

The Corvid Crier

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VOL 32, No 10 – DECEMBER 2012

All Welcome December 15 Christmas Bird Count and Dinner

Join one of eight teams of bird counters for the Eastside Audubon Christmas Bird Count this December 15, and be part of the 113th year of the annual census organized by National Audubon to monitor bird populations across the continent.

We welcome anyone who wants to help, from beginner to expert. Teams take to the field from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Pick the area where you'd like to count (see box on page 6), then get in touch with the leader to join the team.

Your team leader will give you details about where to meet. On count day, be sure to wear comfortable shoes or boots and warm clothes, and bring lunch and liquids. National Audubon is no longer asking a participation fee.

If you can't spend the day out with a team, you can count in your back yard as long as you live within the EAS count circle. Count for at least two hours, then report your results by 5 p.m. to Hugh Jennings

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Last year's CBC found 1,800 Cackling Geese. Photo by Larry Engles.

Party to Honor Volunteers is January 24

You are cordially invited to Eastside Audubon's annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner on Thursday, January 24, 2013. We will celebrate our accomplishments of 2012 and honor all of our volunteers for their extraordinary dedication to fulfilling the mission of EAS.

Please join us at 6:30 p.m. at the Northlake Unitarian Universalist Church (308 4th Avenue South, Kirkland). At 7:30 we will honor volunteer groups, give individual awards, and recognize the board. Our talented photographers will share their amazing work to end the evening.

Please bring a dish that serves six, corresponding to the first letter of your last name.

A-G: Hot dish.

H-P: Salad.

Q-Z: Dessert.

All chapter members are welcome. Kindly RSVP to the office: 425-576-8805 or office@eastsideaudubon.org.

Please see page 2 about sending in your volunteer hours by December 20 so that we can recognize your work for EAS.

Volunteer for Some Cheer Holiday Gift Wrap at REI

If you know how to use scissors and tape, you qualify to join in the fun of wrapping gifts to raise money for Eastside Audubon this month at REI in Redmond Town Center or REI in Issaquah.

Holiday Gift Wrap is a very successful fundraiser for EAS every year, and we're planning for a big season. The bows are already tied: All we need now is for you to sign up to help wrap.

Our gift wrapping dates are:

Redmond REI — December 15, 16, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, and 24

Issaquah REI — December 21, 22, 23, and 24

On each date, we'll have three shifts:

Noon to 3 p.m.

3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

To volunteer, please contact Leah Morris at leahmo@comcast.net or call her cell at 425-233-5548 and let her know:

1. Which REI store you prefer
2. What dates and shifts work for you

If you can't volunteer for a full shift of three hours and you can give at least two hours, please note that in your message to Leah.

Sign up today and be part of Eastside Audubon's most festive fundraiser!

Meetings December & January

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

Conservation Committee December 12 & January 9, 7 p.m.

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

Photo Group

December 13 & January 10, 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

December 18 (Tuesday), Time TBA January Retreat, Date TBA

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

Youth Education Committee

January 8, 6:30 p.m.

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

Volunteer Time Reports Requested by December 20

It's time to tally up the hours you've worked as a volunteer for the chapter during 2012, information that's important for grant applications and annual reporting to National Audubon.

December 20 is the deadline for volunteers to send in their data. Hours reported after December 20 will be rolled over into next year's figures.

Simply record the total hours you've worked this year by category of effort, such as "Membership" or "Publicity." No need to be specific about dates.

Please report only those hours that aren't recorded on the volunteer sign-in sheet for an activity. Organizers already will have reported your hours for activities that had sign-in sheets. Examples include office staffing and Marymoor work parties. If you'll be working on this year's Holiday Gift Wrap, the leaders will report those hours.

Do email your information as soon as possible, and no later than December 20, to: volunteer-time@lists.eastsideaudubon.org.

Spot Jobs

Salvage Native Plants for Marymoor Park (December 1)

Instead of having our first-Saturday work party at Marymoor Park, this month we'll be at old Group Health Overlake in Redmond digging up the plants and putting them into temporary pots for later installation at the Audubon BirdLoop. We need lots of folks to come out with shovels and get these plants. Please sign up in advance and get exact location info from Tim McGruder: tmcgruder@gmail.com or 425-822-8580. Then plan to come out between 8 a.m. and noon, with gloves, a shovel, sturdy shoes, and weather-appropriate clothing. We'll bring the coffee and snacks.

Bend Your Lawmaker's Ear on Environmental Lobby Day (February)

Every year Eastside Audubon sends a delegation to Olympia to join other groups in advocating for bills to protect the environment and wildlife. The 2013 date hasn't yet been set, but likely will be in February. If you'd like stay up to date on the plan, please send word to Pete Marshall, Conservation Committee Chair: psmarshall@comcast.net.

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	Peter Marshall	psmarshall@comcast.net
Education	Open	
Development	Andy McCormick	amccormick@eastsideaudubon.org
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
Historian	Bob Gershmel	rwgusnret1986@yahoo.com
Holiday Gift Wrap	Leah Morris	leahmo@comcast.net
Hospitality	Claudia Welch	425-827-2548
Webmaster	Mary Brisson	mary@marybrisson.net
Chapter Photographer	Mick Thompson	mthomp1707@comcast.net

Eastside Park Rangers

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

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Monthly except January and August. Deadline for material is the first Wednesday of the month preceding publication. Email material to mary@marybrisson.net or send to the address above.

Brian Bell Birding Classes Open Now for Sign-up

Both of these popular classes sold out in 2012, so don't hesitate. To register, phone the EAS office at 425-576-8805.

Birds of Puget Sound

Each half-day session takes you birding in a prime location and provides instruction on basic principles and identification techniques. Beginners, people new to the area, and experienced birders all will find much to learn.

Session 1: Sunday, January 20. Birding at Marymoor Park, Redmond. Basic principles and how to choose binoculars. Meet 7:30 a.m. at Marymoor Park, Parking Lot D. Ends by noon. Parking \$1.

Session 2: Sunday, January 27. Birding at Union Bay Natural Area (also known as the Montlake Fill). Field guides, bird publications, and CDs. Meet 8 a.m. at the UW Center for Urban Horticulture parking lot (3501 NE 41st Street, Seattle). Ends by noon.

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

Session 4: Sunday, February 10. Birding destination to be determined, depending on birds of interest. Birding ethics and etiquette. Meet 8 a.m. at the Kingsgate Park & Ride for a full day out.

Cost: \$80 members, \$90 non-members, plus carpool cost for Session 4 field trip (amount to be determined).

Limit: 18.

Instructor Brian Bell is a professional birding and natural history guide with an extensive background in biology, geology, and astronomy. He is a master birder and co-author of *Birds of Washington State* (Lone Pine). He teaches ornithology at local colleges and has birded extensively throughout the United States.



Brian Bell at Marymoor Park with his 2012 Birds of Puget Sound class. Photo by Mick Thompson.

Washington's Woodpeckers

Explore the world of woodpeckers in Washington. Twelve species inhabit our state from sea level to the boreal forests to the semi-arid valleys of eastern Washington. In class, we'll view an illustrated presentation and discuss habitat requirements, examine seasonal distribution, learn identification tips, and listen to vocalization and drumming patterns. Then, on two field trips, we'll go out in search of woodpeckers.

Evening session: Friday, March 8. 7 to 9:15 p.m. at Northlake Unitarian Universalist Church, 308 4th Avenue South, Kirkland. (Use State Street entrance.)

Field trips: Saturday, March 9 (half day), western Washington. Saturday, May 18 (full day), eastern Washington. The trips will be organized at the class session.

Cost: \$65 members, \$85 non-members. Carpool \$3/passenger for western Washington and \$14/passenger for eastern Washington (both paid to driver on day of trip).

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

Breakout Groups at Member Open House Produce Strong Ideas

Twenty-five members last month attended the first open house offered by Eastside Audubon to share their thoughts about the chapter's direction and how we can turn members' wishes into reality. Several other members sent comments by email prior to the meeting.

Promising plans took shape around ideas to bring younger people into the chapter by forming relationships with school environmentalist groups and enlisting scout troops and service clubs in volunteer projects. Members Linda Sue Thompson and Shane Egelund are following up.

A breakout group on conservation priorities easily reached a consensus that the chapter should be active not only on local topics such as light rail, but also on regional and Pacific Flyway issues such as

coal transport in the northwest and mining near Alaska's Bristol Bay. Conservation Chair Pete Marshall will lead our efforts.

Participants in the conservation discussion also agreed that the chapter should make it a policy to support parks. Earlier this year, EAS declined to take a position on the parks levy measure that recently passed in Kirkland, citing informal advice from an attorney that doing so might be incompatible with our nonprofit status.

At the open house, members suggested probing the legal question more thoroughly. President Andy McCormick, who was moderating the open house, noted that it would be helpful in this instance and many others to have an attorney on the board.

Early Birdathon planning during the open house centered on encouraging creative

and independent ways of birding for pledges next May, such as individual family outings and close-to-home activities. At the same time we'll be looking to create a new Big Day team to replace a big pledge-earning cohort that has retired.

From breakout groups about membership and volunteerism, birding activities, Marymoor Park, conservation, and Birdathon, many constructive suggestions emerged that will need further definition and depend on volunteers. The board will have an opportunity at its January meeting to consider which of these may be feasible.

Also at the November meeting, annual elections returned Andy McCormick, Tricia Kishel, and Mary Brisson to the board as president, birding chair, and communication chair, respectively.



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

**December 1 (Saturday), 8 a.m. to noon
Green Lake**

Walk Green Lake with expert birder Martin Muller, who has acquired intimate knowledge of this lake and the 150 bird species found here. Meet by 7:25 a.m. at South Kirkland P&R near the bus stop to carpool, or meet at Green Lake at 8. We will park at the west end of Green Lake near the Bathhouse Theater and meet Martin on the lake side of the theater, between the brick building and the water. Carpool and toll share \$3/passenger. No pre-registration required. Hugh Jennings: (425) 746-6351.

**December 2 (Sunday), 1 – 2 p.m.
Juanita Bay Park Interpretive Tour**

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

**December 4 (Tuesday), 8 – 11 a.m.
Marymoor Park Birding Walk**

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

**December 8 (Saturday), 7:30 a.m. to late afternoon
Samish Flats and Skagit Flats
(Limit 11 participants in 3 cars)**

Our wintering raptors will be back, so we will be looking for eagles, hawks, falcons, accipiters, and possibly Short-eared Owls. We'll also watch for waterfowl, shorebirds, small passerines, and,

if we're lucky, Northern Shrikes. All experience levels welcome. Dress for the weather; bring lunch, fluids, and a Washington State Discover Pass if you have one. Scopes very helpful. Back late afternoon/early evening. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Kingsgate P&R. Carpool \$20/passenger. **Pre-registration required** with leader Brian H. Bell, 425-485-8058. (Cell: 206-619-0379, morning of trip only.)

**December 17 (Monday), 9 a.m. to noon
Birding the Hot Spots of King County**

Note: Monthly field trip usually on fourth Monday of the month has been changed to third Monday for December because the fourth Monday is Christmas Eve. Meet before 9 a.m. at the north end of the Newport Hills P&R and plan to be back by noon. Carpool \$2/passenger. No pre-registration required. Leader: Hugh Jennings, 425-746-6351.

**December 18 (Tuesday), 9 a.m. to noon
Juanita Bay Park Bird Walk**

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

**December 19 (Wednesday), 8 a.m. to noon
Lake Sammamish State Park**

This urban park offers a wide assortment of birds and habitats in its varied ecosystems. The trip involves walking 2 to 3 miles. Dress appropriately (rainproof in layers; some of the trails can be very muddy if wet). Just inside the main entrance, take the first left into the large parking lot and meet at the northeast end before 8 a.m. A Discover Pass* is required to park. (Walk is free.) No pre-registration required. Co-leaders: Sharon Aagaard, 425-891-3460, and Stan Wood.

**January 1, 2013 (Tuesday), 8 a.m. to 11:00
Marymoor Park Birding Walk**

Get your annual bird list off to a good start with this New Year's Day walk! This regional park in Redmond provides home for resident birds, a wintering area for waterfowl, and a resting place for migrating birds. It is also home to the Audubon BirdLoop, where we will walk on level ground for about two miles along the Sammamish Slough and through the East Meadow, ending at the Clise Mansion area. Meet at Parking Lot D. (When entering the park from West Lake Sammamish Parkway, turn right at third stop sign.) Parking \$1. (Walk is free.) Bring binoculars and a snack, and dress for the weather. No pre-registration required. Leader: Andy McCormick, 425-518-0892.

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/birding/field-trips.

**Field Trip
Meeting
Places**

Kingsgate Park & Ride
13001 116th Way NE, Kingsgate. I-405, Exit 20B northbound or 20 southbound, take NE 124th Street west to the light at 116th Avenue NE. Turn right a few blocks to the Park & Ride (on the left). Meet in the southeast corner.
Wilburton Park & Ride: I-405, Exit 12

Newport Hills Park & Ride
5115 113th Pl SE, Bellevue. I-405, Exit 9
South Kirkland Park & Ride
10610 NE 38th Place, Kirkland. SR 520, exit 108th Avenue. Travel north onto 108th Avenue NE. Take the second left onto NE 38th Place.

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

Field Trips

Continued from previous page

January 5 – 6 (Saturday and Sunday, two days for as long as we last)

George C. Reifel Migratory Bird Sanctuary & Surroundings

Ladner, British Columbia, Canada

The sanctuary is located in the center of the Fraser River estuary, which is of international significance to birds migrating along the Pacific Flyway. It contains ponds, natural tidal marshes, and sloughs, all of which provide important resting and feeding areas in January for thousands of birds that have arrived from their northern or interior breeding grounds. The field trip will explore the Sanctuary and surrounding areas. You can stay overnight and spend both Saturday and Sunday birding Reifel and the neighboring areas with Jim, or you can make it a one-day trip on Saturday only. Birds we should see include hawks, eagles, owls, sparrows, woodpeckers, and great numbers of waterfowl (swans, geese and ducks); also loons, grebes, gulls, and more. The trip leaves Jim's home in Woodinville at 6 a.m. Saturday, January 5, for the roughly 125-mile drive to Reifel. Plan to dress appropriately and bring refreshment and money as needed. Entry fees range from \$3 to \$6 Canadian depending on age. Carpool \$30 U.S./passenger. Each person will need an enhanced Washington State driver's license or a passport to get back into the U.S. **Pre-registration required.** Call Jim for more information and travel arrangements and to reserve a spot. Leader: Jim Rettig, 425-402-1833.

January 6 (Sunday), 1 – 2 p.m.

Juanita Bay Park Interpretive Tour

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

**January 9 (Wednesday), 7:30 a.m. to late afternoon
Samish Flats and Skagit Flats**

(Limit 11 participants in 3 cars)

Our wintering raptors will be back, so we will be looking for eagles, hawks, falcons, accipiters, and possibly Short-eared Owls. We'll also watch for waterfowl, shorebirds, small passerines, and, if we're lucky, Northern Shrikes. All experience levels welcome. Dress for the weather; bring lunch, fluids, and a Washington State Discover Pass if you have one. Scopes very helpful. Back late afternoon/early evening. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Kingsgate P&R. Carpool \$20/passenger. **Pre-registration required** with leader Brian H. Bell, 425-485-8058. (Cell: 206-619-0379, morning of trip only.)

January 14 (Monday), 8 a.m. to noon

Lake Sammamish State Park

This urban park offers a wide assortment of birds and habitats in its varied ecosystems. The trip involves walking 2 to 3 miles. Dress appropriately (rainproof in layers; some of the trails can be very muddy if wet). Just inside the main entrance, take the first left into the large parking lot and meet at the northeast end before 8 a.m. A Discover Pass* is required to park. (Walk is



Two Skagit-Samish trips afford chances to see Short-eared Owls. Photo by Mick Thompson.

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

January 15 (Tuesday), 9 a.m. to noon

Juanita Bay Park Bird Walk

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

January 26 (Saturday), 8 a.m. to noon

West Seattle Shoreline

Explore the shores and waters of West Seattle along Elliot Bay and Puget Sound to Lincoln Park. Numerous viewpoints overlook the water toward freighters, ferries and sea birds. Expectations include goldeneyes, scoters, gulls, Harlequin Ducks, and shorebirds. Should be done by noon. Meet before 8 a.m. at north end of the Wilburton P&R (I-405, exit 12). Carpool \$4/passenger. No pre-registration required. Leader: Hugh Jennings, 425-746-6351.

January 28 (Monday), 9 a.m. to noon

Birding the Hot Spots of King County

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

January 6 (Saturday), 9 a.m. – noon

Marymoor Park Planting Party

This month we'll install 600 native plants gleaned in December from old Group Health. All are welcome! Meet at the kiosk of the Audubon BirdLoop at Marymoor Park, Lot G. Parking pass provided. Bring water, snack, gloves, a shovel and/or a rake. Questions? Call the EAS office: 425-576-8805.

Home and Field Birders Sought for December 15 Count

Continued from page 1

by email at h2ouzel@comcast.net or by voice mail at 425-746-6351 by 5 p.m.

(To find out whether you live in the EAS count circle, go to www.eastsideaudubon.org and follow the Christmas Bird Count links from the home page. With questions, please contact Hugh.)

Tallies from our count will be combined with counts taken throughout the nation to help determine bird distribution and population trends. Birds will also be counted in Central America to keep track of migrants. To learn more about the nationwide program, visit birds.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count.

All of our results for the day will be tallied the same evening at our traditional Christmas Bird Count dinner at 5:30 p.m. at Northlake Unitarian Universalist Church, 308 4th Avenue South, Kirkland. (Enter from the parking lot east of the church buildings.)

This year the chapter will provide a hot main course, salad, and bread. Jill Keeney and Diane Crestanello will organize the meal and bring appetizers, and the Sugar Plum Fairy will bring dessert. You may bring wine, beer, or your beverage of choice.

If you plan to attend, please call the office by Wednesday, December 12: 425-576-8805. We hope to see many of our new members and old standbys for both the count and the dinner.

Christmas Bird Count Teams

Fall City – Preston Area

Kathy Andrich, 206-390-3159 or chukarbird@yahoo.com

Lake Sammamish State Park – Cougar Mountain – Issaquah

Martyn Stewart, 425-898-0462 or mstew@naturesound.org

Marymoor – Ames Lake

Brian Bell, 425-485-8058 or bellasoc@isomedia.com

Pine Lake Plateau

Jim Rettig, 425-402-1833 or jrettigtanager@frontier.com

West Lake Sammamish Parks

MaryFrances Mathis, 425-803-3026 or mf.mathis@comcast.net

East Snoqualmie Valley (team is full)

Joyce Meyer, 425-868-7986 or meyer2j@aol.com

West Snoqualmie Valley (team is full)

Hugh Jennings, 425-746-6351 or h2ouzel@comcast.net

East Lake Sammamish Trail (involves a 4.5-mile walk)

Tim McGruder, 425-822-8580 or tmcgruder@gmail.com

Chapter Welcomed 21 in 3rd Quarter; Gift Memberships Key to December

Eastside Audubon is pleased to welcome another 21 new members who joined between July and September this year. Next time you're at an event, please say a special hello to:

Sophie Chiang, Lori Danielson, Dan Dunphy, Margaret Ellsworth, Richard Garner, Kathleen Haugen, Rusty Hazzard, Karen Jarvis Family, Alexandra Johnson, Mary Lou Kuehn, Elizabeth Kuehn, Rob Lowe, Gregory McDonald, Tamio Michelletti, Patricia Noell, Pascal and Barbara Picat, Laura Rutledge, Martha Schindler, Michael Silence, and Sue Summers.

Adding new members at a good pace helps keep the chapter strong. We started 2012 with 339 chapter members, and at the end of the third quarter had 348.

This month, why not celebrate a neighbor's love of nature with a gift membership in Eastside Audubon? An individual membership is \$25 and a family membership is \$40. Each comes with a year of experiences to share.

To arrange a gift, please get in touch with the office at 425-576-8805 or email office@eastsideaudubon.org.

Shopping at REI this Season? Save Some Time!

Let Eastside Audubon volunteers wrap the holiday gifts you'll purchase at REI at Redmond Town Center or REI in Issaquah. You'll benefit the chapter and buy yourself some time to enjoy the season!

REI at Redmond Town Center

Noon to store closing
December 15 and 16
December 19 – 24

REI Issaquah at 735 NW Gilman

Noon to store closing
December 21 – 24

Visions of Styrofoam Dancing in Your Head?

So what are *your* holiday giving/getting plans/hopes? Replacing that TV with the converter box on top? Upgrading from your 10-year-old computer? Finally caving in to the pressure and getting a Wii? Sounds like some Styrofoam may be involved! Don't toss it: Recycle it, either by taking it to Styro Recycle near the Renton Ikea or by bringing it to the next Eastside Audubon member meeting. (Drivers wanted. Email Jill Keeney: j.keeney@comcast.net.)



Eagle Eye
VISION CARE, P.S.

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

See the birds better!

Trumpeter Swan (*Cygnus buccinator*)

Length	60 inches
Wingspan	80 inches
Weight	23 pounds (10.5 kilo grams)
AOU band code	TRUS

Swans have long been part of folklore as inspiration for poets, musicians, and farmers. A swan was said to be able to sing for the first time only when dying; hence the term *swan song*. Cygnus is the constellation that appears to fly down the Milky Way leading to Pegasus. The Mandan people of North Dakota believed that the swan told them when it was time to plant gourds.

The Trumpeter Swan is the largest of three North American swan species. It is a huge bird of forested habitats (Aldefer). The genus name *Cygnus* is Latin for swan. The species name *buccinator* is from the Latin *bucinator*, a trumpet. The reference is to the call, which is similar to short, alternating soft and loud bursts from a trumpet. The Trumpeter Swan is a lovely bird that is wonderfully highlighted in flight against the blue-gray winter skies of the Pacific Northwest.

A unique Pacific population breeds in the boreal forest of Alaska and northwestern Canada, and many of these birds winter in the Skagit Valley. Studies indicate that the Skagit birds breed in the Copper River delta area (Mitchell and Eichholz). Trumpeter Swans migrate to find ice-free bodies of water in winter — much farther for Alaska-nesting birds than more southern populations.

Like other long-lived birds, the Trumpeter Swan is a slow breeder. It can take a Trumpeter four to seven years to mature to breeding age (Kaufman). In May or early June, both sexes bring material to the nest site, which the female has chosen by sitting on a firm surface such as a beaver mound or muskrat nest. The female then



Trumpeter Swans by Sunny Walter

pulls the gathered plant material around and under her body, forming the nest around itself. Generally four to six eggs are deposited.

Swans can be victims of brood parasitism: A Canada Goose sometimes lays an egg in a swan's nest. The appearance of the resulting young undoubtedly puts a spin on the story of The Ugly Duckling, with the gosling the odd one out among cygnets. Incubation lasts about four weeks and the cygnets are able to swim the day they are born. The young fledge in three to four months (Mitchell & Eichholz). The juvenile plumage is a slate gray color and at a distance can help birders distinguish flocks of Trumpeter Swans from Tundra Swans, which have juveniles with white plumage.

The Trumpeter Swan has recovered from near extirpation in the United States. Westward expansion of civilization and hunting for the swan's meat and feathers severely decreased the Trumpeter's population. By the 1930s there were fewer than 100 of these birds south of Canada. Restrictions on hunting and protection of breeding areas have helped the Trumpeter Swan rebound in northwestern North America. A separate population along the Mississippi and Central flyways has been supported by a reintroduction program which has been controversial and only somewhat successful (Kaufman). The American Bird Conservancy (ABC) estimates the current global population at about 35,000 individuals, with 75 percent of them breeding in the United States, primarily in Alaska. The bird remains on the United States WatchList maintained by ABC and National Audubon (Lebbin, et al).

The recovery of the Trumpeter Swan is considered a conservation success. The Trumpeter Swan Society has played an important role in the swans' comeback. Its Washington affiliate, Washington Swan Stewards, is based in Everett under the leadership of Martha Jordan. If you're interested in monitoring swan populations, you can contact the society by email: swaninfo@swansociety.org.

References on request. Email: amccormick@eastsideaudubon.org.



On an autumnal morning in October, 14 youngsters and 22 adults came to Duvall's McCormick Park for a family birding walk led by Mike West. A Northern Shrike on the hunt was the highlight of a day when 25 species were seen. Photo by Joyce Meyer.

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