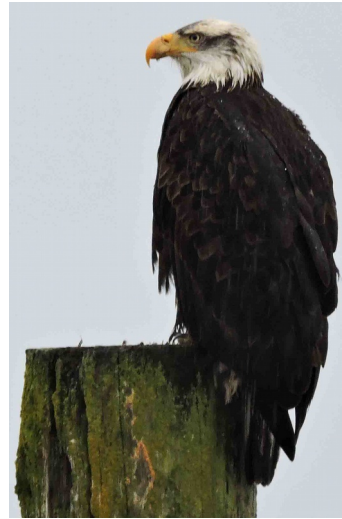


One Step at a Time

Newsletter of the Mountaineers Naturalist Group
February 2016



pond weed at Nisqually (check Odds and Ends)



Padilla bay bald eagle



Nisqually fun in the sun (in winter no less)

Winter photos from our January hikes to Nisqually Flats (hike of the

month) and Padilla Bay.

In the Garden

Walking in our species garden, the signs of spring are in the bud, not the flower (i.e. I saw nothing flowering)

Ferns continue to look great, especially licorice, deer and sword fern. Wait till next month!

Field Trips for Mountaineers' Naturalists

We have several field trips for the month of February, including the hike of the month, which is the third Saturday, February 20 (note I had to change this because I don't want to miss any of these great hikes and I have a conflict the following weekend), to Tiger Mountain, where we will enjoy hiking the not heavily-used Nook and Section Line and Bus trails. Sign up for this by going to LEARN, check the exploring Nature box and Click on Naturalists Study Group and you should see the listing for Tiger Mountain. Now click on Manage Registration, and the next page should allow you to check the hike you want (in this case Tiger Mountain) and add yourself as a participant. If we oversubscribe, do not worry. We will figure out a way to accommodate everyone.

Other hikes this month are directly accessible by clicking on Find activities (under the heading EXPLORE) and check Exploring Nature. There are actually 3 hikes available this month (plus the hike of the month). One of them is led by our study group. This is Skagit Flats, led by Jeff Nystuen on Saturday February 13. Skagit Flats is primarily a birding trip, with visits for a number of DNR and Fish and Wildlife pullouts. It features good raptors, snow geese and swans (in great numbers) in a largely open, marshy environment. There are generally good looks at short eared owls and northern harriers coursing.



Greater Yellowlegs on Skagit Flats

The other hikes led by Dee Ann Kline of the Olympia Branch including a trip to Fort Flagler State park (Feb 16), and Lower Skokomish River (Feb 27). All these hikes are listed on the web page under Activities Exploring Nature.

Four of our study group members are taking a course in Moss identification early in March, and we are planning to have a moss id field trip soon thereafter in March, to share the wealth and knowledge.

Lectures:

Mark your calendar for Thurs., Feb. 11, 7-9 p.m., when Mike Harrell, scientific instructional designer at the UW's Earth and Space Sciences department, will delve into the geology of Mount Rainier, and how our beloved Northwest icon can be temperamental: in the recent (5,000 years ago) geologic past, Rainier floated millions of cubic yards of itself almost to Seattle. This past summer, an outburst of the South Tahoma glacier flooded the Westside Road. Mike will trace the mountain's geologic development from the subduction of tectonic plates through the various convulsions of growth, stage by stage, that produced the Mountain as we know it today.

More information can be found here (no registration required):

[Naturalist Lecture Series - 2016 - Geology of Mt. Rainier — The Mountaineers](#)

Washington Native Plant Society talk:

The Genus *Erythronium* in western North America by Ed Alverson

Over the past several decades, Ed Alverson has been roaming the west in search of fawn lilies, avalanche lilies, and their kin. Western North America is actually the global center of *Erythronium* diversity, with 22 of the 33 species found worldwide, and western species exhibit a wide range of flower color and leaf form. Under optimal conditions they can form large colonies, and are a characteristic springtime feature of many western plant communities. While some of the western species are widespread, many are localized endemics. Ed will show photographs of both the common and rare species, and tell us some of what he has learned in the course of his explorations.

Ed Alverson has a BS in Biology from The Evergreen State College and a MS in Botany from Oregon State University, and has worked as a field botanist and stewardship ecologist in the Pacific Northwest (particularly in Oregon's Willamette Valley) for over 35 years. He has particular interests in fern taxonomy, comparative biogeography, and the conservation, management, and restoration of prairie, savanna, and oak woodland habitats. Ed has also authored more than 50 popular and scientific articles on a variety of botanical and ecological topics, from plant taxonomy and ecology to botanical history and exploration, as well as treatments for *Erythronium* as well as a number of fern families for the revision of Flora of the Pacific Northwest.

**Thursday, February, 4, 2016, 7:30pm,
UW Center for Urban Horticulture, 3501 NE 41st St, Seattle**

(Doors Open at 6:30 PM for the Native Plant Identification Workshop; Program begins at 7:30 PM.) For details, see wnps.org

Refreshments, Public Invited, Admission is free.

Also

BIRDS AND PLANTS

Everyone knows that birds come to feeders full of seeds. There are a lot of seed-eating birds! But birds relate to our native plants in many more ways than that, both positive and negative, and Dennis Paulson will tell you about this in an illustrated lecture.

Dr. Paulson, recently retired as Director of the Slater Museum of Natural History, University of Puget Sound, and has been a professional biologist and naturalist all of his adult life. He began studying natural history as a boy and is a world expert on dragonflies and shorebirds, in addition to teaching master birder classes for the Audubon Society. He is the author of nine books, including *Shorebirds of North America* and *Dragonflies and Damselflies of the West*, and 90 scientific papers on birds and dragonflies.

**Thursday March 3th, 2016, 7:30pm,
UW Center for Urban Horticulture, 3501 NE 41st St, Seattle
(Doors Open at 6:00 PM for the Native Plant Identification Workshop; Program begins at 7:30 PM.)**

Seattle Audubon Society field trips:

Registration is open for all Field Trips listed below. Sign up by calling 206-523-4483, Monday through Saturday from 10am - 5pm. For more information about field trips and registration procedures, [click here](#). To [download](#) a [PDF](#) of the current field trips and classes click [here](#).

Sunday, February 7, 2016 - Limit 14 in 4 or fewer cars

Seattle's Peregrine Falcons

Leaders: Ed Deal (206-713-1546) and Martin Muller (206-525-5575). Calls on day of trip only.

8:00 AM Sharp, Ivar's Salmon House, 401 NE Northlake Way, Seattle (Under the I-5 Ship Canal Bridge)

Join us for a Super Sunday morning half-day search for the city's Peregrine Falcons. This exploration will likely turn up urban Bald Eagles, Merlins and Red-tailed Hawks as well as various ducks, loons and grebes. Please dress warmly for standing in one spot, with lots of layers available. Bring latte money and a spotting scope too, if possible. Carpooling in a maximum of 4 vehicles. Due to the difficulty of car caravans in city traffic, we ask that you not add an extra vehicle for leaving early. Carpool cost \$4 per passenger. Over promptly at 12:30 PM.

Saturday, February 13, 2016 – Limit 11 in 3 cars

Stanwood/Skagit/Samish

Leader: Tim Boyer (206-730-6925, day of trip only)
6:30 AM, Green Lake (Ravenna) P&R

All skill levels welcome! We'll start on Leque Island near Stanwood, follow the road and birds north to Fir Island then even further north to Samish Island. Owls, hawks, falcons, swans, and other winter birds are our target species. We'll scope a few open water bays for loons, ducks and hopefully a few shorebirds. Bring a scope if you have one. Dress in layers for the winter weather, drivers (we'll need 2) will need a Discover Pass. Bring a lunch, snacks and fluids. We'll be back around 6 PM. Carpool cost is \$50 shared by riders.

Monday, February 15, 2016 - Limit 12

Magnuson Park

Leader: Jan Bragg (206-234-7196, day of trip only)

9:00 AM, Education Pavilion (west side of boat launch parking lot. At the end of drive, on your right, after entering Magnuson Park from NE 65th St entrance). Bus #75.

This is a great time to look at sparrows and waterfowl which spend the winter in Seattle. By mid Feb, some of our songbirds may be starting to sing and Anna's hummingbirds may be starting to nest. We will be climbing uphill and down at Promontory Point, then walking through the wetlands, and ending along the lake shoreline. Be prepared to walk over uneven, muddy ground. This is open to all levels of birders, especially those who want to listen to bird calls and songs. Children accompanied by adult welcome. Over by early afternoon.

Saturday, February 20, 2016 – Limit 12

Montlake Fill (Union Bay Natural Area)

Leaders: Jen McKeirnan and Sharon Ellard (206-963-4781, day of field trip only)

8:00 AM, Center for Urban Horticulture east parking lot by the Douglas Building and greenhouse

Beginning and intermediate birders will enjoy this trip to a location with multiple habitats. We will use sight and sound to identify as many birds as possible, hopefully 40 species! At this time of the year the Fill offers wintering waterfowl and songbirds, raptors, and...who knows? Expect to walk up to 3 leisurely paced miles. Be sure to have warm clothing and raingear. Restroom facilities are limited at the Fill, but you can first stop by the QFC or Safeway at nearby University Village. Scopes will be helpful. Over by noon.

Saturday, February 27 and Sunday, February 28, 2016 (Friday, February 26 to travel to Omak) - Limit 10

Okanogan Highlands and Waterville Plateau

Leaders: Gary Kelsberg (206-819-6930, morning of trip only), Sarah Safranek, and Allisa Carlson

6:00 AM, lobby of Omak Inn, Omak, Washington, both Saturday and Sunday

The Okanogan Highlands in winter provide wonderful opportunities to see arctic visitors, altitudinal migrants, and hard-to-see residents. We will start birding from Omak on Saturday at first light, hoping to see Sharp-tailed Grouse feeding in water birches in the Scotch Creek area.

From there, we'll head up to the town of Conconully to look for forest birds (nuthatches, Pine Grosbeaks, Clark's Nutcrackers, and maybe a Northern Goshawk). We'll then cross the Okanogan River eastwards and explore the highland wooded areas and clearings seeking Snow Buntings, Gray-crowned Rosy-finches, Northern Pygmy Owls. If we are lucky, we may see White-winged Crossbills, and even luckier, Great Gray Owl at dusk at the end of our first day.

On Sunday we'll bird the orchards and islands near Brewster seeking Bohemian Waxwings, American Tree Sparrows, and winter ducks. Then we'll explore the open fields of the Waterville Plateau looking for Snowy Owls, Rough-legged Hawks, Gray Partridge, and possibly Long-eared Owl or even a Gyrfalcon. We'll finish birding by afternoon so participants can drive home by Sunday night.

Logistics: Participants will need to arrange their own overnight accommodations for two nights in Omak, and will need to get to Omak by Friday night. We will need two more snow-capable vehicles in addition to leader's Subaru, (AWD is ideal) for carpooling on the birding trips from Omak (there is not enough parking at every stop to accommodate more than 3 cars). Each carpool car will need a Discover Pass and a radio. Bring warm clothes appropriate for freezing temperatures and wind, appropriate footwear for slippery snow and ice, and enough food/drink to carry in the car all day. Scopes helpful for spotting grouse, owls. Most of the birding will involve short walks from the cars, with some walks up to a mile. Carpool costs shared equally by riders in each car, at Seattle Audubon rates of \$0.25 per mile (estimate \$130 per car). When signing up make certain that phone and e-mail contact information is accurate since leaders will need to coordinate logistics. Attendees will need to get to and from Omak on their own, although it may be possible to share rides with other participants.

Saturday, February 27, 2016 - Limit 12

Seward Park

Leaders: Erica Clark and Anne Jacobs (206-697-0920, day of trip only)

8:00 AM, parking lot by the children's playground (immediately south of entrance to park, drive straight at stop sign from Lake Washington Blvd and park)

Seward Park address: 5902 Lake Washington Blvd S.

Within the Seattle city limits, Seward Park boasts 300 acres of beautiful forest land - home to eagles' nests, old growth forest, a 2.4 mile bike and walking path. In addition to sparrows, waterfowl, gulls, and crows, we may be fortunate to find Barred Owls and Pileated Woodpeckers. Please be prepared for rain and cool weather. Consider bringing a snack. Trails can be muddy. Over by 1:00 PM. Carpool cost: none, we'll meet in the parking lot and walk from there.

Odds and Ends

Lest we forget that we can still see birds in our area, here is a reminder of what was seen recently in Magnuson park by Karen Johnson and John Malotte. One of the few Californians that are always welcome here (California Quail)



California Quail



Trumpeter swans in glorious flight

Shakespeare in winter (was he a birder?)

1. from Love's Labour's Lost, Act 5 Scene 2 :

When all aloud the wind doth blow,
And coughing drowns the parson's saw,
And birds sit brooding in the snow,
And Marian's nose looks red and raw,
When roasted crabs hiss in the bowl,
Then nightly sings the staring owl :
'Tu-who ;
Tu-whit, To-who ' - A merry note,
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.
into hot food to cool it off faster).

(keeling the pot is putting something cold

2. from Wikipedia, today :

The call of the Tawny Owl is the tu-whit tu-who immortalised by [William Shakespeare](#). However, it is known today that this call is actually a compound of two calls; the quavering hoo-hoo-hoo by the male and the reply of kew-wick from the female.

How many times have I read or heard this nonsense, usually from so-called experts on owls.

The 'tu-whit' is nothing like the female's 'ke-wick' (far shorter, quieter and less explosive), and comparing the 'to-who' to the male's long-drawn hoot is rubbish (it lasts about two seconds, and the 'who' is on an up-and-down curve that I can't express in letters).

The 'tu-whit to-who' call is not common, I guess I hear it only about once a year, but almost always in mid-winter (as Shakespeare says). I'm not sure but I think it's the male that calls it. It is always prepared by the 'tu-whit' on its own (as Shakespeare says), usually 2-3 times before we get the full thing.

And remember which owl calls “who cooks for you?”

Help the County collect native plants for parks and then collect some for the garden. If you are interested contact Gordie (g.swartzman@gmail.com) for arranging carpooling.

Salvage opportunities to do stewardship and also get some native plants. Here is something you can do that could get some plants for our garden or yours:

Please see attachment for flier and below for more information:

We're digging up native plants and need your help!

Join other volunteers digging up trees and shrubs from this college site in the morning and then dig free plants for yourself! In the afternoon, we'll pot-up the salvaged plants at the nursery where free potted plants are given away! The plants will be installed on King County environmental restoration projects, where they will help reduce erosion, shade streams and provide habitat. Special thanks to Bellevue College for providing the salvage site and the City of Issaquah for their valuable assistance.

When: Saturday, February 6, 2016

Time:

9 a.m. to 12:00 p.m: Salvage plants for King County.

12:00 to 2:00 p.m: Salvage plants for yourself **if** you salvaged for the County from 9:00 to 12:00.

1:00 to 4:30 p.m: Potting at Nursery (Free plants are offered to potters).

Where: Issaquah for salvaging

Maple Valley for potting (**Note new nursery location**)

Directions to the Salvage site:

From eastbound or westbound I-90, take exit 18 (Highlands Dr. NE) in Issaquah. Continue uphill onto Highlands Dr. NE and turn right onto NE Federal Dr. Go slight right onto NE Park Dr. Turn right onto 15th Ave NE and left onto NE College Way and park as directed.

Volunteers who dig for King County from 9:00 to 12:00 are eligible to dig plants

for themselves from 12:00 to 2:00. Please arrive on time for instructions and to be eligible to dig plants for yourself.

Not a morning person? Volunteers are needed at the Nursery from 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. to help pot up the salvaged plants. Volunteers who help with potting are eligible for a free native plant for every half hour of work.

Directions to the Nursery (NEW LOCATION!):

From I-90, take the Front Street exit in Issaquah. Go south on Front Street. Front Street becomes Issaquah-Hobart Rd SE. In about 4.5 miles turn right onto Cedar Grove Road SE. In about 1.7 miles turn right onto 228th Ave SE and in .25 miles turn right onto 227th Ave SE. The nursery is in .5 miles on the right.

From Highway 169, go north on Cedar Grove Rd SE. In about 1.6 miles turn left onto 228th Ave SE and in .25 miles turn right onto 227th Ave SE. The nursery is in .5 miles on the right.

Notes: A parent or guardian must accompany volunteers under 16 years old. Dress for the weather and be prepared to get dirty. Sturdy shoes or boots are recommended. The site can be muddy. [We'll provide gloves, tools and light refreshments.](#)

Participation in at least one event per season will get you invited to an all-day-Salvage-For-Yourself event in late March!

Please contact [Cindy Young](#) or call [206-477-4859](tel:206-477-4859) if you plan to participate.

Birds and Flowers at the Tacoma Glass Museum

There is an interesting exhibit at the Tacoma Glass Museum of a collaboration between *Joey Kirkpatrick and Flora C. Mace called Every Soil Bears Not Everything. I was struck by their evolution from glass to any materials and their later emphasis on plants and birds. They did bird calendars with glass plates (and flower ones too). I was blown away by the work they did with whips from plants like osier dogwood, and by preserving of plants and then remaking them with glass and other materials. Here are some photos to whet your appetite.*



Linnea borealis (twinflower made of glass + ?)



A kind of twiggy art I like.



Bird drawings fused into glass.

Do you think you know what a fern looks like?

The earlier picture of Nisqually features a picture of pondweed, which we learned was actually a fern in the genus *Azolla* or mosquito ferns.



Mosquito ferns

Plant

Azolla is a genus of seven species of aquatic ferns in the family Salviniaceae. They are extremely reduced in form and specialized, looking nothing like other typical ferns but more resembling duckweed or some mosses. [Wikipedia](#)

Scientific name: Azolla

Higher classification: [Salviniaceae](#)

Rank: Genus

If you read this far, you will be treated to fine photos by Gary Brill, taken last



Saturday at Nisqually flats.....

