

Washington Birder

2010 Big Day Reports

Asotin

6 February 2010; 7:30am-5pm.

Species Totals: 56/56 (Team/Shared)

Team: Marv Breece 56, Ken Knittle 56.

Traveled: ? miles by car.

Visiting: Alpowa Creek mouth, Clarkston, Swallow's Park, Asotin, Fields Spring State Park, Montgomery Ridge Rd.

Species of note:

Rare/Unusual: 2 different Merlins.

Early: Marsh Wren.

Stake Out: Western Screech-Owl.

Douglas

6 March 2010; 5:45am-2:30pm.

Species Totals: 74/72 (Team/Shared)

Team: Jon Isacoff, Tim O'Brien.

Traveled: 152 miles by car, 1 miles by foot.

Visiting: Leahy Junction, Waterville Plateau, Bridgeport Bar, Wells Wildlife Area, Central Ferry Canyon, Moses Coulee.

Species of note:

Rare/Unusual: Barrow's Goldeneye, Virginia Rail, Northern Pygmy-Owl, Clark's Nutcracker, Brown Creeper, Bewick's Wren, Varied Thrush, Common Redpoll.

Early: Eared Grebe.

Species Missed: Golden Eagle, Merlin, Ring-billed Gull, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Mountain Bluebird.

Stake Out: Greater Sage Grouse, Pacific Loon.

Special Interest: Weather Conditions: 25-52 Degrees, Sunny, No Wind.

Skamania

6 March 2010; 6:30am-5pm.

Species Totals: 57/57 (Team/Shared)

Team: MaryFrances Mathis 57, Tom Mansfield 57, Ken Knittle 57.

Traveled: ? miles by car, 0.75 mile by foot.

Visiting: Marble Rd., Skamania Landing, North Bonneville, Hamilton Island, Bonneville Dam, Stevenson, Drano Lake, Underwood, Spring Creek Fish Hatchery.

Species of note:

Vagrant: Cackling Goose, Mountain Bluebird, Western Meadowlark.

Rare/Unusual: Tufted Duck.

Early: Tree Swallow.

Species Missed: Northern Shrike—(Didn't hike far enough).

Lewis

1 May 2010; 6am-6pm.

Species Totals: 78/78 (Team/Shared)

Team: Tom Mansfield 78, Ken Knittle 78.

Traveled: ? miles by car.

Visiting: Centralia Steam Plant Ponds, Riffe Lake, White Pass.

Species of note:

Rare/Unusual: Blue-winged Teal, Red-necked Grebe, Sora, Townsend's Solitaire.

Pierce

8 May 2010; 5:30am-dusk.

Species Totals: 130/? (Team/Shared)

Team: Wynne Brown, Bruce LaBar, Ryan Merrill, Annie Meyer, Peter Wimberger, Charlie Wright.

Traveled: ? miles by car.

Visiting: Purdy Spit, Titlow Beach Park, Point Defiance, Spanaway Marsh, McChord, Thirteenth Division Prairie /Fort Lewis, Kreger Lake, Paradise.

Species of note:

Rare/Unusual: Clark's Grebe, Nashville Warbler, Dusky Flycatcher, American Bittern.

Late: Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Golden-crowned Sparrow.

Species Missed: Vesper Sparrow.

Stake Out: Western Scrub-Jay, Western Bluebird, Western Meadowlark, "Streaked" Horned Lark.

Washington State

14 May 2010; 12am-12pm.

Species Totals: 197/? (Team/Shared)

Team: Ryan Merrill, Ryan Shaw, Michael Woodruff, Charlie Wright.

Traveled: 755 miles by car.

Visiting: Rimrock Lake, Bear Canyon, White Pass, Tieton River, Toppenish NWR, Satus Pass, Brooks Memorial Park, Goldendale, Lyle-Balch Lake, Ridgefield NWR, Chehalis, Rainbow Falls State Park, Raymond, Tokeland, Grayland, Westport, Johns River Wildlife Area.

Species of note:

Vagrant: Sage Thrasher, Western Kingbird (Skamania County).

Rare/Unusual: White-headed Woodpecker, Harlequin Duck.

Late: Brant, Pacific Golden-Plover, Red Knot.

Species Missed: Tundra Swan, Cackling Goose, Ruddy Duck, Common Merganser, Hooded Merganser, Caspian Tern, Semipalmated Plover, Western Screech-Owl, any Accipiter, Red-breasted Sapsucker, Mountain Bluebird, Swainson's Thrush, Pygmy Nuthatch, Hutton's Vireo, Bushtit, Say's Phoebe, Gray Flycatcher, Golden-crowned Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, Lincoln Sparrow.

Stake Out: Long-eared Owl, Flammulated Owl, Black-chinned Hummingbird, Lesser Goldfinch, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Acorn Woodpecker, Hermit Warbler.

Pend Oreille

2 July 2010; 6:30am-3pm.

Species Totals: 106/106 (Team/Shared)

Team: Jon Isacoff 106, Gina Sheridan 106, Michael Woodruff 106.

Traveled: 100 miles by car, 1 miles by foot.

Visiting: Allen Road, Scotia Valley, Newport, Cusick, Pend Oreille River, River Bend Pond, Flying Goose Ranch, Calispell Lake, Tacoma Creek Road, Sportsman's Pond.

Species of note:

Rare/Unusual: American Bittern, American Three-toed Woodpecker, White-breasted Nuthatch, Clay-colored Sparrow.

Species Missed: Northern Shoveler, Hooded Merganser, Common Merganser, Black-capped Chickadee, Brown Creeper, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Townsend's Warbler.

Walla Walla *(New Washington State July Record)*

3 July 2010; 4:15am-11pm.

Species Totals: 136/136 (Team/Shared)

Team: MerryLynn Denny 136, Mike Denny 136.

Traveled: 247 miles by car, 2 miles by foot.

Visiting: Wallula Gap, Walla Walla River Delta, Tyson Ponds, Lowden, Biscuit Ridge Road.

Species of note:

Rare/Unusual: Clark's Grebe, Peregrine Falcon, Great Gray Owl, Turkey Vulture, .

Late: Common Goldeneye,

Early: Baird's Sandpiper.

Stake Out: Green-tailed Towhee.

Special Interest: Weather Conditions: 41-77 degrees; Mammals seen: Mule Deer, White-tailed Deer, Elk, Black Bear.

Island

7 August 2010; 6:45am-5pm.

Species Totals: 92/89 (Team/Shared)

Team: Steve Pink 92, Tom Mansfield 91, Ken Knittle 89.

Traveled: ? miles by car, 1 miles by foot.

Visiting: south end Whidbey Island, birding north to Deception Pass.

Species of note:

Early: Pectoral Sandpiper.

Stake Out: Barred Owl.

Kitsap *(New Washington State November Record)*

6 November 2010; 8am-5:30pm.

Species Totals: 104/104 (Team/Shared)

Team: Jamie Acker 104, George Gerdt, 104, Brad Waggoner 104.

Detailed Big Day Report begins on page 3.

BIG DAY REPORT:
WASHINGTON STATE, 6 NOVEMBER 2010

DATE AND TIME:

6 November 2010, Start time: 08:00 – End time: 17:30

TEAM MEMBERS AND SPECIES TOTAL:

Jamie Acker 104 species

Brad Waggoner 104 species

George Gerds 104 species

MILES COVERED:

35 miles driving, 5 miles on foot

AREA COVERED:

The entire route was on Bainbridge Island which is entirely in Kitsap County, Washington State with a short (½ mile) detour off Island and across the Agate Pass Bridge to the Suquamish Indian Casino car park where a Peregrine Falcon was sighted. Thus 103 recorded on Bainbridge Island, Kitsap Co. and 1 additional species added in Suquamish, Kitsap Co. for a total of 104 species recorded by all members of the team. Areas visited on Bainbridge Island included Restoration Point, South Beach Road, Fort Ward area, Lytle Beach, Schel-Chelb Estuary, Brad Waggoner's yard and pond, Gazzam Lake, Dock Street Road-End and Manzanita Bay area.

SPECIES OF NOTE:

- 1) Trumpeter Swan (V)
- 2) Gadwall (R)
- 3) N. Shoveler (R)
- 4) N. Pintail (R)
- 5) Lesser Scaup (R)
- 6) Brown Pelican (V)
- 7) N. Harrier (R)
- 8) Peregrine Falcon (S)
- 9) American Coot (V) (S)
- 10) Black-bellied Plover (R) (#)
- 11) Ruddy Turnstone (V)
- 12) Wilson's Snipe (R)
- 13) Ancient Murrelet (R)
- 14) Yellow Warbler (L)
- 15) Evening Grosbeak (R)

(V)= Vagrant: any species which is recorded less than annually in the county. (R)=Rare, any species less than annual along the chosen route. (L)= Late lingerer. (S)=Staked out bird. And finally, (#) = unusually high number of a species recorded

COMMENTS:

The "Accidental" Big Day!!

Jamie Acker, Brad Waggoner, and I have been conducting a monthly bird survey at Restoration Point, a private enclave of about 400 acres at the south end of Bainbridge Island since November of 2003. Sometimes the weather can be atrocious in November, other years it can be wonderful. Last year's November Restoration Point Survey was conducted on Saturday, November 7, 2009. The high temperature for the day was in the low 40s and the wind was blowing from the southwest at a steady 30 mph with gusts over 45 mph!! Rain, hard rain, and hail were operative words for the day. What a difference a year can make!! In contrast, yesterday, November 6, 2010, was downright balmy at 48 F, reaching 55 F by the time Jamie Acker, Brad Waggoner, and I (George Gerds) finished our census, and the wind was virtually calm with NO rain (well, maybe a slight mist now and again). The birds certainly seemed to acknowledge the fine (for Bainbridge Island) November weather by putting on a dazzling display. We tallied a new November record of 78 species recorded, including 12 new species never before recorded on one of our November surveys!! The new species for the November list included the following: **Trumpeter Swan** (12 flying by the point, low over the water with their long, graceful necks fully outstretched); **Green-winged Teal** (4, with 2 landing in the water off the point); **Greater Scaup** and **Lesser Scaup** (a skein of scaup with birds of two distinct sizes, each having a different-length wing-stripe, flying south past the point); a **BROWN PELICAN** (Brad spotted it at what seemed like 30 miles out from the point, flying north in front of the Seattle waterfront); a **Northern Harrier** (a male flying over the point towards Winslow); **51 Black-bellied Plovers** flying over the point with a lone Dunlin; a **Ruddy Turnstone** (undoubtedly the same bird that we found on last month's survey, feeding along the shore at the point with a lone Dunlin), a **Hairy Woodpecker** (a male in the snags by the cattail pond); a **YELLOW WARBLER** (a first-year male that gave us great looks, we could even see the faint "petechia" lines on its breast!!); several **Townsend's Warblers** (3 in a massive winter-flock at the base of Upper Farms Rd), and **Evening Grosbeaks** (about 8 flying overhead and calling). The bright **Yellow Warbler** was clearly the highlight of the day. While it is not a rare bird, it is extremely rare to find one lingering here into November. Most of the Yellow Warblers have departed the state for warmer climes by the end of September, so we were both delighted and surprised to see the little yellow waif flitting through the shrubs on the banks below the Community Center out near the point. The **Brown Pelican** was also a surprise. While Brown Pelicans are not unheard of this far into Puget Sound, it is a rare event to see one on or near Bainbridge Island, especially in November. This year there have been very few other reports from the waters of Puget Sound.

There were literally birds everywhere we looked. Some other birds worthy of special note (that weren't new to the November all-time list) include the following species: four **Northern Shovelers** that landed in the water near Blakely Rock; a single **Cackling Goose** (ssp. "minima") that flew in to join the flock on the lawn on the south side of the point; two **Ancient Murrelets** flying with two **Rhinoceros Auklets** off the point; and three **Hermit Thrushes** (two on the edge of Country Club Drive just as we entered the grounds at first light.

There are very few places anywhere in Washington State that one could record 78 species of birds during a 4-hour walk at any time of the year, never mind in November. The sheer diversity of habitats within the proximity of the waters of Puget Sound makes Restoration Point a very special place. So, having 78 species "in hand", the weather cooperating, and needing only 22 species to get to 100 for the day, the decision was made to try for the "Century Mark" by visiting a few choice birding locales around Bainbridge Island. South Beach Road yielded many **Cedar Waxwings** and **Yellow-rumped Warblers** feeding on the bumper crop of ripened Madrone berries; the Fish Pens produced **Rock Pigeon** and **Western Gull**; driving up the hill to the Fort Ward area, we startled a male **Ring-necked Pheasant**; the wet meadow at Fort Ward east of the Parade Grounds gave us 2 **Wilson's Snipe**, a singing female-type **Purple Finch**, and an adult **Merlin**! Lytle Road-end had roosting **Killdeer** which we somehow managed to miss at Restoration Point, and an obliging **Lincoln's Sparrow** that responded to our frantic phishing. Schel-Chelb Estuary and surrounding area harbored **House Sparrows**, a **White-crowned Sparrow**, three male **Eurasian Wigeons**, and a female **Gadwall**. Two **Ravens**, calling as they flew over the estuary, added to our growing total. A quick trip to Brad Waggoner's house gave us several **Wood Ducks** and a **Sharp-shinned Hawk** in the alders at the end of his driveway. We then decided that, at 16:00, we had enough time to make a dash to Gazzam Lake. It took us just under 17 minutes to hoof the ½ mile to the lake, check off **American Coot**, **Hooded Merganser**, **Ring-necked Duck**, and **Pied-billed Grebe**, and return the ½ mile back to the car!! As we left Gazzam Lake it started to rain. We were at 99 species recorded!! We had grandiose plans to go to Manzanita Road end at Dock Street, check for the Peregrine at the Agate Pass Bridge, walk Suyematsu's Farm, check the overlook at Murden Cove, and finish at Meig's Farm looking for Marsh Wren. Jamie had also promised that "Fannie" his habituated-to-"feeder-mice" Barred Owl would put in an appearance at his house shortly after 18:00. Needless to say, the hard rain altered our plans. Dock Street yielded an **Eared Grebe** after much searching, and Brad found a pair of **Long-tailed Ducks**. Two **Band-tailed Pigeons** flew over us heading west, and a **Mourning Dove** at a feeder upped our total to 103 species!! Foregoing all of our other stops, a try for the Agate Pass Peregrine Falcon would be our last attempt. Unfortunately, the falcon was not on its perch on the Bainbridge side of the bridge, but as we drove across the bridge to Suquamish, Jamie spotted the **Peregrine** sitting on one of the snags in the casino parking lot. We pulled into the car park and savored the sight of a slightly rain-soaked falcon stoically sitting and waiting as the rain pelted down and the daylight began to fade. We ended the day with 104 species recorded. The only "heard only" birds were several Virginia Rails at Restoration Point.

We had the good fortune of recording some 15 rare or vagrant species last Saturday. Not every day brings such good fortune, so good luck certainly helps greatly!! We had not started the day thinking of doing a "Big Day", and we certainly didn't know that the previous November record for birds seen on a Big Day was 100! But the conditions were near perfect and the birds were extremely cooperative!! Even so, we left a number of birds "on the table", so to speak. Here are some of the birds that were on Bainbridge Island the week of the "Big Day" that we did not record: Greater White-fronted Goose, Common Goldeneye, Barrow's Goldeneye, Cooper's Hawk, Spotted Sandpiper, Greater Yellowlegs, Surf-bird, Sanderling, Barn Owl, Great Horned Owl, Barred Owl, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Red-breasted Sapsucker, Pileated Woodpecker, Marsh Wren, Varied Thrush, and American Goldfinch. So, the total of 104 species is by no means an exhaustive total, there are plenty of other possibilities if the all the variables were to line up perfectly!!

The total of 104 species seen is a new record for Kitsap County in November. Moreover it is also the highest total ever recorded for any county in Washington State in November. For that matter it is also an all-time record for November for birds recorded anywhere in Washington State (meaning a birding excursion that went to more than a single county!!) Pretty amazing for a little Island only 12 miles long by 3 miles wide! Birding on Bainbridge Island and Kitsap County from November through February is superb!! One might be hard pressed to best the Kitsap County records for November (104), December (102), January (110), and February (112). Jamie, Brad, and I welcome and encourage any and all challengers to the friendly competition of fall/winter Big Day county-birding!!! Best of luck!

George Gerdts

Bainbridge Island, 8 November 2010

Washington State and County BIG DAY RECORDS by month

monthly totals												
<i>with 2010 updates</i>	110	112	121	143	201	157	136	127	121	113	104	102
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
State					197		136				104	
Adams												
Asotin		56			110		98	102		61		
Benton												
Chelan												
Clallam												
Clark	78											
Columbia											57	50
Cowlitz												
Douglas			74									
Ferry			58									
Franklin				65								
Garfield											56	
Grant												61
Grays Harbor			96		162							
Island								92				
Jefferson											64	
King				111	126							90
Kitsap	110	112									104	102
Kittitas												
Klickitat					120	114						
Lewis					78						78	
Lincoln				113								58
Mason											57	57
Okanogan					121							
Pacific	71											
Pend Oreille					133		106	127			54	
Pierce					130							
San Juan										94		
Skagit					146						94	95
Skamania		53	66								77	60
Snohomish												
Spokane	62	72	76	80	143	128					72	66
Stevens								101		60		
Thurston												
Wahkiakum					121							85
Walla Walla							136					
Whatcom												
Whitman	45			72	113							
Yakima												