

## THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST AN INTRODUCTORY TOUR

July 6-10, 2005

Leader: Bob Sundstrom

*Early July marks an excellent point in the season to get to know the natural history of Washington's Olympic Peninsula, the primary geographic focus of the five-day Pacific Northwest Introductory Tour. The 2005 tour added a new wrinkle, beginning the trip with a first afternoon and the following morning of birding at the south end of Puget Sound, primarily along upper Scatter Creek and on Rock Candy Mt. in the Black Hills. This geographic refinement of the tour got us started with great views of a very nice array of birds. Five species of woodpeckers were seen in that short period, including Red-breasted Sapsucker and Pileated Woodpecker. MacGillivray's, Hermit, Black-throated Gray, Wilson's, and Orange-crowned warblers were all seen very well (among ten warbler species for the tour), as were Hutton's and Warbling vireos, Willow and Pacific-slope flycatchers, and lots of colorful Black-headed Grosbeaks and Purple Finches. A diminutive Winter Wren sat and sang in the open from a low perch, and Rufous Hummingbirds buzzed by our faces to flowers and feeders. A tiny Northern Pygmy-Owl sat atop a fir tree for lengthy scope views, as it was scolded by Chestnut-backed Chickadees and other small birds. Soon, after a relaxed and scenic drive along the shore of several marine bays lined with tall evergreens, we reached the Olympic Peninsula on the second day of the tour.*

*With three nights in Sequim at the foot of the Olympic Mts., we were well situated to explore the northeast part of the Olympic Peninsula. A drive to Hurricane Ridge at 5200' in the Olympics revealed a wondrous show of mountain wildflowers, which changed composition as we gained elevation. In one place there might be hundreds of White Bog Orchids interspersed with pink Elephant's Heads and blue larkspurs, red columbines and yellow monkey-flowers. Rock faces glowed with blooming, yellow stonecrops and fragrant Western Wallflower, and the damp meadow below these same rocks sparkled with Magenta Paintbrush, blue lupines, and heavily scented Sitka Valerian. Birds along this brilliant floral pathway included a male "Sooty" Blue Grouse, nibbling tender new greenery right at the roadside; a pair of Townsend's Solitaire's feeding fledglings; and brilliant black-and-yellow Townsend's Warblers, with a continuous backing of flute-like Hermit Thrush and Varied Thrush songs. A drive up into the Quilcene Range was also memorable. The Washington State Flower, Pacific Rhododendron, was still in bloom up around 2500', and new birds included an American Dipper preening atop a mid-stream boulder and a Hammond's Flycatcher scoped at eye-level in the massive conifers.*

*The marine scenery and birding opportunities of the Olympic Peninsula make a great complement to its mountain birds and flowers. The prevalence of alcids in the region is well known, and we were not disappointed. Pairs of tiny, dark Marbled Murrelets were scoped readily from shore and seen near the bow on a ferry crossing. Thousands of Rhinoceros Auklets nest nearby, and these distinctive members of the auk family were seen in considerable numbers. Many were seen close enough to pick out the finer details of their white facial plumes and the "horn" (for which the species is named) at the base of the massive orange bill. Pigeon Guillemots were present in force, flashing red feet in flight in contrast to their black feathered bodies. Tufted Puffins stole the show, however, swimming and diving near shore, preening their lanky bleach-blond head plumes with their enormous, colorful bills. The marine shoreline of the Strait of Juan de Fuca and the nearby bays also showed off some of its ample nesting Bald Eagle population, as we scoped pairs of adults as well as two very dark young Bald Eagles, still sitting close to their gargantuan stick nest.*

*The Pacific Northwest Introductory tour comprised a memorable five days of good company, birds, wildflowers, stunning Northwest scenery, great food, and an easy-going tour pace.*

## ITINERARY

**Day 1, July 6:** The 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 Budd Bay Café. Night at Guesthouse Suites.

**Day 2, July 7:** After 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 were driving to Capitol State Forest, entering on the Rock Candy Mt. side, where we birded in the tall Douglas-firs and picnicked. Leaving Capitol Forest, the drive took us through McCleary and north along Hood Canal. A drive to the top of Mt. Walker gave us a spectacular view of the Puget Sound region. Later birding stops included the Quilcene hatchery and Diamond Pt. Dinner at Xanadu Grill; first of four nights at Sequim Bay Lodge.

**Day 3, July 8:** Getting an early start from Sequim, we made a morning trip up from Pt. Angeles to Hurricane Ridge in Olympic National Park, stopping to have a picnic breakfast before birding and look at wildflowers along the 17 mile route to the 5200' summit. Mist and fog developed by mid-morning. After lunch in Pt. Angeles we birded at Ediz Hook in Port Angeles, before returning to Olympic National Park and driving far enough up the Hurricane Ridge road to see a Blue Grouse. After dinner at Gwennie's in Sequim we drove some of the Sequim-Dungeness back roads, including a stop at John Wayne Marina on Sequim Bay. Second night at Sequim Bay Lodge.

**Day 4, July 9:** Heading south after breakfast in Sequim, we returned to Diamond Pt., finding Tufted Puffins feeding at the point. We then spent the bulk of the morning birding south of Quilcene at the hatchery and along the road up Mt. Walker in Olympic National Forest. After lunch at the Three Crabs in Dungeness, we birded the tidal edge, took a break at the lodge to await the tide's return, then returned to the Dungeness shoreline. Later birding at the roadside ponds near Sequim and a walk along the cliff at Clallam County Park/Dungeness NWR. Dinner at Xanadu. Second night at Sequim Bay Lodge.

**Day 5, July 10:** After breakfast in Sequim, we departed for Port Townsend, where we caught a ferry to Whidbey Island (the Keystone Ferry). After a bit of birding at Penn Cove on Whidbey, we continued south on the island and caught the ferry from Clinton on Whidbey Is. to Mukilteo on the mainland to the east, and then drove on to Seatac by midday, where the tour ended.

**BIRDLIST** (sightings in *italics* are of special note, in ***bold italics*** are rare)

**LOONS:**

Common Loon – at Ediz Hook and near Dungeness Spit, birds in breeding plumage

**GREBES:**

Pied-billed Grebe – at the roadside ponds near Sequim

**CORMORANTS:**

Double-crested Cormorant

Pelagic Cormorant – smaller cormorants showing a white flank patch

**BITTERN & HERONS:**

Great Blue Heron – a daily sight along the water's edge

Green Heron – one flew by near Scatter Creek

**AMERICAN VULTURES**

Turkey Vulture

**GEESE, SWANS & DUCKS:**

Canada Goose

Gadwall

Mallard

Harlequin Duck – Our first sighting was an immature in the Quilcene River just below the hatchery, nearby where a pair had nested. On Ediz Hook, we saw at least thirty more post-breeding Harleys as the roosted on log booms or swam near shore.

Surf Scoter – great views of a male at Ediz Hook, where it may have summered

White-winged Scoter – a male on the Diamond Pt. lake and another near Dungeness NWR

Ruddy Duck – very spiffy males with bright blue bills at the roadside ponds

**EAGLES, HAWKS & ALLIES:**

Osprey – along Hood Canal

Bald Eagle – The first eagles of the tour were two fresh immatures near their gigantic nest near Dungeness. We later saw at least eight adults, some sitting or flying in pairs.

Northern Harrier – Great views of local nesting adults near Sequim-Dungeness. A handsome gray male flew very near the road near Dungeness NWR, oblivious to the onlookers as it hunted over the fields.

Sharp-shinned Hawk – a fly-over

Cooper's Hawk – ditto

Red-tailed Hawk – a daily sight, of the darker Pacific Northwest type

**FALCONS:**

American Kestrel – a scarce nester in western Washington, we saw two males, one very close to the road between Sequim and Dungeness

Peregrine Falcon – on sat perched near the mouth of the Dungeness River, watching over the shorebirds and ducks nearby

**GALLINACEOUS BIRDS:**

Blue Grouse – an excellent view of a male right on the edge of the road up to Hurricane Ridge

California Quail – seen several places, including in Bob and Sally's yard

**RAILS & COOTS:**

Virginia Rail – heard at extremely close range and seen moving the reeds, but not quite in the open along Scatter Ck.

American Coot

**PLOVERS:**

Black-bellied Plover – a few with dowitchers at Ediz Hook and the Dungeness tideflats  
Semipalmated Plover – briefly on the Dungeness tideflats  
Killdeer

**SANDPIPERS & ALLIES:**

Black Oystercatcher – wonderful views of one along Ediz Hook, with a close scope view of its red bill and yellow iris  
Greater Yellowlegs – a couple on Sequim Bay  
Western Sandpiper – small flocks of adults along Ediz Hook and the Dungeness tideflats  
Least Sandpiper – at the same locations as the Westerns  
Long-billed Dowitcher – at Ediz Hook and Dungeness, still in nearly full breeding plumage

**JAEGERS, GULLS, & TERNS:**

Heermann's Gull – in very flashy breeding plumage with dark red bills  
Ring-billed Gull – a second year immature  
California Gull – heavily molting non-adults and few adults  
Western Gull – along Ediz Hook and at Dungeness  
Glaucous-winged Gull – the common large gull of the tour  
Caspian Tern – along the water's edge throughout the tour

**AUKS:**

Common Murre – first seen at Diamond Pt., later along most of the marine edge  
Pigeon Guillemot – lots of great views, from Diamond Pt. to the last day ferry crossings  
*Marbled Murrelet* – Good scope views at Diamond Pt. and Ediz Hook, and at least fifteen more of this diminutive dark seabirds were seen during the Pt. Townsend to Whidbey Is. ferry crossing. An endangered species.  
Rhinoceros Auklet – an abundant bird on the waters we birded near, as well as on the Keystone ferry crossing  
*Tufted Puffin* – It took two trips to Diamond Pt. (where one can see the puffins nesting island offshore), but on the second trip we had great scope views of two full breeding plumage puffins, with wonderful bleach-blond head plumes and huge orange bills.

**PIGEONS & DOVES:**

Rock Pigeon (formerly Rock Dove)  
Band-tailed Pigeon – the large, dark forest pigeons were seen several places, including along Scatter Creek, in Capitol Forest, and in Olympic National Park  
Mourning Dove – around Tenino and around Sequim-Dungeness

**OWLS:**

*Northern Pygmy-Owl* – At a spot near Tenino where we had initially stopped the van to inspect a huge Banana Slug in the road, a pygmy-owl came in to tooting out of the tall Douglas-firs, and sat for lengthy scope views as it was mobbed by chickadees and other small birds.

**SWIFTS:**

Vaux's Swift – seen best near the Olympic National Park visitor at the foot of the park

**HUMMINGBIRDS:**

Rufous Hummingbird – lots of immatures at Bob's house, visiting the feeder and *Monarda*

**KINGFISHERS:**

Belted Kingfisher

**WOODPECKERS & ALLIES:**

Red-breasted Sapsucker – an adult and a juvenile along upper Scatter Creek  
Downy Woodpecker – along upper Scatter Ck.  
Hairy Woodpecker – seen flying near Scatter Ck.; heard along the Quilcene River  
Northern Flicker – of the “red-shafted” form  
Pileated Woodpecker – one scoped as it worked steadily on a cedar tree along upper Scatter Ck.

**FLYCATCHERS & ALLIES**

Olive-sided Flycatcher – heard behind the Sequim Bay Lodge  
Willow Flycatcher – good views; calling regularly near Scatter Ck. and the Lodge  
Hammond's Flycatcher – an excellent scope view along the road up Mt. Walker  
Pacific-slope Flycatcher – good study of another western specialty

**VIREOS**

Cassin's Vireo – a couple seen foraging and darting among the branches of tall trees  
Hutton's Vireo – wonderful, close views of this chunky, little vireo  
Warbling Vireo – terrific view of an alarmed bird raising its crown feathers

**JAYS, MAGPIES & CROWS:**

Gray Jay – a family group at a lower overlook on the Hurricane Ridge Rd.  
Steller's Jay  
Western Scrub-Jay – around Tenino, especially in Bob and Sally's yard  
American Crow  
Northwestern Crow – along the waterfront of Sequim and Discovery Bays  
Common Raven

**SWALLOWS & MARTINS:**

Purple Martin – A recent local conservation success story, we saw martins on the Olympia waterfront, as well as on the Dungeness waterfront and at the Pt. Townsend ferry landing.  
Tree Swallow  
Violet-green Swallow – good, diagnostic views of white extending up the sides of the tail  
Northern Rough-winged Swallow  
Cliff Swallow  
Barn Swallow

**TITMICE through CREEPERS:**

Black-capped Chickadee  
Chestnut-backed Chickadee – seen nicely, especially when mobbing a pygmy-owl  
Bushtit – heard at a couple of locations  
Red-breasted Nuthatch  
Brown Creeper

**WRENS & DIPPERS:**

Bewick's Wren – seen along upper Scatter Ck., heard widely  
Winter Wren – Just below our picnic spot in Capitol State Forest, we had a wonderful view of this tiny, cedar colored wren as it perched on a series of tree roots and sang.  
Marsh Wren – heard  
American Dipper – A second trip to the Quilcene hatchery turned up a dipper preening on a boulder in the middle of the Quilcene River.

**KINGLETS:**

Golden-crowned Kinglet – mostly heard singing or calling

**THRUSHES & ALLIES:**

*Townsend's Solitaire* – We were fortunate to see two adults feeding a young bird, right along the roadside below Hurricane Ridge. A scarce nester in the area.

Swainson's Thrush – Its beautiful song was often heard, and we had excellent views of a couple along upper Scatter Creek.

Hermit Thrush – heard many times along the roads up Mt. Walker and to Hurricane Ridge

American Robin

Varied Thrush – heard singing and seen flitting off the road

**STARLINGS & ALLIES:**

European Starling

**WAXWINGS:**

Cedar Waxwing

**WOOD WARBLERS**

Orange-crowned Warbler – nice views along upper Scatter Ck.

Yellow-rumped Warbler – stunning male “Audubon’s” Warblers below Hurricane Ridge

Black-throated Gray Warbler – scope views of a singing male near Tenino

Townsend's Warbler – great views of two males along the Hurricane Ridge road

*Hermit Warbler* – nice looks at a striking male, with all yellow face and crown and black throat

MacGillivray's Warbler – this typical skulker was seen very nicely along upper Scatter Ck.

Common Yellowthroat

Wilson's Warbler – nice views along upper Scatter Ck.

*Yellow-breasted Chat* – one sang along upper Scatter Ck., where it is well out of its typical range

**TANAGERS:**

Western Tanager – flashy, red-faced yellow males seen extremely well

**SPARROWS & ALLIES:**

Spotted Towhee

Chipping Sparrow – a local very nester in western Washington, seen near Tenino

Savannah Sparrow

Song Sparrow

White-crowned Sparrow

Dark-eyed Junco

**GROSBEAKS & BUNTINGS:**

Black-headed Grosbeak – lots of nice views of this distinctive, large-billed passerine

**BLACKBIRDS & ALLIES:**

Red-winged Blackbird

Brewer's Blackbird

Brown-headed Cowbird

**FINCHES:**

Purple Finch – good numbers at Bob’s feeders, males and females and immatures

House Finch

American Goldfinch

**OLD WORLD SPARROWS:**

House Sparrow

## **MAMMALS, HERPS & SELECTED INVERTEBRATES:**

Elk – two cow Elk near the road in the Tenino woods  
Black-tailed Deer  
Eastern Cottontail  
Townsend’s Chipmunk – seen best at Bob’s feeders  
Douglas’s Squirrel  
Harbor Seal – ubiquitous along the marine edge  
Harbor Porpoise – seen during the ferry crossing, close to Whidbey Island  
Banana Slug – a memorable denizen of northwest forests

## **SELECTED WILDFLOWERS AND OTHER PLANTS**

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

### **LILY FAMILY**

Columbia Lily (*Lilium columbianum*) - *orange*  
Scalloped Onion (*Allium crenulatum*) – *white/pink/purple*  
Chocolate Lily (*Fritillaria affinis*) – *brownish purple & yellow face*  
Western Bronze Bells (*Stenanthium occidentale*) – *greenish, streaked with purple*  
Giant False Hellebore (*Veratrum viride*) - *greenish*  
Sticky False Asphodel (*Tofieldia glutinosa*) - *white*  
Nodding Onion (*Alium cernuum*) - *pink*

### **ORCHID FAMILY**

White Bog Orchid (*Plananthera dilatata*) - *white*  
Slender Bog Orchid (*Plananthera stricta*) – *greenish white*  
Spotted Coral-root (*Corallorhiza maculata*) – *white with reddish spots*

### **ROSE FAMILY**

Nootka Rose (*Rosa nutkana*) - *pink*  
Western Thimbleberry (*Rubus parviflora*) - *white*  
Ocean-spray (*Holodiscus discolor*) – *creamy white*  
Goatsbeard (*Aruncus dioicus*) – *creamy white*  
Douglas’ Spirea (*Spirea douglasii*) - *pink*

### **SAXIFRAGE FAMILY**

Spotted Saxifrage (*Saxifraga bronchialis*) - *white*

### **BUTTERCUP FAMILY**

Sitka Columbine (*Aquilegia formosa*) - *red*  
Western Buttercup (*Ranunculus occidentalis*) - *yellow*  
Rockslide Larkspur (*Delphinium glareosum*) - *purple*

### **PRIMROSE FAMILY**

American Starflower (*Trientalis borealis*) - *white*

### **WATERLEAF FAMILY**

Narrow-sepaled Phacelia (*Phacelia leptosepala*) - *white*

### **STONECROP FAMILY**

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

### **MUSTARD FAMILY**

Western Wallflower (*Erysimum capitatum*) - *yellow*

**PARSLEY FAMILY**

Martindale's Lomatium (*Lomatium martindalei*) - *yellow*

Cow-parsnip (*Heracleum lanatum*) - *white*

**HEATH FAMILY**

Salal (*Gaultheria shallon*) – *white/pink*

Red Mountain Heather (*Phyllodoce empetrifomis*) - *red*

**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?*

Silverback Luina (*Luina hypoleuca*) – *white/cream*

Ox-eye-daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*) - *white*

Orange Hawkweed (*Hieracium aurantiacum*) - *orange*

Cat's Ear (*Hypochaeris radicata*) - *yellow*

Nipplewort (*Lansana communis*) - *yellow*

Indian (or Edible) Thistle (*Cirsium edule*) - *red*

Canada Thistle (*Cirsium arvense*) – *pink/purple*

Puget Sound or Pacific Gumplant (*Grindelia integrifolia*) – *yellow*

Heartleaf Arnica (*Arnica cordifolia*) – *yellow*

**BUCKWHEAT FAMILY**

American Bistort (*Polygonum bistortoides*) - *white*

**FIGWORT FAMILY**

Elephant's Head (*Pedicularis groenlandica*) - *pink*

Foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*) – *white/pink/purple*

Scarlet Paintbrush (*Castilleja miniata*) – *red (variable)*

Harsh Paintbrush (*Castilleja hispida*) – *red (variable)*

Magenta Paintbrush (*Castilleja parviflora*) – *pinkish purple*

Yellow/Common Western Monkeyflower (*Mimulus guttatus*) - *yellow*

Broad-leaved Penstemon (*Penstemon ovatus*) - *blue*

Davidson's Penstemon (*Penstemon davidsonii*) – *purple/blue*

**SAXIFRAGE FAMILY**

Fringecup (*Tellima grandiflora*) - *white*

**PHLOX FAMILY**

Spreading Phlox (*Phlox diffusa*) - *white*

**EVENING PRIMROSE FAMILY**

Common Evening Primrose (*Oenothera biennis*) - *yellow*

Fireweed (*Epilobium angustifolium*) - *pink*

Jeffrey's Shooting Star (*Dodecatheon jeffreyi*) – *purple/pink*

**HONEYSUCKLE FAMILY**

Twinflower (*Linna borealis*) - *pink*

**MINT FAMILY**

Self-heal (*Prunella vulgaris*) - *purple*

Cooley's Hedge-Nettle (*Stachys cooleyae*) – *red/purple*

**PEA FAMILY**

Broad-leaf Lupine (*Lupinus latifolius*) - *blue*

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

**BLADDERWORT FAMILY**

Common Butterwort (*Pinguicula vulgaris*) – *purple/blue*

**INDIAN PIPE FAMILY**

Indian-Pipe (*Monotropa uniflora*) – *white*

**FUMITORY FAMILY**

Pacific Bleeding Heart (*Dicentra formosa*) - *pink*

**SELECTED 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*

Kinnikinnick (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*) – *pink flower/red berry*

Hairy Manzanita (*Arctostaphylos Columbiana*) – *pinkish flower/blackish berry*