



Shorelines

Newsletter of the Whidbey Audubon Society

June 2020

Whidbey Audubon Society is dedicated to the understanding, appreciation and conservation of birds, other wildlife and their habitats on Whidbey Island and in surrounding waters.

Dragonfly Whisperer, Jim Walker June general meeting and speaker postponed

Summer has arrived and we are seeing S fledglings everywhere. I hope each of you are able to spend time observing the habitats around you and noting the changes.

This month's speaker was to have been Jim Walker, a retired physics professor, who is also known as the dragonfly whisperer. Jim has agreed to speak with us in the future when we can freely gather again; until then here is some informa-



Photo by James Walker

Happy Face Dragonfly



www.king5.com/article/entertainment/television/programs/evening/dragonfly-whisperer-james-walker-anacortes-common-dragonflies-and-damselflies-of-the-pacific-northwest/281-593082328

Jim Walker from *King 5 Evening* television interview by Anne Erickson, published September 11, 2018, updated September 10, 2019.

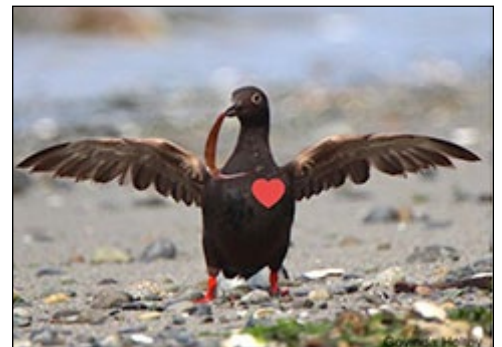
Dragonfly Whisperer, see [page 9](#)

Guillemot Research Group's Expanded Website and Summer Survey Plans

Whidbey Audubon Society's Guillemot Research Group has expanded our website, www.pigeonguillemot.org, in cooperation with four Salish Sea Audubon chapters and nature centers (Clallam County, Kitsap/Bainbridge, Vashon/Maury and South Sound). Our group is now part of the Salish Sea Guillemot Network, which conducts the Pigeon Guillemot Breeding Survey in Washington State. We are sharing our expertise in training with the other chapters and ensuring that all data collected remains consistent as part of an effort to expand our long-term community science project.

As it has not been possible to conduct our annual training this spring, team members Frances Wood, Govinda Holtby and

Emily Terao, with expert assistance from Whidbey Audubon member Jim Gage, have produced a series of four new training videos for new and returning



summer volunteers. The videos can be accessed on the website, and even if you are not a volunteer, you will enjoy Emily's presentation on Pigeon Guillemot science and ecology and her description of what it's like to be a beach volunteer.

Our summer survey program will begin the week of June 7, and we will follow the survey guidelines under Covid-19 restrictions that are posted on the website. The entire, updated toolbox for the 2020 season, including data entry forms and instructions and prey cards, is available on the website.

Brendan McGarry, our 2020 Regional Coordinator, has been participating in online training for volunteers, helping scout Vashon

Guillemot Research, see [page 7](#)

Guillemot Appreciation Day

International Guillemot Appreciation Day began with our Audubon Friends at mid-coast Maine to highlight the Black Guillemot. For Whidbey Audubon Society, this will be our seventh year in celebrating Whidbey's Pigeon Guillemots (PG). **We will be celebrating our PGs on Friday, June 26.** We planned to have a happy hour from 3 to 5 p.m., but it may move to a zoom party. Please check into our website www.pigeonguillemot.org for the latest developments.

Getting to Know Your Board: Kathy Obersinner

Kathy Obersinner is our newest Board member. She has been the Birdathon Chair for the past few years before volunteering to be a Member-at-Large. Here are the answers to some questions that members might want to know about Kathy:

How did you become interested in birding?

Being out in nature has always been my way of regaining equilibrium. Birds are an integral part of nature, and I found that major changes in my life often had an associated vivid bird memory. Those Red-winged Blackbirds, Bobwhites, and Great Blue Herons along the river and in the fields on my childhood farm were probably the first birds I could name. After receiving my Associates in Early Childhood Education, I went to Saint Ignatius, Montana, at the age of 19, to work with preschool-aged children on the Flathead Indian Reservation. Here I encountered exotic birds like Magpies and Pine Grosbeak. Moving to Juneau, Alaska in 1977, I met Wilson's and Yellow Warblers as I hiked up Mount Roberts, right behind town. I remember trying to identify them with a small bird guide, probably a Peterson's. Walking down Basin Creek Road behind town, along Gold Creek, I saw my first American Dipper catching bugs in the icy rapids. A Varied Thrush's clear "telephone" whistle in the spring always brings back being 22 years old, living in the remote community of Gustavus, Alaska, near Glacier Bay. And then there were the flocks of migrating Sandhill Cranes that dropped in to feed at the nearby crane flats every spring and fall, eerie rattling calls you couldn't help but notice, even if you weren't a birder.

All these amazing encounters with birds brought them more and more in focus, as did receiving a pair of good binoculars from my husband for Mother's Day one year. I've always been lucky to live in an area where there were excellent birders, so I have been able to go out with people who actually know what they are seeing and hearing.

Tell us a bit of your personal history: where you grew up, places you have lived, education, work, family, travel experiences.

In 1991 my family and I moved from Gustavus, to Juneau, Alaska, (situated next to the Mendenhall Wetlands, a critical bird habitat) where I finished my teaching certificate and my Masters in Early Childhood Education. Teaching second and third graders at Harborview



New Whidbey Audubon Society Board member, Kathy Obersinner shows off a bird nesting box she made.

Elementary for 20 years as well as raising a family of three children, filled my time. Surrounded by rich and varied ecosystems (glaciers, wetlands, rivers, inland waters, to name a few), we spent many hours outdoors, learning about sea creatures, birds, how the complex environment was interconnected, how we were the stewards.

Upon retiring from teaching in 2015, my husband and I moved to Whidbey Island (our three children were already living "down south"). This introduced me to a new birding area, with many of the same birds, though present during a different season than I was used to up north (such as the Ruby-crowned Kinglet that migrates north to breed in Alaska, but is here on Whidbey in the spring, and so many of the ducks and shorebirds that do the same, flipflopping from when I was used to seeing them.)

Tell us a bit about your history with Whidbey Audubon Society (WAS): how long you have been a member, what other positions you have held, what your experiences with WAS have been like.

My first Whidbey Audubon meeting was that September and my first WAS birding field trip, led by Kim Shepard at Greenbank, took place that January, where I met other birders who have become close friends. That's when I began attending Phyllis Kind's Birding in Neighborhoods (BIN) South (currently headed up by Cathi Bower) BIN South has become an every other Thursday ritual (well, the past months have looked a little different...). I've been fortunate to have had the opportunity to attend many of the birding field trips, led by our local expert birders. In 2017, I took on the position as Birdathon Coordinator for WAS. My position as Birdathon Coordinator is to promote it as WAS's major annual spring fundraiser, to keep track

Meet Kathy, see page 7



Kathy, right, with husband Jim Gage on the beach with their scopes.

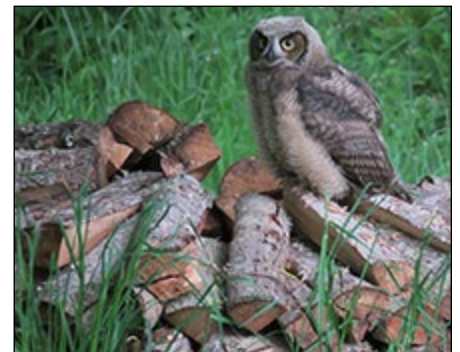


Photo by Kathy Obersinner

A juvenile Great Horned Owl in Kathy and Jim's yard.

Message from the New President: The Window Seat Perch

As I sit in my studio this morning, I am comfortable and glad to be alive and healthy. I am watching seven **Evening Grosbeaks**, five males and two females/immatures; several **Song Sparrows**; **Towhees**; **Chickadees** and **Red-breasted Nuthatches** from my own perch on the window seat. What an entertaining spectacle! Plus, I have a little Douglas squirrel that arrives daily to take the leftovers from the bird feeders. He is such an energetic fellow. I have five gray squirrels as well, but little Doug is a fierce defender of his stash and always chases them away. There are baby bunnies galore, butterflies and many **Rufous Hummingbirds** around the garden. Grateful for the abundance of nature!

Birding can be an island of personal renaissance in the midst of these dark ages that seem to have descended on us. It's an emotional uplift and a spiritual balm. And of course, it's educational. Finally, other people who've had their heads crammed with other things are taking notice of birds and nature in general. Maybe this is also a renaissance for nature. We hope so.

As I take the role of Whidbey Audubon Society President, I want to thank all of you for having faith in me to do a good job. It is an unsettling time and we all need to be creative in how we approach it. For the time being, we need to be willing to learn more about Zoom-type meetings. We need to look for courses and workshops to attend online to keep our curiosity nourished. We need to go out and bird and find ways to do it that keep our health intact. We also need to get involved more in citizen action in whatever ways we can.

I am taking an online photography workshop offered by the



Photo by Patty Cheek

Western Tanager

Tucson Audubon Society. There are many Audubon chapters offering free workshops even if you aren't a member. There is a drawing class on a Muir Laws site. There are virtual bird festivals. I am also listening more to the various songs and trying to identify them from sound as well as sight. The possibilities are endless.

I would appreciate ideas from you about ways we can communicate and learn. How can we remain vital as an organization in spite of this new "normal"?

Stay safe and remember, CDC – Cover, Distance and Clean from the Red Cross.

— *Patty Cheek, President, with virtual hugs*

Would that I were under the cliffs, in the secret-hiding places of the rocks, that Zeus might change me to a winged bird.

— *Sophocles – Hippolytus, 428 B.C.*

Former President Welcomes New President

Welcome to our new president, Patty Cheek! I am very excited that we will have such a caring and competent person at our helm. It bodes well for Whidbey Audubon Society's (WAS's) work of advocating for and educating about birds and their habitats as we navigate our way through the changes, we will need to make due to the coronavirus and changing times.

I am also excited for Patty. Over the next few years, she will have the opportunity to learn more about the many facets of our island community, the many ways our Audubon members reach out to protect our native habitats and the impact of our Audubon activities. She will get to work with a fun, creative, hard working and dedicated group of people on the Audubon Board. She will learn about and come to rely on the extensive expertise of our membership and she will problem solve with the best.

I know this because it has been my honor to serve as WAS president for the past four years. This has been a time of personal growth for me and saying thank you to the board and our

members seems trite in terms of what I have gained. I have always felt strongly supported with people willing to share their expertise, to step up and guide me, or to correct me in a caring way, when I made an error. Thank goodness! I often needed to be corrected at our meetings when I left out information or gave wrong dates, etc. I have shared many problem-solving sessions and laughs with you, some of the best people on the Island. Thank you for all your support and laughter.

Congratulations Patty! Welcome to a new adventure!

— *Sharon, Past President, 2016-2020, Whidbey Audubon Society*



Photo by Jann Ledbetter

The Board presented Sharon with a gardening tote embroidered with the WAS logo, her name and years as president; plus a delphinium for her beautiful garden.

Sightings Sightings Sightings Sightings Sightings

Editor's Note: Thank you all who reported bird sightings to our website this month. I think we broke a record! But alas, *Shorelines* has only limited space, so I had to edit most of them down to bird, a general location and reporter's name. I also did not use some sightings that were repeats. If you want more detail, please go to www.whidbeyaudubon.org, our website or email me for an unedited version. **Thanks.**

— *Jenny Brown, editor:*
jennywhere@gmail.com

April 30: Lapland Longspur. Location: Flintstone Park on the waterfront in Oak Harbor.

— *Jay Adams*



Photo by RG

Lapland Longspur

April 30: Virginia Rail. Nesting. Location: Oak Harbor wetland walkway. — *Denise Marion*

April 30: Cinnamon Teal at Duqualla Bay. — *Mary Jo Adams*

May 1: Four **Barn Swallows** and one **Tree Swallow** perched on my roof, the first **Black-headed Grosbeak** at my feeder, two pairs of **House Wrens** and **Olive-sided Flycatcher** back. Location: Greenbank.

— *Linda Bainbridge*

May 1: Black Swift. Location: just north of the Fort Casey vacation houses. — *Jay Adams*

May 1: Leucistic mature **Bald Eagle** Location: Crockett Lake.

— *Karen Johnson/Cindy Barrett*

May 1: Tufted Puffin flying with a group of five **Pigeon Guillemots**. Location: Dines Point, Greenbank. — *Dave Parent*

May 3: A female **Calliope Hummingbird**. **Warbler** count: with a minimum of 12 **Townsend's** and three **Black-throated Grays** along with a **Warbling Vireo**. Location: Coupeville. — *Steve Ellis*

May 3: Two rare species: **Tennessee Warbler** and **Green-tailed Towhee**. Location: near Parker Road, Coupeville.

— *Sarah Schmidt*

May 4: Ten **American White Pelicans** in V formation, comin' in for a landing. Location: Crockett Lake.

— *Roy Therrien/Shuting Chang*

May 5: A **Vaux's Swift** was overhead with a small flock of **Violet-green Swallows**. Location: Parker Road, Coupeville. — *Steve Ellis*

May 5: Whimbrel wading along shoreline of Oak Harbor.

— *Denise Marion*

May 5: First **Swainson's Thrush** of the year hitting our suet! Location: West Beach, Oak Harbor.

— *Carla Corin*



Photo by Carla Corin

Swainson's Thrush

May 5: Hooded Merganser and possible **Goldeneye**. Location: Lone Lake. — *Linda Griesbach*.

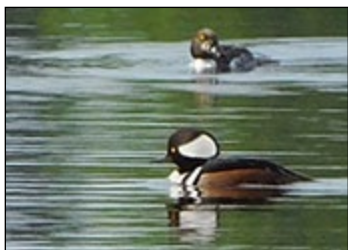


Photo by Linda Griesbach

Hooded Merganser in the foreground with a female **Common Goldeneye** behind

Editor's Note: It is a female **Common Goldeneye**. The juvenile and female both have the gray body with brown head, but the juvenile has a dark eye and the female a gold eye.

May 5: Cassin's Vireo. Location: Dow Road, Freeland.

— *Carlos Andersen*



Photo by Carlos Andersen

Cassin's Vireo

May 6: Large flock of **Greater White-Fronted Geese**. Location: Crockett Lake.

— *Jann Ledbetter*

May 6: Horned Lark at the Keystone Ferry parking area. Also 12 **Greater White-fronted Geese** at "Ralph's Lake" in Coupeville.

— *Steve Ellis*

May 6: Western Tanager at our suet feeder, first of the season for us. Location: Clinton.

— *George and Lynne Jensen*

May 7: Possible **Marbled Godwit** at Crescent Harbor.

— *Mary Jo Adams*

May 7: Lazuli Bunting. Location: Pacific Rim Institute.

— *Mosa Neis*



Photo by Mona Neis

Lazuli Bunting

May 7: Pacific-slope Flycatcher Location: Freeland.

— *Stella/Dave Schoen*

May 8: Male **Bullock's Oriole**. Location: Parker Road. Coupeville. — *Jay Adams*

May 8: Nine **American Pipits** and a **Western Kingbird**. Location: Pacific Rim Institute.

— *Sarah Schmidt*

May 9: First **Western Wood-Pewees**. Three flycatcher species calling simultaneously: **Olive-sided, Pacific Slope and Pewee**. Location: Parker Road, Coupeville. — *Steve Ellis*

May 9: Male **Blue-winged Teal**. Seen with five or so **Green-winged Teal**. At least three mated pairs of **Purple Martins** in the nest boxes Location: Crockett Lake. — *Patrick Kline*

May 9: Hammond's Flycatcher. Location: Deception State Park.

— *Jay Adams*

May 9: Single **Snowy Plover** with **Dunlins**. Location: Deer Lagoon. — *Carlos Andersen*

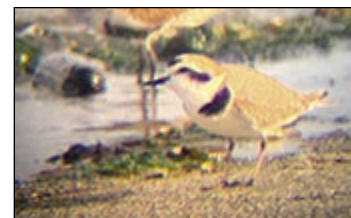


Photo by Carlos Andersen

Snowy Plover with Dunlins.

May 9: Two **Long-billed Curlews** along with 25+ **Whimbrel**. Location: Deer Lagoon.

— *Joe Sheldon/Dave Parent*

May 10: Juvenile **Heermann's Gull**. Very early arrival for this species. Location: Fort Casey State Park. Five **Cinnamon Teal** males in Hastie Lake plus one more **Cinnamon Teal** with a group of **Canada Geese**, two **Greater White-fronted Geese** and a **Cackling Goose** in a small pond nearby.

— *Joe Sheldon/Dave Parent*

May 10: Lazuli Bunting at Pacific Rim Institute.

— *Carlos Andersen*

More Sightings, see page 5

More Sightings, from page 4

May 10: Two **Evening Grosbeaks**, first of the year. Location: Near Langley and Crockett Lake Estates.

— *Paul/Stephanie Neis and Marianne Burr*

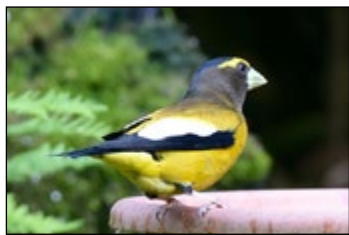


Photo by Paul and Stephanie Neis

Evening Grosbeak

May 13: Thirty **Evening Grosbeaks** flying and feeding. Location: Near Clinton Ferry.

— *George Heleker*

May 15: **Western Tanager**. Location: Scatchet Head.

— *Anthony Zoars*



Photo by Anthony Zoars

Western Tanager

May 15: About 30 **American White Pelicans**, largest number seen since April 13. Location: Deer Lagoon

— *Libby Hayward*

May 15: An adult male **Red-head** (diving duck) swimming with **scaups** and **mallards**.



Photo by Dave Krause

Red Knot

Also saw three **Cinnamon Teal** along north shore. Location: Crockett Lake.

— *Sarah Schmidt*

May 15: **Red Knot** hanging out with six **Whimbrels**. Location: Joseph Whidbey State Park. — *Dave Krause*

May 16: Pair of **Blue-winged Teal**. Location: French Road and Cultus Bay Road wetland.

— *Dyanne Sheldon*

May 19: **Black Phoebe**. Location: Ewing Road Marsh.

— *George Heleker*

May 19: **Spotted Sandpiper** singing its monotonous song. I did not see the bird. Location: Deer Lagoon.

— *Dave Parent*

May 23: Male **Lazuli Bunting**. Location: Pratt Loop trail. — *Robert and Traci York*

May 25: At least three **Bank Swallows** with a group of hundreds of **Tree, Barn, Cliff** and **Northern Rough-winged Swallows**. Location: Crockett Lake. — *Dave Parent*

May 27: **Western Wood Pewee**



Photo by Albert Rose

Western Wood Pewee

wee. Location: Off Honey-moon Bay Road.

— *Albert Rose*

May 29: Male **Yellow-headed Blackbird**. Location: Deer Lagoon. — *Darwin Wile*

May 31: **Blue-winged Teal**. Also, an adult **Virginia Rail** followed by a little black fluff-ball of a chick. Location: Duguala Bay. — *Mary Jo Adams*

May 31: Flock of 100 + **Common Mergansers**. Location: South of Duguala State Park along shoreline of Skagit Bay. — *Vincent Ho*

June 1: Male and female **Crossbills** on my feeder. Location: Freeland and Shoreview. — *Lee Tarsitan*



Photo by Lee Tarsitan

Male and female Crossbills

PLEASE POST UNUSUAL SIGHTINGS to the *Whidbey Audubon Society (WAS) website*.

Sightings should be on Whidbey Island or relate in some way to Whidbey Audubon. Reports should refer to birds or other wildlife that are not commonly seen here. Alternatively, they may refer to migratory birds that arrive outside their normal seasons.

Reports of especially interesting sightings in nearby areas are welcome. Greater selectivity is needed to keep the email volume reasonable so editors will exercise judgment on whether the rarity, proximity and significance of sightings merit inclusion.

These guidelines reflect the interests of local birders. Please respect the essentially scientific nature of the Sightings feature. Thanks for your cooperation.

There are designated spaces to submit your information, such as what you saw, where you saw it and the date and approximate time. Although we are asking those who post to leave a phone number or email address with your sighting, they will not be included on the actual "Sightings" page. Thank you!

Keep up with "Sightings" on the was website, on your mobile device at www.m.whidbeyaudubon.org or on the *Whidbey Audubon Society Facebook page*.

Birding in Neighborhoods North Revisits the Parks

May 13: It has been two months since we could get out of the yard and back to more public spaces. Some of our group stayed in their neighborhoods while others ventured out to Deception Pass State Park, Cornet Bay Marina (DPSP) and Fort Casey. Because of the varieties of habitats, quite a range of birds were seen. The most commonly seen or heard bird was the **Olive-sided Flycatcher** which was listed by all five individuals or groups. Other commonly seen birds were the **Bald Eagle, Song and White-crowned Sparrows, Chestnut-backed Chickadees, Spotted Towhees** and the **American or Northwestern Crow**.

Our participants also saw or heard a **Barred Owl, Common Loon, Willow Flycatcher, Rhinoceros Auklet, Wilson's and Orange-crowned Warblers, Purple Martins and Turkey Vultures**. A couple of lucky birders saw the beautiful **Evening and Black-headed Grosbeaks**.

BIN North, see page 7

More about 2020 Scholarship Recipients

Last month, the Whidbey Audubon Society's Scholarship Committee announced that graduating high school seniors Joshua Pendleton (Oak Harbor) and Arianna Marshall (South Whidbey) had each been awarded the 2020 Renee Smith Scholarship for Environmental Studies.

Here is information about their plans for the future:



Joshua Pendleton



Arianna Marshall

Joshua will be attending Gonzaga University studying environmental engineering/computer engineering. Josh wishes to apply computer engineering skills to significant environmental problems and solutions.

Arianna will be attending Long Island University (New York City) in the Global Studies program. Ari adds, "It is a four-year immersive traveling program that will end in a Bachelor's of Global Studies degree and a minor in Spanish or International relations. This program includes intensive study about climate change, as well because the program centers around the main threats to our world, one of the most prevalent being climate change."

The Whidbey Audubon Society wishes them well.

Thank you, WAS members who have contributed to the scholarship fund to make this possible.

David Krause Receives President's Award 2020

The President's award is an annual award given to a Whidbey Audubon Society (WAS) member who has gone above and beyond in their volunteering for WAS over the past year. It is always very hard to decide who gets the award each year as so very many of our members go above and beyond what is expected of a volunteer. This year, however, it was very easy to decide who should receive the President's Award. We have one member who has gone so far above and beyond the rest of us in volunteering that the choice was obvious. Let me introduce you to David Krause.

Although Dave has only been a board member (Member-at-Large) for two years, he has made a tremendous difference in our organization. When our original Pigeon Guillemot online data collection system became unsupported and we needed to find a new program and home for it, Dave jumped in. He worked diligently to explore options and locate a new home for our data. (This data will now be kept and managed by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, through their Survey 123 program, with an interface in place during 2021.) Dave's work



David Krause was awarded the 2020 President's Award. It will grace his home for a year. His signature on the back joins those of previous years.

will continue as he helps design the new system, downloads the years of data into the new program and assists volunteers as they learn this new system. This ongoing project is not an easy job!

While he was doing all this, the board once again faced the problem of our outdated website. Dave immediately jumped in to lead/aka *do* this project. Developing our new website has taken innumerable hours of direct work by Dave and innumerable hours of herding the rest of the board to contribute information in their area of expertise. Our new website will be revealed this summer; you will be very impressed. Lots of information, beautiful pictures and the ability to sign up for memberships and/or donate online. We will send you an email when it is up and ready to go.

We in Audubon cannot thank Dave enough. He has been an outstanding addition to our board and our only concern is that he gets a well-deserved rest this fall. Thank you, Dave, and congratulations!

— Sharon Gauthier, Immediate Past President

BIN South Continues to Keep Its Distance

April 30: Yesterday, from Penn Cove south, between us all in our varying habitats — and including those who are unaware of their participation — we observed at least 92 species! That's a lot of our Island birds. Somebody had made it out to Deer Lagoon, and surprisingly did not report **Pelicans** then. I admit that I ventured out there early this morning and saw that at least 20 have arrived.

Not to encourage noncompliance, but Deer Lagoon is wonderful right now. Earlier is better. Human visitors were filing in by 9 a.m., but still all respectful, well behaved and happy to see one another!

May 7: The Thursday morning South-end total was 100 species. The best *eBird* list from someone who-didn't-know-they-were-participating was a half-day Deer Lagoon report of 74 species. In addition to all those you would expect out there, it included the **Pelicans**, some **Snow Geese**, **White-fronted Geese** and a **Cinnamon Teal**.

May 14: From Langley to Pacific Rim Institute, the birds and birders were out and about on a pleasant day last week. A couple of **Cedar Waxwings** were spotted up behind Greenbank Farm, but no luck in locating any active Heron rookery. We've heard many reports of fuzzy fledged **Great Horned** and **Barred Owls** and a sizable migration of **Evening Grosbeaks** this week. Does it also seem that **Wilson's Warblers** have commanded the shrubberies lately? Those and **Black-headed Grosbeaks** up in the treetops? Thursday morning, together we saw and/or heard at least 62 species (what a difference a Deer Lagoon report makes!)

BIN North, from page 5

As I write this, I can picture the birds and where they might have been when spotted by our group. I can visualize them raising their heads to vocalize, preening on a perch, soaring overhead or diving under water. I guess you would call that virtual birding. In all, we saw or heard 62 species.

— Marcia Lazoff

Contact Marcia at mlazoff@comcast.net for Birding in Neighborhoods North summer plans.

Meet Kathy, from page 2

of funds from donations and pledges, as well to record bird species that are sighted. As a member of the WAS board, I hope to become more informed about the overall picture of our local birds and how we can help build a better understanding, so people recognize their beauty and importance in our lives.

Anything else you want to share? Profound quote? Funny or interesting bird story? Life list?

We are so lucky to live in such a complex, beautiful place as Whidbey Island. We just need to remember to pause, stand still a moment, look, listen and be overcome with amazement.

May 21: The main missing element in not being together for Birding, is bouncing ID's off one another and puzzling them out together. But, among the many small pleasures of birding together-apart on Thursdays, is the techno ability to forward a sound-recording in real time to a little gang of know-it-all. They may subsequently deny a determination of — say — a Brown Creeper, and conclude that the shrill, emphatic, repetitive “song” coming from way up high in the firs, is likely a Golden-crowned Kinglet, or several. And I believe them, because that's what Birder Buddies do — or else.

Speaking of listening, it was at a Bird Festival Birding-by-Ear class the first time I heard the perfect term in reference to picking out a bird song among other noise and bird sounds. So now we say, when trying to identify a song, with eight other birds, airplanes, chainsaws, mowers and traffic — that they're “walking all over him.” You're welcome.

Among the reports from Thursday morning, was a fun neighborhood group list from over by Deer Lagoon. They added some **Gulls**, **Caspian Terns** and the **Pelicans!**

Between us all, we identified at least 75 species, and as usual, they include all four of our **wrens**, all three of our **corvids**, most of our **swallows**, **finches** and **pigeons**, five of our nine **warblers**, and the **Woodpecker** *Quinfecta*.

May 28: While today is a good day to hunker down and stay cozy, remember how Thursday was an awesome morning to be out? Trillium Woods seemed to be the day's **Vireo** and **Warbler** hotspot! Fledglings of all sorts are now challenging our identification skills — between their fresh-to-their-world vocalizations, and their not-quite-finished plumage, they've added even more for us to puzzle out.

Since this group has some real early birds, our list this week includes a wee-hours **Great Horned Owl**. The **Barred Owl** was out trying to snooze in broad daylight, in spite of the mobbing all around it.

Between us all, we saw and/or heard at least 80 species. Thank you for participating, whether you knew it or not!

— Cathi Bower. *Bird early, bird often*

If you are interested in joining **Birding in Neighborhoods (BIN) South**, contact Cathi at whidbird@whidbey.com.

Guillemot Research, from page 1

Island survey sites and attending the various on-line meetings within the network. Surveys will be conducted on Camano Island this season. Brendan is working with Joan Schrammeck, the Camano Island Coordinator for Sound Water Stewards of Island County, who will be helping guide the process forward with the help of some key volunteers. Though they've only been scouting for a couple of weeks, they've identified some very probable colony sites.

It's not too late to participate in this summer's survey. If you are interested, please contact Frances Wood at wood@whidbey.net.

Bird Games in my Head

Before Isolation
Before Wingspan.

Not everyone relates to the notion of competing with oneself, but if you've been talking with yourself lately, you probably get it.

As many know, eBird is my friend. It's many things to many people and one of those is the Checklist-a-Day Challenge. Cornell presents a monthly challenge, for which there is a fancy binocular prize, but beyond that, I challenge myself to meet all of the year's monthly challenges. I am now in my fourth year of that. There's a challenge to submit a bird list every day for a year — or at least a total of 365 lists. By the start of this summer, I will have submitted over 1,300 daily checklists in a row.

This presents another challenge, *do not* become obsessed. Cornell Labs developed *eBird* to track and record bird species populations and movements all over the world. Whether deemed essential or not, this past spring, birding reports and submissions have not slowed one whit (which, BTW, you may recognize as the soft call of a Swainson's Thrush). So I try to focus on the intent — contributing to the database.

Though we have missed birding together, the activity does lend itself to maintaining distance from one another, and of course, to being outdoors. Joining birds in their habitat is most always good for the soul.

Often I may challenge myself with an attempt at photographing each bird species I see at home on a given day. I always miss a few — sometimes it's a zippy hummingbird, or a Pileated Woodpecker calling distantly or that darn Pacific-slope Flycatcher that is right up there somewhere.

My latest game with myself is to note the first birds I see each day. This began with the age-old First Bird of the Year ritual. During January last year, I noted each daily first bird. When February rolled along, I began noting the first *two* birds I saw each day. Since at that point it was “game on,” one of the rules eliminated vocals, and firmly became “ID by sight.” While in the winter when the feeders are out, a new rule excluded Juncos and Towhees — “The first birds I see, not counting Juncos and Towhees.” March is the first three birds each morning, and so on. As April arrives, I let the DEJU and SPOT back in the game. I once read that humans can easily remember six or seven items in a row, such as a 7-digit phone number, but adding in an eighth starts to give us trouble. I gave up in August last year. July was hard enough, keeping in order the first seven birds of the day in my head until I could write them on the calendar. (This is particularly useful in keeping track of the days lately, as they've been blurring together). Perhaps I will count back down, so that by December, I'm back to the First Bird of each day. After all, if it's no longer fun, I quit playing and take my binoculars and go home.

It can be a blurry distinction between a contest and a challenge, a game and the science. I never try to be *best*. Best is for

other folks. I aim for longest, first, most or weirdest, but best ruins the fun for me, except for Birdathon when I might be interested in beating out another team for sightings (Team Shore Thing's unofficial 2020 Big Day count early in May was a quiet 85, but it was a gorgeous day and included a Sandhill Crane!)

There's always some version of the Big Day — I have a 30-year Yard List, a High-Count Daily Yard List and a list of birds I've actually seen *on* our property, not just from it, which is the usual yard list standard.

There's a book about a big lister, titled *To See Every Bird on Earth* by Dan Koeppel, which has inspired me to my ongoing greatest challenge of all — to *watch every bird I see*, to be mindful, in the midst of all the listing and the box-checking, that we watch them to watch them, to marvel at their behavior and diversity and to meet the challenge of preserving the wonderful existence of birds for following generations of watchers and gamers.

— Cathi Bower, *Bird early — Bird often*

Welcome New and Renewing Members

New:

Don Zisette

Peggy Knoll

Renewing:

Patrick Hussey

Ruth & Mike Scrivner

Ann Nishimoto

Tom & Michele Johnson

Judy Dixon

Wendy & Mark Visconty

Barbara Hudson Nichols

Jan Nelson & Naom Lev

Corinne Ludy

Christina & Stephen Kahn

Sandy Shields

Lu “Anna” & Mark Orth

Sharon Dunn

Carole Tyso, Spotted Towhee

Patricia de la Chapelle

Jill Hein, Spotted Towhee

Patty Cohick

John A. Lee, Spotted Towhee

Don & Marcia Allen

Lea Kouba, Spotted Towhee

Frank & Mary Taylor

Barbara & Mark Jabbusch, Spotted Towhee

Margaret Elphick, Scholarship

Carol & Anthony Dougherty, Scholarship

Melissa Merickel & Jim Somers, Spotted Towhee/Scholarship

Michael & Ellie Sheldon, Spotted Towhee

Robin Llewellyn, Spotted Towhee/Donation

Shirley Hendricson, Spotted Towhee

Dominique Emerson, Spotted Towhee

Betsy Brace, Pigeon Guillemot

Bill Graves & Frances Wood, Pigeon Guillemot/Donation

Marlys Erickson & Christine Hurley, Pigeon Guillemot

Linda & Gordon Griesbach, Red-Tailed Hawk

Marge Plecki, Red-Tailed Hawk

Dragonfly Whisperer, from page 1

tion you might enjoy.

Professor James Walker became interested in dragonflies as a young boy when a "Happy Face Dragonfly" sat on his finger and let him take pictures. Later, he was the first to discover that this species of dragonfly does an acrobatic move spinning at 1,000 rotations per minute (rpm) to dry off after taking a dip in water. Faster than any living thing rotates. Both this species and Jim gained fame for this move, the splash-dunk/spin-dry.

Jim has written a field guide to the 60 most common West Coast species of dragonflies and damselflies. This book contains a full color, two-page spread on each of the described species. Each spread includes a life-size photo (taken by Jim himself), field identification marks, a range map, flight season chart and a discussion of habitat and behavior. In addition to the individual spreads, the book contains a description of dragonfly and damselfly anatomy, reproduction, ecology and tips for observation and photography: *Common Dragonflies and Damselflies of the Pacific Coast: A Life-sized Field Guide*.

You may want to look at Jim's blog. It has great pictures and discusses recent sightings: thedragonflywhisperer.blogspot.com. He also highly recommends this website on Arizona Dragonflies: azdragonfly.org.

Keep your eyes open for dragonflies and damselflies this summer. Maybe you will learn to tell them apart!

Stay well.

— Sharon Gauthier, Past President

Until Further Notice, Do Not Collect Dead Birds

Following the policy of various museums, Whidbey Audubon Society will not be accepting dead birds collected this spring and summer.

This is an extra precaution due to the fact that some strains of coronaviruses can be viable for up to two years in the freezer. Because we can't ensure that birds and their storage bags have not been exposed to a person with COVID-19, please stop collecting and freezing dead birds until further notice. If you find a dead bird, please leave it in the wild for nature's recyclers to dismantle.

We will continue to monitor the practices of other organizations and will let you know when to resume collecting.

The Bird Specimen Library Committee appreciates your consideration at this time. If you have any questions, please contact Robin Llewellyn at 360-320-5480.

Remember that the Bird in the Hand Festival scheduled for September 26, 2020 has been postponed until sometime in 2021.

NOTICE: Puget Sound Bird Fest and Online Photo Contest is September 12 and 13, 2020 in Edmonds. Visit its website for details, www.pugetsoundbirdfest.org.

Whidbey Audubon Society Membership

Please make your check payable to WHIDBEY AUDUBON SOCIETY (WAS)

Mail to: Jann Ledbetter, 1112 Maple Place, Coupeville WA 98239

Name _____ **Y20**

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____ (Your issues will be emailed to you.)

_____ Check here to receive your *Shorelines* by mail. Please add an additional **\$5.00** to defray mailing costs.

SELECT a Category of Membership

_____ Individual Annual Membership \$20

_____ Pigeon Guillemot \$75

_____ Household Annual Membership \$30

_____ Red-tailed Hawk \$100

_____ Spotted Towhee \$50

_____ Osprey \$ _____

\$ _____ Additional Donation to be used for Scholarships

All memberships include 9 issues of *Shorelines* annually, a WAS window decal, discounts and early registration in our educational classes.

_____ **SPECIAL INTRODUCTORY MEMBERSHIP** for first year National Members only.

Receive a joint membership in National and Whidbey Audubon for one year for only \$35.

Make check payable to National Audubon.

The Whidbey Audubon Society is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Donations are tax deductible. It is Whidbey Audubon policy to never share our membership and subscription information with other groups.

Whidbey Audubon Society

Whidbey Audubon programs are 7 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month except December, July and August

September, October and April, May and June meet in Coupeville Recreation Hall

November, January, February and March meet in Unitarian Universalist Congregation, Freeland

Whidbey Audubon Board and Committee Chairs 2020-2021

President	Patty Cheek
Immediate Past President	Sharon Gauthier
Vice President.....	Dave Allen
Secretary	Cathy Queeno-Wall
Treasurer.....	Sheri Croll
Programs	OPEN
Membership Chair.....	Jann Ledbetter
Newsletter Editor.....	Jenny Brown
Conservation Chair.....	Kim Shepard
Education Chair.....	Nan Maysen
Field Trip Chair	OPEN
Publicity Chair	Susan Prescott
Webmaster	Rob Craig
Board Member-at-Large.....	Cathi Bower
Board Member-at-Large.....	Joe Sheldon
Board Member-at-Large.....	Dave Krause
Board Member-at-Large.....	Kathy Obersinner
Christmas Bird Count North Chair	Jay Adams
Christmas Bird Count South Chair.....	Govinda Holtby
Birdathon	Kathy Obersinner
Scholarship Committee.....	Ann Sullivan
Hospitality Chair	OPEN
Newsletter Mailing.....	Marcia Lazoff
Specimen Library	Robin Llewellyn

Contents

Dragonfly Whisperer, Jim Walker.....	1
Guillemot Research Group's Expanded Website and Summer Survey Plans..	1
Guillemot Appreciation Day	1
Know Your Board: Kathy Obersinner ..	2
The Window Seat Perch.....	3
Welcoming the New President	3
Sightings	4
BIN North Revisits the Parks.....	5
2020 Scholarship Recipients.....	6
Krause Receives President's Award	6
BIN South Continues to Keep Distance	7
Bird Games in my Head.....	8
New and Renewing Members.....	8
Do Not Collect Dead Birds.....	9



Stay Safe and Enjoy Summer Birding!

Sign up for the Pigeon Guillemot Survey, see page 1.

No collection of specimens for the Specimen Library.

The Bird in the Hand postponed until September 2021.

Field Trips canceled until further notice.

The next *Shorelines* publishes in September.

Illustration: Golden-crowned Kinglet watercolor by Craig Johnson ©

Whidbey Audubon Society
P.O. Box 1012
Oak Harbor, WA 98277