



Washington Ornithological Society

You
Could
Lead a
Confer-
ence
Field Trip
pg. 15

WOSNews No. 190 April - May 2021

From the Board

Jennifer Kauffman, WOS President

It's Spring at last! I hope you have been listening to birds singing (see article below) and enjoying the spectacle of Spring migration. I especially like to look for birds carrying sticks to build nests.

The WOS Board has been busy. We are interested in building and maintaining membership across the state. By now, you should have received a WOS member survey; we are particularly interested in your opinions about what WOS membership benefits you value most. We also want to know if you plan to attend the annual conference in September. Thanks to Tom Bancroft, Chris Kessler, Jon Houghton and Grace Oliver for leading this effort.

Eric Dudley and Bob Flores are working with the Oregon Birding Association to jump start the planning of the joint conference in Astoria, Oregon, scheduled September 16 – 20, 2021. The Board will make a decision on whether to proceed with the conference (based on Covid-19 considerations) by the end of May.

WOS field trips (with Covid-19 protocols in place) will resume in May. Field trip coordinators Jen Kunitsugu and Matt Yawney are scheduling more trips. Contact them if you're willing to lead a

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Sound Check with Recordist Mark Oberle

Photos courtesy of M. Oberle

You Can Learn a Lot About Listening, Even Capture a Great Avian Chorus or Orchestra. Just Keep Your Stomach from Rumbling!

By the Editor

Give Mark Oberle a phone call since the pandemic hit, and he may have to get back to you later. His birding activities and routines are changed; he has stayed closer to his Kitsap County home where, because his listening area has condensed, he enjoys the solitude of

a nearby 500-acre wood, removing invasive plants and going birding, or taking lengthy bicycle rides into town to retrieve the mail. Then, occasion-



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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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From the Board (continued)

field trip (fieldtrips@wos.org). Watch the web site for updates.

The WOS Board met recently to discuss how our organization can do more to address the barriers that limit diversity in birding in Washington State. WOS recognizes the importance of addressing equity and inclusion as an organization and throughout the birding community. We acknowledge that change within an organization must come from the board and leadership, as well as from individual members doing their own work toward understanding their own biases, stereotypes, and racism. Thanks to Ciny Burrell and Anisha Shankar for supporting us on this journey.

An application for membership on the Washington Bird Records Committee (WBRC) is now on the WOS web site, in accordance with the new bylaws.

The WBRC maintains the official list of all species seen in the state and collects and evaluates reports of rare birds in the state. Applications will be due in summer (more on this in next newsletter).

On behalf of the WOS Board, I also would like to thank our monthly program team of Elaine Chuang and Vicki King for the many excellent programs in 2020 and 2021.

In addition to handling the GoToMeeting technology for virtual monthly meetings, Elaine established our WOS YouTube Channel to present recordings of our monthly programs (more on page 6).

Last fall, Vicki became the WOS monthly program coordinator and has lined up many interesting speakers for this year and beyond. Elaine and Vicki publicize the meetings, conduct dry runs with the Board emcees and speakers, and do a lot of behind the scenes work to make these program happen.

Thank you both and thank you to the volunteers, past and present, as noted in Elaine's article.

As a reminder, the June meeting is member photo night. If you'd like to share some photos, or have ideas for monthly programs, please contact Vicki by email at meetings@wos.org.

WOS does not hold monthly meetings from July – September. In October, we hope to resume in-person meetings.

We plan to continue virtual access via GoToMeeting making recordings of monthly meetings available on YouTube.

The Board is also looking at ways to promote and possibly expand the Patrick Sullivan Young Birders Fund (PSYBF).

One critical need is to find ways to encourage young people to apply. We welcome your ideas and participation in this effort. Contact me at president@wos.org.

Thank you for your membership in WOS, and thanks to the many volunteers who contribute to the organization. I hope to see you in the field sometime soon.



Cooper's Hawk, Bill Byers photo

WOS Birders Discuss Gull Identification, Part 2: The Method

By ANDY McCORMICK

In Part 1 of this article (February 2021), we explored the difficulty of identifying the four, common large, white-headed gulls in the presence of a hybrid swarm of Western x Glaucous-winged Gulls (hybrid). In Part 2 WOS members share their method of studying gulls in a systematic way and practicing what they have learned.

ACCEPTANCE IS A KEY

Many of the birders I consulted on this topic confirmed that identification of gulls in the PNW is difficult and that improving skills requires some regular attention. Many experienced birders accept that they will make errors in identifying gulls. These birders also accept that they cannot pin down every gull to a species and often use the “gull sp” category in eBird to record their sightings.

The ongoing nature of learning gulls is framed by Jeanelle Richardson as a “forever challenge” and she approaches learning as a process of “practicing [her] gulls.” Cindy McCormack finds it helpful and fun to work a gull flock with other people who are just as curious. It is helpful to have extra eyes and discussion of the gulls. Bill Tweit, who also advocates discussing gulls in the field or in photos with other birders, says, “Gulls in the PNW are just plain hard and require constant attention.” Care Borre recommends systematic study.

APPROACHES TO STUDYING GULLS

Cara is a spotter on Westport Seabirds pelagic birding trips and is a fan of bird quizzes as a learning tool. She recommends two of them. Her favorite is Birding Quiz at www.birdingquiz.com. Users choose a location and bird category. The gull category also includes terns and jaegers, all of which are in the same taxonomic family *Laridae*. Cara also recommends the website Anything Larus at www.anythinglarus.com which features a monthly quiz. The quiz archive dates from January 2015 and contains lots of gull photos with commentary.

Mike Donahue focuses his class on the Big 8 PNW gulls. The eight are the three yellow-legged gulls: Mew, Ring-billed, and California, and the four

Ring-billed Gull, Joshua Mayer photo



pink-legged gulls: Herring, Iceland (Thayer’s), Western, and Glaucous-winged. The Western x Glaucous-winged Gull (hybrid) is number eight. This last gull is not a species, but Mike’s respect for this hybrid testifies to the impact it has on our identification challenge.

It is not easy to learn the Western x Glaucous-winged Gull (hybrid). As Carol Riddell pointed out eBird does not report numbers of these hybrid gulls in hotspot reports or photos of hybrids in the illustrated checklists. As a consequence, birders do not have access to data to reinforce the size of the hybrid’s regional population. You may find some photos of hybrids if you perform a Photos Search. Many of the gull watchers with whom I corresponded take their own photos for study at home and recommended this practice as a study aid.

STRUCTURE, ADULT FEATURES, AND AGING

Steve N. G. Howell (Alderfer 2014) emphasizes spending time looking at common species to study how they change throughout the year. He recommends a focus on three general topics: structure, adult features, and age-related changes.

Several birders emphasized that identification begins with the physical structure of gulls. Overall size and

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WOS Birders Discuss Gull Identification,

Part 2: The Method (continued)

shape; proportions of the head, chest, and belly; bill size, shape, length, and the angle of the lower mandible at the gonys; and wing and leg length are all important structural field marks for identification. Comparison of gulls in a mixed flock is a good way to learn more about gull shape and size.

Learning the features of adult gulls is key. Adult gulls can be sorted by a variety of features including leg and mantle color, and bill color and related bill markings. The wingtip pattern and winter head streaking pattern may also be helpful for identification. Keeping the terminal features of the adult gull in mind can help an observer interpret the features of immature gulls.

Howell writes that changes due to feather molting are the hardest to learn. He recommends study of the beginning stage (the juvenile) and the end point (the adult) to see how intermediate plumages fit the pattern. Mike Donahue mentioned he takes photographs of gulls from July to mid-September to follow the feather molting patterns of these gulls.

CHANGES TO APPEARANCE

Experienced birders maintain awareness of environmental factors that impact the appearance of gulls. Ultraviolet light weakens feathers and causes bleaching. Feathers wear through normal use. Melanin strengthens the black portion of the wingtip and the white windows and spots may wear faster.

It is helpful to remember that Ring-billed Gulls are not the only species with black on the bill in the first years of life. Many gull species have markings on their bills including narrow rings, black spots, black tips, and pink at the base. Leg and bill color will change over time. All juvenile gulls will have pink legs. The yellow-legged gulls will not develop yellow legs until their second or third year.

A SEASONAL STUDY STRATEGY

Cindy McCormack recommends reviewing the field marks of resident gulls during summer when there is a natural limit on the number of possible choices for identification. In summer, most Western and Western x Glaucous-winged Gulls (hybrid) move to the coast to breed, and the Iceland (Thayer's) Gull heads to northern Canada. California and Ring-billed Gulls breed in the interior of Washington. Learning the patterns, shapes, and flight styles of gulls you know

will help when more gulls join the flocks in winter.

Winter brings added challenges. The Olympic Gull moves back into the Puget Sound area to join the Glaucous-winged Gulls. California and Ring-billed Gulls migrate through Western Washington to coastal California, but many remain in the Puget Sound region for several months and some overwinter. In addition, the smaller Mew and Bonaparte's Gulls migrate through Puget Sound for the winter.

SUMMARY

“The key to distinguishing gulls lies with time spent watching and studying the common species. Do not take them for granted” Howell and Dunn (2014). There is a lot to learn about gulls. We are fortunate that they tend to stay in place to allow for this kind of study.

Ann Marie Wood sums up the challenge very well and we can take inspiration from her lead. “[Gulls] seem to be everywhere and, try as I might, I can't seem to avoid, or resist them. ...I don't pretend to be an expert on gulls, far from it, but I'm committed to getting better at it.”

I wish to thank Cara Borre, Mike Donahue, Cindy McCormack, Jenelle Richardson, Carol Riddell, Bill Tweit, and Ann Marie Wood for their guidance on my research for this article.

REFERENCES FOR GULL STUDY

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Dunne, Pete. and Karlson, Kevin.(2019). *Gulls Simplified: A Comparative Approach to Identification*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

[Hadley, Jane](#). Online guide with lists of gulls sorted separately by leg color, bill color, overall length, and mantel color.

Howell, Steve N.G. and Dunn, Jon (2007). *Gulls of the Americas*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. Out of print, available used in print and as eBook for Nook.

Olsen, Klaus Malling (2018). *Gulls of the World: A Photographic Guide*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Olsen, Klaus Malling (2004). *Gulls of Europe, Asia, and North America*. London: A & C Black. Out of print, available used in print and as eBook for Kindle.

Paulson, Dennis. [Identification of Pacific Northwest Gulls](#). Online guide at the Slater Museum at the University of Puget Sound. Includes descriptions and many photographs of PNW gulls.

Welcome New Members

WOS currently has a total of 393 members representing 32 of the 39 counties in Washington state, six other states, and British Columbia. Welcome to these new and returning members.

Bothell: Drew Schwitters

Everett: Connie Veldink

Kirkland: Deborah Kirner

Normandy Park: Raphael Fennimore

Seattle: Michael Donahue, Polly Lenssen, Kimberly McCormick,

Mark Rodgers

Vancouver, WA: John Bishop

WOS now has a YouTube Channel!

Elaine Chuang

Monthly meetings have been an integral part of WOS, an offered-up gift to the birding public since the organization was established, with our doors open to all. the University of Washington's Center for Urban Horticulture community. This is deeply pressed into the wax of our memories as a place of camaraderie and exchange. In late 2016 with Blair Bernson in the Program Chair, in order to broaden and enhance access to our CUH meetings and WOS presentations to the membership, we began “live” broadcast of our meetings via the video-conference platform GoToMeeting. Then in 2020, as we entered into the “Time of COVID” and it became unsafe to meet in person, WOS turned attention toward even wider albeit “remote” accessibility and opened a new eye toward social equity. Here, we give special thanks to Canny Burrell who was Program Chairperson during that challenging period as we began offering all of our meetings virtually to all who were interested regardless of membership.

Now in early 2021, the Board has approved another forward move, such that we might now, via our new WOS YouTube channel, retain and offer broadly, and on a permanent basis, all WOS presentations for which we have the speaker’s permission to do so. We are exceedingly grateful to all of our speakers and appreciate the positive impact of this video repository.

Beginning in March 2021, to honor membership in WOS and thank those who support the organization, notification will be sent to members regarding the new availability of recorded programs.

More information is always available on our WOS web site. Today, as one of many such times, we all send our most sincere thanks to Jane Hadley and Randy Robinson for tending WOS.ORG. Their devoted and skilled stewardship makes the organization show and serve so many, so well! Via their most recent stroke of genius and skill, we now have a strategic collation for WOS, all accessible in one place ...

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC657f_RhriAUIwS_P1m5_nQ

Sound Check with Recordist Mark Oberle (continued)

al checks on how his sales of bird song are going, the scout meetings where he volunteers, plus the other familiarities of retirement, and the many family obligations amid Covid-19. And yes, there's still his career helping to plan pandemic responses in the University of Washington School of Public Health, though now it's part-time. Formerly, Oberle spent many years with the Centers for Disease Control.

Much of his life was spent in epidemiology and public health, a discipline that affects all of our lives now



and frames many vocations such as Oberle's chosen realm of environmental and species recording. In a way, he is used to the isolation brought by Covid.

Since his teaching partner Martyn Stewart moved to Florida, Oberle has given fewer seminars on recording but he has regularly done Breeding Bird Surveys in both Eastern and Western Washington. Those have dropped off during the pandemic. But the duties that go along with recording have kept him busy; after years of traveling and recording in Puerto Rico and Latin America, he recently completed an Android app for his West Indies recordings. Along the way he helped to found WOS.

A kind of wry humor found in many expert birders is not lost during conversations with Oberle. When asked if his extensive recording activities have given him a special feel for bird communication, he quickly responds, "I can whistle their songs better." It soon becomes evident that Oberle always thinks about life in at least two different ways: his family, cultural and professional connections, and his involvement with and approach to specific listening areas, with all their their local characteristics and requirements for recording.

Some Background on Soundscapes

A quick research foray on the Internet regarding soundscapes brings up an interesting array of web pages that list several important steps the government and individuals have taken to protect areas for their natural aural resources, and limit intrusions of manmade noise in natural areas.

Some of these sites are artist-oriented and some are aimed at helping recordists to become more technically proficient. One revealing National Park Service page has a Q & A about protecting public lands from noise pollution, and it goes into the two-decade history of how the government views soundscape as a natural resource.

Nature recording equipment has a fairly small, spe-

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Sound Check with Recordist Mark Oberle (continued)

cialized audience. A big reason for this is the cost and amount of post-production work that goes into recording soundscapes, whether it is for birding-related activity or something else, such as conservation of places with mostly natural sound.

Oberle mentions several resources for recordists, such as the Wildlife Sound Recording Society in Great Britain, a 50-year old organization whose web pages include both “listening lessons” and a page on measuring bioacoustics. It also sponsors competitions and issues publications. The Nature Sounds Society in San Francisco has a comprehensive web site and links to the pages of other recordists, such as Oberle’s old partner, Martyn Stewart, and Washingtonian Gordon Hempton.

How to get started

Oberle is more than honest about the necessary personal qualities, the joys and hazards, found in the lives of most recordists. He made his first field recordings nearly 40 years ago and has kept up with and added much of the latest technology into his arsenal. He counts himself lucky that his professional career allowed him to travel and bring his equipment along to locations with many special birds. On being asked about memorable recording trips, Oberle tells the story of leading Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter along some farms and forests not far from Carter’s peanut farm in Georgia to record migratory birds.

Mishaps can happen. Using headphones that aren’t connected to ears tightly enough can let sounds leak into the environment and upset the very species you are recording, he recounted. When you are using the best equipment it can pick up feet shuffling in the grass, the slightest hand movements and even stomach sounds from your digestion of that mornings breakfast.

A cheap way exists into recording, such as downloading free phone apps. Between that level of recording and the more professional range, there is a void. But even amateur recordings, if placed into venues such as eBird, can help researchers find geographical differences in species’ vocalizations.

Good advice

Deciding what your goals are is the most important thing when deciding to enter the field of avian and environmental recording, Oberle said.

“Typically, people want to record all the species in their yard or do some type of production (podcast or youtube video) with several different species. That is an important aspect of how people get into it.”

After that, he said, many recordists want to preserve records of a certain environment, for posterity. Local excursions often give way to far-flung recording expeditions, as happened to him, Oberle said.



Veery Calling, Andrew Weitzel photo

He has spent time in many parts of North and South America but knows them best by their sounds rather than their visual attractions.

“Recording helps you improve your birding by ear and puts you in touch with bird communication,” he said. “You get interaction of species. It forces you to pay more attention” to your overall life.

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THE RAPID EVOLUTION OF AUDIO RECORDINGS

by Mark Oberle

Most of the recordings on my Puerto Rico CD-ROM and smartphone apps are by Mark Oberle, with a few hard-to-obtain recordings provided by the generous contribution of other recordists.

From 1997-2001, I used a Marantz PMD221 audio cassette recorder, usually with a Telinga-Pro IV Mono Parabolic microphone, and Type II studio cassette tape. During the period 2000-2005 I primarily used a SONY TCD-D10 PROII Digital Audio Tape-recorder (DAT) with a Telinga PRO 5W stereo parabolic microphone (<http://www.telinga.com/>).

Occasionally I have used as a backup recorder a MiniDisc recorder (Sharp MD-MT290H(S)). Starting in mid-2005 I primarily used a Marantz PMD 670 compact flash recorder, again with the Telinga PRO 5W stereo parabolic microphone, and in 2006 switched to a Sound Devices 702 compact flash recorder.

I sometimes use a shotgun microphone, originally an Audio-Technica AT815a condenser microphone. Since 2000 I have been using as a shotgun mic a Sennheiser MKH70 sometimes with an improvised fabric windscreen where needed (more recently a Sennheiser MZW 70 basket windshield).

Most recordings were digitized initially by transferring to a computer, but most recently directly copying from the recording device's compact flash card. Now that computer storage space is so cheap I record at audio CD quality or higher but to save space on the internet or smartphone apps I have converted many recordings to mp3 format or reduced the sample rate from 48K to 44.1K or lower.

If you want further details on recording or specifications, please contact me (moberle@uw.edu). I am especially grateful to Martyn Stewart for his advanced technical advice on audio recording technique and equipment.

CD and smartphone app and publications:

Oberle, M. W. All Birds Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands & northern Lesser Antilles. 2020. (Android and iOS app]. <https://sunbird.tv/product/all-birds-puerto-rico-antigua/>

Oberle, M. W. 2008. Cantos de Aves del Caribe: desde Puerto Rico hasta Granada, con las Bahamas, islas Caimán, e isla de San Andrés /Caribbean Bird Song: Puerto Rico south to Grenada, with the Bahamas, Caymans, & San Andrés. ISBN 0-938027-74-3 (3 CD's).

Elliott, L. 1999. Music of the birds: a celebration of bird song. Houghton, Mifflin, NY. (with audio CD).

Nature recording websites of interest:

Naturesound.org: <http://www.naturesound.org>

Wildlife Sound Recording Society (UK): <http://www.wildlife-sound.org/>

The Nature Sounds Society (US): <http://www.naturesounds.org/>

Cornell University Macaulay Library of NaturalSounds: <http://www.birds.cornell.edu/>; <http://macaulaylibrary.org/>

eBird: <https://ebird.org/home>

The British Library sound collection: <https://www.bl.uk/>

xeno-canto: Sharing bird sounds: <https://www.xeno-canto.org/>

Equipment source: <http://www.stithrecording.com/>

Washington Field Notes - December 2018 to February 2019

Compiled by Ryan Merrill

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

A **“Bewick’s” Tundra Swan** spent the latter part of the winter in *Skagit*. Unusual hybrid waterfowl included a Gadwall x American Wigeon in *King* and a Tufted Duck x scaup sp. in *Cowlitz*. A Ruff in *Clark* in mid December was just the third winter record for the state. The state’s 13th **Red-legged Kittiwake** was found dead on a *Jefferson* logging road. The *Benton Slaty-backed Gull* continued into December.

An **Arctic Loon** at Neah Bay Dec to Jan may have been the same individual as was found there the previous year and is one of just a few records for the state. A Laysan Albatross in *Kitsap* on New Year’s Day is one of just a few to ever be found in Puget Sound. Two **Snowy Egrets** were present in *Clark* in December while one remained through the winter.

A Broad-winged Hawk that spent the last week of the year in *Asotin* represented the first winter record for Washington. The state’s 8th **Vermilion Flycatcher** spent most of December in *Snobomish*. Extremely rare in winter were Cliff Swallows in both *King* and *Whatcom* during December. A House Wren in *Whitman* in January appears to be the first winter record on the eastside.

The state’s 4th **“Eastern” Purple Finch** spent a few days in *Whatcom* in February. A Lesser Goldfinch in *Wahkiakum* was an anticipated first record for the county. The *Jefferson* Brewer’s Sparrow lingered into December to become the 3rd winter record for the state. Lark Sparrows in *King* and *Lewis* were the 3rd and 4th winter records for Washington. An **“Eastern” Song Sparrow** in *Thurston* became just the 4th documented record of this subspecies group. Following an extraordinary fall, Swamp Sparrows were found in unprecedented numbers with 120+ found. About a third of these were on the eastside and included an amazing 10 at a single site in *Okanogan*.

A **Baltimore Oriole** in Seattle in mid January was Wash-

ington’s first winter record and 7th overall. Tennessee Warblers in both *King* and *Thurston* were Washington’s 2nd and 3rd winter records. The state’s 3rd and 4th **Cape May Warblers** were in *Snobomish* and *Clark*. At least 28 Palm Warblers were reported this winter, all from the westside, an extraordinary tally. A Hermit Warbler in *Pierce* was just the 3rd winter record for the state. The Indigo Bunting in *Clallam* in mid December was the first winter record for the state and the 41st overall. Wintering Western Tanagers were around in high numbers and included an especially rare eastside bird in *Kittitas*.

Snow Goose High counts: 14702 at Ice Harbor Dam *Walla Walla* 12/6 (JFi), 10720 at Vancouver Lake *Clark* 1/11 (eBird)

Ross’s Goose Uncommon in WA: 14 at Vancouver Lowlands *Clark* 12/1 (eBird)

Brant Uncommon locally: 1 at Sikes Lake *King* 1/2 (ST,AdL), 1 at Woodland *Cowlitz* 1/4 (Terry Anderson)

Trumpeter Swan High count: 237 at Ridgefield NWR *Clark* 1/5 (eBird)

“BEWICK’S” TUNDRA SWAN Rare in WA: 1 at Fir Island *Skagit* 1/20 (AdL) to 2/23 (RyM)

Wood Duck High count: 275 at Hood Park *Walla Walla* 1/5 (eBird)

Gadwall x American Wigeon Reports included: 1 at Black River Riparian Forest *King* 1/10 (eBird)

Mallard X Northern Pintail Reports included: 1 at Steigerwald Lake NWR *Clark* 1/25 (Karen York)

Tufted Duck Uncommon in WA: 1 at Vancouver *Clark* 1/31 (JDz) to 2/24 (eBird)

Tufted Duck x Scaup Uncommon in WA: 1 at Woodland *Cowlitz* 1/11 (eBird)

Black Scoter High count: 100 at Lummi Bay *Whatcom* 12/16 (ESw)

Long-tailed Duck Uncommon locally: 1 at Electric City *Grant* 12/29 (RaM), 4 west of Bridgeport *Douglas* 1/1 (MSP), 1 at Bellevue *King* 1/5 (HJ), 1 at Seven Bays *Lincoln* 2/23 (JoI)

Barrow’s Goldeneye High count: 48 at Seven Bays *Lincoln* 1/25 (TLi)

Common x Barrows Goldeneye Reports included: 1 at Kirkland *King* 1/13 (Teresa Descher)

Red-breasted Merganser Uncommon locally: 1 at Silver Lake *Spokane* 12/15 (MWO), 1 at Buena *Yakima* 1/23 (KvL,-JKo)

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Washington Field Notes - December 2018 to February 2019 (continued)

Anna's Hummingbird High count: 6 at Walla Walla *Walla Walla* 12/15 (fide MID)

Sandhill Crane Reports included: 1 at Walla Walla *Walla Walla* 12/15 (fide MID)

Snowy Plover Reports included: 1 at Griffiths-Priday SP *Grays Harbor* 12/15 (CHa)

Ruddy Turnstone Reports included: 1 at Tulalip Bay *Snobomish* 12/16+ (eBird)

Ruff Rare in winter: 1 at Ridgefield NWR *Clark* 12/19 (JoA)

Red Phalarope Uncommon locally: 2 at Cattle Point *San Juan* 12/16 (MtB)

Willet Reports included: 1 at Dungeness *Clallam* 12/8+ (eBird)

Lesser Yellowlegs Reports included: 1 at Nisqually NWR *Thurston* 2/2 (eBird)

Cassin's Auklet Uncommon in Puget Sound: 1 at Point No Point *Kitsap* 12/21 (eBird), 1 at Bainbridge Island *Kitsap* 12/24 (eBird)

RED-LEGGED KITTIWAKE Rare in WA: 1 at Jefferson Co. *Jefferson* 12/13 (Bill Wells)

Heermann's Gull High count: 95 at Kingston *Kitsap* 12/8 (LnS)

Lesser Black-backed Gull High count: 2 at Clarkston *Asotin* 12/8 to 1/18 (eBird)

SLATY-BACKED GULL Rare in WA: 1 at Bateman Island *Benton* 12/8 (eBird)

Red-throated Loon Rare locally: 1 at Mayfield Lake *Lewis* 2/16 (Dsp, DaH)

ARCTIC LOON Rare in WA: 1 at Neah Bay *Clallam* 12/15 (RyM) to 1/27 (eBird)

Yellow-billed Loon Uncommon locally: 1 at Washington Park *Skagit* 12/14+ (eBird)

Laysan Albatross Rare in Puget Sound: 1 at Port Madison *Kitsap* 1/1 (BWg)

Short-tailed Shearwater Rare locally: 1 at Des Moines *King* 12/30 (AdL, CWf)

American White Pelican Uncommon locally: 1 at Snobomish *Snobomish* 12/2 (eBird) and then at Everett STP *Snobomish* 2/7 (KA) and then at Lake Tye, Monroe *Snobomish* 2/20 (eBird)

Great Egret Reports included: 1 at Skagit Flats *Skagit* 12/15 (MaB)

SNOWY EGRET Rare in WA: 2 at Vancouver Lowlands *Clark* 12/13 to 12/22 (eBird) with 1 remaining 2/26 (eBird)

Black-crowned Night-Heron High count: 86 at Sacajawea SP *Franklin* 12/29 (eBird)

Osprey Uncommon in winter: 1 at Hansville *Kitsap* 12/2 (eBird), 1 at Rock Lake *Whitman* 12/14 (eBird), 1 at Cres-

cent Harbor *Island* 12/18 (eBird), 1 at Ocean Park *Pacific* 12/27 (eBird)

Northern Goshawk Uncommon locally: 1 at Discovery Park *King* 12/18 (JLz)

Red-shouldered Hawk Rare locally: 1 at Cle Elum *Kittitas* 12/17 (fide MiH). Uncommon locally: 1 at Rock Creek *Klickitat* 2/23 (eBird)

Broad-winged Hawk Rare in winter: 1 south of Clarkston *Asotin* 12/23 (CLb) to 12/31 (eBird)

Rough-legged Hawk Reports included: 2 at Waatch River *Clallam* 12/2 (eBird)

Ferruginous Hawk Uncommon in winter: 1 near Ritzville *Adams* 1/21 (eBird), 2 near Dallesport *Klickitat* 2/11 (eBird)

Snowy Owl Reports included: 1 at Cameron Lake Road *Okanogan* 1/5 (eBird), 2 at Eureka *Walla Walla* 1/14 (eBird)

Burrowing Owl Rare in w WA: 1 at Burlington *Skagit* 1/1 to 1/19+ (eBird). Uncommon locally: 1 south of Silcott *Asotin* 1/20 (RyM)

Barred Owl Reports included: 1 at Spokane *Spokane* 12/25 (eBird)

Great Gray Owl Uncommon locally: 1 at Clarkston *Asotin* 12/14 to 1/19 (eBird), 1 near Winthrop *Okanogan* 1/5 (eBird)

Long-eared Owl Reports from w WA included: 1 at Sequim *Clallam* 12/3 (eBird), 1 at Snohomish *Snobomish* 1/4 (eBird), 1 at Samish Flats *Skagit* 1/21 (Giannine Commodore)

Red-breasted Sapsucker Reports included: 1 at Granger *Yakima* 12/17 (fide ErH), 1 at Twisp *Okanogan* 12/30 (eBird)

Gyr Falcon Reports included: 1 at Rexville *Skagit* 1/1 (BrM)

Prairie Falcon Uncommon in w WA: 1 at Duvall *King* 12/8 (ST, MtD) to 1/2 (ST, AdL) and then at Sikes Lake *King* 1/14 (eBird), 1 at Samish Flats *Skagit* 1/6 (eBird)

Black Phoebe Reports from expanding range included: 1 at Cape Disappointment *Pacific* 12/13 (eBird), 1 at Toppenish *Yakima* 12/15 (eBird), 1 at Chehalis *Lewis* 12/21 (ScR), 1 at Kent *King* 1/5 (eBird), 1 at Ocean Shores *Grays Harbor* 1/12 (eBird)

Say's Phoebe Reports included: 1 at Toppenish *Yakima* 12/2 (SDo), 1 at Riffe Lake *Lewis* 2/16 (Dsp, DaH)

VERMILION FLYCATCHER Rare in WA: 1 at Stanwood *Snobomish* 12/3 (MRe) to 12/28 (eBird)

Tropical Kingbird Reports included: 1 at Sequim *Clallam* 12/19 (eBird)

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Washington Field Notes - December 2018 to February 2019 (continued)

Blue Jay Reports included: 1 at Yakima *Yakima* 12/1+ (eBird), 2 at Shawnee Road *Whitman* 1/27 (eBird)
Black-billed Magpie Rare in w WA: 1 at Magnolia *King* 1/9 to 2/8 (eBird)
Barn Swallow Reports included: 6 at Skagit WMA *Skagit* 12/1 (eBird), 1 at Lummi Flats *Whatcom* 12/16 (ESw), 1 at Spearfish Lake *Klickitat* 12/21 (eBird), 12 at Sandy Point *Whatcom* 1/1 (eBird), 1 at Rock Creek *Klickitat* 1/14 (eBird), 5 at Elwha RM *Clallam* 1/28 (eBird)
Cliff Swallow Rare in winter: 1 at Fairhaven *Whatcom* 12/2 (IN), 1 at Sikes Lake *King* 12/14 (eBird)
House Wren Rare in winter: 1 at Port of Wilma *Whitman* 1/16 (eBird)
Northern Mockingbird Reports included: 1 near Centralia *Lewis* 12/21 (RKO,RMy), 1 at Brady Loop Road *Grays Harbor* 1/6 (eBird), 1 at Kent *King* 2/19 (eBird), 1 at Anacortes *Skagit* 2/25+ (eBird)
Mountain Bluebird Uncommon in winter: 1 at Magnuson Park *King* 12/7 (eBird), 1 at Port Angeles *Clallam* 12/9 (eBird)
Townsend's Solitaire Reports included: 3 at Cypress Island *Skagit* 1/1 (eBird)
Bohemian Waxwing Uncommon in w WA: 1 at Camano Island *Island* 12/5 (eBird)
Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch Reports included: 20 at Stevens Pass *King* 2/22 (DaP)
"Western" Purple Finch Reports included: 23 west of Twisp *Okanogan* 12/23 (RyM)
"EASTERN" PURPLE FINCH Rare in WA: 1 at Everson *Whatcom* 2/9 to 2/11 (StCh)
Cassin's Finch High counts: 125 at Siwash Creek *Okanogan* 1/19 (eBird), 110 at Wenas *Yakima* 1/25 (eBird)
Common Redpoll Reports included: 25 at Neah Bay *Clallam* 12/15 (AxP)

Red Crossbill Nesting report: 4 at Wenas *Yakima* 1/16 (JKo,KvL)
White-winged Crossbill Uncommon locally: 60 east of Deming *Whatcom* 12/19 (eBird)
Lesser Goldfinch Reports from expanding range included: 1 at Puget Island *Wabkiakum* 12/28 (DSp) to 12/29 (MtB), 1 at Brady Loop Road *Grays Harbor* 1/10 and 1/25 (eBird), 1 at Auburn *King* 1/10 with 2 there 1/19 (eBird), 8 at Seven Bays *Lincoln* 1/25 (FLi)
Lapland Longspur Reports included: 15 at Horse Heaven Hills *Yakima* 12/9 (eBird)
Chipping Sparrow Uncommon in winter: 1 at Palouse River Road *Whitman* 12/7 (eBird), 1 at Fife *Pierce* 1/7 (eBird), 1 at *Kitsap* 1/19 (Sharon Anderson), 1 near Deer Lake *Stevens* 2/13 to 2/16 (CtM)
Clay-colored Sparrow Reports included: 1 at Bay Center *Pacific* 12/29 (MtB), 1 at Puyallup *Pierce* to 1/28 (eBird)
Brewer's Sparrow Rare in winter: 1 at Gardiner *Jefferson* to 12/2 (JGc)
Lark Sparrow Rare in winter: 1 at Magnolia *King* 1/4 to 1/7 (eBird), 1 at Napavine *Lewis* 2/9 to 2/18 (eBird)
American Tree Sparrow Reports from w WA included: 1 at Lummi Flats *Whatcom* 2/14 (EEL)
"Red" Fox Sparrow Uncommon in WA: 1 at Vancouver *Clark* 2/19 (eBird)
Golden-crowned x White Crowned Sparrow Reports included: 1 at Neah Bay *Clallam* 12/16 (eBird)
Harris's Sparrow Reports included: 1 at Cle Elum *Kittitas* 12/17 (fide MiH), 1 at Renton *King* 1/1 (Mike Blue), 2 south of Stanwood *Snobomish* 1/10 (eBird), 3 at Madame Dorion SP *Walla Walla* 1/11 (eBird), 2 at Dallesport *Klickitat* 2/6 (eBird), 1 at Sumas *Whatcom* 2/18 (fide StCh), 2 at Vancouver Lake *Clark* 2/28 (eBird)

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SEND IN
YOUR
SIGHTINGS

Send your sightings by email to Ryan Merrill
fieldnotes@wos.org



SEEN SEEN BY

March – May.....June 15
 June – JulyAug 15
 Aug – NovDec 15
 Dec – FebMar 15

Washington Field Notes - December 2018 to February 2019 (continued)

Sagebrush Sparrow Rare in w WA: 1 at Vancouver Lake *Clark* 2/16 (Cindy Jordan)

“EASTERN” SONG SPARROW Rare in WA: 1 at Nisqually NWR *Thurston* 2/6 to 2/17 (ShT,Jan)

Swamp Sparrow High counts: 9 at Walla Walla RD *Walla Walla* 12/3 (MID,MD), 10 at Cassimer Bar *Okanogan* 12/20 (IN), 6 at Washburn Island *Okanogan* 12/20 (IN). Reports included: 2 at Barnaby Slough *Skagit* 12/2 (RyM), 1 at Whitman Mission *Walla Walla* 12/2 (MID,MD), 1 at San Juan Island *San Juan* 12/2 (MtB), 1 at Wickersham *Whatcom* 12/2 (KLn), 1 at Iverson Spit *Island* 12/16 (MtB), 3 at Carnation Marsh *King* 1/1 (eBird), 3 at Sikes Lake *King* 1/12 (eBird), 1 at Liberty Lake *Spokane* 1/14 (TO), 3 at Deadman Creek *Garfield* 1/21 (RyM), 1 at Lyons Ferry *Franklin* 2/6 (eBird), 1 at Hawk Creek *Lincoln* 2/23 (JoI)

Yellow-headed Blackbird Reports included: 1 at Sammamish *King* 2/4 (Dwn), 4 at Stanwood *Snobomish* 2/17 (eBird)

Bullock’s Oriole Rare in winter: 1 at Guemes Island *Skagit* 1/26 to 2/6 (Stephanie Kavanaugh)

BALTIMORE ORIOLE Rare in WA: 1 at Seattle *King* 1/13 (Alison Wysong)

Rusty Blackbird Reports included: 2 at Tualco Valley *Snobomish* 12/9 (MaB), 1 at Lynden *Whatcom* 1/16 (eBird)

Northern Waterthrush Uncommon in winter: 2 at Skagit WMA *Skagit* to 2/3 (eBird)

TENNESSEE WARBLER Rare in WA: 1 at Seattle *King* 1/16 to 2/2 (ENe), 1 at East Olympia *Thurston* 2/2 to 2/7 (Rick Mraz)

Nashville Warbler Rare in winter: 2 at Neah Bay *Clallam* 12/15 (RyM), 1 at Port Angeles *Clallam* 1/9 (eBird)

Common Yellowthroat Uncommon in winter included: 2 at Steigerwald Lake NWR *Clark* 12/31 (eBird), 2 at Ridgefield *Clark* 2/7 (eBird)

CAPE MAY WARBLER Rare in WA: 1 at Marysville *Snobomish* 1/10 to 1/13 (Pat Cottrell), 1 at Vancouver *Clark* 2/20 (CMk)

Yellow Warbler Rare in winter: 1 at Tacoma *Pierce* 1/4 to 2/2 (MCh)

Palm Warbler Reports included: 3 at Neah Bay *Clallam* 12/1 (eBird), 2 at Dungeness *Clallam* 12/4 (eBird), 2 at Bay Center *Pacific* 12/5 (eBird) with 1 there 12/29 (MtB), 1 at Leque Island *Snobomish* 12/6 (HHg,SP), 1 at Marymoor Park *King* 12/6 (MiH), 3 at Ediz Hook *Clallam* 12/7 (eBird), 2 at Hobuck Beach *Clallam* 12/15 (eBird), 1 at Gardiner *Jefferson* 12/26 (JGc), 1 at Duvall *King* 1/2 (ST,AdL), 1 at Woodland *Cowlitz* 1/28 (LTk), 1 at Olympia *Thurston* 2/7 (Rick Mraz)

Black-throated Gray Warbler Rare in winter: 1 at Naselle *Pacific* 1/8 to 1/14 (AR)

Hermit Warbler Rare in winter: 1 at Tacoma *Pierce* 1/25 (WiB) to 2/17 (eBird)

Wilson’s Warbler Uncommon in winter: 1 at Woodland *Cowlitz* 12/27 (eBird)

Western Tanager Uncommon in winter: 1 at Montlake Fill *King* 12/10 (fide CSi), 1 at Seattle *King* 12/13+ (Nancy Kirkner), 1 at Mount Vernon *Skagit* 12/16 to 2/15 (eBird), 1 at Fremont, Seattle *King* 12/27 (eBird), 1 at West Seattle *King* 12/27 (DSw), 1 at Federal Way *King* 1/12 (eBird), 1 at Cle Elum *Kittitas* 1/12 (eBird), 1 near Green Lake *King* 1/31 (Max Kingsbury)

INDIGO BUNTING Rare in WA: 1 at Neah Bay *Clallam* 12/15 (RyM) to 12/25 (eBird)

AdL Adrian Lee
AR Alan Richards
AxP Alex Patia
BrM Brien Meilleur
BWg Brad Waggoner
CHa Carl Haynie
CLb Carl Lundblad
CMk Cindy McCormack
CSi Constance Sidles
CtM Curtis Mahon
CWr Charlie Wright
DaH Dave Hayden
DaP Dave Parent
DSp Dalton Spencer
DSw Dave Swayne
DWn Diane Weinstein
eBird eBird.org
EEI Eric Ellingson
ENe Ed Newbold
ErH Eric Heisey
ESw Ed Swan
GB Gary Bletsch
HHg Hank Heiberg
HJ Hugh Jennings
IN Isaiah Nugent
JAn Jon Anderson
JDz Jim Danzenbaker
JEi Jerry Eisner
JFi Jason Fidorra
JGc John Gatchet
JKo Jeff Kozma
JLz John Leszczynski
JoA John Allinger
JoI Jon Isacoff

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Washington Field Notes - December 2018 to February 2019 (continued)

KA	Kevin Aanerud	MWo	Michael Woodruff
KLn	Ken Lane	RaM	Roy A. Myers
KvL	Kevin Lucas	RKo	Russell Koppendrayer
LnS	Lonnie Somer	RMy	Roger Moyer
LTk	Lyn Topinka	RyM	Ryan Merrill
MaB	Marv Breece	ScR	Scott Ramos
MCh	Michael Charest	SDo	Scott Downes
MD	Mike Denny	ShT	Shep Thorp
MiH	Michael Hobbs	SP	Steve Pink
MID	MerryLynn Denny	ST	Sam Terry
MRe	Maxine Reid	StCh	Stephen Chase
MSp	Meredith Spencer	TLi	Terry Little
MtB	Matt Bartels	TO	Tim O'Brien
MtD	Matt Dufort	WiB	Will Brooks

ANSWER TO QUIZ QUESTION FROM LAST ISSUE



This artificial golden Bubo was made by the Greek god Hephaestus in the 1981 film "Clash of the Titans"

Changes to the Patrick Sullivan Young Birders Fund

Jennifer Kauffman, WOS President

After 11 years, Tom Mansfield has stepped down as chair of the Patrick Sullivan Young Birders Fund. The WOS Board wishes to thank Tom for his generosity and service to young birders in Washington.

Since 2005, WOS has awarded 12 PSYBF grants to young birders to support attendance at birding camps and undergraduate research projects. Young birders have been invited to attend the WOS annual conference free of charge and receive a lifetime WOS membership

The Young Birders Fund was first conceived by Andy and Ellen Stepniewski and was established by the Washington Ornithological Society in 2005 to encourage and support young people interested in birding. Andy and Ellen have been advisors to the fund since its inception. After Patrick Sullivan's death in September 2007, the name of the fund was changed to the Patrick Sullivan Young Birders Fund (PSYBF) to honor his contributions to birding in Washington,

Grants are available to individual young people or adults to help fund group birding activities or education for young people. We define "young birders"

as anyone in the age group from pre-teens through early 20s, showing a serious interest in birds and birding. Both students and non-students are eligible and are encouraged to apply.

The WOS Board is exploring how to increase the visibility of this program (and encourage more young people to apply) and possibly expanding the PSYBF, to make more grants available to young birders and adults who sponsor programs to support them. WOS is also exploring ways to support a more diverse birding community, including birders of color.

Long-time PSYBF supporters Andy and Ellen Stepniewski, and Faye McAdams Hands have joined this effort. If you have ideas or are interested in joining other volunteers to support this effort, please contact psybf@wos.org or president@wos.org.



Trip leaders Wanted for Potential Conference in September

Dear WOS members,

Our list of WOS field trips for the September conference in Astoria is nearly complete, and Ken Brown is working to line up leaders.

Please say “Yes!” when you’re contacted to lead a trip! We always have wonderful leaders, and you can be one of them!

Another opportunity would be to volunteer to lead a “Going-to” or “Returning-from” trip. Our Friday, Saturday, and Sunday regular trips cover Cowlitz County (as far east as Toutle and south as far as Woodland), Wahkiakum County, and Pacific County (from the OR-WA border as far north as Grayland, which sneaks into Grays Harbor County just a tad). Needless to say, there’s much to be seen between the conference venue and where most of our members live!

If you’d like to lead a trip, please email me at egdudley@gmail.com and let me know by May 1. Please include a suitable write-up to be published on the website and in WOSNews for the June edition, and for Tracy Mitchell to use for registration.

Also, as you know, a final decision to proceed or not with the in-person conference will be made by the Oregon Birding Association and WOS boards late in May depending on the COVID situation by that time.

- Eric Dudley

WDFW Reviews Ferruginous Hawk Status

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife is **seeking public comment** on its status review of the Ferruginous Hawk. The deadline for comment is April 12, and details can be found on the department’s publications web page. Below is a quotation from the department’s news release (emphasis from the editor).

“The breeding population of Ferruginous Hawks in Washington is in sustained decline. Between 1974 and 2016, there has been significant declines in nesting territory occupancy, nest success, and productivity. Additionally, **the percentage of surveyed nesting territories supporting breeding pairs has significantly declined in the core breeding range of the species** in Benton and Franklin counties.

The distribution of breeding pairs statewide also appears to have contracted since the early 1990s. There has been no improvement in habitat conditions or amelioration of primary threats, and therefore **the recommendation is to reclassify the Ferruginous Hawk from threatened to endangered status in Washington.**”

Q & A with WOS Field Trip Co-Chair Jen Kunitsugu

It has been more than a year since WOS has organized field trips for the membership, and just one field trip has been planned for this spring (It's in May and it's full). WOS News checked in with one of the field trip co-chairs to ask how things were going. (Editor's note: Jen is also on the field trip committee of the Seattle Audubon Society)

Q: Caution is the word of the day?

A: Yes, although this time a year ago, people were much more cautious. I have heard of people who are vaccinated going out, not necessarily in big groups, but with just a few others who received the vaccine.

Q: How was the planning process. Touch and go?

A: We followed the Board's lead, and it took a while hashing out the new release forms. We definitely took guidance from similar groups such as Seattle Audubon and Portland Audubon it was kind of uncharted territory.

Q: Did the membership go along with the year-long delay?

A: A lot of people wanted to know if we are running them or not. We have been pushing them back and back.... Most people were ready to go forward with it, using precautions of course. We are limiting numbers and we want to limit carpooling, but a lot of it is in the field trip leaders' hands.

Q: How quickly do you expect to proceed with getting more trips scheduled?

A: Rules we make now may change. But as of now we really only have one field trip. And even in non-pandemic times there has always been a cap on the number of people.

Q: How did the registration go? Did people have a lot of questions?

A: Yes.... there will be smaller groups going together and possibly more cars. As I said, a lot of it is in the trip leaders' hands.



Three-toed Woodpecker