

Birding by Ear— Increasing Your Birding Skills

by Alan Roedell, *Publisher*

We all appreciate the birds that say their names like “Chickadee-dee-dee” and “Curlew”, because it makes identifying them possible while they remain unseen. But what about the ones that ask nosy questions like, “Who cooks for you?” or offer vague threats like “Fear!” There is the one that demands, “Quick, three beers!” Then there are the complainers, moaning “Oh, dear me,” and the vain ones that announce, “See me, pretty, pretty me!”

If you already have the skills, you’ll recognize which statements, questions, and threats signal which species. However if it’s been a while since you’ve heard a bird in the field, you may have to sweep the cobwebs out of the little gray cells. This month we’ll explore the ways we can gain or regain the skills that make us better birders and help answer the perennial question, “What is that bird?”



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Birdathon 2005 — April to May

See pages 14-17 for details and field trips.

Be a Birdathoner, and help support Seattle Audubon!

Program

**The Latest on the Marbled Murrelet
with Colleen McShane**
Thursday, April 21, 7:00PM
Center for Urban Horticulture

The Marbled Murrelet, a small diving seabird, nests mainly in coniferous forests within 30 miles of the coast and forages in near-shore marine habitats. In 1992, the Marbled Murrelet was listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. Population declines appear related to the effects of historic and on-going loss of breeding habitat in old-growth forests, combined with poor reproductive success. What happens next for the murrelet?

Colleen McShane

was project manager, coordinator, lead technical editor, and contributing author for the Evaluation Report on the Five-Year Status Review of the Marbled Murrelet in Washington, Oregon, and California.

Doors open at 6:30PM for refreshments, Master Birder booth, and Nature Shop selections. We will elect a slate of officers that night.

The Center for Urban Horticulture is located at 3501 NE 41st Street in the Laurelhurst neighborhood. From NE 45th Street, turn south on Mary Gates Memorial Way to NE 41st Street.

Seattle Audubon

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WEB SITES

<http://www.seattleaudubon.org>

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ellen@123imagine.net by the 8th of

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Submissions will be edited and published at the editor's discretion.

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Of Note

• Join us Tuesday, April 26 for **new volunteer orientation** from 7-8:45PM at the Seattle Audubon Center. Please register with Lorraine at 206-523-8243, x12.

• **Spring Plant Sale, Saturday, April 9, 10:00AM-4:00PM**—Vendors include Botanica, Langley Fine Gardens, and Judd Creek, Madrona, Robyn's Nest, and Tadpole Haven Nurseries. Tadpole Haven and Judd Creek grow only Northwest natives. **Garden Tour, too!** Tours will be held from 1-4:00PM. Stop by the Gardening for Life table and pick up a map.

• **Save the date: Annual dinner, June 18**
Speaker: Jay Manning

• **Rain barrels are now available!** The BirdWatch student naturalists are selling rain barrels as a fundraiser. Call the Nature Shop (206-523-4483) today to reserve yours. It's going to be a dry summer...

• **Thank You to—**
Neil Zimmerman and his volunteers for their organization and display of the Seattle Audubon exhibit booth at various outside events. The booth has attracted many new members.

BirdWatch volunteers **Mike Donahue, Alan Grenon, and Cara Ianni** for their help during Emily Sprong's maternity leave.

Springtime **Finding Urban Nature (FUN) volunteers** in Seattle public schools and Bellevue's Newport Heights School. Thanks to Puget Consumers Co-op and City People's Mercantile and Garden Store for their generous donations to the FUN program.

Volunteer Committee members for calling volunteers and gathering 2004 service hours.

• **Save the date: Wenas Campout, May 28-29-30**—For details, visit the Wenas web site, www.nwlink.com/~cyrus/wenas.html.

• The Nominating Committee submits the following **slate of officers for election**: Jane Hedberg, President, Mary Anne Thorbeck, Secretary, and Richard Lintermans, Treasurer. The committee requests suggestions for the position of Vice President. Please send nominations to Tom Riley, tomr@nwframing.com. The election will be held at the April 21 meeting.

• **Donate your old vehicle to Seattle Audubon.** We'll pick it up and do all the paperwork. Proceeds go to support our programs. Please leave a message at 206-523-8243, x7.

• **Call for Nominations—**

Annual Conservation, Education, and Science Awards

Please help us recognize individuals who go the extra mile for birds and conservation. The Education Award recognizes an outstanding individual in the K-12 arena. The Conservation Award is given to someone who has made a significant contribution to the protection of birds and wildlife habitat. The Science Award will honor an individual who has made a significant contribution to our knowledge of the birds and wildlife habitat of our region through publications or other means. Nominations should be no more than five pages long and should include a statement of the nominee's background and achievements. The deadline for nominations is 4:00PM, April 22. For more complete details on the qualifications for each award, consult the Seattle Audubon web site or contact Ann Nez, Awards Chair, at nezac@jps.net.

SEATTLE AUDUBON BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Sharing the Joys of Birding by Ear

by Marina Skumanich, Conservation Chair

It's no surprise that a common name for birding is "bird-watching," since for most of us birding is defined foremost as visually observing birds: their plumage, their behavior, and so forth. Yet many people are increasingly appreciating another form of birding, one that uses sounds rather than sight. This kind of birding—"birding by ear"—opens a whole different dimension on birds.

Some come to birding by ear as a way to gain insight or to experience new challenges with birding; others, due to a natural orientation to, and appreciation of, sound over sight. But however we begin, once we start birding by ear, there



Marina Skumanich

is no going back. Suddenly, in the middle of the K-Mart parking lot, you hear (but don't see) a White-crowned Sparrow singing, and know that summer is finally here. Or on a hiking trail through the forest, you might hear (but not see) a Hermit Thrush, and feel that you are truly in a natural cathedral.

At Seattle Audubon, we are committed to sharing the joys of birding by ear, through classes and field trips, via our attentive Nature Shop volunteers who stand ready to help ID bird-calls, and now with BirdNote, a new radio show.

Through our conservation activities, we are equally committed to saving the habitat on which "our" birds depend—from our own back yards to the wider world—so that there will never be a "silent spring."

Spotlight on Volunteers—Tom Rohrer



Tom grew up in southeastern Pennsylvania, hiking in the forested hills and catching snakes along the Susquehanna River. He says he began birding in junior high, "after an amazing flock of warblers and vireos magically appeared in my yard one day." Tom completed the San Blas, Mexico, Christmas Bird Count in 2004 and has birded throughout the US and Latin America. Since serving an internship in bird-banding with the Institute for Bird Populations, he has volunteered with the Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship program.

Tom, a Boeing software engineer, has worked for countless hours on our web site and serves as a board member. "Our members share a deep desire to protect birds and nature, and work tirelessly to bring positive change. Being on the board has given me a great appreciation for our incredible diversity of people and activities."

The History of Seattle Audubon

by Jerry Joyce

Some of us experienced it firsthand. Others have heard the stories.

Since its founding in 1916, Seattle Audubon has been, and remains, in the forefront of work on behalf of birds and nature—not only in Seattle, but in the Puget Sound region, the entire Pacific Northwest, and sometimes well beyond our region.

As we prepare for the 100th anniversary of the founding of Seattle Audubon, we want to document and record the

organization's fascinating and important history. To accomplish this goal, the Seattle Audubon Board of Directors has formed a history committee. If you would like to participate in researching, collecting oral histories, writing, or otherwise contributing to this project, please contact the committee via e-mail at History@seattleaudubon.org, or leave a message at the Nature Center, 206-523-4483.

At an organizational meeting in early May, we'll develop a plan to publish a book prior to Seattle Audubon's centennial, and discuss interim articles preceding the centennial.

SEATTLE AUDUBON MISSION STATEMENT

Seattle Audubon cultivates and leads a community that values and protects birds and the natural environment.

Seattle Audubon is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization.

Invest in the Future—Make a Bequest to Seattle Audubon

Contact Christina Peterson
206-523-8243, x15
chrisp@seattleaudubon.org



SEATTLE AUDUBON CENTER and NATURE SHOP
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