

The Corvid Crier

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VOL 33, No 2 – MARCH 2013

Birdathon Set to Launch with Party on April 16

You're invited to the first-ever Birdathon Kickoff Party!

On Tuesday, April 16, at 6 p.m., please join Eastside Audubon members to learn new,



Snow Geese with young by Vasily Baranyuk

March Program

Snow Geese and Wildlife of Russia's Wrangel Island

Do you ever wonder where our lovely Snow Geese go after they winter in Washington? For almost all of them, it's Russia's remote Wrangel Island.

Biologist Vasily Baranyuk has spent 30 summers studying the wildlife of Wrangel Island, also home to Snowy Owls, seals, Arctic fox, Arctic wolves, walruses, and lemmings, and the site of the highest density of polar bear dens in the world.

At our meeting March 28 Vasily will share his stories of the Wrangel Island wilderness and describe the astonishing 120-kilometer trek a young Snow Goose makes from inland breeding ground to the sea for food. Don't miss this evening of stunning photos and videos.

Thursday, March 28

Doors open 6:30 p.m. | Program 7 p.m.
Northlake Unitarian Universalist Church
308 4th Avenue South, Kirkland
Open to the public | Free

easy and fun ways to turn May birding into funding for our conservation and education programs.

EAS president Andy McCormick will host the event at his Bellevue home and will provide food and drink. (See sidebar.)

Every year during May, Eastside Audubon members traditionally raise about one-third of our chapter's annual income by birding for pledges, pledging to those who do, and attending special events and birding trips.

At the kickoff you'll hear about this year's special events and get ideas about ways to do Birdathon that fit your schedule and lifestyle. You'll be able to learn all about how to attract pledges and pick up the materials to help you. Birdathon vets will share fundraising techniques that will let you stay in your comfort zone.

Meanwhile you can start thinking about what kind of Birdathon will work for you. There are as many ways to participate in Birdathon as there are Eastside Audubon members. Just a few ideas:

Set aside an afternoon in May to watch birds in your own backyard and get pledges for every species you'll see. Invite other birders and make it a party.

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Birdathon Kickoff Party

April 16, 6 – 7:30 p.m.

Hosted by Andy McCormick
10208 NE 23rd Street, Bellevue

All members invited

RSVP by April 14

office@eastsideaudubon.org

A Tribute to Tim McGruder

With tremendous appreciation, longtime Eastside Audubon member Tim McGruder was recognized at the annual Volunteer Dinner in January for his many years of service on the chapter's board of directors.

Tim served on the board for 14 of the past 15 years, ending his final term in December. He first joined the board in January 1998, as Conservation Chair, and he served in that capacity through December 2005.

After a one-year break, he again served as Conservation Chair through December 2009. In 2010 he moved over to the Development Chair. Finally, in January 2010, he took an at-large board seat with a focus on Marymoor Park; he continued in that role for two additional years through December 2012. With his long experience,

Tim provided invaluable perspective not only on the chapter's history but on that

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Tim McGruder by Mick Thompson

March Meetings

Unless noted, meetings are at Northlake Unitarian Universalist Church 308 4th Avenue South, Kirkland, downstairs entrance (State Street side).

Youth Education Committee

March 12 (Tuesday), 6:30 p.m.

Meets the second Tuesday of every month except December and August. Open to anyone who likes to share nature with youth. Email education@eastsideaudubon.org.

Conservation Committee

March 13 (Wednesday), 7 p.m.

Meets the second Wednesday of every month except July and August. An effective group engaged in activism and hands-on conservation projects. Email Peter Marshall: psmarshall@comcast.net.

Photo Group

March 14 (Thursday), 7 p.m.

Meets the second Thursday of every month in the church sanctuary. All levels welcome; if you like, bring photos on a jump drive to share. Email Larry Engles: engles@ridesoft.com.

Board Meeting

March 26 (Tuesday), 6:30 p.m.

Interested guests may attend the monthly board meeting. Email Andy McCormick: amccormick@eastsideaudubon.org.

Spot Jobs

It's All About the Plant Sale

With 4,000 plants, this year's Eastside Audubon Pacific Northwest Plant Sale on Saturday, April 27, will be the biggest ever, and with your help it may be one of the most successful as well.

A variety of volunteer activities are available from now through the day of the sale, and you can make a meaningful contribution even in a few hours.

During March, sale manager Geary Britton-Simmons will need volunteers to help pot bare root plants. No green thumb required!

In April, Geary will need people to distribute yard signs and flyers.

On Thursday, April 25, you can help load up plants for transport from Geary's nursery near Duvall to the sale site at Kirkland Children's School.

On Friday, April 26, you can help during the afternoon and evening to arrange the plants at the school.

And on sale day, you can be a greeter, a sales assistant, a checker, a runner — or help clean up.

If you're a baker, you can help by making treats for the bake sale that EAS will hold alongside the plant sale.

To pick your plant sale position, please get in touch with one of Geary's deputies: Melinda Bronsdon (Bronson874@aol.com) or Margaret Lie (margaretlie12@gmail.com).

Got pots?

Geary needs your reusable nursery pots, especially 3- and 5-gallon sizes. Please bring them to the March 28 program meeting or to the Wild Bird Center in Houghton Village, 10600 NE 68th Street, Kirkland, during store hours (call 425-576-0309).



Geary Britton-Simmons setting up last year's Pacific Northwest Native Plant Sale. Photo by Mick Thompson.

Eastside Audubon Society

Northlake Unitarian Universalist Church
308 4th Avenue South, Kirkland, WA 98083
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	Andy McCormick	amccormick@eastsideaudubon.org
Vice President	Shane Egeland	shane.egeland@gmail.com
Secretary	Linda Gresky	lgresky@gmail.com
Treasurer	Dora Rajkhowa	doraalex@yahoo.com

Board Members and Committee Chairs

Birding	Tricia Kishel	tkishel@eastsideaudubon.org
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Conservation	Peter Marshall	psmarshall@comcast.net
Education	Open	
Development	Andy McCormick	amccormick@eastsideaudubon.org
Membership	Open	
Volunteers	Open	
At large board member	Diane Crestanello	crestanello@comcast.net
At large board member	Sue Summers	summerssue@hotmail.com

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Office Assistant	Zoe Allen	office@eastsideaudubon.org
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Other Committee Chairs

Photo Group	Larry Engles	engles@ridesoft.com
Bird Questions	MaryFrances Mathis	mf.mathis@comcast.net
Birdathon	Andy McCormick	amccormick@eastsideaudubon.org
Field Trips	Hugh Jennings	h2ouzel@comcast.net
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Holiday Gift Wrap	Leah Morris	leahmo@comcast.net
Hospitality	Claudia Welch	425-827-2548
Webmaster	Mary Brisson	mary@marybrisson.net
Chapter Photographer	Mick Thompson	mthomp1707@comcast.net

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EAS Liaison to Rangers	Jill Keeney	j.keeney@comcast.net

The Corvid Crier, Vol 33, NO 2. Publication Date: March 1, 2013
Published by: Eastside Audubon Society, P.O. Box 3115, Kirkland, WA 98083-3115.
Monthly except January and August. Deadline for material is the first Wednesday of the month preceding publication. Email material to mary@marybrisson.net or send to the address above.

Chapter Income Healthy in 2012, Thanks to Volunteers

By Dora Rajkhowa, EAS Treasurer

Financial results for Eastside Audubon in 2012 were impressive.

Thanks to successful fundraising events and dedicated volunteers who helped keep expenses low, our net income in 2012 was

\$33,300 — more than twice the previous year's!

Some highlights:

In May members made another strong showing for Birdathon, raising \$15,745 through donations and pledges.

Another strong fundraising event was the Pacific Northwest Native Plant Sale in April. After all costs, we earned \$6,000 for the chapter. (See page 2 about how to do it again in 2013.)

Over the holiday season volunteers brought in \$3,600 by wrapping gifts at local REIs. This annual event continues to be fun and profitable.

The chapter's focus on increasing membership showed concrete results. New and returning members paid \$15,625 in dues. This is an increase of \$6,900, or 79 percent, over the prior year. The membership drive included sending out reminders as renewal dates approached.

During the year Eastside Audubon received more than \$13,500 in donations, including generous gifts from the Melody S. Robidoux Foundation, which made a grant of \$5,000, and from Geary and Mary Britton-Simmons, who donated \$2,300 to the plant sale.

Birding classes brought in \$2,625. All classes offered in 2012 sold out thanks to excellent teachers and passionate members.

By the end of the year, the annual appeal fund drive had raised \$5,500. This is not as much as we had hoped, but the appeal is still a welcome source of income.

The energy of our volunteers is reflected in our ability to keep expenses low. We have

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Meet Linda Gresky, New EAS Secretary

Volunteering and the environment are core values in the Redmond family of Linda Gresky, Eastside Audubon's new secretary.

Linda writes:

My husband and I began birding 15 years ago, while living in Texas. We took our daughter birding when she was just five weeks old and she hasn't stopped since. It's no wonder her first word was "bird." [Morgan will turn 9 this May.]

I am a marketing professional and I am attending graduate school to get a degree in Adult Education. It is important for us, as a family, to spend time together volunteering out in nature. We have met some wonderful Eastside Audubon members already, and we are excited to meet many more. I am thrilled to share EAS with other families in our area.

Linda was on the Seattle Audubon committee for new membership before she and her family moved to the east side.

For EAS, Linda will handle board meeting minutes and agendas. She'll also create programs that will complement those of

the Education Committee to offer new ways for families to become involved in more EAS activities.

Editor's Note: This is the second in a series of four articles introducing Eastside Audubon board members who were inaugurated in January. The February *Corvid Crier* featured at-large board member Sue Summers. Still to come: Diane Crestanello (at-large member) and Shane Egeland (vice president).



*Linda Gresky joins the board as secretary.
Photo courtesy of Linda Gresky.*

Birdathon Pre-Party Set for April 16

Continued from page 1

Plan a walk in the park on Mother's Day with your family and help your children find the birds on a kid-friendly checklist from EAS (available in April to download from eastsideaudubon.org). Pledge as a family or get pledges in advance from grandparents and other family members.

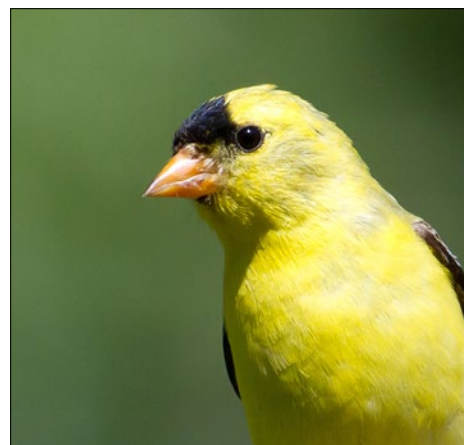
Form a birding team at your workplace and have everyone gather pledges against a day trip you can take together.

Make your own pledge to donate some amount per species reported on one of the walks or trips on the May EAS calendar.

As always, you can pledge to one of our Big Day teams: Mountains to Lake led by Andy McCormick (amccormick@eastsideaudubon.org) or Whidbey Wing Dings led by Hugh Jennings (h2ouzel@comcast.net).

You'll be seeing more about Birdathon in the April and May newsletters, and the website will have complete information and resources starting in April.

To be part of the Birdathon organizing committee, please email Andy at the address above.



American Goldfinch by Mick Thompson



Beginning birders are welcome on our walks and trips, and so are non-members. Start time is trip departure; **please arrive earlier**. Binoculars advisable.

New Field Trip Registration Procedure

EAS members receive news about field trips in different ways at different times. This month we're starting a new procedure, *only for those limited-capacity field trips that require pre-registration*, to make sure everyone has an equal chance to go.

Leaders of limited-capacity trips will specify a start time for registration and will confirm space on a first-come, first-served basis in response to requests received at or after that time.

There is no advantage to calling or emailing ahead of the opening of registration. Thank you for your cooperation in making the trip sign-up process transparent and fair.

March 3 (Sunday), 1 – 2 p.m.

Juanita Bay Park

Family Nature Walk with the Eastside Park Rangers

Eastside Park Rangers lead this easy, one-hour walk on the first Sunday of every month. Free. No pre-registration required. Interpretive tours for community schools and special interest groups also can be scheduled through the EAS office: 425-576-8805.

March 5 (Tuesday), 8 – 11 a.m.

Marymoor Park Birding Walk

March is a transition month with some wintering ducks still around and early migrating songbirds beginning to show up. This regional park in Redmond provides home for resident birds, a wintering area for waterfowl, and a resting place for migrating birds. It is also home to the Audubon BirdLoop, where we will walk on level ground for about two miles along the Sammamish Slough and through the East Meadow, ending at the Clise Mansion area. Meet at Parking Lot D. (When entering the park from West Lake Sammamish Parkway, turn right at the third stop sign.) Parking \$1. (Walk is free.) Bring binoculars and a snack, and dress for the weather. No pre-registration required. Leader: Andy McCormick, 425-518-0892.

March 13 (Wednesday), 7:30 a.m. (all day)

Samish Flats and Skagit Flats Field Trip

Our wintering raptors will still be here, so we will be looking for eagles, hawks, falcons, accipiters, and possibly Short-eared Owls. We'll also watch for waterfowl, shorebirds, small passerines, and, 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. Meet by 7:30 a.m. at the Kingsgate P&R (I-405 exit 20). Back late afternoon or early evening. Carpool \$20/passenger. Limited to 11 participants in 3 cars. Pre-registration required. **Leader Brian Bell will accept registration beginning at 6 p.m. on March 1:** 425-485-8058 or bellasoc@isomedia.com. (Brian's cell, morning of trip only: 206-619-0379).

March 18 (Monday), 8 a.m. – noon

Lake Sammamish State Park Birding Walk

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 very muddy if wet). Just inside the main entrance, take the first left into the large parking lot and meet at the northeast end before 8 a.m. A Discover Pass* is required to park. (Walk is free.) No pre-registration required. Co-leaders: Sharon Aagaard, 425-891-3460, and Stan Wood.

March 19 (Tuesday), 9 a.m. – noon

Juanita Bay Park Birding Walk

See what birds are in the park and on the bay. Varied habitats within the park host a vast array of species, and the quiet of an early morning is one of the best times to explore. Meets the third Tuesday of each month. Free. No pre-registration required. Bring binoculars and meet in the parking lot. Leader: MaryFrances Mathis, 425-803-3026.

March 25 (Monday), 9 a.m. – noon

Birding the Hot Spots of King County

Monthly field trip on the 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 – \$4/passenger. No pre-registration required. Leader: Hugh Jennings, 425-746-6351.

March 30 (Saturday), 7 a.m. (all day)

Theiler Wetlands via Southworth Field Trip

We will take the Fauntleroy ferry to Southworth and bird our way to the Theiler Wetlands. These include fresh and salt water marshes, forested uplands, and estuarine habitats. Prepare to walk about 2.5 miles. We will return by way of Tacoma. We've seen as many as 150 bird species in this area. It can be cool and wet so dress accordingly. Bring a lunch. Meet before 7 a.m. at the north end of the Wilburton P&R (I-405, exit 12). Carpool \$12/person plus share in ferry cost. Hugh Jennings 425-746-6351.

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

Children 8 and older are welcome on all trips; 17 and younger must have adult companion. FRS Radio owners: Please consider bringing them on trips. Find reports of last month's field trips at www.eastsideaudubon.org/birding/field-trips.

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 Pl 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.



Great Blue Heron by Mick Thompson

More Events for March

March 8 (Friday) 11 a.m. Great Blue Heron Viewing Kenmore P&R and Library

EAS members will have spotting scopes available starting at 11 a.m. for the public to watch the Great Blue Heron colony at the north end of the Kenmore Park & Ride (Bothell Way and 73rd Avenue NE). There will be a slide presentation at about noon at the nearby fire station on the herons and other birds. This event is co-sponsored by the Kenmore Senior Center, Kenmore Library, and Northshore Fire Department. All EAS members are invited; please bring a scope if you have one. Contact: Hugh Jennings, 425-746-6351.

March 2 (Saturday), 9 a.m. – noon Marymoor Park Work Party

All are welcome for our monthly morning of habitat restoration work on the Audubon BirdLoop! Meet at the kiosk near Lot G. Parking pass provided. Bring water, a snack, gloves, a shovel and/or rake. Questions? Call the EAS office: 425-576-8805.

Red Carpet Out for Newest EAS Members

Eastside Audubon is delighted to welcome 17 friends who became chapter members during the last quarter of 2012.

With program meetings, the plant sale, and Birdathon all coming up, we'll have lots of occasions to say hello in person to:

Marilynn Albert, Sarah Devine, Diana Durden, G. Shane Egeland, Diane Gelotte, Sheri Grimes, Eric Johnson, Janet and Arthur Kuller, Keats Landis, Theresia McLynne, Antonio Montanana, Moira Ohl, Erik Paulson, Kelly Raber, Susan Runyon, Sabine Saway, Dorothy Simpson.

Chapter Takes Precautions With Email Lists

By Mary Brisson, Communication Chair

Eastside Audubon has removed links from our website that previously facilitated sending a message to an entire EAS mailing list in one click.

The action came after an innocent subscriber error that resulted in an irruption of emails that were unwanted by most recipients. The website change is intended to reduce the chance of a repeat occurrence and to reduce the risk of exposing our members to spam from outside EAS, though no spam has been reported.

If You Email to an EAS List

If you are a project leader who is used to using the website to send emails seeking volunteers, this change may affect you. If you don't have the volunteer opportunities list address in your files, please contact the EAS office when you need to send out a request for volunteers. Allow a few days for the office to reply.

If You Subscribe to an EAS List

You can help EAS avoid annoying email irruptions in the future. If you subscribe to any of our five lists — Announce, Conservation, Crier, Opportunities, or Photo — please never use the **From** address to receive an email of your own. Kindly address your email only to the personal inbox of your intended recipient.

If you receive a message with one of those five addresses on the **From** line and you click **Reply**, your reply will go to everyone who received the original message — possibly hundreds of people. As a general rule, please direct your messages only to others' personal email addresses. Put another way: Please send email only when you know exactly who is going to receive it.

If you have EAS business and don't know what address to use, please email office@eastsideaudubon.org. Zoe Allen and the office volunteers will do their best to help you in a timely way.

Want More Kinds of Birding Walks and Trips?

We know you do: You've told us! The key is for more members to get involved in leading walks and trips. If you like birding, please consider becoming a birding co-leader. You do not need to be a bird ID expert! We'll pair you with a seasoned leader and show you how to help members get more out of their outings. This is one of the best ways you can help EAS right now. Please contact Birding Chair Tricia Kishel, 206-948-3922.



Short-eared Owl, a Skagit field trip favorite, by Mick Thompson

EAS Finances Healthy in 2012

Continued from page 3

our people out in the field, leading bird trips, performing community outreach, working to improve Marymoor Park, and creating holiday gift bags.

Volunteers also assist with behind-the-scenes functions necessary to keep an organization running: computer setup and troubleshooting, contributing to the monthly newsletter, posting signs and fliers for publicity, and assembling mailings.

For 2013, the board hopes to continue the fundraising momentum and membership strength we built in 2012. We are always looking for new and fun ways for the

chapter to be successful. Our members and donors make it possible.

Major EAS Income Sources in 2012	
Source	2012 Income
Birdathon	\$15,745
Annual Appeal	\$5,514
Donations	\$13,500
Native Plant Sale	\$6,000
Holiday Gift Wrap	\$3,600
Birding Classes	\$2,625
Membership	
New	\$4,330
Returning	\$11,294

Is Audubon Doing Enough About Climate Change?

By Andy McCormick, President

In his second inaugural address President Barack Obama said, “We will respond to the threat of climate change, knowing that the failure to do so would betray our children and future generations. . . . The path towards sustainable energy sources will be long and sometimes difficult. But America cannot resist this transition. We must lead it.”

Contrary to this statement, the president has made two recent decisions which have disappointed advocates of reducing carbon emissions in the atmosphere. He has not stopped the construction of the Trans-Canada Keystone XL pipeline through the United States, and he did not have the U.S. delegation take any leadership at the annual United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change held in Doha in November 2012.

Proponents of reducing carbon emissions are not waiting and are taking action. Even before the president’s speech, 350.org and the Sierra Club had joined forces and had planned a large demonstration and civil disobedience in Washington, D.C., on President’s Day weekend.

These actions by prominent environmental groups beg the question if Audubon is doing enough to prevent further global warming. The National Audubon Society

(NAS) has included clean energy development in its strategic plan and acknowledged that global warming has been changing patterns of bird migration and could threaten some bird species, with rising sea levels especially menacing to shorebirds.

However, National Audubon does not have a proactive program to address climate change, the issue is not apparent on the society’s website, and as of this writing on February 15 NAS had not made a statement in support of the President’s address or the Washington demonstration.

Some Audubon chapters are not waiting for National. Locally, several Washington State chapters have become active in opposing the proposal by Ambre Energy, an Australian coal mining company, to ship by train millions of tons of coal mined in Montana to ports in Washington and Oregon for transport to China. Six members of Eastside Audubon attended the “Coal Train” hearings held by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Seattle, and Conservation Chair Pete Marshall and I submitted testimony opposing the export of coal through Washington. (See related story below.)

A quick search of the internet found that Palomar Audubon in California has posted a list of myths about the Keystone XL

pipeline. Montana Audubon has asked its members to “Tell the President No,” on the pipeline. Duluth Audubon has urged its members to tell the President to deny TransCanada a permit to build the pipeline in the U.S. Onandaga Audubon in New York State has come out against the pipeline and mining the tar sands oil in Alberta.

It is not too late for you to act. You can email the president at the White House. Tell him you support renewable energy production and not to approve the Keystone XL Pipeline.

You can email David Yarnold, President of National Audubon. Tell him that Audubon needs to take a strong position to speed the changeover from carbon-based fuels to renewable energy and to approve the Audubon Washington proposal to have a session at the National Convention on stopping the coal trains from crossing Washington.

Editor’s note: [Read Andy’s emails](#) to President Obama and to David Yarnold and learn where to send a message of your own.

EAS Takes a Stand Against Coal Transport

By Pete Marshall, Conservation Chair

EAS President Andy McCormick recently signed letters addressed to Puget Sound Energy, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the Washington Department of Ecology concerning the hazards of continued dependence on coal as an energy source.

Andy, Conservation Chair Pete Marshall, and Conservation Committee member Linda Sue Thompsen attended the huge “Power Past Coal” rally and public hearing in Seattle on December 13. Several thousand people were there, including others from Eastside Audubon. The clear majority opposed additional coal trains through Seattle, where coal exporters hope to accommodate rail transport from mines in Montana and Wyoming to a new export terminal near Bellingham.

The Conservation Committee has been keenly interested in these issues in 2012, even though the physical space directly affected is not literally east of Lake Washington. (Not yet anyway, but keep alert to somebody proposing an east side alternative route for the trains!).

Clearly, we all stand to be affected in a major way by the larger environmental impacts of transporting coal along the Columbia River and northward along Puget Sound rail routes, and ultimately burning it in Asia.

Members at Eastside Audubon’s November open house agreed this is an issue EAS should try to influence.

Editor’s Note: To learn more, visit www.eastsideaudubon.org/conservation/coal.

EAS Recycles Styrofoam

Clamshells • Meat trays • Chunks

Bring your clean, dry Styrofoam to program meetings for transport to V&G Styro Recycle in Renton.

www.styrorecycle.com

Drivers Needed

Please contact Jill Keeney
j.keeney@comcast.net



Eagle Eye
VISION CARE, P.S.

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

See the birds better!

Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*)

Length	6.75 inches
Wingspan	15 inches
Weight	0.67 ounce (19 grams)
AOU band code	BARS

The Barn Swallow has made such good friends with human beings that it is now the most widespread and abundant swallow in the world. As humans have constructed buildings, bridges, and culverts, Barn Swallows have expanded their range along with ours (Brown and Brown). They are familiar to and well-loved by the general public, with the possible exception of those who find their mud nests and messy droppings irksome and then destroy the nests (Bell and Kennedy). Barn Swallows are comfortable around humans and will nest on sills above doors and windows and on open rafters in structures, including birdwatching blinds.



Barn Swallow by Sunny Walter

Their long wings attest to their long-distance migration, which brings them to Washington in late March and early April. Barn Swallows feed in flight and provide a wonderful service to humans by eating millions of flies, beetles, wasps, winged ants, and other kinds of insects. They are commonly seen foraging over bodies of water and fields at lower altitudes than other swallow species (Brown and Brown). Barn Swallows tend to have longer straight flights than other swallows, but will also fly circular patterns when insect concentrations are higher, such as around cattle (Brown and Brown). Birders will sometimes see Barn Swallows fly around them as they walk through fields.

The Barn Swallow is in the genus *Hirundo*, Latin for swallow, and the species name *rustica* refers to its suitability for rural areas. The common name *Barn* is for one of its common nesting sites. Today Barn Swallows are more likely to nest on human-made structures than at more natural sites such as in a cave or on a cliff face.

Swallow is from the Anglo-Saxon *swalewe*, the name for this type of bird (Holloway).

The Barn Swallow's nest is a cup of mud mixed with grass and lined with feathers (Kaufman). Typically four to five white eggs with brown spots are deposited. Both parents incubate the eggs, which hatch in a little more than two weeks, and both feed the young. Feeding is often augmented by non-breeding offspring from previous broods, thus creating a large family brood (Kaufman). First flight occurs in three weeks. Some pairs will have a second brood, and recent research has found that some pairs wintering in Argentina will have a winter brood (Brown and Brown). Barn Swallows require more territory than other swallows and most of the time do not nest in large colonies as some other species do.

The Barn Swallow has the most deeply forked tail of all the swallows. This can be an aid to identification, although juveniles have less-deeply forked tails. The Barn Swallow is well researched, and studies of European populations indicate that females select the males with more-deeply forked tails. "Tail length tends to correlate with reproductive success, annual survival, propensity to engage in extra-pair copulation, parental effort ... and other measures of fitness" (Brown and Brown). Barn Swallows have a widespread and stable population.

References on request from amccormick@eastsideaudubon.org.

Thanks to Tim McGruder

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of Audubon in Washington as the board debated its position on state-level policy. He has taken a thoughtful approach toward finding the balance between chapter tradition and innovation in response to emerging challenges.

As a tribute for Tim's service, the chapter gave him a framed enlargement of a photograph showing him with volunteers at the native plant salvage day he organized in December in Redmond. The day was a classic example of Tim's ingenuity and energy. Having led Eastside Audubon's efforts to prevent the loss of habitat to development at the defunct Group Health campus in Redmond, Tim spotted the opportunity to give the at-risk native plants there a second life where they could benefit birds and wildlife on the Audubon BirdLoop at Marymoor Park. He made the necessary connections with stakeholders in the property, then mobilized a broad base of community volunteers and organized the food and transport for half-day workathon that netted more than 700 plants for the BirdLoop.

Tim plans to continue to volunteer with Eastside Audubon and focus his work at Marymoor Park. He also remains in charge of identifying and scheduling the guest speakers we enjoy at our monthly program meetings. Thanks, Tim, for all you have given to Eastside Audubon.

Eastside Audubon Society
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