

*Program Meeting  
Beginning Birding  
April 8th , 1:30- 3pm  
Hoquiam Library  
Downstairs Meeting Room*

March  
April  
2018



# The Sandpiper



*photo/video by Peter Pearsall*

## **Malheur Wildlife Refuge**

*By Peter Pearsall, Executive Director, Friends of Malheur Refuge*

Spring has sprung and the Harney Basin is abuzz with activity. The ethereal purring of sandhill cranes fills the air, intermixed with the plangent honking of thousands of migratory white geese. <https://www.flickr.com/photos/159067024@N02/38963067900/in/dateposted-public/> Songs of red-winged blackbirds and Western meadowlarks issue forth from the fields and wetlands. Under the sagebrush and juniper, the first wildflowers emerge: sagebrush buttercups (*Ranunculus glaberrimus*) bloom mere centimeters above the soil, tiny high-desert harbingers of spring.

It's not just wildlife that's responding to these longer and (sometimes!) warmer days. Several spring-time events are on the horizon for this Friends group. First, we're participating in "Fair in the Field", an exhibition of what's happening in Harney County that features partners from the Harney Basin Wetlands Initiative and Harney County Restoration Collaborative. The event, which is targeted toward students of Harney County middle schools and takes place Thursday, April 5 at the Eastern Oregon Agricultural Center, has in the past covered such topics as water systems, irrigation systems, mule

deer migration, present and past uses of plants, sage grouse habitat, flood meadows and grazing, carp, and waterfowl. Fair in the Field is free and also open to the public.

Immediately following Fair in the Field is the Harney County Migratory Bird Festival, April 5-8. Representing Malheur Refuge, FOMR organizes and leads birding tours for this annual festival, now in its 37th year. Most of the festivities take place in Burns, but the many birding and natural history tours range throughout the Harney Basin. Several FOMR Board members are leading tours this year; please visit the festival website for tour descriptions and registration.

Then in May, FOMR is hosting its Annual Meeting. This weekend-long event is our way of saying thank you to our members, without whose support we would not exist. The Annual Meeting is an opportunity for us to meet members face-to-face and update them on the various goings-on at Malheur Refuge. See more details about this event below.

Hopefully we will see you soon at one or more of these events this spring!

## The President's Perch



*By Arnie Martin*

It's again time for the Shorebird Festival (this one is the 22nd annual) which will occur Friday April 27th through Sunday April 29th, so for a change in the tone of this bi-monthly rant, this is the only mention of the continuing crusade against fossil fuels import/export and Potash receiving/shipping.

This year's Festival is being held on Saturday and Sunday at the Hoquiam Middle School, 200 Spencer St. Spencer Street is the first marked street after the Emerson Elementary School. It's also the first marked street after the traffic light at the intersection of SR-109 and Adams St.

The change to the Festival headquarters location was made to allow easier access to the exhibits and vendors without having to go up and down the stairs which are at the former location at the Hoquiam High School. There's ample parking across Spencer Street from the Middle School.

To download the complete Festival brochure, go to [shorebirdfestival.com](http://shorebirdfestival.com) and click on the Quick Link "2018 Festival Brochure". This has a map showing the Refuge Headquarters (tour loading/unloading on Friday) and the Middle School (tour loading/unloading on Saturday and Sunday) on page 19 of the brochure.

The Shorebird Festival begins on Friday with one of our premier trips to Tokeland, Grayland, and Westport. This was the first trip I took after moving to Hoquiam, and it really hooked me to the Festival. Also that day we also have a trip to the best birding locations of Ocean Shores. All the Friday trips leave from the Grays Harbor NWR headquarters on Airport Way in Hoquiam – follow the signs to find your way there.

The last item of the Friday festivities is the Keynote speech, which will be presented following the Dessert Reception which starts at 6:45. The Keynote speaker is Dr. John Marzluff of the University of Washington who will discuss his book *Welcome to Subirdia*, which details the diversity of bird species which inhabit our urban environment. The Dessert Reception and the Keynote speech are the only Festival Events which will be held at the Hoquiam High School. Follow SR-109 toward Ocean Shores, and turn right just before the High School reader board, which is 1.1 miles past the turn from US Highway 101 onto Emerson Avenue. The dessert reception is upstairs from the

front entrance.

All the Saturday and Sunday field trips leave from, and return to, the Hoquiam Middle School. The Middle School is also the site where the vendors and exhibitors would welcome your visit. We will also have a selection of pastries available from Nancy's Bakery fresh from the Grays Harbor Farmer's Market. There will also be a selection of optical equipment (binoculars and spotting scopes) along with some Orchard Mason Bee supplies.

All day on Saturday and Sunday the Nature Fun Fair is available to entertain the younger set, and perhaps some of the adults if there's room. There will also be a display of live birds from the West Sound Wildlife Shelter – this year they will bring a Peregrine Falcon and a Barred Owl.

Saturday's festivities will end with the annual banquet at the Hoquiam Elks Lodge, 7th and K streets. Dinner choices are top sirloin steak, chicken breast with apricot sauce, and vegetarian lasagna. After dinner, Larry Workman, photographer for the Quinault Indian Nation and all the beautiful QIN calendars, will speak on "Surviving in the Anthropocene", the next age of dislocation, brought about by Climate Change due to rising CO2 levels. He will discuss the re-location of Taholah, changes to the environment, and other required changes to the Quinault Nation in order to maintain their way of life.

On Sunday, the elementary school Shorebird Poster Contest winning poster artists will receive their awards. The winning posters from each grade will appear on a save the date card and the Best of Show will be the cover for next year's Festival Brochure and will be the design on the 2019 tee-shirt.

Wood Wunders will again be bringing wood birds which can be painted and taken home (Saturday). At the Fun Fair, there will be face painting and mask making (Sunday). There will be a Procession of the Shorebirds on Sunday from 2:00 to 2:30 PM, where the children will be joined by adults wearing shorebird costumes - who will join the parade with the children and their masks.

The last feature of the Festival will be a presentation at 2:00 PM by Coastal Raptor's Dan Varland, who will show and discuss the results of his two decades of studies and banding of the Peregrine Falcons and the Bald Eagles which inhabit our seacoast and our Harbors.

We hope to see all of you at the 2018 Shorebird Festival and tell us how you like the new Festival Headquarters, all on one floor.



## **Bird protections weakened**

*By Elizabeth Shogren, Reveal News*

<https://www.revealnews.org/author/elizabeth-shogren>

From the cockpit of a Cessna airplane, Gary Mowad, a special agent for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, spotted what looked like a dried-out pond in rural eastern Colorado. The banks of the pond were black, so he suspected it was actually a pit for oil company waste.

When he drove out to inspect the half-acre pond, he found something far worse. As he expected, its banks were covered with dried oil. But it was the bottom of the abandoned pit that shocked him: It was blanketed with the bones of thousands of birds.

“You see that carnage and you know there are 500 more pits with oil on them and you can’t see the bottom,” Mowad said. “It’s an ‘Oh, my God’ moment. If there are this many dead birds in this pit, can you imagine what’s in the others?”

Mowad has held dying, oil-cloaked songbirds in his hands. He knows their deaths often are slow and painful. Trapped in these waste pits, raptors, ducks and songbirds can starve to death, suffocate, die of exposure or absorb poisons.

“I knew that I saw more dead birds in that one pit than hunters would poach my entire career,” Mowad, who is now retired, said of the 1996 discovery. “It was very clear to me that this is where our work priority should be.”

He had access to a powerful weapon, too – one that now, under the Trump administration, is gone.

Oil blackens the banks of a pond in Washington County, Colorado, in 1995. A recent legal decision by the Interior Department revoked federal officials’ ability to prosecute and fine companies that accidentally killed birds with oil pits, wind turbines or other industrial hazards.

Since the 1970s, federal officials had used the Migratory Bird Treaty Act to prosecute and fine companies that accidentally killed birds with oil

pits, wind turbines, spills or other industrial hazards. But a legal decision issued in December by the Interior Department revoked that ability.

Wildlife officials predict deadly consequences for migratory birds. The government says millions of birds are killed inadvertently each year by industrial activities.

For example, under the new interpretation, the law no longer applies to oil spills. After the 2010 Deepwater Horizon spill in the Gulf of Mexico, which researchers estimate killed more than a million birds, BP paid a \$100 million settlement for violating the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, among other fines.

Federal wildlife officials also had used the threat of prosecution to prompt oil companies to cover waste pits with nets, which saved millions of birds.

“We needed the criminal statutes to take them on and force them into compliance,” said Terry Grosz, a retired Fish and Wildlife Service official who from 1981 and 1998 was special agent in charge of law enforcement for a region encompassing eight Rocky Mountain and Great Plains states, plus New Mexico and Arizona. “Without that, the migratory birds are going to take a big hit.”

The Interior Department issued its legal opinion after extensive lobbying by industry last year, documents show. An oil industry trade group included it on its wish list and pressed the Trump administration for the decision in emails.

Some energy companies and other industries considered the law burdensome, and the Fish and Wildlife Service and Justice Department overzealous in prosecuting cases. President Donald Trump, in a campaign speech in North Dakota in May 2016, said the Obama administration had used “totalitarian tactics” under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act when it prosecuted seven oil companies in the state for killing 28 birds.

The decision to revoke the authority stunned former top Interior Department officials who have served presidents from both parties. Department officials from all administrations since the 1970s signed a letter opposing the solicitor’s office’s legal opinion, saying it contradicts the way the law has been implemented for decades and ignores birds’ important role in ecosystems.

“Birds are, quite literally, the proverbial ‘canary in the coal mine,’” says the letter to Interior Secretary Zinke. “How birds fare in the world indicates how all wildlife and habitat, and by extension human populations, will fare.” To read more, please go to <https://www.revealnews.org/article/egged-on-by-industry-lobbyists-interior-dept-weakens-bird-protections/>



## **Field trip diary**

*by Judy Rowe Taylor*

As you know from last month, the last Field Trip Diary was dated December 2017. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Judy for her tireless and well-written contributions to our birding experiences to these many years past. We will miss the contribution she made to the organization and especially to the Sandpiper. We hope that she will consider some new trips in the future. In the meantime, enjoy the relaxation of NOT having to meet that deadline. And thanks from all of us.



**R is for robin**

## **Program Meeting April 8th at Hoquiam Library 1:30 - 3:00 pm**

### ***Beginning Birding***

Responding to popular demand, Grays Harbor Audubon Society will offer a Beginning Birding program at its Sunday, April 8 Program meeting. The Society has a terrific presenter in Burt Guttman, Professor Emeritus of Ornithology at The Evergreen State College. Burt has held beginning birding classes for Black Hills Audubon Society, including two half-day field trips.

Burt Guttman grew up in Minneapolis, Minnesota, watching birds and other creatures, learning to love the natural world. After graduating from the University of Minnesota, he earned a Ph.D. at the University of Oregon for research in molecular biology. He joined the faculty of The Evergreen State College in 1972 and enjoyed teaching and learning with students in its inter-disciplinary atmosphere, retiring formally in 2002. He has written or co-written six books on biological subjects, including *Finding Your Wings* in the Peterson Field Guide Series. This volume is an introduction to the art and pleasure of birding.

So please bring your eyes, ears and enthusiasm

to the Hoquiam Library Meeting Room, 420 7th Street, on Sunday, April 8 at 1:30 p.m. to 3 p.m. You can begin to learn or hone your skills as a confident birder in our bird-rich Western Washington. And bring any of your friends who are even the teensiest-bit interested in the birds in their backyards or anywhere else. Everyone will become more observant birders, enriching their life-long birding experiences. Refreshments will be served. For additional information, email Jan Strong at [janet.strong4@gmail.com](mailto:janet.strong4@gmail.com) or call 360-495-3950.

## **Jen to move on**

*by Gail Gatton, VP & Executive Director,  
Audubon Washington*

Dear Audubon family – I want to share some bittersweet news with you. Jen Syrowitz, who recently celebrated 5 years with Audubon Washington, will be leaving us in a few weeks to take on the challenge of being the first executive director for Washington Wildlife Federation. Jen has long volunteered for Washington Outdoor Women, a program of WWF. In this new position, she will have the opportunity to meld two of her loves – empowering women in the outdoors and advocating for wildlife. We're thrilled for her and wish her the best on this new journey. We know from working with her, that she will be up for the challenge of running an organization!

From the first day Jen walked in the door, our Audubon network has been a stronger place. I still remember Jen returning from celebrating Kitsap Audubon's 40th anniversary celebration in her first few months of work and being absolutely joyous. The phrase she used, was "I have found my people!" Now, 5 years later, we all know that Audubon is better for having had Jen on our team.

I know we all will miss her terribly. Jen has been the heart of Audubon Washington and those of you who have had the opportunity to work with her, you know what I mean. Her warmth, compassion, and understanding are unique and will not be easily replaced.

We will be discussing this with chapter leaders during our spring regional meetings over the next couple of months. We are eager for input from the chapters as we move forward. Jen started with us 5 years ago because the chapters were willing to invest in a fledgling state program and provide 50% funding for a new part-time position called a Chapter Associate. As we determine the path forward, we want to know what the chapters are thinking so we can continue to build a strong Audubon in Washington together. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me about this.

## **Friday Night Keynote Speaker**

Friday, April 27, 7:30pm

*Dessert Reception prior to talk begins at 6:45pm*

### **Welcome to Subirdia**

*Sharing Our Neighborhoods with Wrens, Robins, Woodpeckers, and Other Wildlife*

**John Marzluff**

Hoquiam High School ( little theatre)

Tickets may be purchased in advance or at the door for \$15

In Welcome to Subirdia, John will reveal that our suburbs and city parks are often remarkably rich in bird diversity-holding more species than either wilderness areas or urban centers. In fact, suburbs may play a key role in preventing loss of species in the face of the dramatic disruptions of climate change and other human impacts.

We are an integral part of the ecosystem and our everyday actions affect the fabric of animal life that surrounds us. Drawing on examples from across the country and around the world-Kansas City, Seattle, New York, Arizona, New Zealand, Europe, Central America, Asia-you will see how some birds are adapting and thriving in moderately urban ecosystems, often evolving before our eyes.

Just as we affect the birds around us, they shape our culture, commerce, and quality of life. When we make an effort to enhance bird habitat in our cities and towns, we cultivate communities that value nature, that are attractive and exciting places to live and work, and that improve the mental and physical health of our neighbors. Humans are now a distinctly urban species, and the fascinating information in Welcome to Subirdia is increasingly relevant as we think about our future on both local and global scales.

Welcome to Subirdia gives us something to celebrate. Herons in our urban streams, barred owls whose shrieks wake us in our city neighborhoods, woodpeckers that nest in our wooded parks, and chickadees that entertain us at our birdfeeders can motivate us to seek a future filled with birds. The ways we manage our property, plan our towns, and think about the nonhuman residents of our ecosystems can make a difference for our children and grandchildren.

## **Saturday Evening Dinner Speaker**

Saturday April 28, 6:00pm, Hoquiam Elks

### **Surviving in the Anthropocene**

**Larry Workman, Quinault Indian Nation**

In the past, the human race was able to survive by adapting to relatively small climate shifts. However, today humanity has created a situation where the climate is warming at an unprecedented rate along with altering the environment in many different ways. Larry's presentation will look at some of the worldwide changes while focusing on Quinault Country. Melting glaciers, changes in river flow patterns, rising sea levels, invasive species, altered landscapes and many other environmental changes are challenging the Quinault Indian Nation. Quinaults are facing these consequences and deciding how the community, culture, and economy will need to change in order to survive in the future.

Larry is the Centralized Communications Department manager with the Quinault Indian Nation (QIN). He began his career in natural resources and communication following his graduation from Purdue University in 1970 with a three year tour of duty in the US Peace Corps on a reforestation assignment in Northern Ethiopia. He is a national award-winning photographer, who's worked with the QIN since 1974. He helped lay the foundations for the QIN forestry program. Then using his photography and interest in natural sciences he produced several books, 40 QIN annual calendars, edited a natural resources magazine, co-editor of the Quinault Nation's monthly paper Nugguam and produces the QIN General Council Report along with numerous other tribal publications. Larry has served on the board of the Washington Press Association from 1990-2002, serving in several positions including president and high school contest director.

This year's Annual Dinner will offer a scrumptious catered meal by O'Brien's Catering located in Aberdeen. Sign up for this important event at <http://shorebirdfestival.com>

Participants will have a chance to support the education program at Grays Harbor NWR. Money raised is used to fund an AmeriCorps member who coordinates the program and provides classroom lessons on shorebirds and conservation to 3rd and 4th graders in Grays Harbor County. The money is also used to provide the bus transportation to the Refuge for participating classes. Last year's donations were \$5225. We would love to see that amount increase this year.



## **The Astounding migration of shorebirds in Grays Harbor**

*What is more amazing than the migration of Wildebeest in Kenya? Come to Washington's Olympic Coast and Discover for Yourself!*

From as far away as Argentina they come, intent on their annual trek north to their arctic breeding grounds. Their long flights require great stamina and endurance, and the rugged shoreline of the Pacific Northwest offer only a few, widely spaced areas of refuge. The few sanctuaries for the birds are of hemispheric significance, and Grays Harbor is one of the most vital!

Each spring, tens of thousands of migrating shorebirds descend on the mudflats to supercharge their food reserves at Grays Harbor National Wildlife Refuge. Wave after wave of shorebirds fill the sky with flashing wings, as more and more flocks arrive on their northward migration! There in the rich mud of Bowerman Basin, dozens of shorebird species feed on small organisms by day and then resting in large rafts of birds by night. With few stops farther north before they reach their breeding grounds, the birds rest here for several days.

The peak of the annual migration is in late April, and it is spectacular! The refuge is easily accessible, with a broad boardwalk, and the best viewing spots have the sun at their back. So it is a photographers dream! It is also a great opportunity to see the food web in action as resident Peregrine Falcons dive into the flocks for their meal. The number of species present is also amazing, including such uncommon birds as Red Knots and Whimbrels, and thousands and thousands of Dunlin and Western Sandpipers.

Other species include Black-bellied Plovers, Snowy Plovers, Spotted Sandpiper, Solitary

Sandpipers, Pectoral Sandpiper, Black Turnstone and Ruddy Turnstone, Willet, Semipalmated Plover, Marbled Godwit, Least Sandpiper, Dowitcher and many others .

Over the course of the three day festival, with three full days of fieldtrip activity, we have birding experts who give talks and conduct small classes about birding. We have an exhibit area where all things birding are available, from binoculars to books, paintings and photographs. We also have several social events to round out your days: a dessert hour on Friday evening before the keynote speaker, and a Saturday evening banquet and program where tales of the day's events are recounted to the great interest of the birders present. Our key-note speaker is the recognized bird expert and author, Dr. John Marzluff, of the University of Washington. He is a tremendously interesting speaker who gave us a great program on Crows in 2016. This year, he will be telling us about "Birding in Subirdia", which is also the title of his newly published book. Our Banquet speaker is Larry Workman, long-time, out-standing photographer for the Quinault Nation's ancestral lands. He will be speaking about the changes the Quinault are undertaking to counter the effects of climate change on their coastal village.

In addition to viewing the acres of birds at the Refuge, we hope you will join us for the many outstanding fieldtrips to other coastal habitats. From rocky headlands through ancient rainforest, from roiling, open ocean to gentle surf and sandy beach, you are sure to enjoy seeing a wide variety of birds. Maybe even add a bird or two to your life list!

*For more information visit our website: [www.shorebirdfestival.com](http://www.shorebirdfestival.com) or contact us at [jeandart303@gmail.com](mailto:jeandart303@gmail.com)*

## **GHAS Board of Directors**

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Treasurer	Diane Schwickerath 470-2951 deananddiane@gmail.com
Secretary	Mary O'Neill deed2et2et@yahoo.com



### ***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

## **Committee Chairs**

Conservation	Janet Strong, 495-3950 strongjan@centurytel.net
Education	<i>Vacant</i>
Field Trip Coordinator	<i>Vacant</i>
Habitat	<i>Vacant</i>
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GHAS Blog	<a href="http://ghas.org/blog">http://ghas.org/blog</a>
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**ANNUAL GRAYS HARBOR AUDUBON  
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**Grays Harbor Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 470  
Montesano, WA 98563**

Chapter Memberships include a subscription to *The Sandpiper* newsletter. All Chapter Memberships above the Sandpiper category provide financial support to our Chapter. The Grays Harbor Audubon Society is totally self-supporting.

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## ***News & Editorial***

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rd@olearycreek.com  
Copy deadline ongoing

## ***Program Meeting***

### ***Beginning Birding***

*April 8th, 2018*  
*1:30 pm - 3pm*  
*at*

***Hoquiam Library***  
***Downsairs Meeting Room***

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## **The Sandpiper**

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