



DUNGENESS RIVER CURRENT

Newsletter for the Dungeness River Audubon Center interpreting the natural history of the Olympic Peninsula in partnership with the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society,

Winter 2010

From Birding To Bird Photography

By: Stephen Cunliffe

Although I have always loved the great outdoors, it was only a few years ago that I began to be specifically interested in birds. It started with a single event; walking through a meadow with my wife in Ohio, I noticed a flash of blue in a tree. "Look," I said excitedly, "that bird is blue." "Yes," replied my wife, trying not to roll her eyes, "that's why it's called a BLUEBIRD."

A few days later a couple of bird field-guides mysteriously appeared on my desk at home and I was off and running, with a much more skilled bird spotter as a partner. Next came the binoculars, and then the scope. But there was a fundamental problem in the challenge of identification. See a bird, look at it through binoculars, open up the field guide to what you think might be the right place, raise your binoculars again.....and the bird has gone! Yes, I know you are meant to make a mental note of all sort of field-marks during the first look, but that's a tall order for someone who is still trying to figure out what a field-mark might be.

The solution? Cheat, and use a camera for that first look. The camera doesn't need to know what a field mark is, it records everything it can see. So now a camera was added to the ever-growing list of birding equipment, and I was off and running again.

At this stage I was no more of a photographer than I had been a birder. Starting one's career as a photographer with birds as the subject is a bit like learning to play golf with a moving golf-ball. Birds tend to be small and fast moving, not to mention their habit of hiding in trees. If you look to see where most of the best-known professional bird photographers live, you will find most of them call Florida home. In Florida there is usually good light, and great number of rather large birds that stand in nice open spaces instead of hiding in trees. We, on the other hand, live in the land of the Winter Wren. How do you expect to get a good shot of anything called *trogodytes troglodytes*?

Bird photography can be extremely frustrating, but it can also be even more satisfying. To achieve any kind of success, one needs a reasonable knowledge of bird behavior and the technicalities of photography. But if I can do it, with my less than perfect grasp of detail, so can you. You will learn that just as there is satisfaction in checking off a new bird on your list, be it life or yard, there is just the same kind of reward in tucking away into your computer a photograph of a species that you have captured for the first time.

In the next edition of the newsletter I will give some thought to the inevitable question "what kind of equipment do I need?" The short answer is "the best that you can afford," but I will try to be more helpful than just leaving it at that. Meanwhile, if you want to see one or two examples of what can be achieved after just a couple of years of practice, take a look at www.dungenessriveraudubon.org and click on Newsletter on the left.



Red-Breasted Sapsucker – Stephen Cunliffe
See Website for Color Version and another great shot from Stephen

Dungeness River Audubon Center

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*Interpreting the natural history
of the Olympic Peninsula.*

Appleton Pass

By Hansi Hals

There were teardrop
blueberries among the deep
red leaves

You could almost taste
them just to see them, and
sometimes you could smell
them too, along with the
silver and subalpine fir, the
lupine that was blooming in
October.

Didn't anyone tell it
October is too late for you?
But the lupine had been
hibernating under so much
snow, snow that tore off
trees and piled them
hundreds of feet below,
snow that was still melting
this late in the year, trailing into cold creeks below.

A tangle and tumble of trees that lifted our feet and hearts and put
pitch on my hands.

When you did finally reach out and pull and lift a plump berry to your
mouth, it overcame you, so that instead of walking briskly upward
mindful of the time, aware that your respite into the highcountry had
boundaries: children to be picked up, homework to finish, dinner,
bed; you stood still, picking and licking your fingers.

We might get *drunk* I said, tasting one that had soured.
The word spilled from my mouth as I smiled, I was drunk already.



GOING GREEN

We think of the River Center as an environmental leader. By putting
our newsletter online and e-mailing it to as many members as possible
we can save paper and trees and postage too...we can spend the
savings on programs instead printing and mailing. Please help us go
green by sending Powell Jones your email address at
rctech@olympus.net

Changing Course

By: Bob Boekelhiede

As you certainly know, November 2009 was a very wet month in western Washington, as proven by almost four inches of precipitation in the Dungeness River Audubon Center's rain gauge. Coincidentally, the high water in the Dungeness River in November brought more changes to the large woody debris at Railroad Bridge Park than any other storm since the record flood of January, 2002. These changes particularly occurred during the high water of November 16-17, 2009, which peaked at "only" 3800 cubic feet per second (cfs), significantly lower than several other high water events of the last six years and only half the 7610 cfs record flood of 2002.

Back in 2002 and 2003 a large log jam formed on the upstream side of Railroad Bridge, with several large logs interlaced together and grounded into a gravel bar. During the night of November 16-17, 2009, this log jam totally washed downstream under the bridge. During the same night a huge cottonwood that had fallen perpendicular across the river in November, 2007, was pushed 90 degrees downstream closer to the bridge. Look for these changes in the accompanying photos taken from Railroad Bridge, the first on November 16 as the water started to rise, and the other on November 17 after the flood crested. As always, floods on the Dungeness River come up very fast and go down very fast, since the river is so steep. View the accompanying hydrograph of the river to see this pattern.

After the November 16-17 high water, we worried that the removal of the log jam may open the way for the river to flow under the trestle west of the bridge, rather than under the bridge itself. This would not be good, because the trestle pilings are not built to handle constant river flow. In the last couple weeks, however, a new log jam appeared to be forming close to the same spot where the old one used to be, as more trees fall into the river upstream. As always, the river constantly changes, moving back and forth in its floodplain while it rearranges the surrounding riparian forest. In a never-ending cycle, trees grow and trees wash away, a cycle we are lucky to witness at Railroad Bridge Park.



What a difference a day makes! The picture on the right was taken during by a 5th grader during a NOAA BWET supported fieldtrip the day before the picture on the left taken by Bob Boekelhiede. The difference is there is approximately 600 CFS (Cubic Feet per Second) flowing in the left picture and 3000 + CFS in right picture. Most of the logs in the left picture are now downstream of Railroad Bridge instead of above, one exception is the large cottonwood across the river has just pivoted.

Shopping at the Dungeness River Audubon Center

If you haven't been in already, our Gift Shop has some new items for the holiday season. To fend off rainy day boredom, try the best-selling deck "52 Rainy Day Activities"(\$6.95). Filled with hours of imaginative indoor games and fun projects-it's also a great stocking stuffer. We have some new mixed ages jigsaw puzzles, including "Habitat Tray Puzzles" (\$5.99) where kids learn about different animals in their unique environments. New activity and coloring books like "Stained Glass Butterflies" that hang in your window. For Dinosaur enthusiasts, try "Cut and Make Dinosaur Masks and Skeletons", coloring book, puzzle and Professor Noggin Dinosaur game. For your young paleontologist, there's a Mammoth Excavation Kit (ages 8 and up, \$9.99). "Into the Forest"(\$14.95) is a new family game made in Port Townsend, where the players learn about our local animals and the food chain. For the young adult, we have two adventure books, "Ghost Canoe"(\$5.99) and "Sacajawea"(\$4.99).

In for the holidays, we have two new sweatshirt styles "Advice from a Horse" in cranberry, and "Advice from a Bluebird" in winter white for \$17.99, the best price in town.

We have some fun holiday magnets (\$3) that are perfect to enclose in your cards or put in a stocking.

We still have our great organic, shade grown coffee for \$8.95. We now carry 2 lb. bags for \$16.99 and mini bags for \$1.50.

For more unique gift buying, we have beautiful photo bird/nature collages by Diane Blalock (\$29) with archival board ready to frame. She has done a Railroad Bridge Park collage just for our store. We also have charming wood bird sculptures by local artist Bill Lohnes (\$20 - \$45). Another stunning new item are silk scarves made from vintage kimonos (\$40).

Did You Know? Proceeds from all purchases at the Dungeness River Audubon Center gift shop help support our programs and staff.

Endowment Update

Save Money by Making a Charitable Gift

Through December 31, 2009, you may make charitable gifts directly ("rolled over") from a traditional or Roth Individual Retirement Account (IRA), without incurring federal income taxes.

The following limitations apply:

- You must be age 70 1/2 or older.
- The cap on annual IRA rollovers is \$100,000.
- The contribution must be a direct gift to a charity (no planned gifts.)

If you would like to explore the IRA Rollover or other gifting opportunities for the Dungeness River Audubon Center, please contact Bob Boekelheide, Director, at (360) 681-4076.

Listening to the Choruses of Coyotes

By: Powell Jones

"I'm the voice of all the Wildest West, the Patti of the Plains; I'm a wild Wagnerian opera of diabolic strains; I'm a roaring, ranting orchestra with lunatics becrammed; I'm a vocalized tornado - I'm the shrieking of the damned."

- Ernest Thompson Seton, The Coyote's Song, 1913



I can remember being fascinated by coyotes at a young age. Maybe it's because I have always felt a connection with dogs. With my window cracked the yelps, barks, and echoing choruses, would wake my interest from the deep sleep of my mind. Lying in my bed questions would stir in my mind about what their cries in the darkness meant? Twenty plus years later my curiosity with this clever and adaptable animal still exists.

As an adult my interest in coyotes has lead me to pursue closer observations of them. I have chased their discourse through the woods of my property in search of a closer look or a front seat to their concerts. Some times I'm successful but mostly I walk in circles as their voices bounce off the surface of ponds and the walls of conifer trees.

One must look no farther than the mythology of Native American tribes to see that Coyotes have caught the human imagination for a very long time. The exploits of coyote as a creator, lover, magician, and a trickster are celebrated in a vast number of oral tales. He was typically portrayed as a creative force, a maker of fateful decisions, and as the being that secured such necessities as fire and daylight, and as the originator arts for humans.

Coyote's ability to adapt and stay concealed has helped them benefit from the exploits of humans over the last century. Before the European colonization of America, wolves' mainly restricted coyotes to open spaces where their keen sense of sight and tremendous speed helped them catch a variety of prairie animals. Coyotes today inhabit almost every conceivable corner of North America because of the near eradication of wolves. Coyotes can even thrive in cities; the Chicago area with a population of 9 million people has an estimated 2000 coyotes!

The ubiquitous nature of coyotes leads to interesting possibilities for groups like ours. Like the Wednesday Bird Walks, CBC, or 5th grade fieldtrips, citizens hold the ability to collect an amazing amount of information about the natural world. My hope is that our membership can collect some information about the locations and communication habits of the coyotes in the Sequim Area. Are you interested? Please contact me at rctech@olympus.net for more information.

Quick Look

Coyote: American jackal or prairie wolf

Canis latrans, means "barking dog."

Type: Mammal

Diet: Omnivore

Average lifespan in the wild: Up to 14 years

Size: Head and body, 32 to 37 in (81 to 94 cm); Tail, 16 in (41 cm)

Weight: 14 to 50 lbs (7 to 23 kg)

Range: North and Central America

Did You Know:

- Coyotes can reach speeds over 35 mph making them the fastest land predator in North America.
- Coyotes can clear stationary objects over 7 feet high.
- Although Coyotes have been observed traveling in large groups they usual hunt in pairs or small family groups.
- Unlike wolves coyotes reach their full size in one year instead of two.
- Coyotes have adapted from being primarily diurnal to nocturnal under the pressure of humans.
- Coyotes diets can include any of the following and much more: mice, rats, rabbits, birds, eggs, snakes, deer, domestic cats, dogs, frogs, fruit, large insects, and carrion.
- Coyotes are persistent hunters; they have been observed hunting one animal for over 20 hours.
- Young coyotes learn to hunt by practicing stalking, pouncing, and chasing insects like grasshoppers.

Dungeness River Audubon Center Special News

Legacy Gifts

Your legacy gift can have a lasting impact on the well-being of the Dungeness River Audubon Center and Railroad Bridge Park. Although monetary gifts to the River Center Endowment are always welcome, several other gifting options are available including

- Designating the River Center as a beneficiary.
- Adding a codicil to an existing will.
- Contributions of assets, such as stocks and bonds, motor vehicles, boats, and homes.
- IRA Rollover.

If you would like to explore the IRA Rollover or other gifting opportunities for the Dungeness River Audubon Center, please contact Bob Boekelheide, Director, at (360) 681-4076.



Special Events

Christmas Bird Count Warm up

Date: Sat., Dec. 12, Time: 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Meet at RR Bridge Park to cover birds of forests, and then travel to Dungeness Landing Park at noon to view saltwater birds.

Sequim-Dungeness Christmas Bird Count

Date: Mon., Dec. 14, Time: All day until 4 p.m. Chili Feed at 5 p.m. Fee: \$5 per person

It is time to count the birds! You can help by covering a special route, joining another group, or by just counting your neighborhood or backyard. Contact Bob Boekelheide at the River Center (681-4076) to sign up for the count. Our official tally and annual chili feed for counters takes place at the River Center beginning at 5 p.m.

Port Angeles Christmas Bird Count

Date: Sat. Jan 2. All day Fee: \$5 per person

Another great Christmas Bird Count! Contact Barb Blackie at 360-477-8028 to sign up for this count. The count tally will occur at a restaurant in Port Angeles, beginning at 5 p.m.

Raptors in Winter: A Special Presentation with David Drummond

Dates: Fri. evening talk, Feb. 12, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.; Sat. field trip, Feb 13, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Cost: \$50 per person

Join Merlin researcher and raptor expert David Drummond for this special two-day class about the eagles, hawks, and falcons of our area, their adaptations for hunting and survival, and their fascinating lives during winter. Please pre-register: limit 18

Olympic Peninsula BirdFest

Dates: Fri. to Sun., Apr. 9 to 11

Join us for the fifth annual Olympic Peninsula BirdFest, a great time to celebrate the birds and natural history of our unique area. Festival events include special field trips, presentations, a banquet, owl prowls, and lots of birdy activities. Please visit www.olympicbirdfest.org website for information and registration.

San Juan Island Three-day Cruise

Date: Sun. to Tue., Apr. 11 to 13

Join us, for a three-day, two-night birding cruise through the San Juan Archipelago. Relax at historic Roche Harbor Resort. Enjoy whale watching, northwest seabirds, and the spectacular scenery of the San Juan Islands. Details and registration forms for the San Juan cruise can be found at www.olybird.org

Visit us at www.DungenessRiverCenter.org



Schedule of Events

OPAS Field Trips: Jan. 16, Feb. 20 &, and Mar. 27. Contact www.olympicpeninsulaaudubon.org for more details.

Bird Walks

Date: Every Wed. morning; Time: 8:30 to 10:30 a.m.

Meet at the River Center for a lovely walk to see and hear the birds of the Dungeness riparian forest. Information from walks helps us understand the annual cycle of birds in RR Bridge Park.

Dungeness River Management Team

Time: Second Wed. of every month, 2 to 5 p.m.

Experts and informed public that oversee the management of the Dungeness River meet monthly at the River Center.

Work Party

Date: Variable During Winter (contact center to be added to contact list)

The volunteers of Railroad Bridge Park and the River Center need help to maintain the beauty of the Park and River Center. Please join us on anytime snow removal is necessary.

Natural Science Study Group

Dates: Second Mon. of the month, 10 a.m. (No December meeting)

This adult discussion group focuses on the most interesting aspects of the natural world that affect the north Olympic Peninsula. Discussion topics vary with group interests.

Winter Birds of the North Olympic Peninsula

Dates: Six Thursdays, Jan. 14 to Feb. 18, 9 to 11:30 a.m.

Cost: River Center Partners: \$40; non-members: \$60

An intermediate birding class to learn identification, natural history, and ecological preferences of the winter birds of the north Olympic Peninsula. We will include field trips to local habitats; we will be outside nearly every session. Limit 16 people.

Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society Monthly Meeting

Date: Wed., Jan. 17, 7 p.m.

Corvids in Winter

Date: Sat. Jan. 30; 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Cost: \$10 per person

Ken Wiersema leads this special class to explore the fascinating lives of crows, ravens, and jays in winter. Come learn to identify corvids by behavior, ranges, vocalization, as well as hear anecdotes about these intelligent creatures. The class begins with a presentation at the River Center followed by field trip.

Owl Prowl in the Owlympics

Date: Sat. Jan. 30; 7 p.m. to after midnight, Sat. Feb. 27; 7 p.m. to after midnight.

Cost: \$30 per person

Join Bob Boekelheide on an exploratory journey in the northeastern Olympic foothills to find owls and other night creatures. You must pre-register for this trip at the River Center (681-4076); limited to 10 participants each trip. Dates may change depending on weather.

Septics 101

Date: Tues., Jan 19, 6-8 p.m. (also Wed., Feb 18, 6-8 p.m. and Tues., Mar. 23, 6 to 8 p.m.)

The septic system is one of the most expensive parts of many homes, requiring regular inspection and maintenance. This class, taught by Clallam Co. Environmental Health Div., covers how they work, different designs, and how to keep systems working. You must pre-register with Clallam Co. by calling 360-417-2258.

Great Backyard Bird Count

Dates: Fri., Feb. 12 through Mon. Feb. 15

Every year at President's Day weekend, people are asked to count birds in their backyards and everywhere else, to assess how populations are changing in North America. Be part of the count! Go to www.birdcount.org for more information.

Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society Monthly Meeting

Date: Wed., Feb 17, 7 p.m.

Olympic Driftwood Art Show

Date: Sat. & Sun, Feb. 20 to 21, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Olympic driftwood sculptors present prize-winning pieces and recent works by members, plus demonstrate sculpture techniques. Driftwood products available by order will also be present.

Annual Bird Nest Box Building Class

Date: Sat, Feb. 27; 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Cost: \$15 per person, \$12.50 per person for 2 or more participants

Learn how to build a birdhouse, then take one home by the end of the class. This is our annual class to design and construct simple birdhouses. By the time you leave you will have a birdhouse ready for swallows, chickadees, or, if you're lucky, bluebirds. Please pre-register: limit 16 people.

Introduction to Birds and Birding

Day Class: Six Mon. Mornings, Mar. 1 to Apr. 5; 9 to 11 a.m.

Cost: River Center Partners: \$40; non-members \$60.

This class is designed for beginning birders, new residents, and anyone who wants to better understand birds in general. These seminars include basic bird identification, bird feeders, birdhouses, field guides, and birding optics. Limit: 16 people.

Early Spring Birds of the North Olympic Peninsula

Date: Six Thursdays, Mar.4 through Apr. 1; 9 to 11:30 a.m.

Cost: \$40 for River Center partners, \$60 for non-members

The calendar may say winter, but some birds have already begun breeding activities. This intermediate birding class includes several field trips to local habitats to see and hear the early breeders and winter holdovers. First lesson at the River Center; other sessions will be outside, weather permitting. Limit: 16 people

DUNGENESS RIVER CURRENT

Dungeness River Audubon Center
PO Box 2450
Sequim WA 98382



Wanted: Dungeness River Audubon Center Memberships Renewals/Endowment Donations

Choose your category (es): Renewal New member Endowment

Any amount above your dues is a contribution to our operating cost fund raising efforts.

Please contact our office regarding contributions to the River Center and Railroad Bridge Park Endowment Fund.

- Benefactor (\$1000)
- Patron/Corporate (\$500)
- Supporting/Business (\$250)
- Sustaining (\$100)
- Friend (\$50)
- Family (\$30)
- Individual (\$20)
- Senior/Student (\$15)

Name _____

Phone _____

Address _____

RCF mailing address:

Dungeness River Audubon Center
P.O. Box 2450, Sequim, Wash. 98382
Phone (360) 681-4076 Fax (360) 681-8060
E-mail address: rivercenter@olympus.net

- Please Check this box if you are interesting in receiving information about volunteer opportunities for the Dungeness River Audubon Center**

The friendship of those we serve is the foundation of our progress.