



Island Wings

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

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PROGRAM

Birds of Vashon/Maury Forests

Thursday, Sept. 21, 2006, Land Trust Bldg. 10014 SW Bank Rd. 7:00pm. Contact: Laura Bienen 567-4613

Biologists Don Norman of Norman Wildlife Consulting and Jennifer Vanderhoof of King County's Water and Land Resources Division present an evening exploring their on-going bird survey of Vashon and Maury Islands sponsored by King County and Klamath Bird Observatory. The study examines birds' year-round use of the Islands' Madrona and mixed deciduous and conifer forests.

Some questions addressed during the evening are the following: What birds occur in these forests? How many are there? What are they doing at different times of year? Are there differences in birds between forest types?

This is the first year of a long-term research program on birds in King County and their uses of different habitat types. The survey began in April 2006 and continues through March 2007. Sites include Lost Lake, Camp Sealth, and three areas in Maury Island Marine Regional Park.

Project Lead Sherry Hudson notes one positive discovery is that the Islands' vegetation is primarily native, is diverse in type and age, and maintains a multi-layered canopy, understory, and groundcover.

This winter, the study will focus on birds' use of the Madrona forest and will test the hypothesis that birds' winter use of Madrona forest is more extensive than their use of alder or Douglas fir, a topic not studied before.

The project accepts new volunteers. In September, training includes identifying bird calls and chips, autumn and winter bird sounds used out of the nesting season. Present volunteers are Sherry Bottoms, Pete Murray, Jeff Bronson, and Richard Friend. To join, contact Sherry Hudson: pugetsoundbird@gmail.com.

Visit the project's website for more information: <http://dnr.metrokc.gov/wlr/waterres/birds/birds.htm>

LORAX: NEW KIDS' PROGRAM

A new Family Link program sponsored by Vashon-Maury Audubon, The Lorax Club is an outreach in environmental studies seeking to serve Island students and parents. Family Link's mission is to provide educational opportunities to families choosing alternative/home school education.

The Club's program offers multi-age learning opportunities that combine classroom discovery and hands-on field experiences led by local experts. Students will study four island ecosystems (pond, inter-tidal, stream, and forest) through nature journals, guest experts, and field tools for collecting, viewing, and identifying.

Starting Sept. 29, the program's six sessions run Friday mornings, 9:30-11:30am. To enroll, phone the Family Link office 463-9171, Ext 503.

Named after a Dr. Seuss character saving a diminishing environment, The Lorax Club fulfills a need defined by the Island Audubon's 2006 retreat to add to the chapter's successful student education offering, 4th Grade Birding Program. The goal is to foster the Island's next generation of birders and environmentalists.

Co-facilitators are home-school mom Claudia Gross-Shader and Island Audubon's board member Kathryn True.

ADOPT-A-ROAD CLEAN-UP

by Ellen Kritzman

The Audubon crew will be out on our designated 2-mile stretch of Vashon Highway on Sunday, October 15. We gather at 9:30 on the southern edge of town (Methodist Church/Island Funeral home area). The County provides cotton gloves, vests, hard hats, plastic bags, but some people like to bring their own gloves. Dress for the weather of course -- footwear that can get wet is appropriate if there has been recent rain. As the saying goes, "Many hands make light work," or something like that. So come join us. We enjoy each other's company while we clean up our environment, and we should be done before noon. Any questions, call Ellen Kritzman, 567-4837.

SWAN'S NOTABLE SIGHTINGS

Top billing in Ed Swan's e-mails over the past two months goes to shorebirds.

July 18: More shorebirds are coming through KVI Beach. I found a flock of about 15 mixed **Westerns** and **Leasts** there . . . saw another 10 fly by and found about 30 at Ellisport, predominantly Least. I might have heard a **Yellowlegs** fly by KVI. . . . *July 22:* Bob Hawkins saw one or possibly more **Western Sandpipers**, peeps anyway, at Manzanita, a new location for them to be reported from but also we don't have people birding much there this time of year.

August 8: Sherry Hudson and Don Norman saw 13 **Spotted Sandpipers** on the beach just south of Camp Seal. That's the most I've heard of at one time for Vashon. ...there might be a possible breeding location for them there. I checked out Fern Cove today at extreme low tide. I found only 8-10 peeps, mostly Western with maybe 2-3 **Leasts**. I counted over 50 **Killdeer** in just one part of the mud flat. I would bet there were another 10-20 on other parts of the beach. Fisher Pond had some good mud patches with at least 10 Killdeer running around. These patches should be watched right now for Yellowlegs, peeps, and Dowitcher. Mukai Pond also had good mud patches but didn't have Killdeer. This is the traditional spot for Solitary Sandpiper on the Island.

August 11: A cooperative **Solitary Sandpiper** was present at Mukai Pond just before noon. Aug. 16: Kathy Kirkland found a Solitary Sandpiper at Mukai Pond.

August 12: The field trip this morning saw quite a variety of birds.... At Fern Cove with a little work we found 2 **Semipalmated Plover**, a Western Sandpiper, 6+ Least Sandpipers, 3 Spotted Sandpipers and many Killdeer.

August 18: At about 8:30 today Michael Perrone and Marianne Kirkland found a **Baird's Sandpiper** at KVI Beach at the edge of the pond just north of the tower. *Aug 21:* Friday they saw Baird's Sandpipers again at KVI and also at Fern Cove. On Saturday, Aug 18 Gene Hunn from Seattle reports "Nancy and I lucked upon a nice group of peeps etc. at KVI beach at high tide, including . . . 1 Semipalmated and 1 Baird's Sandpiper...." ...the 3rd/4th recorded for the Semipalmated Sandpiper on Vashon and the 7th/8th for the Baird's Sandpiper.



CROW REPORTS: ISLAND'S SMARTEST BIRDS

At the Audubon program on corvids last May, speaker John Marzluff described crows in Japan that placed--not dropped--nuts on the road for drivers to crack with their tires, a behavior he found extraordinary. In his *In the Company of Crows and Ravens* (Yale 2005), Marzluff presents this behavior as "spectacular," ingenious," and says this behavior exhibits humans' and crows' high degree of cultural coevolution. During the question period, Islander Annie Roberts reported that our ordinary Island crows exhibit the same behavior. *Island Wings* asked for Annie's and others' smart Island crow observations.



Annie Roberts' report: "Where Dockton Rd. starts following along Tramp Harbor by Chautauqua Beach Rd., I have seen a crow purposely place some kind of shellfish on the road, hoping a car would crack it open. The crow landed around the yellow centerline and then hopped about a foot into the southbound lane and placed the shell on the ground. As I approached, s/he hopped to the side of the road and watched. I, of course, did my best to run it over but missed! I watched in my rearview mirror as s/he



hopped back over to the item. I'm not sure if he recalculated his placement and moved it or simply cursed the fact that I hadn't trusted him and instead had veered my car off its trajectory in a misguided attempt to help. Also, there often is a group of crows on Dockton Road by the old Pete's Farm that spend a lot of time at a certain time of year (hazelnuts ripening?) dropping nuts into the roadway in an obvious attempt to use cars to crack them open."



Pete Murray's report: "Go have coffee at the Burton stand just when it opens. There is a crow down in Burton that does the same thing [placing food on the road] near the intersection. The last time I saw him was months ago. I am not a coffee drinker and do not hang out there but ask around. I have heard people Speak Of The Crow..."



Joy Nelsen, Emma Amiad also report intentional crow behavior on Island roads and elsewhere.

www.vashonaudubon.org

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Island Butterfly Count 2006 Surprises with No-shows and Some Record Setters

On July 1, 2006, the 11th annual Vashon Butterfly Count produced a few surprises, reports organizer Rayna Holtz. "There was a total absence of Ladies. It's odd that last year we had 69 Painted Ladies and not a single one this year. What happened to all the eggs laid by all the adults who flourished last year? And even though we almost didn't see a single Spring Azure, we still found eight species, and set records for three of them." The total was 196 with 138 from the pan-Island counters and 58 from home gardens.

Vashon Butterfly Counts

Species	1996 unofficial July 7	1997 July 7	1998 July 17	1999 July 10	2000 July 2	2001 July 22	2002 July 6	2003 July 6	2004 July 3	2005 July 3	2006 July 1
	sunny	sunny	sunny	sunny/ hazy	cloudy some rain	sunny	mostly sunny	hazy/ sunny	cloudy am 90% sun pm	sunny clear 70-75°	sunny clear 68-80°
	1:40-6:15	1:20- 5:20	12:15- 4:15	10-4:45	12:15-3	12-6:30	10- 6:30	9-8:30	9-8	9-8	9:30am- 8pm
Western Tiger Swallowtail	19	13	17	9	3	1	27	37	8	27	71
Pale Tiger Swallowtail	1	1	1	1	1		5	4			6
Anise Swallowtail								1			
Cabbage White	14	11	3	4		26	11	52	22	44	88
Purplish Copper					1						
Spring Azure				1	1			16	91	2	1
Lorquin's Admiral	7	9	8	15	9	3	15	47	47	24	19
Red Admiral	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	15	3	5	2
Painted Lady			1			9		1	3	69	
West Coast Lady								1		9	
Misc Ladies										21	
Milbert's Tortoiseshell					1				1	1	1
Satyr Anglewing		1	1		1			2	15	2	8
TOTAL SPECIES	5	6	7	6	8	5	5	10	8	9	8
TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	42	36	32	31	18	42	59	176	190	204	196



Bored? Try Bullfrog Hunting

Bullfrog season is upon the Island. The story goes that pickers at Mukai's strawberry field watched bullfrogs hop strawberry plant to strawberry plant. This distressed Mukai because the bullfrogs were so large, fruit was squished under the considerable bellies of the non-native beasties. Today the concern is that bullfrogs displace native amphibians, so if your natural karma allows you to kill sentient life, here are some how-tos posted on the UW bird-community on-line list server *Tweeters*, liberally edited by *Island Wings*.

Ed Swan: [Vashon Audubon's own] I heard recently that some of the local Land Trust people observed a bullfrog catch a Cedar Waxwing and when they caught it and examined the stomach contents there were two waxwings inside. At Mukai Pond on Vashon Island, willows lean out over the muddy shoreline, and the waxwings flycatch from the willows. Apparently they are sometimes perching low enough that the bullfrogs can get them. Land Trust staff has been trying to pair down the bullfrog numbers by spear fishing them and has caught, I think, fifty or so at a time.

Guy McWethy: I've caught bullfrogs with a fly-rod. Use a short section of line, and any large artificial fly. Spot the bullfrog, and lower the fly down in front of his face. With a long fly-rod, you can easily be standing 10 feet away from the frog. I've had no problem getting them to snap up the fly! The nasty bit is un-hooking them. They usually get hooked in the tongue! Ugh!

Rob Sandelin: For awhile I paid the local children \$3 a piece for bullfrogs that were caught in our watershed area. The first year cost me about \$50, the next year was a lot less and this year I paid out \$12 thus far.

Vicki Biltz: ...[G]o to GI Joes and buy a special gig for catching them. Someone else mentioned using waders or boat, headlight, (night is best, of course) and a trident-type tip on the end of a spearlike object, get the eyeballs on sight, and go for it. (not the eyeballs, PLEASE, but the back...) However the bullfrogs do make a lot of unpleasant noise, ...although fun for some, not for the fainthearted.

Unknown poster: A friend of mine had one of those African frogs you could buy at pet shops ten years or so ago. He came into the house to see his kitten's tail hanging out of the frog's mouth. They managed to pry the mouth open and rescue the cat, but it was several years before the hair all grew back in on the cat's head and neck. Evidently those digestive juices work quickly.

Editor's note: Many hunters noted that frog food needs to be moving for the bullfrogs to see it. Islander Ed Babcock recounts that after WWII, some fellow hunters went to Olympia to find bullfrogs to bring to Vashon. When asked why they imported the frogs, Ed said the frogs might be good eating, two to three pounds each.

September-October 2006

Saturday, September 9, 8-10am -- Ober Park 'n' Ride -- Monthly Second Saturday.

ISLAND AUDUBON FIELD TRIP -- Bring binoculars/scope if you have them! *Sherry Bottoms, 463-1312.*

Thursday, September 21, 7pm -- Land Trust Building.

VASHON AUDUBON PROGRAM -- Birds of Vashon-Maury Islands. Biologists Don Norman and Jennifer Vanderhoof present on-going survey. *Laura Bienen 567-4613.*

Saturday and Sunday, September 23 & 24

LAND TRUST FALL TOURS -- Each tour \$5 per family for Land Trust members, \$25 per family for non-members (includes a year's membership). *Reserve space at 463-2644 or email at info@vashonlandtrust.org.*

Shinglemill Creek: Salmon Habitat Enhancement Project -- Sat, 9-10:30am.

Whispering Firs Bog -- Sat, 3-4pm and 4-5pm.

Fisher Pond Trail -- Sun, 4-5:30pm.

Wednesday, October 11, 7pm --Methodist Church.

AITo SLIDE SHOW --Steve Caldwell presents his photos of Islanders' trip to Indonesia for conservation work. Alliance for Tompotika Conservation. *Marcy Summers 463-7720.*

Thursday, October 12, 7 pm -- Moved to Second Thursday this month only.

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

Saturday, October 14, 8-10am -- Ober Park 'n' Ride -- Monthly Second Saturday.

ISLAND AUDUBON FIELD TRIP -- Bring binoculars/scope if you have them! *Sherry Bottoms, 463-1312.*

Sunday, October 15, 9:30-Noon --Methodist/Island Funeral Home Area.

ADOPT-A-ROAD CLEAN UP --See Page 1 for story. *Ellen Kritzman 567-4837.*

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