

WOS NEWS



WASHINGTON ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter Number 12 • April 1991

"...to increase our knowledge of the birds of Washington and to enhance communication among all persons interested in those birds."

BIRDS OF OKANOGAN HIGHLIGHT ANNUAL MEETING

From the sagebrush desert to the Pacific coast and now on to the Okanogan highlands. The WOS Third Annual Meeting features a new environment for many Washington birders.

This year we will meet at the Cedars Inn in Okanogan, 21-23 June, and venture out in daylight and dark to places with exotic names like Sanpoil River, Freezeout Ridge, Chesaw, Night-hawk, and Sinlahekin Valley. The meeting schedule and registration form are included in this newsletter.

We will be looking for the birds especially sought in north-eastern Washington: Northern Waterthrush, American Redstart, Pygmy Nuthatch, Rosy Finch, Blue and Spruce grouses, Boreal Chickadee, Barrow's Goldeneye, Common Loon, Northern Goshawk, Williamson's Sapsucker, Three-toed and Black-backed woodpeckers and Pine Grosbeak—to name a few.

Come evening, and we plan owling on both Friday and Satur-

day night, we'll gather up good luck charms and set out in search of Great Horned, Pygmy, Flamulated, Saw-whet, Long-eared, Great Gray and maybe more!

Preliminary tour leaders include Ron Friesz, Gene Hunn, AndyStepniewski, Bill Tweit, and Wayne Weber.

The Saturday afternoon workshop will feature Richard Canning, author of *Birds of the Okanogan Valley*, speaking on "Breeding Bird Diversity in the Okanogan Valley" (have Washingtonians figured out yet that British Columbians spell it differently?). The dinner's entertainment will be an illustrated discussion on owls, moderated by Dennis Paulson. Members are encouraged to bring owl slides. If the No-host Bar has been sufficiently well attended, maybe we'll have a competitive owl hoot.

The registration deadline is 1 June, and the dinner room will fit only 80, so register early. If you have any questions, call Fred Bird at (206) 526-5671.

LOOKING FOR A JOB?

Just a reminder that two WOS board positions and all three officers—president, secretary, and treasurer—are open and will be voted on at the annual meeting in June. You need not be present to run for office. If you are interested or have questions, please call Fred Bird at (206) 526-5671.

THE
PAY
IS
TERRIBLE,
BUT
THE
COMPANY'S
GREAT

NEXT MEETINGS

The next **Seattle** meetings will be at the Burke Museum on **2 May** and **6 June**. Bring any bird slides you would like to share, although they don't have to be as spectacular as the albino Red-necked Grebe of the April meeting.

The next **Whatcom-Skagit** meetings will be on **24 April** and **29 May** at the Fairhaven Library in Bellingham.

WOS MEMBERS LOW IN THEIR OWN ESTIMATION

Bud D'Veck

During the December WOS meeting at Camp Long, I showed the group a set of five slides, each with a flock of birds on it. Everyone had a few seconds to estimate the number of birds in the flock, then wrote it down. Marcia Midkiff and I then collected and analyzed the estimates. The results showed an almost incredible variation, although perhaps not surprising (see table to right).

PHOTO	ACTUAL COUNT	ESTIMATES				MODE % OF ACTUAL
		MIN.	MAX.	MEAN	MODE	
1.	55	37	120	55	47	85
2.	100	50	200	83	75	75
3.	125	40	250	115	77	62
4.	555	125	2000	417	275	50
5.	569	100	2000	467	340	60

POB 19538, Seattle, WA 98109

SPRING SHOREBIRD CENSUS

Joe Buchanan

Cascadia Research Collective, of Olympia, has been contacted by Point Reyes Bird Observatory to organize a spring shorebird census in Washington on 27-28 April 1991. This census is part of a large-scale project being conducted throughout western North America by PRBO. Cascadia will organize and coordinate the count, but all other functions of the research effort will be handled by PRBO. This census ultimately will provide information that PRBO will use to identify important shorebird sites throughout the West. The information will later be used in a long-term monitoring program of shorebird populations in North America.

The primary objective this year is to identify important sites and record the abundance of birds at those sites. Grays Harbor and Willapa Bay are already recognized as important sites on a regional or international basis. However, there are many other sites that support large numbers of shorebirds. To ensure that none of the important local or regional sites is missed, PRBO is interested in obtaining counts from all sites that support >1,000 shorebirds.

The emphasis of the 1991 census will be the Puget Sound basin and adjacent waters, including Hood Canal, Strait of Juan de Fuca, etc. Anyone interested in contributing count data from east of the mountains is encouraged to do so!

The count will be held on the weekend of 27-28 April, although counts one or two days before or after those dates may be possible. Anyone interested in volunteering on the spring count

should write to Joe Buchanan at Cascadia Research Collective, 218 1/2 W. Fourth Avenue, Olympia, WA 98501, or call (206) 943-7325. Cascadia will contact volunteers and coordinate the count beginning in April. Participants will receive project background information and count data sheets and questionnaires from PRBO.

Please turn out to count shorebirds this spring and help us begin the long-overdue documentation of population trends of these birds.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you who participated in the FIRST ANNUAL PUGET SOUND WINTER SHOREBIRD CENSUS. Count coverage was excellent, and, although the weather was poor, I feel the first year's effort was a huge success! I have not yet summarized the count results, but it is fairly evident that shorebird numbers were lower than in most years. I will prepare a report on the first winter count to submit for publication in WASHINGTON BIRDS.



MORE BIRDING ETIQUETTE

Jeff Wisman

On 25 August 1990, Tom Rogers led a Spokane Audubon Society field trip to Reardan. In the October issue of THE PYGMY OWL, Tom reported the following: "At Reardan we were informed that the owner of the land west of the road doesn't want anyone entering there anymore, citing problems with visitors who left gates open and loosened wires by crawling through fences."

I don't know if this has anything to do with the Piping Plover observers or not, but it's too bad. I personally know of two people who did trespass, although Rick Hudson specifically cautioned on the Seattle Audubon hot line to observe "no trespassing" signs.

N 22 Willow Rd. #13, Spokane, WA 99206

WASHINGTON ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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PROJECT IDEAS FOR MEMBERS

Joe Buchanan

In the last WOSNEWS, it was made very clear that the delay in the printing of Volume 2 of WASHINGTON BIRDS was related to a manuscript shortage. Such a shortage of submitted material can be rectified by a more active participation by WOS members in contributing manuscripts to the journal. Ultimately, the success of WASHINGTON BIRDS will reflect the level of involvement of the membership in this regard.

Although there are many gaps to fill in our knowledge of Washington's birds, identifying these gaps may not be obvious to all. Consequently, WOS members may not realize that there are many opportunities to initiate or participate in projects the results of which will be publishable in WASHINGTON BIRDS. Perhaps the most important prerequisites for involvement are motivation and an ability to take good field notes! Interested people who feel they lack certain skills might work in teams to utilize the experience or special skills of other WOS members. The benefit of this team approach is that all team members profit and learn from the contribution of other members. Some projects, because of their magnitude or geographic scope, may require the team approach. Also, there may be opportunities to cooperate with agencies or groups that have at their disposal a great deal of information. There is much to accomplish, and I hope WOS members will play an active role in helping us learn more about the birds of our state.

One of my objectives in this notice is to provide a list of some project ideas so that WOS members might clear that initial hurdle of attempting to identify where the gaps are located. Some of the following ideas have been brought up before. A few of the projects may be under way (e.g. county lists), but it is certain that most are untapped topics and would provide opportunities for involvement by our members.

PROJECT IDEAS

- Distributional summaries
 - Counties
 - National Parks
 - National Wildlife Refuges
 - Wildlife Recreation Areas
 - National Forests
 - Any definable area of special interest (ranging in size from large cities and Research Natural Areas to physiographic regions such as the Okanogan Highlands, Columbia Basin, etc.)
- Historical accounts
 - Biographies (partial or complete) of early ornithologists
 - Accounts of early expeditions
- Christmas bird counts
 - History of CBCs throughout state; trends in levels of participation
 - Summary of population trends of any species or group
- Current status of special species
 - Those increasing or declining in the state
 - Rare, casual and accidental species ("vagrants")
- Review of museum holdings throughout the state
 - Specimens of rare species
 - Entire holdings of other species of interest
- Distributional records
- Observations of unusual events/behavior

Other state bird journals are full of this sort of information, and Washington is just as interesting as those other states and has just as much still to learn about it. By publishing what we know and learn, we are serving both ornithology and en-

BRITISH COLUMBIA FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS

British Columbia Field Ornithologists is a new society devoted to the study and enjoyment of birds in British Columbia. It will offer members a provincial bird journal (2 issues a year), including a variety of articles, summaries of noteworthy bird sightings, and book reviews; a newsletter (4 issues a year), including birding site guides, news items, and listing data; and an annual meeting with field trips and invited speakers. The first meeting is planned for late August 1991 in Delta, B.C. Annual dues will be \$20.00 CAN. Please send dues, payable to B. C. Field Ornithologists, to: Treasurer, B. C. Field Ornithologists, P. O. Box 1018, Surrey, B.C. V3S 4P5, Canada. American subscribers, please use an international bank or postal money order.

SNOWY OWLS—WHERE HAVE THEY GONE?

For still another winter, Snowy Owls were virtually absent from Washington. Will they ever be here in numbers again? We can only wait and see. Do we get them when adverse conditions force them farther south than usual, or when reproduction has been especially successful to the north of us, with lots of dispersing immatures? Are there fewer than before?

AND WHAT DO THEY EAT?

The Northeast has had Snowy Owl invasions regularly while we have not. Norman Smith has studied them at Logan Airport, Boston, for a decade, and he reports the following prey: cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Brant, Am. Black Duck, scaup, Common Goldeneye, Bufflehead, Red-breasted Merganser, Northern Harrier, American Kestrel, Ring-necked Pheasant, Clapper Rail, Killdeer, Upland Sandpiper, Dunlin, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, Rock Dove, Short-eared Owl, European Starling, Snow Bunting, Eastern Meadowlark, Meadow Vole, rats, House Mouse, and skunk. Ducks and rats were most commonly taken.

What do they eat in Washington? Do we know?

NORTH CASCADES INSTITUTE

Upcoming 1991 field seminars about birds include the following: Spring Birds of the Cascades Lowlands, 4-5 May, David Drummond, \$80; Birds of the Columbia Basin, 11-13 May, Bill Tweit, \$130*; Birds of the San Juan Islands, 1-3 June, Mark Lewis, \$185* (includes boat trip); Birds of Prey, 15-16 June, David Drummond, \$90*; Birds of the Loup Loup, 22-24 June, Terry Wahl, \$105; The Spotted Owl: Symbol of the Old Growth Forest, 29-30 June, Tom Hamer, \$80.

Participants are responsible for their own food and transportation except where otherwise indicated (* - van transportation included).

Write North Cascades Institute, 2105 Highway 20, Sedro Woolley, WA 98284, or call (206) 856-5700 for information.

OLYMPIC PARK INSTITUTE

Upcoming bird classes for spring and summer 1991 include the following: Bowerman Basin Shorebird Migration,

27-28 April, Fred Sharpe, \$80; Birds of the Olympic Peninsula, 17-19 May, Fred Sharpe, \$163 (includes 2 overnights and 6 meals at Rosemary Inn); Seabirds by Kayak, 28-30 June, David Drummond, \$194 (includes equipment rental).

Write Olympic Park Institute, HC62, Box 9T, Port Angeles, WA 98362, or call (206) 928-3720 for more information.

WESTPORT SEABIRD TRIPS

Terry Wahl's famous (and, to some, infamous) seabird trips are scheduled for the following dates in 1991: 20 April (*Pterodroma try*), 4 May, 13 July, 27 July, 10 August, 17 August, 24 August, 6 September, 7 September, 8 September, 10 September, 5 October, and 6 October.

These trips are among the best in North America for pelagic birds, including albatrosses, shearwaters, storm-petrels, phalaropes, jaegers, and alcids. Many other birds and a variety of other marine animals are also seen.

Early reservations are advisable. Send check for \$59 per person made out to T. R. Wahl.

IMPORTANT LECTURE

Dr. Russell Greenberg, Director of the Smithsonian Institution Migratory Bird Center, will present a slide-illustrated lecture on SOUTHERN MEXICO: CROSSROADS FOR MIGRATORY SONGBIRDS at the Poncho Theatre, next to Woodland Park Zoo's south gate, in Seattle, at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, 16 May.

Chiapas, the southernmost of Mexico's states, is the neck of an "hourglass" through which many American birds migrate. Along with birds from all over North America, individuals of many of our Washington breeding species visit this state each winter. The forests of Chiapas are under relentless pressure from a growing human population and poor management. Dr. Greenberg, with the assistance of the Seattle Audubon Society and Pronatura, a Mexican environmental group, has launched a program to promote forest conservation in the state.

Suggested donation \$3.00 to help pay for Dr. Greenberg's visit.

WASHINGTON ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
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REGISTRATION FORM

WOS ANNUAL MEETING
21-23 June 1991
Cedars Inn, Okanogan, WA

REGISTRATION DEADLINE 1 JUNE 1991

Name(s) _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State/Prov _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

Registration Fees:

_____ \$20 If WOS member

_____ \$30 if nonmember, includes one year WOS membership

_____ \$10 for student

Food cost at Cedars Inn—per person

_____ \$3 each buffet breakfast Saturday morning

_____ \$6 each box lunch for Saturday

_____ \$10 each Annual Dinner Saturday evening
(Room for only 80, register early)

WESTERN DINNER (BBQ ribs, fried chicken, baked beans, cornbread)
Check here for vegetarian []

_____ \$3 each buffet breakfast Sunday morning

_____ \$6 each box lunch for Sunday

_____ TOTAL ENCLOSED: REGISTRATION & FOOD

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO WASHINGTON ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
SEND FORMS AND MONEY TO:

Fred Bird
1249 NE 92nd St.
Seattle, WA 98115
(206) 526-5671

WASHINGTON ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
ANNUAL MEETING
21-23 JUNE 1991

CEDARS INN
OKANOGAN, WASHINGTON

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Friday, June 21

Registration	6-8 pm	Spruce Room
Owling	8:30 pm—	

Saturday, June 22

Buffet breakfast	4:30 am to 5 am	Lobby
Box lunches	pickup 5 am	Lobby
Field Trips	5 am - 2 pm	
Workshop	3 pm - 5 pm	Cedars Room
No-host Reception	5 pm - 6 pm	Cedars Room
Dinner	6 pm - 8 pm	Cedars Room
Owling	8:30 pm—	

Sunday, June 23

Buffet breakfast	4:30 am to 5 am	Lobby
Box lunches	pickup 5 am	Lobby
Fieldtrips	5 am - noon	

The Cedars Inn is just off State Highway 97 in Okanogan. Please make your own reservations there at (509) 422-6431. Identify yourself as a WOS member for a guaranteed room rate of \$38/night (plus tax), regardless of occupancy. Other places to stay in Okanogan include:

Cariboo Inn	(509) 422-3550
Ponderosa Motor Lodge	(509) 826-9971
U&I Motel	(509) 422-2920

Places to stay in nearby Omak include:

Hillcrest Motel	(509) 826-2290
Royal Motel	(509) 826-0140
Leisure Village Motel	(509) 826-4442
Motel Nicholas	(509) 826-4611
Stampede Motel	(509) 826-1161
Travelodge	(509) 826-0400