



Harlequin Happenings

Newsletter of the Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society (OPAS)

www.olympicpeninsulaudubon.org (www.olybird.org)

Clallam County, Washington

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

Issue 2 March-April 2024

"Promoting Birding and Conservation as Community Educators, Volunteers, and Stewards"

OPAS Programs for March and April

by Tom Butler

March Program

"Birds and Climate Change, the changes that are already happening with a special focus on the Pacific Northwest and the Olympic Peninsula"
Presented by Dr. Steve Hampton
March 20, 2024 at 7 p.m., Rainshadow Hall at Dungeness River Nature Center, Free to attend.

Dr. Steve Hampton has been birding since he was 7 years old. He worked for California Department of Fish & Wildlife for 25 years, where he was involved in oil spill response, natural resource damage assessment, seabird restoration, and partnerships with Native communities. He currently serves as conservation chair and CBC compiler for Admiralty Audubon in Port Townsend. He recently served on the American Ornithological Society's Ad-hoc Committee on English Bird Names. His article in the December 2022 issue of *Birding* summarized the recent research on birds and climate change. He combines his love of birds with a PhD in resource economics to analyze bird data.



Steve Hampton

April Program

"Urban Raptors: Seattle's Adaptable Cooper's Hawks"

Presented by Ed Deal from Seattle's Urban Raptor Conservancy

Wednesday, April 17, 2024, 7:00 p.m.

Dungeness River Nature Center, Rainshadow Hall, Free to attend.

You would think someone born in Cooper Hospital and raised in Audubon, NJ would be a child prodigy birder. But Ed's conversion came in mid-life, after taking a hawk ID class in 1991. He went on to volunteer on Fall Migration hawk banding projects all over Washington and the rest of the country. He has over thirty years of experience studying and banding Peregrine Falcons in the San Juan Islands and the concrete wilderness of Seattle. For the last 12 years he has also worked with a group of volunteers studying the expanding urban population of Cooper's Hawks in Seattle. He holds a Federal Master Raptor Banding Permit, is a graduate of the Seattle Audubon Master Birder Program and a recovering lister. If you want to know anything about raptors and especially urban raptors, this is your guy.



Ed Deal

(Continued on page 3)

President's Notes

by Ken Wiersema



Ahh Spring

As we move into spring our busiest time of the year arrives. Many of our resident birds are pair bonding and beginning their nests while our migrant birds are heading north to nest here or pass through our unique Olympic Peninsula environs. Get out, watch, learn, and enjoy.

Our "Harlequin Happenings" Editor

Last week Rob Hutchison, our superb newsletter editor for over 15 years, suffered a cardiac emergency. He underwent surgery on 28 February. His spirits remain good. One of his major concerns, as he was being diagnosed and prepped for surgery, was getting our newsletter out to you. The timing of his recovery and return is undetermined. Our OPAS Board, and article writers have pulled together this edition, led by our multi-skilled, and dedicated Webmaster, Mary Porter-Solberg. In times of need, Mary is our stalwart!

OPAS Awards 2024

OPAS Board of Directors

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president@olympicpeninsulaudubon.org

Each year we strive to recognize and thank those of our members and non-members who have made significant contributions to birds, OPAS, and our community. Our Harlequin Award is presented annually to a deserving OPAS member. You can see the criteria and a list of past recipients on the About tab of our [website](#). Our Conservation Award is presented to those in our community who have made a significant contribution to conserving birds, their habitat, and our environment. Our Conservation Committee recommends deserving individuals or groups to our board for approval. We ask our members who know individuals whose actions are worthy of recognition to send their nominations to a member of our board or me. We'll consider them for recognition in 2024. Thanks.

BirdFest and Birdathon

Each spring delights us with two birding activities. BirdFest (see the poster in this newsletter) is a large, bird-centric festival, whose registration has been open since January 1st of this year. I urge you to review the wide array of activities and events that are part of BirdFest '24 and register to join those that interest you. The funds derived from BirdFest go to support the operation and education programs of the Dungeness River Nature Center. In a separate activity, OPAS leads a one-day Birdathon which is Clallam County wide. It is a bird census and a primary source of our annual operating budget. In April you will receive a letter from us explaining Birdathon activities and ways we encourage you to participate. This year Birdathon occurs on Saturday May 11th, also International Migratory Bird Day. Please join us to Count Birds and Give!

Annual report to National Audubon and naming

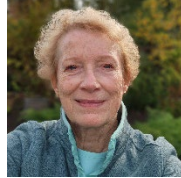
Each year we submit a summary report of OPAS accomplishments, projects, membership, and leaders to National Audubon. Our report keeps us current within the family of some 600 nationwide chapters of Audubon and qualifies us for a "Baseline Fund" distribution. It also enables us to apply for Audubon's Collaborative Grants to support specific OPAS projects. As you may be aware, several of the larger urban chapters are removing "Audubon" from their name. In the west for example, those include Seattle, Portland, and San Francisco. These chapters remain in the Audubon network. Your OPAS board is evaluating our need to consider renaming. Should we move to change our name, we too would intend to stay in the national network. As your board addresses our identity and naming, we will seek input from you, our members. In the near future we plan to survey OPAS members on whether we should act to remove Audubon from our name. How we move forward must be fully understood and worked out. As the proverb, or curse, goes --- "May we live in interesting times."

(Programs continued from page 1)

Thirty years ago, in a somewhat mysterious development, Cooper's Hawks began colonizing urban and suburban landscapes throughout the US, developing a tolerance for living in proximity to humans. In twelve years of recent study, their population in Seattle has tripled. Ed Deal, from Seattle's Urban Raptor Conservancy, will provide fascinating insights into these common but elusive raptors.

Backyard Birding Program March-April

by Rhonda Coats



Backyard Birding 2023-2024 Series Update

Our Backyard Birding programs started 2024 with a new attendance record (exceeding 100) for the January presentation—"Native Plants for Better Gardening"—from OPAS members Kathy & Matt McCoy and WSU Master Gardener Gary Brundidge, supported by Lorraine Eckard. We look forward to many more such collaborations with Master Gardeners in the future. Clearly, gardening for the benefit of birds (and other wildlife) is a shared interest between our organizations! We continued in February, also strongly attended, with the return of Ken Wiersema and Bob Boekelheide for updates on bird nesting habits and a review of the eBird tool in preparation for the Great Backyard Bird Count. Coming attractions for the series will include:

Backyard Birding: "Migration"

Presenter: Bob Boekelheide

Saturday, March 2, 2024, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Rainshadow Hall at Dungeness River Nature Center

In March, attendees will be treated to a discussion on bird migration, led by Bob Boekelheide. He will describe the phenomenon of bird migration—the natural rhythm of avian life that we can observe and study. Bob will focus on the migratory bird species seen in Clallam County—migration stopovers in Clallam County, such as Dungeness Bay and riparian forests, are so important for certain species. Bob will demonstrate a number of online resources to promote self-guided, ongoing study for those interested.

Backyard Birding: "Sounds of Spring"

Presented by Dow Lambert & Ken Wiersema

Saturday, April 6, 2024, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Rainshadow Hall at Dungeness River Nature Center

In April, the series will continue with "Sounds of Spring," presented by veteran birder and photographer, Dow Lambert, with the assistance of Ken Wiersema. Dow's excellent local photos as well as his sound and video recordings will increase and refresh your knowledge of the bird songs and calls of spring heard throughout our local yards, fields, forests, and shores. Dow and Ken will also introduce attendees to the free Merlin Sound ID app offered by the Cornell Ornithology Lab. Please join us for this popular annual program. We add new recordings and photos each year. Come experience the energy and color that birds offer us during their spring mating and nesting season.

Admission to the series is free. However, we suggest a donation of \$5.00 per person to support our ongoing education and bird conservation programs. For your good health as well as that of other attendees and our volunteer staff, please be aware of the latest COVID-19 health precautions as recommended by Clallam County Public Health and the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe.

Our remaining planned schedule the 2023-24 series is as follows:

May 4, 2024	Bird Insectivores: avian bug eaters (special start time 10:30 a.m.)	Ken Wiersema
June 1, 2024	Out of the Nest: fledglings and the vulnerability of new birds	Ken Wiersema
July 6, 2024	Gulls and Local Shorebirds	Bob Boekelheide

OPAS Field Trips March and April



Message from the field trip Chair

by Marie Grad

Recently I met with some of our leaders to begin scheduling field trips for this year. We have tentatively scheduled eight trips from March through July.

Our first trip will be March 23 in the Port Townsend area including Kah Tai Lagoon.

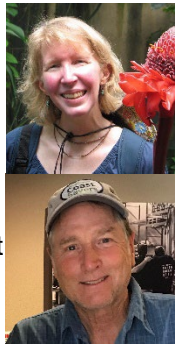
The announcement will be posted on the [Events Calendar](#) of the website in the next few days. One of our goals is to offer trips that are more accessible to people with limited mobility. We have scheduled a few trips that will meet this goal. I will be working to add even more trips to our field trips calendar. All trips will be posted to our website in the coming weeks.

Conservation Matters: OPAS Swan Study Update

By Laura Davis and Liam Antrim

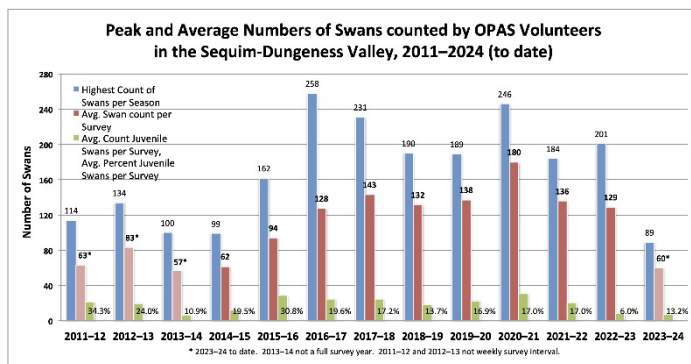
Winter 2023–2024 started with a BANG! as our team counted a hundred swans pass overhead with a windstorm and still a week left in October. Half of them stopped over and swan counts settled down to relative low numbers that we would expect for a warm El Niño winter (in [2014–15](#)). Our tallies this season have been one third to a half of what we typically experience. As spring approaches along with migration, we show a season high count of 89 and average of 60 swans at our daytime foraging locations between Sequim Bay and Agnew.

The large, migratory Trumpeter Swans seem to travel only as far from their boreal forest breeding grounds as necessary. Our warm winter kept northern habitats open through December, and Trumpeter Swans found areas



The major story for January 2024 was the arctic front that pushed down through our El Niño weather in mid-January. Low temperatures down to the single digits Fahrenheit with negative-degree wind chill factors and snow accumulations affected swan roosting and foraging in the lower Dungeness area. In spite of the severity of this storm, the swans stayed around. The salt water of Dungeness Bay allowed the swans to roost overnight as frozen inland freshwater bodies were slow to melt. Tidal influence on estuaries kept emergent vegetation available when pastures were snow covered. Warm temperatures returned after a few days, and we recorded an unseasonal 57 degrees during the January 31 survey.

During the two coldest weeks of January and WDFW's mid-winter survey, we extended our scope east to Chimacum Creek in Jefferson County and west to the Wa'tach River near Neah Bay. While we counted 76 Trumpeter Swans in our area, 90 Trumpeters and one Tundra Swan foraged on rain-flooded pasture grass adjacent to Chimacum Creek, five degrees warmer than here. This is our first record of a higher count of swans on that valley's watery agricultural landscape than in our rain-shadow location. The Port of Port Townsend recently purchased the [Short's Family Farm](#) and is actively planning agricultural land conservation and drainage objectives. Habitat for migratory swans and geese are not currently included in their goals.



Peak and Average Numbers of Swans counted by OPAS Volunteers in the Sequim-Dungeness Valley, 2011–2024 (to date) [Click here to enlarge graph](#)

further north on their flyway to forage and roost – thus, the relatively low numbers of swans in our area this winter. El Niño periods may allow waterfowl distributions to be less compressed along the Pacific Coast, which eases food competition within and between waterfowl species. This may be a good thing for waterfowl in this region but might not make for the best birding.

This fall, we hoped that broad dispersion across coastal and inland habitats would help reduce spread of the highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). In fact, no HPAI has been seen in migratory waterfowl in our area except in mid-November, when 34 Cackling Geese and one American Wigeon succumbed in an outbreak primarily in the Schmuck Road area. WA Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and Discovery Bay Wild Bird Rescue Center are not aware of any other cases in swans or geese from our area.

The food habits of the Pacific Coast Population (PCP) of Trumpeter Swans are unlike other swan populations and species. In our area, swans were first documented on Lake Aldwell, the reservoir created by the lower Elwha dam. Swans are drawn to water bodies and grass-like plants. They graze on grass fronds and grub for their rhizomes – whether on a wetland or agricultural landscape. Likely first attracted to rain-flooded fields, swans acquired the habit of grazing on dairy pastures in the late 1970s.

Previous studies within the PCP indicate forage selection based on quality rather than availability. Pasture grasses are higher in protein than the estuarine foods. Applications of nitrogenous fertilizers and frequent mowing has resulted in a feed high in protein for livestock. Swans' attraction to an area can be due to the availability of resources like dairy pastures. Swans first observed wintering along the Pacific Coast were found exclusively in pasture but today, swans feed on a half dozen other agricultural crops and continue to expand their geographic distribution. Here, that includes corn, winter wheat and other grains, and tubers such as carrots and potatoes.

(Conservation Matters continued on page 5)

(Conservation Matters continued from page 4)

Trumpeter Swan nutritional needs and overwintering habitats in the Pacific Flyway are neither well understood nor are data up to date. It has been 30 years since regional studies of Trumpeter Swan forage focused on the areas of their greatest overwinter use: the Skagit River valley and the Comox River estuary. Now, a new research study is underway in the Skagit that may answer questions we have about the needs of over-wintering swans. Using data derived from GPS collars on 23 Trumpeter Swans wintering in the Skagit, the analysis will focus on swans' spatial distribution among certain crop types in relation to all available food resources. The researchers expect that quantifying forage resources on private land will provide fodder for conversations about swan conservation.

Foraging locations also change due to agricultural decisions regarding crops grown and farming practices. In recent years, we have seen herbicide applied in midwinter to some grassy fields where swans have been foraging; these are abandoned as the plants die off. Typically, we see these fields tilled and planted with corn the following spring.

Due to harvest methods, equipment and conservation goals, crop residues may be left post-harvest – a condition that has no match in the swans' natural wetland landscapes. We have seen swans attracted to abundant carrots remaining on the ground post-harvest. On the flip side, the efficiencies in clean harvest of local silage-corn fields may leave little interest to returning swans. Winter cover crops planted this past fall to reduce erosion and soil compaction and to reduce fertilizer costs are an excellent source of protein in spring and extend swan use of corn fields through to migration. It can also happen that the timing of crops left post-harvest for waterfowl does not reach the swans, e.g. barley left in Graysmarsh fields was foraged clean in the fall by the earlier-arriving Cackling Geese.



Swans graze with elk and geese. Photo: John Gussman

Our understanding of Trumpeter Swans has skyrocketed over the course of our [study](#) due to the engagement of our

team. If you are interested in joining the swan team, please [contact](#) us.

We would like to recognize the contributions of Kendra Donelson, our dear colleague and friend who passed on. Kendra has surveyed ever since the early days of the OPAS swan surveys. We miss her loving spirit.

Birdathon Reminder!

Get ready for the OPAS
Birdathon/World Migratory Bird
Count. Count birds anywhere in
Clallam County on the second
Saturday in May — May 11, 2024

Wild Birds Unlimited

Bring this
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purchase
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\$25.00!

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ADJACENT TO OLYMPIC NATIONAL PARK

Wildly Beautiful

Olympic BirdFest

Thursday-Sunday
April 11-14, 2024

Guided Birding Trips: Bays, Capes,
Estuaries, Grasslands, Conifer Forests

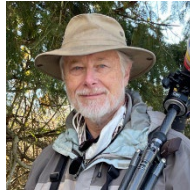
Art & Photography Workshops, Film Night,
Saturday Banquet with Keynote Speaker

Add-on Birding Excursions:
3-Day San Juan Island Cruise
Protection Island Nat. Refuge Cruise
3-Day Cape Flattery/Makah Reservation

Registration Online:
www.OlympicBirdFest.org

Dungeness Data

by Bob Boekelheide



Flocking Madness: The Story of Bushtits

Bushtits are spritely little birds, usually seen flying in loose, bouncy flocks from bush to bush. They are the antithesis of long-distance migratory birds, staying in the same general area year-round and typically flying only far enough to reach the next bush or tree. Their flocks act more like superorganisms, moving through the brush as if with one mind, kept together by their chatter call notes.



Bushtits by Bob Boekelheide

Bushtits are the smallest passerine on the north Olympic Peninsula, weighing just over five grams, or about the same as two pennies. This makes them only a couple grams heavier than the smallest bird on the Olympic Peninsula, the Rufous Hummingbird, and about half a gram less than the relatively chubby Golden-crowned Kinglet. If you're birding with someone who says, "There goes a ton of Bushtits," remind them that it would take about 170,000 Bushtits to weigh one ton.

Bushtits range along the Pacific coast from British Columbia to Central America, as well as inland through the Great Basin and southern Rocky Mountains to west Texas. The local subspecies, *Psaltiriparus minimus saturatus*, is the northernmost subspecies of Bushtit, found from southern coastal British Columbia through the Olympic Peninsula and Puget Sound. At the other end of their range, the southernmost subspecies of Bushtit is found as far south as the mountains of Guatemala. In between, Bushtits probably reach their peak densities in the oak woodlands of California and the mountains of Mexico.

The genus of Bushtit, *Psaltiriparus*, comes from a combination of two other genera: *Psaltia* and *Parus*. Or, as described in *Words for Birds* by Edward Gruson, "Psaltia" is an ancient stringed instrument, and "Parus" is the genus of titmice. Technically it translates to something like "lute-playing titmouse," but, to be honest, their chittery vocalizations don't sound like a lute to me.

Bushtits belong to the family Aegithalidae, known as the "long-tailed tits." The family Aegithalidae contains 11 species, of which the Bushtit is the only one found in North America. All the other members of the family live in Europe and Asia, particularly around the Himalayan Mountains, including some species ranging up to 15,000 feet elevation. It is hypothesized that ancestral Bushtits moved into North America by crossing the Bering land bridge sometime during the Ice Ages.

There are a multitude of interesting stories about Bushtits, many of which can be found in *Birds of the World*, the wonderful on-line resource from Cornell Lab of Ornithology. For one, Bushtits are eating machines, having to consume approximately 80 percent of their body mass each day to maintain body temperature and avoid losing weight. For comparison, if a 150-lb human ate like a Bushtit, they would have to eat 120-lbs of food every day. That's a lot of insects!

Bushtits are classic "foliage-gleaners." Their diet is mostly insects and spiders, with a smattering of small seeds and other plant material, particularly during winter when insects are scarcer. Their preferred diet seems to be scale insects and moth caterpillars, especially when feeding chicks. Their penetrating little eyes are able to spot the smallest insects and insect eggs, mostly impossible for human's eyes to locate. If you have a feeder, you know that Bushtits also love suet, furiously gobbling mini-mouthfuls of high-calorie fat.

(Dungeness Data continued on page 7)

(Dungeness Data continued from page 6)



Bushtits showing a female with light eyes on the left and a male with dark eyes on the right. Photo by Bob Boekelheide

Speaking of eyes, do you know that you can determine the sex of Bushtits by their eye colors? Females have light eyes, whereas males have dark eyes. Females hatch with dark eyes, but their eyes turn light within one month of fledging.

How does a tiny bird like a Bushtit survive freezing nights, particularly when temperatures drop into single digits like we had in January this year. There is no evidence that Bushtits use hypothermia or torpor, the way that hummingbirds reduce their body temperature and slow their metabolism on cold nights. Instead, Bushtits are huddlers, gathering their flock together into a tightly-packed clump lined up in thick foliage within a bush or tree. This increases their collective volume while decreasing each individual's exposed surface area. Adults also huddle within their nest during the nesting season, warming with their chicks and sometimes other adults.

Bushtits have one of the most unique bird nests in North America. Their nest is a "hanging sock" made out of spider webs, lichen, and bits of plant material, fashioned into a foot-long pendulous tube that looks like it is part of the plant. The entrance hole is under a hood at the top of the sock, whereas the nesting chamber is at the bottom in the "toe" of the sock. The

spider webs create flexibility, so that the nest stretches as the chicks grow. One nest in Arizona even had four adults and ten chicks huddled in it at night, a testament to how flexible and strong they can be.

On the north Olympic Peninsula, one of Bushtits' favorite places to build their nests is within Oceanspray, *Holodiscus discolor*. They even build nests within thick Douglas-fir foliage. They often build their first nests in early spring before the deciduous trees and shrubs have started to leaf-out, making their nests look very vulnerable to predation. Studies in Arizona, however, have shown that exposed nests experienced about the same level of predation as hidden nests, so maybe their nests already provide enough camouflage to confuse some predators.

Inside their sock nests, Bushtits lay an average of six to seven eggs, ranging from four to ten eggs. Despite the bird's tiny size, the female lays only one egg per day, the same as many other birds, including chickens. Bushtits don't begin incubation until the last egg is laid, so even though the incubation period is listed as 12 to 13 days, some of the eggs may be in the nest for up to three weeks before they actually hatch. Curiously, even though both the male and female incubate, only the female develops a vascularized brood-patch.

Chicks are totally altricial, naked until they grow their first down at three-days old, and not opening their eyes until eight-days old. Based on the size of Bushtits, it is likely that their chicks fledge in a couple weeks or so, when the fledglings depart their nest and never come back. Their age at fledging is a bit uncertain, because tracking individual chicks in enclosed nests is difficult without destroying the nest. After their first chicks fledge, most Bushtit pairs attempt a second clutch most years, sometimes using the same nest and sometimes building a new one.



Bushtit nest under construction in a red alder. Photo by Bob Boekelheide

Studies have shown that flocks forage over an area of about 250 acres during the year, but flock members typically place their nests within an area of about 80 acres, which may facilitate awareness and interactions with other flock members. Even though individual pairs maintain their own nest sites during the breeding season, they apparently still make contact with fellow flock members throughout the nesting period. If a pair loses their nest, they may join adults at other nests, where they might help feed the other pair's chicks or sometimes even take over the nest. Although it is hard to imagine

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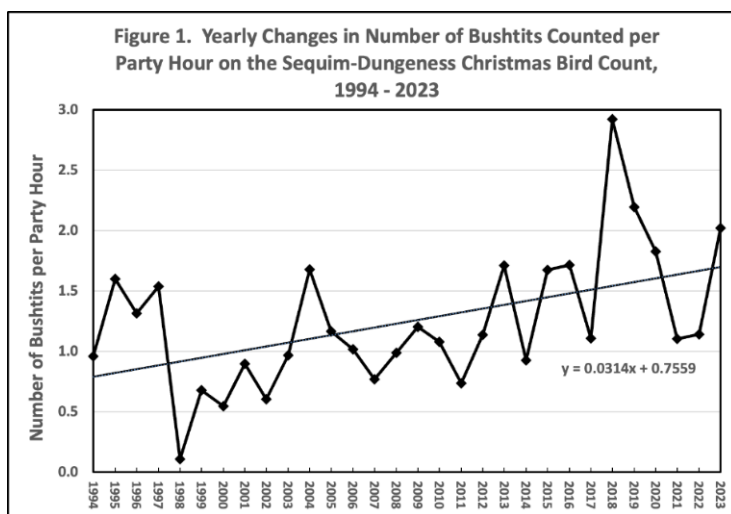
(Dungeness Data continued from page 7)

what Bushtits are thinking, they appear to be remarkably non-territorial with other Bushtits, letting other Bushtits approach their nest and chicks without concern.

In at least the southern part of their range, from Arizona to Central America, Bushtits are cooperative nesters, with attendant birds helping at the nest. Typically, the helpers are adult males, apparently because the sex ratio in these populations is skewed towards more males than females, producing a surplus of males. More studies are needed to determine if Bushtits use helpers in the Pacific NW.

Social interactions like these suggest that members of Bushtit flocks may be closely related. More data are needed to reveal how closely related they really are, but the flocks we see during the non-breeding season could possibly be mixes of parents, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, cousins, and other relationships. How do they keep from interbreeding? Apparently, there are times during the non-breeding period, like in late summer and early fall, and again in early spring, when multiple flocks join together to form “superflocks,” within which individuals switch between flocks. Despite small

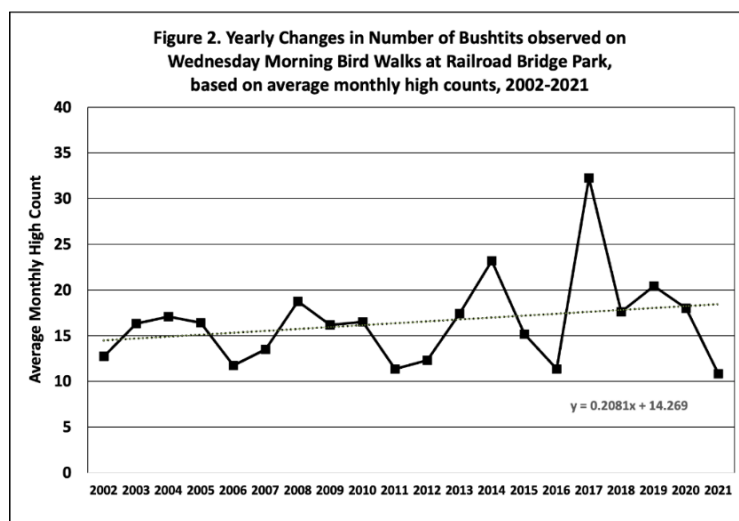
sample sizes, it appears that female Bushtits are the ones most likely to disperse into new flocks, thereby mixing genomes between flocks.



Graph showing yearly changes in the number of Bushtits counted per party hour on the SDCBC

Sequim-Dungeness Christmas Bird Count (SDCBC) data for the last 30 years reveals that Bushtits are doing quite well in the Sequim area (Figure 1). Despite lots of interannual variation, likely due to weather on different count days, the number of Bushtits counted per CBC party hour has increased by fits and starts over 30 years. Between 1995 and 2005, we tallied an average number of about one Bushtit per party hour. Between 2015 and present, the average count increased to about 1.5 Bushtits per party hour.

Similarly, the Wednesday morning bird walk at Railroad Bridge Park, which has occurred along the same stretch of the Olympic Discovery Trail every week since 2001, also shows a slight increase in Bushtits over the last 22 years (Figure 2). During that time, we observed Bushtits on 60.4 percent of Wed am bird walks. Even though Bushtits are somewhere in the area of Railroad Bridge Park throughout the year, we don't encounter flocks every week.



Graph of yearly changes in the number of Bushtits observed on Wed am bird walks at RR Bridge Park, 2002 – 2021.

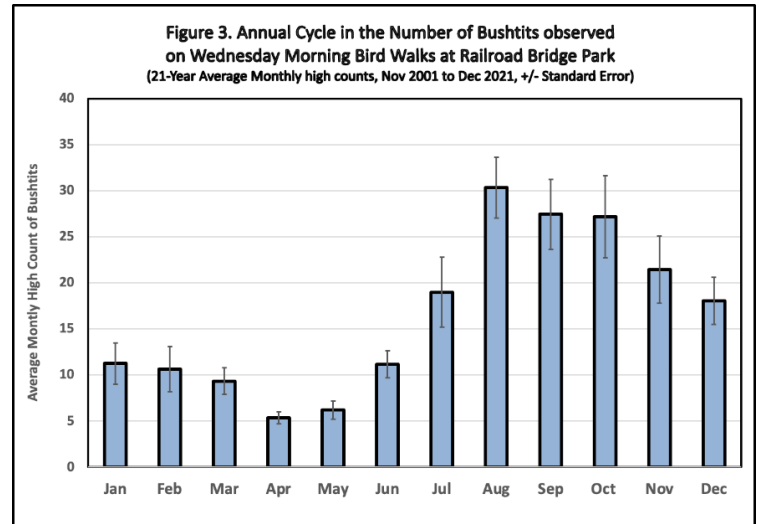
Data from 22-years of Wednesday morning bird walks at RR Bridge Park also show the annual cycle of Bushtit abundance in the Sequim area (Figure 3). Peak numbers of Bushtits occur in late summer, after new fledglings join the population. Numbers steadily decline through fall and winter, likely due to winter mortality, reaching lowest numbers during the next breeding season in April and May. Another reason we likely count fewer birds during the breeding season is because that is when pairs occupy individual nest sites, so instead of counting birds in flocks we're instead counting adults present at the few nests visible along our sample route.

(See Figure 3 on page 9)

(Continued from page 8)

The longest-living Bushtit on record, from USGS Bird Banding Lab data, was 8 years 5 months old. In actual breeding studies, one marked male nested for four consecutive nesting seasons, but most Bushtits do not reach these “old” ages. Another study showed that only 27% of marked Bushtits showed up again one year later. This appears similar to the annual cycle data at RR Bridge Park (Figure 3), where we recorded a high-count average of over 30 Bushtits just after the nesting season in August, to less than 10 Bushtits just before the next nesting season in March. This suggests that only one-fourth to one-third of Bushtits survive each winter. It’s not easy being a little Bushtit.

Here is your springtime homework assignment. Find a Bushtit nest, then every week spend an hour or two watching the birds coming and going from the nest. Are



Graph of the Annual Cycle of Bushtit abundance observed on Wednesday morning bird walks at RR Bridge Park, 2002 – 2021.



Bushtit male gathering spider webs for nesting material. Photo: Bob Boekelheide

there more than two adults attending the nest? Can you tell whether they are incubating eggs or feeding chicks? How often do they feed the chicks? Can you follow males and females (remember their eye colors)? How do the birds interact?

Or, if you’re really fast, try following a Bushtit flock as it moves through the landscape. I’ve tried to do this, but I must admit that I can’t possibly move as fast as a Bushtit flock. I can follow them for a few minutes, but then “Poof,” they disappear. After you’ve gathered your data, please write an article for the Harlequin Happenings telling us all about your observations. Thanks.

Many of the interesting facts about Bushtits contained in this story came from *Birds of the World*, an on-line resource available through Cornell Lab of Ornithology. I highly recommend that all bird aficionados subscribe to *Birds of the World*, both for the information and to support the Lab of Ornithology.

Harlequin Happenings is published six times a year. Consider “going green”. Receive your newsletter electronically, in living color, by contacting the OPAS Membership Chair, Audrey Gift, at 360-681-2989, or email aggift@gmail.com

The Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society meets monthly (except July, August, and December) on the third Wednesday at 7 p.m. at the Dungeness River Nature Center, 1943 West Hendrickson Road, Box 2, Sequim, WA, 98382. The public is welcome.

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Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society
1943 W. Hendrickson Rd., Box 2
Sequim, WA 98382



Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society

1943 W. Hendrickson Rd., Box 2
Sequim, WA 98382

NAS Code Y08

Date: _____

Local OPAS Membership, includes subscription to the *Harlequin Happenings* bi-monthly newsletter and other programs and birding trips. For more information see our website at <http://www.olybird.org>. To join, complete application below and **mail to address above**.

___ Annual Membership (\$20.00)

___ 3 Year Membership (\$50.00)

___ 6 Year Membership (\$90.00, saves \$30)

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Name _____ Home Phone (____) _____

Street _____ Cell Phone (____) _____

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Harlequin Happenings Newsletter: You will receive an e-mail notice when posted in full color on our website. If you wish a black and white printed copy instead, check box here: ☐ Send printed copy

Payment Options:

1. Credit Card Master Card or Visa Payment

Card Number: _____ Expiration Date _____

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OPAS is an Internal Revenue Service Section 501(c)(3) organization (membership gifts are tax deductible)

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