

Program Meeting
Lone Star State Birding
with Woody Wheeler
Hoquiam Library Meeting Room
December 3, 2023 1:30 - 3:30 pm

November
December
2023



The Sandpiper



Grays Harbor County Legacy Forests are on the auction block – Your help is needed *by Lisa McCrummen*

Few folks in Washington are aware that almost all of the natural and old growth forests that once dominated Southwestern Washington have been logged. Lowland watersheds are now mostly industrial forestlands, and agricultural fields. That's why it is so important to protect the few remaining, natural "legacy" forests that are left. These forests are an important part of our natural heritage, and function as natural climate refugia, and ecological "lifeboats" for a wide variety of plant and wildlife species, and hundreds of lesser-known species of insects, lichens, bryophytes, mushrooms, and other fungi.

Natural legacy forests like those found in Grays Harbor's "MM MM Good" timber sale are different from other managed (or planted) forests in a number of ways. The most obvious difference is that the trees are much larger than in managed forests. Many of the dominant trees in this timber sale measure more than three feet in diameter and are close to 180 feet tall. Because these forests were often selectively logged or "high-graded" in the early 1900's, and allowed to grow back on their own, they are also much more structurally and biologically diverse.

Walk through these forests, and you will find they contain multiple canopy layers, composed of a wide variety of trees of different sizes. Gaps in the over-story canopy allow sunlight to reach the forest floor, creating a complex mosaic of different plant communities composed of a diverse array of small trees, shrubs and wildflowers. Standing dead trees and logs provide critical nesting habitat for birds, small mammals, and countless other forms of life.

These forests provide learning opportunities for students, and are popular recreational destinations for hunters, hikers, bikers, and other outdoor enthusiasts. Older forests like these also absorb more carbon from the atmosphere per acre than any other forests in the world, thus slowing the rate of climate change.

There is no defense for logging our last remaining legacy forests. DNR forest inventory records reveal that there are thousands of acres of plantation forests managed by DNR in Grays Harbor County that are currently available for harvest. Plantation forests hold more than enough timber to satisfy overall sustainable harvest targets for the current planning decade, and fulfill DNR's current commitments to generate revenue for the county and its junior taxing districts. There is no need to clearcut this forest.

To be clear, the recommendation by Commissioner of Public Lands and the Department of Natural Resources to clear-cut these forests is a choice that is made by the Commissioner and DNR. DNR is not fulfilling a mandate or following best available science by logging this rare, century-old forest.

We hope you will help put a stop to the destruction of these irreplaceable forests and urge DNR to cancel the "MM MM Good" sale and other upcoming Legacy Forest sales in Grays Harbor County.

Three Easy Things You Can Do To Help Right Now Sign Support Letter to Stop Sale of "MM MM Good" (and help get others to sign!) <https://www.wlfcd.org/mm-mm-good> Voice your support for a pause against clear cutting "MM MM GOOD" (and get others to attend meeting) at the Grays Harbor County Commissioners Meeting on Nov. 21st 1PM 100 W. Broadway in Montesano, WA. Learn More About Legacy Forests (and educate others) <https://www.wlfcd.org>

The President's Perch



By Janet Strong

Welcome to our rainy season and Happy Thanksgiving! We all hope that each and every one of you have some joyous and fun holiday celebrations in store for you and your family and friends. Please don't forget our in-person Annual Members' Meeting on Sunday, December 3rd at 1:30, at the Hoquiam Library Meeting Room. Yes, we are returning to our face-to-face member meetings with a fascinating speaker on board and opportunities to reconnect with friends seen only on Zoom in the past 3 years. Refreshments, provided by all of us, will add to the festive atmosphere. Please read up on our speaker, Woody Wheeler from Seattle, in this issue.

GHAS is among the many citizens and organizations trying to get protection for the remaining older, or Legacy, forests in Southwest Washington through action directed toward our county and toward Department of Natural Resources. Please read the Page 1 article in this issue for much more information and for ways each of us can participate in this important effort. Taking action on this issue is really critical for the survival of the biodiversity of species and habitat in SW WA that we treasure and are protecting on our own GHAS habitat lands.

In the near future, you may notice some power pole movement along Highway #105 close to Westport. Required by WA DOT, Grays Harbor PUD is relocating its transmission line away from the edge of the highway for safety reasons. Only one major pole will end up within our Duckland parcel, a valuable salt marsh. To its credit, GH PUD will employ several environmentally sound steps to protect the marsh, the fish life and the birds, including greatly reducing the number of poles along this highway stretch. For additional information, feel free to email me at janet.strong4@gmail.com.

See you all on Sunday, December 3rd, at 1:30 in the Hoquiam Library Meeting Room where we will greet each other and our speaker, Woody Wheeler!



Woody Wheeler at Big Morongo Canyon Preserve. CA

Member Meeting

Join us at the Hoquiam Public Library at 420 Seventh Street from 1:30 pm - 3:30 pm, Sunday December 3, 2023 for a vicarious, photo-illustrated tour of five outstanding birding areas in the Lone Star State. Host to 639 species, the diverse area serves as a funnel for migrations to and from central America.

Our presenter Woody Wheeler is a Master Birder, a Certified Interpretive Guide and the owner of Conservation Catalyst, a birding and natural history firm. He previously worked for The Nature Conservancy, Audubon Society, Seattle Parks Foundation and as a guide for Naturalist Journeys.

Connecting people with nature is his passion, and he does so by guiding birding and natural history trips, classes, presentations, and through his book *Look Up! Birds and Other Natural Wonders Just Outside Your Window*.

He led tours for Naturalist Journeys and still does for private clients. Tours included: Antarctica, Cuba, SE Alaska, Peru, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, Trinidad and Tobago, Big Bend National Park in Texas, the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem; and Washington State's Olympic Peninsula.

Woody holds Environmental Studies and Geography degrees from Western Washington University, he studied Ornithology at University of Washington, took the Master Birding Class at Seattle Audubon and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology Bird Biology Class.



GH Audubon land provides 3-day base camp for cleanup

Labor Day Weekend beach cleanup on the QIN Reservation

By Scott Mazzone - Quinault Indian Nation Shellfish/Marine Fish Biologist

Once again, we hosted the Twin Harbors Waterkeeper and their volunteers over this past Labor Day weekend to assist in removing beach debris from the hard to access northern beaches on the Reservation. This group had such a wonderful time last Easter weekend, they could not wait to get back.

Given this group was going to be collecting and hauling trash for three days, I chose a different location for them to focus on each day to cover more ground. On Saturday September 2nd we focused on the Raft River/Tunnel Island area. Sunday September 3rd it was the mouth of Camp Creek, and Monday September 4th we moved south to the mouth of Duck Creek. At all these locations, beach debris had to be collected by hand and back-packed out (up to a half mile) to waiting vehicles. From there, the debris was driven to our dumpster located at the northern beach approach at Point Grenville.

We did remove part of a trawl net just south of Tunnel Island but for the most part our haul con-

sisted of Styrofoam, plastic bottles, buoys, rope, and tires. I do not remember how many truckloads of trash we made, but at the end of the weekend we had stuffed the 40-yard dumpster to the top. It took four of us to close it up! Total weight from Lemay came back at 1.47 tons or just over 2,940 pounds!

The volunteers were members from the Twin Harbors Waterkeepers <http://twinharborswaterkeeper.org/>. Lee First, Twin Harbors Waterkeeper, stated “We really appreciate offering our volunteers the opportunity to assist the Nation with these cleanup events, and we hope to continue these efforts. Also, a huge thanks to Kyle Deerkop (and family), Farm Manager from Pacific Shellfish. Kyle stated, “We love this collaboration, and hope to continue to come together to do this great work.” Pacific Seafood not only helped the entire weekend, but also arranged and paid for the dumpster and disposal fee. I’m definitely planning on having this group out again for future beach cleanups. Keep watch out for upcoming cleanup events, volunteers are most welcome!

Photos by Scott Mazzone, Lee First and Kyle Deerkop.



Shorebird Festival Opportunity

by Arnie Martin

I am retiring from my work on the Shorebird Festivals of the past 15 years. I need to find a replacement person who could work on the planning and execution of the 2024 Grays Harbor Shorebird and Nature Festival (May 3rd through May 5th 2024). The person needs to be a member of Grays Harbor Audubon Society who has time to spend 10 to 15 hours per month in planning (mostly via Zoom), spend all day during the several days prior to the 2024 Festival, and 12 hours per day during the Festival. Ideally, the person would live in Grays Harbor County, preferably in the Aberdeen/Hoquiam area.

The person must have transportation, some computer skills, and the ability to work with other Grays Harbor Shorebird Festival committee members (including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife personnel and Nisqually NWR volunteers) that keep the Grays Harbor National Wildlife Refuge property at Bowerman Basin operational.

The biggest need is for a person who is passionate about protecting birds and wildlife, who can devote their time during several years' Festivals.

I would be available to act as a guide plus advisor. If you are interested, please call me at 360-580-1961, and we can discuss any questions you may have, prior to having an interview with GHAS and USF&W personnel.



GHAS outreach at Lake Sylvia

A hearty crew of birding knowledge helped staff the booth at the September 10, 2023 Lake Sylvia Fall Festival. The crew was able to meet many local and visiting attendees, who wanted to know more about birds, their habitats and how they could help. The weather was perfect, and everyone involved enjoyed themselves, and learned a lot as well, as they explored the other vendors and exhibitors.



What is the Difference Between Native, Non-native, and Invasive Plants?

By *Cabriella Sotelo*, Walker Communications Fellow

Birds Tell Us to Act on Climate

Pledge to stand with Audubon to call on elected officials to listen to science and work towards climate solutions.

Sign the Pledge https://act.audubon.org/a/birds-tell-us?ms=policy-adv-web-website_nas-engagementcard-20201200_birds_tell_us

By now you've probably heard some—or a lot—about the importance of swapping out invasive or non-native plants in your yard for native species.

Research shows that native plants can help create a healthier environment, a healthier ecosystem, and support a higher diversity of animals. Native plants can host many more types of insects than non-natives. Take a native oak tree, for example. Researchers have found that native oaks can host over 550 different species of moths or butterflies—especially their larvae. Those caterpillars are vital food sources for birds, especially warblers and other songbirds. In contrast, the non-native ginkgo tree can only host 5 different species.

So far, so good. But what about so-called “invasive” plants? “I remember seeing some agency say ‘invasive means non-native’ and that’s not right,” says Senior Director of Bird Friendly Communities, John Rowden. As it turns out, differentiating between native plants, non-native plants, and invasive plants can be both simple and nuanced. We are here to help you figure out that difference!

Native: Native plant species are species that have existed historically in that area. The Plants for Birds program deliberately say these are plants that have existed in a location prior to European colonization in North America. “For the Plants for Birds program, we say it is any plant that was here before European colonization,” says Partnerships Manager for Plants For Birds, Marlene Pantin. “And then of course native plants are those that are adaptable to the climate, and the soil conditions in that area.”

Non-native: Non-native plants are species that have not existed historically in one area but have been introduced due to human activities. Non-native plants don't necessarily pose a threat to native plants, but as mentioned before, non-native plants may not support ecosystem health as well as native plants do. “Even within North America a plant can be native in portions of it and non-native elsewhere, says Rowden. “When talking non-native plants, for example here in California,

it's not only plants that we brought in from Asia or Europe or wherever—it's also the plants that were brought here from the East Coast, or even just east of the Rockies. Historically, the Rockies were the boundary that plants couldn't cross but then humans brought them.”

Invasive: Invasive plant species are non-native to particular ecosystems and the introduction of them is likely to cause “economic or environmental harm or harm to human health,” according to the National Invasive Species Information Center. For Pantin, invasive species are species that disrupt the growth of native plants, and root and spread quickly. Rowden agrees with Pantin and goes further to say that these species usually do not have any ecological checks on them, which means no predators, pathogens, or any of those sorts of things that can, ecologically speaking, keep a species from spreading.

Let's get it right out there off the bat: the struggle to plant only native plants is real. “People go to the big box stores, and they buy plants that look really pretty, and they may be wonderful plants, but they aren't native to that particular area,” says Pantin. Box stores have very little incentive to carry native plants, and even less incentive to be mindful of what plants might be native to where that particular store might be.

Want to know more, and find plants that are native to your area? Check out Audubon's Plants For Birds database <https://www.audubon.org/plantsforbirds>. Not only will the database tell you what plants to buy and which birds those plants will support, it will also show you where you can buy them. Your local Audubon chapter can also help you find where to buy native plants, and many hold their own local native plants sales. Love shopping online? Check out the many native plant species offered by Audubon's native plant retail partner, Bower & Branch.



photoTroy Shelby



Cliff Swallow, Ben Knoot/Audubon Photo Awards



White-throated Swift, Peter Knoot/Audubon Photo Awards

Is that a Swallow or a Swift?

by *Martha Harbison, Audubon, Senior Editor*

Go out on any fall day when there are insects buzzing about, and you'll see a unit of feathered fighter jets swooping and diving after them. These avian aerialists—swifts and swallows—may look similar and exploit the same niche, but they're not related at all. They only resemble each other because of convergent evolution, which means they've developed some of the same physical traits to adapt to their shared environment.

So how does the enterprising birder tell them apart? By paying attention to details and behavior.

First, check the color. Flashes of blue, green, orange, or iridescence are characteristic of swallows. Swifts are mostly soft gray. There are a few exceptions to this rule, however: The White-throated Swift has a chalky belly, while Northern Rough-winged and Bank Swallows are brown overall.

While you're at it, study the subject's wings, too. Are they uniformly long, skinny, and fluttering? That's a swift. Are they relatively thick near the body and then tapering? That's a swallow.

Don't have a field guide app? Download our handy Audubon Bird Guide App <https://www.audubon.org/app> to start learning 821 North American species.

The nest can also be a good distinguisher. If it looks like a hunk of sticks attached to the side of a vertical surface, it likely belongs to a swallow. Members of the family Apodidae use saliva to glue their nests together above ground. Swal-

lows, on the other hand, will use either smeared-mud chambers (Barn and Cliff), a trunk cavity (Tree), or holes dug into dirt bluffs (Bank).

Other strong signs include foraging and lounging behavior. Swifts fly in the upper part of the air column as they hunt; swallows pursue insects closer to the ground or water. If the bird is perched on a nest box, power line, or branch, that's a giveaway: Only swallows have the wherewithal to sit upright. Swifts are just stage-five clingers.

But the most obvious clue is a combination of time and place. If the sun is setting and the bird is dipping into a chimney, then the matter is settled. It's a swift. Or a bat.

For more quick-reference tips on swifts and swallows, listen to the short BirdNote podcast <https://www.birdnote.org/listen/shows/swallow-or-swift> BirdNote is a partner of The National Audubon Society.



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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

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 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. 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

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Please do NOT publish my name in the newsletter in the list of GHAS members

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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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with Woody Wheeler***

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