

Membership Meeting
Sunday April 3, 2011
It's a Mystery
1:30 pm – 3 pm
Pearsall Building
2109 Sumner Avenue, Aberdeen

March/April 2011



The Sandpiper



Don't miss out

16th Annual Shorebird Festival April 29, 30 & May 1

We are fortunate to have Bart Rulon as the Shorebird Festival keynote speaker Friday evening 7:30 pm April 29th at the Hoquiam High School. A dessert reception precedes the lecture at 7:00 pm. Bart Rulon is an author, wildlife artist, photographer, and scientific illustrator. He has authored and illustrated five books which focus on painting and photographing birds, wildlife, and landscapes. His award winning paintings have been exhibited internationally in many of exhibitions and museums. You can see more of his outstanding artwork at www.BartRulon.com.

Each year Grays Harbor and its friends celebrate the return of the tens of thousands of shorebirds that visit the shores of the Grays Harbor estuary. This is a great time to enjoy field trips, lectures, a nature fun fair, banquet and auction, birder's bazaar, poster contest, and world class shorebird viewing. Visit <http://shorebirdfestival.com> for more information or call Grays Harbor Audubon, one of the founders of this important event. (360) 289-5048

Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse

The Columbian sharp-tailed grouse was once probably the most abundant game bird in Washington. The Columbian is the rarest of six subspecies of sharp-tailed grouse, a close relative of prairie-chickens. Their historical range extended from southern British Columbia, south along the eastern slope of the Cascade and Sierra Nevada mountain ranges to northeastern California, and east to Colorado and Utah. Only small portions of this area still support populations. The proposed management plan updates the information in the 1998 status report (Hays et al. 1998), identifies population recovery objectives, and outlines activities needed to recover a viable population of sharp-tailed grouse in Washington.

Population status. Columbian sharp-tailed grouse were an abundant and important game bird in eastern Washington at the time of Euro-American settlement. They declined dramatically with the spread and intensification of agriculture and livestock grazing, until by the 1920's, sharp-tailed grouse were extinct in much of their historical range in Washington. Harvest levels were reduced after 1920 and the hunting season for sharp-tailed grouse was closed from 1933–1953, but short seasons were opened from 1954–1987. The population continued to decline after 1950, perhaps a time-lagged response to past habitat loss, but probably also due to intensive livestock grazing on

remnant patches of shrub/meadow steppe, and continued loss of woody riparian winter habitat. The loss of active leks over time indicates a trend in reduced population, range, and the resulting isolation of subpopulations of sharp-tailed grouse in the state. Of the 114 leks documented between 1960 and 2006, 82 (71.9%) are currently vacant; 33 (40.2%) of the vacant leks are in portions of the historical range that are no longer occupied. The remaining 49 vacant leks reflect declines in density within occupied portions of the historical range (Schroeder 2006). Leks in Douglas, Okanogan, and Lincoln counties became inactive at similar rates (66%, 72%, and 63%, respectively) from 1954–1994 (Schroeder 1994). The sharp-tailed grouse was listed as a state Threatened species by the Fish and Wildlife Commission in 1998.

The analysis of annual changes in attendance at leks indicated that the average instantaneous rate of population change was -5.4% (SE = 3.4%) per year between 1970 and 2006. The overall population declined almost continually be



Photo by Marc Hallet

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The President's Perch



By Arnie Martin

During this period of high unemployment and consequent belt-tightening, our Washington State Audubon office has lost its funding from National Audubon Society and has been almost totally dissolved. With it went what was arguably the most important service provided: the lobbying of the State Legislature for environmental issues.

In an attempt to minimize the cuts to the environmental budgets, the Washington State Audubon chapters have joined together to fund and support the efforts of the Washington State Audubon Conservation Committee (WSACC). The 26 individual chapters have contributed funds to support the hiring of a lobbyist for the duration of the 2011 Legislative Session. The WSACC formed a working group to direct the activities and to receive and distribute the funds to pay the lobbyist.

After some discussion, the Tahoma Audubon Society is the financial entity that pays the lobbyist and receives the funding from the local Audubon chapters. The primary contact for the lobbyist is Shawn Cantrell, the director of Seattle Audubon. There is a steering committee composed of various WSACC committee members that have overall control of the lobbying activities.

The steering committee advertised for a lobbyist and, after interviews, hired Neil Beaver as the WSACC lobbyist. The term of Neil's employment is for the duration of the Legislative session, and the donations of the local chapters

supply the funds to pay him.

The big problem for Audubon this Legislative session is that funds are being cut from the previous appropriations for this fiscal year; tax revenues are dropping due to dropping appraised home valuations and lower timber cutting, and lack of jobs. These conditions have resulted in a 4 billion dollar budget deficit, which will make it impossible to gain funding for new legislative environmental measures; the best that is likely to be achieved is to minimize the cutting of funds from existing legislative appropriations.

The targeted 2011 Legislative priorities (from Environmental Priorities Coalition) as ordered by the WSACC, are "Budget Solutions for Our Environment", Oil Spill (added by WSACC), and "Reducing Phosphorus Pollution". The complete list of the Environmental Priorities Coalition (EPC) can be found at: <http://environmentalpriorities.org/> but the above listed priorities are those that WSACC felt were most important to Audubon. That those three items were the top does not prevent Neil Beaver from informing WSACC of actions on the entire EPC list, or lobbying on behalf of EPC supported items, but his principal concerns are those of the Audubon priority list.

Now that you have been exposed to the "bare-bones" approach which Audubon has to use, you can see that additional "wish-list" items are extremely unlikely to be funded during this debt-reduction session of the Legislature. What can those of us who are still gainfully employed, or who have a steady source of income do to support environmental matters or environmental organizations? We can give additional funds to those organizations that support our own priorities, whether it is

Wildlife Conservation, Water Pollution Reduction, Cleaner Air, etc. Likely there is an organization that has the best record in your targeted area of concern.

If your area of concern is Habitat Protection, we believe you will not find a better organization for your contributions than Grays Harbor Audubon Society. This Audubon chapter has a 15+ year history of acquiring property for Habitat Conservation, and it now needs your contributions to assure the proper maintenance and oversight of these properties. Please be as generous as you can to this organization or, if your priorities allow, to other organizations that have a good record in your area of concern.

Education Chair Needed

Our long-time Education Chair, Alexandrine (Renee) Prine has decided to focus on other activities. We want to thank her for her years of service, especially in classrooms and during festivals. She will be greatly missed.

We are in need of a replacement for Renee, someone who has had experience in classrooms as a teacher, teacher's aid, or as a classroom volunteer would be preferable. The pay for the position is non-existent, but it would get you a place on the Chapter's Board of Directors, with all the privileges pertaining thereto (still nothing but the experience). We hope that someone with classroom experience and a conservation bent would like to join our organization.



photo by Rob Gilbert

USFWS to Review ESA Status of Four Candidate Prairie Species

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is initiating an evaluation to determine whether to list four prairie species as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). All four species are currently candidates for listing under the ESA. To assist in this analysis, the Service is requesting information related to the four prairie species known to occur in Washington, Oregon and in Del Norte County, California. The agency is particularly interested in collaborating with local, regional and tribal partners to gather status information and consider potential conservation actions affecting each species.

The four species (two butterflies, a bird and a burrowing mammal) are all residents of Washington's fastest-disappearing ecosystem type, the Puget Prairie. Since the mid-1800s over 90 percent of Washington's Puget Prairie habitat has been developed or converted to agriculture.

The species are:

***Mazama pocket gophers* (*Thomomys mazama*)** are most abundant on the prairies of south Puget Sound in Thurston and Pierce Counties, Washington, although subspecies are found on subalpine meadows

of the northern Olympic Peninsula and in reduced numbers on lowland prairies in Mason and Clark counties. The Mazama pocket gopher lives most of its life below ground, coming to the surface to find food that is then stored in cheek pouches and carried to their burrows.

***Streaked horned lark* (*Eremophila alpestris strigata*)** is a subspecies of the horned lark found exclusively in western Washington and Oregon. The streaked horned lark is a ground-nesting bird that finds optimum habitat in prairie or open coastal conditions.

***Taylor's checkerspot* (*Euphydryas editha taylori*)** is a subspecies of a widespread western butterfly. It requires specific host plants (native plantain or paintbrush) for its survival. Its distribution in Oregon and Washington is open prairie habitat or thin-soiled bald habitat, dominated by native grasses and forbs.

***Mardon skipper* (*Polites mardon*)** is a small tawny brown butterfly that finds suitable habitat in prairie and subalpine meadow habitat from the Puget Prairies of Washington, the southern Cascades of Washington and Oregon and in meadows in the coast range of Del Norte County, California. Of the four species under consideration, the Mardon skipper is the most widely distributed.

To ensure this information gathering is comprehensive, the agency is requesting scientific and commercial data and other information regarding these species and their habitats. Anyone with information should send it to: Jodi Bush, Manager, Division of Listing and Recovery, USFWS, 510 Desmond Drive, Lacey, WA 98503 or Jodi_Bush@fws.gov.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working

with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. They are both leaders and trusted partners in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals, and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov.

Wisconsin IBA website has been completed.

Site information is up to date, with descriptions of all 88 Wisconsin IBAs and new maps.

There is a new Conservation section that has lots of detail and information on the conservation work we've been doing at 3 large-river IBAs over the past few years, including copies of reports and other materials.

There are still several planned additions (such as the photo gallery, not yet populated), but there is plenty to see now.

The IBA program was initiated in Europe in the mid-1980's by BirdLife International. To date, some 11,000 IBAs have been identified in 200 countries. The program came to the United States in 1995, administered by the National Audubon Society. Currently, about 47 states have IBA programs, with some 2,400 sites identified. IBAs have been officially adopted as key components of the North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI), the North American Waterbird Conservation Plan (NAWCP), the U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan (USSCP), and the Partners in Flight (PIF) Strategic Plan.

Check it out at: <http://www.wisconsinbirds.org/iba/>

WENAS Campout May 27-30, 2011

For over four decades Audubon families have been camping over Memorial Day weekend at the Wenas Creek Campground. Officially named the Hazel Wolf Wenas Creek Bird Sanctuary, it's located SW of Ellensburg, in an "Important Bird Area" and has been assured of protective status by WA Dept. of Natural Resources. The "primitive" campground along the north fork of Wenas Creek has exceptional opportunities for birding, botanizing and enjoying spring in the eastern foothills of the Cascades.

There are wonderful field trips scheduled, and there will be an old-fashioned campfire in our "approved" firepit device each evening. We do singing, story telling and recapping the sightings of the day.

Please visit Webmaster Michael Hobbs' beautiful Wenas Website to see Hazel Wolf's familiar smiling face and get lots of downloadable information about our campout.
www.wenasaudubon.org.

There's a bird checklist, wildflower checklist, outline of field trips and program, directions to the campground, and lots of photos.

For people who don't "do websites," contact me and I'll send you printed information.

There will be updated detailed information posted soon – keep an eye on our website.

Bring friends, family, and join us at Wenas Memorial Day Weekend for as many days as you want to stay - May 27-30, 2011!

See you there, Helen Engle, hengle@iinet.com, 253-564-3112.



Mason Bees are for the birds!

If you haven't heard about these wonderful pollinators, they are native to most of North America and have been doing a wonderful job of pollinating long before colonists brought over the honey bee. This bee is not a hive dwelling bee, and therefore does not have a queen. Only the female stings, and she only will if sorely provoked.

Nesting The mother Orchard Mason bee uses mud to line a suitable hole and make cells for each egg laid. She does not make her own hole and instead finds holes from natural spacing, wood boring beetles and the nesting system that we provide. Mother Mason Bee can determine the sex of the eggs and makes sure to lay the females deep and safe in the hole, to ensure the males would get eaten first (sorry, guys). She can lay up to 34 eggs, but if the weather suddenly turned cold for long enough, a female bee will absorb some eggs to keep her from starving to death. A long, cold spring will result in fewer Mason Bees.

Developing The egg develops into a larva and eats pollen and nectar that the mother bee has collected for it in the cell. Finally after about a month of eating, and a few days of rest, the larva spins a cocoon around itself and starts a long transformation into adulthood. By the mid to end of September, the bee is now an adult.

And the cycle starts again. In

the spring, when it stays about 55 degrees outside, the male chews through his cell wall and the thick, main entrance plug that the mother made to protect her babies. Once outside, he gathers energy from the sun and heads off to find food, pollinating your trees and flowers along the way. Ten to fifteen days after the males make their way out, the females emerges, rests for a moment then is immediately impregnated by a group of males. A mating cluster of bees will often land on the ground, so step carefully around the nest sight! Scientist have discovered 5/16" hole is best for the desired results; smaller holes will result in fewer bees due to swelling of the wood and larger holes will make more work for the mother, and also result in fewer bees. You should provide six times the amount of clean holes for the bees. Bees do not like using dirty holes, and dirty holes will house mites: mites can kill bee larva. All the tubes you purchase at our store are the desired size and we have additional information for you. If you have questions, please call (253) 851-2575.

Information provided by Wild Birds Unlimited of Gig Harbor WA 3120 1/2 Harborview Dr Gig Harbor, WA 98335 US

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

Grouse continued from page 1
 tween 1970 and 2006, particularly during the 1970s, when the estimated population declined from about 5,000 to about 3,000 birds. The overall estimated decline was 86% between 1970 and 2006. The current distribution of sharp-tailed grouse covers approximately 2,234 km², approximately 2.8% of their historical range in Washington. Sharp-tailed grouse persist in seven scattered populations in Lincoln County, the Colville Indian Reservation, northern Douglas County, and valleys and foothills east and west of the Okanogan River in Okanogan County. The estimated sharp-tailed grouse breeding population in 2009 was 712 birds.

Habitat requirements. Good sharp-tailed grouse habitat contains perennial bunchgrasses, forbs, and key species of deciduous shrubs. Historically, the most important areas for sharp-tailed grouse were probably the Palouse, Wheatgrass/Fescue, Three-tip Sagebrush, and Big Sage/Fescue vegetation zones. The highest densities of sharp-tailed grouse were probably in the more mesic grassland and steppe types where annual precipitation averages at least 11 inches.



*Love is in the air
 Can Spring be far behind?*

Birds need your organic gardening skills

How your garden grows has a profound effect on the birds who come to visit and feed. Limit and/or eliminate your use of toxic chemicals in your landscape. Both humans and wildlife will benefit.

Treat areas for pests only when necessary. Use nontoxic methods first. Pick off and dispose of insects, vacuum, prune out infestations, or hose off garden plants. Using biological controls have very little environmental effects

Native plants mean less care, less time, less expense. The more native plants in your yard, the more healthy habitats for birds and other wildlife.

Membership meeting

This month's membership will be a mystery and the only way you'll be able find out is to attend.

As usual we will serve a variety of refreshments and beverages to augment the afternoon of good fellowship and unravel the mystery of the program. The meeting is held from 1:30 pm – 3 pm at the Pearsall Building 2109 Sumner Avenue, Aberdeen.

Join us to help solve the mystery.

Hawk Watch

by Jan McMillan

Whoever's not driving
 Has hawk watch.
 Red-tailed
 Sharp-shinned
 Kestrels
 Perched on fence posts
 And telephone poles
 They scan
 The stubbled fields
 For food
 And measure
 The syncopated flight
 Of starlings
 Over the highway.

The misted glass

by Arthur Grunbaum

*Mornings I see best
 It is then that I stand straight
 and powerful*

*Lithe and smooth skinned
 Fresh-mouthed and sweet smile
 Ready for the world's chal-
 lenges*

*What a surprise to view reality
 As I place spectacles on my
 nose*

*and wipe the misted glass
 of my bathroom mirror.*



Bird evolution

Birds are bipedal, warm-blooded, egg-laying vertebrates with about 10,000 living species. The fossil record indicates birds evolved from theropod dinosaurs 200 to 150 million years ago, and the earliest known bird is the late Jurassic Archaeopteryx. There is significant evidence that birds evolved from theropod dinosaurs; as more non-avian theropods that are closely related to birds are discovered, the formerly clear distinction between non-birds and birds becomes blurred. A genetically consistent evolutionary tree would classify birds as reptiles, though some scientists would elevate birds, turtles and crocodilians to their own class, on an equal footing with reptiles.

Globally, 1,240 species of birds, or about 12 percent of the total of 10,027 extant described bird species, were deemed endangered or threatened with extinction by IUCN's 2010 Red List. In the United States, about 74 bird species are at risk, about 9 percent of the total.

Center for Biological Diversity
<http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/species/birds/index.html>



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GHAS voice mail	(360) 289-5048
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** _____

Address _____

City _____ **State/Zip** _____

Phone Number _____ **E-Mail** _____

- Heron \$25.00
- Pelican \$50.00
- Falcon \$75.00
- Eagle \$100.00
- The Sandpiper* subscription only \$15
(Fixed or limited income membership or *Sandpiper* newsletter only)

- I am renewing my membership
- I am a new member

To join National Audubon or renew your National Audubon Membership, call 1-800-274-4201.

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

send materials to
P.O. Box 1044
Westport, 98595-1044
or email to
rd@olearycreek.com
Copy deadline ongoing

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It's a mystery

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How Do I Know When My Membership Is Due?

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

The Sandpiper

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