow Reports from w WA included: 1 at Concrete *Skagit* 10/27 (GB), 1 at Kent *King* 10/28 (JiF), 1 at Montlake Fill *King* 10/29 (LKr,CSi), 1 at Hobuck Beach *Clallam* 11/10 (MiH), 1 at Discovery Park *King* 11/22 to 11/25 (JV)

Chipping Sparrow Reports included: 1 at Julia Butler Hansen NWR *Wahkiakum* 10/11 (RH)

Clay-colored Sparrow Reports included: 1 at Montlake Fill *King* 10/2 (CSi), 1 at Neah Bay *Clallam* 10/7 (BWg) and 11/19 (eBird), 1 at Sequim *Clallam* 10/18 (SSc)

Vesper Sparrow Uncommon locally: 1 at Deer Lagoon *Island* 10/4 (BWe,PWe)

Sagebrush Sparrow Rare in w WA: 1 at Hayton Preserve *Skagit* 10/1 to 10/2 (MaB,GB)

Swamp Sparrow Reports included: 1 at Reardan *Lincoln* 10/13 (TLi), 1 at Green Lake *King* 10/23 (LKr), 1 at Asotin *Asotin* 11/4 (CLd), 1 at Sauk Prairie *Skagit* 11/4 (RyM), 4 at Walla Walla RD *Walla Walla* 11/18

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Washington Field Notes (continued)

with 6 there 11/29 (MID,MD), 1 at Iverson Spit *Island* 11/20 (JV), 1 at Suquamish *Kitsap* 11/22 (BWg), 1 at Pleasant Valley *Lewis* 11/24 (ACt,JV)

“Red” Fox Sparrow Uncommon in WA: 1 at Neah Bay *Clallam* 11/18 (ScR), 1 at Yakima *Yakima* 10/22 (DGr)

White-throated Sparrow Reports included: 2 at Madame Dorion SP *Walla Walla* 11/12 (MID,MD)

Harris’s Sparrow Reports included: 1 at Port Angeles *Clallam* 10/9 (SGr), 1 at Tacoma *Pierce* 10/28 (BL), 1 at Seattle *King* 10/31 (JaH,RaR), 1 at Yakima *Yakima* 11/6 (KvL), 1 at Lake Union *King* 11/6 (RyM), 1 at Ridgefield NWR *Clark* 11/7 (Margee Cooper, John Davis), 2 at Colville *Stevens* 11/8 with 3 there 11/19 (WCu), 1 at Long Beach *Pacific* 11/10 (SzW), 1 at Philleo Lake *Spokane* 11/12 (JoI), 4 at Madame Dorion SP *Walla Walla* 11/12 to 11/29 (MID,MD), 1 at Seattle *King* 11/13 (JeB), 1 at Wawawai *Whitman* 11/22 (JoI)

Golden-crowned Sparrow Reports included: 11 at Crow Butte SP *Benton* 11/16 (MID,MD)

White Crowned x Golden-crowned Sparrow Rarely reported: 1 at Neah Bay *Clallam* 10/16+ (WiB)

Rusty Blackbird Reports included: 1 at Stanwood *Snohomish* 10/27 (KA), 1 at Nisqually NWR *Thurston* 10/29 (eBird)

Nashville Warbler Late report: 1 at Bellevue *King* 11/25 (eBird). Rare locally: 1 at Neah Bay *Clallam* 10/7-8 (BWg), 1 at Neah Bay *Clallam* 11/10 (IN)

Palm Warbler Reports included: 1 at Hayton Preserve *Skagit* 10/8 (IN,AxP), 1 at North Jetty Columbia River *Pacific* 10/23 (MPa), 1 at Lake Union *King* 10/24 (RyM), 1 at Point No Point *Kitsap* 11/8 (BWg)

Northern Waterthrush Uncommon in w WA: 1 at Neah Bay *Clallam* 11/10 (KLn,CMH)

MacGillivray’s Warbler Late report: 1 at Snoqualmie Pass *King* 10/1 (AxS)

Wilson’s Warbler Late report: 1 at Montlake Fill *King* 11/10 (AG)

Rose-breasted Grosbeak Uncommon in WA: 1 at Discovery Park *King* 10/5 (MiF)

BLUE GROSBEAK Rare in WA: 1 at Neah Bay *Clallam* 10/23 (BT,RSh)

PAINTED BUNTING Rare in WA: 1 at La Conner *Skagit* 11/18 to 11/23 (eBird)

DICKCISSEL Rare in WA: 1 at Hobuck Beach *Clallam* 11/11 (PR) to 11/12 (AxP)

ACt Adam Crutcher

AS Andy Stepniewski

BT Bill Tweit

AG Alan Grenon

AxP Alex Patia

BWe Barbara Webster

AHn Adrian Hinkle

AxS Alexander Sowers

BWg Brad Waggoner

AIG Alan G. Grenon

BcP Bruce Paige

CLb Carl Lundblad

AMW Ann Marie Wood

BL Bruce LaBar

CLd Carl Lundblad

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Washington Field Notes (continued)

CLy Christopher Lindsey	JB Jan Bragg	MaB Marv Breece	RHu Rachel Hudson
CMH Casey McHugh	JCr James Cleaver	McB Michael Barry	RiW Rick Welle
CSi Constance Sidles	JDz Jim Danzenbaker	MCh Michael Charest	RJB RJ Baltierra
CTe Catherine Temple	JeB Jeff Bryant	MD Mike Denny	RKo Russell Koppen- drayer
CWr Charlie Wright	JG John Grettenberger	MiF Michael Fleming	RSh Ryan Shaw
DBg Donna Bragg	JGI Joshua Glant	MiH Michael Hobbs	RyA Ryan Abe
DBn Doug Brown	JGn Jordan Gunn	MID MerryLynn Denny	RyM Ryan Merrill
DGr Denny Granstrand	JiF Jim Flynn	MPa Mike Patterson	ScR Scott Ramos
DPo David Poortinga	JKg Jen Kunitsugu	MRe Maxine Reid	SDo Scott Downes
DSg Dave Slager	JoI Jon Isacoff	MtB Matt Bartels	SGr Scott Gremel
DSI Debbie Sutherland	JSn Jen Sanford	MtD Matt Dufort	SP Steve Pink
DSp Dalton Spencer	JSy Joe Sweeney	MWo Michael Woodruff	SPd Sarah Peden
DVHo Denny Van Horn	JV Jason Vassallo	MY Matt Yawney	SpH Spencer Hildie
eBird eBird.org	KA Kevin Aanerud	PB Phil Bartley	SSc Stefan Schlick
EEl Eric Ellingson	KaS Kathy Slettebak	PCa Phil Calise	ST Sam Terry
EIS Ellen Stepniewski	KB Ken Brown	PDB Paul DeBruyn	SzW Suzy Whittey
EmS Em Scattaregia	KD Kas Dumroese	PDi Phil Dickinson	TLi Terry Little
GB Gary Bletsch	KeC Keith Carlson	PhG Phil Green	WCu Warren Current
GeH George Heleker	KLn Ken Lane	PhW Phil Wegener	WiB Will Brooks
HeG Helen Gilbert	KvL Kevin Lucas	PP Patrick Paulson	WW Wayne Weber
HFI Houston Flores	LAP Lily Ann Plumb	PPr Pam Pritzl	
IN Isaiah Nugent	LHi Lisa Hill	PR Penny Rose	
JAc Jamie Acker	LKr Louis Kreemer	PWe Paul Webster	
JaH Jane Hadley	LN Laurie Ness	RaR Randy Robinson	
JAm Josh Adams	LWr Linnaea Wright	RH Randy Hill	

The Grace of Trumpeter Swans (continued)

In the summer of 1968, I flew with my sister from Pennsylvania to Yellowstone National Park. Finding a Trumpeter Swan was a priority, I wanted to be able to brag to my high school birding buddies about the western birds we discovered, including this rare swan. Populations of Trumpeter Swans were decimated in the 1800s and early 1900s. They were shot for their skins, flight feathers, and undoubtedly meat.

In 1935, only 69 birds were known to exist, although probably some undiscovered flocks occurred in remote parts of Canada and Alaska. In 2005, a continent-wide survey estimated that the population had grown to more than 34,000 individuals, a conservation success. Stopping the hunt and protecting habitat were critical; the birds also adapted to wintering on farmlands, accessing novel food items.

In winter, lead poisoning and collisions with power lines are now the major mortality issue. These birds looked stunning through my spotting scope. Dirty-gray, full-grown cygnets accompanied many pairs. We had seen half a dozen flocks of similar size already that morning.

In 1968, my sister and I searched Yellowstone for several days and found only two individuals. They swam on the far side of a small river, and our view was through thick vegetation.

Managers have introduced the species into several eastern states where they now breed. A few even winter in

birding spots that I visited in Western Pennsylvania and Ohio as a high school student. Scientists at Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology have analyzed eBird data to provide a much more refined abundance map than those currently available in birding guides or on other websites.

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

It shows that the Salish Sea and south into Oregon are important wintering areas for our West Coast population. These birds then migrate through British Columbia to breeding grounds in Canada and Alaska. The Central Rockies population had expanded substantially from the range in 1968, and birds are found in a band from the northern prairies across the Great Lakes.

A pair and two full-grown gray cygnets began running, head and neck extended while flapping their wings. They quickly became airborne, banking to the left while climbing up over the flock, before turning to fly north away from us.

See: Fink, D., T. Auer, A. Johnston, M. Strimas-Mackey, M. Iliff, and S. Kelling. Ebird Status and Trends. Version: November 2018. <https://ebird.org/science/status-and-trends>. Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, New York

The Calliope Hummingbird is North America's Smallest Breeding Bird (continued)

Coastal Northbound, Montane Southbound

During its annual migrations the Calliope travels in a fashion similar to the Rufous. It makes an oval-shaped migration moving northward in spring in lowlands toward the Pacific coast. There is a general lack of knowledge of this bird's migration route, and it has a penchant for traveling solo in short flights while staying low in shrubbery making detection difficult.

It is known to breed at high elevation often above 3,500 feet in Western North America from central interior British Columbia south through Washington, eastern Oregon, east to western Montana and Wyoming, through Nevada and California to Baja California. It begins southward migration in late July staying primarily along alpine meadows. It winters in southwestern Mexico thorn forest and sometimes pine forest.

Pine Cone Nest

The Calliope has been known to nest in pines in a remarkably deceptive manner. Major Charles Bendire observed in 1895, "I noticed its nest, which was ingeniously saddled on two small cones, and its outward appearance resembled

a cone very closely...The nests...are...marvels of ingenuity, all those I have seen mimicking a small dead pine cone so perfectly as to almost defy detection unless one sees the bird fly on or off the nest."

The female Calliope maintains all breeding tasks. The nest is constructed under an overhanging branch or foliage by the female. It is a compact cup measuring only about one and a half inches across and lined with plant down and moss held together with spider webs. Usually two eggs are deposited and incubated by the female only. Hatchlings emerge in about two weeks and take first flight in about another three weeks.

Conservation and Management

The population of Calliope Hummingbirds appears to be stable, although declines were noted on the Breeding Bird Survey between 1966 and 1991 in parts of Oregon and Southern California. No management plan is in place or thought to be needed. The species appears to be helped by humans who feed hummingbirds and winter sightings in the Southeastern United States have increased in recent years.

Editor's note: Andy McCormick writes a regular column for the Corvid Crier, the newsletter of the Eastside Audubon Society. He can be reached at amccormick@eastsideaudubon.org

Ruddy Duck



Stan Lupo photo