Slowly, I drove over the last speed bump, heading to the west end of Windust Park to pick up MerryLynn. We were in this oasis Corps of Engineers park along the north shore of the Snake River in southern Franklin County, Washington, looking for vagrant eastern warblers. MerryLynn and I had been there about an hour and had walked most of the area, birding and enjoying the outstanding early September afternoon.

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Variegated Flycatcher (Empidonacus varius) in Southeastern Washington 6-7 September 2008: The Story of its Discovery

By Mike Denny

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Variegated Flycatcher drinking from a puddle. Photo by Steve Mlodinow.
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

The Society

WASHINGTON BIRDS

The Washington Ornithological Society publishes a scholarly periodic journal, Washington Birds, Joe Buchanan, editor. The purpose of Washington Birds is to publish information on birds of Washington state and the Pacific Northwest. Papers of general interest independent of geographic region will also be considered. Subject matter may include, but is not limited to, geographic and ecological distribution, seasonal status and migration, breeding biology and general natural history, conservation, identification, faunal lists, site guides, field techniques, and reports on current research. Manuscripts for consideration should be sent to:

Joe Buchanan
2112 Ravenna Ln SE, Olympia 98501
BUCHAJB@dfw.wa.gov

Web Site

http://www.wos.org

Visit the WOS website for up-to-date information on:

• Meetings and field trips
• WOS annual conference information and forms
• Christmas Bird Counts
• Checklists (printable)
• Rare Bird Alert numbers
• Newsletter companion, with color photos and web links

Contact the webmaster, Nancy Hertzel, at WOSWeb@wos.org.

About WOS Publications

WOSNews

WOSNews, the newsletter of the Washington Ornithological Society, is published bimonthly to inform members about Society business, bird sightings, ornithological research, and the fun of birding. Readers are welcome to submit articles, announcements, illustrations, photographs, and other items to the editor for consideration.

Editor Nancy Hertzel WOSNews@wos.org
Production Michael Hobbs BirdMarymoor@verizon.net
Distribution Steve Dang birdingin@hotmail.com

Newsletter printed by Impression Printing, Seattle.

Membership News

Just a little reminder from your membership chair: if you have any changes to your address or email please pass them on to me via email or in writing. Send corrections to Membership@wos.org or to PO Box 31783 Seattle WA 98103-1783.

We are striving to improve our member support which will include publishing the directory on a regular basis. In 2002 we initiated a “Welcome to WOS” letter for new members that includes a complementary checklist and information about membership meetings. We appreciate your feedback. Send us your comments and especially any suggestions you might have to improve WOS.

Susan Fallat, Membership Chair
From the Board – By Eugene “Gene” Hunn

This is my first communiqué since I got elected to the exalted high office of President of WOS. A lot of water has flooded under the bridge since then. First of all, we mourn the death of our friend Patricia Lott. We will sorely miss her generous spirit. She turned a careful and discerning eye on all aspects of WOS administration during her years of service on our Board of Directors. May her soul soar with the swifts and swallows.

The newly elected Board took office October 1, but very soon had to be rather drastically reorganized. Randy Hill stepped down as President at the completion of his two-year term, then graciously agreed to stay on the Board in Patricia’s post. Rob Faucett resigned as Treasurer due to an excess of obligations, but will stay on the Board, filling Ron Fries’ position so that Ron may more fully enjoy his retirement. Brien Meilleur will take the Treasurer position. Kathy Andrich drafted Sharon Aagaard to take over as Secretary so that Kathy could organize WOS fieldtrips, but then had to defer that assignment to care for her mother; so Matt Bartels is our new Field Trips Committee Chair. He may be in touch to sign you up to lead a trip. Our new Board of Directors includes me, Jack Stephens as Vice President, Sharon and Brien as Secretary and Treasurer, with Cindy McCormack joined by our new Directors Scott Downes and Jack Tubbs, plus Randy and Rob. If you have a comment, complaint, or suggestion, you may contact us via email at Board@wos.org.

The Bylaws amendment proposed by the Board for members to consider was duly authorized by a 25-7 vote at a special meeting called before the October 6th monthly members gathering in Seattle. The proposed new Article IX: Committees text was published together with the then current text for comparison and the Board’s rationale for the changes in WOSNews 116 and on an enclosed mail-in ballot in WOSNews 117. The new Article IX institutes term limits for members of the Washington Bird Records Committee (WBRC) and specifies that new appointees be approved by a consensus of the WOS Board and the WBRC. I will work closely with the current WBRC to negotiate a smooth transition to the new rotation, which will require several years to implement fully, as some current members have served (and served very well) for the past twenty years. Term limits are standard practice for most state and national bird records committees and should encourage broader participation in the work of the WBRC by qualified WOS members. WBRC members should be exceptionally knowledgeable with regard to the identification and distribution of North American birds and be willing and able to devote the time and energy required to review the large number of unusual sightings reported each year in our state carefully and critically. The decisions of the WBRC represent an invaluable scientific record.

In recent months, we have experienced some difficulties keeping our financial records current. Our new Treasurer, Dr. Brien Meilleur, is not only an avid birder and long-time Seattle area resident, but has many years experience with the financial management of non-profit organizations, first as Manager of the Amy B. H. Greenwell Ethnobotanical Garden of Hawaii’s Bishop Museum, then as President and Executive Director of the Center for Plant Conservation at the Missouri Botanical Garden. We have been assured by WAMU – where our accounts are held – that there will be no service disruption due to the recent take-over of WAMU by JP Morgan Chase. WOS is in great financial shape. If you have questions for Brien, you may get in touch with him at Treasurer@wos.com. Brien also is looking for a volunteer to take charge of our minor merchandising operations. Any takers?

The week before her death, Patricia Lott traveled to Kelso to meet with local birders and to evaluate facilities for our 2009 annual conference, which is set for Kelso/Longview Friday, September 18, through Monday, September 21, 2009. Mark your calendars. Jack Stephens has taken over the task of directing the organizing committee for the 2009 conference. As you may recall, Jack did a great job organizing our 2007 Aberdeen meeting. We hope that getting an early start organizing for 2009 and lining up top local birding talent to plan and lead field trips will help us avoid some of the difficulties we experienced this past June in Walla Walla, and we hope the weather proves less daunting. Late September is an exciting time to bird the lower Columbia River.

Good Birding to you all.

Tribute to Patricia Lott, by Gina Sheridan

Our fair birding community was recently jolted with the tragic news that Patricia Lott had passed away in a car accident in Seattle. Patricia was 57 years old and had been a highly talented opera singer as well as an excellent birder, a dynamic board member of WOS, and a beloved friend of many.

Passing from this world in Snetsinger-like fashion, Patricia imbued many of our memories with music and a zest for life.

Christmas Bird Counts

This year’s Christmas Bird Counts will take place between 14 December 2008 and 5 January 2009. Consider joining the thousands of volunteers across the nation as we count the birds in our local territories. All levels of expertise are welcome, from beginning to experienced birders. You can start at dawn to look for owls and keep birding all day, or join the count at noon, whatever works for you; then gather afterwards with your fellow birders for hot drinks and sharing stories. To find a Christmas Bird Count in your area, check the WOS website (www.wos.org) or your local Audubon Chapter.
December 1, 2008: Members’ Photo Night

Bring your photos and slides to share! There will be a slide projector available. Digital photos can be on either CD or USB flash.

January 5, 2009: The Birds of Marymoor Park

Michael Hobbs

Michael Hobbs will discuss the birds of Marymoor Park. Michael has been conducting a weekly, year-round bird survey at this popular King County park since April 1994. His walks started out as solo jaunts, but for most of the trips, he's been joined by Brian Bell. In recent years, he's opened up the walks to many birders, but the focus remains on trying to see and document as many birds and bird species as possible - to date, some 850 visits and 204 species. Michael will present a virtual tour with maps and photos, as well as information about the birds and their status. Additionally, he'll discuss his ideas about the process of censusing birds and the analysis of the data collected. Michael has been birding in Washington state for over 20 years, and is a Seattle Audubon Master Birder. He's been on the Board of the Friends of Marymoor Park since its inception over a decade ago, and has long been an active volunteer with WOS.

February 2, 2009: Biological and Political Impacts of Barred Owls in the Pacific Northwest

Lisa Hayward

Lisa Hayward has been studying Spotted Owls in Northern California for four years as a post-doctoral research associate in the Center for Conservation Biology at the University of Washington. At the February WOS Meeting, she will talk about the recent spread of Barred Owls through the range of the Spotted Owl, how Barred Owls affect Spotted Owls, and how managers and policymakers are responding.

March 2, 2009: The Owl and The Woodpecker: Encounters with North America’s Most Iconic Birds

Paul Bannick

Award-winning photographer Paul Bannick will take you on a visual journey of 11 key North American habitats through the needs of all 41 of North America's owl and woodpecker species. This stunning photographic study will be accompanied by field stories, and rich natural history derived from thousands of hours in the field. His talk will look at the way owls and woodpeckers define and enrich their habitat and how their life histories are intertwined.

Mr. Bannick specializes in the natural history of North America, with a special focus on his beloved Pacific Northwest. He has coupled his love of the outdoors with his skill as a photographer to create images intended to foster intimacy between the viewer and subject in order to inspire education and conservation.

April 6, 2009: Wildlife Recovery

Dr. John Huckabee

In 2008, PAWS Wildlife Center reached the milestone of having cared for over 100,000 animals since it began wildlife rehabilitation activities in 1981. The center works with wild species found in the Pacific Northwest with the aim of restoring their health and returning them to the wild. Dr. John Huckabee is a wildlife veterinarian who has worked for PAWS Wildlife Center since 1998, seeing on average about 175 species of wildlife annually. His presentation will focus on what is involved in treating and rehabilitating wild birds and mammals, illustrated with examples of both commonly encountered and very unusual cases. One such case is that of a Laysan Albatross that was found in downtown Seattle in April 2005.

Dr. John Huckabee graduated as a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine from Texas A&M University in 1985. He practiced in small animal hospitals and veterinary emergency clinics in the Houston, Texas, area for several years. He has been actively involved with wildlife rehabilitation and has worked closely with wildlife rehabilitators throughout his professional career. Since 1991, he has worked exclusively as a wildlife rehabilitation veterinarian. Dr. Huckabee moved to this area to work with PAWS in 1998, and has served on several nonprofit boards of directors, advisory boards, steering committees, task forces, and editorial boards since the late 1980s. He has made presentations at numerous wildlife and veterinary conferences.

Directions: From I-5, take SR 520 East. Take the Montlake Blvd. NE exit and turn north towards the University of Washington campus. Stay in right lane and go north on Montlake Blvd. over the bridge and past the stadium. The road will curve to the right around the Montlake Fill and merge with NE 45th St. You will quickly approach a five-way intersection. At the intersection, turn right onto Mary Gates Memorial Drive. The Center for Urban Horticulture is two long blocks down on the right. There is plenty of free parking at the facility. We use the main meeting room, the backside of which faces the road. Bus numbers 25, 65, and 75 all stop at NE 45th and Mary Gates Memorial Drive. A map can be found at http://depts.washington.edu/urbhort/html/info/contact.html.

WOS Field Trips

Field Trips allow members to explore new places or revisit familiar haunts. Each member may join up to four trips per year (excluding annual conference trips). Non-members may attend as a member’s guest once per year. Questions about field trips should be directed to the trip leader(s). If you would like to lead a field trip, or would like to suggest a location for a field trip, send a note to FieldTrips@wos.org.

Saturday, 20 December 2008—Wahkiakum County

Ken Knittle will lead this field trip to Puget Island, Julia Butler Hansen NWR, Covered Bridge Rd., and Altona. Species hoped for include (Dusky type) Canada Geese, White-winged Surf scoters, Pelagic Cormorants, and White-tailed Kites. Be prepared for rain and wind. Bring your own snacks/food. For more details, contact Ken Knittle by email at washingtonbirder@hotmail.com or by phone at (360) 574-2590. Limited to five cars.

Saturday, 31 January 2009—Skagit and Samish Flats

Bob Kuntz will lead a trip to the Skagit and Samish Flats in Skagit County. Target birds will be raptors (falcons, hawks, accipiters, eagles, and owls), Snow Geese, Tundra and Trumpeter swans, and winter sparrows. Bring scope, lunch, and beverages. Dress for potentially cold, wet weather. The trip will meet at 8:00 AM and should finish by late afternoon (around 4:00 PM). Meet at the Park-and-Ride at the gas station just east of I-5 at the Conway exit (Exit 221). Limit of ten (10) participants. If you have further questions, contact Bob at wk) 360-854-7320, (hm) 360-424-9099 (evenings only) or by email at Robert_Kuntz@nps.gov.
large tree and yelling, “Look, look! A flycatcher!” From my perspective, all I could see was a single American Robin perched up where MerryLynn was pointing. Stepping back with the sun behind me, I looked up and there, perched off to the left and above the robin, was a streak-breasted bird about the size of a Western Tanager, smaller than the nearby robin. I watched as it sallied out several times to snag flying bugs. We both blurted out that it looked like a Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher, as we had both caught a hint of rust red along the outer web of the edge of the tail feathers and the rump. Then the robin began to harass it by alighting right next to it and rushing at it. After changing its perch several times due to the robin’s aggressive behavior, this flycatcher flew west out of the park and over to a tree by a home near a large grain elevator beside the Snake River. MerryLynn grabbed the camera and I the scope and off we followed to get a better look at this unknown flycatcher. Upon looking through the scope, we knew we had better get some photos, and then alert folks of this bird’s presence. As we viewed this bird through the 30x 66mm KOWA scope, we saw the following.

What We Saw

Perched at the top of a Tree of Heaven, this bird constantly flew out and caught flying insects. It changed its perch to a dead-top birch and then to a dead-topped Siberian Elm, where we were able to get many photos and good looks. This bird had cream under-tail coverts and a yellow wash on the lower belly; there was a yellow wash across the flanks on up and across the upper chest. The upper chest and flanks to the mid-belly were streaked with heavy dark splotches. The throat was pale with a dusky broad moustache line from the corner of the lower mandible. There was a noticeable white line that ran from the corner of the mouth back to and across the side neck. There was a dark mask that ran from the nare and upper mandible through the dark eyes, progressively lightening in color as it reached the nape. There was a broad white supercilium that ran from the forehead over the eye, back to the nape. The bill was dark on the upper mandible and one third pale-toned at the base of the lower mandible. The bill seemed short to us for a Sulphur-bellied. Then there was a dark cap that ran down the nape. The mantle was blotchy, dark to pale gray. The rump was pale with dark-edged feathers and a hint of rust wash. The lower rump was bright rust red, as were the outer edges of the webs of the outer tail feathers. All of the tail feathers were a dark slate gray, with some outer edges in rust red.

The only field guide we had along was the new Smithsonian Guide to North American Birds and it does not have the Variegated in it. We later looked at the 5th ed. National Geographic Field Guide and that has a very nice painting of the bird (Dunn et al. 2006). With more clouds moving in, we took several more photos and then knowing that this was a very rare bird, we began to head for the car when a guy from the house came out and we showed this “Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher” to him and told him it was a super rare bird. He looked and marveled, then asked if we had ever heard of Washtucna?

MerryLynn grabbed the cell phone to call Nancy LaFramboise about this bird. No service. So we raced up out of Windust Park to get coverage. Twenty-five miles later, we were able to get to a phone and call Nancy, who graciously put it on Tweeters and Inland. We then headed for Basset Park in the hope that there would be a birder in the area. There was no one there, so home we drove to College Place.

The Process of Identifying This Rare Bird

Upon walking through the door, I downloaded our photos and fired several off to Steve Mlodinow, along with an email describing the “Sulphur-bellied” at Windust Park. The next email was from Charlie Wright, who wanted to see a photo; I sent him one. Steve then replied that he did not believe it was a Sulphur-bellied, but perhaps a Piratic, Streaked, or Variegated flycatcher – any of which would make this bird a super “mega rarity.” Charlie too replied that he believed it was perhaps a Piratic or Variegated. Meanwhile, I had pored over six South American references that I had and gotten a mixed bag of results. Wetmore’s Birds of the Republic of Panama described this bird to a T, but it was identified as a Piratic Flycatcher (Wetmore 1972). (Later, I learned this was written before the two were split.) At 2:15 AM on 7 September, we went to bed believing we had located a Piratic Flycatcher. Early the next morning, it was confirmed that what the robin had chased and what MerryLynn had pointed out was indeed a Variegated Flycatcher. This is the first time this South American flycatcher has been located in western North America.

There are three other accepted records. The first was of a bird at Biddeford Pool, York Co., Maine, on 5-11 November 1977 by Susan Bowie and Dave Whittier (Abbott & Finch 1978). The second Variegated was located at Reelfoot Lake, Tennessee, 13-15 May 1984 by Mike Todd; and the third was in Ontario, Toronto Islands, Canada 7 October through 6 November 1993 (WSO 2008). This species is well known for its ability to wander great distances (de Schauensee, 1964) and should be watched for along waterways in deciduous riparian habitat anywhere in Washington state.

We would like to thank Steve Mlodinow and Charlie Wright for their great help in nailing this bird down to species.

Literature Cited


Wisconsin Society for Ornithology: Mid-continent Rare Birds, www.wsobirds.org
PHOTO GALLERY

[Images of various birds]
Clockwise starting upper left:

Rose-breasted Grosbeak, near Kent, King, 07/05/2008. Photo by Dan Streiffert.
Evening Grosbeak, South Prairie, Pierce, 05/04/2008. Photo by Ryan Shaw.
Indigo Bunting, Coppei Creek, Walla Walla, 06/07/2008. Photo by Tom Mansfield.
Ruff, near La Conner, Skagit, 05/07/2008. Photo by Ryan Merrill.
Northern Shrike, Marymoor Park, King, 11/04/2008. Photo by Tom Sanders.
White-faced Ibis, Sammamish, King, 05/17/2008. Photo by Margaret Saint Claire.
Surf Scoters with one male White-winged, Blaine, Whatcom, 02/02/2008. Photo by John Tubbs.
Chestnut-sided Warbler, Bottle Beach, Grays Harbor, 08/14/2008. Photo by Ryan Merrill.
Atkinson served as editor until the October/November 1998 issue. He was succeeded by Diann MacRae from December 1998 to May 2000. Larry Goldstein stepped in from June 2000 to December 2001. Diann MacRae stepped back in and again served as our editor from February 2002 to September 2007. She was followed by our current editor, Nancy Hertzel. During Diann’s second term, she continually improved the newsletter, and Nancy continues meeting this high standard. One of the most consistent features of WOSNews has been the Field Notes section, assembled by Russell Rogers from 1998 to 2001, and since June 2001 by Tom Aversa. This is an incredible data source for anyone curious about seasonal distribution of birds in Washington.

One of our struggles during this time has been the effort to bring our journal, Washington Birds, back into regular publication. Changes of editors, convincing authors to submit papers in a timely manner, hoping reviewers would complete their tasks promptly, and journal layout, have been some of the challenges we have faced. Volumes 7, 8, and 9 have been issued. The Washington Bird Records Committee (WBRC) publishes periodic reports in Washington Birds and the 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th reports were published during our second decade.

Our annual Conference is always a high point of the year. We continued our tradition of alternating the meeting between the eastern and western parts of the state. In February 1998, we met in Mount Vernon and covered some of the best winter birding spots on our field trips. The conference in Yakima in August 1999 let us see that summer was not a birdless time in eastern Washington, but truly provides good birding. In September 2000, we met in Port Angeles and had the chance to see the extremely good birding in the area during early autumn. June 2001 found us in the Columbia Gorge, where we met in The Dalles, Oregon, and let our members experience the rich birding opportunities on both sides of the river. June 2002 brought a return to Okanogan County, site of some of the richest breeding bird locations in the state. This was an extremely popular meeting. Southwestern Washington beckoned in September 2003, when we met in Long Beach. This far southwestern part of the state was new territory for lots of folks, and again allowed us to overlap with our friends to the south in Oregon. June 2004 found us on the eastern border with Idaho, meeting in the Pullman/Moscow area. Everyone agreed that spring in the Palouse is truly wonderful, with great birding. Bellingham in September 2005 brought us to the northwestern corner of the state, and let us also bird across the border into British Columbia. We broke new ground in June 2006 when we met in Republic. This was the first time for a Conference in a small town, and the friendliness and cooperation of the townspersons in providing accommodations and meeting places was notable. The majority of the members attending had not been into this part of Washington before, and we heard lots of comments like “I’ll come back here again.” The birding was outstanding. The Grays Harbor coast drew us to Aberdeen in September 2007 and allowed us to expand our range of field trip locations. In June 2008, we were back in Walla Walla after way too long. For most of us, the Blue Mountains and surrounding areas once again proved to have excellent birding.

These conferences have been so successful due to the supremely dedicated efforts of many people. Folks who have gone beyond what is required in recent years have included Diane and Tom Weber of Pullman for the Pullman/Moscow conference, Bart Whelton for the Republic conference, and Mike and MerryLynn Denny for the Walla Walla conference. This tradition was being carried on for the 2009 conference by Patricia Lott, who had assumed the mantle of Conference Committee Chair. Sadly, she was killed in an accident in September 2008. She is missed by many.

Many significant birding events have occurred during this second 10 years. In early May 1998, a combination of far-offshore weather patterns resulted in large numbers of Bristle-thighed Curlews – which normally migrate from the central Pacific directly north to Alaska - moving northward along the Pacific Coast, particularly in Oregon and Washington. Birders from all over the continent were drawn to this opportunity to see one of the most sought-after species, in easily accessible locations. A Crested Caracara, usually found in Mexico and south Texas, showed up in Neha Bay in January of 1998 and was eventually accepted by the WBRC. A Eurasian Kestrel, a first for the lower 48, appeared on the Samish Flats in November 1999, was identified by Bud Anderson and his Falcon Research Group, and again had folks coming from around the country to see it. In December 2004, a European bird, the Redwing, was found in Olympia by WOS member Gene Revelas, and once again the crowds came from around North America. Other state firsts include: Yellow-throated Warbler in Twisp in October 2003; Temminck's Stint in Ocean Shores in November 2004 (thanks to Patrick Sullivan); Falcated Duck on the Samish Flats in February 2005; Smith’s Longspur at Marymoor Park in Redmond in August 2006; and Variegated Flycatcher in Windust Park along the Snake River in September 2008 (thanks to MerryLynn Denny). These are just a few of the outstanding bird sightings provided by our increasing numbers of birders roaming the state.

One of the most remarkable birding events took place in 2001 when Marv Breece put 30,000 miles on his car, covered the state from top to bottom and east to west, enlisted the help of most of the top birders in Washington and managed to see 359 species in a single year. When asked about his accomplishment, he grinned and gave a big sigh.

This decade also saw the successful efforts of Kevin Li, joined by other enthusiastic birders, in bringing the Purple Martin back to our area. Through the indefatigable efforts of Kevin, scores (hundreds?) of martin houses and gourds were erected and maintained around Puget Sound. This resulted in the return of the martins! Unfortunately, Kevin died during an underwater dive in January 2006. He has been missed.

This review of our second 10 years has to mention the most consistent team of birders covering the state – Ruth and Patrick Sullivan. They were out in the field constantly, and literally could be found almost anywhere within Washington’s borders and at any time of year. They reported on all their trips, from locations in the most out-of-the-way parts of the state, and continually urged the rest of us to get out and observe the birds. Patrick had excellent eyesight, hearing, and observational skills. Numerous people have recounted how they would be birding with the Sullivans and, even while talking to them, Patrick would swing around and point out a bird in the distance or high overhead. It was a great tragedy that after successfully leading field trips for the Aberdeen Conference, Patrick took his own life. In a remarkable outpouring, hundreds of emails were posted to Tweeters and to his mother, Ruth, relating Patrick’s influence on birders. WOS renamed its Young Birder’s Fund, the “Patrick Sullivan Young Birder’s Fund” in his honor. On a personal note, it was most gratifying to be with Ruth this past February during her annual Okanogan WOS trip and to see her regaining her confidence and enthusiasm for birding.
Washington Bird Records Committee (WBRC) Update
By Tom Aversa

This is the first WBRC update in WOSNews since the February/March 2006 issue. Several changes have occurred in that period. The WOS Board proposed amending the Bylaws to specify term limits for membership on the committee. The proposed amendments were approved by a vote of the WOS membership at a special meeting October 6, 2008. How these changes will be instituted is being negotiated between the WBRC and the Board to assure a smooth transition to the new rotation system. Members will serve two-year terms which may be renewed once, at which time the individual must rotate off the committee, and remain off for at least one year before becoming eligible for re-election. New members will be named to the committee by a vote of the current WBRC members with the approval of the WOS Board. Nominations for new members can be forwarded to the President of WOS or to the WBRC Chair.

Phil Mattocks rotated off the committee in 2008. Phil was one of the founding members and served as secretary from inception to 2005. Ryan Merrill has been elected to replace Phil, and will join Kevin Aanerud, Tom Aversa, Steve Mlodinow, Dennis Paulson, Bob Sundstrom, and Bill Tweit. Nominations for additional replacements are welcome.

An updated checklist was completed and sent to the WOS Board for publication and has also been posted on the WOS website (www.wos.org). The state list now stands at 481, with eight additional species represented by single-person sight records and four more historically recorded species which have not been documented in the state for over 50 years.

New species added up through the latest WBRC meeting on February 16, 2008, have included Taiga Bean-Goose, Whooper Swan, Baikal Teal, Common Eider, Greater Shearwater, Ashy Storm-Petrel, Glossy Ibis, Crested Caracara, Common Ringed Plover, Red-necked Stint, Little Stint, Temminck’s Stint, Black-tailed Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Alder Flycatcher, Northern Wheatear, Bay-breasted Warbler, Smith’s Longspur, and Painted Bunting. Blue-footed Booby, Ivory Gull, Philadelphia Vireo, Blue-headed Vireo, and Black-throated Green Warbler were also added by being moved to the main list from supplemental lists, while Dusky Thrush was added to the single-observer sight record supplemental list.

Another species was added when Blue Grouse was split into Sooty and Dusky grouse. Mute Swan was removed from the state list since there are no self-sustaining populations from which vagrants would reasonably originate. (Why not the Vancouver Island population?) Black-backed Wagtail was also removed from the list since it was merged with White Wagtail by the AOU.

Species removed from the state-review list in 2008 included Manx Shearwater, White-faced Ibis, Red-shouldered Hawk, Bar-tailed Godwit, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Ruff, Xantus’s Murrelet, Eurasian Collared Dove, and Tricolored Blackbird. These had all exceeded the threshold of 20 records in the last 10-year period. Borderline species such as Tufted Duck, Tropical Kingbird, and Rose-breasted Grosbeak were left on the review list due to difficulties identifying females and immatures, or closely related species.

WBRC would appreciate receiving supporting details for any review species (in italics on the checklist). Send write-ups and photographs to the address on the WOS website or to WBRC secretary Doug Schonewald at dschone8@donobi.net.

Watch the WBRC section of the WOS website for additional updates and additions. We are currently working on getting a tabular accounting of all accepted records posted among other things. The next issue of Washington Birds should include a summary of deliberations not covered in Volume 10 of Washington Birds in the form of the eighth WBRC report.
Hurricane Ike: Damage to Bird Habitat

Reports are still coming in about the impact of Hurricane Ike on the immediate Texas coast, and we can share some news items pertaining to destruction at birding areas and bird habitats. The 110-mph winds and a 20-foot storm surge certainly had an impact.

As an indication of the force of Ike, the five-mile-long Texas City Dike across from Galveston was almost washed away. Celebrated as the world’s longest man-made fishing pier, the dike is in such disrepair that city leaders say it will remain closed indefinitely. The dike is primarily a birding observation site, though not necessarily vital bird habitat.

But in case you were wondering, the adjacent habitat was clobbered. The Bolivar Flats and High Island Sanctuaries, run by the Houston Audubon Society, suffered. Bolivar Flats was littered with debris, including at least two large shipping containers. Oil and hazardous material spills have been reported. At High Island, litter, broken trees, dead and bloated cattle, and vegetation saturated by intrusive saltwater mark the scene.

A number of Texas State properties have reported damage, including the J. D. Murphee Wildlife Management Area (with an oil spill impacting an estimated 1,200 acres) and the Bessie Heights Marsh of the Lower Neches WMA (with some oiling on about 2,000 acres). Concern over these spills involves threats to waterfowl, ducks, and geese expected to start arriving in late October.

The impact to three local National Wildlife Refuges - Anahuac, McFaddin, and Texas Point - has also been considerable. Aransas NWR, a bit farther down the coast, was also hit. Hurricane Ike caused an estimated $260 million in damage to the refuges. The destruction of structures, roads, and visitor facilities was one element, and habitat devastation, especially the saltwater inundation of freshwater and brackish habitat, along with oil leakage, was another. In many areas, prescribed burning may prove to be the first step in recovery. Elsewhere, it is hoped that a good rain will flush out some of the salt, reviving a zone currently brown for miles.


Bulletin archives can be accessed on the National Wildlife Refuge Association site (www.refugenet.org).

Volunteer Positions

WOS Conference Committee
The WOS Board is looking for members who would like to be involved in organizing the annual conference. The planning of this event includes research and recommendation of sites, arranging for facilities and service providers, managing registration, and assisting the Treasurer with expenses and revenues. Please contact Jack Stephens at VP@wos.org if interested.

Membership Chair
We are looking for a member who would like to take over as Membership Chair. This position is detail-oriented, but not very time-consuming, and can be done from any location in the state. It involves email communication with members with regard to membership issues, and short reports to the Board detailing current membership numbers. Some knowledge of Excel spreadsheets would be useful. For more information, contact Susan Fallat at sungrebes@gmail.com.

RARE BIRD ALERTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Phone</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WOS BirdBox</td>
<td>(206) 364-1162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Idaho</td>
<td>(208) 236-3337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oregon</td>
<td>(503) 292-0661</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vancouver, B.C.</td>
<td>(604) 737-3074</td>
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<tr>
<td>Victoria, B.C.</td>
<td>(250) 592-3381</td>
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</tbody>
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Field Notes & Washington Field Notes

AUTUMN DEADLINE: DECEMBER 15
(August—November sightings)

Send bird sightings to:

Tom Aversa
305 NW 75th St
Seattle WA 98117
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 WOS, P.O. Box 31783, Seattle, WA 98103.

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
Surveys and Studies

All sightings and reports are welcomed by the researchers.

ACCIPITERS: 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 two 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. Please report any sightings to Dr. John Marzluff, corvid@u.washington.edu.

BURROWING OWLS

Year-round sightings of banded Burrowing Owls in the Columbia Basin of eastern WA. Owls banded during 2000-2004 will have a larger colored band on either the left or right leg, in addition to a smaller aluminum band. Owls banded as adults received a BLUE, GREEN, or RED band (males left leg, females right leg) while unsexed juveniles received a PURPLE or ORANGE band (left leg). All banded owls are now adults. The codes are unique, with two numbers and/or letters, next to or above and below each other, and with or without a horizontal or vertical bar separating. If you see a banded owl and can read even a portion of the code or determine color, please note the date and location, which leg, and report it to Randy Hill at work at (509) 488-2668 ext. 14, home (509) 488-9418, or by e-mail at randy_hill@fws.gov.

COASTAL RAPTORS

Colored leg bands (Peregrine Falcons, Gyrfalcons, and Bald Eagles) and leg flags (Merlins) have been placed on raptors on beaches at Ocean Shores, Grayland, and the Long Beach Peninsula. Please note band or leg flag code, color, date, time, and location. Report sightings to Dan Varland at (360) 580-2817 or by email at daniel.varland@rayonier.com.

COOPER'S HAWKS

Color bands have been placed on over 1,200 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, >12 different marked hawks have been reported from Washington. Report all sightings to Andy Stewart, BC Conservation Data Centre, Victoria, B.C. (250) 387-9780, or andy.stewart@gov.bc.ca.

FERRUGINOUS and SWAINSON'S HAWKS

Color bands have been placed on over 1,200 nestling Ferruginous and Swainson's Hawks in the general Arlington, Oregon area of the Columbia Basin in spring 2007. This is part of a wind-power funded monitoring effort. Banding may continue in the same general area in 2008. All chicks were banded with a unique color band on one leg and a metal band on the other leg. Please note color band combination, date, and location. Report sightings to Scott Downes, Northwest Wildlife Consultants, Inc. (509) 833-8331 or s.downes@nw-wildlifeconsultants.com

MERLINS

The Merlin Falcon Foundation (a 501{c}3 organization), invites you to participate in a regional citizen scientist investigation of the little-known Coastal Merlins. Please visit our evolving website at www.merlinfalconfoundation.org and help our national educational programs on behalf of Merlin. We gratefully acknowledge your year-round Merlin observations. Thank you for becoming a Merlin Steward and "Helping to Keep 'em Wild!"

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 whether or not 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, or jgbett@comcast.net.

SONGBIRD SURVEY

We have color-marked more than 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.

TURKEY VULTURES

The Olympic Vulture Study is working on two concurrent studies: the fall migration at Salt Creek, and the demographics of our Pacific Northwest vultures. Any sightings 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 SE, Bothell, WA 98021, or to tvulture@vei.net.

WESTERN BLUEBIRDS

The San Juan Islands Western Bluebird Reintroduction Project has placed colored leg bands on eight pair of birds translocated to San Juan Island during the 2007 breeding season. Each leg has a unique combination of two colored bands to assist in monitoring birds during this five-year study. Please note the color combination for each leg, date, observed location and send information to: Barbara Jensen, San Juan Islands Audubon Society, (360)378-3068 or skylark@rockisland.com.
WOS Membership and Renewal

Make check payable to the Washington Ornithological Society. Send form and payment to:

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

Place an X in the box beside any item you do not want to appear in the WOS directory.

☐ Name(s): ________________________________

☐ Address: ________________________________

☐ City/State/Zip: __________________________

☐ Telephone: (_____) _______________________  ☐ Work: (_____) ____________________

☐ Email: __________________________________

Individual Membership ($25)________ or Family Membership ($30)________

Donation to the Patrick Sullivan Young Birders Fund: __________

Is this membership: New?_______ Continuing?_______ Change of information?_______

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