



The Corvid Crier

EAST LAKE WASHINGTON AUDUBON SOCIETY

VOL 26, No 6— JULY/AUGUST 2007

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.

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Directions to ELWAS HQ

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

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

Another Successful Birdathon!

This past May, our month-long Birdathon fundraiser was another great success! Because of the efforts of all the teams who went birding for dollars, and the support of their contributors, as of press time ELWAS has raised over \$11,000.

It's not over yet – our goal this year is \$20,000 and with your help we can meet that milestone. If you haven't yet sent in your pledge, there's still time. You can mail a check or pledge online right from the home page.

This year's awards go to the following:

Rookie of the Year Award - for the most money raised by a rookie (\$1039) - goes

to Marlene Meyer

Dunka-A-Doo Award - for most money raised by a team (\$3,500) - goes to the Bird Brains team led by Jim Rettig

Phoebe Snetzinger Award - for most bird species seen by one team (108) –goes to the Whidbey Wing Dings led by Hugh Jennings

Thank you everyone for all your hard work. Those sleepless nights and rainy days were well worth it, and we should be proud of what we accomplished! We'll see you all next May.

Want to Keep Up With ELWAS Activities?

Join one or all of the ELWAS e-mail lists and stay informed on what's going on in the Chapter. There aren't a great number of postings to any one list (1-2 a week), and they're a great way for members to keep in touch.

Any member of any list is allowed to post e-mails, as long as they're ELWAS or bird related. The lists are moderated and those who abuse the privilege will be barred.

ELWAS has three e-mail lists:

1. **Announce** – for general announcements on Chapter activities, bird-related issues

2. **Conservation** – for announcements on conservation/environment related issues

Opportunities – for announcements on volunteer opportunities

If you would like to join one or several of these list, send an e-mail to: jan@elwas.org.

Upcoming Fall Class

ELWAS will offer a **Planting for Wildlife** class this fall, probably in October or November. It will be offered by Monica Van der Vieren and will likely involve 2-3 evening sessions plus a planting day.

Watch the Corvid Crier and the ELWAS website for details.



EAST LAKE WASHINGTON
AUDUBON SOCIETY

25TH ANNIVERSARY

No Child Left Inside

By Christy Anderson, ELWAS President



School's out for the summer! In the Pacific Northwest, we seem to appreciate summer days more than most people. At least most years, it finally stops raining!

It's also the time when we have an uncontrollable urge to get outdoors.

Usually not a great time for birding, but who wants to sit inside when the sun finally shows its face?!

How about your kids? Do they have that same burning desire? Or are they glued to the television, Xbox or MTV? Or just too busy being busy?

I recently attended a talk by Richard Louv, author of *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder*. He is worried, as am I, that today's kids are not experiencing the outdoors as we did when we were kids. He asked the audience of a few hundred how many had "run free" as kids, saying goodbye to parents in the morning and promising to be home for supper. Almost everyone raised their hands. Then he asked how many of their kids or grandkids do that today. Three or four hands went up.

E. O. Wilson, a biologist and naturalist, believes we are hardwired to need a connection with nature. It is an emotional and physical need. Divorcing ourselves from nature may actually be detrimental to our spirits, our health, our intellects and to the well-being of our society. The nature connection is not a "nice-to-have." It is essential to our survival.

As obesity rates skyrocket among young Americans, free outdoor play in a natural place (even a vacant lot) is becoming a rare activity. Children's lives are organized beyond my imagining, and time to "waste" and just "be" is hard to come by. Of course, there are safety concerns, and that needs to be kept in mind. But adults, too, gain from taking kids out into nature and letting them explore.

Will our children be willing to save the natural areas and habitat needed by birds and other wild creatures if they have no personal experience of it?

Most of our communities are more urban than wild, but nearby nature is every bit as precious as the North Cascades. Will things ever be as "good" as they used to be? No, but maybe that's the wrong question. Things have changed and they will continue to change. But we can work to save wild areas, and we can take kids out into the natural world to experience it themselves.

Do you know a child or two? Take them outside. Show them the wonder you felt when you first started noticing bugs, birds and trees to climb. Do it for yourself, do it for the earth, but most of all, do it for them. It will last a lifetime.

East Lake Washington Audubon Society
(425) 576-8805 — www.ELWAS.org

308 4th Avenue S. (Corner 4th Ave. S. and State)
P.O. Box 3115, Kirkland, WA 98083-3115

Executive Officers

President	Christy Anderson	(425) 747-4196 president@elwas.org
Vice President	Jim Rettig	(425) 402-1833 jrettigtanager@verizon.net
Secretary	Carmen Almodovar	(425) 643-5922 Carmena2001@earthlink.net
Treasurer	Ellen Homan	(425) 836-5838 gammy@isomedia.com
Executive Director	Jan McGruder	(425) 822-8580 jan@elwas.org

Committee Chairs/Board (board positions underlined)

<u>At large board member</u>	Amy McQuade	(206) 523-6030 mcbrowchr@aol.com
<u>At large board member</u>	Sunny Walter	(425) 271-1346 sunny@sunnywalter.com
<u>At large board member</u>	Tricia Kishel	(206) 948-3922 natureisoutside@gmail.com
<u>Birding</u>	Brian Bell	(425) 485-8058 bellasoc@isomedia.com
Adult Education	Open	
Bird Photography	Tim Boyer	(425) 277-9326 tboyer@seanet.com
Field Trips	Hugh Jennings	(425) 746-6351 fieldtrip@elwas.org
Native Plant Walks	Sunny Walter	(425) 271-1346 sunny@sunnywalter.com
Nature Walks	Open	
Special Events	Open	
Bird Questions?	MaryFrances Mathis	(425) 803-3026
<u>Conservation</u>	Tim McGruder	(425) 822-8580 tim@elwas.org
Advocacy	Open	
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Library	Carolyn Kishel	(425) 746-1817
<u>Communication</u>	Open	
Historian	Open	
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Webmaster	Nancy Nicklas	(425) 869-7827 webmaster@elwas.org
<u>Financial Development</u>	Cindy Balbuena	(425) 643-4074 cbalbuena@comcast.net
Birdathon	Christy Anderson	(425) 747-4196
Gift Wrap	Open	
Merchandising	Cindy Balbuena	(425) 643-4074 cbalbuena@comcast.net
<u>Membership</u>	Margaret Lie	(425) 823-2686 margaretlie12@gmail.com
Hospitality	Claudia Welch	(425) 827/2548
Volunteer Coordinator	Tricia Kishel	(206) 948-3922 natureisoutside@gmail.com

ELWAS July/August

Meetings

Aug 1 (Weds) 6:00 pm Web Committee

Meets first Weds each month in ELWAS Office. All interested parties are invited. In July/Aug, please email Nancy Nicklas at webmaster@elwas.org if you plan to come, or call the ELWAS office.

July 10/Aug 14 (Tues) 7:00 pm Youth Education Committee

Meets in the ELWAS Office. All interested parties are invited. In July/Aug please email education@elwas.org if you plan to come or call the ELWAS office.

July 12/Aug 9 (Thurs) 7:00 pm Photo Group

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

ELWAS Office/ Audubon Center

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

****Note: Office is Closed in August****

(425) 576-8805 — office@elwas.org

Hours: Mon, Tues, Fri — 9:00am - 1:00pm

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

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

newsletter@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

The "Raven in Flight" used as our graphic logo was created by Tony Angell, and is ©1978 University of Washington Press. Used with permission.

Volunteers: We Need You!

With your help and expertise - and a little of your time - we can grow the Chapter and do even more in our community. Whether you want to be in front of a crowd, or work behind the scene, we need you! Some of our volunteer opportunities are:

E-Mail List Moderator – Moderate the ELWAS e-mail lists from the comfort of your own home.

Events Coordinator – Schedule ELWAS volunteer to staff tables at various events on the Eastside, and organize display and materials for each event.

Document Scanner – Scan field trip maps and other documents for posting on the website.

Thank you Melinda!

Melinda Bronsdon, our Adult Education Chair, is moving on – though we hope she won't be going far. Since November, 2003, Melinda has organized all our Adult classes, attended almost every session and field trip, and managed the finances and instructor needs. Under her tutelage, ELWAS has offered over 25 classes on such topics as: Beginning Birding, Bird Behavior, Birding by Ear, Ducks, Ethnobotany, Shorebirds, and Woodpeckers.

Melinda has managed all aspects of this Chapter's activity with great aplomb; she has brought in the expert

Volunteer Office Staff – Work in the ELWAS offices, answer the phones and greet visitors and customers.

We will work with each volunteer, and give them as much training and support as they need to be successful. You may read a thorough description for each opportunity on our website, or contact Jan McGruder at (425) 822-8580 or jan@elwas.org for further details.

If you believe ELWAS is a cause worthy of your time, give a little of yourself. The birds will thank you!

birders in our area, and offered a wide variety of subjects to students. Classes are not only a way for the Chapter to reach out to the membership and general public, but they've also brought in a great deal of money for the Chapter.

With Melinda stepping down, **we are in need of a new Adult Education Chair**. Melinda is available to train you, and answer any questions you may have. Call Jan McGruder (425-822-8580) if you want to learn more.

Melinda – thank you. We can't express enough how much we appreciate all you've done for ELWAS.



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

See the birds better!

A Great Big Thank You!

To those who helped on the Birdathon Mailing: **Lea Knapp, Marlene Meyer, Nancy Thomson, and Margaret Lie.**

To those who helped on the Plant Sale: **Krista Rave-Perkins, Keith Pickrell, Juliana Pickrell, Carmen Almodovar, Margeret Lie, Kay Barrett, Mary Holt, Marlene Meyer, Ella Elman, Patricia Clarke, and Cindy Balbuena.**

To **Jo Prussia** for hosting the Shorebirds Class.

To those who helped at the Membership Meeting: **Carmen Almodovar, Cindy Balbuena, Margaret Lie, Melinda Bronsdon, Tim McGruder, Sunny Walter, Claudia Welsch** and

Christy Anderson.

To those who put together the Bulk Mail Slide Presentation: **Lea Knapp** and **Jan McGruder.**

To those who put so much effort into the Education Committee: **Jill Keeney, Sharon Pagel, Jim and Shirlee Hall, Margaret Lee, Jeani Goodrich, Tora Roksvog, Nancy Mendenhall** and **Lea Knapp.**

To those who helped on the Corvid Mailing: **Lea Knapp, Jane Paige, Peggy Jorgensen, Marge Dolecal, Melanie Bishop, Margaret Snell** and **Margaret Lie.**

To **Lea Knapp** for Beach Clean-up and for being a Juanita Nature Walk

Guide.

To those who worked on the Marymoor Bird Loop: **Jim Rettig, Jan Rettig, Tim McGruder, Glenn Eades, Bev Jennings, Therese Eby, Karen Ridlon, Steve Ridlon, Carmen Almodovar, Karen Greytak, Shawn Bongard, Steve Pope, Patricia Clarke, Brian Park, Tom Jacobson, Mary Holt, Ella Elman, Jennifer Hille, Miles Hille, Marina Silverstone, Megan Lynden, Geary Britton-Simmons, Stan Wood,** and **Cyndi Smith.**

"What lies behind us and what lies before us are small matters compared to what lies within us." ~Ralph Waldo Emerson

Welcome New Members to East Lake Washington Audubon Society!

Welcome to the following new members of the East Lake Washington Audubon Society. We hope to see you soon at a Membership Meeting or Field Trip. Call or visit our office if you have any questions. Our friendly volunteers are more than happy to help you:

Susan Ash
Tina Blade
Cam Bradley
Thomas and Linda Brisk
Ben Caley
Rita Campbell
Joanna Champion
Roger Chen
John Cherry
Henry L. Chiles Jr.
Claudette Christensen
Jim Cissell
Ron Coscorrosa
Etta L. Cosey
Shaun and Lori Cox

John Daley
Rose Dammrose
David A. Desautel
Katharine Durish
Mason Flint
Matthew Fogarty
Suz Garcia
Alan Gero
Donald D. Gossett
Karen Greytak
Ed Hand
Patricia Henderson
Isaac Hicks
Len Hoch
Alyna Holden
Nancy King
Jan Lafond
Dennis and Mary Lampson
Michael Leff
Kathryn A. Lew
Ilana Long
Elizabeth MacDonald
Stephanie Madsen

Massage Practice Builder
Carl Mattson
Phyllis Moss
Deborah Oftebro
Kathleen Ohanion
Richard D. Osborne
Peterson
James Putnam
Steven Randolph
Dorothy Ranns-Furbush
Laurie Rathbun
Jeanne Robertson
Andy Rogers
Nita Jo Rountree
The Very Reverend Rubye-Lew Hu Pang
Mark Schuster
Ramesh Sharma
Kelly Washburn
Vivian and Jim West
Pauline L. Williams



REMOVE ENGLISH IVY AND OTHER INVASIVE PLANTS!!

If left alone, the aggressive English Ivy will kill trees and tear down the forest stand within just a few years.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Join the City of Kirkland Parks Department on the second Saturday of each month at **Watershed Park** to remove invasive plants and improve our important urban forest.

JOIN US FOR AN IVY PULL!



WHEN AND WHERE

Second Saturday of each month

April through November 2007

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

(4/14, 5/12, 6/9, 7/14, 8/11, 9/8, 10/13 & 11/10)

Watershed Park

4500 110th Avenue NE

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO RSVP FOR AN EVENT

Nicci Osborn at 425.587.3342 or email nosborn@ci.kirkland.wa.us

WHAT TO BRING

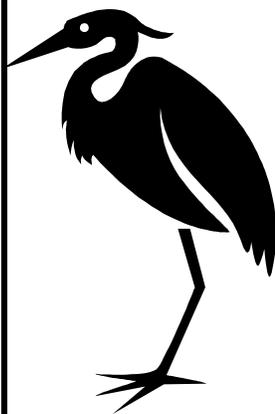
- Work clothes
- Work gloves
- Rain gear (if necessary)
- Water bottle
- Also useful
- Pruning shears or clippers
- Lopping shears
- Pruning saw



King County

COMMUNITY SERVICE HOURS! DAY OF CARING!

Individuals and groups interested in a specific amount of hours or a day to volunteer in the Green Kirkland stewardship program, contact Nicci Osborn with Kirkland Parks and Community Services: 425.587.3342 or email nosborn@ci.kirkland.wa.us



Blue Heron Beach House

Anderson Island. Stunning house/cabin on 1,000+ low bank, pebble beach waterfront. 28 acres of solitude. 270 degree views of the water with Olympics to the west and Mt. Rainier to the southeast. House has two bedrooms (king in one and two twins upstairs in the other). Queen in loft and a futon in the sunroom. Only one hour to the ferry.

Huge deck with birds galore. See at www.andersonislandinn.com Click on vacation rentals. My home is Blue Heron Beach House on Amsterdam Bay.

Please call Barbara Lake, at 253-377-6467 or email bjlak@msn.com for info and booking. Special rates for Audubon members.

FIELD TRIPS

Parents and children over 8 are welcome on all trips. **FRS Radio owners, please consider bringing them on trips.
Check our website at <http://www.elwas.org/events/> for the latest information and for reports of last month's field trips.**

Meeting Places for Field Trips:

- **Tibbetts P&R in Issaquah:** I-90, exit 15, turn right (south) and go to Newport Way NW, turn left (east) and then right (south) into P&R and park on west side.
- **Kingsgate Park and Ride (Detour route):** The detour route has you either take the Totem Lake off-ramp from I-405 northbound and turn left at the light at the bottom of the Totem Lake off-ramp onto Totem Lake Blvd, or take the NE 124th St off-ramp from I-405 southbound and turn left to the light at 124th Ave NE. This will put you on Totem Lake Blvd, the detour route. Take Totem Lake Blvd north to the light at NE 132nd Street, turn left under I-405 and then immediately turn left onto 116th Ave NE and into the P&R..
- **Newport Hills Park and Ride:** I-405, exit 9
- **South Kirkland Park and Ride:** 108th Ave. NE just north of hwy 520 and Northup Way.
- **Wilburton Park and Ride:** I-405, exit 12.

July 6 (Fri) 8am to 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 8:00**. Bring binoculars and meet at the SW corner of the Dog Area parking lot (Parking Lot D). No registration is required. To reach Marymoor Park, take SR 520 east from Seattle to the West Lake Sammamish Parkway exit and follow the signs. The entrance to the park is one block south of the exit. Turn right at third stop sign, to Dog Area parking lot. Parking is \$1.

July 7 (Sat) 9am to noon

Marymoor Park Bird Loop Work Party

See article on page 9

July 14 (Sat/Sun) 11:00 am

Hurricane Ridge/Dungeness Spit

Our annual Olympic Peninsula wildflower trip featuring views, birds, and varied wildlife. At 11:00 am we will meet at the picnic table across the street from the Hurricane Ridge Visitor Center for a snack lunch. (This is the center at the base of the foothills, the one before you actually enter the park.) Look for the ELWAS sign. After lunch, we will head for the main visitor center at the top of Hurricane Ridge, making one stop to check out wildflowers along the way. If you miss the lunch, look for us at the trailhead of Hurricane Hill, about a half mile beyond the main visitor center. Again look for the ELWAS sign. Motels and campsites are available if you wish to stay overnight. For anyone staying overnight, Hugh Jennings will lead a trip to Ediz Hook, Dungeness Spit and Sequim area on Sunday. **Bill Schmidt 425-881-6037**

July 17 (Tues) 8am to noon

Juanita Bay Park Bird Walk

A relaxed walk in the Park, seeing what birds are in the area. Meets the **3rd Tuesday of each month at 8:00**. Bring

binoculars and meet in parking lot. No registration required.

MaryFrances Mathis 425-803-3026

July 23 (Mon) 9am to noon

Birding the Hot Spots of King County

Monthly field trip on **fourth Monday** of each month to wherever the birds are. Meet before 9:00 am 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**

August 3 (Fri) 8am to noon

Marymoor Park Morning Walk

See entry for July 6

August 4 (Sat) 9am to noon

Marymoor Park Bird Loop Work Party

See article on page 9

August 7 (Tues) 5:30 AM

Table Mountain Ptarmigan Hunt

Table Mountain in the Mt. Baker area of Whatcom County is one of the few "favored" spots to look for White-tailed Ptarmigan. We will leave early so that we can bird our way up to the Table Mtn trailhead. We will cover a variety of habitats from riparian to alpine, and will search for those mountain birds along the way. Bring lunch and fluids. We will meet at 5:30 am at the south end of the Kingsgate P&R. Expect to be back by early evening. Limit of 11 in three cars. **Passenger cost \$15/person**. Call **Brian H. Bell to reserve a place - 425-485-8058**.

August 18 (Sat) 6:45 am - Whidbey Island

Take the ferry to Whidbey Island to check out several good places for waterfowl and shorebirds. Stops will include Crockett Lake, Penn Cove, and Dugualla Bay. Dress for the weather and bring a lunch and ferry fare. Meet before 6:45 am at south end of Kingsgate Park-N-Ride to catch ferry in Mukilteo. Return early evening. **Passenger cost/person \$11.00 plus share ferry costs**. **Joyce Meyer 425-868-7986**.

August 18 (Sat) - 3:00 pm

Native Plant Walk at Pritchard Wetland, South Seattle

Leisurely walk along the 2-mile gravel path that winds through nine acres of prairies and marshy wildlife habitat. In August, we should be treated to beautiful displays of goldenrod and asters in the prairies. This park has been extensively restored in the past five years by Starflower Foundation and has one of the highest diversities of native plants in Seattle. See the ELWAS website for a list of birds. Meet at 4 pm at the Wilburton P&R (I-405 and SE 8th St.). To reserve your place, contact Ella Elman at elman@u.washington.edu (preferred) or 425-747-4795. Optional dinner afterward at Hong Kong Seafood Restaurant.

(Continued on page 7)

BIRD OF THE MONTH

Vaux's Swift *Chaetura vauxi*

The Vaux's Swift (VASW) is about 4.75" long with a wingspan 12" and a weight of 0.6 oz. (17g). The genus name *Chaetura* (kee-TOO-rah) is Latin from the Greek *chaite*, stiff hair, bristle, or spine, and *oura*, tail -- spine-tailed. The short, spine-tipped tail helps prop the swift up when clinging to a vertical surface. These spines are difficult to see in flight. Its genus name is the same as for the Chimney Swift, the eastern U.S. counterpart to the Vaux's. The species name *vauxi* (VAUKS-eye) is for the 19th-century Philadelphia naturalist, William Sanson Vaux.

It is our smallest North American swift and is referred to as a "flying cigar". The VASW is dark gray-brown above and paler below the throat and on the chest. It has a short, square tail and long, thin pointed scimitar-shaped wings. They range the North American west coast from British Columbia to Northern California, and are found in open skies over woodlands, lakes and rivers, feeding on a variety of insects. They often feed low over the water in morning and evening. Their flight is rapid, jerky and erratic like a bat. The calls consist of high-pitched *chip* notes followed by an insect-like trill in flight. They are a fairly common summer resident in moist for-

ests throughout Washington state, and in cities in forested areas. During fall migration they gather in large numbers at favorite roosts, such as smokestacks. (Photo was taken by Sam Mann). Fall migration is by day and most probably go to Mexico or the northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico.

Nests are made with a sticky saliva-like substance to glue twigs and pine needles to the wall of a hollowed-out tree or chimney. The VASW prefers old-growth

forests where there are holes in rotted snags. Usually six white eggs are laid but will vary in number from 3-7. Incubation is by both sexes over 18-19 days. Both parents care for and feed the nestlings with other adults helping parents incubate the eggs and feed the young. First flight is after 3-4 weeks and the young may return to roost at the nest site for several days. There is only one brood per year.



(Continued from page 6)

August 21 (Tues) 8am to noon
Juanita Bay Park Bird Walk
See entry for July 17

August 25 (Sat) 7am to 6-7 pm
Grays Harbor Loop – Limited to 11

We will visit many different habitats from city parks, marinas, beaches, and forests for a variety of waterfowl, gulls, terns, shorebirds and songbirds. Our loop drive will include Bottle Beach, Westport, Tokeland and Raymond. This is an all-day trip so bring a lunch. We will stop at the Raymond Waterfront City Park, Tokeland Marina and shoreline, Westport harbor, Westhaven State Park and Bottle Beach. Meet before 7:00 am at north end of the Wilburton Park-n-Ride (I-405, exit 12) to carpool. Limited to 11 people & 3 cars, call to register. Passenger cost/person **\$18.00. Hugh Jennings 425-746-6351**

August 27 (Mon) 9:00 to noon
Birding the Hot Spots of King County
See entry for July 23.

September 8 (Sat) – 5:30-8:30 pm
Vaux's Swifts in Monroe

This is an evening trip to Monroe to watch thousands of Vaux's Swifts go thru their evening ritual before dropping in a chimney to roost for the night. About an hour before dusk they begin circling and swirling around the chimney as the numbers keep increasing. A few will start making feints at the chimney, then a few will start dropping down into the chimney. These are followed by more and more until the sky is empty about dusk. We will meet at the south end of the Kingsgate P&R by 5:30 pm and carpool to Monroe Elementary School in Monroe. **Passenger cost/person is \$3.00.** If you plan to go, email Hugh Jennings at: hughbirder@earthlink.net or call 425-746-6351 so I can contact you in case of a change in plans due to weather.

Bird feeding precautions urged to stem bird disease

OLYMPIA - Recent reports of sick or dead birds at backyard feeders has prompted the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) to recommend that people temporarily discontinue bird feeding, or take extra steps to maintain feeders.

Laboratory analysis of bird carcasses has confirmed salmonellosis, a common and usually fatal bird disease caused by the salmonella bacteria, said WDFW veterinarian Kristin Mansfield.

"Salmonellosis is probably the most common avian disease at feeders in Washington," Mansfield said. "The disease afflicts species such as finches, grosbeaks and pine siskins that flock together in large numbers at feeders and transmit the disease through droppings." There have been about four dozen reports of dead birds in the past several weeks

The first indication of the disease is often a seemingly tame bird on or near a feeder, Mansfield said.

"The birds become very lethargic, fluff out their feathers, and are easy to approach," she said, "but there is very little people can do to treat them."

It's possible, although uncommon, for people to become sick from the salmonella bacteria through direct contact with infected birds, bird droppings, or through pet cats that catch sick birds. More information on human health and salmonella is available at <http://www.doh.wa.gov/EHSPHL/factsheet/salmonel.htm>.

People who handle birds, bird feeders or bird baths should wear gloves and wash their hands thoroughly afterwards, Mansfield said.

Mansfield advised stopping backyard bird

feeding for at least a few weeks, if not for the remainder of the summer, to encourage birds to disperse and forage naturally.

Bird enthusiasts who choose to continue feeding should reduce the number of feeders they maintain and spread them out, use feeders that accommodate fewer birds (using tubes rather than platforms), and clean feeders daily with a 1-to-10 solution of chlorine bleach and warm water. Since water attracts birds during warm, dry weather, keeping bird baths and fountains clean is also important, Mansfield said.

Reports of dead birds in Washington can be made to the Dead Bird Reports line, 1-800-606-8768.

For more information on salmonellosis in birds, see National Wildlife Health Center information at http://www.nwhc.usgs.gov/disease_information/other_diseases/salmonellosis.jsp.

RTID Highway Plan Looks Like Fiscal and Financial Folly

By Nina Carter, Director Audubon WA, and Bill LaBorde. — Published May 6, 2007 in Tacoma News Tribune

Commuters are stuck in traffic wondering why things are so bad, and regional leaders are putting together a roads-and-transit package to put before voters this fall. It's a dubious one.

The Regional Transportation Investment District (RTID) has a list of highway megaprojects, along with the \$16 billion in taxes (including interest) to pay for them. Sound Transit has also put together its phase two list of improved rail, transit and bus service.

The Legislature has required that Sound Transit go to the ballot only in combination with the RTID proposal.

The leaders of the three largest environmental groups in the Puget Sound area – WashPIRG/Environment Washington, Audubon Washington and the Cascade Chapter of the Sierra Club – are concerned that the current the RTID megaproject list is a bad deal for taxpayers and for the environment.

The RTID proposal provides only partial financing for a variety of road projects, including replacement of the Highway 520 floating bridge. This is especially ironic as it was the urgency of replacing

the bridge that forced RTID to the ballot this fall with Sound Transit in the first place.

Indeed, the plan for financing the replacement of the 520 bridge is so incomplete that state Treasurer Mike Murphy refuses to commit the credit of the state to the project. In addition, many of the RTID projects will not be completed until 2020 or beyond. Some will not even break ground until after 2020.

Voters want transportation improvements, but they also want accountability and assurance that their tax dollars are being well spent. In the meantime, there's a budget backlog in maintaining the roads we already have. We will need to come up with additional billions of dollars just to repave and repair Interstate 5.

Over the coming decades the most daunting environmental challenge we face is climate change. Scientists tell us that we must reduce our carbon dioxide emissions 80 percent by 2050 to ward off potentially catastrophic impacts from rising seas, reduced water supplies and profoundly changed ecosystems. Carbon dioxide is a byproduct of burning fossil fuels, like oil, and driving is the largest contributor of

global warming pollution in Washington.

The governor and Legislature have committed the state to holding the line – stop digging the hole deeper – while we figure out how to decrease pollution. Cleaner cars and fuels will help, but the only way we can make deep cuts in emissions to reach that 80 percent reduction goal is by developing transportation and land-use solutions that allow us to drive less. That means a massive rethinking of how we get around, and a commensurately massive reallocation of transportation dollars.

This is why RTID – with its allocation of scarce tax dollars to building miles and miles of new highway lanes – is an ecological disaster in the making.

The best example of this outmoded thinking is the proposed cross-base highway (Highway 704), which would bisect the Fort Lewis/McChord joint military base.

Certainly, we support the effort elected officials in Pierce County are making to put jobs and housing in proximity to each other, as is happening in Fredrickson, and we support greater mobility options for the people who currently live in that community. This new road, however, would

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Conservation Corner: Climate and Birds of Prey



In late May/early June I visited the vast Birds of Prey National Conservation Area near Boise, Idaho, and saw some ominous signs. The weather was very hot: Friday the temperature

was about 95 degrees, Saturday about 98, and Sunday around 107! On Sunday I went on a tour to see some of the 16 species of raptors that breed in the area. Throughout the boat trip and the tour on land, our guide, who has been leading these trips for about 35 years, noted the heat and its effect on the raptors.

Many raptors nest on the high canyon walls of the Snake River Canyon. The walls can get to be 20 degrees warmer than the surrounding temperature, so on a 90 degree day the nestlings may be experiencing 110 degree temperatures. These temperatures can kill, despite the fact that parents do what they can to keep the chicks cooler. With such temperatures, the chick is left with two options: Leave the nest too early and die

from falling or from getting caught by another predator (such as a badger, of which there are many), or simply stay in the nest and die from the heat. While touring in the bus, we looked at the nest of a Ferruginous Hawk with two chicks. The nest was on a platform in the middle of a sagebrush field, the temperature hovering near or above 100 degrees. The parent was attempting to shade the chicks from the direct rays of the sun by spreading its wings over them, but the chicks kept moving, and it looked to be a very difficult task. We wondered if the kids would be able to make it through this day and into the next, which was predicted to bring cooler weather. Our guide was saying that temperatures are getting too hot too soon, and there is not enough time for the chicks to fledge. Consequently, fewer birds are nesting in this amazing area.

We also learned about the effects of the ongoing drought experienced by the western states. Fires are a constant danger to the fields of sagebrush. A major fire some years ago engulfed a large tract. The results: No more sage to give

cover to the rabbits; no more rabbits; thus, far fewer Golden Eagles. Further, the heat and aridity are causing all the vegetation to dry up very quickly. This reduces the foraging capacity of the Ground Squirrels, so the population of this species is about 25% of historical numbers. Of course many of the raptors feed on these Ground Squirrels, which, again, means fewer birds of prey in the area. (There is some good news in this: The aridity seems to be killing the cheat grass that came to America from Russia a century ago and which has spread all across the West.)

Where are the raptors, then? We we told that a number are nesting in other areas in Southern Idaho and Oregon, in places where few have been found before. So, apparently they are dispersing to a degree. Are there simply fewer raptors? The answer is still uncertain on that one.

Are these changes the result of climate change? I will let the experts answer that. – Jim Rettig

Marymoor Park Bird Loop Project Update

Our next two Audubon BirdLoop Work parties will be held on Saturday mornings, July 7 and August 4, 9 to noon. In June one group of volunteers attacked a large infestation of Scot's Broom and removed a lot of it, and another group covered more Reed Canary Grass with

cloth and mulch. Both tasks will be continued at this summer. Further, we may get the bollard installed for the gate in the SODA fence. We may also get permission by then to begin the trail around the east side of the East Meadow, and we could, with enough volunteers, clear out

more vegetation for the path through the woods. There remains a lot to do, as you can tell. Join us for a morning's worth of work, meet new friends and say "Hi" to those you already know. – Jim Rettig

Fiscal/Financial Folly (Continued from page 8) damage a complex intact wetlands system and destroy the largest remaining remnant of oak woodland prairie habitat in Washington, of which the Nature Conservancy estimates that there is less than 3 percent remaining.

As with most new highways, it would increase the vehicle miles driven and induce sprawl in central Pierce County.

With a current price tag of \$577 million, that money could be better spent on solutions that both provide mobility and are environmentally sound.

It's easy to envision a combined roads and transit measure that could receive the support of the environmental community and

the public. It would prioritize safety and replacement of crumbling infrastructure to preserve our existing road network. It would make more efficient use of our existing road network through completion of the HOV system and move toward systemwide congestion pricing. It would also complete the fledgling rail transit system to give commuters a viable choice to get out of traffic.

We agree that several road projects, like a new Highway 520 bridge, are worthy of hard-earned tax dollars because they replace unsafe infrastructure.

Other projects, like extension of Highway 167 to the Port of Tacoma, may also be valid because they create new economic

opportunity without inducing more sprawl and thousands of new car trips.

We are willing and ready to roll up our sleeves and work with other stakeholders and elected officials to develop a proposal that moves our region forward, improves mobility for people and goods and, at the same time, does good by our environment.

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