



The Corvid Crier

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VOL 31, No 10 – DECEMBER 2011 / JANUARY 2012

Annual Christmas Bird Count and Dinner Saturday, December 17

Join one of eight teams of bird counters in the Eastside Audubon Christmas Bird Count on December 17, part of the annual, nationwide count organized by National Audubon to help determine bird distribution and population trends.

Everyone is welcome, from beginner to expert. Counting starts at 8 a.m. and ends by 4 p.m. If you're interested, contact one of these leaders:

Fall City–Preston: Kathy Andrich, (206) 390-3159 or chukarbird@yahoo.com.

**Lake Sammamish State Park–
Cougar Mountain–Issaquah:** Martyn Stewart, (425) 836-3849 or mstew@naturesound.org.

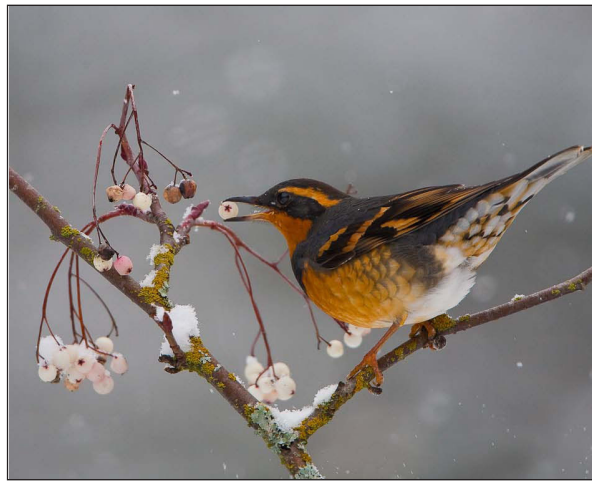
Marymoor Park–Ames Lake: Brian Bell, (425) 485-8058 or bellasoc@isomedia.com.

Pine Lake Plateau: Jim Rettig, (425) 402-1833 or jrettigtanager@frontier.com.

West Lake Sammamish Parks: MaryFrances Mathis, (425) 803-3026 or mfmathis@comcast.net.

West Snoqualmie Valley: Hugh Jennings, (425) 746-6351 or h2ouzel@comcast.net.

The East Snoqualmie Valley team is full.



Varied Thrush by Gary Luhm.

East Lake Sammamish Trail: Tim McGruder, (425) 822-8580 or tmcgruder@gmail.com. This count involves a 4.5-mile walk.

Wear comfortable shoes or boots and warm clothes, and bring lunch. Please also bring a \$5 donation to help National Audubon cover the costs of the CBC materials, annual summary, website, and database.

You can stay home instead and count birds in your back yard, if you're within the EAS count circle (go to www.eastsideaudubon.org; click Conservation, then Citizen Science, then Christmas Bird Count). Count for at least two

hours, then email Hugh Jennings at h2ouzel@comcast.net or phone (425) 746-6351 by 5 p.m. and leave a message with your results.

After the count, results will be tallied at a potluck supper for all participants at 5:30 p.m. at the Northlake Unitarian Universalist Church, 308 4th Avenue South, Kirkland (enter on State Street). Please call the EAS office if you plan to come: (425) 576-8805. Bring a dish corresponding to the first letter of your last name. A–G: Dessert. H–O: Main dish, marked “with meat” or “without meat.” P–Z: Salad. (Note updated assignments.) Bread and beverage are provided.

— Hugh Jennings

January 26 Dinner to Honor Volunteers

In place of Program Night in January, Eastside Audubon will hold a dinner to honor all of our dedicated volunteers. Without your generous contributions of time and talent, EAS would not exist. You do amazing work: staffing the office, teaching children, leading field trips, wrapping gifts at REI, producing and mailing the Corvid Crier, fundraising, working at Marymoor Park, surveying bird populations, and much more.

Join us at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, January 26, for a potluck at the Northlake Unitarian Universalist Church (308 4th Avenue South, Kirkland). We will honor volunteer groups, give individual awards, and recognize the board. Entertainment will follow.

All chapter members are welcome. RSVP: office@eastsideaudubon.org. Please bring a dish that serves six, corresponding to the first letter of your last name. A–G: Dessert. H–P: Hot dish. Q–Z: Salad.

— Mary Britton-Simmons



Register now

for 2012 birding classes on woodpeckers, shorebirds, and birding basics. See Page 6.
Red-breasted Sapsucker by Raymond Parsons.



In its second-to-final meeting as it's currently composed, the board of Eastside Audubon began organizing for its work in 2012. Vice President Andy McCormick was elected temporary chair of the Development Committee, where he'll lead the drive to cultivate new and existing sources of financial support.

Recommend Someone for the Board

The board now has chair positions open in Conservation, Education, Development,

Membership, and Volunteers. If you'd like to be part of an active board where you'd have an opportunity to be creative and make a difference, email Andy McCormick: ammccormick@eastsideaudubon.com.

And if you know someone whose talents and interests seem like a fit, please suggest that he or she get in touch. Your friend needn't be an EAS member now (but would be asked to become one to join the board).

Membership: Our priority for 2012

Income from dues was down 23.5 percent in the first nine months of 2011, reflecting in part a decline in the number of members.

The board is committed to increasing EAS membership in 2012 and beyond. In January we'll set growth targets and form

an action plan. As we grow, we'll also be looking to become more diverse.

What's your best idea about how EAS can attract new members? What would you like to see the chapter do for you in the year ahead? Share your thoughts with Jim Rettig: jrettigtanager@frontier.com or (425) 402-1833.

Styrofoam Drive Continues in January

A big thanks to all who recycled in 2011. To start off 2012, bag your meat trays, food clamshells, #6, and packaging peanuts separately from the big chunks, and bring it all to Volunteer Night on January 26. Margie Huff will cart it off. To take a turn at transporting Styrofoam to Renton for recycling, contact Bev Jennings or Jill Keeney: j.keeney@comcast.net.



Meetings

Youth Education Committee

December: No meeting

January 3 (Tuesday) 6:30 p.m.

Meets at the church in Adams Hall the first Tuesday of every month except December and August. Open to anyone who likes to share nature with kids. Questions? Email education@eastsideaudubon.org.

Conservation Committee

December 14 (Wednesday) 7 p.m.

January 11 (Wednesday) 7 p.m.

Meets the second Wednesday of every month in the EAS office. An effective group engaged in activism and hands-on conservation projects. Questions? Email Andy McCormick: amccormick@eastsideaudubon.org.

Photo Group

December 8 (Thursday) 7 p.m.

January 12 (Thursday) 7 p.m.

Meets the second Thursday of every month in the large room upstairs from the

EAS office. All levels welcome; if you like, bring photos on a jump drive to share. Questions? Email Larry Engles: engles@ridesoft.com.

Board Meeting

December 19 (Monday) 6 p.m.

In the EAS office. The next board meeting will be the semi-annual extended session, in January on a date to be determined. Questions? Email office@eastsideaudubon.org.

All meetings are at Northlake Unitarian Universalist Church, 308 4th Avenue South, Kirkland, unless otherwise noted.

Eastside Audubon Society

Northlake Unitarian Universalist Church
308 4th Avenue South, Kirkland, WA 98063
(425) 576-8805 www.eastsideaudubon.org

Office hours: Monday, Tuesday, Friday. 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

“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.”

Executive Officers

President	Jim Rettig	jrettigtanager@frontier.com
Vice President	Andy McCormick	amccormick@eastsideaudubon.org
Secretary	Open	
Treasurer	Jim Kenney	jimkenney770@aol.com

Holiday Gift Wrap	Helen LaBouy	helenlabouy@mac.com
Hospitality	Claudia Welch	(425) 827-2548
Native Plant Walks	Open	
Nature Walks	Open	
Newsletter	Tamra Chinn	newsletter@eastsideaudubon.org
Webmaster	Gary Luhm	gluhm@comcast.net

Board Members and Committee Chairs

Ex-Officio	Cindy Balbuena	cbalbuena@deloitte.com
Birding	Tricia Kishel	tkishel@eastsideaudubon.org
Communication	Mary Brisson	marybrisson@mac.com
Conservation	Open	
Education	Mary Britton-Simmons	mbrittionsimmons@eastsideaudubon.org
Development	Open	
Membership	Jim Rettig	jrettigtanager@frontier.com
At large board member	Tim McGruder	tmcgruder@gmail.com
At large board member	Open	
Office Assistant	Zoe Allen	office@eastsideaudubon.org

Eastside Park Rangers

Ranger Liaison to EAS	Ted Marx	tedrmarx@comcast.net
EAS Liaison to Rangers	Jill Keeney	j.keeney@comcast.net

Eastside Audubon is located at: Northlake Unitarian Universalist Church, 308 4th Avenue South, Kirkland (corner of 4th Avenue South and State Street). Take I-405 Exit 18 (NE 85th, Kirkland). Drive west on Central Way to 3rd Street. Turn left (south) and follow 3rd Street as it bears left and changes name to State Street. Turn left onto 4th Ave South. By bus: Routes 540, 230, and 255 to State Street in Kirkland.

Other Committee Chairs

Bird Photography	Larry Engles	engles@ridesoft.com
Bird Questions	MaryFrances Mathis	mf.mathis@comcast.net
Birdathon	Andy McCormick	amccormick@eastsideaudubon.org
Field Trips	Hugh Jennings	(425) 746-6351 fieldtrips@eastsideaudubon.org
Historian	Bob Gershmel	rwgusnret1986@yahoo.com

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Deadline for material submission is the first Wednesday of the month preceding publication. **Send material by email to: marybrisson@mac.com or by mail to the address above.**

Puget Loop Birding Trail Map on Sale from EAS

With original artwork by Ed Newbold and detailed birding how-to for 42 locations from Orcas Island to Mount Rainier National Park, the final map in Audubon Washington's Great Washington State Birding Trail series is on sale now from Eastside Audubon.

In addition to a colorfully illustrated route connecting prime birding spots, the Puget Loop map provides invaluable tips about when and how to find the species characteristic of each location.

The mapmaking team included members from eight chapters, with EAS represented by Brian H. Bell, Melinda Bronsdon,

Michael Hobbs, Hugh Jennings, and MaryFrances Mathis. Audubon Washington's Hilary Hilscher credited Brian with a breakthrough moment in the yearlong project. "We had chosen the best of the best nominated sites

and had marked them on a giant map of Puget Sound, but we couldn't figure out how to tie the sites together in a loop," she said. "Brian tossed out the suggestion of going site-to-site within each chapter and linking the chapters together. Voilà! That was it, and we were able to create a work-



Hooded Merganser pair at Juanita Bay Park by Mick Thompson.

able route that also shows clusters of sites that people can visit in a weekend."

On the map are five places in Eastside Audubon's back yard: the Audubon BirdLoop at Marymoor Park, Juanita Bay Park, Lake Sammamish State Park, Mercer Slough Nature Park, and the Snoqualmie Valley.

The map carries the EAS logo in recognition of our co-sponsorship, and EAS will retain all of the proceeds from the maps the chapter sells.

You can buy the map for the cover price of \$4.95 plus tax at chapter events and at the office. Or order by phone at (425) 576-8805; postage and handling fees will apply.

— Mary Brisson



Black-capped Chickadee by Caren Park.

Volunteer for the Annual Holiday Gift Wrap

Raise funds for EAS by wrapping gifts at REI Redmond Town Center or REI Issaquah. Shifts available

December 17 through December 24: noon to 3 p.m., 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., and 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. No fancy skills needed. Contact Helen LaBouy: (206) 915-1345 or helenlabouy@mac.com.

For teachers and students

College scholarship and teacher grant applications are due in February. Go to www.eastsideaudubon.org, select the Education tab, then click Youth Education.

Chinook Book: Savings for You, Funds for EAS

Eastside Audubon is now selling the 2012 Chinook Book, with coupons worth hundreds of dollars at local businesses and an emphasis on sustainability. For a list of merchants, go to: <http://sea.chinookbook.net/>.

The traditional book sells for \$20, and EAS keeps \$10. A mobile pack sells for \$10 (we keep \$6) and includes a code to download about 400 mobile coupons to the iPhone or an Android phone. A combo pack (book and mobile) sells for \$25 (we keep \$11).

Buy one for yourself and more for gifts at chapter events through February or at the office any time; call (425) 576-8805.

Let's Join Our Voices at Lobby Day: January 25

Eastside Audubon will send a delegation to Olympia to lobby our legislators on bills protecting the environment and wildlife, as part of the annual Environmental Lobby Day on Wednesday, January 25. Come along to meet your legislator and tell him or her that you are from EAS and support the environment.

EAS will once again partner with People for Puget Sound to urge a pro-environment legislative agenda. A special part of the day will be the official unveiling of the Puget Loop Birding Trail map, the seventh and final segment in the 3,000-mile Great Washington State Birding Trail. (See related story, above.)

Watch emails to the Announce and Conservation lists for updates and carpool arrangements. A Pre-Lobby Day Legislative Workshop will be held on Saturday, January 7. Email Andy McCormick: amccormick@eastsideaudubon.org.



EagleEye
VISION CARE, P.S.

**17320 135 Ave NE, #D
Woodinville, WA 98072
425-398-1862**

See the birds better!

Eastside Audubon's Best Bets for Winter Birding

Winter birding can be outstanding in the Puget Sound region. Our shorelines, wetlands, and frequently flooded fields are attractive to a variety of waterfowl; our relatively moderate climate is hospitable to a changeable list of overwintering visitors; and the occasional storm can shunt surprise species our way.

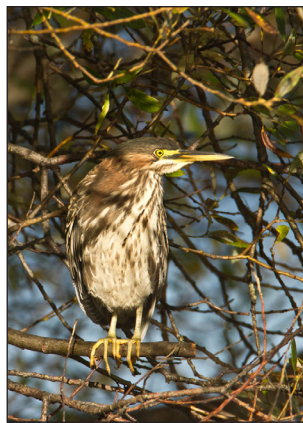
We asked several well-known local birders for their tips on winter birding in the places they know best. Here's what they told us. An expanded version of this article will appear in December at www.eastsideaudubon.org.

Gene Coulon Memorial Beach Park (Renton)

Tim Boyer

Go in the morning on any winter day, and you can see a good variety of birds — more birds than people. There are plenty of viewing spots, and it can be a very peaceful place.

When to go: I like to go about an hour after sunrise. It takes a little time for the light to reach the park. If it's sunny, there will be lots to see.



*Juvenile Green Heron at Gene Coulon Memorial Park
by Tim Boyer.*

Good for: Gadwall, Northern Shoveler, American Wigeon, Scaup, Goldeneye, and Common Merganser. Also Greater White-fronted Goose, Western and Horned Grebe, Mew and Ring-billed Gull, Red-tailed and Sharp-shinned Hawk.

How to bird it: Start at the very southern end of the park, by the kids' play area. Closer to Boeing, there's a small island you can walk out on. You may see Western Grebes, Bald Eagles, Double-crested Cormorants, and maybe some Canvasbacks.

Walk east, then north along the lake end toward the boat launch area. On the other side of the boat launch is a bridge, and there can be a lot of small bird activity in this area. I once spent the morning with a mixed flock of Black-capped Chickadees and Bushtits in the cedars here.

If you're lucky: Last winter one Sunday morning, I saw the local Belted Kingfisher in a tree close enough to get a picture. As I took it, a juvenile Green Heron flew into the bottom of the tree. I alternated looking at and taking pictures of both birds, thinking how lucky I was to see both of them at the same time. One late winter or early spring, there were a bunch of Ring-necked Ducks on the eastern edge of the swimming area near the south end. It was one of the few times I've been close enough in the right light to see their ringed necks.

Practicalities: It's free! You gotta love that these days.

—Tim Boyer's bird photography is at <http://www.TimBoyerPhotography.com>

Juanita Bay Park (Kirkland)

MaryFrances Mathis

In winter the bay is full of waterfowl, as it offers shelter and good food sources. Two boardwalks and a causeway provide excellent views of the entire bay. In the park, the thickets and blackberries attract sparrows, and the trees and shrubs have chickadees, kinglets, and woodpeckers.

How to bird it: In the bay and along the shore, look for Green-winged Teal, Greater and Lesser Scaup, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Gadwall, Wood Duck, Canvasback, Ring-necked Duck, Bufflehead, Hooded and Common Merganser, Common Goldeneye, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Common Loon, and Pied-billed, Western, Red-necked and Horned Grebes. Listen and watch closely in the tall grasses along the shoreline for Wilson's Snipe and Virginia Rail.

Birds are often quite close to the boardwalks and causeway, so a scope isn't necessary (unless to view birds on the far side of the bay).

If you're lucky: You may see Clark's Grebe, Pacific Loon, Eurasian Wigeon, Trumpeter and Tundra Swan, Redhead, Barrow's Goldeneye, Greater White-fronted Goose, Scoters, Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, Swamp Sparrow, and White-throated Sparrow.

Practicalities: Parking is free (enter on Market Street), and paths are paved. From here, drive north on Juanita Drive to Juanita Beach Park, an excellent place to study and sort through gulls (Glaucous-winged, Ring-billed, Mew, Herring, California, Thayer's, and Bonaparte's).

—MaryFrances Mathis is a Juanita Bay Park Ranger.

Lake Sammamish State Park (Issaquah)

Stan Wood

In one morning here you can bird a great diversity of habitat: beaches, woods, meadows, and Issaquah Creek as it flows into Lake Sammamish.

How to bird it: Prime spots to see ducks on the lake are the two swimming beaches and the boat launch area. Typical are Scaup, Goldeneye, Bufflehead, American Wigeon, Gadwall, Northern Shoveler, Green-winged Teal, Common Merganser, Western Grebe, Pied-billed Grebe, and Horned Grebe. In Issaquah Creek, expect Wood Duck and Hooded Merganser.

The trail between the two beaches is good for woodland birds, as is the trail along Issaquah Creek. Follow the creekside trail from the lake, or take one of the trails south of the beach parking lots and follow the creek upstream through woodlands to meadows.

If you're lucky: You may see Redhead or Canvasback ducks on the lake.

Practicalities: The trails can be very muddy. I recommend rubber or waterproof boots. If you have a scope, it can be helpful for seeing birds on the water. A Washington State Discover Pass is required for vehicle access; see <http://www.discoverpass.wa.gov/>.

—Stan Wood co-leads the monthly Eastside Audubon walk at the park.

Marymoor Park (Redmond)

Michael Hobbs

A morning at Marymoor can yield 50 or more species with careful observation, even in winter. In addition to its specialties, the park is good for ducks and grebes (seen on the Lake Sammamish slough and from the lake platform), as well as hawks, eagles, and a host of regular wintering passerines.

Good for: Sparrows, a Marymoor winter specialty. Large flocks of Golden-crowned Sparrows often contain one or two White-throated Sparrows from October through March; look along the slough trail north and south of the west Audubon BirdLoop kiosk (near Lot D). The compost/brush/dirt piles (Lot G) are a great place to look for Fox, Lincoln's, and White-crowned Sparrows. And watch for possible rarities such as American Tree Sparrow and Swamp Sparrow.

One or more Northern Shrike are seen with fair reliability from October to March. The best places to look are the "Grassy Meadow" southeast of the east kiosk of the Audubon BirdLoop (near Lot G), the north edge of the soccer fields northwest of the kiosk, and the compost/brush/dirt piles. Western Meadowlark sometimes can be found in the same locations.

Cackling Geese often form huge flocks on grass fields in the early mornings from October to February. Compare them with Canada Geese, and search the flocks for Greater White-fronted Goose and Snow Goose. The same fields are a gull hangout in the first hours after sunrise: Mew, Ring-billed, California, and Glaucous-winged are common. And keep an eye out for swans overhead.

If you're lucky: Arriving an hour before sunrise may allow views of Short-eared Owl (best in October and November, possible through April).

Practicalities: Parking is \$1 per visit.

—Michael Hobbs has led weekly bird surveys at Marymoor for 18 years.

Montlake Fill (Union Bay Natural Area, Seattle)

Connie Sidles

Birds that are off course often light here on the northeast shore of Lake Washington, where they can get respite from stress and fuel

up on the abundant food: seeds from the wild prairie and riparian habitats, insects, rodents, fish, and other birds.

When to go: Come after a heavy windstorm. Do not delay.

Good for: Eurasian Teal (same guy the past two years), Eurasian Wigeon, Cinnamon Teal (we've got a male already back in breeding plumage), Canvasback, Redhead, and Ruddy Duck. Three Trumpeter Swans who grew up here a few winters ago now return each year with their mates.

We usually host overwintering Virginia Rails, Marsh Wrens, Green Herons, and Savannah Sparrows. Winter is the time when Western Scrub-Jays appear, along with other winter rarities such as Red-breasted Sapsucker (a male who makes the Fill part of his circuit), Varied Thrush, Western Meadowlark, Band-tailed Pigeon, Eurasian Collared-Dove, and Pacific Wren.

This year, for a first, we have a Barred Owl! Also, back from who knows where, Short-eared Owl.

If you're lucky: Distinct possibilities this season are Tufted Duck, Barrow's Goldeneye, Western Screech-Owl, Cattle Egret, Rough-legged Hawk, any longspur, Snow Bunting, Tropical Kingbird, both redpolls, Snowy Owl, Northern Wheatear, Lewis's Woodpecker, a wagtail, Bohemian Waxwing, and Palm Warbler.

Practicalities: Parking in the small lots around the Center for Urban Horticulture (CUH) buildings is free unless posted for private events. If you plan to come often, buy a parking permit from the CUH office staff.

—Connie Sidles has just published her second book about the Fill, *Second Nature: Tales from the Montlake Fill* (Constancy Press).

Samish Flats (Skagit County)

Brian H. Bell

Roughly bordered by I-5 on the east, Samish Bay on the north, Padilla Bay on the west, and Bayview Ridge on the south, the Flats are a rich agricultural area that attracts birds of many kinds from about late October into February and March. The fields usually provide a good supply of rodents (good for hawks, eagles, falcons, and owls), are often flooded (good for ducks, geese, and swans), and have lots of mud (good for shorebirds).



Belted Kingfisher at Gene Coulon Memorial Park by Tim Boyer.

When to go: Clear days after storms are ideal.

How to bird it: The area along Chuckanut Drive is usually good for hawks and Trumpeter and Tundra Swans (cruise the side roads where it's easier to park). West of the town of Edison, the fields are good for waterfowl and shorebirds, and the wires and trees are perching spots for hawks and eagles. The WDFW access

(Continued on page 6)

Best Bets for Winter Birding

(Continued from page 5)

(also called the West 90) on Samish Island Road can be good for Short-eared Owls.

Along Bayview-Edison Road, flooded fields may attract large flocks of shorebirds (Dunlin and other sandpipers) who in turn may attract Peregrine Falcons and Merlin. On Samish Island, scanning Samish Bay can yield a wide variety of waterfowl.

If you're lucky: The Samish Flats are one of the few spots in North America where you have the opportunity to see up to five species of falcon (American Kestrel, Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, and possibly Prairie Falcon or Gyrfalcon) in a single day.

Practicalities: Always pull well off the road to park. WFDW parking requires a Discover Pass (or, until March 31, a Vehicle Use Permit). Stay clear of hunting areas through January.

— Brian H. Bell is a co-author of *Birds of Washington State* (Lone Pine).

Snoqualmie Valley (Carnation Farm Road)

John Tubbs

The Snoqualmie River valley is soggy in the winter, resulting in ideal habitat for wintering or migrating waterfowl. In recent years a huge flock of geese has wintered in the valley; Tundra and Trumpeter Swans are regular.

How to bird it: From Carnation, drive north on Highway 203 and turn west onto Carnation Farm Road. After crossing the Snoqualmie River, turn right into a parking area for the Chinook

Bend Natural Area. Ducks love the marshy pond here.

Drive on and, at the top of a slight hill, stop on the right at a gravel pulloff. This is an excellent vantage point to check out where the geese are feeding. Recent flocks have included Canada Geese, several subspecies of Cackling Geese, a few Greater White-fronted Geese, and one year an apparently confused Snow Goose. Also scan the tops of the trees along the river: Bald Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Merlin, and various hawk species have been seen from this location.

Proceed and, beyond Camp Korey, turn right on 284th Avenue NE. Stop just past the Sikes Lake bridge and look for ducks, grebes, and geese. Then backtrack to Carnation Farm Road (it becomes Ames Lake-Carnation Road NE) and turn right onto NE 80th Street, where several years ago a rare wintering Harris's Sparrow spent the whole season in the brush and berry patches.

If you're lucky: You may spot Redhead among the ducks and, mixed with a flock of American Wigeon, an occasional Eurasian. If you look hard at the sparrows in brushy patches, you may pick out a rarity such as White-throated or Swamp. Rough-legged Hawk has been regular and Northern Harrier often seen.

Practicalities: Carnation Farm Road can be busy: Pull off safely and be mindful of private property. Wear boots.

— Master birder John Tubbs is a landscape and bird artist (www.jtubbs.com) and photographer (www.tubbsphoto.com).



Hopelessly confused Snow Goose amid the Canadas in Snoqualmie Valley by John Tubbs.

2012 Birding Classes Start in January

To register for a class, call the Eastside Audubon office at (425) 576-8805 to reserve your space and arrange payment by check or credit card.

Birds of Puget Sound (Four Sessions) Brian H. Bell

Back by popular demand! Each session in this four-part course takes you birding in a prime location and provides instruction in basic principles, etiquette, field guides, equipment, and identification techniques for successful birding. Beginners, people new to the area, and experienced birders all will find much to learn.

Master Birder Brian H. Bell is a professional birding and natural history guide with an extensive background in biology, geology, and astronomy. He teaches ornithology at local community colleges and has birded extensively throughout the West and the United States. His enthusiasm and passion for birds will inspire you!

Session 1: Sunday, January 22. Basic principles and how to choose binoculars. Birding at Marymoor Park, Redmond. Meet 7:30 a.m. at Marymoor Park, Parking Lot D. Ends by noon.

Session 2: Sunday, January 29. Field guides, bird publications, and CDs. Birding at Union Bay Natural Area (also known as the Montlake Fill). Meet 8 a.m. at the UW Center for Urban Horticulture parking lot (3501 NE 41st Street, Seattle). Ends by noon.

Session 3: Sunday, February 5. Identification techniques. Birding at Discovery Park, Seattle. Meet 8 a.m. at Discovery Park Environmental Learning Center. Ends by noon.

Session 4: Sunday, February 12. Birding ethics and etiquette. Field trip destination to be determined, depending on birds of interest. Meet 8 a.m. at the Kingsgate Park & Ride. Full day.

Cost: \$80 members, \$90 non-members, plus carpool cost for Session 4 field trip.

Washington's Woodpeckers Brian H. Bell

Explore the world of woodpeckers in Washington. Twelve species inhabit our state from sea level to the boreal forests to the semiarid valleys of eastern Washington. In class, we will view an illustrated presentation and discuss habitat requirements, examine seasonal distribution, learn identification tips, and listen to vocal-

ization and drumming patterns. Then, on two field trips, we'll apply what we've learned to finding woodpeckers. See the listing above for more about Brian.

Evening session: Friday, March 9, 7–9:15 p.m. at the EAS office, Northlake Unitarian Universalist Church, 308 4th Avenue South, Kirkland.

Field trips: Saturday, March 10 (half day), western Washington. Saturday, June 9 (full day), eastern Washington. The trips will be organized at the class session.

Cost: \$60 members, \$80 non-members. Carpool cost \$18/passenger for eastern Washington and \$3 for western Washington.

Limit: 15 participants taking both class and field trips, 5 taking class only.

Shorebird Identification Tim Boyer

For the beginning or intermediate birder who is interested in shorebirds and how to identify them, curious about where they go when they're not on the coast, why they migrate through Washington, and what we should know about their conservation and incredible migrations.

In two evening sessions we'll cover methodologies for sorting out those "brown little peeps." We'll concentrate on viewing similari-



Pectoral Sandpiper by Tim Boyer.

ties and explore ways of telling species apart. We'll discuss the typical identification markings, as well as size, shape, habitat, and behavior. In class you'll see multiple photographs of each bird, including its various stages. Side-by-side images will demonstrate not only the similarities, but also the remarkable differences between similar species.

The field trip will be a full day, with a dozen or more stops that will offer close views of just about all of the common coastal shorebirds. If the class is full, we'll split into two field trips. This is easier on the birds and the instructor.

Evening sessions: Tuesdays, March 20 and March 27, 6:30–8:30 p.m. Location to be determined.

Field trips: Saturday, March 31, or Sunday, April 1. (Students will choose at the first class.)

Cost: \$60 members, \$80 non-members, plus carpool share. Evening sessions only: \$40 members, \$55 non-members.

Limit: 16 participants.

Spring Birding for Beginners Mike West

For anyone who is just beginning to bird or wants some really excellent basic instruction. Birding can be a challenging activity because birds are not always easy to distinguish, and they are naturally skittish. Let Mike help you discover some basic key methods for figuring out which bird is which, and you'll enjoy your birding more. There are few activities that can bring such a sense of wonder, satisfaction, and connection with nature in the busy lives we all lead. Scheduled to coincide with the best birding time of the year.

Evening sessions: Tuesday, May 1, and Thursday, May 3, at the EAS office, Northlake Unitarian Universalist Church, 308 4th Avenue South, Kirkland.

Field trip: Saturday, May 5 (full day), to eastern Washington. The trip will be organized at the class sessions.

Cost: \$60 members, \$80 non-members, plus field trip carpool share to be determined.

Limit: 20 participants.

Eastside Audubon thanks **Kirkland Park Place Cinemas** for hosting us during *The Big Year*.

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Beginning and experienced birders are equally welcome on our walks and field trips. Not a member? Not a problem. Come along and get to know Eastside Audubon. Advance registration is not necessary unless stated. P&R means Park & Ride. Binoculars are advisable. A scope may sometimes be suggested, but isn't required. Check www.eastsideaudubon.org for more trips.

Green Lake

December 3 (Saturday) 8 a.m. to noon

Walk Green Lake with expert birder Martin Muller, who has acquired intimate knowledge of this lake and the 150 bird species found here. Meet by 7:25 a.m. at South Kirkland P&R near the bus stop to carpool, or meet at Green Lake at 8. We will park at the west end of Green Lake near the Bathhouse Theater and meet Martin on the lake side of the theater, between the brick building and the water. Carpool \$2/passenger. Hugh Jennings: (425) 746-6351.

Juanita Bay Park

December 4, January 1 (Sunday) 1 p.m.

Eastside Park Rangers Interpretive Tour on the first Sunday of every month. Tours for community schools and special interest groups also can be scheduled through the EAS office: (425) 576-8805.

Sequim Area

December 6 (Tuesday) 7 a.m. (sharp) to 5 p.m.

Registration required. We will work our way up the Kitsap Peninsula to the Sequim area. Fall is a good time to search out a wide variety of waterfowl, loons, grebes, and alcids. We will also pay attention to the songbirds. Weather can be variable, so come prepared for most anything. Scopes are very helpful. Bring lunch and money for ferry plus carpool cost of \$20/passenger. Limited to 11 people in 3 cars. Meet at the south end of the Kingsgate P&R. Register with Brian H. Bell: (425) 485-8058. To reach Brian on day of trip only: (206) 619-0379.

Lake Sammamish State Park

December 7, January 25 (Wednesday) 8 a.m. to noon

This urban park offers a wide assortment of birds and habitats in its varied ecosystems. The trip involves walking 2 to 3 miles. Dress appropriately (rainproof in layers; some of the trails 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. A Discover Pass* is required to park. Co-led by Sharon Aagaard, (425) 891-3460, and Stan Wood.

Washington Native Plant Society Workshop: Diversity in the Desert UW Botany Greenhouse, main campus on Stevens Way

December 9 (Friday) 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Registration required by

December 5. Eva Dettweiler-Robinson, restoration ecology specialist, will lead an introductory course exploring the ways complex and fragile desert flora structure themselves to deal with a harsh environment. Although we tend to perceive arid lands as desolate, there is a rich flora with amazing adaptations to environmental stresses. To ask questions

about the class, email evadr@u.washington.edu or go to <http://staff.washington.edu/evadr>. To register, email lindaellis@wnps.org or call (206) 527-3210. Pay by credit card or check to: WNPS, 6310 NE 74th St. Suite 215E, Seattle, WA 98115.

Roll and Stroll at Juanita Bay Park

December 10 (Saturday) 9 a.m. to noon

A wheelchair accessible trip also suitable for slow walkers. We'll visit a 144-acre urban wildlife habitat area that offers a diversity of bird species and wildlife seen in close proximity in wet meadows, marsh, and open water. The trail surface is paved or boardwalk. Participants must be independent or bring an attendant. Bring binoculars. The leader will provide a spotting scope. Meet before 9 a.m. at Juanita Bay Park parking, 2201 Market Street, Kirkland. Andy McCormick: (425) 637-0892.

Samish Flats/Skagit

December 12 (Monday) 7:30 a.m.

Registration required. Our wintering raptors will be back, so we will be looking for eagles, hawks, falcons, accipiters, and possibly Short-eared Owls. We'll also watch for waterfowl, shorebirds, and small passerines; if we're lucky: Northern Shrike. Scopes very helpful. All experience levels welcome. Dress for the weather, bring lunch and fluids, and a Discover Pass* if you have one. Back late afternoon/early evening. Meet at southern end of Kingsgate P&R. Carpool \$20/passenger. Register with Brian H. Bell: (425) 485-8058. To reach Brian on day of trip only: (206) 619-0379.

Juanita Bay Park Bird Walk

December 20, January 17 (Tuesday) 9 a.m. to noon

A relaxed walk in the park, seeing what birds are in the area. Meets the third Tuesday of each month. Bring binoculars and meet in parking lot. Please note: Walks begin 9 a.m. October-March inclusive. MaryFrances Mathis: (425) 803-3026.

Birding the Hot Spots of King County

December 26, January 23 (Monday) 9 a.m. to noon

Monthly field trip on fourth Monday to wherever the birds are. Meet before 9 a.m. at the north end of the Newport Hills P&R and plan to be back by noon. Carpool \$2/passenger. Hugh Jennings: (425) 746-6351.

West Seattle Shoreline

January 28 (Saturday) 8 a.m. to noon

Explore the shores and waters of West Seattle along Elliot Bay and Puget Sound to Lincoln Park. Numerous viewpoints overlook the water and freighters, ferries, and sea birds. Expectations include goldeneyes, scoters, gulls, Harlequin Ducks, and shorebirds. Meet before 8 a.m. at north end of the Wilburton P&R. Carpool \$4/passenger. Hugh Jennings: (425) 746-6351.

Marymoor BirdLoop Restoration

December 3 and January 7 (Saturday) 9 a.m. to noon.

All are welcome! Meet at the kiosk of the Audubon BirdLoop at Marymoor Park, Lot G. Parking pass provided. Bring water, a snack, gloves, and a shovel and/or rake. Questions? Call the EAS office: (425) 576-8805.

* Discover Pass: \$10 daily/\$30 annual. Can be purchased online at <http://discoverpass.wa.gov> or at a sporting goods store.

Children 8 and over are welcome on all trips. FRS Radio owners: please consider bringing them on trips. Reports of last month's field trips are found at www.eastsideaudubon.org/events/.

Field Trip Meeting Places



Kingsgate Park & Ride

13001 116th Way NE, Kingsgate. I-405, Exit 20B northbound or 20 southbound, take NE 124th Street west to the light at 116th Avenue NE. Turn right a few blocks to the Park & Ride (on the left). Meet in the southeast corner.

Wilburton Park & Ride: I-405, Exit 12.

Newport Hills Park & Ride

5115 113th PI SE, Bellevue. I-405, Exit 9.

South Kirkland Park & Ride

10610 NE 38th Place, Kirkland. SR 520, exit 108th Avenue. Travel north onto 108th Avenue NE. Take the second left onto NE 38th Place.

Tibbetts Lot

1675 Newport Way NW, Issaquah. I-90, Exit 15. Turn right (south). Go past the new multi-story Issaquah Park & Ride to the third traffic light. Turn left (east) on Newport Way NW. Go one block, then turn right (south) into the Park & Ride. Meet across the street from the large parking garage at the west end.

American Kestrel *Falco sparverius*

<i>Length</i>	9 inches
<i>Wingspan</i>	22 inches
<i>Weight</i>	4.1 ounces
<i>AOU Alpha code</i>	AMKE

If you see a small, long-winged bird hovering over an open field, it's likely an American Kestrel. This hunting pattern is used by only a few species and is a trademark for the kestrel, which hovers by facing into the wind, flapping its wings and spreading its tail. It will glide to a new location and hover again to detect grasshoppers and other large insects, and sometimes small rodents. The kestrel is frequently seen perched on a wire or exposed branch from which it will swoop down to catch prey.

The American Kestrel is sexually dichromatic. The male has grey-blue wings which contrast with its rufous back and a rufous tail with a black terminal band. The female has rufous wings barred with black, and the tail is also rufous with black bands along its entire length (Smallwood & Bird). Both male and female have black moustachial stripes and a vertical black mark behind the eye, giving them a striped-head look. The bill is small and the feet and legs are yellow.

The kestrel is one of nine North American falcons in the genus *Falco*, from the Latin *falx*, an agricultural implement with a curved blade. The American Kestrel has the species name *sparverius*. In Early Modern English this was the term for Sparrow Hawk, still a common name for this bird. Kestrel is from the French, *crecelle*, a noisy bell, referring to its call: a high-pitched, loud and ringing *killy-killy-killy-killy-killy* (Holloway, Alderfer).

The American Kestrel is a cavity-nester, using natural openings in trees (or cactus in the southwest), spaces between rocks, nooks in structures, and holes excavated by woodpeckers (Smallwood & Bird). A kestrel will readily use a nest box placed high in a tree. The birds do not build a nest but will make a scrape in whatever material is already in the cavity.



Typically four to six whitish, spotted eggs are deposited and then incubated by both parents for about a month. First flight occurs in another month, with the parents continuing to feed the young kestrels for another 12 days.

Migration occurs in stages, with northern breeding birds migrating first and others following in waves. It is thought that changes in available light stimulate migration. Kestrels can be seen in Washington year-round, with some birds breeding in the state and others wintering from northern areas.

Two studies indicate that the life span for an American Kestrel may be one to two years. However, average life span in captivity is five years. The North American population has changed in response to human intervention. Deforestation and farming once increased kestrel habitat, but forest regrowth, urbanization, and sprawl have since reduced open field acreage. Overall the American Kestrel has a stable population and remains our smallest, most widespread, and well-loved falcon.

A recording of the call of the American Kestrel can be heard at the Macaulay Library at <http://macaulaylibrary.org/audio/flashPlayer.do?id=107973>.

Photo credit Raymond Parsons. Drawing by N. John Schmitt
References available upon request from amccormick@eastside-audubon.org.



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