Program Meeting
December 14, 2025 1:30 pm - 3:00 pm
FOSLS
(Friends of Schafer and Lake Sylvia)
Trina Young, President
Hoquiam Library
Downstairs Meeting Room

November
December
2025

The Sandpiper

Photo by Robert Royse

Steller's Birds from BirdNote

This loud, raucous call belongs to a common jay of the Western states, the Steller's jay.

You might mistakenly call this bird a blue jay, seeing its bright cobalt-blue body. But when the Steller's jay was first discovered, the name "blue jay" had already been assigned to a different species of jay living in the Eastern United States.

You might guess that the word "Steller" describes an exceptional jay, but Steller, spelled s-t-e-l-l-E-r, comes instead from a man's name.

It was back in July of 1741 that George Wilhelm Steller, the first European to set foot on land later known as Alaska, first sighted this jay. Steller was a German naturalist on the St. Peter, a Russian ship exploring the Bering Sea.

Shortly after finding and describing this jay, Steller was shipwrecked on Bering Island for over a year. After enduring a harsh winter and rebuilding their boat, the few survivors, including Steller, returned to Russia.

Steller wrote a book about the creatures that lived on the island. Many were later named for this adventurous and feisty German, among them the Steller's sea eagle and the Steller's eider.

How the jay got it's crest from BirdNote

In the 1860s, James Swan, an early European resident of the Northwest Coast, lived among the Makah Indians. The Makahs told Swan this story about how the bird we know as the Steller's Jay—the bird the Makahs call Kwish-kwishee—got its crest.

"The mink, Kwahtie (a as in cat), was a great liar . . . very shrewd . . full of rascalities. Once while Kwahtie was making an arrow, his mother directed him to get some water, but he refused until he should have finished his work. His mother told him to make haste, for she felt she was turning into a bird. While she was talking, she turned into a blue jay and flew into a bush. Kwahtie tried to shoot her, but his arrow passed behind her neck, glancing over the top of her head, ruffling up her feathers, as they have always remained."

We should be heartened that Kwahtie's aim was slightly off. Not only is his mother, the Steller's Jay, still with us, but she will forever flaunt that rakish crest.

The President's Perch

By Janet Strong

Spare the fin, fur, feather, hide and earth's waters!

The year-end holiday season is rushing up to meet us. Are we ready to savor all the food, fun and enjoyment and still be responsible citizens of planet Earth? Can we be more thoughtful consumers of special meals and givers of gifts? Yes, we can!

Excessive packaging seems to fill up landfills, maybe finding its way to waterways and the ocean, at this time of year. Our role in this mess can be the use of decorative, recyclable bags or useful items like scarves or towels as wrappings for our gifts. Kids' presents might be wrapped in something wearable, like pajamas. Other waste-saving ideas could include gifts of experiences rather than things – a trip to a spa, a dinner out, a class in a desired topic, an art class or a membership in a fitness club. There are lots of other options.

Our festive holiday meals could be created while keeping animal welfare in mind. Admittedly we all love our extra-special delicacies for this season. So do I. However, we can reduce our reliance on meat and dairy products this season and perhaps explore new menu ideas using more fruits and vegetables. People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) advertises lots of delicious-sounding recipes, urging people to adopt a more vegetarian lifestyle. They even have a vegetarian-starting kit, free on their website.

While not preaching any particular action, I encourage all of us to bring more thoughtfulness into our holiday purchases, whether it be decorations, food or gifts. Perhaps some of these new ideas will carry into the new year. While we are actively protecting birds and their habitat in so many ways, perhaps each of us can take a couple of extra steps to be better earth citizens.

Happy Thanksgiving!

Anna Tukhfatullina Food Photographer/Stylist

...National Audubon

Grays Harbor Audubon depends on you.

As a non-profit volunteer organization we rely on your generosity and the kindness of friends to keep GHAS going. Don't forget to renew your membership now. We know that it is tough out there and we appreciate anything that you can do to help out your Chapter to continue to achieve the great things we've done in the name of birds and people.

1. The Habitat Protection Program has placed into conservation close to 4,000 acres of sensitive land in Grays Harbor, Pacific and Jefferson Counties. If you have property or want to donate to help with acquisition of property, please contact the Habitat Committee.
2. Membership meetings introduce subjects and people to our membership that affect our lives and of those around us.
3. We provide the organization and direction for the Christmas Bird Count and annual Backyard Bird Count.
4. The Annual Shorebird and Nature Festival is cosponsored by GHAS and brings thousands of birders to our shores to view the annual migration of shorebirds.
5. We produce The Sandpiper, our bimonthly newsletter, which is chock full of tidbits that help us get out the word about birds. A membership form can be found on page 8.

Your Chapter provides so much, for so little.

If you can make an additional donation please include that in your membership update.

The 126th Christmas Bird Count is around the corner!

We're getting ready for the 126th Christmas Bird Count (CBC), with local counts running from December 14 to January 5.

Want to learn more about the program? You can learn everything you need to know to run your Christmas Bird Count here

In the 19th century, many North Americans participated in the tradition of Christmas "side hunts", in which they competed at how many birds they could kill.[2] In December 1900, the U.S. ornithologist Frank Chapman, founder of Bird-Lore (which became Audubon magazine), proposed counting birds on Christmas instead of killing them.

On Christmas Day of that year, 27 observers took part in the first count in 25 places in the United States and Canada. The participants counted 18,500 birds in 90 species. Since then the counts have been held every winter, usually with increasing numbers of observers. The 101st count, in the winter of 2000–2001, involved 52,471 people in 1,823 places in 17 countries (but mostly in the U.S. and Canada). During the 113th count (winter 2012–2013), 71,531 people participated in 2,369 locations. The National Audubon Society now partners with Bird Studies Canada, the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory of Texas (responsible for CBCs in Mexico), and the Red Nacional de Observadores de Aves (RNOA, National Network of Bird Observers) and the Instituto Alexander von Humboldt of Colombia.

The greatest number of bird species ever reported by a CBC circle in the world is 531, observed on December 21, 2013, in the Cosanga-Narupa count (previously known as the Yanayacu count) on the eastern slope of the Andes in Ecuador.

The greatest number of bird species ever reported by any U.S. location in a single count is 250, observed on December 19, 2005, in the Matagorda County-Mad Island Marsh count circle around Matagorda and Palacios, Texas.

Methods

Each individual count is performed in a "count circle" with a diameter of 15 miles (24 kilometres). At least ten volunteers, including a compiler to manage things, count in each circle. They break up into small parties and follow assigned routes, which change little from year to year, counting every bird they see. In most count circles, some people also watch feeders instead of following routes.

Counts can be held on any day from December 14 to January 5 inclusive.

The results, providing data on winter ranges of birds, are complementary to those of the Breeding Bird Surveys.

The Christmas Bird Count for the Grays Harbor bay/Ocean Shores area will be held on Saturday, January 3rd. To participate, be sure Dianna Moore knows you are interested. Email her at osdlm1945@gmail.com. There will also be an East County CBC again this year. Liam Hutcheson is organizing that count. You can contact him at liamhutcheson2020@gmail.com For Olympia will be held Dec 14. If you are interested, contact Bill Shelmerdine at georn1@hotmail.com Also the LongBeach Penninsula will be held Dec 20. If interested contact Robert Sudar at fallcreek734@gmail.com On the same date, Dec 20, Lewis County centered around Centralia/Chehalis. Contact Rachel (Hudson) Holland at lightening-dash09@yahoo.com

Audubon Washington has new Vice President

by Trina Bayard

I am delighted to share that Amanda Kaplan has joined Audubon as our new vice president, Washington. As vice president, Amanda will oversee Audubon Washington and Seward Park Audubon Center staff and programs. Amanda comes to us with over 25 years of leadership experience in environmental conservation, public policy, and strategic communications. She is a long time Washingtonian, and you may know her from her most recent role as chief of public and congressional affairs for the National Park Service's Pacific West Region, leading strategies for more than 60 parks across eight western states and Pacific territories. Amanda is recognized for building coalitions, navigating complex policy landscapes, and translating science into public engagement that drives results. It has been an honor to serve as the interim vice president for Washington for the past two years, and I look forward to working closely with Amanda as I resume my role as director of bird conservation.

Member Meeting

We're baaack.... Head to the Hoquiam Public Lbrary downstairs meeting room 420 7th Street, in Hoquaiam

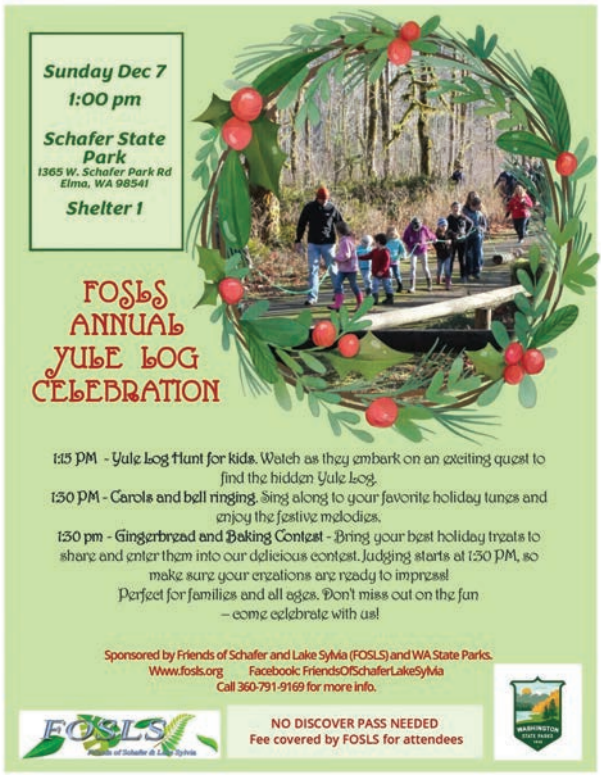
Join us as we welcome, Trina Young, head of FOSLS (Friends of Schafer and Lake Sylvia). She will help us learn about how FOSLS helps the two state parks it loves.

December is also GHAS' annual meeting where we elect officers and appoint and/or reappoint board members. It's a chance to summarize the highlights of 2025 also.

GHAS hopes to meet with the FOSLS members in January to explore ways our two organizations can work together to support each other and maybe on projects.

December 7, join FOSLS Yule Log Party

Eat, drink and be merry with FOSLS members at their annual Yule Log celebration on Sunday, December 7 at 1 p.m. in the pavilion at Schafer State Park. All are invited to join in the fun.



Thanksgiving Day

Thanksgiving Day, annual national holiday in the United States and Canada celebrating the harvest and other blessings of the past year. It is observed on the fourth Thursday in November in the United States and on the second Monday in October in Canada. Thanksgiving is a day when families and friends gather to express gratitude for the year's blessings over a shared feast. The holiday has evolved from a harvest celebration to a national tradition of togetherness and thankfulness through centuries of tradition building, mythmaking, and cultural change.

The American holiday is rich in legend and symbolism, and the traditional fare of the Thanksgiving meal typically includes turkey, bread stuffing, potatoes, cranberries, and pumpkin pie.

The First Thanksgiving: Myths and Facts

Why Do Americans Eat Turkey on Thanksgiving?

Does the Tryptophan in Turkey Actually Cause Sleepiness?

Does the Tryptophan in Turkey Actually Cause Sleepiness? How chemistry explains tryptophan and debunks the myth that eating turkey (which contains it) induces drowsiness on Thanksgiving.

Thanksgiving is believed to have originated as a regional celebration in colonial New England (now in the northeastern United States). The American Thanksgiving may have been modeled on a 1621 harvest feast shared by the English colonists (Pilgrims) of Plymouth (now in Massachusetts) and the Wampanoag people. The celebration in Plymouth is commonly called the first Thanksgiving. Plymouth's Thanksgiving began with a few colonists going out "fowling," possibly for turkeys but more probably for the easier prey of geese and ducks, since they "in one day killed as much as…served the company almost a week." Next, 90 or so Wampanoag made a surprise appearance at the settlement's gate, doubtlessly unnerving the 50 or so colonists. Nevertheless, over the next few days the two groups socialized without incident. The Wampanoag contributed venison to the feast, which included the fowl and probably fish, eels, shellfish, stews, vegetables, and beer. Since Plymouth had few buildings and manufactured goods, most people ate outside while sitting on the ground or on barrels with plates on their laps. The men fired guns, ran races, and drank liquor, struggling to communicate in broken English and Wampanoag. This was a rather disorderly affair, but it sealed a treaty between the two groups that lasted until King Philip's War (1675–76), in which hundreds of colonists and thousands of Native Americans lost their lives.

October Greenfield Audubon Awards

How trading wild turkeys for other animals became a conservation success

by Holly Ramer, AP

No one wants a weasel on their Thanksgiving table, but swapping turkeys for other animals was once surprisingly common.

Trading turkeys – for wildlife management, not dinner – was a key part of one of North America's biggest conservation success stories. After dwindling to a few thousand birds in the late 1880s, the wild turkey population has grown to about 7 million birds in 49 states, plus more in Canada and Mexico, according to the National Wild Turkey Federation.

In many cases, restoration relied on trades. The exchange rates varied, but Oklahoma once swapped walleye and prairie chickens for turkeys from Arkansas and Missouri. Colorado traded mountain goats for turkeys from Idaho. The Canadian province of Ontario ended up with 274 turkeys from New York, New Jersey, Vermont, Michigan, Missouri and Iowa in exchange for moose, river otters, and partridge.

"Wildlife biologists don't suffer from a lack of creativity," said Patt Dorsey, director of conservation for the National Wild Turkey Federation's western region.

West Virginia in particular appears to have had an abundance of turkeys to share. In 1969, it sent 26 turkeys to New Hampshire in exchange for 25 fishers, a member of the weasel family once prized for its pelt. Later trades involved otters and bobwhite quail.

Some families are 'adopting' turkeys for Thanksgiving instead of eating them,

"They were like our currency for all our wildlife that we restored," said Holly Morris, furbearer and small game project leader at the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources. "It's just a way to help out other agencies. We're all in the same mission."

Wild turkeys were abundant across the U.S. until the mid-1800s, when the clearing of forestland and unregulated hunting led the population to plummet. Early restoration efforts in the 1940s and 50s involved raising turkeys on farms, but that didn't work well, Dorsey said.

"Turkeys that had been raised in a pen didn't do very well in the wild," she said. "That's when we started capturing them out of the wild and moving them around to other places to restore their population, and they really took off."

In New Hampshire, wild turkeys hadn't been seen for more than 100 years when the state got the West Virginia flock. Though those birds quickly succumbed to a harsh winter, another flock sent from New York in 1975 fared better. With careful management that included moving birds around the state dozens of times over the ensuing decades, the population has grown to roughly 40,000 birds, said Dan Ellingwood, a biologist with the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department. That's likely well beyond the expectations at the time of reintroduction, he said.

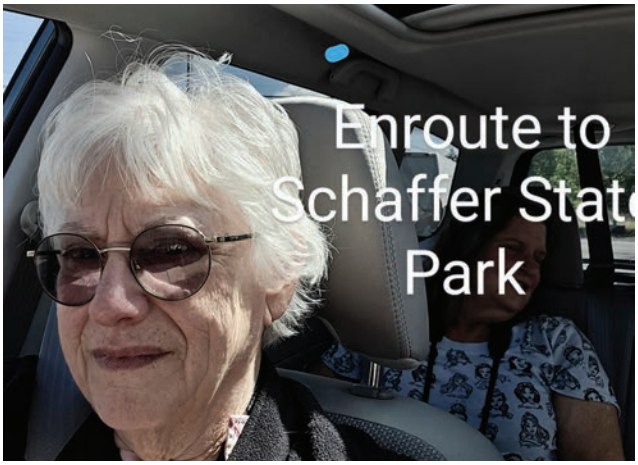
"Turkeys are incredibly adaptive," he said. "Winter severity has changed, the landscape has changed, and yet the population really took off."

Turkeys play an important role in a healthy ecosystem as both predator and prey, he said, and are a popular draw for hunters. But the restoration effort also is important just for the sake of ensuring native species continue to persist, he said.

Dorsey, at the National Wild Turkey Federation agreed, noting that turkey restoration projects also helped states revive their populations of other species.

"A lot of good work gets done on the back of the wild turkey," she said.

Jeanette Tasey, Great Background Bird Count



Field Trips have been scheduled for the next 4 months: December through March. Included in the list of field trips are surveys set to be conducted every 3rd Thursday. The surveys will be on private property in Ocean Shores at the request of the owner. Field trips are as follows:

Dec 8 South Bend/Potters Slough

Two rare species have been reported in this area from November 23rd - a Sora and a Swamp Sparrow. To car pool, meet at the Southside Swanson at 8 am

Dec 28 East County Christmas Bird Count

Contact Liam Hutcheson at liamhutcheson2020@gmail.com for a specific area .

Jan 3 Grays Harbor Christmas Bird Count

Contact Dianna Moore at osdlm1945@gmail.com for a specific area

Jan15 Property Survey in Ocean Shores

Aim to be in Ocean Shores for 9 am start. To car pool from Aberdeen/Hoquiam, we can meet at the Hoquiam Swanson back/side parking area near Levy Street at 8:20 am.

Jan 24 Westport Marina

Meet at Southside Swanson at 9:00 am. If you would prefer to meet at Westport or some point along Hwy 105, Please contact Mary ONeil directly.

Feb 9 Brady Loop

Meet at Tractor Supply parking area closest to Hwy 12 at 9:00 am. We can meet people from Central Park/Montesano area at the Mocha Monster coffee stand located just south of the Hwy 12 exit where the off-ramp connects with Montesano's Market Street. Those coming from farther east can meet us at the Brady Store on Montesano-Elma Hwy at the Brady exit.

Feb 19 Property Survey in Ocean Shores

Aim to be in Ocean Shores for 9 am start. To car pool from Aberdeen/Hoquiam, we can meet at the Hoquiam Swanson back/side parking area near Levy Street at 8:20 am.

Mar 7 Sandpiper Trail/Sewer Ponds

Meet at the parking area next to the gate of the Hoquiam Airport at 9:00 am

Mar 19 Property Survey at Ocean Shores.

Aim to be in Ocean Shores for 9 am start. To car pool from Aberdeen/Hoquiam, we can meet at the Hoquiam Swanson back/side parking area near Levy Street at 8:20 am.

Mar 31 Oyhut Wildlife Refuge/ Ocean Shores

Those coming from Aberdeen/Hoquiam and points East can meet at the Hoquiam Swanson at 8:30 am. We can meet those coming from in and around Ocean Shores at the Convention Center parking lot closest to the MacDonalds Store at about 9am.

The field trip chair maintains an email list for notices and reports regarding field trips. If you have changed your contact information or if you would like to be added to the field trips email list, please contact Mary O'Neil at deed2et2et@yahoo.com

Look forward to seeing you on the upcoming trips

BirdNote®
— 20 Years of Storytelling —

BirdNote joins the lineup on KGHI 91.1

After many years of asking, your local community radio KGHI 91.1 has finally been able to aquire the permission to run the very popular program BirdNote, a daily radio program dedicated to sharing the joy and wonder of birds with listeners and promoting the conservation of birds and their habitats. You can hear BirdNote between 8:00 AM - 8:30 AM and again at approximately 3:30 PM Monday through Friday.

The BirdNote Daily radio broadcast originated in the Pacific Northwest under the umbrella of the Seattle Audubon Society, a chapter of the National Audubon Society and operates as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit.

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Education	*Vacant*
Field Trip Coordinator	Mary O'Neil 810-7995 *deed2et2et@yahoo.com*
Habitat	*Vacant*
Hospitality	Linda Orgel 500-7228 *ldotorg@olearycreek.com*
Membership	Linda Orgel 500-7228 *ldotorg@olearycreek.com*
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Publicity Committee	Janet Strong, 495-3950 *janet.strong4@gmail.com*
Webmaster/Communications	Mary Lou Gregory 533-4897 *kuaygal@gmail.com*

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) 495-3950
National Audubon	(212) 979-3000
GHAS Website	*http://ghas.org*

all area codes 360, unless otherwise noted

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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. 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

Name _____ ***Date*** _____

Address _____

City _____ ***State/Zip*** _____

Phone Number _____ ***E-Mail*** _____

___ Heron	$ 25.00
___ Pelican	$ 50.00
___ Falcon	$ 75.00
___ Eagle	$100.00
___ Other	$_____

__ I am renewing my membership
__ I am a new member

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

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Program Meeting

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Trina Young

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420 7th Street
Hoquiam, Washington 98550

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The Sandpiper

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