An Overview of Prothonotary Warbler (Protonotaria citrea) Records in Southeast Washington State and Adjacent Oregon Counties by Mike Denny

The prothonotary warbler is one of North America’s most spectacular looking wood-warblers. Once called the “Golden Swamp Warbler” it is a cavity nesting species that breeds in dank, dark, lowland swamps and bogs. It breeds in the southeastern United States (Curson, Quinn & Beadle 1994), north along the Mississippi River into southeastern Minnesota, and up along the eastern seaboard into central New Jersey, and southwest into east Texas (Dunn & Garrett 1997). This spectacular warbler is very local in central and south Florida and considered a regular vagrant during migrations in the west, primarily in California (Dunn & Garrett 1997). The term “prothonotary” is derived from the name for a group of “ecclesiastical scribes charged with the registry of important pontifical proceedings” in Rome. These scribes wore bright yellow robes (Morris 1975). This species fall migration is typified as barely noticeable, they just melt away from their breeding sites and move south starting in mid-August on their way to the Yucatan of Mexico and on into Central America, The West Indies and northern South America where they winter (Curson, Quinn & Beadle 1994).

Oregon has a total of eight records of prothonotary warbler (Wahl et al. 2005). In reality there are nine records with the late Frank Conley’s find. This warbler has been detected in Oregon from May through November (Marshall et al. 2003).

The early years – oh, that sweet formaldehyde bouquet

By Fred Bird

Seventeen years and 100 issues of WOSNEWS later my memories of WOS’ conestoga days are surprising fresh (although not necessarily accurate!).

It was not a dark and stormy night but it certainly was sweltering that evening in the summer of 1988 when about a dozen of Washington’s better-known wetside birders and I gathered in Seattle Audubon’s board room in their old downtown offices. I should have been suspicious after about ten minutes as hardly a word had been spoken. Everyone just sat around casually looking for the air-conditioner they knew wasn’t there.

The need for a state ornithological society had been talked about for several years. For some, the motivation was to bring the Washington Bird Records Committee under the wing of a more regional bird-centric organization. Up to then, Seattle Audubon had been hosting the records group. Others wanted an organization solely devoted to birds, one whose birding energies would not be diluted by the all too many and too pressing environmental causes. A few I’m sure just wanted another meeting to go to.

The need for a state ornithological society had been talked about for several years. For some, the motivation was to bring the Washington Bird Records Committee under the wing of a more regional bird-centric organization. Up to then, Seattle Audubon had been hosting the records group. Others wanted an organization solely devoted to birds, one whose birding energies would not be diluted by the all too many and too pressing environmental causes. A few I’m sure just wanted another meeting to go to.

Ian Paulsen, I recall, deserves the credit for actually bringing everyone together. Back in those dark-aged, pre-e-mail days, Ian operated a birding hotline service from a secret location on Bainbridge Island. Persistent and devoted, he herded everyone together for that modestly historic meeting.

After the experience of running WOS meetings for two or three years, I could generously have ascribed the silence that first night to the tendency of hotshot birders to not casually speculate about a challenging slide identification question.
Saturday, December 3rd

Kraig and Kathy Kemper will lead a trip on the Waterville Plateau in Douglas County. Areas covered will include Atkins Lake, Mansfield, Bridgeport Hill Road, and Central Ferry Canyon. Additional areas covered may include Bridgeport State Park, the Okanogan River mouth, and Cassimer Bar in Okanogan County. Target species include sharp-tailed grouse, Bohemian waxwing, American tree sparrow, Lapland longspur, snow bunting, gray-crowned rosy-finch, and common redpoll. An additional morning will be added for those participants willing to stay overnight in Pateros. Limit of 8 birders. For details, contact Kraig at K_Kemper@msn.com or call (206) 789-9255.

Saturday, January 28th, 2006

Ken Knittle will lead a field trip to the Woodland Bottoms, Ridgefield NWR, and surrounding area looking for waterfowl, red-shouldered hawk, western scrub-jay, white-breasted nuthatch, swamp sparrow, Anna’s hummingbird plus many more. These areas are rich with ducks, geese, passerines, and sandhill cranes are usually present. Limit of 10 participants. Contact Ken Knittle to sign up and for the time and meeting place at 360-574-2590 or e-mail at washingtonbirder@hotmail.com

Saturday and Sunday, 11 & 12 February

Ruth and Patrick Sullivan will lead a two-day trip to the Waterville Plateau region. The trip will be on February 11th and 12th, 2006 with an overnight stay in Pateros. We’ll look for many winter specialties including the following: gyrfalcon, sage grouse, sharp-tailed grouse, long-eared owl, Bohemian waxwing, American tree sparrow, Lapland longspur, gray-crowned rosy-finch, snow bunting, and common redpoll. Areas covered on the field trip will include: Bridgeport Hill Road, Bridgeport State Park, Leahy Junction, the town of Bridgeport, Central Ferry Canyon, and Bridgeport and Cassimer Bars. Additional visits may be made in the surrounding areas at Atkins Lake and the Mansfield area. The last two years of this same field trip have produced under 80 species. Participants should be prepared for winter driving, as well as dressing for cold weather. Limit of 10 participants. For details contact the Sullivans at 253-564-7419, or e-mail at godwit@worldnet.att.net

Saturday, February 18th

Owls by Day will be led by Mike and MerryLynn Denny with a limit of 14 participants. We’ll look for long-eared, barn, great horned, northern saw-whet, and screech owls plus winter sparrows (Harris, American tree, and white-throated) as well as gray-crowned rosy-finch, northern shrike, merlin, gray partridge, and canyon wren. We’ll meet at Hood Park at 7:15 AM sharp. Bring lunch and water for an all-day outing along the Snake River. Everyone must be able to walk several miles on foot. Sign up starts January 15, 2006, for details, contact Mike at 509-529-0080 or e-mail Mike at m.denny@charter.net

WOS Meetings

Monday, December 5th – Member slides night

Bring a few of your favorite slides or digital photos to share with other members; backyard, Pacific Northwest, or far away, all will be appreciated.

Monday, January 2nd—Washington and Alaska - the Link

Many of the birds that we enjoy in fall and winter, and while passing through on the way south, have spent their spring and summer on the breeding grounds in Alaska. Brian Bell and Michael Hobbs will share photos from near Kotzebue showing some of the territory these Alaskan birds can be found in, as well as some of the birds, many of them in their breeding finery.

Note: Meetings are held the first Monday of each month (except July, August, and September) at the Center for Urban Horticulture on the University of Washington campus, 3501 N.E. 41st Street, Seattle, and are open to all. The social begins at 7:00 pm, and the program starts at 7:30 pm.

The Society

The Washington Ornithological Society was chartered in 1988 to increase knowledge of the birds of Washington and to enhance communication among all persons interested in those birds. WOS is a nonprofit educational organization under 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue code. For information about the Society, contact an officer or board member, or write to:

Washington Ornithological Society
P.O. Box 31783
Seattle, WA 98103-1783

President

Brian Bell
16440 NE 160th St., Woodinville 98072
425-485-8058
President@wos.org

Secretary

Carol Schulz
21421 15th Ave S, DesMoinves 91898
206-824-7618
Secretary@wos.org

Treasurer

Joyce Meyer
19107 NE 146th Way, Woodinville 98072
425-881-5422
Treasurer@wos.org

Board Members

Denny Granstrand
2011 S 47th Ave., Yakima, WA 98903
509-453-2500
dgranstrand@charter.net

Cindy McCormack
4218 E 35th Ave., Spokane, WA 99223
509-448-3825
cbirds@comcast.net

Bart Whelton
W. 1112-17th Ave., Spokane, WA 99203
509-747-0161
nhawkowl@comcast.net

Bob Flores
806 East Spruce St., Othello, WA 99344
509-331-0388
rflores@smwireless.net

Rachel Lawson
411 W. Prospect St, Seattle 98119
206-282-5593
RachelLawson@softhome.net
Vulture’s Roost
by Diann MacRae

An anniversary, especially a 100th anniversary, is nothing to be ignored. Whether a birthday or a newsletter issue, it’s very special. Our organization and its newsletter have been special due to the hours of work by devoted volunteers over nearly twenty years. A little trivia is called for, I think.

The first issue of WOSNews, a single, long page, triple-folded, was published in November of 1988. Even with that scant amount of paper, a lot of data was presented: articles on pectoral sandpipers, Okanogan highland birds, frigate birds and other sightings (a prequel to our Field Notes), and a northwestern crow piece.

Fred Bird was our first President, Phil Mattocks, Secretary, and Ken Brunner was Treasurer. Dennis Paulson became the newsletter’s first editor with Linda Feltner on the Editorial Committee.

In February 1993, the newsletter “graduated” to the style now used, but with fewer pages. Linda Feltner’s handsome raven logo first appeared on issue #4, December 1989, and is still with us.

Washington Field Notes, began in issue #29, February 1994, with Russell Rogers as compiler. WOSNews #73, June 2001, saw Tom Aversa take over as compiler, a position he still holds.

The Washington BirdBox, sponsored by WOS started in April of 1995 and is still in operation.

The first color photo – a gorgeous redwing in Olympia taken by Ruth Sullivan – appeared in issue #96 earlier this year.

In 1999, the Washington Ornithological Society began its first Web site, designed and maintained still by the very capable Michael Hobbs, who is also layout editor for the newsletter.

WOS has had seven presidents over the years: David Bird, 1988; Tom Schooley, 1991; Michael Carmody, 1994; Marcus Roening, 1997; Scott Morrison, 1999; Kraig Kemper, 2001; and Brian Bell, 2003 and present.

Six newsletter editors have endured deadlines: Dennis Paulson, 1988; Fred Bird, 1993; Scott Richardson, 1995; Diann MacRae, 1998; Larry Goldstein, 2000; Michael Hobbs as an interim editor for a couple issues in 2001; and Diann MacRae, 2002 and present. During the early years, Robert Ashbaugh and Andy Stepniewski served as “Guest Editors” as needed.

WOS 17th ANNUAL CONFERENCE--June 16-19, 2006

WOS will base its 18th Annual Conference in Republic, Ferry County, from Friday, June 16 to Monday, June 19, 2006. In the short tradition of the 2005 Bellingham Conference, field trips will be offered on all four days of the meeting. Catered boxed breakfasts, boxed lunches, and banquet dinners will be served in the Ferry County Fairgrounds Pavilion (~1 mile east of Republic) on Friday through Sunday of the Conference (prices yet to be determined); meals on other dates are on your own; be forewarned that restaurants in Republic will likely not be open at 4 AM, will not be open much past the normal dinner hour, and tend to operate with limited staff, so if lots of birders show up in one place at one time, the wait could be considerable.

The Saturday evening banquet speaker will be Chris Loggers, Wildlife Biologist with the Colville National Forest who will discuss the natural history of northeastern Washington. Conference attendees must make their own reservations by personally contacting the facilities listed below. You must mention the WOS Conference room block to obtain the special rates or block reservation considerations. To sum up, there are only about 63 motel rooms available in Republic and, dependent on night, 28 to 35 are blocked--so act quickly and phone (see below) to reserve a room now.

Prospector’s Inn: 979 S. Clark Ave., Republic, WA 99166, 509-775-3361 or 888-844-6480, www.theprospectorinn.com and prospectornn@rcabletv.com; contact Valerie Hester (owner/manager); 23 rooms + 5 suites; rates are $48/room for a single, $53/room for a couple with one bed, or $59-$70 for a quartet with 2 beds, 20 (of the 23 available) rooms are blocked for all four nights; reservations made before May 1, 2006 will receive a 10% discount; continental breakfast includes unlimited amounts of hard boiled eggs, four types of cereal, sweet rolls, toast, coffee, fruit, etc. and will be open at 4 AM in the conference room (back/first floor); PC connections, microwave, and refrigerator in each room, laundry facilities, sauna, jacuzzi.

Rock & Darlene Gliddon; about 15 rooms total; rates: $42 for room for one, $55/room for two; most rooms have 2 queen beds; & Sunday nights, 15 for Friday & Saturday nights; rates, $50/room for one, $55/room for two; most rooms have 2 queen beds; there is one handicapped room; all have PC connections, refrigerator, and microwave (but no continental breakfast).

Klondike Motel, 150 N. Clark Ave., 509-775-3555 or 800-213-2812 [reservations], fax 509-775-2636; contact owners Rock & Darlene Gliddon; about 15 rooms total; rates: $42 for singles & $44 to 54 for twosomes; kitchenettes in 5 rooms (a unique advantage among the three motels); no blocked rooms.

Forty trips including owling ventures are scheduled and include the following loops: Sanpoil River Valley to Frosty Meadow; Scatter Creek to Aeneas Valley; North and South Twin lakes to Wilmont Creek Road; Sherman Pass to the Lower Kettle River; Upper Kettle River to Togo Mountain; Wauconda to Chesaw and Lost Lake; Wauconda/Bunch Road to Havillah; Northport to Big Meadow Lake; Little Pend Orielle NWR to Amazon Creek Marsh; and Republic and Curlew Local Destinations.

Detailed information will be published in the REGISTRATION packet mailed with the February/March WOSNews #101. Registration begins Feb. 13, 2006; as a courtesy to the business people of Republic, please have your registration materials returned to WOS by April 1; late fee after May 19.
Unfortunately, I cannot cope with long silences, so eventually I asked, “Well, are we going to do this?”

“Sure,” was the un-attributable, muffled response.

“So, who’s in charge,” I asked innocently.

“You,” a loud chorus answered.

“No,” I protested, “I can never remember people’s names, let alone bird calls!” But by then no one was listening and thus began my intimate association with the Washington Ornithological Society – a happy and challenging adventure that would (and still does) carry me to every nook and cranny of our wonderful state, meeting hundreds of wonderful people whose names escape me.

Our first meeting place was the specimen prep room in the Burke Museum. We would quickly outgrow that space but not the memories. I fondly recall my wife’s one and only visit to a WOS meeting. Later, she asked sweetly, “how can you stand the stink”? Somewhat perplexed I said, “What stink? That’s only formaldehyde.”

Our second regular meeting place, also at the Burke, was the cavernous and obscure basement classroom that needed a little work to accommodate our group. That’s where I got to know the group’s most dependable and able volunteers Bud D’Veck and Marcia Midkiff. Bud suggested I should help him with a little project, and that as the younger member of the team, I should be the one to hang upside down drilling bolts into the classroom’s ceiling. We were trying to install sound-proofing. At first, it wasn’t successful. It was kind of ugly too. Ultimately, it worked just fine. Our heroic efforts inspired the Burke to rip out our handiwork and do it right.

Bud was always there (and still is!), helping with technology and exhorting the membership to improve our bird-flock-counting skills by tossing handfuls of rice on a table and demand when-instantaneously accurate tallies. It was easy to remember Bud’s name. There were only two Buds then in WOS, and when I’d run into the other one, I’d remember Bud D’Veck. It worked most of the time.

Our first annual meeting was held in Moses Lake and for once my odd array of skills were useful. After too much experience organizing political fund-raising events in Olympia, arranging an annual meeting was a snap. I had also accumulated a few useful contacts from my Olympia days, and was thrilled when Department of Wildlife Director Curt Smitch agreed to be our main speaker, but there would be a price to pay. When Curt arrived at the hotel I escorted him into a lecture on the fine points of shorebird identification. (Do shorebirds have anything but fine points?) As is typical with slide shows, about a third of the audience watched the presentation with binoculars. I thought nothing of it but Curt has never forgotten and to this day he rarely fails to bring up the strange habits of birders in my presence in public.

It is fitting then to end this brief reminiscence on a public note. I very much enjoyed my very public experience as the first president of the Washington Ornithological Society. WOS continues to thrive through the dedication and talents of the founders’ successors. I am grateful to have been allowed the opportunity to contribute to that foundation.

###

A note on the first meeting’s attendees: The original membership solicitation letter was signed by 16 people. However, I recall that not all the letter-signers were able to attend the meeting, but were still encouraged to sign on. The following signed that letter: Gene Hunn, Phil Mattocks, Linda Feltner, Ben Feltner, Dennis Paulson, Rob Thorn, Ian Paulsen, Tom Hahn, Kevin Aarnerud, Mark Oberle, Ken Brunner, Fred Bird, Bob Sundstrom, Michael Scruderi, Todd Haas and Dale Hurter.
Purple Martins
- story and photos by Kevin Li

Purple martins are the largest of the eight North American species comprising the swallow family, Hirundinidae. This migratory species breeds across much of North America and Canada, and overwinters in South America. Western populations have declined significantly over the past decades, and the species is given a special conservation status in California, Oregon, Washington, British Columbia, and Colorado; Washington lists it as a Candidate Species. The northern-most nesting on the Pacific coast is on Vancouver Island. Oddly, the vast majority of the species population nests in birdhouses provided by people. Purple martins in the western US have not made as dramatic a behavioral shift as their eastern counterparts, and a few nest in natural or structural cavities. Starlings, house sparrows, and lack of tree snags are considered to be major factors in the decline. Only a few nests are known in natural cavities in Washington, and these are in Fort Lewis; none are known in British Columbia.

Recovery programs in each state tend to be loosely coordinated at best, and depend largely on citizen volunteers. Volunteers in Portland, Olympia, and Victoria have successfully developed colonies of up to 50 or more nesting pairs. A comprehensive survey of purple martins in Washington has never been conducted, and funding is not very likely; numbers are gathered largely from volunteer stewards, and compiled by Michelle Tirhi of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). Almost all of the known nests in Washington and British Columbia are along marine shorelines, where pilings are often used for hanging nesting gourds or boxes.

In 1947, the purple martin was considered a fairly common summer resident in Seattle, and the birds were abundant in roosts at Green Lake and the Montlake neighborhood; numbers were well into the thousands, according to Earl Larrison. Martins were also nesting in downtown Seattle, using cavities in buildings. By the 1970s and 80s purple martins had declined substantially, and were regarded as a vanishing species nesting in widely scattered colonies. WDFW records show that in 1988 Seattle had just a single known nesting pair, in the Blue Ridge neighborhood.

In 1996 Ken Jacobsen had an article in the Seattle Audubon newsletter; Ken wrote of the decline of the purple martin in Seattle, and about how a nest box program might help in local recovery of the species. None had nested in the city for perhaps 15 years, I was told. I followed up, contacting Jacobsen and installing nest boxes in hopes of turning things around. I built more boxes than I could handle, and found myself giving many away. A couple of boxes went to Al Vetrovs and Nat Gove, who told me they had suitable pilings near their shop in Ballard. Nat installed a few boxes high on the pilings at the public access beach. The very next day purple martins were observed, and nesting has been successful at the site nearly every year since. In 2005, the number in Seattle is about 45 pairs, with most nesting in Ballard and the lower Duwamish River area. I’ve also had martins nesting at other sites scattered around Puget Sound and on Lake Washington and Lake Sammamish.

Nest cavities mounted on pilings along marine shorelines have been shown to be successful on a number of purple martin housing projects, from Oregon to British Columbia. While most effort has been on marine shores, martins have nested inland at Lake Nahwatzel, Lake Washington, Lake Sammamish, Lacey, Fort Lewis, and the lower Columbia River. The Lake Nahwatzel colony is on a small lake in Mason County near Shelton, and usually has several dozen active pairs.

When I first started working on martin recovery, I had advice from a number of people: Ken Jacobsen of Seattle, the late Jack Davis of Olympia, and Dave Fouts of Portland. Jack Davis had been responsible for a hundred or more successful martin houses in the Olympia area, including the largest colony in Puget Sound, at Woodard Bay. Dave Fouts has many hundreds of boxes in the Portland and lower Columbia River area, and he’s assisted greatly in maintaining martins in the area. Ken Jacobsen had installed dozens of boxes along Lake Washington with teacher Shirley Rybock of the Villa Academy. Their experience showed that the multiple cavity nest boxes of the eastern states were not working in the west, and that here the birds needed separate houses. Furthermore, starlings and house sparrows were a major pest, and great vigilance would be needed to keep the cavities available for martins.

Being a martin steward means a substantial commitment; I learned quickly that nest boxes are extremely vulnerable to house sparrows. I often kept a long ladder on my car, and evicted house sparrows many times per week. However, in recent years I discovered that one cavity design seems unattractive to house sparrows, but works well for martins. Native Americans reportedly used natural gourds for martins, even before European settlement. Now, in urban areas, I use large natural gourds almost exclusively rather than a wooden box. While wooden boxes can last longer and allow access for cleaning and monitoring, gourds are simpler and may be less susceptible to gull and heron predation.

Gulls and herons have been known to perch atop boxes and prey on nestlings. I purchase gourds for about $8, and then treat them with sealants to increase their weather resistance. They can last up to five years with no maintenance whatsoever, but generally last two to four years. I check them annually and maintain/replace as needed, but cleaning the interior has not been necessary. On only one occasion have I seen a house sparrow or starling nest in a gourd. However, Dave Fouts reported that starlings may be a problem in his lower Columbia River gourds. Tree swallows and violet-green swallows have been known to use the gourds, but often martins may nest in the very same cavity afterwards. Gourds may be acquired from the Purple Martin Conservation Association in Pennsylvania, and they come pre-drilled with drain holes and a round two-inch entry hole.

In 2005 I had approximately 75 pairs of martins successfully nesting in houses or gourds in the region. Of these 75, all but
three are along marine shorelines. At least 36 require using a boat for maintenance; of these, 33 are dependent on suitable high tide heights, being on Puget Sound. Many of the ones not requiring a boat do require a ladder at low tide for access. The number of unoccupied cavities was roughly 42.

Following the 2003 breeding season, one Seattle colony on lower Elliott Bay faced a dilemma. The entire colony at Jack Block Park needed to be relocated due to an EPA Superfund project that involved removal of hundreds of creosote covered pilings; these pilings happened to hold seven active houses and gourds. The Port of Seattle has been highly supportive of the martin project, and together we installed new housing on the park shoreline. All of the housing had been on pilings in the salt water, but in 2004 the martins would return to find housing only on shore. Eleven pairs nested in the new gourds in 2004, and viewing and access has been even better than before.

Creosote pilings are a significant source of chemical contamination Puget Sound, and laudable efforts are underway in some areas to remove them. The cost of removal is high, and limits the scope of such projects. If funding became widely available, there might be a need to find alternate housing for many purple martins. Most housing in Washington is on such pilings, and 100% of the British Columbia martin housing is on them as well.

While I started working on Seattle purple martin recovery in 1996, it happened that Vashon Island resident Rich Siegrist and Arlington resident Stan Kostka also took up martin projects that very same year. Rich has over 40 pairs in boxes and gourds around Vashon Island and on Kellogg Island. Stan has many dozens of successful nest boxes in numerous colonies, mostly around northern Puget Sound. Kitsap, Tacoma, and Rainier Audubon have been active and successful in their martin projects; Lanny Carpenter, Don Norman, Paul Carson, Paul McDonald, Dawn Garcia, AJ & Debbie Fisher, and the late Todd Tannery are among many who have volunteered in the community. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife has an extremely limited budget, but it manages to implement a nest box program and keep a database; in some years there has also been a banding program. Vancouver Island has an extremely active group (GBEARS, the Georgia Basin Ecological Assessment and Restoration Society) working on martin recovery, and they’ve done much to advance the prospects of purple martins in this region.

Over the past decade the Western Purple Martin Working Group has slowly come together, and includes interested parties from California to British Columbia and beyond. Meetings are in the off-season, usually in Washington or Oregon. Participants come from various agencies and backgrounds, from professionals to volunteers. Michele Tirhi of WDFW includes purple martins in her agency tasks, and coordinates and tracks project efforts. Stan Kostka is another key person in the Washington effort; he’s probably visited almost every known nest in the Puget Sound area!

Best places for viewing martins: Nisqually Reach Nature Center at Luhr Beach, and Jack Block Park (2130 Harbor Ave. S.W.) in West Seattle. Purple martins tend to arrive in Seattle primarily in May and June, with some early arrivals in April; departure is in August and September. Late July and August are often best for viewing, with activity through much of the day. In earlier months, viewing is generally best around dawn and dusk; at mid day the martins are often feeding away from the colony.

At low tide, the Ballard Public Access Beach (behind the Ballard Beach Club at 6411 Seaview Avenue NW) is another excellent viewing spot; 13 pairs nested in 2005.

In 2006, expect to see new gourd housing at Juanita Bay Park on Lake Washington in Kirkland.

Bird Magic

by Joy Stickney-Markgraf, May 2005

Under the knarred branches
Of an ancient apple tree
Standing on the edge
Of hidden pool I see
Into the lives of brilliant birds
That blend with dappled light
By my shoulder one is perching
Oh what a thrilling sight!
On his face a black mask wearing
Above his yellow breast
Nearby she is watching
While caring for the nest
Head back he whistles his tune
Witchety witchety witchety
Love season in bloom
And near my feet two red birds
Bathe and splash and play
Saving more serious cares
For yet another day
And on the tree behind me
A sapsucker drilling wells
Getting all the holes ready
For little fledgling bills
Distant sounds of cooing
Soft sounds soothing
Love-making in the branches above
And in the brambles beside me
A loud burst of song
He simply can’t help it
He’s a Song sparrow you know
And in shadowy reeds downstream
A glimpse of soft golden down
A little duckling chasing
After an insect he found
Mama always ready
With keen watchful eye
Feigning a broken wing
If predator attacks nearby
Giving herself as sacrifice
What more can she give?
Isn't that the way humans should live?
Now worldly cares have left me
Worry and anger and pain
And in the space only beauty and joy
Is all that my heart retains

Copyright Joy Stickney-Markgraf
May 2005
near White Salmon WA
email: joymarkgraf@gorge.net
Anna’s Hummingbird, Kirkland, King, September 20, 2005. Photo by Tim Hobbs

Adult male Prothonotary Warbler discovered at McNary NWR, HQ, Walla Walla, by Mike Denny on October 20, 2005. Photo by Denny Granstrand

Below: Brandt’s Cormorant, Edmond Ferry Terminal, Snohomish, March 2005. Photo by Ollie Oliver.


Western Bluebird, Umtanum Road, Ellensburg, Kittitas, May 14, 2005. Photo by Joyce Meyer.


Bottom right: Osprey carrying a trout, Marymoor Park, King, June 13, 2005. Photo by Lacey Hartje.

KENT VALLEY NORTH
by Carol Schulz

The Kent Valley is south of Seattle and southeast of SeaTac Airport. It is a partly-industrialized area, with some remaining fields, ponds, and wetlands. The valley follows the Green River from Tukwila south to Auburn. Despite the rapid development of warehouses, housing subdivisions, and office parks, the northern portion of the valley remains a haven for raptors and waterfowl.

KENT PONDS: One of the last remaining open tracts of land in the valley is the 304-acre Green River Natural Resources Area (GRNRA). Birders simply call it Kent Ponds. This Kent City property northwest of downtown Kent is bounded generally by the Green River to the west, S 212th St on the north, 64th Ave S on the east, and the Powerline Bike and Pedestrian Trail on the south. It is administered by the Kent Public Works Department as a stormwater control area, a wildlife refuge, and as a public education/recreation area. The area contains a wetland with several ponds, and three viewing towers.

The major east-west arterial across this area is S 212th St. These directions from I-5 and I-167 will guide you to the intersection of S 212th and 64th Ave S. From I-5: Take exit 152, Orillia Road. This is near SeaTac airport. (S 188th St borders the airport, and becomes Orillia Rd at I-5.) From I-5, turn east and travel on Orillia down into the valley (1.5 miles). Orillia Rd becomes S 212th St at the light at 42nd Ave S at the bottom of the hill. Reset your odometer and travel east on S 212th to 64th Ave S (1.2 mi.). From I-167: Take the S 212th exit which is to the north of downtown Kent. Travel west across the valley on S 212th St to the light at 64th Ave S (1.5 mi.). From the intersection of S 212th and 64th Ave S, reset odometer and travel south on 64th Ave (0.5 mi.). Park in a pullout with room for two or three cars on the right, or park across the street at the building called Web Press. Walk to the west from the pullout about 100 feet up onto the "Grassy Knoll". You are now able to view Green River Natural Resources Area (GRNRA) (Kent Ponds).

You will have views of the pond in Kent Ponds called "The Constructed Wetland," and views of snags in the distance. Look for raptors in the snags and waterfowl in the pond. American bittern (all year), and a skulky great egret (possibly all year) can sometimes be seen here; Virginia rails occasionally call. American coots, pied-billed grebe, and gadwall breed here. Cooper's hawk and red-tailed hawk also breed in the wooded areas. Two years ago we observed lazuli buntings at the knoll in summer. A nearby osprey platform occasionally has osprey perching, but not nesting, and other raptors sometimes can be seen there.

A main dike road through the interior of the property is ordinarily closed to the public. Continue to travel south on 64th Ave past views of Kent Ponds on the right to S 226th St (0.8 mi). Turn right (west) on S 226th. Near the corner a small pullout will be to your right. You can park here and walk the Powerline Trail.

On 226th, travel west to 54th Ave S (0.5 mi). You will be paralleling the Powerline Trail, and Kent Ponds is to your right. Turn right on 54th Ave, go about 100 feet and park along the sides of 54th. Walk north across the grass to the Powerline Trail if it isn't too wet. This area can get quite wet in the winter. The Powerline Trail borders the south side of Kent Ponds. The trail is approximately 0.9 miles long as it borders Kent Ponds. Standing on the trail, look to your right (ENE) about 0.2 miles and you'll see what we call the South Tower. It's close to the Powerline Trail and the gate is always open. This viewing tower has the best view of the "Lagoon" (the largest pond) of any of the three towers. Look for raptors on snags, including perched peregrines, and for flying raptors including merlin. From this tower, birders got some views of a Baikal Teal in the winter of 2004-2005. This rarity was first discovered by Charlie Wright and the GRNRA census team in mid-December 2004 during the monthly GRNRA census. Farther east on the Powerline Trail, you can view looking north through a water channel. Moderate numbers of birders got views of the skulky Baikal teal up that brushy channel.

Walk farther on the Powerline Trail to view more waterfowl and occasionally northern shrikes in winter. Back at the street parking on 54th Ave, travel south on 54th to S 228th/Russell Road (0.3 mi.). Turn right (west) on Russell Road as it bends around next to the Green River. At 0.5 miles on Russell Road there is a big fir tree on the right. It has an owl box that occasionally contains barn owls and, sometimes, owlets. At 0.7 miles you will reach the GRNRA Nursery on the right, the headquarters for the site manager and crew, and the west trailhead to the Powerline Trail.

To the left, there is a footbridge over the Green River. Park in a pullout (don't block the nursery drive), walk across the bridge, and walk left on Frager Road about 200 feet. There is a public trail under the power lines that has a “No Trespassing” sign. Despite the sign, we haven't had problems birding there.

You can walk back on a gravel trail to view a pond that we call RIVERVIEW MARSH. A 1/2 mile overgrown trail loops around the back of the marsh, and there you can view ducks in the pond including canvasback (winter), and dowitchers at times (fall, winter). You may also enter the trail farther south on Frager Road. That area has several Virginia rails (all year).

Back at the nursery, RESET your odometer to 0. Continue north on Russell Road. Van Doren's Landing Park (0.2 mi.) on the left has restrooms. The main parking lot for GRNRA (0.3 mi.) on the right has a gate into the meadows and a trail to the southwest tower. A sign says that the gate is closed from 9 or 10AM to dusk, but it's rarely closed anymore. The views from
the parking lot and nearby trail are best in fall and winter. You may see northern shrike, merlin flying, meadowlarks, or perched raptors. The SW tower can be seen from here, but it's pretty far from the action at the ponds. Farther north on Russell Road (0.7 miles) is the north parking lot. Park here to walk into the north tower and to view the pines in the small Anderson Park. Barn owls sometimes perch in the pines and owl pellets may be found under the pines. Continue north on Russell Road to S 212th St (0.8 miles).

For more information about Green River Natural Resources Area, click on www.ci.kent.wa.us/publicworks/specialprograms/grnrasite.asp You may also leave a message at the nursery at 253-437-2051.

Contact the site manager to ask for access to the interior. (Or come out with us on a monthly birding census.)

BOEING PONDS: Less than a mile north of Kent Ponds is the Boeing Ponds site. It is located just north of the large Boeing Kent Space Center. There are three or four ponds here depending on the water level. This area can be good for raptors, and shorebirds may be seen during migration. It is a great spot to view waterfowl in fall and winter. Directions continue from above: from Russell Road and S 212th, turn right (east) (CAREFULLY) from Russell Road onto S 212th, get in the left lane, and turn left (0.1 mi.) onto 59th Pl S. Travel north on 59th Pl (0.5 mi) to view Boeing Ponds just past the Boeing Space Center. There are a couple of pullouts here on the right and a trail around the perimeter of the ponds. Waterfowl are numerous in winter. And shorebirds may be seen here in migration. Spotted sandpipers and savannah sparrows breed here. Continue on 59th Pl as it reaches the intersection with 62nd Ave S (0.8 mi). Park at the barrier on 62nd, and walk south into the ponds area about 0.1 mi. There is a pond all the way back by the Boeing fence that you can't view from the road. It goes dry in summer, but can be productive for snipe and shorebirds when still wet. Peregrines like the tall buildings, especially the little ledges near the top. Boeing security guards sometimes will ask what you are doing, so it is best to limit your gazing at the Boeing buildings if possible. You might want to carry some ID or a bird book showing that you are a birder.

These areas are shown in the WA DeLorme Atlas pg 63, grid 6A. (An old map.) A newer, larger map is in the Thomas Guide, King, Pierce, and Snohomish Counties, pg 685.

We who bird the Kent Valley are still surprised by the variety of bird species we continue to see at the Kent and Boeing Ponds despite continuing development.

Maps by Katherine Wright
This species has been reported twice in the last four years in northeastern Oregon. One bright adult male was along Pine Creek near Halfway, Baker County, 9-18 Nov. 2001 (Sullivan 2002). The second record was a male in Enterprise, Wallowa County observed by the late Frank Conley on 3 Nov. 2003 for a first Wallowa county record (Bray 2004). This is the ninth Oregon state record.

In Washington state all prothonotary warbler records have come from the Lower Columbia Basin in southeastern Washington. All three birds have been found in Benton and Walla Walla Counties. These spectacular warblers were discovered during fall migration and have, to date, all been males. Following is a list of all reported records in southeastern Washington.

The first reported prothonotary warbler in Washington was a single bright male located in West Richland, Benton County, along the Yakima River just below the Horn Rapids Dam on 2 September 1970. It was observed by Bob Woodley and the late Mr. O.C. Schroeder (who first found and videoed the warbler) along with the late Mr. Watts on 6 September. This male was present through 9 September 1970 (Weber & Larrison 1977, pers. comm. B. Woodley).

The second record was also a bright adult male that appeared on 27 Oct. 1973 at the home of Dr. Corey and Shirley Muse along one of the many small streams in Walla Walla, Walla Walla County, and was observed by several others through 21 Nov. 1973 (Weber & Larrison 1977). "This individual vanished after the arrival of a cold front and a good snow fall." (S. Muse pers. comm.).

The third record was an adult male located at McNary NWR, HQ along Burbank slough near Burbank, Walla Walla County, on 20 Oct. 2005 by Mike Denny and observed and photographed by many others through 21 Oct. 2005. This bird may still be in the area as of this writing. This bright male was first located at 1300hrs in a planted shelter belt to the west of the refuge buildings and later flew into a large, dense Russian Olive surrounded by thick *Phragmites* where it remained for the next day-and-a-half foraging on small insects (flying aphids). Denny Granstrand was able to take several super photos of this bird. This individual remained silent throughout my observations of it. No vocalizations were detected from this bird as it foraged, preened or flew. It was in loose association with several orange-crowned warblers, many Audubon’s yellow-rumped warblers, and a mix of white-crowned sparrows, Lincoln’s sparrows, and one or two spotted towhees. Also in this same general area were some gifted bird hunters, including a Merlin, sharp-shinned hawk and Coopers hawk. All visited the shelter belt and the Russian Olive tree several times while Merry-Lynn and I were there.

Where these lost individuals come from is a mystery. Maybe there is an unknown isolated breeding area closer than southeastern Minnesota or east Texas? Perhaps these are individuals that overshoot during spring migration and end up wandering in the boreal forests of Canada all summer and then drift south as the days shorten and get cooler?

All of these reported adult male prothonotary warblers were located near open surface waters and dense cover. This is a beautiful warbler species that will most likely be found again in southeast Washington, so please carry that camera and be on the alert for late fall season prothonotary warblers in those thick Russian Olives near water in eastern Washington.

Mike Denny, m.denny@charter.net
1354 S.E. Central Ave., College Place, WA 99324

**Literature Cited**


**2005/2006 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS**

More than 50,000 observers participate each year in these all-day censuses of early-winter bird populations. The results of their efforts are compiled into the longest running database in ornithology, representing over a century of unbroken data on trends of early-winter bird populations across the Americas. Simply put, the Christmas Bird Count, or "CBC", is citizen science in action.

Christmas Bird Counts are done in established counting circles. These are 15-mile diameter circles (one covers most of Seattle, and there are over 50 that are at least partially in Washington state). Counting is done only within a circle.

Typically what you do is contact the count coordinator ahead of time for instructions. On the day of that circle's count, groups of birders will meet at various locations, and from those locations, smaller groups will go out to count a particular small area. (There are 47 square miles in one of those circles, so they are far too big for any one group to cover thoroughly). Because each sub-area is covered by a small group (3-4 people, typically) working together, you don't need to be a top-notch birder to help out. Eyes, ears, and pencils are needed. At the end of the day, each group sends its counts to be tabulated. There's usually a potluck where everyone can share stories about the day.

The following is a partial listing of those Washington CBCs for which information is currently available. A complete listing is available at http://www.wos.org/WACBCs.htm. The web site also lists additional information provided by coordinators.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNT</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>CONTACT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bellingham</td>
<td>Sunday, December 18</td>
<td>Joe Meche, <a href="mailto:joemeche@aol.com">joemeche@aol.com</a> or 360-738-0641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridgeport</td>
<td>Wednesday, December 14</td>
<td>Meredith Spencer, <a href="mailto:Merdave@vib.tv">Merdave@vib.tv</a> or 509-686-7551</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camas Prairie-Trout Lake</td>
<td>Saturday, December 17</td>
<td>Stuart Johnston, <a href="mailto:johnstonstuart@hotmail.com">johnstonstuart@hotmail.com</a> or 509-493-3363 (6 - 10 p.m.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chelan</td>
<td>Thursday, December 29</td>
<td>Steve Easley, <a href="mailto:seasley@wenval.com">seasley@wenval.com</a> or 509-682-2318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cle Elum</td>
<td>Thursday, December 15</td>
<td>Michael Hobbs, <a href="mailto:BirdMarymoor@verizon.net">BirdMarymoor@verizon.net</a> or 425-869-2370 (H) or 425-318-2105 (C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbia Estuary</td>
<td>Sunday, December 18</td>
<td>Mike Patterson, <a href="mailto:celata@pacifier.com">celata@pacifier.com</a> or 503-325-1365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbia Hills-Klickitat</td>
<td>Saturday, December 31</td>
<td>Stuart Johnston, <a href="mailto:johnstonstuart@hotmail.com">johnstonstuart@hotmail.com</a> or 509-493-3363 (6 - 10 p.m.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cowlitz-Columbia</td>
<td>Sunday, January  1</td>
<td>Bob Reistroffer, <a href="mailto:BReistrof@aol.com">BReistrof@aol.com</a> or 360-636-5125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Lake Washington</td>
<td>Saturday, December 17</td>
<td>Len Steiner, <a href="mailto:MariLenSteiner@aol.com">MariLenSteiner@aol.com</a> or 425-827-2478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edmonds</td>
<td>Saturday, December 17</td>
<td>Sally Van Neil, <a href="mailto:sallyvanjaenniel@pilchuckaudubon.org">sallyvanjaenniel@pilchuckaudubon.org</a> or 425-778-7568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellensburg</td>
<td>Saturday, December 17</td>
<td>Phil Mattocks, <a href="mailto:mattocks@kvalley.com">mattocks@kvalley.com</a> or 509-962-2191 or Steve Hall, 509-925-4877</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everett</td>
<td>Saturday, December 17</td>
<td>Mary Teesdale, <a href="mailto:metesdale@hotmail.com">metesdale@hotmail.com</a> or 360-734-2561</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Coulee</td>
<td>Monday, December 19</td>
<td>Meredith Spencer, <a href="mailto:Merdave@vib.tv">Merdave@vib.tv</a> or 509-686-7551</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grays Harbor</td>
<td>Monday, January  2</td>
<td>Bob Morse, <a href="mailto:rwmorse@comcast.net">rwmorse@comcast.net</a> or 360-943-8600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hood River-Bingen</td>
<td>Sunday, January 1</td>
<td>Catherine Flick, <a href="mailto:stewart@gorge.net">stewart@gorge.net</a> or 509-493-1195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kent-Auburn</td>
<td>Sunday, January  1</td>
<td>Nancy Streifft, <a href="mailto:nancy_streifft@hotmail.com">nancy_streifft@hotmail.com</a> or (253) 852-8394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitsap</td>
<td>Saturday, December 17</td>
<td>Gene Bullock, <a href="mailto:bullockg@earthlink.net">bullockg@earthlink.net</a> or 360-394-5635</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ladner, B.C.</td>
<td>Tuesday, December 27</td>
<td>Jude Grass, <a href="mailto:judegrass@shaw.ca">judegrass@shaw.ca</a> or 604-538-8774</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadbetter Point</td>
<td>Saturday, December 17</td>
<td>Alan Richards, <a href="mailto:mrm@willapabay.org">mrm@willapabay.org</a> or 360-484-7119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leavenworth</td>
<td>Saturday, December 17</td>
<td>Karen Haire, <a href="mailto:khaire@earthlink.net">khaire@earthlink.net</a> or 509-548-4566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewiston-Clarkston</td>
<td>Saturday, December 31</td>
<td>Charles Swift, <a href="mailto:chaetura@gmail.com">chaetura@gmail.com</a> or 208-883-0553</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moscow-Pullman</td>
<td>Saturday, December 17</td>
<td>WA - Tom Weber, <a href="mailto:twwebs@wsu.edu">twwebs@wsu.edu</a> or (509) 334-3817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moses Lake</td>
<td>Saturday, December 17</td>
<td>ID - Dave Holick, <a href="mailto:dholick@moscow.com">dholick@moscow.com</a> or 208-882-5556</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Cascades</td>
<td>Friday, December 16</td>
<td>Doug Schonewald, <a href="mailto:dchsone8@donobi.net">dchsone8@donobi.net</a> or (509) 766-0056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oliver-Osoyoos, B.C.</td>
<td>Saturday, December 31</td>
<td>Doug Brown, <a href="mailto:douglasbrown01@yahoo.ca">douglasbrown01@yahoo.ca</a> or (250) 495-6164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olympia</td>
<td>Sunday, December 18</td>
<td>George Walter, <a href="mailto:gwalter@nwf.org">gwalter@nwf.org</a> or 360-459-8220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Padilla Bay</td>
<td>Saturday, December 17</td>
<td>Steve Asliamian, <a href="mailto:asliamian@whidbey.net">asliamian@whidbey.net</a> or 509-435-9493</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Angeles-Victoria Ferry</td>
<td>Sunday, December 18</td>
<td>Scott Atkinson, <a href="mailto:scottatkinson@hotmail.com">scottatkinson@hotmail.com</a> or 206-406-2306 (cell)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portland, OR</td>
<td>Saturday, December 31</td>
<td><a href="http://www.audubonportland.org/events/xmascount/">http://www.audubonportland.org/events/xmascount/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Juan Ferry</td>
<td>Saturday, December 17</td>
<td>R.B. Porter, <a href="mailto:rbdemo2@worldnet.att.net">rbdemo2@worldnet.att.net</a> or 360-332-6799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Juan Islands</td>
<td>Sunday, December 18</td>
<td>San Juan: Barb Jensen, <a href="mailto:skylark@rockisland.com">skylark@rockisland.com</a> or 360-378-3068</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satsop</td>
<td>Monday, December 26</td>
<td>Tom Schooley, <a href="mailto:schooleymccartan@comcast.net">schooleymccartan@comcast.net</a> or 360-357-9170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sauvie Island, OR</td>
<td>Sunday, December 18</td>
<td>WA - Wilson Cady, <a href="mailto:gorgebra@juno.com">gorgebra@juno.com</a> or 360-835-5947, OR - Karen Bachman, <a href="mailto:Konion6@aol.com">Konion6@aol.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seattle</td>
<td>Saturday, December 31</td>
<td>Seattle Audubon Society, <a href="mailto:adams@seattleaudubon.org">adams@seattleaudubon.org</a> or 206-523-8243 ext.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sequim-Dungeness</td>
<td>Monday, December 19</td>
<td>Bob Boekelheide, <a href="mailto:rivercenter@olympus.net">rivercenter@olympus.net</a> or 360-681-4076</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skagit Bay</td>
<td>Saturday, January  1</td>
<td>Art Campbell, <a href="mailto:acampbell@herreraInc.com">acampbell@herreraInc.com</a> or 206-783-2449(H) or 206-441-9080(W)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spokane</td>
<td>Sunday, December 18</td>
<td>Alan McCoy, <a href="mailto:alamccoy@earthlink.net">alamccoy@earthlink.net</a> or 509-448-3123 or 509-448-8861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tacoma</td>
<td>Saturday, December 17</td>
<td>Faye McAdams Hands, <a href="mailto:zest4parus@hotmail.com">zest4parus@hotmail.com</a> or 253-942-9233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toppenish NWR</td>
<td>Sunday, December 18</td>
<td>Andy Stepniewski, <a href="mailto:stepnie@nwinfo.net">stepnie@nwinfo.net</a> or 509-877-6639</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tri-Cities</td>
<td>Saturday, December 31</td>
<td>Phil Bartley, <a href="mailto:tamia@charter.net">tamia@charter.net</a> or 509-783-5265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vashon Island</td>
<td>Sunday, January  1</td>
<td>Sue Trevathan, <a href="mailto:suetrevathan@centurytel.net">suetrevathan@centurytel.net</a> or 206-463-1484</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wahkiakum</td>
<td>Thursday, December 29</td>
<td>Andrew Emlen, <a href="mailto:acemlen@pacifier.com">acemlen@pacifier.com</a> or 360-795-8009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walla Walla</td>
<td>Sunday, December 18</td>
<td>Mike Denny, <a href="mailto:m.denny@charter.net">m.denny@charter.net</a> or 509-529-0080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wenatchee</td>
<td>Sunday, January  1</td>
<td>Dan Stephens, <a href="mailto:dstephens@wvc.edu">dstephens@wvc.edu</a> or 509-663-5323 (h) or 509-682-6752 (w)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whidbey Island</td>
<td>Saturday, December 17</td>
<td>Steve Ellis, <a href="mailto:sellis@coup.wednet.edu">sellis@coup.wednet.edu</a> or 360-678-2264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yakima Valley</td>
<td>Sunday, December 17</td>
<td>Denny Granstrand, <a href="mailto:dgranstrand@charter.net">dgranstrand@charter.net</a> or 509-543-2500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A Retrospective of the Washington Bird Record’s Committee

In looking back at the accomplishments of the Washington Ornithological Society and specifically its Washington Bird Records Committee, I am reminded first about my personal experiences of birding in Washington as a young and enthusiastic college student during the 1970s. There were at that time a few brief, but also fine, birding resources available to us. One in particular that got a lot of use from me was *A Field Guide to Bird Finding in Washington* by Terence R. Wahl and Dennis R. Paulson. In fact, my copy was, after a time, literally falling apart and rather abused by my rampant scribbles. The checklists provided were of particular interest to me and they were personally edited with my rarity code numbers and additional species inserted as my own state list grew. With the beginnings of WOS in the summer of 1988, I no longer had just a small circle of friends with whom to share my birding experiences, but an entire community of birders across the state. It is quite impressive to see how we have collectively increased our knowledge of Washington birds since that time and this growth of information is also reflected in the work of the WBRC.

The WBRC’s first Check-list of Washington Birds was published in 1989 (*Washington Birds*, vol. 1, 1989). That edition included 421 species with 13 additionally placed on the Supplementary List. Revisions of that Check-list have been made every couple of years for either a new issue of the Field Card of Washington Birds or in companionship to WBRC Reports published in *Washington Birds*. The last update was prepared in 2002 for the most recent printing of the Field Card. At that time the state list stood at 456 species with an additional 11 species represented on the Supplemental List. Certainly the years since then have produced many rare bird sightings and the next version of the Check-list will include 15 (or thereabouts) new entrants.

Much else has changed since those first years of the WBRC. A new member to the Committee has been selected at the rate of about one every other year. While these new members have brought their own personal experiences and perspectives, the WBRC has also been able to maintain continuity from one year to the next, and has always been able to meet for a vote at least once in every year.

In the five reports thus far published and an additional report near print there is a steady increase in the acceptance rate of the “review species” reports we have reviewed. The records from the First Report of the WBRC had an acceptance rate of 65 percent. Seventy-one percent of the records were accepted in the Second Report, and the Third Report showed a slight increase at 75 percent. Since the Fourth Report we have found the acceptance rate to stand at more or less 90 percent. As we have reviewed and voted to accept or decline over 1000 reports, that increase is significant. I don’t believe that this is an indication of a more liberal attitude among the members of the WBRC, but rather reflects some interesting changes in the birding community.

Birders are certainly more knowledgeable about bird identification today than even ten years ago as there is such an enormous amount of information which is available to all of us now. That access to information is reflected in the higher quality of reports we now receive. Nowadays many of the written reports are supported with very fine photographs or electronically sent “jpegs.” The word of a newly discovered rarity gets out so fast now that it seems as though everyone arrives on the very next day to see it for him or herself. This phenomenon leads to more pictures and multiple observer accounts. Let’s not omit the contributions of the cellphone or two-way radio either. Surely a few rare birds can slip through Washington unnoticed but it is a lot harder for them to do so than it used to be.

Kevin Aanerud, Chairperson of the Washington bird records Committee, e-mail: k_aanerud@comcast.net

---

**SALMO PASS FIELD TRIP**

by Bart Whelton

A WOS group composed about equally of members from the west and east sides of Washington state met at Salmo Pass, Pend Orielle County, on the afternoon of October 15th. Birding the high country on Salmo was a first for all trippers but the leader. Weather over the preceding week had remained seasonably mild with little snow on the ground, however by Saturday evening the wind began to kick up (25-30mph) and by midday Sunday, snow again was falling. The following is a compilation of sightings as individuals made their way to the pass (5910’) and lookout (6820’).

Pend Orielle River near Ione: western screech owl (calling), double-crested cormorant, American crow, and river otter; Sullivan Lake Road: wild turkey; Harvey Creek: American dipper; Sullivan Lake (south end): bald eagle, Canada goose, mallard, common merganser, and red-necked and horned grebes; Sullivan Lake (north end): spotted sandpiper, American robin, black-capped and chestnut-backed chickadees, and northern pygmy-owl; Sullivan Creek Road: ruffed grouse and elk; and Salmo Pass and Lookout: red-tailed and northern rough-legged hawks, American three-toed woodpecker, common raven, gray and Steller's jays, Clark's nutcracker, Townsend's solitaire, red-breasted nuthatch, Cassin's finch, dark-eyed junco, pika and red-tailed chipmunk.

A search for boreal owl between 7 PM and 2:30 AM from Salmo Pass to the Shedroof Divide Trail was partially successful. Three separate individuals were heard giving a weak, muted, muffled version of the “chu-uk” call—none were seen perched, not even flying circles around the group. Apparently, at least this fall, others have basically had the same experience. On October 7th and 22nd, others recorded two (same muted response only) or no boreal owls in clear, calm weather on waxing and waning half-moons respectively.
Report Your Sightings (updated May 2005)

ACCOPITERS: Winter site fidelity study. Cooper's hawks: Blue VID bands (Note right or left leg and engraved number and letter on VID band). Sharp-shinned hawks: either one or two color (only) bands on the same leg. Note right or left leg and top/bottom color if both bands. Other leg has standard aluminum band. Note date, time and location. Report to Jack Bettesworth, 2569 12th Ave W, Seattle, WA 98119, 206-285-5276, jgbett@comcast.net.

AMERICAN CROWS wanted: dead or alive. We still want your observations of color-banded crows. If possible, please record the color and location (top/bottom left leg, top/bottom right leg) of bands. Recently banded crows now have two colors and a metal (Fish & Wildlife) band on one leg, and two colors on the other. In addition, as part of our West Nile virus monitoring efforts in the Puget Sound area, we would like to know about any dead crows you observe. If they appear freshly dead, your county health agency may also want to test them for the virus. Report to: John Withey, jwithey@u.washington.edu, phone: 206-543-2764.

COOPER'S HAWKS: Color bands have been placed on over 850 nestling Cooper's hawks in Victoria, British Columbia since 1996. This is part of a long-term study on its urban-nesting ecology. Each color band is uniquely coded with two vertical, alphanumeric characters and is placed on the left leg; black bands are on males, red bands on females. Please note band code and color, date, time, and location. To date, five different birds have been reported from Washington. Report all sightings to Andy Stewart, BC Conservation Data Centre, Victoria, B.C. (250) 387-9780, or e-mail to: andy.stewart@gems6.gov.bc.ca.

MERLINS: Detailed year-round observations are needed for scientific research on the merlin in Washington. Sightings should include exact location/map, date/time, description of bird(s) and behavior. Send to David Drummond, Coastal Forest Merlin Project, P.O. Box 4123, Bellingham, WA 98227, (360) 671-3804 or e-mail to: merlinology@hotmail.com.

NORTHERN HARRIERS: Patagial markers have been placed on northern harriers as part of a long-term study of populations on Whidbey Island and in the Kent Valley. Please note the color of the tag (yellow, blue, green, or white), which wing it is on, the letter or number printed (in black) on the tag, and if there is a black circle around the letter or number. Note date, time, and exact location. Report to Jack Bettesworth, 2569 12th Ave W, Seattle WA 98119, (206) 285-5276, jgbett@comcast.net.

SONGBIRD SURVEY: We have color-marked ~500 crows as well as many other songbirds in the area and would appreciate any sightings of these. Be on the lookout for banded robins, Wilson's warblers, Swainson's thrushes, song sparrows, spotted towhees, Oregon juncos, winter and Bewick's wrens, and Pacific-slope flycatchers. If possible please record the color and location (top/bottom left leg, top/bottom right leg) of bands. Please report any sightings to Dr. John Marzluff, corvid@u.washington.edu.

STREAKED HORNED LARK RESEARCH: We color-marked ~80 streaked horned larks in Washington and would appreciate any sightings of these birds (coast, Puget trough, Columbia River islands, Willamette Valley, etc.). Please record the color combination (e.g., red over USFWS on right and white over red on left - right and left are the bird's right and left), location and date observed and send to Dr. Scott F. Pearson, scott.pearson@wadnr.gov.

TURKEY VULTURES: The Olympic Vulture Study has been working on two concurrent studies: the fall migration at Salt Creek, and the demographics of our Pacific Northwest vultures. Any wintering or early spring arrival reports from British Columbia, Washington, Oregon, and Idaho will be welcomed. As always, date, location, and number of birds is needed. If possible, report weather, time, and any aspect of behavior. Please send to Diann MacRae, 22622 - 53rd Avenue S.E., Bothell, WA 98021, or to tvulture@vei.net.

New: CLARK'S NUTCRACKERS: Sightings are needed for a three year study of the distribution and timing of movements of nutcrackers throughout Washington, but especially in the Cascades, lowland western Washington, and Olympic Mountains. Year round sightings are important, but sightings outside of the late summer months would be the most valuable (November through June). Send information on the exact location, date and a conservative estimate for number of birds observed (for flocks) to: Teresa Lorenz, teresalorenz@fs.fed.us or 360-956-2277.

RARE BIRD ALERTS

WOS BirdBox (206) 281-9172
Tri Cities Area (509) 627-2473
SE Wash/N Idaho (208) 882-6195
South Idaho (208) 236-3337
Oregon (503) 292-0661
Vancouver, B.C. (604) 737-3074
Victoria, B.C. (250) 592-3381
Okanagan, B.C. (250) 491-7738

Field Notes & Washington Field Notes
FALL DEADLINE: DECEMBER 15
(August — November sightings)

Send bird sightings to:

Tom Aversa
305 NW 75th St
Seattle WA 98103
FieldNotes@wos.org

Washington Review Species – Reports of review species (see Washington Birds 5:1-6 or the WOS Field Card) may be sent to the “Washington Field Notes” compiler or directly to the Washington Bird Records Committee, c/o Phil Mattocks, 5421 Hanson Rd., Ellensburg WA 98926.

Please submit detailed descriptions and drawings or photographs, if possible, of unusual birds.

BAND RECOVERIES (“Avise” leg bands) should be reported. Include the band number, along with how, when, and where the band was recovered, preferably with reference to the nearest town. Persons who report bands receive a Certificate of Appreciation telling when, where, and by whom the bird was banded, so be sure to include your full name and address with all reports.

Report to:

Bird Banding Laboratory
12100 Beech Forest Road, Suite 4037
Laurel MD 20708
Phone: (800) 327-BAND
E-mail: bandreports@patuxent.usgs.gov
http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bbl
The Washington Ornithological Society was chartered in 1988 to increase knowledge of the birds of Washington and to enhance communication among all persons interested in those birds. WOS is a non-profit organization under 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue code.

Memberships extend one year from the month joined. Benefits include:

- **WOSNews** — bimonthly newsletter
- Monthly field trips
- Affordable annual conferences
- **WASHINGTON BIRDS** — scholarly journal

The Washington Ornithological Society is the premier organization for Washington's active birders.

**WASHINGTON ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

POST OFFICE BOX 31783

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 98103-1783

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

### WOS MEMBERSHIP AND RENEWAL FORM

Make check payable to Washington Ornithological Society.

Send form and payment to:

Washington Ornithological Society Membership, P.O. Box 31783, Seattle 98103

- **Name:**
- **Address:**
- **City/State/Zip:**
- **Telephone:** ( )
- **E-mail:**
- Individual Membership ($20): ____  Family Membership ($25): ____


Place an x beside any item you don't want to appear in the WOS directory.

**NOTE:** WOS does not sell or loan its membership list.

### WOS SALES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Description</th>
<th>At Meetings</th>
<th>By Mail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Window decal with circle raven logo – static-cling</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Card of Washington Birds – 3.5”x6.5”, 12 pp. checklist</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WASHINGTON BIRDS</strong> – Annual Journal – issues # 3, 4, 5, 6</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>8.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>issues # 7, 8</td>
<td>8.00</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WOSNews – Newsletter – Most issues available</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T-Shirt — White-headed Woodpecker logo, sizes M, L, XL</td>
<td>15.00</td>
<td>18.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— Raven head logo, sizes L, XL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These prices are for single items. If ordering more than one item of a kind, please call (206) 789-9255 for shipping prices.

Orders should be sent to:

Washington Ornithological Society Sales

P.O. Box 31783, Seattle, WA 98103-1783

### WOS News 100

December 2005 / January 2006

**Table of Contents**

- Prothonotary Warbler in WA 1
- WOS—the early years 1
- Conference announcement 4
- Purple Martins 6
- Color Photo Gallery 8
- Site Guide: Kent Valley North 10
- 2005 CBC Listing 13
- WBRC Retrospective 14
- Report Your Sightings 15