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Cover:
Taiwan Black Drongo

Birds Unltd. in Gig Harbor, will have actual cocoons to introduce your children and grandchildren to this friendly, gregarious, non-stinging pollinating bee.

Enjoy an interactive presentation covering the life cycle of this magnificent solitary bee — an important early pollinator. Jim Ulrich, CEO of Knox Cellar Orchard Mason Bees, and former owner of Wild Birds Unlimited, in Gig Harbor, will have actual cocoons to show while discussing how to set up a housing area. Bees and houses will be available to take home at a nominal cost. This is a great program for families to introduce your children and grandchildren to this friendly, gregarious, non-stinging pollinating bee.

Join us for the Spring Speaker Series:
Community, Science, and Stewardship
March 22

Inform yourself and find out ways that you can engage in the environmental issues that directly affect you and your family through the spring Tahoma Audubon Speaker Series programs.
Free and open to the public. Programs are held in the auditorium of the Tacoma Nature Center, 1919 S. Tyler St. Doors open at 6:30 pm for socializing and refreshments, and the programs begin at 7 pm.

Birds ‘n’ the Orchard Mason Bees
April 26

For fifty years Tahoma Audubon activists have worked steadily with other individuals, groups, and agencies to restore and preserve our wild open spaces in Pierce County. Find out how from Kirk Kirkland, community activist and longtime member of Tahoma Audubon’s Conservation Committee. The countywide open space plan is well-funded and reaches into every river, farm area, and up the slopes of Mt. Rainier. Hear about the behind-the-scenes research, negotiation, planning, and oversight that has preserved working farms, working forests, and highly biodiverse wildlife habitat, and how you might play a role in this ongoing process.

Petite Plastics in Puget Sound
May 17

Find out about the impact our everyday use of plastics is having on the marine ecosystem of the Pacific Northwest, including Puget Sound. Julie Murase, Senior Lecturer/Research Scientist at the University of Washington Tacoma and Center for Urban Waters, will speak on the growing field of marine microplastics research. Initially studying harmful algal blooms in Puget Sound and estuarine processes on the west coast of Vancouver Island, her field work expanded to assessing concentrations of microplastics in the waters of the Pacific Northwest. Julie involves several students in her research work and partners with many environmental education groups throughout the region.

Vaux’s Swifts Monitoring
June 28

SAVE THE DATE! Kay Pullen and the Advanced Birding Club (ABC) will share details on the Vaux’s Swifts monitoring. Stay tuned for more details on this exciting program!

CTC 2017

Aultman Ryan.jpg

By Diane Yorgason-Quinn.

Almost 30 years ago when I did my first Christmas Bird Count for Tahoma Audubon, I asked to be in Area 3, as I had just moved to the Gig Harbor peninsula. I was surprised to learn that Nell and Ken Batker were in charge of Area 3, as they didn’t live on this side of the water. They told me that there were very few birders here. They put me with Elsie Parrott, and we had a great time together! We spotted the first and possibly the only Mountain Quail ever on this CBC at the Gig Harbor Country Club. There were three of them, and as soon as they felt our eyes upon them, their little round bodies appeared to roll down the slope away from us. When Norris Cone moved near me, he became my next CBC companion for several years, and I learned a lot from him and enjoyed his deadpan humor, especially when he got pulled over for not having current tags on his vintage International Harvester Scout. He was fearless and pulled me along with him down to the Gig Harbor lighthouse, a route now off limits to the public. Good thing we weren’t there the year after the big storm, when two Leach’s Storm-petrels flew out of the harbor just below our eye level, giving us contain the 15-mile diameter. Tahoma Auduboners are happy to count again a couple of weeks later, and we have much the same group going out again, this season on December 31, 2017, with a count dinner on the island, which doubled as a New Year’s Eve party.

This season didn’t give us any major rarities, but it’s always good to see how well Robins and Juncos are doing. There was an almost white (leucistic) Robin seen on the Dec 31 count, as well! One group on Dec 16 saw a Mountain Beaver. Without a camera, they drew a cunning little sketch in case they were not believed. And what about that bronze turkey who ran out to meet one of our teams. The neighbors claimed he was not domestic.

Our hot young birder of the year is Mik Rimanek from the Czech Republic, who is here for the school year and who was on...
Make 2018 a year you engage birds and habitats!

The start of a new year is a great opportunity to explore new hobbies or opportunities. This year, we hope you continue (or grow) the ways you engage with Tahoma Audubon Society through our education, conservation, and recreational programs and events! 2018 is also an especially great year to engage with your local Audubon chapter, as 2018 has been officially recognized as the #YearOfTheBird. #YearOfTheBird is a year-long celebration of the centennial anniversary of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, the most powerful and important bird-protection law ever passed. The goal of this year-long campaign is to provide an opportunity for individuals to reconnect themselves to protecting birds today and for the next hundred years. You can support #YearOfTheBird by committing to take one simple action a month to help birds.

Getting involved with your local Tahoma Audubon Society chapter offers a number of classes, programs, and volunteer opportunities and other ways to support birds, but there are also many other things you can do to support birds in Pierce County and beyond! If you have not already, we encourage you to take the pledge today: http://ow.ly/Mfsv30hAKKj Taking the pledge and making a commitment to simple monthly actions throughout 2018 for conservation, habitat preservation, and citizen science, collectively we can make a large difference for the birds and habitat that we all love!

Making a commitment to birds and habitat is nothing new to Tahoma Audubon Society Members. However, I am encouraged by the record-number of participants we had in our 2017 Christmas Bird Count—112! Welcoming new participants into our programs is a great way to spark a lifelong connection to nature and an awareness of the importance of nature. If you are looking for additional ways to participate in citizen science like the Christmas Bird Count, I encourage you to check out our local Great Backyard Bird Count, happening on February 17 at the Adriana Hess Audubon Center (2017 Morrison Rd W, University Place, WA). You can find more details about this event at: http://tahomaaudubon.org/GBBC. Not able to participate on February 17? That is okay! This four-day global citizen science event occurs from February 16 to 19 and is a family-friendly way to contribute to science with minimal time or special equipment needed—counts can be for as little as 15 minutes and are intended to be done in your backyard! Learn more about the Great Backyard Bird Count here: http://www.audubon.org/conservation/about-great-backyard-bird-count

As always, thank you for your continued interest and commitment to birds and their habitats in Pierce County and beyond! We are so fortunate to have so many interested, engaged, and generous people as a part of the Tahoma Audubon Society flock, and we are excited to continue to grow our flock into the future.

Tahoma Audubon Society's Feathered Nest Circle

We’re pleased to honor our visionaries who have named Tahoma Audubon in their estate plans making them members of the Feathered Nest Circle. This list updated as of May 16, 2017.

Anonymous (5)
Jane Brosius
Dick & Terry Carkner
Terry* & Bev Conner
Ruth Daugherty*
Rhona Dietl*
Helen Enge
Bryan Flint
Thomas Guldabini
John Garner & Caroline Harris
Priscilla J. Huber
Thelma* & Chuck* Gilmar
Marjorie Griffin*
Noel & Bill Hagens
Cam Harris
Frances Hedner*
David R. Hirst
Krystal Kyer
John & Pat Lantz
Peggy Kopf* & Pat Mail
Diane J. Malone
Jean McCord
Gny* & Cecile* Montgomery

Gary & Sharon Nestegard
Melissa Nevel
Donna Cooper Pepos*
Barbara Petersen
Marcus Rouning & Heath Ballash
Sarah C. Stout*
Beatrice E. Thompson*
Darby Veeck & Kristin Lynett

Gary & Sharon Nestegard
Melissa Nevel
Donna Cooper Pepos*
Barbara Petersen
Marcus Rouning & Heath Ballash
Sarah C. Stout*
Beatrice E. Thompson*
Darby Veeck & Kristin Lynett

Callie Stoker-

Dr. Emily Kalnicky
emilyk@tahomaaudubon.org

Britt (Brittany) McGrath
Part-time Volunteer & Environmental Education Coordinator

Jerry Broads
President
Marsha Williams
Vice President
Joel Chang
Treasurer
Bob Furman
Secretary

Ione Clagett
Gary Geddes
Marjorie Shea
Javier Figueroa
Maria Jost
Nathanael Swecker
Michael Garrity
Robert E. Mack
Art Wang

What will your legacy be?

Making a gift by will is easy!

If you want to help Tahoma Audubon connect people with nature for generations to come, consider including Tahoma Audubon Society in your estate plans. By giving through your will, you can:
• Make a generous gift intention without depleting income
• Join the Feathered Nest Circle – our legacy society
• Honor or memorialize a loved one
• Reduce your estate taxes

We are here to help!
Call 253-565-9278 or email: emilyk@tahomaaudubon.org or visit tahomaaudubon.org/waystogive

We are deeply grateful for your generosity!
How many birds will you find?

21st Annual Great Backyard Bird Count
February 16-19, 2018

Join In! Count birds in your backyard, local park, or wherever you spot a bird, and submit your observations online.
birdcount.org

FREE Family Events with your Local Audubon

When: Saturday, Feb. 17
- Session 1: 9:00—10:30 am
- Session 2: 11:30 am—1:00 pm

Where: Adrian Hess Audubon Center
2917 Morrison Rd W
University Place, WA 98466

How: Registration required. Online or phone: www.tahomaaudubon.org or 253-566-9278

Legislative Preview for 2018
by Bruce Hoeft

A special Senate election last fall allowed Democrats to achieve control of both houses, but some bonds required to fund the capital budget require a 60% approval, so negotiations and trade-offs will be ongoing. Some of the issues likely to be considered during the 2018 short session:

In 2016 the Supreme Court, in the Hirst decision, ruled to constrain new permits to drill and release more than 100,000 non-native salmon into North Sound waters. Another pen was recently closed due to inability to comply with permit conditions. The fish farms create significant pollution, promote fish parasites, and escaped fish from pens threaten native salmon runs. Several legislative bills this session will seek to ban non-native fish farming, and raise standards for existing net pens.

In 2008 the legislature committed the State to reduce its emissions of greenhouse gasses. To reach this goal, Governor Inslee has proposed a tax of $20 per ton of carbon released, half of the money to be used to cover the education-funding deficit, the rest to cover conservation projects, and job retraining. Several other measures imposing fees on carbon pollution will be introduced as well. Furthermore, the Alliance for Jobs and Clean Energy will introduce a carbon tax initiative, addressing many of the same issues, to be included on the ballot this fall.

Audubon Washington will be promoting a plan to encourage the State to adopt a timetable for achieving 100% clean energy, as well as establishing a price on carbon pollution, and creating a low-carbon fuel standard. Audubon Washington will also seek to phase out or ban Atlantic salmon farming in the Sound, and back legislation to promote Rangeland Fire Protection Associations east of the Cascades.

If you would like to contribute to our legislative efforts, please send a message to brucehoeft3@gmail.com. Conservation Committee meetings are in Thompson Hall, room 297 on the UPS campus, the first Tuesday of the month.
How to register: Registration for the classes below will be done through Tahoma Audubon’s website at www.tahomaaudubon.org/education. You can also call or visit the Adriana Hess Audubon Center to register: 253-565-9278. The Tacoma Nature Center is not handling registrations for TAS programs.

Please note: Don’t wait until the last minute to register for classes. If the minimum attendance (5) of a class is not met two business days before the class starts, the class will be canceled and registrants will be refunded. Classes are either held at the Adriana Hess Audubon Center (2917 Morrison Rd W, University Place) or Tacoma Nature Center (1919 S Tyler St, Tacoma).

Scholarships: In an effort to make our classes accessible to all who wish to take them, and thanks to the generosity of our donors, scholarships are available. Please call the office for more details.

Thank you for taking a class (or several)! Part of the registration fee for these classes goes to support Tahoma Audubon’s work and is our primary source of earned income.

Tacoma Audubon Classes: Winter

Winter Birds of Washington State (3 Sessions) 2/5/18 – 2/19/18; Mondays, 6:30 PM – 8:30 PM Adriana Hess Audubon Center (2917 Morrison Rd W, University Place, WA) Fee: $59/TAS Member, $66/Non-member Ages 14 and up

A perfect class for the beginner or intermediate level birders. Learn to identify over 205 winter bird species found in Washington. Class includes, identification of species, habitat and season, locations, and tools needed. Also presented are birding techniques and ethics. Instructor David Kaynor is a member of the Washington Ornithological Society.


NEW: Common Washington Birds (1 Session) 3/7/18, Wednesday, 2:00 PM- 4:00 PM Adriana Hess Audubon Center (2917 Morrison Rd W, University Place, WA) Fee: $20/TAS Member, $25/Non-member Ages 14 and up

Join us for a look at 50 of the most common bird species that are found in Washington State. This class is a great starting place for back yard bird watchers and birds found throughout Washington State. Instructor David Kaynor is a member of the Washington Ornithological Society.

NEW: Birding 101 (1 Session) 3/12/18, Monday, 6:30 PM -7:30PM Adriana Hess Audubon Center (2917 Morrison Rd W, University Place, WA) Fee: $15/TAS Member, $20/Non-member Ages 14 and up

This class covers the things you need to know to be a better birder. Topics will include how to buy optics, field guides and clothing for birding, best feeder foods and practices and the birder’s garden, planning a birding trip, hazards and places to go, along with best time to view. Instructor David Kaynor is a member of the Washington Ornithological Society.

Purchasing a book for your class? We encourage you to shop local or, if you’re shopping on Amazon, to support Tahoma Audubon by starting at https://smile.amazon.com and selecting Tahoma Audubon Society as the charity to receive a portion of your purchase price.

By Marsha Williams, Chairperson “All Out for Environmental Education” is the theme for our Tahoma Audubon Society annual meeting on February 15, 2018 at the Museum of Glass. The focus on environmental education comes as we face increased challenges of climate change on our favorite birds. Thank you for supporting the Tahoma Audubon Teen Intern Scholarship with Tacoma Nature Center. Your generous donations impact over 300 young students in the summer environmental education camps. And there is more good news.

Britt McGrath has been hired as the Volunteer and Environmental Education Coordinator for Tahoma Audubon. Already she has established a Preschool Nature Book Club at Tacoma Nature Center. The education committee recently met with Britt, and we are excited for the energy and enthusiasm she brings to the job. Welcome, Britt!

Citizen science programs offer terrific opportunities to engage our members in national and international birding programs. On February 17, Brenda Miller and Daisy Douglas will hold two sessions of the Great Backyard Bird Count. Register on the TAS website to hold a spot. Anyone can host a GBBC event over the weekend of February 16-19. Share your home feeders with friends and neighbors and submit the counts to birdcount.org. The TAS website provides easy links to the National Audubon resources.

The 19 Annual Youth Bird Drawing Contest kicks off in February with information to Pierce County teachers of grades 1-8. We think the Peregrine Falcon, the Red-tailed Hawk, and the American Kestrel will interest our young artists.

Environmental education is the basis of this very popular contest as the art must reflect understanding of the bird’s habitat and key field marks.

The education committee will again celebrate Thelma Gilmur’s birthday with a walk in her park in Fircrest. Last year 16 people enjoyed the quiet trails, conversation, and some cake and ice cream. We hope you join us for the fun. Gather at 10:30 a.m. on February 24 at Thelma Gilmur Park.

Stephanie Ostmann, of the Nature Book Club and the Poetry in the Park committee, has written an excellent Towhee article about our poetry project. (page 8) Imagine walking a lovely path and coming upon a thoughtful or funny poem. We thank Poetry in the Park is another way to encourage appreciation for nature.

In January, the Thelma Gilmur Education Committee hosted an event for the field trip leaders of Tahoma Audubon. Our field trips are often the first experience of members of Audubon, and our leaders are the chief environmental educators for the community. Last spring the education committee interviewed the field trip leaders, and we were impressed with the enthusiasm and passion they bring to their walks. Our organization is fortunate to have such talented and expert volunteers in our community. Thank you, again, field trip leaders! You are awesome!
February

Bird class and Coffee at Point Ruston
Saturday, February 3rd—9:00 AM to 10:00 AM
Join Brenda Miller from the Slater Museum on a local bird walk!
Meet at the Copperline Apartments on the south side of the playfields, proceed to end of Dresden Lane SW, then turn right into the park and immediately left around the south side of the playfields, take a right onto 104th St SE, and then turn left. The park entrance is on the left. Enter, turn right at the baseball fields and head south to the Heritage and Masters Gardens, past the Pavilion and the Master Gardener’s yard. Call Melissa (253-851-7230) to register for the walk. (She tends to cancel the trip during heavy wind conditions.)

Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge
(Non-TAS sponsored Event)
Monday, February 5th—8:00 AM to 9:00 AM
(SEE ABOVE DESCRIPTION)

Theler Wetlands Bird Walk
March 8th—8:00 AM to 11:00 AM
(SEE ABOVE DESCRIPTION)

Theler Wetlands Bird Walk
March 1st—8:00 AM to 11:00 AM
(SEE ABOVE DESCRIPTION)

March

Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge
March 8th—8:00 AM to 9:00 AM
(SEE ABOVE DESCRIPTION)

Birding at Eagle’s Pride Golf Course at JBLM
Thursday, March 8th—8:00 AM to 11:00 AM
(SEE ABOVE DESCRIPTION)

Wapato Lake
March 1st—8:00 AM to 9:15 AM
Join Brenda Miller from the Slater Museum on a local bird walk.
We will meet at the parking lot off the S 68th St. entrance and take the trails to appreciate the forest and prairie, take a close look at wetland habitat by way of the boardwalk extension, which is an additional 2 miles. Good walking shoes or boots, ringer, water, snacks, and 3 for entry fee, unless otherwise noted.

Theler Wetlands Bird Walk
March 1st—8:00 AM to 10:30 AM
(SEE ABOVE DESCRIPTION)

Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge
March 1st—8:00 AM to 9:00 AM
(SEE ABOVE DESCRIPTION)

Beginning Bird Walk at the Audubon Center
March 12th—8:00 AM to 11:00 AM
(SEE ABOVE DESCRIPTION)

Bill Gaskett Field Trip
Saturday, February 24th—7:00 PM to 9:00 PM
Join master birders, Marcus & Melissa Knapton and Greg Ewing, for a walk in the Audubon Center’s own backyard! Explore the forest and prairie, see many migration species, and finish with a workshop on bird call identification. Contact Greg Ewing at greg3_99@juno.com

Beginning Bird Walk at the Audubon Center
March 19th—8:00 AM to 11:00 AM
(SEE ABOVE DESCRIPTION)

Bird class and Coffee at Point Ruston
Saturday, March 3rd—9:00 AM to 10:00 AM
(SEE ABOVE DESCRIPTION)

Friday, March 2nd—2:00 PM to 3:00 PM
(SEE ABOVE DESCRIPTION)

Bird class and Coffee at Point Ruston
Friday, March 9th—2:00 PM to 3:00 PM
(SEE ABOVE DESCRIPTION)

Beginning Bird Walk at the Audubon Center
March 12th—8:00 AM to 11:00 AM
(SEE ABOVE DESCRIPTION)

Bill Gaskett Field Trip
Saturday, March 3rd—7:00 PM to 9:00 PM
Join master birders, Marcus & Melissa Knapton and Greg Ewing, for a walk in the Audubon Center’s own backyard! Explore the forest and prairie, see many migration species, and finish with a workshop on bird call identification. Contact Greg Ewing at greg3_99@juno.com

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(SEE ABOVE DESCRIPTION)

Bill Gaskett Field Trip
Saturday, March 3rd—7:00 PM to 9:00 PM
Join master birders, Marcus & Melissa Knapton and Greg Ewing, for a walk in the Audubon Center’s own backyard! Explore the forest and prairie, see many migration species, and finish with a workshop on bird call identification. Contact Greg Ewing at greg3_99@juno.com

Bird class and Coffee at Point Ruston
Saturday, March 3rd—9:00 AM to 10:00 AM
(SEE ABOVE DESCRIPTION)
Thank you to all of our CBC participants!

AREA 1: ART WANG, Susan Boynton, Ken Brown, Brandon Clinton, Merci Clinton, Representative Jake Fey, Mona Hahn, Emily Kalnicky, Mitch Kohjima, Curt Lovins, Rob McBeth-Huff, Brenda Miller, Cindy Mirsko, Era Parkes, Chris Rurik, John Vaillette

AREA 2: FAYE MADAMS HANDS, Jerry Broadus and Clarice Clark, Mike Charette, Al Clark, Lucia Faithful, Cheryl Futz, Jerry Messinger, Roger Omnes, Erin Tennessean, Sherrin Thorp, and Maggie Treguer, Cheryl White

AREA 3: DIANE YORGASON-QUINN, Jim Bosley, Carole Breedlove, Vera Cragin, Phil Craven, Pat Damron, David Estoff, Ben Estoff, Wayne Jackson, Jack Leiman, Terry Mace, Fred Matthews, Madeleine and Mark Meniniana, John Moore, Jim O’Donnell, John Repske, Melissa Rimanek, Melissa Sherwood, Carol Smith, Stephen Snyder, John Voigt

AREA 4: ROXY & BILL GIDDINGS, Winfield Giddings, Ken and Neil Bakker, David Bakker, Tracy and Maia Bos, Sheri Clark, Mary Lee Collins, Ken and Julie Cole, Paul Clark, Mike Dollinger, Joni Eastland, Claudia Fennel, Mary Sue Gee, Laura Giddings, Donna LaCasse, Kirk Scarce, Cecelia Schilling, Fred and Dorothy Tobiasson

AREA 5: NATHANIEL SWECKER, Jason and Caleb Arapich, Cindy and Calen Flanagen, Karen and Terry Gibbs, Dee Hammer, Whittier Johnson, Lin Livingston, Susan Livingston, Laurel Parshall, Mary Pearse, Kay Schlimkne, Richard Smithhurst, Russ Smith

AREA 6: MARCUS ROERING, HEATHER BALLASH, Wally Croshaw, Cathy Davidson, Greg Plath, Wayne Sladek

AREA 7: RYAN WIESE, Mike and Carolyn Barry, Bryan Hanson, Shelley Parker

AREA 8: JODY HESS, Rosianne Beck, Kathryn Cooper, Richard Perkins, Justin Sims, Petrie Stockland

BOAT: BRUCE LEHAR, Carol Kulla, Ed Pullen, WM Brooks

AND THANK YOU TO THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE! For providing scrounging food for Hungry Birders: MARSHA WILLIAMS, Jone Clagett, Daisy Douglas, Sally Larson, Martha Scoville, Sharon Selden, Carol Rae Smith, Donna and Denvin Townsend

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**Species**

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--from page one

....CBC

the Wollochet Bay team. Imagine his impression of our birds when his team ran into Macaws! They took a midday break on Fox Island and ran into a flock of them! Yes, really! Turns out there's a woman there who keeps them and lets them out for short flights each morning. Amazingly, they always come home again, which is not usually the case with escaped cage birds. Mik was able to photograph the Macaws, too! He showed the pictures around at the TAS Count Dinner, to great amusement. He fit in with our group very well! How can we keep him from going home again?

One of the famous spectacles in Gig Harbor is the large winter roost of Great Blue Herons in the little forest remnant on the south side of the mouth of the harbor behind the Tides Tavern. We were lucky enough to be on hand again this year to see them fly out and back in again, 50+ strong, not counting the ones who stayed hidden in the dense evergreens. This is a great number, considering that some local heronries have been decimated in recent years by Bald Eagles. The high numbers show there are still Herons nesting somewhere in the area, including historically in this little forest. There was palpable relief in Gig Harbor among many residents and birders when the plan to cut down that forest and put up multi-unit townhouses (One Harbor Point) was scuttled in November after a study by WSFW and input from...
concerned citizens, including our own Jim O'Donnell. But Jeni Woock, Gig Harbor City Council member, tells me that new plans to ax those trees are hatching, so vigilance needs to be maintained.

To see more photos from our CBCs, check out the TAS FLICKR site: https://www.flickr.com/photos/tahomaaudubon/albums/7215766237143147

The three amigos at Gig Harbor's Jerisich Dock, Wayne Jackson, Jim O'Donnell, and Jack Leiman.

By Faye McAdams Hands

A comment heard in 2016, after our Christmas Bird Count participants had been tallied and we came up with a Record Breaking number of 99! Okay, okay! It wasn’t an even 100! But still, it was the most counters that we have ever had in our history of Tahoma Audubon CBCs! In response, this year we did find “one more”…..and then some! We had a mind-boggling 112 participants! Good Job all of You out there in Pierce County Land!

Along with our regulars, we had a lot of new birders looking to experience our CBC Tradition, which is such a Win–Win – for the them, for us, for the birds, and ultimately for the planet!

And once again Citizens for a Healthy Bay offered up one of their perky boats for patrolling our water areas! We are so fortunate to have this option.

And now, the moment that you have all been waiting for! How many adorable Anna’s Hummingbirds did we tabulate?? And the answer is: 138! Yay! A High Count for Anna’s! (A High Count means the highest number counted in any Tahoma Audubon CBC). We also had High Counts for Cackling Geese (4,250) and Hooded Merganser (222).

For our Low Counts, we had only 2 Greater Scaup. A little alarming when looking at the trend.

From 1977-2000, we had an average of 200 Greater Scaup (High Count 419/Low Count 79). From 2001-2016, we had an average of 84 Greater Scaup (High Count 417/Low Count 4).

But, if you can look at a Low Count as a Good Thing, I do have two other Low Counts for this year’s CBC! European Starlings are a Low Count at 1,328! The High Count on this imported species was in 1973 at 17,820! Our other Low Count was another import – the House Sparrow at 131. And all in all, we had good weather – No rain, No snow and No ice. Even with a high temperature of 44, we were all pretty happy! And hungry when we gathered for our delicious Tally Dinner – once again conjured up by our very own Education Committee!

Thank you all, and see you in December! It’s the 15th! Write it down now!!!

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Tahoma Audubon Society Board Candidates

Bob Furman
Bob was born into an Audubon family where his father was President of the Oklahoma Audubon Society and Audubon Screen Tour presenters stayed in his home. Bob is a retired social worker where he supported people with developmental disabilities. He is married to Mary Hart and they are parents to two grown daughters. Bob has 30+ years of involvement with nonprofit organizations.

Brenda Miller
Brenda Miller is an avid birder and field trip leader for Tahoma Audubon. She was first introduced to birds at a young age when her father would show her the chickadees that visited their backyard. She grew more interested in birds while completing her undergraduate degree at University of Puget Sound, and graduated in 2015 with a double major in biology and music. It was during this time that Brenda also started volunteering at the Slater Museum of Natural History on the university campus. Since then, she has been working at the Slater Museum as a member of the education and outreach staff. In addition to leading bird walks, Brenda enjoys bird banding at Morse Wildlife Preserve (a skill that she is still learning so much about). She is also a professional freelance pianist and enjoys being equally active in such diverse interests.

Michael Hassel
Born: February 9, 1948 (Topeka, Kansas)
Wife: Kathy Uruski
Sons: Tucker and Connor
Interests: Family, Our dog, Winston (chocolate lab), Current events, Eye care, ARMS (association of retired medical staff) (from Group Health and, now, Kaiser), Travel, Hiking or taking walks, Photography and videos, Computers and video editing, Cycling (I oversee the web page, blog, forum, photo albums, and videos for our cycling group – The Puylulp Cyclopaths – puyululpyclopaths.com ), Surfing, Bird watching

New Year’s Cruise with ABC!
By Diane Yorgason-Quinn
The Advanced Birding Club (ABC) went cruising on New Year’s Day to start our year lists off with a different kind of bang than those which kept us up late the eve before. Luckily, we had great weather and a great cruise ship (Washington State Ferry Kaleetan) and 24 kindred spirits to share it all with!

We saw lots of good birds, and some saw porpois- es. Harbor Seals and Sea Lions were out in strength. The weather was glorious, and all the mountains of the Olympics and Cascades were out! Emily Kalnicky, director of Tahoma Audubon, and Jerry Broadus, president of TAS, attended and enjoyed it. Everyone was smiling, even in the chill breeze out on the water, especially Eric Dudley & Mary Kay Eflin, who announced their engagement!

The event was bookmarked by falcons!! At the approach Seattle!, None other than Tahoma Audubon director, Emily Kalnicky, out for some air!

Clarice Clark and Jerry Broadus, President of Tahoma Audubon, leave the breeze on deck.

Just a few Common Murres. Alcids in general were not thick today.

Eric and Mary Kay announce their engagement to the group!

Yikes – a paddleboarder in the shadow of Mt. Tahoma as we approach Seattle!

Laurel checks out the life saver!

Laurel captured every wingbeat as this Loon flew overhead on the voyage home.

Could be an advertisement for the ferry system on a beautiful day like today!

Poetry in the Park 2018
Tahoma Audubon will host its second annual Poetry in the Park event on April 8 (1:30 – 3:30) at the Tacoma Nature Center at Snake Lake. The free event celebrates National Poetry month and will feature a nature-themed poetry reading. It is open to the public, with participants invited to read a nature poem by a favorite poet, or an original work of their own. Following the reading the group will walk the trails and discover poems posted along the way.

Posted poems are a new addition to this year’s event. Working with Tacoma Public Library, TAS selected 20 poems, which will be printed on durable signs and divided among four area parks: Adriana Hess Wetland Park in University Place, Thelma Gilmur Park in Firecrest, and Morse Preserve in Graham, in addition to Snake Lake.

The signs will be installed on March 31 and will stay in place until the end of May. We hope walkers will discover the magical blend of poetry and nature in all four parks.

You may sponsor a poem, with a printed notation on the sign, as a friend of Tahoma Audubon or in honor of a loved one. Your $50 tax-deductible contribution will cover the cost of the sign. Sponsorships must be committed by January 31 by calling the Tahoma Audubon office at 253-565-9278 to select a poem to sponsor and choosing a message to include on your sign. Contributions of any amount will be accepted from those who don’t sponsor a poem but want to support this project.

Mark your calendars for April 8. We look forward to seeing all you nature and poetry lovers in the parks this spring. “The forest knows! Where you are. You must let it find you.” (David Wagoner, Lost)
Tacoma Nature Center Volunteer Stewardship

Habitat Restoration Work
All ages welcome, free!
Join us for our regular stewardship activities as we care for the park by removing invasive plant species, re-planting areas with native plants and helping those plants thrive. No experience necessary. Come dressed for the weather and prepared to get dirty. Work parties occur rain or shine! Children must be accompanied by adults.
Feb 2 & 6, 9:00am - 12:00pm
Mar 2 & 6, 9:00am - 12:00pm
Apr 6 & 20, 9:00am - 12:00pm

Tacoma Nature Center Family Adventures

Nature Yoga
Ages 8 months to 12 years old + adults (adult must accompany children) $15.00/adult-child combo, $5.00 for each additional child or adult
Fun, child-centered activities and nature pose awareness are taught with time-honored yoga practice to guide children and an adult partner through warm-up, work-out, strength, cool down and relaxation. Adult attendance is required.
Participants may bring yoga mats or use those provided. Drop-ins welcome if the class is not already full - call ahead to check on status. A portion of the class will be outdoors so dressed for the weather and in layers appropriate for the indoor section. Adults with younger children should feel free to leave after the first 60 minutes but the program will run 75 minutes.
Feb 27, 9:30-10:45am Wetlands Walk
Mar 17, 1:30-2:45pm Spring Equinox
Apr 21, 9:30-10:45am Earth Celebration

Earth Day Peer Peer – Foss Waterway Seaport
Ages 8 and up, $15/person, no member discount
Enjoy a Peer Peer, fun activities to learn about protecting and conserving our Earth, and snacks and hot cocoa all enjoyed in the Foss Waterway’s historic building. No children under 8 and each child under 13 requires their own adult partner.
Apr 14, 7:00 pm - 9:30 pm

Pier Peer in Tacoma – Point Defiance Marina
Ages 8 and up, $10/person, no member discount
Bring your family for an aquatic night-time adventure to explore mysterious marine life below the docks. Warm-up afterward with hot cocoa. Each child must be accompanied by an adult.

Excellent Echinoderms
Learn about stars & cucumbers
Mar 10, 7:30-9:00pm

Family Nature Walks - All ages welcome, free
Explore Tacoma Parks during these seasonal naturalist-led family walks. Discover the amazing plants and animals that live in these parks and how they adapt in the different seasons. Recommended for wheelchairs, strollers or children under 3. Pre-registration requested.

Winter Wonderland
Feb 3, 10am – 11am Wapato Hills Park
Feb 3, 1pm – 2pm Tacoma Nature Center

Feb 10, 10am – 11am Titlow Park
Feb 11, 10am – 11am McCarthey Point
Feb 17, 10am – 11am McKinley Park
Feb 24, 9am – 1pm Meet at the STAR Center
Mar 17, 9am – 1pm Meet at the People’s Center

Family Snow Play Days
Ages 7 and up, $50.00 + tax/family of up to 4, $9.00 + tax/additional person, $45.00 + tax/TNC member family of up to 4, $8.80 + tax/additional member
Have fun sledding, snowshoeing or just playing while making new friends in the mountains! Please bring your own snow toys. Transportation provided to and from the sledding area. Pre-registration required - not available online. Call 253-591-6439.
Feb 24, 7:30-9:30pm Picnic in the Mountains
Mar 17, 9am – 1pm Meet at the Tacoma Nature Center

Tacoma Nature Center Adult Programs

Adult Snowshoe Hike
Ages 18 and up, $65/person, $58.50/TNC member
Join us for an exhilarating easy to moderate hike while basking in the mountains’ winter beauty. No experience necessary.
Transportation and snowshoes provided. Pack a lunch, snacks and water. Pre-registration required.
Feb 10, 9am – 11am Meet at the STAR Center
Mar 10, 9am – 11am Meet at the People’s Center

Movies and Marine Life at the Seaport
Ages 8 and up, $25.00/person, no member discount
Bring your favorite person for a great “date night” at an adults’ only Pier Peer in Tacoma. You will have the chance to see cool critters while night-lighting on the pier, enjoy popcorn and a short film, and cap it off with something sweet all in the Seaport’s 17 year-old warehouse location. Pre-registration required.
Feb 17, 7pm - 9:30pm

Franklin Ghost Town Hike
Ages 50 and up, $40.00/person, no member discount
Take a short hike up to the site of the old Franklin Mine. Explore the history and beauty of the Franklin area and the Green River. Must be able to walk for 2-4 miles on uneven surfaces (trail). Transportation provided – meet at Park District Headquarters. Pre-registration required.
Mar 13, 9am - 4pm

Federation Forest Hike
Ages 50 and up, $40.00/person, no member discount
Explore this old growth grove of trees along the White River near the town of Greenwood. Transportation provided – meet at Park District Headquarters. Pre-registration required.
Apr 17, 9am - 4pm

Spring Break Youth Camp
Outdoor Adventure Spring Break Camp
Ages 10 – 12, $240/camper, $216/TNC member
Join us for a week of fun outside. Camp includes hiking, kayaking, and canoeing. Add an overnight camping experience at the Tacoma Nature Center Thursday night until Friday morning for $40.00 extra including dinner–Thursday night, breakfast and lunch Friday. Pre-registration required.
Apr 2-6 9am-4pm Meet at the Tacoma Nature Center
Thurs–Fri Overnight Add-on: Apr 5–6 4pm-9pm Additional $40 ($36)

Tacoma Nature Center Homeschool Science
Homeschool students explore science through hands-on experiments and activities. Register early – these classes fill quickly! Note – topics are repeated during the month, so select class appropriate for your child’s age, knowledge and abilities. Contact Lauren with questions or for more information at 591-6439 or laurenh@ tacomparks.com.

Intermediate Level Homeschool Science
Ages 10-12, $12 per student, $10.80 per member child
To participate in this class, students should be able to multiply and divide numbers, add and subtract fractions. Each class is offered twice, choose one time.
Feb 15, 9:00am–1:00pm All About Animals
10:00am–3:00pm All About Animals
Mar 15, 9:00am–1:00pm Green Machines
10:00am–3:00pm Green Machines
Apr 19, 9:00am–1:00pm Under the Microscope
10:00am–3:00pm Under the Microscope

Tacoma Nature Center Homeschool Adventures

Homeschool Outdoor Adventure Trips
Ages 10 – 15
These trips are geared toward students enrolled in homeschool science at the Tacoma Nature Center. These trips are for students to get to know one another, build leadership skills and experience new outdoor activities. Trips may include hiking, kayaking, mountain biking etc. and will occur once a month on Wednesdays. Times, locations, and fees will vary depending on the activity. Each trip will leave from the Tacoma Nature Center. Transportation and all equipment provided. Pre-registration required.
Feb 14, 12:30-5pm Sister Museum $10, TNC Member $9
Mar 20, 9:00am–12pm Seymour Conservatory $10, TNC Member $9
Apr 25, 9am–4pm GeoAcaching at Pt Defiance $15, TNC Member $13.50

Tacoma Nature Center Thursday night until Friday morning for $40.00 extra including dinner–Thursday night, breakfast and lunch Friday. Pre-registration required.

Tahoma Nature Center Special Events
Native Plant Sale
May 5, 9:00am - 2:00pm
Landscape your yard with plants that are native to your area. Planting natives ensures the conservation of our precious water resources and provides habitat for local birds, mammals and insects. A list of available plants will be posted on the website by 1:00pm on Friday, May 4. www.tacomanaturecenter.org. Come early for the best selection.
WELCOME BRITT (BRITTANY) MCGRATH TO TAHOMA AUDUBON SOCIETY!

By Emily Kalnicky

I am delighted to announce that Brittany (Britt) McGrath has joined us as our new, Part-Time Volunteer & Environmental Education Coordinator! Her first day was January 8, 2018. Britt’s time will be split between coordinating environmental education programs and also working with our volunteers. One of Britt’s initial area of focus for Environmental Education Programs includes a pre-school nature book club in partnership with the Tacoma Nature Center. Stay tuned to our website, social media, and fliers at the Audubon Center for details on this, and future Environmental Education Programs!

Britt’s connection to Audubon goes back to an internship program in Environmental Education she participated in at the Schlitz Audubon Nature Center, located near Milwaukee, WI. As a part of that internship, Britt worked with youth programming focused on raptors, while completing her BS in Environmental Geography from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Dedication and a passion to pursue a career in the environmental field brought Britt to Washington where she ran an urban farm and a native plant nursery. Outside of Britt’s role here at Tahoma Audubon Society, you are likely to see her around town in one of many leadership roles she engages with, including: Tacoma Needs Trees, Pierce County’s Sustainable Resources Division, and Tacoma Tool Library! Additionally, Britt enjoys a deep connection with the natural environment, love of being outdoors, gardening, yoga, and hula hooping! As you can see, Britt brings a solid professional and educational background to Tahoma Audubon Society, and that, along with an upbeat and warm personality, will enable her to help Tahoma Audubon Society continue to support our volunteers and grow and expand the ways we connect people with nature through environmental education! Please join me in welcoming Britt into our “flock”! You can meet Britt at our upcoming 49th Annual Meeting & Celebration on February 15 (details in this Towhee and on our website, tahomaaudubon.org).

Environmental Education Programs includes a pre-school nature book club in partnership with the Tacoma Nature Center. Stay tuned to our website, social media, and fliers at the Audubon Center for details on this, and future Environmental Education Programs!

Book Club Field Trip to Billy Frank, Jr. Nisqually Wildlife Refuge

By Dennis Townsend

Fourteen members of Tahoma Audubon Book Club braved a rainy day for an interpretative walk and discussion at the Billy Frank, Jr. Nisqually Wildlife Refuge on November 28. The subject matter of the hike was the club’s recent read, “The Bitter Waters of Medicine Creek” by Richard Kluger, which chronicled the history and relationships of Native American tribes, settlers and government officials in the early days of the Washington Territory, as well as the Medicine Creek treaty, which was signed near here in December, 1854. Lynn Corliss, an instructor at South Puget Sound Community College, led the hike, talk and informative discussion. Several species of birds were also spotted, including brown creepers, a ruby-crowned kinglet, an unhappily drenched bald eagle, as well as a wayward deer.
November 16, 2017 to January 15, 2018

New Members

Returning Members

*Canopy-level member
**Monthly canopy-level member

Special thanks to our canopy-level members for their sustaining support!

Exploring Nature Book Club

Art Wang was the facilitator for our December book, “The Home Place: Memoirs of a Colored Man’s Love Affair with Nature” by J. Drew Lanham. Art arranged for a discussion in “real time” with Professor Lanham at our meeting. Book club members were able to ask the author many questions about his experience growing up black in North Carolina, his love of birds and nature, studying ornithology and eventually becoming a Professor of Ornithology at the University of North Carolina. Lanham also serves on the National Audubon Organization and has contributed to the positions that National Audubon has taken on many environmental and climate concerns as well as greater inclusion efforts. Thank you so much Art for arranging for this exciting meeting.

Our January meeting discussed “Coyote America” by Dan Flores. Ellen Kohijima sent three questions regarding the book to members and facilitated our discussion. Flores gave us much information of about coyotes and outlined the war between man and coyote. This book like some others we’ve read over the years, emphasizes the evolving view of nature and man’s involvement with it. This was an excellent introduction to coyote history both biology and ecologically.

Our next book club meeting will be on February 6, 2018. Helen Engle will act as facilitator for “A River Lost - The Life and Death of the Columbia” by Blaine Harden. Book Club meetings occur on the first Tuesday of the month at the Adriana Hess Audubon Center at 1:30 pm in University Place. Future reads are always posted on the Tahoma Audubon website.

Eco Habit: Choose foods with less packaging to reduce waste.

At our January meeting we also chose future books for both the Exploring Nature Book Club and The Night Owl Book Club. Future Book Club reads include: March 6th and 20th: “Birding without Borders” by Noah Stryker, facilitated by Judy Best.

April 3rd and 17th: Poetry Month: “Bright Wings” an anthology edited by Billy Collins, Illustrations by Sibele. Or select a poet of your own choosing.

May 1st and 15th: “Desert Solitaire” by Edward Abbey, facilitated by Marsha Williams.


October 2nd and 16th: “Two in the Far North” by Margaret Murie, facilitated by Stephanie Ostmann.

The Night Owl Book Club

The Night Owl Book Club will be reading the same selections as the Exploring Nature Book Club.

The evening group meets at King’s Book Store at 7 pm, 218 St Helen’s Ave, Tacoma.

Book club members from the day and evening clubs who purchase the selections at King’s will receive a joint membership with National and Tahoma Audubon. As an Introductory Member of TAS, you will receive a joint membership with National and Tahoma Audubon and receive Audubon Magazine for one year.

Renewing your chapter membership ensures that we can collectively continue to do our work in Pierce County. At all levels, Tahoma Audubon members will receive a discount for classes and workshops where fees are paid; a 10% discount in our Nature Shop; support of Important Bird Areas (IBA) and state and national conservation agendas; a newsletter (the Towhee) mailed to their home, unless they opt for an electronic notification; free participation in field trips; free family events; recognition in our newsletter; and invitations to special events and volunteer opportunities.

For questions about membership, call 253-565-9278 or email emilyk@tahomaaudubon.org.

Tahoe Audubon is the Pierce County Chapter of National Audubon. As an Introductory Member of TAS, you will receive a joint membership with National and Tahoma Audubon and receive Audubon Magazine for one year.

Renewing your chapter membership ensures that we can collectively continue to do our work in Pierce County. At all levels, Tahoma Audubon members will receive a discount for classes and workshops where fees are paid; a 10% discount in our Nature Shop; support of Important Bird Areas (IBA) and state and national conservation agendas; a newsletter (the Towhee) mailed to their home, unless they opt for an electronic notification; free participation in field trips; free family events; recognition in our newsletter; and invitations to special events and volunteer opportunities.

Northern California Audubon Society

Tahoe Audubon is the Pierce County Chapter of National Audubon. As an Introductory Member of TAS, you will receive a joint membership with National and Tahoma Audubon and receive Audubon Magazine for one year.

Renewing your chapter membership ensures that we can collectively continue to do our work in Pierce County. At all levels, Tahoma Audubon members will receive a discount for classes and workshops where fees are paid; a 10% discount in our Nature Shop; support of Important Bird Areas (IBA) and state and national conservation agendas; a newsletter (the Towhee) mailed to their home, unless they opt for an electronic notification; free participation in field trips; free family events; recognition in our newsletter; and invitations to special events and volunteer opportunities.

Oak $600yr or $50/mo. online
Cedar $300yr or $25/mo. online
Fir $144yr or $12/mo. online

Family/Dual Senior $40
Military (active & retired) $35

For questions about membership, call 253-565-9278 or email emilyk@tahomaaudubon.org.