Tahoma Audubon held its 51st annual meeting at the Tacoma Art Museum on February 20. It was an evening full of camaraderie, stories, and recognition given to special people. Pacific Grill catered the social hour, and Hello Cupcake of Tacoma provided sweet treats as people went into the museum theater. President Nathanael Swecker was the emcee, and Executive Director Matt Mega gave his annual report. New board members, Daniel Cuevas and David Wiebecke, were voted in and welcomed.

An inspiring presentation was given by Pacific Northwest poet Holly J. Hughes, whose most recent book, *Passings*, gives voice to birds whose songs have been extinguished by extinction. It was inspiring to hear her artful words, which served as a reminder of what we work to protect.

The annual Distinguished Service – Member Award was given to Tom Galdabini for his steadfast support of Morse Wildlife Preserve as a leader of the Morse Force, and to Russ Smith for connecting people to birds with his field trips and informative leadership. Curtis Ashby, who created the bird habitat wall mural on the TAS headquarters, was given a Distinguished Service – Community Award. Librarians Michelle Massero and Kristine Countryman were recognized with a Distinguished Service – Community Award for their key role as partners of Poetry in the Parks.

The big surprise of the night was the Thelma Gilmur/Helen Engle Legacy Award. The TAS Board had decided to keep the recipient in the dark until the moment it was announced. Ione Claggett, board member and chair of the Thelma Gilmur Education Committee, was the well-deserved honoree. Ione has long been at the forefront of outreach with schools, community walks, strategic planning, and conservation projects at Morse Wildlife Preserve. She was, however, a bit confused when she thought she was the one to get the award. Ione was a good sport about it all.

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**Connecting people with nature since 1969**
When I left the office the other day, I heard a strange sound in the tree next to the shed. My first thought was “those darn squirrels.” But as I got closer to the tree, I realized there were between 30-40 crows all shimmying and shaking. They had all taken a bath and were drying off. I obviously have seen many birds take baths and shake out their feathers, but never in a leetetop together in unison. It seemed very ritualistic. As I explored further, I saw that another 20-30 were in our detention pond bathing. I watched as they finished, and all of them returned to a different tree and engaged in the same ritual of drying off.

Crows are well-known for their intelligence and capacity to amaze. Whether it is dropping nuts in front of moving cars or being able to recognize human faces, these are truly some of the most intelligent birds you will come across. I understand that many people have a love-hate relationship with crows. I know I am tested each time I see a crow. I love them, but I also hate them, and this is one of the mysteries of nature I want to explore and learn. Crows are definitely intelligent birds you will come across. I often find myself standing under a tree full of crows. I just watch in amazement, admiring their many different calls, their family dynamics, and their desire to explore and learn. Crows are definitely one of the mysteries of nature I want to explore.

What are some of yours?
In our wetland and the beautiful red-flowering currant awaiting that first Rufous Hummingbird to show up. And even though the kids are not out there, I can also imagine all of those youngsters in mid-July learning about pond critters or the importance of a healthy forest.

In these uncertain times, we need this dose of nature more than ever. So I will make a strong pitch for folks to get outside any time, but especially in these difficult times of pandemics and uncertainty. If you are feeling anxious and trapped inside your home, a walk around the block or to the closest park might be a perfect remedy. Please be safe, and we will see everyone soon!

SPOTLIGHT continues on Page 11

Photo courtesy of Andrea Michelbach

Lillian and Cleo keeping an eye out. Diane Yorgason-Quinn photo.
Legislature Passes Audubon Priorities
Kirk Kirkland - Conservation Committee Co-chair

The budget proviso to protect farmlands and wildlife habitats from industrial solar power generation sites won support by the Senate, but was a challenge in the House.

The conservation committee wrote letters and lobbied on two afternoons to gain support of this study to map Eastern Washington farms and find locations for solar projects away from farms and wildlife areas.

The $500K budget proviso will focus on mapping potential conflict areas in Washington's sunny Columbia Basin, with the goal of helping clean energy developers identify the best places to develop utility-scale solar projects.

The proviso, spearheaded by Tahoma Audubon, had support from American Farmland Trust, Renewable Northwest, and state and Kittitas County elected officials from both sides of the aisle.

The Department of Fish and Wildlife Budget increase was enough to fund WDFW’s core services through June of 2021. It allocates significant resources for new projects. The ongoing dollars are close to fully funding WDFW’s important bird programs. This is the huge improvement we worked toward in the last two years.

"This improved funding was in no small part thanks to the nearly 2,500 emails sent by Audubon members over the course of the short 60-day legislative session," said Adam Maxwell of Audubon Washington who coordinated the lobbying effort for the Chapters.

The housing study compared multi-story buildings in University Place and Tacoma with the apartment high-rises planned for the areas between Spanaway, Frederickson, and South Hill. It did not discuss whether the lower cost of county high-rise apartments would divert growth in residential apartments from cities or what effect tall apartment buildings would have on increased traffic.

The study found that 8-story buildings were feasible only in Parkland/Spanaway and in Frederickson town centers. Buildings between 4–8 stories were only feasible with a 10-25 percent rent increase, which left 3-story buildings the most likely to be permitted.

Crucial to the success of these buildings was providing off-street parking and a network of sidewalks and bike lanes to connect bus stops, schools, and parks with the town center. Without such networks, large Park & Ride lots would be needed at bus stops, as the county does not allow on-street parking. The study also failed to analyze the amount of affordable housing needed in the county.

The town center proposal only mentioned affordable housing on the upper floors of 8-story buildings.

The next phase of development would be delayed until the initial phase of development had met concurrency requirements for services. Then subsequent community plans would be evaluated for their financial ability to provide infrastructure for city services in cooperation with other junior taxing districts.

The Central Pierce Fire District’s ability to provide fire service to 214,000 people in four community plans illustrates the problem for schools, parks, and transit to provide services. If 4–8 story buildings are allowed throughout the county’s UGA, then each of their fire stations would need training and new equipment to reach the new buildings’ upper floors.

The County Council is expected to review the town center proposals in May. Tahoma Audubon, Futurewise, and others have requested a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement to provide the missing population analysis. Without one, it will be difficult to show how the dramatic increase in housing will impact traffic and determine if the county is meeting the requirements for concurrency in providing roads and other services.

The county proposes adding another 94,000 people to the UGA for a total county population of 1 million in 2030.
You Can Be a Part of Poetry and Art at TAS!

Britt McGrath - Education and Outreach Manager

Environmental Education has been and will continue to be a mainstay at Tahoma Audubon. For this reason, the Thelma Gilmur Education Committee supports many of the opportunities that allow people to get involved with Tahoma Audubon, including supporting field trip leaders, community science programs, summer camps, adult education, Birdathon, and stewardship!

Currently, the education committee is focused on two specific programs: the Youth Bird Drawing Contest and Poetry in the Park. In our current circumstances, we are focused on offering education from these two programs that can fit into our currently adapted lifestyles.

Youth Bird Drawing Contest (YBDC): We are in our 21st year of offering YBDC, a free-to-enter program offered to youth in grades 1–8 in Pierce County. Youth choose one of three birds to draw, paint, create with mixed media, etc. and submit their drawing via mail to Tahoma Audubon or Tacoma Nature Center by April 30th, 2020. The theme of YBDC this year is “Wetland Wonders,” with the featured birds including: Red-breasted Merganser, Bufflehead, and Wood Duck. There is also a list of local wetlands that youth and families can visit and incorporate into the artwork. For more information and entry forms, please visit https://www.tahomaaudubon.org/contest.

Poetry in the Park: Poetry in the Park is our annual nod to Poetry Month in April. Traditionally, we post nature poetry in parks around Pierce County, encouraging people to connect to nature through poetry. This year we are pleased to feature poetry from African American poets as well as local youth poetry from the Oceanfest poetry competition and In Our Own Expressions poetry contest from Pierce County Library System. Due to certain park closures, we are planning to postpone placing our poetry signs until late April or May, with the hopes that people will be able to get out and enjoy them as the wonderful Washington weather moves in. Look for poetry signs in these parks: Adriana Hess, Fort Steilacoom, Morse Wildlife Preserve, Snake Lake, Thelma Gilmur, and Wapato Park. Thank you to the generous support of our partners in this program, Tacoma Public Library and Pierce County Library.

Focus on Education

Summer Camp!

I am so pleased to announce that in partnership with Tacoma Nature Center, Tahoma Audubon is offering three weeks of summer camps for preschool-age children (ages 4 and 5) at the Adriana Hess Wetland Park in University Place at the end of July and August. These camps are three half-days, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. Camps are taught by me, our teen intern, and teen volunteers from Tacoma Nature Center. The themes chosen for this summer are: Pond Critters, Backyard Bird Buddies, and Furry Friends! Registration started on March 25th through the Tacoma Nature Center registration on their website. If you or someone you know has preschool-age children and is interested in nature summer camps, encourage them to sign up!

What to expect:
Camps at Tahoma Audubon are immersive in nature, science, music, art, and movement. Campers are outside most of the day, rain or shine! Education topics have a large “wingspan” and include: bird walks, pond critter identification, land stewardship, nest building, nature yoga, animal adaptations, and more!

Details:
Camp days: Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday
Times: 9 am–12 pm or 1 pm–4 pm
Location: Adriana Hess Wetland Park

Activity: Pond Critters
August 18-23 - Backyard Bird Buddies
August 25-27 - Furry Friends

Second Sunday host/docent training, organized and piloted by Clarice Clark, was conducted on March 7 in two sessions: one in the morning and another in the afternoon. These new volunteer recruits are very welcome and will bring something special to the Second Sunday visitors’ experience.

Education Works at the Morse Preserve!

Britt McGrath - Education and Outreach Manager

Cougars Mountain Middle School students were out at Morse Wildlife Preserve on February 13 to practice water testing techniques and to sow some lupine seeds among the prairie restoration plots south of the barn. The class has offered to do some informational signage for the nest box exhibit built by an Eagle Scout last year. This may start with a simple handout.

Chuck Messinger, an educator who recently joined Morse Force, has about a dozen Bethel students who are highly interested in coming out to Morse and doing some environmental work. He is working on a curriculum that would offer school credit.

Youth Bird Drawing Contest

Wetland Wonders

Request for Submissions
Paintings... Drawings... Mixed Media...
All Students in Pierce County Grades 1-8

For information, visit: https://www.tahomaaudubon.org/contest

21st Annual

Youth Bird Drawing Contest

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Chuck Messinger, an educator who recently joined Morse Force, has about a dozen Bethel students who are highly interested in coming out to Morse and doing some environmental work. He is working on a curriculum that would offer school credit.
Managed colonies of European honeybees are annually shipped from California to Maine to Louisiana, ensuring high pollination rates for US agriculture. Since colony collapse disorder was identified in 2006, research has been devoted to discovering its causes and reducing hive loss for beekeepers. Little was known about the health of 4,000 native North American bee species until the Center for Biological Diversity completed an in-depth native bee assessment. Their 2017 report, Pollinators in Peril, shared the bad news.

**Extent of the Peril** -
Managed honeybee keepers are losing 30 percent of their hives annually, and more than half of native species are declining. The Center for Biological Diversity found nearly 1 in 4 native bees are at increasing risk of extinction. Formerly widespread, the Rusty Patched Bumblebee has disappeared from 87 percent of its historic range. In 2017, it became the first bumblebee to join the Endangered Species List.

**Native Bees Matter** -
Three fourths of human food crops worldwide depend on pollinators. While managed hives work well for many crops like apples and almonds, they are not optimal for others. Tomatoes, eggplants, pumpkins, squash, cranberries, and blueberries are more efficiently pollinated by native bees, while home gardeners and small organic growers are entirely dependent on local pollinators. As native bees decline, some fruits and vegetables will become more expensive to produce. Nutritious pollinator-dependent foods may be replaced by staples like rice, corn, and potatoes. The quality and diversity of our food is at risk.

Declining native bees may also be an indicator of malfunctioning ecosystems that will impact the survival of other insects, birds, mammals, and fish. Native bees are responsible, with other pollinators, for keeping native wildflowers and flowering shrub species thriving. Local birds and other wildlife count on these plants for food and shelter. Loss of any node in a food web can have devastating consequences.

**Species Spotlight: Tree Swallow**

Zooming overhead and chattering away, Tree Swallows are a sure sound of summer in the Northwest. One of the earlier arrivals from California and Mexico, these little wonders begin to arrive here at the end of January.

Tree Swallows nest in cavities, either human-made or natural cavities created by woodpeckers. They prefer sites with water and lots of insects, which they hunt for on the wing. Often traveling over 20 miles in a day, these little wonders consume up to 6000 insects per summer day while rarely touching the ground. They drink and bathe on the wing, skimming along the surface of open water in daringly precise flight.

It is thought that Tree Swallows have a high site-fidelity while nesting, but not such a strong mate-fidelity. Males have been observed mating and rearing young at more than one nest cavity at a time. Nests are built by the females and made mostly of grass lined with feathers, and Tree Swallows have been observed playing with feathers as they build nests. One commonly seen behavior is when one swallow will drop a feather and a veritable game of tag ensues, with many individuals jetting around, diving and banking to catch the stray feather.

They lay 4-7 pale pink eggs in 1-2 broods per season and incubate them for 15-25 days. Keep an eye out for these cheerful birds of spring.
Virtual Migration Tool on eBird Gives Hours of Entertainment

Are you stuck at home and wishing you could find interesting things to do online that revolve around your passion for birds? What more fun can there be than an interactive video map of bird populations over the course of a year? eBird provides just such a great tool online, and it’s available to anyone, regardless of whether you have an eBird account or not. On eBird you can: “Discover movements, range boundaries, and areas of abundance for over 600 North American birds. Follow bird populations on a weekly basis across the entire Western Hemisphere at an astounding level of detail. The eBird Science team linked bird sightings from hundreds of thousands of eBirders with habitat information from satellites to create valuable predictions of when and where birds occur. eBird data products are free to use for research, conservation, or to better understand the amazing lives of birds” (quote taken from ebird.org/science/status-and-trends).

Simply navigate to the ebird.org website and click on the “Science” tab near the top of the page. From there you can click on the large green button “Explore eBird Status and Trends” or just navigate down the page and type in the species name, Latin name, or four-letter bird code to bring up a custom video animation. These dynamic maps are called abundance animations. Simply hit the blue play button and watch the video. It reminds me of a radar map where I can see a storm front approaching. It’s fun to imagine a cloud of birds raining down from the sky as the breeding season arrives. The video starts us in January and moves week by week all the way through spring, summer, fall, and back to winter again. You can stop the animation at any time and even use your cursor at the bottom of the interactive map to position the map to whatever time of year you desire.

What makes these interactive video maps exceptional is that they do not just show where birds can be found in the four seasons. The maps break it down to the weeks of the year and even show the concentration of the bird populations. This concept of “bird concentrations” is what they call “Relative Abundance,” defined loosely as how many birds you might expect to see on an ideal day during the target time and the ideal time of the day with the optimal search duration. This relative abundance is indicated by the color scale, from gray (none expected) to yellow to orange and lastly blue (very likely to encounter while birding). Putting together the variables of time, space, and abundance all into one package makes a great science tool to play with while you are stuck inside during these turbulent times.

Once you find an abundance map of your favorite bird, you can copy the web page and post it on your Facebook page. Make sure to tag Tahoma Audubon in your post with @Tahoma Audubon to share your interactive map with all of us, or tag me @Nathanael Swecker. I’d love to see which maps you love the most.

The Exploring Nature 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, 28 St. Helen’s Ave., Tacoma, on the third Tuesday of the month.

Book club members from the day and evening clubs who purchase the selections at King’s Book Store will receive a discount.

The evening club is expanding and welcomes newcomers!
Birdathon 2020: A Year to Reconnect

Matt Mega - TAS Executive Director

I know it is April, but how are you doing on your New Year’s resolution? Was one of those resolutions to get outside more and to connect with nature? Lucky for you, Tahoma Audubon’s Birdathon is about to start. From April 22 (Earth Day) through July 19, Tahoma Audubon will be holding our famous and most important fundraiser of the year . . . and we need everyone to participate!

But Birdathon is so much more than a fundraiser; it is also a great opportunity to meet new friends and learn about birds and nature. Birdathon field trips are led by passionate and knowledgeable birders eager to share their experiences with you and help you develop your own passion for birds. Our Birdathon trips range from the “extravagant” (see how many birds you can see in a 24-hour period), all the way to a relaxed walk through incredible habitat. Everyone is invited to participate, from expert to beginning birders, as well as those just interested in nature.

With the ever-changing environment of the COVID-19 pandemic, I cannot guarantee everything will be business as usual with this year’s Birdathon, but I can state with confidence that this Birdathon, more than most, is critically important to our organization and to all of our members looking for a way to reconnect from our daily worries and reconnect with all the local birds and potential spring time rarities. Be prepared to be finished by 4 PM. Hoping for a representative sample of breeding birds and maybe some late migrants.

Contact Ed Pullen by email edwardpullen@gmail.com to sign up. Limit to 12 people, 3 vehicles.

Wednesday, Jun. 3, 6:30 a.m.–4 p.m. RSVP Required Please!

Green River Watershed

Join Diane Yorgason-Quinn and Tyler Patterson for a special trip to the Green River Watershed. Sign up for this rare opportunity to see the protected watershed managed by Tacoma Public Utilities. We will bird in forests and fields around the Howard Hansen and Eagle Lakes.

Saturday, May 2, All Day. RSVP Required Please!

Birdathon by Ear

Support Tahoma Audubon Society by joining Nathanael Swecker on a half-day birding trip around the trails of DuPont Washington. Nathanael has been birding the Du pont trails for well over 6 years, and is intimately familiar with all the local birds and potential spring time rarities. Be prepared to learn how to listen to bird songs and calls to identify species in the field. Nathanael has previously taught “Birding by Ear” courses with TAS and this is his passion. A special interest will be placed on warbler and flycatcher songs.

Wednesday, May 6 RSVP Required Please!

Help & Wanted!

We need people to...
- Plan and put on events
- Organize and input data
- Contact members with announcements
- Reach out to the community for guest speakers
- Report at outreach events
- Write articles for newsletters
- Keep the website up-to-date

Join us for a Birdathon walk. The only rules are to lead a Birdathon walk. The only rules are to...

What is Birdathon?

“Birdathoners” participate in special field trips, learn about local birds, visit beautiful nature spots, and make new friends—all while raising money that supports Tahoma Audubon’s main program areas: education, conservation, science, and exploration (field trips).

Birdathon is like a walkathon, but instead of counting miles walked, you will count bird species seen (or heard). You can sign up for one of our special guided Birdathon field trips, go on your own solo trip, or be bold and lead a Birdathon walk. The only rules are to conduct your trip between April 22 and July 19 and identify your official 24-hour window in which you will count bird species.

Before you go on your trip, you collect pledges from family, friends, and coworkers. The money you help raise goes directly to supporting Tahoma Audubon programing. Birdathon is often looked at as a competition, and people can certainly sponsor you by the number of bird species seen or at a flat rate. We know it is intimidating to ask for money, but in the end, it is not only about raising money—it is also about the number of new people you introduce to birding and Tahoma Audubon. That is why this year we are providing the option for you to ask people to join Tahoma Audubon with a special Birdathon membership for $40 that will count toward your money raised.

Will you help us?

For everything you need to know about Birdathon, please visit www.tahomaaudubon.org/birdathon. For a list of current Birdathon trips, see the sidebar on this page and page 9 of The Towhee.

ANNUAL

Continued from Page 1

Three lucky winners of raffle prizes helped support the Teen Internship and Scholarship Fund. Prizes included a children’s nature party, a picnic and guided walk at Morse Wildlife Preserve, and a special hike with naturalist and artist Dale Thompson.

Thanks to the volunteers and attendees who made the evening a success. Congratulations to our elected board members, raffle prize winners, and distinguished recipients of the service awards!

To view further Diane Yorgason-Quinn photos from the evening, go to: https://tinyurl.com/yx38tmj5.
The Age of Innocence Ends with a Glorious Birding Party

A full boat of happy birding partiers left the Alderbrook Resort on March 7 on a fair weather day (not perfect, but fair!). This was the third annual cruise of Hood Canal in partnership with Black Hills Audubon and promised some great birds and interesting looks at the scenery along inner Hood Canal.

Little did we know that many birding venues and field trips were about to be canceled due to the increasing coronavirus threat in the area. I know I’m not the only one who feels very lucky to have been on this voyage at the end of that Age of Innocence. As I write this, everything else looks canceled, and we’re told not to go anywhere where there are other people and not to share binoculars or scopes.

But on March 7, the boat left with two noted bird spotters from Westport Pelagics, Bill Tweit and Bruce LaBar. Faye McAdams Hands was aboard, who worked with Black Hills Audubon to offer this great trip to the birders of Tahoma Audubon and the ABC Club. Thanks, you three!

It wasn’t long at all before we got into the large flock of Western Grebes, now a sensation since they’ve become so scarce in the Sound in recent years due to a shortage of tidflats to Moses Lake

Want a chance to see 130 species in one day? Join Marcus, Heather and Art on an an exciting trip from Commencement Bay to the Potholes of Eastern WA. We will travel through 15 habitat zones in a race against time to see as many species as possible. After an overnight stay in Moses Lake the group will head back to the Tacoma area on Sunday. Participation is limited to 12 and individuals are asked to raise at least $250 in pledges

Sat. and Sun, May 9-10, 2 Day Trip. RSVP Required Please!

Birding the Restoration Loop

Join Tahoma Audubon’s Executive Director as we walk Puyallup’s 5-mile loop trail and seek birds that have benefited from 5 years of habitat restoration. On past walks we have seen Wood Ducks, Sapsuckers, Pileated Woodpeckers and even a pair of Common Ravens.

Saturday, Jun. 6, 8 a.m.–12 p.m.

Morse Preserve

Join Tahoma Audubon Board member Vicki Blitz as she takes you on an exploration of Morse Preserve. This walk is for our senior members and will be at a slow and relaxed pace. Each walk is limited to 8. Two separate trips offered.

Thursday, May 14, 8 a.m.–12 p.m.
Thursday, Jun. 11, 8 a.m.–12 p.m.
RSVP Required Please!

Bird Band-a-Thon

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to participate in a scientific research project? Would you like to spend a few hours feather to feather with the birds you love, while helping TAS raise the funds it needs? Come join us for the Bird Band-a-thon. Sponsor by the species, or by the number of birds banded, or just contribute a bit to be close to the feathered friends you love. Help TAS raise the funds it needs to continue the new and exciting research!

Get more information by contacting Scott Markowitz (scott_markowitz@yahoo.com) or Nathanael Swecker (nathanaelswecker@gmail.com).

Saturday, Jul. 11, All Day. RSVP Required Please!

Birdathon 2020

Tahoma Audubon to Infinity and Beyond - The Field Trip Page
The Dovekie Quest

Diane Yorgason-Quinn - Contributing Author

Tahoma Audubon charter member Georgia Ramsey had just one bird on her bucket list 15 years ago, the Dovekie, the smallest member of the Alcid (Puffin) family, a rob-in-sized waterbird of the far, far, far north and reputed to be “cute.” They breed in the Arctic Circle but come south to the coast of North America in the winter—well kind of south, but not our idea of south!

Georgia was a legendary birder who, with her husband Bob Ramsey, had seen every bird and been on every road in the state of Washington. She had been the first to record several species in the state that no one else had ever found. She was the mentor to our own Ken W. Brown. The Ramseys are sorely missed by local birders, now relegated to the category of Legendary.

Georgia was looking for a companion to search out this adorable bird. January is the best time, and the far east of Canada is the best place. Vera Cragin, a friend of Georgia’s, is from New England and is familiar with the area. She readily agreed. They made plans for January 2005 and landed in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and headed for Canso.

Success! Two happy birders!

Fast forward 15 years: Some of the Willettes decided to recreate the famous Dovekie Quest. Faye McAdams Hands, Laurel Parshall, and I checked likely places on eBird, made contact with a guide in St. John’s, Newfoundland, and headed off in January this year. We had a great trip (except for the airline….) and had our first Dovekies at Cape Spear, the easternmost point of North America, in bright sunshine, deep-freeze chills, and a nasty wind! From then on, we had Dovekies every hour or so until we reached our total of 23, and there may have been more if we’d been able to zoom in a little further on those dots way out on the water.

This far north, the bright sun shone horizontally right into our eyes. Temperatures with the wind chill factor were around -12 F. We would have been frost-bit en if not for the hand, foot, and ear warmers that Faye and Laurel brought!

Our guide, Jared Clarke of Bird the Rock (birdtherock.com), was the perfect guide, with encyclopedic knowledge of everything Newfoundland. He knew Dovekie was our target bird, so that’s where we went first! Then we had a sweeping adventure through Newfoundland (the “Rock”), getting the low-down on the Colony of Avalon (est. 1621!) and seeing some of its excavations. We then circled the peninsula until we ended up at Signal Hill and looked down on the landscape from the site of the deciding English victory over the French in the Seven Years’ War in 1763. We also found out that Newfoundland was an independent nation of the Commonwealth until 1948 when it voted to join Canada with a very close vote that many are still mad about.

Although we were never far from water in this windswept landscape, we did find actual tundra inland, as evidenced by caribou and a stunning pure white Willow Ptlarigan. We saw many more good birds, too, including Common Eiders (pronounced in Newfoundlandese as “odders,” which was really odd after just seeing actual otters!). The Black Guillemots, which we expected to look much like our Pigeon Guillemots in winter plumage, were actually much more white. Thirty Purple Sandpipers were seen at La Haye, 29 more than Faye “needed.” Black Ducks were everywhere, too. We even chased a couple of rarities—Glaucous Gull and Pink-footed Goose. Snow and drifts were everywhere. We made it out of there just before a major winter storm, so luck was with us.

We would like to thank Vera Cragin for her inspiration and tips. We now know the magic that she and Georgia experienced 15 years earlier. It was like having them along with us.

To see more of our trip photos, go to: https://tinyurl.com/v9e3r28
Every Penguin in the World is both a love letter and a call to action. It is a narrative and photographic book that chronicles the author and his wife in their quest to see every penguin species on the planet. In the process, he muses about adventure, conservation, and what it is about penguins that captures our hearts.

Dr. Bergman is one of our own! He has been a member of Tahoma Audubon for 40 years. He was the first editor of the Towhee, responsible for the transition from mimeographing in Helen Engle's basement to newsprint. He has been a speaker at TASS's annual banquet.

April 25 is World Penguin Day and April 22 is Earth Day 2020. This is perfect timing to meet the author as he launches his fifth book!

A writer and photographer, Charles Bergman has lived nearly his whole life in the Pacific Northwest. He's a long-time teacher of English at Pacific Lutheran University.

He's the author of five books, including Wild Echoes: Encounters with the Most Endangered Animals in North America. He's written extensively on wildlife and animals in national magazines, including Audubon and Natural History and National Geographic. His article on wildlife trafficking in Latin America was the cover story in Smithsonian.

His work springs from a wild dedication to the Earth and its creatures. His writing and photography have won several awards, including the Washington State Book Award, Southwest Book Award, Ben Franklin Book Award, and he was a PEN USA Literary Award finalist. He has a particular love for the Southern Hemisphere and has completed two Fulbright Fellowships, in Mexico and Ecuador. He has taught study tours in Antarctica six times.

Two unexpected treats were a Spotted Sandpiper and a Long-tailed Duck! You just never know what you'll run into there between the kingfishers, ducks, gulls, and harbor seals!

As it started to sprinkle slightly, snow was noted on the Olympic peaks. It never did rain hard on us because we were living a charmed life for those two hours!

Some of our photos can be seen here: https://tinyurl.com/uwl257t

Look for this to be an annual event, so be sure to sign up early next year!

A key piece of participating in Birdathon is to report back to those who have pledged money to you about your experience and what birds were spotted. This makes it fun to keep track of what you've seen so you have some good stories to share later, like seeing the burrowing owls. Andrea is not a "lister," but does enjoy sharing "elaborate reporting."

She also spoke of the importance of getting lots of people to pledge donations: "Small donations add up to a big gift that has an impact." She knows it can be scary to ask for money because of the fear of rejection. She advised, "Ask people to support you and share why Tahoma Audubon is important to you. Give others a chance to know what it is you care about." It could be your love of birds, your desire for people to get outdoors and connect with nature, the support of the TAS outreach programs in the community, and the conservation work done by TAS volunteers.

Birdathon is important because of its fundraising, but more important to Andrea is the community-building and spreading awareness of the organization. So join in and do some good while enjoying what she calls "purpose-driven birding."

**Calendar**

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**Calendar**

**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. Not recommended for wheelchairs, strollers, or children under 3. Please call the Tacoma Nature Center to register.

**Fall Colors:**

- Saturday, Apr. 11, 10–11 a.m. Wapato Park—6500 S. Sheridan Ave.
- Saturday, Apr. 18, 10–11 a.m. Oak Tree Park—74th St. & S. Cedar St.
- Saturday, Apr. 25, 10–11 a.m. Wapato Hills Park—6231 S. Wapato St.

**Weather Wonderings:**

- Mon. May 4, 9:45–10:45 a.m. Mon. May 11, 9:45–10:45 a.m.
- Mon. Apr. 20, 9:45–10:45 a.m.

**Sprouts in Space:**

- Ages 2–4 years, $7.00 per child/$5.00 Tahoma Audubon or TNC members

**Bird Band-a-thon at Morse**

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to participate in a scientific research project? Would you like to spend a few hours in the field to feather with the birds you love, while helping TAS raise the funds it needs? Come join us for the bird Band-a-thon. Sponsor by the species, or by the number of birds banded, or just contribute a bit to be close to the feathered friends you love. Help TAS raise the funds it needs to continue the new and exciting research!

Get more information by visiting the TAS Calendar, or by contacting Scott Markowitz (scott_markowitz@yahoo.com) or Nathanael Swecker (nathanaelswecker@gmail.com).
Field Trips and Activities

Fort Steilacoom Park Bird Walk
Join Scott Saunders and others for birding at Fort Steilacoom Park in Lakewood, where 146 species have been identified over the years. This monthly guided walk will happen rain or shine (unless the rain is torrential).

Birders of all ages and skill levels are welcome. Bring binoculars and a field guide if you have them, and wear footwear and clothing appropriate to the weather. Birders may join or leave at any point during the walk.

Check the Tahoma Audubon Calendar page on the website for more information.

Tuesday, Apr. 7, 8 a.m.–12 p.m.
Tuesday, May 5, 8 a.m.–12 p.m.

Thel.er Wetlands Bird Walk
Join leaders Faye Hands and John Riegsecker of the Advanced Birding Club of Tahmoa Audubon for a walk through this great estuary on the Union River in Belfair.

For questions, contact Faye at zest4parus@hotmail.com, or visit the Tahoma Audubon Calendar Page.

Thursday, Apr. 9, 8–11 a.m.
Thursday, Apr. 23, 8–11 a.m.
Thursday, May 14, 8–11 a.m.
Thursday, May 28, 8–11 a.m.

Swan Creek Bird Walk
Swan Creek Park bird walk is at 8 a.m. on the 3rd Saturday of each month. Meet at the gazebo in the community gardens on 42nd St. Scott Saunders will be leading this walk for all ages and birding experience levels. See between 15 and 50 species of birds depending on the season!

Saturday, Apr. 11, 8 – 12 p.m.
Saturday, May 9, 8 – 12 p.m.

Beginning Bird Walk at Adrianna Hess Audubon Center Park
This late morning bird walk is perfect for beginners and intermediate birders. We will be exploring the park and the Adrianna Hess Wetland Park on a short loop. This walk is wheelchair- and stroller accessible. Bring your binoculars or borrow ours!

Mon. Apr. 13, 10 a.m.–11:30 a.m.
Mon. May 11, 10 a.m.–11:30 a.m

Sehmel Homestead Park Bird Walk
Join Melissa Sherwood as she leads her bird walks through Sehmel Homestead Park in Gig Harbor. Wear appropriate clothing, there may be some muddy areas that need to be negotiated along the trails. Bring field glasses.

To join this field trip, please register on the Tahoma Audubon Calendar page and call Melissa at (253) 851-7230.

Wed. Apr. 15, 8–10 a.m.
Wed. May 20, 8–10 a.m.

Eagle’s Pride Golf Course Bird Walk
A monthly field trip on the 3rd Thursday of each month. Meet at 8 a.m. at the starting point, Building 151-4, Driving Range Tee, Eagle’s Pride Golf Course in DuPont. You’ll exit I-5 at the Mounts Road exit. Everyone is welcome to join, no base pass necessary. For more information, contact Dennis at avnacres4birds@outlook.com, or check out the Tahoma Audubon Calendar Page.

Thursday, Apr. 16, 8–10 a.m.
Thursday, May 21, 8–10 a.m.

Point Ruston Bird Walk
Join field trip leader Art Wang at Point Ruston for this monthly bird walk. This walk is an introductory level walk, but anyone is welcome to join. A variety of water birds and occasionally even whales can be seen.

Please dress for the weather and meet at the Baker Building lounge at Point Ruston. There is a fee for parking.

Saturday May 2, 9–10:30 a.m.
Saturday Jun 6, 9–10:30 a.m.

People of Faith Bird Walk
This walk is designed for all people of faith to learn and become familiar with different birding locations in the Tacoma area. This walk is aimed at beginners, though all are welcome.

Bring a pair of binoculars and a sack lunch. This walk is for people older than 11, and is not a good walk for pets. Meet in Fort Steilacoom Park at the farthest end of the parking lot next to the buildings. The walk starts at 9:00 a.m., and has no set ending time, but feel free to leave as you like. Please confirm your attendance ahead of time by calling Vicki Bliltz at 253-241-6010.

Thursday, May 7, 9:00 a.m.

Habitat Steward Restoration Event
Join in and volunteer to help restore and maintain the habitat of the Tacoma Nature Center and Snake Lake Park. Help 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.

Friday, Apr. 17, 9 a.m.–12 p.m.
Saturday, May 1, 9 a.m.–12 p.m.
Saturday, May 15, 9 a.m.–12 p.m.

NEW MEMBERS

Introductory Membership $20 All new members receive a joint membership with National and Tahoma Audubon for 1 year, including the Audubon Magazine and the Towhee, either electronically or mailed to your address.

CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

- Individual Renewal $30
- Senior Individual* (65 yrs +) $25
- Student/Jr. Audubon (under 18 and/or college students) $15
- Oak $600/yr or $50/mo. online
- Cedar $360/yr or $30/mo. online
- Fir $240/yr or $20/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.

Membership
Tahoma Audubon is the Pierce County Chapter of National Audubon. As an introductory member of NAS, 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 version; free participation in field trips; free family events; recognition in our newsletter, and invitations to special events and volunteer opportuni- ties. 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

For more information, contact Dennis at avnacres4birds@outlook.com, or check out the Tahoma Audubon Calendar Page.

https://www.tahomaaudubon.org/calendar-2

This is an incomplete calendar. Please see our full and up-to-date calendar at:
https://www.tahomaaudubon.org/calendar-2

The online calendar is the most current. Check before you go!