



Island Wings

- to enjoy, learn about, & preserve the diverse natural habitats of these islands & beyond

Volume 18 Number 1

July-August 2007

PROGRAM

ISLAND AUDUBON'S ANNUAL MEETING SLATES A FULL AGENDA

TOXICS PROGRAM AND BOARD ELECTION
Consumer Pesticides: Are They Worth the Risk?
Speaker: Philip Dickey, Washington Toxics Coalition

7pm, Thursday, July 19, 2007
Land Trust Building 10014 SW Bank Rd
Contact: Laura Bienen 567-4613

After a brief session to elect next year's Island Audubon board, the annual chapter meeting features speaker Philip Dickey, PhD, staff scientist for Washington Toxics Coalition (WTC). His presentation invites you to grow smarter, grow safer by understanding the health and environmental impacts of consumer pesticide use. If you have already sworn off pesticides, his lecture will give you the arguments to convince your neighbors to discontinue chemical use.

Dickey will identify less-toxic alternative products and techniques to garden in harmony with nature. He will cover concerns about the effects of pesticides on children, pets, birds, beneficial insects, and water quality.

The WTC is a non-profit organization dedicated to protecting public health and preventing pollution in industry, agriculture, and the home.

For nearly 20 years, Dickey has directed the Home Safe Home program for WTC, which educates consumers and businesses about hazardous products and safer alternatives. He presents workshops for local plant nurseries, horticulture students, volunteer training programs, and other community groups. He is the author of numerous publications, including *Grow Smart, Grow Safe, A Consumer's Guide to Lawn and Garden Products*. He manages the Pesticide Free Zone program, which distributes colorful ladybug signs to landscape owners who do not use pesticides.

**Vote For Audubon Board
on the Enclosed Ballot**
See enclosure for directions.

Novices and Experts Invited to 4th of July Butterfly Count 2007

Sunday, July 1, Vashon's official 4th of July Butterfly Count starts at 9am at the Country Store Park'n'Ride lot. Beginners are encouraged to participate. Butterfly nets are welcome to use to capture, identify, and release.

This count, Vashon's eleventh, is part of North American Butterfly Association (NABA) annual count program, now in its 33rd year. Last year there were 438 U.S. counts, 25 Canadian counts, and four Mexican counts. Alan Warneke participates again this year to help identify dragonflies.

JOIN A TEAM

One way to participate is to join us team that roves until dark, though many participants drop out at noon or mid-afternoon. To join officially, you pay a \$3 fee that helps NABA cover the costs of administering the national count. You should dress in layers and bring binoculars, water, snacks, lunch, and collecting jars if you have them. We will also look at birds, dragonflies, native plants and amphibians.

Each year has delightful surprises, such as the year we walked around to the meadow on the far side of Mukai Pond to discover Spring Azures, small blue butterflies, fluttering by the dozens around the wet pond margin.

They were just newly emerged and fresh, and by the following day they had mostly dispersed.

COUNT AT HOME

The other way to participate is to count in your own yard or neighborhood. Make multiple strolls through your yard, or just one, counting every butterfly you see on each trip. At day's end, you report only the highest count from any one trip for each species. For example; if you make three trips, and on the first you see four Lorquin's Admirals, on the second two, and on the third, five Lorquin's, you report a final count of five Lorquin's Admirals. Garden watchers pay no fee, and their assistance is very helpful to document local areas.

If the day is cool and cloudy, we will reschedule the count for the next weekend, July 8 or 9. For further information, phone Rayna Holtz 463-3153.

Submitted by Rayna Holtz



Pale Tiger Swallowtail

Audubon Presents Moria Robinson High School Scholarship

Moria Robinson, winner of this year's Vashon-Maury Island Audubon \$500 scholarship, has been long involved with Audubon. Most recently, she presented our May program with her own slides from the Island, Alaska, Arizona, and Latin America.

Her activities actively embody our chapter's mission statement: "to enjoy, learn about, and preserve the diverse natural habitats of these islands and beyond." For example, about five years ago she pestered Puget Sound Energy until they attached flashy "spinners" to the power lines that cross Portage. Ducks flying between Quartermaster and Tramp Harbor often fatally collided with those lines, and the spinners make them more visible.

Moria has been interested in nature from early childhood, especially butterflies. One summer she raised Milbert's Tortoiseshell butterflies, feeding hundreds of caterpillars with daily meals of fresh nettles, and carefully watching over their golden chrysalises until over 300 emerged as adult butterflies. She participated in a two-week research project on entomology and climate change in Arizona last summer as the recipient of the Earthwatch Institute's Student Challenge Award.

During high school, Moria was active in social issues, going to Paraguay with Amigos de las Americas and serving as president and co-president of Interact/Amnesty International. She achieved a GPA of 3.99 as well! She is working on a field guide to Vashon butterflies, and plans to travel in South and Central America for four months in the fall. She will enter Vermont's Middlebury College next February to study Spanish, biology, and environmental studies.

Submitted by Rayna Holtz

Donations for the scholarship fund are always welcome. Send check to Vashon Audubon, PO Box 838, Vashon WA 98070.

www.vashonaudubon.org

Vashon-Maury Island Audubon Board

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Ebb Tide Ecology Program

Divers To Bring Up Davy Jones' Creatures for Island Viewers

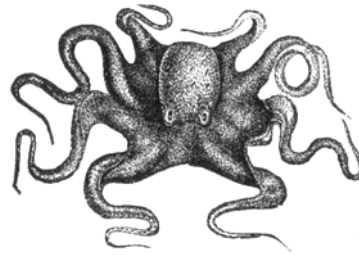
Public Fishing Dock, Tramp Harbor

Saturday, July 21, 10am to 1pm

Park to the north and walk the road with care

Puget Sound's underwater creatures will be brought to the surface by Island diver Karlista Rickerson and her dive partners from Washington Scuba Alliance. Wading in, the divers will pass seawater containers filled with aquatic life for folks to take a closer look.

Audubon Conservation Co-chair and the event's co organizer Rayna Holtz says, "It will be a big first for me. I've never been treated to this peek at the bottom before. I hope to see Pacific octopus or a nudibranch, those sea slugs with their coloring and shapes that remind me of pop-culture designs."



This event is part of the Ebb Tide Ecology Program, sponsored by the Island Audubon's

field seminars that look closely at Puget Sound.

EELGRASS FORESTS OF FERN COVE EXPLORED FOR COMPLEX LIFE WEB

On June 16, 2007, the Ebb Tide Ecology field trip explored the eelgrass forest at Fern Cove. Naturalist Barbara Gustafson used a small seine net to sample aquatic life.

Seen in this dynamic and essential habitat was the exquisite Phidiana crassicornus, a nudibranch with fluorescent orange tips on its cerata and fluorescent turquoise stripes along each side of its body. Other occupants in this ecosystem were a brooding anemone with babies attached, bright green isopods or *Idotea*, a baby flounder, eggs of the *Lacuna* (smallest NW snail known for its 'waddling' across eelgrass blades as it feeds), and a bryozoan (a colonial animal that encrusts on or branches from eelgrass blades). One child found an active moon snail with its milky, broad, fleshy foot extruded.

VOLUNTEER TODAY

**Audubon Booth Staff
Strawberry Festival**

Saturday & Sunday, July 14 & 15

10-6 Saturday; 10-4 Sunday at Ober Park

Volunteer for a 2-hour shift at Vashon Audubon's booth. Encourage membership and make money for our chapter's projects. Ed Swan: 463-7976

Audubon Field Trips Go Off Island for Adventure, Birding, and Fun

Over the past two years, Sherry Bottoms, Vashon Audubon's director of both on- and off-Island field trips, turned her considerable knowledge of Northwest natural habitats and fauna into planning birding weekends. These trips allow the local chapter to explore beyond Island backyards, woods, and shores. Her forays are physically exhilarating, but designed for all ages and abilities.

Highlights are many, but notable are the trips floating down the Skagit and Yakima Rivers and the pelagic bird cruise off the Washington coast.

Sherry has worked as a field biologist, designed and planted a rooftop garden on a dormitory at the UW, and presently gardens at the Seattle Center. Her goal is a masters in wildlife biology.

We thank her and urge Audubon members and their guests to enjoy Sherry's birding field trips.

Upcoming Off-Island Trip

A kayak and birding trip to Ridgefield National Wildlife Area on the Columbia River floodplain is planned for October 6, 2007. The refuge has 5,150 acres of marshes, grass lands and woods. Birds to watch for are Sandhill Cranes, Dusky Canada Goose, and shorebirds and songbirds of the fall migration. Year-round residents and refuge nesters include Mallards, Great Blue Herons, and Red-tailed Hawks. The trip requires at least 6 people to sign up. Lodging is available in rental cabins or a local State Park campground. Kayak rental is about \$40. For more info, go on-line at www.ridgefieldwash.com/recreation.htm. and www.ridgefieldkayak.com. To sign up, e-mail Sherry by September at sleebottoms@yahoo.com.

What You've Missed

Pelagic Ocean Trip

Albatrosses, shearwaters, skuas and a Tufted Puffin were the exciting birds the Vashon-Maury Island field group found September 30, 2006, on its pelagic trip out of Westport on Washington's coast. Twelve Islanders set foot on the Monte Carlo at 7:00am to explore the open seas for birds only seen offshore. The trip crossed the Grays Harbor bar and boated out 35 miles to the continental shelf.

The trip encountered dispersed birds and large flocks feeding in wakes of fishing boats. Spotters identified birds for the passengers, but also counted birds as part of on-going census. In 1966, researcher Terry Wahl initiated trips

offshore to Grays Canyon. From 1971 to the present, his work continues as a systematic counting of pelagic birds, producing the longest running database of birds counted at sea in the world. For Vashon's trip, the spotters were Mike Donahue, Scott Mills, Bill Shelmerdine.

On the UW's Washington birders' report site, *Tweeters*, spotter Shelmerdine comments: "...[W]e set out a chum slick [to attract the birds by smell and sight] once we reached the inner edge of Grays Canyon. At that point we encountered good numbers of Cassin's and Rhinoceros Auklets, along with our first Black-footed Albatross, Fork-tailed Storm Petrels, and Sabine's Gulls. ...The area around the Canyon and shelf edge had good diversity and a lot of dispersed bird activity. A green-winged teal on the water beyond 30 miles briefly threw us for a loop as we scrambled to determine what this unusual pelagic species might be. ...Perhaps the most unusual thing to me was a South Polar Skua standing on a log, surrounded by a single species group of about 40 Pink-footed Shearwaters."

Islanders' highlights included non-flying species Humpback Whales, Elephant and Northern Fur Seals, Harbor Porpoise, blue sharks, and Mola Mola fish.

Field trip organizer Sherry Bottoms reports, "Weather was mostly sunny with some ocean swells. We finished the day off by 4:00 PM with Marbled Godwits found at the Westport Marina. One could say we had a swell day of bird watching."

Yakima River Birding Trip

On May 12, 2007, eighteen Vashon Audubon members floated the Yakima River. Laura Bienen, mother of three boys out of the seven children on the trip, reports, "The trip had stunning scenery, and despite the need to negotiate several young helmsman, the whole family enjoyed the experience. Nobody had to walk the plank."

The co-leaders were Joseph and Amy Bogard. The highlight was Great Horned owlets located up in a small cavern in the rock cliff face. Other sightings included Bullock Orioles, Golden Eagle, and American Kestrels. Several participants saw wild rattlesnakes while on a reptile walk.

Trip details compiled from participants' reports



Photo by Michelle Ramsden

Islander Joy Nelson and expert spotter scan the ocean off Westport for pelagic birds.

Vashon-Maury Island Audubon Society
P.O. Box 838
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July/August 2007

Sunday, July 1, 9am to dark -- Park 'n' Ride next to Country Store

OFFICIAL ANNUAL "4TH OF JULY BUTTERFLY COUNT" -- *Rayna Holtz 463-3153.*

Saturday, July 14, 8-10am -- Park 'n' Ride next to Country Store

ISLAND AUDUBON FIELD TRIP -- *Monthly Second Saturday.* Note change in meeting place (to avoid Strawberry Festival crowds). Bring binoculars/scope if you have them! *Sherry Bottoms 463-1312.*

Friday, Saturday, Sunday, July 13, 14, 15 -- All Day in Town

STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL -- Volunteer at the Audubon booth, or stop by; great items for sale. *Ed Swan 463-7976.*

Thursday, July 19 -- Land Trust Building, 10014 SW Bank Road

VASHON AUDUBON PROGRAM, ANNUAL MEETING, & ELECTION -- **Consumer Pesticides: Are they worth the risk?**, Washington Toxics Coalition staff scientist **Philip Dickey**.

A short business meeting/board election (see enclosed ballot) will precede the program. *Laura Bienen 567-4613.*

Saturday, July 21, 10am-1pm -- Tramp Harbor Dock

SEA FLOOR EXPLORATIONS WITH SCUBA DIVERS -- **Karlista Rickerson and Friends**. View aquatic life up close. Audubon's Ebb Tide Program. *Michelle Ramsden 463-1312.*

Thursday, August 2, 7 pm -- First Thursday every even-numbered month

VMIAS BOARD MEETING -- Phone Ed Swan for confirmation, 463-7976.

Saturday, August 11, 8-10am -- Ober Park 'n' Ride

ISLAND AUDUBON FIELD TRIP -- *Monthly 2nd Saturday.* Bring binoculars/scope if you can! *Sherry Bottoms 463-1312.*

PLAN AHEAD!

A kayak/birding trip to Ridgefield National Wildlife Area, Saturday, October 6. For info: sleebottoms@yahoo.com. See P.3 for details.

A 1-day photography class is planned for October or November taught by Islander Peter Murray. See next issue for details.