



# Island Wings

- to enjoy, learn about, & preserve the diverse natural habitats of these islands & beyond

Volume 19 Number 3

November-December 2008

## PROGRAM

### Conservation of Washington's Rare and Imperiled Plants

Rare Care's Wendy Gibble

*7pm, Thursday, November 20, 2008*  
*Land Trust Building 10014 SW Bank Rd.*  
**Contact: Laura Bienen 206 567-4613**

We hear quite a bit of buzz about worldwide decline in species diversity and in particular threats to individual species whether the Giant Panda, California Condor or Black Rhino, among many others. Closer to home, the Island Marble butterfly of the San Juans are threatened with extinction.

Most conservation organization fundraising appeals and media coverage focus primarily on animal species. Our November Audubon program will consider the subject of endangered species, rarity and conservation from a botanical angle. The program topic of rare plant conservation in Washington State will be presented by Wendy Gibble, the Program Manager for the Rare Plant Care and Conservation Program at the University of Washington.

As an introduction, Gibble writes, "Washington's native plant species are being threatened by rapidly growing human population, invasive species, and global warming. Approximately 15 percent of the state's native flora is considered to be sensitive, threatened, or endangered and vulnerable to decline or extirpation. Some of these species occur nowhere else in the world, and very little is known about their life history and habitat requirements.

State and federal laws protecting these plants are minimal, and severe reductions in government spending on botanic surveys and full-time botanist positions hinder our ability to understand the current distribution and status of rare plant populations and what is needed to protect them."

The Washington Rare Plant Care and Conservation Program (Rare Care) partners with state and federal agencies to conserve rare plants across the state by monitoring rare plant populations, collecting and storing seeds in a seed vault, and conducting research on rare plant species. Rare Care is the only organization solely dedicated to conserving Washington's rare plants.

**The program is free and all are welcome to attend. If you have questions, please call Laura Bienen at 567-4613.**



*Basalt daisy (Erigeron basalticus) is endemic to Yakima Canyon*  
*Photo by Richard Ramsden*

## *You Love What You Know*

### **Vashon Audubon Supplies Vashon Ferry Terminals with Seabird Posters**

On the walls of the ferry terminals at Fauntleroy, North Vashon, and Point Defiance are posters depicting 10 of Puget Sound's marine birds. The large posters feature photos and text that will guide identification and give a few facts to create interest about each bird.

Past-Audubon president Jill Andrews comments, "The new signs are truly gorgeous. When I delivered the sign to the north-end ferry dock, the woman in charge of loading cars greeted me joyously. 'Oh, you brought our signs...!' she said. 'People are always asking us what birds we are seeing on the water.' It was a real treat to hear her reaction."

Featuring the most commonly seen water birds, the posters help achieve Vashon-Maury Island Audubon Chapter's goal to educate people, here specifically ferry riders, about birds, a goal set at its annual retreat a few years back.

When the state's Audubon offered Chapter Grants, Andrews wrote the grant; Ed Swan, Gary Shugart, Ron Simons, and Sue Trevathan selected the birds; Peter Murray took the photos (Greg Gillson took one); Kathryn True wrote the text; Barbara Chasan and Ann Spiers proofread; and Sandra Noel (Noel Design LLC) designed the posters. Vashon Audubon supplemented the \$800 grant to ensure visually attractive and durable posters.

## Volunteer Scope: Richard Rogers

A graphic designer who specializes in website and advertising design, Richard Rogers has lived on Vashon Island for 19 years. His first volunteer job for VMIAS was to design our website ([www.vashonaudubon.org](http://www.vashonaudubon.org)) in 2005. In addition to his ongoing job as webmaster, Richard volunteered time to help develop six PowerPoint presentations for Alan Huggins' successful *Enjoyment of Birds* class. His latest project will be to revitalize PowerPoint presentations for the 4th grade program.

When a Ruby-crowned Kinglet was attacking its own reflection at Richard's front door, he decided "I've got to get to know my feathered neighbors" and attended an Audubon presentation featuring an author of the *Birds of the Puget Sound Region*. A few years later, he became irrevocably smitten with birds when a rare visitor turned up in his backyard.

### How did you get involved with Audubon?

In December of 2004, a woodpecker landed on an apple tree in our backyard. I looked at it, and looked at it and looked it, and between my guidebook and the scope I decided it was a Red-naped Sapsucker. My guidebook said the bird is "never seen below the Cascade Crest." I called Ed Swan and he was naturally skeptical. But the bird was kind enough to return on New Year's Day and I immediately called Ed again. In no time I had four excited birders in my house! They confirmed it was a Red-naped Sapsucker—a rare species for Vashon.

**Now do you consider yourself a birder?** I'm still a beginning birder—there's a lot to be learned. I'm happy to be able to walk down the street and identify certain birds by sight and song now. Birding is like gardening, the more you get into it the more humbled you are...the more you learn, the more there is to know.

**Have you changed any of your daily habits now that you're more aware of birds?** My morning walks have become a lot more consistent and I almost never leave the house without binoculars. Being aware of birds and their songs brings enjoyment to the day although family and friends say my gaze tends to drift skyward during conversations these days.

**What is best about volunteering for VMIAS?** I've benefited a lot from other experienced birders' knowledge, and in turn I get satisfaction out of sharing something I enjoy with others.

(cont. column 2)



**Ruby-crowned Kinglet smote Richard Rogers' heart, turning him into a birder.**

**What's new on the VMIAS website?** We just added a birding map. I thought in terms of someone from out of town or someone new to the island who's asking, "What do I do, where to I go to see birds?", and designed the map to answer those questions (see story p. 5).

Submitted by Kathryn True

## Need to Renew Your Membership? Shopping for a Seasonal Gift?

If your renewal letter has been filed (or piled) away, go on-line to the Vashon Audubon website for a fresh form, mailing address, and other information. On the form, cross out "New" and write in "Renew."

For your seasonal gift, give a membership to your off or on Island friends. We send a hand-crafted gift card. Write "gift" on the application and include a personal note.

### <VOLUNTEER TODAY>

#### 4th Grade Birding Program

Share your love of birds and develop the same love in children. Help them learn about local birds--no need to be an expert...you can learn with them! The program occurs on selected dates, January through March at Chautauqua Elementary and KVI beach, both locations need volunteer help. Volunteer for two or more hours. No need to commit for the whole program. Kathryn True: 567-5389

#### Annual Christmas Bird Count

Sunday, December 28.

Join the annual bird count as a recorder or spotter.  
Sue Trevathan: 463-1484 or [sue.trevathan@centurytel.net](mailto:sue.trevathan@centurytel.net)

#### Newsletter Editors for Audubon's Island Wings

For one person or a team. Easy layout, cooperative Island printer, interesting content, some writing, much editing and detail garnering, fun interaction with bird and environmental community. Excellent training by present editors.  
Ann Spiers: 463-9858 or Barbara Chasan: 463-2571

#### Volunteer Coordinator

The chapter needs someone to oversee our volunteer process. Someone to contact, record, solicit, train volunteers, and then link them to appropriate projects. Are you the one? Sue Trevathan: 463-1484

### Visit Our Website

[www.vashonaudubon.org](http://www.vashonaudubon.org)

#### Vashon-Maury Island Audubon Board Officers:

Co-President	Sue Trevathan	463-1484
	John Friars	463-9881
Secretary	Mary O'Brien	463-6209
Treasurer	Lindsay Hofman	463-5356

#### Board Chairs:

Conservation	Michelle Ramsden	406-3723
Co-Education	Kathryn True	567-5389
	Amy Kitchener	463-2921
Field Trips	Alan Huggins	567-5166
Co-Editor <i>Island Wings</i>	Barbara Chasan	463-2571
	Ann Spiers	463-9858
Membership Programs	Randy Smith	567-5333
	Laura Bienen	567-4613

#### Project Coordinators:

Publicity	Jean Aspinall	463-3178
Welcome	Fran O'Reilly	463-4255
Merchandise	Susan Commerece	567-5707

## Audubon Webpage Offers Interactive Map to Island Birding

Almost as good as birding in real time, Vashon Audubon's webpage features an interactive map of the Island's birding spots. Click on a map point, and a thumbnail instantly appears with site name, locale photo, and expected birds. Another click opens a full screen with each locale's birds (usual and rare), habitat description, and directions to site.

The text is primarily from Ed Swan's *Birds of Vashon Island* with other details from Vashon Land Trust and Vashon Parks. Island photographers Terry Donnelly, Pete Murray, and Richard Rogers define the landscape: shore, marsh, roadside, pond. Also used are shoreline aerial photos from Washington DNR.

Web designer Richard Rogers praises the collaboration that created the interactive site, "I designed the map using technology donated by Islander Andrew Maxwell of MapMates.com. Thanks to the map, all the birders are out now where we can see them." Start Island birding at [www.vashonaudubon.org](http://www.vashonaudubon.org)

### Portage area viewed from Quartermaster to Tramp Harbor Washington State DNR Shoreline Photo



### Below is the interactive bird map's Portage Entry:

*A brackish marsh best viewed from Quartermaster Drive hides behind the Portage store. The star attraction here consists of Virginia Rails that respond consistently to a tape of their calls. Near-dawn makes the best time to find the rails. Many wrens, woodpeckers, flycatchers, thrushes, vireos, warblers and sparrows utilize the woods on the western side of the marsh in migration and in winter. A small collection of snags here provides nesting sites for chickadees, wrens and other birds.*

*The view of the inner harbor of Quartermaster Harbor at Portage reveals one of the best spots to find Ruddy Ducks around the island. Many scoters, goldeneye and Bufflehead show up here as well. Rarely, Sanderling or Western Sandpiper join the Killdeer feeding in the mud.*

*To view the Quartermaster Harbor side of Portage, one can park along Tramp Harbor or take the short crossroad along the south side of the old store through to the Quartermaster Harbor side. A gravel parking strip exists along the harbor side of Quartermaster Drive. Note the Quartermaster Harbor Important Bird Area interpretive sign. From *Birds of Vashon Island* by Ed Swan, Vashon birding guide 206-463-7976.*

## The Annual Adventure Christmas Bird Count

Sunday, December 28, dawn to dusk.

*Masters and Initiates Needed*

The Vashon-Maury Island Audubon Society invites chapter members, Island birders, and *Enjoyment of Birds* neophytes to join with other birders across the Western Hemisphere for the annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC). Our CBC occurs on Sunday, December 28, dawn to dusk.

Here's your opportunity to contribute to our growing winter bird census data, spend a day in the field with expert birders, and enhance your birding skills. Each year, over 55,000 volunteers from all 50 states, every Canadian province, parts of Central and South America, Bermuda, West Indies, and Pacific islands count and record every individual bird seen or heard in a designated count circle.

### Local Area: Blake, Kitsap, Vashon, Maury

A count circle is 15 miles in diameter, roughly 177 square miles total. Our count circle covers all of Vashon-Maury Island, swings north over most of Blake Island, and hops across Colvos Passage to encompass a large swath of the Kitsap Peninsula. Volunteers count within the circle from dawn to dusk on December 28. Teams are assigned sections of the circle and cover their areas either by car, by ferry, or on foot. Most team members spend the entire day in the field, while others contribute the minimum 4 hours.

**We especially need volunteers to help cover Kitsap and Blake Island.**

You may be interested in simply counting birds at your feeders or in your backyards. We welcome reports from feeder watchers, so if you have an especially popular feeding station and could count birds from the warmth of your home. See *Rules for Feederwatchers* below.

### Potluck, Birding Stories End Day

At the end of the day, please join us for our CBC potluck at the Land Trust building, shortly after sunset (around 5pm). This is a great opportunity to hear stories about the birds that were seen or missed either here on the Island or over on the Kitsap. Here's your chance to meet veteran birders from off-island teams, many of whom have participated in our CBC since its inception in 1999.

In the past folks who have attended the potlucks have been the first to hear about rare birds that were tallied during the count, such as Ruffed Grouse, Northern Goshawk, White-fronted Goose, Red Phalarope, Gray Jay, White-breasted Nuthatch, Northern Shrike, and Harris's Sparrow.

Our CBC organizer/compiler is Sue Trevathan. It's a huge area to cover so if you are interested in helping out, contact Sue at 463-1484 or [sue.trevathan@centurytel.net](mailto:sue.trevathan@centurytel.net).

### Simple Rules for Feeder Watchers

Remember that birds coming to feeders should not be summed over the day. Only the high number of individuals of any species seen at one time should be the final count for that species. For example, when watching a feeder over the course of an afternoon, 14 dark-eyed Oregon Juncos are seen all at once, then leave, 5 more appear, then leave; later on 6 more appear at the feeder. The number added to your dark-eyed Oregon Junco total is 14, and not 25. Recognizing the call of a bird and not seeing it is fine as long as you are confident in your ID.

Submitted by Sue Trevathan

Vashon-Maury Island Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 838  
Vashon Island, WA 98070

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## Join the on-going bird classes

*Enjoyment of Birds a la Carte*

Have house guests in need of fun?  
Have an interest only in owls?  
Who are those birds tweeting at dawn?

**\$10 a session**

### Course Schedule

2008: Wed. Nov. 12 - Freshwater birds - Gary Shugart  
2009: Wed. Jan. 14 - Owls & Diurnal Raptors - Alan Huggins  
Wed. Feb. 11 - Common Winter Perching birds - Alan Huggins  
Wed. Mar. 11 - Spring migrants - Alan Huggins  
7-9pm, Land Trust Building

**For more information**

**Contact Alan Huggins at [alanhugs@comcast.net](mailto:alanhugs@comcast.net)**

## November/December 2008

*Sunday, November 2, 2pm -- Vashon Theatre*

**FALL FOR ORCAS** -- Discussion and slides of Puget Sound whales. Sponsored by Vashon Hydrophone Project. \$5.  
*Orca Annie 463-9041.*

*Saturday, November 8, 8-10am -- Ober Park 'n' Ride*

**ISLAND AUDUBON FIELD TRIP** -- *Monthly 2nd Saturday.* Bring binoculars/scope if you can! *Alan Huggins 567-5166.*

*Sunday, November 9, 1pm -- Judd Creek at restored culvert just west of 11th Street at 204th Ave*

**WELCOME BACK SALMON CELEBRATION** -- Kicking off the 11th year of organized salmon watching in Island streams, the gathering is just beyond the old Jesus barn in Paradise Valley. Bring a rattle, poem, song and/or your neighbor's kids. Make a joyful noise. *Jane Neubauer 567-5404 or Yvonne Kuperberg 567-4005.*

*Wednesday, November 12, 7-9pm -- Land Trust Building, 10014 SW Bank Road*

**THE ENJOYMENT OF BIRDS** -- Ongoing classes. This session's instruction by Gary Shugart on freshwater birds. *Alan Huggins [alanhugs@comcast.net](mailto:alanhugs@comcast.net) or 567-5166. **Special Opportunity for Drop-Ins Students @ \$10 per Session.***

*Thursday, November 20, 7pm -- Land Trust Building, 10014 SW Bank Road*

**VASHON AUDUBON PROGRAM -- Conservation of Washington's Rare and Imperiled Plants** -- *Wendy Gibble. Laura Bienen 567-4613.*

*Thursday, December 4, 7pm -- First Thursday every even-numbered month*

**VMIAS BOARD MEETING** -- Phone Sue Trevathan for confirmation, 463-1484.

*Saturday, December 13, 8-10am -- Ober Park'n'Ride*

**ISLAND AUDUBON FIELD TRIP** -- *Monthly 2nd Saturday.* Bring binoculars/scope if you can *Alan Huggins 567-5166.*

*Sunday, December 28, dawn to dusk -- Vashon-Maury Islands and Kitsap Peninsula See story p5 for details.*

**AUDUBON'S ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT** -- *Sue Trevathan 463-1484 or [sue.trevathan@centurytel.net](mailto:sue.trevathan@centurytel.net).*

## LOOK AHEAD!

*Saturday-Sunday, January 23-25*

**TOKELAND/WESTPORT FIELD TRIP** -- *Alan Huggins -- Vashon Audubon Field Trip*

Bird the Washington coast and enjoy conversation and dinner at the Historic Tokeland Hotel. Spaces are rapidly filling, so reserve yours now! *Alan Huggins [alanhugs@comcast.net](mailto:alanhugs@comcast.net) or 567-5166.*

# SWAN'S NOTABLE SIGHTINGS

The following Island bird sightings were reported by bird guide and author Ed Swan. See his *Birds of Vashon Island* for further seasonal notes and places to bird on the Island.

What was seen:

August 24: Larry Huggins saw **Red-necked Phalaropes** on the Tahlequah ferry run. (Sept. 2: I saw more RN Phalaropes from the Fautleroy ferry. Bob Hawkins saw some from the am PO Boat. Sept 30: Gary Shugart had 2 today. Most are seen in August and earlier in Sept, though we have some October dates.)

August 25: The first **Horned Grebes** were back on both sides of Portage in Quartermaster and Tramp Harbors. Also in Tramp Harbor was a group of about 5-6 **White-winged Scoters**. On the Quartermaster side of Portage were 2 female or first-year **Hooded Mergansers**.

August 28: New species for Vashon! In Tweeters, Gene Hunn described his sighting of a first summer **Arctic Tern**. He also saw a **Semipalmated Sandpiper** in with the peeps, which is rare here. I saw a **Heermann's Gull** off the north end of Vashon from the Southworth ferry.

August 29: Steve Caldwell went to look for the Semipalmated Sandpiper and found a **Pectoral** instead. They were regular for several years but haven't been seen for several years now.

August 30: Larry Huggins saw a **Brown Pelican** from a boat off Jensen Pt. in Quartmaster Harbor. (Sept.1: Joy Nelson saw one fly by Pt. Robinson.) Sue Trevathan saw about 40 **peeps** at KVI, mostly **Western** with a few **Least** and one Semipalmated.

September 2: Bob Hawkins saw a dozen **Western Grebes** from the PO Boat in the evening. I think these are the first report for this fall, which is unusual.

September 3: At Tramp Harbor were a single **Eared Grebe** in breeding plumage and both **White-winged** and **Surf Scoters**. (Sept 13: Kathryn True saw a flock of 8 or so Surf Scoters off Shawnee indicating that the Quartermaster Harbor flock is getting going now as well as the Tramp Harbor group. Sept. 15: Bob Hawkins saw 10 S Scoters off Gold Beach.)

September 5: Gilbert Findlay counted 130 **DC Cormorants** in the trees around the yacht club. There were also 50 **Barn Swallows** roosting on a boat.

September 8: Richard Rogers reported a first of the season **Townsend's Warbler** in his yard. Birds still around in my yard this week included **BH Grosbeak** and **BTG Warbler**. (Sept 13: Marcy Summers and Brenda Sestrap still have BH Grosbeaks and Marcy and Emma Amiad still have **Rufous Hummingbirds**, which is getting late for both species. As of this morning, I still have tanagers, BTG and Wilson's Warblers and **PS Flycatcher** and **Swainson's Thrush**. Sept 19: A singing male Townsend's, a female and a BTG remain together and active in my yard.)

September 9: Today I had a lot of migrant activity about 8am when the sun hits our back bushes and madrone trees. A blindingly bright yellow young male tanager was about with a Townsend's and a Wilson's Warbler. Richard Rogers saw 20 **American Wigeon** at Lisabeula along with 24 **Common Mergansers**, first of the season report for wigeon and only the second C. Merganser report. Wigeons are definitely late. (Sept 15: A couple of dozen wigeon were at Ellisport.)

September 10: This morning I had a single **Golden-crowned Sparrow** eating Evergreen Huckleberry berries in my yard and heard a **Varied Thrush**. (Sept 16: Kathryn True reports a Varied Thrush in her yard.)

September 13: Alan Huggins found a dozen **pipits** at Fern Cove

today and a few **Green-winged Teal** at Fisher's Pond. The teal are late but the pipits are coming at their standard time. Other places to look: KVI Beach, Pt. Robinson and especially along Old Mill Rd and possibly Wax Orchard Rd fields. (Oct 14: Fran O'Reilley has 5 pipits in her Maury Isl. field.) Bob Hawkins saw an Osprey over Quartermaster H. this afternoon.

September 15: Mukai Pond was crawling with **Lincoln's Sparrows** and **Common Yellowthroats** this morning and a few GC Sparrows and a few thousand young bull frogs. No Fox Sparrows and only one Swainson's Thrush. Mukai Pond being thrushless seems kind of amazing. Mid to late September this pond is usually the thrush capital of Vashon. Hermit Thrush should be in eating the berries along the trail now. The yellowthroats must have had a very successful breeding season at the pond this year. There was also a single **House Wren** which is getting late for them to be around. Bob Hawkins saw a **Marbled Murrelet** off Gold Beach.

September 16: I heard a couple of **YR Warblers** by Old Mill Road. We usually have a more noticeable fall passage. A large group of **Bonaparte's Gulls** was hawking insects high in the air over Tramp Harbor.

September 19: At KVI today a single **shoveler** was with the Mallards and some wigeon in the pond. This appears to be in the late middle of first of season sightings for shovelers. (Oct. 2: The shoveler continues to hang out with the growing wigeon flock which still has just one Eurasian.) Mike Feinstein had the first **Harlequin Ducks**, 6 along Luanna Beach Rd. Gary Shugart saw a **Parasitic Jaeger** "zooming" around some **California Gulls** off Tahlequah.

September 21: Sue Trevathan reported birds found at six Island locations: 21 species, including a **merlin** at Rabb's Lagoon, her first on the Island in many years, perched with fanned tail and outstretched wing, trying to dry off. She also says, "Bravo for the new trail along the road at Fisher's Pond. It will afford great looks in the winter when the leaves have dropped."

September 22: Yesterday a group of 30 **vultures** was along Bank Rd, and this morning a hundred or so were on the western part of the Burton hill. Many other vulture movements are being reported in the Puget Sound regions.

September 23: Steve Caldwell reported hearing the first **Fox Sparrow** about a week ago. Today I heard and saw two singing at Portage. This is a late return. **Evening Grosbeaks** continue to be heard: some around my place, some along Tramp Harbor, and some at Alan Huggins' place. (Sept 29: They can still be heard passing through.)

September 25: A male **Eurasian Wigeon** was in the flock at Ellisport. Most years we don't find them until October.

September 26: A single **Red-necked Duck** was on a pond in the Wax Orchard area. Adam Sedgely with SAS, over to visit relatives, found a **pintail** with the wigeon flock at Ellisport. (Oct 7: A female pintail was at Fisher's Pond today.)

October 2: A mini midweek field trip for the Enjoyment of Birds class turned up a single **Pacific Loon** and single **Greater Scaup** off the Tramp Harbor fishing pier. Arrival dates for Pacific Loon have jumped all over the place, most likely related to observer effort. This is the earliest Greater Scaup return by a couple of days, but the last couple of years'

## Swan's Sightings (cont from previous page)

have also been in the first week of October. Previous years' were in the last week of October and early November. I think that may be related to observer effort as well. A number of **RN Grebes** were around as well as Westerns spread out in several rafts pretty far out into the Sound. There were as many as 10 **Common Loons** stretched across Tramp Harbor. Today I have a **RC Kinglet** at my place, the first I've heard about on the Island this season. This is a week later than the latest earlier first of season dates. I've been listening for them for some time, so they definitely haven't moved in in any numbers yet.

October 6: A yellowthroat and a **Savannah Sparrow** were still at Monument Rd. Barbara Chasan still has a **Wilson's Warbler** at her place on Westside Hwy.

October 8: **Black Scoters** were honking their kazoos off Manzanita this morning. They have probably been back for a while; this is the first I've had a chance to go down and check. A **Hermit Thrush** was along my driveway this morning. John and Ellie Friars have the first reported **RB Mergansers** at their place near KVI.

October 9: This from Gary Shugart: **Franklin's** were hanging out with about 100 mew gulls about 10am. Tide was half in or out.

October 10: Steve Caldwell found a **meadowlark** down at KVI, our first fall record I believe.

October 11: Bob Hawkins found **Wilson's Snipe** back at Fisher's Pond. **RB Sapsuckers** are coming down from the hills; Bent and Marie Blichfeldt had one at their place for the first time in a while. A **Greater Yellowlegs** and 2 **Barrow's Goldeneye** were seen at Raab's Lagoon during the Audubon field trip.

October 14: Fran O'Reilly had 20 **Greater White-fronted Geese** in her fields on Maury Island. They were still present on the 19th. They flew in each morning and grazed her field and then flew out to the nw in the late afternoon. Talking to Ed Babcock, who has lived here for over 80 years, it sounds like geese flocks (Canada, GWF and Snow) used to stop by to feed in farm fields on their way south. Vashon used to have many more fields and probably had crops that the geese would eat the remains of, but now these fields are fallow, forest or houses. This is the first flock that's landed and stuck around that I've heard about since moving here. It's pretty hard to tell about the Canada Geese flocks around here. I haven't counted them because I think most stay here year round. GWF and Snow Geese are seen each year but pretty much only overhead each way.

October 15: Dan Willsie had a very late **Osprey** at his place on the nw corner of Vashon.

October 16: The Findlays report the first **White-throated Sparrow** of the season at their place near the mouth of Judd Creek. The Chasan's had one the next day on the Westside Hwy.

October 18: Alan Huggins has a late **tanager** singing.

October 20: I saw a single male **Bufflehead** at the marina in Burton. I've also noted that the Ellisport wigeon flock is splitting up much earlier than normal, by two months, with many going to the pond at Monument Road and Quartermaster Drive. I believe this is a result of harassment by Bald Eagles. The ones hanging around KVI/Ellisport/Tramp Harbor were gone for a couple of months and began diving on the wigeons as soon as they came back. I'm not sure how the wigeons would be any more protected at the pond but that seems to be their response.

October 22: Rich Siegrist had a flock of 50 **Snow Geese** overhead going south this morning.

## Audubon Off-Island Field Trips Scheduling for 2009

*Vashon Audubon field-trip leader Alan Huggins is planning off-Island field trips for 2009. The first trip is the weekend of Jan. 23-5 at the Tokeland Hotel on the ocean south of Grayland. As he plans out further trips, he is welcoming suggestions. Please email him at [alanhugs@comcast.net](mailto:alanhugs@comcast.net) with suggestions. To join the Tokeland trip, contact the hotel directly for reservations: [www.tokelandhotel.com/home.html](http://www.tokelandhotel.com/home.html)*

**From Alan Huggins:** As field trip leader of Vashon Audubon I'm reviving an old favorite Vashon Audubon trip begun by Dan Willsie, Carol Ferch and Pam Dawdy several years ago. On the weekend of Jan. 23-5, we'll enjoy a half day drive to the coast, birding at key stops along Chehalis River and Willapa Bay, and arriving at the Historic Tokeland Hotel south of Grayland. You can come for one night or two, but Saturday will be a special group dinner at the hotel.



**The Historic Tokeland Hotel, Site of Winter Bird Weekend**

This trip is planned around a predicted 10ft or higher tide to provide an up close and personal encounter with 400 plus over-wintering Marbled godwits! These are very large, long-billed shorebirds that stand shoulder to shoulder on the small marina pier within 50 feet of us birders. Other birds include Willets, Curlews, Loons, grebes, herons and various peeps. On one trip Dan Willsie reported that 10,000 Sooty Shearwaters dropped in!

## Litter Love: Willingham Picks Up Task as Road-Crew Lead

The 28th of September turned out to be a perfect day for a walk and trash pick-up on Audubon's 2-mile stretch of Vashon Highway (Health Clinic to Methodist Church). Actually, the road seemed cleaner than usual, but that may partly have been because no mowing had occurred recently, and blackberries and grass were surely hiding some treasures. We picked up 10 bags of garbage and two of recyclables. Joining me in the effort were Larry Jensen, Yvonne Kuperberg, Amy and Aaron Kitchener, Rayna Holtz, Sue Trevathan, Jill Andrews, David and Anne Willingham, Jacob Green, Kathryn True, Alex Koriath, Elizabeth Freeman, and Randy Smith.

After 17 years this was the last Audubon clean-up of which I will be leader. Next spring Anne Willingham, also an MRC (Master Recycler/Composter), will take over that position. Over all it has been really fun, and rewarding -- the few exceptions the days when we got drenched in the process, or had too few volunteers. I know you will have a good time with Anne as well.

Submitted by Ellen Kritzman