

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, and Audubon Washington

Winter 2011

Christmas Bird Counts are Here!

By Bob Boekelheide

Yahoo! It's time for Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs).

The annual Sequim-Dungeness Christmas Bird Count (SDCBC) occurs on Monday, Dec. 20, 2010, and the Port Angeles CBC (PACBC) occurs on Sunday, Jan. 2, 2011. Please contact Bob Boekelheide at 360-681-4076 (email rivercenter@olympus.net) to sign up for the Sequim count, and call Barb Blackie at 360-477-8028 to sign-up for the Port Angeles count.

This is the 35th year of the SDCBC, which started in 1975. It has occurred every year since except 1990, when an ice storm forced its cancellation.

The SDCBC is renowned for having some of the highest species diversity in Washington, holding the record of 150 species counted in 2007. The Sequim count has led the state in number of species for 12 of the last 14 years, consistently reaching at least 140 species most years.

The Sequim CBC is also renowned for leading the U.S. and frequently the world in the number of individuals of two seabird species, Pigeon Guillemot and Ancient Murrelet, both of which concentrate in the eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca in winter.

Occasionally the Sequim CBC also leads the world in Golden-crowned Kinglets, especially during years when we have young ears (human, that is) counting in the Douglas-fir forests.

The center of the SDCBC 15-mile diameter circle is near the intersection of Brown and Port Williams Roads. Its territory covers from Diamond Point on the east to McDonald Creek on the west, and from Dungeness Spit on the north to the Olympic foothills south of Sequim.

The center of the PACBC is on the west side of Port Angeles, so it from Sieberts Creek on the east to the Elwha River on the west, and from Ediz Hook on the north to Hurricane Ridge on the south. The PACBC includes perhaps the greatest change in elevation of any CBC in the U.S.

Both counts use several teams of counters, each assigned to specific areas where they try to count all the birds they see and hear. If you are a new Christmas counter, you can learn birds by joining other groups or, if you do know your birds, you can help with areas not covered well by others.

Even if you can only count at your feeder or stroll around your neighborhood for a couple hours (assuming you live in a count circle), we would love to have you help out. We also keep close tabs of our time and mileage in the field, so comparisons can be made with other counts and with other years.

Why bother to count birds during the cold, short days of late fall and winter?

One reason is curiosity. The counts document where birds are and what habitats they use, helping to increase our knowledge about the natural world.



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*Interpreting the natural history
of the Olympic Peninsula.*

CBC Continued



For example, CBCs show that several types of birds in the eastern half of North America now regularly spend the winter a few hundred miles further north than they did 50 years ago, documenting how wild animals may be responding to changing climates.

The counts also document changes in populations, such as the serious decline in Common Loons and Western Grebes in Washington over the last 30 years.

A second good reason is the thrill of the chase. It's like the excitement of an Easter egg

hunt for a child, only our goal is to locate birds instead of Easter eggs. Finding unusual birds outside their normal range adds to the thrill.

A third reason is friendly competition. Bragging rights are important in the birding world, to have a large list, or a rare bird not seen anywhere else. The most important thing, however, is to have a "clean count," with well-documented records that leave no doubt that sightings are real.

A fourth reason, perhaps most important for many counters, is it's a lot of fun to get outside and count the birds.

We frequently get asked, "How do you know someone isn't making up birds on their list?"

First, unusual birds require a written description, or better yet, a photograph. If someone reports an unusual species, they can expect to be grilled by count leaders. We check unusual species and numbers very carefully.

In addition, even the best birders make mistakes or don't see birds well enough to know for sure, so questionable sightings may not be included for the sake of a clean count.

Another question is, "How do you know birds aren't counted more than once?"

Over-counting is a possibility, particularly for big birds like Bald Eagles and large waterfowl. Several years ago three field parties reported seven Trumpeter Swans flying over the Sequim circle, adding up to 21 swans. A check of group leaders showed that they all saw the swans at the same time, so only seven swans ended up on the official list.

Much more information about CBCs is available at <http://birds.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count>, including access to all the data collected during the past 110 years. Local information is also available at the OPAS website, <http://www.olympicpeninsulaudubon.org>. You can also join us on a pre-CBC field trip on Sat., Dec. 11, starting at Railroad Bridge Park at 9 a.m. then continuing at Dungeness Landing Park at Dungeness Bay at noon. Thanks for your help!

CONSIDER A RIVER CENTER DONATION OF STOCK CERTIFICATES AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO CASH

By Sue Chickman, Endowment Committee and Curtis Johnson, Port Angeles Attorney

With help from legal and financial professionals in our community, the Endowment Committee is exploring ways that friends and supporters can make tax-advantaged charitable gifts to the River Center. You can specify whether your generous gifts go towards the Center's educational programs or its endowment fund. The endowment was created in 2008 to ensure a perpetual source of funds for its educational programs long into the future.

While a cash donation is always appreciated, you may also want to consider the benefits of making a gift of appreciated stock to the River Center, a 501c(3) non-profit organization.

If you are contemplating a sale of stock that has increased in value and that you have owned for a minimum of one year, by donating shares to the River Center, 1) you can avoid paying the capital gains tax; and 2) the total stock amount may still be eligible for a tax deduction. Since taxation on the gift is avoided, the giver essentially will provide a larger donation to the River Center.

Q: How does this work?

A: Say you wish to make a \$5,000 donation to the River Center and you could either give cash or donate stock. Let's assume that you bought stock over one year ago for an original price of \$1,000, but it is now worth \$5,000. If sold, it would normally be subject to the capital gains tax of 15% of the stock's appreciation. Selling the shares for cash would net about \$4,400 after capital gains tax [$\$5,000 - \$1,000 \times 0.15$] = \$600. The River Center can receive more benefit from a stock donation, as they will receive a gift valued at \$5,000, instead of the \$4,400 in cash. You may be able to deduct the full \$5,000 from your income tax, depending on your circumstances. The \$4,000 capital gain is not taxed, even though it has "inflated" your charitable donations. Avoiding capital gains makes it possible to give stock at a lower actual cost to you rather than making a cash gift. The River Center would be glad to receive the stock and can sell it immediately for \$5,000 generally with no capital gains consequences because of its tax exempt status.

Q. How do you make a gift of stock?

A: There are two methods in transferring the ownership of a stock, which depend on how the shares are held. If the stock is being held in a certificate form, then transferring the physical stock certificate will be required. If the shares are only held as an electronic version stored in your brokerage account, you will need to order an electronic transfer to the River Center. Please feel free to contact us for assistance.

Q. What if the donor is rebalancing his/her stock portfolio and wants to give stock that has lost its value since purchase?

A. You should think twice about giving stock that has lost its value since you bought it. It may be better to sell stock that has lost value and donate the proceeds of the sale to the River Center – because you'd have a capital loss that you may be able to deduct as well as your charitable contribution. If you simply donated the stock that has lost value, you could not deduct the loss.

A final word to the wise: Always check with your tax and/or financial advisor before implementing any gift.

Curtis G. Johnson is an attorney who has practiced in Clallam County for over 30 years, contributed to this article. His practice, located in Port Angeles, emphasizes personal injury, estate planning and wills, real estate, and general civil litigation.

Many Thanks to Our Volunteers!!



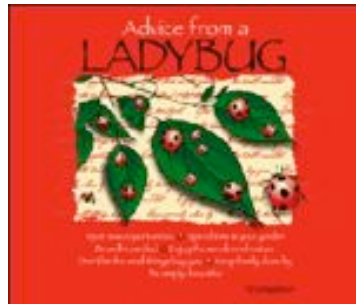
Volunteers are the lifeblood of the River Center. Volunteers greet the public, keep Railroad Bridge Park looking fantastic, organize and staff special events, serve on boards, raise money, write grants, teach classes, count birds, lead field trips, and so much more! Thank you to all the volunteers that helped make 2010 a year to remember! If you are interested in becoming more involved with the River Center please give us a call so we can discuss how your talents and interests could help the River Center.

Want to see what you are missing? Check out the last River Center Online:
www.DungenessRiverCenter.org

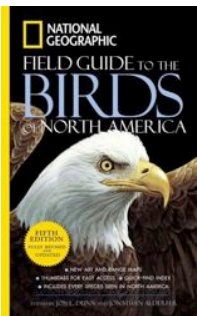
We think of the River Center as an environmental leader. By putting our newsletter online and e-mailing it to as many members as possible we can save paper, trees, and postage too...we can spend the savings on programs instead of printing and mailing. Please help us go green by sending Powell Jones your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

Holiday Shopping at the River Center

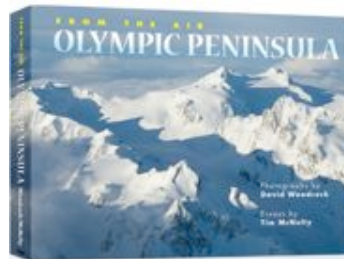
Give some advice with one of our popular T-shirts, lots of styles and sizes.
\$10 – \$15.99



Anyone who loves coffee will enjoy Audubon Coffee! Responsibly produced at an outstanding price.
\$8.95 (12oz) - \$18.95 (2lb)

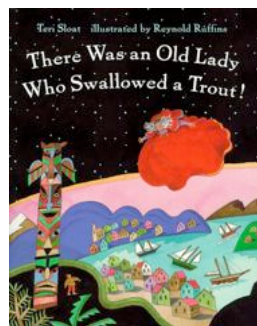


Come in and pick up a field guide for the nature enthusiast in your life. We have many guides to choose from including the National Geo's 5th edition.
\$24

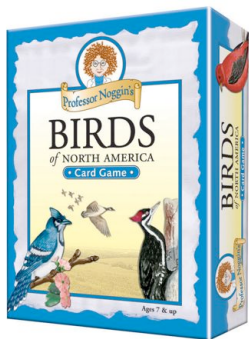
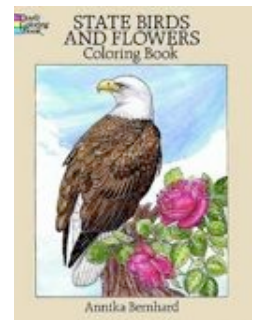


This extraordinary book takes a look at the Olympic Peninsula's amazing landscape from the air.
\$29.95 (Paperback)

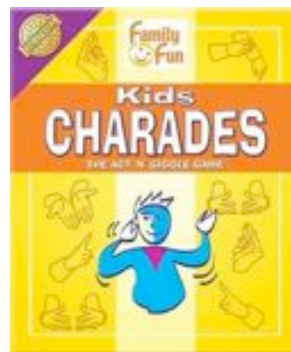
We have many children's books that are fun and nature oriented. There Was an Old Woman Who Swallowed a Trout is a spin off of the classic.
\$7.95



Our Gift Shop has lots of activity books that teach about the wonders of nature!
\$1.50 - \$6.99



Professor Noggin's games are fun and challenging games for the whole family. They come in a variety of subjects and are great for rainy days.
\$9.99



Charades is a classic that all kids can enjoy. These sets are great for groups and parties of kids.
\$9.99

Amazing Birds is a great gift for Docents and anyone else that wants a bunch of interesting facts about birds!
\$18.99



Audubon plush toys, with realistic calls, are a favorite of kids, adults, and even some of those special canine friends of ours!
\$6.99



Upcoming Special Events

Sequim-Dungeness Christmas Bird Count

Date: Mon., Dec. 20. Time: All day. 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. Official tally and chili feed for counters at the River Center begins at 5 p.m.

Port Angeles Christmas Bird Count

Date: Sun. 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. 11, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.; Sat. field trip, Feb 12, 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. 8 to 10

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. 10 to 12

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

Join The River Center Kids Mailing List

Get E-mail alerts when the Dungeness River Audubon Center is doing activities for kids. The date, time, and cost of activities like birdhouse building and painting, night hikes, bicycle trips, art projects, river explorations and much more will be delivered to your e-mail box. If this sounds interesting then please contact Powell Jones at rctech@olympus.net and tell him that you want to be part of the River Center Kids mailing list!



Red-Breasted Nuthatch – This is just one of the many wonderful birds that is seen on the Wednesday morning bird walk, come join the fun every week!



Schedule of Events

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.

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. 20 to Feb. 24 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. 19, 7 p.m.

Corvids in Winter

Date: Sat. Jan. 29; 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 Owllympics

Date: Sat. Feb 19; 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.

Great Backyard Bird Count

Dates: Fri., Feb. 18 through Mon. Feb. 21

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 16, 7 p.m.

Olympic Driftwood Art Show

Date: Sat. & Sun, Feb. 26 to 27, 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/Bird House Building Class

Date: Sat, Mar. 5th; 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 Tues. Evenings, Mar. 1 to Apr. 5; 7 to 9 p.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. 10 through Apr. 14; 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

Non Profit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Sequim, WA
Permit No. 10

Wanted: Dungeness River Audubon Center Memberships Renewals/ Endowment Donations

Choose your category (ies): Renewal New Member Endowment

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

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

- Individual (\$25)
- Family/Dual (\$35)
- Friend (\$50)
- Sustaining (\$100)
- Supporting/Business (\$200)
- Patron/Corporate (\$500)
- Benefactor (\$1000)
- Additional Donation\$ _____

Contact Information:

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P.O. Box 2450 Sequim WA 98382
Phone (360) 681-4076 Fax (360) 681-8060
Web Site: www.DungenessRiverCenter.org

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ ST _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

- Check if you would like to receive the *River Current* newsletter online instead of in print.
- Check if you are interested in receiving information about Volunteer Opportunities for the Dungeness River Audubon Center

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