

Federal Legislation to Protect All Wetlands

by Alex Morgan, Conservation Coordinator

A decision by the United States Supreme Court two years ago has increased the rate of wetlands loss throughout the nation. The ruling removed federal jurisdiction over isolated wetlands, creeks, and watering holes such as prairie potholes, leaving nearly one-fifth of our nation's small water sources unprotected.

Supporters of the Supreme Court's decision argue that state and local regulations protect these areas, and that those left unprotected do not serve important ecological roles. As birders, Seattle Audubon members realize the importance of small wetlands, ponds, and other waterways for waterfowl, and we support efforts to protect these millions of acres of wetlands. A recent study completed by Ducks Unlimited noted that 65 percent of the prairie pothole wetlands in the US have already been lost, and 85 percent of those remaining could lose protection under the decision of the Supreme Court. While the Environmental Protection Agency is in the midst of figuring out its regulatory response to the court's decision, there are other ways that citizens can get involved to protect our nation's waterways.

Recently, federal legislation was introduced in both the House and the Senate that would provide permanent protection for all wetlands and waters throughout the nation. Senate Bill S. 473 and House version H.R. 962 would amend the Clean Water Act of 1972 to "restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the waters of the United States." The bills would also "provide protection to the waters of the United States to the fullest extent of the legislative authority of Congress under the Constitution."

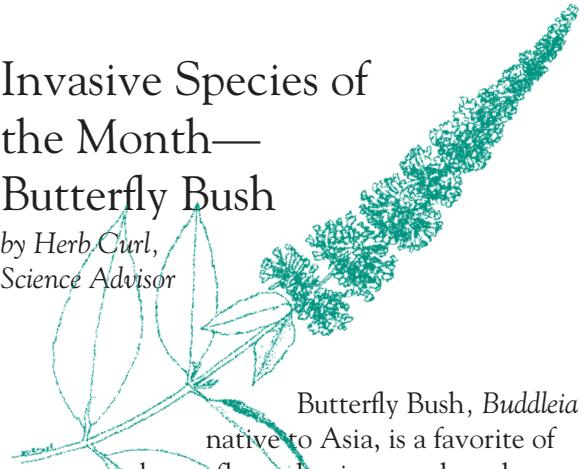
Seattle Audubon will become increasingly involved in this issue, and we ask that you support our efforts to protect America's waterways and wetlands. Stay tuned for action alerts, and check our website soon for more information and links to action alert notices. To work with the Conservation Committee on this issue, please contact Alex Morgan at 206-985-6581.

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Invasive Species of the Month— Butterfly Bush

by Herb Curl,
Science Advisor



© 2003, Megan Ernst,
Wild Plants of Greater Seattle
by Arthur Lee Jacobson, available in the Nature Shop

Butterfly Bush, *Buddleia* sp., native to Asia, is a favorite of butterfly enthusiasts and gardeners. Unfortunately, it easily escapes gardens by wind, water, and soil movement, invading dry, open, disturbed sites such as roadsides, streams, new developments, vacant lots, wastelands, pastures, and open woodlands. It has started to appear on hillsides along the I-5 corridor. A major pest in Great Britain and New Zealand, it ranks among the top 20 invasive weeds in England. At its worst, it shades out native plants, particularly willows along streams. There are many species, the most noxious also being the most common, *B. davidii*, with many varieties available at nurseries. Fortunately, it does not spread as rapidly as Scots Broom.

Butterfly Bush is a Class C "Obnoxious weed" in King County. The county recommends against, but does not forbid, its planting. The species *B. globosa*, which has orange-yellow blossoms, is a much better choice than *B. davidii*, since it is not invasive, or at least less so.

Butterflies are not attracted to Butterfly Bush any more than to many other showy flowers. Alternative plants to *Buddleia* are Lilac, *Syringia ovalifolia* or *vulgaris*, and while not shrubby, Coneflower, *Echinacea purpurea*, Globe-thistle, *Echinops exaltatus*, Blanket flower, *Gaillardia* spp, Oregano, *Origanum vulgare*, and tall verberna, *Verbena bonariensis*.

There are lots of other choices.

Butterfly Bush does make good firewood.

Opportunities for Teens!

- Explore Washington's natural areas with other teens
- Learn bird banding
- Earn your Service-Learning hours
- Join us for a week-long trip to Texas in April!

Sound interesting? Well, if you are going to be a 9th-12th grader next year, then Seattle Audubon has an opportunity for you.

BirdWatch is a great program for teens interested in learning more about birds. There is no cost to join, and no experience or equipment required. Come to this month's program meeting (see front page for more info), or call Emily Sprong, BirdWatch Coordinator, to find out more about this exciting opportunity. Fun times await!

For more about BirdWatch, call 206-523-8243, x 20 or e-mail emilys@seattleaudubon.org.

Or you may download an application from our website: <http://www.seattleaudubon.org/Education/BirdWatch/BWHome.html>.

Summer Nature Camp

All new themes and curricula brought in a great new year for 2003 Nature Camp. Campers studied forest ecology, habitats, endangered species, marine life, and conservation. Parents and campers were happy with our many field trips to great places like Seward Park, Tiger Mountain, Lincoln Park, and the Arboretum.

As one camp parent remarked at the end of the week, "My kids came home talking about insects and their metamorphoses and proboscises... The learning is so obviously integrated and fun!"

Our teen trekker camps for 6th, 7th, and 8th graders filled up for the first time since the start of the program several years ago. The teens trekked out to the Olympic Peninsula as well as to Mt. Baker and the Snoqualmie National Forest. Also, thanks to a wonderful partnership with EarthCorps, our teens received a chance to give back to the community, spending a day with EarthCorps learning about conservation and participating in restoration projects.

We were able to give 26 scholarships to assist families in need.



NOAA comes to camp.

Thanks to our great campers and to our top-notch summer staff: naturalists Darcy Dinse, Britt Olsen, Sadie Bogie, Sara Frame, and Laura Schershel. Kudos to Sue Tallarico, Nature Camp Director, for another great year. And Kintea Bryant, from the Seattle Audubon FUN Program, made a fine Assistant Director.

Summer Camp Outreach Programs

Sand Point can be far away and hard for some kids to reach, so we again took Seattle Audubon Nature Camp into new neighborhoods, community centers, and summer school programs throughout the city.

Free programs on habitats, birds, reptiles, and mammals reached 350 kids at Mercer and Denny Middle Schools, the Primary and Secondary Bilingual Orientation Centers (for kids newly arrived in this country), and at Rainier and Rainier Beach and Garfield Community Centers.



Seattle Audubon Student Naturalists

Can't Have Too Much FUN!

You know what happens when you pour water mixed with mustard on a patch of ground?

Earthworms wiggle to the surface, stinging slightly from the mustard.

Finding Urban Nature (FUN) students use that fact to take a worm census at two or more places in their schoolyard, calculating worms per square foot. Then they ponder why it might be that numbers vary from one place to another. Maybe the dirt is compacted from foot traffic? Maybe school maintenance workers have sprayed pesticides?

This kind of active, stimulating thinking about nature and birds lies at the heart of Seattle Audubon's Finding Urban Nature program. Two

hundred volunteers help introduce 3rd-, 4th-, and 5th-graders to nature in their neighborhoods. Kids learn to watch, listen, touch, record, measure, hypothesize, test, and compare--that is, they develop their ability to think.

Do you want to help? FUN will reach more than 2,000 children this year (eight times each) in 24 Seattle Public Schools. If you can commit to helping with just eight classes and a bit of training, please contact FUN coordinators Kintea Bryant and Anita Lagerberg, both at 206-523-8243, x 18 or 19. The fall training will be on September 27, so call soon!

Seattle Audubon wants to know—

What events or classes would you like to see in your neighborhood? Is there someone you think would value Seattle Audubon education programs who doesn't yet know about them?

Seattle Audubon wants to know! Please contact Dan Drais at 206-523-8243, x 21, or dand@seattleaudubon.org.

Thank you.



What critter am I?

WINGS Set for New Year

Seattle Audubon's program for middle-school students, WINGS (Working in Nature, Giving Service) takes off this month for another year of stimulating, experiential education about the environment. WINGS teaches students some of the science needed to understand natural systems and then goes one step farther, urging them to wrestle with some of the non-scientific challenges.

Students talk about ways that a Seattle family might adjust its behavior to make a difference in nature—driving less or recycling or turning off the lights when they aren't necessary. "The important things," says WINGS Coordinator Sue Tallarico, "are, first, that the material engages the kids—that they come to enjoy learning about the environment--and second, that the kids learn that they can play a role in improving their own environment. They can make a difference!"

The program will work with classes in the African American Academy, the Secondary Bilingual Orientation Center (for kids new to the country), and one or more of the following middle schools: Mercer, Hamilton, and Denny.