

WILLAPA WHISTLER

A Publication of the Willapa Hills Audubon Society

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White Pelican on the Columbia River -- Image courtesy of Andrew Emlen

The Wonder of Grief

By Steve Puddicombe, President

As I often do in these columns, I try and relate our human experience in terms of the wider, natural world we inhabit, particularly with the world of birds. I'll get to that twist. But first I ask you to indulge me some very personal reflections on this day of sun, rain, cloud, thunder, wind and calm.

First off, I must relate my Dad's recent death after a fairly short illness. It was no great surprise considering his age, yet the aftermath emboldens me, despite the event's individual importance for me, to elevate grief as one of the wonders of our shared humanity.

Kubler Ross described grief as a succession of other emotions: denial, anger, depression, and so on, but for me grief is just a deep, deep sense of loss. I guess that corresponds with acceptance, according to Ross, yet I can't really relate to that word and it's cool rationality. For me, grief has always been the richest manifestation of love for other, for something stable and true, so true and pure that bathing in its memory is so luscious that it cannot be sustained; and finally the recognition that I must find a new way to embrace and to be embraced.

This year, and last, have been seasons of loss for most of us. Our collective sense of security in our beloved civic and public institutions and in our fellows has often been altered. The very stability of the Earth's ecosystems is in doubt.

We at WHAS have had to forgo meeting in person, and our usual public gatherings, our birding trips, have been curtailed. The intensity of loss here may not be the same as in losing a loved one, but I think it has engendered a sense of grief nonetheless.

Yet, the wonder of grief is that it propels our best selves on with an often unconscious and near miraculous wisdom. As Whitman's poem "Out Of The Cradle, Endlessly Rocking" attests, young Walt's discovery of death and loss and attendant grief, while observing a mockingbird nest, is a revelation of truth and beauty rather than a wallowing in dark melancholy.

We cannot reject grief anymore than we can object to the weather. Just wait and there will be sunshine, or rain. Loss is universal to all our experience; its derivation from love, its depth, its power to transform, is fundamental to our humanity and our relationship with all beings. We only need to find new ways to embrace.

WHAS Board Meeting October 9

By Steve Puddicombe

The board of Willapa Hills Audubon will have its regular Fall board meeting on Saturday, October 9, 2021, tentatively at 10 AM, via zoom and hosted by board member Robert Sudar. WHAS members are welcomed to join in. For access to the code please check our web page at www.willapahillsaudubon.org the morning of October 9 for directions. A special guest will be Norman Dick, representing the Carbon Capture Foundation.

The goal of the foundation is to address climate change, in part by planting trees in our area. They are interested in possibly providing seedlings to WHAS members.

Christmas Bird Counts 2021

Save the dates:

This is a fun event for seasoned and new-birders alike. All dates and events are preliminary as there might be changes and adjustments due to Covid 19. We will have all the details on our website and in the Winter Whistler - published in early December.

Leadbetter (Pacific County) – CANCELED, see page 3 for details

Wahkiakum – December 29, 2021
Coordinator: Andrew Emlen

Cowlitz-Columbia – January 1, 2022
Coordinator: Bob Reistroffer

In this issue of the Whistler:

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Together

Support our mission, join WHAS today!

Membership renewals are due March 1 of each year. If you prefer to pay by credit or debit card use our online form on our website at <https://willapahillsaudubon.org/join-us-donate>.

Membership includes 4 issues of our newsletter *WILLAPA WHISTLER* annually. Gift Memberships are available online.

Check type of Membership:

- ☐ Individual Chapter Membership **WHAS** (\$25 check for annual membership)
- ☐ Family Chapter Membership **WHAS** (\$35 check for annual membership)
- ☐ Lifetime Chapter Membership **WHAS** (\$750 check for lifetime membership)

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

Please make your check payable to:

WILLAPA HILLS AUDUBON SOCIETY or WHAS and mail to:

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We will not share your contact information with anyone. For membership in National Audubon Society visit <https://www.audubon.org/> Chapter# Y14

*) 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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Other options:(Add your email below)

- ☐ I prefer to receive the *WHISTLER* by email
- ☐ Contact me about volunteer opportunities
- ☐ Add me to your announcement email list*
- ☐ **I would like to support the work of Willapa Hills Audubon Society. Enclosed is my additional donation of \$ _____**

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 Choose "Willapa Hills Audubon Society" as your charity and we'll receive 0.5% of your purchase total.

National Audubon Convention, October 1-2

For the first time in its history, the gathering of Audubon's vast network of dedicated chapter, state, center, campus, national and international leaders from across our flyways will be virtual. Join them this October 1-2 for two days of collaboration, community, conservation and conversation from your own home. They will have inspiring speakers and activists, virtual field trip experiences led by on-the-ground experts, and interactive networking opportunities to expand your reach. More here: <https://2021.audubonconvention.org>

Audubon Everywhere



Report on Audubon State meeting - ACOW

By Larry Brandt

The Audubon Council of Washington (ACOW) was held virtually over the weekend of September 24 and 25. This was an opportunity for all 25 Audubon Chapters in Washington State to participate in grass-roots networking and strategic planning. We also heard from several representatives from the National Audubon Society regarding national and international efforts on behalf of birds and our environment.

A number of mission critical priorities were identified, and their implementation discussed in focus groups. Among these were (of course) addressing climate change on a local level. We reviewed a report authored by Princeton University titled **Net Zero America**. I was able to take several points from this study back to Willapa Hills Audubon. This project can be found at <https://netzeroamerica.princeton.edu>

Across the Americas was also identified as one of our mission critical priorities. The often-neglected point that migratory birds fly through multiple states and countries must be addressed as an overarching avian conservation need. Willapa Hills Audubon is at the forefront of this effort with our inclusion in the Vaux swift observation and tracking network that extends from British Columbia to Baja in Mexico. Scientists from National Audubon have identified the four migratory flyways

across the United States as the focus for migratory bird conservation by Nation, State and by chapter. We are in the Pacific flyway which extends from our coastal area to the Rocky Mountains and south to South America.

At the forefront of priorities, Audubon is working hard to address racism and misogyny within our organizations. Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (ESI) has been the understood goals of business, government and social groups since the events of the summer of 2020. National Audubon speaker and Diversity Director Jamaal Nelson discussed the issues for Audubon and gave a very motivating presentation. According to Jamaal, Audubon has added **Belonging** (EDIB) to our priorities and goals. We have much to do with respect to EDIB. He stated that the goal is not perfection: The goal is to try with the understanding that we will have some successes and some failures.

I encourage members to comment on any of the points I brought back from ACOW or comment on any other way we can better protect birds and our environment. I can be reached at lbrandt@cni.net or phone 360.200.4580. This conference was recorded and will be available to all.

Leadbetter CBC has been canceled!

By Suzy Whitley

I have made the decision to CANCEL this year's Leadbetter Christmas Bird Count.

Many factors contributed to this. One, I emailed over 20 people to see if I could get 8 people or 8 vehicles to cover the 8 sections of the count circle, and only 3 people responded that they would do the bird count. With one couple in Canada and not likely to get across the border again this year because of the pandemic. Which just left two groups.

The count has been dwindling for many years as we age, have health issues and many have moved away. The pandemic also made a major impact.

Newspaper articles over the years requesting new birders has never been successful. It has pretty much been the same 30 or so birders for the last twenty + years with very little

new blood. Part of this I believe is because of new birding apps and sites like eBird that are gathering citizen science data that is the same as the CBC.

The CBC has been an important part of my life for the last 18 years. I will miss it greatly; the participation, the organizing, but mostly you birders and friends.

I want to give a special THANK YOU to Robert Sudar who was the compiler of the data even before I started organizing the count. And to all of you birders who have given your time and birding skill to the Leadbetter Christmas Bird Count over the years. I will miss connecting with you each fall. It has been a GRAND run!

Thank you all, miss you already.

Bird Flight Patterns and Music

Friends of WHAS are now able to access the online concert video and curriculum. The link and password below will bring you to the Bird Flight Patterns and Music webpage. On this page you will find the full concert video and online curriculum with activities, lessons, extra musical performances, composer interviews and educational games.

While adults will enjoy watching the concert video all the way through, we are recommending that teachers show the concert video in segments. For example, the students may watch the segment on the flap and glide flight pattern and listen to this motion imitated in the performance of Strauss' Acceleration Waltz. Following this segment, the teacher can stop the video

and lead the children on activities connected to the flap and glide flight pattern on the website.

The Bird Flight Patterns and Music webpage with concert video and online activities will remain active for at least one year. Therefore, you may visit and revisit at any time from now through June 2022!

We hope you will share your feedback regarding this program and responses from chapter members and local schools. Kindly send an email to Terry (twolkowicz@nbsymphony.org)

Link: <https://nbsymphony.org/bird-flight-patterns-and-music-curriculum/>

Password: BFPMC

Vaux Swifts in Rainier Oregon

By Larry Brandt

Several years ago, Darrel Whipple and crew removed the grating covering the smokestack at Riverside Community church in Rainier OR. The purpose was to attract Vaux swifts during their twice-yearly migration. The success was greater than possibly imagined. One Sunday night in early September saw 19,514 birds enter the chimney before dark. Similar counts happen each night during the 2-3 weeks of migration. Enjoy the video or come and see the spectacle in person.

The video is available on our website at <https://willapahillsaudubon.org/91-news/609-see-the-vaux-swifts-in-rainier-oregon>

Much thanks to Juni Roberts, Carolyn Norrend and Terry Williams (from left) and Art Norred and Darrel Whipple for volunteering as team observers.



2021 Cowlitz County Bird List - August Update

By Russ Koppendrayer

As usual the July and August period was slow for new additions to our list of species seen in Cowlitz County for the year. This year all three additions were from the shorebird group. Specifically they were *Pectoral Sandpiper*, *Semipalmated Sandpiper* and *Long-billed Dowitcher*.

The dowitcher we find every year at some time as they move through in both spring and fall migrations in small numbers and even will overwinter sometimes. The two sandpiper species are almost exclusively fall migrants through Washington state however, and then in fairly small numbers. Spring

migration records of these species are quite rare as they move through the middle of North America at that time. While we do find Semipalmated and Pectoral Sandpipers in Cowlitz County most years we do sometimes miss them completely due to a lack of much shorebird habitat in fall as many places go completely dry.

Download the Cowlitz County Bird list as pdf here:

<https://willapahillsaudubon.org/index.php/bird-lists/cowlitz-county-bird-list>

Birds of a Feather Winter Roost Together

By Jamie Bails, WDFW habitat biologist (via Crossing Paths Newsletter mailing list)

Winter can be a critical time for the wildlife species that don't migrate out of Washington or hibernate until spring.

For some birds like crows, chickadees, robins, and blackbirds, a communal winter roost can make the difference between life and death.

Communal winter roosts can provide protection from predators with safety in numbers, foraging opportunities alongside experienced birds, and even warmth with shared body heat in small spaces. Roosts can also provide the social interaction necessary to find mates, come spring.

Crows are among the best known and studied communal winter roosting species in Washington. One of the largest crow roosts - up to 10,000 birds -- is on North Creek in King County, just east of the University of Washington Bothell campus.

Each night from late fall through winter, an hour before dusk, long lines of crows begin to gather from all directions. First, they land in the top of cottonwood and willow trees, calling and socializing. Then as night falls and the trees fill up, they move down to the middle of the trees, huddling close together for warmth and protection.

This massive crow roost is a relatively recent phenomena. In 1997, the University began a stream restoration project on North Creek to turn a pasture infested with reed canary grass into a highly functioning and diverse wetland. After a few years, the planted cottonwoods, alders and willows were large enough to provide nightly shelter, and crows from as far east as Sultan, north to Everett and south to Kirkland began to gather.

Research by Professor John Marzluff, of the University of Washington School of Environmental and Forest Sciences, and others, has shown that social hierarchy seems to play an important role in the organization of the roost site. Senior members may occupy higher perches, while younger individuals settle in the lower areas. At night, most crows move down into the thicker branches to reduce the effects of wind and rain.

Research has also shown that the young crows form circles around the elders, maybe as trade for a day of good foraging and companionship. Thus, the elder crows are afforded more protection from predators, like great horned owls. With many eyes and ears watching, it would be difficult for any predator to attack an individual in this roost.

For more information on the Bothell crows and Marzluff's research, see <https://www.uwb.edu/visitors/crows>.

The term "roosting" generally refers to communal birds that remain together in large flocks like this. But it can also refer to a period of inactivity, similar to sleeping at night. Some birds roost alone, only pairing up for nesting season.

Many species roost in cavities made by woodpeckers in decaying old trees with broken tops, called "snags." Smaller species, like bushtits, kinglets and juncos are more likely to roost in closed cavities, alone or in small groups. Three to four black-capped chickadees will group together in a confined space, using their body heat to warm the air around them and save energy.



Image: [wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Birds_in_a_tree.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Birds_in_a_tree.jpg)

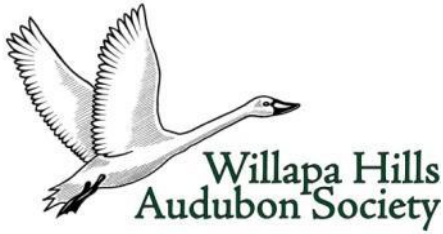
Larger birds like robins, stellar jays, and varied thrushes, often roost in the canopy of evergreen trees or tall shrubs.

Birds that overwinter here generally are built to stay warm, given enough food and shelter. They fluff up their feathers, draw their head in or tuck it under a wing, and shiver. They may scrunch down by bending their legs, or tuck one foot up under their feathers to further reduce heat loss. During the night their body temperature may drop 10-15 degrees to slow their metabolism and conserve energy. This survival technique, called "nocturnal hypothermia," is used for the most extreme cold nights.

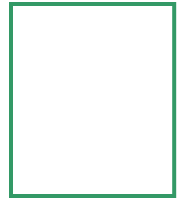
Male red-winged blackbirds are known to flock together at night in winter, usually in dense evergreens, thickets or shrubs near agriculture fields, pastures and grasslands. Such roost sites can be located when you see large flocks soaring across the fields in search of insects. Once breeding gets underway in spring, male blackbirds night roost alone near their female and her nest.

You can provide winter roosts for resident birds on your property in several ways

- Maintain clusters of trees, shrubs and large brush piles
- Maintain a "snag" or dead or dying tree, if it's not a safety hazard
- Provide an artificial cavity or roost box in a sheltered spot like the south side of a building or tree; these can be the same as nest boxes, cleaned out after last summer's use
- Control dogs and especially cats, particularly at night, to prevent disturbance to roosting birds



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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 15th 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.



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<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Willapa-Hills-Audubon/1386609461578276>

WHAS Programs and Field Trips

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

Fieldtrips and in person programs are postponed due to the Covid-19 restrictions and will resume once gatherings are allowed again.
Please check our website for updates!

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.

**WHAS made changes to membership by switching to a yearly renewal date.
All membership renewals are due in March.**

**Other programs and field trips will appear on our website and will be announced through our email alert system.
More information about the alert system here: <http://willapahillsaudubon.org/member-services>**