



The Corvid Crier

EAST LAKE WASHINGTON AUDUBON SOCIETY

ISSUE 04-7 – OCTOBER 2004

Great Blue Herons in Medina Park

When: Thursday, October 28 at 7:00 p.m. (after the social hour)

Where: Northlake Unitarian Universalist Church

Morey Wetherald is an amateur wildlife photographer and a member of ELWAS. He grew up in the Eastern United States and has been interested in birds and flight since boyhood. Morey spent three years in the US Navy -- one with the Blue Angels -- and then 40 years with The Boeing Company. He was in product development for the 707, 727, and 747, spent four years in sales in Australia/South Pacific, and was in Executive Program Management -- Air Force One for President Reagan.

Morey was interesting in sailing most of his life, held a leadership position with the Boy Scouts for 10 years, and was active in town government for 15 years. After retiring 10 years ago, he decided to spend more time with birds and nature and soon became an avid wildlife photographer.

Morey has always enjoyed Medina Park, a quiet spot which provides ponds, benches, and paths for strolling, dog walking, and joggers. In February, 2003 he was surprised to discover four pairs of Great Blue Herons congregating in a cottonwood tree right in the midst of this activity, bringing with them nest building materials to begin a new colony. Nest building commenced and went on from dawn to dusk.

Once completed, courting ensued under the watchful eyes of the dog walkers, joggers, and young families—all turned bird watchers— waiting for the inevitable sounds and sights of new life. Morey set tripod and long lens in place to capture the activity and events as they unfolded -- from nest building to fledging and first flights. The herons decided they liked this urban location and came back in 2004, so Morey was able to include images from a second breeding season.

Please join us **Thursday, October 28**, for this up front and personal view into the life style of the Great Blue Heron. Come at 6:30 for the social hour.

The social hour, meeting, and presentation are **free and open to the public**. Invite a friend or anyone who loves Great Blue Herons.

URGENT NOTICE

NEEDED: One or two persons to replace me as ELWAS Librarian. I will be leaving the State in December, and need to train the new persons in the operation of cataloging and processing library materials.

Please contact me ASAP. **Betty Dean (425) 821-8453**

Our Mission: *The mission of the East Lake Washington Audubon Society is to protect, preserve and enhance natural ecosystems and our communities for the benefit of birds, other wildlife and people.*

President's Message

By Christy Anderson, ELWAS President

Bumper Sticker Activism

While traveling this summer, I saw a bumper sticker I loved. It said, "I'm a Birder, and I VOTE!" It identified the owner as a kindred spirit and someone who puts action behind what he or she thinks is important.

"Special interest group" has become a pejorative term (as have "liberal" and even "environmentalist"). That is, unless the special interest group is one that we belong to!

What would a Special Interest Group of Birders think is important?

- Habitat? Forest and wetland preservation, curbing development into natural areas, national and local park and wildlife refuge support.
- Endangered Species Act? Many birds have benefited from this protection.
- Pollution? Reducing and preventing air and water pollution, hazardous and nuclear waste issues.
- Population? As the number of people increases, their impact does as well.
- Energy? Conservation of energy resources, fuel economy, environmental impacts of current and future energy sources, global warming.
- Transportation? Motorized vehicles and where they're allowed to go. Should more roads be built in urban and/or rural areas, in forests, in wilderness?

Do you know where candidates for local and national office stand? What concerns me most about environmental decisions elected officials make, is that some have irreversible consequences.

Few of us make decisions on who to vote for based on any single issue. And a candidate's past actions, more than their commercials, tell us much of what we need to know about their concern for the issues we feel are important, environmental and otherwise.

Tools are available to assist in researching. One of the most valuable for our theoretical Birders Special Interest Group (BSIG!) is the League of Conservation voters at <http://www.lcv.org>. It is a wealth of information on environmental votes and actions of elected officials nationally. Washington's version is at <http://www.wcvoters.org>. You might also check information provided by the League of Women Voters, National Resources Defense Council, and Public Agenda.

It's going to take some effort to go beyond the sound bites and the television ads, especially when environmental issues are not in the forefront. But, I will do what I can to figure it out. Because, after all, *I'm a Birder and I Vote!*

East Lake Washington Audubon Society

425 576 8805

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

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Juanita Bay Park

By MaryFrances Mathis — photo by Margaret St. Clair

Might 2005 be the year? Will Osprey finally nest on the platform in Juanita Bay, erected by ELWAS in 1997? For several days in early September, a pair of Osprey seemed to be intent on staking out their future home. While the male made repeated trips through the trees to gather sticks for the nest, the female stayed on the platform and seemed to direct his efforts, calling repeatedly as he returned and positioned his offering. Were they establishing their territory? Pair-bonding? Will they return in the Spring to nest? Stay tuned...



The beginning of fall has brought many birds into JBP to rest and recoup for their southern migration, while others prepare to leave, and still others to return. Some of the transients: Western, Least and Semipalmated Sandpipers, Lesser and Greater Yellowlegs, Pacific-slope Flycatcher, Red-eyed and Warbling Vireos, Orange-crowned, Nashville, Yellow, Black-throated Gray, and Wilson's Warblers, and Western Tanager. The Tree and Violet-green Swallows have left, and the numbers of Barn Swallows have dwindled to just a few stragglers, and only an occasional immature Black-headed Grosbeak, Swainson's Thrush, or Common Yellowthroat is to be found. But in exchange: the ducks, and other waterfowl have increased daily, both in numbers and species; the sparrows have returned...Fox, Lincoln's, Golden-crowned, and White-crowned Sparrows...to join the resident Songs and Spotted Towhees;

immature Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks are patrolling the trees, while the resident Bald Eagles survey the bay from on high.

A visit to Juanita Bay Park in any season is always a treat. Be sure to check the board on the kiosk to see what's been spotted recently, and report any interesting or unusual sightings to juanitabay@elwas.org.

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- **Deadline** for material submission is the first Wednesday of the month preceding publication. Send material by email to: newsletter@elwas.org Subject: ELWAS Newsletter or by mail to: East Lake Washington Audubon Society
Attn: Tom Grismer
P. O. Box 3115, Kirkland, WA 98083-3115
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AUDUBON CENTER/OFFICE HOURS

The office is downstairs at Northlake Unitarian Universalist Church in Kirkland, **308 4th Avenue S. (Corner 4th Ave. S. and State, directions on page 5).**

Phone number: (425) 576-8805

Email: office@elwas.org

**Hours: Monday, Tuesday and Friday
10:00 – 2:00**

COMING EVENTS

Parents and children over 8 are welcome on all trips

Check our website at <http://www.elwas.org/events/> for the latest information and for reports of last months' field trips.

October 1 (Friday) 9am – noon -- Marymoor Park

Join us for a morning walk along the nature trail, seeing what birds are in the area. Meets the **1st Friday of each month at 9:00**. Bring binoculars and meet at the SW corner of the Dog Area parking lot. No registration is required. To reach Marymoor Park, take SR 520 east from Seattle to the West Lake Sammamish Parkway exit and follow the signs. The entrance to the park is one block south of the exit. Turn right at the third stop sign, to the Dog Area parking lot. Parking fee is **\$1.00**. **MaryFrances Mathis 425-803-3026**

October 2 (Saturday) – 9:00 a.m. - Ballard Locks

Join us for a behind-the-scenes tour of the Ballard Locks, a great place to find out a bit about Seattle's history and see our salmon in action all in one place. It's the height of the spawning season, so we should see quite a few fish. We'll see the botanical garden and fish ladder, and get a personal tour of the Locks and learn how they work. Our speaker, Jay Wells, Program Director of the Chittenden Locks Visitor Center, is a very dynamic person. Bring the family and enjoy a morning on the water. Space is limited, so call the office (**425-576-8805**) to reserve your spot. We'll meet at S. Kirkland Park & Ride before 9:00 a.m. to carpool, or meet in front of the Visitors Center at the Locks at 10:00 a.m. Passenger cost/person **\$2.00**.

October 5 (Tues.) 7:00 p.m. - Conservation Committee Meets first Tuesday of each month in the ELWAS Office.

All interested parties are invited. Questions? Call **Tim McGruder at 425-828-4036**

October 6 (Weds.) 7:00 p.m. — Web Committee Meets first Wednesday of each month in the ELWAS

Office. All interested parties are invited. Questions? Email **Nancy Nicklas at webmaster@elwas.org**

October 9 (Saturday) 10 a.m. Bellefields Trail Walkthrough

Help clean litter along Bellefields Trail in Mercer Slough Nature Park. Meet at the Bellefields Trail parking lot on 118th Ave SE (Bellevue), about a mile south of Greenbaum's Furniture (118th and SE 8th). **Bring gloves, a bag for trash, and binoculars.** -- **Kay Barrett 425-644-2862**

October 12 (Tues.) 7-9 p.m. — Education Committee

Meets **2nd Tuesday of each month** in the ELWAS Office. All interested parties are invited. Questions? For information email: **education@elwas.org** or call **425-576-8805**.

**October 18 (Monday) 7:00 p.m. — Birds in the Balance
Meets 3rd Mon. each month** at Len Steiner's, 13239 NE 100th, Kirkland. You're welcome to join this group, which assesses bird populations in local habitats **425-827-2478**

**October 13 (Weds.) - 9:00 a.m.
Bellevue Botanical Gardens**

Join us for a walk through the garden and spend a relaxed morning seeing what birds are in the area. **Meets 2nd Wed. of each month at 9:00 a.m.**, and will finish by lunchtime. Bring binoculars and meet at the front door. No registration required. **Jim Ganley 425-450-0461**

October 14 (Thursday) - 8:00 a.m. Tolt-McDonald Park/Carnation

Conifers, deciduous trees, brush, and the Tolt River, are all part of this park in Carnation where any number of bird species can be found. There'll be a fair amount of walking on the trails. Bring a lunch. Return early afternoon. Meet before 8:00 a.m. at Marymoor Park (\$1 parking fee) to carpool. I-405 to Hwy 520 East. Exit at W. Lake Sammamish Parkway and turn right at the stop light. Turn east on NE Marymoor Way, into the Park, and turn right at the first stop sign. Meet at south end of the lot. Passenger cost/person **\$2.00**. **Joyce Meyer 425-881-5422**

October 19 (Tues.) 9 a.m. – noon — Juanita Bay Park

Join MaryFrances Mathis for a relaxed walk in the Park, seeing what birds are in the area. Meets the **3rd Tues. of each month at 9:00**. Bring binoculars and meet in parking lot. No registration required. **MaryFrances Mathis 425-803-3026**

October 23 (Saturday) 7:30 a.m. - Camano Island/Stanwood

Prepare for a full day of birding and explore Camano Island's shoreline, salt-water marshes, grasslands, and forest habitats for seabirds, raptors, and songbirds. Specific areas include Livingston Bay, English Boom, Utsalady, and Iverson Spit, a 100-acre preserve. Bring a lunch and meet before 7:30 a.m. at south end of Kingsgate P&R. Return early evening. Passenger cost/person **\$4.00**. **Joyce Meyer 425-881-5422**.

October 25 (Monday) 9:00 a.m. to noon Birding the Hotspots of King County

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

October 28 (Thursday) 7:00 p.m. Presentation and Membership meeting

“The Great Blue Herons in Medina Park?” See page 1 for details.

October 30 (Sat.) 8 a.m. — Purdy & Key Peninsula

Expect lots of saltwater waterfowl, cormorants and Great Blue Herons in the South Sound bays. We will include Snake Lake in Tacoma if time permits. Meet before 8:00 a.m. at north end of Newport Hills P&R (I-405, exit 9) and bring a sack lunch. Passenger cost/person **\$5.00**. **Hugh Jennings 425-746-6351**



Osprey at Juanita Bay Park — Photo by Margaret St. Clair

Winter Birding for Beginners

If you've never gone birding, or if you're a beginning birder and want to sharpen your skills, mark your calendar for the winter course in January, 2005.

DATES: (2) Tuesdays 1-18 & 1-25. 6:30—9:00 P.M. (*classes* only)

Sat 1-22 *or* Sun 1-23 (morning only *field trip*)

Sat 1-29 *or* Sun 1-30 (all day *field trip* to Skagit Flats)

How to get to..

- **Kingsgate Park and Ride:**
I-405 exit 20B northbound or 20 southbound, N. E. 124th St. Go west to light at 116th Ave. N. E., then right (north) a few blocks to P&R lot (on the left). Meet in the S.E. corner.
- **ELWAS Office/Northlake Unitarian Universalist Church,
308 4th Avenue S. (corner 4th Ave. S and State)**
I-405 exit 18 (N. E. 85th-Kirkland). Go west on Central Way to the light on 3rd St. Go left on 3rd St. Follow this street (it bears left and changes name to State St.) Then turn left on 4th Ave. S.



BIRD of the MONTH

Caspian Tern

Sterna caspia

by Hugh Jennings



The Caspian Tern (CATE) is about 21" long with a wingspan of 50" and weight of 1.4 lb (660g). The genus name *Sterna* (STIR-nah) is Latin stemming from Anglo-Saxon *stearn*, tern. The species name *caspia* is Latin for Caspian Sea, where a specimen was collected by Pallas, in 1770. This is the largest of the terns.

The CATE nests on five continents. In North America, it is common along both coasts and locally inland, mainly around large bodies of water. In Washington, non-breeders are abundant summer residents on coastal bays and on inland marine waters. It is a fairly common summer resident in Eastern Washington on a few major lakes and on the Columbia River. They are often seen flying 20 to 50 feet above the water, with bill

pointing downward, looking for fish. It catches fish by diving completely underwater, but also may pick fish off the water surface. It may steal fish from other seabirds.

Its summer plumage: large, crested, black cap and big blood-red bill (sometimes the bill is slightly darker at the tip). The bird is overall gray above and light below. The winter plumage is like the summer plumage, but the cap is splotchy and gray. Juveniles are like winter adults, but the bill is orange and upper parts lightly marked with dark bars and V's. The adult calls include a low, harsh scream "kwok" and "cahar".

The Caspian Tern first breeds at about 3 years, nesting singly or in colonies. The nest is a depression in the ground lined with grasses and seaweed, located on sandy beaches. There are usually 2-3 eggs, which are pinkish with darker markings. Incubation is 20-22 days. The young may leave the nest a few days after hatching. If a colony is not disturbed, the young may stay at the nest until ready to fly. Both parents bring food to the young. The age at first flight is 28-35 days. The young terns are noted for their long adolescence, with the young dependent on their parents for many months. Even in late winter, many adult Caspian Terns are trailed by a begging youngster from the previous nesting season. During migration, the terns fly high with bill pointing forward. It is the least sociable of all terns and travels singly or in small groups. Inland breeders move to the coast and fly south for winter, some wintering south to the West Indies and northern South America.

Volunteers Needed

By Jan McGruder

ELWAS has openings for two leadership positions. A Communications Chair, and an Education Chair.

The **Communication Chair** is mostly an oversight position, with the main responsibility of seeing that our message to the public is consistent. You would be expected to attend Board Meetings, as that is where most of our activities are discussed. You would also be responsible for the following:

1. Historian: Oversee history books
2. Oversee communication of events and activities to Newsletter Editor
3. Publicity Chair and Webmaster
4. Newsletter: Proofread newsletter on a monthly basis and assist Editor and Newsletter Labeling Chair, as necessary
5. Publicity: Oversee publicity that goes out to various media
6. Webmaster: Attend monthly Web Meetings and assist web committee, as necessary

The **Education Chair** is also mostly an oversight position, with the main responsibility of seeing that the Adult and Youth Education Committees are working in accordance with the ELWAS mission, and advocating on behalf of these committees before the Board. You would be expected to attend the Adult and Youth Education Committee meetings, as well as Board Meetings. You would be responsible for the following:

1. Supervise the development and maintenance of educational programs for youth, as well as adults, to further knowledge in the sciences and conservation
2. Act as a resource for further information on the natural world;
3. Promote such other educational activities of this Chapter as the Board of Directors deems advantageous in further the Audubon cause;
4. Manage and maintain the Chapter library;
5. Manage and maintain a Speakers List and slide programs;
6. Create and maintain educational displays

Upcoming ELWAS Classes

COMPARATIVE IDENTIFICATION AND BEHAVIORAL ECOLOGY OF THE SMALLER FALCONS AND ACCIPITERS

Fascinated by hawks and falcons? Still figuring out the difference between Sharp-shins and Cooper's hawks? Let our instructor guide you through the "raptor gauntlet" and sharpen your identification skills of these amazing stealth hunters. He will include the often over-looked "look-a-like" Merlin, Kestrel and Arctic Peregrine to better understand this challenging complex. Using superb images, hand-outs, voice-imprints and inter-active class discussion, you will learn their unique life histories and behaviors. This course consists of one class meeting and one all-day field trip.

Our **instructor** will be **David Drummond**, wildlife biologist and principal investigator on the regional Coastal Forest Merlin Project. David has taught classes at the Olympic Park Institute and the North Cascades Institute and has worked for many Northwest natural resource agencies. He is also an outdoor adventure guide and birding specialist.

Class: Tuesday, **October 12, 2004, 6:30 to 9:30 PM.** Class will meet at the Northlake Unitarian Church, 308 Fourth Avenue, Kirkland, WA, 98033. Class is limited to 20 participants.

Field Trip: Saturday, **October 16, 2004.** Trip will go to the Stillaguamish and Skagit Flats area. Details to be arranged at the class meeting.

Cost: \$45 ELWAS member, \$60 non-ELWAS member. **Class only may be taken for \$35 ELWAS member, \$45 non-ELWAS member.**

Registration: Call the ELWAS office to register at **425-576-8805.**

FALL AND WINTER WATERBIRDS OF THE NORTHWEST

Confused by all those wintering waterbirds we see in fall and winter? Then this course is for you. Improve your birding skills in both locating and identifying species that winter in Puget Sound and local waterways. The course will cover loons, grebes, cormorants, geese, ducks, swans, alcids and others. Four classroom sessions using slides and recordings and one full-day field trip will teach you the identifying characteristics and vocalizations of these interesting birds.

Our **instructor** will be **Brian Bell**, Master Birder with Seattle Audubon and president of the Washington Ornithological Society. Brian is a professional birding and natural history guide and regularly teaches birding classes for Seattle Audubon, ELWAS, and Shoreline and North Seattle Community Colleges. He has birded extensively throughout the West and Alaska and in most other parts of the USA.

Class: **Thursdays, October 14 and 21, and November 4 and 11 from 7:00 to 9:15 P.M.** Limit 20 class and field trip, 5 additional class only. Class will meet at Northlake Unitarian Church, 308 Fourth Avenue, Kirkland, WA.

Field trip: **Friday, November 12 OR Saturday, November 13.** Limit: 10 each day. No registration for the field trip only.

Cost: \$90 ELWAS member, \$110 non-ELWAS member.

Registration: Call ELWAS office to register at **425-576-8805.** **This popular class will fill quickly so call NOW to register.**

COMING IN WINTER 2005:

Bird Photography with Tim Boyer

Winter Birding for Beginners with Mike West

Plumage and Molt with Mike Donahue

Mourning A Tree

By Jan McGruder

*A*s this edition of the Crier goes to press, I am in mourning. My neighborhood is slowly moving towards annexation from King County to the City of Redmond, and my neighbors are cutting down significant trees either for money or fear of the City's tree regulations.

Unfortunately, this includes a small stand of significant trees, including a 100+ year-old cedar, that were just over the fence line and has shaded my yard and office for the past 20 years that I've lived here.

After the deed was done, my neighbor tells me, "I'm sorry about the trees. I know you liked them." LIKED THEM! I feel as though he's murdered members of my family! I treasured their cool shade on hot summer mornings, and listening to the rain drip through the branches. Not to mention the numbers of birds and wildlife that visited.

Each spring I'd search for the various warblers among the fluttering cottonwood leaves, and listen for the drunken song of the returning black-headed grosbeak. Mornings were always brighter when I was greeted by the downy woodpecker, and I was thrilled this year by the family of red-breasted sapsucker.

In speaking with other ELWAS members, I've discovered they have suffered the same losses. It only strengthens my resolve that we must educate our friends, neighbors, acquaintances, and those in authority of the importance of trees and the natural world for birds and for PEOPLE! I hope you'll join me. Together we can make a difference - before it's too late.

I know - he has a right to do what he wants with his trees and property, and I can plant trees in an attempt to heal myself and compensate for their loss. But there's something awesome about big, old trees, and his belittlement by greed and stupidity makes it that much more painful.

Have You Ever Considered Planned Giving?

I am so proud of my friend, Val Moore. As a single person, with no children, she has drawn up her Will. From my years working in a law firm, I know how a death can divide a family and cause much infighting - and how the best of intentions never come to pass. I'm also proud of Val because she has named East Lake Washington Audubon Society as a recipient of a portion of her estate. Without naming ELWAS in her Will, we would never receive her gift.

What can you do? First, think about your estate planning. It's something none of us like to consider, but death and taxes are the two certainties in this life. We've all amassed assets and personal items that we hope to pass on to the next generation. If we don't make our wishes known, that valuable antique vase may end up at Goodwill! And your favorite charities might go without your gifts.

Second, if you don't have one - meet with your attorney and draw up a Will. Do your family a favor - put in writing how you want your estate distributed.

Third, if you already have a Will, and want to include ELWAS without the expense of redrafting it, ask your attorney to draw up a Codicil to your Will. A codicil is the legal means by which you can make minor changes or clarify sections of your Will, and is recommended unless you're making major changes.

In 1999 we received a bequest of \$15,000. This gift gave ELWAS the necessary funds to open our current office and hire a part time Director. Think about it - what changes could you make for ELWAS?

“Field Book of Wild Birds and Their Music”

review by Hugh Jennings



Whether you are a musician, or not, I think anyone would enjoy this book. A copy of this book in the ELWAS library. The reissue of this book is available from bookstores. Following are some notes from an Amazon.com review of the book.

F. Schuyler Mathews' 1904 Field Book of Wild Birds and Their Music, reissued by Applewood Books, is a pocket-sized reminder of what bird books used to be. Whereas our modern field guides are bent on helping us quickly and accurately identify birds, many popular field guides of the late nineteenth and early twentieth

centuries blended the goal of identification with encouragement for readers to revel in the beauty of birds and their music.

Mathews' Field Book of Wild Birds and Their Music describes the Eastern birds (or most of them) in elaborate passages, but what is most ambitious about this book is the music. Mathews renders each bird's song on a musical scale, complete with liner notes and commentary. Don't read music? Don't worry. Mathews offers both a quick primer on how to read music and a glossary of musical terms. Paging back to Mathews' handy glossary, you'll know just what he means when the lark's song is described as *affettuoso* or the robin's melody as *sostenuto*. On the other hand, if you do happen to read music, this guide breathes new life into bird songs.

Mathews concedes that - "Of course it is a more or less a problematic matter to deal with wild music. It is not amenable in any respect to law. However, the question involved is not whether the bird's song is radically different from ours - we may admit that point - but whether it may be truthfully and logically recorded upon the musical staff. That question, it is the object of this book to answer affirmatively, and with due regard for all the difficulties involved".

"Syllables are very useful in expressing rhythm or time; but even here they sometimes fail. For instance, one of the best syllabic examples of rhythm is the *Old Sam Peabody, Peabody, Peabody*, attributed to the White-throated Sparrow. Naturally, one would pronounce the name *Pea-boddy*, evenly; but the bird does not sing this trisyllabic note that way; he sings the first of the three notes to three beats, the second to one beat, and the third to two beats. Only the musical staff can express that fact accurately"

