

WILLAPA WHISTLER

A Publication of the Willapa Hills Audubon Society

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Fall 2022



Bald Eagle - Image by John Green

Names and Identification Letter From Alaska

By Steve Puddicombe, President

An old friend, Alaska comrade and hiking buddy, Charles, has often suggested that if we honored the denizens of nature in language the way we honor ourselves, by capitalizing their “common” names, we might subtly begin to give animals, plants and birds an importance, an accounting on this sphere that would ennoble them and perhaps ever so slightly humble us.

So, there is the common name “wandering tattler”, and then there is the...“Wandering Tattler”.

A failed English major not entirely familiar with grammatical rules, I’ve mistakenly capitalized bird names for years. It only seemed natural to do so after spending so much time identifying and learning their unique haunts, habits, and names. When I first began birding, about 15 miles north of my homestead at False Pass, on the Bering Sea, it wasn’t just the ability to see these creatures with such clarity (thanks to field glasses), or even the noting of behaviors that enthused me. It was in identifying them and attaching them to a name.

I suppose I could have named them myself. But my handy field guide linked me to all the knowledge that had come before, all the field work and expertise, and then to the very birds themselves—that is the benefit we get from the accumulation of knowledge and technology. And as they say, as knowledge deepens so does understanding, appreciation, love.

Some bird names acknowledge discovery in the western tradition by using a person’s name. Consider the Steller’s Eider, first described by Georg Steller while traveling with the explorer Vitus Bering in 1741, enduring incredible privation and nearly dying on Bering Island. (Steller was the only naturalist to observe the Steller Sea Cow before it went extinct). Or, closer to home, consider the Lewis’ Woodpecker and Clark’s Nutcracker, as an homage to those two species and the expedition that first cataloged them for the wider world.

...continued on page 4

Christmas Bird Counts 2022

Save the dates:

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

Leadbetter (Pacific County) –
December 17, 2022

Wahkiakum – tbd (week 52)
Coordinator: Andrew Emlen

Cowlitz-Columbia – January 1, 2023
Coordinator: Bob Reistroffer

Cowlitz County Bird List

By Russ Koppendrayer

We’ve arrived at the halfway point of 2022 with a typical number of species on our Cowlitz County year list. With the number of people using eBird constantly increasing we had recorded almost all of the expected returning neotropical migrants by the end of May. That’s a big reason we only added two species in June. Red-eyed Vireo is a late migrant that doesn’t typically arrive until early or even mid June. The other addition was a Yellow-breasted Chat. While always in low numbers if not a single pair, they also seem to use different locations from one year to the next making them more difficult to find.

We have different bird list available on our website at
<https://willapahillsaudubon.org/bird-lists>

In this issue of the Whistler:

- Membership Form
- NW Birding Events
- Wildlife Center of the North Coast
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- ACOW is back
- Vaux Swifts Fall Migration
- Threatened Legacy Forests of SW WA

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

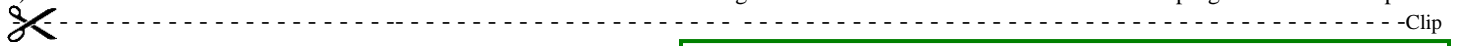
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We will not share your contact information with anyone. For membership in National Audubon Society visit <https://www.audubon.org/> Chapter# Y14

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



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

Puget Sound Bird Fest

September 10-11, 2022
 The Puget Sound Bird Fest is a celebration of birds and nature in Edmonds, WA. It offers presentations by local experts, field activities, exhibits, vendors, kid's activities, and workshops and demonstrations - some are free, others require a nominal fee and advance registration. More at <http://www.pugetsoundbirdfest.com>

Wings over Willapa Festival

September 23-25, 2022
 This annual birding and nature festival is a celebration of Willapa National Wildlife Refuge's many species and diverse habitats. There will be an array of tours, workshops and other events happening all around the Long Beach Peninsula and Willapa Bay. More at <https://friendsofwillaparefuge.org/Wings-Over-Willapa>

Ridgefield BirdFest and Bluegrass Celebration

October 1st 2022
 The 2022 BirdFest & Bluegrass will be entirely in person! There will be vendors and music in Downtown Ridgefield, a self-guided Carty Unit Refuge hike, wandering trail stewards to answer questions, Sandhill Crane Tours, tours of the new Refuge office building, and a bus tour of the River 'S' Unit!
 More at <https://ridgefieldfriends.org/birdfest-bluegrass/>

Children's Discovery Museum reopens

By Ann Cordero

The Children's Discovery Museum has reopened at **1209 Commerce Avenue in Longview** on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. After closing for over two years due to covid, the museum now welcomes Cowlitz County residents to enjoy its free exhibits and to learn through play.

Children can build a cabin with giant Lincoln logs, produce art on the harmonograph, revel in the ping pong ball shower, look through microscopes in the Nature Niche, and shop at the Farm to Table market. Dress up clothes and doctor and dentist offices give children a look at the adult world. New murals of a whale's tail and the human body decorate the walls. Bowling is a new activity, adjacent to the dance corner.



The magic of the Children's Discovery Museum comes from hands-on learning with exhibits designed for interactive play. The children use their imaginations to lead the way while parents and volunteers focus on the kids and their interests and engage in activities with them. The result is quality fun time for families. And there are often surprises: you might see a young child listening through a stethoscope to find out whether a grouse mount has a heartbeat!

The museum, which first opened at Three Rivers Mall in January 2017, is a non-profit organization supported by donations and grants. It does not receive any government funding. Willapa Hills Audubon Society has sponsored the Nature Niche, consisting of touch tables, exhibit drawers, and microscope viewing and has donated funds for the museum's operation. It also sponsors a circulating nature library for the children and their families. In this way we are helping the museum to focus on science and the natural world.

This gift to the community is mostly staffed by volunteers under the supervision of Pepper Carter, Interim Executive Director. Initially Cowlitz Americorps Network supplied core staff, but the discontinuation of this program has made it much more difficult to run the museum. Volunteers who



enjoy working with children are needed, especially in the Nature Niche where kids can explore rocks, shells, bones, birds' nests and insects with the help of a volunteer interpreter. It is delightful to see the children rediscovering the museum, something they have missed for two years, as they push their miniature shopping carts and send lightweight objects through the wind tunnel.

Could you or someone you know be one of the people who makes this experience possible? If you are 14 or older you can begin your volunteering by filling out an application, available on the museum website CowlitzCDM.com, and by passing a background check. Your help could make museum learning a success while you enjoy the children's world. Come visit us!



...continued from page one: Names and Identification

Yet, given a choice I nearly always prefer the descriptive monikers of, say, Snowy Owl, Song Sparrow, Ruddy Turnstone or Rufous Hummingbird for the illustrative hints of habitat, color, sound, and behavior they convey.

The local colloquialisms are even more delightful. Locally, the Greater Scaup is known as the “Blue-bill” here in False Pass. And one of the first birds I ever identified, one of my favorites then called Oldsquaw, is the “Ollie-Ollie” here, mimicking its sing-song call.

“Oldsquaw” is now commonly called the Long-tailed Duck. The board that determines such things replaced a derogatory term with an appellation perhaps less colorful, but more universally descriptive. Other names are being similarly reviewed, even Audubon’s Warbler as the man himself undergoes scrutiny of his views on race and ethnicity that were decidedly contemporary and narrow-minded.

There is even a movement afoot to remove “Audubon” from the society founded with his name.

As we reconsider the past in light of today, it’s my hope that we’ll expand recognition rather than limit it entirely by strict current standards. Certainly the Eider we now call Steller’s, was already known and named by indigenous people perhaps a thousand years before his arrival in the Aleutians. Our field guides and birding books can further enlighten us with etymology and the history of identification, and with these indigenous and localized names. Anyhow, what is the origin of Guillemot or Cormorant, or Duck?

Scientific classification and species delineation of Linnaeus’ system aside, the common names of natural beings are not merely the nouns of identity; they are (or ought to be) a gift of intimacy and respect in our shared space called Earth.

It turns out that the American Ornithological Society Committee on Classification and Nomenclature has led the way in capitalization. In their general rules of orthography: “English names for birds are capitalized.....”

Happy Birding!

Announcement

Ann Musche’, beloved former president of Willapa Hills and avid birder and naturalist, died earlier this year at her home in Naselle.

Many will remember her devotion to WHAS and to the principles of citizen science and conservation. She led the efforts to revitalize WHAS 20 years ago, and organized campaigns to protect endangered species in our territory, including the Snowy Plover.

Beyond that she was a cheerful and caring human being, and good friend to many.

She will be sorely missed. A full obituary will appear in the next issue of the Whistler.

Vaux Swifts Fall Migration

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 southward migration of the swifts from all over the Northwest usually starts in September, affording us more opportunities to view thousands of them entering the chimney. The success was greater than possibly imagined. One Sunday night in early September last year saw 19,514 birds enter the chimney before dark. Similar counts happen each night during the 2-3 weeks of migration. You can watch them and meet our volunteers from the corner of W D St and W 3rd St near Fox Creek.

Larry Schwitters of Vaux’s Happening recently sent out the rankings for the top 14 roost sites on the flyway for the northbound migration Rainier’s Riverside Community Church ranked second or third in all three categories! Enjoy the video and come and see the spectacle in person. Find the video on our



website at <https://willapahillsaudubon.org/91-news/609-see-the-vaux-s-swifts-in-rainier-oregon>

The birds can be unpredictable but, in general, if the weather is relatively calm, they begin entering the roost around an hour before sunset and conclude half an hour after sunset.

Wildlife Center of the North Coast

By Kyleen Austin

A couple of years ago I rescued a one-winged American White Pelican off of Fitzpatrick Island and in the process became better acquainted with Wildlife Center of the North Coast. Shortly after the pelican rescue, they found out that I have experience in nonprofit governance and I was asked to join their Board of Directors which I did. I also volunteer in the hospital during my off-season.

When asked how I feel about WCNC, my first thought is that it is a treasure for this region and my second is that I wish more people could know about and support its mission, which is "to promote compassion, empathy, and respect for all life through wildlife rehabilitation, ecological teachings, and wildlife conservation." Just as I began volunteering for WCNC we finalized a comprehensive five-year strategic plan. You can read it on the WCNC website at

<https://coastwildlife.org/about/>. It



ACOW is back!

Audubon Washington and the chapters of the Northwest II region are pleased to welcome back chapter leaders from across Washington State for an in-person weekend of community and conservation from **Friday, September 30 - Saturday, October 2**. We'll meet in the newly renovated **Dungeness River Nature Center** in Sequim, a partnership between the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe and the Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society. What to expect:

- Helen Engle Volunteer of the Year Award
- Field Trips
- Shared Conservation Issues
- Education Strategies across Audubon
- Legislator Panel
- Audubon Partnerships with Tribes
- New Migration Mapping Project from National Audubon

Schedule of Events:

Friday, September 30 from 2:00PM - 8:00PM

We'll discuss the latest statewide conservation work and hear chapter resolutions from the Washington State Conservation Council (WSACC). Refreshments and a pizza dinner will be provided.

Saturday, October 1 from 9:00AM - 6:00PM

Sessions and workshops will help us tackle some of the biggest conservation challenges in Washington. Author and naturalist Lyanda Haupt will be the keynote speaker. Refreshments, lunch, and a catered reception will be provided.

Sunday, October 2 - Optional field trip day

Learn more and register here: <https://wa.audubon.org/chapters-centers/audubon-council-washington-2022>

focuses on specific areas of maintenance and growth that will enable the organization to continue helping wildlife for years to come.

The majority of the wildlife served by WCNC is birds. This is where us bird lovers come in. By supporting WCNC's mission we can help the birds and other wildlife who need it, which helps keep more birds and other wildlife around for us to see and hear. Even for those like my dear one-winged pelican who was too far gone to make it, WCNC is there to help ease their suffering. This year has been particularly challenging with the 2022 HPAI outbreak, but the center's staff have managed it well and continued serving patients with new protocols.

So how can you help? If you are ready to go out into a social in-person event, come to our Founder's Night Auction & Dinner at the Seaside Convention Center on September 18th. Tickets may be purchased through the website at <https://coastwildlife.org/foundersnight/>. You could even be an event sponsor or buy a table and bring your friends. There will be a silent and live auction, a three-course dinner, and a sweet video of our educational ambassador, Cormie the double-crested cormorant among other activities that evening.

If you're not quite ready to return to in-person gatherings, you can donate directly through the website or even the good old fashioned US Postal Service. There is always a need for more volunteers in the clinic, maintaining the facilities, fundraising, and more. Whatever your passion and skill, it all helps.

If you are able to attend this year's Founder's Night, stop by my table and say hello!

Threatened Legacy Forests of Southwest Washington

By Stephen Kropp

Stephen Kropp is the Executive Director of the Center for Responsible Forestry. Contact information at their website: <https://www.c4rf.org/our-team>

Almost all of the native forests that once dominated Southwestern Washington have been logged, and there is virtually no "old growth" (trees that pre-date European settlement) remaining in this part of the state. The Willapa Hills and mountains overlooking the lower Columbia River are now dominated by industrial tree plantations. If you spend enough time driving through these hills, however, you will run across scattered remnants of older forests, located on state forestlands managed by the State Department of Natural Resources (DNR), that were selectively logged in the late 19th or early 20th centuries. These forests are relics of the past and represent an important part of our natural heritage.

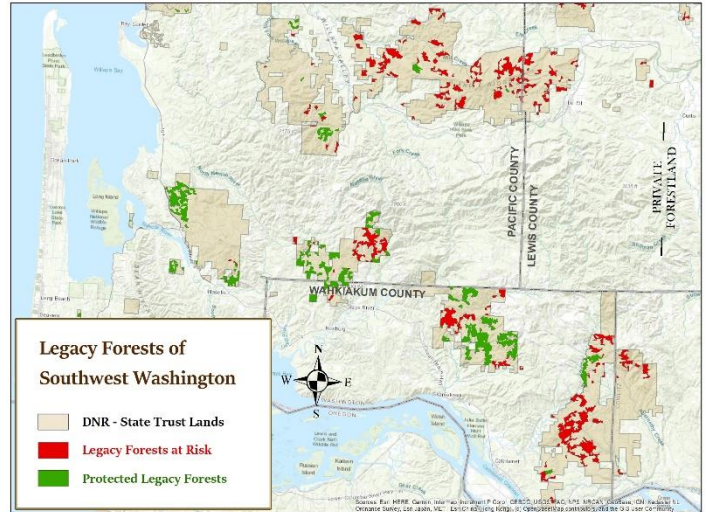
We refer to these forests as legacy forests. These forests were logged prior to World War II, before mechanized logging and chemical spraying were common practice. Back then, the logs were typically loaded into railcars using steam-powered yarders, oxen or raw manpower. There were no chainsaws, and logging operations were labor intensive. There were also a lot of big trees, so loggers would often leave behind the smaller trees, defective trees, or trees that were difficult to access or out-of-reach of their yarding systems. In other cases, trees were intentionally left behind as "seed trees".



There are a number of fundamental differences between legacy forests and modern, industrial forests. The most obvious difference is that the trees in legacy forests are much larger than those found in plantation forests. Because the forests were allowed to grow back on their own, they are more diverse than managed forests, with multiple tree species, including conifers like Douglas fir, hemlock, spruce, and western red cedar, often growing in dispersed clumps and intermixed with deciduous trees such as big leaf maple, red alder, and black cottonwood. Legacy forests

often contain multiple canopy layers, composed of a wide variety of trees of different sizes. Gaps in the overstory canopy allow sunlight to reach the forest floor, creating a complex mosaic of different plant communities composed of a diverse variety of small trees, shrubs and wildflowers.

Large volumes of downed wood, and standing dead trees, were also commonly left behind when these forests were logged. These features, which were routinely removed or burned



in forests that were logged in the latter half of the 20th century, provide critical habitat for a diverse array of species of plants, invertebrates, lichens, mushrooms, and other fungi, and represent "legacies" of the original forests. Elliot Norse (1990) referred to dead trees as "the life of the forest". Rotting snags and logs found in legacy forests provide tunnels, dens, and nesting cavities required by many organisms, from swifts, flickers, voles, chipmunks, and flying squirrels to land snails and springtails. According to Carey (2009), forests that were selectively logged more than 100 years ago often resemble forests that emerged following natural disturbances such as wildfires or severe wind storms, and may support hundreds of lesser known species of snails, fungi, and invertebrates that are absent in managed forests. These features are very difficult to restore in plantation forests. Although DNR claims to retain these structures during harvest wherever possible, much of this habitat is lost when these forests are logged. Rotting snags and downed logs are considered to be safety hazards and are generally removed during logging operations. The few snags and downed logs that are left behind tend to desiccate or dry out when exposed to the sun and



wind, diminishing their value to organisms that depend on them for habitat.

Legacy forests can also contribute to the productivity of working forests or plantations. For example, small mammals including voles, shrews, and squirrels that find refuge in older forests may disseminate spores of mycorrhizal fungi to forests managed for timber production. Natural parasites and predators found in legacy forests may play an important role in preventing or limiting pest outbreaks in managed stands. As temperatures continue to rise over the coming decades -- and forested acres are increasingly lost to foliar diseases and beetles -- legacy forests, with their large, fire-resistant conifers, may function as "climate refugia", that are less likely to be impacted by pathogens and beetle infestations.

DNR is currently planning to log nearly all of the remaining legacy forests in the Willapa Hills, and in the Abernathy Creek and Elochoman River watersheds, over the next ten years. After they are clearcut, these lands will be sprayed with herbicides, and re-planted with fast growing cultivars of Douglas fir in an attempt to maximize long-term yield.

Converting these legacy forests to commercial tree plantations permanently transforms the character of the land and composition of the forest, destroying native ecosystems and critical wildlife habitat.

The Center for Responsible Forestry has mapped these legacy forests using forest inventory data maintained by DNR, combined with high resolution LiDAR data that produces three-dimensional images of the forest canopy. The Center estimates that there are approximately 2,500 acres of legacy forests remaining in the Elochoman River watershed, 2,000 acres in the Abernathy/Mill Creek watershed, 3,100 acres in the Grays River watershed, 3,800 acres in the Skamokawa Creek watershed, and about 6,600 acres in the Willapa Hills (Willapa River basin and headwaters of Elk Creek). All of these forests are on lands managed by DNR. Legacy forests overall occupy less than 15% of lands managed by DNR in Southwestern Washington.

There is no defense for logging these forests. DNR forest inventory records reveal that there are tens of thousands of acres of plantation forests managed by DNR in Lewis, Pacific, and Wahkiakum Counties that are currently available for harvest. Plantation forests hold more than enough timber to satisfy overall sustainable harvest targets for the current planning decade, and fulfill DNR's current financial commitments to junior taxing districts in these counties over the next ten years. To be clear, the decision to log these forests is a choice that has been made by DNR and the Commissioner of Public Lands. DNR is not fulfilling a mandate or following best available science by clearcutting these natural legacy forests.



Most of the jobs that have been lost in the timber industry have been a result of consolidation, mechanization, and exporting of raw logs. Statistics show that communities that continue to be dependent on commercial timber production in general have lower median wages, and higher rates of unemployment and poverty. It is unlikely that counties will be dependent on timber revenue 20 years from now in the same way they are today. A new carbon market is rapidly emerging, and soon it is going to be more profitable to leave these older trees in the ground than cut them down. There are likely to be many more jobs in restorative forestry, fire risk reduction, and ecologically-based forest management 20 years from now on state forest lands than there are in timber sale contracts today. Chris Reykdal, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, has said publicly that the money that is generated from the harvest of timber on federal (common school) trust lands constitutes an "almost invisible share of the \$3.5 billion we spend every year on school construction", and would be better spent compensating the impacted counties in order to protect wildlife habitat.

Lands Commissioner Hilary Franz, head of DNR, has said repeatedly that the "counties know best" and that she will follow their lead. DNR has many tools at its disposal to assist counties in making the transition to the new economy without financial disruptions to its junior taxing districts, including carbon offset payments, trust land transfer and land acquisition programs, and capital budget bonds or state-issued green bonds. DNR took an encouraging first step with their recent "carbon project", which will "protect some of our most ecologically and culturally valuable forests, while generating millions of dollars in revenue for the schools, colleges, and critical local services that state trust lands support." However, DNR has not yet included any legacy forests in Southwestern Washington in its carbon offset program.

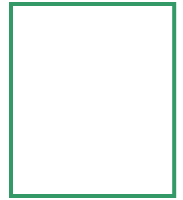
Instead of clinging to the economic models of the past, the counties of Southwestern Washington should demand that DNR lead the way in restoring the health of our state forestlands, and reducing climate-related impacts, by working to transition to more ecologically-based approach to forest management.

References:

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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
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Membership Renewals

WHAS made changes to membership by switching to a yearly renewal date.

All **membership** renewals are **due in March** of each year.

You can renew online by using a credit card or by mailing a check.

See page 2 for the details!

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: <https://willapahillsaudubon.org/member-services>