

# WILLAPA WHISTLER

*A Publication of the Willapa Hills Audubon Society*

Volume 44 // Issue 2

Summer 2018



Great Horned Owl on nest --- Image by John Green taken in Portal, AZ

## WHAS Summer PICNIC

By Larry Brandt

This year the Willapa Hills Audubon Chapter **summer picnic** will happen on **Sunday, July 15, 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 15! See you then!**

## On The Verge

By Steve Puddicombe, *President*

At the edge of things, on the margins of fields and roads, fringing yards and city plots, parks, even supermarkets, are those fringes where the pruning shears and weed killer hasn't yet dimmed the zeal of the Springtime riot. These verges provide some of the best remaining habitat for birds and wildlife.

I was reminded of this in a particular way about a month ago when getting a set of tires at a store in Warrenton, near Astoria. On a walk with my dog while waiting I ventured onto a nearby tract of cleared ground; about 20 acres of commercial land fronting highway 101. The entire piece had been stripped of trees and brush, save a copse of trees at one corner, and then graded perfectly flat. All that remained was cracked dirt and thin grass, horsetails and vetch.

I headed eventually for the alders and willows where a rough entry road of rock had been laid down. To my surprise two kildeer sought my attention, feigning injury to their wings. In half a minute I found the nest, easily discernible against the squarish mined rock: four eggs clustered in a sparse skirt of twigs.

*...continued on page 4*

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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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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\*

### Long Beach Peninsula Bird Festival 2018

Wings over Willapa - September 29, 2018. The Friends of Willapa National Wildlife Refuge are hosting a birding, art and nature festival on Long Beach Peninsula celebrating the Wildlife Refuge with a day full of classes, workshops, guided tours and more.

More info: <https://friendsofwillaparefuge.org/wings-over-willapa>

### Pudget Sound Bird Fest 2018

Come to Edmonds, Washington, September 14-16, 2018

Bird Fest offers guided nature walks at parks and viewing stations in and around Edmonds, field workshops on bird identification, nature photography, wildlife habitat, and two boat cruises to choose from.

More info and BirdFest registration at [www.pugetsoundbirdfest.org/](http://www.pugetsoundbirdfest.org/)

### ACOW Fall 2018

The next meeting of the Audubon Council of Washington (ACOW) will be hosted by King County chapters and Eastside Audubon on Saturday October 13, 2018 in Woodinville, WA. This year's theme, "Through a Local Lens," shines a spotlight on the work WA Audubon Chapters have done in the state to advance National Audubon priorities and sets the stage for conservation and advocacy efforts to continue in the year ahead. Contact a board members on the left for more information.

### Ridgefield BirdFest and Bluegrass Celebration

The 2018 Event is on October 5, 6 & 7th, 2018 with a new schedule--all in town events will be Saturday only, with kick-off events Friday evening. More at

[https://ridgefieldfriends.org/events\\_trashed/birdfest-bluegrass](https://ridgefieldfriends.org/events_trashed/birdfest-bluegrass)



## Photographic Transformation of a Harris's Sparrow

By Suzy Whittey

Left: Harris Sparrow Juvenile Plumage – arrived in Long Beach on November 10, 2017

Below: March 30, 2018 – Notice how his neck, chest and head starting to turn more black! He his molting into his Adult Breeding Plumage.



Left: Photo from April 27, 2018

This Harris's Sparrow was the second of its species to show up at my home in Long Beach, Washington. The first one showed up in the winter of 2011 – 2012, but did not stay all winter. They were both way out of their historic range and traveling with Golden-crowned Sparrows.

Lower left corner: Map of Harris Sparrows range

Below: Photo taken May 5, 2018 – Full Breeding Plumage – last seen May 6

Washington Range Map





**Continued from page one: On The Verges - By Steve Puddicombe**

It wasn't ideal for them, but it wasn't bad either—a place without much activity even at the fringe of human commerce. I'd heard of kildeer nesting on gravel roofs and in the middle of lightly used roads so I wasn't completely surprised. Still, I congratulated the couple and was glad that the razed landscape could accommodate them.

Only a few years ago this tract had still been swampy and covered with brush and trees, profusely so along the drainage ditches that edged and penetrated it. In spring it was filled with the birdsong of red winged blackbirds, song and white crown sparrows and all manner of warblers. I was amazed at how richly populated with birds it was. Now it was silent, save for the kildeer on the margin of two roads and a highway, not 200 feet from asphalt and lots of cars.

As humanity continues to insinuate itself further and further into the natural world, what remains after all the development and infrastructure are those fringes, the verges where habitat remains. While so many species find themselves on the verge of range extinction these physical verges, as insignificant as they seem, offer the opportunity of survival for other of our animal, plant and bird brethren. The monarch

butterfly, as just one example, is a specie that has come to rely on the wild fringes of fields and roadsides for the milkweed it needs to survive.

At my small farm on Gray's River the kildeer nest on the stream bed each year, and the western toad lives in my garden beds, and the barn swallows and stellers jay and winter wren nests in my garage, crapping on my car. Living on the verge of things is a lesson on the force of nature and it's ability to persevere given half a chance. It is my pleasure to host these fellows.

WHAS has been involved with many conservation projects to help birds and wildlife including placing bird boxes and improving habitat. Our education projects include sponsoring Bird Notes on KMUN radio, placing signs about birds at various locations, helping to run a library of nature books, and sponsoring a gardening project that benefits wildlife. Our conservation committee studies and comments on proposed development in our region and advocates for preservation for species like the marbled murrelet and the northern spotted owl. If you would like to join in these efforts please contact one of our board members.

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**Birding Adventures in the Palms**


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By Carol Carver

Dos Palmas Preserve is 1400 acres in Riverside County's Colorado desert portion of the Sonoran Desert, near the Salton Sea. The Preserve is in the Salt Creek Area of Critical Environmental Concern. The area was purchased by the Nature Conservancy and is now managed by the Bureau of Land Management. The San Andreas Oasis Trail is right outside the gated preserve, which is open to the public who can walk around the gate. The field trip we attended meant the gate was unlocked, eliminating the one mile walk in (and out) of the preserve --- an important boost for older birders saving their energy in the heat for the birding walk in the preserve.

Dos Palmas shows the magic of water in the desert. It is a large oasis of hundreds of native California fan tail palms, *Washingtonia filifera*, and wetlands fed by artesian springs and water seeping from the Coachella irrigation canal. The area is bisected by the San Andreas fault and it is the fault zone that causes water to reach the surface through the artesian springs.



The Bradshaw stagecoach route went through Dos Palmas because of the reliable source of water in an otherwise very dry trip from gold mining towns in Arizona to San Bernardino CA in 1862-1877. Bradshaw, a miner, developed the stagecoach route based on people of the Cahuilla and Maricopa First Nations sharing with him their



ancient trade route.

This Desert Cities Bird Club field trip was led by Kurt Leuschner, Professor of Natural Resources at the College of the Desert, Palm Desert. On November 18<sup>th</sup>, WHAS Board members Carol Carver and George Exum joined a large and amicable group of about 30 who birded a 2-1/2 mile loop through the Preserve, observing or hearing more than 30 species. Many were wintering birds familiar to us in the PNW---great egrets, redheads, canvasbacks, ruddy ducks, coots coots coots. But also included were Cassin's Finch and the Ridgeway Rail (formerly the Clapper Rail.)

This is a place that sticks to you not just for the birding, but also for the sweet taste of fan palms dates (we thought they were like sticky raisins, with a large pit), the beauty of the pristine ponds surrounded by huge palms and supporting endangered pupfish, the native history and "Wild West" history of the Bradshaw stagecoach trail, and gratitude that the area has been preserved. If you travel or bird in the Coachella/Imperial Valley area, you may want to be on the Desert Cities Bird Club email list to receive occasional emails of their field trips and pdfs of the Club's and San Bernadino Audubon newsletters. Email [Kleuschner@collegeofthedesert.edu](mailto:Kleuschner@collegeofthedesert.edu) to ask to be on the elist.

## Children's Discovery Museum: We've Got Our Wings

By Ann Cordero and Darrel Whipple

The wooden wings used by Willapa Hills Audubon Society to measure the "wingspan" of humans have found a home at the Children's Discovery Museum. The hinged plywood silhouettes of wings can be used to demonstrate the actual sizes and shapes of wings belonging to the mallard duck, red-tailed hawk, herring gull, and bald eagle. They were built by the late John Byrd of Rainier (1951-2015) many years ago, possibly in the 1990's. Friends of Fox Creek dedicated its new salmon life-cycle sign in the Rainier city park to John's memory at a ceremony on April 21, 2018.

A person can learn which bird is the closest to his size by spreading out his arms and having a helper hold up a set of



wings for comparison. Once the best match is identified, an informational flyer about that bird is given to its human counterpart. In a recent sampling at the Children's Discovery Museum, an 8-year-old measured a little larger than a herring gull, two 3-year-olds and a 5-year-old were about the size of red-tailed hawks, two 2-year-olds corresponded to a mallard, and an adult had a wingspan comparable to a bald eagle.

The Children's Discovery Museum, in the Three Rivers Mall in Kelso, is now open Sundays 1-4, Wednesdays

11-4, and Fridays 4-7. Come and visit!

The image shows Charlie Wallingford posing with the red-tailed hawk wings.

## Willapa Hills Audubon Takes a Position on Columbia River BiOp and HB 3144

By Robert Sudar

Power generation, water for irrigation, movement of commerce and salmon management are each complicated topics, and they are all intertwined on the Columbia River. Historically, salmon lost out to power, water and transport issues. Recent Biological Opinions (BiOps) by the federal managers on the Columbia have provided some improvements for salmon, but the courts have felt it necessary to mandate more help for salmon than what was in the BiOps, including the most recent offering.

House Bill 3144 would attempt to block until 2022 any actions on the Columbia River beyond what is specified in the 2014 BiOp. This would include rollbacks to court-mandated increases in spill, which has been proven to provide the most benefit for successfully moving salmon smolts to the ocean. It would also prevent any research into the effects of removing the four lower dams on the Snake River. The bill has passed the House and will now be considered in the Senate. The Willapa

Hills Audubon Society board has voted to oppose that bill, and to explain to our Representatives and Senators while we feel it's bad legislation.

Removal of those four dams is a very controversial subject. The courts have requested that removal be one of the options in the current BiOp. Blocking that consideration would do nothing to resolve the questions surrounding removal of those four dams. Salmon recovery will continue to challenge Columbia River salmon managers, and avoiding a comprehensive study of the options will only make their work more difficult.

Willapa Hills Audubon offered the following reasons why this is the right time to say no to HR 3144 and any counterpart in the Senate, and to demand that the next BiOp does all it can for salmon, including consideration of removal of the four dams in question:

...continued next page

- The four lower Snake River dams produce about 14% of the power generated by those four dams plus the 11 dams on the mainstem between Bonneville Dam and Chief Joseph Dam
- Just to be clear, that doesn't mean they aren't important in the power management from all of the dams, providing some swing capacity when needed, but they aren't the big producers some would suggest.
- The primary reason that those dams were constructed was to make Lewiston a port with access to the ocean, hundreds of miles away. There has been a considerable amount of barge traffic moving goods between the Snake and the lower river (mostly grain, but also other materials) but Lewiston has never seen the predicted growth.
- The dams do not provide irrigation for very many farms, and some farms were eliminated when the dams were built.
- All of the dams on the Columbia contribute to flood control. These dams were not promoted specifically for flood control.
- There is no doubt that these dams have created some new recreational opportunities for the local residents, and new habitat for some fish species. By the same token, they have reduced the recreation provided by the salmon and steelhead returns which have declined incrementally as each of those dams were built.
- There have been improvements on the four Snake River dams in recent years to aid the downstream migration of fingerlings headed to the ocean and of adults trying to reach their spawning grounds upstream, but similar improvements have also occurred on all mainstem dams.
- Previous court instructions to redo earlier BiOps have resulted in significant gains in salmon returns. This

provided benefits for ESA-listed fish and also healthy wild runs.

- The recent decision by the judge reviewing the latest BiOp update from the Federal Government said that he wanted to see an evaluation included of the effect of removing the Snake River dams, along with all of the other possible management actions to improve salmon survival. That consideration was left out of the government's proposal. It only seems reasonable that, with so many competing arguments about whether or not removing those dams would help salmon and the many entities (human and environmental) that depend on them, a thorough analysis might finally answer that question, or at least move the conversation in a factual direction.

Rep. McMorris-Rodgers' bill would block the necessary discussion about the four lower Snake River dams from the conversation. It could also roll back some of the recent changes in water management that have been mandated by the courts, and that have been a benefit to salmon recovery. The WHAS board does not think that moves us ahead to finding the best decisions and answering questions with the best science in the interest of enhancing the salmon resource on the Columbia River.

*Robert Sudar has been a member of WHAS since 1981 and recently was elected to the Board. He has been a commercial advisor to the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (and its predecessor, the Washington State Department of Fisheries) since 1988 and has been intimately involved in Columbia River salmon management, and salmon management throughout Washington, for over 45 years.*

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## Skookumchuck Wind Turbine Project

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By Charlotte Persons

This month Lewis County and the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service asked for scoping comments for the Environmental Impact Statement for the Skookumchuck Wind Turbine Project on Weyerhaeuser land near Vail, WA. Larry Brandt and I attended Lewis County's public meeting on March 9, 2018. He represented WHAS and I represented Cascade Forest Conservancy, which protects the Gifford Pinchot National Forest, including the Mineral Blank, a section just south of the wind project.

You can read all the documents at this link:

<http://lewiscountywa.gov/community-development/skookumchuck-wind-energy-sepa>

The USFWS website is

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2018/05/03/2018-09405/notice-of-intent-to-prepare-a-draft-environmental-impact-statement-for-the-proposed-skookumchuck>

This project will set a precedent for siting and constructing a wind turbine project in a forested area in western Washington State. The major concerns for conservationists are possible bird and bat collisions with wind turbines and other

structures, and possible bird electrocutions from the 17-mile power line. The birds most in danger are:

- birds migrating over the high ridges;
- Marbled Murrelet, which has nearby breeding habitat with 7 recorded nests;
- Bald and Golden Eagles, recorded in large numbers in the project area.

Due to deficiencies in the wildlife studies, this danger is underestimated in the scoping documents. We hope that the draft Environmental Impact Statement, currently expected in September, will be based on better science and will be a proposal that protects wildlife.

Larry Brandt, other Audubon chapters, and I have been attending informal meetings with RES-Americas for five years. The company reported on progress in inventing Identiflight, a camera-based system to identify eagles flying into the project area and shut down selected turbines before the birds collide with them. Identiflight has not yet been published in any scientific journal, and the current proposal is maybe to start using it two years after the project is operational.



## WHAS Booth at Earthday 2018 Recap

By Gloria Nichols, Images by Ann Cordero

On April 28th WHAS participated in Longview Park and Recreation's annual Earth Day celebration at the Cowlitz Expo Center. As usual, there were many wonderful exhibits—something for everyone, young and old. Charlotte Persons and I set up the WHAS booth the day before. To attract attention to our booth, she picked up 5 WHAS bird mounts on permanent loan to Dr. Louis La Pierre's environmental science classroom at LCC. The kids loved making "bird feeders" out of toilet paper rolls, peanut butter and birdseed. The wooden folding wings are always a big hit as well. The kids like finding out what size bird wingspan will match their armspan. The size of the folding wings ranges from the smallest, the mallard, to the largest, the bald



eagle.

I want to thank Beverly and Jack Holley, new WHAS members, and WHAS board members Ann Cordero, Sherry Hawkins, Larry Brandt and John Gross. A special thank you to Sherry, who helped me take the bird mounts back to LCC. We had two high school students from Mark Morris, who were great with the kids. I would like to thank L.&J. Feed for donating birdseed for the "bird feeders". They are at 531 14th Ave in L.V. I get my birdseed and fresh eggs there. A good time was had by all!!

Again, thank you to all who helped.



## Updates and Notes from the WHAS Board

By Steve Puddicombe, President

March was a busy month for the Willapa Hills board. First, the annual meeting and banquet was held March 23. The **election of officers** results of the bi-annual board election were announced by outgoing president Larry Brandt as follows: Steve Puddicombe, president; George Exum, vice-president; Cathy Kendall, secretary; Sherry Hawkins, treasurer; John Gross, Darrel Whipple, Ann Cordero, Robert Sudar and Randy Bergman, members-at-large. Cathy, Robert and Randy were welcomed as new members of the board. Thanks to outgoing president Larry Brandt and Treasurer Linda Jennings for their service.

The **second quarter board meeting** was held March 29 in Rainier, Oregon. One item for discussion was a suggestion to have an audit of the financial books before Sherry Hawkins takes over as treasurer from Linda Jennings. John Gross, board member at-large, volunteered to do an audit with Linda and Sherry.

Outgoing president Larry Brandt has been involved with outreach to the *Friends of Willapa Bay*, a group that supports the

goals and aims of the Willapa Bay National Wildlife Refuge. He brought up the need to work with FOWB on their event scheduled for September 27, Wings Over Willapa Bay, to include a speaker and tours of the bay. Several board members offered to get involved. WHAS territory includes Pacific County and Willapa Bay.

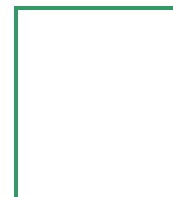
George Exum, chair of the financial committee, announced that Matt Hiatt, a representative of Edward Jones, the financial group that manages most of the WHAS funds, will be at the next board meeting to answer questions regarding future financial decisions.

Discussion of the **lack of a field trip leader and program coordinator** resulted in a motion to seat a committee to look further into a solution including potentially paying a coordinator to arrange events.

The **next WHAS board meeting** will be held on June 26. If you have a concern or would like to attend please contact President Steve Puddicombe.



PO Box 399  
Longview, WA 98632



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**

**Sunday, July 15, 2018** 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 programs and field trips 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)**