



Island Wings

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

Volume 19 Number 3

January-February 2009

PROGRAM

AITo Launches Sea Turtle Conservation

7pm, Thursday, January 15, 2009

Land Trust Building 10014 SW Bank Rd.

Contact: Laura Bienen 206 567-4613

Alliance for Tompotika Conservation (AITo) Executive Director Marcy Summers presents a new initiative—sea turtle conservation—for the Vashon/Maury Island-based conservation group. In 2005, AITo's first initiative was to protect the maleo, a colorful chicken-sized bird living in the tropical rain forests of the island of Sulawesi, Indonesia, a "hot-spot" in global biodiversity.



Protecting sea turtle eggs is one focus of Alto's new Indonesian conservation initiative on Sulawesi Island.

From Alto's webpage tompotika.org: In 2008, AITo launched its new Sea Turtle

Conservation Program. The project consists of both a field component that works with villagers to protect adult turtles and eggs from poaching, and an outreach component in which AITo staff bring their message of Indonesian sea turtle conservation into the villages and schools.

Prior to AITo's work in the villages of Teku and Taima, virtually every detected sea turtle adult and nest was poached.

Now, however, not only are turtles and nests being protected, but in their nightly beach patrols AITo staff have discovered an additional sea turtle species not previously known to nest in the area: the Olive Ridley turtle (*Lepidochelys olivacea*). The Olive Ridley, along with Green, Hawksbill, and Leatherback turtles, makes Tompotika one of only a handful of places in the world in which four of the world's seven sea turtle species are documented to nest. AITo is now gearing up for the 2009 sea turtle season (roughly March–August), in which they hope to expand its sea turtle patrols and initiate several new protection strategies.

These projects were activated by the dedicated and hard-working Vashon AITo group. All five AITo board members and Summers are Vashon-Maury Islanders. Islanders remember the AITo group marching in the Strawberry Festival parade with beautifully decorated art forms depicting the endangered maleo bird.

As usual, this program is free, and all are welcome. Refreshments are served, and bringing your own cup is appreciated.

Submitted by Laura Bienen

Program Chair Laura Bienen invites suggestions for topics or presenters for Vashon Audubon Chapter's bi-monthly evening program. Email your suggestions to tlbieners@earthlink.net.

FULL MOON BEACH WALK

Friday, January 9, 8-10pm
North End Ferry Dock beach
Meet at espresso stand

An Audubon Ebb Tide Program with Island beach naturalists, including Sandra Noel, Barb Gustafson & Bob Fuerstenberg.

Bring flashlights, extra batteries, wading boots, warm hat and jacket, and dry gloves. The tide will be -3.1' at 9:25 p.m. Rocks and sand that are covered with water most of the year emerge and reveal beach animals staying cool and wet in the protective darkness.

For more information call Michelle Ramsden 406-3723 or Rayna Holtz 463-3153.

**Do NOT park at La Playa restaurant, please!
Park in the ferry parking lot and walk down hill.**

Co-sponsored by People For Puget Sound
and Vashon-Maury Island Audubon

VASHON AUDUBON'S NEWSLETTER ISLAND WINGS CHANGES FORMAT

Beginning with the March/April 2009 issue, *Island Wings* starts a trial run of its new, greener "bulletin" format, a one-page, hard-copy, snail-mail issue. This bi-monthly, printed publication will be closely coordinated with Vashon Audubon's website (www.vashonaudubon.org). The one-page sheet will continue to include a cover article on the Audubon evening program offered every-other-month, the calendar listings, and a call-for-volunteer box. Instead of printing other complete articles, the new "bulletin" will offer highlights of those articles and refer readers to the full text on the website.

Moving to the website are "Ed Swan's Notable Sightings" along with the full text of other articles such as the details of field trips, happenings, classes, conservation topics, editorials, appeals, and thank-yous. The website's generous space will allow more in-depth stories as well as color photographs. This switch to less paper and more web will cut down on paper use and production time.

Another important change involves the dedicated Island Wings co-editors, Ann Spiers and Barbara Chasan, who are stepping down after three years of volunteer service. We have been very fortunate to have had such excellent editors and want to gratefully acknowledge their efforts over the years.

Volunteers are still needed to round out the new newsletter team. Please consider helping with Island Wings by giving a few hours of your time every other month. See *Volunteer Today*, p3.

Good News! Vashon Audubon's booth at Holly Daze bazaar earned \$306 of which \$50 was a direct contribution to Audubon. Many thank-yous to Susan Commeree and volunteers.

Visit our website
www.vashonaudubon.org

Vashon-Maury Island Audubon

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Co-President	Sue Trevathan	206 463-1484
	John Friars	463-9881
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Project Coordinators:

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

SWAN'S NOTABLE SIGHTINGS

What was seen:

October 26: Alan Huggins found a couple of **snipe** at Fisher's Pond. A **Western Scrub Jay** was at the Lockwood's yard at the upper end of Luana Beach Rd.

October 27: Bob Hawkins had a **scrub jay** at his place in Dockton today. The year before last, he had one hang around for awhile. This could be the one that was reported along Luana Beach Rd. or a different one. Today I saw a **Mourning Dove** along the telephone wires on the Quartermaster Harbor side of Portage.

October 30: Dan Willisie spotted a winter adult **Franklin's Gull** on the beach in front of his place on NW Vashon.

November 1: John Arum had a **Heermann's Gull** at the Tahlequah dock. November 3: The Findlays had the first of the season **Common Goldeneye** - a male - at their place by the mouth of Judd Creek. November 5: Rich Siegrist saw and heard 6 **swans** vocalizing like **Tundras** fly over his place. In the afternoon, he saw 30 **Black Turnstones** and 50 **Sanderling** at Fern Cove. They later flew straight across Colvos Passage to Kitsap Co.

November 11: Gary Shugart continues to see the **Heermann's Gull** on the dock or with gulls flying around the ferry at Tahlequah. John Friars and I have noted a male **Shoveler** hanging around with the wigeon at Ellisport and KVI. Rich Siegrist had two **Evening Grosbeaks** at his place on the 11th. November 16: Steve Caldwell has heard **Barn Owls** at his place over along Tramp Harbor Dr. the last few nights. November 20: Dan Willisie had a low slow flyover by 5 **Trumpeter Swans** yesterday at his house on the NW corner of Vashon.

November 21: All three **cormorant** species were nicely side by side at the north-end ferry dock. At the Tramp Harbor pier, I got my closest looks ever at **Pacific Loons**. They emerged from a dive quite literally under our feet. There were also several **Eared Grebes** mixed in with the **scaup** and **scoter** flock. November 28: Joy Nelsen found some **Harlequin Ducks** by the ferry dock this week.

December 2: In the afternoon, I saw the **kestrel** for the first time this year at the usual location of the wires along 232nd at the south end of the Was Orchard air strip.

December 3: On the Enjoyment of Birds (EoB) Audubon field trip, we found at least one **Eared Grebe** with the flock of grebes and Buffleheads around the Tramp Harbor fishing pier. Look for the grebe(s) with the head that isn't quite so flat and doesn't have a clean break from the black on the top of the head to the white cheeks. The Eared Grebes go black/dark grey to a light grey around the eyes, ears and cheek and then white. The **kestrel** was found at the Wax Orchard airstrip but it took looking at the tops of the Douglas firs on the east side of the runway a couple of hundred yards north of 232nd to find him. December 5: There were about twenty **Brant** mixed in with floating debris about mid channel on the Fauntleroy route.

Bird Watching Tours for Vashon Island

On regular trips off Island or arranged trips on Island, Ed Swan provides natural history wildlife tours that see and hear a great variety of bird species. Rates: \$35/hour for up to four persons, the \$35 covers the whole group up to four. Additional persons beyond four cost \$5/hour and require clients to provide the vehicle. For arrangements contact: Ed Swan, (206) 463-7976, edswan@centurytel.net or visit www.theswancompany.com.

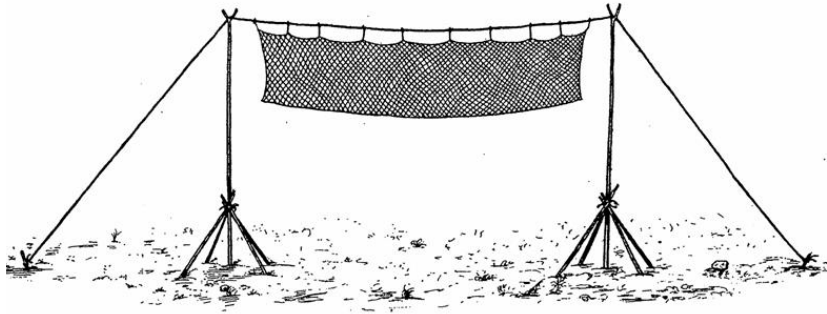
PORTAGE WAS SITE OF DUCK-NET USE BY ISLAND NATIVE TRIBES

(In respectful memory of Vi Hilbert, Upper Skagit Elder, Story Teller, and Lutshootseed Language Teacher)

For Puget Sound's Native Americans, catching duck for dinner was made easy by observing where flushed birds flew and then erecting a net across that flyway.

At Portage, located on the low stretch that links Vashon and Maury Islands, the flushed birds flew from Inner Quartermaster Harbor over the Portage isthmus to Puget Sound's Tramp Harbor.

Across the Portage airspace, tribal hunters stretched a net between poles. The poles were secured by wood braces. The net, hung loosely on a rope, was designed so the net collapsed and enfolded the birds when ducks flew into it after being flushed.



Sketch of duck snare used across Portage by Native Americans to capture seabirds as they flew from Quartermaster to Tramp Harbor. From T.T. Waterman, *Indian Notes and Monographs No. 59 Notes on the Ethnology of the Indians of Puget Sound*. New York. Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, 1973 (UW Library).

Writing in the early 1900s about Puget Sound, including Vashon, ethnologist T.T. Waterman describes the net's mechanics: "The net hung from a cable, the ends of which played over dumb-sheaves [wood block with hole or groove] which were fastened on the supports. The ends of the cable were then made fast at the ground."

Waterman describes the hunt: "The Indian set his net in such a place [low land between two water bodies], and then sent a helper out to 'stir the ducks up.' In some cases the hunter was able to dispose his net in such a way, in relation to the background, that it was practically invisible. When the flock of ducks struck the net, the ends of the cable were slacked away, and the net with the ducks in it came down on the run. As soon as it struck the ground, the hunters set sharply to work whipping it with sticks to kill the ducks before they escaped."

Ethnologist Erna Gunther relates that the ducks' necks were wrung, and that the ducks' heads entangled in the net, preventing escape. Hunting was done in early morning and before dark. At Washington Harbor [west of Sequim] 12 poles, called *tu'kum* or *tu'kub*, were erected, two for each house. To capture geese, fires were lit at night in pits under the nets to direct the birds into them. For instance, Port Townsend net sites had large holes and blackened stones and earth.

Each net required various plants, depending on the component's need, such as strength for the cable or camouflaging the net. Gunther, writing of the Skokomish peoples, observed that the net's fibers were made from "Nettles [that] are peeled and dried, then rolled on the thigh into a 2-ply string." Most likely, willow was used for the cables. In May or June, the outer bark of willow, such as Hooker's willow (*Salix hookeriana*), was peeled to reveal the inner tissue (cambium). Split into thin strands, the tissue was twisted into long ropes for strength and length. Some nets stretched to sixty fathoms (360 ft.).

In her 1927 court deposition, Lucy Gerand, Native American resident of Vashon, recalled that Portage, site of the duck net, had seven families living in seven 'long houses' that ranged in size from 45 to 50 ft. by 30 to 35 feet.

Native American essayist Wayne Suttles writes that access to resource sites, such as duck-net sites, was restricted by property rights. He writes, "Not all, but the best camas beds, fern beds, wapato ponds, and clam beds were owned by extended families with control exercised by individuals. Most duck-net sites were so owned..." The individual earned high status as owner of the gear, as "owner" of the site, as director of food production, and as provider of food for others. The "owner" had the responsibility to maintain the gear (i.e. nets), to oversee the site's ecological integrity, and to direct the resource's use by the community. This "ownership" was hereditary.

Today, when ducks fly between Tramp and Quartermaster Harbors, a net of sorts kills birds at Portage. That net comes in the form of utility wires strung on poles. Fortunately, a few years ago, then Vashon high-schooler Moria Robinson noted dead birds, wire-kill, on the Portage road. Puget Sound Energy (PSE) responded to Moria's concerns by installing bright flashers. High winds plucked many off, but subsequently, PSE installed newly designed flashers. Moria reports that the flashers significantly cut down on the bird kill.

In the Seattle vicinity, Waterman locates other duck-net poles on the lower Duwamish River's first bend under the West Seattle bluff and between Queen Ann Hill and "Seattle business district." *Submitted by Ann Spiers*

<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. Volunteer for two or more hours. No need to commit to whole program.

Contact Kathryn True 567-5389

Volunteer Coordinator for Audubon Chapter

The Vashon chapter needs someone to oversee our volunteer process. Someone to contact, record, solicit, train volunteers, and then link them to projects.

Contact Sue Trevathan 463-1484

Island Wings Newsletter Mailing

Island Wings needs a volunteer to help for several hours every other month to pick up newsletters from the printer (on island); fold, label and mail the newsletter.

**Contact Mary Ann McCarty 206-419-4997 or
mannmcc@hotmail.com**

Volunteer at the January 9 Full Moon Beach Walk

Help with refreshments from 7:45 to 8:30pm at the espresso stand. See p1 & Calendar for information.

**Contact Rayna Holtz 463-3153 or Michelle Ramsden
406-3723**

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

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"I heard something hit a window, went out and found a Sharp-shinned hawk. It was stunned ... Here's the hawk as I found it and just before it flew away." Richard Rogers, Audubon Web Master.

January/February 2009 CALENDAR

Friday, January 9, 8-10pm--North-end Ferry Dock beach. Meet at espresso stand. See story p1 for details
FULL MOON BEACH WALK -- Audubon Ebb Tide Beach Walk. Michelle Ramsden 406-3723/Rayna Holtz 463-3153.

Saturday, January 10, 8-10am -- Monthly 2nd Saturday -- Meet at Ober Park 'n' Ride
ISLAND AUDUBON FIELD TRIP -- Bring binoculars/scope if you have them! Alan Huggins 567-5166.

Saturday, January 10th, 9:30am-2:15pm -- Seattle Pacific University
2009 ENVIRONMENTAL PRIORITIES LEGISLATIVE WORKSHOP To prepare for 2009 Washington State legislative session, hear from legislators, environmental lobbyists, and others. Details at <http://www.environmentalpriorities.org>.

Wednesday, January 14, 7-9pm -- Land Trust Building, 10014 SW Bank Road
THE ENJOYMENT OF BIRDS -- Ongoing classes--Owls and Diurnal Raptors. Drop-in \$10 a session for members (plus \$15 membership for non-members). Alan Huggins alanhugs@comcast.net or 567-5166.

Thursday, January 15, 7pm -- Land Trust Building, 10014 SW Bank Road
VASHON AUDUBON PROGRAM -- AITo's Sea Turtle Conservation Program on Selawesi, Indonesia, with Islander Marcy Summers. New Initiative for AITo! Free. Laura Bienen 567-4613.

Thursday, February 5, 7pm -- First Thursday every even-numbered month
VMIAS BOARD MEETING -- Phone Sue Trevathan for confirmation, 463-1484.

Wednesday, February 11, 7-9pm -- Land Trust Building, 10014 SW Bank Road
THE ENJOYMENT OF BIRDS -- Ongoing classes -- Common Winter Perching Birds. Drop-in \$10 a session for members (plus \$15 membership for non-members). Alan Huggins alanhugs@comcast.net or 567-5166.

Friday-Monday, February 13-16
GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT -- Join bird watchers throughout North America for the 12th annual count. Sponsors: Cornell Lab of Ornithology/National Audubon Society. Information: www.birdcount.org or citizenscience@audubon.org.

Saturday, February 14, 8-10am -- Monthly 2nd Saturday -- Meet at Ober Park 'n' Ride.
ISLAND AUDUBON FIELD TRIP -- Bring binoculars/scope if you have them! Alan Huggins 567-5166.

Thursday, February 19, Olympia, WA
ENVIRONMENTAL PRIORITIES LOBBY DAY -- Face-to-face meetings with WA State legislators, lobbying training, issue briefings, keynote speakers, and evening reception. For details, go to <http://www.environmentalpriorities.org>.

Tentative Dates Sat/Sun, January 10, 11 OR 17, 18 (TBD)
Possible ONE DAY FIELD TRIP TO SKAGIT/SAMISH FLATS for raptors, geese and swans. See Vashon-Maury Audubon website <http://www.vashonaudubon.org/> or Alan Huggins alanhugs@comcast.net or 567-5166.