

**Black Hills
Audubon Society**
Olympia, Washington

**Volume 40,
Number 1**

January/February 2009



**Participate in
Environmental Lobby
Day, February 19**

Black Hills Audubon is a co-sponsor of the eighteenth annual Environmental Priorities Lobby Day, Thursday, February 19, 2009, in Olympia. We have joined other leading conservation groups and hundreds of citizen lobbyists across Washington State to push for the passage of the Environmental Priorities legislative package. These four priorities are legislation for:

- Cap greenhouse gas emissions by setting real limits on global warming pollution
- Promote super-efficient, low-energy-use buildings
- To create and support transit-oriented communities
- Invest in Clean Water through targeted fees to be paid by polluters

Continued on page 2

In this issue of The Echo

Environmental Lobby Day	1
Thurston Co Mineral Lands, Asphalt Plants	2
Dave McNett-In Memoriam	3
Dave McNett Education Award	3
Spring Birding Class	4
BHAS Annual Dinner	4
Field Trips and Events	5
Summit for Planning Field Trips.....	5
New WDFW Wildlife Website	6
Observations from the Window.....	7
BHAS Calendar.....	8
Birding in Earnest.....	9
Conservation Updates	10
Bird Book Review.....	11
BHAS Roster	12
Membership Form	13
Nominations for Conservation and Education Awards.....	14

**Thursday, January 15
The Macaws of
Tambopata**

Joe and Kathy LaTourrette spent more than 3 weeks in Peru in October 2009, including a week in the Tambopata National Reserve (TNR). At 3.7 million acres, TNR is one of the largest tracts of protected tropical rainforest in South America. They stayed at the Tambopata Research Center (TRC), a seven-hour trip up the Tambopata River from the nearest town. They will show snapshots and video clips of macaws and parrots at the largest known mineral claylick in the world, as well as 100+ other species of birds, monkeys, reptiles and amphibians in the upper Amazon basin. 🦋

**Thursday, February 19
Washington's
Not-So-Common Loon**

Daniel Poleschook, Jr. and Virginia R. Gumm will feature common loon description, behavior, ecology and the necessary conservation required to maintain or increase its low breeding population of less than 15 territorial pairs in Washington. The team has been doing common loon research projects and observations on Washington's common loons since 1996. They use high-magnification digital images to record and make determinations for their fieldwork. Their conservation work for

Continued on page 7

Lobby day, Feb 19

From page 1

During Lobby Day last year, members of Black Hills Audubon and others from the Olympia area participated in strategic briefings led by environmental organizers, had questions answered, and practiced our powers of persuasion.

Then we had good meetings with Senator Karen Fraser and Representatives Sam Hunt and Brendan Williams.

In the 2008 legislative session, ALL four of the environmental priorities of Priorities for a Healthy Washington were successfully passed and signed by the Governor (with some modifications in SB6580 and HB2844):

- Climate action and green jobs (HB2815)
- Providing local governments local solutions to global warming (SB6580)
- Evergreen Communities Act, protecting and promoting urban trees (HB2844)
- Bringing more locally grown produce into our

On February 19, during the 2009 legislative session, Environmental Priorities Lobby Day again brings citizen activists from all over the state to Olympia to meet with their elected representative.

schools and food banks (SB6483)
On February 19, during the 2009 legislative session, Environmental Priorities Lobby Day again brings citizen activists from all over the state to Olympia to meet with their elected representatives.

Make a Difference. Sign Up Today!

Register today so we can schedule meetings with all your legislators. To register, go to pugetsound.org/policy/lobbyday09 or contact Rein Attemann, People For Puget Sound, rattemann@pugetsound.org, (206) 382-7005 x213 (People for Puget Sound is handling registration for Lobby Day).

Environmental Priorities Lobby Day will begin at 8:30 am at the United Churches, 110 East

11th Ave., in Olympia, opposite the Capitol Campus. There will be a reception in the evening.

To learn more about the four priorities go to www.environmentalpriorities.org 🐾

—Submitted by Sam Merrill, BHAS President

Thurston County Moves Forward on Mineral Lands and Asphalt Plants

Washington State's Growth Management Act requires counties to identify lands where gravel, sand, and rock mining may occur. These are called mineral lands of long-term commercial significance. In 2003, Thurston County adopted a moratorium on the designation of these lands and on the siting of new asphalt plants. The moratorium was adopted due to concerns about insufficient environmental and public-safety protections in the permitting process. This was a six-month moratorium that has been renewed eight times.

During the moratorium, a Mineral Lands Task Force and an Asphalt Advisory Task Force (both made up of industry, government, and citizen representatives) have met and have provided some guidelines for making changes to the designation and permitting processes. Now, Thurston County will move forward on these issues. In March of 2009, the Planning Commission will begin review of the work of the Task Forces and will make recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC). Ten-

tatively, the BOCC will hold hearings on this in the Fall of 2009.

In addition, county staff will be making recommendations directly to the BOCC, perhaps as early as January, 2009, for the adoption of interim regulations on permitting new gravel mines and asphalt plants. This more immediate process is being done so that an additional renewal of the moratorium, unpopular with the gravel mine and asphalt industries, will be avoided.

BHAS will be monitoring this process and commenting on the recommendations. Immediate concerns are that the thoughtful mineral lands designation process, as envisioned by the Task Force, will be circumvented in a hasty regulations adoption process. This could result in reverting back to mineral lands designation based on individual gravel mine proposals rather than designation based upon a more comprehensive approach. Appropriate sites

Continued on page 8

In Memoriam – BHAS Volunteer Dave McNett

It is with sadness that we note the passing this fall of one of Black Hills Audubon's most steadfast and enduring volunteers, David McNett. Dave was a charter member of BHAS and he served on the board for three decades in the 1970s, 80s, and 90s. In this decade, he continued to serve as one of our best bird identification volunteers, helping beginners and experts alike sort out their bird sighting—entirely through discussions of characteristics over the telephone.

Dave served in many leadership roles for BHAS; some of his best contributions were in the form of letters to the editor and letters to officials in which he took informed and principled stands on conservation issues.

Dave's modesty and shyness belied a razor-sharp mind and ready sense of humor. He mastered not only birds but multiple foreign languages. The television quiz-show *Jeopardy* was a nightly tradition for Dave; he used to take quiet pleasure in outperforming the contestants, especially in science categories. Besides natural history and foreign languages, Dave's major passion was young people and their learning. In his retirement years, he volunteered at several Olympia public schools, tutoring in a variety of classes.

Because of Dave's deep commitments to environmental care and lifelong learning, the Black Hills Audubon board has renamed the annual Education award the David McNett Environmental Educator of the Year Award. It will be presented at the BHAS Annual Dinner, March 7th, 2009. In addition, if Echo readers would like to remember Dave through a donation to Black Hills Audubon, know that we will invest those funds in educational programming.

Here are some excerpts from a piece on Dave, written by his friend Bette Chambers for the newsletter of The Humanist Society:

"On October 23, we lost a national treasure. We called him "Old Dave" and he was that: 86 on his passing.

Dave was a renaissance man, if that is a fitting description for someone so in tune with the present world. He was conversant in 17 languages and spoke five fluently. While he was never paid much for his work (which was mostly volunteer), he helped kids with numerous subjects as well as languages, including math, English and history. Just a few days after his death, kids he had tutored at the local Lincoln School requested a special assembly in

his memory and the principal readily agreed.

David lived on a shockingly paltry retirement in a subsidized apartment downtown. He had been unable to drive a car for years, due to failing health. And he remained a prime motivator of environmental concerns, having played a role in Audubon's programs for well over thirty years. Professors of biology at the nearby Evergreen State College often consulted Dave about the numerous species of the area's gulls, which even skilled ornithologists find difficult to identify in the wild. If Dave didn't know the answer, the question was hardly worth asking.

At his memorial on November 8, over two hundred people came. No clergymen, just friends, and students and teachers from the schools where he tutored and taught, and enthralled and inspired. The service was a true "celebration of life." Not a sad word. Dave was no admirer of religious dogmatism. He deplored the divisiveness that keeps the world suffused with hatred. He lived as a Humanist, whether he joined any organization or not.

"Old Dave" is already deeply missed. 🐦

The Dave McNett Environmental Educator Award

BHAS has named the Education Award in honor of Dave McNett, who, we are very sad to say, passed away this past Fall (See more about Dave on this page). The first Dave McNett Environmental Educator Award for outstanding educational achievements went to Tom Schooley and Tim Sweeney in 2008 for their initiative and creativity in teaming up to produce the TCTV program series, *Birdwise Magazine*. This program educated viewers for two years on local birds and birding places. The locally produced TV program on area birds and the people who watch them was hosted by Tom Schooley and produced and directed by Tim Sweeney, and featured birding news, a calendar of events, birding tips, backyard birding, educational features, and reports of research work.

We are now proud to continue recognizing educational efforts by area residents through this newly

Continued on page 4

Black Hills Audubon Society Annual Dinner/Auction

March 7, 2009, Olympia Center

The current BHAS Board of Directors is very excited about our upcoming Annual Dinner/Auction. Your invitation should reach you in early February.

We continue to try to make this annual event one which you want to attend. We have tried to incorporate your comments and your concerns in providing an experience that addresses your desire to participate in an enjoyable social experience while meeting our fund-raising needs.

While the addition of the Voice Auction to our previous Silent Auction in the

Dave McNett Environmental Educator Award

From previous page

established award. Carrying on Dave McNett's tradition of educational excellence, we would like to receive nominations of individuals or teams who have made a positive difference through their lives as educators.

The criteria for nominations for this award are:

- Work has generally been within the BHAS geographical base (Thurston, Mason, and Lewis Counties).
- Nominees may be members of BHAS, but don't have to be.
- Results of their work made a significant difference in the understanding of certain facets of our natural world through study in our region.
- Their work has been inspirational to those with whom they have worked or taught.
- Work need not have been done on a volunteer basis but did involve volunteers or one's own volunteer time. One can be a professional in the field of environmental education but need not be.
- Nominees worked collaboratively with others to attain educational goals of informing the public about an aspect of our natural world pertaining to bird habitat or conservation.
- Nominees have worked in the field for at least two years.

Please email your completed nominations, along with a description of why you are nominating the person, by January 15th, 2009, to the McNettEnv-EducatorAward-nom@blackhills-audubon.org, or mail it to Black Hills Audubon Society, PO Box 2524, Olympia WA 98507. 🐦

past few years increased auction revenues, we are aware that these higher priced items were not what most of you were interested in. The amount of time

devoted to the Voice Auction took away from time to socialize, time to maximize fully the funds raised for Silent Auction items and our ability to keep to the promised schedule. Therefore, this year we will

be eliminating the Voice Auction. This makes it more important than ever that we

have a wide variety of high-quality, attractive items for the silent auction. If you have something to donate (e.g. an item or a gift certificate from a favorite restaurant or service provider), please call or e-mail Margery Beeler at 360-352-5437 or [mhwampcat@aol.com](mailto:mwampcat@aol.com). We must have advance notice of anything you plan to donate.

Each year at the annual dinner we bestow the Jack L. Davis Conservationist of the Year award. Last year we gave a special education award to Tom Schooley and Tim Sweeney for their innovative television program, BirdWise, which was devoted to area birds and birding. At the November BHAS Board meeting, the directors voted to make this education award an annual event and to name it in honor of our beloved Dave McNett.

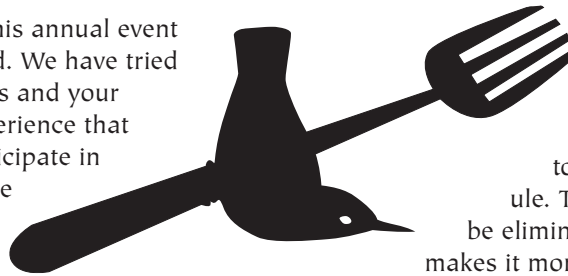
Members are encouraged to nominate candidates for either of these awards by January 15, 2009. Please see directions for making these nominations beginning on page 3.

We look forward to sharing this special evening with you. 🐦

Spring Birding Classes

Spring 2009 Beginning Birding Class will be held on Mondays in March and April beginning March 9th and running through April 6th. Please check the BHAS Website, <http://www.blackhills-audubon.org/>, for updated information on classes.

We thank Matt Pike and Burt Guttman for teaching the Fall 2008 Birding 101 class. Twenty participants learned the basics of birding and had two gorgeous days for their field trips. 🐦



2009 Field Trips and Events

**January 3rd, 2009, Sunday,
9 am to about noon**

**Field Trip: Downtown Ducks: Part 1
Leader: Burt Guttman**

Olympia has an abundance of waterfront birding opportunities. Join Burt to look at the ducks and other waterfowl along Capital Lake, Tumwater Historical Park, Percival Cove, and perhaps the saltier southern-most tip of Puget Sound. Usually there is at least one example of all the wintering ducks at Capital Lake, and the numbers and close distance afford excellent chances to really study them. Burt is a master teacher of the basics of birding. Often there are passerines in the trees and shrubs along the way, as well. This trip and the follow-up trip in February are geared to beginning birders, but all are welcome to attend.

Meet at Marathon Park at 9:00am. Bring binoculars, a spotting scope if you have one, and be prepared for any weather possibility.

January 31st, Saturday. 7 am to evening.

**Field Trip: Samish Flats Raptors
Leader: Scott Morrison**

Scott will lead his annual raptor search trip to the Samish Flats. There will be Red-tailed Hawks and Rough-legged Hawks aplenty in many morphs, thus providing opportunity to study them and learn more about their incredible diversity. There should be many Bald Eagles, some Northern Harriers, and usually it is possible to see Short-eared Owls. The hope of course, for this trip, is to have a 5 falcon day. While that does not happen often, it is a possibility in some years, and if not 5 falcons, there are usually 3 or 4 falcon species to see. Additionally, there are waterfowl, including both Tundra and Trumpeter Swans, and Snow Geese, as well as some shorebirds, and passerines.

Scott will leave the Martin Way Park and Ride lot at 7:00am, so arrive a bit earlier than that. There will be one opportunity to connect with the trip at the Smokey Point Rest Area north of Marysville. This is a long trip so bring plenty of snacks, and real food, as well as drinks. Please be prepared for any weather condition. There is a limit of 3 cars on this trip. Call Scott to register at 360-412-1260.

**February 7th, Saturday,
7:30 am to afternoon.**

**Field Trip: Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge
Leader: Phil Kelley**

This annual celebration of the end of hunting season walks the entire 5½ mile outer dike trail, or whatever portion you might choose to walk. There is no "bad" time to be at Nisqually, but winter is a wonderful time to be a birder there. There are large numbers of wintering waterfowl, and sparrows of various persuasions, as well as raptors, woodpeckers, and owls.

Bring snacks and lunch, be prepared for any weather condition, and wear sturdy shoes or boots. Meet at the overlook at the Visitor Center at 7:30 am. Call Phil at 459-1499 to sign up or if you have questions.

**February 8th, Sunday, 9:00-noon,
Field Trip: Downtown Ducks Part 2
Leader: Burt Guttman**

Olympia has an abundance of waterfront birding opportunities. Join Burt to look at the ducks and other waterfowl along Capital Lake,

Next page



Summit to Plan Field Trips

The 2nd annual field trip planning potluck, which has now been dubbed the Field Trip Summit, will be held Jan 3rd, 2009, beginning at 5:30 pm and ending when we have the whole year's field trips planned!

Please bring a dish to share, your field trip ideas, and your calendar. It would be really wonderful if you had your ideas written up and an approximate date in mind, but we will consult our calendars to avoid conflicts. We will meet at Kristin Stewarts' house again, even though it was cozy for so many of us.

Anyone interested in leading a field trip is invited. And anyone with field trip suggestions or requests is welcome to call Kristin. Her home phone number is 360-456-5098, and her cell number is 360-402-1526. 🐦

Field Trips and Events

-cont'd from previous page

Tumwater Historical Park, Percival Cove, and perhaps the saltier southern-most tip of Puget Sound. Usually there is at least one example of all the wintering ducks at Capital Lake, and the numbers and close distance afford excellent chances to really study them. Burt is a master teacher of the basics of birding. Often there are passerines in the trees and shrubs along the way, as well. This trip is geared to beginning birders, but all are welcome to attend.

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February 19th, Thursday, starting at 8:30 am.

**Environmental Lobby Day
Capitol Campus, Olympia**

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During the coming legislative session, the Environmental Lobby Day (sponsored by the Coalition for Environmental Priorities and organized by People for Puget Sound) again brings citizen activists from all over the state to Olympia to meet with their elected representatives.

Nominations

From page 12

- Results of the work made a significant difference either in real environmental benefits or improved awareness by the public or governmental agencies on an environmental issue.

Please mail your completed nominations by January 15th to the Black Hills Audubon Society, PO Box 2524, Olympia WA 98507. The Conservation Committee will review the nominations received and will make a recommendation as they do each year to the BHAS board members for final selection and approval. The award will be given at the BHAS Annual Dinner in March 2009. 🦋

Please visit the BHAS Web site at <http://www.blackhills-audubon.org> to see the previous winners of the Jack Davis Conservation Award.

Make a Difference. Sign Up Today!

Register today so we can schedule meetings with all of your legislators. To register, go to www.pugetsound.org/policy/lobbyday09 or contact Rein Attemann, People For Puget Sound, rattemann@pugetsound.org, (206) 382-7005 x213.

Environmental Lobby Day will begin at 8:30 am at the United Churches, 110 East 11th Ave., Olympia, opposite the Capitol Campus. There will be a reception in the evening.

March 7th, Saturday, 8:30 am to mid-afternoon

Field Trip: Hood Canal

Leader: Andrew Beélik

We'll meet at Potlatch State Park at 8:30 am, bird there till 9:00, then we'll visit the most promising estuaries revealed by scouting from Belfair to the Duckabush. This span encompasses the Great Bend IBA, one of the important wintering areas for waterfowl on inland salt waters. We will see 15 or more species of ducks, starring Harlequin and Black Scoter. we hope. Other possibilities are Trumpeter Swans, Brant, and Dippers. Raptors and passerines will be a bonus.

Walking will not exceed one mile. Bring lunch. We will be back to Potlatch by 3:30. Limit: 12 persons, three vehicles. Call Andrew with reservations at (360) 426-6262. 🦋

State wildlife areas featured on new WDFW website

OLYMPIA — A new Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) website offers viewers quick and easy access to a wealth of information about Washington's public wildlife lands.

The website, which can be viewed at wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/, includes descriptions of WDFW's wildlife areas, maps, directions, water access sites and amenities. Each wildlife area's management plan is also posted on the site.

With its ease of use and up-to-date information, the new website is a resource for Washington citizens and visitors to the state who want to learn more about WDFW's wildlife areas and recreational opportunities, said Jennifer Quan, WDFW lands division manager.

Next column



Observations from the Window

It's sometimes difficult to find time in our busy lives to just sit and watch what is going on outside. If we do, more often than not we are rewarded with a glimpse of the daily struggles of other animals conducting their lives without human observation, involvement, or intervention.

I admit to frequently sabotaging my work efforts by locating my work space where I can see outside. My peripheral vision is constantly on the look-out for movement.

One such movement caught my attention a few weeks back. Out of the corner of my eye, I could tell that a BIG bird had come into the branches of a fir tree outside the window. I had to get a closer look to see what it was.

By the time I got to the window, the big bird had hopped down to the top of the fence that runs alongside the tree. He (or

she) was magnificent! An immature sharp-shinned hawk was my intermediate-birder's best-guess as to the identity of this uncommon visitor to my yard.

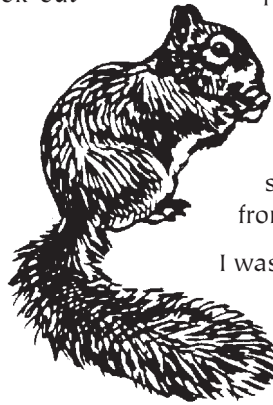
As he sat on the fence, he craned his head from side to side and up and down, searching for something on the tree—that much was obvious. I quickly located his intended target: an Eastern Gray Squirrel (not one of the native Western Gray Squirrels). The squirrel was doing his or her best to stay out of sight of the hawk. The hawk must have heard the squirrel because it moved to that side of the tree. In among the dense branches of the fir tree, the big bird was not the most graceful site, its large wings slightly outstretched, awkwardly hopping from branch to branch.

I was suddenly hit with a dilemma: should I intervene in this life-and-death drama or not? On one hand, the conservationist in me said, "This is nature; let it take its natural course. And besides, that squirrel species is overpopulating our area and squeezing out the native Western Gray Squirrels."

Another part of me wanted the squirrel to be spared. This had nothing to do with me rooting for a fellow mammal, either, because I truly value birds. At the same time, I knew what that would mean for the hawk: that it would not eat...at least not this time. Have you been faced with a decision like this?

To this day, I have mixed emotions about what I decided to do...which was to shout out through the window, causing the startled hawk to fly down to the ground behind the fence where I could no longer see it. I don't know what eventually happened to the hawk and the squirrel because I closed the window and the blinds and tried to go back to work. 🦉

—Debra Jaqua



WDFW website

From previous column

"The site is user friendly and offers several selection choices from one centralized location," Quan said. "Viewers can search by wildlife area, county or region. Once they make a selection, they'll find even more information about the area, how to get there and what is available."

Quan said information on vehicle-use permits, which are required when using a designated access site on WDFW wildlife lands, is also included on the site along with the department's public conduct rules. The conduct rules were enacted earlier this year to protect fish and wildlife habitat, ensure public safety and promote responsible use of public lands.

WDFW oversees approximately 900,000 acres of public land divided into 32 designated wildlife areas across the state. The lands are managed to protect fish and wildlife species, preserve habitat and provide recreational opportunities for the public. The department also maintains more than 150 water access sites, which provide boating access to lakes, rivers and marine areas in or near state wildlife areas.

Information on water access sites is also available online at wdfw.wa.gov/lands/water_access/index.html. 🦉

February program: Loons!

From page 1

common loons can be used as a model for conservation of other waterbird species, many of which are in rapid decline. Daniel and Ginger have presented common loon and other wildlife programs to large numbers of audiences throughout United States, Canada, Africa and Costa Rica, including 23 previous presentations to various Audubon groups in Washington. 🦉

BHAS Calendar for 2009

January 3rd, 2009, Sunday, 9:00am to about noon

Field Trip: Downtown Ducks: Part 1
Leader: Burt Guttman

January 3rd, Sunday, 5:30 pm

Planning Summit for 2009 Field Trips (Potluck)
Location: Home of Kristin Stewart: 360-456-5098, or cell number is 360-402-1526.

January 31st, Saturday, 7:00 am to evening.

Field Trip: Samish Flats Raptors
Leader: Scott Morrison

February 7th, Saturday, 7:30 am to afternoon

Field Trip: Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge
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Environmental Lobby Day
Capitol Campus, Olympia

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Field Trip: Hood Canal,
Leader: Andrew Beélik

March 7th, Saturday evening

BHAS Annual Dinner and Auction

Thurston County issues

From page 2

for gravel mining in the county should be based upon gravel availability and quality, effects on the natural environment, and human safety concerns. This identification process should precede mining proposals.

If you are interested in this regulation adoption process, more information will be available on the county's website:

www.co.thurston.wa.us/permitting/Mineral_Lands_Task_Force/Mineral_Lands_Home.htm.

You may also contact BHAS member Susan Markey via email: slmarkey@comcast.net 🐦

—Submitted by Susan Markey

Birding in Earnest: October – November 2008

By Bill Shelmerdine

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

Reports for the period included a mix of the later Fall migrants and wintering species. Sometimes it can be difficult to separate the two; perhaps time and careful observation will tell.

On 10/4, 300 + **American Pipits** were in the farm fields south of Nisqually Refuge. They continued in numbers there at least through the middle of the month. The week of October 6th saw a notable influx of geese; they were widely reported especially from Nisqually Refuge and the fields to the south. Reports included first-of-season (FOS) **Snow, Greater White-fronted**, and **Cackling Geese**. Thanks to Dennis DeSilvis and Phil Kelly for passing along their sightings. A 10/11 Seattle Audubon Trip to Nisqually Refuge, lead by Dennis Desilvis, noted numbers of geese and FOS **Northern Shrikes** (2). It was also a good day for falcons with **Peregrine, Merlin**, and **American Kestrel** sighted. (Is it just me, or did falcons seem just a bit more numerous this Fall?).

The week of 10/13 brought a noticeable increase in **Golden-crowned Kinglet** flocks to our neighborhood and, overhead, **Evening Grosbeaks** were a daily occurrence. Both species are regular, but in case you did not know, the Olympia Christmas Bird Count is often in the running for the high count in the nation for Golden-crowned Kinglet; one to keep an eye, and perhaps more importantly, an ear out for.

Keith Brady reported a notable increase in Waterfowl at Capitol Lake on 10/27. On 11/1 Kelly Mcallister reported that waterfowl concentrations on Capitol Lake contained at least one **Redhead** and several **Canvasbacks**. By mid-November raptor reports were on the rise, with a nice sighting of a **Dark Rough-legged Hawk** at Nisqually around the middle of the month. **Merlins** and **Peregrines** were recorded on many outings, especially but not exclusively on the Nisqually Refuge.

Accounts of individual species produce a nice mix of sightings as noted below:

On 11/9 Bill Tweit noted a pair of **Eurasian Widgeon** joining the waterfowl at Capitol Lake. With them was an intergrade (hybrid) **American x Eurasian Widgeon**.

At Violet Prairie on 11/11, at least one adult **White-tailed Kite** was present attending to two hatch-year birds suggesting breeding nearby this year (Paul Hicks, Roger Orness).

Sandhill Cranes were noted in a couple of locations: over Olympia on 10/8 (Robin Baird) and south of Tenino through 10/24 (Paul Hicks).

On 11/15 Joe Buchanan located a **Rock Sandpiper** at Kennedy Creek in Mason County. It was found among numbers of **Black-bellied Plover** and **Dunlin** during shorebird censuses there. He notes, "This is my first observation of a Rock Sandpiper at KC estuary in over 30 years visiting the site." This is a great find for this location and only the second for the county that I am aware of.

On 10/18, Paul Hicks located 2 **Heerman's Gulls** at KGY Point at the Port of Olympia. They included an adult and a 2nd-year bird. A second winter Heerman's Gull was seen at Kennedy Creek Estuary by Joe Buchanan on 11/2 and again on 11/7. Given their relative scarcity and proximity, one wonders if the latter is the same bird found at Kennedy Creek earlier in the month.

A calling **Barred Owl** was an early morning surprise at our house on 10/8. This is one of a handful of newcomers that are now regular in the area.

Short-eared Owl is a species that was once considered regular in our area but has been declining in the past few decades and has become difficult to find in recent years. Paul Hicks reported two at Violet Prairie (Tenino) on 11/10. The evening of 11/29, Grace and Ollie Oliver reported a **Short-eared Owl** at Thaler Wetlands, one of a very few Mason County reports. It would be interesting to know if they are found to be wintering, or if these are simply migrants passing through.

Anna's Hummingbirds were reported from Shelton by Andrew Beelik between 11/21 and 11/24. Few reports of Anna's come from Mason County, but although there has been a distinct increase in sightings from the Olympia area over the past couple of years. From 1997 to about 2001, they had been reported about every other year. Since 2001 they have been reported annually with a big increase in 2007. The 2007 and 2008 Olympia Christmas Bird Counts both recorded 11 individuals. At our place, what I have assumed is a family group has been resident since Fall 2007. At least 3 birds have been present off and on since that time.

Bob Sundstrom reported a **Mountain Chickadee**

Continued on page 9

Conservation Updates

Keeneland Park Brief

As noted in the last conservation news, BHAS has been working since 2004 to ensure that the Keeneland Park proposed cluster-development – which had been vested under the land use regulations at that time – would be designed in the most environmentally responsible manner possible. Our main concern has been to protect the high quality wetlands from degradation.

Through the project review process, which included a revised Hearings Examiner decision and an appeal of that decision, BHAS has consistently argued for wetland buffer sizes based upon best available science. Thurston County staff has supported this argument. Recently, BHAS and the development applicant came to an agreement that will largely satisfy those wetland protection concerns. We thank Sue Danver for her insight, perseverance, and skills in the legal arena throughout these past 4 years as lead on this important issue.

Some early lessons from this experience include:

- Washington State's vesting laws must be amended if we want to meet even the basic goals of the Growth Management Act. During last year's legislative session, BHAS issued a strong letter of support for a vesting reform bill that moved farther in the process than previous years when similar legislation was introduced. The draft bill was not ultimately successful; however, the public has shown an increasing openness to understanding issues in depth and supporting solutions that achieve public benefit rather than special interest benefits. With more unified support from constituents and environmental public interest groups, vesting reform can become a reality in the near future.
- Citizens and public interest NGOs are important cogs in the land use review system because they help counties and states enforce their own environmental standards. At the local level, the Hearing Examiners are key decision makers in the conflict when those standards are applied and questioned. Kitsap County's new Hearing Examiner, Kimberly Allen, who denied a building permit because it did not meet the wetland buffer standard under the county's ordinance, received praise from both government and community leaders. Such examples should encourage ruling



in the public interest.

Olympia Isthmus Park Proposal

BHAS recommended to the Olympia City Council on November 26, 2008, that they continue to review and consider the potential for turning the Isthmus into a park before making any intermediate decision that would affect development on the Isthmus.

The development proposal would require a significant change in the city's comprehensive plan, while the park proposal is consistent with the comprehensive plan.

We urged that the city's review be comprehensive, and include all relevant information, including in particular the Park feasibility study results, scheduled to be released in 2009.

The city's review should also assess any potential public benefits that an Isthmus park might have on encouraging demand for housing in roughly 90% of Olympia's downtown that is already zoned to accommodate up to 8 stories of residential structures, but is as yet, either under- or not developed. The review could investigate whether building on the isthmus rather than choosing the park alternative might negatively affect the market value of current and future residences in the other parts of Olympia by creating a surplus of housing rather than a demand, as well as its affect on the city's aesthetic appeal and livability index. This would affect the County's plan to direct growth to the cities. Growth management tools must be harmonized between the County and its cities.

Finally, we would think that an Isthmus park proposal would be consistent with Olympia's strong support of the Evergreen Communities Act, which will be implemented this year.

Some early lessons from this experience include:

- Three public interest groups have formed because of the significant change proposed to the Comprehensive Plan, asking the City Council for more review and consideration of a number of issues that are important in this public choice. There is no formal mechanism that requires City Council members to conduct an objective analysis that observes net public benefits and the subsequent distributional effects that are the key factors in making a public choice. It is essential that citizens and public interest NGOs work with government to help instill comprehensive public benefit assessment into public decision making. 🦋

—Submitted by Donna Nickerson, Conservation Chair

Bird Book Review:

Birds in Flight: The Art and Science of How Birds Fly

Clear a space on the coffee table! A new bird book should be landing on it soon. *Birds in Flight: The Art and Science of How Birds Fly*, by Carrol L. Henderson, looks like many a coffee-table book—large format, glossy photos, minimal text—but it's not. This book is a hybrid—an elegant combination of gorgeous color photographs and well-presented technical information on the aerodynamics of birds taking off, flying, and landing.

Such a winning combination is the work of a man with a background perfectly suited to the task. Author Carrol Henderson is a wildlife biologist with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, a nature photographer, writer, and leader of international bird-watching trips. Henderson also served as an officer in the U.S. Air Force, an experience that informs his writing, especially in passages dealing with the physics

Birding in Earnest

From page 7

on 11/17. It was found along the bike path between Rainier and Tenino. A great find locally, and one of a number of reports from Western Washington this season. This is one to keep an eye out for.

Keith Brady found a **Clay-colored Sparrow** at his feeder on 10/9. The bird was present at least through 10/12 and cooperated for a number of nice photos. Rounding out sparrow reports, Phil Kelly reported a **White-throated Sparrow** at Nisqually on 11/12.

And finally, an exciting maybe: Scanning the web (tweeters), I noted a 10/10 report of a possible **Brown Thrasher** at Nisqually Refuge (with no details!) Certainly detailed notes and if possible a photo or two should accompany a sighting such as this. It will be up to the Washington Ornithological Society Records Committee to try to verify this account assuming a report is submitted. It is interesting to note that there is a May 1994 record (possibly a first and only state record) from the same location.

And right around the corner... Gulls should be stacking up, particularly around local estuaries with significant chum salmon runs. Skokomish, Kennedy Creek, and Mud Bay/ Perry Creek are all great places to look, and for more than just gulls, as these are very productive places at this time. Also, Christmas Bird Counts will be in full swing from mid-December into the first days of the new year. Good luck and good birding. 🦅

of flight. Add to this his early childhood appreciation of migrating Canada geese and his acquiring his first Golden Guides to birds—and you have a man almost predestined to create *Birds in Flight*.

The 150 photographs in the book represent the best of what Henderson has taken during the past 20 years, 45 birding trips, and 250,000 miles of travel in search of birds. While his sharply focused photographs of the albatross, great egrets, pelicans and other large white-winged birds are stunning against a backdrop of blue sky, the most dynamic and compelling photographs for me are Henderson's blurry ones. Henderson uses a variety of photographic techniques—freeze action, slow-exposure, and panning among them—to capture the blurred motion and implied wing movement that is lost in sharp photos. Some of these techniques were intentional, but in many cases Henderson was shooting in less-than-ideal lighting conditions (low light) and had no choice. His blurred birds include the Tufted Titmouse, Goldfinch, Black Vulture, and even an upside-down hummingbird—but my favorite is the photograph of the pheasant-sized Hoatzin in the Venezuelan rain forest. You can almost feel the woosh of the bird.

Once I had admired all the photographs in the first part of the book, I took a deep breath for what I anticipated to be the hard-going technical section on avian aerodynamics in the second part. Thanks to the clarity of Henderson's writing style and excellent diagrams by illustrator Steve Adams, however, I am now confident that I could explain Bernoulli's principle, thrust, drag, wing loading, and the secrets of the alula to most anyone. The third part of the book is dedicated to different styles of take-offs, landings, and flight. You'll understand what kind of effort is involved in the seemingly simple acts of flapping, soaring, hovering, gliding, and other techniques birds use to move between land, water, and air.

Thanks to Henderson's beautiful and satisfying book, I know my walks around Capital Lake will be measurably more enjoyable as I watch (and actually understand) how the mallards, golden eyes, kingfishers, and coots manipulate the invisible winds and air currents to create the magic of flight. 🦅

Birds in Flight: The Art and Science of How Birds Fly, by Carrol L. Henderson. Voyager Press, October 2008. \$25.00. 160 pages, 150 photos, 15 diagrams.

—Reviewed by Maria Ruth

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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.

General membership meetings are held at 7 p.m. on the third Thursday evening of each month, September through June, at the Capitol Museum Coach House, 211 West 21st Street, in Olympia.

Board meetings are at 5:30 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month. The site varies from month to month, so please call us at the office if you would like to sit in.

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: Deb Jaqua. Layout and design by Lee Miller. Graphics by Nature Icons/Ultimate Symbol unless initialed.

Material for *The Echo* should be sent to PO Box 2524, Olympia, WA 98507, or e-mailed to Deb Jaqua at webdeb1@gmail.com.

Deadline for the March/April 2009 issue is **February 5, 2009.**

Black Hills Audubon Society (BHAS) Membership form

Type of Membership—check appropriate box

Yearly benefits:

Member of Black Hills Audubon Society Chapter (BHAS) only

Singles or household

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

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*.

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Thank you for supporting the Black Hills Audubon Society!



Participate in Nomination for Conservation and Education Awards

Conservation and education are key goals of the Black Hills Audubon Society (BHAS). The Jack Davis Conservation Award and the newly established Dave McNett Environmental Educator Award give us the opportunity to recognize the efforts of individuals or teams who have made important contributions to the progress on these goals.

This year, we invite our BHAS members to help nominate candidates for these two awards. Please see the criteria for the Jack Davis Conservation Award, following this section, and the criteria for the Dave McNett Environmental Educator Award on page 3 of this *Echo*.

Process and criteria for the Jack Davis Conservation Award Nominations

Submit the name(s), and a brief description of the effort made by the individual(s) or teams and their progress and successes in regards to the criteria below. If you are nominating a team, please list the key individuals who have led the team and their contact information. Keep in mind this award is primarily for citizens who have volunteered their time and skills rather than those who are employed in the field of

conservation and is intended for persons who have not previously received the award. (See the list of previous awardees below, or on the BHAS Web site at <http://www.blackhills-audubon.org/conservation-istoftheyear.htm#previous> .) Please be guided by the following set of criteria:

- Work has generally been within the BHAS geographical base (Thurston, Mason, and Lewis Counties).
- Nominees may be members of BHAS but are required to be.
- Work was a volunteer initiative relying heavily on volunteer time.
- Nominees worked collaboratively with others, including governmental and non-governmental organizations to help resolve an environmental issue.
- Nominees used objective sources of information and reliable data and demonstrated professionalism throughout.
- Nominees worked consistently on the issue and persevered, proving resourceful under difficult challenges.

Continued on page 6

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