

Echo



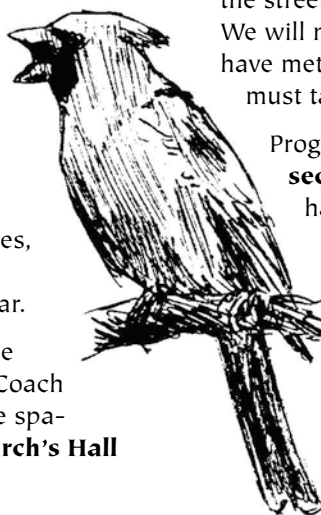
Olympia, Washington
Volume 2011, Number 4
September/October 2011

Program Meetings Move to a Different Night and a New, More Spacious Location

Sam Merrill – BHAS President

Our Black Hills Audubon evening programs have been blessed with burgeoning attendance in the last couple of years – something we are all happy to see. Our programs on Whales in the Pacific Northwest, presented by John Calambokidis, and the Return of Wolves to Washington, presented by Gary Wiles, each drew 80-90 people. Talks on Vaux's Swift roosting sites, restoration of the Nisqually estuary, and several others have also been very popular.

Because we are bursting the seams on the seating capacity of the Capitol Museum Coach House, we are moving to a new and more spacious location —the **First Christian Church's Hall**

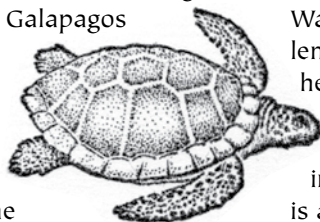


at **701 Franklin Street in downtown Olympia** (between 7th and 8th Avenues). Parking is available on the street and at the printer's shop across the street. We will no doubt miss the Coach House, where we have met for so many years, but at this point numbers must take precedence.

Program meetings will also be on a new date, the **second Thursday of each month** (the church hall is not available on our previous schedule). So our first program will be on Thursday, September 8. The topic will be the Galapagos Islands. I look forward to seeing you there to start a new season of Black Hills Audubon programs. 🐦

Thursday, September 8 Galapagos Islands

Clydia Cuykendall will present photos of snorkling, diving, hiking, and cycling on the Galapagos islands, including many geological features, land animals, and marine animals. Fellow tourist birdwatchers helped her with identifying two-footed species as well. As Clydia says, "I have some good photos of birds as well as the non-bird attractions. And you can imagine what kind of t-shirt Blue-footed Boobies inspire!"



Thursday, October 13 Wildlife Rehabilitation

Tammy Yuth, a licensed wildlife rehabilitator in Washington, will talk about what she does, its challenges, and the state and federal laws that guide her. When should an animal or bird be left alone? When should it be "rescued?" What steps can you take to help? How can we live with wildlife in an ever-increasing urban environment? What is a "nuisance" animal?" Tammy will address these questions and more. She will also bring a special wildlife guest to help illustrate her talk. 🐦

Note the new day and location! BHAS Program meetings are held on the second Thursday of the month at the First Christian Church meeting hall, 701 Franklin Street, in downtown Olympia. Arrive at 7:00 pm to socialize—the program will begin promptly at 7:30.

Participate in the Upcoming Public Hearing on Thurston County's Critical Area Ordinance

Donna J. Nickerson

Thurston County staff and Planning Commission have made steady progress in updating the 2005 draft of the Critical Area Ordinance (CAO) to reflect new science and guidance, as required by the Growth Management Act. New drafts of individual chapters have been placed on the County's website as they have been completed. These drafts are available at www.co.thurston.wa.us/planning/critical_areas/criticalareas_home.htm. The County expects to have a complete draft of all the CAO chapters in October 2011. After a public review period of 2-3 weeks, a public hearing will be held to take comments on the updated draft CAO.

BHAS encourages your participation in the public comment opportunity during the public hearing. Speaking in person at the public hearing is always an interesting and rewarding experience. If you prefer, there is also the alternative to submit written comments, which can be sent to Andrew Deffobis at deffoba@co.thurston.wa.us.

BHAS has made several recommendations for changes to the 2005 draft CAO based on our own Best Available Science reviews. As noted in the March/April and May/June issues of the Echo, a summary of the recommendations and our full reports with recommendations are on the BHAS website at www.blackhills-audubon.org.

Some key general points to consider include:

- ▶ The standard of "no net loss" means preventing adverse impacts to critical areas. It is the cornerstone of the CAO, and the CAO is one of the key regulatory tools we have to ensure both preservation and enhancement of critical ecosystem functions. It is an opportunity, not a burden, to protect the high quality of life we still enjoy here in Thurston County – clean drinking water from aquifers and rural wells without the high cost of filtration, and the privilege to fish and harvest shellfish in clean estuarine waters, among many other benefits we receive from a healthy environment.
- ▶ Riparian buffers are separation zones between a water body and a land use activity. They provide many functions that keep our aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems healthy. Both the width and

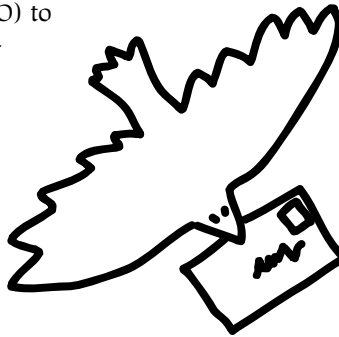
quality of the Riparian Buffer areas are important considerations in the CAO. Buffers vegetated with native trees and shrubs keep our rivers and

Puget Sound waters clean by filtering pollutants (nitrogen, phosphorus, etc.) and sediments. Healthy buffers provide riparian shade for fish, habitat for wildlife, retain and form top soil, stabilize slopes and help prevent flooding. These functions benefit private land owners and the public.

▶ Empirical data from the landscape work of Randall Arendt indicate that landowners who protect the natural values of buffer areas almost always enjoy higher property values. Likewise, communities that preserve and cherish their natural areas and wildlife, rural character, clean water, and working farms are considered better places to live. (For more info about Randall Arendt's work, see www.landchoices.org/.)

Our collective voice in this process of public debate about protecting these important critical areas or ecosystems is essential. Everyone's participation is needed to help convey the importance of protecting our natural resources and both public and private property values. If you have any questions, please contact me at D.J.Nick@comcast.net

See you at the public hearing! 🦋



To Mason County Members—Carpooling Opportunity

If you are interested in attending BHAS program meetings and would like to carpool, please contact Allan Borden (360-426-1051).

Please note the change in date and place of program meetings beginning in September: the **second Thursday** of each non-summer month at the **First Christian Church**, 701 Franklin Street SE, Olympia 98501.

Birding in Earnest

By Bill Shelmerdine

To reports sightings call 866-9106 or email at georn1@hotmail.com

Editor's note: Birding in Earnest did not appear in the July-August Echo. This edition's column covers the four-month period from April through July.

Not surprisingly, the big news for the period was spring migration. Of particular interest are dates of first arrivals or "first of year (FOY)" sightings. The ones I know of are included below. Local shorebirding has been good this season and the seabirding off of the Washington Coast has been nothing short of spectacular this spring. On the land birding front, I continue to receive periodic reports of "Ringed Turtle Doves." These reports almost certainly pertain to **Eurasian Collard Doves** (a species presumably introduced in Florida decades ago). In recent years the species has experienced a population explosion and dramatic range expansion across the U.S. that has been well documented. And finally, this spring could be characterized as a tale of two finches. **Evening Grosbeaks** have been conspicuous and widely reported with large flocks lingering late into the season. Conversely, **Red Crossbills** have been all but absent this season. Typically common this time of year (at least in my area), the first individuals were reported in mid-May, with only a few reports coming in by the end of May.

The first **Caspian Terns** of the year were reported from Luhr Beach on 4/3 by Matt Pike.

On 4/3 the wintering **Townsend's Solitaire** finally departed our neighborhood off of Steamboat Island Road.

By 4/8 the first **Orange-crowned Warbler** of the season was reported from West Olympia

The first **Blue-winged Teal** of the season was reported from Nisqually by Phil Kelly on 4/20. This seems to be on the early side for this species.

On 4/23, Keith Brady visited Weir Prairie. Species of note included: **Western Kingbird**, **Western Bluebird**, **Townsend's Solitaire**, and FOY **Chipping Sparrow**, and **Purple Martin**.

On 4/24, a noticeable movement of **Chipping Sparrows** (ten +) and a **Townsend's Solitaire** were moving through our neighborhood.

On 4/26, Dave Hayden located 4 **Marbled Godwits** at the Goodrich Road pond along the Chehalis River in Lewis County.

On 4/30, the first Westport Seabirds trip of the season produced no less than four **Laysan Albatross** among the many **Black-footed Albatross**. Several **Short-tailed Shearwaters** and **Ancient Murrelets**, along with a single **Flesh-footed Shearwater** were also noteworthy.

On 5/4 the FOY **Wilson's Warbler** was reported from West Olympia.

On 5/6 David Hayden located a **Wilson's Phalarope** along the Chehalis River in the Goodrich Road area of Lewis County, a rarity in the county. Ryan Merrill had one **Red-necked Phalarope** the same day. On 5/7, the first **Wilson's Phalarope** was reported from Nisqually by Dave Richardson along the three **Yellow-headed Blackbirds**. Since that time both species have been widely reported from Nisqually, it will be interesting to see if breeding takes place.

Also on 5/7, a **Northern Saw-whet Owl** was calling in our neighborhood off of Steamboat Island Road. It seems very late in the season for this species in this location.

On 5/8, the only **Solitary Sandpiper** of the season was seen at Nisqually by Bill Twiet and Bill Shelmerdine. **Semipalmated Plover** and **Whimbrel** were present that day as were large numbers of **Yellow Warblers** and **Vaux's Swift**. A **Western Tanager** reported to refuge headquarters was possibly the first in our area for the year.

On 5/8, Dave Hayden reported one **Sandhill Crane** and 2 **Yellow-Headed Blackbirds** at the Galvin Road Retention Pond (Lewis Co.) On 5/10 he located eight **Caspian Terns** at the east end of Riffe Lake. In our area they are rarely reported away from the Sound.

The first (5/12) FOY **Red Crossbill** report of the season came from Tumwater on 5/12 (eBird, Bill Twiet). This was a single bird and was followed by six at Nisqually by Ryan Shaw later that week.

On 5/14, twelve **White Pelicans** were reported to eBird (Dana Botka). The birds were reported from Luhr Beach, a location where they have occurred before.

On 5/15, Bob Sundstrom reported the first **Swainson's Thrush** and **Cedar Waxwing** of the year, along with a continuing **Dusky Flycatcher** in Tenino.

Dave Hayden birded the area around the Chehalis Steam Plant on 5/17. Notable sightings included a



Continued on page 4

Birding in Earnest

From page 3

Whimbrel and **Purple Martins** along Big Hanaford Road (Lewis County).

A striking male **Lazuli Bunting** was reported at a feeder in West Olympia by Frankie Valentine on 5/18.

The 5/21 Westport Seabirds trip reported seven **Murphy's Petrels**, one **Mottled Petrel**, and a couple of **Laysan Albatross** among the regulars. The petrels have been frustratingly elusive and have not been reported on these trips for several years.

A **Western Scrub Jay** seemed out of place, well out on Steamboat Island Road on 5/23.

On 5/25 Robin Shoal reported a **House Wren** and several **Western Bluebirds** in the South Fork of the Skokomish River drainage. Locally rare, or perhaps uncommon, this is the second year in a row that House Wren has been reported from the Skokomish area in Mason County.

On 5/26, two **Black Terns** were found at Nisqually by Roger Moyer and Tony Varela. The birds stuck around for at least two days before departing.

A female type **Black-chinned Hummingbird** showed up with a small flock of migrants in West Olympia on 5/26. To my knowledge this is a first for Thurston County, but not a first for Western Washington in the spring.

On 5/30, two **Whimbrel**, and two **Common Terns** were on Cooper Point. The terns are at best uncommon in the spring and have become downright hard to find in South Sound in recent years.

In Lewis County on 5/21, Dave Hayden reports three **Black Swifts**, 12 **Bank Swallows**, and two pairs of **Western Bluebirds**. All came from the area around Randle.

On 6/1, Keith Brady reported a **Western Kingbird** and **Marbled Godwit** "recently at Nisqually" (presumably from the end of May).

Shorebirds and seabirds continued to provide exciting birding through June and July. On 6/6, a **Common Murre** was seen near Cooper Point. This was my first observation of this species for the year and seemingly a long time coming. This is another species that has been just plain hard to find in South Sound in recent years.

The local highlight of the period was a partial breeding plumaged **Pacific Golden Plover** at Nisqually seen from June 10- 27. The bird was first

located by refuge staff and reported by Marian Baily. Several nice photos have been taken and a number of lucky people got to see this bird during its stay.

Dave Hayden reported two **Western Kingbirds** along Blakely Road near Packwood on 6/14. On that day he also found **Lazuli Bunting**, two **House Wrens**, **Cassin's Vireo**, and six **Chipping Sparrows** in a clearcut along Thompson Road.

On 6/19, four **Bank Swallows** were seen along Hartman Rd in the lower Nisqually Valley. A **Cassin's Vireo** was calling along Shaker Church Road that day.

A **Bullock's Oriole** was at the Cowlitz Salmon Hatchery, and **Northern Pygmy Owl** and **Lazuli Bunting** were reported from the east end of Riffe Lake on 6/21 (Dave Hayden).

On the 6/25 Westport Seabirds trip, a very rare and much coveted **Short-tailed Albatross** was seen. At least three **Laysan Albatross** and four **Long-tailed Jaegers** (a first for June) were also seen along with a good mix of the regular species. The July 23rd trip produced a **Horned Puffin** and continued a good string of rarities coming from this location.

Gene Revelas and Bill Shelmerdine observed one or two **Bank Swallows** and 11 **Short-billed Dowitchers** along with a few hundred **Western Sandpipers** and a few **Least Sandpipers** at Nisqually on 7/3.

On July 17, Bill Tweit located a **Semipalmated Sandpiper** along Moon Road in South Thurston County. Bill and Whittier Johnson also noted this species at Nisqually on July 24 and 30.

The first **Baird's Sandpiper** of the season was at Nisqually on July 29. That day, there were also at least 10 **Semipalmated Plovers** in the same location. This can be a surprisingly challenging species to find in Thurston County.

And finally in Mason County, **Townsend's Solitaire** were observed in Pine and Cedar Creeks on 7/6, 7/7, and 7/13. On the 7th a **Eurasian Collared-Dove** was noted in the lower Skokomish Valley. Throughout the period **Sooty Grouse** tending young were conspicuous along forest roads throughout in the area.

Looking ahead, as the unusually late snowpack recedes from the alpine areas, now may just be the time to start exploring the alpine environs. The first **Ptarmigan** of the year have been reported from the Mount Fremont area of Mount Rainier, though most of the suitable habitat is still snowbound. 🐾



BHAS Calendar

September

September 8, Thursday – Monthly Program Meeting at the First Christian Church Meeting Hall, 107 S. Franklin Street in downtown Olympia. Doors open at 7:00 pm, program begins at 7:30.

September 10, Saturday – Field Trip: Ocean Shores. 7:00 am to late afternoon.

October

October 3-5, 2011, Mon-Wed, San Juan Islands Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society. Contact 360-681-4076, or email rcoffice@olympus.net. Details at: www.olympicpeninsulaudubon.org

October 8, Saturday – Field Trip: Millersylvania Mushroom Foray. 9:00 am to early afternoon.

October 13, Thursday – Monthly Program Meeting at the First Christian Church Meeting Hall, 107 S. Franklin Street in downtown Olympia. Doors open at 7:00 pm, program begins at 7:30.

October 15, Saturday – Field Trip: Port Susan Bay Preserve. 8:00 am to late afternoon.

November

November 5, Saturday – Field Trip: Kitsap and Jefferson Counties, 7:00 am-5:00 pm.

November 10, Thursday – Monthly Program Meeting at the First Christian Church Meeting Hall, 107 S. Franklin Street in downtown Olympia. Doors open at 7:00 pm, program begins at 7:30.

May 2011 Birdathon Wrap-up

Sheila McCartan – Birdathon Coordinator

This year's fourth annual month-of-May BHAS Birdathon was a great success. Over 100 people participated either as birders, supporters (pledgers), or both. After pledges were gathered and tallied, a total of \$4,279 had been raised for the

Chapter. We'd like to extend a heartfelt thank you to all who participated and found creative ways to have fun, watch birds, and raise money at the same time. Thank you to the trip leaders (Whittier Johnson, Kristin Stewart, Megan Thorn, Robin Shoal, Deb Nickerson, and Sheila McCartan) for lending their time and expertise to this important chapter program. An additional acknowledgment goes to Sue Danver who single handedly collected over \$1,900 in pledges! Thanks Sue and all who contributed. 🐦

Field Trips and Events

September 8, Thursday, 7:30 pm Monthly Program Meeting

Our first monthly program meeting at our new meeting location – the Meeting Hall at the First Christian Church, 701 Franklin Street in downtown Olympia. Arrive at 7:00 pm to socialize and find a seat. The program will begin promptly at 7:30. This meeting's program topic is the Galapagos Islands.

September 10, Saturday, 7:00 am to late afternoon

Field Trip: Ocean Shores

Leaders: Ruth Sullivan and Lonnie Somer

Our first stop is Bowerman Basin, to see the many gulls and ducks utilizing the Hoquiam sewage ponds, and to look for warblers and other passerines in the great habitat adjacent to the ponds. We will then go on to Ocean Shores Game Range where the focus will be on shorebirds. Last year a Lesser Sand Plover was located in this area. We will also look at the jetty, hoping for rockbirds such as Wandering Tattler and Surfbird. We will check the water near what is left of Damon Point for loons, grebes, and scoters. There is also the possibility of seeing raptors. Ocean Shores is a huge area, covered mostly on foot. Wear sturdy shoes or boots, bring rain gear, and dress for windy weather. Bring lunch, drinks and snacks. Meet at the Mud Bay Park and Ride ready to depart at 7:00 am. There will be a limit of 4 cars. Contact Lonnie at wheelermombi@comcast.net.

October 3-5, Mon–Wed, San Juan Islands

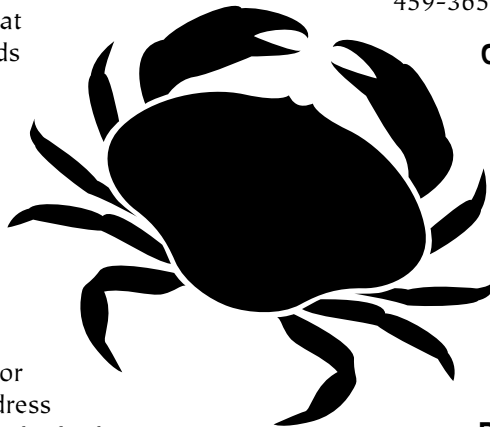
Join the Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society this fall for a three-day wildlife cruise through the spectacular San Juan Archipelago. Cruise to Roche Harbor Resort and San Juan Island, whale-watching along the way. Picnic on Sucia Island State Park, and cruise home via dramatic Deception Pass. Contact 360-681-4076, or email rcoffice@olympus.net. Details at: www.olympicpeninsulaudubon.org

October 8, Saturday, 9:00 am to early afternoon

Field Trip: Millersylvania Mushroom Foray Leader: Jim Pruske

(Note: this date is tentative. It may be pushed forward or backward within the month of October depending on the wetness of season.)

We will learn to identify many of the more common mushroom species associated with conifer and deciduous forests. With luck, chanterelles, boletes, and other edible species will be found. I plan to discuss the ecological value of fungi to the overall health of a forest. Be prepared to walk through damp undergrowth and kneeling on wet ground. Bring brownbag lunch and water. Bring a basket if you plan to take any specimens home. Plan to look for forest birds and amphibians as well. Meet at Martin Way Park & Ride at 9:00 am. This trip is limited to 5 cars. Call the BHAS office at 360-352-7299 to register. Feel free to call Jim Pruske at 360-459-3655 if you have any questions.



October 13, Thursday, 7:30 pm Monthly Program Meeting

Monthly program meetings are held at the Meeting Hall at the First Christian Church, 701 Franklin Street in downtown Olympia. Arrive at 7:00 pm to socialize and find a seat.

October 15, Saturday, 8:00 am to late afternoon Field Trip: Port Susan Bay Preserve

Leader: Lonnie Somer

Port Susan Bay Preserve, located near Stanwood WA, is owned by The Nature Conservancy and consists of more than 4,000 acres of protected habitat, much of it estuarine. Access to the preserve is limited and permission is required in advance. We will take a 2.5-mile walk along a flat dike trail, looking for several species of waterfowl, including ducks, geese, loons, and grebes. Raptors should be common, possibly including Barn Owls, Peregrine Falcons, Bald Eagles, and various species of hawks. Wear appropriate fall-weather clothing and bring rain gear, water, snacks, and lunch. Birders of all experience levels will be welcomed! Meet at the Martin Way Park & Ride at 8:00 am. The

Trips and Events

(From previous page)

trip is limited to a maximum of 12 participants and three vehicles. To sign up, contact Lonnie Somer, wheelermombi@comcast.net. Participants will be e-mailed a Nature Conservancy release form which needs to be submitted to the Nature Conservancy steward in advance.

November 5, Saturday, 7:00 am–5:00 pm Field Trip: Kitsap and Jefferson Counties Leaders: Phil Kelley and Ruth Sullivan

This trip will cross the Narrows Bridge with Port Townsend as the final destination, with several stops along the way, including Marrowstone Island and Fort Flagler. The emphasis of the day will be water birds arriving for the winter. In addition to waterfowl and other birds, this trip offers lovely views of Hood Canal, Admiralty Inlet, and the Straits of Juan de Fuca. There will be a little walking over terrain that is not difficult. Dress for weather, which means possible rain and wind (it is winter in the PNW, after all). Bring food and drinks. There is a limit of four cars. Meet at the Martin Way Park and Ride at 7:00 and the 6th Avenue Park and Ride in Tacoma at 7:30 am. Call Phil at 360-970-6323 or Ruth at 253-564-7419 to reserve a spot for this trip. 🦋

Birding Field Courses: Beyond Beginning Birding

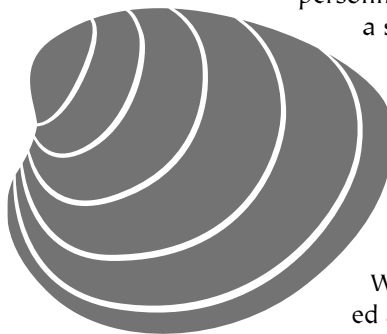
The BHAS Education Committee recently began a pilot program offering field courses for previous participants of our Beginning Birding Classes. Our Beginning Birding Classes have been extremely successful, but Committee members as well as class participants have all pondered, what's next? We have over 150 "graduates" with a beginning foundation in birding, but everyone agrees that what is needed next is the opportunity to practice in the field under the guidance of experienced birders. So far, we have had two four-hour field courses led by Scott Mills, PhD. Each course proved to be a very valuable time in the field working on calls and songs, identification, and behavior. We hope to have more field courses offered soon. Previous participants were sent an email announcing the field courses. A few of the emails were non-deliverable or returned as "no longer available." If you are a previous birding class participant who did not receive the email and would like to be on this list, send your address to Shelleysmail@me.com. 🦋

COASST Training Session for Seabird Beach Surveys

Ever see a dead bird on a beach and wonder why it succumbed? Would you like to help scientists find out why?

The Coastal Observation and Seabird Survey Team (COASST) provides that opportunity by training volunteers to do regular surveys of beaches in their area. Volunteers identify and take measurements on any dead birds found and report them to COASST.

A training session in the Olympia area is expected for a Saturday in late September or early October. It is a free, six-hour session, with a break for lunch. If you are interested, contact Sam Merrill (sammerrill3@comcast.net). You do not have to commit to be a volunteer surveyor to take the training class.



The COASST program is intended to establish baseline data for scientific purposes and to alert wildlife personnel for possible intervention when a significant increase in dead birds is observed. Currently, four Thurston County beaches are on the COASST survey list: Evergreen, Priest Point, and two at Tolmie State Park. Four Mason County beaches are also on the list: Menard's Landing, Rendsland Creek, Twanoh State Park, and Walker County Park Sites can be added and there are many other potential sites on Puget Sound and the ocean shore.

The COASST program is associated with the University of Washington; more information is available at: <http://depts.washington.edu/coasst/>. 🦋

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Black Hills Audubon Society is a non-profit organization. A member chapter of the National Audubon Society, it represents Audubon members in Lewis, Mason and Thurston Counties.

Our goals are to maintain, restore and protect our ecosystems for future generations, and to promote environmental education and nature-based recreation.

Monthly program meetings are usually held at 7 p.m. on the second Thursday evening of each month, September through June, at the First Christian Church's Hall at 701 Franklin Street in downtown Olympia (between 7th and 8th Avenues).

Board meetings are usually at 5:30 p.m. on the first Wednesday of each month. The site varies from month to month; please call the message phone number to inquire as to the location.

Phone and e-mail messages are welcome, but please remember that we are a volunteer-based organization, and it may take us a few days to get back to you.

The Echo is published bi-monthly. Editor: Robin Shoal. Layout and design by Lee Miller. Graphics by Nature Icons/Ultimate Symbol unless otherwise identified. Cedar waxwing on page 1 by Kirsten Munson; graphics on pages 2 & 3 by Lee Miller.

Material for *The Echo* should be sent to PO Box 2524, Olympia, WA 98507, or e-mailed to Robin Shoal at rzshoal@comcast.net. The next *Echo* will be the November/December 2011 issue, the deadline for which is October 5. 🐾

Black Hills Audubon Society (BHAS) Membership form

Type of Membership—check appropriate box

Member of Black Hills Audubon Society Chapter (BHAS) only

Singles or household

- \$20, regular member
- \$35, regular member for 2 years
- \$50, regular member for 3 years,
- \$15, senior or full-time student
- \$25, senior or full-time student for 2 years
- \$35, senior or full-time student for 3 years

Please make check payable to Black Hills Audubon Society.

All dues go to support local Black Hills Audubon chapter efforts.

Receive the chapter newsletter, *The Echo*, which describes local chapter conservation action, events, and field trips.

Member of Black Hills Audubon Society Chapter and National Audubon (both)

- \$20, first-time member price
- \$15, Senior or full-time student

Please make check payable to National Audubon Society.

Renewals: please renew your National Audubon Membership by filling out the forms sent to you by National and sending directly to National Audubon. Thanks!

Most of the dues go to support national efforts.

Receive the award-winning national magazine, *Audubon*, and the chapter newsletter, *The Echo*.

Chapter: C 9 Z Y12 0 Z

Subscription only—receive the chapter newsletter, *The Echo* (does not include membership)

- \$10 chapter newsletter only

Please make check payable to Black Hills Audubon Society.

Receive the chapter newsletter, *The Echo*

- I would like to help Black Hills Audubon's programs of education and conservation. Enclosed is my additional donation of \$_____

Renewals: please renew your National Audubon Membership by filling out the forms sent to you by National and sending directly to National Audubon. Thanks!

Name: _____

Address: _____ City/State/zip _____

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Book Review

Feathers: The Evolution of a Natural Miracle

Bobbie Moody

San Juan Island biologist Thor Hanson's new book is a great read, filled with easily understood science, lots of interesting stories about past and present uses for feathers, anecdotes from his field experiences and lots of detail about the evolution of feathers—all written in clear and entertaining prose.

Hanson gives an excellent presentation of the evolution and development of feathers and both sides of the arguments on the evolution of flight: ground-up or tree-down. Did you know that scientists, using an electron microscope, have found evidence of coloration in the arrangements of molecules on a feather of a dinosaur? These 'four winged' theropod dinosaurs lived in trees and helped bridge the gap from ground to air.

Hanson also covers, in well described detail, the aerodynamics of a feather. Did you know that some-day airplane wings may be 'fuzzy'? The fuzziness of a bird feather helps reduce turbulence and drag.

Did you also know that the largest down and feather factory in the country is in Seattle? Its three-storied sorting tower is filled with windows because the workers like to watch the feathers floating by.

Hanson has done a great amount of research in order to cover evolution, fluff, flight, fancy and the function of feathers. There is much to learn and enjoy in this book; anyone interested in birds will find it a good read. The Olympia Timberland Library regularly has talks by authors and has scheduled Thor Hanson to speak on Oct 5 at 7:30 pm. See you there! 