

Program Meeting
Hoquiam Library Meeting Room
October 6, 2024 1:30 pm - 3:00 pm
Band-Tailed Pigeons
Anthony Novak - WDFW
Species of Great Conservation Need
AVAILABLE VIA ZOOM see page 9

September
October
2024



The Sandpiper



Backyard birds mural nears completion

Your local chapter is excited to preview some pictures of the newest mural to grace the walls of the Harbor. A year or so ago, Grays Harbor Audubon commissioned the artistic talents of Jenny Fisher to create a mural of birds that members might find in their own backyards. It took over a year to locate a suitable venue and we greatly appreciate the efforts of Mark Swanson, Scott Reynvaan, Lynn Ogren, Mary Lou Gregory, Fine Lines Painting and of course, Jenny Fisher to make it happen. The mural can be seen as you exit the Hoquiam bridge and head towards downtown Hoquiam.



The President's Perch



By Janet Strong

'Tis the season for annual picnics and other celebrations. It seems like all organizations hold their yearly warm weather events in August or September. We started August off with our own annual picnic on Sunday August 3 and a good time was had by all. After that, all the other groups that all of us have connections with have filled every weekend with end-of-summer gatherings featuring great food, games, greeting old friends not seen all year and general outdoor fun. We hope you have enjoyed a few of these.

Grays Harbor Audubon has another, special celebration to look forward to in the near future. Jenny Fisher, locally renowned muralist, is putting the finishing touches on the beautiful mural she has been creating titled "OUR BACKYARD BIRDS." Jenny has mounted scaffolding, climbed ladders and other feats all summer to paint this immense work of art on the wall of the former Res-Com building on 6th Street in downtown Hoquiam. Grays Harbor Audubon Society has commissioned this effort. Additional sponsors and friends will be acknowledged on the face of the mural as well. Plans are in the works for a dedication of this new wonder. Please stay tuned for more information. In the meantime, you may want to wander by for a close-up view of this amazing mural. See photo below.



Member profile with gratitude

We would like to take this time to pay tribute to our long-time members and supporters, Dean and Diane Schwickerath. Dean and Diane were instrumental in starting our chapter more than thirty years ago. They became involved with Grays Harbor Audubon Society within a year of its founding in 1992. Since that time they have been contributing to Grays Harbor Audubon in so many ways. Both had been active members of the Board for many years. Both served terms as President of the Board. Diane was Treasurer for over twenty years.

Dean and Diane have devoted thousands of volunteer hours to protect Washington's wetlands. Since 1997 they began purchasing wetland properties for GHAS with support from an anonymous donor. They started with a 20-acre wetland just south of Westport, Washington along the Washington coast in Grays Harbor County. From this early commitment to protect the rapidly vanishing and fragile wetlands throughout Grays Harbor County, the Schwickeraths were responsible for working with willing sellers to acquire over 3,000 acres of estuary and forest lands in Jefferson, Pacific and Grays Harbor counties to protect in conservation.

In September, 2021, the Schwickeraths personally purchased three parcels totaling over 34 acres along Elliott Slough, immediately south of Hwy 12 just east of Aberdeen. In November 2021, they generously donated that property to Grays Harbor Audubon to ensure its protection in perpetuity.

Their leadership brought wetland and critical habitat issues to the forefront of the GHAS agenda and steered a new course toward habitat protection activism. Because of their perseverance and commitment, these two individuals represent the finest example of leaders who have made a difference in wildlife and wetland protection in Washington State. We thank them very much.



photo by Lee First

Washington's 1st industrial wood pellet plant proposed for Hoquiam

by Lee First - Twin Harbors Waterkeeper

Pacific Northwest Renewable Energy (PNWRE) has proposed one of the first industrial wood pellet/biomass manufacturing plants in Washington State. The proposed location is on the north shore of Grays Harbor, within the city limits of Hoquiam. PNWRE plans to produce more than 440,000 tons of wood pellets annually to be exported to Asia and burned in former coal-fired power plants, increasing climate-harming greenhouse gas emissions. The Hoquiam plant would operate the facility seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

The proposed location is across the street from the Grays Harbor National Wildlife Refuge, and just over a mile from Hoquiam High School, Hoquiam Middle School, residential areas and local parks. While touted as “renewable,” wood pellet plants are a false energy solution that pose significant threats to public health, wildlife, and the environment. Hazardous air pollution and dust linked to serious health issues will be emitted at the plant at every step of the manufacturing process.

Industrial wood pellet plants run all day, every day, and their “hammer mills” create noise pollution all day and all night long. The location of this facility is especially problematic, as it's in close proximity to schools and neighborhoods. Studies from pellet plants built in the rural South document that “vulnerable populations and children in particular are impacted by air pollution emitted from wood pellet production. Proximity to these plants is associated with a statistically significant higher risk of hospitalization for respiratory illnesses and increased asthma-like symptoms in children.”

Particulate matter and dust deposited on tide flats, shorelines, and in the water also harms birds, fish, wildlife, and aquatic ecosystems. The proximity to the Grays Harbor National Wildlife Refuge, at Bowerman Basin, is problematic as well. “The refuge's 1,500 acres of salt marsh and mudflats play host each year to tens of thousands of shorebirds that stop to feed and rest during their 7,000

mile journey from South America to their nesting grounds in the Arctic. One of the four most important estuaries in North America for migrating shorebirds, Grays Harbor as a whole has been named a Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network Site.” Birdwatchers frequently visit this area, which is only a block away from the proposed PNWRE facility.

Biomass is an ambiguous term that is also called bioenergy, wood pellets, woody biomass, and more. No matter the name, it means burning trees in power stations for electricity. The biomass industry claims it's a renewable and carbon neutral form of energy. But biomass releases climate warming carbon into the atmosphere every step of the way. The industry cuts down forests of the Southeastern US and converts them to pellets. They ship these pellets overseas. Then they burn these pellets in foreign power stations as an alternative to coal. Since the demand for wood pellet is expected to double by 2026, this will increase pressure to harvest our local forests and further risk the viability of salmon in our local rivers.

If built, PNWRE would likely ship pellets from this Port of Grays Harbor Terminal on Airport Way in Hoquiam. Wood chips are already shipped from this terminal to other ports for processing.

According to Pivot Point, the demand for wood biomass for the proposed PNWRE wood pellet plant in Hoquiam, the proposed DRAX pellet plant in Longview and interest in siting a plant in Lewis County could triple the tonnage of biomass removed from local forests.

Friends of Grays Harbor, Grays Harbor Audubon, Twin Harbors Waterkeeper, NRDC (Natural Resources Defense Council), and Wild Orca, represented by Earthjustice, are challenging the project's Clean Air Act permit for underestimating the amounts of hazardous pollutants and particulate matter the plant will emit and for failing to consider the full harm of producing and burning wood pellets on our climate.

To add insult to injury, the proposed location of this facility is listed as a contaminated site under the WA State's Contaminated Sites list. The site, Grays Harbor Port Export Facility Development, has benzene, petroleum diesel, petroleum gasoline in soil and groundwater, as well as additional suspected contaminants in groundwater, soil, and sediment. The Port, City of Hoquiam, and the WA State Department of Ecology are considering cleaning up this site under the State's Voluntary Cleanup Program, because it takes less time than the Model Toxics Control Act Cleanup Process. Yes, cleaning up the site faster is a great goal, but it also excludes the public from the process.



**In the field
summer field trips summary**
by Mary O'Neil

Everyone who participated in the field trips agrees: Huge Success. Early in June (June 9) we traveled the Wynoochee Montesano road to Lake Wynoochee. Weather had been looking rather bleary. We even talked about canceling due to weather. What a surprise when we arrived at the lake and the clouds gave way to a day of sunshine and pleasant breezes. We explored the side roads and even found the old eastside boat launch. There were a few who could not do the walk to Maidenhair Falls, but for those of us who made the trek, the beauty of the falls became a highlight of the day. Those who stayed with the car were equally well rewarded with great bird sightings including a Hammond Warbler and the Warbling Vireo. We rounded out the day picnicking and relaxing at the Tacoma Power Plant's day use park on the west side of the lake. We totaled 29 species including all 3 woodpeckers: hairy, downy and pileated. The last bird of the day was the male Western Tanager. He kept up his raucous chipping until we would almost zero in on him only to have him fly to a new location and start over again. Finally when everyone agreed they had at least one look at him, we checked out and headed home.

For our next trip we stayed relatively close to town visiting the John's River Wildlife Refuge off Hwy 105 near Markham. We only had 3 show up, but we 3 birders had a great time pulling 26 species out of the tall grass, rushes and reeds. We maintained a leisurely pace but managed to walk to the end of the trail near the last bird blind. We even had some river otters show up to give us their vote of approval.

On July 15, we headed out bright and early (for us: 8am) headed to Rainbow Falls near Centralia

off Hwy 6. We started counting at our first stop which was the Willie Keil Historical Marker that you come across about 5 miles east of Raymond. We made several stops along the way including a small state park in Pe El, Rainbow Falls State Park and the Dryad cemetery. Our quest centered around the Hermit Warbler, but he was not showing himself. The birding marvel of the day was the exceptionally high number of Brown Creepers. Jeepers...Creepers...!! Every tree seemed to have its own creeper walking its bark. Weather started to deteriorate, so we headed back early. However when we got back to Raymond the sun was still shining, so we took advantage of being there to walk the Willapa River Trail. This trail never disappoints with another 10 species to list.

The 29th July trip was scheduled close to town at Lake Swano near GH College. However at the last minute I got word of a rare bird sighting at Bottle Beach so we changed out for a trip to Bottle Beach. Only two of us showed up, but we had an amazing time. We got there just immediately before or actually at high tide and the shorebirds showed up in numbers. Unfortunately, the high tide was only a 7 ft tide which is still quite low leaving a wide beach to scan. We could not see the Red Necked Stint, but he could have been there packed in with the Marbled Godwits, Black Bellied Plovers, the Short billed Dowitchers and the sandpipers. One of our cancellees worried that she could not walk very far on the sand. As it turned out, we didn't walk the beach anyway, but spent the whole time sitting on a log at the end of the trail.



Our most recent trip was to Schafer State Park on the East Fork of the Satsop River. We enjoyed a leisurely walk around the trails in and about the upgraded campground. We searched high and low for a Dipper Bird to no avail. Our best sighting had us in his sights long before he flew in on top of us and chipped out some message that sounded like, "You blind or something? Take a look at me!!" A huge Osprey had flown into the tree we were standing under swaying the branches 20 feet above our heads.

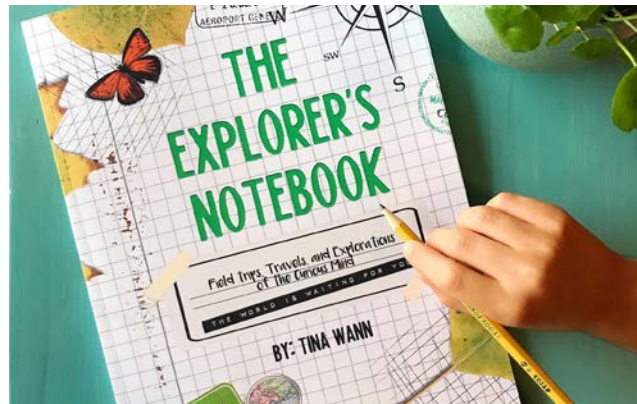
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On a final note, we happily included a Red Winged Crossbill in our count because Merlin kept calling it and at one point, one of our birders remarked “Red Winged Crossbill” in response to the faint chip call she was hearing. At the same time, the Merlin Sound App called it and I saw a bird fly from where the sound had been coming.

There was one more trip scheduled – a trip we did not make. I had planned to go to Hoodspport August 11, but nobody could make it. At the last minute, one of my friends offered to go with me, but by then I was burned out, so we just cancelled it.

If you are interested in last minute emails regarding upcoming trips, be sure to let me know your name and number so I can add you to the Bird List group email. Our next field trip is to Kalaloch in the Olympic National Park. A list of upcoming field trips follows this report.



Upcoming field trips

We are headed into the final quarter of 2024 with a number of successful field trips behind us. Some members have expressed interest in staying closer to home so I have taken that into consideration in planning the next set of field trips. We do have one member who very much would like for us to visit the Scatter Creek Wildlife Refuge near Grand Mounds/Rochester, and I have scheduled one of our next dates to go there. If you have any feedback on the following set of dates, please let me know what you think.

Tuesday, September 24, Bowerman Basin, Hoquiam

Meet at the Hoquiam airport parking lot at 8:30 am. We will start off walking the Sandpiper Trail. Tides are mediocre so there are no time objectives. We can then survey the ponds of the old sewage treatment plant, and if we have more mileage on our feet, we can walk the old (now closed) road along the Bay/Chehalis River.

Sunday, October 6, Scatter Creek Wildlife Refuge near Grand Mounds/Rochester

Meet at Tractor Supply at 8:00 am in the parking area closest to Hwy 12. We can meet other birders at Monster Mocha just south of the Main Street exit from Hwy 12 at Montesano. We will follow All Trails trail recommendations.

Monday, October 21, Tokeland

Meet at Southside Swansons in parking lot near coffee shop at 8:30 am. Tide is low at 9:30 am so we can take our time to get there by driving through the cranberry fields, back roads and campground first.

Saturday, November 9, Westport Marina and Bottle Beach

Meet at Southside Swansons in parking lot near coffee shop at 8:30 am. Again, tide is not very cooperative, but by visiting Marina first we give the tide a chance to move in a bit for Bottle Beach.

I do have an email list for birder contacts. I feel like this is the best way to keep in touch with reminders and changes. If you are not already on my email list, please send a request to be included to my Birder's email list. Send your request to deed2et2et@yahoo.com

ACOW set for October 4 - 6

The Audubon Council of Washington (ACOW) brings together chapter leaders from across the state of Washington and is set this year for October 4-6, 2024.

This yearly in-person statewide event will be located at South Puget Sound Community College, located in the picturesque city of Lacey, near Olympia. Lacey is known for its natural environment. Nearly 20 percent of the City has been set aside for parks, natural areas, and open space. We'll meet at the South Puget Sound Community College Lacey Campus at 4220 6th Ave SE. We will be in Room 188 and there will be signs pointing you in the right direction!

This traditional meeting is more than just a gathering; it's a chance for us to come together, deepen our connections, and work on shared conservation issues. Throughout the event, participants will have the opportunity to learn from expert speakers, share valuable information, and engage in meaningful discussions that shape the future of conservation efforts in Washington.

Go to <https://nationalaudubon.app.box.com/s/qo5f8i3en365wyqgtes1353ptphpsnmm> to view the draft agenda or to make your reservation please sign up at <https://act.audubon.org/a/acow-2024-registration-1>

Member Meeting

Band-Tailed Pigeons in Washington

In this presentation, WDFW wildlife biologist Anthony Novak will talk about the ecology of Band-Tailed Pigeons in Washington and discuss ongoing efforts to monitor their overall population. Recent developments in radio-telemetry have allowed for us to obtain significant amounts of data on bird movements and locations. We applied this technology to assist with discovering hidden Mineral Sites utilized by Band-Tailed Pigeons along the Pacific Coast of Washington.

Anthony Novack is the District Wildlife Biologist for the WA Dept of Fish and Wildlife in Grays Harbor and Pacific Counties. He has been in this role since 2013 and is involved in the management and monitoring of all game species and species of greatest conservation need (SGCN) within those two counties. His primary field activities include monitoring of Western Snowy Plover, Streaked Horned lark, Roosevelt Elk, Sooty Grouse, Black Bear and Band-Tailed Pigeon. He also has a lead role in acquiring additional lands for the conservation of fish and wildlife. Prior to working for WDFW, he worked for USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services preventing bird-aircraft collisions in California, conducted wolf monitoring in Idaho for the Nez Perce tribe, and worked for the Park Service counting Aoudad at Carlsbad Caverns NP in New Mexico. Anthony has a Master's of Science degree from the University of Florida. His thesis was on the foraging ecology of jaguar and mountain lions in the Maya Biosphere Reserve of Guatemala.



Mr. Anthony Novack
WDFW District Wildlife Biologist
Grays Harbor and Pacific Counties
48 Devonshire Road Montesano, WA 98563
Anthony.Novack@dfw.wa.gov



Member profile

Carol R. Sunde's debut poetry book, *Through Pine Shadows*, has recently been published by MoonPath Press. Carol, long a member of the Grays Harbor Audubon Society, includes in her collection a number of nature poems and references to birds as well as sharing a lifetime of real and imaginary experiences, observations, and musings across a life full of lessons, loves, losses, and joys. Carol's work has also been published online and in print in journals such as *Cirque*, *Passager*, *The Comstock Review*.

Born and raised in Iowa, Carol R. Sunde is a retired Social Worker (Ph.D.) living in Westport, WA. Upon retiring from a counselor position at Grays Harbor College, she earned a Certificate in Poetry from the University of Washington which meant she drove back and forth to Seattle for a year taking weekly classes. She continues to immerse herself in poetry workshops, conferences, writing groups, and, of course, reading and writing poems.

Besides poetry, other top joys for Carol include yoga, bird and sky watching, and travel. She feels lucky and fortunate to be in the PNW with its awesome people, forests, ocean, rivers, deserts, mountains, plains, and rain.

Through Pine Shadows is available through Bookshop.org, Amazon, Barnes & Noble



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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GHAS Website	<i>http://ghas.org</i>

****all area codes 360, unless otherwise noted****

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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* _____

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Heron | \$ 25.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pelican | \$ 50.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Falcon | \$ 75.00 |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | \$ _____ |

- I am renewing my membership
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To join National Audubon or renew your National Audubon Membership, call 1-800-274-4201.

News & Editorial

send materials to
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or email to
rd@olearycreek.com

Copy deadline 10th of
month preceding
membership meeting

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The Sandpiper

P.O. Box 470
Montesano,
WA 98563



Program Meeting

Band-Tailed Pigeons in Washington An ongoing study of mineral site usage, habitat use, and migration patterns

*Anthony Novak from WDFW talks
about the unique characteristics
and behaviors of this species of concern*

***Hoquiam Library Meeting Room
420 Seventh Street
(7th & K)***

ZOOM LINK

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

Meeting ID: 821 1869 5964

Passcode: 579465

One tap mobile

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Dial by your location

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MEETING TIME

1:30 pm - 3:30 pm

October 6, 2024