

### *Program Meeting*

*Due to scheduling conflicts the Program Meeting for June 5, 2022 has been cancelled. We are looking forward to our Annual Potluck Picnic which will be held at Janet Strong's wildlife retreat in August on a date yet to be determined*

May  
June  
2022



# The Sandpiper



photo from American Association for the Advancement of Science

## **As Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza outbreak spreads, actions are needed** *by Amercian Bird Conservancy*

First identified in December 2021 when domestic chickens on the island of Newfoundland, Canada tested positive, a strain of bird flu known as highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) has now spread to wild birds in more than 30 U.S. states and every Canadian province. Waterfowl, raptors, and vultures seem particularly susceptible. As of April 20, 2022, more than 750 wild birds representing more than 40 species — including Snow Geese, Bald Eagles, and Snowy Owls — had been impacted. This year's outbreak is more effective at infecting and killing wild birds than the last outbreak in 2014 and 2015, and American Bird Conservancy (ABC) is asking people to take action to limit the disease's spread.

"There's a lot we don't yet know about this outbreak of avian flu, but with billions of wild birds moving across the continent on migration, we're asking everyone to take some common-sense steps," said Mike Parr, President of American Bird Conservancy.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service is currently keeping track of where outbreaks in wild birds are occurring across the U.S. You can use this resource to check whether your home is near an outbreak. (Note: there is a very low risk of infec-

tion for the general human population, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention). If there is an outbreak in your area, follow the direction and guidance of local agency officials, who can provide localized advice. Such safety precautions are particularly important if you raise chickens or have any other kind of pet bird on your property.

Here is additional information from ABC on how you can help birds during the current avian flu outbreak: wherever you are and whatever your circumstances.

If an avian flu outbreak is reported in your area, consider pausing any feeding of birds at least until this wildlife morbidity/mortality event is over.

Removing bird feeders is typically recommended to reduce any disease spread among groups of birds. Given that the breeding season is starting in the U.S. and Canada, many "feeder" birds are now more reliant on invertebrates like caterpillars and grasshoppers. During the breeding season, chicks need protein for rapid growth; hardworking parent birds also benefit from a solid dose of insect- and spider-based protein.

You can still help birds coming to your yard. Creating a backyard that supports birds and other wildlife luckily isn't dependent on feeders. Incorporating native plants into your yard is a great option at any time. Many native plants provide naturally grown food, including berries and nectar, and also attract invertebrates that birds seek. If you maintain native trees, shrubs, and vines on the landscape, you will also encourage birds to nest in your yard or stop for a quick rest during spring or fall migration.

Make sure any plants you use are selected with care. Do not assume that nurseries will only sell you native and/or non-invasive plants.

Don't use chemicals that may harm insects, birds, and other wildlife. Birds eat invertebrates and feed many of them to their young. Just as you wouldn't want children or pets to ingest yard chemicals, the same should hold true for neighborhood wildlife.

If you find a dead bird and would like to report it, do not pick it up and check with your state health

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## The President's Perch



*By Janet Strong*

This summer we will be able to admire a brand new mural in Hoquiam, one that will feature the birds in the Grays Harbor area. The GHAS board voted to commission Jenny Fisher, well-known mural artist, to create a large mural of many of our avian friends, our “neighborhood birds” that grace our yards and locales around the harbor. The art work will include about 24 portraits carefully posed against an arboreal background.

The mural will cover most of the wall of the Res/Com Flooring building at 605 Simpson Ave (6th and Simpson), just west of the Hoquiam River bridge. Jenny has created several other murals recently, including the “Kelp Forest” at City Center Drug in Aberdeen, “The Immigrants, Grays Harbor” at the Union Gospel Mission in Aberdeen and “The Books of Youth” at the Hoquiam Timberland Library.

Jenny told us that she has always been passionate about the beauty, mystery and science of the natural world and so is very excited to be representing GHAS in the coming mural, depicting birds that grace the harbor. She has lived in Grays Harbor since 1985, establishing herself as a mural artist through Washington State’s 1989 Bicentennial mural project. Dozens of public and private murals in Grays Harbor have followed from her role in the Bicentennial.

GHAS is seeking sponsors for this project, to help cover material, labor and safety costs. If you or anybody you know would be interested in helping, please contact Linda Orgel [Ldotorg@oleary-creek.com](mailto:Ldotorg@oleary-creek.com) or Mary Lou Gregory [kuaygal@gmail.com](mailto:kuaygal@gmail.com).

**Derelict Tire Removal Project** on the south shore of Grays Harbor: DNR and Americorps volunteers, under a grant from WA RCO, have undertaken the removal of hundreds of 60+ year-old tires from the beach and near-shore of the bay, including some on GHAS lands. Please check out Lee First’s article beginning on page 3 to get more detailed information. Work has been going on for over a month and continues still. Hats off to all those involved in taking this practical measure to protect our bay waters and shoreline, for the birds, the fish and other wildlife!

## *Avian Flu continued from Page 1*

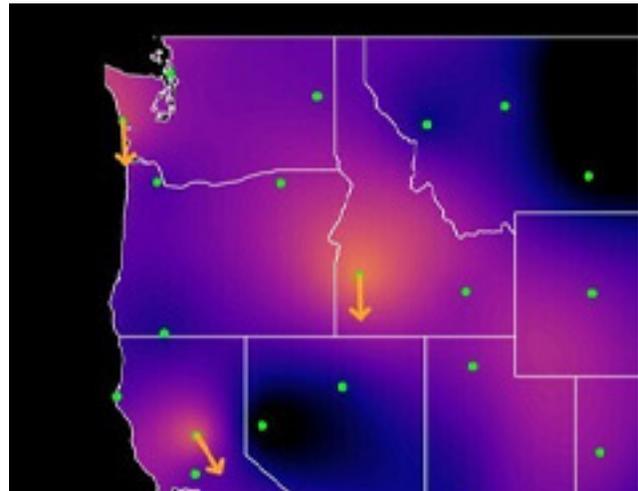
department or wildlife agency for reporting information specific to your area.

Please note that the CDC and USDA are closely monitoring this situation. The CDC also has a number to call if you see unusual behavior in any birds near your home. Always avoid handling wild birds unless absolutely necessary. Only handle them if you have the proper permits and are aware of proper handling techniques.

If using a bird feeder or bird bath, maintain them with regular washes using a 10-percent bleach solution (one part bleach mixed with nine parts water), followed by a water rinse, then complete air-dry.

“Bird feeders are basically the kitchens and dining rooms of our backyards,” said Jordan Rutter, ABC’s Director of Public Relations. “It would be hard for us to imagine not washing our dishes. We should think of bird feeders and bird baths in a similar way.”

*Editors note: Fortunately APHI has not been recorded in Grays Harbor but Wasington Department of Wildlife recommends prudent caution.*



## How many birds flew over the County last night? BirdCast can tell you

There’s a new way to view one of nature’s great unseen spectacles: the massive migration of billions of birds across the night sky. For any county in the Lower 48, **BirdCast** can now detail the number, speed, direction, and altitude of the birds cruising through the darkness on spring and fall nights—along with suggesting which species are most likely. And if you’re not a night owl, you can catch up with the previous night’s action the next day.

<https://dashboard.birdcast.info/region/US-WA-027>



*Janet Strong, GHAS, Kristian Tollefson, WA DNR*

### **Bottle Beach tire removal**

Bottle Beach State Park is a 64-acre day-use park with 6,000 feet of shoreline on Grays Harbor. The open tide flats are the park's most significant feature. Mud flats in the area support a rich supply of invertebrates that attract shorebirds as they migrate from Central and South America to their breeding grounds in the Arctic. Grays Harbor is considered the single most important shorebird feeding area on the Pacific Coast, attracting more than a million birds each spring. Up to 20 percent of these migrating birds use the tide flats adjacent to Bottle Beach, which has been designated an Important Bird Area by the Audubon Society. Large numbers of migratory waterfowl also use the area. More than 130 species of birds have been observed at Bottle Beach.

In the 1950s, more than 350 huge truck and large equipment tires were placed in rows along the shoreline and in other areas at what is now the State Park to protect residential properties from erosion.

Three Washington Conservation Corps crews converged at Bottle Beach State Park in mid-March 2022 and began removing tires at Bottle Beach State Park on the South Shore of Grays Harbor. The Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Marine Debris Removal Program (MDRP) leads efforts to remove marine debris throughout Washington State's aquatic lands. Projects include removing creosote-treated wood, tires, docks, floats and other derelict floating objects. As steward of 2.6 million acres of state-owned land beneath Washington's marine waters, estuaries, rivers, and lakes, DNR has a unique role to play in the effort to ensure healthy waterways. The Aquatic Lands Restoration Team works to restore ecological quality and function to native aquatic habitats for their ecological values, for the benefit of the people, plants, and animals that live there.

Washington Conservation Corps (WCC) is an

AmeriCorps program that creates future leaders through community involvement and mentorship. More than 350 members and experienced staff statewide restore critical habitat, build trails, and respond to local and national disasters. Through AmeriCorps, the WCC program provides hands-on experience, field skills, and training opportunities to young adults between 18 and 25 and military veterans. WCC works in partnership with nonprofit and governmental organizations that apply for WCC crews or individual placement members to complete projects. Twin Harbors Waterkeeper (THW) is a leader in the effort to prevent pollution in the Chehalis River, Grays Harbor, and Willapa Bay watersheds. Their mission is to protect and improve water quality and marine and freshwater habitats. By holding polluters accountable THW works to address environmental health disparities that are driven by historic and current pollution and systemic inequities that disadvantage communities of color and lower income populations in the Chehalis River, Grays Harbor Estuary and Willapa Bay Watersheds. Staff from Twin Harbors Waterkeeper is available to speak to groups in the Chehalis watershed about water quality concerns posed by tires, as well as recycling/reuse opportunities for waste tires.

### **Information about shoreline armoring:**

In the 1950s, more than 350 huge truck and large equipment tires were placed in rows along the shoreline and in other areas at what is now the State Park to protect residential properties from erosion. At that time, it was common practice to use tires, junk cars, concrete chunks, creosote timbers, and other items to protect property from erosion. Placement of these items is called shoreline armoring. It is now known that shoreline armoring, seawalls, and rock revetments disrupts the natural process of erosion, which supplies much of the sand and gravel that forms and main



*AmeriCorp Crew and Tire Removal Volunteers*

*Continued on Page 4*

### *Tire Removal continued from Page 3*

tains our beaches. Today, placement of shoreline armoring requires permits and must meet certain criteria.

Marine shorelines are among the most valuable and fragile of our natural resources. A dynamic area where land and marine ecosystems meet, the shoreline is constantly changing with the action of wind, waves, tides, and erosion. Shoreline armoring narrows beaches by changing wave dynamics, reducing bluff erosion, and preventing sand migration. Smaller, more constrained beaches can result in habitat loss for shellfish, aquatic insects, worms, and amphipods, which rely on the steady upper beach accumulation of drift logs and beach wrack (algae, seagrass, leaf litter, and other tide-deposited debris). Armored beaches are less hospitable to the key forage fish, such as surf smelt and Pacific sand lance, both of which spawn in beach sediment and require specific conditions harmed by armoring.

These same forces are the reason why people often build bulkheads or other structures to harden the shoreline. Under the direction of the DNR's Aquatic Lands Program staff, three Washington Conservation Corps crews converged at Bottle Beach State Park in mid-March 2022 and began removing tires at Bottle Beach State Park, on the South Shore of Grays Harbor. Their work included digging the tires out of the tidelands, cleaning mud from within the tires, and loading/hauling the tires to the highway for transport. The project is still underway, and will be complete late this spring.

#### **Information about tires**

Recent science has confirmed that stormwater runoff from busy roads contains a mixture of chemicals, including metals and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) that are harmful to coho salmon and other aquatic species. A chemical called 6PPD-quinone is widely used to protect tires from ozone, a reactive atmospheric gas. It leaches out of the particles that tires shed onto pavement, and even very small doses killed coho salmon in the lab. Roadway runoff also contains thousands of mostly unidentified and/or toxicologically uncharacterized organic chemicals.

Scrap tires present both a disposal problem and a resource opportunity. Two to three billion scrap tires are in landfills and stockpiles across the United States, and approximately one scrap tire per person is generated every year. Scrap tires represent both a disposal problem and a resource opportunity.

Waste tire accumulations also present a danger-

ous fire hazard and the potential to emit polluting tire smoke. In 2005, the Washington legislature created the waste tire removal account to help clean up illegally discarded tires. This account is funded by a \$1 fee charged for each new vehicle tire sold in Washington. The program receives an annual budget of \$500,000 to provide resources to communities and landowners who discover unauthorized waste tire accumulations, and the program oversees businesses that handle waste tires.

Tires removed from Bottle Beach State Park are being hauled to L & S Tire Company in Tacoma, where they'll be cleaned and shredded. Then, they'll be burned as fuel at Ash Grove Cement Company in Seattle, Washington. The Ash Grove Cement Facility has the appropriate air operating permit that allows tires to be burned while minimizing emissions. Tires replace a portion of the coal and natural gas used to make Portland Cement. A smaller amount of the shredded tires will be used as daily landfill cover at LeMay's Landfill in Pierce County, and at the Roosevelt Regional Landfill in Klickitat County, WA.

Burning tires instead of coal presents many challenges because of their chemical composition, and because of air pollution threats. If air permits are carefully issued and enforced, burning tires instead of coal is possibly the best current solution for them.

*"We are thrilled to witness the removal of hundreds of old truck and tractor tires that have been contaminating the southern Grays Harbor estuary near Ocosta for over 60 years. This shallow bay is an important feeding station for migrating shorebirds and a refuge for young salmon as they go through the smolting process before heading out into the Pacific Ocean. Removal of these toxic tires will improve water quality here and restore near-shore habitat. A huge thanks to Kristian Tollefson at DNR's Marine Debris Removal program and to the many Americorps volunteers who made it happen." - Janet Strong Grays Harbor Audubon Society. See a video at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UXB\\_NQ1DIOo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UXB_NQ1DIOo)*





Data : BirdLife International. Graphic courtesy Lees et. al. Annual Review of Environment and Resources, May 2022.

## Global bird populations steadily declining

Staggering declines in bird populations are taking place around the world. So concludes a study from scientists at multiple institutions, published today in the journal *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*. Loss and degradation of natural habitats and direct overexploitation of many species are cited as the key threats to avian biodiversity. Climate change is identified as an emerging driver of bird population declines.

“We are now witnessing the first signs of a new wave of extinctions of continentally distributed bird species,” says lead author Alexander Lees, senior lecturer at Manchester Metropolitan University in the United Kingdom and also a research associate at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. “Avian diversity peaks globally in the tropics and it is there that we also find the highest number of threatened species.”

High or medium-impact threats affecting five globally threatened bird species and the underlying drivers of these threats. The study says approximately 48% of existing bird species worldwide are known or suspected to be undergoing population declines. Populations are stable for 39% of species. Only 6% are showing increasing population trends, and the status of 7% is still unknown. The study authors reviewed changes in avian biodiversity using data from the International Union for Conservation of Nature’s “Red List” to reveal population changes among the world’s 11,000 bird species.

The findings mirror the results of a seminal 2019 study which determined that nearly 3 billion breeding birds have been lost during the past 50 years across the United States and Canada. The lead author of that study is also an author on this global status report.

“After documenting the loss of nearly 3 billion birds in North America alone, it was dismaying to see the same patterns of population declines and extinction occurring globally,” says conservation scientist Ken Rosenberg from the Cornell Lab, now retired. “Because birds are highly visible and sensitive indicators of environmental health, we know their loss signals a much wider loss of biodiversity and threats to human health and well-being.”

Despite their findings, study authors say there is hope for avian conservation efforts, but transformative change is needed.

“The fate of bird populations is strongly dependent on stopping the loss and degradation of habitats,” says Lees. “That is often driven by demand for resources. We need to better consider how commodity flows can contribute to biodiversity loss and try to reduce the human footprint on the natural world.”

“Fortunately, the global network of bird conservation organizations taking part in this study have the tools to prevent further loss of bird species and abundance,” adds Rosenberg. “From land protection to policies supporting sustainable resource-use, it all depends on the will of governments and of society to live side by side with nature on our shared planet.”

Information is key, and study authors point out that the growth of public participation in bird monitoring and the advent of easy-to-use tools, such as the Cornell Lab’s eBird database, make continental-scale breeding bird surveys, distribution atlases, and abundance models possible and help inform conservation efforts.

*This study was conducted by scientists from Manchester Metropolitan University, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, BirdLife International, the University of Johannesburg, Pontifical Xavierian University, and the Nature Conservation Foundation.*



## Member Program

Due to a scheduling conflict with our speaker, we will have to skip the member program meeting on June 5th.

Instead we are looking forward to our annual potluck picnic which will be held at Janet Strong's incredible wildlife refuge that she calls home.

Assuming that all things improve in the limits placed on us by COVID and its related infections, we will set aside a day in August to meet and enjoy the creative cuisine of a potluck picnic. Date yet to be determined.



## Incredible way birds change their bodies for migration

### *National Audubon article excerpt*

It's tempting to compare bird migration to marathon running. In both, participants prepare intensely and undergo an extreme test of endurance. But the similarities stop there. Though marathon runners push the human body to its limits—during the 26.2-mile race, core temperatures spike to 102 degrees Fahrenheit and the heart pumps three to four times more blood than usual—birds radically change their bodies and their metabolism for the main event. In just weeks or months, they undergo physical transformation unmatched by human gains from years of training. To fly vast distances between breeding and wintering grounds, birds can shrink their internal organs, rapidly gain and burn through fat stores, barely sleep, and more.

These are incredible abilities, but they come with tradeoffs. The energy required to fly hundreds or thousands of miles in a short span leaves birds with little room for error during migration, and vulnerable to natural and human-caused threats. In North America alone, an estimated 2.6 billion birds disappear between fall and spring migration every year. Researchers pin many of these losses on migration, when birds must survive storms and cold snaps, navigate skyscrapers and other buildings, avoid predators, and successfully forage for food or else fail to complete their journeys.

Migration is perilous, but it's also wondrous. Here are some of the incredible ways birds sculpt their bodies for their journeys.

***Double Their Body Weight***

***Transform Internal Organs***

***Reduce Their Sleep Time***

***Consume Their Own Muscles***

***Revert to Their Previous Form***

Once birds reach their destination, they need to regain their organ function and shape, and refuel now-emaciated fat stores. It's an urgent task during spring migration because soon as they reach their breeding ground, birds must do the hard work of breeding: attracting mates, and producing and raising hungry young chicks—all while still taking care of themselves. "Essentially, they need to instantly start making territories and reproducing," Bartell says. "If they can't get food within a couple hours or are delayed after landing, they can actually starve to death."

The stakes are lower during fall migration because birds don't need to breed upon landing, plus the warmer, tropical areas in the south tend to have more food available. "All they're trying to do usually is maintain the body mass at a certain level and get through the winter," McWilliams says. Birds on average need to restore between 17 and 23 percent of their body weight in fat upon arrival, and also account for significant protein and water loss depending on their species and migratory pattern.

It's an astounding balance to maintain while already undergoing spectacular trips across the world. But if we've learned anything about birds and migration at this point, it's that we shouldn't be surprised by anything of birds—and vice versa. A man with long flowing hair stands on top of a hill, with water in the background, holding binoculars.

To read the entire article, please visit

[https://www.audubon.org/news/five-incredible-ways-birds-change-their-bodies-spring-and-fall-migration?ms=digital-eng-email-ea-x-engagement\\_20220413\\_eng-email\\_incredible-migration-facts](https://www.audubon.org/news/five-incredible-ways-birds-change-their-bodies-spring-and-fall-migration?ms=digital-eng-email-ea-x-engagement_20220413_eng-email_incredible-migration-facts)

### ***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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<http://ghas.org>

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**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***

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**The Sandpiper**

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