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November 27, 2016

Area around Harvey Manning Park at Talus Bird Survey Report for period November 2015-September 2016

Summary

Members of Eastside Audubon Society conducted a walk through survey of the birds of the area around Harvey Manning Park at Talus in 10 of the months during the survey period. The team found 43 species of birds in and around the park. Fifteen species were year-round residents, 14 were migrating species, and another 14 visited or flew over the area during surveys. Nesting birds used the forest from the ground, to the understory, to the canopy and a number of additional bird species were observed in the open area and forest edges. Due to the difficulty of seeing and hearing birds in the forest, the team considers the results to be an undercount of the numbers of birds in the area, and because the survey area is so similar to the adjacent Cougar Mountain Regional Park, the birds likely reflect the bird populations in that park.

Talus

The website Issaquah 360 has a description of the Talus development process. This can be located at <http://www.issaquah360.com/talus-neighborhood/>.

“Talus is a neighborhood located in Issaquah, WA. It is a 630 acre master-planned community built on the eastern slope of Cougar Mountain, above Tibbetts Valley, accessible from SR-900. It is located between Cougar Mountain Regional Park and Squak Mountain State Park. First zoned for residential uses in the late 1980s, local governments rejected a succession of intrusive ideas, such as houses across the entire east slope and a regional conference center on top. In 1995, the developer became involved with the property and a year later it was annexed into Issaquah.” After four years of discussion, “The development was approved with very little objection in 1999. Zoning for the development was changed from 5-acre individual plots to allow urban-village densities. Consisting ultimately of 1,730 homes, development was concentrated on about 25% of the site with the remaining 75% permanently dedicated to open space. “

Harvey Manning Park at Talus

Harvey Manning Park at Talus is a ten acre park on the northern border of the Talus Neighborhood Development. It includes both active and passive recreational facilities. The entrance is on Bear Ridge Court off Bear Ridge Drive NW and Shangri-La Way NW. There is a playground area and restrooms. A

trailhead leads into the wooded area of the park and connects with trails in the Cougar Mountain Regional Park. The park is named for Harvey Manning who lived on Cougar Mountain. Along with Ira Spring he wrote hiking guides, including the “100 Hikes” series, and climbing textbooks, and was a tireless advocate for hiking trails. Manning named many of the peaks, creeks, wetlands, and trails on Cougar Mountain. He designated the Tiger, Cougar and Squak Mountains as the “Issaquah Alps” and founded the Issaquah Alps Trails Club in 1979.

Eastside Audubon Society

Eastside Audubon Society (EAS) is a chapter of the National Audubon Society and has a service area that includes the City of Issaquah and the Cougar Mountain Regional Park and the Harvey Manning Park at Talus. The chapter has 1,100 members in 11 cities and towns in Northeastern King County from Lake Washington to the Cascade Crest. A local group of hikers concerned about future development of a parcel of land north of the Harvey Manning Park at Talus asked Eastside Audubon to conduct a survey of birds of the area.

EAS members researched eBird, the online database for bird record storage and retrieval sponsored by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and found there were no checklists posted for the Harvey Manning Park at Talus area. Conducting bird surveys is a long tradition with EAS, and the chapter decided to conduct a one year, once a month walking survey of birds of the park.

Survey Methods

The survey was conducted along a series of connecting trails beginning at Harvey Manning Park at Talus. The survey team followed a loop trail from the north side of Harvey Manning Park along the Precipice Bottom Trail, connecting south with the Big Tree Ridge Trail turning east to the Military Ridge Trail returning to the west side of Harvey Manning Park. The bird census is in areas near Harvey Manning Park at Talus that have a potential to be annexed for development (currently there's no easement access). The walk was approximately 1.5 miles through forest of big leaf maple, western red cedar, western hemlock, and Douglas fir. The recreation area in the Harvey Manning Park at Talus has been landscaped with native shrubs and provides a location for observing neighborhood birds.

The survey began in November 2015 and concluded in September 2016. A walk-through survey method was used with team members noting all birds seen or heard as they walked along the trail. A total of 10 survey walks were conducted over the eleven month period with a checklist posted to eBird after each walk. The EAS survey team consisted of five members with the monthly surveyors numbering from one to five participants during the survey walks. Survey walks were conducted at least once a month with the exception of December 2015. Nine survey walks were conducted by a group of survey team members with two to five members participating. The distribution of survey team members participating by month is as follows: four members – April; three members - January, February, March, June, July, and September; two members – May and August; one member – November. The survey round trip took about 1.25 hours. All of the walks covered the same route.

Results from Eastside Audubon Bird Survey

The survey team found 40 species of birds that use the park as residents (15 species), migrants (14 species) or vagrants (11 species). An additional three species were seen flying over or near the park bringing the total to 43 bird species seen in and around the park.

A spreadsheet of the monthly tally of birds accompanies this report. The number of bird species seen in the park ranges from a low of nine in February to a high of 22 in May during the breeding period.

Breeding birds were confirmed by the presence of breeding pairs, males singing on territory, adults feeding young, the presence of an active nest, and nesting and feeding behavior. Breeding birds included both residents which were seen in every month, and migrants which were seen during the summer months. Thirteen species of birds are thought to breed in the survey area. Birds with strong evidence of breeding include Hairy Woodpecker (a pair foraging together in March), Pileated Woodpecker (a pair in appropriate habitat), Pacific-slope Flycatcher (singing males and female call notes heard in May, and a juvenile seen being fed in July), Black-capped Chickadee (a pair working together to excavate a nest hole in May), Pacific Wren (an adult carrying nesting material in April). Other species were seen in nearly every month of the survey and are also suspected of breeding in or close to the survey area, principally because of their greater numbers and singing during the breeding season: Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Brown Creeper, Golden-crowned Kinglet, American Robin, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Wilson's Warbler, Dark-eyed Junco, and Spotted Towhee. All of these species are known to breed in Washington.

Nine additional migrating birds were seen in the park and may use it as a rest stop during their spring migration. These neo-tropical migrants were seen in spring and early summer: Olive-sided Flycatcher, Western Wood-Pewee, Violet-green Swallow, Warbling Vireo, Swainson's Thrush, Orange-crowned Warbler, Western Tanager, Black-headed Grosbeak and Purple Finch. Spring migration is condensed over a few weeks in April and May making these sightings more likely than seeing birds in fall migration. Migrating birds in the fall often take a different route south because they must find areas that provide habitat for foraging, which is not as available in forests in the fall.

King County Regulated Wildlife Species

One of King County's regulated wildlife species the Bald Eagle was seen flying near the park in April and July. Bald Eagles are known to nest near Lake Sammamish.

Summary Comments

The EAS survey team is confident that the resident and migrating birds which use the park for breeding and as a rest stop on migration have been successfully counted. At least 13 species of breeding birds have been identified. All areas around Harvey Manning Park at Talus that were surveyed sustained bird life. Ground nesting birds such as Pacific Wren, understory nesters such as Wilson's Warbler, cavity nesters such as Hairy Woodpecker and Black-capped Chickadee, and upper story nesters such as Pacific-

slope Flycatcher indicate that habitat from the ground to the canopy is used by birds during the breeding season.

The EAS survey was conducted on a loop trail close to Harvey Manning Park at Talus. The majority of the park was directly surveyed. This survey provides the first and most thorough systematic count of birds in the Talus area and the survey team is confident it reflects the birdlife of a portion of the adjacent Cougar Mountain Regional Park. Birds are more confined in their habitat needs and foraging areas during breeding, so the numbers of birds seen during the survey period is likely to reflect the area surveyed and only a portion of the birds that use the park. Forest birds are routinely undercounted because of the difficulty of seeing them in thick underbrush, full foliage, and high canopies. Therefore, the count of the birds in this survey should be considered an undercount of the possible number of birds that use the wooded areas around Harvey Manning Park at Talus.

EAS is grateful for the team members who conducted this survey over the course of a year. The chapter hopes this report will assist in planning for the future use of the park.

EAS Bird Survey Team Members: Andrew McCormick, Sharon Aagaard, Joanne Cormier, Nancy Hubley, and Carol Ray.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Andrew McCormick".

Andrew McCormick, Bird Survey Leader

Peter Marshall, Conservation Chair

Jan McGruder, President