

*Program Meeting  
Turkey Vultures  
Love at Second Sight  
Dan Varland, PhD*

*virtually see pages 4 & 9  
February 5, 2023 1:30 - 3:30 pm*

January  
February  
2023



# The Sandpiper

## **Bottle Beach erosion shuts down blind** *photos, story by Miles Wenzel, WA Parks*



One of the parks in our area, Bottle Beach, is experiencing erosion in front of our first bird blind once again this winter. Last winter brought a lot of damage to the structure, but we were able to stabilize it. Unfortunately, recent erosion has put the structure in danger of failing. We are going to have to deconstruct the structure for the public's safety. I just wanted to let you know so it was not a surprise for your members on their next visit.

*Miles Wenzel, Area Manager of the Washington State Parks in the South Beach Area.  
Please feel free to contact me at [miles.wenzel@parks.wa.gov](mailto:miles.wenzel@parks.wa.gov)*

## The President's Perch



*By Mary O'Neil*



Congratulations to all for surviving another holiday season. I sincerely hope you are all well-launched into your resolutions for becoming a better you.

Taking just a moment to look back... While everyone was preparing for and celebrating the arrival of the New Year 2023, many of us birders from around the world were busy counting birds in an effort known as The Christmas Bird Count. Prior to 1900, a popular holiday tradition existed called the Christmas "Side Hunt". Large parties would get together choosing sides and placing bets. Then they would take to the field and shoot as many birds and animals as they could come across. The side that produced the most kills won the pot and other prizes. As the 20th Century approached, many concerned citizens were worried about declining bird populations. Audubon Society itself was a fledgling operation that voiced concern. In the year 1900, an ornithologist Frank M. Chapman, also an officer in Audubon Society, proposed a new Holiday Tradition – counting the birds instead of shooting them. This past holiday season we celebrated the 122nd annual Christmas Bird Count.

Across the United States and Canada there are more than 2500 separate CBC circles, each of which is combed by teams of birders tallying counts. This tradition has provided one of the largest scientific data bases on bird populations available.

Our local Audubon area of Grays Harbor has 2 such circles. I was very happy to be able to participate in the counts of both circles again this year. Perhaps the most popular circle has its center point on Sand Island and encompasses the shoreline around Grays Harbor Bay including Hoquiam's Bowerman Basin, Westport and Ocean Shores. Master birders and amateurs as well come from around the State of Washington to cover this ter-

ritory. The other circle's centerpoint is just south of Hwy 12 in the Brady Loop area and includes the Chehalis River area between Montesano and Elma reaching east beyond the Hwy 8 rest station and south to Malone.

The date of the CBC can be set for any day between Dec 14 and January 5. I encourage you to mark your calendars now for around December 5th or so. Log onto National Audubon Society's web page at [www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org). You should be able to pick up specific dates at that time. Or, if you want to travel, you can find links to bird counts in any city or country you choose.

Remember, it's not only fun, but it's a great way to contribute to a data base that can be used for planning for a better world.

Happy Year of the Rabbit. May all you Hawks and Eagles get your fill.

*Thank you Mary O'Neil, Vice President*

### Membership dues for 2023

Your support of Grays Harbor Audubon Society (GHAS) helps to assure that our over 3000 acres of prime wetlands and wildlife habitat are protected for future generations. In addition, your tax-deductible donation helps the chapter provide our informational website, member meetings, and support to like-minded organizations. Your membership renews January 1, 2023. Please send your dues to GHAS PO Box 470 Montesano, Washington 98563. Please join or re-new at the highest level you can afford. See page 8 for a membership form.



### Have a Happy Valentines Day

Remember to love the birds, wildlife, land, and those around you and throughout the globe

***Put the Shorebird Festival on your calendar***

May 5th - 7th 2023

<http://www.shorebirdfestival.com/>

***The Great Backyard Birdcount***

February 17th - 20th



RedTailed Hawk - Pinterest

## The Inflation Reduction Act is a big deal for birds (and you)

By Sarah Rose

*Audubon National Vice President of Climate*

The Senate had an opportunity to advance one of the most significant pieces of climate legislation ever in the form of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). It is, as Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm told Stephen Colbert, “a BFD.”

It is also massive, as these policy packages tend to be. There is a lot of content to explore, and as one of the leading organizations protecting birds and the places they need today and tomorrow, here are some of the highlights:

**Extension and expansion of clean energy:** The IRA makes additional technologies like energy storage and biogas eligible for tax credits, and transitions to a technology-neutral credit so that the amount of emissions reduction potential is the primary criterion, rather than the technology itself. The bill also provides billions of dollars for grants and loans for new clean energy manufacturing, repair and upgrade of transmission infrastructure, and incentives for developing domestic supply chains for critical minerals.

**Climate-smart agriculture and resilience:** Our fields, forests, and other working lands play a critical role in naturally storing carbon and reducing emissions. The IRA would provide \$19.9 billion to support implementation of conservation practices on farms, ranches, orchards, and forests across the country. These practices can also help promote drought resilience in the West through river restoration projects, habitat restoration, and irrigation management and efficiency.

**Methane fee:** Methane is one of the most dangerous greenhouse gases, and is the second-biggest contributor to climate change, after carbon dioxide. Burning off excess methane, or flaring, is particularly hazardous for both people and wildlife, and methane leakage is a common problem in fossil fuel production. The IRA includes funds

for methane emissions monitoring and fixes, and applies a fee on oil and gas operations of \$900 in 2024 (up to \$1,500 in 2026 and thereafter) per metric ton of methane emitted.

**Ports:** The bill contains \$3 billion to reduce emissions and air pollution at America’s ports, which is good news for both coastal birds and nearby communities.

**DOE Loans Program Office (LPO):** The LPO is the part of the Energy Department that finances large-scale infrastructure projects. The IRA would give over \$70 billion in new loan authority for the LPO, which is critical to expanding clean energy and transmission, as well as updating infrastructure to meet climate threats and ensuring that new projects are designed with conservation of existing environments in mind.

**Increase Timeliness of EPA Reviews:** The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) conducts reviews of major projects, but this review process, for myriad reasons, suffers from an extensive backlog. The IRA would provide \$40 million to the EPA through FY 2026 to provide for timely permitting reviews to advance projects or more quickly identify necessary improvements before proceeding.

**Environmental and Climate Justice:** Conservation is more than just protecting wild spaces and wildlife. It also means prioritizing investments to build healthy communities, especially for those communities that have historically shouldered the burden of pollution and climate change. The IRA will provide block grants of \$2.8 billion through FY 2026 for environmental justice grants, including community-led air pollution monitoring, prevention, and remediation. Additionally, many of the tax credits provided for in the bill increase in value if they directly affect communities that have been disproportionately affected by climate change, including Black and brown, Indigenous, and lower-income communities.

Overall, this bill represents a major step forward in the effort to meet our climate goals. In a bill this large, final passage will inevitably require negotiation and compromise. Included currently are provisions providing opportunities for additional fossil fuel leasing, with some renewable energy development contingent upon oil and gas leasing being made available on some public lands. Even with these elements, the opportunity for progress on climate is significant. Birds are telling us that we need to reduce emissions as soon as possible to protect the places that both they and we need to survive. This bill will go a long way to making that critical difference. *(Lightly edited content, as bill passed)*



**Member Meeting**  
**February 5, 2023 1:30pm - 3:30pm**

***Turkey Vultures – Love at Second Sight!***

Despite the fact that Turkey Vultures dine on carrion and sport unattractive, featherless heads, take a closer look at the behavior and ecology of these essential birds and discover their true beauty. Dr. Dan Varland will share results of a collaborative study with Hawk Mountain Sanctuary on the patterns of migration, site fidelity and roost sites of Turkey Vultures captured and fitted with GPS transmitters and/or wing-tags for monitoring in coastal Washington.

Dan Varland is Executive Director of Coastal Raptors, a Washington-based non-profit focused on research and education programs leading to conservation of birds of prey.

The ultimate goal of Coastal Raptors is conservation of coastal raptors. They accomplish this through their research and education programs. Research leads to informed decisions on conservation issues. Education leads to understanding of and respect for our magnificent coastal raptors and their habitats. Over the years, more than 500 people have participated in the field. While many live close by, many others travel from Seattle, Portland and beyond to help and to learn.

**Meeting link:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82118695964?pwd=dDVqOXF1bUJrakxLWXhLNTRQL1ovUT09#succ ess>



**Bird Buddy**  
***Smart camera bird feeder***

This is an AI-powered camera feeder which can notify you of bird visitors, captures their photos and can help to ID who has come to visit. The system recognizes over 1,000 bird species and will alert your smart phone of the presence and identity of the latest visitor

A bit pricey at \$199, it is something to put on your birding want list.

More at <https://mybirdbuddy.com>



photo by Don Whaling



### **Recently passed federal funding package makes investments in natural climate solutions**

Congress passed an appropriations package for fiscal year 2023 today that includes a significant investment in natural climate solutions along with increased spending for critical conservation and research programs that benefit birds and people.

Audubon has long been advocating for the Growing Climate Solutions Act (GCSA), which was folded into the omnibus spending package. The GCSA creates voluntary carbon markets for farmers, foresters, ranchers, and other land stewards. Once signed into law, it will create a new program to self-certify technical assistance providers and third-party verifiers for the agriculture and forestry sectors. It will also address barriers to entry for landowners trying to access voluntary carbon markets and encourages practices guided by science.

“Recognizing the critical role that stewards of the land play in responsible conservation and reducing emissions through natural carbon storage is essential,” said Elizabeth Gray, CEO of the National Audubon Society. “The Growing Climate Solutions Act will provide the support that farmers, ranchers, foresters, and other producers need to ensure that our working lands are part of the solution for a better future for people and wildlife.”

Federal spending was slightly increased for programs focused on coastal and freshwater ecosystem restoration, fisheries management, and migratory bird conservation. This includes restoration initiatives in the Great Lakes, Delaware River Basin, Everglades, and other important ecosystems that benefit birds, other wildlife, and communities. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

(USFWS) programs that manage migratory birds and provide grants for migratory bird conservation saw minor increases, too.

The Department of Energy received \$10 million to invest in advancements in testing and verification of technologies that help solar energy projects avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts on wildlife and ecosystems, as well as improved scientific research into avian-solar interactions.

Unfortunately, the package included a harmful policy provision regarding the Greater Sage-Grouse and missed an opportunity to invest in state-level wildlife recovery efforts by failing to include the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act (RAWA). RAWA would have helped state wildlife agencies proactively conserve vulnerable species. And although this year’s spending bill included much needed increases in funding for Greater Sage-Grouse conservation, it once again undercuts science by continuing to prohibit the USFWS from considering the Greater Sage-Grouse for protection under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

“We are truly disappointed to see Congress continually put politics before science,” said Sara Brodnax, director of public lands policy, National Audubon Society. “The provision sets a very concerning precedent for future intervention in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s mission to conserve and protect wildlife and their habitats.”

The spending package also contains portions of the Salton Sea Projects Improvements Act, bipartisan legislation introduced last year that greatly expand the ability of the federal government to participate in projects at California’s beleaguered Salton Sea. Changing water use patterns and a warming climate are hastening the Sea’s evaporation, endangering a critical stopover for migratory birds as well as the health of hundreds of thousands of nearby residents.

“The federal government owns some 40 percent of the land in and around the Salton Sea, but has had its hands tied when it comes to participating in state-run remediation projects,” said Frank Ruiz, director of Audubon California’s Salton Sea Program. “This legislation will significantly expand the ability of the Bureau of Reclamation to partner with the region’s other major landowners — state, local, and Tribal governments — to address the expanding public health and environmental crisis at the Salton Sea.”

Audubon will continue pushing for greater investments and protections in a number of priorities for birds, people, and the places we need as the new Congress begins planning appropriations for the next fiscal year.

photo by Don Whaling



## **Pacific Northwest Eagles**

by Emily Gillespie AAA, WA

With their piercing eyes, curved talons and wingspans that can reach 6 feet, eagles have earned their place as revered residents of the Pacific Northwest. For centuries, people have viewed eagles as a symbol of bravery, honor and grace. And that is because the birds have many qualities humans have come to respect. They use their powerful vision to soar high and hunt their prey. They are monogamous creatures that nurture their young, and they are fierce defenders of their home, sometimes fighting in mid-air to death.

“They’re impressive,” says Jim Watson, a wildlife research scientist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife who specializes in raptors. “They eat other things, which always makes for an exciting story. They don’t ignore each other; they interact with each other. They do cartwheels by engaging talons and twirling around in a circle and falling in the air.”

The Pacific Northwest is home to two types of eagles: the bald eagle and the golden eagle. And winter is the best time to see them, because eagles feed on prey such as salmon or animal carcasses, which are more plentiful in the winter. Both types of eagles have their own unique allure, which makes spotting either one a special moment during an outdoor adventure.

With their eye-catching white heads contrasting with their brown bodies, bald eagles are unmistakable. Earning the title of national bird just six years after the United States became a nation, the bald eagle is emblematic of our country. Although bald eagles exist all over the United States, those that call the Pacific Northwest home are among the largest. Unlike the rest of the year when they’re fairly spread out, winter is when bald eagles gather in large groups in places where there are salmon concentrations — waterways such as rivers and lakes.

Here are some places around the Northwest that offer the best chances to spot a bald eagle:

### ***Harrison River Delta***

At the confluence of the Fraser and Harrison rivers near Abbotsford, British Columbia, sits the Harrison River Delta and nearby Chehalis flats where every year, hundreds if not thousands of bald eagles flock to gorge on salmon. The gathering is considered the largest overwintering population of bald eagles. That is because the waters support North America’s largest populations of several salmon species. The Fraser Valley Bald Eagle Festival, which began in 1995 and was discontinued in 2020, alerted thousands of bird enthusiasts to the event. Subsequently, it also spurred the creation of the Chehalis Flats Bald Eagle & Salmon Preserve to help reduce the human disturbance to the area.

### ***Upper Skagit River***

Dotting the tree branches near Rockport along the banks of the Skagit River, a 150-mile waterway that carves the North Cascades, bald eagles can be seen in the hundreds during wintertime. Luckily for birders, Highway 20 follows the river. There are several places to stop and pull out your binoculars between Sedro-Woolley and Marblemount. This includes the Skagit River Bald Eagle Interpretive Center, which offers guided hikes and a speaker series each December and January.

### ***Columbia River Gorge***

Although there are a few spots along the Columbia River Gorge where bald eagles are known to congregate in the winter, The Dalles Dam is one spot to which these majestic birds reliably return year after year. A few weekends every winter, park rangers with the U.S. Forest Service and raptor handlers from the Columbia Gorge Discovery Center & Museum host an Eagle Watch event where they answer questions and host activities.

### ***Klamath Basin***

Spanning parts of southern Oregon and northern California, the Klamath Basin becomes home to hundreds of bald eagles each winter. The annual migration, which occurs between November and March, draws birders from across the region. The six wildlife refuges that make up the Klamath Basin National Wildlife Refuges are considered reliable places to see bald eagles in the winter.

To read the entire article please visit [https://blog.wa.aaa.com/journey/pacific-northwest-eagles/?cmpid=int\\_eml\\_out\\_all-0123-blog-digital-journey&ajs\\_uid=6bb408e5442395fda727cb671caf174f](https://blog.wa.aaa.com/journey/pacific-northwest-eagles/?cmpid=int_eml_out_all-0123-blog-digital-journey&ajs_uid=6bb408e5442395fda727cb671caf174f)

## GHAS Board of Directors

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### **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



## Other Audubon Contacts

GHAS voice mail	(360) 289-5048
National Audubon	(212) 979-3000
GHAS Website	<i>http://ghas.org</i>

**\*\*all area codes 360, unless otherwise noted\*\***

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or

### **Follow us on our website**

*http://ghas.org*

*Please Fill Out and Mail Back*

**ANNUAL GRAYS HARBOR AUDUBON  
CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES**

If you would like to join Grays Harbor Audubon Society (GHAS), please fill out the form below, **make your check payable to Grays Harbor Audubon Society** and return it with your check to:

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

Chapter Memberships include a subscription to *The Sandpiper* newsletter. All Chapter Memberships above the Sandpiper category provide financial support to our Chapter. The Grays Harbor Audubon Society is totally self-supporting. Please note that the Sandpiper Newsletter is sent via email, so please include your email address on this form or send it to Linda Orgel at [Ldotorg@olearycreek.com](mailto:Ldotorg@olearycreek.com)

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

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- |                          |           |          |
|--------------------------|-----------|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Sandpiper | \$ 15.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Heron     | \$ 25.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Pelican   | \$ 50.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Falcon    | \$ 75.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Eagle     | \$100.00 |
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- I am renewing my membership  
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- Please do NOT publish my name in the newsletter in the list of GHAS members

To join National Audubon or renew your National Audubon Membership, call 1-800-274-4201.



***News & Editorial***

send materials to  
P.O. Box 1044  
Westport, 98595-1044  
or email to  
rd@olearycreek.com

Copy deadline 10th of  
month preceding  
membership meeting

***Program Meeting  
February 5, 2023 1:30pm - 3:30pm***

***Turkey Vultures  
Love at Second Sight  
Dan Varland, PhD  
virtually via Zoom.  
See Membership article***

***<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82118695964?pwd=dDVqOXFibUJrakxLWXhLNTRQL1ovUT09>***

***Inside this Issue***

Bottle Beach erosion	1
President's perch	2
Inflation Reduction Act	3
Member Meeting	4
Bird Buddy	4
Funding for Climate	5
Pacific NW Eagles	6
Board & Officers	7
Member application	8

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