

SWAN'S NOTABLE SIGHTINGS

The following Island bird sightings were reported by bird guide and author Ed Swan. See his *Birds of Vashon Island* for further seasonal notes and places to bird on the Island.

What was seen:

July 1: A male **Yellow-rumped Warbler** was singing on 220th. Like a number of other warblers I've heard this year, its song was far from typical. This one sounded more like a MacGillivray's Warbler. Yellow-rumped Warbler sightings are rare in summer on Vashon, with about one record per year at this time. Yesterday a raft of at least 20 **Rhino Auklets** was moving along a rip on the Pierce Co. side of the Tahlequah-Pt. Defiance ferry route. Several smaller groups were about.

July 3: Larry Jensen saw a **pelican** off the north end ferry near Vashon. I also had a pelican report for the same area by Jacky Lee.

July 10: Bill Sutherland reports a very early **Horned Grebe** in Q Harbor for the last week, about a month early. (August 9: The Horned Grebe in breeding plumage seen by others in Q Harbor seems to be hanging around where the Ruddy Ducks usually do, where the little stream comes out by the wood yard at Portage.)

July 17: A **California Gull** was at the Vashon ferry dock. (July 23: Rich Siegrist reports seeing a C. Gull at least a few days before I saw the one at the dock, still within the usual arrival range, which sometimes is as early as late June. July 26: There were quite a few C. Gulls at Fern Cove.) This would be the time also to watch for dowitchers especially at Fern Cove and Fisher's Pond but also at KVI. Mukai Pond is also worth checking for shorebirds.

July 19: Bob Hawkins had a juvenile **Harlequin Duck** already back from the mountains hanging out at their dock in Burton. This seems a bit early.

July 21: I saw my first returning **DC Cormorant** at the Tahlequah dock, an adult. On the Pt. Defiance side there was a **Marbled Murrelet**. (August 12: Rita Carlson saw a Marbled Murrelet, possibly injured or ill, on shore by the fishing pier at Tramp Harbor.)

July 23: I got a call from a visiting birder who said there were several **dowitchers** and a good mix of **peeps** at KVI yesterday. (July 26: This afternoon I found a dowitcher at Fisher's Pond at the usual spot directly across the pond from the parking spot on Bank Road. There's a lot of good mud to search here. A little later, this spot looks very good for Stilt and Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, rarities not yet on the Island list--bring a scope. August 1: Joy Nelsen saw the dowitcher at Fisher's Pond this weekend.) We've had a Pacific-slope Flycatcher and a Song Sparrow feeding cowbirds around our house lately and Sherry Bottoms reported seeing a cowbird fed by a towhee at her place about a month ago.

July 26: At Fern Cove I saw a white **Spotted Sandpiper**. It had bright yellow legs and beak and a few of the spots from breeding plumage but was otherwise pure white. I forget the

correct term for this: whether it's partially albino or leucistic. A Spotted Sandpiper in breeding plumage was at Mukai Pond along with many big bullfrogs. (August 9: Two Spotted Sandpipers were on the rocks by the bluff at KVI. August 11: Several at Fern Cove.) There were several small mixed groups of **Western** and **Least Sandpipers** present totalling at least 30. (August 9: At KVI a mixed group of W and L Sandpipers were in the pond and three **Semipalmated Plover** were along the shoreline with some W Sandpipers. August 11: Fisher Pond had at least three W Sandpipers.) I also saw **Bonaparte's Gulls** (this is a bit late for a first of season sighting) and 2 **Mew Gulls** (right smack in the middle of first of season arrival dates.

July 30: I saw a **Red-necked Phalarope** in the green weed debris along the ferry run to Fauntleroy.

August 9: Today a **Solitary Sandpiper** was at Mukai Pond as is usual for this week in August. (August 11: Two S Sandpipers were mixed in with the peeps and the Killdeer the Fern Cove's mudflats.) On Tramp Harbor there was at least one **Common Loon** in breeding plumage (I saw one Monday as well) and at least one **Red-necked Grebe** moving towards winter plumage. (Katherine True saw a R-n Grebe by the north end ferry dock yesterday.)

August 11: A single **Western Grebe** was off Fern Cove for the Audubon field trip today.

August 12: I saw many single **Common Mures** and several groups of 5-10 from the Fauntleroy ferry.

August 13: Larry Huggins heard a **Northern Saw-whet Owl** at his place over the weekend. This seems to be the typical time for them to show up again on the Island, especially migrating young birds. At Pt. Robinson an adult **Heermann's Gull** was flying around and sitting on the water. And Joy Nelsen had new-hatched **Brown Creepers** at her place.

What to look for this fall: September and October are as exciting for what's leaving as well as for what's arriving. Green-winged Teal, wigeon, and shoveler show up at Fisher's Pond, and grebes and scoters start moving through Tramp and Quartermaster Harbor. It would be nice at the same time, however, to note any warblers, flycatchers, tanagers and other breeding birds seen in mid to late September as these birds leave for the south. Interesting spectacles this time of year are the gatherings of Purple Martins, Violet-green and Barn Swallows as they prepare to leave. The martins really bunch up around the radio tower at KVI Beach, and large groups of swallows forage over the fields and rest on the wires along Wax Orchard Road, Old Mill Road and Westside Highway. Rich Siegrist gets flocks of 200-300 along Westside Highway in some years.

BUTTERFLY COUNT 2007 SEES YELLOW

This is the year of big yellow butterflies. Survey counters on July 1 tallied 112 Western Tiger Swallowtails, finding them at every team stop and in every yard where garden watchers observed. This is a big jump up from last year's record of 71. Fourteen people joined the roving team, and six people counted in their local areas.

Other species were *less* numerous than usual. We counted only three Spring Azures, one Red Admiral, and no Painted or West Coast Ladies at all (there were 69 Painted Ladies in the 2005 count!) Starting at 9:30am at the Country Store and ending on Maury Island around 6pm, we found seven species and 164 individuals, the lowest totals in the past five years. A cool, cloudy afternoon may be part of the reason, but counters agreed that fewer butterflies were present than in recent years, other than the swallowtails. The fluctuations in species abundance seem random from looking at the past 12

years of figures, but other causes can be the cool weather, availability of host plants, and many other factors.

PHONE IN LATE-SUMMER RARITIES

With late summer, there are other garden guests. Woodland Skippers, the small caramel butterflies, hover busily over lavender, asters, valerian, and other good nectar flowers on sunny days. Meadows may hold dark Wood Nymphs bobbing among the grass heads and showing yellow ringlets on their forewings when they perch long enough to be seen. Grasses are the host plant for their caterpillars. If anyone spots small checkered orange Mylitta Crescents or other less common species, please give me a call at 463-3153.

Submitted by Rayna Holtz

The 2007 Butterfly Count

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	2007 July 1
	sunny	sunny	sunny	sunny/ hazy	cloudy some rain	sunny	mostly sunny	hazy/ sunny	cloudy am 90°-pm	Sunny & clear 70-75°	Sunny & clear 68-80°	sunny / clouds @ 4 69-80°
	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	9:30-8	9:30-6
Western Tiger Swallowtail	19	13	17	9	3	1	27	37	8	27	71	112
Pale Tiger Swallowtail	1	1	1	1	1		5	4			6	2
Anise Swallowtail								1				
Cabbage White	14	11	3	4		26	11	52	22	44	88	16
Purplish Copper					1							
Spring Azure				1	1			16	91	2	1	3
Lorquin's Admiral	7	9	8	15	9	3	15	47	47	24	19	25
Red Admiral	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	15	3	5	2	1
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	5
TOTAL SPECIES	5	6	7	6	8	5	5	10	8	9	8	7
TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	42	36	32	31	18	42	59	176	190	204	196	164