

# WILLAPA WHISTLER

*A Publication of the Willapa Hills Audubon Society*

Volume 43 // Issue 2

Summer 2017



Dusky-capped Flycatcher - *Image courtesy of Rita Maupin*  
Photo was taken in April at Brown Canyon AZ on a WHAS Fieldtrip.  
*For more information see page 3*

## WHAS Summer PICNIC

**By Larry Brandt**

This year the Willapa Hills Audubon Chapter **summer picnic** will happen on **Saturday, July 29, 2017** beginning at 3:00 PM. Attendees should bring one covered dish (an entree, salad, fruit or dessert) large enough to feed 4-6 adults and also provide eating supplies (plates, knives, forks, napkins, glasses) and drinks for their party. Ice, chairs, picnic tables, snacks and shade covers will be provided. We will have some eating/serving/cleanup items available and we will provide pavilions in the unlikely event of rain.

The picnic will be held again at the Brandt residence, 18 Island View Lane, Cathlamet, WA. Island View Lane is on the east edge of Cathlamet to the south of State Hwy 4.

**To get to the picnic from Longview**, look for the 50-mph speed sign as you enter Cathlamet. Turn left onto Island View Drive just past the speed sign.

**To get to the picnic from the west**, drive through Cathlamet on Hwy 4. As you are leaving Cathlamet look for a 55-mph speed sign. Immediately turn right onto Island View Drive.

Stay in the right lane and drive all the way back to the end of the road (0.1-mi.). There is lots of space for parking.

There's plenty to do other than eat: field games, fresh blueberries, peaches and plums, bird watching (count is now 57 in our yard), an indoor pool, or just chat with friends you haven't seen in a while.

**Mark your calendar! July 29! See you then!**

## WHAS Board Notes

**By Steve Puddicombe**

President Larry Brandt and the Willapa Hills Audubon Society Board held their first quarter meeting on March 17, 2017 in Longview, and discussed a variety of issues.

One is that our chapter has a **need for volunteers**: WHAS still has no active program committee or committee chair to organize programs.

Programs are a central part of our mission to educate the public and is a good way to announce our presence in the community. Over the years programs have also brought in new members. In the meantime board members are looking at sharing out responsibility for several programs for later this year and early next, and will meet soon to discuss setting up dates and possible speakers and subjects. If you have any ideas or would like to join in a programs committee please contact John Gross or Steve Puddicombe (see page 2).

WHAS also is looking for members interested in leading or organizing **field trips**, and the **Christmas Bird Count**, Leadbetter circle, needs an organizer for this year.

WHAS recently voted to support a **Bird Notes** segment on KMUN radio. This segment is a nationally produced tidbit to educate the public about birds and is aired each weekday at the 11 AM hour. Sponsorship allows WHAS a brief message or announcement of our upcoming events.

Give it a listen at 91.9 FM.

## In this issue of the Whistler:

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## Support our mission, join WHAS today!

### Check type of Membership:

- ☐ New Chapter Membership **WHAS** (\$20 check for annual membership)
- ☐ Renewal Chapter Membership **WHAS** (\$20 check for annual membership)
- ☐ I would like to support the work of Willapa Hills Audubon Society.  
Enclosed is my additional donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_

Membership includes 4 issues of our newsletter *WILLAPA WHISTLER* annually.

We are a 501(c) (3) non-profit corporation. All dues and donations are tax deductible

For membership in National Audubon Society visit <http://www.audubon.org/>.

Please make your check payable to:

WILLAPA HILLS AUDUBON SOCIETY or WHAS and mail to:

**WHAS-Membership, PO Box 399, Longview, WA 98632.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Y14:7XCH rev. 2007

### Thank you for supporting your local Audubon chapter -- Willapa Hills Audubon Society!

We will not share your contact information with anyone.

\*) To announce **occasional** reminders and to communicate last minute changes due to weather or other issues for WHAS programs and field trips.

-----Clip

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**Wildlife Sightings:** **vacant**

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Please indicate any **new** information:

I prefer you contact me by:

- ☐ Phone
- ☐ Email
- ☐ Mail

Other options:

- ☐ I prefer to receive the *WHISTLER* by email  
(Add your email address below)
- ☐ Contact me about volunteer opportunities
- ☐ Add me to your announcement email list\*

### WHAS Board Meeting

The Willapa Hills Audubon Society board will meet on June 13<sup>th</sup> at the Longview Library. Board meetings are open to members. If you would like more information contact any board member (see left).

### Puget Sound Bird Fest

Puget Sound Bird Fest returns the weekend of September 15-17th, 2017, in Edmonds. The annual 3-day festival celebrates birds and nature on the beautiful shores of Puget Sound with speakers, guided walks and field trips, Puget Sound boat tours, exhibits, and educational activities for children and adults and is in its 13<sup>th</sup> year.

For more info visit the festival website at  
[www.pugetsoundbirdfest.org](http://www.pugetsoundbirdfest.org)

### Ridgefield Birdfest & Bluegrass

The 18th Annual BirdFest & Bluegrass 2017 will be October 7th & 8th!

Keep an eye out this summer for the schedule of events, vendor sign-up, volunteer sign-up and more!

### ACOW

Audubon Council of WA is set for October 14, 2017 in Sequim WA. Contact any of the board members for more information.



## Brown Canyon Field Trip Report

By Darrel Whipple

Inspired by the recommendations of John and Margaret Green, I cobbled together a group of fourteen birdwatchers to visit Brown Canyon in southeast Arizona on April 25-28, 2017. I needed an organizational sponsor, such as WHAS, in order to rent the lodge several miles up the desert canyon maintained by the Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge as an environmental education center. Josh Smith at the refuge headquarters near Arivaca south of Tucson facilitated the arrangements.

Every decade or so I need to get my Arizona fix, and this filled the bill nicely. My fellow adventurers must have been tired of hearing of my Fort Huachuca army days and my subsequent stint as a seasonal ranger in 1968-69 at Coronado National Memorial on the Mexican border south of Sierra Vista.

But I digress. The Brown Canyon



Image: Rita Maupin



Hooded Oriole – Image: Rob Whipple

negotiating the rough dirt road as we left on Day 4 my son Rob spotted a Pyrrhuloxia in the brush. And a post-canyon visit to the Arivaca wetland yielded an Arizona Woodpecker and a Crested Caracara for Joe Stafford, Rita Maupin, Rob-Uyen-and-baby-Zan Whipple and yours truly!

Kudos are in order for Jude Gardner and Ned Pancoast and George Exum and Carol Carver for helping us get everyone out and on the road on Day 4, despite the bug. Kudos also to WHAS president Larry Brandt for taking a splendid batch of photos of us doing our thing. A special treat for me, besides getting time with my new grandson, was re-uniting with my hiking buddies whom I met long ago through the late Harold and Ruth Deery -- Joe and Rita, Linda Deery Nelson, Ted Olsen, Lori Miller and Kate Farrar.

Regrets? No. Only a few disappointments. Like, where were the Thrashers and the Roadrunners and the Montezuma Quail? And the celebrated Jaguar? We'll have to plan a return trip!

Oops! George and Carol did see a Roadrunner in their final hours in the canyon, I am so jealous!

stay was a delightful and memorable experience for all of us housed comfortably at the lodge, in view of majestic Baboquivari Peak. (It was marred only by the contraction of a flu-like virus by nine of us in turns that week. Aargh!)

Meanwhile, we enjoyed a two-mile hike up to a rock arch on Day 2, guided by three excellent local birders who volunteer at the refuge. Highlights included Gray Hawk, Golden Eagle, Summer Tanager, Hepatic Tanager, Dusky-capped Flycatcher. Lounging around the lodge also got results -- Broad-billed Hummingbird, Acorn Woodpecker, Lazuli Bunting, for starters. While



Roadrunner – Image: George Exum



## Puget Sound's Great blue herons provide summertime watching

From the WDFW blog: Crossing Paths with Washington's Wildlife

### By Jamie Bails, WDFW habitat biologist

Even amidst fully-leafed-out trees at this time of year, it's hard to miss a great blue heron (*Ardea herodias*).

Four feet tall with a six-foot span of blue-feathered wings, this big bird is mostly beak, neck and legs. It's commonly found in both rural and urban areas of every Washington county and can be even more noticeable in the spring and summer because it nests communally, in large groups called heron rookeries or colonies.

Although widely recognized, much is still unknown about foraging, seasonal dispersal, habitat associations and winter distribution of the great blue heron. Many eastern Washington herons migrate south in the fall, but others, especially on the west side of the state, are year-round residents.

The non-migratory Puget Sound population is classified as a sub-species (*Ardea herodias fannini*) found only in the Salish Sea, a broad area that stretches from Prince William Sound to south Puget Sound. What we DO know is that these herons are an important indicator of the health of Puget Sound.

According to "Great Blue Herons of Puget Sound," a technical report by Ann Eissinger published by the Puget Sound Nearshore Partnership, 49 percent of this population is concentrated in four mega-colonies of 200-600 heron pairs. The remaining 51 percent is in small to medium colonies of less than 200 pairs, scattered along the Puget Sound shore from Bellingham to Olympia.

Many of the largest nest sites are in northern Puget Sound near eelgrass beds on marine shorelines, like the March Point colony in Padilla Bay, where several dozen herons are frequently seen wading to feed on herring, shrimp, crabs, sculpins, starry flounder and other aquatic life.

In south Puget Sound, where eelgrass is not abundant, smaller colonies are distributed by tree availability, access to marsh foraging areas and prey abundance. These smaller southern colonies usually breed earlier than those of the north and Strait of Georgia.

Based on Eissinger's observations over 25-plus years, some mega-colonies appear to fragment, with herons relocating to new and existing nesting sites, usually closer to productive marine feeding areas.

For example, a Point Roberts colony of nearly 400 nesting pairs began to fragment in 2002-2003, with about 350

pairs moving about two miles north to the Tsawassen bluff, directly above their primary feeding grounds at Roberts Bank. Another case was the Birch Bay colony of about 275 nesting pairs, which fragmented and relocated between 2006 and 2008 to a new site at Drayton Harbor with about 100 nests, and to the Lummi Bay colony, which grew by 50-100 nests.

Most great blue herons begin the reproductive cycle in early February, gathering at these traditional communal nest sites. These sites are usually in tall deciduous trees such as alder,



Great Blue Heron – Image: USFWS – George Gentry

cottonwood and big leaf maple, but also cedar, hemlock and pine, and near foraging habitat like an estuary or other waterway.

By March the male of each pair is providing sticks for the female to build a nest or renovate an old nest. She lays three to five eggs, and both take turns incubating them for almost a month. By the end of May the eggs begin to hatch, and chicks grow rapidly, fed by both parents. The chicks first leave the nest at 7-8 weeks but usually return to be fed for another few weeks.

By the end of September, the juveniles have fully fledged and disperse with adult females to upland rivers, lakes and wetlands to find prey. There they stay through the winter, roosting nightly at forest edges on lateral branching trees. Voles and other small mammals, reptiles and amphibians provide easy and abundant food around fields and marshes, and winter-returning salmon are taken from rivers and beaver ponds. Adult male herons maintain their shoreline territory over winter.

Puget Sound's mega-colonies of great blue herons act as an anchor for an overall resilient population, but by being

concentrated they are susceptible to disturbance, both natural and man-made.

For example, in the 1990's a large ice storm destroyed the colony at Squaxin Island near Olympia, killing all the nest trees. If a major oil spill were to occur in Padilla Bay, the largest heron breeding center in the Salish Sea -- March Point and Samish Island colonies -- could be seriously impacted.

Smaller colonies might be at greater risk of competition with other species or predation. At Edmonds Marsh, herons have tried to establish nests over the last dozen years, but fledglings have not yet been documented. Many heron-watchers assume nearby mature bald eagles are thwarting the herons' efforts.

On the other hand, a bald eagle nesting pair near several heron nests at Point Roberts is more likely protecting both species' territory from raids by crows, ravens or immature eagles.

Over the years, heron watchers throughout Puget Sound have seen both large and small colonies shrink, grow, and completely disappear. In 2010, the Kiwanis Ravine colony included some 80 successful nests, but by 2014 there were none.

The now abandoned Black River colony in Renton once supported 130 nests. Today the Lake Sammamish State Park and Kenmore Park & Ride colonies are the largest in the Pierce/King/Snohomish county area.

Eissinger has noted that many Puget Sound herons are well-adapted to human disturbance, including dogs, motor vehicle traffic, and industry noise. Nevertheless, heron colony watchers need to keep a respectful distance from nests. Keep pets on leash, minimize noise, and bring binoculars, scopes and telephoto camera lenses to enjoy these big birds.

## New WHSRN Site dedicated at Willapa Bay, Washington

From the manomet newsletter May 2017 <https://www.manomet.org/newsletter/community-engagement-kicks-new-whsrn-site-washington-state-usa>

On International Migratory Bird Day, May 13th at the Pacific Columbia Heritage Museum in Ilwaco, WA, a dedication ceremony was held celebrating the **Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN)** dedication and student artwork. WNWR Project Leader, Jackie Ferrier; USFWS Regional Shorebird Biologist, Vanessa Loverti; and teacher and Alaska exchange participant, Cheri Lloyd highlighted the recent exchange with other sites and the student artwork quilt during the ceremony. Over 70 partners, supporters, business owners, community members, and students attended to learn more about WHSRN, shorebirds, and why Willapa Bay and Long Beach Peninsula are important. All of the student artwork and the quilt will be on display into June.

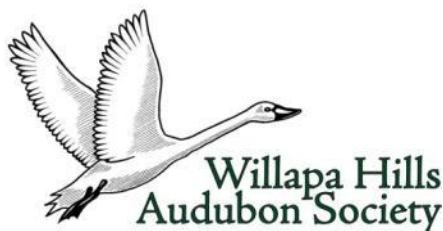
Each year over 200,000 shorebirds make a stop at Willapa Bay in Washington State, the second largest estuary on the USA's Pacific Coast. With nearly 50,000 acres of mudflats, shorebirds are able to rest and refuel on a buffet of invertebrates. They also forage, roost, and nest on the nearby sandy shores of Long Beach Peninsula. With salt marshes and pastures also contributing to habitat diversity, it's no surprise that at least 43 species of wintering, migrating, and nesting shorebirds rely on the area, including Red Knot, Short-billed Dowitcher, Dunlin, Western Sandpiper, Marbled Godwit, and Western Snowy Plover.

With 14 stakeholders—including landowners, conservation groups, private businesses, and state and federal agencies—signing letters of support, Willapa Bay and Long Beach Peninsula were designated as a WHSRN site of International Importance in February 2017. Willapa Bay and Long Beach Peninsula became the 97th site to join the network, which now comprises more than 36.8 million acres (14.8 million hectares) of shorebird habitat in 15 countries across the Americas. The bay and peninsula join two other nearby WHSRN sites along the Washington coastline: the Columbia River Estuary to the south, and Grays Harbor to the north.

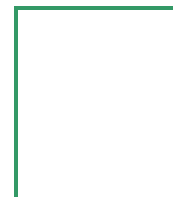
The site is a critical link for species migrating along the Pacific Flyway. However, it is threatened by habitat loss from climate change, sea level rise, and invasive species. Human disturbance is also a threat, particularly on Long Beach Peninsula, a popular destination for tourists and local residents. Increasing the community's awareness and appreciation of shorebirds that share their habitat is important for the success of long-term conservation efforts in the region.

The WHSRN Executive Office, Manomet, USFWS, WNWR, and WDFW are working with partners in the Willapa Bay region to share the story of shorebirds and engage the community in conservation efforts. With the support of volunteer intern Grace DeMeo, educational activities centered on shorebird ecology and conservation have been conducted in schools and with youth groups, educating over 150 students. The students created inspirational artwork, and 25 pieces were selected and transformed into weatherproof signs. Forty-one signs will be installed at locations throughout the community including beach and bay access points, businesses, visitor centers, libraries, and other public facilities.





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The *Willapa Whistler* is the quarterly publication of the Willapa Hills Audubon Society (WHAS), a chapter of the National Audubon Society. Complimentary copies are available for free on our website.

**TEMP -- RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

**Most WHAS activities and programs are open to the public.**

### **Send in your stories & photos**

Articles, information, wildlife sightings and artwork are most welcomed. The deadline for submissions is the 15<sup>th</sup> of February, May, August and November. Send your contributions to:

WHAS Whistler, PO Box 399, Longview WA 98632

or email them to

[newsletter@willapahillsaudubon.org](mailto:newsletter@willapahillsaudubon.org).

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## **WHAS Programs and Field Trips**

WHAS events are free and open to the public (Unless otherwise noted). Check the website calendar for the latest information and updates.

### **WHAS Summer PICNIC**

**Saturday, July 29, 2017** beginning at 3:00 PM

See page one for the details.

### **The Whistler Online**

Did you know that you can subscribe to the Willapa Whistler on our website? All the links are easy to follow. Go to <http://whistler.willapahillsaudubon.org> for this and past issues.

Other plans will appear on our website and will be announced through our gmail alert system. More information about the alert system here: <http://willapahillsaudubon.org/index.php/member-services>

*The Mission of the Willapa Hills Audubon Society is to support ecologically responsible ways of life, to help maintain biologically diverse habitats, and to promote environmental understanding and enjoyment of nature.*

**Check out our website at [www.willapahillsaudubon.org](http://www.willapahillsaudubon.org)**