



The Corvid Crier

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VOL 32, No 4 – MAY 2012

Attracting Hummingbirds to Your Yard Program Night Thursday, May 24 with Chris Caviezel



Photo courtesy of Chris Caviezel

Chris Caviezel has created a haven for hummingbirds at his home. At the peak of spring migration in May, there's usually a week when about 2,000 hummingbirds a day hit Chris's Snoqualmie Pass setup. In his talk he'll share his tips for making your garden hummingbird friendly, including important hints about your hummingbird feeders.

Looking at the bigger picture, Chris will talk about hummingbird banding: why it's valuable and what it has accomplished.

Almost all of the hummingbirds that come to Chris's home are Rufous, the species we'll be counting in our census the first weekend in June. (See page 6.)

Come to program night to learn more about how to see Rufous Hummingbirds and why it matters to watch for them.

6:30 p.m. Social time

7 p.m. Program

Northlake Unitarian Universalist Church
308 4th Avenue S.
Kirkland

Ready, Set, Birdathon! Birding our way to \$16K

May means migrating birds. May means baby birds. And May means Birdathon, our biggest fundraising effort of the year.

Our 2012 goal is to bird our way to \$16,000 in donations during May. Birdathon is vital for Eastside Audubon conservation and education work, from habitat restoration to schoolroom programs. We're not fundraising for the chapter. We're fundraising for the birds!

How Birdathon works

The classic approach goes like this: You set aside a time during May to see as many bird species as you can, and you ask everyone you know to pledge a donation to Eastside Audubon for every species you see during that time.

Some donors may prefer to pledge a fixed amount, and that's okay. The key is to line up your donors early and follow up. For fundraising tips, visit the Birdathon pages at www.eastsideaudubon.org/birdathon.

Teaming up for Birdathon

People often do their Birdathon birding in teams (more pairs of eyes, more species!) and cover as many spots as they can during a dawn-to-dusk Big Day. Friendly competition adds to the fun.

To join a team, contact Bird Brains captain Jim Rettig at (425) 402-1833 or Mountains to the Lake captain Andy McCormick at (425) 637-0892.

To start a team, contact Andy McCormick for help getting organized.

Birdathon your own way

Instead of joining a team, you can be creative. Have a solo Big Day on your deck or count birds from the bus to work. Or take one of the Birdathon field trips listed on pages 4 and 5 and make that trip's species list your Birdathon count. For more do-it-yourself Birdathon ideas, visit www.eastsideaudubon.org/birdathon.

Make a Birdathon contribution

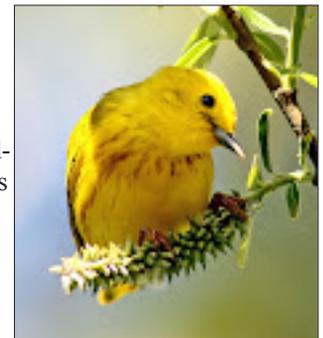
In addition to birding for pledges, you can contribute to Birdathon directly:

Pledge to a Birdathon team. Contact one of the team leaders (above) or Whidbey Wing Dings captain Hugh Jennings at (425) 746-6351.

Take a Birdathon field trip. See pages 4 and 5 for the Birdathon trip schedule.

Treat yourself to Brunch, Birds and Bubbly. An elegant, once-a-year event. See page 5.

Simply donate. You can send a check payable to Eastside Audubon at the address on page 2 or donate at www.eastsideaudubon.org.



Yellow Warbler by Mick Thompson

Board Notes

New Membership Dues and Newsletter Options

With this edition of the *Corvid Crier*, Eastside Audubon is adopting a new dues structure developed through the thoughtful collaboration of the Membership and Brochure committees and approved in March by the board.

We have two new dues levels: Individual Membership (\$25) and Family Membership (\$40). At both of these levels, it costs an additional \$12 to receive the *Corvid Crier* in print. Web Membership and Corvid Club Membership (\$25 and \$35) no longer exist.

Higher dues levels are unchanged and

entail no add-on fee for the newsletter in print. (You can see the new dues structure in full on page 8.)

The new dues structure is in effect now for first-time members and for lapsed members who are returning. For existing, paid-up members, the change takes effect with the next renewal.

Print *Crier* versus Online *Crier*

We recognize that some members need to receive the newsletter in print. You can do so at any dues level by specific request upon joining or renewing.

If you're currently receiving the *Crier* in print and would rather receive it online, please tell the office at (425) 576-8805. As an online subscriber, you'll receive each

Crier by email as a PDF file. The newsletter is also available on the website via a link on our home page.

We urge everyone to consider switching to the *Crier* online. You'll save resources and you'll save the chapter money. You'll see beautiful bird photos in full color. And you'll be able to print out the field trip list or any other page.

The board thanks Zoe Allen and Mark Williams for bringing our website membership page up to date for the new dues structure.

Send in your Birdathon photos!

We'll share highlights in the July–August *Corvid Crier*.

Email by June 4 to marybrisson@eastsideaudubon.org.

May Meetings

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

Youth Education Committee

May 1 (Tuesday) 6:30 p.m.

Meets the first Tuesday of every month except December and August. Open to anyone who likes to share nature with youth.

Email education@eastsideaudubon.org.

Website Committee

May 9 (Wednesday) 1 p.m.

Meets the second Wednesday of every month to coordinate website improvement projects. Location varies. Call Mary Brisson: (425) 829-8110.

Conservation Committee

May 9 (Wednesday) 7 p.m.

Meets the second Wednesday of every month. An effective group engaged in activism and hands-on conservation projects.

Email Andy McCormick: amccormick@eastsideaudubon.org.

Photo Group

May 10 (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

May 28 (Monday) 6 p.m.

Fourth Monday of every month. If you'd like to attend, please email Andy McCormick: amccormick@eastsideaudubon.org.

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	Open	
Secretary	Open	
Treasurer	Dora Rajkhowa	doraalex@yahoo.com

Board Members and Committee Chairs

Birding	Tricia Kishel	tkishel@eastsideaudubon.org
Communication	Mary Brisson	marybrisson@eastsideaudubon.org
Conservation	Open	
Education	Open	
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Membership	Open	
Volunteers	Open	
At large board member	Tim McGruder	tmcgruder@gmail.com
At large board member	Open	

Staff

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	Helen LaBouy	helenlabouy@mac.com
Hospitality	Claudia Welch	(425) 827-2548
Newsletter	Tamra Chinn	newsletter@eastsideaudubon.org
Webmaster	Mary Brisson	marybrisson@mac.com
Chapter Photographer	Mick Thompson	mthomp1707@comcast.net

Eastside Park Rangers

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

The *Corvid Crier*, Vol 32, NO 4. Publication Date: May 1, 2012
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 marybrisson@mac.com or send to the address above.

Eastside Audubon Awards \$1,000 in College Scholarships

This year each of two deserving college-bound high school students will receive a \$500 Brian Gershon Scholarship from Eastside Audubon. In most years the Youth Education Committee selects one student to receive the Gershon award. This year the committee was able to honor both outstanding students thanks to an anonymous contribution from a member.

— Margaret Snell

Marin Harris

Marin Harris is a senior at Lake Washington High School (LWHS) in Kirkland. Marin has been active in the LWHS Environmental Club and has worked on many clean-up days in the Kirkland area. She is taking Advanced Placement Environmental Science and is the vice president of the LWHS National Honor Society. She plans to major in environmental science and international relations in college. She is particularly interested in the protection of the oceans. Congratulations, Marin!



Photo courtesy of Marin Harris

Addison Woolsey

Addison Woolsey is a senior at Bellevue High School. Addison is an active birder and enjoys working on habitat restoration projects in Bellevue. Last summer he worked as an intern for eight weeks at the Seattle Audubon Nature Camp, assisting in teaching 10 to 12 kids a week. An editor of the school newspaper, Addison has also been captain of the cross country team and a member of Earth-bound Club. He hopes to pursue a degree in environmental studies or in education. Congratulations, Addison!



Photo courtesy of Addison Woolsey

Eastside Educators Receive Grants

Three teachers recently received grants from Eastside Audubon. The Youth Education Committee chose the three based on how well their proposals matched the EAS mission to protect, preserve and enhance natural ecosystems and our communities for the benefit of birds, other wildlife and people. Each winner may receive up to \$200.

Karen Ollerenshaw of Einstein Elementary plans to create a Buddies for Birds project. Picture books about birds will be purchased for sixth grade buddies to share with first and second graders. Then the sixth graders will assist the younger students in making bird seed feeders to take home.



Elise Cooksley receives an EAS teacher grant from Shirlee Hall of the Youth Education Committee. Photo by Jim Hall.

Elise Cooksley of Two Rivers High School in North Bend needed a Pasco probeware device to help her students investigate the effect of light on the rates of gas exchange in plants. Understanding photosynthesis and cellular respiration provide the basis for better understanding ecosystem health.

Horace Mann Elementary in Redmond recently

received approval for re-vegetation of an on-site detention pond. Teacher Marie Hartford requested funds to purchase 52 native shrubs. Students will plant them around the pond, providing a healthy natural habitat for wildlife and an outdoor classroom for study.

— Jim and Shirlee Hall

International Migratory Bird Day Celebration

Juanita Bay Park
Kirkland
Saturday, May 12
10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Free!

Activities for kids
Guided nature walks
All ages
Accessible
Dress for the weather!

Migration Celebration Invitation!

Celebrate the marvel of migration with Eastside Audubon and the Eastside Park Rangers on May 12.

Kids can play at being birds on the wing in the active and educational Migration Game. Also for kids, we'll have bird bracelets and buttons, stickers and tattoos, coloring and quizzes.

All ages can join in guided nature walks, with spring warblers and swallows likely. You also may see migrants such as Black-headed Grosbeak, Cedar Waxwing, Common Yellowthroat, Warbling Vireo, Western Tanager, and Western Wood-Pewee. Bring binoculars if you have them.

Photographer Aaron Baggenstos, whose book *Wildlife of Lake Washington* features numerous pictures from Juanita Bay Park, will have a booth. So will Sustainable Kirkland, Green Kirkland Partnership, and the Wild Bird Center from Kirkland's Houghton neighborhood.

Organized by the Youth Education Committee, our event on the theme "Connecting People to Birds" is one of 500 to be held in North America for the twentieth International Migratory Bird Day. For background, see www.birdday.org. Jill Keeney and Margaret Lie are leading our preparations.



Lesser Yellowlegs, one of our international migrants. Photo by Mick Thompson.



In May only, Eastside Audubon asks for a donation when you take part in a Birdathon trip or walk. Beginning and experienced birders are equally welcome on our walks and trips. Not a member? Not a problem: Come along! P&R means Park & Ride. Binoculars advisable. Arrive before trip start time.

May 5 (Saturday) 7:30 a.m.

Wine on the Wings — Vashon Island

\$25 donation to Eastside Audubon for Birdathon

Vashon Island contains a wealth of birding opportunities in May, from shorebirds at Point Robinson to Purple Martins and Brant at Tramp Harbor to Harlequin Ducks at the Tahlequah dock. Our birding route could also take us to Fern Cove, Fisher Pond, KVI Beach, Judd Creek, Spring Beach, and Quartermaster Harbor. After lunch we will visit a local winery to taste and learn about some award-winning local wines. Be aware that there may be a charge for the tastings. We will then bird our way back to the ferry. The goal is to have fun, fun, fun! Meet before 7:30 a.m. at the Wilburton P&R (I-405, exit 12) to carpool. Bring a lunch and dress for the weather. Carpool \$8/passenger, plus share in ferry cost. Make \$25 Birdathon donation at www.eastsideaudubon.org or bring cash or check. No registration required. Co-leaders: Tricia Kishel, (206) 948-3922, and Tim McGruder.



Barn Swallow by Mick Thompson

May 6 (Sunday) 1 p.m.

Juanita Bay Park, Kirkland

No Birdathon donation

Eastside Park Rangers Interpretive Tour on the first Sunday of every month. No registration required. Tours for community schools and special interest groups also can be scheduled through the EAS office: (425) 576-8805.

May 12 (Saturday) 7:30 a.m.

Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge

\$25 donation to Eastside Audubon for Birdathon

The Nisqually NWR offers a diverse combination of habitats and birds. The delta is bounded by rivers on each side, and there are marshes, deciduous woods, and wide open areas. Spring migrants should be arriving to join regulars such as woodpeckers and

Great Horned Owls. A variety of waterfowl and raptors should be present as well. Admission is free if you have an Interagency Annual Pass (old Golden Eagle), Senior Pass (old Golden Age), Access Passport, Federal Duck Stamp, or Annual Refuge Pass. (See www.fws.gov/Nisqually/visit.html.) Meet before 7:30 a.m. at north end of the Wilburton P&R (I-405, exit 12) to carpool. Bring a lunch and dress for the weather. Make \$25 Birdathon donation at www.eastsideaudubon.org or bring cash or check. Carpool \$12/passenger. No registration required. Leader: Hugh Jennings, (425) 746-6351, h2ouzel@comcast.net.

May 12 (Saturday) 8 a.m. to noon

Lake Sammamish State Park, Issaquah

\$25 donation to Eastside Audubon for Birdathon

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). Arrive before 8 a.m. 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. We'll return by 1 p.m. Make \$25 Birdathon donation at www.eastsideaudubon.org or bring cash or check. No registration required. Leader: Andy McCormick, (425) 637-0892.

May 14 (Monday) 6 a.m. to noon

Newport Hills and Coal Creek Trails

\$25 donation to Eastside Audubon for Birdathon Limit 7 people. Registration required.

This is a 6-mile, one-way walk geared for birders who like to combine walking with birding. We'll leave cars at each end of the walk and bird 6 miles one way at a pace slow enough to hear and see as many birds as possible. We'll start on a local trail in Newport Hills and end at Cougar Mountain Regional Wildland Park. After walking about 3 miles, we'll cross Coal Creek

Parkway where it intersects with Forest Drive, and soon join the Coal Creek Trail, hiking another 3 miles before crossing over Lakemont Boulevard to return to our cars at Cougar Mountain. We'll then carpool back to the other cars we left at the beginning of our walk. At any time of year, the trails can be wet and muddy, so waterproof shoes/boots are a must. Hiking poles are not required but may be useful to some. Dress in layers and bring a day pack with snacks and liquids. Meet at the Newport Hills P&R (I-405, exit 9), north end of lot, by 6 a.m. We'll return by noon. Carpool \$2/passenger. Make \$25 Birdathon donation at www.eastsideaudubon.org or bring cash or check. Email Sharon Aagaard at scormieraa001@hotmail.com with questions and to register. Call (425) 891-3460 on day of trip only.

Continued on next page

* 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/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 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.

More May Field Trips and Birdathon Events

Continued from preceding page

May 15 (Tuesday) 8 a.m. to noon

Juanita Bay Park, Kirkland

\$25 donation to Eastside Audubon for Birdathon

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. We'll look for spring migrants and resident birds, as well as raptors and waterfowl. Bring binoculars and meet before 8 a.m. at the parking lot. We'll return around noon. Make \$25 Birdathon donation at www.eastsideaudubon.org or bring cash or check. No registration required. Leader: MaryFrances Mathis, (425) 922-9524.

May 20 (Sunday) 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Brunch, Birds and Bubbly

\$125 donation to Eastside Audubon for Birdathon

Limit 8 people. Registration required.

Start your day with brunch at a home on a ridge overlooking the Snoqualmie Valley and the Cascade Range. Join John Tubbs, Master Birder and nature photographer (www.tubbsphoto.com), on a birding trip in the valley. Later in the afternoon, celebrate the birds you have seen with dessert and champagne. In the mood for more birding? Venture out from the sunroom and walk 16 acres of wooded trails. Hosted by Candy Allen, Margaret Lie, and Mary Britton-Simmons. To sign up and for more details, contact Mary, (360) 794-7163, mbritton1@earthlink.net.

May 21 (Monday) 5:30 a.m.

Umtanum Creek Falls and Wenas Campground

\$25 donation to Eastside Audubon for Birdathon

Limit 7 people. Registration required.

We'll walk 5+ miles, so this trip is geared for birders who like to combine walking with birding. We'll cover a variety of eastern Washington habitats in this full day of birding. We'll start off birding by car from I-90 Thorp Road (Exit 101), driving through farm fields. Next, we'll head up Umtanum Road, park at Umtanum Creek Falls, and walk about 1 mile roundtrip on a path along the creek. Then we'll drive and bird along the way to Wenas Campground, park and walk another 4 miles roundtrip



Red Crossbills are a target bird on the Birdathon Umtanum-Wenas trip. Photo by Larry Engles.

in the campground area. In addition to raptors, warblers, flycatchers, and vireos, we hope to see/hear: White-headed Woodpecker, Long-billed Curlew, Great Horned Owl, White-breasted Nuthatch, Pygmy Nuthatch, Western Bluebird, Mountain Bluebird, Chipping Sparrow, Brewer's Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, and Red Crossbill. Dress in layers, wear comfortable hiking/walking shoes, and bring lots of liquids, your lunch and snacks. Sharon will bring a scope. Meet at the Issaquah P&R, Tibbits Lot (across the street from the multi-story P&R building) before 5:30 a.m. We'll return by early evening. Carpool cost is \$77 per car and is divided among passengers (driver does not pay). Make \$25 Birdathon donation at

www.eastsideaudubon.org or bring cash or check. Email Sharon Aagaard at scormieraa001@hotmail.com with questions and to register. Call (425) 891-3460 on day of trip only.

May 26 (Saturday) 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Discovery Park, Seattle

\$25 donation to Eastside Audubon for Birdathon

This is one of the leader's favorite parks in Seattle. The park is composed of 530 acres of varying habitats that include saltwater beaches, meadows, wetlands, fresh water ponds, and mixed forests, all on a bluff in Magnolia. It is a true treasure of the area. It is home to 90 species of birds. Residents include Anna's Hummingbirds, California Quail, and Hutton's Vireos, which are joined in the spring by flycatchers, swallows, and warblers. Bring a lunch if you wish, snacks, drinks, binoculars, and good spirits! Meet before 8 a.m. at the north end of the Wilburton P&R (I-405, exit 12). We'll be back about 1 p.m. Carpool \$4/passenger. Make \$25 Birdathon donation at www.eastsideaudubon.org or bring cash or check. No registration required. Leader: Tricia Kishel, (206) 948-3922.

May 28 (Monday) 9 a.m. to noon

Birding the Hot Spots of King County

No Birdathon donation

Monthly field trip on fourth Monday of the month to wherever the birds are. Meet before 9 a.m. at north end of the Newport Hills P&R (I-405, exit 9) and plan to be back by noon. Passenger cost/person \$2. No registration required. Leader: Hugh Jennings, (425) 746-6351.

May 30 (Wednesday) 8:00 a.m. to noon

Lake Sammamish State Park, Issaquah

No Birdathon donation

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. No registration required. Co-leaders: Sharon Aagaard, (425) 891-3460, and Stan Wood.

May 5 (Saturday) 9 a.m. to noon

Marymoor Park: BirdLoop Work Party

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

On Track! Welcome to 26 New Members

A warm spring greeting to the 26 of you who joined Eastside Audubon from January through March. Welcome to:

Ruth Adamski, Sally Burgdorff, Sharon Burke, Barbara Dallas, Rosie Decker, John Durant, John Egerter, Janice Foster, Sharon Furutani, Maya Giddings, Mary Ingels, Steve Jamieson, Kim Koegel, Michael Koegel, Colleen Kozak, Anne Kroeker, Amit Kulkarni, Michiko McAndrew, Richard Minch, Jean Patton, David and Jennifer Prior, Eileen Stemple, Nancy Tipton, Pamela Wheelock, and Linda Witsil.

Thank you all for getting our year off to a running start!

Birding Focus for June 2 – 3: The At-risk Rufous Hummingbird

In your own back yard or on a local walk, you can help with a count of Rufous Hummingbirds that the Eastside Audubon Conservation Committee is holding the first weekend in June.

During the past 50 years, Rufous Hummingbird (RUHU) numbers have dropped 55 percent by some estimates. National Audubon and the Nature Conservancy are discussing a program to use the species to educate people about neotropical migrants and their decline. More science is needed, and our count will help.

The count will focus on birds in the Eastside Audubon service area, which covers east King County from Lake Washington to the Cascade Crest and from

the Snohomish County line to just south of I-90. We may expand the count to other chapters in the future.

Report your RUHUs. It's easy.

On June 2 and 3, check your feeders, go out for a walk, visit a favorite birding spot — and keep your eyes open for Rufous Hummingbirds. Then tell us what you see. (If you're unsure whether your sighting is in our service area, please do report it.)

What to record:

1. Number of birds that you can see at one time
2. Number of males and females
3. Location (name of park or area and city or town)

4. Day of the week
5. Time of day
6. Your name

How to report:

Call in your sightings to Leslie at (425) 442-7681 or Peter at (425) 453-9287, or email to amccormick@eastsideaudubon.org.

We'll be checking eBird and adding any postings from our service area to our census. If you normally post your sightings to eBird, do so; then please also report them to us and let us know you've posted to eBird so we won't double count.

Continued on next page

Conservation in Our Lives

The Pacific Flyway: A Bird Highway from the Neotropics

The annual spring migration of neotropical birds has begun. Birds that migrate along the Pacific Flyway are arriving in Oregon and Washington, and others will pass through on their way to the boreal forest in Canada and Alaska, the Teshekpuk Lake region on the North Slope, and the Arctic coastal plain in the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge. Other wildlife refuges and national and state parks along the flyway provide resting and refueling sites for warblers, vireos, tanagers, orioles, flycatchers, shorebirds, and some raptors.

This perspective which encompasses the Western Hemisphere and the flyways is the foundation for the National Audubon Society's new strategic plan to promote awareness of this north-south connection

and the need for conservation at all points along bird migration routes.

"In biogeography, the Neotropic or Neotropical zone is one of eight terrestrial ecozones. It includes Central and South America, the Mexican lowlands, the Caribbean islands, and southern Florida, because these regions share a large number of plant and animal groups" (Wikipedia). We often picture the area filled with tropical forest, but there are large areas of other habitats as well, including marshland, scrubland, prairies, montane forests, riparian areas, and shoreline.

Birds that use the Pacific Flyway tend to winter in western Mexico, and many reside in the western mountains, which are not completely in the Neotropic zone. These wintering grounds are vital for the survival of migrant birds and it is good for us to remember that migrant birds are with us for only four to five months of the year. They spend seven to eight months in their wintering range.

The State of Jalisco in the western Sierra Madre range is a very important winter home for 15 species of warbler, including western species such as Black-throated Gray, Orange-crowned, MacGillivray's, and Nashville. The Black-headed Grosbeak and Rufous Hummingbird migrate



Orioles are among the bird families that come to us in spring from the neotropics. Bullock's Oriole by Larry Engles.

from this area's pine and oak woodlands. The Lazuli Bunting favors riparian woodland. The Dusky and Gray Flycatchers prefer oak scrub and arid scrub respectively. Farther south in the cloud forests of Chiapas, Townsend's and Wilson's Warblers spend the winter.

A number of conservation organizations have been active in preserving bird habitat in the Neotropic zone. We in Eastside Audubon will contribute to this effort. (See the story above about our June 2 – 3 Rufous Hummingbird census.) The Bird of the Month column now includes information on wintering habitat. We will be meeting with other chapters soon to begin to work together to promote conservation along the Pacific Flyway.

— Andy McCormick



Eagle Eye
VISION CARE, P.S.

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

See the birds better!

Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*)

Length	3.75 inches
Wingspan	4.5 inches
Weight	0.12 ounces (3.4 grams)
AOU alpha code	RUHU

In the northwest, the Rufous Hummingbird is a beloved breeding bird and a sure sign of spring. Its breeding area includes Oregon, Washington, Idaho, western Montana, British Columbia, and south central Alaska. It arrives in March after a flight of more than 1,500 miles from western and southern Mexico, where it winters in pine-oak forests such as those in the Sierra Manantlán Biosphere Reserve in Jalisco. Spring migration follows a coastal route, with sightings in the lowlands common until summer. Starting in late July, fall migration shifts inland along the Cascade and Rocky mountain ranges, where the birds can fuel up on mountain meadow flowers. For some, fall migration can veer eastward. There have been an increasing number of sightings along the southeast coast, and vagrants have been seen in the northeast during winter.

The Rufous is one of three North American hummingbirds in the genus *Selasphorus*, to bear a flame, from the Greek *selas*, brightness or flame, and *phoros*, bearing. The other two are the Broad-tailed and Allen's Hummingbirds, neither of which is seen in Washington. Rufous is based on the scientific name, *rufus*, Latin for red or tawny (Holloway).

The male RUHU has a glittering flame orange throat gorget. Its forehead is green and it has a white band below the gorget. The rest of the bird is rufous, including its back, tail and belly. The female is more muted and much greener overall, with a rufous wash along the sides and rufous in the center portion of the tail. Males can be identified by their call note *tzee* and a longer *tzee-chuppity-chup*. Their wings produce a rattle as they brake at the bottom of their display dives.

The male can be pugnacious. It will battle males of its own and other species for territory and actively defend a stand of flowers. It will also attempt to claim a home feeder as its own. For breeding the Rufous favors forest clearings and edges along streams,



Male Rufous Hummingbird by Aaron Baggenstos



Female Rufous Hummingbird by Larry Engles

especially brushy second-growth areas. The female builds a compact cup nest usually in the lower branches of a conifer and deposits two eggs. Incubation lasts only a little more than two weeks, with first flight three weeks after hatching.

There is some debate over the status of the Rufous Hummingbird, a valuable natural pollinator. Some say the population has declined by 55 percent since 1966, perhaps through the loss of brushy habitat to timber farming techniques (Wells). Habitat loss on the wintering grounds presents another threat. Others question whether breeding bird surveys are effective in counting these birds because of their remote breeding behavior (Healy and Calder).

A recording of the call of the Rufous Hummingbird can be heard at the Macaulay Library website, <http://macaulaylibrary.org>.

References available from amccormick@eastsideaudubon.org.

Report your Rufous Hummers June 2 – 3

Continued from preceding page

Know a Rufous when you see one

The following identification notes and those in the Bird of the Month story (this page) will help you spot the Rufous.

Rufous Hummingbird: Tail mainly rufous. **Adult male** has rufous back, sometimes marked with green, very rarely entirely green; orange-red gorget (throat). **Immature** resembles **adult female**, which has a whitish throat with lines of bronzy-green flecks strongest at corners, and typically a central splotch of red.

The most likely other hummingbird you'll see is Anna's, which is larger and has a green back and tail. The adult male Anna's is green with a red gorget and crown. The adult female's throat and underparts are mottled dusky to spotty green, median throat blotched rose-red.

Descriptions from Dunn and Alderfer (2008), *National Geographic Guide to Birds of Western North America*, and (2006) *National Geographic Complete Birds of North America*.

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