



June 2018

Naturalists

EXPLORE. LEARN. CONSERVE.

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In the Native Plant Garden

We have had several stewardships in the garden this past month and the weeds are reduced in many areas. Spring plants have largely come and gone. Some lovely flowers remain, including saxifrages, penstemons, asters, buckwheats and monkey flowers. We are dealing with considerable insect damage in some areas (sawflies it looks like) that ate the gooseberry leaves to mortality last year and were beginning on others. The shrubs have mostly thrived and the mock orange is now blooming and ocean spray will be soon. The garden is starting to provide a shady place for repose, contemplation, and picnicking, as well as for plant identification. Having visited it many times I enjoy seeing the passing of seasons and the number of birds that stop by or nest in the garden area.



Owl Steward Park by Steve Johnson

 [Facebook](#)

 [Flickr](#)

May Hikes

STILLWATER WILDLIFE RESERVE

This trip was one of the best birding trips ever! Tom Bancroft brought us out in hopes of hearing the bittern her had heard on a recon. Not only did we hear bittern but we had very good looks of them flying and displaying (like looking tall and cool without moving) and vocalizing as well. Other highlights were a gorgeous, cooperative rufous hummingbird, hooded mergansers, bullocks orioles, red breasted sapsuckers, black headed grosbeak, swallows galore and a hairy woodpecker going in and out of its nest.

UMPTANUM CREEK – UMPTANUM RIDGE

BLACK CANYON



Bitterroot

Silvery blue on hesperichon



Blue on blue (western bluebird)



Tweedy's lewisia and nuttall's larkspur



CHIWAUKUM CREEK – ICICLE RIDGE



Recovery after the burn on Chiwaukum creek (3 years out)



Calypso orchid on Chiwaukum creek



Lizard on icicle ridge trail

Upcoming June Hikes

Sign up online under *Explore, Find Activities* and check exploring nature (or click the register buttons below).

The mountain hiking season is nigh upon us, and we nats have many offerings to enjoy.

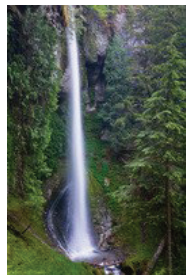


Kachess Ridge

JUNE 9 – GORDIE SWARTZMAN

The ridge is steep, but the views and the flowers make it worthwhile. Enjoy lunch at the top and massage your ankles and knees after the trip down.

[Register Here](#)



Goat Creek and Cathedral Falls

JUNE 10 - DEE ANN KLINE

A trip in Mt. St. Helen national monument along a stream and to falls not hit by the explosion. Not much elevation gain.

[Register Here](#)

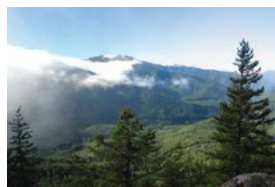


Clayton Beach

JUNE 16 - STEWART HOUGEN

An annual pilgrimage on a low tide to bird and tidepool. Discover your forebears in the tidepools of Puget Sound.

[Register Here](#)



Mount Zion

JUNE 16 -DEE AN KLINE

Hope for a wild rhody show along the slopes of Mt. Zion in the north Olympic mountains.

[Register Here](#)



East Fork Owyhee River Canyon

JUNE 16 – LINDA MOORE

Photo/nature-oriented hikes along dramatic canyon rim and into deep river canyon curving along multi-colored towering rock walls. High desert spring wildflowers, bighorns, antelope, birds of prey and more. Located in remote SW Idaho, S of Mountain Home.

[Register Here](#)



Tronsen Ridge

JUNE23 - GORDIE SWARTZMAN

A hike along a high ridge in the East Wenatchee Mountains. The flowers on this ridge are spectacular and the views marvelous.

[Register Here](#)



Dosewallips State Park

JUNE 24 - CHRISTINE GRENIER

A beach exploration on Hood Canal with optional clamming.

[Register Here](#)

WA Native Plant Society Program

Birds in Our Midst: Creating Gardens Filled with Life

TUESDAY, JUNE 12, 7:00PM, JULIE O'DONALD

Bellevue Botanical Garden, Aaron Education Center

Doors open at 6:00 PM for the Native Plant Identification Workshop; Program begins at 7:00 PM. Donations greatly appreciated.



Backyard Wildlife Habitat Steward and Master Gardener, Julie O'Donald will give an overview of the elements that create beautiful gardens for birds and people. Best native plants for birds and design features that create habitat will be emphasized. Photos of birds with their food plants will show how to bring nature home to any size property. Julie's personal certified wildlife habitat contains over 200 species of native plants and attracts birds, butterflies, pollinators and beneficial insects.

Upcoming Programs

- 9-6-18 Robert Pelant, Pacific Rim Institute, "Restoring abandoned agricultural land to native oak-prairie habitat on Whidbey Island."
The Mountaineers, Cascade Room
- 11-1-18 Scott and Susan Freeman "Saving Tarboo Creek", The Mountaineers
- 12-6-8 Holiday Party! The Mountaineers

Odds & Ends

Naturalist facebook group:

The Facebook Group is a group of Mountaineers who have a passion for the natural world and want to learn more about it.

It is called The Mountaineers Naturalist Group. It is open to Mountaineers Members who are affiliated with the Naturalist Program, either as a current or past student of the Intro to the Natural World course or as a member of the Naturalist Study Group. It provides a place for members to share photos of their hikes and trips, as well as to help with identification of species.

People can search for it on Facebook and ask to join. If they are a current member of The Mountaineers and affiliated with the Naturalist Program, they will be added.

The group is open only to Mountaineers Members as it helps us build camaraderie among our members. (There are many other Facebook groups open to all such as the Washington Native Plant Society and Western Washington Birders.)

Poetry

“HOPE” IS THE THING WITH FEATHERS - (314)

BY EMILY DICKINSON

“Hope” is the thing with feathers -
That perches in the soul -
And sings the tune without the words -
And never stops - at all -

And sweetest - in the Gale - is heard -
And sore must be the storm -
That could abash the little Bird
That kept so many warm -

I’ve heard it in the chilliest land -
And on the strangest Sea -
Yet - never - in Extremity,
It asked a crumb - of me.

UNTITLED SHAMAN SONG

Uvavnuk (Iglulik Eskimo, 19th century) [translated by Jane Hirshfield]

The great sea
frees me, moves me,
as a strong river carries a weed.
Earth and her strong winds
move me, take me away,
and my soul is swept up in joy.

ZAZEN ON CHING-T’ING MOUNTAIN

Li Po (China, 701-762) [translated by Sam Hamill]

The birds have vanished down the sky.
Now the last cloud drains away.

We sit together, the mountain and me,
until only the mountain remains.

AFTER THE WINTER

BY CLAUDE MCKAY

Some day, when trees have shed their leaves
And against the morning’s white
The shivering birds beneath the eaves
Have sheltered for the night,
We’ll turn our faces southward, love,
Toward the summer isle
Where bamboos spire the shafted grove
And wide-mouthed orchids smile.

And we will seek the quiet hill
Where towers the cotton tree,
And leaps the laughing crystal rill,
And works the droning bee.
And we will build a cottage there
Beside an open glade,
With black-ribbed blue-bells blowing near,
And ferns that never fade.



Mountain lady slipper smiling on Icicle ridge trail

A Swainson's Thrush in Panama

by Tom Bancroft

The flute-like whistle began an upward spiral but then appeared to stumble. The bird started again and continued to misstep before reaching the ending that was familiar to my ears. It sounded like a person trying to remember a tune, knowing he knew it, but also knowing he still didn't have it quite right, so the practicing continued. Finally, the full Swainson's thrush song burst through the woods.

But, there I stood in a montane forest in Western Panama thousands of miles from this bird's breeding range. It was late afternoon on an early April day, and I had hiked up the Rio Colorado valley in Chiriquí. All day, the woods had been full of the chip notes of hundreds of Swainson's thrushes, and I had seen at least half a dozen individuals as they flitted through the understory. This was a thick tropical forest of broad-leaf trees, not the coniferous forests where this species breeds in North America. Bromeliads and orchids clung to many branches as well as dense banks of mosses and ferns.

According to the lodge owner, this species had only arrived in the Mt. Totumas area in the last week, and individuals would be abundant throughout April, fattening on fruit and insects before their next leg north. They winter in northern South America -- Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela -- and were heading north to breed in the western United States and Canada. Ornithologists think that northbound Swainson's thrushes can average 250 km during one of their nightly migration flights. After dark, the urge to fly north may overtake them, and they travel for as long as their fat reserves, their tank of gas, will last. They migrate at an altitude of a few hundred feet to six

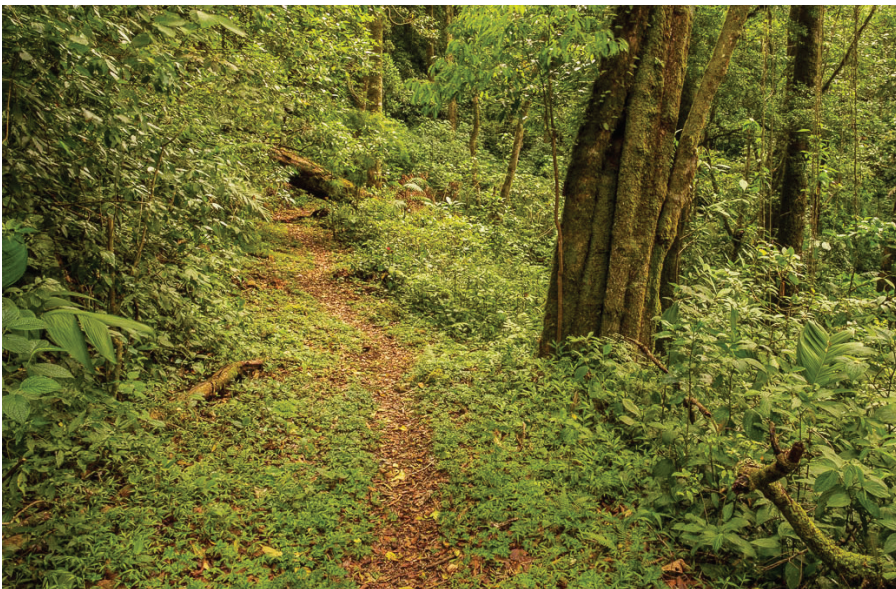
thousand, depending on wind, cloud, and fog, often giving their chip notes as they go.

The thrush I was listening to finally had his song down pat and was singing variations of it every few seconds. I remembered the first time I heard this magnificent song. I was in high school, and my sister and I were hiking in the mountains of western Montana. The melody seemed to float out of the dense forest and wrap around us. The valley in Montana had thick conifers, Douglas firs, western hemlocks, and red cedars. Those wet temperate forests were so different from this exotic tropical place where I was hiking in Panama.

By early May, the quickest migrants will arrive in the Pacific Northwest where I now live, and by early June, their numbers will peak as they start their breeding season. Swainson's thrushes weigh about an ounce or approximately half a serving of dried wild rice. Yet, they can make this almost 5,000-mile journey on their own. It might take them 30-night flights to reach my home in Seattle and even more to arrive at the northern ends of their breeding range in Alaska. They orient themselves by the stars, earth's magnetism, and the location of the sun in the evening and morning. All these travels are done through internal knowledge.

I stared into the forest, listening to that wafting, ethereal and rich flute, and thinking there was no way I could make it home from here on my own. I'd planned to stay a week and then take a taxi back to the airport and a series of flights to reach Seattle. Along the way, someone else would guide me, feed me, and point me in the right direction. The notes seemed to penetrate the forest, graceful, lucid, poetic.

[Thrush Sound File](#)



Montane Forests in mountains of Western Panama where Swainson's Thrushes are common in April.

Photographs

ON THE TRAIL BY GARY BRILL



Baker Lake



Silvercrown Luina on icicle ridge trail (gls photo)



Baker Lake



Sleeping lady slipper (gls)



White Bluffs

Photographs

DONNA HAHN PHOTOS



Violet green swallow (on Sauer's mountain)



Penstemon on Hanford Reach – can you identify it?



Black widow spider



Damselfly on Hanford Reach

Photographs

Anita Elder:



Gadwall at Reifel Migratory Bird Sanctuary



Sandhill Crane at Reifel Migratory Bird Sanctuary



Frog at Nisqually



Marsh Wren at Gray's Harbor



Marmots at Palouse Falls



Wild Poppies near Elvas, Portugal

Townsend's Chipmunk by Jeff Brennan



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We welcome comments, ideas, information to share, original short articles, and photos. If you have information you'd like to have appear in the newsletter, please send it to Gordie (g.swartzman@gmail.com).