

Program Meeting
Special Birds of Mt. Rainier
Jeff Antonelis-Lapp 1:30 pm
February 7th Via Zoom
details via email to follow

January
February
2021



The Sandpiper



Our Local Bird Carver

Carol Clothier, a member of Grays Harbor Audubon Society, began carving birds 50 years ago about the time she and her husband moved to the Montesano area. He joined the faculty of Grays Harbor College, teaching biological sciences and taking students on birding field trips.

Carol remembers spending many, many weekends birding in the harbor and along the coast, becoming familiar with the local avian community.

Carol ended up teaching young elementary students but continued to draw and paint. Soon she started carving Teddy bears, too. But after admiring an especially outstanding bird carving, she launched her own pursuit, turning pieces of wood into three-dimensional images of birds she knew. As she handles the wood, she feels the bird just come from within, a spiritual experience for her. As

each bird fully emerges from the wood, with eyes and wood-burned details, Carol sees each one looking directly at her, perhaps bonding with its creator. One in particular, a large American bittern, just seemed to come out of the wood, leaving her with a wonderful feeling when it achieved its final form.

About 10 years ago, Carol became active in the Washington Woodcarvers Association, leading to a quicker pace of carving activity. She has given many of her creations away but lots of them are still residing in her Montesano home where they were born. Her favorite subjects are chickadees and shorebirds, all species. Our chapter is indeed fortunate to have in our midst an artist who can bring to life the birds we all know and love."



The President's Perch



By Janet Strong

We all hope that you and your friends and family are all healthy and looking forward to a good year 2021, despite some ominous beginnings last week. But this column will be devoted to a potential threat to Washington's marine state parks, including our nearby ones we hold so dear.

The U.S. Navy has proposed to the WA State Parks Commission to expand from 5 to 29! the marine state parks where SEAL training can take place. The parks include Cape Disappointment, Leadbetter Point, Twin Harbors, Grayland Beach, Westhaven, Westport Light, Deception Pass, Blake Island, Fort Worden and many others.

These trainees would be training both on land and in the water, having access to sensitive areas, walking trails, tidelands and the beaches. The Navy also plans to use Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (Drones?), vehicles, boats and submersibles and supposedly mock guns. Guns are not allowed in our state parks!

Since the COVID-19 began, Washingtonians have sought recreation increasingly in the outdoors, especially on public lands such as in our state parks. Parks are crowded during all days of the week, since schools are closed and many people are working remotely or not working at all.

Nature has brought solace, calmness, beauty and a distraction from COVID-19 concerns. State parks have never been more important to all of us. Navy SEAL exercises are way out of line in our state parks, especially now. AND, in light of the recent mobilization of frightening militia groups to the U.S. Capitol, the possibility of frightening the public, especially children, has never been higher, in my opinion.

The specter of Navy SEALs training on park lands and waters is bound to be disturbing to the protected habitats, to wildlife, will cause erosion, native plant damage. Most of all, this type of activity is inconsistent with the mission of state parks - to provide outdoor recreation and public enjoyment that welcomes all our citizens to their public parks - and protects the natural areas of those parks.

I urge all members and friends to go on the WA State Parks website and click on current SEPA documents <https://parks.state.wa.us/1168/Navy-training-proposal>, scroll down to find further information.

Or go to the Twin Harbors Waterkeeper's webpage <http://twinharborswaterkeeper.org/act-now-important-dates/>

In either there are easy ways to get involved. There is a remote public hearing on January 26, 4-8 p.m.

I hope many will take action to redirect the Navy's important SEAL training exercises to other less sensitive shorelines than those in our marine state parks

Comments are due by January 22. (I will try to get more info for commenters).



With a hawkish stare
This predator of the skies
Awaits its moment
David Linn

Program Meeting *Special Birds of Mt. Rainier*

To most birders, Mount Rainier National Park is a mecca for subalpine and alpine birds that include Gray Jay, Clark's Nutcracker, Mountain Bluebird, and many other species. It's also home to highly sought-after specialties that include Boreal Owl, White-tailed Ptarmigan, and Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch.

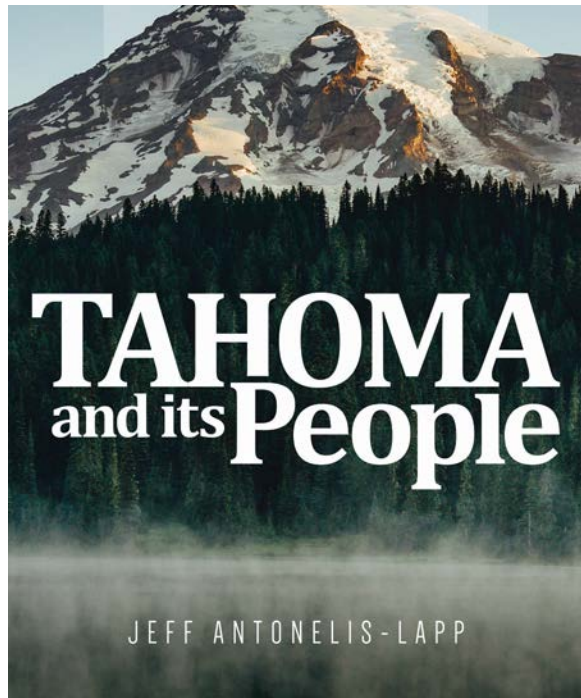
But did you know that it and its neighboring watersheds host Northern Spotted Owl, Marbled Murrelet, and Streaked Horned Lark, all protected under the U.S. Endangered Species Act?



Join Jeff Antonelis-Lapp, Emeritus Faculty at The Evergreen State College in Olympia, as he shares the status of these key species from Tahoma and Its People, his natural history of Mount Rainier National Park, published this spring by Washington State University Press.

After graduating from college, Jeff Antonelis-Lapp worked two summers at Mount Rainier National Park, igniting a connection to the mountain that endures today. He has summited the mountain, hiked all of its mapped trails, and completed the 93-mile Wonderland Trail five times.

Jeff began writing Tahoma and Its People after being unable to find a current natural history for a course he planned to teach at The Evergreen State College in Olympia. He conducted over 250 days of fieldwork for the book, many of them in the company of park archaeologists, biologists, and geologists.



While at Evergreen, he taught Native American Studies, natural history, environmental education, and served as the Library Dean before retiring in 2015.

Membership Dues Due

Your local Grays Harbor Audubon Society depends on the kindness of you, and a couple of strangers. January marks the date when memberships are due for renewal. If you have not already renewed, simply turn to page 8 of this Sandpiper and fill out your renewal at a level that is comfortable for you.

We depend on your support to bring you the programs you enjoy at the bi-monthly get-togethers. Subscribing at a higher-level allows us to enhance the care and consideration we give to our over 3,000 acres of essential wetlands and habitat for birds and other wildlife species. Grays Harbor Audubon protects birds and the places they need, today and tomorrow, but only with your support. Make sure you renew or upgrade today. If you are unsure, contact Linda Orgel ldotorg@oleary-creek.com to review your current status.

Thank you in advance for caring about the birds, and your generous support of our Chapter.



How do birds survive the winter

Story by Bernd Heinrich; Illustrations by Megan Bishop

It seems logical that most birds flee the northern regions to overwinter somewhere warmer, such as the tropics. Their feat of leaving their homes navigating and negotiating often stupendous distances twice a year, indicates their great necessity of avoiding the alternative—of staying and enduring howling snowstorms and subzero temperatures.

However, some birds stay and face the dead of winter against seemingly insurmountable odds. That they can and do invites our awe and wonder, for it requires solving two problems simultaneously.

The first is maintaining an elevated body temperature—generally about 105°F for birds—in order to stay active. Humans in the north, with our 98.6°F body temperatures, face the same problem during winter of staying warm enough to be able to function, as anyone walking barefoot at -30°F will attest to within seconds.

The second problem to be surmounted in winter is finding food. For most birds, food supplies become greatly reduced in winter just when food is most required as fuel for keeping them warm.

One might wonder if birds are endowed with a magic winter survival trick. The short answer is: they aren't. They solve the winter survival problem in many ways, often by doing many things at once. Although some species have devised the evolutionary equivalent of proprietary solutions, most birds follow a simple formula: maximize calories ingested while minimizing calories spent. **Black-Capped Chickadees**

Chickadees (like most year-round northern birds) brave the winter in their bare uninsulated legs and feet. Yet their toes remain flexible and functional at all temperatures, whereas ours, if that small, would freeze into blocks of ice in seconds. Don't

they get cold?

They do. Their feet cool down to near freezing, close to 30°F. Of course, a bird's comfort level for foot temperature is likely very different from ours; they would not feel uncomfortable until the point when damage occurs from freezing (ice crystal formation).

But chickadee feet don't freeze, and that's because their foot temperature is regulated near the freezing point and may stay cold most of the time all winter, even as core body temperature stays high.

Every time the bird sends heat (via blood) from the body core to the extremities, it must produce more heat in the core for replacement. Thus, if chickadee maintained its feet at the same temperature as its body core, it would lose heat very rapidly, and that would be so energetically costly that any bird doing so would quickly be calorie depleted. Birds maintaining warm feet would be unlikely to be able to feed fast enough to stay warm and active.

However, a chickadee's feet are provided with continuous blood flow. The warm arterial blood headed toward the feet from the body runs next to veins of cooled blood returning from the feet to the body. As heat is transferred between the outgoing and incoming veins, the blood returning into the body recovers much of the heat that would otherwise be lost flowing out <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/how-do-gulls-deal-with-cold-feet/>

Birds retain heat in their body core by fluffing out their feathers. Chickadees may appear to be twice as fat in winter as in summer. But they aren't. They are merely puffed up, thickening the insulation around their bodies. At night, they reduce heat loss by seeking shelter in tree holes or other crevices, and by reducing their body temperature — the smaller the difference in temperature between the bird and its environment, the lower the rate of heat loss. Still, the bird may have to shiver all night and burn up most of its fat reserves, which then must be replenished the next day in order to survive the next night.

Nighttime is crunch time for winter survival because no food calories are coming in to replace those being expended. It is a tight energy balance, but by lowering body temperature and turning down heat production at night, chickadees and other small birds of winter spare the cushion of fat accumulated during the day.

For more information and the complete article visit <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/how-do-birds-survive-the-winter/>



Irruption Alert: Astonishing Pine Siskin Nocturnal Migration

By Ryan F. Mandelbaum:

On Sunday, October 11, Astronomer and Field Ornithologist Timothy Spahr captured sounds almost never heard in recorded history: the raspy call notes of Pine Siskins migrating at night. This month, these teeny finches have shattered expectations across the entire country.

Pine Siskins are out in full force in both the west and the east, descending on trees, bushes and feeders in noisy flocks and delighting birders who may not have seen this finch on their home turf in years. This autumn's mega flight has not only broken records, but taught us more about the bird's irruptive behaviors more generally.

Passerine birds like warblers and sparrows typically migrate at night, but ornithologists consider Pine Siskins to be exclusively diurnal, or daytime migrants. However, from October 10 to October 16, 2008, scientists Michael Watson, Jeffrey Wells, and Ryan Bavis recorded 190 Pine Siskins migrating at three sites near Gardiner, Maine for the first time in published history. This year, Spahr's recording station in Middlesex County, Massachusetts once again picked up the flight calls of Pine Siskins migrating from 11pm until dawn, totaling several hundred birds.

"It was really fantastic to hear Pine Siskins with the Swainson's and Hermit Thrushes giving nocturnal flight calls amid a backdrop of duetting Great Horned Owls." Spahr said.

What's going on? The 2008-2009 season was marked by an enormous movement of Pine Siskins as well, probably in response to depleted co-

nifer seed crops in their native montane and boreal habitats. Watson, Wells, and Bavis hypothesized in their 2011 paper that Siskins might only express this trait in response to a severe food shortage, forcing them to take on a nocturnal migration pattern more typical of other songbirds. It's likely that Pine Siskins are undergoing the same stresses this season, causing them to shift their behavior once again.

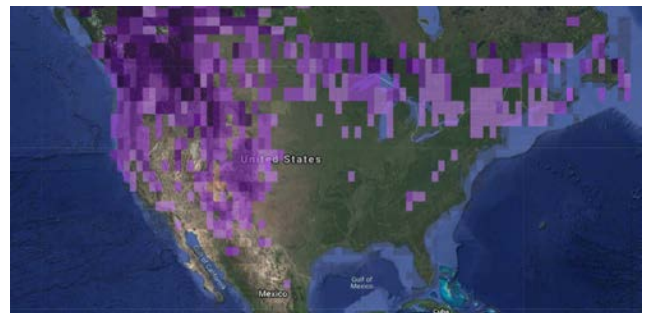
Even those without recording equipment can tell you that this year has been a historic one for Pine Siskins. On the morning October 11, birders at Higbee Beach in Cape May, New Jersey recorded a flight of over 5,000 birds. Around the country, Siskins are now frequent fixtures at well-known migratory pit stops; clouds of Siskins seem to outnumber goldfinches in my native New York City's parks.

As impressive as the numbers are the locations where these birds are moving. A comparison of eBird maps between August and October shows that Pine Siskins are irrupting even in the western half of the United States, where irruptive bird behavior is less studied. Pine Siskins have already reached the Gulf Coast in the East earlier than previous eBird records, reaching New Orleans on October 12. A flock of 20 even showed up in Bermuda, where this bird is only rarely spotted.

We'll continue tracking this year's epic Pine Siskin flight. In the meantime, remember to log all of your sightings to eBird, and keep your feeders stocked with thistle/nyjer seed.

FiRN is committed to researching and protecting these birds and other threatened finch species. We've included a link to donate below, and hope you'll help support our efforts.

Photo Credit Ryan F. Mandelbaum



Editors Note: WDFW has suggested that ALL feeders should be discontinued for the next few weeks, because of a salmonella outbreak spread by the irruption of the Pine Siskin.

Fun in the field

Memories of the Christmas Bird Count by Mary O'Neil

The Christmas Bird Count got its start at the beginning of the last century, but I didn't get involved until the beginning of the 21st Century. In the fall of 2001, I took a bird identification class through the Rainier Chapter of the Audubon Society (in South King County). Our teacher kept us involved with field trips and bird surveys over the next couple of months. She invited us to join her on the Christmas Bird count although she let us know this was very serious and not normally open to beginners. A number of us tagged along behind her as she methodically counted her territory – the Des Moines, Normandy Park area of South Seattle.

I remember we took a break around 2 pm at her friend's place off of S. 200th and Des Moines Memorial Drive. While some were sipping tea and relaxing, others of us walked a side street where we were very much entertained by a flock of drunken robins. It was fairly easy to count the robins as they would feed on the fermented berries until they would literally fall out of the tree and flounder on the ground until their stupor wore off enough to return to the tree to continue feasting. The festive mood got a little intense when a Sharp-Shinned Hawk moved in to watch the drunken brawl as well.

Our teacher was trying to get us to move along and was a bit reluctant to check out a bird I spotted which looked quite different to me. Finally at my insistence, she set her scope and zeroed in on the Townsend Warbler. It was my first, and she ended up being very delighted to add it to her CBC list.



Townsend's Warbler, photo by Tammy Mandeville. This is her first Townsend's Warbler and was photographed very recently at the retention ponds in Lacey, WA.

After moving to Grays Harbor, I eagerly signed up with the GHAS chapter of Audubon and have participated in their CBC ever since with minor exceptions. One year I helped with a group that covered the Westport area of the Grays Harbor Circle. We parked at roads end near the (now)

Shop'n Kart Grocery. One in our group who was far more physically fit than myself and another older gentlemen offered to scout along the edge of the marshland. Meanwhile we were to check out the side streets and park area. It was a biting cold day and few birds were showing themselves. The older gentleman and myself settled in the van waiting for the third person to return. While in the van, I pointed out a distant leafless tree – Big Leaf Maple, perhaps. At the top I could see some birds flitting about. At the time, my optics were very poor and I could make out no details on these distant blips. I tried pointing them out the fellow with whom I was sharing the van. Once he caught sight of them, he said: Common Redpolls. I said, "No. We are too far away for you to be able to say what kind of birds those are." "Common Redpolls" he said again. "You can tell by the way they are behaving." Finally he sacrificed the security of the van to brave the icy weather. He set up his scope and, sure enough, Common Redpolls. This was my first and only time I have ever seen Common Redpolls. When the third person in our party returned, he was very cold but very excited about finding one of the rarest birds of that CBC, a Harris Sparrow.

I think the point I am trying to make is: Even if you do not consider yourself an Ace Birder, your 'third eye' is going to be a valuable contribution to the group effort. Beginner, Tag Along or Master Birder – it's calling attention to that brief flick of motion that creates a scientific record dating back 120 years now. I'll miss the compilation party this year but hope to make up for it in years to come.



The rag tag crew is me, my sisters and a nephew : ITanner Pinkal; Rita Schlageter; Mary O'Neil; Margaret Beitel and Cecila Pinkal, at Ocean Shores

GHAS Mission

The mission of the Grays Harbor Audubon Society is to seek a sustainable balance between human activity and the needs of the environment, and to promote enjoyment of birds and the natural world



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**Grays Harbor Audubon Society
P.O. Box 470
Montesano, WA 98563**

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News & Editorial

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Copy deadline 10th of
month preceeding
membership meeting

Program Meeting
Special Birds of Mt. Rainier

Jeff Antonelis-Lapp

1:30 pm

Via Zoom

Inside this Issue

Local Bird Carver	1
President's perch	2
David Linn Haiku	2
Program meeting	3
Membership Dues	3
Winter Survival	4
Irruption Alert	5
Bird Count	6
Board & Officers	7
Member Application	8

The Sandpiper

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