

One Step at a Time

Newsletter of the Mountaineers Naturalist Group
January 2016

Guess what? A new year has arrived, to inspire us to learn, to teach, to share, to witness and to marvel.



Winter photos from our December hikes

In the Garden

Walking in our species garden, most plants are senescent. However, there are still a few blooms.

Evergreen huckleberry



yarrow



Oregon sunshine



also, some ferns are shining this month, especially licorice and deer fern.

Field Trips for Mountaineers' Naturalists

We have several field trips for the month of January, including the hike of the month, which is the last Saturday, January 30, to Nisqually Flats, a great estuarine river basin, beloved of bird watchers, yet allowing enjoyable walking as well. Sign up for this

by going to your profile (your name) and look for My Courses. Click on Naturalists Study Group and you should see the listing for Nisqually. Now click on Manage Registration, and the next page should allow you to check the hike you want (in this case Nisqually) 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 6 hikes available this month (plus the hike of the month). Two of them are led by leaders in the study group. These are Ebey's Landing and Whidbey Island, led by Stewart Hougen on Saturday January 16, and Padilla Bay, led by Shelley Williams on Saturday January 23. Both are trips with good walks and a seabird focus.

There are 4 other nature walks scheduled this month, including January 9 Spruce Railroad Trail and January 12 Dash Point State Park (Dee Ann Kline), January 15, Washington Park Arboretum (Muriel Stoker), and January 23 Chehalis River Surge Plain Trail (Dee Ann Kline). The hikes led by Dee Ann tend to be farther south, since she is in the Olympia Branch of the Mountaineers. On February 13 Jeff Nystuen is leading a birding trip to Skagit Flats. All these hikes are listed on the web page under Exploring Nature.

With all the snow we've been having look for listing of snowshoe trips to the mountains to look at animal tracks and see how plants and animals cope with heavy snowfall.

Lectures:

Naturalists Lecture Series:



Why have Eastern Washington wildfires been so explosive and hard to control?

Wed. Jan. 13, 2016, 7-9 p.m., Goodman A, Seattle Program Center

Mark your calendar for Wed., Jan. 13 when **Paul Hessburg**, a research landscape ecologist with the Forest Service, will talk about the natural role of wildfires in the pre-settlement era, and **how human actions have unwittingly conspired to change that role**. Decades of fire suppression have created a dense, fuel-laden landscape that Hessburg says is far from natural and is driving extreme wildfires.

More information can be found here:

https://www.mountaineers.org/about/branches-committees/seattle-branch/committees/seattle-naturalists-committee/course-templates/copy_of_naturalist-leaders-first-aid-seminar/naturalist-lecture-series-2016-2-paul-hessburg

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.

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](#).

Saturday, January 9, 2016 – Limit 10

West Seattle Waterfront

Leaders: Barbara and Paul Webster (cell for day of trip only 206-856-1379)

8:00 AM, Jack Block Park, 2130 Harbor Ave SW, Seattle

Explore the West Seattle waterfront and neighboring greenbelts in search of wintering and resident species. We'll carpool to several spots and walk up to two miles on relatively easy terrain. There is a strong possibility of a bakery stop. Dress to stay warm and dry. Scopes helpful. Over around noon. Carpool cost: \$3 shared equally by riders.

Sunday, January 10, 2016 – Limit 12

Luther Burbank Park, Mercer Island

Leader: Judith Roan (cell for day of trip 206-265-2661)

9:00 AM, North Parking Lot of the park

January is a good time to see wintering ducks and grebes. Luther Burbank Park has an impressive shoreline from which to watch ducks, grebes, cormorants, gulls and Belted Kingfisher. Fox Sparrows,

Cedar Waxwings, Pacific Wren, Towhees, Anna's Hummingbirds, Kinglets, and a resident pair of Bald Eagle are likely to be seen. Meet in the North parking lot at 9 AM. The loop trip may be rainy and muddy so dress accordingly. Over by noon.

Monday, January 11, 2016 – Limit 12

Vashon Island

Leader: Ed Swan (206-949-3545 or edswan2@comcast.net)

Meet aboard the 8:25 AM ferry from Fauntleroy

We will start birding from the Fauntleroy ferry! We'll look for Harlequin Ducks and auklets near the Vashon dock. At Fisher Pond, we may find Wood Ducks and other puddle ducks. On Tramp Harbor, we'll scan through large flocks of scoters, scaup, goldeneye and wigeon to look for something unusual. Don't arrange rides in parking lot, meet on ferry. Let Nature Shop know if you can drive when you sign up. You can park for 4 hours in the southernmost parking lot at Lincoln Park (1 block north of the ferry dock) or find parking on nearby neighborhood streets. Do not park on Fauntleroy Way or you risk getting towed. Participants should plan to arrive early enough to park, purchase a ticket, and board the 8:25 AM ferry. Ed will [meet up](#) with participants on the ferry. Ed's car will be on the island. Carpool cost: \$6 plus cost of ferry (\$5.25 per passenger plus a share of \$14.30 car and driver ticket).

Friday, January 22, 2016

Bainbridge Island to Point No Point – Limit 8

Leaders: George Gerdts and Mary Anne Rossing (206-399-7536 cell, day of trip only. Contact by email if questions geopandion@aol.com)

6:00 AM sharp, Green Lake (Ravenna) P&R to form a carpool in 2 cars to take the 7:05 AM Bainbridge Island Ferry and meet George at the Bainbridge ferry terminal.

Join George Gerdts and Mary Anne Rossing for a day of birding some of the best spots on Bainbridge Island, then head to Point No Point for the outgoing tide. We will have the group back at the Bainbridge ferry terminal in time to catch the 5:30 PM ferry back to Seattle. We'll be looking for shorebirds and waterfowl (including loons and alcids). Scopes helpful. Bring a lunch and dress in layers in case of inclement weather. Walking from the cars up to a mile on level ground. Carpool costs: \$15 plus \$45 for the ferry shared equally by riders.

Saturday, January 30, 2015 – Limit 7

Birch Bay, Semiahmoo, Drayton Harbor, Boundary Bay

Leader: Scott Ramos (cell for day of trip only 206-229-2421)

6:00 AM, Green Lake (Ravenna) P&R

January is a good time to look for loons, grebes, diving ducks, alcids, and possible wintering owls. We'll start at Birch Bay and make our way to Semiahmoo and Drayton Harbor, as well as the Blaine Marina. Depending on owl reports, we may head across the border to scan the shoreline of Boundary Bay. Drivers will need a Discover Pass for Birch Bay SP (if we head into B.C., you must have a passport or enhanced driver's license for the border crossing). Dress for cold weather, bring lunch, snacks and fluids; scopes will be very helpful but not required. Return by early evening. Carpool costs: \$45 shared equally by riders.

Saturday, January 30, 2016 – Limit 6 in 2 cars

The Three S's (Stilly, Skagit, Samish) in Winter

Leaders: Jon Houghton and Jordan Gunn (cell for day of trip 206-601-0773)

7:00 AM, Green Lake (Ravenna) P&R (Optional rendezvous in north end, if sufficient interest.

Indicate interest when [sign up.](#))

This trip will visit several winter hot spots for raptors, waterfowl, and shorebirds in the Stillaguamish, Skagit, and Samish flats. We'll start at the Nature Conservancy's newly constructed tidal restoration site in the Stilly Delta, go on to Thomle Road (if reports there are positive), and Eide Road to transition into the Skagit Flats. Depending on recent sightings and time, on Fir Island we may visit Wiley Slough and Dry Slough WDFW game access points. We'll then continue on to Padilla Bay, and the fabled West 90 on the Samish Flats, finishing up in the Bow-Edison area. Some short walking for better viewing is possible, but not mandatory at each area. Warning! Hunting seasons will be in progress so this could limit waterfowl viewing. Bring: [rain gear](#) and warmth, rubber boots, lunch and drink, and an interest in discovery! Scopes will be a plus for shorebirds. Carpool costs: Maximum of \$50 each car shared equally by riders. Drivers should bring a current Discover Pass. Anticipate return to Ravenna around 5:30 PM (earlier if the weather is really awful!).

Sunday, January 31, 2016 – Limit 8

Lincoln Park

Leader: Jen McKeirnan

Meet: 8:30 AM, Lincoln Park South-end Parking Lot, located at Fauntleroy Way SW & SW Cloverdale St.

Explore the West Seattle waterfront and woodlands in search of wintering and resident species. Expect to see ducks, loons, grebes and alcids on the water. Woodland bird sightings bring wrens, sparrows, chickadees, kinglets and raptors. This field trip is geared for beginner birders. Expect to walk up to 4 leisurely paced miles with some hills. Bring binoculars, and a scope if you own one. Dress to stay warm and dry. Restrooms will be available. Bring water and snacks. Over around noon.

Odds and Ends

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.

What in the world? FIRST PERSON TO IDENTIFY EVERYTHING CORRECTLY WINS A PRIZE – e-mail identification to g.swartzman@gmail.com
Identification is edifying.



Name these things:

seen on Hansville reach trail Dec 26

seen on Barclay Lake trail end of September



Remember Summer? With lengthening days its OK to think about summer. And so ...

Song: "Where the bee sucks, there suck I"

By [William Shakespeare](#)

(from *The Tempest*)

Where the bee sucks, there suck I:

In a cowslip's bell I lie;

There I couch when owls do cry.

On the bat's back I do fly

After [summer](#) merrily.

Merrily, merrily shall I live now

Under the blossom that hangs on the bough.