

The Skagit Flyer

Skagit Audubon Society
A Chapter of National Audubon Society

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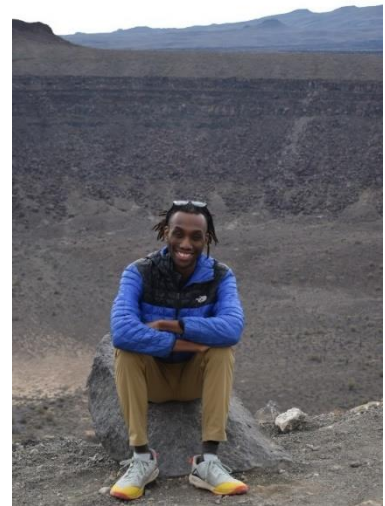
FEBRUARY MEETING – PRESENTED ON ZOOM (no in-person attendance)

"Birds of the Sonoran Desert"

**Presented by: Chris Williams, Saguaro National Park
Tuesday, February 14th at 7:00 pm**

Every year birders from all over the world flock to the Sonoran Desert to experience some of the best birding in the U.S. With its diversity in habitats and proximity to Mexico, this region receives birds not found in other parts of the country. From roadrunners, trogons, to woodpeckers that specialize in making homes in cacti, the Sonoran Desert is extremely diverse in birds. Join Chris Williams as he explores the diversity of birds in the Sonoran Desert!

Chris Williams is an Education Ranger at Saguaro National Park. He grew up in the San Francisco Bay Area and has worked at North Cascades National Park and Olympic National Park. His favorite hobbies include birding, kayaking, and backpacking and his favorite trail snack is banana chips.



This month's meeting will be a virtual (remote) meeting on Zoom ONLY. To attend the Zoom event, please register at: <https://bit.ly/SASFeb1423>. Preregistration is required and please only one Zoom registrant per household. After you register, you will receive an email with the link to sign in at the time of the event. Questions? Contact programs@skagitaudubon.org.

NOTES:

The link to the December 13th Holiday Member Photo Program is available at:
<https://youtu.be/HWxxE9lxNbk>

The link to the January 10th Presentation "A Bird's Eye View: Skagit Land Trust & the March Point Heronry" is available at: <https://youtu.be/ct7-1vUB8BE>

ABOUT SKAGIT AUDUBON: Skagit Audubon Society is a chapter of the National Audubon Society. Our mission is to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity. General membership meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month at 7 pm. Some meetings will be presented on Zoom only. Others will be hybrid meetings on Zoom and in-person at the Padilla Bay Interpretive Center, 10441 Bayview-Edison Rd., Mt. Vernon. Check the monthly Flyer for upcoming meeting details. The board of directors meets on the first Tuesday of each month, September through June, at 7 pm. Skagit Audubon membership provides a local chapter affiliation and newsletter, the Skagit Flyer, for individuals who want all their funds to benefit their local chapter. The Skagit Flyer is produced monthly from September through June and full color issues are available at: www.skagitaudubon.org/newsletter. Unless noted, all images, drawings, clip art, etc. appearing in The Skagit Flyer are in the public domain. We reserve the right to edit.

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In response to the COVID-19 virus, some of our general meetings are being held at the Padilla Bay Interpretive Center with an option to attend via Zoom, while others will be available on Zoom only. Please check the monthly program description for meeting details. As with our hikes and field trips, only vaccinated, symptom-free individuals should attend meetings in person. Please visit our website: www.skagitaudubon.org for updates.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE – by John Day

Dear Members and Friends of Skagit Audubon Society,

First, a belated Happy 2023 to everyone! The last three years have been particularly challenging for many of us and I hope this one offers more positive changes.

A couple of weeks ago, on a tip from some friends, my wife Martha and I visited Coal Creek east of Sedro Woolley to see salmon spawning. As we parked by the side of Minkler Road just west of the bridge, two county dump trucks were pulling out after being filled by a front-end loader from a huge pile of sandy, dark sediment that must have been excavated from the creek bed after the November 2021 flood event.



The creek channel downstream from the bridge looked like a construction zone because of the recent excavation, but despite this dozens of coho were splashing in the shallow riffles, with females turning on their sides to scoop out redds in the gravel with their tails and males vying with each other to fertilize the eggs as they were being laid. Fish carcasses in various states of decay lay at the edge of the water.

As we approached the bridge (and the noise of the departing dump trucks subsided), we heard a loud, rollicking song echoing in the vault-like space

underneath. It was a song I hadn't heard for a while, but which I recognized from time spent in western mountains and canyons, including on sub-zero winter days along predominantly snow and ice-bound creeks in the Wind River Mountains of Wyoming near where I grew up. It was a male American dipper (*Cinclus mexicanus*), our only truly aquatic songbird, and here was his mate as well.

Later, while Martha explored downstream, I sat on the bank watching one of the dippers feeding a few feet away. The bird would land on a rock in the stream, constantly doing its namesake, bobbing dance and occasionally shaking water from its feathers. Periodically, it would thrust just its head into the stream and then pop back up with its white nictitating membranes (third eyelids) blinking bright white. After peeking into the water like this several times, the bird would jump into the creek, splash vigorously with its wings and tail for a second or two at the surface, and then disappear below. When it popped back up on the rock a few moments later, there would usually be a spherical, bright pink salmon egg in its bill, which it would promptly swallow.

In addition to the joy of seeing the salmon and dippers that day, I was heartened to find them both in such a disturbed location. Clearly there is much that needs to be done to prevent further degradation and restore habitat in streams like Coal Creek, but this was a reminder of how resilient nature can be if we just give it a chance. And, what a privilege to witness this ancient relationship between salmon and their feathered neighbors. I look forward to returning to the bridge over the next few months to see if the dippers are nesting there. With such a rich food source in these winter months, it looks like it might be a good spring for this pair.

Photo: American Dipper by Derek Hameister/Macaulay Library/allaboutbirds.org

HIKING

Skagit Audubon is pleased to offer scheduled hikes. Please visit our website: www.skagitaudubon.org/activities/hikes for full details on the hikes. All hikers must have a current signed liability release form (available on the website) on file prior to participating in any Skagit Audubon hike. Please be prepared to follow current COVID pandemic safety protocols and all hikers must be fully vaccinated. Questions? Contact Tom Ozretich, tom.ozretich@gmail.com; 360.424.8466 *Means Wash. State Discover Pass required.



- Feb. 1:** Whatcom Falls & Creek, Big Rock Loop
- Feb. 8:** Conway Area Dike Walk (*Wylie Slough option)
- Feb. 16:** Lummi Island
- Feb. 22:** Camano Island Hikes (*State Park options)
- Mar. 1:** Goose Rock Perimeter Hike*

AMAZON SMILE charitable giving program coming to an end

Recently, Skagit Audubon Society received notification from Amazon that the Amazon Smile charitable giving program will be ending on Feb. 20, 2023. This information is being provided so that anyone who has designated Skagit Audubon Society as their charity is aware that the program is ending. An excerpt from the notice appears below:

Dear charitable organization,

In 2013, we launched AmazonSmile to make it easier for customers to support their favorite charities. We were excited about the potential for the program and the impact it could have for many charitable organizations. We want to thank you for your partnership during all these years.

After almost a decade of running AmazonSmile, we learned that with so many eligible organizations—more than 1 million globally—our ability to have an impact was often spread too thin.

Over the past few years, we've seen that Amazon can have a more significant and lasting impact if we invest in specific areas and focus our philanthropic efforts in the communities where our employees live and work. We've started to see the benefits of a more focused approach with our investments in programs like [Amazon Future Engineer](#) and our [\\$2 billion investment in building affordable housing](#) in our hometown communities through the Amazon Housing Equity Fund—and we will continue to pursue and invest in other areas where we've seen we can make meaningful change.

We are writing to let you know that we have made plans to wind down AmazonSmile by February 20, 2023. Until this date, customer purchases made via AmazonSmile will continue to accrue funds for your charity as normal. To help nonprofits like you plan ahead, we will also provide you with a one-time payment equivalent to three months of payments based on what you accrued in 2022 through this program. The timing of this final payment will be approximately 60 to 90 days after February 20, 2023. We hope that this will help minimize the impact that this decision might have.

We will keep supporting thousands of charities across the U.S. in many ways and focus on the areas we believe can help create an even greater impact. Our long-term commitment to our communities remains the same: We are determined to help create a better world for our customers, our employees, and the communities we serve across the country.

Thank you,
AmazonSmile Team

FIELD TRIPS – by Colleen Shannon

Beginning birders and friends are always welcome on Skagit Audubon field trips. Please be prepared for the weather with suitable clothing and bring field guides, binoculars, and spotting scopes (if you have them). Please note specific COVID guidelines in each field trip description. Questions? Contact Colleen Shannon, fieldtrips@skagitaudubon.org.



Saturday, February 4th – 9 am-1 pm (pre-registration required-see below, maximum 15 people)

Samish Flats and Samish Island – Washington State Discover Pass required

Trip Leader: Neil O'Hara, treasurer@skagitaudubon.org

We will look for raptors, waterfowl, western meadowlarks, and shorebirds on the Samish Flats. We'll make one or two stops on the way to the West 90 and walk while there (duck hunting season will be over). Our stop by the church on Samish Island should turn up some passerines and we'll check out the nearby Skagit Land Trust property. The Samish Island Day Use Access should yield sea ducks, brant, cormorants, loons, grebes and gulls. Bring binoculars, spotting scope (if available) and dress for cold and wet weather. All participants must be fully vaccinated and carpooling is by private arrangement or at the discretion of participants on the day. Additional information is provided upon registration here:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0c44a4ab23a1f9c07-field2/136468704#/>

Monday, February 20th – 12 noon-3 pm (pre-registration required-see below)

Barnum Point County Park (Camano Island)

Trip Leader: Ellyn Thoreen; contact Colleen Shannon at fieldtrips@skagitaudubon.org

Barnum Point offers a variety of habitats with many species of birds. We will walk past Fullerton Pond to the inlet at Triangle Cove and back along the bluff for a total distance of about two miles. We hope to see mergansers, Barrow's Goldeneyes, kingfishers, herons, various ducks, scoters, loons, gulls, eagles, and grebes. Dress for the weather, including muddy trails and windy conditions. Spotting scopes will be useful. Meet at noon at the Barnum Point parking area (limited parking, carpooling is advised). All participants must be fully vaccinated for Covid, and this is not an accessible field trip. To register please use the following link: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040545abae28a6f58-barnum#/>

Saturday - February 25th – 9 am until 12:00 pm (pre-registration required-see below)

Semiahmoo / Drayton Harbor – this trip is accessible along the paved path that follows the spit

Trip Leader: Alice Turner, 360.387.1781

We will be focusing on water birds. Large rafts of mixed species may be seen, including grebes, scoters, loons, Harlequin Ducks, brant, mergansers, goldeneye, cormorants, scaup, and some shorebirds including oystercatchers and turnstones.

Meet 9:00 a.m. at the Birch Bay State Park (bathrooms here). We will drive to Semiahmoo County Park and walk along the Semiahmoo Spit trail. Dress for the weather (it can be windy) and bring snacks. Scopes are useful when birds are far out.

To get to Birch Bay State Park, take I-5 exit 266, Grandview Rd/SR-548. Turn left toward Birch Bay and follow Grandview/SR-548 for about 7 miles, turn right onto Jackson Rd, then left onto Helweg Rd to the state park. To indicate you plan to attend and to provide contact information in case trip plans change, please sign up at: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0F4CA5AA2EA7F8C61-semiahmoo>

2022 PADILLA BAY CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

December 30, 2022

The list below shows the results of Skagit Audubon Society's 2022 Padilla Bay Christmas Bird Count. Thank you very much to all 72 participants and to Libby Mills, who led a field trip on count day for four beginning birders.

Red-throated Loon	Sharp-shinned Hawk	American Crow
Pacific Loon	Cooper's Hawk	Common Raven
Common Loon	Red-tailed Hawk	Black-capped Chickadee
Pied-billed Grebe	Rough-legged Hawk	Chestnut-backed Chickadee
Horned Grebe	American Kestrel	Bushtit
Red-necked Grebe	Merlin	Red-breasted Nuthatch
Eared Grebe	Peregrine Falcon	Brown Creeper
Western Grebe	Ring-necked Pheasant	Bewick's Wren
Double-crested Cormorant	California Quail	Pacific Wren
Brandt's Cormorant	Virginia Rail	Marsh Wren
Pelagic Cormorant	American Coot	Golden-crowned Kinglet
Great Blue Heron	Black-bellied Plover	Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Tundra Swan	Killdeer	Hermit Thrush
Trumpeter Swan	Black Oystercatcher	American Robin
Canada Goose	Greater Yellowlegs	Varied Thrush
Brant	Black Turnstone	Northern Shrike
Snow Goose	Western Sandpiper	European Starling
Wood Duck	Dunlin	Hutton's Vireo
Green-winged Teal	Wilson's Snipe	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Mallard	Short-billed (Mew) Gull	Spotted Towhee
Northern Pintail	Ring-billed Gull	Savannah Sparrow
Northern Shoveler	California Gull	Fox Sparrow
Gadwall	Glaucous-winged Gull	Song Sparrow
Eurasian Wigeon	Common Murre	Lincoln's Sparrow
American Wigeon	Pigeon Guillemot	White-throated Sparrow
Canvasback	Marbled Murrelet	Golden-crowned Sparrow
Redhead	Rock Pigeon	White-crowned Sparrow
Ringed-necked Duck	Eurasian Collared-Dove	Dark-eyed Junco
Greater Scaup	Mourning Dove	Red-winged Blackbird
Lesser Scaup	Barn Owl	Western Meadowlark
Harlequin Duck	Great Horned Owl	Brewer's Blackbird
Long-tailed Duck	Short-eared Owl	Brown-headed Cowbird
Surf Scoter	Barred Owl	Purple Finch
White-winged Scoter	Anna's Hummingbird	House Finch
Common Goldeneye	Belted Kingfisher	Red Crossbill
Bufflehead	Red-breasted Sapsucker	Pine Siskin
Hooded Merganser	Downy Woodpecker	American Goldfinch
Common Merganser	Hairy Woodpecker	House Sparrow
Red-breasted Merganser	Northern Flicker	
Ruddy Duck	Pileated Woodpecker	
Bald Eagle	Steller's Jay	
Northern Harrier	California Scrub Jay	
		Total species observed=122
		# Of observers=72

GRAY'S HARBOR (Part Two) – by Neil O'Hara

It's not too early to think about visiting spring migration hotspots on the Washington Coast. Neil O'Hara shares his experiences from 2022 in a two-part article (Part Two is below and Part One appeared in the January 2023 Flyer) – enjoy!

Peak shorebird viewing at Gray's Harbor occurs in late April and early May. I recommend a base in Aberdeen, from where you can spend one day focused on north shore locations and a second on the south shore. For best results, you need to know not only where to go, but when the tide is right at each location.

Next day, on the south shore, I started at the Point Chehalis jetty in Westport, where a -0.55-foot low tide occurred at 9 a.m. Near the jetty I found brant, American brown pelican, surf scoter, red-necked grebe and three gull species as well as common and Pacific loons. On the beach south of the jetty I found a small flock of shorebirds: mostly semipalmated sandpipers plus a few sanderlings and western sandpipers. I stopped briefly at Westport marina, too, but saw no shorebirds there.

From Westport, I drove south to Tokeland marina, where I arrived at 1 p.m., three hours before high tide. This proved to be the highlight of my day, turning up semipalmated sandpiper, whimbrel, ruddy turnstone, red knot, dunlin, least sandpiper, western sandpiper, short-billed dowitcher, greater yellowlegs and willet. I was so entranced I did not have time to stop at another hotspot, Grayland Beach, a nesting area for snowy plovers, on my way back to Bottle Beach, which often has the best shorebird viewing on the south shore.

I missed the show at Bottle Beach anyway; I arrived at 3 p.m., about 45 minutes before a +7.5-foot-high tide only to find the shorebirds had just left. The optimum time there is probably two hours before high tide; any earlier and the water would be too far out. Birders who had seen the show said that tide did not bring any rarities, but all the species I saw at Tokeland appear more frequently at Bottle Beach so it's a mandatory stop while you are nearby.

That completed my Gray's Harbor quest, but I couldn't resist stopping at the Billy J. Frank Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge on my way to and from Anacortes. My return trip coincided with a weekly Wednesday bird walk led by members of the local Black Hills Audubon Society, which lasted all day and tallied 87 species. Just eight were shorebirds, but that included spotted sandpiper, which I had not seen at Gray's Harbor.

THE GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT IS COMING and anyone, regardless of experience, can participate. The 26th annual GBBC will be held February 17 through February 20, 2023.

The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) is a free, fun, and easy event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of bird populations. Participants are asked to count birds for as little as 15 minutes (or as long as they wish) on one or more days of the four-day event and report their sightings online at www.birdcount.org. Anyone can take part in the Great Backyard Bird Count, from beginning bird watchers to experts, and you can participate from your backyard, or anywhere in the world. Visit www.birdcount.org for information.

CONSERVATION – by Tim Manns

In the last days of 2022, exceptionally high, or “king”, tides coincided with very low barometric pressure to flood parts of La Conner and overtop a dike, flooding a county road and making Samish Island truly an island again. This has happened before and will happen again and again as climate change furthers sea level rise. Skagit County suddenly decided last year to end its practice of six or more decades and no longer help maintain dikes protecting county roads including the sole road to Samish Island. Also last year, the county forwarded its draft update of the Shoreline Master Program (SMP) for Department of Ecology (DOE) review without addressing the effects of climate change. During last year’s hearings on the SMP, the County Commissioners reacted to concerted public input on this failing by at least implying that Planning & Development Services would apply for a DOE grant to fund amending the new SMP to address sea level rise sooner than the plan’s mandated eight-year update. Whether Planning applied or not we don’t know, but Skagit County is not receiving this grant. DOE will be announcing a public comment period on the draft shoreline plan and will hold a public meeting. Both Audubon Washington (the state office) and Skagit Audubon will continue to work with local partner organizations to ensure that the county’s shoreline planning and regulations stop ignoring the effects of climate change (see [Puget Sound Series: A Winning Formula for Coastal Resilience | Audubon Washington](#)).

Among the bills Audubon Washington is supporting during the current state legislative session are Senate Bill 5203 and its companion bill in the House, HB 1181. These bills would require counties and municipalities to address climate change in the comprehensive plans required under the Growth Management Act. They would also require addressing sea level rise in the Shoreline Master Programs mandated by the Shoreline Management Act. A similar bill came close to passing last year and may just make it this time. Other counties have proactively planned for climate change. Skagit County’s ability to duck this responsibility may finally be ending.

The legislature’s website ([Legislature Home \(wa.gov\)](#)) makes it easy to be an active citizen expressing to your legislators and to committees holding hearings on bills how you would like them to vote. This page gives instructions on how to do this: [Washington State Legislature Participating in the Process](#). You can simply indicate your position for or against, write a statement, or give live testimony. The bill information page ([Bill Information \(wa.gov\)](#)) is the place to search for the text of the bill in which you are interested and to see where it is in the legislative process. Your voice has greatest impact with committee members who represent the district in which you live. Don’t know your district? Go to [Washington State Legislature](#).

To better help advance Audubon Washington’s state legislative priorities, join the Action Network. Go to [Advocacy | Audubon Washington](#) and scroll down to “Be the Voice for Birds.” Audubon Washington’s Bill Tracker gives weekly updates on the progress of these priorities and how you can help: [Bill Tracker: 2023 Legislative Session | Audubon Washington](#).

The Environmental Priorities Coalition (EPC), comprised of over twenty environmental groups including Audubon, is organizing virtual Lobby Days for February 14-16. The coalition’s four priorities overlap those of Audubon Washington. In brief, 15-minute Zoom appointments with your senator and two representatives or their staff members you can make a difference. (Most of) our elected officials want to hear from us. Register here: [Lobby for Environmental Health and Justice in 2023 \(google.com\)](#). See January’s Conservation Notes on the Skagit Audubon website ([Skagit Audubon Society - Home](#)) under the Conservation tab for details about Audubon and EPC priorities.

FIELD SIGHTINGS – by Ann Skinner

This column reports a summary of selected sightings. Rare sightings should be submitted with detailed written documentation and if possible, a photograph. A second person to verify rare sightings is encouraged. Do not hesitate to contact any observer to help document unusual sightings.

Please submit your sightings to birdsightings@skagitadubon.org

For recent updates on bird sightings, check out **ABA Tweeters** and **Skagit County Ebird List** on the SAS website (Birding menu, Bird Sightings submenu).

WATERFOWL

Bewick's Swan (1) FIFR, 12/13 (PA)
Trumpeter Swan (2) Cranberry Lk, 1/25 (NOH)
Harlequin Duck (2-5) WA Park, 12/29 (NOH)
Redhead (1) DPBL, 1/20, (PA) photo verified; **RARE**
Northern Shoveler (1) Wylie, 12/29 & 30, (NOH)
Red-breasted Merganser (4) WA Park, 12/30, (NOH)

GREBES

Horned Grebe (4) WA Park, 12/30, (NOH)
Red-necked Grebe (23) WA Park, 12/30, (NOH)

SHOREBIRDS

Greater Yellowlegs (1) Samish Flats, 1/8, (NOH)
Spotted Sandpiper (2) Edens Rd. Guemes Is. 1/7, (CS)
Wilson's Snipe (4) Wylie, 12/22 (NOH)

ALCIDS

Common Murre (2) WA Park, 12/30 (NOH)
Marbled Murrelet (17) WA Park, 12/30 (NOH)

LOONS

Red-throated Loon (1) WA Park, 12/30 (NOH)

HAWKS, EAGLES and ALLIES

Harlan's Hawk (1) Samish Flats, 1/5, (PA)
Northern Harrier (2) Samish Flats, 1/8 (NOH)

OWLS

Great Horned Owl pair, Stanwood area, daily, (MS/JS)

WOODPECKERS

Red-breasted Sapsucker (1) Cranberry Lk. 1/25, (NOH)
Hairy Woodpecker (1) Cranberry Lk. 1/25, (NOH)

WRENS

Pacific Wren,(3) Stanwood area, daily, (MS/JS)
Bewick's Wren (2) Stanwood area, daily, (MS/JS)

THRUSHES

Varied Thrush (1) Stanwood area, 1/3, (MS/JS), (2) Cranberry Lk. 1/25, (NOH)

BUNTING

Snow Bunting (1) MCS, 12/23 (LL)

FINCHES & SPARROWS

Golden-crowned Sparrow (2) Stanwood area, daily, (MS/JS)
White-crowned Sparrow (4) Stanwood area, daily, (MS/JS)
Fox Sparrow (2) Stanwood area, daily, (MS/JS), (4) Wylie, 12/22 (NOH)
House Sparrow (1) Stanwood area, daily, (MS/JS)
American Goldfinch (4) Stanwood area, 1/5-1/8, (MS/JS)
Purple Finch (2) Wylie, 12/22, (NOH)

BLACKBIRDS

Red-winged Blackbirds (7), Stanwood area, 1/8, (MS/JS)

WARBLERS

Yellow-rumped Warblers(6) Stanwood area, 1/8, (MS/JS)

(FIFR) Fir Island Farm Reserve aka Hayton Reserve; **(MCS)** McElroy Slough, Blanchard, **(DPBL)** Detention Pond NE of Blackburn & LaVenture in Mount Vernon **(CS)** Colleen Shannon; **(JS)** Jeff Sinker; **(MS)** Mary Sinker; **(NOH)** Neil O'Hara; **(PA)** Paul Anderson **(LL)** Lynn Lennox **(JH)** Joe Halton **(TM)** Tim Manns **(RW)** Regan Weeks

SPRING WILL BE HERE before we know it, even it doesn't seem like it on these dreary and cold days in January. Our very own Washington State Native Plant Society (<https://www.wnps.org/native-gardening/wildlife>) has some tips on how to attract birds, bees and butterflies to your yard or garden (no matter how large or small).

Native plants provide the food, shelter, and nesting habitat favored by our local wildlife. Make your garden a sanctuary for songbirds, hummingbirds, butterflies, bees and other wildlife using native plants. For all around practical advice, read Russell Link's books. He describes different zones around your home, includes wildlife photos, construction diagrams, extensive plant lists (not all native), and tells who will use which plant part for what purpose. There's even a "deer resistant" list though he cautions none are guaranteed in times of stress.



To attract wildlife, aim to provide the four essentials of habitat: food, water, cover, and space. Controlling nuisance pests means keeping pet food and kitchens waste out of reach. Bird feeders and houses need regular cleaning and maintenance. Use of garden chemicals will keep wildlife away and even harm them. Natural gardening benefits plants, critters, watersheds, and people!

Backyard Wildlife & Habitat Resources

- [Pacific Northwest Plants and the Birds that Use Them: use easy to use chart \(pdf\)](#)
- Link, Russell. *Landscaping for Wildlife in the Pacific Northwest*. University of Washington Press, Seattle, 1999. Great, well organized, not all native plants.
- Link, Russell. *Living with Wildlife in the Pacific Northwest*. University of Washington Press, Seattle, 2004.
- [Seattle Audubon Society](#) has extensive resources on birds, butterflies, etc. Read PDF version of page 48, chapter four, *Gardening for Life - An Inspirational Guide for Creating Healthy Habitat*. Seattle Audubon Society, Seattle, 2003. [Audubon At Home](#) is a regional resource for creating backyard habitat.
- [National Audubon Society](#)
- [King County Department of Natural Resources](#): See Events & Volunteers (native plant salvage and restoration work), Forestry (home forest steward program), Yard & Garden.
- The [Songbird Foundation](#) promotes shade grown coffee and restoring urban habitat to keep the migratory songbirds healthy that nest in the PNW and feast in Central American forests.
- [USDA National Resources Conservation Service](#) has more information on backyard conservation.
- [Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife](#) – check out “Habitat.” Join their [Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary Program](#) which has west and east of Cascades versions. \$10 total cost for instructional materials and a waterproof Sanctuary sign.
- [Wildlife Habitat Council](#): Order *Backyard Conservation – Bringing Conservation from the Countryside to Your Backyard on-line*, 2002.
- National Wildlife Federation - Basic components of habitat for wildlife locally - [Garden for Wildlife](#) and nationally the organization provides the [Native Plant Finder](#).
- Bumble Bees of Washington State - www.washingtonbumblebees.org

RECENTLY A REDHEAD WAS spotted and photographed in Mt. Vernon. The handsome male was in a mixed flock of other ducks, and he certainly stands out from the rest of the crowd! The Sibley Birds West guide shows that he is outside of his normal year-round range with Western Washington being on the migration route.

These medium-sized ducks (19 inches long with 29-inch wingspan) can be found during winter on the open waters of lakes and bays. Although they are diving ducks, they do use shallower waters and have been observed feeding “bottoms up” like dabbling ducks.



Redheads are dependent upon seasonal ponds and wetlands of the prairie regions across midwestern Canada and south to the southwestern US (they also nest in Alaska). In addition to seasonal wetlands, they will also use streams and sewage ponds. Submerged aquatic plants, invertebrates and fish eggs comprise much of their diet. They also eat a wide variety of insects.

A mated pair scouts potential nest sites but the female is the sole builder of the nest. The preferred nest site will be in dense vegetation, such as cattails or bullrushes, over water. The female lays 7-8 eggs which are incubated for 22-28 days. After hatching, the nestlings are ready to leave the nest in 1-2 days and can swim and feed themselves, though they remain close to their mother for protection from predators.

Redheads are social and are often found in mixed flocks including mallards, canvasbacks, ring-necked ducks, and similar species. In winter, flocks of Redheads can number in the thousands on the Gulf of Mexico.

Fun fact:

Females may lay some of their eggs in another duck’s nest (known as “brood parasitism”).

Learn more at: www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Redhead

Photo credit: Paul Anderson

**SKAGIT AUDUBON SOCIETY
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