Citizen Science Symposium at Puget Sound Bird Fest

Reprinted from My Edmonds News of August 22, 2016

The Edmonds-based Puget Sound Bird Fest will host a Citizen Science Symposium on Saturday, September 10 to present local bird research projects by the Seattle Audubon Society, the Puget Sound Bird Observatory, the University of Washington, and Edmonds residents. Research materials will be on display from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Frances Anderson Center, with talks occurring in the same location from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Chaired by Edmonds ecologist Alan Mearns, the symposium will feature four presentations focused on long-term changes in park and backyard bird populations, the responses of songbirds to removal of invasive vegetation, and trends in strandings of sea birds along our shorelines. In all cases, the projects are largely conducted by citizens, including Mearns’ own long-term study of the correlations between birds in his backyard to events happening in the surrounding neighborhood.

Hundreds of non-scientists throughout the Puget Sound Region are involved in dozens of research projects designed to measure and understand what makes our bird life tick. How do they do it? And what are they learning about our birds? The symposium is organized similar to those at scientific conferences and is intended to give festival-goers a brief “flavor” of how science is applied and what a scientific conference “looks” and “feels” like.

(Continued on page 2)
Citizen Science Symposium at Puget Sound Bird Fest

In addition to the symposium and traditional festival favorites like the Edmonds Yacht Club boat cruise, Sarvey Live Raptor presentation, and day-long Bird Viewing Station at the Edmonds Marsh, festival-goers can enjoy a new moderated photo exhibit (you can vote for the People’s Choice award), afternoon and overnight boat cruises, and a full lineup of speakers and presentations.

The 2016 Puget Sound Bird Fest takes place in Edmonds September 9-11. For more information and details on all of the Puget Sound Bird Fest events, visit www.pugetsoundbirdfest.org or contact Jennifer Leach at 425-771-0227 or jennifer.leach@edmondswa.gov.

September 9-11

www.pugetsoundbirdfest.org

About Pilchuck Audubon Society

The Pilchuck Audubon Profile, official newsletter of Pilchuck Audubon Society, is published monthly.

Pilchuck Audubon Society (PAS) is a grass-roots environmental organization with members throughout Snohomish County and Camano Island, Washington.

Our mission is to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds and other wildlife, for the benefit of the earth’s biological diversity.

Through education, advocacy, and community activism, PAS is committed to bringing people closer to wildlife in order to build a deeper understanding of the powerful links between healthy ecosystems and human beings, and to encourage the involvement of our members in efforts to protect the habitat this wildlife depends upon for survival.

We serve as a local chapter of the National Audubon Society. PAS is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt, non-profit organization incorporated in the state of Washington.

Newsletter Submissions
Submit articles to newsletter@pilchuckaudubon.org or mail to 1429 Avenue D, PMB 198, Snohomish, WA 98290. Submissions must be received by the 21st of the month preceding publication. We reserve the right to edit.

To contact Pilchuck Audubon Society, call 425.610.8027.

The monthly Profile is available online at www.pilchuckaudubon.org

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Kathy Johnson ............ forest@pilchuckaudubon.org
Consultant
David Gladstone ............ 425.418.3226

Committee Chairs
Bird Sightings
Mara Price .................. 360.722.5752
Citizen Science Coord.
Sherrill Miller ................. field.birds.pas@gmail.com
Communications
Lindsey May ............... 425.610.8027
Conservation Awards
Laurel Cheap .............. classroom.awards@pilchuckaudubon.org
Donations
Judy Chapman ............. donations@pilchuckaudubon.org
Education
Jim Beneteau .............. develop@pilchuckaudubon.org
Field Trips
Art Wait .................. 360.563.0181
Forest Practices
Kathy Johnson ............. forest@pilchuckaudubon.org
Hospitality
Virginia Clark ............... 360.435.3750
Newsletter Editor
Carolyn Lacy ............... newsletter@pilchuckaudubon.org
Programs
Susie Schaefer ......... garden@pilchuckaudubon.org
Webmaster
Terry Nightingale ...... webmaster@pilchuckaudubon.org

Staff
Smart Growth/PAS ExecDir
Kristin Kelly .............. execdirector@pilchuckaudubon.org
The Heermann’s Gull

Text and Sketches by Cindy Easterson

The Heermann’s Gull is a good starting point for anyone trying to sort out the medium sized, white-headed gulls of our region. This gull’s adult plumage includes a stark white head that contrasts with its dark gray back and wings. The adult has dark eyes, black legs, and a bright red-orange bill with black tip, which also differentiates it from all other gulls. Juveniles are brown in their first year and dark gray in their second with pale bills. They can be mistaken for a Parasitic Jaeger, but the Heermann’s Gull lacks the white wing patch on the underside of the wing.

This gull winters and breeds off the coast of Mexico and can be found in Snohomish County as early as May. It may stay as late as December before flying back to Mexico where it winters and breeds. They are common in large flocks at the Edmonds marina along the rocky breakwaters and at Haines Wharf Park between Edmonds and Picnic Point.

Heermann’s Gulls tend to stay near salt water. Unlike some of our resident gulls, Heermann’s Gulls are not drawn to parking lot garbage or larger waste sites. However, they are aggressive foragers and their migration north may be due, in part, to pursuit of Brown Pelican flocks whose loosely held catch is easily stolen. The harvesting of Heermann’s Gull eggs by fishermen on the gull’s winter/breeding grounds has posed a threat to this species, destabilizing populations and landing them on the ‘species of concern’ list.

Who’s Visiting?

Bird Sightings June 26 to July 25

Compiled by Mara Price

The species count at Carole and Larry Beason’s home at Lake Bosworth is a little down, but they are on a lake which does help when it is so hot. Their report included

- 2 American Goldfinch
- 4 Anna’s Hummingbirds
- 2 Bald Eagles over the lake,
- 27 Barn Swallows,
- 6 Black-headed Grosbeaks,
- 10 Brewer’s Blackbirds,
- 7 Canada Geese on the lake,
- a Common Raven flying over,
- 2 Downy Woodpeckers,
- a Great Blue Heron flying over,
- 10 Mallards on the lake,
- 3 Pileated Woodpeckers at the suet and in the trees,
- 6 Purple Finch,
- 12+ Red-winged Blackbirds, a Swainson’s Thrush,
- 14 Tree Swallows and a Turkey Vulture flying over, for a total species count of 40.

Hilkka Egtvedt listed 27 species this month. Her report included

- 2 adult California Quail plus 4 juveniles,
- 3 Band-tailed Pigeons,
- 2 Eurasian Collared Doves, a Barred Owl heard calling at night,
- 3 Anna’s Hummingbirds,
- 2 Adult Hairy Woodpeckers
- and 1 juvenile,
- 2 adult Pileated Woodpeckers and 3 juveniles,
- 2 Violet-green Swallows,
- 5 Chestnut-backed Chickadees,
- 2 Western Tanagers,
- 7 Black-headed Grosbeaks including 3 juveniles,
- 2 White-crowned Sparrows,
- 4 Dark-eyed Junco,
- 5 Purple Finch and 4 American Goldfinch.

Linda Kielland reports from her home in Everett and then she also lists birds from the various areas she visits during her drives around in Everett. From her home she listed

- 9 Dark-eyed Juncos
- which includes 6 Juveniles,
- 5 Brown-headed Cowbirds,
- 8 Brewer’s Blackbirds,
- 5 American Robins including
- 3 Juveniles,
- 2 Red-winged Blackbirds,
- 4 Purple Finch,
- 3 American Goldfinch,
- 2 Evening Grosbeaks and 6 Pine Siskin.

She also reported 14 Canada Geese in a pond near Miller Shingle just north of the Snohomish River, 2 Great Blue Heron flying east over I-5, a Belted Kingfisher flying along easement over water at Blackman’s Point, and 18 Rock Doves at Port Gardner Bay south viewing area, for a total species count of 33.

Reporting from my home in Marysville, my total species count of 22 included

- 4 American Robins,
- 6 American Crows, 2 American Goldfinch,
- 1 Anna’s Hummingbird, 4 Black-capped Chickadees,
- 2 Dark-eyed Junco, 2 Great Horned Owls, 6 Black-headed Grosbeaks including 2 Juvenile, 5 Mourning Doves, 1 Pileated Woodpecker, 2 Northern Flickers, 2 Song Sparrows feeding a Brown-headed Cowbird juvenile, 4 Spotted Towhees,
- 6 Steller’s Jays, 3 Red-tailed Hawks flying over, a Red-breasted Nuthatch, a Bald Eagle being swarmed by a bunch of small birds in the fields along 100th St.

If you are interested in participating in our Backyard Bird count, please Email me at prcmar1@gmail.com or leave a message on my cell 425-750-8125.

Photo of Violet-Green Swallow (top) by Terry Steele, www.terrysteelenaturephotography.com
WEEKEND BIRD WALK TRIP REPORT: Lynndale Park
by Terry Nightingale

On Sunday, July 24, we held a family picnic and bird walk at Lynndale park in suburban Lynnwood. A total of eighteen birders came out, having a median age of eleven years old! After enjoying a lovely picnic in a shady spot near the softball fields, we set off to explore the park. While perhaps best known for the sports fields, this park also includes several picnic areas, a small amphitheater, and extensive trails through the wooded areas of the park.

Our first stop was the interpretive display at the edge of the forest. There are small plaques that describe the native tree and plant species found in the park. The youngsters in our group learned about Douglas Fir, Western Red Cedar, and our state tree, Western Hemlock. Moving on through the interpretive area, my co-trip-leader Jonathan Blubaugh helped them learn to recognize shrubs like Oregon Grape, Mountain Ash, and Kinnikinnick, also known as Bearberry.

Next, we started following the main trail through the woods, while stopping to hear the forest birds: Golden-crowned Kinglet, Black-capped Chickadee, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, and Red-breasted Nuthatch. This last bird some of the kids had fun imitating: honk honk! Also along the trail, one keen observer found a bird nest hidden in the blackberry brambles. Not being all that great at identifying nests, we made a rough guess that it would most likely be a Song Sparrow or American Robin nest.

Toward the end of our trail walk, we experienced what was definitely the highlight of the day: we heard sharp knocking sounds and found that a Pileated Woodpecker was pecking at a tree only 30-40 feet away from us! All of the adults and most of the kids in our group got nice, long looks at this colorful forest resident. Jonathan and I explained how they can knock their heads into the tree and not get a headache—they have a specially adapted skull just for this purpose!

Altogether we had a fun and productive outing! I highly recommend this local park tucked into a residential neighborhood of Lynnwood. After only a five-minute hike, I got the refreshing feeling I was deep in the forest, far from city life. For children and teens, there is also an orienteering course where they can practice their skills with a map and compass—helpful skills if they ever find themselves out in the wild with no cell phone coverage!

SMART GROWTH
by Kristin Kelly, Executive Director

Protection of farmland in Snohomish County should just be a given. But that is just not the case.

After the Growth Management Act was adopted in 1990, our leadership at that time was tasked with identifying which agricultural lands were to be protected. It was unfortunate that most of our upland farmland was given up for urban development, rather than protected for food production. What was protected was the farmland in our floodplain areas along the Skykomish/ Snohomish and Stillaguamish River basins.

Still protecting that remaining precious farmland has not been an easy thing. Farmers along these river basins know that restoration of salmon habitat must happen, and taking some of the farmland along these rivers is imperative. In addition, some of the farmland doesn’t drain too well, and farmers have sold off some of their land for conservation and flood control purposes. In addition, our county currently allows our commercially designated farmland to be zoned into 10-acre lots, and valuable farmland is now used for large homes and, in all likelihood, will never be farmed again.

Some farmers complain that they can’t make a profit just by growing crops or livestock. It’s no secret that all but a few dairy farms have gone out of business. Farmers have tried to be creative to use their farms in ways other than growing crops or hay. Horse arenas and stables are more prevalent. And there are thriving corn maze/pumpkin patch farms. Still others need other non-ag uses to keep their farms in the black financially.

To help farmers stay in business, the county has allowed for designated farmland to include non-ag uses such as wedding facilities, farm stands, composting operations, and farm equipment sales. Currently, there is a proposal to add wineries, breweries, and distilleries to our farms, as well as in rural areas. While that can add some value to farms to keep them in business, as Smart Growth Director I must convince the County Council that these types of commercial enterprises should not become the main function of farmland.

Snohomish County has a responsibility legally and morally to preserve farmland for food production. A public hearing will continue with the County Council at 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, September 7. I have requested that any winery, brewery, or distillery must use at least 60 percent of needed product from the farm where they are located and the remaining 40 percent from Washington state, and that any operation not change the farm into strictly a commercial enterprise. Please send the County Council an email and support that position so we can truly protect our remaining farmland for future generations. Email addresses are: terry.ryan@snoco.org; brian.sullivan@snoco.org; Stephanie.wright@snoco.org; hans.dunshee@snoco.org; ken.klein@snoco.org.
TRIP CALENDAR

Check our website at www.pilchuckaudubon.org for the latest information

Tuesday September 6 Camano Island
Meet at 7:30 AM at Quilceda Village Wal-Mart lot west of Marysville (I-5 exit 200). Park away from the store, to the east, near Quilceda Blvd and next to I-5. Scenic locations we may bird are Triangle Cove, Eide Road, English Boom, Iverson Spit, and Cama Beach State Park. Pack a lunch.
Trip Leader: Virginia Clark, 360-435-3750

September 9-11 Puget Sound Birding Festival Edmonds
Go to www.pugetsoundbirdfest.org for more information.

September 10 Swift Night Out
4:00 p.m. until dusk
639 West Main Street, Monroe
Come witness an amazing natural event occurring in our community. See page 7 for details.

Tuesday, September 13 Fir Island
Meet at 7:30 AM at Quilceda Village Wal-Mart west of Marysville (1-5-Exit 200). Park away from store, to the east, near Quilceda Blvd and next to I-5. Expect almost anything. Pack a lunch.
Trip Leader: Virginia Clark, 360-435-3750

Sunday, September 18 Seahurst Park, Burien
Meet at 8:30 AM at Everett Mall. Park in the back, near the transit facility by LA Fitness. We will carpool to Seahurst Park in Burien to walk the trails and explore the beaches. Bring snacks for the trail, water, sunscreen, binoculars, hat, good walking shoes, and bug repellent just in case. We’ll probably stop for a little socializing over lunch in the Burien area. This will be a half-day trip.
Leader: Terry Nightingale, 206.619.2383

Tuesday, September 20 Sequim
Meet at 7:10 AM at the Edmonds Wade James Theater Parking Lot. The theater’s address is 950 Main St., Edmonds, 98020, just East of 9th Ave. on the south side of Main St. We’ll take the ferry to Kingston and bird the voyage, the docks, go through Port Gamble and across the floating bridge. We will bird, Sequim Bay, Dungeness Recreational Area, and whatever else we fancy. Lots of waterfowl, shorebirds, and surprises. Bring a lunch.
Trip Leader: Virginia Clark, 360-435-3750

Saturday, September 24 Iron Goat State Park/John Wayne Pioneer Trail at Kecheulus Lake
Meet at 8:30 AM at Everett Mall. Park in the back, near the transit facility by LA Fitness. We will hike the segment of the trail from Snoqualmie Pass along the southwest shore of the lake. The trail is a flat former railbed. The lake, at just over 2700 feet elevation, is about four miles long. I’d probably suggest hiking for about an hour and half, then turning back.

Bring snacks for the trail, water, sunscreen, binoculars, hat, good walking shoes, and bug repellent just in case. We’ll probably stop for a little socializing over dinner on the way home. Northwest Forest Pass $5 per day or $30 annually (not to be confused with a state Discovery Pass). The USFS website says the pass can be purchased online or at a local store at Snoqualmie Pass, but as of this writing their web page is down.
Leader: Jonathan Blubaugh, 425.244.7633 aracfi@msn.com

Tuesday, September 27 Smith and Spencer Islands
Meet at 8:00 AM at Langus Riverfront Park, Everett. Go North on SR-529 (Broadway) over the Snohomish River; turn right onto 28th Pl. NE. Follow signs to Langus Waterfront Park. Continue past the Shell House and Everett Animal Shelter making a left turn onto 4th St SE to a parking lot on the right side of the street. Trying for raptors and returning waterfowl. Walk the Trails, view the Everett Sewage Ponds. Lots of walking. Pack a lunch.
Trip Leader: Virginia Clark, 360-435-3750

UPCOMING EVENTS, CLASSES, and FESTIVALS farther afield

September 17 Chelan Ridge Hawk Migration Festival
Pateros, WA
This free event combines activities in Pateros, WA, with shuttle trips to the Chelan Ridge migration site to learn about and celebrate raptors as they journey to winter territories. The HawkWatch International field crew who live at the Ridge during the migration season will offer insight into what it is like to live and breathe raptors, and show how the birds are banded and tracked. https://www.hawkwatch.org/participate/calendar/migration-sites/248-chelan-ridge-hawk-migration-festival

September 23-25 Monterey Bay Birthing Festival
Watsonville, CA
The MBBF provides participants with more than 250 bird species, as well as whales, dolphins, and otters on pelagic tours of Monterey Bay. With more than fifty field trips and lectures offered, birders can add life-list birds such as the California Thrasher, California Towhee, Bell’s Sparrow, Oak Titmouse, Nuttall’s Woodpecker, and Elegant Tern. You can even do trips combining birding with olive oil or wine tasting! http://www.montereybaybirding.org/

September 24-25 Ha’akula Manu
Kailua-Kona, Hi
Celebrate Hawai’i’s unique blend of birds—from native honey-creepers found nowhere else in the world to common backyard birds from five continents. The first annual Hawai’i Island Festival of Birds—Ha’akula Manu, will signal the official opening of the Hawai’i Island Coast to Coast Birding Trail. Such notable species as Nēnē, Hawai’i Amakīhi, ‘Ōhōa, Hawai’i ‘Elepaio, ‘Apanane, ‘I’iwi, Hawaiian Hawk, and Hawaiian Coot, can be found on the 90 miles of this new trail. Enjoy this new festival which spans the island, too. https://hawaiibirdingtrails.com/festival-details/
FALL BIRDING CLASSES
Taught by Candy Brown

Backyard Birds
Enhance your understanding of common birds and improve your ability to identify them. Includes basics of anatomy, reproduction, foods and foraging. Also, how to provide a good backyard habitat for birds.

Marysville at Jennings Barn - Tuesday, September 13, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. $17. To register, call 360-363-8400.

Mukilteo at Rosehill Center - Tuesday, September 20, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. $15. To register, call 425-263-8180.

Edmonds at Frances Anderson Center - Tuesday, September 27, 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. $15 for residents, $17 for non-residents. To register, call 425-771-0230.

Owls and Raptors
Class participants will explore the worlds of the most common owls, hawks, and eagles that live here at different times of the year, or all year long. We will look at impressive photos of these birds and discuss the habitats in which to find them.

Edmonds at Frances Anderson Center - Monday, October 10, 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. $15 for residents, $17 for non-residents. To register, call 425-771-0230.

Marysville at Jennings Barn - Tuesday, October 18, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. $17. To register, call 360-363-8400.

Mukilteo at Rosehill Center - Tuesday, October 25, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. $15. To register, call 425-263-8180.

Register now for the 2016 annual meeting of the Audubon Council of Washington (ACOW), hosted by North Central Washington Audubon Society and the Eastern Washington Chapters. ACOW is our annual state-wide meeting where members from all Audubon Chapters in Washington gather together for a weekend of information sharing, action opportunities, and fellowship. The theme of this year’s meeting is the management of public lands and how the Audubon network can successfully engage in planning and management decisions to build resilient ecosystems that benefit birds and other wildlife.

Date: Saturday, October 8, 2016
Location: Confluence Technology Center,
285 Technology Center Way, #102, Wenatchee, WA
Agenda and Information: http://wa.audubon.org/events/audubon-council-washington
Registration: $35 at http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/2564495

Highlights at the 2016 ACOW meeting:
- The candidates for Commissioner of Public Lands – Dave Upthegrove and Hilary Franz – will speak about their vision for the management and care of Washington State public lands and waterways, and how they intend to engage Washington citizens with their plans.
- An update from Seattle Audubon on the Department of Natural Resource’s Long-Term Conservation Strategy for the Marbled Murrelet, and ways in which the network can take action during the upcoming decision-making process.
- Agency experts from the US Forest Service, WA Department of Fish & Wildlife, WA Department of Natural Resources, and the Bureau of Land Management will participate in a panel discussion regarding fire ecology and management plans for Eastern Washington, followed by Q&A and potential ways in which the Audubon network can support sound fire management policies and programs in Washington State.
- A visit from David Ringer, National Audubon’s first Chief Network Officer. David oversees the health, vitality, capacity, diversity and strength of Audubon’s vast distributed network. It’s a tall order, but David is up for the

challenge and excited to meet the effective Audubon network in Washington State!

Additional weekend activities will include:
- Education Workshop – Friday, October 7
- WSACC Meeting – Friday, October 7
- Friday Night Guest Speaker – Paul Bannick on his new book, OWL
- Field Trip – Sunday, October 9, Fire Ecology in North Central Washington

Until October 7 - A block of rooms at $158 (King) and $178 (two Queen) per night is being held at the Comfort Suites at the Park, 195 E. Penny Road, Wenatchee, within walking distance of the Confluence Technology Center. Hotel reservations may be made by calling (509) 662-1818. AUDUBON is the group name.

Until September 17 - A second block of rooms at $99 (one Queen) and $109 (two Queen) per night is being held at Super 8 Wenatchee, 1404 N. Miller St., Wenatchee. Hotel reservations may be made by calling (509) 662-3443. AUDUBON SOCIETY is the group name.

Burrowing Owls →
Mick Thompson.
City of Monroe adopts Vaux’s Swift

On August 16, the City of Monroe adopted the Vaux’s Swift as its official bird. Below are the remarks PAS President Cindy Easterson shared before the Monroe City Council as council members considered the resolution to adopt the Vaux’s Swift as their official bird.

Too often when Audubon comes before a City Council or public agency it is in the name of advocacy, a plea to protect and preserve an important bird habitat. But tonight is different. Tonight we welcome the opportunity to celebrate the official bird for the City of Monroe: the Vaux’s Swift. Tonight we celebrate a win for birds.

Credit for raising awareness of the Vaux’s Swift and the important role that the City of Monroe plays in its natural history lies squarely on the shoulders of Larry Schwitters, the founder and key researcher for Vaux’s Happenings. Larry has opened our eyes to the wonder and magic of these wee birds. He has documented the value of the chimney at Wagner Center (formerly Frank Wagner Elementary) and has launched a movement that engages people, businesses, and public agencies all in support of sustaining a healthy roost site. But credit must also go to the citizens, business owners, public officials, and school district staff of Monroe, because you, too, have welcomed this bird into your hearts and given it a key to your city. You have worked alongside us to educate the public about the value of old brick chimneys and taught an entire region how even an urban setting can be crucial to a species survival.

Tonight, by adopting the Vaux’s Swift as your official bird, the City of Monroe has put in place a legacy that will benefit these tiny visitors to your town for years to come. The 2016 southbound migration has just started. Just think how much fun we will all have in looking skyward and sharing the thought, “You are back little swifts! Your City welcomes you.”

Thank you for tonight’s resolution to adopt the Vaux’s Swift as the City of Monroe’s official bird. Pilchuck Audubon Society and our partners—Vaux’s Happenings, Seattle Audubon, and Eastside Audubon—thank you. And... I wouldn’t be surprised if just across the street there aren’t more than a few Vaux’s Swifts, tipping a wing in an appreciative salute. ♠

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Sponsored by:

Pilchuck Audubon Society

**SWIFT NIGHT OUT**

Monroe, Washington • FREE EVENT

September 10, 2016

4 pm till dusk

Wagner Center

639 West Main Street, Monroe Washington

Celebrate the Vaux’s Swift migration and watch thousands of birds come to roost in the chimney at Wagner Center

FREE PARKING

Pilchuck Audubon Society

SPAGHETTI FEED DINNER

Feed the family at our Fundraising Spaghetti Feed.

Spaghetti and Salad Dinner just $6.50

Hotdogs, dessert, beverages and other snacks available.

ACTIVITIES

Children’s Games and Crafts

Wildlife Education Booths

Vaux’s Swift Research Station

Swift Headbands

...and of course the Swifts!

THANK YOU TO OUR KEY SUPPORTERS

Pilchuck Audubon Society

Wagner Center

WDFW

Vaux’s Swift → WDFW
Pilchuck Audubon Society
Membership Information
Support your local Audubon chapter by becoming a member. PAS dues are tax deductible (consult your tax professional for details). The PAS tax ID number is 91-6183664.

- $28
- $28
- $1,000
- My employer will match my contribution

Make checks payable to Pilchuck Audubon Society
Mail to: Pilchuck Audubon Society
1429 Avenue D, PMB 198
Snohomish, WA 98290-1742

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Send me these via e-mail (check all that apply & include your e-mail address above):
- Profile Newsletter
- Program Announcements
- Action Alerts

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