

*Program Meeting
How to recognize, document and
report pollution
Lee First, Twin Harbors Waterkeeper
Via Zoom, April 3rd
1:30 pm - 3:30 pm
see page 2 and/or page 9 for access*

March
April
2022



The Sandpiper



Grays Harbor birds would love any and all.

Why Native Plants Are Better for Birds and People

By Marina Richie

Your garden is your outdoor sanctuary. With some careful plant choices, it can be a haven for native birds as well. Landscaped with native species, your yard, patio, or balcony becomes a vital recharge station for birds passing through and a sanctuary for nesting and overwintering birds.

Each patch of restored native habitat is just that—a patch in the frayed fabric of the ecosystem in which it lies. By landscaping with native plants, we can turn a patchwork of green spaces into a quilt of restored habitat.

To survive, native birds need native plants and the insects that have co-evolved with them. Most landscaping plants available in nurseries are exotic species from other countries. Many are prized for qualities that make them poor food sources for

native birds—like having leaves that are unpalatable to native insects and caterpillars. With 96 percent of all terrestrial bird species in North America feeding insects to their young, planting insect-proof exotic plants is like serving up plastic food. No insects? No birds.

Caterpillars are the go-to food source for migrant and resident birds alike. In the 16 days between hatching and fledging, a clutch of Carolina Chickadee chicks can down more than 9,000 of them.

Tallamy's work points to native landscaping as a key tool in increasing bird diversity and abundance. In a study of suburban properties in southeast Pennsylvania, for example, eight times more Wood Thrushes, Eastern Towhees, Veeries, and Scarlet Tanagers (all species of conservation concern) were found in yards with native plantings as compared with yards landscaped with typical alien ornamentals.

What's more, the habitat provided by native plants can help birds adapt and survive amid a changing climate. More than half of North American bird species are threatened by climate change, and native plants can help increase their resilience by giving them food and places to rest and nest.

When you landscape with native species, you can spend more time with the birds and less time with the mower. How does that boost human health? During the growing season, some 56 million Americans mow 40 million acres of grass each week—an area eight times the size of New Jersey! Mowers and weed-whackers burn gasoline to the tune of 800 million gallons per year, contributing to the greenhouse gases that drive global warming.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, 30 to 60 percent of fresh water in American cities is used for watering lawns. Native plants have adapted to thrive in their regional landscape, without added water or nutrients. With climate change models predicting increased episodes of extreme drought such as California is experiencing, it's a good time to shift to water-wise yards and native plants.

For the complete article: <https://www.audubon.org/news/why-native-plants-are-better-birds-and-people>

The President's Perch



By Janet Strong

The winter storms and the super high tides have damaged the bird blind at our beloved Bottle Beach State Park. While we can't fix that problem, there is something we as members and lovers of this state park can do to help. You may have noticed that invasive blackberries are still growing along the paths and the parking lot and other upland areas. They don't do well in wetlands, thank goodness.

The State Parks agency has worked to remove some of them but need our help to finish the job, since their allocated funding deadline has passed. But, take heart, we will have the partnership of those super weed removers, the Grays Harbor Stream Team. (<https://www.aberdeenwa.gov/372/Grays-Harbor-Stream-Team>) The team has volunteered to devote a Saturday helping us (and the park) getting the job done. All we need is to iron out the details with State Parks and fix a date. Please stay tuned. We will email everybody with an email as to that date. Please wear sturdy clothes and have strong gloves. I apologize the date isn't set yet, but I am working on it. This is a good project for us to involve ourselves in as it benefits the park, our local birds and increases the enjoyment of all users. And such good exercise! And those satisfying feelings of removing a noxious plant!

Get your binoculars ready! The Shorebird Festival will be held April 29th - May 1st, 2022. The Festival will be hybrid this year with virtual presentations and resources for self-guided shorebird viewing. Peak viewing dates are April 24th - May 1st. The Sandpiper Trail is always open to view the incredible displays of migratory birds that visit us every year on their way to their breeding grounds. Check <http://www.shorebird-festival.com/> for more information.

Grays Harbor Audubon will hold our program meetings via Zoom in April and probably in June. We will continue to monitor the Covid situation and hope that meetings can resume in person as soon as it is safe.

Join GHAS Zoom Meeting,
April 3rd at 1:30 pm - 3:30 pm
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82118695964?pwd=dDVqOXF1bUJrakxLWXhLNTRQL1ovUT09>
Meeting ID: 821 1869 5964
Passcode: 579465

Member Program

How to recognize, document and report pollution

Attend this presentation to learn how to recognize, document, and report pollution. Your observations and reports help protect clean water, and by reporting pollution, you are helping to protect your watershed.

Stormwater pollution is the most prevalent type of pollution in the United States. Learn why, what it looks like, and how to report it. There are many construction sites in the Chehalis watershed that are not managed correctly by construction contractors. Poor management at construction sites often results in discharges of sediment that are harmful to aquatic life. Sediment can smother fish eggs and make it difficult for fish to breathe, and cause other problems. Some sediment is so fine that it can take months to settle.

Discharges from industrial sites are sometimes visible from our public roads. Learn what to look for, why these discharges are harmful, and how to document discharges.

Creosote pilings are very abundant in the lower Chehalis watershed. Creosote is poison, and many pilings are still in place that have no function at all. Help us report them so that the Department of Natural Resources can track them for removal.

The WA Department of Ecology has a reporting tool called the Environmental Incident Report Tracking Form, or ERTS. We will demonstrate how to fill out an ERTs. The WA Dept of Natural Resources has a reporting tool called MYCoast. It is used to report large marine debris, derelict vessels, creosote pilings, and tires.

By learning how to use these tools, you will be helping to protect water quality. Please join us for this talk!





Female cowbirds perform some incredible arithmetic to know when she should lay her eggs in the nest of a host bird

Some bird species have invented a whole arsenal of trickery to get rid of the burden of parenthood and let others do the job. Breeding a clutch and raising young are costly endeavours, after all. They become brood parasites by laying their eggs in other birds' nests and letting the host do all the hard work of incubating eggs and feeding hatchlings. Naturally, the potential hosts are not pleased and do everything to avoid being exploited. And one of the defence strategies the potential host has at its disposal is the usage of numerical cues.

A sophisticated type of brood parasitism is found in cowbirds, a songbird species that lives in North America. In this species, females also deposit their eggs in the nests of a variety of host species, from birds as small as kinglets to those as large as meadowlarks, and they have to be smart in order to guarantee that their future young have a bright future.

Cowbird eggs hatch after exactly 12 days of incubation; if incubation is only 11 days, the chicks do not hatch and are lost. It is therefore not an accident that the incubation times for the eggs of the most common hosts range from 11 to 16 days, with an average of 12 days. Host birds usually lay one egg per day – once one day elapses with no egg added by the host to the nest, the host has begun incubation. This means the chicks start to develop in the eggs, and the clock begins ticking. For a cowbird female, it is therefore not only important to find a suitable host, but also to precisely time their egg laying appropriately. If the cowbird lays her egg too early in the host nest, she risks her egg being discovered and destroyed. But if she lays her egg too late, incubation time will have expired before her cowbird chick can hatch.

Clever experiments by David J White and Grace Freed-Brown from the University of Pennsyl-

vania suggest that cowbird females carefully monitor the host's clutch to synchronise their parasitism with a potential host's incubation. The cowbird females watch out for host nests in which the number of eggs has increased since her first visit. This guarantees that the host is still in the laying process and incubation has not yet started. In addition, the cowbird is looking out for nests that contain exactly one additional egg per number of days that have elapsed since her initial visit.

For instance, if the cowbird female visited a nest on the first day and found one host egg in the nest, she will only deposit her own egg if the host nest contains three eggs on the third day. If the nest contains fewer additional eggs than the number of days that have passed since the last visit, she knows that incubation has already started and it is useless for her to lay her own egg. It is incredibly cognitively demanding, since the female cowbird needs to visit a nest over multiple days, remember the clutch size from one day to the next, evaluate the change in the number of eggs in the nest from a past visit to the present, assess the number of days that have passed, and then compare these values to make a decision to lay her egg or not.

But this is not all. Cowbird mothers also have sinister reinforcement strategies. They keep watch on the nests where they've laid their eggs. In an attempt to protect their egg, the cowbirds act like mafia gangsters. If the cowbird finds that her egg has been destroyed or removed from the host's nest, she retaliates by destroying the host bird's eggs, pecking holes in them or carrying them out of the nest and dropping them on the ground. The host birds better raise the cowbird nestling, or else they have to pay dearly. For the host parents, it may therefore be worth it to go through all the trouble of raising a foster chick from an adaptive point of view.

The cowbird is an astounding example of how far evolution has driven some species to stay in the business of passing on their genes. The existing selection pressures, whether imposed by the inanimate environment or by other animals, force populations of species to maintain or increase adaptive traits caused by specific genes. Irrespective of its evolutionary origin, one thing is certain – numerical competence is most certainly an adaptive trait.

** This article originally appeared in The MIT Press Reader, Andreas Nieder is Professor of Animal Physiology and Director of the Institute of Neurobiology at the University of Tübingen and the author of A Brain for Numbers, from which this article is adapted.*



The artist, Flori Pondia is a member of the Oakville Art gatherings, along with Janet Strong. Flori was born and raised in New York City in the 50s and moved to the Pacific Northwest 28 years ago. Here, she discovered that she was an avid nature lover and advocate. She expresses her passion in the two watercolor paintings shown here. “Larch with Chickadee” and “Blackbird and Cattail”.





Make migration-friendly window decorations

By National Audubon Society

Migration presents bird lovers with amazing opportunities to spot birds as they pass through, but one cannot forget the many dangers birds face on their journeys. One of the most perilous threats is a window collision. Birds can't perceive glass windows: They see through the clear surface to the other side, or see a mirrored reflection of nearby sky or trees. Either way, they can fly right into the hard glass at full speed. If they're lucky and close to the ground, the strike will stun them and they can recover on the ground before flying off. Often, though, they are more likely to be killed by it.

With this DIY activity, you can be both a champion for birds and decorate your home in a fun and creative way. After making decals using puff paint or a glue mixture, attach them to the outside of your windows.

Using patterns to break up the reflections and transparency of your windows can help prevent collisions. Be sure to stick your homemade decorations on the outside-facing side of your window in order to disrupt the perilous reflections.

Activity adapted from Audubon New York

Materials

Puff paint OR Elmer's glue, dish soap, and markers
A smooth plastic surface like a sheet protector, sandwich bag, or plastic wrap.

A paintbrush

Stencils for tracing (optional, since you can make your own)

Instructions

1. Decide on your design! You can find stencils online, at your local craft store, or make up your designs as you go. Any pattern can divert birds, but why not get in the migration spirit with bird, flower, or leaf shapes? You can also make your

own stencil by tracing the outlines of birds from photographs in books or your Audubon magazine issue. If you're looking to have less showy decorations, create many small circles or flowers (each at least the size of a dime); you'll need enough to place one approximately every 2 inches across the entire window pane to break up the reflection.

2. Place your smooth plastic sheet over your stencil so you can see the stencil through the plastic.

3. Prepare your glue. Puff paint is great, if you have some on hand; it's glue and colored paint combined into one. If you don't have puff paint, you can make your own clear adhesive by pouring two tablespoons of Elmer's glue in a cup and then adding a few drops of dish soap. Stir until the soap is fully blended. (See how to make clear adhesive in this video from Audubon New York.)

4. Apply the glue onto the plastic. Try not to move your stencil around too much! If you're using puff paint, you can squeeze the paint directly from the bottle onto the plastic and use a paintbrush to smooth it out. If you're using homemade glue, use the paintbrush to paint the glue onto the sheet. In either case, you will want an even coating that is thick enough to withstand being lifted from the sheet. Make sure there are no gaps or thin, streaky sections. You may need to apply a second coat.

5. Let the glue dry. This will depend on the thickness of the glue you painted on, but will take at least two hours—and maybe up to 24 hours if you're using puff paint. The homemade glue will become transparent as it dries. When it is completely transparent and smooth, that means it is dry.

6. Only for homemade glue decals. If you used puff paint, skip this step! Once the clings are entirely dry, it is time to color! Leaving the clings on the plastic, use markers (permanent or water-based markers are both fine) to color in your creations as you wish! Make sure to color gently so as not to rip the decals.

7. Once the marker ink is dry, you can carefully remove the clings from the sheet. You will need to peel them off slowly and gently to make sure the clings do not fold over and stick to themselves. If they do, you will very likely be able to separate it, but there is a possibility of a rip or tear.

8. Place your decals close together on the outsides of your windows. For puff paint, attach the flat side to the window; for homemade glue, attach the non-colored side. Birds see even small spaces as passages, so open gaps should be no more than 4 inches wide and 2 inches high. Carefully smooth the decals on the window.

While window decals are not 100 percent effective, they can make a huge difference.



2022 Legislative session recap by Audubon Washington

Climate change is the number one threat to birds and people. Wisely planning for a 100% clean energy future with healthy communities and abundant birds is essential to building a resilient future. That's why Audubon Washington had two climate priorities this session: incorporating climate change in our state's Growth Management Act (GMA), and promoting an equitable buildout of well-sited solar energy.

A disappointing loss - HB 1099 dies in the final moments. This year's legislative session was a critical deadline for updating the GMA before comprehensive planning for the next decade begins. HB 1099, which we've worked on diligently for multiple sessions, finally passed out of both chambers of the legislature but died when the House ran out of time to agree to late-session changes in the bill. This is a major disappointment, causing advocates for climate resilience planning to regroup and consider next steps.

Our efforts to support well-sited and equitable solar energy helped pass HB 1814, which creates a new low-income solar incentive program with precedent-setting language defining 'preferred sites' in state law. This bill will bring the benefits of solar energy to vulnerable communities and protect birds from solar development by guiding projects towards buildings, parking lots, and other locations that don't displace wildlife habitat or prime farmland. The bill's prime sponsor, Representative Sharon Shewmake, deserves special praise for stewarding this bill through a very challenging legislative session. The many local Audubon chapters who supported these efforts with letters to the editor in their local papers also deserve credit for the passage of this important bill.

Coastal Program: Puget Sound

Unfortunately SB 5885, our priority bill for protecting Puget Sound coastline, didn't make it across the finish line this year. One major impediment to healthy shorelines is the presence of countless (truly, uncounted) structures like bulkheads and rock walls that destroy critical habitat for forage fish, further threatening species who rely on them like the Rhinoceros Auklet. SB 5885 would have provided a comprehensive assessment of our shoreline conditions, to get a more accurate estimate of unpermitted and derelict structures that are negatively impacting our shores.

This bill was a casualty of attacks from opponents who expressed concerns about the potential for enforcement actions against illegal and environmentally harmful structures. While this legislation didn't pass, it's imperative that we stay engaged and demonstrate broad public support for habitat recovery in Puget Sound.

In other news, we supported the successful passage of SB 5619, legislation that calls on the Department of Natural Resources to develop a plan to conserve and restore 10,000 acres of native kelp and eelgrass beds by 2040. This is welcome news for species who rely on those ecosystems!

Greater Sage-grouse. Photo: Evan Barrientos
Working Lands Program: Sagelands

Sageland birds will be safer thanks to an important budget win: Washington's Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) secured funding for new staff to help them respond to the major influx of solar projects in the Columbia Plateau. This additional staffing will allow DFW to effectively manage our growing demand for clean energy, and ensure these projects are well-sited, protecting sagebrush birds like the Sage Thrasher and Greater Sage-grouse. Along this same vein, we successfully maintained funding secured in 2021 for Washington State University's least conflict solar siting process.

While we celebrate these wins, other sageland priorities saw less success. HB 1891, a bill that would have supported a pilot project for rangeland wildfire protections, fizzled out early in the legislative process.

Bird-Friendly Communities

Outdoor Education for All - HB 2078 passed! We are thrilled that more 5th and 6th graders across Washington will have greater opportunities to access the outdoors, thanks to this new grant program which will be set up through the Office of the Superintendent of Public Schools. Seward Park Audubon Center testified in support of this legislation, offering an important and vivid example of how nature and birds can transform a child's life!

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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Please Fill Out and Mail Back

**ANNUAL GRAYS HARBOR AUDUBON
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If you would like to join Grays Harbor Audubon Society (GHAS), please fill out the form below, ***make 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.

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News & Editorial

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Copy deadline 10th of
month preceding
membership meeting

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Program Meeting

How to recognize, document and report pollution

Lee First, Twin Harbors Waterkeeper

Via Zoom 1:30 pm, April 3rd

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<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82118695964?pwd=dDVqOXFlbUJrakxLWXhLNTRQL1ovUT09>

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