

Program Meeting

*Fry Creek - A Stormwater Story
and
GH Stream Team Accomplishments
5:00 pm June 7th Via Zoom
details via email to follow*

May
June
2020



The Sandpiper



photo by Charles Sharp

An extinct bird just ‘evolved itself’ back into existence

by Thomas Shambler

The Aldabra white-throated rail bird was declared extinct, a victim of rising sea levels almost 100,000 years ago. However, the flightless brown bird has recently been spotted – leaving scientists scratching their heads as to how – and why – the species has come back to life.

According to research in the Zoological Journal of Linnean Society, the re-incarnated Aldabra bird is a product of ‘iterative evolution’. That’s when old genes thought to have died out re-emerge at a different point in time.

That means that while a bird’s ancestors might have disappeared, that DNA still remains – and provided the environment is right, there’s nothing to stop those ancient genes from replicating in modern times. So identical species can indeed produce multiple, slightly evolved offshoots, throughout the course of their species’ history.

But don’t get your hopes up that this means dinosaurs and woolly mammoths will be popping up next. This scientific phenomenon only occurs within species that are nearly identical to their ancestors.

While iterative evolution has previously occurred in species such as turtles, it has never been seen in the realm of birds. “We know of no other example in the rails, or of birds in general, that demonstrates this phenomenon so evidently,” said paleobiologist David Martill, in a statement.

“Only on the Aldabra, which has the oldest palaeontological record of any oceanic island within the Indian Ocean region, is fossil evidence avail-

able that demonstrates the effects of changing sea levels on extinction and recolonization events.”

2020 was already an interesting and confusing year. Looks like now we have to contend with re-materializing birds, as well.



photo by Charles Melton

The secret of Hummingbird migration

In the Southwest and in the West to British Columbia, hummingbirds are present year-round. In southern Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas, many sought-after species, including Blue-throated, Rivoli’s, Broad-billed, and White-eared hummingbirds, frequent backyard nectar feeders, and even rarer visitors can also make an appearance.

Hummingbird lovers on the West Coast from California to British are also fortunate. Large numbers of hummingbirds, especially Anna’s to the north and Allen’s to the south, are likely to be found in good numbers in hummingbird-friendly yards year-round. Migrant Rufous Hummingbirds also move northward early—as far north as Oregon by the end of February—on their way to their coastal Alaskan breeding grounds.

Growing plants that are indigenous to your area is a great way to both attract and help the hummingbirds you love. Native plants provide shelter and food, including a healthy environment for insects, part of the hummingbird diet important during breeding season.

You can protect hummingbirds by helping crowd-source invaluable data using Audubon’s free Hummingbirds at Home app or website. You just submit your observations on when hummingbirds feed on nectar-bearing plants in your yard or community. Go to <http://www.hummingbirdsathome.org/>

The President's Perch



By Janet Strong

By the time you read this, the May 27th deadline for comments on the DEIS for the proposed dam on the upper Chehalis River will have passed. Many, many organizations, tribes and individuals submitted comments in opposition to this massive construction project. Their objections include concerns about the survival of fish, especially Chinook salmon and steelhead, large impacts on birds and other wildlife in the area of the dam and reservoir, and the decline of the quality of the Chehalis River itself. They are also alarmed by the huge cost of the dam (minimally estimated at \$628 Million) with benefits to a limited portion of the basin and the fact that it will not prevent future flooding, but merely reduce some impacts. Many other basin areas, including the lower basin where we live, will not benefit from having the dam. Many commenters submitted alternatives to the dam, including habitat restoration throughout the river basin, reconnection of floodplains to absorb floodwaters, movement of threatened buildings to higher ground, and provision of high areas for livestock and farm equipment. GHAS submitted comments as did several of our members. We all hope the decisionmakers will listen objectively.

Our annual picnic is a "GO" as of this date, subject to change, for Sunday, August 2, starting at 12 noon, at RD and Linda's lovely home on the harbor. Members will be welcomed warmly (but without big hugs) since we have had to cancel all our programs and activities since February, especially the Shorebird Festival. Everybody will take whatever care is needed to protect us all from Covid-19. It will be a pleasure to be together again.

I hope everybody is getting outdoors to bird, garden, walk, or just breathe in the spring air and being safe in every way while we make our way through these troubling times. Nature can be a healer for all of us as it moves forward through the seasons in its steady, dependable way. Please take advantage of this reliable presence in our lives. Stay safe.

Program Meeting

This month we have two presenters to tell and show us about some exciting projects. We welcome Alexa Brown Coordinator of the Grays Harbor Stream Team about their accomplishments, and Lee First of Twin Harbors Waterkeeper who will talk about the Fry Creek- a stormwater story, Join us from the comfort and safety of your own home via Zoom at 5:00 pm on June 7th.

A composite image featuring a sunset over water with a large feather in the foreground. Text reads "Please Respect Our Feathered Friends". To the right is a vertical list of bird species: Sanderling, Brown Pelican, Willet, Dunlin, and Semi Palmated Plover. Below the main image are two more birds: Greater Yellow Legs and Marbled Godwit. The logo for Grays Harbor Audubon (GHAS) is also present with the website www.ghas.org.

Birding the basin by Mary Oneil

Field trips report

Sadly, our ability to gather for field trips is still limited to individuals on their own. We hope that you can find time to enjoy your own backyard and remember to fill those feeders.

Birding 5-7-5 with David Linn



A moment of rest
A brief break from nest-building
In a friendly place

The Mallard couple
Find solace in the water
Ignoring the rain



Behind marigolds
Colors of yellow and brown
With splash of orange



Dancing in water
Splashing happily about
Droplets in the air

Beauty to behold
Displaying its bright colors
Orange green and brown





Blue Grosbeak, photo by Jay McGowan, Macaulay Library

Birdwatchers set World Records on Global Big Day

Birdwatchers set a new world record on May 9 for birds documented in a single day. During the annual Global Big Day, participants reported a record-breaking 2.1 million bird observations, recording 6,479 species. An all-time high of 50,000 participants submitted more than 120,000 checklists, shattering the previous single-day checklist total by 30%.

The Global Big Day sightings were submitted to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's free eBird program, which uses the data to power science, outreach, and conservation efforts around the world.

Migrants, such as the Ovenbird, were met with unseasonably cold, snowy weather in the northeastern U.S. on Global Big Day. Photo by Ian Davies, Macaulay Library. "This year's Global Big Day checklists contain more than 2.1 million observations of birds in a single calendar day," said eBird coordinator Ian Davies. "That means Global Big Day 2020 collected more information on birds than was submitted during the first 2.5 years of eBird's existence!" Since the program launched in 2002, eBird has amassed more than 810 million observations of birds.

This Global Big Day was unprecedented for another reason: it took place during a pandemic. Participants birded where they could safely do so, socially distanced from balconies, gardens, and local parks—contributing from every continent toward a common cause. Their record-breaking numbers are part of a larger trend that has become pronounced in recent months as birds and nature have become a bright spot for many.

During the first two weeks of April, eBird checklist submissions jumped 46% compared with the same period the previous year. Contributions of photo and audio recordings to the Cornell Lab's Macaulay Library wildlife media archive, and downloads of the Lab's free Merlin Bird ID app, were all up by 50–100%.



Baltimore Oriole by Tim Lenz, Macaulay Library.

"Contributions from birdwatchers around the world provide a whole new way of seeing biodiversity," says Steve Kelling, co-director of the Center for Avian Population Studies at the Cornell Lab. "Your observations help build an unparalleled window into the full annual cycle of bird populations that will help us better understand and prevent avian population declines."

Even watching birds for just 10 minutes and sharing observations, photos, and sound recordings at eBird.org, any day of the year, from anywhere in world, can help the effort to better understand, conserve, and enjoy birds.

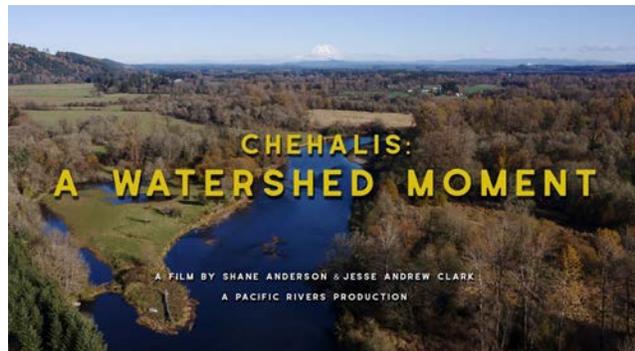
The Cornell Lab of Ornithology

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 at ldotorg@olearycreek.com to review your current status.

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



The new documentary about the proposed dam on the Chehalis River will be airing on KBTC Public TV on June 11th, at 8pm. Or watch it on the Pacific Rivers.org website <https://www.pacificrivers.org/> or the special YouTube https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W0PC5Xa_CSc&feature=emb_title

Then, attend a special Q & A with film director Shane Anderson – at 6:30pm on Wednesday, June 10th. This meeting is coordinated by your Twin Harbors Waterkeeper, Lee First.

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85483428078?pwd=UzBYRU5DSzdMd3djRGFnbnhNd21oUT09>

Meeting ID: 854 8342 8078

Password: 031191

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The LEED Bird Collision Deterrence pilot credit encourages bird-friendly building design.

The New York City Council recently passed a law mandating bird-friendly design standards, making New York the largest city in the U.S. to do so. This marks an exciting point in history for bird lovers.

Scientists have found a nearly 30% decline in bird populations in North America since 1970; contributing causes may include climate change, habitat loss and building collisions. Studies suggest collisions may be killing between 365 million and one billion birds in the U.S. each year, with buildings with bright, reflective surfaces, especially at lower heights, posing risks.

The LEED Bird Collision Deterrence pilot credit, which proves that animal conservation and energy efficiency can go hand in hand. This credit exemplifies how LEED continues to be a market leader in innovative design strategies.

With over 400 registered projects, the bird collision pilot credit is one of the most popular pilot credits.

Birds contribute to balanced ecosystems, making them a clear indicator of a healthy environment. They reduce pests, pollinate plants and spread seeds, thus encouraging the health of vegetation, insects, pollinators and people.

Strategies

Strategies such as, bird-friendly facades, reducing unnecessary lighting, and monitoring progress for three years are cost-effective and energy-efficient for the building, even before considering the benefits to birds.

Bird-friendly glass design (e.g., ceramic fritting)

Buildings can see a reduction in heat gain and increased heating and cooling efficiency.

Decreasing light use during nonoperational hours or having synchronized photo-electric sensors also reduces energy consumption.

A number of projects are already embracing this commonsense approach to building design, operation and management.

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Projects with positive outcomes

Chicago Botanic Garden | Chicago, Illinois

In April 2019, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology published a study ranking cities with the highest bird collision fatalities. The study found that Chicago, Illinois, tops the list. This is due to Chicago being located in one of the most highly traveled aerial corridors for migratory birds. At the Chicago Botanic Garden, the 26,700-square-foot, LEED Platinum Learning Center on the Regenstein Learning Campus earned the bird collision credit, as well as all six points in the LEED Innovation category.

By installing special low-emissive glass and lighting control systems, the building was able to turn off lights when spaces were unoccupied or had sufficient daylight. These strategies played a large role in deterring bird collisions and reducing energy costs by 48% from a standard education building.

Johnson Space Center | Houston, Texas

The same Cornell study listed Houston and Dallas, Texas, as the other top cities for fatal bird collisions, since they are also located in prime migratory paths. NASA's Johnson Space Center saw the toll Houston can have firsthand, when a flock of over a dozen indigo buntings fatally struck a window in 2012. The Space Center took inexpensive steps to ensure safety by applying vinyl cutouts to break up reflections on new buildings. This is a great example of how retrofitting can be a solution. The effort did not disturb operations and was highly rewarding, reducing bird strikes by 85%.

The Space Center continued its efforts across the entire campus, certifying 8 LEED buildings and opening their first LEED Platinum office space, Building 20, with bird-friendly egg-crate overhangs that appear as an obstruction to birds. This office is energy-efficient too, operating 57% more efficiently than ASHRAE 90.1-1999 requirements.

Fiserv Forum Arena | Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Sports stadiums have a reputation for intensifying the risk of bird collisions. That is not the case for Wisconsin's Fiserv Forum arena, new home of the Milwaukee Bucks and a stadium situated on a migratory pathway along the Great Lakes. The building was introduced as the "world's first bird-friendly sports and entertainment arena." Located in downtown Milwaukee, the 700,000-square-foot Fiserv Forum earned the bird collision pilot credit as part of its LEED Silver certification.

Low-reflectivity ceramic coating, known as "fritting," was embedded into the stadium glass in

a thinly striped pattern with little effect on transparency or quality views, making it nearly invisible to the human eye. However, fritting is visible to birds and signals to them that they cannot fly in between the lines. The pattern also saves energy by reducing heat gain in the building.

The arena's lighting is also designed to automatically shut off during times of high migration, and light is cast downward so that birds do not become drawn to it. In order to maintain achievement of the pilot credit, the Fiserv Forum must also monitor for bird collisions for three years following construction, which will be done in collaboration with the Wisconsin Humane Society. These bird-friendly design measures did nothing significant to add to the cost of the \$524 million arena. The Milwaukee Bucks facility proves even large buildings can make a positive impact.

Actions to make buildings bird-friendly

Bird-friendly strategies help building owners, and there is no incidental operating cost to making a building bird-friendly. On the contrary, the strategies can save on operating and energy costs, especially when these types of strategies are incorporated into the initial design phase rather than after the fact.

Although there has been uptake by states and cities like New York, as well as introduction of a federal bill, there is still more that can be done. Find out if your state legislature is currently engaged on this issue, and consider sharing your support for existing or potential legislation with your representatives. Learn more about getting involved in advocacy efforts.

U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC)



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Please Fill Out and Mail Back

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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.

Name _____ *Date* _____

Address _____

City _____ *State/Zip* _____

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News & Editorial

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

Program Meeting

Fry Creek and the Stream Team

***June 7th
5:00 pm
Via Zoom***

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The Sandpiper

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