



Padilla Bay Newsletter

A Joint Publication of the Padilla Bay Foundation and Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve

Spring 2007



Padilla Bay

National Estuarine Research Reserve

Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve is managed by the Washington State Department of Ecology under the National Estuarine Research Reserve System established by NOAA.

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The Padilla Bay Foundation is a membership-based non-profit organization formed in 1987. Its mission is to help preserve the Padilla Bay estuary in Skagit County, Washington, through support of Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve.

Padilla Bay Foundation
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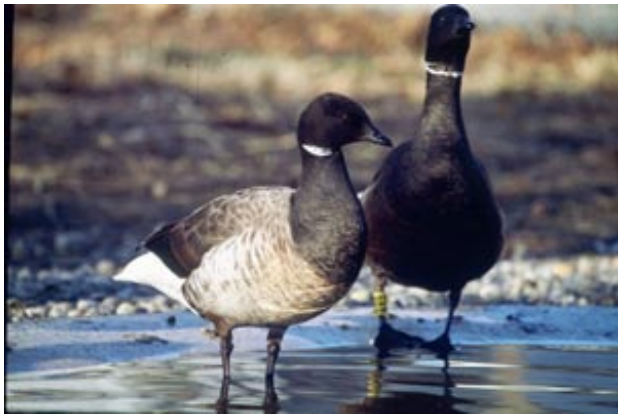


Foundation's Annual Members Day Features March's Point Herons

Lights, Camera, Action – starring the March's Point Herons! In 2006 a Leadership Skagit group teamed up with Skagit Land Trust and Padilla Bay Research Reserve to install a web camera in the March's Point Heronry. The camera, secured high up in a tree, is linked remotely to the Padilla Bay Research Reserve, where the public can view the action. This "Heron Cam" provides virtual access to tell the Great Blue Herons' remarkable story. As one visitor exclaimed "You mean it's a live camera? We're really seeing a bird that's there right now?" The answer is "Yes!" Plans are underway now to send the live images to Padilla Bay's website where anyone with Internet access can enjoy it.

The true stars are the herons themselves. The March's Point Heronry sits on six acres of land owned by several owners, one of which is Skagit Land Trust. With over 550 pairs of nesting adult Great Blue Herons plus their young, this heronry is believed to be the largest of its type in all of Puget Sound, and quite possibly, in all of the Western United States.

Padilla Bay Foundation members and the public are invited to join Andrew Rice, a member of Leadership Skagit, along with the new Stewardship Director from Skagit Land Trust for a presentation on the Great Blue Herons and the Heron Cam project. Enjoy this chance to view the herons and their chicks in "real time." **Saturday, May 26th at 1:00PM.** Refreshments will be provided. Please register online at www.padillabay.gov or by calling (360) 428-1558.

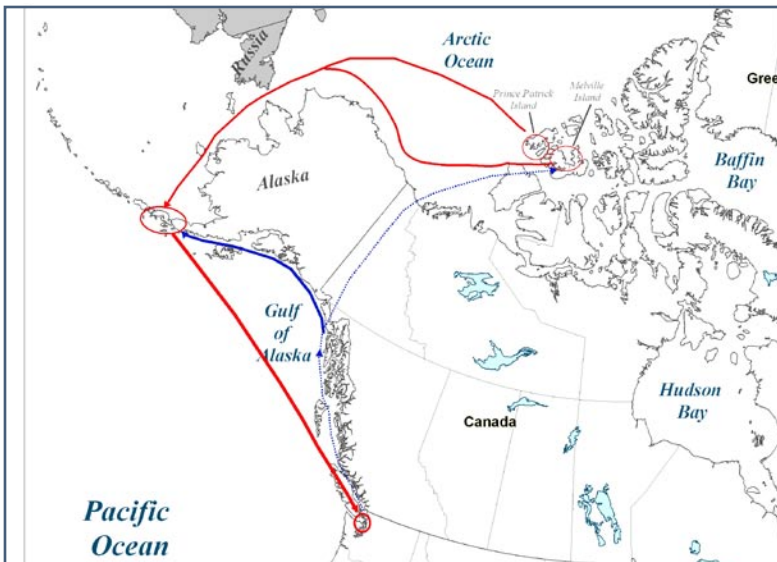


Western High Arctic Brant in Puget Sound

The Padilla Bay Foundation is pleased to offer a presentation on High Arctic Brant by waterfowl enthusiast, Maynard Axelson. Founder of the Washington Brant Foundation, Maynard has recently been involved in an international effort to monitor the migration of this rare local goose.

Western High Arctic “Gray Belly” Brant are a unique stock of brant and one of the rarest goose populations in the world numbering less than 10,000. They breed in Canada’s Parry Islands, migrate along the coast of Alaska, and winter almost exclusively in Puget Sound. Using satellite telemetry, scientists can track individual birds along their migration route. A transmitter is surgically implanted and signals sent to an orbiting satellite and relayed to a data center. Mellville Island is the main breeding area, where the birds spread out widely in very harsh habitat. Reproduction can be very low in some years due to extreme weather conditions. Recent tracking showed that some of these birds migrate overland through the Yukon Territory. Because of their later breeding chronology, Western High Arctic Brant migrate after Black Brant in both spring and fall.

Saturday, March 24, 1:00PM. Refreshments will be provided. Please RSVP by registering online (www.padillabay.gov) or by calling the Interpretive Center at (360) 428-1558.



Western High Arctic Brant Flyway



Padilla Bay Foundation

How You Can Help

Grassroots involvement is the core of Padilla Bay Foundation’s commitment to protect Padilla Bay and support the Padilla Bay Reserve.

Membership in the Foundation means you are contributing directly to environmental education and research right here in Western Washington.

Categories of membership are:

Senior/Student	\$20
Individual	\$30
Family	\$40
School/Organization	\$50+
Supporting	\$60
Sustaining	\$100+
Small Business	\$100+
Sponsor	\$250
Patron	\$500
Steward	\$1000

Send your contribution to:
 Padilla Bay Foundation
 PO Box 1305
 Mount Vernon, WA 98273
 (360) 757-3234
 a 501 (c) 3 organization

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Spring Events

Presentations for March, April and May

Birds in Video Part 2

Bob Hamblin has been doing video photography since 1982. This presentation focuses on birds of Washington, with a special emphasis on waterfowl. Footage from Bob's project will be used in the production of a new Digital Video series identifying 600 species of North American birds. **Saturday, March 17, 1:00-1:45.** Please call or register online.

Urban Merlins of the Pacific Northwest

Savvy survivors, Merlins are smart enough to recognize that both nesting platforms and plenty of accessible prey are available in the growing urban areas of western Washington and British Columbia. This program examines human landscapes and their effects on wildlife communities and Merlin's place in this complex system. Thanks to the support and participation of citizen-scientists like you, The Merlin Falcon Foundation's regional Coastal Forest Merlin Project is investigating this little known predator. Join wildlife biologist, David Drummond for this lively and engaging imaged program! **Saturday, April 7, 1:00-2:30.** Please call or register online.

The Spring Chorus: Birding by Ear

Join naturalist, Libby Mills, listening and looking for neotropical migrant birds. There is no better time of year to enjoy the music. This excursion involves a **slow** walk around the reserve uplands, so you may want to bring a folding chair. Pack warm clothes, binoculars, field guides, and warm drink or lunch. Meet in the Padilla Bay parking lot. Each class limited to 15 participants. **Friday, May 4 and Saturday, May 5, 8:00-12:00.** Call to register, or register online.

Eelgrass: King of the Mudflats

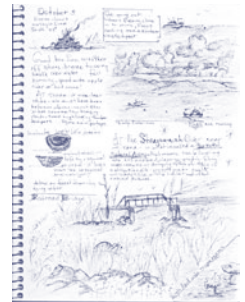
We usually see eelgrass as a green smear on top of the mud flats, but it is much more. Eelgrass is a keystone species that turns a featureless mudflat into an underwater jungle. This jungle supports an entire ecosystem and our commercial fishing industry but it is under attack. Come hear the latest research on the declining eelgrass populations



in the San Juan Archipelago and what is being done to save this important resource. Eelgrass researcher, Ginger Shoemaker, is a doctoral candidate at the University of Washington. **Tuesday, May 8, 3:00.** Please call or register online.

Nature Journaling for Teens

Take a break from school, home, and everyday routine. Enjoy a close encounter with a bald eagle or the changing tide. Keeping a nature journal is a great chance to slow down, think, observe, and take in the natural world. Camano Island Beach Watcher, Dodie Markey will share ideas and techniques that help beginners and experienced "journalists" record their observations, thoughts and experiences. This class is intended for 14-18 year olds. **Saturday, May 19, 12:30-4:30.** There is a \$10 materials fee payable to the instructor. Please register online or call (360) 428-1558.



Padilla Bay by Kayak

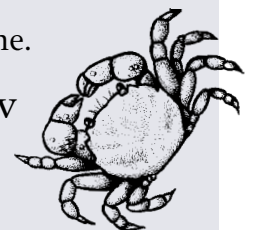
Enjoy paddling along the shores of the bay with an Island Outfitters guide and a Padilla Bay naturalist. No experience necessary. Minimum age is 12, with people under 18 accompanied by a parent. Please meet at 10:30 at the Padilla Bay Reserve for a brief orientation, with launching from Bay View State Park. Fee is \$65 per person, with proceeds benefitting the Padilla Bay Foundation. **Call Island Outfitters at 299-2300 for information and to register. Saturdays, April 14, May 12, June 23, 10:30.**

The Breazeale Interpretive Center is open Wednesday-Sunday, 10:00-5:00.

Register online or by phone.

www.padillabay.gov

(360) 428-1558





WCC Crew Tackles Holiday Service Project

This past fall, Washington Conservation Corps Interns at Padilla Bay decided to sponsor a family for the Holidays. Starting with abundant energy and little experience, the Crew chose December 15 as delivery day and went to work. Mike McManus, a counselor at La Venture Middle School in Mount Vernon, recommended a deserving family—no easy matter. Meetings were held, letters requesting donations were crafted, and various gift possibilities were discussed. Early December we hoped to get a list of clothing sizes, needs and wants of the family, but came to discover the top priority for the family was repairing their car. This was an unexpected task, but by December 11, we had begun collecting items for the family and were ready to take on the car work. A local mechanic gave us an estimate of the work needed for the car—well over \$4000 of work to be made safe! We simply could not do this, but through Volunteers of America and with a few very generous donations, we are

looking to acquire a new vehicle for the family in the near future. By the 14th of December, we had acquired virtually all of our gift items and had begun wrapping. Then December 15 greeted us with high winds, downed trees and a closed facility. We adapted, and on December 19, loaded up the gifts and a couch and delivered them to a grateful family. Thanks to all who supported our project and helped us raise more than \$1000: Shell Puget Sound Refinery, Budget Towing and Auto, Tri-Dee Arts, Target, Subway, and many individuals and families. Without you it couldn't have happened.

Videos: Sundays at 1:00 & 4:00

March	4	Eagles (40 min)
	11	Finding Solutions—Derelict Fishing Gear Removal Project (13 min)
	18	Song of the Salish Sea (45 min)
	25	Steller Sea Lions in Jeopardy (27m)
April	1	Tide of the Heron (12 min)
	8	The Intertidal Zone (17 min)
	15	The Northern Elephant Seal (14 min)
	22	The Secret World of Sharks, Rays (60)
	29	The Days of Salmon Traps (30 min)
May	6	Padilla Bay (20 min)
	13	Saving Swans: One Family's Ordeal (27 min)
	20	Pacific Estuaries (28 min)
	27	Estuary! (15 min)

Monthly Youth Programs Offer Fun Learning

Mini Explorers are the 3-5 year old learners. We look at a new topic each month, with stories, games, hands-on observations, art projects, and plenty of action. Call the Interpretive Center to register or register online.

March 14, 10:00 (Wed. only)
How Animals Eat—*Some use their pincers. Some use a beak. Others eat with their feet, but none use a spoon or fork!*



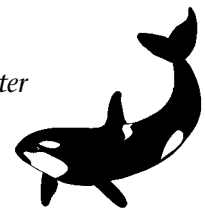
April 11 at 10:00 & April 12, 10:00 & 1:00
Estuary Babies - *Padilla Bay is home to all kinds of animals when they are young. We'll look at tiny plankton and try to match up parents with their babies.*

May 9 & 10, 10:00 & 1:00
Our Fine Feathered Friends- *Find out what makes a bird a bird and why they love Padilla Bay.*



Junior Ecologists are 6-9 year olds who have fun exploring the estuary. Excursions to the beach, science experiments, games, art projects, and studying life in the bay—this program is guaranteed fun! Call the Interpretive Center or register online.

March 10, 10:30-12:00 (Sat. only)
Marine Mammals—*Living in the water but breathing air, these amazing creatures have all the tricks for survival.*



April 13 & 14, 10:30-12:00
Adaptations—*Finding food, staying safe, or finding a mate: adaptations help plants and animals in all kinds of ways.*

May 11 & 12, 10:30-12:00
Who Eats Whom in the Food Web?—*Have fun untangling the sometimes confusing estuary food web, and learn how everything seems to be connected.*



WSU Beach Watchers A Regional Program of the Northern Puget Sound

Beach Watchers are trained volunteers dedicated to protecting Puget Sound's fragile environment. This university-based regional program helps communities become engaged in valuing and protecting natural resources through education and research. Supported by Washington State University's extension program in each of the seven counties of northern Puget Sound, the program is based on the successful Island County WSU Beach Watchers, begun in 1989.

Beach Watchers come from all walks of life and bring a rich cross-section of backgrounds, experience, service and talents. Every volunteer receives 100 hours of expert training from top instructors in such subjects as the beaches, environmental processes, geology and marine life. In return for this unique educational opportunity, all new Beach Watchers agree to "give back" a minimum of 100 volunteer hours to scientific surveys, exploring the beaches, talking with students and the public, and much more. It is fun and the enthusiasm is contagious.

The regional Beach Watcher program is supported by federal funds processed through the Environmental Protection Agency.

The 100-hour WSU Beach Watcher Training is being offered this spring in Island, Jefferson, Snohomish, and Whatcom, Counties. Trainings in San Juan, Skagit and Clallam Counties are offered in the fall. For more information, visit www.beach-watchers.wsu.edu or call 360-679-7327.



Beach Watchers Spring Seminar Series

The WSU Skagit and Snohomish County Beach Watchers Program is sponsoring a Community Seminar Series to promote education and stewardship of our local marine resources. Events are free to the public and open to all ages. For more information on the 2007 Seminar Series contact Betty Carteret at (360) 299-8553 or at sydster2@wavecable.com.

La Conner High School, 506 N. Sixth Street

March 23, 7PM – Saving Puget Sound: A Conservation Strategy for the 21st Century. John Lombard, of Steward & Assoc. and Sustainable Fisheries Foundation will discuss his new book outlining a long-term, practical proposal to conserve the region's natural heritage in the face of continued population growth and climate change. He'll present a long-term vision for conservation and an original strategy for how we get there and build an enduring consensus for conservation.

Padilla Bay Interpretive Center, 10441 Bayview-Edison Road

April 25, 7PM – Northwest Impacts of Global Warming and Climate Change. Dr. Richard Gammon, Univ. of WA School of Oceanography and Chemistry Dept. What are the implications of global warming and climate change for the Pacific Northwest? Dr. Gammon will discuss the results of research conducted by the University of Washington Climate Impacts Group and other organizations. Learn what leading climate researchers are predicting and how our environment and lives may be impacted by these global forces.

Anacortes Public Library, 1220 10th Street

April 13, 7PM - Northwest Washington Marine Birds: Are numbers increasing or decreasing? Dr. John Bower, Western Washington University, Fairhaven College. Come learn about a comprehensive marine bird census study being conducted by WWU, which replicates the landmark MESA study conducted in the late 1970s. Dr. Bower will discuss the research and census methods being used by himself and his students and reveal what they're learning about northwest marine bird populations.

May 18, 7PM – Understanding Puget Sound Natural Shoreline Processes: Why bulkheads may not work. Doug Myers, Habitat Restoration Manager with the Puget Sound Action Team. Come learn about the natural forces and manmade impacts that shape our shorelines. Doug will discuss natural processes such as littoral drift, bluff erosion, and wave action that form the character of our beaches. He'll compare how traditional hard armoring (bulkheads) and newer low-impact soft shore armoring techniques perform in controlling shoreline erosion.

Northwest Straits Commission Receives National Award

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Restoration Center has given the Northwest Straits Commission its "Excellence in Restoration" award for the Commission's derelict fishing gear removal program in Puget Sound.

"We appreciate this national recognition for our work in restoring Puget Sound habitat" said Lew Moore, Director of the Commission. "The support we've received from NOAA's Community-based Restoration Program has been critical to our success."

Over 118 acres of fishing nets and more than 1,100 crab pots have been recovered in the Commission's ongoing effort to rid Puget Sound of marine debris that continues to kill fish, marine mammals and sea birds, as well as negatively affecting habitat.



The Northwest Straits Commission has developed protocols now used throughout the country to report, safely remove, and catalog derelict fishing gear.

For more information about the Derelict Fishing Gear Removal



Program, check the website at www.nwstraits.org, or view the Sunday video March 9 at the Padilla Bay Reserve—1:00 & 4:00 showings.

Check Inside for the Spring Activity Schedule:

- Presentations
- Mini Explorers
- Junior Ecologists
- Films
- PB Foundation Members Day



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