



THE BRANT

VOLUME 1

FRIENDS OF DUNGENESS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

WINTER 2021

Birds of the Refuge: Pacific Wren

by Judith White

Since cave-dwelling at home during the pandemic is turning us into troglodytes, it seemed timely to write an article about our actual Troglodyte in the Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge—the Pacific Wren (*Troglodytes pacificus*). This tiny nondescript brown bird scuttles along the mossy forest floor of moist Pacific Northwest coastal coniferous forests. It nests and forages for insects in tree hollows and crevices, earning its genus name *Troglodytes* (cave-dweller). It is the most commonly reported wren in the refuge on eBird, a useful database of birding observations (eBird.org). Some Pacific Wrens stay at the refuge all year, while many others are “elevation” migrants. They move to higher elevations to breed in summer, favoring insect-rich old growth forests near water sources.



Pacific Wren signing. Photo by Wayne Sladek.

While you may find it difficult to get a good view of a Pacific Wren, you can certainly hear them. Their incredible song, complex and high-pitched, has been described as the “pinnacle of song complexity” by Kroodsma (*The Condor*, 1980). What makes their song so interesting? Like many songbirds, wrens have two voice boxes (called syrinx), one for each side of their lungs. In contrast, humans and other animals have only one voice box, the larynx, located above the lungs in the trachea. Having two syrinxes allows the wrens to sing harmony in their own songs, carrying two melodies at once.

Continued on page 2

REFUGE EVENTS

Tuesday, March 16th

2:00 p.m.– 3:00 p.m.

Birds of the Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge with Friend and fellow refuge volunteer Judith White

Register for this free event at www.fodnwr.org

Free event via Zoom
Space is limited



Pacific Wren. Photo by John Gatchet.

Pacific Wren

Continued from page 1

Songbirds hear at about the same frequencies of pitch that humans do, but can process sounds and control the tiny muscles in the syrinx to produce sound much faster than humans. What sounds like a buzz to humans is actually a complex song to a Pacific Wren. A Birdnote radio program “*What the Pacific Wren Hears*” <https://www.birdnote.org/listen/shows/what-pacific-wren-hears> demonstrated this by slowing the song down to ¼ speed so human ears can appreciate the beautiful melody and harmony. The rapidly tumbling and trilling notes are often sung by the male wren, perched with his jaunty tail upright, singing with a force that shakes his entire body. He may have spent years learning songs in order to attract the interest of a chosen female. His repertoire may include 30 different songs of over 300 notes each, portions learned from his father and neighbors. The female will listen, then perhaps check out several of the nests he has constructed for her to choose from. If she finds the singing male attractive, and one of the nests suitable, they may pair and breed.



Pacific Wren resting on a branch. Photo by Wayne Sladek.

Apart from the breeding pair or a family group with young birds, Pacific Wrens are usually solitary and do not move in flocks. The exception is during cold weather, when they pile into nest boxes or cavities to warm each other. A record 31 Pacific Wrens were found safely huddled together in one nest box during a cold snap in Western Washington.

As you walk the trails at the refuge this winter, look for the tiny brown bird scuttling along the forest floor, and remember that this troglodyte is the virtuoso of bird song.

CONTACTS

**Friends of Dungeness
National Wildlife Refuge**

715 Holgerson Rd.
Sequim, WA 98382

www.fodnwr.org

Friends Email
fodnwr@gmail.com

Refuge Phone
(360) 457-8451

FRIENDS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ellie Ausmus, Secretary
Bruce Brod, Treasurer
Jessie Christiansen
Linda Gutowski
Glenn Harris
Jeanie McNamara, Vice Pres.
Dan Shappie
Jason West, President
Judith White

FRIENDS COMMITTEES

Environmental Education
Linda Gutowski
Environmental Restoration
Jessie Christiansen
Fundraising
Dan Shappie
Membership
Ellie Ausmus
Outreach
Jason West
Refuge Protection
Judith White

Project Swan Safe Update

by Laura Davis

The Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society sincerely thanks the volunteers and Friends of Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge for their partnership and support for Project Swan Safe. With the collaborative efforts of WDFW and Clallam PUD, we will get rid of the overhead power-line hazard on Kirner Road adjacent to one of our area's most important swan-roosting sites. Together, we can realize the vision of the swans' safe return to our local landscape for generations to come. To follow the project progress and learn more, see www.olybird.org



Swan photos by Allan Byrd.

Refuge Volunteer Program Update

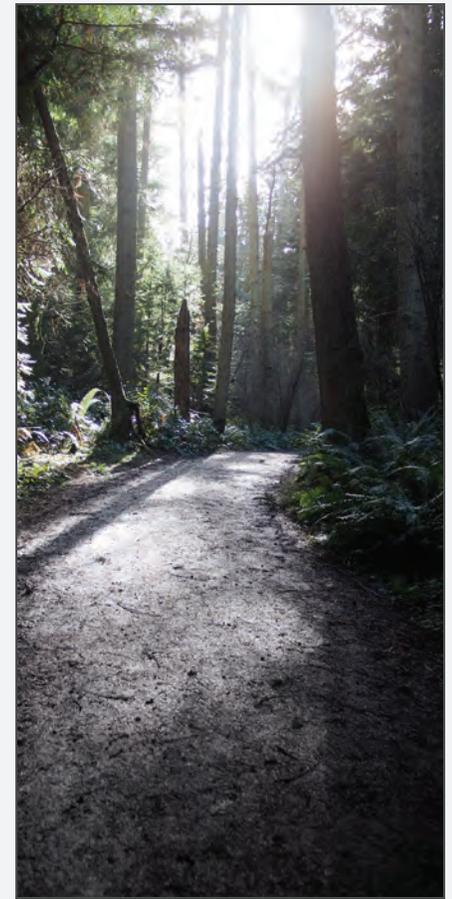
by Dave Falzetti

Hello Refuge Volunteer, I hope this message finds you happy and healthy. As we discuss options for resuming Volunteer activities, I wanted to update you on our thoughts and offer you the opportunity to add to the discussion. Needless to say, our top priority is your safety and much relies on the prevalence of the virus and the success of the vaccination effort as we move forward. We're not quite there yet but there are a couple activities we can start planning to resume.

Given the current state of affairs, it looks like the best option for the Volunteer Recognition Dinner is to postpone the event until summer or fall to ensure the safety of all invitees. A benefit of a summer event is that nobody would have to drive in the dark and we could open doors and windows for better airflow or even dine al fresco.

We're also leaning towards not recruiting new Volunteers this year given the difficulties of delivering a group training class safely. I don't think we can provide new Volunteers the tools they need to be successful in the current environment. However, for returning Volunteers an online update of some sort will likely be adequate to get everyone up to speed. Topics will include safety protocols, Covid-19 agency and federal policy, legal requirements, procedural adjustments, new passes, etc. We're also working with the Friends of DNWR to offer additional virtual learning opportunities.

Continued on page 5



Afternoon sun on the main trail.



Dungeness Spit on a sunny February day.

Volunteer Update

Continued from page 4

There are some activities such as Weed Warriors, trash runs, trail maintenance (to a limited degree), and beach cleanups that could start sooner given participants' ability to work independently and socially distance. They'll require safety plans and Service approval, but we're confident they can be done safely with some procedural adjustments.

As more Volunteers are vaccinated and the State and County relax restrictions, we can move to activities that include public contact, although we will still need to adhere to stringent safety protocols. We will also have to provide safety briefings of some sort, personal protective equipment (PPE), and possibly make some changes to the kiosk to provide a safety buffer. Ideas include adding plexiglass, roping off the entrances or a larger area, adding fans to increase air flow, and even creating a closed "booth" for a Volunteer. Another idea is to have only people from the same "bubble" work shifts together.

Lastly, the resumption of indoor activities such as fee counts will likely be the most challenging. Currently we have one fee counter handling the funds in isolation and one fee counter observing electronically from another location to avoid contact. Vaccinated fee counters could work together in a well ventilated space while still observing safety protocols, especially if they are from the same "social bubble." This may be one of the last group activities to resume given the challenges of indoor environments.

Things are certainly moving in the right direction. There is a tiny warm glow at the end of the tunnel. With some patience we think we can move the program forward and get Volunteers back in action safely. Please let me know if you have anything you would like to add to the discussion.

The latest on mask wearing on Federal lands for employees, contractors, and Volunteers is a long read, so I'll summarize. Masks are required in all Federal buildings, that includes restrooms, and on all federal lands when social distancing cannot be maintained such as the Refuge trails. You'll see additional signage at the Refuge. Please wear masks at all times when visiting the Refuge until you reach the open beach area. It's up to us to keep each other safe and to present a good example for our visitors.

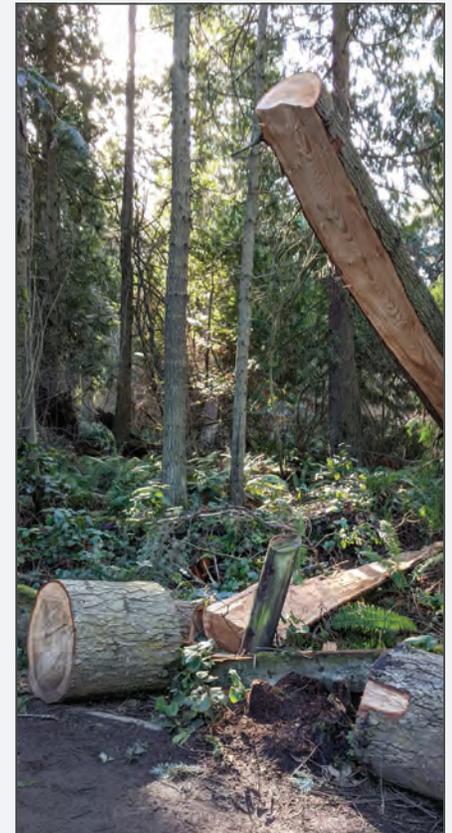
Thank you all for your incredible patience and I look forward to seeing you all back in the Refuge soon.

Remain vigilant.

Cheers,
Dave



Winter storms have downed trees and created soggy conditions requiring the seasonal closure of the Primitive Trail.



Large downed trees along the Main Trail.

Collisions & Confusion: Project BirdSafe

by Dee Renee Ericks

In the Pacific Northwest, many of us rejoice when the sun comes streaming through our windows, especially after many long days of gray skies. We enjoy our windows for light they bring, and the views we experience gazing out upon our neighborhood. Did you know that those very same windows are a serious hazard to our avian friends? Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society has a new addition to www.olybird.org called **Project BirdSafe**. Here you will find helpful information for the homeowner or business owner in how to minimize risks to birds.

Did you know that birds do not see glass as a solid object? Glass is a confusing problem for birds because it is reflective, and invisible. During daylight, birds collide with reflective surfaces thinking that it is a continuation of their habitat, and something they should be able to fly right on through. Glass collisions are most often fatal, killing the healthiest birds as well as the weakest. At least a billion birds die annually across the United States in glass collisions, the majority on home windows.

Steps you can take to minimize window collisions:

- Create markings in patterns on reflective glass, about 2-4" apart
- Install exterior screens on windows
- Close blinds or curtains
- Move interior plants away from windows
- Place bird feeders directly on windows
- Use tape and window film
- Attach ultraviolet decals
- Make your own *Acopian BirdSavers*™

This doesn't have to be an expensive project. Some temporary methods of marking windows include use of Tempera paint (free hand or use stencils), marking glass with soap, posting family artwork or using Post-It notes. Netting, roll down sun shades, ribbons and shiny streamers can work.

For a homeowner interested in applying markers to the outside of a problem window, Do-It-Yourself Feather Friendly® Bird Collision Deterrent Marker Tape is relatively easy to install. For a window measuring 27" X 56", it took about 1.5 hours to clean the window, secure measuring tapes on either side of the window, apply the marker tape at 2" horizontal intervals, run a card over the tapes securing the markers to the glass, peeling the tape off, and clean up. A 100-foot roll of tape costs \$15.99 each, or less depending on the number of rolls purchased.

Continued on page 7

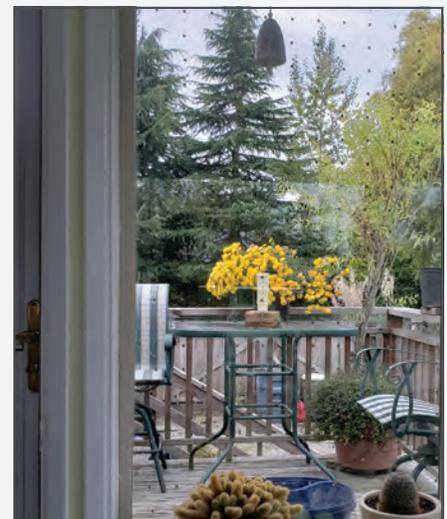
Did you know you can earn money for Friends while shopping on Amazon?

Sign up for AmazonSmile and select Friends as your designated charity and Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible purchase to Friends.

amazonsmile
smile.amazon.com



Viewed from the exterior, this pattern helps birds see the glass as an obstacle.



Viewed from inside the pattern is barely noticeable. Photos: Dee Renee Ericks.

Collisions & Confusion

Continued from page 6

The markers are made of cast vinyl for durability and longevity. While the markers are somewhat noticeable from the outside, from the inside looking out they remain unobtrusive. This tape is endorsed by a number of bird conservation organizations including FLAP (Fatal Light Awareness Program) and the American Bird Conservancy.



Light pollution confuses and disorients migrating birds. Photo: Dee Renee Ericks.

Just as windows are a threat to birds during the day, lights can threaten a bird's safety at night. Lights that point upward, or illuminate a large area, are an attractant, especially for migrating birds.

Did you know that 80% of North American bird species migrate, and 70% of migrants travel at night? Normally navigating by moon and starlight, artificial light disorients migrants, causing them to wander off course. Not knowing how to escape from beams of light, birds exhaust themselves, circling, and can crash into buildings, towers, and windows.

Turning off lights dramatically reduces hazards, saves energy, and allows birds to safely proceed with their journey.

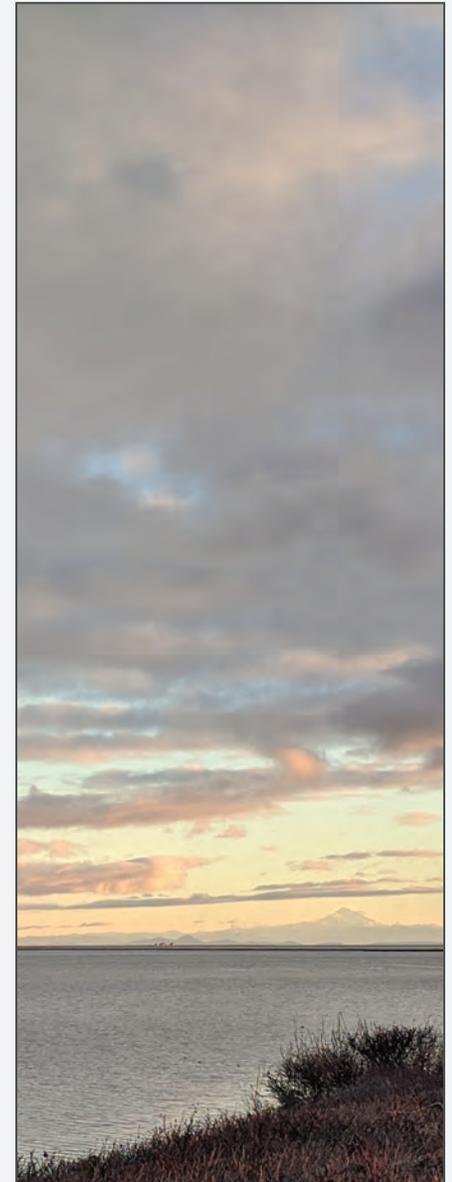
Reduce light pollution to help birds:

- Turn off unnecessary lights especially during fall & spring migration
- Make sure that your outdoor lights are aimed downward and shielded
- Choose a warm color tone bulb
- Switch to motion sensor lights
- Lower shades or pull your drapes closed at night

Check out the **Lights Out Initiative** in Project BirdSafe! at www.olybird.org



A stunned Kingfisher rests after a window collision near Dungeness NWR.



Winter sunrise over Dungeness Bay with the lighthouse and Mt. Baker.

A Note From the President

by Jason West

In October Friends of Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge was featured by Sequim Sunrise Rotary for their Good News Giving program. Members of SSR raised over \$2,700. to donate to Friends. We are so grateful! If you have a friend or relative that is a member of SSR, please tell them “thank you!”

Friends held our annual meeting in November 2020 online via Zoom. Thank you to our members who attended. We reviewed our accomplishments for the year which included:

- Awarded two Sequim High School seniors with the Maxwell Award of \$1,000 each toward their education in Environmental Conservation
- Planning for Dungeness Discovery Day
- Hosted the 2019 Annual Volunteer Banquet in February 2020

At our January Board Meeting we held our officer elections. All officer positions remain the same this year as we had last year.

In December our Refuge and Friends organization was featured by Erika Gilsdorf in her new online series: *What Fuels You: An Electric Road Trip* You can find the video she and her team put together on our web site. Erika’s odyssey is being sponsored by The National Wildlife Refuge Association.

Looking forward, 2021 seems a brighter place than one year ago. Friends are planning to offer Maxwell Awards to local seniors again this year and resume planning for Dungeness Discovery Day, which probably won’t happen until 2022. We are hopeful that we will be able to return to volunteering in some capacity later this year. Can’t wait to see your faces on the Refuge again!

Until then, Friends are planning to offer some online events. Our first event will be **Tuesday, March 16th at 2:00 p.m.** via Zoom. Our newest Board member, Judith White, will give a presentation: *Birds of the Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge*. She’ll provide tips on tools, locations, and discuss what birds you should look for. A big thank you to Judith and Linda Gutowski, our chair of Environmental Education, for putting this program together.

Visit www.fodnwr.org to register for this free event.

We hope you can join us.

Weed Warriors

Top Ten Invasive Plants

1. Himalayan blackberry
2. English holly
3. English ivy
4. English laurel
5. Spurge laurel
6. Herb Robert
7. Tansy ragwort
8. Ox-eye daisy
9. Sweet pea
10. Scotch broom



Worth a Read

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

The fight against invasive European green crab in Puget Sound

<https://medium.com/usfwspacificnw/hey-washington-feeling-crabby-f8380e377308>

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Remove bird feeders or wash them daily until April to protect birds

<https://wdfw.wa.gov/news/leave-bird-feeders-down-until-april-1-protect-wild-birds-deadly-salmonellosis>

The Atlantic

Transients orcas are rising to rule the Salish Sea

<https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2021/01/orcas-killer-whale-resident-transient/617862/>



It's that time of year again. Rough-skinned newts are hitting the trails. Please watch your step.



Follow Friends
on social media
@FriendsOfDNWR



A quiet kiosk waits for volunteers to return.