



Island Wings

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

Volume 18 Number 4

January-February 2008

PROGRAM

OWLS OF VASHON

Owl Prowler Jamie Acker

7pm, **THURSDAY**, January 17, 2008
Land Trust Building 10014 SW Bank Rd.
Contact: Laura Bienen 206 567-4613

The *Owls of Vashon*, topic for the January Audubon program, will bring you outside in this season of long nights. Night is the best to observe our Island owls.

Whooo is hooting? Master Birder Jamie Acker will be our presenter. From Bainbridge Island, he is active in Kitsap Audubon.

Owl Bird Bander

Although birding for over 30 years, he has specialized in studying the owls on Bainbridge Island since 1995, in particular the Barred Owl. As a licensed owl bander, he has banded many of Bainbridge's Barred Owls. In the last four years, he has equipped some with radio telemetry.

He also bands Northern Saw-whet Owls in an attempt to help further understand this common migratory owl.

Present Vashon's Owls

In Ed Swan's *Birds of Vashon*, Vashon's most common owls are listed as the Great Horned Owl and Barred Owl, both nesting here. The Barred is steadily increasing in numbers here. As the Island's agricultural fields and buildings disappeared, so did the Barn Owl and Short-eared Owl, although still occasionally seen. Perhaps this year, if Arctic conditions are in upheaval or an irruption occurs, Snowy Owls will grace our shoreline or fields, a very rare occurrence.

This program is free of charge, coffee and cookies are provided, and all are welcome. Submitted by Laura Bienen



Barred Owl perched in a cedar

Photo by Jamie Acker

PAL-TO-PAL WEBPAGE OFFERS LOCALLY LED FIELD TRIPS WORLDWIDE

While looking for birding places or opportunities near Paris, France, Island birdwatcher Bob Hawkins found that the *Birding Pal* webpage (www.birdingpal.org) gave him exactly what he wanted. The site offers a network of birders all over the globe. These birders list themselves on-line as willing to guide visitors into their home habitats. The bird pals do this, not for money, but to share the joy of birding in their home territories and to extend friendly hands to visitors.

In addition to the birder-to-birder contacts, the Birding Pal site offers the following information under the headings of *Bird Forum*, *Upcoming Trips*, *Birding Links*, *Guides for Hire*, and *Lodging List*. The *Lodging List* includes local birding notes and lodging descriptions and costs.

Hawkins' experience was positive. He praises the French birder who took Hawkins to "an amazingly good spot to go considering the time of year [late autumn] and proximity to Paris--a nature preserve that was once the headwaters for the Versailles fountains. Much of the reserve is locked, but he had the key. He does the official counts within the reserve.

"His methods are exactly as I'd expect. We first walked through deciduous woodlands observing mainly passerines, went to a couple of blinds overlooking wetlands for waterfowl, shorebirds, raptors, then to a park for thrushes, woodpeckers. He

asked us if we wanted to see Long-eared Owls (which spoken with a French accent is a mouth full of empty vowels), and we saw three roosting; we were almost eyeball to eyeball with them."

In addition, while Hawkins is an avid birder, his wife Bette accompanied him on the birding day and enjoyed the tour of the countryside by a knowledgeable resident.

Island Audubon Needs Your Skills (Not Necessarily Your Birding Skills)

You are methodic, intelligent, tidy, friendly, sales savvy.

Do you read? Do you hang out in book stores? Do you love guide books? Are you curious about natural science? Can you count money? Can you order, list, store (in an Audubon rental unit), and delete inventory (books, bird boxes, maps etc.)? Can you set up a display? Can you smile and encourage folks to buy, buy, buy? Are you on-Island for Strawberry Festival?



We need you as Chapter Merchandise Coordinator.

You are personable, communicative, quick witted, creative planner.

Can you use the phone and/or email? Do you know how to beam in on the varied Vashon volunteer networks? Can you take volunteer signup sheets and follow through on soliciting participation. Can you say thank you, come again?



We need you as our Volunteer Coordinator.

You are a teacher, conversationalist, curious, versatile, responsive.

Do you like grade-school children, bird habitat, posing and answering questions, learning about Island birds and its ecological history. Do you have eyes on the back of your head?



We need you on the 4th-Grade Birding Program.

You have visual and verbal acuity, work well with others, and are curious about how to communicate.

Are you adept at creating text and using visuals to inform folks about Puget Sound birds? Can you ask for project money? Do you know signage material: cost, life expectancy?



We need you to help with the ferry-boat signs describing local marine birds.

See Volunteer Box, Column #2

Visit our website
www.vashonaudubon.org

Vashon-Maury Island Audubon Board

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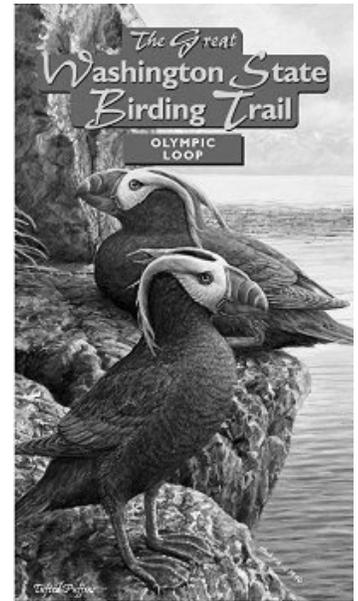
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FOUR STATE BIRDING TRAIL MAPS

READY TO GO

Following loops through birding territory, four *Birding Trail* maps lead birdwatchers through the State's Southwest, Cascades, Olympic Peninsula, and Coulee areas. The maps also provide habitat descriptions, access directions, and best time to go. The full-color art is by Ed Newbold. Proposed maps will cover Columbia River, Spokane, and Puget Sound areas.

At \$4.95 each, maps can be ordered from Washington State Audubon at wa.audubon.org.



>VOLUNTEER TODAY>

Start the New Year Right!

Chapter Merchandise Coordinator

Please consider this position. It isn't a big time commitment and you meet many interesting people. The job includes selection and sales of books and other merchandise, as well as coordinating the set-up for Strawberry Festival and Holly Daze sales.

Jill Andrews: 463-9909

Volunteer Coordinator

The chapter needs someone to oversee our volunteer process. Someone to contact, record, solicit, train volunteers, and then link them to appropriate projects. Are you the one?

Jill Andrews: 463-9909

A Sign at the Ferry Dock

VMIAS has a grant for, and permission to, install a permanent sign at the north end ferry terminal. Now we need artists and designers to help get the work done. Are you interested?

Jill Andrews: 463-9909

4th Grade Birding Program

Here's an opportunity to share your love of birds and help develop the same love in children. The program occurs in February at Chautauqua Elementary. Sue Trevathan could use help in the classrooms with the bird skin display, use of binoculars and scopes, especially on the all-day field trip.

Please call 463-1484 or e-mail sue.trevathan@centurytel.net.

SWAN'S NOTABLE SIGHTINGS

What was seen:

October 23: A bright male **Eurasian Wigeon** was at Lisabeula. Andrea Wuenschel found two male Eurasians in the Ellisport wigeon flock. I'm pretty sure that flock keeps separate from the flock over by Lisabeula, so there are at least 3 males around. I also saw another Eurasian male in a flock by the Colvos Apts. up toward Fern Cove, but I don't know if it's the Lisabeula bird or another. (Nov 18: My wife and I easily picked out at least 3 males at Ellisport without using binoculars. A thorough look with binoculars might even find more. The wigeon flocks are worth looking through for pintail, gadwell and other rare or even extremely rare species if you have the time.) A **Northern Harrier** was flying steadily south over Fern Cove. I later heard that Rich Siegrist saw the harrier fly over him just a mile or so south of Fern Cove after I saw it. A flock of 20 or so male **Barrow's Goldeneye** was back by the marina at Burton along with some male **Bufflehead**. A flock of female Bufflehead was in Tramp Harbor.

October 28: Gary Shugart has his banded **White-throated Sparrow** back for at least its third winter. It's a tan-striped one. (Oct 15: Barbara Chasan reported a white-striped W-t Sparrow at their place near Cove. Nov 5: The Findley's have a W-t Sparrow at their place on inner Quartermaster Harbor, a white-striped one. Dec 2: We seem to be having more W-t Sparrows than usual this year. Barbara Chasan closely examined her flock the other day and found 3 at once. The Findley's also report 2 coming to their place, and I assume Gary Shugart still has his.) Andrea Wuenschel had a **Sharpie** swoop within 3 feet of her as she was doing one of the counts with Don Norman down on Maury Island.

October 30: The Findleys saw the first **Common Goldeneye** of the season at their place between Judd Creek and the marina on Quartermaster Harbor. Either Joy Nelsen or Gary Shugart or both saw **Lg Scaup** at the Old Mill Road Pond at the end of October.

November 1: Gary Shugart has seen a **Parasitic Jaeger** from the Tahlequah ferry the last two days and today a **Heermann's Gull** was sitting on the railing of the old dock next door to the ferry. (Nov. 4: Gary saw the H. Gull at Tahlequah again today. Nov 20: Gary again saw a Heermann's Gull at the T. dock and a P. Jaeger about a quarter mile out. That's later by 3 weeks than any other jaeger since I started keeping track in 2000. It's also about that much later than all of the Pierce County records I have which is fairly extensive at this point.) At least a dozen **Pacific Loons**, some still in breeding plumage, were off Manzanita today. Nearby was a flock of **Black Scoters**. A Snow Bunting was seen on one of the Ft. Lewis prairies today. They might possibly be seen in one of our farm fields or at Pt. Robinson, Manzanita or KVI or Lisabeula.

November 7: Abel from the Land Trust reports that there were 3 **Trumpeter Swans** at Fisher Pond. I'll count them as Trumpeters probably even though Abel didn't give details. Tundras and Trumpeters can be hard to tell apart but the low numbers and location favor Trumpeter Swans. Both might be expected to be seen migrating overhead with some possible landings like last fall when quite a few made stops.

November 8: I found about 15 **Black Turnstones** at Fern Cove after looking to no avail at Fisher's Pond for the

swans. Some **Sanderling** were also at Fern Cove.

November 9: Bob Hawkins saw a **Brown Pelican** off the Tahlequah ferry this evening.

November 20: Richard Rogers saw 50+ **Common Mergansers** in the Christensen Cove at Lisabeula herding the fish into shallow water today.

November 30: This morning I saw that the male **Kestrel** had returned to its usual spot at the south end of Misty Isles on 232rd. It was working its way around the fields using the small planted maple trees as perches. Recently, Gary Shugart was out at Pt. Robinson and said: Out in the middle **Murres** were flying south in small groups, but then there were smaller alcids in a ragged line that splash down in the water. Saw this twice with groups of about 10 and 15-flying along and then splash. The splash was visible. I've seen Ancient Murrelets do this off Pt. Townsend and in about the same place they were today--they fly along then land/dive. Saw a flock once disappear into a wave. So something to watch for--I would give it a 95% probability they were ancients.

December 3: Dan Willis called to tell me he had a **Black-legged Kittiwake** give him a good long look sitting on a log at the front of his house this morning. This is the first documented record since one from about 90 years ago. They are rare to very rare in central Puget Sound waters. Likely blown in by the storm.

December 7: Larry Huggins saw about 10 **Brants** about mid channel, the first of the season.

December 8: The Audubon/Enjoyment of Birds field trip found two **Lesser Yellowlegs** at Raab's Lagoon this morning for the second winter record for Vashon.

December 12: John Arum scoped a **Long-tailed Duck** off the Tramp Harbor fishing pier. (Dec 14: A male and a female L-t Duck were loosely associating with the Greater Scaup flock just off the Tramp Harbor pier. I got my first look from about 25 feet. Thanks to John for reporting the earlier bird, otherwise I probably wouldn't have been thinking to look through all of the ducks around the pier. It just goes to show you can't get too jaded and stop looking at the usual old birds. This is my 197 species for Vashon over 8 years of birding here.) Joy Nelsen has had **Merlins** at her place.

December 14: At least 4-5 **Eared Grebes** were with the larger mixed-species flock of birds that develops between the Tramp Harbor fishing pier and the pilings just south at high tide.

I've tallied up the species seen so far this year and altogether at least 169 have been reported for Vashon/Maury.

Addendum:

December 18: Gary Shugart saw a **Peregrine** at Raab's Lagoon.

December 26: Marianne and Kathy Kirkland reported a **Greater White-fronted Goose** with the Canada Geese at the mouth of Judd Creek today. I found it and a **Greater Yellowlegs**. This is the first winter Greater Yellowlegs record and a rare chance to see a GWF Goose because they usually can only be seen or heard overhead in migration.

December 27: Bent and Marie Blichfeldt had 44 **Band-tailed Pigeons** come to their place in Dockton recently.

Vashon-Maury Island Audubon Society
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*The Varied Thrushes
hop about beside themselves
rain-flushed worms....*

oh, man!

*Helen Russell
Paradise Cove/Issaquah*

January/February 2008

Saturday, January 12, 8-10am -- Ober Park 'n' Ride

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

LAND TRUST'S ANNUAL NATIVE PLANT & TREE SALE -- *10am-2pm* -- Land Trust Building, 10014 SW Bank Road.
Beth Bordner 463-2644, info@vashonlandtrust.org.

Thursday, January 17, 7pm -- Land Trust Building, 10014 SW Bank Road

VASHON AUDUBON PROGRAM -- *Owls of Vashon. Presenter Jamie Acker. Laura Bienen 567-4613.*

Saturday, January 19, 9am-1pm -- around Judd Creek

LAND TRUST TREE-PLANTING WORK PARTY-- *Beth Bordner 463-2644 or info@vashonlandtrust.org.*

Tuesday, January 29, 9am-1pm -- Paradise Cove

LAND TRUST TREE-PLANTING WORK PARTY -- *Beth Bordner 463-2644 or info@vashonlandtrust.org.*

Thursday, February 7, 7 pm -- First Thursday every even-numbered month

VMIAS BOARD MEETING -- Phone Jill Andrews for confirmation, 463-9909.

Saturday, February 9, 8-10am -- Ober Park'n'Ride

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

Wednesday, February 13, 9am-1pm -- Island Center Forest

LAND TRUST TREE-PLANTING WORK PARTY -- *Beth Bordner 463-2644 or info@vashonlandtrust.org.*