Celebrating Birds: Anticipating the Spring Migration

We are calling this issue of the Towhee the “Migration” issue in honor of our feathered friends and the amazing feats they accomplish on a regular basis. Not to mention the palpable excitement of birders as we anticipate the arrival of our summer residents. We will of course also highlight the Christmas Bird Count results and provide you with a few stories focused on this wonderful event. In addition, we will launch Birdathon for 2019 and highlight the beginnings of our TAS “Big Year.” We hope you enjoy this issue and find it brings you a little closer into the world of birds.

...Meanwhile Across the Water

by Diane Yorgason-Quinn

The Tahoma Audubon Christmas Bird Count (CBC) on December 15th extended across the water to south Gig Harbor and Fox Island (area 3), as well as the surrounding waters, which were surveyed by a crack team of pelagic birders. The loyal peninsula counters ran a little short of Bald Eagles this year (but that's OKAY!), but had some good sightings otherwise, including pretty fair numbers of Bonaparte’s Gulls, White-throated Sparrows, and Hutton’s Vireos. A species of particular interest to us on the peninsula was Great Blue Heron. As many of you know, their famous winter roost in the Douglas Fir stand at the mouth of Gig Harbor has been in peril, as the owners wanted to log it and put up high-rise condominiums, thus removing the last vestige of waterfront forest along the southern touristy shore of the harbor. But recent city elections put some excellent conservationists into office who worked with Tahoma Audubon and Jim O’Donnell and others to save it. The last couple of years, Jim and I had been on the CBC team that covered that area and documented, with photos, at least 50 herons (just counting the ones we could see, but there were undoubtedly more) in that stand. We believe those photos were instrumental in the decision to save the forest. In an area where heronries have been devastated by eagle predation, losing a major winter roost would have just been one more blow to the herons that we love and that visitors to Gig Harbor love.

This year was our first CBC visit since this site was sold to the City of Gig Harbor and turned into a park. Early in February they accepted name suggestions for the park and will decide soon what to call it. I hope they don’t choose a name with “heron” in it, since the roost seems to have been disrupted by all the activity, new trails, etc. But maybe the herons will get used to it and roost there again. We only had 5 to 10 herons this year when Vicki Biltz, Jack Leiman, and I watched there for the CBC, instead of 50 to 60 in the previous couple of years. CBC data helped save this beloved mini forest, just one example of the many times CBC citizen science data has been used over the past century. Everyone has access to all the data since the CBC was instituted in 1901 at: https://www.audubon.org/content/american-birds-annual-summary-christmas-bird-count

Two weeks after the Tahoma Audubon CBC, many of our counters met again to count the north Gig Harbor/South Kitsap peninsula areas for the Vashon CBC. Tahoma Auduboners have been doing this count since it started about See "Meanwhile" on page 4
Six Month Check-up

By Matt Mega

February 28th marked the completion of six months on the job for this rookie Executive Director. I think the best way I can sum up these first few months is this: every day I pull into the Adrianna Hess parking lot say good morning to our birds at the feeder, smile, make a strong pot of coffee and seemingly head home for the day. Yes, my work day follows that famous cliché “time flies when you are having fun!”

The downside to this fun, however, is that I never seem to have enough time to accomplish the tasks at hand. I want to do more. Luckily, with an army of dedicated and caring volunteers, there is always support just around the corner. Let’s take the annual dinner for example. This is a major event for our organization and is no small task. The Membership Committee led by Margie Shea does the majority of the heavy lifting, but it is a big project. The membership team of Margie Shea, Lalenia Maria, Karen Gillis (and Terry) is supported by Britt McGrath, several teen interns and numerous other volunteers. From my vantage point they are a well-oiled machine.

Volunteers lead many of Tahoma Audubon’s efforts including, the conservation, membership and education committees, field trips, Christmas Bird Count and managing the front desk. While the next 50 years will certainly bring change, the fact remains that volunteers will always provide the solid foundation on which we all stand. Thank you Tahoma Audubon volunteers!

First: Matt, Margie and Roxy lead the singing of Happy Birthday to TAS. Second: Britt and Gary enjoying the Annual Dinner. Third: Matt, Margie and Dale celebrating Dale’s original art work (Goshawk) hanging at Adriana Hess Audubon Center.

Deceased

The Tahoma Audubon Society was chartered in 1969. TAS advocates for the protection of wildlife and promotes conservation through education and activities that enrich its member’s experiences in and with the natural world. The Towhee is a publication of the Tahoma Audubon Society (TAS). The Tahoma Audubon Society was chartered in 1969. TAS advocates for the protection of wildlife and promotes conservation through education and activities that enrich its member’s experiences in and with the natural world. The Towhee is published quarterly. Submissions of articles and photographs of birds, bird lore, natural history, conservation, and environmental education are reviewed and considered for inclusion by the editor. Copy is due by the 15th of the month prior to publication and may be sent by e-mail, disk, or typed.

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REFLECTIONS

Annual Dinner: Flying Into Our 50th

By Matt Mega

Tahoma Audubon's annual meeting took place on February 16 at the Tacoma Art Museum. This very special evening launched our 50th Anniversary year. Official attendance was 143 members, friends and family. The night was full of reminiscing, meeting new friends and enjoying some bites to eat. Music was provided by the Happy Sinners and was a great overture for the entire night. We also want to thank Hello Cupcake for donating treats. Lucy Patton designed the incredible 50th Anniversary logo, and Maria Jost donated the beautiful artwork for the scholarship raffle. At the end of the night Jim O'Donnell's daughter Mary won the artwork.

Regular business included the official election of three new Board of Directors: Scott Markowitz, Vicki Blitz and David Richardson. Margi Shea and Marsha Williams were re-elected. The evening also included a special film presentation; "We Are Conservationists" produced by Sarah Smith with audio editing by Shawn Smith. This 50 year retrospective framed perfectly the evening and Tahoma Audubon's long history of conservation and education.

The most exciting part of the program was the opportunity to present five individuals with awards. Martha Scoville and Art Wang received the Distinguished Service Award for a TAS member; Casey Hubbell and Kelsey Alshememry of Yoga Wild received the Distinguished Service Award for a community member, and Jim O’Donnell and Dale Thompson received the Thelma Gilmur and Helen Engle Legacy Award. Honoring this deserving group of folks in our 50th year added to the evening’s celebration. But wait, there is more. A special award of Distinguished Service to the Board of Directors was presented to Margi Shea. This new award recognizes a Board member who has gone above and beyond the call of duty. Thank you to everyone who attended and helped make our 2019 Annual meeting such a success.

Top Right: Casey and Jo, Middle: Sarah and Shawn 50th Anniversary Video creators. Bottom Row: Dale Thompson, Jim O’Donnell; Nathanael, Eric and Martha; Curt, Art, Nancy and Dorothy.

Tahoma 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 your 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, Cedar, and Fir membership levels will receive additional invitations to exclusive events. All membership fees are 100% tax deductible.

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

Membership Level Options:

**New Members**

<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Introductory Membership $20</strong></th>
<th>All new members receive a joint membership with National and Tahoma Audubon for 1 year, including the Audubon Magazine and the Towhee mailed to your home.</th>
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<td><strong>New Chapter Membership Levels:</strong></td>
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**INDIVIDUAL LEVELS**

| Individual Renewal | $30 |
| Senior Individual (65y.o.+ | $25 |
| Student/Jr. Audubon | $15 |
| (Under 18 and/or college students) |

**HOUSEHOLD LEVELS**

| 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 |

*Tip: If you have more than one senior in your household and would like to both be members and receive full benefits, consider joining at one of the household levels, which would cost less than 2 senior memberships.

**New Members**

| Member(s) Name: | |
| Address: | |
| City: | Zip: |
| Phone: | Email: |
| Message: | |

You may also join or renew online at: [www.tahomaaudubon.org/membership](http://www.tahomaaudubon.org/membership)

We also encourage you to support National Audubon Society by renewing directly with them.
Thank you to all of the CBC Participants!

Species | AREA | TOTAL
--- | --- | ---
Grt Wh. Frntd Goose | 1 | 1
Cackling Goose | 2 | 84 | 10 | 338 | 96 | 20 | 1070 | 150 | 1770
Canada Goose | 121 | 174 | 243 | 541 | 493 | 147 | 286 | 51 | 2056
Trumpeter Swan | 2 | 2
Wood Duck | 24 | 5 | 7 | 30 | 16 | 36 | 2 | 178
Eurasian Wigeon | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 8 | 19 | 4 | 5 | 17
American Wigeon | 417 | 363 | 400 | 163 | 102 | 41 | 63 | 127 | 123 | 1819
Mallard | 159 | 272 | 91 | 115 | 98 | 343 | 74 | 133 | 4 | 1289
Cinnamon Teal | 1 | 1
Northern Shoveler | 28 | 15 | 830 | 1 | 36 | 2 | 874
Northern Pintail | 29 | 2 | 36 | 30 | 103
Green-winged Teal | 147 | 45 | 48 | 7 | 3 | 250
Canvasback | 1 | 10 | 1 | 12
Redhead | 2 | 2
Ring-necked Duck | 9 | 118 | 6 | 890 | 8 | | 1031
Greater Scap | 4 | 8
Lesser Scap | 6 | 1 | 4 | 38 | 1 | 49
Harlequin Duck | 4 | 7 | 99 | 92 | 3 | 1 | 191 | 431
Surf Scoter | 7 | 38 | 99 | 92 | 3 | 1 | 191 | 431
White-winged Scoter | 1 | 13 | 22 | 36
Black Scoter | 1 | 1
Bufflehead | 5 | 75 | 77 | 11 | 23 | 332 | 12 | 34 | 103 | 672
Common Goldeneye | 11 | 37 | 43 | 1 | 27 | 150 | 3 | 172 | 444
Barrow's Goldeneye | 64 | 114
Hooded Merghanser | 5 | 16 | 9 | 1 | 41 | 10 | 27 | 1 | 110
Common Merghanser | 3 | 66 | 28 | 20 | 11 | 506 | 3 | 12 | 649
Rd-brstd Merghanser | 13 | 15 | 18 | 38 | 12 | 1 | 125 | 222
Ruddy Duck | 3 | 10 | 11
Ring-nkd pheasant | 1 | 1
California Quail | 9 | 9
Red-throated Loon | 3 | 4
Pacific Loon | 9 | 9
Common Loon | 2 | 5 | 11 | 18

Species | AREA | TOTAL
--- | --- | ---
Pied-billed Grebe | 5 | 1 | 12 | 2 | 41 | 3 | 65
Horned Grebe | 24 | 30 | 8 | 1 | 12 | 1 | 52 | 128
Red-necked Grebe | 8 | 2 | 20 | 14 | 47 | 91
Eared Grebe | 11 | 11
Western Grebe | 3 | 2 | 66 | 50 | 101 | 222
Clark's Grebe | 1 | 1
Brandt's Cormorant | 4 | 49 | 6 | 42 | 101
Dbl brstd Cormorant | 58 | 25 | 103 | 1 | 36 | 105 | 11 | 33 | 277 | 649
Pelagic Cormorant | 2 | 4 | 203 | 4 | | 40 | 172 | 425
Great Blue Heron | 2 | 43 | 15 | 5 | 22 | 8 | 2 | 6 | 9 | 116
Green Heron | 1 | 1
Bald Eagle | 4 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 9 | 4 | 2 | 15 | 49
Northern Harrier | 2 | 2
Sharp-shinned Hawk | 1 | 1 | 2 | 4
Cooper's Hawk | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 11
Accipiter sp. | 1 | 1
Red-tailed Hawk | 12 | 6 | 9 | 6 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 43
Merlin | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 7
Peregrine Falcon | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 5
Virginia Rail | 17 | 1 | 7
American Coot | 3 | 65 | 21 | 1087 | 12 | 1188
Kildeer | 51 | 5 | 9 | 6 | 1 | 72
Spotted Sandpiper | 4 | 4
Black Turnstone | 13 | 4 | 17
Least Sandpiper | 2 | 2
Dunlin | 7 | 7
Wilson's Snipe | 10 | 8 | 11
Bonaparte's Gull | 10 | 60 | 38 | 47 | 155
Mew Gull | 430 | 305 | 5 | 297 | 1023 | 2060
Ring-billed Gull | 26 | 1 | 7 | 34
California Gull | 5 | 93 | 98
Herring Gull | 3 | 6
Thayer's Gull | 4 | 15
Western Gull | 1 | 2

... Meanwhile

20 years ago, and our numerous participants from Tahoma Audubon are greatly appreciated. This time my partners were Jim O'Donnell, the “father” of the Tahoma Audubon Christmas Bird Count, and Faye McAdams Hands, the current TAS CBC coordinator. We had a lot of fun and found even more birds than on December 15th, including a large flock of Eurasian Col porated Doves. The Burley Lagoon team, led by Art Wang, found 4 Black Scoters, a really good find! And those crazy Nuthatches seemed to be everywhere this winter.

At press time, we are just getting over the horrid February weather, leaving us nostalgic for the weather of the CBCs. Let’s hope for that good weather again this coming December for the 120th CBC and TAS’ 50th!

Below 1: Rosanne, Joann, Vicki (Marsha & Carol Rae). Below 2: Marsha, Sharon, Martha, Ellen and Carol Rae.
As we wrap up another Christmas Bird Count (CBC), it’s always fun to look over the numbers and compare them to past Counts.

The two main notes of significance were in the numbers of our Anna’s Hummingbird, and the California (Alert! Name Change in effect!) Scrub-Jay in contrast to our native Steller’s Jay.

First, our adorable Anna’s Hummingbird. In 2017 we had a High Count (HC) of 138 individuals. Up from a previous HC of 122 in 2015, and 10 in 1999. This year’s CBC brought us 161! An even bigger HC! I can’t wait to see what we tally in 2019….

Next, the Jays. Our CBC in 1999 was our first year of having California Scrub-Jay – then called Western Scrub Jay before the recent split into California and Woodhouse’s Scrub-Jay. (Woodhouse’s is typically found in the Rockies, and further east and south of Washington). We counted 1, with Steller’s Jay at 96. Since then, the Scrubs have steadily risen, although never being more than roughly one-half of the Steller’s Jay totals at their highest. (Last year we had 42 Scrubs to 149 Steller’s). 2018 gave us a new HC for California, and the first time that they have in fact outnumbered Steller’s: 98 California Scrub-Jay and 94 Steller’s Jay.

As far as weather, we were treated to about the best that you can hope for mid-December in the Pacific Northwest: low of 40, high of 48 and NO RAIN! Surely you jest!??!

We were also blessed with another year of partnership with Citizens for A Healthy Bay taking our boat crew out to scour our waters for waterfowl. Thank you so much! We really couldn’t do it without you!

And how true that statement is in general – we couldn’t do it without all of the counters (83!), feeder watchers, and the food fairies of the Education Committee providing victuals for our Tally Dinner. It really does take a village to raise a Christmas Bird Count!

See you all in December!

Photos: Jim O’Donnell “father” of the Tahoma Audubon’s CBC with Diane (below) and Faye (right).

Anna’s Hummingbird Here To Stay!
by Faye McAdams Hands

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Migration 2019 www.tahomaaudubon.org
CONSERVATION CORNER

Twenty-Five Years Of Preserving Bird Habitats - One Conflict At a Time

by Kirk Kirkland

Twenty-five years ago when I began writing stories for the Towhee, the Nisqually Delta Association, TAS, and other partners opposed a large shipping dock proposed for the Dupont area. Our partners were concerned that the noise and lights from the dock would affect the Nisqually Wildlife Refuge and disturb residents on Anderson Island across from the dock.

Meetings at Helen Engle’s house with our attorney and partners led to a negotiated settlement with the gravel company. The dock was built to a minimum size with space for loading one barge at a time with a mechanical loader. A $1.5 million settlement was used to expand the Wildlife Refuge along the east side of the river. It also preserved the hillside above the refuge in its natural state.

Years later the company wanted to mine a new gravel section that would lower the ground water. Again we negotiated a settlement that re-routed water from a creek into a deteriorating wetland near Dupont’s Northwest Landing. The wetland is now a popular birding site in the area.

Other controversial issues were negotiated to preserve habitat that birders enjoy today. Spanaway Marsh and Audubon Springs were destined to become a four-lane state highway. Then the Woodbrook Hunt Club, stable owners, and Conservation Northwest joined TAS in opposing the Cross Base Highway. The demise of the highway was the result of a negotiated settlement with the Secretary of Transportation and our partners. The road would have destroyed wildlife habitat of 800 acres of prairie, wetlands and forests which today remains an Important Bird Area for TAS members.

The County’s Open Space Task Force began with a partnership with the National Park Service and countywide meetings. In 2011 land trusts, farm organizations, trail groups, Sierra Club and tribes sat down together and set goals for how the county would acquire properties over the next 10 years and spend $30 million.

Task Force members including the Pierce Conservation District, Forterra, and local farmers then studied the most vulnerable valley farms in the region and created a shared conservation strategy. By working together the group has protected over 10 farms, totaling over 800 acres. They continue to buy new farms every two years doubling the county’s funding of $3 million annually by finding matching funds.

There are many stories like these that show how TAS has partnered with other groups and used negotiations to add to the County’s open space lands. This is the core of the TAS mission: preserving places where people connect to nature.

At the April Monthly Meeting of TAS at the Tacoma Nature Center, you can hear more stories about birding areas on the county’s open space map.

- A proposal for a 300 acre elk viewing pasture near Ashford on the drive to Mt Rainier could have become a 70,000 square foot shopping center with a golf course and convention center.
- The Morse Wildlife Preserve began as a gift of a 50 acre farm to TAS and became over 150 acre partnership with Forterra that has lasted for over 20 years.
- An 80 acre Fairfax forest was negotiated into preservation of over 160 acres of forests and a potential new campground near the Carbon River Entrance to Mt Rainier.

Along the way, I learned about the Audubon Way of political activism from Helen Engle. She has been the guiding force that has allowed TAS to remap the county and turn a half dozen bird habitats into preserved open space – mostly through finding partners and negotiations.

Kirk Kirkland is Conservation Committee Chair. He has lived in Pierce County for 40 years.

Photos: Spanaway Marsh and Elk grazing in a protected open space.
Legislature Eyes Overturning Ban On Neurotoxic Pesticides

by Kirk Kirkland

In 2015 the Department of Ecology (DOE) granted a permit for shellfish growers to spray imidacloprid, a Neonicotinoids pesticide on oyster beds in Willapa Bay. The pesticide is banned by 49 states and the European Union.

Once the helicopter spraying began, restaurant owners in Seattle were concerned the oysters and clams were dangerous to eat. The public outcry forced DOE to withdraw the permit.

In 2016 the shellfish growers’ association applied to spray imidacloprid again -- this time on burrowing shrimp -- a native species. DOE published their studies showing the dangers and then denied the application. Growers promptly appealed the decision to the state Pollution Control Board with the hearing set for September 2019.

Not wanting to miss a summer of spraying and oyster growing, the shellfish interests found legislators to sponsor three bills that would declare an “economic emergency” to permit the use of imidacloprid in Willapa Bay starting May 2019. The bills also appropriate $1.5 million to cover costs.

On February 19 Audubon Society and other Coalition members testified before legislative committees in Olympia. By press time we don’t know if the bills were defeated.

Four non-profit groups took legal action to uphold the Ecology’s prohibition with the hearing scheduled for September 2019.

“Salmon, forage fish and migratory bird populations in Willapa Bay and Grays Harbor are in dramatic decline after decades of pesticide spraying by the shellfish industry,” said Laura Hendricks, director of the Coalition to Protect Puget Sound Habitat and one of the appellants.

“There's absolutely no question that this Neonicotinoids insecticide will harm crustaceans and shellfish,” said Nathan Donley, a senior scientist at the Center for Biological Diversity, one of the appellants. “Washingtonians don't want our beloved coast treated like a hazardous-waste dump.”

Neonicotinoids insecticide is a leading cause of pollinator and bee declines according to Amy van Saun, an attorney with Center for Food Safety, another one of the appellants. “Spraying the pesticide on oyster beds affects nearby areas covered by incoming tides and Dungeness crab.”

“Oyster growers in Willapa Bay have every right to do business in these areas, but risking public health by demanding to cover the area with toxic chemicals is over the line,” said Andrew Hawley with the Western Environmental Law Center.

Public outcry prior to 2018 led several oyster growers to change to organic methods to grow oysters. It requires more equipment, but organic growers were able to sell oysters at a higher price. Still the majority of the growers’ association insist that they cannot change their style of shellfish cultivation.

Senate Bill 5626 and House Bills 1611 and 1037, are currently in committee and seek to legislatively overturn the DOE’s decision even before the hearing of the Pollution Control Board begins.

Attend TAS Conservation Committee meetings to learn more about this shoreline issue. Meetings are held first Tuesday at University of Puget Sound at 6.30 to 8.30 p.m.

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Healthy Backyard Habitat Workshop

March 23, Saturday (12:30 - 3 p.m.)

Lakewood Community Center, Room 103
9112 Lakeview Drive, Lakewood, WA

Free registration: www.tahomaaudubon.org/healthyhabitat

Community Workshop

Learn how planned landscaping in our neighborhoods and back yards can help with salmon recovery while bringing butterflies and bird song to Lakewood.

• Only two salmon runs spawn in Chambers Creek and we improve our water quality. Healthy yard habitats filter runoff and will bring more salmon into Lakewood’s lakes and streams.

• Bees are endangered and are critical for the pollination of our food and flower gardens. Flowering native plants invite butterflies and bees into your garden and help ensure their long term survival.

• Layers of native plants and trees attract birds that remove bugs without pesticides. Learn how to attract hummingbirds, towhees, and other urban species and reduce your time spent on lawncare, as well.
Thelma Gilmur Education Committee Report – Bird Education!
by Britt McGrath

Our new “Explore the Salish Sea” program has reached just over 250 4th grade students in Tacoma and in the Chambers/Clover Creek Watershed. Every student receives their own copy of Explore the Salish Sea by Joseph Gaydos and Audrey DeLella Benedict to take home or for continued classroom learning. In this book students learn about the unique Salish Sea: its importance in our region and globally, the habitat it provides to animals and how to be a “Salish Sea Hero.” The accompanying classroom activity helps students understand the connection of their watershed to the Salish Sea ecosystem. Students learn what a watershed is, how it is connected to the habitat of the Rhinoceros Auklet, Orcas and Puffins and what they can do to keep their watershed healthy. Beautiful images of a Rhinoceros Auklet diving, a pod of Orcas swimming, and a Puffin skipping across the water help children visualize the beauty of the Salish Sea. “Explore the Salish Sea” is helping to foster the next generation of conservationists in Pierce County!

The 2019 Youth Bird Drawing Contest theme is “50 Years of Population Shift” and we are accepting entries from youth in Pierce County in grades 1-8 until April 30th. The chosen birds are: Anna's Hummingbird, Western Grebe and California Scrub Jay. According to the TAS Christmas Bird Count records, all of these birds have seen population shift within the last 20 years. We have provided additional information for students to investigate the causes of bird population shift in Pierce County.

The Thelma Gilmur Education Committee is dedicated to creating and offering programs that connect people to nature and foster a sense of curiosity and responsibility to conserve and steward the environment.

Photos:
Left: Young students create watershed models. Above: Britt provides instruction to young environmentalists

Poetry In the Park Expands
by Marsha Williams

The 3rd annual Poetry in the Park event will be Sunday, April 7, 2019 from 1:30 – 3:30 pm at Tacoma Nature Center. We invite participants to read a favorite nature-themed poem by a published poet or some of their own work. Following the reading, the group will enjoy the poetry trail at the park.

New, exciting developments: Good projects can develop faster than expected. The following new activities, new poems, new signs, new sponsors will join the Tahoma Audubon poetry project in 2019.

Thanks to the work of Michelle Massero from the Tacoma Public Library System and Kristine Countryman of Pierce County Library System, a Poet-Tree Workshop will be held March 23, 2019 from 1:30 to 3:30 pm at Tacoma Nature Center. This free event is open to the public. Participants will develop poems to display on a Poet-Tree.

The Rotary Club of Lakewood has generously granted $500 to install 10 new poetry signs on the Waughop Lake Trail at Fort Steilacoom Park. The grant will finance design and printing expenses for the signs.

These new poems will include our 50th anniversary logo. We hope the many people walking the trail around the lake will pause, read the signs, and reflect on the beauty of nature around them.

Chirp and Company, a popular retail outlet for birding supplies and yard art located in the Proctor District, has contributed $200 to reprint 4 signs damaged last year. Liz Bright, owner, likes the opportunity to participate in this project. These four signs will be at Snake Lake Park.

Poetry Walks can be found from April 1-May 31 in these five parks:
Fort Steilacoom Park at 8714 87th Ave. SW, Lakewood, WA (Sponsored by The Rotary Club of Lakewood)
Snake Lake Park at 1919 So. Tyler Street, Tacoma, WA (Sponsored by Chirp & Co, at 3803 No. 26th Street, Tacoma)
Adriana Hess Wetland Park at 2917 Morrison Road W. University Place
Thelma Gilmur Park at 1404 Evergreen Drive, Fircrest
Morse Wildlife Preserve at 25415 70th Avenue E. Graham on Second Sundays.
Exploring Nature Book Club

by Britt McGrath

Martha Scoville was the facilitator of our February reading, "Rising: Dispatches from the New American Shore" by Elizabeth Rush. Members received a list of discussion questions from Martha that aided the group through a very lively discussion. Most members enjoyed the way Rush wove the narrative about the changing American coastlines to include the Atlantic, Gulf and Pacific. Rush described the rotting marshes of Maine, the losing battle with ocean rise in Staten Island, rising waters in Pensacola, the future of a submerged Miami and changes in shore level around San Francisco. Rush made the story extra interesting by interviewing many people who have been affected by these climate changes. There was additional scientific data suggesting what will occur during the next several decades and some ways to make retreat to higher land safe, equable and reasonable.

Our next book deals with the changes of the Great Lakes and Marsha Williams suggested that members might consider choosing a nature poem in April (National Poetry month) that includes ‘water’ which is the focus of our first two books for 2019.

Our next book club meeting will be on March 5, 2019. Dorothy McBride will act as facilitator for "The Death and Life of the Great Lakes" by Dan Egan.

The Exploring Nature Book Club meets at 1:30 pm on the first Tuesday of the month at the Adriana Hess Audubon Center in University Place. Future reads are always posted on the Tahoma Audubon website.

Eco Habit: use less plastic

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<th>Future Book List</th>
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<tr>
<td>March 5 and March 19, 2019  &quot;The Death and Life of the Great Lakes&quot; by Dan Egan (Facilitator Dorothy McBride)</td>
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<td>April 2 and April 16, 2019  &quot;National Poetry Month (Bring a poem to share with the group)</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 7 and May 2, 2019  &quot;The Big Ones: How Natural Disasters Have Shaped Us&quot; by Lucy Jones (Facilitator Sharon Selden)</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 4 and June 19, 2019  &quot;Saving Tarboo Creek: One Family’s Quest to the Land&quot; by Scott Freeman (Facilitator Stephanie Ostmann)</td>
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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 Book Store will receive a discount.

Jonelle Soelling from the evening club selected our January book, “The Guest Cat” by Takashi Hiraide. This was a very different selection for the two clubs, and the members enjoyed it very much! Thank you Jonelle!

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Tahoma Audubon's 20th Annual Youth Bird Drawing Contest

"50 years of Population Shift"

Submission Deadline: April 30, 2019
For Pierce County youth in grades 1-8. For full details, entry form and more visit: www.tahomaaudubon.org/contest

Presented by:
BIRDATHON

Birdathon: Get Ready, Get Set...G...
by Matt Mega

Spring is just around the corner and as our migratory friends return to Washington it is also time to launch Birdathon. Birdathon has a long tradition for Audubon Chapters across the country. Just like a walkathon, Birdathon participants collect pledges for finding (counting) as many birds as they can in a 24 hour period. While Birdathon can become quite competitive among expert birders, it is also a great way to learn about birding and is open to everyone. You can participate by joining a guided walk with an experienced field trip leader or you can organize your own trip with friends and family.

The purpose of Birdathon is to help raise money to protect birds and the natural environment. There are 34 bird species listed on the Washington State Endangered, Threatened or Species of Concern lists. Birdathon is a fun and engaging way to help protect our birds. All of the money raised goes back into our programing and will help us continue to connect people to birds and the natural environment.

Detailed information and directions will be up on our web site by April 1.

Special Birdathon field trips will be listed in the next edition of the Towhee (May-June-July). However, there is one field trip ready to go. It is scheduled for April 27 to the Green River. Check out our calendar page for the most updated information on field trips, including some ‘tune ups’ for Birdathon. One nice tune-up will be the Skagit Daffy Ducks & Daffydils, where you can celebrate the Equinox on March 21. Another tune-up walk will be held at Seeley Lake Park on March 23. Come take a walk with Tahoma Audubon and then stick around for the Homeowners Backyard Habitat Workshop. For details visit our calendar page or call the office at 223-565-9278.

FOR INFO AND TO APPLY CALL (253) 404-3930

Teen Internship Opportunity
Tahoma Audubon and Tacoma Nature Center

Full time summer teen intern will assist staff with nature camp programs. The teen intern will receive a $2,000 stipend, training, and practical experience in planning, organization, coordination and implementation of youth activities within an environmental education curriculum-based day camp

TEENS AGES 15-18 MAY APPLY. DEADLINE: APRIL 9, 2019.
At the time of this writing we are up to 198 species in our Big Year adventure. What is Tahoma Audubon’s Big Year you ask? Very simply stated we will be tracking everyone’s checklists throughout 2019 and compile one big list of all species at the end of the year. Ideally we will use eBird to track everyone’s checklist, however, if you do not use eBird you can send your list to the office.

Detailed instructions are at our website, [https://www.tahomaaudubon.org/big-year-2019](https://www.tahomaaudubon.org/big-year-2019). At this site you can also view our progress and download checklists. If you have any problems registering or sharing your lists please contact me at mmega@tahomaaudubon.org

Here is our list of highlight birds so far

1. First bird seen (Spotted Towhee), Bremerton Ferry Terminal by Diane Yorgason-Quinn and group
2. 50th bird seen (Marsh Wren), Ocean Shores by Art Wang and Dalton Spencer
3. 150th bird seen (White-eyed Vireo), Everglades National Park by Art Wang
4. 250th?
5. 350th?

Sally Larson leads a walk around Thelma Gilmur park every year to celebrate Thelma Gilmur's birthday and talk about how much we miss her. Sally and Wayne spearhead work parties frequently to keep this little gem of a park spiffy so we can enjoy it.

Celebrating Thelma's Birthday!

Sally Larson leads a walk around Thelma Gilmur park every year to celebrate Thelma Gilmur’s birthday and talk about how much we miss her. Sally and Wayne spearhead work parties frequently to keep this little gem of a park spiffy so we can enjoy it.
Mission, Vision and Values of Tahoma Audubon

Our Mission: We connect people with birds, other wildlife and their habitats through education, conservation and recreation.

Our Vision: We envision future generations will value, conserve and enjoy access to birds and wildlife.

Our Core Values:
- Appreciation of the Natural World
- Volunteerism
- Civic Engagement
- Lifelong Learning