A view of the future?

Hal Michael

I recently returned from a short vacation to southern California, 17-22 June, 1992. We visited the cultural high points such as Disneyland and Knott's Berry Farm. I found some aspects of the trip rather disturbing.

On our first introduction to the southern California freeway system, I was amazed at how similar it was to Seattle's; lots of cars going nowhere fast. At rush hour traffic crawled. The surface streets were crowded. One area of difference was that there were a lot of buses and shuttles so that a private vehicle was not a necessity, at least for visitors.

The sky, too, was the same color as Seattle's. In fact, on some days it seemed clearer, smog-wise, than I am used to around here. On most days I could see the mountains to the east. How often are the Olympics visible from Seattle in the summer?

What disturbed me the most was what seemed to be a distressing and almost total lack of birds. House Sparrows were, at best, common. There were a few Rock Doves, a few Spotted Doves, and a Starling or two. The only native land birds I saw were crows and Barn Swallows. One lake had some Mallards, a coot or two, and some Pied-billed Grebes. There appeared to be a lot of available habitat. There were trees, shrubs, reeds, lawns, and so on. There appeared to be quite a bit of surface water available in ponds and the like. Where were the hummingbirds, Scrub Jays, mockingbirds, blackbirds, other swallows, etc.?

Is this the future of urban areas? Are we creating cities where birds no longer exist; even in parks? Perhaps it is time to look at what is going on in our cities and towns, as well as our ancient forests and wetlands. Is it time to establish feeder programs, nest box programs for our urban environments?

I might also add that, in spite of all the pretty flowers everywhere, there were very few butterflies. I believe I can find more butterflies in Olympia right now than I saw down there.

I do not know why the birds and butterflies were so scarce. Maybe it was the time of year, perhaps it was because of six or more years of drought, maybe it was the smog. It could be the use of pesticides and herbicides "necessary" to keep down aquatic vegetation, lawn pests, white flies, medfly, and other exotic agricultural pests; I don't know. I do know that it was disturbing; especially with the other similarities to Pugetopolis.

One of the popular sports among Washington residents is the trashing of California and its residents. After this trip, it appears to me that we may be following the same path which means that we have not learned anything from their mistakes, and we seem bound and determined to repeat them. I hope not.

4035 Indian Summer Drive SE
Olympia, WA 98513

WOS Meetings in Seattle

The next WOS Seattle-area meeting will be September 3rd (always the 1st Thursday) at 7:30 p.m. at the Burke Museum. Rob Thorn will present a short program in September on Bird Eruptions in the NW - Fact or Fiction?. Bring your summer slides for show and tell.

The October 1st program is still pending. On November 5th Prof. John Wingfield (UW Zoology) will speak on Territorial Behavior in Birds.
Site Guide: fall and winter birding in eastern Franklin County

Andy Stepniewski

Although western Franklin County has received attention from birders because of birding opportunities around Pasco and the McNary National Wildlife Refuge, the eastern parts of the county are not well known. Several interesting areas deserve more attention, especially during the fall and winter months.

Western Franklin County lies in the lowest, driest and warmest part of the Columbia Basin. Irrigated croplands have replaced most of the original shrub-steppe flora. Northeast from the Columbia River elevations rise steadily from 100 meters (350') to about 400 meters (1,250') along the eastern boundary. An increase in precipitation is also noted. Irrigated farmlands are replaced by dryland wheat farming here on the western edge of the famous Palouse Belt. Few remnants of the native grasslands occur. Such patches are usually in terrain too precipitous for farm machinery, such as along channels of the Pleistocene Bretz Floods where soils are thin and rocky. One prominent floodway in eastern Franklin County is Washtucna Coulee.

Fall and winter birders traveling eastern Washington may find Kahlotus Lake in Washtucna Coulee and adjacent areas interesting. Although the lake is very low this year (1992) due to the drought, many shorebirds can be found there in the fall. To reach Kahlotus Lake, drive east from Connell 30 km (20 miles southeast of Othello) on SR 260 towards the small town of Kahlotus.

Three km (about two miles) east of Connell, detour north of the highway by looking for a gravel road which heads north down into the coulee. Once at the bottom, proceed east (marked Miller Road in the DeLorme Atlas), stopping to bird in the feedlots north of the road. Thousands of blackbirds and many white crowned sparrows can be found there and in the adjacent corn stubble in the fall. Either return to SR 260 or go east on Miller Road about 7 km (4.5 miles) to regain SR 260 and proceed east to Kahlotus. Just east of the town is a Department of Wildlife access to the western shores of the lake. Or, proceed east on SR 260 another 1.5 km (1 mile) to gain access via a steep, but passable gravel road which leads down to the eastern shores.

Eighteen species of shorebirds were noted here on six visits during the fall of 1991, including both Black-bellied, Lesser Golden and Semipalmated Plovers, Solitary Sandpiper, Marbled Godwit, Baird’s and Pectoral Sandpipers, both dowitchers and Wilson’s and Red-necked Phalaropes. The lake also attracts hundreds of Common Goldeneyes (and a few Barrow’s) and Buffleheads during the colder months. Gulls are an attraction at the dam itself, including numerous Herring and a few Glaucous-wings. Another good gull site is just downstream from the Pasco-Kahlotus Road.

Send bird sightings to:
Phil Mattocks: 915 E Third, Ellensburg, WA 98926
Tom Rogers (easternmost counties): 10820 E. Maxwell, Spokane, WA 99206
Bill Tweit: POB 1271, Olympia, WA 98507-1271

American Birds deadlines

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More observant readers may have wondered about Capt. George Vancouver’s trip (WOSNEWS #19) to the Northwest in 1792 and concluded that perhaps he really came in 1792. P.S. you have until Aug. 31st to enter the contest.
In the 1960s, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service began a North America-wide survey of breeding land birds in an attempt to measure trends in bird populations, starting in the eastern U.S. It was soon expanded to cover the west. The scheme consists of computer-selected routes, 25 miles in length, along highways in each one-minute latitude/longitude block. Briefly, the idea is to set up 50 fixed stops where the observer stops, looks, listens and records all the birds identified by sight or sound within minutes. Then, hop in the car, drive one-half mile to the next stop, and so on.

The whole thing starts one-half hour before local sunrise when there is maximum bird song and minimum traffic (it's even earlier than a boat trip: starting time is about 0430). For consistency the survey is done in June, only under generally good conditions of wind and weather, and the observer should avoid having birds pointed out by others and finish within about four hours.

In 1968, Zella Schultz, Washington's first breeding bird survey (BBS) coordinator, asked me to take a route. My wife Robin (the driver) and I started on what has turned out to be another decades-long plod in accumulating data. The route we have covered is in Whatcom and Skagit Counties, along Highway 20 from the parking area at George Creek to the highway rest stop just east of Rockport. Three times in June I was at sea, but with help we have managed, traffic or high water, to get the job done every year.

The Newhalem route (004) parallels the Skagit River though for much of the route the road wanders "in-shore" near farmlands, woods and residential areas. In the first years there was no North Cascades National Park and the highway was very lightly used on weekends. There has been a great increase in traffic and some development (believe it or not, there was no river rafting when we started!) and the road alterations along much of the route as Highway 20 became the North Cascades Highway. Although the early part of the route has a "mountain" feeling, maximum elevation is only about 600 feet.

Our route is probably better off than most, but times have brought problems and difficulties in maintaining the same quality of effort. Traffic has increased substantially and the route seems especially attractive to ever-larger pickups with ever larger and noisier tires going like bats out of Hell for fishing spots - they can be heard for miles! Toward the end of the survey we sometimes have 15 or more vehicles pass in three minutes - during the first ten stops there may be two or three cars.

We run the route on Sunday to avoid truck traffic, though this is less on Highway 20 than on most other roads. We have had to cancel out, go home and come back the next week about three times due to bad weather (rain or too much wind). We've had few "incidents" interrupting surveys - a couple of cars have stopped to offer assistance, and one guy stopped because he was sure we were planning to steal an ancient, rusty Packard parked behind an old barn.

Though not always next to the river, the route has a fair number of stops with loud water noise due to small streams. At one stop the noise is so loud one just looks for dippers. Seattle City Light water release practices can greatly affect water noise levels on the river ('92 was very quiet). I think our route has more water noise than average. Lawn sprinklers in Newhalem can be a problem, and a barking dog has accompanied singing birds at one stop for several years.

The upper part of the route, in Whatcom County and stops in Skagit within the recreation area, has changed little in 25 years. Highway straightening (including the elimination of some pull-off areas), City Light powerline maintenance (which periodically removes trees and shrubs changing the habitat-users from Willow Flycatchers to White-crowned Sparrows) and a couple of landslides in the gorge have had an impact.

The proposed damming of the river below Newhalem years ago would have drastically altered habitats for the worse. Fortunately, power supplied from Canada saved the riparian areas. Unfortunately, creeping development including recreational housing and other habitat alterations have affected the lower part of the route along with the rest of the world.

We have recorded 98 species and discernible subspecies. Uncommon species are easy to miss during a three-minute stop. I consider a species to be a "regular" on the survey if it occurs on 15 of the 25 surveys. Fifty-two species qualify as "regulars" on that basis, and more are regular in the area even if not seen on the survey.
Regulars include Common Merganser, Blue Grouse, Killdeer, Spotted Sandpiper, Rufous Hummingbird, Hairy and Downy woodpeckers, Red-shafted Flicker, Western Wood Pewee, Willow, Hammond’s and Pacific-slope Flycatchers, Tree, Violet-green, Rough-winged, Cliff and Barn Swallows, Steller’s Jay, Common Crow, Common Raven, Black-capped and Chestnut-backed Chickadees, Winter Wren, Swainson’s and Varied Thrushes, American Robin, Cedar Waxwing, Starling, Warbling Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo (found all 25 years), Orange-crowned Warbler, Nashville Warbler (18 years), Yellow, Audubon, Black-throated Gray, Townsend’s and MacGillivray’s Warblers, Western Tanager, Black-headed Grosbeak, Lazuli Bunting (20 years), Rufous-sided Towhee, Chipping Sparrow (none since 1987; maybe gone), Savannah, Song, and White-crowned Sparrows, Oregon Junco, Brewer’s Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, Purple Finch, Pine Siskin, American Goldfinch and Evening Grosbeak.

Species noted on fewer than 15 surveys include: Great Blue Heron, Canada Goose, Mallard. Hooded Merganser, Osprey, Bald Eagle, Sharp-shinned, Cooper’s, and Red-tailed hawks, American Kestrel (hawks get up late), Ring-necked Pheasant, Ruffed Grouse, Rock Dove (four times only!), Mourning Dove, Band-tailed Pigeon (only three times), Common Night-hawk, Vaux’s and Black Swifts (swifts are slow in the morning), Belted Kingfisher, Downy Woodpecker, Red-breasted Sapsucker, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Western Kingbird (once), Eastern Kingbird (13 times and now undoubtedly regular), Common Bush-tit (once), Brown Creeper (regular in area but not close to the road), Bewick’s Wren (twice), Dipper (regular in area), Golden-crowned Kinglet, Veery, Hermit Thrush (13 times but not in the last four years) Solitary Vireo (eight times), Hutton’s Vireo, Common Yellowthroat (regular in area), Wilson’s Warbler, American Redstart, Yellow-breasted Chat, Golden-crowned Sparrow (once), Gambell’s White-crowned Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, Western Meadowlark (twice; habitat limited), Bullock’s Oriole (five times), House Finch (certainly regular in area but in small numbers), Red Crossbill (regular in area) and House Sparrow (only ten times!). I consider only about 13 of these to be not regular in the area, so the total “expectable” list for bird finding along the route should be at least 85.

We have tried to do our survey early in June, which allows for weather delays, but we have done it as late as the 29th (two weather cancellations in one year). Are we too early for maximum numbers of Red-eyed Vireos, for example, which presumably migrate up the middle of the continent rather than up the coast? Looking at Red-eyed Vireos by the day of the month, no. Same for Swainson’s Thrushes and, in fact, some species (e.g., MacGillivray’s Warbler) decreased in numbers later. This seems reasonable as many birds are virtually disappeared. This is definitely a “roadside” survey and birds a few hundred yards away, particularly in forests uphill, are totally out of it. Consequently, effects of the drastic clearcuts of the last few years may not be measured at all. I think sadly of Brown Creepers and Western Tanagers. And there is a problem with non-breeding birds: how many are counted, and what proportion of the population is this “excess”? This has important implications: could the total population decrease by a large percentage before the difference could be detected? As the years pass I have become increasingly concerned that we are not measuring bird populations along the Skagit rather than measuring singing males within a narrow highway corridor. The analysis of BBS methods and results has been and will continue to be discussed (e.g. Robbins et al. 1986, and articles in Ralph and Scott, eds. 1981 Estimating numbers of terrestrial birds. Studies in Avian Biology No. 6).

One of the interesting things about a BBS is that you must stop and look for birds at places you’d never stop at otherwise. This systematic exercise has forced me to look entirely differently at “birding” in known places, and especially at stakeouts in hot spots. This is true for other systematic censusing, too. I’m sure Christmas Bird Counters see this; certainly the observers who helped so generously with our NOAA/EPA study of marine birds in 1978-79 saw not only a few goodies but also could not help but note spe-
cies composition, habitat associations and seasonal variations because they had to do systematic observations and take notes, rather than just taking a shot (in the daylight) at finding a rare bird or chasing a phoned-in report.

Whatever the implications regarding BBS interpretations of populations of birds, this exercise and others like it provide new information of bird distribution. We have also enjoyed learning about the area and have turned up a number of interesting birds and occurrences when camping in the area as well as during the brief BBS stops. The count itself, nibbling at the edge of obviously good habitat, has encouraged return trips to look longer and farther from the road, including North Cascades Institute and other class trips.

Among the many interesting features of the route was the discovery of the congregations of hundreds of Black Swifts at Newhalem (perhaps the largest known), the small but regular population of Nashville Warblers from Newhalem up the gorge, Lazuli Buntings and Eastern Kingbirds along the powerline right-of-way, and the abundance of Red-eyed Vireos (perhaps the greatest concentration in the state). The virtual absence of species like bushtit, Bewick's Wren and Hutton's Vireo confirms their limited distribution. Incredibly, it seemed at first, Olive-sided Flycatchers and Golden-crowned Kinglets are seldom heard on the route stops! If this does not say something about the roadside effect of this type of survey, I do not know what does. The survey led us to explore the unique lodgepole pine habitat across the Skagit from Newhalem which, unfortunately, became a campground. Exploration expanded from the route has turned up a number of Barred and Pygmy Owls, too.

To rare bird seekers, even three-minute stops can sometimes be of interest. We had a Yellow-breasted Chat at Bacon Creek in 1976 (found a couple of times later that summer), a Veery at Newhalem in 1983 (preceded by a non-BBS bird at Colonial Creek Campground in 1981) and followed by a bird (probably a pair) off the road southwest of Newhalem in 1992. American Redstarts were noted at the Whatcom-Skagit county line from 1981 to 1987 and presumably bred there (probably in Skagit County, foraging partly in Whatcom County!). Venturing off the road (two weeks after the survey) to check on robins going bananas turned up a Barred Owl in 1992. Interesting: White-crowned Sparrows singing Gambell's songs heard in Newhalem in 1976, 1987 and 1992 (the latter was still there two weeks later). Though we have never had one on the route itself, we found Calliope Hummingbirds across the river in the Newhalem Campground several times while viewing the spectacular evening flights of Black Swifts above the area.

If you'd like to find out about doing a Breeding Bird Survey in Washington (there are some 50 routes last time I heard), contact state coordinator Ed Miller in Richland. There may be some routes open, and I am sure on others there are some long-time observers who want to start training replacements.

Acknowledgments: First, I thank Robin for her patience and assistance. I suspect our BBS efforts and experiences have not been far off average and long ago I decided a real test of marriage has been during arguments over precisely how far it has been since out last stop and the exact location of the next one -- at 4:45 in the morning, before breakfast, some drivers can be pretty testy...if those highway mileage markers had just been there during the first year! I thank also Norm Lavers, Fran Jepperson and Geri Walker who filled in for me in 1975, 1980 and 1986 respectively.

Bellingham, WA 98225

3041 Eldridge
Pitcairn Island scientific expedition
Murphy's petrels at home
Jim Jolly

The following article is reprinted from the March, 1992 (No. 62) issue of OSNZnews, the newsletter of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand. The article was supplied by Ken Jacobsen (Seattle), a WOS and OSNZ member. We reprint the article to add perspective to this spring's discovery of Murphy's petrels off the Washington coast (WOSNEWS No. 19, June 1992).

Henderson Island, the expedition's base, proved to be as extraordinary and fascinating as we had imagined. Its surface is fossil coral, weathered into jagged ridges and gullies, and raised 30 meters above sea level. It is clothed, for the most part, in dense, low forest that offers food and shelter for the four species of landbirds and nesting sites for at least eight species of seabirds. We also camped on two atolls of the group, Ducie and Oeno. Ducie, which is a broken ring of mostly dead coral, must be one of the most remote places on this planet and is the nesting place of tens of thousands of petrels. Most of the world's population of Murphy's Petrel breed there. Oeno, which has more diverse vegetation than Ducie, is host to three species of waders (Bristle-thighed Curlew, Wandering Tattler, and Pacific Golden Plover), the Reef Heron, and the Spotless Crane as well as seabirds.

Four species of gadfly petrels are recorded from Henderson Island (the Kermadec, Herald, Phoenix and Murphy's Petrels), but the expedition doubts the presence of the Phoenix Petrel. Analysis of measurements, feather lice, and DNA should resolve whether the Herald Petrel occurs in two color morphs or whether there are both Herald and Phoenix Petrels on the island. The expedition found that these light and dark color "morphs" segregate in breeding pairs and favor different breeding sites on the island.

My priority task was to collect stomach samples for Mike Imber's study of petrel foods. This work was curtailed on Henderson Island because the nesting of all petrels failed almost completely. Almost all losses were of young chicks, and as far as we were able to determine, the losses were due to predation by kiore(*). We witnessed predation by kiore during long vigils at nests (all petrel species are surface nesters at the Pitcairn Islands) and found kiore sign with freshly killed chick carcasses.

I collected 70 regurgitations from chicks on Ducie and Oeno, mostly from Murphy's and Kermadec Petrels. Other work on the petrels included monitoring nests, collecting lice for Ricardo Palma, and tape recordings for Les McPherson.

The three major landbird studies were an assessment of abundance of forest birds on Henderson Island, a study of the diet of the Henderson Island fruit dove in relation to foods available and their seasonal changes, and breeding and behavioral studies of the Henderson Crane. We also logged the distribution and feeding activity of the Henderson Lorikeet.

The crakes proved to be confiding (though extremely difficult to catch) and were the main attraction at our base camp, particularly as they chose to nest nearby and to bring their chicks in for breakfast. Chuck Doersch (Nebraska) and I took the opportunity to study parental care by the local pairs (including their breakfasts). We found that both parents feed and guard the chicks and vigorously pursue kiore, but we also found that they leave even young chicks unguarded at times.

The three islands have an important bird fauna, but our observations have shown the vulnerability to predation of both the seabirds and the landbirds. Elsewhere in the Pacific, some of these species, or their close relatives, are in decline or are already absent through introductions of more predators or diseases, through habitat loss and hunting.

The long sea voyages to and from the Pitcairns gave plenty of opportunities for recording seabirds, but also emphasized the paucity of birds in this region compared with New Zealand waters. One hour counts generally produced between 0 and 2 sightings. Between Tahiti and Pitcairn, in July, we saw Red-tailed Tropicbirds and Red-footed Boobies frequently, and Tahiti and Collared Petrels and masked Boobies infrequently. In mid-ocean we also saw a single, cheery Wandering Tattler which whistled as it circled our yacht before continuing on its way. Near Pitcairn and Henderson we saw Cape Pigeon and one Giant Petrel (both species were well to the north of their usual ranges), a storm petrel and the species which breed on the islands. South from Pitcairn in September, on the direct route home to New Zealand, Wandering Albatross followed the ship from 28 degrees south, and I saw some Grey Petrels and one White-headed Petrel, as well as Giant Petrel and Cape Pigeon. The numbers of birds seen increased noticeably from about 32 degrees south with species common in New Zealand, Wandering Albatross followed the ship from 28 degrees south, and I saw some Grey Petrels and one White-headed Petrel, as well as Giant Petrel and Cape Pigeon. The numbers of birds seen increased noticeably from about 32 degrees south with species common in New Zealand waters.

My participation in the Henderson Island Expedition was supported by grants from the OSNZ Projects Assistance Reserve and the Pacific Development and Conservation Trust.

(*Ed note: What is a kiore?)

Murphy's Petrel on its nest on Ducie Island, Pitcairns
— Photo by Jim Jolly
I have come to associate long-distance birding with sleep, or the lack of it. Almost ten years ago I took a three-month trip down the west coast, into Arizona, Texas and north through Colorado, Wyoming, Montana and home again. Driving alone for 10 to 12 hours a day wears you out quickly. I found that as soon as I began to yawn, it was time to pull off the road and take a short nap. Pushing on beyond that point was dangerous.

My van had rigid, uncomfortable seats, but I managed these short naps by crudely wrapping my head in the safety belt harness and hanging my feet over the steering wheel. I survived these contortions even in the heat and humidity of West Texas. Air conditioning was just a day dream, and though I suffered, my dog suffered worse. I do not have fond memories of the experience, so when I later bought a Honda with comfortable, fold-down seats, it was a lap of luxury. Air conditioning eventually came along with a subsequent marriage.

To this day I still look to the first yawn as a sign to pull over and rest. And though most of my driving is confined to Washington, the early or late hours required of good birding can be exhausting.

Then along came espresso!

Used to be I'd start a trip with two or three cups of regular coffee, which barely dented my consciousness and quickly sent me searching for a bathroom or bush.

Then along came espresso!

Used to be that espresso was confined to the Yuppie environs of downtown Seattle -- every street corner, to be exact. In fact, there are reportedly 232 espresso outlets listed in the Seattle Yellow Pages. And since you can't keep good entrepreneurs down, soon caffeine freaks in the suburbs were greedily lining up for their double shots.

Then a couple of years ago I finally found a valid reason to visit Phil Mottoces in Ellensburg. The Valley Cafe downtown on 3rd Avenue began serving espresso. The food's pretty good too. Since then at least six other espresso outlets have opened up there, as has the prospect of getting back over the pass without a rest stop at Indian John. If you make it as far as the pass, the Summit Inn has come on board. Cle Elum remains a wasteland for caffeine, but Roslyn has several stands keeping the Northern Exposure tourists jarred up.

Farther east, Nordstrom's in Yakima on Yakima Avenue offers espresso to well-healed cowboys, or you could enroll at West Valley High School where cafeteria espresso created something of a local controversy. No more sleeping through school. In Kennewick, try the Bon. Klickitat County not only imports west side garbage, but Jerry's Stop and Go Market (Columbus & Court Sts.) rated frontpage coverage in the Goldendale Sentinel when espresso hit town.

Farther north, the tourist industry in Winthrop guarantees good coffee at the Pony Espresso stand, but I was amazed to find two outlets in Tonasket. Really, now, Crossing the North Cascades Highway, you will have to wait until Cascadian Farm, three miles east of Rockport to get a ration.

Perhaps the oddest or most incongruous espresso outlets can be found in Aberdeen, that true hothed of liberated thinking (Aberdeen WOS members exempted!). Westbound stop at the Wishkah Cookhouse (500 Wishkah Ave.) where you can "Dine Like a Logger" and sip like a Yuppie. Eastbound stop at Anjo's Quick Stop on Simpson Ave. for a quick fix. If you make it to Ocean Shores, there's an espresso kiosk at the supermarket, among other outlets. I'm surprised they didn't put the kiosk at the city gate.

Nothing spreads "civilization" like the prospect of a profit.

**

On a somewhat more serious note, I'm considering we truly need a Washington Guide to Publicly Convenient Bathrooms. If you've ever led a birding group, you know what I mean. And I can't forget how impressed my future wife was as I led her from one well-appointed restroom to another - all over the state. So, send me a list of your favorite (if that's the right word) restrooms and I'll put together a list. Just wait until the WOS board hears of this scam!

1249 NE 92nd Street
Seattle, WA 98115

Short Takes

Anyone interested in joining WOS should send dues to the address below. Annual memberships are $10 for individuals and $14 for families. Send all your money to WOS, POB 85786, Seattle, WA 98115.

NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS

I suspect some may notice that this month's WOSNEWS is eight pages instead of the usual six, thanks to great contributions from Terry Wahl, Andy Steppenwijk, Hal Michael, Dick Lindstrom and others.

The quality and size of future newsletters depends on you. Please send news items, articles, opinion pieces or just good photographs (preferably black and white, but I can convert for the next WOSNEWS by Sept. 23 to Fred Bird, 1249 NE 92nd Street, Seattle, WA 98115 -- (206) 526-5671.

SITE GUIDES

In the last issue I asked for site guide suggestions. Needless to say, the response wasn't overwhelming, so I've started assigning this VERY small chore. Still, WOSNEWS is eager to regularly publish readers' favorite birding sites, whether or not the sites are already published in state or regional guides. We can always add information and useful maps. Send your information, particularly on fall migration sites (passerine traps, shorebird mudflats, etc.) to the editor (address above), or give us a call. No sophistication required! We do all the work.

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Raven Illustrations ©1989 Linda Feltner
As I was about to embark on my small boat to venture out into Puget Sound from my property last fall, for the purpose of finding new birds (perhaps an Ancient Murrelet) for my House List, I suddenly realized that I was undoubtedly violating some unwritten code of listing.

I had always assumed that birds seen or heard on one's property or seen or heard from it could be counted for the House List, including water birds in or flying over the water. But now I was about to stretch my advantage over my land-locked fellow birders. I concluded that it wouldn't be proper to extend my boundary line beyond its normal limit, i.e., low tide waterline, and that going out in a boat would simply not be fair.

If one applies the same logic to State Lists, one would have to conclude that those species observed by boat on pelagic trips, etc. outside of state boundaries, should be recorded separately as oceanic birds or off-shore species and listed on the ABA Listing Report Form as State Oceanic List Data. This change would not affect the standings drastically, but it would give a more realistic comparison between one state and another. Of course, a decision would also have to made as to whether or not these birds of the open sea should be dropped from the North American lists and given a separate category.

P.O. Box 10610
Banbridge Island, WA 98110