

*Membership Meeting
Sunday February 6, 2011
Hows, Whys & Whats of
Marking Raptors*

*1:30 pm – 3 pm
Pearsall Building
2109 Sumner Avenue, Aberdeen*

January/February 2011



The Sandpiper



Results of the 2010 Christmas Bird Count

by Dianna Moore, compiler

I have finished the tally for our Christmas Bird Count from Dec 29th. 36 of us endured pretty awful conditions to count a total of 132 species with 36,582 birds showing up. We had gusty winds all day long, with intermittent hail/intermittent sunshine...more hail than sun on some of us. What a great bunch of dedicated birders!

Those of you who were around in 2008 will recall how appalled I was at a high count of 52 Brown Pelicans; Wednesday's total was 520, 470 of which were found in Westport! That's really amazing and a clear signal of how important is this annual census of birds. A later e-mail from Bill Tweit said they appeared to be well-fed and in good health, and some are acquiring their breeding plumage; hopefully they will leave soon for their breeding grounds in southern California and Mexico.

Other birds of note:

*Ruth Sullivan, Jim Pruske and Lonnie Somers had a Canvasback, 3 Redheads, the only Ruddy Ducks (3), the only Rough-legged Hawk, two Virginia Rails, and the only Downy

and Hairy Woodpeckers (1 ea). *Bruce LaBar's group found the female King Eider in her usual spot in the pilings off the base of Damon Point (her second CBC showing), 13 Pacific Loons, two Thayer's Gulls, and a Lincoln's Sparrow.

*Bill Tweit's Westport group also covered Area 9...left uncovered due to a shortage of people. Their "reward" was a record number of pelicans, the only Red-necked and Eared Grebes, two Harlequins, a Rock Sandpiper, a Bonaparte's Gull, a Glaucous Gull, 4 Glaucous-winged X Herring Gulls, 10 Red Crossbills, and the only Am. Goldfinches (2).

*Hermit Thrushes were big this year, with a total of 26, as were the 141 Varied Thrushes.

*The only owl during the count itself was found by the Edgars and their guests behind their house on the bay side of Ocean Shores...a Great Horned Owl. The other two owls were during the count period, with a Short-eared Owl seen by Jude Armstrong over her neighbor's house in Hoquiam on Tues. the 28th, and a Barred Owl in my front yard on the 30th.

Thanks to all who participated; you truly went above and beyond the call of duty, but you all looked very satisfied with a job well done. I really appreciate your efforts and as usual, I had a ball!



Tag, you're it

The February 6th membership meeting will feature a familiar friend of GH Audubon and the raptors of Grays Harbor, Dan Varland PhD.

Varland worked from 1993 to 2009 as a wildlife biologist for Rayonier, a large private forest landowner. In 2009 Dr. Varland founded and became the Executive Director of Coastal Raptors, a non-profit organization focused on research, education and conservation programs for raptors in coastal environments.

The Hows, Whys and Whats of marking raptors will discuss the careful planning that a marking system and protocol requires in order to allow traceable research to be valid in the field. Colors of banding material should be bright and bold, for example. Letters that can identify individual birds must be visible based on how close the observer will be able to be to the bird.

Varland presents this material in an engaging way with lots of examples of proper methodology and statistics of the health of our raptor population on Grays Harbor. Don't miss the presentation on Sunday, February 6, 2011 at the Pearsall Building 2109 Sumner Avenue, Aberdeen. The meeting will begin at 1:30 PM. Refreshments will be served and the public is encouraged and welcome to attend.

The President's Perch



By Mary O'Neil

Many thanks to all (especially Arnie Martin) for starting off the 2010/2011 year without me. I had the opportunity to go to India so I just up and left putting all my responsibilities on hold for the last quarter of 2010. I traveled with a family originally from Northern India in the Punjab state. We stayed with relatives in the small village of Badial and visited other relatives throughout the region.

India is a fascinating country with history and traditions that make our western civilization look like we only emerged from ancestral cave dwellings yesterday. And still, the ancient ways persist into the modern era. This being my first trip to a land featuring an ancient civilization, I was constantly on the lookout for ancient artifacts. The trip was almost over before I realized that I wasn't going to "find" an ancient artifact just laying around – they were all still in use! From the stone pots the yogurt is made in on a daily basis to the cart being pulled through city traffic by the water buffalo, the ancient meets the modern in every day life.

Except for the major cities of Jalandhar, Nakodar, Ludhiana and Amritsar, all of the Punjab state is farmland. The landscape is flat and extends to the horizon much like the plains of our midwestern states. The climate is hot with a high humidity even though rainfall is limited to a month or two in spring. We arrived as the temperature was dropping to 90° F during the day and into the 80's at night. Just before we left, the temperature

had reached down into the 60's. Where I thought it was just getting comfortable, I noticed all the babies were being dressed in wooly sleepers with hats and blankets so I guessed the locals thought it was getting "cold".

There is no wildlife (at least very little); there is no habitat. Every acre of land is farmed. Even the widspots in the road support a family or two in mud huts with their two/three water buffalo which are used like cattle primarily for their milk and related dairy products. The birds are still abundant, but appreciation for them is very low or at least does not find its way into the agricultural community. The huge green parakeets flock around the villages and farmland competing with the grey-necked crow for territory. Their loud screeching tells you they are everywhere, but their color camouflages them so well in the trees that they are just as difficult to find as our "little brown birds".

When we arrived in October, the rice was being harvested. As soon as the stubble was removed from the fields, the paddies were flooded to saturate the ground and prepare it for replanting with potatoes. The flood irrigation attracts a range of wading birds including the cattle egrets, bitterns, herons, stilts and ibis. The red-wattled lapwing also loves the open fields and flocks in by the hundreds. In the mid-afternoon, I would walk with the family out to the farm where I would look for the birds while they tended to milking, feeding and watering their buffalo. They thought I was truly weird, but while they worked, I became acquainted with the coucal, or crow pheasant, which is a big turkey-like bird that lives amid the sugar cane. Also hiding in the protection of the sugar cane were the whitebreasted waterhen, grey partridges, and count-

less tiny birds that were difficult to zero in on without a scope although one day I did get a very close-up look at the bluethroat which looks just like the name says. Overhead on the power lines, the very charming white-breasted kingfisher would perch and sing his plaintive downwardly whistled song. The blue jay or "roller" was returning to the area and appeared to be pairing up although we did not get to see any mating activity. A walk was not complete without the black drogon making the scene. This bird looks like a black bird, but has an exceptionally long, split tail. One day, I spotted a little owl in the trees shading the buffalo shed. I determined it to be (what else but!) the spotted owl. Of course, the highlight of the day was to catch sight of the hoopoe – a truly marvelous bird about the size of a pigeon with a conspicuous fan shaped crest and long gently curved bill – tan in color with heavy black/white wing and tail striping.



photo by Mary O'Neil

There were no peacocks in the farmland. I was told they had all been driven off. We spotted a few when we drove south of New Delhi to Agra to see the Taj Mahal. Also absent were the huge (+100 cm) vultures which I was told used to inhabit the area but which caught a virus or disease and disappeared as recently as 20 years, never to return to the area.

In all, I compiled a list of 56 species which doesn't sound like much. However, they were

Continued on Page 3

Perch continued from page 2
 all new birds which I had to ID on my own. Unfortunately I could find no one who could/would do a guided field trip. I used *The Book of Indian Birds* by Salim Ali as my resource. The names I have used are the English names he applies leaving off the Latin and not going into the fact that there are 14 national languages in India each of which has its own name for many of these birds.

Bird list from trip to India

by Mary O'Neil

In October of this newly past year, I had the opportunity to travel to the State of Punjab in northern India. The trip was not organized around bird watching, but I took my binoculars and purchased a book about the birds of India so I could do some watching on my own. I was disappointed that no one that I met in my travels was interested in bird watching, and all were unable and unwilling to undertake any kind of meaningful field trek. I'm sure the local people viewed me as quite an odd bird in my own right. Nevertheless, I managed to identify over 50 birds, only a few of which I had ever seen before.

I used *THE BOOK OF INDIAN BIRDS* by Salim Ali (twelfth revised centenary edition) published in 1996 to make my identifications. Ali's names roughly follow the original taxonomy of Indian birds as determined by Oates and Blanford in the first edition of the "Fauna of British India, Birds" published in 1889-90. There may be other names associated with these birds because in 1988 C.G. Sibley and B.L. Munro released the "Distribution and taxonomy of birds of the World" in which the naming of the birds is based on DNA affiliations. Unfortunately,

this has caused many of the common English names used in the subcontinent for over a century to be summarily thrown overboard. Ali resisted using the Distribution names although he cross references them in an appendix. *The Book of Indian Birds* lists 538 species. The original *Fauna of British India* enumerated some 2400 species and subspecies.

My list:

Little cormorant (*Phalacrocorax niger*)
 Cattle egret (*Bubulcus ibis*)
 Paddybird or Pond Heron (*ardeola grayii*)
 Black stork (*Ciconia Nigra*)
 Black ibis (*Pseudibis papillosa*)
 Ruddy Shelduck (*Tadorna ferruginea*)
 Black Partridge (*Francolinus francolinus*)
 Peacock (*Pavo cristatus*)
 Indian moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*)
 Whitebreasted waterhen (*Amauornis phoenicurus*)
 Black winged stilt (*Himantopus himantopus*)
 Red wattled lapwing (*Vanellus indicus*)
 Blue rock pigeon (*Columba livia*)
 Ring dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*)
 Red turtle dove (*Streptopelia tranquebarica*)
 Little brown dove (*Streptopelia senegalensis*)
 Rose-ringed parakeet (*Psittacula krameri*)
 Common hawk cuckoo (*Cuculus varius*) (also called the brainfever bird)
 Crow pheasant or Coucal (*Centropus sinensis*)
 Spotted owllet (*Athene brama*)
 White breasted kingfisher (*Halcyon smyrnensis*)
 Black-capped kingfisher (*Halcyon pileata*)
 Roller or Blue jay (*Coracias benghalensis*)

Hoopoe (*Upupa epops*)
 Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*)
 Wiretailed swallow (*Hirundo smithii*)
 Black drongo or King-crow (*Dicurus adsimilis*)
 Grey or Ashy drongo (*Dicurus leucophaeus*)
 Indian myna (*Acridotheres tristis*)
 Jungle myna (*Acridotheres fuscus*)
 Bank myna (*Acridotheres ginginianus*)
 Pied myna (*Sturnus contra*)
 House crow (*Corvus splendens*)
 Jungle crow (*Corvus macrohynchos*)
 Red-vented bulbul (*Pycnonotus cafer*)
 Black bulbul (*Hypsipetes madagascariensis*)
 Jungle babbler (*Turdoides striatus*)
 Rufoustailed flycatcher (*Muscicapa ruficauda*)
 Quaker babbler (*Alcippe poiocephala*)
 Franklin's wren-warbler (*Prinia hodgsonii*)
 Dull green leaf warbler (*Phylloscopus trochiloides*)
 Bluethroat (*Erithacus svecicus*)
 Brown rock chat (*Cercomela fusca*)
 Pied bush chat (*Saxicola caprata*)
 Desert wheatear (*Oenanthe deserti*)
 White-winged black tit (*Parus nuchalis*)
 Indian tree pipit (*Anthus hodgsoni*)
 Paddyfield pipit (*Anthus novaeseelandiae*)
 Tickell's flowerpecker (*Dicaeum erythrorhynchos*)
 Plaincolored flowerpecker (*Dicaeum concolor*)
 White wagtail (*Motacilla alba*)
 Forest wagtail (*Motacilla indica*)
 House sparrow (*Passer domesticus*)

Call for mini-grant applicants

Funds help organizers create fun neighborhood events

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology's "Celebrate Urban Birds" project is now accepting applications for another round of mini-grants. Grants average \$250-\$500 and are used to fund neighborhood events that promote an appreciation for birds and nature.

Neighborhood events or projects feature activities involving birds, community service, art, greening, and science. Participants collect simple information about common birds and report to the Cornell Lab. Celebrate Urban Birds mini-grants could be used to support a bird-activity day at a local museum, afterschool program, library, or community center, or fund art and gardening activities at your club, business, school, senior center, or neighborhood.

To apply for a mini-grant, visit www.CelebrateUrbanBirds.org. Organizations working with underserved communities are strongly encouraged to apply. No experience with birds is required.

Deadline to apply is Feb. 15, 2011

Celebrate Urban Birds is a free, year-round citizen science project in which participants watch birds in their neighborhoods and report what they see. This information helps scientists better understand how birds survive in cities and make use of green spaces, including parks and gardens.

Contact: Karen Purcell, Project Leader, (607) 254-2455, urban-birds@cornell.edu



Shut up and listen

photo by Gail Garcia

Environmental Lobby Day

Tuesday, February 15th

Time: 8:30 am - 6:00 pm

*United Churches of Olympia,
110 East 11th Ave.*

*Event Price: \$15 (includes
breakfast, lunch and materials)*

Talk to your legislators in person about environmental priorities. Register at <http://pugetsound.org/programs/policy/lobbyday>

2011 Environmental Priorities

***Coal Free Future for Washington
Reducing Phosphorous Pollution
The 2011 Clean Water Act
Budget Solutions for Our
Environment***

Commission restricts the use of lead fishing tackle on lakes with loons

The Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission approved restrictions on the use of lead fishing tackle at 13 lakes with nesting common loons during its Dec. 2-4 meeting in Olympia.

The commission, a nine-member citizen panel appointed by the governor to set policy for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), adopted a proposal that prohibits the use of lead weights and jigs that measure 1 inches or less along the longest axis at 12 lakes.

Those 12 lakes include Ferry and Swan lakes in Ferry County; Calligan and Hancock lakes

in King County; Bonaparte, Blue and Lost lakes in Okanogan County; Big Meadow, South Skookum and Yocum lakes in Pend Oreille County; Pierre Lake in Stevens County; and Hozomeen Lake in Whatcom County.



Photo by Roy Toft

OLYMPIC PENINSULA BIRDFEST

SEQUIM, WASHINGTON

April 8 - 10, 2011



Visit the rain shadow of the Olympic Peninsula to discover the birds of the coastal Pacific Northwest—Marbled Murrelets, Rhinoceros Auklets, Harlequin Ducks, dippers, Black Oystercatchers, Long-tailed Ducks, and more. Guided field trips, a boat cruise in the Strait of Juan de Fuca, silent auction, and a gala banquet at the Sunland Golf & Country Club. The festival with the most spectacular setting!

Immediately following BirdFest, join us for a three-day, two-night birding cruise of the San Juan Islands, April 10-12, 2011.

Website: www.olympicbirdfest.org
E-mail: opas.birdfest.info@gmail.com
Contact name: Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society, 360-681-4076



Plan to count

The Great Backyard Bird Count is an annual four-day event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of where the birds are across the continent. Anyone can participate, from beginning bird watchers to experts. It takes as little as 15 minutes on one day, or you can count for as

Diane Schwickerath thought our readers might find it educational and fun to learn the different words for groups of birds. The table below is a sample of what can be found at the website address:

<http://www.birdnature.com/groupnames.html>

Alphabetically by Group Name

Alphabetically by Bird Name

<i>Group Name</i>	<i>Bird Name</i>	<i>Bird Name</i>	<i>Group Name</i>
<i>band</i>	<i>jays</i>	<i>birds</i>	<i>dissimulation</i>
<i>bevy</i>	<i>quail</i>	<i>bitterns</i>	<i>siege</i>
<i>bouquet</i>	<i>pheasants</i>	<i>chickens</i>	<i>peep</i>
<i>brood</i>	<i>hens, pheasants (family)</i>	<i>coots</i>	<i>cove</i>
<i>building</i>	<i>rooks</i>	<i>cormorants</i>	<i>flight</i>
<i>cast</i>	<i>falcons, hawks</i>	<i>cranes</i>	<i>herd</i>
<i>cauldron</i>	<i>raptors</i>	<i>crows</i>	<i>murder, muster</i>

long as you like each day of the event. It's free, fun, and easy—and it helps the birds.

It is as easy as 1,2,3

1. Plan to count birds for at least 15 minutes on one or more days of the count. You can count for longer than that if you wish! Count birds in as many places and on as many days as you like—one day, two days, or all four days. Submit a separate checklist for each new day. You can also submit more than one checklist per day if you count in other locations on that day.

2. Count the greatest number of individuals of each species that you see together at any one time. You may find it helpful to print out your regional bird checklist to get an idea of the kinds of birds you're likely to see in your area in February. Visit <http://gbbc.birdsource.org/gbbcApps/checklist> and enter your zip code to develop a printable list. You could take note of the highest number of each species you see on this checklist.

3. When you're finished, enter your results through the Great Backyard Bird Count webpage

<http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/> You'll see a button marked "Enter Your Checklists!" on the website home page beginning on the first day of the count. It will remain active until the deadline for data submission on March 1st.

GHAS Mission

The mission of the Grays Harbor Audubon Society is to seek a sustainable balance between human activity and the needs of the environment, and to promote enjoyment of birds and the natural world

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GHAS voice mail	(800) 303-8498
State Audubon	(360) 786-8020
National Audubon	(212) 979-3000
GHAS Website	http://ghas.org

Please Fill Out and Mail Back

**ANNUAL GRAYS HARBOR AUDUBON
CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES**

If you would like to join Grays Harbor Audubon Society (GHAS), please fill out the form below, *make check payable to Grays Harbor Audubon Society* and return it with your check to:

**Grays Harbor Audubon Society
P.O. Box 470
Montesano, WA 98563**

Chapter Memberships include a subscription to *The Sandpiper* newsletter. All Chapter Memberships above the Sandpiper category provide financial support to our Chapter. The Grays Harbor Audubon Society is totally self-supporting.

Name _____ *Date* _____

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If your newsletter is stamped with *Last Issue-Please Renew*, be sure to fill out the Membership Form above and send it in to keep your membership active and keep receiving the newsletter! Thanks!

News & Editorial

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rd@olearycreek.com
Copy deadline ongoing

Membership Meeting
Sunday, February 6, 2011
1:30 - 3:00PM
Pearsall Building

The Hows, Whys and Whats of Marking Raptors

Program presented by
Dan Varland, PhD

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How Do I Know When My Membership Is Due?

If we have mailed your copy, look in the upper right hand corner of your label and it will give you your renewal date! For those of you on email, we will notify you via email of your upcoming renewal date.

The Sandpiper

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