

THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

AN INTRODUCTORY TOUR

JULY 21-25, 2007

LEADERS:

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July 21 – 25, 2007

Leaders: Bob Sundstrom and Kim Eckert

Our 2007 “Pacific Northwest Introductory” tour once again proved that mid-July is an excellent time to enjoy the wildlife and natural beauty of this region. Participants on this five-day tour met at the Seattle airport, then drove directly to the rural south Puget Sound region. Here we birded the upper reaches of Scatter Creek and enjoyed a wonderful first dinner at leader Bob Sundstrom’s home in the country, while watching lots of bird activity in the yard. Purple Finches and Black-headed Grosbeaks competed for space at the feeders, while ten or more Rufous Hummingbirds sped back and forth among the flowers. California Quail brought their chicks to the yard, as Western Scrub-Jays and Cedar Waxwings glided back and forth among the serviceberry shrubs.

After another morning of birding in the same vicinity, we left for the Olympic Peninsula with a fine list of birds already under our belts: close views of Red-breasted Sapsucker and Pileated Woodpecker, and such western specialties as Hermit and Black-throated Gray warblers, Hutton’s Vireo, and Chestnut-backed Chickadee. Driving north along the lengthy fjord known as Hood Canal, we stopped at a mudflat busy with shorebirds, gulls, and terns. It was a bit farther north, at the mouth of Discovery Bay, that we hit our first bonanza of seabirds. A short walk down a lovely beach brought us views of endangered Marbled Murrelets, Common Murres, lots of flashy Pigeon Guillemots and heavy-billed Rhinoceros Auklets, and one much anticipated Tufted Puffin.

On the morning of Day 3, after a sumptuous breakfast in Port Angeles, we drove up the winding road toward the heights of Hurricane Ridge, a mile above the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Misty conditions along the route were ideal for grouse activity: including adults and chicks we saw more than 15 Sooty Grouse—an amazing run of luck for a species that can behave very shyly. The following day we once again saw several Sooty Grouse broods, this time along another mountain road. Sooty Grouse is part of the former Blue Grouse species, which was recently split into Sooty Grouse (*Dendragapus fuliginosa*), the darker Pacific form, and Dusky Grouse (*D. obscurus*) of the interior West.

As we started back down from the summit of Hurricane Ridge, another surprise awaited. Just off the roadside, perched atop a fallen tree, was a wholly unexpected Long-eared Owl! The owl looked as surprised as we did, but sat long enough for an excellent view of its narrow facial disks and tall “ear” tufts. This is one of very few confirmed records of this owl for the Olympic Mountains. A bit farther down the slope, the roadside shone with myriad wildflowers: paintbrush, bog orchids, pink elephant’s head, larkspur—a few of the hundred or more flowers, shrubs, and trees that made up the flora list for the tour.

Later that same day we birded the Strait shoreline near Port Angeles, where a couple of dozen Harlequin Ducks swam and dove nearby, Black Turnstones crept over log booms among harbor seals and Pigeon Guillemots, and red-billed Heermann’s Gulls still sported the silvery-white heads of breeding plumage. A few miles east near Dungeness, a high tide brought breeding plumage Black-bellied Plovers, Ruddy Turnstones, Long-billed Dowitchers, and a hunting Peregrine Falcon up onto roadside plowed fields.

On the final full day of our tour we ranged from the Quilcene River, where an American Dipper put on a great show, to Tongue Point west of Port Angeles, where a Wandering Tattler foraged over shoreline rocks as Bald Eagles and Northwest Crows flew over the tall conifers. A morning walk from the lodge turned up Red Crossbills, Olive-sided Flycatcher, and a very confiding red and yellow Western Tanager. The most entertaining sighting of the morning may have been the family of five raccoons foraging together in the shallows of Sequim Bay, up to their bellies in salt water, but with their tails held aloft, lest they get wet.

Before long we were ferrying across Puget Sound back toward Seattle, for flights home from a fondly remembered trip.

ITINERARY

Day 1, July 21The group met at 2:30 at Seatac Airport, and then drove directly south to Tumwater and checked in at the Guesthouse Suites. Shortly after, we were in Tenino, birding at Bob and Sally's house and along the upper reaches of Scatter Creek nearby. Dinner in Olympia at Anthony's Homeport in Olympia. Night at Guesthouse Suites.

Day 2, July 22After breakfast at the Guesthouse, we returned to Tenino and upper Scatter Creek, adding to the previous day's sightings in the area. By late morning we left Tenino, and had lunch in Tumwater. Driving drove north along Hood Canal, we stopped at a mudflat busy with shorebirds south of Shelton, then continued on to Diamond Pt. at the mouth of Discovery Bay where we saw five species of alcids. Dinner at Dantini's in Sequim. First of three nights at Sequim Bay Lodge.

Day 3, July 23 After an early breakfast at Chestnut Cottage in Pt. Angeles, we made a morning trip up from Pt. Angeles to Hurricane Ridge in Olympic National Park, stopping to bird and look at wildflowers along the 17 mile route to the 5200' summit. The misty conditions were perfect for grouse activity, and we saw at least 15 Sooty Grouse including hens and chicks and one male. Birded near the 5200' high point adjacent to the visitor center before starting back downhill, getting a great view of a wholly unexpected Long-eared Owl along the roadside! Then to Pt. Angeles for lunch at Chestnut Cottage. In Pt. Angeles, we birded at Ediz Hook in Port Angeles, before returning to bird roadside ponds in Sequim, the mouth of the Dungeness River, and along the Dungeness River. After dinner stopped to check for birds at John Wayne Marina on Sequim Bay. Second night at Sequim Bay Lodge.

Day 4, July 24Heading south after breakfast in Sequim, we drove to the Quilcene River hatchery, where a dipper proved a ready subject. Later drove the road up Mt. Walker in Olympic National Forest, walked out to the upper viewpoint, then birded back down. Picnic lunch at Falls View Campground. After a break at the lodge to await the tide's return, we birded drove west of Pt. Angeles to Salt Creek State Park at Tongue Pt., where a Wandering Tattler was a big surprise. Dinner in Pt. Angeles at Café Garden. Final night at Sequim Bay Lodge.

Day 5, July 25After breakfast in Sequim, we drove south to cross Hood Canal, bird at Salsbury County Park on Hood Canal, and then caught the Kingston-Edmonds ferry and birded from the bow. After a quick pass through downtown Seattle and a drive by the Pike Place Market, we arrived at Seatac Airport by midday, where the tour ended.

BIRDS

(sightings in *italics* are uncommon or of special note, in ***bold italics*** are very unusual)

LOONS:

Red-throated Loon – a couple offshore at Tongue Pt.

GREBES:

Pied-billed Grebe – at the Sequim roadside ponds

CORMORANTS:

Double-crested Cormorant

Pelagic Cormorant – the common cormorant around Pt. Angeles

BITTERN & HERONS:

Great Blue Heron

Green Heron – one perched atop a tree north of Quilcene

AMERICAN VULTURES

Turkey Vulture – a goodly number for the Olympic Peninsula, where uncommon

GEESE, SWANS & DUCKS:

Canada Goose

Mallard

Northern Pintail

Harlequin Duck – perhaps 25 or so along Ediz Hook, mostly in faded plumage

Surf Scoter

Hooded Merganser – one the last morning at the pond near Sequim Bay

Common Merganser

Ruddy Duck - at the Sequim roadside ponds

EAGLES, HAWKS & ALLIES:

Osprey

Bald Eagle – some great views of adults and immatures around Tongue Pt.

Northern Harrier

Sharp-shinned Hawk

Red-tailed Hawk

FALCONS:

American Kestrel – seen by some at Hurricane Ridge

Peregrine Falcon – on the ground near a flock of shorebirds at Dungeness

GALLINACEOUS BIRDS:

Sooty Grouse – Amazing luck with what is often a shy species: we saw close to 30 individuals, including all the chicks with their mothers. There were multiple broods along the road to Hurricane Ridge and the Mt.

Walker road. Recently the former Blue Grouse species was split into Sooty Grouse (*Dendragapus fuliginosa*), the darker Pacific form, and Dusky Grouse (*D. obscurus*) of the interior West.

California Quail – great views of adults and chicks in Sally and Bob's yard

RAILS & COOTS:

Virginia Rail – heard at a Tenino area marsh

American Coot - at the Sequim roadside ponds, with a tiny, fuzzy chick

PLOVERS:

Black-bellied Plover – some fine breeding plumage birds in a Dungeness plowed field
Semipalmated Plover
Killdeer

SANDPIPERS & ALLIES:

Greater Yellowlegs – barred, breeding plumage adults and one crisply patterned juvenile
Wandering Tattler – a first for the tour, we had splendid views of a breeding plumage adult
Spotted Sandpiper – along two fast flowing rivers
Whimbrel – a big surprise was a flock of 10 high overhead near Tenino
Ruddy Turnstone
Black Turnstone – a few along Ediz Hook
Sanderling
Western Sandpiper
Least Sandpiper
Short-billed Dowitcher
Long-billed Dowitcher
Red-necked Phalarope – some saw a flock of in the Strait of Juan de Fuca from Ediz Hook

JAEGERS, GULLS, & TERNS:

Bonaparte's Gull
Heermann's Gull – most still in vivid breeding plumage
Ring-billed Gull
California Gull – by the thousands
Western Gull
Glaucous-winged Gull – the common large gull of the region in summer
Caspian Tern

AUKS:

Common Murre – scoped from Diamond Pt.
Pigeon Guillemot – great views, including the bright red feet
Marbled Murrelet – seen on three days, some very good studies of a tiny, endangered seabird
Rhinoceros Auklet – wonderful views up close, including the “rhino” horn
Tufted Puffin – one flew into Diamond Pt. then back out a moment later

PIGEONS & DOVES:

Rock Pigeon
Band-tailed Pigeon
Mourning Dove

OWLS:

Long-eared Owl – The real stunning surprise of the tour was an adult sitting out on in the cool, cloudy conditions just below the summit of Hurricane Ridge Rd. This is one of very few confirmed records for the Olympic Mts.

HUMMINGBIRDS:

Rufous Hummingbird – lots of aerially jousting immatures at Sally and Bob's feeders

KINGFISHERS:

Belted Kingfisher

WOODPECKERS & ALLIES:

Red-breasted Sapsucker – fine, close view of this Pacific specialty along upper Scatter Ck.
Downy Woodpecker
Hairy Woodpecker – the dusky Northwest form seen during a walk from Sequim Bay Lodge
Northern Flicker – “red-shafted” form
Pileated Woodpecker – along upper Scatter Creek, back and forth close to the road

FLYCATCHERS & ALLIES

Olive-sided Flycatcher – seen during a morning walk from Sequim Bay Lodge
Willow Flycatcher – the “fitz-bew” calling *Empidonax* flycatcher
Pacific-slope Flycatcher – the high-pitched whistling flycatcher

VIREOS

Cassin’s Vireo – heard, seen briefly
Hutton’s Vireo – great view of this chubby vireo
Warbling Vireo – heard
Red-eyed Vireo – a rare breeder on the Olympic Peninsula where we saw it

JAYS, MAGPIES & CROWS:

Gray Jay – upper Scatter Ck. and Hurricane Ridge
Steller’s Jay – surprisingly shy for a common bird of the region
Western Scrub-Jay – around Tenino only
American Crow
Northwestern Crow – small, hoarse crows of the intertidal zone; especially at Tongue Pt.
Common Raven

SWALLOWS & MARTINS:

Tree Swallow
Violet-green Swallow
Northern Rough-winged Swallow
Cliff Swallow
Barn Swallow

TITMICE through CREEPERS:

Black-capped Chickadee
Chestnut-backed Chickadee – good views of this Pacific specialty
Bushtit
Red-breasted Nuthatch
Brown Creeper – close views in the tall firs near Tenino

WRENS & DIPPERS:

Bewick’s Wren – a family group along upper Scatter Ck.
Winter Wren – seen nicely in the deep woods near Tenino and Hurricane Ridge
Marsh Wren – elusive
American Dipper – nice scope studies of one foraging along the Quilcene River

KINGLETS:

Golden-crowned Kinglet

THRUSHES & ALLIES:

Swainson’s Thrush – singing, seen briefly
American Robin
Varied Thrush – seen briefly from Bob’s van; singing on Mt. Walker

STARLINGS & ALLIES:

European Starling

WAXWINGS:

Cedar Waxwing

WOOD WARBLERS

Orange-crowned Warbler

Yellow-rumped Warbler

Black-throated Gray Warbler – good views near Tenino

Townsend's Warbler – along the Mt. Walker Rd.

Hermit Warbler – definitely a surprise to see this in the Ritter family woods near Tenino

MacGillivray's Warbler – calling, but unwilling to come into view

Common Yellowthroat

Wilson's Warbler

TANAGERS:

Western Tanager – some nice views of colorful males

SPARROWS & ALLIES:

Spotted Towhee

Chipping Sparrow – very local in the region, seen along the Tenino woods

Song Sparrow – of the dark *morphna* subspecies

White-crowned Sparrow – of the sweet singing *pugetensis* subspecies

Dark-eyed Junco – the “Oregon” type

GROSBEAKS & BUNTINGS:

Black-headed Grosbeak – good views at Bob and Sally’s feeders and behind Sequim Bay Lodge

BLACKBIRDS & ALLIES:

Red-winged Blackbird

Brewer's Blackbird

Brown-headed Cowbird

FINCHES:

Purple Finch – nice views of these bright cranberry finches at Bob and Sally’s

House Finch

Red Crossbill – mostly heard flying over; seen atop a tall tree during an early morning walk from Sequim Bay Lodge

Pine Siskin – excellent views of these little finches

American Goldfinch

Evening Grosbeak – seen by Laura on a tree top

OLD WORLD SPARROWS:

House Sparrow

MAMMALS, HERPS & OTHER ANIMALS:

Raccoon – at John Wayne Marina and along the road

“Black-tailed” form of Mule Deer

Eastern Cottontail

Townsend’s Chipmunk – seen at Bob and Sally’s and at Hurricane Ridge

Harbor Seal – ubiquitous along the marine edge

Harbor Porpoise – seen briefly off Diamond Pt.

Western Terrestrial Garter Snake

Common Garter Snake

Rough-skinned Newt

Banana Slug

SELECTED WILDFLOWERS AND OTHER PLANTS

(seen along Hurricane Ridge road, Mt. Walker Rd., and other sites)

FLOWERS

LILY FAMILY

Avalanche Lily (*Erythronium montanum*) - white

Columbia Lily (*Lilium columbianum*) - orange

Nodding Onion (*Allium cernuum*) - pink

Western Trillium (*Trillium ovatum*) – white/pink

ORCHID FAMILY

White Bog Orchid (*Platanthera dilatata*) - white

SAXIFRAGE FAMILY

Trefoil Foamflower (*Tiarella trifoliata*) – white

BUTTERCUP FAMILY

Western Buttercup (*Ranunculus occidentalis*) - yellow

Rockslide Larkspur (*Delphinium glareosum*) - purple

Pale Larkspur (*Delphinium glaucum*) – purple/blue

Red/Western Baneberry (*Actaea rubra*) – white flowers; red berries

ROSE FAMILY

Nootka Rose (*Rosa nutkana*) - pink

Fan-leaf Cinquefoil (*Potentilla flabelligolia*) - yellow

Western Thimbleberry (*Rubus parviflora*) - white

Dwarf Bramble (*Rubus lasiococcus*) - white

Salmonberry (*Rubus spectabilis*) – pink; salmon berries

Ocean-spray (*Holodiscus discolor*) – creamy white

Goatsbeard (*Aruncus dioicus*) – creamy white

Douglas’ Spirea (*Spirea douglasii*) - pink

Woods Strawberry (*Fragaria vesca*) - white

PEA FAMILY

Large-leaved Lupine (*Lupinus polyphllus burkei*) - blue

Western Hedysarum (*Hedysarum occidentale*) – red/purple

Bird’s-foot Trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*) – yellow

White Sweet-clover (*Melilotus alba*) - white

MUSTARD FAMILY

American Searocket (*Cakile edentula*) – pink

EVENING PRIMROSE FAMILY

Fireweed (*Epilobium/Chamerion angustifolium*) - pink
Fireweed (*Epilobium/Chamerion angustifolium*) - pink
Red/Broad-leaved Willowherb (*Epilobium/Chamerion latifolium*) – rose/pink

PARSLEY FAMILY

Cow-parsnip (*Heracleum lanatum*) – white
Sharptooth Angelica (*Angelica arguta*) – white
Queen Anne’s Lace (*Daucus carota*) – white

MINT FAMILY

Self-heal (*Prunella vulgaris*) - purple
Cooley’s/Great Hedge-Nettle (*Stachys chamisonis cooleyae*) – red/purple
Mexican Hedge-Nettle (*Stachys mexicana*) – pink/red

MALLOW FAMILY

Cheeseweed/buttonweed (*Malva neglecta*) – pink

FIGWORT FAMILY

Elephant’s Head (*Pedicularis groenlandica*) – pink
Foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*) – white/pink/purple
Scarlet/Common Red Paintbrush (*Castilleja miniata*) – red (variable)
Yellow/Common Western Monkeyflower (*Mimulus guttatus*) - yellow
Cusick’s Speedwell (*Veronica cusickii*) – blue

PINK FAMILY

Bladder Campion/Catchfly (*Silene vulgaris*) – white

MADDER FAMILY

Fragrant Bedstraw (*Galium triflorum*)

STONECROP FAMILY

Broad-leaved Sedum (*Sedum spathulifolium*) - yellow

HEATH FAMILY

Salal (*Gaultheria shallon*) – white/pink
Red Mountain Heather (*Phyllodoce empetriformis*) - red
Pinedrops (*Pterospora andromedea*) – yellow

WINTERGREEN FAMILY

Sidebells (*Orthilia secunda*) – white/yellow-green
Common Pink Pyrola (*Pyrola asarifolia*) – pink/purple
Pipsissewa/Prince’s Pine (*Chimaphila umbellata*) – pink

SUNFLOWER FAMILY

Common Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*) - white
Pearly-everlasting (*Alaphalis margaritacea*) - white
Woolly Sunflower (*Eriophyllum lanatum*) - yellow
Alpine Aster (*Aster alpigenus*) - purple
Northern Wormwood (*Artemisia campestris*) – white/green
Ox-eye-daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*) - white
Cat’s Ear (*Hypochaeris radicata*) - yellow
Indian (or Edible) Thistle (*Cirsium edule*) - red

Canada Thistle (*Cirsium arvense*) – pink/purple
Puget Sound or Pacific Gumplant (*Grindelia integrifolia*) – yellow
Rayless/Nodding Arnica (*Arnica parryi*) - yellow
Canada Goldenrod (*Solidago multiradiata*) – yellow
Common Tansy (*Tanacetum vulgare*) – yellow
Chickory (*Cichorium intybus*) – blue
Pineapple Weed (*Matricaria discoidea/matricariodes*) - yellow

ST. JOHN’S WORT FAMILY

St.-John’s-Wort (*Hypericum perforatum*)

ARUM FAMILY

Skunk Cabbage (*Lysichiton americanus*) – yellow

SNAPDRAGON FAMILY

Woolly/Common Mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*) - yellow

BUCKWHEAT FAMILY

American Bistort (*Polygonum bistortoides*) - white

VALERIAN FAMILY

Sitka Valerian (*Valeriana sitchensis*) – white/pink

HONEYSUCKLE FAMILY

Twinflower (*Linna borealis*) - pink

NETTLE FAMILY

Stinging Nettle (*Urtica dioica*) – green

SHRUBS

Sitka Mountain Ash (*Sorbus sitchensis*) – white/cream
Pacific Rhododendron (*Rhododendron macrophyllum*) - pink
White-flowered Rhododendron (*Rhododendron albiflorum*) - white
Red Elderberry (*Sambucus racemosa pubens*) – white flower/red berry
Blue Elderberry – (*Sambucus caerulea*) – white flower/blue berry
Red Huckleberry (*Vaccinium parvifolium*) – pink flower/red berry
Evergreen Huckleberry (*Vaccinium ovatum*) – white flower
Hairy Manzanita (*Arctostaphylos columbiana*) – pinkish flower/blackish berry
Scot’s Broom (*Cytisus scoparius*) - yellow
Cascade Oregon Grape (*Mahonia/Berberis nervosa*) – yellow
Tall Oregon Grape (*Mahonia/Berberis aquifolium*) – yellow
Mock Orange (*Philadelphus lewisii*) – white
Sitka Alder (*Alnus viridis*)
Beaked Hazel (*Corylus cornuta*)
Black Hawthorn (*Crataegus douglasii*)
Western Serviceberry (*Amelanchier alnifolia*)

TREES

Western Red Cedar (*Thuja plicata*)
Grand Fir (*Abies grandis*)
Subalpine Fir (*Abies lasiocarpa*)
Sitka Spruce (*Picea sitchensis*)
Western White Pine (*Pinus monticola*)

Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*)
Garry/Oregon White Oak (*Quercus garryana*)
Red Alder (*Alnus rubra*)
Pacific Madrone (*Arbutus menziesii*)
Bigleaf Maple (*Acer macrophyllum*)
Vine Maple (*Acer circinatum*)
Oregon Ash (*Fraxinus latifolia*)
Black Cottonwood (*Populus balsamifera*)