The Corvid Crier

EASTSIDE AUDUBON SOCIETY

Vol 28, No 7 - September 2009

The Mission of the Eastside Audubon Society is to protect, preserve and enhance natural ecosystems and our communities for the benefit of birds, other wildlife and people.

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Eastside Audubon Celebrates the Birds of Snoqualmie Valley

Eastside Audubon will be participating for the first time in the Harvest Celebration Farm Tour of King County by hosting a booth at the Dougherty Farmstead in Duvall on Saturday, September 26. The events will include a bird feedermaking activity for children at the Farmstead, and bird walks for families which begin at Depot Park and continue along the Carnation-Duvall Trail. Information about Eastside Audubon will be available. The Farm Tour events run from 10:00 in the morning to 4:30 in the afternoon. The bird walks begin at 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.. Bring binoculars and dress for the weather.

On the preceding Tuesday, September 22 at 7:00 p.m., Tim McGruder of the East-side Audubon Conservation Committee will present a talk at the Duvall Depot on "The Birds of Snoqualmie Valley" and discuss the role of conservation efforts to protect migratory birds which pass through the area in spring and fall. We invite all members and their guests to both the Tuesday and Saturday events.

These events are part of Eastside Audubon's outreach effort to East King



County to introduce the chapter to several new communities that have been assigned to its service area by the National Audubon Society. The Eastside Chapter has added 11 new zip codes and now includes the area eastward from Lake Washington to the Cascade ridge and from the Snohomish County line southward to a bit south of I-90. The Chapter is also planning future activities in other eastern King County towns.

(photo by Margaret Saint Clair)

Swift's Night Out, September 12

Please join us to celebrate the Vaux's Swifts southward migration through Monroe. The event will be Saturday, September 12 at Frank Wagner Elementary School on 639 W. Main Street, Monroe. Representatives from the Monroe Swift Watch Committee, the Pilchuck, Seattle and Eastside Audubon Societies, PAWS, Bats Northwest, and Animal Talk will

have educational booths set up.

Please bring blankets, a picnic, and thoughts for good weather! Last year we had about 800 participants, so please be prepared for a crowd.

For more information, see the description on page 6, the Field Trips page.

Directions to Eastside Audubon

Northlake Unitarian Universalist Church, 308 4th Ave. S. (corner of 4th Ave. S. and State). Take I-405 exit 18 (NE 85th, Kirkland). Drive west on Central Way to 3rd St. (stoplight). Turn left (south) on 3rd St. and follow it as it bears left and changes name to State St. Turn left on 4th Ave S.

TAKE THE BUS! Routes 540, 230 and 255 serve State Street in Kirkland.

Focus on the Board: Summer Camp Makes a Difference by Margaret Lie — At Large Board Member

Do you know what it meant to the 22 lowincome children Eastside Audubon sent to environmental camps in the past three years? Let me share with you how this summer experience



changed the life of one camper – in the words of her mother.

"Dear Margaret Lie and members of Eastside Audubon,

I know you like to hear from the children about their camp experience, but I felt compelled to write to you myself. This was Ashley's first camp experience. We had to borrow many items of gear and had no idea how to set up a tent. Although Ashley was excited to attend, she was very apprehensive, and I was not sure she would be able to relax and enjoy the experience.

When we arrived at camp the staff was very welcoming and showed her where to set up her tent. She willingly got to it and with staff help had it up in a few minutes. Then she was off with a group of campers waving goodbye, not wanting us to hang around at all.

We were thrilled, but still expected a call from camp asking us to pick her up early. We were wrong. On the way to pick her up, we were discussing ways to encourage her to talk about camp on our way home, anticipating one-word answers - "fine," etc. From the time we left the Closing Ceremony it was nonstop storie; we could barely get her to stop until she went to bed that night.

The friendships and respect for staff, each other and the envi ronment were very clear. She loved every minute of every day. She got filthy dirty every day and loved it and was the first to jump in a muddy pool to cool off. (This child sometimes takes a shower twice a day.) The games they played were active and full of awareness teachings, but in her eyes just so much fun. I know she learned many things and is so much more aware of her surroundings and environment, but believe many things she learned will evolve long after this

In this busy world it is so easy to be caught up in electronics that keep a person inside. This camp brought Ashley to the world outside. Opening her eyes and giving her a greater sense and appreciation of her self, her abilities, and environment and for that we are truly grateful!!! She continues to inform us she will go next year so is working on a plan.

Thank you so much for providing this opportunity to Ashley and so many others. We support your hard work and diligence in keeping children aware and able to experience this wonderful camp."

This is one of many stories from the Youth Education Committee where we have accepted the challenge to create in children a love of nature, especially birds, and a commitment to care for the environment. Thanks to all who have donated to the McQuade Camp Fund.

Eastside Audubon Society (425) 576-8805 — www.eastsideaudubon.org

308 4th Avenue S. (Corner 4th Ave. S. and State)

Cindy Balbuena

Executive Officers

President Vice President Secretary

Open Carmen Almodovar Ellen Homan Treasurer **Executive Director** Jan McGruder

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Committee Chairs/Board (board positions underlined)

At large board member At large board member At large board member Birding Bird Photography Field Trips

Native Plant Walks

Nature Walks

Membership

Helen LaBouy Margaret Lie Tricia Kishel Brian Bell Tim Bover **Hugh Jennings** hlabouy@eastsideaudubon.org mlie@eastsideaudubon.org tkishel@eastsideaudubon.org bbell@eastsideaudubon.org tboyer@seanet.com (425) 746-6351

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sunny@sunnywalter.com Christopher Chapman (425) 941-3501

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MaryFrances Mathis (425) 803-3026 **Bird Questions?**

Conservation Andrew McCormick amccormick@eastsideaudubon.org Marymoor Park Jim Rettig

(425) 402-1833

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Tom Grismer (206) 720-9892 newsletter@eastsideaudubon Sunny Walter (425) 271-1346

sunny@sunnywalter.com

Open Board Positions

The following positions are open and waiting for volunteers. Please call the office if you have questions or are interested: Vice President, Adult Education chair, Advocacy, Financial Development chair, Birdathon, Gift Wrap, and Merchandising.

Watch Birds for Science! Project FeederWatch

You can become part of the world's largest avian research team by joining tens of thousands of bird watchers across North America who are contributing to bird studies. By joining Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Project FeederWatch, you will help scientists further understand what is needed to protect birds and their habitats – in remote forests, cities, and your own backyard, and help them track bird movements and monitor long-term trends in the distribution and abundance of birds in winter. Participants periodically count backyard birds and report totals online or on paper data forms. Since birds are everywhere and researchers are not, the data you collect and send in, combined with observations across the continent, give scientists the "big picture" about bird populations. Are some species expanding their ranges? Are others declining in numbers? Your reports make a difference for bird conservation!

Project FeederWatch is a joint research and education project of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Bird Studies Canada. Many participants are Audubon members. Sign up now and start counting in November. Contact the Lab at www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw, or call 607-254-2427, or call the EAS office for more information.

- Jim Rettig

September Meetings

Sept 2 (Weds) 4:00—6:00 p.m. Web Committee

Meets first Wednesday each month in EAS Office. All interested parties are invited. Questions? Email webmaster@eastsideaudubon.org

Sept 8 (Tues) 7:00 p.m. Youth Education Committee

Meets in the EAS Office. All interested parties are invited. Questions? Email **education@elwas.org**

Sept 10 (Thurs) 7:00 p.m. Photo Group

Meets in large room upstairs from EAS Office. Questions? Email Tim Boyer at **tboyer@seanet.com**

Eastside Audubon Office/ Audubon Center

The office is downstairs at Northlake Unitarian Universalist Church in Kirkland, **308 4th Avenue S. (Corner 4th Ave. S. and State**). Directions: I-405 exit 18 (N. E. 85th-Kirkland). Go west on Central Way to the light on 3rd St. Go left on 3rd St. Follow this street (it bears left and changes name to State St.) Then turn left on 4th Ave. S.

(425) 576-8805 office@eastsideaudubon.org

Hours: Mon, Tues, Fri — 9:00a.m. - 1:00p.m.

The Corvid Crier, Vol 28, NO 7 Publication Date: September 1, 2009. Published by: Eastside Audubon Society P.O. Box 3115, Kirkland, WA 98083-3115

The Corvid Crier is published monthly by the Eastside Audubon Society except that there are no issues in January or August.

Deadline for material submission is the first Wednesday of the month preceding publication. Send material by email to:

newsletter@eastsideaudubon.org Subject: EAS Newsletter

or by mail to:

Eastside Audubon Society
Attn: Tom Grismer

P. O. Box 3115, Kirkland, WA 98083-3115

Thanks to our Scholarship Fund Donors

Eastside Audubon wishes to thank all those donors who made possible a unique weeklong experience for seven middle school students. Your generosity provided scholarships for those who would not otherwise be able to attend due to financial need.

In addition to members' contributions to the scholarship fund, some camps generously offered discounted fees to EAS. We are grateful to REI for their contribution of camping gear.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Science Camp was at Magnuson Park in Seattle. Each day was filled with projects and activities that explored the mysteries of our oceans and atmosphere.

The Pacific Science Center combination day/overnight camp, Get Your Green On, focused on the environment. It was held at the new education center at Bellefields Park in Bellevue and at Leavenworth where students spent the night and then rafted the Wenatchee River.

The third camp was Wilderness Awareness, based on the school's property in the Cascade Foothills. This camp, Scout Overnight, emphasized the ways of the ancient scouts.

YMCA offered B.O.L.D., Boys Outdoor Leadership Development, a weeklong backpacking and photography trip along the Pacific Coast of the Olympic Peninsula.

Our EAS Youth Education Committee has taken the challenge of offering, organizing and mentoring the campers and their families. We believe that those who learn about their surroundings at an early age are more likely to become adult stewards of the environment.

You can expect to read about the students' experiences in the newsletter, or hear a short presentation at a program meeting or see students volunteering at one of our events. In these ways the scholarship recipients give back to EAS. – Jill Keeney and Margaret Lie

Pyrrhuloxia

Fire chested, crested male

Surveys the sage country.

Gray lady springs up.

-Andrew McCormick Texas, April 2009

San Juans Cruise with OPAS

October 5-7, Sequim, WA. Join the Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society this fall for a three-day cruise through the spectacular San Juan Archipelago. Cruise to Roche Harbor Resort and San Juan Island. Picnic on Sucia Island State Park, and cruise home via dramatic Deception Pass. Register at www.olympicpeninsulaaudubon.org. Call 360-681-4076, or email rcoffice@olympus.net.



Dr. Kerri W. Scarbrough, Optometrist 17320 135th Ave. N.E. — Woodinville (425) 398-1862 www.eevisioncare.com

See the birds better!

Welcome New Members

Welcome to the following new members of the East Lake Washington Audubon Society. We hope to see you help you. soon at a Membership Meeting or Field Trip. Call or visit our office if

you have any questions. Our friendly volunteers are more than happy to

Ed Averett, Robert Bolling, Howard Donkin, Joan McBride, Arlene E.

Ritzen, Eugene Shapiro, Theresa Sherman, David C. Sietsema.

News from the Marymoor BirdLoop

The boardwalk extension is complete! during high water this winter. Thanks All that remains to be done are the addition of some rail details and clean-up. If you haven't been down the River to see the extension yet, go feast your eyes on a job well done! You'll see the benefits of this project

to all those who worked tirelessly to get this job done this summer, especially to our construction manager, Tim McGruder.

Our next work party is scheduled for Saturday, September 12, 9 a.m. to

noon. Some volunteers will attend to the boardwalk details and clean-up. others will be involved in habitat restoration. Parking passes will be provided. We need your help. Plan to join others at Marymoor on September 12.

- Jim Rettig



August's Boardwalk Work crew

The Education Committee Needs YOU

Do you enjoy being with children? Do Festival in Monroe. Hang up the eduyou want young people to become stewards of the environment? Make a difference in children's lives by becoming a volunteer with the Education Committee. Help kids at a science fair make bird feeders to take home. Assist an Education Committee member in a classroom. Join a work party to make bird buttons for the Swift

cation brochure in your local grocery store. Plant native plants to attract birds to a school yard. Join us at the historical Dougherty Farm on Sept. 26 when we will sponsor a children's activity and informational tables as part of the King County Heritage Farm Tour.

And these are just a few of the many ways you can volunteer to make a difference. We promise no meetings, no paperwork—just lots of fun and a feeling of giving back to your community. Call (360-794-7163) or e-mail (mbritton1@earthlink.net) to volunteer. - Mary Britton-Simmons

The Southern Cross Peregrine Project — Thursday, September 24, at 7:00 p.m. Northlake Unitarian Universalist Church (Directions on page 1)

Come hear fascinating stories of the beautiful peregrine falcon's incredible migration from the Chilean Andes to the northern Arctic and back. Raptor biologist, **Bud Anderson**, has studied raptors for over 35 years and has an incredible knowledge of local populations of peregrine falcons. He invites EAS members to join about 100 volunteers who participate in the one hour annual Skagit Flats Winter Raptor Count in February. The Skagit Flats is one of the premier winter hawk watching sites in Washington.

Bud Anderson and the members of the Southern Cross Peregrine Project have spent three years tracking these incredible birds. They have followed the spring and fall migration of North American tundra peregrines from their southern ranges in Chile to their breeding grounds in the arctic.

The group captured, banded and attached GPS transmitters to the falcons. The Falcon Research Group led by Bud Anderson was able to track these birds every day and learn more about their behavior and migratory pathways than ever before. Linking

the GPS data to Google Earth, they can closely examine the departure dates, specific routes, daily distance travelled, arrival times and even the locations of the northern nest sites of the individual birds. Locations can be pinpointed to within 20 meters, often allowing us to identify individual perches and roosts used by the migrant peregrines anywhere in the western hemisphere.

During each migration period, this information is shared online, allowing anyone to follow the falcons as they traverse two continents on an 8,600 mile journey that may last up to two months.

Last fall, one peregrine, Elizabetha, travelled a spectacular 935 miles in a single day, a world record for distance covered by a migratory bird (New Jersey to Florida). This is a typical example of the revolutionary new GPS satellite technology being "married" to the ancient phenomenon of global bird migration. This technology has allowed the group to track nine migrant Peregrine Falcons "wintering" in Chile. Bud will share amazing stories



and pictures of the Southern Cross Peregrine Project, the travels and travails of Peregrine tracking throughout the Americas.

Please join us Thursday, September 24, for Bud's thrilling presentation on peregrine falcons. The presentations will start promptly at 7:00; however, you are welcome to come early and enjoy the Activity Fair. Bud's presentation is FREE and open to the public – invite a friend.

Board Notes for Summer 2009

Board Retreat: The board met in August to review our progress on goals for 2009.

Education: Mary Britton-Simmons, Education Chair, noted the following achievements thus far:

900 students were served

We received an REI grant for \$5K We received an invitation to speak to staff at REI on August 29, 2009

The Education Committee plans to build upon what they've achieved thus far, including expanding curriculum, sending more children to summer camp, adding more family field trips, and expanding service to schools in our new territories.

Conservation: Andy McCormick, Conservation Committee Chair, discussed plans for outreach to our new territories. The committee plans talks on topics such as specific bird species, landscaping with native plants, habitat restoration, and promotion of education initiatives that are both local and national in scope. Andy noted that we will be participating in the Harvest Celebration in Duvall at the Dougherty Farm, on Saturday, September 26, 2009. We will also be giving a presentation in Duvall on the birds of the Snoqualmie Valley.

Birding: Brian Bell, Birding Chair, discussed plans to expand the number of walks and adult education classes and our involvement in bird counts.

Project FeederWatch: Jim Rettig discussed plans for increasing our involvement in this bird count that occurs from November to April each year. Counters select their own bird-count days, usually two consecutive days once every two weeks, and then they report their findings to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. For more information, see http://www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw/

International Migratory Bird Day (**IMBD**): The board decided we will continue this event at Marymoor Park. We will work on improving publicity and modify content we provide at the event.

(Continued on page 7)

FIELD TRIPS

<u>Parents and children over 8 are welcome on all trips.</u> **FRS Radio owners, please consider bringing them on trips.**
See www.eastsideaudubon.org/events/ for the latest information and for reports of last month's field trips.

Meeting Places for Field Trips:

- **Kingsgate Park and Ride:** I-405 exit 20B northbound or 20 southbound, N. E. 124th St. Go west to light at 116th Ave. N. E., then right (north) a few blocks to P&R lot (on the left). Meet in the S.E. corner. 1300 116th Way NE, Kingsgate.
- Newport Hills Park and Ride: I-405, exit 9. 5115 113th PL NE, Newport Hills.
- **South Kirkland Park and Ride:** 108th Ave. NE just north of hwy 520 and Northup Way. 10610 NE 38th Pl.
- Tibbetts Park and Ride: Take exit 15 from I-90, turn right (south) and go past the new multistory Issaquah Park & Ride to the 3rd traffic light. Turn left (east) on Newport Way NW, go one block and turn right (south) into the Park & Ride. Meet at the west end of the parking lot (away from the entrance) to carpool. 1675 Newport Way NW, Issaquah

September 4 (Fri) 8:00 to noon Marymoor Park Bird Walk

Join us for a morning walk along the nature trail, seeing what birds are in the area. Meets the 1st Friday of each month at 8:00. Bring binoculars and meet at the SW corner of the Dog Area parking lot (Parking Lot D). No registration is required. To reach Marymoor Park, take SR 520 east from Seattle to the West Lake Sammamish Parkway exit and follow the signs. The entrance to the park is one block south of the exit. Turn right at third stop sign, to Dog Area parking lot. Parking is \$1.

September 12 (Sat) – 5:00-8:00 p.m. Vaux's Swifts in Monroe

This is an evening trip to Monroe to watch thousands of Vaux's Swifts go thru their evening ritual before dropping in a chimney to roost for the night. Bring a folding chair or blanket if you don't like to stand for a long time. About an hour before dusk they begin circling and swirling around the chimney as the numbers keep increasing. A few will start making feints at the chimney, then some will start dropping down into the chimney. These are followed by more and more until the sky is empty about dusk. We will meet at the south end of the Kingsgate P&R by 5:00 p.m. and carpool to Frank Wagner Elementary School in Monroe. A program in the auditorium will begin at 6:00 with entertainment and a lecture by local swift expert Larry Schwitters. Immediately following the lecture, we will go outside and watch thousands of swifts descend into the chimney. Docents will be on hand to answer questions about the swift project and the swifts. Passenger cost/ person is \$4.00. If you plan to go, email **Hugh Jennings** at: hughbirder@earthlink.net or call at 425-746-6351.

September 12 (Sat) 9:00 to noon Marymoor Park Habitat Restoration

Join us in restoring native habitat at the Marymoor Park interpretive area. Dress for the weather and bring clippers,

gloves, snacks and water. Meet at SE corner of Parking Lot G. **Jim Rettig 425-402-1833**

September 14 (Mon) – 6:30 a.m. to early evening Grays Harbor area

We will explore the Grays Harbor area for shorebirds and seabirds, we'll also keep an eye out for passerines. We may hit the Hoquiam area and Ocean Shores, or Westport, Midway Beach and Tokeland depending on where the birds are reported. Come prepared for any weather conditions. Bring lunch and WDFW parking permit if you have one. Carpooling essential. Return early evening. Meet at Newport Hills P&R (exit 9 from I-405) by 6:30 a.m. Cost per person \$30. Brian Bell 425-485-8058

September 15 (Tues) 8:00 to noon Juanita Bay Park Bird Walk

A relaxed walk in the Park, seeing what birds are in the area. Meets the <u>3rd Tuesday of each month at 8:00</u>. Bring binoculars and meet in parking lot. No registration required. MaryFrances Mathis 425-803-3026

Sept 19 (Sat) - 8:00 a.m. to 4 p.m. - Olallie Meadow

Meet at Tibbetts P&R is Issaquah. A slow-paced native plant walk that also provides opportunities to see garter snakes, cascade frogs and pacific giant salamanders. The focal area is a series of bogs and fens just a few miles east of Snoqualmie Pass at Windy Point. We also expect to find ripe blueberries/ huckleberries. Bring sturdy walking shoes, water, lunch, and plant ID book (camera optional). Joint trip with Mountaineers Naturalist Group. Sign up with leader, Sunny Walter, swalter@eastsideaudubon.org or 425-271-1346. Passenger cost \$8.

September 23 (Weds) – 8:00 to noon Lake Sammamish State Park (Issaquah) Bird Walk

This urban park offers a wide assortment of birds and habitats due to its varied ecosystems. The trip will involve walking approximately 2-3 miles. Dress appropriately (it can be muddy if wet). Just inside the main entrance, take the first left into the large parking lot and meet at the northeast end. Call the trip leader, **Sharon Aagaard**, with any questions, **425-891-3460**.

September 28 (Monday) 9:00 to noon Birding the Hot Spots of King County

Monthly field trip on **fourth Monday** of each month to wherever the birds are. Meet before 9:00 a.m. at north end of the Newport Hills Park-N-Ride (I-405, exit 9) and plan to be back by noon. Passenger cost/person **\$2.00. Hugh Jennings 425-746-6351**

BIRD OF THE MONTH — Andrew McCormick

Black-bellied Plover Pluvialis squatarola

Length 11.5 in. Wingspan 29 in. Weight 8 oz (240 g) AOU Band code BBPL

The Black-bellied Plover is our largest plover. It is distinctive in its breeding plumage with black bill and legs, back and white barred upperparts and black face, throat and breast to the belly. In fall it molts to its basic plumage of gray above and below with a lightly streaked breast (photo). Because of this appearance it has been called the Grey Plover in the Old World. In flight black patches are visible in the axillars. These patches are present only in the Black-bellied Plover and make a good field mark in winter.

The genus name Pluvialis is from the Latin for rain or being associated with rain (Holloway). There does not seem to be any good reason for the birds to have been given this name. I would like to think that the birds bred in such large numbers that when they landed during migration it seemed to be raining plovers. Equally obscure is the species name squatarola, meaning bull-headed (Online Dictionary). The bird was called the Bull-headed Plover in the southeastern United States in the 19th Century (Audubon). It is still sometimes described this way (Paulson). The common name is descriptive.

Black-bellied Plovers breed in western Alaska and extreme northern Canada and around the world in the high arctic zone. They winter along the coastlines of the United States southward through Bermuda, the West Indies, and Mexico, to



Central and South America north of the equator and in similar areas on several other continents. The nest is a shallow scrape in the gravel usually in dry tundra but sometimes in river bottom areas. Usually four buff to grey-green colored eggs with dark splotches are distributed in the nest. Incubation lasts four weeks. Once hatched the young leave the nest almost immediately to begin foraging and find all their own food (Kaufman). They begin flying after 4-6 more weeks. It is the juvenile birds that we will see heading south in Washington during September. They congregate in large flocks on mudflats along the coast but can also be found in inland fields. The adults generally migrate in late July and August.

Black-bellieds feed in typical plover fashion. They run a few feet then probe

slightly to get at mollusks, marine worms, and insects, and then run a few more feet to nab something else. They can be seen in mixed flocks with Dunlin and dowitchers and have been described as sentinels for other birds because they are so alert to predators (Bent). Their plaintive PLEEooee whistling call is distinctive (Paulson, Sibley). This can be heard at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Macauley Library http://macaulaylibrary.org/audio/flashPlayer.do?id=43029

Black-bellied Plovers are abundant and their numbers are stable. Nineteenth Century hunting did not affect them as it did the American Golden-Plover. (Photo credit: Gary Luhm. References available upon request at

amccormick@eastsideaudubon.org)

Board Notes (Continued from page 5)

Marymoor: Jim Rettig, Marymoor project coordinator, announced that the boardwalk is done. New front panels for the kiosk signs have been installed, and the bike racks are in and waiting to be installed. We're applying for a small grant to continue additional work.

Communications: Anusha Raman, our new Communications Chair, stressed the importance of consistent messaging in everything we do, particularly, the news-

letter, the website, and program night. Look for changes in all of these in upcoming months. Anusha will also increase our presence in social media, such as Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter.

Speaker's Bureau: Jan McGruder discussed plans to again provide this free service to the community. Topics available include backyard birds, hummingbirds, and an introduction to birding. New topics to be developed may include Marymoor Park and gardening to attract birds.

Development: Tim McGruder, Development Chair, discussed different events and activities we might try to improve our fundraising. Karin Hargrove headed a successful Scrip sales event at PCC in July. With Scrip sales PCC donates 5% of the sale to Eastside Audubon.

New Board Position: The board passed a motion to make the Volunteer Program Chair a board position.

— Carmen Almodovar